

Tiger 1 S04 (Michael Wittman)



History

First produced in August 1942, the Tiger I was Germany's workhorse tank from Operation Barbarossa all the way up to the Battle for Berlin. Michael Wittmann, the Richtoffen of armored warfare, commanded numerous Tiger Is, until Tiger #007 became his metal tomb in 1944.

The Tiger I was first given to the Reich's favored army groups, most notably Germany's Praetorian Guard, the Leibstandarte of the Waffen-SS. With the military prowess of Germany's elite, and the tank's notorious overengineering, Hitler's armies were able to

control the battlefields for much of the war.

The Tiger I was equipped with an 8.8cm KwK 36 L/56 cannon. Its thick armor, although proving a godsend on the battlefield, was just one result of overengineering back at the drawing boards. This made the type extremely expensive to produce, eventually preventing the resources-strained Reich to produce the tank in large numbers.

Tiger 131, located at the Bovington Tank Museum, is the only Tiger still in working order.

Michael Wittmann: Tank Ace

Son of farmer Johann Wittmann, Michael Wittman was born on April 22, 1914, in Oberpfalz, Bavaria. He joined the Wehrmacht in October of 1934, assigned to the 19th Infantry Regiment at Freising. He would stay with this division until being promoted to Gefreiter (lance-corporal). Two years later, Wittman joined the Allgemeine SS, finally kickstarting a successful career in Germany's home guard. Half a year later, he was assigned to the Leibstandarte, Germany's Praetorian Guard, and Wittman's new home.

Wittmann was first given the rank of Panzer-Mann, or Private. With an armored car platoon, Wittmann and the Leibstandarte stormed across Austria and the Sudetenland. Wittmann got his first taste of blood during the Polish Campaign, commanding a Sturmgeschütz III Ausf. A assault gun. Along with the 9th Panzer Division, the Leibstandarte sowed a field of destruction in Greece, culminating in the capture of the Greek Capital.

After the capture of Greece, Wittmann was sent to the Eastern Front, to take part in Operation Barbarossa. He still kept with the StuG III, but was eventually assigned to Officer and Tank Commander training. He returned to the Eastern Front as an Untersturmführer of SS Panzer Regiment 1, commanding a Panzer III. By 1943, he commanded his first Tiger. The Tiger would become Wittman's notorious *modus operandi*. During the Battle of Kursk, Wittman survived a Russian *Taran* attack, initiated by a T-34. In an ironic twist of fate, the T-34 was destroyed when its ammunition store exploded after S04 pulled out from under the Russian. On January 14, 1944, Wittmann was awarded the Knights Cross of the Iron Cross. By then, he'd scored 88 kills (see gun barrel on next page).

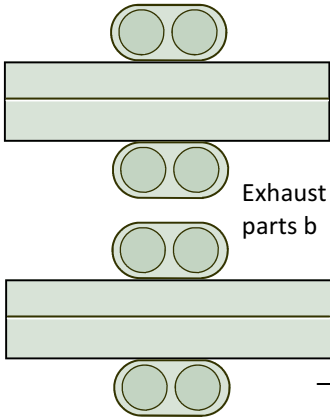
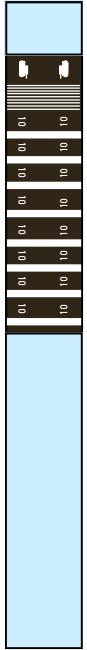
In April 1944, Wittmann's LSSAH Tiger company was transferred to Panzer Abteilung 101. There, he was promoted to Obersturmführer and commanded the Battalion's 2nd company. The company fought the invading Anglo-American forces at Normandy, which pushed Wittmann and co. southwards, eventually opening a 7.5 mile gap in the German lines.

On the 13th June 1944, Wittman was engaged in one of his crowning moments of armored warfare. Encountering the British at Villers-Bocage, Wittman engaged several armored fighting vehicles. About fifteen minutes into the battle, Panzer Battalion 101 had destroyed 14 tanks, 2 anti-tank guns, and 14 transports. For his actions during the battle, Wittmann was promoted to Hauptsturmführer.

