

THE TIGER 1 TANK PURCHASED BY JAPAN

In mid September 1943 in anticipation of changes to be made on November 1, 1943 to the HQ companies of the heavy tank battalions under the KstN1150e, eighteen of the twenty-one SdKfz 267 and SdKfz 268 Tiger 1 command tanks being stored at the Heereszeugamt Magdeburg were declared surplus.. Starting in mid October, 1943, these surplus command tanks began to be reconverted into battle tanks. The very first Tiger 1 command tank to be reconverted was the Tiger 1 tank sold to the Government of Japan. ,

The following account is arranged chronologically and is interpreted from data found in Mr. Walter Spielberger's book "Tiger & King Tiger Tanks, (pp 103-105), the Kleine & Kuehn's book "Tiger, the History of a Legendary Weapon, " (pp.42-43) as well as copies of documents from General Heinz Guderian's files, including the In-6 Heereszeugamt (HZA) monthly inventory summary reports for 1943-44..

Prior to the German invasion of the Soviet Union, the Germans and Japanese had been exchanging raw materials and industrial goods carried by rail across the Soviet Union, via the Trans Siberian Railway through the port of Vladivostok. However, following the German invasion of the USSR and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, any exchange of materials and information had to be made by sea. By 1942, only a very few surface vessel ('blockade runners') were able to successfully make the long trip around the tip of Africa to Japan. However, by 1943 any return trips by surface vessels between Japan and the European ports had become too dangerous. Submarines now had to be used to carry war materials between the two countries. (Wikipedia, "Germany-Japan Relations" pp.13-16 on line Also data from the book "Code Name Caesar" by J Preisler and K. Sewell, var. pages")

In mid 1942, following reversals in the war in the South Pacific, the Japanese Government recognized a need for new technology and armaments to rebuild its forces, to fight against the United States and protect the homeland. The Japanese Ambassador in Berlin, General Hiroshi Oshima was instructed to submit a 'wish list' to Tokyo, for the purchase of raw materials and weapon technology from the Germans.

January 20, 1943, the "Treaty on Economic Cooperation" was signed between Germany, Italy and Japan. The Japanese asked for and received microfilmed plans and examples of German weapons, which were shipped to them by submarine in early 1943. (Ibid, on line, p.15)

May 19, 1943, Henschel & Sohn GmbH of Kassel was advised by the Heereswaffenamt, that the Government of Japan was interested in purchasing an example of the Tiger 1E tank and having it shipped to Japan as part of an weapon upgrading program,

June 7, 1943, Following consultations with the Heereswaffenamt, General Hiroshi Oshima was invited to witness a demonstration of a Tiger tank belonging to the 1st Company sPzAbt 502, near Leningrad in Russia . After watching the tank in action, the ambassador inspected it with members of his staff, He then returned to Berlin

July 27, 1943, General Oshima and his staff were invited for a tour of the Henschel & Sohn Tiger assembly plant followed by a demonstration of the tank at the testing grounds near Schlos Wilhelmstal. Later, at an evening reception held at the Henschel Haus* the Japanese Ambassador expressed a desire to purchase a Tiger tank and have it shipped in pieces by submarine, from Bordeaux in France to Japan. The matter was then referred to the Heereswaffenamt in Berlin.

* Note: Henschel Haus was the Henschel family's mansion, It was located on a large estate at Falkenberg, about 25 km south of Kassel.

Henschel & Sohn was later asked to submit a set of plans for the Tiger 1 tank, on microfilm and prepare a total cost estimate for the production of a Tiger tank. Since Henschel & Sohn held the design and development rights for the tank, a fee had to be negotiated to cover this aspect of the sale.

