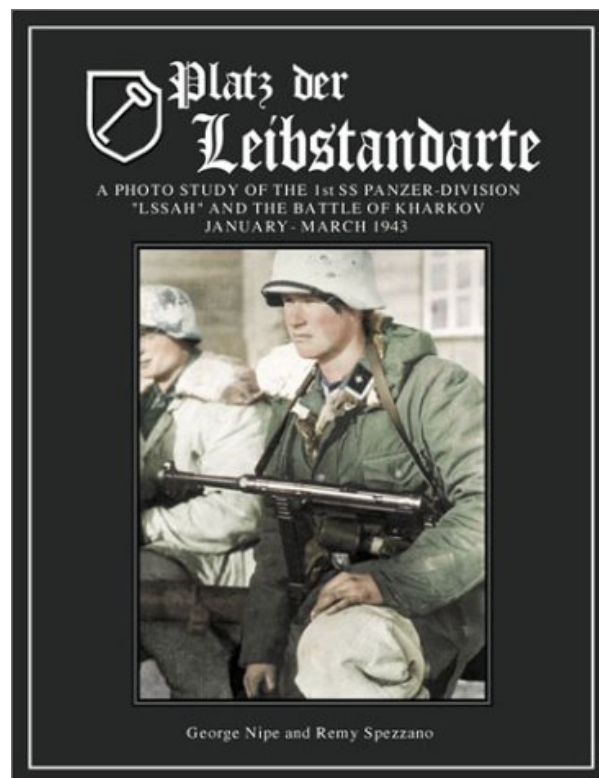


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# Platz der Leibstandarte

A PHOTO STUDY OF THE 1st SS PANZER-DIVISION  
"LSSAH" AND THE BATTLE OF KHARKOV  
JANUARY - MARCH 1943



George Nipe and Remy Spezzano

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In the first months of 1943, the SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Division "Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler" was involved in all phases of the series of operations in the complex Kharkov campaign. During the initial defensive fighting, the division held its sector for two weeks against the full weight of the Soviet 3rd Tank Army, a remarkable feat in itself. After the city fell, "Leibstandarte" withdrew to a new defensive position and protected the important supply rail center at Krasnograd while the "Das Reich" and "Totenkopf" divisions executed the first phase of the counterattack. When the 3rd Tank Army began its move south to block the advance of these two SS divisions "Leibstandarte" carried out raids and interdiction strikes that disrupted the Soviet realignment and weakened the army's fighting power.

Once having rejoined the SS-Panzerkorps, after taking part in the destruction of the Kegitschevka pocket, "Leibstandarte" led the way back to the city of Kharkov. Dynamic young officers such as Kurt Meyer, Max Wünsche and Jochen Peiper personally led attack columns that struck deep into the city, eventually forcing the Russian troops to abandon Kharkov.

When "Leibstandarte's" role in each phase of Manstein's Kharkov counterattack is taken into consideration it is clear why its men, after enduring the losses necessary to retake the city's blood stained streets and ruined buildings, renamed the enormous Red Square as "Platz der Leibstandarte." Beautifully reproduced wartime photos, and compelling captions by author George Nipe illustrate in incredible detail the men, equipment, weapons, and vehicles used in this decisive Eastern Front battle.

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Outstanding Photo History

By Ozark Trail Outrider

Rare is the book that provides pictures that are actually related to the text provided. Even rarer still are pictures that capture in sequence the entire event. Such is the case with this volume. From start to finish the

reader is presented with a sequence of photographs that literally document aspects of the complete campaign for Kharkov in the winter of 1943.

The pictures are also notable for depictions of many well-known and other lesser known figures of the Leibstandarte, Das Reich, and Totenkopf divisions. Of particular interest are those photos showing a young Jochen Peiper in action. This photographic volume also has a remarkable series of photos showing the fate of a Soviet horse drawn column as it is overtaken by Peiper's Kampfgruppe. Not a happy ending to be certain, but a very real glimpse into the realities of combat on the Eastern Front. In fact, one must wonder how similar the context of the events that would occur at Malmedy over a year later, when an American column would be overtaken by another of Peiper's Kampfgruppen. Certainly, the pictures in this book show a no quarter given attitude for the advancing German Kampfgruppe.

For the generalist, this volume will be an interesting look at German formations in action. However, for the serious historian, the pictures clearly show the players, weather, terrain, and operational activities of the Waffen SS all at a given place and point in time.

This book is a must for any serious library on German arms or the Waffen SS in particular.

22 of 22 people found the following review helpful.

Platz der Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler

By Joseph Burgard

As the title of the book says, it is a photo study of the Waffen-SS divisions that fought in the battle for Kharkov. One word to describe the book would be awesome. The collection of photos is truly amazing and one can tell that each photo was delicately and faithfully reproduced from the original prints or contact sheets. Many of the photos have never been published previously. The types of photos range from combat, staged shots, rest, award ceremonies, and the behind the scenes type activities. After looking at the pictures, one will be able to get some sort of idea of what it was like to fight in the harsh Russian winter. All of the photos were taken by 'Kriegsberichters' or war journalists who were right with all the soldiers in the thick of the fighting. Not only are the photos excellent for study, but also as reference for reenactors and the like. Other features in the book include the following. An introduction that explains where the photos came from and some technical data about the photography employed. A nice synopsis of the battle of Kharkov to give you an idea of the overall picture. Superb captions for each photo written by George Nipe. Lastly there are eight short biographies of some of the more famous LAH commanders, like Panzermeyer and Jochen Peiper, with impressive color portraits painted by Marco Ortelli. Overall an excellent book worth buying.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

Good book for East Front enthusiasts.

By citizen

If you are an enthusiast of WWII & the Eastern Front you will like this book. It contains many photos not seen before and by following the flow of the battle of Kharkov it does create a compelling visual companion to other books on the same subject.

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