

The M-48 is an improved M-47, with a revised turret and a larger commander's capsule (which is a smaller turret on top of the main turret). 1,800 of these were built between 1952 and 1957 and were named the M-48A1. An additional 2,328 were built as the M-48A2, incorporating several improvements, but there were still two serious problems – high fuel consumption and a very bold IR (Infrared) signature. The Army then decided to use a Diesel engine in 1959 and started retrofitting earlier models which became the M-48A3s. In 1967 the intensity of the Vietnam War required the quick availability of more A3s. Over 1,600 tanks were modified. An attempt to improve the M-48 with a 105 mm main gun resulted in the M-48A4, but only a few prototypes were built. With the development of the M-60 in 1969, the M-48 benefitted from many advantages of the M-60 as the last, best equipped of the long line of M-48 tanks, designated the M-48A5, was fielded. Over 2,600 of the earlier model tanks were converted to the A5 configuration between October 1975 and December 1979. After December 1979 all upgrading was ceased. But no matter what model of the M-48 one finds, the M-48 and M-60 are almost identical in shape. But there is one noticeable difference – the M-48 is curved at the front of the chassis while the M-60 has a straight front.

DATA

Length: 28 ft. 5 in. Width: 11 ft. 10 in. Height: 10 ft. 7 in.

Weight: 98,793 lbs. (M-48A1 +A2); 103,781 lbs. (M-48A3, A4, A5)

Power: Continental AV-1790-5B/7/7B/7C, V-12 air cooled gasoline engine, 310 hp (A1 + A2)
Continental AVDS-1790-A2/D Diesel, 750 hp (A3, AA4, A5)

Armament: one 90 mm cannon – all models except the A4, one 105 mm cannon – A4, one 50-cal and one 30-cal machine gun

Armor: 2 in to 7 in

Range: 70 miles (A1, A2), 300 miles (A3, A4, A5)

Speed: 30 mph

