

# **THE OPPOSING FORCES IN THE “PROKHOROVKA: THE ULTIMATE BATTLE” SCENARIO**

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This article will look at the opposing forces in the new Prokhorovka scenario, both those on the board, those that come on the board as reinforcements (which are far fewer than the previous rendition of this scenario), and those listed in the OOB but are off the board. It will concentrate on the major combat formations and some unique units within them.

As the number of AFVs that each unit started the battle with always seems to be of interest to players, they will be listed here. Note that although the number of AFVs listed for each unit seems to be pretty exact, they are at best educated guesses on my part. The daily strength reports for each side, which are prepared every 24 hours, serve as a starting point. But between the time that the reports are prepared a lot of things can happen, AFVs can be lost due to combat and mechanical breakdowns, vehicles can return from the field repair units, organic units can be detached to be sent elsewhere, and outside units can be assigned or attached to the parent unit. Thus the number of AFVs that are actually in the subordinate units are always changing through out the course of the day and the strength reports at best only show what the numbers were at the time the reports were prepared. Also note that command AFVs, which are listed separately, now appear on the board for both sides as they were definitely used in the battle, often in engagements that they found themselves in due to the flow of the action. These include those silly little Panzer I and II's in the German LAH and DR SS Panzer Regimental staffs and all the silly little armored cars that the various Russian mobile units had assigned to their headquarters staffs.

## **THE GERMANS**

### **II. SS Panzer Corps**

The II SS Panzer Corps consisted of the “LAH”, “Das Reich”, and “Totenkopf” Panzer Grenadier Divisions, the 122<sup>nd</sup> Artillery Command, and the 680<sup>th</sup> Engineer Regiment. While the corps headquarters and the three divisions were SS, the artillery command and engineer regiment were regular Army. The three SS Panzer Grenadier Divisions in the battle were panzer grenadier in name only. In truth they were in various stages of transition from panzer grenadier to panzer divisions, although they would not receive the panzer designation until the autumn of 1943. Each division had a panzer regiment instead of a panzer battalion and also had a panzer division type artillery regiment. Their infantry, with a few exceptions, were still motorized though.

#### **“LAH” SS Panzer Grenadier Division**

Of all of the divisions, the LAH was the furthest along in the transition stages. It was the only division to have a halftrack equipped panzer grenadier battalion, with some other units having armored halftracks as well although they did not have their full complement and in some cases, as with the engineer battalion, did not have any at all.

**LAH SS Panzer Regiment:** Although the regiment had two panzer battalions, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was back in Germany undergoing training with the new Panther tanks. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion was organized as a four company battalion, each with four platoons apiece. It had about 42 Pz IVf/2, 9 Pz IIIj, and 6 command tanks operational at the time of the battle. The regiment's 13<sup>th</sup> Company (Tiger) had four operational Tiger tanks at the time of the battle, one of which was knocked out and another which was damaged due to being rammed by a T-34 tank, during the day's fighting. By the way, the Leader unit LT Wittman (of Villars Bocage fame the following year) was not the 13<sup>th</sup> Company's commander. He was one of the platoon leaders but all of the operational Tiger tanks were put under his command that day while the rest of the company, including the commander, were back at the field trains, concentrating on getting the rest of the Tiger tanks in the company operational again. The regimental headquarters had about nine more tanks, including two Pz I's and four Pz II's which were used in support roles, and the other three being command tanks.

**LAH 2<sup>nd</sup> SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment:** This regiment's 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion was the only one which was an armored infantry battalion in any of the three SS divisions. It also had the only flame vehicles, a platoon of six Sd Kfz 251/16's, in the whole II SS Panzer Corps. Incidentally, the battalion commander was one Major Peiper, who would become the infamous Colonel Peiper in the Battle of the Bulge the following year. This regiment also had its 13<sup>th</sup> Company equipped with sIG 38(t) "Bison" assault guns, instead of the usual sIG 33 150mm infantry guns.

**LAH SS Armored Reconnaissance Battalion:** This unit was undergoing transition at the time of the Kursk Campaign. One of its motorcycle companies was converted to an armored reconnaissance company (with halftracks) before the campaign began. The other two motorcycle companies were to be converted to scout car companies, but this was deferred until after the campaign was over. The battalion also had the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon of its Heavy Weapons Company equipped with two sIG 38(t) assault guns, which replaced its two leIG 18 75mm infantry guns, and halftracks instead of trucks for its anti-tank guns and engineer platoon, a rarity among reconnaissance units during this time.

**LAH SS Artillery Regiment:** This regiment was short a battalion as its 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion was broken up in the late spring of 1943 and most of the personnel sent back to Germany to provide the cadre of the artillery regiment of the 12<sup>th</sup> SS Panzer Division, which was forming up. To help make up for the lost firepower, a 150mm Nebelwerfer battery was assigned to the regiment which became the 11<sup>th</sup> Battery. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion was converted to a self-propelled artillery battalion with one Hummel and two Wespe batteries shortly before the Kursk Campaign. This was the only SS division that actually had Wespe and Hummel vehicles in its inventory during the campaign. Note that the Hummel unit is only five vehicles strong instead of the usual six. This was due to fact that when the Hummels

were first issued the German units, they were in five gun batteries. However late June 1943, Hummel batteries had their strength raised to six guns due to a new T.O.& E. that went into effect. However, only about half of the German mobile divisions that used the Hummel at the time received their sixth vehicle before the start of the Kursk campaign and the LAH SS Division was not one of them. The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was a standard 105mm howitzer battalion and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion was a standard 150mm howitzer battalion.

