

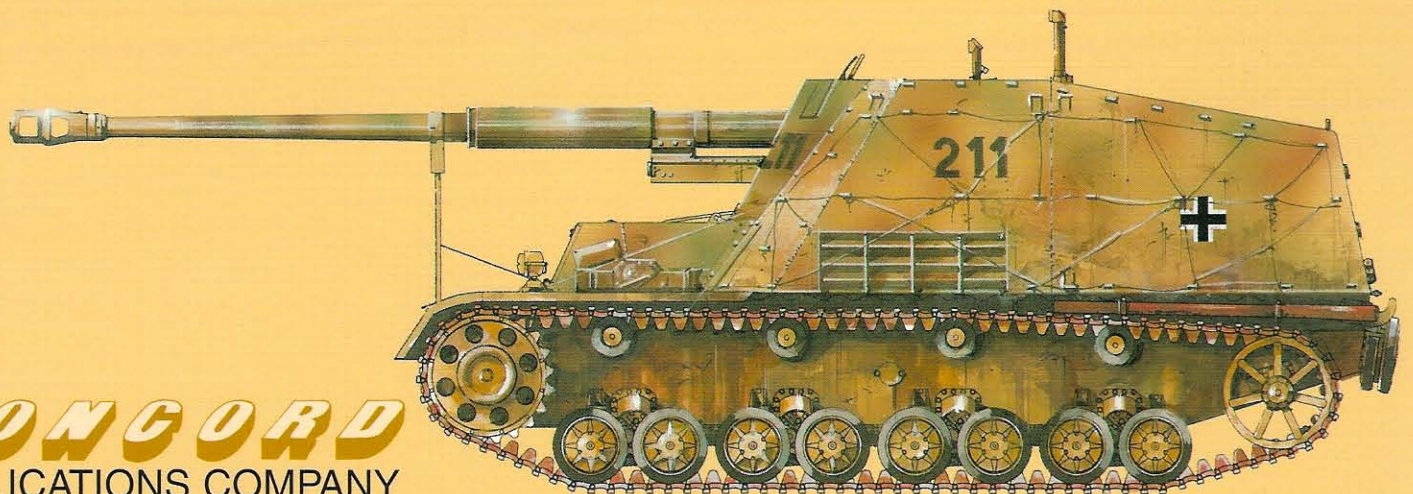
ARMOR AT WAR SERIES

7023

Panzers in Italy

1943-1945

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Panzers in Italy

1943-1945

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Introduction

By the end of 1942, Axis Forces in North Africa were being slowly squeezed back into Tunisia by the combined armies of the United States and Great Britain. In January 1943, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill met with the Allied Combined Chiefs of Staff in the Moroccan port city of Casablanca to plan their next move.

American strategists favored concentrating on a cross-Channel offensive and viewed any other course of action as a distraction from the main goal. Churchill on the other hand, felt that a campaign against Italy, 'the soft underbelly of Europe' as he called it, might help knock Italy out of the war and divert some German forces from the Russian Front. As the Allies were in no position to launch a major offensive in France in 1943 and in order to maintain the initiative, it was decided to invade Sicily as soon as the Axis Forces in North Africa were defeated. American General Dwight D. Eisenhower was named Supreme Commander and a target date was set in early July 1943.

The plan called for the British Eighth Army, under General Sir Bernard L. Montgomery, to land near Pachino on the south east corner of the island, with the British 5th, 50th and 51st Infantry Divisions, the Canadian 1st Infantry Division and two Royal Marine Commando units. The American Seventh Army, under Lieutenant General George S. Patton, with the U.S. 1st, 3rd and 45th Infantry Divisions followed by the 2nd Armored Division, would land on the British left flank, near Gela.

Operation 'Husky', as it was called, would be the largest amphibious landing in history, using 3,300 vessels of all types to ferry more than 80,000 troops, 7,000 vehicles, 300 trucks, 600 tanks and 900 artillery pieces from ports in North Africa, Great Britain and the United States. The invasion would be preceded by the largest Allied airborne operation of the war carrying almost 4,600 men in 222 planes and 144 gliders.

The Italians had about 200,000 troops stationed on the island in five coastal divisions and four poorly equipped infantry divisions, the Aosta, Napoli,

Assietta and Livorno Divisions. They were reinforced by some 30,000 German troops in the well trained and equipped 15.Panzer-Grenadier-Division, under Generalmajor Eberhard Rodt and Panzer-Division 'Hermann Göring', under Generalleutnant Paul Conrath, supported by 17 Tiger I's from 2./s.Pz.Abt.504.

The landings took place in the early morning hours of 10 July 1943. The British, landing near Syracuse, took the port on the first day. The Americans, landing in the Gela sector faced some stiff opposition when the Italian Livorno Division counterattacked with Panzer-Division 'Hermann Göring', the Italians actually reaching Gela before they were repulsed. Under intense naval gunfire, the Italian and German forces fell back. A coordinated attack the next day brought Panzer-Division 'Hermann Göring' to within 2,000 yards of the American beachhead before they again withdrew under a storm of combined artillery and naval gunfire.

On 12-14 July, FJR 3 and I. and III./FJR 4 were parachuted into Sicily to reinforce the German positions in the Catania area. They were later followed by 29.Panzer-Grenadier-Division under Generalmajor Walter Fries, equipped with 43 StuG.III, who were ferried over from the mainland.

On 25 July, as the battle for Sicily raged on, Benito Mussolini was arrested and control of the government was turned over to Marshal Badoglio, who immediately began secret negotiations for an armistice. During the following weeks, the German defenders were gradually pushed back towards Messina, where, during the nights of 10 and 11 August, 34 Panzers and 44 StuG.III and one remaining Tiger were evacuated by ferry to the Italian mainland. On 17 August 1943, the U.S. 1st Infantry Division entered Messina ending the battle for Sicily. In all, 118 of the 217 Panzers and Sturmgeschütz sent to Sicily were lost.

In August 1943, Hitler also ordered SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Division 'LSSAH' transferred to northern Italy from the Eastern Front to bolster German forces there. Leaving all their equipment behind, they were re-equipped with new

Pz.Kpfw.IV's and Pz.Kpfw.V Panthers along with 27 Tiger I's of the newly formed schwere SS-Panzer-Abteilung of 1.SS-Panzer-Korps 'Leibstandarte'. The reformed 24.Panzer-Division was also transferred to central Italy in August 1943.

Encouraged by their progress on Sicily, in mid-July Allied strategists began to plan the assault on the Italian mainland at Salerno. Mussolini's arrest further increased the Allies optimism and General Eisenhower was instructed to urgently prepare plans for the operation.

Although the British Eighth Army had crossed the Strait of Messina on 3 September, 1943 landing near Reggio, the main attacks did not take place until 9 September 1943. Code named Operation 'Avalanche', the U.S. Fifth Army landed at Salerno on the Italian mainland with the British X and U.S. VI Corps. At the same time, the British 1st Airborne landed at Taranto.

At this time, southern Italy was defended by the German 10.Armeekorps under General der Panzertruppe Heinrich von Vietinghoff. His command included 56.Armeekorps with 29.Panzer-Grenadier-Division, 26.Panzer-Division and 16.Panzer-Division; 16.Panzerkorps with 15.Panzer-Grenadier-Division and 1.Fallschirmjäger-Division and 11.Fliegerkorps with 2.Fallschirmjäger-Division and 3.Panzer-Grenadier-Division. Generalfeldmarschall Albert Kesselring was overall commander of all German forces in the south of Italy.

The landings came as no surprise to 16.Panzer-Division, the only German division stationed in the Salerno area. The German High Command had considered Salerno to be a likely landing site and 16.Panzer-Division had just completed anti-invasion maneuvers in the area and several static defenses had been set up. Against stiff opposition, the Allies slowly began consolidating the beachhead. In the early morning light, a large force of Pz.Kpfw.IV's from 16.Panzer-Division made the first large-scale attack against the U.S. 36th Division north of Paestum. It was not until after noon that the attack was repulsed and the American troops took their initial objectives some four miles inland.

Von Vietinghoff ordered 26. Panzer-Division and 29. Panzer-Grenadier-Division to break off contact with the advancing British Eighth Army and rush north to Salerno. He also ordered Panzer-Division 'Hermann Göring' and 15. Panzer-Grenadier-Division, who were resting and refitting in the Naples area after their withdrawal from Sicily, dispatched south to block any Allied attempt to advance toward Naples. Kesselring requested two Panzer-Divisions from 14. Armee stationed in northern Italy, be transferred south to meet the Allied threat, but Hitler refused the request.

The Germans launched a major counter-attack against the American positions all along the front on 13 September. The situation became critical when German tanks swept to within two miles of the beach. Having committed their reserves, the Allies were short of reinforcements and Montgomery's Eighth Army was still almost 120 miles away. Every man who could hold a gun was put into the line and furious artillery fire poured into the German positions. The attack faltered and by sunset, the Germans had pulled back. Meanwhile, General Clark, concerned about the tenuous American positions, made plans for them to be evacuated by sea to the British sector. Fortunately, during the evening, reinforcements arrived when 1,300 men from the 82nd Airborne dropped into the American sector followed by parts of the U.S. 45th Infantry Division and British 7th Armoured Division by landing craft in the early morning. Another German attack was beaten off the next day and the situation began to improve for the Allies as reinforcements continued to pour in. Finally, on 18 September, after nine days of fighting, the Germans pulled back from the beachhead in an organized withdrawal to a new defensive position in the northern Apennines. By the time Montgomery's Eighth Army linked up with the invasion forces, the fighting was largely over.

With the beachhead at Salerno secured, the Allies attention turned to Naples. The U.S. Fifth Army would advance along the west and capture the port of Naples while the British Eighth Army attacked toward Foggia on the eastern side of the Apennines. The mountainous terrain favored the defender

and the Germans became experts at demolishing bridges along the narrow, winding roads and setting up small rear guard forces to impede the Allied advance. This gave the Germans two weeks to completely dismantle and remove or destroy anything that may be helpful to the Allies. Railroads and buildings were dynamited clogging the streets with rubble and ships were sunk and cranes demolished in the harbor making it useless. Within a month though, the port was back operating almost at prewar levels. The Germans began to realize that these tactics could delay the Allied advance by months and on 4 October, Hitler instructed Kesselring to set up a defensive line across Italy between Naples and Rome. This would come to be known as the Gustav Line and would become the scene of much bitter fighting at a town called Cassino.

North of the Volturno River, the road that led from Naples to Rome branched into two roads, one running along the coast and the other through the mountains about 35 miles inland. The coast road, which followed the ancient Appian Way, ran through the Pontine Marshes and was the least suitable of the two. The other route, once it passed Monte Cassino, opened up into the Liri Valley and led directly to Rome. The Germans were determined to block access to the Allies.

The German defensive line actually consisted of two shorter lines, the Barbara and Bernhard Lines, blocking both roads. Both were designed to slow down the Allied advance so that the major defensive line, the Gustav Line, could be completed. It took the Fifth Army more than two weeks to break through the Barbara Line and advance 40 miles only to be stopped on the Bernhard Line. By 15 November, the exhausted Fifth Army halted to rest and refit for two weeks.

In order to break the stalemate that was developing, Allied planners conceived a plan for an amphibious landing behind the German lines that would force them to abandon their positions south of Rome. The landing site chosen was Anzio, a small coastal town 35 miles south of Rome.

The assault force of 40,000 men from the U.S. VI Corps, commanded by Major General John P. Lucas, landed on 22

January 1944, against light opposition. By the end of the first day, the U.S. 3rd Infantry Division had advanced inland three miles and the British 1st Division two miles. Mindful of the situation that had developed at Salerno and fearing a possible trap, General Lucas decided to hold his position until all the troops and equipment could be put ashore.

Hitler immediately ordered reinforcements from Yugoslavia, Germany, France and northern Italy sent in. By the end of the day, three divisions were on their way from 14. Armee in northern Italy to meet the new threat along with some units from the Cassino area. Among the various units sent were s.Pz.Abt.508, I./Pz.Rgt.4, I./s.Pz.Jg.Abt.653, Sturmpanzer-Abteilung 216 and Panzer-Abteilung (Fkl) 301. By the time General Lucas launched an attack out of the bridgehead on 30 January, the Germans had assembled a formidable defense.

While the Germans were reacting to the landings at Anzio, General Clark, once again, ordered Fifth Army to try to breach the Gustav Line. The Benedictine Abbey on top of Monte Cassino looked down on the town of Cassino on the banks of the Rapido River from a height of 1,700 feet. In order to reach the Rapido River, troops from the U.S. 34th and 36th Infantry Divisions had to cross two miles of open, swampy ground under the constant surveillance of German observers who were able to call down extremely accurate artillery fire. It took more than a week to get across the river.

At Anzio, the Germans launched a major counter-attack down the Albano-Anzio road against the U.S. 45th Infantry Division. Confined to the few good roads because of wet, muddy fields, the German attack gained some initial success but the line held. After five days, the Germans realized they would not be able to break through and suspended the attack. Both sides suffered about 19,000 casualties each. A second, weaker attempt nine days later also failed. The inability of the Allies to make any headway resulted in General Lucas being replaced by Major General Lucian Truscott, commander of the U.S. 3rd Infantry Division.

While the Germans were occupied

with plans for the Anzio counter-attack, the 2nd New Zealand and 4th Indian divisions were given the task of trying to break through the German defenses at Cassino and into the Liri Valley. To the commander of the 4th Indian Division, the monastery presented an insurmountable obstacle as long as it was intact. Although the Germans maintained after that they had no troops actually stationed in the monastery, at that time few Allied commanders believed it. After the monastery was bombed on 15 February, the elite German 1.Fallschirmjäger-Division occupied the ruins. The rubble only provided the German defenders with excellent cover and made the position more difficult to take. Two more Allied attacks failed to take their objective.

The next attack would follow another massive aerial bombardment on the town, but the weather conditions remained unfavorable for the next three weeks and it was not until 15 March that conditions were right. Again, the ground attack was met by furious resistance from paratroopers from 1.Fallschirmjäger-Division, who had survived the bombing in tunnels and bunkers. Mountains of debris and rain filled bomb craters hampered the movement of men and tanks. On the mountain, men from the 4th Indian Division fought to within 250 yards of the summit before being driven back by the German paratroopers.

General Alexander now transferred Eighth Army from the Adriatic to the Cassino area. A new offensive was planned with 14 divisions massed against the Germans. After more than six weeks of preparation, the Allies were ready. On 11 May, more than 1,600 guns opened up with the most massive barrage yet seen on the Italian Front. With their usual tenacity, the Germans fought back holding on to their ground except in the thinly held Aurunci Mountains where the French Expeditionary Corps under General Juin, advanced several miles in a few days and threatened to break into the Liri Valley in the German rear. Sparked by this success, the British outflanked the town of Cassino on 17 May and that night, Kesselring ordered 1.Fallschirmjäger-Division to abandon the ruins and fall back. The next day, the Polish II Corps occupied the monastery after taking almost 4,000 casualties in the preceding week.

As the German 10.Armee retreated all along the front, the Allies, now numbering seven divisions in the Anzio beachhead, launched an attack towards Cisterna to cut them off. But General Clark, his eye on the prize of Rome, diverted some of his attack force northwest toward Rome allowing the bulk of German forces from Cassino to bypass them and escape. Two regiments from the U.S. 36th Infantry Division marched through a hole in the German defenses and entered Rome on 4 June 1944. It was the first enemy capital city to fall to the Allies.

The Germans continued to withdraw north leaving a trail of destruction behind. Another series of temporary defensive lines was being set up to hinder the Allied advance while the main line of resistance, the Gothic Line, was being hurriedly constructed across the Apennines 155 miles north of Rome.

The Trasimeno Line ran through Lake Trasimeno 85 miles north of Rome. Here, Kesselring managed to hold up the Allied advance for ten days before conducting an orderly withdrawal to a new line 30 miles away where the performance was repeated. By 4 August, they were back to the Arno Line which followed the Arno River through Pisa and Florence and then over the mountains to the Adriatic. At this point, they were only 20 miles from the Gothic Line where a last stand would be made.

The beginning of August found both armies facing each other across the Arno River. Seven Allied divisions had been withdrawn for the landings in southern France and now General Alexander was forced to shift troops to pick up the slack for an assault across the Arno River. The Eighth Army was moved to the Adriatic coast where the terrain was less formidable. The plan was for the British to attack towards the coastal town of Rimini. It was hoped that the Germans would react by shifting units from the center of the line to meet the attack allowing the Fifth Army to strike toward Bologna against little resistance. On 25 August, Eighth Army launched its assault on Rimini across the Arno Line. They made good progress at first but soon were bogged down by autumn rains. The Germans reacted as expected and the Fifth Army crossed the Arno virtually unopposed, moving into Pisa on 2 September and advancing to the

Gothic Line 15 miles north of Florence on 13 September.

There are two narrow, winding passes through the Apennines connecting Florence with Bologna, the Futa Pass and Il Giogo Pass. General Clark chose the secondary Il Giogo Pass believing the Futa Pass to be more strongly defended. The narrow confines of the pass made it necessary to employ small groups of infantry, often in hand-to-hand combat, to take the commanding heights. Soon, the bulk of the Fifth Army was moving through the pass toward their objective. The Gothic Line had been broken and the Germans again withdrew to the next defensive line. On 10 October, amid torrential rains and fog, Fifth Army came to a halt 10 miles short of the Po Valley.

Meanwhile, the British Eighth Army, after taking Rimini, continued slowly up the Adriatic coast, crossing seven rain swollen rivers until they too, were forced to halt in late December. Both armies settled down to a period of relative calm with only sporadic bursts of action, waiting for another miserable Italian winter to pass.

In preparation for a new spring offensive, the Allies stockpiled weapons and fuel over the winter months. The Eighth Army launched an attack towards Lake Comacchio on 9 April followed by an attack on Bologna by the Fifth Army a few days later. On 21 April, both armies linked up encircling the retreating Germans. Partisan groups rose up and harassed the Germans by sabotaging tracks and setting up roadblocks. The disintegrating German armies were surrendering in the tens of thousands as the Allies raced to seal the Alpine passes and prevent their escape. The battle for Italy was finally over.

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Operation 'Husky', the Allied invasion of Sicily, began on 10 July 1943. Island defenses included the Italian 'Napoli' and 'Livorno' Divisions along with Panzer-Division 'Hermann Göring' and 15. Panzer-Grenadier-Division. The crew of this StuG.III Ausf.F8 of Pz.Rgt. 'Hermann Göring', perform routine maintenance on their vehicle in the days before the Allied landings. At this time, the regiment was equipped with 20 StuG.III and 9 StuH. in their III. Abteilung. The crewmen wear a variety of tropical uniforms including the unpopular tropical sun helmet.



A heavily retouched photo of a Pz.Kpfw.III Ausf.J of II./Pz.Rgt. 'Hermann Göring' in the Niscemi area. On the afternoon of the invasion, an attack on the American forces at Gela nearly succeeded but the massive firepower of the invasion fleet broke up the attack. The division's vehicles were painted in overall dark yellow with the three digit tactical number painted in white with a black outline. Panzer-Division 'Hermann Göring' used a complex system of vehicle unit identification markings based on a white disc with different colored lines corresponding to the numbers around a clock face. Here, the disc on the left front mudguard has a black line in the six o'clock position indicating 6. Kompanie.



A StuH42 Ausf.G and StuG.III Ausf.G of III./Pz.Rgt. 'Hermann Göring' in a defensive position facing the invasion beaches, while their supporting infantry take a lunch break. Both vehicles have been camouflaged with cut foliage to help conceal their outline.

Another camouflaged StuG.III Ausf.G of III./Pz.Rgt. 'Hermann Göring' in a town near the east coast of Sicily. Signs on the buildings in the background point to Catania on the left and Siricusa on the right. Panzer-Abteilung 129 of 29.Panzer-Grenadier-Division, equipped with 43 StuG.III, were transferred to Sicily on 22 July 1943.



An Sd.Kfz.223 leichte Panzerspähwagen (Fu) of Panzer-Division 'Hermann Göring' in the Vizzini area along the route taken by the 1st Canadian Division. An internal explosion has scattered debris around the vehicle and dislodged the frame antenna.



II./s/Pz.Abt.504, equipped with 17 Tiger I's, was assigned to Panzer-Division 'Hermann Göring' on 9 July 1943. Ten were lost during the first three days of fighting when they were blown up by their crews to prevent capture. During the following weeks, the German defenders were gradually pushed back towards Messina, where, during the nights of 10 and 11 August, 34 Panzers and 44 StuG.III and one remaining Tiger were evacuated by ferry to the Italian mainland. On 17 August 1943, the U.S. 1st Infantry Division entered Messina ending the battle for Sicily.



After the surrender of the Italian government on 3 September 1943, the Germans moved to disarm their former allies. As a result, large quantities of Italian tanks, self-propelled guns and armored cars were absorbed into the German Army. This Semovente da 75/18 was probably photographed before the surrender as it still displays its Italian Regio Esercito (Royal Army) registration plate.



This Semovente da 75/18 is one of 123 taken over by the Germans and has had new markings applied over the standard Italian camouflage paint scheme, consisting of the standard black Balkenkreuz and a three digit tactical number, '224', probably in black with a white outline. Two of the crewmen appear to be wearing uniforms fashioned from captured Italian camouflage cloth. In German service, it was referred to as Sturmgeschütz M42 mit 75/18 858(i)



A Carro Comando Compagnia Semovente da 47/32, German designation Pz.Bef.Wg. 47/32 770(i), in service with 5.Gebirgs-Division. Note the heavy mountain boots worn by two of the soldiers.



Another view of one of the Autoblinda AB41 armored cars as it passes the cameraman. The Balkenkreuz on the side of the hull is now plainly visible. Other photos of this type of vehicle show the Italian tactical marking system still painted on the angled rear sides of the turret.



Two Autoblinda AB41 - Panzerspähwagen AB41 201(i) - on patrol in a mountainous area. They retain their Italian camouflage paint scheme of gray-green patches over the yellow sand base and would likely have carried the standard Balkenkreuz on the front and both sides of the hull and on the rear of the turret.

