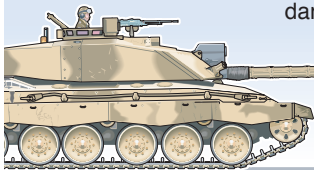


How depleted uranium shells work

Britain is supplying Ukraine with depleted uranium ammunition, which is used in weapons because it can penetrate tanks and armour more easily due to its density and other physical properties

1 Depleted uranium (DU) shell fired by main battle tank

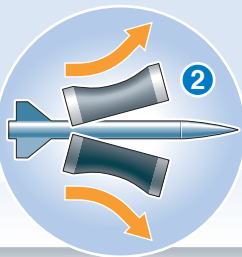
2 As projectile leaves gun barrel, sabot casing falls away, leaving dart-like penetrator



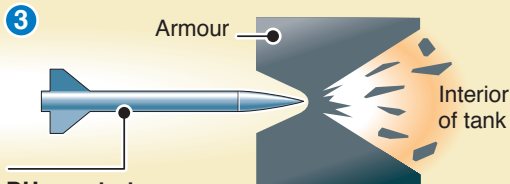
Challenger 2 tank

1

DETAIL



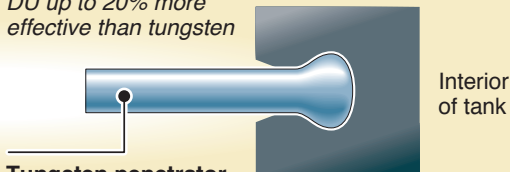
3 On hitting solid object, such as side of tank, kinetic energy of dense uranium penetrator is released, punching through armour



DU penetrator

Material is about 1.7 times denser than lead and sharpens itself as it moves through armour

DU up to 20% more effective than tungsten



Tungsten penetrator

Tends to form mushroom shape, becoming progressively blunter as it strikes armour

DU anti-tank shell

Penetrator made of mildly radioactive DU alloy

Sabot casing

Combustible cartridge case

Stabiliser fins

Propelling charge

Electric primer

