

**Notes on the organization of the
German *Schützen* and *Kradschützen*
Battalion
1938 to 1941**

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Introduction

This is the third entry in the series of studies of [German Infantry Battalion](#) organizations used during the Second World War. It is a difficult one to write, in part because so many of the original records are missing, and also because there was so much variation in the organization of *Schützen* units in the early part of the war.

In the last few years new documents have surfaced, which have been augmented by several extremely valuable donations from fellow enthusiasts. Taken together, these documents have provided enough material for me to have a crack at a reconstruction of the missing *Schützen* tables.

While I am by no means the first one to attempt it, it is a project I had always wanted to try and I'm happy that I've finally done so. There is still much need for guesswork, especially when it comes to the composition of the various Trains, overall though I am reasonably content with the result. Please see the sources and acknowledgements section for details of the sources used.

This document gives an outline of the development of the Battalion, before looking at its component subunits in more detail. Complete descriptions of the various *Schützen* Battalions discussed here are available in PDF files accessible from the below linked area of the site.

[German Army organization during the Second World War](#)

There are substantial gaps in the primary documentation on this subject. If anyone reading this can give me a pointer on where to find more information, or can offer more direct assistance, I would be interested to hear from you. See the Home page for contact info.

I hope this proves of use to anyone interested in the subject.

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Organization of the *Schützen* Battalion

1938 to 1940

The term *Schützen* dates back to the early 1800s and usually referred to troops armed with rifles as distinct from muskets. When the first Panzer Divisions were formed by the Germany Army in the 1930s, their infantry component was given the title of *Schützen*. They were fully motorised and able to lift all their personnel and weapons in a single move, without the need for additional transport.

The organization of the early war *Schützen* is a particularly torrid subject. There were numerous KStN tables, each detailing the authorised strength and organization of a particular subunit, however the way they fitted together varied considerably across the Panzer and *leichte* (Light) Divisions.

Below is a list of the KStN tables issued for *Schützen* units as of late 1938. Those tables highlighted in red are missing.

KStN ref.	Title	Comments
54	Brigade Headquarters	
1104	Regimental Headquarters	
1197	Regimental Communication Platoon	
202	Infantry Column (motorised)	
1119	Infantry Gun Company	8x 7.5-cm light inf guns
1108	Battalion Headquarters	Includes Comm. Det
1114	Rifle Company type 'b'	9 LMG, 2 HMG, 3x 5-cm
1115	Rifle Company 'c'	18 LMG, 4 HMG, 3x 5-cm
1116	Machine Gun Company 'b'	8 HMG, 6x 8-cm
1109	Battalion Headquarters (Motorcycle)	Non-Regimented
1111	Motorcycle Rifle Company	9 LMG, 2 HMG, 3x 5-cm
1111a	Motorcycle Rifle Company	18 LMG, 4 HMG, 3x 5-cm
1118	Motorcycle MG Company	8 HMG, 6x 8-cm
1121	Headquarters, Heavy Company	Commands below types
1122	Anti-tank Platoon	3x 3.7-cm atk guns, 1 LMG
1123	Infantry Gun Platoon	2x 7.5-cm infantry guns
1124	Pioneer Platoon	3 Squads, each 1 LMG
1126	Mortar Platoon	6x 8-cm mortars
184	Infantry Anti-tank Company	12x 3.7-cm atk guns, 4 LMG

5-cm and 8-cm in the above comments refer to mortars. LMG is light machine gun and HMG is heavy machine gun. KStN 184 is as that used in the standard Infantry Regiment.

As can be seen from this list, there were at least 18 component KStN tables issued for the various *Schützen* units as of 1939, of which 10 remain. This study attempts to fill in the gaps using the contemporary details that remain.

Structural variations

There was no standard organization for the *Schützen* Battalions and Regiments of 1938 to 1940. Rather, there were multiple variations, each using the authorised KStN but fitting them together in different ways. Below is an outline of the organization of the *Schützen* units as detailed under the Mobilisation Plan of late 1939.

1st, 2nd and 3rd Panzer Divisions (each)

Brigade Headquarters

1 *Schützen* Regiment;

Regimental Headquarters, Communication Platoon, Light Column

2 (later 3*) *Schützen* Battalions, each;

Battalion Headquarters

3 Rifle Companies**

1 MG Company

1 Heavy Company

*(Mobilisation Plan indicates two *Schützen* Battalions, a third was added by transferring in a Motorised Infantry Battalion)

** (one motorcycle, two motorised in I and II Battalions, all motorised in III Battalion)

1 *Kradschützen* Battalion;

Battalion Headquarters

2 Motorcycle Rifle Companies***

1 Motorcycle MG Company

1 Heavy Company

*** (Mobilisation Plan shows three Motorcycle Rifle Companies per *Kradschützen* Battalion, however organizational documents indicate only two were present in each).

4th Panzer Division

1 *Schützen* Regiment;

Regimental Headquarters, Communication Platoon, Light Column, Motorcycle Platoon

2 *Schützen* Battalions, each;

Battalion Headquarters

3 Rifle Companies*

1 Heavy Company

*(one motorcycle, two motorised in II Battalion, all motorised in I Battalion)

1 Schützen Regiment;

Regimental Headquarters, Communication Platoon, Light Column, Motorcycle Platoon
 Infantry Gun Company (motorised), Infantry Anti-tank Company (motorised)

2 Schützen Battalions, each;

Battalion Headquarters
 3 Rifle Companies*
 1 MG Company

*(one motorcycle, two motorised in II Battalion, all motorised in I Battalion)

5th Panzer Division*2 Schützen Regiments (each);*

Regimental Headquarters, Communication Platoon, Light Column, Motorcycle Platoon

2 Schützen Battalions, each;

Battalion Headquarters
 3 Rifle Companies*
 1 Heavy Company

*(one motorcycle, two motorised in all Battalions)

6th and 8th Panzer Divisions (formerly 1st and 3rd leichte Divisions) (each)*1 Schützen Regiment;*

Regimental Headquarters, Communication Platoon, 2 Light Columns

Infantry Gun Company (motorised)

3 Schützen Battalions, each;

Battalion Headquarters
 3 Rifle Companies
 1 MG Company
 1 Anti-tank Platoon

1 Kradschützen Battalion;

Battalion Headquarters
 3 Motorcycle Rifle Companies
 1 MG Company*
 1 Anti-tank Platoon

*(motorised, not motorcycle)

7th Panzer Division (formerly 2nd leichte Division)

2 Schützen Regiments (each);

Regimental Headquarters, Communication Platoon, Light Column

2 Schützen Battalions, each;

Battalion Headquarters

3 Rifle Companies

1 Heavy Company

1 Kradschützen Battalion (non-Regimented);

Battalion Headquarters

2 Motorcycle Rifle Companies

1 Heavy Company

1 Light Column

9th Panzer Division (formerly 4th leichte Division)

2 Schützen Regiments (each);

Regimental Headquarters, Communication Platoon, Light Column, Motorcycle Platoon

2 Schützen Battalions, each;

Battalion Headquarters

3 Rifle Companies

1 Heavy Company

10th Panzer Division

2 Schützen Regiments (each);

Regimental Headquarters, Communication Platoon, Light Column, Motorcycle Platoon

Infantry Gun Company (motorised), Infantry Anti-tank Company (motorised)

2 Schützen Battalions, each;

Battalion Headquarters

3 Rifle Companies*

1 MG Company

*(one motorcycle, two motorised in II Battalion of one Regiment only)

Comment – complicated isn't it?

Overview of the *Schützen* and *Kradschützen* Battalions 1938 to 1940

With so many variations across the infantry components of the Panzer Divisions an overview is a complicated exercise. In effect there were two basic models of *Schützen* Battalion, each subject to some form of modification in certain Panzer Divisions.

The first of these consisted of a Battalion Headquarters (which included the Commander's staff, a Communication Detachment and the Battalion Trains), three Rifle Companies, a Machine Gun Company and a Heavy Company. Each Rifle Company had its own MG Section of two weapons, and three Rifle Platoons, each with three Rifle Squads and a 5-cm mortar detachment. There was an MG34 in each Rifle Squad, with the same weapon being used in the heavy role in the MG Section. Two of the Rifle Companies were carried in light personnel trucks while the third was equipped with motorcycles.

