

MEN-AT-ARMS SERIES

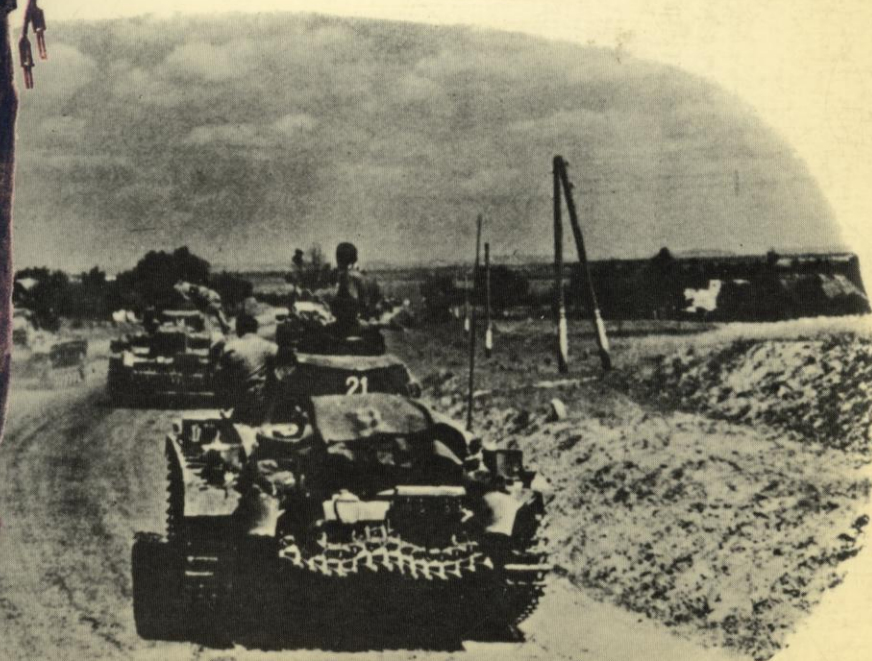
The Panzer Divisions

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MICHAEL ROFFE



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EDITOR: MARTIN WINDROW

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Introduction

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Introduction



The armoured divisions which did so much to secure an unbroken chain of German victories in the first two years of the Second World War were a wholly new phenomenon on the world's battlefields. The terrible fruits of the foresight, determination and single-minded effort of a handful of brilliant soldiers, they were a new weapon forged for a new purpose and wielded in a new way. It was to be literally years before the Allies produced commanding generals who understood the full potential of this new weapon, and who grasped the vital rules for using it effectively. The formidable achievements of the Panzer arm are matched by a sort of fierce glamour which clings to their name, an image compounded partly of respect for the genuinely outstanding performance of this new breed of soldier in victory and in defeat, and partly of the dramatic appearance of his equipment and his uniform. Though basically practical, the black suit with its silver skull badges invites immediate comparison with the uniform of an earlier body of German shock-troops – the 'Death's-Head Hussars', the 'Black Brunswickers' of the nineteenth century.

In the present brief study it is impossible to offer a detailed history of the operations of this very large corps. The writer has limited himself, after careful thought, to a short account of the basic elements of the Panzer arm; a list of operational units, giving, in note form, details of formation, theatres of operation and component units, where known; and as full a commentary as possible on the uniforms and insignia ably illus-

trated by the artist. The temptation to follow fascinating trains of discussion concerning the armoured war in Europe, Africa and Russia has been resisted, with regret; so great a part did the Panzer units play in the changing fortunes of the Second World War that it would be all too easy to find oneself writing a general history of the whole conflict.

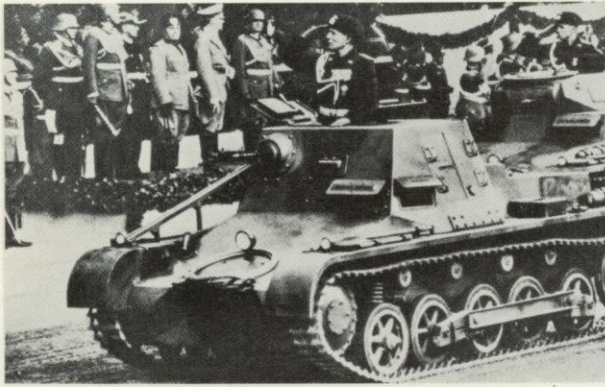
It should perhaps be made clear at this stage that this book deals only with the Panzer divisions of the German Army; those controlled by the Waffen-SS and the Luftwaffe are covered in two other titles by the present writer in the Men-at-Arms series: *Waffen-SS* and *Luftwaffe Airborne and Field Units*.

The Cardboard Chariots

By 1930 there existed within the German Reichswehr a group of far-sighted senior officers to whom the limitations of the Treaty of Versailles presented a more galling frustration than to their colleagues.



Genesis – with cardboard and plywood 'tanks' the German Army of the 1930s practised the evolutions which would take them in triumph from the Arctic Circle to the Sahara, from the Atlantic to the Caspian. (Imperial War Museum)



Command version of the PzKpfw. I tank passes in review before Hitler and Mussolini; note the officer's parade aiguilletes. (Imperial War Museum)

Men such as Lutz, Guderian, von Reichenau and von Thoma were the 'tank enthusiasts'; the research of these keen students of the most advanced international theories of armoured warfare was seriously hampered by the ban which the treaty placed upon the production of heavy armoured vehicles in Germany. They were forced to mount experimental manoeuvres, exercises designed to familiarize their men with the tank, using such unsatisfactory expedients as motor cars carrying cardboard dummies of tank turrets. Undeterred by this handicap, these officers evolved a new philosophy of warfare, unsuspected by their past and future enemies, apart from a few exceptions, and by no means easily accepted by their colleagues.

The core of the Panzer theory was the idea of a highly mobile combat group of all arms – tanks, artillery and heavy infantry – which could strike at will across country. It would be controlled from the front, by generals riding with the armour; it would be supplied independently by its own rear echelon services; and it would be able to exploit local conditions to the full, without lengthy back-reference to higher command. There would be no need to hamper the advance of the group by the inclusion of lumbering heavy artillery – close liaison with the Air Force would provide an airborne artillery barrage.

The difficulties facing the tank enthusiasts were considerable, even when Adolf Hitler came to supreme power in Germany and became an enthusiastic convert. The industrial know-how, and the actual factory plant, required to produce

modern armoured vehicles in quantity was not available, and had to be built up with painful slowness. There were blind alleys in the thinking-out of design which cost yet more time. True, when Germany began openly rearming in 1935 some of the obstacles to progress disappeared, but the equipment actually available when war was declared four years later still fell far short of the ideal envisaged by Guderian and his colleagues in the years of theoretical planning.

The first three Panzer formations were raised in October 1935. On paper each division was to have a complement of two tank regiments, of two battalions each, totalling 561 tanks; a lorry-borne infantry brigade; and strong motor-towed field and anti-tank artillery units. Engineers and signals troops, and motorcycle battalions for reconnaissance, completed the all-arms force. But the hard fact was that in 1935 only a handful of tanks had rolled from the factories, all of them of the light Mk. I and Mk. II classes. None the less, the apparently premature birth of the Panzer divisions gave the tank enthusiasts a framework to work with. The armoured build-up did not always proceed smoothly; many still clung to the old theory that tanks should be tied closely to the infantry, aiding and shielding their advance, while the cavalry branch decided to stake their claim to some of the production of the tank factories, and formed four light divisions, each requiring a light tank battalion. Over and over again the guardians of the new weapon had to press their arguments in favour of concentration; dispersed among infantry and glorified cavalry units, the tanks would be as good as useless. The essence of the whole plan was the launching of concentrated attacks by large independent armoured formations, capable of overwhelming the enemy at any one point. It was known that the Western democracies, on the other hand, favoured the 'dispersal' policy.

In the years leading up to the outbreak of war the new divisions slowly evolved. The infantry element was increased, and the tank element cut down. Useful combat experience was gained by the 'instructors' sent to assist Franco in the Spanish Civil War; vehicles were in too short supply to practise the mass attack, but liaison techniques between armoured commanders and

their air support were evolved, and polished. The rape of Czechoslovakia gave the desperately under-equipped tank arm a useful bonus in the form of more than 400 serviceable tanks and well-organized factories. Even so, when war broke out in September 1939 the six Panzer divisions on the establishment were still much weaker than they should have been. Of more than 3,000 tanks in service or reserve, the Germans had only 98 of the medium Mk. IIIs and 211 of the powerful Mk. IVs.

The new force had another weapon, however – a weapon which the Allies were never to acquire in so full a measure: superbly trained and selected crews. Unlike other armies, who treated the armour as just another branch of the forces, the Germans selected their tank crews exclusively from among the most promising recruits. These were instilled from the start with a fiercely professional pride and determination, and were encouraged, not least by their dramatic black uniforms, to think of themselves as an élite. They were trained to a high level, many learning at least two of the basic trades of the tank soldier – driver, gunner and radio operator – and were exercised under semi-operational conditions during Germany's bloodless invasions of the Sudetenland and Czechoslovakia.

Their equipment, although in short supply, was excellent. The little PzKpfw. I (*Panzerkampfwagen* =armoured combat vehicle) was useful in a scouting role, though not for much else. The PzKpfw. II, with its 20 mm gun, was light but not excessively so by contemporary standards. The PzKpfw. III, with a 37 mm main armament, and the PzKpfw. IV, mounting a 75 mm gun, were formidable.

Lightning War:

September 1939–November 1941

The invasion of Poland offered the green Wehrmacht perfect conditions for learning the finer points of the art of aggression under fire. The disparity in total forces committed was not great; in armour it was astronomical, since against



PzKpfw. II tanks in winter scenery, possibly during the occupation of Norway. Note that the commanders wear ordinary Army field-grey greatcoats over their uniforms. (Imperial War Museum)

Germany's six new divisions the Poles could field only a weak brigade of obsolete tanks. Most of the German divisions were committed to the southern prong of the triple assault, and in less than a month, crucified by the Wehrmacht and the Red Army together, Poland lay at the mercy of her conquerors. But her agony had taught the German tank generals some sharp lessons.

It became clear that tanks could often turn strong defensive positions by launching wide 'hooks' through weakly defended 'untankable' terrain such as thick woodland. If they fought by the book – stopping when they encountered strong opposition, trying to burst through by sheer gunpower, probably suffering heavy casualties, pulling back while the infantry mounted set-piece attacks – then their greatest advantage was lost. By immediately dashing on in a slightly different direction, and refusing to accept that country was impassable until they had actually tried to drive through it and failed, not only could specific positions be turned, but the enemy's whole rhythm and pace of defence could be thrown into confusion. A corollary was the discovery that a single troop of tanks appearing in the enemy's rear from an unexpected direction could create greater disruption than a whole battalion advancing down the expected route.

While the secret of success appeared to lie in leaving the bulk of the infantry behind and striking on without pause, many of the 217 tank



Men of an armoured reconnaissance unit - 'Panzer Aufklärungs Abteilung' - study maps beside an SdKfz. 232 8-rad armoured car. The loose black beret or *Schutzmütze*, worn over a rubber skull-protector, was with-

drawn in favour of the sidecap in the winter of 1939/40; among collectors it is the most sought-after of all German military headgear. (Imperial War Museum)

casualties suffered by Germany in Poland were due to the lack of an armoured cross-country vehicle in which the *Panzergranadiers* could keep right up with the forward tank elements; this lack had already been pointed out by Guderian. In their vulnerable trucks the infantry of the Panzer Korps - the perfect armoured corps was now seen to be two Panzer and one motorized division - tended to hang back from the point of actual contact. While they could forget the bulk of the marching infantry, the tanks badly needed their own mobile shock-troops. Many incidents occurred in which a delayed response by the infantry led to tank casualties and to delay in the clearing of an obstacle which could have been

swept aside at little cost, had immediate infantry support been given.

The provision of half-tracks for the *Panzergranadiers* would continue throughout the war, but never fast enough; fully armoured divisions were never achieved. Another danger to the Panzers was commitment to street fighting - again, a lesson which was learnt but never fully applied. In three hours' fighting in the narrow confines of the Warsaw suburbs, 4th Panzer Division, unable to vary their line of attack, set up like sitting ducks for determined Polish gunners dug into the rubble, lost 57 out of 120 tanks committed. Other failures in the campaign were the horsed cavalry and semi-mechanized light divisions - the former out-

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moded, the latter suffering the inevitable penalty of being neither fish nor fowl. In the immediate aftermath of the campaign, the four light divisions were converted to full Panzer division establishment.

Finally, the inevitably high ratio of tanks dropping out of action at any one time through mechanical failure was underlined in the latter weeks of the fighting. At the outset an acceptable figure of 25 per cent was recorded; in the last stages of the campaign the high mileage travelled under combat conditions had taken so severe a toll that virtually every vehicle needed overhaul.

In the West the German successes in Poland provoked only short-sighted reactions; the myth that the film of the Panzer divisions on their victory ride was posed with 'cardboard tanks' was still surprisingly widespread, and in many quarters the victory was attributed to equipment which, though fairly limited, was more modern in character. With a tank strength greater in numbers than that of the Germans, the Allies were still wedded to the old idea of light 'cavalry' tank formations spread thinly along the line of defence, and heavy 'infantry' tanks split up among the foot-sloggers in small groups; fatally, they did not seek superiority at any one point. In the spring of 1940 they were finally taught their error, and those surprisingly strong elements in the German High Command who still distrusted the new wonder-weapon were silenced once for all.

The Allies expected any attack to come through Holland and northern Belgium, roughly following the coastal strip before turning south through Amiens and Paris. This had been planned by the Oberkommando Wehrmacht, based on the old Schlieffen Plan of the First World War. But after Poland, von Mannstein (with the delighted support of the 'tank enthusiasts') proposed an attack through the 'impassable' terrain of the Ardennes in southern Belgium, sweeping west and north to the coast - trapping the Allies' best mobile troops in the 'pocket', where he proposed to lure them by a conventional but secondary attack through the Low Countries.

Put briefly, this is what happened in May-June 1940; and this, despite material deficiencies in the Panzer force. Of 2,687 tanks on the strength in May, only 627 were PzKpfw. IIIs and IVs; 381

were Czech PzKpfw. 38t types, and the remainder were light PzKpfw. Is and IIs. France mustered about 3,000 machines, of which nearly half were gathered in light mechanized and armoured divisions (D.L.M.s and D.C.M.s) and the rest were dispersed among the infantry. The B.E.F. had 210 light and 100 heavy tanks, all committed to infantry support; 174 light and 156 'cruisers' of the 1st Armoured Division awaited shipment from the U.K. Quality varied; while the guns and armour of the best French types were well up to, or superior to, German equipment, the practice of mounting the commander alone in the turret, doubling as the gunner, cut the efficiency of the French tanks badly. The British heavy tanks, especially the handful of new Matildas, were more than a match for any Panzer; unfortunately control procedures were far too complex and unwieldy.