On 8 August 1944, Wittmann and Battalion 101 took part in a counteroffensive ordered by Kurt Meyer near the town of Saint-Aignan-de-Cramesnil. A group of seven Tigers were ambushed by squadrons of British tanks. At around 12:47, Tiger 007, under command of Michael Wittmann, exploded, sending its turret flying some meters away. A shot, now believed to have come from a Sherman Firefly of 3 Troop, A Squadron, had apparently struck 007's ammunition store, killing all of its crew. Wittmann and his crew are now buried at the German War Cemetery in La Cambre, France.



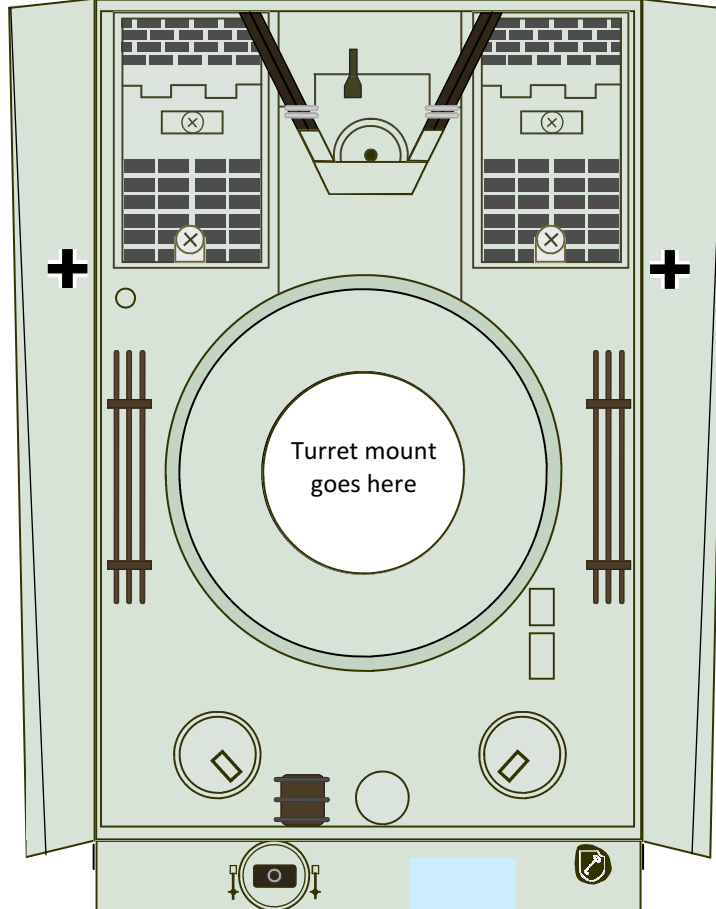
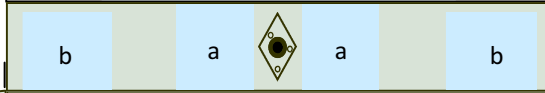
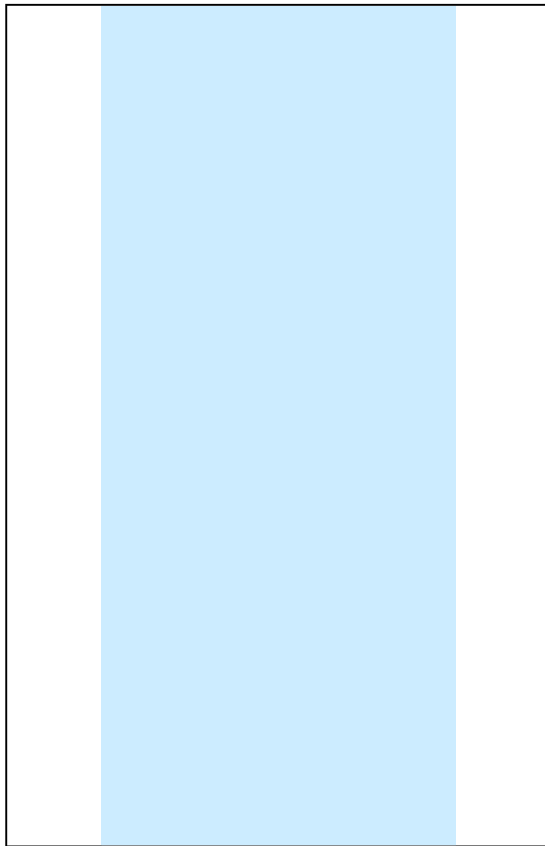
These stripes indicate how many kills Wittman had scored as of January 13, 1944. The next day, he'd be rewarded the Knight's Cross.