The Machine Gun (MG) Company had two MG Platoons, each with four MG34s as heavy machine guns, and a Mortar Platoon of six 8-cm weapons. The Heavy Company was a result of the decentralisation of support weapons found at Regimental level in the standard Infantry Regiment. In the earliest model of *Schützen* Battalion it consisted of an Anti-tank Platoon, with three towed 3.7-cm guns, an Infantry Gun Platoon, with two 7.5-cm infantry guns, and a Pioneer Platoon, with three Sections, each with an LMG.

The first three *Kradschützen* Battalions followed this format with an important difference, there being only two Rifle Companies. The *Kradschützen* Battalion of 2nd Panzer Division however appears to have been authorised a third Rifle Company. In the Motorcycle MG Company, the MG Platoons were carried on motorcycle combinations while the Mortar Platoon used light personnel trucks.

The first three Panzer Divisions, 1st, 2nd and 3rd, were to each have a single *Schützen* Regiment of two Battalions plus a separate *Kradschützen* Battalion. At the end of 1939 they each added a third Battalion to their *Schützen* Regiments, which were transferred across from Motorised Infantry Divisions. See below for more on this.

The other distinct form of *Schützen* Battalion was found initially in the 4th and 5th Panzer Divisions. It used the same Battalion Headquarters and had three Rifle Companies and a Heavy Company; there was no MG Company. Heavy Company was made up of two Infantry Gun Platoons (each with two 7.5-cm guns), an Anti-tank Platoon (three 3.7-cm guns) and a Mortar Platoon (six 8-cm mortars). The Battalion also included a Pioneer Platoon, which was normally shown as appended to Battalion Headquarters, rather than being part of the Heavy Company

In the Rifle Companies, the MG Section was increased to a Platoon with four heavy machine guns. There were still three Rifle Platoons, each of three Squads, but each Squad now had two light machine guns rather than one. Platoon Headquarters included the usual 5-cm mortar detachment.

The substitution of a motorised Rifle Company with a motorcycle equipped version was also seen in these two Panzer Divisions. In 4th Panzer Division, one Rifle Company of the second Battalion in the first *Schützen* Regiment was on motorcycles, while in 5th Panzer Division all four *Schützen* Battalions had one motorcycle and two motorised Rifle Companies.

6th and 8th Panzer Divisions (formerly 1st and 3rd *leichte* Divisions respectively) introduced another organizational twist. They used the same basic format of the first model of *Schützen* Battalion described, with a Battalion Headquarters, three Rifle Companies and an MG Company, however there was no Heavy Company. Instead, an Anti-tank Platoon, of the type found in the Heavy Company, was attached to the MG Company. Each Rifle Company used the same KStN as in the *Schützen* Battalions of the first three Panzer Divisions, however their light machine gun complement was doubled from nine to 18, allowing for two per Rifle Squad. The Company MG Section remained as two guns.

This same pattern was repeated in the *Kradschützen* Battalion of these two Divisions, with the three Motorcycle Rifle Companies having a double allocation of light machine guns. The MG Company was motorised, rather than motorcycle, and again there was no Heavy Company, just an Anti-tank Platoon with three 3.7-cm guns attached to the MG Company. None of these Battalions included a Pioneer Platoon.

There was an Infantry Gun Company with four Platoons, each of two 7.5-cm infantry guns, at Regimental level and two Light Columns, one for each two Battalions.

7th and 9th Panzer Divisions (formerly 2nd and 4th *leichte* Divisions respectively) used the same model of *Schützen* Battalion as seen in 4th and 5th Panzer Divisions, namely three Rifle Companies and a Heavy Company, and no MG Company. All the Rifle Companies in the *Schützen* Battalions of 7th and 9th Panzer Divisions were motorised with no motorcycle units substituted.

9th Panzer Division had a sizeable *Kradschützen* Battalion that was paired with an Armoured Car Battalion to form the 9th Reconnaissance Regiment. The *Kradschützen* Battalion had three Motorcycle Rifle Companies (each of three Rifle Platoons and one MG Platoon), and a Heavy Company with two Infantry Gun Platoons, an Anti-tank Platoon and an 8-cm Mortar Platoon, plus a Pioneer Platoon attached to Battalion Headquarters. There was also a Light Column of the type normally found in a Panzer Division Reconnaissance Battalion.

The 1939 Mobilisation Plan envisaged 7th Panzer Division as a duplicate of 9th Panzer Division. In actuality 7th Panzer Division included a smaller *Kradschützen* Battalion with two Motorcycle Rifle Companies (18 light machine guns, three 5-cm mortars and four heavy machine guns). Its Heavy Company initially had an 8-cm Mortar Platoon and an Anti-tank Platoon (three 3.7-cm guns). By early 1940 an Infantry Gun Platoon had been added, and sometime after that a Pioneer Platoon. The Battalion also had a motorised Light Column, as found in the Motorised Infantry Regiment.

As if the forgoing were not complicated enough, there was yet another Battalion organization to consider.

4th Panzer Division received a second infantry Regiment, seemingly at the end of 1939 following the invasion of Poland. This was 33rd Infantry Regiment from 13th Infantry Division (Motorised). The Regiment was reduced to two Battalions, with its I Battalion joining the 2nd *Schützen* Regiment of 2nd Panzer Division as its new III Battalion. Similarly, 69th Infantry Regiment left 20th Infantry Division (Motorised) and saw two of its three Battalions allocated one apiece to 1st Panzer Division (III Battalion joining 1st *Schützen* Regiment) and 3rd Panzer Division (I Battalion joining 3rd *Schützen* Regiment). The I Battalion of 33rd Infantry Regiment went to 2nd Panzer Division (becoming the new III Battalion of 2nd *Schützen* Regiment).

Finally, 86th Infantry Regiment left 29th Infantry Division (Motorised) and joined the nascent 10th Panzer Division. It was bolstered by the II Battalion of 69th Infantry Regiment, which enabled two Regiments, each of two Battalions, to be formed.

The intriguing point here (for me at least) is that the new 33rd *Schützen* Regiment of 4th Panzer Division, and the 69th and 86th *Schützen* Regiments of 10th Panzer Division, all retained their Regimental Infantry Gun Company and Anti-tank Company. It does make me wonder whether these additions to the Panzer Division retained their Motorised Infantry Battalion and Regimental organization, even if only for the brief time between the end of the fighting in Poland and the start of the campaign in the West.

Overleaf is a chart that attempts to summarise the various versions of the *Schützen* Battalion seen from 1939 to 1940.

Schützen and Kradschützen Battalion summaries, 1939

Detail	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
i). Personnel							
Officers	25	26	26	22	26	26	22
Beamte (Officials)	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
NCOs ('O' group)	6	5	5	5	5	6	5
NCOs ('G' group)	146	152	144	138	152	132	114
Privates ('M' group)	841	858	857	776	858	792	683
Total, all ranks	1021	1044	1035	944	1044	959	827
ii). Transport							
Kfz.2 light personnel cars	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Kfz.11 medium personnel cars	7	3	6	2	3	18	14
Kfz.12 medium personnel cars	1	2	2	0	2	1	0
Kfz.15 medium personnel cars	23	28	26	21	28	14	12
Kfz.18 medium personnel cars	0	0	5	0	0	15	12
Light personnel cars	3	2	2	3	2	4	3
Sd.Kfz 261 armoured cars	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Kfz.69 light trucks	8	11	11	5	11	8	5
Kfz.70 personnel trucks	65	84	70	88	84	9	19
Light trucks	40	28	31	28	28	43	31
Medium trucks	1	4	3	0	4	1	3
Kfz.31 ambulance	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Motorcycles, solo	37	28	35	25	28	51	43
Motorcycles, with sidecar	78	39	93	29	39	190	149
iii). Weapons							
Pistols	279	283	294	260	283	266	239
Machine pistols	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Rifles	742	761	741	684	761	693	588
Light machine guns	31	58	58	28	58	31	55
Heavy machine guns	14	12	12	14	12	14	14
5-cm mortars	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
8-cm mortars	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
7.5-cm light infantry guns	2	4	4	0	4	2	0
3.7-cm anti-tank guns	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

