

Captured & converted French vehicles in German service

The German army made extensive use of French captured vehicles and converted ex-French vehicles, though many had been retired by 1944, or had gone to axis allies such as Croatia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Italy or Rumania.

UE 630(f) Schlepper (about 3000 Renault UE have been used)

- Infanterie UE-Schlepper (f)
- Mannschaftstransportwagen Renault UE(f) (2 different versions)
- Kleiner Funk- und Beobachtungspanzer auf Infanterie-Schlepper UE (f) (40 produced)
- Fernmeldekabel Kraftwagen Renault UE(f)
- Selbstfahrlafette für 3.7cm Pak36 auf Renault UE(f) (700 pieces)
- Selbstfahrlafette für 28/32cm Wurfrahmen auf Infanterie-Schlepper UE (f) (2 versions, 40 produced)
- Gepanzerte-MG-Träger Renault UE(f)
- Munitionsschlepper Renault UE(f)
- Sicherungsfahrzeug UE(f) – Luftwaffe security vehicles armed with 7.92mm and/or 13mm MGs
- Panzerkampfwagen Attrape auf UE(f) (dummy tank for training)
- Schneeschleuder auf Renault UE(f) (50 converted in snow ploughs in 1942)
- Schneefräser auf Renault UE(f) (snow milling)

Lorraine 37L(f) Schlepper

- Gefechtsfeld-Versorgungsfahrzeug Lorraine 37L (f)
- Großer Funk- & Beobachtungspanzer Lorraine (f) (30 produced)
- 4.7cm Pak181(f) auf Geschützwagen Lorraine (this is a French production in fact, not a German conversion)
- Munitionstransportkraftwagen auf Lorraine Schlepper
- 7.5cm Pak40/1 auf Geschützwagen Lorraine "Marder I (Sdkfz 135)"
- 10.5cm leFH18 auf Geschützwagen Lorraine (24 produced), Wespe-equivalent based on Lorraine 37L
- 12.2cm Kanone (r) auf Geschützwagen Lorraine (f) (1 produced)
- 15cm sFH13/1 auf Geschützwagen Lorraine (102 produced), Hummel-equivalent based on Lorraine 37L

Lorraine 38L(f) (SPW)

Somua MCL S303 (f)

- Zugkraftwagen Somua MCL S303 (f)
- In 1943, Somua MCL S303 (f) were converted to personnel carriers mSPW S303(f), equivalent of the Sdkfz 251/1
- 8cm Reihenwerfer auf SPW Somua S303 (f), 20x 81mm Brandt mortars on a single mount (16 produced)
- 8cm Vielfachwerfer auf SPW Somua S303 (f), mounting 2 racks of 80mm rockets (6 produced)
- mSPW S303(f) (Pionier), equivalent of the Sdkfz 251/7

Somua MCG S307 (f)

- Zugkraftwagen Somua MCG S307 (f)
- Munitions-Zugkraftwagen Somua MCG S307 (f) (48 produced)
- In 1943, Somua MCG S307 (f) were converted to mSPW S307(f), equivalent of the Sdkfz 251/1
- In 1943, Somua MCG S307 (f) were converted to pioneer Panzerwagen mSPW S307(f), equivalent of the Sdkfz 251/7
- In 1943, 72 Somua MCG S307 (f) were converted to 7,5cm Pak40 (Sf) auf mSPW S307(f), equivalent of the Sdkfz 251/22
- 8cm Reihenwerfer auf SPW Somua S307 (f), 16x 81mm Brandt mortars on a single mount (36 produced)
- 8cm Vielfachwerfer auf SPW Somua S307 (f), mounting 2 racks of 80mm rockets
- 15cm Panzerwerfer 42 (Sf) auf mSPW Somua S307(f)

Zugkraftwagen P302 U302(f)

Zugkraftwagen Unic TU1 U305(f)

- Leichter Artillerieschlepper
- Bergfahrzeug (towing/reparation car)
- Fahrschulfahrzeug (driving school car), used by the 4. PzD in the Panzer Regiment 35.

Zugkraftwagen P107 U304(f) (Unic-Kégresse P107)

- Leichter Zugkraftwagen P107 U304(f) (to tow 3.7cm Pak36, 7.5cm Pak97/38, 7.5cm PaK40, 10.5cm leFH18)
- Mittlerer Munitionskraftwagen (munition transporter)
- Leichter Mannschaftstransportwagen (with a wooden open-top compartment to transport troops)
- Bergefahrzeug (towing/reparation car)
- Leichter Schützenpanzerwagen : in 1943/44, P107s were converted to personnel carriers leSPW U304(f). They were stripped of their superstructures and fitted with armored hulls that were almost like the SdKfz 251 series (20cm higher). Issued to armored units in France.
- leSPW U304(f) (Funk) - Equivalent of the Sdkfz 251/3 radio/command vehicles
- Selbstfahrlafette U304(f) with FlaK 38 – Unic P107 partially armored mounting the 20mm Flak 38
- Selbstfahrlafette leSPW U304(f) with FlaK 38 –armored P107 mounting the 20mm Flak 38 (72 produced for the Schnelle Brigade West)
- Zugführerwagen leSPW U304(f) (PaK 36) - Equivalent of the Sdkfz 251/10, mounting the 37mm PaK 36
- Granatwerfer leSPW U304(f) (8cm GrW) - Equivalent of the Sdkfz 251/2, mounting the 8cm mortar
- Sanität leSPW U304(f) (8cm GrW) - Equivalent of the Sdkfz 251/8
- Nachrichtenkraftwagen

Zugkraftwagen Ci/380(f) (Citroën-Kégresse P19)

Gepanzerter Transportkraftwagen P380(f) (Panhard-Kégresse)

Panzerspähwagen VM 701(f) (AMR-33)

Panzerspähwagen ZT 702(f) (AMR-35)

- PSW ZT 702(f)
- some were rearmed with 2cm KwK 30 or KwK 38 L/55 guns
- 8cm Granatwerfer auf PSW AMR35(f)

Panzerspähwagen Wh 201(f) (AMD Laffly 50AM)

Panzerspähwagen Laf 202(f) (AMD Laffly 80AM)

Panzerspähwagen 203(f) (AMD Panhard 165/175)

Panzerspähwagen 204(f) (AMD Panhard 178)