### **“Das Reich” SS Panzer Grenadier Division**

Of the three SS divisions in the battle, Das Reich was sort of in the middle between the other two when it came to the transition process to a full panzer division. Recently published photographs from the time period show Das Reich as having armored halftracks during the battle of Kursk. These photos are for the most part mislabeled. Das Reich had a few armored halftracks but not enough to even equip one company in their “armored infantry” battalion, instead they were largely used as command vehicles during the battle of Kursk. It was not until after the battle of Kursk that Das Reich received its armored halftracks as these were from the “LAH” Panzer Grenadier Division which turn over all of its vehicles and equipment to the Das Reich and Totenkopf divisions before transferring back to Germany to be rebuilt.

Das Reich SS Panzer Regiment: Like with the LAH, Das Reich’s 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was back in Germany undergoing training in the new Panther tanks. When it left in the late spring of 1943, it left all of its tanks with the regiment, thus allowing the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion to be at full strength. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion was organized into four companies, each with four platoons. However, there were too many tanks for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion to contain in its organization, so an unusual procedure was implemented to alleviate this overage of tanks. The Das Reich SS Panzer Jaeger Battalion was stripped of all of its Marders and anti-tank guns which were assigned to other units in the division. The command personnel and the organization were then used to create a temporary panzer battalion for the left over tanks. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion had about 18 Pz IVf/2, 24 Pz IIIj, and 5 command tanks operational at the time of the battle. The Heavy Tank Company (it had no company number) started the day with only one operational Tiger tank but just before the battle started a second Tiger tank returned from the field repair shops so there were two of them when battle was joined. Of these one was knock out, by 83 hits no less (that’s got to be a record somewhere).

Das Reich SS Panzer Jaeger Battalion: This was the proper name for the division’s motorized anti-tank battalion. There were only enough Marders to equip one company (the 1<sup>st</sup>) and the other two companies were very short in anti-tank guns. The Marder company was assigned to the divisional assault gun battalion as its 4<sup>th</sup> Company and the anti-tank guns were parceled out to the division’s two panzer grenadier regiments where they more than filled out the 14<sup>th</sup> Company of those regiments. The battalion, as a panzer battalion, was organized into three companies of three platoons each. This battalion was equipped with captured T-34c tanks (for which I am using the Finnish T-34’s to represent them in the scenario). It is not clear whether there were two companies of T-34’s and one company of Pz IIIj’s or one company of T-34’s and two companies of Pz IIIj’s in the

battalion. Different sources list both types of organizations. I set up the organization of the battalion using the former arrangement. The Das Reich SS Panzer Jaeger Battalion had about 15 T-34c, 10 Pz IIIj, and 2 command tanks operational at the time of the battle.

**Das Reich SS Artillery Regiment:** The artillery regiment had four battalions. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalions were standard 105mm howitzer battalions with two batteries each. The 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion was a mixed battalion of two batteries of 150mm howitzers and one battery of 105mm guns. The regiment used six gun batteries instead of the usual four with the exception of the 105mm gun battery which only had four guns. Therefore, for every two six-gun batteries the unit had in real life, is depicted by three four-gun batteries in the OOB for the scenario to keep the equivalent number of guns. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion was the self-propelled battalion with three 105mm batteries. The self-propelled artillery pieces were actually experimental ones utilizing captured French tank chassis. These vehicles were hand-me-downs from the regular Army panzer divisions which had received their Wespe and Hummel vehicles. Since the game does not have these experimental vehicles in the unit files, I used Wespe units to represent them as they are functionally the same as the experimental ones.

### **“Totenkopf” SS Panzer Grenadier Division**

Of the three SS divisions in the battle, Totenkopf was the furthest behind in the transition process to a panzer division. However, it had the most AFVs available for the battle and it was the only division that could claim some success in that it fulfilled at least one of its missions on July 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Totenkopf SS Panzer Regiment:** This regiment still had both of its panzer battalions, plus a heavy tank company. Each battalion had three companies of four platoons each. The regiment had about 28 PzIVf/2, 54 Pz IIIj, and 7 command tanks operational in its two battalions at the time of the battle. The regiment's 9<sup>th</sup> Company (Tiger) had ten operational Tiger tanks at the beginning of the battle. However, by the time of the attack on Hill 226.2 in the afternoon, there were only four operational Tigers left, the rest having suffered mechanical breakdowns during the course of the day. By the end of the day these four Tigers were knocked out, leaving the company with no operational tanks.

**Totenkopf Theodor Eicke SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment:** This regiment was unusual in that its 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion was a motorcycle battalion. It was originally a separate battalion with in the divisional force structure but in the spring of 1943 was absorbed into the Theodor Eicke Regiment as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, due to the regiment combining the remains of three original battalions into two after the heavy fighting of the period produced an inordinate amount of casualties in the regiment. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion was scheduled to be converted into an armored infantry battalion in the autumn of 1943, so it was decided that retaining its motorcycles would be more cost effective than re-equipping with trucks for the short term before conversion.

**Totenkopf SS Motorized Anti-Tank Battalion:** Like its original counterpart in Das Reich, the battalion only had enough Marders to fill one company, thus the other two companies

consisted of towed anti-tank batteries. However, this unit stayed intact during the battle, so it was not split up among the other divisional units.