Since Henschel provided about 80 % of the components needed to assemble a Tiger 1 tank, the firm may have believed they would make a considerable profit from the sale of a new tank assembled by them specifically for export to Japan. The Japanese undoubtedly also expected they would be buying a new Tiger tank, fully equipped, for shipment to them, The Heereswaffenamt in Berlin, however, apparently had other ideas,

September 19, 1943, Henschel was informed by the Reich industrial export union for war equipment (AGK) "that it had been notified by the High Command that a Tiger 1 tank"....."was to be delivered to Japan out of army stocks". The tank was to be delivered for shipment from the depot to Japan "about October 10, 1943 from Bordeaux together with a Panther tank supplied by MAN (Spielberger, ibid, p 104)

Further discussions followed, concerning the price and the terms of the licence agreement with Henschel. It appears Henschel's management was suspicious of the army's intentions and, demanded the sale be conducted by independent commercial agents from within those German and Japanese businesses located in Berlin, to ensure the "Henschel portion of the transaction would not be lost" (ie. mis-appropriated by the Heereswaffenamt) This was evidently agreed to.

In late September, the Japanese put pressure on the Heereswaffenamt to provide the Tiger tank for shipment to Japan as soon as possible,

October 1, 1943: The AGK advised Henschel that the cost for a Tiger 1E tank complete with ammunition, guns, gun sights and radios etc. was determined to be 300,000 Reichsmark. They suggested an export selling price of 645,000 Reichsmark.. Without including the cost of ammunition, radios, gun sights and external equipment, this 'export price' was double the price the government was paying Henschel for a completed tank. (Spielberger, ibid p.104) The extra costs were evidently intended to cover the shipping costs incurred in sending the tank to Japan via submarine.

The Tiger tank the Heereswaffenamt intended to sell to Japan was not to be a new battle tank taken out of the ordnance depot "stocks", but was in fact, a reconverted command tank. It was the first of eighteen Tiger 1 command tanks to be reconverted into battle tanks, beginning in mid October 1943 at the Magdeburg-Koenigsborn HZA. These unused, command tanks had been in storage at the HZA since late August -September 1943 and were now considered to be redundant due to the organizational changes to be made in the heavy tank battalions, which were scheduled to take effect on November 1, 1943.

The Tiger purchased by Japan was one of these eighteen reconverted tanks. This fact is shown in the following comments made by Mr. Spielberger (ibid. p102)

- "the vehicle destined for Japan was to be taken to the Army tank Ordnance Depot at Madgeburg/ Koenigsborn".
- "On 14th October, the Army Tank Ordnance Depot, Koenigsborn, produced a Tiger tank (chassis number 250455) for delivery to Japan via the Bordeaux railway station. .(ibid, p.104)

The tank selected for Japan, chassis number 250455, had been assembled as a command tank and accepted by the army on or about August 28, 1943. Since the need for Tiger 1 Command tanks had diminished, the command tank selected for sale to Japan was still in storage at the army ordnance depot. in mid October,

The In-6 HZA monthly inventory summary reports for September 1943 (dated October 1st.), shows the following inventories of battle and command tanks were available at the HZA during August-September 1943

TIGER1 TANK INVENTORIES AT THE HZA
AUGUST –SEPTEMBER 1943

<u>Month ending</u>	<u>Battle tanks</u>	<u>Command tanks</u>
August 1943.....	1.....	14
September 1943.....	0	21.

Based on the August- September inventories of Tiger 1 tanks at the HZA and the constant demand for Tiger 1 battle tanks, it is highly improbable that a new battle tank from August production, still existed at the HZA in mid October 1943. The only August 1943 production tanks still available in October were to be found among the twenty-one unused Tiger 1 command tanks in storage at the HZA.

