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M10 Tank Destroyer Vs StuG III Assault Gun: Germany 1944 (Duel)



Synopsis

Although tanks like the Sherman and Panther captured the headlines, the Allies' M10 tank destroyer and the Germans' Sturmgeschütz (StuG) III were the unsung workhorses of the northwest European battlefields of 1944-45. While their mission was not principally fighting one another, their widespread use ensured their frequent encounters, from the Normandy bocage to the rubble-strewn streets of Aachen. The StuG III was the quintessential assault gun: a low-slung, heavily armored, turretless vehicle intended to provide direct-fire support for infantry formations. It was a jack of all trades, being used both for the traditional direct-fire role, but also increasingly for antitank defense; when its armament was improved from a short 75mm gun to the better-known long 75mm gun, it reached its pinnacle and remained largely unchanged from 1943 to 1945. It proved exceptionally valuable in Normandy as its low profile and excellent armament made it a useful infantry support weapon while at the same time it had more than adequate firepower to destroy standard Allied tanks such as the Sherman. The M10 3in Gun Motor Carriage was originally developed as a tank destroyer. It was based on the Sherman tank chassis but with less armor and a more powerful gun. By 1944, however, its 3in gun proved ineffectual against the most thickly armored German tanks such as the Panther and Tiger. As a result, by 1944, the US Army's M10 battalions were usually deployed in support of US infantry divisions to conduct direct-fire support. Essentially, the M10 became the US Army's principal assault gun in the 1944-45 ETO campaign, whether intended for this role or not. Widely deployed in roles their designers had not envisaged, these two armored fighting vehicles clashed repeatedly during the 11-month campaign that saw the Allies advance from Normandy to the heart of the Reich. Fully illustrated with specially commissioned artwork, this is the story of their confrontation at the height of World War II.

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Customer Reviews

Steven J Zaloga received his BA in History from Union College and his MA from Columbia University. He has worked as an analyst in the aerospace industry for over two decades, covering missile systems and the international arms trade, and has served with the Institute for Defense Analyses, a federal think tank. He is the author of numerous books on military technology and military history, with an accent on the US Army in World War II as well as Russia and the former Soviet Union.

"M10 Tank Destroyer vs StuG III Assault Gun: Germany 1944 (Duel)", by Steven Zaloga and illustrated by Richard Chasemore, is a book in the Osprey Duel format that compares the American M10 Tank Destroyer to the German Stug III Assault Gun. The duel format is 80 pages long, and presents an analysis of the factors ... human, mechanical, and tactical ... of the two weapons systems being compared, describes how the weapons were developed and utilized, and includes maps, drawings, photographs, and illustrations. The first part of the book examines and analyses the design, development, and technical specifications of these two weapons, as well as a discussion of how they came to be. The author then describes how the Germans and Americans were trained, how they were organized, and how they fought. He finally describes the strategic situation on the Western Front in late 1944, covers fighting around Ubach-Palenberg, and analyzes the strengths/weaknesses of how the two vehicles were used and provides some good tabular information on unit strengths and losses over time. Note that this book really isn't a duel in the traditional sense. The Stug III was originally designed as an assault gun and, due to the extremely pressing need of the Germans for viable tank destroyers, was converted to fit that role. The M10 was designed as a tank destroyer, but by the time it arrived in theatre in appreciable numbers, the Germans were on the strategic defensive, severely limiting the opportunity for these weapons to be used against tanks, as intended. So, the M10 was used more and more frequently as assault guns supporting infantry. So while these two vehicles undoubtedly tangled from time to time, especially as the Stug III was occasionally forced to act as a poor-man's tank, their usage in 1944 were not as direct combatants. Once you understand that, you'll discover that this is an excellent overview and analysis of these two vehicles. As

