



Tank Combat in Spain: Armored Warfare during the Spanish Civil War 1936–1939 by Anthony J. Candil.

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Spanish studies of armored warfare in the Spanish Civil War (1936–39) have tended to be either shallow regurgitations of earlier publications or too narrowly focused on, for instance, the intervention of a certain foreign power or the performance of a given model of tank. In *Tank Combat in Spain*, a former senior Spanish Army officer Anthony Candil aims to avoid these shortcomings in a balanced history of the use of tanks in the Spanish Civil War, with close attention to the conclusions future belligerent armies of the Second World War reached about it. He is certainly well qualified to do so: his career included, besides service in tank units, professional courses and assignments in other NATO countries and many publications on past and current armored warfare.

The book comprises 21 chapters and an epilogue, with subject matter distributed as follows. Chapters 1–2: military operations and foreign interventions in the Civil War. Chapters 3–4: the evolution of the tank arm of the Spanish Army up to 1936. Chapters 5–7: Soviet, Italian, and German participation in tank warfare. Chapter 8: the cost of foreign aid. Chapters 9–10: both sides' organization of armored forces. Chapters 11–14: the tactical use of tanks during the conflict. Chapter 15: antitank weapons. Chapters 16–18: the logistical dimension of tank warfare, from industrial bases to tank maintenance in the field. Chapter 19: the Republican tank school at Archena. Chapters 20–21–epilogue: the war's lessons about tank tactics and technical design, including the post-1939 legacy of armored warfare.

For the most part, Candil usefully synthesizes secondary sources on his subject. Sparse referencing signals that his book is meant chiefly for enthusiasts and nonspecialist readers. That said, even readers conversant with his subject will appreciate Candil's coverage of topics not often tackled in the literature. These include a survey of logistics and technical support services—the sinews of tank warfare. Candil highlights the contribution of US companies to the Nationalist victory. Taking advantage of a loophole in neutrality legislation, American firms sold vast quantities of fuel to the Nationalists (whose army consumed 1.2 million liters of gasoline per combat day by 1938), as well as twelve thousand trucks (Germany supplied only eighteen hundred).

Another strength of book is its attention to the Spanish military's own experiences with armor before and during the Civil War, although the bibliography omits several recent works that make extensive use of Spanish primary sources.¹ The Spanish military was not innovative as regards tank matters, but

the plan of the Republican summer offensive against Zaragoza in 1937 and the Nationalist offensive in Aragon in March 1938 showed that Spanish commanders could manage to

1. E.g., Alberto Guerrero Martín, “La Colección Bibliográfica Militar y el debate sobre la mecanización y la motorización (1928–1936),” *Rev. Univ. de Hist. Militar* 3.6 (2014) 174–88; José Vicente Herrero Pérez, “The Spanish Military and the Tank, 1909–1939,” *Journ. Mil. Hist.* 80 (2016) 757–80, and *The Spanish Military and Warfare from 1899 to the Civil War* (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017) chaps. 9–10.

understand, and even grasp at random, the possibilities of mechanized forces and mobile warfare. (35)

The book has its flaws. Chapters 2 and 8 are redundant in a work with such a specialized focus. In fact, neither discusses armor till the end of chapter 8, where the author cites the approximate amounts spent on tanks (\$7.5 million by the Republicans, \$2.5 million by the Nationalists) and the price range of the various models. Leaving the most detailed descriptions of the main tanks employed in the war to the last chapter is ill-advised; placing them in the initial chapters would have clarified later discussions of how the tanks' technical features affected their performance and logistical support.

The book is also marred by sloppy editing and unsystematic source referencing. For instance, an article and book by Steven Zaloga are cited in the main text and the endnotes, but neither appears in the bibliography.² Candil's writing style is lucid in general, but readers will encounter the same sentences or pieces of information at different points in the book, as if its author were more concerned to leave nothing unsaid than to avoid needless reiteration.

Despite its defects, *Tank Combat in Spain* belongs on the bookshelf of anyone interested in the military history of the Spanish Civil War or armored warfare more generally.

2. Steven J. Zaloga, "Soviet Tank Operations in the Spanish Civil War," *Journ. of Slavic Mil. Studies* 12.3 (1999) 134-62 and *Spanish Civil War Tanks: The Proving Ground for Blitzkrieg* (Oxford: Osprey, 2010).