

Tanks

The first tanks, tracked armored vehicles fitted with some sort of armament, were developed in Britain. Due to the high demand and important uses for tanks, prototypes were quickly drawn up. The design moved swiftly from prototype to production to battle.



The first tank, nicknamed “Mother” was first run in 1916 and was in the shape of a rhombus with two turret guns. The first attack initially went well, literally scaring the Germans out of their trenches, but thereafter their effectiveness diminished rapidly. Due to the rushed development, many tanks broke down due to mechanical failure and others simply bogged down in the muddy conditions of battle.

Tanks became available with different combinations of weapons. “Males” carried a pair of light artillery guns and four machine guns. “Females” were armed with six machine guns. The most widely used tank was the Mark IV.

As the capabilities and limitations of tanks became better understood, they underwent various modifications and improvements. So that they could cross wider trenches that the Germans had started digging, new tanks were equipped with an extension to the rear of vehicle. The extensions proved too flimsy so designers ended up extending the body of the tank itself to cross wider trenches.



As the value of tanks became clear, the British developed a faster light-tank that was supposed to work with cavalry and exploit any breakthrough made by the heavier tanks. These tanks suffered similar liabilities due to mechanical failures. As a whole, Tanks were neither as good as their exponents believed or as bad as their detractors argued.