- The Guderian ‘Fuehrervortrag’ report for September, 1943, noted the reconversion of the Tiger command tanks was to begin following the October 15th completion date set for the reworking of Panther tanks at the Magdeburg HZA..
- A specific tank was to be “taken out of army stocks” Considering General Guderian’s comments in the September “Fuehrervortrag” report (above), noting the Tiger tank reconversions were to begin after October 15, 1943, the early reconversion of this tank for Japan must have required a special order from the Heereswaffenamt in Berlin, sent in early October, specifying the immediate reconversion of a Tiger 1 command tank being held at the Magdeburg HZA. .
- The reconversion work on the Tiger command tank, chassis number 250455, was completed on October 14, 1943 by the army work shops at the Koenigsborn ordnance depot (Spielberger, ibid, p.102.)
- The Tiger tank was shipped from the HZA to the port of Bordeaux on October 19, 1943.(Guderian Files: Zufuehrung report, for October, 1943)

Though the chassis number for the tank does not appear on the invoice sent by Henschel., that chassis number was undoubtedly quoted on other correspondence with the Japanese government for the following reasons: (Spielberger, Ibid. pp 214-215)

- The Japanese were not buying just any tank, but were buying one specific, new, unused, Tiger tank, chassis number 250455 and were expecting that specific tank to be delivered by submarine to Japan.
- The tank the Japanese had purchased was undoubtedly inspected by Japanese army representatives from the Berlin embassy, before being shipped from the HZA to Bordeaux
- After spending a lot of money, time and effort in purchasing the tank, the Japanese were not about to risk receiving a tank of unknown quality, The Japanese would have demanded full information on the tank they were purchasing, including chassis number, turret number, engine serial number etc.. Undoubtedly photographs of the tank, were wired back to Japan for approval of the purchase ... No substitution would have been allowed in the contract.

As previously noted, the tank selected for Japan was the first of the 18 command Tiger tanks to be reconverted. It was followed by the reconversion of an additional 17 surplus command tanks beginning in late October and early November 1943.

Including the Tiger 1 tank for Japan, all eighteen reconverted command tanks are accounted for in the Guderian records. Apart from the Tank sold to Japan, seventeen tanks are listed as being 'supply' shipments sent to the Eastern Front (Nachschub Ost) in November 1943

- Four tanks were to be shipped to the 13th Coy. LSSAH Panzer Regiment
- Thirteen tanks were to be shipped to the newly reformed sPzAbt501.

The tank selected for Japan was most likely to have been a reconverted SdKfz 268 command tank, as these command tanks would have required a minimum of conversion work. Also the alterations to the exterior of the reconverted SdKfz268 tank would not be noticeable except under close examination.

- The SdKfz268 (Signal Officer's tank) lacked the large armoured pot base of the SdKfz267 command tank, A standard base for the Fu-5 / Fu-2 antenna was located on the right centre hull deck in the same location as found on battle tanks
- The reconversion required the removal of the Fu-7 antenna base located on the left centre hull deck and plugging of the hole for the antenna wiring. The Fu-5 antenna base on the turret roof was also removed and the hole for the wiring was plugged, It also required the removal of the armoured plugs in the right side viewport of the turret, the opening for the loader's turret roof periscope and the plug in the gun mantlet,
- The mounting brackets for the long range antenna mast had to be removed and the hole in the hull deck for the exhaust from the GG400 generator had to be plugged. The tube for storing the long range antenna had to be cut off the rear hull plate. Etc..
- Internal changes would have required the removal of the turret Fu-5 radio set and mounts, removal of the Fu-7 radio, the removal of the GG400 generator and exhaust tube, the extra headphone connection for the gun loader, etc.
- Installing the co-axial machine gun, installing the two ammunition panniers for the 8.8 cm cannon in the right hull sponson, etc...

The staff at the Magdeburg/Koenigsborn Ordnance Depot did the reconversion work, undoubtedly using materials and parts requisitioned from the replacement parts inventories held at the depot. This may have required the use of a new, replacement gun mantlet, whenever the welds holding the close fitting plug in the MG port could not be removed.

October 16, 1943 The Tiger tank was shipped from the ordnance depot via rail, to Bordeaux, The Guderian monthly supplies report (Zufuehrung) recording the shipments from the HZA, notes the planned shipping date had been set for October 19, but the tank was actually shipped on October 16th, to "Japan" on train manifest no 6291730. (The Panther Ausf A tank also purchased by Japan was probably included in the same shipment.)