- PSW 204(f)
- some were rearmed with 2cm KwK 30 or KwK 38 L/55 guns
- some were modified and rearmed with 5cm KwK L/42 guns
- some were converted to railway protection armored cars
- some were converted to command vehicles without turret

Panzerkampfwagen AMC 738(f) (AMC-35)

Panzerkampfwagen 17R/18R 730(f) (Renault FT 17/18)

Panzerkampfwagen 730c (f) is the cannon version and 730m (f) is the MG version. Many were used in armored trains or were given to the Luftwaffe as snow ploughs for airfields

Panzerkampfwagen 35R 731(f) (Renault R35)

- Panzerkampfwagen 35R 731(f)
- Befehlspanzer 35R (f) with a MG34 (26 produced)
- Munitionspanzer 35R 731(f)
- Bergeschlepper 35R 731(f) (towing of vehicles)
- Zugkraftwagen 35R 731(f)
- 4.7cm Pak(t) auf PzKpfw 35R (f) (200 produced)
- 5.0cm Pak38 auf PzKpfw 35R (f) (prototype)
- Flammenwerferpanzer 35R (f)
- Mörserzugmittel 35R (f) (Artillerie-Schlepper)
- some were used in armored trains

Panzerkampfwagen 40 R 736(f) (Renault R40)

Panzerkampfwagen D1 732(f) (Renault D1)

Panzerkampfwagen D2 733(f) (Renault D2)

- Panzerkampfwagen D2 733(f)
- number of turrets was sent to Croatia and mounted on armored trains

Panzerkampfwagen 35H 734(f) (Hotchkiss H35)

- Panzerkampfwagen 35H 734(f)
- Munitionsschlepper 35H 734(f)
- 7.5cm Pak40 auf PzKpfw 35H (f) "Marder I (SdKfz 135)"
- Sif. für 28/32cm Wurfrahmen auf PzKpfw 35H(f)
- some were used in armored trains
- Artillerie Panzerbeobachtungswagen auf 35H 734(f)

Panzerkampfwagen 38H 735(f) (Hotchkiss H39)

- Panzerkampfwagen 38H 735(f)
- 7.5cm Pak40 auf PzKpfw 38H (f) "Marder I (SdKfz 135)"
- Munitionsschlepper 38H 735(f)
- Großer Funk- & Befehlspanzer 38H 735(f) (24 produced)
- Artillerie Panzerbeobachtungswagen auf 38H 735(f)
- 10.5cm leFH18/4 auf Geschützwagen 38H (f) , Wespe-equivalent based on Hotchkiss H39 tank
- Sif. für 28/32cm Wurfrahmen auf PzKpfw 38H(f)
- Mörserzugmittel 38H (f) (Artillerie-Schlepper)
- some were used in armored trains

Panzerkampfwagen FCM 737(f) (FCM 36)

- Panzerkampfwagen FCM 737(f)
- 7.5cm Pak40 auf PzKpfw FCM (f) "Marder I (SdKfz 135)"
- 10.5cm leFH16 auf Geschützwagen FCM (f) (48 produced)

Panzerkampfwagen 35S 739(f) (Somua S35)

- Panzerkampfwagen 35S 739(f)
- Fahrschulpanzer 35S (f)
- Mörserzugmittel 35S (f) (Artillerie-Schlepper)
- Befehlspanzer 35S (f)
- Munitions-Schlepper 35S (f)
- Pak40 auf Somua 35S (f)
- some were used in armored trains

Germans used about 300 Somua S-35s under the name Panzerkampfwagen 35S 739(f). It was mainly used in anti-partisans warfare but was also issued for example to Panzer Abteilung 211 in Finland in 1941. They could also be found as Fahrschulpanzer Somua 35S(f), as artillery towing vehicle and as protection in armored trains. Some 35S were modified with a German tank commander's copula.

Panzerkampfwagen B2 740(f) (Renault B1bis)

160 B2(f) tanks were used by the German army :

- Panzerkampfwagen B2 740(f)
- 10.5cm leFH18/3 auf Geschützwagen B2(f) (18 converted in 1942)
- Flammenwerferpanzer Renault B2 (f), retaining the turret-mounted 47mm, but with the hull-mounted 75mm replaced by a flamethrower (60 converted)
- Fahrschulpanzer B1 (f) (turretless) (regular B2(f) + Fahrschulpanzers = 82 tanks)