**Totenkopf SS Artillery Regiment:** The artillery regiment had four battalions. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> battalions were the standard 105mm howitzer battalions with two batteries apiece. The 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion was a mixed battalion with two batteries of 150mm howitzers and one battery of 105mm guns. As in Das Reich, Totenkopf used six gun batteries, except for the 105mm gun battery which had four. Thus again, every two six gun batteries in real life are represented by three four gun batteries in the game. The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was the self-propelled battalion with two 150mm batteries and one 105mm battery. Again, as in Das Reich, Totenkopf used hand-me-down experimental self-propelled artillery pieces mounted on captured French tank chassis. Since the game does not have these experimental artillery pieces, I used Hummel and Wespe units to represent them. One would think that Das Reich and Totenkopf would have traded one SP 105mm battery for one SP 150mm battery so each would the proper set up for their respective SP artillery battalions. However, the unusual set up in each of these battalions was due to the type of French tank chassis used in each battalion. It was decided that it was better for maintenance purposes to keep the number of different types of tank chassis to a minimum in each battalion. Anyway, after the Kursk battle was over, when the LAH SS Division went back to Germany and turned over all of its equipment to the other two SS Divisions, Das Reich got LAH's Wespes and Hummels and turned over to Totenkopf all of its experimental SP artillery vehicles, from which Totenkopf along with its own vehicles, could make a properly organized SP artillery battalion. Also note that Totenkopf was using five gun SP 150mm batteries due to a shortage of that type of vehicle.

### **122<sup>nd</sup> Artillery Command**

The 122<sup>nd</sup> Artillery Command was an Army brigade size unit, whose function was to control, and provide administration and supply to the artillery units assigned directly to the corps. It had assigned to it two 105mm artillery battalions and two Werfer regiments during the battle.

**1<sup>st</sup> Battalion/861<sup>st</sup> Artillery Regiment:** The 1<sup>st</sup>/861<sup>st</sup> was a standard 105mm howitzer equipped battalion. It was motorized and had three batteries with four guns each.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion/818<sup>th</sup> Artillery Regiment:** The 3<sup>rd</sup>/818<sup>th</sup> was a standard 105mm howitzer equipped battalion. Like the previous unit, it was motorized and had three batteries of four guns each.

**1<sup>st</sup> Werfer Lehr Regiment:** This was the main training unit for the Wefer rocket weapons. It contained three battalions. Two of the battalions each contained two 150mm ground mounted medium Nebelwerfer batteries, one 210mm ground mounted heavy Nebelwerfer battery, and one self-propelled 150mm battery. The other battalion contained three 210mm ground mounted heavy Nebelwerfer batteries. The regiment was kept backed in the corps area and was used in general support for all three divisions.

**55<sup>th</sup> Werfer Regiment:** The 55<sup>th</sup> Werfer Regiment was a standard rocket launcher unit that had three battalions. Two of the battalions (1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>) each contained three 150mm ground mounted medium Nebelwerfer batteries and one self-propelled 150mm battery. The other battalion (2<sup>nd</sup>) contained three 210mm ground mounted heavy Nebelwerfer batteries. The heavy Nebelwerfer batteries were supposed to be equipped with 280mm rockets but these were still under development and would not be ready until the autumn of 1943 so they had to make due with 210mm rockets. The three battalions were attached out to the three SS divisions, one battalion per division, while the regimental headquarters remained back at corps level.

### **680<sup>th</sup> Motorized Engineer Regiment**

The 680<sup>th</sup> Motorized Engineer Regiment was an independent Army construction engineer unit that was assigned directly to the 2<sup>nd</sup> SS Panzer Corps. It consisted of two battalions, the 627<sup>th</sup> and 666<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalions, and in the Matrix version, five bridging companies (the 2/41<sup>st</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup>, and 537<sup>th</sup>). The battalions were primarily construction battalions, though in a pinch they could perform combat engineer functions. During the battle they were kept as a corps reserve and not committed to battle, though they could have been.

## **THE RUSSIANS**

The Russians had committed to this battle the 5th Guards Tank Army and the elements of the 1<sup>st</sup> Tank Army, the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6th Guards Armies, and the 69<sup>th</sup> Army. These included, in whole or part of, five tank corps, one mechanized corps, one airborne division, and five rifle divisions, as well as one anti-aircraft division, an independent artillery brigade, and numerous independent artillery regiments.

### **5<sup>th</sup> Guards Tank Army**

The 5<sup>th</sup> Guards tank Army was the main striking force in the battle of Prokhorovka. It originally consisted of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> Tank Corps, the 5<sup>th</sup> Guards Mechanized Corps, and numerous attached artillery and other support units.

### **18<sup>th</sup> Tank Corps**

The 18<sup>th</sup> Tank Corps was assigned to the 5<sup>th</sup> Guards Tank Army only days before it was ordered to move to the Prokhorovka area, therefore it was a new unit in the army. It had the usual number of supporting regiments and battalions except that it was missing its MRL battalion, which was removed in the spring of 1943 due to casualties incurred during the winter battles. The 18<sup>th</sup> did have two reconnaissance battalions though, one which was motorcycle and the other which an armored car unit. It also had a medium SU regiment attached to it. The corps had about 165 T-34c, Churchill Mk III, and T-70a tanks, plus 16 SU-122's and 33 command tanks operational at the start of the battle.

