

**FN P 90.**<sup>56</sup> The characteristics of the FN 5.7 x 28 mm P 90 personal defence weapon system make it more properly akin to a sub-machine gun than an assault rifle. The weapon is ultra-modern, easy to maintain, very light, and reliable. It can be equipped with a laser target designator as well as a wide variety of day and night sights. It has a standard integrated optical sight with no magnification. Like the G 11, its most significant characteristic is its ammunition. The development of this cartridge reflects NATO concerns that the 9 x 19 mm ball ammunition used in most handguns and sub-machine guns possesses insufficient power for the battlefield of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, where various types of body armour will be commonplace. Designed to provide (according to FN literature) substantially more lethality than the 9 mm round it is designed to replace, it also weighs less than 50 per cent of the latter round. Thus, like the G-11 caseless, a soldier can carry many more cartridges than before. It should be noted that the maximum effective range of this weapon is listed as 200 metres, less than the 300 to 600 metres of most assault rifles and the 1,000 metres of other rifles, but better than any pistol and most sub-machine guns. Of further significance is the fact that a pistol (the five-seven, with a twenty round magazine) has also been developed for the same round.

The SS190 5.7 mm round (it is actually the same bore size as the NATO 5.56 mm round but has a much shorter cartridge case – 28 mm versus 45 mm) is made in full metal jacket (ball), tracer, subsonic and blank forms. It is advertised as capable of creating a larger wound cavity in Fackler gelatin (5 cm by 30 cm) than either the 9 mm jacketed round (3 cm with over penetration) or the 9 mm hollow point (4 cm by 40 cm variable penetration).<sup>57</sup> Because it transfers most of its energy to the target, it is less likely to exit a target and strike something else. In comparison with the 9 mm FMJ round, it is also advertised as being less susceptible to ricochet and, with a shorter range lethality, less susceptible to creating casualties beyond the range of the intended target. These characteristics make it particularly attractive to military special operations units and police tactical units. In addition, the 5.7 x 28 mm round fired from a P 90 can penetrate 48 plies of kelvar body armour at 200 metres. The characteristics of the round when fired from the five-seven pistol are equivalent but with relative shorter ranges.

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<sup>56</sup> Paul Tweedale, the Canadian FN Herstal representative provided much of the information contained herein and was forthright in answering all questions. The author was permitted to handle and fire both the P 90 and the Five-seven pistol. Additional views and collateral information on the P 90 were obtained from: *Jane's Infantry Weapons*, p. 88, and from <http://www.remtek.com/arms/fn/p90/p90.htm>.

<sup>57</sup> Note that the 9 mm hollow point would be banned under the "rules of war" but the 5.7 mm jacketed ammunition would not – even though the wound ballistics would appear to be potentially more traumatic. Thus, if all police forces adopted this round they would be in compliance with the international rules of war. At least one senior police force official believes that the wounding capacity of the round is insufficient.