

# GENERAL

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# ★ ★ The AVALON HILL GENERAL

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**MANAGING EDITOR:** Rex A. Martin

**GRAPHICS:** Jean Baer, Charles Kibler and Mike Creager

**COVER ART:** George Parrish

**AREA Technician:** Brenda Parrish

**GENERAL Subscriptions:** Richard Snider

**Purchase of Games, PBM kits and parts:** Brenda Brauer

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## AH Philosophy Part 112

Back in the letters column of Vol. 21, No. 5, I requested that the secretaries (or presidents) of wargaming clubs around the country send me information on their organizations in order to publicize the FTF aspects of our hobby. The response, to say the least, was disappointing. It leads me to have some concern for the future of this fascinating pastime, since it would appear that apathy or antipathy have made some serious advances therein. (For those interested, the full list of those clubs responding to my appeal for information follows at the conclusion of this column. Of course, there are also a number of clubs listed in the "Opponents Wanted" ads on the back cover of this issue as always.)

Looking over this, I find that the sentiments expressed by Mr. McMahon in his letters (Vol. 21, Nos. 3 and 5) to be all too true. It does seem that the social competitive play of wargames is in decline. Too, without the encouragement of at-hand experienced gamers, how can we expect newcomers to stay long in this hobby. As the "hard-core" gamers grow older, they will seemingly gradually become more isolated as those around them drop out. Without local clubs where these "groggnards" can gather, attrition speeds up in a deadly cycle. Conventions are fine for bringing gamers together, but such "events" are all too limited in duration. I've been lucky

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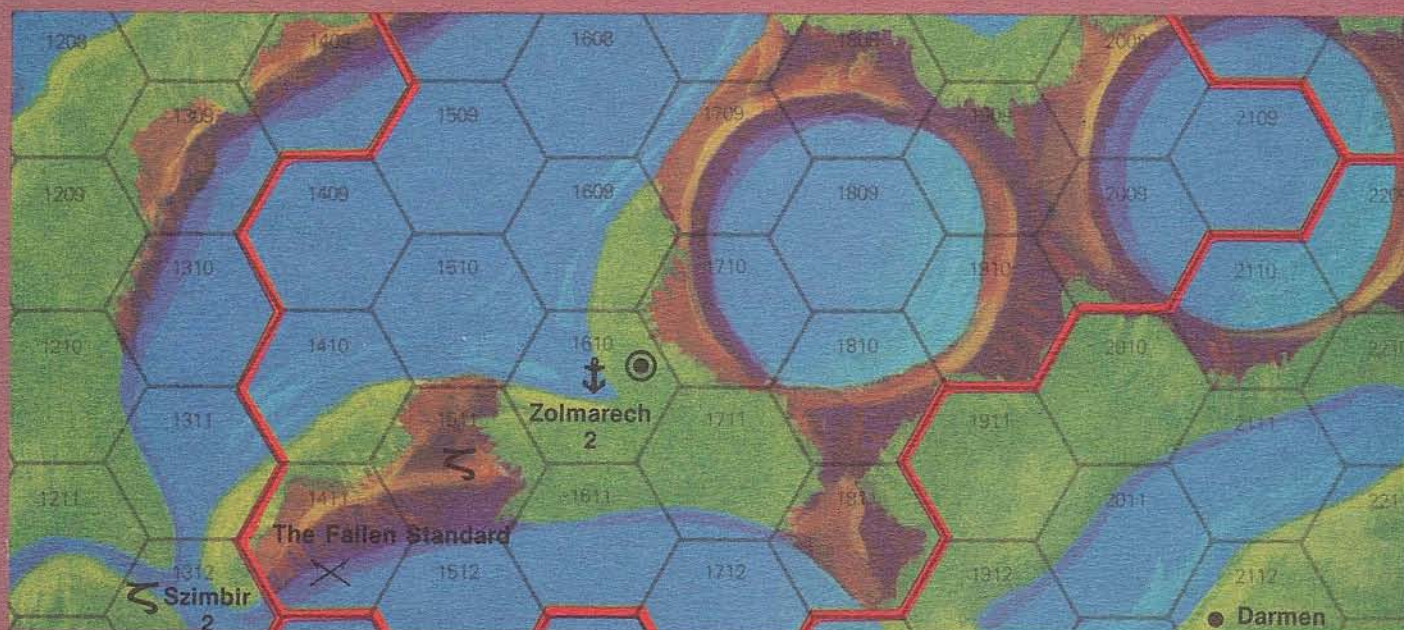
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# Dark Emperor

**Dark Emperor** is a fantasy wargame for two players set in the unique world of Loslon. It pits the divided, but formidable, human kingdoms against the small, but powerful, forces of Padrech dar Choim.

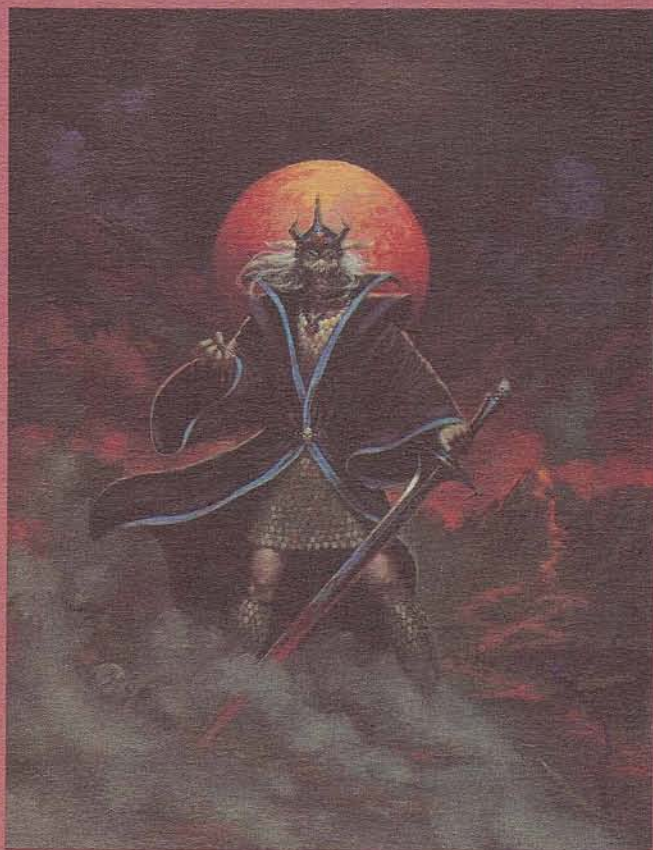
As the Great Necromancer, you must subdue the kingdoms before they can unite to oppose you. In doing so, your first goal is to conquer two or three of the lesser kingdoms, to provide fodder for your vampiric host. Afterwards, you may march against the seat of empire and avenge yourself on the descendants of Padrom III. Losses mean nothing, victory is all. The death of your hosts holds no terror for you, for you are Padrech dar Choim, a master Necromancer who can raise the dead to do your bidding. Aided by the power of Tol Morn and Mezal, and with the Great Sword, He-Sups-On-Prana at your side (if you can find it), you know that you are invincible.

As the active leader of humanity, the Kingdoms player, you must fight a delaying action until the heroes and heroines under your command can rouse the land to fight mankind's greatest foe. Unless these forces can be united, they will surely fall. Only together can they hope to stem the dark tide and defeat Padrech dar Choim. Cunning strategy, subtle diplomacy and heroic, tenacious defense are their only hope against this great evil. Used well, they can lead to glorious and final victory over the powers of death and terror.

**Dark Emperor** is a simulation of Loslon's greatest war, encompassing all of the diplomatic, magical and military factors that were brought to bear. Its movement and attrition systems reflect the non-combat losses that occur in any war, especially in a period before the modern advances in logistics and medicine. The combat system rates the relative strengths, and the different capacities, of armies, creating a necessity for intelligent command to assure victory.

**Dark Emperor** can be played in two to four hours. Included in the game is a four-color mapboard, a sixteen-page rule book (with extensive historical background and designer's notes), two hundred and sixty counters and two six-sided dice. On a scale of one (easy) to ten (hard), its complexity rating is SIX.

**Dark Emperor** is now available for \$19.00 from The Avalon Hill Game Company (4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, Maryland 21214). Please add 10% for shipping and handling to payment (20% for Canadian and Mexican orders or 30% for overseas orders). Maryland residents please add an additional 5% state sales tax.







# THE RUSSIAN FRONT DISSECTED

## OR "Ivan, We Hardly Knew Ya"

By S. Craig Taylor, Jr.

Do you really have to be crazy to design and develop wargames? No . . . and contrary to popular legend, it doesn't really help. Actually, it is mental *outlook* (not mental *health*) that contrasts *designing* a wargame from *developing* one and this clear division in thought processes is not always well-understood in the hobby.

### DESIGN ELEMENTS

Properly *designing* a wargame requires research; not only to find an accurate map and order-of-battle but, even more importantly, the identification of the *major* aspects of the situation in order to devise a *board* game "system" reflecting the *overall* dynamics of the historical events. The last 27 years have seen the introduction of myriad wargame systems and sub-systems and most games feature familiar systems and mechanics that are assembled in some new combination or applied to some new topic. These games can be regarded as "developmental designs" in that the *design* mental outlook is there, along with the requirement for *design* research, but the game itself *develops* existing systems. Properly developing a game usually requires additional research that centers on smaller aspects of the situation, actually playing the game to identify problems and making minor corrections, additions and improvements to smooth over any anomalies that may lie hidden in the game's basic systems. Good game development or good developmental designs can produce superior games but the improvements are incremental rather than wholesale.

Wargames featuring original *major* "systems" are less common. New "systems" (always assuming that they work well and get consumer acceptance—more than one widely-heralded new system has subsequently vanished without a trace) make possible advances in the state of the art because they open up the possibilities of reapplying the same new system in future developmental designs. As a company that already has the two most popular and widely-played games on the topic/scale, The Avalon Hill Game Company was understandably reluctant to risk publishing a third until it became apparent that *RUSSIAN FRONT* was one of those rare games that both introduced major new systems and also plays smoothly, providing an interesting game that is innovative and playable.

*RUSSIAN FRONT* designer Neil Zimmerer (also the designer of *NAVAL WAR*), a number of whose games I've previously developed, is one of the most systems-oriented designers in the business. He likes playable and elegant game systems that emphasize the most important and interesting details and what he has done with *RUSSIAN FRONT* is nothing short of remarkable. Games on this topic and scale are certainly nothing new in the hobby. The Avalon Hill Game Company alone has *STALINGRAD* and *THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN* in print, and similar games from other companies make these two far from unique. For all this output, which includes some first-class efforts (*RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN* remains a personal favorite), the fact is that all of these games are, to a large extent, development designs on the major systems of the first of the "breed", *STALIN-*

*GRAD* (which, in turn, shows the lineage of all the old "classics"). What Neil did was to carefully research the events and then mentally stand on his head to re-examine the campaign from new perspectives. Many tried-and-true games systems *were* kept, as it's rare for any game to be *totally* new. Other major systems were freshly minted to introduce a startlingly different overview of the campaign compared to other titles. The rules and systems were carefully considered and assembled as part of the designer's overall concept and the result is a game with only slightly more complexity than *RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN* and with many familiar systems and concepts, but having a totally different "feel" from any other game on the market.

The earlier game systems feature unit combat factors based on *total* combinations and evaluations of unit strength, equipment, leadership, support, tactics, and so forth; battles are resolved by comparing linear additions of these factors, usually, but not always, using an odds-comparison combat results table. On the surface, *RUSSIAN FRONT* looks deceptively similar until played. A cursory component and rules inspection reveals that combats are resolved *within* the hexes rather than against adjacent hexes, and use a differential combat results table. Casualties are handled with incremental "hits" (which oddly enough do not alter the unit's combat factors); combat can extend over several rounds; air and sea units are more prominent and numerous than in similar games; and, curiously, for most units, the unit's attack factors are larger than their defense factors. Since this particular *combi-*



nation of rules and factors looks new, there is an initial tendency to identify these differences as the game's "innovations"; but these variations are actually more the *consequence* of a new game system rather than the definition of the system itself.

Looking at the unit counters, one sees the common format of "Attack Factor—Defense Factor—Movement Factor". That looks reassuringly familiar, but why is the attack factor larger than the defense factor and why don't increasing losses reduce those factors? And what about the rule that stacked units cannot add their factors together? Is this the *Twilight Zone* version of the campaign or is there more to the units than first meets the eye? Yes, there is, and the unit counters are the key to the combat system, which, in turn is fundamental to understanding the logic and simulation underpinnings of the entire game system.

The attack factor is usually larger than the defense factor simply because the cost of replacing a unit is based on the attack factor. It is larger so that an entire unit costs more to replace than repairing hits on an existing unit (an existing unit is eliminated when the number of hits equals the usually smaller defense factor). Thus, the attack-factor size is an aspect of the game's replacement system rather than its combat system. Any effects that the skewed combat factors might have on battle are accommodated by the combat results table. Also, the component elements used to calculate the combat factors are more *limited* than those used in other games. The strength included in the combat factors of most other games numbers, among many other elements, abstracted major support and the shock value of armor. These are not included in the *RUSSIAN FRONT* combat factor calculations but are presented as separate "supporting" air, sea and artillery units or as distinct game mechanisms like the "blitz attack"). The support mechanism abstracted to a limited degree in *RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN* through the use of Stuka units is detailed with a vengeance in *RUSSIAN FRONT*.

Increasing losses do not reduce combat factors because the combat factors do not represent the *sum* total of a unit's combat value. In World War II, losses were usually concentrated in the front-line combat units—individual infantrymen and AFVs. It was not unusual for even a heavily-battered unit to still have most of its automatic weapons and artillery available, these are the basis for most of a unit's *effective* firepower. What the hit unit does lose is a portion of its ability to *sustain* combat over a period of time (especially when remembering that combat in *RUSSIAN FRONT* can continue for more than one round). A heavily hit unit becomes "brittle", regardless of its remaining firepower. Historically, a common and, in wargame design, largely overlooked method of rating combat units is to define them as having a certain percentage of effectiveness based upon their ability to sustain combat. For example, a unit rated at thirty percent effectiveness could be viewed as being capable of only limited defensive operations while a unit rated at 60% could be viewed as being capable of limited offensive operations. Similarly, in the game, this method applies and a unit only one step from elimination is defined as being capable of only very limited defensive operations; and its combat factors, either large or small, will change this perception only slightly. Even at full strength, some units—notably Axis allied infantry corps—are quite brittle and their ability to sustain combat is always low. Similarly, unsupplied units have their combat factors unaffected while their movement rates are cut in half. Unsupplied units are eliminated (representing a complete and catastrophic collapse of organization and effective firepower) if not returned to supply during their next turn; so the more common fuel and command problems are emphasized over any losses in firepower that would, in reality, more rarely apply. An unsupplied unit wishing to breakout

of an encirclement as a coherent formation would have to make the attempt while ammunition remained to do so. Terrain modifiers of combat factors have the effect of raising or lowering the number of hits that can be expected on an engaged unit rather than granting absolute advantage as with an odds-comparison combat system. Thus, unlike other games where a unit's combat effectiveness is based almost totally on the size of its combat factors, a unit's combat effectiveness in *RUSSIAN FRONT* is based on the *combined* relationship of its combat factors, the terrain and its hits.

All right, then why can't units stacked together have their combat factors added together for a battle? This is admittedly an abstraction that is a result of the designer's view of and research into the actual events and of the game's scale, which features hexes about 25 miles across and month-long turns. Theoretically, it would not be difficult to simultaneously employ the *full* strength of two or more units of the size typically employed in the game (Axis corps and Soviet armies) in such an area if that were an effective deployment for World War II. Much more likely, additional units in a hex-sized area would be used to *relieve* a front-line unit after it had its chance to fight and get chewed-up, or several units would initially commit only a fraction of their strength each for about the same effect as if all of one unit is used. Twentieth century armies do not fight shoulder-to-shoulder, but mass at selected key points along their frontage while holding back substantial portions of their strength to reinforce success or retrieve failure.

More important than sheer numbers is how a combat is "supported", and this perception is one of the game's major innovations. What the designer has done is to reject the notion that success is usually based on brute force and weight of numbers (combat factor comparisons) than on proper timing, support by air, naval and massed heavy artillery and the commitment of reserves. Sometimes it is easier to speak facetiously of the "Russian hordes" overwhelming the Axis defenders by numbers and not to look inquiringly at the record to see just how often numbers were the decisive element. Prior to 1914, most soldiers were assigned to front-line combat units. World War I convinced even the most conservative military thinkers that machineguns and modern infantry firepower largely negated the decisive effects of superior numbers (or combat factors, in game terms). World War II saw, for the first time, armies where most of the soldiers were assigned to support units—and this trend continues to the present day.

If sheer numbers of men and equipment were really the key to battlefield success, Tel-Aviv would today be an Arab city, even considering Israeli tactical excellence. Following reports of Soviet tactical clumsiness and German tactical finesse (both of which are built-in to the unit's combat factors) one can forget that Soviet strategic and operational combinations (which are the level of maneuvers in the game) were often very skillful and effective. The "Russian steamroller" is there, but effective use of its raw power requires more than lining up the troops and pointing them west. In *RUSSIAN FRONT*, a 7-5-6 panzer corps and a Soviet 4-3-4 army depict similar numbers of men and integral artillery support and their combat and movement factor differences reflect primarily training, leadership and equipment differences. In a head-on confrontation (depending on terrain), neither has a *decisive* advantage, although the higher factors of the German unit do give it an edge in most situations. Instead of a straight comparison of numbers and tactical expertise, Neil chose to interpret the key to success at the game's level on proper "support" and on operational and strategic combinations. Can't break through or push back the enemy line? Try adding air support. Can't capture Sevastopol? Try adding heavy artillery and naval support. Enemy

line too strong for a successful frontal attack? Try massing armor and penetrating a weak point to get behind it.

In *RUSSIAN FRONT*, a more detailed representation of the opposing fronts is possible because the unengaged units can be adjacent—it is necessary to enter the enemy's hex to have a battle, so the map-board "looks right"—there is no need for a hex-wide gap between forces on inactive fronts. Salients large and small appear all along the front and "pinching" them off or using them as advanced offensive springboards are important game considerations. A *RUSSIAN FRONT* game in progress both looks and plays differently than any other game of the same topic and scale.

## DEVELOPMENT ELEMENTS

A major problem with "new" game systems is that they often contain a number of serious glitches that must be eliminated to ensure smooth, accurate play. *RUSSIAN FRONT* was mercifully free of major problems of this nature, so the major development efforts were concentrated on adding minor details, checking game balance and in rules presentation and format.

Every commercial wargame, to avoid becoming an unwieldy monster with a million different subsystems covering every conceivable topic in myopic detail, needs a "focus". Without a clear focus, wargame rules can start to resemble a major city phone book and are unplayable in any normally accepted sense. It is actually easier to develop a game by throwing in a separate rule for every possible situation than to find ways to maintain a game's focus by abstracting lesser details to achieve the same effects in a more playable format. A game's focus consists of the major points that the game emphasizes and establishes a game's priorities. Any other items are more or less abstracted to mesh with the major points while causing the *least* possible expenditure of player time and effort, although these other points may be necessarily a bit "out of focus" and some less important detail is sacrificed. This game's focus is on playable large-scale land combat and the air and sea elements, for example, are abstracted and present in play more as support for the ground units than as independent combat arms. Less important items that add to a game's flavor and detail, often called "chrome", should be added in such a way as not to distort a game's focus.

