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Slain Tiger: Confirming the Total Loss of a Fabled Tiger Tank at Prokhorovka

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ABSTRACT

The battle of Prokhorovka in July 1943 was undoubtedly a convincing Soviet victory, despite incurring heavy armored losses, the Red Army's supremacy in artillery, anti-tank defense, armored reserves, and tenacity ensured that the German advance on Prokhorovka was halted. Despite this, Western historians have tended to fixate on the lesser armored losses suffered by the Germans; often without placing these losses in the wider context of the battle. This theme is continued further when Tiger tank losses at Prokhorovka are dismissed as myth or fable. This article will reveal the contrary is true and that in reality, the final myth of the battle of Prokhorovka is that no Tiger tank losses occurred. Using original German sources throughout the article provides irrefutable evidence that a German Tiger tank was destroyed on the Prokhorovka battlefield in July 1943.

KEYWORDS

Prokhorovka; Tiger Tank; Tanks; Kursk; Operation Citadel; Red Army; Soviet Union; Eastern Front; Second World War

Introduction

The Tiger tank is perhaps the most recognizable symbol of Germany's armored force in the Second World War. Therefore, it was perhaps inevitable that the tank would become closely associated with the famous Soviet victory at Prokhorovka in July 1943 (the culmination point of Germany's southern pincer during the Kursk offensive — codenamed Operation *Citadel*). The Tiger tank had an immediate and lasting psychological impact on the Soviets, as evidenced by the 5th Guards Tank Army commenting 'of which Tigers' when reporting the number of tanks it had destroyed and their extensive coverage in the memoirs of the army's commander, General Rotmistrov. As a result, any potential Tiger tank loss in the Prokhorovka area holds tremendous symbolism. This is best highlighted by the sculpture of two Tiger tanks being rammed and destroyed by two Soviet T-34s that stand

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outside the entrance to the ‘Third Battlefield of Russia’ museum in Prokhorovka.¹

The current historiography, especially in the West, has swung in a completely different direction. Notably, the historian Roman Töppel wrote, under the heading of ‘Phantom Tiger’, that ‘it can be proven beyond doubt that the Leibstandarte cannot have lost a ‘Tiger’ on 12 July 1943’. Töppel even went so far as to state that ‘no room for speculation remains’ on the matter.²

However, research undertaken by the author for his book *The Panzers of Prokhorovka* (2023) strongly indicated that a Tiger tank was lost either during the battle of Prokhorovka on 12 July 1943 or in its immediate aftermath. Further evidence has since come to light that confirms the total loss of a Tiger tank in the Prokhorovka area between 12 and 13 July 1943.³

Understanding German armor loss and damage categorization during Operation *Citadel*

During Operation *Citadel* (5–16 July 1943), the German armored units at the front were ordered to report the number of total losses they were sustaining and the number of tanks that were under repair (short-term and long-term – the latter being defined as requiring six days or more to repair) to the panzer officer attached to the German Army High Command (OKH).⁴

When the Soviet 5th Guards Tank Army launched its armored counter-attack at Prokhorovka on 12 July, it was the German division *Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler* (LSSAH) that bore the brunt of the fighting. Testimony from the LSSAH’s former soldiers spoke of a Tiger tank being immobilized in combat with the 18th Tank Corps and then subsequently being written off as a total loss. The LSSAH began Operation *Citadel* with 13 Tiger tanks in its inventory.

One of these Tiger tanks was severely damaged during the first phase of the German offensive (between the 5th and 10th of July 1943). This Tiger tank was declared by the LSSAH, in its armored situation report covering the period, to

¹Valeriy Zamulin, ‘Soviet Troop Losses in the Battle of Prokhorovka, 10–16 July 1943’, *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 32(1) (2019), pp. 118–20; Gen. Pavel Rotmistrov, *Tankovoe srazhenie pod Prokhorovki* (Moscow: 1960); Ben Wheatley, *The Panzers of Prokhorovka: The Myth of Hitler’s Greatest Armoured Defeat* (Oxford: Osprey, 2023) Plate 119.