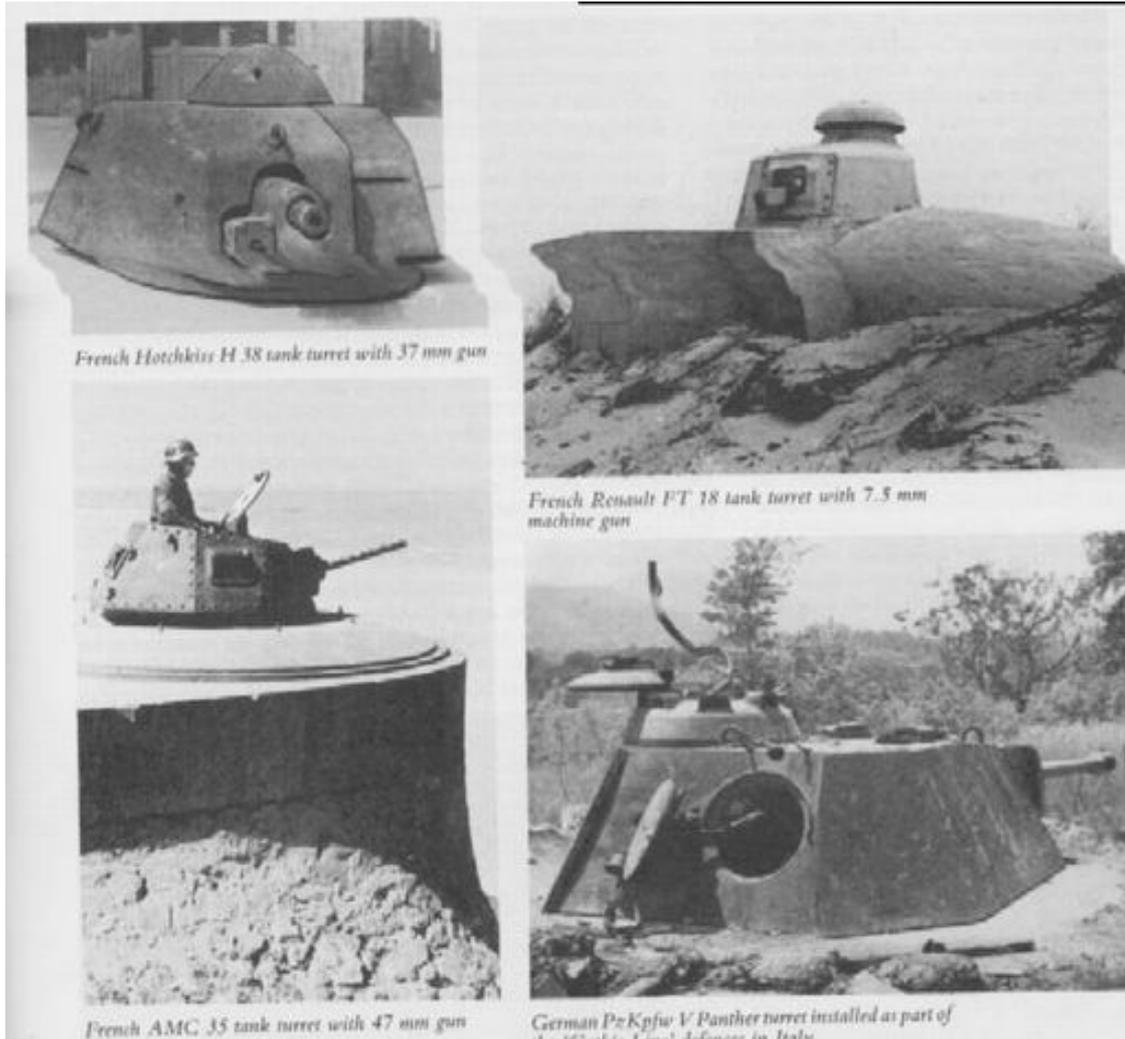
19.4cm Kanone 485 (f) auf Selbstfahrlafette

Panzerkampfwagen 3C 741(f) (FM2C)

Panzerkampfwagen 770(f) (Renault YS)

Many trucks and cars (Citroën, Panhard, Peugeot, Renault, Unic, Matford, Willeme, Simca etc.)

Tank turrets were used in coastal defenses or for protection of important areas



This Somua tank turret with its 47mm cannon guarded the entrance to Honfleur Harbor. (BA)

In August 1940, Hitler already decided that in further enlargement of the Army, the possibility of a campaign against Soviet Russia had to be considered. By the time this campaign began in June 1941, 84 more divisions were created. Just before Barbarossa, 88 infantry divisions, 3 motorized infantry divisions and 1 Panzerdivision were largely equipped with French vehicles. Without the extensive booty from the western campaign of 1940, these units would have remained without weapons and vehicles. Motor vehicles in particular played an important role in the motorization of the divisions. The 18.PzD was equipped with strictly stock French motor vehicles until the end of May 1941. Among the trucks, the 4.5-ton Citroën Type 45 attained a certain significance. The 1-ton Peugeot was also seen often. The same was true for the French halftrack (Somua MCL and MCG, Unic P107 etc.) towing vehicles, which were used as tractors in the Panzerjäger units, infantry gun companies and motorized artillery units.

Most of the motor vehicles (German, French or other booty trucks) massively used for various transports were not to have long lives under the rough conditions of the Eastern theatre of war. The progressive deterioration of the German army's motor vehicle situation already in the autumn of 1941 led to numerous use and new production of French trucks and also to the transformation of about 200 French tanks into towing vehicles/tractors (Renault and Hotchkiss Mörserzugmittel / Artillerie-Schlepper).

Captured French aircraft and on-board weapons were put to use within certain limits. The Luftwaffe made more frequent use of airdropped ammunition. Among others, the French 50kg splinter bombs in packages of four with the Ab 500 3 A airdrop container were used, and the small 1kg splinter bombs were also kept in production.

About 5148 Renault UE (model 1931) and UE2 (model 1937) has been built for the French army (according to François Vauvillier's "L'automobile sous l'uniforme"). The German army captured some 3000 UE tractors (of those many were damaged and were only used to provide spare parts I guess) and had them overhauled in an assembly plant at Paris (Issy-les-Moulineaux) under the direction of the M.A.N. company.

These tractors were used in different tasks :

- towing light infantry guns (leIG18) and 3.7cm Paks
- towing 5.0cm, 7.5cm and 7.62cm Paks as well as heavy infantry guns (sIG33)
- transporting position material and seated wounded
- self-propelled mount for installed 3.7cm Pak36 and 2.5cm Pak112/113(f)
- scout car with installed machine gun
- armored car for the protection of airfields
- ammunition carrier +/- trailer to arm gun positions
- 28/32cm rocket launcher
- for training, simulating dummy tanks
- artillery observation

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A significant rebuilding was the Renault UE reconnaissance tank. By the Becker building staff, 24 tractors were equipped with an armored rear body in which radio equipment and observation personnel were housed. Several of these vehicles were used by the 21. PzD.

The Luftwaffe rebuilt UE tractors into genuine small tanks used for securing its airfields and bases. By installing machine guns behind shields and in armored balconies, small series of securing vehicles were created.

The French UE tractor is also used by the Luftwaffe for towing aircraft bombs. Large bombs were simply attached to chains and dragged over the ground. Sometimes transport sleds made of wood were also used to move the bombs.

After the battle of France, the German troops recovered/repared many French tanks, about :

- 500 FT-17
- 800 R-35/40
- 600 H-35/39
- 50 FCM-36
- 160 B1bis (18 B2(f) with 10.5 cm howitzers, 60 B2 flammpanzer and 82 B2(f) tanks + turretless B2(f) Fahrschulpanzer)
- 297 Somua S-35 tanks

Beginning 1942 the Waffen-SS security forces received 250 FT-17, 30 R-35 and 60 Hotchkiss tanks. Several tanks were given to Germany allies like for example 40 Renault R35 to Bulgaria and other R35 tanks to Croatia. The Luftwaffe used 100 FT-17 (25 for the Luftgaukommando Holland, 30 for the Luftgaukommando Belgien und Nordfrankreich and 45 for the Luftgaukommando Westfrankreich). For example, on December 31, 1944, 350 Hotchkiss based tanks were still used by the German army, although mostly in police and school units.

