

M4 Sherman Tank: (Haynes) Owners' Workshop Manual, by Pat Ware

by Andrew Birkbeck

Anyone who has ever worked on his own car, either tinkering with a modern Honda Civic or Dodge Grand Caravan or a classic automobile like a 1960s Mini Cooper or Ford Mustang, will know the series of repair manuals under the Haynes brand name. Over the past few years, the Haynes title has begun producing a series of books covering aviation and military vehicle topics, including the title in this review, the M4 Sherman tank. As the blurb on the title page states: "An insight into the history, development, production, uses, and ownership of the world's most iconic tank".

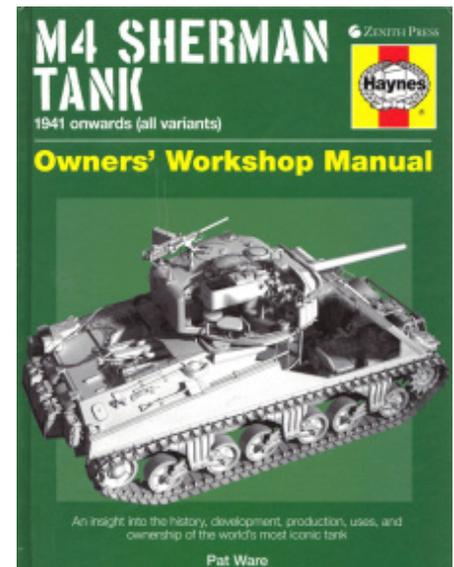
This book is a hardback edition, A4 format in size, and contains 164 pages. It is divided into eight main sections, each of which is well illustrated with black and white and color period photos, color photos of restored vehicles, together with numerous tables covering production and serial numbers, as well as photo captions from wartime Sherman tech manuals:

Section 1: The Sherman story: a 10 page introduction to the Sherman, including its early development history and initial introduction into combat service with the British Army at El Alamein in October, 1942. One nugget of information gleaned from this section is that the

cost of production of Shermans differed widely from production plant to production plant. The author states that Shermans produced at Chrysler's Detroit Tank Arsenal cost \$42,400, whereas the same basic vehicle cost \$70,000 to produce at the Federal Machine & Welder plant!

Section 2: Sherman variants: this 24 page section details the different variants of the M4 Sherman family: M4, M4A1, M4A2, M4A3, M4A4, M4A5, and M4A6. British variants, such as the Firefly, and Israeli Shermans are also covered. Specialized tanks also receive coverage in this chapter, such as armored recovery vehicles, flame throwers, D-D amphibious tanks, mine clearing vehicles, and rocket firing versions. Vehicles using the M4 Sherman lower hull are also detailed, including the M7 howitzer gun motor carriage (GMC), the M10 tank destroyer, M36 GMC, etc. Numerous charts are provided chronicling the various vehicles' official designations, production dates, and brief descriptions.

Section 3: Building the Sherman (14 pages): while total wartime German tank production reached 24,360 units according to the author, ten US and one Canadian firm managed to produce 49,422 Sherman tanks in a shorter period of time! This chapter lists these



firms and gives a brief history covering the contribution of each. The chapter covers both new manufacturing of the Sherman, as well as the program of "remanufacturing" that took place as earlier models of the tank were upgraded throughout the war. Coverage is also given to the firms that produced the Sherman engines. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the Sherman's role in the massive Lend-Lease program instituted by the USA to aid in the supply of military equipment to other Allied nations.

Anatomy of the Sherman (32 pages): the longest in the book, this chapter covers the main subcomponents that made up the Sherman: engines (six pages of text, together with very nice photos of the major engine types); fuel, cooling, and transmission systems; suspension and track details; hull and turret design; main guns (75mm M2 and M3, 76mm M1, 17 pounder for Firefly, M2A1 and M4 105mm howitzer). Also covered are: sighting and vision equipment, ammunition

storage, crew accommodation, communication equipment. To accompany the text, there are plenty of tech manual diagrams and black and white and color photographs.

Section 5: The Sherman in Action (15 pages): this covers the deployment of the Sherman in the various wartime theaters of operation, along with crew training. Included is a section comparing US vs. German tank guns and tank armor.

Section 6: Owning a Sherman (!) (10 pages): from locating one to buy, how to properly insure it, and the legal aspects of ownership. Included are starting up procedures for the vehicle, driving it, and stopping. Fascinating stuff.

Section 7: Restoring the Sherman (12 pages): lots of color (mainly) photos of rusting parts, and partially rebuilt Shermans, together with details on how to remove an engine, the transmission, suspension units,

the tracks etc. Useful stuff if you have one of these beasts sitting in your garage, or in a shed down the back of the garden.

Section 8: Maintaining the Sherman (6 pages): various black and white, and color photos covering the day-to-day maintenance of a Sherman in combat: lubrication duties are the main topic of study here, and the chapter includes the Lubrication Chart for a 75mm M4A3 from the tech manual.

Section 9: Appendices: a series of charts covering various aspects of the Sherman, the most interesting of which is a two-page listing of WW2 manufacturing contracts, serial numbers, and US Army registration numbers.

This is a wonderfully produced book, with high production values. The photos are well captioned and they are to a high reproduction standard, being printed on good glossy paper. The chapters are well thought out, with appropriate tech manual

diagrams, period and museum photos, and various charts to help with the understanding of the written text. For someone looking for a beginner's primer book on the Sherman tank, this book would be a great pick. For someone like myself who has 20 or more books on various aspects of the Sherman tank, it still provided a very entertaining read, and provided lots of useful photographs new to me and various useful charts not covered in my other books. Therefore, I most highly recommend this excellent book to anyone even remotely interested in this wartime workhorse.

My sincere thanks to Zenith Press for providing this review sample to IPMS/ USA, and to IPMS for allowing me to review it.

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