All based on the figures for the 1939 Mobilisation Plan

- A – *Schützen* Battalions of 1st, 2nd and 3rd Panzer Divisions, with one Rifle Company on motorcycles
- B – *Schützen* Battalions of 4th Panzer Division, all Rifle Companies motorised
- C – *Schützen* Battalions of 5th Panzer Division, with one Rifle Company on motorcycles
- D – *Schützen* Battalions of 6th and 8th Panzer Divisions, all Rifle Companies motorised
- E – *Schützen* Battalions of 7th and 9th Panzer Divisions, all Rifle Companies motorised
- F – *Kradschützen* Battalion of 1st, 2nd and 3rd Panzer Divisions, with three Rifle Companies
- G – *Kradschützen* Battalion of 6th and 8th Panzer Divisions, MG Company motorised

The elements of the Battalion, 1938 to 1940

Below follows a more detailed examination of the subunits of the Battalion (defined herein as Companies and Platoons and where applicable the various Trains).

It should be noted that the KStN tables for key subunits, specifically the motorised Rifle Company (both types) and the MG Company (both motorised and motorcycle versions) are missing. The details of these have therefore had to be reconstructed from various contemporary sources, which are detailed at the end of the piece.

Also, having started this series with the [Organization of the German Infantry Battalion](#) piece, and then followed up with the [Organization of the German Motorised Infantry Battalion](#) there is not too much left to say about the low level organization of the *Schützen* Battalion, though the *KradSchützen* Battalion does open up some new avenues, so the below contains some unavoidable repetition of those pieces.

Battalion Headquarters (*Stab eines Schützenbataillons mot*) (1938 to 1940)

The officers of Headquarters consisted of the Battalion commander, an Adjutant, the Orderly (Ordnance) Officer and both a senior and a junior medical officer. The Ordnance Officer was also responsible for gas warfare training and preparedness.

There was a single NCO, who acted as the messenger staff leader, and had a motorcycle with sidecar. He oversaw seven messengers on motorcycles, of which two had sidecars, plus one messenger carried as a passenger. Headquarters transport was one Kfz.11 personnel car and one Kfz.15 car, which featured a large, open topped storage compartment (*geratkasten*) directly behind the rear seats.

Communication Detachment (*Nachrichtenstaffel*) (1938 to 1940)

This had two Light Field Telephone Troops, each of four men, carried in a Kfz15/1, which was a modified Kfz.15 fitted with cable laying equipment. There were also two Pack Radio Troops, each of a driver and two men in a Kfz.2 light car, with a single *Torn.Fu d2* pack radio per Troop.

Completing the Communication Detachment in the *Schützen* Battalion were two Light Armoured Radio Troops, each of which was authorised an Sd.Kfz 261 armoured car. It appears however that these vehicles were not introduced into service until the end of 1940. Later KStN for the Detachment show the Kfz.17 radio car as an alternative to the Sd.Kfz 261, and presumably this was the case during the early war years.

Battalion and Company Trains and Baggage

In 1937 the Battalion Trains consisted of;

The Battle Train (*Gefechtstross*) initially with cooks and a kitchen truck and the unit ambulance.

The Repair Group (Instandsetzungsgruppe) including mechanics and armourers.

The Rations Train (Verpflegungstross) with two trucks.

The Baggage Train (Gepäcktrass) included the Paymaster and Battalion clerk.

In the Rifle Companies the Trains initially consisted of the Battle Train and the Baggage Train. The former included cooks, repair personnel and various NCO billets, plus a truck fitted as a field kitchen and several more for fuel, ammunition and equipment. The Baggage Train had a single truck plus the usual tailor and shoemaker.

The Machine Gun (MG) Company (Maschinengewehrkompanie mot)

This is the first example of reconstruction in this piece as the MG Company KStN (ref 1116 of 1st October 1937) is missing.

As with the Motorised Infantry Battalion, the *Schützen* Battalion used the same basic MG Company as found in the Infantry Battalion type 'b', which had two MG Platoons, each of four guns, and a Mortar Platoon with six 8-cm weapons.

In the MG Platoons each gun team was carried complete in its own Kfz.70 light personnel truck. Platoon Headquarters was split over two Kfz.15 personnel cars, and accompanied by a motorcyclist on a combination. The 8-cm Mortar Platoon had nine Kfz.70 trucks, plus a Kfz.15 and motorcycle with sidecar at its Headquarters. Each Section of two 8-cm mortars had three Kfz.70 trucks, two each carrying a mortar detachment and the third ammunition and equipment.

MG Company Headquarters included a Communication Section, with three field telephone detachments, each of four men, carried across two Kfz.70 trucks.

The Heavy Company (schweren Kompanie mot) (1938 to 1940)

When it comes to the Heavy Company, all the relevant KStN tables are available.

The Heavy Company used a modular organization, with a standard Headquarters commanding a varying mixture of Platoons. In the late 1937 *Schützen* Battalion these Platoons consisted of the following –

Anti-tank Platoon (Panzerabwehrzug) (1938 to 1940)

A Platoon of three anti-tank guns was devolved to each *Schützen* Battalion, normally forming part of the Heavy Company.

The 3.7-cm *Pak 35/36 (Panzerabwehrkanone)* was the standard German anti-tank gun in the pre-war years, and continued to be numerically its most significant well into 1942. I hope to cover the evolution of German anti-tank guns in the Panzer Grenadier Battalion pieces, so intend to look at the weapon in more detail there.

The Platoon had three 3.7-cm anti-tank guns, each towed by a Kfz.69 light truck that carried the crew of five men, plus a driver. A fourth Kfz.69 was provided for a three-man LMG team. Platoon Headquarters added a fifth such vehicle, plus two motorcycles, one with sidecar.

Infantry Gun Platoon (Geschützzug) (1938 to 1940)

A single Platoon of two 7.5-cm *leichte Infanteriegeschütz 18* was included in the Heavy Company of each of the *Schützen* and *Kradgeschützen* Battalions of the first three Panzer Divisions. The IG 18 is another item that I intend to expand on in the subsequent pieces on Panzer Grenadiers.

The Infantry Gun Platoon had three Kfz.69 light trucks, two each towing a gun and the third an ammunition trailer. Platoon Headquarters had a light car and three motorcycles, two with sidecars, and there was also a field telephone detachment in a Kfz.15, which allowed a forward observer to be deployed.

Pioneer Platoon (Pionierzug) (1938 to 1940)

This subunit was composed of infantrymen trained in light engineering duties, and was not drawn from the Divisional Pioneer Battalion.

It had an unusual internal organization, being ostensibly divided into three Squads, each of an NCO and 12 men, with one light machine gun per Squad. The first of these Squads appears to have been carried across two Kfz.15 cars and one *Pionierkraftwagen*, which was a light truck, while the second and third Squads each had two of these same trucks. Why one Squad was carried partly in cars rather than in two trucks, as was the case for the other two Squads, I don't know.

There were two Pioneers additional to those in the Squads, who seem to have travelled on a motorcycle and sidecar. Also equipped with a motorcycle combination was the *Schirrmeister (P)*, who was an NCO trained in Pioneer duties.

Platoon Headquarters was an Officer, NCO and a surveyor, in its own Kfz.15 car, with a pair of motorcycle messengers and a standard light truck completing the personnel and transport line up. All cars and trucks had a driver allocated to them.

The modified Heavy Company (1938 to 1940)

In the later *Schützen* Battalions, those without an MG Company, the line up of the Heavy Company was changed. There was an Anti-tank Platoon and two Infantry Gun Platoons, plus an 8-cm Mortar Platoon. This latter subunit was the same as seen in the MG Company, and was simply added to the Heavy Company in those Battalions with no MG Company.

