

German 150th Panzer Brigade

December, 1944

Skorzeny's 150th Panzer Brigade was the most unorthodox formation in the German Order of Battle. It is presented here as three Kampfgruppenes. Please see notes on next page for more information.

Kampfgruppe X (Hardieck)

4 ●●● ARMORED 10	1 ●●● RIFLE 8	2* ●●● SMG 6	3 ●●● 10	1 ●●● 1	3 ●●● 1	2 ●●● 1	3 M 12	10 M 17	9 A 5	5 57mm 0
x 2	x 5	x 4	x 1	x 1	x 2	x 2				
16 Panther 12	A M-8 10	3 M-8 15	5 0 1	C Truck 12	0 2 4	C(I) Halftrack 10	2 2 1	C(I) M-8 Jeep 18	2* Use U.S. units for Arm. Inf., 107 mort, 57 AT, M-8 AC, Jeep, Panthers are disguised as M-10 TD, everything painted green.	
x 1	x 1	x 15	x 1	x 1						

Kampfgruppe Y (Scherff)

4 ●●● ARMORED 10	1 ●●● RIFLE 8	2* ●●● SMG 6	3 ●●● 10	1 ●●● 1	3 ●●● 1	2 ●●● 1	3 M 12	10 M 17	9 A 5	5 57mm 0
x 2	x 5	x 4	x 1	x 1	x 2	x 2				
12 Stug III G 9	A SdKfz 234/1 8	2 SdKfz 234/1 16	4 0 1	C Truck 12	0 2 3	C(I) M-3 10	2 2 1	C(I) M-8 Jeep 18	2* Use U.S. units for Arm. Inf., 107 mort, 57 AT, M-3 HT, Jeep, everything painted green.	
x 1	x 1	x 15	x 1	x 1						

Kampfgruppe Z (Wolf)

4 ●●● ARMORED 10	1 ●●● RIFLE 8	2* ●●● SMG 6	3 ●●● 10	1 ●●● 1	3 ●●● 1	2 ●●● 1	3 M 12	10 M 17	12 A 10	9 A 5	5 57mm 0
x 2	x 5	x 4	x 1	x 1	x 2	x 1	x 1	x 2	x 1	x 1	
0 Truck 1	C SdKfz 250/1 4	0 SdKfz 250/1 12	0 2 2	C M-8 Jeep 18	0 2 2	C(I) 2	2 2 1	C(I) 2*	Use U.S. units for Arm. Inf., 107 mort, 76 AT, 57 AT, jeep, everything painted green.		
x 16	x 1	x 1									

FGB
Artillery
(attached)

60 (H) 150mm 2	36 0	0 C SdKfz 8 1	0 0 10
x 2		x 2	

Attached from Fuhrer
Grenadier Brigade,
probably after Decem-
ber 18.

By Greg Moore
gregpanzerblitz.com
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One of Hitler's ideas for this campaign was an entire tank brigade of men who spoke English, outfitted in U.S. uniforms and entirely equipped with American vehicles and equipment. Their job would be to slip through American lines in the confusion and race forward to the Meuse River bridges and take and hold them until the Panzer Divisions could get there. He put his favorite German commando, the much decorated Otto Skorzeny, in charge with barely five weeks to put his force together.

The call went out for 3300 soldiers who could speak English as well as enough captured American vehicles and equipment to outfit this force. Out of the soldiers found, only a small number of them could actually speak colloquial English well enough to pass as Americans. Also, German units were reluctant to give up any American vehicles they had, especially not knowing what they were for. In the end, only two Sherman tanks were acquired and one was a total loss. Five Panthers were modified to resemble M-10 tank destroyers and some Stg-III's were painted green. Only four Greyhound armored cars were found so German 234/1's were added to the force. Also only a few M-3 halftracks were found and everybody was reluctant to part with their excellent U.S. built trucks. German built Ford trucks were used as much as possible and civilian cars helped fill in the transportation pool as this force had to be totally mechanized in order to accomplish its objectives. All vehicles were painted green with big white stars on them. U.S. anti-tank guns and heavy mortars helped fill out the force.

The force assembled fell far short of an "armored brigade" with less than a dozen total tanks or assault guns. Skorzeny decided the best way to use his force was to divide it into three Kampfgruppen, each led by an experienced combat leader. They would follow behind the spearhead and wait for the break in the line expected to occur in the first 48 hours and then slip through and race for the bridges, with each group heading for a different major crossing.

He organized his best English speaking soldiers into three and four man teams, each team riding in a jeep, and sent them forward to infiltrate through the lines and cause confusion any way they could. They changed road signs, gave phony directions, committed acts of sabotage, and sowed as much confusion and panic as possible. It was dangerous work, some were caught and executed as spies. One team claimed to have driven all the way to the Meuse River.

As the battle developed, the break in the American line needed for this mission to succeed never occurred. After the first two days, Skorzeny decided that his mission to capture the Meuse River bridges had no chance of success so he requested that his brigade be committed to action as a regular combat unit. His request was granted and he was given orders to attack Malmedy. This resulted in one of the strangest looking battles in the entire war. German soldiers, outfitted partially or entirely in U.S. uniforms and supported by U.S. and German heavy equipment, attacked a American force consisting largely of the U.S. 99th Infantry Battalion, a group of soldiers of Norwegian ancestry, many of whom spoke less than perfect English themselves. The initial attack consisted of just X and Y Kampfgruppen, as Z had not arrived yet. Skorzeny relied on surprise for success but it didn't work and accurate U.S. artillery fire defeated the attack. Several Panthers were destroyed in the assault. The 150th Panzer Brigade remained in the line until December 28, when it was withdrawn back to the rear and disbanded.