Concerning the **Somua S35**, though blaming its small turret, the High Command recognizes it as one of the best contemporary tanks. Its main assets are speed, armor and excellent 47mm SA35 L/34 gun (better penetration than the 3.7cm KwK36 L/46.5 of the Panzer III). So the modifications made are minimal to suit it to German use : copula cropped down and equipped with a 2 lid hatch, and the frequent addition of a FuG 5 10 watts radio set. The

command version gets a frame antenna over the rear and the gun is now a wooden dummy. The only other known German variant is the driver training "Fahrschule" tank, with the front hull component and turret removed.

One can try a not exhaustive distribution of the Somua S35 tanks. In many units the tank troops were made up of a Somua S35 leading 4 Hotchkiss H39 (38H in the German designation).

At the end of 1940 and beginning of 1941, Pz.Rgt.201 and 202 were created in France (each with 2 Abteilungen of 3 light companies), as well as the Pz.Abt.301. This one will soon be renamed in March 1941 to become the second Abteilung of Pz.Rgt.202, as the first units of this name went to battle in Finland. The second phase of units' creation was in June 1941, in the wake of the 3rd wave of rising new Panzerdivisionen, and corresponding regiments were equipped with French AFVs. But the units were often reequipped with German or Czech tanks before going to the Russian front. To be more precise, the units are Pz.Rgt.201 (which went to 23.PzD in December 1941), Pz.Rgt.202 (The I.Abteilung was sent to Yugoslavia in September 1941, the II.Abteilung and III.Abteilung were issued to the 26.PzD), Pz.Rgt.203 (it fought as an independent unit as part of Army Group North from December 1941) and Pz.Rgt.204 (to 22.PzD). This wave included the independent zbv 12 (mainly an administrative unit), company Paris (it says it all) and Pz.Abt.212 (going to Crete, also with some German tanks), Pz.Abt.214 (to Norway) ; the Pz.Abt.217 was sent to Jersey and Guernsey but used only B2(f) (Renault B1bis). So, at the end of 1941 and beginning of 1942, French tanks (often Somua S35 as part of the inventory) were seen only in I.Abt./201 in Yugoslavia, II.Abt./202 in Finland and Abteilungen 212, 214, 217. That is if you do not take into account the independent companies and such smaller units scattered in the West. But the material of the units reequipped left out in France was not lost.

The 3rd phase happened during the 1942 spring when the Panzerdivisionen fighting in Russia were sent to France for refit (before the summer offensive in South Russia) and so were given French tanks (Hotchkiss and Somua) : they were in Pz.Rgt.1, 2, 7, 11, 25 and 36. But these tanks were not involved in fighting when the divisions returned to Russia as they had received new German tanks before the long journey. Some units were created in France at the same time and went to the fight, as was Pz.Kie.223 which later merged in 22.PzD in Crimea, where it found use for its Somua S35s around Sevastopol in the spring of 1942.

The last phase was the creation of a unit destined to regroup the groups that housed French tanks in OB West in October 1942, Panzer Brigade 100 (which will quickly become Pz.Rgt.100). The Abteilungen going to this regiment were naturally the ones using French tanks in France, grossly Pz.Kie.81, 100 and 223. This regiment will eventually be involved in the rebuilding of the 21.PzD in July 1943 in France and will eventually be renamed Pz.Rgt.22 on 20th May 1944.

A major evolution occurred in October 1943 when the material captured in September from the former Italian ally begin to reequip the units fighting the partisan in the Balkans : Z.b.V 12, Pz.Abt.202 (lost near Beograd in 1944, it had initially 2 Somua S35 in HQ and 3 in 1st company) and SS Pz.Abt.7 'Prinz Eugen'. The last units with French tanks were created in November 1943. Pz.Abt.205 was deployed in the North of France and became anti-tank Abteilung in December 1944 (it had before that 10 Somua S35s : 2 in HQ and 4 in the 1st and 2nd companies). Pz.Abt.206 fought against the US forces in June 1944 in the Cotentin Peninsula (it had 10 Somua S35s : 2 in HQ and 4 in the 1st and 2nd companies) and was lost in Cherbourg. Pz.Ersatz Abt.100, created in April 1941 to train the crews on French tanks, went through all the reorganizations but met its fate in Normandy fighting along the 91.ID (it still had one Somua S35 on 19th May 1944).

Photos exist of Somua S35s in use in the following units : SS Gebirgsdivision 'Nord' in Norway 1943 and SS Division Totenkopf (France 1940). Among the units appearing in reports, there is Panzer-Jäger Abt.657 created in 1943 in the Netherlands, equipped with at least 2 Somua S35s.

The Somua went to 21.PzD which was rebuilt in France in July 1943 after its destruction in Tunisia. On 1st June 1944 the division had still 40 Somua S35s mainly in Pz.Rgt.22, 3 of them in Panzer Nachrichten Kompanie 200 (signal company). No more Somua S35s were recorded in the 1st September reports of this division, but it does not mean they were all destroyed in Normandy, as they were probably given to other units as they were considered as unfit for combat at the time.

As an anti-partisan weapon, the Somua S35 also went naturally to armoured trains. It was transported on railways cars with movable ramps to disembark rapidly and fight the 'saboteurs', or on 'Om' or 'SSK' Köln cars (with no possibility to leave them quickly). Two of these tanks were found on each train on the E. Panzer Züge 25 (replaced in 1943 by Pz38(t) tanks), 29, 30 and 31. The Panzer Züge 26, 27 and 28 got 3 Somua S35s each.

About 72 Somua S35s were released to German allies. Hungary got 2, Bulgaria 6 and Italy 32. The Royal Italian Army requested 50 to equip an experimental mixed company scheduled for Africa. It would have had an armoured car platoon, one equipped with Renault R35s and an other with Somua S35s, but not enough deliveries were made and only the armoured cars went to the front. The Somuas, sent without any spare parts, found their way to Sardinia where the battalion was disbanded without seeing any fight.

About 124 Renault R35 and 32 Somua S35 and maybe a couple of turretless Renault B2(f) tanks were given to Italy by Germany since February 1941 (a few Renault FT-17 tanks captured after the occupation of France in November 1942 were also used as targets in the Ciriè proving ground).

