

Lessons from Kampfgruppe Seigfried: Tactics for Tiger Companies

Late war gives players several heavy tank companies to play in Flames of War. German players have the Heer or regular army Tiger Tank Companies in DDay and Bagration or the SS Tigers in DDay SS (and Bagration with the use of Command Cards). Soviet players can run heavy tank forces using the ISII or IS85 heavy tank. The Churchill and ISU122 heavy assault gun can also form the basis of an effective heavy armoured force, but the tactics are different, so we won't deal with those here. We asked veteran German commander Colonel Konrad Siegfried for his advice on how to play these forces.



Winning strategy with heavy tanks

Heavy tanks have many advantages in Flames of War, but the point system means you will not get many of them. You will always be outnumbered, especially versus infantry. This means you must maximise strengths and minimise weaknesses.

Use Lots of Heavy Tanks

Many players buy the minimum number of heavy tanks in a force, because of their high cost. You only need 5 Tigers (HQ and 2 platoons of 2 Tigers) or 7 ISIIs (HQ and 2 platoons of 3 ISIIs). Don't do this! These small formations are easily broken. Avoid two tank platoons. The platoon may be lost from a single bail result. At 100 points, sensible heavy tank forces are 7+ Tigers and 10 or more ISIIs and IS85s. Use core platoon choices to strengthen force morale. For Tigers, always take the AA halftrack unit. It means you can fight to the last Tiger. Likewise with the Soviets, always take the Hero SMG platoon with RPG card in your force.



Use cover and concentration of force to gain the advantage

Always Attack

Being outnumbered, you need all of your heavy tanks on the battlefield as quickly as possible. You can't afford to have them sitting in Reserve. So always attack where you get to

Lessons from Kampfgruppe Seigfried: Tactics for Tiger Companies

choose. If you are using the Mission selection system, always choose an Attack or Hasty Attack/Manoeuvre strategy so that you are likely to be the attacker in the selected mission.

Try to win Quickly

Heavy tank companies want to avoid long, drawn-out battles of attrition. You will tend to lose them. The longer games go on, the more the enemies reserve arrive, and their numerical superiority will start to tell. Be aggressive early. Manoeuvre to get good firing positions. Be prepared to assault infantry on an objective before it gets reinforced.

Make a Tactical Plan

In Flames of War you win if you gain uncontested control of one of the objectives as attacker, or if you can break the morale of your opposing force. Neither of these things will happen by accident. You need to make a plan before you deploy and stick to it. Always make sure you read the victory conditions of the Mission you are playing before the game begins so you know which victory conditions are possible. Look closely at the terrain too.



A force of ten IS IIs with supporting infantry and ISU122s begins an assault

Capturing an objective

Against infantry opponents you will often need to assault enemy off the objective to win. If the enemy only has mortars, artillery or light anti-tank guns defending then great! Advance as quickly as possible, remembering to use Follow Me, and assault as soon as you can. If there are infantry defending but with no anti-tank weapons, that is just as good. They can't hurt you with Top Armour 2. Go get them!

Lessons from Kampfgruppe Seigfried: Tactics for Tiger Companies

If the enemy has infantry with panzerfausts, panzerschrecks, bazookas, PIATs or RPGs defending the objective, then it will be tougher, but you can still win. Even a Panzerfaust only has a 50/50 chance of penetrating a heavy tank in defensive fire. You can reduce those odds by using smoke or pinning the enemy before assaulting. For this reason a small mortar or artillery unit makes a great support. You need an assault unit of at least 3 heavy tanks.

In this instance (only) don't rush. Fire at the enemy till they are pinned before assaulting. Always target bazookas, PIATs and panzerschrecks in your fire. ISIIs with their Brutal 122mm gun are great for this. Remember at assault range there is no mistaken identity.

Move up to within 4 inches of the objective the turn before launching your assault. This is critical. If you start your assault within four inches of an objective, and push back the enemy from it, you win immediately at the end of your turn. The enemy has no opportunity to launch a counterattack in their following turn. If you have lost a few tanks it does not matter. Any one surviving heavy tank within 4" of the objective wins you the game.



