

# RIVER OF HEROES

BATTLES ON THE VISTULA, OPERATION BAGRATION

## WOLOMIN

On 23 June 1944, the greatest offensive in Soviet history, Operation Bagration, began at the eastern border of Byelorussia near the city of Vitebsk. By the end of July, the final battles were being fought nearly 660 kilometres (410 miles) to the west at the line of the Vistula River on the outskirts of Warsaw, Poland.

During those six weeks the Soviet Army had ripped a hole in the German lines nearly 1100 kilometres (685 miles) wide, completely annihilating Germany's *Armee gruppe Mitte* (Army Group Centre) and putting half a million German soldiers out the war. In the final weeks of July 1944 the Soviet armoured spearheads reached the Vistula River and were threatening to overrun Poland and enter German territory.

However, Soviet losses had exceeded those of the Germans. As their depleted spearheads began to slow, one of the final objectives in Operation Bagration was to secure a river crossing at the great bend in the Vistula River, where it meets the Narew and Bug Rivers. A bridgehead here, near the town of Wolomin, would enable the Soviets to cut off the German armies in Prussia and Latvia. The German High Command was well aware of this possibility and the importance of holding this critical bridgehead.

While the Red Army was racing across Byelorussia, the Germans were quickly reconstituting all available armoured divisions into *Panzerkorps* (Armoured Corps). With the Soviets approaching the Vistula, Hitler released *IV SS-Panzerkorps*, (4<sup>th</sup> Armoured Corps) consisting of two armoured divisions, 5. 'Wiking' *SS-Panzerdivision* and 3. 'Totenkopf' *SS-Panzerdivision*. Its first task was to assist *XXXIX Panzerkorps*, (39<sup>th</sup> Armoured Corps) under *General der Panzertruppen* von Saucken in halting the lead Soviet spearheads east of Warsaw, Poland.

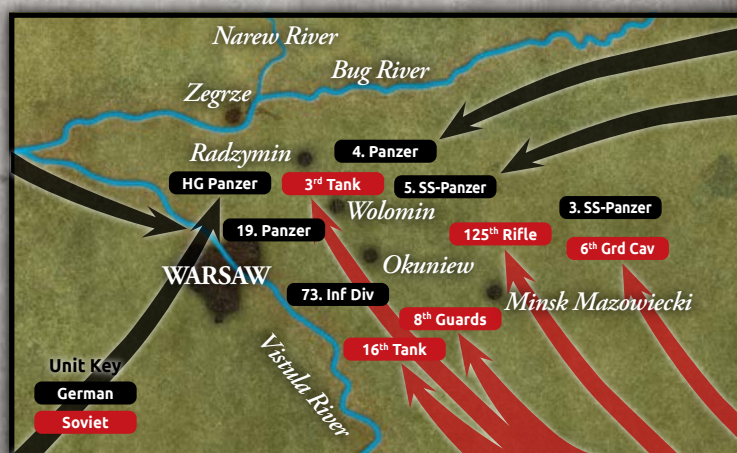
The battle raged for nearly ten days and when the smoke cleared the Soviet 3<sup>rd</sup> Tank Corps of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tank Army was encircled and severely mauled. The 8<sup>th</sup> Guards Tank Corps of the 70<sup>th</sup> Army suffered similar losses at the hands of the two SS armoured

divisions in an effort to break through to their comrades. The lead elements of Operation Bagration had finally been halted. After six weeks of retreat the Germans could finally catch their breath and rearm their battered forces.

This scenario represents the initial engagement of the lead batalon of the 50<sup>th</sup> Tankovy Brigade of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tank Corps with the *Panzer*grenadiers and *Panzer*s of the 5. 'Wiking' *SS-Panzerdivision* at the approaches to the bridges over the Narew River near Wolomin, Poland. Can you drive the Soviets through the German armoured defence and keep Operation Bagration moving forward or will you meet the same fate as the Soviet 3<sup>rd</sup> Tank Corps?

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Tank Corps contained the 50<sup>th</sup>, 51<sup>st</sup>, and 103<sup>rd</sup> Tank Brigades fully equipped for Operation Bagration with 65 T-34/85 tanks apiece. By the end of July when the Corps had reached the outskirts of Warsaw, they had already suffered nearly 40% casualties. In August, they received the 6<sup>th</sup> Guards Heavy Tank regiment with 21 IS-2 tanks for support.

It was this force that initially faced the two *SS-Panzerdivisions* of the *IV SS-Panzerkorps* and the three Heer panzer divisions of the *XXXIX Panzerkorps* northeast of Warsaw in its attempt to secure a bridgehead over the Narew River. After the initial battles, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tank Corps was reinforced with the other two (8<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>) Tank Corps from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tank Army.



