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MEN-AT-ARMS 236

GERMAN ARMY 1939–45 (5)
WESTERN FRONT 1943–45

TEXT BY
NIGEL THOMAS

COLOUR PLATES BY
STEPHEN ANDREW
Dedication

This book is respectfully dedicated to my late father, War Substantive Lieutenant William Robert Thomas, Royal Palmer, and the late Colonel R.D. J. M. Douglas (E), Royal Palmer, formerly of 108, Hailwood Parade and the drumhead—both men from whom I have learnt a lot.

Acknowledgements

This book would not have been possible without the generous help of many people, especially Stephen Brailsford, Philip Bays M, Joseph Choppa, Brian Cox, Keith Driscoll, Anthony Edmonds, a number of artists, and a number of photographers, including Alan Chennells, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner. Credits should be addressed to the Publishers.

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Title page illustration: Halsen-Batallions, 34, the reconnaissance and of Infantry Division 34 in northern Italy. This is the only unit serving in the West entitled to wear the bronze 'dragon eagle' or 'Schweizer Adler' tradition badge on the front of the cap in memory of the old 1st Brandenburger Dragoons. The Garter wreath is authorised in a British tank unit in May 1945, the M1942 field tunic with M1940 shoulder patches and the M1942 dark green shoulder straps and breast eagles, intricately, above his M1936 rank chevrons he displays the helmetman's qualification badge awarded to assault boat pilots. (Brian Davis)
GERMAN ARMY 1939–45 (5)
WESTERN FRONT 1943–45

THE CONTEXT OF THE WESTERN FRONT 1943–45

The High Command of the Army and Wehrmacht

The German Armed Forces (Wehrmacht) consisted of the Arme (Heer), Navy (Kriegsmarine) and Air Force (Luftwaffe) under Chief of the Armed Forces High Command (Chef des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht – OKW). GM Wilhelm Keitel. The Waffen-SS, officially established in November 1939 under Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler, was an independent arm, but its field units operated under Army command. There were also auxiliary units in the Police (Polizei), Border Guards (Grenzschutz), Stormtroopers (SA), National Socialist Motor Corps (NSKK), Nazi Labour Service (RAD), and Labour Organisation (OT), and from 25 September 1944 the German Home Guard (Deutscher Volksgau), and these all provided the Army with scratch units to defend western Germany from October 1944.

Adolf Hitler, as Führer and head of the German government since 30 January 1933, had appointed himself Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces (Oberbefehlshaber der Wehrmacht) on 4 February 1938 and Chief of the Army High Command (Oberbefehlshaber des Heeres – OKH) on 19 December 1941. Hitler was essentially an armchair strategist who believed that his military experience in the ranks of the infantry during the Great War, combined with his political vision, qualified him as a gifted field commander. Accordingly he increasingly ignored the input of Keitel, and bypassed three successive Army Chiefs of Staff – Gen der Inf. (later Gen Obs) Kurt Zeiler (24 September 1942 to 21 July 1944); GenObs Heinz Guderian (until 28 March 1945); and Gen der Inf. Hans Krebs – with predictably disastrous results. On 30 April 1945 Hitler committed suicide, and on 1 May Josef Göbbels became prime minister (Reichskanzler), appointing Admiral of the Fleet Karl Dönitz as president, before himself committing suicide. On 7 May Dönitz ordered Keitel to sign the unconditional surrender of all German forces to the Western Allies at Rheims, eastern France.

Hitler encouraged rivalry and demarcation disputes in duplicated political and military institutions in order to forestall challenges to his authority. He appointed the OKW to administer France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway and Italy, leaving eastern Europe and the Balkans to the OKH. This gave Army generals in the West even less power than in the East, a situation compounded by Hitler’s determination to marginalise the OKH, especially after the failed Army-inspired ‘Reinhard Plan’ of 20 July 1941.

From 25 April 1945 the OKW Operations Staff under Gen Obs Alfred
Jodl nominally took over the military conduct of the war, with Dönitz controlling troops in northern Germany and Luftwaffe GFM Albert Kesselring those in southern Germany, Austria, and Northern Italy, thus effectively excluding the OKH from control over its own troops—though given the chaotic conditions of the last couple of weeks of hostilities, this had little practical effect. The Army was composed of the Field Army (Frontheer) on active service outside Germany, and the Replacement Army (Ersatzheer), from July 1944 under Hamburger's SS command, increasingly training replacements for field units in occupied territories. The Army decreased from a peak of 6,550,000 to 3,500,000 by May 1945, with a further 800,000 in the Waffen-SS.

Since 25 October 1944 German Army troops in occupied France— from 27 November 1942 including the former Vichy zone—Belgium and the Netherlands were under Western High Command (Oberbefehlshaber West) in Paris, also called Army Group D (Heeresgruppe D). This command was initially held by GFM Erwin von Witzleben; from 15 March 1942 by GFM Good von Rundstedt; from 2 July 1944 until his arrest as a conspirator in the Bomb Plot by GFM Günther von Kügelgen; from 15 August 1944 by GFM Walter Model; and from 5 September 1944 by von Rundstedt again. Western High Command controlled Army Groups B and C.

Italy came under the 2nd Air Fleet (Luftflotte 2), later redesignated Southern High Command (Oberbefehlshaber Süd) and from 26 November 1945 Army South-Western High Command, under Luftwaffe GFM Albert Kesselring, controlling Army Group C and, briefly, Army Group B. As the Western and Italian Fronts merged, Western and South-Western High Command were combined on 22 April 1945 as Southern High Command, under Kesselring. The OKW administered the Netherlands, Denmark and Norway directly through the Armed Forces Command (Wehrmachtsbefehlshaber). On 11 November 1944 Netherlands Armed Forces Command became Army Group H, and on 7 April 1945 North-Western High Command, under GenObst Johannes Blaskowitz, and from 15 April 1945 GFM Erich Busch.

The strategy

Germany's victories from September 1939 to February 1945 had been achieved by experienced generals free to apply 'Blitzkrieg tactics', with concentrations of tanks, motorised infantry and Luftwaffe ground attack aircraft breaking through weak points in the enemy lines and destroying the enemy's command centres, while 'Defensive Maneuver' used infantry to trap the enemy and destroy them in isolated pockets.

Following the fall of France, the decision to postpone the invasion of Great Britain indefinitely, and his self-assessment as supreme field
commander. Hitler had these tactics disseminated in favour of static defence of fortified lines—essentially the tactics he had observed as a runner at the command post of Austrian Reserve Infantry Regiment No.16 on the Western Front during the Great War.

On 23 March 1942 Hitler ordered the OT to build the “Atlantic Rampart” (Atlantikwall), a series of fortified anchor points. The idea was intended to form a continuous line of fortifications from the Dutch, Belgian and French coasts as far as the Spanish border (and on the Channel Islands). These were connected by concrete coastal artillery positions and pillboxes, tank obstacles, minefields and barbed wire, to prevent the expected Anglo-American airborne landings and allow German forces to concentrate on the Eastern and North African campaigns. The Atlantikwall was guarded by static infantry divisions with some Panzer divisions in mobile reserve, but by June 1944 the fortifications were still incomplete, and the garrisons had been stripped of manpower and tanks to provide replacements for the Eastern Front.

Hitler had reluctantly assigned the ‘old warfare’ GFM Gerd von Rundstedt to defend France, Belgium and the Netherlands but then frustrated this experienced field commander by ignoring his pleas that the Allies would land in Normandy, insisting that they would land at Calais or on the Dutch coast and consequently misleading vital reinforcements. Hitler also insisted until May 1945 on maintaining a large garrison in Norway, where he erroneously expected a landing.

In June 1944 the Dunkirk infantry screen fought doggedly to defend the Normandy beaches, but salutary hours and days were lost while his generals attempted to convince a dictating Hitler, remote from the battlefield, to commit armoured reserves against the bridgehead. Thereafter GFM Walter Model, perhaps the most gifted German field commander after Rommel (but prevented by Hitler, and Allied armoured and air superiority, from deploying Blaskowitz or Decisive Maneuver tactics), conducted a masterful fighting retreat under constant daylight mauling from Allied ground attack aircraft. Hitler waved reinforcements by insisting on defending every inch of ground and refusing tactical withdrawals to secure defensive lines and increasingly relying on the Waffen-SS to stiffen Army units.

Hitler’s insistence, on the grounds of sustaining morale, on the reconstitution of all destroyed and depleted units actually created a deceptively large order of battle on paper, containing nominal divisions of only brigades or even regimental strength. His furtively gamble in counterattacking westwards in the Ardennes offensive in December 1944 squandered Rundstedt’s best troops; but the deflected forces defended the western German border energetically, only collapsing in late March 1945 when defeat was clearly inevitable.

Hitler’s fear of losing Italy was so great that the Italian Front commander, Luftwaffe GFM Albert Kesselring was allowed to maintain an elite quality Army and Luftwaffe ground units. He conducted a dogged fighting withdrawal northwest across Italy’s easily defendable rivers and mountains until a general collapse in April 1945. This ensured that the Italian campaign, which Winston Churchill had believed would hasten Germany’s defeat, remained a comparative “sideshow”, diverting valuable Allied reinforcements from the Western Front.
THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARMY UNITS

The German army on the Western Front in 1914-18 was organised into two, later three Army Groups, with a fourth in Italy; these comprised one Panzer and eight infantry armies, the Italian I and II German Reinforced Corps, and a Reinf. Corps (Armeeabteilung) actually an Army without Army HQ troops). These were supported by the Luftwaffe, Airborne Armies and 1st SS Armoured Army, with Replacement Army units briefly organised into the Upper Rhine Army Group (Heeresgruppe Oberling) and Blumenau Army. Each Army controlled two to five infantry Corps; no cavalry, mountain or reserve Corps served on these fronts.

Infantry Divisions

The infantry division remained the backbone of the German army and, from September 1918 to March 1945 divisions were organised according to 35 particular establishments, each designated a 'wave' (Welle). The divisional and establishment number gives a general indication of the size and quality of manpower, and firepower, the higher the wave and 'home-number' the smaller the division, and the lower the quality of the troops, weapons, and equipment.

Waves 1-8, in the 1934 July 1942 period (1939, 796,719 divisional series) were organised as M1939 Divisions, with steady reductions in the number of troops (from 17,734 to 11,246). From 20 September 1942 onwards 12 'state' (Staatsgruften) infantry divisions, numbered 292-5, 264-6, 396, and 343, were formed outside the 'state' system to guard the Adlerschutz. Each of these had two, later sometimes three or four infantry regiments, each with two or three battalions, usually totalling six battalions instead of the normal ten. These were older, less well-trained troops, with minimal motorisation and reduced firepower.

Comes on the Eastern Front forced M1939 Divisions in the West to be reorganised as 38 and for divisions in Waves 19-28 (1941-45) divisional series and named divisions from November 1943, toJuly 1944 to be formed as M-1944 Divisions. The M1944 Infantry Division had 12,772 men in three M1944 infantry regiments, each with an anti-tank company, infantry gun company, and two infantry battalions. Six divisional support units comprised an artillery regiment, flak battery reconnaissance, field replacement (Feldersatz), anti-air, engineer, and signals battalions. Divisional services consisted of motorised and motor transport columns, medical companies, field hospital, veterinary company, military police troop and field post office. Five of these divisions (59, 64, 226, 229, 257) were static units for the Western and Italian fronts.

Following the Battle of the Bulge Nov 1944, Hitler from 28 August 1944 designated 34 new and reorganised divisions raised from July to August 1944 in Waves 28-32, and many reconstituted divisions (0-563, 208) divisional series and named divisions, as People's Grenadier Divisions (Volksgrenadierdivisionen). These were intended to politically reliable infantry under Himmler's direct command, and would essentially represent the bulk of the infantry on the Western Front. With a nominal strength of 90,000, the People's Grenadier Division — either a reorganised combat-ready formation, or a new formation raised from
convalescent wounded and untrained recruits — was organized like a M1944 Infantry Division but with a Firelight company instead of a mortar battalion, with 18% less manpower and 16% less firepower. Quality varied from reasonably good to wholly inadequate.