²See Roman Töppel, ‘The Battle of Prokhorovka: Facts Against Fables’, *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 34(2) (2021); Roman Töppel, ‘Die Panzerschlacht bei Prochorowka, Fakten gegen Fabeln’, *Arbeitskreis Militärgeschichte e.V.* (2020); Roman Töppel, *Die größte Schlacht des Zweiten Weltkriegs* (Paderborn: Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 2017); Roman Töppel, ‘Kursk – Mythen und Wirklichkeit einer Schlacht’, in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 57 (2009); Roman Töppel, *Kursk 1943: The Greatest Battle of the Second World War* (Solihull: Helion, 2018). See also Wheatley, *The Panzers of Prokhorovka*, 111–13 and Ben Wheatley, ‘Slain Tiger – Confirming the Total Loss of a Fabled Tiger Tank at Prokhorovka’ (Osprey Blog: September 2023).

³Wheatley, *The Panzers of Prokhorovka*, pp. 108–13. The 2024 paperback version of this book confirms this research.

⁴OKH – General Inspector of Panzer Troops – Totalverluste reports for the attacking units of Army Group South are available for the periods that cover 5–10.7.1943, 5–13.7.1943, 5–14.7.1943, 5–15.7.1943, 5–16.7.1943 and 5–17.7.1943. Damage reports exist for 10.7.1943, 11.7.1943, 12.7.1943, 13.7.1943 and 14.7.1943. Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv, RH 10/64.

be so badly damaged that it needed to be sent to Germany for Homeland Maintenance (HM — the highest level of repair). The Tiger tank was declared a total loss by the panzer officer at OKH in his total loss report that covered the same period (5–10 July 1943). However, the LSSAH itself did not regard this Tiger tank as a total loss. The division's list of total losses for the same period did not include any Tiger tanks. Similarly, in its armored situation report the LSSAH also declared four Pz IVs to be total losses and one Pz IV to require Homeland Maintenance. The OKH panzer officer simply reported five Pz IVs as total losses; once again, though, the LSSAH's total loss report only reported the four Pz IVs as total losses. The OKH panzer officer was incorrectly declaring tanks requiring Homeland Maintenance to be total losses.⁵

The panzer officer at OKH would have no doubt believed that the LSSAH inventory had been reduced to 12 Tiger tanks by the end of 10 July 1943, whereas the LSSAH would have believed it still possessed 13 Tiger tanks. As we shall see, this is an important distinction to make. Later in the month, when the LSSAH was ordered to transfer all its Tiger tanks to its sister SS divisions *Das Reich* and *Totenkopf* (before being sent to Italy), it handed over 17 Tiger tanks (five new Tiger tanks had arrived on 25 July 1943 – see [Table 1](#)). Clearly, for a Tiger tank to have been lost at Prokhorovka, 13 Tiger tanks would still have to be in the LSSAH inventory before the battle. It is now possible to prove this was the case.

Table 1. LSSAH Transfer of Armor on 28 July 1943 Before Being Sent to Italy⁶

	Pz III	Pz IV	Pz VI (Tiger)
LSSAH inventory 4 July 1943	13	83	13
LSSAH inventory 20 July 1943	12	74	12
LSSAH inventory 25 July 1943	12	74	17
Das Reich received	4	39	9
Totenkopf received	4	30	8
II SS Pz Korps HQ received	3	0	0
Retained by LSSAH	1	5	0
Collective spread of LSSAH armor at end of July 1943	12	74	17

⁵Wheatley, *The Panzers of Prokhorovka*, 103–04; 4th Panzer Army, O.Qu.V, LSSAH, Gep. Kfz. Bestandsmeldung. 1–10.7.1943. NARA T313, R390; OKH – General Inspector of Panzer Troops – AGS, 5–10.7.1943 Totalverluste. Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv, RH 10/64, 22.; 4th Panzer Army, O.Qu.V. V, LSSAH, Betr.: Totalausfälle an Pz. Kpfgw. und gep. Kfz. 1–10.7.1943, (written 12.7.1943). NARA T313, R390.

