

## PERSONAL PHOTO ALBUM FROM AUFKLÄRUNGS-ABTEILUNG 2 (MOT)

With the prewar years being the formative ones for the newly established *schnelle Truppen*, it is no wonder that many unit soldiers liked to take pictures of their units, equipment, training, and comrades for loved ones back home. Empty photo albums with unit designations stamped on the covers and usually a history of the branch of service were sold at canteens on posts throughout Germany. These were then filled with images taken by the soldiers or with photos and postcards available at the canteens. Of course, basic civilian-style photo albums were also used, which makes it difficult to identify the owner's unit.

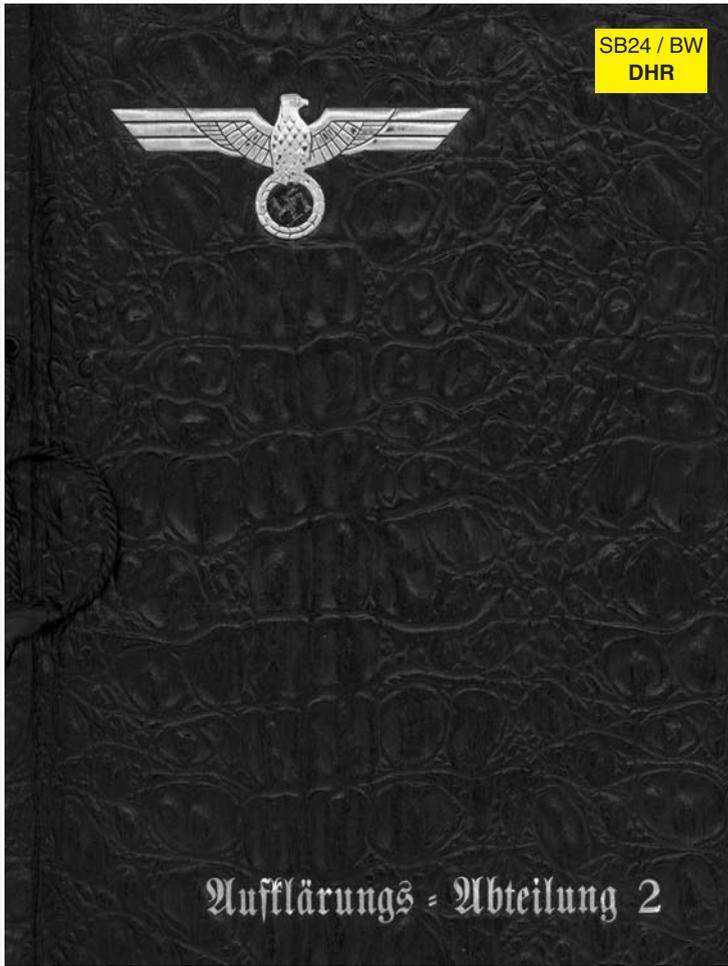
In some cases, it is possible to establish the original owners based on entries made. In most cases, however, unless the photo album comes directly from a family, the albums remain anonymous. Despite that, the units or formations can usually be identified, either through markings on vehicles or insignia worn by personnel. Since most prewar German vehicles displayed the tactical signal of their formation, the element can be established as long as they are readily identifiable in an image. The same holds true in the

case of uniforms, since prewar regulations called for distinctive ciphers and numerals to be placed on shoulder boards (officers) and straps (enlisted personnel) that frequently also allows for a rapid identification of the formation as long as the basic type of unit is known.

The photo album here comes from a scout assigned to *Aufklärungs-Abteilung 2 (mot)* of the *2. Infanterie-Division (mot)*. The division, which eventually became the *12. Panzer-Division*, was formed in 1935 as a regular infantry division. On 10 November 1938, the reconnaissance battalion was added to its rolls, initially with a motorcycle infantry troop (1st Troop) and an armored car troop (2nd Troop). The first two wartime commanders of the battalion were *Major/Oberstleutnant* Walter (1 September 1939 to August 1940—it is assumed that Walter assumed command prior to the outbreak and remained after) and *Major* Wolf (August 1940 to 1 October 1940). The majority of these images were probably taken around the time of the battalion's integration into the *2. Infanterie-Division (mot)*.



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**Opposite page:** Images such as these—available in garrison canteens as post cards—often complemented the personal photography in a soldier's photo album. The cartoon drawing is actually quite telling in representing the various roles and skills of the scouts. The vehicle commander is seen observing but also carrying the traditional lance of the German cavalry. The dismounted armored car crewman carries a variety of weapons, from handheld to antitank rifles and a machine gun, demonstrating the need for proficiency in each. He also carries aiming stakes, representative of indirect-fire weapons, such as the artillery, for which he was expected to be able to call for fire. The pouch behind him is probably a report satchel, since the scout was expected to submit a variety of reports concerning the enemy forces observed. Finally, he also carries a pair of large shears, representative of the combat-engineer skills needed to breach obstacles. In short, the armored scout was a jack-of-all-trades who needed a variety of skill sets to accomplish his missions.

The cover of the canteen-purchased photo album for the battalion.

**Below:** Sample page from the text that usually accompanied such albums. This one includes a stock image of one of the first armored cars to be delivered to the armored reconnaissance forces, the *Sd.Kfz. 13*, which mounted a manually traversed 7.92mm machine gun in the center of the superstructure, which was manned by the vehicle commander. Although basically obsolete upon introduction, some of these vehicles saw active frontline service through the end of the campaign in Poland. Of interest here is the vehicle's *Reichswehr* license plate, which dates the image around the time of Hitler's accession to power in 1933.

h stark sein, das heißt, Panzerkräfte in ausreichendem Maße  
 sich häufig mit der Abwehr begnügen, um dann im Schwere  
 in größter Stärke einsetzen zu können.  
 e Notwendigkeit der Panzerabwehr und ihrer Sonderwaffen zu  
 merwaffe ist die Panzerabwehrtruppe aus einem neu  
 n eigenen Geer ergänzen beide einander in taktischer und  
 rt und Schild; als Feinde sind sie geeignet, das alte Sprich-  
 n Schwert das andere in der Scheide hält", also entweder  
 ein zu sichern oder im Kampf den Gegner zu lähmen, das  
 13en.

motorisierte Aufklärung

ig wie für den Einsatz aller Waffengattungen ist ferner eine  
 vorzügliche Aufklärung. Es ist selbstverständlich, daß sie im Zeitalter der Technik motorisiert ist.  
 Mehr als die anderen Einheiten der Kraftfahrkampftruppe werden die Aufklärungs-  
 abteilungen von der Schnelligkeit ihres Motors Gebrauch machen können und müssen, um  
 überraschend in den Feind vorzustoßen und seine Absichten aufzudecken. Kühn und verwegener  
 muß die Truppe geführt werden; noch Kühner und noch verwegener muß der einzelne Spättrupp  
 handeln, der der Erste am Feind ist — ganz auf seine verantwortungsvolle Aufgabe eingestellt,  
 die ihn zum Auge und Ohr des oberen Truppenführers werden läßt...!  
 Sein Gerät ist der leichte und der schwere Panzerpöhwagen, die in Züge und Kompanien  
 zusammengefaßt sind.

Die motorisierten Schützen

Den Keigen der Kraftfahrkampftruppe beschließen die motorisierten Schützen, die in  
 Verbänden bis zu Regimentsstärke im Zusammenwirken mit den anderen Teilen nicht unwesentlich



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Leichter Panzerpöhwagen im Gelände

Photo Schroter, Cenahrud