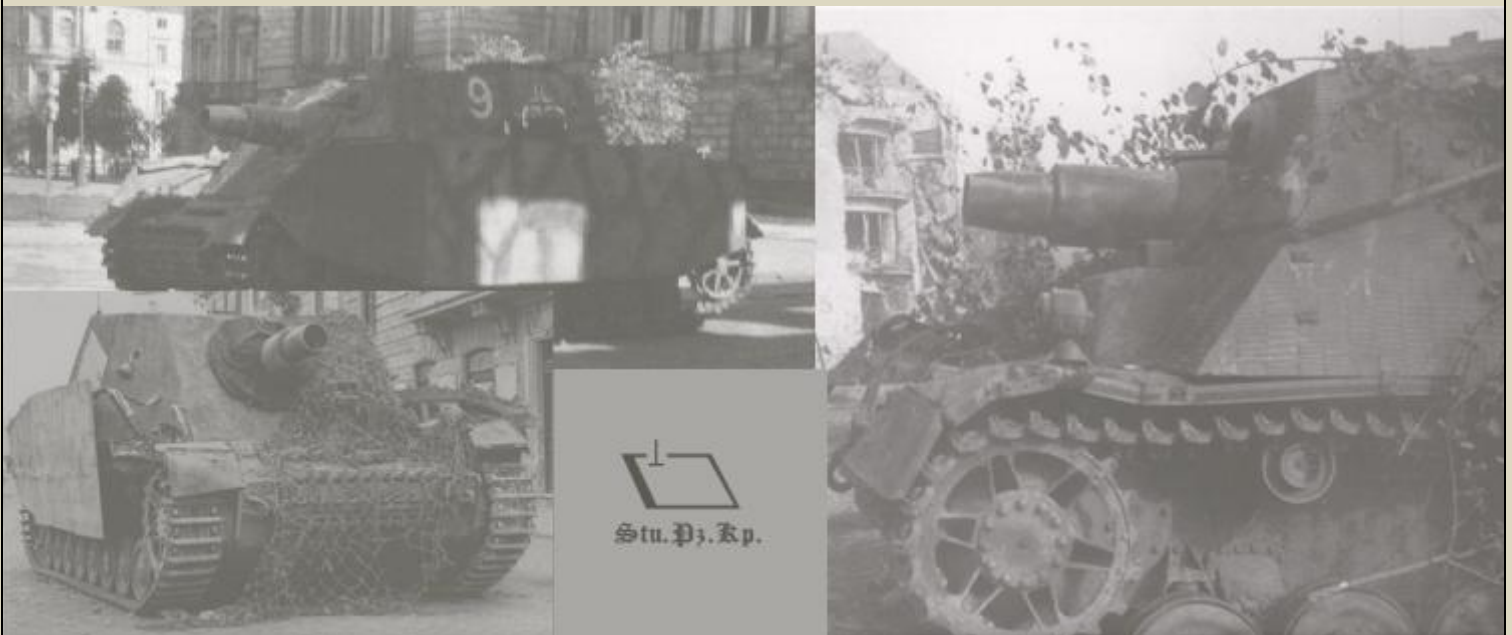
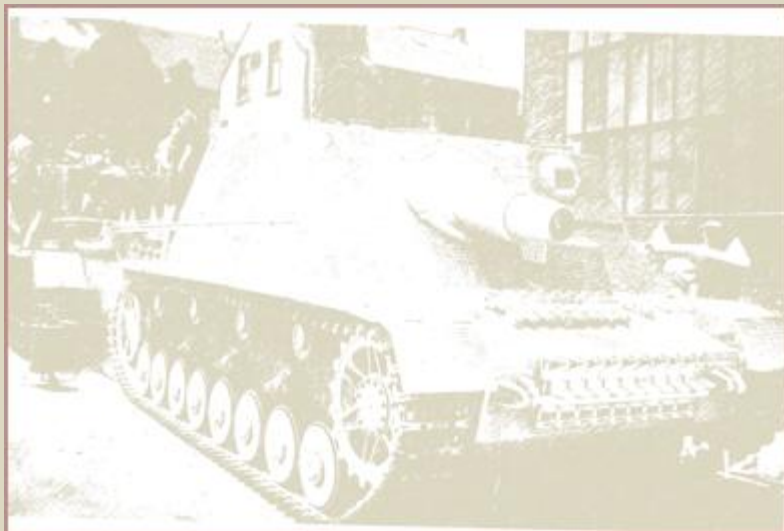