October 27, 1943, The Tiger tank finally arrived at Bordeaux after having been held up en route for “several days” due to railroad car width restrictions and other transport problems.

November 23, 1943, Although the reconversion work had been done at the Koenigsborn Ordnance Depot, the actual sales invoice, (Number 10047) for the tank, was issued by Henschel & Sohn on November 23, 1943, to the agent for the Japanese Government, in Berlin. (the Showa Tsusho Kaisha Ltd. of Tokyo.) The invoice notes “We carried out the undernoted delivery” of “one Tiger Model E which was ready for shipment to Japan, in accordance with the quotation of the firm of Lilies & Co. Berlin, dated 7.10.43 including the amendment of 11.10.43” (Spielberger, Ibid, pp .214-15) The invoice was to cover the total cost of production, plus the cost of radios, ammunition, machine guns etc and the costs of shipping the tank to Japan. It appears from the Henschel invoice, that the Tiger tank was at still at Bordeaux rail yards awaiting delivery Due to the worsening war situation, any shipments to Japan, even by submarine, were by now, nearly impossible. The Tiger tank and Panther tank evidently could no longer be shipped to Japan.

December,? 1943, At some point probably near the end of December, both the Japanese purchased Tiger tank and Panther tank were returned to the Magdeburg army ordnance depot for storage, awaiting the Japanese government’s decision on what to do with their two tanks. The Tiger tank was probably still fully equipped and armed.

January 14 1944, During December 1943, there were shortages of both Tiger 1 command tanks and Tiger 1 battle tanks caused by the three months of production losses, incurred at both the Henschel and Wegmann assembly plants, following the Royal Air Force’s area fire bombing of the City of Kassel, on the night of October.22/23, 1943 Due to the shortage of Tiger 1 battle tanks, it appears a decision was made to include the Japanese purchased Tiger tank in a shipment of Tiger tanks being sent to the newly formed HQ. and 3rd Companies, sSSPzAbt 101, at the Mons-Maisieres training grounds in Belgium...

- Authorization for delivery of the tank to the ‘SS-101’ would have been given by the OKH-AHA-AgK In-6 in Berlin (Ober Kommando des Heeres, Allgemeines Heeresamt, Amtsgruppe Kraftfahrwesen, Inspektorat-6).
- The inclusion of the Tiger tank purchased by Japan in the January tank shipment to the 3rd and HQ Companies, gave the ‘new formation’ a total of 19 tanks. This was apparently considered to be the minimum number of command and battle tanks required for the formation and battle tactic training of new heavy tank battalions, during late 1943. (this conclusion is based on similar shipments sent to other fledgling heavy tank battalions. as recorded in the Guderian ‘Fuehrervortrag’ and ‘Zufuehrung’ reports)

Even though the Heereswaffenamt decided to make use of this tank, it remained the property of the Government of Japan.

- Since payment for the tank had not yet been received by Henschel from the Japanese Government prior to the shipment, it seems probable the Japanese Army staff in Berlin had not been advised of the shipment of their Tiger tank to the 3rd Company of the sSS-PzAbt101

- There is no record in either the Zufuehrung reports or the In-6 HZA monthly inventory summary reports documenting the return of the Japanese purchased tank from Bordeaux to the HZA, nor of it's subsequent shipment to the 3rd Coy at the Mons-Maisieres training grounds.
- It appears the Tiger tank shipped to the sSSPzAbt101 at Mons-Maisieres on January 14th 1944, was not recorded in the shipment records, since it remained the property of the Government of Japan.

It is interesting to note the original October, 1943 Zufuehrung shipping record documenting the tank's shipment to 'Japan', was subsequently amended in General Guderian's records, by the stroke of a pencil through the typed notation 'Japan' and the addition of a penciled notation- "SS-101" The original shipping data was also penciled out. That simple pencil notation is apparently only one of two records found in the Guderian files to show this particular Tiger was shipped to the 'SS-101'.