⁶PzAOK 4, O.Qu.V, LSSAH, DR & SS-T, Fahrgestell-Nr. Pz.kpf.Wg. 1–2.7.1943, T313, R390; PzAOK 4, O.Qu.V, LSSAH, DR & SS-T, Gep. Kfz. Bestandsmeldung. 1–2.7.1943 & 10.7.1943, T313, R390; PzAOK 4, O.Qu.V, LSSAH, DR and SS-T, Betr.: Totalausfälle an Pz.Kpfgw. und gep. Kfz. 1–10.7.1943, (LSSAH written 12.7.1943, DR & SS-T Lageskizzen written 23.7.1943) T313, R390; II SS Panzer Korps, Ingenieur, Betr.: Einsatz Raum Belgorod. 5–18.7.1943, updated to 22.7.1943 (written 28.7.1943), T354, R607, F000629-31; AOK 6, 1a, KTB 9, *Zustandsberichte, Wochenmeldung über Panzer und Sturmgeschützlage Stand* 1.8.1943 (written 6.8.1943), T312, R1483, F000441; II SS Panzer Korps, LSSAH Ia, Tagesmeldung für den 24.7.1943, T354, R605, F000867; II SS Panzer Korps, DR & SS-T Ia 667/43 & 668/43, 28.7.1943, T354, R605, F000879-80; Gen Insp. d Pz Truppen, Waffen SS monthly divisional Meldung and OB charts, LSSAH, 1.9.1943, T78, R719; PzAOK 4, O.Qu.V, LSSAH, Gep. Kfz. Bestandsmeldung. 1.11.1943, T313, R391.

Correctly assessing German panzer losses in the Prokhorovka area 11–14 July 1943

Historians of the battle of Kursk have often pointed to the OKH Panzer Officer loss reports, but few have also looked at the accompanying damage reports for the 11th, 12th, 13th, and 14th of July which also cover the battle of Prokhorovka. If one correctly adds the number of Tiger tanks under repair in these reports (the damage reports gave the situation at 24:00 hrs on any given day, i.e., at the end of the day) with the number of tanks that were declared to be operational in the evening of the same date, then we are presented with the LSSAH inventory both before (11 July 1943) and after the battle of Prokhorovka (12–14 July 1943).⁷ The results are as revelatory as they are conclusive (see Table 2).

On the eve of the battle of Prokhorovka, at 24:00 hrs on 11 July 1943, the LSSAH reported two Tiger tanks under long-term repair and seven under short-term repair; on the same evening, the division also reported that four Tiger tanks were operational. Therefore, the LSSAH was still reporting a full pre-*Citadel* inventory of 13 Tiger tanks on the eve of the battle of Prokhorovka. The daily damage and operational reports confirm why the LSSAH did not include the 5–10 July 1943 Tiger tank requiring Homeland Maintenance in its list of total losses for the same period. The LSSAH was including the Homeland Maintenance Tiger tank within its two Tiger tanks that were requiring long-term repair. In addition, the

Table 2. Daily Damage and Operational Reports for LSSAH Tiger Tanks in the Prokhorovka Area 11–14 July 1943⁸

Report date and time	Under short-term repair	Under long-term repair (over six days)	Operational	Accumulated inventory
11 July 1943 (24:00 – eve of the battle of Prokhorovka)	7	2	4 (19:25)	13
12 July 1943 (no time given)	3	5	No report	?
13 July 1943 (24:00)	7	2	3 (19:35)	12
14 July 1943 (24:00)	2	2	8 (18:00)	12

⁷Töppel utilizes data from two different dates to reach the LSSAH 11.7.1943 (24:00) pre-battle armored inventory (Töppel correctly uses the 11.7.1943 evening figures for operational numbers, but incorrectly uses the 12.7.1943 post-battle evening figures for damaged tanks). The correct data should all be taken from the evening of 11.7.1943. Töppel's figures give an incorrect pre-battle inventory of 12 Tiger tanks (eight damaged and four operational), whereas the correct analysis gives a pre-battle inventory of 13 Tiger tanks (nine damaged and four operational). See Töppel, 'The Battle of Prokhorovka: Facts Against Fables'; Töppel, 'Die Panzerschlacht bei Prochorowka, Fakten gegen Fabeln'. See also 11.7.1943 24:00 damage report, 12.7.1943 (almost certainly 24:00) damage report, 13.7.1943 24:00 damage report and 14.7.1943 24:00 damage report, OKH – General Inspector of Panzer Troops – AGS, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv, RH 10/64. 47., 43., 48., 57., 66.