The partisan rules provide a perfect illustration of how and why a rule is developed in a certain way. The Soviet partisans played a very important role in the actual campaign, but, given the level of the game and its focus, detailed rules and separate partisan units to move around seemed out of place and inappropriate compared with other game mechanics. Neil had actually left them out of the original prototype, although we both realized that they were too important to leave out of the published game and some rules were eventually needed. Further research revealed that, although partisans engaged in constant and varied operations, the major effects of their activities that show on a game of this scale primarily concern the reduced capabilities of the Axis rail network and that the Soviet command often used lulls in the fighting to re-organize, move and recruit their partisans so that they were available at full strength to support major offensives. These considerations appeared to be the key to their use in the game. Partisans are presented as "partisan factors" available to the Soviet side as replacements and these can be used as they arrive or accumulated for use in mass at the most appropriate time. When used, the number of partisan factors employed and expended during one month modifies the die roll on the *Partisan Table*; the more partisan points employed, the better the odds of being effective. The *Partisan Table* affects the number of units the Axis can transport by rail during



a turn and these abstracted partisan activities, with good modifiers and a decent die roll, can virtually shut down the Axis railnet during those three months (the start of major Soviet offensives) when the Axis player most wants to transfer major reserves. Although an easily performed abstraction, the effect on the game is about "right" and there is no need for players to fiddle with anti-partisan operations, leaving them free to concentrate on major operations.

Game balance was established by repeated playings of the game. The *Victory Points Chart* was adjusted a bit at the start but remained remarkably stable for the rest of development. Rather than sending the Axis on a mad dash to seize a few specific cities to win, *all* major cities and oilfields on the mapboard (some of which are worth more than others) are counted to determine victory levels every six months. Captured factory units also count, but the Axis player must return one factory unit after each Victory Level Phase to reflect the rebuilding and expansion of Soviet industry. The victory levels obtained from this city count are cumulative as a game continues, but "float" and are different in each six month period, forcing the Axis player to attempt to continue his career of conquest early in the game and forcing the Soviet player to attempt to liberate "Mother Russia" in the later stages of the game. This allows for great planning flexibility and a wide variety of possible strategic options by both sides.

Balance appears acceptably close. Although the playtest program included several hundred playings, most were concluded before a final decision was reached. If *RUSSIAN FRONT* is played for the entire 42 turns, the game can last eighteen or more hours and requires several gaming sessions to complete. A variety of scenarios allow for games with later starting points that also permit shorter games. To allow for games that can be concluded in a single evening, there is both a "short scenario" (three turns) and a mechanism where the game can be concluded without a decisive victory at the end of *any* six turn period if the players accept the victory level at that point (which will produce either a marginal victory or a draw).

Of reported "complete" games that started in June 1941 and went the entire distance or were decided by a decisive victory for one side or the other, early games where the players were still learning the game system were culled out—and this produced a list of 69 completed campaign games between experienced players (both players had previously played at least three times). This showed 30 (about 43%) Axis decisive victories and 27 (about 39%) Soviet decisive victories with most of the remainder evenly split (five each) between early resignations (which amount to a decisive victory) by one side or the other. One game went clear to the end in a draw and another ended with a Soviet marginal victory; but, although 20 of the games went into 1944 before a decisive victory was achieved, the typical game ended in a decisive victory or a resignation before the end of 1943. Only four of these games saw a decisive victory (three Axis, one Soviet) in the first six months of play (and one of the Axis victories was an "early start" game that commenced in May 1941) and exactly the same number of games saw the fall of Moscow during the first six months (it was immediately retaken in two of those four games, but the other two times the fall of Moscow *did* produce an Axis decisive victory). Comparing these games to those involving less experienced players on both sides, the Soviets do considerably better, indicating that they are the *easier* side to play. Using smaller and less statistically significant numbers of experienced player games, the short scenario was almost exactly even in assorted results for both sides; scenarios

starting in June 1942 gave the Axis a marked edge of 14-7 and June 1943 scenarios gave the Soviets a victory edge of 15-4.

Rules presentation and format is always a challenge with a new game system because there are no games with a similar system to provide a tested format sample suitable for shameless plagiarism. Also, some care must be taken to explain the new concepts, but this can't be overdone or the rulebook becomes more of a design primer (of marginal interest to most gamers) than an explanation of how the game is played. This would increase the game's price and leave no material for *GENERAL* articles. I decided to include a four-page Basic Game Folder to learn as well as to provide a short "practice" session covering the major new concepts in the game system for "grognards". Most players discover that they're doing something backwards in the middle of the first few games, anyhow, so why foul up a long game when you can make the same discovery during a short game? It helps to know how to float before you attempt to swim. Players are advised to read and play the Basic Game first as it makes learning the "real" game (the Advanced Game Rules) and transitioning to the new system much easier. The rules are basically laid out in the familiar sequence of play order, but the separation into Basic and Advanced Rules does make a bit of jumping around and cross-referencing necessary. This is no problem and, indeed, makes the game easier to learn *if the instructions are followed* and the Basic Game is read and played first—followed by reading and playing the Advanced Game. Times have changed since the introduction of the old "classics" during the sixties when players would practically memorize the rules and play a new game repeatedly and continuously. Rules formats evolve to reflect new playing habits. Most players today tend to read over a set of rules *once*, play the game a time or two, and then move on to another game, returning only weeks or months later for more playings. To make refreshing the memory after such intervals easier and for reference during play, the rules are extensively broken up by explanatory bold type headings. There is an extensive table of contents referenced to these headings. And all the charts

and tables and many notes on play are printed on a separate game card that is completely referenced to the appropriate rules sections. Despite attempting to accomplish so many things at once, rules should also be kept as concise as possible. With so many factors to consider and incorporate, it is a pleasure to report that game play questions are running far below normal.

## GAME ELEMENTS

What does all this come to when *playing* the game and how does all this differ from other games on the same topic? Competent play of *RUSSIAN FRONT* requires changing and rethinking many acquired "game tactics". The traditional method of comparing all-inclusive combat factors is a viable method of representing combat at this level (that is why it has been around for so long) and its abstractions and design theory are well-understood by wargamers, but much of a situation's unique "flavor" can be lost. The *RF* system *forces* the players to think about game details in a manner more similar to the considerations of their historic counterparts. What units should be sent replacements to prepare for an offensive or maintain a defense? What major combat units and what support assets should be transferred to a section of the front? What should be the direction of an attack? Where is the best place to attack, and what are the chances for success there? Instead of worrying about that extra attack factor required for a perfect "3-1" attack, players have to look at the larger picture. The Combat Results Table can cause losses to *both* sides at *any* differential (naturally, the chances for success go up in the more favorable columns) and this means that there are few "sure things", but also means that there is no chance of losing half your army on one "attacker eliminated" result.

Since an entire game cannot turn on the result of one die roll, the *RF* system permits the realistic (at this level) and effective incorporation of limited intelligence rules. The hits on opposing units may not be examined prior to combat and, if option 19.5.2 is used, any units not in direct contact with the enemy may be inverted (all Axis units have a grey back and all Soviet units have a red back for just



Figure 1: Initial Blitz



Figure 2: Assault on Leningrad

this purpose). The order in which units are moved can be very important and play can be very interactive. In other games, the major difference between the armies are the percentages of powerful and weak units and the differences in movement factors. Both sides still fight using approximately the same offensive and defensive tactics—in *RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN* for example, you would not normally consider having the Germans always attack by causing a few “3-1” or better odds combats while the Soviets always attack by causing a larger number of “2-1” or less odds combats. Instead, both sides tend to rely primarily on fewer but higher odds attacks and their primary differences lie in how easy or difficult putting these attacks together can be because of combat and movement factor differences. In *RUSSIAN FRONT*, there are two different armies that perform to their own specifications and have to use their own appropriate strategies to achieve success.

The Axis forces must utilize a “high risk” blitzkrieg strategy to have any hope of victory. In the Axis forces, the limited number of German panzer corps are at once both most powerful and the most mobile units and true massed *schwerpunkts* must be formed of these and properly supported from the air to achieve decisive breakthroughs and rapid advances on narrow fronts. Even later in the game, they are the units best suited for spoiling attacks, limited offensives and rearguard actions. As such they are the heart of the Axis armies, but their “high-tech” capabilities require (along with maintenance of their primary support, the Luftwaffe *fliegerkorps* units) a high expenditure of replacement factors (two replacement factors per hit as opposed to one for infantry units). The high replacement cost of keeping these units in action can be somewhat discounted by use of the Axis “refit” capability (a refitting unit replaces one hit per turn for no replacement expenditure [game hint: use this capability to the maximum]), but it is rare that the panzer corps can be held out of action for months on end to totally refit. Their relative ineffectiveness in cities and unfavorable terrain such as swamps, mountains and forests limits the areas where they can be favorably deployed. The Axis player is also caught in a constant one-handed juggling act between using replacements to keep the panzer and Luftwaffe units fully capable and lacking infantry to form firm fronts or keeping the infantry up to snuff and watching the panzer and air units approach extinction. Proper use of the Axis forces requires a large degree of precision and skill.

The Soviet forces are blessed with large numbers of “all-arms” armies (abstracted as “infantry” armies in the game) that are primarily infantry and include some very powerful units, especially the Shock and Guards armies. Regarding replacement costs, they are relatively inexpensive to keep in action but lack the breakthrough and exploitation capabilities of the armor formations. The powerful infantry armies arrive only gradually, so offensive capability increases slowly. Powerful Soviet tank armies build up leisurely, until, by 1944, the Soviets have a definite blitzkrieg capability, but prior to that time overextending their few tank armies can lead to their being chewed up to little purpose by counter-attacking panzers.

An interesting choice confronts the a Soviet player as the game continues. Guard units (infantry armies, tank armies and cavalry corps) can, when their entry turn arrives, be placed on the mapboard by substituting for a standard unit of the same type or by being “purchased” using replacement factors. There is usually no hesitation in substituting a 7-6-5 Guard infantry for a 4-3-4 infantry or a 4-3-6 Guard cavalry for a 2-2-6 cavalry, but substituting a 9-7-6 Guard armor for a 8-6-4 unit seems much less worthwhile. Historically, the Soviets in every case converted



standard tank armies to Guard status, but the game provides a player with the alternative of purchasing the three Guard tank armies for eight replacement factors each (24 total) and improving on the actual quantity of Soviet armored forces. The problem is that the 24 replacement factors required for this could otherwise be used to, say, put four eliminated air armies back into play. Augmenting the Soviet tank forces in this manner is recommended only if the Soviet side is in a superb accumulated replacement situation; otherwise, the replacement points are better expended for other purposes.

The Soviets are always hampered by their less capable primary support units, the air armies, although large numbers become available as the game progresses. Even late in the game Luftwaffe units can achieve air superiority over limited sections of the front. Soviet offensives, therefore, for most of the game must concentrate their attacks over broad fronts that will wear down and defeat large Axis forces and force them into large scale retreats to avoid total annihilation. Defensively, armies must be deployed in continuous lines and in depth to avoid deep Axis penetrations while causing unacceptable attrition to the expensive Axis spearheads. Proper use of the Soviet forces requires less precision than use of the Axis forces, but requires as much skill and an adjustment in thinking to accommodate the fact that most air-to-air battles will be lost and that even the most powerful offensives will involve some local defeats. Soviet players cannot afford a mentality that calls for a few “high-odds” attacks but must have the ability to see a large series of battles as a cohesive whole.

## PLAY ELEMENTS

Like every game, *RUSSIAN FRONT* has a number of “gaming tricks” or commonly used strategies that work well with the game’s system. The measure of a game’s strength or weakness as a simulation lies in how well these “tricks” and the actual play of the game represents actual events. The true test of any game is not in how it looks in theory, but how well it works in practice. Drawing on my personal experience in over 80 playings of the game (yes, I do like it), here are some illustrations of common situations, their resolution and what they simulate.

### Initial Blitz (See Figure 1)

The Soviet problem at the start of *Barbarossa* is that they lack the ground units to form a defense in depth and prevent Axis breakthroughs. Soviet counterattacking capability is also small due to the lack of powerful ground units and air armies for support. The Axis player must ruthlessly exploit this advantage to destroy Soviet units and push forward at maximum speed. To illustrate a typical first turn, let’s examine the northern end of the front and the initial operations of Army Group North (with an assist from a few Army Group Center units).

Instead of moving, a reserve unit is placed on the German infantry corps in hex JJ4 so it will be available for later movement during the Exploitation Phase, supplementing the panzer exploitation. The German infantry corps entering hexes II7 and KK6 both expend an extra movement factor that will convert the railroads in those hexes if the German units hold those hexes at the conclusion of combat. The German 4-4-7 naval flotilla supports the coastal attack in NN5. The Soviet player could, but doesn’t, send the Baltic Flotilla from Riga to also participate in this combat. Note the German corps left in KK5 to block possible Soviet retreat there. Units can always retreat to a coastal hex if they have a naval unit in the same body of water. Since this is Turn 1, Advanced Rule 15.5 (Axis First Turn Surprise) applies and the attack factors of all the involved Axis units are modified by “+1”.

A blitz unit (“4” showing) is placed on the combat in hex KK6. This is the centerpiece of the entire German offensive on this front. Blitz units are faced to show any movement factors remaining after an armored unit enters a combat hex. Blitz attacks are resolved before any other ground combats and any remaining movement factors (in this case, four) can be used for additional movement (at the usual costs) and/or combat (one movement factor per additional round of combat during the blitz attack) by the blitzing units. Although there are three German ground units in the hex, only one may be used in a round of combat and the Axis player uses the 8-6-6 panzer corps with the 4-3-10 air unit in support for “+7” (actually 14 to 3, or “+11”, but “+7” is the best column on the CRT) attack in hex KK6. A “1” is rolled, putting one hit on the panzer corps and two hits on the Soviet infantry corps. The Soviet player



decides to voluntarily retreat to LL7. After a round of combat, if no mandatory retreat was required by the combat result, the defender has the opportunity to voluntarily retreat followed by (if the defender does not retreat) an opportunity for the attacker to retreat. Here however, the blitzing Axis player pursues the retreating Soviet corps with the 8-6-6 panzer and the air unit, expending one movement factor to enter the hex, one movement factor to fight an additional round of combat and one movement factor to convert the railroad in LL7 (the blitz unit is adjusted so that a "1" now shows). The 6-4-6 panzer corps splits off and expends one movement factor to enter KK7 and one movement factor to convert the railroad there and ends its movement. The 4-3-6 German infantry unit remains in LL6, as infantry units cannot be moved as part of blitz attacks. The new combat in LL7 annihilates the Soviet unit with no further German loss. The 8-6-6 panzer corps expends its last movement factor to enter MM7. The panzer *schwerpunkt* has punched through and turned back to envelop and cut retreats by adjacent Soviet units to ensure that there will be a *big* hole (at least three hexes wide) in the Soviet front for exploitation when the combat is finished.

Without going into the gory details, the rest of the combats yield the following results: HH7—Soviet tank corps eliminated for one hit on the panzer corps; II7—Soviet infantry corps retreats to II8 with one hit for two hits on the German infantry corps; JJ6—Soviet infantry corps retreats into JJ7 with two hits; KK6—Soviet tank corps is eliminated with one hit on the opposing infantry corps; MM6—Soviet tank corps retreats into NN6 carrying one hit; and NN5—Soviet infantry corps is eliminated with one hit placed on the enemy infantry corps. Following the combats, the German naval and air units are moved to base at Memel during the Post Combat Step.

During the Exploitation Phase, the German infantry unit held in reserve in JJ4 moves through the hole in the Soviet line to JJ5, KK6, LL6, MM8, NN8 and NN9 (Riga)—the seventh movement factor expended to enter Riga costs one hit, as option 19.2 is being used (where extra movement factors can be expended at the cost of an equal number of hits). The panzer corps at HH7 enters HH8. The panzer corps at KK7 moves LL7, LL8, KK9, KK10 and KK11. The panzer corps in MM7 moves LL7, LL8, KK9, KK10, JJ10 and II10. This nails down a good advance (although most of the infantry has been left far behind, a major problem for the Axis in the early months of the campaign) and leaves the surviving Soviet units in hexes II8, JJ7 and NN6 out of supply (no replacements are possible and movement is halved) during the coming Soviet Phases of the Turn. The exploiting panzers could have plunged deeper into the enemy rear, but this might have left them out of supply at the start of their next turn (out of supply units may not move forward, only back toward their own supply sources). If the exploiting panzer corps had been moved further east, on the following turn the Axis player could possibly use air supply (if option 17.2 is used) to permit their normal use or leave them in place until rail hexes are converted far enough east to supply them for use during the Axis Exploitation Phase.

#### An Assault on Leningrad (See Figure 2)

Leningrad can be one of the toughest nuts to crack on the entire mapboard. The city itself is *very* strong ("++3" as a fortress city and "+1" for having a river) and it usually contains the powerful Baltic Fleet (5-5-7) for support. It is hard to reach by Axis naval support because of the dense naval minefields and the surrounding terrain (mostly forest and swamp) is hardly conducive to fast-moving blitz

attacks. Naval operations, including minelaying and minesweeping, can appear deceptively unimportant until a place like Leningrad or Sevastopol is reached. Then, they can prove to be the decisive element in determining if they can be taken or held. Until the German siege artillery unit becomes available for support in mid-1942, the best Axis chance to take the city is usually to cut it off and force a surrender.

This sample attack details an attempt to cut off Leningrad and demonstrates the problems and dangers associated with these maneuvers. The German infantry corps in QQ17 attacks Leningrad directly—this is hopeless (a "-5" attack—the *worst* column on the CRT), but like the concept of "soak-off" attacks in many other games, it pins down the defenders. The Soviet naval and air units in Leningrad cannot interfere elsewhere while tied up in their own combat. The German infantry corps in PP17 joins the panzer corps in QQ18 and enters QQ19 for a blitz attack ("4" showing on the blitz counter)—the German *fliegerkorps* in Pskov will also join this combat during the Air Movement Step, as will the Soviet air army from Tikhvin (an attacker's air units are moved, followed by the defender's air units during the Air Movement Step, after all ground movement is completed). The Finnish infantry corps from TT19 attacks SS19, joined by the Finnish Air Force during the Air Movement Step. The German and Finnish flotillas are both moved forward during the Naval Movement Step to "sweep" the outer belt of Soviet minefields protecting Leningrad in RR17 and SS18.

The blitz attack in QQ19 starts with the air-to-air combat between the German and Soviet air units.

In any combat hex, the air-to-air combats are resolved first, followed by the ground attacks (which may be supported by victorious or unopposed air and naval units). With a German attack factor of "4" and a Soviet defense factor of "2", this is a "+2" attack. A "1" is rolled and the German unit takes two hits to the Soviet unit's single hit. This leaves both units only one hit from elimination, but the Soviet player can't stand the heat and voluntarily retreats the air army into QQ20. The panzer corps supported by the German air unit then makes a "+7" attack that results in two hits on the Soviet army and one hit on the panzer corps. Again, the Soviet player chooses to retreat to QQ20.

