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Pershing Tank  
Author: Craig Burnett (---.prem.tnms.net.au)  
Date: 12-16-01 02:03

G'Day,  
This question comes from ignorance on my part:

Could anyone stick in a 2 cents worth on the Pershing tank?  
Like: which formations used it; was it used in contacts at all etc etc.

Thanks  
CRB

Reply To This Message

Re: Pershing Tank  
Author: Robert Patrick (---.rina.org.uk)  
Date: 12-17-01 05:11

Off the top of my head I think it was used in action by 3rd Armoured at Remagen.

I think around 20 were issued to combat units out of 200 sent to the ETO. The deployment of the M26s had a silly name like Operation Zebra or something.

There is an account of a Pershing stalking and killing A Tiger I and two Mark IVs

I believe the commander got out of his tank and went forward to observe the Tiger before driving up ready to fire, put two rounds into the Tiger killing it before carrying out a drive by shooting on the Mark IVs. Pausing only to turn around so he could drive back and fire HE into the tanks as the crews tried to bail!

Reply To This Message

Re: Pershing Tank  
Author: Rob (---.core.hp.com)  
Date: 12-17-01 19:22

The Pershing was only available in the closing months of the war; February, or March introduction if I recall correctly. It was involved in a few firefights, though the numbers were very limited in scope.

One of the main attributes of the tank was its stabilization system, which permitted reasonably accurate firing on the move. The frontal armor was good, but the side and rear armor wasn't much of an improvement.

The 3rd Armored Division reference is correct, and I have seen various quotes as to the numbers available (5, 10, and 20) prior to the end of the war. My guess is that all were correct at some point in time. One of the last combats was an M-26 stalking a Panther in a major German city (Cologne?/Frankfurt?); it has been much publicized and is on video and in many photos since the Panther burned in front of a large, and very famous cathedral. I believe Cologne is correct. Also, the combat footage really demonstrates why one might want to reconsider a decision to become a tanker, unless your side is significantly better armed than your current opponents, due to the quick and thorough manner in which the vehicle catches fire and burns - the video actually shows at least one of the crew bailing out of the vehicle (the video is found at the end of the Sherman tank episode frequently aired on the history channel), rather quickly I might add.

For more info, I would suggest reading Belton Cooper's "Death Traps", which provides some useful information about the introduction of these. This book also has some info about the Super-Pershing that was also being developed.

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I assume the the 3d Armored unit history available in your local library would also have some useful info.

Reply To This Message

Re: Pershing Tank  
Author: James Baker (---.mtc1.cox.rr.com)  
Date: 12-17-01 20:53

I would like to second the recommendation of Belton Cooper's book. I believe they did a video based on it that aired on the History Channel and may be available for sale (most of their videos are). The Osprey book on the Pershing has some interesting info as well (including a picture of the super Pershing)

Reply To This Message

Re: Pershing Tank  
Author: Roger Kumferman (---.dialsprint.net)  
Date: 12-18-01 01:19

The M-26 Pershing tank was introduced (along with other newly developed weapons) to the ETO by a special technical mission code named Zebra. Zebra Mission (consisting of the test weapons, spare parts, and military as well as civilian technical representatives) arrived in Paris on February 9, 1945. There were 20 Pershings in this initial shipment. After a meeting with Eisenhower, it was decided to get the tanks into action as soon as possible, and they were all assigned to the 12th Army Group where General Bradley sent 10 each to the 3rd and 9th Armored Divisions.

Zebra Mission moved via Antwerp to Aachen, there to begin training the assigned crews. The crews learned to operate the new tanks, weapons were boresighted, and each crew fired 28 rounds to familiarize themselves. By February 23, the first 20 Pershings were ready for action. In 3rd Armored (a "heavy" division), 5 tanks each were assigned to 32nd and 33rd Armored Regiments (1 tank each in Companies D, E, G, H, I of the 32nd; 1 tank each in Companies D, E, F, H, I of the 33rd). In 9th Armored (a standard "light" division), 5 tanks each were assigned to 14th and 19th Tank Battalions (all 5 in one platoon in Company A of the 14th, 1 in Coy.A, 2 in Coy. B, and 2 in Coy.C of the 19th).

