

**NZAR ID 160, Arm Type: AFV, Date: (V1) 19 March 2012, Compiled by : Phil Cregeen**

**Pattern (name) Tank, Infantry Mk IV CS (Matilda) A 12, Introduced into NZ Service: 1941, Withdrawn 1944**

**Crew:** 4 (commander, gunner, loader, driver) **Battle Weight:** 59,360 lbs (26,925 Kg)

**Length:** 18 ft 5in. (5.48 m) **Width:** 8 ft 6 in. (2.58 m) **Height:** 8 ft 3 in. (2.51 m) **Track width:** 14 in (355 mm)

**Guns:** One 2 pdr or one 3 in. close support howitzer (Matilda Mk III & IV CS ), plus one 7.92 mm Besa co-ax MG

**Armour:** 78 mm to 208 mm, **Engine:** twin Leyland 6 cylinder, 95 hp each.

**Max Speed:** Road 15 mph, X-country 8mph. **Range:** 70 miles.(115 Km)

**Manufacture:** Vulcan Foundry



The Infantry Tank Mk II was designed at the Royal Arsenal, Woolwich to General Staff specification A.12 and initially built by the Vulcan Foundry. The design was based on the A7 (which had started development in 1929) rather than on the Infantry Tank Mk I, which was a two-man tank with a single machine gun for armament. When war was recognised as imminent, production of the Matilda II was ordered and that of the Matilda I curtailed. The first order was placed shortly after trials were completed with 140 ordered from Vulcan Foundry in mid 1938.

The first Matilda was produced in 1937 but only two were in service when war broke out in September 1939. Following the initial order from Vulcan Foundry, a second order was placed shortly after with Ruston & Hornsby. Some 2,987 tanks were produced by the Vulcan Foundry, John Fowler & Co. of Leeds, Ruston & Hornsby, and later by the London, Midland and Scottish Railway at Horwich Works; Harland and Wolff, and the North British Locomotive Company Glasgow. The last were delivered in August 1943. Peak production was 1,330 in 1942, the most common model being the Mark IV

The Matilda weighed around 27 tons (27 tonnes or 60,000 lb) more than twice as much as its predecessor, and was armed with a QF 2 pounder (40 mm) tank gun in a three-man turret. The turret traversed by hydraulic motor or by hand through 360 degrees; the gun itself could be elevated through an arc from -15 to +20 degrees. One of the most serious weaknesses of the Matilda II was the lack of a high-explosive round for its main gun. A high-explosive shell was designed for the 2 pounder but for reasons never explained it was never placed in production. With its heavy armour the Matilda II was an excellent infantry support tank, but had to rely on its machine gun when operating with infantry units. The turret carried the main armament with the machine gun to the right in a rotating internal mantlet. Two smoke grenade launchers were carried on the right side of the turret. The grenade launcher mechanisms were cut down Lee-Enfield rifles, each firing a single smoke grenade.

**Ordnance QF 3 inch howitzer** was a howitzer fitted to British tanks of the Second World War so they could fire a HE shell in "close support" of infantry. It was used to equip the British Infantry tanks: Matilda II, Churchill tank Mk I, and the cruiser tank Crusader (65 rounds).

Calibre: 3 inch (76.2 mm)

- Length of barrel: 75 inches (25 calibres)
- Overall length: 78.2 inches
- Weight: 256 lb
- Muzzle velocity: 600-700 f/s
- Ammunition
  - Cartridge: 76.2x134R
  - Smoke: 13.4 lb
  - HE: 13.9 lb
- Range 2,000-2,500 yards

### **New Zealand Service**

An order was placed with the UK for 34 Close Support Matildas in 1941 but the first tanks did not arrive until in late 1942 and were used to equip two squadrons of the Tank Brigade. They were used for training in New Zealand and later some were stripped of their 3 in howitzers to convert Valentine tanks to the Close Support role. By 1943 they had become surplus to requirement and were released by the Army and shipped to Australia in June 1944.

*Acknowledgements:*

*Reference:* *Armoured Fighting Vehicles of New Zealand 1939-59* by J Plowman & M Thomas

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matilda\\_II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matilda_II)