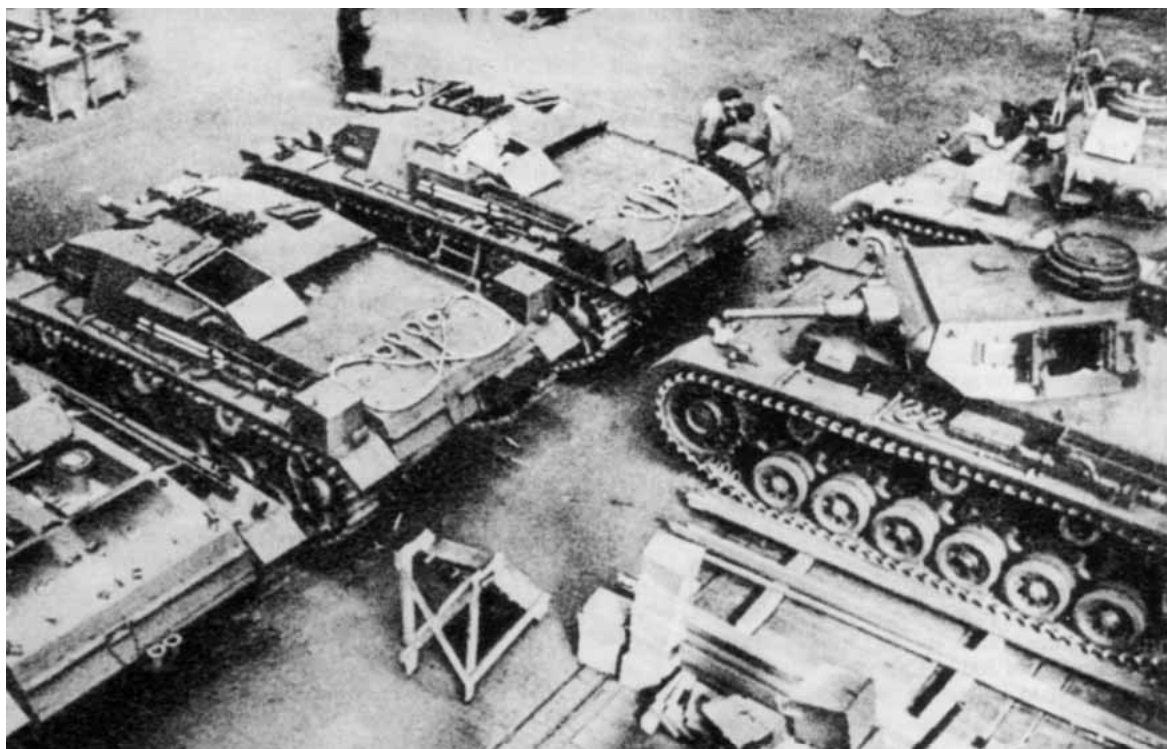


## Series production with short-barreled main armament



Production of StuG III Ausf B and PzKpfw III Ausf H at Alkett / The vehicle on the far left is a battle tank fitted with a special muffler in preparation for »Operation Sea Lion« (Invasion of England) / Alkett, 6. – 9.1940

In the fall of 1940 production of the Assault Gun was also assigned to the category »Sonderstufe«,<sup>115</sup> finally solving the problem of allocating manpower and materials. This phase did not last<sup>116</sup>; at the beginning of 1941 the StuG was downgraded again to Level Ia.

January 1941 saw 41 vehicles delivered instead of the 36 scheduled. This »surplus delivery in previous month« was the justification when 30 units were delivered instead of 34 in February.<sup>117</sup> Changeover from AusfB to AusfC led to production delays in March 1941 when only 23 vehicles were delivered instead of 38, with »start-up difficulties AusfC« being reported.<sup>118</sup> This situation was not, however, critical for the troops as there were still enough AusfB available for acceptance and delivery. At Alkett, machine capacity allowing an increase in produc-

<sup>115</sup> Rüstungsstand des Heeres, 1.11.1940, G<sup>110</sup>

<sup>116</sup> OKH, Wa J Rü (WuG 6), Anlage zu 1/41 g.Kdos. : Überblick über den Rüstungsstand von Kraftfahrzeugen bis Juni 1941 : 2.1.1941

<sup>117</sup> OKH, Wa J Rü (WuG 6), Anlage 131/41 g.Kdos. : Überblick über den Rüstungsstand von Kraftfahrzeugen : 7.3.1941

<sup>118</sup> OKH, Wa J Rü (WuG 6), Anlage 192/41 g.Kdos. : Überblick über den Rüstungsstand von Kraftfahrzeugen : 7.4.1941 und OKH, Wa Stab Ia St : Überblick über den Rüstungsstand des Heeres - WuG - nach dem Stand vom 1.4.1941. Kurz gefasste Auswertung : 18.4.1941