On 10 December 1944 all existing infantry divisions, and those formed in Waves 33-35 (48-716 divisional series and named divisions), six of which were Volkssturmmitteldivisions, were reorganized as M1945 Divisions. An M1945 infantry division had 11,909 men; divisional services were reorganized as a supply regiment (Versorgungsregiment) with a motor transport company, two home-drawn transport companies, an ordnance company, and a mechanical repair plant; administration, medical, and veterinary companies, a military police troop and field post office. In March 1945 manpower was further reduced to 11,750, but it is doubtful whether any division now conforming to official establishment so late in the war. Some divisions hastily formed in spring 1945 were assigned a name rather than the usual number.

The Germans were particularly successful at forming in the field small unit remnants and individual stragglers into temporary “battle groups” (Kampfgruppen), with no fixed organization and named after their commanders, for particular missions. Similarly, larger assets were sometimes assembled as available into a “divisional staff for special employment” (Division zur besonderen Verwendung — dBF) lacking a conventional divisional organization.

From October 1939 each military district (Wehrkreis) raised several depot divisions to train Field Army depot (Erste) units in Germany. Each numbered depot division was organized as a M1939 infantry division and from autumn 1941 they were increasingly deployed as field units to defend territory close to or within the German border — e.g., the deployment of 100th and 101st Depot Divisions at Arnheim in September 1944. In October 1942 many depot divisions were redesignated Reserve Divisions (141-188 series), each 16,000 strong, and deployed as static garrison units in the occupied territories. On 9 October 1944, with virtually all occupied territory occupied by the Allies, Reserve Divisions were redesignated Infantry Divisions, as were Training Divisions (Feldübungs-Divisionen), each with 16,000 recruits undergoing advanced combat training and awaiting posting to front line units.

Three mountain infantry divisions (2, 6, 7) served in Norway and France (5, 3, 8, 157) on the Western and Italian Fronts. The M1939 Mountain Division with 15,006 men was organized like the M1939 Infantry Division but with two mountain regiments and mountain-equipped support units and services; whilst a 15,004-strong M1942 Rifle (Jäger) Division had lightly armed mobile infantry. No Secondary Divisions served on the Western or Italian Fronts.

Generalmajor Gerd von Rundstedt, commanding German forces in France, Belgium, and the Netherlands in June 1944. He was the only serving officer holding a traditional appointment as General or Colonel of the Regiment, in his case of the 100th Infantry, which he commanded in 1925-26. He thus wears a unique uniform combining insignia of his rank and his honorary appointment. The right-buttoned M1920 officer’s field tunic has gold buttons and breast cockle of general’s rank; the front goring prescribed for general officers in 1927 is here worn for infantry. His field-marshals shoulder boards have a white underlodge, and bear both the crossed laurels of rank and the regimental numerals “102”. The M1935 officer’s collar patches have silver thread “guards tridents” (Diamant) on an infantry white background. He wears the Knight’s Cross with Oak Leaves and Swords at his breast (EhPa).
Armoured formations and units
On 23 June 1943 the armoured infantry division was re-designated M1943 Armoured Infantry Division (Panzergrenadierdivision). This was 14,758 strong with two motorised infantry regiments and one Panzer battalion; seven divisional support units – motorised artillery regiments, field replacement, armoured reconnaissance, anti-tank, motorised artillery, motorised engineer and motorised signals battalions, plus divisional services. From 20 September 1944 it was reorganised as the M1944 Armoured Infantry Division, with 680 fewer support personnel and less equipment but increased firepower; the motorised infantry regiments were redesignated as Panzer-grenadier regiments.

Only six armoured Panzer Divisions were available to fight on the Western Front and two in Italy. On 24 September 1943 all 15,600 strong M1943 Panzer Divisions were reorganised as M1943 Panzer Divisions with 14,727 men. The establishment was one motorised tank regiment, of which the 1st Battalion often received PzKpfw V Panthers while the 2nd received the PzKpfw IV; two motorised armoured Panzer-grenadier regiments, each of which had one battalion equipped with armoured halftracks; seven divisional support units – an armoured artillery regiment, field replacement, motorised anti-aircraft, armoured reconnaissance, armoured antitank, armoured engineer and armoured signals battalions; and divisional services.

This organisation concealed the fact that the number of tanks had steadily declined from 328 per division in September 1939 to 165 in 1943. In practice, mechanical breakdowns, shortages of space-pants, combat losses, nonarrival of replacements under sky rules by Allied fighter-bombers, and equipment abandoned when retreating across the Seine forced CSM Model to report in September 1944 only five to ten serviceable tanks per division – which, although later greatly improved, revealed a catastrophic situation which was virtually ignored by Hitler.

On 24 March 1944 all Panzer and Panzer-grenadier divisions were ordered reorganised as M1943 Panzer Divisions, with purely defensive capabilities and only 54 tanks; but it is unlikely that any divisions were thus organised so late in the war. Theoretically the 11,422 strong M1945 Panzer Division would have had a mixed armoured regiment with one tank battalion and one halftrack Panzer-grenadier battalion; two motorised Panzer-grenadier regiments; and support units and services as before.

German armour was supported by assault artillery battalions allocated to Army HQ, on 25 February 1944 these were redesignated as brigades. Each had three batteries of 14-44 self-propelled guns. Panzer and Panzer-grenadier divisions had armoured anti-aircraft battalions, each with two...
batteries of 88mm dual-purpose guns – devastating when used in the ground role – and two 20mm light anti-aircraft batteries. On 1 March 1944 rocket-launcher regiments were grouped into brigades; from September 1944 these came under Himmeler’s nominal command as ‘People’s Rocket Launcher Brigades’, ten of which fought in the Ardennes offensive.

**Elite divisions**

Of the six elite army divisions formed during World War II all except the Großdeutschland divisions served, albeit often briefly, on the Western Front after June 1940. On 1 June 1943 the 14th Infantry Division was redesignated the Imperial Grenadier Division (Reichsgrenadier- Division) Hoch- und Deutschkönig, encouraging continued Austrian loyalty to the Reich by stressing Imperial Austrian military traditions: it served from August 1943 to November 1944 in Italy. On 28 June 1943 the Panzergrenadier Division Feldherrnhalle was formed from SA (Sturmabteilung) volunteers. 196th Panzer Brigade Feldherrnhalle fought on the Western Front from August 1944. Some 224 men of the Brandenburg commandos were formed into the Stielau Group and sent behind Allied lines as 56-four-man teams in US Army uniforms as saboteurs during the Ardennes offensive in December 1944; 72 soldiers were captured and shot as spies. The Führer Infantry Brigade (Führer- Grenadier-Brigade) and Führer Forest Brigade (Führer-Bergleut-Brigade) participated in the final stages of the Ardennes fighting in January 1945.

**Non-Army formations**

On 1 November 1943, the 14 surviving Luftwaffe field divisions were transferred to the Heer and reorganised as M1544 infantry divisions with “Rifile” (L) Regiments, support units and services. On paper 14 Luftwaffe Airborne divisions – some of these ‘Green Devils’ being generally considered among the best German units of the war – were formed, of which nine (2, 3, 5, 8, 11, 59, 60, 61, 62) supported the army on the Western Front and two (1, 4) on the Italian Front. The elite Hermann Göring Panzer Division served in Italy from June 1943 to July 1944. (See MAA 139, German Airborne Organization and MAA 229, Luftwaffe Field Divisions.)

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A group of prisoners captured in Normandy, 12 June 1944. The Oberleutnant (left) is wearing the M1942 pattern field cap and M1940 field tunic; (far right) is a corporal wearing the old M1936 field cap; and (second right) is seen wearing the M1943 hooded smock in maroon-pattern camouflage, as issued to snipers. (Brian Davis)
The Waffen SS deployed eight divisions (1, 2, 9, 10, 12 Panzer, 17 Panzergruppe 4; 34 Infantry, 6 Mountain) on the Western Front, and 16th SS-Panzergruppe Division in Italy (see MAA 34, The Waffen-SS).

Military Police, Chaplains & Officials
On 1 February 1941 the Army Patrol Service (Heeresstreifenleitung), supervising Replacement Army garrisons and checking the papers of soldiers on leave, was unified under a Patrol Service Command controlling railway guard battalions and checking documents in large railway stations. From 1 December 1941 special Army Patrol Service Groups (Gruppen Heeres-Streifenleitung), from 1 March 1944 redesignated Armed Forces Patrol Groups, were deployed to the occupied territories. Following the German defeat at Stalingrad in February 1943 the army's traditionally high discipline gradually eroded, requiring extra units to support these and the Military Police and Area Command (Oberfeldkommandantur) authorities.

On 27 November 1943 Field Police (Feldjäger) Commands III were established, reporting directly to GFM Keitel, and holding precedence over all Patrol Service and Military Police. Each command controlled a Field Police Battalion (from 25 April 1944, a Regiment) with five motorised companies based 12 miles behind the front line, these units dealt out rough justice, including summary execution, to Wehrmacht personnel. They were supported from December 1941 by Patrol Corps (Streifkorps) sections. Each Army had a 33-stong battalion-size Secret Field Police (Geheime Feldpolizei) Group carrying out field security and anti-resistance duties, reporting to Army Intelligence (Abwehr).

A Protestant and a Catholic chaplain each served on divisional staffs, while Arees, North Caucasian, Tatars and Volga-Tartar battalions were allocated a Sunni Muslim chaplain (Mufid). On 21 January 1944 some branches of Army Officials, permanently assigned to the Field Army, were redesignated as service personnel, and on 1 May 1944 transferred to the two branches of the newly formed Special Troop Service (Truppenwunderdienst) – the Wehrmacht Legal Service for senior career court martial officials, and the Administration Service for senior and advanced career district administration officials and senior career paymaster officials.

European volunteers
Western and northern European volunteers in the German army were not deployed on the Western Front, so as to avoid execution as traitors if captured by their compatriots. Thus the Spanish 'Blue Division', Belgian Wallon 57th Infantry Battalion and French 638th Reinforced Grenadier Regiment served only on the Eastern Front. Belgians Flemish, Danes, Dutch, Norwegians, Swedish, Swiss and later Spanish volunteers

GFM Günther von Kluge (left) photographed on the Normandy front in July 1944 during his three-week tenure as Oberbefehlshaber West. The field-grey leather greatcoat was popular with high-ranking officers, but production was discontinued from 26 February 1944 in order to save strategic materials. The leather was unriveted. The Generalmajor accompanying him wears a rubberised greatcoat. (COPA)
served in the Waffen-SS on the Eastern Front, joined on 1 June 1943 by the Waffen-SS and on 1 September 1944 by the French.

On 15 September 1945 Miroslav established the Italian Social Republic (RSI) in northern and central Italy, and the RSI armed forces continued to fight on the Italian Front as German allies in Italian uniforms. They were joined in August 1945 by the 2nd Infantry (later 2nd Territorial) Division of the Slovak Army, in Mosaz uniform; and on 8 May 1944 by 11 Infantry battalions of the Czech Government Army (Vládou cizích) in Czech uniform. Some Italian volunteers joined the Waffen-SS and others were employed by the German army in divisional service units.

The Osttruppen

The German army on the Eastern Front had been accepting volunteers from Russia and Soviet ethnic minorities as "Auxiliaries" (Hitlerjugend, or "Youth") in combat divisions since August 1941, and the success of this recruitment led to the raising of three types of independent units. Cowork cavalry squadrons and later mounted battalions, mounted regiments, infantry battalions and infantry regiments were formed from October 1941. From 8 February 1942 Estonian, Azeri, Georgian, North Caucasian, Terekistan and Volga-Tatar infantry battalions were formed into six Eastern Legions (Onregiment). On 1 October 1942 Estonian, Russian, Belorussian and Ukrainian units were designated Eastern Battalions (Ostbataillon); and in January 1943 Russian, Belorussian and Ukrainians units were united as the Russian Liberation Army (Russkaya Oboronytsa Rossii - ROA) under ex-Soviet Maj.Gen Andrey Vlasov.

