

## ***STURMPANZER SPOTTERS GUIDE***

[Stu.Pz.Abt. 216]



Identifying Sturmpanzers of the Sturmpanzer Abteilung 216 can be tricky as there are a lot of variables. The battalion not only fielded every version produced but also received over 50% of all Sturmpanzers delivered.

Because this unit was reformed at the beginning of 1944 when overhauled Series 1 and the new Series 2 vehicles were coming off the line, it would have fielded the majority of the total vehicles of this type. The battalion would have also received a considerable number of Series 4; however, it is not likely they possessed a Series 4 without Zimmerit. The application of Zimmerit ceased in September of 1944, but the last shipment of Sturmpanzers to the 216<sup>th</sup> was in the middle of September 1944. Given the process of production acceptance these Sturmpanzers would have likely left the factory in late August or early September. It is fairly easy to determine whether a 216<sup>th</sup> Sturmpanzer should have Zimmerit. If it is a Series 1 in Russia it would not have Zimmerit. Alternatively, all Sturmpanzers in Italy had Zimmerit for reasons explained above.

The markings on the units Sturmpanzers did not vary from their time in Russia to their time in Italy. The basic configuration was as follows: a Balkenkreuz that was placed slightly above and to the rear of the center of the side superstructure. There was also a Balkenkreuz on the rear boxed structure. Tactical numbers were placed on the top rear corner of the superstructure and also on the rear top right corner. While in Russia, however, the tactical numbers appeared to have a line in the center of them or were outlines only. Not all of the Sturmpanzers photographed in Italy had numbers but those that did had the basic solid type. It could be that the practice of using tactical numbers diminished at the later part of the units time in Italy. The tactical numbers that have been observed indicate that the vehicles were numbered sequentially from 1 to 56 with the three headquarters vehicles using roman numerals, I, II and III. The battalion possessed a 4<sup>th</sup> company for a short period before it was used to form the Sturmpanzer Abteilung 219.

Another practice that began in Russia and carried over into Italy was the placing of a tarp over the roof of the vehicle. It appears this practice was followed on all versions. Another practice that I have not noticed on other units is the placing of the crews' helmets and other stowage on the exterior of the vehicle. This was a very prevalent practice for the 216<sup>th</sup> and is seen often in photographs of the battalions Sturmpanzers.

All Sturmpanzer of the unit would have been painted the standard dunkelgelb (dark yellow) base with a pattern sprayed in olivgrun (olive green) and/or rotbraun (red brown).



Ground Power 59, Delta Publishing

16 . 2

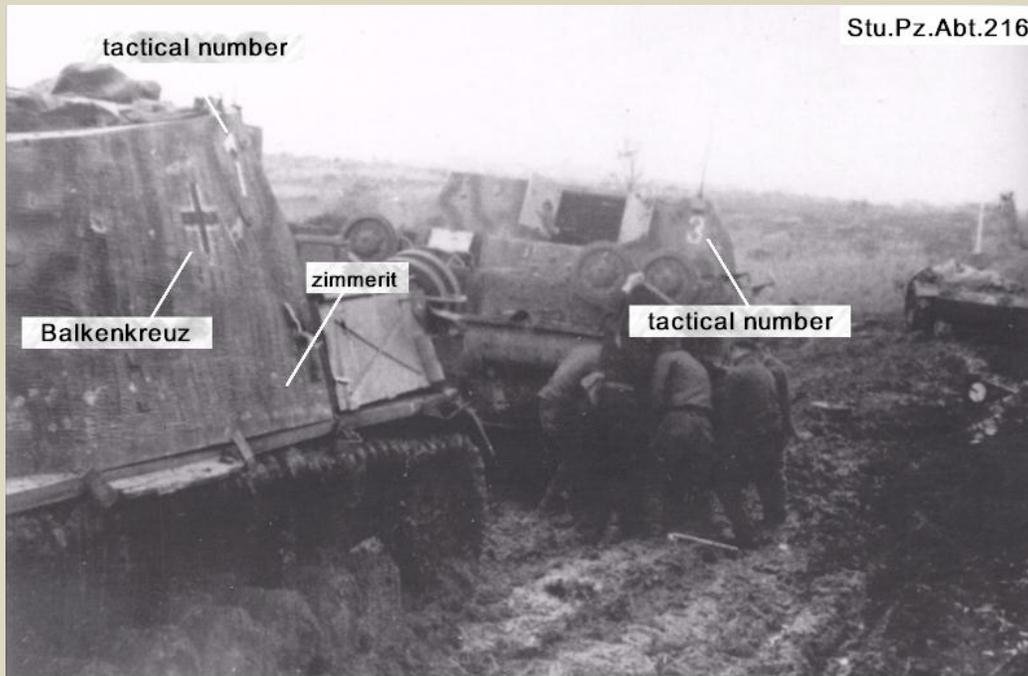
A Series 3 Sturmpanzer in Italy. This is a befehlsturpanzer. Since it has a tactical number of 1 instead of a roman numeral, it is a company command vehicle.

This is an upgraded Series 1 as noted by the armored air intakes. It has a Balkenkreuz on the rear, Zimmerit and camo typical of the battalion in Italy. Also note the cargo on the rear deck. This was typical for the battalion during the early period in Italy.



Ground Power 59, Delta Publishing

34 . 1



JJF Sturmpanzer IV

78 . 3

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Two Series 3 Sturmpanzer. Note the location of the Balkenkreuz, slightly higher and back of center. Also there are tactical numbers located on the top corner of the side and also on the right side of the back just under the antenna mount.

