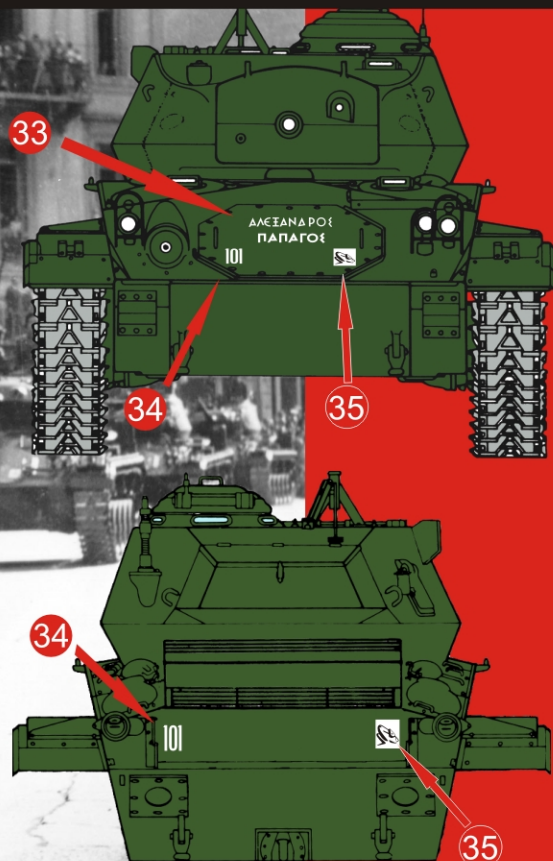


# M 24 in Hellenic Service

## M47 in Hellenic, Cypriot & Turkish service

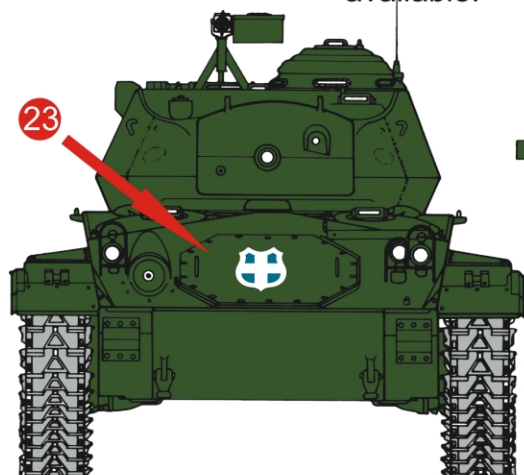


Photo: A & L Haitoglou collection

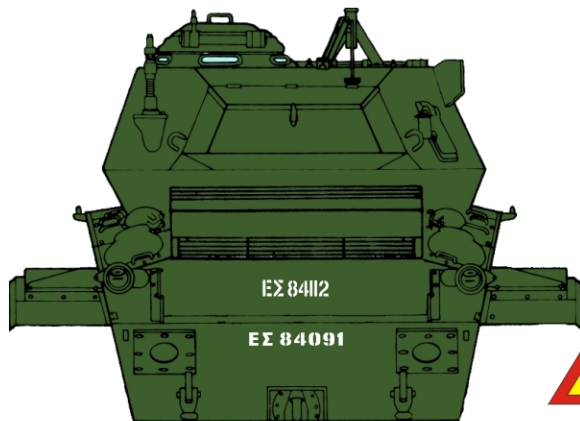


This is believed to be the M24's first public appearance in Athens, on 28th October 1950. These tanks belong to the armour school and carry its markings on the front plate. The leading tank also has the name "ALEXANDROS PAPAΓOΣ" who at the time was the chief of the armed forces and the only ever officer in Greece to be awarded the rank of Field Marshal. When supplied these tanks were finished in the post-war shade of US Olive-drab. It is possible that for the parade they were repainted either in this shade or a similar one. No serial numbers appear to have been applied. The rear view is only speculative.

This M24 appeared in a parade in Salonika during the late '50s. It is believed that the oversize national crest on the glacis plate was applied for the occasion. No information about the rear view is available.

