

654. SCHWERE PANZERJÄGER ABTEILUNG (654TH HEAVY TANK-HUNTER BATTALION) NORMANDY, JULY 1944



THE WORLD WAR II MINIATURES GAME

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"The British 'infantry' tanks had a horrible time. The Argylls of 15th Scottish, less their anti-tank guns, but supported by the Churchill tanks of Scots Guards, took and held a height known as Quarry Hill (Mont Pincon, Southwest of Caen), when there were three shots and three Churchill tanks 'brewed'. Then two enormous Jagdpanther tank-hunters, covered by a third, lumbered into the open, up the hill, through the British position, and down the other side, leaving in all eleven shattered Churchill tanks behind them. One of the Jagdpanther tank-hunters passed within a few feet of an artillery officer who had a close view of the German commander who was standing up, wearing only a vest, presumably because of the heat, and laughing. These enormous vehicles mounted a 88mm gun some 23 feet long on a Panther chassis."

—From the history of the 3rd Armoured Battalion (Scots Guards), 6th Guards Tank Brigade.



THE HUNTING PANTHER

The success of the 8.8cm gun had a direct influence on the design of German tanks and tank-hunters. The 8.8cm PaK43 was too big to be useful on a Panzer III or IV chassis, so German industry sought a compromise to upgrade the slow manoeuvring heavies such as the Ferdinand assault gun and Königstiger heavy tank.

The Army Weapons Office's answer was the *Jagdpanther* (Hunting Panther, pronounced yahkt pan-terr). This placed an 8.8cm PaK43 on a Panther tank to combine the firepower of the big gun with the higher mobility of the Panther.

Initial designs called for the *Jagdpanther* to be based on the Panther II, but once the Panther II was scrapped in favour of upgrading the standard Panther, the *Jagdpanther* changed to that chassis instead.

The main result was the lowering of the front armour to 80mm armour instead of the intended 100mm of the Panther II. The first *Jagdpanther* tank-hunters sported *Zimmerit* protective coating, but those produced after 8 September 1944 did not.

INITIAL DEPLOYMENT

The first unit to receive the *Jagdpanther* was 654. *Schwere Panzerjäger Abteilung* (654th Heavy Tank-hunter Battalion). This unit fought with towed anti-tank guns through Poland, Holland, and France. Then in 1943 it was re-equipped with Ferdinand heavy tank-hunters for the Kursk battles.

After Kursk the battalion was reformed at the Mielau training facility in France. In February 1944, the unit received eight Bergepanther recovery vehicles for driver training. However, it wasn't until 23 March that the first two *Jagdpanther* tank-hunters arrived at the school.

April saw eight *Jagdpanther* released to the 654th. Orders had each *Jagdpanther Kompanie* scheduled to receive 14 *Jagdpanther*'s, with the battalion command receiving three modified command vehicles.

Production shortfalls prevented any further deliveries before the D-Day invasion. Although it was reported to Hitler on June 11 that the *Abteilung* was combat ready, it still had not received any more vehicles. The original eight vehicles were assigned to the *2. Kompanie*, and loaded on railcars for transfer to Normandy on 15 June. They reached the front by 29 June.

A 1 July report has the *Abteilung* claiming 25 *Jagdpanther*'s, but the additional 17 vehicles had only just arrived at the training camp. The rest of *2. Kompanie* and *3. Kompanie* now began training in earnest. At the same time personnel for *1. Kompanie* also arrived at the camp for training, but they would not see their *Jagdpanther's* for over a month. One more *Jagdpanther* and three Panther command tanks were all that were delivered to the battalion in July.

FIRST BLOOD

The battalion staff, the rest of *2. Kompanie*, and *3. Kompanie* arrived at the front on 17 July. Placed in reserve with *XLVII Panzerkorps* (47th Armoured Corps), they did not see action until 30 July when they were sent to support *326. Infanterie Division* (326th Infantry Division) attempting to stop the British Operation Bluecoat.

Elements of the 3rd Tank Battalion (Scots Guards), 6th Guards Tank Brigade were the first to meet this new German behemoth near St. Martin des Bois. Within the first two minutes of battle, three *Jagdpanther's* destroyed eleven Churchill tanks on Quarry Hill.

