

4. Panzer-Division

on the Eastern Front (1) 1941-1943

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INTRODUCTION

4. Panzer-Division, commanded by Gen. Maj. Georg-Hans Reinhardt, was formally established on November 10, 1938 with its headquarters in Würzburg. The formation process had begun much earlier though. Since 1936, each Panzer-Regiment was required to provide 2-4 companies for raising new Panzer-Regiments each year. 5. Panzer-Brigade, established in Bamberg on November 3, 1938, was composed of Panzer-Regiment 35, also established in Bamberg on November 11 along with Panzer-Regiment 36 established in Schweinfurt on November 10. Both Regiments were made up of men from Pz.Rgt.1 and 2 from 2. Panzer-Division, Pz.Rgt.7 from 4. Pz. Brig. and Pz.Rgt.25. Pz.Rgt.35 was commanded by Oberst Lt. Heinrich Eberbach, who was destined to become a very famous officer of the Panzerwaffe. Schützen-Rgt.12 was created on August 1, 1938 in Meiningen around the Austrian 1. Infanterieregiment, Kraftfahrjägerbataillon I and Inf.Rgt. Eisenstadt.

The organization of the two Panzer regiments was typical for such formations in the Third Reich at that time. Each Regiment was composed of two battalions, each of which consisted of four companies of tanks, one equipped with heavy tanks (for that time) and the remainder with light tanks. There was also a Stab (headquarters) Kompanie, Nachrichten-Zug (signals platoon) and leichte Panzer-Zug. The rest of the Division was also organized in the same way as the other Panzer divisions with motorcycle, anti-tank, reconnaissance, engineering and radio battalions and an artillery regiment.

Fall Weiss - the Invasion of Poland

Prior to the outbreak of World War II, 4. Panzer-Division was highly trained but had little time for training in cooperation with other branches of service among the lower levels of command. Nevertheless, during their service in Poland in 1939, they acquitted themselves quite well. 4. Panzer-Division fought under command of 10. Armee in H.Gr. Süd with 1. Panzer-Division and 1., 2. and 3. leichte Divisions against three Polish Corps and, together with 1. Panzer-Division, formed the spearhead of 10. Armee. During the first week of combat, the Polish Army quickly disintegrated and only small, separated units defied the German assault.

Panzer-Regiment 35 was the first unit to reach the outskirts of Warsaw and on September 9, was ordered to advance into the city. Two assault groups were formed and Gefechtsgruppe I, with Pz.Rgt.35, was ordered to capture the Ochota area and Gefechtsgruppe II, with Pz.Rgt.36, was directed against the Wola area.

G.Gr. II met a well organized defense and suffered high casualties. Only three tanks of II./Pz.Rgt.35 managed to break through the Polish defenses to reach the main railway station in Wola but later had to abandon their position and return to the main force. The fighting for Ochota was somewhat harder. The tanks of the Brigade and Regimental commanders were hit and two company commanders were killed. Thus the attack on Warsaw had to be abandoned and the Division was pulled back to rest and refit. The opportunity to be the first division to capture an enemy capital city had been lost. Except for an engagement on September 16 in coordination with Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler, which cost the Division the loss of 23 Panzers, the remaining days in Poland until the surrender on September 20, were less difficult. Of 10,220 men in the Division on August 31, 1939, 504 were killed and 547 wounded. Vehicle losses in XVI Armee-Korps from September 1 to September 20 were as follows:

Pz.Kpfw.I	27
Pz.Kpfw.II	26
Pz.Kpfw.III	42
Pz.Kpfw.IV	32
kl.Pz.Bef.Wg.	38
gr.Pz.Bef.Wg.	67
le.Pz.Spähwagen	14
s.Pz.Spähwagen	28

Many other tanks were damaged, further reducing the number of operational tanks. 4. Panzer-Division lost 94 tanks damaged or destroyed between September 1 and September 25, or about one third of the 305 tanks they had at the beginning of the war. Among their losses were 6 Pz.Kpfw.IV, half of the number assigned to the Division, some of which were blown up by their crews to avoid capture after they had been damaged in battle.

Fall Gelb - the Invasion of France

4. Panzer-Division, now commanded by Gen. Maj. Johann Stever, invaded Belgium

with XVI. Pz.K on May 10, 1940 as part of H.Gr.B. Their task was to protect the flank of H.Gr.A, which, with seven of the ten Panzer Divisions, was to cross the Meuse River, breakout to the west and split the French forces. The French reacted to the threat in the north by sending their mechanized cavalry forces against the Germans which resulted in the first major tank vs. tank battle of the war. Pz.Rgt.35 met them near Hannut on May 12 and again at Merdorp on May 13, knocking out 39 French tanks plus an additional 14 on May 14. The Division had entered the battle with 13,941 men and 314 combat tanks, 263 of which were light tanks including 152 obsolete Pz.Kpfw.I. They also had 48 armored cars, 14 Sd.Kfz.251 half-tracks, 1,722 trucks, 773 cars, 80 prime movers and 1,392 motorcycles. Their losses were 518 men killed and 1,531 wounded. In addition, there were 13 armored cars and 86 tanks destroyed. From the larger number of casualties, it is obvious that the French Army had been a more powerful opponent than the Polish Army had been.

After the collapse of France, 4. Panzer-Division was transferred south to Libourne, close to the Vichy border, for occupation duties. During this time, command of the Division was transferred to Gen. Maj. von Langermann und Ehrlencamp. There were plans to move it further south for possible operations against Gibraltar, but these plans never materialized and the unit remained where it was. On November 11, 1940, Pz.Rgt.36 was transferred to 14. Panzer-Division during its formation. In March 1941, the Division was ordered to cancel all leaves and prepare to move on April 4. The Division was transported to an area on the Hungarian border in preparation for the invasion of Yugoslavia, but on April 20, was sent instead to the Posen (now Poznan) area of Poland. It stayed there for almost the next two months and on June 6, marched to the German-Soviet border, where it was placed under command of Gen. Heinz Guderian's Panzergruppe 2 in H.Gr. Mitte. Pz.Gr.2 was composed of three Korps including XXIV Pz.K. to which 4. Panzer-Division was assigned.

The main Divisional units were Pz.Rgt.35 commanded by Oberst Heinrich Eberbach and 4. Schützen-Brigade commanded by Oberst Dietrich von Saucken. Pz.Rgt.35 was composed of two

battalions of tanks, commanded by Oberst Lt. Hochbaum and Major von Lauchert. Each battalion had 4 companies. On the morning of June 22, 1941, the reported strength of Pz.Rgt.35 was as follows: 44 Pz.Kpfw.II, 105 Pz.Kpfw.III, 20 Pz.Kpfw.IV and 8 Pz.Bef.Wg. In addition, Art.Rgt.103 had several Pz.Kpfw.II Beobachtungswagen, 3./Pioniere-Battalion 79 had a dozen Pz.Kpfw.I and II and 3 other tanks were placed in the Division Stab bringing the total to 204 tanks of all types.

The Division had 35 armored cars in Pz.Aufkl.Abt.7 and 43 Sd.Kfz.250 or 251, mostly in 4.Schützen-Brigade, which brought the fighting strength of the Division to 282 vehicles altogether. With 185 prime movers, 1,992 trucks, 1,001 cars and 1,586 motorcycles, 4.Panzer-Division was one of the best equipped divisions in the Wehrmacht at this time.

Operation 'Barbarossa' - the Invasion of the Soviet Union

4.Panzer-Division attacked the Soviet forces across the Bug River south of Brest-Litovsk on June 22, 1941 and advanced through the forested area east towards the area of Kobryn. The tactical superiority of the Germans was total and the first clashes with the Red Army were very limited. The Division captured the city of Kobryn just after 1500 hours on June 23 and then marched in the direction of Minsk, guarding the southern flank of 3.Panzer-Division. As the Soviets were pushed steadily east, casualties in the Division were light. Despite the great power of the Soviet Air Force, only one bombing mission was carried out against 4.Panzer-Division on June 24 with 12 bombers which resulted in 3 men killed and 20 wounded. Taking Baranovichi on June 27, the Germans captured 25 guns, 11 tanks and 300 prisoners at the cost of 1 dead and a few wounded. Dozens of Soviet built Ford trucks and several fuel dumps were also captured and at once added to the Division's inventory.

In early July, 4.Panzer-Division broke through the 'Stalin Line' of fortifications and advanced towards the Dniepr River. On July 4, they were ordered to take Staryi Bychoff and the bridge across the river. Here the Division met stronger Soviet opposition and was involved in hard fighting. Between July 1 and July 10, the Division lost 120 men with another 178 wounded. After several heavy tank battles, the Division was down to 25 operational

tanks on July 13, 1941. By July 20, the Division had fought its way to Propoisk, capturing the city and repulsing several Soviet counterattacks in the process. These resulted in another 151 men killed and 493 wounded. Losses mounted as the Division was attacked from the north and south by waves of desperate enemy soldiers who melted back into the forests. A few counterattacks were launched where groups of the enemy had concentrated which cost the Division 47 killed and 87 wounded, between July 20 and July 22. Six tanks were lost to Molotov cocktails on July 21 alone which raised the Division's losses to 42 tanks destroyed and 89 damaged, including 40 heavily damaged. Pz.Rgt.35 itself had lost 54 men killed and 87 wounded up to this time. As of July 21, there were 44 serviceable tanks in the Division. This situation improved with the arrival of spare parts and replacements in the next few days and brought their strength up to 90 tanks: 34 Pz.Kpfw.II, 6 Pz.Kpfw.III (3.7cm), 36 Pz.Kpfw.III (5cm), 11 Pz.Kpfw.IV and 11 Pz.Bef.Wg.

Ammunition and fuel supplies were also a major problem being experienced, caused by the lack of good roads to transport supplies as well as the lack of trucks. Of the 178 tons of fuel required by 4.Panzer-Division on July 27, only 133 tons could be supplied and, in fact, much less was often received. On July 30, offensive operations across the Dniepr River had to be cancelled for 4 to 5 days because of the shortage of ammunition.

In early August, 4.Panzer-Division was ordered to move south and took part in the operation against Soviet forces grouped in the Kiev area. The fighting lasted almost two months and resulted in a great success but not without cost. The fight for the Kiev cauldron hadn't been so heavy as the struggles on the Dniepr River because of the fast moving maneuver tactics employed by the Germans against the enemy flanks and disintegrating smaller Soviet units. The first big success was won in the early phase of the operation when, in two days, the Division advanced over 70km, took 400 prisoners and captured or destroyed 35 guns, 7 tanks and 58 other vehicles. On August 12, one company of tanks, an 8.8cm gun and a troop of pioniers engaged three Soviet armored trains, knocking out one of them while a second was destroyed by Stuka dive bombers.

The most desperate battles were fought

in late September when, in the Romny area the Germans tried to stop as many Soviet forces from escaping encirclement as possible. Dozens of skirmishes were fought by small scale groups of forces in short, but intensive, fire fights. The Division ended this mission with H.Gr.Süd around September 25 and moved north to the Orel area to prepare for the offensive against Moscow. During the fighting east of Kiev, it is estimated the 4.Panzer-Division accounted for 3,000 Soviet soldiers killed and 17,000 prisoners taken.

On September 30, 4.Panzer-Division took part in the renewed offensive against Moscow called Operation 'Typhoon'. Together with the other divisions of XXIV Pz.K., they attacked enemy positions east of Glukhov and marched in an easterly direction towards Dmitrovsk that they reached at about 2130 hours on October 1. Thus, within 48 hours, the Division covered almost half the distance to their first important objective, the city of Orel, which was taken in the early evening of October 3. In those days, the Division was formed into two battle groups, Pz.Rgt.35 commanded by Eberbach providing the armored fist and 4.Schützen-Brigade commanded by von Saucken mopping up after. There were some additional sub-units of 3.Panzer-Division and an Army artillery unit added to the Division to increase its firepower.

During these battles the Division captured large amounts of enemy equipment including guns and ammunition, prime movers, trucks and some of the first American made Jeeps encountered. Losses had not been high but, on the morning of October 4, only 59 tanks were able to move out in the direction of Mzensk, about 60% of the available tanks at the beginning of the operation. Of the rest, only 6 had been destroyed, the remainder being damaged or having broken down. During the battles for Orel and Mzensk, 4.Panzer-Division met large numbers of heavy KV-1 and T-34 tanks for the first time. In his report after the battles, the Divisional commander wrote that the absolute superiority of these Russian tanks had been felt for the first time and made several recommendations to improve the situation in the Germans favor. After the battle for Mzensk, the staff of 4.Panzer-Division counted its losses at 10 men killed and 33 wounded. The Division lost 6 tanks with 4 damaged, two 8.8cm FlaK, one 10cm and one 10.5cm gun. They counted 17 knocked out Russian tanks on the battlefield including 8 heavy tanks, 11

anti-tank guns and around 220 men killed or taken prisoner. The Soviets record this battle differently claiming a victory over the Germans with 50 tanks and 35 guns destroyed.

And so, the first day of the battle for Mzensk was won by the Germans. The losses were not high but the battle had been long and hard. The exhausted men of 4.Panzer-Division, blocked by a very strong defense, ceased full scale operations until October 9. The battle erupted again on that day and continued until October 11, when the Germans finally captured the city. However, the Soviets kept up the defense to the east of the city for the next 13 days until an attack by Pz.Rgt.35 into the flank of the Soviet position finally demolished resistance in this area. The final battle for Mzensk took place on October 23 and 24 and cost the Division 27 dead and 135 wounded. The enemy suffered much greater losses. Among the dead, the Germans had identified the Russian commander of 4th Tank Brigade, Katukov, claiming he had committed suicide. However, Katukov survived the battle and went on to lead 1st Tank Brigade in the next battles with the German Panzerwaffe.

4.Panzer-Division marched to the Tula area, reaching their objective on October 31. After several days of hard fighting against the enemy and the mud, on November 9 the Germans stopped their attack and formed a defensive line. The battles in October had cost the Division 210 men killed and 658 wounded and during November a further 131 killed and 349 wounded. Many others were sick due to the severe weather conditions. The number of available vehicles was greatly reduced, the Division having lost 61% of its motorcycles, 49% of its prime movers, 40% of its cars and 34% of its trucks since the beginning of Operation 'Barbarossa'. The actual number of trucks had been higher, but losses had been offset somewhat by the capture of Soviet trucks which were taken into the Division. Nevertheless, the Germans attacked again and in early December took Venev and then stormed Tula. But this was to be the end. On the outskirts of this city, the Division finally expended itself. Weather, lack of fuel and equipment supplies and Soviet resistance finally combined to bring 4.Panzer-Division to a halt.

Then on December 5, the Soviets launched a counteroffensive which forced

4.Panzer-Division to fall back to Kromy and then to Orel. During this month the Division lost almost all of its tanks, only one unit of company strength was left, and most of its heavy equipment. A further 62 men were killed and 214 wounded. The Division suffered greatly during the period between December 29, 1941 and January 2, 1942 when 74 more men were killed and 199 wounded.

4.Panzer-Division was pulled back to Briansk at the end of January. On February 1, the Division reported 10,971 men left with 12 tanks and 18 guns. They had lost 1,313 men throughout the seven previous months of vicious fighting and another 3,911 had been wounded. Almost all of their vehicles were lost - 92% of their AFVs and 83% of their softskins. The Division still had about 3,500 horses, which replaced the motor vehicles, and the soldiers had to rely on their own two feet.

Throughout most of 1942, 4.Panzer-Division was involved mainly in defensive operations along the Oka River in the area of Mzensk. The scale of fighting had been limited with the Division involved in some larger offensive operations in July and some anti-partisan actions. For this reason, losses from May 1942 until the end of January 1943 barely exceeded 800 men killed, wounded or missing. In early 1943 the Division had started rebuilding. Its manpower had been built up but the strength of its armored regiment was still low due to problems with tank production back in Germany and the allotment of forces to the large offensive being conducted in the south. On December 1, 1942, there were still only 20 tanks available to the Division including 2 Pz.Kpfw.II, 2 Pz.Bef.Wg. and 1 captured T-34. They were also short of artillery pieces. Art.Rgt.103 reported 35 German made, 12 French made and 14 Soviet made guns on hand in October. The Division was only partly motorized at this time.

In late January 1943, the first transports began to arrive with new vehicles, men and equipment to replenish the Division. 230 Maultiers were promised but only 100 were delivered. Additionally, StuG.III's, Panthers and Tigers were to be delivered with newly trained crews. The Panthers were not received until the following year and no Tigers were ever sent. The StuG.III's were from StuG.Abt.904 under command of Hptm. Wiegels sent to support the Division. Pz.Jg.Abt.49 received 27 Marder II.

Despite this and very severe weather conditions, 4.Panzer-Division was moved south in late January and incorporated into the forces involved in the defense of Kursk. Even though they received replacements of 23 anti-tanks guns, 20 prime movers and 150 trucks, the Divisional forces were too small and fought as a Kampfgruppe supported by two infantry divisions and 17. and 18.Panzer-Divisions, which were as weak as they were.

The situation of the German forces facing the Soviets who broke through the German frontlines on the Don River near Voronezh was very serious. Dozens of smaller units had to be scraped together and thrown into combat without heavy equipment or organized support. A shortage of tanks forced 4.Panzer-Division commanders to create infantry companies from tank crewmen from I./Pz.Rgt.35. 4.Kompanie of Pz.Rgt.35 was reinforced with an armored train, Pz.Zug.21 in early February 1943 while the remaining companies in the battalion received 18 Marder II in place of tanks. Only 8 tanks were available to the whole Division on February 12. Pz.Zug.21 took part in a critical battle near Okolodok on February 11 and helped to destroy or damage 3 out of 4 Soviet tanks that were being used in their attack. The engine received a hit and was withdrawn for repairs. 7.Kompanie of II./Pz.Gren.Rgt.12 was overwhelmed by the enemy and panicked resulting in 24 men dead and wounded and 24 missing including the battalion and three company commanders.

There were also difficulties with logistical support due to the lack of transport and accessible roads covered in deep snow. The enemy forces were superior and forced the men of the Division back and engaged them in house to house fighting that cost them further casualties. During the fighting between February 6 and February 8, the Division's battalions lost an average of 80 men dead and wounded each. The long battle for Kursk, fought between January 29 and February 25, cost 4.Panzer-Division no less than 210 men killed, 715 wounded and 120 missing - 1,045 men altogether. The Division counted enemy losses as 5,500 killed, 440 taken prisoner and 14 tanks and 64 guns destroyed or captured.

After abandoning Kursk, 4.Panzer-Division was involved in the battles for Romny, which ended in early March. The

Division lost 38 dead, 253 wounded and 5 missing while enemy losses were estimated at 500 dead, 60 prisoners taken, 1 T-34 knocked out and 30 guns destroyed or captured. After a few days of rest, 4.Panzer-Division was again thrown into battle in the area of Novgorod Severskiy where it was reinforced with a Hungarian tank company equipped with French tanks and two other tank companies equipped with Pz.Kpfw.II. Here, on March 10, they fought a very successful battle for Ivot against the Soviet 29th Ski Brigade, which was smashed by the German forces. Against 9 killed and 25 wounded, the Germans counted 324 Soviets dead, 120 prisoners taken along with 8 guns and 8 mortars. The situation was repeated the next day when 4.Panzer-Division launched its first large scale armored attack since the autumn of 1941. In the area of Gudovshina, the Panzers and Panzergrenadiers achieved a huge success, especially in the area of the village of Dubrovka, where several Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G of Pz.Rgt.35 supported by half-tracks of I./Pz.Gren.Rgt.12 overwhelmed Soviet cavalry units and took 62 prisoners and killed about another 200 men with the loss of only 13 wounded during a full day of fighting. This success was made possible by the continuing replacements being received by the Division. On March 13, there were 36 tanks, 20 StuG.III and 26 Panzerjäger at the disposal of 4.Panzer-Division - a total of 82 AFVs, 56 of which were suitable for attack. They all proved valuable in the last two weeks of March when the Division attacked Sevsik and, after a hard fight, captured the city. The Division received an order to regroup and their positions were taken over by 251.Infanterie-Division. Thus did the advance of 4.Panzer-Division from Novgorod Severskiy to Sevsik, accomplished from March 8 to March 27, finally come to an end. The difficulty of this battle is evident by the number of casualties suffered by both sides. The Division staff counted 3,720 Soviet soldiers killed and 420 taken prisoner. The Red Army also lost 68 tanks, most in the Sevsik area, 5 armored cars, 135 guns and 81 mortars. Losses to the Division were 227 men dead, 876 wounded and 23 missing. 3 Pz.Kpfw.IV and 2 StuG.III were totally destroyed.

