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M60 Main Battle Tank 1960-1991 (New Vanguard, 85)



Synopsis

Entering service in the early 1960s, the M60 tank was in production for 23 years and formed the backbone of US Army and Marine armoured units during the Cold War. Over 15,000 were built in four basic models: the M60, M60A1, M60A2, and the M60A3. Although the M60 had been phased out of US Army service by the time Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, M60s were amongst the first Allied tanks to enter Kuwait City with the US Marines. This book examines the design and deployment of the M60, a very widely used vehicle that is still in service today.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

There is no knocking the New Vanguard series. They're cheap, informative and very user friendly.

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.

Good book, good reference on the development and adoption of the M60 Patton tank. Good pictures and cutaways showing details of the tank. Good modelers reference.

Reading through this sometimes enlightening book, I get the feeling what this book needs most (besides fixing the shortcomings the other reviewer mentions) is a good editor. Paragraphs tend to

start with a topic sentence, then wander off on tangents and unnecessary, non-supporting details. Sometimes I appreciated the insight offered by the experiences of an actual M60 tank crewman, but other anecdotes such as problems with the crew heater, procedures for "unwrapping" tanks stored in POMCUS sites, repairing tracks, fogged up vision devices, hanging muddy rubber boots on the infantry rail, ad infinitum do not really describe the tank itself. One gem I gleaned from this book was that the first M60 tanks deployed to Germany did not have sufficient M85 anti-aircraft machineguns, so they jury rigged a standard M2HB .50cal on an external post (which was used almost as a matter of course in Vietnam by M48A3 crews) until the supply of machineguns caught up. Another factoid I did not know: many M60s used steel wheels like M48 Pattons, with smooth rims instead of the ribbed aluminum rims I've always seen. Plenty of photographic evidence supports the widespread use of these steel wheels, and I had to look back at other sources to confirm, and voila, steel wheels! I never noticed them before, this book shed light on that. Insufficient data is provided on the upgrading of the M60A1 tank during the 1970s; a paragraph describes the add-on stabilization system for the main gun, but incorrectly states that M48 series tanks were also fitted with this stabilizer (foreign customers may have done so, but not American tanks). Precious little is mentioned of the RISE upgrade, but on page 13 it is stated that the engine fitted to the M60A1 had "an additional horsepower rating of 750 hp"... I was under the impression that the original AVDS-1790-2 engine in the earlier M60 also made 750 hp, but I could be wrong. So short shrift is given to fielding details of the M60A1(AOS), M60A1(RISE), the M60A1(RISE/PASSIVE), the M60A3, and the M60A3(TTS). The Squadron/Signal book M60 Patton In Action had more details on these models, but this book goes into more detail on the actual components themselves. As the other reviewer bemoaned, hard data on armor and ammunition is sorely lacking. I would have liked some mention of the various 105mm rounds and their penetration stats, effective range, etc. as one will find in Steven Zaloga's books. The lack of profile color plates of M60A1s or M60A3s is noted. The excellent Laurier cutaway "centerfold" is appealing, but I note that in the entire book, there is not one photograph or drawing of the original large Xenon searchlight! However, the anecdote regarding the use of said searchlight to "microwave" soldiers' canned rations on the gun barrel was... fun. Towards the end of the book, a mention is made of GPS receivers and how Army crews had them in the 1980s. Strange, I was under the impression these things were somewhat rare even in the Gulf War of 1991, and many crews used alternate navigation means like Loran (perhaps that was non-tank units?). Also, saying that the M60A3 was the first tank into Kuwait City "with the US Marines" is misleading; I believe Egyptians used M60A3s, and perhaps the Marines were supported by them, but Marine Corps M60s were still the M60A1(RISE/PASSIVE) with reactive armor tiles

attached. Being written in 2002, this book also covers some recent topics like the robotic mine-clearing vehicle Panther and the GDLS private venture 120S upgrade which was not purchased by Turkey. Somehow I got the feeling after reading this book that the style and lack of significant supporting data sounded familiar, and sure enough, right at the top of the "Further Reading" list on page 44 was Tom Clancy's Armored Cav. Granted the list was in alphabetical order by author's last name, but this one reference was telling. Now don't get me wrong, I have that book too, and it is another good source of anecdotes that shed light on the life of soldiers. But a Jane's they are not...and this Big Mac and fries of a book may disappoint those expecting a porterhouse.

I crewed on M60 series tanks for several years and was very excited when Osprey announced that they were going to add a book on "my" tank. Unfortunately this one is not up to par with the majority of the others in the New Vanguard series. Much of what is included would have fit better in a Warrior book titled, "M60 Crewman of the Cold War," it's not bad content, just not what I'd expect in a vehicle focused book. There is slight coverage of the various versions of the tank as mentioned in other reviews and unfortunately even less of the deployments in US Army, Europe and some of the interesting color schemes used during the mid to late 70's. Coverage of the Israeli variants is also thin. At least one photo (Commander's turret control handle) is set into the page incorrectly. Perhaps the scope is too big for one title. We might be better served with one book that covers the M60 and M60A2 and a second that covers M60A1/A1(AOS)/A1(RISE/Passive) and the M60A3. Maybe someone will reprint Hunnicutt's book for less than \$200. Until then this will have to do.

The M60 tank is one of the most important tanks in the U.S. arsenal, having served from 1960 to 1991 in the U.S. Army and Marines. It was used extensively by Israel in the Arab-Israeli War of 1973 and Lebanon invasions; it was used by the U.S. Marines in Gulf War 1991, where it battled T72s of the Republican Guard. I wanted to know more about the combat performance of the M60; the armor penetration of the 105 mm (esp. the new sabot APFSDS round), and the adjustments to the chin armor protection as a result of combat losses suffered in the 1973 Yom Kippur War. The authors (R. Lathrop and J McDonald) supplied none of this information which I wanted to read about. They went overboard on the development of the M60 and the Reforger exercises. They also had several pages devoted to "Life with the M60." Who cares? Please supply more information that all of us armor enthusiasts desire, the actual combat performance of the M60 and how it fared against Soviet tanks such as the T54/55, T62, and T72. All the pages that were devoted to "Life with the M60" could have dealt with how the Israeli Army upgraded and uparmored the M60 to make it a viable fighting

machine for the 21st century. The only redeeming part of this book were the nice colored plates and illustrations done by Jim Laurier. Otherwise, this book is sorely lacking.

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