Another column of Churchill tanks managed to flank three other *Jagdpanther's* and the battalion staff. The Churchill tanks managed to disable two of the *Jagdpanther's* and one of the battalion Panther command tanks. These three were abandoned when the Germans were forced to retreat.

MECHANICAL PROBLEMS

On 1 August the battalion was back to its original eight tank-hunters ready for action. The final drives of the Panther engine design only lasted about 35 kilometres in a *Jagdpanther* before the drive shafts gave out. It took the German designers until October before a solution to the final drive problem was developed.

Later in August 1. Kompanie finally received their full complement of Jagdpanther tank-hunters. 654. Schwere Panzerjäger Abteilung was finally whole. This would be the only time a heavy tank-hunter battalion was fully outfitted with Jagdpanther's, as on 11 September Hitler ordered that all heavy tank-hunter battalions would now be outfitted with one company of Jagdpanther and two companies of Jagdpanzer IV tank-hunters.

BATTLE OF THE BULGE

After escaping from the Falaise Pocket in Normandy, 654. Schwere Panzerjäger Abteilung, now in Germany, continued to receive priority replacements to prepare for the winter offensive. They reached a total of 45 Jagdpanther tank-hunters on 15 November, along with four quadruple 2cm FlaK38 and four 3.7cm FlaK43 guns on Panzer IV chassis for air defence.

Subordinated to *LXIII Armee Korps* (68th Corps), the battalion fought non-stop through the rest of November, claiming 52 enemy tanks destroyed while losing 18 tank-hunters and two 2cm anti-aircraft tanks.

Reduced to a total of 27 *Jagdpanther*'s, the battalion entered the Ardennes winter offensive reporting just 24 operational. After receiving another 20 *Jagdpanther*'s, they reported 28 operational on 30 December with another 7 in repair. Two weeks later there were just 26 ready for the final defence of the Fatherland.



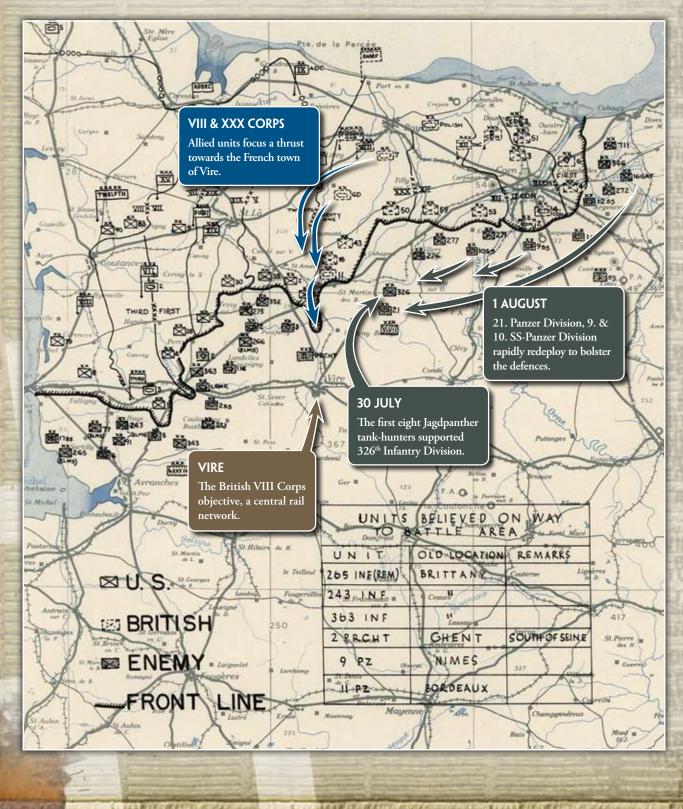
30 JULY - 1 AUGUST, SITUATION MAP OPERATION BLUECOAT

When it arrived in Normandy, 654. Schwere Panzerjäger Abteilung was placed in reserve under XLVII Panzerkorps. Its first combat mission was to support 326. Infanterie Division against the British Operation Bluecoat.

The three German Panzer divisions on this part of the front had been diverted to face US armoured divisions threatening to breakthrough the German lines in the west. This left the three *Grenadier* regiments of *326. Infanterie Division* responsible for covering a huge area of the

front line between the US front in the west and II SS-Panzerkorps (2nd SS Armoured Corps) in the east.

