

THE OPPOSING FORCES IN THE “PROKHOROVKA: THE HISTORICAL 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. Players will note some major changes from previous versions of this article.

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. However, it appears that there are no strength reports for the 12th of July for the German side as their preparation that day was skipped, given the intensity of the combat on that day and for the Russians they are incomplete, probably for the same reason. Therefore, I had to use strength reports for the day before the battle and on the days after the 12th to get a good approximation. Christopher Lawrence's book “Kursk: The Battle of Prokhorovka” had the same problem but despite this, has the best approximation I have ever seen. 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.

One will notice that the internal composition of many units have been changed, especially on the Russian side, when compared to previous editions of this article. This is because new information has come to light indicating that a lot of units did not necessarily have the exact organization on the day of the battle that most of the standard order of battle references give them. This does not mean that these references are incorrect, it just means that these units achieved the stated organization during the general period of the battle. In war, when a new unit organization is put into effect, it usually takes weeks, and sometimes months, before every unit of that particular type has implemented the new organization. During the Kursk Campaign, many Russian units did not achieve their stated organization until the lull between Russian defensive phase of the campaign and the Russian offensive phase. This is because it was easier to rebuild worn

down units to the new organizations, then to go through a lengthy transition phase between the old and the new organizations before the battle.

THE GERMANS

II. SS Panzer Corps

The II SS Panzer Corps consisted of the “LAH”, “Das Reich”, and “Totenkopf” Panzer Grenadier Divisions, the 122nd Artillery Command, and the 680th 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 compliment and in some cases, as with the engineer battalion, did not have any at all.

LAH SS Begleit Company: This was a special headquarters company with a motorcycle scout section, a armored panzergrenadier platoon, a machinegun section, an anti-aircraft section, and an anti-tank platoon. The anti-tank and anti-aircraft elements had by the time of the battle, been transferred to other units in the division to replace losses. The LAH was the only division of the three to have this type of company.

LAH SS Panzer Regiment: Although the regiment had two panzer battalions, the 1st Battalion was back in Germany undergoing training with the new Panther tanks. The 2nd Battalion was organized as a four company battalion, each with four platoons apiece. It had about 29 Pz IVf/2, 13 Pz IVh, 9 Pz IIIj, and 6 command tanks operational at the time of the battle. The regiment’s 13th 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 13th 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. There was also an armored engineer company assigned to the regiment.

LAH 2nd SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment: This regiment's 3rd 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.

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. Earlier historians have stated that the battalion also had the 1st Platoon of its Heavy Weapons Company equipped with two sIG 38(t) assault guns, which replaced its two leIG 18 75mm infantry guns. This is in error as the battalion still had its 75mm infantry guns. The two sIG 38(t) were actually attached to the battalion from the 2nd SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment. It also had 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 4th 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 12th 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 11th Battery. Also, the 1st Battalion was given six-gun batteries instead of the usual four-gun type. The 2nd 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 1st Battalion was a standard 105mm howitzer battalion and the 3rd 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. Although Das Reich had as many armored halftracks as the other two divisions, they were for the most part towing vehicles for artillery or carriers of self-propelled Flak guns. There was 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 troop-carrying 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 1st 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 2nd Battalion to be at full strength. The 2nd Battalion was organized into four companies, each with four platoons. However, there were too many tanks for the 2nd 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 2nd Battalion had about 10 Pz IVf/2, 8 Pz IVh, 24 Pz IIIj, and 5 command tanks operational at the time of the battle. This regiment also had an armored engineer company assigned to it. 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. Early historians have said that one of them was knocked out by 83 hits (that’s got to be a record somewhere). However no Tigers were lost, let alone hit, that day. This Tiger tank in question was still in the repair shop this day and would not return to duty for another couple of days. For the record this tank was hit 83 times but this was over the course of the German offensive at Kursk, not in one day’s battle.