On 14 November 1941 the ROA was officially redesignated the Armed Forces of the Committee for the Liberation of the Russian Peoples (Komitet Oborony Rossii - KOR), although the term ROA was commonly used until May 1945. All these units were attached to German divisions as combat or support units.

By July 1943 the German army was in insurmountable retreat towards the Baltic region and into Belarus and Ukraine, and much of the home territory of the volunteers was being recaptured by Soviet forces. In order to avoid the dangers of mutiny and desertion, from October 1943 67 battalions were transferred to Western Europe to expand under-strength occupation divisions on the Atlantic Wall and 24 to the Italian Front. They were usually deployed as 1st Battalions of German infantry regiments. Two battalions (643rd Eastern, 823rd Georgian) even served on the Channel Islands with 319th Infantry Division. On 1 February 1944 the Volunteers Depot Division (Freiwilligen-Staffel Division) was formed in northern-eastern France with 1st-5th Regiments to gain unit replacements.

There was a wide variance in morale amongst these battalions, transferred far from familiar territory and required to fight Western Allied forces instead of the Red Army, as the Germans had promised them. Allied troops were amazed to

Two well-constructed Panzergranatwerfer 39/44 Panzergranatwerfer 39/44 and mortars were in use for Allied armour in a Normandy hedge-row, July 1944, armed with the initial H 75 mm Panzergranatwerfer. This 80mm anti-tank rocket launcher, an improved copy of the US bazooka, projected hollow charge armour-piercing rockets out to 150 yards. The projectile's rocket motor continued to burn for about 80 feet as it hit the target – thus the need for the operator's shield with a sighting port. His mate carries a box of M50A1 432 or 40mm projectiles.

(Friedrich Hermoni)
An intriguing scene in eastern Normandy, August 1944: three infantrymen from an ex-Luftwaffe field division move a knocked-out British Sherman tank carrying full jerkins. All wore the M1942 second pattern thigh-length Luftwaffe splinter-pattern overjacket so characteristic of the Luftwaffe field units; they also retain the M1935 Luftwaffe other ranks’ belt. Other photos show field division infantry wearing Luftwaffe second pattern camouflage-patterned paratroop jump-smocks. (Friedrich Normandia)

find Russian troops advancing forces. The Eastern Battalions were the most effective, with 29 battalions serving with the 23rd Army Group B. In the Normandy campaign, 18 battalions, and 11 with Army Group N, in southern France. Five Cossack infantry and three cavalry battalions fought with Army Group B, losing one infantry battalion.

The Eastern Legions, recruited to liberate Ukraine and Central Asia, bunched on the eastern flanks of the German forces, proved more problematic: 18 battalions fought in Normandy and seven in southern France. In July 1944 part of the 139th Georgian Battalion deserted to Allied lines, and the 137th Volga-Caucassian Battalion remained; and on 3 April 1944 the 805th North Caucasian and 822nd Georgian Battalions, stationed on Texel Island off the Dutch coast, declared for the Allies and joined the island against German counterattacks before surrendering to the Germans on 17 April.

The 162nd Infantry Division, posted in occupied Poland to provide units for the Eastern Legions, was mobilized with five Azov and six Cossack infantry and artillery battalions and German support units and services; the division was transferred to northern Italy in October 1943. One Azov, three Georgian and two Cossack Battalions were allocated to other divisions in Italy on anti-parasite duties behind the front. No Cossack units fought in Italy, but from September 1944 to April 1945 Cossack families were billeted in Germany, later Toulouse, in the northwest of that country.

**CAMPAIGN SUMMARY 1943-45**

**Normandy Landings 1944**

France, Belgium, and the Netherlands were garrisoned in June 1944 by Western High Command, controlling Army Group B (Heeresgruppe B) covering northern France, Belgium and the Netherlands, and Reinforced Army Group G (Armeegruppe G) in southern France, Army Group B, commanded by GFM Erwin Rommel, the celebrated commander of German-Italian forces in North Africa, had two armies and the Netherlands garrison. 75th Army had 12 divisions (77, 105, 286, 506, 275, 543, 329, 796, 716 Infantry: 2 Luftwaffe Airborne, 21 Panzer) in Britain and western Normandy, and 319 Infantry Division on the Channel Islands. Further east the 13th Army garrisoned eastern Normandy, the Pas-de-Calais region and
Belgium with 18 divisions (471, 485, 243, 326, 331, 344, 346, 358, 711-12 Infantry, 103, 102 Reserve, 17-19 Luftwaffe Riffel), while the Netherlands were defended by four divisions (347, 719 Infantry, 16 Luftwaffe Riffel, 10 Panzer). Panzer Group West, on 5 August 1944 redesignated 5th Panzer Army, constituted von Rundstedt's strategic reserve near Paris, with nine divisions (271-2, 279-7 Infantry, 2, 116 Panzer, Panzer-Lehr, 1, 12 SS Panzer). D-Day began just after midnight on Tuesday 6 June 1944, as the Allied 21 Army Group, with eight divisions (three airborne and five infantry), three armoured brigades, and total air superiority, landed in western Normandy, which was defended by three static infantry divisions (302, 709, 716) of 1st Corps, German 7th Army. Hitler's poor strategic instinct left his forces unprepared and his caution prevented a quick reaction to mobile deployment, thus only 21 Panzer Division counter-attacked decisively near Caen. With daytime movement virtually excluded by Allied airpower, the deployment by late June of seven first-line mobile divisions (from 21 Army Group West and Army Group G (2 Panzer, Panzer-Lehr, 1, 9, 10, 12 SS Panzer; 17 SS Panzer Grenadier) was too late to destroy the Allied bridgehead. By early July this had been reinforced to total 28 American, British, and Canadian divisions (three airborne, 19 infantry, six armoured and five armoured brigades).

Northern France, Belgium and the Netherlands 1944-45

On 17 July Rommel was seriously wounded by a strafing RAF fighter, and von Kluge served as Army Group B commander until his arrest, and replacement by Model, on 17 August. The Allied bridgehead expanded slowly against determined German counterattacks, but the eventual British capture of Caen on 10 July meant that the habitations were now secure. On 25 July the Allies broke out of the bridgehead, and by 7 August German 7th Army had lost Brittany. 1st Army was briefly assigned to Army Group B but was unable to stem the Allied advance and on 29 August the 7th Army and 5th Panzer Army, which had extricated themselves only at huge cost from encirclement in the Falaise Pocket, crossed the Seine. Paris was abandoned on the 23rd.

On 25 August 1944 the Allies attacked across the Seine, Western Command and Army Group L (7th, 15th Army; 5th Panzer Army) retreated rapidly eastwards under heavy Allied air attack, executing northern France by 6 September – but denying valuable Channel ports to the Allies with isolated 'fortress' garrisons, some of which held out until May 1945. British progress through Belgium was even...
Genes in the Nucleus of a Human Cell

Southern France 1944-45

Southern France was garrisoned by Reinforced Army G under GenObst Konrad Blaskowski, commanding 1st Army in southwestern France with three understrength static coastal defense divisions (70% Infantry; 13th Reserve), with 11 Panzer Division in strategic reserve; and 16th Army in southern and central France with seven static divisions (242, 244, 338, 716 Infantry; 14th, 15th, 189 Infantry Division, with 9 Panzer Division in reserve.

At 0800 hours on 15 August 1944 the US 7th Army with eight US and French divisions (six infantry, one armoured, one airborne) landed in
south-eastern France in Operation Anvil. Reinforced Army G (on 12 September redesignated Army Group G), organized and outmanoeuvred, retreated rapidly. 19th Army abandoned Marseille and Provence on 25 August, Lyons on 3 September and Dijon on 10 September, forcing the outflanked 1st Army to evacuate south-western France without a battle and retreat north-eastwards. When the Allies halted their offensive on 15 September 1944, Army Group G still held the Vosges mountains in Lorraine. On 21 September Gen der Pz Tr Hermann Balck replaced Blanken, who was reinstated on 24 December, in which time 1st Army had retreated into south-western Germany (13 December). Here in January 1945 is absorbed Upper Rhine Army Group (Heeresgruppe Oberrhein), formed in November 1944 from local defence and Replacement Army units. 19th Army stubbornly defended the Colmar pocket, the last German occupied part of France, until 9 February 1945. Free French units were prominent among the Allied attackers.

Western Germany and the Netherlands 1945

Throughout January 1945 Western Command on the Dutch-Belgian and western German borders resisted local Allied attacks, but on 8 February three Allied army groups (6, 12, 21) launched a general offensive into western Germany. By 21 March 1945 the Allies had forced Army Group B (7th, 17th Army; 5th Panzer, 6th SS-Panzer Army) and most of Army Group G (16, 19th Army) — commanded from 29 January 1945 by Walter SS General Paul Hausser — across the Rhine, capturing the Reichswald forest on the Dutch border after heavy fighting, Cologne on 5 March, and establishing a Rhine bridgehead at Remagen on 7 March.

The depleted Army Group H, later North-Western Command, garrisoned the Netherlands with 12 divisions in 1st Airborne Army (84, 180, 190 Infantry; 406 abV: 15 Panzergrenadier; 116 Panzer; 68 Luftwaffe Airborne; 106 Panzer Brigade), and 258 Army, formed on 10 November 1944 (351, 366 Infantry; 2 Luftwaffe Airborne). Steady Allied pressure from 2 April forced North-West Command — joined on 9 April by German Replacement Army units organized as Arme Blutscheit — to retreat into northwest Germany on 13 April 1945, abandoning Bremen on 25 April and Hamburg on 3 May before surrendering on 5 May. On 8 May the German garrison in Denmark, with 281 and 308 District Commands, and 29 Mountain Army in Norway with 11 divisions and nine brigades, also surrendered.

Army Group B defended the central front of Western Germany with 27 divisions.

5th Pioneer Army — now without significant armour — (83, 89 Infantry; 18, 20, 227, 277 Volksgrenadier; 3, 8 Luftwaffe Airborne) 15th Army (59, 176, 338, 339 Infantry; 12, 183, 363 Volksgrenadier; 476 abV: 5 Panzerbrigade; 9, 11 Panzer, Panzer Lehr)

On 22-23 March 1945 the Allies attacked across the Rhine, and by 2 April had trapped Army Group B in the Ruhr Pocket, which surrendered on 16 April. GFM Model having committed suicide.

Army Group G, commanded from 2 April by Gen der Inf. Friedrich Schulz, defended south-west Germany with 37 divisions:

1st Army (416, 719, Rüsser Infantry; 16, 19, 36, 47, 256-7, 347, 359 Volksgrenadier; 52th Reserve: 905 z.B., 2 Mountain; 17 SS-Panzergrenadier; 6 SS-Mountain)

7th Army (9, 70, 167, 212, 246, 276, 340, 345, 352, 560 Volksgrenadier; 2 Panzer)

18th Army (108, 189, 198, 716 Infantry; 550 Volksgrenadier; 16, 47, 257 Volksgrenadier; 303, 805 z.B.; 1905 Infantry Brigade) — also included the 24th Army Staff formed in November 1944.

On 22 March the Allies attacked across the Rhine, taking Karlsruhe on 4 April, Stuttgart and Nuremberg on 20 April and Munich on 30 April, and reaching Salzburg in Austria on 4 May. Army Group G surrendered on 5 May.

**Sicily and Southern Italy 1943**

On 10 July 1943 British and US forces landed in southeastern Sicily, defeated by Italian 6th Army (four infantry, one motorized, six coastal divisions), and the German 14 Panzer Corps with three divisions (15, 29 Panzer; German-Georg Luftwaffe Panzer) in northern Sicily. German forces led a determined Axis defence of the island, and on 17 August retreated largely intact to Calabria in southern Italy.