Only 3 tanks battalions were equipped with them :

- CI/131° and CII/131° (3 companies each) using Renault R35; they were in Sicily since December 1941 and took part to the defense of the island in July 1943 being completely destroyed.
- CC (two companies) using Somua S35 tanks was in Sardinia since December 1941; its tanks were used again by French troops after the Italian armistice of 8 September 1943.

A most interesting re-use of the Somua. The Toto's partisans captured a running S35 and rearmed it with a British 6-Pdr gun. The long recoil course obliged them to make up a prominent shield, giving the tank a unique profile.

Concerning the **Renault B1bis**, the first units equipped with B2 flame tanks were the 7th companies of Pz.Rgt.201 and 202, which were regrouped in 1941 in Pz.Abt.102 and engaged on the eastern front. Char B2(f) and B2(f) flame tanks were used during Barbarossa to reduce and destroy Russian fortifications in the summer of 1941. Pz.Abt.213 was later equipped with B2 tanks and stationed in French islands in the Channel.

Pz.Abt.206 was formed in November 1941 at Satory (near Paris), this battalion was used as a reserve unit for the 7.Armee. Wedged in Cherbourg, this unit was destroyed there. Its composition in beginning 1944 included 2 companies of 10 Hotchkiss H39 and 4 Somua S35s (in each company) and one "Stab Kompanie" of 3 Renault B2, 3 Renault B2 flamethrower, 2 Somua S35 and 2 Renault R35. Many such small units were formed with French booty/converted tanks like the Pz.Abt.100 committed to 91.ID in Normandy in 1944 (1 Somua S35, 8 Hotchkiss H39, 14 Renault R35, 1 Flammenwerferpanzer Renault B2, 1 PzIII and 5 FT17c) and the 21. Pz.D. included many French tanks.

Pz.Abt.223 was formed (attached to 22.PzD) with Char B2 flame tanks and was engaged in battles near Sevastopol in 1942. This unit was then expanded to include 2 panzer companies and command elements with a second company composed of 5 B2 and 12 B2 (FI = flamethrower).

Different other units were also equipped with B2(f) tanks : Pz.Abt.224 in the Netherlands (engaged in Arnhem and Oosterbeek in 1944), two companies of the Pz.Rgt.100 in France and one company of 17 B2 from SS Pz.Abt.7 (SS 'Prinz Eugen' division) in the Balkans. In February 1945, 40 B2(f) tanks were still in service in the German army. Late war B2(f) had sometimes a kind of Zimmerit/concrete on their armor, at least on the turret. The B2(f) Flammpanzer could fire about 200x 2-3 seconds "napalm" shots.

Yugoslavia had been overrun in 11 days in April 1941. The 6 Panzerdivisionen that took part were redirected to the eastern front and the invasion of Russia. The remaining occupation forces in Yugoslavia had not many tanks. Despite the very mountainous area, tanks could be useful to escort convoys, provide fire support to garrisons as well as fight against partisans in search and destroy operations. In 1941, the Italian occupation troops had about 250 AFVs but these were very vulnerable and poorly armed CV33/L3 tankettes. On their side the German troops had only a few Renault FT17 tanks from former Yugoslavian army.

During summer 1941 the situation changed and the Germans sent the I.Abteilung of the Pz.Rgt.202 with about 60 French tanks to take up the role of armored support for anti-partisan forces in the Balkans. There were 3 combat companies (51 tanks), each with with one company HQ (2 Somua S35s) and 3 platoons (1 Somua S35 (platoon commander) and 4 Hotchkiss H39). On 18th September 1941, it was deployed to Serbia with 342.ID. These operations lasted until the middle of December 1941 and I.Abtl./ Pz.Rgt.202 provided armored support to both 342.ID and 113.ID as well as to 704.ID, 714.ID, 717.ID and 718.ID when required. The unit served in the Balkans from January to March 1943 and was also with 22nd Mountain Corps. It is deployed in Hungary in March 1944 and transferred back to the Balkans by May 1944. At one point served under 12th Army (Wehrmacht Command South-East) Armeekorpskommando 12, Generalfeldmarschall Wilhelm List.

Panzer-Kompanie Z.b.V 12 was also created to be administratively in charge of 5 independent platoons with 5 Renault R35s each in Yugoslavia.

On the Italian side very few L6/40 tanks and AB-41 armored cars were sent to Yugoslavia but also mainly AFVs from the 1920's and 1930's, including Lancia 1ZM armoured cars and L5 tanks (Italian copies of the French Renault FT17). The main Italian AFVs remained the L3 tankettes. Around 1943 several Autoprotetto 37 and Fiat 665NM Scudato armoured trucks were also sent as well as two SMV da75/18 and a few M13/40 in Slovenia.

During 1941-1943 the Germans deployed also other tank units :

- SS Pz.Abt.7 with the SS division 'Prinz Eugen' : 17 Renault B2 and B2(FI) with also several Hotchkiss H39 tanks. The Renault B1bis is then the most powerful tank in Yugoslavia.
- Polizei-Gebirgsjäger-Regiment 18 including 20 Renault R35 tanks and 12 Steyr ADGZ armored cars (moves to Finland in December 1942)
- 6. Polizei-Panzer-Kompanie with 6 Steyr ADGZ armored cars and 5 Hotchkiss tanks
- 11. Polizei-Panzer-Kompanie with 6 Panhard 178 armored cars and 5 Hotchkiss tanks
- 13. Verstärkte Polizei-Panzer-Kompanie with 6 Steyr ADGZ armored cars, 6 Panzer II Ausf.J (VK1601, front armor of 50-80mm, only 22 produced but initially rejected by the army), 4 Panzer IV Ausf.F1 and 2 Sd.Kfz.251/16 (flamethrower).

After the Italian armistice the Germans seized many Italian equipments. During 1944, the 14., 15. and 16. Polizei-Panzer-Kompanie are equipped with Italian vehicles. The 373.(kroat.)ID received also 10 L6/40 tanks and 2 Autoprotetto in its Panzerjäger Abteilung. During 1944, the Pz.Abt.202 replaces its last French tanks by new Italian ones : 67 M15-42 (improved M13-40) but 70% of them are quickly not operational due to the cold weather.