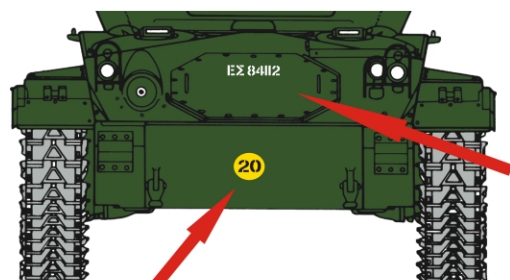




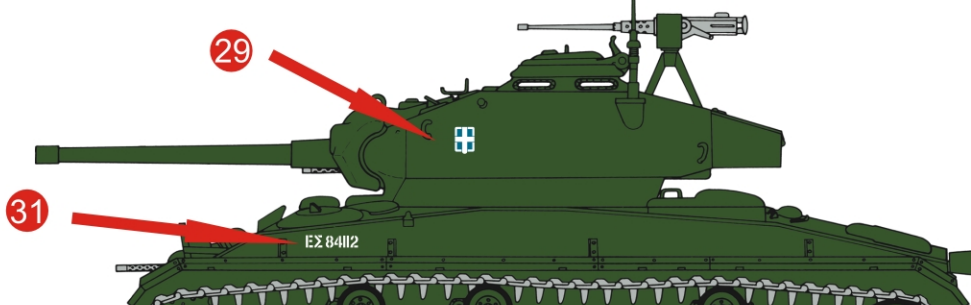


During the 1950's and '60s Greek tanks were finished overall in a dark shade of olive drab, similar to US tanks at the time. Markings consisted of the serial number applied to all four sides and the national crest on both sides of the turret. The style of the national crest varied from unit to unit. A bridge classification marking was applied to the lower glacis plate.

- 31 Although not much pictorial information is available it seems that the rear serial number could be applied in one of two positions. This applies to all tanks of this type.
- 14
- 37