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 1st) 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 4th Company and the anti-tank guns were parceled out to the division’s two panzer grenadier regiments where they more than filled out the 14th 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 10 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 1st and 2nd Battalions were standard 105mm howitzer battalions with two batteries each. The 4th 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 3rd 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 12th.

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 14 PzIVf/2, 14 Pz IVh, 54 Pz IIIj, and 7 command tanks operational in its two battalions at the time of the battle. This regiment did not have an armored engineer company assigned to it, unlike the other two SS divisions. The regiment's 9th 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 Tiger tanks.

Totenkopf Theodor Eicke SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment: This regiment was unusual in that its 3rd Battalion was a motorcycle battalion. It was originally a separate battalion within the divisional force structure but in the spring of 1943 was absorbed into the Theodor Eicke Regiment as the 3rd 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 3rd 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 2nd and 3rd battalions were the standard 105mm howitzer battalions with two batteries apiece. The 4th 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 1st 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 be 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 one of Totenkopf's Hummel batteries only five guns due to a shortage of that type of vehicle.

122nd Artillery Command

The 122nd 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.

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

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

1st 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.

55th Werfer Regiment: The 55th Wefer Regiment was a standard rocket launcher unit that had three battalions. Two of the battalions (1st and 3rd) each contained three 150mm ground mounted medium Nebelwerfer batteries and one self-propelled 150mm battery. The other battalion (2nd) 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.

680th Motorized Engineer Regiment

The 680th Motorized Engineer Regiment was an independent Army construction engineer unit that was assigned directly to the 2nd SS Panzer Corps. It consisted of two battalions, the 627th and 666th Engineer Battalions, and in the Matrix version, five bridging companies (the 2/41st, 11th, 21st, 31st, and 537th). 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 1st Tank Army, the 5th and 6th Guards Armies, and the 69th 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.

5th Guards Tank Army

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

18th Tank Corps

The 18th Tank Corps was assigned to the 5th 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 18th did have two reconnaissance battalions though, one which was motorcycle and the other which an armored car unit. The corps was a little short on tanks as it had suffered over forty vehicle breakdowns on the road march to Prokhorovka and also lost eight tanks to airstrikes the day before. It had about 136 T-34c, Churchill Mk III, and T-70a tanks, and 34 command tanks operational at the start of the battle.

36th Guards Heavy Tank Regiment: This was a regular heavy tank regiment with 21 Churchill Mk IV tanks assigned to it but had only 18 operational tanks the day of the battle. Earlier historians have mistakenly combined the 1549th SU Regiment with the 36th to make an oversize regiment of 35 tanks, even giving it a history into the fall of 1943, but this never really happened. The 36th was in the first echelon and supported the 170th Tank Brigade.

1549th Heavy SU Regiment: The 1549th was one of the first heavy SU regiments formed in March 1943. It was originally formed with 12 SU-152's and 1 KV-1c as a command tank. However, by the time of the battle all of its AFVs were either in maintenance or repair units for breakdowns or knockouts. There was a heavy tank regiment of 20 Churchill Mk IV tanks that had no headquarters so they were put into the 1549th for command and control purposes. The regiment was placed in the second echelon as a corps reserve unit and did not move for the entire battle, although it did take a few long range potshots at German units across the Psel River. After the 12th of July, as its assigned vehicles returned to the regiment, the 1549th transferred out the Churchills to other heavy tank regiments as replacements.

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

29th Tank Corps

The 29th Tank Corps had been assigned to the 5th 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. The 29th Tank Corps was somewhat over-strength in AFVs. Besides its three tank brigades, it also had a mixed SU regiment and a heavy SU regiment attached to it, totaling about 166 T-34c and T-70a tanks, plus 8 SU-76's, 12 SU-122's, 11 SU-152's, and 30 command tanks operational at the start of the battle.

32nd Tank Brigade: The 32nd 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.