By smooth teamwork, unflagging advance, and maximum disruption of the enemy rear, the Panzer arm had in five weeks smashed a road to the sea, and to victory. By 25 June the Wehrmacht were in control of the whole of France north of a line roughly from Angoulême to Clermont-Ferrand, Lyon and the Swiss frontier at Geneva. There is no space here for a detailed commentary on the campaign. The Allied armour, fatally dis-



Company briefing for a Panzer unit equipped with the Czech-built PzKpfw. 35t tank, almost certainly a sub-unit of the 6th Panzer Division. The black berets suggest that this picture was taken in 1939, and the combat decorations worn by the officer indicate that the Polish campaign was already over. The captain wears his 'old-style officer's field cap' instead of a beret; he is a Ritterkreuzträger (holder of the Knight's Cross) and wears the Panzer Assault Badge and the silver Wound Badge below the Iron Cross 1st Class on the left breast. (Imperial War Museum)



Old-style officer's field cap, with flat woven badges in silver on green, soft leather peak, and no cords or chin-strap. The *Waffenfarbe* piping on this example is corn-flower blue, indicating a medical officer. (Author's collection)

persed, was cut into pockets by attackers who always enjoyed superiority at the point of engagement. The Germans fully exploited their air superiority. The technical superiority of the best Allied tanks was more than neutralized by local weakness in numbers, by the early failure of supply and communications as the German tanks raged through the Allied rear echelons, and by the general bewilderment which quickly gripped the Allied command structure at most levels.

July 1940 found the *Panzertruppen* the heroes of the hour. Theirs had been the breakthrough, and their Führer's enthusiasm took the form of demands for twice as many of these unique formations. Thus quantity began to take precedence over quality even at this early stage – the seeds of disaster were being sown. The need for cross-country transport for the *Panzergranadiers* was once more high on the list of priorities; so was the improvement of the tank guns and armour, which had shown up less than brilliantly on the few occasions when the Panzers met Allied Matildas or Char Bs on equal terms. (The 3-ton half-track personnel-carrier produced to answer the needs of the armoured infantry was to become the most numerous armoured vehicle built by Germany during the war; production figures of roughly 350 in 1940, and 950 in 1941, grew to no less than 7,800 in 1944.) The PzKpfw. III underwent a programme of up-gunning with a 50 mm weapon, and the armour of the PzKpfw. III and IV was

increased. The demand for twice as many divisions meant that the tank strength of each would have to be halved; yet each required the full complement of secondary vehicles, increasing the strain on an industry already taxed by the programme of motorization in the infantry formations. The reorganization of the Wehrmacht in preparation for the attack on Russia was also hampered by the diversion of forces to Greece and North Africa, in order to pull Italy's chestnuts out of the fire.

When Operation Barbarossa opened in June 1941, some twenty Panzer divisions formed the spearhead of the German Army; of these, fourteen contained a single tank regiment of two battalions, and six fielded three tank battalions. The establishment of a battalion was about 90 tanks; so, allowing for 25 per cent mechanical failure at any time – a conservative estimate – Guderian's original figure of 560-odd tanks per division had now shrunk in practical terms to about 135. Total tank strength was about 3,200. Facing them were up to 20,000 Soviet tanks, but the sum was less stark than this figure suggests. While excellent T-34 and KV-1 machines were coming into service with reorganized armoured brigades, they were not yet numerous and their crews were nowhere near full operational efficiency. The bulk of the huge total was made up of obsolete types, and of the total sum 60 per cent were unserviceable at any one time – an eloquent testimony to the efficiency of the Red Army in 1941.

Between June and September 1941 the world was treated to the spectacle of the Wehrmacht cutting up the enormous Soviet forces into helpless, milling pockets and then extinguishing them one by one, while the tanks raced on into the East at speeds of up to 50 miles a day. There were problems, however, which the superficial impact of the early German victories hid from all but a prescient few. The mileages covered over often appalling roads were taking a fearful toll in terms of mechanical wear. The roads were nowhere as good as had been expected; and once the poor surface had been torn up by the first waves of tanks, the supply lorries had even more difficulty in following up the advance with the essential lifeblood of fuel and ammunition. Moreover, the constant bewildering movement of the tank divisions was all that kept them alive, strung out as they were in relatively

small groups far behind vastly superior Soviet forces. Nevertheless, it looked as though the trick would work; despite the unease of a school of German generals who felt that the tanks should not expose themselves so much, but should wait for the slower-moving infantry, it seemed that the dashing leaders who had captured Western Europe in weeks would repeat their exploits in the vast emptiness of Russia.

In the event, the juggler allowed a single ball to evade his grasp, and the whole structure came down about his ears. The decisive drive on Moscow had to be put off while the front was 'tidied up'. Large concentrations of Russian forces in the south had to be neutralized, and stiff resistance on the Leningrad front required a certain amount of redeployment. The Russians fell or were captured in their hundreds of thousands, in their millions – but still they fought on. The excel-

lent new T-34s and KV-1s appeared in increasing numbers; often they were thrown away by unimaginative commanders, but where they were properly used they exacted a fearful price. By October, rain and mud heralded the approach of winter, and the push on Moscow presented far greater hazards than had faced the Wehrmacht in August. Progress was slow, fatally slow; and then the snows came down. The Russians were getting skilful at evading the pincers and harassing the faltering advance; and, above all, the tank divisions were exhausted. The supply of spares was inadequate, the narrow tracks of the Panzers were bogged down while the broad-tracked T-34s could still move at will, and the enormous distances already travelled had worn out men and machines; the mighty weapon became increasingly unserviceable. With the freeze-up came the inevitable counter-offensive by Zhukov's Siberian divisions,



Group of 7th Panzer Division officers conferring during the campaign in the West, spring 1940. Second from left, partly obscured, is the divisional commander, General Erwin Rommel. Note early pattern Panzer Assault

Badge worn by officer on right; this type, with the large death's-head motif, was authorized in 1936 by General von Thoma, commanding the tank units which fought in the Spanish Civil War. (Conway Maritime Press)



Czech-built PzKpfw. 38t Ausf. H tank of 7th Panzer Division crossing the La Bassée Canal, June 1940; of the 218 tanks in his division, Rommel had only some three dozen German-designed vehicles. Note that the crew wear black tank uniforms but grey sidecaps. The *Schutzmütze* had been withdrawn, but supplies of the black sidecap were not yet available for all personnel. (Conway Maritime Press)



One of the few PzKpfw. III tanks of the 7th Panzer Division being guided on to a French beach at the end of the drive to St-Valéry, June 1940. Note large national flag draped over rear stowage for aerial recognition. (Conway Maritime Press)

fresh, fit and accustomed to the terrible conditions.

The winter of 1941/2 saw the first great set-back of German arms. The wonder was that they survived it at all, but from now on the hallmark of the Wehrmacht was to be an incredible resilience in the face of repeated failure.

African Sideshow

The real military significance of the desert campaign (as distinct from its considerable political and psychological implications) might almost be said to be the practical schooling it provided in the art of mobile warfare. For most of the campaign the forces were relatively small; the terrain was limitless, and quite open; there were no urban areas, no civilians, nothing except the desert and the enemy. For two years Erwin Rommel's two Panzer units (5th Light, later 21st Panzer Division, and 15th Panzer Division) were the key pieces in a huge chess game. Both sides were completely ruled by the supply problem: one cannot live off the land in the desert, and without fuel and ammunition one cannot manoeuvre or fight. Movement was everything, and Rommel showed himself a master of opportunism. Living precariously off captured and improvised material at the end of far-extended and unreliable supply lines, he outguessed and outmanoeuvred successive British generals sent against him. His young colonels and junior generals, almost without exception, went on to high command in Europe and Russia after Montgomery's arrival with vastly increased Allied resources had finally pinned the Afrika Korps down and destroyed it. The special problems of the desert – the unusual strains imposed upon men and machinery by the sand and the climate, the constant and imperative problem of resupply, the irrelevance of static infantry positions in all but a very few sectors, the enforced self-sufficiency of the tank regiments – these taught lessons which were to be valuable in the declining years of the Reich. The importance of recovering one's own crippled vehicles from the battlefield, and of capturing or destroying the enemy's non-runners, became paramount; another

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technique perfected in this theatre was the closely combined use of tanks and anti-tank guns, to bring the enemy armour to battle at a time and place of one's own choosing. The desert was also a forcing-house in the constant guns-and-armour race, seeing the introduction of the long 75 mm gun of the PzKpfw. IV F2, the Grant/Lee series of American tanks and the immortal Sherman.

The Decline

The years 1942-4 saw the huge seesaw campaign in the East go through a series of phases of which only the main features need here be summarized. The Panzer units, recovering with great resilience from Soviet successes in the winter of 1941/2, were launched eastward again in the late spring, when the momentum of the Red Army's counter-offensive had run down. This time the emphasis was on the southern sector. One huge force battered its way deep into the Caucasus, another pushed the Soviets back to Stalingrad. This city on the Volga, originally seen only as a flanking strongpoint for the great southern drive, came to occupy German attention to a ridiculous and tragic degree. It became a symbol – something almost always fatal in war. The tanks, once more in need of rest and refit after a hard summer's campaign, were sucked into street fighting, and soaked away into the rubble of the devastated factories and wharfs. The inevitable Soviet winter counter-offensive cost the Germans enormous losses, both in the doomed city and on the periphery of the encirclement when rescue attempts were mounted.

The turn of 1942/3 saw yet another enforced task of frantic rebuilding in the Wehrmacht – and once again the task was achieved. But the price was a subtle watering-down of the effectiveness of the Panzers. Hitler, having established personal control over operations, placed far too much faith in the new tanks which came into service in 1943, the PzKpfw. V 'Panther' and PzKpfw. VI 'Tiger'. The Panther, produced in response to the success of the T-34, was excellent, but it was introduced without sufficient development. The mighty Tiger

was terrifyingly efficient in defence in close country and was capable of great local success, but it was not the answer to the Allied armoured developments. In the West a heavy concentration on a few standard types, not particularly formidable individually but very reliable and capable of mass production, built up the strength of the British and American armoured divisions in readiness for D-Day. Rigid standardization in Russia produced thousands of T-34s and KVs. In contrast to this industrial might, Germany began to fill the depleted regiments with 'S.P.s' – self-propelled guns mounted in limited-traverse housings on well-tried tank chassis. These were relatively cheap, quick and easy – but they were basically defensive weapons, and their capacity for attack was seriously limited.

Defeat followed defeat, yet each time the sheer professionalism of the *Panzertruppen* somehow fended off final collapse. Rebuilt at enormous cost



The architect of victory in the West enjoys his hour: Heinz Guderian, tank general supreme, on the French coast in 1940. Note the uniforms of the two officers behind him. (Imperial War Museum)

in effort and scarce material, the tank armies were hurled with criminal stupidity into the vast tank-trap of the Kursk salient in July 1943. Through the gutted wrecks of the Tigers crashed a new Soviet offensive – yet that too was halted, and far back to the west a line was somehow cobbled together. Always outnumbered, always short of every necessity; hounded now by an Allied air superiority, both strategic and tactical, which menaced the tanks from factory floor to company dispersal; always trying to hold too long a line with too few men and machines; still the Wehrmacht did not collapse. In the summer of 1944 the stubborn resistance of the forces in the West taught the British and American armies that this could still be a long war. The *Panzertruppen*, the core of all German operations, used every skill learnt in five years of war to offset their constant material weakness. Simultaneously a great Soviet offensive began the final rolling-up of the Eastern Front, and by the end of the year Germany's armies were everywhere standing on German soil. Yet they still managed to scrape together the resources for the numbing attack in the Ardennes, in which, as always, the tank crews played a vital part. The failure of that offensive was due to no failing of their soldiers, but to the weakened state of their nation; Germany could no longer supply her forces with the basic necessities, could no longer find the fuel or the pilots for air support, could no longer mount diversionary attacks on other fronts.



The Panzers advance – a characteristic view of Germany's finest striking force. (Imperial War Museum)

Inevitably, in early 1945, there followed the final annihilating invasion of Germany. The Wehrmacht was a skeleton, a tragic, ludicrous shadow of its former might. Its military, its political, its human wretchedness was absolute. Yet Kenneth Macksey, in his book, *Panzer Division*, records an incident which might stand as an epitaph for the *Panzertruppen*. On the Küstrin-Berlin highway, on 22 March 1945, virtually the only effective mobile formation standing between the Red Army and the battered capital prepared to make its last stand. It consisted of twenty-seven Panther and twenty-eight Tiger tanks of an unnumbered, nameless 'scratch division' – for those days, a remarkable force. Attacked after a lengthy artillery barrage by massed infantry and armour, the German force not only survived, but consistently out-thought and outfought the Russian formations thrown against them. When they withdrew in good order they left the Russians in retreat, and more than sixty Russian wrecks smoking on the battlefield. This incident is typical of the unbroken morale, undiminished skill and unshaken determination of the *Panzertruppen* even at the end.

The Divisions

1. PANZER DIVISION (formed October 1935: Weimar)

Took part in Polish invasion, September 1939, and the assault in the West, 1940. June 1941–early 1943, Russia, north and central sectors. After a few months in France, transferred to the Balkans in June 1943. July and August 1943, in Greece. November 1943, northern Ukraine. Took part in the counter-offensive following the Orel defeats, November and December 1943. Summer 1944, transferred to the Carpathians. For the remainder of the war the division was engaged in Hungary and Austria, distinguishing itself at Debrecen. Surrendered in eastern Austria.

Main combat units: 1939: Panzer Regt. 1, Rifle Regt. 1, Rifle Regt. 113, Artillery Regt. 73, Motorcycle Bn. 1, divisional units numbered 37.

1940: Panzer Regt. 2 added to establishment; this unit was transferred in October 1940 as cadre for new 16. Panzer Division. *Final strength:* Panzer Regt. 1, Panzergrenadier Regt. 1, Panzergrenadier Regt. 113, Artillery Regt. 73, Panzer Aufkl. Abt. 1, divisional units numbered 37.

2. PANZER DIVISION

(formed October 1935: Würzburg)

After the take-over of Austria the division was moved to Vienna. Took part in Polish invasion, 1939, and in French campaign, 1940. Returned to Germany, August 1940. September 1940–February 1941, stationed in Poland. March–May 1941, engaged in Balkans and Greece. Returned to France, then transferred almost immediately to Russia, taking part in drive on Moscow with Army Group Centre. 1942–3, Russia, notably at Smolensk, Orel, Kiev. January 1944, rest and refitting near Amiens, France. Heavily engaged on Invasion Front, summer 1944. December 1944, played important part in southern claw of Ardennes offensive. Early 1945, fighting along the Rhine. May 1945, surrendered at Plauen.

