

LA PROKHOVORKA

- THE FALSE SOVIET VICTORY



Historical Background

The year was 1943. After the heavy setbacks suffered in Moscow and Stalingrad, Hitler was desperately looking for a military success to exploit for propaganda purposes. He set his sights on Operation Zitadelle, aimed at the Kursk salient. But from the outset, the operation went badly wrong. The salient, massively fortified by the Soviets, was full of traps. The German forces advanced slowly, held back by successive defensive lines that were extremely effective. The minefields of both sides intermingled, the Soviet artillery pounded relentlessly, and every metre of ground was conquered at the cost of fierce fighting.

On 11 July, there was renewed hope on the German side. The 2nd SS Panzerkorps managed to break through the third Soviet defensive line near Prokhorovka. Panicked, the Soviet high command ordered an immediate counter-attack, mobilising all available armour. Poorly prepared, the operation came up against a major setback: the positions initially planned for the Soviet tanks had already fallen into German hands. So on the morning of the 12th, without any prior reconnaissance, the Soviet tankers launched their assault on the advanced units of the Leibstandarte division.

Weakened by several days of fighting, the 2nd Panzerkorps had lost a large part of its armour, including 60% of its fearsome Tigers (only four remained, fifteen for the whole 2nd Panzerkorps). However, it had dug in behind a large anti-tank ditch dug earlier... by the Soviets themselves. Poorly informed, the Soviet attackers were unaware of its existence. The result was catastrophic: several tanks fell into the ditch, while the others, trying to get around it, were decimated by German fire.

On 12 July, the confrontation reached its climax: 330 German tanks clashed with almost 800 Soviet tanks. By nightfall, the Red Army had suffered terrible losses, with around 350 tanks destroyed compared with around 50 on the German side.

Long celebrated by Soviet propaganda as a dazzling victory, the battle of Prokhorovka is now being reassessed in the light of Second World War military archives. Recent research by historians is revealing an entirely different reality: that of a bitter Soviet failure that was concealed for decades.

Briefing

Axis player :
- 7 command cards

Allied player :
- 5 command cards
- You play first

Conditions of Victory

12 medals

Special Rules

- Soviet tanks cannot retreat, so the flags inflict losses on them.
- Each player must discard one card each time his opponent reaches a multiple of 4 medals (4-8) and continue the battle with one card less.
- The exits counters are there for the Soviet units; each Soviet armoured unit that exits earns the Allied player a medal. In order to win the game, the Allied player must obtain at least one medal in this way

Setup order		
1		x6
2		x13
3		x4
4		x20
5		x1
6		x6
7		x17
8		x2
9		x6
10		x2
11		x2