After the fighting in March, the Division was pulled back behind the frontlines for refitting and for anti-partisan duties. During this period they received large quantities of heavy weapons and vehicles. The number of tanks had slowly

raised from 36 on April 2 to 59 by May 7. The number of soft-skinned vehicles had increased as well as had the number of armored cars and motorcycles. There was a shortage of supply of Sd.Kfz.250 and 251 half-tracks and the Division had only 10-15 on hand in I./Pz.Gren.Rgt.12. To help alleviate transport difficulties, the Division was provided with about 2,500 horses. On May 31, Gen. Dietrich von Saucken, former commander of the Division's 4.Schützen-Brigade, was appointed commander of the Division.

In June, the final preparations for the Kursk offensive, code named Operation 'Zitadelle', were being made and some changes were made to the organization of the Division. New men and equipment were received as well.

I./Pz.Gren.Rgt.12 was reformed into an armored battalion and had been re-equipped with many new Sd.Kfz.250 and 251 half-tracks. By July 5, 1943, there were 96 on strength. On July 6, six Bison self-propelled 15cm guns were received by the Division and on July 10 were assigned to 9.Kompanie in this Regiment. Pz.Gren.Rgt.33 had been well equipped too. Its I.Bataillon was fully motorized with Opel Blitz trucks, while II.Bataillon received Maultiers. Maultiers and half-tracked APCs were issued to Pz.Aufkl.Abt.4 as well. The 4.Kompanie of this unit had a full complement of armored cars - 16 light and heavy vehicles. Pz.Art.Rgt.103 was equipped with the new 10.5cm self-propelled howitzer 'Wespe' in its 4. and 5.Batterie and new 15cm self-propelled howitzer 'Hummel' in its 6.Batterie while the staff were mobilized with Pz.Beob.Wg.III and half-tracks. The anti-aircraft and anti-tank units were mainly armed with self-propelled vehicles as well. The horses, now about 1,800 in number, were sent to an infantry division.

On July 1, there were 13,166 men in the Division including 258 Russian conscripts, or Hiwis. Many were lost during the fierce battles that took place on the northern sector of the Kursk bulge. Average losses in the infantry battalions was 70-75% in two weeks of fighting and up to 50% in the Panzer Divisions in the first week. The Soviets had many weeks to prepare their defenses in depth prior to the battle and were well equipped to fight. They were strong in numbers and had large reserves to draw from.

The successes of 4.Panzer-Division during Operation 'Zitadelle' were very limited for the high price of achieving them. After the Soviet counteroffensive launched on July 12, 4.Panzer-Division began a very long and difficult phase of defensive operations which carried on into December 1943. So for the next five months the Division would be used to fight defensive battles and skirmishes as the rear guard of the retreating H.Gr.Mitte. In this period of retreat, 4.Panzer-Division suffered many losses, most of them in November and December when they were ordered to stop the Soviet offensive on the Dniepr and Pripyet Rivers. From November 10, when the 1st Belorussian Front launched its attack across the Dniepr, to December 25, when 4.Panzer-Division stopped their attack at Parichi, the Division lost more men than it had in the previous two months, about 800-1,000 men in each of its two Panzer-Grenadier Regiments.

The final battles of 4.Panzer-Division in 1943 were fought on the Pripyet River. They started north-east of the city of Pripyat in the first days of October when troops of the 13th Army of the 1st Ukrainian Front crossed the Dniepr River and built a large bridgehead north of Kiev. The Soviets attacked later on both sides of the Pripyet River and captured only a few miles of ground before being stopped in late October. 4.Panzer-Division crossed the Pripyet River and took positions on the left bank facing the enemy on the Uzh River. Here the Division stood for the next few weeks in the area of Chernobyl. They were ordered to prepare for a move to the north when the 1st Belorussian Front broke through the German lines and stormed west. A Soviet attack on their positions prevented the move. For the next seven days they fought for the city until, on November 16, it was captured by XV Rifle Corps of the 13th Army.

4.Panzer-Division retreated to the west where it was moved across the Pripyet River to attack the left wing of Gen. Batov's 48th Army, which was stopped at Parichi. The Division was concentrated around Ozarichi and attacked the Soviets with limited success. Their attack was called off around December 25. Both sides were exhausted. It was to be the last offensive operation of General von Saucken's 4.Panzer-Division in 1943.



Three new early production Sd.Kfz.263 radio vehicles parked near a rail siding in the spring of 1941 as 4.Panzer-Division was preparing for the invasion of the Soviet Union. The Sd.Kfz.263 was equipped with a long range radio set and was usually used by Nachrichten (signals) units and in Korps and Armee headquarters. They are protected with canvas covers around the crew compartment and on the telescoping mast antenna. The boxes hanging on the sides are metal containers for stick hand grenades. The nearest vehicle carries the license number WH-76694. Just above it can be seen the divisional emblem while on the opposite side of the radiator grille can be seen the tactical sign for a signals unit.



This photo proves the usefulness of the canvas covers as evidenced by a fresh snowfall still in the spring of 1941. Note the square metal pennon frame on the front of the vehicle signifying a Korps HQ vehicle. In June 1941, 4.Panzer-Division was moved close to the Soviet-German border in the area of Brest-Litovsk with 3.Panzer-Division on their northern flank and 1.Kavallerie-Division on their southern flank.



An excellent side view of an Sd.Kfz.263 in the spring of 1941. The man on the right appears to be decoding a message on an Enigma coding machine while the man beside him writes down the message. The vehicle carries new markings in the form of white road width indicators painted on the mudguards.



A column of Pz.Kpfw.III led by a Panzerbefehlswagen III Ausf.H, distinguished by its 30mm bolt on additional armor plates and frame antenna, wait for marching orders in the spring of 1941. The other two tanks in the photograph are Pz.Kpfw.III Ausf.E. On June 22, 1941, Pz.Rgt.35 had 37 Pz.Kpfw.III armed with 3.7cm guns, 74 Pz.Kpfw.III armed with 5cm guns in addition to 8 Pz.Bef.Wg.III.



This Horch Kfz.15 heavy cross country car is fitted with a radio antenna visible on the left and displays a complete set of markings. On the bumper and mudguards, white road markings can be seen as well as the yellow divisional emblem, white tactical sign and vehicle license number WH 64613. The tactical sign indicates the vehicle belongs to 2.Kompanie of Pz.Nachr.Abt.79 which was commanded by Major Loibl in June 1941. The white 'Z1' painted on the windscreen may indicate 1.Zug in the company. The Oberfeldwebel in the Panzer uniform is wearing a marksmanship lanyard on his right shoulder and the three soldiers on the right are wearing the motorcyclist's rubberized coat.



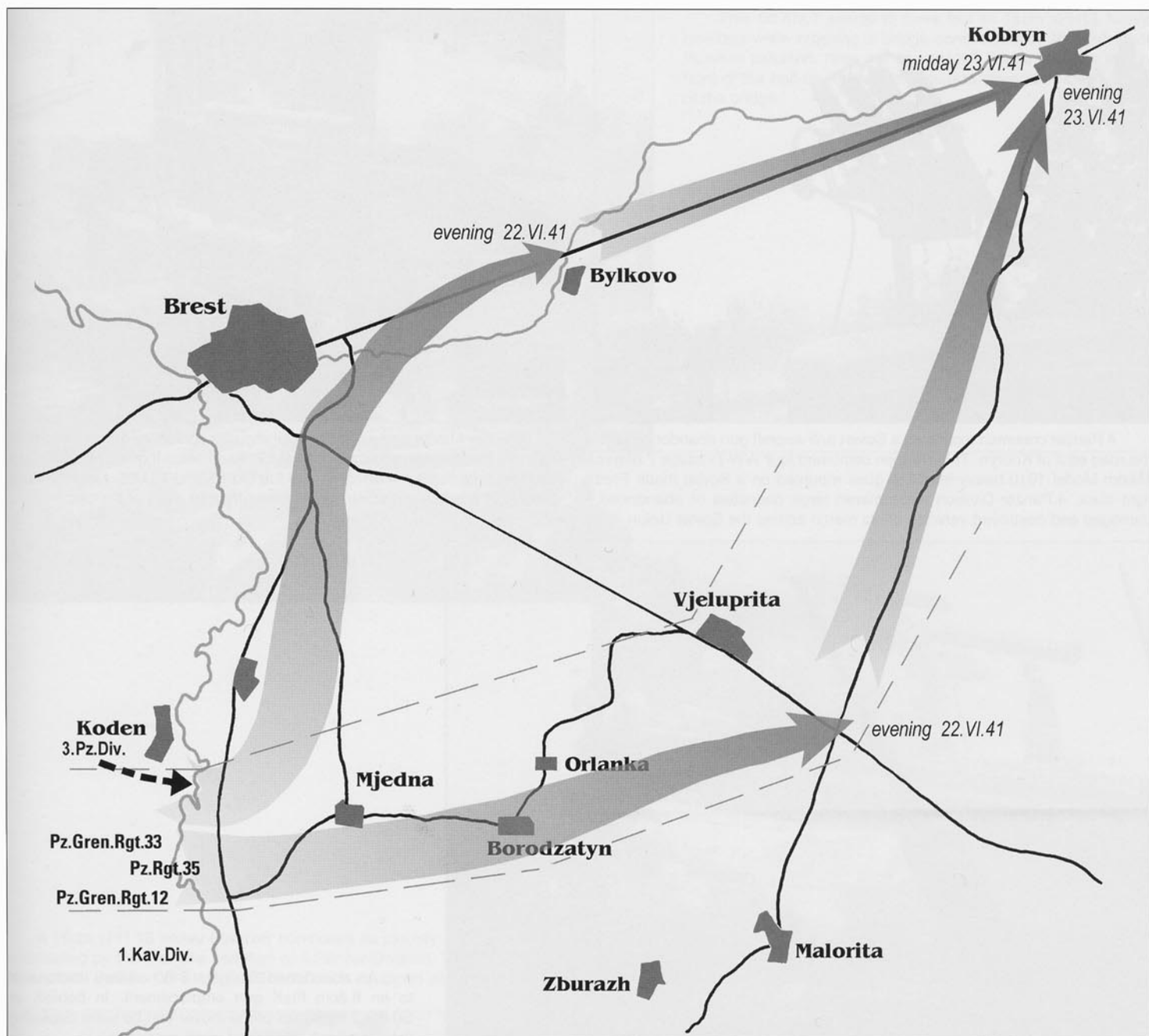
A pair of Horch Kfz.17 Funkkraftwagen (wireless cars) with the distinctive frame antenna from the same unit. The Horch closest to the camera has the license WH 99006 on its right mudguard and a barely visible tactical sign on its left. It has the sign 'K1' painted in white on its windscreen while the car in the background appears to have 'K3'. Note as well the tall antenna mounted on the rear of the car.



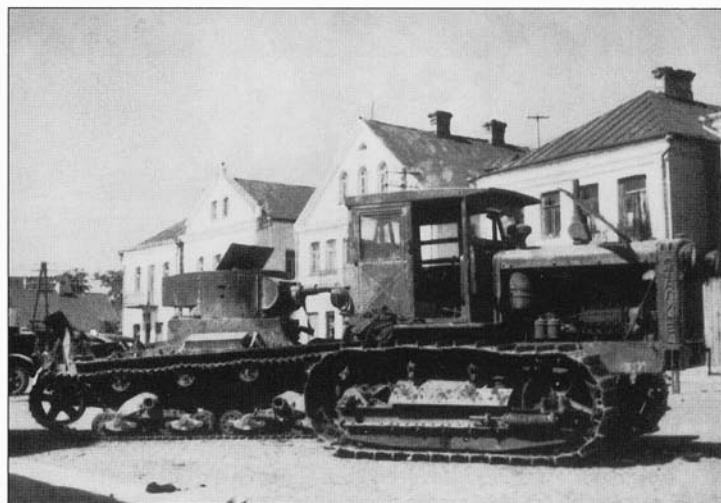
Frequent heavy summer rains turned the dirt roads of the Soviet Union into impassable obstacles. Seen here is one of the victims - a BMW R12 motorcycle combination of Art.Rgt.103. Visible on the mudguard is the tactical sign of a towed 10.5cm light field howitzer battery in white with a small 'R' of unknown meaning, painted beside it. On the original photograph, the divisional emblem can be made out near the front of the mudguard. Above this is mounted the license plate with the number WH-39678.



Dry, sandy roads could also present an obstacle to the German Army. Here, we see soldiers struggling to push a Kfz.31 Krankenkraftwagen (ambulance) through a soft sandy road in a forest, probably in the Kobryn area. The ambulance carries the standard Red Cross sign on the sides and rear as well as road width markings and the letter 'G' for Panzergruppe 2 commander General Heinz Guderian. The three Horch Kfz.17 wireless cars from a Nachrichten Abt. also carry similar markings.



Movements and actions of 4. Panzer-Division during the first two days of Operation 'Barbarossa', June 22-23, 1941.



Two shots of Soviet tanks abandoned in a town square having apparently failed in their duty of protecting Stalin's monument. The three tanks in the left photograph are T-26 S Model 1939 while in the right photo, a T-26 Model 1933 can be seen behind a Stalinets S-60, a Soviet copy of the American Caterpillar tractor.



A Panzer crewman examines a Soviet anti-aircraft gun abandoned near the road east of Kobryn. This weapon combined four WW I vintage 7.62mm Maxim Model 1910 heavy machine guns mounted on a Soviet made Ford light truck. 4.Panzer-Division encountered large quantities of abandoned, damaged and destroyed vehicles on its march across the Soviet Union.



Another Maxim anti-aircraft machine gun mounted on an armored train. Behind it can be seen an 85mm Model 1939 anti-aircraft gun which was later modified to become the armament of the SU-85 and T34/85. Note the large quantity of ammunition stored behind the armored walls of the car.



An abandoned Stalinets S-60 artillery tractor next to an 8.8cm FlaK gun emplacement. In behind, an Sd.Kfz.7 half-track prime mover can be seen displaying the prominent white road width markings.



This Horch Kfz.17 wireless car seen during the summer of 1941, displays a complete set of markings including road width markings, vehicle license WH 92996 and Panzergruppe Guderian 'G' on the right mudguard and the divisional emblem and tactical sign for 2.Kompanie of a signals unit on the left mudguard.



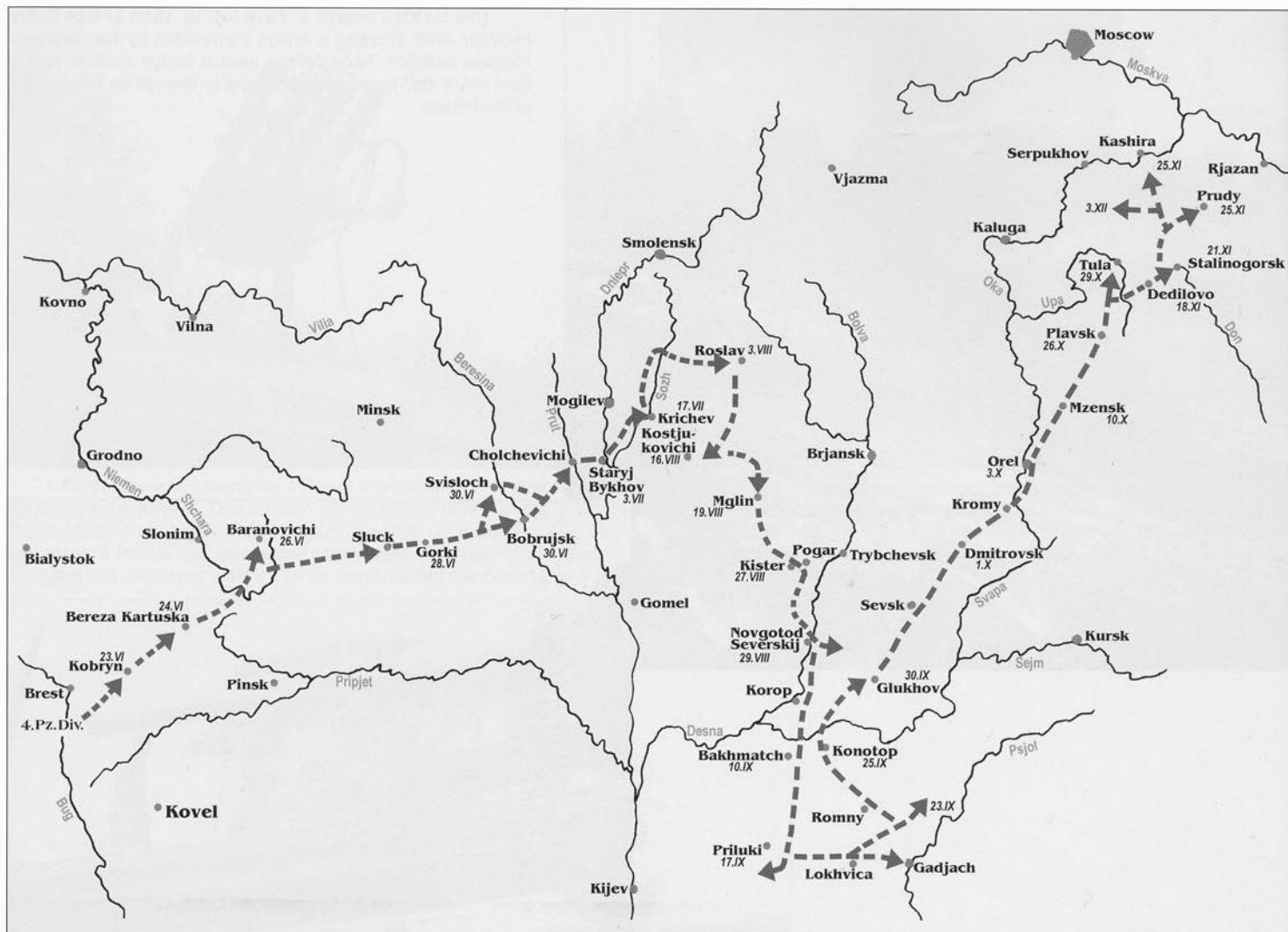
This Sd.Kfz.7 seems to have lost its 15cm sFH18 heavy howitzer while crossing a bridge constructed by the divisional Pioniere battalion. Note the two assault bridge sections just in front of the half-track, probably there to strengthen this section of the bridge.



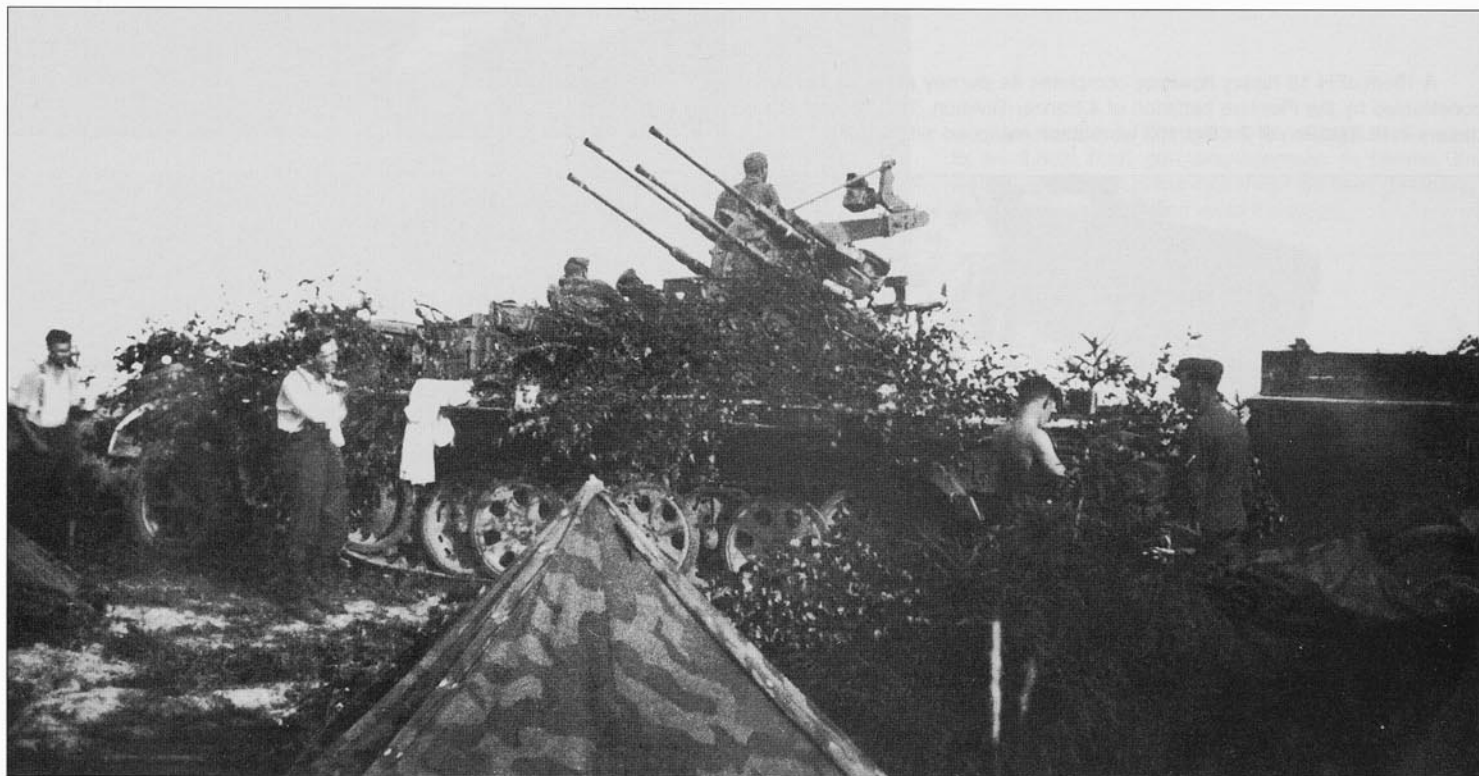
A 15cm sFH 18 heavy howitzer completes its journey across a bridge constructed by the Pioniere battalion of 4.Panzer-Division. The 7th and 8th battery in III.Bataillon of Art.Rgt.103 were each equipped with 4 guns.