The approaching loss of Sicily shocked the Italian government, which on 25 July arrested Mussolini and appointed Marshal Pietro Badoglio as prime minister. Hitler, correctly suspecting a coming Italian surrender and the prospect of Allied forces rushing to the southern African border, formed the highly mobile 15th Army on 15 August 1943 around the divisions in Calabria. 108 Army, reporting to Luftwaffe Southern Command in Rome, had ten divisions in 56 Corps (45, 29 Panzer; 16, 26 Panzer; 1 Luftwaffe Airborne) in Calabria, and three divisions (3, 90 Panzer; 2 Luftwaffe Airborne plus 16 SS-Arme Brigade Reichsführer SS) — later under 14 Panzer Corps — in reserve in central Italy.

On 3 September 1943 the Allies landed in Califronia and on 9 September at Taranto in Apulia, as 10th Army conducted a lightning raid northwards. Italy's surrender was announced on the 8th, prompting
Troops of a Volksgrenadier division defeated Aschon, October 1944. The soldier being congratulated on just having been awarded the Iron Cross 2nd Class wears a M1935 helmet still bearing the Wehrmacht eagle decal, adorned discontinuously from 22 August 1943. He has an enraging toy — perhaps intended as a hand-to-hand weapon? — thrust into the front of his M1940 field greatcoat, which has no shoulder straps. Contrast the M1924 classic napsack in top left with that carried by the soldier at right, who wears the M1942 motorcyclist’s rubberised overcoat – the latter’s grenade has the M1942 tattooed camouflage sleeves. (Friedrich Hermann)

Hitler issued GFM Erwin Rommel’s Army Group B (51, 57 Corps, 2 SS-Panzer Corps) to occupy northern Italy. Meanwhile Allied forces landed at Salerno on 9 September, but 10th Army attacked the bridgehead energetically until 18 September. Resuming its skilful retreat, 10th Army evacuated Potenza on 29 September, Foggia on 27 September and Naples on 1 October, halting on 8 October on the Capua-Termini ‘Viktor Line’.

**Central and Northern Italy 1943-45**

On 28 November 1945 Army Group C was formed under GFM Kienel with 18 divisions, deployed under ‘The Army in central Italy’ (44, 45, 54, 55 Infantry; 15, 29, 90 Panzer grenadiers; 5 Mountain; 26 Panzer; 1 Luftwaffe Airborne; Hermann Göring Panzer; and 17th Army, formed 18 November 1943, in the north (71, 162, 278, 354, 396, 392 Infantry; 188 Reserve Mountain). 10th Army defended the narrow Italian front with great skill and resourcefulness, excusing a high price for ground lost, before halting on 27 December 1943 on the ‘Gustav’ or ‘Hitler Line’ on the Sangro and Garigliano rivers through the Monte Cassino strongpoint. On 18 January 1944 the Allies assaulted the Gustav Line, and on 22 January landed at Anzio andNetunno: but 10th Army held the Gustav Line until 13 May 1944, and 14th Army confirmed the Anzio beachhead until 23 May. Evacuating Rome on 1 June and retreating rather faster northwards, the Wehrmacht gave up Florence on 4 August and halted on the ‘Gothic Line’ on 19 August. Meanwhile on 17 March 1944 the Yoo Zangyo Reinforced Corps (Armeetruppenführung Yoo Zangyo) was formed in northern Italy, expelling on 1 July 1944 to form Legione Army with two RSI divisions and six German (54 Infantry; 198; 157 Reserve; 42, 54, 5 Mountain). On 25 August 1944 the Allies broke through the Gothic Line, taking Rimini on 21 September, but further advances were slow against determined opposition by Army Group C, which had halted south of Bologna on 29 December 1944. On 10 March 1945 GenOst Heinrich von Vietinghoff, the distinguished 10th Army commander, took over Army Group C on ‘cessation of hostilities’. The final Allied offensive was launched on 1 April 1945; the Germans were soon in headlong retreat towards Austria, abandoning Bologna on 2 April and Genova on 27 April. German forces in Italy surrendered on 2 May 1945, allowing the Allies to advance to southern Austria by Vi Dic.

**ARMY UNIFORM**

**Officers’ service uniform**

This consisted of the M1935 officer’s ‘saddle-shaped’ peaked cap, M1935 officer’s field tunic with ribbons, M1935/M1940 officer’s field greatcoat, M1935 officer’s brown leather belt, officer’s breeches and officer’s black leather high boots, grey suede gloves, postal and holster. The cloth was a superior quality greenish-grey traditionally called ‘Feldgrau’. 

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from 1941 painted field-grey, a blackened polishing and grey suede gloves were also worn. Many junior NCOs and men wore the field cap instead, and a scarabated havestrel on the belt. The peaked M1945 universal field cap, which officially replaced the M1934/1942 from June 1934 and was by 1944 the most common Army headgear, was essentially the M1942 cap with a deep peak. The M1942 field tunic omitted the previous pocket flaps, and the M1945 tunic had straight pocket flaps. Some NCOs had the collars sharpened, the skirt shortened in officer style, and the bellows side-pockets sewn up for a more elegant appearance. The M1943 belt trousers incorporated a reinforced seat and tapered legs for ankles. The other ranks' field greatcoat had other ranks' quality cloth and insignia, with a wider collar for better protection against the cold on the M1942 model. These items, and the walking-out uniform for all ranks are described in more detail in MAA 330, The German Army 1939-45 (4).

**Officers' field uniform**

In the field all officers (except platoon leaders—by 1944 only NCOs and the youngest second lieutenants were commanding platoons) wore the M1935 officer's field tunic with officer's belt and polished pistol; M1935/M1942 steel helmet, officer's M1938 or M1943 field cap and officer's breeches with riding boots. On 31 October 1939 all officers below general rank in combat units were ordered to wear the other ranks' field tunic, black belt, trousers and marching boots, in order not to be too conspicuous to the enemy; but most officers either totally or partially ignored the order. Many purchased and altered an other ranks' tunic, adding officers' features (field-grey). These items are described in detail in MAA 330, The German Army 1939-45 (4).
such as a shortened skirt, roll-back cuffs, pocket pleats, bloody dark green collars, and officer’s insignia. The tunic could be worn with the collar unbuttoned when in the field with troops. The other ranks’ black belt could no longer be worn by officers after 25 July 1943 and a blackened officer’s M1934 belt was prescribed instead, but from 50 October 1943 the M1934 brown belt was reinstated.

On 25 September 1944 the M1944 field uniform was introduced for all ranks of the Arms, Navy shore units, Luftwaffe and Waffen-SS. The waist-length field jacket or blouse, of inferior quality cloth in a brown/grey feldgrau 44 shade, had six front buttons and two plain breast pockets. It was apparently popular for its resemblance to the British battledress blouse and US ‘Eisenhower jacket’, which were felt to look more modern than the old tunic; some officers imitated these garments further by having fly fronts sewn in. The M1944 trousers, also in feldgrau 44, had an integral belt and side fastenings. From 15 December 1944 tailored M1944 jackets could be worn with the collar open over a black tie and a shirt – greenish-grey, green, greenish-brown, beige or white were all seen. Other ranks’ M1944 field-grey ‘guards’ braids were sewn directly onto the collar, as were officer’s M1935 collar patches. Officers were prescribed the standard M1944 moose-grey woven breast- and stomach on a field-grey woven triangle, but most substituted the officer’s M1935 pattern in aluminium thread on dark green backing, or the M1944 aluminium woven eagle on a dark green triangle. General officers preferred a dress quality M1935 gold thread or M1938 cellulose eagle.

The M1935 and M1942 steel helmets were painted matt greenish-grey and initially bore a silver-white Wehrmacht eagle decal on the left side, abolished 28 August 1943. The peakless M1938 officer’s field cap had aluminium thread pipings, and an aluminium wire embroidered cockade below an aluminium thread eagle on a bluish dark green backing (gold thread or cellulose for general officers). Officers also wore the M1935 peaked field cap with aluminium (gold for general officers) contrast piping and occasionally the other ranks’ eagle and cockade. The obsolete M1934 ‘old style’ officer’s peaked field cap with flat machine-woven insignia (called the ‘crusher cap’ by today’s collectors) was worn by many individuals until May 1943. Some officers also unofficially wore the other ranks’ M1942 field cap with officers’ aluminium or gold piping added.

Subalterns acting as infantry platoon leaders wore the other ranks’ black belt supporting the 84/98 bayonet and scabbard, M1939 bayonet frog, M1938 folding shovel, M1944 or 1944 bread bag, M1931 canteen and cup and the M1933 dispatch case. The M1928 ‘officers’ support
Obstetricant of anti-tank troops captured at Deventer, Holland, in April 1945 by Canadian 1st Arm. He wears the M1941 special field grey uniform, with the pink-piped black Passer collar patches indicating anti-tank battalions in Pariser and Pasenprender divisions and those under direct Army or Corps command; he probably commanded a company of self-propelled guns. His shoulder boards have pink yellow and show one gilt ‘strip’ of rank and the gilt ‘P’ for Panzerjager, but no battalion numbers, his other ranks’ M1943 field cap has standard insignia and no officer’s silver piping, but his breast eagle is the officer’s silver metal. Note the ribbons of the Eastern Front 1941/42 Medal and Iron Cross 2nd Class; the Iron Cross 1st Class; Royal Assault, Sofia, and silver Yound badge (three and four wounds) on the left breast; and the Rosas Shield on the left sleeve. (Boris Davis)

Straps secured two sets of triple M198/40 pouches for the M358/40 submachine-gun magazines. The anti-air cap in a pouch was usually tied to a M1090 gas mask carrier slung from a shoulder or strapped to the bread bag. Zeiss 6 x 30 binoculars, a signal whistle and a flashlight were also carried.

Other ranks’ field uniform

Other ranks wore the service uniform, with M1941 field-grey canvas anklets and black hessian ankle boots increasingly replacing the traditional marching boots, and a steel helmet. Some senior NCOs preferred the M1054 ‘old style’ peaked field cap to its replacements. The tunic could be worn with the collar unbuttoned by order of the company commander. Technical and senior NCOs carried a pistol in a black holster; NCOs acting as infantry platoon or section leaders wore a subaltern platoon leader’s equipment but with other ranks’ M1099 infantry support Ystraps. The other ranks’ M1944 field uniform had plain round-ended shoulder straps with branch-colour piping. M1949 field-grey ‘gusset braces’ were directly on the collar, no NCO collar edging broad, and the standard M1941 mono-grey breast eagle on a field-grey sewn triangle.

Other NCOs and men wore the standard rifleman’s equipment. The waist belt carried the M17/29 bayonet, M1929 folding saw, M1931 canteen bag and M1931 canteen and cup. The M1939 infantry support Ystraps and supplementary ‘Dring’ straps supported two sets of three M1931 ammunition pouches for the Karabiner 98k rifle on the belt front, and on the back the M1939 canvas A-frame for the M1931 mess kit, M1931 camouflage shelter-quarter, canvas battle pack bag, and the gas cape strapped to the gas mask carrier when not worn on the canvas shoulder strap. The equipment worn by the section light machine-gun team is described in MAA 311, The German Army, 1939-45.

Summer field uniform

Summer field uniforms were worn on the Western and East fronts in hot weather. Tropical uniforms were permitted in southern France and southern Italy, Sicily and Sardinia from summer 1943, after the surrender of North Africa on 12 May 1943 had made them superfluous outside Europe.

The reed-green cotton herringbone twill M1940 fatigue uniform was still occasionally encountered. The tunic, with two skirt pockets only, b/c, the breast eagle, and collar brass for senior NCOs, they, and officers, added their shoulder straps of rank. The M1941 reed-green pull-over-style cotton shirt was worn as an outer garment in warm weather. This had five white plastic button and two breast pockets; officers’ shoulder boards, other ranks’ piped M1940 field-grey shoulder straps, and arm chevrons on M1942 arm rank insignia were added as appropriate.
The most commonly encountered uniform was the M1942 summer tunic in real-green or light grey HBT. cut like the M1942 field tunic, with field-grey rank insignia and brown eagle. Officers wore M1935 collar patches, NCOs and men M1940 field-grey 'guards braids'. Matching trousers appeared in 1943. A real-green drill M1941 field blouse and trousers were authorised but almost certainly never produced.