The Pioneer Platoon was retained but is often shown as being administered directly by Battalion Headquarters rather than being part of the Heavy Company.

In those Panzer Divisions where the *Schützen* Battalions with no Heavy Company, there was a Regimental Infantry Gun Company, organized with four Platoons, each of two 7.5-cm light infantry guns. An Anti-tank Platoon was normally attached directly to the MG Company. The *Schützen* Regiments of two Panzer Divisions however included an Infantry Anti-tank Company, with four Platoons, each of three 3.7-cm guns, with no guns devolved to the Battalions.

The Rifle Company (*Schützenkompanie mot*) (1938 to 1940)

I have to admit that when I first realised that the original *Schützen* Company was little more than a motorised version of that used by the normal Infantry Regiment, I was a little disappointed. I had assumed that the *Schützen* of 1939 and 1940 had already developed a different Rifle Squad organization to the infantry, however the reality is that the standard Infantry Regiment was the first to move to a different Rifle Squad.

This is another reconstruction as the Rifle Company KStN (ref 1114 of 1st October 1937) is missing.

The Rifle Platoon of the type 'b' *Schützen* Company consisted of a Platoon Headquarters, a 5-cm Mortar Troop and three Rifle Squads. Platoon Headquarters was the commander and three messengers, while the Mortar Troop had an NCO and two men serving a single 5-cm mortar. Each Rifle Squad was 13 strong, with two NCOs, seven riflemen and four light machine gun numbers for the Squad's MG34. The Platoon commander and three LMG numbers in each Squad were armed with pistols, all the others having rifles.

This was the same Rifle Platoon found in the type 'b' Company of the normal Infantry Regiment. To turn it into *Schützen* all that was done was to add seven drivers, each with a Kfz.70 light truck, and a motorcycle messenger with a motorcycle and sidecar. Also, the Platoon's stretcher-bearer, normally counted in the Company Battle Train, was put on the strength of the Platoon. This brought the *Schützen* Platoon to 55 all ranks, with seven light personnel trucks and one motorcycle combination. Platoon Headquarters and the 5-cm mortar crew travelled in one truck, while each Rifle Squad was carried across two trucks.

The three Rifle Platoons were supported by a Heavy Machine Gun Group (termed a half-Platoon), with two MG34s on tripod mounts. These were carried in two Kfz.70 light trucks, one per gun team, and a Kfz.15 for the Group Headquarters, plus a motorcycle and sidecar.

Company Headquarters consisted of the commander, the Company HQ leader and the Company Vehicle (transport) leader, with a motorcycle. There were four messengers, three motorcycle messengers, two drivers, each with a Kfz.15 personnel car, and a stretcher-bearer.

Completing the Company was a Battle Train, with four trucks and a light personnel car, and the Baggage Train with a further truck. Where detailed, the four Battle Train

trucks are generally described as one for fuel, one for ammunition, one for a mix of fuel and equipment, and the fourth as a field kitchen.

October 1938 and the revised Schützen Battalion

The format of three Rifle Companies, an MG Company and a Heavy Company was used by all the *Schützen* Battalions of 1st, 2nd and 3rd Panzer Divisions. These Divisions were all formed in 1935 and included one *Schützen* Brigade with a *Schützen* Regiment of two (later three) Battalions and a separate *Kradschützen* Battalion.

4th and 5th Panzer Divisions both joined the order of battle at the end of 1938 and each had a *Schützen* Brigade with two *Schützen* Regiments, each of two Battalions. The *Schützen* Battalions of these Regiments introduced a new organization, made up of three Rifle Companies and a revised Heavy Company with two Infantry Gun Platoons, an Anti-tank Platoon and an 8-cm Mortar Platoon (with six 8-cm weapons). The Pioneer Platoon was normally now shown directly under Battalion Headquarters rather than being part of the Heavy Company.

The Rifle Company organization used in the *Schützen* Battalions of 4th and 5th Panzer Divisions was detailed under KStN 1115 of 1st October 1938, a document that is again missing. The key difference of this new Company was the doubling of the machine gun allocation from the usual nine light and two heavy weapons to 18 light and four heavy machine guns, with the 5-cm mortars remaining as three.

This was not an insignificant change and to my disappointment I can offer no reason as to why it was made. There was no combat experience at this time for units to draw upon and it was not applied to all the Panzer Divisions.

The *Schützen* units of 4th and 5th Panzer Divisions were formed on the October 1938 KStN, those of 6th and 8th Panzer Divisions on a modification of the October 1937 KStN, and those of 7th and 9th Panzer Divisions on the October 1938 tables. All had 18 light machine guns issued per motorised Rifle Company.

It could be argued that, as 1st, 2nd and 3rd Panzer Divisions had been formed and trained on the 1937 KStN for the whole of 1938, then changing their *Schützen* Battalion structure could be deemed disruptive. If all the subsequent Panzer Divisions were formed using the new 1938 KStN then there would be some demarcation, however both 6th and 8th Panzer Divisions used the October 1937 *Schützen* KStN, modified to include 18 light machine guns per Rifle Company instead of nine.

The Schützen Company type 'c'

This is another reconstruction as the Rifle Company KStN (ref 1115 of 1st October 1938) is missing. It differed from the October 1937 Rifle Company KStN in two key respects, the first being the presence of a full MG Platoon rather than a half-Platoon.

The MG Platoon was a slightly amended version of that found in the MG Company, with four machine gun teams, each carried in a Kfz.70 light truck. Platoon Headquarters had two Kfz.15 cars, and added a third for a telephone detachment. The heavy machine gun strength of the Rifle Company was then doubled from two to four such weapons, however the overall total for the Battalion dropped slightly, from 14 to 12 guns, as a consequence of the disbandment of the MG Company.

In the pre-war period the German Army had decided on a fairly standard Rifle Platoon, based on three Rifle Squads, each with a single light machine gun, operating under a small Headquarters and supported by a 5-cm mortar team. This same Platoon was visible in the organization of all the four *Welle* (waves) of Infantry Division raised under the 1939 Mobilization Plan, with the important proviso that the 5-cm mortar and crew was deleted from those Infantry Divisions formed outside of the first wave.

The Rifle Platoon was also carried over to both the Motorised Infantry Divisions and the Panzer Divisions, the former being carried in four medium trucks and the latter in seven light personnel trucks. Once dismounted, the Motorised Rifle Platoon and the *Schützen* Rifle Platoon were identical, and had the same firepower as an unmotorised Rifle Platoon of a 1 *Welle* Infantry Division.

As noted, KStN 1115 is missing and it has been necessary for me to attempt a reconstruction of it to complete this piece. Having done so, I expected to see some variation in the individual weapons within the Rifle Platoon when issued with double the number of light machine guns: to my surprise however there is none. The numbers only reconcile if the Rifle Platoon is left unaltered in terms of rifles and pistols.

The thing about the change that probably nags at me the most is that it undoes the concerted effort made in standardising the Rifle Squad and Platoon. As discussed earlier, the pre-war German Rifle Squad was based upon an LMG Troop supporting a Rifle Troop. Within the LMG Troop there were four men, each with a particular load of ammunition and equipment to keep the gun functioning. Adding a second light machine gun to the Squad means one of two things; either the Rifle Troop has to take on the second LMG, in which case it is no longer a Rifle Troop, or the LMG Troop does so. In the latter instance, each gun can only realistically be served by two men, which dramatically decreases the amount of ammunition available per gun.

In the case of the *Schützen* there is a mitigating factor, in that the Squad was motorised, so it could carry a substantial amount of ammunition on its vehicles. In order to fight however, the Squad had to dismount, meaning they were back in the normal position of having to carry their weapons and ammunition on foot.

It is possible that the additional light machine guns were a means of increasing the firepower of the infantry element of the Panzer Divisions. *Schützen* Battalions were not exactly small in terms of manpower, however there were on average only around four of them per Panzer Division. They could also have been a simple means to boost anti-aircraft capability at a time when light machine guns were considered a deterrent.