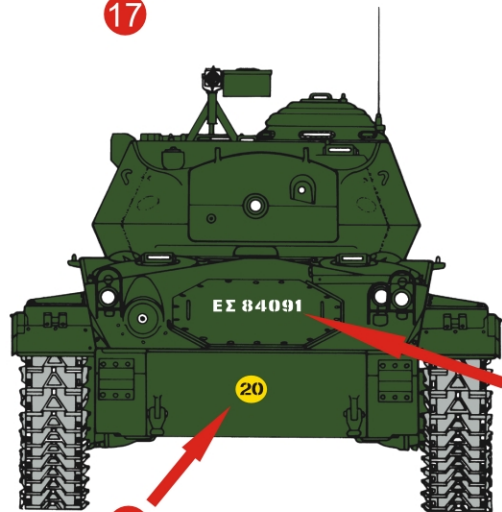


17

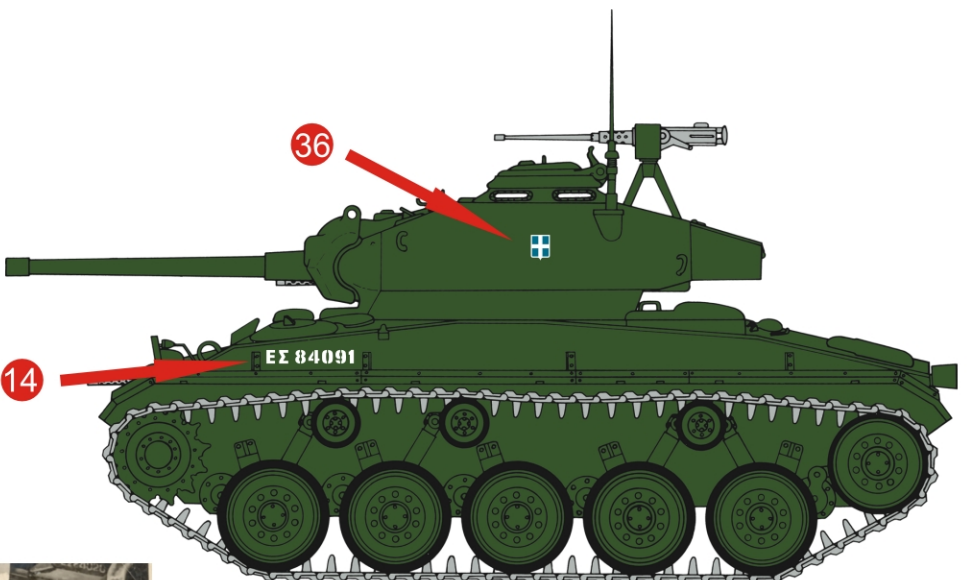


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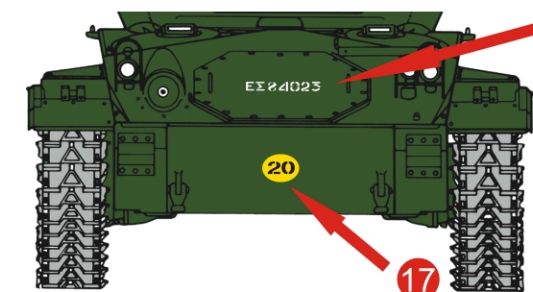


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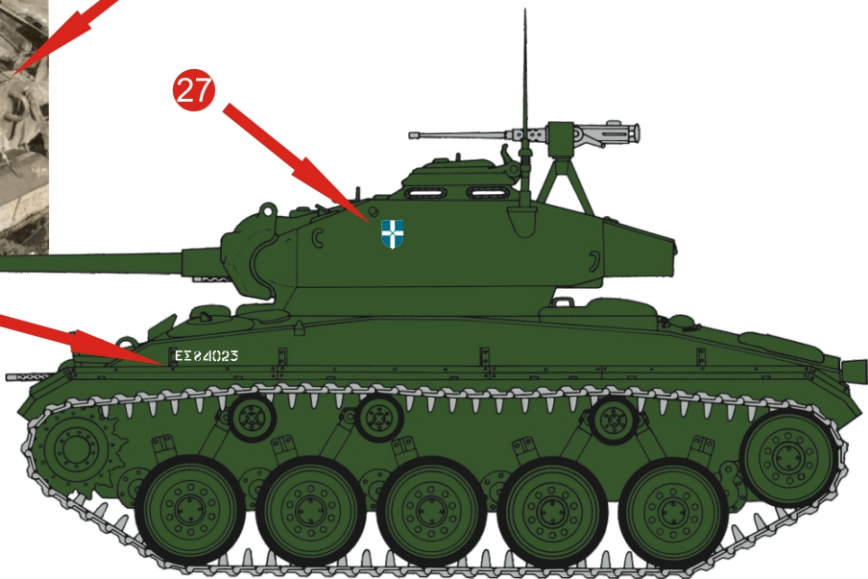


Although this tank is fitted with a rear stowage rack, the serial number is painted above the rack.



