

KV Heavy Tanks 1939-45: A Tanking Behemoth that Changed Warfare

The KV series of heavy tanks, developed by the Soviet Union during World War II, represented a significant leap forward in armored warfare. Their formidable armor and powerful armament made them a formidable opponent on the battlefield, capable of withstanding enemy fire and delivering devastating blows. This article delves into the history, design, and combat performance of the KV heavy tanks, highlighting their impact on the course of the war.



KV-1 & 2 Heavy Tanks 1939–45 (New Vanguard Book 17)

by Peter Delagio

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

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Origins and Development

The KV tanks were named after Kliment Voroshilov, the Soviet defense minister at the time of their development. The initial design, the KV-1, was conceived in response to concerns about the vulnerability of Soviet tanks to German anti-tank weapons. It featured thick armor, a powerful 76.2mm

gun, and a diesel engine for extended range. The KV-1 proved its worth in the Winter War against Finland, where it proved virtually immune to Finnish anti-tank fire.

Design and Features

The KV heavy tanks were characterized by their heavily sloped armor, which provided excellent protection against enemy fire. The KV-1 had a 75mm main gun, while the later KV-2 carried a massive 152mm howitzer, making it a formidable assault gun. The KV tanks also featured a spacious interior, allowing for a large crew and ammunition storage.

Combat Performance

The KV heavy tanks made their combat debut in the early stages of Operation Barbarossa, the German invasion of the Soviet Union. Their thick armor proved a major obstacle for German anti-tank weapons, and their 76.2mm gun could inflict significant damage on enemy tanks. The KV-2, with its massive howitzer, was particularly effective at destroying fortifications and suppressing enemy infantry.

In the early stages of the war, the KV tanks played a crucial role in slowing down the German advance. Their presence on the battlefield often forced the Germans to deploy specialized anti-tank weapons or air support to deal with them effectively. However, as the war progressed, the Germans developed new tactics and weapons to counter the KV tanks, such as the 88mm anti-aircraft gun and the Panzer IV tank with the long-barreled 75mm gun.

Despite the challenges they faced, the KV heavy tanks remained a valuable asset to the Soviet Army throughout the war. Their ability to withstand enemy fire and deliver powerful blows made them a formidable opponent on the battlefield. The KV-1 was produced in large numbers, with over 5,000 units built during the war. The KV-2, though produced in smaller numbers, became a legendary weapon, feared by German troops due to its devastating firepower.

Legacy and Impact

The KV heavy tanks had a profound impact on the development of armored warfare. Their thick armor and powerful armament set a new standard for tank design, forcing other nations to reconsider their own tank designs. The KV tanks also helped to establish the Soviet Union as a major player in the field of armored warfare, demonstrating the country's ability to produce formidable weapons.

After the war, the KV heavy tanks continued to serve in the Soviet Army and were also exported to other countries. They saw combat in various conflicts, including the Korean War and the Vietnam War. The legacy of the KV tanks lives on today, as they remain a symbol of Soviet engineering ingenuity and a testament to their impact on the course of World War II.

Book Review: KV Heavy Tanks 1939-45 (New Vanguard 17)

The book "KV Heavy Tanks 1939-45" by Steven Zaloga is a comprehensive and well-researched account of the development, design, and combat history of the KV heavy tanks. This book provides a detailed overview of the various models of the KV series, including the KV-1, KV-2, and KV-85. It also includes numerous photographs, illustrations, and maps, making it an

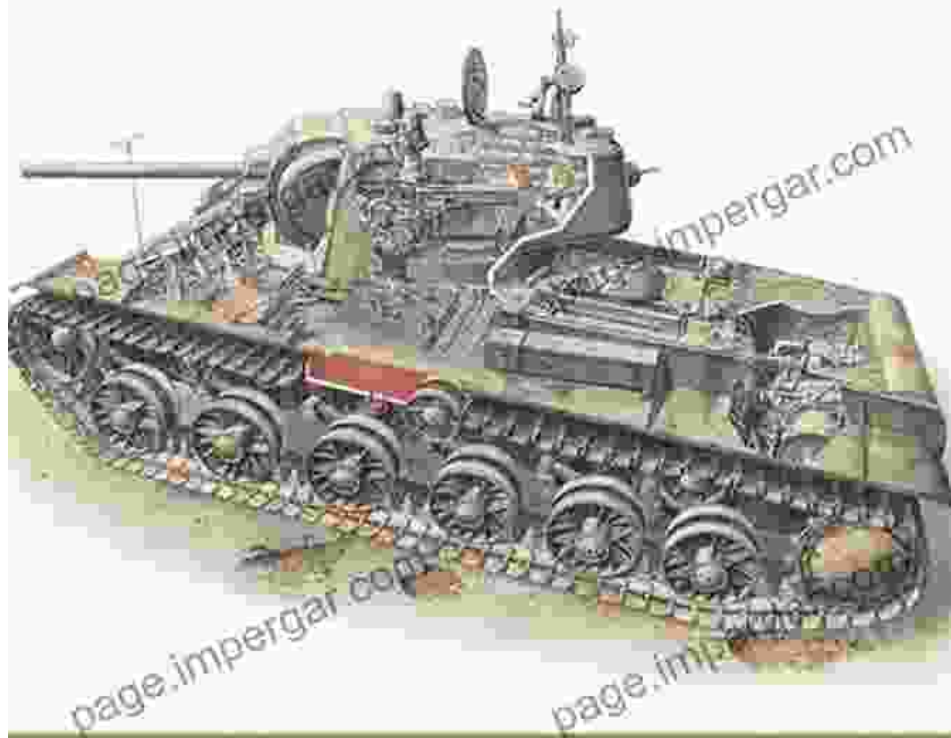
indispensable resource for anyone interested in the history of armored warfare.

The KV heavy tanks were a revolutionary development in armored warfare, combining thick armor, powerful armament, and a spacious interior. They played a critical role in the Soviet Army's defense against the German invasion and remained a formidable opponent throughout the war. The legacy of the KV tanks lives on today, as they remain a symbol of Soviet engineering ingenuity and their impact on the course of World War II.

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KV-1 & 2 Heavy Tanks 1939–45



Steven J. Zaloga & Jim Kinnear • Illustrated by Peter Sarson



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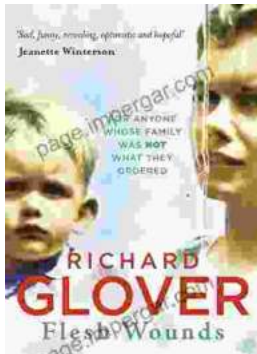
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