This opens up RR19 to the blitzing panzer corps, although the marshy terrain there means that all remaining blitz attack movement factors are expended when the panzer corps enters the hex (three to enter the hex and one for the coming combat) accompanied by the battered *fliegerkorps*. The 5-4-6 German infantry corps is left behind as the panzers and Stukas roll north. In RR19, the Soviet army's "3" defense factor is increased by one for the river and by one for the marsh, plus the support of the naval flotilla ("++2"), giving the Soviets a total value of seven for the combat. Note that naval units in a base (port city) hex under ground attack are not used in a separate naval combat before the ground combat is resolved, but are used only for support of the ground combat in that hex. The panzer corps, up to its idlers in muck, has its "8" attack factor reduced by three for the marsh (the terrain in a hex can influence both attacker and defender), but the air unit still adds "+4" in support, so the Axis has

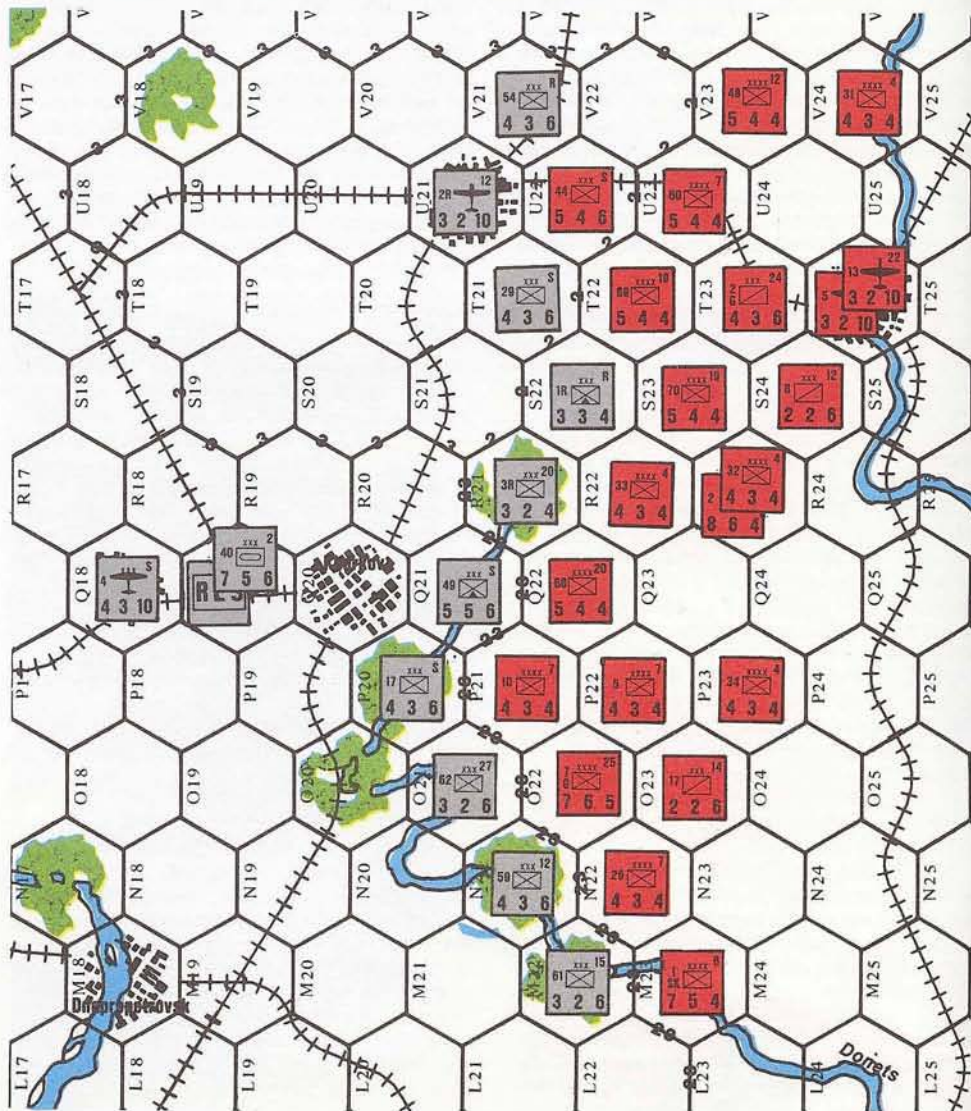


Figure 3: On to Kharkov



a total value of nine for the combat. This gives them a “+2” attack, and a “2” is rolled. This puts two hits on each side (marked on the Soviet army and German panzer units). Nobody wants to voluntarily retreat, so an identical second combat round is fought. This time a “3” is rolled so both sides take one hit, but the attacker *must* retreat. The Axis player decides to use Option 20.1 to ignore the mandatory retreat by taking an *extra* hit. One hit is marked on the Soviet flotilla and two more hits on the German panzer corps (five hits total now indicated on the panzers). Both sides grit their teeth, there are no retreats and there is a third combat round. Another “3” is rolled. The Soviet player takes his hit on the army, which eliminates it and forces the flotilla (with nothing left to support) to retreat. The Soviet player could have chosen to mark the hit on the flotilla (eliminating it instead of the army), but wants to keep it to maintain a supply line across Lake Ladoga to hex SS20 for the Soviet Phases. The Axis player takes his hit on the *fliegerkorps*, which causes its elimination but the mandatory attacker retreat can be ignored because the last Soviet ground unit was eliminated in the same round of combat. The mauled panzer corps retains sole possession of hex RR19.

In other combats, both Axis naval units sweep their minefields (unopposed); the attack on Leningrad is duly repulsed with (luckily for the Axis) only one hit. The Finnish “+3” attack in SS19 puts one hit on the Soviet Marines, who voluntarily retreat to SS20. During the Post Combat Steps, all the surviving air and naval units return to their original bases, except for the Soviet naval flotilla, which goes to Volkhov, and the air army in Leningrad, which is moved to join the other air army using Tikhvin as a base (up to two air units may be based in the same city hex). If this air army had been left based at Leningrad, it would have been “out of supply” and could not be used for combat during the Soviet half of the turn. Leningrad is well and truly cut off. The two Soviet units in hex SS20 are not out of supply, because they are in a shore hex of Lake Ladoga, a body of water where the Soviet player still has a naval unit. The weakness in the Axis position is that no German *fliegerkorps* remains available (air units may only support ground units of the same nationality) and the panzer corps in RR19 is so weakened that serious consideration should be given during the Axis Exploitation Phase to moving it back to the protection of the infantry in QQ19—but this is *not* done and the panzer corps remains in RR19.

During the Soviet Phases, the Soviet player uses replacements to eliminate all the hits on Soviet units. An attack is then launched to break the ring and relieve Leningrad. The 4-3-4 army from SS20 enters hex RR19, later to be joined for support by the flotilla from Volkhov and by one of the air units from Tikhvin. The Soviet army at QQ20 moves and attacks QQ19 (“+1”); with a little luck, this combat will broaden the corridor to Leningrad. The other air army at Tikhvin is moved during the Air Movement Step to attack the Finnish air force at Vyborg—this is a lousy attack (“-2”), because the Finns are “+2” when defending their own base against a purely air attack, but it will keep the Finnish flyboys from attempting to interfere with the decisive attack at RR19. (Although the Finnish air unit could not support the German panzer corps, it could have fought and possibly driven off the Soviet air army supporting the RR19 attack.) Regardless of the results of the other combats, the Soviet player has a “+5” attack in RR19 and this guarantees (there will be at least one hit on the defender) the destruction of the panzer corps and the opening of a supply route through RR19 to Leningrad. Overall, although some ground was gained (SS19) and some minefields were swept, the month-long series of battles around Leningrad proved to be a costly Axis fiasco.

## On To Kharkov (See Figure 3)

This is used as an example of a typical Soviet “broad front” offensive. The main Soviet objective is Kharkov and, rather than drive straight at it with the fairly unimpressive forces available which would simply create a narrow (and vulnerable) salient centered around P20 and O21 followed by bitter fighting for the city, the Soviet player is launching a series of attacks to the north and south of the city. If all goes well, this will cause unacceptable attrition and eventually cause an Axis retreat along the entire front or pocket the Kharkov defenders and permit the capture of the city without the need for a costly combat through the streets. Kursk is also threatened. (Actually, more directly threatened than Kharkov—this is a partial feint that may force the Axis player to worry more about Kursk and draw Axis strength from closer to Kharkov.) The German panzer corps in Q19 is marked with a reserve counter which allows it to be moved *after* the Soviet ground movements are completed. The air units are moved to support the ground forces in the normal manner during the Air Movement Step.

The combats are resolved as follows: V22—(“0”) two Soviet to one German hit, and the Soviet army voluntarily retreats to V23 (this looked like a “+2” when the offensive started, but the shifting of the reserve panzer corps to the hex changed that); T21—(“0”) one Soviet hit, the Soviet army voluntarily retreating to T22; S22—air-to-air (“+1”) results in one Rumanian hit and a voluntary retreat by the Rumanian air unit (staying for another round of air-to-air combat with one hit would entail a 5/6s chance of elimination), ground and air (“+7”) gives the Rumanian mountain corps three hits and eliminates it; R21—(“-4”) one hit each and the Rumanian corps voluntarily retreats to R20; O21—(“-1”) each side takes two hits, the Axis player takes them on his air unit to avoid the elimination of the infantry corps and the Soviet army voluntarily retreats to O22 (the movement of the *fliegerkorps* to this hex spoiled what originally looked like a “+2” attack; N21—(“-2”) two German hits, the German infantry corps retreats to N20; and M22—(“-3”) one Axis hit and the German unit voluntarily retreats to M21. During the Post Combat Steps, all air units return to their original base hexes. As these examples should make obvious, multiple rounds of combat in one hex are rather rare and are usually restricted to important hexes when the odds are close or to hexes from which retreat is impossible.

This was a successful opening, with very favorable Soviet attrition. Losses will cost the Soviets only six replacements to repair, while Axis losses call for fourteen replacements for full recovery. The Soviet player conservatively passes up the opportunity to occupy S21 with the tank army in S22 during the Exploitation Phase as this would leave the tank army vulnerable to a counterattack. Although the Axis line is intact, except for the hole at S21 left by the destruction of the Rumanian mountaineers, what can be done in response depends on the situation along the rest of the front. If a unit is available and if partisans have not wrecked all Axis rail capacity, a new infantry unit might be shipped to the front to plug the hole at S21. If this is not possible, the hole will have to be blocked by the panzer corps, thus eliminating the last Axis local reserve. If few replacements are available, the position is already untenable, as the next Soviet turn could see the destruction of as many as five ravaged Axis infantry corps—the Axis player would do better to retreat the whole line four hexes to beyond the reach of most of the Soviet units. Assuming that enough replacements and/or reinforcements are forthcoming, the Axis player might consider using the panzer corps as a “fire brigade” to help attrition matters a bit and recover a good defensive hex

by joining the Rumanian infantry in R20 to counter-attack R21 with the support of the German *fliegerkorps* (“+4”), assuming that the air unit can win its “+2” air-to-air combat in the event of intervention by a Soviet air army or armies).

## Pinching Off A Salient (See Figure 4)

Since the non-phasing side can commit support and reserve units *after* the attacker's dispositions are complete, and since the Combat Results Table provides a wide variety of results, it is usually impossible to *guarantee* the success of a whole series of attacks. Normally, some units will advance into a new hex while others will retreat and this may leave small exposed salients vulnerable to an enemy counterattack. Reducing these salients cannot only eliminate powerful spearheads but may even help shorten the front. In this example, the Soviet 5-4-4 army occupies such a salient.

The combat in T16 should be fought *first*—the Soviet 5-4-4 army cannot retreat into S17 or T17, as there are combats still going on here, so the Soviets can probably be destroyed (“+7” attack). The holding actions in S17 and T17 may or may not be successful, but elimination of the 5-4-4 should produce a very favorable loss ratio.

## Rearguard Actions (See Figure 5)

The zones of control exerted by ground units in *RUSSIAN FRONT* are very tenuous and the game instead incorporates a mechanism called “response movement” that permits a non-phasing unit to force combat with an enemy unit moving from one of its ZOC hexes to another. Against a weak enemy, this permits one unit to screen a long (three hexes wide) stretch of front, although the game normally requires continuous fronts. Against a strong and numerous attacker, a screen has no chance. One enemy unit moves into the defender's hex, forcing it into combat and negating its zone of control, and the rest of the enemy units move past uninterrupted into the defender's rear.

It is not unusual for defending units to win a combat in their hex while combats in adjacent hexes to either side are lost, leaving the victorious defender out of supply or at least so placed that its retreat can be halted by enemy response moves. Armored units make effective “rearguards” by moving to attack the flanking enemy units to rescue trapped defenders who can then move back to safety. The armored units can then use their Exploitation Phase to rejoin the main defense line after combat, as in this example.

Early in the game, the Soviets (as usual) are in trouble and one of their best units—a 6-5-4 army (among others)—is partially surrounded, although it is not out of supply. If simply moved back to GG15, either or both of the German corps in FF14 or HH14 can respond move to trap the powerful Soviet unit short of the defensive line the Soviet player is struggling to establish just to the west of Smolensk. Since the Soviet infantry corps in GG14 already has two hits and is just about gone anyway, this is moved in HH14 to combat that German corps in a hopeless holding action. The tank corps in GG15 then enters FF14 (later to be joined by the Soviet air army from Smolensk) to tie up that German corps while bracing up the other shoulder of the GG hex row gap. These attacks prevent any possible response movements and the Soviet 6-5-4 can retire up to four hexes to the east to join the new defense line. Although the Soviet infantry corps fighting in HH14 can be written off, if the tank corps survives one round of combat (“+3”), unless a German *fliegerkorps* is sent to intervene, it can use its Exploitation Phase movement to fall back and also join the new defensive line.





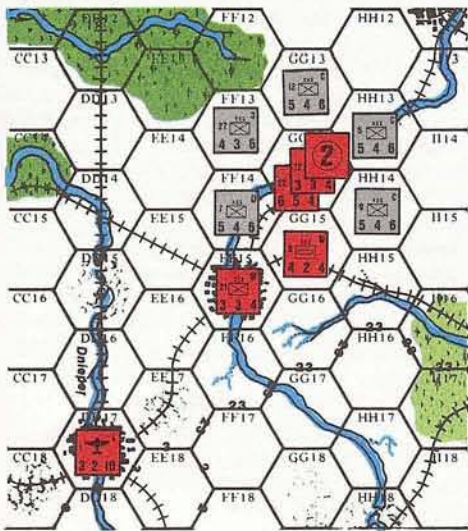


Axis front for an entire month. Watch for over-extended panzers and try the occasional counter-attack if there is an opportunity to destroy an isolated spearhead unit. Only a few successful counterattacks that eliminate panzer corps are required to reduce a cocky Kraut to a harried Hun. Keep cool and don't get discouraged. Whistle Slavic folk tunes. Hope for an early winter.

Then the snows come! Winter 1941-42 found the Axis armies woefully unprepared for cold weather. During all snow months during this "first winter" period (weather is determined by die roll and may vary on the different panels of the mapboard), all Axis ground units (except mountain corps and the Finns) have their combat factors reduced by one and two of the powerful German *fliegerkorps* are withdrawn (historically, one went to the Mediterranean and the other back to Germany to rest and refit). Axis infantry is strung all across the mapboard and the panzer spearheads (probably considerably weakened by hits) maintain a precarious "front line" to the east. Powerful Soviet reinforcements, especially the Shock armies and new air armies, also arrive at just this time. If the Axis is anywhere close to victory at this point and the Soviets are, in spite of their winter advantages, too weak for serious counter-offensives, the Axis just about has the game wrapped up. The Soviet player *must* use this favorable period to attack and recapture cities, to drive the Axis lines back from threatened cities, and to weaken the Axis forces to hinder and delay their 1942 offensive. Don't wait! Start attacking in November or December while the panzers are holding isolated forward positions waiting for most of their infantry. A word of warning to the Soviet player: Do not overextend these offensives as Stalin did historically. When the snows end, those panzers can rapidly regain their ability to smash up prodigious quantities of exposed Soviet units.

The coming of good weather in 1942 (this also applies to games starting in 1942) forces the Axis player to make another major decision, probably the most important since his choice of whether to make the major effort to the north or south of the Pripet Marshes at the start of the game. The two wandering *fliegerkorps* return in May and June as well as a more powerful Rumanian air unit, a horde of allied infantry corps and the German siege artillery unit. Replacements reach the Axis high point for the game (it is all downhill from here) and permit shattered units to recuperate to a presentable condition. The Soviets are infinitely more powerful than a year earlier, have more support available, and stretch across the map in a continuous line that probably has some depth at selected points. If playing the 1942 scenario, the Soviet line contains some tempting salients, notably a large one to the north

Figure 5: Rearguard Action





# RUSSIAN FRONT PLUS

## Variants for the Latest Invasion

By James E. Meldrum

*RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN* was good—but *RUSSIAN FRONT* is even better! The Avalon Hill Game Company's newest game simulating that portion of World War II between Russia and Germany, operates on the same scale as *RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN* (army/corps level) but it depicts this conflict in far greater detail. *RUSSIAN FRONT* is just the game for those who like more detail than is found in *RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN* but who do not want to drive every tank in the German army as one has to do in monster games dealing with the Eastern Front.

Because of the additional detail neatly incorporated into *RUSSIAN FRONT*, the potential for simulating variant situations is tremendous. The variants presented in this article are intended to exploit a small part of that potential. Players may use these variants to examine how various historical factors and events might have altered the outcome of this campaign. Since the use of variant rules can drastically change the game's balance, it is suggested that players use variants that are neutral or pairs of variants that each favor one side. A variant that favors the Axis is marked A, one that favors the Soviets is marked S and a variant that favors neither side ("neutral") is marked N. Even this will not rebalance the game, but the whole purpose of these variants is to explore these effects. Copies of units required for some of the variants are included in this issue's insert. Unless otherwise mentioned, all original game rules are unchanged.

### I. NEUTRAL BALKANS (S):

This variant assumes that the Balkans remained neutral throughout the war. Consequently, Rumanian and Hungarian units may never be used and German forces may not begin the game in either country. The German Black Sea flotilla starts any 1941 scenario with Army Group North and in the same hex as the German Baltic Flotilla in other scenarios. The German ground units in Rumania in 1941 start with Army Group South. Italian reinforcements use Germany as their "home country" and "other" replacements (which apply only to the Italians in this case) are cut to one and are available only on Turns whose number is divisible by four from Turn 16 (Sept. '42) to Turn 24 (May '43). Neither side may enter any Rumanian or Hungarian hex with any units. The Axis side still gets the one replacement from the Ploesti oilfields throughout the game.

### II. NEUTRAL FINLAND (S):

This variant assumes that Finland remained neutral throughout the war. Consequently, Finnish units may never be used. The German 18th Mountain Corps arrives in Germany in August 1941 instead of in Finland. The Soviet 19th and 27th armies are not withdrawn on Turn 10 (March '42). Neither side may enter any Finnish hex with any unit.

