

TANKS IN THE EAST - 1942

Germans



The diminutive Pz II was still in service and appeared in every panzer battalion. Its role was as a command or scouting tank but it was still just barely useful enough to keep around. 302 were built in 1942 with the last one rolling off the line in December. After that, all chassis's built for this model would be used for other purposes (tank destroyers, self-propelled artillery, etc).



The Pz 38t was still in service in six panzer divisions, although it was very much a secondary tank by this point. It only remained in service because of the great need for tanks. Czech factories built another 198 in 1942 before all production was switched to other purposes. The last new one had been built before the start of Case Blue at the end of June. They would very rarely ever be seen in a combat role after this year.



Amazingly, the Panzer III with the short 50mm gun was still the most numerous tank in German Panzer divisions this year. Another 251 new ones of this model were built in 1942 but by the start of Case Blue all production of this type had ceased.



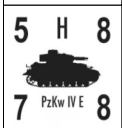
A better version of the Pz III was needed to combat the hordes of T-34's showing up on the battlefield and German factories were now building this version in large numbers. The biggest production year for Pz III's would see 1907 new ones built with this gun. Though almost none would be built after this year (just 60 in 1943), this tank would serve admirably until the end of the war. Most panzer divisions had at least a few of these, with many more showing up as replacements by the end of the year.



The Germans wanted to mount a bigger gun in the Pz III but there was not room for the long barreled 75mm gun. It was decided to start mounting the short barreled 75mm gun in some new production models and to convert some old ones to this configuration. 450 new ones were built this year and 37 old ones converted. In late 1942, these began to be issued to the Panzer divisions as replacements for the short barreled Pz IV's. They also appeared mated with Tigers in the heavy tank battalions.



Almost all German tank battalions had Pz IV's in them serving mainly in an infantry support role. The short barreled version was the most common type although it was fast approaching the end of its useful life. An uparmored version was issued to newer panzer divisions and to the 2nd and 5th divisions. Only 124 new ones were built this year before all production was changed to the much better version with the longer gun.



Russian tank production was far outstripping German tank production now and the Germans needed a tank good enough to win when constantly outnumbered. The Panzer IV had a big enough chassis to take a better 75mm gun. 200 Pz-IV F/2's were built from March to June of 1942. An improved G model also entered production in May which was functionally the same as the F/2. Some of the G model produced in 1942 had extra armor bolted on the front making them the same as the later H model in game terms. Therefore most of the Pz-IV with the long gun in 1942 should have armor 7 but armor 8 ones will become more common towards the end of the year, probably mixed in the same battalions as the older model.



The Tiger was the first German heavy tank to see production. Though an expensive and problem prone design caused by its rush into production, when it worked right it could dominate a battlefield. The first ones rolled off the production line in July but only 78 were built by the end of the year. The first Tigers to see combat served in the 502nd Heavy Panzer Battalion in the Leningrad area in October of 1942.



These tank destroyers based on a Pz I chassis had been serving since France in 1940. The 202 that had been built in past years were now mostly used up. They would still be seen on rare occasions in 1942. All the survivors were withdraw from service by the middle of 1943.



The Marder II was a 75mm AT gun in a fixed mounting on a Pz II chassis. 511 were built in 1942 and these were commonly seen in the PzJg battalions of Panzer divisions in 1942. These gave quite a bit more punch than the 50mm AT guns they usually served with.



The Marder III was either a 75mm AT gun or a captured Russian 76.2mm gun mounted on a Pz 38t chassis in a fixed mounting. This gave new life to the outdated Pz 38t's. 454 were built in 1942 with most of them appearing very late in the year in PzJg battalions.

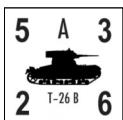


The Stg III B consisted of a short barreled 75mm gun in a fixed mounting in a turretless Pz III hull. These appeared in assault gun battalions and served mainly as infantry support vehicles. This configuration was so successful that the longer 75mm gun was mounted starting in 1942. 93 of the older B design were built this year with 695 of the longer barreled G version built as production lines changed over to the new design. The Stug III G also made a very good tank destroyer and thousands more would be built by the end of the war.