1446th Mixed SU Regiment: The 1446th 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 and one battery in the SU regiments, leaving the five remaining 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 1446th was one of them. The regiment itself had three SU-122 batteries, two SU-76 batteries, and a KV-1c tank as a command vehicle. The three SU-122 batteries supported the 32nd Tank Brigade and the two SU-76 batteries supported the 25th Tank Brigade during the battle.

1529th Heavy SU Regiment: The 1529th was another of the first heavy SU regiments formed in March 1943. While the heavy SU regiments normally had six batteries of two SU-152 assault guns apiece, the 1529th was slightly under-strength in that it only had five batteries, one half battery, and a KV-1c command tank. The regiment's participation in the day's battles was partial at best. It arrived in the evening before in the Prokhorovka area and was immediately assigned to the 29th 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 12th of July. So its remaining ammunition was pooled and redistributed to three of the assault guns which were attached to the 32nd Tank Brigade. The rest of the regiment was positioned in the north-western outskirts of the town of Prokhorovka where it remained as a corps reserve unit. This is why it is locked into position for the whole scenario (barring any German attacks on it which, of course, would release it).

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

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

2nd Tank Corps

The 2nd Tank Corps was assigned to the 5th Guards Tank Army when it arrived in the Prokhorovka area on 11 July. It had been in combat for four days prior to July 12th 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% while the tank units themselves were down to about 30%. (This is why the average Morale Level for its units is set at 4.) To make matters worse, one of its tank brigades, the 99th, was located down in the Psel River valley, away from the rest of the corps. The 2nd Tank Corps had the usual allotment of support units, including its own Guards mortar battalion, but had only one reconnaissance unit, that being the 83rd Motorcycle Battalion. Also, it had not received its special anti-tank battalion (85mm guns) yet. The 2nd was unusual in that it had its tank brigades organized in the experimental three battalion organization with two T-34c tank battalions and one T-70a tank battalion apiece. The 2nd by itself had about 24 T-34c, 4 Churchill, 14 T-70a, and 10 command tanks operational at the beginning of the battle. Due to its low strength, two more tank regiments totaling about 76 T-34c, T-70a, and command tanks were assigned to it before the start of the battle. This made the 2nd more than capable of supporting its two neighboring tank corps during the day. However, it only supported the 2nd Guards Tank Corps to the south during the battle.

58th Motorized Rifle Brigade: The 58th 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. Previous editions of this scenario had the 136th Guard Rifle

Regiment from the 42nd Guards Rifle Division assigned to it. This has recently found to be in error as the 136th did not assigned to the 58th until the 14th of July.

53rd Guards Tank Regiment: The 53rd 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 53rd was originally part of the 5th 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 5th Guards Tank Army. While there was a 53rd 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 53rd Guards as a medium tank regiment. The 53rd was originally attached to Group Trufanov but at the last minute was diverted to the 2nd Tank Corps in the morning of the battle. The regiment was a bit under strength, having only 24 T-34c, 8 T-70a, and 5 command tanks. It spent most of the day as corps reserve unit and was never committed to battle. On the afternoon of July 12th, the 53rd was detached from the 2nd Tank Corps and sent south to rejoin Group Trufanov.

55th Guards Tank Regiment: The 55th Guards Tank Regiment was originally part of the 12th Guards Mechanized Brigade of the 5th 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 2nd Tank Corps as another corps reserve unit. Like the 53rd Tank Regiment, the 55th was not committed to battle. 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 afternoon of July 12th.

62nd Heavy Tank Regiment: The 62nd Heavy Tank Regiment is another one of the mystery units of the battle. Different Russian sources have identified it either as the 15th Guards, the 62nd, or the 69th Heavy Tank Regiment. I have ruled out the 15th Guards as it did not join the 2nd Tank Corps until August 1943. The 69th was also ruled out as it was not anywhere even close to the Kursk battles. The 62nd was assigned to the 2nd Tank Corps in June 1943. This unit normally had KV-1c heavy tanks, but during the Kursk campaign it was equipped with Churchill Mk IV heavy tanks instead. On the morning of July 12th it only had four Churchills that were operational. It was removed from the tank corps during its refitting after the end of the Kursk battles.

