

# Next Generation Squad Weapons (NGSW) Weapons and Ammunition (W&A) and NGSW Fire Control (NGSW-FC)



Top: Next Generation Squad Weapon (NGSW) M7 Rifle  
Bottom: NGSW M250 Automatic Rifle

The Army completed natural environment testing on the Next Generation Squad Weapon (NGSW) at the Arctic Regions Test Center in Fort Greely, Alaska, in February 2024; airborne and military free-fall testing at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in August 2024; an operational assessment (OA) at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, in October 2024; and limited lethality testing of the 6.8mm Special Purpose (SP) ammunition at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, in December 2024. The Army anticipates completing LFT&E of the 6.8mm General Purpose (GP) ammunition by 2QFY26. DOT&E published an early fielding report (EFR) with a classified limited lethality annex on the 6.8mm SP ammunition in June 2025. DOT&E will report on the 6.8mm GP ammunition LFT&E results in a classified lethality report by 3QFY26. Due to the completion of operational testing (OT) and associated reporting to inform fielding and full-rate production (FRP) decisions, DOT&E removed NGSW Weapons and Ammunition (W&A) and Fire Control (NGSW-FC) from OT oversight in July 2025. NGSW W&A remains on live fire (LF) oversight.

## SYSTEM DESCRIPTION

The NGSW system includes the M7 Rifle, M250 Automatic Rifle, 6.8mm ammunition common to both weapons, and M157 Fire Control mounted on each weapon. The M7 and the M250 are replacements for the M4/M4A1 carbine and M249 Squad Automatic Weapon used in the close combat force (CCF), and special operations forces units. The M7 is fielded with seven 20-round magazines and has selectable safe, semi-automatic, and automatic firing modes. The M250 is fielded with two 50-round fabric ammunition pouches and three 100-round fabric ammo pouches, and has selectable safe, semi-automatic, and automatic firing modes. The M157 is a variable magnification direct view optic with laser range finder, aiming lasers, environmental sensors, ballistic solver, compass, wireless communication, and display overlay. The M157 replaces the current optics used by the CCF when issued NGSW systems.

The 6.8mm ammunition includes GP, SP, Blank, Reduced Range, Tracers, Marking, and Drill Dummy Inert ammunition.

## MISSION

Units employ NGSW against threat dismounted personnel and small unit formations equipped with and without protective body armor; in urban, rural, open, and



Next Generation Squad Weapon Fire Control (NGSW M157 FC)

positions under cover; and in all environmental conditions. Operational environments may range from a known traditional or conventional regional environment to an unknown complex environment, such as an international megacity encompassing complex urban terrain.

Units equipped with the NGSW conduct the following combat operations:

- Movement to Contact
- Attack
- Defense
- Reconnaissance Patrol
- Enter and Clear a Trench
- Enter a Building and Clear a Room
- Hasty Defense

## PROGRAM

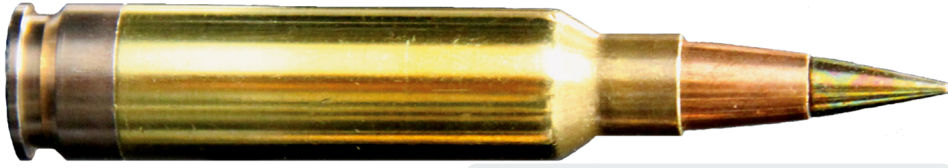
The NGSW system consists of two distinct Middle Tier of Acquisition

(MTA) programs: the NGSW W&A rapid fielding program and the NGSW-FC rapid fielding program.

The NGSW W&A program consists of the following components: M7, M250, and a common family of 6.8mm ammunition. NGSW W&A was approved as an MTA rapid fielding program in March 2022. In March 2024, the Army approved an urgent materiel release for the weapons and initiated fielding. In April 2024, the Army approved an urgent materiel release for the ammunition and issued it to units for use in new equipment training.

The NGSW-FC program consists of the M157 fire control and was approved as an MTA rapid fielding program in July 2021. The Army approved an urgent materiel release for the fire control in March 2024 and began fielding that same month.

The Army completed an OA of the NGSW system in October 2024 and limited lethality testing of the 6.8mm SP ammunition in



6.8 x 51mm M1186 GP Ammunition

December 2024 to support the planned transition of both the NGSW W&A and NGSW-FC programs from the MTA rapid fielding pathway to separate major capability acquisition programs in 3QFY26. The Army anticipates completing LFT&E of the 6.8mm GP ammunition by 2QFY26.

DOT&E approved the TEMP for both the NGSW W&A and NGSW-FC programs in August 2023, the OT test plan in August 2024, and the LFT&E plan in September 2024. Due to the completion of OT and associated reporting to inform fielding and FRP decisions, DOT&E removed NGSW W&A and NGSW-FC from OT oversight in July 2025. NGSW W&A remains on LF oversight.

» **MAJOR CONTRACTORS**

- SIG SAUER, Inc. – Newington, New Hampshire
- Sheltered Wings, Inc., doing business as Vortex Optics – Barneveld, Wisconsin

**TEST ADEQUACY**

The Army completed natural environment testing at the Arctic Regional Test Center in Fort Greely, Alaska, in February 2024; airborne and military free-fall testing at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in August 2024; an OA at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, in October 2024; and limited lethality testing of the 6.8mm SP Ammunition

at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, in December 2024. The operational and lethality testing was conducted in accordance with DOT&E-approved test plans, observed by DOT&E personnel, and was adequate to assess the operational effectiveness, lethality, suitability, and cyber survivability of a unit equipped with the NGSW. DOT&E published an NGSW W&A and NGSW-FC EFR, with a classified limited lethality annex on the 6.8mm SP ammunition, in June 2025.

The Army anticipates completing LFT&E of the 6.8mm GP ammunition at Aberdeen Proving Ground by 2QFY26. DOT&E will report on the 6.8mm GP ammunition LFT&E results in a classified lethality report in 3QFY26.

**PERFORMANCE**

» **EFFECTIVENESS, LETHALITY, SUITABILITY, AND SURVIVABILITY**

DOT&E’s assessment of M7, M250, M157’s operational effectiveness, suitability, and cyber survivability, and the lethality of the 6.8mm SP ammunition are provided in the June 2025 EFR and classified limited lethality annex, respectively. The EFR assesses individual soldier

and squad performance using the NGSW system on static and maneuver ranges; highlights the weapons’ suitability and soldiers’ safety concerns; and compares performance of the SP ammunition to that of current ammunition against specific types of targets. Assessments in the report include:

- Individual soldiers consistently qualified with their NGSW and, when firing on the variable distance range, demonstrated the ability to engage targets at extended distances.
- The 6.8mm SP ammunition generally provides increased lethality over the M855A1 (i.e., the SP ammunition for the legacy M4A1 weapon) against the tested targets.
- Improvements to system reliability, safety, human-systems integration, and compatibility with cold weather operations are needed.
- During the OA, soldiers reported negative physiological effects caused by the noxious off-gassing from their weapons, as well as concerns about the extreme heat from the weapons’ suppressors after firing.
- Most M250s equipped with M157s did not retain zero during the OA or the airborne test.
- Ergonomic complaints about the M157 persisted.
- The NGSW is compatible and safe for use during static line and military free-fall airborne operations.

## RECOMMENDATION

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The Army should:

1. Address the recommendations in the June 2025 EFR and classified limited lethality annex.