

# Armor at El Alamein

## British Made



The old A9, A10, and A13's had finally been pulled from front line service. In their place, 216 British built Crusader II tanks stood ready for service at El Alamein. These tanks still mounted the nearly obsolete 2 pdr gun with some mounting a 3 inch howitzer for infantry support.



Crusader III had been uparmored and carried a 6pdr gun in its turret. This was the end of the line for the Crusader as the turret would not mount any bigger gun. 78 of these were available for the battle.



The cheaper, faster to build, and more reliable Valentine tank had now completely replaced the Matilda in infantry support battalions. 194 Valentines served four infantry support tank regiments at El Alamein, all equipped with the 2 pdr gun.



The Matilda was now retired as a front line tank but the hulls were used for various conversions. The Matilda CS was still used to support the Valentine tanks which did not have a CS version. The Scorpion was a field modified Matilda with the guns removed and a rotating flail fixed in front of the tank to detonate mines. 25 of these helped clear mines at El Alamein. These should use the same special rules as the Sherman flail.

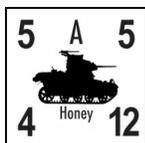


The Churchill made its first appearance in combat since the disastrous Dieppe landing with the new Churchill III with increased armor and a new 6 pdr gun. Six were sent to North Africa for combat evaluation and were sent forward against the Germans during the El Alamein offensive. They proved to be very resistant to damage and performed well enough that more were built and sent into the later Tunisia battle area.



This is the first British attempt at self-propelled artillery. A 25pdr gun was mounted in an armored box mounted on a Valentine Tank chassis. Slow and with a restricted elevation which limited its firing range, the Bishop still managed to serve the British cause through the rest of the North African Campaign and into Italy. Only 100 were built.

## American Made



The M-3 Light "Honey" tank had debuted during Operation Crusader as a main battle tank and, although it had many pluses, it proved to be too light to stand up well against the heavy German tanks. 119 were still around for this battle and were used mostly in a light tank role. Later versions would continue to serve in this role in British armored formations until the end of the war.



The M-3 Medium "Grant" had also debuted during Operation Crusader and still served as an important battle tank at El Alamein with 170 present for duty. These tanks would serve through and into the Tunisia campaign but would be phased out as more Shermans became available.



After the fall of Tobruk, FDR ordered the 1st U.S. Armored Division to give up its new M-4 Medium tanks and send them immediately to the British in North Africa. The British named them "Sherman" and had 252 of them ready to go at El Alamein. These tanks were spread out to nearly all the tank regiments and performed so well against the German tanks that the Americans decided that they needed no better tank for the rest of the war.

This flawed logic led to the Sherman not receiving a main gun upgrade until after D-Day.



British tank buyers ordered several hundred of these self-propelled artillery vehicles as soon as they laid eyes on them. Priests were sent straight to North Africa (making the Bishop obsolete just as it was being deployed) and served the British Army from El Alamein until D-Day.

## The Germans



The Panzer II was still in service as a light tank although it was next to useless in a tank battle. They still helped fill up the panzer battalions and acted mainly in a scouting role with 31 in action for this battle.



All surviving Panzer III's can now be assumed to either be later versions with improved armor or earlier versions with extra armor bolted on. 85 of the short 50 mm gun version served in the panzer battalions for Rommel.



The Panzer III had been upgraded with a longer 50 mm gun and a little better armor. Often referred to as Panzer III Special, 88 of these improved tanks were ready for action at Alamein.



The support version of the Panzer IV with the short 75 mm howitzer was at the end of its useful life on the battlefield. Only 8 were still available at this time for Rommel.



The Panzer IV Special received extra armor and a 75 mm anti-tank gun mounted in an improved turret. This was the best tank on the battlefield at El Alamein and would become the main German battle tank for at least the next year. Unfortunately for the Germans, only 30 were present at this battle.



In order to get a better self-propelled tank destroyer into the field, captured Russian 76.2 mm guns were mounted on Pz 38t chassis. This was called Marder III and proved to be an effective tank killer in North Africa.



This vehicle represents an early German attempt at self-propelled artillery. A 150L17 howitzer was mounted on a captured French Lorraine tractor chassis. Almost a hundred were built in total with about two dozen sent to Rommel in North Africa where they participated at Gazala and El Alamein and continued in service until they were finally destroyed in Tunisia.



This was an early German assault gun with the 150mm sIG heavy infantry gun mounted on a modified Panzer II chassis with the goal being a very low profile weapon. Only 12 were built but they were all sent to North Africa and served in the 708th and 709th Battalions which were attached to the 15th and 21st Panzer Divisions.

## The Italians



While the other nations had been improving their tanks, Italy's more limited arms industry had done very little to get more and better tanks into the field. The obsolete M13/40 was still serving in the Italian armored battalions as a main battle tank. It was no match for the newest generation of British and American tanks



The M14/41 was a very slightly improved version of the M13/40 and differed mainly in having a more powerful engine. This tank was still obsolete compared to the newer German and Allied tanks and, although the Italians fought bravely in them, all too often they also died in them.



The Italians had a handful of these marginally effective tank destroyers at El Alamein. They consisted of a 47mm anti-tank gun mounted on a M11/39 tank chassis.



At El Alamein, the Italian army had a couple of small battalions of the first of the Semovente assault guns. Later variants would become the most capable Italian armored vehicles in the field. The short howitzer on this first variant made it useful for infantry support but marginal in a tank fight.

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