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Jagdpanther Vs SU-100: Eastern Front 1945 (Duel)



Synopsis

The culmination of big-gun German and Soviet tank destroyer design can be found in their clashes in Hungary in the spring of 1945. As World War II in Europe reached its end, armor development and doctrine had experienced several years of massively accelerated change, especially within the crucible of the Eastern Front. The German Jagdpanther and Soviet SU-100, both turretless tank destroyer designs based on a 'traditional' turret-tank chassis, were the culminating examples of how the progression of experience, resources and time constraints produced vehicles that were well suited for roles of defence and offence, respectively. The Jagdpanther represented a well-balanced solution and an excellent use of limited resources, while the SU-100 was a natural progression of the rudimentary but numerous SU-85. As the role of tanks broadened from essentially infantry support to anti-tank, armor thickness and armament increased to enable AFVs better to survive such encounters. Expensive and hard to upgrade with larger armament owing to the constraints imposed by turret-ring size and suspension, turreted tanks gave way in some contexts to new designs. The Soviets and the Germans alike found that more powerful guns could be installed directly into the hull, which in turn reduced the vehicle's silhouette, and allowed for increased armour protection for the weight. A rapid arms race resulted in the East with each side attempting to develop a battlefield edge, if only for a limited time. For the Germans the 8.8cm-armed Jagdpanther was intended for more defensive roles, such as ambushing or flank protection at long range where its superior sights and high-velocity rounds imparted an advantage. Its sloped armor and relatively light weight meant, unlike the more massive (and less practical) Jagdtiger (a Tiger II derivative), it could also operate in a more mobile capacity. Its superior optics offered key firepower advantages, but its origins in the overengineered Panther design meant it was susceptible to breakdown and mechanical problems. In contrast, the closest Soviet equivalent, the SU-100, was designed to operate alongside armor and mechanized forces in an offensive capacity, where its 100mm main gun would help counter heavier enemy armour when encountered. Although its speed and armour protection were comparable, the greater numbers fielded late in the war often proved decisive against an adversary increasingly forced to fight despite inadequate logistics and training. By this stage of the conflict, the Germans were forced to adopt ad hoc battle groups to coordinate their decimated parent formations' assets. The Soviets in turn possessed operational momentum, and were perhaps less concerned with tactical losses, in part as immobilized vehicles could be more easily recovered and reintroduced into combat.

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Customer Reviews

• I would recommend this book to anyone with an interest in these vehicles and Eastern Front operations.
• Jim Mesko, Armor Modeling and Preservation Society
• Chock full of excellent period photos, diagrams and art work ... makes for a great read. I learned quite a bit from this volume...
• Scott Van Aken, www.modelingmadness.com
• A focused look at one minor detail of a big war.
• Strategy & Tactics magazine

David R. Higgins attended the Columbus College of Art & Design, and received a BFA from Ohio State University and an MISM from Keller. In addition to The Roer River Battles he has written over twenty articles for magazines such as Strategy & Tactics, Armchair General, and World at War, as well as MCSGroup, a conflict simulation provider for the US Defense Department. He lives in Columbus, Ohio. The author lives in Columbus, Ohio.

As far as I can tell, the most satisfying among the Duel books are the ones in which actual weapon vs. weapon clashes are documented, preferably more than one. The trouble is, in some cases, there isn't a lot of documentation of such clashes on the level of tank vs. tank or plane vs plane. This volume does a good job with what were probably sparse pickings. The writing is clear, the artwork is good, and the descriptions of the two AFVs are clear and instructive. The actual battling is pretty sparse. That doesn't make it a bad book; there apparently isn't a lot of Jagdpanther literature/history out there. If you know that ahead of time, you won't be disappointed.

Like most of the "This vs That" books, the book was an interesting read. There were some good photos and some interesting technical information. I wish there was more excerpts about actual small unit actions these tank destroyers participated in.

While it had strong technical data on both vehicles I felt the operational history section was lacking. For example the Panther vs Sherman book, also by Osprey, really broke down the vehicles' operation performance against each other during specific engagements in the Ardennes. The operational history in this book felt more like a campaign overview that both vehicles happened to participate in. I personally would have preferred more specific discussion of the field performance of the Jagdpanther and Su-100 and how they compared.

The neat thing about this book (like a few others that I've reviewed) is that it focuses on the 2 weapon systems, and how they performed. Thus, if you are researching either of the weapons (implicitly less interest in the battles), start here, then follow the sources.

This is one of the better in this Osprey Series actually covering not only the vehicles, their deployment, but actual combat against each other. Detailed enough to determine the SU 100 could NOT successfully engage German armor at 3000 meters despite its 100mm main gun; Soviet doctrine for the gun was to engage at up to 1500 meters when on the offensive and at 200-300 meters when defending. Easy to read, good drawings and photos. Excellent addition to a library on these two AFV.

Excellent comparison between two iconic WWII Tank Destroyers. The duel series of Osprey books is innovative and unique.

fun read with plenty of visual reference material, nice entry level piece on the subject matter.

THE TECHNICAL AND DESIGN INFORMATION ABOUT THE TWO VEHICLES WAS INTERESTING AND THE MAIN PART OF THE BOOK. THE ACTUAL COMBAT EXPERIENCE OF ONE VERSUS THE OTHER WAS LIMITED BUT INDICATED THAT THE JAGDPANTHER WAS THE SUPERIOR VEHICLE BUT WAS OUTNUMBER SO THAT IT COULD NOT CHANGE THE OUTCOME OF THE BATTLE.

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