

Weapons of Tank Battalions Illustrations

Chapter 6: Assault Guns and Mortars



SC-167191: A T30 assault gun displays the distinctive hump atop the 75mm pack howitzer barrel. The pedestal-mounted .50-caliber machine gun is visible behind the howitzer. (NARA, Signal Corps photo)



111-M-1001_15: A T30 assault gun advances into Tunisia with 2/13th Armored Regiment in November 1942. (NARA, Signal Corps film) [color photo]



111-M-1012_10: The 75mm pack howitzer on a T30 assault gun recoils after firing at the Germans near Tunis, Tunisia, in April or May 1943. (NARA, Signal Corps film)



SC-177883: T30 assault guns operate near Montechiaro, Sicily, on 14 July 1943. Two are pulling ammunition trailers. (NARA, Signal Corps photo)



SC-179955: An M8 HMC pulls an ammunition trailer during maneuvers in Tennessee in May 1943. The vehicle had very limited ammunition stowage. (NARA, Signal Corps photo)



SC-168558-R: Layout of the M8 turret, which was also installed on the LVT(A)(4) amtank. (NARA, Signal Corps photo)



SC-195753: The commander/gunner and loader worked in tight spaces in the open-topped turret. (NARA, Signal Corps photo)



SC-199172: An M8 fires at a Japanese pillbox on Leyte Island, the Philippines, in December 1944. Close-quarters shooting was common in the Pacific Theater. This assault gun still has part of its wading gear attached. (NARA, Signal Corps photo)



SC-200259: An M8 shells the Germans near Karlsbrun, Germany, in February 1945. Indirect-fire missions were fairly common for assault guns when they could be tied into an artillery unit's fire-control center. (NARA, Signal Corps photo)



111-ADC-2278_3: Elements of the 113th Cavalry Group operate in France in September 1944. (NARA, Signal Corps film)



111-FB-51_1: The 1st Armored Division, while still in North Africa in November 1943, assigned M7 Priest self-propelled 105mm howitzers to its medium tank battalions as stop-gap assault guns, because it found the 75mm howitzer underpowered in combat. The 751st substituted M7s for its M8s when it reorganized as a standard tank battalion in December 1943 while in Italy. (NARA, Signal Corps film)



SC-192647: An early M4 Sherman with 105mm howitzer. This vehicle has a standard commander's hatch. (NARA, Signal Corps photo)



SC-206511: This group of tanks on Okinawa includes very late-production assault guns equipped with HVSS suspension (center rear). The crews have all blotted out the white stars on the hull sides as they provided aiming points for Japanese gunners. Note the sandbags on the rear decks, which was standard practice in the Pacific because satchel charges and magnetic mines delivered by suicide squads rather than bazookas constituted the main close-range threat. (NARA, Signal Corps photo)



SC-198396: Assault guns from the 750th Tank Battalion fire indirectly at Manhay, Belgium, on 30 December 1944. (NARA, Signal Corps photo)



SC-201841: A litter of empty shell containers surrounds a 736th Tank Battalion assault gun firing in support of the 83d Infantry Division in Neuss, Germany, on 3 March 1945. The gun's elevation suggests it has been shooting in direct support of the doughs, as does the heavy sandbagging. This tank has the commander's vision cupola with the single hatch. (NARA, Signal Corps photo)



SC-133515: A Soviet officer in April 1942 examines a 2d Armored Division Halftrack 81mm Mortar Carrier M4, based on the M2 halftrack. The shorter rear compartment and twin back steps are the easiest way to distinguish the M2 from the M3 halftrack. (NARA, Signal Corps photo)



SC-144284: Firing the weapon mounted in the Halftrack 81mm Mortar Carrier M4A1, which had a raised and strengthened floor mount. (NARA, Signal Corps photo)



SC-195079: An M4A1 mortar crew in action near Overloon, Holland, in October 1944. Crews often turned the mortar to face forward. (NARA, Signal Corps photo)



AFB6100: The crew of an 81mm Mortar Carrier T19, prototype for the M21, serves the weapon, which was designed to fire forward. (NARA, records of the Chief of Ordnance)