⁸11.7.1943 24:00 damage report, 12.7.1943 (almost certainly 24:00) damage report, 13.7.1943 24:00 damage report and 14.7.1943 24:00 damage report, OKH – General Inspector of Panzer Troops – AGS, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv, RH 10/64. 47., 43., 48., 57., 66; II SS Panzer Korps, LSSAH daily AFV reports for 11.7.1943, 13.7.1943 and 14.7.1943, T354, R605, F000653-54, F000703-04, F000725-26.

LSSAH reported one Panzer IV under long-term repair (the 5-10 July Homeland Maintenance Panzer IV) and 31 under short-term repair, while 47 were operational. Therefore, the LSSAH was indirectly declaring an inventory of 79 Panzer IV, down four since the start of the offensive. The SS damage report for 11 July 1943 (24:00) was used to populate the SS elements of the untimed 11 July 1943 damage report for all of Army Group South's attacking armored formations (see Table 3).⁹

A couple of days later, at 24:00 on 13 July, the LSSAH once again reported two Tiger tanks under long-term repair, and seven under short-term repair; however, now the division was only reporting three Tiger tanks as being operational. This gives a collective inventory of 12 Tiger tanks. Clearly an LSSAH Tiger tank had been declared by the LSSAH as a total loss in the Prokhorovka area sometime between 12 July (00:01) and 13 July (24:00). Analysis of the reports also confirms that three LSSAH Pz IVs were lost in the Prokhorovka area between the 12th and 13th of July 1943, while 1 Pz IV was recovered for Homeland Maintenance (see Table 4). At 24:00 on 13 July, the LSSAH listed three Panzer IVs under long-term repair (the 5-10 July Homeland Maintenance Panzer IV and another from Prokhorovka – the third was recategorized the following day) and 42 under short-term repair, while 31 were operational. The LSSAH Panzer IV inventory was now down to

Table 3. LSSAH Armored Situation on the eve of the Battle of Prokhorovka End of 11 July 1943 (24:00 hrs)¹⁰

	Pz III	Pz IV	Pz VI (Tiger)
Pre-Citadel inventory 4 July 1943	13	83	13
Operational at end of 11 July 1943 (19:25)	5	47	4
Short-term repair at end of 11 July 1943 (24:00)	8	31	7
Long-term repair at end of 11 July 1943 (24:00)	0	1 (This is for HM)	2 (1 of which was for HM)
Inventory at end of 11 July 1943	13	79	13
LSSAH declared total losses 5– 10 July 1943	1 (in error a long- barrelled Pz III reported)	4	0
Collective number	14	83	13
Accumulated total losses 5– 11 July 1943 (24:00)	0	4	0
Collective number if HM tanks are regarded as total losses	-	84 (above 4 July 1943 inventory, i.e., impossible)	14 (above 4 July 1943 inventory, i.e., impossible)

⁹11.7.1943 24:00 damage report, OKH – General Inspector of Panzer Troops – AGS, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv, RH 10/64. 47., 43.; II SS Panzer Korps, LSSAH daily AFV report for 11.7.1943, T354, R605, F000653-54.

¹⁰11.7.1943 24:00 damage report, OKH – General Inspector of Panzer Troops – AGS, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv, RH 10/64. 47., 43.; II SS Panzer Korps, LSSAH daily AFV report for 11.7.1943, T354, R605, F000653-54; 4th Panzer Army, O.Qu.V. V, LSSAH, Betr.: Totalausfälle an Pz. Kpfg. und gep. Kfz. 1–10.7.1943, (written 12.7.1943). NARA T313, R390; 4th Panzer Army, O.Qu.V, LSSAH, Gep. Kfz. Bestandsmeldung. 1–10.7.1943. NARA T313, R390.