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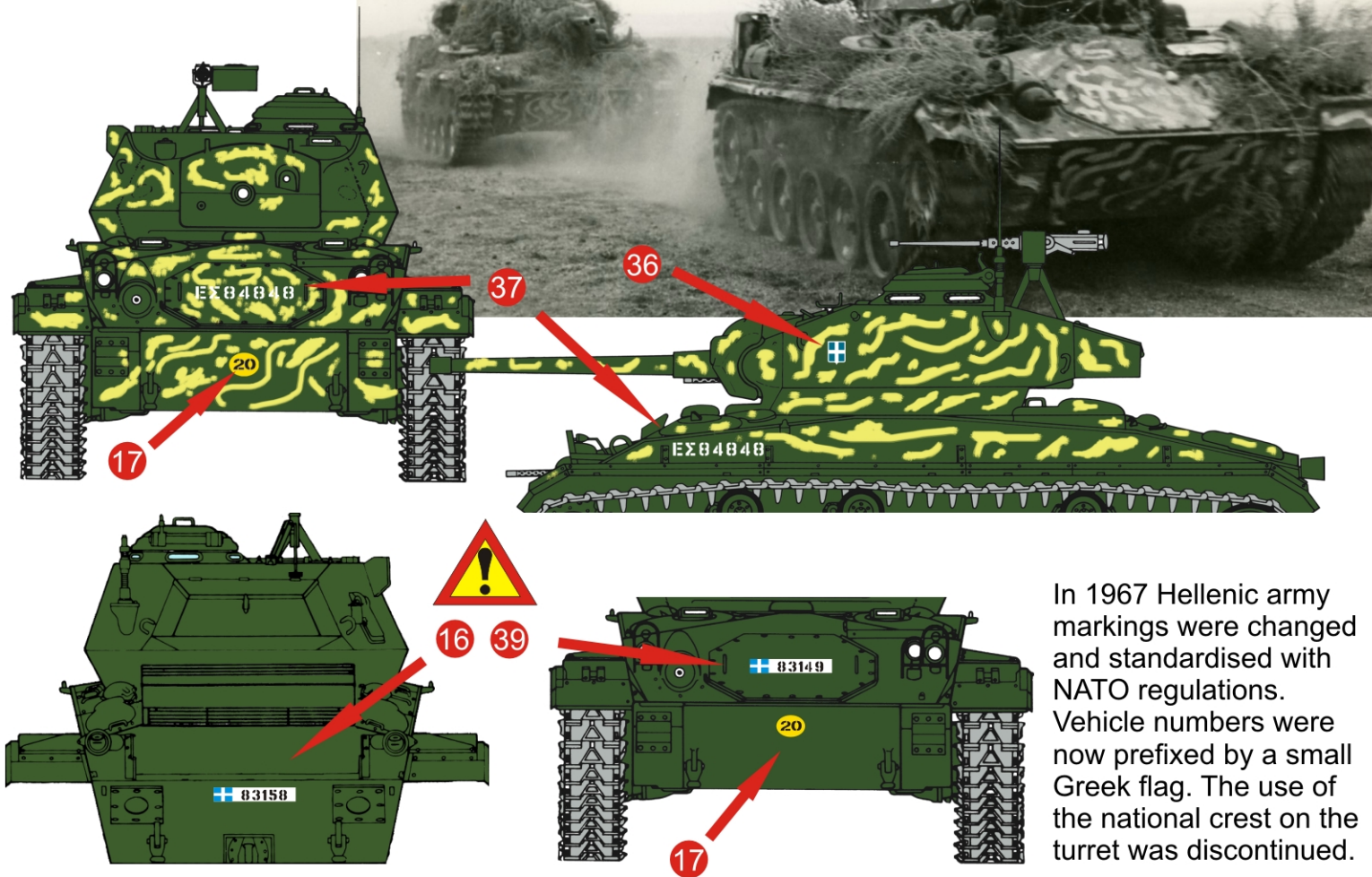


27

Photo: T. Metsovitis Collection



To break up the overall Olive Drab finish temporary camouflage using mud and local vegetation was applied during exercises. The tanks in the photo have a rather elaborate temporary pattern. Wide irregular bands were much more common.



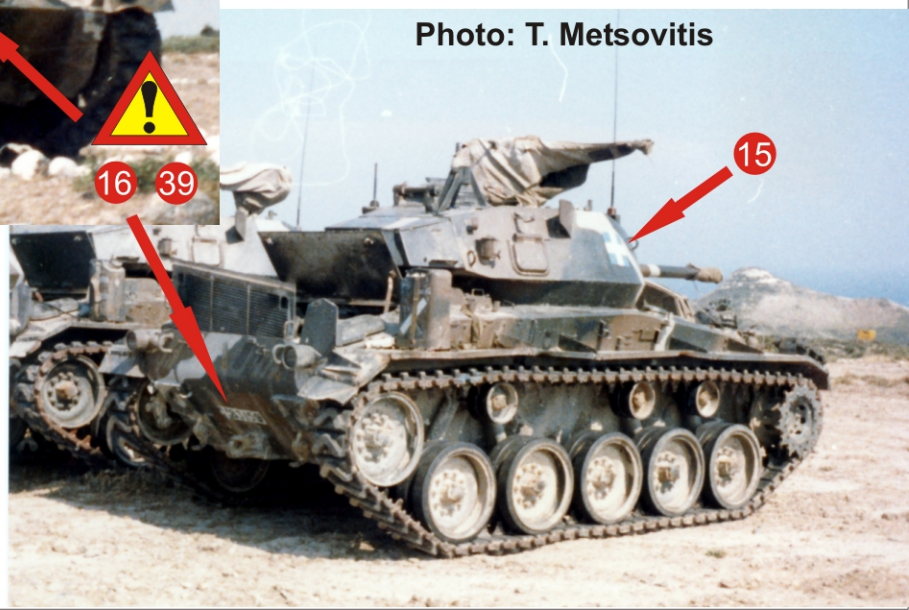
In 1967 Hellenic army markings were changed and standardised with NATO regulations. Vehicle numbers were now prefixed by a small Greek flag. The use of the national crest on the turret was discontinued.