### III. CHANGED ITALIAN PARTICIPATION:

*This variant presents two options on Axis Mediterranean strategy that could have affected the Eastern Campaign.*

**a. No Italian Participation (A):** In this option, Germany does not go to Italy's aid in North Africa, causing Italy to shoulder almost the entire burden for the war in the south.

**1)** No Italian units are used in any scenario and the "other" replacements are reduced by one on

all turns divisible by four from Turn 16 (Sept. '42) to Turn 24 (May '43).

**2)** German replacements are increased by one per turn from Turn 2 (July '41) through Turn 8 (Jan. '42).

**3)** The Afrika Korps was never sent to North Africa and is available in the east until the inevitable early Italian collapse. The extra "AK" air and armored units from the insert may be added to the forces starting in Rumania in 1941 (note: if variant 1 is also used, the air unit is set up with Army Group North). Both of these units must be withdrawn on Turn 9 (Feb. '42).

**b. Greater German Support for Italy (S):** In this option German support for Italy in North Africa is increased.

**1)** German replacements are reduced by one for Turns 2 (July '41) through 27 (Sept. '43).

**2)** Italian units are not removed on Turn 28 (Sept. '43).

**3)** "Other" replacements are increased by one on Turns 28, 32, 36, 40 and 42.

### IV. MORE ACTIVE AXIS ALLIES (A):

The Hungarians enter the war immediately. Any German units normally set up in Rumania may be set up in Hungary instead and Rule 4.4.2 is suspended. The Finns may pursue the war more vigorously than they did historically by modifying 11.2.2 so that Finnish units may now move anywhere on mapboard panels "A" and "B" at any time.

### V. NO PARTISANS (A):

One of the major reasons that Soviet partisans were so active was because of the brutal Nazi occupation policies. This not only provided partisan recruits but gave them the local support necessary for effective operations. In this variant, the Nazis opt for a more reasonable occupation policy and partisan replacements and the Partisan Activity Step are not used.

### VI. BETTER AXIS WINTER PREPARATION (A):

In this variant, the Axis forces are prepared for the harsh Russian winter and Rule 15.6 is suspended.

### VII. GERMAN PARATROOPER JUMP CAPACITY (A):

In this variant, the German parachute corps is assumed to be able to conduct airborne operations. Apply optional Rule 17.3 to this German corps.

### VIII. NO LEND-LEASE (A):

This variant supposes that, for several reasons, the Western Allies decided not to extend unlimited lend-lease to the Soviet Union. For this variant, the Lend-Lease rules (13.2.1.2.3) are not used and, to reflect the effect this would have had on mobility of the Soviet forces (most trucks and half-tracks used came from the West), all Guards armies (this does not include Guard cavalry corps) have their movement factor decreased to "4" and their attack factor decreased by one.

### IX. JAPANESE INVASION (A):

*As the Germans advanced toward Moscow, Stalin*

*sporadically worried about the threat of Japanese intervention in Siberia that would cause reinforcements needed at Moscow to remain in the Far East. These fears were never realized, but suppose they were? To simulate the effects of a Japanese attack, the Soviet player must choose one of the following during the Turn 6 (Nov. '41) Victory Level Phase:*

**a)** None of the Turn 7 (Dec. '41) or Turn 8 (Jan. '42) reinforcements arrive. These units are treated as eliminated, although the red counters can be purchased later using replacement factors.

**b)** The reinforcements arrive on schedule, but the victory level is automatically shifted one level in the Axis favor (i.e., an Axis "+1" would become an Axis "+2"). Soviet replacement factors are reduced by two per turn from Turn 8 (Jan. '42) on.

### X. MORE GERMAN MOTORIZATION (A):

*This variant has two parts, either one of which may be selected for use.*

**a)** Historically, the Russian mud hindered both the Axis and Soviet forces because both utilized large numbers of trucks that depended on the almost non-existent roads. This variant assumes that the Germans produced enough tracked and half-tracked vehicles to completely equip their armored formations. As a result, the movement cost to enter clear and forest hexes is reduced to "2" during mud weather for all German armored units.

**b)** In this variant the Germans have increased production of trucks enough to equip all ground units except parachute, cavalry, and mountain corps with some form of motorized transportation. The movement factor of all German infantry corps is increased to "8".

### XI. UPGRADED SOVIET ARMY (S):

This variant is based on the assumption that the purges of the late 1930s, which decimated Soviet military leadership, never took place. Players may depict this possibility by having all Soviet reinforcements arrive one turn earlier than normal throughout the game.

### XII. FORTIFICATIONS (N):

*Fortification units are available to both sides in limited quantities (the counter mix in the insert). Variants 13 and 17 require the use of fortification units or they may be incorporated into any game.*

**a)** These units can be constructed in any land hexes not containing a major or fortress city; completed fortification units add an additional "+2" to defending ground units' defense factors. Fortification units have no effect on other terrain in a hex.

**b)** Available pairs of fortification units may be purchased during a Replacement Step for an expenditure of one replacement factor per pair. Fortification units are placed on the mapboard at the end of the same turn's Ground Movement Step.

**c)** Fortification units may only be placed in a hex containing a friendly ground unit. When placed, they should be inverted to show that they are "under construction". They have no value while under construction.

**d)** Fortifications are turned upright and are completed and ready for use at the end of the following turn's Ground Movement Step.



e) Fortification units are eliminated anytime an enemy ground unit enters a fortification hex that does not contain a friendly ground unit, or whenever all the friendly ground units in a hex are eliminated and/or retreat from the hex. A player may also voluntarily eliminate any of his fortification units at any time. Eliminated fortification units are available to be rebuilt elsewhere.

f) Add six completed fortification units to both sides' available countermix for the start of the 1942 and 1943 scenarios.

g) The German "ST" artillery unit may use its attack factor when attacking in a hex containing a Soviet fortification unit.

### XIII. SOVIET FORTIFIED BORDER (S):

The Soviets were in the process of fortifying their newly acquired borders when the Axis invasion started. This variant assumes that the fortification process was completed before the invasion. All of the Soviet fortification units may be placed, as desired, in any hexes (normal restrictions—see variant 12) located in the military district areas. All are complete when the game begins.

### XIV. GREATER SPANISH PARTICIPATION (A):

To pay Hitler back for favors during the Spanish Civil War, Franco sent the Spanish Blue Division to fight in Russia, where it served with Army Group North as the 250th Infantry Division. This variant assumes greater Spanish participation, so increase available German replacement factors by one in all 1941 and 1942 turns.

### XV. A GERMAN VICTORY AT KURSK (A):

Many historians wonder what might have happened if the Germans had won the battle of Kursk and eliminated a large portion of the Red Army's reserve forces. Could the Axis have won in the East, or was the outcome of the war decided at Stalingrad? This variant considers the effects of such a victory. A German victory at Kursk is simulated by removing two (8-6-4) armor armies, four (7-6-5) and five (5-4-4) infantry armies, and four (3-2-10) air armies from the Soviet countermix for the 1943 scenario. These Soviet losses reflect what the Germans hoped to accomplish at Kursk. Given Soviet strength at Kursk, the Germans would have had to pay a price. The price paid by the Germans is simulated by marking all 9-8-6, 8-7-6 and 8-6-6 panzer corps in the German countermix with three hits each in addition to the normal hits marked. Otherwise, begin the 1943 scenario normally, except start it on Turn 27 (Aug. '43) and the Kursk "bulge" is eliminated, Axis units may be set up in the bulge area using the "2" start line across the base of the 1943 bulge (from S21 to V22).

### XVI. NO PRESSURE IN THE WEST (A):

The purpose of this variant is to explore how the course of the war in the East might have been changed if the Germans had inflicted a defeat on the Western Allies that precluded a "second front" in Western Europe. For game purposes, assume that the Western Allies lost the Atlantic submarine campaign or suffered a crushing defeat while invading Europe in 1943. This variant is played only with the 1943 scenario. To the Turn 27 (Aug. '43) reinforcements add two (7-5-6) armored corps, one (6-5-6) and two (4-3-6) infantry corps, and one (4-3-4) paratrooper corps. Use units not included in the 1943 scenario countermix for these reinforcements. Also, German replacements are increased by two per turn for Turn 28 on and all German unit

withdrawals are ignored for the rest of the game.

### XVII. GERMAN STRATEGIC WITHDRAWAL (A):

*More than a few historians have suggested that the Battle of Kursk should never have been fought. The Germans squandered their precious armored reserves by taking part in this ill-advised operation. Historically, several German generals wanted to retreat to form a shorter, fortified and more easily defended line rather than attack at Kursk. The use of this strategy can be simulated by starting the 1943 scenario with the following modifications:*

a) The "3" start line is modified to the west of the Orel salient and now runs from hex AA19 to V16 in that area. Four of the hexes encompassed by this new section of the start line may contain four extra completed Axis fortification units at the start of the scenario.

b) The Axis ground units that would usually be deployed east of the Kerch Strait may be placed anywhere in the Crimean Peninsula instead—one of these units must be placed in Kerch (E18).

### XVIII. OPERATION BARBAROSSA GERMAN STYLE (A):

When the Axis forces invaded the Soviet Union, they did not suspect the existence of the huge reserve armies that allowed the Soviets to hold Moscow, counterattack at Stalingrad and ultimately force the Axis armies back to their own homelands. This variant modifies the 1941 scenario to simulate how the Germans anticipated the progress of Operation Barbarossa. This is done by deleting all Soviet reinforcements appearing at Moscow except for any one unit of the Soviet player's choice on Turns 4, 5 and 6. All other units appear at the indicated times and places. This so unbalances the game that it is suggested that it be played only through the Turn 6 (Nov. '41) Victory Level Phase. If the Axis fails to win a decisive victory at that time, consider that the Soviets have won a decisive victory, instead.

These are just a few of the myriad factors that affected the outcome of the war on the RUSSIAN FRONT. I hope that you have as much fun experimenting with these variants as I had researching and designing them. And I look forward to seeing some of yours.



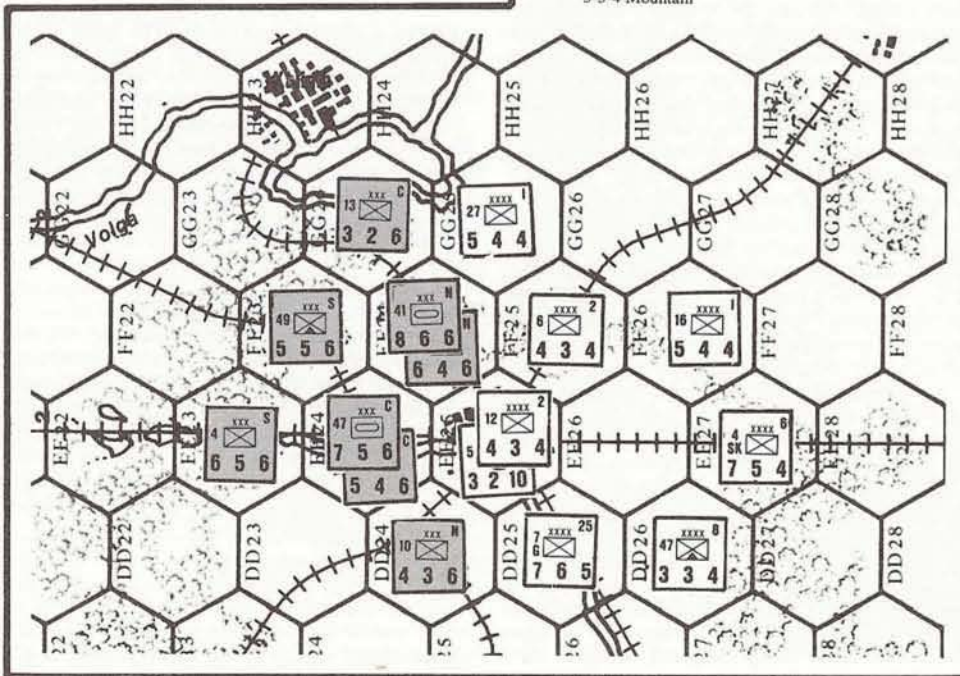
## CONTEST 128

It is November 1942 and the weather is "Snow" (as is to be expected). The hard-driving Axis player has reached the gates of Moscow (positions are shown below, Axis in grey). If Axis forces can seize and hold Moscow, they will win a decisive victory and end this game of RUSSIAN FRONT no matter what happens on the rest of the mapboard. No units shown have any hits. All rail hexes on the respective sides of the front line are properly converted. The Axis player may use all three of his "blitz" and "reserve" markers, if needed, but only the combat units shown are available to him; to the rear he has three 4-3-10 air units able and ready to join the assault. Assume that during the Soviet Phases, all Soviet hits can be removed and up to two air units (but no more ground units) will be available for use if an attempt to retake Moscow is necessary. All Advanced Game rules and select Optional Rules (17.2, 18.0, 19.2 and 20.1) are in play. What Axis moves give the best chance of taking and holding Moscow?

The answer to this contest must be entered on the official entry form (or a facsimile) found on the insert of this issue. Ten winning entries will receive merchandise credits from The Avalon Hill Game Company. To be valid, an entry must be received prior to the mailing of the next issue and include a numerical rating for the issue as a whole and a listing of the three best articles. The solution to Contest 128 will appear in Vol. 22, No. 5 and this list of winners in Vol. 22, No. 6 of THE GENERAL.

The following is a position listing for all units to be considered in solution of the problem (in addition to the three off-map air units available to the German player).

Axis: GG24, 3-2-6 Infantry  
FF23, 5-5-6 Mountain  
FF24, 8-6-6 Panzer and 6-4-6 Panzer  
EE23, 6-5-6 Infantry  
EE24, 7-5-6 Panzer and 5-4-6 Infantry  
DD24, 4-3-6 Infantry  
Soviet: GG25, 5-4-4 Infantry  
FF26, 5-4-4 Infantry  
EE25, 4-3-4 Infantry and 3-2-10 Air  
7-5-4 Shock  
7-6-5 Guard Infantry  
4-3-4 Infantry  
3-3-4 Mountain







# BEFORE THE SNOW FLIES

## A Tour of the June-August 1941 Turns of RUSSIAN FRONT

By Dan Thompson

Hitler's invasion of Russia in June of 1941 will always be a classic (perhaps *the* classic) wargame situation. Why? Unlike the overrunning of Poland (which left no chance for failure) or the almost precise execution of the invasion of France (which left just enough chance for excitement), the German invasion of Russia was overshadowed by doubt from the moment it was first put down on paper. This was in part thanks to Napoleon; Hitler did his bit as well. Yet the campaign in Russia offered a truly massive confrontation between skill and size which lends itself admirably to the wargaming format. An even contest of minds is the mark of a good wargame, and that is what *Barbarossa* translates into during the play of *RUSSIAN FRONT*.

But why bother with *another* game on it? That *other* Avalon Hill game is good, right? Of course. But while wargames are first and foremost a contest of minds (or equally acceptable, "mind", for those who enjoy playing solitaire), they also offer an interpretive view of the historical event. In the same way you might read three or four books on any given subject to form an opinion of your own, a new way of treating the campaign on the wargaming table should be welcome. A new rule or approach may be fascinating and enlightening. It may help to bring the actual event just a little bit closer to you. That's another thing a good wargame should do.

Avalon Hill's recent release, *RUSSIAN FRONT*, fits right into the above comments. While the map is nothing new (after all, Russia is Russia is Russia, right?), it offers some unique impressions which are welcome. And once you set up the counters for the first time you are going to have basically the same units as that *other* Avalon Hill game; but again, there are differences which must be assimilated. Basic

strategic moves and plans will be similar to that *other* game; but the new rules, the slightly different terrain, counters, combat tables and such will all influence your moves. Those players who simply repeat the tactics of that *other* game will find themselves defeated more times than not.

I don't intend this article to discuss in detail all those differences or their effects. I want instead to present a general impression. The intent of this article is to discuss some basic tactics, initial set-up and movements in the game. To that end, I've presented a sample game, with brief discussion. Neither definitive nor necessarily expert, I would hope that it serves as inspiration for more articles on this excellent game. I welcome any comments and criticisms. That is, in the end, the real purpose of articles such as this [*and, indeed, of The GENERAL*].

### INITIAL RUSSIAN SET-UP

We begin with the Russian initial set-up. Far from being an exercise in futility, placement of the Russian "At-Start" forces holds the possibility of good results for the Russian player if he is careful. This is primarily true for the units of the military districts since they must deal immediately with the invading Germans. As such, interior force set-up should be viewed less rigidly than the military districts whose deployment should be strictly followed.

#### *Initial Forces, Interior*

Given the size of Russia, a difference in placement of a hex here or there will make little matter. Remember to place the big infantry units on railroad hexes in case a particular one needs to move

in that manner. Those units close to the military districts should be placed so as to be in reach of possible defense lines. For example, the 21 Army at Gomel sets-up in hex Z14 in order to be able to reach DD14 should the Germans pierce the initial line dramatically. The 27 Army at Pskov is stationed in LL14 so that it can reach the Dvina River. At Minsk, both armor units go in DD12 in order to allow rapid movement towards Vitebsk and Dvinsk should the Germans cut the other approaches across the Vilna. The 13 Army in hex DD10 will help mask any advance towards the city by exploiting panzers. The paratroopers should hold Minsk itself.

#### *Initial Placement, Leningrad Military District*

The Leningrad district is the only one with an actual excess of units. The 10 Armor Corps should not be put into the line (alone anyway) because it is the only unit in the district which can be destroyed in one shot. Therefore, it is placed in Leningrad where it can move towards Pskov if desperately needed. The other units set-up as 7 Army in hex WW20, 23 Army in TT18, and the Marine in TT17. It makes little difference which of the three infantry units are placed where, except that the Marines may have a hard time slugging through those forests so they hold Vyborg against the Finns.

Here is a fine example of the main concept underlying initial (and later) Russian strategy. The front line is held wherever possible by units with a defense strength of three as opposed to the weaker units. Only with a great superiority of numbers can the German hope to destroy the large units; even then, at best, the odds are even as to success or failure. After the initial punishment, all Russian



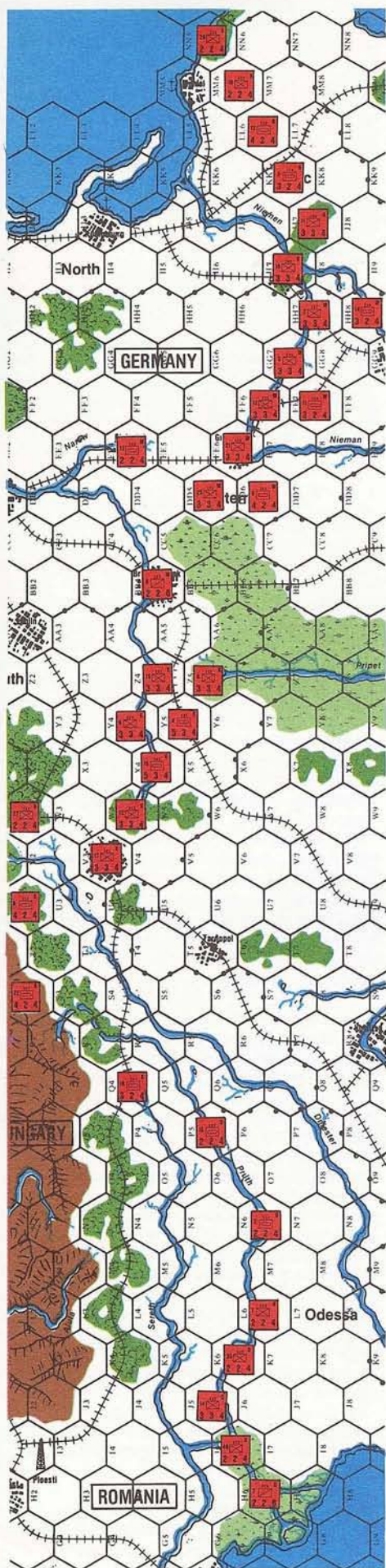


Illustration 1: Russian Initial Placement

units retreat in the face of the German advance, badly damaged but still existent. The need for a line of defense on the second turn of the game is all important. The only thing that can win the campaign for the German army is its mobility, and if the Russian player can deny that for the second and possibly the third turn he has a chance. Let the line be blown open in two or three places on the opening salvo and the Wehrmacht will flood past as it did historically. And don't count on your opponent making the same mistakes as Hitler did to lose the game in later turns.