76 Panzer IV, three fewer than 24:00 11 July 1943.¹¹ A detailed description of how these Pz IVs met their fate, and their location in Luftwaffe reconnaissance and post-battle images, is contained in Chapter 4 of *The Panzers of Prokhorovka*.¹²

The following day, at 24:00 on 14 July 1943, two Tiger tanks were reported to be under short-term repair, while two Tiger tanks were under long-term repair, eight Tiger tanks being operational that same night; therefore, the LSSAH inventory remained at 12 Tiger tanks. The 14 July damage report did not list the number of Pz IVs that required short-term repair, but the report did state that two Pz IVs were now listed as total losses; this was likely the moment when the two Homeland Maintenance Pz IVs were removed from the LSSAH inventory (see Table 5). The LSSAH's operational Panzer IV numbers increased by one to 32; accounted for by the recategorization of the previous day's additional 'long-term' damaged Panzer IV. Forty-two Panzer

Table 4. LSSAH Armored Situation at the end of 13 July 1943 (24:00 hrs)¹³

	Pz III	Pz IV	Pz VI (Tiger)
Pre-Citadel inventory 4 July 1943	13	83	13
Inventory at end of 11 July 1943	13	79	13
Operational at end of 13 July 1943 (19:35)	5	31	3
Short-term repair at end of 13 July 1943 (24:00)	5	42	7
Long-term repair at end of 13 July 1943 (24:00)	2	3 (2 of which were for HM)	2 (1 of which was for HM)
Inventory at end of 13 July 1943	12	76	12
LSSAH declared total losses 5–10 July 1943	1 long-barrelled Pz III listed in error	4	0
Deducted total losses from 12 July 1943 (00:01) to 13 July 1943 (24:00 hrs)	1 (short barrel - correction for above)	3	1
Collective number	13	83	13
Accumulated total losses 5–13 July 1943 (24:00)	1	7	1
Collective number if HM tanks are regarded as total losses		85 (above 4 July 1943 inventory, i.e., impossible)	14 (above 4 July 1943 inventory, i.e., impossible)

¹¹11.7.1943 24:00 damage report, 13.7.1943 24:00 damage report, and 14.7.1943 24:00 damage report, OKH – General Inspector of Panzer Troops – AGS, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv, RH 10/64. 47., 43., 57., 66; II SS Panzer Korps, LSSAH daily AFV reports for 11.7.1943, 13.7.1943 and 14.7.1943, T354, R605, F000653-54, F000703-04, F000725-26; II SS Panzer Korps, Ingenieur, Betr.: Einsatz Raum Belgorod, 5–18.7.1943, updated to 22.7.1943 (written 28.7.1943), NARA T354, R607, F000629-31.

¹²Wheatley, Ben, *The Panzers of Prokhorovka: The Myth of Hitler's Greatest Armoured Defeat* (Oxford: Osprey, 2023), pp. 90–108. See also destroyed LSSAH Pz IVs in plates 86-92 – compare the terrain around Pz IV '615' in plates 87 and 92.

¹³11.7.1943 24:00 damage report and 13.7.1943 24:00 damage report, OKH – General Inspector of Panzer Troops – AGS, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv, RH 10/64. 47., 43., 57.; II SS Panzer Korps, LSSAH daily AFV reports for 11.7.1943 and 13.7.1943, T354, R605, F000653-54, F000703-04; 4th Panzer Army, O.Qu.V. V, LSSAH, Betr.: Totalausfälle an Pz. Kpfg. und gep. Kfz. 1–10.7.1943, (written 12.7.1943). NARA T313, R390; 4th Panzer Army, O.Qu.V, LSSAH, Gep. Kfz. Bestandsmeldung. 1–10.7.1943. NARA T313, R390; II SS Panzer Korps, Ingenieur, Betr.: Einsatz Raum Belgorod, 5–18.7.1943, updated to 22.7.1943 (written 28.7.1943), NARA T354, R607, F000629-31.