The light olive tropical uniform is described and illustrated in more detail in MAA 316, The German Army 1939-45 (2). It consisted of the distinctive M1941 Afrikakorps peaked field cap; M1940 or M1942 field tunic; M1940 shirt and tie; M1940 breeches or trousers; M1940 shorts and knee socks; high lace-up boots or ankle-boots; and brown field greatcoat, worn with the M1940 camo tropical belt and webbing.

The Luftwaffe tropical uniform, introduced 25 April 1941, in light trubrown cloth, was worn by Luftwaffe divisions transferred to the Army and by individual soldiers. Individuals also acquired Italian and Wehrmacht tropical items, and often wore them mixed with real-green Armeenorm Summer clothing.

Winter clothing

Standard winter uniform items included the wooden/brown woollen outerwear; winter woollen mittens, reality double-breasted guard coat and felt over-shoes; the vehicles' winter; and the drivers' and motorcycle's over-gloves. Other issue winter clothing included sheepskin overcoats, a plain brown quilted jacket and trousers worn over the field uniform and under the greatcoat, and leather-reinforced felt- or leather boots.

Winter uniforms developed for the Eastern Front were mainly worn on the Western Front during the Ardennes offensive from December 1944 to January 1945 and in the Italian Apennines in winter 1944/45. The M1942 padded reversible white/grey winter tunic was issued in lightweight, medium weight and heavyweight versions, with waist and sleeve draccords, six buttons, two slash pocket and an integral hood. Reversible trousers had two thigh pockets, a stretch snap and ankle draccords. A reversible separate hood was issued with this uniform, but was unpopular. Reversible woolen and leather-reinforced white felt snow boots were also worn. Production of this uniform probably ended in late 1944 due to the chronic raw materials shortage.

Other winter items were the seven-button M1942 one-piece snow overalls, the four-button M1942 snow coat, the M1942 two-piece snow suit, and the M1942 mountain troops' snow suit uniform – a reversible wool and crepe-suit, issued to all combat troops. For further details see MAA 319, The German Army 1939-45.
Camouflage uniforms

The M1931 triangular shovel-quarter (Zeltbahn 31), in tightly woven cotton drill, was used as a summer camouflage cape under or over field equipment. It was reversible, between light and dark shades of the first pattern angular ‘splitter’ camouflage scheme in green, brown and khaki.

The M1942 smock, a collarless cotton drill garment in Zeltbahn 31 camouflage reversible to white, saw limited issue, and was worn over the field uniform. It was closed at the chest by a cord passing through five sets of holes; two breast flaps gave access to the tunic beneath. It had a Waase drapecock, often two side pockets, and buttoned cuffs. M1942 arm insignia was prescribed but usually omitted. Over-vests and the same material, and helmet covers, were also worn. The first M1942 pattern cover had Zeltbahn 31 reversible to white; the second pattern had added foliage loops, both attached by a drawstring under the helmet rim.

A total number of M1942 padded reversible winter tunics, trousers and mittens were produced in Zeltbahn 31/white from April 1945. A non-reversible winter tunic was also produced in both Zeltbahn 31 and ‘mash pattern’ versions—the latter a softer-edged pattern of brown and green on khaki or greenish-grey background. The M1944 camouflage apron was a deuceless smock closed by a buttoned chest flap, in Zeltbahn 31 or mash pattern herringbone twill.

Later production smocks and winter tunics were made in second pattern M1943 splitter camouflage, in mash pattern, and in a third pattern M1944 rounded ‘blob’ version. The M1943 mash pattern camouflage smock was issued to snipers and Panzer Grenadier units.

Personnel of the Luftwaffe field divisions who had transferred to the Army often retained their M1932 thigh-length overpants in Luftwaffe splitter camouflage or mash pattern herringbone twill. M1943 field tunics and M1940 trousers, M1944 field blouses and trousers, and M1946 special tunics and trousers for armoured crews were often precisely tailored in Zeltbahn 31 or mash pattern herringbone twill.

Troops on the Italian Front often wore Italian Army M1929 shelter quarters, or M1942 three-quarter length parachutist smocks. M1942 helmet covers, and Sahariana-style tunics and long trousers made up in standard Italian Army camouflage; this was a roundered ‘clown’ pattern in brown, light forest green and ochre. It was also used to manufacture versions of the camouflage items described above, particularly the M1945 field tunic. Waffen-SS camouflage items were also individually acquired; and Luftwaffe troops of the Hermann Goering Division were issued with Waffen-SS camouflage smocks and helmet covers from summer 1942.

Rank insignia

Officers’ shoulder boards, NCOs’ shoulder straps and men’s arm
chevrons are described and illustrated in detail in MAA 341. *The German Army 1939-45* [1].

General officers’ shoulder boards displayed dress-quality plated cords on a bright red underlay. The design incorporated two gold button or ‘cheek’ initiation gold cords and one bright aluminium cord. After 25 April 1944 only generals of combat branches were supposed to wear bright red underlays. The rank of Generalfeldmarschall was marked by silver crossed marshal’s batons (and from 3 April 1941, all gold cords); the Generaloberst, General, Generalleutnant and Generalmajor wore respectively three, two, one and no silver four-point stars or ‘pips’. Generals of specialist branches and elite formations wore appropriate additional shoulder board insignia.

Field officers’ shoulder boards had double-plated aluminium cords on a branch-colour underlay; Oberst, Oberleutnant and Major were differentiated by wearing respectively two, one and no gold pips. The Parade ranks of Hauptmann, Oberleutnant and Leutnant wore doubled flat parallel cords, again differentiated by two, one or no gold pips. All officer ranks of specialist branches and elite units wore the appropriate additional insignia in gold. Shoulder boards of field and company ranks were manufactured during wartime in a less conspicuous dull silver-grey cord (sometimes referred to by collectors as ‘oxidised silver’).

The senior NCO ranks (from Statthalter down to Feldwebel) wore dark green or field-grey shoulder straps piped in branch colour and edged with M1935 bright aluminium or M1940 moon-grey (official silk or cellulose-thre thread) to these were applied respectively three, two or one pips, plus appropriate insignia of branch and/or unit, in aluminium. The Hauptfeldwebel (company sergeant-major) wore two brass cuff rings. Junior NCOs (Unterfeldwebel and Unteroffizier) wore the same shoulder strap without pips, the lower without brass across the base, with branch and/or unit insignia in branch-colour chain-stitch. It is reported Hauptfeldwebeldidienst (acting company sergeant-major – a wartime appointment necessitated by the increasing lack of qualified NCOs) they also wore the two brass cuff rings.

The enlisted men wore plain shoulder straps edged with branch colour piping. Rank was indicated by branch chevrons (or aluminium
pipes) on a bluish-dark green or field-grey triangular (or round) backing patch on the left sleeve. From 25 April 1942 an Oberstleutnant of two years' seniority not suitable for junior NOO rank could be promoted to Oberstleutnant, and many, though not all soldiers ranking as Oberstleutnant not make this step. Promotions were widely unpopular.

**Branch insignia**

A selection of branch insignia is shown in the Table on page 40. For security reasons troops of the Army were ordered on 1 September 1939 to conceal or remove their shoulder boards or shoulder strap, branch letters and unit numerals when outside Germany. Replacement Army personnel, and Army troops on leave or assigned to duties in Germany, could continue to wear these insignia openly. During the war elite units such as the Großdeutschland divisions were permitted their pipped GD monogram shoulder strap insignia in the field. By 1944 the OKH recognised that the improved morale – and quick identification of detractors by military police – which the open wearing of unit insignia permitted, now outweighed the risk of compromised field security. From 16 February 1944 all Army and Replacement Army officers were ordered to fix gold-colored aluminium branch and unit insignia to their shoulder boards, and senior NOOs bright or matt aluminium insignia to their shoulder straps.

Junior NOOs and men were issued field-grey (or Panzer black) slip-on shoulder loops with insignia in branch-colour artificial silk chain-stitch. Although intended for wearing in the middle of the straps they were often worn at the base. An order of 24 May 1944 prescribed shoulder loop insignia in light grey chain-stitch if the correct branch colour was unavailable. The deteriorating supply situation meant that shoulder loops were not manufactured for, or supplied to, all units, especially for newly formed ones with high 'house-numbers', so in practice the reintroduction of shoulder branch and unit insignia was mainly limited to officers and senior NOOs (many of whom had in fact been wearing them before February 1944).

**Special black uniform and insignia for tank crews**

Most personnel in Panzer formations, regiments and brigades, Panzer
NOTRE DAME & NORTHERN FRANCE, 1944
1. Grenadier, Grenadier-Regiment 944, Omaha Beach, Normandy, 6 June 1944
2. Gebirgsjäger, Panzergrenadier-Lehr-Regiment 961, Bannion, August 1944
3. Oberaufseher, Armament Rocket Launcher Battery, Normandy, June 1944.
NORMANDY & NORTHERN FRANCE: 1944
1: Hauptmann, Festungs-Grenadier-Regiment 897; Caen, July 1944
2: Leutnant, Heeres-Feldartillerie-Abteilung 281; Falaise Pocket, August 1944
3: Panzergrenadier, Panzergrenadier-Regiment 152; Lille, September 1944
SOUTHERN FRANCE, 1944

1: Legionar, Armeemachtes Feld-Bataillon 1/190; Toulon, August 1944
2: Generalkorps, 11. Panzer-Division; Abau, September 1944
3: Luftwaffenflebe, Panzer-Abteilung 2113; Lorraine, September 1944
BELGIUM AND NETHERLANDS, 1944

2. Funksprechfibel, Feldgendarmendienst-Trepp (Mat.-139), Dutch-Belgian border, September 1944.
1. Unteroffizier, Flanken-Regiment 39, Dezember 1944
2. Obersturmführer, Panzer-Regiment 20, Dezember 1944
3. Panzerwaffe-Grenadier, I. Panzergrenadier-Rot. 1945
1. Oberkommando, Panzergrenadier-Bataillon 2196, Cologne, March 1945
2. Gehirn, Grenadier-Regiment 40, Ruhr Pocket, April 1945
3. Panzergrenadier, Panzergrenadier-Regiment 106, Reichswald Forest, February 1945
SICILY AND SOUTHERN ITALY, 1943

1. Wehrmacht Oberleutnant, 26.Panzer Division, Salerno, November 1943
2. Panzergrenadier, Panzergrenadier-Regiment 59, Salerno, September 1943
3. Unteroffizier, Panzergrenadier-Regiment 115, Sicily, July 1943
CENTRAL AND NORTHERN FRONTS 1944-45

1. Obergefreiter, Jäger-Regiment 25; Gothic Line, September 1944
2. Unteroffizier, Birkenfelder-Regiment Hoch- und Deutschmeister; Gusta Line, February 1944
3. Stabsfeldwebel; Panzer-Aufklärungs-Abteilung 26; Near Po, April 1945
and Panzer grenadier divisional anti-tank battalions and many on Panzer divisional staffs wore the M1941 black field cap, M1938 or M1942 field jacket and trousers, with grey shirt, black tie and black lace-up shoes, or marching boots for Armoured Engineer companies. Against regulations some general officers in Panzer division wore the special black uniform with the Abt Lurah collar patches, sometimes even omitting red trouser piping and stripes.

A black wool version of the M1942 other ranks' field cap saw limited issue. All sidecaps were superseded from 11 June 1943 by the black wool version of the M1945 peaked field cap, but the peak got in the way when using the optical equipment inside the armoured fighting vehicle; those who had them often preferred to keep the old sidecaps, and this was widely tolerated. Against regulations many officers and senior NCOs also preferred the field grey officer's M1935 peaked service cap, M1934 'old style' peaked field cap, or the other ranks' M1935 peaked service cap.