a World War II history buff, I have many books that cover the Stug III, but this is the first book I own that provides detailed information on the M10, particularly on why the American tank destroyer force was even created. Unlike the Germans, who viewed a tank destroyer as a much cheaper alternative to a tank, and desperately needed to produce as many armored fighting vehicles as they could, the Americans had the industrial capacity to basically build whatever they needed in the quantities they wanted. As it turned out, the decision to build tank destroyers was a doctrinal one, and was eventually discarded, as tanks were found to be the best defense against other tanks. As the author shows, neither vehicle was perfect. The Stug III's largest fault in the tank destroyer role was its lack of a turret, and the M10's was that it was open-topped, leaving it vulnerable to bursting artillery and small arms, as well as comparatively thin armor. However, both weapons were used to good effect even if outside of their intended roles. Mr Zaloga superbly presents his material, displaying the ability to pack relevant information into the constrained "Duel" format in an entertaining and informative fashion. The photos, illustrations, and drawings are also top notch. I particularly liked the cut-out illustrations showing the fighting compartments of both vehicles. Overall, the author does an outstanding job of setting the stage and presenting relevant data, anecdotes, and analysis of these armored fighting vehicles, and provides interesting and well developed analysis and conclusions. Five stars.

This is a good discussion of the German StuG III assault gun designed to provide their infantry with cheap armor support and the U.S. 3-inch M10 Gun Motor Carriage designed to equip the Tank Destroyer units, including some mention of alternates for both. He covers the technical details of both the vehicles and guns to a fair degree. Unlike some duel books he does not cover one shoot out in particular but rather the campaign given in the title, amended for Western Europe. He provides more details than many other books, contrasting the claims versus facts for kills on both sides. The summaries of strengths on hand versus losses were very useful, as was the discussion of the German policy of carrying severely damaged vehicles on the roster and not writing them off as lost until much later. Skewing the loss-kill ratios a quick analysis of any period would generate. Some photos are spotty (whether due to the original or printing I can't say; most are from the period) but he provides some interior views that really help clear some details up. Not a perfect book, but well worth it to someone who buys these books to research the technology of the period, how it was used, and the overall performance.

I've been a fan of Steven Zaloga for years. I think one would be hard-pressed to find a more

informed expert on armored vehicles. But it seems Osprey is going for quantity over quality. Its latest series of books are not up to the standards I've come to expect from Osprey publications. That said, modelers and history buffs will find this a useful addition to their collection of Osprey books. I hope the publisher reemphasized quality in their work, and throttles back on their efforts to push out a higher volume of lower quality products.

The M10 GMC was designed to fill the role of a tank destroyer in U.S. doctrine. It did fight German tanks and self-propelled guns but not as originally planned. Needed to support our almost always advancing forces it ended up as a support weapon. Used to provide indirect fire as artillery, to support infantry as if a tank, it ended up used as an infantry support weapon, not as the answer to Blitzkrieg. On the other hand the German StuG III was specifically designed as an infantry support weapon to provide a heavily armored vehicle with a gun large enough to have good effect from its HE round. The mission of the StuG III morphed in the opposite direction. It too served as a tank substitute and as a tank destroyer. Not as effective as a turreted tank in that role it did excel as a destroyer of tanks. This book describes the roles, design, changes in doctrine and in the vehicles and their effectiveness, but it does not really look at a duel between the vehicles as some of the other books in this series does. No descriptions of StuG III/G fighting M10 GMC on the battlefield, just an excellent summary of two WWII armored fighting vehicles and their role in combat..

RECOMMENDED. Also look for STURMGESCHULTZ VOR! and the Osprey Book on U.S. Tank Destroyer Battalions in WWII.

Steve's work is always top notch and this volume is no exception. The research impeccable and the conclusions logical and well supported. Zaloga does a great job illustrating the pros and cons of these important WW2 AFVs.

The comparison of two vehicles that did double duty as tank destroyers and as self propelled infantry support guns, each taking on a role for which it was not intended, is an intriguing one. And Steven Zaloga is one of the best writers contributing to the series, if not the best. This is a good read, with good color plates and diagrams.

Osprey Kindle e-books do not have an active tap and go index. It is way to clunky to navigate the book. The content is very good though and the text is easy to read.

The book, in my opinion, is very informative. It also has, a lot of great pictures, a few color artist renditions, and a couple of maps.

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