Oktober 1943

ZUFÜHRUNG

Prognose : 80
Geliefert : 85

Verband	Stück	davon	Abtransport		Zug Nr
			geplant	totsächlich	
Japan <i>hh 101</i>	1	1	19.10	16.10	6291730

The shipment of the Tiger tank owned by Japan to the "SS101" was obviously not a donation as some sources claim.....nor could it even be considered to have been a loan. Considering the Japanese were 'allies' in the war, the transaction from the start appears to have been somewhat devious in nature..

- The Japanese may have been told the Tiger 1 tank they were to purchase would be a special order tank made for them by Henschel & Son GmbH. It appears this may intentionally have been a fabricated story which was continued with Henschel's participation. since the invoice for the tank purchase and delivery was sent to the agent for the Government of Japan by Henschel and the payment for the tanks was received by Henschel and not the Heereswaffenamt..
- Instead of a newly made tank, the Heereswaffenamt (through Henschel) had sold the Japanese government a reconverted late August production, former SdKfz268 Tiger command tank, which had been sitting unused, for over a month in the Magdeburg HZA
- This tank was sold "by Henschel " to the Government of Japan at a very high selling price which included transportation costs and other fees..
- Furthermore, even before the payment from Japan had been received by Henschel, the Heereswaffenamt had already 'borrowed' the Japanese tank and the newly formed 3rd Coy. sSS-PzAbt101 was already using it—apparently 'without the owner's knowledge or consent' *.

* Note: There is no mention in the available literature of any ‘behind the scenes’ negotiations with the Japanese on the use of the tank by the German army, though this possibly may have occurred—albeit only at a much later date ..

The HQ and 3rd Companies of the sSS-PzAbt101) had the following tanks at the Mons-Maisieres training grounds in January 1944.

- Ten Tiger 1 battle tanks (including the four reconverted command tanks), which had been received in October 1943, after being diverted to Augustdorf on orders of the SS High Command (SS-FHA). while en route to the Eastern Front (This change in venue may have been due to a lack of trained Tiger tank crews on the Eastern Front. The ten tanks had been mainly used for training the newly recruited drivers and tank crews in the operation and maintenance of the tanks) *
- Seven Tiger 1 battle tanks and two Tiger 1 command tanks which had been shipped in January 1944 for the formation and tactical training of the HQ and 3rd Companies
- The six battle tanks were shipped to the new formation in one train load on January 11, 1944, The two command tanks were shipped two days later on January 14, 1944 among a train shipment which included both the Japanese purchased Tiger 1 battle tank and the Japanese purchased Panther Ausf A tank**

*Note: The Tiger tanks shipped in January 1944 as well as the tanks shipped to Augustdorf in October, 1943 were all originally listed as being “Nachschub Ost” shipments in the Guderian Zufuehrung records. Apparently the original plans were to train the crews intended for the new 3rd Company of the sSS-PzAbt101 in Germany then ship the crews, the HQ Company staff and all of their tanks to the Eastern Front to join the two companies of the sSS-PzAbt101 which were attached to the LSSAH as their 13th Company. The planned shipment of these tanks added to those existing tanks of the 13th Coy LSSAH already in Russia, would undoubtedly have been sufficient to complete the new sSS-PzAbt101’s full complement of 45 tanks. Obviously, the plans were changed during December. As a result, the newly trained personnel from Augustdorf, along with a cadre of experienced crews and officers were assigned to the newly formed 3rd. and HQ Companies which then began tactical training at the Mons-Maisieres training grounds in Belgium.