The unexpected advance of the British VIII and XXX Corps towards Vire required 654. Schwere Panzerjäger Abteilung to block a hole torn by the 15th (Scottish) Division and 6th Guards Tank Brigade. The Jagdpanther tank-hunters destroyed most of a tank company in their counterattack, allowing 326. Infanterie Division to restore its lines.



HAUPTMANN KARL-HEINZ NOAK

Leutnant (Lieutenant) Karl-Heinz Noak was awarded the Knight's Cross for bravery near Orleans, France in June 1940 when he raced his unit across the Loire River to capture a company of French soldiers. He was then promoted to *Oberleutnant* (First Lieutenant) and given command of the *1. Kompanie*, *137. Panzerjäger Abteilung* for the invasion of the Soviet Union. Displaying continued excellence in the field, he was selected as a company commander for the Army NCO School in Tutlos, France. While there, he received the Oak Leaves for his Knight's Cross for his combat actions on the Eastern Front.

In early 1943, Noak was promoted to *Hauptmann* (Captain) and placed in charge of the 654. *Schwere Panzerjäger Abteilung*. The battalion had just recently upgraded to the new *Ferdinand* heavy tank-hunter. He commanded the battalion through the battle at Kursk but was severely wounded during the fighting.

In recovery for almost a year, he returned to active duty as commander of the Military School in Hamburg. Finally, in March 1944, he was once more given

command of *654. Schwere Panzerjäger Abteilung* and led them through the Normandy campaign. Promoted to *Major* in September 1944, he led the battalion through the Battle of the Bulge, and the final defence of the Rhine. He was captured in early 1945 in the Ruhr.

Major Karl-Heinz Noak returned to the German Army in 1956, retiring as an Oberst (colonel) in 1974.



CHARACTERISTICS

Hauptmann Karl-Heinz Noak is a Warrior and Higher Command team. He may join any company in 654. Schwere Panzerjäger Abteilung. Hauptmann Noak is rated **Confident Veteran**.

NOAK'S COMMAND PANTHER

In 654. Schwere Panzerjäger Abteilung, the battalion command vehicles were Panther tanks, thus Noak led his battalion from the turret of a Panther tank.

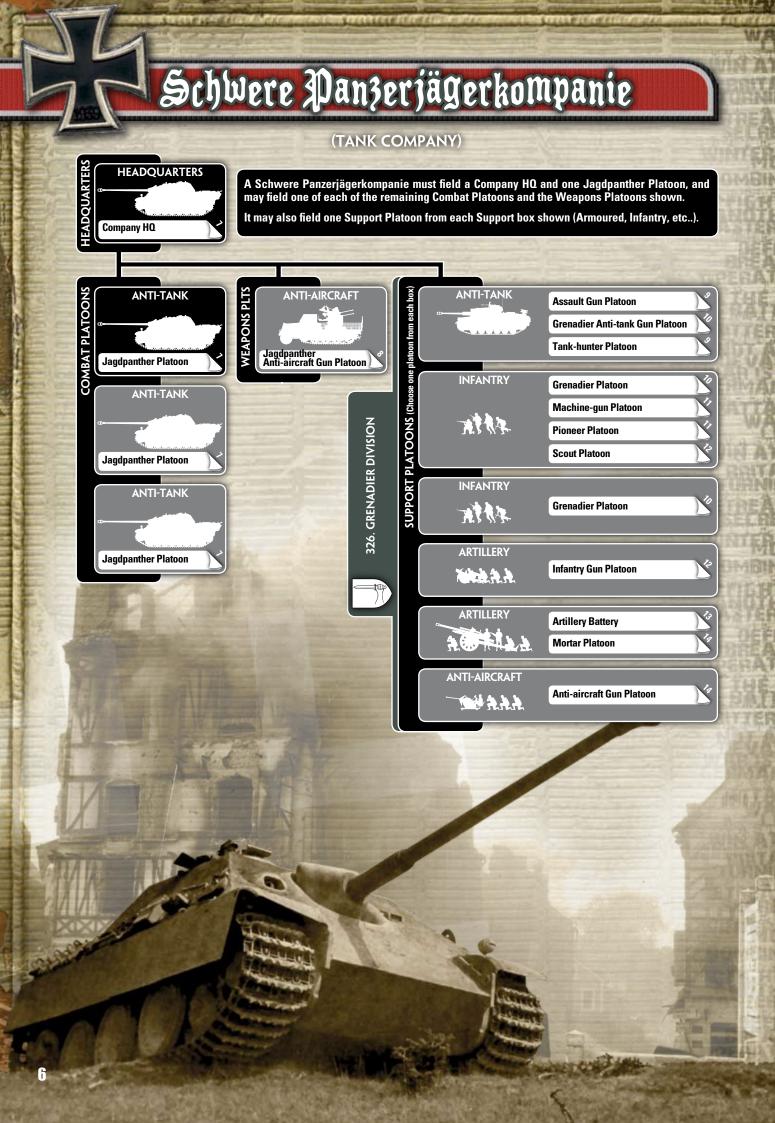
Hauptmann Karl-Heinz Noak is purchased with his Panther A tank for 250 points.