First combat use was by 3rd Armored Division on February 25. The first combat loss occurred on February 28, when F Company, 33rd Armored Regiment lost its Pershing to a Tiger I. The Pershing had been unwisely positioned at a roadblock in the town of Elsdorf, at night, while several fires burned in the area. These fires silhouetted the M-26 and the Tiger, concealed behind a building, at 100 yards range, put a round through the Pershing's gun mantlet, killing the gunner and loader (after knocking out the Pershing, the Tiger reversed and immobilized itself on a pile of debris - its crew abandoned it). This Pershing was repaired and put back into service by March 7.

The next day, also at Elsdorf, the Pershing of Coy. E, 33rd Armored Regiment destroyed a Tiger I at 900 yards range with two rounds, and two Pzkw. Mk.IV at 1200 yards range with one round each. Of the initial batch of 20 Pershings, only one did not finish the war on active service (Coy.H, 33rd Arm. Regt. lost its tank to a Nashorn on March 6 - because of the shortage of spare parts it was decided to cannibalize this vehicle).

On March 7, the Pershings of 9th Armored Division had their finest day, participating in the capture of the Remagen bridge. The 5 Pershings of the 14th Battalion were unique among the first batch of 20, as they were constituted together as one whole platoon. The Pershings were too heavy to travel over the weakened Ludendorf Bridge after its capture, and so were ferried across the Rhine on barges

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on March 13.

The second shipment of 40 Pershings arrived on March 25. 22 were assigned to 2nd Armored Division and 18 to 5th Armored Division. These tanks entered action without their crews enjoying any target practice beforehand. General Patton got his first Pershings when the next shipment of 30 was assigned to 11th Armored Division - these tanks had arrived in Frankfurt by April 14 (where the civilian tech rep expert on the 90mm gun put on a display of the Pershing's accuracy, picking off German helmets with single rounds at 625 yards range), and the crews entered combat on April 21. Altogether 310 Pershings were delivered to the ETO by VE-Day (of which 200 had actually been issued to combat units).

One further Pershing should be mentioned - the T26E4 Temporary Pilot No. 1, better known as the "Super Pershing" This was a Pershing T26E1 (the initial production test model) fitted with a 90mm T15E1 weapon (considerably longer and more powerful than the standard 90mm M3 gun, and firing an HVAP round at 3750 ft/sec.). In fact, this was the most powerfully armed tank in the world when introduced. Arriving in theatre on March 14, the Super Pershing was assigned to 3rd Armored Division. Prior to entering combat Zebra Mission flame-cut the front glacis plate from a captured Panther and welded this armor to the Super Pershing's hull and gun mantlet, thus effectively doubling the tank's frontal armor. A week after arriving the Super Pershing was ready for action - it did see brief combat before war's end, but alas not against any King Tigers, where its gun would have been a nasty surprise (armor penetration with the HVAP round was 8.7 inches (221mm) at 1000 yards).

Reply To This Message

Re: Pershing Tank  
Author: Dave Choat (---.arl.army.mil)  
Date: 12-18-01 10:08

The Pershing also had an extremely poor reliability factor regarding the engine's ability to shed fan belts. There were tething problems.

Dave Choat

Reply To This Message

Re: Pershing Tank  
Author: Ken Natt (---.mid.ntl.com)  
Date: 12-18-01 12:34

Are we saying we wasted a card on a tank that NEVER appeared as more than a pair of models?. Come on Gents, get a grip. What's next, I thought the SturmTiger was a waste at about a dozen produced, but on this scale it must be a cert for the next card set.

Ken

Reply To This Message

Re: Pershing Tank  
Author: R Mark Davies (---.proxy.aol.com)  
Date: 12-18-01 13:41

When it was discussed in the development forum, I remember it was mentioned that it was going to stay in due to its use in the Korean war.