IVs were likely under short-term repair, as the LSSAH ended Operation *Citadel* with 74 Panzer IVs in its inventory.¹⁴ No panzers of any type requiring Homeland Maintenance were removed from the LSSAH inventory before 14 July 1943; therefore, any decline in LSSAH inventory numbers before this

Table 5. LSSAH Armored Situation at end of 14 July 1943 (24:00 hrs)¹⁵

	Pz III	Pz IV	Pz VI (Tiger)
Pre- <i>Citadel</i> inventory 4 July 1943	13	83	13
Inventory at end of 13 July 1943	12	76	12
Operational at end of 14 July 1943 (18:00)	6	32	8
Short-term repair at end of 14 July 1943 (24:00)	4	0 reported (clearly not given – likely 42)	2
Long-term repair at end of 14 July 1943 (24:00)	2	0	2 (1 of which was for HM)
Inventory at end of 14 July 1943	12	74 as the 2 HM Pz IVs are administratively removed from the inventory at this point	12
LSSAH declared total losses 5–10 July 1943	1 (in error – long barrelled Pz III reported)	4	0
Deducted total losses from 12 July 1943 (00:01) to 13 July 1943 (24:00 hrs)	1 (short barrel – correction for the above)	3	1
Deducted total Losses from 14 July 1943 (00:01) to 14 July 1943 (24:00 hrs)	0	2 (the 2 HM Pz IVs)	0
Collective number	13	83	13
Accumulated total losses 5–14 July 1943 (24:00)	1	9 as the 2 HM Pz IVs are administratively removed from the LSSAH inventory at this point	1

date would be due to battlefield losses.

There is no time listed on the 12 July 1943 damage report. However, as we have established that the other damage reports were reporting the situation at 24:00, there is no reason to believe the 12 July damage report was not also reporting the situation at the end of the day. The LSSAH did not report its operational numbers for the evening of 12 July (no doubt due to the frantic nature of the day's fighting), so this prohibits establishing the LSSAH Tiger tank inventory at the end of 12 July 1943. The 12 July damage report declared five Tiger tanks under long-term repair with three under short-term repair.¹⁶

¹⁴14.7.1943 24:00 damage report, OKH – General Inspector of Panzer Troops – AGS, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv, RH 10/64. 66.; II SS Panzer Korps, LSSAH daily AFV report for 14.7.1943, T354, R605, F000725-26; II SS Panzer Korps, Ingenieur, Betr.: Einsatz Raum Belgorod, 5–18.7.1943, updated to 22.7.1943 (written 28.7.1943), NARA T354, R607, F000629-31.

¹⁵13.7.1943 24:00 damage report and 14.7.1943 24:00 damage report, OKH – General Inspector of Panzer Troops – AGS, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv, RH 10/64. 57., 66.; II SS Panzer Korps, LSSAH daily AFV reports for 13.7.1943 and 14.7.1943, T354, R605, F000703-04 & F000725-26; 4th Panzer Army, O.Qu.V. V, LSSAH, Betr.: Totalausfälle an Pz. Kpfgw. und gep. Kfz. 1–10.7.1943, (written 12.7.1943). NARA T313, R390; 4th Panzer Army, O.Qu.V, LSSAH, Gep. Kfz. Bestandsmeldung. 1–10.7.1943. NARA T313, R390; II SS Panzer Korps, Ingenieur, Betr.: Einsatz Raum Belgorod, 5–18.7.1943, updated to 22.7.1943 (written 28.7.1943), NARA T354, R607, F000629-31.

Table 6. LSSAH Panzer Inventory – July 1943¹⁷

	Pz III	Pz IV	Pz VI (Tiger)
LSSAH inventory 4 July 1943 (24:00)	13	83	13
LSSAH inventory 11 July 1943 (24:00)	12*	79 (1 HM retained)	13 (1 HM retained)
LSSAH inventory 13 July 1943 (24:00)	12	76 (2 HM retained)	12 (1 HM retained)
LSSAH inventory 20 July 1943 (24:00)	12	74 (2 HM no longer retained)	12 (1 HM retained)
LSSAH inventory 25 July 1943 (24:00)	12	74 (2 HM no longer retained)	17 (1 HM retained)
LSSAH inventory 29 July 1943 (24:00)	1	5	0

The LSSAH Tiger tank requiring Homeland Maintenance remained in the LSSAH inventory throughout Operation *Citadel* (see Table 6). This should not be regarded as unusual. For example, there is another instance before Operation *Citadel* of an SS Tiger tank remaining in a divisional inventory after being listed as requiring Homeland Maintenance. Indeed, from October 1943 onwards, tanks of all types requiring Homeland Maintenance officially remained part of the dispatching unit's inventory. It is also interesting to note that after the battle of Prokhorovka, the operational number of LSSAH Tiger tanks never surpassed ten. This strongly suggests that the two long-term damaged LSSAH Tiger tanks (which included the LSSAH Tiger tank requiring Homeland Maintenance) that were recorded in the damage reports between the 11th and 14th of July 1943 remained in this state of disrepair until their transfer to *Das Reich* or *Totenkopf* on 28 July 1943.¹⁸

