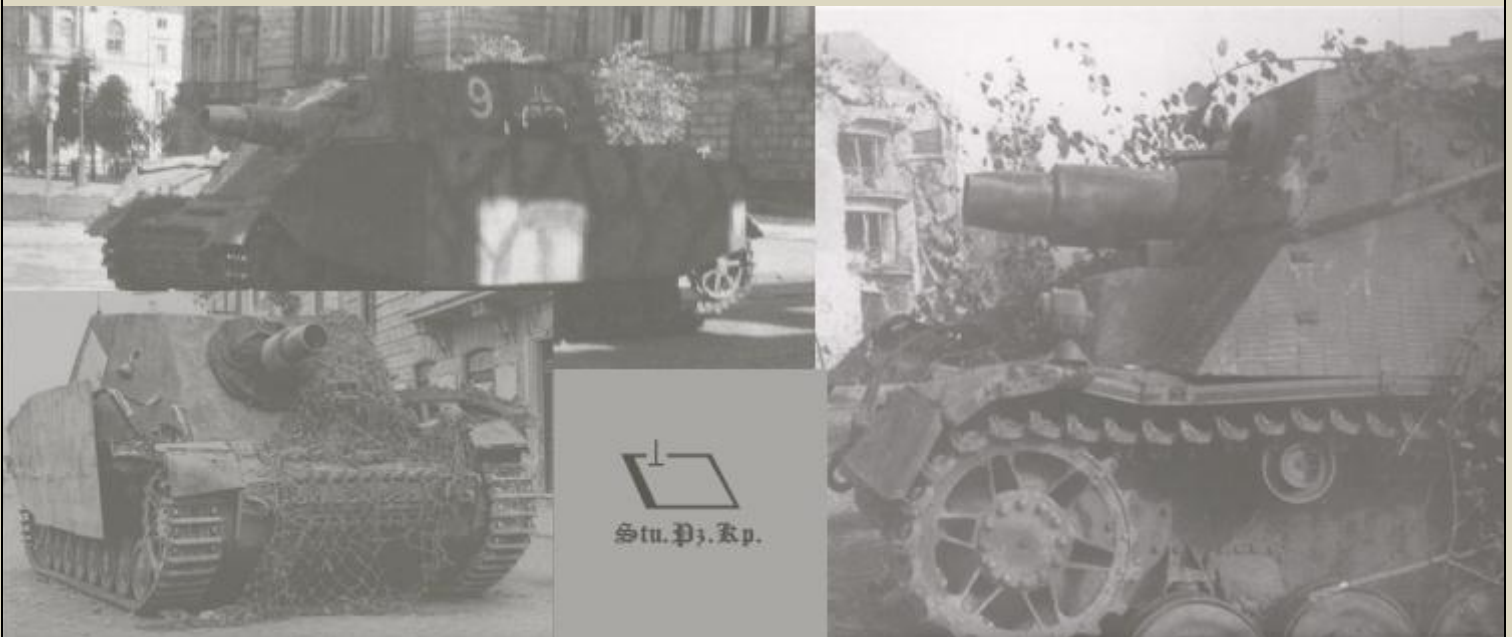


STURMPANZER SPOTTERS GUIDE

[Series 2 & 3]



Production of the mid versions of the Sturmpanzer began in October of 1943 and concluded in May or June of 1944. Around 80 units of the mid versions of the Sturmpanzer were produced, but if one takes into account the 40 or so overhauled Series 1 during that period then the number of Sturmpanzers with the mid features is closer to 120. This would also make the overhauled Series 1 and Series 2 Sturmpanzer more common than the drivers periscope mounted Series 3. The Series 2 and Series 3 Sturmpanzers are identical in almost all aspects except the driver's port. All mid's did not have the periscope drivers vision port only the later ones. The early-mid's (Series 2) had the same driver's port as the Series 1. It is a frequent occurrence that a Sturmpanzer with the early driver's port is automatically assumed to be a Series 1 but this is not necessarily the case. The driver's port alone cannot be used as a means to identify the version of a Sturmpanzer.