Armoured vehicle crews and mechanics and Armoured Artillery and Rocket-Launcher crews were issued cotton one-piece uniforms in mossy-grey, field grey, off-white, light brown or reed-green. Panzer crews sometimes dyed these black, and some crews on the Italian Front had them privately manufactured in Italian camouflage pattern. Crews of armoured car companies wore the M1941 Panzer denim uniform in reed-green herringbone twill or in white or mossy-grey cotton as a fatigue and summer field uniform.

The M1942 Panzer denim uniform in reed-green or light grey HBT was issued for all armoured vehicle crews, including Assault Artillery crews and mechanics. It comprised a loose-fitting jacket with a large left breast pocket with buttoned scalloped flap, with two parallel rows of five concealed buttons on the right side; these allowed adjustment so that it could be worn over the black or field-grey uniform in cold weather, or alone in hot weather. The trousers had a large left thigh pocket. This uniform was also privately acquired in splinter, marl and Italian M1939 forest-pattern camouflage material.

See MAA 330, The German Army 1939-45 (4) for more detailed descriptions of these uniforms and their insignia worn on them.

Special field-grey uniform and insignia

Eleven categories of troops serving on the Western and Italian Fronts in armoured vehicles but not wearing the black Panzer uniform were issued the special field-grey uniform. These were Assault Artillery; Armoured Artillery with Wege und Hummel self-propelled guns; army motorised Anti-Aircraft battalions; Armoured Engineers; Armoured Trains; Anti-Tank and Infantry Gun companies on half-tracks in infantry and Panzer-grenadier units; Panzer grenadier battalions on half-tracks; Armoured Rocket-launcher batteries; towed and self-propelled Anti-Tank units in infantry, rifle or mountain divisions or Arun or Corps

This fibreboard commanding a Panzer regiment in Italy, 1944, wears the olive M1940 tropical field cap; the eagle insignia is woven in light bluish-grey on rust-brown, and a chevron of pink Wolfscreuze (officially discontinued from 8 September 1942) endorses the national cockade, also on a rust-brown patch. The olive M1940 tropical tunic bears the all-ranks collar patches and breast eagle, in light bluish-grey on rust-brown. On the lower lapel he has added the aluminium skulls from the earlier Panzergrenadiers of his special black uniform—a practice first seen in North Africa. The M1940 light olive tie is woven with a non-regimental popp, set to this distinction by the Iron Cross 1st Class and Gunnery Cross in Gold, a Wound Badge and an unidentified foreign cross. (Brown Davis)
HQ units. Armoured units under Army of Corps HQ command equipped with the Elefant self-propelled gun and Signals (not Armoured Signals) personnel in armoured vehicles. General officers sometimes wore this uniform with all-Leibstandarte collar patches and breeches.

This uniform consisted of the field-grey M1940 version of the black Panzer field uniform - field jacket, trousers, grey shirt, black tie and black leather lace-up boots. Officers wore the M1930 peaked or M1943 peaked field cap. Other ranks wore the M1939 or M1942 peaked or M1943 peaked field cap.

On the jacket officers were standard M1939 collar patches, NCOs and men M1940 mousquetry standard 'guard's braids' on a field-grey backing sewn onto the rectangular collar patches, piped in branch-colour: bright red for Assault and Armoured Artillery and arm Anti-Aircraft battalions; black for Armoured Engineers; pink for Armoured Trains; while for Anti-Tank and Infantry Gun companies in infantry units; green for Panzergruender battalions on half-tracks and Anti-Tank and Infantry Gun companies in Panzergruender units; and Bordeaux red (piping sometimes omitted) for Armoured Rocket/launchers.

All ranks of Anti-Tank units in infantry, rifle or mountain divisions or Army or HQ units wore the pink-piped field-grey rectangular collar patches with skulls; Signals, lemon yellow-piped field-grey patches with skulls, and self-propelled Anti-Tank units in Panzer and Panzergruender divisions or Elefant-equipped, were of Corps HQ units, pink-piped black patches with skulls as for Panzer regiments. Photos from mid-1941 onwards also show many examples of these patches worn with the skulls removed, and an order to this effect was published (or repeated) in January 1943. It was equally often disregarded.

Tropen also wore the reed-green fatigue and summer field uniform with appropriate branch insignia.

**Special insignia for other branches**

The elite divisions continued to develop distinctive insignia. From 31 December 1943 personnel (including general officers) of the divisional staff and Reichsgruender Regiment Reichsund-Deutschmeister of the 14th Infantry Division wore on their shoulder boards/straps a grey aluminium 'Stellring Cross' - the badge of the medieval Teutonic Order - with the campaign title commemorating the original division's destruction at Stellringen in January 1943. The cross was also worn as an unofficial unit cap badge. A cuff title, probably for the right cuff, was awarded the division on 26 February 1945 when it had transferred to Hungary. Since 5 June 1943 the Grenadier Regiment had already been allowed the unique distinction of carrying the regimental flag of the 4th Infantry Regiment. Reichsund-Deutschmeister of the former Austro-Hungarian Army, with a black impaled Habsburg eagle on a golden yellow ground.

The 101st Feldherrenhalle Panzer Brigade (1946 Panzer and Panzergruender units) wore the woven brown 'Feldherrenhalle' title on the left cuff and the bronze 5th victory runes' (Siegerabzeichen) shoulder board/strap monogram. During the Ardennes offensive the Flieder-Bergen Brigade wore the OD shoulder board/strap monogram and 'Großdeutschland' right cuff title; personnel assigned to guarding Hitler's
various headquarters added the "Führer, Headquarters" title in hand-embroidered gold wire or machine-embroidered yellow thread talar. A cuff wire, using gold wire, was hand-embroidered aluminium wire "Südland" script and edging on a black cloth band, or hand-embroidered aluminium wire "Südland" script and edging on a black cloth band. During that operation the Führer-Grenadier-Brigade wore the "Führer, Headquarters" cuff title and GD monogram. Hitler hoped that strong National Socialist political leadership would transform the understrength, under-equipped and poorly trained Volksgruppe divisions raised after July 1944 into elite units; on 9 October 1944 a distinctive badge, probably a monogram incorporating the letters V.G., was planned, but this was never manufactured.

From 1941 personnel of a number of units, usually in Panzer and Panzergrenadier divisions, wore unofficial cap badges on field headgear; these were usually aluminium reproductions of the divisional vehicle sign, worn on the left side just above the ear. The only division on the Western Front with such a badge was the 16th Panzer, who wore the 'Windfire' greyhound in an oval filled in with black. There were three on the Italian Front: 34th Infantry - white and blue shield; 36th Mountain - black; and 96th Panzergrenadier - word over Sardinia map. On the Italian Front many members of the 36th Mountain Division, which had helped capture Crici in May-June 1941, wore the cuff title "KRIEDA" and members of the 96th Panzergrenadier Division wore the "AFRIKA" title awarded on 15 January 1943 to Afrikakorps veterans. Individual soldiers reassigned to other units retained these titles until May 1943 and, if awarded another title, could wear one above the other on the same cuff.

On 29 August 1944 the staff and cadets of the VI Infantry Officer Candidate (Palatinejunior) School at Metz in German-occupied Lorraine, under Generalkommandant von Stülpnagel, joined the Kraut Battle-Group of Stawel Regiment, 402 Volksgrenadier Division, and held out from 27 August to 29 November 1944 against attacks by US forces. On 24 October 1944 a cuff title was awarded to members of the school who had fought in the battle, and cadets of the school, which was subsequently relocated to Messina, central Germany. To wear it whilst toasting at the school. The black cloth band bore the 16th 'Men 1944' in machine-embroidered silver-grey cotton Roman script and matching edging. Until 1 September 1945 reconnaissance battalions in infantry and mountain divisions wore the cavalry's golden-yellow branch cloth, but on that date they were remanufactured to the infantry as Field Battalion, wearing infantry white branch cloth. In order to preserve the traditional cavalry association 57 battalions throughout the army were on 25 February 1944 named 'Divisional Field Battalions (AA)', wearing golden-yellow and using cavalry ranks and unit designations. Only the 34th Field Battalion, originally part of 6th Cavalry Regiment, wore its traditional 'dragoon eagle' cap badge. On 25 March 1943 all Armoured Reconnaissance battalions were required to wear the Panzer pink branch colour, but many retained golden-yellow, and on 29 November 1943 this colour was once more prescribed for all such battalions.

The personnel of military internal security units apparently feared victimisation if captured by Allied troops, and from early 1944 tended only to wear dark gogots, armlets and signallers which could be
easily discarded before capture. Thus from 19 March 1944 Military Police ( Feldgendarmerie) no longer wore their M1939 arm badge and cuff title, retaining only their distinctive M1939 duty gorget. Field Police ( Feldgendarmerie) wore the uniform of their original branch of service and a duty gorget with the inscription Feldgendarmerie; they were prescribed, but rarely wore, a shoulder strap insignia, and a red armband on the left upper sleeve with an official stamp and Überwachungsordner der Wehrmacht/Feldgendarmerie in black Roman letters. Wehrmacht Patrol Service ( Wehrmacht Streifenfusilier) personnel wore their original uniforms with M1935 officers' aiguillettes, and on the left upper sleeve the black cross-white Wehrmacht Streifenfusilier armband. Troops guarding District Command HQ's wore the Kommandantur gorget; railway guards, the Zugleitschild gorget, and railway-station guards the Bahnhofsbahn gorget.

Uniforms and insignia of Army Chaplains

Divisional chaplains were classified as senior career Army Officials ( Beamten) with equivalent officers' rank, the Chaplain-General ( Feldkirchen) der Wehrmacht, being equivalent to a general officer. From 8 March 1937 chaplains wore the M1935 officer's service dress cap with matt aluminium chin cords and buttons, violet branch-coloured pippings and a small aluminium or blue-embroidered Gothic cross between the eagle and the wreathed cockade. A chaplain-general had a gold wire crown and lower cap band piping and violet upper cap band piping (later changed to gold wire); a gold wire or celluloid chin cord with gold buttons, and from 1 January 1941 a gold metal eagle, Gothic cross, wreath and cockade. The M1934 'old style' field cap with aluminium or gold thread insignia was also worn, as were the following caps, with aluminium or gold wire crown and front flap pippings, normal army insignia and the Gothic cross badge. M1938 peaked field cap; M1936 mountain cap, introduced 21 July 1942 as the M1942 peaked field cap; and the M1943 peaked field cap. The steel helmet could also be worn in the front line.

The M1935 officer's field tunic had a breast eagle but no shoulder boards, rank being indicated by M1935 violet facing cloth collar patches with two bright wire embroidered 'guards' bands with violet centre cords, gold for the chaplain-general, silver for chaplains ranked as field-officers ( Wehrmachttoben Wehrmachtforsten). No collar patches were worn by war-substantive chaplains ranked as captains ( Wehrmachttoben Wehrmachtforsten), this rank being phased out from October 1942. As non-combatants chaplains wore a white armband, with a violet centre stripe broken by a red cross, on the left upper sleeve; but against regulations some chaplains carried a bolstered pistol on their M1934 officers' brown belt for self-protection in the front line.

The full-length pocketless fieldgrey cassock had a violet standing collar, front and cuff pippings and breast eagle. On their chest Protestant chaplains wore an aluminium cross and chain, and Catholic chaplains a crucifix with a black wooden inset, worn by chaplains-general in gold. For chaplains the M1935 field greycoat had no shoulder boards, chaplain-general showing violet lapel linings.

The uniform and insignia of other Officials are described in MAA 928, The German Army 1939-45 (3).
Uniforms and insignia of European Volunteers

Italian troops in Europe supported units with German divisions on the Eastern Front in standard Italian Republican Army uniforms and insignia. From 30 July 1944 individual Italian troops serving as "Volunteers" (on the same basis as Helfenwillige on the Eastern Front) in divisional service units were ordered to wear Italian M1940 or German uniforms with German rank insignia and a national badge on the left upper sleeve. The design of the badge is unconfirmed, but was either a black painted armshield with STALKA in white over an inner shield with greenish-red horizontal bars, or a black embroidered eagle and lictor's fasces badge as worn by the Italian 29th SS Infantry Division.