Main combat units: 1939: Panzer Regt. 3, Rifle Regt. 304, Artillery Regt. 74, Motorcycle Bn. 2, divisional units numbered 38. *September 1940:* cadre for new 13. Panzer Division supplied as Panzer Regt. 4. *Final strength:* Panzer Regt. 3, Panzergrenadier Regt. 2, Panzergrenadier Regt. 304, Artillery Regt. 74, Panzer Aufkl. Abt. 2, divisional units numbered 38.

3. PANZER DIVISION

(formed October 1935: Berlin)

Fought in Poland, 1939; France, 1940. Returned to Germany for refitting. June 1941–February 1942, Russia, Army Group Centre. February 1942, transferred to southern sector. Took part in drive into Caucasus, summer 1942. 1943, heavily engaged around Kharkov in summer; moved into Dnepr sector, September 1943. Cited for distinguished service in Dnepr Bend sector, January 1944. Heavy fighting in Ukraine and Poland throughout 1944. January 1945, moved to Hungary; surrendered at Steyr, Austria, April 1945.

Main combat units: 1939: Panzer Regt. 5, Panzer Regt. 6, Rifle Regt. 3, Artillery Regt. 75,



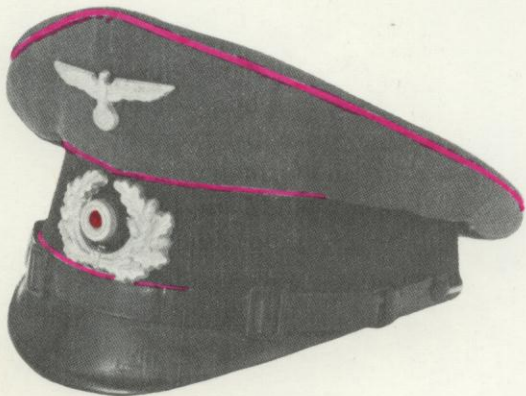
1940 Panzer Assault Badge, awarded in silver to personnel of tank units who fought in three actions on three different days. Later a bronze version was authorized for armoured reconnaissance personnel, and as the war dragged on later types with 'modernized' tank motifs appeared; the numbers of engagements amassed were acknowledged by badges with the figures '50', '75' and '100' in small plaques at the base of the wreath.

Motorcycle Bn. 3, divisional units numbered 39. *October 1940:* Panzer Regt. 5 transferred as cadre to 5th Light Motorized Division, and Panzergrenadier Regt. 394 added. *Final strength:* Panzer Regt. 6, Panzergrenadier Regt. 3, Panzergrenadier Regt. 394, Artillery Regt. 75, Panzer Aufkl. Abt. 3, divisional units numbered 39.

4. PANZER DIVISION

(formed 1938: Würzburg)

Took part in Polish campaign, 1939, and French campaign, 1940. June 1941, took part in Russian invasion as part of Army Group Centre; from that time onwards continuously engaged on the Eastern



Peaked service cap of an Army N.C.O. with pressed alloy badges, leather chinstrap, and piping in *Waffenfarbe* round crown seam and edges of the dark bluish-green band. (Author's collection)



Army officer's field-grey sidecap. The eagle is woven in silver on green, the cockade in black, red and silver metallic thread. Silver piping follows the crown seam, and the front arch of the 'turn-up'. The white *Waffenfarbe* chevron identifies the infantry. (Author's collection)

front. Engaged in drive to Caucasus, 1942; Kursk offensive, 1943; cited for action around Gomel following failure of offensive. Engaged on central sector of front, winter 1943/4. 1944, fought in Latvia, then moved southwards into Germany. Remaining elements surrendered to U.S. forces, early 1945.

Main combat units: 1939: Panzer Regt. 35, Panzer Regt. 36, Rifle Regt. 12, Rifle Regt. 33, Artillery Regt. 116, Motorcycle Bn. 4, divisional units numbered 84. October 1940: Panzer Regt. 36 transferred as cadre for 14. Panzer Division. Final strength: Panzer Regt. 35, Panzergrenadier Regt. 12, Panzergrenadier Regt. 33, Artillery Regt. 103, Panzer Aufkl. Abt. 4, divisional units numbered 79, apart from Panzer Jäger Abt. 49.

5. PANZER DIVISION

(formed November 1938: *Oppeln*)

Played important role in French campaign, 1940. Early 1941, Yugoslavia and Greece. June 1941, Russia, central sector. Heavily engaged throughout 1941-2. Early 1943, Demjansk. Suffered heavy losses in Kursk offensive, July 1943. Early 1944, heavily engaged in Dnepr area. Late 1944, Latvia and Kurland. Early 1945, defending East Prussia; surrendered to Russian forces after stubborn defence of Hela Peninsula.

Main combat units: 1939: Panzer Regt. 15, Panzer Regt. 31, Rifle Regt. 13, Rifle Regt. 14, Artillery Regt. 116, Aufkl. Abt. 8, variously numbered divisional units. October 1940: 15. Panzer Regt. transferred as cadre to 11. Panzer Division. Final strength: Panzer Regt. 31, Panzergrenadier Regt. 13, Panzergrenadier Regt. 14, Artillery Regt. 116, Panzer Aufkl. Abt. 5 variously numbered divisional units.

6. PANZER DIVISION

(formed October 1939: *Wuppertal*: from 1. Light Division)

Fought in France, 1940. Transferred to East Prussia; opened Russian invasion on northern front, June 1941. After fighting around Leningrad, transferred to the central sector where it was heavily engaged until May 1942. In that month the division was pulled back to France for rest and

refit. Returned to Russia in December, fighting on southern sector, Kharkov. Summer 1943, engaged in Kursk salient fighting around Belgorod. January 1944, transferred to Hungary, took part in defence of Budapest. Heavy losses. Withdrew into Austria, March 1945; surrendered to Russian forces at Brno, May 1945.

Main combat units: 1939: Panzer Regt. 11, Panzer Abteilung 65, Rifle Regt. 4, Artillery Regt. 76, Motorcycle Bn. 6, most divisional units numbered 57. *Final strength*: Panzer Regt. 11, Panzergrenadier Regt. 4, Panzergrenadier Regt. 114, Artillery Regt. 76, Panzer Aufkl. Abt. 6, variously numbered divisional units.

7. PANZER DIVISION

(formed October 1939: from 2. Light Division)

Played important part in French campaign, 1940, commanded by Gen. Maj. Rommel. February 1941, returned to Germany for rest and refit. July 1941, Russia, central sector. Heavily engaged until July 1942, when division returned to France, taking part in occupation of Vichy. December 1942, returned to Russia, fighting around Kharkov on the southern part of the front, and later in the Belgorod offensive. August 1944, transferred to Baltic coast. Fought in Kurland, Memel until end of year, withdrawing into Prussia and surrendering to British at Schwerin in May 1945.

Main combat units: 1939: Panzer Regt. 25, Panzer Abt. 66, Rifle Regt. 6, Rifle Regt. 7, Artillery Regt. 78, Motorcycle Bn. 7, most divisional units numbered 58. *Final strength*: Panzer Regt. 25, Panzergrenadier Regt. 6, Panzergrenadier Regt. 7, Artillery Regt. 78, Panzer Aufkl. Abt. 7, most divisional units numbered 58.

8. PANZER DIVISION

(formed October 1939: from 3. Light Division)

After fighting in France in 1940 the division was transferred in April 1941 to Yugoslavia, but saw no action. In July 1941 the unit fought on the northern sector of the Russian front; took part in the early stages of the siege of Leningrad. March–November 1942, heavy fighting, Kholm area. April–August 1943, heavily engaged in operations connected with Orel offensive. Heavy losses in withdrawal from Kiev, October 1943. January–



Sidecap of Army Other Ranks; this example was worn by a cavalryman of Reiter Regt. 6, which served as an armoured reconnaissance unit in Africa and north-west Europe. The yellow chevron identifies the cavalry branch, and the tradition badge in the shape of the bronze 'Dragon Eagle' identifies this particular regiment. (Author's collection)



Black Panzer sidecap, with pink *Waffenfarbe* chevron and grey-on-black eagle badge. The earphones are original Panzer issue items. (Author's collection)

September 1944, engaged on southern sector of Russian front. September 1944, moved into the Carpathians. Defence of Budapest, December 1944. February–March 1945, Moravia; surrendered to Red Army at Brno, May 1945.

Main combat units: 1939: Panzer Regt. 10, Rifle Regt. 8, Artillery Regt. 80, Motorcycle Bn. 8; armour increased by inclusion of Panzer Abt. 67 in that year. Most divisional units numbered 59. *Final strength:* Panzer Regt. 10, Panzergrenadier Regt. 8, Panzergrenadier Regt. 28, Artillery Regt. 80, Panzer Aufkl. Abt. 8, divisional units numbered 59, 42, 84.

9. PANZER DIVISION

(formed January 1940: from 4. Light Division)

Fought in Holland, and in France at Dunkirk and later Lyons, 1940. September–December 1940, stationed in Poland. January 1941, fought in Balkan campaign. July 1941, Russian front, southern sector. October 1941, central sector; engaged throughout 1942. Mid-1943, heavily committed to Kursk offensive and subsequent defensive operations in Dnepr Bend. Early 1944, heavy losses in southern sector. March 1944, survivors pulled back to Nîmes area of France; with 155th Panzer Reserve Brigade, division re-formed and brought back to strength. August 1944, engaged in Normandy. September 1944, engaged in Aachen/Geilenkirchen area. December 1944, heavy fighting in Ardennes offensive. January 1945, Eifel area. Captured by U.S. forces in Ruhr, April 1945.



PzKpfw. IIIs thrust into the Russian interior – a picture taken during the breathtaking advances of summer 1941.

Main combat units: 1940: Panzer Regt. 33 (raised from Austrian Army Tank Battalion, and later took honour title 'Prinz Eugen'), Rifle Regt. 10, Rifle Regt. 11, Artillery Regt. 102, Motorcycle Bn. 59, variously numbered divisional units. *Final strength:* Panzer Regt. 33, Panzergrenadier Regt. 10, Panzergrenadier Regt. 11, Artillery Regt. 102, Panzer Aufkl. Abt. 9, variously numbered divisional units. (Panzer Regt. 33 mustered only one battalion; in January 1944 the armoured strength was increased by inclusion of Panzer Abt. 51.)

10. PANZER DIVISION

(formed April 1939: Prague)

Fought in Poland, September 1939, and in France, May 1940. July 1941–April 1942, engaged on central sector of Russian front. Transferred to France for rest and refitting, April 1942. August 1942, fought British and Canadian landings at Dieppe. December 1942, shipped to Tunisia. May 1943, division wiped out in Tunisia, and never re-formed.

Main combat units: 1939: Panzer Regt. 7, Panzer Regt. 8, Rifle Regt. 69, Rifle Regt. 86, Artillery Regt. 90, most divisional units numbered 90. 1943: Panzer Regt. 7, Panzergrenadier Regt. 69, Panzergrenadier Regt. 86, Artillery Regt. 90, Panzer Aufkl. Abt. 10, most divisional units numbered 90.

11. PANZER DIVISION

(formed August 1940: from 11. Rifle Brigade)

January–April 1941, fought in Balkans, captured Belgrade. July 1941, southern sector of Russian front, subsequently central sector. Fought in central zone until June 1942, returned to southern sector. July 1943, engaged in Orel/Belgorod offensive; later, heavy fighting in Krivoi Rog area. January–May 1944, Korsun Pocket; heavy losses. June 1944, survivors pulled back to France for rest and refit. Engaged against Allied landings in south of France, withdrawing to Alsace; September 1944, fought in the Belfort gap, withdrew into the Saar area. March 1945, engaged at Remagen; finally surrendered to U.S. forces in Bavaria. Frequently cited for distinguished conduct, it was known as the 'Ghost Division' on

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Soviet troops examine a PzKpfw. III and a half-track abandoned by the 3rd Panzer Division. (Imperial War Museum)

account of the unit emblem – a skeleton riding the tracks of a tank, brandishing a sword.

Main combat units: 1940: Panzer Regt. 15, Rifle Regt. 110, Rifle Regt. 111, Artillery Regt. 119, Motorcycle Bn. 61, variously numbered divisional units. *Final strength*: Panzer Regt. 15, Panzergrenadier Regt. 110, Panzergrenadier Regt. 111, Artillery Regt. 119, Panzer Aufkl. Abt. 11, variously numbered divisional units.

12. PANZER DIVISION

(formed October 1940: from 2. Infanterie Division (Mot.))

From December 1940 to June 1941, stationed in Germany. July 1941, engaged on central sector of Russian front, between Minsk and Smolensk. September 1941, northern sector; participated in siege of Leningrad until November 1942, then returned to Army Group Centre. March–August 1943, engaged before Orel, and later in defence

of middle Dnepr. February 1944, returned to northern sector; cited for distinguished conduct in withdrawal from Leningrad. August 1944, Kurland; captured by Red Army in that sector, early 1945.

Main combat units: 1940: Panzer Regt. 29, Rifle Regt. 5, Rifle Regt. 25, Artillery Regt. 2, Motorcycle Bn. 22, most divisional units numbered 2. *Final strength*: Panzer Regt. 29, Panzergrenadier Regt. 5, Panzergrenadier Regt. 25, Artillery Regt. 2, Panzer Aufkl. Abt. 12, most divisional units numbered 2.

13. PANZER DIVISION

(formed October 1940: from 13. Infanterie Division (Mot.))

1940, served as training formation, Rumania. June 1941, transferred to Russia; heavily engaged, southern sector. Took part in capture of Kiev. August 1942–January 1943, engaged in Caucasus.

February–August 1943, engaged in the Kuban. October 1943–January 1944, fought in Krivoi Rog area. September 1944, withdrew to Germany for refit. October 1944, transferred to Hungary. December 1944–January 1945, defence of Budapest; division wiped out. Re-formed as Panzer Division 'Feldherrnhalle 2', q.v.

Main combat units: 1940: Panzer Regt. 4, Rifle Regt. 66, Rifle Regt. 93, Artillery Regt. 13, Motorcycle Bn. 43, most divisional units numbered 13. *Final strength*: Panzer Regt. 4, Panzergrenadier Regt. 66, Panzergrenadier Regt. 93, Artillery Regt. 13, Panzer Aufkl. Abt. 13, most divisional units numbered 13.

