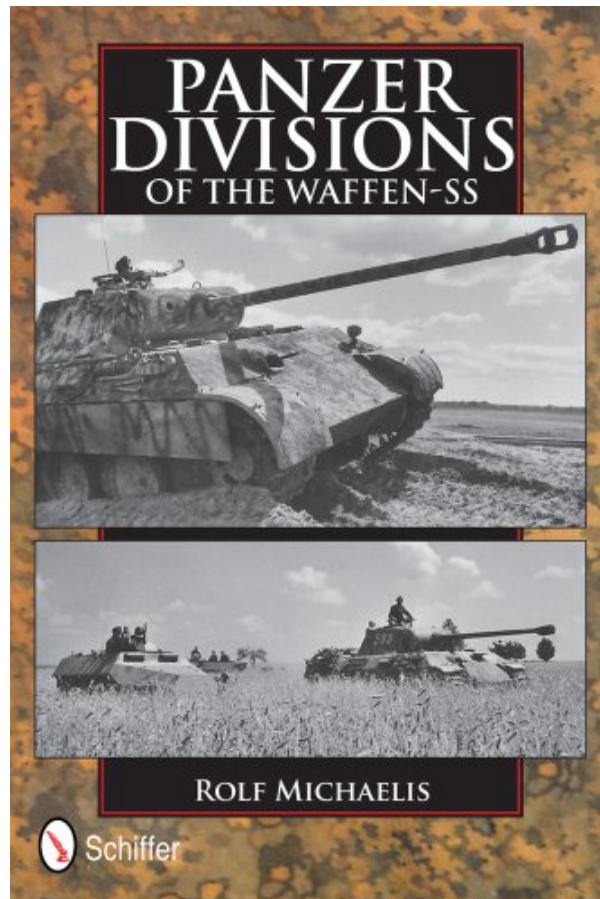


# PANZER DIVISIONS OF THE WAFFEN-SS BY ROLF MICHAELIS



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## About the Author

Rolf Michaelis specializes in books on the Waffen-SS and has written over thirty to date, with many available in English from Schiffer Books. He lives in Berlin.

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A detailed history of all seven Waffen-SS panzer divisions in World War II: 1.SS-Panzer-Division, Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler, 2.SS-Panzer-Division, Das Reich, 3.SS-Panzer-Division, Totenkopf, 5.SS-Panzer-Division, Wiking, 9.SS-Panzer-Division, Hohenstaufen, 10.SS-Panzer-Division, Frundsberg, 12.SS-Panzer-Division, Hitlerjugend. Each unit is presented in detailed history from its formation, combat operations throughout the war, and final disposition at war's end. Rare images most never before published, including soldbuchs and award documents and personal veteran accounts are featured along with equipment, commanders, maps, and charts.

- Sales Rank: #1268860 in Books
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## About the Author

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By DRB

The book more or less provides summaries on the most well known of the Waffen SS divisions. You know Leibstandarte, Das Reich, Totenkopf, and Hitlerjugend to name more than half of them. There is not really much new information other than the strength of the various divisions before and after combat actions. There are some new pictures I have never seen before but nothing special. Overall it pretty much tells you what we already know. Before 1943 the elite Waffen SS divisions were some of the best soldiers of the war. After 1943 they were grinded down and filled with replacements from the Wehrmacht, Kriegsmarine, and even Hermann Goering units. I thought the author was a bit harsh on the performance of the Leibstandarte as he seemingly overlooked the fact they were a fire brigade that more or less saw constant combat in the most harsh of conditions which eventually effected their combat performance. Then he gave the Hitlerjugend too much credit as he boasted about teenagers holding the line despite being green troops. They did not hold the line that well because Germany still lost the war. If you love books about the Waffen SS it does not hurt to buy it but do not expect anything outstanding.

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PANZER DIVISIONS OF THE WAFFEN-SS ROLF MICHAELS SCHIFFER PUBLISHING, ...