After eliminating threats, advance onto the objective

Breaking an enemy force

Breaking an enemy force will usually mean destroying it by shooting if armour, or by assault if infantry. This is difficult versus defending infantry with multiple panzerfausts, RPGs or

Lessons from Kampfgruppe Seigfried: Tactics for Tiger Companies

bazookas. Firepower, protection and good use of cover are keys in this strategy. You need to destroy the enemy units faster than they destroy your units. A *lot* faster.

To break an enemy you do not need to destroy all of their units. You need to reduce their core units to only one. The support units do not count for company morale. So ignore support units unless they are a special threat to your heavy tanks. Threats are units like the German 88, British 17 pounder, US M10, and Soviet 100mm anti-tank gun. Forget the rest. Artillery can't do worse than bail you, so ignore them unless they are core units.

At the start of the game, look at the enemy army list and make a fire plan. Which units do you plan to destroy to break the enemy? Throughout the game, focus your fire on them. Try to keep shooting at one unit until you have reduced it to the point where it is testing Last Stand before firing at other units.

Whenever possible, try to include the enemy HQ unit in your firing plan to destroy their force. HQ units morale rerolls help an enemy force survive longer when it is testing for platoon morale. The sooner the HQ is gone, the faster the morale of other units will collapse

Heavy Tank Company Tactics

Concentration

Keep the bulk of your heavy tank force together at the point you want to attack. Include the HQ tank. Use at least two platoons together. One platoon shoots in support while the other advances to take the objective. Do not spread them out across the battlefield in small units that are easily isolated and destroyed. Use cheaper supporting units to screen off the rest of the battlefield and/or defend an objective.

Use Cover

Don't drive your heavy tanks straight down the road like in a Hollywood movie. Use cover. Your armour is good, but being hidden is much safer. Don't be afraid to move through difficult terrain like forests (unless they are full of infantry carrying anti-tank weapons) if it stops you getting shot at by defending 17 pounders. Most heavy tanks have good Cross checks. Use them! You need to conserve your small force.

Rating the Heavy Tanks

The different heavy tank options vary in ability and suit some tactics better than others.

Lessons from Kampfgruppe Seigfried: Tactics for Tiger Companies

DDay or Bagration German (Heer) Tiger



Firepower:

The 88 gun is more than good enough to kill any light, medium or heavy tank you will encounter. Don't forget the Tiger's machine guns (MGs) either. With ROF 4, use the MGs to pin down infantry or anti-tank guns, and always vs unarmoured targets.

Protection:

The Tiger's armour was great when it was first introduced in Mid-War, but by Late War it is good, but no longer great. Most armies have anti-tank weapons that can penetrate our Tigers, even at long range. Advance through cover or behind smoke to minimise losses.

Mobility:

The Tiger is not the lumbering brute Allied propaganda makes it out to be. You have standard speed, a useful dash and 2+ Cross. Use them to launch flank attacks. If trying to destroy your enemy using shooting, remember to use the German stormtrooper rule. Never give the enemy free shots, even at Tigers.

Morale and Skill:

This may be the single greatest asset of the LW Tiger. Remount 2+ and Last Stand 2+ means your Tigers are very hard to finish off. Buy a "Lucky" card for when you roll that "one". Skill 3+ makes Tigers good in assault too. The only weakness is your 4+ morale for Counterattack. Keep your company commander nearby your lead assault unit for morale rerolls.

Lessons from Kampfgruppe Seigfried: Tactics for Tiger Companies

DDay or Bagration SS Tiger

TIGER
SS TANK COMPANY HQ

MOTIVATION **SS TIGER 2+** • TANK FORMATION • STORMTROOPERS • IS HIT ON **CAREFUL 4+**

SKILL **VETERAN 3+** ARMOUR

FRONT 9
SIDE & REAR 8
TOP 2

| TACTICAL | TERRAIN DASH | CROSS COUNTRY DASH | ROAD DASH | CROSS |
|----------|--------------|--------------------|-----------|-------|
| 10"/25cm | 12"/30cm | 18"/45cm | 20"/50cm | 2+ |

| WEAPON | RANGE | ROF HALTED | ROF MOVING | ANTI-TANK | FIRE-POWER | NOTES |
|---------------|-----------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|-------|
| Tiger (8.8cm) | 40"/100cm | 2 | 1 | 14 | 3+ | |
| Tiger (MGs) | 16"/40cm | 4 | 4 | 2 | 6 | |

Firepower, Protection and Mobility:

These ratings for the SS Tiger are exactly the same as the Heer Tiger, meaning very good.