There is one final, odd twist, that niggles too. The Mobilization Plan for 1939 includes the ammunition allocation for Divisions. In the 4th, 5th, 7th and 9th Panzer Divisions, there is an increase that is directly in line with the extra light machine guns. However, in the 6th and 8th Panzer Divisions, the increase is only sufficient for 27 LMGs, or the equivalent of one Battalion out of four. I suspect, but cannot confirm, that this was for the *Kradschützen* Battalion of each of these Divisions (see below). Why you would issue additional light machine guns but seemingly skimp on the ammunition for them in some units but not others, is another 'I dunno guv' I'm afraid.

The Kradschützen Battalion and Rifle Company

An important element of the *Schützen*, and the Panzer Division as a whole were the *Kradschützen*, or Motorcycle Rifle units. The German Army was a heavy user of motorcycles, both solo machines and those fitted with a sidecar (also known as a motorcycle combination). Overall levels of motorisation were low in many armies in the interwar years and motorcycles could offer a quick and cheap means to motorise infantry units.

The *Kradschützen* of the original three Panzer Divisions included one Rifle Company in each of the two *Schützen* Battalions, plus a separate *Kradschützen* Battalion, with two Motorcycle Rifle Companies, a Motorcycle MG Company and a Heavy Company. There was also a Motorcycle Rifle Company in the Reconnaissance Battalion.

There were two versions of the Motorcycle Rifle Company and, for once, both of the governing KStN tables are available for reference, so no reconstruction is required.

The first of these was KStN 1111 of 1st October 1937, and followed the usual outline of a Company Headquarters, a Heavy Machine Gun Group, three Rifle Platoons and the Company Trains. The Motorcycle Rifle Platoon had a Headquarters, three Rifle Squads and a 5-cm Mortar Troop. It was though much smaller in size than the Motorised *Schützen* Platoon, with one Officer and 38 men, carried across two cars and 13 motorcycles, 11 of which were fitted with a sidecar.

The *Kradschützen* Squad had an NCO and eight men, with three motorcycle combinations. Each machine was expected to carry three men: the driver, a passenger on the pillion seat behind him, and another in the sidecar. Within the Squad, three men were designated drivers, and four as numbers for the Squad's single light machine gun. This left only one man as a rifleman, plus the Squad leader. Two of the LMG team were armed with pistols and the remainder of the Squad with rifles.

Platoon Headquarters consisted of the Officer, three messengers (two with solo motorcycles), and a stretcher-bearer. There were two cars, each with driver, one vehicle being a Kfz.11 light car and the other a Kfz.15 with equipment compartment. Completing the Platoon was the three man 5-cm Mortar Troop, carried across two motorcycle combinations, each with a driver.

The Heavy Machine Gun Group had two guns and four motorcycles with sidecars, with two more for the Group Headquarters personnel. The *Kradschützen* Company Headquarters was similar to that in the motorised *Schützen* Rifle Company, with a commander, two NCOs, six messengers (three with motorcycles), two drivers (for a Kfz.15 and Kfz.18 car respectively) and a stretcher-bearer.

In the first three *Kradschützen* Battalions there was also a Motorcycle MG Company, with two Heavy Machine Gun Platoons and one 8-cm Mortar Platoon. The Mortar Platoon had six weapons and was identical to that found in the MG Company of the motorised *Schützen* Battalion, while each MG Platoon had four guns, two cars and 18 motorcycles, all but one of them with a sidecar.

The Heavy Company of the first three *Kradschützen* Battalions was the same as found in their accompanying *Schützen* Battalions, with an Anti-tank Platoon, an Infantry Gun Platoon and a Pioneer Platoon.

There was another variation of *Kradschützen* Battalion, also using the Motorcycle Rifle Company under KStN 1111 of 1st October 1937. The *Kradschützen* Battalions of both 6th and 8th Panzer Divisions (formerly 1st and 3rd *leichte* Divisions) each had three Motorcycle Rifle Companies and an MG Company but no Heavy Company. The MG Company was motorised (using KStN 1116) rather than on motorcycles, and attached to it was an Anti-tank Platoon (KStN 1122). Each of the three Motorcycle Rifle Companies in these Battalions had a double issue of 18 light machine guns, instead of nine, and also added two men and one truck to the figure shown for the KStN.

A second KStN was issued on 1st October 1938, reference 1111a, and was used in those *Schützen* and *Kradschützen* Battalions that did not feature an MG Company. Under 1111a, each Rifle Squad added three men and one motorcycle combination. This gave the Squad an NCO, four LMG crewmen for two light machine guns, three riflemen and four drivers. Individual armament changed slightly, with four pistols per Squad, sufficient for the four LMG numbers, while the balance had rifles. There were no changes to Platoon Headquarters or the Mortar Troop.

At Company level the Heavy Machine Gun Group was enlarged to a full Platoon of four guns, and included a small field telephone detachment.

There were two more variants of *Kradschützen* Battalion. 9th Panzer Division included a Reconnaissance Regiment, made up of one *Kradschützen* Battalion and one Armoured Car Battalion. The former had three Motorcycle Rifle Companies, based on the October 1938 KStN, plus an impressive Heavy Company with an Anti-tank Platoon, two Infantry Gun Platoons, a Pioneer Platoon and an 8-cm Mortar Platoon. There was also a Light Column, as found in a Reconnaissance Battalion

The same was planned for 7th Panzer Division, however as of early 1940 its *Kradschützen* Battalion and its Reconnaissance Battalion were not Regimented. The 7th *Kradschützen* Battalion had only two Rifle Companies, while its Heavy Company

had an Anti-tank Platoon and an 8-cm Mortar Platoon initially, subsequently augmented by an Infantry Gun Platoon and a Pioneer Platoon. There was also a Motorised Light Column.

Below are summaries of the Rifle Platoon organization of the *Schützen* and *Kradgeschützen* Rifle Companies under the 1937 and 1938 KStN tables.

Schützen Platoon, under KStN 1114 - October 1937 (Reconstruction)

Personnel	No.	Pistol	Rifle	LMG	5-cm	Kfz.70	m/c*
Platoon Headquarters							
Platoon commander	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
Messenger	3	-	3	-	-	-	-
Motorcycle messenger	1	-	1	-	-	-	1
Stretcher-bearer	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
Vehicle driver	1	-	1	-	-	1	-
Light Mortar Troop							
Leader (NCO)	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
Gunner	1	-	1	-	1	-	-
Assistant	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
Total, Headquarters	10	2	8	-	1	1	1
Three Rifle Squads, each							
Squad leader (NCO)	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
Deputy leader (NCO)	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
Rifleman	7	-	7	-	-	-	-
Light machine gunner	1	1	-	1	-	-	-
Assistant gunner	3	2	1	-	-	-	-
Vehicle driver	2	-	2	-	-	2	-
Total, Squad	15	3	12	1	-	2	-
Total, Platoon	55	11	44	3	1	7	1

Notes

1. * is a motorcycle with sidecar.
2. Weapons issue extrapolated from KStN 131c of the same date.

Kradschützen Platoon, under KStN 1111 - October 1937

Personnel	No.	Pistol	Rifle	LMG	5-cm	Kfz.11	Kfz.18	m/c*	m/c**
Platoon Headquarters									
Platoon commander	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Messenger	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Motorcycle messenger	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	2	-
Stretcher-bearer	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vehicle driver	2	-	2	-	-	1	1	-	-
Light Mortar Troop									
Leader (NCO)	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gunner	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
Assistant	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Motorcycle driver	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
Total, Headquarters	12	2	10	-	1	1	1	2	2
Three Rifle Squads, each									
Squad leader (NCO)	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rifleman	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Light machine gunner	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Assistant gunner	3	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Motorcycle driver	3	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	3
Total, Squad	9	2	7	1	-	-	-	-	3
Total, Platoon	39	8	31	3	1	1	1	2	11

Notes

1. * is a motorcycle.
2. ** is a motorcycle with sidecar.

