

The Slapton Sands Sherman

On the outskirts of the pretty Devon seaside village of Torcross is a large car park that has an unusual war memorial. An M4A1 Duplex Drive Sherman is mounted on a pebble plinth surrounded by a collection of memorials that tell either the tank's story or are dedicated to the memory of the 946 American Servicemen that lost their lives during Exercise Tiger that took place in the English Channel near to where the tank now sits.

The Sherman was recovered from the sea in November 1984, just a little too late for the 40th Anniversary celebrations of the D Day landings. This was accomplished by the owner of a Guesthouse that overlooks the site, the late Ken Small whose book "The Forgotten Dead" describes his struggles with bureaucracy, and the sea, to literally drag the tank from its watery grave. (The work undertaken by Ken Small inspired a BBC Radio 4 play about the recovery of the tank; "The Tank-man".) The book goes into detail about the tragic events that occurred off the Devon coast when a convoy of unescorted landing craft, practicing for the forthcoming "Overlord" landings, were attacked by German E Boats.

Once pulled from the sea the tank was high pressure washed and then sprayed with "Fertan Rust Converter" to combat the inevitable problem that once the tank was exposed to the air it would quickly rust.

More information on the Slapton Sands Sherman can be found in the Miniature Armoured Fighting Vehicle Association magazine "Tankette"

For more details see: <http://mafva.net>



Front view of the imposing tank on the pebble plinth.



Close up side view showing the thick coating used to protect the tank from the worst of the sea spray, wind and rain.