**36<sup>th</sup> Guards Heavy Tank Regiment:** This was an unusual tank regiment. While it was heavy tank regiment due to having Churchill Mk III heavy tanks, it was organized as a medium tank regiment due to the number of tanks in the unit. Normally a heavy tank regiment has 21 tanks in it but the 36<sup>th</sup> had 35 tanks in it. It was originally organized as a three company regiment with three ten-tank companies, but before the Kursk operation it was expanded into a four company regiment, and an under-strength one at that. By the fall of 1943 it finally reached its full strength of 41 tanks, only to be divided into two normal heavy tank regiments shortly thereafter. During the battle the 36<sup>th</sup> stayed in the second echelon behind the 170<sup>th</sup> Tank Brigade and did not see any combat that day, except for taking a few pot shots at German tanks across the Psel River.

**1447<sup>th</sup> Medium SU Regiment:** The 1447<sup>th</sup> came from the 5<sup>th</sup> Guards Mechanized Corps and consisted of four batteries consisting of four SU-122's each, plus a T-34c command tank. During the battle, two batteries supported the 170<sup>th</sup> Tank Brigade and the other two supported the 181<sup>st</sup> Tank Brigade.

**1000<sup>th</sup> Anti-tank Regiment:** Although an anti-tank regiment normally has five batteries of four guns each, the 1000<sup>th</sup> had a sixth battery. All of the guns in the regiment were 76.2mm anti-tank guns.

## **29<sup>th</sup> Tank Corps**

The 29<sup>th</sup> Tank Corps had been assigned to the 5<sup>th</sup> Guards Tank Army since its reorganization in the spring of 1943. It had the usual supporting regiments and battalions except that it was missing its MRL battalion due to the fact that it never received one since its formation. The Corps did have two reconnaissance battalions though, again one was a motorcycle battalion and the other an armored car one. It also had a mixed SU regiment attached to it. The 29<sup>th</sup> Tank Corps had about 135 T-34c and T-70a tanks, plus 16 SU-76's, 8 SU-122's, 8 SU-152's, and 29 command tanks operational at the start of the battle.

**32<sup>nd</sup> Tank Brigade:** The 32<sup>nd</sup> was unusual in that all of its tanks were T-34c's, not a T-70a tank could be found among them. The usual mix of tanks of this type of tank brigade organization was two companies of T-70a and three companies of T-34c tanks.

**1446<sup>th</sup> Mixed SU Regiment:** The 1446<sup>th</sup> was among the first SU regiments formed in the Russian Army back in January 1943. Its organization reflects this in that it had battalion level headquarters for its batteries. The regiment had four SU-76 and two SU-122 batteries, each with four vehicles apiece. These batteries were organized into one SU-122 battalion and two SU-76 battalions. In addition, the regimental headquarters had an SU-76 vehicle assigned to it as well. In March of 1943, the Russians did away with the battalion level headquarters in the SU regiments, leaving the batteries directly subordinate to the regimental headquarters, and the mixed battalions were broken up and reformed into pure SU regiments of one vehicle type. However, some of the mixed battalions did not get broken up until after the Kursk Campaign and the 1446<sup>th</sup> was one of

them. The two SU-76 battalions supported the 31<sup>st</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> Tank Brigades while the SU-122 battalion supported the 25<sup>th</sup> Tank Brigade during the battle.

**1529<sup>th</sup> Heavy SU Regiment:** The 1529<sup>th</sup> was among the first heavy SU regiments formed in March 1943. While the heavy SU regiments normally had six batteries of two vehicles apiece, the 1529<sup>th</sup> was under-strength in that it only had four batteries, plus a KV-1c command tank. Whether this was due to an incomplete organization during its formation or to casualties sustained earlier during the campaign is unclear. The regiment's participation in the day's battles was minimal at best. It arrived in the evening before in the Prokhorovka area and was immediately assigned to the 29<sup>th</sup> Tank Corp. However, it had just come from another major battle earlier in the day and was low on fuel and ammunition. Getting refueled was not a problem, but getting ammunition was as it seems the 152mm ammunition could not be obtained until the night of the 12<sup>th</sup> of July. Thus it was positioned in the north-western outskirts of the town of Prokhorovka and beyond lobbing a few rounds on top of Hill 252.4 (hex 74,28) to hasten the German withdrawal from there, it did little else during the battle. This is why it is locked into position for the whole scenario (barring any German attacks on it which, of course, would release it).

**108<sup>th</sup> Anti-Tank Regiment:** Like the 1000<sup>th</sup> Anti-Tank Regiment in the 18<sup>th</sup> Tank Corps, the 108<sup>th</sup> had a sixth battery and all batteries had 76.2mm anti-tank guns.