1502nd Anti-Tank Regiment: The 1502nd Anti-Tank Regiment was a regular five battery regiment, but was equipped with 45mm, not 76.2mm, anti-tank guns. Also on the 12th 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.

10th Anti-Tank Brigade: The 10th Anti-Tank Brigade consisted of three anti-tank regiments, the 532nd which was equipped with 76.2mm anti-tank guns, and the 1243rd and 1245th which were equipped with 57mm anti-tank guns. At the beginning of the day of the battle, the brigade was broken up, with the 1243rd Regiment going to the 18th Tank Corps and the 532nd and 1245th Regiments going the 2nd 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 2nd Tank Corps, which used it to reinforce the defense line that night. For simplicity's sake, I have set up the 1243rd Regiment in the 18th Tank Corps area and the rest of the 10th Brigade on the border between the 2nd Tank and 2nd Guards Tank Corps respective set up areas in this scenario.

2nd Guards Tank Corps

The 2nd Guards Tank Corps was assigned to the 5th Guards Tank Army when arrived in the area the day before. Like the 2nd Tank Corps, the 2nd 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 2nd 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 heavy tank regiment, the 47th Guards, assigned to it. The 2nd Guards Tank Corps had about 67 T-34c, 3 Churchill, 27 T-70a and 16 command tanks operational at the beginning of the battle.

26th Guards Tank Brigade: This brigade, which had 21 T-34c, 5 T-70a, and 4 command tanks at the beginning of the battle, was not committed to the attack and as a result, was pulled out of the front lines in the early afternoon and sent south to join Group Trufanov.

47th Guards Heavy Tank Regiment: The 47th Guards Heavy Tank Regiment was originally formed with 21 KV-1c tanks in November of 1942. After participating in heavy combat around the Stalingrad area, it was placed in reserves in the spring of 1943 and re-equipped with Churchill Mk IV tanks. It was assigned to the 2nd Guards Tank Corps in late June of 1943. At the time of the battle on the 12th it only had 3 Churchill tanks operational. After the Kursk campaign it was converted to a medium tank regiment.

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

5th Guards Mechanized Corps

The 5th Guards Mechanized Corps was assigned to the 5th 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, an independent medium tank regiment, a mixed SU regiment, a Guards anti-tank regiment, a mortar regiment, a Guards mortar regiment, a Guards motorcycle battalion, and a Guards sapper battalion. 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 29th Tank Corps and the bulk of its remaining combat units are located off map north of the 18th Tank Corps.

1447th Mixed SU Regiment: The 1447th, like its sister unit the 1446th, was formed in January of 1943, and like its sister unit was trimmed down in March of 1943. The 1447th had three SU-122 batteries and two SU-76 batteries, but had an SU-76 for its command vehicle, not a KV-1c tank. On the morning of the 12th, it was originally attached to the 18th Tank Corps but recent information has shown that a last minute change in the 5th Tank Army's attack plan caused it to be transferred over to Group "Trufanov". Early historians did not know this and have written that the 1447th was with the 18th Tank Corps the whole day. As it turns out it was not since it did not go into combat until the evening of 12 July with Group "Trufanov". After the Prokhorovka battle it was converted to a medium SU regiment with 16 SU-122's.