**Note: A maximum of six Tiger tanks were allowed for railway shipments of Tiger 1 tanks from the HZA to destinations in Germany, France and Belgium .The tanks were loaded on the sSyms tank transport railcars, which due to railroad load restrictions, had to be located between other loaded railway cars on the train. (For shipments to Italy or other mountainous countries only five Tiger tanks were allowed per train load.). A photograph exists of a partial shipment consisting of a Tiger I tank together with an early Panther Ausf A tank which had just arrived at the Mons-Maisieres training grounds in January 1944. The photograph caption identifies the Tiger tank as being part of the shipment of tanks for the newly formed 3rd, Company, sSS-PzAbt101. It is interesting to note the coincidence, since both a Tiger and a Panther tank had been purchased by Japan and were originally shipped to the Bordeaux railway yard.. Since the sea shipment of these tanks via submarine to Japan was no longer practical, both tanks

were probably returned to the HZA at the same time.. The Tiger tank in the photograph appears to lack the central mounted head lamp and appears to have had the early tracks lacking the chevrons on each tread. It would probably have been completed /accepted during late August or early September, 1943, ...but were the two tanks in the photograph actually the two tanks purchased by Japan ??? If so, the Panther tank was probably one of the MAN Panther tanks known to have been rebuilt at the Magdeburg HZA in mid October 1943. It's subsequent assignment to a Panzer Division in France is not known. (Photograph on page 425 of the book "Tiger Technical and Operational History", Vol. 2, by Waldemar and Gregor Troijka.) .

February 28, 1944: Henschel & Sohn confirmed the receipt of the 645,000 Reichsmark (RM) from the Japanese government as payment in full for the tank .(Note: 1944 was a "leap year". As a result, there were 28 days in the month of February.)

This payment was then broken down into individual costs and payments to the various concerns:

Maybach engine.....	13,000RM
Transmission mechanism.....	8,300RM.
Hull.....	54,000RM
Turret with commander's cupola and mantlet....	26,000RM
Turret assembly costs.....	20,000RM
Hull/chassis assembly costs.....	124,000RM
Tracks.....	7,000RM
8.8 cm gun.....	22,000RM
Ammunition.....	9,000RM
Gun sights, optics.....	2,900RM
Radio equipment.....	3,000RM
Two MG 34 machine guns.....	1,100RM
Machine Pistol MP38.....	<u>75RM</u>
Total.....	645,000 RM

The payment of the 645,000 RM was broken down as follows:.... ..645,000RM
 Cost of the tank to the army.....-300,000 RM
 Cost of packing, rail shipment, commissions, etc.- 33,136 RM
 Balance..... 311,166 RM.

The balance of 311,166 RM was then distributed among the participants:
 The Army received 80% of the residual.....249,467.00 RM
 Henschel for the transaction received 2.5%.....7,795.85RM
 Payment to the three development firms for a total of 17.5%.....54,570.85 RM

Of this latter payment, Henschel received 70 %.....	38,199.59 RM
Krupp received.22.7 %.....	12,387.58 RM
Maybach received 7.1 %.....	3874.53 RM

Henschel for it's ownership of the design and other efforts, received a total of 45,995.44 RM..

The winner in the transaction was undoubtedly the Heereswaffenamt. Not only did they keep and use the tank the Japanese had purchased, but they kept the total cost they had charged the Japanese for the fully equipped Tiger tank (300,000RM) , They also received 80% of the residual payment of 249,467 RM, Since the tank could not be shipped to Japan, the Heereswaffenamt probably kept some of the estimated rail transportation and shipping costs of 33,136RM,. The residual payment plus transportation payments received by the Heereswaffenamt may have equaled a total payment of approximately 282,603 RM.--.which was probably sufficient to pay Henschel for assembling yet another Tiger 1 tank. (ie. Henschel was paid 250,800 RM for a new Tiger 1 tank).

By the time the payment from the Japanese was received at the end of February,1944, the Heereswaffenamt had already decided to make use of the tank, by having it shipped in early January 1944 to the fledgling HQ. and 3rd Companys, sSSPzAbt101 at the Mons-Maisieres training grounds, Out of the transaction, the Heereswaffenamt had gained a free Tiger tank and probably sufficient funds to pay Henschel for the assembly of yet another Tiger tank.