The GW I consisted of a 150mm infantry gun mounted on a Pz I chassis. These were assigned to Heavy Infantry Gun Companies 701-706 and some of these clunky old things were still in service in Panzer divisions in 1942. The survivors would be phased out of service by 1943.

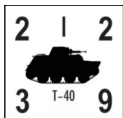
Russians



The T-26 was the most important Russian tank of the 1930's. Though none were being built anymore in 1942, 11000 had been built through 1941. A very large number of these were destroyed or used up in 1941 and they were not considered a front line tank anymore. However, because of the large numbers built, they still appeared in almost every major action until the end of the war. They should start to be a little rare at this point though as even the Pz II is a threat to kill them.



The other very common early war tank for the Russians is the BT-5 and BT-7 light tanks. None had been built since 1940, but many of the 8000 of all BT types built were still in existence, despite over 2000 being destroyed by the Germans in the first 12 months of the war. These continued to serve the Russians until the end of the war.

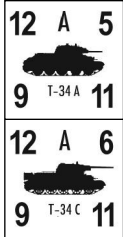


The T-40 and T-50 were still serving as light tanks in the Soviet Army but less than 1000 had been built of these two types and production ended on both in 1942. These tanks will show up on occasion, usually in a recon role.



The Russians were still building large numbers of light tanks, due to their great need for tanks. These two types could be built in any automobile or tractor factory and used largely automotive engine train components. At least 4000 of each of these two types were built in 1942 but none after 1943. Both would be commonly seen through the end of the war.

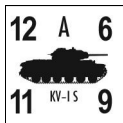




Although the T-34 had been around in fairly small numbers since the invasion, it now became the primary Russian tank of the war with over 12000 built in 1942 alone. The T-34a represents the earlier version of this tank with a slightly different gun. Only 400 of these earlier type were built but they would still show up occasionally. T-34c would be the most commonly encountered Russian tank from 1942 until the end of the war.



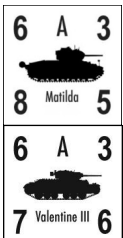
The KV-1 was the primary heavy tank for the Russians when the war started. Practically immune to early German anti-tank guns, it presented a problem for them whenever it showed up on the battlefield. 1942 was the biggest production year for this type with 1753 built. However, as more T-34's entered service, this tank was deemed to be too expensive to produce and not mobile enough and so no more of this model were built after this year. Again, the A model has the slightly older, less capable gun and the C model has the better gun and more armor.



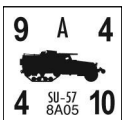
The KV tank did not die off right away, though. A modified version, KV-1S, with lighter armor and more mobility was produced in 1942 and 1943 with about 1200 built.



KV-II mounted a 152mm gun in a huge box shaped turret. 334 were built in 1940 and 1941 but no more after that. This huge vehicle was prone to breakdown and was an easy target for German gunners and they would become very rare as the war went on.



The British and Americans both sent Lend-Lease tanks to the Russians with the first deliveries arriving in late 1941. About 800 Matilda, 1000 Valentine III, 1200 M-3A1, and 1200 Lee tanks were sent altogether with most of these four types delivered in 1942. With the Russians losing 70% of their tank force (over 20,000 tanks!) by the end of 1941, these Allied tanks helped to fill the void until T-34 production could really get going in 1942. Though not as well armed as the T-34, these tanks were reliable and did just fine against the early Pz-III and Pz-38t that the Germans were still mostly using. These tanks should be fairly common in this year. Shermans and Churchills would come in future years as well as a better armed Valentine.



The Russian Su-57 is actually the American built T-48, a 57mm AT gun mounted on an M-3 Halftrack. 650 of these were sent and might occasionally be seen on a battlefield somewhere in Russia.

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