Morale and Skill:

The SS Tiger is the only unit better rated than a Heer Tiger for Morale. It gets 2+ morale for everything including the vital Counterattack when assaulting. Don't forget you can Follow Me with your excellent morale.

Bagration Soviet ISII

IS-2
GUARDS HEAVY TANK COMPANY

MOTIVATION **CONFIDENT 4+** • TANK UNIT • IS HIT ON **AGGRESSIVE 3+**

SKILL **VETERAN 3+** ARMOUR

FRONT 10
SIDE & REAR 8
TOP 2

| TACTICAL | TERRAIN DASH | CROSS COUNTRY DASH | ROAD DASH | CROSS |
|----------|--------------|--------------------|-----------|-------|
| 10"/25cm | 12"/30cm | 18"/45cm | 20"/50cm | 3+ |

| WEAPON | RANGE | ROF HALTED | ROF MOVING | ANTI-TANK | FIRE-POWER | NOTES |
|---------------------|----------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|---------------------|
| IS-2 (122mm) | 28"/70cm | 1 | 1 | 14 | 2+ | Brutal, Slow Firing |
| IS-2 (12.7mm AA MG) | 20"/50cm | 3 | 2 | 4 | 5+ | Self-defence AA |
| IS-2 (MG) | 16"/40cm | 1 | 1 | 2 | 6 | |

Firepower:

The 122mm gun is a match for any tank, including the Tiger, and better versus dug in guns and infantry. The ROF is 1 but you will outnumber Tigers 2 to 1. The main drawback is the

Lessons from Kampfgruppe Seigfried: Tactics for Tiger Companies

moving fire penalty. The ISII has a 12.7mm AAMG. Use it when moving. With ROF 4 and FP5+, these MGs are better to pin or kill infantry and anti-tank guns than the main gun.

Protection:

The ISII's armour is very good, and better than a Tiger. The extra point of Front Armour (10) means most standard tanks and AT guns up to AT12 cannot penetrate an ISII at long range. Engage these opponents at long range and force them to come to you. If you take the "Make your own Luck" Command card you can bounce an 88mm hit off one of your ISIIs.

Mobility:

Mobility is the one area the ISII is inferior to the Tiger, being good but not great. Do not try to outmanoeuvre enemy tanks. Use your skill to roll for Blitz moves and fire stationary. The 3+ Cross check is adequate. Again use Skill to Cross here to negotiate difficult terrain.

Morale and Skill:

ISII crews were all Guards and their crew ratings reflect it. The 3+ Counterattack and 3+ Skill (assault) ratings make the ISII an ideal assault tank. The Last Stand of 3+ combined with a large platoon of 4 or 5 tanks makes the ISII platoon

Bagration Soviet IS85

You can take a company of IS85s, or you can add a platoon of IS85s to an ISII company and vice versa. I recommend the mixed approach, as it offers more flexibility in your tactics. A company of exclusively IS85s can struggle to kill an enemy heavy tank company alone.



Firepower:

The IS85 gets the same 85mm gun as the T34/85, with ROF 2. This makes it better taking out enemy medium armour, though less effective vs enemy infantry.

Protection and Mobility:

These ratings for the IS85 are exactly the same as the ISII, meaning very good.

Lessons from Kampfgruppe Seigfried: Tactics for Tiger Companies

Morale and Skill:

These ratings for the IS85 are exactly the same as the ISII, meaning excellent. The ISII is still an excellent assault threat, just like the ISII.

Useful Heavy Tank Supports

By the time you buy 7 to 10 (or more) heavy tanks you won't have many points left. Focus on the essentials: AA for your Tiger force, reconnaissance, artillery and a screening unit.