KNIGHT'S CROSS WITH OAK LEAVES

Noak's experience at command and combat have made him a *Panzer Kanone*, a tank ace. As a leader of heavy tank-hunters he comes with these skills.

Hauptmann Karl-Heinz Noak may:

- Move and Shoot with full ROF, and
- Have Tank teams in any platoon he joins re-roll failed Skill Tests.



GERMAN 🕂

MOTIVATION AND SKILL

Personnel of the 654. Schwere Panzerjäger Abteilung are well-trained with extensive combat experience in the victories of 1939-41 and the fierce fighting of the Eastern Front. Companies in the 654th are rated **Confident Veteran**.

HEADQUARTERS

COMPANY HQ

460

230

points

points

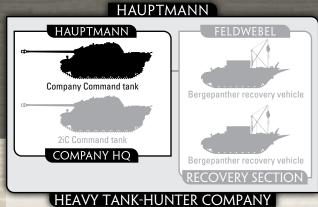
Headquarters

- 2 Jagdpanther
- 1 Jagdpanther

OPTION

• Add up to two Bergepanther recovery vehicles for +15 points each.

The arrival of the *Jagdpanther* to the 654. Schwere *Jagdpanzer Abteilung* in April 1944 heralded the marriage of the deadly 8.8 cm PaK43 gun with the chassis of a Panther tank. Promising to provide an excellent tankhunter capability the battalion was placed in reserve to support the forces in Normandy gathering to contest the Allied invasion.



UNRELIABLE

The initial deployment of Jagdpanther tank-hunters was plagued with severe drive-train issues that cause it to be Unreliable.

COMBAT PLATOONS



PLATOON

3 Jagdpanther690 points2 Jagdpanther460 points

A *Jagdpanther* company consisted of three platoons with three tank-hunters each. A full company totalled eleven, with the two command tank-hunters from the Company HQ. The range and armour of the *Jagdpanther* outclassed any tanks the enemy could field. When used with proper tank-hunter tactics, they could crush any enemy armour thrusts.

With the enemy tanks at an extreme disadvantage the task of dealing with the Jagdpanther often fell to the Allied fighter-bombers and infantry.



WEAPONS PLATOONS



JAGDPANTHER ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUN PLATOON

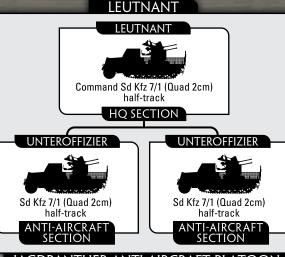
Platoon

3 Sd Kfz 7/1 (Quad 2cm) 2 Sd Kfz 7/1 (Quad 2cm) 135 points90 points

OPTION

• Upgrade to armoured half-tracks with Front, Side and Top armour rating of 0 for +10 points per half-track.

The concentrated firepower of three quad 20mm antiaircraft guns could keep enemy fighter-bombers from threatening a *Jagdpanther Kompanie*. Allied control of the air over Normandy made anti-aircraft support vital.



JAGDPANTHER ANTI-AIRCRAFT PLATOON





Divisional Support

326. Infanterie Division was a static division formed in 1942 in France and had never faced combat until the Normandy invasion. As such units from 326. Infanterie Division are rated **Confident Trained**.