Kradschützen Platoon, under KStN 1111a - October 1938

Personnel	No.	Pistol	Rifle	LMG	5-cm	Kfz.11	Kfz.18	m/c*	m/c**
Platoon Headquarters									
Platoon commander	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Messenger	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Motorcycle messenger	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	2	-
Stretcher-bearer	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vehicle driver	2	-	2	-	-	1	1	-	-
Light Mortar Troop									
Leader (NCO)	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gunner	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
Assistant	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Motorcycle driver	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
Total, Headquarters	12	2	10	-	1	1	1	2	2
Three Rifle Squads, each									
Squad leader (NCO)	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rifleman	3	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Light machine gunner	2	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Assistant gunner	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Motorcycle driver	4	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	4
Total, Squad	12	4	8	6	-	-	-	-	4
Total, Platoon	48	14	34	6	1	1	1	2	14

Notes

1. * is a motorcycle.
2. ** is a motorcycle with sidecar.

Reorganization of the *Schützen* Battalion 1941

A new wave of Panzer Divisions began formation in the latter months of 1940, doubling the number from 10 to 20. Along with this expansion came the first attempt to impose something approaching a standard organization upon the Panzer Divisions.

This saw the *Schützen* become the largest single element of the Panzer Division. The *Schützen* Brigade consisted two *Schützen* Regiments (each of two Battalions) and a separate *Kradschützen* Battalion. This compared to a single Panzer Regiment in each Panzer Division, which could contain two or three Panzer Battalions.

Outline organization of the *Schützen* Brigade, as of 1st February 1941

Brigade Headquarters

Heavy Infantry Gun Company (only found in six Panzer Divisions)

2 *Schützen* Regiments, each;

Regimental Headquarters

Staff Company (incorporating Communication Platoon, Pioneer Platoon and Motorcycle Messenger Platoon)

2 *Schützen* Battalions, each;

Battalion Headquarters

3 Rifle Companies

1 MG Company

1 Heavy Company

Infantry Gun Company

Light Column

1 *Kradschützen* Battalion;

Battalion Headquarters

3 Motorcycle Rifle Companies

1 Motorcycle MG Company

1 Heavy Company

Comments

Where present the Heavy Infantry Gun Company had six 15-cm infantry guns mounted on a fully tracked chassis. During 1941 the Light Column of each *Schützen* Regiment (and also each Panzer Battalion) was removed and used to form additional Transport Companies in the Panzer Division supply troops.

Below is a list of the KStN tables issued for *Schützen* units as of February 1941. Those tables highlighted in red are missing.

KStN ref.	Title	Comments
54	Brigade Headquarters	
1104	Regimental Headquarters	
1104gp	Regimental Headquarters (armoured)	
1153	Regimental Staff Company	
1153gp	Regimental Staff Company (armoured)	
1120	Infantry Gun Company (motorised)	4x 7.5-cm & 2x 15-cm inf guns
1120gp	Infantry Gun Company (armoured)	4x 7.5-cm & 2x 15-cm inf guns
202	Infantry Column (motorised)	
1108	Battalion Headquarters	Includes Comm. Det
1114	Rifle Company type 'b' (motorised)	18 LMG, 2 HMG, 3x 5-cm
1116	Machine Gun Company 'b' (motorised)	8 HMG, 6x 8-cm
1108	Battalion Headquarters (armoured)	Includes Comm. Det
1114	Rifle Company type 'b' (armoured)	18 LMG, 2 HMG, 3x 5-cm
1116	Machine Gun Company 'b' (armoured)	8 HMG, 6x 8-cm
1109	Battalion Headquarters (Motorcycle)	Non-Regimented
1112	Motorcycle Rifle Company	18 LMG, 2 HMG, 3x 5-cm
1118	Motorcycle MG Company	8 HMG, 6x 8-cm
1121	Headquarters, Heavy Company (mot)	Commands below types
1122	Anti-tank Platoon (motorised)	3x 3.7-cm atk guns, 1 LMG
1123	Infantry Gun Platoon (motorised)	2x 7.5-cm infantry guns
1124	Pioneer Platoon (motorised)	3 Squads, each 1 LMG
1121	Headquarters, Heavy Company (armd)	Commands below types
1122	Anti-tank Platoon (armoured)	3x 3.7-cm atk guns, 1 LMG
1123	Infantry Gun Platoon (armoured)	2x 7.5-cm infantry guns
1124	Pioneer Platoon (armoured)	3 Squads, each 1 LMG

5-cm and 8-cm in the above comments refer to mortars. LMG is light machine gun and HMG is heavy machine gun.

Of the more than two dozen tables issued only five remain for study. There is a document that makes it possible to attempt a reconstruction of the *Schützen* Battalion organized under the February 1941 KStN tables, however that omits much detail, so the following is still a qualified effort.

The Schützen Battalion – February 1941

For the first time there was a unified approach to the organization of both the *Schützen* and *Kradschützen* Battalion. This consisted of Battalion Headquarters, with Communication Section and Battalion Trains and Maintenance elements, three Rifle Companies, an MG Company and a Heavy Company.

The Rifle Company was something of a hybrid of the earlier organizations seen under KStN 1114 and 1115 of 1937 and 1938 respectively. The superseding KStN 1114 of February 1941 gave the Company a Headquarters, a Group of two heavy machine guns, and three Rifle Platoons. Each Platoon had a Headquarters, a 5-cm Mortar Troop and three Rifle Squads, each with two light machine guns.

Surprisingly, to me at any rate, the *Schützen* Rifle Platoon of February 1941 was not much altered from that of October 1937. Platoon Headquarters remained as the Officer, three messengers and a stretcher-bearer, plus a motorcycle messenger with a combination. The Officer was now armed with a machine pistol, the stretcher-bearer still with a pistol, and the others with rifles. Headquarters was carried in a Kfz.70 light personnel truck, with a driver armed with a rifle. Completing Platoon Headquarters was the 5-cm Mortar Troop, of an NCO and two men serving a single 5-cm mortar. The two mortar numbers now had pistols and the NCO a rifle.

Each Rifle Squad was still 13 men strong, plus two drivers for its pair of Kfz.70 light trucks. There were two light machine guns per Squad, each with a gunner and assistant armed with pistols, seven riflemen and two NCOs; the assistant leader was armed with a rifle and the Squad leader a machine pistol. Added to the armament of the Platoon was an anti-tank rifle. There was no dedicated crew for this, meaning it would most likely have to be handled by personnel from one of the Rifle Squads.

The MG Company retained the same overall format of the 1937 unit, with two Heavy MG Platoons, each with four guns, and a Mortar Platoon with six 8-cm weapons. Its Communication Section was slimmed down to two telephone detachments, each carried in a Kfz.15 car.

The Heavy Company contained an Anti-tank Platoon (three 3.7-cm guns), an Infantry Gun Platoon (two 7.5cm guns) and a Pioneer Platoon (seemingly still of three Squads, each with an LMG). The February 1941 KStN for the Anti-tank Platoon was practically identical to the October 1937 version. There appear to be some changes to the Pioneer Platoon, including the addition of two trucks carrying light bridging equipment. The Infantry Gun Platoon seems unchanged, still with a telephone detachment.

In the *Kradschützen* Battalion all three Rifle Companies and the MG Company were motorcycle equipped. The Rifle Platoon was a slight modification of that seen under KStN 1111a of October 1938, with three Rifle Squads and a Platoon Headquarters. The Squad had 12-men, with an NCO, three riflemen, four gunners for two LMGs and four drivers each with a motorcycle and sidecar. The Squad leader was now armed with a machine pistol, each LMG number a pistol and the remainder rifles. The Platoon commander would now have switched to a machine pistol, and the two 5-cm mortar numbers each a pistol. The Platoon also had an anti-tank rifle.

Overleaf are reconstructions of the Rifle Platoon organization of the *Schützen* and *Kradschützen* Companies under the February 1941 KStN tables.

