

# Italian Light Tanks 1919-45: An Unforgettable Era of Warfare

When it comes to World War II and its rich history of armored warfare, Italian tanks may not be the first ones that come to mind. However, the Italian Light Tanks from the period of 1919 to 1945 played a significant role in the conflicts and left a lasting impact on military strategy and design. In this article, we will delve into the fascinating world of Italian light tanks and explore their features, battles they participated in, and their contribution to the war effort.

## to Italian Light Tanks

Following the end of World War I, Italy found itself in need of modernizing its armored forces. As a result, the Regio Esercito, or the Royal Army, ventured into the development and production of light tanks. With superior mobility and maneuverability, these tanks were perfect for the tactical approach favored by the Italian military.

One of the first and most successful Italian light tanks was the FIAT 3000. Introduced in 1921, this tank commanded attention with its innovative design and powerful weaponry. Equipped with a 37 mm cannon and paired with machine guns, the FIAT 3000 quickly became a feared opponent on the battlefield.



## Italian Light Tanks: 1919–45 (New Vanguard Book 191) by Filippo Cappellano (Kindle Edition)

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## Battles and Operations

Italian light tanks saw action in various battles and operations throughout their service. They played a significant role in the Spanish Civil War, where they were used extensively by Italian forces supporting General Francisco Franco's Nationalists against the Republican factions. The light tanks showcased their effectiveness in urban combat and infantry support, proving their worth in challenging environments.

One of the most notable operations involving Italian light tanks was the North African campaign. During the desert warfare against British Commonwealth forces, Italian tanks like the L6/40 and the M13/40 formed an integral part of the Italian armored divisions. These tanks were involved in battles such as the Siege of Tobruk and the Battle of El Alamein, offering fierce resistance against the Allies.

## Advancements and Innovations

Italian light tanks, though often overshadowed by their German and Allied counterparts, boasted several technological innovations. One such example was the use of a diesel engine in the Carro Armato M13/40, which provided increased endurance and efficiency during long-range operations.

Furthermore, the Italian tanks featured sloped armor, an engineering technique that improved their defensive capabilities. The effective use of sloped armor

reduced the chance of penetrating hits, enhancing their survivability on the battlefield.

## Legacy and Influence

While Italian tanks may not have achieved the same level of notoriety as their German or American counterparts, they undeniably left a lasting impact on tank design and warfare strategies. The performance and strengths of Italian light tanks influenced subsequent tank developments, particularly in countries such as Sweden and Argentina.

In addition to their technical influence, Italian light tanks became an integral part of popular culture. Their distinctive designs and historical significance have captivated tank enthusiasts and history buffs alike, ensuring that their legacy lives on.

Italian light tanks from the period of 1919 to 1945 played a crucial role in the evolution of armored warfare. Despite being overshadowed by other nations, they proved their worth in various battles and operations, showcasing their mobility, firepower, and innovative features. Their legacy continues to be felt in tank design and their historical significance has captivated enthusiasts for years to come.



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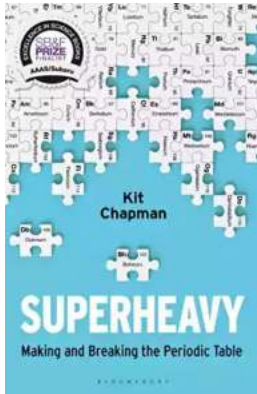
The Italian army, unlike those of the British and French, did not use tanks in combat during World War I and, by November 1918, only one training unit equipped with French Schneider and Renault tanks had been formed.

Consequently, during the 1920s the Italian army had just one single tank type in its armoured inventory – the Fiat 3000. Only in 1927 was the first tank unit formed as a branch of the infantry and not as an independent organization, while the cavalry rejected the idea of both tanks and armoured cars and decided to stand by the use of horses for its mounted units. Between 1933 and March 1939, a further 2,724 CV 33 / L 3 tanks were built, 1,216 of which were exported all over the world. By the time Italy entered the war in June 1940, the army had 1,284 light tanks, 855 of which were in combat units, including three armoured divisions. Variants of the CV 33 / L 3 tanks included flame-throwers, bridge-layers, recovery vehicles, and a radio command tank. Some L 3 tanks were still in use in 1945, by both the Germans and the German-allied Italian units of the Repubblica Sociale.



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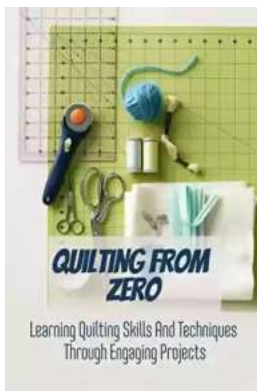
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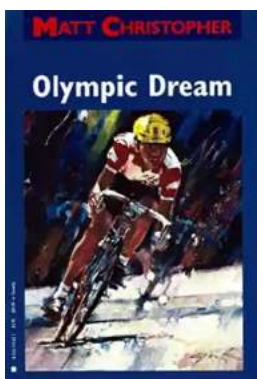
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