I have found no record of exactly how many of the early-mid's were produced. We know that 60 were produced on new Ausf. H. chassis and 14 were on remanufactured Ausf. H. and the remaining 6 might have been Ausf. J's. In October 1943 the 10 first new Ausf. H's chassis were delivered to Heereszeugamt Wien in Vienna, this was the exact same month that steel return rollers and cast idler wheels were introduced into the Pz.Kpfw.IV production so it is unlikely they had these features. I am of the opinion that the remanufactured Ausf. H chassis were also delivered around this time. All photographic evidence of Series 2 vehicles seems to show the rubber return rollers so I believe that Series 2 production used these 24 chassis. These would be the chassis that sometimes also had the extra Air Filters on the right side of the rear hull. At the same time I have not seen any Series 3 that did not have the steel return rollers. The next batch of new chassis delivered to Vienna was in January (50) and these would have likely had the steel return rollers; I believe these were used for the late-mid production. There is no way to be sure and this is just conjecture on my part but it seems the photo evidence will back some version of this explanation. Exact numbers of each may vary. When Stu.Pz.Abt.216 returned from Russia at the end of 1943 the 40¹ or so remaining Sturmpanzers were sent to Vienna to be overhauled. These vehicles were rebuilt to the specifications of the new series 2 being built at that time.

Features of the Series 2 Sturmpanzer are as follows:²

- Pistol port added to each rear-side of body
- Gun barrel armor was lengthened
- Roof changed: two piece gunners hatch was eliminated, new ventilator was added
- Only one antenna on the right side

- Angle iron in front of both the commanders and the loaders hatches to ricochet bullets
- Armor plate added to drivers vision port
- Large basic-issue-item container was moved to the left side
- Air filters in some (Filzbalgfilter)
- Two additional mountings for replacement road wheels
- Armor plating above muffler to help load rounds
- New side skirt brackets
- Zimmerit

Features of the overhauled First Series:

- New roof design same as Series 2
- Ausf. E's were upgraded to new standard ports, mufflers, and brake maintenance access panels
- New side skirt brackets
- Zimmerit

From these descriptions you can see that distinguishing a Series 2 from a Series 1 (overhauled) version can be difficult. The key items to look for are chassis differences, if it's an Ausf. H then it's a Series 2 and besides the drive sprocket the easiest way to tell is from the added front armor. In June 43 80mm solid front plates were introduced into the Pz.Kpfw.IV chassis production so a Series 2 would not have the bolted front armor found on the Ausf G's. This is the front plate where the spare track goes. If you cannot see the front plate or drive sprocket then the armored ventilator covers in the rear of the Series 1 were left in place so if it has them then it's not a Series 2.

There were also new features on the Series 2 that were not on the overhauled Series 1, these were an added pistol port on each side of the rear-side of the superstructure and the lengthened gun barrel armor. The changes for the Series 3 included a later version Ausf. H chassis (with steel return rollers and cast idler wheels on some) and the changing of the driver's port to a periscope design. Zimmerit would have been applied at the factory as well as the fitting of the new type of armored side skirts brackets to all Series 1 overhauled, Series 2 and Series 3 Sturmpanzers.

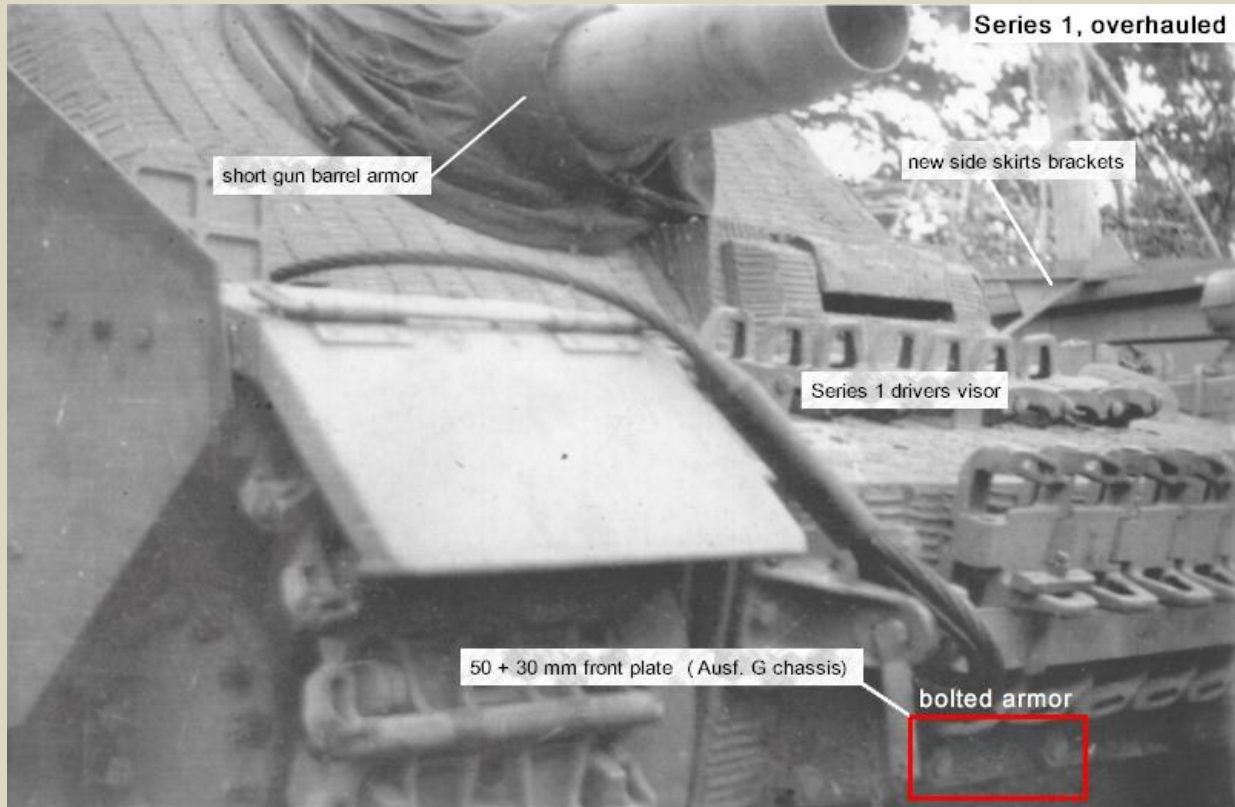
The mid series of Sturmpanzers allowed the application of lessons learned in the field without extensive changes in the design. The changes of the roof layout being the most complex but