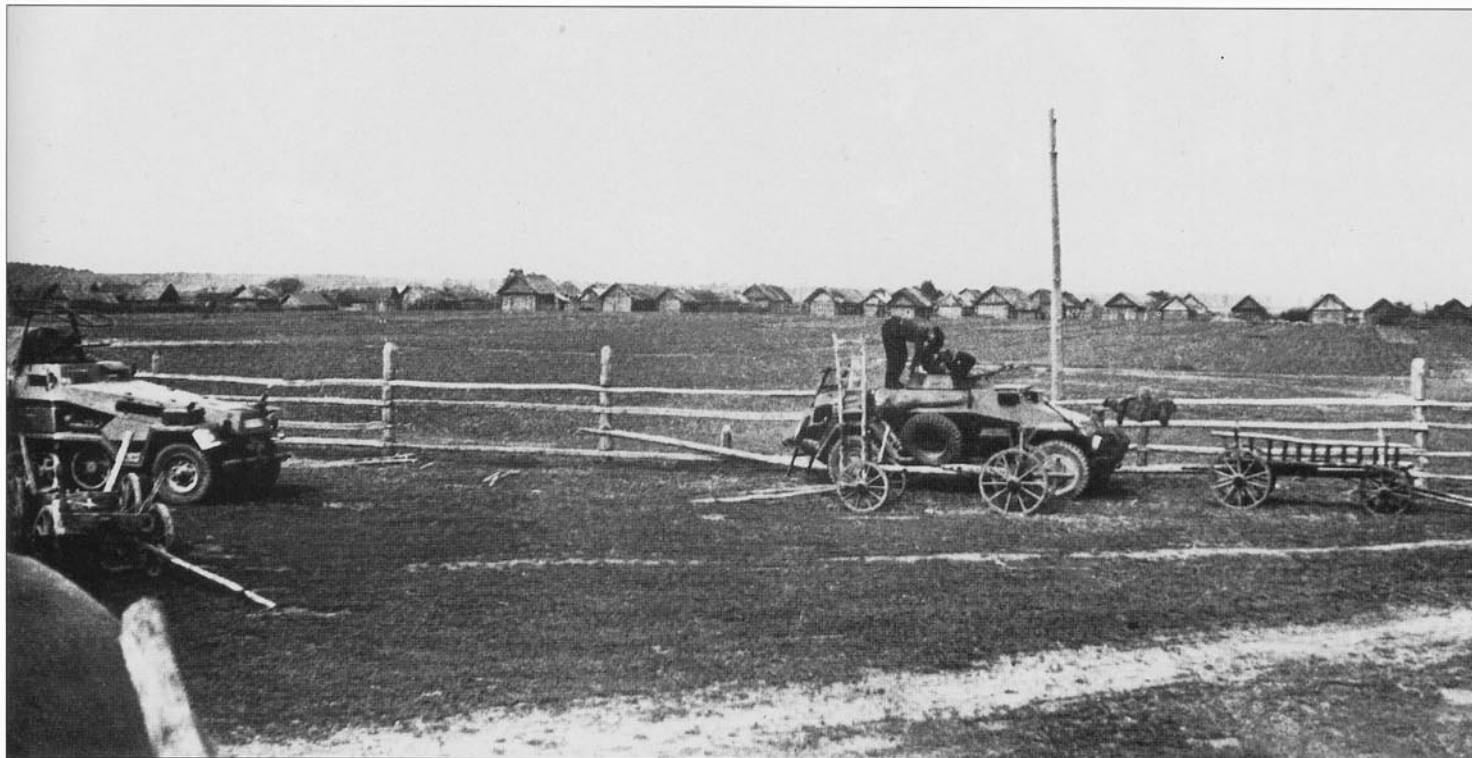
Two shots of BT tanks knocked out by 4.Panzer-Division near the Dniepr River in July 1941. In one photograph, two German soldiers inspect a BT-2. The other is a rare BT-7A, an artillery support version that utilized the turret from a T-28 armed with the 76.2mm KT-28 gun and two machine guns. There were only 155 built during 1936-37, most of them seeing front-line service during Operation 'Barbarossa'. Note the heavily camouflaged truck in the background.



March route of 4. Panzer-Division during Operation 'Barbarossa' and Operation 'Taifun' (Typhoon), June 22 to December 31, 1941.



One of 12 Sd.Kfz.7/1 half-tracks armed with the 2cm Flakvierling 38 which were incorporated in Art.Rgt.103 from Heeres Flakart.Abt.66 as the 5th company in the battalion. Anti-aircraft defenses were not heavily utilized in the opening phase of 'Barbarossa', but later in August, the Soviet Air Force inflicted many casualties among the crews of these anti-aircraft guns.



Staff vehicles at rest near a Soviet village. At the left is an Sd.Kfz.251/6 Ausf.B equipped with a frame antenna and displaying the letter 'G' of Panzergruppe Guderian on its right mudguard. On the right is an Sd.Kfz.221 light armored car of Pz.Aufkl.Abt.7 which was commanded by Hauptmann Nierle. 4.Panzer-Division had 43 half-track APC's on strength in June 1941.



Pz.Kpfw.III tanks pass a column of softskin vehicles during 4.Panzer-Division's march to the east, summer 1941. The leading tank is a rather rare Tauchpanzer III Ausf.G, one of 168 built on Pz.Kpfw.III Ausf.F, G & H chassis in 1940. They are identifiable by the bolt flange around the mantlet and machine gun ball mount that the waterproof fabric cover attached to. There is a snorkel tube attached over the wood beam on the right mudguard. Additional track links have been placed on the front of the hull for additional armor protection. On the original photograph, the Panzergruppe Guderian 'G' is visible on the mudguard of the Horch Kfz.17 wireless car on the right.



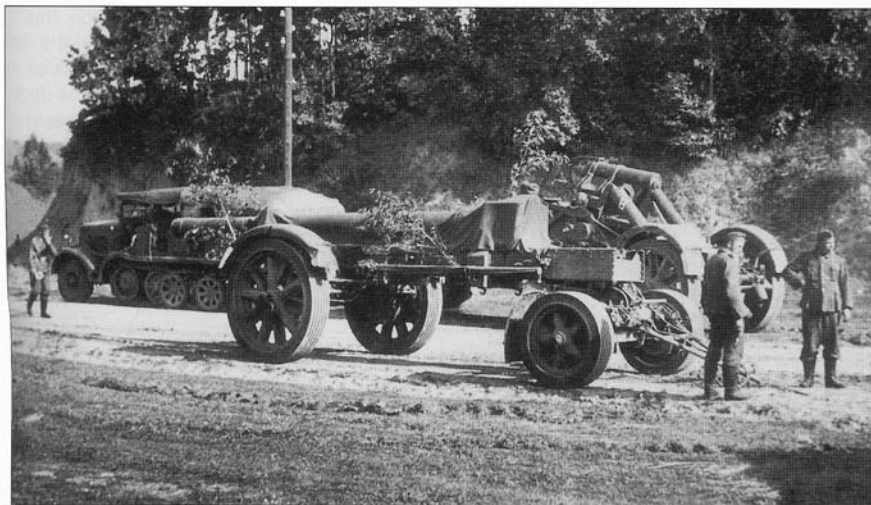
A Pz.Kpfw.III Ausf.H of Pz.Rgt.35 creates a cloud of dust as it advances down a dirt road. Commanded by Oberst Heinrich Eberbach, Pz.Rgt.35 marched overnight, stopping on the morning of June 25, 1941 at Zazhechne. As the head of the column was arriving, the last vehicles of the Division were still in Kobryn, some 60km behind.



There were 44 Pz.Kpfw.II in Pz.Rgt.35 on June 22, 1941, including these two Pz.Kpfw.II Ausf.F. Note the additional spare roadwheels carried by the leading tank. On July 4, 1941, five tanks of I.Abt. were able to cross a bridge on the Dniepr River at Staryi Bychoff before it was severely damaged by Russian artillery. The Soviets allowed them to advance before opening fire resulting in the destruction of four of the Panzers. The position was held until later in the day when II.Abt. arrived to reinforce them. The action cost 4.Panzer-Division 34 men dead, wounded or missing and 9 Panzers lost. Oberleutnant von Cossel and Major von Lauchert, commander of Pz.Rgt.35, were awarded the Ritterkreuz for the capture of the city.

General Heinz Guderian, sitting in the front passenger seat of this Horch light staff car during an inspection of 4.Panzer-Division in August 1941. The officer speaking to Guderian is probably the Division's commanding officer at the time, Gen.Maj. von Langermann. The vehicle, with license WH 656652, is fitted with an early pattern general's vehicle pennant on the right mudguard and a Panzergruppe commander's command flag on the left mudguard beside the engine compartment as well as on the front bumper.

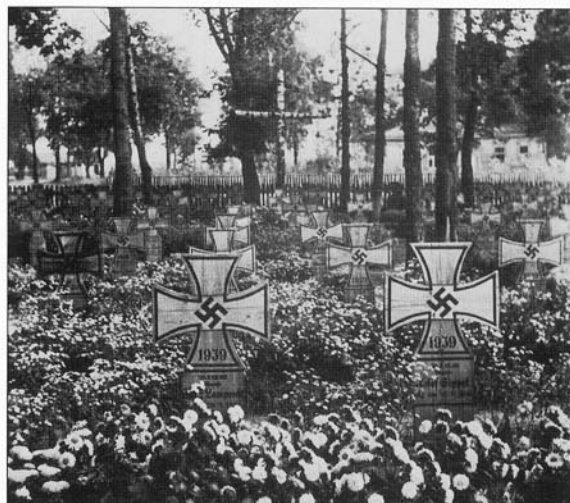




An Sd.Kfz.8 from III./Art.Rgt.103 towing the heaviest artillery piece in the Division - the 21cm Morser 18 which had a maximum range of 16,725m. The gun was broken down into two pieces for transportation. Few were built as the range was only about half that of the 17cm K18 and production was canceled in 1942.



Panzer crew helping to free an Sd.Kfz.263 from a muddy road. The first intensive rains appeared in September but the worst was yet to come. Throughout the whole of August, when 4.Panzer-Division took part in the battle for Kiev, excellent weather was encountered. The good weather contributed to the intensity of the fighting. In only two days, August 13 and 14, they captured 416 Russian soldiers, killed about 300 others and destroyed or captured one armored train, 34 tanks, 7 other vehicles and 22 guns. Earlier, between August 8-11, when the operation started, the Division claimed 420 captured, 180 killed, 7 tanks, 16 guns and 52 vehicles. Their own losses were 9 dead and 42 wounded.



A 4.Panzer-Division cemetery located somewhere in the Soviet Union. The graves in front are those of Obergefreiters Lamprecht and Sippel, both from Art.Rgt.103. The Division suffered its first heavy losses during the fighting for the Stalin Line in mid-July. During this month, they lost 321 men killed, 952 wounded and 38 missing. On July 15, the staff of 4.Schützen-Brigade were caught in a Soviet artillery barrage resulting in many officers being killed and wounded, including Oberst von Saucken, who would later command the Division. This forced the disbanding of the brigade staff.

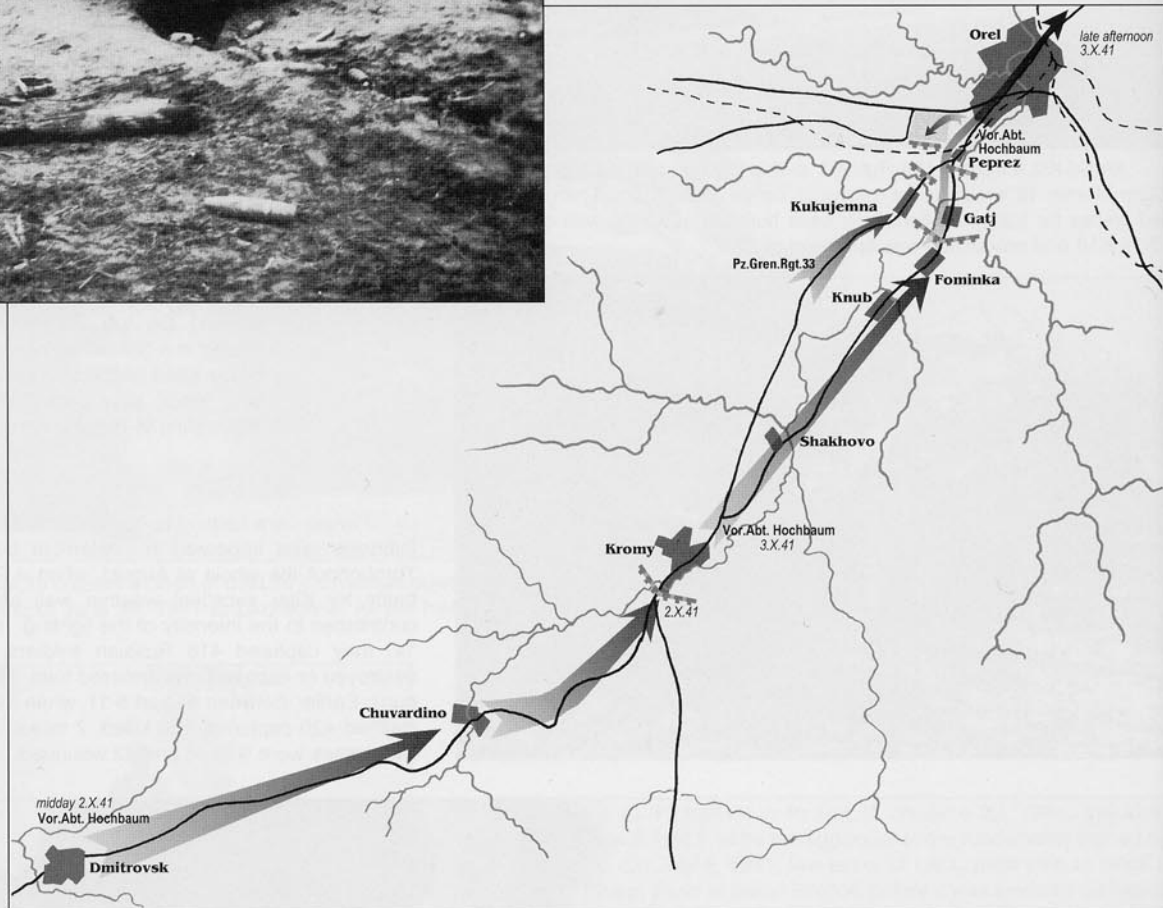


A rare T-50 blazes after being knocked out by 4.Panzer-Division. The T-50 had been designed to replace the T-26, but only 65 were built because of its relatively high cost and complexity compared to the T-34.

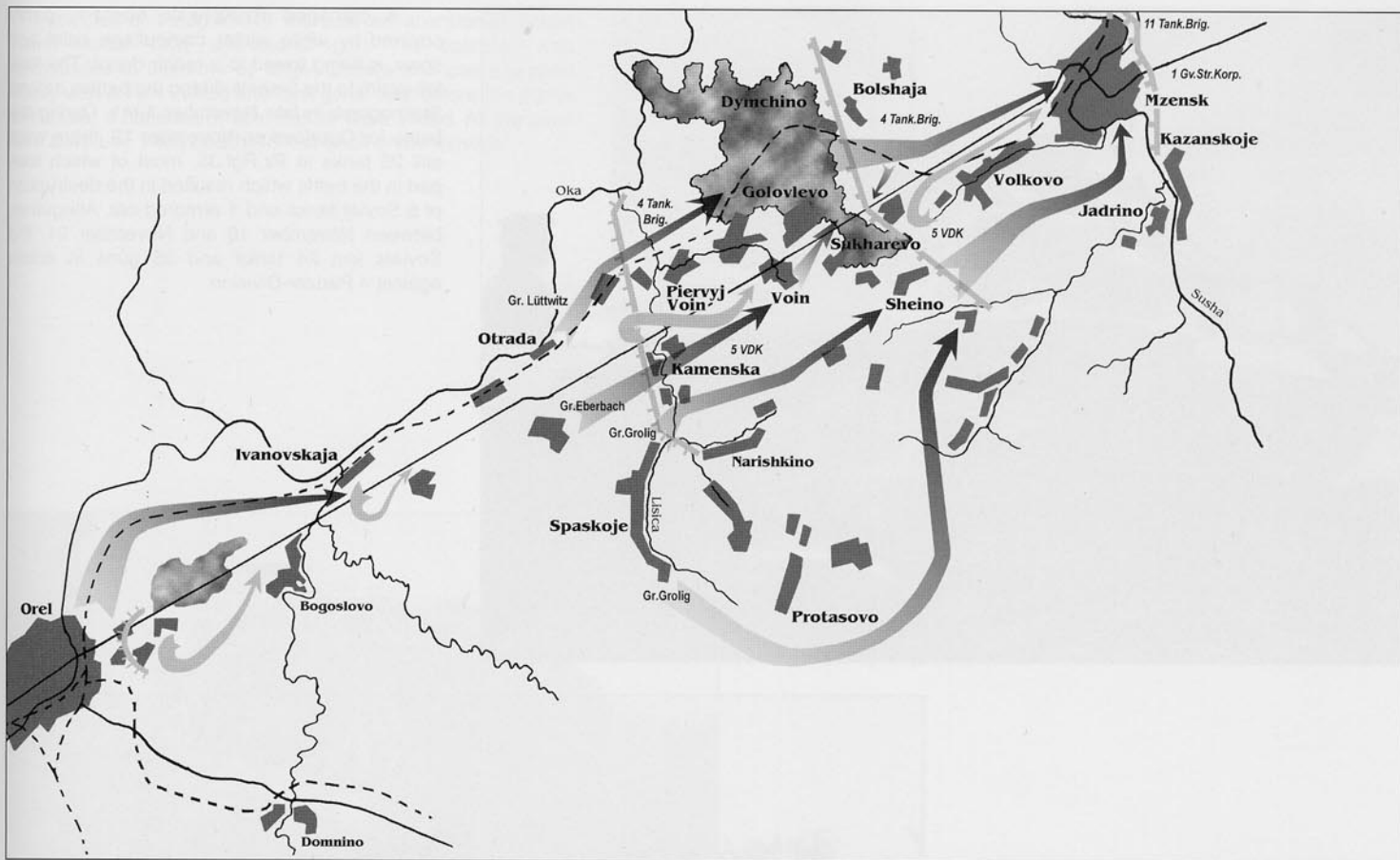


A nasty surprise for the crews of 4.Panzer-Division, this T-34/76 Model 1941 was destroyed during battles with the 4th and 11th Tank Brigades in the Mzensk area. An explosion in the engine compartment has blown off part of the engine deck, seen laying against the side of the tank. There are no signs of penetrations on the glacis or the turret, but the hull machine gun has been blown out of its mount.

After breaking through the Soviet frontlines on the first day of Operation 'Taifun', 4.Panzer-Division advanced rapidly in the direction of Tula, capturing many towns along the way. The first strong resistance was met close to Orel, but the opposition was quickly crushed, and 4.Panzer-Division captured this city on October 3. Vorausabteilung Hochbaum of Kampfgruppe Eberbach's Pz.Rgt.35 formed the spearhead of the attack during this action.



