

Panzeraufklarungs-Abteilung 6

Reconnaissance Battalion 6

6th Panzer Division

Jim McKinney

The 6th Panzer division was formed in October 1939 in Wuppertal, Germany from the 1st Leichte (light) division. The order of battle for the 6th Panzer division in 1943 describes the reconnaissance battalion as a motorized rather than armored formation. Two Aufklarungs companies were equipped with motorcycles and the heavy company was also listed as motorized. Using the Kubelwagon option in the Flames of War army list I equipped my platoons with "bucket" cars instead of motorcycles. Between 1943 and 1944 three members of the recon battalion were awarded the Knights Cross. One of the recipients, Gunter Hasenbeck, served as a company commander in the reconnaissance battalion.

During the invasion of France in 1940 the 6th Panzer division was heavily engaged against French and British forces. The 6th Reconnaissance battalion was the first 6th Panzer division unit to reach the channel coast. The division was in position to cut off the British evacuation at Dunkirk when Hitler ordered the panzers to stop and entrusted the Luftwaffe to destroy the British forces fleeing toward the coast. 6th Panzer withdrew and the opportunity to seal the fate of the evacuating British was lost. In the following campaign resulting in the fall of France the 6th Panzer division followed the advance of the 6th reconnaissance battalion.

The 6th Panzer division was assigned to the Northern sector for the invasion of the Soviet Union. 6th Panzer would serve on the Eastern front until its surrender in Hungary in May 1945. The Divisions only extended break was for refit in France in the Summer and Fall of 1942. When the 6th Panzer returned to the Eastern Front in the late Fall of 1942 it would be used in the attempt by 4th Panzer army to

fight its way into Stalingrad to relieve the 6th Army. One battalion commander of the 11th Panzer regiment, Franz Bake, was the last member of the Division to withdraw having come within 48 kilometers of Stalingrad. He faced North toward the doomed city, saluted and closed the hatch on his Panzer IV and gave the command to move out. Operation Winter Storm (the attempted relief of 6th army) was over.ⁱ

During the Kursk campaign 6th Panzer division was assigned to III Panzer Corps, Armieeabteilung Kempf. Of the three major army formations used in the battle, this army group was the weakest. When the offensive was called off by Hitler, 6th Panzer division was able to field 6 operational tanks. In the months following the battle of Kursk units from the 6th Panzer division were used as a fire brigade, engaging Soviet armored threats to their sector. 6th Panzer division surrendered to the Soviets in May 1945, having been pushed back to Hungary.

I selected the 6th Aufklarungs-Abteilung for the several reasons. First, the unit was motorized and not armored. An unusual but not unheard of configuration for a Panzer division. The unit was one of three Panzer divisions on the Eastern front to receive the Luchs reconnaissance vehicle in 1944. The 11th Panzer Regiment was equipped with Panthers in 1944. The 11th Panzer Regiment was often reinforced with a heavy Panzer battalion and used as quick response force as the German army was pushed back to Hungary.

ⁱ Kurowski, Franz. Panzer Aces. Stackpole Books, 2004. 460 pages.

Aufklärungsschwadron

Reconnaissance Mechanized Company

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Company HQ		45 pts
	AT Section	<u>25 pts</u>
		70 pts
1st Platoon 3 squads		205 pts
	Upgrade to Kubelwagons	<u>5 pts</u>
		210 pts
2nd Platoon 3 squads		205 pts
	Upgrade to Kubelwagons	<u>5 pts</u>
		210 pts
Light Anti Tank Platoon	3 PAK 40	170 pts
Heavy Anti-Aircraft Gun Platoon	2 8.8 cm flak 36	205 pts
	Upgrade ROF 3	<u>20 pts</u>
		225 pts
Panzer Platoon	5 Panzer IV	475 pts

Assault Gun Platoon

2 Brummbar

140 pts

Total 1500 pts