

German 1941 TO&E Notes

By Greg Moore

In order to increase the number of Panzer divisions from ten to twenty or more, the Germans dropped the number of Panzer regiments in all divisions down to one with divisions having either two or three battalions of tanks. However the number of tanks in a battalion was beefed up a little for the start of the Russian Campaign and the tanks were upgraded as well. Panzer I is mostly phased out of combat service although they are still present in small numbers in some divisions. Panzer II is now a supporting tank with nearly all battalions having just a few to scout and support the heavier tanks. Panzer III's have nearly all had their armor upgraded to a strength of 6 and the main gun is 50L42 on most with a few 37/45 still hanging around. Panzer 35t and 38t still equip 6 Panzer division and all battalions have about the same number of Panzer IV with the short 75L/24 gun for support. Panzer III and IV with the longer guns are not yet in service but T-34's and KV-I's are still rare and widely dispersed the Germans have a pretty good edge on all those T-26's and BT-5's which the Russians are largely equipped with.

The number of infantry battalions in the Panzer divisions has been standardized at four (two regiments of two battalions each). Note that halftracks are still rare for the Germans. Though on paper, the infantry in the Panzer Divisions should all be mounted in halftracks, German production has not yet come close to producing enough to supple the demand. What few that existed were trickled out to the divisions with most German Panzer divisions having only enough to equip one company of one battalion for the whole division although the 1st panzer was lucky enough to have two full battalions equipped.

New Units



After the French Campaign, the standard 37mm AT gun was deemed to have been inadequate to deal with some of the heavier tanks so the Germans decided to upgrade to a 50mm gun. At the start of the Russian campaign however, production of the new 50mm gun was still low so the Germans beefed up a few of their anti-tank battalions by issuing captured 47mm AT guns to make up part of the battalions, mostly in Infantry divisions. These captured guns came from France, Czechoslovakia, and Belgium with a few also purchased from Italy. These 47mm guns should show up occasionally throughout the rest of 1941 as they were frequently issued as replacements. By 1942, most AT guns will be the 50mm.



A few of the German AT battalions in 1941 included some of the 28mm PzB 41 gun. This was only a 28mm weapon but used the squeezebore principle to achieve a very high velocity. This gave good performance but the velocity tailed off quickly with range and the gun wore out quickly as well. The infantry liked this gun in the early part of the war due to its small size and hard punch but it was obsolete by 1942 and shows up mostly in mountain divisions and paratroopers after that.



The Germans were impressed by the performance of the French Panhard armored car in the French Campaign and equipped the Recon Battalions of two of their Panzer Divisions (the 7th and the 20th) for the start of the Russian Campaign with them.



The TO&E's include HMG units for the infantry battalions. After some debate, they have been shown with the 6-1-6-6-1 units available on Ward's Imstrat Site. Those stronger units should not have the ability to participate in CAT attacks. Also in consideration to represent those HMG units were these weaker units which would have the ability to CAT (when stacked with rifle units). I have included some of these units for those who may wish to experiment with them or just want another HMG type unit available. This unit represents four heavy machine guns.



The Germans used all the captured tanks they could get their hands on for something useful. Most were used in secondary roles such as security in occupied areas or were rebuilt into other roles such as self-propelled artillery or tank destroyers. The 100th Panzer Flame Battalion took a few British A-13's to Russia with them to help support their flame tanks and used them up the first summer.



The Germans put many captured French tanks into service. This counter represents the French B1-bis tanks which were part of the 102nd Flame Battalion and served as support to the flame tanks. These units represent three tanks each.



The Germans modified 24 B1-bis tanks into flame tanks by removing the 75mm gun in the hull and replacing it with a flame projector. These 24 tanks were organized into 2 companies with three regular B1-bis tanks in support for each company. These two companies became the 102nd Flame Panzer Battalion and were available in Russia starting on June 23. These units represent three tanks each.