326. GRENADIER DIVISION SUPPORT PLATOONS

The only support 654. Schwere Panzerjäger Abteilung could expect came from 326. Infanterie Division. This had three regiments of infantry, a tank-hunter battalion containing Marder III tank hunters and StuG G assault guns, an engineer battalion, and an artillery regiment of three batteries of 10.5cm howitzers and six batteries of 12.2cm FH316(r) Russian guns.

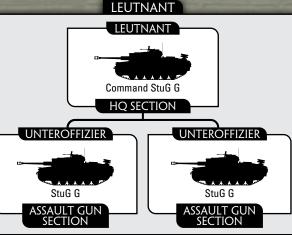
ASSAULT GUN PLATOON

F	LATOON	
	3 StuG G	
	2 StuG G	

220	points
145	points

The StuG G assault gun possessed the armour and firepower capable of taking on most enemy tanks. It's low silhouette increased its survivability and made it easier to embed into the frontline defences.

Assault gun platoons in infantry divisions could be found detached in platoons of three to support separate missions within the grenadier regiments. They provided limited armour for the German infantryman in his effort to halt Allied advances.



ASSAULT GUN PLATOON

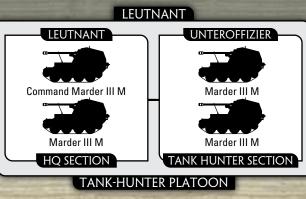


TANK-HUNTER PLATOON

PLATOON

4 Marder III M	205	points
3 Marder III M	155	points
2 Marder III M	105	points

The Marder tank-hunter provided mobile anti-tank capability to the *Grenadier* regiments. It could readily be moved to meet enemy tank incursions or to block key transportation routes.



GRENADIER ANTI-TANK PLATOON

PLATOON

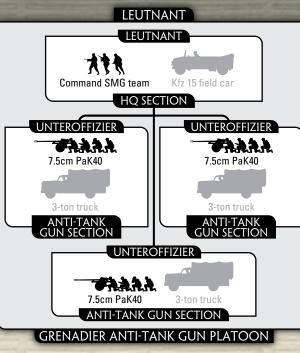
H	HQ Section with:		
	3 7.5cm PaK40	125	points
	2 7.5cm PaK40	90	points

OPTION

• Add Kfz 15 field car and 3-ton trucks for +5 points for the platoon.

The Grenadiers' regimental anti-tank guns are the cornerstone of their defensive strong points. Three mutually supporting 7.5cm PaK40 guns can stop advancing enemy tanks and hold a vital defensive position from being overrun.

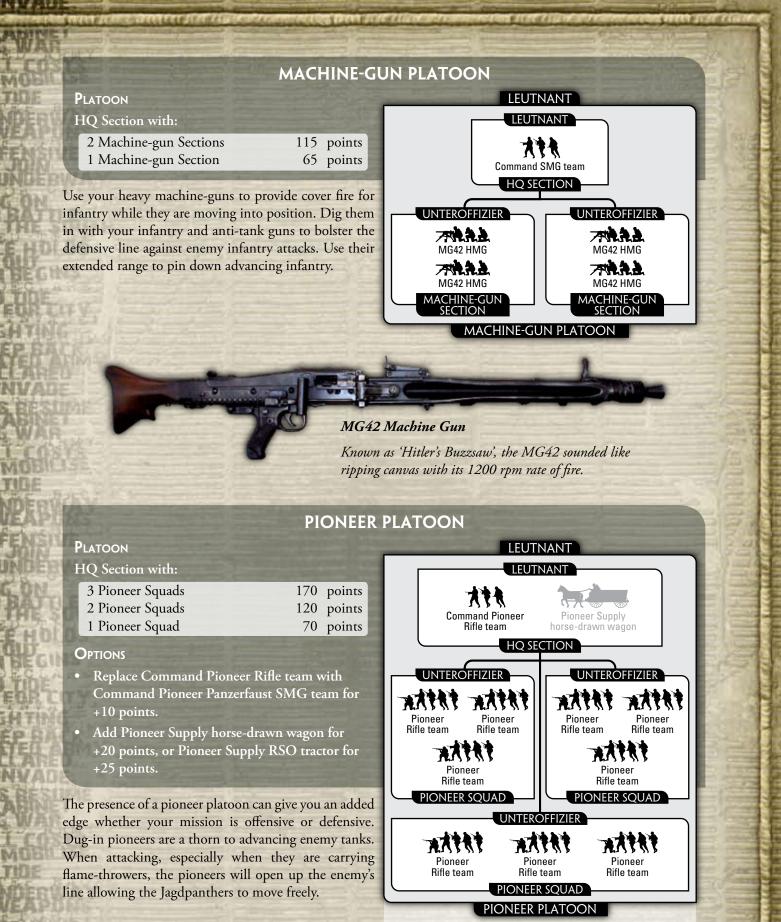
A sufficient blocking force to halt an enemy infantry or mobile attack can be provided by surrounding the guns with well-entrenched infantry.