Conclusion

The documents confirm beyond any reasonable doubt that a German Tiger tank was lost on the battlefield in the Prokhorovka area between the 12th and 13th of July 1943. The LSSAH went into 12 July 1943 with an inventory of 13 Tiger tanks and exited 13 July 1943 with 12 Tiger tanks.¹⁹ The total loss of a Tiger tank at Prokhorovka was dismissed by

¹⁶12.7.1943 (almost certainly 24:00) damage report, OKH – General Inspector of Panzer Troops – AGS, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv, RH 10/64. 48.

¹⁷11.7.1943 24:00 damage report and 13.7.1943 24:00 damage report, OKH – General Inspector of Panzer Troops – AGS, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv, RH 10/64. 47., 43., 57.; II SS Panzer Korps, LSSAH daily AFV reports for 11.7.1943 & 13.7.1943, T354, R605, F000653-54, F000703-04; 4th Panzer Army, O.Qu.V. V, LSSAH, Betr.: Totalausfälle an Pz. Kpffwg. und gep. Kfz. 1–10.7.1943, (written 12.7.1943). NARA T313, R390; 4th Panzer Army, O.Qu.V, LSSAH, Gep. Kfz. Bestandsmeldung. 1–10.7.1943. NARA T313, R390; II SS Panzer Korps, Ingenieur, Betr.: Einsatz Raum Belgorod, 5–18.7.1943, updated to 22.7.1943 (written 28.7.1943), NARA T354, R607, F000629-31; AOK 6, 1a, KTB 9, *Zustandsberichte, Wochenmeldung über Panzer und Sturmgeschützlage Stand 1.8.1943* (written 6.8.1943), T312, R1483, F000441; II SS Panzer Korps, LSSAH Ia, Tagesmeldung für den 24.7.1943, T354, R605, F000867; Gen Insp. d Pz Truppen, Waffen SS monthly divisional Meldung and OB charts, LSSAH, 1.9.1943, T78, R719; PzAOK 4, O.Qu.V, LSSAH, Gep. Kfz. Bestandsmeldung. 1.11.1943, T313, R391. *The LSSAH, Gep. Kfz. Bestandsmeldung. 1-10.7.1943 & LSSAH, Gep. Kfz. Bestandsmeldung. 1.11.1943 indicates the loss of a Pz III kz occurred between the 5th and 10th of July 1943.

¹⁸Wheatley, *The Panzers of Prokhorovka*, 29-30, 74 ans 120-21; II SS Panzer Korps, LSSAH Ia, Tagesmeldung für den 24.7.1943, T354, R605, F000867; 11.7.1943 24:00 damage report, 12.7.1943 (almost certainly 24:00) damage report, 13.7.1943 24:00 damage report and 14.7.1943 24:00 damage report, OKH – General Inspector of Panzer Troops – AGS, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv, RH 10/64. 47., 43., 48., 57., 66.

¹⁹11.7.1943 24:00 damage report & 13.7.1943 24:00 damage report, OKH - General Inspector of Panzer Troops – AGS, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv, RH 10/64. 47., 43., 57.; II SS Panzer Korps, LSSAH daily AFV reports for 11.7.1943 & 13.7.1943, T354, R605, F000653-54, F000703-04; The General Inspector of Panzer Troops 1943 Panzer Lage also

some historians due to a fundamental misunderstanding of (1) how divisional panzer engineers reported heavily damaged tanks to their superiors and (2) how these superiors chose to interpret these reports. There was also a lack of interrogation of the known sources and an incorrect assessment of the time of issue of critical damage reports. At face value, the loss of an additional panzer may not seem like an important distinction to make. However, proving a Tiger loss at the Prokhorovka battlefield is more than the re-interpretation of reports, as destroyed Tiger tanks have come to symbolize the wider German defeat in the battle.

Notes on contributor

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