the basic body dimensions remained the same. The 4th and final series provided for more significant changes to the design.

The mid series Sturmpanzers would see service in the Italian front as well as the West, serving with StuPz.Abt.216 and Stu.Pz.Abt.217. The resupplying of Stu.Pz.Abt.216 during the early months of 1944, as the first of the mids were being completed, would insure that it received the bulk of the overhauled Series 1 and Series 2 Sturmpanzers.

¹ Documents from Oberkommando des Heeres, Heeres-Waffenamt indicate that 40 overhauled Sturmpanzers were acquired by Inspektion des Kraftfahrwesens between December 1943 and March 1944.

² Sd. Kfz. 166 Sturmpanzer Brumbär (Volume 1), J.J.Fedorowicz



Series 1, overhauled

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Series 1, overhauled

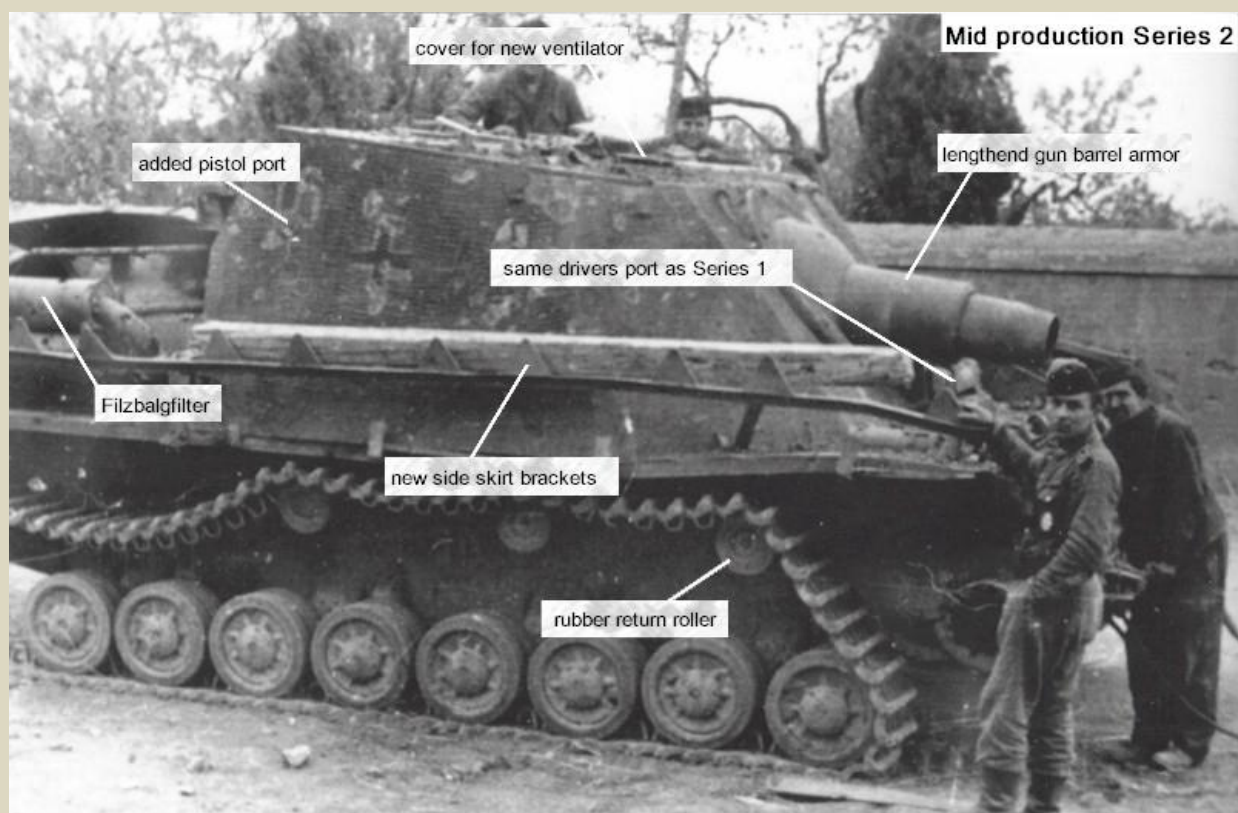
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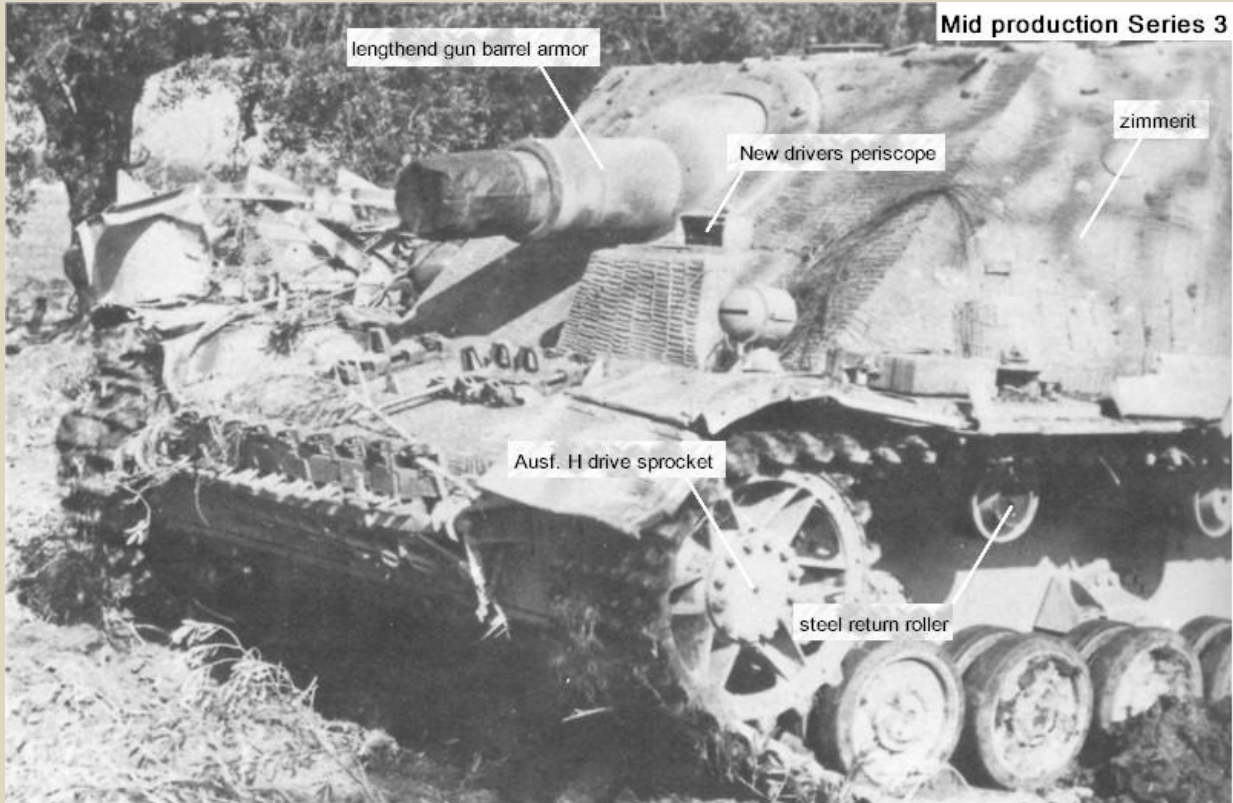
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Waffen Arsenal 160

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Mid production Series 3

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Mid production Series 3

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