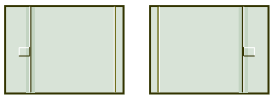
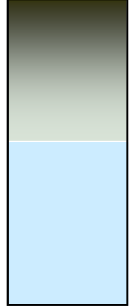
Exhaust parts b



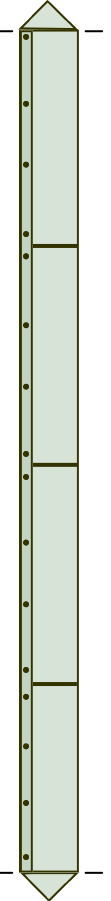
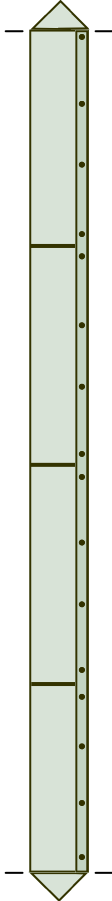
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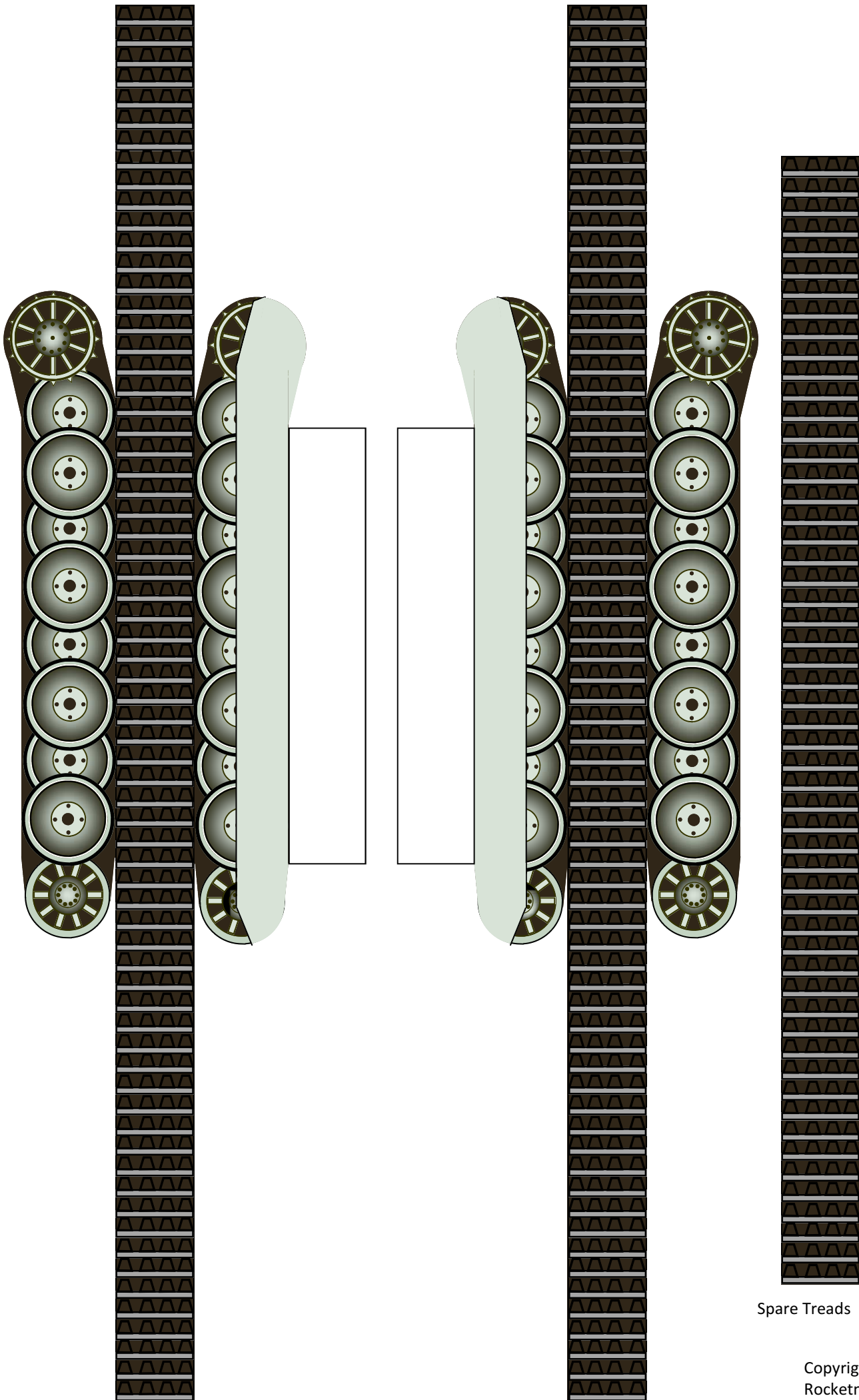