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:

5th Guards Mechanized Corps

11th Guards Mechanized Brigade
12th Guards Mechanized Brigade
1447th Mixed SU Regiment
104th Guards Anti-Tank Regiment
285th Mortar Regiment
409th Guards Mortar Battalion
2nd Guards Motorcycle Battalion
68th Guards Sapper Battalion

5th Guards Tank Army

53rd Medium Tank Regiment
689th Anti-Tank Regiment
16th Guards Mortar Regiment
1st Guards Motorcycle Regiment
516th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment (from the 6th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Division)
678th Howitzer Artillery Regiment
377th Engineer Battalion

Group "Trufanov" was located behind the 2nd Guards Tank Corps, east of Pravorot. The group as a whole moved out during the early afternoon of the 12th, though some units may have taken off earlier. Thus it contributed nothing towards the battle. This is why it is frozen in place

5th Guards Tank Army Artillery Assets

According to Jay Karamales, the Russian 5th 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 5th Guards Tank Army’s operational control for the battle. The following is the listing of these artillery assets.

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

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

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

146th Light Anti-Aircraft Artillery Regiment (5th Guards Mechanized Corps)
366th Light Anti-Aircraft Artillery Regiment (29th Tank Corps)
516th Light Anti-Aircraft Artillery Regiment (Group “Trufanov”)
1062nd Light Anti-Aircraft Artillery Regiment (5th 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 units after they shot off their basic day’s allowance of ammunition. At the beginning of the Kursk campaign, Russian artillery units had about two basic loads of ammunition which had to last them about two weeks before they could expect major resupply. This meant that they could only fire a limited number of rounds each day per weapon. Any left over rounds at the end of a day were carried over to the next day's allowance. On occasion they would receive extra rounds but these came from artillery units whose guns had become inoperable for some reason. Thus Russian commanders had to be very judicious on assigning fire missions for their artillery units. This is why the artillery support was so massive in the early part of the battle and sporadic in the latter part.

5th Guards Army

If the 5th Guards Tank Army was the main striking force, the 5th Guards Army was its shield. The 5th Guards Army consisted of two Guards Rifle Corps (the 32nd and 33rd), the 10th Tank Corps, and some support units. On the map it is the 33rd Guards Rifle Corps which covers the front. (The 32nd Guards Rifle Corps and 10th Tank Corps are off map to the west.) The 33rd Guards Rifle Corps had three Guards rifle divisions, one Guards airborne division, and some supporting units from Army level. (Historically, it also had

the 11th Motorized Rifle Brigade from the 10th Tank Corps, but this was a reinforcement that arrives after the scenario is over.)

9th Guards Airborne Division

The 9th Guards Airborne Division covered the line in front of the 29th Tank Corps. It had two Guards airborne regiments up front (the 23rd and the 28th) and one held in reserve (the 26th). Although this is the first time the division fought as whole in combat, the 26th 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 26th 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 26th Guards Airborne Regiment has a lot of its units at reduced strength in the scenario. The 23rd and 28th Guards Airborne Regiments joined in with the three tank brigades of the 29th Tank Corps in the initial attacks of the battle.

9th Guards Airborne Brigade: In the original version of the Prokhorovka battle, the one that comes with the game, the 9th Guards Airborne Brigade is used in place of the 9th Guards Airborne Division. This is totally false. The real 9th 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.

42nd Guards Rifle Division

The 42nd Guards Rifle Division started the battle as the reserve of the 33rd Guards Rifle Corps but in the end was committed piecemeal into the fighting. On July 11th the 127th and 136th Guards Rifle Regiments came in from the north and set up in front of the 18th Tank Corps, acting as its shield as it re-assembled after a long road march. They also connected the front line between the 9th Guards Airborne Division and the 95th Guards Rifle Division. The 132nd Guards Rifle Regiment was held in reserve until the afternoon of July 12th 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 127th and 136th Guards Rifle Regiments have their units fixed in the scenario until Turn 20 when they are released and may accompany the 18th Tank Corps in their attack. Note that earlier renditions of this scenario have the 136th Guards Rifle Regiment set up with the 2nd Tank Corps. Recent sources indicate that this did not happen until the 14th of July and so I placed the regiment back with its division.