Two shots of an abandoned "Stalin Organ", as the Germans called the "Katyusha" BM-13 rocket launcher, mounted on a Zis 6 light truck. It was able to fire sixteen 133mm rockets that had a range of 8,000m. Eight of these vehicles were captured or destroyed by 4.Panzer-Division during the battles with the 1st Guards Infantry Corps between October 8-10, 1941, where they were used to fire salvos against charging German tanks and infantry. In breaking through the Soviet lines between September 30 and October 3, 4.Panzer-Division had destroyed 16 tanks against the loss of 6 tanks of their own with a further 35 damaged. In addition, the Soviets lost 53 guns, 23 tractors, 362 soft-skinned vehicles and 2,200 dead, wounded or captured. German casualties were 161 dead and wounded.



The clash of 4. Panzer-Division with Gen. Katukov's 4th Tank Brigade on the approach to Mzensk between October 3 and October 10, 1941. This was one of the most difficult battles yet faced, and is well known even today as this was one of the first battles in which the Soviets committed their T-34 and KV-1 tanks in concentration. The first skirmishes took place on October 3, just east of Orel. On October 5, the Division captured a bridge over the Lisica River where they were charged by a large number of T-34 and KV-1's, resulting in the loss of several tanks and guns. On October 7 they stormed and broke the Soviet defensive line between Piervyj Voin and Kamenevo. Supplied with fuel and ammunition and supported by heavy artillery fire, 4. Panzer-Division pushed the Soviet forces back, but it was to take another 4 days of heavy fighting before the capture of Mzensk.

The first snowfalls in October 1941 turned the roads into streams of mud and brought the advance of 4. Panzer-Division to a halt. Here we see a Horch Kfz.17 wireless car parked next to a Russian farmhouse to help conceal it from Russian reconnaissance aircraft. At the end of the month, about 100 vehicles were incapacitated because of the mud and those that could move, took 48 hours to travel 5km on the Orel-Chern road, most with the assistance of the Divisional half-track prime movers. Many of the half-tracks had been lost by this time. Of 45 belonging to Art. Rgt.103, only 25 were serviceable on October 28.



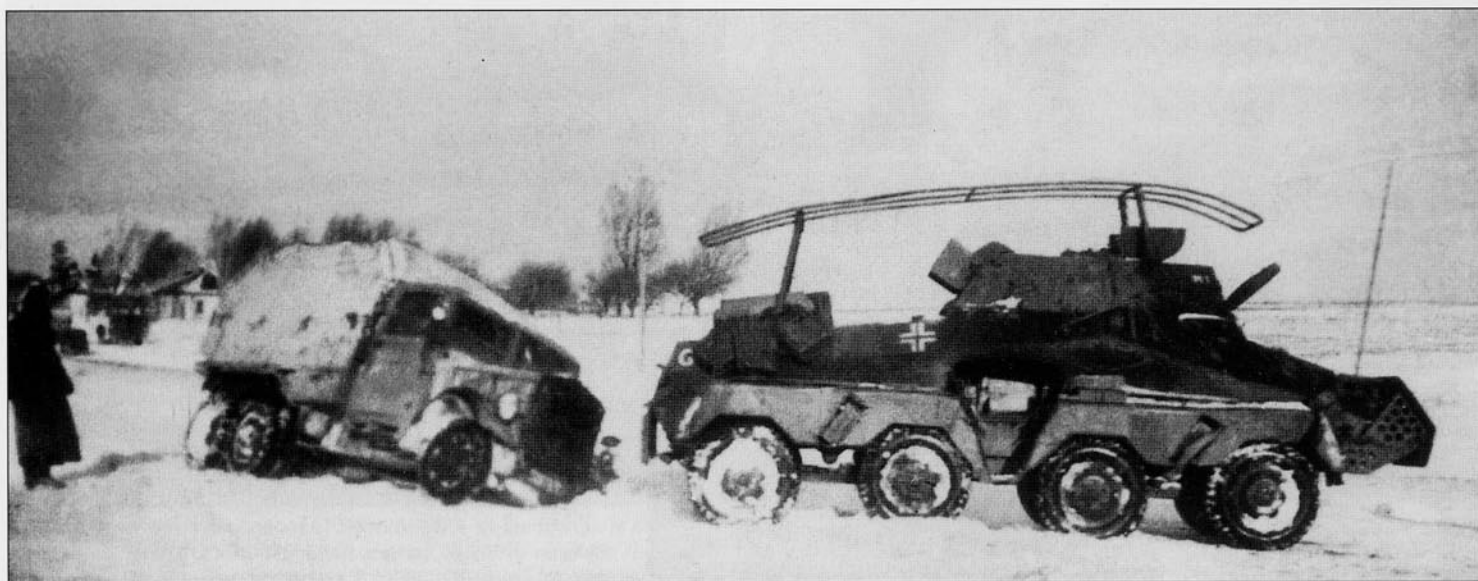
An early KV-1 Model 1941 knocked out by 4. Panzer-Division in Venev on November 24, 1941. There are no less than 30 impacts of various caliber on the turret as well as two penetrations of the gun barrel. In the three previous days, the Division had knocked out 3 other KV-1's, two on November 21 at Brusjanka where a Soviet counter-attack had been repulsed.



A damaged Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.F1, partly covered by white winter camouflage paint and snow, is being towed to a repair depot. The tank fell victim to the Soviets during the battles around Stalinogorsk in late November 1941. During the battle for Ogorjovo on November 19, there were still 25 tanks in Pz.Rgt.35, most of which took part in the battle which resulted in the destruction of 6 Soviet tanks and 1 armored car. Altogether, between November 18 and November 21, the Soviets lost 24 tanks and 35 guns in action against 4.Panzer-Division.



A winter camouflaged 21cm Morser 18 sitting on its firing table. Note the chains hanging from its wheels. It was time consuming to set up the gun for firing, but probably worth the effort as it could fire a 113kg high explosive shell almost 17km.



Another victim of the extreme weather conditions experienced by the Germans in Russia in the winter of 1941/42. Here we see an Sd.Kfz.263 armored car towing a truck that has become stuck. It has the additional armor plate (Zusatz panzer) fitted to the front, which also provided additional stowage space for the crew. The letter 'G', for Panzergruppe Guderian, can be made out on the rear of the armored car.

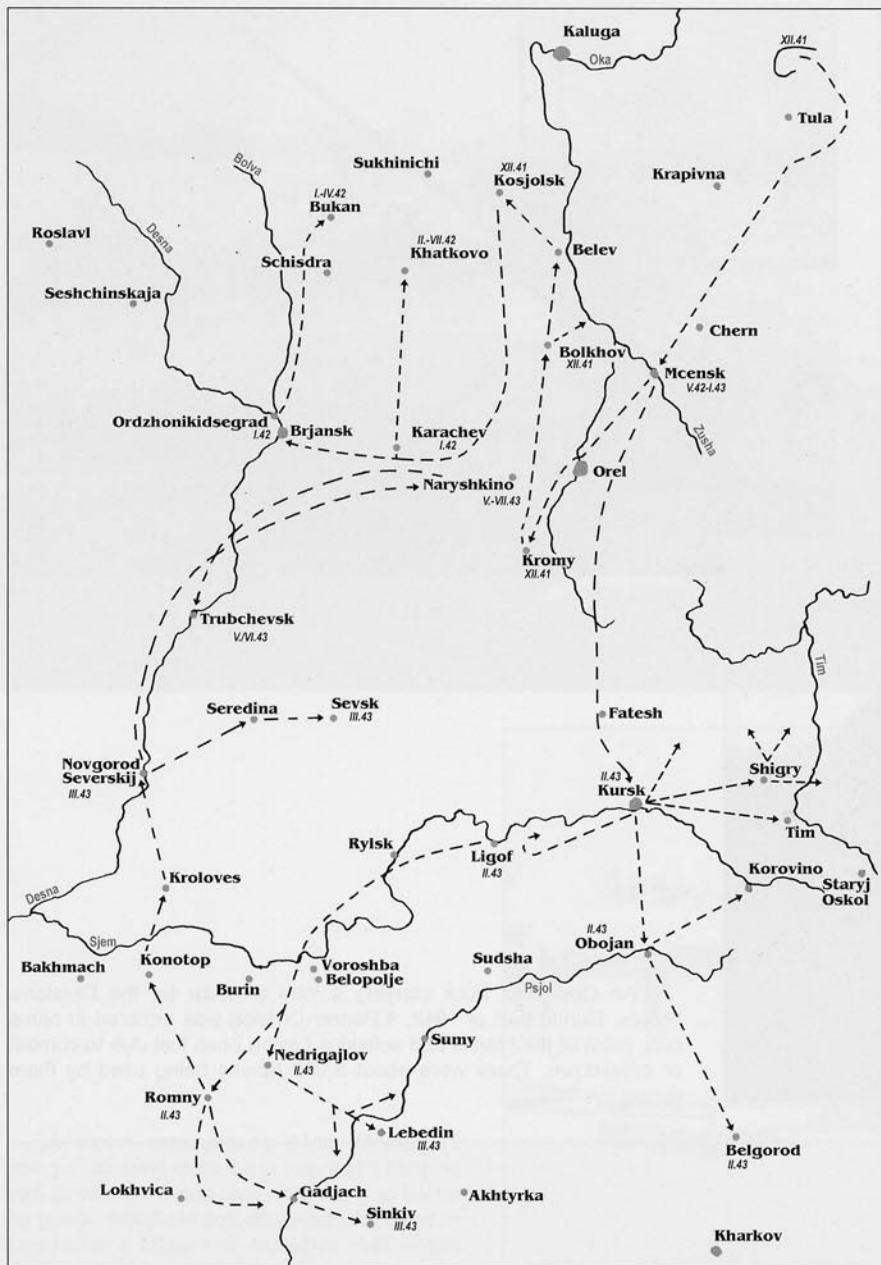
Vehicles of Pz.Jg.Abt.49 roll past an abandoned Soviet 37mm Model 1939 anti-aircraft gun. The battalion was commanded at this time by Major Geffers and was equipped mainly with 3.7cm PaK36 anti-tank guns. Just before the attack on Russia, 3 batteries of 5cm PaK38 were added. All the guns were towed by 1 ton Sd.Kfz.10 half-track prime movers.



An Opel Blitz truck carrying a load of straw for the Division's horses. During part of 1942, 4.Panzer-Division was armored in name only, most of their tanks and softskins having been lost due to combat or breakdown. There were about 3,000 horses being used by them during this time.



An Sd.Kfz.251/6 Ausf.B of the Division staff carrying a coat of white winter camouflage paint in early 1943. Note the contrast of the white painted helmets hanging from the antenna supports with the worn appearance of the half-track.



This staff car has a general's command pennant on the right mudguard and a pennant indicating II. Bataillon of a towed artillery regiment, in this case Art. Rgt. 103, on the left mudguard. In the background is a winter camouflaged Pz. Bef. Wg. III Ausf. H which was used as a forward observation vehicle or by Divisional HQ.

Movements and actions of 4. Panzer-Division from January 1, 1942 to June 30, 1943. During this time, the Division was involved in several small scale actions and one major offensive, the battle for Kharkov, in March 1943.



Four Sd.Kfz. 7 of the Division's artillery regiment are being used to tow the Pz. Bef. Wg. III from its predicament. Both leading vehicles have a unit emblem on the right mudguard and the letters 'C' and 'D' on the opposite mudguard indicating which gun in the battery they were assigned to. Curiously, the two half-tracks in the background display no markings at all.



The same Pz.Bef.Wg.III Ausf.H being towed out of a stream bed. Note how the mud has completely washed out the camouflage effect of the white paint on the lower hull. The tactical number 'D01' is painted in white on the vehicle's original dark gray background. The main gun is a dummy, vehicle defense being provided by the MG34 machine gun in a ball mount beside it.



Soldiers of the Divisional staff troop push a Soviet BA-64B light armored car. This appears to be a captured vehicle that was taken into service with 4.Panzer-Division.



A Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G of 4.Panzer-Division completely destroyed by an internal explosion after being hit by a Soviet tank. The Division's first 5 Panzer IV with the long barrel gun and winterketten were offloaded from rail cars on February 16, 1943 while 16 more arrived a few days later. This vehicle was equipped with standard track links.



A Marder II self-propelled anti-tank gun passes through a village in Central Russia, March 1943. 4.Panzer-Division received 27 of these vehicles on February 11, 1943, most of which were incorporated into Pz.Rgt.35 which had only 8 tanks serviceable at the time. Nine were assigned to 3/Pz.Jg.Abt.49.



An Sd.Kfz.8 pushes its way down a muddy street in another Soviet village. No vehicle markings are visible through the layer of dried mud and a canvas tarp has been fitted over the engine compartment.



Typical of the conditions encountered in the spring and fall, this road has been transformed into a stream of mud due to rain and snow. This 3.7cm PaK36 is being towed by one of the most primitive forms of transport in the German Army - the 'panjewagen'. In the background is a Pz.Bef.Wg.III Ausf.H of 4.Panzer-Division HQ.



A pair of Steyr RSO/01 fully tracked tractors roll past the smoldering remains of a Russian farm building in late spring of 1943. The RSO/01 went into production in late 1942 and by the summer of 1943 most divisions had been equipped with them, usually in the anti-tank units.



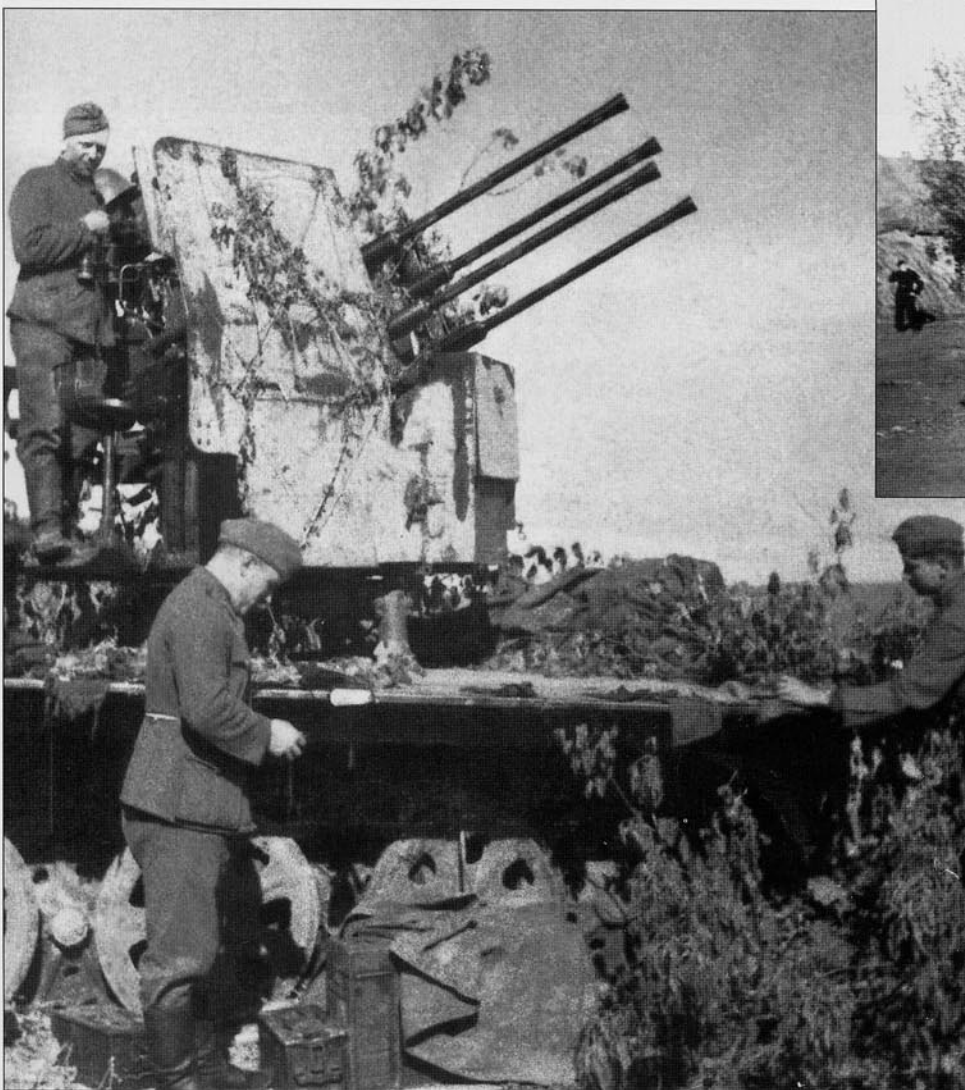
This late Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G or early Ausf.H exhibits some of the characteristics of both. It has the L/48 7.5cm gun and the antenna mounted on the rear of the Ausf.H and the bolted appliqué armor and split cupola hatches of the Ausf.G. The armored side skirts - schürzen - were very often lost in combat and not replaced. They served a very useful purpose and many German tank crews owe their lives to them.



An Sd.Kfz.251/6 Ausf.B followed by a Pz.Bef.Wg.III Ausf.H makes its way down a muddy street. The half-track displays a general's command pennant on the right mudguard and command pennant for a division on the left. Such conditions made it difficult for the Panzer Divisions to carry on with offensive operations as they often presented more of an obstacle than the enemy.



The summer of 1943 brought good times to 4.Panzer-Division. Between April and early July, the Division was re-equipped, receiving as much new equipment during that time as during the previous two years. Among the new equipment were a few Pz.Bef.Wg.III based on the Ausf.J chassis. These differed from the normal Pz.Bef.Wg. in that the main armament was operational and the turret traversable. They were incorporated into the HQ of the Division and Pz.Rgt.35. Here we see the commander of 4.Panzer-Division, Gen.Lt. Dietrich von Saucken testing out one of the new vehicles. It appears to be camouflaged with sand spots applied over the dark gray base. The tactical sign 'D02' is painted in black.



After the test, the General enjoys a short ride on his horse. Just before the launch of Operation 'Zitadelle', all of the Division's horses were sent to an infantry division. Between April 2 and May 7, the number of tanks in the Division increased from 36, including 16 Pz.Kpfw.IV, to 59, including 38 Pz.Kpfw.IV.

The crew of this Sd.Kfz.7/1 is camouflaging their vehicle with foliage. Sand camouflage paint has been applied to the dark gray gunshield and probably the rest of the vehicle. 3.Kompanie of H.Flak.Abt.290 was equipped with these guns as well as some 2cm Flak 38.



A pair of late Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G or early Ausf.H crossing a river in June 1943. Note the two color camouflage paint over the dark yellow base and the regimental emblem of 4.Panzer-Division, a standing bear, on the turret side skirts of the leading vehicle. Pz.Rgt.35 had only one Abteilung with a strength of 101 tanks on the eve of Operation 'Zitadelle' which included 15 Pz.Kpfw.III Ausf.N, 80 Pz.Kpfw.IV of which 79 were Ausf.G or Ausf.H, and 6 Pz.Bef.Wg.III.



Another Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G or early Ausf.H emerges from a river. Note the additional 30mm plate bolted to the front of the upper hull which increased the armor protection to 80mm. During the last part of June, Pz.Rgt.35 received 211 replacements which brought the strength of the Division up to 13,166 men including 258 Hiwis.

This Sd.Kfz.11 3 ton half-track prime mover was used by Pz.Jg.Abt.49 of 4.Panzer-Division in the summer of 1943. Here it is towing a 7.5cm PaK97/38 which combined the barrel of the French Model 1897 field gun and the carriage of the 5cm PaK38 in an effort to deal with the heavier Soviet tanks first encountered in Russia. The camouflage paint is probably dark brown lines over the sand base.





Another half-track crossing the same river, this time an Opel Maultier carrying a coat of overall sand paint. In early 1943, the Division received a large number of these vehicles. It is towing the obsolete 3.7cm PaK36 anti-tank gun.



