

# **A Student's Guide to American World War II Vehicles**

World War II is a very important part of American history. In World War II, the U.S. helped the Allies to win the war against the Axis. During this war effort, Americans from all backgrounds made numerous sacrifices to support the campaign. Some specific vehicles were used and brought in specifically for the American World War II push. The following will explain more about American World War II vehicles.

## **In the Sky!**

One of the more famous American World War II vehicles was the B-29 Superfortress, which was made for three years from 1943 to 1946. Designed by Boeing, the Superfortress was a heavy bomber that was driven by propellers and had four engines. It was used mainly by the U.S. Air Force. Its legacy is that it was one of the biggest planes used by America during the War.

The P-51 Mustang was introduced in 1942. It was used not only by the U.S. Air Force, but also the Royal Air Force. It acquired a reputation for being the best fighter in World War II. Supporting this reputation, pilots of the P-51 Mustang claimed to have shot down almost 5000 enemy planes.

The F4U Corsair was a fighter aircraft that was carrier-capable. While it was used in World War II, it was also used later on in the Korean War. Produced between 1940 and 1952, it was made by Vought, Brewster and Goodyear. The U.S. Marines, the U.S. Navy, the Royal New Zealand Air Force and the Fleet Air Arm all used this aircraft.

The P-40 Warhawk was an all-metal fighter that was single-seat and single-engine. First taking flight in 1938, the P-40 Warhawk stayed in frontline, war service until the end of World War II. It was manufactured between 1939 and 1944. During World War II, this aircraft was used by 28 countries in all.

The P-38 Lightning was manufactured by Lockheed and introduced in 1941. It was produced between 1941 and 1945. It was used in a variety of roles. This aircraft was used for level bombing, dive bombing, photo reconnaissance missions, and ground attack.

## **On the Ground!**

### **Trucks**

The Jeep is the oldest sports utility vehicle and off-road vehicle brand. First made in 1941 by Chrysler, the Jeep inspired other vehicles like the Land Rover. During World War II, the Jeep got to be the main 4-wheel-drive car of the U.S. Army and its allies. In 1945, models for civilians were being made.

The amphibian truck's design became standardized in 1943. It was a huge vehicle that weighed in at one-quarter of a ton. Its hull was waterproof, and its windshield was capable of being folded to the front. Five life preservers were included.

The ambulance can be traced back to even ancient times. Like in all wars, the ambulance saw a lot of use in World War II. It had a number of uses during the war. It was used as a response unit, an emergency vehicle and a patient transport vehicle.

The cargo truck was utilized for transport of equipment during World War II. Its huge size and bulky frame made it ideal for this purpose. The cargo truck has also been adopted for civilian and commercial purposes since then. It sometimes weighed in excess of 2 tons, depending on the model.

## **Tanks**

The M 24 Chaffee was a light tank that was used by the U.S. in World War II. It was produced for only 1 year: from 1944 to 1945. It was named after U.S. Army General Adna R. Chaffee Jr. The General was instrumental in developing tanks for the U.S. Army.

The M3 A1 Stuart was made from 1941 to 1945. A light American tank, it weighed more than 32,000 pounds and was more than 14 feet long. It could carry a crew of four people. It was equipped with a 37 mm M6.

The M3 A5 Grant was produced from 1941 to 1942. It was named in honor of General Ulysses S. Grant. It was 27 tons and 18.5 feet long. The M3 A5 Grant carried seven people and had an operational range of 193 kilometers.

The M4 Sherman tank was in service from 1942 to 1955. A medium tank, it was the main tank that the U.S. used during World War II. By lend-lease, this tank was also given out to the allied forces, including the Soviets and the British. This tank weighed greater than 30 tons.

## **In the Water!**

### **Ships**

The aircraft carrier is designed to both deploy and recover aircraft. During World War II, American aircraft carriers acted like seagoing airbases. It allowed the U.S. Navy to project air power. Yet it enabled the Navy to do this without the need for local, land-based air bases.

The battleship is regarded as a big, armored warship that features heavy-caliber guns. Battleships are bigger and better-armed than destroyers or cruisers. The battleship is the biggest ship in a fleet. Therefore, it was used to get command of the sea.

The destroyer is a long-endurance warship. This means that it is built not just for warfare, but also for maneuverability and speed. Its purpose was to escort bigger ships in a convoy, battle group or fleet. Its job was to defend these bigger ships against short-range, smaller attackers.

The cruiser is a kind of warship. It falls in between a battleship and a destroyer in terms of size. There was a general, accepted definition of a cruiser, up until World War II. It was a warship that was 10,000 tons and featured guns shorter than 8 inches in caliber.

### **Submarines**

During World War II, the U.S. regarded its submarines as boats. The submarine proved instrumental in taking the fight to the Nazi enemy because many of the U.S. Navy's surface ships were ruined after the Japanese kamikaze attack on Pearl Harbor. Because U.S. submarines didn't have any support ships, their mission was to independently hunt down and wreck Japanese submarines and ships. The track record for U.S. submarines with regards to this mission was very successful.

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