**76<sup>th</sup> Guards Mortar Regiment:** The 76<sup>th</sup> Guards Mortar Regiment was an independent MRL regiment with three MRL battalions of eight vehicles each. Although the 76<sup>th</sup> was assigned to the 29<sup>th</sup> Tank Corps, it supported both the 29<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Tank Corps during the battle.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Tank Corps**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Tank Corps was assigned to the 5<sup>th</sup> Guards Tank Army when it arrived in the Prokhorovka area on 11 July. It had been in combat for four days prior to July 12<sup>th</sup> and was at a much reduced strength due to casualties sustained during that time. The average combat strength of its units was about at 45%. (This is why the average Morale Level for its units is set at 4.) To make matters worse, one of its tank brigades, the 99<sup>th</sup>, was trapped down in the Psel River valley, away from the rest of the corps. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Tank Corps had the usual allotment of support units, including its own Guards mortar battalion, but had only one reconnaissance unit, that being the 83<sup>rd</sup> Motorcycle Battalion. Also, it had not received its special anti-tank battalion (85mm guns) yet. The 2<sup>nd</sup> was unusual in that it had its tank brigades organized in the experimental three battalion organization with all T-34c tanks, a formation that would not be made official until October 1943. The corps was also unusual in that it had a heavy tank regiment assigned to it that did not appear in the 5<sup>th</sup> Guards Tank Army's records. The 2<sup>nd</sup> by itself had about 71 T-34c, 10 KV-1c, and 12 command tanks operational at the beginning of the battle. Due to its low strength, two more tank regiments totaling about 73 T-34c, T-70a, and command tanks were assigned to it before the start of the battle. This made the 2<sup>nd</sup> more than capable of supporting its two neighboring tank corps during the day.



58<sup>th</sup> Motorized Rifle Brigade: The 58<sup>th</sup> Motorized Rifle Brigade was at about 25% combat strength that day. It was so bad that its three motorized rifle battalions were down to company plus strength. To bolster its strength, the 136<sup>th</sup> Guard Rifle Regiment from the 42<sup>nd</sup> Guards Rifle Division, was assigned to it. The 136<sup>th</sup> was coming off of a night march and was put directly into the front line for the assault with only hours to spare.

53<sup>rd</sup> Guards Tank Regiment: The 53<sup>rd</sup> Guards Tank Regiment is one of the mystery units in the battle. I say mystery because it is listed in different Russian sources on the battle as either a heavy tank regiment of 21 tanks or a medium tank regiment of 39 tanks. The 53<sup>rd</sup> was originally part of the 5<sup>th</sup> Guards Mechanized Corps and was a medium tank regiment there. In March of 1943 it was detached from the corps and made into an independent medium tank regiment within the 5<sup>th</sup> Guards Tank Army. While there was a 53<sup>rd</sup> Heavy Tank Regiment in the Russian Army at the time, it was not anywhere close to the Kursk battles at all. Thus I set up the 53<sup>rd</sup> Guards as a medium tank regiment. The 53<sup>rd</sup> was originally attached to Group Trufanov but at the last minute was diverted to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tank Corps in the morning of the battle. The regiment was a bit under strength, having only 25 T-34c, 4 T-70a and 5 command tanks. On the night of July 12<sup>th</sup>, the 53<sup>rd</sup> was detached from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tank Corps and sent south to rejoin Group Trufanov.

55<sup>th</sup> Guards Tank Regiment: The 55<sup>th</sup> Guards Tank Regiment was originally part of the 12<sup>th</sup> Guards Mechanized Brigade of the 5<sup>th</sup> Guards Mechanized Corps. It too was supposed to be assigned to Group Trufanov as part of its parent brigade, but at the last minute was sent to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tank Corps. The regiment was at full strength with 27 T-34c, 6 T-70a, and 6 command tanks. It was sent south to rejoin Group Trufanov on the evening of July 13<sup>th</sup>.

62<sup>nd</sup> Heavy Tank Regiment: The 62<sup>nd</sup> Heavy Tank Regiment is another one of the mystery units of the battle. Different Russian sources have identified it either as the 15<sup>th</sup> Guards, the 62<sup>nd</sup>, or the 69<sup>th</sup> Heavy Tank Regiment. I have ruled out the 15<sup>th</sup> Guards as it did not join the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tank Corps until August 1943. The 69<sup>th</sup> was also ruled out as it was not anywhere even close to the Kursk battles. The 62<sup>nd</sup> was assigned to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tank Corps in June 1943. This unit was hidden from the 5<sup>th</sup> Guards Tank Army's records because the 2<sup>nd</sup> always reported its tank losses and strengths in numbers only without differentiating between the different types of tanks. Since the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tank Corps was an all T-34c unit, the 5<sup>th</sup> Guards Tank Army never suspected that it had heavy tanks. It was removed from the tank corps during its refitting after the end of the Kursk battles.

1502<sup>nd</sup> Anti-Tank Regiment: The 1502<sup>nd</sup> Anti-Tank Regiment was a regular five battery regiment, but was equipped with 45mm, not 76.2mm, anti-tank guns. Also on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July the regiment had lost one of its batteries during the fighting of the previous days, thus it has only four batteries in the scenario set up.

10<sup>th</sup> Anti-Tank Brigade: The 10<sup>th</sup> Anti-Tank Brigade consisted of three anti-tank regiments, the 532<sup>nd</sup> which was equipped with 76.2mm anti-tank guns, and the 1243<sup>rd</sup> and 1245<sup>th</sup> which were equipped with 57mm anti-tank guns. At the beginning of the day of the battle, the brigade was broken up, with the 1243<sup>rd</sup> Regiment going to the 18<sup>th</sup> Tank