Photo: T. Metsovitis



In 1976 a four colour camouflage scheme based on the American MERDC pattern was adopted by the Hellenic Army. All the markings remained the same as they had been on the previously olive drab vehicles. The only change was the adoption of a square national insignia applied to the both sides of armoured vehicles.

Photo: T. Metsovitis



With the adoption of the four colour camouflage, M24 light tanks were repainted probably using the MERDC pattern for the M48 tank. This was adapted to the smaller tank in keeping with the principles of the scheme but the results were never standard.



Photo: A & L Haitoglou collection



When supplied to Greece these tanks were be finished in the post-war shade of US Olive-drab. During their first years in service some names such as "U.S. of AMERICA" seem to have been popular.



The rear view is based on later practices and applies to all the tanks illustrated here to show the position of the rear number.

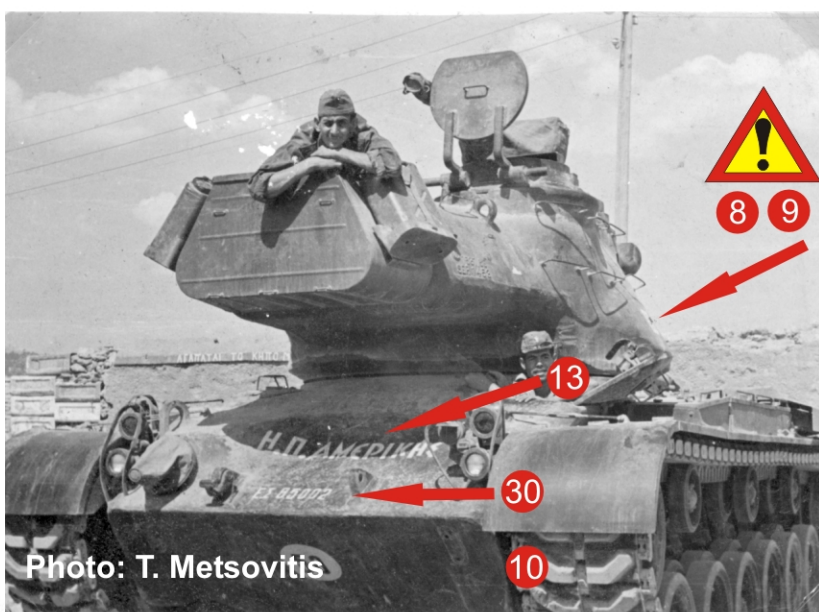
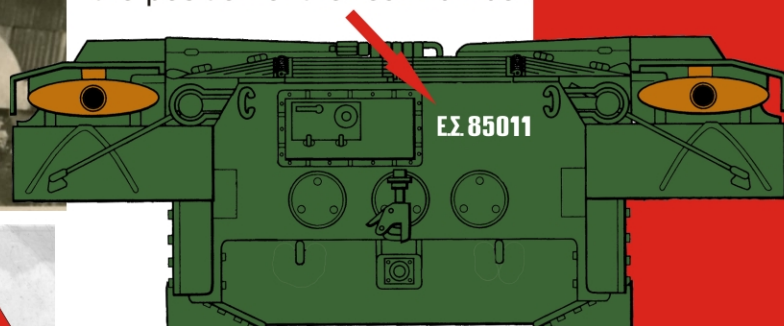


