

Panzer III vs Somua 35 Belgium 1940 Duel 63: A Glimpse into the Epic Battle of Tanks

When it comes to warfare, few things capture the imagination quite like an epic tank battle. In the annals of military history, the clash between the Panzer III and the Somua 35 during the Battle of Belgium in 1940 stands out as an iconic duel of armored giants. With both tanks boasting unique features and strengths, this article takes you on a journey back in time to witness Duel 63 - a riveting confrontation that showcased the tactical ingenuity and prowess of both sides.

The Panzer III

Development and Design

The Panzer III, developed by Nazi Germany, was one of the most important tanks of World War II. Initially designed as an anti-tank weapon, it evolved into a versatile and effective medium tank. With a weight of around 24 tons, this 5-man tank featured a 37-millimeter KwK L/45 cannon as its main armament, along with two 7.92-millimeter MG34 machine guns for secondary firepower. The Panzer III boasted frontal armor that ranged from 30 to 70 millimeters, making it formidable against most contemporary tanks.

Strengths and Weaknesses

The Panzer III's primary strength lay in its powerful cannon, which could penetrate the armor of most tanks at the time. It also had a decent speed of around 24 miles per hour (39 kilometers per hour) and good mobility, allowing it to traverse various terrains effectively. However, its greatest drawback was its inadequate armor protection, particularly on its sides and rear. Despite this

vulnerability, the Panzer III compensated for it by employing clever tactics and agile maneuverability.



Panzer III vs Somua S 35: Belgium 1940 (Duel

Book 63) by Theodore Roosevelt (Kindle Edition)

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Screen Reader : Supported

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Notable Battles

The Panzer III made its mark in several significant battles throughout World War II. Notably, it played a crucial role in the German invasion of Poland and France. Its performance in these battles showcased its effectiveness as a medium tank and its ability to spearhead German advances. However, its limitations became evident during the later years of the war when it faced more heavily armored opponents.

The Somua 35

Development and Design

The Somua 35, a French-designed tank, served as one of the primary battle tanks for the French Army during the early stages of World War II. Weighing around 19 tons, this 3-man tank featured a 47-millimeter SA 35 cannon as its main armament, along with a 7.5-millimeter Reibel machine gun for secondary

firepower. The Somua 35 had front armor that ranged from 35 to 47 millimeters, offering solid protection against smaller caliber guns.

Strengths and Weaknesses

One of the Somua 35's greatest strengths was its superior armor protection, particularly on the front. It also had a relatively low profile, making it difficult to target on the battlefield. Additionally, its suspension system provided excellent cross-country performance, allowing it to navigate diverse terrains. However, its main weakness was its slow speed, clocking in at only 20 miles per hour (32 kilometers per hour). This limited its ability to quickly respond to battlefield conditions.

Notable Battles

The Somua 35 gained prominence during the Battle of Belgium in 1940. Despite the overall difficult situation faced by the French forces in this campaign, the Somua 35 proved to be a formidable adversary for the invading Germans. Its solid armor protection became a significant challenge for the Panzer III and other German tanks. However, the ultimate outcome of the battle showcased the superior German tactics and coordination.

The Duel of Duel 63

During the Battle of Belgium, the Panzer III and the Somua 35 faced off in multiple engagements, but one particular confrontation, known as Duel 63, has become legendary. In this epic clash, a Panzer III, led by a veteran German crew, encountered a Somua 35 with an equally seasoned French crew.

The duel unfolded in a small Belgian village, with both tanks utilizing the surrounding buildings for cover. The Panzer III initiated the battle, firing off a penetration shot that struck the Somua 35's frontal armor. However, the shot

failed to pierce through the Somua's thick armor, leaving the French tank unharmed.

The Somua 35 retaliated with a swift and accurate shot from its 47-millimeter cannon, striking the Panzer III's turret. Although it did not penetrate the German tank's armor, the impact caused significant damage, disabling the Panzer III's turret rotation mechanism.

With their turret immobilized, the German crew had to rely on their tank's maneuverability and secondary armament to maintain the fight. The Panzer III skillfully utilized the village's narrow lanes and concealed positions to evade the Somua's cannon fire while engaging the French tank's weaker sides and rear armor with their machine guns.