14. PANZER DIVISION

(formed August 1940: from 4. Infanterie Division)

November 1940–February 1941, stationed in Germany. March 1941, transferred to Hungary. April 1941, engaged in Yugoslavia. May–June 1941, returned to Germany for refit. July 1941–December 1942, heavily engaged on Russian front, southern sector. December 1942, encircled in Stalingrad and wiped out. April–October 1943, division re-formed in Brittany; November 1943, returned to Russia and heavily engaged in Dnepr Bend. Refitted in Ukraine, June 1944. Moved to Kurland, August 1944; captured there by Red Army, April 1945.

Main combat units: 1940: Panzer Regt. 36, Rifle Regt. 103, Rifle Regt. 108, Artillery Regt. 4, Motorcycle Bn. 64, most divisional units numbered 4. *Final strength*: Panzer Regt. 36, Panzergrenadier Regt. 103, Panzergrenadier Regt. 108, Artillery Regt. 4, Panzer Aufkl. Abt. 14, most divisional units numbered 4.

15. PANZER DIVISION

(formed August 1940: from 33. Infanterie Division)

Shipped to North Africa as part of the original Deutsches Afrika Korps in February 1941, the division was continuously engaged in that theatre from that time until 12 May 1943, when it surrendered in Tunisia together with the other units of the German forces in Africa. July 1943, re-formed in Sicily as 15. Panzergrenadier Division.

Main combat units: Panzer Regt. 8, Panzer-

grenadier (formerly Rifle) Regt. 104, Panzer grenadier (formerly Rifle) Regt. 115, Artillery Regt. 33, Panzer Aufkl. Abt. 15, most divisional units numbered 33.

16. PANZER DIVISION

(formed August 1940)

Held in reserve during Balkan campaign; June 1941, Russian front, southern sector. Continuously engaged in that sector throughout 1941 and 1942; December 1942, encircled and wiped out at Stalingrad. March 1943, division re-formed in France. June 1943, transferred to northern Italy, subsequently moved to Taranto area. September 1943, rushed to Salerno area; heavily engaged in opposing Allied landings, and subsequently in Naples area. Continued operations in Italy until November 1943, then transferred to Russia, suffering heavy losses in counter-offensive around Kiev. October 1944, division refitted at Kielce; January 1945, returned to front in Baranów area. Engaged at Lauban in March 1945; surrendered at Brno in April 1945.

Main combat units: 1940: Panzer Regt. 2, Rifle Regt. 64, Rifle Regt. 79, Artillery Regt. 16, Motorcycle Bn. 16, divisional units numbered 16. *Final strength*: Panzer Regt. 2, Panzergrenadier Regt. 64, Panzergrenadier Regt. 79, Panzer Artillerie Regt. 16, most divisional units numbered 16.

17. PANZER DIVISION

(formed October 1940)

First saw combat on central sector of Russian front, June 1941. Continuously engaged in that sector until November 1942, when transferred to southern sector. Mid-1943, heavily engaged in Dnepr and Donets areas during aftermath of German defeat in Kursk/Orel/Belgorod offensive. Participated in all major actions during German retreat across northern Ukraine in 1944. January 1945, heavily committed to fighting at Baranów; overrun by Red Army in April.

Main combat units: Panzer Regt. 17, Panzergrenadier (formerly Rifle) Regt. 40, Panzergrenadier (formerly Rifle) Regt. 63, Panzer Artillery Regt. 27, Panzer Aufkl. Abt. 17, divisional units numbered 27.



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Tired and grimy tank crews gather round the troop commander for a briefing by the roadside. Note the variety of black and grey uniform items, and the use of working denims

18. PANZER DIVISION

(formed October 1940)

June 1941, first entered combat on central sector of Russian front. Continuously committed to action until June 1942, when it was transferred to the southern sector, subsequently returning to the central area. October 1943, heavily engaged west of Kiev; heavy casualties during German counter-offensive in that area the following month. Never re-formed as armoured unit, but reorganized and brought back up to strength as 18. Artillerie Division.

Main combat units: Panzer Regt. 18, Panzergrenadier (formerly Rifle) Regt. 52, Panzergrenadier (formerly Rifle) Regt. 101, Panzer

Artillery Regt. 88, Panzer Aufkl. Abt. 18, most divisional units numbered 88.

19. PANZER DIVISION

(formed October 1940)

Fought on central sector of Russian front from June 1941 to April 1943; transferred to southern sector. Very heavy casualties in unsuccessful Belgorod offensive, July 1943. March 1944, heavily engaged during withdrawal across northern Ukraine. July 1944–January 1945, stationed in East Prussia. January–February 1945, committed to action around Baranów bridgehead, near Breslau. Moved south to Bohemia, where it surrendered in May.



An Obergefreiter (note chevrons) or acting corporal of an armoured car unit fits on the huge plaited straw boots issued in Russia for extra insulation. (Imperial War Museum)

Main combat units: Panzer Regt. 27, Panzer-grenadier (formerly Rifle) Regt. 73, Panzer-grenadier (formerly Rifle) Regt. 74, Panzer Artillery Regt. 19, Panzer Aufkl. Abt. 19, divisional units numbered 19.

20. PANZER DIVISION (formed October 1940)

Continuously engaged on Russian front. Fought on central sector, participating in drive on Moscow in 1941, and Orel offensive in July 1943; heavy losses during Soviet summer offensive of 1944. Transferred to Rumania, August 1944, and again heavily engaged. November 1944, moved to East Prussia, and in December to Hungary. Withdrew westwards, and overrun by Red Army in May 1945.

Main combat units: Panzer Regt. 21, Panzer-

grenadier (formerly Rifle) Regt. 59, Panzer-grenadier (formerly Rifle) Regt. 112, Panzer Artillery Regt. 92, Panzer Aufkl. Abt. 20, divisional units numbered 92.

21. PANZER DIVISION (formed February 1941: from 5. Light Motorized Division, plus Panzer Regt. 5 and other cadres from 3. Panzer Division)

Formed 'in the field', this famous formation was the second major component of the Deutsches Afrika Korps, and served continuously in the desert campaigns from February 1941 onwards. Badly mauled before Alam Halfa in mid-1942, the division suffered further heavy casualties at El Alamein in October, providing the rearguard for the subsequent German withdrawal. Overrun in Tunisia, May 1943. Re-formed in Normandy, July 1943 (with same unit numbers). Training and occupation duties in France until June 1944; heavily engaged in Normandy fighting and withdrawal across France. Withdrawn to Germany for refitting, the division fought in the Saar and Alsace areas September–December 1944. January 1945, transferred to Eastern front, and overrun by Red Army in final weeks of the war.

Main combat units: Panzer Regt. 22, Panzer-grenadier (formerly Rifle) Regt. 125, Panzer-grenadier (formerly Rifle) Regt. 192, Panzer Artillery Regt. 155, Panzer Aufkl. Abt. 21, most divisional units numbered 200.

22. PANZER DIVISION (formed October 1941: France)

Sent to the central sector of the Russian front in March 1942, this division was heavily engaged in the Crimea. It was encircled and virtually wiped out in Stalingrad in December 1942. Although some units survived, notably Panzer-grenadier Regt. 129, the division was disbanded. The surviving regiment was transferred to the 15. Panzer-grenadier Division.

Main combat units: Panzer Regt. 204, Panzer-grenadier Regt. 129, Panzer-grenadier Regt. 140, Panzer Artillery Regt. 140, Panzer Aufkl. Abt. 140, divisional units numbered 140.

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23. PANZER DIVISION

(formed October 1941: France)

Sent to southern sector of Russian front in March 1942; heavily engaged in capture of Kharkov, and subsequently reached Terek River at spearhead of German penetration in the Caucasus. In November 1942 the division was moved north to Stalingrad but avoided encirclement. Summer 1943, heavily committed to defensive fighting in Dnepr Bend. February 1944, cited for distinguished service on the lower Dnepr. Suffered heavy casualties in withdrawal; refitted in Poland, summer 1944, and subsequently engaged there in September 1944. October 1944, transferred to Hungary, fighting at Dèbreccen. Cited again for outstanding services. Engaged at Baranów bridgehead, January 1945; overrun by Red Army at end of war.

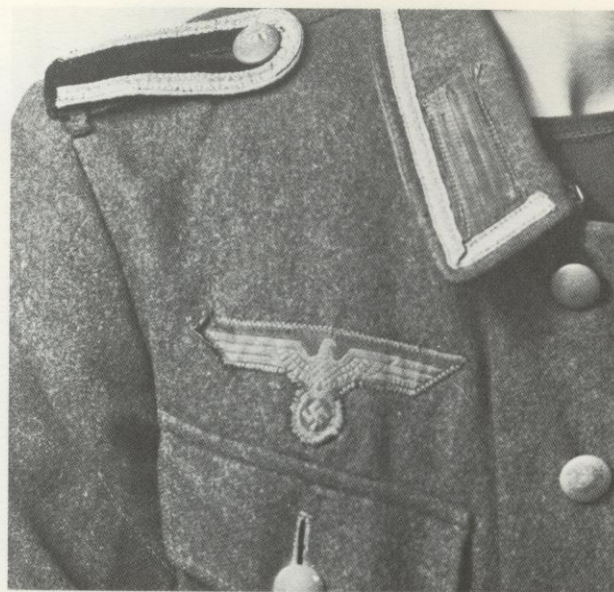
Main combat units: Panzer Regt. 23, Panzer-grenadier (formerly Rifle) Regt. 126, Panzer-grenadier (formerly Rifle) Regt. 128, Panzer Artillery Regt. 128, Panzer Aufkl. Abt. 23, divisional units numbered 128.

24. PANZER DIVISION

(formed February 1942: from 1. Kavallerie Division)

After its reorganization and re-equipment this division was employed on the southern sector of the Russian front in the summer and autumn of 1942. It was encircled and wiped out at Stalingrad in December 1942-January 1943. March-April 1943, re-formed in Normandy, France. August 1943, transferred to northern Italy. October 1943, returned to Russia, southern sector, suffering heavy casualties west of Kiev. February 1944, cited for distinguished conduct. Further heavy losses during withdrawal from Dnepr Bend, March 1944. July 1944, engaged in southern Poland during Soviet summer offensive. October 1944, transferred to Hungary, engaged around Dèbreccen. December 1944-January 1945, Slovakia; transferred to West Prussia, withdrawing into Schleswig-Holstein and surrendering to British forces in May 1945.

Main combat units: Panzer Regt. 24, Panzer-grenadier Regt. 21, Panzergrenadier Regt. 26, Panzer Artillery Regt. 89, Panzer Aufkl. Abt. 24,



Detail of shoulder, collar and breast insignia on the tunic of an Army Unteroffizier or sergeant. The mid-war-style tunic has a field-grey collar, in place of the bluish-green 'badge cloth' collars often seen early in the war. The dark-green shoulder-straps, a survival from earlier in the war, have white infantry piping round the edge, and gmm-wide silver braid identifies the rank. The silver Tresse is repeated round the edge of the collar. Breast eagle and collar-bars of 'field service quality' are woven in light grey on sage-green background.

variously numbered divisional units, primarily '40'.

25. PANZER DIVISION

(formed February 1942: from troops of occupation forces in Norway)

Transferred to the south of France in August 1943 and brought up to strength, the division was moved to the southern sector of the Russian front in October 1943. Engaged west of Kiev; heavy losses during withdrawal from northern Ukraine in March 1944. April 1944, pulled back to Denmark for re-forming. September 1944, returned to central sector of Russian front. Engaged on Vistula line, and in defence of Warsaw. Withdrew into Germany in February 1945, and overrun by Red Army in May 1945.

Main combat units: Panzer Regt. 9, Panzer-grenadier Regt. 146, Panzergrenadier Regt. 147, Panzer Aufkl. Abt. 87, divisional units numbered 87.

26. PANZER DIVISION

(formed October 1942: Brittany, from 23. Infanterie Division)

July 1943, transferred to Italy, and remained on that front throughout war. Cited for outstanding service between Apennines and Adriatic coast, November 1944. Surrendered near Bologna, May 1945.

Main combat units: Panzer Regt. 26, Panzergrenadier Regt. 9, Panzergrenadier Regt. 67, Reinforced Panzergrenadier Regt. 1027, Panzer Artillery Regt. 93, Panzer Aufkl. Abt. 26, most divisional units numbered 93.

27. PANZER DIVISION

While in process of formation in France, 1942, this unit was sent to the southern sector of the Russian front. It was engaged in the winter of 1942/3, and was disbanded early in 1943.

116. PANZER DIVISION

(formed France: April 1944, from 16. Panzergrenadier Division)



Continuously engaged in France from July 1944, throughout withdrawal across that country. September 1944, pulled back to Düsseldorf for rest and refitting. November, transferred to Cologne. Heavily engaged on southern claw of Ardennes offensive, December 1944, suffering serious casualties. January 1945, engaged in Kleve area. April 1945, went into American captivity in the Ruhr.

Main combat units: Panzer Regt. 16, Panzergrenadier Regt. 60, Panzergrenadier Regt. 156, Panzer Artillery Regt. 146, Panzer Aufkl. Abt. 116, variously numbered divisional units.

130. PANZER-LEHR-DIVISION

(formed winter 1943/4)



Under the command of Fritz Bayerlein, Rommel's old Chief of Staff in Africa, the formidable *Panzer-Lehr* was assembled in France from the demonstration units of various armoured schools. Apart from its unusually experienced and expert personnel, it received double the normal complement of armour; by June 1944 its establishment included

190 tanks, 40 assault guns and 612 half-tracks, and it was the second most powerful division in the Wehrmacht. It was very heavily engaged in the fighting in Normandy following the Allied landings, and suffered correspondingly high losses; by late July it could field only 50 armoured fighting vehicles. Rebuilt around Paderborn in the late autumn, it was committed to the Ardennes offensive in December 1944. It remained on the Western front, and the survivors went into American captivity in April 1945 in the Ruhr.

Main combat units: Panzer Lehr Regt. 103, Panzergrenadier Lehr Regt. 901, Panzergrenadier Lehr Regt. 902, Panzer Artillerie Lehr Regt. 130, Panzer Aufkl. Lehr Regt. 130, divisional units numbered 130.

DIVISION

"Grossdeutschland"

The German Army's élite formation, at all stages of its history. It evolved originally from the Berlin Watch Regiment, and by 1940 was designated *Infanterie Regt. (Mot.) 'Grossdeutschland'*; it fought in France under the command of General Graf Schwerin. In 1941 it saw action in the Balkans and Greece, and as part of Guderian's 2nd Panzer Army during the first year in Russia. By early spring 1942 the unit had expanded to divisional strength. As happened in other cases of units with better-than-average establishments, the official redesignations tended to lag behind the facts; thus the 'GD' slowly became a Panzergrenadier unit, and then a Panzer formation, although its armoured strength was as good as, or better than, actual Panzer divisions for months or years beforehand.

