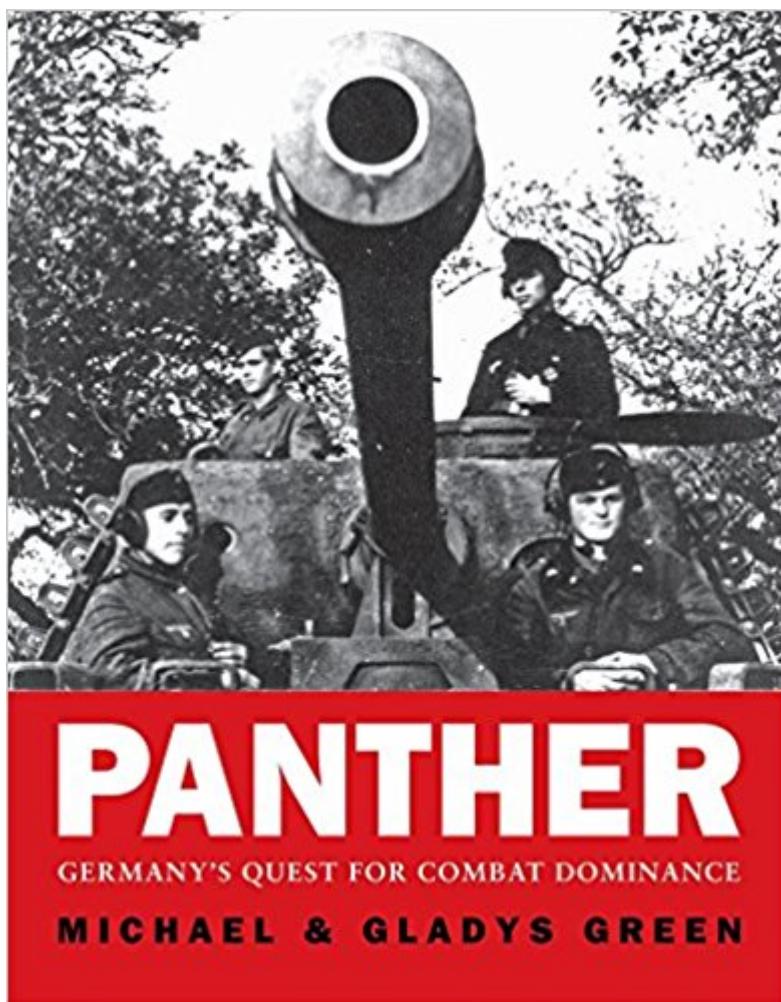


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Panther: Germany's Quest For Combat Dominance (General Military)



Synopsis

The German Panther tank was almost certainly the most elegant design of WWII. It embodied a balance of firepower, armor protection, and mobility unmatched by any other tank of the period. Yet, it was not the war-winner it might have been. Author Mike Green examines the disparity between the potential of the Panther design and the actuality of the fielded Panther tank in his new book. Though many viewed the Panther as an engineering masterpiece and a technological breakthrough, the Panther failed to meet expectations on the battlefield, thereby crushing Hitler's dreams of world domination. Green explores the evolution--and devolution--of the Panther, providing keen insight and new reasons for its ultimate failure.

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Customer Reviews

Few tanks have had as many books written about them as Germany's PzKw V "Panther", and many will be wondering if anything could be added by another. Mr. Green clearly asked himself this question and decided that the answer could only be "Yes" if a different approach were taken. In this useful volume, he goes through the Panther, crew position by crew position, system by system, in some cases component by component, and explains its function and operation in simple lay terms. Mr. Green's explanations of technical terms and characteristics of tank design are a great feature of this book. Too many other works either skip over this stuff or assume that you know it. To assess the Panther's strengths and weaknesses, he draws extensively on British, American and Russian evaluations from both wartime and post-war analyses. These are complemented by some

interesting remembrances of Panzer force veterans. Differences between the various Ausf^huhrung are explained, again usually in functional terms. There are also brief chapters covering the Jagdpanther, Bergepanther and even Panther turret pillboxes. Mr. Green was involved the restoration of the Littlefield Collection's Panther and he has made good use of his access to this vehicle. Clear and detailed color photographs are a particular strength and will be very useful to any modeler. The interior of this vehicle is particularly well covered. Color coverage also extends to other restored survivors. One thing that this volume does not have, however, is any previously unpublished WW2-era pictures of its subject. All the period pictures will be familiar to experienced readers. This book does not replace Thomas Jentz's authoritative book on the Panther and the accompanying Panzer Tracts, but it does provide a useful supplement and I fully recommend it.

