

# Russia's Military built a 'Terminator' and now it's getting smart weapons

One of the latest additions to the Russian army was set to receive an advanced upgrade that would allow it to fire controlled air burst munitions designed to inflict maximum damage on targets.

The BMPT tank support combat vehicle, semi-officially nicknamed "the Terminator," has been in the works since the 1980s and has gone through a number of modifications, much like the popular science fiction film franchise of the same name. In April, Russia announced that the latest installment was officially accepted into Russia's ground forces and the Techmash Scientific and Production Association told state media Thursday that another update was in store.

"In the interests of the Russian Army, work is now nearing completion for tank support combat vehicles to create a system with 30mm controlled burst shells," Techmash told the Tass Russian News Agency.

Plans for the BMPT, sometimes officially referred to as "Ramka-99," were originally drawn up in response to Soviet difficulties during the Afghanistan War that lasted from 1979 to 1989 and increasingly solidified after subsequent conflicts in Chechnya, as *Popular Mechanics* reported. The idea was to build a military vehicle designed to not only engage other tanks, but light infantry and insurgent formations too.

The BMPT-72 or "Terminator-2" debuted at the Russia Arms Expo 2013 with a new chassis based on the T-72 tank, according to Jane's 360. The latest edition adopted by the Russian Ministry of Defense in April, however, has been modified based on the later T-90, and has been informally dubbed "Terminator-3." According to a 2012 report by Russian newspaper *Izvestia*, Admiral Vladimir Komoyedov led the defense committee of Russia's lower house of parliament to push manufacturer UralVagonZavod (UVZ) to change the Terminator's name to something more Russian-sounding, but the moniker has stuck throughout the years.

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The Terminator's current arsenal includes two 30mm 2A42 guns loaded with 900 rounds of ammunition as well the Ataka-T anti-tank missile system armed with four 9M120-1 and 9M120-1F supersonic missiles, two 30mm AG-17D automated grenade launchers and the 7.62mm PKTM machine gun as detailed in an extensive Tass report based on information released by the press office of UVZ.

The new controlled air burst shells may operate similarly to those developed by Swiss company Oerlikon, a subsidiary of Germany's Rheinmetall, and equipped by the German Puma infantry fighting vehicle, as Tass pointed out. These shells are programmed by computers systems within the vehicle.



Russia's BMPT-72, nicknamed "Terminator-2," launches a missile during the Zapad 2017 military drills on September 23, 2017. The advanced armored vehicle was inspired by Soviet combat in Afghanistan and has been deployed in Syria as well. RUSSIAN MINISTRY OF DEFENSE

Last year, the Terminator made its combat debut in Syria, where Russia has joined Iran in helping Syrian President Bashar al-Assad overcome insurgents and jihadis rising up in the wake of a 2011 rebellion backed by the West, Turkey and Gulf Arab states such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar. It was also showcased during last September's massive joint Russian-Belarusian Zapad ("West") military exercises that caused rival U.S.-led NATO Western military alliance major anxieties.

While the abilities of the Terminator have yet to be fully demonstrated, *The National Interest* highlighted last week what could potentially be one of the vehicle's most formidable qualities. Russian media has claimed that the Terminator may receive anti-air weapons capable of taking out drones.

This isn't the only Russian military project to be referred to as the Terminator. The gun-shooting, car-driving, possibly space-exploring FEDOR (Final Experimental Demonstration Object Research) immediately drew comparisons to the fictional time-traveling androids, compelling Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin to assure Twitter users last April that Russia was "not creating a Terminator, but artificial intelligence that will be of great practical significance in various fields."

The following day, he shared a video of FEDOR firing two handguns at once.

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Source: <http://www.newsweek.com/russia-military-terminator-will-get-new-smart-weapons-989577>

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