In August 1943, SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Division 'LSSAH' was transferred to Italy from the Eastern Front to bolster German forces after the Italian Government dismissed and then imprisoned Mussolini. Leaving all their equipment behind, they were re-equipped with new Pz.Kpfw.IV's and Pz.Kpfw.V Panthers along with 27 Tiger I's. Here an early Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.H from II./SS-Pz.Rgt.1 enters the northern Italian city of Milan. It is painted in a camouflage scheme of green and brown patches over the dark yellow base. The crudely painted tactical number '618' is painted in yellow with a black and secondary white outline behind the standard Balkenkreuz. They also carried the divisional emblem, a white shield with a skeleton key inside above a pair of oak leaves, on the front plate beside the driver's visor and on the upper left rear plate.

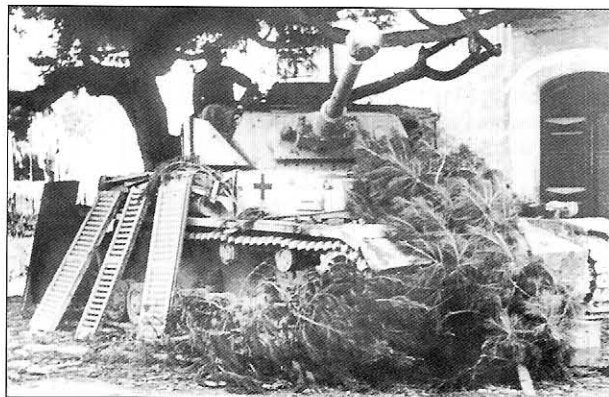


Another early Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf. H from II./SS-Pz.Rgt.1 in Milan, August 1943. The black and white outlines around the tactical numbers are clearly visible here as well as the divisional emblem painted on the rear plate.



A brand new Tiger I Ausf.E of the newly formed schwere SS-Panzer-Abteilung of 1.SS-Panzer-Korps 'Leibstandarte' which was sent to Italy in August 1943 along with SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Division 'LSSAH'. At this time, they were painted in overall dark yellow and displayed no markings. The unit remained in Northern Italy until the middle of October when they were transferred back to the Eastern Front without having seen any action.

An Sd.Kfz.233 schwere Panzerspähwagen (7.5cm) rolling along a dusty country road. It is painted in overall dark yellow and displays the standard Wehrmacht registration number plate, 'WH 1312055', in white with black numbers on the front. A total of 129 Sd.Kfz.233 were built from July 1942 to October 1943 and were normally issued to the reconnaissance battalions in the Panzer divisions.



On 9 September 1943, the U.S.Fifth Army landed at Salerno on the Italian mainland with the British X and U.S. VI Corps. German reaction was swift with 16.Panzer-Division and 29.Panzer-Grenadier-Division attacking the beachhead. Here, an early Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.H from 16.Panzer-Division, lies concealed from roving Allied fighter-bombers under a large tree. The vehicle is fitted with the new drive sprocket and final drive housings introduced in May 1943, but still retains the additional 30mm bolted on armor plates on the front of the hull that were replaced with single 80mm plates in June 1943. It also has the vision ports on the hull sides that were deleted in June as well.



Panzer-Division 'Hermann Göring' and 15.Panzer-Grenadier-Division were resting and refitting in the Naples area after their withdrawal from Sicily when the landings at Salerno took place. They were immediately dispatched south to block any Allied attempt to advance toward Naples. Here a column of new Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G from I./Pz.Rgt. 'Hermann Göring' make their way through an Italian village enroute to the front. They are fitted with the smoke candle dischargers on the turret that were briefly installed from February to May 1943 and also appear to have the 25mm thick roof plate that was introduced at the beginning of Ausf.H production. The three digit tactical number appears to be red with a white outline and there was a Balkenkreuz, painted in white outline only, on the upper left rear plate.

A Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.H of II./Pz.Rgt. 'Hermann Göring' passing through an Italian village in October 1943. The II.Abtteilung appears to have adopted a different style of marking on their vehicles than the I.Abtteilung. The three digit tactical number '7 + 11' is painted in new black paint which makes it appear darker than the faded black of the Balkenkreuz. The tactical number and Balkenkreuz were repeated on the sides of the turret skirt armor as well.



An Sd.Kfz.131 Marder II self-propelled anti-tank gun of Panzer-Artillerie-Regiment 'Hermann Göring' in Southern Italy in late 1943. Mounting the 7.5cm PaK40/2, 576 Marder II's were manufactured between June 1942 and June 1943 with another 75 converted from obsolete Pz.Kpfw.II chassis from July 1943 to March 1944. The crew has been issued with standard M38 Fallschirmjäger helmets.



Another Marder II self-propelled anti-tank gun of Panzer-Artillerie-Regiment 'Hermann Göring' passing through an Italian village followed by a 2cm Flakvierling 38 auf schwerer Geländegängiger Lastkraftwagen 4.5t. More simply put, this was a 2cm Flakvierling 38 mounted on the chassis of the Mercedes-Benz L4500 4.5 ton truck. The driver's cab and radiator received light armor plating and the rear deck was fitted with folding sides to increase the platform size. It also carries a striking hard-edged camouflage scheme of green stripes over the dark yellow base.



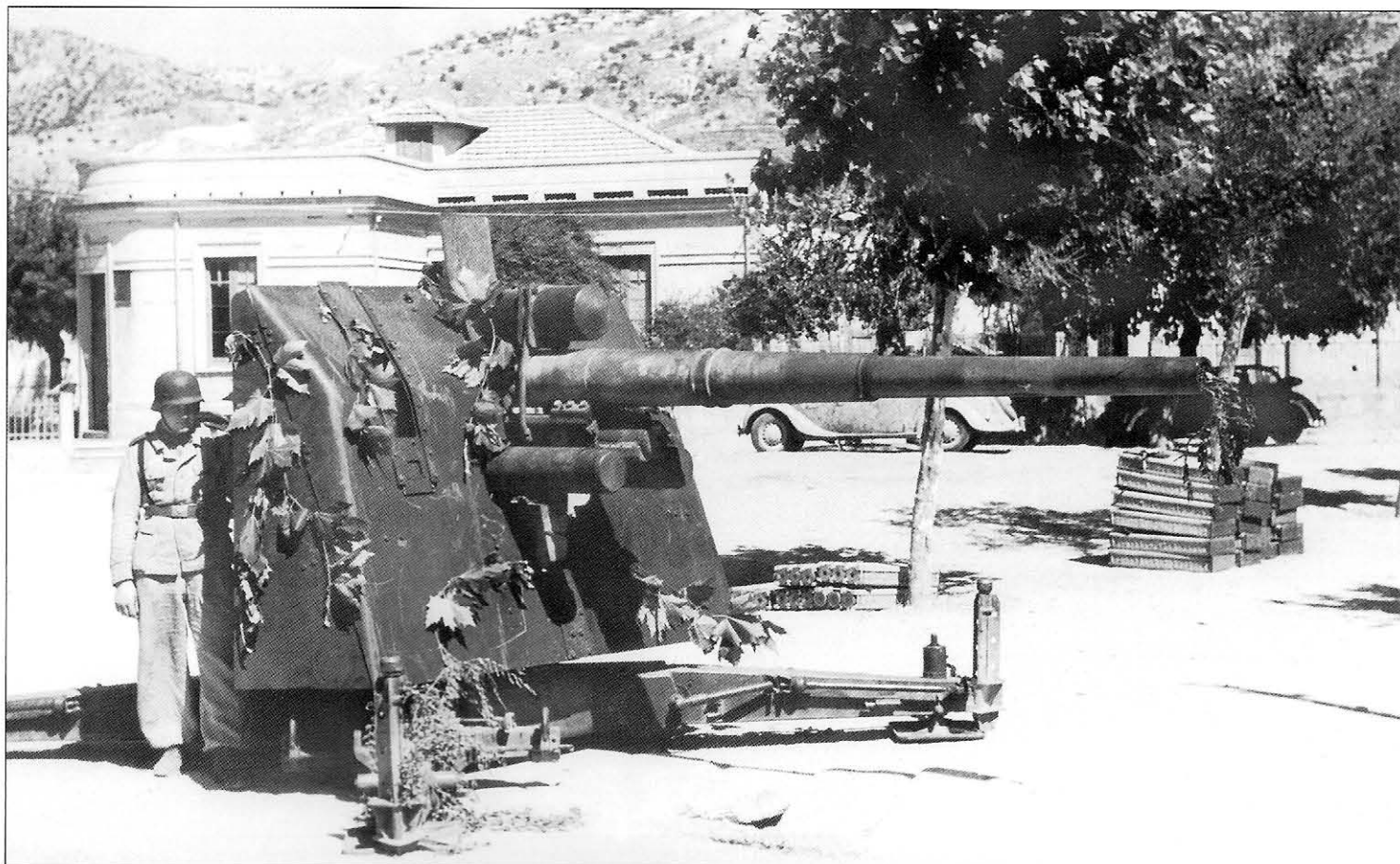
A Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G from II./Panzer-Regiment 2 of 16.Panzer-Division, receives an engine overhaul by the divisional maintenance company. Part of the tactical number, '231' or '331', is visible on the side of the turret skirt armor. The divisional emblem, a 'Y' with a horizontal bar through it, painted in yellow ochre with a black outline is faintly visible on the rear plate just to the left of the Balkenkreuz. At this time, 16.Panzer-Division consisted of II.Abteilung equipped with Pz.Kpfw.IV and III.Abteilung equipped with StuG.III. Their I.Abteilung was still in Germany being trained with the new Panther.



A column of Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G of II./Pz.Rgt.2 of 16.Panzer-Division parked along a road in Southern Italy while their crews relax in the late summer of 1943. The divisional emblem can be clearly seen beside the spare track links. Although looking rather new, these vehicles have already seen some action in the Salerno area. Another photo of the vehicle on the right shows that it has taken a hit from an anti-tank round on the right side just in front of the engine deck and right below the hull roof which, apparently, did not disable it. All of them are painted in overall dark yellow and display a black stencil outline three digit tactical number on the sides of the turret skirt armor.



Another Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G moves toward the front. Judging from the dark colored uniforms, it is possibly from III./Panzer-Regiment 24 of 24.Panzer-Division, which was transferred to central Italy in August 1943 and then back to the Eastern Front a short time later in October. After being annihilated at Stalingrad, the division was reformed in February 1943 with two Pz.Abt. A III.Abteilung, created in April 1943 was converted to a Pz.StuG.Abt., equipped with two companies of StuG.III and two of Pz.Kpfw.IV. In the original photo, a white outlined three digit tactical number can faintly be seen on the side of the turret skirt armor.



An 8.8cm FlaK18 anti-aircraft gun from an unidentified Luftwaffe Flak-Regiment. The gun is finished in its original dark gray paint, and the half-hearted attempt at camouflage would scarcely conceal it from the air against its sandy colored surroundings. This one has been fitted with the redesigned curved gunshield. Capable of firing a 9.24 kg high explosive shell at a muzzle velocity of 820 m/s, it had a maximum effective ceiling of 8000 m.



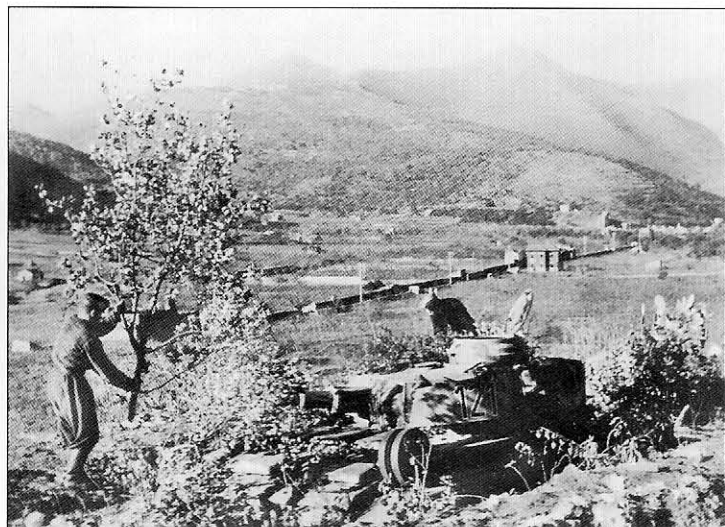
A 2cm Flakvierling 38 anti-aircraft gun is moved into position by its crew. All branches of the German Armed Forces used this gun and by August 1944, the Luftwaffe alone had around 3600 in service. It was capable of firing at 880 rpm and had a maximum effective ceiling of 2200 m.



A Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G from Pz.Rgt.2 of 16.Panzer-Division, knocked out in the British sector near Lucera in September 1943. An anti-tank round has penetrated the right side of the turret, blowing out a large hole and setting off the ammunition resulting in the rear plate being blown off. Here, the damaged vehicle is apparently being towed around in a field to test the efficiency of various types of mines, near 8th Army headquarters on 22 October 1943.



A StuG.III Ausf.G sits alongside a road near Satriano di Lucania, southwest of Potenza in September 1943. The roof of the fighting compartment has been completely blown off as a result of an internal ammunition explosion. It is finished in overall dark yellow with a camouflage scheme of green patches. No unit markings are visible but both 16.Panzer-Division and 29.Panzer-Grenadier-Division were operating in the area and both were equipped with StuG.III.



The crewmen of a Pz.Kpfw.III Ausf.N camouflage their vehicle with cut foliage on a hillside in Southern Italy. A three digit tactical number, '121', is painted on the sides of the turret skirt armor in red with a white outline and it is likely that it also has a camouflage scheme of green patches over the dark yellow base. Although no unit markings can be seen, Pz.Rgt. 'Hermann Göring' reported three Pz.Kpfw.III Ausf.N on their table of organization on 20 August 1943 and this may be one of them.



Another view of the same column of Sd.Kfz.10/4 self-propelled anti-aircraft guns halted along the street. The crew are all wearing tropical issue uniforms including shorts and the gun commander, standing in front, even wears the tropical sun helmet with the tricolor national emblem shield on the side.

A Luftwaffe Sd.Kfz.10/4 self-propelled anti-aircraft gun rolling down a palm lined street in sunny Southern Italy in the summer of 1943. A total of 610 of these vehicles were produced from 1938 to 1944 and combined the 2cm Flak38 or, later as in this case, the Flak38 anti-aircraft gun mounted on the Demag D7 half-track chassis.



A column of new Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G move through an Italian town near the Adriatic coast. The Panzer is finished in overall dark yellow and the only visible marking is the black Balkenkreuz painted on the side of the turret skirt armor. Note the dust covers installed on the muzzle brake and hull mounted machine gun. They are probably from 16.Panzer-Division, the only unit equipped with Pz.Kpfw.IV in Southern Italy at the time.



Another view of the column as it proceeds around the corner of a building on the same street. On the left, a sign points the way towards Bari, a port city on the Adriatic coast, and Bitonto, a small town a few kilometers west.



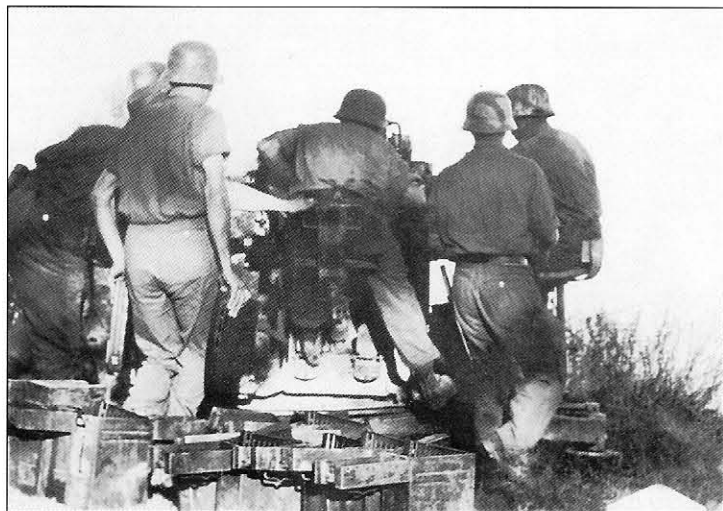
A Panzer crewman guides the driver of a Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G as he backs under cover in an olive grove. In the background can be seen the Zeltbahn shelter quarter tents set up for the men to sleep in. These vehicles are possibly from Pz.Rgt. 'Hermann Göring'.



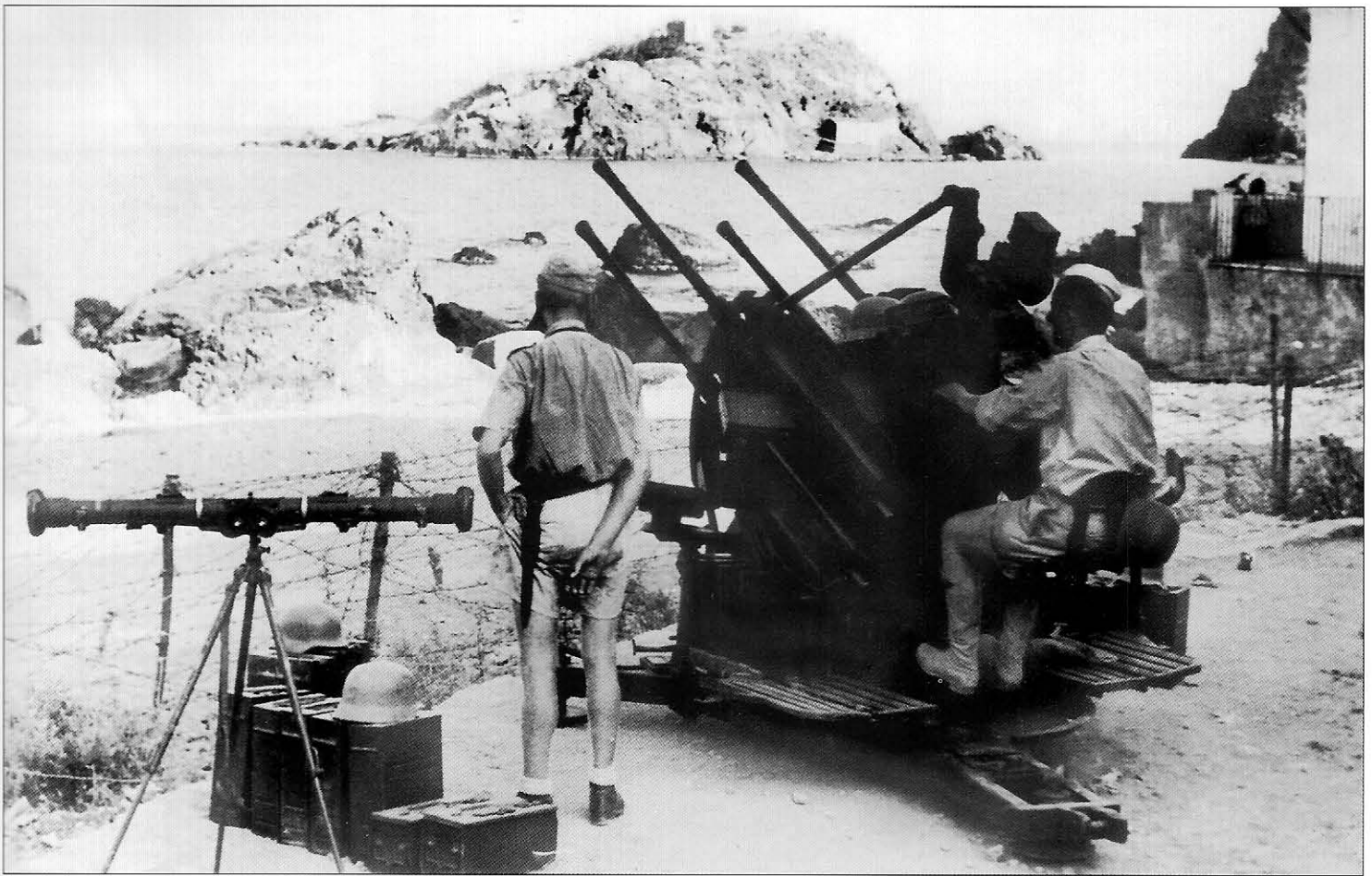
A Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G from the same unit raises a great cloud of dust as it moves into position among the grove of olive trees. Both vehicles are fitted with the 'Filzbalgfilter' engine air filter system on the right mudguard introduced in May 1943. The officer standing in front is wearing the Iron Cross First Class pinned to the left breast of his tropical shirt.



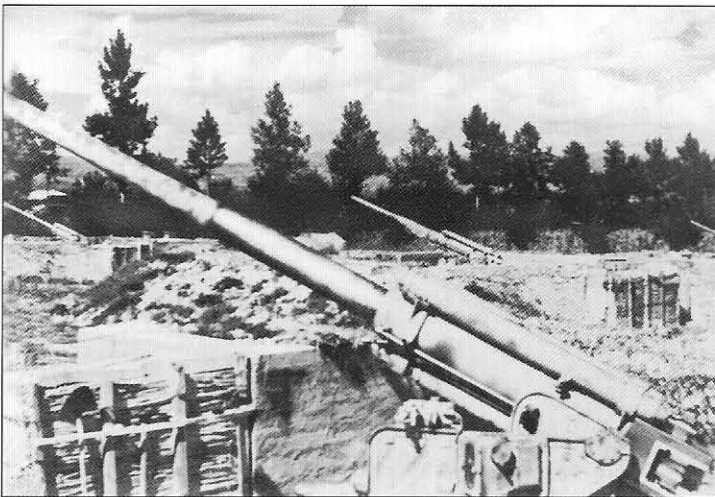
A 15cm sFH18 artillery gun towed by an Sd.Kfz.7 half-track, is maneuvered around a grove of trees being used as a camp by a heavy towed artillery unit. The Zeltbahn camouflage shelter quarter was designed to be joined together with others to form a small tent. The Sd.Kfz.7 is finished in overall dark yellow with a camouflage paint scheme of green patches.