# WOLOMIN SCENARIO

The lead elements of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tank Army raced northwards towards the great bend in the Vistula River where it combined with the Narew and Bug Rivers. Gaining a bridgehead here would directly threaten to cut off all German forces in Army Group North potentially replaying the debacle that was Army Group Centre.

His army was poised for action like a sledgehammer over the anvil.  
—Marshal Chuikov of General Bogdanov's 2<sup>nd</sup> Tank Army.

## YOUR ORDERS

### GERMAN

As Commander of 4. Kompanie, III/9. SS-Panzergrenadier Regiment your orders are clear. Take and hold the approaches to the bridges over the Vistula and Bug Rivers. You will receive reinforcements from 5. SS-Panzerregiment. Under no circumstances allow the Soviets to obtain a bridgehead over either river.

### SOVIET

You are the lead tank batalon of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tank Corps. Your mission is to secure a bridgehead over either the Vistula or Bug River before German reinforcements can counterattack. Though you have been fighting for six weeks, this is the final battle that could open a clear road into the lair of the beast. Your numbers are dwindling but your orders are firm.

## SETTING UP

1. Set up terrain using the map as your guide.
2. Place the three objectives (1, 2, & 3), as identified on the map. All objectives are at least 12"/30cm from any table edge.

## DEPLOYMENT

3. Deploy the Units of 4. Kompanie, III/9. SS-Panzergrenadier Regiment within 16"/40cm of any Objective. Only one Unit may be deployed within 16"/40cm of Objective 1.
4. Deploy the 1125ya Legkiy Broneveekiy Vzod, BA-64 Armoured Car Platoon within 12"/30cm of Point A.
5. The Units of the 254<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion move onto the map within 12"/30cm of Point A on the first turn.
6. The German Player's Units begin the game in Foxholes.

7. German reserves may enter the map on the roads at either Point B or C.

8. The Soviet Player has the first turn.

## WINNING THE GAME

The Soviet player wins if the end their turn on or after the sixth turn holding two Objectives.

The German player wins if they end their turn on or after the sixth turn with no Attacking Soviet Tank, Infantry, Gun teams within 8"/20cm of Objectives 2 or 3.



# WOLOMIN FORCES



## 4. KOMPANIE, II/SS-PANZERGRENADEIER REGIMENT 9 "GERMANIA"

SUPPORTED BY: SS-PANZERREGIMENT 5 AND  
SS-PANZER ARTILLERIE REGIMENT 5.

**Hauptsturmführer Rolf Handel**

**1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, 4. Kompanie**

2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, 4. Kompanie

4. Batterie, SS-Panzerartillerie Regiment and  
SS-Panzerjägerabteilung 5

Obersturmführer Erik Stemme  
3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, Panzerjägerabteilung 5

### Delayed Reserves

Obersturmführer Fritz Darges  
3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, 4. Kompanie, SS-Panzer Regiment 5

Untersturmführer Kurt Schumacher  
1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, 6. Kompanie, SS-Panzer Regiment 5

## Armoured SS-Panzergrenadier Company

See *D-Day: Waffen-SS*

Armoured SS Panzergrenadier Company HQ (LG199)  
2x MP40 SMG teams with Panzerfaust,  
1x Sd Kfz 251 (MG)

Armoured SS Panzergrenadier Platoon (LG200)  
7x MG42 team with Panzerfaust,  
4x Sd Kfz 251 (MG)

SS Panzergrenadier Platoon (LG208)  
7x MG42 team with Panzerfaust

Wespe SS Artillery Battery (LG230)  
3x Wespe (10.5cm)

7.5cm SS Tank-hunter Platoon (LG215)  
3x 7.5cm gun

### Delayed Reserves

Panther SS Tank Platoon (LG194)  
3x Panther (7.5cm)

Panzer IV SS Tank Platoon (LG196)  
5x Panzer IV (7.5cm)



## 254<sup>TH</sup> TANKOVY BATALON, 50<sup>TH</sup> TANKOVY BRIGADE, 3<sup>RD</sup> TANK KORPUS

**PODPOLKOVNIK STANISLAUS BERENSKY**

1ys Tankovy Polk, 254ya Batalon

2ys Tankovy Polk, 254ya Batalon

115ya Tankodesantniki Batalon

117ya Motorstrelky Protevotankovy Batalon

126ya Gvardeyskaya Menometki Batalon

## 254<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion (T-34 (85mm) Tank Battalion)

T-34 (85mm) Tank Battalion HQ (LS178)  
1x T-34 (85mm)

T-34 (85mm) Tank Company (LS179)  
10x T-34 (85mm)

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10x T-34 (85mm)

SMG Company (LS130)  
22x PPSH SMG team, 1x Komissar team

57mm Anti-tank Company (LS177)  
4x 57mm gun

Katyusha Guards Rocket Battery (LS147)  
4x Katyusha

BA-64 Armoured Car Platoon (LS184)  
3x BA-64 (MG)

