

### 4. Krupki Station



#### Historical Situation

With the frontline defenses thoroughly penetrated throughout the northern sector and the Dnepr and Dvina river lines breached, the next major objective for the Red Army was the Berezina River. The 5<sup>th</sup> Guards Tank Army was committed to the exploitation phase. Joining them was the 2<sup>nd</sup> Guards Tank Corps moving southwest towards Minsk. This represented the largest concentration of armor during Operation Bagration.

Although Hitler believed the main blow was yet to fall in northern Ukraine, the 5<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division was sent to stem the Soviet onslaught pushing down the Moscow-Minsk Highway. This was a formidable force with its 70 Panthers, 55 Mark IV's and 29 Tiger I's of the Heavy Tank Battalion 505.

A blocking force of Tiger tanks, engineers and infantry was positioned northeast of Borisov. It was tasked with holding the Berezina river line to permit the 4<sup>th</sup> Army's orderly withdrawal. However, there was nothing orderly about it. The scene witnessed by the blocking force was one of chaos, as panic stricken soldiers swarmed across the bridges, abandoning their weapons and equipment.

# Operation Bagration

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The first contact with the advancing 3<sup>rd</sup> Byelorussian Front took place near Krupki, when M4A2 Sherman tanks of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Guards Tank Corps fought a sharp engagement with the Tigers from sPzAbt. 505 in the early evening of 28 June. The fighting continued through the night, with the Krupki station being captured by the Russians around 0700 on 29 June after suffering heavy losses.

## Soviet Mission Briefing

Although it is late in the day (dusk), by securing the Krupki Railway Station, we can cut off vital enemy reinforcements to this sector. Once this is done, we will be able to cross the Berezina River and outflank the German forces at Minsk. We are rather skeptical about the reliability of these Lend-Lease Sherman tanks. The reputation from prior combat performance is somewhat dubious.

## Soviet Forces

- 5x M4A2 Sherman tanks w/ 5-man crew of regular to professional
- 1x 4-man HQ element of regular to veteran TQ
- 2x 10-man infantry squads of green to veteran TQ

## German Mission Briefing

Army Group Center has been off-balance throughout this entire episode. But now we have a superior force that will throw Ivan back. We must defend Krupki Station so the remainder of the 5<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division can arrive by rail to reinforce us. Only then will we be strong enough to provide security for 4<sup>th</sup> Army's withdrawal.

## German Forces

- 2x Tiger I tanks (Model E) w/ 5-man crew of professional and veteran TQ
- 1x 2-man HQ element of professional and veteran TQ
- 1x 8-man infantry squad of green to veteran TQ, 1d4 panzerfaust 60
- 1x MG42 (belt-fed) on tripod w/ 3-man crew of regular TQ

## Set-up

The German infantry begins the game inside Krupki Station and the guard tower. The tiger tanks must start within 16-inches of the station. The Soviet forces enter on the north edge of the board.

## Victory Conditions

The Soviet player has eight turns to capture Krupki Station. The German player must prevent this.

# Operation Bagration

## Map 4: Krupki Station



The guard tower is indicated by the letters "G.T."