

## Production of Assault Gun III and Variants

The »Armaments Status of the Army«, the acceptance figures of the Army Ordnance Office and the reports on repair and maintenance statistics are the primary sources referred to in this investigation of the production output aspects. Those documents contain detailed monthly figures on the number of vehicles accepted at the assembly plants by the Ordnance Office and the numbers of vehicles arriving at the Army Equipment Depots. They also record deliveries to the troops, although these are of less significance to this publication. It would not have been proper to simply copy those acceptance figures; it was important to consolidate numerous discrepancies between the stacks of different records. Our research succeeded in achieving that aim.

The statistics cover almost the entire time period that is of interest to us: it was possible to assemble seamless documentation right up to February 1945. After that date, the course of the war prevented further statistics from being kept. For the period from March 1945 to the cessation of hostilities we derived our data for the months in question from surviving accounts »Führer Presentations« of the Inspector General of Armored Troops, inventory reports of the Army Equipment Depots and other documents on production output and deliveries. The reconstructed figures for March to May 1945 have an estimated deviation of around ten vehicles which, considering a total of some 10 540 vehicles, is negligible.

### Delineations

The course of events from production to acceptance by the Army Ordnance Office, right up to deliveries to the Army Equipment Depots, is first presented in separate charts and then finally summarized, see pages 283 et seq.

Collated are the figures for new production, acceptance and arrivals at the Army Equipment Depots for all StuG III and variants on unmodified chassis. Further included are the conversion drives in the years 1943 and 1944, when PzKpfw III chassis were fitted with Assault Gun superstructures. Vehicles from repair activities are not reflected in the production and acceptance figures. However, conversions based on repaired vehicles (StuH L/28 and sIG) have been included for the sake of completeness.

Even though detailed research has allowed all known deliveries to be recorded down to the last vehicle, the purpose of the charts is to provide overall impressions rather than to refer to individual vehicles.

## Production

The chart on page 283 illustrates total StuG output during the entire time axis. It highlights how initial production was no more than a mere handful of vehicles, whereas by the end of 1944, one month's output was sufficient to equip ten new Assault Gun brigades.

Assembly outputs were reconstructed from the target quotas, »Production Forecast Ordnance Office«, the effective acceptance figures and various other records. It was also possible to eradicate a number of errors and to obtain clear answers to various significant questions.

Specific months or events:

- January to March 1940  
Delivery of Ausführung A was planned for March 1940, but delayed until May.
- June to October 1940  
The active intervention and influence of the Reich Minister for Armaments and Munitions led to higher allocations of manpower and exempted companies from other manufacturing obligations.<sup>493</sup> Together, these factors allowed production output to be increased beyond the plan figures. In October 1940 the planned capacity of 40 vehicles/month was not yet reached because of raw material and manpower allocation problems.<sup>494</sup>
- September 1941  
Replacement engines were needed for the Campaign in Russia; these were diverted from new production of tanks and Assault Guns (see also page 67). Output in excess of the original October quota (21 units) was able to offset the shortfall.
- March 1942  
Assembly of short barrels (L/24) was terminated at the end of February. Because of the rearming with gun 40 L/43 there was an almost complete absence of completed vehicles in March 1942. The production quota shortfalls of 37 units in March and nine units in April were offset by increased output in the months of May (29 units) and June (17).
- September to October 1942  
In September and October, a total of 24 chassis from the repair facilities were equipped with superstructures for the sIG 33 and accepted in Octo-

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<sup>493</sup> Rüstungsstand des Heeres, 1.6.1940, G<sup>110</sup>

<sup>494</sup> Rüstungsstand des Heeres, 1.10.1940, G<sup>110</sup>

were entered in the inventories of the Army Equipment Depots. The missing 24 vehicles were still under way at the end of February 1945 because transports undertaken by the Reichsbahn were taking ever longer. In the most drastic cases, the vehicles were destroyed during transportation or were lost; it is also feasible that the troops simply raided the railroad wagons in their desperation to obtain new equipment.

In addition to the listed 10 164 Assault Guns from new production, the troops were also reissued with 894 others that had been reported as losses and then refurbished by the homeland repair facilities up to February 1945.

From the files of the Inspector General of Armored Troops and other supporting documents it is possible to extrapolate a production level of around 379 StuG III for the months of March and April 1945, plus the final three Assault Guns from the homeland repair facilities. Consequently, the total number of manufactured and accepted StuG III and derivatives comes to some 10 543 units, of which 814 were fitted with the short StuK L/24, 118 with the long StuK L/43, 24 with sIG, ten with flame throwers, around 1 290 with StuH L/28 and the great majority of around 8 287 equipped with the StuK L/48.

The three steps of production, acceptance and receipt by the Army Equipment Depots are shown in the chart on page 286. It is clearly evident that the fluctuations in monthly production had been balanced out when the vehicles reached the depots and were barely discernible by the time they arrived at the front. Rather, it was the effects of the transportation situation and provisioning with food, fuel, ammunition and equipment that were the determining factors in the areas where the troops were operational.

The newly drafted, but contemporary, chart on the next page clearly shows how the production of turretless „Assault Guns“ (StuG III and IV, Jagdpanzer 38 (t), Jagdpanzer IV, »Jagdpanther«, »Jagdtiger«, Pz. IV long, StuH and Sturmpanzer) rose steadily to overtake the output of dedicated battle tanks in the year 1944.<sup>500</sup>

### **Tables showing production, acceptances and deliveries**

When ascertaining output capacities it was not sufficient to simply consult the Ordnance Office tables on the »Armament Status of the Army« and the USSBS Report on Miag. In order to fully grasp the mechanisms of production, cross-referencing against other documents such as the files on »Verification of accepted

<sup>500</sup> OKH, Org Abt III, 10575/45 g.Kdos., Anlage 1 : Panzer- und Sturmgeschütz-Auslieferung 1941 - 1944 : 23.2.1945