The Fate of the "Japanese" Tiger tank

September 21,1944: The Heereswaffenamt issued order No.11646/44, noting that since the Tiger for Japan could not be delivered to that country, the Government of Japan was now making the tank available to the German Army, "by way of loan".

Nine months after the Tiger tank had been shipped to the sSSPzAbt101 in Belgium, the Tiger tank purchased and still owned by Japan, was now officially, being 'loaned' to the German Army. It seems ironical that the Tiger tank purchased by Japan was being 'loaned' to the German Army in September 1944, when in fact, the tank was already just a rusting hulk left on some battlefield in Normandy or abandoned on the banks of the River Seine.

THE RECONVERTED TIGER TANKS OF THE sSS-PzAbt 101

Four of the ten Tiger 1 battle tanks shipped on October 29, 1943 to what was to later become the 3rd Company, sSS-PxAbt101, were reconverted Command tanks. As seen in published photographs, several of these tanks were from August-September production

These four reconverted Tiger battle tanks had originally been intended to be part of a “Nachschub Ost” shipment of ten tanks to the 13th. heavy tank company attached to the LSSAH Panzer Division in Russia, The shipment had been rerouted at Lvov, Poland, to the Augustdorf ,training grounds, on orders from the SS-FHA .

On January 14, 1944, the late August production reconverted Tiger 1 command tank purchased by Japan, was shipped to the unit, bringing the total number of reconverted command tanks in the 3rd. Coy. to five tanks. These five reconverted command tanks can be seen in photographs taken of the battle tanks of the 3rd Company, in February 1944, during tactical training exercises in Belgium. Four Tiger tanks of the SS101, had features which are consistent with tanks from August-September 1943 production There is yet another reconverted command tank, probably also from late September production, whose tactical number has not been identified. These five tanks were:

Tiger tactical number	305
“ “ “	314*
“ “ “	323*
‘ “ ‘	333
“ “ “	3?? (tactical number not known)

* Note: Based on the lack of a central head lamp on two of the above tanks, it appears probable the late August production Japanese Tiger tank had been assigned either tactical number 314 or tactical number 323..

One of the reconverted September production command tanks included in the shipment to the SS101. (tactical number 305) can be seen to have the central mounted head light and the older tracks lacking the chevrons on each track, (The chevrons were introduced on early October 1943 production tanks).

- It should be noted that the central headlight was probably being ‘blended in’ on the assembly lines during the last two weeks of September 1943 and only attained full production status in early October 1943 on chassis number 250570*
- As a result, some late September production Tiger 1 command tanks were also assembled with the central mounted headlight.

*Note: This October production tank was assigned tactical no.334, (chassis number 250570) The tank hull had begun the machining / assembly process about September 26, 1943, and the tank was completed by Henschel on or about October 4th.. It would have passed the road testing and army acceptance inspection process about October 7, 1943. According to the data quoted by the late Mr. Tom.Jentz, this was the first tank to be assembled with the central mounted headlight in full production (ie. all tanks completed after this tank had central mounted headlamps) It was also among the first Tiger tanks to be completed with the new tracks which had chevrons cast into the tracks. (T. Jentz “Germany’s Tiger tanks, Tiger I & Tiger II, Combat Tactics” page 19)

THE REBUILT TIGER 1 TANK OF THE sSS-PzAbt101:

It is interesting to note, from the Guderian' Fuehrervortrag' report for October 1943 that repairs and rebuilding work on Panther tanks was being carried out at the Magdeburg ordnance depot at the same time as the reconversion work on the command Tiger tanks was to begin.(see previous notes on the Tiger tank purchased by Japan)

On page 6 of General Guderian's 'Fuehrervortrag' for March 5,1944, there is the first entry, documenting the rebuilding of battle damaged Tiger tanks (form reproduced verbatim as follows)