Continuously engaged in the southern and central zones of the Russian front throughout 1942, the division took part in the recapture of Kharkov in March 1943 alongside the premier *Waffen-SS* Panzer formations. It fought in the great offensive around the Kursk salient in July 1943, and in the gruelling withdrawals from the Donets and the Dnepr Bend in the winter of 1943/4. In May of 1944 the division was heavily committed in Bessarabia, and in July was back in the central part of the front, countering the

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Panzer grenadiers prepare a powerful charge by wiring the heads of seven stick-grenades round one complete grenade. They wear the cuff-titles and shoulder-strap

monograms of the crack 'Grossdeutschland' Division, the Army's most powerful armoured formation. (Imperial War Museum)

Soviet summer offensive. In the period August–October 1944 'GD' fought in Kurland, and mounted a stubborn defence around the Memel bridgehead in November. It suffered terrible casualties, and a part of its strength was encircled at Memel. Those units which escaped were reformed in East Prussia; between January and March 1945 the remnants of 'GD' fought a series of defensive actions around the Frisches Haff, from which few escaped.

MAIN COMBAT UNITS IN 1944

Panzer Regt. 'Grossdeutschland' (I Bn., PzKpfw. V Panther tanks; II Bn., PzKpfw. IV tanks; III Bn., PzKpfw. VI Tiger tanks)
 Panzer grenadier Regt. 'Grossdeutschland' (I Bn., armoured; II and III Bns. motorized; strong

integral anti-tank, anti-aircraft and S.P. artillery units)

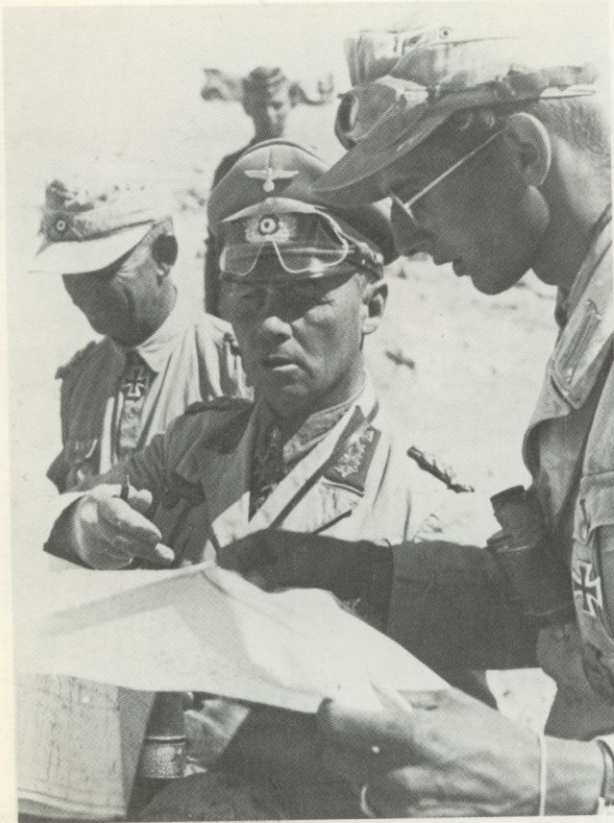
Füsilier Regt. 'Grossdeutschland' (I Bn., armoured; II and III Bns. motorized; strong integral A-T, A-A and S.P. artillery units)

Panzer Aufklärungs Abteilung 'Grossdeutschland' (1 Sqn., Jagdpanzer 38t.; 2 and 3 Sqns. armoured half-tracks; 4 Sqn., towed artillery)

Panzer Artillerie Regt. 'Grossdeutschland' (I Bn., S.P. guns; II, III and IV Bns., half-track-towed guns)

Panzer Sturmgeschütz Brigade 'Grossdeutschland' (1, 2, 3, 4 Batteries armoured S.P. assault guns)

In the latter part of the war various other élite units, expanded and equipped for realistic participation on the battlefield, were grouped under the overall control of the Division 'GD', with the collective title 'Grossdeutschland Verbände'. These included various armoured formations:



Rommel, a legend in his own lifetime; with limited forces and a crippling supply problem, he outguessed and outfought the Allies in Africa for two years. His brand of dashing 'cavalry' generalship was well suited to desert warfare. (Imperial War Museum)



The motley clothing of the desert soldiers, Allied and Axis alike, exemplified by a group of Panzergrenadiers. (Imperial War Museum)

FÜHRER-BEGLEIT-DIVISION

Originally formed in late 1939 as the *Führer-Begleit-Bataillon*, this unit was the motorized escort for the Führer's general headquarters. In 1940 they were awarded a 'Grossdeutschland' cuff-title. During 1940 they were used for various internal escort and V.I.P. security duties; the unit was fully motorized and heavily armed, acquiring a Panzer company at an early date. Though only infrequently used in combat throughout most of the war (there were two brief excursions to the northern sector of the Russian front) the unit was kept up to scratch by constant and punishing training; they were usually based at Hitler's Rastenburg headquarters. Part of the battalion was moved to Berchtesgaden in 1944; and in July the unit was brought up to regimental strength. In November 1944 the unit, in brigade strength, was sent to the Western front and was very heavily engaged during the Ardennes offensive. Subsequently, in January 1945, it was upgraded to divisional establishment and sent to the Oder front with its sister unit, the *Führer-Grenadier-Division* (q.v.). Heavily engaged in defensive operations, the *F-B-D* was decimated while breaking out of a Soviet encirclement near Spremberg in April 1945.

Main combat units: Panzergrenadier Regt. 'Führer-Begleit-Brigade', Panzer Regt. 'Führer-Begleit-Brigade', Artillerie Abteilung 'Führer-Begleit-Brigade', Infanterie Bn. 'for Special Duty' 828.

FÜHRER-GRENADIER-DIVISION

Raised after the attempt on Hitler's life in July 1944, the *Führer-Grenadier-Brigade* was stationed at Cottbus near the Rastenburg 'Wolf's Lair'. At the end of September, consisting of a Panzergrenadier Battalion, a Fusilier Battalion, and a Panzer Abteilung, it was moved to the East Prussia area. Between October and December 1944 it was continuously and heavily engaged against Soviet thrusts; in that month it was sent west to the Ardennes. In February it went east again, to the Stargard area, and was engaged in further heavy fighting; it had been uprated to divisional strength at the same time as its sister unit. In March it was at Stettin, and later fought around the

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- 1 Unteroffizier, Panzertruppen, 1935-pattern parade dress
- 2 Oberleutnant, Panzertruppen, service dress, 1939-45
- 3 Leutnant, Panzertruppen, vehicle parade uniform, 1939



2



3



1 Unterfeldwebel, Panzertruppen, winter 1939
2 Gefreiter, Panzer-Pioniere, 1940
3 Major, Panzertruppen, vehicle uniform, 1941



1 Panzer-Funker, campaign dress, 1941
2 Hauptmann, 24. Panzer Division, 1943
3 Oberfeldwebel ('Spiess'), Sturmartillerie, 1943

- 1 Leutnant, Panzertruppen, winter 1943-4
- 2 Panzer Wärte I, 1944
- 3 Obergefreiter, Panzerjäger, 116. Panzer Division, 1944





- 1 General der Panzertruppen, 1943
2 Kraftradfahrer, Aufklärungstruppen, 1940
3 Zeugmeister Unterfeldwebel, Panzergrenadier, 1942



1 Gefreiter, Panzergrenadier, 1940
 2 Unteroffizier, Panzergrenadier, summer 1943
 3 Leutnant, Panzergrenadier Regt. 'Grossdeutschland', 1944

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- 1 Oberleutnant, Panzertruppen, D.A.K., 1942
- 2 Obergefreiter, Panzergrenadier, D.A.K., 1942
- 3 Wachtmeister, 33. Aufklärungs Abteilung, D.A.K., 1941





1 Unterfeldwebel, Feldgendarmerie,
 summer 1944
2 Generalmajor, Panzertruppen,
 field service dress, 1944
3 Panzergrenadier, 1945

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Küstrin bridgehead. In April the unit was sent to Vienna; it eventually surrendered to U.S. forces in Austria but was handed over to the Russians. Personnel wore 'Grossdeutschland' insignia throughout the unit's career.

Main combat units: Panzergrenadier Regt. 'Führer-Grenadier-Brigade' (comprising an armoured Fusilier battalion and a motorized Grenadier battalion), Infanterie Bn. 'for Special Duty' 829, Panzer Regt. 'Führer-Grenadier-Brigade', Sturmgeschütz Brigade 'Führer-Grenadier-Brigade'.

PANZER DIVISION 'KURMARK'

Formed at Cottbus in late January 1945, and with personnel bearing 'GD' insignia, this unit fought on the Oder front between February and April. It managed to withdraw in late April and the remnants surrendered to U.S. forces in May. It consisted of a Panzer Regiment, a Panzergrenadier Regiment, a Panzer Artillerie Regiment and the usual divisional reconnaissance, engineer and signals units, all identified by the honour title 'Kurmark'.

A PzKpfw. III of the Afrika Korps (the palm and swastika badge is just visible on the frontal armour by the driver's vision slot) churns up the dust of the Western Desert. (Imperial War Museum)

OTHER ARMoured FORMATIONS

Several armoured formations, many of them without practical significance, were formed on paper in the closing months of the war. This period was characterized by decrees from Hitler's headquarters regarding the formation and movements of units whose only existence was in the form of flags on the Führer's maps. Among these twilight formations were the following:

Panzer Division 'Feldherrnhalle 2'. Formed at the turn of 1944/5 from the surviving elements of the 13. Panzer Division and the 60. Panzergrenadier Division 'Feldherrnhalle', both of which were decimated in the defence of Budapest. Much under strength, the division fought in Hungary and Austria until the end of the war.

Panzer Division 'Kurland'. Formed within the encircled German armies in the Kurland area, from elements of the 14. Panzer Division and other motorized 'odds and ends'.

The personnel of various schools, training courses, reserve organizations, and so forth, were to be formed into Panzer divisions named 'Clausewitz', 'Holstein', 'Münchenberg', 'Donau', 'Schlesien', 'Thüringen', and 'Westfalen'; how far these plans proceeded in practice is not known.



The Plates



A1 Unteroffizier, Panzertruppen, parade dress

This sergeant is presenting arms; he carries the normal Mauser K.98 rifle of 7.92 mm calibre, and six black leather ammunition pouches are slung on his black leather service belt. The rectangular belt-plate, in bright metal, bears an eagle and swastika within a wreath charged with the words *Gott Mit Uns* – ‘God With Us’. His 1935-model steel helmet is painted dark grey, with a black/white/red tricolour decal on the right side. The black leather hobnailed *Marschstiefel* – marching boots – are standard issue.

The special full-dress tunic, worn for parade, walking out, and other ceremonial occasions, was known as the *Waffenrock*. It is of field-grey cloth, without external pockets, and the turn-down collar and deep Swedish cuffs are of dark blue-green ‘badge cloth’; the shoulder-straps are also made of this material. Introduced in June 1935, it has a much more ornate appearance than the usual service tunic; it is worn with plain grey trousers – giving a contrasting appearance – piped down the outer seam in *Waffenfarbe*. This is the identifying colour of the branch of service within the Army; in this case, the rose-pink of the *Panzertruppen*. It appears in several places on the tunic – as piping up the front join, around the bottom and front edges of the collar and around the top and rear edges of the cuffs. The silver collar-bars are woven on patches of this colour, as are the decorative cuff tabs. The 9 mm-wide *Tresse* or

silver braid around the top and front of the collar, and the top and rear of the cuffs, is an indication of senior N.C.O. rank. It also appears on the shoulder-straps, within an outer piping of pink. On the shoulder-straps the open-ended silver braid identifies the exact rank, and the numeral the regiment.

The buttons on the front, cuffs and shoulders of the tunic are silver-grey metal. The breast eagle is woven in white on a black background, the appropriate style for the Panzer arm. The only equipment worn on the belt in this uniform order would be the bayonet.

A2 Oberleutnant, Panzertruppen, service dress

The normal everyday working dress of the German Army officer. The high-fronted peaked service cap, or *Schirmmütze*, is of field-grey cloth with a dark blue-green band and a glossy black composition peak. The two silver cap cords identify commissioned rank. The crown seam, and the top and bottom of the band, are piped in pink *Waffenfarbe*. The upper badge is a silver-grey alloy eagle, the lower one a wreath of oak leaves surrounding the national cockade; the wreath was sometimes woven in silver thread, more often pressed in silver-grey alloy.

The tunic is field-grey, with a dark blue-green badge cloth collar, four box-pleated pockets with scalloped flaps, and deep turn-back cuffs (often used, as here, as a handy extra pocket for small items). The shoulder-straps are in silver ‘Russia braid’ with the single yellow metal pip of Oberleutnant’s rank and an underlay of Panzer pink *Waffenfarbe*. The silver collar-bars are woven on dark blue-green patches sewn to the collar. The breast-eagle is in silver thread on a black background. The Army Four-Year Service Medal ribbon, cornflower blue with a small applied silver eagle, is worn above the left breast-pocket.

The pegged breeches, worn by officers of all branches, are field-grey. The leather service belt with plain double-claw buckle, the black top-boots and grey kid gloves are all items common to the uniforms of officers in the Army, Luftwaffe and SS.



Two different styles of tropical helmet issued to the Afrika Korps: left, of greenish drill fabric over cork, and right, of brown felt. The insignia were in the form of pin-back metal shields. (Author's collection)

A3 *Leutnant, Panzertruppen, vehicle parade uniform, 1939*

The *Sonderbekleidung*, or special black vehicle uniform of the *Panzertruppen*, was issued to all ranks for wear when in the field, or when working or parading actually in their vehicles. The colour was intended partly to conceal oil stains. The short, double-breasted *Feldjacke* could be buttoned to the throat, giving extra protection from the elements and the sharp projections inside a tank. The long, loose trousers were gathered at the ankle.

The loose black beret, or *Schutzmütze*, was worn over a rubber skull-protector. Flat woven badges, in white or silver depending on rank, were sewn to the front – the usual eagle surmounting an oak wreath and the *Reichskokarde*. The shirt was mouse-grey, the tie black. The tunic was piped around the collar in pink. The breast eagle appeared in white or silver, depending on rank. All ranks wore identical collar-patches – an unusual feature. They were black, outlined in pink piping, and bore small silver-grey metal skulls. Rank was indicated only by the shoulder-straps, of conventional design with *Waffenfarbe* underlay, and on this uniform normally sewn to the shoulder all the way round, to prevent snagging on equipment inside the

vehicle. The trousers were gathered at the ankles of the standard knee-length marching boots.