To get back to Leningrad, the defense as shown will permit the Finns to hit the Marine unit at relatively good odds (given air support), but that's about all. They may even have a tough time cleaning out the garrison of Hango (especially if Russian air flies there in support). But whatever the case, the Marine unit will survive the initial round of combat and retreat to SS18. That will be pretty much the limit of the Finns' advance for some time unless lack of Russian air cover gives them a chance to lunge at Leningrad.

### *Initial Placement, Baltic Military District*

The units of the Baltic district are set-up as shown in Illustration #1. Both the 11 and 16 Infantry Corps are positioned to hold the right flank of the Western district. While the Germans could easily reach +7 on the Combat Table against these two units, failure to annihilate them will result in a Russian line on the second turn (and blitzing armor won't be moving very far in the forests). The rest of the line is weak and most likely will disappear well before the Russian has an opportunity to move. Little can be done about this except to try and stop exploiting panzers with a retreat of the 11 Infantry Corps to hex KK80 so that marauding enemy tankers will have to detour through the marshes.

All in all, the Germans should crack the Baltic district with relative ease, but space and distance will save the Russian. Panzers which drive too deeply may find themselves out of supply and immobile for July. While Riga is important for establishing a defense line along the Dvina River, chances are it will prove impossible to form a line here anyway (since there will be no units capable of holding here on the second turn).

### *Initial Placement, Western Military District*

Illustration #1 also shows the Russian attempt to stop the advance of the cream of the German Army. Given the strengths of the panzers and German air support, most Russian units will be hit at the +6/+7 end of the Combat Table. This is where the Russian player can expect to see most of the blitz markers. The small armor corps are placed behind the line to limit exploitation movement. Bialystok is sacrificed for a better position along the river. The cavalry holds Brest-Litovsk since it can retreat through the marsh with more ease (should it actually survive). Once again, any unit capable of retreat must do so. Death will be certain on the second turn but time and distance are critically important, whereas destruction of units is not.

### *Initial Placement, Kiev Military District*

Again an attempt is made to stop any broad advance. There will probably be very little blitzing armor down here and a good piece of the Russian forces should succeed in escaping the opening onslaught. Admittedly, there seems to be a threat from the south with the Rumanian border as open as it is, but there are few German units free there to roam behind the Russian lines. The weak Russian infantry and armor units are placed on border duty or written off. See Illustration #1.



Illustration 2: German Positions and Battle Locations (see notes) for June



## *Initial Placement, Odessa Military District*

As per Illustration #1—although if you feel threatened in the Kiev district you may want to strengthen the northern shoulder of the district (just be prepared to hand over Odessa if you do). While the Russian forces in this district are even worse than those in the Baltic, the fact remains that the Rumanians are little better. What German units are in Rumania cannot be supported by air unless it comes from Lublin (or later, from Lwow). The lack of exploiting enemy armor will also be a big help.

## THE GERMAN PLAN

The number one objective for June and the following summer months is to drive a wedge of German armor followed by infantry as fast and as deep as possible directly through Vitebsk and Smolensk to Moscow. This will draw the major portion of the available Russian forces into the central sector of the board to mask and protect Moscow. A subsidiary penetration along the north coast to Leningrad should prove highly successful if the main thrust preserves its striking effect and speed. The forces of Army Group South together with the Rumanian units concentrate on beating down and annihilating any Russian forces in front of them. There will be no great arc south from Gomel to the coast to cut off Russian forces around Kiev. The drive on Moscow is all-important.

One easy way for the German player in *RUSSIAN FRONT* to lose the game is to forget the lessons of the historical campaign. Attempts to encircle and destroy pockets of Russian units will prove successful, but these will also seal the fate of the German army by slowing down and in effect stopping the drive on Moscow. Always remember that when you attack the enemy line do so at right angles; that is, drive directly through the line towards an objective deep in the rear of the Russian area. This creates more of a problem and panic and requires the defender to give up more ground faster than if shallow and diverging penetrations are made (as Montgomery found out with *GOODWOOD* at Caen). So drive for Moscow full force and never divert panzers and air support to the flanks unless necessary to eliminate a sore spot which threatens that drive.

Of course, you must drive as far as possible during both movement phases each turn with the panzers. Supply will be a problem on the first turn and Russian units the problem in succeeding turns, but try to gain as much ground with that extra movement—as opposed to having to gain it through combat. As with every simulation of this campaign, time is very much a critical factor. If you dally too long executing fancy maneuvers with your panzers, you will most likely experience your fair share of Russian mud considerably sooner than desired.

## *June Objectives for Army Group North*

The Russian units holding hexes KK7, LL6 and MM6 must be destroyed to permit exploitation by 41 and 56 Panzer Corps as well as the 1 and 2 and 38 Infantry Corps held in reserve in JJ5. The Russian 10 Infantry Corps in MM6 will be hit by 28 Infantry plus air support (+7 on the combat table). The 41 Panzer and the Russian 3 Armor Corps in KK7 will be hit by 56 Panzer Corps using Blitz movement. The right shoulder of the Army Group will be held by 23 and 26 Infantry Corps and the Russian unit on the coast will be kept occupied by the German 10 Infantry Corps assisted by the naval unit.

The use of Blitz by 56 Panzer Corps is made to insure the destruction of the Russian defenders. While neither attack by 41 Panzer nor 28 Infantry Corps are guaranteed of destroying the enemy, further use of Blitz cannot be justified given the situation facing Army Group Centre. Exploiting armor will move into positions across the Dvina to cut the rail line at Dvinsk and block movement of the Russian units to the west. The reserve infantry takes Riga (forcing the Russian flotilla to evacuate if still there) and helps to close the noose around the Russian units bypassed in the forests around Kaunas. Blitzing armor may want to convert railroad hexes to extend the supply route for the exploitation phase.

## *June Objectives for Army Group Centre*

The plan is to use the two remaining Blitz markers to insure destruction of the Russian 5 and 12 Infantry Corps and to drive the German armor in wedges east through Vilna and along the Nieman to hex EE8. Following exploitation should insure that most of the Russian units in this sector will be unsupplied during their portion of June. Since it is impossible to advance the infantry further than the Russian initial line, there are no reserves, the infantry hitting all along the line in force to do as much damage to the Russians as possible. One might suspect that it would be wiser to leave the greatest portion of Russians unmolested to prevent retreats but retreat will be curtailed by the panzers blitzing in behind and damaged Russian units will most assuredly destroy themselves should they attack the encircling German armor. German casualties may be higher than desired but if the maneuver proves successful then most of the combat in July and August will be done by the armor with air support, allowing time for the infantry corps to be rebuilt and moved up to the front positions.

The 46 Panzer Corps will execute the attack against the Russian 5 Infantry Corps in GG7, supported by air and followed by 24 and 39 Panzer Corps as well as the 12 Infantry Corps. The armor will use the remaining movement from Blitz to occupy all three hexes GG8, GG9 (Vilna) and GG10 to maintain a supply route. They can also convert the rail to Vilna. The 57 Panzer Corps will lead the assault against the Russian 12 Infantry Corps in FF6, assisted by air, joined by 47 Panzer and 9 Infantry (who converts the rail). Armor pushes to EE7 and EE8 (or to DD7). Exploitation is possible if handled correctly and a supply line is open to the panzer units at the beginning of July (i.e., all Russian units in between the German armor and infantry must die from lack of supply).

The remaining three Russian corps in the line are attacked by a minimum of two infantry corps each, one 5-4-6 and one 4-3-6. Attrition is the objective. The German 13 Infantry Corps holds HH6 in order to maintain a supply line down through the Vilna corridor to II6. Bialystok is hit by a lone 7 Infantry Corps and the 42 Infantry Corps holds the flank in hex CC4. Note that all rail hexes from EE3 through to FF6 are converted for German use (providing combat is successful) as well as HH7 and CC4. See Illustration #2 for positions and battle locations.

## *June Objectives for Army Group South*

Faced with numerous units and a strong Russian defensive position, the panzers of Army Group South must attempt to bludgeon their way through the Russian 15 Armor Corps and 13 Infantry Corps—hopefully eliminating the defenders and exploiting one hex each to hold X5, W5 and V4 to pin the remaining Russian units and to be in position to respond to any Russian movement. The left shoulder of the Army Group is held by the heavier infantry corps attacking the Russians at the river and the weak infantry shadows the right shoulder of the penetration. The Russian should be allowed free movement towards the south since this leads only deeper into the pocket which will eventually be formed by Army Group South linking up with units from Rumania somewhere around Vinnitsa. Also, more Russian units could be attacked at lower odds

but by not doing so as attempt is being made to reduce German casualties which will be high enough as is in Army Group Centre. Rail lines will be converted during the July turn (except for Z4 which is converted by 44 Infantry Corps during its attack on the Russian defenders there).

## *June Objectives for Axis Forces in Rumania*

Given the pitiful forces in Rumania and the fact that they must be further weakened by being stretched thin on border duty, the Rumanian forces will be capable of hitting in only one place effectively, assisted by the German 11 and 54 Infantry Corps. Supported by air, the Rumanian 1 Mountain Corps attacks the Russian armor in hex N6 to blow open a hole in the Russian line. The two German infantry corps put pressure on the right flank and the lone Rumanian armor moves through to M7, from where it may or may not exploit. Without some type of reinforcements there is very little which can be achieved here barring excellent luck on June combat until Army Group South puts in some appearance. See Illustration #2.

## *June Objectives for Axis Forces in Finland*

More often than not the pace of operations in the north will be set by the outcome of June combat. The Finnish army is very strong but very fragile with a low replacement rate even with Riga, Tallinn and Vilna controlled in the south. Should the Finnish air strength be destroyed it will be quite some time before the Finns can mount any type of determined offensive until reinforced by German ground and air. On the other hand, should the Finns succeed in eliminating the Russian air cover around Leningrad and survive, they will be in a very strong position to gradually force their way right up to Leningrad—although they will probably lack the necessary power to take the fortress itself until elements of Army Group North approach from the south-west.

The opening attack is as per Illustration #3. The big Finnish corps plus air hits the Marine unit in Vyborg. This brings the Russian air out of Leningrad to decide the events of the next couple months. The Hango garrison is ignored until later. One month cannot be wasted in eradicating a tiny Russian garrison at this point in time.

## *Extent of the Army Groups June '41*

As you can see in Illustration #4, Army Group North devastates the Russian defenders in the Baltic Military District with almost no casualties sustained. The Russian flotilla from Riga, damaged in action off the coast at NN5, evacuates to Tallinn when 41 Panzer Corps exploited through Riga to its present location. The Russians in the pocket around Kaunas should find it almost impossible to reach a supplied hex by the end of their turn. The panzer wedge driven through Vilna could have been exploited deeply into Russian territory but the armor would have found itself out of supply at the start of the German July turn. As is, they are ready to respond to any Russian movement and are well placed to move against the Russian defensive line which will probably form in front of Vitebsk. The German 2 and 8 air units are well advanced and in range of Smolensk and the rail from Warsaw will be converted all the way to Dvinsk by the end of July.

In the south (Illustration #4) progress has been less dramatic and most of the Russians are in supply for June movement. Use of the Blitz would probably have resulted in a pocket of sorts but with reinforcements sent into Rumania and pressure applied from there onto the Russians at Vinnitsa, the Russians will use the fact that they are in supply to retreat towards Kiev in order to maintain supply and the over-all German gains will be about the same. Also, the rapid advance of the northern Ger-





Illustration 3: Finnish Positions and Battle Locations (see notes) for June

man Army Groups will pose a threat of encirclement which most Russian commanders will not ignore, and they will eventually establish a line of defense well back along the Dniپر anchored in Kiev.

Casualties were somewhat high on the Rumanian front with both German infantry corps suffering heavily while their Russian opponents survived combat. The Rumanian Mountain Corps destroyed the Russian armor and the Rumanian armor pushed further east to cut the rail to Odessa. It should be quite obvious that reinforcements are needed to give the Rumanian forces any chance of exploiting opportunities such as this. With more infantry and a panzer corps, the situation at the end of June would have been dramatically different and most of the Russians defending along Army Group South would have been effectively trapped.

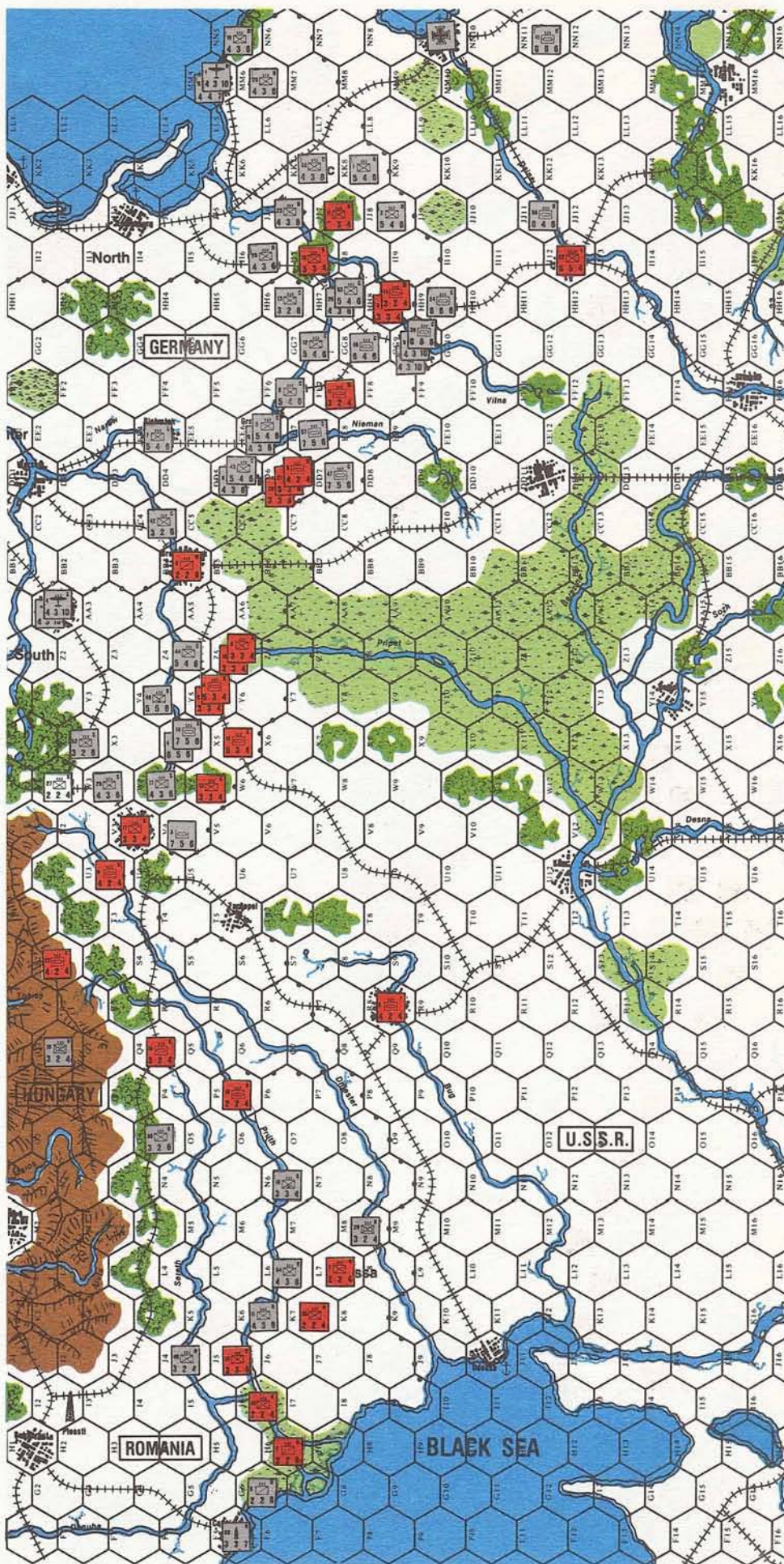
In the north with the Finns, the Russian air force was blasted out of the skies (although the Finns took two points of damage). The Marine unit was forced back. The weakened state of the Finnish air means that it will be some time before it can be used against Russian air without the risk of loss. If no Russian air appears in the Leningrad area then the Finns will make steady progress towards the city.

## RUSSIAN MOVES FOR JUNE

In the far north, the Russian 23 Army should take up position in SS18 and the Marine unit moves to SS19. The armor comes out of Leningrad to defend along the shore of Lake Ladoga in hex SS20. The air unit originally at Smolensk moves to Novgorod from where it can support either Leningrad or Vitebsk areas.

But the real crisis for the Russians is in the center. Around Vitebsk the Russians deploy as per Illustration #5. Most of the defenders surrounded by the initial German push have vaporised from lack of supply; but the 6 and 11 Armor Corps managed to fight their way out and have taken up positions where they can respond to advancing panzers (or at least make that threat). Note that the 19 Army is railed in from Dnepetrovsk. The original defenders of Minsk have retreated into the swamp east of the city as any defense of the city itself will achieve nothing but the destruction of the defenders and loss of the city anyway. Even if the Russians managed to hold Minsk they would be unable to move the factory. Pskov is shamefully held but there are simply no other units available to bolster the defense in that sector.

