



This *Adler* appears to be a mock-up meant to look like an armored car. The *Reichswehr* and *Wehrmacht* had to do a great deal of improvising in the early 1930s before it started receiving purpose-built armored vehicles for its fledgling armored force. JIM HALEY

unified theory on how to employ its reconnaissance assets. During the 1920s most of the discussion concerning the role and mission of reconnaissance (particularly motorized) forces focused on which branch should exercise oversight and developmental functions. The arguments were often heated, not only in Germany, but also in other European countries and in the United States.⁵ The cavalry branch saw reconnaissance forces as falling within its purview, but it continued to stress the need for horse-mounted units or mixed units comprised of both horse-ridden and vehicle-mounted elements. The proponents of armor as a separate arm saw the necessity for reconnaissance elements to come under its wing, since they were expected to work hand-in-glove with armor forces in developing situations and facilitating the exploitation of opportunities on the battlefield. Not to be outdone, the infantry branches of various nations also showed some interest in developing their own motorized reconnaissance elements, since there was a large school of thought that believed that armor needed to be tied to the infantry in its employment and not the other way around.

As is usually the case with internecine fighting like this, the combat arm that takes the first step, and takes it decisively, emerges the winner. In Germany the *Kavallerie* branch only halfheartedly advanced the concept of motorized reconnaissance, while the *Kraftfahrtruppe*, the motorized transport forces, which served as the clandestine breeding ground for the eventual *Panzertruppe*, wholeheartedly embraced the concept of any and all things mechanical. As John McGraph notes in his monograph concerning the development of modern reconnaissance:

In contrast to what happened in the U.S. Army in the same period, the German cavalry leadership's devotion to the cavalry in the main battle led to the cavalry's ready surrender of the operational-level reconnaissance mission to the motorized troops branch, the predecessor of the armored forces. Despite later attempts to shift this role back to the cavalry, the motorized troops retained the mission. The Germans became the first major army to effectively divorce operational reconnaissance from horse cavalry, at least in theory.⁶



A number of German firms produced prototypes of armored cars for the police and the military. Here we see a Krupp *Polizei-Streifenwagen* displayed at an automobile show. The police patrol vehicle had a 70-horsepower engine and appeared to have the capability of mounting a machine gun in a revolving turret. The date and location are unknown. MICHAEL H. PRUETT

In 1929 the first decisive step was taken in the development of what was to become the *Panzertruppe*. *Kraftfahrabteilung 6* in Münster was designated as a test bed for the new concepts being advanced by men like Guderian. The truck battalion was reorganized as a combined-arms battalion with three line companies: a *Krafttradschützen-Kompanie* (motorcycle infantry company); a *Kampfwagen-Nachbildungs-Kompanie* (fighting vehicle simulation company); and a *Panzerspähwagen-Nachbildungs-Kompanie* (armored car simulation company).⁷ By 1930 it was decided to restructure the remaining *Kraftfahrabteilungen* in a similar fashion, with then-Major Guderian assuming command of *Kraftfahrabteilung 3* in Wünsdorf on 1 February 1930.⁸ By 1934 all six of the truck battalions had been converted, although they all retained the original designation as *Kraftfahrabteilungen* as a deception measure.⁹

It was during this period that the initial organization for motorized/armored reconnaissance battalions was established: two armored car companies (or troops), one motorcycle infantry company (or troop),

and a heavy company/troop containing engineer, anti-tank, and infantry gun assets at platoon levels. This was to remain the theoretical norm leading into the war, even if the practice was often quite different, generally because of a lack of adequate and suitable reconnaissance vehicles but also because of changing missions and roles for the reconnaissance forces. Although some of the first-wave infantry divisions also received a small complement of armored cars, these were few and far between. All of the organizational nuances will be discussed in the next chapter.¹⁰

The specific vehicles used by the armored reconnaissance forces will be covered in depth in a later chapter, but at this point it will suffice to say that the German Army entered the war and conducted combat operations with reconnaissance assets that had originally been designed solely as training vehicles and interim measures. In this sense, it was similar to the tanks used by the armored regiments, which had to fight for a not inconsiderable period with the *Panzer I* and *Panzer II* long after they had outlived their battlefield effectiveness. In the case of the reconnaissance