Schützen Platoon, under KStN 1114 - February 1941 (reconstruction)

Personnel	No.	Pistol	MP	Rifle	LMG	5-cm	PzB	Kfz.70	m/c*
Platoon Headquarters									
Platoon commander	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Messenger	3	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-
Motorcycle messenger	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Stretcher-bearer	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vehicle driver	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-
Light Mortar Troop									
Leader (NCO)	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Gunner	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Assistant	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Headquarters	10	3	1	6	-	1	1	1	1
Three Rifle Squads, each									
Squad leader (NCO)	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Deputy leader (NCO)	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Rifleman	7	-	-	7	-	-	-	-	-
Light machine gunner	2	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
Assistant gunner	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vehicle driver	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	-
Total, Squad	15	4	1	10	6	-	-	2	-
Total, Platoon	55	15	4	36	6	1	1	7	1

Notes

1. PzB is the 7.92-mm Panzerbusche anti-tank rifle (no crew allocated).
2. * is a solo motorcycle.

Kradschützen Platoon, under KStN 1112 - February 1941 (reconstruction)

Personnel	No.	Pistol	MP	Rifle	LMG	5-cm	PzB	Car*	m/c**	m/c***
Platoon Headquarters										
Platoon commander	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Messenger	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Motorcycle messenger	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2	-
Stretcher-bearer	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vehicle driver	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	-	-
Light Mortar Troop										
Leader (NCO)	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gunner	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Assistant	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Motorcycle driver	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
Total, Headquarters	12	3	1	8	-	1	1	2	2	2
Three Rifle Squads, each										
Squad leader (NCO)	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rifleman	3	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Light machine gunner	2	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Assistant gunner	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Motorcycle driver	4	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	4
Total, Squad	12	4	1	7	6	-	-	-	-	4
Total, Platoon	48	15	4	29	6	1	1	2	2	14

Notes

1. PzB is the 7.92-mm Panzerbusche anti-tank rifle (no crew allocated).
2. * Personnel cars, could be Kfz.11, Kfz.15 or Kfz.18 types.
3. ** is a solo motorcycle.
4. *** is a motorcycle with sidecar.

Annex A – Notes on the armoured *Schützen* Rifle Company

There was another important development in the organization and equipment of the *Schützen* in late 1939, on which there is little detailed information to be found. This was the introduction of an armoured vehicle designed to carry infantry alongside tanks, giving them some measure of protection from small arms and artillery fire.

It was initially titled the *gepanzerten Mannschaftstransportwagen* (MTW), or armoured personnel transport vehicle, with both light and medium models planned. The light model was based on the *zugkraftwagen* Sd.Kfz 10 and the medium on the *zugkraftwagen* Sd.Kfz 11. These were both unarmoured halftrack tractors with a towing capacity of 1-tonne and 3-tonnes respectively. Originally the light MTW was to provide the transport for various Headquarters elements, with the medium MTW carrying the Rifle Platoons and Heavy MG teams.

These two vehicles subsequently became known as the Sd.Kfz 250 *leichte Schützenpanzerwagen* and Sd.Kfz 251 *mittlere Schützenpanzerwagen* respectively. They are vehicles I hope to cover in subsequent pieces so will not go into too much detail here. Suffice to say that the Sd.Kfz 250 could accommodate six men, two in the driver's position and four in the personnel compartment, and the Sd.Kfz 251 twelve men, with ten in its larger personnel compartment. The Sd.Kfz 251 was provided with two mounts for light machine guns, one above the driver's compartment and one over the rear doors, while the Sd.Kfz 250 had only the forward mount.

A full set of KStN tables for an armoured *Schützen* Regiment was issued dated 1st December 1939, which was superseded by the 1st February 1941 series. Of these only two of the 1941 tables have definitely survived. A document has appeared recently however that offers some insight into the outline organization of the armoured *Schützen* Rifle Company of the early war years (see the sources section for details).

Now it is extremely tempting for me to use this single contemporary piece as a means to reconstruct the armoured *Schützen* Rifle Company. After some consideration however, I think there is simply too little information available to attempt this. Every point would have to be tempered with 'it appears', or 'seems' or 'perhaps then'.

Illustrative of this is trying to establish how many units received halftracks. The only source I am aware of for the early war years is provided by the research of Dr Leo Niehorster, whose website is linked to in the sources and acknowledgement pages.

This indicates that, in May 1940, in 1st Panzer Division all seven *Schützen* Rifle Companies were halftrack equipped, leaving two as motorcycle versions. The other Panzer Divisions then each had one *Schützen* Rifle Company in halftracks.

By June 1941, 1st Panzer Division had two *Schützen* Battalions in halftracks (one in each *Schützen* Regiment), and 10th Panzer Division one full Battalion. The remaining Panzer Divisions had either one *Schützen* Rifle Company equipped with halftracks, and at least three Divisions no halftrack for their *Schützen* at all.

Below is an outline of the armoured *Schützen* Rifle Company organization as detailed in the document alluded to above, with a link to the original in the sources section. It should be stressed that this was something of an experimental organization, and not a full KStN by any means, however it does offer some interesting insights.

Company Headquarters

Company commander (P)

NCO Company Troop leader (MP)

NCO Company vehicle leader (R)

3 Messengers (R)

5 Motorcycle messengers (5R) – 5 solo motorcycles

4 Stretcher-bearers (P)

1 Driver (R) - 1 light halftrack

1 Driver (R) - 1 medium halftrack

Three Rifle Platoons, each;

Platoon Headquarters

Platoon commander (P)

Platoon NCO (R)

3 Messengers (3R)

3 Ammunition handlers (3R)

2 Motorcycle messengers (2R) – 2 solo motorcycles

1 Driver (R) – 1 medium halftrack

Mortar Troop NCO (P)

Mortar gunner (P) – 5-cm mortar

Assistant gunner (P)

Three Rifle Squads, each;

NCO Squad leader (MP)

NCO Troop leader (R)

Troop leader (R)

2 Light machine gunners (2P) – 2 MG34 light machine guns

2 Assistant light machine gunners (2P)

4 Riflemen (4R)

1 Driver (R) – 1 medium halftrack

Heavy Machine Gun Platoon

Platoon Headquarters

Platoon commander (P)

Platoon NCO (P)

Aiming circle NCO 1 (P)

Aiming circle NCO 2 (P)

2 Rangetakers (2P) – each with rangetaker

2 Messengers (2R)

2 Motorcycle messengers (2R) – 2 solo motorcycles

4 Ammunition bearers (4R)

1 Driver (R) – 1 light halftrack

3 Drivers (3R) – 3 medium halftracks*

**(1 medium halftrack for balance of Platoon Headquarters personnel and 2 medium halftracks each carrying two Heavy MG teams, as below).*

Telephone detachment

NCO telephonist (P)

2 Telephonists (2R)

1 Driver (R) – 1 light halftrack

Four Heavy MG teams, each;

NCO Gun leader (P)

Gunner No.1 (P) – MG34 as heavy machine gun

Gunner No.2 (P)

2 Gunner numbers (2R)

Company Trains

Personnel details not given, transport shown as five light and one medium trucks. Assume usual organization of Battle Train and Baggage Train.

Key to abbreviations in the above

(P) = pistol

(MP) = machine pistol

(R) = rifle

Comments

There was an obvious incompatibility between the medium halftrack and the 13-man Rifle Squad, in that the halftrack had seating for a maximum of twelve men. The above example looks to have partly offset this by moving one man from each Rifle Squad to Platoon Headquarters, where they became ammunition bearers. This meant the Squad was now a dozen men, however as the driver was always to remain with the vehicle the actual dismount was eleven men. The Squad leader and one or two other men were also to be trained as drivers to provide replacements or relief.

This Platoon organization includes a Platoon Headquarters NCO, who appeared in the normal Rifle Platoon from late 1939 but not in the *Schützen* Platoon until late 1941. Squad leaders are also armed with machine pistols, which no doubt became the case in *Schützen* units in general during 1940 as these weapons became available.

The most striking feature of the armoured *Schützen* Rifle Platoon as detailed in this document is that it shows the Rifle Squad operating with two light machine guns rather than one, which is a development already discussed in this piece. What remains unknown, for me at any rate, is whether the initial anticipation was that the Squad would operate dismounted with one light machine gun, while the second was retained on the vehicle, primarily for anti-aircraft defence. However, once given a second LMG, units involved in developing the training and tactics for the new vehicles realised that it could be incorporated into the Squad organization, bringing much greater firepower.