Illustration 4: Extent of German Advances for June





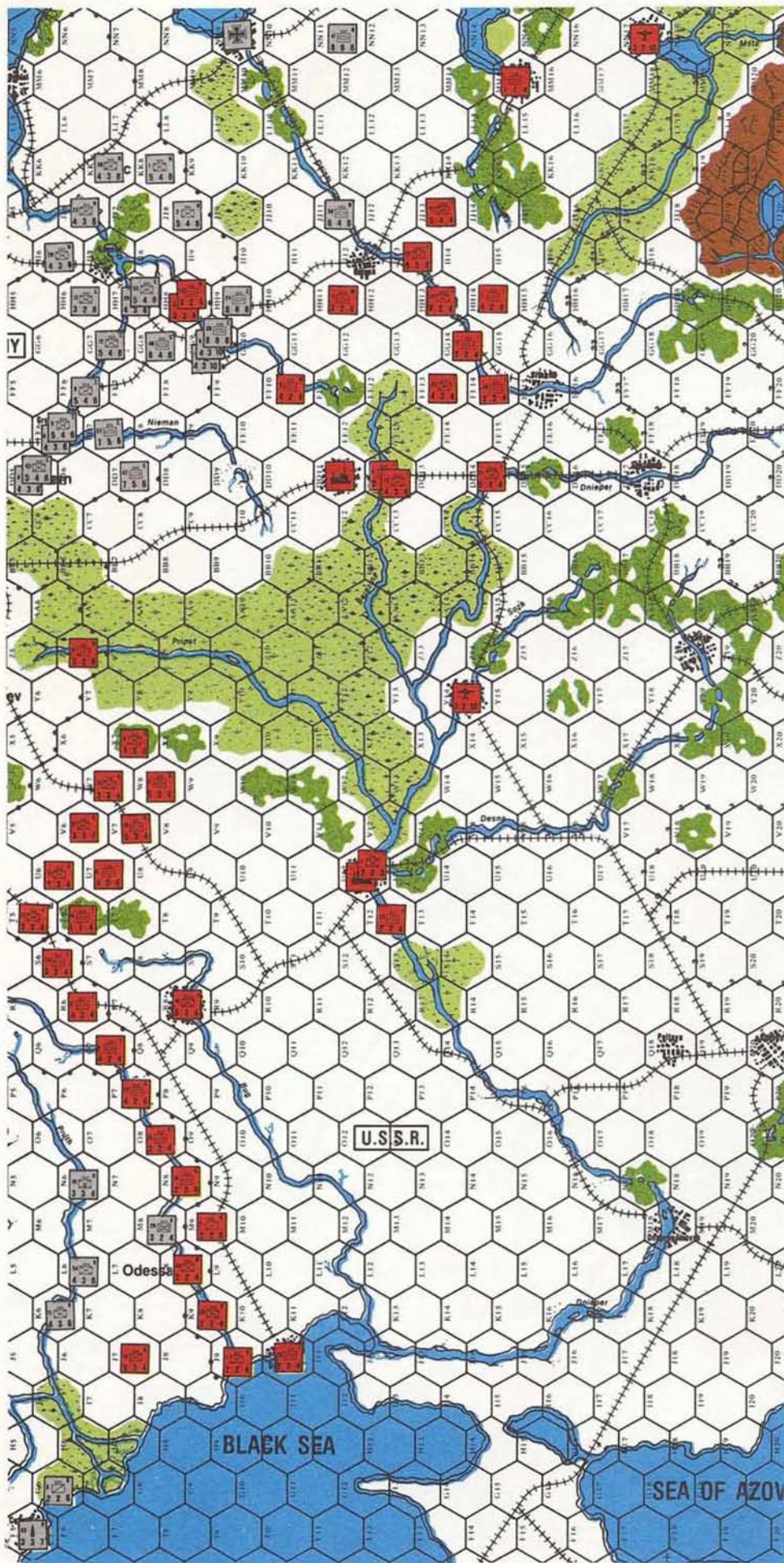


Illustration 5: Russian Positions at the end of June

In the Kiev Military District a line is formed up further west than normally expected due to the slowness of the surviving Russian infantry. The German portion of July should see most of this infantry destroyed, but the armor will then be able to retreat well back to Kiev where it will meet up with reinforcing armies from Kiev and Dnepropetrovsk. The Rumanian forces can be held up by the positions along the Dniester for July and when the Russians then retreat to the Bug, the Axis units in this area will find it extremely difficult to attack and maintain supply routes given the distance back to the line running through Rumania. Note that the 4 air unit stationed At Start in Rostov flies to Gomel to support either sector. See illustration #5 for deployment.

### GERMAN MOVES FOR JULY

In Finland the battle heats up with attacks all along the line just north of Leningrad. This assault is partly a gamble that the Russian Marine unit will take a casualty and disappear even if supported by air; it is even more a gamble in that the Finnish air may be lost in a confrontation with Russian planes. With luck the Russian 10 Armor Corps may also sustain enough damage to remove it. While the attacks by the Finns are at relatively low odds (even negative on the part of Finnish 6 Corps attacking the Marines) and casualties will be high, the excellent chance of breaking open the front to Leningrad cannot be passed up or delayed until German arrival. This will be the best shot the Finnish army has for getting right up to Leningrad since reinforcements are due there during the Russian portion of this turn. Once again the Russian garrison of Hango is ignored and Helsinki is held by the Finnish 7 Corps and the flotilla. See Illustration #6.

With Army Group North the infantry moves through Riga converting the rail and 41 Panzer Corps streaks across to the coast and captures Tallinn so that an additional Finnish replacement will be available starting with the August turn. The 56 Panzer Corps, the only armor unit within near distance of the Russians, is the sole German unit to use Blitz in this sector. The attacks here along the river will not result in the elimination of many Russians but will cause some damage, and the German armor will be set up for full use of Blitz during the August turn. This threat could normally be countered by an inflow of Russian forces from Moscow and the south (Dnepropetrovsk); but if the situation at Leningrad becomes critical due to Finnish successes then Army Groups North and Centre will face less opposition than the Russian might desire and considerable gains should be made. Mopping up "battles of annihilation" are performed

Illustration 6: Finnish Positions and Battle Locations (see notes) for July





by the infantry corps as they move up. Refer to Illustration #7.

In the southern half of Russia, Army Group South unleashes its power with full effect on the Russian line west of Kiev and this should remove a large portion of the defenders. The Army Group is now assisted by German reinforcements available at the start of July which sailed to Rumania before movement. The Rumanian sector is relatively quiet with only one attack being made by the Mountain Corps and the air unit. The idea in the south now is to kill as many Russians as possible during July and August so that the Russian must commit at least some of his reinforcements to this sector (thus weakening the line defending the road to Moscow). See Illustration #7.

With relatively few casualties expected on German infantry this month, any damage sustained by the air units' entanglements with the Red Air Force will be the at least partially replaced during August. Also, if Rumanian replacements continue to build up those units just might see more action than normal.

### Extent of the Army Groups July '41

Combat results in heavy Russian losses including both air units (one of which takes down the Finns with it), the Marine unit at Leningrad and surprisingly the Russian 20 Army by Vitebsk. Heavy damage is inflicted by Army Group South but the Rumanian attack in 08 is repulsed. German exploitation is minimal given the positioning of Russian units. The only significant movement is by 41 Panzer Corps on the north coast which takes Narva in an attempt to deny that river defense line to the Russians. The unit will be out of supply with the start of August but the infantry corps of the Army Group should open a supply line by the end of the turn. With the Finns, the only good results are the removals of the Marine unit and Russian air, but along with the loss of Finnish air there is also five points in damage to the Finnish infantry corps. That will be the extent of Finn progress for quite some time.

### RUSSIAN MOVES FOR JULY

The forces now at Leningrad should prove capable of stopping anything the Finns could throw at the city. The Marine unit (rebuilt) holds Schlüsselburg and 8 Army the city. South-east of the city in the forests by Narva, the German panzer corps is being held off by two infantry armies. Pskov is held by 27 Army and two armor corps shadow Novgorod. The line in front of Vitebsk still stands (as per Illustration #8) and this will deny the Germans any possibility of capturing either Vitebsk or Smolensk during August. Indeed, if victory points are added up, then the German may find himself on the wrong end of the draw.

Likewise in the south, the Russian line pulls back to just west of Kiev—running to Vinnitsa and from there along the Bug to the coast. This prevents the capture of Kiev for August victory conditions. The port of Odessa should also remain in Russian hands for at least August unless the Rumanians are extremely lucky in their attack there. Granted, another round of combat and losses like the last and there won't be much Russian armor left around Kiev, but the reinforcements from Kharkov should be enough to hold the line. The Russian air is hurting and only one could be replaced this turn (Bryansk). See Illustration #8.

### GERMAN MOVES FOR AUGUST

In the centre, the German panzer formations concentrate into two main attacks designed to puncture the Russian line and with the use of Blitz movement

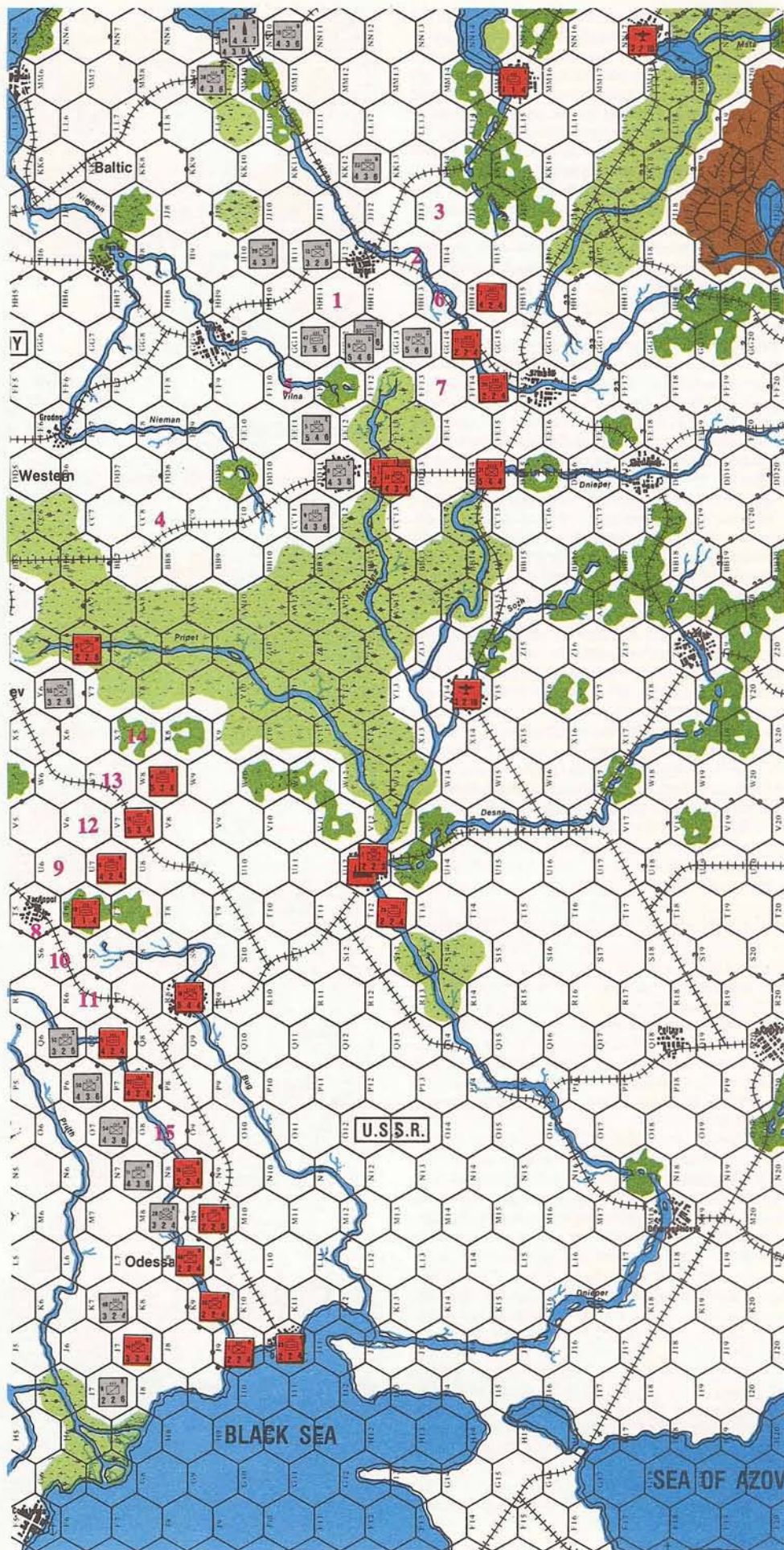


Illustration 7: German Positions and Battle Locations (see notes) for July



to reach around past the city of Vitebsk while 57 Panzer Corps pushes in the direction of Gomel. Unless the panzers can achieve some spectacular successes with these attacks it will be a long hard drive to the forests around Moscow and there would be little chance of getting that far before bad weather starts. Exploitation here may take 57 Panzer as far as Gomel or Bryansk, and the armor lunging past Vitebsk may do a similar sweep towards Rzhev if the Russian defenders take heavy casualties. One thing should be obvious from this situation: that is the need for the German player to continually push his armor formations east and whenever possible to concentrate them into Blitz attacks where the excess movement can be used to penetrate the Russian line if enough armor is present to insure supply back through to the German lines at the beginning of the exploitation phase. If you check the Short Game victory points now, you see that the German is falling behind at this critical stage of the game. If things start to go well then there should be no problem come the November check point. But the panzers must get moving. See Illustration #9 for positions at beginning of combat.

As for the south, once again the Army Group opens up on the Russian line in an attempt to finally crack it. If the panzer corps had been farther south, they could have attempted to Blitz through the Russians in hex P9 to cut off a large number of units. Even so, Russian casualties will be very high and the Germans should end up one turn away from Kiev. The rail lines have been converted right up to the front as well as half-way to Odessa, so supply will be no problem until the Russians fall back to the Dnieper. Air support is stretched to the limit but Vinnitsa should fall during September and the air will then be well within reach of the Dnieper and Gomel. See Illustration #9 again.

The Finnish front becomes static until German air can be brought into reach; then the German 18 Mountain Corps will begin assaulting Leningrad. Finnish replacements are being stored to permit rebuilding of their air force. There is finally an attempt this turn to take out the garrison of Hango by the Finnish 1 Corps while the naval flotilla sweeps the harbour of mines.

### *Extent of the Army Groups August '41*

The only real progress is made by Army Group Centre (see Illustration #10) where the massed panzer attacks result in encirclement of those Russian defenders not eliminated in the combat assaults. If the Short Game victory points are added up now, the Russian gets a Decisive Victory. But the situation is such that eight points are within immediate grasp of the German Army and if Kiev should fall then it would be one point away from the German Decisive Victory.

Hopefully all of this has illustrated the need to use the German Panzer Corps correctly to maximise the advance of the army. It should be obvious from the progress of Army Group South (see Illustration #10) that sheer bludgeoning will not give the German Army the early victory which it desperately needs. It should be seen that progress for Army Group South will normally be fairly difficult given the manner in which the terrain funnels the German advance and allows the Russian armor (plentiful but weak) to form double lines of defense to prohibit German exploitation. You must also take into account the extreme weakness of the forces in Rumania (witness the Rumanian attack in P9 failing again) and the necessity to detail German infantry corps to rail conversion to insure adequate supply. It is also difficult to place Odessa within German air range. In all, the only thing that can dramatically unhinge the Russian defense in the south is the threat posed by Army Group Centre of

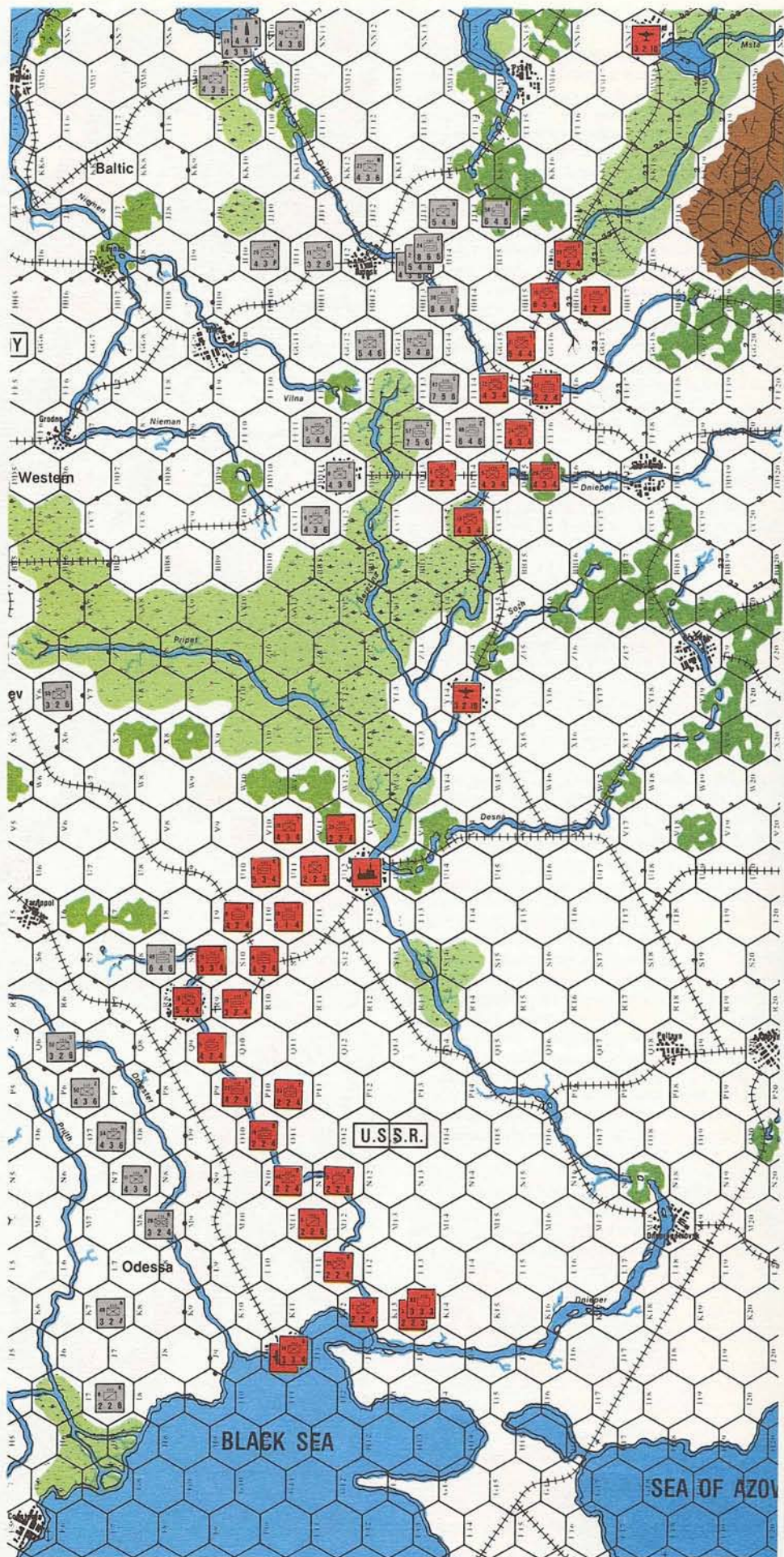
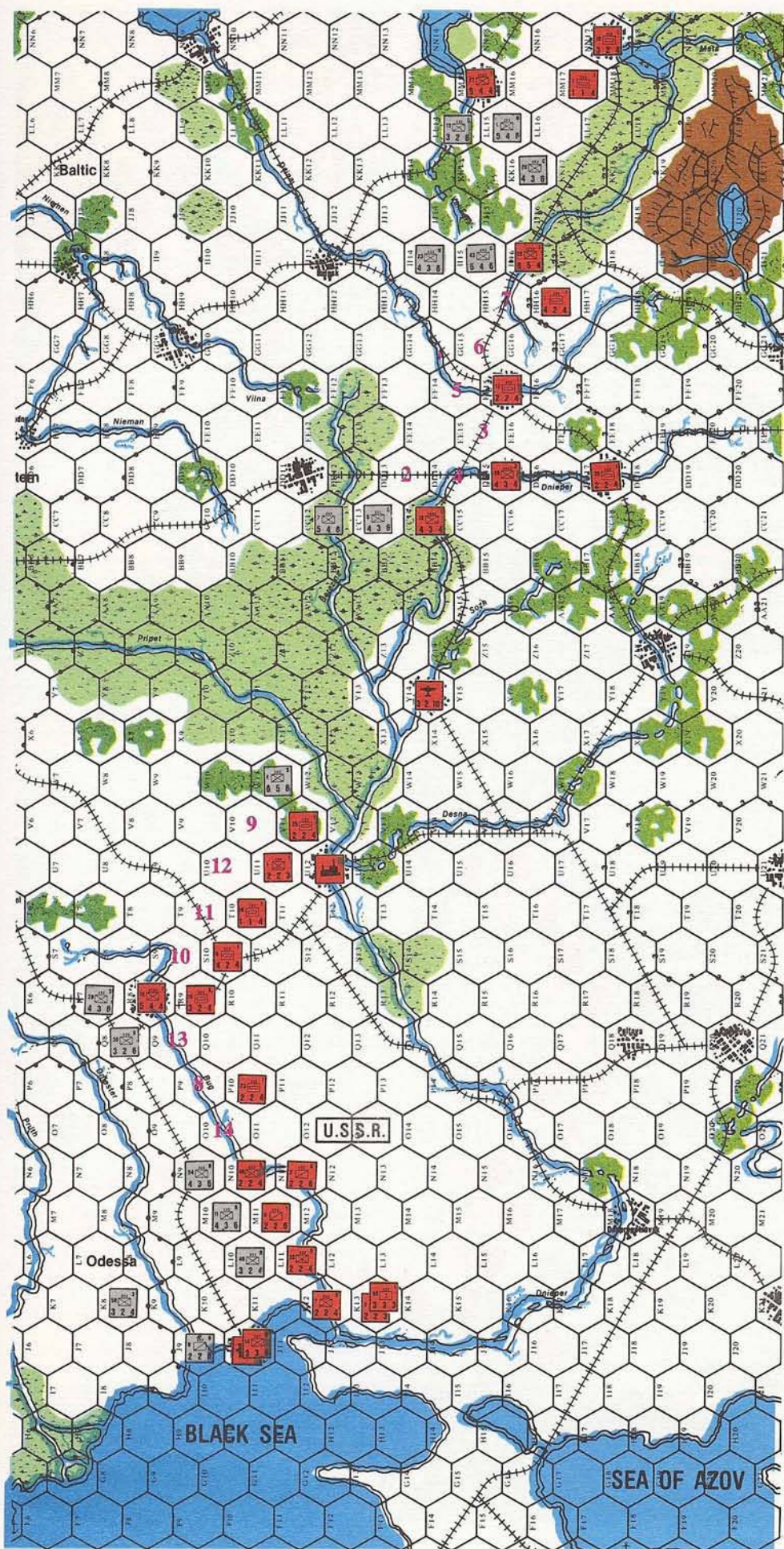