This is a useful edition to the Panther tank bookshelf. Some of the information presented will be familiar but the Greens add a new depth of understanding of the components of the vehicle. Most interesting is a series of Allied evaluations of Panther ammo, transmission, engine, suspension, etc. The book is loaded with new color photographs of surviving tanks, both as memorials as well as working models held by various governments and museums. There are quite a few survivors, compared to the Tiger. I never tire of seeing photos of knocked out tanks and there is a nice selection of such photos, along with stories by crewmen and "enemy" battle reports. Presumably all the wartime photos of Panthers have been published so there is nothing new in those that are presented. They're a minority of the images, however. Pertinent comparisons are made to the Panther's main battlefield opponents--the Sherman and the T34. Comparisons of the running gear, engine and transmissions are interesting and a discussion of Panther ammunition, compared to US and Soviet ammo is instructive. The Germans had a way of building in real quality sometimes. Sometimes not, as the discussion of the transmission showed. Many Panthers broke down and were abandoned rather than lost in combat. It was interesting to read of the effort made to disguise several Panthers as M10 tank destroyers for the Battle of the Bulge. Technical issues that were new to me were an explanation of "live track" vs dead track," evaluations of technical issues by the restorers of the Littlefield Panther, over-gearing of the tank, as required by the German technical office and many, many other topics. If someone was looking for one technical book on the Panther, this would be a good candidate. I recommend it.

This is a well written and wonderfully illustrated book with good diagrams and photos. I liked the technical information regarding all aspect of the Panther's planning, development, teething

problems, final product, successes and failures. The Panther was a sophisticated design well executed by skilled engineers and fabricators. The comparisons with the Sherman, T-34 and other tanks in actual combat were very eye opening. The photos and narratives from the actual British, American and Russian gun tests on captured Panthers showing the armour's condition after various hits by many types of tank and anti-tank guns are pretty conclusive as to the success of the Panthers design. The actual interviews of German tank crewmen and their experiences with the Panther against various enemy tanks and the interviews with British, American and Russian tank and anti-tank gun crew experiences against the Panther were very telling. Seeing in writing that the Allies and Soviet tankers would have wished to have the Panther rather than their own tells a lot of the story of WWII tank warfare. Really a good reference book for any armour aficionado. This book has more original photos than I have ever found about the Panther.

Once again Michael Green has produced an outstanding work on the history of armor. I believe it to be his best work to date and I am very much looking forward to his next book on the Patton tank which is scheduled to be released in September 2012. What most readers will soon realize is the great attention to detail and historical authenticity of his work. As a USMC tanker and as a company commander in combat operations in Vietnam with command of 22 M48a3 Patton tanks and 3 M67 flame tanks (Company Commander of B Co. 5th tank Battalion, 5th Marine Division deployed with 1st Marine Division) during that war I was greatly interested in the development of the Panther tank which dramatically effected the design and production of our main M48 battle tank during my time of active service. Mr. Green was also part of the late and famous tank collector Jacques Littlefield's restoration of a Panther tank pulled from an eastern European Polish bog which was restored over a 5 year period to its exact specifications and detail by Mr. Littlefield's team at the Littlefield private museum at Portola California. I would estimate that from that exacting restoration experience which has been the subject of a Military Channel production and the extensive research done by Mr. Green to guarantee absolute authenticity for the project when coupled with his great skill as a writer that "Panther" will be judged a masterpiece in military writings. Lt. Col. Robert M. Johnstone USMCR.

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