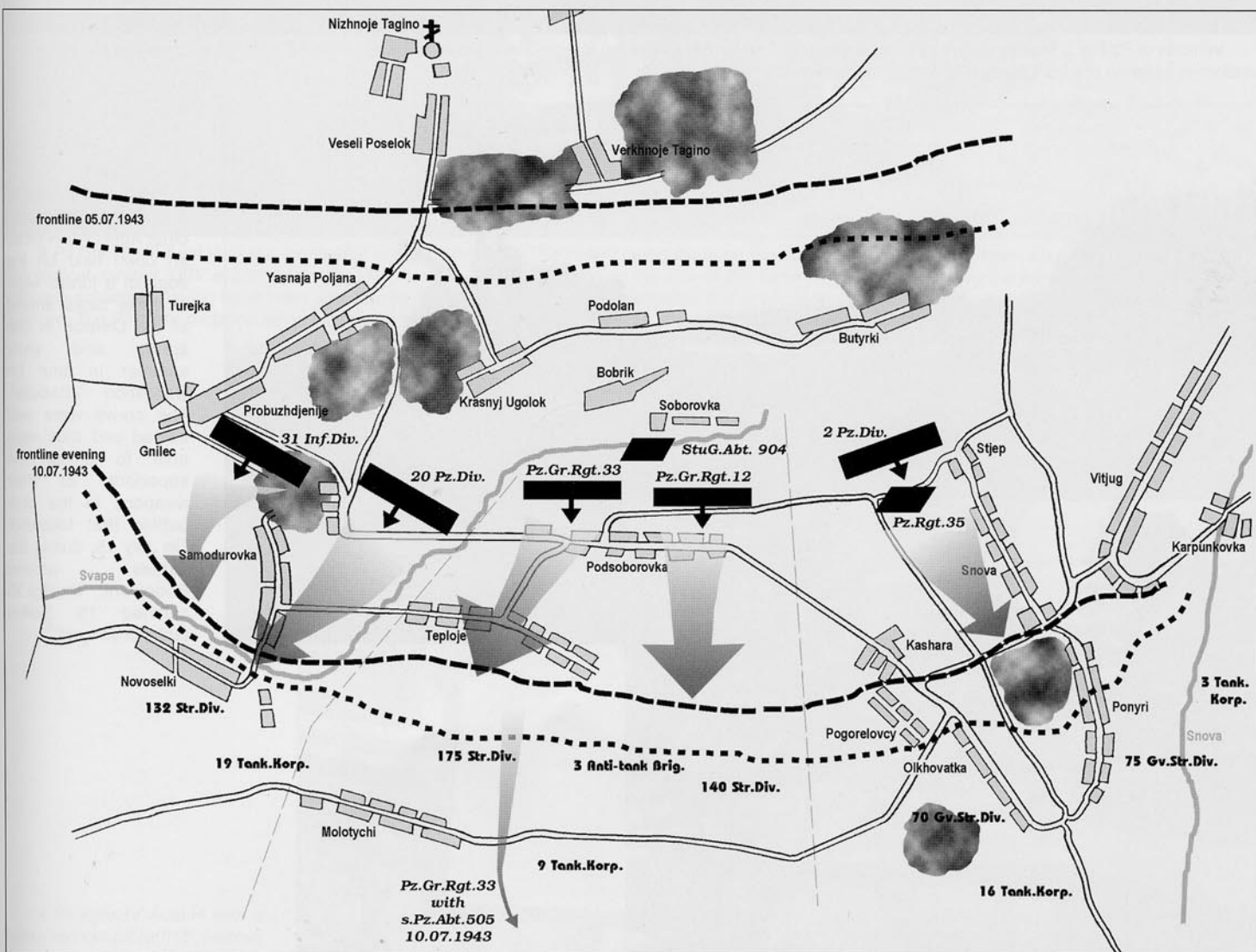
The crew of an Sd.Kfz.251/6 Ausf.B questioning two Soviet POW's. The camouflage on this older vehicle is probably sand on the dark gray base.

A Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G photographed somewhere on the boundless steppes of the Soviet Union in the Kursk area. The tank is camouflaged with an irregular pattern of green and brown lines over the sand base. Note the applique armor protection on the upper hull which has been welded instead of bolted on.



The command troop of Pz.Rgt.35 in the rear area. In the background are 2 Pz.Bef.Wg.III with distinctly different camouflage schemes. 4.Panzer-Division was placed under command of Heeresgruppe Mitte for the opening phase of Operation 'Zitadelle' and fought on the north side of the Kursk Bulge. To the right can be seen one of the Division's Sd.Kfz.263 armored cars.

An Opel Maultier struggling on a sandy road through a Russian village in July 1943. The vehicle belongs to II./Pz.Gren.Rgt.33, which was completely equipped with this type of transport. The camouflage is sand spots on the dark gray base. During the Kursk battle, 4.Panzer-Division advanced into the area west of Olkhovatka and Ponyri.



The route of 4.Panzer-Division during Operation 'Zitadelle', July 8-10, 1943. The tanks of the Division were involved in the initial assault, but it was not until July 8 that the rest of the Division joined in the attack, taking part in two days of heavy combat that resulted in pushing the Soviet lines south towards Olkhovatka and Teploje. The map shows the location of the units poised for the attack on July 8 and their main lines of advance on July 8-10 including the assault by Pz.Gren.Rgt.33 and s.Pz.Abt.505 at Teploje late on July 10.



Vehicles of Pz.Rgt.35 camouflaged in a forest clearing. The Pz.Kpfw.IV in the foreground is a late Ausf.G or early Ausf.H and displays the standing bear emblem in white on the front part of the turret skirt armor.



A Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G followed by two other Ausf.G or H cross an open field on the edge of a forest. Most of these tanks arrived at the Division in late spring and early summer in time for Operation 'Zitadelle'. The crews were well trained and thus were able to utilize the superiority of their weapons in the tank battles that followed. On July 15, during the battles around Podolyani, Pz.Rgt.35 claimed 19 Soviet tanks destroyed.



An Sd.Kfz.251/6 Ausf.A, July 1943, which has been retrofitted with the MG shield. It has been camouflaged with sand spots over the dark gray base color.



A Pz.Bef.Wg.III Ausf.H of the regimental staff of Pz.Rgt.35. The heavy camouflage on the schürzen has probably been applied over the whole tank. The tactical number 'D01' is painted on the skirt armor in black and again on the side of the turret in white. It is possibly the same vehicle seen earlier but with new schürzen having been fitted. On July 18, after 10 days of continuous battle, the severely weakened Division was pulled back into reserve under 9.Armee. The Pioniere battalion alone was down to 94 men, or about 25% of its strength.



A Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.H with a faintly recognizable '113' painted in white on the turret skirt, indicating a battalion command vehicle, also displays the standing bear emblem of the Division.



Three photos of an early Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.H with the tactical number '420' and the standing bear emblem painted on the turret skirt armor. In the one photo, the contrast between the outline of the bear and the tactical number suggests the number is perhaps yellow or the bear has been freshly painted. 4.Kompanie vehicles normally had the bear painted in light blue. Interestingly, this vehicle carries the yellow painted divisional insignia that 4.Panzer-Division used in France in 1940.



A Marder II self-propelled anti-tank gun traveling across the steppe behind the front lines. Marders were used in Pz.Jg.Abt.49 and by the time of Operation 'Zitadelle', comprised most of the vehicles in the unit. The tactical number '323' can be faintly seen on the side. On July 18, Pz.Jg.Abt.49 had only 20 Marders available in three companies with four towed 7.5cm PaK40's in the 4th company.



An Opel Blitz carrying an interesting camouflage scheme, probably sand lines on the dark gray base, traveling down a dusty road. An additional attempt at camouflage using cut spruce boughs can be seen as well.



This Sd.Kfz.251/3 Ausf.C carries the license number WH-1539893. It is painted in a three color camouflage scheme of green and brown splotches over the sand base. One of the crew has picked up an alternate form of transportation - a bicycle. Note the star antenna on the right rear of the vehicle.



Another Hanomag passing by the same cameraman, this time a relatively rare riveted construction Sd.Kfz.251/7 Ausf.C outfitted for Pioniere duties. It is carrying wooden planks in place of the standard assault bridging sections. The camouflage scheme is quite different from the previous vehicle and it has some additional markings on the front plate including a white or yellow arrowhead that was used as a divisional emblem in 1943.



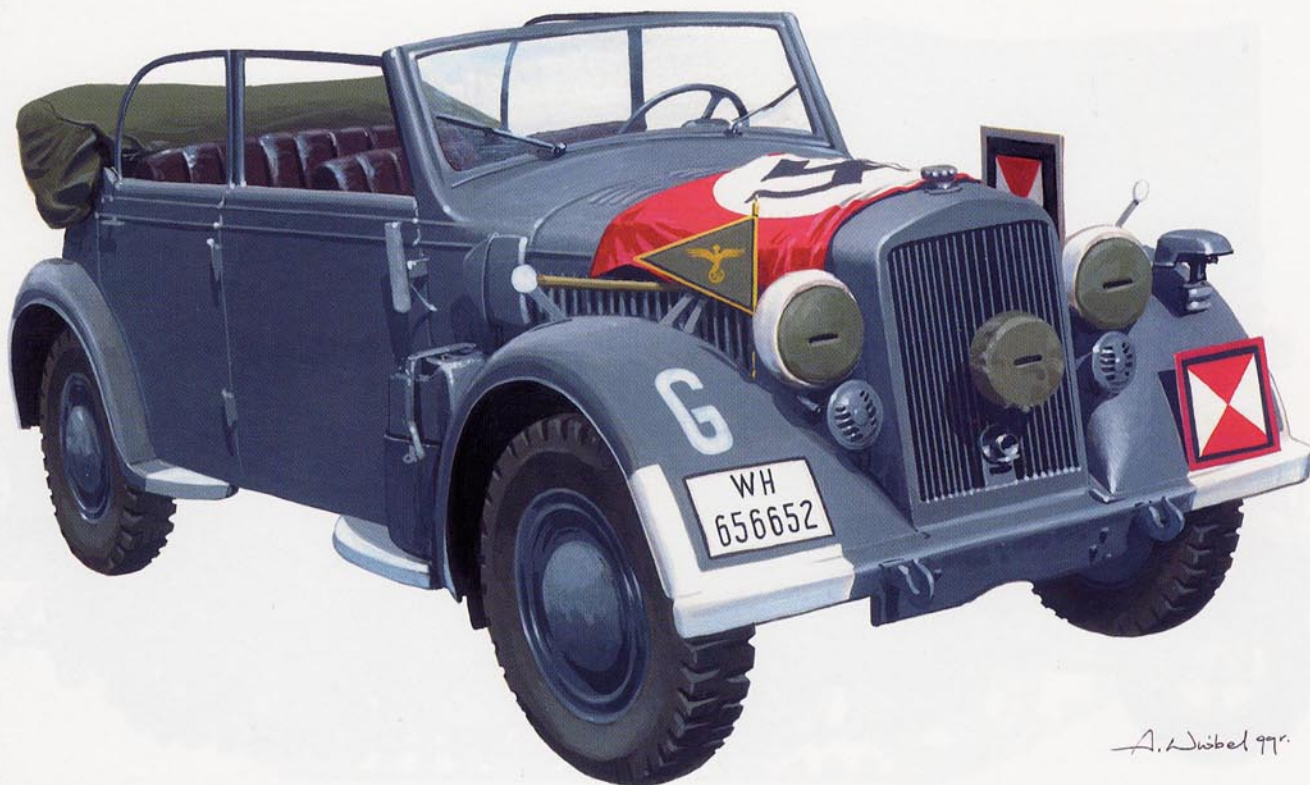
A camouflaged Ford Maultier traveling to the front with supplies for the troops. The license number and a tactical marking can be barely made out on the original photo. The camouflage paint on the cargo bed appears to be brown or green mostly covering the sand base while the cab is covered with roughly equal amounts.



A Pz.Bef.Wg.III followed by an Sd.Kfz.251/6 Ausf.B pass by a group of Russian peasants in a small village. Both vehicles have quite different camouflage schemes. A highly mobile command structure gave the Germans an advantage over the numerically superior Soviets. Note the boarding ladder mounted on the side of the half-track.

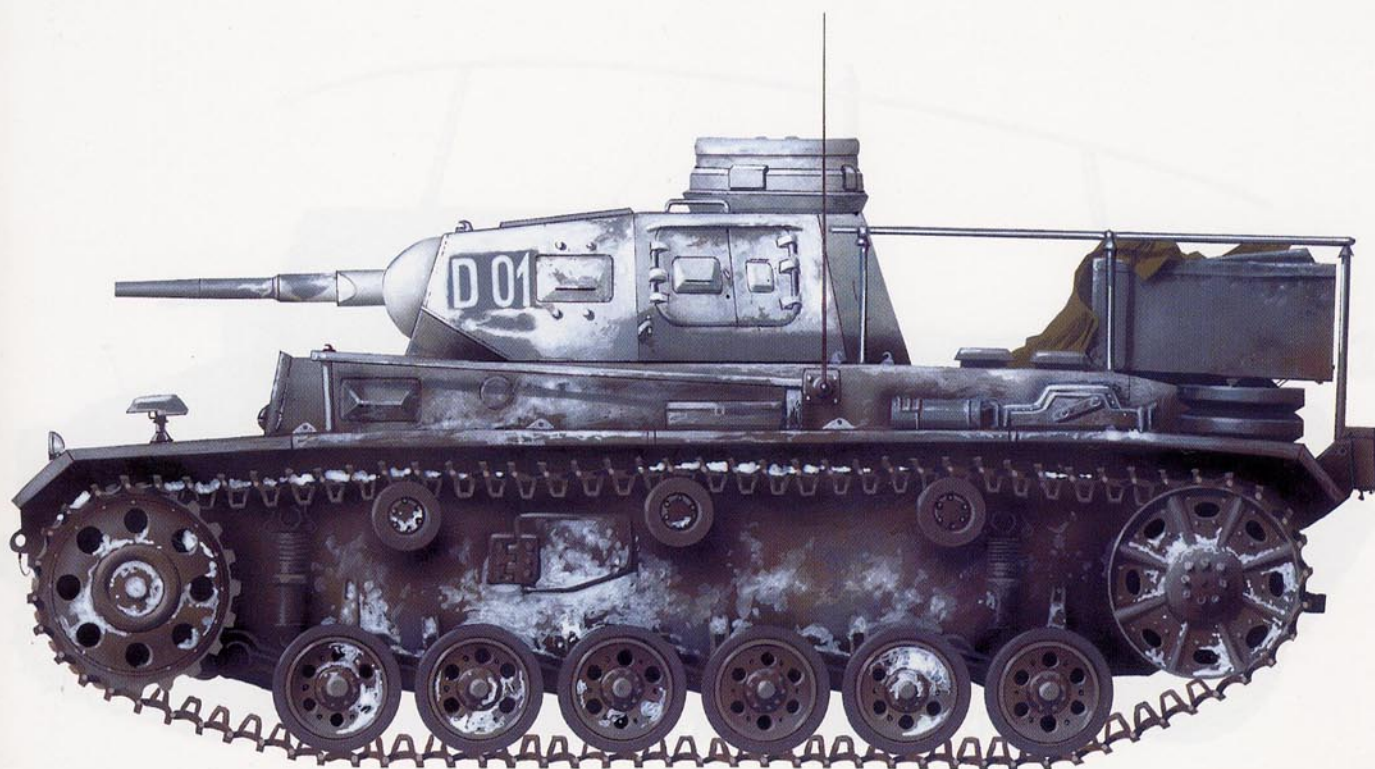


A heavily loaded and camouflaged Wespe self-propelled gun armed with the 10.5cm leFH18/2 howitzer. They were employed in II./Art.Rgt.103 in the 4th and 5th batteries.



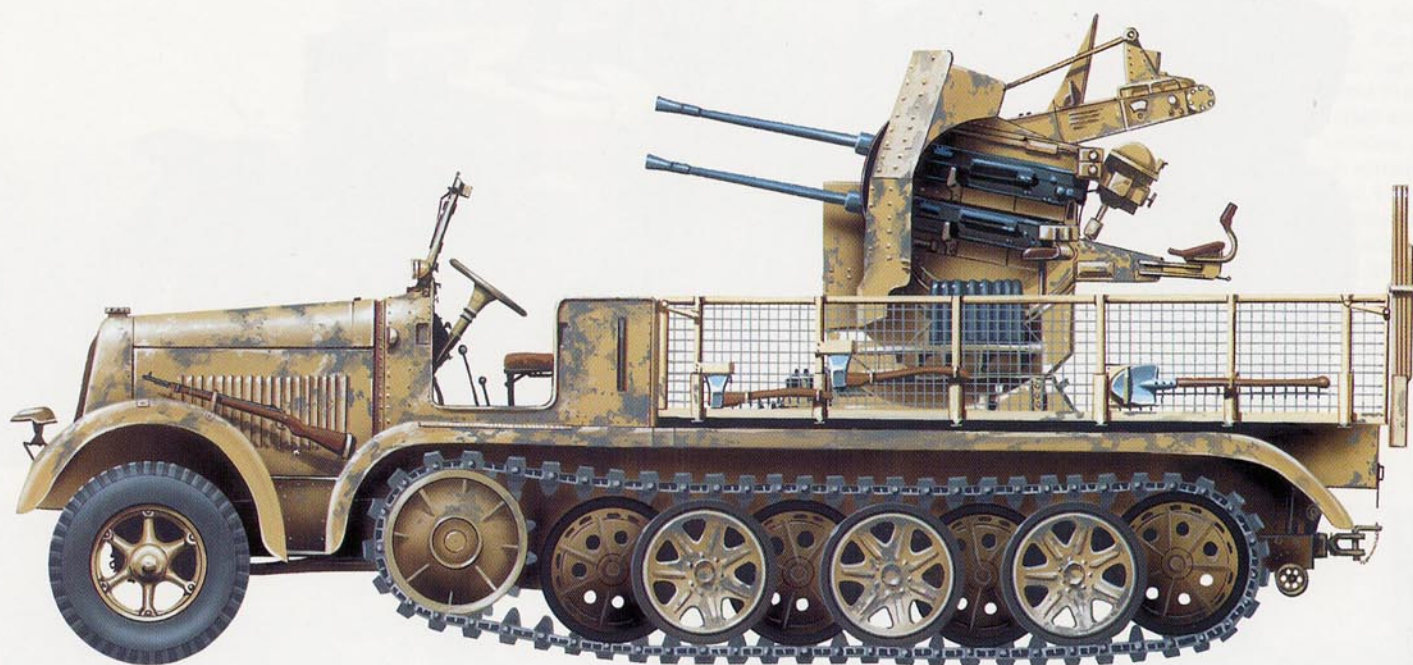
Horch Staff Car of General Guderian, Eastern Front, August 1941

This car was often used by General Guderian for his trips to the various divisions under his command in Panzergruppe 2. It is painted with the standard dark gray paint and displays the white letter 'G' for 'Panzergruppe Guderian' on the right mudguard above the license number. It is fitted with an early pattern general's vehicle pennant on the right side of the engine compartment and a Panzergruppe commander's command flag on the opposite side as well as on the left mudguard.



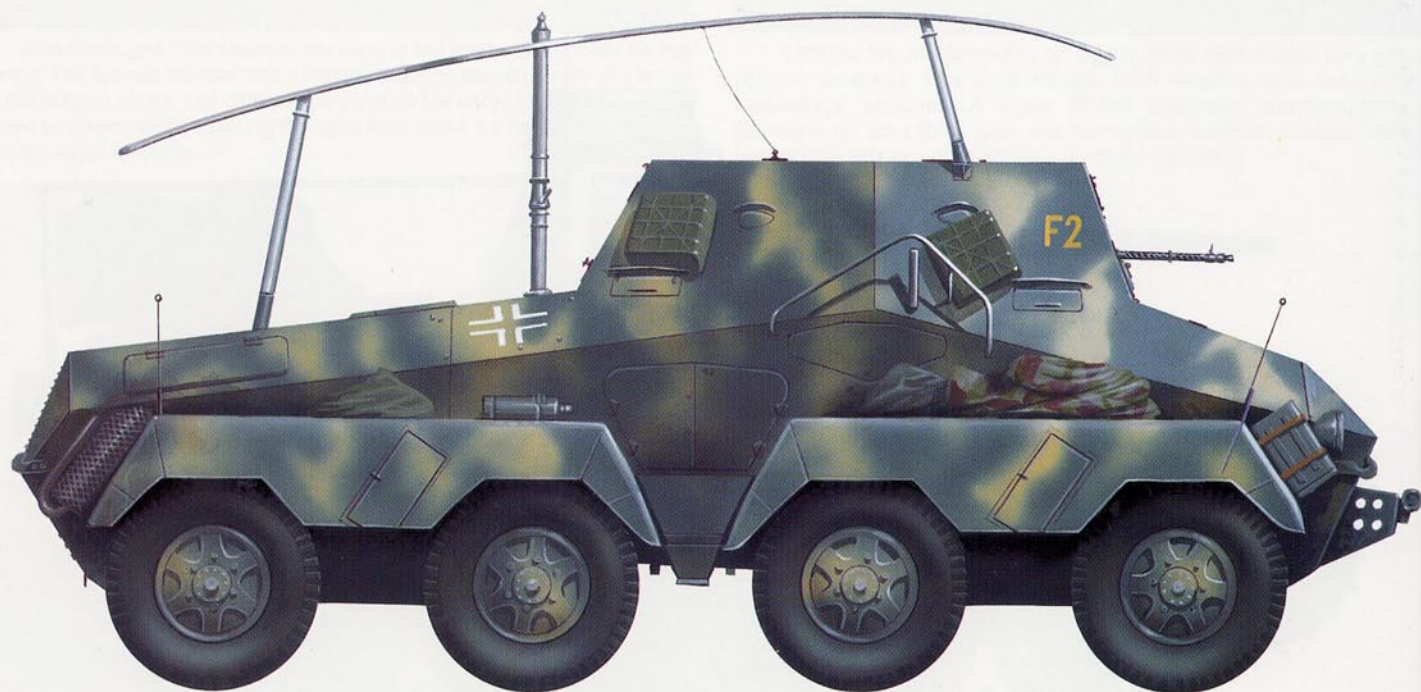
Pz.Bef.Wg. III Ausf.H, Sievsk area, March 1943

The Pz.Bef.Wg. III had a dummy 3.7cm gun mounted in the turret with an MG34 mounted beside it for self defense. This one is still finished in its original dark gray base and has a splotchy coat of white winter camouflage paint applied. Only the tactical number 'D01' has been left on the turret.



