

Direct Identification

This chapter collates all those externally visible characteristics that allow the researcher to directly conclude which variant is involved. As soon as one of those typical characteristics is evident, it will lead to a concrete determination of the relevant production batch, because that attribute will only have been featured in that specific variant.

We have not taken any retrofits into consideration, but have documented the vehicles in the original series production condition in which they would have rolled off the plant assembly line. By retrofits we understand either the formally specified, subsequent installation or modification of equipment, or individual conversions undertaken in the field. The months in which the corresponding variants were accepted are shown in parentheses.

For images, please see the chapter on „Complex Identification“ on pages 31 et seq., where each feature is backed up by a corresponding photograph.

Typical features of trial series StuG III (1937/1938)

- Running gear with leaf springs and 8 road wheels on each side
- Circular maintenance hatches in the bow of the hull
- Absence of inner upright plate beside the vision channel of the gunner

Typical features of all StuG III series production vehicles (01.1940 – 04.1945)

- Running gear with externally concealed torsion bar suspension, 6 road wheels and 3 return rollers on each side; vehicles have no rotating turret

Typical features of StuG III Ausf A (01.1940 – 05.1940)

- Evenly spaced return rollers
- Narrow drive sprockets each with 8 circular cutouts
- Narrow road wheels
- Narrow tracks, each with a total width of 38 cm
- 2 hinged hatch covers above the gunner; the front one with a single hinge, the rear one with two hinges
- No Notek blackout light