Corps and the 532<sup>nd</sup> and 1245<sup>th</sup> Regiments going the 2<sup>nd</sup> Guards Tank Corps. However neither of these tank corps utilized these regiments, and so by the early afternoon the brigade was reassembled and assigned to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tank Corps, which used it to reinforce the defense line that night. For simplicity's sake, I have set up the 1243<sup>rd</sup> Regiment in the 18<sup>th</sup> Tank Corps area and the rest of the 10<sup>th</sup> Brigade on the border between the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tank and 2<sup>nd</sup> Guards Tank Corps respective set up areas in this scenario.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Guards Tank Corps**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Guards Tank Corps was assigned to the 5<sup>th</sup> Guards Tank Army when arrived in the area the day before. Like the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tank Corps, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Guard Tank Corps had been in previous combat, in this case for seven days. However it fared somewhat better as its fighting strength had been reduced to only about 55%. (This is why the average Morale level of its units is set at 6.) The 2<sup>nd</sup> Guards had the usual supporting units except that it did not have its own MRL battalion, having lost it during the spring refit. It did have two reconnaissance battalions though, one motorcycle battalion and one armored car one, both of which were attached to the corps. The corps also had an extra tank regiment, the 47<sup>th</sup> Guards, assigned to it. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Guards Tank Corps had about 67 T-34c, 27 T-70a and 16 command tanks operational at the beginning of the battle.

26<sup>th</sup> Guards Tank Brigade: This brigade, which had 21 T-34c, 5 T-70a, and 4 command tanks at the beginning of the battle, suffered few losses during the day and as a result, was pulled out of the front lines in the early afternoon and sent south to join Group Trufanov.

47<sup>th</sup> Guards Tank Regiment: The 47<sup>th</sup> Guards Tank Regiment was originally formed as a heavy tank regiment in November of 1942. After participating in heavy combat around the Stalingrad area, it was placed in reserves in the spring of 1943 and converted to a medium tank regiment with 39 T-34c tanks. It was assigned to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Guards in late June of 1943. At the time of the battle it had about 16 T-34c and 3 command tanks operational.

80<sup>th</sup> Guards Mortar Regiment: The 80<sup>th</sup> Guards Mortar Regiment was an independent MRL regiment with three MRL battalions, with 8 vehicles apiece. It was assigned to and supported the 2<sup>nd</sup> Guards Tank Corps.

## **5<sup>th</sup> Guards Mechanized Corps**

The 5<sup>th</sup> Guards Mechanized Corps was assigned to the 5<sup>th</sup> Guards Tank Army since its reorganization in the spring of 1943. It never fought as a unit at Prokhorovka, instead its subordinate units were parceled out to other units. Over half of the corps was parceled out to Group "Trufanov", to the tune of two Guards mechanized brigades, a Guards anti-tank regiment, a mortar regiment, a Guards mortar regiment, a Guards motorcycle battalion, and a Guards sapper battalion. Among other units, the 18<sup>th</sup> Tank Corps received its medium SU Regiment and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tank Corps received a Guards tank regiment from one of its Guards mechanized brigades. This did not leave much left for the corps and even its remaining Guards mechanized and tank brigades had to be committed to battle later in the

day. The headquarters and its few remaining units were located to the north of the 29<sup>th</sup> Tank Corps and the bulk of its remaining combat units are located off map north of the 18<sup>th</sup> Tank Corps.

### **Group “Trufanov”**

Group “Trufanov” was a division size grouping of various combat units that were earmarked to move south to deal with the German III Panzer Corps. The following list identifies the units in the group and where they came from:

*5<sup>th</sup> Guards Mechanized Corps*

11<sup>th</sup> Guards Mechanized Brigade

12<sup>th</sup> Guards Mechanized Brigade (minus the 55<sup>th</sup> Guards Tank Regiment)

104<sup>th</sup> Guards Anti-Tank Regiment

285<sup>th</sup> Mortar Regiment

409<sup>th</sup> Guards Mortar Battalion

2<sup>nd</sup> Guards Motorcycle Battalion

68<sup>th</sup> Guards Sapper Battalion

*5<sup>th</sup> Guards Tank Army*

689<sup>th</sup> Anti-Tank Regiment

16<sup>th</sup> Guards Mortar Regiment

1<sup>st</sup> Guards Motorcycle Regiment

516<sup>th</sup> Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment (from the 6<sup>th</sup> Anti-Aircraft Artillery Division)

678<sup>th</sup> Howitzer Regiment

377<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion

Group “Trufanov” was located behind the 2<sup>nd</sup> Guards Tank Corps, east of Pravorot. The group as a whole moved out during the early afternoon of the 12<sup>th</sup>, though some units may have taken off earlier. Thus it contributed nothing towards the battle. This is why it is frozen in place. In the Russian version of the scenario, the group is frozen until Turn 30, but the high victory point totals that the Russians need to win require that the Russian player move the units off the southern edge of the board at the exit hexes in order to get their victory points. In the German version, the group is just frozen there for the duration of the scenario to provide a sort of reserve force should the Germans break through down south and run into them.

### **5<sup>th</sup> Guards Tank Army Artillery Assets**

According to Jay Karamales, the Russian 5<sup>th</sup> Guards Tank Army hardly had any artillery. If you look at what they had when they were in the strategic reserve in the Steppe Front you would certainly see his point. One howitzer regiment, one Guards mortar regiment, a one anti-aircraft artillery division was all that the tank army had in its assets, and these ended up going to Group “Trufanov” for the most part. However, what Jay did not mention was all the artillery assets that were already in the Prokhorovka area

with the other armies and were put under the 5<sup>th</sup> Guards Tank Army's operational control for the battle. The following is the listing of these artillery assets.