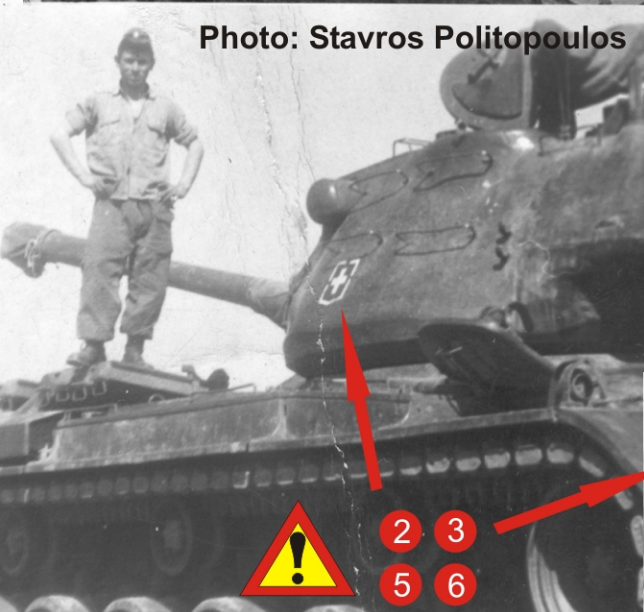
Photo: T. Metsovitis

As the photograph is not clear the modeller is provided with a choice of two different marking styles.



Photo: A & L Haitoglou collection

Photo: Stavros Politopoulos



It is believed that these two photos show the same tank at different times. The crest is slightly different in each photo. Also it is impossible to tell if it has a blue background or not. For this reason the modeller is provided with a choice of four decals.

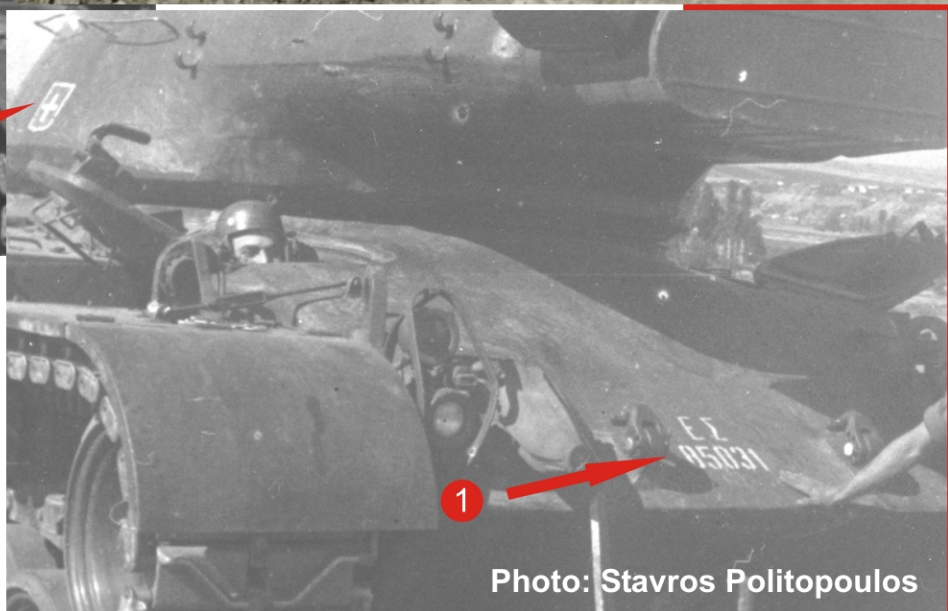
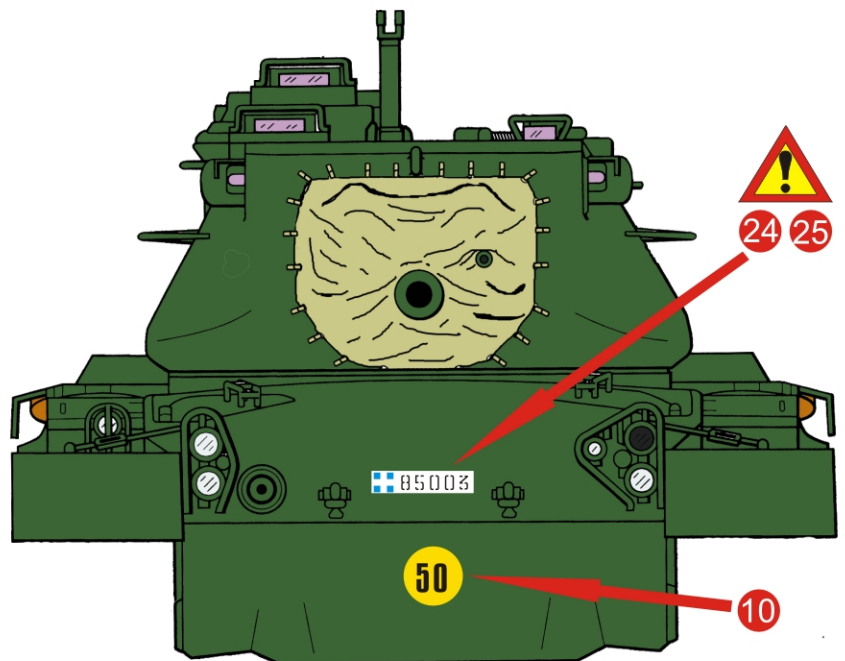