Mark

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Reply To This Message

Re: Pershing Tank  
Author: Dave Choat (---.arl.army.mil)  
Date: 12-18-01 13:56

The Sturmtiger was in the Korean War?

Just kidding. Oh and I believe we did do some stats for the Sturmtiger, of course it never made it in...

Dave

Reply To This Message

Re: Pershing Tank  
Author: Steven James (---.tmns.net.au)  
Date: 12-18-01 18:35

Oh please, do include stats on the Sturmtiger. And lets not forget the E100 and the Maus. Oh yes, I plan to do a what if scenario for the Maus. Must have stats for the Maus guys. Love that tank.

Steven James

Reply To This Message

Re: Pershing Tank  
Author: Mike Pierce (---.clvhoh.adelphia.net)  
Date: 12-18-01 19:05

Interesting to contrast the initial deployment by the Germans of both the Tiger I and the Panther---most concentrated together in a single formation (heavy tank battalions and the famous Kursk Panther brigade)---with the American deployment of the Pershings (all spread out in 2 Armored divisions). It must say something about doctrine, training or just the American way?

Mike

Reply To This Message

Re: Pershing Tank  
Author: Craig Burnett (144.139.11.---)  
Date: 12-18-01 21:06

Thanks very much Roger and everyone else for that info - better than I can find in a library! I'd like to get a copy of that book and video. I have to admit, my knowledge of the US army is almost exclusively Korea, Vietnam and the 1980's.

You will now have made a 9 Year old happy at Christmas. After all, he has to compete with a 12 year old German and 11 year old Russian for brothers!

Now all I have to do is put together a small combat group centred around 2 Pershing tank models for BF - perhaps one of George Pattons units?

CRB

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Reply To This Message

Re: Pershing Tank  
Author: Dave Choat (---.arl.army.mil)  
Date: 12-19-01 10:46

The Sturmtiger DID get into combat, and some evidence exists that the Maus did too. At least one Maus was recovered from a collapsed building in Berlin, not from a trials field or a factory floor.

I don't care if anyone wants to get a damned Maus into their last gasp of the ubermensch scenario, but the Sturmtiger did see some action in numbers greater than one or two. So it could merit some consideration.

Your mileage may vary, and this vehicle is not for everyone blah blah blah. Hey I am a game designer some days and I like fooling around with this stuff. I am not suggesting that there are any fun scenarios involved in using any of these vehicles in a one off fashion. Never. :)

Dave

Reply To This Message

Re: Pershing Tank  
Author: Robert Patrick (---.rina.org.uk)  
Date: 12-19-01 11:42

I have no problem with people using such rare, weird and wonderful equipment. I do have a problem with manufacturers making it. Nothing more annoying than finding that someone has produced something like a Tiger II with Porsche turret (50 built) but not something like the M4A2 Sherman for use by my beloved Russians (approx 4000 delivered). Or a Kugelblitz but not an M15 etc....

Reply To This Message

Re: Pershing Tank  
Author: Greg Lyle (---.proxy.aol.com)  
Date: 12-19-01 17:45

Let us not forget the 12 Pershings that where shipped to Okinawa to late (perhaps Operation Olypic?). 2428 M26s where produced, but in1946 they where reclassified from Heavy to Medium Tanks and made an apperance in Korea, most of them where transformed into the M47 (Patton II) and in 1952 an improved version the M48 (dubbed the Patton 48) was produced.  
GL

Reply To This Message

Re: Pershing Tank  
Author: James Baker (---.mtc1.cox.rr.com)  
Date: 12-20-01 07:27

The history channel video is available at [www.thehistorychannel.com](http://www.thehistorychannel.com)  
Look for the video entitle "Suicide Missions:Tank Crews"

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Re: Pershing Tank  
Author: Mark Andrews ( )  
Date: 12-06-04 19:07

The film footage of the pershing stalking the panther is part of George Stevens D-Day to Berlin colour film. This was made by the Hollywood director George Stevens as he followed the 3rd armoured from Normandy to, you guessed it, Berlin.

I think there is only evidence of two sturmtiger ever seeing combat and that was against a civilian uprising in Hungary.