STURMPANZER ABTEILUNG 218

TIMM HAASLER





On 12 August 1944 Sturmpanzer-Kompanie z.b.V. 218 was raised at Bielefeld by order of the OKH [German Army High Command]. Personnel came from Panzer-Ersatz- und Ausbildungs-Abteilung 11 – Bielefeld - and Panzer-Ersatz- und Ausbildungs-Abteilung 18 – Kamenz. Already the next day 10 Sturmpanzer IV's were allocated to the unit which came directly from the Army depot in Bielefeld. The same day the company started to board a train heading for the Eastern Front.

On 16 August 1944 another OKH order arrived, demanding that a second Sturmpanzer company be raised by 6 PM on 19 August 1944 at Bielefeld. The company was named Sturmpanzer-Kompanie z.b.V. 2./ 218; later documents also show 2./ Sturmpanzer-Abteilung z.b.V. 218 and 2./ Sturmpanzer-Abteilung 218 z.b.V. as the unit's name. This company too would receive 10 Sturmpanzer IV from the Army depot at Bielefeld, other soft skin vehicles should have come from the Army District VI but most of the vehicles were provided by Pz.Ers.- und Ausb.Abt. 11. Again it was intended to use personnel from Pz.Ers.- und Ausb.Abt. 11 and 18 in order to form the company, but in the end all personnel came from Pz.Ers.- und Ausb.Abt. 11 which was also responsible for providing the company commander, 1st Lieutenant Friedemann. Nevertheless Pz.Ers.- und Ausb.Abt. 18 was designated to become the replacement unit.

The 10 Sturmpanzer IV's were already allocated to the unit on 16 August 44 and left the depot the same day. Before the company started to board a train on 19 August 1944 it was bid farewell by the local Kreisleiter [district leader]. The next day the train left Bielefeld heading for France where the company would join another tank unit in the Versailles area. It was said that the company was engaged in the Caen area but this seems to be highly unlikely as the German forces were already in full retreat from Normandy by the end of August. The overall situation in the West was most likely the reason why no other information relating to the company is found until mid-September 1944. In fact the company detrained on 26 August 1944 at Chalon-sur-Marne as the railroad to Paris was already blocked by the advancing Allies.

On either 9 or 10 September 1944 a soldier of the company was captured by members of 4th US Infantry Division near Libramont in Belgium. He told his captors that his unit had been raised recently and was attached to Kampfgruppe Hauser of Panzer-Lehr-Division at present. The company was engaged as a rearguard together with I./ Panzer-Grenadier-Regiment 901 and 5 Panzer IV of II./ Panzer-Regiment 130. Only 2 Sturmpanzers were combat ready when the company was ordered to withdraw to Ochamps on 8 September

1944. On 10 September Army Group B forwarded a request to 7th and 15th Army in order to get information regarding the whereabouts of the company.

On 17 September 1944 the remnants of 2./ Sturmpanzer-Abteilung 218 z.b.V. arrived at Kaiserslautern after having been ordered by A.O.K. 1 to return to Germany for rest and refitting. Only 3 officers, 16 enlisted men and one passenger car returned to the Panzerstützpunkt Mitte. The next day A.O.K. 1 ordered what was left of the company to move to Kamenz.

Aftermath. On 30 September 1944 the 17. SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Division asked Panzerstützpunkt Mitte for support to recover a Sturmpanzer IV at Marzellingen (Marsilly) 6 km east of Metz. The division claimed that this tank was one of their vehicles. Werkstatt-Kompanie 924 intended to recover the vehicle however on 4 October 1944 it learnt that this particular Sturmpanzer had already arrived on its own at Siegelbach near Kaiserslautern where Werkstatt-Kompanie 924 was located. The tank was still at Siegelbach one week later when the General der Panzertruppen West proposed to hand it over to Sturmpanzer-Abteilung 217, the tank however was still in need of repair and Werkstatt-Kompanie 924 reported to need another seven days to have the tank in running order again. It is unknown when exactly this tank was handed over to Sturmpanzer-Abteilung 217 but a member of the battalion later claimed that they took over a Sturmpanzer IV from Sturmpanzer-Abteilung 218 in November 1944.

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