Photo: Stavros Politopoulos





Photo: T. Metsovitis



In 1967 Hellenic army markings were changed and standardised with NATO regulations. Vehicle numbers were now prefixed by a small Greek flag. The use of the national insignia on the turret was discontinued.

In 1976 with the adoption of the four colour camouflage, M47 tanks were painted using the MERDC pattern for the M48 tank. This was not always strictly followed and the different shape of the tank necessitated some improvisation anyway. All the markings remained the same as they had been on the overall olive drab vehicles. The new square national insignia was applied to the sides of the turret, although not

always. Curiously on many M47s this was only applied to the right side for quite some time. The reason



Photo: T. Metsovitis

Photo: T. Metsovitis



Photo: T. Metsovitis

may have been that this was the "official" viewing side during parades. This practice seems to have been discontinued later on.

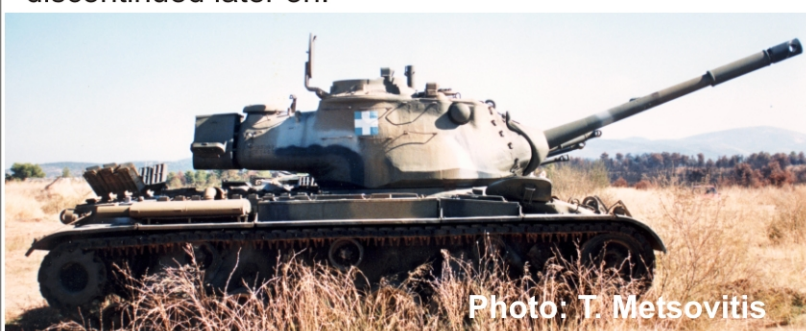


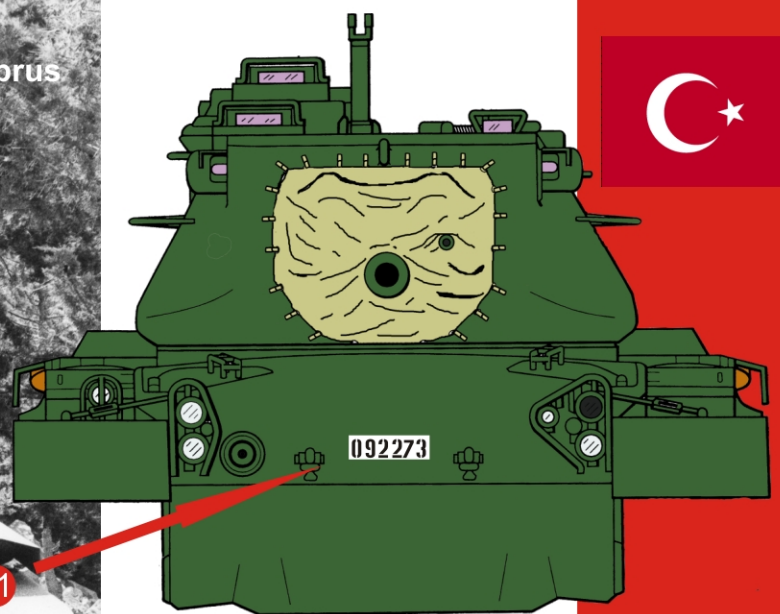
Photo: T. Metsovitis



Photo: T. Metsovitis



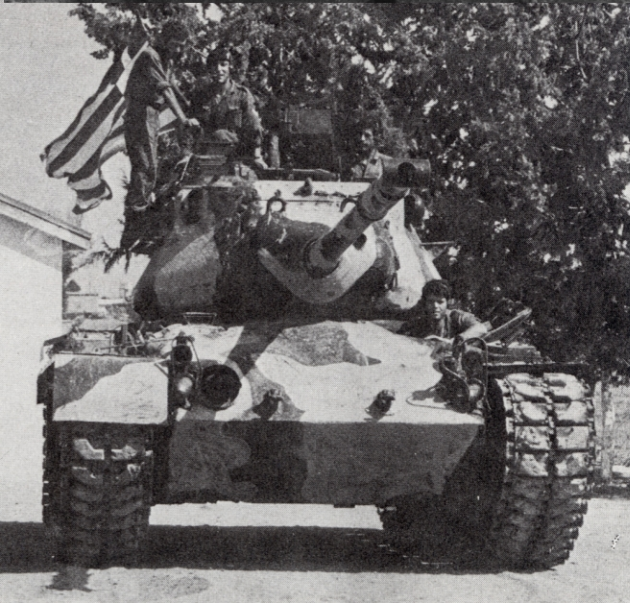
Photo: PIO Cyprus



Following the Turkish invasion of Cyprus, on August 2nd 1974 this Turkish M47 was part of column of tanks and APCs carrying paratroopers attempting to outflank Cypriot National Guard positions. The column took a narrow mountain on Mt Pentadaktylos where it was ambushed. The leading M47 hit a mine and lost a track. The fourth vehicle in the column, an M113 was hit by a 106 mm

recoilless rifle round and was destroyed. Between these two disabled vehicles were trapped an M47 and an M113 which were captured by the National Guard. Turkish tanks at the time were finished in an overall dark Olive drab and carried

number plates front and rear. After its capture the M47 was pressed into Greek service and repaired. On August 15th it was defending the village of Skilloura when it became encircled by Turkish tanks. Still in its Turkish colours and markings the tank joined the column of Turkish tanks and started picking them off from within their midst. The Turkish tanks were at a disadvantage as they had no communications