Special features worn by this officer include the heavy silver cord aiguillettes worn by all commissioned ranks on ceremonial parades; the ribbon of the Iron Cross 2nd Class in the tunic button-hole; and the Four-Year Service Medal. This Leutnant served with the expeditionary tank force in the Spanish Civil War; he wears around the right forearm a red cuff-title with gold edges, bearing on the outside of the arm the words '1936 Spanien 1939'. This was instituted in June 1939. The 1936 version of the Tank Assault Badge, with a large skull motif over a crude representation of a tank within a wreath, is worn in silver on the left breast. The silver brocade belt, with circular silver buckle, was worn by officers on parade occasions.

B1 *Unterfeldwebel, Panzertruppen, winter 1939*

Until the introduction of special winter combat clothing later in the war, the tank crews had no alternative but to wear the standard Army field-grey greatcoat in cold weather. In the confines of a crowded tank this was a highly impractical garment. This N.C.O.'s rank is indicated by his

The tropical helmets were often discarded in favour of the practical, comfortable - and stylish - tropical field cap. The eagle insignia are woven in light grey-blue on a tan ground, and the national cockade on a tan patch. (Author's collection)



shoulder-straps, looped and buttoned to the shoulders of the coat. The *Schutzmütze* is still worn, as are the marching boots. The P.08 pistol was a standard-issue personal weapon for tank crews.

This pattern of greatcoat, with a turn-down collar of dark blue-green badge cloth, was of pre-war issue; as stocks ran down, it was replaced with coats of inferior finish, with plain field-grey collars.

B2 Gefreiter, Panzer-Pioniere, 1940

Considering the importance, in any armoured formation, of recovering and repairing damaged vehicles swiftly, if necessary under fire, it is not surprising that each Panzer Division included a battalion of armoured combat engineers, or *Panzer-Pioniere*. This junior N.C.O. belongs to such a unit; his rank is indicated by the single white chevron on the left upper arm of his jacket. He wears the standard black vehicle uniform, but his branch of service is differentiated (by an order of 10 May 1940) by the replacement of pink *Waffenfarbe* with black and white mixed piping. This appears around his shoulder-straps, the collar of his jacket, the collar patches, and in a chevron on the front of his sidecap. This use of the ordinary field-grey *Feldmütze* with the black uniform was much seen in 1940 - and even as late as 1943 - owing to the black beret being withdrawn in the winter of 1939/40 before stocks of the new black *Feldmütze* were generally available. The badges

on the cap are the usual small eagle surmounting a national cockade; the breast eagle is white.

B3 Major, Panzertruppen, vehicle uniform, 1941

This company commander wears the usual vehicle uniform, with the twisted silver cord shoulder-straps of his rank. He wears the officer's version of the black Panzer *Feldmütze*; the crown seam and the front arch of the 'turn-up' are piped in silver, and the national cockade is enclosed by a chevron of pink *Waffenfarbe* piping. Below the silver breast-eagle is the silver star of the War Order of the German Cross. This decoration was instituted in late summer of 1941, to provide an intermediate decoration for those who already held the Iron Cross 1st Class, but did not qualify for the Knight's Cross. The ribbon of the Iron Cross 2nd Class is worn in the buttonhole, and the Iron Cross 1st Class is pinned below it. Grouped with it are the 1940 Tank Assault Badge - awarded for armoured personnel who took part in three separate actions, on three separate days, while actually in armoured fighting vehicles - and the silver Wound Badge.

The plain, double-claw buckled belt was the usual field wear for officers. The earphones and throat microphones are worn even when the soldier leaves the vehicle for a time - it is simpler to pull out the jack-plugs than to remove the hampering cables and then replace them, in the

confines of a turret. The boots are now lace-up ankle-length items in many cases, although the old marching boot would continue to be worn for another two years or so, alongside the newer style.

C1 *Panzer-Funker, campaign dress, 1941*

A tank radio operator, as he might appear during the great advance into Russia in the summer of 1941. Not only the tanks wore out – the men themselves became exhausted, and had no time to spend on their appearance. This private wears the black *Feldmütze* of the enlisted personnel and N.C.O.s, without silver piping. His jacket is unremarkable, except for the small white lightning-bolt badge on the left upper arm, identifying his trade. He wears a common combination of garments for the long weeks of constant living and working in a front-line tank; his uniform jacket belted over an old pair of working over-trousers, which hang loosely to the ground. The pink collar piping began to be omitted from the *Feldjacke* from mid-1942 onwards, but old stocks were used up.

C2 *Hauptmann, 24. Panzer Division, 1943*

This captain wears the standard vehicle uniform, with one interesting variation. In recognition of the fact that it was raised from the élite 1st Cavalry Division (the only Panzer formation raised from the cavalry arm) the 24th Panzer Division had the distinction of wearing golden-yellow cavalry *Waffenfarbe* piping in place of the usual rose-pink. It appeared at all points on the uniform and headgear normally distinguished by pink piping.

This officer displays a common practice: with his black uniform he wears the soft-peaked, rather battered-looking 'officer's old-style field cap' (*Offizierfeldmütze älterer Art*), without any cords or chinstrap, and with flat woven badges in silver on dark-green grounds. It is piped in cavalry yellow, in identification of his unit. Under his tunic he wears the usual pocketless mouse-grey shirt (*Heeres Hemd*); as a *Ritterkreuzträger*, he wears his Knight's Cross on its ribbon passing beneath the shirt collar.

C3 *Oberfeldwebel ('Spiess'), Sturmartillerie, 1943*

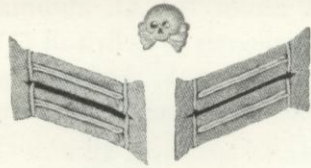
The 'Spiess' was not a rank, but a position within a unit – the senior N.C.O. automatically took over duties analogous to a British C.S.M., whatever his personal rank, and his position was marked by the two silver braid stripes worn on each sleeve. This C.S.M. of self-propelled artillery is in 'reporting order', with his leather-covered pouch at the ready, to report the state of the unit to his commanding officer.

The field-grey uniform worn by self-propelled artillery personnel of all classes was identical in cut to the black Panzer uniform. Note that there is no piping around the collar – this was never worn in the artillery. The grey sidecap, however, has a *soutache* of artillery red *Waffenfarbe* piping. The shoulder-straps are piped in artillery red, and one of several types of collar-patch asso-



Tired Afrika Korps soldiers display several interesting details of kit; note the high-lacing canvas boots, the light-coloured hessian helmet covers, the pouches for the MP. 40, and the thin drill uniforms. (Imperial War Museum)

AFRIKAKORPS



AFRIKA

The upper cuff-title, worn on the right sleeve, was the formation identification insignia, instituted for Afrika Korps personnel on 18 July 1941. It was replaced by the lower type, worn on the left sleeve and basically a campaign honour, on 15 January 1943; all personnel who served six months in Africa, or who were wounded in that theatre, were eligible. The small silver-grey death's-head, identical with that worn on the black collar-patches of the European tank uniform, was pinned to the lower lapel of the tropical tunic. The officer's collar-bars, worn on the collar of the field-grey uniform and the upper lapels of the tropical tunic, are in dull silver thread on a patch of bluish-green 'badge cloth'; pink Panzer *Waffenfarbe* appears in two small strips down the centre of the bars. (Author's collection)

ciated with the self-propelled artillery branch is sewn to the tunic. It is the normal Army collar-bar patch of a non-commissioned officer, with an outline of red *Waffenfarbe* piping. This style was worn by non-commissioned ranks only – officers wore their standard collar-bars on the usual backing patch of dark bluish-green badge cloth. Other types of patch worn by these increasingly vital members of the Panzer Division included collar-bars without piping; and dark bluish-green patches with red piping edging and silvery-grey skulls, identical in design to Panzer patches. As the war progressed, however, the type of patch shown here became the most common, although all styles were often observed alongside one another. As an artilleryman this N.C.O. wears the bronze General Assault Badge rather than the Tank Assault Badge; his black Wound Badge is pinned beside it, and the ribbon of his Iron Cross 2nd Class is worn in the buttonhole.

D1 Leutnant, Panzertruppen, winter 1943/4

In June 1943 the new field service cap (*Einheitsfeldmütze*) was authorized, and from that date it

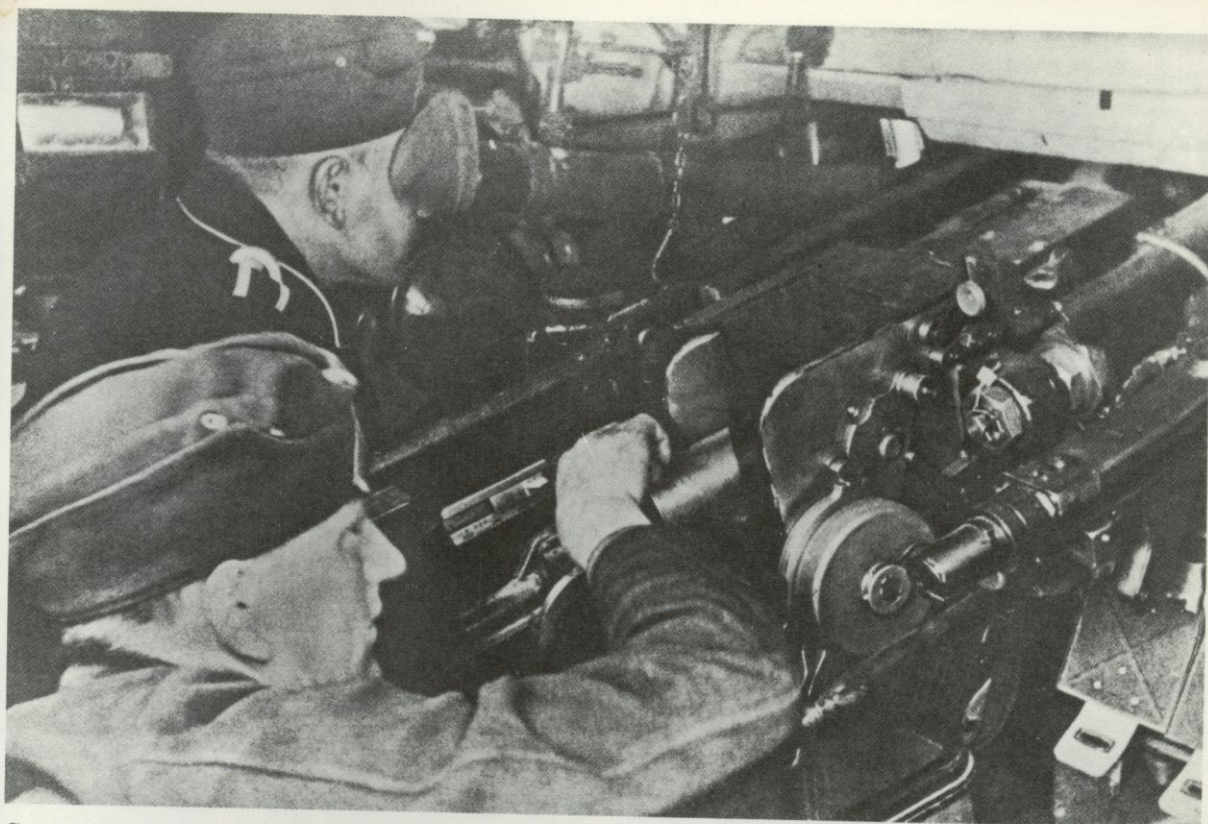
became the most widely used form of headgear in the German forces, apart from the steel helmet. Many versions appeared, differing in details. This tank troop commander wears the black Panzer pattern. As an officer he has the crown seam and the front arch of the 'turn-up' flap piped in silver; other caps observed had the crown piping only. The two small silver buttons on the flap were largely decorative, as although in theory the flap could be pulled down and worn round the face, it was more often sewn in place, for reasons of smartness.

He wears the reversible white/camouflage hooded winter smock, a bulky garment with a thick inner lining of blanket material, introduced the previous winter. Its double-breasted cut and overlapping flaps formed a windproof closure, and it was a very serviceable, comfortable, and popular garment. The 'water pattern' camouflage is visible on the reverse of the lapels and inside the hood. The stylized rank badge of a Leutnant – a single pair of oak leaves over a single bar, in green on a black patch – is worn on the left upper arm; this type of rank patch was widely used in place of all other forms of insignia on protective and camouflage clothing of all types. The heavy reversible over-trousers are fastened by drawstrings rather high on the ankle, over special felt-and-leather combination winter boots. The shapeless grey woollen toque was standard issue.

D2 Panzer Warte I, 1944

This first-class mechanic, taking a cigarette break during a round-the-clock engine job, wears the 'Other Ranks' version of the black *Einheitsmütze*. He is dressed in the reed-green Panzer denim suit (*Schilfgrüner Drillichschutzanzug*) issued to Army armoured formations as working dress. It was worn sometimes over the black uniform, and sometimes by itself as a warm-weather uniform. This soldier wears it in the latter way, over the field-grey late-issue shirt. The black leather belt and lace-up ankle boots are standard; these boots, in use since 1941, had by this stage completely superseded the marching boots for wear in the vehicle.

The denim jacket was issued with a breast-eagle in the usual Army colours of grey on sage-



Gunner (left) and loader in action in a PzKpfw. III tank.

green. Armoured personnel usually added special insignia: the normal pink-piped black shoulder-straps, the death's-head collar-patches, and any other insignia they wished. On his right forearm this man wears the qualification badge of his trade – a field-grey circular patch with the pink cord edging of first-class grade, and the pink *Zahnrad* or cogwheel design.

D3 Obergefreiter, Panzerjäger, 116. Panzer Division, 1944

As mentioned in the commentary on Plate C3, the self-propelled artillery branch became increasingly important as the war progressed. By the close of 1944 two or three companies of self-propelled 'tank destroyers', usually Jagdpanzer IVs or Jagdpanthers, were a potent weapon in the armoury of the Panzer Division. The duplication of effort involved in the manning and organization of the S.P. units by the artillery, rather than the

armoured branch, caused endless frustrations, and the overlapping of command is perhaps reflected in the apparently pointless changes of insignia to which these troops were subject. As stated previously, the final form (in theory) was for these troops to wear normal Army collar-bars with red *Waffenfarbe* edging for non-commissioned personnel, but uniformity was never really achieved.

This corporal wears a popular variation which emphasized the marginal difference between the crew of a Panther tank and the crew of a Jagdpanther of the same division, perhaps operating within half a mile of each other. He wears the field-grey uniform of the artillery vehicle crews, of identical cut with the Panzer suit. His collar-patches are the black, pink-piped tank crew pattern. His shoulder-straps are likewise of Panzer pattern, distinguished only by the pink Gothic 'P' (for *Panzerjäger*). His breast-eagle and rank chevrons are of standard Army pattern.

