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M26/M46 Pershing Tank 1943–1953 (New Vanguard)



Synopsis

From the moment that the M4 Sherman had been matched against German Panther and Tiger tanks, the American tank crews had known that their vehicles were outclassed by the opposition. What was needed was a more powerful tank, more heavily armed and armored, that could take-on the powerful German panzers on a more equal footing. Although it took time to develop by the latter months of the war numbers of M26 Pershing tanks were reaching the frontline US armored units. Well armored and with a powerful 90mm gun the Pershing was a match for any tank in the German order of battle.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The unrivalled illustrated reference on fighting vehicles, transport and artillery through the ages. Each volume is illustrated throughout, making these books uniquely accessible to history enthusiasts of all ages.

Steven J. Zaloga was born in 1952, received his BA in history from Union College, and his MA from Columbia University. He has published numerous books and articles dealing with modern military technology, especially armoured vehicle development. His main area of interest is military affairs in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the Second World War, and he has also written extensively on American armoured forces.

How frustrating it is to find facts. So much is lost in translations, in disorganization, and even outright censorship. Even a serious subject such as the Second World War mires in a swamp of misconceptions and misinformation. What a joy it is to find a current book devoted to the M26 Pershing-- the most underrated tank of World War II. In the M4 Sherman's shadow, the Pershing's very existence was unknown to me. Gradually a reference here or a dismissal there clued me in; mostly histories written immediately after the war. New Vanguard's **M26/M46 Pershing** is the most detailed of several new books to finally tell this needed tale. Steven Zaloga's straight-forward and unpretentious writing summarizes the development and use of America's first heavy tank. Along the way he explores the political scandals surrounding its initial neglect by high Army officials. He follows this great weapon into the Korean War and establishes its ancestry of modern armor units. Tony Bryan and Jim Laurier provide several full color plates, including a digitized cut away with nomenclature list. All around this book respects a classic American machine almost nobody knows about. Because the resurgence in war lore still rides high, I'd strongly recommend this book to anyone with an interest in how America actually fought the war. Zaloga smashes the popular conception that the Sherman was our best tank. He reveals how our own great tank generals were so devoted to dated doctrines, that Patton himself refused to accept the Pershing. Zaloga writes "...the idea that the [Sherman's] 76mm gun was able to deal with the Tiger was widely held in the US Army in 1943, and was quite wrong." Readers may feel angry as I did to discover that it took the deaths of thousands of American and British men to shock the brass out of its complacency. In regards to Normandy, Zaloga tells us "In the first month of fighting, M4 Medium tank casualties were 32 percent of the available strength, more than four times its expected attrition rate of 7 percent." By the time the Pershing with its 90mm gun and 102mm frontal armor arrived in Europe, the Nazis were already defeated by their own lack of resources. A lack of good resources almost defeated me, but New Vanguard's series has arrived just in time. Read along with Belton Y Cooper's **Death Traps-- The Survival of an American Armored Division in World War II**, I have learned everything an amateur historian needs to know about the M26 and its overlooked role in the fight for freedom.

Osprey does it again when it comes to covering a specific equipment. Good pictures and drawing are a plus. The history and combat deployment in Korea and at the end of WW2 is covered. The development and major improvements on this tank is one of the subjects I remember the most after reading.

Another excellent resource by Steven Zaloga. An added addition to anyone's AFV library.

This book has a couple of major mistakes in it. On p. 12 of this book, Zaloga repeats the claim made by Belton Cooper in the book "Death Traps" that Gen. Patton was primarily responsible for delaying the production of the M26. On p. 15, Zaloga states that the only action of the single "Super Pershing" in Europe was to hit an unidentified armored vehicle from long range with its powerful cannon - again repeating what Belton Cooper said in "Death Traps". The problem is that neither bits of information are correct. Zaloga has since completely revised both of those statements in the book "Armored Thunderbolt", published in 2008, which is a true five star book. Zaloga clearly did a lot more research into original documents than he did for this book on the M26/M46. And in his new book, Zaloga leaves Patton completely out of the story about why the M26 program was delayed. He also fills in much more detail about the "Super Pershing", which was involved in at least two other tank engagements. (John P. Irwin, the tank gunner for the Super Pershing also published his war memoir "Another River, Another Town", in 2002, which also fills in some more detail about that tank). Although "Armored Thunderbolt" is primarily about the M4 Sherman, Zaloga's intent in this book was to address the severe criticisms of the M4 that arose after Belton Cooper's "Death Traps" came out (he states this in the Preface). And as a result, Zaloga digs deep into the details of all the failings of the U.S. tank development process during WWII, including the real story of how production of the M26 was delayed. He also fills in the details of all of the combat actions of the M26 and the "Super Pershing" in WWII. There is in fact more about the story of the M26 during WWII in "Armored Thunderbolt" than there is in this thin little book. "M26/M46 Pershing Tank 1943-45" is a fairly threadbare book that seems to be mainly a summary of what's in Hunnicutt's "Pershing" book. Hunnicutt, however, does not mention Patton in his take on how the M26 got delayed. As Zaloga discovered later in "Armored Thunderbolt", the chief culprit was Army Ground Forces and its head, Gen. Lesley McNair. Both "Armored Thunderbolt" and "Pershing" are excellent books. Get those two books if you want to learn some real facts. Get this book only if you can't afford anything better.

Good book, very informative, great reference for modelers or history buffs looking for info on these tanks which don't get as much attention as some others.

Great book. I suggest it for any fan of tanks.

Nice book

This book fills in a lot of the growth of the Army's Tank Corps. The growth, setbacks, politics, and combat problems are covered very well. Any one interested in how we ended with the best Tank's in the world will enjoy this book. I would recommend this book to any and all.

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