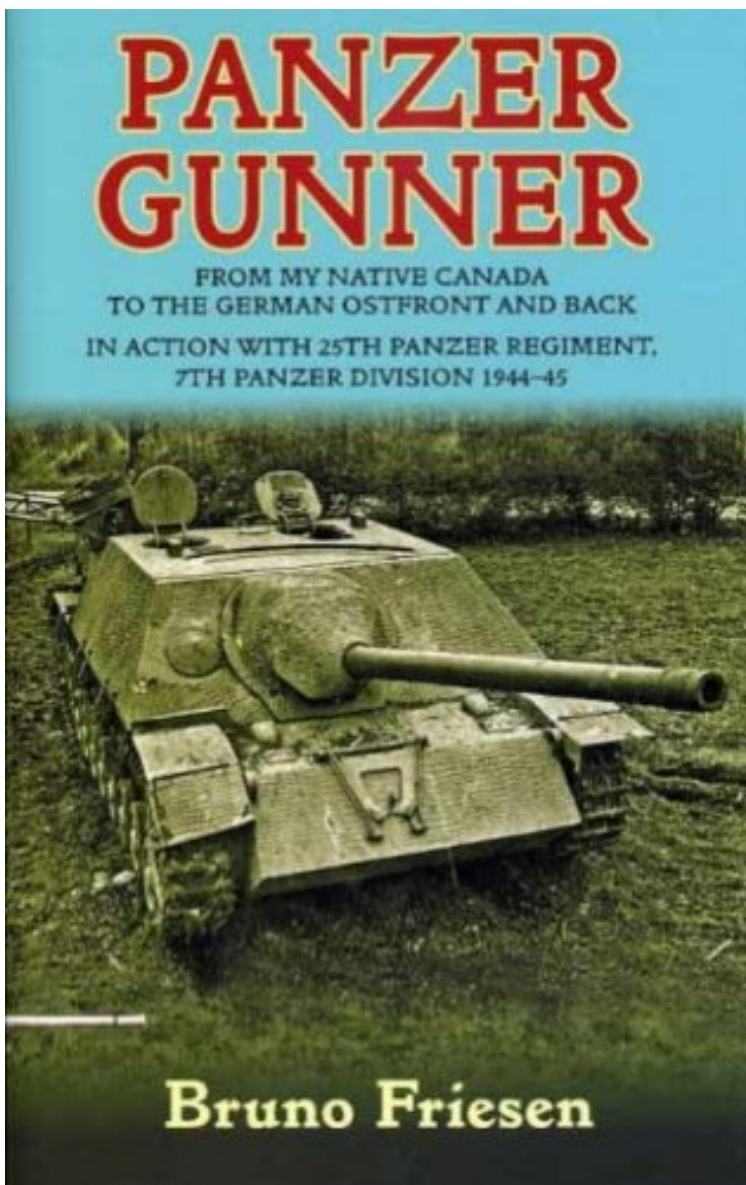


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# Panzer Gunner: From My Native Canada to the German Osfront and Back. In Action with 25th Panzer Regiment, 7th Panzer Division 1944-45



*Par Bruno Friesen*

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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurThere are few memoirs available of German Panzer crews that focus on the climactic

last 12 months of the war on the Eastern Front, 1944-45. What makes Bruno Friesen's account virtually unique is his family background: his parents came from a German-speaking Mennonite community in Ukraine, and were to all intents and purposes culturally German. To make matters even more complex, in 1924 his parents left the Ukraine for Canada, where Bruno was born. In March 1939 he and his brother Oscar found themselves on a ship bound for Bremerhaven in Germany. He barely spoke German, and had never been to Germany, nevertheless his father envisaged that a better life awaited them in the Third Reich.

Needless to say, Bruno became caught up in the Second World War, and in 1942 was drafted into the Wehrmacht. The author provides a full account of his family background, and how, through these unusual circumstances, he found himself a Canadian-born German soldier. The bulk of the book is a detailed account of the author's training, and his subsequent service with 25th Panzer Regiment, part of 7th Panzer Division.

As the title suggests, Bruno Friesen served as a gunner aboard, initially, Panzer IVs, before crewing the lesser-known Jagdpanzer IV tank hunter. The author provides a fantastic amount of information about these two vehicles, and how the crews actually fought in battle with them. This kind of 'hands-on' detail has almost never been available before, particularly such extensive information concerning the characteristics and combat performance of the Jagdpanzer IV. Apart from providing a large fund of information about specific German tanks and their combat performance, the author writes in great detail about the combat the experienced on the Eastern Front, including tank battles in Rumania, spring 1944, Lithuania in the summer of 1944, and West Prussia during early 1945. If one wants to know how German tank crews fought the

Soviets in the last year of the war, then this book provides an outstanding account, containing material simply not found elsewhere. The author closes his account by reflecting on his post-war efforts to return to Canada, which eventually succeeded in 1950, and his subsequent life there. This book is not just a critique of armored fighting vehicles and tank warfare, it is above all a very human story, told in a lively, conversational

and fluid manner, and is a remarkable contribution to the literature of the Second World War. *Revue de presse* A fascinating and bizarre biography of a young Canadian born to parents from a German-speaking Mennonite community in Ukraine. The book contains a few familiar images of the vehicle types along with pictures from the authors own collection but the real interest is in his first hand accounts of what it was like to crew these vehicles which is bound to be of interest to many modellers. --AVF Modeller, 05/2008 The author goes into a considerable amount of technical and historical detail, but it is his first hand accounts of tank versus tank encounters that I found fascinating --Classic Military Vehicle, 05/2008 The book goes into very detailed explanations of what it s like to serve as a crew in these vehicles... but as well as a technical side, also has a very human element... --Model Military International. 08/2008 There are a number of excellent battle narratives, easily transferable to table-top This book will prove useful to anyone interested in

armoured warfare on the Eastern Front or 7th Panzer Division in particular. --The Society of Twentieth Century Wargamers Journal An unusual book, one is tempted to say a unique memoir... --

*Windscreen* Presentation de l'diteur There are few memoirs available of German Panzer crews that focus on the climactic last 12 months of the war on the Eastern Front, 1944-45. What makes Bruno Friesen's account virtually unique is his family background: his parents came from a German-speaking Mennonite community in Ukraine, and were to all intents and purposes culturally German. To make matters even more complex, in 1924 his parents left the Ukraine for Canada, where Bruno was born. In March 1939 he and his brother Oscar found themselves on a ship bound for Bremerhaven in Germany. He barely spoke German, and had never been to Germany, nevertheless his father envisaged that a better life awaited them in the Third Reich.

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