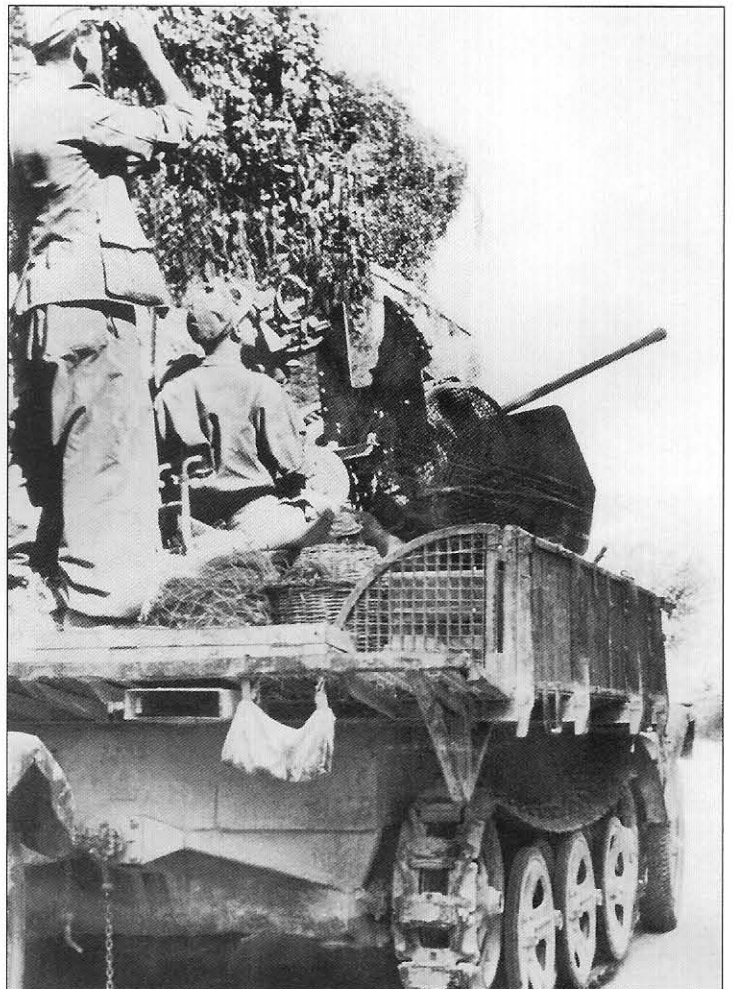
A 2cm Flakvierling 38 anti-aircraft gun prepares for action. Although only six soldiers are visible, the gun was normally crewed by a detachment commander and seven men. On the left, one of the two ammunition bearers stands ready with two twenty round magazines. The two crewmen on the right have painted their steel helmets with sand colored camouflage paint.



Another 2cm Flakvierling 38 anti-aircraft gun emplacement along the Mediterranean coast in the Straits of Messina. The Entfernungsmesser 34 range finder can be seen mounted on a tripod on the left. The EM34 was normally held in a harness strapped to the observer and used split image optics and triangulation to determine the distance to the target.



A battery of Italian Cannone da 90/53 anti-aircraft guns. Originally designed by Ansaldo in 1939, only 539 of these guns were produced by July 1943. In German service they were officially referred to as the FlaK 309/1(i) or, more commonly, the 9cm FlaK41 (i).



A Luftwaffe Sd.Kfz. 10/4 self-propelled anti-aircraft gun stands ready for action beside a road in Southern Italy during the summer of 1943. This one is fitted with the 2cm FlaK38.



The crew of this Luftwaffe Sd.Kfz.7/2 self-propelled anti-aircraft gun strike a pose for the PK photographer. The Sd.Kfz.7/2 mounted the potent 3.7cm FlaK36 anti-aircraft gun on the chassis of the Sd.Kfz.7 8t half-track prime mover. Beginning in late 1943, some vehicles received a light armor plating over the driver's cab and engine compartment. Altogether, 123 were produced between 1943 and 1945. The crewmen are all wearing the distinctive tan colored Luftwaffe tropical uniforms that featured the large patch pocket on the left trouser leg.

Another Luftwaffe Sd.Kfz.7/2 self-propelled anti-aircraft gun, this time one with the lightly armor cab, sits abandoned along a road, the victim of an Allied air attack. Just ahead of it lies, what appears to be a 2cm Flakvierling 38 mounted on the chassis of the Mercedes-Benz L4500 4.5 ton truck. The amount of foliage camouflaging it conceals its true identity.

A 7.5cm PaK40 anti-tank gun crew, possibly from 16.Panzer-Division, await the Allied advance in Southern Italy during the late summer of 1943. When the U.S.Fifth Army under Lt.Gen. Mark Clark landed at Salerno in September 1943, 16.Panzer-Division, with some 17,000 men and over 100 tanks and assault guns, was the only fully equipped German unit in Southern Italy to oppose the Allies 4 divisions and 70,000 men.



Another 7.5cm PaK40 gun crew in action. The gun loader is ramming one shell into the breech while another man removes one from its protective metal shipping case. The 7.5cm PaK40 came into service in 1941 replacing the 5cm PaK38 as the main weapon in German anti-tank units. It had a muzzle velocity of 930m/s and was capable of penetrating 115mm of armor plate at 1500m.

A British motorcyclist passes a row of abandoned Italian transport at Pontecagnano, east of Salerno in September 1943. Visible over the motorcyclist's left shoulder is a Breda TM 40 towing tractor which was towing a trailer and an Italian generator.



A 7.5cm PaK40/3 auf Panzerkampfwagen 38(t) Ausf.H (Sd.Kfz.138) from an unidentified Panzerjäger-Abteilung, reportedly somewhere in Italy in late 1943. Also known as the Marder III Ausf.H, this vehicle has been fitted with a non-standard stowage box on the rear of the engine deck by a field workshop.



In this photo, another Marder III Ausf.H can be seen in the background. Five kill rings around the end of the gun barrel just behind the muzzle brake can also be seen on the nearest vehicle. It is finished with neatly applied camouflage scheme of green stripes on the dark yellow base with no visible markings. They seem to have attracted a lot of attention from the civilian population gathered around.



One of the crewmen of this StuG.III Ausf.G from 16.Panzer-Division, strikes a jaunty pose for the camera. This is one of the StuG.III Ausf.G manufactured from PzKpfw.III Ausf.M chassis by M.A.N. between January and March 1943 and features the welded 30mm additional armor plates on the front of the hull and one piece hatches on the glacis. Note the longer deflector in front of the driver's visor. The tactical sign for a Panzer Kompanie is painted on the front plate followed by a '3', probably in black.



Two StuG.III Ausf.G from an unidentified unit parked along an Italian street. The nearest vehicle is fitted with the smoke grenade launchers installed on vehicles manufactured from February to May 1943.



Four StuG.III Ausf.G on a country road in Southern Italy during the summer of 1943. All are heavily stowed with gear on the engine decks. The nearest vehicle displays a black Balkenkreuz on the rear plate and the deep wading muffler of the Pz.Kpfw.III Ausf.M chassis can be seen on the rear of the vehicle on the road.



The crew of this StuG.III Ausf.G from 16.Panzer-Division, relax between engagements. Note the facial wound on the man sitting in the middle. The vehicle is probably undergoing maintenance or repairs as the glacis hatches have been removed and are sitting on the right mudguard.



The crew of another StuG.III Ausf.G, relax and play cards in the sun. A canvas tarp and some additional cut foliage have been placed around the vehicle to help conceal it from the air.

A crewman from the same unit poses on the mantlet of his StuG.III Ausf.G. This vehicle is also one of those manufactured on the chassis of a Pz.Kpfw.III Ausf.M as indicated by the longer deflector in front of the driver's visor and the wide gap between the bolts that fasten the 30mm supplemental armor above the driver's visor.



The crew of this StuG.III Ausf.G from 16.Panzer-Division, show a variety of uniforms and headgear being worn. The man on the left is wearing a mouse-gray pullover shirt. The second is wearing the tropical tunic and a field-gray later style M1943 fieldcap with plain metal cap buttons. The third man is wearing a black Panzer jacket with the skull patches on the collar, normally worn only by Panzer crew. Obergefreiter rank chevrons can be seen on his left sleeve and he is wearing the early style M1943 fieldcap with black metal washer buttons. The gun commander on the right also is wearing the tropical tunic without shoulder straps and an early pattern black fieldcap with either a pink or red soutache.



The crewmen in the left bottom photo, are joined by men from other crews for a group photo. The wide diversity of uniforms being worn is quite apparent here. Three men are wearing the reed-green denim Panzer style jacket with the large patch pocket on the left breast and the standard Army style collar patches. One even appears to be wearing a pullover camouflage smock.



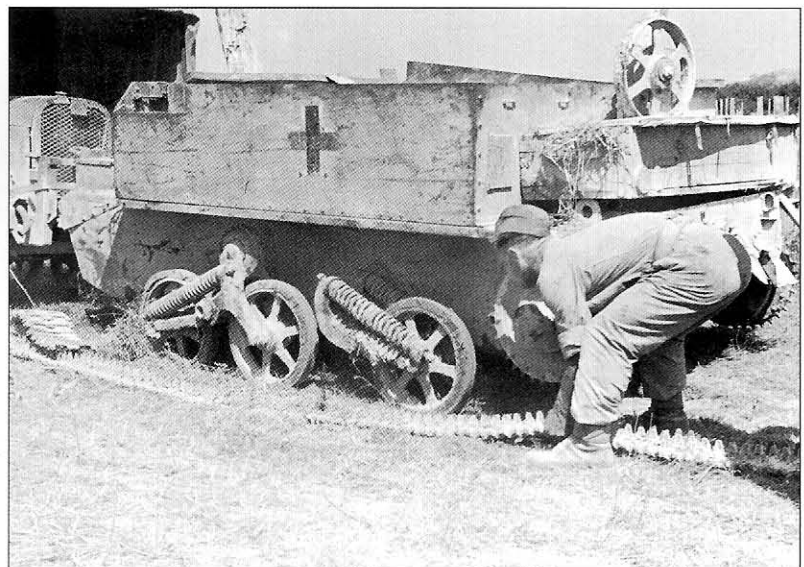
A newly awarded Iron Cross Second Class hangs from the button hole in the lapel of the Obergefreiter's black Panzer jacket. His other awards include an Eastern Winter Campaign 1941/42 ribbon in his lapel, a silver Tank Battle Badge and a black Wound Badge. The gun commander's awards include an Iron Cross First Class and a silver Tank Battle Badge.



German troops clamber aboard a column of Sd.Kfz.250 half-tracks on the outskirts of an Italian town. This vehicle appears to be new and is painted in overall dark yellow. It also has the additional sheet metal stowage lockers along each side fitted to some vehicles. The numbers on the front are unusual and are not duplicated on the following vehicle. Both have the standard Wehrmacht registration number painted on front, though the glare from the sun makes the one on the front vehicle almost invisible.



An Sd.Kfz.9 heavy half-track prime mover tries to negotiate a tight curve on an Italian mountain road in late 1943. The 18t Famo is towing an Sd.Ah.116 trailer carrying a severely battered Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G from Pz.Rgt. 'Hermann Göring' on it. The Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G is painted in overall dark yellow with a patchy green camouflage pattern and a three digit tactical number, '331', painted in red with a white outline on the side of the turret skirt armor. The Famo is also painted in overall dark yellow but has a wide green horizontal zig-zag camouflage stripe painted on the cargo box.



A Commonwealth soldier lays out the track for a Universal Carrier recently recaptured from its former German owners. The front idler wheel has been propped up on the back of the vehicle.



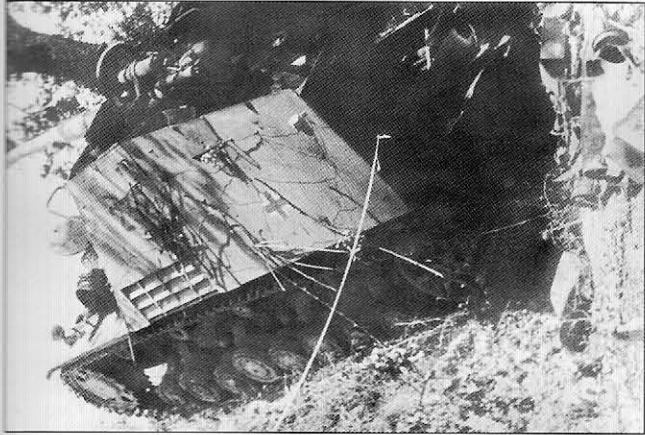
Another view of the Famo shows the camouflage stripe on the cargo box to good effect. The severe damage to the Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G is also evident as the whole final drive housing on the left side is missing.



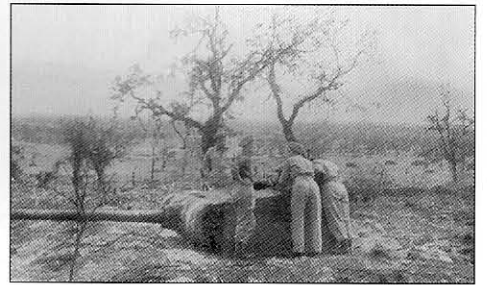
A captured British Daimler armored car ferries three Commonwealth prisoners, possibly from the 4th Indian Division, to the rear. The armored car has a wavy camouflage stripe of dark yellow paint applied over the original British green along with a three digit tactical number, '028', probably in black with a white outline. A black outline Balkenkreuz is also painted on the side.



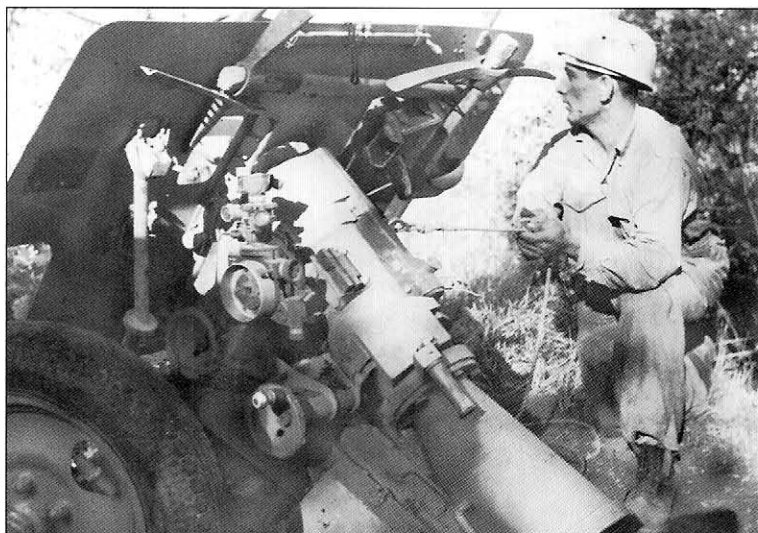
A group of Commonwealth soldiers inspect a knocked out Panther Ostwallturm somewhere on the Hitler Line near Monte Cassino in late 1943. This one consists of a normal Panther turret although the majority used purpose built Panther turrets with 40mm roofs and flat hatches in place of the commander's cupola. A total of 18 Pantherturm I, mounted on a welded steel box, and 30 Pantherturm III, mounted on a reinforced concrete base, were constructed in Italy in 1943 and 1944. An additional 182 were constructed on the Western Front with another 36 on the Eastern Front.



A Nashorn from s.Pz.Jg.Abt.525 knocked out by Canadian troops near Pontecorvo in May 1944. In August 1943, s.Pz.Jg.Abt.525 was sent from France to Northern Italy and then to the Rome area in December 1943. They were transferred to the Cassino area in January 1944. They also saw heavy fighting in the Anzio-Nettuno area in February before returning to the Cassino area in May.



Fallschirmjäger troops wrestle their 4.2cm Panzerjägerkanone 41 anti-tank gun up a hill while a Propaganda Kompanie newsreel photographer captures the action in the background. The 4.2cm PJK41 was the second Gerlich (tapered bore) weapon developed for German paratroops in 1941. It was mounted on the 3.7cm PaK35/36 carriage with a torsion bar suspension but featured a 40mm spaced gun shield that can clearly be seen here. Although not visible, the length of the gun barrel was almost 550mm longer than the standard 3.7cm barrel. It utilized tungsten-cored ammunition, but as the supply of tungsten was scarce, production was stopped in 1942. When ammunition supplies ran out, the guns were usually scrapped.



A German Fallschirmjäger prepares to fire a 10.5cm Leichtgeschütz 40 (10.5cm LG40) recoilless artillery piece. Originally manufactured in a light alloy to reduce weight for airborne operations, they could be dismantled into five parachute loads or dropped assembled in a special shock-absorbing crate. The weapon fired the same shell as the 10.5cm leFH18.



An Sd.Kfz. 7 8t half-track prime-mover fords a shallow stream in Central Italy. The shipping stencil can be seen painted in black on the side panel behind the driver along with a white '8'. They were normally employed for towing heavy artillery pieces such as the 15cm sFH18 and the 8.8cm FlaK guns. Over 12,000 units were manufactured between 1934 and 1944.



A German military police checkpoint on the outskirts of Rome. The uniform and shoulder straps indicate this man is a Oberwachtmeister der Schutzpolizei d. Reiches, who has probably been seconded to Feldgendarmarie duties. His uniform is cut in a style similar to the Army tropical tunic and his shoulder straps are piped in light green with a silver and brown twisted braid. The Polizei badge on his left arm is partially hidden by an armband that likely says 'Hilfsgendarmerie', probably in black letters on a light green band, which indicates 'auxiliary police'. He is wearing the Polizeigebirgsjäger 'Skimutze' featuring a single button flap with cloth Polizei badge and a metal cockade above. Obviously a combat veteran, he wears the Infantry Assault Badge and a black wound badge pinned to his tunic. It's possible that he is also wearing the Eastern Winter Campaign 1941/42 ribbon in his lapel.



Three British soldiers from the 78th Infantry Division examine a knocked out Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G near San Salvo on the Adriatic coast in November 1943. It has been fitted with additional 30mm armor plates that have been bolted to the superstructure front and welded to the hull front. The meaning of the small cross, visible to the left of the driver's visor, is unknown and other photos show that it was applied at the factory. The missing tracks have exposed the curved armor shield that protected the final drive housings on the Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.B to G. Reinforced final drive housings were installed on the Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.H replacing the curved shield. Note how mud has built up around the drive sprocket. The soldier in front is carrying a German field telephone slung over his shoulder.



Another knocked out Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G is searched for souvenirs by three soldiers from the Canadian Three Rivers Regiment (12th Armoured Regiment) in October 1943. This one has been fitted with additional 30mm armor plates that have been welded to both the superstructure and hull fronts. The curved armor shield around the final drive is missing and has probably been shot away by the impact of the round that also damaged the track. Two penetrations can also be seen in the front of the turret beside the gun mantlet. These tanks are probably from 26.Panzer-Division, which fought in this area.



A destroyed StuG.III Ausf.G from 16.Panzer-Division lies in a field near San Salvo in November 1943. Tow cables have been attached to the front indicating the vehicle may have been disabled and the Germans were attempting to recover it when it was knocked out.



A Sturmgeschütz.IV knocked out in the Pontecorvo area near Cassino in May 1944. The StuG.IV was hurriedly developed in December 1943 to replace lost production of StuG.III after a bombing raid on the Alkett plant in November. The first 30 were completed in December 1943 and production continued until April 1945 with some 1141 built altogether. This one is from 90.Panzer-Grenadier-Division, which received 42 of these vehicles in February 1944, all of which were coated with Zimmerit.

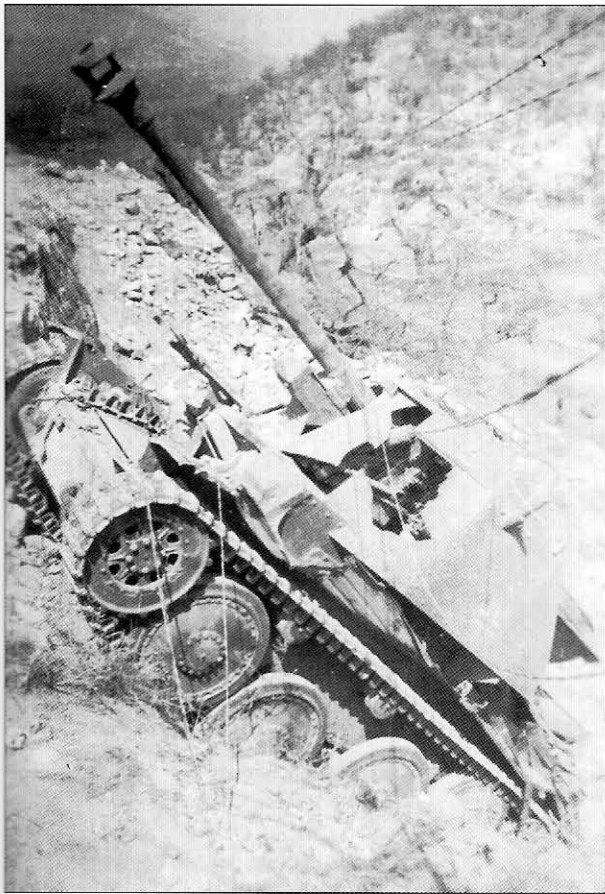


Fallschirmjäger troops man a 15cm sFH18 heavy artillery piece. The man on the left is ramming in the projectile while another prepares to hand the charge casing to another who will place it in the breech. Both men on the right are wearing the splinter pattern camouflage jump smock.

Helmets on wood poles mark the graves of two of the crew of this knocked StuG.III Ausf.G near Pignataro in May 1944 while several Commonwealth soldiers check for souvenirs. An unidentifiable unit marking is painted on the front plate of this overall dark yellow vehicle.



Two soldiers from the Calgary Tanks (14th Armoured Regiment) pose in front of an abandoned Marder III Ausf.H on the outskirts of Aquino, near Pontecorvo, in May 1944. The Marder III is finished in a three-color camouflage scheme of hard-edged brown and green patches on the dark yellow base. The only visible marking is the standard white outlined black Balkenkreuz painted on the side of the fighting compartment. The Calgary Tanks took part in the battles in this area with Canadian Ontario and Three Rivers Regiments and the British 78th Division and 8th Indian Division on 11 May 1944.



This Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.H was knocked out in the Cassino area in early 1944. By this time, most new armored vehicles were being delivered with Zimmerit anti-magnetic mine coating which is visible here on the superstructure front plate.

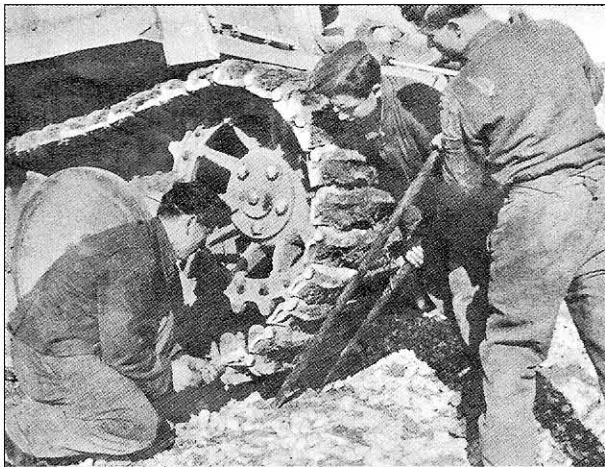
A knocked out Marder III Ausf.H rests on the edge of a steep road embankment after being cleared from the road by engineers. This photo is similar to one of another Marder III Ausf.H from Pz.Jg.Abt.171 of 71.Infanterie-Division, but they are not the same vehicle. The tactical sign for a self-propelled anti-tank unit is painted in white on the sloped front shield with a faded white outlined black Balkenkreuz painted on the side.



A pair of M4 Sherman tanks captured by the Germans near Monte Cassino and put into service by s.Pz.Abt.508. Judging from the earth yellow over olive drab camouflage paint scheme and markings, it was originally assigned to the U.S. 756th Tank Battalion. The battalion also used a set of tactical markings consisting of a set of bars to indicate the platoon painted above the tactical numbers on the side of the turret bustle, but they are obscured in this photo by the German crewman in the driver's hatch.



In July 1943, schwere Panzerkompanie 'Meyer', under the temporary command of Oberleutnant Hans-Gert Meyer, was formed and sent to Italy to assist in disarming the Italian Army. Equipped with 8 early Tiger I's, they traveled through the Brenner Pass, arriving in Modena in mid November. In late November, they were shipped by rail to Rome. Here, an early production Tiger I Ausf.E, fitted with the pistol port on the right side of the turret, has its battle tracks installed. The vehicle is painted in overall dark yellow with a camouflage pattern of brown patches applied. Markings include a black tactical number '2' on the rear of the turret stowage bin and a personal marking resembling a sunburst, likely painted in red with eleven white points, painted on the side of the turret. Most unusual though, is the non-standard white Balkenkreuz with a black outline painted on the side of the hull. This Tiger I would later become the personal vehicle of the new company commander, Hauptmann Schwebbach, when he joined the unit in early December 1943.



The heavy battle tracks have been joined and the crew struggle to insert the track pin to complete the task.



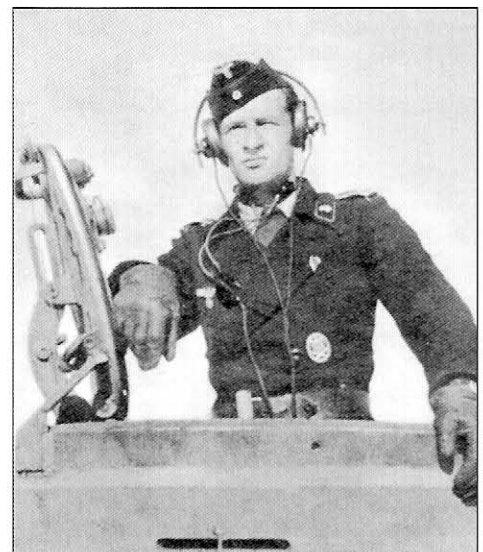
The crewmen are busy installing the outer roadwheels normally removed for rail transport. The unusual style Balkenkreuz and camouflage paint scheme can be seen to good effect in this photo. Also note that at this time the tactical numbers appeared only on the rear of the turret stowage bin.



The last roadwheel is bolted in place before the installation of the battle tracks is completed.



Another Tiger I Ausf.E from schwere Panzerkompanie 'Meyer'. An emblem, consisting of a white shield with a black cross inside, can be seen painted on the front of the hull. Vehicles in the unit were later repainted in a three-color scheme, some receiving individual names painted on the upper hull plate between the driver's visor and hull machine gun ball mount. This particular Tiger I had the name 'Stolch', meaning 'bum' or 'tramp' painted on along with a large tactical number '8' painted in black on the forward side of the turret. In March 1944, the unit was integrated into s.Pz.Abt.508.

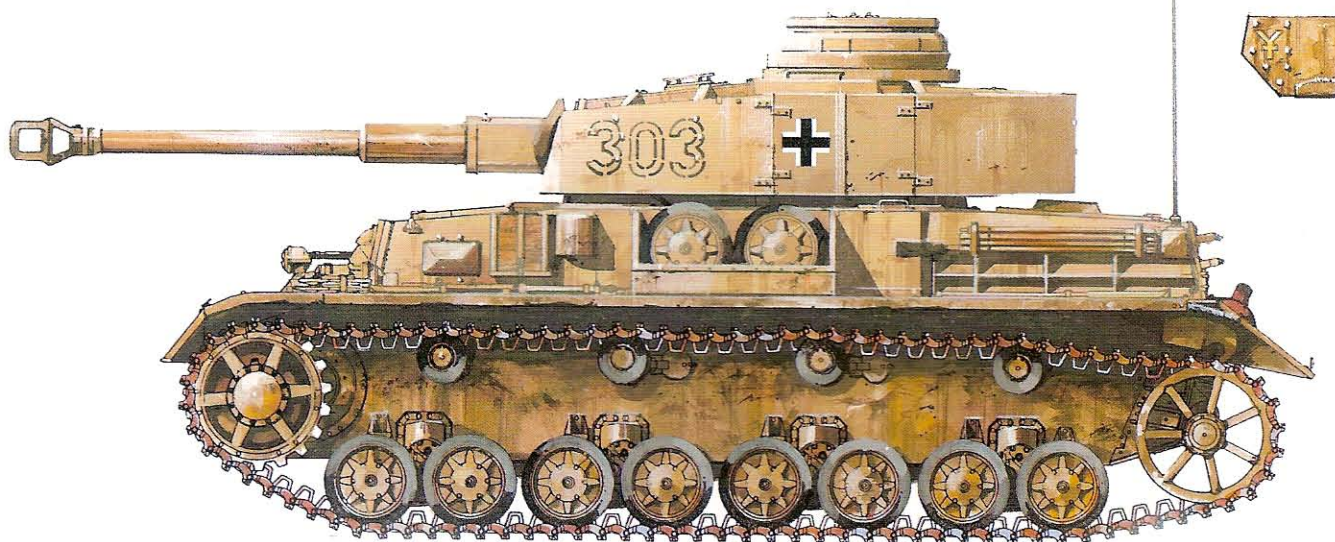


A young Feldwebel Panzer commander strikes a confident pose in the cupola of his Tiger I Ausf.E. His decorations include the ribbon of the Iron Cross Second Class in the lapel buttonhole of his black Panzer jacket and a General Assault Badge, awarded for assaults made on three different days. A black Wound Badge is just visible under the cord from his headset.



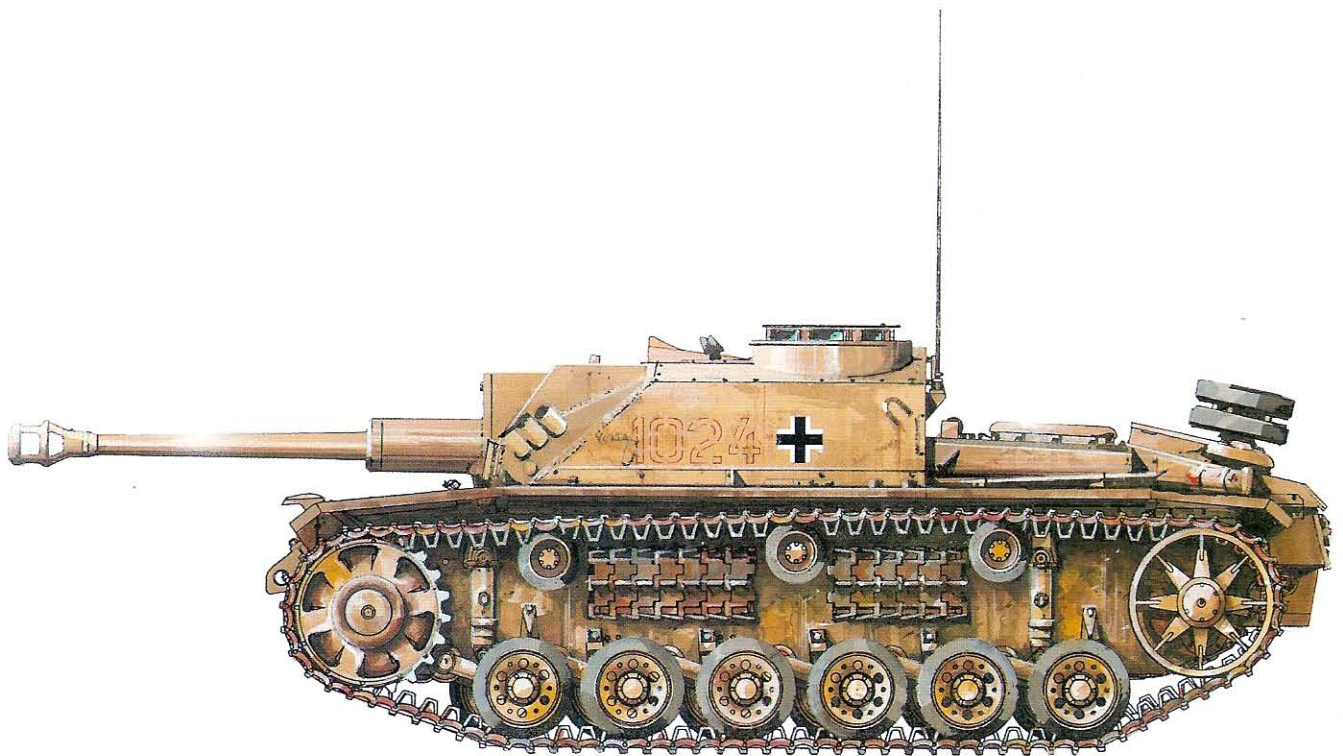
Pz.Kpfw.VI Tiger I Ausf.E, s.Pz.Kp.Meyer, northern Italy, fall 1943

This early production Tiger I has a camouflage scheme of red brown (RAL 8017) patches over the dark yellow (RAL 7028) base. A single digit tactical number '2' is painted in black on the rear of the stowage bin. On the right side of the turret, a personal emblem looking much like a sunburst, has been painted. It appears to be a dark circle, possibly red, with eleven white points radiating out around it. The most unusual marking is the non-regulation Balkenkreuz painted on the side of the hull in white with a black outline.



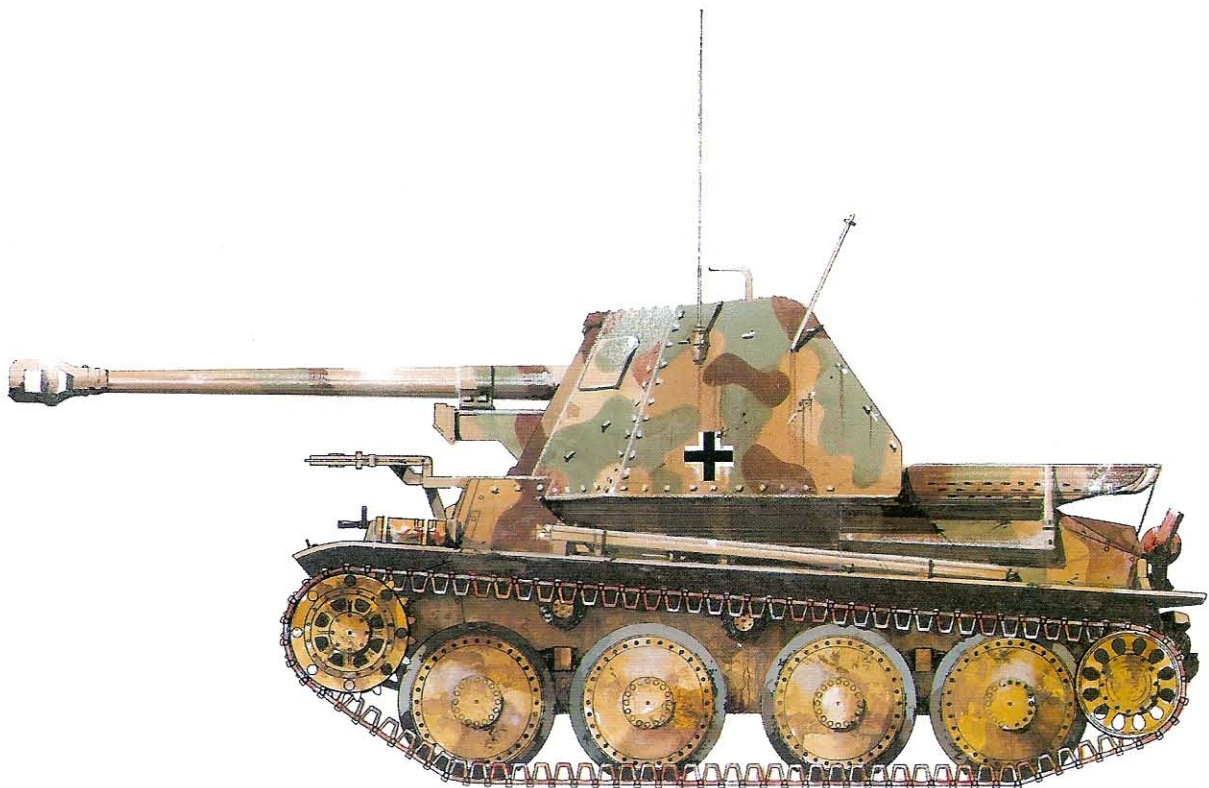
Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G, I./Pz.Rgt.2, 16.Panzer-Division, Salerno, Italy, September 1943

This late model Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G is painted in overall dark yellow (RAL 7028). Markings include a standard black and white Balkenkreuz painted on the front door and rear of the turret skirt armor and black stencil outline tactical number '303' painted on the front. In addition, the Balkenkreuz has also been painted on the inside face of the front door so that it is still visible when the door is open. The divisional emblem, a 'Y' with a horizontal bar through it, is painted in yellow ochre with a black outline on the left side of the rear plate and on the front beside the driver's visor.



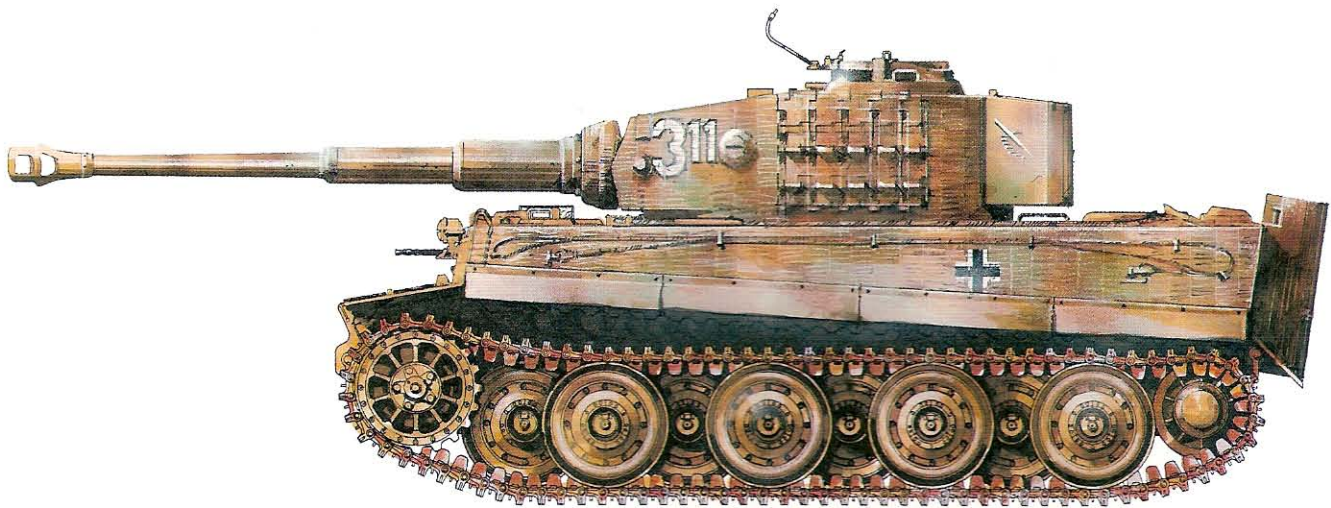
StuG.III Ausf.G, III./Pz.Rgt.2, 16.Panzer-Division, Rome, Italy, November 1943

This StuG.III Ausf.G is painted in overall dark yellow (RAL 7028) with a standard black and white Balkenkreuz painted on the side of the fighting compartment behind the red stencil outline tactical number '1024' indicating it is the 4th vehicle in the 2nd platoon of the 10th company. In front of that is a small stenciled shipping label 'Ve Kl A' painted in black.



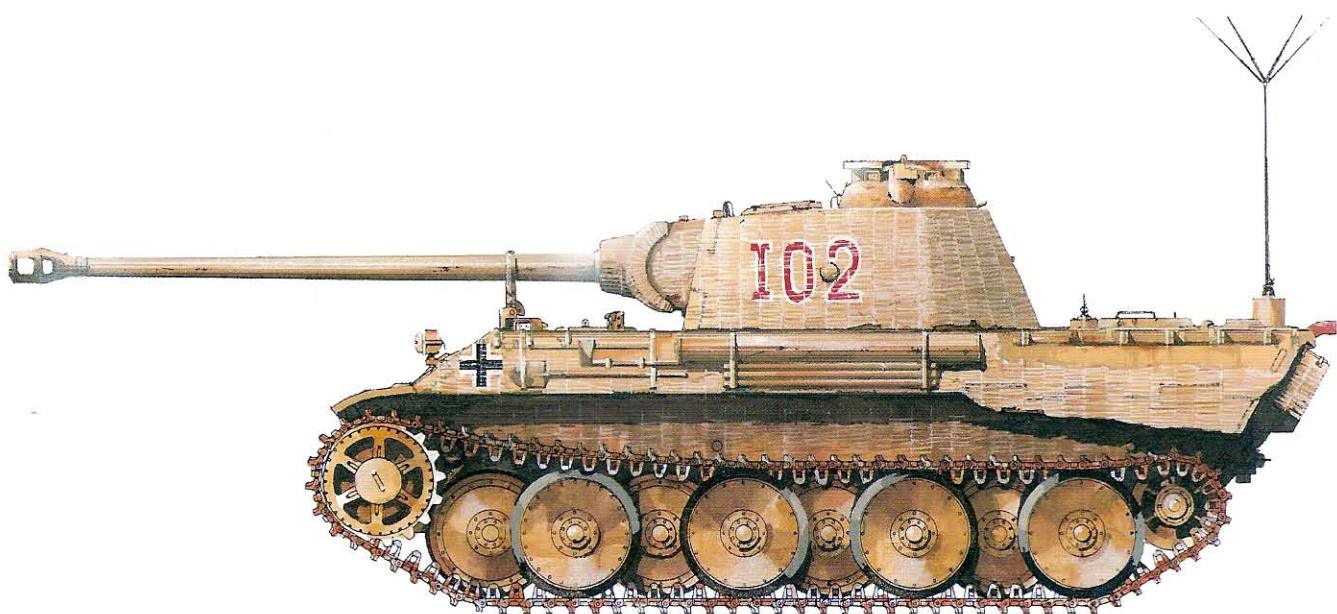
Marder III Ausf.H, unknown Pz.Jg.Abt., northern Italy, summer 1944

This Marder III Ausf.H is painted in a camouflage scheme of olive green (RAL 6003) and red brown (RAL 8017) patches brush painted over the dark yellow (RAL 7028) base. A narrow style of black and white Balkenkreuz has been painted on the lower side of the fighting compartment.



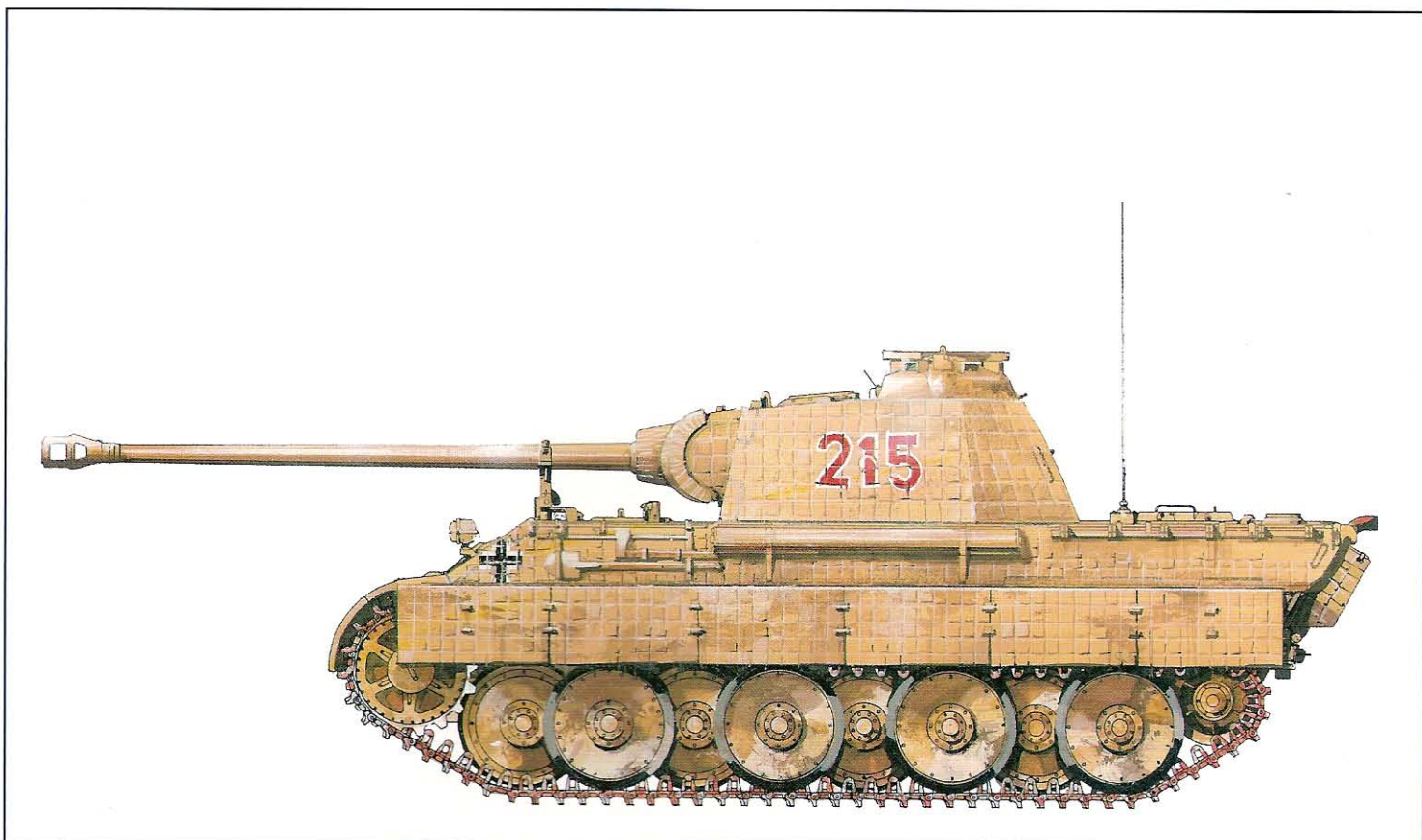
Pz.Kpfw.VI Tiger I Ausf.E, 3./s.Pz.Abt.504, near Livorno, Italy, July 1944

This late production Tiger I is painted in overall dark yellow (RAL 7028) with a camouflage scheme of olive green (RAL 6003) and red brown (RAL 8017) sprayed in small patches. The tactical number '311' is painted in white with a black outline with the first digit being about 50 percent larger than the last two. On the left side they were painted high on the side of the turret with the two smaller digits even with the top of the larger digit. As 3.Kompanie was equipped with Borgward BIV radio controlled demolition vehicles, the additional antenna mounted on the right side of the turret required the tactical number to be lowered. The tactical number was repeated on the rear of the stowage bin in uniform large digits. The unit emblem, a spearhead superimposed over a stylized track, was painted on both sides of the stowage bin and a standard black and white Balkenkreuz was painted on the side of the hull.



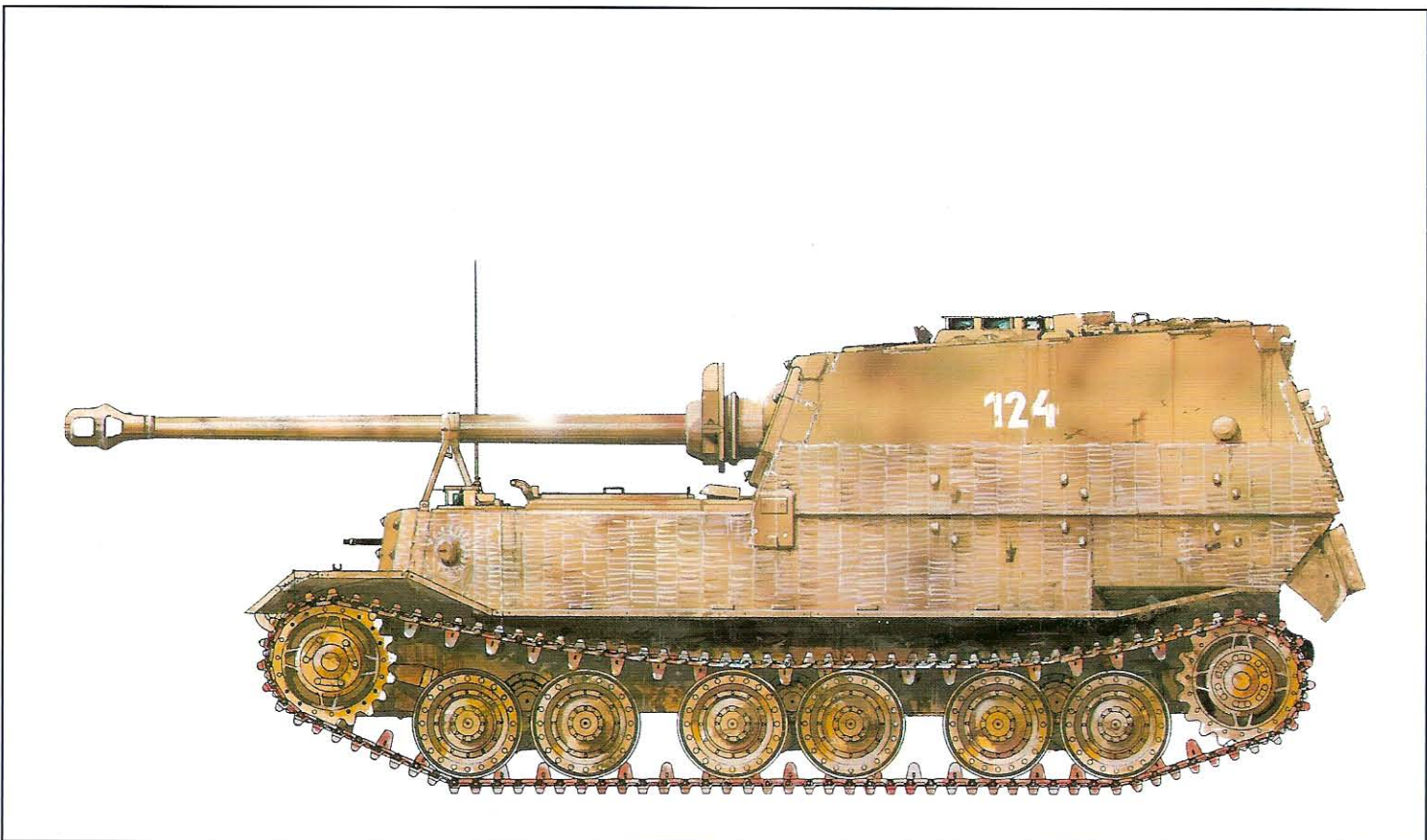
Pz.Bef.Wg.V Panther Ausf.A, I./Pz.Rgt.4, Florence, Italy, summer 1944

This early model Pz.Bef.Wg.V Panther Ausf.A is painted in overall dark yellow (RAL 7028). The tactical number '102' painted in red with a white outline on the side of the turret indicates that this is the battalion adjutants vehicle. The only other visible markings are a standard black and white Balkenkreuz painted on the side of the hull in front of the tool stowage brackets.



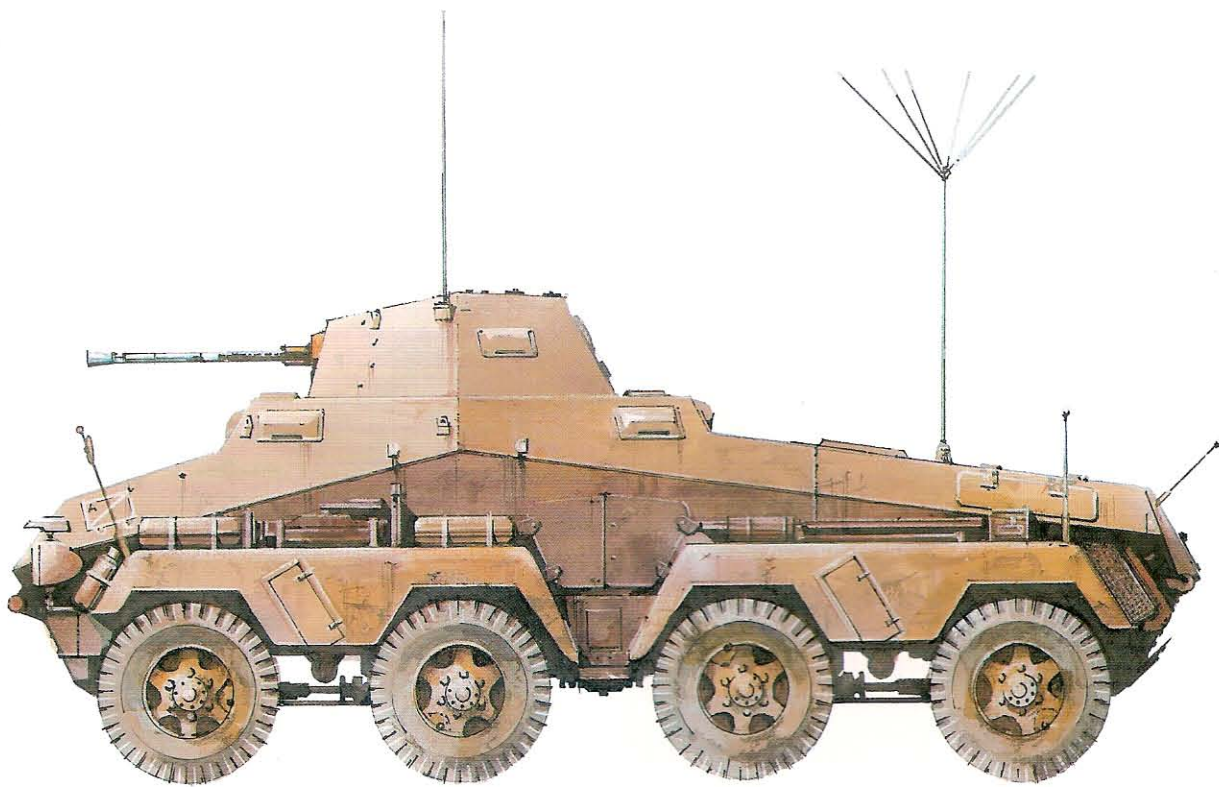
Pz.Kpfw.V Panther Ausf.A, I./Pz.Rgt.4, Rome, Italy, March 1944

This early model Panther Ausf.A is painted in overall dark yellow (RAL 7028). The tactical number '215' is painted in red with a white outline. A standard black and white Balkenkreuz is painted on the sides of the hull in front of the tool stowage brackets and is repeated on the rear of the hull between the exhaust pipes.



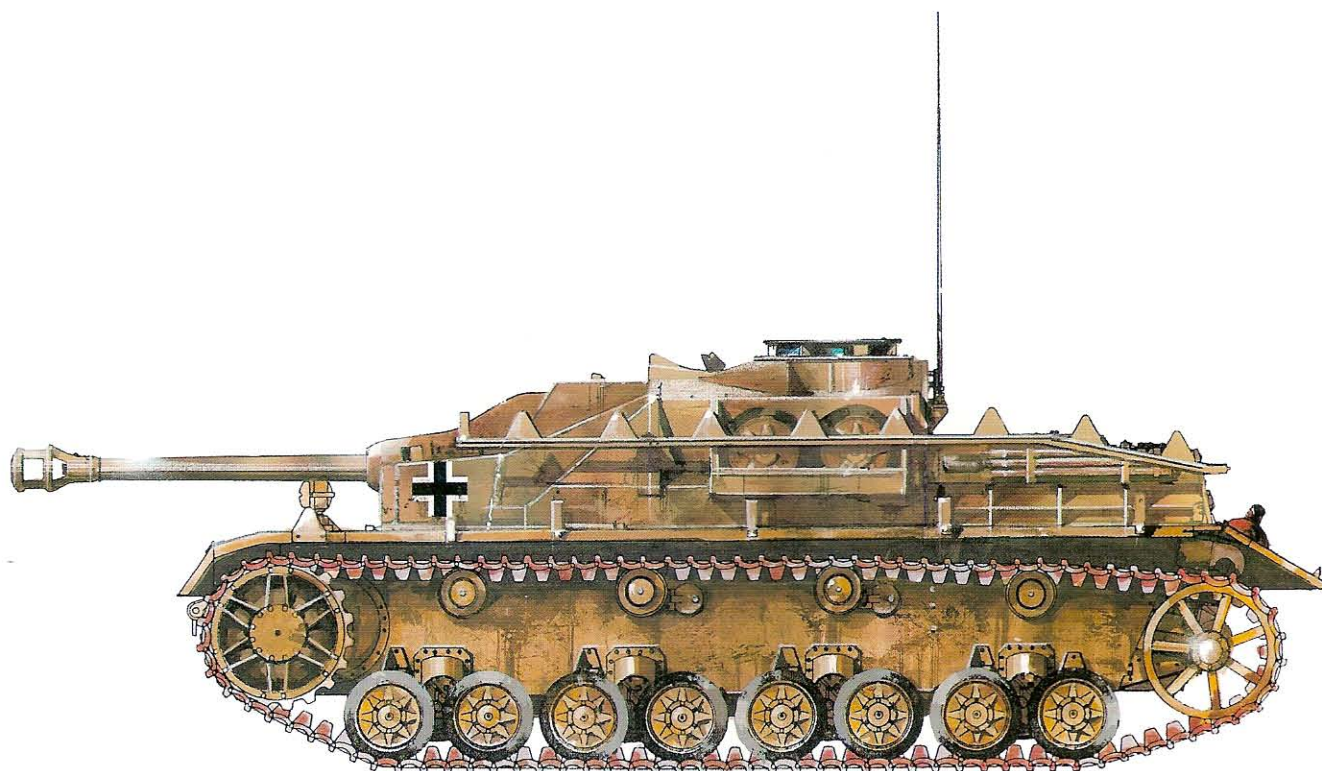
Panzerjäger Tiger (P) Elefant, 1./s.H.Pz.Jg.Abt.653, Soriano, Italy, fall 1944

This Elefant is painted in overall dark yellow (RAL 7028) with a camouflage scheme of olive green (RAL 6003) and red brown (RAL 8017) patches sprayed on. A white three digit tactical number '124' is painted just above the line where the Zimmerit stops.



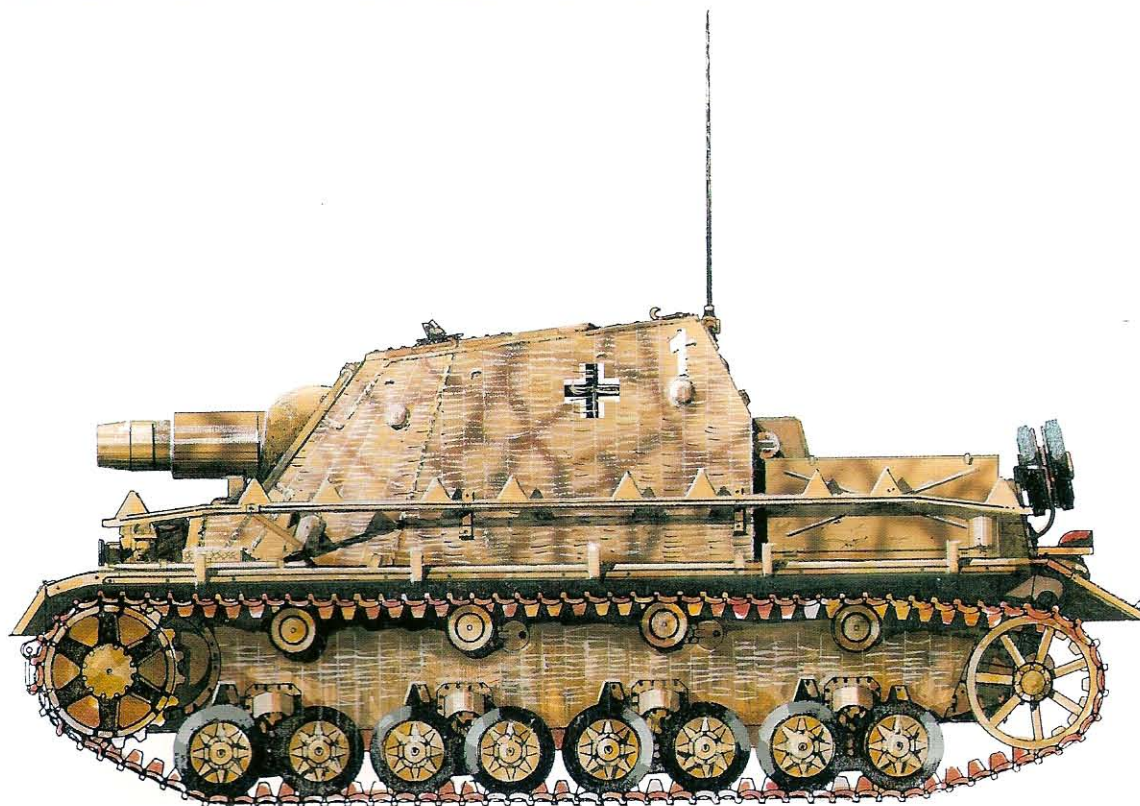
s.Pz.Sp.Wg.(Fu) (Sd.Kfz.232) (8Rad), Pz.Aufkl.Abt.115, 15.Panzer-Grenadier-Division, Italy, spring 1944

This late production schwere Panzerspähwagen (Fu) is painted in overall dark yellow (RAL 7028). The divisional emblem, a white star with a black letter 'B', representing the last initial of the unit commander, is painted on the top right of the front plate and top left of the rear plate. The tactical sign for a reconnaissance company is painted in white on the front side plate.



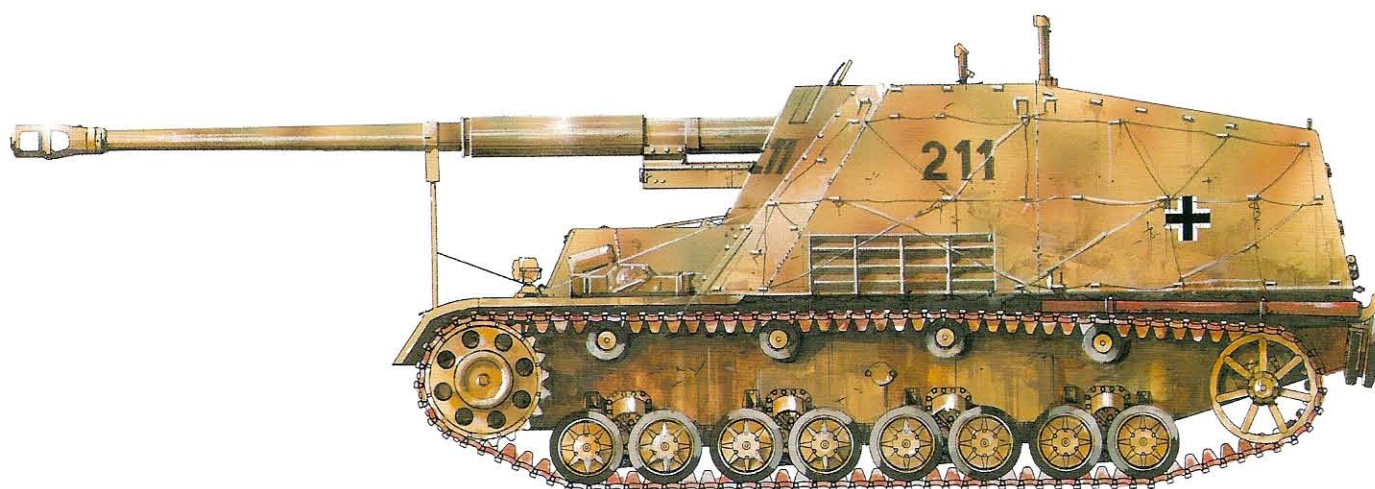
StuG.IV, StuG.Abt.1034, 34.Infanterie-Division, northern Italy, fall 1944

This StuG.IV is painted in overall dark yellow (RAL 7028) with a camouflage scheme of olive green (RAL 6003) and red brown (RAL 8017) patches. A standard black and white Balkenkreuz is painted on the armor plate beside the driver's compartment. The three digit tactical number was usually painted on the Schürzen armor plates that are missing from this vehicle.



Sturmpanzer IV Brummbär, Stu.Pz.Abt.216, Nettuno area, Italy, January 1944

This Brummbär is painted in overall dark yellow (RAL 7028) with a camouflage scheme of red brown (RAL 8017) interconnecting lines. The single digit tactical number '1' is painted in white on the upper rear corner of the side of the fighting compartment along with a black and white Balkenkreuz.



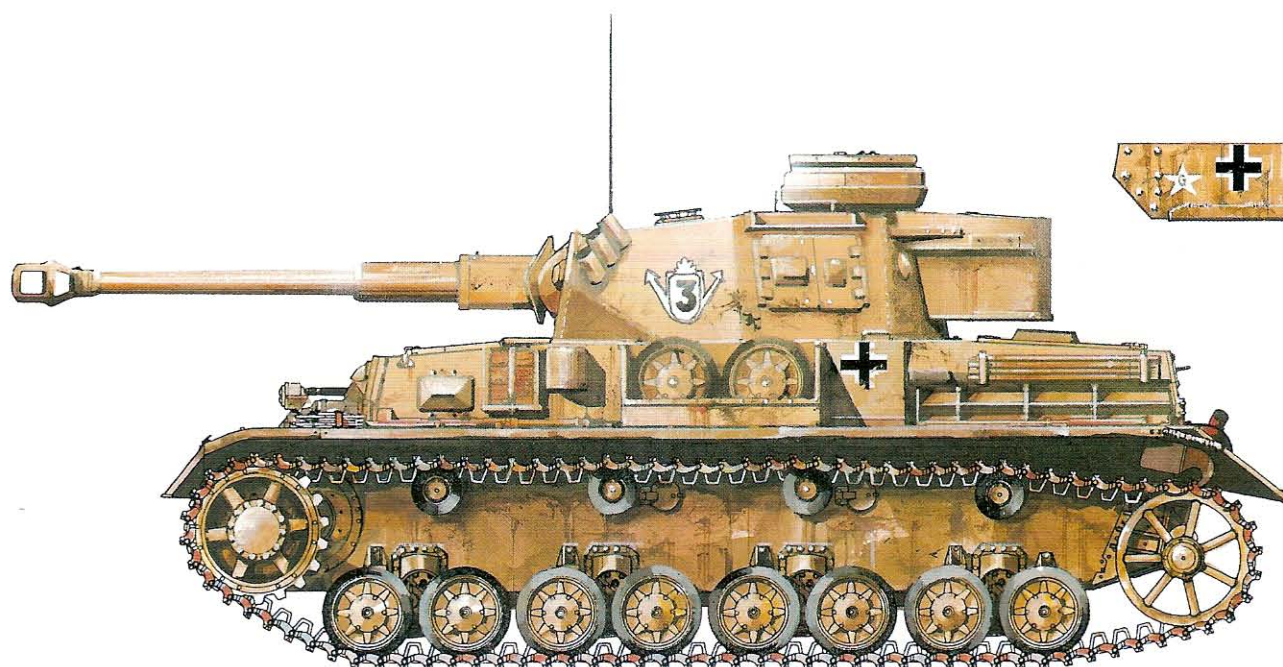
Sd.Kfz. 164 Nashorn, 2./s.H.Pz.Jg.Abt.525, Nettuno area, Italy, March 1944

This early production Nashorn is painted in overall dark yellow (RAL 7028) with a subdued camouflage scheme of olive green (RAL 6003) and red brown (RAL 8017) patches. A standard black and white Balkenkreuz is painted on each side of the fighting compartment as well as on the left rear. The three digit tactical number '211' is painted in black on the sides of the fighting compartment above the engine air intake louvers, on the front of the curved gunshield and again on the right rear. A unit emblem was painted on the hinged portion of the left front mudguard and resembles a crouching lion perched on top of a tracked chassis. Additional tie downs have been welded to the sides and the welds touched up with new dark yellow paint. Wire has been woven through the tie downs to hold foliage.



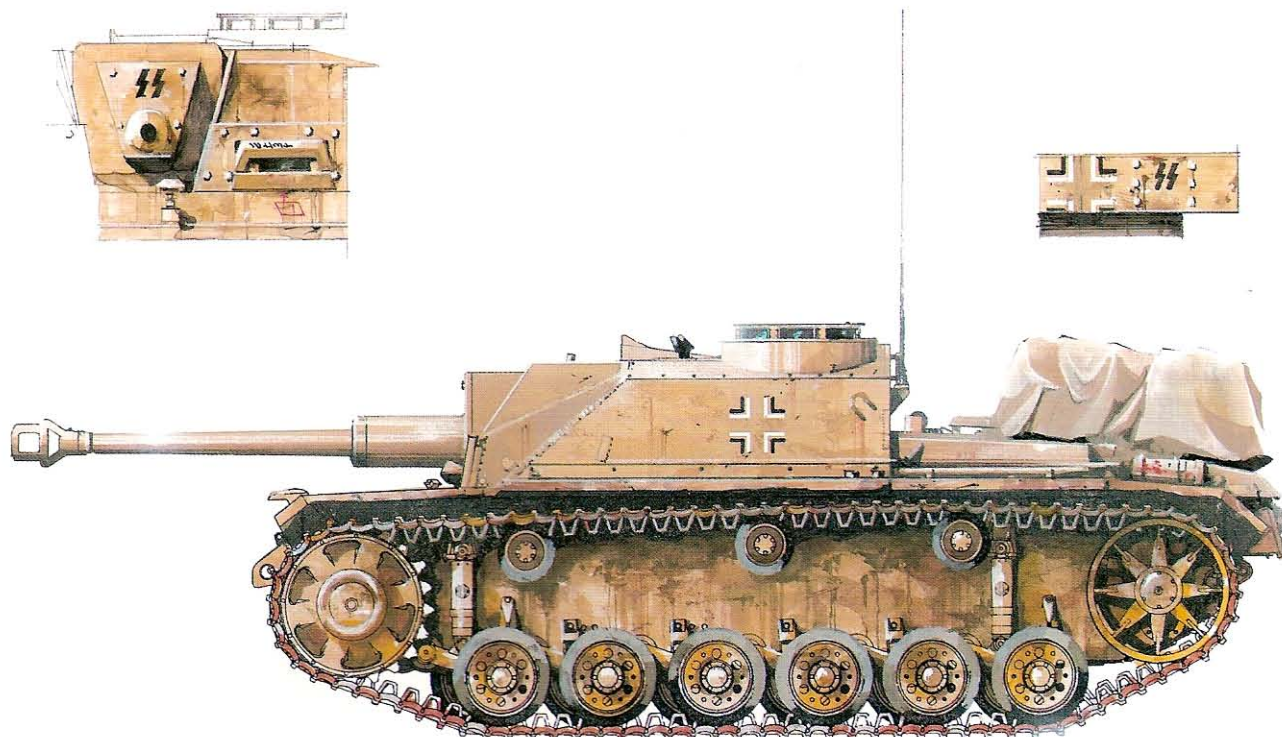
Pz.Kpfw.III Ausf.M, II./Pz.Rgt. 'Hermann Göring', Niscemi, Sicily, July 1943

This Pz.Kpfw.III Ausf.M is painted in overall dark yellow (RAL 7028). Markings are limited to the three digit tactical number '533', painted in white with a black outline on the sides and rear of the turret skirt armor.



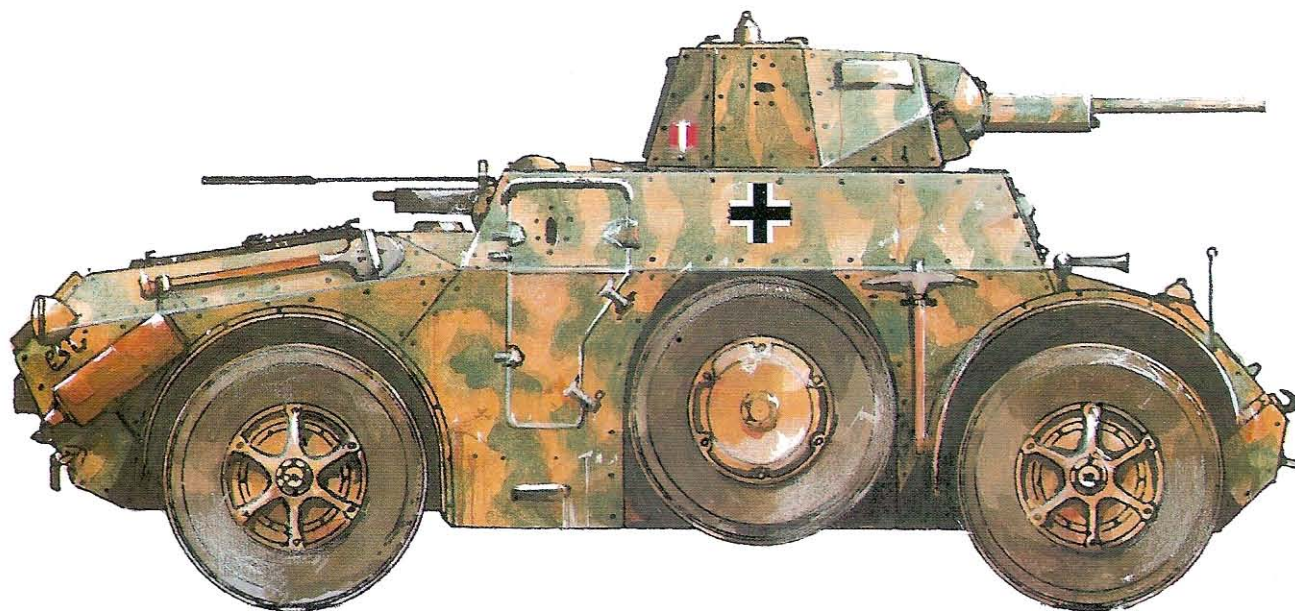
Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G, 3./Pz.Abt.215, 15.Panzer-Grenadier-Division, Regalbuto, Sicily, July 1943

This Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G is painted in overall dark yellow (RAL 7028). Markings include a standard black and white Balkenkreuz painted on each side and on the left side of the rear plate. The divisional emblem, a white star with a black letter 'G', representing the last initial of the unit commander, is also painted on the rear plate. The company number is painted on the sides of the turret in black on a white shield with a small crown and two arrows extending up from the bottom.



StuG.III Ausf.G, 16.SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Division 'Reichsführer SS', Rome, Italy, January 1944

This early StuG.III Ausf.G is painted in overall dark yellow (RAL 7028). It carries an unusual non-standard Balkenkreuz painted on the sides that consists of a white outline with a second black outline. This is repeated on the rear plate but is so large that the bottom is cut off. On the front of the mantlet and on the rear plate, a black runic 'SS' symbol is also painted. The tactical sign for an assault gun company is painted in red on the glacis plate with a number '1' inside. A number of the StuG.III's of this unit had personal names of wives or girlfriends painted on the pivoting driver's visor.



Panzerspähwagen AB41 201(i), 278.Infanterie-Division, Lonigo area, Italy, fall 1944

After the capitulation of Italy in September 1943, the German Army confiscated large numbers of Italian vehicles and incorporated them within various units. This Autoblinda AB41 retains its original Italian camouflage scheme of green patches on the sand yellow base. A narrow style standard black Balkenkreuz was painted on each side above the spare wheel as well as on the front of the hull and rear of the turret. It still retains its original Italian tactical sign of a red rectangle, indicating 1st company, with a white stripe through it indicating 1st platoon.

A column of StuG.III Ausf.G make their way through Rome on the way toward the Anzio-Nettuno front in April 1944. They are from SS-Pz.Jg.Abt.16 of 16.SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Division 'Reichsführer-SS'. Formed in October 1943 from Sturmbrigade 'Reichsführer-SS', the division saw action in Italy throughout 1944 before being transferred to Hungary in January 1945. These vehicles are all painted in overall dark yellow and display a variety of markings. The runic symbol for the 'SS' was painted on the front of the gun mantlet as well as the right side of the rear engine deck plate. A rhomboid shaped tactical sign for an assault gun company is painted in red on the glacis and a personal name, unfortunately illegible, can be seen behind the standard Balkenkreuz on the side of the fighting compartment. A tactical number '4' can be seen on the side of the following vehicle.



Another StuG.III Ausf.G from 16.SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Division 'Reichsführer-SS' on its way through Rome. This is an early 1943 production vehicle with driver's periscopes and additional 30mm bolted armor plates on the glacis and lower hull front. The 'SS' runic symbol can be seen on the front of the gun mantlet as well.

The column of StuG.III Ausf.G from 16.SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Division 'Reichsführer-SS', pass through the Piazza del Popolo in Rome. The vehicle in front is a very early Ausf.G completed in January 1943 and features the early stepped mudguard that was hinged at the rear. The 'SS' runes can be seen painted on the front of the mantlet and the tactical sign for an assault gun company is painted in white on the glacis followed by the number '1' in black.





A column of Panthers from I.Abteilung/Panzer-Regiment 4 travel along the Via dei Fori Imperiali towards the Colosseum in February 1944. This is an early Panther Ausf.A and features the 'letterbox' machine gun port on the glacis. The tactical number '215' is painted in red with a white outline on the side of the turret. The vehicle appears to be painted in a severely weathered and dirty overall dark yellow over a rough coating of Zimmerit.



A view of '215' as it rolls along the Via dei Fori Imperiali taken from the opposite side of the street. III./Pz.Rgt.4 was converted to a Panther Abt. with four Kompanies on 5 May 1943. On 19 October 1943, it was renamed I./Pz.Rgt.4 after I./Pz.Rgt.4 was transferred to form s.Pz.Abt.507, and sent to Italy in early February 1944 with 76 Panthers.

Another early Panther Ausf.A following '215', approaches the Colosseum on the Via dei Fori Imperiali. Unfortunately, the tactical number is illegible, but we can see that it carried a standard black Balkenkreuz painted on the rear plate between the exhaust pipes. The small box mounted on the left rear of the engine deck was a common addition on the Panthers of I./Pz.Rgt.4.



Here we see the Panther Ausf.A trailing '215' with the Colosseum in the background.



A new Panther Ausf.A from I./Pz.Rgt.4 travelling with the column through Rome in February 1944. It is fitted with the early 16 bolt roadwheels that have been reinforced with 16 rivets. Note the boarding ladder suspended from the cross bar between the exhaust pipes.



A mid production Tiger I Ausf.E as it travels through Rome. S.Pz.Abt.508, equipped with 45 Tiger I's, was one of several units the Germans rushed south to meet the Allied threat at Anzio.



Another view of the same Tiger I Ausf.E from I./s.Pz.Abt.508 approaches the Forum of Trajan near the Victor Emanuel Monument in Rome in February 1944. The Tiger is painted in overall dark yellow with a camouflage scheme of green and brown patches. Although not visible, it has a white outline tactical number '1' painted on the rear of the stowage bin. A DKW NZ 250 motorcycle has been loaded on the engine deck, allowing the rider to enjoy the scenery along the way.



Sturmpanzer-Abteilung 216 was also one of the units rushed to the Anzio-Nettuno area in February 1944. They were the first unit to be equipped with the Sturmpanzer IV, which was first successfully employed at Kursk in July 1943. This one is a mid production vehicle built on a Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.H chassis and still has the sliding driver's visor similar to the Tiger I. In front, is an obsolete Pz.Kpfw.II Ausf.A-C, probably in use as a command vehicle. A column of British POW's can be seen marching to the rear along the right side of the road.



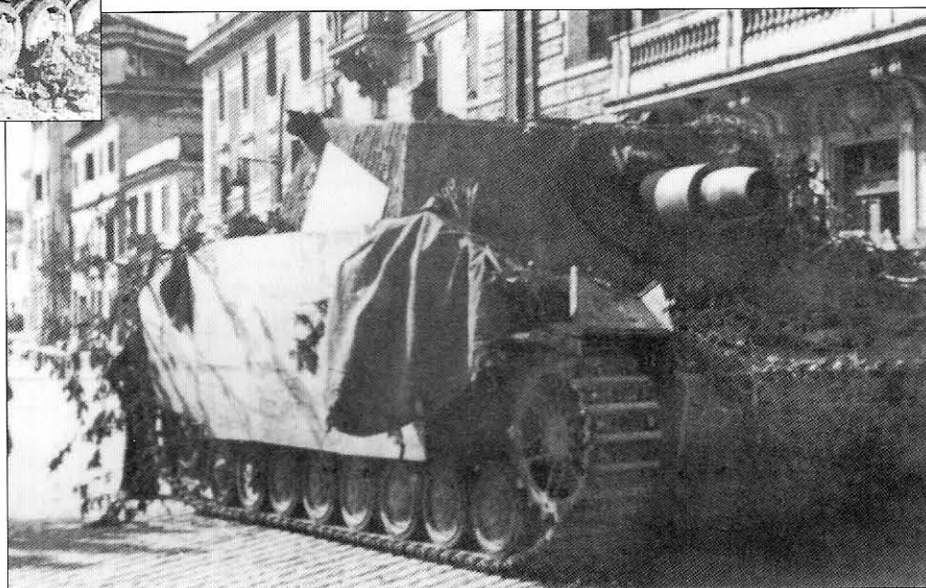
The same Sturmpanzer IV with the column of British POW's receding in the distance. It is finished in overall dark yellow with random patches of brown camouflage paint and is fitted with a canvas collar around the mantlet. The crewman standing on the ground is wearing a pair of field grey coveralls over his black Panzer uniform and has the lapels of his Panzer jacket pulled out.



Another Sturmpanzer IV from Sturmpanzer-Abteilung 216 passes a disabled Tiger I Ausf.E from s.Pz.Abt.508 near Anzio. This one was built on the chassis of a Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G. The exhaust port for the turret traverse muffler has been plated over and it is fitted with the early plated covers over the fighting compartment ventilators as can be seen to the right of the crewman standing on the engine deck. In the background, an Sd.Kfz.9 Famo heavy half-track prime-mover is waiting to move in and recover the Tiger I.



This is a later production Sturmpfanz IV featuring the boxed in driver's compartment and rotating periscope in place of the sliding visor. It is painted in overall dark yellow with a camouflage scheme of brown criss-cross lines. Though not evident in this photo, it also had a standard white outlined black Balkenkreuz high on the side of the fighting compartment with a white '1' behind it.



A Sturmpfanz IV from Sturmpfanz-Abteilung 216, left behind by the retreating Germans as they evacuated the city of Rome on 4 June 1944. This one is built on the Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.H chassis.



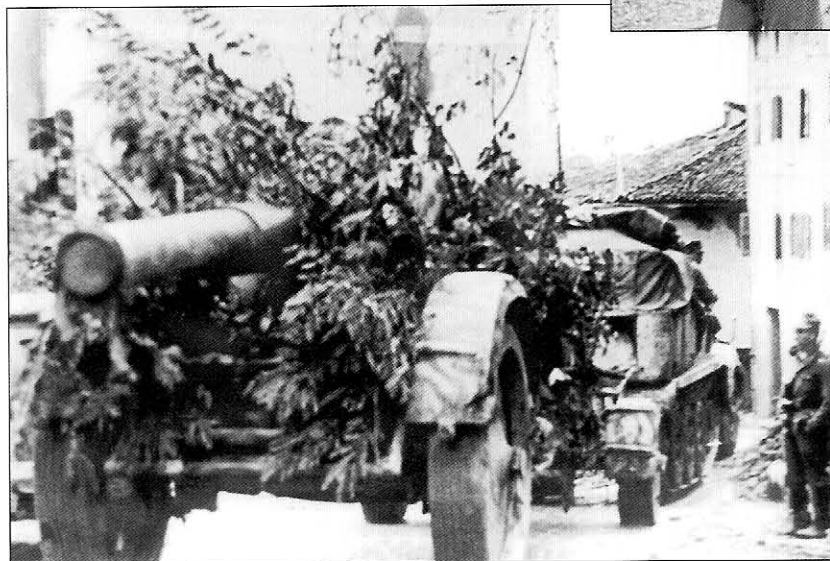
A mid production Sturmpfanz IV abandoned in a field near Anzio is inspected by some Italian youths. An internal explosion has blown the roof off which can be seen lying on the ground in front of it. It is also fitted with the newer cast steel idler that was introduced on the Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.H in October 1943.



A Nashorn from 2./s.H.Pz.Jg.Abt.525 in the Anzio-Nettuno area in March 1944. This is an early production vehicle fitted with the early eight-hole drive sprocket with a spacer ring to accommodate the 40cm wide track. It is painted in overall dark yellow with a camouflage scheme of green and brown patches. Markings include the standard Balkenkreuz along with a black three digit tactical number, '211', painted on the side. The tactical number is also repeated on the left side of the gunshield. The unit emblem, consisting of a crouching lion perched on top of a tracked chassis, was painted on the left hinged mudguard. Additional tie downs have been welded on the sides to hold wire for attaching foliage for camouflage.



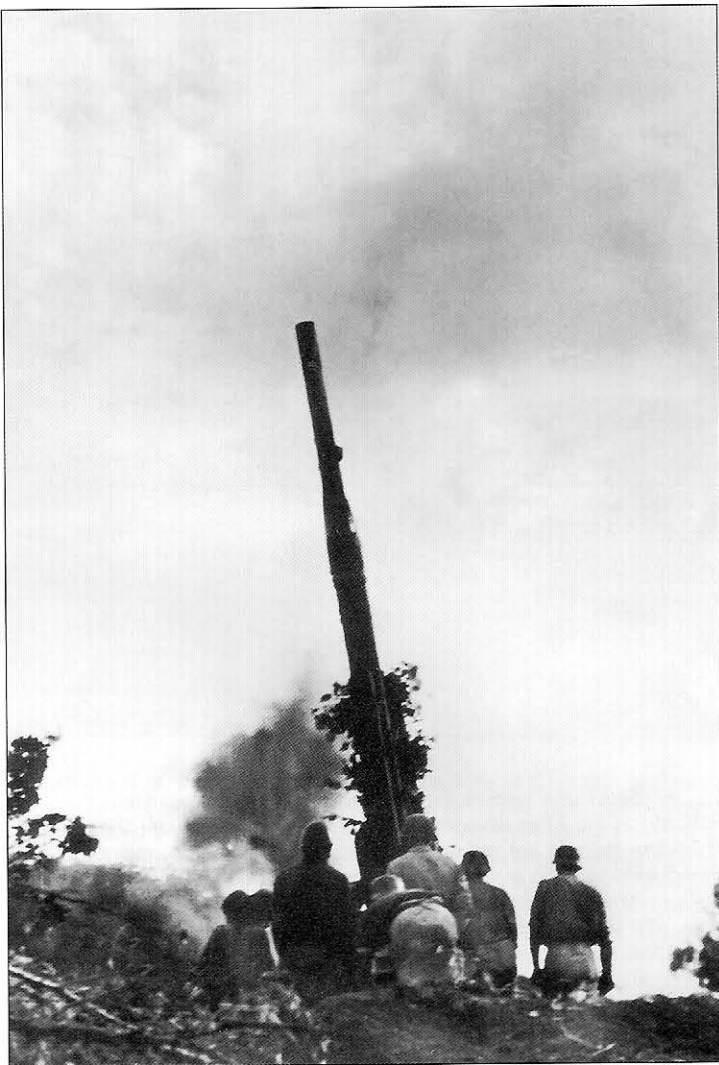
A 17cm Kanone 18 in Morserlafette fires on the Allied beachhead at Anzio. This heavy artillery piece could fire a 68kg high explosive projectile to a maximum range of 29600m. It was mounted on a carriage that not only had a gun recoil system but the gun platform slid back on the trails providing a second recoil system. In action, the whole carriage was mounted on a turntable that provided a complete 360° rotation. The gun was normally towed by the Sd.Kfz.8 half-track prime-mover.



A heavily camouflaged 17cm Kanone 18 in Morserlafette being towed by an Sd.Kfz.8 half-track prime-mover along a narrow Italian street. It appears that the gun and limber have also had some camouflage paint applied, probably dark yellow stripes over the original dark gray color.



A 10.5cm leFH18 or leFH18M (M – mundungbremse – muzzle brake) is maneuvered into a prepared gun emplacement. One of the crew has added his weight on end of the gun barrel to help balance the heavy gun trails as they are opened up. Unfortunately, he has also blocked the view of the muzzle, which would indicate if the piece were fitted with a muzzle brake or not. The leFH18 was the backbone of the German artillery and served from 1935 to 1945. It fired a 14.8kg high explosive shell and had a maximum range of 10675m.



Burnt powder hangs in the air as this 8.8cm FlaK36/37 anti-aircraft gun engages Allied aircraft over Italy in 1944. Just as the 10.5cm leFH 18 was the backbone of the German artillery, so was the 8.8cm FlaK18 and 36/37 the backbone of German anti-aircraft defenses. The gun fired a 9.24kg high explosive shell and had a maximum effective ceiling of 8000m.



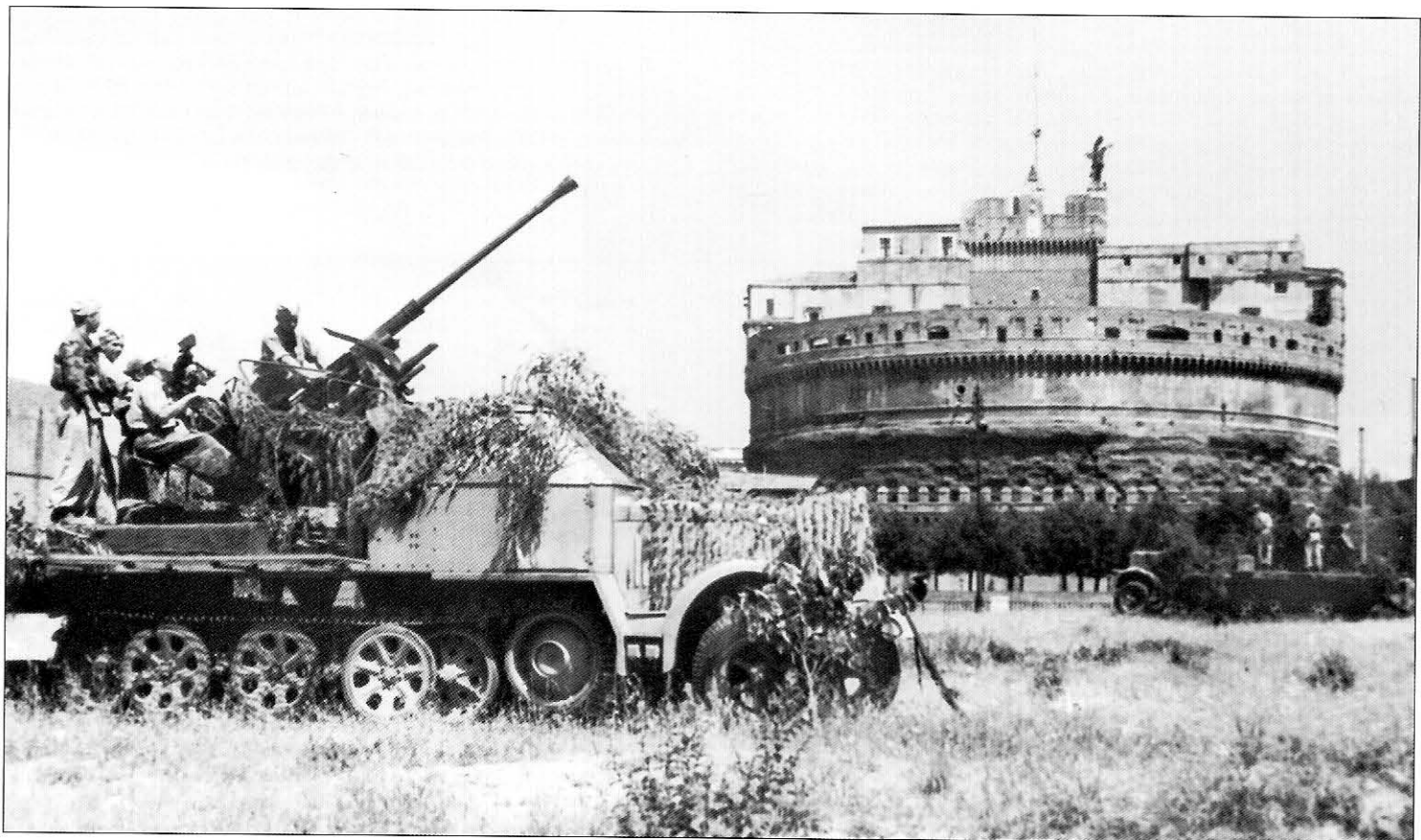
A Wespe self-propelled light field howitzer in the process of having its 10.5cm leFH18M armament removed with the help of an Sd.Kfz.9/1 18t half-track mounting a 6t Bilstein crane. The Wespe is painted in overall dark yellow and carries a white two digit tactical number '11' and a narrow style Balkenkreuz on the side armor of the fighting compartment. The vehicle to the left is an Italian M13/40 tank or Semovente da 75/18 self-propelled gun.



A diminutive 3.7cm PaK35/36 anti-tank gun manned by Fallschirmjäger troops in Rome in May 1944. Both men are wearing the second model olive green jump smock over their Luftwaffe tropical uniform along with the distinctive paratrooper helmet. The gun has been painted in a camouflage scheme of dark yellow stripes over the original dark gray color. In 1941, over 15,000 of these weapons were in service although it had been rendered obsolete by that time. Its Pzgr.Patr.40 ammunition was only capable of penetrating 51mm of armor plate at 500m.



A 7.5cm PaK40 anti-tank gun set up behind a barricaded street in Rome as the Allies advanced on the city in late May 1944. Their distinctive helmets are the only thing that identify the gun crew as Fallschirmjäger who also wear the standard Luftwaffe tan tropical uniform. The low gunshield only provided basic protection for the crew, who were otherwise exposed to small arms and high explosive return fire. In contrast to the 3.7cm PaK35/36, the 7.5cm Pzgr.40 ammunition could penetrate 154mm of armor plate at 500m.



A pair of Sd.Kfz.7/2 self-propelled anti-aircraft guns guard the skies over Rome in the spring of 1944. Mounting the 3.7cm FlaK36 anti-aircraft gun, these vehicles were originally produced on the standard half-track chassis and later received an armored cab and engine compartment. In the background is the Castel Sant'Angelo, on the banks of the Tiber River, originally built as a tomb for the emperor Hadrian.

Generalfeldmarschall Albert Kesselring, accompanied by some of his staff officers, observes a firing exercise from the engine deck of a StuG.IV from Pz.Abt.190 of 90.Pz.Gren.Div. The vehicle looks new and has a camouflage scheme of green and brown lines over the dark yellow base color. Note as well the addition of reinforced concrete used to supplement the armor protection in front of the driver's compartment and the canvas dust cover that completely covers the 'topfblende' cast gun mantlet.



Two Grille Ausf.H self-propelled howitzers sit amid the ruins of Carocetto, an Italian village north of Anzio near Aprilia in February 1944. Their crews have piled broken timbers and debris around them to help camouflage their position from Allied fighters. The nearest vehicle is painted in overall dark yellow with a camouflage scheme of what is most likely wide brown strips and is marked with a newly painted standard Balkenkreuz. In the background is an Sd.Kfz.251/1 Ausf.C half-track armored personnel carrier, behind which, is a knocked out M4 Sherman tank from the U.S. 1st Armored Division which supported the earlier British attack in this area. The Grille were normally issued to the schwere Infanteriegeschütz companies of the Panzergrenadier regiments.

The commander of a heavily camouflaged StuG.III Ausf.G scans the horizon through his field glasses. His Army style tropical tunic, displaying Feldwebel rank shoulder straps, is hung over the open cupola hatch behind him. Unusually, it appears that he is wearing a Fallschirmjäger steel helmet.



Grenadiers from Pz.Rgt. 'Hermann Göring', march along a road past a Panther Ausf.A from I./Pz.Rgt.4 in February 1944 near Anzio. The weather in late February was rainy and some of the men are wearing their greatcoats under their jump smocks. To the right can be seen a camouflaged Tiger I Ausf.E from either s.Pz.Abt.508 or s.Pz.Kp. 'Meyer', which also were committed to the attack against the Allied landings at Anzio-Nettuno.

An Elephant from s.Pz.Jg.Abt.653 sits immobilized by a mine along the attack route towards the Anzio-Nettuno bridgehead on 29 February 1944. A column of Panthers from I./Pz.Rgt.4 can be seen approaching along the road accompanied by the grenadiers from Pz.Rgt. 'Hermann Göring'.



A Borgward BIV Ausf.B (Sd.Kfz.301) demolition vehicle from Pz.Abt.(FKL) 301 in front of a column of Panthers from I./Pz.Rgt.4 near the Anzio-Nettuno bridgehead. In late January 1944, Pz.Abt.(FKL) 301 was ordered to Italy, arriving at its destination south of Rome on 5 February. The unit was equipped with 30 StuG.III Ausf.G command and control vehicles and had an authorized strength of 108 Borgward demolition vehicles although it has not been reported how many they actually had available.

A column of Sd.Kfz.251/1 Ausf.C half-track personnel carriers advances down the same road. They have all been heavily camouflaged with branches to help conceal them from Allied fighters. The Wehrmacht license number 'WH 1261663' indicates they are probably from one of the Panzer-Grenadier-Divisions that took part in the operation.



This is the early model of the le.ladungsträger (Sd.Kfz.302) 'Goliath', an electric drive remote control, wire guided demolition vehicle which carried a 60kg explosive charge. Developed in 1942 to assault buildings and fortifications, it was also used against armored vehicles and could cause severe damage although it was highly vulnerable to small arms fire.



A Pz.Kpfw.III Ausf.L from an unidentified unit sits abandoned in a field after the U.S. Fifth Army successfully broke out of the bridgehead in late May 1944.

A column of Pz.Kpfw.IV, probably destroyed by Allied fighters as they advanced along a road near Anzio. Near the bottom of the photo can be seen the bypass route taken by the advancing Allied vehicles, marked by tape after having been cleared of mines. One of the Pz.KPfw.IV's has been completely consumed by fire leaving piles of light gray ash from the burnt rubber roadwheels.





One of the early Tiger I Ausf.E originally from s.Pz.Kp. 'Meyer' destroyed during the battle near Cisterna 25 May 1944. The Tigers had been repainted with a camouflage scheme of green and brown over the dark yellow base color and had new tactical numbers from '1', seen here, to '8'. Note the early cupola lying on the ground after being blown off by an internal explosion. On 3 March 1944, the remaining Tigers in the Kompanie were integrated with s.Pz.Abt.508. Hidden from view, on the other side of the road, was an overturned Elephant from s.Pz.Jg.Abt.653.

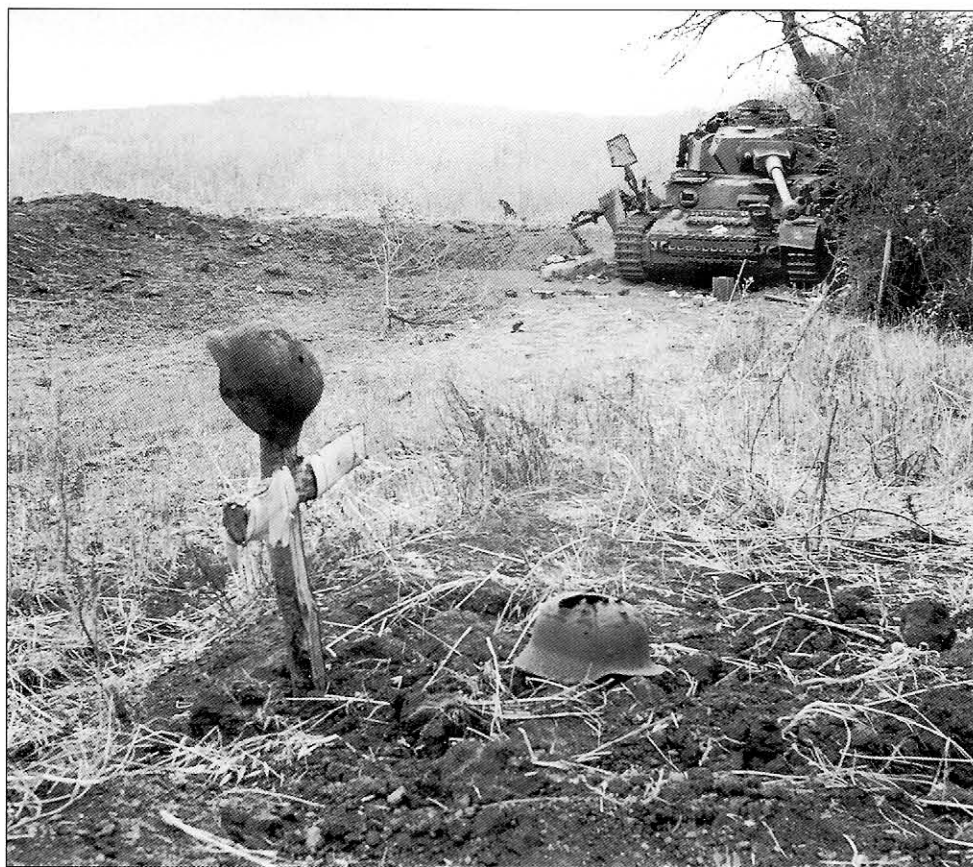
Three American soldiers pose in front of a captured Elephant from s.Pz.Jg.Abt.653 that broke down and had to be abandoned in late May 1944. The vehicle is finished in a camouflage scheme of green and brown patches applied over the dark yellow base color and a three digit tactical number, '102', has been painted in white on both sides. Not visible is the gothic script letter 'U', an abbreviation for 1.Kompanie commander Hauptmann Helmut Ulbricht, also painted in white on the upper right side of the upper rear plate.



Another photo of the same Elephant from s.Pz.Jg.Abt.653 at an enemy vehicle collection point. In the background can be seen a Sturmpanzer IV from Sturmpanzer-Abteilung 216 along with two large artillery pieces, a 15cm K18 on the left and a schwere 10cm K18 on the right. This Elephant was shipped back to Aberdeen Proving Grounds in the U.S. where it can still be seen today.



The crew of this Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.H struggle to replace a damaged track. It is likely that the track simply broke since there appears to be no mine damage to the suspension. They have their work cut out for them as one end of the track has wound itself up between the second and third roadwheel. The white star marking on the rear plate indicates this vehicle is from 15.Panzer-Grenadier-Division. Beside it is a white rhomboid, the tactical sign for a Panzer unit followed by the number '2', indicating the company to which the vehicle is assigned.



A knocked out Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.H from Pz.Rgt. 'Hermann Göring'. Note the white circle on the left front mudguard with a black bar at the two o'clock position indicating this is a 2.Kompanie vehicle. A crude cross marks the temporary resting-place of one of the crew in the foreground.



An early Panther Ausf. A from I./Pz.Rgt.4 sits abandoned alongside the road near San Giovanni Incarico, northwest of Pontecorvo on 25 May 1944. The vehicle is remarkably intact and shows minimal damage. The three digit tactical number, '331' is painted in red with a white outline on the side of the turret. In addition to the standard Balkenkreuz painted on each side of the hull, there was one painted on the rear plate between the vertical exhaust pipes. Note the unusual stowage boxes (there were two) mounted on the rear of the engine deck.



Two British soldiers hunt for souvenirs in another early Panther Ausf. A from I./Pz.Rgt.4 knocked in the fighting around Aquino a few kilometers west of Monte Cassino in May 1944. Note the gun barrel in partial recoil.

A motorcycle combination from 26.Panzer-Division in the Nettuno area. The emblem painted on the front of the sidecar apparently was a simplified version of the divisional emblem that was sometimes used.



A StuG.III Ausf.G, probably from Pz.Abt.129 of 29.Panzer-Grenadier-Division, is towed by an M31 armored recovery vehicle along the Via Casalina near Mignano Monte Lungo in the Monte Cassino area in January 1944. A small white letter 'A' has been painted on the side of the fighting compartment in front of the standard Balkenkreuz. A larger 'A' is repeated on the glacis in black beside the unit emblem, two crossed pennants within the outline of a shield, also in black. On the front of the gun mantlet, a small white number '15' appears inside a white circle. Note the unusual machine gun ring mount on the turret of the M31.

Two American soldiers appear to be repairing the final drive housing on this captured StuG.III Ausf.G. A neatly painted three digit tactical number '232' has been applied on the side of the fighting compartment in black with a white outline behind the standard Balkenkreuz. The Zimmerit pattern indicates this StuG.III was manufactured at the MIAG plant after September 1943.





An early StuG.III Ausf.G is inspected by two British soldiers in the summer of 1944. It is fitted with the smoke grenade launchers that were installed on vehicles manufactured from February to May of 1943 and has the retrofitted Schürzen brackets that were installed by field workshops beginning in early June 1943. The chassis number '92271' is painted on the 30mm supplementary armor plate on the right side of the vehicle.



An early M4A1 Sherman winds its way past several abandoned German vehicles including this mid-production Tiger I from s.Pz.Abt.508. There is no visible damage on the Tiger and it is likely that it was simply abandoned after it broke down. Note the dust cover still in place on the muzzle brake and the gun locked in the traveling position.



Another view of the early M4A1 Sherman as it passes the Tiger I. The Sherman is fitted with the early bolted transmission housing and narrow M34 gun mantlet.



An early Marder III Ausf.M sits in a hull down position behind a stone fence while one of the crew keeps a watchful eye on the ground in front with his binoculars. The name 'Leopard' can be seen painted in black on the right side of the hull behind the driver's compartment. The early Marder III was fitted with a rounded, cast cover on the driver's compartment. A redesigned welded cover was introduced at the end of 1943.



A soldier from the U.S. 133rd Infantry Division poses in front of a knocked out late Tiger I Ausf.E from s.Pz.Abt.508 in the Cecina region in July 1944. The impact point from a round that did not penetrate the 100mm thick lower hull plate can be seen to the left. This Tiger I was hit by a 75mm round into the engine compartment through the thinner, 80mm side hull plate resulting in an engine fire that destroyed the vehicle.



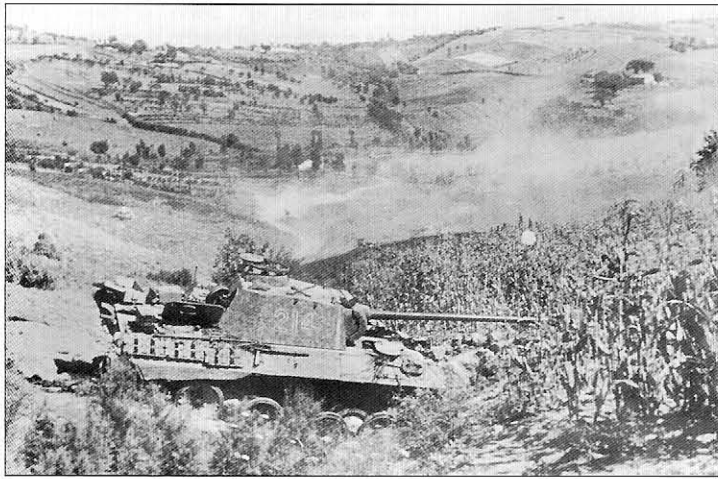
Two Panzerbefehlswagen V Panther Ausf.A from I./Pz.Rgt.4 near Florence during the summer of 1944. They are both early Ausf.A with the 'letterbox' machine gun port on the glacis. The one in front, tactical number '102', is a purpose built Befehls-Panther and is fitted with an armored mount for the star antenna on the engine deck and has the spare antenna storage tubes mounted below the gun cleaning rod storage tube. The one behind with tactical number '113', is a standard gun tank that has been assigned as a staff vehicle. Both Panthers are painted overall dark yellow with red tactical numbers outlined in white.



Befehls-Panther '113' shown crossing a small stream with '102' following behind. The early Panther Ausf.A was equipped with the T.Z.F.12 binocular gunsight until mid-November 1943, when the T.Z.F.12a monocular gunsight was introduced.



A photo of Befehls-Panther '102' giving a good view of the 'letterbox' machine gun port and the additional periscope providing forward vision for the machine gunner/radio operator. Note the absence of a coaxial machine gun port in the mantlet – on Befehls-Panthers and Tigers, the ports were sealed with an armored plug.



This late Panther Ausf.A from I./Pz.Rgt.4 looks as though it may have been pushed off a road higher up this hill after losing a track or breaking down. It rolled downhill with enough momentum to bury its nose in the ground. The Panther is painted in overall dark yellow and it has a tactical number, '214', painted in red with a white outline, on the side of the turret.



A view of the left side of the same late Panther Ausf.A from I./Pz.Rgt.4 with several British Commonwealth soldiers checking it out for souvenirs. The impact from a projectile on the side of the hull has torn away the gun cleaning rod tube and part of the tool rack.



A late Tiger I Ausf.E from 3./s.Pz.Abt.508 sits abandoned in a grove of olive trees, the rear of its turret blackened by an engine fire. The white outline tactical number '3' is still plainly visible on the side of the turret and rear of the stowage bin. The 3.Kompanie was equipped with Borgward BIV radio controlled demolition vehicles and so these Tigers had an additional radio antenna mount added to the right side of the turret.



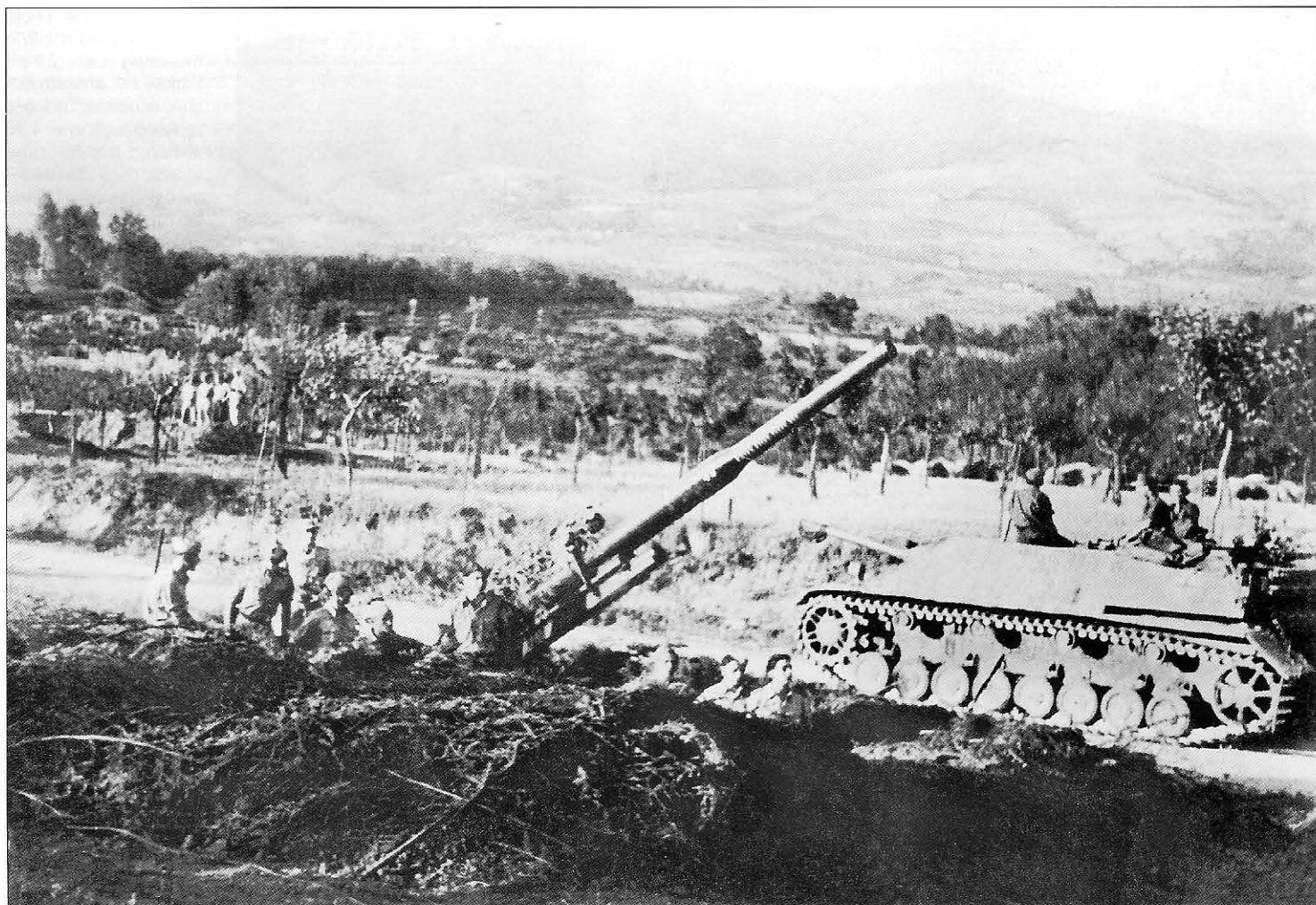
The Sd.Kfz.11 light 3-ton half-track prime mover was employed for towing a variety of light howitzers, anti-tank guns and the Nebelwerfer rocket launcher. Here, an Sd.Kfz.11 is towing a 7.5cm PaK40 anti-tank gun along a dusty country road. The gun crew has added some cut foliage to the gunshield for camouflage.



This StuG.III Ausf.G is one of those manufactured on the Pz.Kpfw.III chassis. Note the gap between the bolts fastening the additional 30mm armor plate in front of the driver's position. It is also fitted with smoke grenade launchers and 30mm bolted on additional armor plates on the glacis and lower hull.



A damaged early Jagdpanzer IV awaits a recovery vehicle to tow it to the workshops. The transmission has probably seized up and so both tracks have been shortened and linked together bypassing the drive sprocket. The early Jagdpanzer IV mounted the 7.5cm PaK39/L48 gun, some of which were fitted with a muzzle brake like this one. From January to November 1944, a total of 769 of these purpose built Panzerjäger were built and saw their first action with Panzer-Division 'Hermann Göring' in the spring of 1944.



Another early Jagdpanzer IV passing an 8.8cm FlaK36/37 anti-aircraft gun emplacement in the Italian countryside during the summer of 1944. Barely visible on the side of the fighting compartment, is a three digit tactical number, '214', painted in either black or red with a white outline. Note the 18 kill rings painted on the barrel of the anti-aircraft gun.



Regular German Wehrmacht and Fallschirmjäger troops occupy an elaborate trench protected by an 8.8cm FlaK18 anti-aircraft gun with 6 kill rings on the barrel, being utilized in the ground support role. The color of the Luftwaffe tan tropical uniform contrasted with the standard Wehrmacht issue olive green or khaki tropical uniform.

Fallschirmjäger troops fire their 12cm Granatwerfer 42 mortar on Allied positions during the fighting in Italy during the summer of 1944. A splinter pattern camouflage jump smock belonging to one of them can be seen hanging from the lower end of the tube. The 12cm Gr.W 42 was copied from a Soviet design and could throw a 15.5kg bomb to 5700m making it the best mortar in the German arsenal.





A dramatic photo of an Sd.Kfz. 7/2, mounting a 3.7cm Flak36 anti-aircraft gun, in action. This one is fitted with the light armored cab and engine compartment that began to be fitted to some vehicles in late 1943.

Two rockets can be seen streaking from a battery of Nebelwerfer rocket launchers located at the edge of a field. The 15cm NbW41 had a maximum range of 6900m and the 21cm NbW42 had a maximum range of 7850m. Their main disadvantage was the prominent smoke trail the projectiles left that clearly marked the battery location for return artillery fire.



Two soldiers from the Calgary Tanks (14th Armoured Regiment) inspect the remains of a captured battery of 21cm NbW41 rocket launchers. The rockets were fired electrically in sequence from each tube in order to avoid upsetting the unit.

The crew of this 10.5cm leFH18/40 howitzer prepares to set their artillery piece up in a narrow Italian village street. This was the last version of this gun to be produced and, in an effort to reduce the weight of the piece without sacrificing performance, combined the barrel of the 10.5cm leFH18M and a modified carriage from the 7.5cm PaK40. The smaller diameter PaK40 wheels were later replaced with larger ones that were also wider as can be seen in this photo. These guns were typically fitted with a large double baffle muzzle brake.

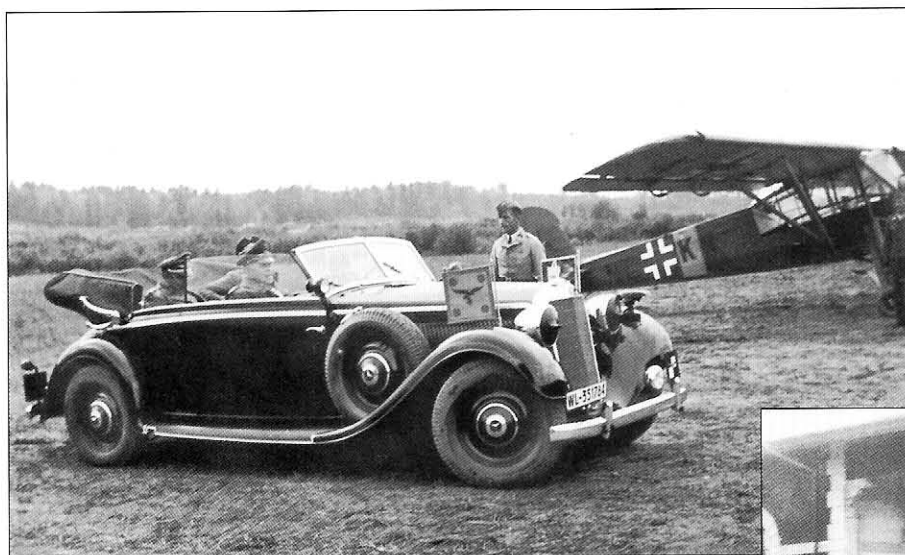


An Sd.Kfz.10/5 abandoned near Rome in June 1944. It is armed with the 2cm FlaK38 anti-aircraft gun and has been fitted with a light armored shield around the driver's compartment. This one is painted overall dark yellow with a camouflage scheme of brown and green patches.

A Polish soldier poses in the burned out hulk of a Nashorn from s.H.Pz.Jg.Abt.525 near Roncitelli in August 1944. It is likely that the vehicle was destroyed by its own crew when it ran out of fuel or broke down as the gun appears to have been fired after draining the recoil fluid from the recoil cylinders. Note as well the fine mesh screen that has been installed over the engine air intakes to prevent debris from being sucked into the engine compartment. A three digit tactical number, '233', can be faintly seen painted in black on the side armor.



Polish soldiers inspect a Nashorn from s.H.Pz.Jg.Abt.525, captured near Chiaravelle, July 1944. A three digit tactical number '214' can be seen painted on the left side of the gunshield and there are twelve kill rings painted around the gun barrel just behind the muzzle brake. The unit emblem does not appear to have been painted on this vehicle.



Generalfeldmarschall Albert Kesselring is shown arriving at a small grass airstrip in his spotless Mercedes-Benz 320 Cabriolet B staff car. On the right mudguard is the rank pennant for a Generalfeldmarschall der Luftwaffe that had a light blue background with gold trim. The opposite side of the pennant showed a pair of crossed field marshal batons inside an oak leaf wreath and four Luftwaffe eagles, also in gold on a light blue background. Also visible above the bumper in front of the left mudguard, is the red, white and black command flag for the Commander-in-Chief of an Army. Waiting for him on the airstrip is a Fieseler Storch.



A group of Luftwaffe staff officers at the train station in Lucca, about 20km north of Pisa, during the summer of 1944. Both cars appear to be Mercedes-Benz 540K Tourenwagen, although the one in front has been painted in the military overall dark yellow complete with a shipping stencil applied to the drivers door and the other has a commercial paint finish.



A young Luftwaffe Gefreiter driver poses for a photo beside another Luftwaffe staff car. This new Mercedes-Benz G4 was probably photographed earlier in the war judging by the dark gray paint and low registration number plate. There were not many privately owned vehicles in Germany during the pre-war years and many new recruits had to be trained to drive when they entered the service. Only 72 of these vehicles were ever manufactured.



A British Commonwealth or Polish soldier examines a burnt out Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.H in the San Patrignano area, near Rimini in the late summer of 1944. The familiar 'Smashed by D.A.F.' sign, claiming destruction by the Desert Air Force, has been placed on the hulk. On 25 August 1944, the British Eighth Army launched an assault toward the Adriatic coastal city of Rimini. The Germans reacted by shifting troops from the center of the Gothic Line, weakening their defenses and allowing the U.S. Fifth Army to cross the Arno River almost unopposed.



Another Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.H, concealed in a farmyard in the San Patrignano area. It appears to have been abandoned rather than knocked out by enemy fire. It belonged to either 29.Panzer-Grenadier-Division or 26.Panzer-Division, both of which fought in the area.



A StuH42 Ausf.G lurks in the doorway of an Italian building. This vehicle is one of those produced between June and September 1943, after the lower hull armor was increased to 80mm but before Zimmerit began to be applied. The bolted on 30mm additional armor plate can also be seen on the right side of the fighting compartment.



An American soldier sits on a knocked out StuG.III Ausf.G. It features the waffle pattern Zimmerit coating applied at the Alkett plant between September 1943 and September 1944. It is also fitted with the 'topfblende' cast gun mantlet and the shot deflector in front of the commander's cupola. Steel return rollers were introduced in November 1943, however rubber tired rollers continued in use until stocks were used up.



Another Alkett manufactured StuG.III Ausf.G knocked out alongside a country road, its roof blown off by an internal explosion. It has also been fitted with the 'topfblende' cast gun mantlet and rubber tired return rollers.



This Sd.Kfz.251/9 Ausf.C was torn apart, most likely, by a direct hit from a large caliber artillery round. First developed in the summer of 1942, the Sd.Kfz.251/9 mounted the 7.5cm KwK37 L/24 made redundant by the upgunning of the Pz.Kpfw.IV with the KwK40 L/43. The gun was offset to the right side of the vehicle and, on early versions, the roof over the radio operator's seat was cut out to make room for the gun.



On 14 September 1944, two late Tiger I Ausf.E from s.Pz.Abt.504 had to be blown up after driving off the road during a night march and ending up in a small ravine near Ospedaletto, south of Rimini, from which they could not be recovered. The lead Tiger has a tactical number, '312', painted in white with a black outline, on the side of the turret.



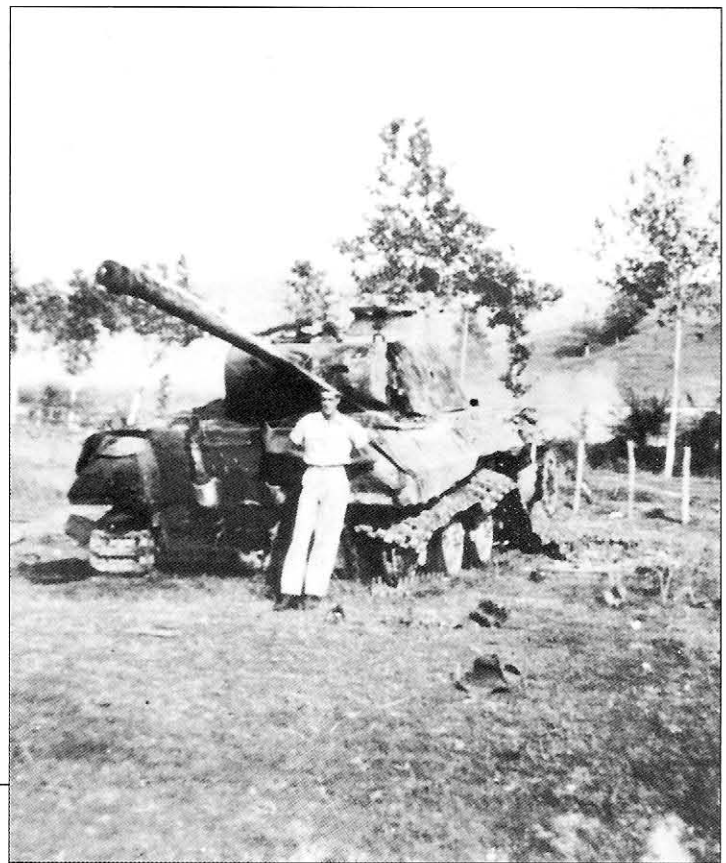
This Tiger I Ausf.E from s.Pz.Abt.508 bogged down and had to be abandoned while trying to cross a soft streambed. In order to avoid the same fate, the Allies have erected a Bailey Bridge across the obstacle.



A brand new late production Panther Ausf.A from Pz.Rgt.4 in northern Italy during late summer 1944. Unfortunately, the signpost on the building in the background is not clear enough to provide an accurate location. The hastily applied three digit tactical number, '401', is likely black with a white outline.



Two American soldiers with a knocked out late Panther Ausf.A that has been pushed to the side of the road. On 1 September 1944, Pz.Rgt.4 reported that there were only 10 Panthers operational of the 76 that they were sent to Italy with in the spring.



The fire blackened hulk of an early Panther Ausf.A from Pz.Rgt.4 photographed after the war with an Italian civilian. The light line that can be seen extending from his head along the gun barrel is actually a scratch on the negative.



A battle weary Panther Ausf.A from 4./Pz.Rgt.4 sits abandoned in a small Italian village in the Monte Columbo area west of Rimini on 14 September 1944. Its neatly applied three digit tactical number, '434', is red with a white outline.



A Luftwaffe 8.8cm FlaK18 anti-aircraft gun being utilized in the ground role during the street fighting in Florence, September 1944. All the crewmen here are wearing the Luftwaffe tropical tan uniform. In an exposed position like this, they are likely part of a rear guard and would simply abandon their gun when the position became untenable.



Two early production Hummel self-propelled guns, mounting the 15cm sFH18 howitzer, provide fire support during the long German retreat up the Italian peninsula. Both vehicles are finished in overall dark yellow with a camouflage scheme of green and brown applied in small stripes and patches. Hummels were usually attached to the heavy artillery batteries of the Panzer divisions, and so it is possible that these two belong to 26.Panzer-Division, the only full Panzer division left fighting in Italy at the time.



Stablemate of the Hummel, the Wespe mounted the 10.5cm IFH18M howitzer on the obsolete Pz.Kpfw.II chassis. They were also issued to the light artillery batteries of the Panzer and Panzer-Grenadier divisions.



Two early Marder III Ausf.M make their way along a slushy, snow covered mountain road, probably in the late spring of 1945. As most of the crewmen are wearing short sleeved shirts, the weather must still be quite warm. Both vehicles are marked with the standard black Balkenkreuz on the side of the fighting compartment and the vehicle on the left has a girl's name, possibly 'Linda', also painted in white.



A late production StuG.IV from StuG.Abt.1034 of 34.Infanterie-Division sits abandoned in a farm yard, probably the victim of engine failure judging by the opened engine deck hatch and the absence of any noticeable battle damage. 34.Infanterie-Division was the only unit other than 90.Pz.Gren.Div. to be equipped with the StuG.IV in Italy, arriving in late September or early October 1944. This vehicle was produced after September 1944, when Zimmerit was no longer applied. It appears to be painted in overall dark yellow with a camouflage scheme of brown and green patches and is marked with a white outline Balkenkreuz.



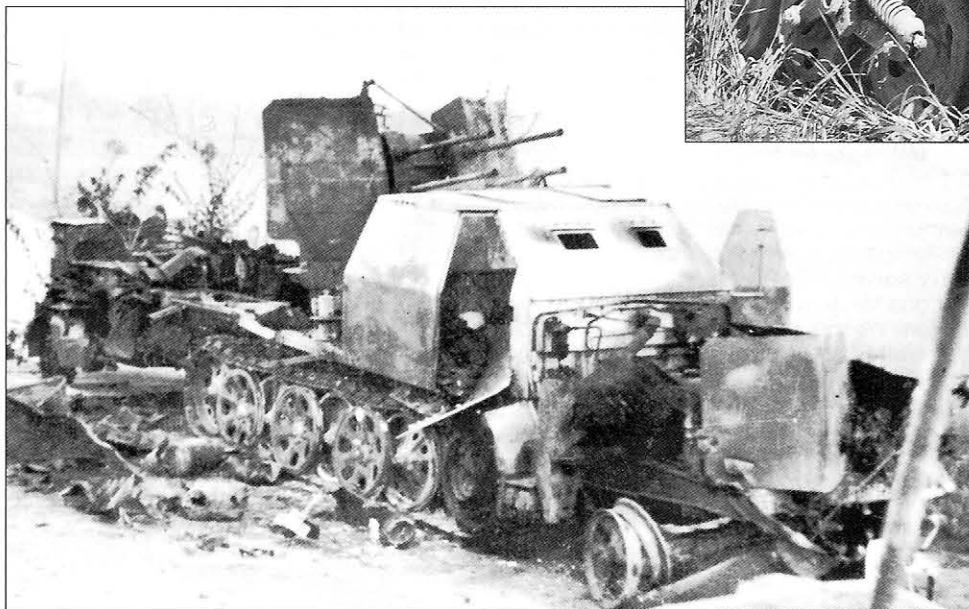
Another view of the same StuG.IV showing an additional armor plate hinged in front of the driver's position. Here, the opened access hatch on the glacis is holding up the plate. 34.Infanterie-Division surrendered their remaining vehicles at Ivrea, north of Torino, on 5 May 1945. Photos taken at that time show their vehicles fitted with similar additional armor.



The remains of a totally destroyed StuG.III Ausf.G near Bologna in the spring of 1945. This was a later production vehicle manufactured after September 1944, when Zimmerit was no longer applied. Before being knocked out, this crew had successfully destroyed six Allied vehicles as shown by the number of kill rings on the gun barrel.



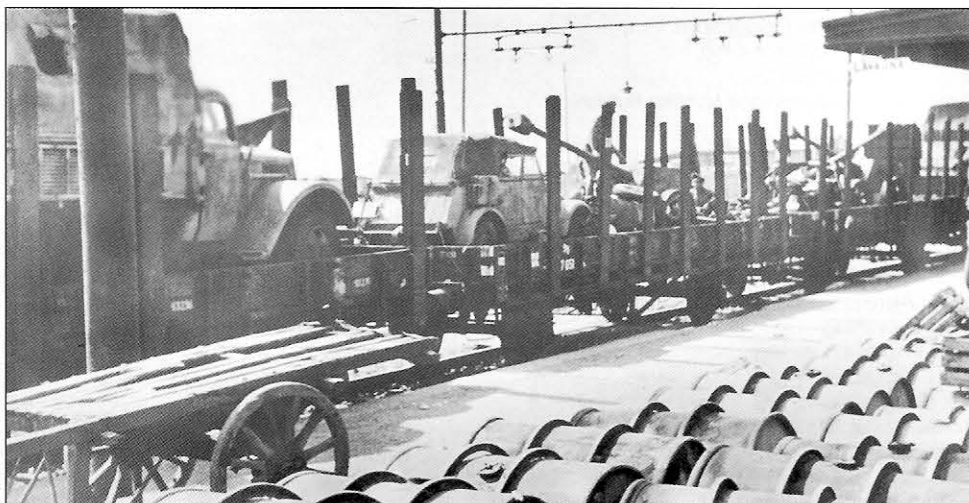
Two Commonwealth soldiers examine an abandoned 15cm Panzerwerfer 42 (Sd.Kfz.4/1). The two men are probably British judging from the style of hobnail boots on the man on the left and the small bandage pocket visible on his battledress trousers. There were 300 Panzerwerfer 42 built from April 1943 to March 1944 plus another 19 converted from Munitionskraftwagen für Nebelwerfer in June 1944.



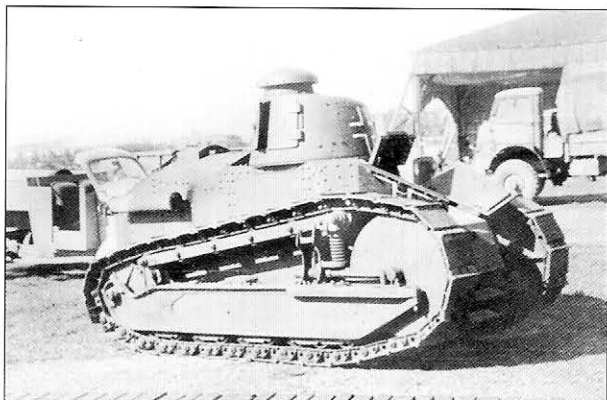
An Sd.Kfz.7/1 self-propelled anti-aircraft gun, mounting the 2cm Flakvierling, destroyed in the Po River valley 23 April 1945. Fire and explosions have weakened the torsion bar suspension, burning the rubber off the roadwheels and blowing apart the engine compartment. This is one of those fitted with light armor plates around the cab and engine compartment although it appears not to have helped much here.



A Nashorn from s.H.Pz.Jg.Abt.525 is inspected by several British Commonwealth troops in the late spring of 1945. It has been fitted with a screen over the engine air intake to prevent debris from being sucked into the engine compartment. On 9 September 1944, 1./s.H.Pz.Jg.Abt.525 was ordered back to Germany to re-equip with the Jagdpanther, while 2./525 and 3./525 remained in Italy, surrendering to American forces on the Po River at the end of the war.



A German transport train at Lavagna railroad station near Genoa. The truck on the left is a Ford V3000 3t lorrie. In front of it is a Kfz.2 Kubelwagen and three 7.5cm PaK40 anti-tank guns.



A large number of obsolete French Renault FT-17 tanks were captured by the Germans in 1940 and pressed into service, mostly for police and security duties. The Luftwaffe utilized this one at an unidentified Italian airfield. Most of them were repainted in overall dark gray and had an oversize black Balkenkreuz painted on each side of the turret.



Another captured French Renault FT-17. This one has a large white outline Balkenkreuz on the turret. In German service, they were referred to as Panzerkampfwagen FT-17 730(f).

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