

The M1 « Abrams » Tank

The M1 'Abrams' is the first ranking American combat tank that operates at the moment. The US ARMY owns no less than 7,000 units, out of the gross 10,000 manufactured units.. The first (XM-A) prototypes operated in 1978 and the first versions equipped with a 105 mm M68 gun (derived from the British L7), entered into service in 1980.

As from 1985, *the Detroit Arsenal Tank Plant* and the *Lima Arsenal Tank Plant* have developed improved versions : the M1A1, then the M1A2 equipped with a 120 mm *Rheinmetall* gun.

This is the first American armored car equipped with a gas turbine, less clumsy and easier to recondition and to replace. Ever since its first design, it has integrated new technologies, such as the NBC protection system, the laser telemeter, the gun's stabilization, the IT controlled shooting device or the advanced protection of the *chobham* type of armoring.

The engine is protected by a 75 mm rear armoring, while the turret's front is reinforced by a 380 mm armoring (such armoring is made out of a chequer-work of neutralized uranium plates, covered with steel and composite ceramics). Finally, the chassis's front part is protected by 140 mm, the turret's sides by 300 mm and the chassis's sides by 200 mm.

Specifications :

Dimensions : Length 9.83 m, Width 3.65 m, Height 2.43 m

Weight : 57 t.

Speed : 70 km/h

Range : 498 km

Armament : 1 *off* 105 or 120 mm gun, 1 *off* 12.7 mm machine gun and 2 *off* 7.62 mm machine guns.

Armoring : welded-shot, with several layers of metal, 75 to 410 mm metal and composite alloys

Crew : 4 men