## Series production with short-barreled main armament

tion output from hitherto 40 vehicles to 55 units per month beginning May 1941 was in place.<sup>119</sup>

In June 1941 Alkett delivered slightly too many vehicles; in July there was a slight shortfall. From a total for both months together, four StuG too few were supplied:<sup>120</sup> »Short delivery of 4 units because of problems at sub-contractor.«

Production quotas were increased steadily to 47 units/month from June 1941 and 50 units/month beginning November 1941. The Ordnance Office calculated in April that the initial equipping of the divisions with StuG would be completed in December. Consequently, they intended to cut back output from the end of the year to the former 38 units/month and to use the liberated assembly capacities to increase production of battle tanks.<sup>121</sup>

From the very outset of the invasion of the Soviet Union »Operation Barbarossa«, on June 22, 1941, numbers of replacement engines for the armored vehicles involved were far too low. Because of dusty road conditions, engines were massively overtaxed and large numbers of replacements were needed.<sup>122</sup> Even though air filters were cleaned every 150 km,<sup>123</sup> this did not solve the problem. To immediately cover the shortfall, Hitler ordered in June 1941, that 142 engines destined for Tank III and StuG III be taken from the production process in August and transported to the front by plane and truck. Production figures were amended accordingly in June 1941, the intention being to assemble fewer Assault Guns in September to cover for replacements shipped to the front.<sup>124</sup> The planned shortfall was to be compensated by February 1942:<sup>125</sup>

Month	08.41	09.41	10.41	11.41	12.41	1.42	2.42	3.42	4.42
Former	50	50	50	50	40	40	40	40	50
New	50	17	38	60	50	50	50	45	50
Shortfall		-33	-45	-35	-25	-15	-5	-0	

The plan was to accept vehicles with works engines installed, then to remove these again and leave the vehicles standing without engines at the manufactur-

<sup>119</sup> OKH, Wa J Rü (WuG 2) g.Kdos. : Überblick über den Rüstungsstand von Waffen bis 31.12.1941. Wehrmachtteil Heer : ohne Datum [2.1941]

<sup>120</sup> OKH, Wa J Rü (WuG 6), Anlage 425/41 g.Kdos. I d : Überblick über den Rüstungsstand von Kraftfahrzeugen : 7.8.1941

<sup>121</sup> OKH, Wa J Rü (WuG) 6, Anlage zu 161/41 g.Kdos. Wa J Rü (WuG) IIIa : Überblick über den Rüstungsstand von Waffen bis 31.12.41, Wehrmachtteil Heer : 31.3.1941

<sup>122</sup> OKH, WaA, Wa Stab Ia St : Pz.Kpf.Wg.Ersatzteile-Fertigung : 24.1.1942

<sup>123</sup> AHM 1941, Kraftfahrtechnischer Anhang Ziffr. 74 : OKH (Ch H Rüst und BdD) : 15.8.1941

<sup>124</sup> Rüstungsstand des Heeres, 1.7.1940, G110

<sup>125</sup> OKH, Stab Rüst II : Aktenvermerk : 6.8.1941

## Series production with short-barreled main armament

ers. In the event of lack of space, vehicles would be sent to the Army Equipment Depots (HZA)<sup>c</sup>. As engines became available they would be installed and the vehicles could be rendered operational again.<sup>126</sup> The production shortfall of Assault Guns was to be offset, at least partially, by increased deliveries in October and November; an objective that succeeded totally.



Start-up of StuG III Ausf E production at Alkett, in September 1941 / Accepted 11.1941

Lack of engines created a gap in production that Alkett made good use of: Homeland Repairs, i.e. the refurbishment of heavily damaged vehicles from the front within Reich territory, had to be set up. By the end of June 1941 Alkett had only repaired as few as six StuG with technical defects. From May onwards there were vehicle breakdowns from combat on the new Russian front, and an increased need for repair capacity was to be expected. First vehicles with combat damage began to arrive at Alkett in July. By September 1941 the first seven of these StuG III had been repaired by Alkett and transferred to the Army Equipment Depots.<sup>127</sup> Of the 38 vehicles that Alkett received from the Eastern Campaign still in 1941, nine were repaired and returned to the Army. Another twelve were readied for trial conversion using the light field howitzer Feldhaubitze 18 (IFH 18).

<sup>126</sup> OKH WaA, Wa Stab Ia St, 1628/41 g.Kdos. : Aktenvermerk über Kampfwagenmotoren : 12.8.1941

<sup>127</sup> OKH, Anlage zu 2190/41 g.Kdos. Wa Stab Ia St : Die Waffenlage während des Ostfeldzuges in Stück : ohne Datum [10.1941]