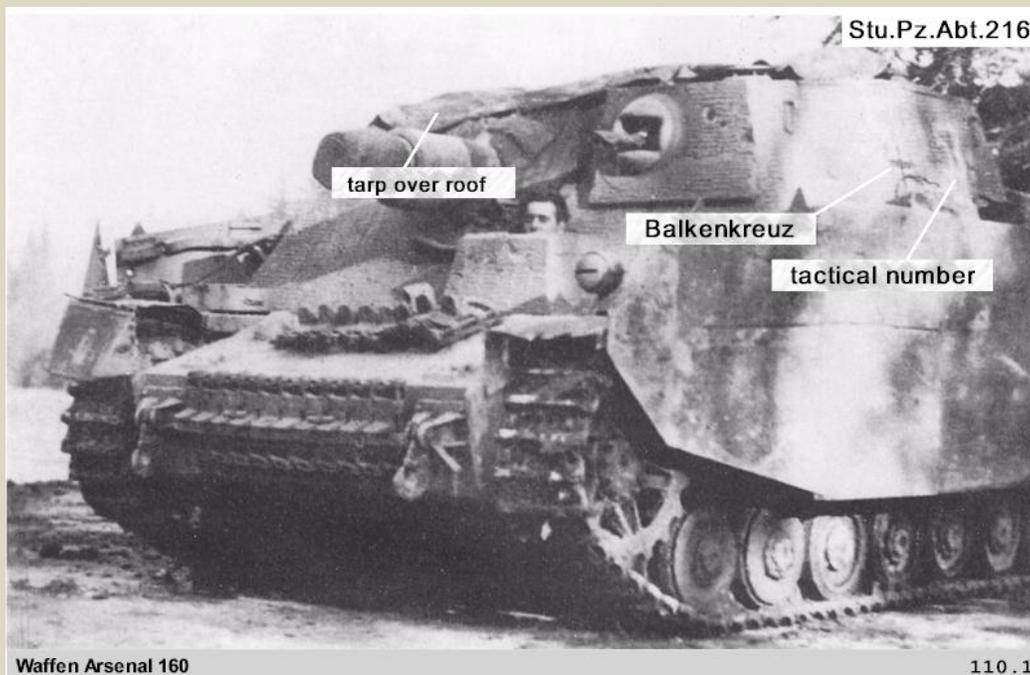
The Sturmpanzer in the foreground is a Series 2 as indicated by the drivers visor port. This Sturmpanzer has the typical markings as well as crews items stored on the side. Also notice the tarp on the roof of the Sturmpanzer. A tarp was used frequently by Sturmpanzers of the battalion in both Russia and Italy.



JJF Sturmpanzer IV

80 . 3

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Waffen Arsenal 160

110.1

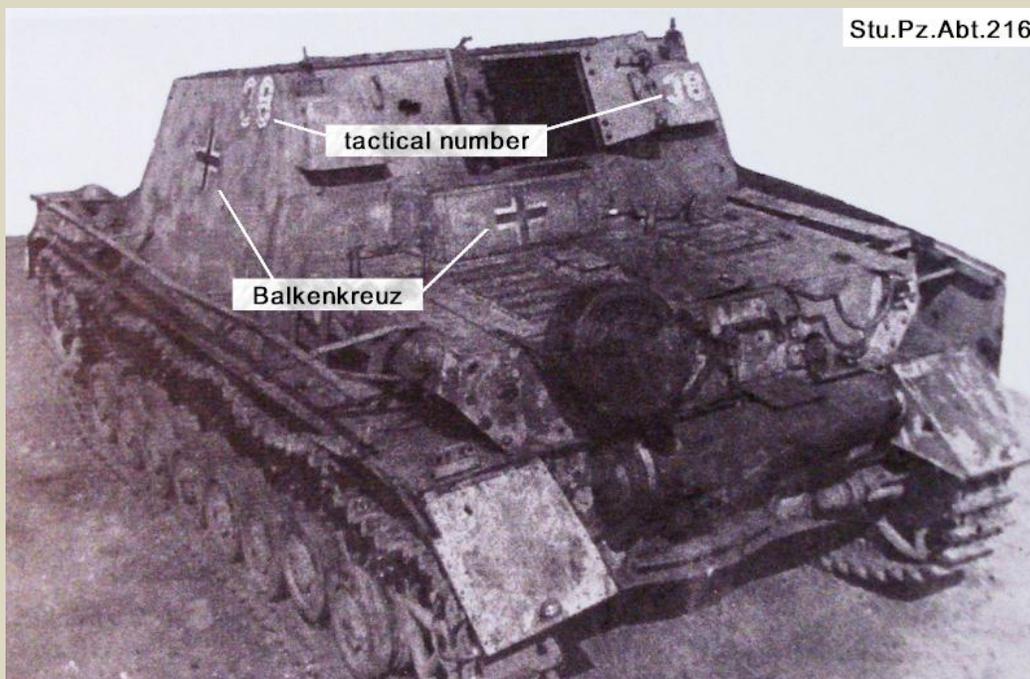
A Series 4 Sturmpanzer in Italy with typical markings of the battalion along with a tarp. Notice the number is 53 which indicates this might be from the 4<sup>th</sup> company. Only the 216<sup>th</sup> had a 4<sup>th</sup> company if only for a short while. It also has steel wheels in the two forward positions.

A Series 1 upgrade with a Balkenkreuz but with no tactical number. Note the tarp and the cargo on the back. I believe this to be the same vehicle as in image 2 above.



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Achtung Panzer No. 4

156.1

A Series 1 Sturmpanzer in Russia. Note that during their period in Russia, the battalion used the same markings and in the same locations as in Italy. However, the style of the numbers changed.

Series 1 upgrade in Italy. No markings are visible but the tarp and cargo on the rear engine deck are visible and typical of the battalion.



Panzer Voran! No. 22

163.1