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The 503<sup>rd</sup> had a number of exceptional individuals assigned to it. Most notably was the top scoring Tiger Ace of the war, Feldwebel Kurt Knispel, awarded the German Cross in Gold, and top ace with at least 168 confirmed kills. Knispel was assigned to the First Kompanie and was KIA on 28 April 1943 in Hungary. The acting battalion commander in Normandy was Oberleutnant Walter Scherf, awarded the Knight's Cross in February 1944. Besides Knispel two other members of the unit were holders of the German Cross in Gold and Tiger Aces with over 103 confirmed kills each, Heinz Rondorf, 2. Kompanie commander and Heinz Gärtner of 3. Kompanie. While the Panzer Lehr division included five of the new Tiger ausf Bs or King Tigers in its Radio Controlled tank company, only the 503<sup>rd</sup> would deploy a full company of Tiger IIs as the battalion command section and 1. Kompanie were fully equipped with these new German behemoths.



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**Photo Captions:**

- 1: Map of the initial positions of the 503<sup>rd</sup> schwere PanzerAbteilung during Operation Goodwood.
- 2: File photo of Heinz Rondorf, courtesy of the Tiger I Information Center.
- 3: Flak pals. A Tiger I protected from Allied airpower by a half tracked SdKfz 7/1 2 cm Flakvierling 38.
- 4: Oberleutnant Walter Scherf, Knight's Cross holder, acting Battalion Commander in Normandy.
- 5: Photo of Cagny and the Cagny-Vimont road after the bombing. 3./503 s PzAb was destroyed here.
- 6: Upturned Tiger of 3. Kompanie, victim of the 1000 bomber attack.
- 7: Sherman Firefly 'brewed up' after being hit by a Tiger's 88mm gun.
- 8: Destroyed Cromwell tank near Cagny, possibly destroyed by a Tiger from the 2. Kompanie.
- 9: MP 40 armed Panzergrenadier in Caen.
- 10: Tiger 222 of the 2. Kompanie, camouflaged in Normandy.
- 11: Top Tiger Ace Kurt Knispel of the 503<sup>rd</sup>, center.

## References:

**Most reference material was accessed via the Internet and World Wide Web. There are also numerous excellent books covering the subject.**

1. Feldgrau.com: Research based Website covering all aspects of the German military from 1918 to 1945. Highly recommended. Site link: [www.feldgrau.com](http://www.feldgrau.com)
2. The Tiger I Information Center. Great site for all things related to the Tiger I. Provides photos, unit histories and losses and lists the various Tiger aces. Site link: <http://www.alanhamby.com/tiger.html>
3. The Normandy Campaign. Website by Niklas Zetterling, supporting his book "Normandy 1944, German Military Organization, Combat Power and Organizational Effectiveness". Excellent data on operational units. Site link: <http://web.telia.com/~u18313395/normandy/index.html>
4. *Tigers in Combat Volume I* by Wolfgang Schneider. Published by Stackpole Book, Mechanicsburg, PA 1998.
5. Worldwar2aces.com. Website covering the development and use of the Tiger I and Tiger II. Provides photos and vintage videos of Tiger tanks in action. Excellent links. Site link: <http://www.worldwar2aces.com/>
6. The ARMOR Site! Perhaps one of the definitive collections of all things AFV related. Fantastic collection of technical information on the Tigers I and II and the units that used them. The site also covers modern AFVs and PC wargames. Site link: <http://www.fprado.com/armorsite/main.html>
7. Military Images.net. Nice site with an excellent collection of photos and lists of historical battles. Site link: <http://www.militaryimages.net/>
8. Axis History Factbook Excellent site for information on the Axis Powers. Covers units, individuals, equipment and various campaigns and battles. This is a superior site, well worth a visit. Highly recommended. Site link: <http://www.axishistory.com/>
9. Wikipedia.com. Online internet encyclopedia. A good place to start research but be wary of using Wikipedia as a primary source. Good search function and usually provides links to quality site and published works. Site link: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page)

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