

## **THE HELLCATS ARE ON THE PROWL** *Based on Buick's War Time Advertising.*



(The following two extracts have been slightly modified for this Magazine to provide more interesting reading, however the writer makes no claims as to the authorship of the extracts.)

“The Army calls them 76-mm Gun Motor Carriages - designation M-18 but to Buick men who designed them and built them, in co-operation with Army Ordnance and to Tank Destroyer Command men that fight in them, they're Hellcats.

They are tank-killers with the pace of a panther and lethal strike of a king cobra. They're so fast they run rings around anything but their brothers and they master obstacles that stop other vehicles cold. They can split an enemy tank at several miles and thanks to springing born of Buick's work on your car, they can romp down roads at passenger car speeds. And now they're on the prowl!

It has been twenty odd months since we started work on these sluggers as answers to the vaunted Tiger tank. Twenty odd months of designing, building, testing and perfecting. More than a year ago they went into production and several months ago we knew they were on the way in quantities to undisclosed battlefields. They have shown what they can do there. They've added their force to the Great Effort and because of them American men have had the benefit of a harder hitting weapon against tanks, pillboxes, strong points and machine gun nests.

We're mighty glad that's so. Not just because this is a Buick baby but because it's an American weapon, built in our own way, for use of our own kind. More power to it say we and to those gallant men in uniform for whom we sweated it out!”



“Buick’s Hellcat, Model M-18 had a range of 105 miles and weighed 17 tons. With its 9 cylinder 400 horsepower engine, the Hellcat boasted an excellent power-to-weight ratio making it the fastest tank of World War II with a top speed of 55 mph. The Hellcat sported maximum maneuverability, high firepower and all steel, centre guided tracks. It could smash tanks at several miles. The Hellcat proved superior to latest versions of the German Tiger Tank in actual battle and was 30 mph faster!

Special Buick design gave the Hellcat a centre guide track, torsion bar suspension and an automatic transmission including knee action principles which enabled the Hellcat to fight running battles when necessary. Ordered on January 28 1943 after demonstration of pilot models, the Hellcat has been in regular production since July 1943. Used by tank destroyer battalions in Europe, it was intended to be used in an ambush role with its quick speed. The Hellcat first saw action in the summer of 1944 in Europe. One unit to use it quite effectively was the 630<sup>th</sup> Tank Destroyer Battalion in July 1944 and reported destroying 53 Panthers and Tigers and 15 self propelled guns with only a loss of 17 of their M-18s.

Buick’s Hellcat was designed primarily to be a smaller tank with light armor, but speed was a major factor so the Hellcats could mix at a close range with the larger German tanks. As quoted by Buick, “The Hellcats were designed to shoot and scoot.”

Buick also exported the chassis of the Hellcats to Russia as the specially designed suspension by Buick proved extremely useful with the rough Russian terrain.”

*L. Haime (WA Buicks).*