GRENADIER PLATOON



GRENADIER PLATOON PLATOON LEUTNANT HQ Section with: **3** Grenadier Squads 120 points 2 Grenadier Squads 85 points Command Rifle/MG team OPTION HQ SECTION • Replace Command Rifle/MG team with UNTEROFFIZIER UNTEROFFIZIER a Command Panzerfaust SMG team for +10 points. エデアズダ ネオナズダ Rifle/MG team Rifle/MG team The Grenadiers of the 326. Infanterie Division were 747 responsible for holding an over-extended front line Rifle/MG team Rifle/MG team against the Allied attacks in Operation Bluecoat. GRENADIER SQUAD GRENADIER SQUAD Defeating those Allied attacks required the infantry and UNTEROFFIZIER heavy tank-hunters to support each other. Without their combined efforts neither would have Rifle/MG team Rifle/MG team a chance against the efforts of Allied armour and GRENADIER SOUAD infantry.



You may replace up to one Pioneer Rifle team per Pioneer Squad with a Flame-thrower team at the start of the game before deployment.

SCOUT PLATOON

points

points

PLATOON

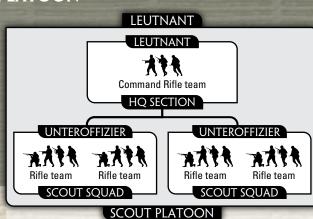
HQ Section with:	
2 Scout Squads	85
1 Scout Squad	50

OPTION

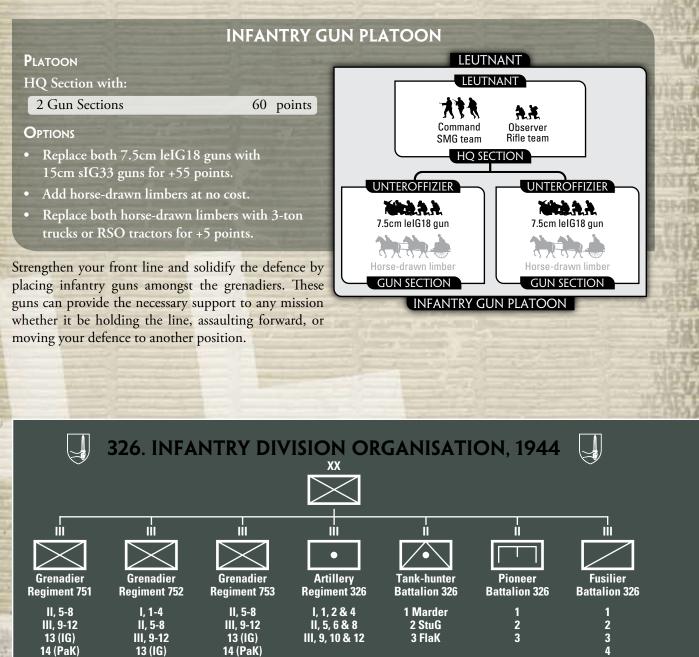
 Replace Command Rifle team with a Command Panzerfaust SMG team for +20 points.

The Grenadier regiment's scouts are the only reconnaissance troops available. Sending them out to find the soft spot in the enemy's defence or to sound the alarm in case of attack will keep your company prepared to meet and match his moves on the battlefield.