Turret mount goes here



Rear mud flaps

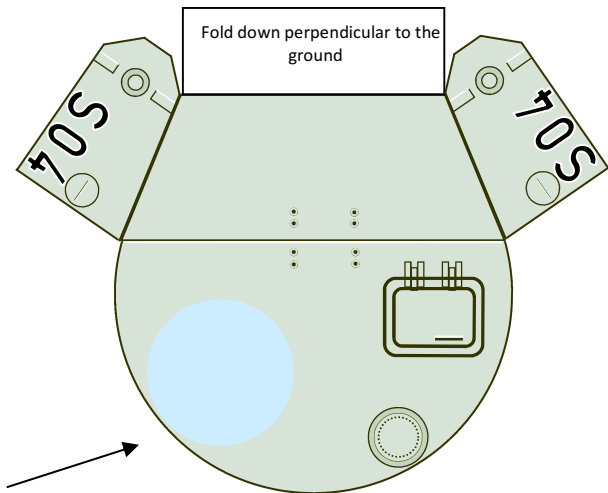
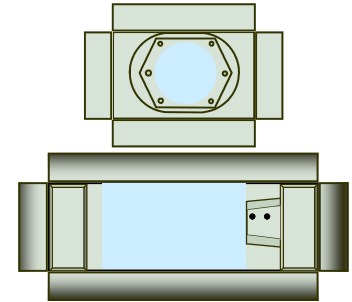
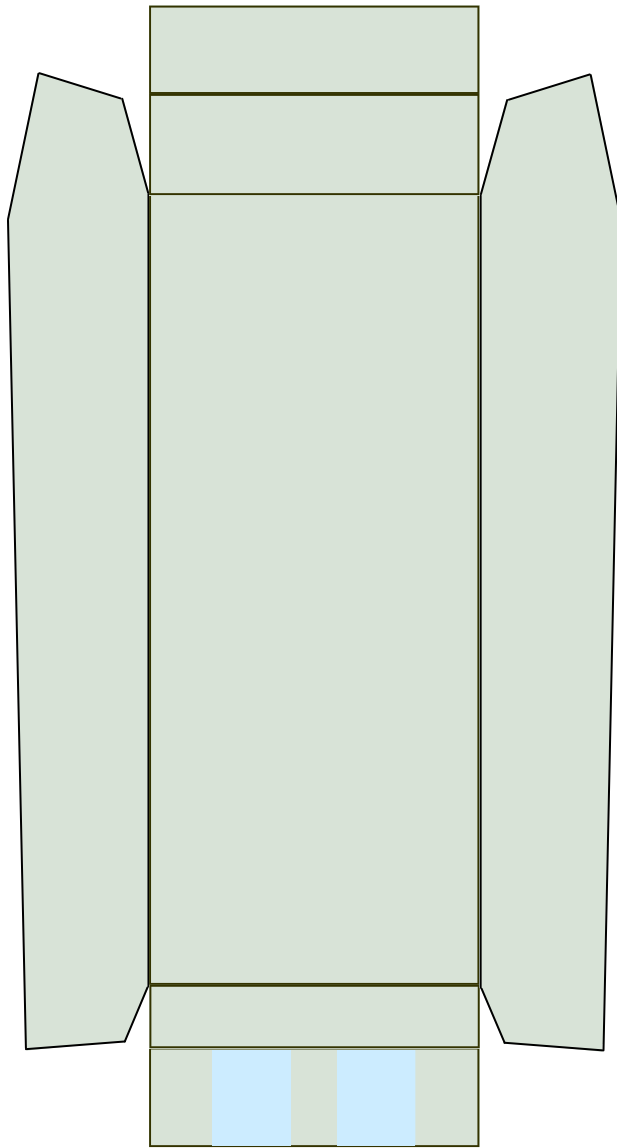




