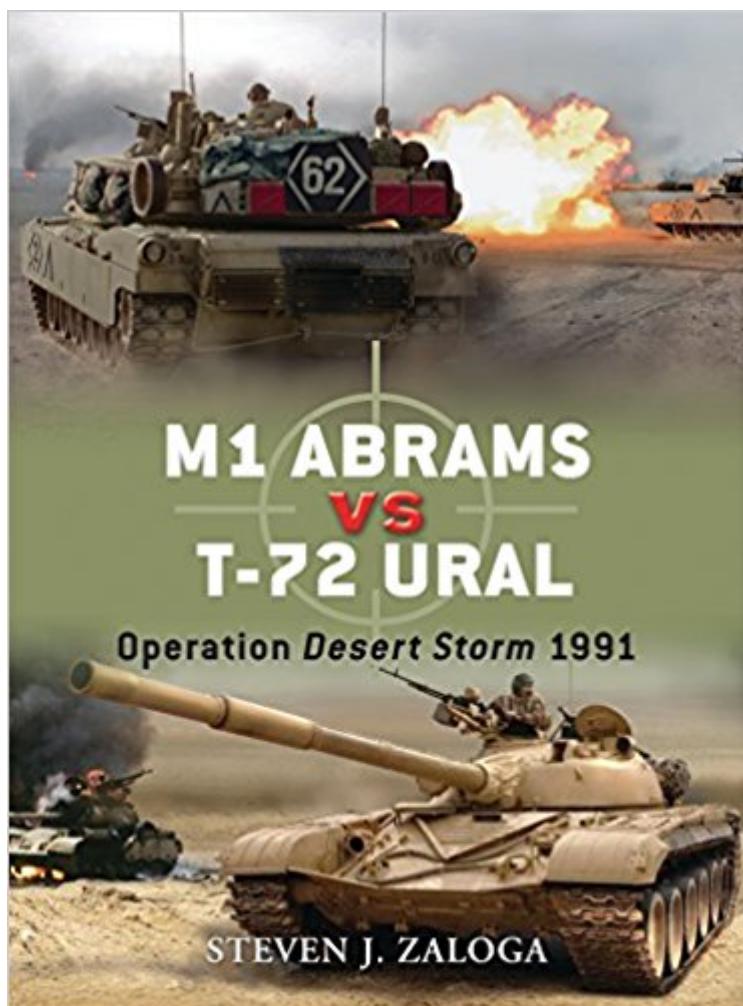


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# M1 Abrams Vs T-72 Ural: Operation Desert Storm 1991 (Duel)



## Synopsis

The Gulf War bore witness to a number of deadly encounters between these two great adversaries. Heavily armored, highly mobile and capable of killing at over 2500m the M1 Abrams is, to this day, a veritable fighting machine. Superior to both Iraq's Soviet era T-55 and T-62 tanks, nearly all sources claim that no Abrams tank has ever been destroyed by enemy fire. Despite entering service in 1980, the M1 Abrams remained untested in combat until the Gulf War in 1991, where it was to be confronted by its archenemy the Iraqi-assembled Soviet-designed T-72. Entering production in 1971, the T-72 arguably outstripped its contemporaries in a balance of mobility, protection and firepower. By the time of Operation Desert Storm, however, the tables had turned and the tank suffered due to low quality ammunition and poorly trained crews. In this fascinating study, Steven Zaloga pits these two great fighting machines against one another, plotting the development of the Cold War until both tanks met in combat in the deserts of Iraq and Kuwait.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Steven Zaloga weaves a compelling narrative which balances its treatment of both vehicles. He is careful to point out that the reader cannot discern too much about the effectiveness of the T-72 in the hands of the Iraqis. However, he does lay out several distinct weaknesses of the export T-72 that might not have altered the balance even in well trained and experienced hands. If you have only a mild interest in modern armor, this is a book well worth picking up.”

Charles Landrum, IPMS (February 2010) "I was particularly impressed by the interior photos, cutaway drawings and gunsight views. The detailed descriptions of the various crew functions also made for interesting reading for me..." Overall, a very enjoyable read which gave me a much clearer insight into the superiority of the Abrams to the T72M1.

Steve Allen, AMPS (October 2009) "Author Zaloga follows a tried and true format in this Duel book by first providing the design and development of both tanks. There is then a section on the technical specifications of each followed by a look at the military in which both were used and how they trained for battle. Next is a look at the situation prior to the start of the war and then a look at some of the more important battles in which these two tanks were used. Finally, an analysis of how these tanks fared; their strengths and weaknesses. Overall, it makes for a most interesting read and provides a good look at these two important MBTs. It is a book that I thoroughly enjoyed reading and I'm sure you will as well. Like all Osprey titles it is one that I can easily recommend to you."