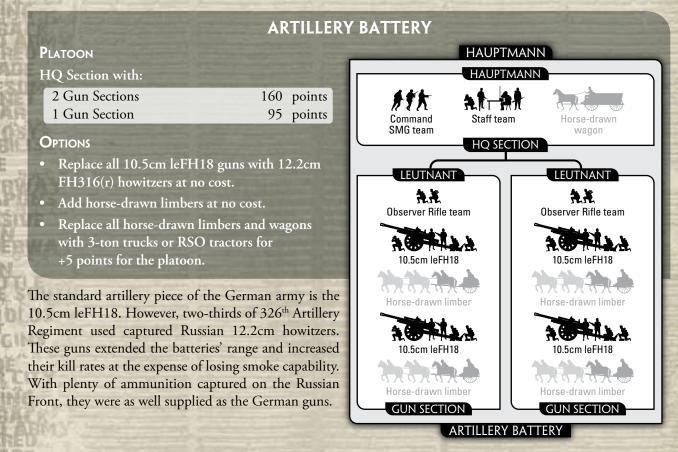
14 (PaK)



Scout Platoons are Reconnaissance Platoons.







326. Infanterie-Division was raised in November 1942 as a static division for the occupation of France. Initially in the south of France, it moved to the Pas-de-Calais area.

The paper strength of the division was meant to be 11,912 men and on 1 May it was only short 93 men.

Each infantry battalion (shown opposite as: II, 5-8, or 2nd Battalion with companies numbered 5 to 8) contained 56 machine-guns and 8 8cm mortars, with the Fusilier Battalion equipped the same.

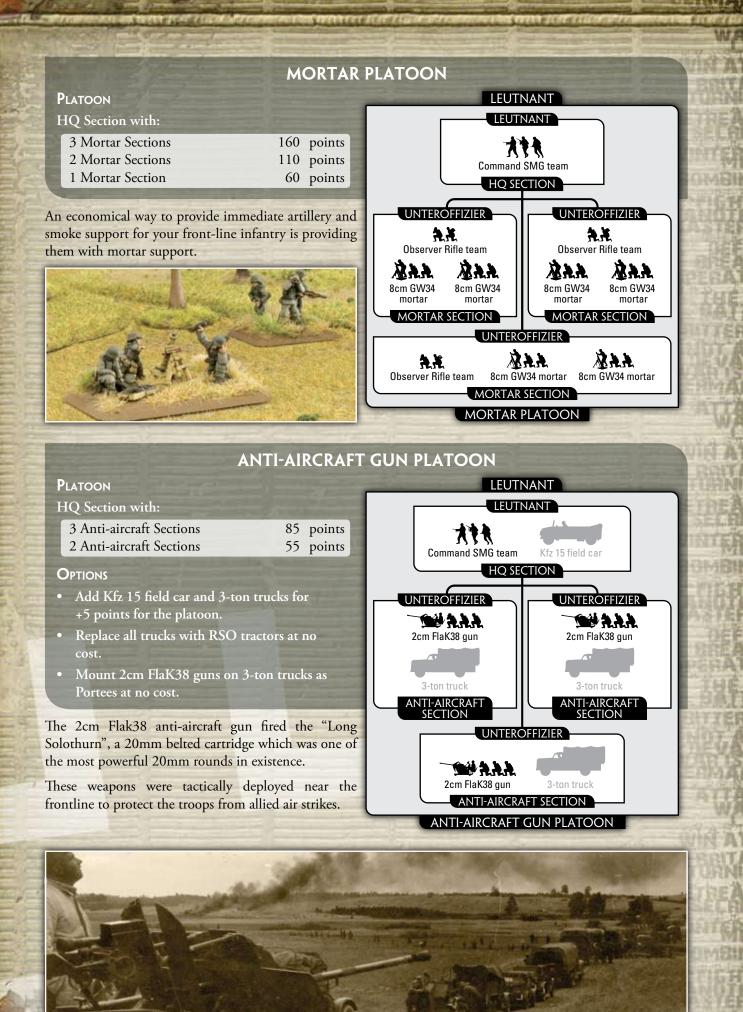
The Panzerjäger Abteilung, or tank-hunter battalion, had 14 Marder tank hunters, 10 *Sturmgeschütz* assault guns and 12 light anti-aircraft guns. The StuG company was often referred to as *Sturmgeschütz Abteilung 1326* (Assault Gun Detachment 1326) and was organised so they could be easily detached for separate missions if required.