By Robert A. Lynn

## PANZER DIVISIONS OF THE WAFFEN-SS

ROLF MICHAELS

SCHIFFER PUBLISHING, 2013

HARDCOVER, \$45.00, 320 PAGES, PHOTOGRAPHS, CHARTS, MAPS, APPENDICES

The creation of the motorized infantry and panzergrenadier arms came as a direct consequence of General Guderians's revolutionary concept of armored mobile warfare. This concept necessitated the introduction of mobile infantry units which not only could accompany the panzers over difficult terrain into action, but also provide both supportive firepower and safety against enemy infantry and shell splinters under the cover of the Schuetzenpanzerwagon (rifle armored vehicle).

From the very beginning when the first experimental panzer division was formed in 1934, there was a Schuetzen-Brigade (rifle brigade) with one Leichte Schuetzen-Regiment (light rifle regiment) and one Kradeschuetzen-Bataillon (motorcycle rifle battalion) as motorized infantry units to support two Panzer-Regiments within the Panzer-Division. The initial development of the German motorized infantry branch wasn't only lorried infantry, but also motorcycle equipped infantry. Because Germany didn't have suitable armored transport vehicles at that time, those rifle units were formed half as motorcycle infantry and half as lorried infantry.

The first formation of independent motorized infantry units occurred in 1937, when four infantry divisions (mot) (motorized infantry division) were re-organized from infantry divisions. As a political balance between panzer and cavalry arms, four leichte infantry divisions were formed in 1938. The motorized infantry units within a leichte division were no longer known as Schuetzen; instead they were re-named Kavallerieschuetzen (cavalry rifle). Also, in 1938, Hitler appointed Guderian (now a General der Panzertruppen, Chief of Schnelle Truppen-mobile troops), with authority over the development and training of Germany's mechanized forces including Panzer, Schuetzen, Motorisierte Infanterie (motorized infantry), Panzerabwehr (anti-tank defense) and even Kavallerie truppen.

The Polish Campaign ended the short life of four leichte-divisions which were re-organized into Panzer divisions with all of the Kavallerieschuetzen re-designated as Schuetzen during 1939-1940. The second expansion of infantry-division (mot) occurred after the French Campaign when a total of eight infantry-divisions were formed but only two of them were re-designated as Panzer-divisions. Another expansion came from the motorized infantry units of both Herr and Waffen-SS; Infanterie-Division (mot) "Grossdeutschland", SS-Division (mot) "LSSAH", "Das Reich", "Yotenkopof", and "Wiking" during 1941-1942. But all of the elite SS-divisions (mot) were re-designated Panzergrenadier divisions in late 1942 and finally were again re-designated Panzer divisions in late 1943.

After defeats in both North Africa and Stalingrad, the destroyed infantry divisions or Panzer divisions were re-built in 1942. These defeats also led to a re-designation of the Panzertruppen in the same year but without cavalry units. In June, 1943, the majority of the infantry divisions were re-designated Panzergrenadier divisions and re-organized as Type 43 Panzergrenadier divisions in September, 1943. During 1943-1944, several Panzergrenadier divisions were raised by Waffen SS and even the Luftwaffe formed their own Panzergrenadier division. In late 1944, Panzer brigades were created to face the collapse of the Eastern Front (they were also known as Panzergrenadier brigades). In fact, they werde a combination of both panzer and panzergrenadier units under the same command. Although these brigades failed to stop the Allied advance, this organization became the cadre of the Type 45 Panzer division during the last year of the war. The final expansion of the Panzergrenadier divisions was seen in the re-organization of the "Grossdeutschland" Division in 1945. Although they fielded four Panzergrenadier divisions, they were no longer configured as divisions but as Kempfgruppe (battle group).

The following units are covered in this book:

- \*1st SS Panzer Division-Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler
- \*2nd SS Panzer Division-Das Reich
- \*3rd SS Panzer Division-Totenkopf
- \*5th SS Panzer Division-Wiking
- \*9th SS Panzer Division-Hohenstaufen
- \*10th SS Panzer Division-Frundsberg
- \*12th SS Panzer Division-Hitler Jugend
- \*Field Post Numbers and Division Commanders
- \*Comparison of Ranks
- \*Order of Battle for Panzer Division-Division 1943, 1944, and 1945

PANZER DIVISIONS OF THE WAFFEN SS is a good primer for anyone wanting a study of these units. But while it doesn't go into much depth as other books have done, it still offers enough solid information to help someone understand how and why these units came into being.

Lt. Colonel Robert A. Lynn, Florida Guard  
Orlando, Florida

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