The prolonged exchange of gunfire and tactical maneuvering highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of both tanks. The Panzer III's agility and smaller size allowed it to outmaneuver the Somua 35 in the cramped village environment. However, the Somua's sturdy armor proved to be a formidable defense, absorbing machine gun fire and limiting the damage inflicted by the German tank.

Ultimately, after a relentless back-and-forth battle, the Panzer III emerged as the victor in Duel 63. The German crew's tactical superiority and adaptability, combined with the Somua's limitations, tipped the scale in favor of the Panzer III.

The clash between the Panzer III and the Somua 35 during the Battle of Belgium in 1940 exemplified the tenacity and skill of tank crews on both sides. With each tank showcasing unique strengths and weaknesses, Duel 63 became a testament to the ever-evolving nature of tank warfare. While the Panzer III prevailed in this particular encounter, it is important to remember the sacrifices made by both sides and the pivotal role tanks played in shaping the outcome of World War II.



Image: Panzer III and Somua 35 engaged in a duel during the Battle of Belgium in 1940.

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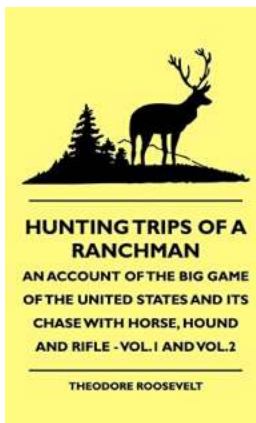
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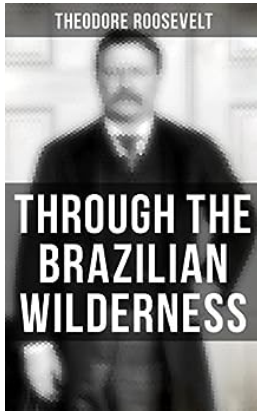


The armour clashes in May 1940 were the biggest the world had yet seen, as the sweeping German advances of that period came to epitomize Blitzkrieg. The Wehrmacht's Panzer III was well matched by the French Somua S35 tanks, the two representing very different design philosophies and yet both ranking among the best in the world at the time. Fully illustrated with specially commissioned colour artwork, this work draws upon the latest research to provide a definitive analysis of the clash between these two high-quality, cutting-edge tank designs. It describes one of the key duels at the heart of a new type of warfare, in the epic battles at the outset of Hitler's conquest of France and the Low Countries.



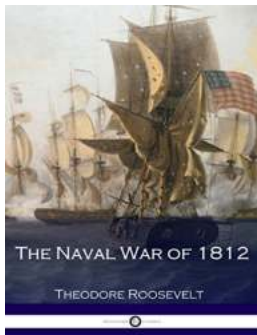
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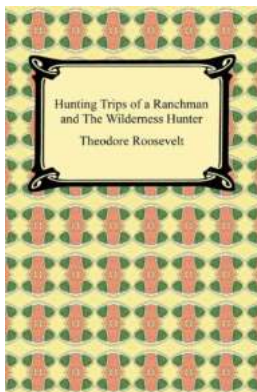
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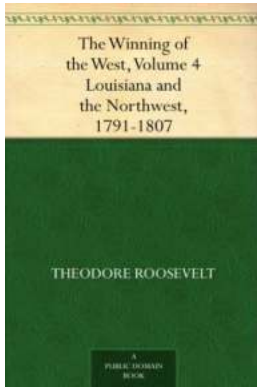
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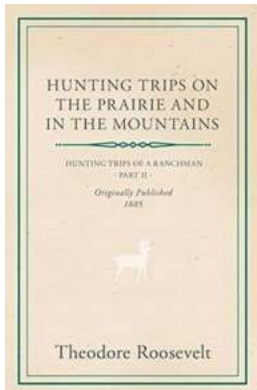
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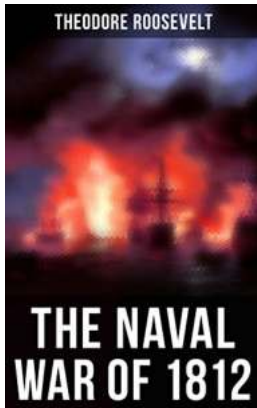
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