And only manual turret traverse, whereas the hydraulic traverse had been repaired on the captured tank and was now operational. Having fully exploited the element of surprise for around two hours, the "killer" managed to escape after destroying five Turkish tanks.

At a later date the captured tank was given a temporary mud camouflage completely covering its front number plate but not the rear one which remained visible.





Photo: Stelios Markides



Photo: Stelios Markides



Following the cessation of hostilities the tank remained in National Guard service serving alongside the T-34-85 tanks. It was finished in a dark Olive Drab shade and its marking seem to have changed with each repaint. In the photos above the Greek flag is either absent from the number plates or has faded to invisibility.

Photo: Stelios Markides collection



A bridging class marking was also added to the tank while marked as in this photo.

In the photos on the left the tank is marked "by the book". A square national insignia has been applied to the turret sides, the serial numbers are prefixed by the Greek flag and the National Guard crest sticker has been applied to the left rear mudguard. During exercise temporary mud camouflage was always applied to the tank helping it to blend in not only with the environment but also the T-34 tanks with which it operated.

This tank is the only one in the history of the Hellenic tank corps to have ever fought in a tank battle and to have destroyed enemy tanks, making it quite a unique vehicle. It finished its career in the later Cypriot National Guard camouflage scheme of sand, green and brown, although no markings were applied at that time. Today the tank has been preserved to be displayed in the planned National Guard museum.

Photo: Stelios Markides



Photo: T. Metsovitis



## M47 in Hellenic, Cypriot & Turkish service

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This symbol indicates that alternative markings are applicable in this position **OR** that the same marking applies to more than one colour scheme.

