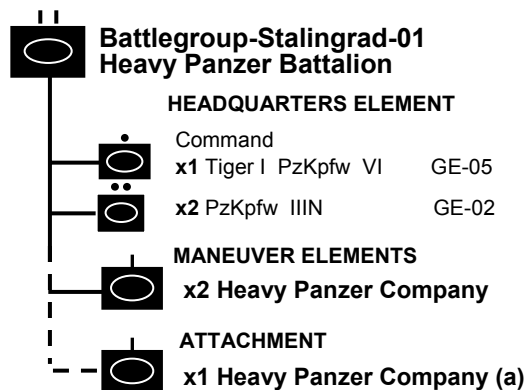


# BG-Stalingrad-01 - Schwere Panzer-Abteilung 503

## Heavy Panzer Battalion Winter 1942-1943



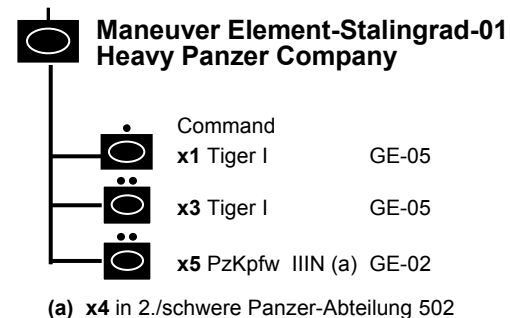
(a) 2./schwere Panzer-Abteilung 502 served independently during January of 1943, but was incorporated into the 503rd as 3./schwere Panzer-Abteilung 503 in early February, and resumed operations on February 8, 1943.

In December 1942, newly formed schwere Panzer-Abteilung 503 was rushed to the Stalingrad theater of operations to help check the Soviet drive on Rostov, which threatened to cut off the whole of Army Group A in the Caucasus. The 503<sup>rd</sup> was the senior of all the Tiger battalions and the first to see extensive prolonged action on the Eastern Front. The gravity of the situation in the south was born witness by the fact that the 503<sup>rd</sup>'s sister organization, the 502<sup>nd</sup> in the Leningrad sector was stripped of one Tiger company to reinforce Rostov. Thus, 2./schwere Panzer-Abteilung 502 served independently during January of 1943, but was incorporated into the 503rd as 3./schwere Panzer-Abteilung 503 in early February, and resumed operations on February 8, 1943. After having been in battle for over seven continuous weeks, the entire battalion was rested on February 22, just as the Manstein Kharkov counterattack was gathering steam. Of the 29 Tigers the three companies brought with them to southern Russian in late December, 23 remained on February 22, with only 2 operational.

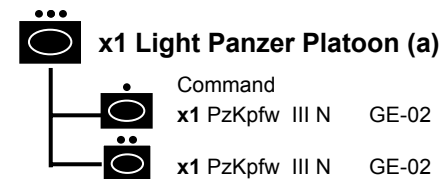
The Tigers and Pz IIIs were painted grey, with turret numbers in white with a black outline. Only some Tigers bore the unit insignia (profile of a tiger head) on the right hull front. Photographic evidence shows that the unit fought in January & February with & without whitewash camouflage, and when the whitewash was applied, it was done sparingly and in great haste. The Pz IIIs were devoid of any supplemental side shield armor. While it is suggested that a Tiger unit would receive veteran status, it is recommended that the Tigers themselves be granted experienced status, due to teething problems with the new equipment (Panzer III's get veteran). The bulk of Soviet units they opposed should be considered trained.

### Select Bibliography

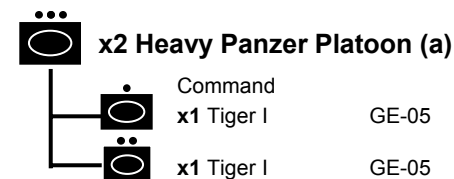
- 'The Combat History of schwere Panzer-Abteilung 503' – Alfred Rubbel, editor
- 'Tiger 1 on the Eastern Front' – Jean Restayn
- 'Tigers in Combat I' – Wolfgang Schneider



(a) use for the two heavy panzer companies of 503



(a) x2 in the heavy panzer company of 502



(a) used for the heavy panzer company of 502