Illustration 8: Russian Positions at the end of July





massive encirclement and destruction. Faced with this, the Russian line must pull back to at least the Dnieper and this maneuver will place Kiev at the point of the Russian line and it should then fall in either September or October. German progress towards Dnepropetrovsk and Sevastopol will be entirely a matter of weather conditions.

With Army Group Centre, the main thrust towards Moscow must be continued with full fury. The temptation to wheel to the south with the panzers must be ignored, although if opposition is extremely heavy in the forests masking Moscow then it could prove highly successful to execute a massive wheel south from there through Orel-Kursk-Kharkov-Dnepropetrovsk. This would then position the German forces for a strike north-east towards Gorky in the Spring of '42. Extravagant ideas perhaps but extremely likely if the German can continue to use the panzers effectively by blitzing through two or three key units and trapping a large number of other Russian units. Exploitation, handled right, can be phenomenal.

On the Finnish front it can be seen from the events of June and July that the Finns are capable of rapid progress towards Leningrad but will almost certainly fall short of capturing the city due to fragility of Finnish units, lack of German support until too late and stout Russian defenders sufficiently numerous by August.

Finally, while with time players will learn to play the German army almost to perfection, the fact that even at the best of odds all but the weakest of Russian units may survive combat will continually plague the German player as key Russian units which *must* be destroyed remarkably survive to hold the Wehrmacht up for another month. Blitz attacks can guarantee elimination but the blitz will not be possible if the Russian pulls back away from the panzer corps and gives up ground to help survivability (see the lack of German blitz movement in Army Group Centre during July). At this early stage of the game the German player should find that his armor is usually enmeshed in the Russian line during exploitation and thus unable to be placed in reserve to respond to Russian positioning during the Russian turn. All this means is that any player should find *RUSSIAN FRONT* to be an extremely tense and even game where in any one turn the victory conditions might say that one or the other is ahead (see the state of conditions at the end of August here) while the "losing" player is but a breath away from being equally ahead.

Aspiring field marshals should also take note of what poor weather conditions can do to slow down the German drive for Moscow. Blitz movement will be cut in half by wet conditions. So learn to use the Blitz well while you can and don't spread out the armor formations all across the front (see the role played by 41 Panzer Corps here which spent July and August taking Tallinn and sitting out of supply at Narva). Concentration of force is the sole means for German victory. The fact remains that if 41 Panzer had been used together with the panzer corps around Vitebsk it would have been available to close the gap left in hex CC16 (see Illustration #10).

## RUSSIAN SITUATION, MIDDLE OF AUGUST

As with many games dealing with the German campaign in Russia, the flow of the game will be set by the gains and advances of the German army. The Russian player must use his brain to exploit any weaknesses which appear and must adapt his tactics to the needs of each turn. While it is always preferable to hold as far west as possible to keep the German territorial gains down, it can be much more effective to retreat when faced with massive panzers waiting to blitz and exploit. It is rarely

Illustration 9: German Positions and Battle Locations (see notes) for August



beneficial to stand and fight it out with the German units. A seriously weakened but still existent Russian corps or army is many times more valuable than one which dies simply to inflict extra casualties to the Germans. Therefore, always remember the number one rule: "Retreat Whenever/Wherever Possible" (the old "live to fight another day" maxim). If the Russian units had stood their ground against Army Group South here there would have been no Russian front around Kiev by the end of August. Look at what that Russian line consists of, almost no units with a defense strength greater than two. Yet this line has held up the German advance admirably compared to those Russians who started in the Baltic and Western Military Districts.

A second point to be noted concerns the evacuation of Russian factories. The situation at Kiev at the end of the German August turn is typical. The Russian player has available rail transportation for four units (or for one factory and one unit), but given the situation at Smolensk the rail capacity will have to be used to move the reinforcements at Kharkov to the defense of Moscow. Unfortunately, this one turn delay will result in the German panzer formations west of Kiev battling their way to the outskirts of the city to prevent any rail movement into or out of Kiev. Indeed, by creating a crisis at a particular point the German can manipulate the Russian situation so that the factories don't train away from him before he can come up adjacent to them.

Concerning Russian air power—it can be a critical factor in stalling the German advance *if* the Finnish air can be shot down, *if* the Russian air survives July combat so that replacement capacity can be used solely to bring back eliminated Russian armies and *if* one or more of the German air units can be heavily damaged and then destroyed. The most critical point for the Russian air force is probably the defense of Leningrad where there is even a possibility of Russian air superiority *if* the Finnish air is removed and *if* the Russian air is not needed desperately elsewhere.

**Notes:** For those interested, the following list indicates the units involved in the battles whose locations (BL) are shown numbered in the accompanying illustrations.

**Illustration 2:** BL 1 Russian 29 Inf and Baltic Flotilla vs. German 10 Inf and Baltic Flotilla; BL 2 Russian 10 Inf vs. German 28 Inf and 1 Air; BL 3 Russian 12 Armor vs. German 41 Panzer; BL 4 Russian 3 Armor vs. German 56 Panzer (Blitz 3); BL 5 Russian 3 Inf vs. German 53 Inf and 20 Inf; BL 6 Russian 5 Inf vs. German 46 Panzer (Blitz 4), 24 Panzer, 39 Panzer, 2 Air and 12 Inf; BL 7 Russian 12 Inf vs. German 57 Panzer (Blitz 4), 47 Panzer, 8 Air and 9 Inf; BL 8 Russian 21 Inf vs. German 5 Inf and 8 Inf; BL 9 Russian 28 Inf vs. German 43 Inf and 6 Inf; BL 10 Russian 13 Armor vs. German 7 Inf; BL 11 Russian 15 Inf vs. German 44 Inf; BL 12 Russian 8 Inf vs. German 49 Mtn; BL 13 Russian 15 Armor vs. German 14 Panzer, 5 Air and 4 Inf; BL 14 Russian 13 Inf vs. German 48 Panzer, 3 Panzer, 4 Air and 17 Inf; BL 15 Russian 2 Armor vs. Rumanian 1 Mtn and 1 Air; BL 16 Russian 7 Inf vs. German 54 Inf; BL 17 Russian 35 Inf vs. German 11 Inf.

**Illustration 3:** BL 18 Russian Marine and 1 Air vs. Finnish 4 Inf and Air.

**Illustration 6:** BL 16 Russian 23 Inf vs. Finnish 4 Inf; BL 17 Russian 10 Armor vs. Finnish 3 Inf; BL 18 Russian Marine and 3 Air vs. Finnish 6 Inf and Air.

**Illustration 7:** BL 1 Russian 11 Armor vs. German 53 Inf; BL 2 Russian 22 Inf vs. German 24 Panzer, 2 Inf and 20 Inf; BL 3 Russian 27 Inf vs. German 56 Panzer (Blitz 3), 1 Air and 1 Inf; BL 4 Russian 21 Inf vs. German 7 Inf; BL 5 Russian 6 Armor vs. German 43 Inf; BL 6 Russian 19 Inf vs. German 39 Panzer and 2 Air; BL 7 Russian 20 Inf and 4 Air vs. German 46 Panzer and 8 Air; BL 8 Russian 17 Inf vs. German 3 Panzer (Blitz 3) and 29 Inf; BL 9 Russian 13 Inf vs. German 48 Panzer (Blitz 3) and 17 Inf; BL 10 Russian 24 Armor vs. German 40 Panzer; BL 11 Russian 9 Armor vs. German 50 Inf and 5 Air; BL 12 Russian 8 Inf vs. German 14 Panzer and 44 Inf; BL 13 Russian 15 Inf vs. German 49 Mtn; BL 14 Russian 6 Inf vs. German 4 Inf and 4 Air; BL 15 Russian 16 Armor vs. Rumanian 1 Mtn and 1 Air.

**Illustration 9:** BL 1 Russian Hango garrison vs. Finnish 1 Inf and Flotilla; BL 2 Russian 4 Para vs. German 8 Inf; BL 3 Russian 24 Inf and 1 Air vs. German 46 Panzer (Blitz 3), 47 Panzer, 8 Air and 12 Inf; BL 4 Russian 6 Inf vs. German 57 Panzer (Blitz 3), 2 Air and 9 Inf; BL 5 Russian 12 Inf vs. German 5 Inf and 26 Inf; BL 6 Russian 21 Inf vs. German 24 Panzer, 39 Panzer, 56 Panzer (Blitz 2), 1 Air and 53 Inf; BL 7 Russian 19 Inf vs. German 2 Inf; BL 8 Russian 22 Armor vs. Rumanian 1 Mtn, 2 Armor and 1 Air; BL 9 Russian 18 Inf vs. German 14 Panzer; BL 10 Russian 15 Armor vs. German 3 Panzer and 17 Inf; BL 11 Russian 8 Armor vs. German 48 Panzer and 44 Inf; BL 12 Russian 4 Armor vs. German 40 Panzer and 49 Mtn; BL 13 Russian 5 Armor vs. German 51 Inf and 5 Air; BL 14 Russian 18 Armor vs. German 50 Inf and 4 Air.

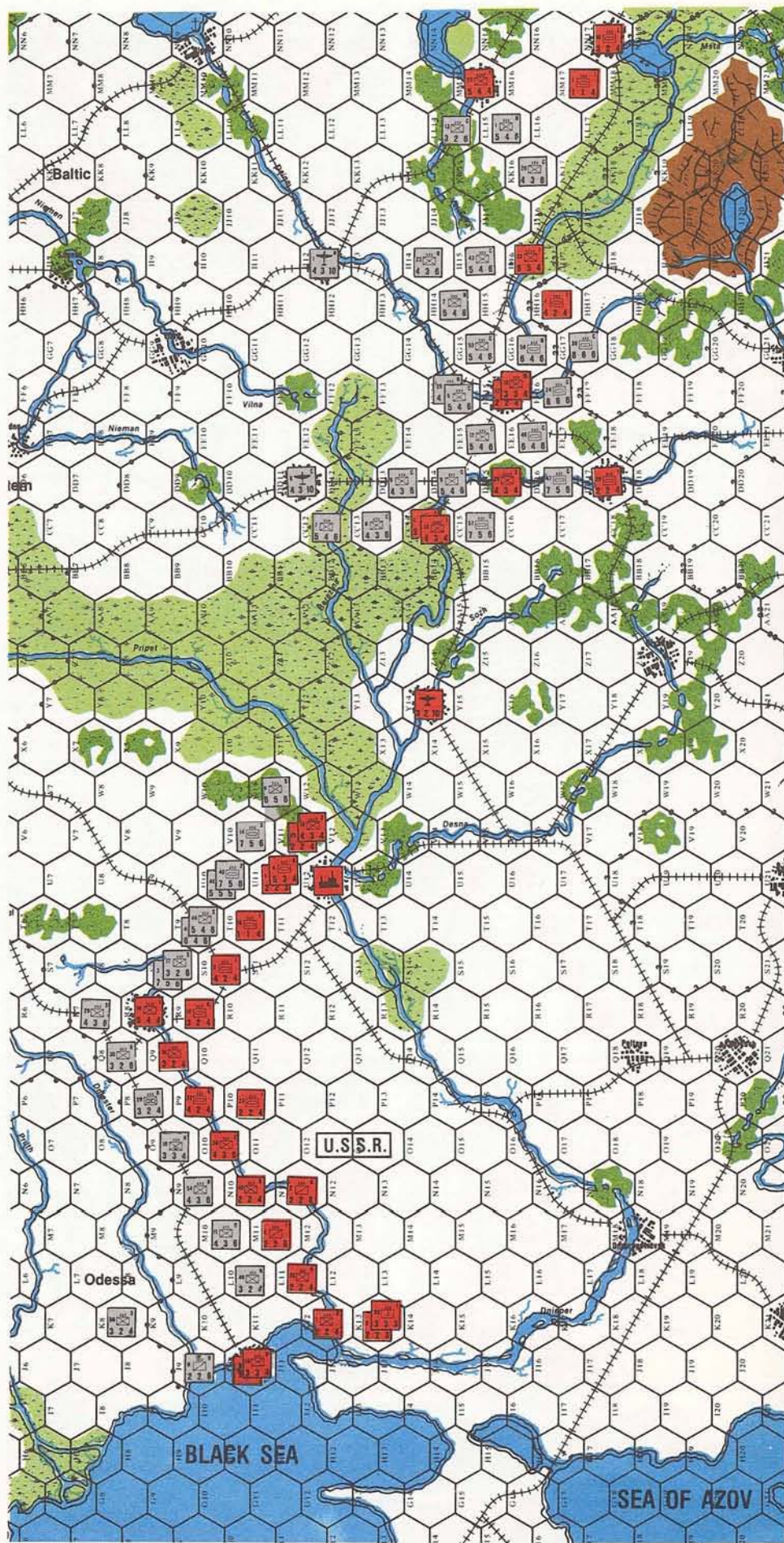


Illustration 10: Extent of German Advances for August





# LONG TREK EASTWARDS

## Tracking the Weather of THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN

By Marc Dultz

Poised along an 800-mile frontier that stretches from the Baltic in the north to the Black in the south stand the cream of the Wehrmacht and the Third Reich's allies in the fight against Communism. Awaiting the final signal to commence *Barbarossa*, three million veterans of past victories prepare to settle a score with the lone "defender" of Eastern Europe—the Soviet Union. Eagerness and pride abounding, the Axis forces set forth on that June 1941 morning to extend the sway of the New Order.

Seizing territory and destroying a goodly deal of the Soviet Union's army would prove simple enough. The *blitzkrieg* tactics of past campaigns, proving ever-so-effective against static front mentality of the First World War, would once again present the Axis with hugh initial successes. But what of the hidden foe that hovered over those battlefields—the weather?

Although German successes at the outset were fast and furious, time and the vastness of Mother Russia and most importantly the extremes of weather would prove to be insurmountable barriers. Through miscalculation on the part of Axis leadership, the Third Reich lost any chance of a lightning victory right at the outset. Poor planning for the possibility of a protracted campaign allowed for little or no winter preparations. This callousness extended even to winter clothing for the troops; only a massive campaign by the Ministry of Propaganda rallied the homefront to divest itself of thousands of articles of heavy clothing for these soldiers.

As for the translation of the actual weather conditions during the campaign into a simplified version for *THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN*, the effort—although to be commended for its unique approach—leave a great deal to be desired. All too often a strong Axis advance into Russia can be stymied by a "mud" roll on the Sept/Oct weather die roll. What's more, the Axis player now faces a 50% chance of drawing a result of "snow" for the Nov/Dec turn. On the other hand, nothing can be more frustrating for a Soviet player than to sit idly by as an Axis player's forces drive unhindered into the Soviet Union vis the benefit of four consecutive "clear" weather turns in 1941. Are these examples common? Obviously not; but are they even possible? The answer no longer possesses its sparkling clarity.

The autumn turns of 1941 are, in many cases, the story line for the balance of the campaign game. A strong Axis advance due to good weather in 1941 will usually lead to a smothering offensive in 1942, wiping out as many Soviet units and worker cities as possible. Thus, the 1942 game year serves as the "set-up" year for the Axis player, with the death blows dealt the Soviet Union falling in 1943.

On the other hand, poor weather in 1941 can lead to a bitter contest for control of central Russia in 1942 with the upper hand, more often than not, befalling the Soviet player. The players' caliber of expertise understandably comes into force; but when two evenly matched players sit across from each other, the Axis player has the tougher task. The balance of the game can drag out through the full three remaining years as the Axis player slowly falls back upon his home countries.

If one does acknowledge that there is a problem with the manner of resolving the weather (at least in 1941) what can be done about it?

There have already been myriad variations on resolving the critical weather rolls. The first lies in the very rulebook provided with the game. I'm not sure if the designer saw an inherent problem with

his design of the weather rules, but in any case two alternative methods to resolving the weather were provided. These optional rules offered include the use of the actual historical weather results as a guide for resolving the turn-by-turn weather changes, and a system of resolving the weather rolls on a monthly basis. The use of the historical weather table, although possibly accurate in simulating the past, gives both opponents perfect prior knowledge as to upcoming weather changes. Needless to say, both players will act and react to the other's moves in manners unintended by the basic theory of the simulation. The degree of uncertainty necessary for the game's basic structure eventually becomes suspect. As for the monthly weather resolution system, the game's mechanics of double impulse planning and maneuver is seriously jeopardized. A critical Axis attack can be hindered not by the enemy's position but by an ill-timed poor weather result. Likewise, Soviet counterattacks, essential to regaining the upper hand in local regions, are compromised if the weather hasn't remained poor for at least two complete turns. Once again, a player's knowledge of a second impulse weather change may do more to change a player's mind as to an overall strategy than the actual situation dictates.