The divisions SS 'Prinz Eugen', SS 'Handschar' and SS 'Skanderbeg' had one or two Hotchkiss H35/39 and Renault R35 companies, mostly in their Aufklärung Abteilung beside motorcycle and horse mounted men. The SS Kama division was later issued with the French tanks of the SS Handschar divisions in fall 1944. There were also Hotchkiss H39s in the Pz.Abt.200 during the Belgrad battle in October 1944.

According to Otto Kumm ("Vorwärts Prinz Eugen !") and completed by German and Yugoslavian archives, the 105. SS-StuG Abt from captain Paletta attacked on 11th October 1944 a T34 battalion progressing with the 36th Tito's partisans division, in front of Obrenovac (south-west of Belgrad). The dozen StuGs from SS Prinz Eugen are supported by French H-39 and R-35 tanks from Pz.Abt.200 and SS Aufklärung Abt. 21 from Kampfgruppe Skanderbeg. They destroyed 13 T34/85 and about 100 other miscellaneous vehicles. This counter-attack was launched to cover the retreat of elements from Armee-Gruppen E and F across the Save. Then the Renault and Hotchkiss tanks protected the retreat of the StuGs. By the end of the day the H39s and R35s are hardly attacked by IL-2 Sturmoviks.

The Hotchkiss, Somua and Renault French tanks were really liked in the Balkans because of their small size which allowed them to operate in the mountain areas, on the small trails and "roads" there and to provide close fire support to the engaged infantry units. There was also a huge stockpile of spare parts in the Renault and Hotchkiss factories in France.

To these tanks you have to add all the other vehicles : motorcycles, sidecars, cars, trucks, armored cars and the numerous conversions based on French chassis and realized by the Germans. French captured tanks and armored cars were first use on the Eastern front. Several new units were first trained on French tanks like 24.PzD and 25.PzD formed respectively in France (November 1941) and Norway (February 1942) with French tanks before being converted to German ones when sent to the front. These tanks were nevertheless not only used for training or anti-partisans warfare, for example the Pz.Abt.211 in Finland destroyed 24 Russian tanks and 5 AT guns between 4-8th July 1941 in Salla, North Finland. This unit was equipped with H39 and S35 tanks (Source : Kari Kuusela – "Wehrmacht in Panssarit Suomessa/Panzers In Finland").

The Germans were not long to realize the usefulness in combat of the Panhard P178. Seen as technically rated over the average armored cars, notably over the SdKfz 222 series, they were immediately put back to service during the campaign of France with German crosses.

About 190 P178 armored cars were used unmodified in 1941 with 107 lost in action on the Eastern front during following years. At the beginning of Barbarossa, beside Waffen-SS units such as "Totenkopf" or "Das Reich" and police units, the PSW-204(f) was mainly found in the 37th (7.PzD) and 92nd (20.PzD) armored reconnaissance battalions. 64 vehicles in the 37th (10 more than in theory) and 54 vehicles in the 92th with generally 18 radio variants. The Panhard 178 was the vehicle that went the closer to Moscow, they reached the terminal bus station.

In the secondary security tasks several exemplars were put on railway cars in armored trains (such as Panzerzug 25) to protect the lines. Later 43 were transformed in true "draisine", mostly to operate on rail-roads against partisans in the Balkans. After the invasion of the "Free Zone" in November 1942 more Panhard P178s had been captured, most of these were twin-MG variants. There were also an undetermined number of P178s fitted with the CDM turret (version with the 47mm SA35 gun) found in hidden depots. At least 2 were used in the Sicherung Aufklärungsabteilung 1000 (affiliated to 89.ID). They fought against partisans in Auvergne. The 1st Army for example still had 10 Panhard P178 on 30th December 1944 on the Western front.

Command Panhard P178s with a casemate instead of a turret and two radios were also captured in France, some kept their former role but most were given to PK (Propaganda Kompanie) units, often issued to war correspondents of the Waffen-SS ("Das Reich" and "Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler"). Armed with a MG34 and equipped with a German radio set, these vehicles were also equipped with cameras and sound recording equipments.

During Summer 1943, several Panhard P178s were rearmed with a 5.0cm KwK L/42 gun installed in a superstructure unarmored to the rear. A few Panhard P178s were rearmed with a 5.0cm KwK L/60 gun but fitted with the muzzle brake from a Pak38.

Such a Panhard 178 with a 5.0cm KwK L/60 gun was captured and used in 1944-1945 by the 1st GMR (Groupement Mobile de Reconnaissance) of the FFI (French Forces of the Interior). This unit later called 'escadron autonome de chars Besnier' (Besnier independent tank squadron) is equipped in December 1944 with :

- 1x Panhard 178 with a standard 25mm gun
- 1x Panhard 178 with a 5.0cm L/60 gun
- 2x French Unic trucks fitted with a 81mm mortar
- 2x StuG III
- 1x Tiger I
- 1x Tiger II
- 1x Panther
- 11x Panzer IV
- 1x Jagdpanzer on French Lorraine chassis
- 1x Panzerwerfer 42
- 1x SdKfz-7 with a 20mm Flak
- 2x towing halftracks
- 1x workshop truck
- 4x lights trucks
- 4x heavy trucks

There was also a certain number of turretless command cars (maybe former French armored cars sent to the front in June 1940 without turret and only armed with a FM 24/29 or a MG behind a makeshift shield). There is a model with an aircraft modified turret armed with a MG81 which served for the protection of the Luftwaffe column 143. The Italians used also 2 Panhard P178s captured in November 1942 when the Germans seized Southern France, they could be found in the 224th coastal division.

In June 1943 the situation is grossly the following :

• Eastern Front

Heeresgruppe A : 6 Renault B2

Heeresgruppe Süd : 12 Panhard P178

Heeresgruppe Mitte : 15 Hotchkiss H39, 2 Somua S35, 18 Panhard P178

Südosten (Balkans) : 96 Hotchkiss H39, 43 Somua S35, 17 Renault B2

• Western Front

149 Hotchkiss H39

67 Somua S35

81 Renault B2

58 Renault R35

12 Renault FT17/18

33 Panhard P178

• Norway

68 Hotchkiss H39

17 Somua S35

• Finland (Panzer-Abteilung 211 + Panzerkampfwagen-Zug 217, 218 and 219)

33 Hotchkiss H39

16 Somua S35

Germans had still about 700 French tanks in mid-1943 and still at the end of the war there were about 425 such tanks in the inventory. There were numerous Renault UE(f) (initially 3000 used), Lorraine tractors, Marder based on French chassis, softskins and halftracks etc.

