

'Tank Spotter's Guide'
Compiled by Marcus Cowper and Christopher Pannell,
In Association with the Tank Museum in Great Britain

Review by Rob Morgan

This came as a birthday present from an old colleague, Alison, who found herself, probably bored stiff, at the Tank Museum at Bovington in Dorset a few weeks ago. The book, in a small format, some 7 1/2" by 5", is published jointly by the Tank Museum and the omnipresent Osprey at £9.99 hardback. There are 128 pages, lots of colour plates, about 55 of them; the book was compiled by Marcus Cowper and Christopher Pannell (ISBN 978-1-78096-052-4, should you need it). I've not seen the book before, nor heard of it, and so I suspect it's intended as a museum shop sell to visitors, rather than intended to attain a wider distribution.



Of course, there's not one tank in here that the average modern-period wargamer won't know well. This is far from being one of the long-awaited books which will change the way you organise your World War II armies or play the Fulda Gap game. The 40 tanks recorded in brief commentary and with technical details -- that part's useful enough -- begin with the British Mk I of 1916, and end with the American M1 Abrams, covering many of the well-known major weapons of the British, American, Soviet and German armies on the way. The Israeli Merkava's also included, as are one or two odd 'engineered' derivatives, but for some reason no Italian, no French nor Japanese tanks of any period appear, so the content's rather limited in terms of its overall value, which is a pity! Still the book does have its uses.

The colour drawings are delightful, beautifully produced examples of tank camouflage, markings and decoration. The plate of the A7V 'Alter Fritz' is an example, since one of my 'when I get a month to spare' projects is to build an Emhar A7V force, c.1918, to add to the single example I already field. The Late Model G Panther with an unusual linear splinter camouflage is another fine drawing, as is the intriguing Syrian T34/85 and the Pakistani M24. One thing strikes a reader, how over the years tank paint-jobs have become bland and

frankly unattractive, when compared say to the Soviet WWII T-34s or the US Vietnam AFVs.

My opinion, having read the text and enjoyed many of the drawings, is that this is nothing more than a birthday gift, not one to buy for yourself, but maybe there's an heir to the 20mm armies who would find it an interesting introduction to armoured vehicles. Frankly, it's no more than that.