Sd.Kfz. 251/9 Ausf. C

Following very successful experience with half-tracks designed as artillery tractors, in 1938 German engineers also developed armored versions for combat use. Armoured infantry fighting vehicles, based on a half-track chassis, quickly became the main combat vehicles and means of transport used by the German mechanized infantry in the Second World War. These vehicles enabled the mechanised infantry to operate and advance quickly together with the battle tanks.

The medium armoured fighting vehicle 251 (Sd.Kfz. 251) was based on the Sd.Kfz. 11 half-track chassis developed by Hanomag. The vehicle had all-round armour and was only open at the top. In order to protect the crew from the weather however it could be covered by a tarpaulin. There were four basic versions (A-D) of the Sd.Kfz. 251 tracked infantry vehicle, 16,000 of which were built from 1938 onwards, and which served as the basis for 23 different variants. These variants were adapted to different operational requirements with different equipment and armament. Thus the Sd.Kfz. 251/9 was equipped with a 7.5 cm KwK 37 L/24 short barrelled cannon, and an MG 34 or MG 42 as secondary armament. There was a crew of 4. To enable the gun to be integrated into the vehicle a recess was made in the roof on the right side of the driver's compartment and the cannon was placed on a mount in the front combat compartment. The preferred battle zones were in open spaces. The vehicles were 5.8m long and had a 6-cylinder Maybach engine, could reach a speed of about 50/60 km/h, the 160 litre fuel tank giving a range of 180 km. Overland, it was possible for the crew to mount and dismount quickly through the two-leaf door in the rear. The type A vehicles had side vision slots in the rear of the hull which, by way of simplification, had already been eliminated in version B. Only the driver still had a side vision slot. In type C, as a result of experience gained in operation, the front bumper was eliminated and the nose plate and side engine vents were redesigned. Finally, for version D, only straight metal plates were used and the rear was given an overhang.
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8. schwere Panzergrenadierkompanie, Afrikakorps 1943

5. schwere Panzeraufklärungskompanie, Russland 1943