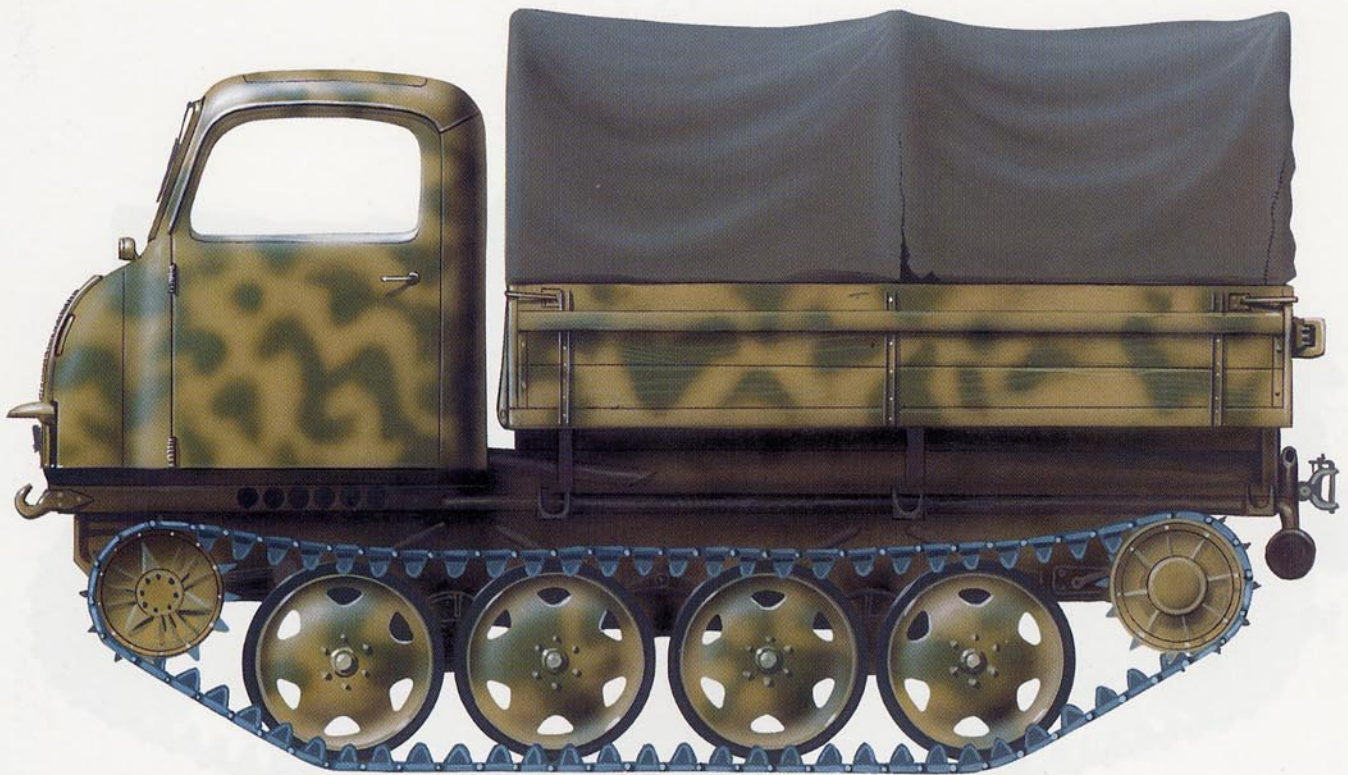
Sd.Kfz. 7/1, H.Flakart.Abt.290, Eastern Front, spring 1943

This vehicle is finished in its original dark gray color with a field applied camouflage pattern of dark sand.



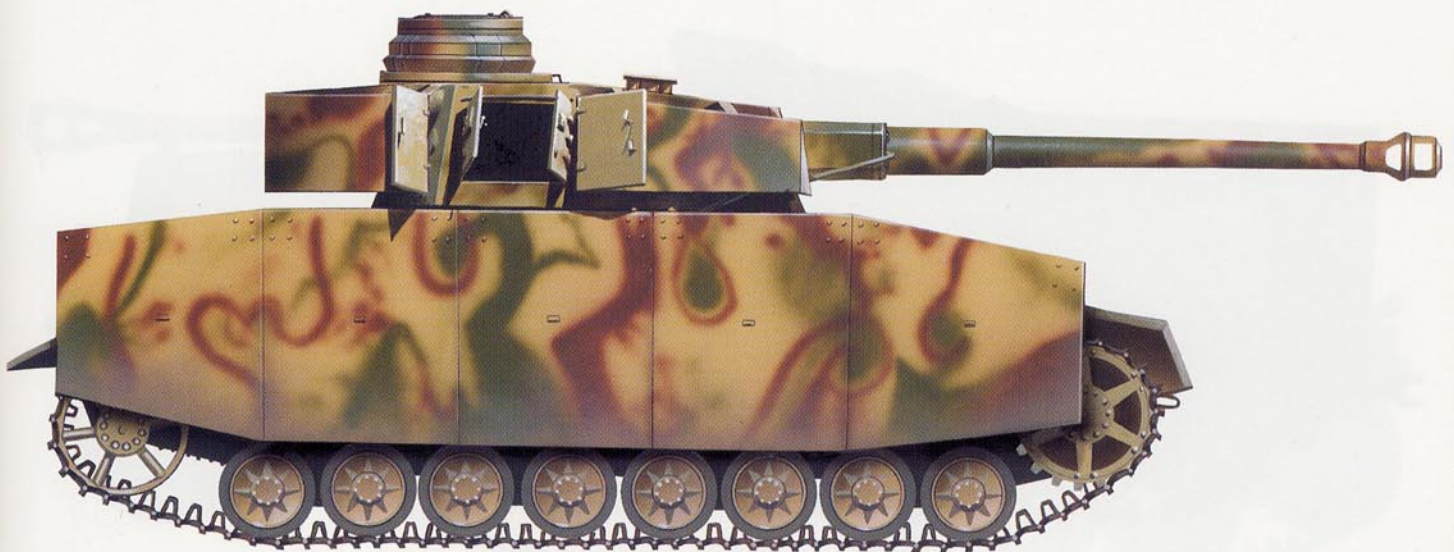
Sd.Kfz.263, Div.Nachr.Abt., Eastern Front, spring/summer 1943

The Panzerfunkwagen (Sd.Kfz.263) 8-Rad was usually issued to the Nachrichten Abteilung of motorized infantry and Panzer divisions as well as Korps and Armee headquarters. This is one of the few older vehicles still in the dark gray base but with a camouflage pattern of dark sand sprayed over.



RSO/01, Pz.Jg.Abt.49, Operation 'Zitadelle', July 1943

The RSO (Raupenschlepper Ost) was developed especially for use on the Eastern Front. This vehicle was painted in an overall sand base with a summer camouflage scheme of green spots sprayed over.



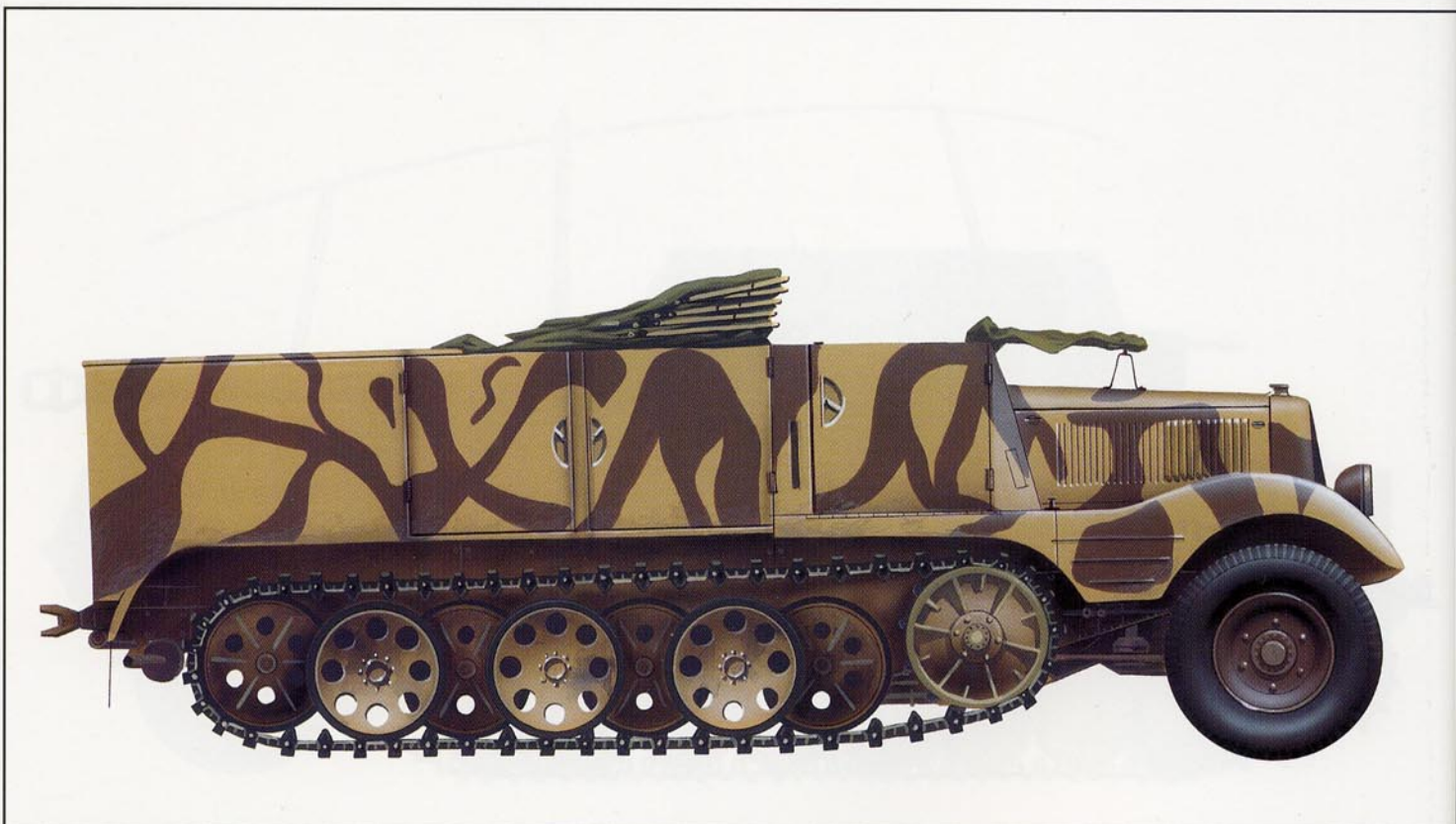
Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G, I./Pz.Rgt.35, Operation 'Zitadelle', July 1943

This Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G carried a very artistic camouflage pattern of green and brown applied over the dark yellow base on the side skirts while the hull and turret were painted with a more standard camouflage pattern. No markings have been added.



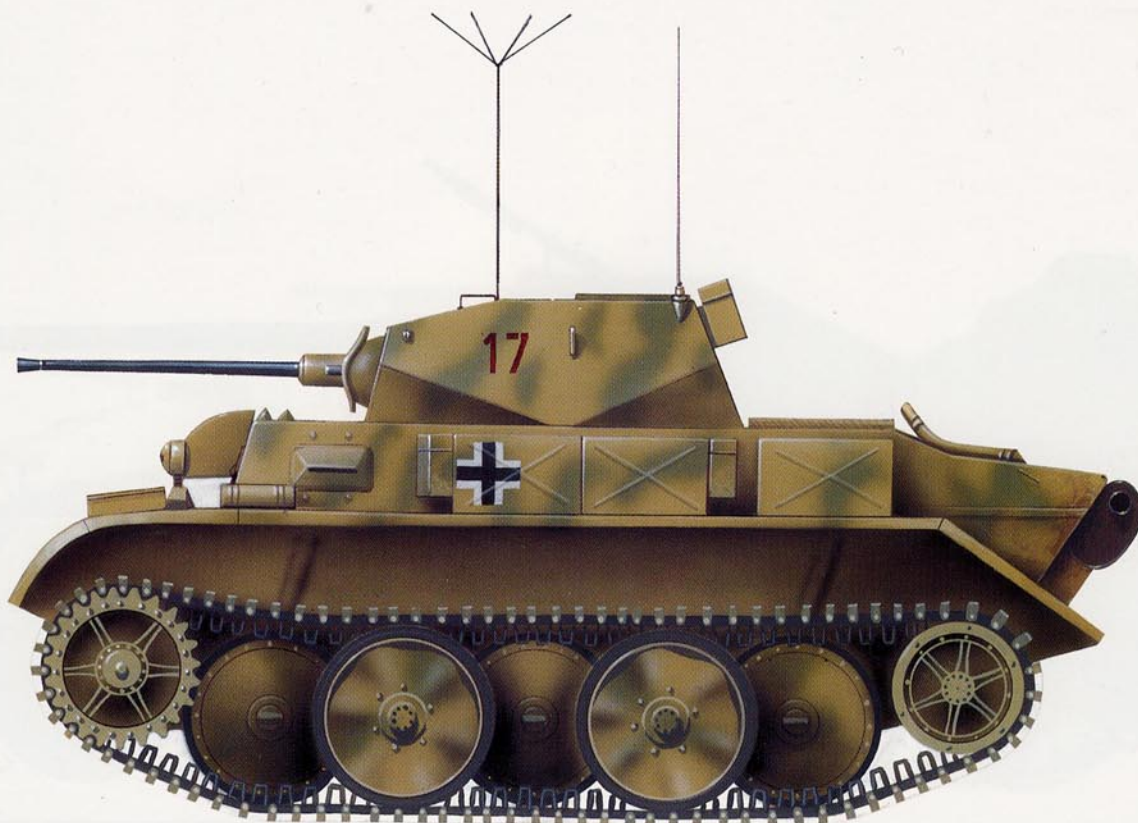
Sd.Kfz. 124 'Wespe', Art.Rgt.103, Operation 'Zitadelle', July 1943

The Wespe was issued to the artillery regiments in Panzer and Panzer-Grenadier divisions and saw its first major action at Kursk. This vehicle has been camouflaged with a pattern of green spots applied over the dark sand base and has been covered with bundles of grain stalks to help break up its shape.



Sd.Kfz. 11, Pz.Jg.Abt.49, Eastern Front, summer 1943

The Sd.Kfz. 11 3 ton prime mover was first issued to artillery regiments for towing the 10.5cm howitzer and later on, to anti-tank regiments for towing their guns. This vehicle has a camouflage scheme of brown, irregular lines painted over the dark sand base with a brush, creating a hard edge pattern.



Pz.Kpfw.II Ausf.L 'Luchs', Pz.Aufkl.Abt.4, Eastern Front, autumn 1943

4.Panzer-Division and 9.Panzer-Division were the only two Panzer divisions to be equipped with a full company of the 'Lynx'. This command vehicle is fitted with the star antenna and has been camouflaged with a spray pattern of green over the dark sand base. The two digit tactical number is painted in red on the side of the turret.



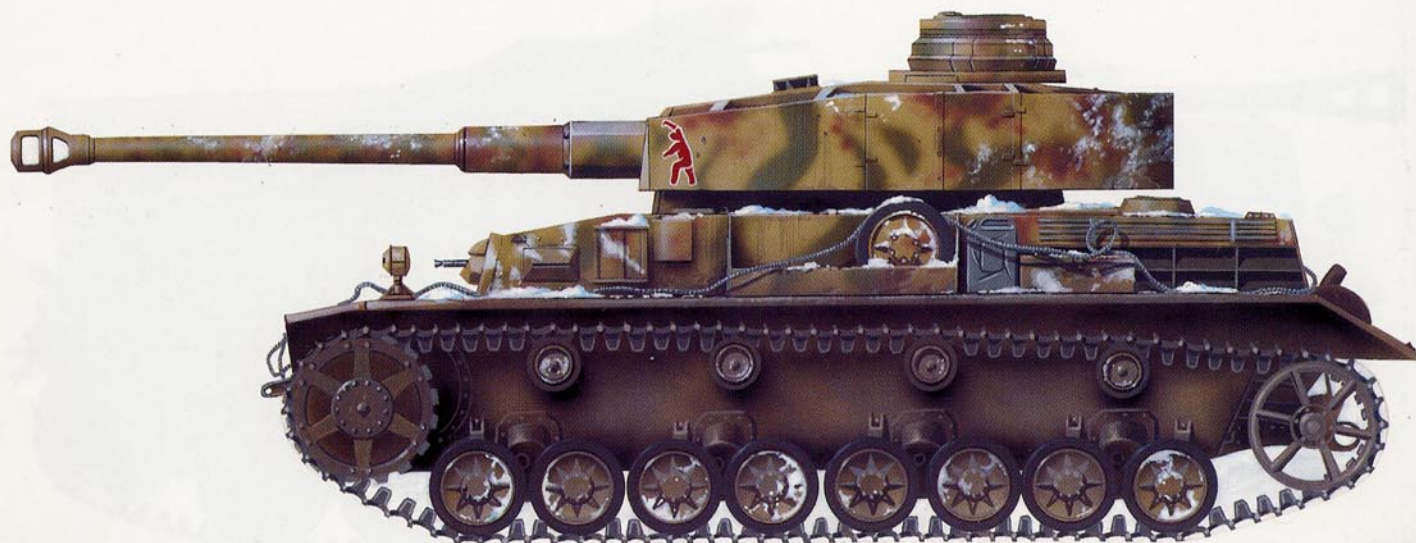
Sd.Kfz.131 'Marder II', Pz.Jg.Abt.49, Eastern Front, winter 1943/44

This vehicle is still finished in its summer camouflage scheme of green spots applied over the dark sand base. There are six kill rings on the gun barrel and the tactical number '211' painted in white on the side.



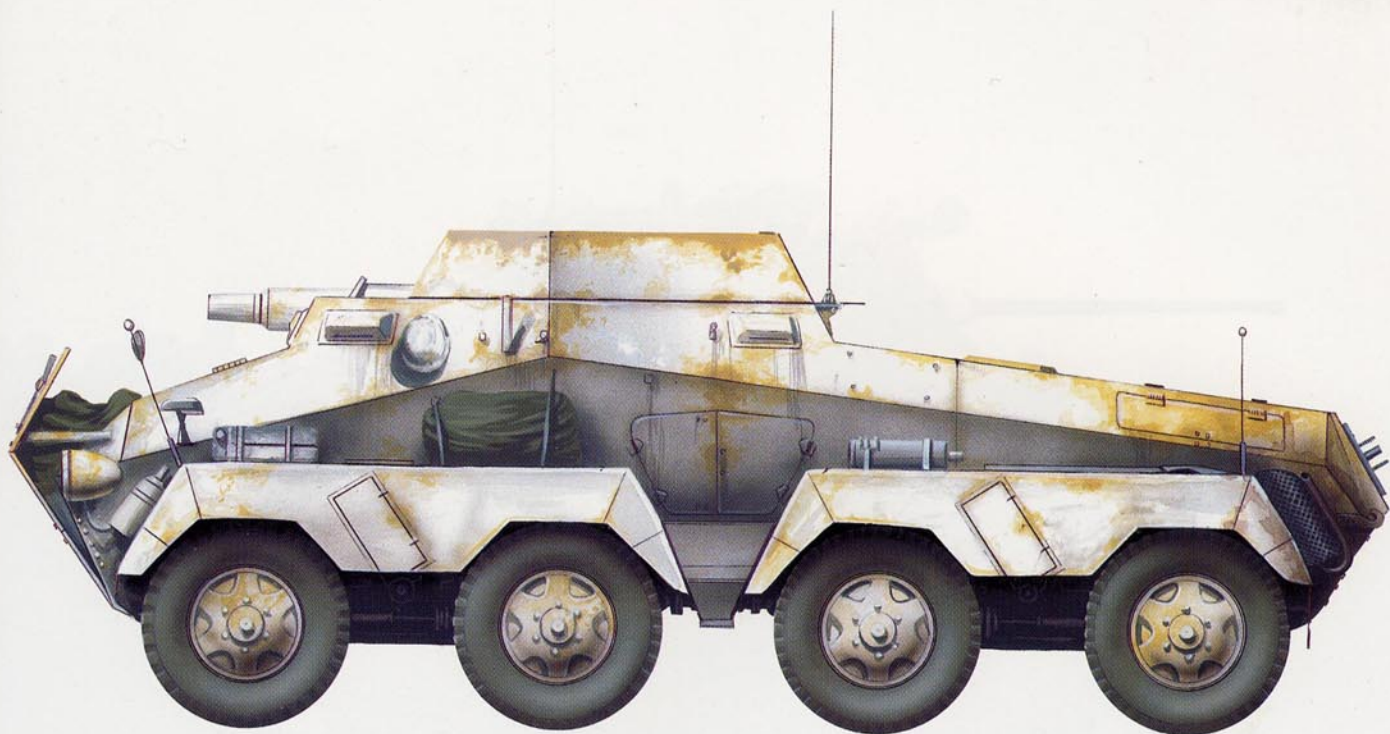
Sd.Kfz. 131 'Marder' II, Pz.Jg.Abt.49, Eastern Front, winter 1943/44

The Marder II was first issued to Panzerjägerabteilungen in July, 1942, and was used on all fronts until the end of the war. Seen during the winter of 1943/44, this vehicle has not received any winter camouflage paint and still displays its summer scheme of brown and green lines over the dark sand base. It also displays two different sets of tactical numbers.