The main **conversions** are :

- 200x 4.7cm Pak(t) auf PzKpfw R35 (f) "Marder I (SdKfz 135)"
- 26x Befehlspanzer auf PzKpfw R35 (f)
- 170x Lorraine 37L converted to 7.5cm Pak40 auf PzKpfw 37L (f) "Marder I (SdKfz 135)"
- 24x 7.5cm Pak40 auf PzKpfw 38H (f) "Marder I (SdKfz 135)"
- 10x 7.5cm Pak40 auf PzKpfw FCM (f) "Marder I (SdKfz 135)"
- 72x 7.5cm Pak40 auf Somua halftrack chassis
- 107x converted Lorraine tractors with 15cm (102), 10.5cm (24) or 12.2cm (r) (1 vehicle on an armored train) howitzers and used as SP artillery in the PzDs before the arrival of the Wespe and Hummel SP howitzers.
- 48x FCM-36 converted with 10.5cm howitzers.
- beside the Lorraine and FCM conversions, there were also numerous Hotchkiss conversions and for example the 200. StuG Abt / 21. PzD in Normandy was equipped with 16x 7.5cm Pak40 auf Hotchkiss and 24x 10.5cm leFH18 auf Hotchkiss
- 18x B2 chassis with 10.5 cm howitzers
- 60x B2 tanks with flamethrower
- + other halftracks/tanks converted to SP AT gun, SP mortar(s), SP flamethrower, SP Flak or SP rocket-launchers
- + halftracks converted to APCs like the leSPW U304(f)
- etc.

The 21.PzD in 1944 had over 50 different softskin types (mainly French) including Citroën, Laffly and Renault trucks. Unic P107 and Somua MCL and MCG halftracks as well as Somua SPWs were very common. In emergency situation the Germans always used their booty vehicles and proved to be skilled to convert and re-use

all what they captured ... Even old 120mm Mle1878 De Bange French guns (!) were still used in some fortifications and by Rumanian troops in 1944. If they didn't used themselves some of these booty equipments they provided their allies (mainly Rumania, Bulgaria and Italy) with captured vehicles, guns, small arms or planes. All these captured equipments were necessary to the motorization of the German army of 1941.

About 100 7.5cm Pak40 auf Geschützwagen Lorraine "Marder I (SdKfz.135)" were still in service in 1943 :

• Units in the West using the Marder I during 1943 were :

LVXXXIII. Korps

Pz.Rgt. 100

1. PzD : 9 (already gone by 10.5.43, probably handed over to 26. Pz.Div., which kept them only for about 1 month)

44. ID : 9 (during summer 1943 exchanged for Marder III)

65. ID : 9 (during summer 1943 exchanged for Marder III)

76. ID : 9 (during summer 1943 exchanged for Marder III)

94. ID : 9 (during summer 1943 exchanged for Marder III)

113. ID : 9 (during summer 1943 exchanged for Marder III)

158. Reserve Division = 9

305. ID

343. ID

346. ID

348. ID

353. ID

384. ID

708. ID

709. ID

711. ID

712. ID

716. ID

719. ID

• Units in the East using the Marder I during 1943 were :

31. ID : 8 (4 on 31st December 1943)

35. ID : 8 (2 on 31st December 1943)

36. ID : 1

72. ID : 8 (4 on 31st December 1943)

206. ID : 8 (7 on 31st December 1943)

256. ID : 9 (7 on 31st December 1943)

384. ID : 14 (20th December 1943)

The French industries had also been mobilized by the German occupant :

• Berliet :

Various Berliet trucks were used by the German army (DGRA, GDC, GDM, VDCA etc.) and about 30 Berliet tank carriers were used by the Wehrmacht.

During 1943-1944 for example, 1262 trucks (5t) were produced for the German army.

• Bernard :

A few Bernard trucks (fuel tank trucks etc.) were used by the German army.

• Citroën :

Many booty cars, trucks and halftracks (Citroën Kégresse P14, P17, P19) were captured and used by the Germans. The Citroën-Kégresse P19 = Ci380(f) can for example be found in the Schnelle Brigade West. Many other vehicles were produced for the Germans between 1941 and 1944 like for example :

- 3700 type 23 trucks
- 6000 type 32U trucks
- 15300 type 45 trucks (the majority of the trucks of Schnelle Brigade West)

• Delahaye :

About 1000 SdKfz-11 were produced for the Germans (ordered in 1942).

The Delahaye factory also produced spare parts for the Büssing-NAG 4500.

• ELMAG (in Mulhouse, Alsace) :

Production of 1143 SdKfz-8 halftracks and spare parts for German halftracks between 1942 and 1944.

• Ford :

At the beginning of WW2, the French Ford factories located at Poissy and Asnières were controlled by the Laffly company. They transformed 1000 Ford trucks in half-tracked trucks (Maultier) and produced spare parts for the Ford trucks captured in Europe.

• Gnôme-Rhône :

Gnôme-Rhône in Gennevilliers (nowadays SNECMA) produced German engines for planes like the Henschel 129.

Gnôme-Rhône motorcycles and side-cars were also used by the Germans.

• Hotchkiss :

During the occupation, Hotchkiss produced spare parts, engines and several chassis for the Germans from 1940 to 1944 . Some Laffly vehicles (R15R, S20TL, W15T etc.) and several Hotchkiss personal cars (PKW Typ680, 686 and 686 PNA) were also produced for the Germans.

• Isobloc :

Numerous buses had been produced for the French army. Several W843M medical buses were used by the Germans. They could carry 30 lying wounded soldiers or a whole mobile surgical antenna.

• Laffly :

Many Laffly V15R, S15R, S20TL, W15T etc. were captured and used by the Germans.

A small number of armored SPW based on the W15T were produced for the Schnelle Brigade West.

In 1942, 60 Renault R-40 tanks were transformed for snow milling. 119 Renault R-40 were modified for the Luftwaffe (towing vehicles ?) and 200 various German tracked vehicles were also modified for the Luftwaffe by the Laffly factory. Laffly transformed also 22 wheeled and 33 tracked vehicles in snow ploughs.