93<sup>rd</sup> Gun Artillery Regiment  
148<sup>th</sup> High-Power Howitzer Regiment  
522<sup>nd</sup> High-Power Howitzer Regiment  
1148<sup>th</sup> Gun Artillery Regiment  
27<sup>th</sup> Gun Artillery Brigade (92<sup>nd</sup> and 142<sup>nd</sup> Gun Artillery Regiments)

In addition, the tank army also had two Guards mortar regiments (the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 80<sup>th</sup>) which were assigned to Group "Trufanov and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Guards Tank Corps respectively.

The 6<sup>th</sup> Anti-Aircraft Artillery Division had four light anti-aircraft artillery regiments. Below is listed their numerical designation and where they were.

146<sup>th</sup> Light Anti-Aircraft Artillery Regiment (5<sup>th</sup> Guards Mechanized Corps)  
366<sup>th</sup> Light Anti-Aircraft Artillery Regiment (29<sup>th</sup> Tank Corps)  
516<sup>th</sup> Light Anti-Aircraft Artillery Regiment (Group "Trufanov")  
1062<sup>nd</sup> Light Anti-Aircraft Artillery Regiment (5<sup>th</sup> Guards Tank Army)

While this may seem like a lot, and it was, the Russians were having supply problems when it came to re-supplying their artillery unit after they shot off their basic day's load of ammunition. This is why the artillery support was so massive in the early part of the battle and sporadic in the latter part.

## **5<sup>th</sup> Guards Army**

If the 5<sup>th</sup> Guards Tank Army was the main striking force, the 5<sup>th</sup> Guards Army was its shield. The 5<sup>th</sup> Guards Army consisted of two Guards Rifle Corps (the 32<sup>nd</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup>), the 10<sup>th</sup> Tank Corps, and some support units. On the map it is the 33<sup>rd</sup> Guards Rifle Corps which covers the front. (The 32<sup>nd</sup> Guards Rifle Corps and 10<sup>th</sup> Tank Corps are off map to the west.) The 33<sup>rd</sup> Guards Rifle Corps had three Guards rifle divisions, one Guards airborne division, and some supporting units from Army level. (Historically, it also had the 11<sup>th</sup> Motorized Rifle Brigade from the 10<sup>th</sup> Tank Corps, but this was a reinforcement that arrives after the scenario is over.)

## **9<sup>th</sup> Guards Airborne Division**

The 9<sup>th</sup> Guards Airborne Division covered the line in front of the 29<sup>th</sup> Tank Corps. It had two Guards airborne regiments up front (the 23<sup>rd</sup> and the 28<sup>th</sup>) and one held in reserve (the 26<sup>th</sup>). Although this is the first time the division fought as whole in combat, the 26<sup>th</sup> Guards Airborne Regiment fought the day before just south of Prokhorovka, stopping the "LAH" SS Panzer Grenadier Division from taking the town on that day. The 26<sup>th</sup> Guards took some casualties and during the night was withdrawn into the division reserve as the other two Guards airborne regiments moved up to the front lines. This is why the 26<sup>th</sup>

Guards Airborne Regiment has a lot of its units at reduced strength in the scenario. The 23<sup>rd</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> Guards Airborne Regiments joined in with the three tank brigades of the 29<sup>th</sup> Tank Corps in the initial attacks of the battle.

9<sup>th</sup> Guards Airborne Brigade: In the original version of the Prokhorovka battle, the one that comes with the game, the 9<sup>th</sup> Guards Airborne Brigade is used in place of the 9<sup>th</sup> Guards Airborne Division. This is totally false. The real 9<sup>th</sup> Guards Airborne Brigade was formed in May 1943 and spent the rest of the year in the Moscow Military District, in other words, it was no where even remotely close to the Kursk battles. I do not know what the scenario's original designer, Jay Karamales, is trying to pull here, but he must think that all of us wargamers are so stupid that we do not have the intelligence to go and check this information out.

### **42<sup>nd</sup> Guards Rifle Division**

The 42<sup>nd</sup> Guards Rifle Division started the battle as the reserve of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Guards Rifle Corps but in the end was committed piecemeal into the fighting. On July 11<sup>th</sup> the 132<sup>nd</sup> Guards Rifle Regiment came in from the north and set up in front of the 18<sup>th</sup> Tank Corps, acting as its shield as it re-assembled after a long road march. It also connected the front line between the 9<sup>th</sup> Guards Airborne Division and the 95<sup>th</sup> Guards Rifle Division. That night the 136<sup>th</sup> Guards Rifle Regiment was forced marched over to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tank Corps where it was assigned to the 58<sup>th</sup> Motorized Rifle Brigade. The 127<sup>th</sup> Guards Rifle Regiment was held in reserve until the afternoon of July 12<sup>th</sup> when it was brought down to help stem the advance of the German Totenkopf SS Panzer Grenadier Division. In the scenario it arrives as reinforcements. The 132<sup>nd</sup> Guards Rifle Regiments has its units fixed in the scenario due to its defensive mission.

### **95<sup>th</sup> Guards Rifle Division**

The 95<sup>th</sup> Guards Rifle Division was responsible for defending the area on the north side of the Psel River. It had two Guards rifle regiments up front (the 284<sup>th</sup> and the 290<sup>th</sup>), with the 287<sup>th</sup> Guards Rifle Regiment set up in the second echelon behind them. Although the 287<sup>th</sup> was in action against the German "LAH" SS Panzer Grenadier Division the day before, it actually came out of the battle in good order as it was the other units (such as the 52<sup>nd</sup> Guards Rifle Division and 2<sup>nd</sup> Tank Corps) that took a beating in casualties. The division is set up in whole on the board, north of the Psel River, thus all of it is available for action in the scenario. Because the division's mission is defensive in nature, all of its units are fixed at the start of the game, although starting on Turn 10 the divisional support units are released so they can come forward.