The armament of the Sd.Kfz 251 halftrack is something to be covered in the Panzer Grenadier piece, however from the fragments available for early 1941 it does not seem that all halftracks were provided with a light machine gun. Certainly, there is no MG armament shown for the Platoon Headquarters vehicle in the 1939 document.

Another feature of the Company as outlined in 1939 was it having a full Heavy Machine Gun Platoon, with four guns. Two medium halftracks each carried two MG teams, with a third such vehicle for the balance of Platoon Headquarters. The Platoon commander was allotted a Sd.Kfz 250 as was the accompanying field telephone detachment. Company Headquarters was to have one light and one medium halftrack.

This was though a paper allocation as the light MTW did not actually reach units until several years after the outbreak of war.

The overall look of the armoured *Schützen* Company as described in the document does mirror the motorised *Schützen* Rifle Company under KStN 1115. A diagram showing the parade ground organization of the armoured *Schützen* Company at the end of the document does bear the number 1115. Perhaps, if 1115 were still around, it might indicate that this was a motorised version of the armoured *Schützen* Rifle Company, intended for units awaiting receipt of the halftrack. Or not...

Annex B – *Schützen* units in Panzer Divisions, 1939 to 1940

Panzer Division	<i>Schützen</i> Regiment	<i>Krad</i> <i>Schützen</i> Battalion	Comments
1st	1st	1st	<i>Schützen</i> Regiment added a third Battalion early 1940
2nd	2nd	2nd	<i>Schützen</i> Regiment added a third Battalion early 1940
3rd	3rd	3rd	<i>Schützen</i> Regiment added a third Battalion early 1940
4th	12th 33rd	...	Two Battalions per Regiment
5th	13th 14th	...	Two Battalions per Regiment
6th	4th	6th	<i>Schützen</i> Regiment had three Battalions
7th	6th 7th	7th	Two Battalions per Regiment
8th	8th	8th	<i>Schützen</i> Regiment had three Battalions
9th	10th 11th	...	Two Battalions per Regiment
10th	86th 69th	...	Two Battalions per Regiment

Notes

- 3rd Battalion of 1st *Schützen* Regiment previously 3rd Battalion of 69th Motorised Infantry Regiment.
- 3rd Battalion of 2nd *Schützen* Regiment previously 3rd Battalion of 33rd Motorised Infantry Regiment.
- 3rd Battalion of 3rd *Schützen* Regiment previously 1st Battalion of 69th Motorised Infantry Regiment.
- 33rd *Schützen* Regiment previously 33rd Motorised Infantry Regiment.
- 86th *Schützen* Regiment previously 86th Motorised Infantry Regiment
- 69th *Schützen* Regiment previously 69th Motorised Infantry Regiment.
- 2nd Battalion of 69th *Schützen* Regiment previously 3rd Battalion of 86th Motorised Infantry Regiment.

Annex C – *Schützen* units in Panzer Divisions, 1941

Panzer Division	<i>Schützen</i> Regiment	<i>Krad</i><i>Schützen</i> Battalion	Comments
1st	1st 113th	1st	Also has a Heavy Infantry Gun Company (motorised)
2nd	2nd 304th	2nd	Also has a Heavy Infantry Gun Company (motorised)
3rd	3rd 394th	3rd	
4th	12th 33rd	34th	
5th	13th 14th	55th	Also has a Heavy Infantry Gun Company (motorised)
6th	4th 114th	6th	
7th	6th 7th	7th	Also has a Heavy Infantry Gun Company (motorised)
8th	8th 28th	8th	
9th	10th 11th	59th	Also has a Heavy Infantry Gun Company (motorised)
10th	86th 69th	10th	Also has a Heavy Infantry Gun Company (motorised)
11th	110th 111th	61st	
12th	5th 25th	22nd	
13th	68th 93rd	43rd	
14th	108th 103rd	64th	
15th	104th 115th	15th	
16th	64th 79th	16th	
17th	40th 63rd	77th	
18th	52nd 101st	18th	
19th	73rd 74th	79th	
20th	59th 112th	20th	

Note - all *Schützen* Regiments have two Battalions

Sources used and Acknowledgements

My particular thanks to Massimo Baroffi (Max) for his efforts in chronicling the contents of the [germandocsinrussia](#) site (see below) and for sharing his own information on the 1937 and 1938 organization of the *Schützen* and *Kradschützen* Battalion.

Also, to Richard Hedrick for sharing pages from NARA T78 R659 H36/161, which show an undated schematic representation of a *Schützen* Regiment and *Kradschützen* Battalion, which I personally reckon are an initial draft of the February 1941 KStN tables.

Please see below for website links as appropriate.

***Kriegsstärkenachweisung* tables**

Staff of a *Schützen* Battalion (motorised);

1108 - 1st October 1937

Headquarters of a Heavy Company (motorised);

1121 - 1st October 1937

Anti-tank Platoon (three guns) (motorised)

1122 - 1st October 1937

Mobile Gun Platoon (two light infantry guns) (motorised)

1123 - 1st October 1937

Mobile Pioneer Platoon (motorised)

1124 - 1st October 1937

Mobile Mortar Platoon (six heavy mortars) (motorised)

1126 - 1st October 1938

Headquarters of a *Kradschützen* Battalion (non-Regimented)

1108 - 1st October 1937

Kradschützen Rifle Company

1111 - 1st October 1937

Kradschützen Rifle Company 'a'

1111a - 1st October 1938

Machine Gun Company 'b' (motorised)

1116 – 1st February 1941

Website links

Dr Leo Niehorster's site - <http://niehorster.org/>

Richard Hedrick's website - <http://www.sturmpanzer.com/Default.aspx>

The German documents in Russia Project site;

<http://germandocsinrussia.org/de/nodes/1-russisch-deutsches-projekt-zur-digitalisierung-deutscher-dokumente-in-den-archiven-der-russischen-f-deration>

An outline of the *Schützen* Regiment (spotted by Max) seemingly under the February 1941 KStN. Sadly, it does not give the same level of detail for all units of the Regiment; the MG Company and Heavy Company of the Battalion, and also the Regimental Gun Company, are given only the most cursory of mentions. There is also no detail on the armoured variant of the Rifle Company.

<https://wwii.germandocsinrussia.org/de/nodes/14413-akte-77-unterlagen-der-artillerieschule-ii-j-terbog-altes-lager-unterrichtsmaterial-des-lehrstabes-f-r-offiziersschie-lehrg-nge-taktische-grundbegriffe-gel-ndebesprechungen-u-a#page/400/mode/inspect/zoom/4>

An outline organization for units of the Panzer Division, undated but referring to circa late 1940 into early 1941. This was originally flagged up on the Axis History Forum. As is often the case with motorised and mechanised units, it includes a lot of information on vehicles and practically nil for personnel.

<https://wwii.germandocsinrussia.org/de/nodes/14443-akte-17-gliederungs-bersichten-zu-den-einheiten-und-truppenteilen-einer-panzerdivision#page/2/mode/inspect/zoom/4>

The 1939 document detailing the armoured *Schützen* Rifle Company. I cannot read or speak German so have only been able to translate a fraction of it. At least it isn't in Fraktur...

<https://wwii.germandocsinrussia.org/de/nodes/2901-akte-9-briefwechsel-befehle-und-anweisungen-des-oberkommandos-der-wehrmacht-okw-des-oberkommandos-des-heeres-okh-des-chefs-der-heeresleitung-des-heeresgruppenkommandos-1-des-generalkommandos-iii-armeekorps#page/129/mode/inspect/zoom/6>

Would like to find...

If anyone has any information that they would be willing to share, or at least tell me where I can find, that relates to anything on the subject of the organization of the *Schützen*, be they in trucks, halftracks or on motorcycles, I would be interested to hear from you. My email contact is on the Homepage, accessible from the link at the bottom left corner of every PDF page.