Uniforms and insignia of Osttruppen

From January 1943 ROA personnel in the Eastern Battalions wore standard German uniforms with a Tassilo-style red and blue cap cockade and modified Tassilo rank and collar insignia illustrated in MAA 330, The German Army 1939–45 (9) and on the left upper sleeve an armshield featuring a blue St Andrews Cross. In 1944 some troops were issued a distinctive light bluegrey field uniform, possibly using surplus French Army stocks of M1943 "bordeaux" material, with M1943 collar and shoulder insignia and armshield. The pullover field tunic resembled a Saniro M1935 gimsaizicha, open at the chest and secured by three fieldgrey pebbled buttons; it had two breast pockets and two side pockets with V-shaped buttoned flaps, and single-button cuffs. The trousers were worn with M1941 utility uniform.

From 18 March 1944 personnel, who appeared to be "worthy in character, general performance and political reliability" were permitted German rank insignia and collar patches; a distinction more likely to be gained by battalions integrated into German infantry regiments that independent battalions. In practice ROA officers wore M1943 ROA or M1945 German officers' collar patches, and German shoulder boards with white infantry underlay, while NCOs and men wore M1945 ROA or M1940 German collar patches and M1942 ROA shoulder straps piped in white. On 2 March 1945 personnel were ordered to remove their German breast eagles, a command often ignored, and German cadres to remove their ROA armshields, to perpetuate the fiction that the ROA/KONR were independent armed forces allied to Germany.

Cross-battalions in France wore standard German Army uniforms with breast eagles, M1942 "Insigne" collar patches and M1945 ROA rank insignia. From 18 March 1944 some troops adopted German collar patches, and many officers added German shoulder boards with white underlay for infantry battalions and gold-yellow for cavalry battalions. Other ranks on 30 April 1945

Generalleutnant Max Pemsel, commanding 11th Mountain Division in Normandy, was appointed Chief of Staff to the German-Italian Ligeria Army, only to see it surrender 13 days later on 3 May. His M1935 armband cap and tunic bore conventional general officer's distinctions in gold and bright red. At his thrust are the Knights Cross of the Iron Cross and the War Merit Cross with Swords; in his button hole and on his left breast pocket are the 1944 Iron Cross 2nd Class ribbon and 1st Class decorations, both with 1939 clasps for subsequent World War II awards; and note the very long ribbon bar above, General Pemsel went on to serve in the West German Bundeswehr, and could thus claim the rare distinction of having served in three German Armies. (Brian Everitt)
The disparity in uniforms and insignia and the depleted appearance of these troops captured by the French Expeditionary Corps in May 1944, make a striking contrast with the smartness and confidence of the early war years. The private (left foreground) wears the M1943 tunic with regulation M1940 collar patches, shoulder straps and breast eagle. The young Unterförster (centre foreground) has the M1943 tunic with M1940 breast eagle, to which he has attached M1935 dark green collar facing and bright aluminium NBC breast, M1930 collar patches, and long-dated M1935 printed dark-green shoulder straps without piping. (Brian Doxet)

tallions continued to wear Legion armshands and German breast eagles as well as the M1942 cap badges, collar patches and shoulder board/rank insignia (described and illustrated in MAA 239) until May 1943. Reluctantly few personnel appear to have adopted German collar patches and shoulder boards/straps with infantry white underlays/piping after 18 March 1944—probably because they were considered less reliable than the ROA and Cross of Honour officer and NCO cadres wore German uniforms and insignia with the Legion armshands on the right upper arm.

Medals and awards

By 1944 the German soldier was entitled to wear a substantial number of medals, ribbons, campaign and qualification badges on the field uniform. This may have belittled morale, but also made much-decorated soldiers obvious targets for snipers.

The principal medal for bravery and leadership in the front line remained the Iron Cross, displayed in its 2nd Class by a brown-hide ribbon and in the 1st Class by a black and silver-pinned cross on the left breast pocket. The German Cross in Gold might be awarded to personnel who already had the Iron Cross 1st Class, and was worn as a swastika within a gilt sunburst on the right breast pocket. For further acts of conspicuous gallantry or leadership four classes of the Knight’s Cross of the Iron Cross might be awarded progressively, and were worn at the throat, the basic Knight’s Cross, with Oakleaves, with Oakleaves and Swords, and with Oakleaves, Swords and Diamonds—the latter supreme award being granted to only a handful of very distinguished officers.

The War Merit Cross with or without Swords for acts of bravery or leadership away from the front line was in four classes: 2nd Class button hole ribbon, 1st Class cross pinned to the left breast pocket, and silver and gold classes of Knight’s Cross worn at the throat. Soldiers admitted to the ‘Roll of Honour of the German Army’, equivalent to the British Army’s ‘mentioned in dispatches’, were from 30 January 1944 awarded a gilt metal wreathed swastika clasp to be worn in the button hole on the Iron Cross ribbon.
Four combat qualification badges were worn on the left breast pocket: the silver Infantry Assault Badge for infantry, rifle and mountain troops (bronze for motorized infantry); the silver Tank Battle Badge for tank crews (bronze for Panzergrenadiers and armoured car crews); the dull grey Army Anti-Aircraft Badge; and the silver General Assault Badge. For other branches, including artillery, anti-tank, engineers and medical personnel. Apart from the Flak badge these were initially awarded for participation in three separate actions, but higher classes were later added.

The Close Combat Clasp, Sniper’s Badge, Tank Destruction Badge, and the similar award for shooting down an aircraft with light weapons are described in MAA 530. The German Army 1939-45 (4) Awards such as the Nutzk, Cholen, Ortenau, Dornitz and Rahns Shields and the Anti-Partisan War Badge, awarded for service on the Eastern Front, could be seen worn by troops transferred from that theatre to the Western and Italian Fronts – see MAA 530. However, only one campaign shield was awarded for service on the latter fronts, and that was unofficial. The submarine base of Lorient in southern Brittany held out as an isolated fortress from 6 August 1944 until 8 May 1945. In December 1944 the base commander, Admiral Helwede, approved a locally made shield for wear on the left arm, in white metal, copper, aluminium or brass; this featured a defiant warrior armed except for helmet, shield and sword bestriding the base, with the date above and name below. How many were made is unknown.

Normandy, June 1944: mail for soldiers of 116. Panzer-Division, which would be badly mauled in the fighting against the Allied bridgehead. The Obersturmführer handling it is wearing the M1942 mud-green uniform with unusual buttoned cuffs; M1943 dark green shoulder straps; M1936 arm chevrons, and Nco. class M1943 field cap the division's unofficial Württemberg badge. The Obersturmführer (control – probably 1st platoon) in Panzergrenadier-Regiment 80 or 105, wears the M1940 special field-grey uniform. He has the m44 field cap with standard ‘quarda broks’ and is holding the open screw of a spare 30 mm Norden’s MG40 magazine pouches, non-standard 10x90 Voigtländer binoculars, and on his left breast the Close Combat Clasp above the Iron Cross 1st Class. (Brian Davis)
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<tr>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Branch Colour</th>
<th>Shoulder-strap Insignia</th>
<th>Other distinctions</th>
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<td><strong>Combat Troops — Mobile Troops (ultimate troops)</strong></td>
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<td>13 Rocket Launcher, Anti-tank Regt, Other</td>
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<td><strong>Combat Troops — Signallers (Telegraphers)</strong></td>
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<td>61 Signallers (Telegraphers) Regt</td>
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continued on page 42
Regiment 918, 242 Infanterie-Division, and was one of two Eastern Legion units that assailed General Wrangel's army. In March 1944, the battalion was destroyed in the decisive battle of Tukums. This historian sees it as M1943 field tunic in M1941 field-grey shoulders strips, gold infantry-white, M1940 other ranks' collar patches and breast eagle, and a M1940 national arm shield. He wears the M1942 hood, M1943 field-grey belted trousers, M1942 canvas anklets and ankle boots. The other ranks' black belt with leather M1939 infantry 'Y'-rigs supports rifle ammunition pouches, a bayonet and entrenching tool on his left hip, and bread bag and canteen on his right, the M1930 gas mask canister at his right side behind his body. He is armed with the standard Karbiner 98K rifle and a M1919 grenade.

G2: Generalmajor, 11. Panzer-Division: Alsace, September 1944

Rejecting a general officer's normal affectations such as a pewter-embroidered field-grey or black Panzer uniform, this divisional commander wears the regulation other ranks' M1943 field tunic with general officers' Al-Lansch collar patches, shoulder boards, gold breast eagle and glazed piped buttons. He has a M1943 peaked field cap with gold wire crown piping, officer's breast pocket with general officer's bright 'Y'-rigs, and officer's riding-boots without spurs. He carries a 7.62mm Walter PPK pistol (his only personal indulgence) holstered on his M1943 officer's belt buckle, and 10x50 Zeiss binoculars. He displays the Knight's Cross, the ribbon of the Eastern Winter 1941-42 Medal and the Tank Battle Badge.

G3: Unterfeldwebel, Panzer-Abteilung 2113: Lorraine, September 1944

This 113.Panzer-Brigade tank commander wears the black M1942 Panzer jacket with M1943 shoulder straps and NCO braic, collar patches and breast eagle. He wears black, shiny-up ankle boots, and an M32/40 round field 'third grey' sweater in preference to the regulation grey shirt and black tie. The M1943 field-grey petrol field cap suggests supply shortages of the black Panzer version. He has a P38 Walther in a soft shell holster on his belt; and displays the Iron Cross 2nd Class ribbon in his button hole, the Tank Battle Badge, a black 'Round Badge (for one and two rounds), and on his cuff above the Cactus Shield, indicating previous Eastern Front service. He carries the standard field 'flashlight.'

D: Belgium and Netherlands, 1944

D1: Grenadier, Grenadier-Regiment 1323: Arnhem corridor, October 1944

This senior third LMG gunner from 150 Infanterie-Regiment wears the M1943 field tunic and belted trousers with M1942 canvas anklets and ankle boots; his M1942 helmet has a unlocked chicken-wire 'basket' over his helmet and M1939 lederer Infantry 'Y'-rigs support standard officer's equipment: M1938 folding shovel in second pattern carrier and 10x50 Zeiss binoculars on his left hip; M1931 mess kit, bread bag and camouflage shelter-quarter on his lower back; and M1941 carter also cap behind his right hip. He has tied his gas cap pouch to the M1930 gas mask canister hanging Part of an infantry section training in France, May 1944. They wear M1940 and M1943 field jackets, M1942 greatcoats, M1940 trousers with M1933 short-shaft marching boots, or M1943 bolted trousers with M1941 canvas anklets and ankle boots. The finn purrer of the LMG team is at far right; he has a holstered P38 Radom pistol and the MG42 spouc pouch on his belt. Left of him we see the second gunner, with holstered pistol, ammunition box, and stich grenades. The third gunner, with standard rifle equipment, holds the late model MG42. All three carry spare ammunition belts. [Friedrich Herrmann]
from his shoulder. He carries a Karabiner 98k rifle and a spare ammunition belt for the light machine gun.

D3: Folewinkel, Feindfeldgendarmerie-Trupp (Mot.) 185, Dutch-Belgian border, September 1944

This military schematic from the British Intelligence Department is on traffic control duty as a passenger on a motocycle combination. He wears a M1952 field-lance, with scalloped pocket flaps that keep his belts, M1941 shoulder straps, collar patches, breast star and NCO collar lead. M1935 helmet with motorcycle goggles, M1940 leather boots and M1940 field shirt. Marching boots complete the uniform. On his belt he wears a second pattern triple magazine pouch for the MG40 sub-machine gun (M1930/4) around his neck for easy access. He wears his 'chaired dog' duty gogot and display the infantry Assault Badge. However, the 19 March 1944 regulations, he has no helmet. His military police arm badge and cuff title. He carries a baton to direct traffic.