Anti-aircraft



Tiger Companies should include AA halftracks as a Core unit. A must buy! The Soviet ZSU M17 is also a good choice to pin enemy infantry and guns.

Reconnaissance



A cheap recce unit is always useful for Spearhead moves and some extra MGs vs infantry.

Artillery



A basic artillery support is perfect to pin infantry or take out enemy heavy AT guns.

Lessons from Kampfgruppe Seigfried: Tactics for Tiger Companies

Bunkers/Pakfronts



The 88 Flak in a Pakfront (bunker) rated Assault Flak is a great screen unit to hold a flank.

Infantry



A cheap infantry unit with panzerfaust and/or RPGs holds objectives. For Soviets this also increases core strength. The Hero SMG unit is ideal for this, being cheap and tough to kill.

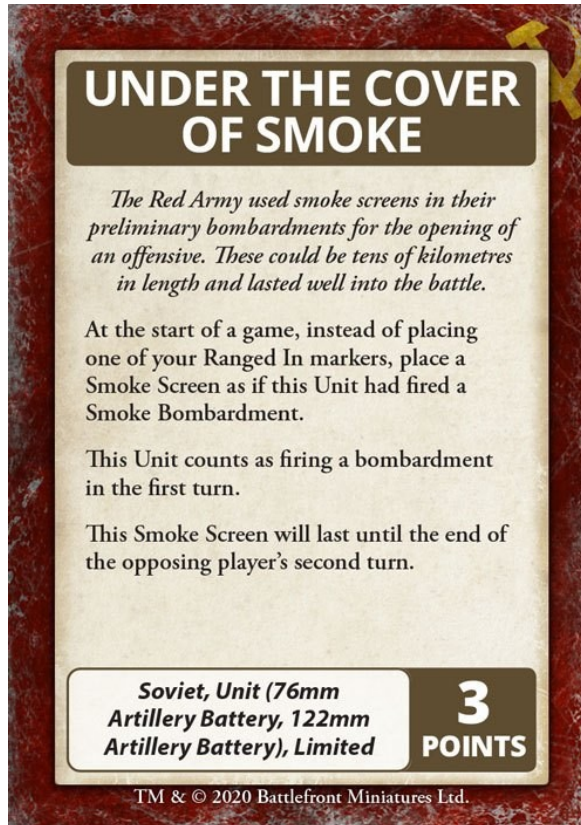
Command Cards

A few Command Cards are particularly useful for your heavy tank company. Always take the Lucky card and if Soviet, Make Your Own Luck. Save them to protect a platoon when you roll that unfortunate “one”. Don’t waste them rerolling an iffy “to hit” die roll.

The Germans have some terrific Tiger commanders – Knispel, Carius, and of course Wittman. They are good but costly. I’d pass unless making a force of more than 100 points.

For the Soviets two cards really stand out. Under Cover of Smoke allows your ISiIs to close on the enemy and assault them while taking minimal fire. That can win you games. Another “must buy” is the RPG anti-tank rocket. It turns your Hero SMG unit into uber-defenders.

Lessons from Kampfgruppe Seigfried: Tactics for Tiger Companies



UNDER THE COVER OF SMOKE

The Red Army used smoke screens in their preliminary bombardments for the opening of an offensive. These could be tens of kilometres in length and lasted well into the battle.

At the start of a game, instead of placing one of your Ranged In markers, place a Smoke Screen as if this Unit had fired a Smoke Bombardment.

This Unit counts as firing a bombardment in the first turn.

This Smoke Screen will last until the end of the opposing player's second turn.

Soviet, Unit (76mm Artillery Battery, 122mm Artillery Battery), Limited **3 POINTS**

TM & © 2020 Battlefront Miniatures Ltd.

Overall

Enough of the theory. It's time for you to put your heavy tanks on the table and attack. Remember to take more than minimum strength, use platoons of 3 or more, always attack, concentrate your force, and make a plan to capture the objective or break your enemy. If fail to do any of those things, I will send you back to the infantry.



Don't let this happen to you.