Scott Van Aken, Modeling Madness, [modelingmadness.com](http://modelingmadness.com) (October 2009)

Steven J. Zaloga received his BA in history from Union College and his MA from Columbia University. He has worked as an analyst in the aerospace industry for over two decades, covering missile systems and the international arms trade, and has served with the Institute for Defense Analyses, a federal think-tank. He is the author of numerous books on military technology and military history, with an accent on the US Army in World War II as well as Russia and the former Soviet Union.

Mr Zaloga is a well established and respected author in armor, and this book only serves to reinforce that reputation. The book provides a solid overview of the engagements mostly between the US Armys VII Corps and 3 Republican Guard divisons near the Kuwait-Iraq border, with a paragraph or two on the Marine M1A1 engagements. The book begins with a detailed development history of both tanks, then moves on to a thorough technical passage. Then, the tactical and training aspects of both armys, highlighting the ineptitude of the Iraqi army and the evolving nature of the US Armys strong training regimens. Finally, a basic introduction to the Gulf War, and a swell account of the battles between the US VII Corps/24th ID and Tawakalna, Medina and Hammurabi Divisions of the Republican Guard. 73 Easting and Rumalyah are covered with a several paragraphs, while the Medina Ridge is covered with several pages, a good choice considering how 73 Easting is already well known. The book finishes of with a 2 page analysis of the engagements. The book has a healthy mixture of text and photograph, a few maps and doesn't use the terrible 3D maps that

plagues some of Osprey's other titles. I can't really think of any issues with the book, though some may be present that I didn't notice. Overall, I would definitely recommend this book to anyone interested in the tank battles between the T72 and M1 Abrams.

This represents one entry in the Osprey Duel series. This slender volume focuses on the tank combat in Desert Storm, in 1991. Two key tanks: the M1 Abrams on the American side and the T-72 (a Soviet-built tank) on the Iraqi side. Indeed, as the author notes at the outset, the tank combat in Iraq may have served as something of a model for what might have happened had Warsaw Pact and NATO forces engaged in combat. Both sides in Desert Storm had significant armored forces. Outcomes in battle were a function of two factors--the ability of the tanks and the training and performance of the tank crews. Both have to be accounted for. Early on, as with other books examining weapons systems, design, development, and technical specifications of the tanks are provided. Pages 15 and 23 provide tank to tank comparisons (although it is annoying that physical dimensions are in feet for the M-1 and in the metric system for the T-72). Then, there is a discussion of the crews. The M-1 had a crew of 4 and the T-72 of 3. American crews were, overall, better trained and better fit for field combat. Iraqi tankers tended to be rather poorly trained--a genuine hazard once combat began. Next, the strategic thinking of the two opponents are discussed and--then--the actual fighting. The end result was a battering of the Iraqi forces. More American tanks were destroyed by friendly fire than by Iraqi tanks. A nice brief volume on tank versus tank in Operation Desert Storm.

The book covers briefly the development history of both the M-1 and the T-72 before proceeding to their combat performances in the 1991 Gulf War. Overall the author has covered both machines well and has highlighted the limitations of the T-72. On the downside, the maps could have been accompanied by a legend to better show what the symbols mean. Also, the synergy between the tanks and their primary infantry support vehicles could have been explored in greater detail. However, in all a good book and another worthy addition to this series.

If you've never read much about the M-1 or T-72, this book is going to be an excellent surprise. It is well written, accurate and provides a concise summary of these two tanks. Many excellent photographs (all in color), cut-away drawings, statistics and facts support Steven Zaloga's premise...the M-1 is hands down the better tank. I always enjoy photos of the interior of tanks, this book has several for each tank. Zaloga, who has written many books on Soviet and US armor,

explains in detail how each tank was developed and how the different needs of each Army shaped the design of each fighting vehicle. The M-1 has emerged as the worlds best tank providing superior firepower, protection and mobility. It does have its flaws - it gups fuel and requires a long logistical tail. But that's ok, the US can afford that & it's well worth it to protect our crews. There are also sections of US tanker's first hand experiences during the Gulf War which demonstrate why the battle was so one sided.Highly recommended for beginners of tank warfare or someone seeking a concise book on the armor aspect on Desert Storm. Not so much a book for modelers, although the photos will give you a lot of ideas on how crews stored their equipment. While very informative, if you know anything about either tank, there is nothing new or surprising here. It is a good buy for the money - quality paperback.

Steven Zaloga is one of the most astute military historians today, but where he excels is in the combining of written military history WITH modern (emphasis on "modern") graphics. While he, of course, is not the graphic artist, his books in the Osprey line are absolute must-haves in my library. In fact, I've set aside a small section of my library just for books like this one from the Osprey line.

It was fascinating and a bit remarkable, to learn about the technical aspects of these tanks. 1991 was a long time ago, and much of the information must've been declassified. I didn't know the Iraqi T-72 had a laser rangefinder. It was inferior to the Abrams but the American claim that they would've won had the equipment been swapped is probably true. Arab leadership has always been awful.

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