1., 2. and 4 artillery batteries had four captured Soviet 12.2cm FH316(r) howitzers each; 5., 6. and 8. batteries had four 10.5cm leFH18 howitzers each; and 9., 10. and 12. batteries also had four captured Soviet 12.2cm FH316(r) howitzers each.

326. Infanterie Division remained in the Pas-de-Calais area until mid July, when it was reported that elements of the division had crossed the Seine River. The division relieved 2. Panzer Division in the Caumont area.

By the end of August the reported casualties suffered in Normandy was estimated to be about 6,000.

Source: Normandy 1944, Niklas Zetterling.



1 1 1 1

Roger Key

Berman Arsenal

TANK TEAMS

Name Weapon	Mobility <i>Range</i>	Front ROF	Armour Side <i>Anti-tank</i>	Top Firepower	Equipment and Notes
Jagdpanther	Fully-tracked 40"/100cm	10	5	1	Hull MG, Unreliable.
8.8cm PaK43 gun		2	16	3+	<i>Hull mounted</i> .
Panther A	Fully-tracked	10	5	1	Co-ax MG, Hull MG, Wide tracks.
7.5cm KwK42 gun	32"/80cm	2	14	3+	
StuG G	Fully-tracked	7	3	1	Hull MG, Protected ammo, Schürzen.
7.5cm StuK40 gun	32"/80cm	2	11	3+	<i>Hull mounted</i> .
Marder III M	Fully-tracked	$\begin{array}{c} 0 \\ 2 \end{array}$	0	0	AA MG.
7.5cm PaK40 gun	32"/80cm		12	3+	Hull mounted.
Sd Kfz 7/1 (Quad 2cm)	Half-tracked	-	-	-	Anti-aircraft.
2cm FlaK38 (V) gun	16"/40cm	6	5	5+	

GUN TEAMS

Weapon	Mobility	Range	ROF	Anti-tank	Firepower	Notes
MG42 HMG	Man-packed	24"/60cm	6	2	6	ROF 2 when pinned down.
8cm GW34 mortar	Man-packed	40"/100cm	6-	2	6	Smoke bombardment.
7.5cm leIG18 gun Firing bombardments	Light	16"/40cm 48 <i>"/120cm</i>	2 -	9 <i>3</i>	3+ 6	Gun shield, Smoke.
15cm sIG33 gun Firing bombardments	Heavy	16"/40cm 56"/140cm	1 -	13 4	1+ 2+	Bunker buster, Gun shield.
2cm FlaK38 gun	Light	16"/40cm	4	5	5+	Anti-aircraft, Gun shield, Turntable.
7.5cm PaK40 gun	Medium	32"/80cm	2	12	3+	Gun shield.
10.5cm leFH18 howitzer Firing bombardments	Immobile	24"/60cm 72"/180cm	1 -	10 4	2+ 4+	Gun shield, Smoke. Smoke bombardment.
12.2cm FH316(r) howitzer Firing bombardments	Immobile	24"/60cm 80"/200cm	1 -	8 4	2+ 3+	Gun shield.

INFANTRY TEAMS

Team	Range	ROF	Anti-tank	Firepower	Notes
Rifle team	16"/40cm	1	2	6	
Rifle/MG team	16"/40cm	2	2	6	
SMG team	4"/10cm	3	1	6	Full ROF when moving.
Flame-thrower team	4"/10cm	2		6	Flame-thrower.
Staff team	ca	nnot shoo	ot		Moves as a Heavy Gun team.

ADDITIONAL TRAINING AND EQUIPMENT

Panzerfaust	4"/10cm	1	12	5+

Tank Assault 6, Cannot shoot in the Shooting Step if moved in the Movement Step.

Pioneer teams are rated as Tank Assault 4.

TRANSPORT TEAMS

	Vehicle Weapon	Mobility <i>Range</i>	Front ROF	Armour Side Anti-tank	Top Firepower	Equipment and Notes
Ĩ	Horch Kfz 15 car	Jeep	-	-	-	
Ş	Opel Blitz 3-ton truck or Opel Kfz 68 radio truck	Wheeled	-2010		-	
í	RSO tractor	Fully-tracked	-	-	-	Slow tank.
6	Horse-drawn wagon or Horse-drawn limber	Wagon			-	
in a	Bergepanther recovery vehicle	Fully-tracked	10	5	0	AA MG, Wide tracks, Recovery vehicle.