95th Guards Rifle Division

The 95th Guards Rifle Division was responsible for defending the area on the north side of the Psel River. It had the 290th Guards Rifle Regiment up front, with the 287th Guards Rifle Regiment set up in the second echelon behind them, but these regiments were set up

in the western half of the defense sector north of the Psel. The 284th Guards Rifle Regiment was held in reserve along the main road from Prokhorovka to Obayon near the bridge over the Psel River. 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. The 95th Guards Rifle Division had two penal companies attached to it, the 108th and 109th. These were assigned to the 287th and 284th Guards Rifle Regiments respectively.

97th Guards Rifle Division

The 97th Guards Rifle Division was responsible for defending the area west of the Psel River. Historically it had two Guards rifle regiments up front (the 289th and the 294th), with the 292nd 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.

11th Motorized Rifle Brigade

The 11th Motorized Rifle Brigade was part of the 10th Tank Corps. Due to previous combat, the brigade was at 65% strength. On the 11th of July it was detached from the tank corps and assigned to the 33rd Guards Rifle Corps. It was immediately placed among the units of the 52nd Guards Rifle Division which was defending north of the Psel River. This caused some confusion in coordinating the actions of the units of the two formations. One battalion of the brigade moved across the Psel River on the 11th and relieved the 153rd Guards Rifle Brigade in the Psel River Valley, which moved back and rejoined its division. In the scenario, the 11th Motorized Rifle Brigade is set up in the same area as the 52nd Guards Rifle Division, but for simplicity I did not mix up their units in the same hexes.

6th Guards Army

The 6th 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 5th Guards Army to move in a few days before the battle of Prokhorovka. One of its divisions, the 52nd Guards Rifle Division, was left behind because it was heavily involved in combat. It is on the map and does play a major part.

52nd Guards Rifle Division

The 52nd Guards Rifle Division was assigned to the 23rd Guards Rifle Corps in the 6th 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 153rd Guards Rifle Regiment was originally located down in the Psel River valley along with the 99th Tank Brigade from the 2nd Tank Corps. However, it was relieved by the 1st Battalion, 11th Motorized Rifle Brigade on the 11th of July and it moved back north to rejoin the division. Historically, the division was supposed to pull back and regroup as soon as the 95th Guards Rifle Division relieved it. However, it still had units in the front lines north of the Psel River on the morning of the 12th of July because the 95th only arrived the night before and had only moved into the western half of the 52nd Division's sector. This caused the 52nd to consolidate its forces in the eastern half of its defense sector, given its weakened state, with the 155th and 151st Rifle Regiments up front and the 153rd Rifle Regiment back in the second echelon. The units of the division start the scenario in a fixed status and will remain that way until attacked by German forces.

69th Army

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

183rd Rifle Division

The 183rd Rifle Division was assigned to the 48th Rifle Corps of the 69th Army. But since the 5th Guards Tank Army had operational control of it during the battle, it worked in conjunction with the 2nd Guards Tank Corps. The 183rd 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 2nd Guards Tank Corps as well. Although the 183rd's mission was primarily defensive in nature, it did support the 2nd Guards Tank Corp in the early afternoon attack on July 12th.

1st Tank Army

The 1st Tank Army was off the map to the west, engaging the German XXXXVIII Panzer Corps. However its 31st 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 12th.

31st Tank Corps

The 31st 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. The 31st was mostly equipped with T-70a and T-34c tanks, although it had a few T-60 tanks also. Early historians have stated that the 3rd Battalions of the 237th and 242nd Tank Brigades were equipped with M-3 Grant and Lee tanks and were used during the battle of Kursk. However, they were used in the latter part of the Kursk campaign as they did not receive these tanks until late July of 1943 as replacements for some of their losses in preparation for their Belgorod and Kharkov offensives in August. During the battle the 242nd supported the 97th Guards Rifle Division in its defense and the 237th supported the 95th Guards Rifle Division's attack on Kluchi on July 12th. 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

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