D3: Oberegretreiter, Grenadier-Regiment 1039, Breenska Pocket, October 1944

This infantryman of Grenadier-Regiment trapped in the Breenska Pocket in northern Belgium wears the M1942 field shirt, peaked field cap and belted trousers. M1941 canvas sidekicks and lanyard-up boots. As a Rankman of company HQ he wears the signalman's qualification badge. His uniform is complete with the red M1940 rank chevrons. He carries the Flügel B short-range (one mile) radio with 32m antenna and attached headpiece suspended from his M1940 leather infantry Y-straps, and the minimum of belt equipment - a P38 Walther in a soft-shell holster and M1931 bread bag. cottonfil cup.

D3: Bremen, August 1944: German POWs have tied and bolted their Zeissblick 31 shutter-quadcopters together to make four-man tents. That in the foreground clearly shows the contrast between the light (outside) and dark (inside) colors of the Zeissblick. (Brian Davis)

E: ARMENDES OFFENSIVE, 1944-45

E1: Unteroffizier, Field-Grenadier-Regiment 95

E2: Grenadier, December 1944

This commando of the 15. Panzergrander-Regiments competent in the field dressing of late variation of the M1944 rubberized 3-piece coat with red-gold cloth collar, initially issued to motorcyclists and military police, since 1944 it was restricted to officers by many officers and senior NCOs in the front line. He has added his shoulder badges with engineer-technician topic. His M1943 officer's peaked field cap has aluminium wire passed piping and a M1943 eagle and cockade on a T-shaped field-grey brim. He wears officers' service gloves and long boots. He carries a P38 Walther. It's a
The M1944 field blouse was popular, but officers often had it privately made or modified to personal taste. General der Panzertruppen Gerhard Saul von Schwerin, commanding 78 Panzer Corps, was photographed at Bologna, March 1945, wearing one with shoulder boards, Zeltbahn collar patches, dress-quality gold thread breast eagle (agential regulations), gold buttons, and decorations. The open breast displays his Knight’s Cross with Oakleaves, Swords and Diamonds. The headgear is the M1934 ‘old style’ field cap with gold machine-woven insignia and gold piping. (Brian Davis)

M1938 hud-shell holster on his back. M1934 officer’s belt, a standard beltiguine and Volframese short 100-gm brocaded.

E3: Panzerergänzungs, I Panzerergänzungs-Bataillon, Führer-Begleit-Brigade, Ardennes, January 1945

The Führer-Begleit-Brigade, a detachment of which formed Hitler’s personal bodyguard, was effectively a Großdeutschland unit. The senior panzer officer wears M1942 one-piece ‘shirt’ over trousers over a M1942 padded non-removable winter tunic in M1944 star-pattern camouflage, a field-grey tulipajakka around his neck, a M1942 shirt with normal shirt collar was cool and stood out with white ribbed three-finger reversible mittens, and lace-up ankle boots. He carries leather rifle ammunition pouches and a S1939 grenade on the right front of his belt, and on the left canvas magazine pouches for the Gew-43 semi-automatic rifle and a 8x58R bayonet. A fighting knife is clipped to the chest of his overall.

F: WESTERN GERMANY, 1945

F1: Oberleutnant, Panzerergänzungs-Bataillon 2106, Cologne, March 1945

This yourment company commander in 106 Panzer Brigade. Fighting with the 11th Army front wears the M1939 special field-grey jacket displaying M1935 officer’s chinstraps and visor, the Velcro-bonded shoulder boards monogram and cuff title, two silver tank Decoration Badges, the leather tank issue glove, the SA Military Sports Badges and Iron Cross 2nd Class ribbon. His cap, wears the M1942 field helmet and field-grey weather, the trousers of the M1940 special field-grey uniform, and black ankle boots. He carries standard M36 beltiguine; a M1935 officer’s disheal (map case) and a P38 Walther pistol in a M1938 soft-shell holster on his black leather (silk) belt, and a M1943 Pancerbufl 30 (tank plier) anti-tank grenade launcher.

F2: Oberleutnant, Grenadier-Regiment 48; Ruth pocket, April 1945

This volunteer commander from 12 Volksgrenadier-Division nears the M1944 field blouse with M1940 shoulder straps piped infantry white, all-white breast eagle and collar patches on his M1940 sunt shirt. His headgear is just visible on the left shoulder. His M1942 helmet is painted in imitation of the Zeltbahn 3rd colour, blue and green camouflage colours. M1942 trousers are buckled into M1941 canvas anklets; note the plain white leather ankle boots. He has M1940 trousers with supporting straps, canvas magazine pouches for his M1940/42 pistol R98, an M1939 grenade and 8x58R bayonet and a paking sheath behind his left leg.

F3: Panzerergänzungs, Grenadier-Regiment 156, Buschhofs, Forest, February 1945

The soldier from 116 Panzer Division wears a M1942 non-removable padded winter tunic in M1943 star-pattern camouflage, without insignia, over his M1943 field-grey tunic and field trousers. His M1943 field cap bears the armband silver and black or dark grey diagonal geographical pavement badge on the left side. Again, note the plain leather of the unbuttoned ankle boots. He has M1939 leather infantry Yukadans and M1941 ammunition pouches with a grenade attached. Behind his left hip are an 8x58R bayonet and his entrenching tool. He also carries a M1940, 9mm pistol, a silk, Kerbeiner, RSK, and a M1943 Pancerbufl 60 anti-tank grenade launcher.

G: SICILY AND SOUTHERN ITALY, 1943

G1: Wehrmachtobserger, 26th Panzer Division; Velletrino, November 1943

This Roman Catholic clerical chaplain wears the M1939 officer’s field tunic without shoulder boards but with an M1935 officer’s breast eagle. His rank is approximately indicated by the M1939 velvet collar patches with aluminium ‘guards’ badges. His M1935 officer’s peaked service cap has vivid piping, and an aluminium Gothic cross between the national insignia. His M1939 officer’s belt, M1940 officer’s breeches and riding boots are conventional. He wears a
Catholic crowds around his neck, and the chaplain's ambon. On his left breast pocket are pinned the War Merit Cross 1st Class with Swords and a black Wound Badge. He wears the ribbon of the War Merit Cross 2nd Class in his button hole.

G2: Panzergrenadiere, Panzergraupen-Reiter-Regiment 64; Salerno, September 1943

This member of a NCO section in 15 Panzer-Division, attacking with Allied bridgeheads, wears the M1940 light olive tropical shirt with applied M1940 field-grey shoulder straps piped grass-green. M1943 field-grey trousers are confined by M1941 field-grey canvas armbands over black armbone boots. He has co-oppgies on his sand-painted M1935 heÌmer, a M1940 camouflage tropical belt and Y-straps support M1941 black leather radio ammunition pouches and the rest of the conventional uniform's belt under obscured him. Also obscured but skirting by a canvas strap over this shoulder is an air of green canvas rifle-grenade pouch for the rifle other screwed to his Karabiner 98k. The pouch was after manufactured in both moss-green canvas and black leather; and note all the fan is pair of second pattern grass-green carrying bags, designed to be carried by hand.

G3: Unterfeldwebel, Panzergruppe-Reiter-Regiment 115; Sicily, July 1943

This section commander from 15 Panzer-Division, opposing the Allied landings, wears the M1942 light olive tropical field tunic with M1940 machine-woven blue-grey thread breast eagle and collar patches on russet-brown barding, and copper-blue aluminium NCO braid on the collar and olive M1940 tropical shoulder straps. His M1940 light olive tropical peaked field cap has a blue-grey eagle and Waffen-SS national cockade on russet-brown stitching. The M1940 light olive tropical trousers are gathered at the ankle over laced leather boots. He wears second pattern fan camouflage strip magazine pouches on his M1940 tropical canvas belt, with a B9/8000 boot and entrenching tool; the M1015 fixed sawn carbine still bears the Wehrmacht eagle decal on the left side. Note on his left breast the Close Combat Order of bronze and the bronze fork Battle Badge. He also displays the Iron Cross 2nd Class ribbon, and the M1943 SFSKc cuff title for North Africa veterans.

H: CENTRAL AND NORTHERN ITALY, 1944-1945

H1: Obergefreiter, Jäger-Regiment 25; Gothic Line, September 1944

This section field officer in 42. Jäger-Division wears the M1943 mid-grey high-performance field tunic and trousers. His M1940 field-grey shoulder straps are piped in light green; note also the M1940 machine-woven Jäger right arm band, any M1940 rank chevrons. His M1942 helmet has a second metal cover in 1943 flame-pattern camouflage. He has the M1940 field-grey webbing set, M1940 field-grey canvas armbands, and cladded mountain boots. His combat equipment is conventional: note tucked into his belt the

April 1945, Ruhr Pocket: two PzKpfw IIIs officers, appearing rather red for their rank — prepare to move for a US POW camp, relaxing the equipment necessarily for an essential future. (Left) M1944 motorcyclist's motorcycle seat with thick gray cloth collar; winter-motormounted fieldpouch canvas clutchpack with humber strap, and blanket, M1943 field cap with aluminum crown piping. (Right) M1937 officer's field greatcoat, piped M1945 field cap, M1931 M400 bag and mess kit. (Richard Neuman)

M1943 field cap with M1942 aluminum three-later jaget badge on his left side. He carries a Karabiner 98k, M1939 grenade, and a machine gun ammunition box.

H2: Unteroffizier, Reichsgrenadier-Regiment koh- und Deutsche-Schmeisser; Gustav Line, February 1944

This NCO from the Hoch- and Deutschlandmeister (41-Infanterie-Division) wears the M1942 colorless smoke, a Feldhase 31 camouflage webbing to silver, over his M1943 field suit and M1942 wide-collar field greatcoat. M1943 field-grey trench trousers, M1941 field-grey canvas armbands and black armbone boots. His M1942 helmet has a rubber foliage netting ring and tropical canvas Y-straps support his leather belt. This section commander has one set of patches for his M940 sub machine gun, a M1935 brown leather map case, and 10cm binoculars.

H3: Staatsfeldwebel, Panzer-Aufklärungs-Abteilung 26; River Po, April 1945

This section NCO in 26 Panzer-Division wears the M1942 mid-green VEB Panther working jacket with a machine-woven M1941 breast eagle and the unpupiled M1943 regulation arm insignia, he has added — against regulations — Panzer color patches, piped golden-yellow for Armored Reconnaissance troops. His M1943 Panzer field cap has machine-woven insignia on a "shaped" backing. His trousers are field-made in Italian M1943 forest pattern cloth, to resemble the M1942 Panzer division, but with an added second thigh pouch, they are dressattached at the ankle over line-up boots. As an M41 crew member he carries a .50-caliber in a sackubol holster on his other rank's belt.
Prisoners near Perugia, Italy, in July 1944. The Oberstleutnant (left) wears the M1943 reed-green summer tunic with pineapple patches (the M1943 had straight pocket flaps), privately shortened in the skirt, with M1935 collar patches, and has against regulations added an officer’s enamelled metal breast eagle. He wears the M1934 ‘old style’ field cap, patched, reinforced breeches and riding boots; note the M1935 dispatch case at his belt.

The three officers from 5th Mountain Division (right) all wear M1941 Luftwaffe light shakos (with M1943 tropical uniform – note Edelweiss arm badges). All show typical slight differences: the man on the left of the trio has a privately-made light khaki version of the M1943 mountain cap; the officer in the centre has the M1943 field-grey field cap, with the Mountain Troops badge pruned to the left side; the right hand officer has non-standard trousers with two high pockets.

(Friedrich Hermann)
In this the final title of the sequence, Nigel Thomas covers the high command, the developments in unit organisation, the campaigns and the uniforms and equipment of the last two years of the war in North-West Europe and Italy. Despite the huge pressure of fighting on three fronts, ever-worsening shortages of manpower and equipment, and Allied command of the skies, Germany’s decimated divisions fought on with impressive skill and determination. This period also saw a fascinating mixture of obsolescent, newly designed, and field-made combat clothing which gave the German soldier a radically different appearance from his predecessor of just five years before.