On the left side of his field-grey *Einheitsmütze* appears a small black and white enamel badge bearing the greyhound insignia of the 116th Division. In the closing months of the war such divisional emblems, while not common, were increasingly adopted by a few élite formations. On the peaked service cap they were worn beneath the eagle badge and above the oak spray.

E1 General der Panzertruppen, 1943

One of the architects of the Panzer arm, in normal General's service dress. The peaked cap, of fine-quality material, is field-grey – but slight variations in shade were common with items of this quality, a comment which applies with equal force to the tunic and breeches. The band is dark-green velvet, and the piping around crown seam and band is gold metallic thread. The eagle badge is woven in gold thread on a dark-green background; pressed gilt metal eagles were also common. (Before January 1943 the insignia on the General's cap were in silver metal or thread, although the other gold distinctions accompanied them.) The oak-leaf spray surrounding the national cockade is also in gold, as are the two cords.

The fine-quality tunic, frequently of a rather pale shade and sometimes almost approaching a blue-grey rather than a green-grey colour, has four pockets; the large pleated breast-pockets are external, the lower pair internal with slanted flaps. All buttons on the tunic are of gilt metal. The national emblem above the right breast-pocket is woven in gold thread on a dark-green ground. The turn-down collar is of dark-green cloth, with the large red collar patches of General's rank, embroidered in gold with the traditional oak-leaf motif. The red shoulder-strap underlay is common to General Officers of all branches; it bears a heavy plaited motif in mixed gold and silver cord, and two silver pips. The pegged breeches have the broad red stripes of General's rank down the outer seam – actually a thin line of red piping follows the seam itself, with a broad red stripe on either side.

The *Ritterkreuz* is worn at the throat. On the left breast are the 1939 Bar to the 1914–18 Iron Cross; the Iron Cross 1st Class; the 1914–18

Wound Badge in silver; and one of the rare (ninety-nine only) First World War Tank Assault Badges. This decoration was awarded in 1921 to crew members of tanks who had taken part in three or more actions during the First World War – an exclusive band indeed.

E2 Krafttradfahrer, Aufklärungstruppen

The mobility of the Panzer Division was only possible if advanced reconnaissance and internal control were maintained at all times. Motorcycle units were used in a variety of roles, including armed light reconnaissance, as well as providing a useful means of mobile liaison. For the protection of the motorcycle riders the German Army produced a voluminous coat of rubberized fabric, illustrated here as worn by a reconnaissance unit motor-cyclist after a hard journey in the Russian thaw. The full skirts of the coat could be pulled back between the legs and buttoned around the calves, giving warmth and protection while riding astride the bike. This is the reason for the somewhat 'pregnant' appearance of the rider – the cut of the coat when buttoned in this way is intended to allow comfort in the sitting position, not elegance when standing!

The coat has a broad turn-down collar of field-grey woollen material, and two pairs of silver-grey buttons on the chest; it is double-breasted for greater wind protection. No collar-patches are worn. The wrists have tight-buttoning bands, and there are two side-pockets, opening almost verti-



Congratulations for the crew of a PzKpfw. IV tank in Russia. (Imperial War Museum)

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cally. Civilian scarves were widely used throughout the Wehrmacht in the field. The gas-mask canister was worn around the neck by motorcyclists. The normal shoulder-straps are looped and buttoned to the coat – in this case piped in cavalry yellow, typical of a *recce* unit. Although such decorations would seldom be seen in the field, we have included in our figure the motorcyclist's shoulder tally – a Gothic 'K' (for *Krafttrad*) above his *Abteilung* number, both woven in the *Waffenfarbe* of the branch to which he is attached. Note the strapped leggings of canvas and leather worn over the boots.

E3 Zeugmeister Unterfeldwebel, Panzergrenadier, 1942

An N.C.O. – the rank corresponds roughly to sergeant – preparing to go out on the town while on leave. For 'walking out', the service tunic (*Heeres Dienstanzug*) was in practice worn much more frequently than the *Waffenrock* illustrated in Plate A1, although the latter was intended for walking out as well as parade wear.

The *Schirmmütze* for non-commissioned personnel is basically similar to the officer's model, although of poorer quality; the crown is smaller, the silver cords of the officer are replaced by a black gloss-leather chinstrap, and the badges are in a duller silver-grey alloy. The colours are the same, however; field-grey crown, dark-green band, and *Waffenfarbe* piping – in this case, the green of the armoured infantry. The 1936 service tunic with the dark-green collar is worn buttoned to the throat with this order of dress. The 9 mm-wide silver braid distinguishes all ranks from Unteroffizier upwards, and reappears on the shoulder-straps; the braid follows the edge of the straps 'on all three sides', identifying the wearer's exact rank. The usual national emblem appears above the right breast-pocket, and the ribbon of the Iron Cross 2nd Class is worn in the second buttonhole. The six small eyelets in the front (and back) of the tunic are for the removable brass belt-hooks, normally fitted when field equipment is being worn, to help support the weight of the belt. Above the left breast-pocket are medal ribbons marking the soldier's service on the West Wall and in the first winter in Russia – the latter usually referred to as 'The Order of the Frozen



A Panzer major studies his maps, slightly hampered by the cables and straps of earphones, throat microphones and field-glasses. Note silver-piped sidecap.

Meat'. The bronze badge on the pocket is the SA Sports Badge, won during the soldier's pre-war membership of the *Sturmabteilungen* or Storm Troopers. He wears no Assault Badge; his trade badge, the cloth insignia on the right forearm, identifies him as *Zeugmeister* – a clothing store N.C.O.! His Iron Cross is no doubt a memento of some unexpected encounter in the Russian winter, when Zhukov's Siberians penetrated deep behind German lines.

The usual issue belt is worn, and for walking out the bayonet is decorated with the Army N.C.O.'s green and silver brocade *Troddel* or side-arm knot. Trousers and laced shoes are worn with this order.



The StuG III assault gun, one of several types of 'SP' produced in great numbers in the last two years of the war in an effort to make up Panzer division losses quickly. (Imperial War Museum)

F1 Gefreiter, Panzergrenadier, 1940

The typical soldier, and his field equipment. He wears the grey-painted 1935 steel helmet, with a black shield decal with a white eagle and swastika motif on the left side, and a black/white/red diagonally divided tricolor shield decal on the right. Every soldier was issued with a pair of simple dust and smoke goggles, usually pushed up on to the helmet when not required. The 1936 service tunic with dark-green collar and shoulder-straps is worn open at the neck when in the field. The usual national emblem is sewn above the right pocket, and the chevron of rank on the left upper arm. There are no other insignia. The rather loose trousers are tucked in standard issue marching boots.

This lance-corporal is sorting out his discarded kit after a rest on the march. His Mauser K.98 7.92 mm service rifle is slung on his shoulder for the moment. At his feet are his mess tin, his fluted gas-mask canister (normally worn behind the left hip, slung round the body on a webbing strap), and the cotton bag for his anti-gas cape, normally slung on the chest. The belt and Y-strap harness support six pouches for rifle ammunition, three on each side of the buckle; a canvas 'bread bag' for rations and small kit; a quart-capacity felt-covered canteen, with cup; an entrenching spade reversed in a leather case; and the Mauser bayonet.

F2 Unteroffizier, Panzergrenadier, summer 1943

The relatively tidy soldier of 1940 has turned into an alert, scruffy, highly skilled veteran in three years of harsh warfare. His helmet is unchanged, except that it is worn comfortably pushed back, and the decals have long since worn off. The tunic and trousers are now of light reed-green cotton denim for summer comfort, and are worn with the sleeves rolled up and the chest unbuttoned, to taste. This sergeant, leading a patrol in Russia or Italy, has knotted an old civilian scarf round his throat as a sweat-rag. His insignia of rank are still worn at collar and shoulder. The ribbon of his Iron Cross 2nd Class is worn in the usual button-hole, even in the front line; likewise his *Sturmabzeichen*, identifying him as a seasoned combat infantryman, is pinned to his tunic. On his left upper arm is a campaign shield; these were awarded for service in notably hazardous or successful actions – Kholm, Demjansk, Krim, the Kuban, all led to such awards. As a squad leader he carries field-glasses; on his belt are slung the canted webbing magazine pouches for his MP. 40 Schmeisser sub-machine gun, and he carries a stick-grenade ready in his hand. His main equipment has been left behind in his dug-out; on the back of his belt he would carry only his bread bag, mess tin, one or two canteens and perhaps a home-made canvas haversack of grenades or extra ammunition.

F3 Leutnant, Panzergrenadier Regt. 'Grossdeutschland', 1944

By 1944 camouflage clothing was being worn more and more frequently. This young armoured infantry officer bandaging a minor wound is a member of the élite Panzer Division '*Grossdeutschland*'; he wears the unit's name on a silver-on-black cuff-title on his right sleeve, and a gilt '*GD*' monogram on his shoulder-straps. His camouflaged helmet cover is in the usual splinter pattern of brown, dark green and light green, with a 'falling rain' pattern of dark green over the other shades. The loops are for extra camouflage in the form of foliage. His camouflaged twill tunic is identical with the usual field-grey officer's service tunic in cut, apart from lacking the deep turn-

back cuffs and pocket pleats. He wears his normal collar-patches and shoulder-straps on this combat garment, although a simple rank patch on the arm would be more in keeping with the spirit and letter of regulations. A map case is slung on his field service belt. The camouflaged over-trousers, with the distinctive break in pattern caused by the vertical seams, are gathered at the ankle over laced boots.

Camouflage clothing was not general issue to all German troops, but a variety of smocks, jackets, trousers and ponchos were available. A constant battle seems to have been waged by the higher command to limit the wearing of insignia on these garments to stylized arm rank patches; from the available photographic evidence, the front-line soldier's liking for his full unit and rank insignia won every time!

G1 Oberleutnant, Panzertruppen, D.A.K., 1942

This tank company commander of the Deutsches Afrika Korps wears one of many variations of uniform seen in the desert fighting – a campaign which seemed to encourage an individual approach to military dress by all ranks of all armies! This is a relatively smart version. The light, comfortable and stylish desert field cap, forerunner and direct ancestor of the 1943 *Einheitsfeldmütze*, was extremely popular and almost universally worn as the preferred dress. The national emblem was woven in blue-grey thread on a dull brown background, and the cockade on a diamond-shaped patch of brown. Officers usually wore caps with dull silver piping round the crown seam – and sometimes following the edge of the false ‘turn-up’ as well – but it was by no means uncommon for officers to wear ‘Other Ranks’ caps. The *soutache* of *Waffenfarbe* piping followed the upper edges of the diamond-shaped patch; here, in Panzer pink.

Open-necked shirts were the normal dress, but scarves were worn at personal taste. The drill tunic of sage-green lightweight material follows the general lines of the field-grey officer's service tunic, though without the turn-back cuffs. The colour of all items of tropical dress varied sharply. Some batches were green, others a dark, almost ‘mustard’ shade of tan, still others a light sandy shade. All weathered and bleached in short order



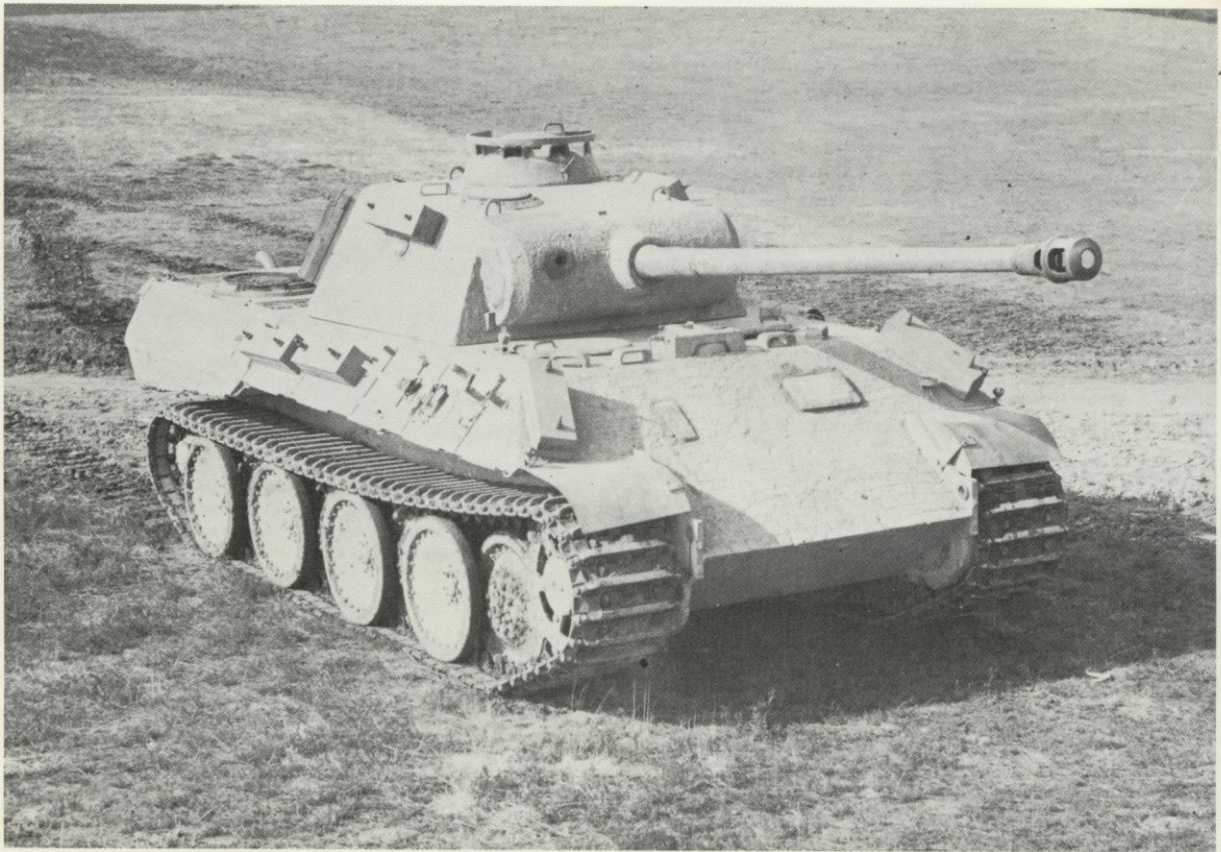
Despite their image of massive strength, the Panzers were no less vulnerable to the appropriate weapons than the tanks of any other army; this late-model PzKpfw. IV, with extra turret armour, was knocked out in Russia. (Imperial War Museum)

after arrival in the desert, and any one unit might contain uniforms of similar cut but of shades ranging through every gradation from deep tan to mid-green. The normal officer's collar-bars are worn here on the upper lapel; Panzer officers pinned directly to the lower lapel the small metal skull badges from the collar-patches of the black vehicle uniform. The breast-eagle is an ‘Other Ranks’ version, in pale blue-grey thread on brown. The Iron Cross 1st and 2nd Classes are displayed in the usual way; Tank Assault Badge and a black Wound Badge are also worn. The belt is a light webbing pattern, with a circular bronze buckle embossed with an oak wreath and an eagle and swastika motif. The long, loose cotton drill trousers are of a light sandy shade – this contrast with the tunic colour is not deliberate, but merely the result of different batches of clothing being issued to his unit at different times. He wears them gathered at the ankle over the long canvas and leather desert boots, as extra protection against flies and sand. He carries a pair of amber-tinted sun and sand goggles.