• Latil :

Many Latil trucks and utility vehicles had been captured by the Wehrmacht. Some of the heavier trucks (Latil TAR H2) were again produced for the German forces.

• Lorraine :

Many Lorraine 37L and 38L were captured and used or modified by the Germans. The Lorraine factory also produced 500 SdKfz-9 in 1942.

• Matford (in Strasbourg, Alsace) :

Matford was born from the fusion between Ford and the French Mathis company. A few trucks were produced but mainly spare parts for the French booty Matford trucks like the Matford F917.

• Panhard & Levassor :

About 2000 Panhard trucks were delivered to the Germans army and about 1000 couples of tracks for the SdKfz-7 have been produced.

• Peugeot :

The factory is controlled by KDFWagen (future Volkswagen).

Many cars (Peugeot 202 and 402) and light trucks (Peugeot DMA, DK etc.) were captured and used but also produced. Between 1941 and 1944 Peugeot delivered to the Germans :

- 12500 Peugeot DK5
- 15300 Peugeot DMA
- about 15000 Peugeot 202 and 402

That make **about 28000 trucks delivered to the Germans.**

The factory produced also spare parts for the Kübelwagen and a few Volkswagen type 82 and 166 were completed. 150 SdKfz-10 per month were also planned to be produced in 1942 but the delivered number is unknown.

• Renault :

For Renault, most of the archives have disappeared during the allied bombings of 1944 but in François Vauvillier's book "l'automobile sous l'uniforme" it is indicated that about **28000 Renault trucks had been produced for the Germans** during the occupation (AHS, AHN, AHR, AGC, ADK, ADH etc.). The Renault factories were administrated by Prinz Von Urach (who will later be the press attaché of Daimler-Benz after WW2). About 23000 Renault AHS trucks were used by the Germans (booty and new produced ones).

For example, from 1941 to 1944, 4000 Renault AHN and 2000 Renault AHR had been produced for the German army. In 1943, 704 AGC3 were delivered.

Renault produced also spare parts for the SdKfz-7 and SdKfz-11.

• Saurer :

Several trucks were still produced for the Germans, especially the Saurer type 3CT which was liked. For example between 1943 and 1944 some 1800 3CT trucks were delivered to the Germans.

• Simca :

Simca produced personal cars for the German/Italian Army

1941/1942: 5983 Simca 5 (aka Fiat 500 Topolino) and 3960 Simca 8 (aka Fiat 1100)

1943: 122 Simca 8 and 19 Simca 5

1944: 180 Simca 8 and 23 Simca 5

Simca was intended to produce 2500 SdKfz-2 Kettenkraftrad but there seem not to have been produced. Tracks for the SdKfz-7, SdKfz-10 and SdKfz-11 were also produced.

• Somua :

Beside the Somua S-35 tanks, many MCL named S303(f) and MCG named S307(f) halftracks were captured. Many of these halftracks have been armored.

• Talbot :

From 1941 to 1944, Talbot produced tracks for the SdKfz-7, SdKfz-10 and SdKfz-11, braces for the Büssing-NAG S4500 and complete steering for the Panzer 38(t).

• Trippel :

The factory was located at Molsheim (Alsace) in the former Bugatti factory. They produced the Trippel SG6 amphibious car.

• Unic :

About 200 Unic TU1 U305(f) and 3000 Unic P107 U304(f) were used by the German army.

• Willeme :

A few Willeme type DU10 (10t) heavy trucks were used by the German army.

Beside the booty vehicles, the main companies (Renault, Peugeot, Citroën, Panhard, Berliet and Saurer ...) produced about 90,000 new trucks for the German army between 1941 and 1944. Especially for the Eastern front 200 French tanks were also converted to Mörserzugmittel / Artillerie-Schlepper / Bergeschlepper (tractors).

EXAMPLES OF UNITS ISSUED WITH FRENCH VEHICLES IN NORMANDY IN 1944 :

• 100. Panzer Abteilung (committed to 91. ID)

Panzerkampfwagen 35R 731(f)
 Panzerkampfwagen 39H 735(f)
 Panzerkampfwagen 35S 739(f)
 Flammenwerferpanzer Renault B2 (f)
 Panzerkampfwagen 17R 730c(f)

• 21. Panzer Division

Panzerkampfwagen 35S 739(f)
 Panzerkampfwagen 39H 735(f)
 Flammenwerferpanzer Renault B1/B2 (f)
 Panzerbeobachtungswagen auf 35/38/39H(f)
 Großer Funk- & Beobachtungspanzer Lorraine-S (f)
 10,5cm leFH18/40 auf Geschützwagen 38H (f)
 10,5cm leFH18 auf Geschützwagen Lorraine
 15cm sFH13/1 auf Geschützwagen Lorraine
 8cm Reihenwerfer auf SPW Somua S303/307 (f)
 8cm Vielfachwerfer auf SPW Somua S303/307 (f)
 7,5cm Pak40 auf PzKpfw 38H (f) "Marder I (SdKfz 135)"
 7,5cm Pak40 auf PzKpfw 39H (f) "Marder I (SdKfz 135)"
 7,5cm Pak40/1 auf Geschützwagen Lorraine "Marder I (SdKfz 135)"
 7,5cm Pak40 (Sf) auf mSPW S307(f)
 4,7cm Pak(t) auf PzKpfw 35R (f)
 Zugkraftwagen P107 U304(f)
 Zugkraftwagen Somua MCL S303 (f)
 Zugkraftwagen Somua MCG S307(f)
 leSPW U304(f)
 leSPW U304(f) (Fkl)
 leSPW U304(f) (FlaK 38)
 leSPW U304(f) (PaK 36)
 leSPW U304(f) (8cm GrW)
 mSPW S303(f)
 mSPW S303(f) (Pionier)
 mSPW S307(f)

Softskins : over 50 different softskin types (mainly French, but also some Italian ones) including Citroën, Laffly and Renault trucks. Unic-Kégresse P107 and Somua MCL and MCG halftracks as well as Somua SPWs were very common.

• Artillerie Regiment of the 716. ID was equipped with :

8cm Reihenwerfer auf SPW Somua S303 (f)
 8cm Vielfachwerfer auf SPW Somua S307 (f)

• Panzerjäger Abteilung of the 709. ID had nine 7,5cm Pak40 (Sf) auf mSPW S307(f)

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