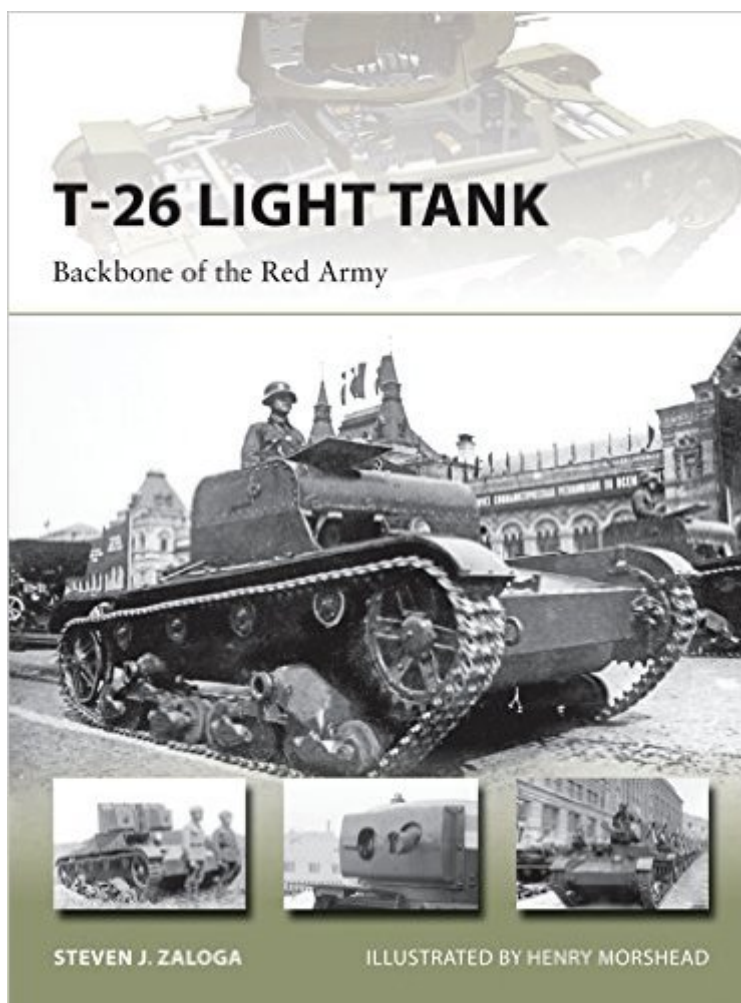


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T-26 Light Tank: Backbone Of The Red Army (New Vanguard)



Synopsis

This book surveys the development of the T-26 as well as its combat record in the Spanish Civil War, the war in China, the border wars with Poland and Finland in 1939-40, and the disastrous battles of 1941 during Operation Barbarossa. The T-26 was the first major Soviet program of the 1930s, beginning as a license-built version of the British Vickers 6-ton export tank. Although the T-26 retained the basic Vickers hull and suspension, the Red Army began to make extensive changes to the turret and armament, starting with the addition of a 45mm tank gun in 1933. The T-26 was built in larger numbers than any other tank prior to World War II. Indeed, more T-26 tanks were manufactured than the combined tank production of Germany, France, Britain, and the United States in 1931-40.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In *T-26 Light Tank*, armored expert Steven J Zaloga points out that the T-26 formed the backbone of the Red Army's armored force in 1941 and was one of the most important tanks of the 1930s. Derived from the Vickers 6-ton tank that was purchased in 1930, the Soviet Union adopted the tank and gradually modified it over the next decade. Stalin ruthlessly pushed the expansion of Soviet heavy industry under the Five Year Plans in order to increase armaments expansion, with the T-26 becoming one of the primary output items. As the author points out, by the time of the Spanish Civil War in 1936 the T-26 was one of the best tanks in the world, but this superiority was short-lived. The German introduction of the 3.7-cm Pak anti-tank gun inflicted heavy losses on the thinly-armored

T-26 in Spain and the Red Army realized that light tanks were increasingly vulnerable. By the time of the German invasion of the USSR in 1941, the Red Army had roughly 10,000 T-26, but they had become hopelessly obsolete. Overall, this volume is an excellent addition to Osprey's New Vanguard series. The volume's initial discussion of the Soviet purchase of the Vickers 6-ton tank and the introduction of the T-26 tank shed great light on early Soviet tank developments which influenced later events. He then discusses the up-gunning of the T-26 from machineguns to the 45-mm gun and the initial combat debut in Spain. The author then discusses efforts to modernize the T-26 and alternative versions, including flamethrower tanks, robot tanks and artillery vehicles. He then delves into more combat actions in the Far East, Poland, Finland and Barbarossa. This is all great material, however I felt that there was simply too much material to fit within the 46-page New Vanguard.

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