The ‘AFRIKA KORPS’ cuff-title was authorized in July 1941; among the unit insignia for all members of the D.A.K. rather than campaign insignia.

G2 Obergefreiter, Panzergrenadier, D.A.K., 1942

Poorly equipped with specialized mine-lifting equipment in a theatre of war in which the mine



The magnificent 'Panther', PzKpfw. V. Introduced too hurriedly in an effort to counter the superb Russian T-34, the Panther suffered more casualties from technical failure than from enemy fire in the first months of

service. The first batch of 300 were entirely 'used up' at Kursk in July 1943, many being destroyed by spontaneous engine fires. (Imperial War Museum)

played an enormous part, the Afrika Korps soldier was forced to do it the hard way – probing by hand with a bayonet. This cool N.C.O. wears the standard 1935 helmet, painted over with a matt sand colour. His scarf is a personal addition. His tunic is exactly similar in cut to that of the officer in Plate G1, but displays one of the many colour variations observed in the desert. His long trousers are tucked into the high-lacing canvas and leather desert boots. Belt and harness are of webbing, with darkened metal fittings. Shoulder-straps are of the usual design, but the ground colour is a light sandy tan. The rank chevrons are woven in a sand-yellow shade on a greenish-khaki patch; this yellow colour replaced the silver *Tresse* in N.C.O.'s rank distinctions. The faded blue-grey and brown collar-patches are typical of the tropical pattern insignia, as is the breast eagle in the same colours. The water canteen for tropical use has a conical black plastic cup. The Infantry Assault Badge is pinned to the left breast.

G3 Wachtmeister, 33. Aufklärungs Abteilung, D.A.K., 1941

The rank designations in cavalry units differed in some ways from those in the mass of the Army; *Wachtmeister* is the equivalent of *Feldwebel*, sergeant-major. It was the cavalry arm which, logically enough, provided most of the highly mobile reconnaissance units which were the eyes of the armoured divisions. The 33rd Reconnaissance Detachment, a unit of roughly battalion strength, served with the 15th Panzer Division from the earliest battles in North Africa.

It was drawn from Reiter Regiment 6, and was thus entitled to wear on all types of headgear the gold eagle tradition badge of the old Brandenburg Dragoons, the '*Schwedter Adler*'. It was pinned between the two usual badges on the fronts of all caps, and to the front of the sun helmet issued when the unit took ship for Africa. This sun helmet, or *Tropische Kopfbedeckung*, was not a success, and was soon discarded in favour of the

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less cumbersome field cap – over which it had no advantages from a protective point of view! The cloth pugaree illustrated here was not a common feature, but has been copied from a photograph of a soldier of this rank and this unit. The universal badges worn on the helmet were two shield-shaped metal plates with pin-backs, their design duplicating the insignia of the decals on the Army steel helmet.

The shirt was very similar to the field-grey shirt worn in Europe, but as it was intended for frequent use on formal occasions in 'shirt-sleeve order' it was of superior finish and manufacture, with a reinforced yoke. The colour varied between a dark sandy shade and sage-green, and frequent washing soon faded it to an indeterminate tone. The shorts were frequently worn rolled up. The long woollen socks were often discarded in favour of ankle socks when in the field. The footwear

The name 'Tiger' became a symbol of terror to the crews of lighter Allied tanks. Despite its many drawbacks on the open battlefields of Russia, the PzKpfw. VI was so potent as a defensive weapon in the close countryside of

illustrated is a type of 'sneaker' very similar in appearance and manufacture to the foot of the long desert boot, and perhaps cut down from it.

The only insignia worn with shirt-sleeve order are the shoulder-straps, looped and buttoned on in the usual way. Note that the silver *Tresse* is replaced by a washed-out sandy-yellow braiding on a brown ground. The normal grey metal pips are applied, however; the outer piping is in cavalry yellow.

Hr Unterfeldwebel, Feldgendarmarie, summer 1944

An unappreciated but vital part of the armoured division – the divisional military police, responsible for keeping the thousands of vehicles moving on often poor and always crowded roads, sometimes under fire. Their other duties – disciplinary, and under front-line conditions harshly enforced

north-west Europe that an image of crushing strength and invulnerability still clings to its name. (Imperial War Museum)





Company of 'Tiger II' ('King Tiger') heavy tanks on manoeuvres. The basic buff-yellow factory scheme was camouflaged at unit level with dark green and brown. These vehicles served in independent heavy tank battalions under direct Army command, rather than as integral units of the individual divisions. (Imperial War Museum)

– made them hated by the rank and file, but that would be inevitable in any army.

The *Feldgendarmerie* senior sergeant illustrated wears the service uniform commonly seen in 1944. The tunic is of 1943 pattern – similar in cut to the earlier style, but with various economy measures incorporated. The pockets have straight flaps, and are unpleated. The collar is no longer of dark green, but of field-grey like the rest of the tunic, and so are the shoulder-straps. The tunic is made from a poorer-quality cloth, with a high 'shoddy' content and an increased use of rayon rather than wool. It gave poor protection against heat and cold, and tore easily when wet.

The trousers are tucked into webbing anklets over laced ankle boots – another obvious economy measure in the hard-pressed Reich was the withdrawal of the high marching boot, which used up such vast quantities of leather.

Conventional insignia include the grey-on-sage-green breast-eagle, the silver *Tresse* round the collar, the collar-patches, and the shoulder-straps indicating rank, the latter piped in *Feldgendarmerie* orange *Waffenfarbe*. The special badge of this branch of service is sewn to the left upper arm – an eagle and swastika in a wreath, in the usual police style; the eagle and wreath are in *Waffenfarbe* orange, the swastika in black, and the patch is field-grey. Officers wore an identical badge in

silver thread throughout. A cuff-title of brown cloth, edged with grey and bearing the word '*Feldgendarmerie*' in grey Gothic script, is worn on the left forearm.

To indicate their function when on duty the military police wore the gorget or *Ringkragen*. This was of dull silver on a chain of masked links; two bosses and an eagle motif were picked out in yellowish luminous paint, as was the word '*Feldgendarmerie*' on a grey scroll. It was this 'chain collar' which gave rise to one of the more printable soldiers' nicknames for the M.P.s – '*Kettenhund*' ('Chained Dog').

H2 Generalmajor, *Panzertruppen*, field service dress, 1944

One of the young leaders who came to prominence as a result of direct battlefield experience in Africa and Russia, this Major-General wears the slightly more casual dress of the last few months of the war. The *Schirmmütze* was frequently replaced by the *Einheitsmütze*, even among General Officers; it is of superior material and finish, and has General's distinctions in the form of gilt buttons on the flap, gold piping round the crown, and a gold-on-dark-green woven badge.

The tunic is a high-quality modification of the troops' 1944 *Feldbluse*, the two-pocket waist-length garment introduced in place of the long-skirted tunic for economy reasons; cf. Plate H3. The more elaborate features of the General's pattern include pleated pockets with scooped flaps, and a fly front. The collar-patches of his rank are worn on the open collar, and the shoulder-straps are conventional; pocket and shoulder-buttons are gilt. He wears the national emblem above the right breast-pocket, woven in gilt thread on a green background, and a row of campaign and service ribbons opposite. His Knight's Cross is visible at the throat, its ribbon passing under the shirt collar. On his left pocket are his Iron Cross 1st Class and a high grade of *Panzer Sturmabzeichen*; as the war progressed the tank arm began to see so much action that the 'three separate combats' qualification for this Assault Badge became meaningless. Versions with small plaques at the base were awarded for the appropriate number of actions – 25, 50, 75 and 100. The bronze version awarded to armoured car personnel appeared in

the same variations.

The red-striped breeches and jackboots are conventional. He carries over his arm the General's special pattern of greatcoat; this was of fine quality, field-grey in colour, with a dark-green collar, bright red lapel facings usually worn open and visible, and twelve large gilt buttons.

- Two items mark specific areas of past service, one official and the other unofficial but characteristic. The 'Africa with Palms' cuff-title, worn on the left sleeve and bearing the word 'AFRIKA' between two palm heads, was instituted in January 1943 as a campaign decoration awarded to all ranks who completed six months' service in that theatre, or who were wounded. The script and edges are silver-grey, the band a soft brown. The carved stick is a souvenir much favoured by the Wehrmacht on the Eastern front - the famous 'Wolchowstock'. Carved with designs indicative of

the unit's role and service, and with traditional Germanic decorations, it was sometimes presented to popular commanders when leaving a unit.

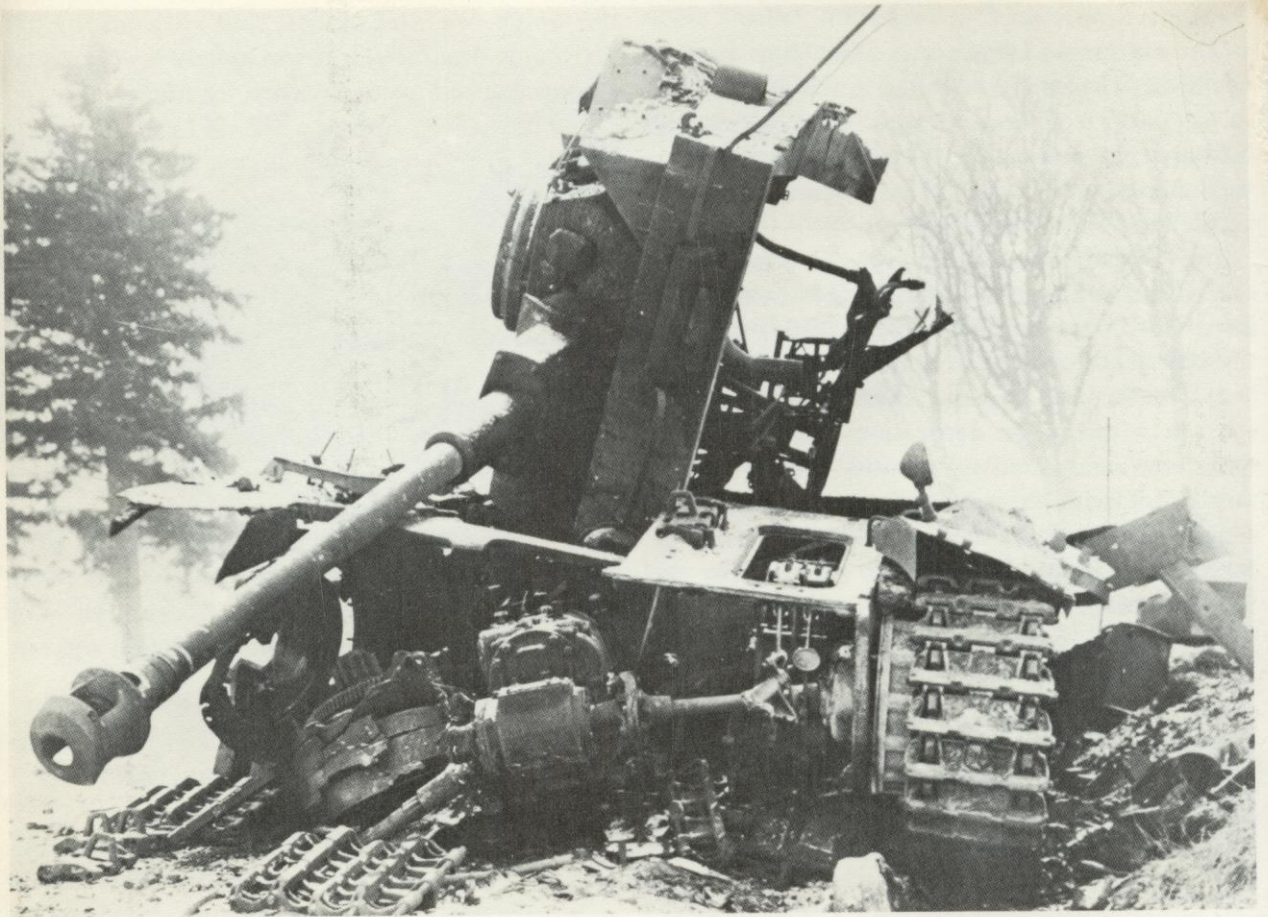
H3 Panzergrenadier, 1945

The sight which greeted the Tommies and G.I.s at the end - the last remnants of the Panzer Division trudging west to seek British or American captivity rather than Russian revenge.

Incredibly resilient for so long, the Wehrmacht had scraped the bottom of the barrel for manpower; boys, old men and medical rejects filled the ranks of the few veteran survivors. The distinction between a *Panzergrenadier* and an infantryman was now academic; the half-tracks had no fuel, and dared not move by day anyway. There was so much frantic, and pointless, redesignation of scratch units going on that the distinction was not

The last throw - a 'King Tiger' passes a dejected column of American prisoners in the Ardennes, December 1944. (Imperial War Museum)





Brutally sculptured by flame and explosive, the gutted hulk of a late-model PzKpfw. IV in the Ardennes marks the graveyard of the last great Panzer assault wave. (Imperial War Museum)

even valid from an official point of view – hence this soldier's infantry white *Waffenfarbe* piping at the shoulders.

He wears a poor-quality *Einheitsmütze*, and a wool-shoddy sweater under his *Feldbluse*. This economy garment carries a late-pattern national emblem above the right pocket, the eagle and swastika on a triangular patch. The collar-patches are also of a late, utility pattern – simple motifs in dull grey, without any branch or rank embellish-

ments. (The silver collar-braid of senior N.C.O.s was seldom worn with the *Feldbluse*.)

He has abandoned all equipment not directly necessary to personal survival – assuming that he was ever issued with anything else. His bread bag, and a roll made from his weatherproof camouflaged shelter-quarter, contain his personal effects and what food he has managed to forage. His canteen and mess tin complete his simple needs. He will need nothing else in the P.O.W. cage.

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