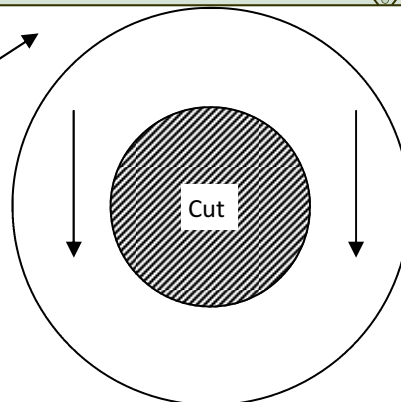
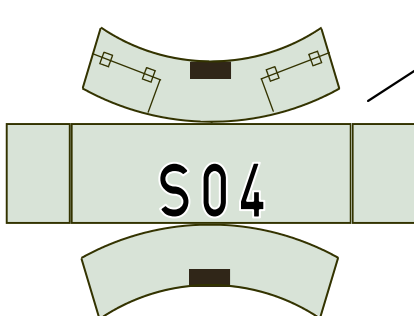
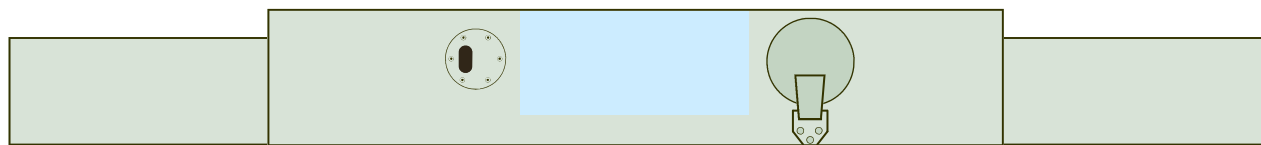
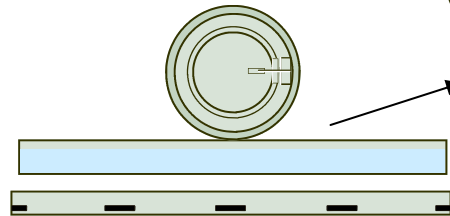
Spare Treads

Panzerlied
-Kurt Wiehle

*Ob's Sturm oder Schneit, ob die Sonne uns Lacht
Der Tag glühend heiß, oder Eiskalt die Nacht
Bestäubt sind die Gesichter, doch froh ist, unser Sinn
(Ja, unser Sinn!)
Eis braust, unser Panzer, im Sturmwind dahin!*



Turret Mount



Assemble this part of the turret first, making a perfectly circular ring. After that, slide the upper shell over this assembly.