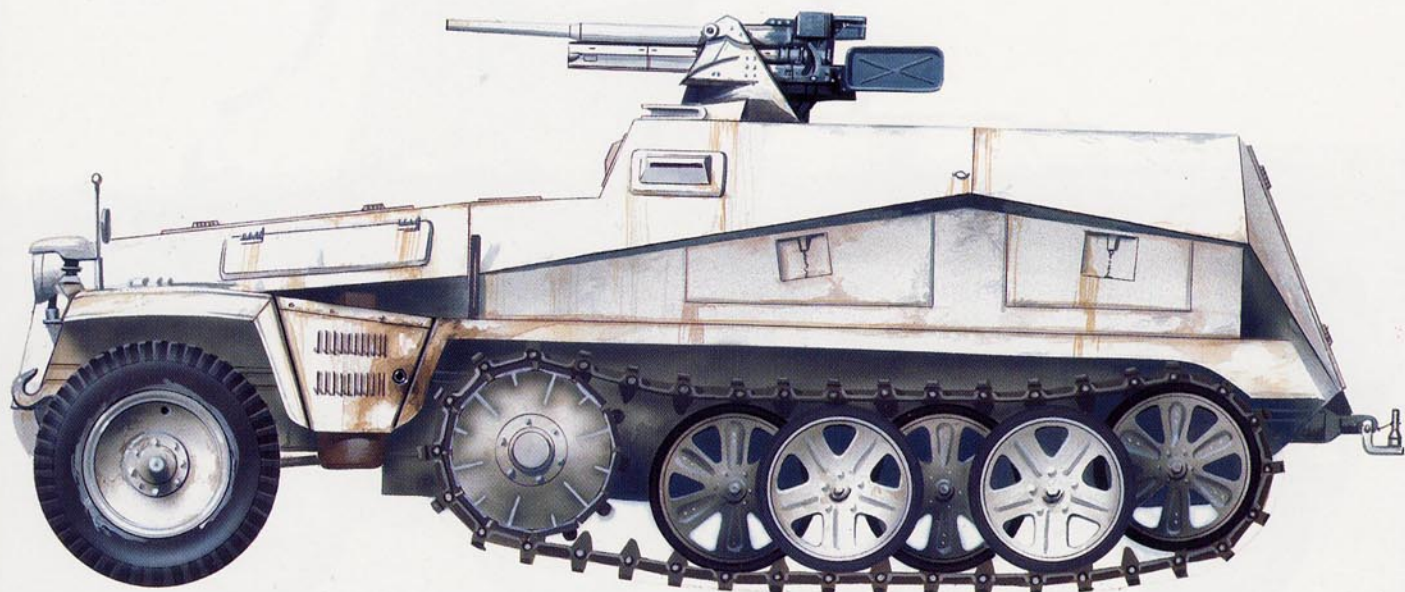
Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G, I./Pz.Rgt.35, Eastern Front, winter 1943/44

Remnants of white winter camouflage paint can still be seen in a few spots on the turret and hull of this Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G. The tank carried no other markings except for the standing bear emblem on the front of the turret skirt armor.



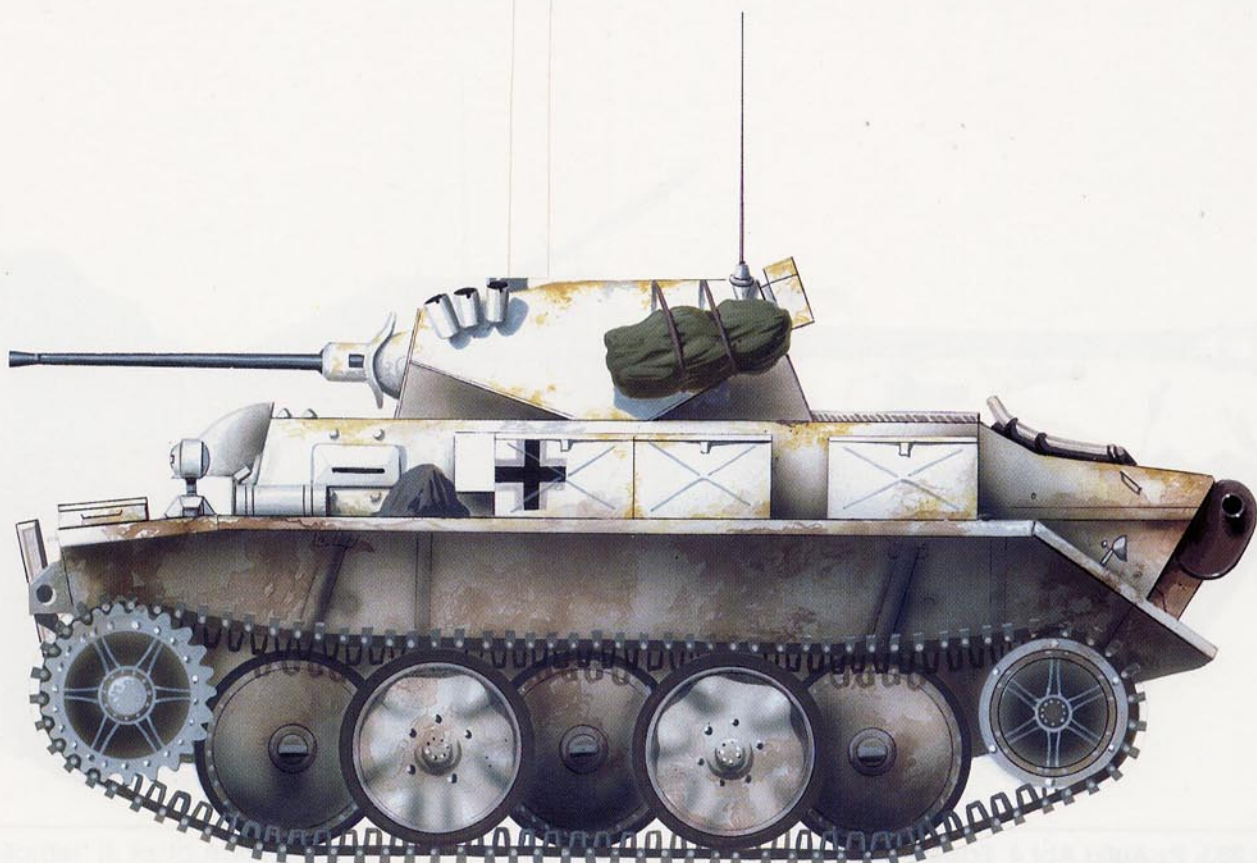
Sd.Kfz.233, Pz.Aufkl.Abt.4, Eastern Front, winter 1943/44

Armed with the 7.5cm Stuk37 L/24 mounted to an early production Sd.Kfz.232 chassis with the spaced frontal armor plate, this Sd.Kfz.233 has a coat of white winter camouflage paint applied over the dark sand base, covering all the markings.



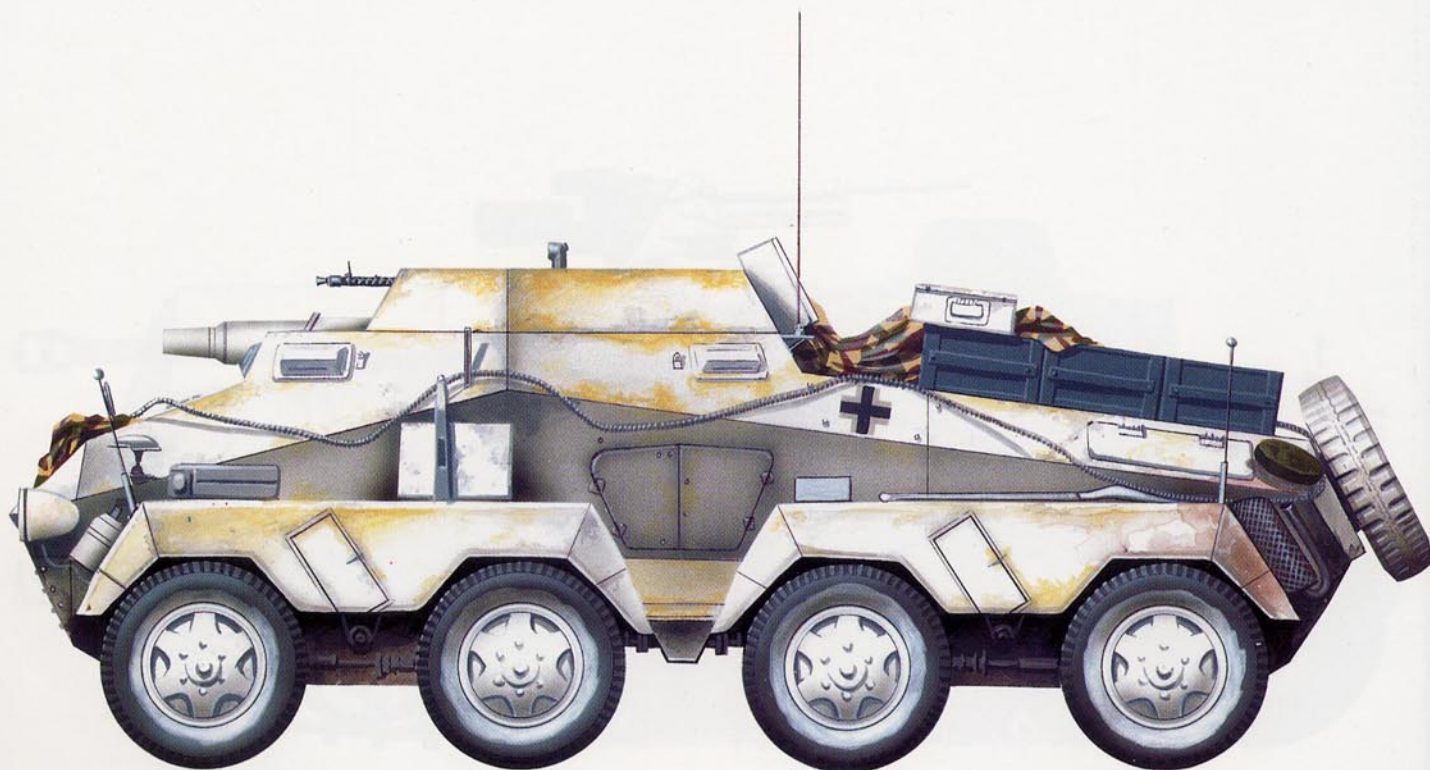
Sd.Kfz.250/10, Pz.Aufkl.Abt.4, Eastern Front, winter 1943/44

This platoon leader's vehicle, armed with an obsolete 3.7cm Pak35/36, has been painted with a uniform coat of white winter camouflage paint over the dark gray base, covering all the vehicle's markings as well.



Pz.Kpfw.II Ausf.L 'Luchs', Pz.Aufkl.Abt.4, Eastern Front, winter 1943/44

The reconnaissance battalion's 'Luchs' all received a uniform application of white winter camouflage paint over their summer coat of green and sand camouflage paint, leaving only the national cross exposed.



Sd.Kfz.233, Pz.Aufkl.Abt.4, Eastern Front, winter 1943/44

This is a later production vehicle with the 30mm thick nose armor. The crew has carefully applied the white winter camouflage paint on the wheel centers as well as the spare wheel mounted on the rear of the vehicle, while leaving the national cross exposed.



Hummels were organized in only one 6 gun battery in II./Art.Rgt.103, in the 6th battery commanded by Hptm. Schnubbe. They are early production models with the narrow driver's compartment.



A Marder II of Pz.Jg.Abt.49 commanded by Major Jentsch. The battalion had 3 companies of 8 self-propelled anti-tank guns, two of which were equipped with the Marder II.



A few Marder III Ausf.M were used in one of the companies of Pz.Jg.Abt.49. This vehicle appears to be painted in an overall sand color with no camouflage paint.

An Sd.Kfz.251/1 Ausf.C of I./Pz.Gren.Rgt.12, the only battalion so equipped in the whole Division. The vehicle has a light camouflage pattern of green or brown applied over the sand base. Note the lack of an MG34 mount on the front.



Another Sd.Kfz.251/1 Ausf.C carrying a different camouflage pattern from the upper one. On July 29, I./Pz.Gren.Rgt.12 under Hptm. Abel took part in an assault on a hill occupied by Soviet troops. The assault failed after three attempts and resulted in the loss of 50 men killed, wounded or captured.



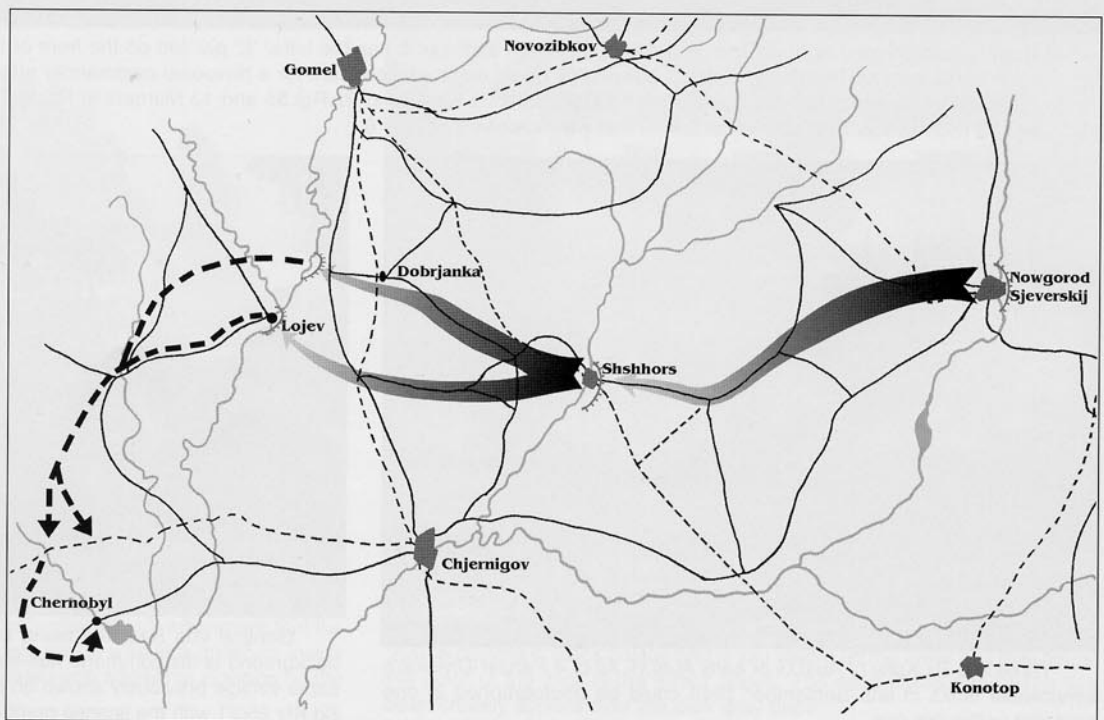
This Sd.Kfz.250/1 appears to have been camouflaged with sand spots over the dark gray base. Note the canvas cover on the MG34 or 42.



This Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G has been fitted with an early globular muzzle brake common to the Ausf.F2 but which was also fitted to the early Ausf.G. The front schürzen plate looks like a replacement as the paint scheme is much different from the others. A personal name, which is unrecognizable, has been painted in front of the national cross on the turret skirt armor.



The gun this Sd.Kfz.10 is towing can't be identified because of the amount of foliage used to camouflage it. After retreating from the Orel area, 4.Panzer-Division was involved in battles around the upper Desna River. On September 17, the Division's strength was reported as 3,023 men and 5 serviceable tanks.



The retreat of 4.Panzer-Division across southern Belorussia in September 1943. The Division was involved in minor actions against the Soviet bridgehead between the Pripyet and Dniepr Rivers. They crossed to the left bank of the Pripyet River then held a section of the frontlines near the city of Chernobyl for several weeks.



An Sd.Kfz.251/1 Ausf.C carries a plank tied to the side to assist movement in soft ground or mud. It has the tactical number '321' painted on the stowage bin on the side indicating it is from 3.Kompanie, I./Pz.Gren.Rgt.12 and also has the 1940 Divisional emblem painted on the nose. The same arrowhead emblem seen before is also painted on the nose though this time on the opposite side.



A heavily camouflaged Hummel towing a damaged Horch staff car. It has the letter 'E' painted on the front of the fighting compartment indicating it is the 5th gun in the battery. The Horch staff car passing by has a command pennant for a divisional commander attached to the bumper. In late September 1943, there were only about half the guns left in Art.Rgt.103, 4 Pz.Kpfw.IV in Pz.Rgt.35 and 13 Marders in Pz.Jg.Abt.49. Additionally there were only four 15cm SiG 33 (Sd.Kfz.138/1) 'Bison' left of the 12 that were received on July 6.



Three late Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G or early Ausf.H. All of 4.Panzer-Division's serviceable tanks in late September 1943 could be photographed in one shot, not unlike this one.



General von Saucken being briefed by his field commanders. In the background is his command half-track, an Sd.Kfz.251/6 Ausf.B. This is the same vehicle previously shown on page 23 and page 26. To the right is an Sd.Kfz.250/1 with the license number WH-1451180.



A closeup of General von Saucken's half-track. It is apparent in this photograph that, judging by the scratches, this is a dark gray vehicle with sand patches of camouflage paint applied. The shipping load label has been repainted on after and clearly indicates the vehicle is an Sd.Kfz.251/6. Also note the large non-standard turn signal covers.



General von Saucken's driver has managed to get the half-track bogged down in soft ground.



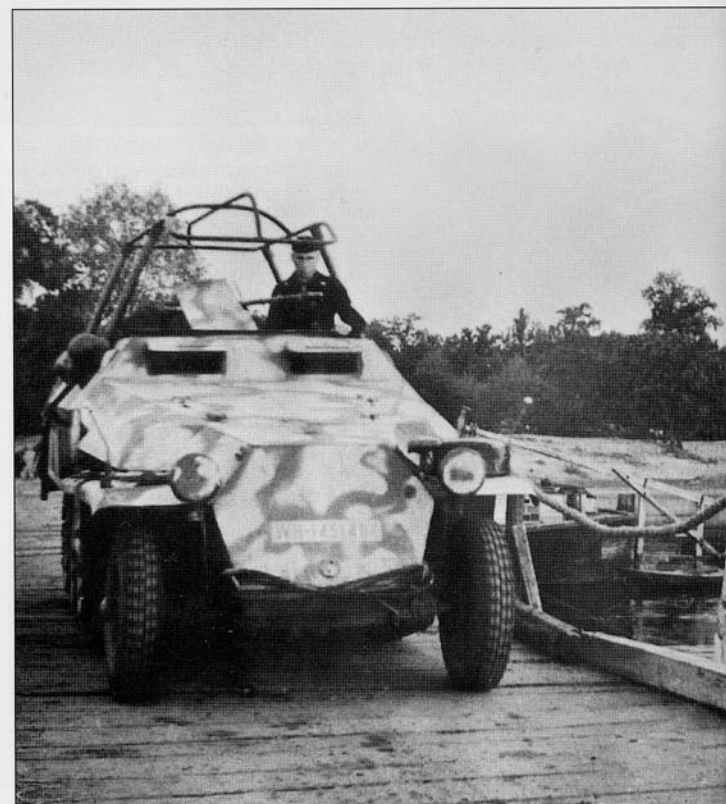
A battered looking Sd.Kfz.250/1 heavily stowed with equipment and the crew's belongings. With a crew of six men, space was at a premium inside the vehicle and so they tended to be cluttered with additional stowage on the outside.



