



Vickers Quick Fire 3.7" Anti-Aircraft Shell

British made



Background:

The roar of enemy aircraft overhead was a familiar and terrifying sound during World War II. But equally familiar, and far more comforting, was the booming retort of our anti-aircraft guns, spitting defiance into the skies. At the heart of this aerial defense lay the formidable Vickers QF 3.7-inch Anti-Aircraft Shell.

Developed in the years leading up to the war, the 3.7-inch gun and its associated ammunition quickly became the backbone of British anti-aircraft defenses, proving its worth in countless engagements from the Battle of Britain to the final push across Europe.

Key Specifications:

Maximum Ceiling: 32,000 feet (approximately 9,750 meters)

Effective Range: Over 15,000 yards (approximately 13,700 meters)

WWII Production:

The demand for these shells was immense, and British factories worked tirelessly to keep pace. By the end of World War II, over 15 million 3.7-inch shells had been produced, a testament to their critical role in the war effort.

Operational Data:

Rate of Fire: The 3.7-inch gun, operated by a well-drilled crew, could achieve a respectable rate of fire of 16-20 rounds per minute, allowing for sustained barrages against incoming aircraft.

Failure Rate: While highly effective, no munition is without its imperfections. The 3.7-inch shells had a relatively low failure rate of 2-3%, primarily attributed to fusing or mechanical issues. This still meant that the vast majority of shells performed as intended, delivering their deadly payload.

The shell was fired from the Vickers QF heavy anti-aircraft gun

Fusing:

The Vickers QF 3.7-inch anti-aircraft shells were fitted with **mechanical time fuses**, later improved with **automatic fuse setters (Molins No. 11)**, and eventually adapted for **proximity (VT) fuzes** late in WWII. These options allowed shells to detonate at a calculated point in the air, increasing effectiveness against fast-moving aircraft.

Diagram:

