

More than 170 profiles
ready for modeling



The definitive guide to get into
the Deutsches Afrika Korps



All the AK Interactive staff and myself are proud to introduce this new book full of information on the Deutsches Arika Korps. Here you will find all the references needed to paint almost any armored vehicle; camouflages, division signs, etc.

Variations of the most popular models depending on the year, division and army it belonged. A complete approach to the German DAK, ready for the modeler to achieve the most realistic look in your vehicles. This book is meant for all of us who enjoy and love this great hobby.

Fernando Vallejo
AK Interactive President



2014

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Prologue

The vast majority of military episodes which took place during World War II, speak of terrible battles, with stories both cruel and ruthless, which shrink the reader's heart. Even those accustomed to such stories of war cannot do anything but shudder to imagine the suffering of the protagonists. However, the events that took place in the inhospitable lands of Tunisia, Libya and Egypt, between February 1941 and May 1943, enjoy a unique aura, resulting in a mixture of heroism, courage, recklessness, companionship and respect for the enemy which has lasted until this day.

Following the disaster which was the Italian campaign in North Africa, Hitler, in a decision more political than military, decided to send an expeditionary force to aid his allies. The Italians were about to crumble and become virtually disbanded in the face of the British. In command of this army, was a general who had featured in the campaign for France famed for his mastery of the Panzer, and their use in the German 'Blitzkrieg' doctrine that had so far smashed Germany's adversaries. His name was Erwin Rommel, a name as well known as the troops he commanded; the Afrika Korps. Both of them are so intrinsically linked, that to name one, invokes the name of the other.

Outnumbered by man and materiel from beginning to end, only the audacity and great determination of this force allowed them to keep check with the Commonwealth forces, and arrive at the gates of Alexandria. Only with the sea behind them, and before a much stronger enemy, were they forced to surrender after a series of defensive maneuvers and counterattacks that prevented their withdrawal.

Some of the phrases which most seem to define the personality a German are his planning, organization and modus operandi. In North Africa however, improvisation was perhaps the most valuable of weapons. Despite having no experience in desert combat and specially prepared vehicles for operating in harsh conditions, the Afrika Korps saw successive victories over the first months of their operations, along the coast of North Africa to the Halfaya Pass, through Egypt, and onto the Tobruk, which was then besieged.

Months later, when a counter ally released the German advance to Tobruk and Benghazi, it



seemed that the end was near for the Afrika Korps and their Italian allies. Rommel recaptured lost ground and took Tobruk and swiftly moved on to El Alamein, just 100 km away from Alexandria. All these events forged the Rommel legend, and his nickname, "Der Wüstenfuchs" or Desert Fox. Rommel was both revered by his troops and admired even by his enemies.

Henceforth, their efforts to reach Cairo and control the Suez Canal were in vain. Facing a much better equipped enemy without any supply shortages, the Germano-Italian lines were totally exhausted, stretched, and short of supplies. This also coincided with the summer of 1942, when preparations were afoot for the second great offensive in Russia. This in itself was much more difficult in obtaining the necessary materials and equipment for the campaign. Many of the supply convoys trying to reach by sea, were intercepted by Allied aircraft. The African campaign was always considered a secondary front, although this theatre of war was paradoxically closer to the Middle East oil than the supplies which would be required from the Caucasus.

In October 1942, Montgomery triggered an offensive against the Germans, with a force that exceeded that of the Afrika Korps and its



allies by a ratio of 6 to 1. The Germans lacked fuel, so they couldn't maneuver and therefore had to open battle at El-Alamein. This battle caused a lot of losses, both in men and equip-

ment; to the British forces, but the Germans also lost a lot of soldiers and vehicles. However, the British could re-supply in a short period, in contrast to the Germans. This began a long withdrawal to Tunisia which intensified after the Americans landed in Morocco and Algeria, and the French government in Vichy changed sides. This meant that the Germans could be attacked on two fronts. All this would perhaps mean a rapid annihilation of Axis forces away if so, but despite this, they were still able to inflict a severe defeat on the Americans in the Kasserine Pass.

Finally, on May 12, 1943, General von Arnim surrendered to the Allies, but Rommel was not there. Separated from his troops against their will, by "Reasons of health", it is true that a good part of the German thrust and vitality was lost forever. Those men who had at all times accompanied Rommel in this desert adventure, by the heat of the day, and with their joyful, glorious anthem: *Es rasseln die Ketten, Es dröhnt der Motor! Panzer rollen in Afrika vor!* (squeaking tracks, echoes the engine... The advancing panzers in Africa!) now spent cold nights listening to the radio, and the melancholy notes of "Lili Marleen". Those sounds have, without doubt, forged the memory of all who fought there and survived, along with personal testimonies, photographs, documentaries and texts. These memories survive to the present day, but with less in terms of triumph, and more in the respect for the sheer human losses which were suffered. As an amateur modeller, I would like to follow this simple premise, and pay a small tribute to that memory.

Luis Miguel García Ruiz.

Introduction

On vehicles used by the Afrika Korps, the modelling fan has a huge source of inspiration, not only for the variety vehicles used, but also by the unique features which resulted because of life in the desert. In addition to the standard tanks and vehicles of the Wehrmacht, add to those the modifications and adaptations for desert fighting, and you have quite a range from which to model. Of course, their Italian allies, while being technologically inferior to the British as far as armor is concerned, actively collaborated in this theatre of combat, so their trucks, wheeled vehicles and armored cars can also be greatly appreciated. Also deserving special attention are the trucks, vehicles and weapons captured from the allies in large number and pressed into service immediately by the Axis armies.

Another interesting aspect of Rommel which is worth considering are varied means of transport that he used, from the Opel Blitz Bus, through the Sd.Kfz.250/3s named "Greif", "Igel" and "Adler", the Kfz.15 and Kfz.21 cars, an Alpha Romeo 6C 2500 Coloniale, the striking "Max", one of the three AEC "Dorchester" 4x4 Armoured Command Vehicles, captured intact from the British and christened by the Germans as "Mammuts". He also used a Fieseler Fi 156 "Storch" for a number of short trips during this campaign.

Of these vehicles described above, we show a number of colour profiles which can be extremely useful for deciding our model schemes. Most of the existing documentation that is available, helped to provide information for these artworks, together with the tedious analysis of black and white photographs. Unlike the Allies, the Afrika Korps, by way of their vehicle repair units, quickly recovered and repaired vehicles whilst on the battlefield, so we can see armored trucks and tanks with panels, doors, wheels, and other parts hatches from other, destroyed vehicles.

Extreme weather conditions, daytime heat and low night temperatures, in both winter and summer, caused expansion and contraction of the materials affecting paints coverage. Sandstorms, Ghibli or so called Sirocco desert winds, can blow at over 100 km/h. causing sand to enter instruments, and the interiors of the vehicles, and any small cracks. Intense sunlight, rain (yes, rain) and proximity to the sea are all factors that alter and impair colors, and offer an

opportunity for modellers to recreate these in his/her work. Dust, dusty scratches, dents uncovering oxide paint, discoloration, wheel wear are all effects of combat in the desert, which the modeller should try to observe and recreate. Fortunately, today we have a wide range of products that allow us to realistically recreate these effects on our models. To begin painting our models, we must start with a base. What should be the correct colors of the vehicles we wish to model? Based on a strict theory, these would be RAL colors also, applied in accordance with army regulations of the time. But what is the RAL system?

The RAL color system

Germany created the RAL system in 1927, for the standardisation of the colors that were used for the painting of official vehicles, public buildings, posters, plates etc. Not only the army used this system, but also railways, post offices, police, firefighters and other organizations which were dependent on the government. The RAL Institute was created. RAL stands for "Reichsausschuss für Lieferbedingungen" or "Governmental Committee Specification". This system, called RAL, still remains, but with modifications and extensions for modern times, and has expanded from 40 to 210 colors.

In the war years, despite using these regulation colors, reality and necessity was imposed. The first vehicles which arrived in Africa were painted in the typical Dark Gray (RAL 7021) which was used in Europe, which wasn't suited for combat in the desert, but was concealed with mud and sand. Later, Yellow-Brown (RAL 8000) and Gray-Green (RAL 7008) became available and were adapted to the conditions present in this battle scenario. Italian paint was also used. Captured British vehicles were often left in their original colours, or only partially repainted.

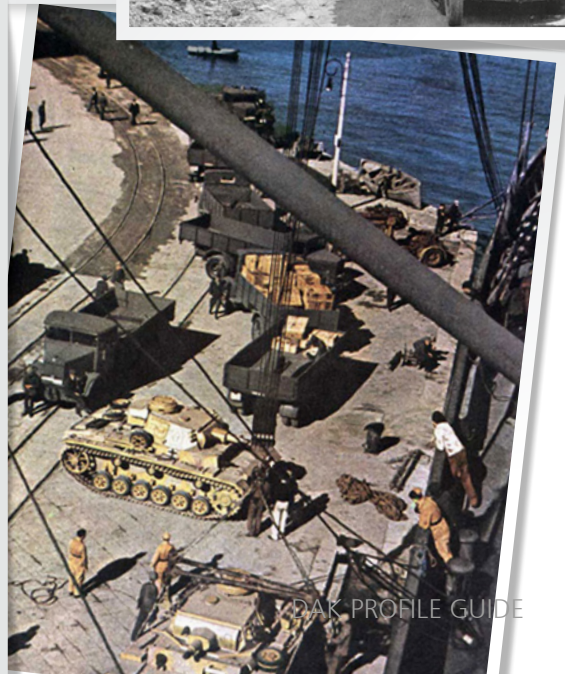
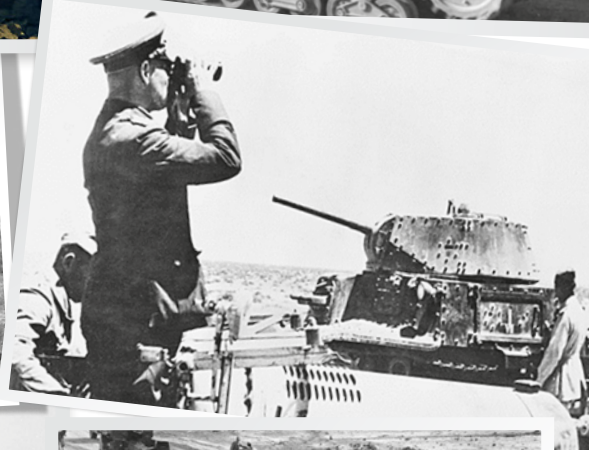
In the spring of 1942, there were new specific colors for the African campaign, such as Brown (RAL 8020) and Sand Gray (RAL 7027). These would theoretically replace the above, but this would not stop the stocks of this paint being used which was already still available.

In short, given the multitude of combinations possible to decorate our models, we have supplied in this book, an important reference for



recreating miniatures of the vehicles which fought in Africa, with maximum accuracy. I am certain that after browsing this book, you will bring forth from your closet, or even buy, that model you always wanted to build, and paint it in a way that it had not been entirely feasible to do until now. Dare I say that you will not be only one who will use this book as a guide. I will now bid you farewell, as I have a Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.F2 kit that I can't wait to finish in one of these sexy schemes! For you though, you should wait, and work your way through these pages and enjoy them as I have done.

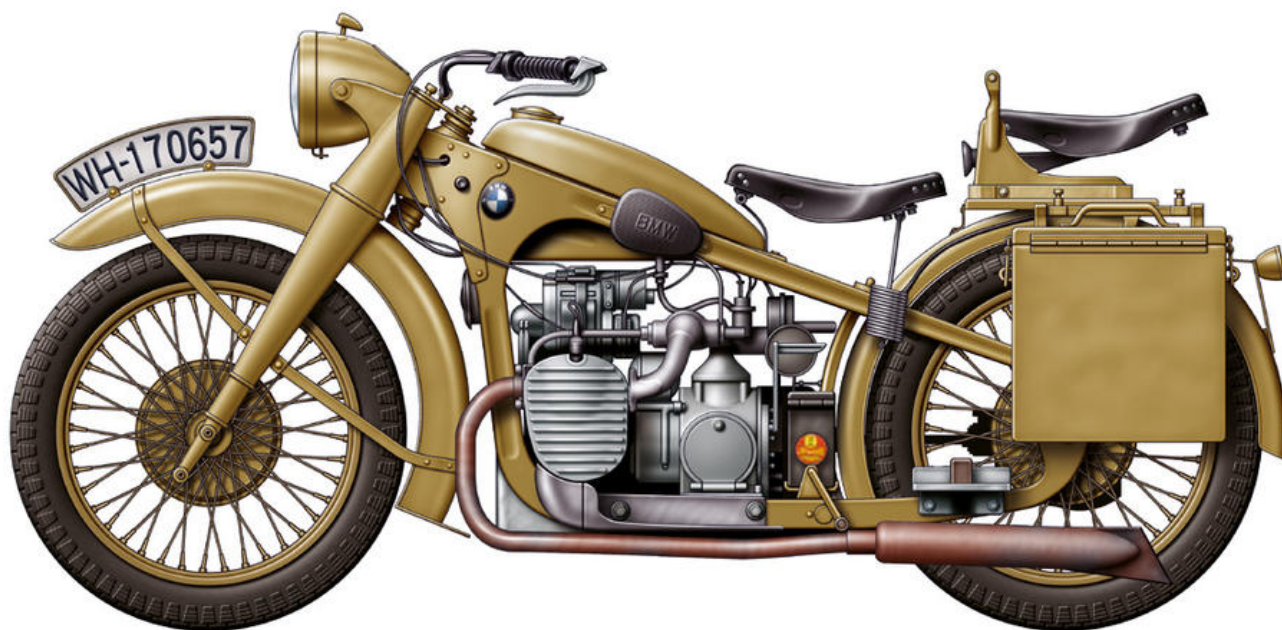
Luis Miguel García Ruiz



LIGHT VEHICLES

For a motorised corps such as the DAK, the availability and efficiency of motor vehicles was a crucial factor. About 90 percent of the total of a Panzer Division were non-combat wheeled vehicles used to transport men and supplies. 21. Panzer-Division's vehicle establishment in late December 1941 included almost 1000 motorcycles (of which more than 700 were with sidecar) and about 1000 cars (450 light off-road passenger cars like the Kübelwagen, 350 medium off-road passenger cars like Kfz.12 and 17, about 15 heavy staff cars like Kfz.21 and 23, and more than 150 off-road light trucks for personnel transport, as well as 52 Kfz.31 ambulances). On top of that, the Germans always tried to employ all Allied vehicles they put their hands on, so a great number of light vehicles in many units, were captured ones. Here's a selection of these light vehicles, including some of the Italian motorcycles and vehicles that fought together with their German allies.

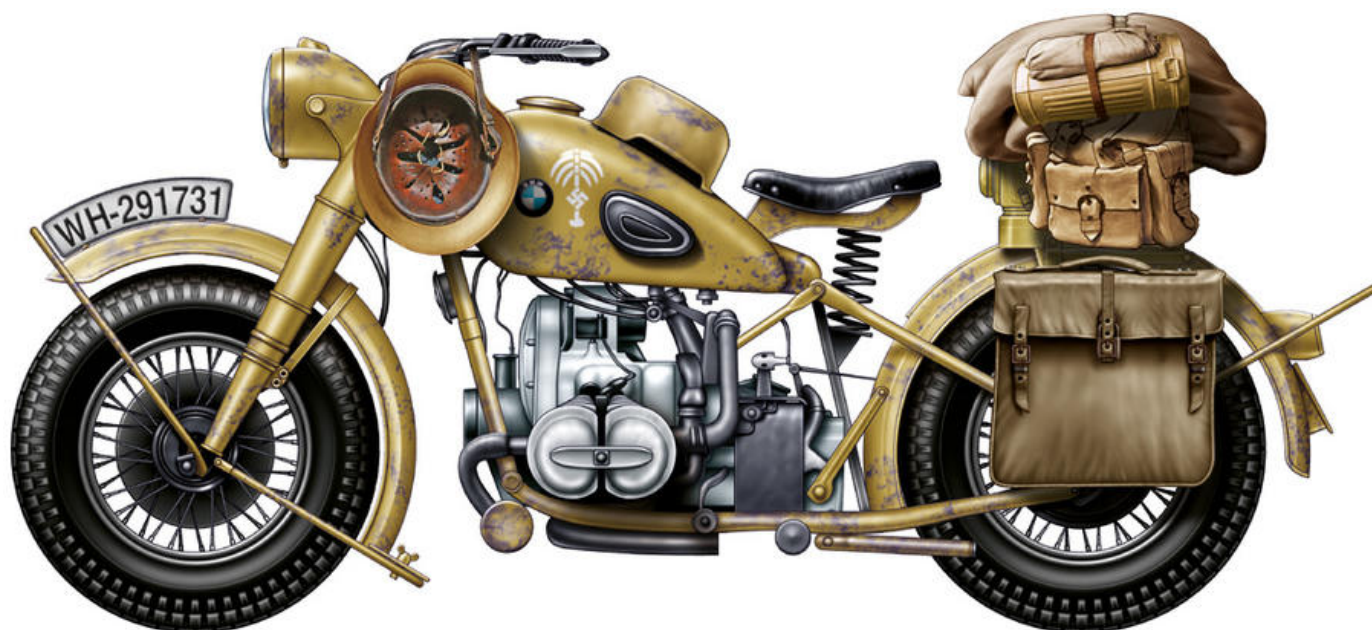




✠ **BMW R 12, unknown unit, Libya 1941**

The BMW R 12 was a civilian design, but became one of the most widely used motorcycles by the German forces during WW2, with 36,000 produced between 1935 and 1942 in both single and twin Carburettor form. The R 12 had a 745 cc four stroke two cylinder flat twin engine with a maximum power output of 18 hp and was capable

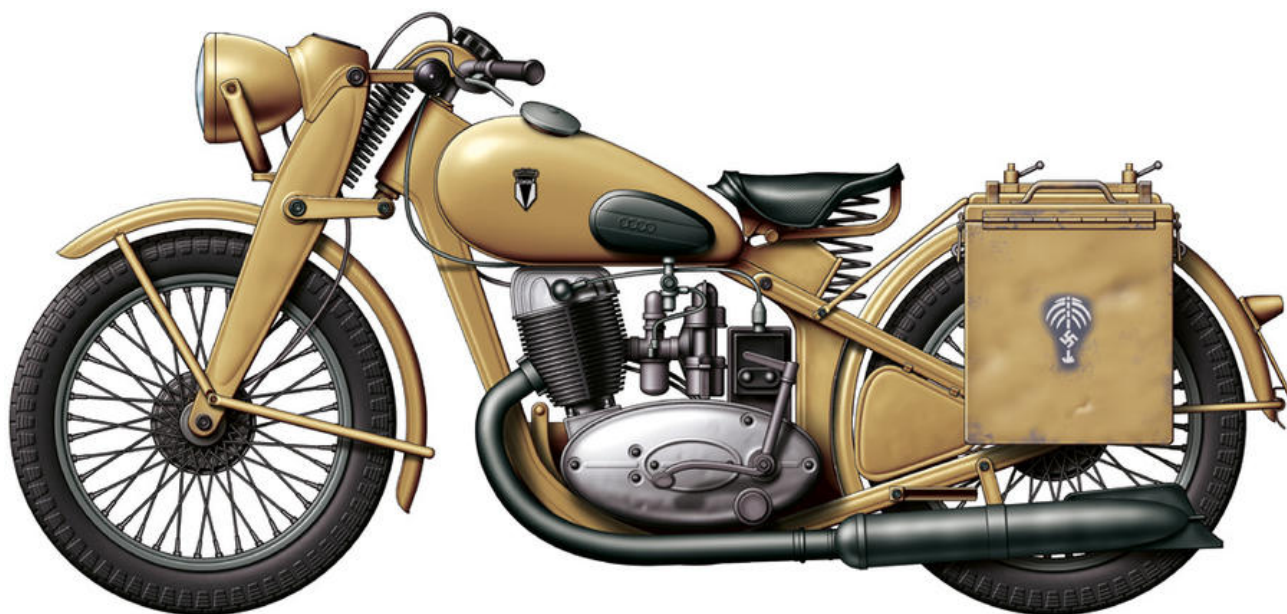
of 85 km/h on good roads. The R 12 was well liked being reliable, fast and easily maintained and was used as a solo cycle or fitted with a sidecar which was not powered like those on the later R 75 Military Motorcycle. This bike was painted in a fresh coat of yellow-brown paint (RAL 8000), with just the vehicle license plates as marking.



✠ **BMW R 75, unknown reconnaissance unit, Libya 1941**

In 1938 development of the R 75 started in response to a request from the German Army. The R 75 was designed for use in extreme conditions. Therefore, it was equipped with hydraulic brakes, high muffler and gearbox with reverse and reduction gear. Various chassis parts were held together by screws in order to enable quick and easy disassembly. Even the motor could be removed without using too many tools. The R 75 remained in production until 1944. This was the most famous German motorbike of the WW2. It was used in single version or with sidecar on

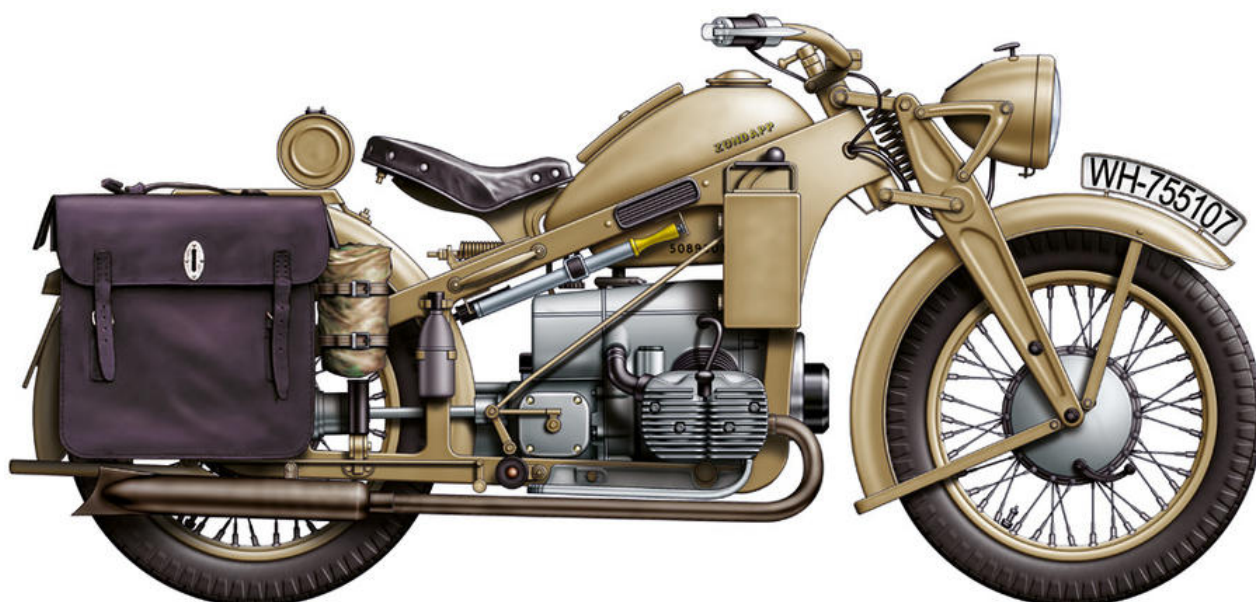
all fronts. In Africa the R 75 adopted a distinctive special air filter for sand (that looked like a helmet) located above the tank. The picture shows a BMW R 75 with the tropical air filter, and all the equipment of his driver onboard (see the helmet, gas mask canister and overcoat). The bike had the typical leather bags on the rear wheel, and was painted in a worn coat of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) over the dark gray base (RAL 7021). The bike had the usual standard license plates and DAK insignia on both sides of the tank, and probably belonged to a reconnaissance unit.



✠ DKW NZ 350, unknown unit, Libya 1942

In 1938 DKW introduced a new family of motorcycles: the NZ series, consisting of the NZ 250 and NZ 350 models. Apart from the four-speed gearbox with hand and pedal gear change, the most striking new feature was a welded central box-section frame, which made the new motorcycles more rigid. Despite DKW's commercial success, the German Army never showed any real interest in their motorcycle products, instead preferring the heavier 750 cc BMW R 21. Once the war started

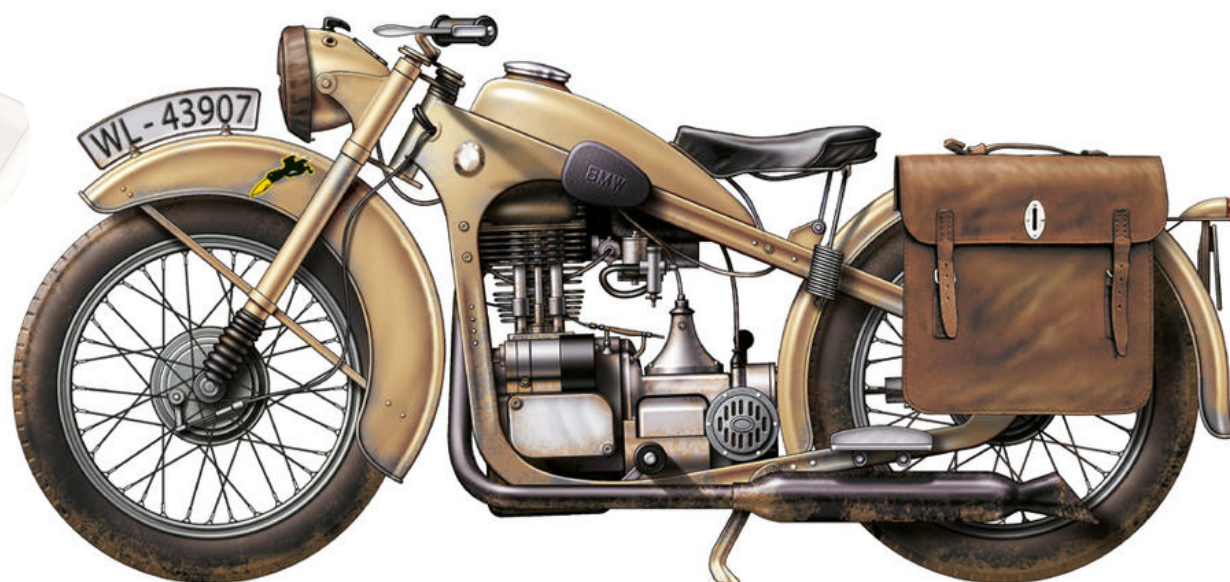
however, they adopted the NZ 350 as a dispatch rider's bike. The bike saw service on all fronts. This vehicle is painted in an overall coat of brown (RAL 8020) over the original dark gray (RAL 7021). The only marking of this bike was the DAK insignia painted on both boxes beside the rear wheel, over a patch of dark gray base colour. Note that the colour of the boxes was yellow-brown (RAL 8000); probably they were a "donation" from another bike painted in that colour.



✠ Zündapp KS 600 W, unknown unit, Libya 1942

The Zündapp KS 600 W, with a power of 28 hp and an horizontally opposed twin cylinder motor with overhead valves displacing 597 cc, was made from 1938 to 1940, when the KS 600 production was discontinued and eventually replaced by the purpose-built KS 750. The KS 600 was often coupled with a Steib sidecar, but with a worse per-

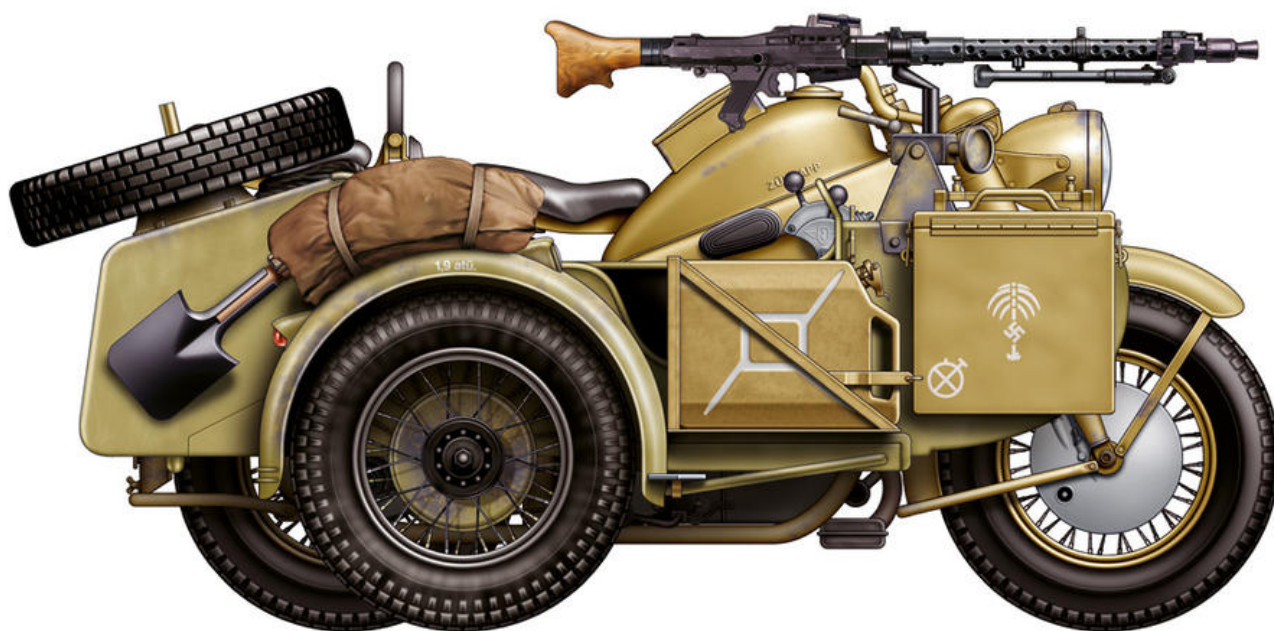
formance than the bigger KS 750-sidecar combination. This vehicle, a solo version with single seat, was painted in brown (RAL 8020), with leather bags fitted to the rear wheel, and standard Heer license plates. Note the gas mask canister fixed over the rear mudguard, and a hand tyre pump attached to the chassis main beam.



✝ **BMW R 35, I./Sturzkampfgeschwader 1, Libya 1941**

The BMW R 35 came on the market in 1937, as a civilian motorbike; it had old riveted plate frame, while the telescopic fork was undamped. When the threat of war became increasingly clear, this machine appeared as the cheapest possible, durable and reliable product on the market. It was used by German Army for all duties of light motorbikes, but In 1940 the production of the R 35 was terminated because the engine does not meet the military requirements. This R 35 belonged

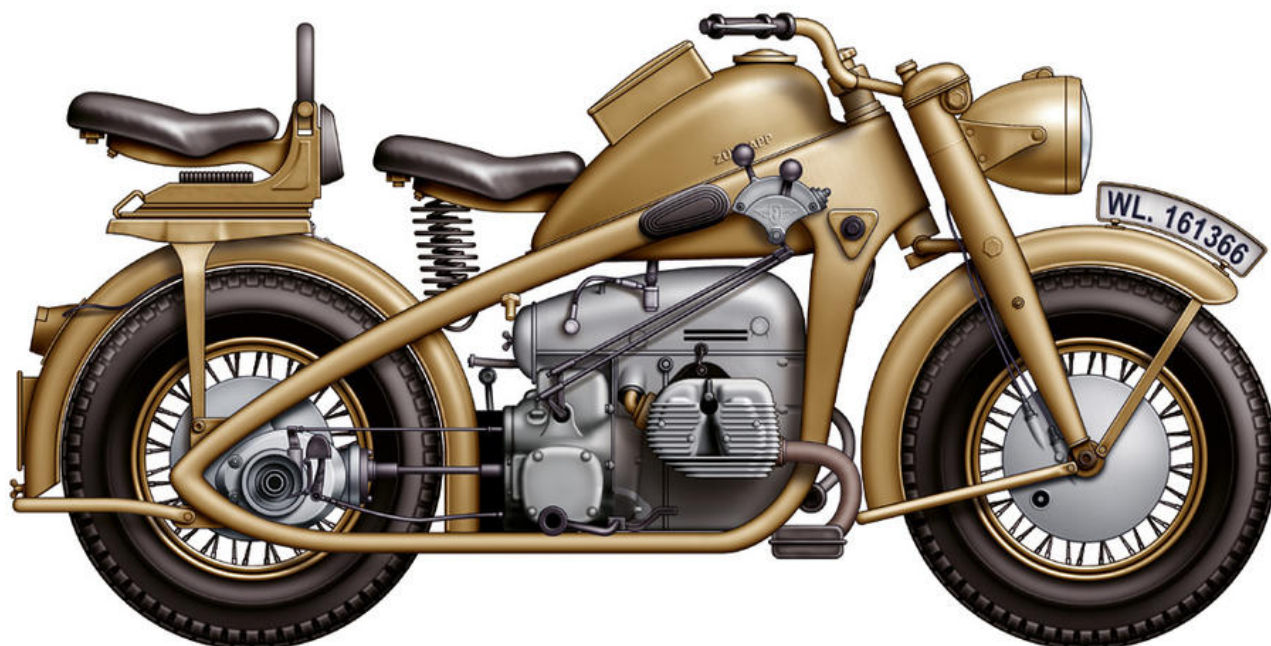
to a Luftwaffe Stuka unit and was probably used for liaison duties. It had simple seat and a couple of leather bags for documents beside the rear wheel. See the canvas cover on the frontal light (combat light), and the emblem of the I. Gruppe of St.G. 1, a diving raven with yellow beak (see detail picture), applied on both sides of the front mudguard. The bike had the standard Luftwaffe license plates and was painted with a Luftwaffe sand yellow coat (RLM 79).



✝ **Zündapp KS 750 with sidecar, unknown motorcycle infantry unit, Libya 1941**

The original KS 750 and sidecar combo was one of the most famous vehicles of the German Army during the war (BMW R 75 with sidecar was really almost a copy, 70%, of the Zündapp one). As the R 75, it was a 2x3 wheel drive, with a locking differential and selectable road and off-road gear ratios through which all four and reverse gears worked; in addition to loading with three fully equipped soldiers could also tow a trailer fully loaded. As a result of that equipment, the Zündapp, 420 kg in running order, was perfect for all terrain drive. The bike shows the usual equipment for sidecars; spare wheel, jerrycan rack, support for a MG

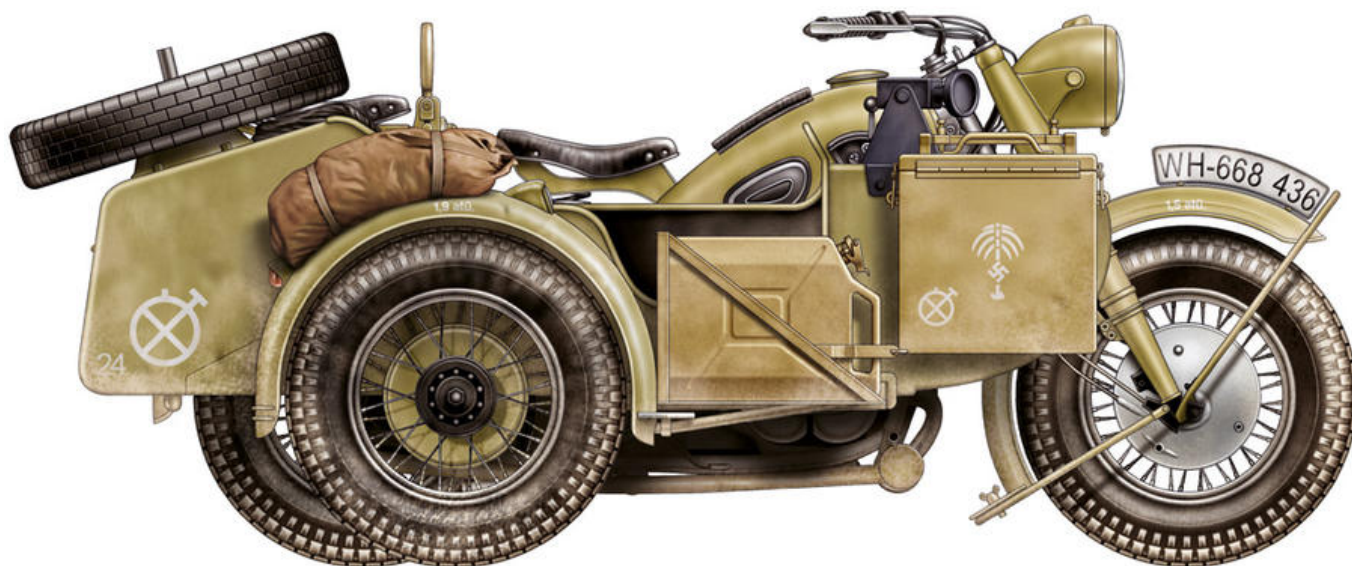
34 machine gun, and a shovel to remove the vehicle from sand traps if necessary. The bike, jerrycan, rack and box of the sidecar were painted in standard yellow-brown (RAL 8000), whilst the sidecar (maybe retrieved from another damaged bike) was painted in a very light green colour (probably Italian grigio-verde chiaro) over the original dark gray base (RAL 7021). The vehicle belonged to a motorcycle infantry platoon (see sidecar's box marking), and had the usual DAK insignia painted in white on the sidecar box, and standard Heer license plates. The DAK insignia and tactical markings were repeated over the front and rear of the sidecar.



✠ Zündapp KS 750, unknown Luftwaffe unit, Libya 1942

The KS 750 was a powerful machine equipped with twin-cylinder, 4-stroke, 26 hp engine, and designed to be fitted with sidecar. Until 1948, Zündapp produced around 18,650 units of the KS 750. This motorcycle was used on all fronts and proved to be extremely reliable and versatile in any type of terrain. This KS 750

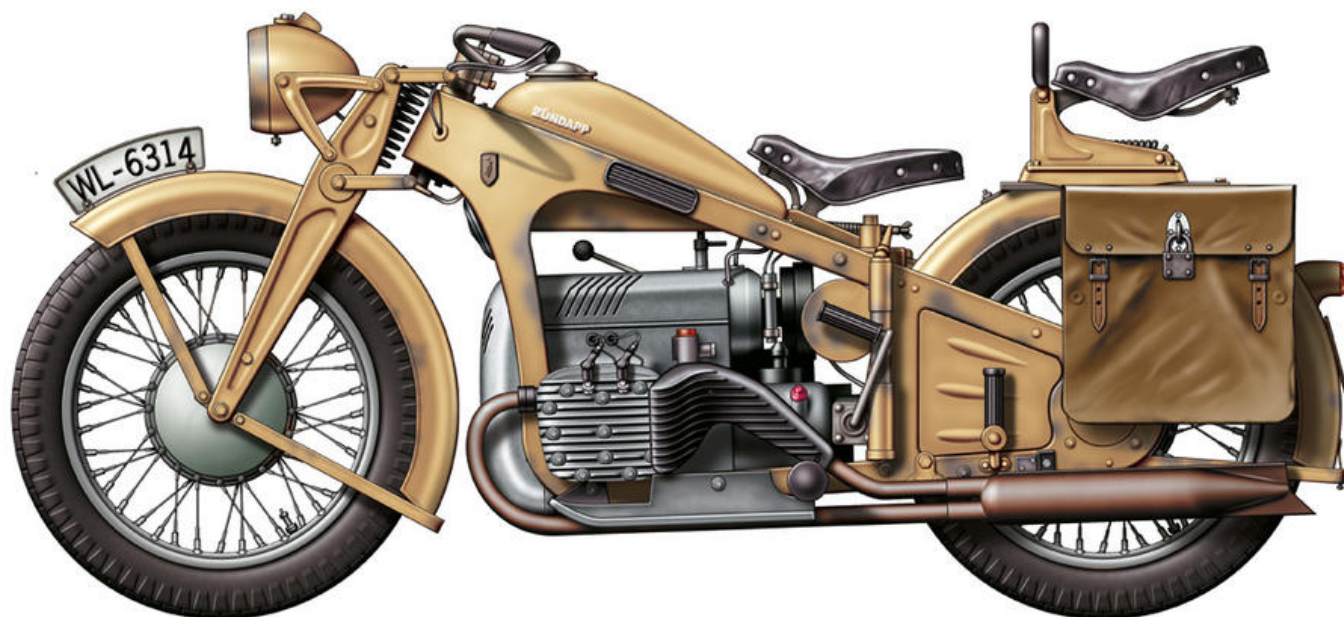
belonged to a Luftwaffe unit deployed in Africa. It hadn't the usual sidecar, and was painted in Luftwaffe sand yellow (RLM 79). Its only markings were the Luftwaffe license plates. Such motorcycles were usually used for liaison duties, especially by 88 mm Flak-Pak units attached to Panzer Divisions.



✠ BMW R 75 with sidecar, unknown motorcycle infantry platoon, Libya 1941

The combo R 75 and sidecar combination was one of the most famous vehicles of the German Army during the war. The third side-car wheel was driven with an axle connected to the rear wheel of the motorcycle. These were fitted with a locking differential and selectable road and off-road gear ratios through which all four and reverse gears worked; that characteristics made the R 75 highly manoeuvrable and capable of negotiating most surfaces, something very important in the hard north africa deserts. This early R 75 with sidecar had a standard air filter, the standard spare weel over the sidecar, a jerrycan rack and a

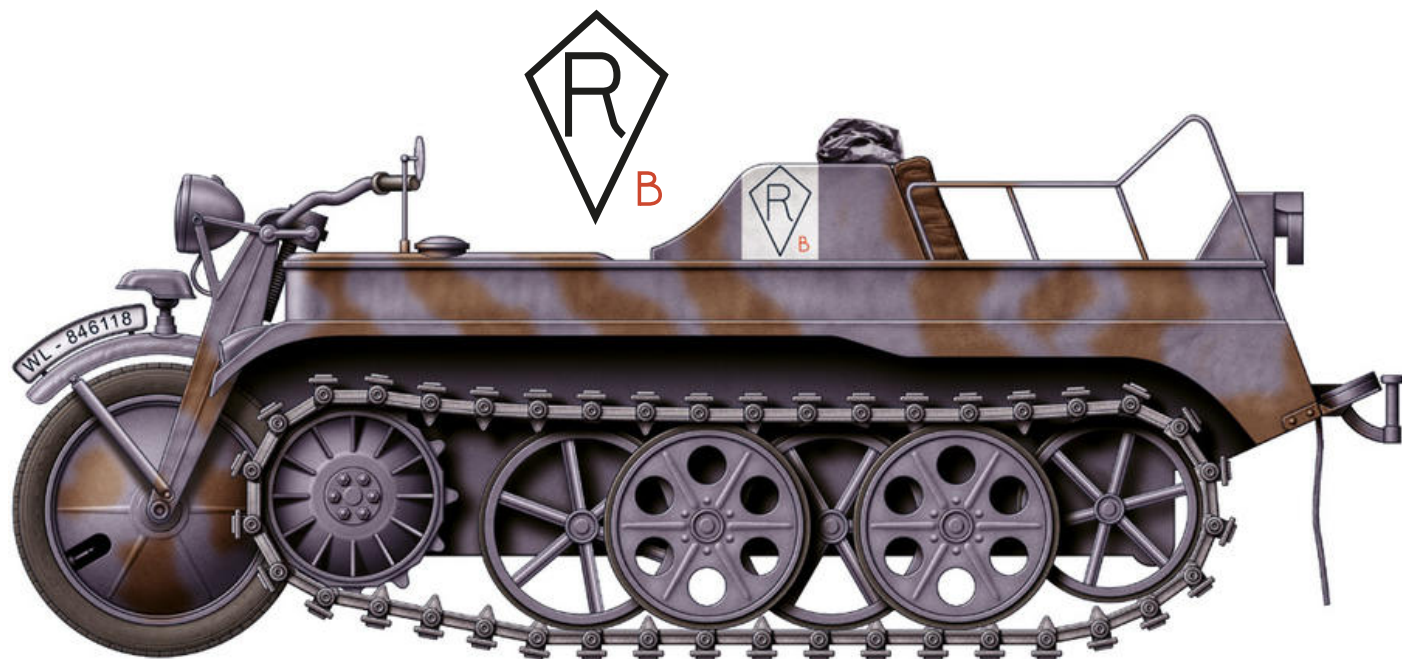
support for machine gun (usually MG 34). The vehicle was painted in a very light green color (probably Italian grigio-verde chiaro) over the dark gray base (RAL 7021), with sidecar box and jerrycan painted in yellow-brown (RAL 8000), probably a "donation" from another destroyed sidecar. It belonged to a motorcycle infantry platoon (note the symbol on the sidecar), and had the usual DAK insignia painted in white on the sidecar box, and the usual vehicle license plates. The meaning of the white 24 besides the motorcycle infantry platoon symbol is unknown, but it may indicate 4th platoon of 2nd company.



✦ **Zündapp K 800 W, unknown Luftwaffe unit, Libya 1941**

The Zündapp K 800 W was produced from 1934 to 1938, with a overall production of 550 units, with flat-four engines, shaft drive (a layout adopted by Honda for the Gold Wing in 1974); the K 800 was the only 4-cylinder machines used by the German armed forces in WWII. Many

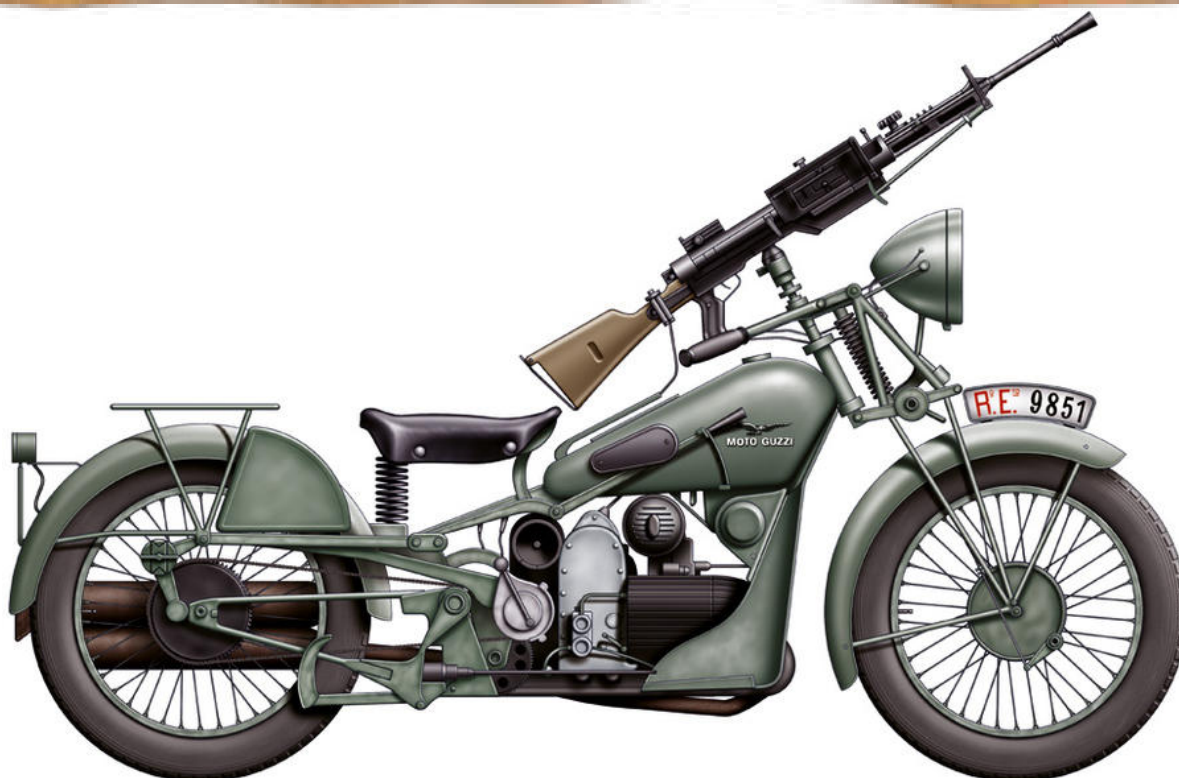
of these Zündapp motorcycles were used by the German Army with a sidecar attached. This Zündapp was a Luftwaffe solo version, with two seats, used for liaison duties. Its colour was the standard Luftwaffe sand yellow (RLM 79), with just Luftwaffe licence plates attached as markings.



✦ **Sd.Kfz.2 kleines Kettenkraftrad, Kampfgruppe Burckhardt, Libya, July 1942**

The Sd.Kfz.2, started its life as a light tractor for airborne troops. The vehicle was designed to be delivered by Junkers Ju 52 aircraft, though not by parachute. The vehicle had the advantage of being the only gun tractor small enough to fit inside the hold of the Ju 52. With its amazing ability to tow 4 tons the vehicle soon was used to tow light artillery and trailers as well as aircraft to save aviation fuel. This vehicle belonged to the Luftwaffe's Fallschirmjäger-Brigade Ramcke (Ramcke Parachute Brigade) originally formed for the invasion of Malta that was cancelled so they were sent in July

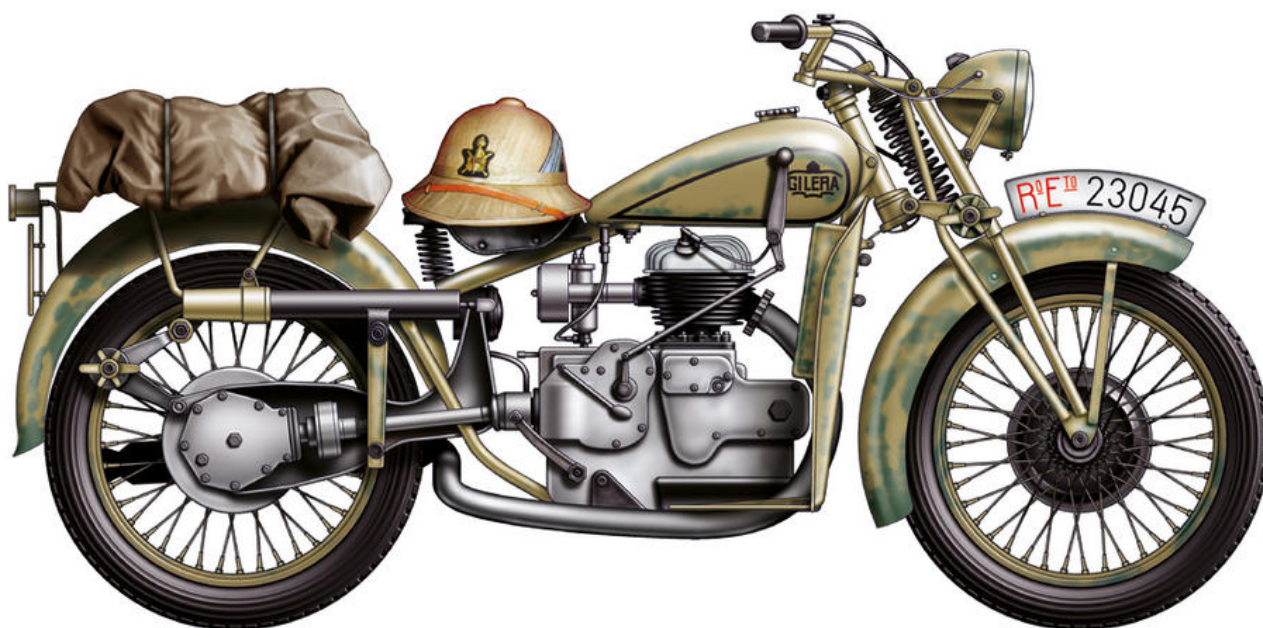
1942 to North Africa. The tactical marking (white rectangle with black R inside a black kite symbol with little red B in the right down corner) was for the Kampfgruppe Burckhardt, one of the sub-units of Ramcke Brigade. The vehicle went to battle painted in his original Luftwaffe blue-gray (RAL 7016) with a camouflage pattern of long stripes of gray-green (RAL 7008). After a few weeks, most of brigade vehicles were repainted in brown (RAL 8020). See the Luftwaffe standard license plates over the front wheel, that repeated at rear plate.



✝ Moto Guzzi GT 17 500cc, unknown Regio Esercito unit, Libya 1941

In 1928 Moto Guzzi gave to the army units 245 civilian model GT 16 with slight modifications military. The Regio Esercito, after checking the versatility of the bikes in action requested the construction of a specialized bike, lightweight and adaptable to any terrain. The result was the GT 17, first military motorcycle manufactured by Moto Guzzi from 1932 to 1939 with 4,800 units produced. The Moto Guzzi was employed by Italian Army in many roles, and the first combat use was in the Spanish civil war. The Moto Guzzi GT 17 had the horizontal sin-

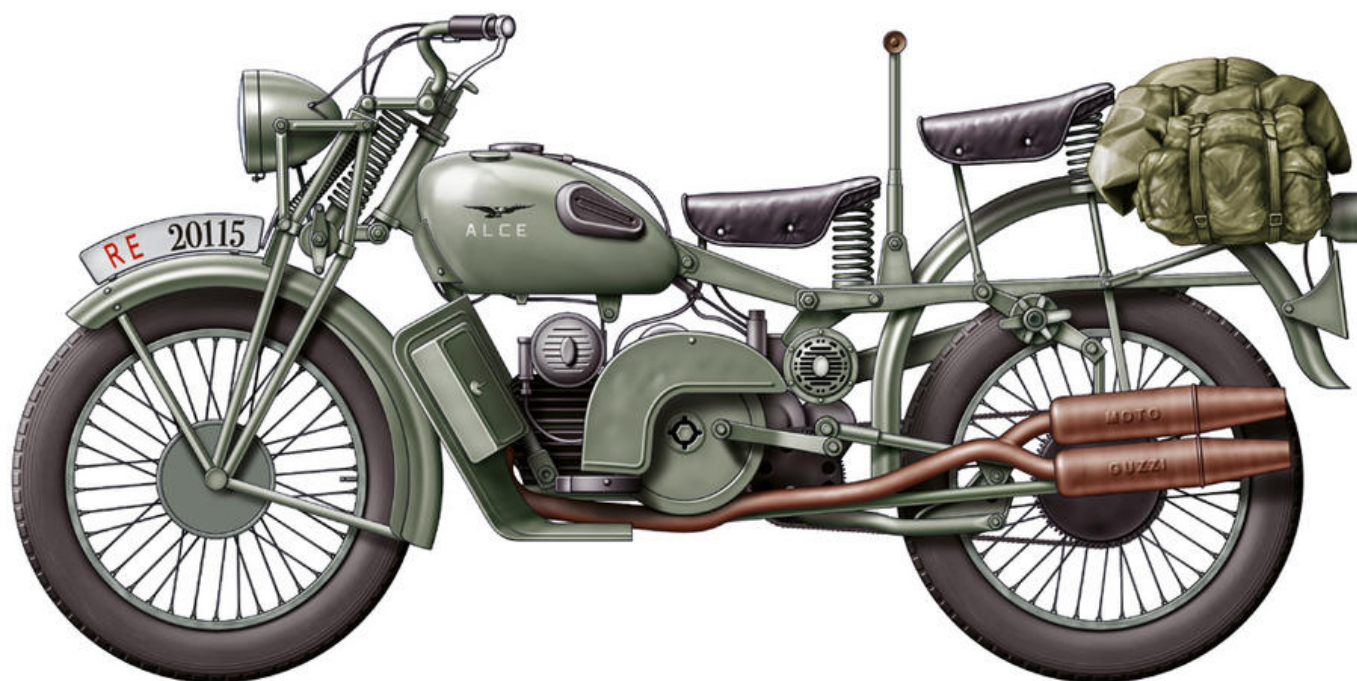
gle cylinder engine typical of the first Moto Guzzi, and was the base for the more modern Moto Guzzi Alce. This special version had a special tripod to attach a machine gun such as Breda Mod. 30 or 37, or Fiat-Revelli Mod. 35. The weapon was operated by the driver of the motorcycle itself; it was fired with the vehicle stopped (the Guzzi had a special support to lock the machine gun to avoid accidental damages). This Guzzi was painted in the typical overall coat of standard grigio-verde scuro, and was used in Africa with all units of the Regio Esercito.



✝ Gilera Marte, unknown Regio Esercito unit, Libya 1942

The Gilera Marte was a combo motorcycle with sidecar produced by Gilera from 1941 to 1946. This motorcycle, realized only as a sidecar, was derived from a Gilera 500 LTE, but with cardan transmission. It was used by the Italian Army on all fronts of World War II from 1941 onwards. The picture shows a Gilera Marte without

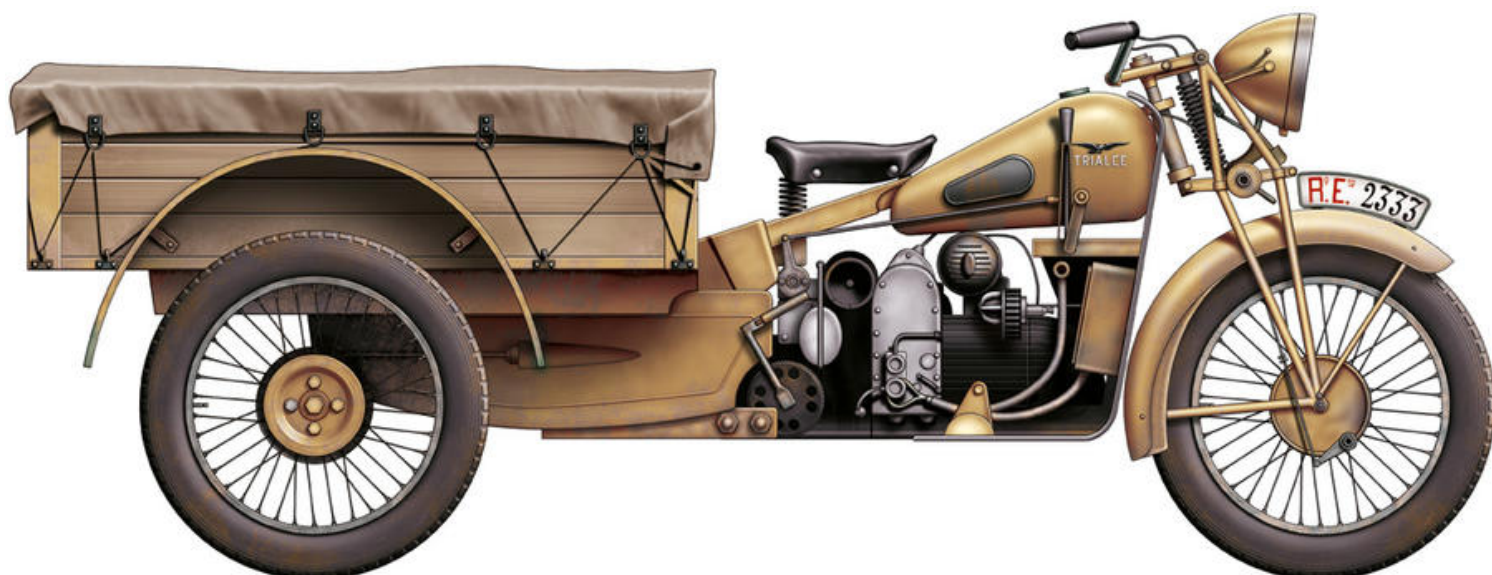
his sidecar, something not unusual because of combat or mechanical damages. The color was a worn coat of grigio-verde chiaro over the standard grigio-verde scuro. The only marks were the vehicle license plates. See the light tropical Italian army helmet made of straw.



✦ **Moto Guzzi Alce Biposto, Compagnia Motociclisti, unknown Bersaglieri reconnaissance battalion, Libya 1941**

Guzzi Alce 500 is probably the most famous Italian motorcycles of the Second World War. The Moto Guzzi Alce was produced between 1939-1945 and 6390 were built. The engine was a single cylinder, 4-stroke, 498 cc engine generating 13 hp. Unique military motorcycle produced by Moto Guzzi during the

war, Alce was declined with single-seater and two-seater, like the one shown in the picture. It was produced for military use as reconnaissance and convoy escort. This vehicle paint was a coat of grigio-verde scuro (dark gray-green), with just vehicle license plates as marking.



✦ **Moto Guzzi 500 TriAlce, unknown Regio Esercito unit, Libya 1942**

Built in 1940, the TriAlce was a three-wheeler (or "motocarrello"), produced till 1943 at 1741 units. It was used in many different uses: personal transport, central radio, support for 8 mm machine guns and Breda Mod. 35 20 mm anti-aircraft guns. The TriAlce took the front frame, fork and engine from the Moto Guzzi Alce. The rear part of

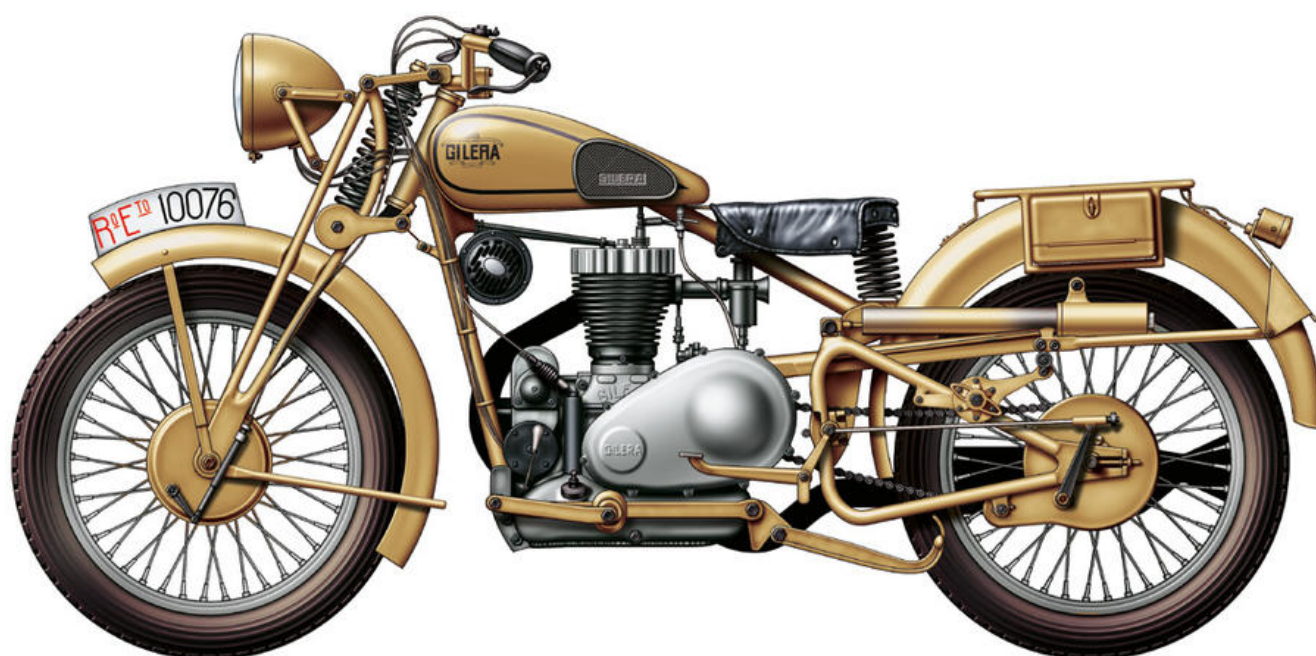
the frame was modified with the installation of a frame supporting a wooden box of 500 kg of payload. This TriAlce had no markings but the usual Regio Esercito vehicle licence plates on the front mudguard and rear cargo box. The color is an overall coat of giallo sabbia chiaro (light sand yellow), with the wooden parts of the cargo box unpainted.



✠ **Benelli 250 M 37, unknown Bersaglieri unit, 132^a Divisione Corazzata "Ariete", Libya 1942**

The Benelli 250 M 37 was produced in 1937 as military version of the Benelli 250 TN (Tourism Normal). In the Regio Esercito this bike was used for duties like escort and courier, because for the operation of the combat troops were preferred the most powerful Benelli 500 VLM. This vehicle belonged to a Bersaglieri unit (see the typical helmet adorned

with black capercaillie feathers) from the 132^a Divisione Corazzata "Ariete" (132nd Armoured Division "Ariete"). The symbol of "Ariete", a ram's head, is painted on both sides of the gasoline tank in dark brown colour. The vehicle had a coat of giallo sabbia chiaro (light sand yellow) over the original grigio-verde scuro (dark gray-green) base.



✠ **Gilera 500 LTE Monoposto, unknown Regio Esercito unit, Libya 1941**

The Gilera 500 LTE was a motorcycle manufactured by Gilera between 1937 and 1945. Together with the Bianchi 500 M, Benelli 500 VLM and Moto Guzzi Alce, the Gilera was a standard motorbike for all departments of the Regio Esercito on all fronts of World War II and

stayed in service with the Italian Army. This Gilera, with just one seat (monoposto), was painted with a coat of giallo sabbia chiaro (light sand yellow), with the license plates on the front and rear mudguard. This kind of bikes was used in liaison and courier services.



✝ **VW Typ 82 Kübelwagen, unknown unit, Libya 1941**

General Rommel, who used the Kübelwagen in operations in France, was so impressed by it that he, afterwards, when he was in charge of the Afrika Korps, reordered an ever increasing number of these vehicles. The Kübelwagen had an enormous efficiency on all kind of terrain, in spite of its small horse power (hardly 24 hp) and the drive on the

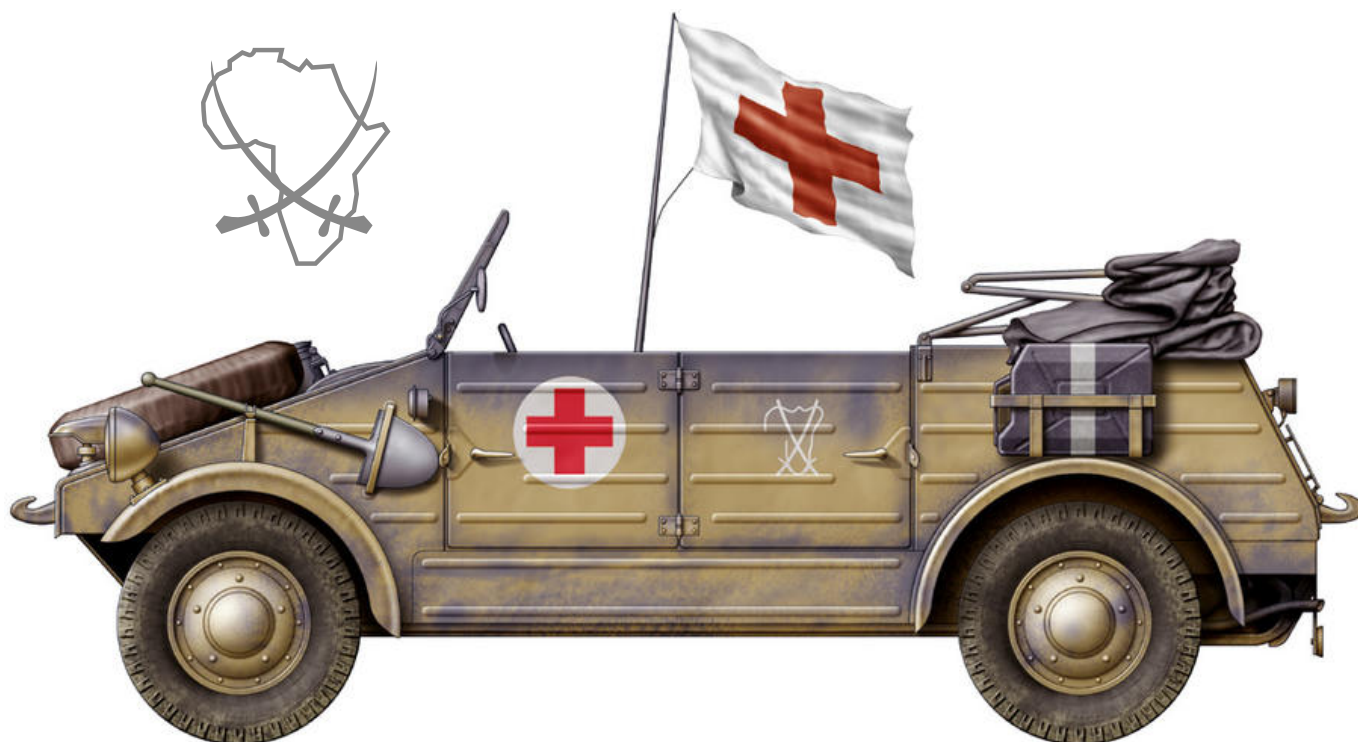
rear-wheels only; something very important in the African Theater. This vehicle is painted in yellow-brown (RAL 8000) over dark gray base (RAL 7021), with very little faded paint; so probably this one belonged to a non-combat unit. A standard full canvas cover is over the cabin to protect the passengers from direct sun, dust and sand.



✝ **VW Typ 82 Kübelwagen, unknown unit, Tunisia 1943**

This vehicle, painted in brown (RAL 8020) over dark gray base (RAL 7021), was used in Tunisia; see the brand new MG 42 machine gun instead of the "old" MG 34, and lack of usual faded paint typical of

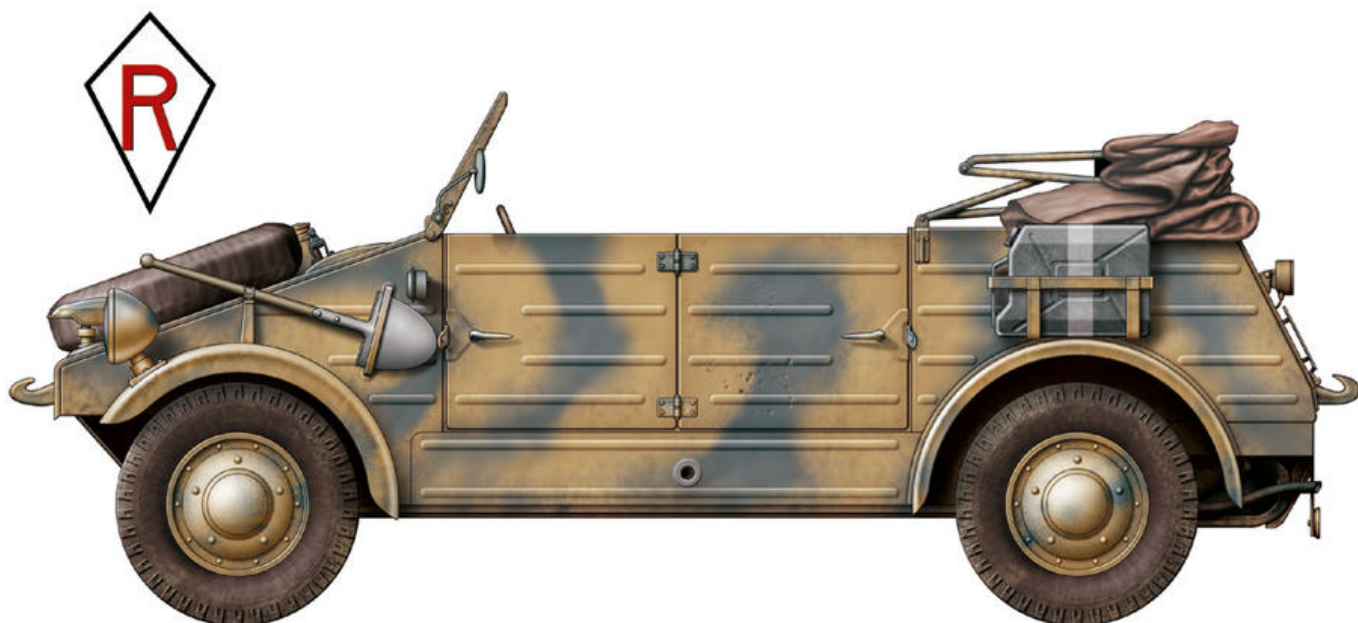
the "desert" vehicles. The DAK insignia was painted in white on both front doors and probably in right side back plate. There are jerrycans over both rear mudguards.



✠ VW Typ 82 Kübelwagen, 164. leichte Afrika-Division, El Alamein, September 1942

This Kübelwagen was used as light ambulance vehicle by the 164. leichte Afrika-Division. This unit was sent to Afrika from Crete at the end of the summer and was deployed just in time to take part in El Alamein's Battle. The division was well spent by the end of the battle and suffered additional losses during the retreat afterwards. It was then sent to Tunisia to rebuild but never did so due to a lack of resources. This vehicle had a very faded coat of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) over the original dark gray

(RAL 7021), and probably the inside of cabin and doors were left painted in the dark gray base. It shown a red cross on white circle on both front doors and back plate, and divisional symbol in white on both back doors and right side back plate (see detail picture). As usual in German ambulance vehicles, it had a big white flag with red cross attached to right front door. Over the both sides rear mudguards there were jerrycans for water (dark grey with white crosses which identified the can's contents).



✠ VW Typ 82 Kübelwagen, Stab der Fallschirmjäger-Brigade Ramcke, Egypt, September 1942

Fallschirmjäger-Brigade Ramcke was a paratrooper unit sent in summer 1942 to North Africa because Rommel needed infantry for El Alamein battle, so many of their vehicles were left in original dark gray (RAL 7021), or painted in a hurry with camouflage paint. This vehicle was painted in an expeditious manner with large spots of brown (RAL 8020) over the original dark base. The markings com-

prised the usual front and rear Luftwaffe vehicle license plates, white DAK insignia painted on a patch of dark gray in the left front mudguard and rear right side of the rear door, and Ramcke Brigade's insignia of a black kite with red 'R' painted inside it on a white background, applied on the right front mudguard and rear left side of the rear engine door.



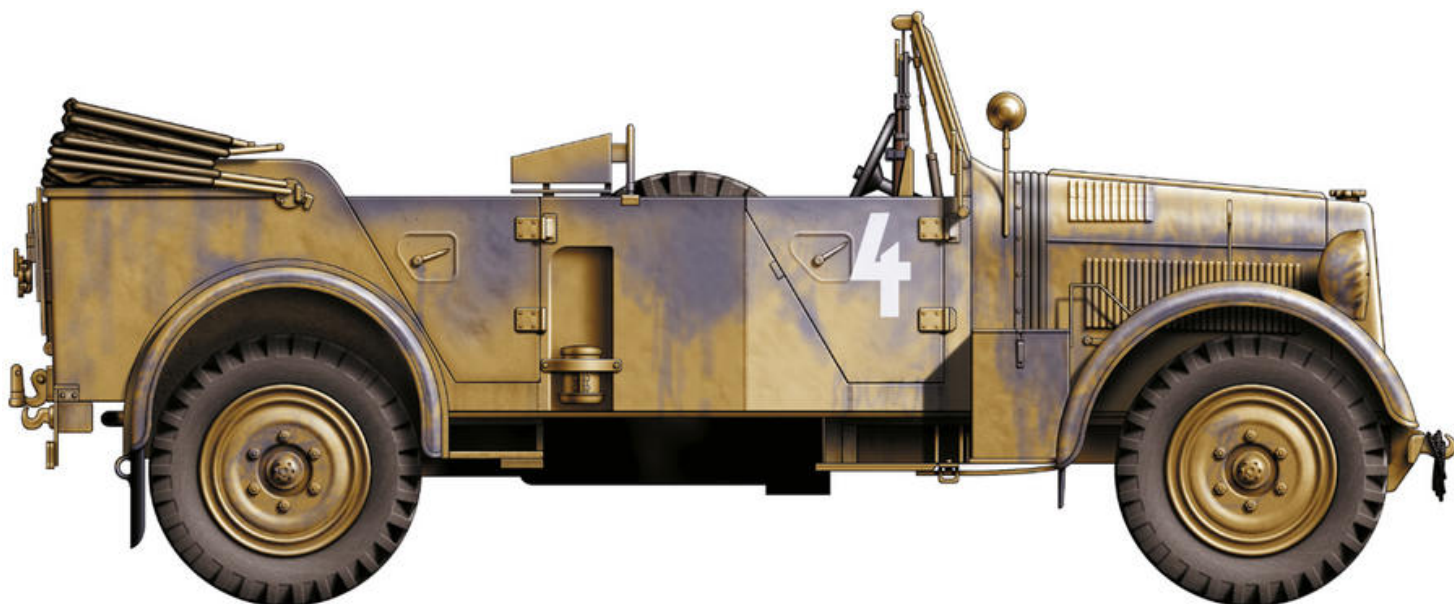
✠ Alfa Romeo 6C 2500 Coloniale, Rommel's personal vehicle, Stab der Panzergruppe Afrika, Libya 1941

This command car was expressly conceived by Italian Army for the African theatre of war, with 4x2 traction and an adequate cross-country performance, and was in production in 1941 and 1942. This vehicle, one of the Rommel's "horses" in Afrika, was a Reggione Esercito's gift (see the vehicle license plates) in service with the HQ of Panzergruppe Afrika. It was painted in the original Italian grigio-verde scuro. The car shows the flag of the corps commander over the left front mudguard (painted it on the right back mudguard too) and a triangular pennant with yellow-black-yellow stripes and DAK insignia inside over the right front mudguard. There were two yellow triangular symbols (see detail picture) over the front right mudguard and right side of back door (near the license plate), and the DAK insignia in white on both front doors, the left front mudguard (just over the license plate), and on the left side of back door (near the license plate, but in a little higher position).



✠ Horch 901 Typ 40 (Kfz.15), Stab des Panzer-Regiments 5, 21. Panzer-Division, Libya 1942

This Horch 901 was used in his main role as staff car, belonged to the main tank unit of the 21. Panzer-Division. The vehicle was marked with the usual white DAK insignia on both doors. On the left front mudguard were the symbol of 21. Panzer-Division, the rhomboid of the armoured unit with a white roman "I" (meaning the HQ of the Regiment), and a white "E" with unknown meaning. The same group of markings was painted in the right back door. The vehicle was painted with a coat of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) over dark gray base (RAL 7021). Note the frontal lights without canvas battle covers.



✠ Horch 901 Typ 40 (Kfz.15), Tobruk port, Libya, June 1942

Developed in 1934, the Kfz.15 was built by Horch as a medium military personnel carrier, under contract to the military. Universally known as the Horch, the Kfz.15 was an all wheel drive vehicle capable of conveying four soldiers, as well as towing light artillery. Its primary use was as a staff car for officers. Some of these vehicles were used as personal cars by General Rommel. This one was the subject of a series of well-known photographs taken in the port of Tobruk

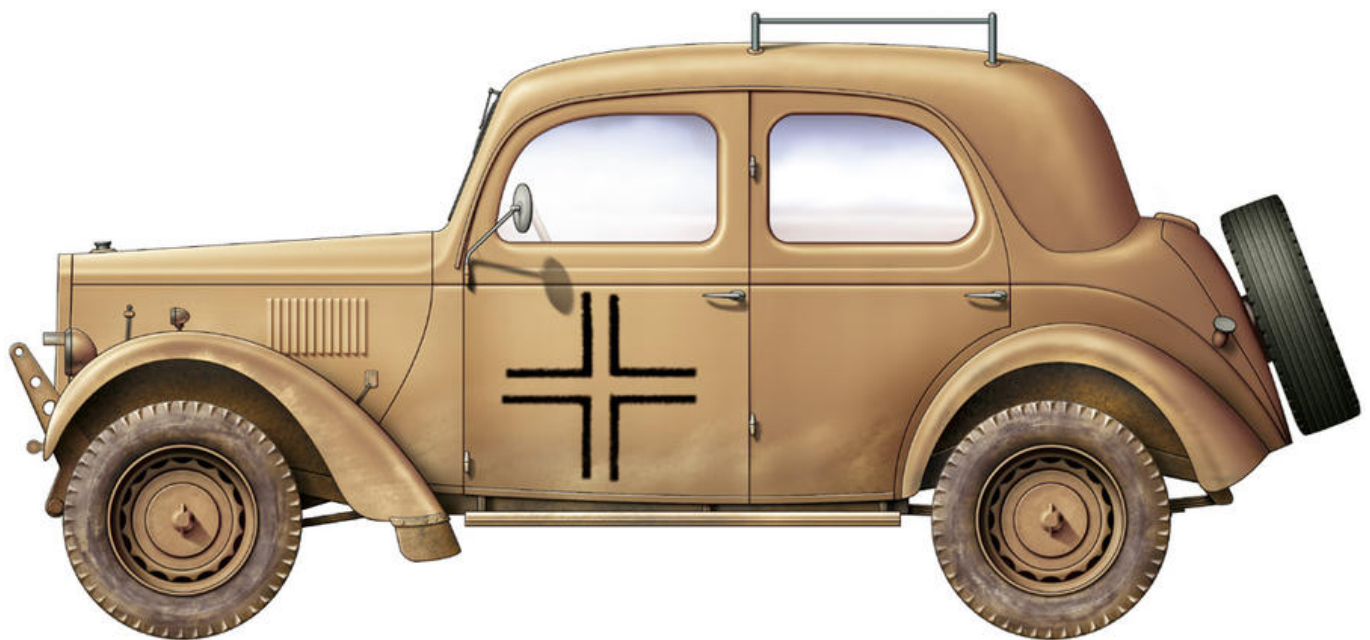
in 1942, with Rommel and his Chief-of-Staff General Fritz Bayerlein on board. The vehicle had only a "4" tactical number in white color on both front doors, the usual license vehicle plates, and a square symbol of the corps commander with the legend "Afrika" inside, and no more marking. The Horch was painted in a very worn coat of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) over the dark gray base (RAL 7021). Note the canvas covers for the front lights.



✝ Mercedes-Benz Typ 170 VK (Kfz.2), unknown unit, Libya 1941

The Mercedes-Benz Typ 170 VK Kübelwagen was developed from the commercial Typ 170 V passenger car. More than 19.000 of these vehicles were built from 1938 to 1942. The car was very reliable and durable. Because of the small clearance, cross-country mobility was insufficient. This vehicle was the radio car version, with only three doors (it hadn't right rear door), special radio equipment in the right side of the passengers rear zone. See the radio antenna (mounted in the right side of the

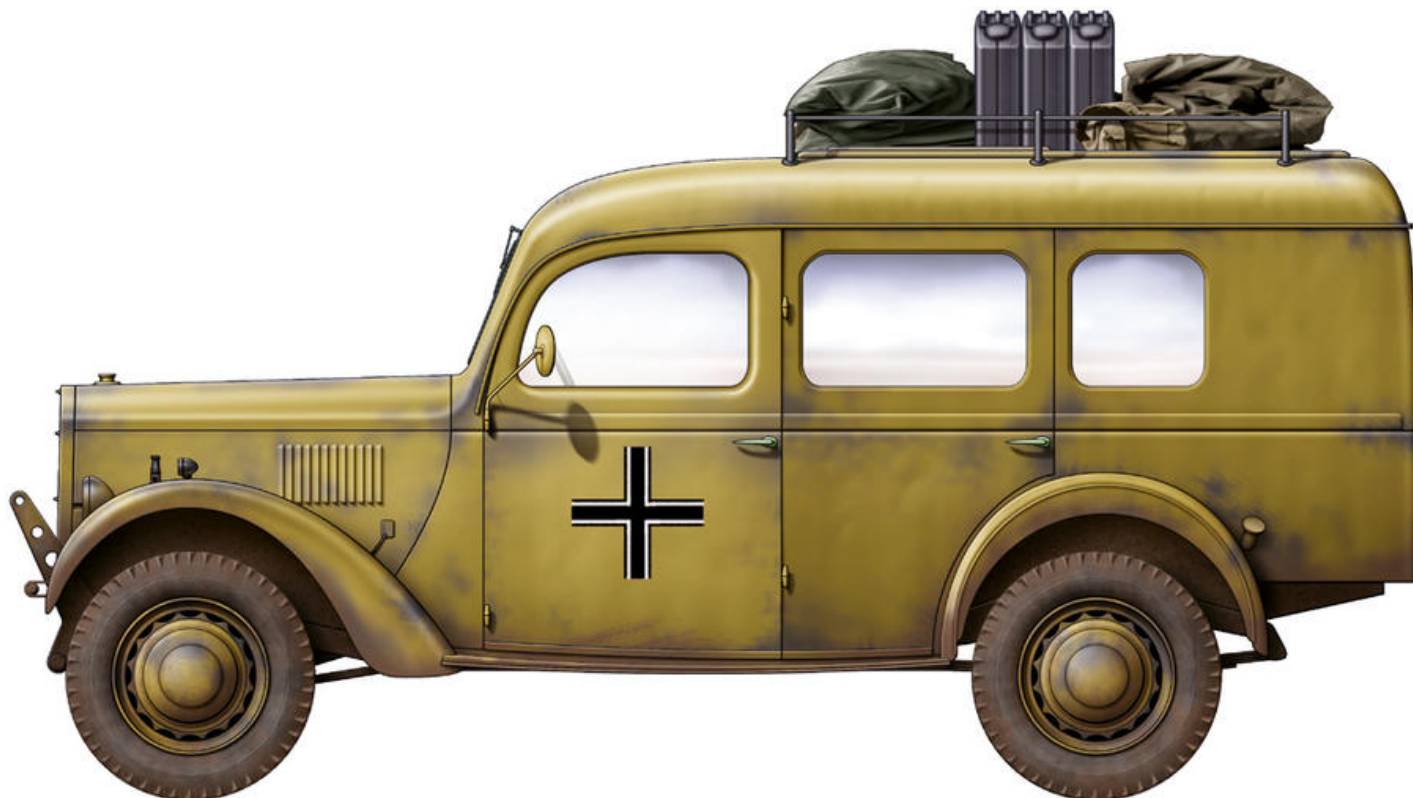
car) fixed to the windshield. The car showed the DAK insignia on both front doors, left front mudguard and right side of rear plate. There were the usual vehicle license plates (front and rear), and a spare wheel in the right side of the engine compartment. The antennas for long range radio communication were fixed in a diagonal position in the right side of the vehicle. The paint of this Mercedes-Benz was the usual worn coat of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) over the dark gray base (RAL 7021).



✝ Ford WOA 1, unknown unit, Libya 1942

Ford WOA 1 staff car was a development of the pre-war Model 62 Saloon 1938/39, but with a military pattern front end and 32 hp V8 engine, and cutaway wings which allowed for the oversized 9.00 x 13 sand tyres when used in the desert. This model was produced from 1941 to 1944, and only 600 of these cars were ever produced. The picture shows a captured vehicle with sand oversized tyres, spare wheel on rear door, and a luggage rack on the roof. This vehicle appears to have been painted in British

Middle Stone No.62 colour, and after the capture the Germans overpainted the front doors, front part of the roof, and engine compartment cover with a light coat of brown (RAL 8020), probably to cover British markings (see the color difference between the more clear front and back darker). Before that their new owners painted prominent hollow outlined in black national crosses on both doors (and probably over the engine cover for aerial identification) without anymore marking.



✝ Ford WOA 2, unknown unit, Libya 1942

This vehicle, a variant of the Ford WO/A1, was introduced in 1941. It was too a militarized version of the Ford Model 62 chassis powered by the 32 hp V8 engine, but instead of built with a soft top saloon body style, the WOA 2 had an all-steel hard top body. These vehicles were in production until July 1944. They were used by the British Army, the RAF and the Royal Navy, and even as commercial car after

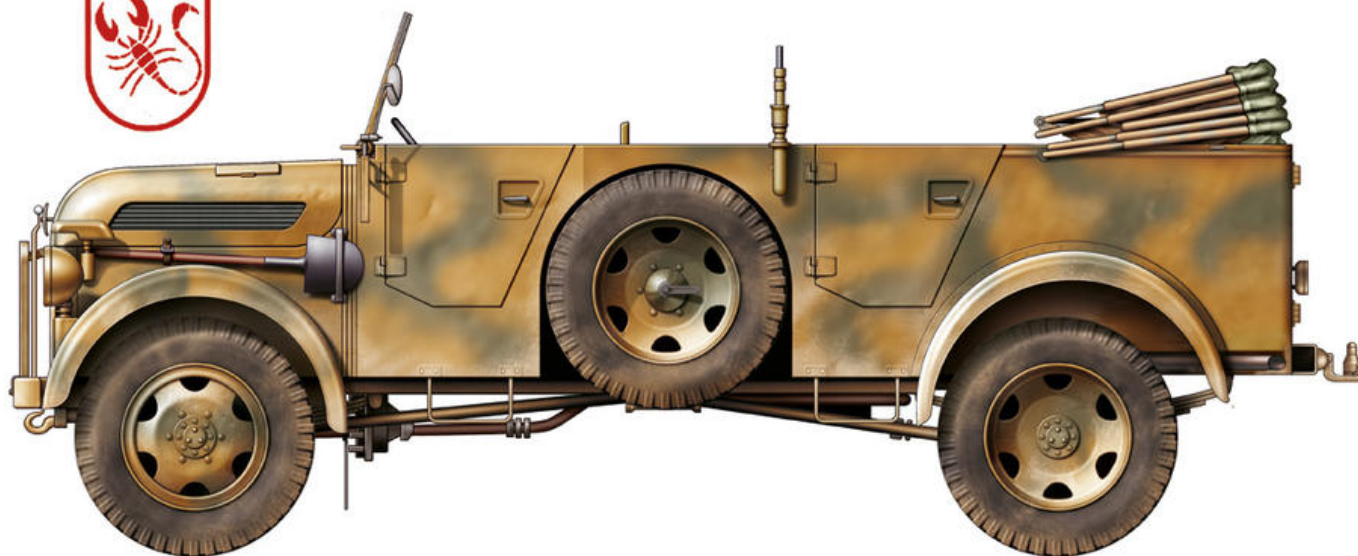
the war. This vehicle, captured by the German Army, was painted with the standard British Light Stone No.61 colour, in a very worn coat. The only markings in the car were the national crosses painted on both front doors and over the engine compartment cover for aerial identification. Like the Ford WOA 1, this one had a luggage rack on the roof too (note the jerrycans).



✝ Opel Olympia OL 38, unknown unit, Libya 1942

The Opel Olympia was a compact car produced by the German company Opel from 1935 to 1940. The Olympia was Germany's first mass-produced car with an all-steel unitized body (monocoque). This revolutionary technology reduced the weight of the car by 180 kilograms compared to its predecessor. The Olympia was so named in anticipation of the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games. Before World War II it was made in two versions. From 1935 to 1937 the Olympia had a 1.3 litre engine. For the OL 38 version made from 1937 to 1940 this was replaced by a 1.5 litre overhead valve unit

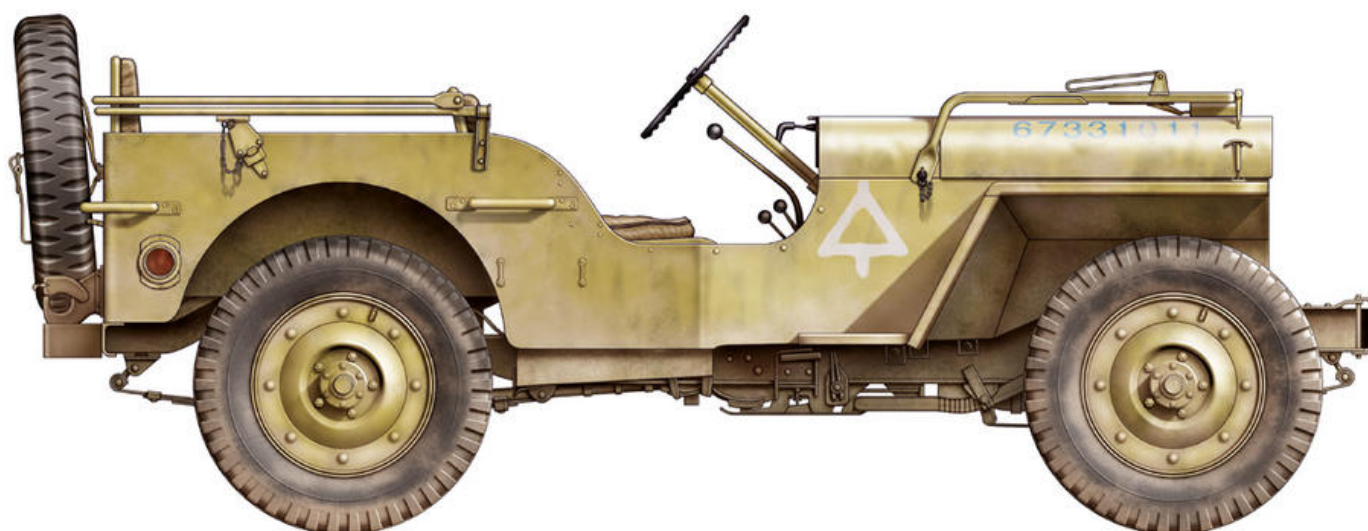
(the same engine used for the Kettenkrad). Between 1935 and the 1940 over 168,000 Olympias were built. This car was used by all branches of the German armed forces as light car for commanders and high rank officers in all fronts, including Africa. This Olympia, was painted in a fresh brown coat (RAL 8020) over the usual dark gray base (RAL 7021), with the standard white DAK insignia painted on dark gray patches left unpainted on both doors. See the Notek light over the left front mudguard, usual in all the military version of this car.



✝ Steyr Typ 1500 A/02, Sonderkommando Dora, Libya 1942

This vehicle, one of the only six of this type to see ever service in Libya, belonged to the Special Unit Dora, consisting of 13 scientists, with a support crew of about 60 soldiers from the German special operations "Branderburg" units. All the group was sent to Libya in May of 1942 and its tasks were to collect information and to do mapping, to find possible locations for military airfields, to investigate water sources and checking the situation of Free French units in Chad. Following the withdrawal of Axis forces from Libya

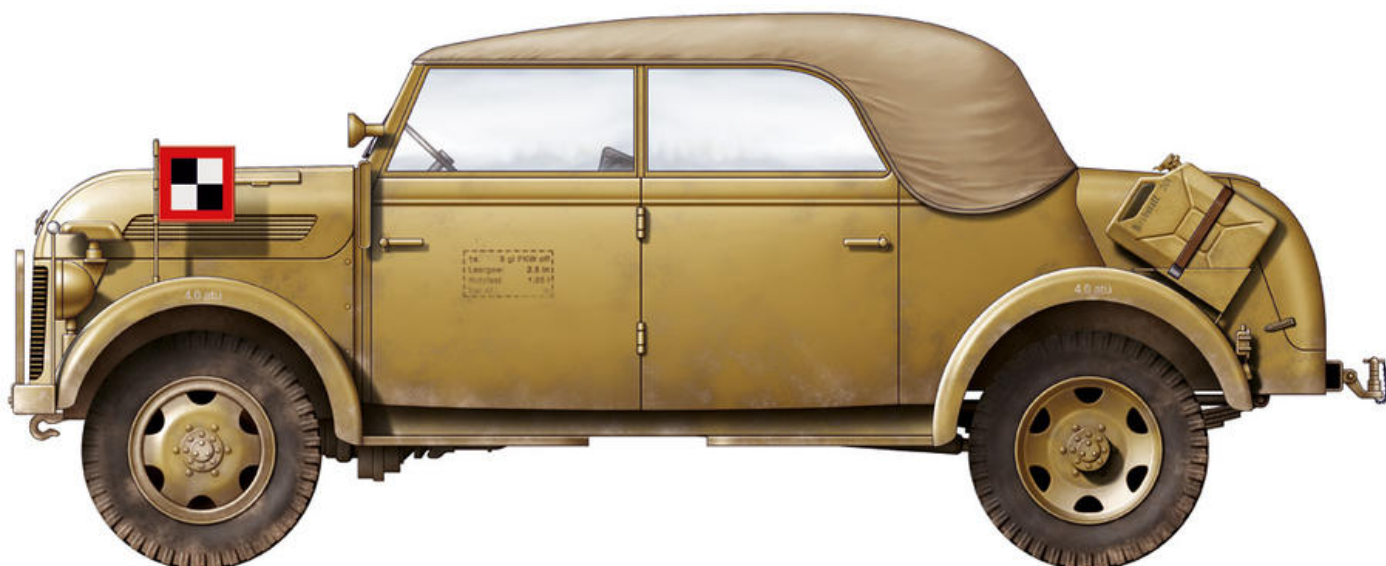
in January 1943, the scientists were urgently evacuated back to Germany by aircraft, and the remainder of the unit followed in their vehicles to Tripoli. This special vehicle was painted in the standard yellow-brown (RAL 8000) with stripes of gray-green (RAL 7008). The markings were just the standard license vehicle plates, and the symbol of the unit, a scorpion (see the detail picture), centered over the rounded front part of the engine compartment cover, and in the right back door.



✝ Willys MB, 15. Panzer-Division, Libya 1942

The Willys MB U.S. Army Jeep was manufactured from 1941 to 1945. These small four-wheel drive utility vehicles are considered the iconic World War II Jeep, and inspired many similar light utility vehicles. The British Army received many of these vehicles in North Africa in 1942, most used by famous SAS units, but serving with other units too. Many of them were captured by the Germans, who used them because of their great performance. This Jeep was left in its original British Light

Stone No.61 colour and had the original markings; the serial number on both sides of the engine compartment cover in light blue color (US Army painted serial numbers in blue from mid 1942 to mid 1943). The new owner was a unit of the 15. Panzer-Division, and had the symbol of the unit in white on both sides. The car had painted in black on the left side of the front bumper an Egyptian vehicle license number and the vehicle license of War Department (72435 WD).

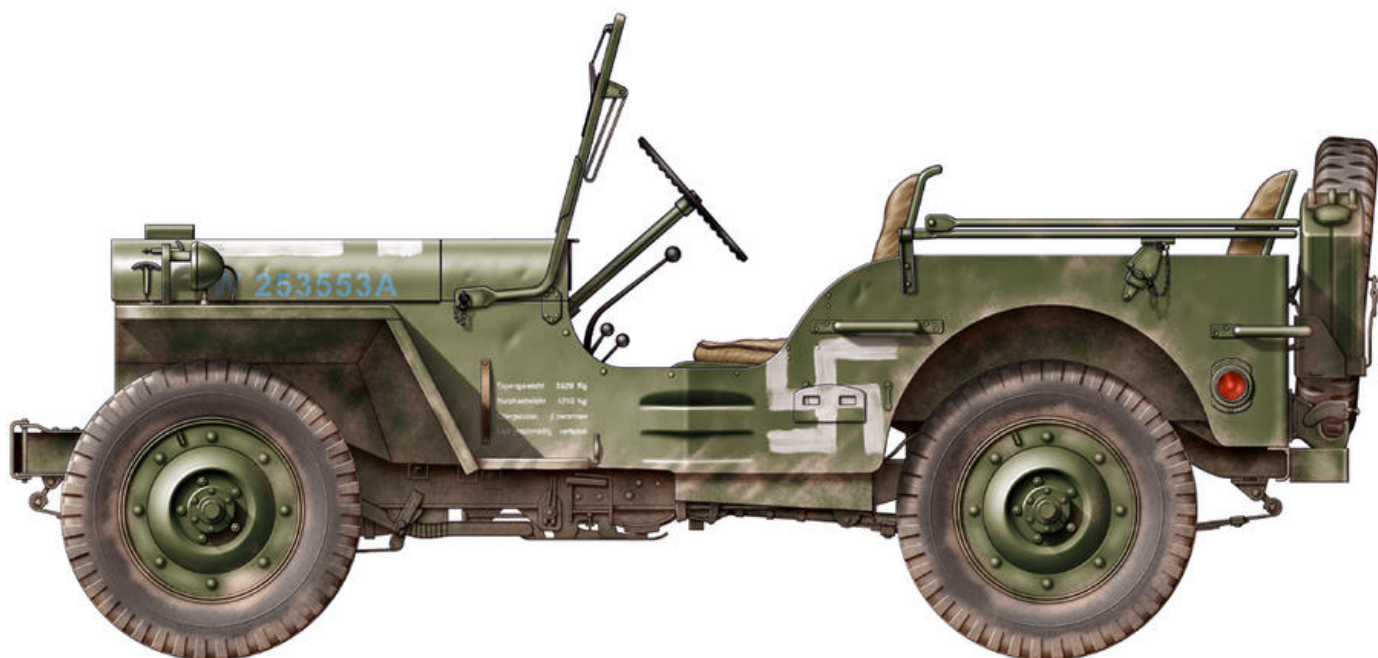


✠ Steyr 1500 A/01 (Kfz.21 Kommandeurwagen), General von Arnim's staff car, Tunisia 1943

Steyr 1500 A vehicles were produced in Austria and Germany between 1941-44. They were built in three main variants: light truck, infantry carrier and luxury command vehicle for high ranking officers, that featured spacious seating for four. This light duty vehicle had four wheel drive and a 85 hp engine, and was rugged and reliable. This vehicle was the personal car of the last of the Afrika Korps commanders, General von Arnim; the car was captured in Tunisia after the German surrender by the British Royal Sussex Regiment, and



can be seen today in the Eastbourne Redoubt Military Museum in England. The car was painted in brown paint coat (RAL 8020), with vehicle license plates WH-1475151, and DAK insignia in white colour on the left front mudguard and right side of rear door. The flag was a symbol of an army commander. Note the technical data plate painted in black on the driver's door, and jerrycans over the rear mudguards on both sides. The marks for tyre's pressure were painted in white in the center of mudguards.



✠ Willys MB, unknown unit, Tunisia, February 1943

This Jeep was one of the captured by the Germans army during the battle of Kasserine Pass to the US 1st Armored Division, and used by his captors because of the lack of transport vehicles in the German Army. This vehicle had the standard US Army markings over the olive drab paint standard coat. For identification the car

had only swastikas painted in white on both sides of the vehicle, and a big white one over the engine compartment cover. Note the US army serial number painted in light blue (US army painted them in light blue color from mid 1942 to mid 1943), and technical data plate painted in white.



✝ Mercedes-Benz L 1500 A, unknown unit, Libya 1942

Similar in design to the better known Steyr 1500 A personnel carrier, the Mercedes-Benz L 1500 A, it was an evolution from the civilian L 1500 4x2 truck. Equipped with a robust chassis and a reliable engine the L 1500 A soon proved a real asset on all fronts and was eventually used as command car as well. Only some 4,900 of these vehicles were produced from 1941 to 1943. This vehicle was painted in the standard brown (RAL 8020) over the dark gray base

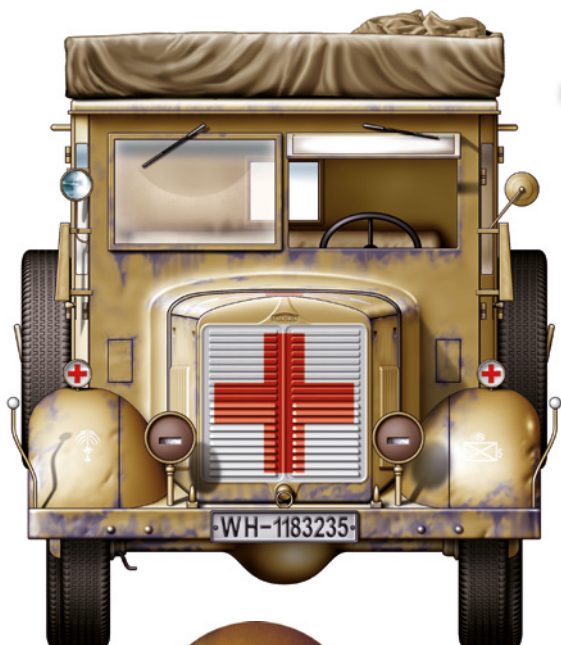
(RAL 7021); with black technical data plate and white DAK insignia on both sides; this symbol was repeated in front left mudguard and right rear door. See the tyre's pressure marks in white on all the mudguards, jerrycans on both sides (marked with white crosses to identify them as filled with water), and the spare wheel hidden by the side of the vehicle. The vehicle license plates were on the usual places in front and rear.



✝ Horch 108 Typ 1 (Kfz.21), unknown motorised artillery unit, 21. Panzer-Division, Libya 1942

This Horch was a staff car of a motorised artillery unit of 21. Panzer-Division. There were a white symbol of the division painted on the front right mudguard, a white motorised artillery unit marking (see detail picture) on the front left mudguard and upper right corner of right rear door, and a hollow outlined in white

national cross on the left side of rear right door. The ubiquitous DAK insignia was painted on both front doors in this car. This car was one of the early version of this kind, with exposed spare wheels. Note the canvas cover laid to prevent dust and sand in the desert.



✠ **Phänomen Granit 25 H (Kfz.31), unknown staff unit, Libya 1941**

These vehicles were very common in their version of ambulance with the German army, even in Africa. It could accommodate four stretchers or eight sitting patients. This version had an all metal closed cab; with a top speed of 73 km/h and range on road of 340 km., was very useful for the transport of wounded to rear echelon hospitals. This ambulance was painted in a coat of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) over the usual dark gray (RAL 7021). It had the standard white circle with red cross in both sides, over the engine compartment cover, and at the rear of the vehicle. The frontal radiator grill was painted white with a red cross inside too. The white DAK insignia was painted in both front doors, on the front right mudguard and rear left side, and the tactical symbol in white (for staff ambulance section of an infantry unit) was painted in the front left mudguard and rear right side. The vehicle license plates, front and rear, were the standard for the Heer.



✠ **Horch 108 Typ 40 (Kfz.23), pioneer platoon, schwere Panzer-Abteilung 501, Tunisia, January 1943**

The Horch company provided lots of vehicles to the Wehrmacht throughout the war; and the Horch 108 was one of the many models of light 4x4 trucks used by the Wehrmacht in their divisions and were present in all theaters of operations. The main difference of the Type 40, like this vehicle, with the standard 108 was a spare wheel not embedded in the side of the vehicle. This Horch belonged to the pioneer platoon of the s.Pz.Abt.501; see the "Pi 1" painted in

black between the doors on both sides. The weapon was a dual MG 34 on an anti-aircraft mount with a seat for the gunner. The light trailer was a Sd.Ah.32 for spare ammunition and other materials. The Horch and the trailer were painted in an overall coat of brown (RAL 8020), with standard vehicle license plates. The s.Pz.Abt.501's tiger insignia, with a black "J" over it, was painted on the left front mudguard and right rear door.

AFRIKAKORPS

AFRIKA

Ärmelband „Afrika“

Die Einführung des Ärmelbandes „Afrika“ wurde vom Führer im Januar 1943 als Abzeichen für die drei Wehrmachtteile beföhnt. Bedingungen für den Verleih dieses Abzeichens sind: Ehrenvoller Einsatz von mindestens 6 Monaten auf dem Kriegsschauplatz in Afrika oder Erkrankung der vollen oder bedingten Tropendienstfähigkeit geführt hat. Voraussetzung für ein Aufenthalts in Afrika von mindestens drei Monaten. Das Ärmelband „Afrika“ wird zur Uniform am linken Unterarm getragen.

STYR-DAIMLER PUCH A 3			
Baumuster	1500 A101	Fahrgestell-Nr.	270.0.0684
Nutzlast	kg 1385	Baujahr	1942
Leergewicht	kg 2775	Hubraum	cm 3517
zul. Gesamtgewicht	kg 4160	Entstört nach Gruppe	2285
zul. Achsdruck vorn	kg 1875		

Vbn
236
80



Sollte Gruppe
T. Gruppe
AN

*** Abile comandante di Com
con audace impiego dei suoi
minandone in modo decisivo

MEDIUM HEAVY VEHICLES

These vehicles, mainly trucks, were the real heart of the German Army in Africa, because the artillery, services, supply units etc. depended on them to be able to move and fight against the enemy. Following the example of 21. Panzer-Division late in 1941, the greatest part of around 1700 trucks of this division, mainly used as tractors and ammunition vehicles by the artillery, service and supply units, were made up of medium (3 ton) trucks, and only some of which were four-wheel drives like one of the Opel Blitz variants. On top of that, it is a fact that only a small fraction of the Afrika Korps infantry was mounted in armoured personnel carriers, with most infantry units depending on trucks for moving their soldiers in the desert. So the typical image people had of the Afrika Korps as waves of tanks and halftracks loaded with infantry was not real. Most infantry movements were made by truck, and many of them were even in captured British vehicles. Here we include a varied selection of medium and heavy trucks used in Africa, including some Italian and British vehicles (these were captured and used in large quantities by the Afrika Korps).

SUPREMO
ETO
O. DI RICOMPENSA AL V. M.
la OROCE
ano
orgio, di Georg
la Tedesca
(A.S.), 3/9/1942-XX;
il col R. Decreto 14 Ottobre 1940 - XVIII
do "sul campo", la CHOCE AL VALORE
la seguente motivazione:

Trusa ajutor gazati

Citeste inaintea!
Nu da sles intrebuinare
acesta, suchi care-ți apăra
sănătatea.



IL CAPO DI ST.

Uffavoz



✝ **Bedford OYD, unknown unit, Libya 1942**

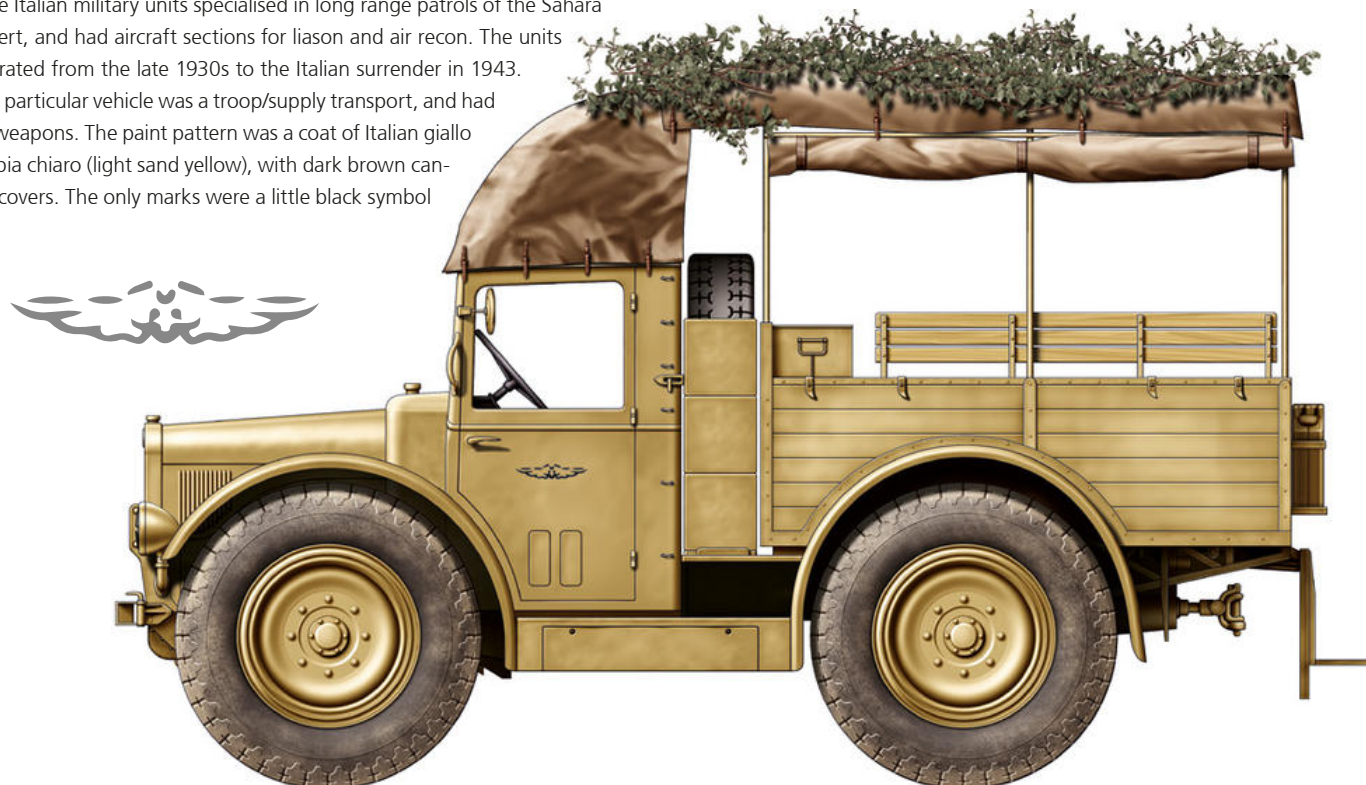
This captured British truck is a Bedford, introduced in British Army in 1939, and was designed for a 3 ton payload with top speed of 65 km/h and range of 450 km and was very popular with the Afrika Korps. This one, with a very worn canvas cover, was repainted with yellow-brown

(RAL 8000), and shows rain and dew marks in the dust layer all over the vehicle (rain was very unusual in the desert, but sometimes it happens). The only markings of this truck were the standard Heer vehicle licenses and the DAK insignia in white on both doors.

✝ **Autocarro Sahariano AS37, I Battaglione Sahariano, Libya 1941**

This vehicle, based on the TL37 artillery tractor, had a flat truck bed with two benches facing each other. This vehicle was part of a Compagnia auto-avio sahariana (Auto-Saharan Company); 4 of that companies formed the Battaglione Sahariano in 1940. These Auto-Saharan Companies were Italian military units specialised in long range patrols of the Sahara Desert, and had aircraft sections for liaison and air recon. The units operated from the late 1930s to the Italian surrender in 1943. This particular vehicle was a troop/supply transport, and had no weapons. The paint pattern was a coat of Italian giallo sabbia chiaro (light sand yellow), with dark brown canvas covers. The only marks were a little black symbol

(a shield of the Royal House of Savoy with wings), probably a symbol of the Sezioni Aeroplani (airplane section of the company) and the standard Italian army vehicle license plates. See the branches on the canvas cover, trying to avoid the British air detection.





✠ Ford V8 G 917 T, unknown unit, Libya 1941

Various models of the Ford 3 tons lorry model 1939 were manufactured under license from 1939 to 1942 in Germany. Contrary to the American model, the German Ford had a one piece windshield and a different radiator mask. This vehicle was a 4x2, V8 engine medium truck, with a maximum load of 3 tons. It was painted in yellow-brown (RAL 8000) over the original dark gray base (RAL

7021). Note the racks for jerrycans besides the back mudguard and over the front mudguard; there was a camouflage net over the canvas cover. This kind of nets were a very usual item in Africa for fixing branches to avoid the British air attacks. The only marks are the DAK insignia in white on both doors, and the standard vehicle license plates.



✠ AEC 0853 Matador, unknown unit, Libya 1942

The Matador, a British truck with flat fronted cab, wheels at the corners and a flat load carrying area covered by a canvas or tarpaulin tilt, was originally designed as an artillery tractor. German troops used all they can put his hands on, because of his heavy load capacity and good off-

road ability. This vehicle, as was usual in North Africa, retains his original pattern of British sand yellow over the green base, and was marked by his new owners with prominent German national crosses on both doors. Note the thin white outline of the crosses in an unusual style.



✠ Ford EO18T, I./Jagdgeschwader 27, Ain-el-Gazala airfield, Libya 1941

This captured British Ford truck was assigned to the I. Gruppe (group) of Jagdgeschwader 27 (27th Fighter Wing), the Luftwaffe unit of the famous ace Hans-Joachim Marseille. The vehicle, originally in a British green color, was repainted with a light coat of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) when a cover was over the cargo bay; so when the cover was removed

it left the green stripe on both sides. The truck had big national crosses on both doors, and a white stripe across the engine compartment cover as aerial identification. The emblem of the I./JG 27 was painted in the front left side, over the radiator grill. It had the regular Luftwaffe vehicle licence plate. The meaning of the white "65" is unknown.



✠ Fiat 626 NM, unknown transport unit, Libya 1942

In 1939, the 626 became the first truck model by FIAT with the advanced cabin and replaced the traditional models 621 and 623. The original version ("N" for Nafta = Diesel) was civilian, followed by the second one ("NL" for Nafta Lungo = Diesel long) with slightly longer wheelbase and finally by the military version ("NLM" for Nafta Lungo Militare) for the army and air force. A reliable workhorse, the FIAT 626 became the standard Italian medium truck and operated on all fronts. This vehicle,

in German service, was painted with a worn coat of Italian giallo sabbia scuro over the grigio-verde scuro base color. The only markings of the vehicle were the DAK insignia on both doors, and the standard German vehicle license plates. It was usual that the Italian troops exchanged this kind of vehicles for captured British light trucks to be used by recon units with 20 mm Breda guns onboard. Note the net over the canvas cover with branches to avoid the strafing of Allied fighters.



✠ **Ford V8 G 917 T, I./Flak-Regiment 43 (gem. mot.), attached to 15. Panzer-Division, Tunisia, December 1942**

This German-built Ford 4x2 3 ton truck belonged to the I./Flak-Regiment 43 (gem. mot.) and was used to transport supplies and ammo for 88 mm and 20 mm Flak guns. The unusual camouflage pattern was distinctive for this unit's vehicles (seen in Sd.Kfz.7s towing 88 mm Flak guns as well as the guns themselves). It was painted in brown (RAL 8020) over the original dark gray base (RAL 7021), and received a splinter pattern with hard-edged stripes of brown (perhaps

a dark version of RAL 8000, or Italian rosso rugine). The canvas cover had gray-green patches (RAL 7008), and the typical net with branches for camouflage. The vehicle had the DAK insignia painted in white on both doors. The very same insignia was also applied on the left front mudguard and on the right side of the cargo bay door, together with white markings of the 15. Panzer-Division. Luftwaffe license plates were present on the front and rear of the truck.

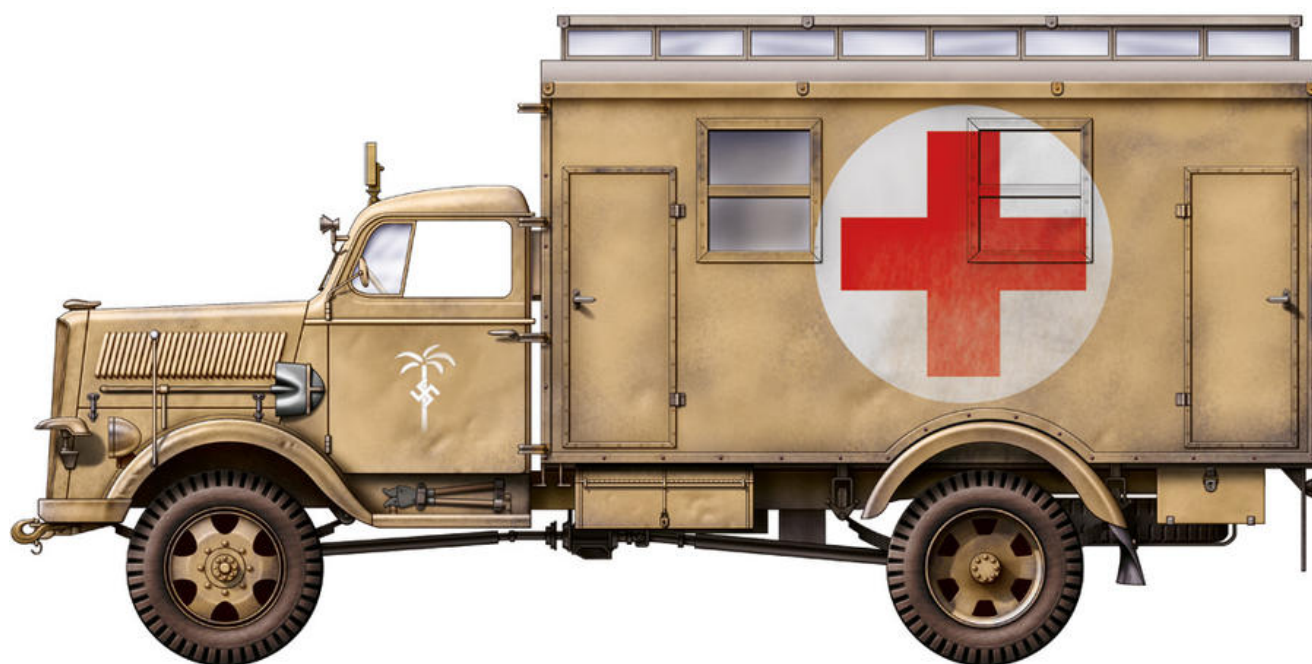


✠ **Opel Blitz 3,6-36 S (4x2), unknown transport unit, 21. Panzer-Division, Libya 1941**

The Opel Blitz (lightning) was introduced early in the 1930s. A proven six-cylinder engine from another GM company, Buick, provided the power. The payload increased in steps from the original 1,75 tons to 3 tons. The greatest production figures were achieved by the Opel Blitz 3,6-36 S 4x2, 3 ton truck with a wheelbase of 3.6 m. More than 87,000 of these vehicles were produced from April 1937 to August 1944. This dependable, light truck enjoyed great popularity among the units, and was superior to many other 3 ton trucks on account of its low ground pressure which was a result of the vehicle's low weight. This Opel Blitz 3,6-36 S was a standard cargo

version, painted in the usual yellow-brown (RAL 8000) coat over the dark gray base (RAL 7021). There were DAK insignia painted on both side doors, the the 21. Panzer-Division and DAK insignia painted in white on the front left mudguard and right side of rear cargo door, and white tactical markings of fully motorised transport unit (see the detail picture) on the front right mudguard and left side of cargo bay door; all markings were painted over patches of dark gray left unpainted. White '5' numerals painted under the DAK insignia might be the numbers of the transport unit. The canvas cover had an unusual camouflage pattern of large gray-green (RAL 7008) patches.





✝ Opel Blitz 3,6-6700A (4x4), unknown unit, Libya 1942

Opel supplied the 3-ton Opel Blitz to the Wehrmacht with various standard body types, and one of them was specially developed for ambulance use. This version had a closed metal box instead of cargo bay, with side doors and windows, and two rear doors for easy access with the stretchers (up to a maximum of 6). This kind of vehicles was marked

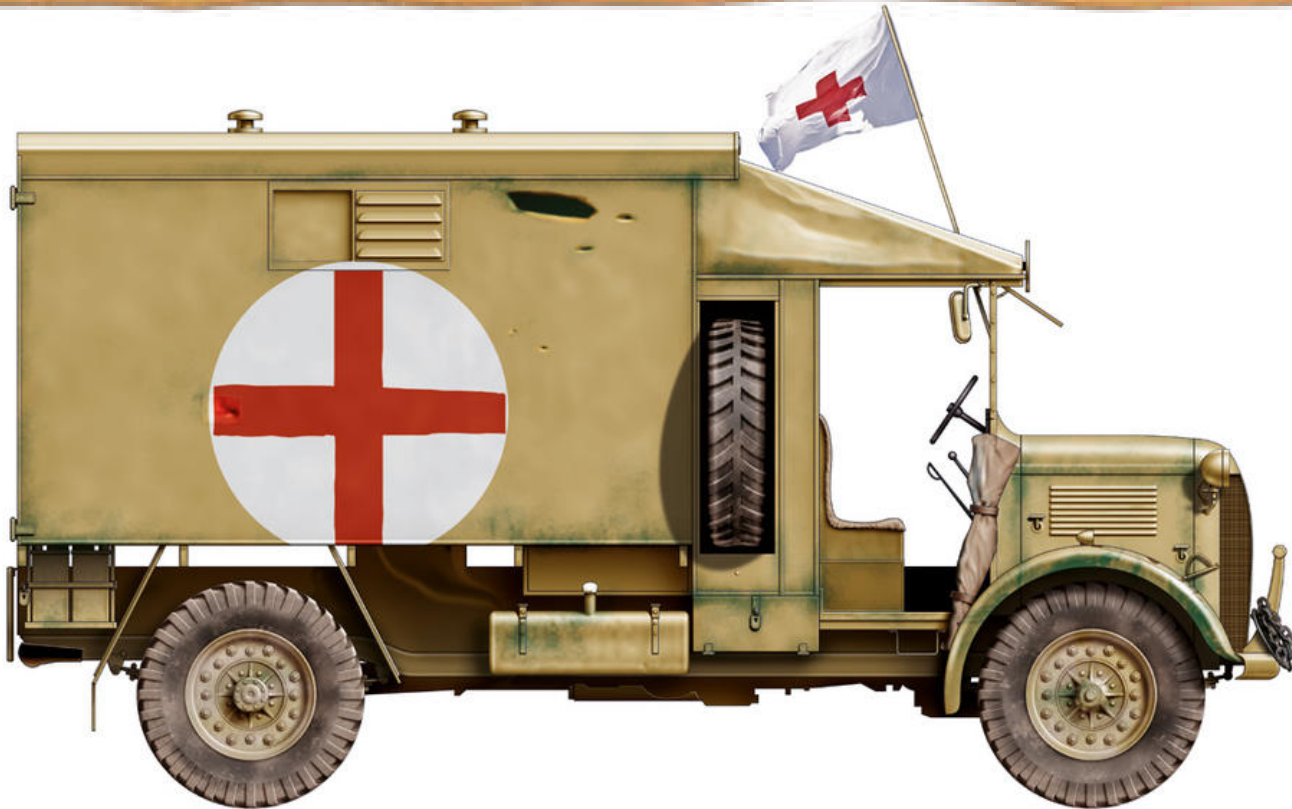
with prominent red crosses in white background; this one had big white circles with red crosses on both sides and centered on rear doors. The DAK insignia was painted in white on both doors and front right mud-guard, with no more markings. This vehicle was a 4x4 drive, almost a must for Africa service, and was painted brown colour (RAL 8020).



✝ Morris Commercial CDSW 6x4, unknown unit, Libya 1941

The Morris Commercial CDSW 6x4 tractor was brought into service in the 1930s to tow heavy field guns like the 25 pounder but was not as manoueverable as the later Morris Quad which replaced it. A lot of these trucks were captured during the French campaign, and used by Heer in all fronts; this one was converted to ambulance duty, with a prominent red cross flag fixed to the windshield frame. Worth noting are the canvas roof of the cabin, curtains instead of

doors, and the very worn cover over the cargo bay to protect the wounded soldiers from the desert sun. German crew changed the equipment boxes from upside (in the original British configuration) to downside of the cargo bay to make room for stretchers. The color of this vehicle was a worn coat of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) over the original dark gray (RAL 7021). Markings of this vehicle are unknown.



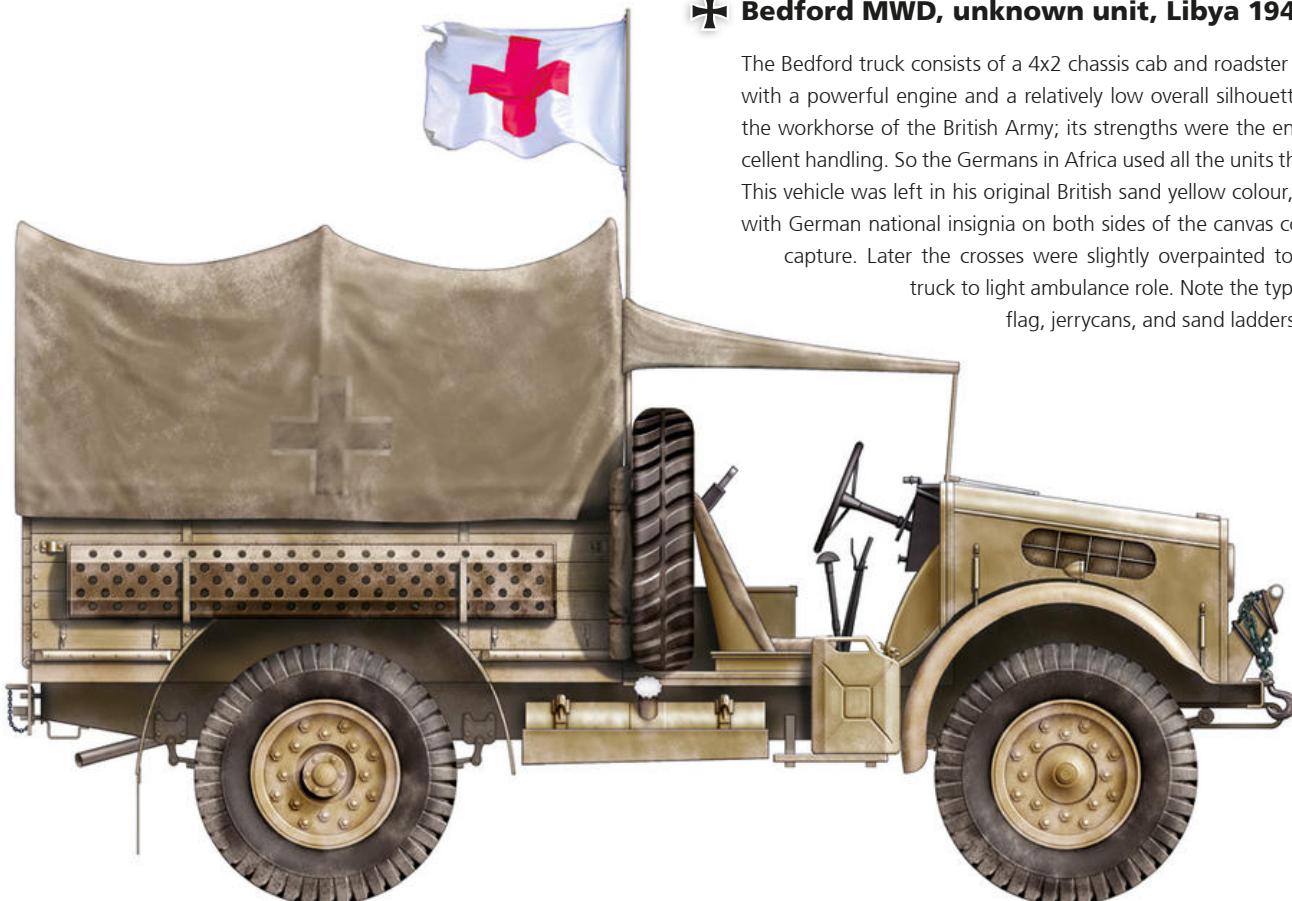
✠ Austin K2/Y, unknown unit, Libya 1942

The Austin K2/Y was a British heavy military ambulance used by all services during World War II, built by the Austin Motor Company. It was based on the civilian light truck Austin K30, with the main difference being the simplified driver's cabin. This captured vehicle, used by the Germans in his original role, was left in original British camouflage of

sand yellow applied over green base. Note the big white circle and hand painted red cross on both sides and back doors, and the usual red cross flag of the German ambulances attached to the left side, with no more marking. Worth noting are also the damage at the top of the side panel, probably caused by shrapnel, and the canvas rolled cabin doors.

✠ Bedford MWD, unknown unit, Libya 1942

The Bedford truck consists of a 4x2 chassis cab and roadster wooden box with a powerful engine and a relatively low overall silhouette. It became the workhorse of the British Army; its strengths were the engine and excellent handling. So the Germans in Africa used all the units they captured. This vehicle was left in his original British sand yellow colour, and marked with German national insignia on both sides of the canvas cover after his capture. Later the crosses were slightly overpainted to convert the truck to light ambulance role. Note the typical red cross flag, jerrycans, and sand ladders.



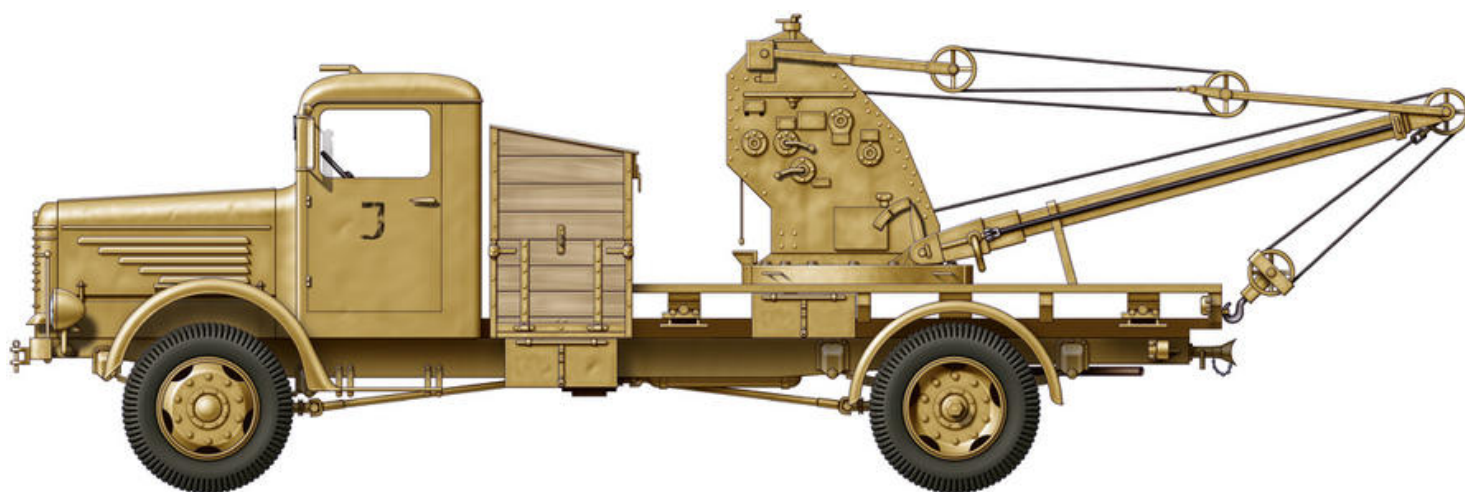


✝ **Opel Blitz 3,6-47 Omnibus, unknown unit, Tunisia 1943**

A small number of early production buses were converted into mobile staff vehicles. For this purpose almost all of the passenger seats were removed and a few tables were fitted, for meetings in field conditions. In addition, staff vehicles were equipped with various pieces of special equipment like telegraph machines, radios, 'Enigma' encryption machines, etc. A baggage rack of increased capacity was installed on top of the bus due to the need to transport large quantities of staff items. This second version of the Opel Blitz Omnibus,



sent to Africa, additionally had extra metal shields on the side windows to shield the interior from the intense sunlight in hot desert conditions. This kind of vehicles had a door in the left side of the vehicle in the place of the former spare wheel. The vehicle was painted with a coat of brown (RAL 8020) and long stripes of gray-green (RAL 7008). See the camouflage rolled net and other equipment on the roof rack, and the ladder mounted in the left rear corner to access to the top of the bus.



✝ **Büssing-NAG 4500 A-1 Drehkrankraftwagen (Kfz.100), schwere Panzer-Abteilung 501, Tunisia, January 1943**

The Drehkrankraftwagen (Hebekraft 3t) - swing crane motor vehicle (lifting force 3 tons) - was exclusively procured on the chassis of the Büssing-NAG 500 A and 4500 A. The Bilstein swing crane mounted on this vehicle was the usual tool for changing engines of tanks. Various tools and lifting gears were stored in the equipment box behind the

driver's cab. This Büssing-NAG 4500 A of the first series was part of the HQ maintenance and repair unit of the s.Pz.Abt.501 as shows the black "J" tactical symbol of both doors. The color of the truck is the standard in Tunisia brown (RAL 8020), but the tool box was left unpainted. There wasn't more marking than the J and the standard vehicle license.



✠ Büssing-NAG 4500 A-1, unknown unit, Tunisia 1943

Beginning late in 1942, the Büssing-NAG 4500 A, a 4x4 version, replaced the older Büssing-NAG models. With a maximum load of 4,5 tons and 4 wheels drive, it was very useful in Africa campaign. This vehicle had a coat of brown colour (RAL 8020), with

khaki canvas cargo bay cover on. The load label was painted in black on both doors, and the DAK insignia was painted in white in the same place, with no more marks but the standard vehicle license plates.



✠ Opel Blitz 3,6-47 Omnibus, unknown unit, Libya 1942

The Opel 3.6-47 Omnibus was a combination of the Opel Blitz, with the 75 hp 3.6 liter engine, on a lengthened chassis of 4.7 meters (approx), mated with a sheet metal body manufactured by Ludewig. The bus could carry 30 passengers and tow 4,000 kg. Standardized in 1939, the bus was quickly pressed into service as the invasion of Poland had already begun. Production continued until 1944, with 2880 vehicles produced. This first version, much more like a civil bus, had a spare wheel flush-mounted on the left side of the car body in

the area of the driver's seat, a baggage rack to transport equipment over the roof rear half of the vehicle, and curtains in the windows. This vehicle was painted in a worn coat of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) over the usual dark gray base (RAL 7021). The DAK insignia was painted white on both sides, front right mudguard and right rear corner, over a patch of dark gray color left unpainted. This kind of vehicles used big German national flags fixed on the roof for aerial identification when necessary.



✝ Lancia 3Ro NM with medium tank transporter trailer with M11/39 medium tank, Libya 1941

The Lancia 3Ro NM, 6.5-ton 4x2 heavy truck was manufactured by Lancia from 1938 to 1950 and used by the Regio Esercito and Wehrmacht in WWII. The 3Ro evolved from the earlier Lancia Ro in 1938 by receiving a stronger five cylinder engine to replace the weaker two or three cylinder engines used in the Ro, pneumatic tires and an improved transmission. The Lancia 3 Ro's design was simple, functional

and was considered the most reliable heavy truck of the Royal Italian Army in World War II. This vehicle was towing a medium tank transporter trailer with a M11/39 tank. The trailer was used to transport tanks by road or to recovery damaged tanks. All the vehicles were painted in Italian giallo sabbia chiaro colour. The tank had no tactical markings, so may be it was a replacement vehicle ready to delivery to his unit.

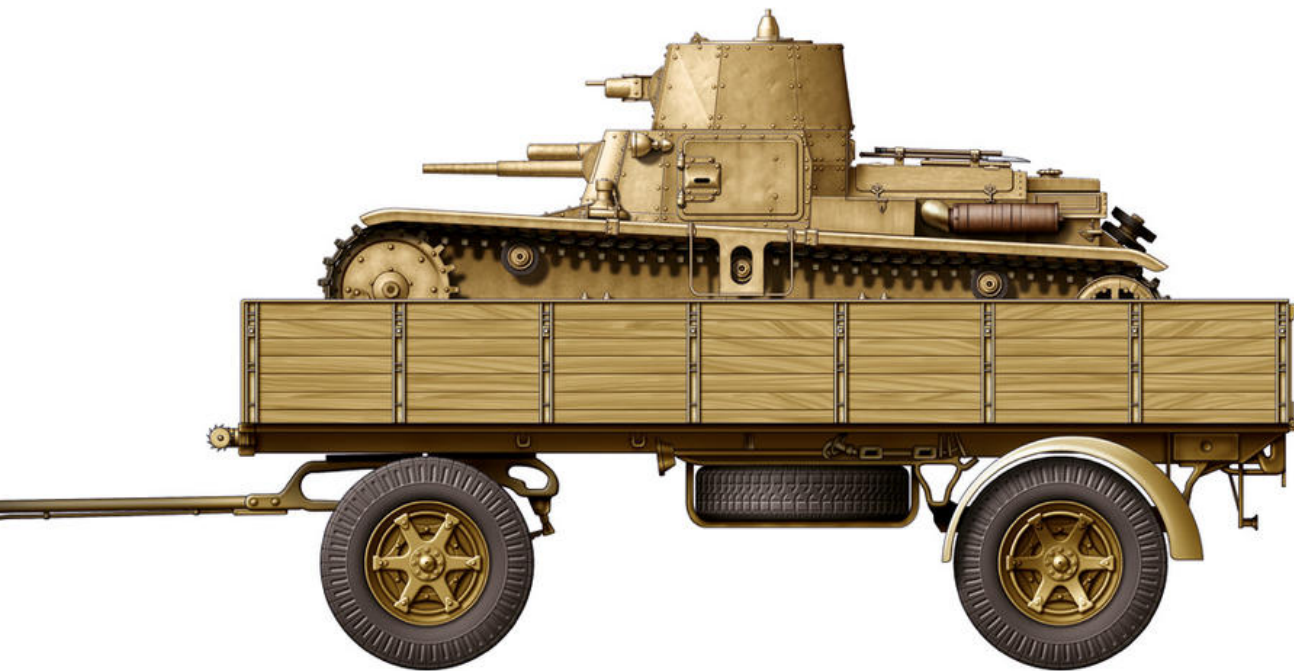


✝ Krupp L 3 H 163 (Kfz.72), weather forecast unit, 21. Panzer-Division, Libya 1942

The hull of this vehicle was that of a Funkhorchkraftwagen (Kfz.72), a monitoring and transmitting vehicle, mainly used by Luftwaffe. This Krupp was recovered by 21. Panzer-Division, and attached to a weather forecast unit; see the flag tactical marking and 21. Panzer-

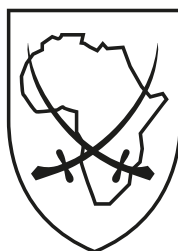
Division symbol painted on the rear right mudguard and front left mudguard. The vehicle had the usual license plates of the army, and a couple of spare wheels over the rear. The paint of the truck is an overall coat of brown (RAL 8020).





✠ Krupp L 3 H 163, 164. leichte Afrika-Division, El Alamein, Egypt, October 1942

The first year of production of the Krupp L 3 H 163 was 1936, replacing the old L 3 H 163; it had an improved shifting gear, a more powerful 110 hp engine, a payload of 3.5 tons, 6x4 wheel drive and new wheel suspension. Altogether, about 2,000 Krupp L 3 H 63 and L 3 H 163 trucks were manufactured from 1928 to 1938, when production ended. This vehicle, with open cabin with canvas roof, was painted in the brown (RAL 8020) colour,



standard for 1942, over a dark gray base (RAL 7021), as the 164. leichte Afrika-Division was sent to Afrika from Crete in mid-1942. White DAK insignia and black load label were painted on both cabin doors. The DAK insignia was repeated on the left rear mudguard and front left mudguard. The divisional symbol (see detail picture) were painted over the front right mudguard and right rear mudguard.



31 G 2305269

Fallschirmschützenschein
 Nr. 305,44
 für *Oskarjürgen Rüdiger Dornitz*
 (Dienstgrad, Vor- und Zunamen)
 geboren: 3. Oktober 1919

Dienst Eintritt: 32/4/39
 Truppenteil: 32/4/39
 über ist befördert:

am: _____
 zum: _____
 am: _____
 zum: _____
 am: _____
 zum: _____

Kurt Wolff
 Besondere Unterschrift
 O.A. den 1. Juli 1944
 (Ort)

Lagerort: Ein Verlag und Druck: Henschelverlag-Mohndruck, Völklingen, Saarland

Wolfgang
 Ausweis Nr. 62765/106
 für *Wilhelm Peters*
 (Dienstgrad)
 geboren am 13. 1. 1917 zu *Linsdorf*

Seinatschrip: *Richard Peters*
Schönberg
 Fliegerhorstkommandant
 Braunschweig-Bröttem
 Braunschweig, den 2. u. 3. Okt. 1944
 (Ort und Tag)

Garmisch
 Kommandant
 Garmisch

Ausweis Nr. 62765/106
 für *Ogefr. Gottfried Erich*
 (Vor- und Zunamen)
 geboren am 2.11.1920 zu *Melssen*

Seinatschrip: *Hart Erich, Melssen*
 Datum: 12. Okt. 1944

Wolfgang
 Besondere Unterschrift
 O.A. den 1. Juli 1944
 (Ort)

1940	1941
III IV	III IV
1942	1943
III IV	III IV
1944	1945
III IV	III IV

MIT DEN BESTEN WEIHNACHTS
 WÜNSCHEN DES FUHRERS UND
 OBERSTEN BEFEHLSHABERS DER
 WEIHNACHT.

WEIHNACHTEN 1944

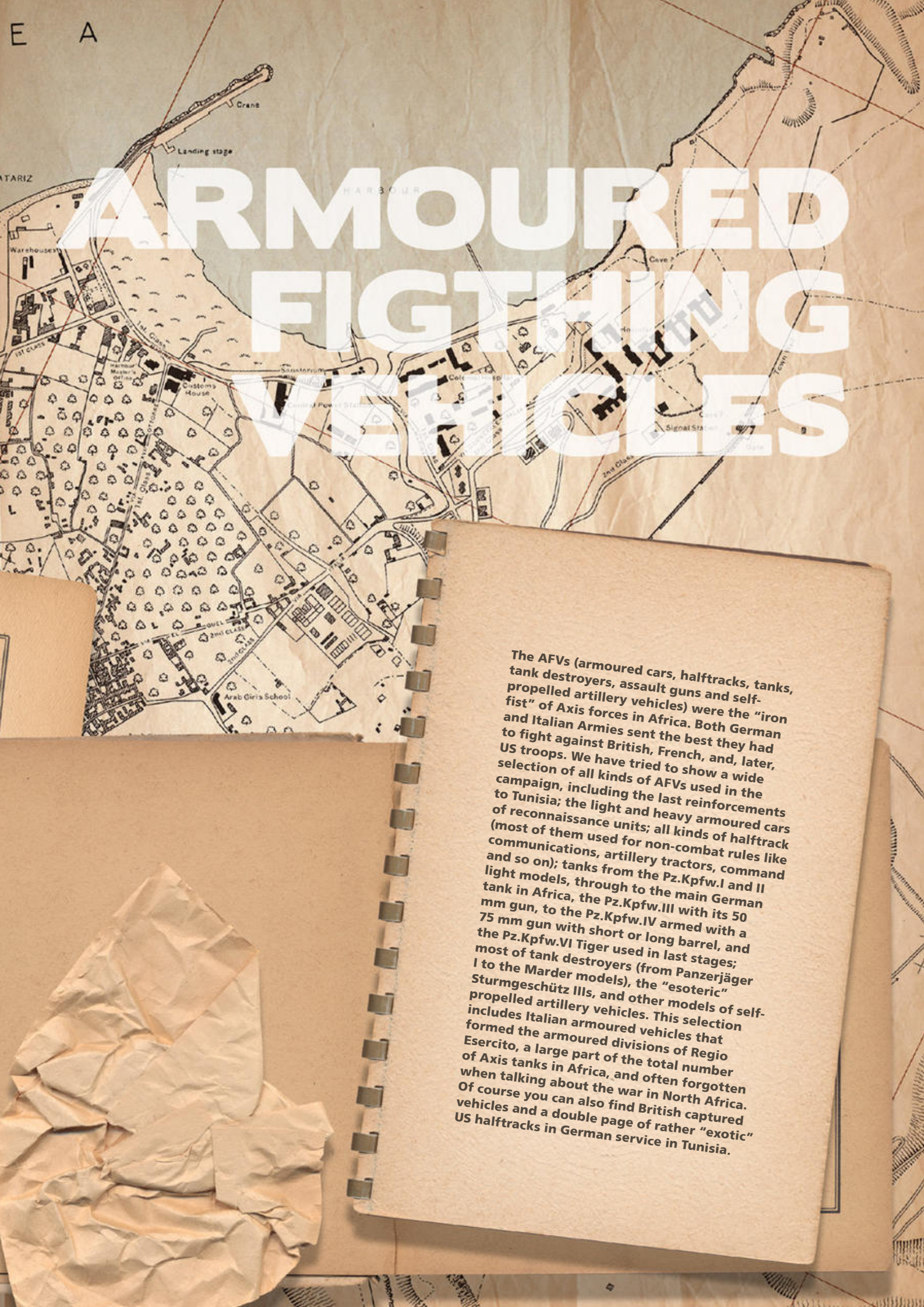
KRIEGSGEFANGENEN-AUSWEIS
 (Vom Kriegsgefangenen beibehalten zu werden)

Name: *Hordemann*
 U.S. Kriegsgefangenen
 Vorname: *Kurt*
 Dienstgrad: *447*
 IHRE KRIEGSGEFANGENENNUMMER
 IST NR. *056097*

Während Ihrer Internierung sind alle Nachrichten an ALLE in bestehenden Angehörigen personal werden. Die Nachricht muss in eine mit englischer Sprache beschrifteten im Land Ihre Korrespondenz vertragen werden.
 Einsetzen im Land *383 und 2547*



1940	1941
III IV	III IV
1942	1943
III IV	III IV
1944	1945
III IV	III IV



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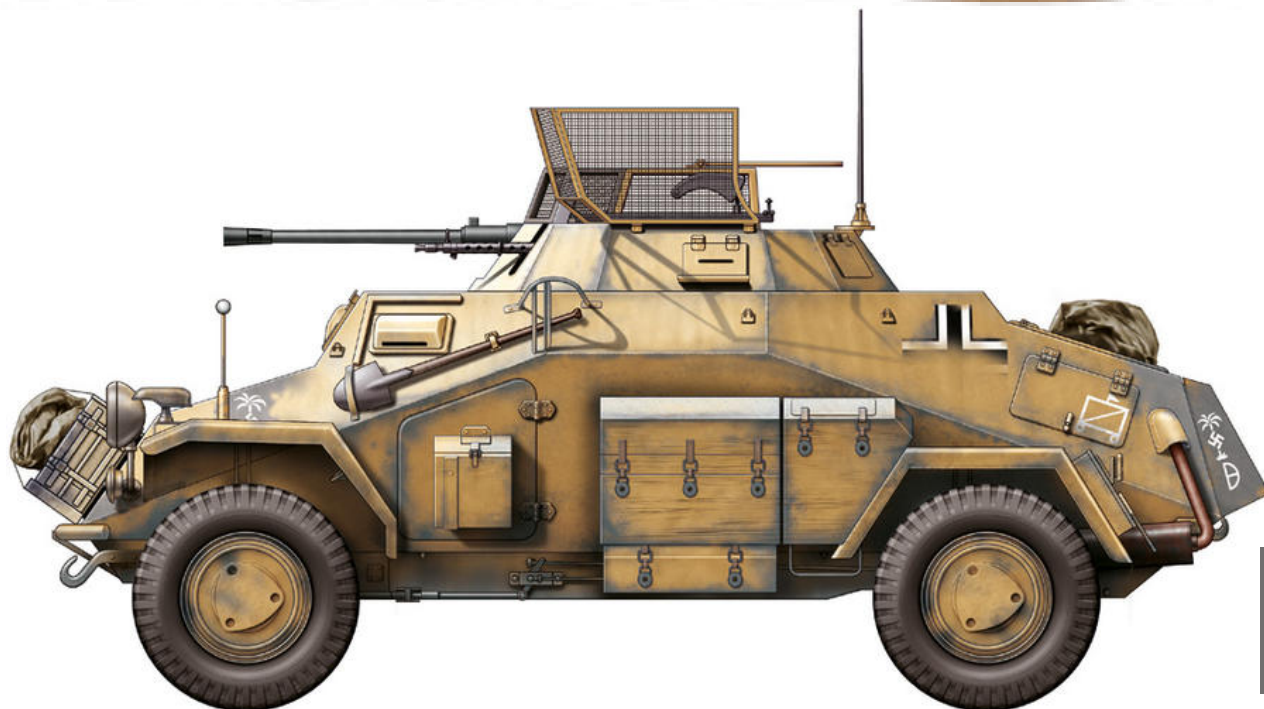
ATARIZ

HARBOUR

ARMoured FIGHTING VEHICLES

The AFVs (armoured cars, halftracks, tanks, tank destroyers, assault guns and self-propelled artillery vehicles) were the "iron fist" of Axis forces in Africa. Both German and Italian Armies sent the best they had to fight against British, French, and, later, US troops. We have tried to show a wide selection of all kinds of AFVs used in the campaign, including the last reinforcements to Tunisia; the light and heavy armoured cars of reconnaissance units; all kinds of halftrack (most of them used for non-combat roles like communications, artillery tractors, command and so on); tanks from the Pz.Kpfw.I and II light models, through to the main German tank in Africa, the Pz.Kpfw.III with its 50 mm gun, to the Pz.Kpfw.IV armed with a 75 mm gun with short or long barrel, and the Pz.Kpfw.VI Tiger used in last stages; most of tank destroyers (from Panzerjäger I to the Marder models), the "esoteric" Sturmgeschütz IIIs, and other models of self-propelled artillery vehicles. This selection includes Italian armoured vehicles that formed the armoured divisions of Regio Esercito, a large part of the total number of Axis tanks in Africa, and often forgotten when talking about the war in North Africa. Of course you can also find British captured vehicles and a double page of rather "exotic" US halftracks in German service in Tunisia.

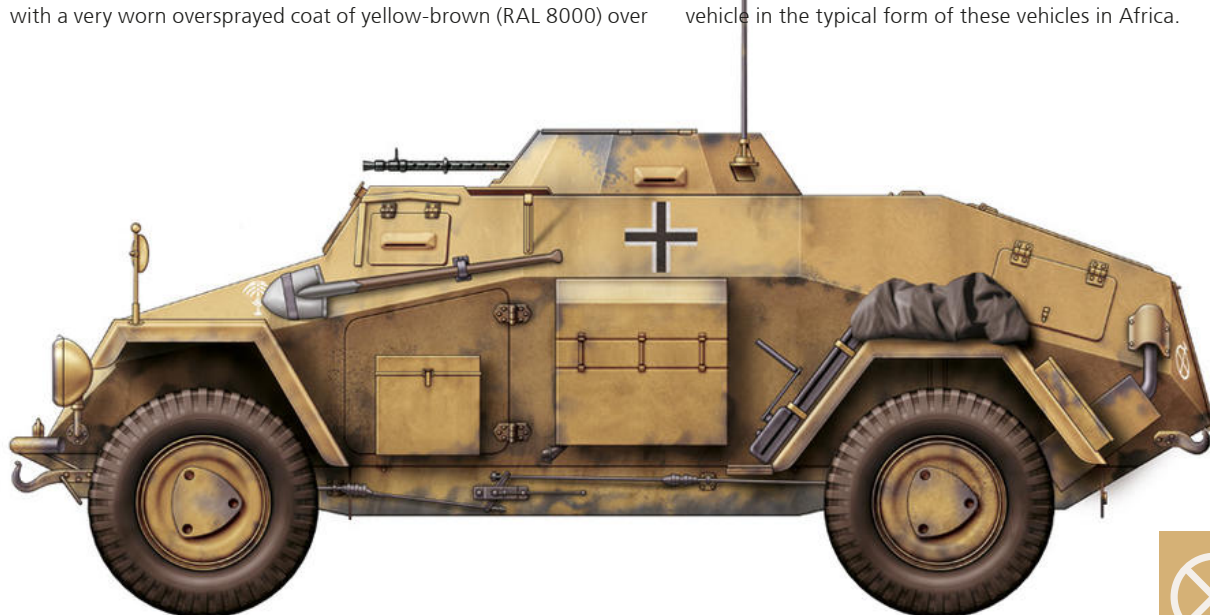




✠ Sd.Kfz.222, Pz.Aufkl.Abt.3, 21. Panzer-Division, Libya 1941

The light armoured reconnaissance vehicles were a series of light four-wheel drive armoured cars produced from 1935 to 1944 by using the chassis of Horch 108 standard heavy off-road car with an angled armoured body and turret. They had a road speed of 80 km/h and a cross-country speed of 40 km/h and maximum range of 300 km. In Africa this class of vehicle was hampered by its relatively poor off-road performance and, it gradually found itself replaced in the reconnaissance role by the Sd.Kfz.250 half-track. The Sd.Kfz.222 was armed with a 2 cm KwK 30 L/55 autocannon and a 7.92 mm MG 34 machine gun. Crew increased to three by the addition of a gunner, relieving the commander of that task. This vehicle, painted with a very worn oversprayed coat of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) over

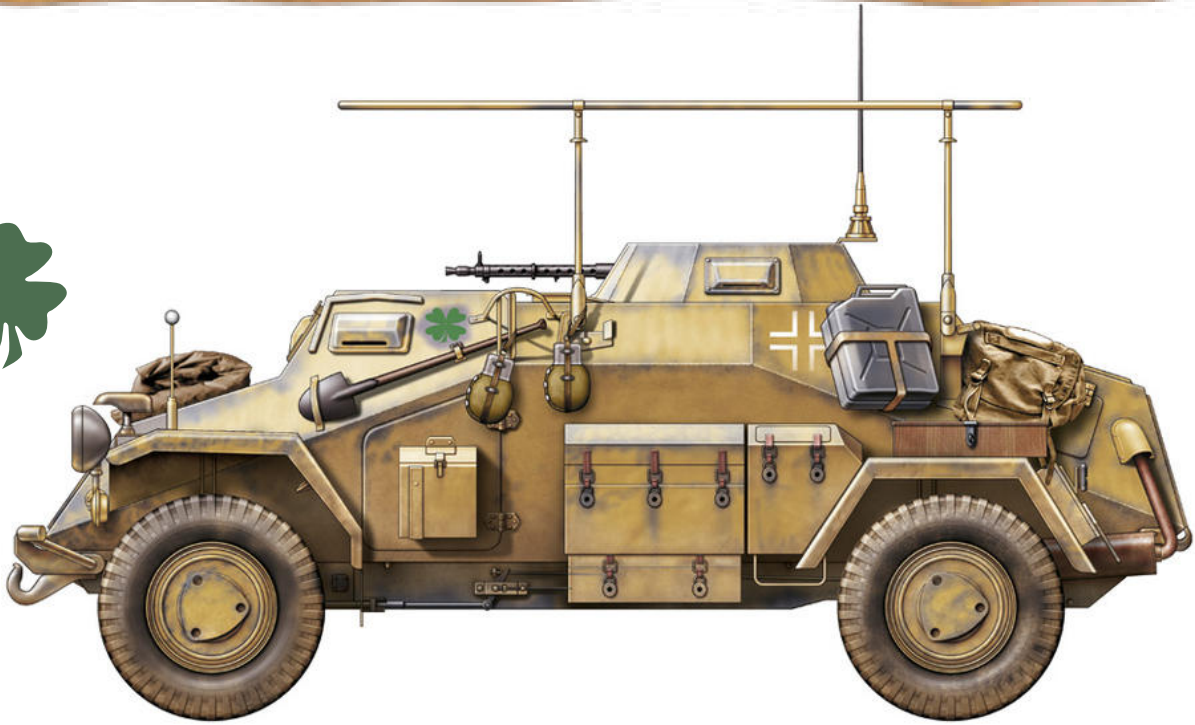
the original European color dark gray (RAL 7021), had black outlined national crosses on rear part of hull sides (see the one partially oversprayed), on the rear plate, and on the frontal glassis plate as air identification; the rear part of the vehicle was left unpainted, probably to save camouflage paint. Other markings were the white DAK insignia painted on a grey patch left unpainted on front part of both sides of vehicle (over the front mudguards), and in the gray left side of rear plate, this one together with the 21. Panzer-Division marking. There were tactical markings for armoured reconnaissance battalion painted in white on both side engine access hatches (see detail picture). The extra equipment was placed on the front of the vehicle in the typical form of these vehicles in Africa.



✠ Sd.Kfz.221, Pz.Aufkl.Abt.33, 15. Panzer-Division, Libya 1941

The basic recon vehicle of the Afrika Korps, the Sd.Kfz.221 was the backbone of the armoured recon units in the desert, together with his "brothers" the Sd.Kfz.222 and 223. Armed only with a MG 34 machine gun and with a crew of two, was the first useful armoured car of the German Army. The vehicle had the standard paint for Africa, an overcoat of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) all over the orig-

inal dark gray base (RAL 7021). It had the DAK insignia in white over the front mudguards, and national crosses on both sides, back plate and over the engine compartment for aerial identification. There is a white tactical symbol of a motorcycles unit in left back side and front plate (the motorcycles in the armoured recon units were replaced in 1942 with halftracks).



✠ Sd.Kfz.223, Pz.Aufkl.Abt.3, 5. leichte Division, Libya, May 1941

A radio car version of the Sd.Kfz.221, the Sd.Kfz.223 was armed with a 7.92 mm MG 34 machine gun too. It carried additional radio equipment, and had a large "bed-frame" antenna over the vehicle. Over 500 of the Sd.Kfz.223 were produced. This vehicle, as a some months african warrior, was repainted in yellow-brown color (RAL 8000) over the original dark gray base (RAL 7021). It belonged to main recon-

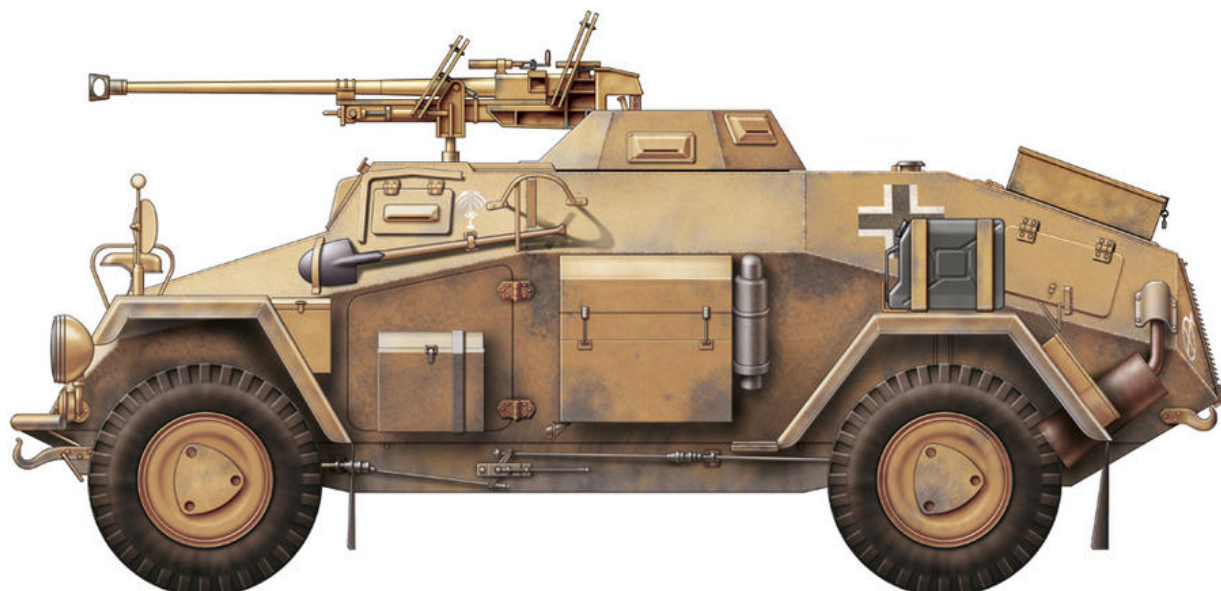
naissance unit of the 5. leichte Division. This Sd.Kfz.223 had hollow outlined in white national crosses on rear part of hull sides, rear grill plate. The vehicle had the front and rear Heer license plates, with no more marking but a 4 leaf clover on left hull side over the door, on a patch of gray left unpainted (the meaning of this symbol is unknown, maybe a good luck fetish).



✠ Sd.Kfz.222, 1. Kompanie of an unknown Pz.Aufkl.Abt., Libya 1942

This recon vehicle, painted in a coat of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) over the original dark gray color (RAL 7021), belonged to the 1st company of armoured cars from one of the armoured reconnaissance battalions of the Afrika Korps. The frontal plate of this vehicle was marked with the white

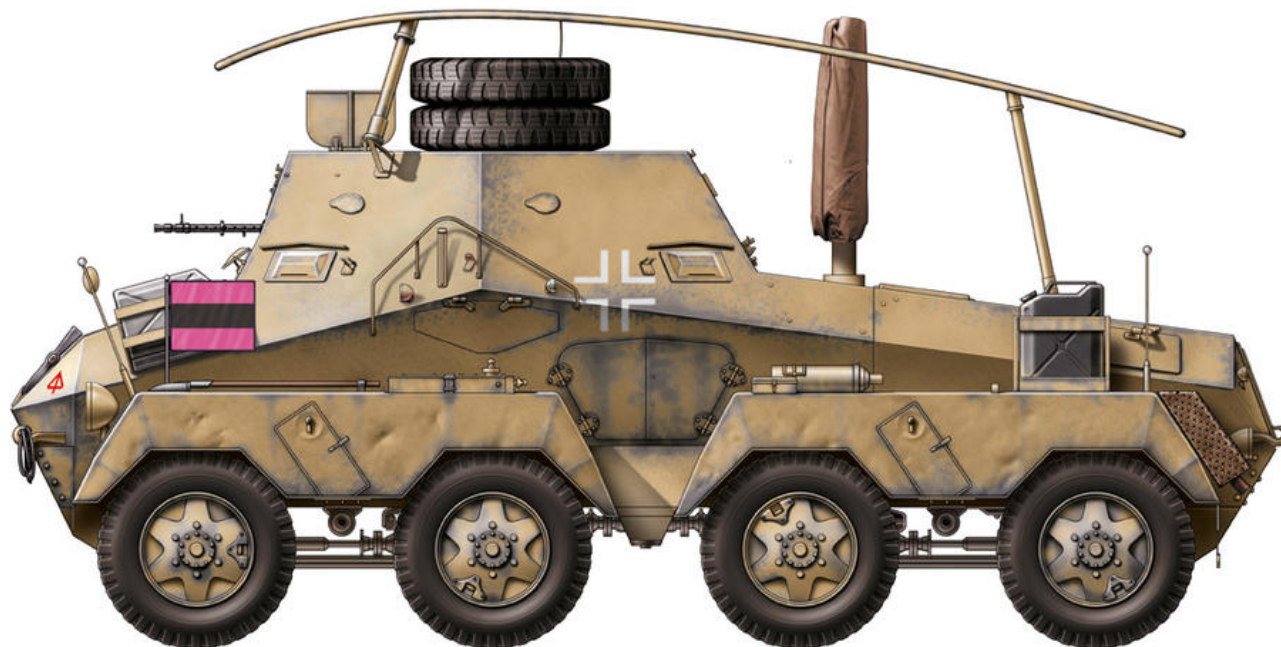
tactical symbol of its unit at right side and white DAK insignia at left side. The rear engine plate had the tactical symbol at left side, a national cross (black outlined in white) at center, and a DAK insignia at right side. The vehicle showed the usual vehicle license plates for Heer, front and rear.



✠ Sd.Kfz.221 with 2.8 cm schwere Panzerbüchse 41, Panzer-Späh-Kompanie, Kradschützen-Bataillon 15, 15. Panzer-Division, Libya, April 1942

This version of the Sd.Kfz.221 received a weapon to give a more powerful punch to recon troops; the only one light enough to be mounted on top, the 2.8 cm schwere Panzerbüchse 41. An unknown number of vehicles were converted in 1942, with the crew reduced to only two, a driver and gunner. The Panzerbüchse 41 design was based on a cone-shaped barrel, with the caliber reducing from 28 mm at the chamber end to only 20 mm at the muzzle. It had a very high muzzle velocity - up to 1,400 m/s. This gun, facing its caliber, was very effective against British cruiser tanks, and even Allied medium tanks at short range. This vehicle

was painted in a worn coat of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) over dark gray (RAL 7021), with the newer gun in brown (RAL 8020). The usual national crosses were painted back in both sides and rear plate, with white DAK insignia painted on both sides, right side of rear plate and upper right corner of front armoured plate. The red divisional symbol was painted in the upperleft corner of the same frontal plate, with a white tactical symbol for motorcycle unit (probably Kradschützen-Bataillon 15) painted under; this tactical symbol was repeated in the left side of rear plate. It had the usual vehicle license plates.



✠ Sd.Kfz.263 (8-Rad), Stab des Panzer-Regiments 8, 15. Panzer-Division, Libya 1942

This radio vehicle was equipped with long-range radio and an additional radio operator. To support the extra equipment, the turret (seen in Sd.Kfz.232) was omitted, the superstructure was raised, and only a single ball-mounted machine gun was mounted. This particular car had a telescopic extra large antenna for extra-long radio communication, folded down and with a canvas cover. The jerrycans over the vehicle are of US type (probably captured from a Jeep or another lend-lease US vehicle in British service). The paint pattern is the standard faded yellow-

low-brown (RAL 8000) over original dark gray (RAL 7021). The symbol of the 15. Panzer-Division is painted in red in the front left side, and the national crosses on both side were of the hollow type just outlined in white. The same national cross was painted in the back side too. Over the left front mudguard there's a pink-black-pink flag, because this was the Regiment Commander vehicle (pink was color for panzer troops). As usual, this armoured car had vehicle license plates at front and back, and two spare wheels on the top of superstructure.



✠ **Sd.Kfz.232 (8-Rad), Stab des Panzer-Regiments 5, 21. Panzer-Division, Libya 1941**

This radio vehicle was part of the HQ of the Panzer-Regiment 5, the main armoured unit of the 21. Panzer-Division. It had the typical frame antenna, frontal plate, and was armed with a 2 cm KwK 30 L/55 gun. The radio equipment comprised a Fu 11 SE 100 medium range radio and a Fu.Spr.a short range radio. This vehicle was painted in the typical coat of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) all over the original dark gray

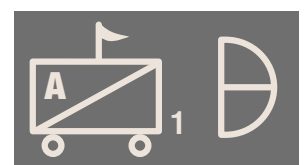
base (RAL 7021). A legend "Gero von Hohendorff" was applied in white colour on a patch of dark gray paint. Gero von Hohendorff was a Leutnant in I./Aufklärungs-Regiment 8, who was KIA during the Polish Campaign. The only markings were the DAK insignia in white color painted on the front plate over a patch of dark gray, and the standard vehicle license plates.



✠ **Sd.Kfz.231 (8-Rad), 1./Pz.Aufkl.Abt.3, 21. Panzer-Division, Libya 1941**

This Sd.Kfz.231 belonged to the 1st company of the main recon unit of 21. Panzer-Division. The vehicle is similar to the Sd.Kfz.232, but without the additional radio equipment and antenna frame. It was painted with a coat of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) all over the original dark gray base (RAL 7021). The national crosses, hollow outlined in white, were painted on both

sides of hull and rear hull plate grill. The white DAK insignia was painted in the frontal part of hull sides. The white tactical symbol for recon company (mot) was painted in the frontal armoured shield left side, together with white divisional symbol, with white DAK insignia on the right side and vehicle license plate under them; there were rear license plates too.





✠ **Sd.Kfz.232 (8-Rad), Pz.Aufkl.Abt.33, 15. Panzer-Division, Tunisia 1943**

This Sd.Kfz.231, member of the panzer recon unit of 15. Panzer-Division, had the new Sternantenne (star antenna) that replaced the old frame antenna, and was painted with a regular pattern of yellow-brown wavy lines (RAL 8000) all over the original dark gray base (RAL 7021). It had na-

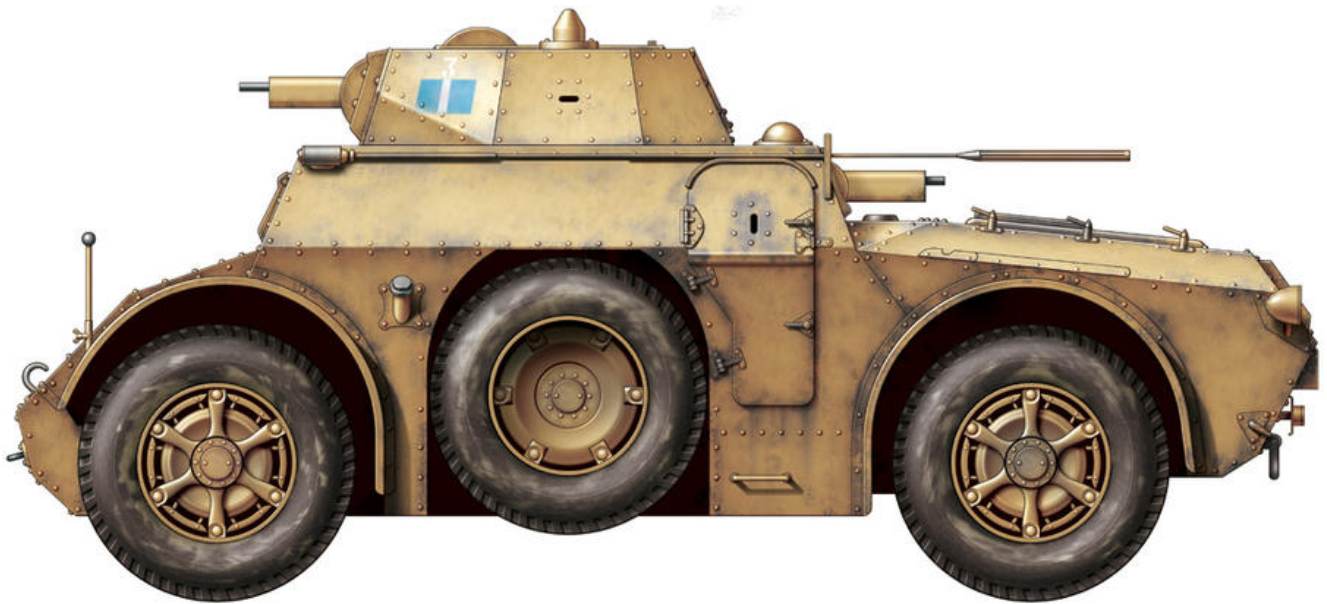
tional standard crosses in both sides, license plate painted on the upper half of the front plate, with a tactical sign in white color for the 1st armoured car company. Probably this vehicle was a replacement one send to Africa late 1942, because of his dark gray base color and new antenna.



✠ **Sd.Kfz.233, Pz.Aufkl.Abt.220, 164. leichte Afrika-Division, Tunisia, January 1943**

Equipped with a short barrelled 7.5 cm KwK 37 L/24 gun, this vehicle was based on the open-topped superstructure of the Sd.Kfz.263 (8-Rad) radio vehicle. One hundred and nine of these vehicles were built at the Büsing-NAG plant, between December 1942 and October 1943. A further 10 were converted from Sd.Kfz.263 chassis in October 1942. This variant of the Schwerer Panzerspähwagen series entered service during 1942 and remained in use throughout the war. They

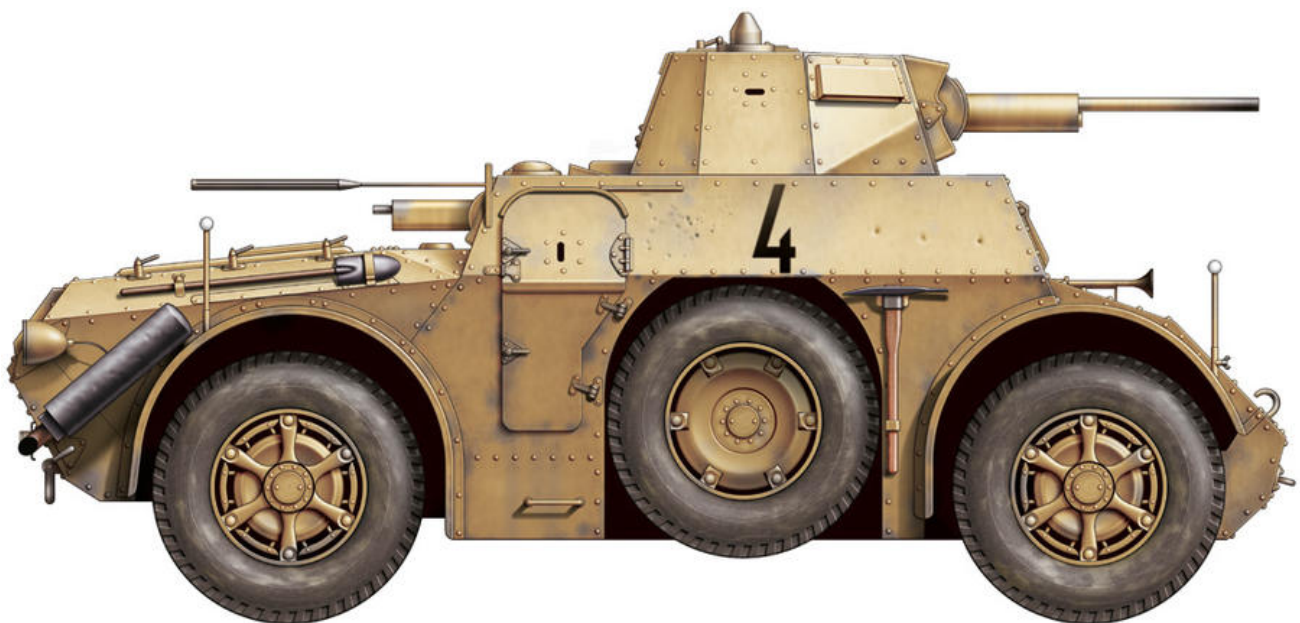
were issued as a platoon of six vehicles in support of reconnaissance battalions. This vehicle was painted in a very worn coat of brown (RAL 8020) over dark gray base (RAL 7021), with just the vehicle license plates as marking. See the rack for jerry cans on both sides and MG 34 machine gun mount besides the main gun. The branches on the vehicle was something usual in Tunisia to avoid air raids of British and US "jabos" in a landscape with much more vegetation than in Libya.



✠ Autoblinda AB40, unknown cavalry reconnaissance unit, Libya 1941

The Autoblinda 40 armored car had their origins in a requirement for Italian colonial Police in Africa and for Italian cavalry branch, so a new vehicle design appeared in 1939. This vehicle had the engine at the rear and a turret mounting a machine gun towards the front. There was another machine gun in the hull rear and the vehicle could be driven from either the normal front position or another position in the hull rear. The Autoblinda 40 began production in mid-1940 with twin 8 mm machine guns in the turret. When the original production order was placed it was specified that a small number of Autoblinda 40s be produced with a 20

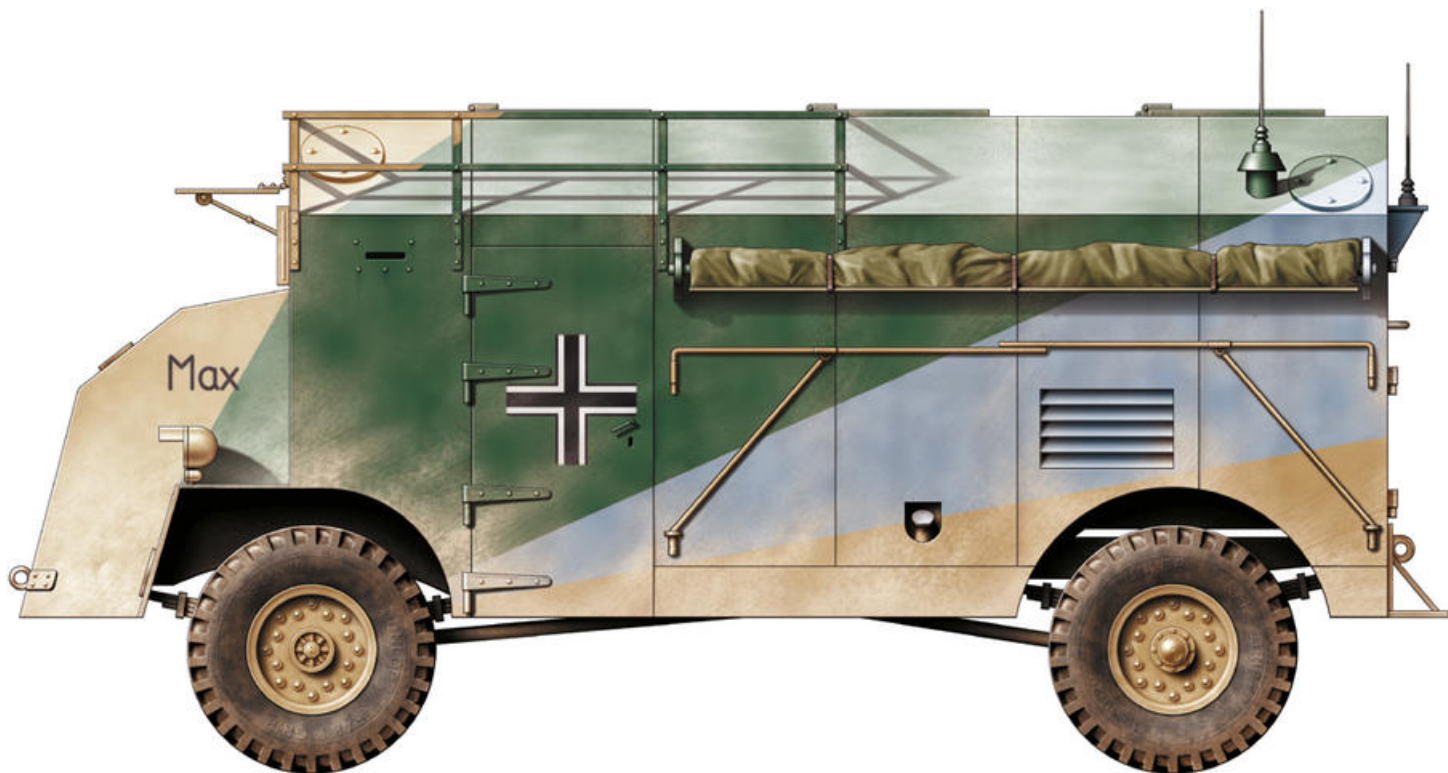
mm cannon; it was achieved by using the turret of the L6/40 light tank in place of the original turret. This then became the Autoblinda 41. In Africa it was used by cavalry reconnaissance units of the Regio Esercito, with companies of three platoons of four cars each. This vehicle was painted in Italian giallo sabbia chiaro (light sand yellow) over a worn a grigio verde (grey green) base. The meaning of the tactical symbol painted on both sides of turret (and back turret plate too) was 3rd vehicle (white 3 number), 1st platoon (white bar), 2nd company (light blue rectangle). It had the usual front and back vehicle license plates.



✠ Autoblinda AB41, 3^a Battaglione Autoblinda, Reggimento "Nizza Cavalleria", 132^a Divisione Corazzata "Ariete", Gazala, Libya, June 1942

The AB41 (named after its first year of production, 1941) was based on the machine gun armed Autoblinda 40, but with the turret of the L6/40 light tank. Made with an all-riveted construction, the AB41 had four-wheel drive and a four wheel steering system that proved troublesome. The spare wheels fitted to its sides were free to rotate, thus helping the vehicle over rough terrain and allowing it to drive over higher obstacles. Italy issued the AB41 only to cavalry, Italian Africa Police (PAI) and Bersaglieri

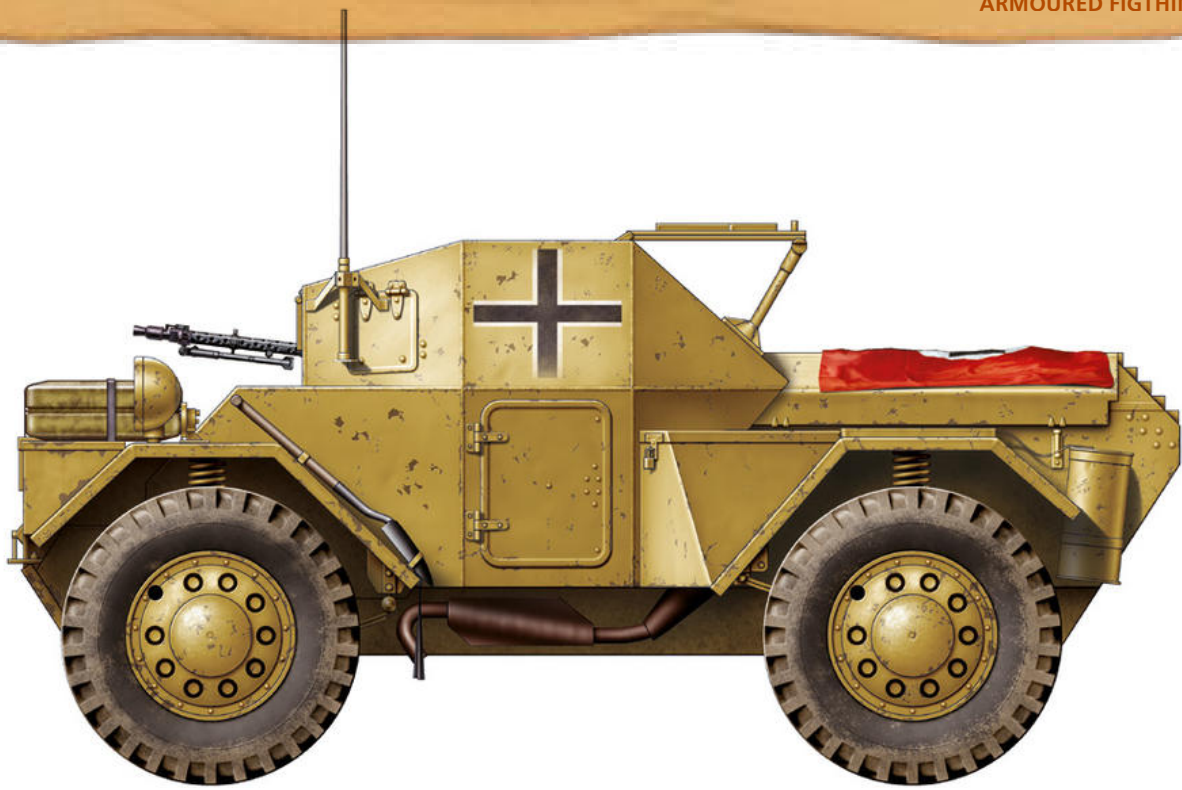
units. The AB41 was also organized into reconnaissance battalions (or cavalry groups) of 3 or 4 companies each. Each armoured car company consisted of 3 armoured car platoons of 4 armoured cars each. This vehicle was painted in Italian giallo sabbia chiaro (light sand yellow) over a grigio verde (grey green) base. The black painted "4" was a tactical number that indicated the vehicle 4 of a armoured car platoon. There were front and back standard vehicle licenses, without anymore markings.



✝ **AEC "Dorchester" 4x4 Armoured Command Vehicle, very early "Max", Rommel's staff vehicle, Libya, April 1941**

This vehicle was developed by the British company AEC on the basis of the Matador truck chassis. It was produced in two variants fitted with different radio equipment. The "Dorchester" made its operational debut in North Africa in 1941. The nickname of this comfortable and spacious vehicle referred to the famous luxury hotel in London. Three "Dorchester"s were captured by the Afrika Korps troops near Mechili on the 7th April 1941. The Germans named one of them "Moritz" and another one "Max", after the characters from a popular children's story by Wilhelm Busch. "Max" was used by Rommel and his staff until September 1941, when it was lost to a landmine. The pictured vehicle, an early "Max", still carried its original British colors (khaki green, sky blue and sand tan). New owners applied the German national crosses on both doors (later moved further back, because if the doors were open, the crosses were hidden), front plate and rear door, as well as white DAK insignia on the front right mudguard and left side of the rear plate. The name "Max" was painted in black on the left side of the vehicle. Later, the frontal part of this ACV was sprayed with patches of gray-green, which covered the name "Max" that was repainted in white. The pennants of the commander of a corps were present on the right front mudguard and in the left lower corner of the rear plate. The photos show that their size varied in the course of vehicle's service. Finally, the Germans painted the number plate (WH-819835) on the front and rear of the vehicle. Some photos probably show "third" version of "Max", with little patches of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) applied over the previous camouflage. It appears that the appearance of this vehicle was modified several times, and it is hard to pin down an exact camouflage pattern used at a certain period. Note the sunshade support rods fastened to the side of the vehicle, the rolled sunshade itself, and the racks on the roof for jerrycans and equipment.

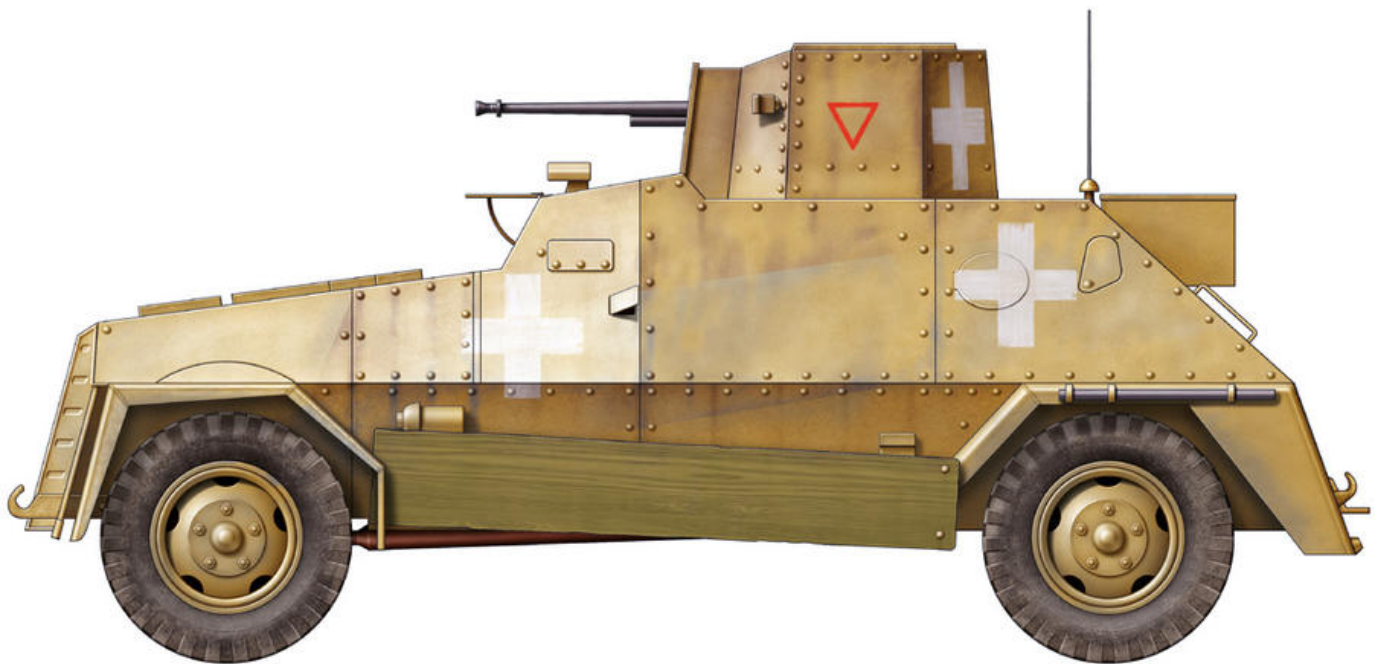




✠ Daimler Dingo, unknown unit, Libya, 1942

The Dingo scout car was a very appreciated vehicle for the German soldiers wherever they captured it, and was turned into German service in France, Africa and even Normandy. This one was captured in Libya 1942 and was repainted with a coat of German yellow-brown (RAL 8000) over the original British color (that's the reason for no

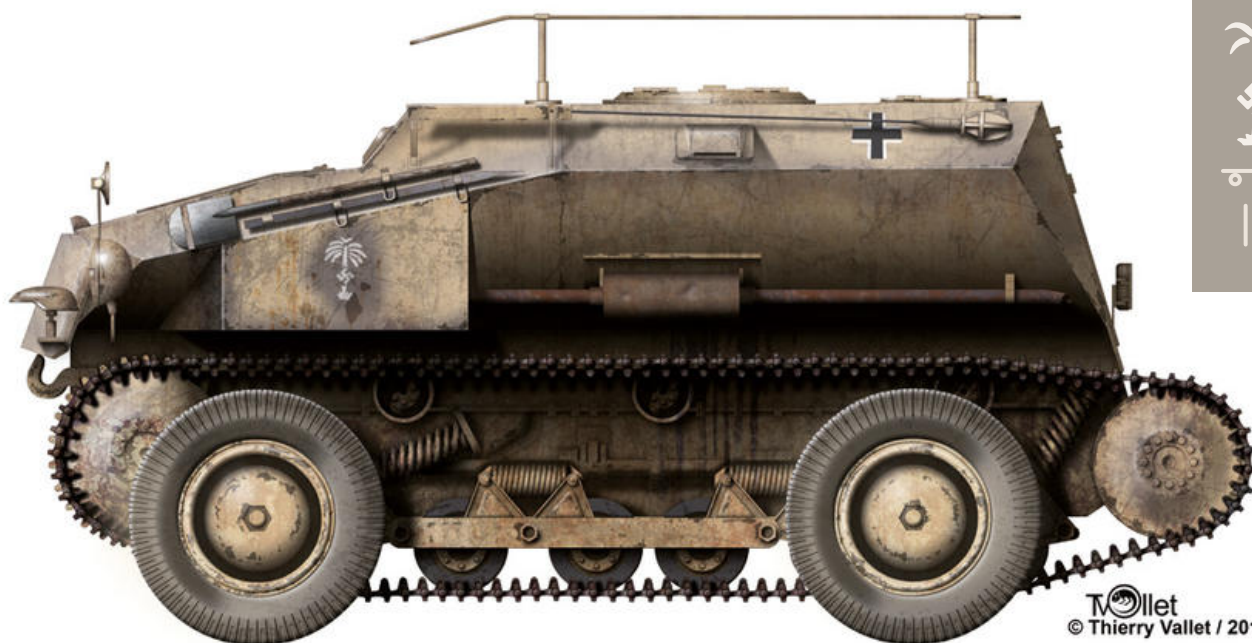
British marking at sight). The new marking were great national crosses in both sides, centered in back plate, and on the front glacis. The German vehicle license plate was in the left side of the frontal tool box, and there was a German flag over the engine compartment for aerial identification.



✠ Marmon-Herrington Mk.II, 21. Panzer-Division, Tobruk, Libya, June 1942

This captured South African Marmon Herrington Mk.II was a fairly simple but effective conversion of a commercial truck chassis to take a new 4x4 transmission and a well-shaped armored hull. The early versions had a turret on the roof mounting a .303 Vickers machine gun, with the second one located in the hull front, but once this combination had been tried in action it was changed to a .55 Boys anti-tank rifle mounted alongside a .303 machine gun in the turret. The vehicle had a crew of four housed in the roomy

hull, and the engine was a Ford V8. They proved to be surprisingly effective vehicles, but their 12 mm (.47-in) armour was often too thin to be of much use, and the armament was really too light. This vehicle, captured by 21. Panzer-Division tropas, was marked with prominent solid white national crosses all around over the original British sand yellow color coat. The red triangle was a British tactical symbol for B squadron (triangle) from senior regiment in a brigade (red color).



Vallet
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✠ **Sd.Kfz.254 Saurer RK-7, Artillerie-Regiment (mot.) 33, 15. Panzer-Division, Libya 1942**

This vehicle was developed in 1936 by the Saurer company as an artillery tractor for the Austrian army, and 12 were manufactured in 1938 before to Anschluss (the annexation of Austria by Nazi Germany in 1938). Production of the vehicle continued after the Anschluss, with about 140 units completed. The Sd.Kfz.254 featured a wheel-cum-track layout and a diesel motor. The wheels were lowered when it was used on roads and retracted for tracked movement cross-country. A number saw service with the Afrika Korps, serving as artillery observation vehicles after being fitted with a radio and rail antenna, like the vehicle pictured here. This Saurer belonged to a towed artill-

ery unit of the 15. Panzer-Division. It was painted in a very worn coat of brown (RAL 8020), with black outlined in white national crosses painted in the right side of frontal plate, centered in the rear doors, and in rear upper zone of both hull sides. The white DAK insignia was painted in the left side of front plate, and in the upper left corner of left rear door. The white tactical symbol was under the DAK insignia in front plate, with red divisional symbol at left. The red divisional symbol over the white tactical symbol was repeated in the upper left corner of rear plate. The standard vehicle license plates were in front and rear.



✠ **Sd.Kfz.250/3 "Igel", Rommel's personal vehicle, Libya 1942**

"Igel" (Hedgehog) was one of the armoured command vehicles of the Rommel's command group, together with "Greif" (Griffin) and "Adler" (Eagle). The less known of the three, this one had the letters clearly painted in red outlined in white

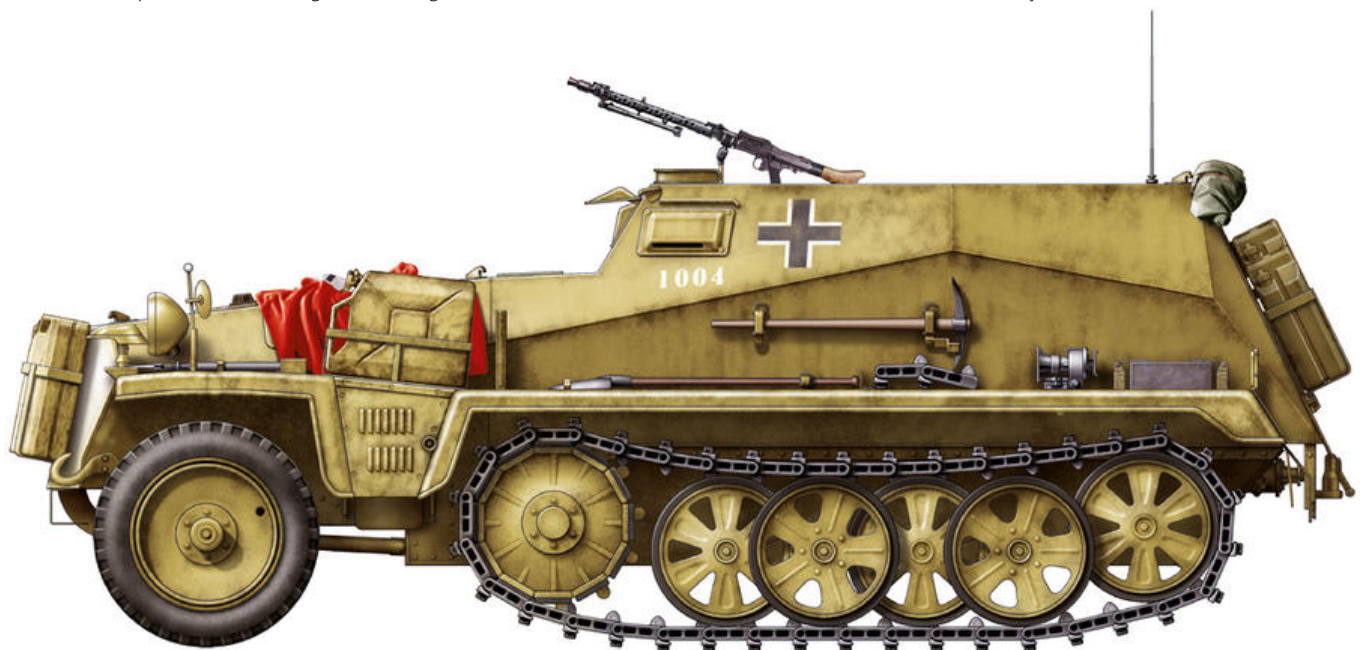
color, and hollow national crosses outlined in white. The vehicle was painted like "Greif" and "Adler", with yellow-brown (RAL 8000) over dark gray (RAL 7021), and with a jerrycan racks in the back plate.



✠ Sd.Kfz.250/1 Ausf.A, Artillerie-Regiment 155, 21. Panzer-Division, Libya 1941

Standard light armoured halftrack of the Afrika Korps, this vehicle belonged to an artillery unit of the 21. Panzer-Division. The marks were the DAK insignia and tactical marking in white in the left side of the front plate, and the same tactical symbol in the left side of the back plate and DAK insignia in the right side, and back standard

national cross. This early Africa warrior shows a very irregular coat of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) over dark gray base (RAL 7021), mainly in the front of the vehicle (perhaps trying to save sand paint). The weapons are the standard two MG 34s; one with armour shield and the other with a mobile assembly.



✠ Sd.Kfz.250/1, General Kleemann's vehicle, 90. leichte Afrika-Division, Bir Hakeim, Libya 1942

This standard Sd.Kfz.250 was used by General Ulrich Kleemann, chief in command of the 90. leichte Afrika-Division, probably pictured near Bir Hakeim (Libya). The vehicle was painted in the standard yellow-brown (RAL 8000) over dark gray base (RAL 7021). There is a group of pictures of this half-track (front, side and back views) with a couple of jerrycans attached to the front plate, another couple to the



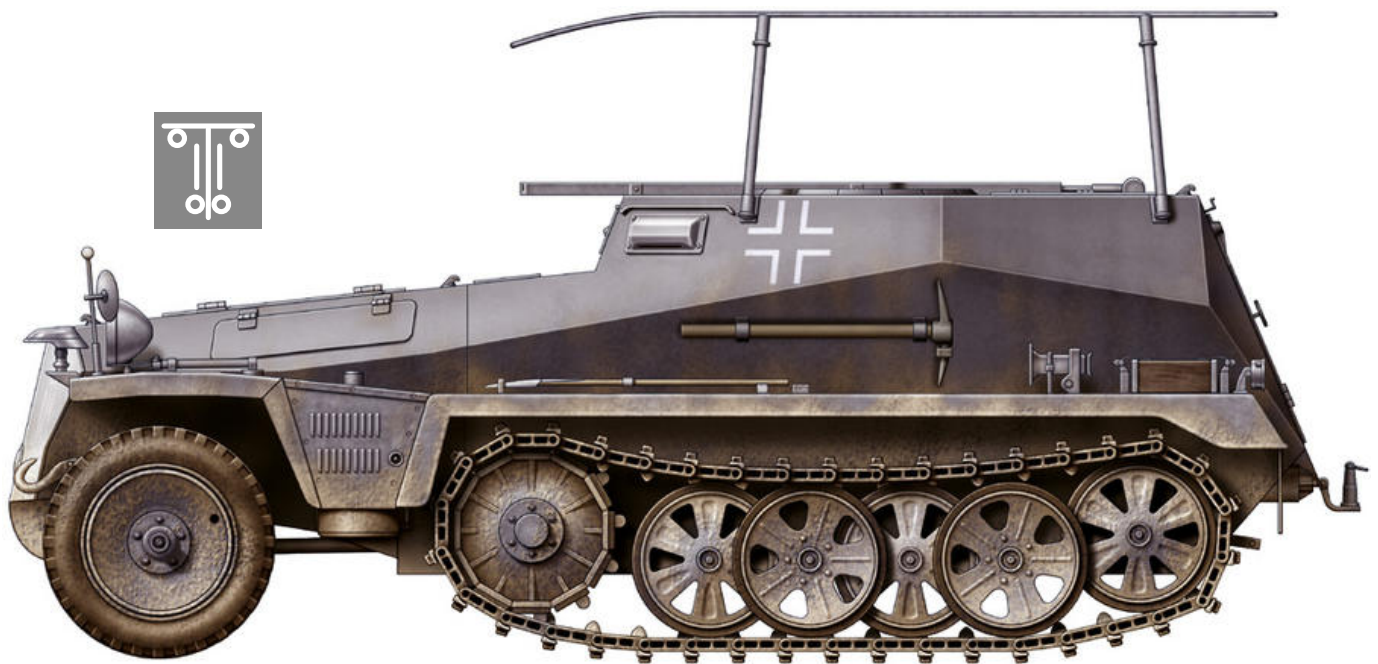
back plate, and one over the smoke pipes on both sides. The markings were just a standard national cross and a small white "1004" on both sides and back plate, and a national flag as aerial identification; the front registration plate was transferred to the lower front plate. This vehicle had a non-standard antenna mount in his right side, over the mudguard, near the back plate (see the picture).



✠ **Sd.Kfz.250/3 "Greif", Rommel's personal vehicle, Tobruk area, Libya 1942**

Perhaps the most known of the Rommel's "horses" in the Desert Campaign, the "Greif" was a standard command haltrack, painted in the usual scheme of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) over the dark gray base (RAL 7021) leaving great patches of dark gray uncovered. The legend "Greif" in the left side of the vehicle was painted in red with white outlined; about the right side, the pictures show the word just outlined in white, without red paint; but maybe the "Greif" was first just outlined in white and after a time the letters were painted in red leaving the white outline.





✝ **Sd.Kfz.253, Stab der I./Artillerie-Regiment (mot.) 75, 5. leichte Division, Libya, April 1941**

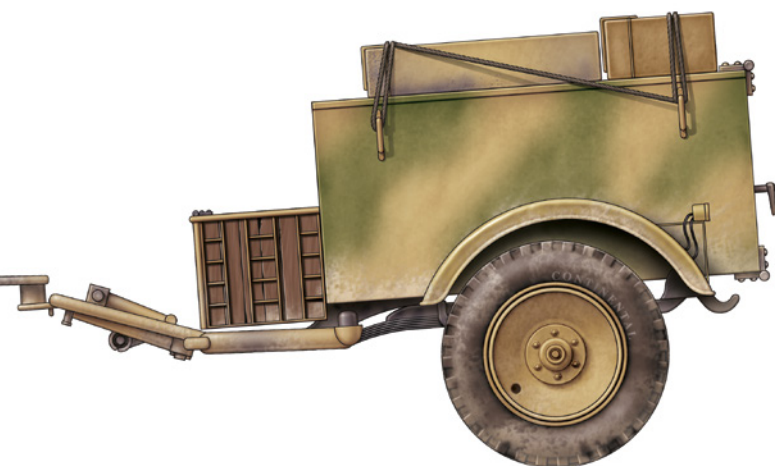
The Sd.Kfz.253 was a special version of the half-track Sd.Kfz.250; the appearance was similar, but the Sd.Kfz.253 variant was fully enclosed with a couple of hatches on the roof; 285 vehicles were produced between 1940-1941. It was used as light observation and communication vehicle by artillery forward observers. The pictured vehicle was painted in dark gray color (RAL 7021) as a just arrived vehicle. It had hollow outlined in white national crosses on both sides and center of rear plate, standard vehicle license plates, white DAK insignia on right side of frontal armoured plate and upper right corner of rear plate, and the white tactical symbol for HQ unit of a motorised artillery battalion with yellow divisional symbol under it on left side of frontal plate and upper left corner of rear plate. Most of this vehicles had special radio equipment and a square frame antenna. Another field modification

was an extra stowage box for range finders and other important 'specialist' equipment, welded to the upper right corner of rear plate; a way to save space in the narrow inside of the vehicle.



✝ **Sd.Kfz.252, 13. Batterie, Panzer-Artillerie-Regiment 90, 10. Panzer-Division, Tunisia, February 1943**

The Sd.Kfz.252 was a light armored ammunition carrier designed for Sturmartillerie batteries. Some 413 were produced by Demag/Wegmann from June of 1940 and then by Deutsche Werke from January of 1941 until September of 1941. All were issued to Sturmartillerie batteries. This particular half-track tows a Sd.Ah.51 ammunition trailer, that usually contained 20 mm flak ammo. This vehicle was painted in a coat of brown (RAL 8020) with long stripes of gray-green (RAL 7008). The only markings of this vehicle were the standard license plates (the front one in the upper part of the frontal plate). This was an ammo vehicle for the StuG IIIs with the long-barreled 7.5 cm StuK 40 L/48 gun in Africa, a unit attached to the 10. Panzer-Division as the 13. Batterie of Panzer-Artillerie-Regiment 90 in January 1943.

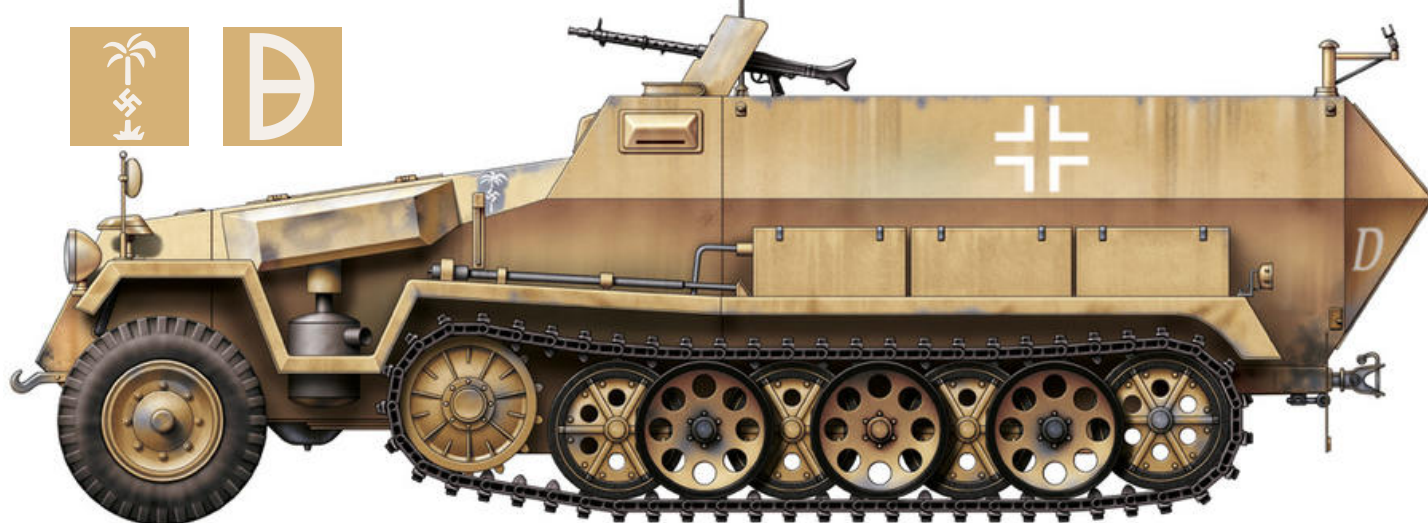




✠ **Sd.Kfz.250/11 with 2.8 cm schwere Panzerbüchse 41, Panzergrenadier-Regiment 69, 10. Panzer-Division, Tunisia, March 1943**

This vehicle was a special version for using the very special s.Pz.B.41 gun, an hybrid of heavy anti-tank rifle and gun. This kind of weapons, like the 3.7 cm PaK 36, used to be mounted on halftracks or wheeled armoured cars to give a close heavy weapons support to light armoured units. This vehicle was painted in a usual pattern for half-

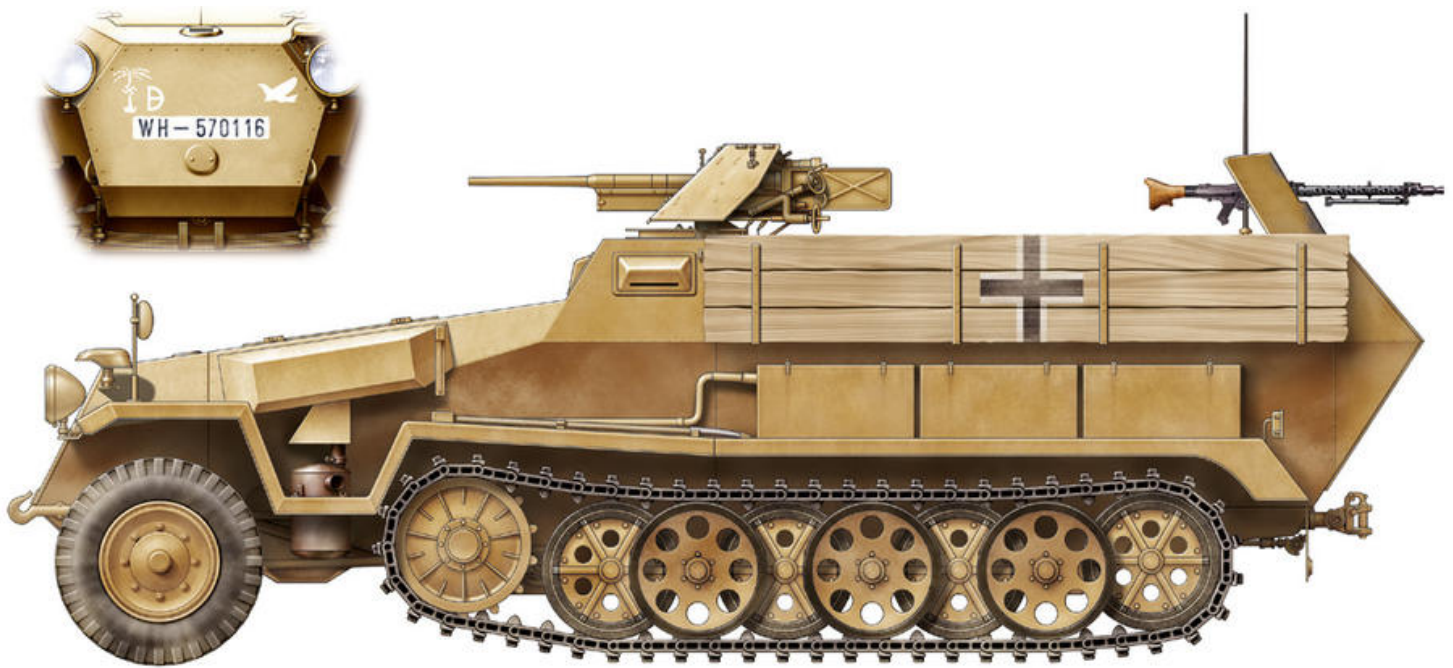
tracks of 10. Panzer-Division in Tunisia, yellow-brown (RAL 8020) with stripes of gray-green (RAL 7008), an scheme far more adapted to the greener Tunisian landscape. The only marks are hollow national crosses outlined in white at both sides and back plate, and DAK insignia in white in left side of front plate and right side of back one.



✠ **Sd.Kfz.251 Ausf.C, Panzergrenadier-Regiment 104, 21. Panzer-Division, Egypt, August 1942**

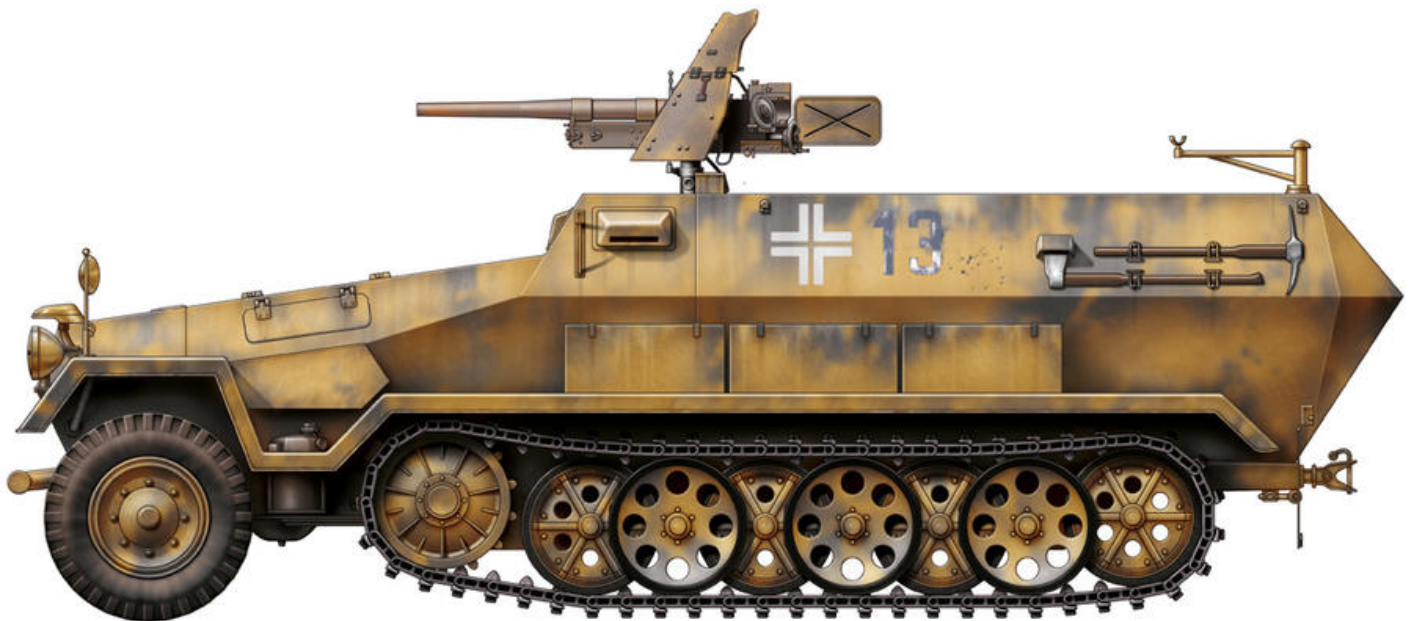
The Sd.Kfz.251 Ausf.C (produced in 1941) was very similar to the Ausf.B, but introduced a new flat engine nose plate, 14.5 mm thick, without access trap, replaced by a simple hole for the manifold. Other minor mass-production simplifications, included the rear access doors. Attention was also paid to the engine, with the removal of the front hood cooling grid, and the lateral access traps, replaced by large open ventilation boxes, and the lower part of the hull was modified to increase the compartment draw. The headlights were now fixed directly to the chassis and the bumpers removed and replaced by towing hooks. These vehicles seen action also in North Africa in limited numbers due to the only two armoured divisions involved. There was no real tropicalized version -only late modifications in the field, the rear "bathtub" compartment could turn red hot with the blistering sun of this region, and the engine hatches were all open to increase air cool-

ing while on the move. This Ausf.C was one of the few Sd.Kfz.251s of the Panzergrenadier-Regiment 104, used as infantry armoured transport (just 31 Sd.Kfz.251s in 21. Panzer-Division in November 1942). The Schützen-Regiment 104 (104th Infantry Regiment) was first attached to 15. Panzer-Division, but in August 1941 was transferred to 21. Panzer-Division, and renamed in 1942 as Panzergrenadier-Regiment 104. This vehicle had the new 1942 yellow-brown color for Africa (RAL 8020) over the usual dark gray base (RAL 7021), with hollow outlined in white national crosses on both sides and rear. The only markings were the DAK insignia over gary patch on both sides; DAK and division insignias painted in white on right side of front plate (DAK in gray patch), and the same DAK insignia in rear lower right corner and divisional insignia painted in rear lower left corner with front and rear licenses plates.



✠ **Sd.Kfz.251/10 Ausf.C, Schützen-Regiment 104, 21. Panzer-Division, January 1942**

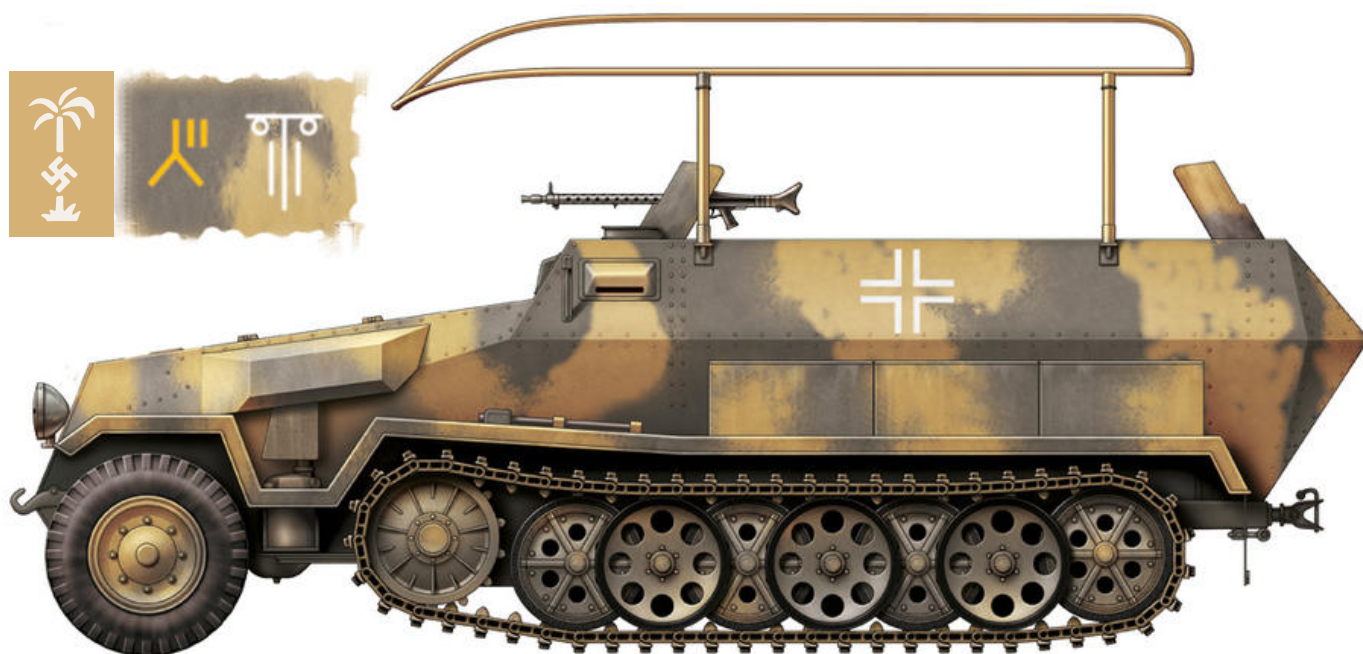
This was the support version of the Sd.Kfz.251 Ausf.C, with the 37 mm PaK 36 gun instead of the front machine gun; in this case the machine gun and its armoured shield were reinstalled at the hull rear. The vehicle, painted in yellow-brown (RAL 8000), had the standard vehicle license plates, and standard national crosses on both sides of hull and center of rear plate. In the frontal plate were painted a white DAK and divisional insignia right side, and a white bird (regiment symbol) left side (see the picture). The same markings were repeated in rear plate upper corners. The wooden containers on the upper hull sides were painted in the same colour as the vehicle. These were probably a field modification to transport crew and passenger equipment.



✠ **Sd.Kfz.251/10 Ausf.B, unknown unit, El Alamein, Egypt, November 1942**

This version of the Sd.Kfz.251 half-track was armed with the 37 mm PaK gun, as support vehicle (because this gun was obsolete as anti-tank weapon). This vehicle was the platoon commander's one (it used to be equipped with the 37 mm PaK) and was painted in a very worn coat of brown (RAL 8020) over the dark gray (RAL 7021), with a new hollow outlined in white

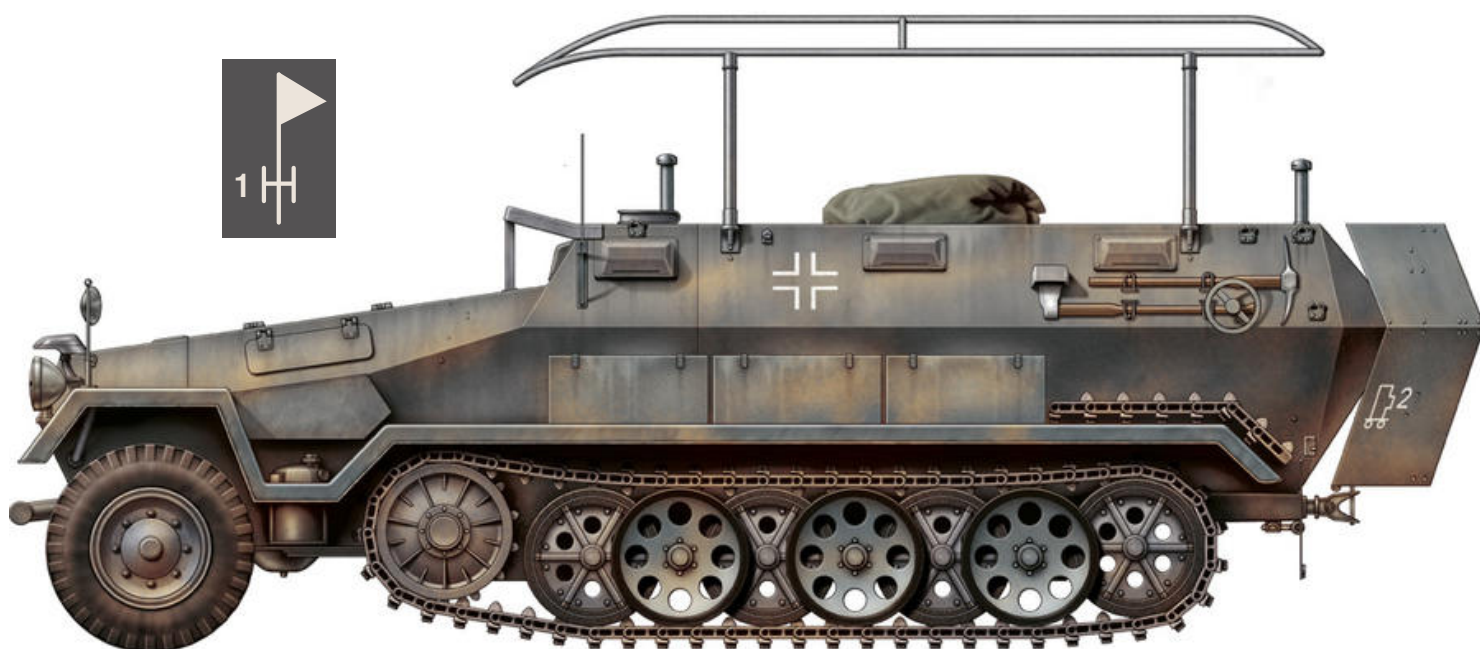
national cross on each side and number 13 (almost erased) as mark of probably 1st company, 3rd platoon. The vehicle had the standard front and rear license plates. See the yellow-brown (RAL 8000) almost gone from the gun and shield, exposing the original dark gray color (probably because the gun was previously on a carriage as towed PaK gun).

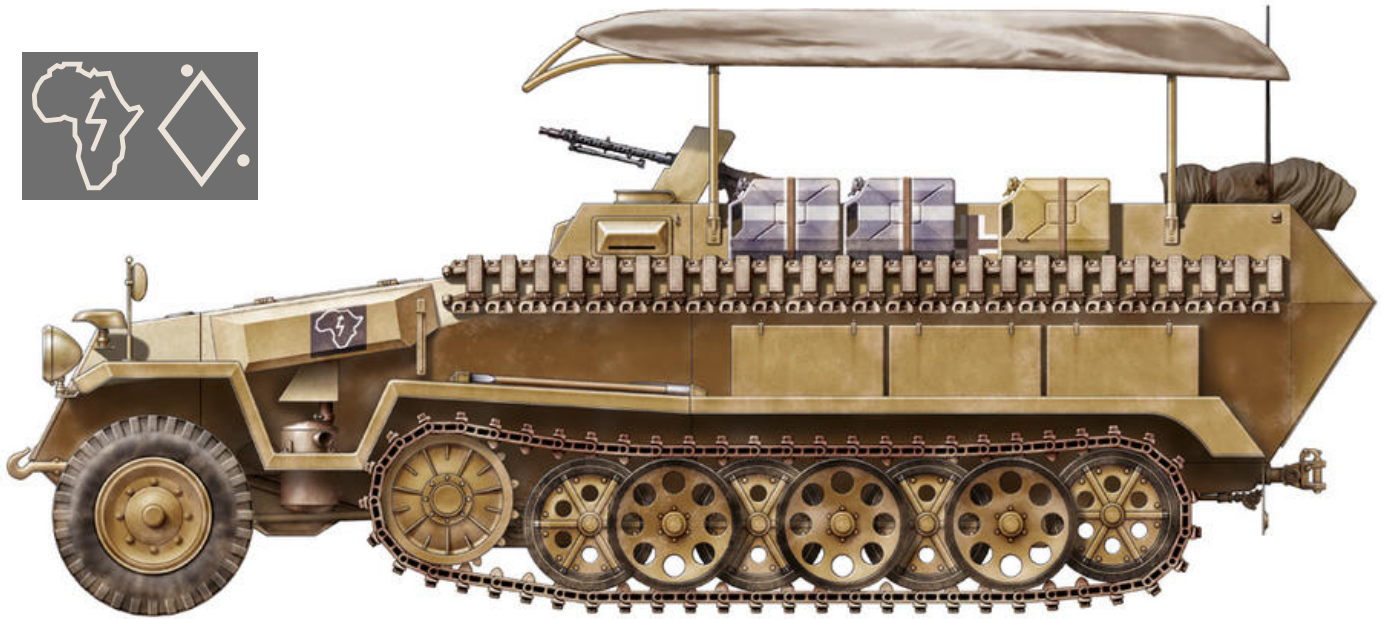


✚ **Sd.Kfz.251/3 Ausf.C, Stab des Artillerie-Regiments 155, 5. leichte Division, Libya, August 1941**

The Sd.Kfz.251/3 was the main radio version of this vehicle, which was subdivided into five sub-versions, each using different radio combinations, like the Fu 8 + Fu 5 (I, II), Fu 1 + Fu 7 (III), Fu 11 + Fu 12 (IV - long range, with a telescopic 9m antenna mast) and the Fu 11 for the V sub-variant. Most of these vehicles were used in signal and HQ sub-units of Panzer and artillery, like this one. This vehicle belonged to the Artillerie-Regiment 155, the field artillery unit of 5. leichte Division and, after renamed, the 21. Panzer-Division. This unit was the sum of I. Abteilung of Artillerie-Regiment (mot.) 75 of 5. leichte Division and two more Abteilungen sent to Africa. The pictured vehicle, one of the few halftracks of the 5. leichte Division, belonged to the HQ of the Regiment, and was painted with a pattern of large patch-

es of a very light sand brown colour (maybe a "captured" British paint) over the original dark gray base (RAL 7021). The vehicle had the usual front and rear license plates, and hollow outlined in white national crosses on both sides and centered on the rear doors. The DAK insignia was painted in white in the front right upper corner of the front plate and left rear upper corner. The tactical symbol of 5. leichte Division (in yellow) was painted on the right rear upper corner; it was painted too on the front left upper corner of the front plate, besides tactical symbol of motorised artillery unit (in white). This vehicle was armed with an armoured shielded frontal MG 34 machine gun, and as extra equipment (and very unusual), had a rear armoured shield for another machine gun.





✠ Sd.Kfz.251/6, unknown signal unit, Libya 1942

This command version of the Sd.Kfz.251 was the best equipped half-track version for the use of high rank officers, and usually belonged to signal units attached to HQ of big units like regiments or divisions, like the one pictured here. The vehicle had a marking of a signal unit painted on the engine air intakes of both sides (black rectangle with white outlined Africa map and a white lightning bolt inside, typical symbol of signal units in German Army). This symbol was quite a mystery, because was seen on many signal vehicles close to Rommel's HQ, but on ambulance vehicles close to Rommel group too. The halftrack was painted in a coat of yellow-brown (RAL 8000), with standard national crosses (black outlined in white) on both sides of hull, over the engine compartment covers (for air identification) and probably on the rear doors. The original image shows a rank pennant attached to the front left vertical support on antennae frame; the colors seems to be black-white-red, and probably it's a triangle flag, so maybe a division commander vehicle's flag (this is more probably because the pointing officer was General Rommel as the Bundesarchiv picture caption says); probably was the commander of 90 leichte Division (because the vehicle had a tactical symbol which looked like a white

90. leichte Afrika-Division on a black square painted at left rear corner), and the vehicle (belonged to Rommel's HQ) was borrowed to this Division Commander (this kind of vehicles were rare and 90. Division had only one). The DAK insignia painted in white was in left side of front plate, and the halftrack had the standard front and rear license plates, as was usual. See the spare tracks all along the hull, and jerry can racks on both sides for water and gas cans. The crew has spread a canvas cover over the antenna frame to have some shadow.



◀ ✠ Sd.Kfz.251/6 Ausf.B, Nachrichtenzug, Stab der I./Artillerie-Regiment (mot.) 75, 5. leichte Division, Libya, April 1941

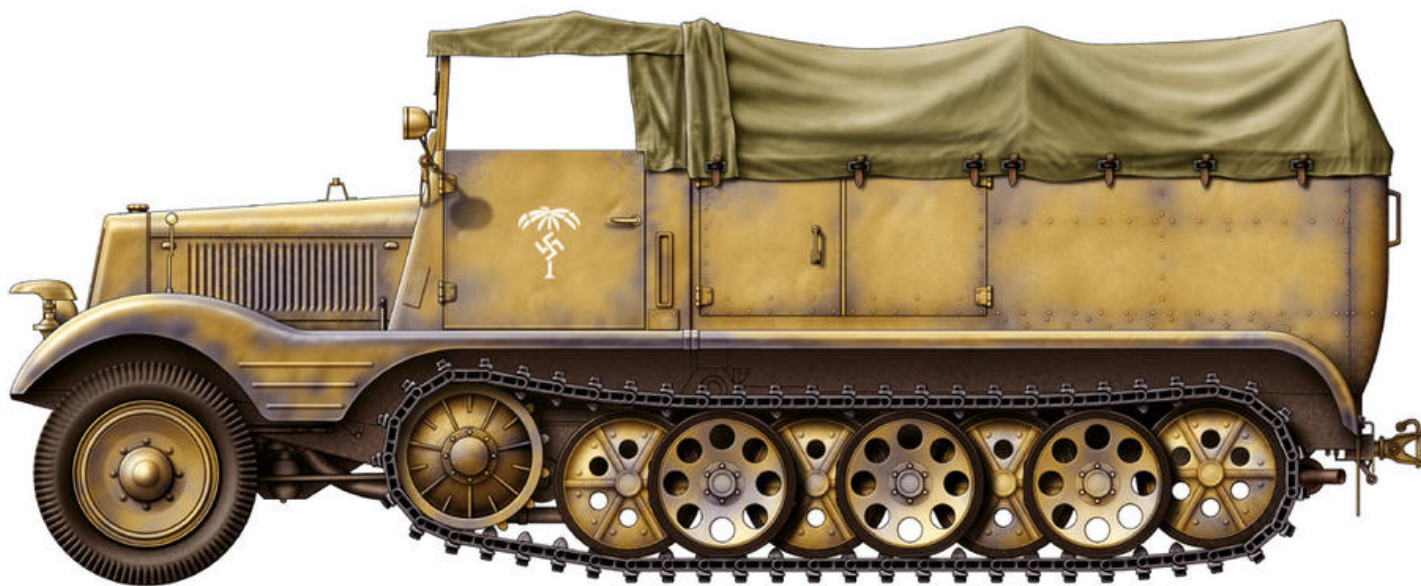
The first Sd.Kfz.251 Ausf.A appeared in mid-1939 and were initially allocated to the Schützen-Regiment 1 attached to the 1. Panzer-Division, the best equipped German unit at the outbreak of the Polish campaign. Production figures estimates for 1939 are only 232. The Ausf.B appeared in 1940, and was similar in all aspects but the relocated radio antenna (from the step to the rear fighting compartment), and the removal of the rear vision sights, for production facility. By the end of 1940, only 337 more would be delivered. An estimated 500 took part in the French Campaign. This vehicle belonged to the Nachrichtenzug (Signal Platoon) attached to HQ of the 1st Abteilung of the 75th Artillery Regiment, a part of the 5. leichte Division. This Sd.Kfz.251/6

was an early command and radio vehicle, housed map boards, cipher and encoding machines into a rearranged compartment, and it had just arrived to Libya, so it was still painted in the standard European dark gray camouflage (RAL 7021), with a light coat of dust and sand. See the white tactical symbol for a signal platoon (mot.) and the number "2" for the second platoon, painted on rear left door. No DAK insignia was painted, but just hollow white outlined national crosses on both sides and over the engine compartment cover for air detection. The vehicle had the usual front and rear standard licence plates and a tactical symbol and number 1 in white painted on the left front mudguard for Stab der I. Artillerie-Abteilung (see the detail picture).



✠ **Sd.Kfz.10, unknown half-tracked towed anti-tank artillery unit, Libya 1941**

The Sd.Kfz.10 was a halftrack that saw very widespread use in Africa. Its main role was as a prime mover for small towed guns such as the 2 cm FlaK 30/38, the 7.5 cm le.I.G.18, the 3.7 cm PaK 36 and even the 5 cm PaK 38. It could carry all the crew of the towing gun. Its chassis formed the basis for the Sd.Kfz.250 light armored personnel carrier. Approximately 14,000 were produced between 1938 and 1945, making it one of the most widely produced German halftracks vehicles of the war. This vehicle was a tractor of 2 company of an unknown halftrack-towed anti-tank artillery unit. The paint scheme was a coat of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) over the dark gray original (RAL 7021). The white DAK insignia was painted on both sides, right front mudguard and rear plate left side; the white tactical symbol was painted in back hull sides, front left mudguard and rear plate right side. The vehicle license plates were the usual of the Heer, and it had a German national flag over the engine cover for air detection.

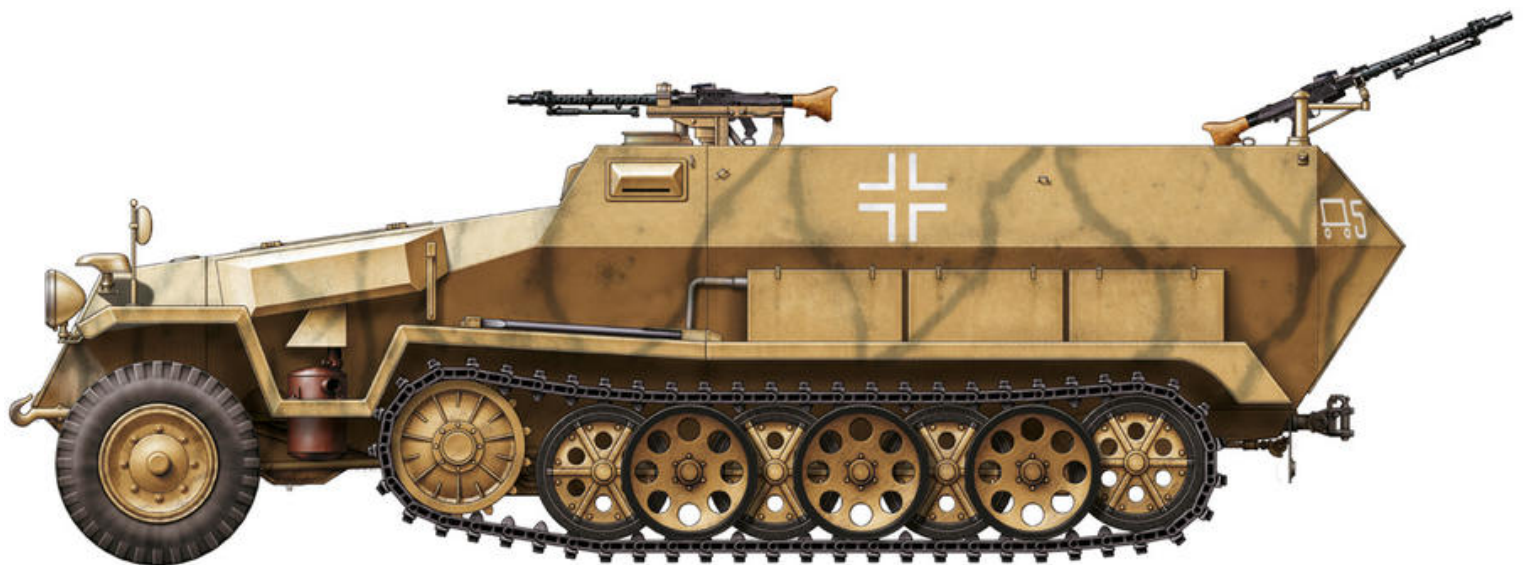
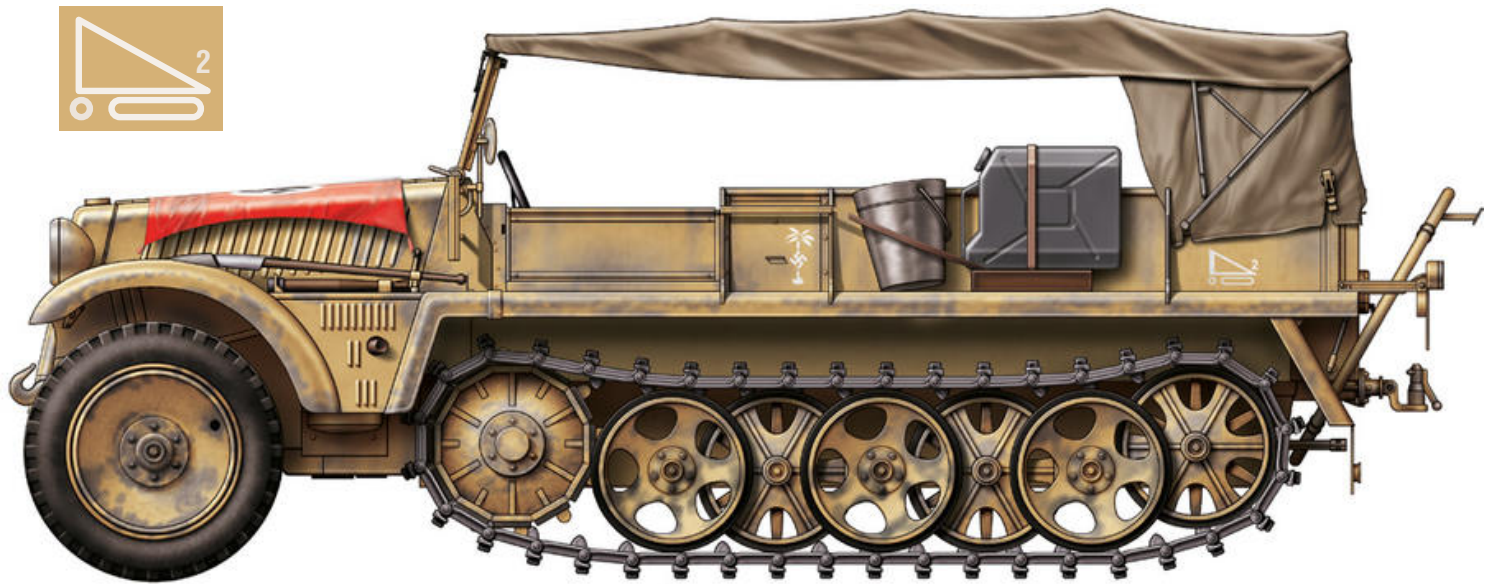


✠ **Sd.Kfz.11, Panzer-Artillerie-Regiment 33, 15. Panzer-Division, Libya 1942**

The Sd.Kfz.11 was produced from 1937 to 1945 by Horch, Skoda and several other German factories. The total number was around 25.000, and its main role was as a prime mover for medium towed guns ranging from the 3.7 cm FlaK 43 anti-aircraft gun up to the 10.5 cm le.F.H.18 field howitzer. It could carry eight troops in addition to towing a gun or trailer. This Sd.Kfz.11 belonged to the main artillery unit of 15. Panzer-Division, the Artillerie-Regiment (mot.) 33, renamed in mid-1942 as Panzer-Artillerie-Regiment

33. Its two light Abteilungen were equipped with le.F.H.18 howitzers, towed by the Sd.Kfz.11. This one was painted in a very worn coat of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) over the dark gray base (RAL 7021). It had white DAK insignia on both side doors, red divisional symbols painted on front right mudguard and rear lower left corner, and white tactical symbols for light howitzer unit (mot.) on the front left mudguard and rear right lower corner. The vehicle license plates were the usual front and rear ones of Heer.





✠ **Sd.Kfz.251 Ausf.C, Panzergrenadier-Regiment 69, 10. Panzer-Division, Tunisia, February 1943**

This Sd.Kfz.251 troop carrier, belonged to the Panzergrenadier-Regiment 69 (with only two Abteilungen/Battalions), and was sent to Africa late in 1942 with the 10. Panzer-Division. The vehicles of this unit are well known from a series of pictures taken in Kasserine Pass by German PK units, where these vehicles are mixed with captured US halftracks, jeeps and trucks. This Sd.Kfz.251 was painted in a coat of brown (RAL 8020), with a pattern of thin gray-green lines (RAL 7008) all over the vehicle. Hollow outlined in white national crosses were painted on both sides, rear doors and over the engine compartment cover (for air detection). The vehicle license plates were the standard front and rear ones, with the tactical symbol for the 5th motorised infantry company painted in white in upper front left corner and upper front left corner, and 10. Panzer-Division tactical symbol in yellow painted on upper right front corner and upper rear right corner (over a gray green stripe).

No DAK insignia were painted on the vehicle. The weapons are the standard front and rear MG 34 machine guns. Some vehicles of this platoon had racks for jerrycans on the rear part of hull sides, and black outlined in white national crosses (see photo below).

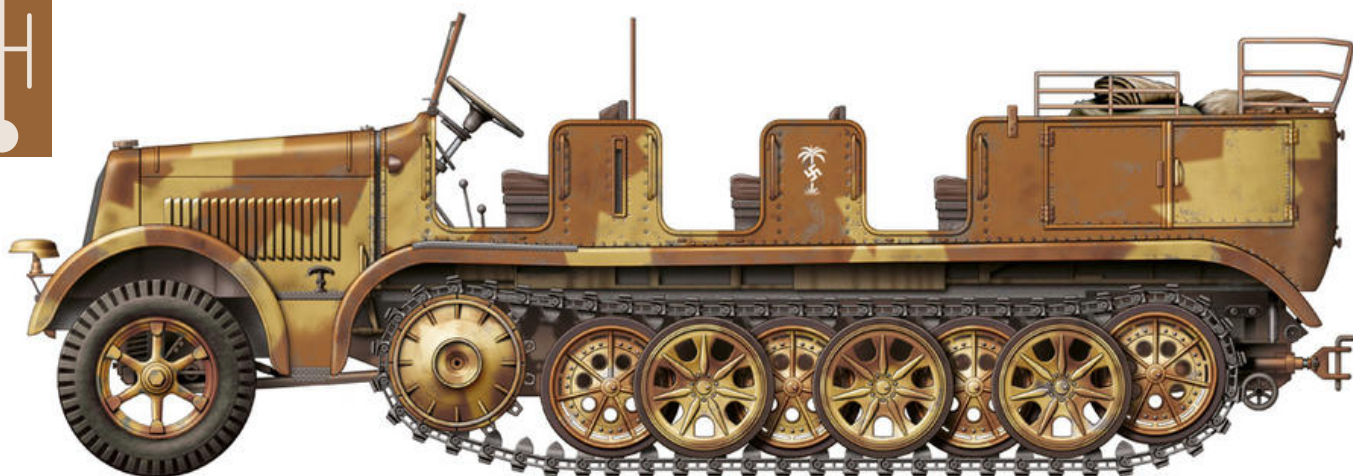




✠ **Sd.Kfz.7, unknown Luftwaffe 8.8 cm Flakbatterie, Libya 1941**

This Sd.Kfz.7 has just been delivered to Libya. Its uniform coat of dark grey (RAL 7021) wasn't suited for combat in the desert, so the crew camouflaged the vehicle with patches of mud, creating a provisional ground concealment scheme. The markings of this

Sd.Kfz.7 comprised white tactical symbol of Luftwaffe's 8.8 cm Flakbatterie, and probably also the DAK insignia, each applied on one of the front mudguards and opposite sides of the rear plate. Note the canvas cover in grey instead of more usual khaki colour.



✠ **Sd.Kfz.7, I./Flak-Regiment 43 (gem. mot.), attached to 15. Panzer-Division, Libya, March 1942**

This Sd.Kfz.7 belonged to the I. Abteilung of Luftwaffe's Flak-Regiment 43 (gem. mot.), which was sent to North Africa in 1942, and attached to the 15. Panzer-Division to perform in the anti-tank role. This vehicle wore a typical camouflage for this unit, which resembled the splinter pattern present on all Luftwaffe aircraft in the early period of war, albeit here it was done with different colours. The original dark gray (RAL 7021) base coat was covered with brown (RAL 8020), and then some hard-edged stripes of brown were applied, perhaps using a dark



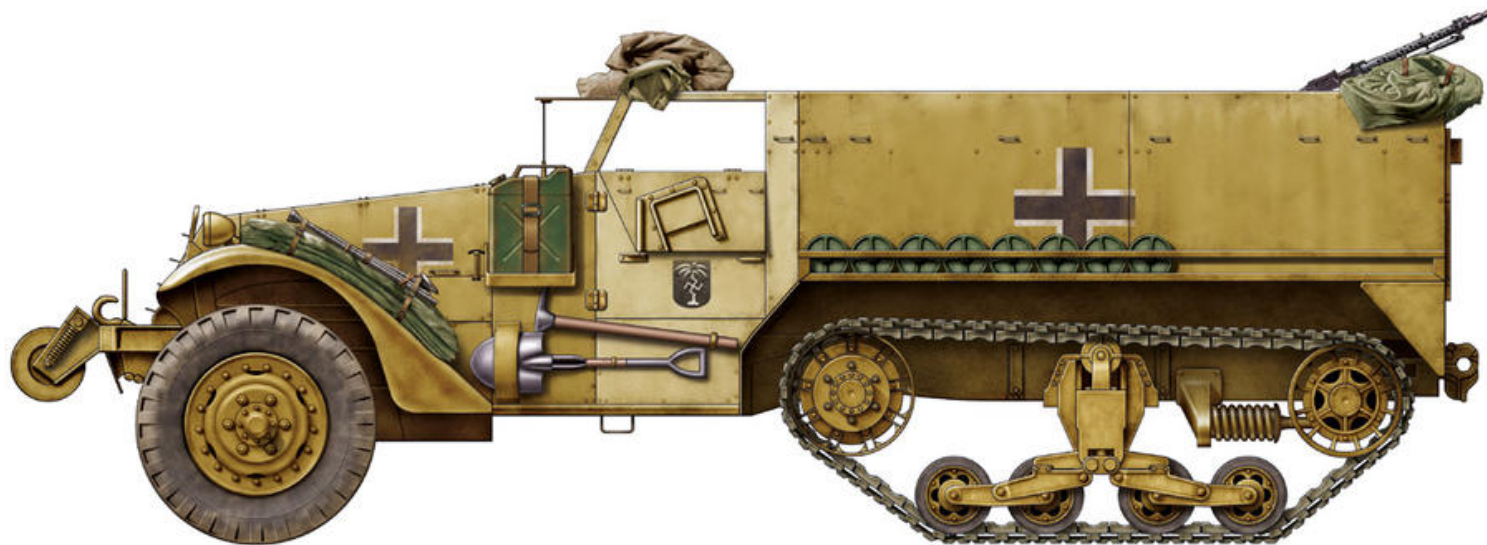
version of RAL 8000, or Italian rosso rugine paint. This vehicle had standard Luftwaffe license plates (two on the front bumper). White DAK insignia were applied on both sides of the body, left front mudguard and right side of the rear plate, whilst the tactical symbol of Luftwaffe's 8.8 cm Flakbatterie was painted in white on the right front mudguard and left side of the rear plate. As the I./Flak-Regiment 43 wasn't an organic unit of the 15. Panzer-Division, this Sd.Kfz.7 didn't wear any divisional symbols.



✠ **Sd.Kfz.9, Werkstatt-Kompanie, Panzer-Regiment 5, 21. Panzer-Division, Tunisia, December 1942**

The Sd.Kfz.9, also known as "Famo", was the heaviest half-track vehicle of any type built in quantity in Germany during the war years. Its main roles were prime mover for very heavy towed guns, for heavy cargo, or towing tanks or Sd.Ah.116 trailer for tanks transport (like this vehicle), and tank recovery vehicle. This cargo or towing version had just two storage compartments mounted in the front of the cargo compartment, one on each side, that opened to the outside. The Sd.Kfz.9 was designed to have a towing capacity of 28 tons. This was adequate for medium tanks like the Panzer IV, but two or even three or four were necessary for heavier vehicles like the Tiger I in Tunisia. This vehicle belonged to the 3.Zug (3rd Platoon, a recovery unit with 2 Sd.Kfz.9s and Sd.Ah.116 trailers) from the Werkstatt-Kompanie (workshop company; note its white tactical symbol) of Panzer-Regiment 5. This heavy halftrack was repainted in brown (RAL 8020) over the original dark gray (RAL 7021), and was marked with white DAK insignia applied on gray patches on both sides, front right mudguard and left rear mudguard. The white tactical symbol together with divisional symbol were painted on the front left mudguard and right rear mudguard, over a gray patch too.





✠ **M3 Half-Track, unknown unit, Tunisia, March 1943**

As a result of the great number of captured US M3 Half-Tracks, the Germans in Tunisia started to paint all these vehicles in a standard scheme of brown (RAL 8020) over the original olive drab. This M3 was one of the "Germanised" vehicles, with a full coat of the new color, prominent national crosses all around the vehicle (two in the sides, one in front and back plate, and over the motor hood). Like in this

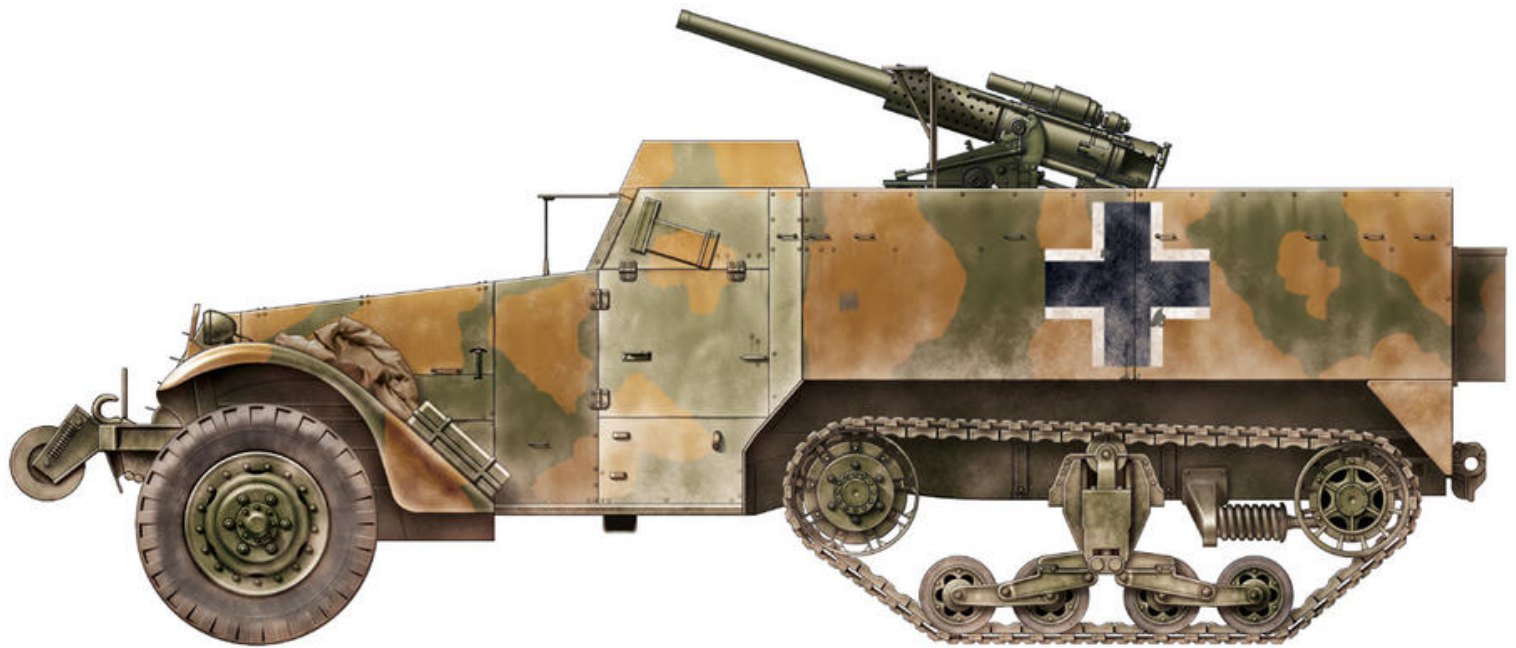
M3, was usual to paint the DAK insignia in white over black or original olive drab patch in both side doors. The US weapons were removed from this vehicle, and its only weapon is a standard MG 34 machine gun. The round items along the side are US landmines in the original olive drab color, that were transporter (without fuses of course) in such a way in US M3s.



✠ **M3 Half-Track, unknown unit, Tunisia, February 1943**

After the battles of Sidi Bou Zid and Kasserine Pass, the Afrika Korps captured a lot of US Army 1st Armoured Division's halftracks. Most of them were used by the Germans due to the shortage of their own transport vehicles. This vehicle was used as light ambulance, and was painted in US olive drab standard color, camouflage with patches of dark brown color

probably by German capturers. The captured vehicles used to be marked with German national insignia, but this one had only the big red cross on both sides and rear plate, and a big white flag with red cross inside. See the name of the vehicle "Moon lite", and the yellow star of all the US armour in Tunisia, with a red "2" tactical number inside.

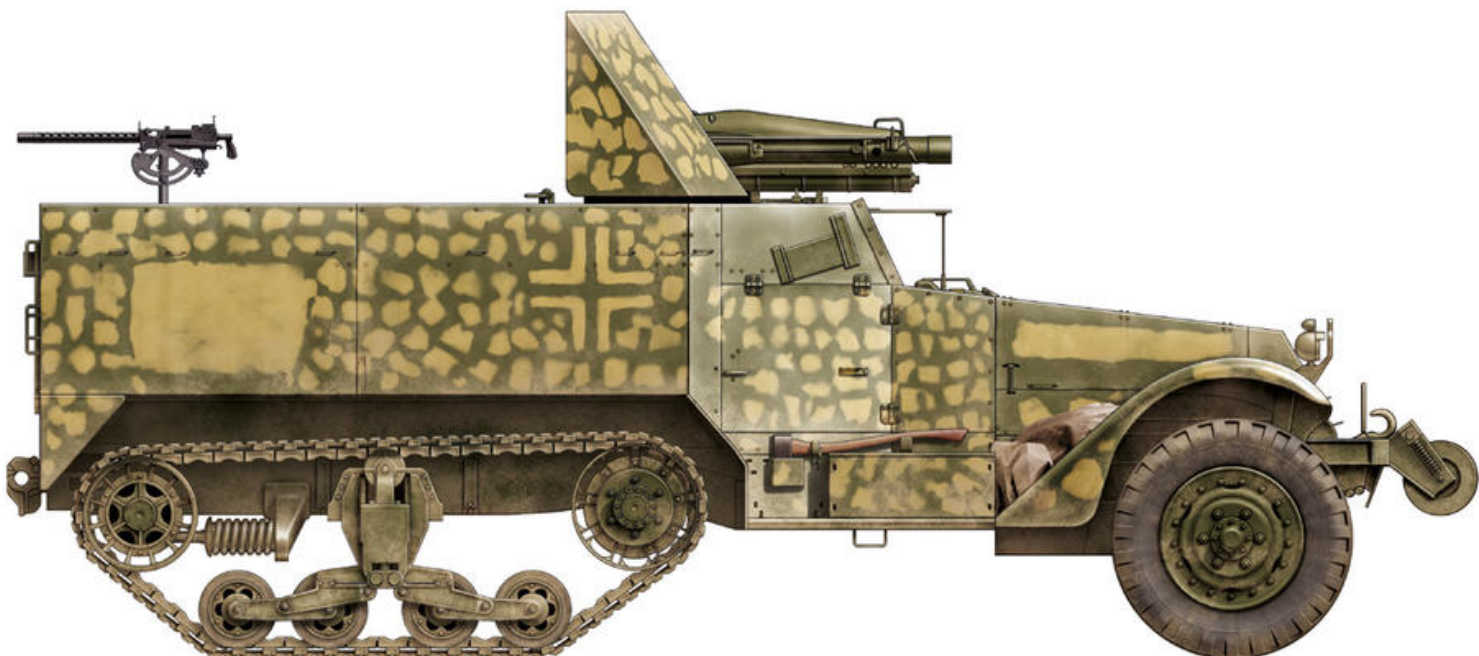


✠ M3 Half-Track with 3.7 cm M 25 (f), unknown unit, Tunisia 1943

Probably one of a number taken by the 10. Panzer-Division at Kesserine off the US 1st Armoured Division, this M3 halftrack was up-gunned with a French 37 mm CA/SMCA mle 1925 single AA gun. This kind of weapons, captured by the Germans in France and Tunisia, was mainly used in ships and



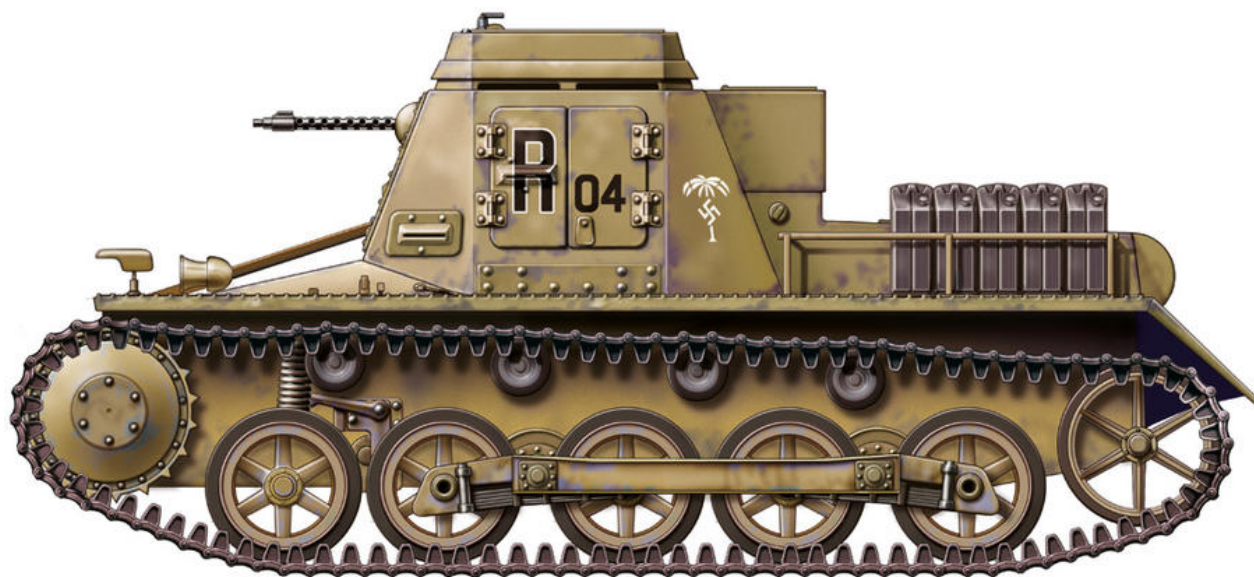
coastal artillery batteries. The gun was painted in the standard French green paint, and the vehicle had large patches of brown color (maybe yellow-brown RAL 8000) over the original US olive drab. The only markings were large national crosses on both sides of the hull and over the front grill.



✠ T30 75 mm HMC, Panzergrenadier-Regiment 86, Sidi-Nsir, Tunisia, February 1943

This self-propelled gun, a version of M3 Half-Track with 75 mm howitzer, was captured by the Germans to US 1st Armoured Division, and used in the battle of Sidi-Nsir in February 1943. This vehicle receive a very special pattern of little patches of brown (RAL 8020) over the original US olive drab. All the US markings were overpainted with yellow-brown colour; see the patch over the US serial number in the

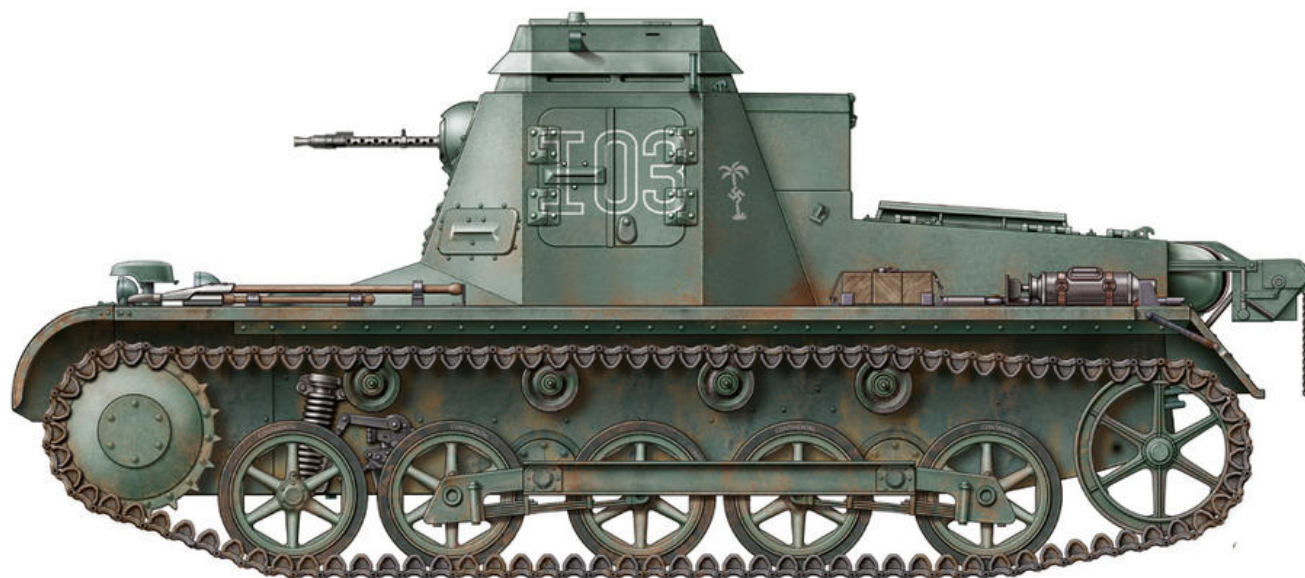
engine cover side, and over the national star (big rectangular patch in back side plate). The only marks in the vehicle were German national insignia, just outlined in brown (RAL 8020) on both sides of the vehicle and over the radiator grill. The new owners of this vehicle didn't even change the M1919 machine gun for a German one, as was usual with captured M3 halftracks.



✠ **kl.Pz.Bef.Wg.I Ausf.B, unknown Panzer-Regiment, Libya 1941**

The kleiner Panzerbefehlswagen or light command tank was based on Pz.Kpfw.I Ausf.B; around 200 of these high profile, fast command tanks were built. Painted in a worn coat of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) over the original dark gray base (RAL 7021), this command version was armed just with a frontal ball mount MG 34, belonged to the HQ of a

Panzer Regiment (see the black R outlined in white). The 04 painted in black is the number for regiment staff officer. There was DAK insignia painted in white besides the tactical symbols. All the symbols were repeated on the other side of the vehicle. This kind of vehicles had a rack for jerrycans over the rear side of the mudguard.



✠ **kl.Pz.Bef.Wg.I Ausf.B, I./Panzer-Regiment 5, 21. Panzer-Division, Libya, late 1941**

This command version of the Pz.Kpfw.I was painted with light green paint over the dark gray base, probably Grigio Verde, an Italian color. The tactical number belongs to the I.Abteilung signals officer. The DAK insignia was painted on both sides.

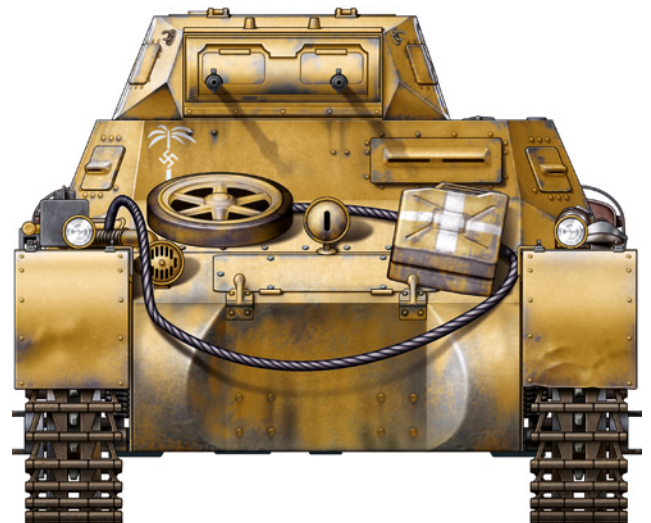
The tactical symbol of the division, white "D" divided by an horizontal white line, was painted in the left side of the front, and in the right side of back plate, together with a solid white national cross.



✠ Pz.Kpfw.I Ausf.A, 8./Panzer-Regiment 5, 5. leichte Division, Libya 1941

Design of the Panzerkampfwagen I began in 1932 and mass production in 1934. The Pz.Kpfw.I's performance in combat was limited by its thin armor and light armament of two machine guns, so this kind of tanks were soon replaced as first line battle tanks and relegated to other roles. This vehicle was the first version of the Pz.Kpfw.I, with a shorter hull and worse engine and suspension performance. The Panzer-Regiment 5 had light tanks companies equipped with the Pz.Kpfw.I, so they took part in the first Africa fights against the British light armoured vehicles. This Panzer I had a light coat of yellow-brown paint (RAL 8000) over the original dark gray base (RAL 7021). The crew left unpainted the tactical number on both sides of turret, hollow outlined in white; 8 indicating the 8th company, 3 indicating 3rd platoon, and 3 indicating the 3rd tank of the platoon. See the white

DAK insignia painted over a patch of dark gray left unpainted (both sides and left side of front hull plate). These vehicles used to had a black white outlined Balkenkreuz painted in the left side of rear engine plate.



✠ Pz.Kpfw.I Ausf.B, 8./Panzer-Regiment 5, 5. leichte Division, Libya 1941

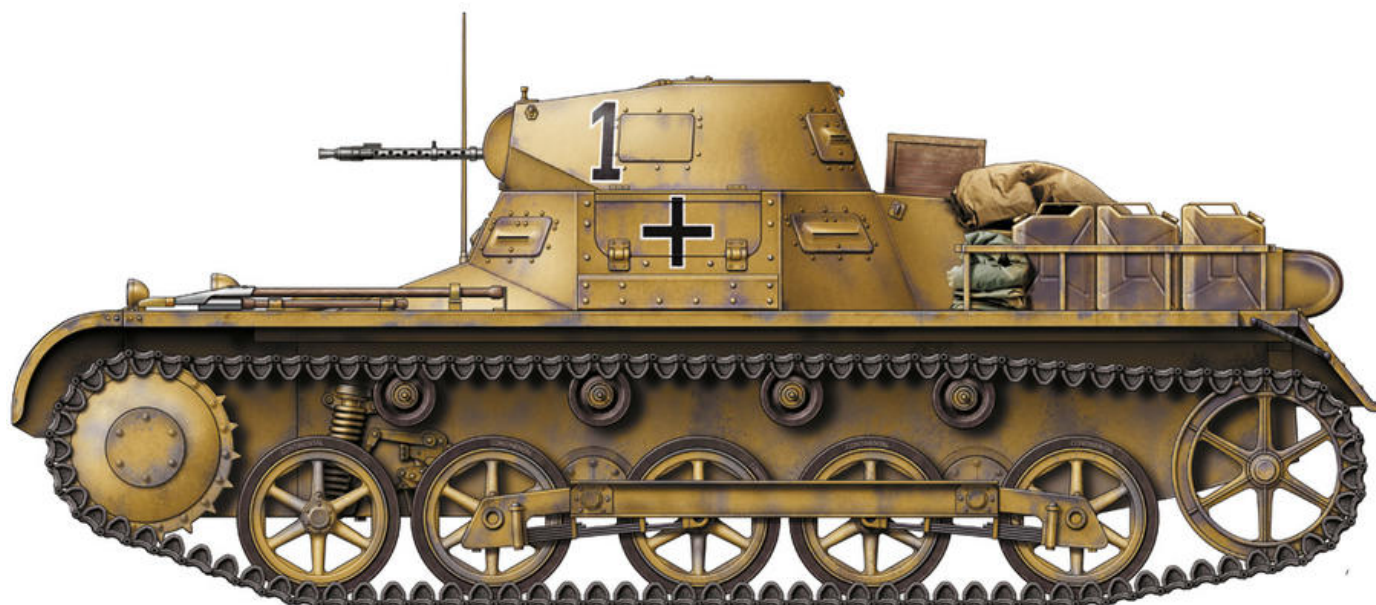
This frontal view of a Pz.Kpfw.I Ausf.B, with a worn coat of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) over dark gray (RAL 7021) base, shows the white DAK insignia on the front hull plate. The tactical number 813 was painted black outlined in white on both sides of turret. The national insignia, black outlined in white, were painted on both hull sides and left side of engine rear plate. See the tow cable, the spare road wheel and the water can.



✠ Pz.Kpfw.I Ausf.A, Stab der I./Panzer-Regiment 8, 15. Panzer-Division, Libya 1941

This frontal view of a Pz.Kpfw.I Ausf.A, with a new coat of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) over dark gray (RAL 7021) base, shows the divisional symbol painted in red color and white DAK insignia centered on the front hull plate. The tactical number 103, red outlined in white, indicating a vehicle of I.Abteilung signals officer, was painted on both sides of turret.

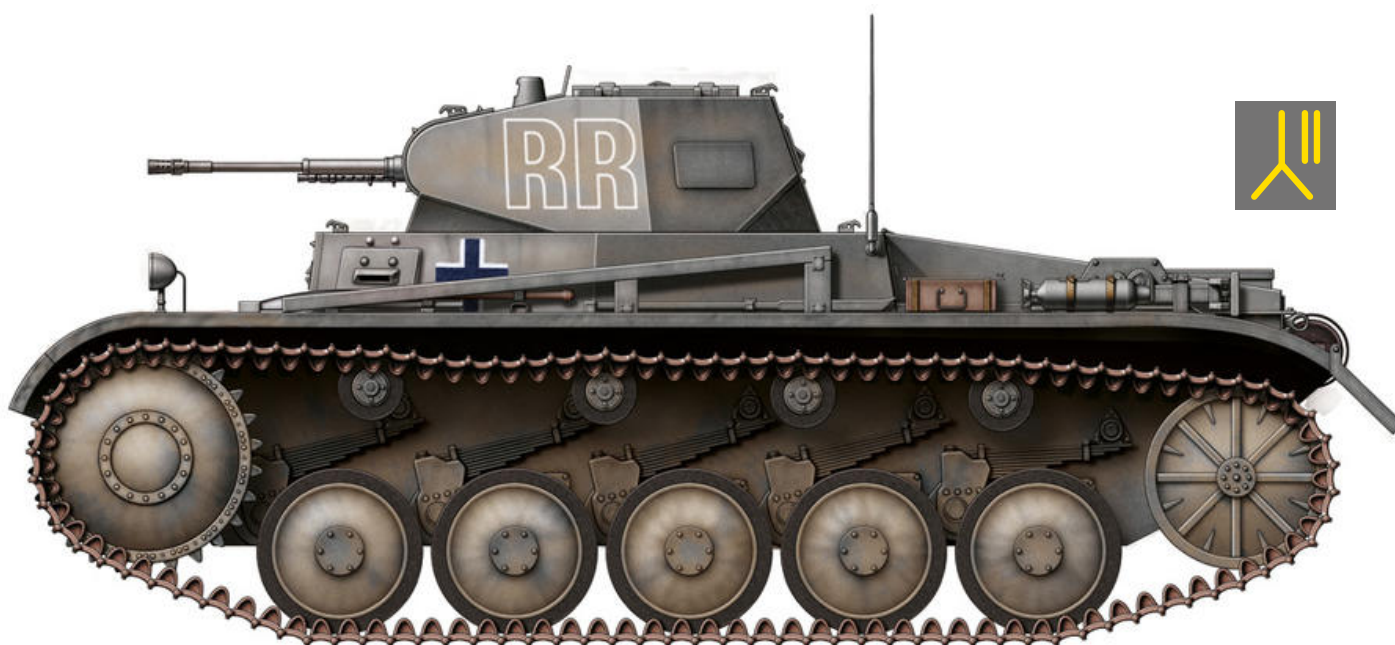




✠ Pz.Kpfw.I Ausf.B, Stab der II./Panzer-Regiment 5, 5. leichte Division, Libya, May 1941

This vehicle is the Ausf.B version of Pz.Kpfw.I, with a longer hull, better engine and suspension, but outdated as first line tank when the Afrika Korps was formed and the Panzer-Regiment 5 was sent to Libya. The HQs of Abteilungen (Battalions) of Panzer-Regiment 5 were assigned with light tank platoons for protection with 5 Panzer IIs, but they used the Panzer I in these platoons due to the shortage of Panzer IIs. Despite being outdated, the HQ of II.Abteilung had in May 1941 four operational Panzer Is, and even in September 1941 the Regiment

still had 13 Panzer Is (most of Panzer I in that time were used in rear duties or as spare parts for Panzerjäger I). This vehicle was repainted with a worn coat of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) over the base of dark gray (RAL 7021); the tactical number, black 1 outlined in white, was painted in both sides of turret. It had national insignia black outlined in white on both sides of hull and rear engine plate left side, and the DAK insignia painted over a gray patch centered on the front hull plate. Note the racks for jerrycans over the mudguards.



✠ Pz.Kpfw.II Ausf. D, Stabs-Kompanie, Panzer-Regiment 5, 5. leichte Division, Libya, February 1941

The Pz.Kpfw.II was, armed with a 2 cm KwK 38 L/55, similar to Flak 30 anti-aircraft gun, which was capable of firing at a rate of 600 rounds per minute (280 rounds per minute sustained) from 10-round magazines. This tank also had a 7.92 mm MG 34 machine gun mounted coaxially with the main gun, and a crew of just 3 men. This light tank belonged to HQ of the Panzer-Regiment 5, which was a part of the first German unit in Africa. It was painted in original European dark

gray (RAL 7021), with national insignia on both sides of hull. As a former part of the 3. Panzer-Division, this tank still had the symbol of this unit. painted in yellow centered on the front hull plate. As soon as possible all those tanks were painted in yellow-brown (RAL 8000), which resulted in the 3. Panzer-Division symbols being overpainted. The outlined in white "RR" tactical markings were painted on rear and both sides of the turret.



✠ Pz.Kpfw.II Ausf.B, Stabs-Kompanie, Panzer-Regiment 5, 5. leichte Division, Tobruk, April 1941

The Panzer-Regiment 5 was attached to the 5. leichte Division when arrived to Africa, before that division was renamed the 21. Panzer-Division. This Panzer II was assigned to the medical officer of the Regiment, as indicated by the snake white symbol and the letters "RA" outlined in white (for Regiments Arzt in German). The vehicle was painted in yellow-brown

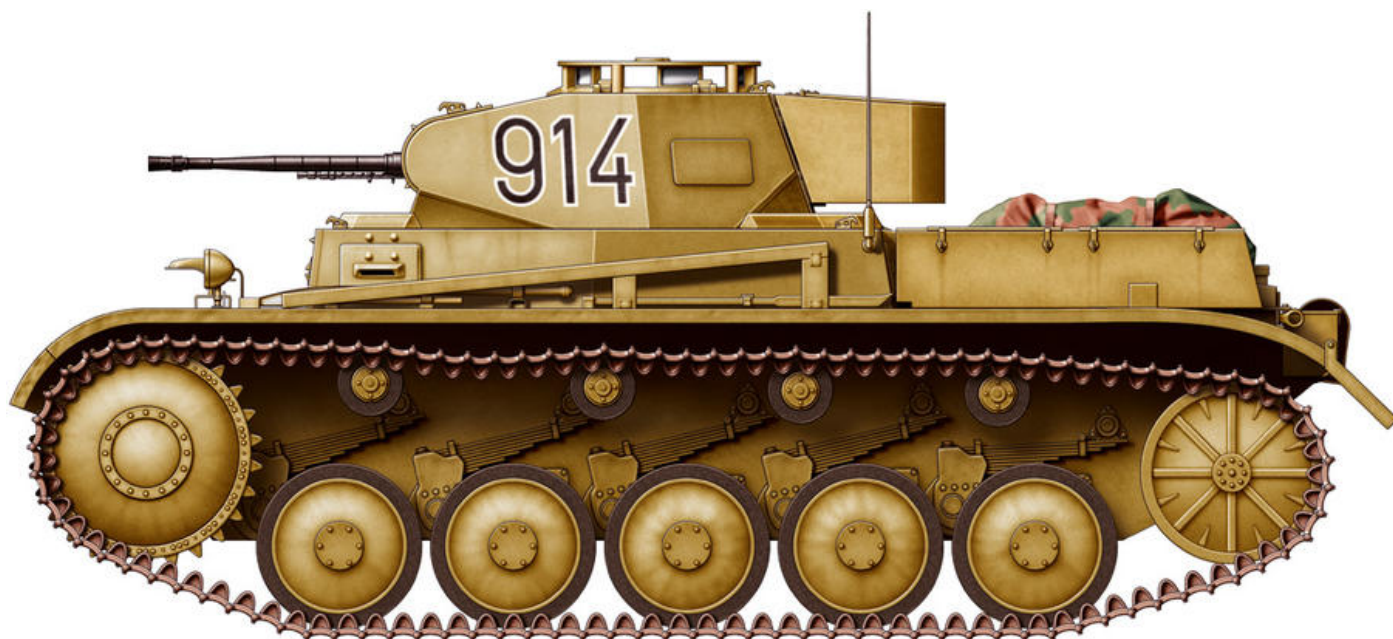
(RAL 8000) over the original dark gray base (RAL 7021). See the painting was made with the antenna down, so there was a gray line unpainted where the antenna was. There were national insignia and white DAK insignia on both sides of the hull; the latter were repeated on the front beside the driver's visor, with a white "G" to the right of DAK insignia.



✠ Pz.Kpfw.II Ausf.A, unknown pioneer unit, 15. Panzer-Division, Libya 1941

This early Panzer II, painted in the European dark gray colour (RAL 7021), had a pattern of "spaghetti" stripes of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) all around the hull and turret surfaces, in a fast way of camouflage the dark color, very prominent in the clear desert landscape. This vehicle showed a tactical symbol for pioneer unit tank,

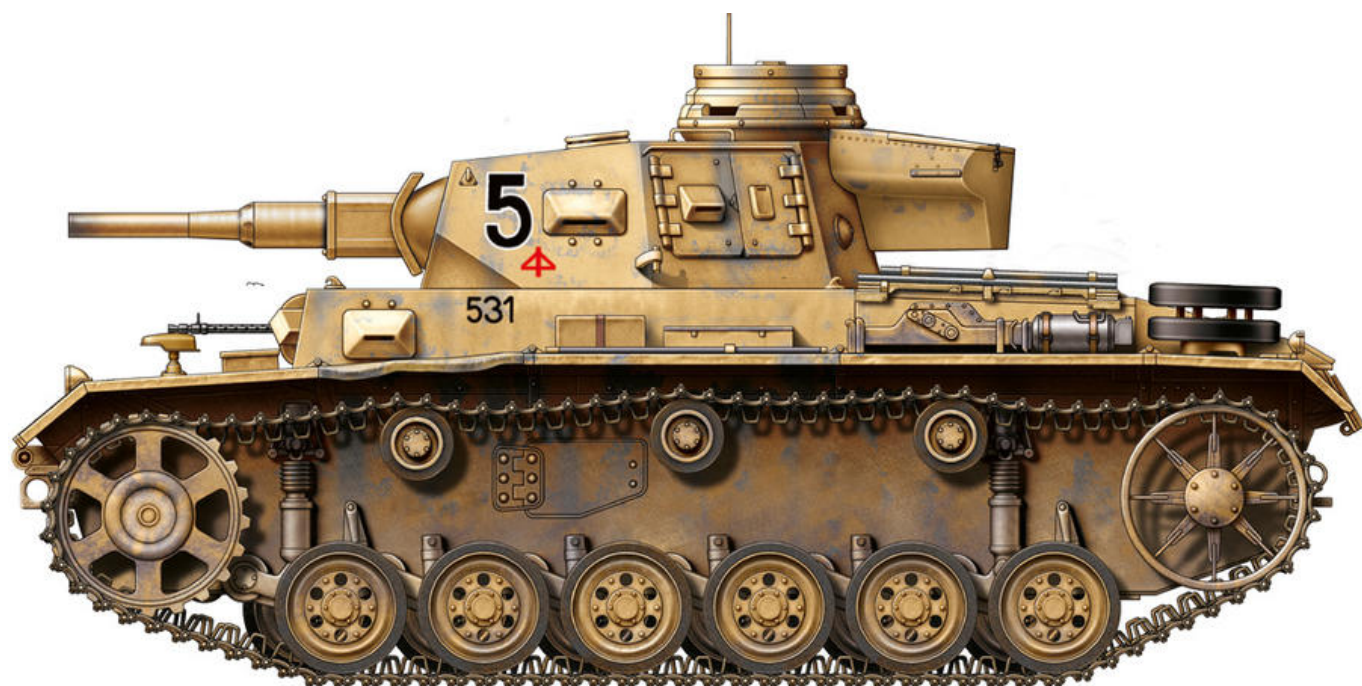
outlined in white, with white DAK insignia beside it, repeated on both sides and rear of the turret. The red divisional symbol was painted in both sides of turret and center hull frontal plate. The standard national insignia (black and white) were painted on both sides and rear plate of hull.



✠ Pz.Kpfw.II Ausf.D, Stab des Panzer-Regiments 8, 15. Panzer-Division, Libya 1942

The Panzer-Regiment 8, the unit of this Panzer II, had 8 tank companies in 1942 so as a method to avoid detection of regimental command vehicles it was usual to use a number 9 instead of "R" for tactical markings. Therefore, the 901 was the tank assigned for regiment commander, 902 for the executive office, 903 for signals officer, and

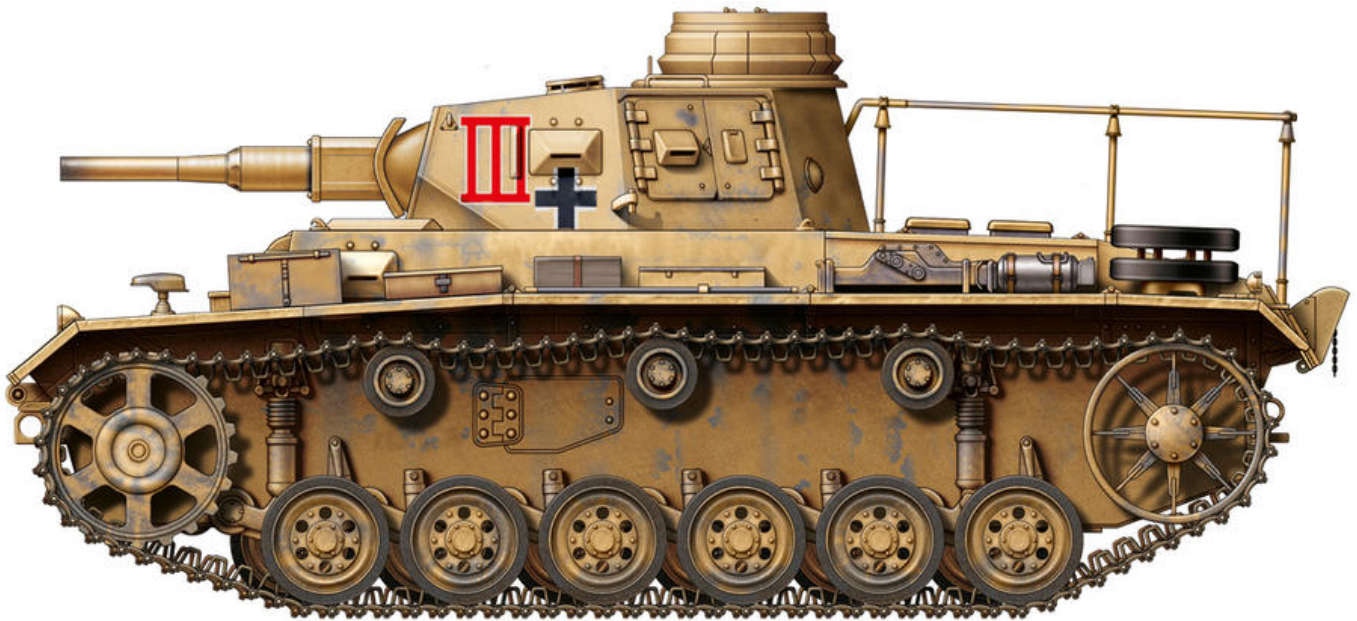
so on even with the tanks (Panzer II) of the Regiment HQ light tank platoon. The vehicle was painted in a fresh yellow-brown coat (RAL 8000) with a national insignia (black outlined in white) in the rear engine plate, white DAK insignia in left side of front hull plate and red divisional symbol on the other side of that plate.



✠ Pz.Kpfw.III Ausf.J, 5./Panzer-Regiment 8, 15. Panzer-Division, El Alamein, Egypt, October 1942

The Ausf.J version of the Panzer III was initially armed with the 5 cm KwK 38 L/42, a gun better than the 37 mm guns of older versions, and good to fight most of the British tanks (except for Matildas) in the desert in 1941. This variant was the most popular tank of the DAK until the introduction of the long barreled 5 cm KwK 39 L/60 gun to fight against the British Sherman and Grant tanks in 1942. This veteran desert warrior was painted in a very worn coat of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) over the original dark gray base (RAL 7021). The black outlined in white 5 indicated the 5th company, and was painted on

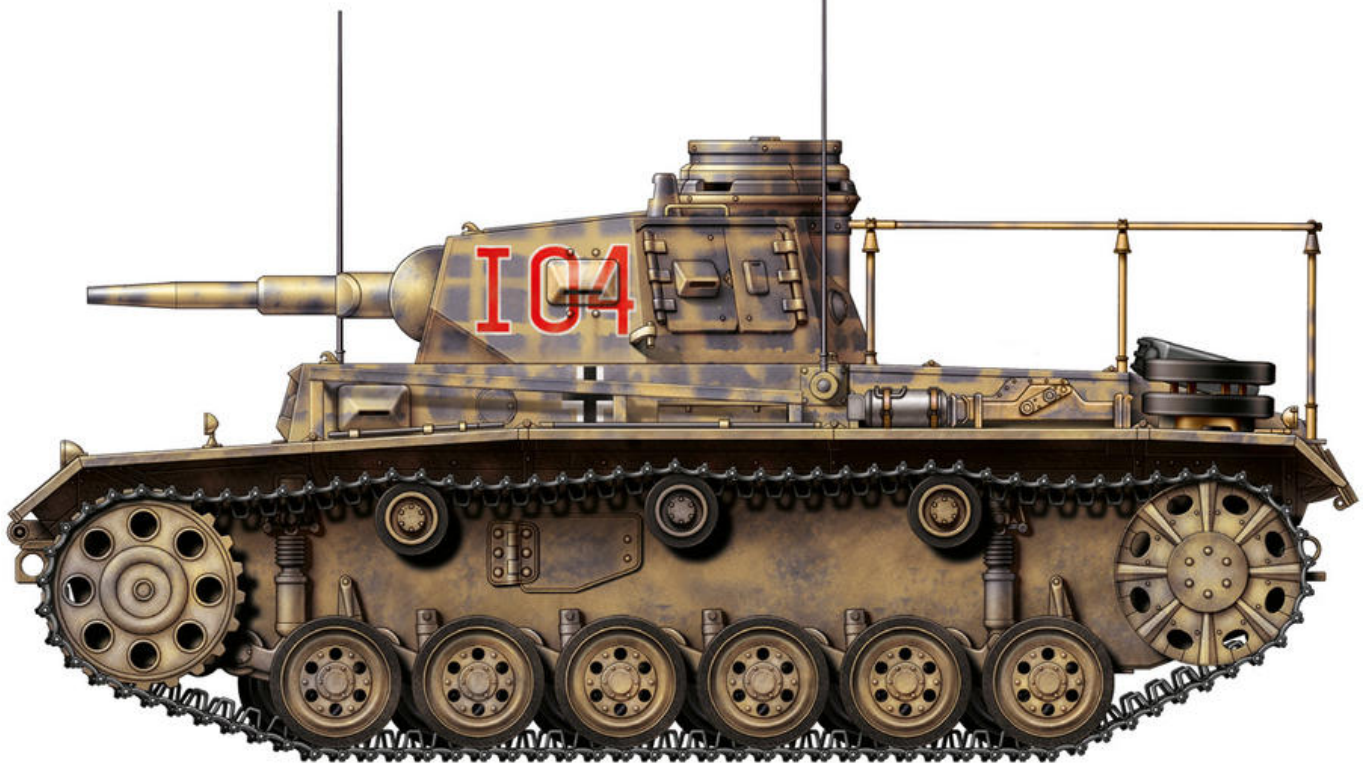
both sides of the turret together with the red divisional symbol. In the turret rear stowage bin was painted the tactical number 5, with white DAK insignia at left and red divisional and regimental symbols painted under it. The number 531 in black color was repeated on both sides of the hull. It indicated that this tank was the 1st vehicle within the 3rd platoon of the 5th company. The regimental symbol, painted in red, was usually painted on one side of the front hull plate, with white DAK insignia on the other side. The national insignia black outlined in white was painted on the left side of hull rear plate.



✠ Pz.Bef.Wg.III Ausf.H, Panzer-Regiment 8, 15. Panzer-Division, Libya 1942

The Panzerbefehlswagen III was a command tank, used as a mobile command post for officers. A certain number of Pz.Kpfw.III Ausf.H, were converted to command tanks, like the pictured vehicle. Their armament was limited to one MG 34 machine gun in the turret. They had a dummy main gun and additional radio equipment, with frame antenna in the back side of hull, and other observation equipment. The vehicle was painted in a worn coat of yellow-brown (RAL 8000). The national

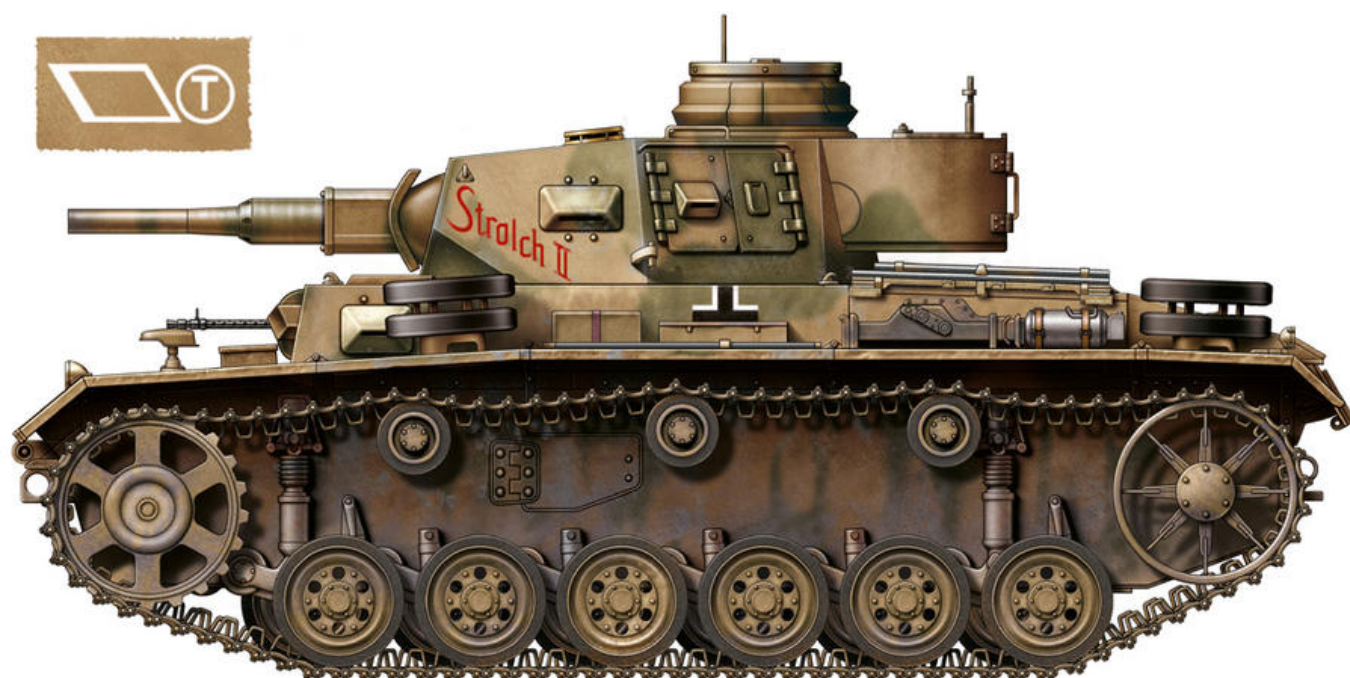
crosses were painted on both sides of the turret, front hull plate and left side of rear hull plate, with the tactical marking "III" in red outlined in white; the meaning of this symbol is not clear, because the standard were "II01" for the commander of II.Abteilung or "I02" for the executive officer of I.Abteilung; probably the change was made to avoid identification by enemy anti-tank gunners. The photo of this vehicle reveals that it sported the symbol of the 15. Panzer-Division on the right mudguard.



✠ Pz.Bef.Wg.III Ausf.E, Stab der I./Panzer-Regiment 5, 21. Panzer-Division, Libya, August 1941

This command version of Panzer III had the hull of Ausf.E version, with a dummy gun in a fixed turret, and a vision hatch instead of hull MG. The radio equipments were Fu 6 (ultra short wave) and Fu 8 (medium wave). The tactical marking (in red) on both sides indicated a tank of staff officer of I.Abteilung of Panzer-Regiment 5. The division symbol

was painted in white in the left side of frontal hull plate, with a white DAK insignia on the other side. The vehicle had national crosses on both sides of hull and left side of engine rear plate. The vehicle was painted in dark gray (RAL 7021) base with a cross-hatch pattern of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) lines.



✠ Pz.Kpfw.III (Funk) Ausf.J, Versuchskommando (F.L.) Tropen, Libya, October 1942

This Panzer III, named "Strolch II" (Rogue) was assigned to a test unit of remotely controlled and radio controlled vehicles, or Funklenk. The unit, consisting of two companies: one equipped with 10 Borgward IV remote-controlled heavy explosive carriers and 3 Panzer III control vehicles (note the antenna and the armoured box fixed to the rear of the turret), the other fielding 12 Goliath remote-controlled demolition vehicles, was sent to Africa in September 1942.

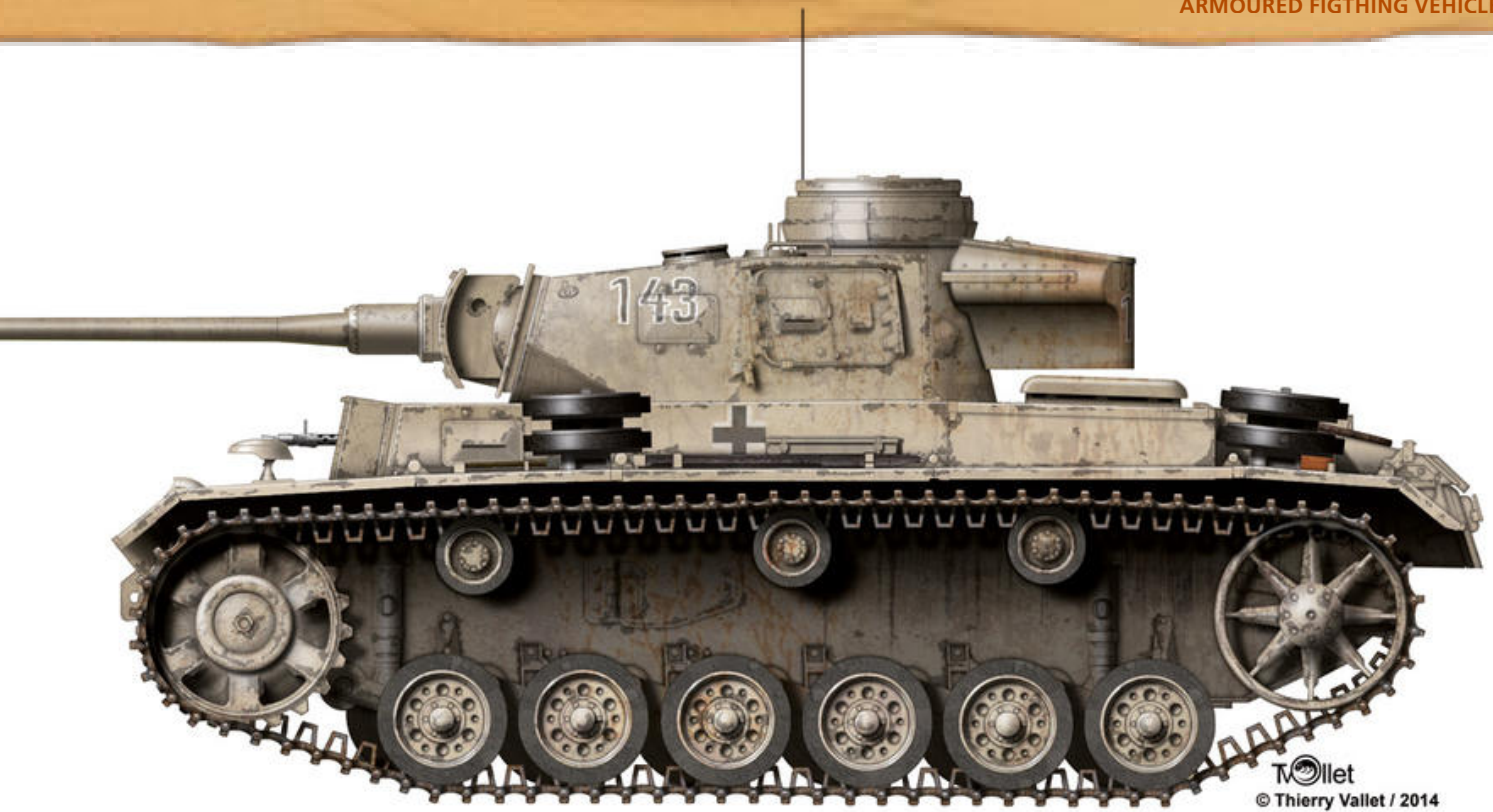
The test showed poor suitability of the remote-controlled vehicles in to the desert conditions, In November 1942 the unit was disbanded. Once their special equipment had been removed, the three Panzer IIIs were transferred to Kampfstaffel DAK which used them for escort duties. "Strolch II" was painted in two-tone camouflage of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) and green (RAL 7008). This vehicle had a standard national cross in the left side of the back hull plate, as well as white tactical symbol of the unit, a large "T" inside a circle next to a rhomboid.



✠ Pz.Kpfw.III Ausf.G, 5./Panzer-Regiment 5, 21. Panzer-Division, Libya 1941

This tank, one of the first Panzer III in Africa with the Panzer-Regiment 5 of the 5. leichte Division (later renamed 21. Panzer-Division), received an overcoat of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) over the dark gray base (RAL 7021); when the vehicles were repainted, the original white outlined tactical number were repainted in red for a better visibility. The tactical number of this tank was applied on the sides of the turret and the rear

stowage bin. It indicated that this tank was the 3rd vehicle within the 2nd platoon of the 5th company. The tanks of 21. Panzer-Division usually had a white divisional symbol in left side and a white DAK insignia in the right side, of the hull front plate. See the worn paint overcoat, revealing the dark base color. The standard national crosses were painted on both sides of the hull.



✠ Pz.Kpfw.III Ausf.J, 1./Panzer-Regiment 5, 21. Panzer-Division, El Alamein, Egypt, October 1942

The late model of Panzer III Ausf.J, armed with the longer 5 cm KwK 39 L/60 gun, was the second best tank used by the Afrika Korps in the Battle of El Alamein, being outperformed only by the Panzer IV model armed with long barreled 75 mm gun. This vehicle was one of the 43 Ausf.J used by the 21. Panzer-Division in the battle. It was painted in

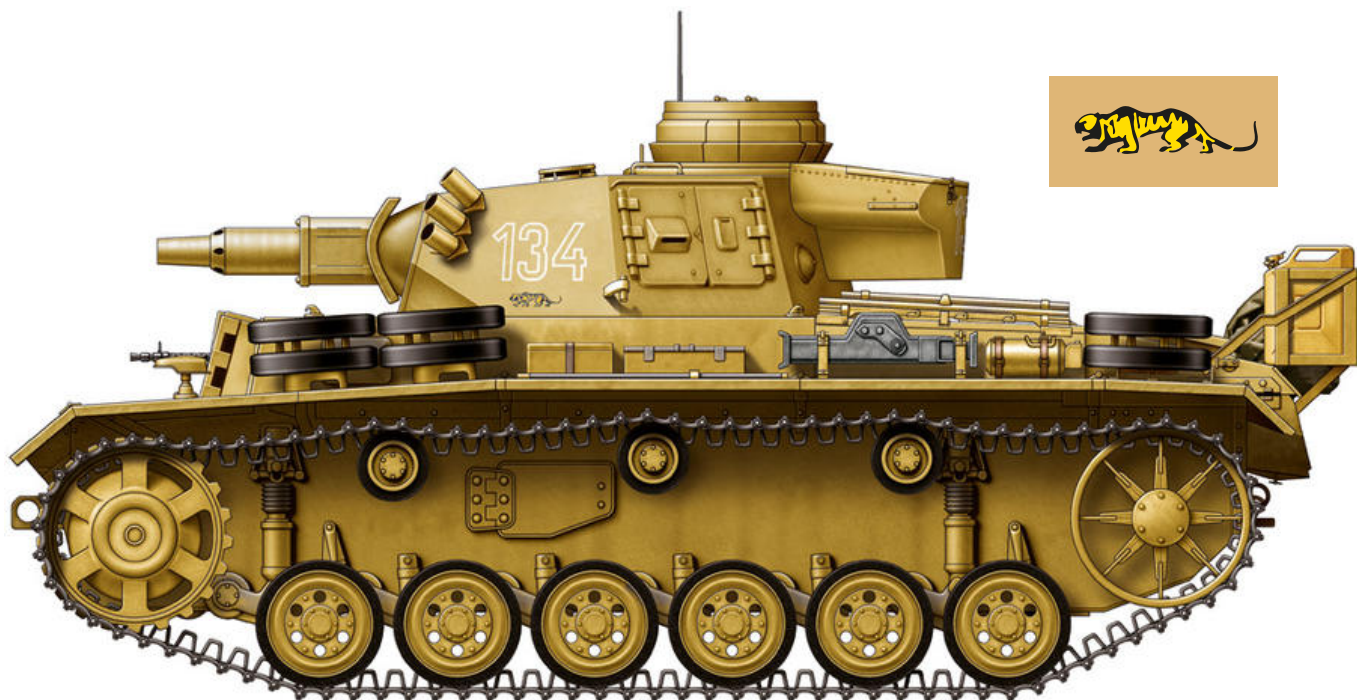
overall coat of brown (RAL 8020), and marked with national standard crosses on both sides of hull and left side of rear engine plate. The tactical number 143 painted in black outlined in white was on both sides of turret and rear stowage box. The divisional symbol was painted in the left side of hull front plate, with white DAK insignia on right side.



✠ Pz.Kpfw.III Ausf.J, 1./Panzer-Regiment 5, 21. Panzer-Division, Libya 1942

The Pz.Kpfw.III Ausf.J late model, armed with the longer 5 cm KwK 39 L/60 gun, was the German response to Sherman and Grant tanks used by the British Army. This Panzer III showed the official standard camouflage scheme for 1941, a coat of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) over dark gray base (RAL 7021), with a disruptive pattern of gray-green

(RAL 7008). The red white outlined tactical number was painted on the sides of the turret and the rear stowage bin. Usually the divisional symbol was painted in the left side of hull front plate. This vehicle had a national cross black outlined in white in the left side of hull rear plate.



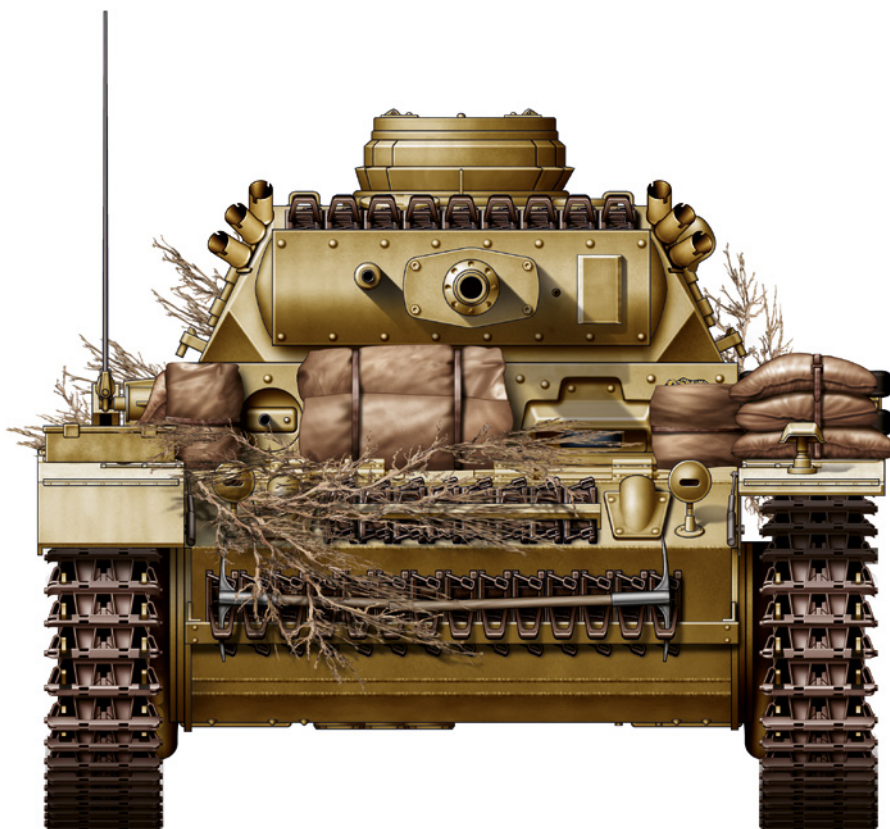
✠ **Pz.Kpfw.III Ausf.N, 1./schwere Panzer-Abteilung 501, Tunisia, January 1943**

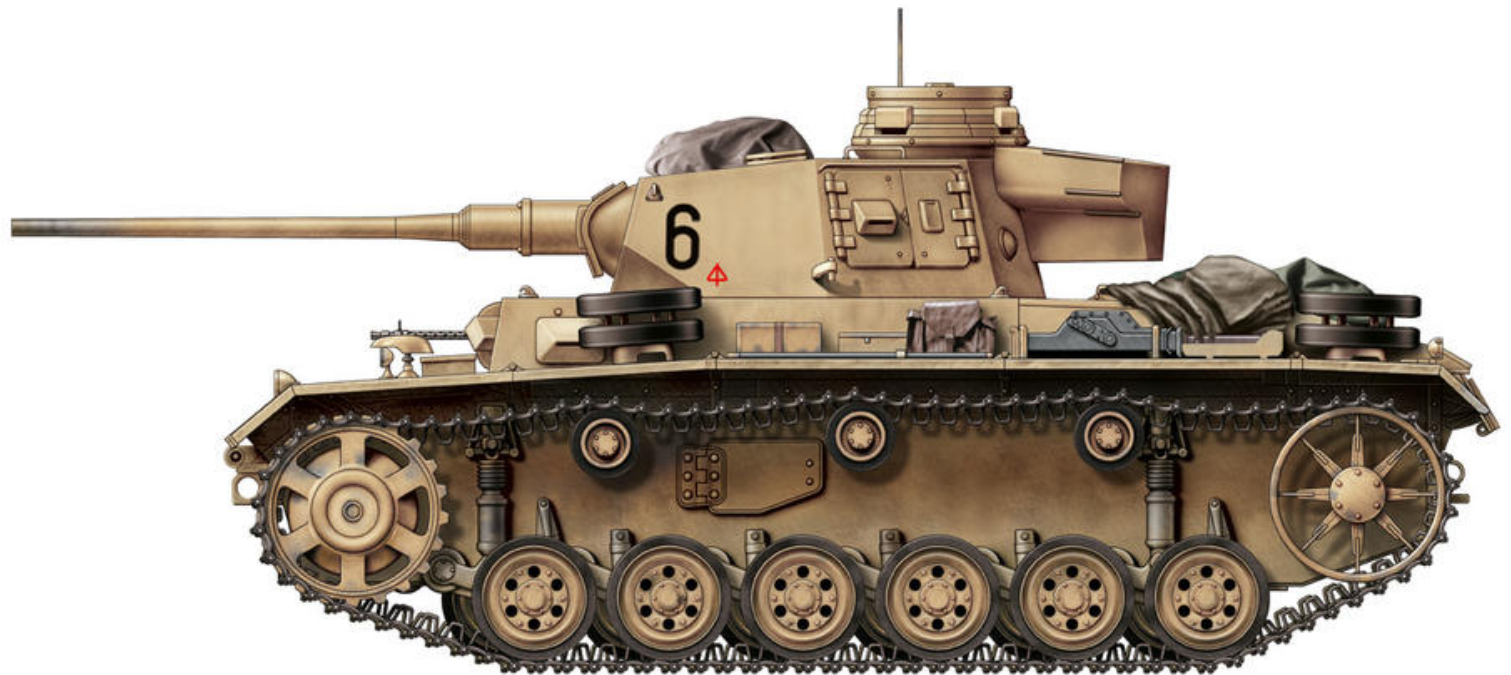
This Panzer III version was equipped with the same 75 mm gun used in the first versions of the Panzer IV, and was used to complete the first Tiger Abteilungen due to the shortage of heavy tanks. Their main task was to protect the flanks of the Tigers, to avoid the problem of the slowly turning turrets of Tigers. This one belonged to the 1st company of the s.Pz.Abt.501, as indicated by the stalking tiger insignia painted under the white outlined tactical number on both sides of the turret (the tiger's head was directed towards the front on both sides). The number

was also repeated on the stowage bin at the rear of the turret. This tank was painted in a brand new coat of brown (RAL 8020) in a very yellowish tone. It had national standard crosses on both side, just beside the vision port (no visible in the picture because of the spare road wheels) and on left side of the back plate, with the stalking tiger painted in the left corner of the frontal plate, over the driver vision port. This version of Panzer III received smoke grenades dischargers in the turret, and usually a rack over the back plate for jerrycans and equipment.

✠ **Pz.Kpfw.III Ausf.N, schwere Panzer-Abteilung 501, Tunisia 1943**

This Panzer III showed the typical disposal of Panzers in the last battles in Tunisia, with sandbags and spare tracks as added armour for facing the powerful US and British Sherman tanks. The branches for camouflage were very typical of Tunisia campaign; the camouflage was necessary for breaking the tank shape to avoid enemy tanks, guns, and low-level air attacks (a new risk for German tank crews, specially in the narrows roads of Tunisian mountains with no space to escape). This tank was painted in an overall coat of brown (RAL 8020). Note two picks hooked in tracks in front lower plate, and the stalking tiger emblem barely visible behind sandbags at right.





✠ Pz.Kpfw.III Ausf.J, 6./Panzer-Regiment 8, 15. Panzer-Division, Tunisia, December 1942

The Ausf J late was armed with the longer 5 cm KwK 39 L/60 gun in response to increasingly better armed and armoured opponents, like Shermans and Grants. This Panzer III, sent to Africa late in 1942, was painted with a fresh coat of brown (RAL 8020), with a black 6 indicating its belonging to 6th company painted in both sides of

the turret, together with a red divisional symbol. Both markings were repeated on the stowage box at the rear of the turret. Usually the divisional symbol was also painted on the left side of front hull plate. This vehicle had a national cross black outlined in white in the left side of rear hull plate.



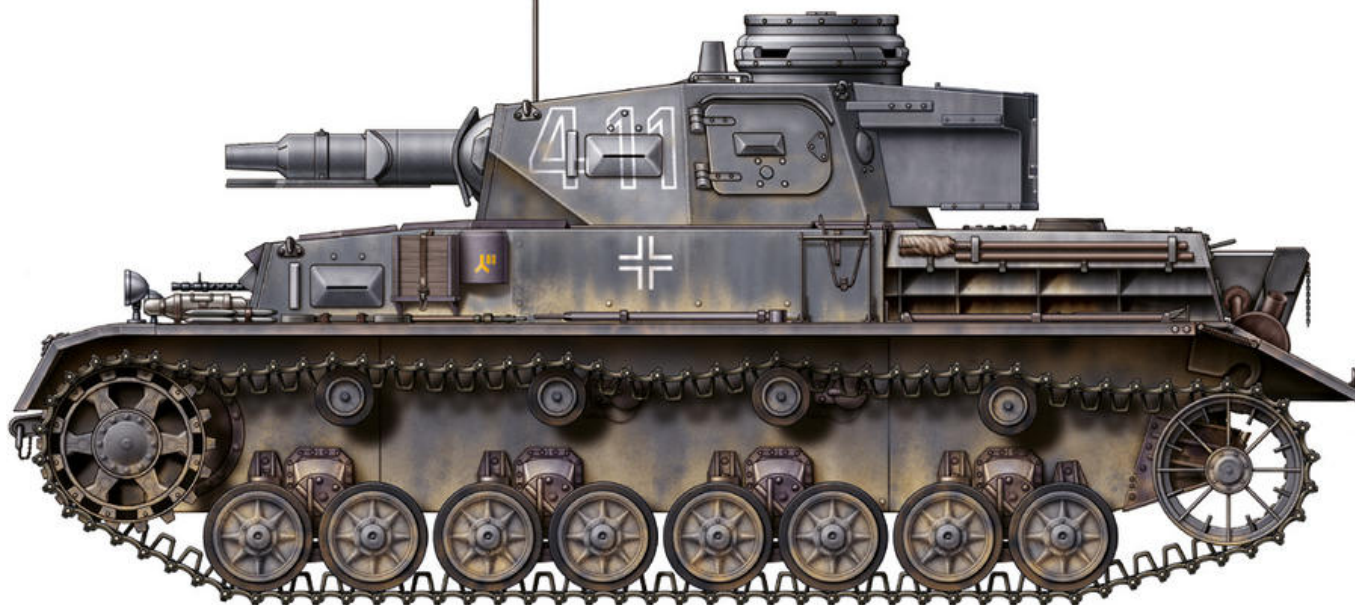
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✠ Pz.Kpfw.III Ausf.N, 3./Panzer-Regiment 8, 15. Panzer-Division, Tunisia 1943

The Panzer III tanks armed with the 7.5 cm KwK 37 L/24 gun, were sent to Africa late 1942 to reinforce the weak Afrika Korps after the long withdrawal after the battle of El-Alamein. This vehicle was painted in brown (RAL 8020) over dark gray base RAL 7021. The tactical markings applied on both sides of the turret comprised a red divisional sign, a



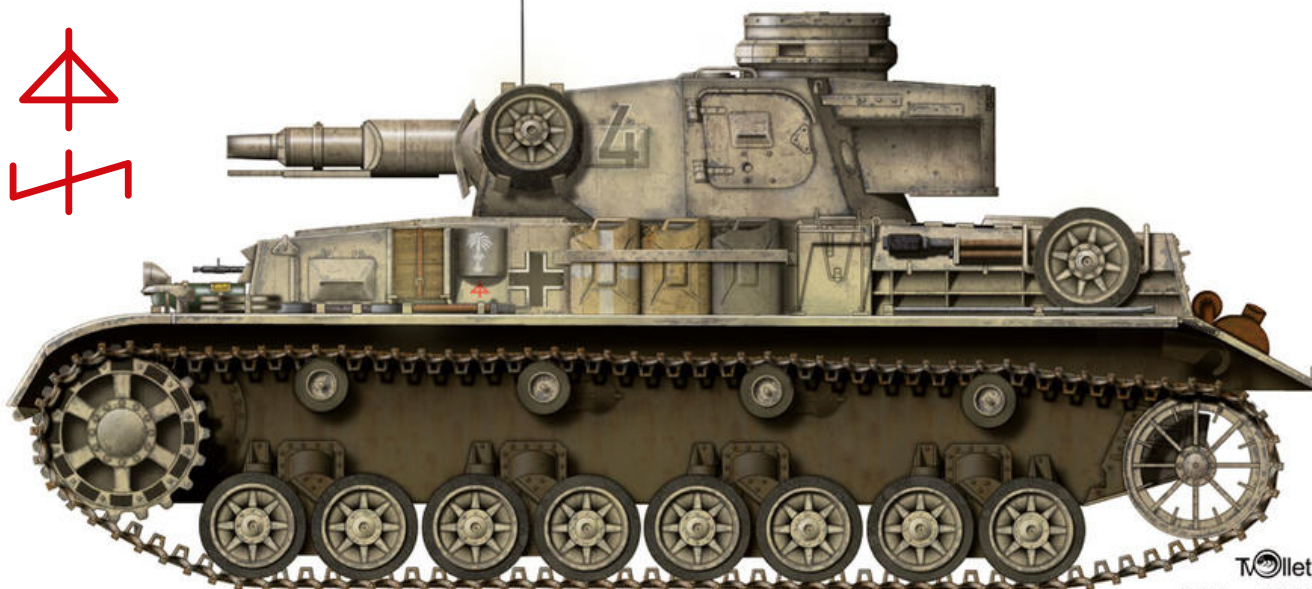
black ace of spades inside a circle, probably as Abteilung symbol, and black 3 indicating the 3rd company. The number was repeated on the stowage box at the rear of the turret. The only other marking were the standard national black outlined white crosses on center hull sides and left side of engine rear plate.



✠ Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.D, 4./Panzer-Regiment 5, 5. leichte Division, Trípoli, Libya, March-April 1941

The Panzer-Regiment 5 arrived in Trípoli in March 1941. This unit was originally a part of the 3. Panzer-Division. Its vehicles were painted in the standard dark gray base color (RAL 7021). The markings were a tactical number, white outlined in both sides of the turret and stowage bin, plus the national crosses. This particular vehicle had an unusual national cross outlined in white. The small black romboïd metal

plate with tactical number that was usual in that tanks when they arrived to Libya was lost after the first combat days in Africa. The tactical symbol of the 3. Panzer-Division was painted in the center of the front plate, both sides of hull and above and to the left of rear towing pin. These vehicles were repainted as soon as was possible for a better camouflage in the desert.



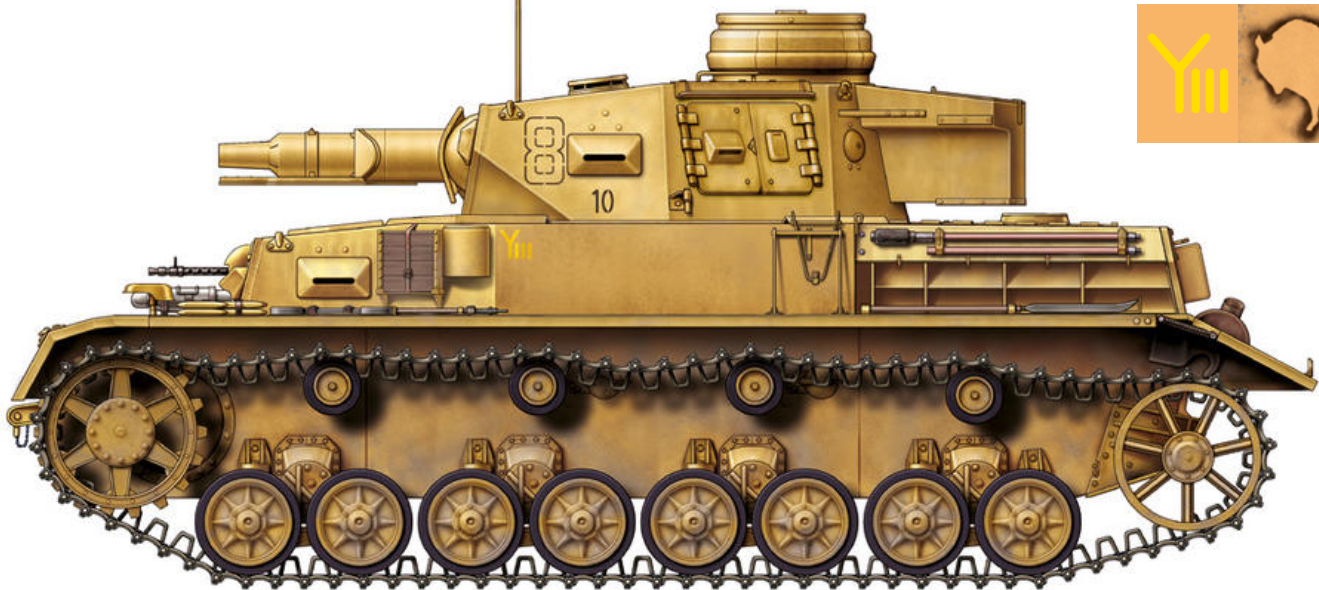
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✠ Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.D, 4./Panzer-Regiment 8, 15. Panzer-Division, Libya, November 1941

This Panzer IV belonged to the 4th company of the 8th Panzer Regiment, as indicated by the black outlined in white 4 painted on both sides of the turret. The tactical number was repeated on the turret stowage bin. The national crosses were painted on both sides of hull and lower right side of rear plate. The DAK insignia was painted in white on both sides of hull, and on the front plate next to hull-mounted machine gun. The regimental symbol, the "Wolfsangel" in red color, was painted in the upper right side of turret bin, and the red

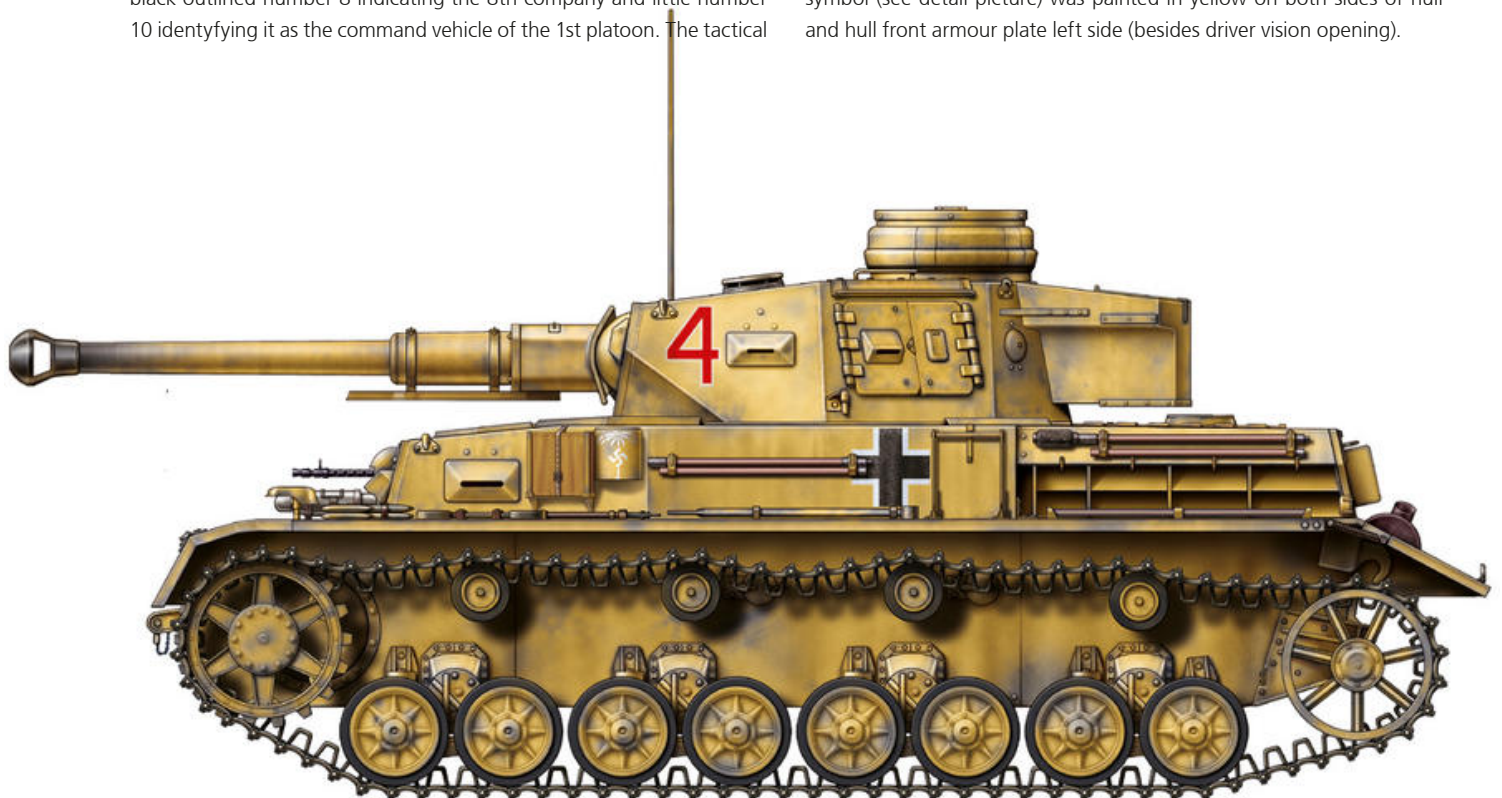
divisional symbol and white DAK symbol (under the division symbol) were painted in the left side. Red divisional symbol was also painted on the left side of front plate and sides of the hull, under DAK insignia. This vehicle, one of the first Panzer IVs sent to Africa and a true veteran with several months of combat, was painted in a very light and worn coat of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) over the dark gray base (RAL 7021). Note the spare road wheel on the turret, typical for tanks of this company, and the rack for jerrycans.



✠ Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.F1, 8./Panzer-Regiment 7, 10. Panzer-Division, Tunisia, February 1943

Although in early 1943 these tanks were outclassed by the Shermans due to their short barreled gun, the 10. Panzer-Division, shipped to Tunisia as a part of the 5. Panzerarmee, was still partially equipped with them. This tank was painted in a fresh brown coat (RAL 8020), with a big black outlined number 8 indicating the 8th company and little number 10 identifying it as the command vehicle of the 1st platoon. The tactical

number was repeated on both sides of the turret, with the rear stowage bin marked with 8 and regimental symbol, a bison (see detail picture), and the number 10 painted in the rear engine plate right side, with a national cross (black outlined in white) in the other side. The divisional symbol (see detail picture) was painted in yellow on both sides of hull and hull front armour plate left side (besides driver vision opening).



✠ Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.F2, 4./Panzer-Regiment 5, 21. Panzer-Division, El Alamein, Egypt, October 1942

This Panzer IV Ausf.F2 was one of the 200 units completed in 1942 and armed with the new 7.5 cm KwK 40 L/43 gun. This new tank, christened as "Mark IV special" by the British, was the best German tank in El Alamein battle, and was able to destroy the new Shermans and Grants at usual combat distances. This vehicle belonged to the 4th company, as indicated by the red outlined in white 4 painted on both sides of the

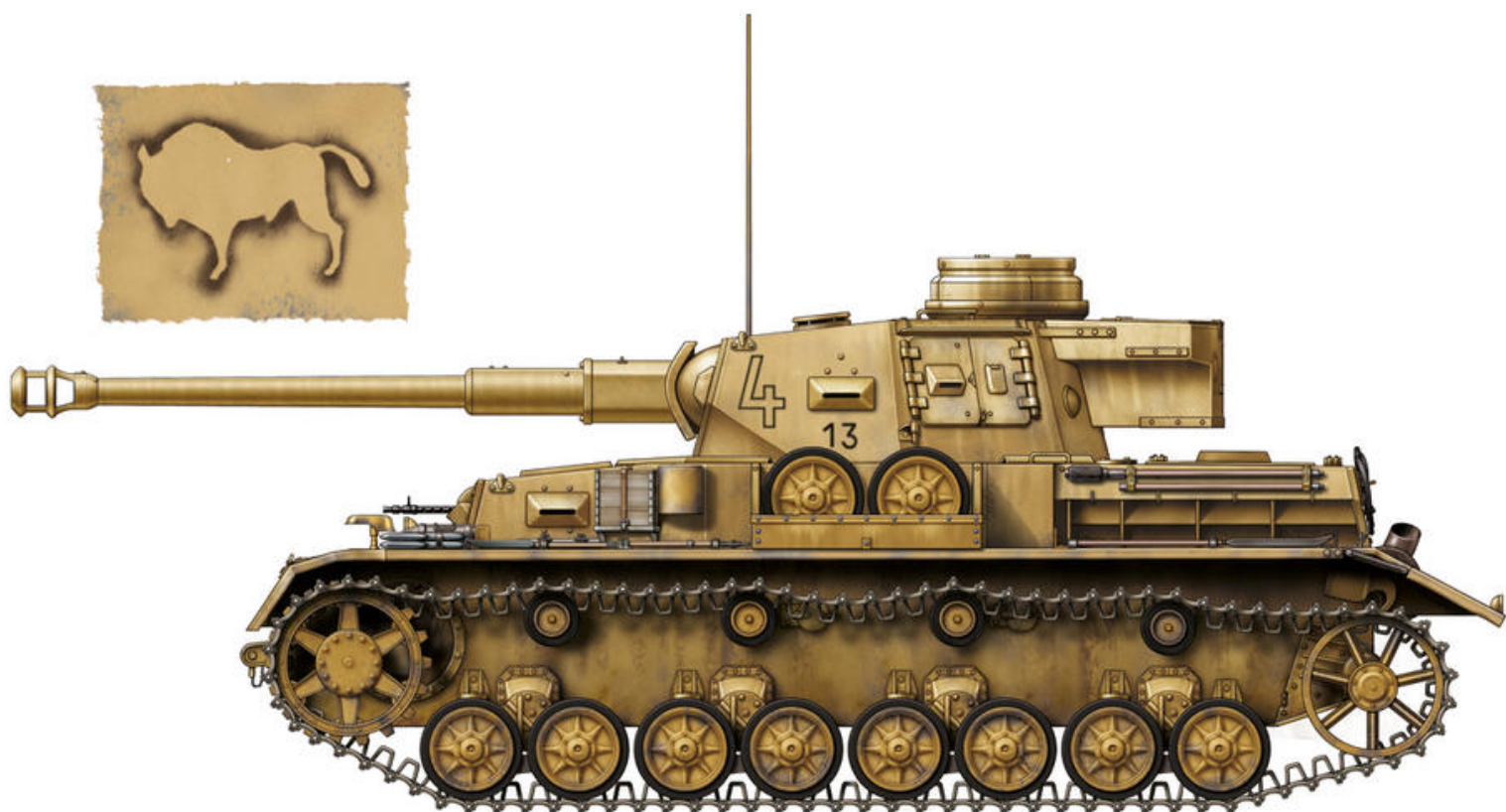
turret and rear stowage bin. The divisional symbol was painted in white on the left side of the hull frontal plate and right side of rear hull plate. The DAK insignia was painted in white in the center of frontal plate and both sides of the hull. This vehicle was painted in a worn coat of brown (RAL 8020) over the original dark gray base (RAL 7021). It had the usual national crosses on both sides and rear plate left side of the hull.



✠ **Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G, 8./Panzer-Regiment 5, 21. Panzer-Division, Tunisia, April 1943**

This Panzer IV Ausf.G, one of the last tanks delivered to Africa, belonged to the 8th company indicated by its red tactical number 852. It was finished in brown (RAL 8020) over the original dark gray (RAL 7021) base. Its long gun barrel was camouflaged with brown stripes

over the gray base, in order to make the tank a less attractive target for Allied anti-tank gunners. The vehicle had a lot of bush branches for braking its shape. This tank was destroyed during the battle of Gabes in April 1943.



✠ **Pz.Kpfw.IV Ausf.G, 4./Panzer-Regiment 7, 10. Panzer-Division, Tunisia, 1943**

The Ausf. G models were the most modern Panzer IVs used in Africa, and seen action mainly in 10. and 21. Panzer-Division in Tunisia. This vehicle had a brand new coat of brown paint (RAL 8020), typical of the tanks sent to Tunisia in a hurry after the Allied landing in North Africa. The tactical markings, applied on both sides of the turret, consisted of the number of the company, 4, outlined in black

paint, and a little 13 in black. The detail picture shows the emblem of Panzer-Regiment 7, a bison, painted on the turret stowage bin together with the number 4. The little 13 number was painted in the right side of engine rear plate too. The only national cross (black outlined white) was painted in left side of rear engine plate (opposite to the 13 number).



✠ **Pz.Kpfw.VI Ausf.E Tiger, 7./Panzer-Regiment 7, 10. Panzer-Division, Tunisia, late February 1943**

This vehicle, formerly tank "131" of the 1./s.Pz.Abt.501, belonged to the 7th company of the Panzer-Regiment 7. All the tanks of the 1st and 2nd company of the s.Pz.Abt.501 were used to form 7th and 8th company of the Pz.Rgt.7 in late February 1943. Note the famous name of this tank, "Norbert", and the stalking tiger emblem, partially overpainted due to the change of the number from 131 to 731. The name and number were repeated on both sides of turret, and the

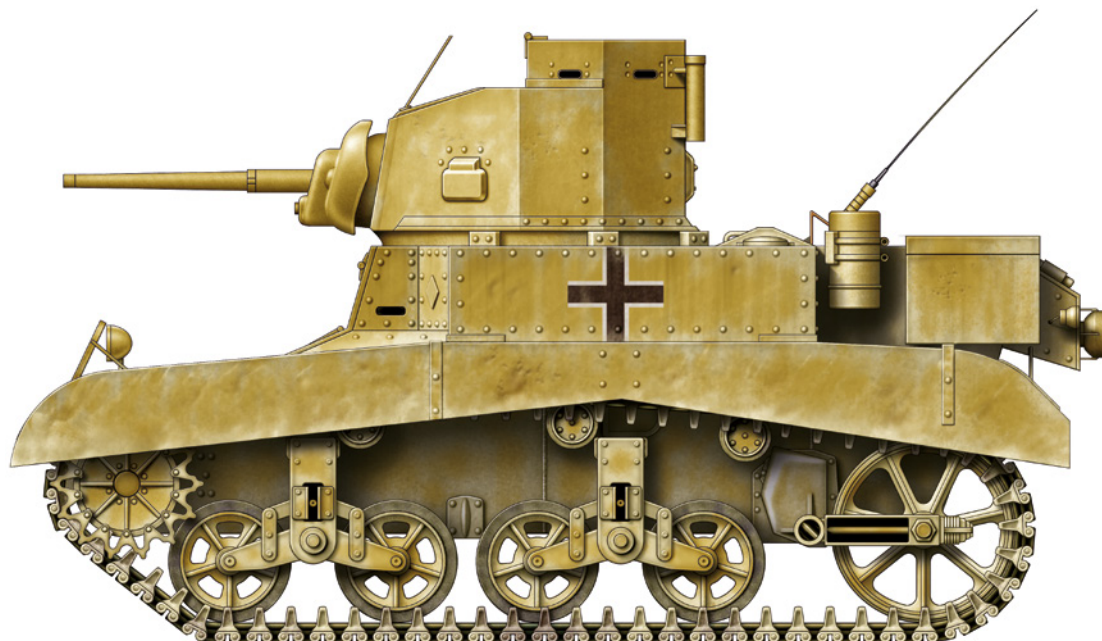
tiger symbol was painted over the right upper corner of the driver's visor. The colour of the tank was probably gray-green (RAL 7008); the tanks of s.Pz.Abt.501 were sent to Africa in several small groups, so the colors they were painted were not always the same (others tanks were painted in RAL 8020). Note the typical position of the front lights for this unit's Tigers in front of the hull front plate and not on it, as was normal for early-built Tigers.



✠ **Pz.Kpfw.VI Ausf.E Tiger, 7./Panzer-Regiment 7, 10. Panzer-Division, Tunisia, March 1943**

This Tiger was originally a vehicle of 2./s.Pz.Abt.501. It was painted in brown (RAL 8020), with white outlined red number on both sides. The front lights of the sp.Pz.Abt.501's Tigers were mounted on a special support over the front mudguards; but when the crews started putting Tiger tracks sections on the front plate over the mudguards (and a Pz.Kpfw.III track section between machine gunner and driver position), the lights returned to their standard position

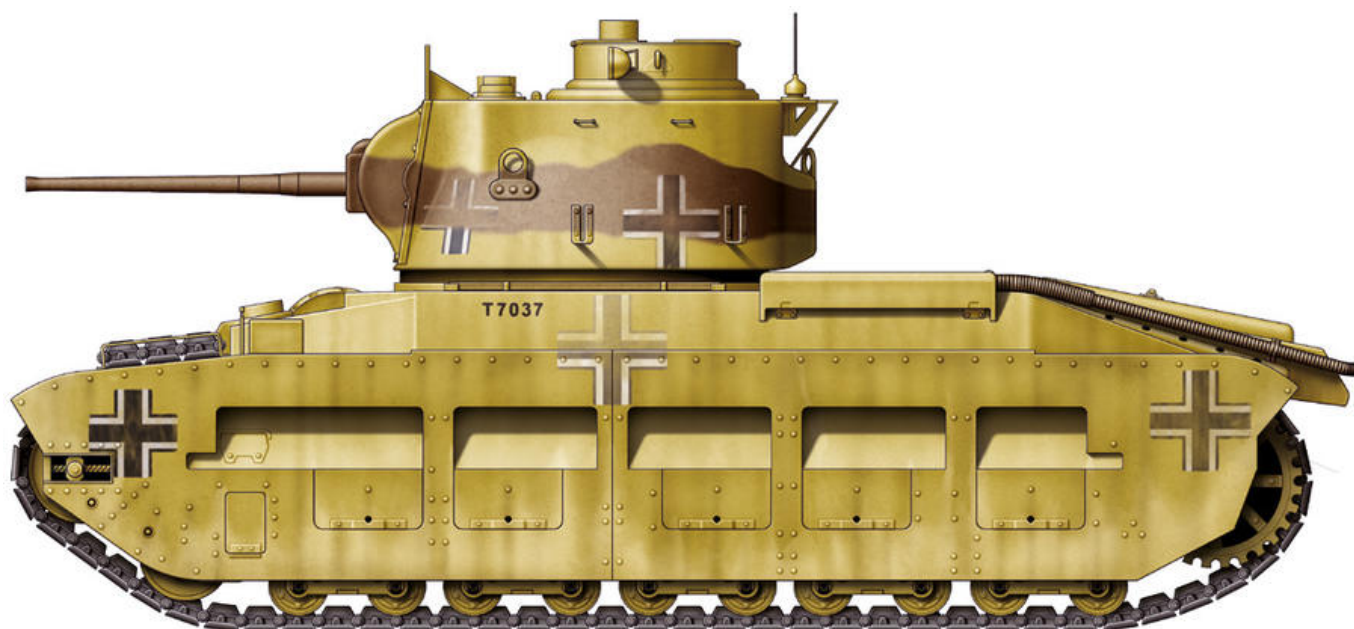
(see the picture). On 26 February 1943, the s.Pz.Abt.501 was assigned to Panzer-Regiment 7 of 10. Panzer-Division. Each company received 15 Panzer IVs as reinforcement. As a remain of the previous unit, this Tiger sported its stalking tiger emblem, painted over the right corner of the driver's visor. Finally, after the loss of a great part of Tigers in Beja, the survivors were transferred to the s.Pz.Abt.504 on the 17th March.



✝ **M3 Stuart I, Kampfstaffel des Oberbefehlshabers der Panzerarmee Afrika, Libya 1942**

The M3 Stuart was supplied to British and Commonwealth forces under lend-lease prior to the entry of the U.S. into the war. The name Stuart given by the British comes from the American Civil War Confederate General J.E.B. Stuart and was used for both the M3 and the derivative M5 Light Tank. In British service, it also had the unofficial nickname of Honey after a tank driver remarked "She's a honey". In the North African campaign the operation revealed that the M3 had several technical faults (weak main gun and poor

internal layout). The two-man turret crew was too a significant weakness. The Stuart also had a limited range, which was a severe problem in the highly mobile desert warfare. On the positive side, crews liked its relatively high speed and mechanical reliability. This captured vehicle was left in its original British sand yellow colour. Only the German national insignia were added. At least six of these light tanks served with the Kampfstaffel des Oberbefehlshabers der Panzerarmee Afrika.

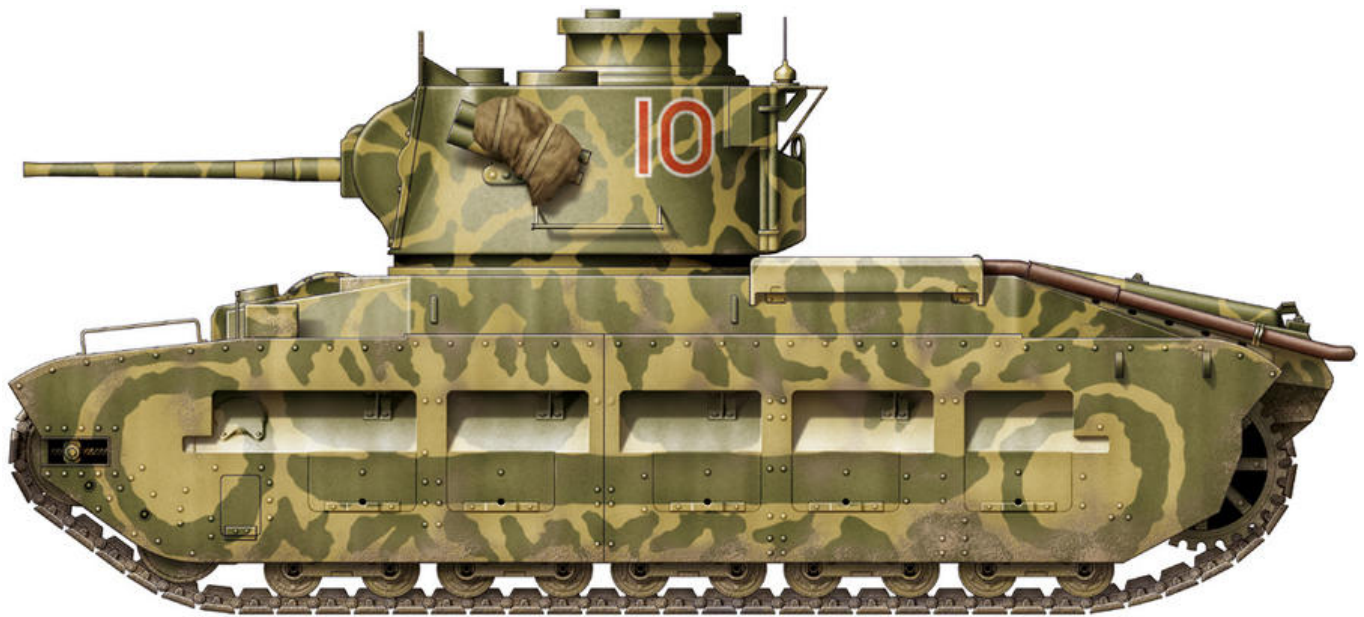


✝ **Matilda II, Panzer-Regiment 5, 21. Panzer-Division, Libya 1942**

This British Matilda II tank was captured by the Germans, and turned against her former owners with little modifications; the colour of the tank looks like a British sand yellow, with just a dark brown horizontal patch applied around

the turret and the main gun, and several German crosses painted for fast identification. Some of the crosses look like overpainted with sand and brown colors in a very strange way. This particular tank was later recaptured by British forces.



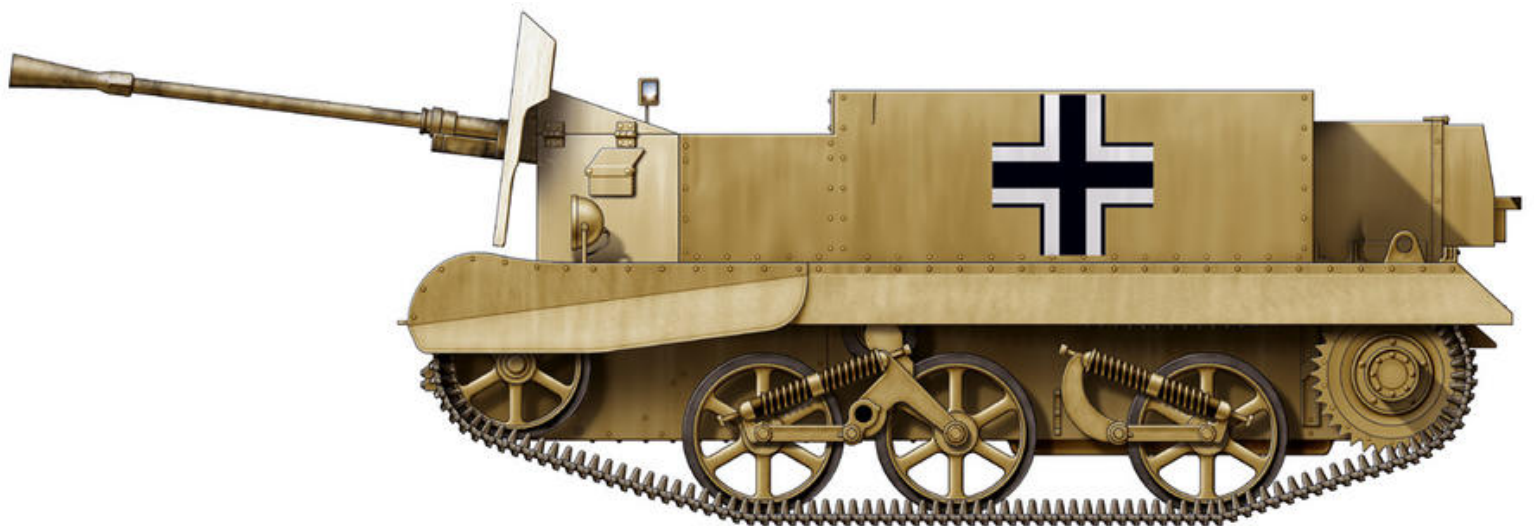


✠ Matilda II, unknown unit, Libya, November 1941

Another British Matilda II tank captured by the Germans in the course of the Operation Crusader. This one belonged to the 1st Armoured Brigade, and was captured intact. The camouflage of this vehicle is very strange, with a scheme of green patches over sand yellow, all done in British colours. The large circular



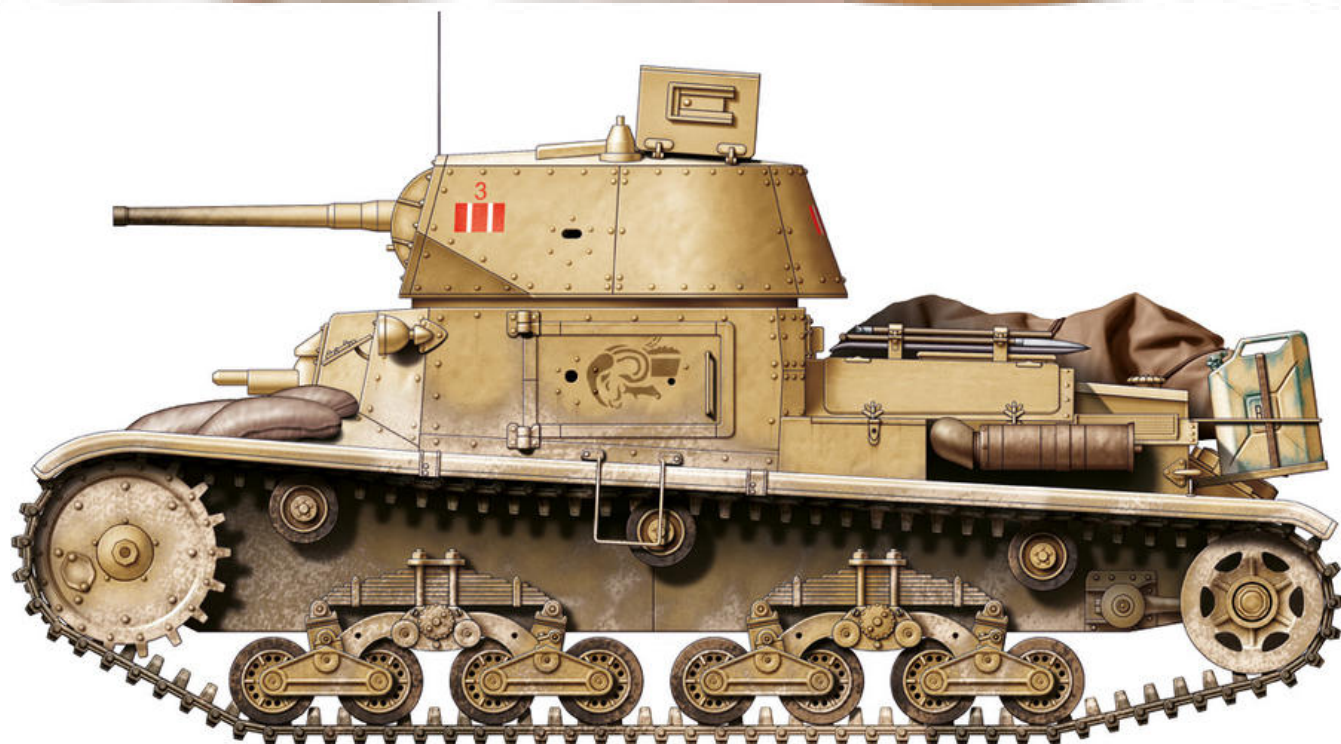
green patches at the front and rear of the vehicle side seem to be a way to disguise the tank as a wheeled vehicle in order to avoid heavy fire from German 88 mm Flak guns, the worst nightmare of British tankers in the desert. German gunners wouldn't waste the precious 88 mm ammo to shoot at softskin vehicles.



✠ Universal Carrier with 25 mm Hotchkiss anti-tank gun, unknown unit, Libya 1942

This vehicle is a rare example of a captured Bren Carrier up-armed by the Free French forces with a 25 mm Hotchkiss gun. This gun was a French design named canon semi-automatique modèle 1934. It was the main anti-tank gun of the French infantry at the beginning of war, and many of

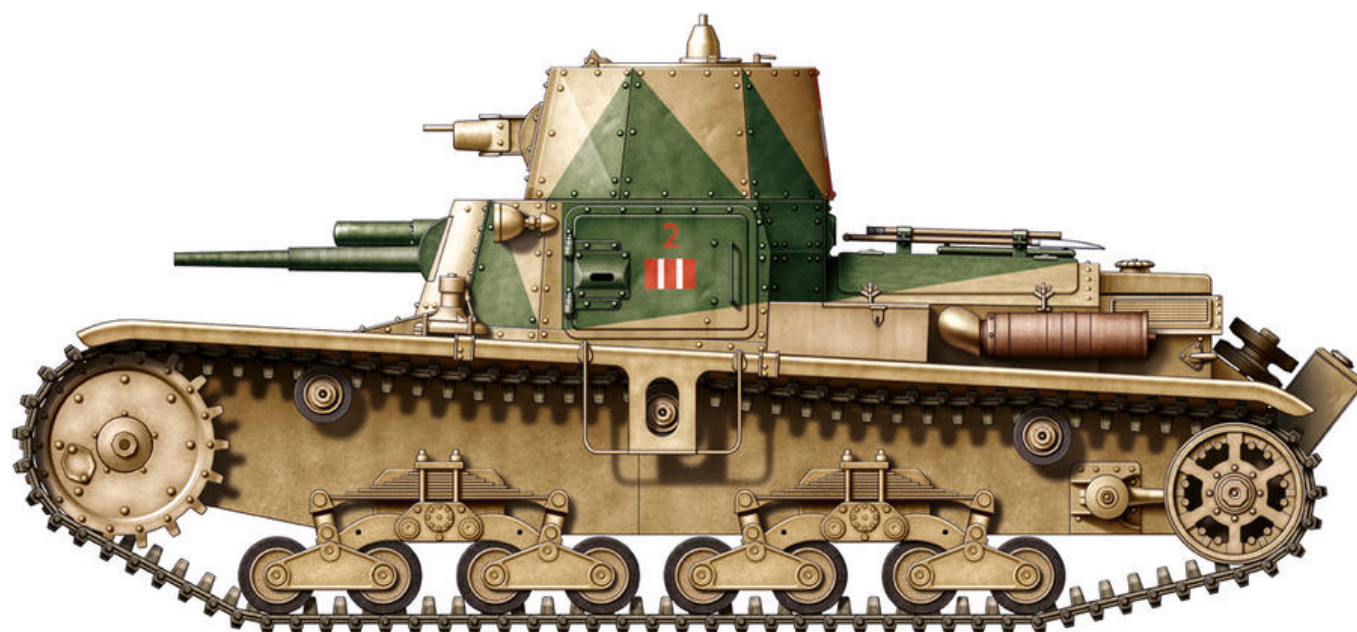
these were also issued to the British Expeditionary Force when it arrived in France in autumn 1939. This Universal Carrier still retains its original British light stone paint, but it's marked with prominent German national insignia on both sides, back plate, and on the gun shield, just above the barrel.



✠ M14/41, 132° Reggimento Carri, 132ª Divisione Corazzata "Ariete", El Alamein, Egypt, October 1942

The M14/41 was a slightly improved version of the earlier M13/40 with a better diesel engine, but it was obsolete by the time of its introduction. The M14/41 used the same chassis as the M13/40 but with a redesigned hull with better armor. The M14/41 was manufactured in 1941 and 1942. Nearly 800 were produced by the time production ended. This vehicle belonged to the 132° Reggimento Carri, the tank unit of the "Ariete" armoured division, and took part in the second battle of El Alamein. The vehicle was painted in a coat of sabbia chiaro

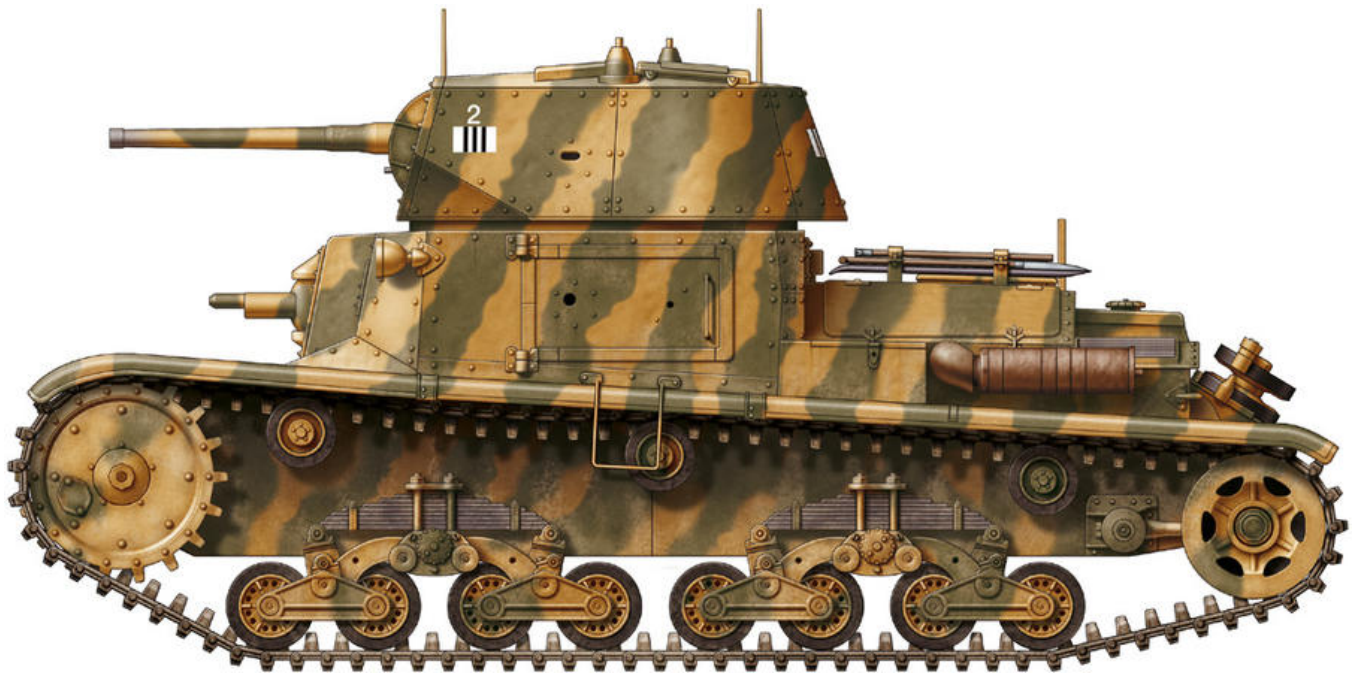
(light sand yellow). The markings were the standard front and rear Italian vehicle license plates, the "Ariete" emblem on both sides of hull, and the tactical symbol on the turret sides and rear. The latter identified this tank as the 3rd vehicle (number 3) within the 2nd platoon (two white bars) of the 1st company (red color). Note the rear rack for jerry cans and the sandbags placed on the front part of the vehicle as standoff armour. These tanks used to had a white circle on the turret roof (in front of the hatch) for air recognition.



✠ M11/39, 32° Reggimento Carri, 132ª Divisione Corazzata "Ariete", Libya, January 1941

In 1937, the M11/39 prototype was constructed. Its design was similar to the US Medium Tank M3. Its armament comprised a 37 mm gun mounted in the hull and two 8 mm machine guns located in the turret. As the better M13/40 tank was soon developed on the basis of the M11/39 chassis, only 100 of the latter were built in 1939. In 1940, 70 were sent to North Africa, where the last ones were destroyed or captured by the Commonwealth

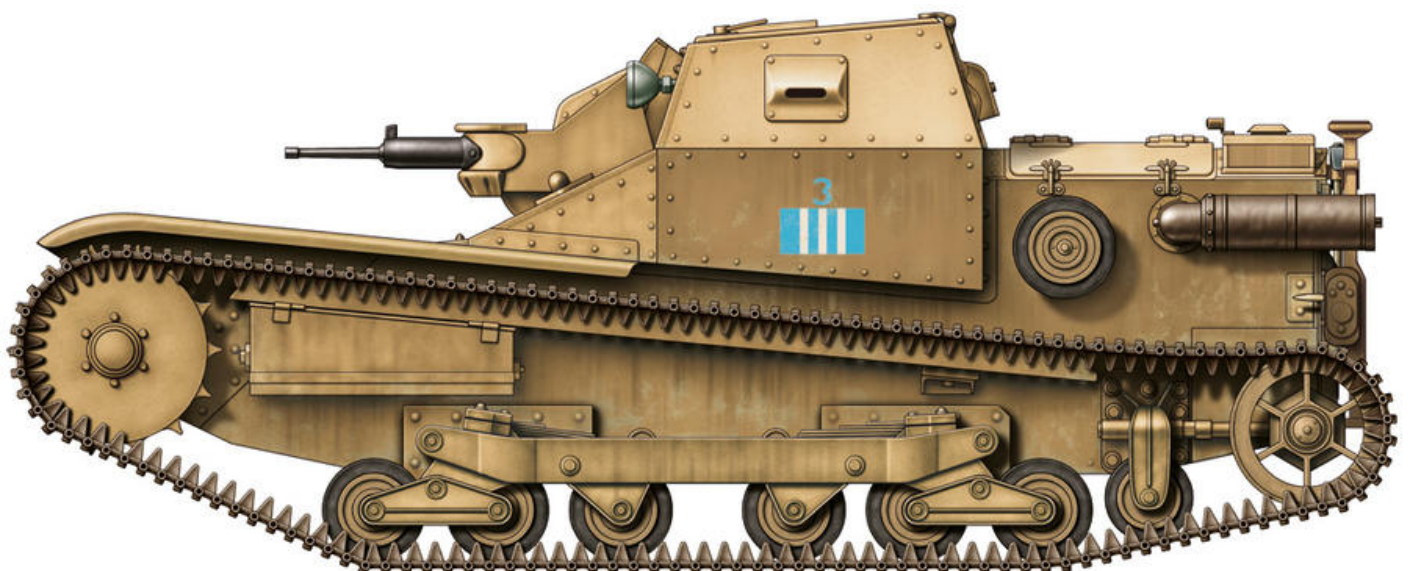
forces in 1941. This tank was the 2nd vehicle within the 2nd platoon of 1st company, as indicated by the tactical symbol applied on both sides of the hull. The rear of the turret sported a solid cross marking. The vehicle had the standard license plates of Regio Esercito on the front and black plate of the hull, and was camouflaged in a splinter pattern of grigio verde scuro (dark grey green) and sabbia chiaro (light sand yellow).



✠ **M14/41, unknown unit, Tunisia, May 1943**

This M14/41 was one of the last Italian "warriors" in Africa. This tank was painted in the *sabbia chiaro* (light sand yellow) with stripes of *grigio verde scuro* for better concealment in the green Tunisian landscape. The vehicle had the usual Italian tactical marking painted

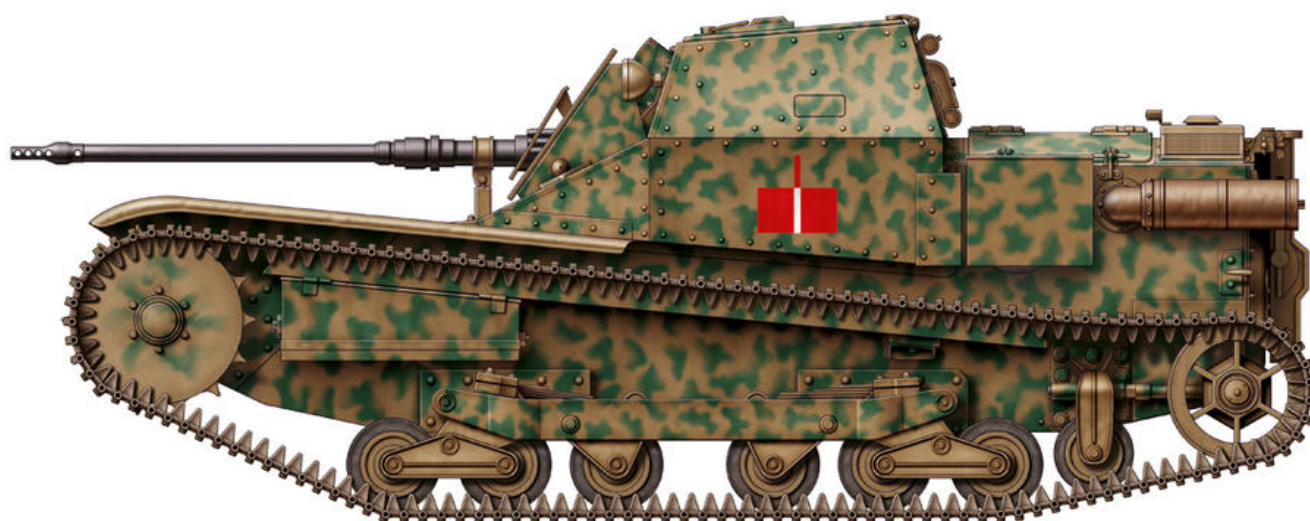
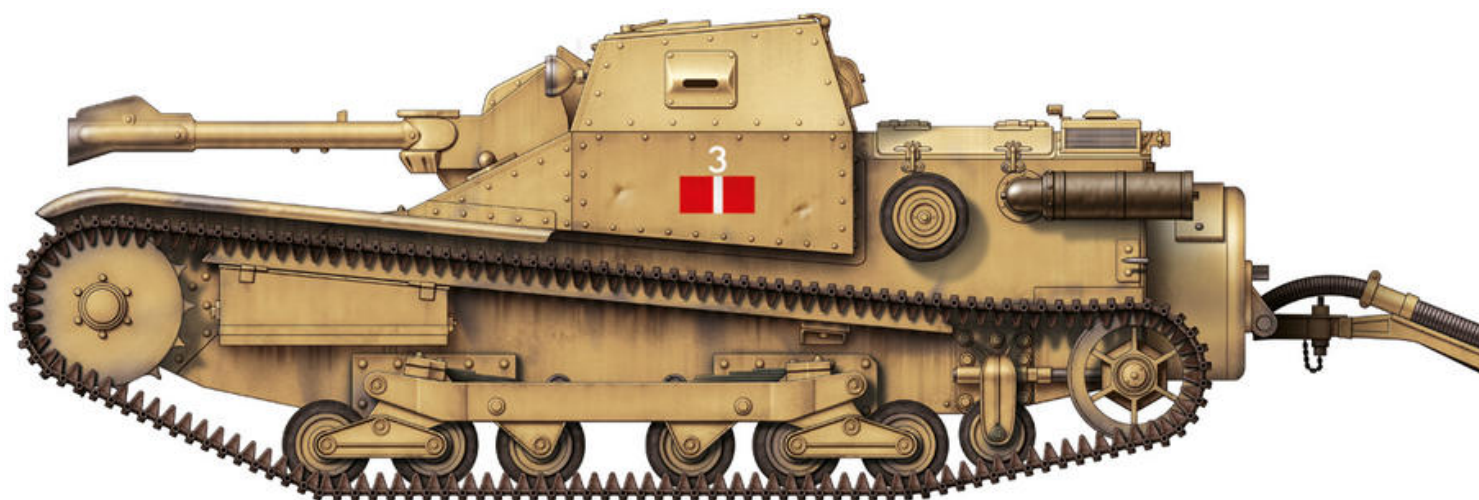
on both sides and rear turret; with license plates (front and rear). Probably belonged to the Ariete Tactical Group, one of the last Italian armour units in Africa (after the catastrophic loss of armoured vehicles in the battle of El Alamein in October 1942).



✠ **L3/35 (CV-35), 32° Reggimento Carri, 132ª Divisione Corazzata "Ariete", Libya 1941**

The L3/35 (initially designated CV-35) was an Italian tankette that saw combat before and during World War II. Although designated a light tank by the Italian Army, its turretless configuration, weight and firepower make it closer to contemporary tankettes. It was the most numerous Italian armoured fighting vehicle which saw service almost everywhere with Italian army, but proved to be outclassed from the

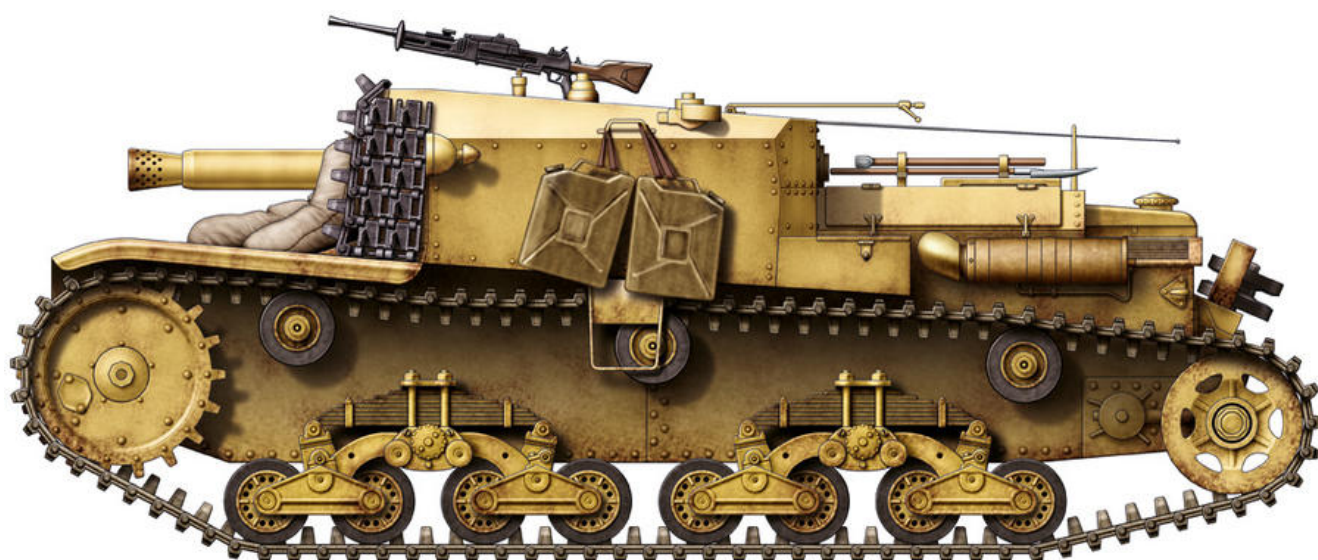
start of their service because of too thin armor and weak armament of two 8 mm machine guns. This tankette was the 3rd vehicle (number 3) within the 3rd platoon of the 2nd company (3 white bars on a light blue rectangle), as indicated by the tactical symbol applied on both sides and rear plate of the hull. It had the usual front and back license plates, and was painted in *giallo sabbia chiaro* (light sand yellow).



✠ **L3/35cc (CV-35cc), unknown unit, Libya 1941**

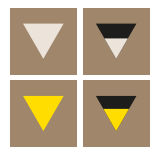
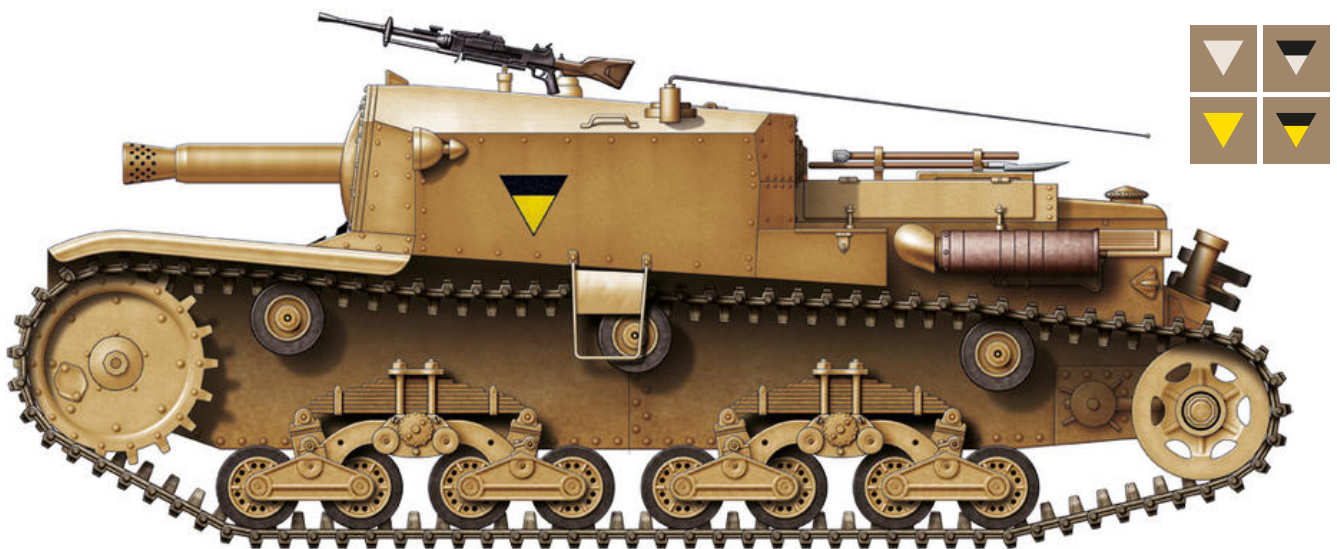
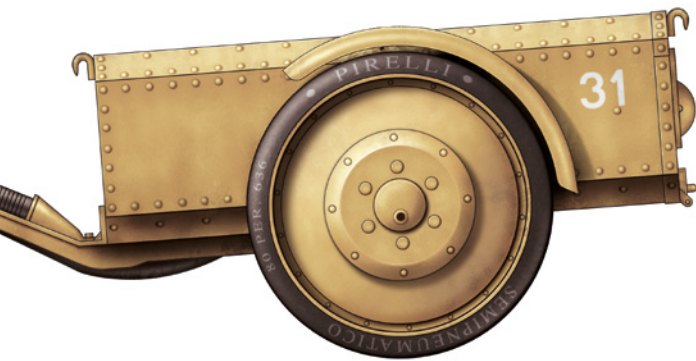
The L3/35cc anti-tank (controcarro) was a rare variant of L3/35 armed with a Solothurn 20 mm anti-tank rifle instead of its standard 8 mm machine guns. A small number of these were used in North Africa. The Solothurn S-18/1000 20 mm anti-tank rifle was a Swiss design used by the Italian Army. It could penetrate up to 18 mm of armor at 300 m which was effective against lightly armored vehicles. The camouflage

of this vehicle consisted of little patches of grigio-verde scuro sprayed over giallo sabbia scuro base coat. The tactical symbol, which identifies this tankette as the 1st vehicle within the first platoon of the 1st company, was painted on both sides of the hull, as well as in the upper right corner of the rear hull plate. The Regio Esercito license plates were present on the front and rear of the vehicle.



✝ **L3/35Lf, 132ª Divisione Corazzata "Ariete", Libya 1941**

The L3/35Lf (Lanciafiamme - flame thrower) flame-throwing tank was developed in 1935. It was a standard L3/35 tankette with one of the machine guns replaced by the flame thrower nozzle. The flame fuel was carried in an armoured 500 L fuel trailer towed by the vehicle. From 1936 each L3 company had a single L3/35Lf platoon. This vehicle was painted in giallo sabbia chiaro colour. It had standard license plates of the Regio Esercito (even on the rear of the trailer), and the tactical symbol indicating the 3rd vehicle (white 3) within the 1st platoon (one white bar) of the 1st company (red rectangle). This symbol was painted on both sides of the hull, as well as on the right upper corner of the rear hull plate, and the left upper corner of the trailer's rear plate. A number "31" in white was applied on both sides of the trailer, and on the left upper corner of the tankette's rear hull plate.



✝ **Semovente M40 da 75/18, VI (DLII) Gruppo Semoventi, 132ª Divisione Corazzata "Ariete", El Alamein, Egypt, August 1942**

The standard tactical symbols of the Semovente units in "Ariete" Division were: a white triangle for 1st Battery of I Gruppo, a white triangle, outlined in black, with a black horizontal bar on the top for 2nd Battery of I Gruppo, a yellow triangle for 1st Battery of II Gruppo, and a yellow triangle, outlined in black, with black horizontal bar on the top for 2nd Battery of II Gruppo, as in case of the

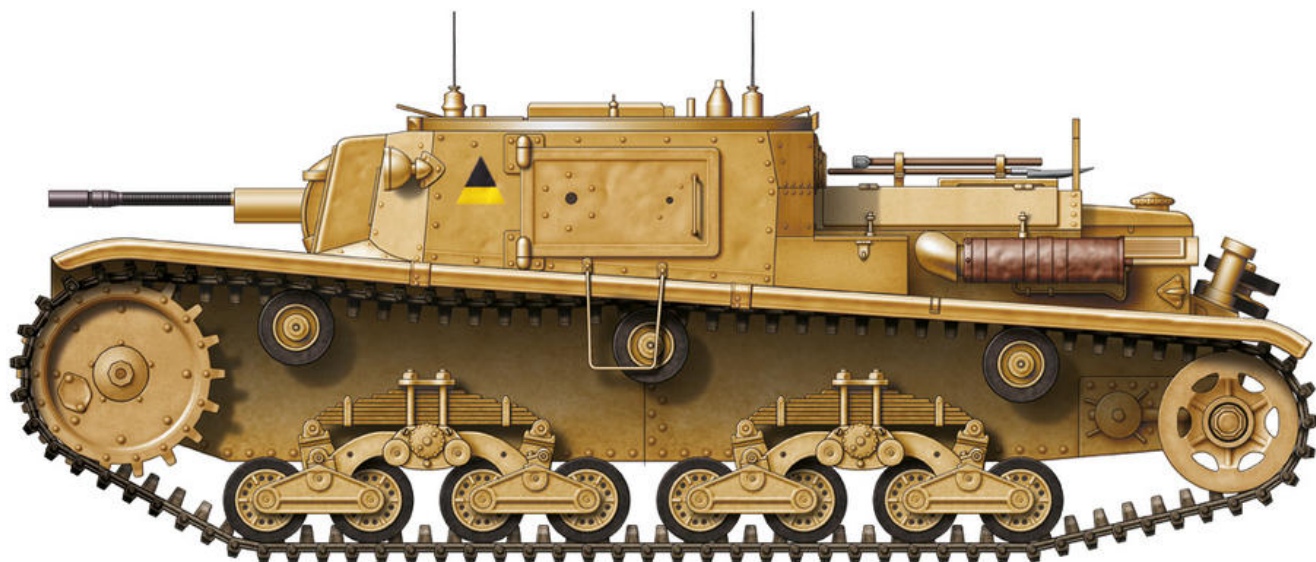
vehicle shown above. The tactical symbol was painted on both sides of the hull, as well as on the rear hull plate. This Semovente sported a fresh coat of giallo sabbia chiaro (light sand yellow), which may indicate that it was a newly delivered vehicle. The license plates were present on the front and rear of the hull. Note the 6.5 mm Breda Mod. 30 machine gun mounted on the roof for close defense.

◀ ✝ **Semovente M40 da 75/18, unknown unit, Libya 1942**

The Semovente da 75/18 self-propelled gun was developed in 1941. Inspired by the design of the German Sturmgeschütz III, the Italians built a similar vehicle by mounting the 75 mm Obice da 75/18 modello 34 mountain gun on the chassis of a M13/40 or M14/41 tank. The first Semoventes were sent to North Africa in January 1942. They proved to be quite effective against the M3 Grant and M4 Sherman tanks used by the Allied troops. Although the Semovente da 75/18 usually served as divisional artillery, due to their characteristics they could be successfully used on the front line, acting as



assault guns and tank destroyers. This particular vehicle was camouflaged in standard giallo sabbia chiaro (light sand yellow) colour. It had the frontal and rear Regio Esercito vehicle license plates. Worth noting are the sandbags and sections of spare tracks used as an add-on armour on the front and sides of the hull, and the extra jerrycans. The latter were sometimes filled with sand and used as an improvised armour. The weapon on the roof of this Semovente da 75/18 was a 6.5 mm Breda Mod. 30 light machine gun. Also note the radio antenna in its low position, fixed to the hull.



✠ **Carro Comando Semoventi M40, VI (DLII) Gruppo Semoventi, 132^a Divisione Corazzata "Ariete", Egypt, El Alamein, August 1942**

This vehicle was a command variant of the Semovente, with additional radio equipment, a 13.2 mm Breda Mod. 31 machine gun (a license-built copy of French Hotchkiss machine gun) mounted instead of the 75 mm gun, and a large hatch in the left side of the hull which presence was caused by using the M13/40 tank hulls to build these command vehicles. Each Gruppo had two of these vehicles in the HQ, and one more in each Battery. In 1942, each Battery comprised one command vehicle and four self-propelled guns. The command vehi-

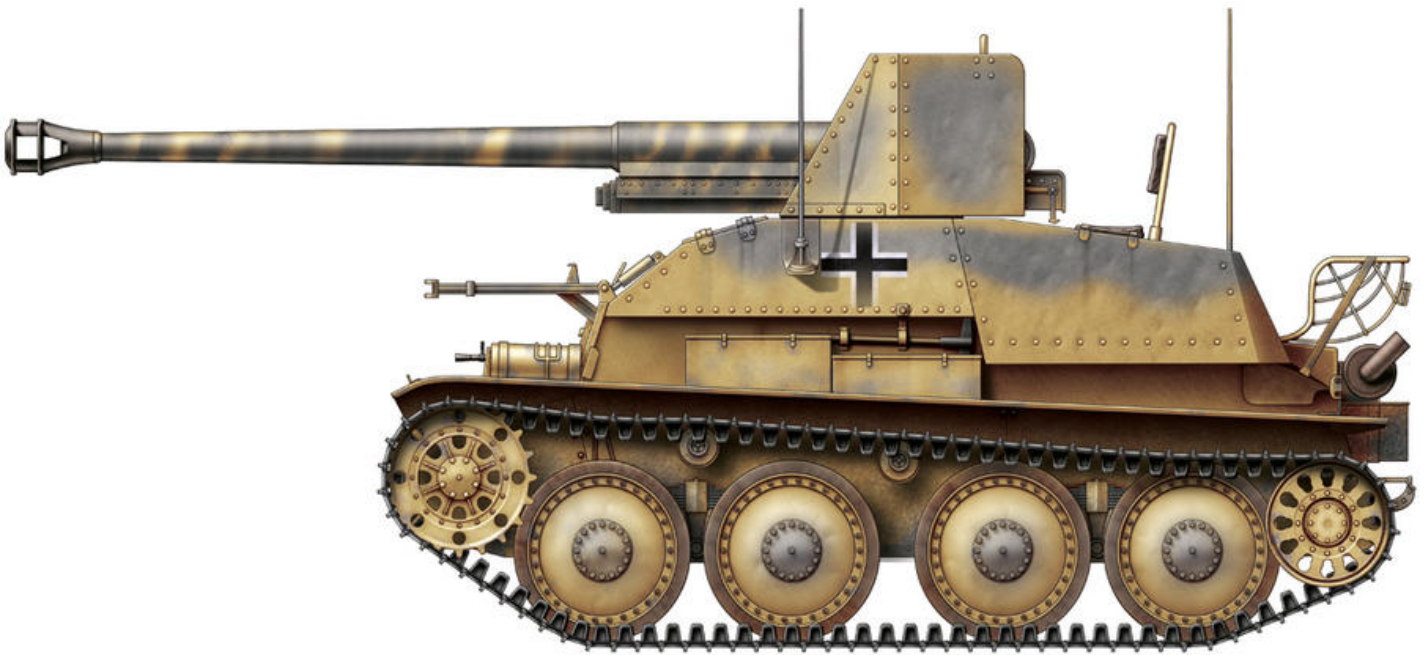
cles in each Battery sported the same tactical symbols as the self-propelled guns, although the triangles were painted upside down, with the black horizontal bar kept in the top position. This particular vehicle was finished in the usual scheme of overall giallo sabbia chiaro (light sand yellow), with Regio Esercito vehicle license plates placed on the lower front hull plate and left side of the rear hull plate. The tactical symbol was repeated on the right side of the rear hull plate. Note the additional radio antennas on the roof.



✠ **Panzerjäger 38(t) für 7.62 cm PaK 36(r) Marder III (Sd.Kfz.139), Kampfstaffel des Oberbefehlshabers der Panzerarmee Afrika, Gazala, Libya, May 1942**

The Marder III was a makeshift tank destroyer built on the chassis of the obsolete Pz.Kpfw.38(t) tank, mated with the 7.62 cm PaK 36(r) gun. The latter was the Russian F.K.296(r) (originally F-22), rechambered by the Germans for the PaK 40 cartridge. Production of the new vehicle started in April 1942, and 344 units were completed until November 1942. Six of these were delivered to the Kampfstaffel des Oberbefehlshabers der Panzerarmee Afrika in May 1942, arriving at the start of Gazala offensive. This vehicle sported a worn coat of recently introduced brown paint (RAL 8020) over a dark gray base

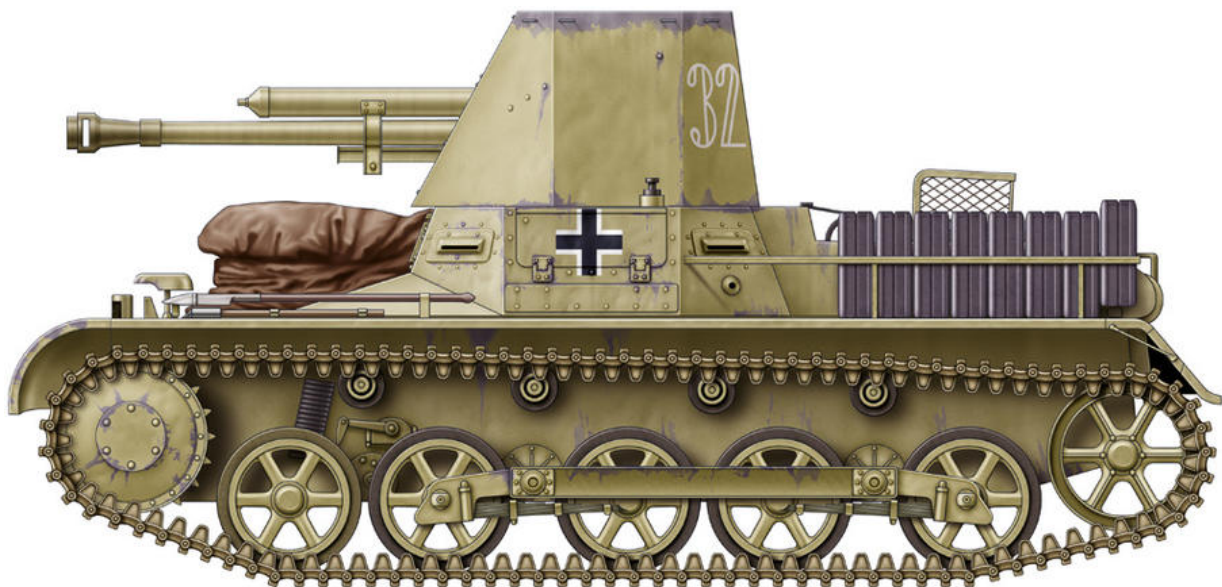
(RAL 7021). It had national crosses on both sides and rear, lightly oversprayed with brown (RAL 8020), and white tactical numbers applied on patches of dark gray, which were probably masked off before the vehicle was given a coat of yellow-brown. Most of the pictures of Marder IIIs serving in North Africa show them without any tactical numbers, so it's possible that after some weeks the crews overpainted these markings to avoid the use of them as targeting points by British gunners. The Marder III had a very high silhouette, so white markings applied on grey background could be seen from far away.



✠ **Panzerjäger 38(t) für 7.62 cm PaK 36(r) Marder III (Sd.Kfz.139), Panzerjäger-Abteilung 33, 15. Panzer-Division, El Alamein, Egypt, November 1942**

Sixty-six Marder IIIs were shipped to North Africa in 1942. Most of them were assigned to the Panzerjäger-Abteilung 33 of the 15. Panzer-Division and Panzerjäger-Abteilung 39 of the 21. Panzer-Division. These vehicles, as in case of the presented example, were usually painted with a coat of yellow-brown (RAL 8000), or brown

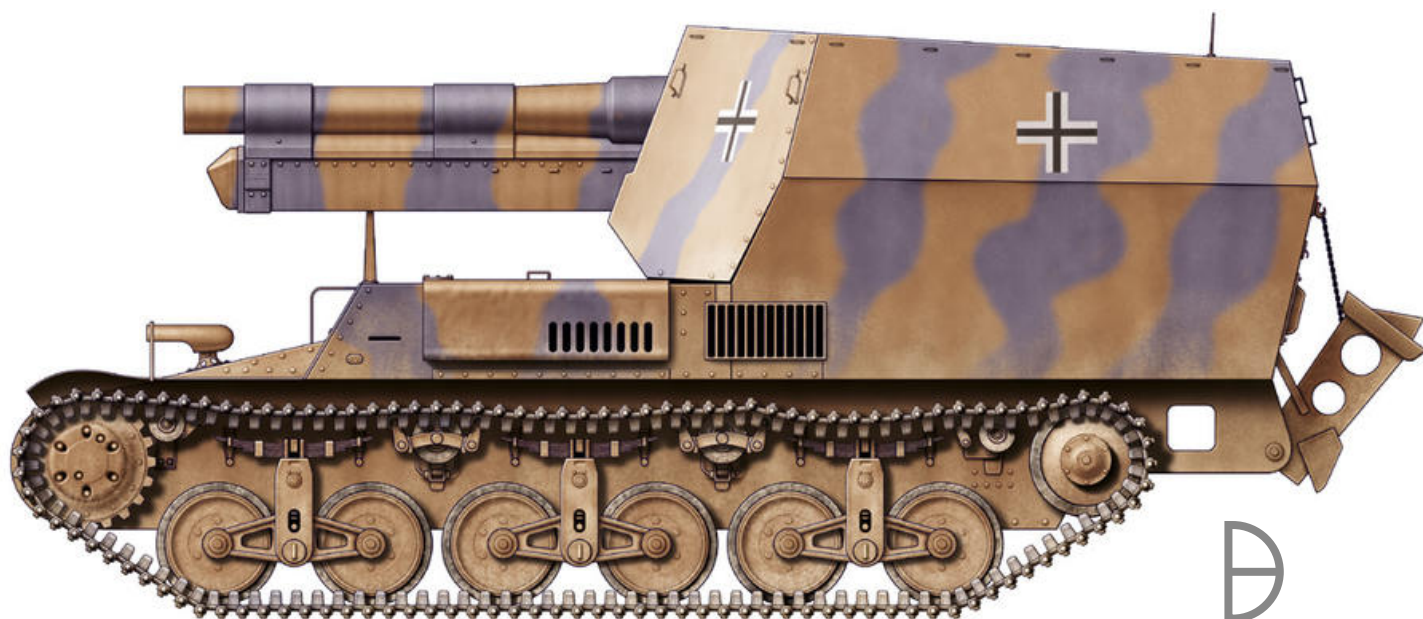
(RAL 8020), applied over the original dark gray base (RAL 7021). The markings were limited to the national insignia applied on both sides and the rear of the vehicle. The power of the gun of the Marder III was very appreciated by the crews, but its high silhouette made it very hard to hide in the plain desert battlefield.



✠ **4.7 cm PaK(t) (Sf) auf Pz.Kpfw.I Ausf.B, Panzerjäger-Abteilung 605, 5. leichte Division, Libya, April 1941**

Commonly known as the Panzerjäger I, this version marked Germany's first attempt at an armored tank destroyer. The turret was removed and a 4.7 cm PaK(t) Czechoslovakian anti-tank gun with a tall wrap-around gun shield was installed. Twenty-seven Panzerjäger Is were assigned to the Panzerjäger-Abteilung 605, which arrived in Tripoli, Libya on the 21st March 1941. This vehicle is painted in what seems to be a very light coat of Italian grigio-verde chiaro (so light it looks like a

greenish sand) over the standard dark gray base (RAL 7021). The use of Italian paints was rare, but it happened in the first months of 1941 when the German paints were in short supply. Note the gray stripe on top of the superstructure, which was a result of painting the vehicle with the canvas cover on. The only markings are standard national insignia on both sides and back plate of the hull, and a tactical number "32" outlined in white.



✠ **Lg.s.F.H.13 (Sfl.) auf Lorraine-Schlepper, Panzer-Artillerie-Regiment 155, 21. Panzer-Division, El Alamein, September 1942**

This self-propelled gun, a hybrid of a French light tracked armoured vehicle and German heavy field howitzer, was painted in a camouflage scheme consisting of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) and dark gray (RAL 7021) stripes. It had thin black national crosses outlined white on both side and front plates of the superstructure, and rear

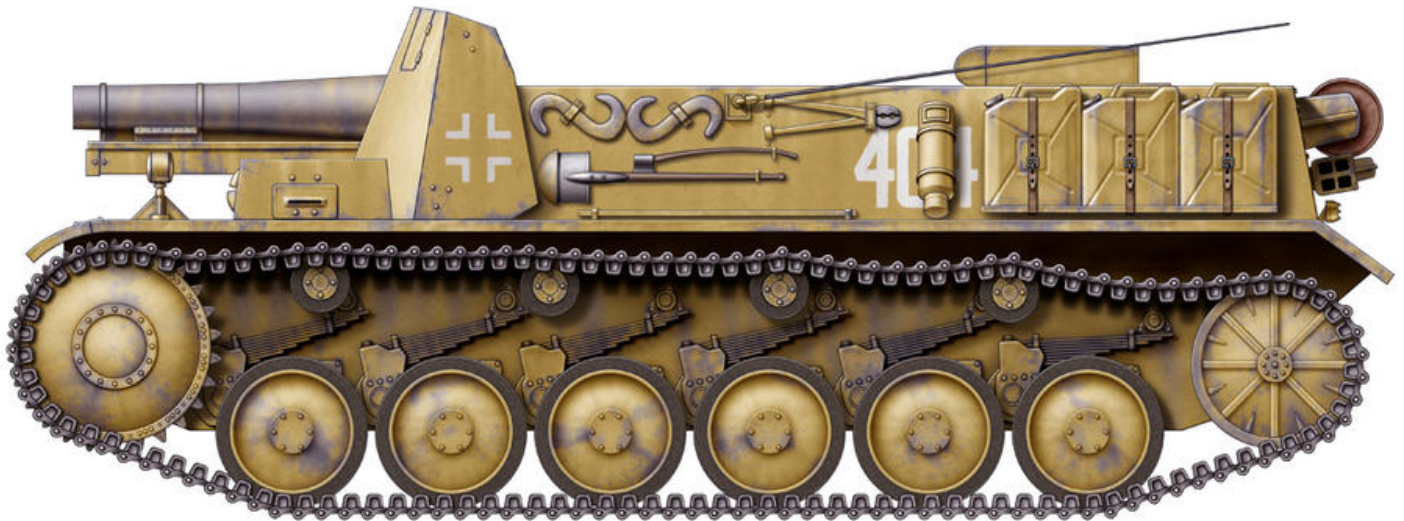
access door. The white tactical symbols of the 21. Panzer-Division and towed artillery battery were painted on the left side of the rear superstructure plate, with the DAK insignia on the right side. The were also applied in a similar fashion on the curved parts of the front mudguards.



✠ **StuG III Ausf.D, Sonderverband 288, Bir Hakeim, Libya, May 1942**

The three vehicles sent to Africa were painted in yellow-brown (RAL 8000) or according to some sources, brown (RAL 8020), over the dark gray base (RAL 7021). This particular StuG sported non-typical national insignia in form of thin black open crosses with arms additionally outlined in white. These were applied on both sides and the rear of the vehicle (on the smoke candle housing). The unit emblem (see the detail draw) was painted in green on the front plate, right to the main gun. The three StuGs saw service with Sonderverband 288. It was composed of units from all branches of the German Army,

including a company of Brandenburgers, trained for special operations behind enemy lines. The Sonderverband 288 was intended to prepare the way for the DAK as it flowed across the Nile and into the Middle East. The combat elements of the unit were eventually sent to Afrika as special reinforcements. The vehicles of the Sturmzug of Sv 288 saw action, attached to 90. leichte Afrika-Division, supporting the Italian "Ariete" Division in combat against the French forces defending Bir Hakeim. They also participated in the battles of El Alamein.



✠ 15 cm s.I.G.33 B (Sfl.), s.I.G.Kp. (mot. S) 707 or 708, 90. leichte Division, Libya 1942

This self-propelled gun was built on the strengthened and lengthened chassis of the Pz.Kpfw.II. Six of these vehicles were assigned to s.I.G.Kp. (mot. S) 707, with another six assigned to s.I.G.Kp. (mot. S) 708. Both companies were attached to infantry regiments of the 90. leichte Afrika-Division. The markings of their vehicles were different on each other. This

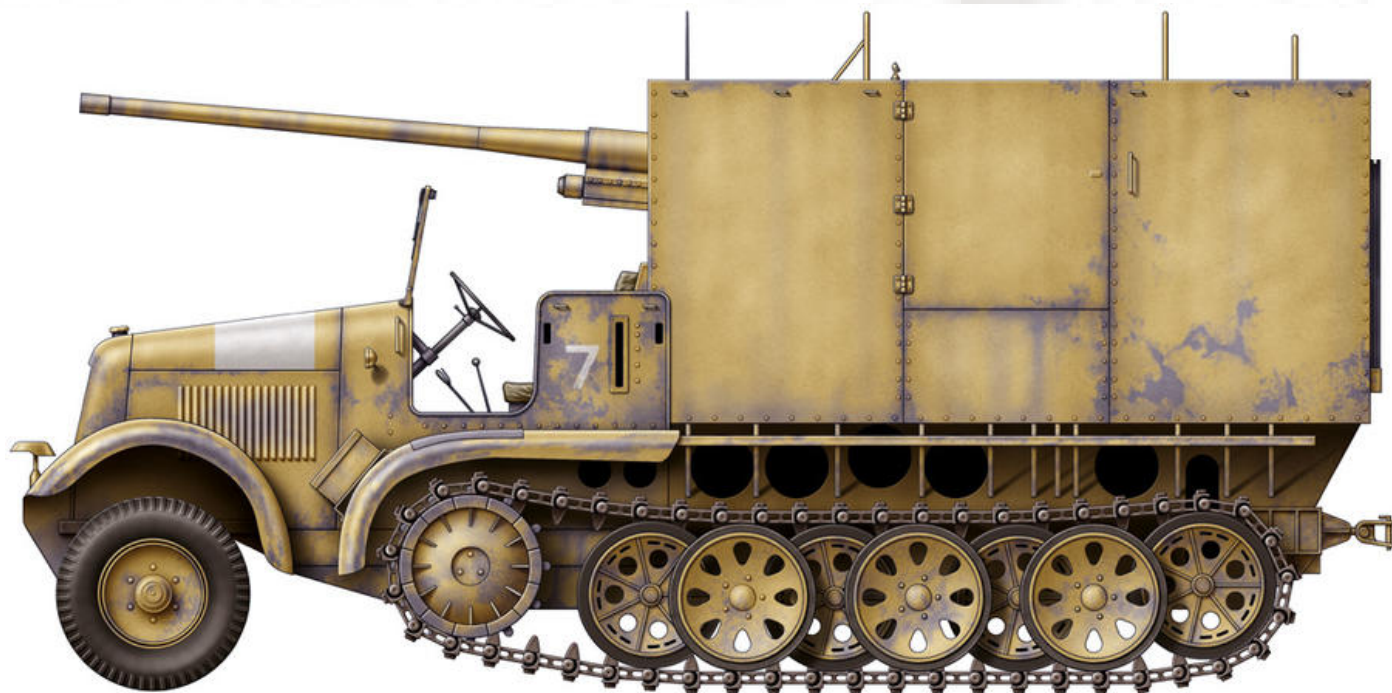
one had only simple white outline crosses and tactical number "404" on both sides of the superstructure. It was painted in yellow-brown (RAL 8000) over dark gray (RAL 7021) base. Eight of these vehicles were still reported as available at the outbreak of the second battle of El Alamein on the 23th October 1942, but all had been lost by the 2nd December 1942.



✠ 7.5 cm PaK 40/3 auf Pz.Kpw.38(t) Ausf.H (Sd.Kfz.138), 2./Panzerjäger-Abteilung 39, 21. Panzer-Division, Tunisia, March 1943

The second variant of the Marder III featured the standard German 7.5 cm PaK 40 anti-tank gun mounted on a slightly modified Pz.Kpfw.38(t) chassis. 275 vehicles were built in between November 1942 and April 1943, with additional 175 units converted from the Pz.Kpfw.38(t) in 1943. This particular Marder III was one of nine delivered in March 1943, which were all lost in combat in Tunisia. It

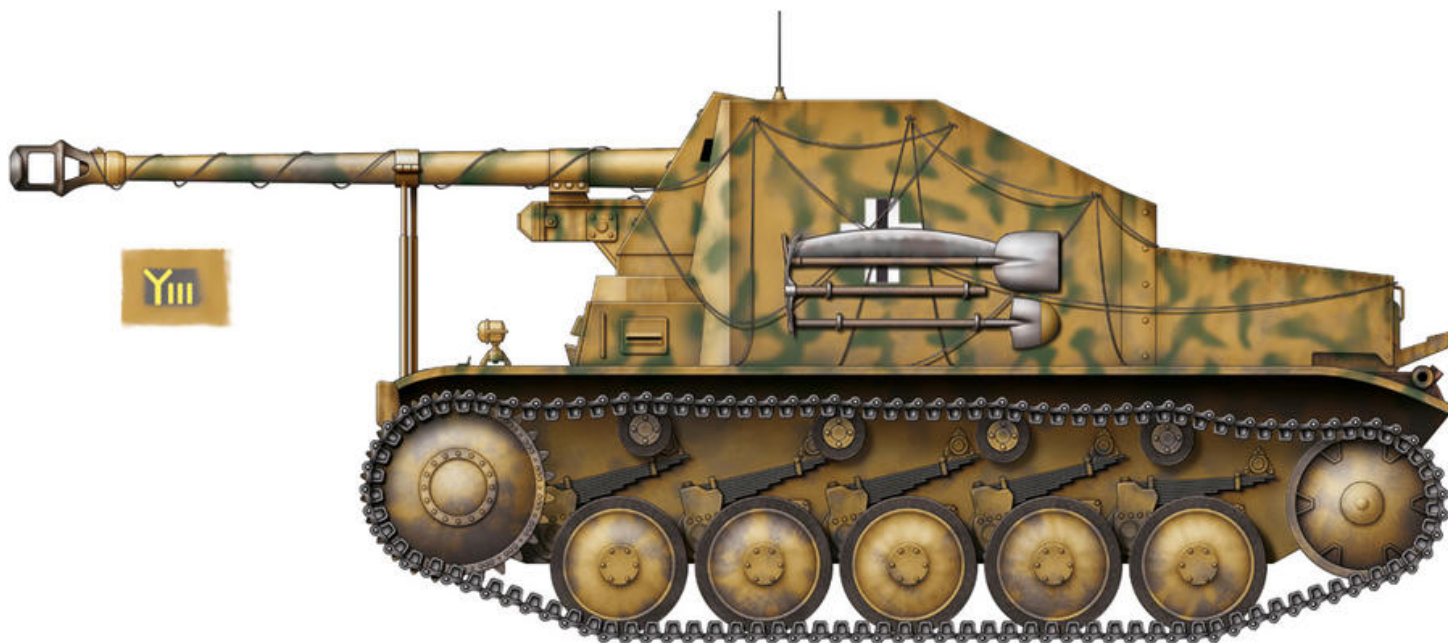
was probably camouflaged with patches of red brown (RAL 8017) applied over a coat of brown (RAL 8020). Its only markings were the standard national insignia and tactical number, painted on both sides of the fighting compartment. The tactical number indicates that this was the 2nd vehicle within the 3rd platoon of the 2nd company.



✠ **7.62 cm F.K.(r) auf gp. Selbstfahrlafette (Sd.Kfz.6/3), Panzerjäger-Abteilung 605, 90. Afrika-Division, Tel el Eisa, El Alamein, Egypt, July 1942**

This vehicle was an expedient attempt to provide the DAK with a fast self-propelled anti-tank gun. Captured Russian 76.2 mm divisional gun was mounted in an armoured superstructure, built on the chassis of the Büssing-NAG Sd.Kfz.6 5 ton half-tracked vehicle. Six of these vehicles arrived in North Africa in late January 1942, with three more delivered in late February. They formed the 3rd self-propelled anti-tank company of the Pz.Jg.Abt 605. All of them were lost or destroyed by the end

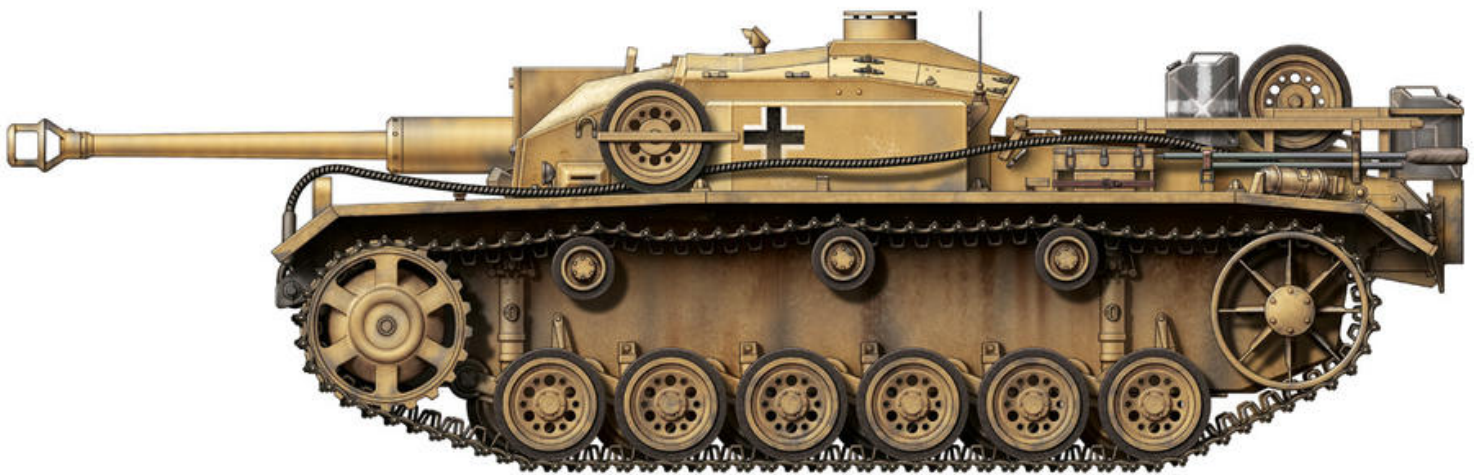
of November 1942. This particular vehicle sported a worn coat of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) applied over the original dark gray (RAL 7021) base. A white air recognition band was painted across the engine compartment. The markings consisted of tactical number "7", applied in white on both sides of the cab, small white elephant symbols painted on the right front mudguard and left side of the fighting compartment's rear plate, and a standard vehicle license plate fitted on the front.



✠ **7.5 cm PaK 40/2 auf Fahrgestell Pz.Kpfw.II (Sfl.) Marder II (Sd.Kfz.131), Panzerjäger-Abteilung 90, 10. Panzer-Division, Tunisia 1943**

This variant of the Marder II tank destroyer, armed with German 7.5 cm PaK 40/2 anti-tank gun, was built on the chassis of the Pz.Kpfw.II Ausf.A to C and Ausf.F. From June 1942 to mid-1943, 576 tanks were converted. This vehicle was camouflaged with little patches of grey-green (RAL 7008) applied over brown (RAL 8020) base. The tactical symbol of the

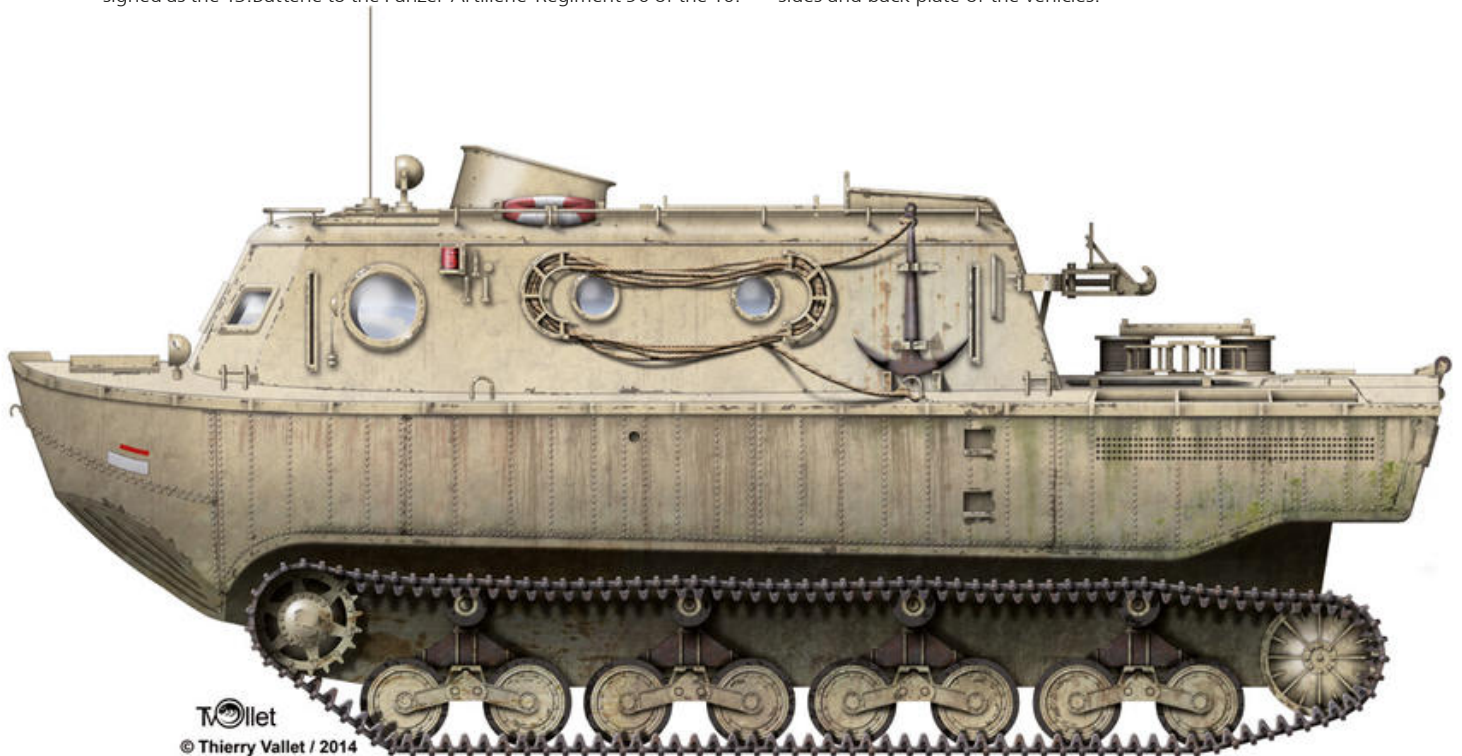
10. Panzer-Division (see the detail view) was painted on the front hull plate, near the driver's visor, and on the left side of the rear low plate, near the muffler. Standard national insignia were applied on both sides of the superstructure. Note the wires spread on the superstructure and gun barrel, which were used to hold branches for additional camouflage.



✠ **StuG III Ausf.F/8, 1./Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 242, Tunisia, February 1943**

The only StuG IIIs with the long barreled 7.5 cm StuK 40 L/48 gun used in North Africa were the vehicles of the 1.Batterie of the Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 242. The Abteilung, under the command of Hptm. Ernst Benz, was formed in November 1942 for service in Africa, but only the 1.Batterie was sent to Tunisia, where it was renamed Sturmgeschütz-Batterie 90. That unit, equipped with four StuG III Ausf F/8s, was assigned as the 13.Batterie to the Panzer-Artillerie-Regiment 90 of the 10.

Panzer-Division in January 1943. It also supported Luftwaffen-Jäger-Brigade 1 and then Fallschirm-Regiment Barentin while fighting to the end in Tunisia. The remnants of the batterie surrendered to the British troops at Cap Bon Peninsula on the 11th May 1943. Their StuG IIIs were painted in brown (RAL 8020) over the dark gray base (RAL 7021). Their markings comprised only standard national insignia applied on both sides and back plate of the vehicles.



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✠ **Landwasserschlepper (LWS), Pionier-Landungs-Kompanie 778 (probably), Libya, 1942**

The development of the Landwasserschlepper tracked amphibious tractor began in 1935, but the first prototypes were not completed before 1940. This vehicle was intended to aid river crossing and landing operations. It was to be used to carry and tow heavy loads in the water and on land. The LWS didn't see regular service until 1942 and was built in only small numbers. Some of these vehicles were sent to North Africa to be used in an amphibious landing of

a mixed German-Italian task force behind enemy lines, in order to cut the Via Balbia (the main road of Libya) 30 kms east of Tobruk, during the attack on the Gazala Line in late May 1942. However, the landing was not carried out. This LWS was repainted in brown (RAL 8020), which became the standard colour since late March 1942. In 1943, the vehicle was captured by British troops in Tunisia, and sent to England for evaluation.

ARTILLERY



05° 00' N (1942)

LAT. 30°30'

LONG. 15°

Magnetic North
Magnetic Variation,
3°32' W (1942)
Annual Change 05 E.



CONVERSION TABLE
Metres Feet
3,000

O.U., den 1. Dezember 1942.

Hinnschreiben I
...ehr geehrter Herr Hordemann!
...ehr schmerzliche Pflicht, Ihnen in Namen des
...le traurige Mitteilung machen zu müssen, dass
...Hugo Hordemann, seit dem 5.11.1942
...n-Front vermisst wird.



Verleihungsurkunde

Ich verleihe dem
Gefreiten

Herbert Nowacki

das Abzeichen für

Jalldschirm schützen

Berlin, den 15. Juli 1942

Der Reichsminister der Luftfahrt
und Oberbefehlshaber der Luft

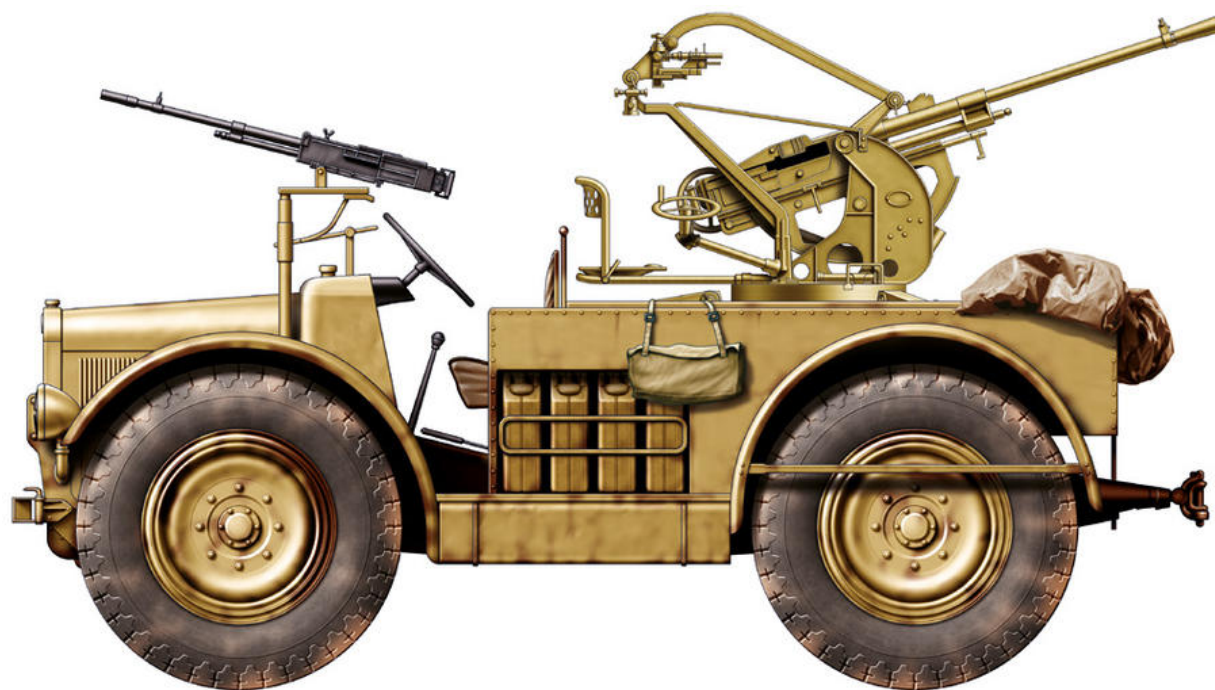
Der Chef des Luftwaffenpersonals

Handwritten signature

The artillery regiments of the Afrika Korps were mainly comprised of 105 mm (le.F.H.18) and 150 mm (s.I.G.33, s.F.H.18) howitzers, and, as the campaign progressed, also a large number of captured British howitzers such as the famous Ordnance QF 25-pounder. The towed anti-tank artillery units which were first equipped with the obsolete 3.7 cm PaK 36 guns, were soon replaced by the much more efficient 5 cm PaK 38 guns, with a limited number of 7.5 cm PaK 40 guns provided in 1942-1943, and able to knock out any of the Allied tanks. Regarding the anti-aircraft guns, both the Luftwaffe and Heer had special units with 2 cm Flak 30 and 38, as well as Flakvierling 38, towed or mounted on top of trucks and half-tracks, as their main mobile Flak guns (with other guns in very limited numbers). Of course, the Afrika Korps had the famous 8.8 cm Flak 18/36/37 guns, used in an anti-tank role to fight British Matilda tanks like during the French Campaign in 1940, and later against the Grant, Lee and Sherman medium tanks. The Flak 18 guns were always in short supply, and no more than 30-40 were at the front at the same time. In any case, their performance was legendary, and a handful of these could tip the balance in favor of Rommel, as happened on several occasions. Because of its popularity, the 20 mm Breda cannon is also included in this chapter. It was used in a double role, mostly mounted on vehicles of various types and nationality. This chapter also includes a selection of German, Italian and British captured vehicles, mounted with 20 mm guns, and used by the Axis in Africa in a similar fashion to British "portees" and LRDG recon vehicles.



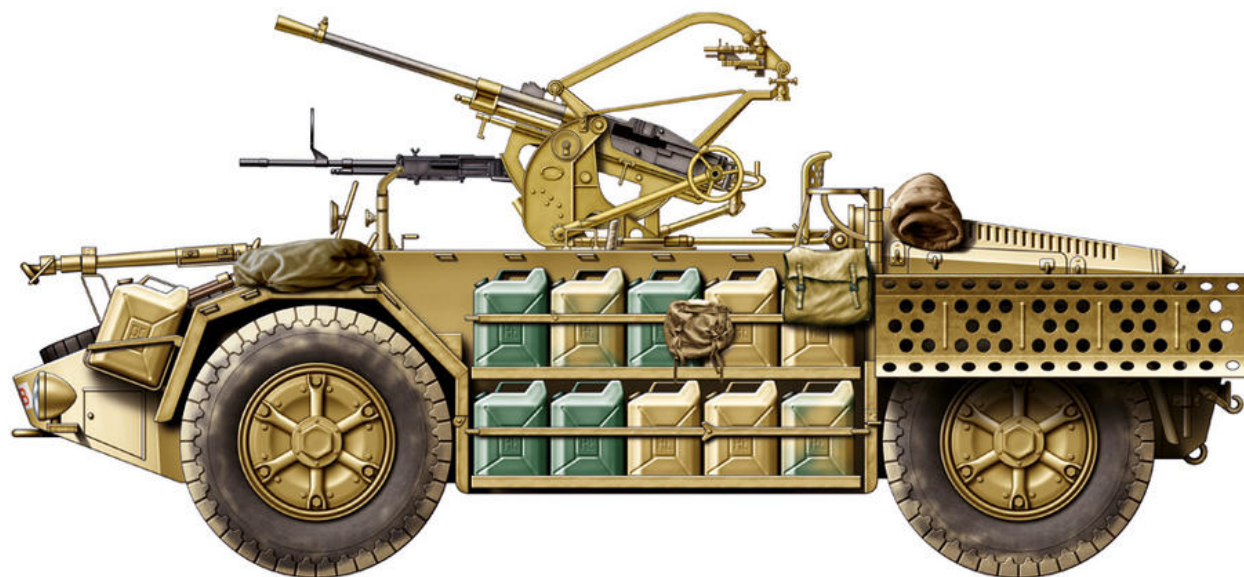
Finally, as a bonus to the content of this book, we include a double page spread, with three views of one of the Fieseler Fi 156 "Storch" liaison aircraft used by Rommel in Africa. Thanks to the excellent short take-off and landing performance of this plane, Rommel could land almost anywhere and command the battle from the front line, as was the style of the legendary "Desert Fox".



✠ **Camionetta Desertica AS37, Compagnia auto-avio sahariana, Libia 1942**

This vehicle was a variant of Autocarro Sahariano AS37 modified for long-range recon duties in the Libyan desert with the Italian Auto-Saharan Companies. Based on the TL37 artillery tractor, some of them were armed with 20 mm Breda 20/65 Mod. 1935 cannon. These had a sawed-off cab and different body size and shape. All were hand-built in the army workshops. This particular example was additionally fitted with a 8 mm Breda Mod. 37 machine gun. The crews of these vehicles put forth very

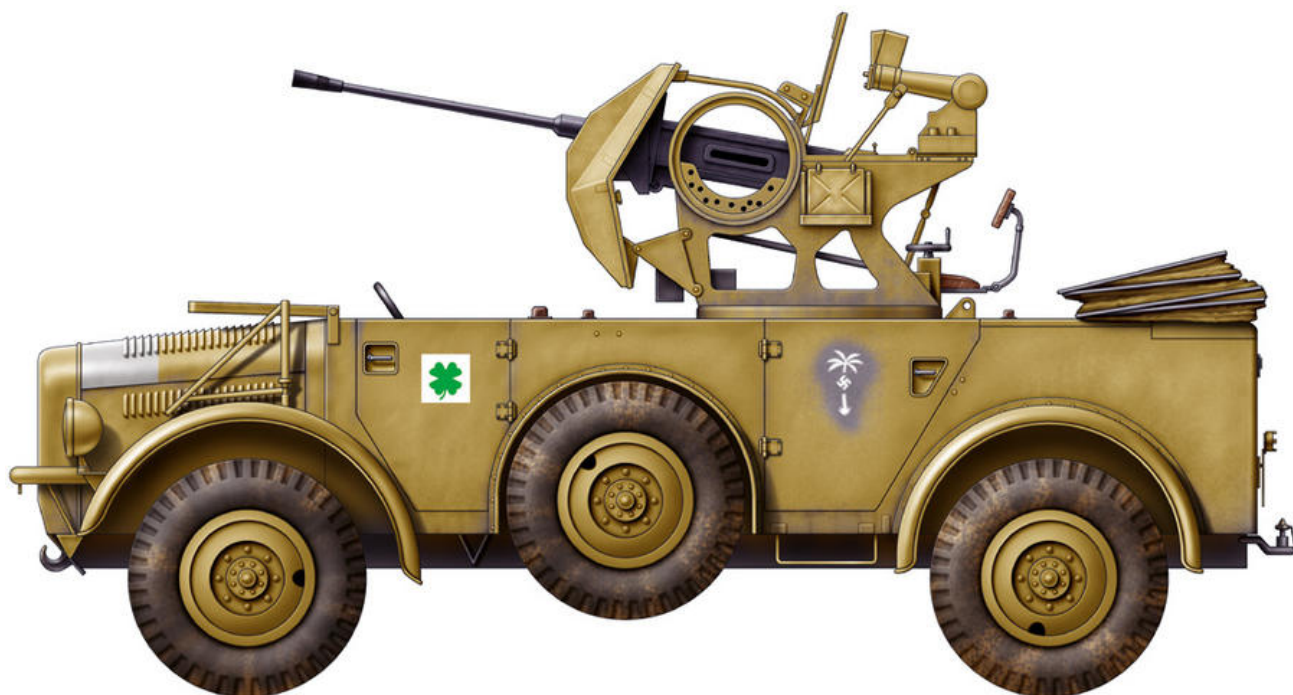
favorable judgments on them. Their four-wheel drive and large diameter wheels prevented them from becoming easily bogged down. The main defect of the AS37 was its high silhouette, which made the vehicle too easy to detect in the desert environment. This vehicle was camouflaged in giallo sabbia chiaro (light sand yellow), with the 20 mm cannon painted in giallo sabbia scuro (dark sand yellow). Its only markings were the standard Italian vehicle license plates. Note the racks for jerrycans.



✠ **AS42 "Sahariana", Raggruppamento sahariano "Mannerini", Tunisia, March 1943**

Directly derived from the AB41 armoured car, the AS42 was produced from August 1942 onwards. It was unarmoured and could carry four cans of water on the front and twenty gasoline cans on the sides plus ammunition and food for long-range operations. The armament of the vehicle usually consisted of one to three 8 mm Breda Mod. 37 machine guns, with either a 20 mm Solothurn S18/1000 anti-tank rifle, 20 mm Breda 20/65 Mod. 1935 anti-aircraft cannon (in this vehicle) or 47 mm Cannone da 47/32 Mod. 35 gun. Twenty-six of these vehicles were used

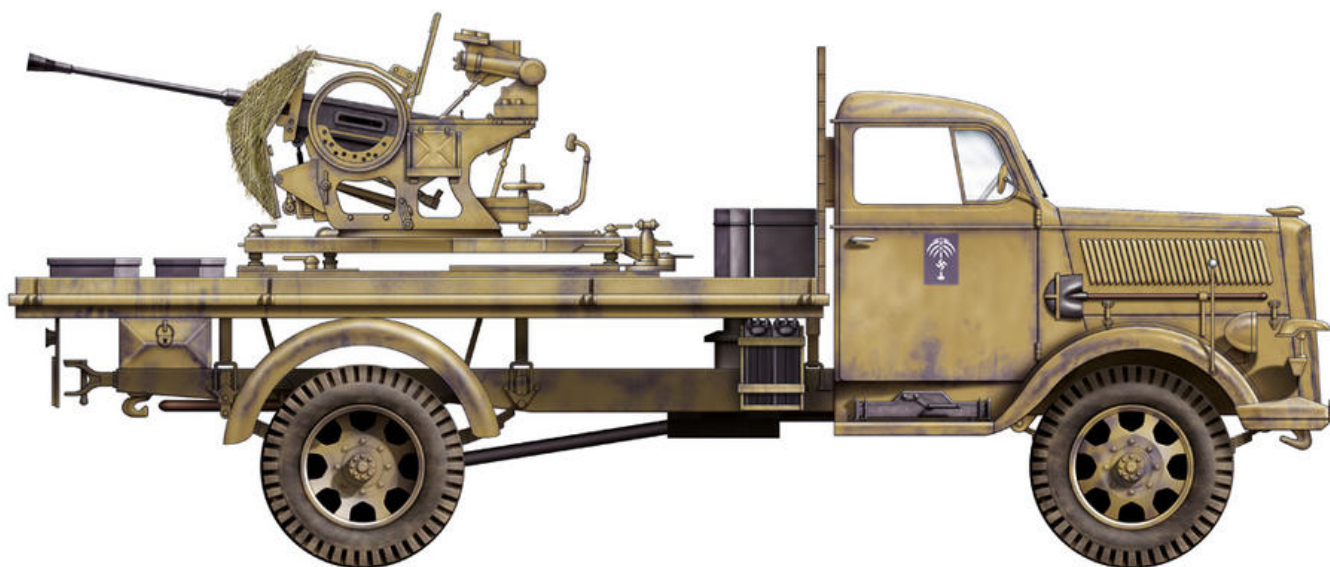
in Libya and Egypt from October 1942, and in Tunisia from January 1943. This AS42 belonged to the Raggruppamento sahariano "Mannerini", a "sui generis" unit of a divisional size, activated in the first months of 1943 in Tunisia. It was camouflaged in giallo sabbia chiaro (light sand yellow), with the Breda cannon painted in giallo sabbia scuro (dark sand yellow). Standard Italian vehicle license plates were the only markings of this AS42. Sometimes the crews painted the Italian flag on the engine compartment cover for the purpose of air recognition.



✝ **Horch 108 Typ 1a with 2 cm Flak 38, I./Flak-Regiment 33 (gem. mot.), attached to 15. Panzer-Division, Libya 1942**

This vehicle, a subject of a very well known series of pictures, belonged to the I. Abteilung of Flak-Regiment 33, a unit of the 19. Flak-Division, but attached to the 15. Panzer-Division after its arrival to Africa in 1942. The crew of this vehicle, in a very practical way, mounted the gun on the car instead of towing it, and used the empty trailer for ammo transport. It was a very common field modification in the light flak units. The Horch and gun were painted with a coat of yellow-

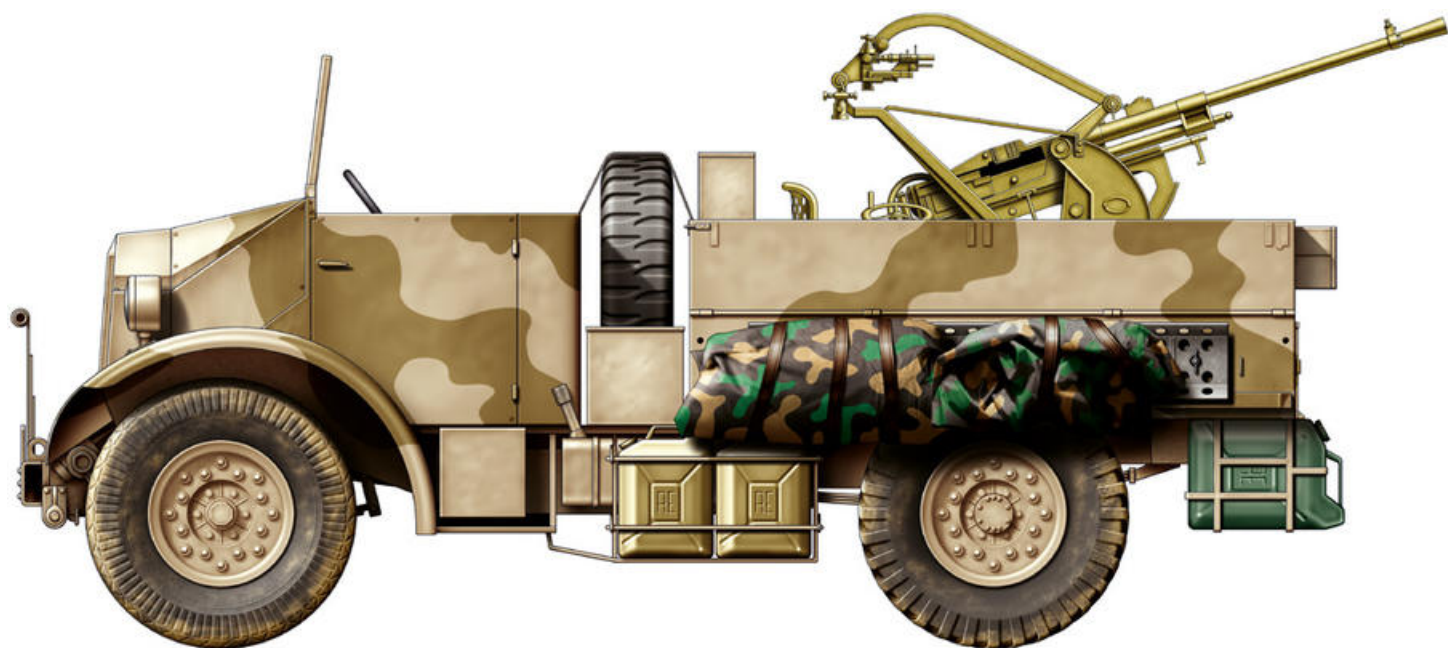
low-brown (RAL 8000) over original dark gray base (RAL 7021). The DAK insignia were applied in white over dark grey patches on both rear side doors, left back door, and right front mudguard. The symbol of the 19. Flak-Division was painted on the front side doors, right back door, and left front mudguard. The white stripe running across the top engine compartment panel was added for the purpose of aerial identification. The vehicle had standard Luftwaffe license plates.



✝ **Opel Blitz 3,6-36 S (4x2) with 2 cm Flak 38, unknown Luftwaffe Flak unit, Libya 1941**

The Opel Blitz was one of the standard trucks for towing light Flak guns such as Flak 30, Flak 38 and Flakvierling 38/4. Soon the crews made field conversions by mounting the guns on the cargo beds, similarly to the British "portees". This kind of conversion was very popular in Africa, both in German and Italian army, and concerned many different vehicles. In this vehicle the crew cut down the sides of the cargo bay, and screwed the gun support to the cargo bed floor, so the weapon had a 360° field of

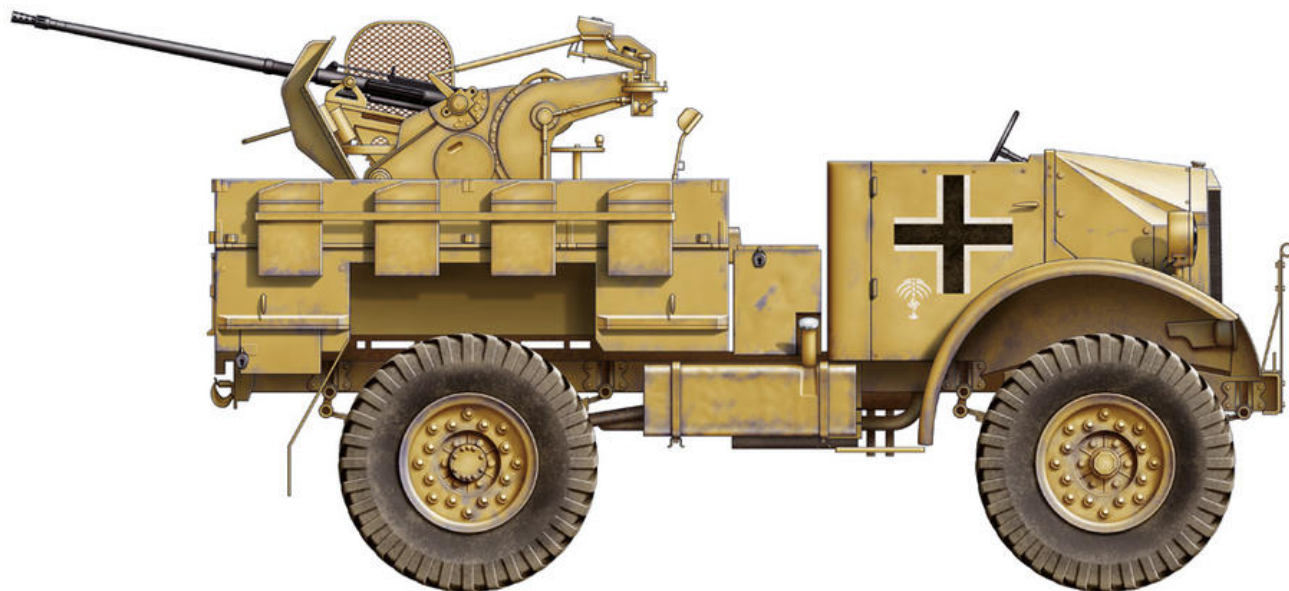
fire. Both truck and gun sported a very worn coat of yellow-brown (RAL 8000), which was applied over original dark gray base (RAL 7021). The Flak 38 was additionally camouflaged with a net with branches stretched over the armoured shield. The only markings of this vehicle were the standard Luftwaffe license plates and DAK insignia painted on both doors over dark gray rectangles. Note the dark gray ammo boxes placed around the gun, and the rack for jerrycans under the cargo bed floor.



✝ **Ford CMP F.15 with Breda 20/65 Mod. 1935, Regio Esercito, Libya 1942**

The Canadian Military Pattern (CMP) truck was a class of military truck produced during the World War II in Canada in accordance with the British Army specifications. The trucks were widely employed by all Commonwealth troops. Many of them were captured by the Regio Esercito in Africa in 1941 and 1942. The Italians fitted several Ford CMP F15 trucks with the 20 mm Breda 20/65 cannon. This vehicle was camouflaged with wavy stripes of grigio-verde chiaro applied

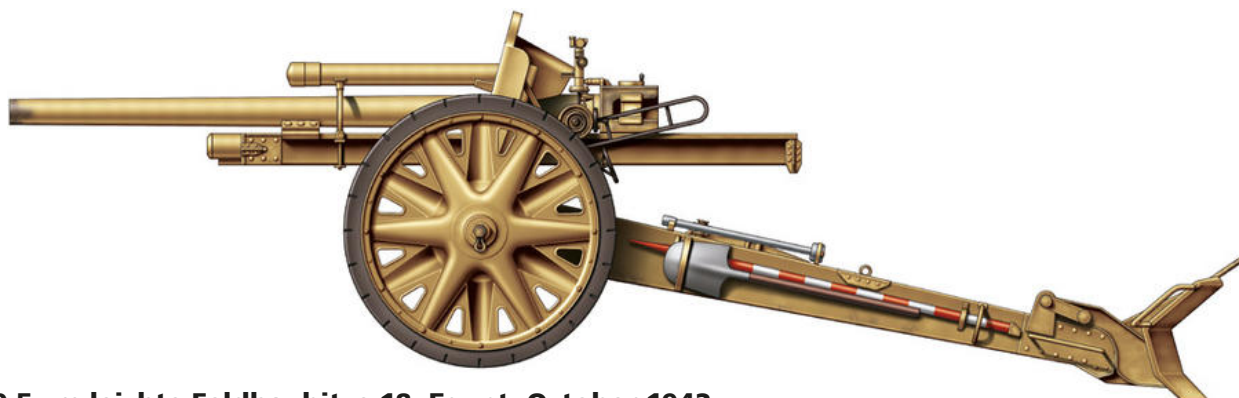
over a base coat of giallo sabbia chiaro. The Breda gun was painted in giallo sabbia scuro. This truck was well-equipped for desert raids, carrying many jerrycans, sand ladders, and camouflaged canvas cover. Such vehicles were usually marked with only a solid white cross applied on the top surface of the engine compartment cover for the purpose of aerial identification, but this particular truck didn't carry even this marking.



✝ **Ford CMP F.15 with 2 cm Flak 30, unknown unit, Libya 1942**

Captured Canadian Military Pattern trucks were extensively used in North Africa not only by the Regio Esercito, but also by the German Army. Similarly to the Italians, who fitted many of their war booty Ford F15 CMPs with 20 mm Breda 20/65 anti-aircraft cannon, the Germans converted some captured trucks of this type to "portees" by mounting a 2 cm Flak 30 guns on the cargo bed, as well as removing the truck's

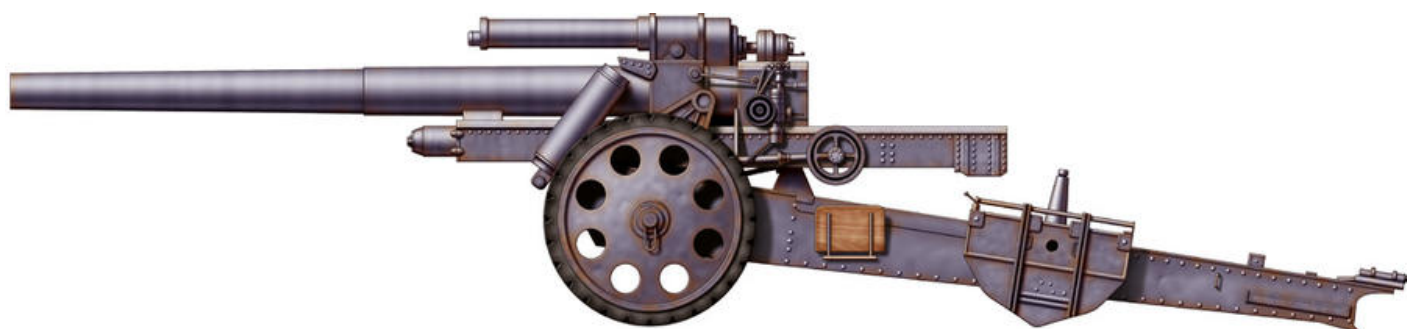
360° field of fire. This truck was repainted by the Germans in brown (RAL 8020), the colour of the Flak 30 gun. The national insignia were painted on both cab doors. The DAK insignia were also applied on the cab doors, as well as on the right front mudguard and right side of the rear cargo bed door. Note the externally carried ammunition boxes for the 20-round magazines. Four of them were fitted to each side of the cargo bed.



✠ 10.5 cm leichte Feldhaubitze 18, Egypt, October 1942

The 10.5 cm leichte Feldhaubitze 18 was the basic German divisional-level light field howitzer used during the World War II. It was designed and developed by Rheinmetall in 1929-30, and entered the service in 1935. This howitzer had a heavy, simple breech mechanism with a hydro-pneumatic recoil system. Initially, it wasn't equipped with a muzzle brake. The 10.5 cm le.F.H.18s were fitted with wood-spoked or pressed steel wheels, but only the latter were used in

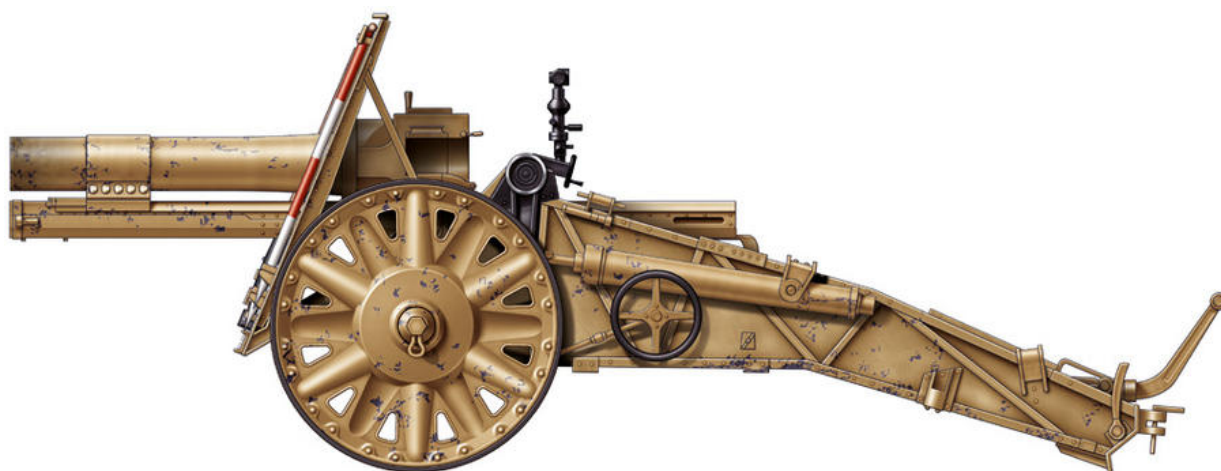
North Africa, as there weren't any horse-tracked artillery units in the Afrika Korps. This kind of artillery pieces used to be towed with half-tracks such as Sd.Kfz.11. This 10.5 cm le.F.H.18 wore a fresh coat of brown (RAL 8020), the standard colour in 1942, and was one of the few of such howitzers used in the second battle of El Alamein. Note the shovel and the aiming posts (with red and white poles) for indirect fire.



✠ 15 cm schwere Feldhaubitze 18, Libya 1941

The 15 cm schwere Feldhaubitze 18 was the standard division-level heavy field howitzer used by the Wehrmacht during the World War II. It was developed on the basis of the World War I-era design of the 15 cm schwere Feldhaubitze 13, hence it was often nicknamed "Immergrün" ("Evergreen"). Its maximum firing range was 13 km.

Over 5,400 units were manufactured between 1933 and 1945. The 15 cm s.F.H.18 was usually towed by the Sd.Kfz.7 half-track. This howitzer was left in its original dark gray colour (RAL 7021), but many of these were repainted with yellow-brown (RAL 8000) soon after the delivery to North Africa.



✠ 15 cm schweres Infanteriegeschütz 33, Libya 1941

The 15 cm schweres Infanteriegeschütz 33 was the basic heavy infantry gun used by the German Army during the World War II. It was built from 1936 to the end of the war. This 15 cm s.I.G. 33 was painted in yellow-brown (RAL 8000) over the original dark gray base (RAL 7021). The Afrika Korps motorised artillery

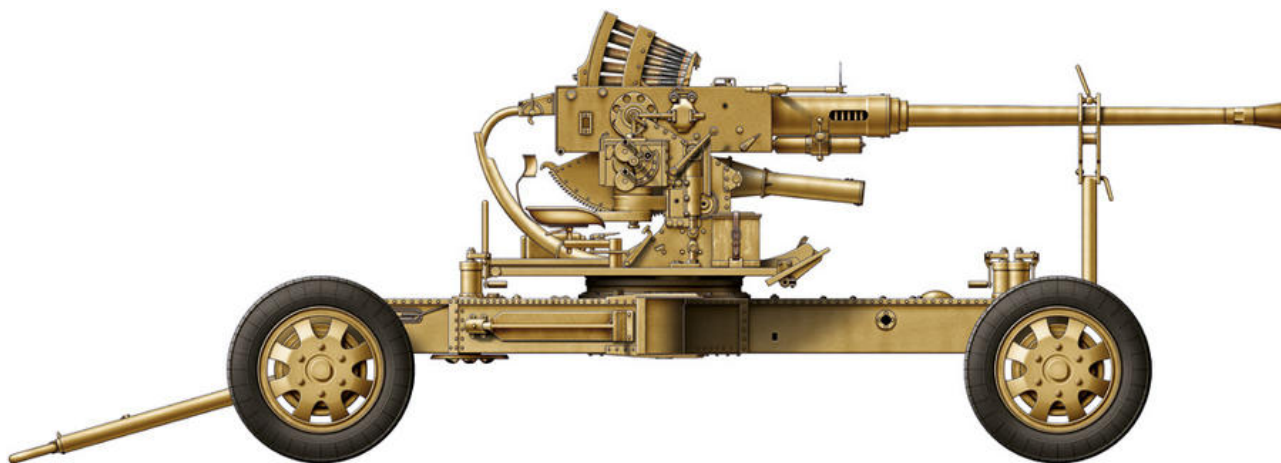
regiments used only the late-production variant of the gun with pressed steel wheels, with solid rubber tires and air brakes for motor towing. This weapon was also mounted on obsolete tracked vehicles and used as self-propelled guns, such as the Bison and 15 cm s.I.G.33 B (Sfl.).



✝ **Ordnance QF 25-pounder Mk.II, Libya 1942**

The Ordnance QF 25-pounder was introduced into service just before the outbreak of the World War II, during which it served as the major dual-purpose British field gun/howitzer. Combining high rates of fire with a reasonably lethal shell in a highly mobile piece, it was used by the British Army well into the

1960s. The Afrika Korps captured so many of these guns that in late 1942 most of the artillery pieces of many of its units was British. The Germans used these guns without any modifications. This 25-pounder was left in its original British light stone colour and didn't carry any markings.



✝ **QF 40 mm Mark III, Libya 1942**

Designed in the 1930s by the Swedish AB Bofors company, the Bofors 40 mm anti-aircraft/multi-purpose autocannon became one of the most popular medium-weight anti-aircraft systems used during World War II. It was widely employed by both the western Allies and Axis armies. The Afrika Korps captured some license-built British Bofors guns in North

Africa, but most of these guns used by the German flak units came from Austria, where the Bofors was built under license, and then taken over by the Wehrmacht. However, this gun was captured to the British, and left in its original colour, without markings. Note the barrel support locked, ready for transport, and a magazine of ammunition ready to fire.



✝ **7.5 cm Panzerabwehrkanone 40, Tunisia, March 1943**

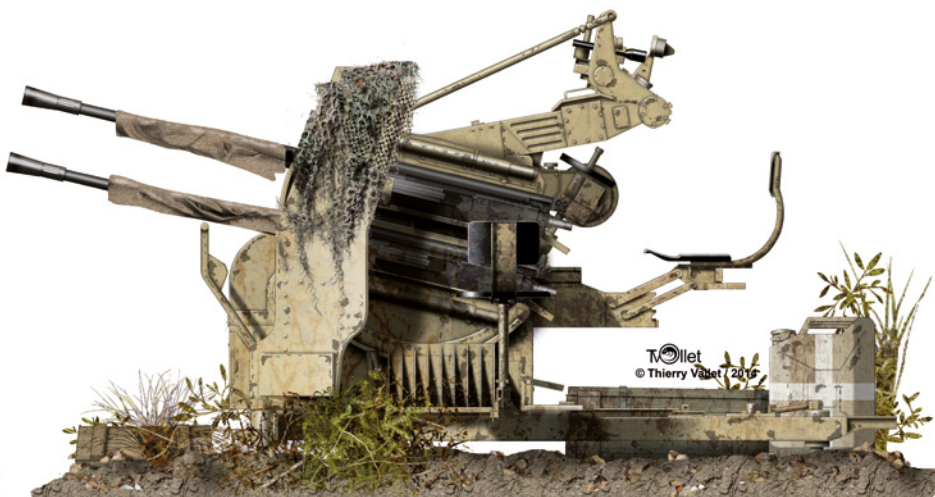
The 7.5 cm Panzerabwehrkanone 40, or PaK 40, was an 75 mm anti-tank gun designed by Rheinmetall company. Its production began in late 1941. The PaK 40 was effective against most of the Allied tanks until the end of the war. It could seriously damage even the heaviest tanks if firing against their sides and back. The only disadvantage of this weapon was its weight, which often made it difficult to move without using a tow vehicle. The PaK 40s were delivered to North Africa in late 1942, so they were mainly deployed in Tunisia. They

were able to knock down any of the Allied tanks used in North Africa. This gun was camouflaged with stripes of red brown (RAL 8017) sprayed over the brown (RAL 8020) base. The use of RAL 8017 paint, which was officially introduced in February 1943, suggests that the camouflage was applied before sending the gun to Tunisia, and that it was freshly delivered. This gun was fitted with late-production perforated wheels, made of pressed steel, which were wider and lighter than those used initially.



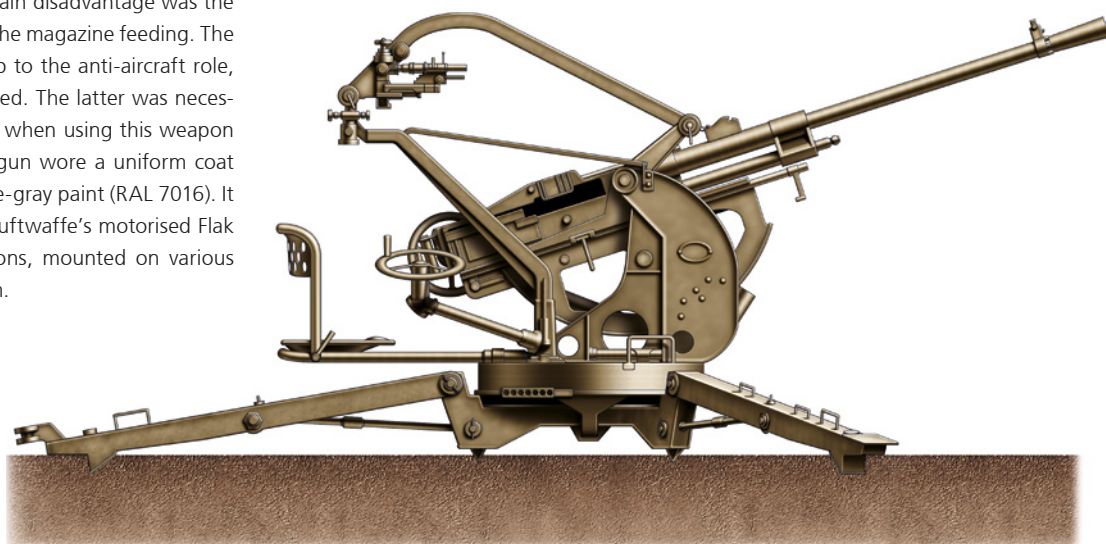
✠ 2 cm Flugabwehrkanone 30, Libya 1941

The 2 cm Flugabwehrkanone 30 20 mm anti-aircraft gun was developed by Rheinmetall on the basis of the 20 mm C/30 gun previously designed for the Kriegsmarine. The gun was transported on a high mobility trailer that could be towed by almost any vehicle. In case of necessity the gun could be fired from the trailer. The Flak 30 was fed with 20-round magazines and had an effective firing range of 2,200 m. Its main disadvantage was the limited rate of fire, caused by the magazine feeding. The gun presented above is set-up to the anti-aircraft role, with the armour shield removed. The latter was necessary for covering the gunners when using this weapon against ground targets. This gun wore a uniform coat of the standard Luftwaffe blue-gray paint (RAL 7016). It was extensively used by the Luftwaffe's motorised Flak units attached to Heer divisions, mounted on various vehicles or just towed by them.



✠ 2 cm Flakvierling 38, Tunisia, 1943

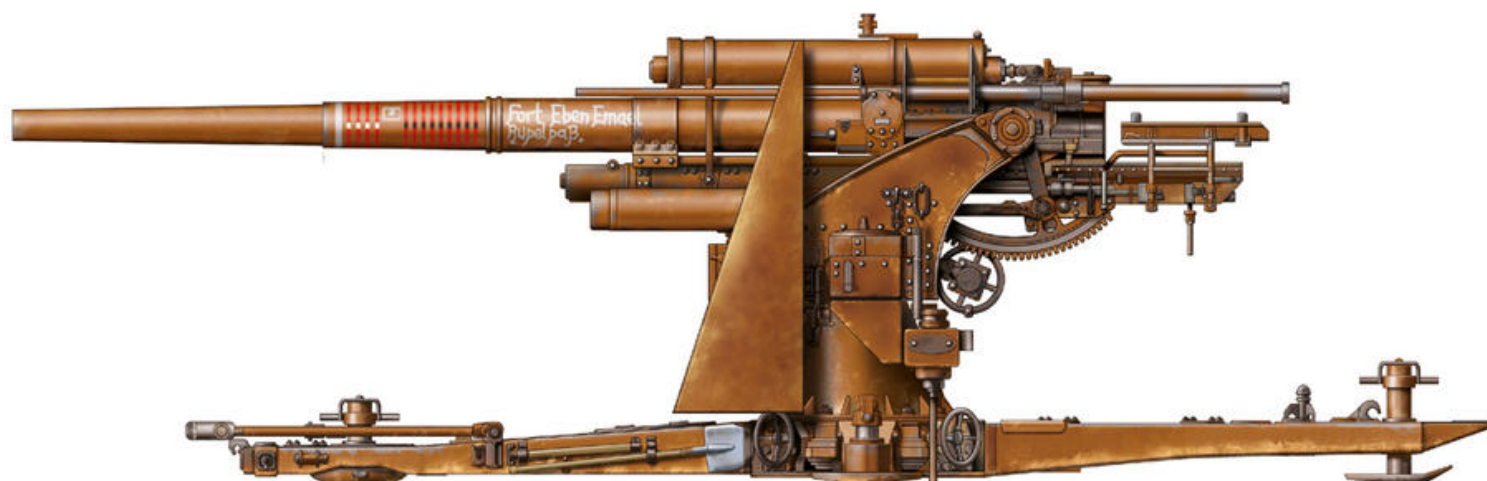
Since the Flak 30 and 38 efficiency was limited by their low rate of fire, Rheinmetall company came up with a solution by developing the 2 cm Flakvierling 38 20 mm four-barreled anti-aircraft gun. The new weapon proved to be very effective against both low-flying aircraft and ground targets. The pictured weapon was painted in brown colour (RAL 8020), and additionally camouflaged with nets stretched over the armour shield and canvas wrapped around the gun barrels. This was a very usual way of camouflage for light artillery pieces. Note the jerrycan for water (marked with a white cross) used to cool the gun barrels which heated up during automatic fire.



✠ Breda 20/65 Mod. 1935, Libya 1941

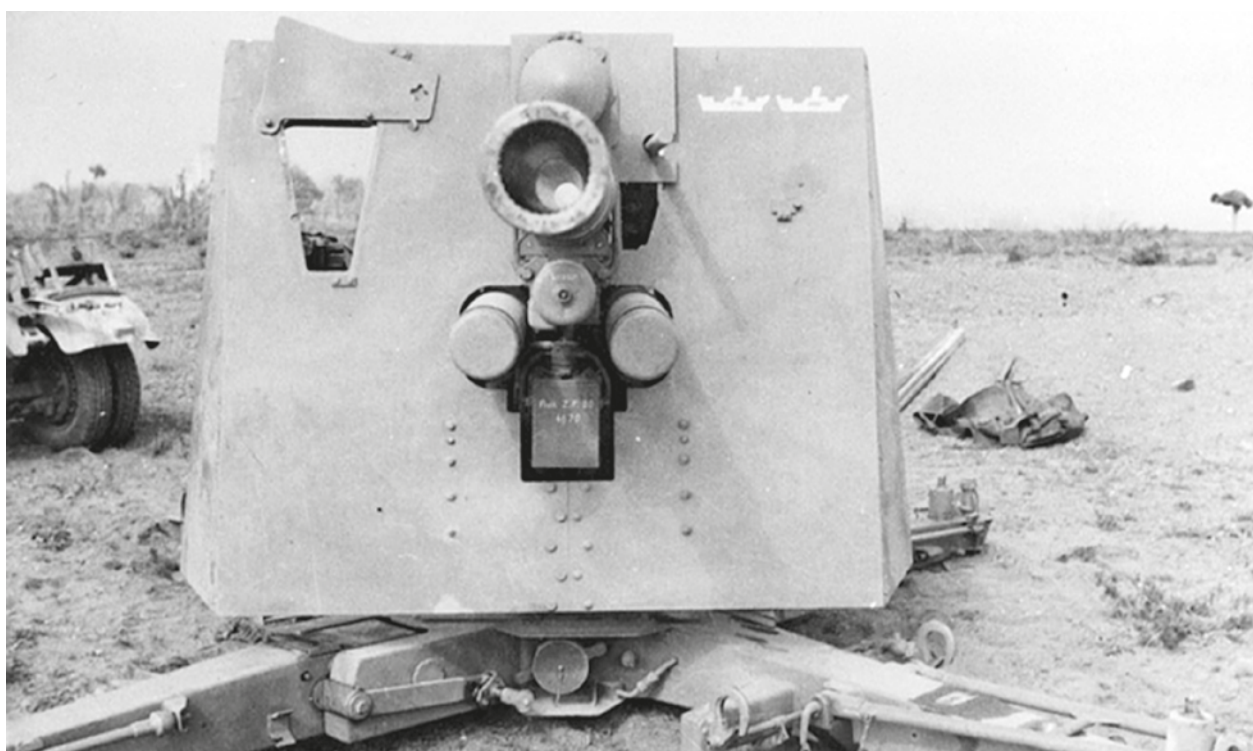
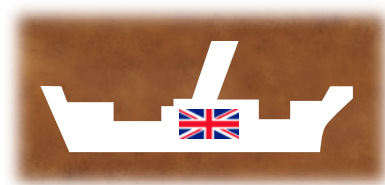
Designed in 1932, the Breda 20/65 Mod. 1935 20 mm anti-aircraft gun entered service in 1935. It was one of two 20 mm anti-aircraft guns used by the Italian Armed Forces during the World War II, the other being the Scotti-Isotta Fraschini 20/70. The Breda 20/65 Mod. 1935 was a dual-purpose weapon. It was effective against both aircraft and ground targets, including light tanks. Using armour-piercing

ammunition, it was able to penetrate 30 mm of armour at 500 meters. As the structural weakness of its standard carriage limited the towing speed just to 20 km/h, it was usually transported on a truck cargo bed. This weapon was also used as the armament of armoured vehicles such as the AB41 and L6/40. This Breda is shown in a fixed position. It was painted in the Regio Esercito giallo sabbia chiaro colour.



✝ **8.8 cm Flugabwehrkanone 18, unknown Luftwaffe Flak-Regiment, 19. Flak-Division, El Alamein, Egypt, October 1942**

On the 23rd August 1942, all Luftwaffe Flak units deployed in North Africa were subordinated to the HQ of the 19. Flak-Division. The command post of the Division was then located in the area of El Alamen-El Daba. This Flak 18 gun was destroyed in the battle of El Alamein. It was painted with a very dark tone of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) or British Terracotta No. 44 paint. The use of the latter can't be excluded, as large stock of British paints was captured in Tobruk. The gun barrel was marked with a number of red kill rings, as well as the legends "Fort Eben Emael" (a Belgian fort captured by German paratroopers in 1940) and "Rupel-Paß" (the Roupel Pass is a mountain valley near the Greek-Bulgarian border guarded by a fortress, which crew stopped the advance of the German and Bulgarian armies in April 1941 for 3 days) in white. Two victory markings in form of white ship silhouettes were applied in the left upper corner of the armoured shield (see detail picture).

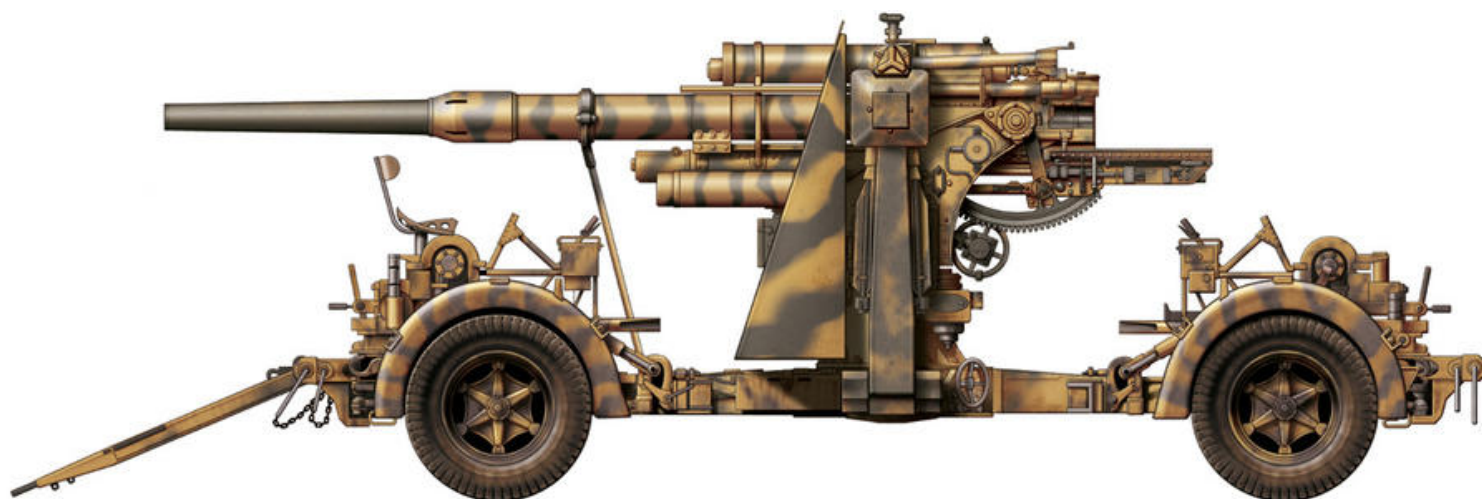




✠ **8.8 cm Flugabwehrkanone 36, I./Flak-Regiment 33 (gem. mot.), attached to 21. Panzer-Division, Libya, November 1941**

The Flak 18/36/37 was the most powerful anti-tank weapon used by the Afrika Korps during the campaign in North Africa. The Allied tank crews couldn't feel safe when facing the deadly "Eighty-eight" in the battlefield. The Flak 36 was mounted on a new Sd.Ah.202 carriage, with twin front and rear wheels. It also had a two-part gun barrel and other improvements. The main problem of the 88 mm Flak guns was their high silhouette, which made them difficult to hide in

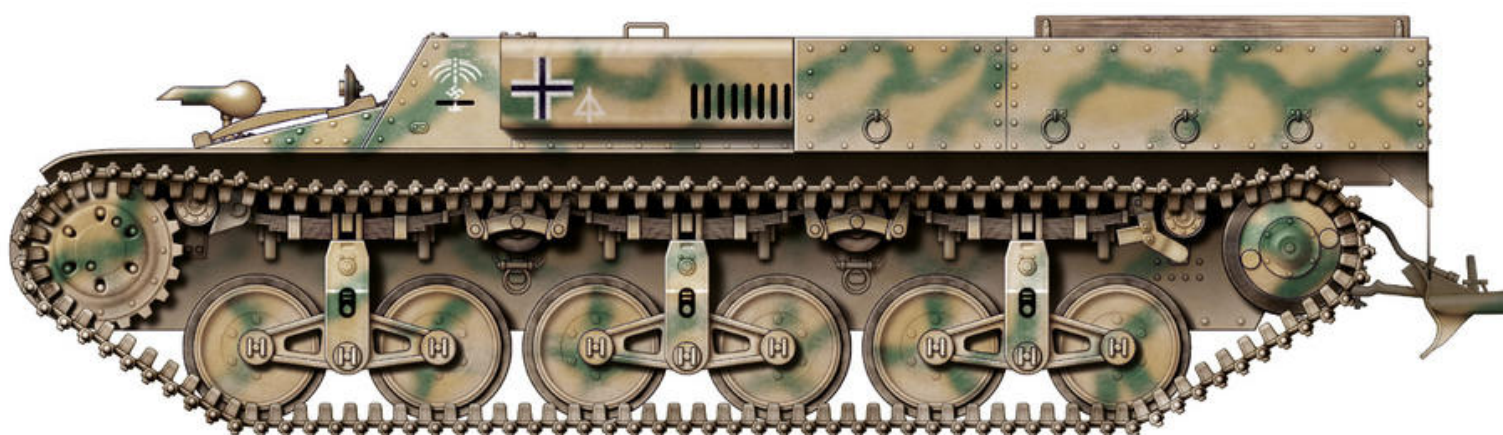
the plain desert environment. This gun was camouflaged with thin stripes of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) sprayed over a dark gray base (RAL 7021). Its markings consisted of the DAK insignia and 21. Panzer-Division symbol painted in white on the rear right mudguard, and the tactical symbol of a motorised Flak unit applied on the rear left mudguard. The transport support bar of the gun barrel is locked, so the gun is ready to be moved to another fire position.



✠ **8.8 cm Flugabwehrkanone 37, IV.(Flak)/Panzer-Artillerie-Regiment 90, 10. Panzer-Division, Tunisia, March 1943**

The 8.8 cm Flugabwehrkanone 37 was the last variant of the first generation of the German 88 mm anti-aircraft and anti-tank guns. It was equipped with updated instrumentation. This gun belonged to a Heer (army) artillery regiment of the 10. Panzer-Division, which was sent to Tunisia in December 1942 to face the advancing US and British

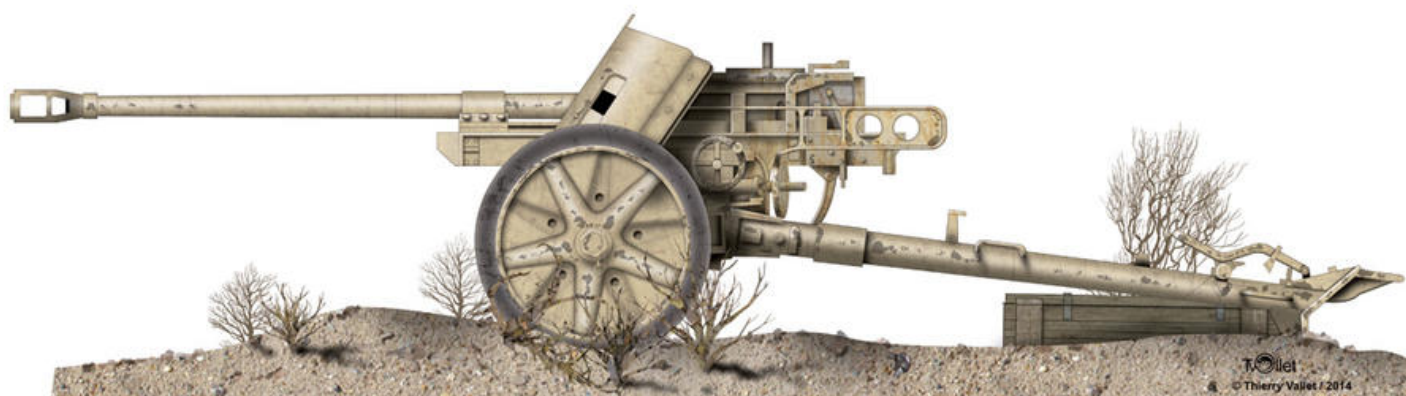
tanks. The gun was camouflaged with diagonal brown stripes (RAL 8020) sprayed over a dark gray base (RAL 7021). The dark gray front part of the gun barrel was probably a replacement part. The carriage and gun didn't carry any markings. Note that the gun barrel is locked with transport support.



✠ Munitionstransportkraftwagen auf Lorraine Schlepper with 7.5 cm PaK 40, 15. Panzer-Division, Tunisia 1943

The Lorraine 37L was developed as a light tracked armoured munition and fuel supply carrier for armoured units. Its production began in 1939, and after the battle of France around 360 Lorraine tractors fell into German hands. The Germans designated them as Munitionstransportkraftwagen auf Lorraine Schlepper. This vehicle was used by the 15. Panzer-Division as an artillery tractor for a PaK 40 75 mm gun, the most powerful anti-tank weapon of the Afrika Korps (the 88 mm Flak 18/36/37 was a dual-purpose gun). Both vehicle and gun

wore a two-tone camouflage pattern consisting of thin stripes of gray-green (RAL 7008) sprayed over a brown (RAL 8020) base. Thin national markings were painted on both sides and in the center of the rear plate of the tractor. White DAK insignia were applied in front of the crosses on the hull sides, and on the left side of the lower front and rear hull plate, whilst the tactical symbol of the 15. Panzer-Division was painted in white aft the crosses on the hull sides, and on the right side of the lower front and rear hull plate.



✠ 5 cm Panzerabwehrkanone 38, Libya 1941

The 5 cm Panzerabwehrkanone 38 was a German 50 mm anti-tank gun developed in 1938 as the successor of the 37 mm PaK 36. The production of PaK 38 began in 1940, and the gun entered service after the French campaign. It had its baptism of fire in North Africa in April 1941. This weapon was then able to penetrate the armour of most of the British armoured vehicles, with the exception of the front ar-

mour of Matilda tanks, and became the main anti-tank gun of towed Panzerjäger artillery units. The Pak 38 was very similar to the PaK 40, but had a rectangular vision hole in the armoured shield, whilst the Pak 40 had a square one. Also, the muzzle brake had more rounded shape in the 50 mm gun. This gun carried a worn coat of yellow-brown (RAL 8000), which was applied over original dark gray base (RAL 7021).



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✠ 3.7 cm Panzerabwehrkanone 36, Libya 1942

The 3.7 cm Panzerabwehrkanone 36 gun was the standard anti-tank weapon of Wehrmacht infantry until mid-1941. Due to its limited effectiveness in combat against medium and heavy tanks of both western Allies and Soviets, it had to be replaced by the 5 cm PaK 38 by late 1941. Many of these guns were relegated to the light support role, being mounted on the Sd.Kfz.250 and 251 armoured half-tracks, as

well as other vehicles. The pictured gun was probably sent to North Africa in 1942. Its original uniform dark gray paint scheme was replaced with brown coat (RAL 8020), which soon wore out during the service in desert conditions. Stripes of canvas and bush branches provided additional camouflage. Note the jerrycan with water (marked with white cross) for the gunners, and spare ammo box.

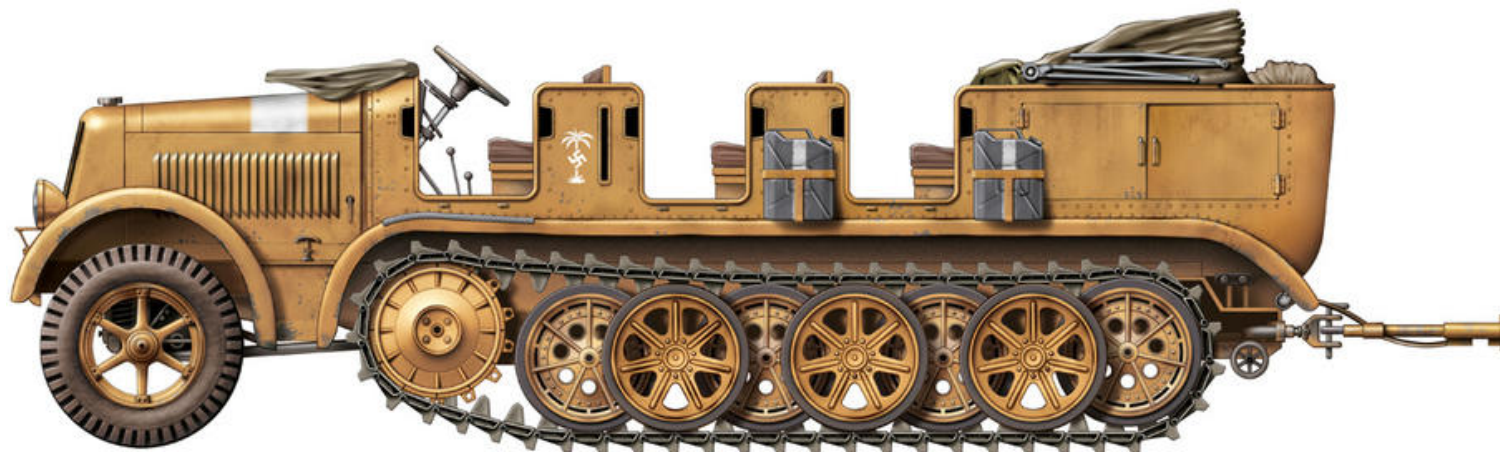


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✠ 7.5 cm Panzerabwehrkanone 40, Tunisia, December 1942

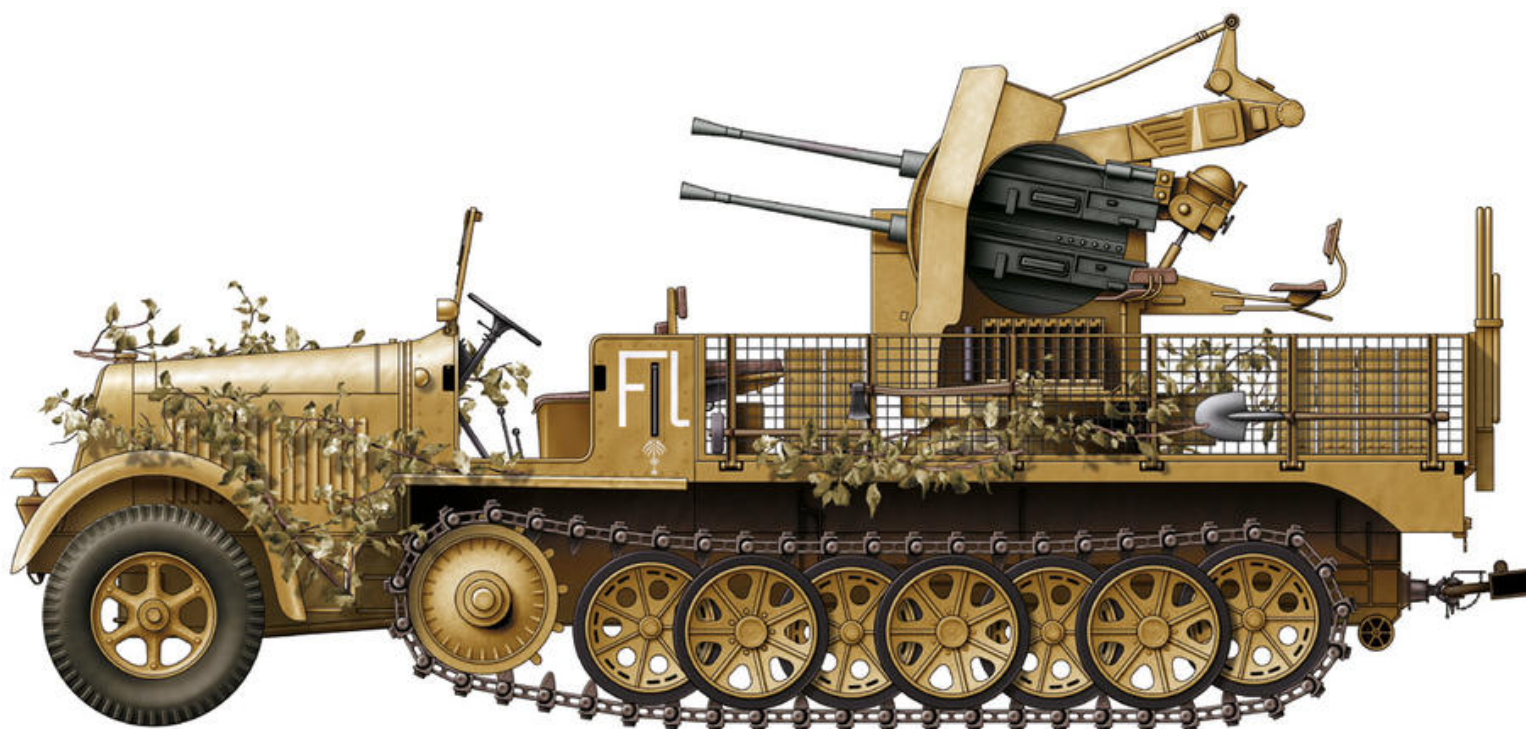
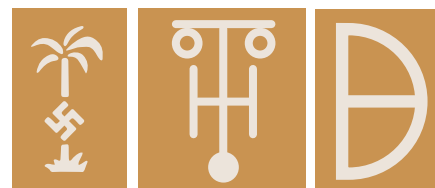
This PaK 40 was sent to North Africa in a uniform dark grey coat (RAL 7021), and received a very light overspray coat of brown (RAL 8020), which worn out very soon, revealing the original dark grey colour. The picture shows

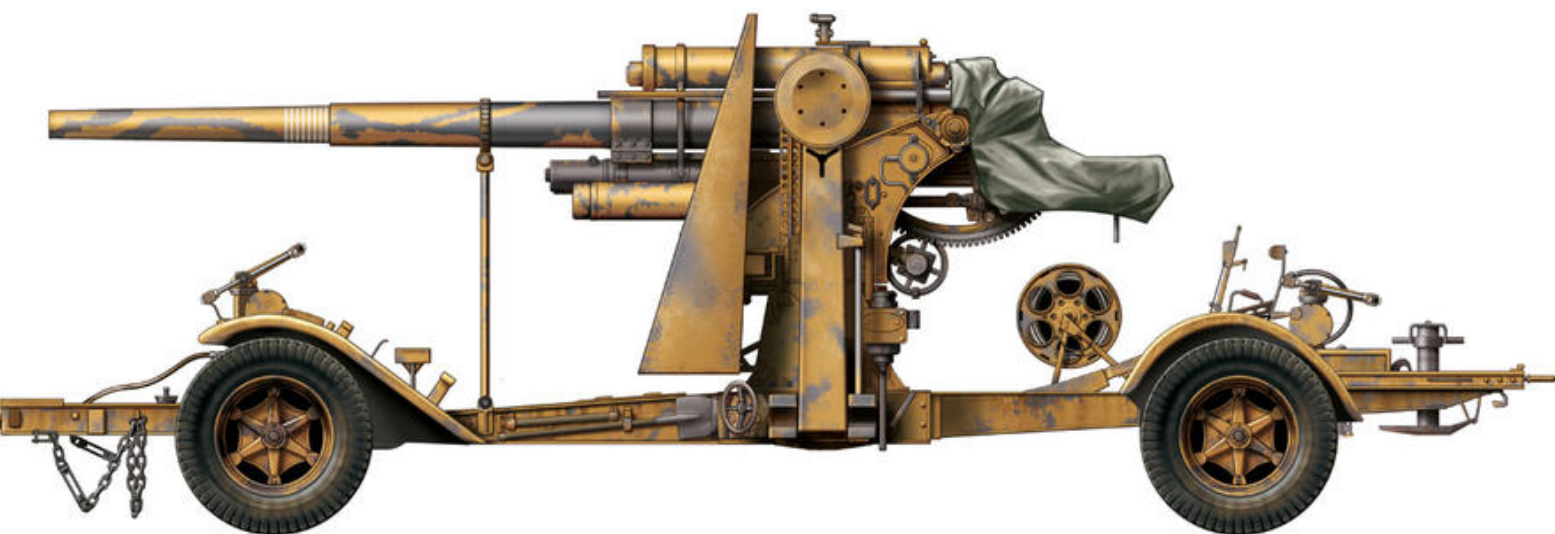
a typical firing position for this kind of weapons, with camouflage nets stretched over the armour shield in order to avoid detection by approaching tanks. This gun was fitted with early-type wheels, made of pressed steel.



✠ **Sd.Kfz.7, I./Flak-Regiment 33 (gem. mot.), attached to 21. Panzer-Division, Libya 1941**

This Sd.Kfz.7 half-tracked artillery tractor wore a fresh uniform coat of yellow-brown paint (RAL 8000), which was applied over original dark gray base (RAL 7021). The white stripe running across the top engine compartment panel was added for the purpose of aerial identification. The DAK insignia was painted in white on both sides of hull, right front mudguard and left side of the rear plate, whilst the tactical symbols of a Luftwaffe Flak unit (mot.) and the 21. Panzer-Division were applied on the left front mudguard and right side of the rear plate. The vehicle had two Luftwaffe license plates on the front bumper and racks for jerrycans on both sides. Note that latter were used for transporting water, as indicated by white cross markings.





✠ **8.8 cm Flugabwehrkanone 18, I./Flak-Regiment 33 (gem. mot.), attached to 21. Panzer-Division, Libya 1941**

The 8.8 cm Flak 18 was the first version of the powerful 88 mm gun used in North Africa. These guns faced the British Matilda tanks in the battle of France with very good results, and they repeated that success in Libya. The Flak 18 had a different carriage than the later Flak 36/37 guns, with four single front wheels and twin rear wheels, and a single-piece barrel. The gun could be fired in travel position, but the accuracy was

much better when the weapon was emplaced on the ground. This gun was camouflaged with big irregular patches of yellow-brown (RAL 8000) sprayed over a dark gray base (RAL 7021). Its only marking was the DAK insignia, applied on the upper left corner of the armour shield over a dark gray patch. Worth noting are eight kill rings painted by the gunners around the barrel.

✠ **2 cm Flakvierling 38 auf Selbstfahrlafette (Sd.Kfz.7/1), Fla-Bataillon (mot.) 609, 21. Panzer-Division, Tunisia, March 1943**

This Sd.Kfz.7/1, armed with a 2 cm Flakvierling 38 four-barreled anti-aircraft gun, was an early-built vehicle with open cab. The armoured cab and radiator shield were introduced in 1942. This vehicle towed a

Sd.Ah.52 trailer with a box for ammunition and crew equipment. The Sd.Kfz.7/1s were delivered to North Africa in limited numbers in 1942 as the equipment of Army Flak Battalions, attached to Panzer Divisions. This vehicle received a brown coat (RAL 8020) over original dark gray base (RAL 7021). Its markings consisted of white DAK insignia applied on both sides of the hull, right front mudguard, and left side of the rear plate, as well as the tactical symbols of a half-tracked light Flak Batterie and the 21. Panzer-Division, painted in white on the left front mudguard and right side of the rear plate. They were also repeated in a similar fashion on the rear plate of the trailer. The large white "Fl" was probably an additional unit marking, being an abbreviation of "Flak". This vehicle had Heer license plates. The crew camouflaged it with branches in order to conceal the vehicle in the Tunisian landscape.







✚ **Fieseler Fi 156 C-3 trop, 1. Wüstennotstaffel, Rommel's personal plane, Libya 1941**

Designed in 1935, the Storch was widely used during World War II by German forces for reconnaissance, liaison and aeromedical transport. High-ranking officers also used it as personal transports. Notable features of the Storch included its good maneuverability, extremely low stalling speed of 32 mph, and excellent short field take-off and landing characteristics. This plane was a version adapted for tropical/desert conditions, with filtered intakes, produced in 1940–1942. This was the favourite recon plane of General Rommel in North Africa because of his ability to land and take-off almost anywhere. Rommel used some different planes in Africa, and here is one of them. This Rommel's "eagle" belonged to a very special unit of the Luftwaffe, the German desert rescue squadron, the 1. Wüstennotstaffel. This unique unit, equipped with around a dozen of the Fi 156s, served as a multi-purpose squadron for the German army and air force throughout the North African campaign, acting as a 'jack-of-all trades' for Generalfeldmarschall Erwin Rommel. The story of the unit is a fascinating one, because it was involved in a number of lively escapades and events in the two years from its creation in the summer of 1941 to its disbandment in the summer of 1943. The emblem of the unit was a white stylized stork over a black outlined in white Africa map (see the detail picture). This aircraft was painted in Luftwaffe colors for mediterranean theater, a base coat of sand yellow (RLM 79), with olive green (RLM 80) spots, and bright blue (RLM 78) for lower surfaces. The markings of the vehicle were the standard for German planes; national crosses painted on the wings (up and down sides) and both sides of fuselage, with the swastika on both sides of the tail. The identification code for the plane was DL+AW, painted in both sides with black paint. The Wüstennotstaffel emblem was applied on both sides of the engine cover.

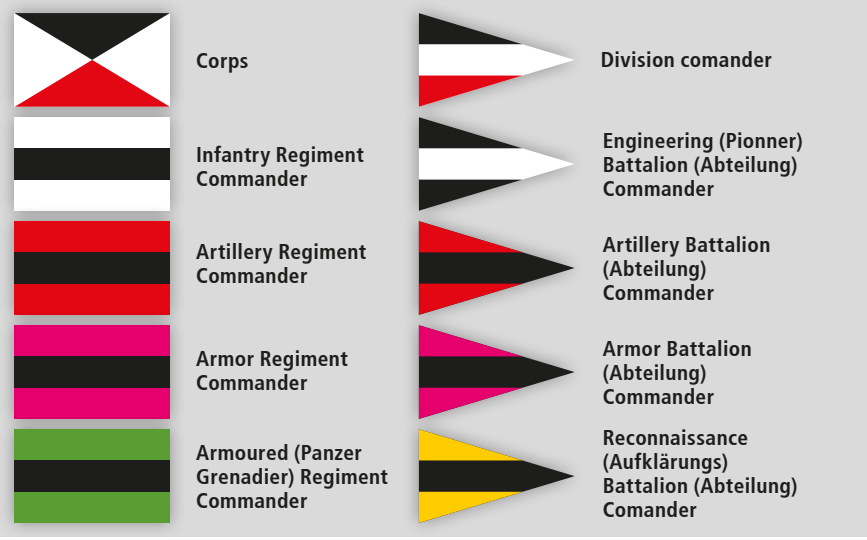




Markings

Army Vehicle Command Flags and Pennants

Command flags were mainly used by the leader of a military unit as car and/or vehicle flag. They never replaced unit colours. Command flags and pennants of German Army formations had background colours of their branch (Waffenfarbe), usually with a black stripe in the middle. The list of World War II Waffenfarben in the Army (Heer) was: General Staff, Carmine Red; Infantry, White; Armor, Pink; Armored Reconnaissance, Golden Yellow; Artillery, Red; Anti-aircraft Artillery, Coral Red; Pioneers (engineers), Black; Signals, Lemon Yellow; Light Infantry (Jäger and Panzergrenadiere), Grass Green; Technical Troops (engineers and logistics), Blue; Army Aviation, Light Gray; Chemical Defense, Crimson; Military Police, Orange; Bands, White; Medical, Dark Blue.



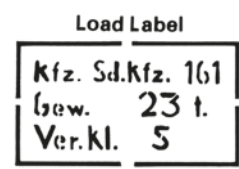
Regimental / Battalion basic turret markings

R01	Regiment Commander
R02	Regimental Adjutant
R03	Regimental Signals Officer
R04	Regimental Staff Officer
I01	1st Battalion Commander
I02	1st Battalion Adjutant
I03	1st Battalion Signals Officer
I04	1st Battalion Staff Officer
II01	2nd Battalion Commander
II02	2nd Battalion Adjutant
II03	2nd Battalion Signals Officer
II04	2nd Battalion Staff Officer

Italian Tactical Symbols

Tanks number in the company were painted over a colour square in white or the company colour.

	Carro Comando	1° plotone	2° plotone	3° plotone	4° plotone	5° plotone
1ª Compagnia						
2ª Compagnia						
3ª Compagnia						
4ª Compagnia						
Comando Rgt.						



s.Pz.Abt.501



Pz.Rgt.7



s.Pz.Abt.504



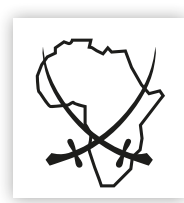
Pz.Rgt.8



21. Pz.Div.



15. Pz.Div.



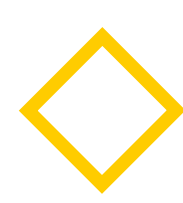
164. le.Afrika-Div.



5. le.Div.



10. Pz.Div.



90. le.Div.



Ramcke Brigade

German colours in North Africa 1941-1943

The first stage

As the German Afrika Korps was formed faster than expected, because of the catastrophic defeat of the Italian Army, the Wehrmacht had no standardized color for camouflage in desert landscape, so all the vehicles arrived to Libya in the standard European dark gray RAL 7021 coat. Since Rommel wanted to attack the British Army as soon as possible, the vehicles were sent to battle in their original color, but soon the dust and sand of desert covered all surfaces, blending them with the landscape in an acceptable style for desert.

German soldiers soon learned that the vehicles can be efficiently camouflaged by making a mud "soup" with water, gasolina, or even motor oil, that, after being applied to the vehicle and drying out, perfectly hid it in the landscape; this expedited system was used in the first months of war in the desert. Some units were able to use Italian paints, or even Luftwaffe ones, but everybody had the same supply problems and the use of these paints was unusual.

HM No. 281, March 17, 1941

This Heeres Memorandum ordered that all vehicles used in Africa must be painted in a priming coat of yellow-brown – gelbbraun RAL 8000, and camouflaged to one-third with gray-green - graugrün RAL 7008 with smooth color transitions.

In reality, because the paint was not a priority, stocks of the new colors were limited. So there were many vehicles in dark gray covered with yellow-brown spots and stripes to break up the silhouette, whilst the inner surfaces of open vehicles were left in original gray, just to save paint. In top of that, the paint had to be diluted with water or gasoline, both scarce in Africa, giving rise to different shades of the same color depending on the diluent and dilution.

HM No. 315, March 25, 1942

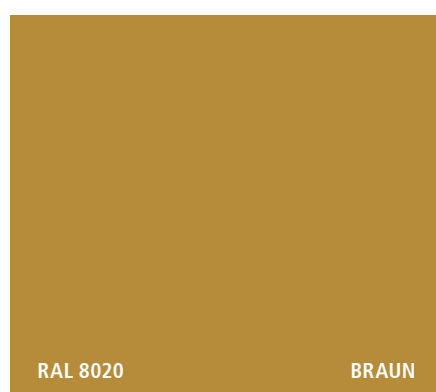
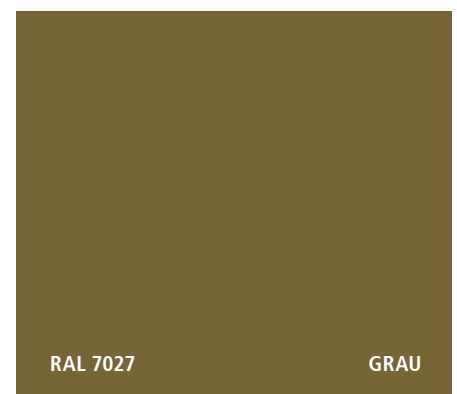
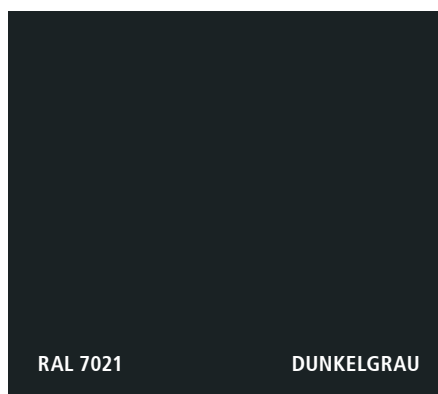
According to this order, a sandy brown colour - braun RAL 8020, was introduced as the new base colour, with a sand gray - grau RAL 7027 as camouflage color (which covered about one third of the vehicle). In the field, however, most vehicles were just sandy brown, although a small number had patches or "clouds" in sand gray (very hard to spot in black and white pictures). Of course many vehicles were left in the yellow-brown - gelbbraun RAL 8000 colour, whilst some vehicles from the units sent to Africa as reinforcements were left in their dark gray colour again.

When Rommel took the harbour of Tobruk in June 1942, the Germans captured vast amounts of British paints, which were used because of shortage of German paints, specially for many captured British vehicles in German service.

On top of that, the very hard conditions of the North African desert, with a bright sunlight, heat, sand storms, temperature changes, etc. caused that the paints faded very quickly. That's why many of the German vehicles in Africa had a rather shabby appearance.

Tunisia

In the last stage of war in Africa, Hitler sent reinforcements to Tunisia, with most vehicles painted in RAL 8020. As the Tunisian landscape was greener than the desert of Libya, many vehicles were camouflaged with stripes of green, like the old gray-green - graugrün RAL 7008, or with the new red brown RAL 8017 or olive green - olivgrün RAL 6003 (used for camouflage with dark yellow - dunkelgelb RAL 7028 from February 1943). In the case of Tigers of the 501st Heavy Tank Battalion, there's a long controversy about whether any of them were painted in green, and which green it was. The green color was probably gray-green - graugrün RAL7008, a color at hand in sufficient amount to paint a few Tigers, which allowed to achieve better integration with the green landscape of Tunisia in winter.



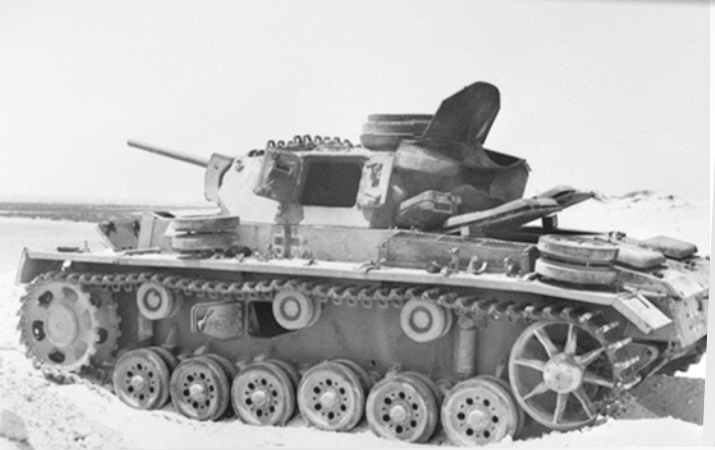
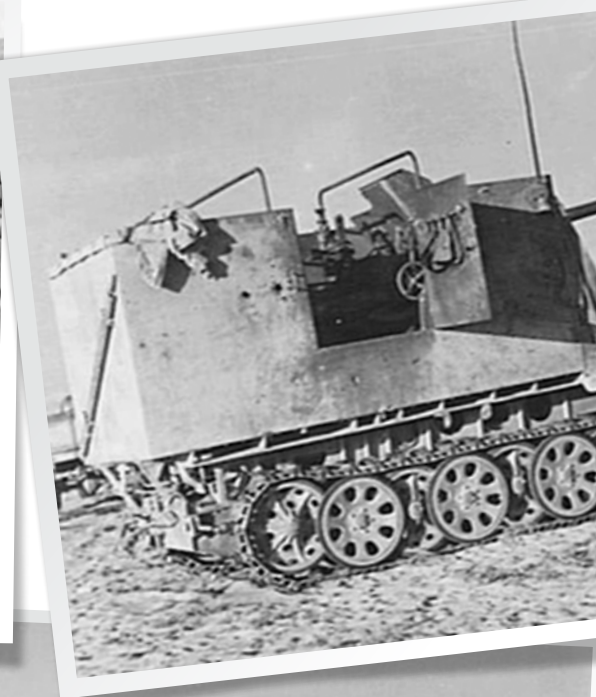




Photo credits

Pag 3

Bundesarchiv. Bild 101 I -783-0110-13
Foto: Dörner I 1941 April-Mai

Pag 4

Signal Magazine (top)
Signal Magazine (mid)
Bundesarchiv. Bild 101 I -554-086-17A Foto:
Stocker, Dr I 1943 Januar-Februar (bot)

Pag 5

(from left to right and from top to bottom)
Signal Magazine
Bundesarchiv. Bild 101 I -557-1018-26A Foto:
Appe (Arppe) I 1943 Anfang
Signal Magazine
Signal Magazine
Bundesarchiv. Bild 101 I -546-067-17A Foto:
Seeger, Erwin I 1942
Bundesarchiv. Bild 101 I -784-0241-01 Foto:
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Bundesarchiv. Bild 101 I -785-0296-22A Foto:
Valtingoer, Klemens I 1942
National Archives and Records
Administration (NARA)
Bundesarchiv. Bild 101 I -782-0023-09A Foto:
Moosmüller I 1941 März-April
Signal Magazine
Signal Magazine

Pags 6 -103

Bundesarchiv
Imperial War Museum
Australian War Memorial
HITM
National Archives and Records
Administration (NARA)
Harveyqs's Collection

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(from left to right and from top to bottom)
Imperial War Museum NA-2321
Australian War Memorial 024683A
Australian War Memorial 024856
Australian War Memorial 050011
Australian War Memorial 128496
Australian War Memorial 022444
Australian War Memorial 014071

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(from left to right and from top to bottom)
Imperial War Museum NA-2866
Author's collection
Author's collection
Author's collection

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