### **97<sup>th</sup> Guards Rifle Division**

The 97<sup>th</sup> Guards Rifle Division was responsible for defending the area west of the Psel River. Historically it had two Guards rifle regiments up front (the 289<sup>th</sup> and the 294<sup>th</sup>), with the 292<sup>nd</sup> Guards Rifle Regiment behind them in the second echelon. Due to the better scale of the new map (250 meters per hex) I am now able to set up the entire

division in its historical location. As the division's mission was defensive in nature, all units are fixed in position at the start of the scenario, although starting on Turn 10 some of the divisional support units are released so they can come forward.

## **6<sup>th</sup> Guards Army**

The 6<sup>th</sup> Guards Army, which bore the brunt of the fighting during the first week of the campaign, is mostly off map, off to the west and has no bearing in the scenario. Although it was originally responsible for the defense of the area at the beginning of the Kursk battles, it shifted to the west in order for the 5<sup>th</sup> Guards Army to move in a few days before the battle of Prokhorovka. One of its divisions, the 52<sup>nd</sup> Guards Rifle Division, was left behind because it was heavily involved combat. It is on the map and does play a small part.

### **52<sup>nd</sup> Guards Rifle Division**

The 52<sup>nd</sup> Guards Rifle Division was assigned to the 23<sup>rd</sup> Guards Rifle Corps in the 6<sup>th</sup> Guards Army. The division had been in combat since the very beginning of the Kursk battles. It had been severely mauled in combat and was a shadow of its former self by the time of Prokhorovka, being down to about 33% in strength. (This is why the average Morale Level of its units is set at 6.) Although the division was in no shape to participate in combat, circumstances dictated otherwise. Its 153<sup>rd</sup> Guards Rifle Regiment was trapped down in the Psel River valley along with the 99<sup>th</sup> Tank Brigade from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tank Corps. The rest of the division was regrouping on and around Hill 243.8. When the 153<sup>rd</sup> was relieved, it moved north to re-join its division and then that night the division had to be committed to the containment of the German bridgehead across the Psel River. The units of the division start the scenario in a fixed status and will remain that way to reflect their regrouping status until attacked by German forces (which for the 153<sup>rd</sup> Guards Rifle Regiment will be right away as soon as the game begins).

## **69<sup>th</sup> Army**

The 69<sup>th</sup> Army was to the south of the 5<sup>th</sup> Guards Tank Army. In fact there was an overlap of the two as one of its rifle divisions (the 183<sup>rd</sup>) was in the same area as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Guards Tank Corp. Because of this, the 5<sup>th</sup> Guards Tank Army had operational control of the 183<sup>rd</sup> on the day of the battle since it was used in the fighting.

### **183<sup>rd</sup> Rifle Division**

The 183<sup>rd</sup> Rifle Division was assigned to the 48<sup>th</sup> Rifle Corps of the 69<sup>th</sup> Army. But since the 5<sup>th</sup> Guards Tank Army had operational control of it during the battle, it worked in conjunction with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Guards Tank Corps. The 183<sup>rd</sup> had been in combat during the five previous days and was down to about 50% fighting strength. This is why the average Morale Level of its units is set at 4.) It had all three of its rifle regiments in the front line

in order to protect not only the divisional artillery and support assets but also those of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Guards Tank Corps as well. Although the 183<sup>rd</sup>'s mission was primarily defensive in nature, it did support the 2<sup>nd</sup> Guards Tank Corp in the morning attack on July 12<sup>th</sup>.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Tank Army**

The 1<sup>st</sup> Tank Army was off the map to the west, engaging the German XXXXVIII Panzer Corps. However its 31<sup>st</sup> Tank Corps had been engaging elements of the Totenkopf and LAH Panzer Grenadier Divisions during the previous three days and had elements supporting an attack against the Totenkopf division on the July 12<sup>th</sup>.

### **31<sup>st</sup> Tank Corps**

The 31<sup>st</sup> Tank Corps was the youngest tank corps in Russian Army, in fact it was still forming up when the Kursk battles occurred and was missing a lot of units. Its tank brigades were organized in the experimental three battalion set up. Although the 31<sup>st</sup> mostly was equipped with T-34c tanks, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalions of the 237<sup>th</sup> and 242<sup>nd</sup> tank Brigades were equipped with M-3 Grant and Lee tanks. During the battle the 242<sup>nd</sup> supported the 97<sup>th</sup> Guards Rifle Division in its defense and the 237<sup>th</sup> supported the 95<sup>th</sup> Guards Rifle Division's attack on Kluchi on July 12<sup>th</sup>. However, both units, like the rest of the corps, had suffered heavy casualties in the previous days of combat and were at reduced strength. (This is why the average Morale Level of its units is set at 5.)

### **CONCLUSION**

I hope that this information present here helps gamers in understanding the reason for the composition of the order of battle for this scenario. I have endeavored to be as accurate as possible in this version of the famous battle. Of course, as in any simulation, some compromises had to be made, but at least they are fewer than in my previous versions. Enjoy the scenario.