IV.) In Heimatinstanzsetzung befinden sich :
: (Stand 29. 2. 44)

266	Pz. Kpfw	III
380	" "	IV
158	" "	Panther
72	" "	Tiger
<u>242</u>	Sturmgeschutz	
1,129	Stück	

Aus Heimatinstanzsetzung ausgeliefert in Februar:

5	Pz. Kpfw.	III
19	" "	IV
12	" "	Panther
1	" "	Tiger
<u>75</u>	Sturmgeschutz	
112	Stück	

The single Tiger tank rebuilt during February 1944 appears on the revised In-6 HZA inventory summary report for February 1944 (dated March 1, 1944), The In-6 monthly inventory form itself, had been revised at the end of January 1944 and for the first time it included spaces to record the number of rebuilt Tiger tanks received at the HZA

The book by Patrick Agte, "Michael Wittmann and the Tiger Commanders of the Leibstandarte" (page 258) describes what could only have been a rebuilt Tiger 1 battle tank, among the April 1944 shipments sent to the sSS-PzAbt 101 in Belgium.

Mr. Agte evidently based the history of the January and April Tiger tank shipments to the battalion on the recollections of former SS-Unterscharfuehrer, the late Mr. Werner Wendt,... who, as a tank commander in the 1st Coy, 3rd Troop (Tiger No.132) had been present during the January 1944 shipment of Tiger 1 Command and battle tanks from the ordnance depot to the 3rd and HQ Companies. Mr. Wendt was also present when the April 1944 shipments of Tiger 1 tanks arrived at the Mons-Maisieres training grounds.

rebuilt at an unspecified homeland depot, during the months of February, March and April, 1944 as listed by Mr. T. Jentz (Osprey Publ., Tiger 1 p. 13)

Unfortunately not all tanks of the 1st Coy, have been identified among the few existing photographs. The rebuilt Tiger with the old style cupola may have been assigned tactical number 124. The tank is believed to have been lost early in the Normandy battles of June-July 1944.(Mr. Yann Joubert, personal corresp. 2014)

The five rebuilt battle damaged tanks noted by Mr. Jentz, in his production statistics form (ibid. p.13) may have been repaired and rebuilt at the army ordnance depot Magdeburg, using replacement parts taken from army stores.

- The original turret and cupola were not replaced. The older turret could not be upgraded to use the newer cupola found on turrets assembled at the Wegmann plant after early July 1943, since the welded base of the newer cupola did not interchange with the existing cupola base on the older turret (Mr. D. Byrden, pers. corresp.2011).
- Missing or damaged parts were more often the rule than the exception on those battle damaged tanks sent back to Germany for rebuilding by the Front line units. Due to the scarcity of spare parts at the front, battle damaged tanks were usually scavenged for usable parts by the Tiger repair companies. prior to the tanks being shipped back to the homeland repair depots.
- As a result, these repaired tanks could have had any combination of old or new components. It seems likely any extensive repositioning of tools and equipment would not have been carried out unless absolutely necessary. For example, a new 20 ton jack complete with it's mounting brackets would have been installed, to replace a missing or damaged 15 ton jack and mounts. Shovel clamps on the glacis plate were probably retained if not damaged etc. The obsolete Feifel air cleaners were undoubtedly removed, leaving only the mounting lugs welded on the rear upper hull plate)
- If the Zimmeritt coating on the sides of the hull and turret was damaged. it was probably patched up or replaced.

Jentz (Tiger 1, etc. sec 3.3.1.) describes the late Tiger tank assembly procedures at Henschel in June, July 1944. which involved the remanufacture of battle damaged tanks. The description reflects the type of materials required for any conversion work being done on the Tiger 1 tank.

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The well known photograph of the Tiger 1 tank, tactical number 323, was scanned from the book "Tiger in Combat", and is reproduced here with permission of the author, Col. Wolfgang Schneider.

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Any errors or misinterpretations of the facts are the sole responsibility of the author