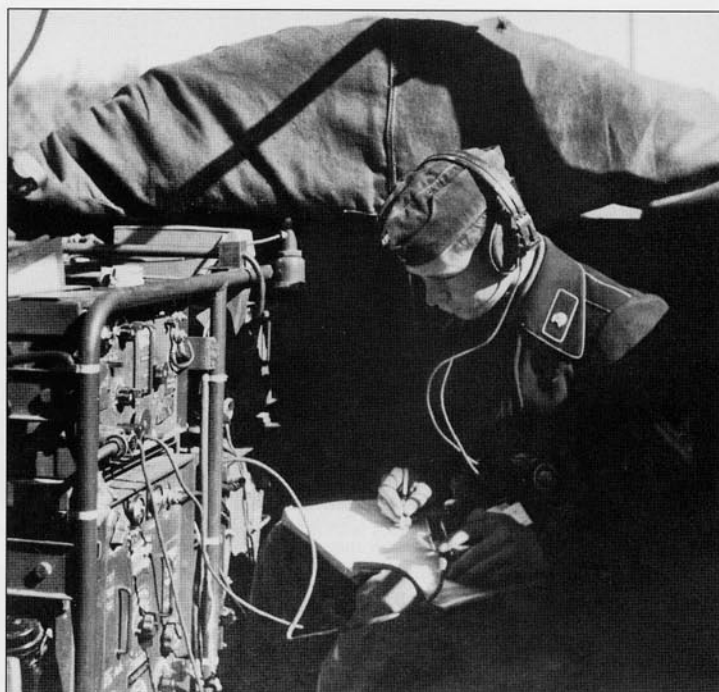
A cleverly camouflaged Sd.Kfz.231 Schwerer Panzer-Spähwagen of Pz.Aufkl.Abt.4, one of 16 such vehicles in this unit in the summer of 1943.



A very rare vehicle in 4.Panzer-Division, the Sd.Kfz.253 leichter Beobachtungspanzerwagen was first designed for StuG.III assault gun batteries and was probably assigned to Art.Rgt.103. The tactical number '200' is painted in black outline and is just visible on the lower hull side below the point of the joint in the armor plates. The sand camouflage paint has been crudely applied over the dark gray base.



A series of photos of an Sd.Kfz.251/6 Ausf.C with a two color camouflage paint scheme of green on the overall sand base. It is probably a new replacement for the divisional commander, General von Saucken. In one photo, immediately behind the half-track, can be seen a long line of softskin vehicles of the divisional HQ. The last photo (on page 47) in the series shows the radio operator manning the FuG 19 and FuG 12 radio sets.



An early production Sd.Kfz.222 armored car of Pz.Aufkl.Abt.49. The 5th and 6th company in the unit were equipped with armored cars. It appears to have been camouflaged with sand spots applied over the dark gray base.



Two photos of Opel Blitz 3 ton trucks with interesting camouflage paint schemes, almost certainly sand over the dark gray base.



An early model Sd.kfz.250/1. Note the spare outer roadwheel hanging on the side of the vehicle. The back side of the wheel can be seen which shows it to be a simple stamping. The camouflage appears to be sand lines over the dark gray base.



A group of Sd.Kfz.250's camouflaged with tree branches in a wooded area. Of all combatants during WWII, the Germans were the only ones to elevate the application of camouflage to an art form. This undoubtedly has contributed to the huge interest of German vehicles of WWII.



A heavily laden NSU Kettenrad (Sd.Kfz.2) appears to be towing another vehicle just outside the picture to the left. The driver is wearing the waterproof motorcyclist's coat.



A Panzerbefehlswagen III based on the Pz.Kpfw.III Ausf.J with the 5cm KwK L/42 gun. The hull machine gun was eliminated to make room for an additional radio set. There were 81 manufactured in 1942 with a further 103 converted during 1943. The star antenna can be faintly seen behind the commander.

A Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G with a horseshoe fixed to its left mudguard for luck. Note the additional 30mm armor plates welded to the front of the hull and superstructure. This vehicle is also equipped with the smoke candle racks on the turret sides.



A Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.H with the tactical number '440' painted on the turret skirt armor and with the standing bear emblem of 4.Panzer-Division painted in front of it. This was the tank of the commander of the 4th platoon in the 4th company of I./Pz.Rgt.35. This is an early Ausf.H as indicated by the additional 30mm armor plates welded and bolted to the front. There were 21 Pz.Kpfw.IV available to the Division on October 25, almost all of them new. At this time there were only 2,825 men left in the combat units of Pz.Gren.Rgt.12 and Rgt.33.



Six photographs showing one of the rarest vehicles in the Panzertruppe assigned to 4. Panzer-Division, the Pz.Kpfw.II Ausf.L "Luchs" (Lynx). Only 100 vehicles were completed and 9. Panzer-Division was the only other unit to receive a full company. A handful were distributed to three other units as well. At the end of October 1943, 4. Panzer-Division reported 27 available for duty with 2. Kompanie/Pz. Aufkl. Abt. 4. Section and platoon leader's vehicles as well as the company commander's vehicle were fitted with the FuG12 radio set and star antenna. The rest were equipped with a FuG Spr. Ger. f which had replaced the FuG Spr. Ger. a in 1943. It appears most of them had an extra armor plate attached to the front of the hull which was spaced out far enough to provide room for extra stowage. The curved sections above the driver's visor are replacement segments for the six piece rear idler and were held in place by a steel rod running through the bolt holes. Some vehicles appear to carry a combination of steel cast and rubber segments though no photographs seem to exist showing the rubber ones in use. These vehicles are all finished in overall sand with a green or brown camouflage pattern painted over and all have a 2 digit tactical numbering system, probably in red.





One of the Sd.Kfz.263 heavy armored radio cars of the Nachrichten Abteilung. It is camouflaged with sand over the dark gray base and displays the Divisional emblem on the right side nose and the identification 'F2' in white or yellow on the side of the hull.



An Sd.Kfz.251/3 Ausf.C radio half-track of I./Pz.Gren.Rgt.12 displaying the white or yellow arrowhead divisional emblem used in 1943 along with an unidentifiable marking to its left. A white Gothic script 'Kdr' painted in white probably indicates this is the commander's vehicle. A star antenna is also faintly visible on the rear.

An Sd.Kfz.250/1 struggling down a soft, sandy road through a Russian village. It is camouflaged with large patches of green or brown over the sand base along with some cut foliage.





Two shots of a Marder III Ausf.M of Pz.Jg.Abt.49. The unit consisted of three companies equipped with 22 Marder II and Marder III on October 1, 1943. These vehicles are finished in overall sand.



The Marder II was the first type of self-propelled anti-tank gun delivered to Pz.Jg.Abt.49 in January 1943. Marder III were issued to replace losses suffered up to August 1943. Here, a Marder II is being passed by a Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.H somewhere in the Ukraine during November 1943.



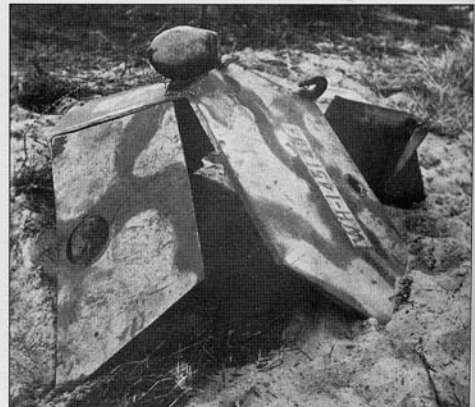
A new Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.H delivered to 4.Panzer-Division in October-November 1943. Note the chassis number '86803' painted on the front of the superstructure. Replacement tanks were rushed into combat immediately, often before unit insignia, tactical markings or camouflage paint could be applied.



An early Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.H, also without markings or camouflage paint.



Two photos of the Sd.Kfz.251/6 Ausf.C seen previously after coming to grief on a mine. They provide a good view of the front axle details and radiator of the vehicle.





The smoldering remains of a Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.H knocked out during the battles along the Pripyet River in November 1943. During October, the Soviets had tried to establish a bridgehead across the river to assist in their advance on Kiev and had suffered many losses to 4.Panzer-Division and its supporting troops.



These two Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.H look to be fairly new replacements and don't appear to have had any camouflage paint applied.



Another Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.H is passed by a Nashorn self-propelled anti-tank gun of an independent schwere Panzerjäger Abteilung. Armed with the deadly 8.8cm PaK43/1 (L/71), the Nashorn was one of the most potent anti-tank weapons in the German arsenal in 1943.



A column of Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.H along the same road await the order to advance. Other than the national cross on the vehicle in the middle, no other markings are visible. They all appear to have a three color camouflage scheme and the one closest to the camera has an unusual pattern painted on its side skirt armor.



A Marder II in a mixed column of vehicles including two more Marder II, an Sd.Kfz.10 and several transport trucks. The Marder II has a mottled three color camouflage paint scheme. In the bitter fighting during November, Pz.Gren.Rgt.12 was reduced to 135 men and Pz.Gren.Rgt.33 reduced to 244 men, down from 815 and 1,106 men on October 25.



A Marder II self-propelled anti-tank gun rolls past a column of infantry, most of whom are wearing the reversible camouflage winter suit introduced in the winter of 1942-43. The winter suit was white on one side and either mouse gray, green splinter or tan water pattern camouflage on the other side.



An officer from 4. Panzer-Division scans the enemy positions from his Sd.Kfz. 250/1 half-track. He is wearing a green splinter pattern winter suit with a black officer's piped feldmutze. The vehicle has a three color camouflage scheme of brown and green applied over the sand base color. The flat bow struts that supported the canvas top can be seen immediately behind him and in front of the MG shield.



A Horch Kfz. 15 staff car and a motorcycle combination bogged down on a muddy road in a Russian village in late 1943. In conditions such as these, vehicles like the Opel Maultier on the left proved invaluable.



Another view of the Opel Maultier as it makes its way down the muddy road. Note the hard edged camouflage paint scheme - probably sand over the dark gray background. A tactical marking can be seen on the right mudguard. It is not clear enough to make out in this photo but can be seen more clearly on an Sd.Kfz. 251 later in this book.



A dilapidated Opel Blitz makes its way through a river of mud. Note the tow cables wrapped around the headlights readily available should the need arise.



An Sd.Kfz.11 half-track prime mover of 4.Panzer-Division is used to tow a truck belonging to 2.Panzer-Division - note the divisional trident emblem on the mudguard.



Two soldiers work on the Maybach engine of an Sd.Kfz.250 half-track. The man on the left is wearing the reversible camouflage winter suit with the green splinter pattern facing out and insulated mitts with the separate trigger finger.



A battery of Hummel self-propelled howitzers of II./Art.Rgt.103 sit exposed in a field in late 1943. An attempt to camouflage one vehicle with pieces of wood has been made and the closest vehicle has a canvas cover pulled over the fighting compartment. It is finished in overall sand with no other camouflage paint. In the foreground can be seen the wicker shipping containers and some projectiles for the 15cm sFH18 guns as well as a Tellermine and its wooden shipping container.



Three shots of a Marder II self-propelled anti-tank gun in the winter of 1943-44. The tactical number '111' has been painted on the side in two locations. One of the photos has been taken at a different time as the push broom is missing and the shovel has been moved and now covers the lower tactical number. The shipping stencil is visible as well. Note the six kill rings painted on the gun barrel.





A Marder II with tactical number '122' and one kill ring on its gun barrel seen with an Sd.Kfz.250/1 half-track with the tactical number '100' painted on the side in yellow with a thin black outline. In one photo, it appears another, possibly older, tactical number '121' has been painted above the number '122'.





Another Marder II seen here towing an Sd.Kfz.250. Note the additional 7.5cm ammunition containers stowed on the back of the vehicle. It normally carried 37 rounds.

A Marder II with tactical number '113' deployed in a snowy field with other vehicles in the company.



A Pz.Kpfw. IV Ausf. G transporting a group of infantry behind the front lines. In the background can be seen the Marder II number '122'. It was not uncommon for tanks and Panzerjäger to operate in conjunction with each other during attacks with the Panzerjäger providing covering fire support.



Officers of the Division discuss plans before an attack. The men standing in the front and the men in the Sd.Kfz.251/3 Ausf.D radio half-track are wearing new green splinter pattern camouflage reversible winter suits while the officer standing on the right is wearing a leather greatcoat.



Sd.Kfz.251/3 Ausf.C and Ausf.D radio half-tracks and a Pz.Bef.Wg.III with the tactical number '001'.



Winter clad grenadiers climb aboard the half-tracks on their way to the front. A covered command pennant can be seen on the side of this Sd.Kfz.251/3 Ausf.D.



The same half-track seen previously gets a coat of white winter camouflage paint hastily applied by one of its crew. He is wearing the reversible winter camouflage suit with the white side out. It is probably a new issue as they tended to soil very easily.



This Soviet built Ford truck has been officially drafted into the Wehrmacht and displays a partial license plate number, a shipping stencil and a Notek blackout driving light on the left mudguard. Despite the situation, these men seem to be in good spirits. The Soviet built trucks were better suited to the rugged conditions than many of the German built trucks.



An Sd.Kfz.250/1, covered with canvas tarps to help conceal it, is parked in a Russian village. It is fitted with steel bow struts to support the tarps over the crew compartment.



A Marder II crewman applies the white winter camouflage paint to his vehicle as well. It is easy to see that not much care is being taken and even the tactical number has been painted over. Compare this to the Marder II in the background that has a uniform, solid coat of white paint applied. The tactical number has even been painted around leaving it exposed.



The crewmen of this late model Pz.Kpfw.III, possibly one of the Division's Pz.Bef.Wg.III, are scanning the horizon for signs of the enemy. This tank appears to have a very even coating of white winter camouflage paint when compared to the previous two vehicles. Both men are wearing the green splinter pattern camouflage winter suit.

A Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G and three Sd.Kfz.251/1 Ausf.C approach enemy positions during the winter of 1943-44. The tank is painted in the standard three color camouflage scheme and has been partially camouflaged with white paint. The standing bear emblem of 4.Panzer-Division can be seen on the turret side skirt. The tank in the foreground is probably the Pz.Bef.Wg.III with tactical number '001'.



An Sd.Kfz.251/7 Ausf.D following behind a large number of vehicles on the hill in the background. The lower part of the hull has not received any white camouflage paint. The crew are all wearing their winter camouflage suits with the white side out.



Two photos of Gen. von Saucken's Sd.Kfz.251/6 Ausf.B half-track which has been very carefully covered in white winter camouflage paint including even the helmet and pack hanging on the side. A boarding ladder has been installed on the side to allow the General easy access into the vehicle. Presumably this was easier than using the rear doors because of the radio equipment that would have been installed there.



A Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.H emerges from a forested area. It has a scruffy white camouflage paint scheme and has lost its side skirts and hangers during the continuous running battles 4.Panzer-Division faced with the Soviet Army.



Four soldiers in winter camouflage suits carry a wounded comrade from the battlefield after an encounter with the enemy. The Sd.Kfz.251/1 Ausf.C in the background has white camouflage paint applied only to the upper surfaces.



Three Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G and H and another Sd.Kfz.251/7 Ausf.D half-track maneuver across a snow covered field. 4.Panzer-Division had 19 serviceable Pz.Kpfw.IV on December 20, 1943.



An Sd.Kfz.251/1 Ausf.C and a 251/10 Ausf.C preparing for action supported by a Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.H. Both half-tracks have carefully white winter camouflage paint applied leaving the tactical markings and license numbers exposed. The number '420' on the vehicle in the foreground is a black outline while the vehicle in the background has a solid number.

These crew members of a Pz.Bef.Wg.III seem in high spirits as they pose for a picture in their green splinter pattern winter camouflage suits. Some are even wearing the new felt and leather winter boots. The man in front still wears his M1938 Feldmütze with the pink waffenfarbe soutache on the front.



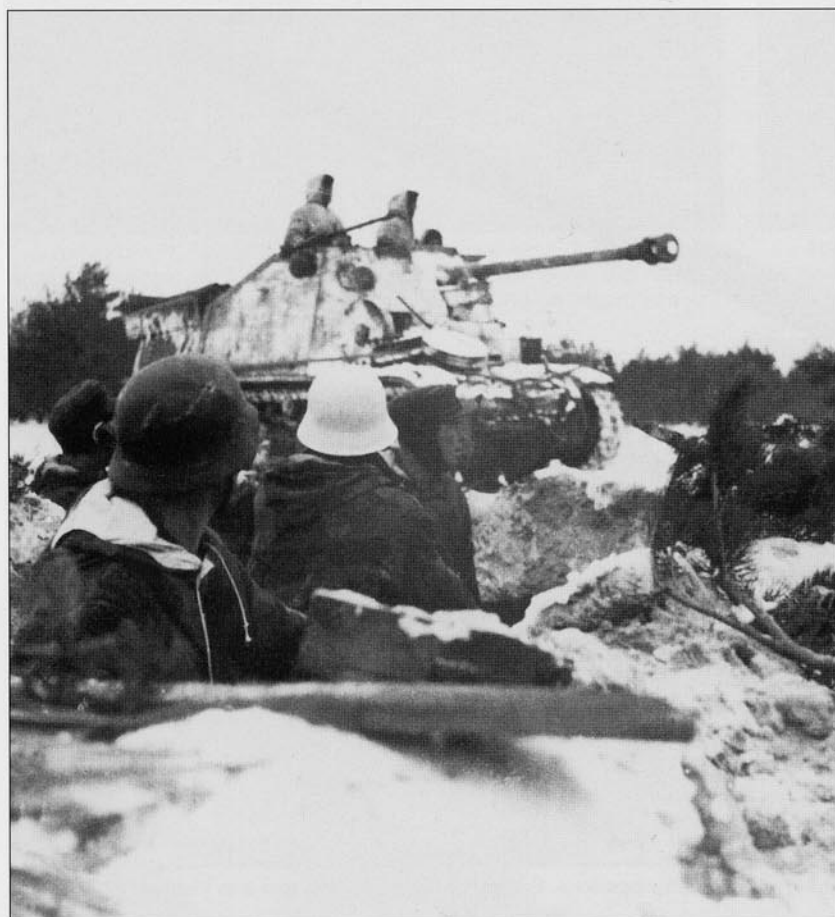
A battery of white camouflaged schwere 10cm K 18 guns lined up to fire on enemy positions. Except for the barrel, this gun was identical to the 15cm sFH18.



Two Marder II self-propelled anti-tank guns provide support for German soldiers occupying a snow covered trench. The men in the trench are all equipped with the reversible snow suit, but curiously, no one is wearing them with the white side out.



This Marder II has run over a mine, damaging its track and destroying the first roadwheel. Also note the additional armor plate that has been added to the side.



One of the lucky crewmen of the Marder II damaged by the mine has had his uniform and face blackened from the blast but has apparently suffered no serious injury. During operations in December 1943, two Marders were damaged but both returned to service in January 1944.



A group of Sd.Kfz.250 half-tracks in white winter camouflage. Two of the vehicles are Sd.Kfz.250/10 armed with the obsolete 3.7cm PaK36 and were usually assigned to platoon leaders. The object draped over the mudguard of the closest vehicle is a wild boar.





A pair of Pz.Kpfw.II Ausf.L "Luchs" leading a heavy armored car troop of Pz.Aufkl.Abt.4 down a forest track. The "Luchs" was well liked by their crews for its speed and mobility.



The Sd.Kfz.233 was as rare a vehicle as the "Luchs" with only some 119 produced. Armed with the obsolete 7.5cm StuK37 L/24, they were issued to the Aufklärung Abteilungen of the Panzer Divisions on all fronts. It would appear that both vehicles have had some additional armor protection added to the front.



A rear view of one of these vehicles shows that even the spare wheel has received a coat of white winter camouflage paint.

An Sd.Kfz.251/3 Ausf.D in white winter camouflage paint. The Divisional emblem and license number have been carefully painted around to leave them visible. Another marking, seen earlier on the mudguard of an Opel Maultier, appears to be 'I v G', the meaning of which is not known.





Two more views of the same half-track. The men are wearing a variety of winter camouflage suits, all of which look to be newly issued. The man in the back of the half-track is wearing one of the many styles of unofficial fur lined caps seen on the Eastern Front. A Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G can be seen in the background.