A second variation (which is currently in vogue) is to replace the "Mud" result in the September/October turn and the "Clear" result in the November/December turn with "Light Mud" results. The premise is sound, reducing the chance of an Axis advance from gathering too much or not enough steam. Here, however, a careful Soviet opponent can defend his country in the November/December turn, not against a possible panzer advance of eleven hexes but one of only six hexes. Targets beyond that distance need not be guarded, allowing the Soviet player the ability of maintaining a stronger forward defense. Again, although only a minor change to the existing system, the results will unduly be magnified as the game progresses.

A third variation can be found in Vol. 17, No. 3 of *THE GENERAL*. In Tom Oleson's article entitled "Dividing Pressure Zones", the author has made a good attempt to alter the weather conditions on the battlefield. Devising a system of variable weather dependent upon areas of the mapboard during weather resolution turns, the game's mechanics change drastically as units attempt to maneuver within the three zones depicted. Unfortunately, the game, under this system, makes Axis advances into the northern zone during weather resolution turns all but impossible. Ground movement is severely limited, as well as supporting air power. True, Stukas would have a hard time flying in snow turns; but the army too is all but frozen on the steppes. Conversely, Axis advances into the southern zone are virtually unstoppable as movement during good weather is unhindered. And, the air support can be as high as three Stukas in late 1941, affording the Axis player good cause to press on his advance against the worker centers in the Ukraine. What's more, the Soviet player, already cherishing the few turns he is able to deploy his paratroops, can only do so when at least two zones are covered by snow. These and other modifications may prove to be realistic but do they add to the *RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN*'s playability?

Improving *THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN*'s balance, at least in early stages of the game, was of paramount importance to any altering of the weather

resolution rules. Basically, the alternative weather resolution systems discussed were well thought-out systems that I felt were, however, just shy of the mark. Examining each system for its advantages and disadvantages while "stirring" in my own ingredients, so to speak, I believe a better system of weather resolution has been developed. The solution I would like to put forward I've dubbed the "Weather Tracking System".

Simple in effect, players afforded the luxury of better weather in the crucial September/October 1941 turn now stand less of a chance to obtain equally acceptable weather in the upcoming November/December and March/April weather resolution turns. Likewise, players encumbered with poor weather in the September/October 1941 turn stand an increased chance of obtaining better weather in the November/December and March/April weather resolution turns. Thus the system rewards one side in the contest for unfortunate weather befalling them while penalizing the other to a mild degree for obtaining early favorable weather. Keep in mind, though, that one side still possesses the chance of obtaining near-perfect weather during these three weather resolution turns, although the odds of such an occurrence are now remote. In such a manner, both sides must still be on guard for an unexpected turn of events directly attributable to a change in the weather. Players are no longer guaranteed a minimum weather grade as every weather level depicted in the original weather rules are still wholly obtainable in the Weather Tracking System.

Turning to the system itself, a cursory examination of Chart 1 reveals that the Weather Table has been expanded to a double-die resolution system, as opposed to the present system of a single die, one evenly dispersed event system allows for varying degrees of probability of occurrence, essential to my revised system for weather resolution. Chart 1 will be used only for the September/October 1941 weather resolution roll. With subsequent weather-changing turns using different charts wholly dependent upon the weather obtained on Chart 1.

Chart 1

Die Roll	Weather Condition	Probability of Occurrence
2	Light Mud	.03 = 3%
3	Light Mud	.06 = 6%
4	Mud	.08 = 8%
5	Light Mud	.11 = 11%
6	Clear	.14 = 14%
7	Clear	.17 = 17%
8	Clear	.14 = 14%
9	Light Mud	.11 = 11%
10	Mud	.08 = 8%
11	Light Mud	.06 = 6%
12	Light Mud	.03 = 3%
		101%

Note: Odds of occurrence have been rounded to the nearest whole number, thus a total of 101%

The chance of obtaining a Clear weather result has been scaled downwards slightly while the chance of obtaining a Light Mud result has been increased slightly. The reason for this change reflects my opinion that a Clear weather result in the September/October 1941 turn is the most lethal result an Axis player can ever hope to achieve during the campaign. Oftentimes a good Axis player can lay claim to an assault on several Soviet worker centers that, when destroyed, can never be replaced no matter



what future weather resolution turns may offer. Instead, the chance of obtaining Light Mud, probably better conducive in terms of fairness to both players, stands a greater probability of occurring.

Looking beyond the September/October 1941 turn to the November/December 1941 turn both players will adhere to one of three charts (labeled 2A, 2B, and 2C below) dependent upon the weather obtained on Chart 1. A Clear result from Chart 1 will lead players to Chart 2A. A Light Mud result from Chart 1 will lead players to Chart 2B. Lastly, a Mud result from Chart 1 will lead players to Chart 2C.

Finally, when faced with the March/April 1942 weather resolution turn, again results obtained from Chart 1 will determine the chart to be utilized. A Clear result from Chart 1 will lead players to chart 3A. A Light Mud result from Chart 1 will lead players to use Chart 3B. And a Mud result from Chart 1 will lead players to Chart 3C.

#### Chart 2A

Die Roll	Weather Condition	Probability of Occurrence
2	Clear	3%
3	Light Mud	6%
4	Mud	8%
5	Mud	11%
6	Snow	14%
7	Snow	17%
8	Snow	14%
9	Mud	11%
10	Mud	8%
11	Light Mud	6%
12	Clear	3%

#### Predominant Weather:

Snow	—	45%
Mud	—	38%
Light Mud	—	12%
Clear	—	6%

#### Chart 2B

Die Roll	Weather Condition	Probability of Occurrence
2	Light Mud	3%
3	Clear	6%
4	Light Mud	8%
5	Mud	11%
6	Snow	14%
7	Snow	17%
8	Snow	14%
9	Mud	11%
10	Light Mud	8%
11	Clear	6%
12	Light Mud	3%

#### Predominant Weather:

Snow	—	45%
Mud	—	22%
Light Mud	—	22%
Clear	—	12%

#### Chart 2C

Die Roll	Weather Condition	Probability of Occurrence
2	Mud	3%
3	Light Mud	6%
4	Light Mud	8%
5	Clear	11%
6	Snow	14%
7	Snow	17%
8	Snow	14%
9	Clear	11%
10	Light Mud	8%
11	Light Mud	6%
12	Mud	3%

#### Predominant Weather:

Snow	—	45%
Light Mud	—	22%
Clear	—	22%
Mud	—	6%

**Table 1**

Overall Probability of the Weather Tracking System

Sept/Oct Weather Result	Probability of Resulting Good or Bad Weather Thru April 1942	Decent Weather Index
Clear	10%—Good 32%—Bad 57%—Mixed	67%
Light Mud	22%—Good 22%—Bad 55%—Mixed	77%
Mud	33%—Good 16%—Bad 50%—Mixed	83%

Definitions: Good Weather—Clear and Light Mud results.

Bad Weather—Mud and Snow results.

Mixed Weather—a combination of a turn of good and a turn of bad weather.

Decent Weather Index—the addition of good and mixed weather probabilities.

#### Chart 3A

Die Roll	Weather Condition	Probability of Occurrence
2	Light Mud	3%
3	Clear	6%
4	Snow	8%
5	Mud	11%
6	Light Mud	14%
7	Clear	17%
8	Light Mud	14%
9	Mud	11%
10	Snow	8%
11	Clear	6%
12	Light Mud	3%

#### Predominant Weather:

Light Mud	—	34%
Clear	—	29%
Mud	—	22%
Snow	—	16%

#### Chart 3B

Die Roll	Weather Condition	Probability of Occurrence
2	Light Mud	3%
3	Snow	6%
4	Clear	8%
5	Mud	11%
6	Light Mud	14%
7	Clear	17%
8	Light Mud	14%
9	Mud	11%
10	Clear	8%
11	Snow	6%
12	Light Mud	3%

#### Predominant Weather:

Light Mud	—	34%
Clear	—	33%
Mud	—	22%
Snow	—	12%

#### Chart 3C

Die Roll	Weather Condition	Probability of Occurrence
2	Light Mud	3%
3	Clear	6%
4	Snow	8%
5	Clear	11%
6	Light Mud	14%
7	Mud	17%
8	Light Mud	14%
9	Clear	11%
10	Snow	8%
11	Clear	6%
12	Light Mud	3%

#### Predominant Weather:

Light Mud	—	34%
Clear	—	34%
Mud	—	17%
Snow	—	16%

Basically, these charts attempt to balance the shortcomings in the present weather resolution system. As to their overall effects during the November/December and March/April weather resolution turns, please consult Table 1.

To make a long story short, an Axis player gaining the benefit of Clear weather in the September/October 1941 turn stands only a 10% chance of gaining further good weather and a  $\frac{2}{3}$  chance of having one turn of good weather and one turn of bad weather. On the other hand, an Axis player whose luck has seemingly run out in September/October 1941 with a Mud weather result has a one-third chance of attaining good weather through the balance of the weather resolution turns and fully an 83% chance of attaining mixed results. If bad luck and weather still occur, the chance of it happening would only be 16%.

Summing them up, the charts attempt to smooth out the wide discrepancies that can and inevitably do happen. Skill is oftentimes all for naught as a stalwart Soviet player can do little in the fact of four Clear turns in 1941.

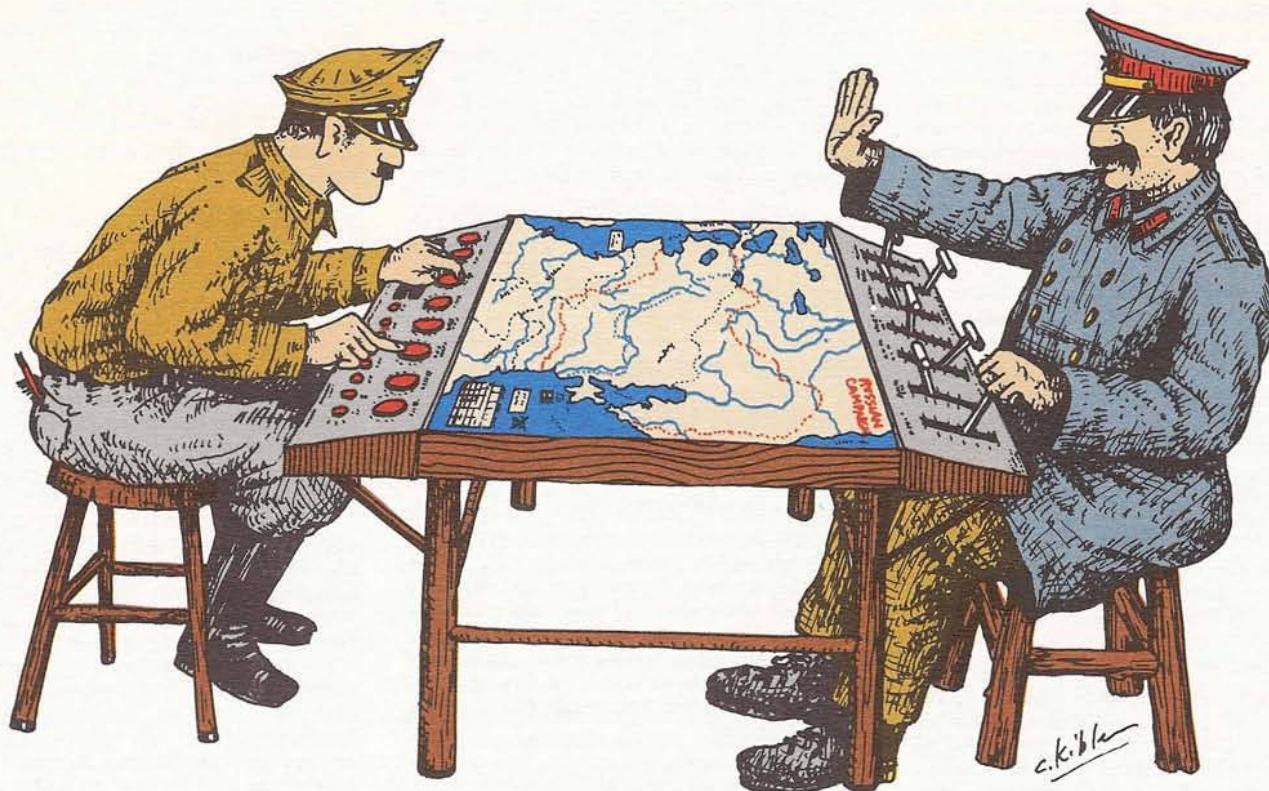
Mind you, under the present weather rules an Axis player who is lucky enough to obtain a Clear weather result in the September/October 1941 turn still has a 22% chance of attaining good weather through April of 1942. Likewise, an Axis player unlucky enough to obtain Mud in the September/October 1941 turn still has a 22% chance of additional poor weather befalling him.

In closing, one could argue that the Weather Tracking System should be used for the balance of the Campaign Game. My main thrust for devising this system, though, was to somehow alter those first few critical weather rolls that set the tone for the balance of the game.



*It has always struck me that the strength of a solid design is in no manner better demonstrated than by the willingness of knowledgeable gamers to tinker with it. By "tinker" I do not mean the correction of design flaws in the game system, but rather the exploration of options and cause/effect relationships beyond the pale of recorded history. Obviously, THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN is one such solid design. Mr. Dultz's article above and Mr. Carberry's following clarify and codify a number of variant options—enough certainly to keep the most devoted player busy exploring the "what-ifs" of this classic.*





# HANDICAPPING IN THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN

## Options for Balancing the Old Favorite

By Joe Carberry

One game that continues to rate highly on the GENERAL's "So That's What You've Been Playing" chart is *THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN*. Why is this so?

Well, of course the game seems to model the ebb and flow of the actual event. One gets the "feel" of both the swift Nazi armored advances and, if the Russian player survives, the relentless onslaught of a vengeful and ever-growing Red Army. These aside, the reason why so many enjoy *TRC* is that out of all the games played over the years, many of the most memorable have been of this title. There are few games that can keep the tension level as high over the course of play. I find this true especially between equal or nearly equal players.

Wouldn't you want to break in a novice with *TRC*? Or for that matter, play against an otherwise good player who is unfamiliar with the game? My answer to that is an unfortunate *NO*.

In my experience *RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN* is the kind of game where even relatively small differences in skill and experience are very telling. This is in spite of the oft-touted luck factor which I feel, outside of a few crucial weather rolls, usually does not function throughout the play of a complete game. Further, I have long felt that a bad choice of the existing optional rules vis-a-vis player skill levels can throw a game.

Is there a solution?

Well, you can play a different game. However, once a player, even a novice, experiences the sheer excitement of a good hard-fought *TRC* game, it will more often than not be the game of his choice. With this in mind, several years ago I devised a system using the 2nd Edition Rules which seems to solve this problem for me.

The system assigns a relative point value to the options based on their effect on play. Options which have a more pronounced impact are assigned more points, those which do not exhibit as strong an impact are given fewer points. I also developed some additional options, most of which are simple and easy to implement. Some are rather more complex and sweeping in their ramifications.

I should note here, and this is important, that any of these new options, especially those for which I claim some degree of historicity are not meant as a critique of the original rules. Rather, read them as "game-balancers" into which I have attempted to build some semblance of historical plausibility.

To use this system the players agree upon a certain number of option points per player. Each player chooses the options he wishes to be in effect. There are options which are specific to one side or the other, and there are those options which may be selected by either player. The players ought to choose their options in secret, have an agreed upon procedure for both revealing their selections, and some way of resolving difficulties if their choices happen to coincide or conflict.

What follows is a list of all the options, a short explanation of the rationale for each rule, and the effect of that rule on the game. The rules marked by an asterisk (\*) are those that I have developed. The ones listed with numbers are part of the regular optional rules.

I fully realize that not all readers experienced in *THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN* will agree with the points assigned to each option, the following explanations, nor for that matter even with the player that the option is allowed! If this scheme should prove to be popular, all of these things ought to work

themselves out over a period of time and play. Remember, this is for the players to sort out themselves; I've only provided the guidelines. The most important thing, and I am sure that we all agree on it, is to have those excellent hair-raising contests that *TRC* offers.

Given a contest between two players of equivalent skills, the relative weight in points were assigned on the following basis: one point, minimal or transient value; two points, moderate and occasionally strong; three points, strong if not critical; four points and over, very strong options—real "game-breakers" if taken alone. These point values were derived from playings using very few options per game. If players desire the use of many optional rules in a game, the scaled values are likely to lose some of their numeric validity. This occurs as the options interact to a greater extent.

The Soviet player ought to set up his units prior to the selection of the optional rules.

### I. OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO EITHER PLAYER

#### 1. OFF-BOARD RAIL & SUPPLY (26.6), 2 Points

As the Western map-edge is more constricted than that of the East, this rule will benefit the German player more often than his counterpart. This is a decent option for turning a losing game into a draw. It will help the player who is unfortunate enough to need it.

#### 2. UNLIMITED INVASIONS UNTIL FAILURE (Variant II), 2 Points

For the player that holds all Black Sea ports at any time in the game, this can be a real plus. On



the other hand, if you risk an invasion or transport and it fails . . .

This rule will assist a victorious Russian player in cracking the Rumanian chestnut in 1944-45. It will be of less value to the Axis as they have a more diffuse set of objectives at the Eastern end of the Black Sea. As long as no transports/invasions are lost prematurely, this option will help the player on the offensive in the end-game. The overall effect is likely to be the fostering of a more conservative approach to risk in Black Sea naval operations.

### 3. MONTHLY WEATHER (26.8), 1 Point

A favorite of mine and a lot of other players, it can have a stronger impact than the single point would seem to indicate. This is especially true for the German player as he must take the weather as it comes, while the Russian can play ahead. I guess that's what you get for fooling around in Mother Russia!

However, this is also true to a smaller degree if the normal weather rules are used. "Clear" in November 1941 is still three Stukas worth of trouble for the Kremlin.

This rule will go quite away toward mitigating the make or break luck of the 1941 weather.

### 4. BUT WHAT IF . . . (Variant III), 3 Points

On the face of it this ought to be a German option. However, unless the Wehrmacht can mount an extremely effective blitz, the extra month and the XI Fleigerkorps just do not make up for the likely disuse of two Axis-Allied armies and the anchoring of the Lwow redoubt's left flank. We won't even mention panzer replacements, Italians, and the extra replacement die rolls the Russian player is liable to receive. More often than not the Nazis end up with both fists stuck in the Russian Tar Baby if this is chosen. Even the best part of this option, "The Italian Sellout" gives only a passing advantage in return for long-term disabilities.

The Russian player can take this option in the hope that his opponent will be tempted into using it. If the German does not bite, the Soviets have wasted three option points.

Recommended for the German player who likes to experiment and is perhaps gentleman enough to give a bit of an edge to an unequal fellow player. The high point cost for this option will ensure that Hitler won't "put the Bulge on the Russians" too often.

### 5. SUDDEN DEATH VICTORY CONDITIONS (24.3), 2 Points

If you thought you got rid of the luck factor with Monthly Weather, well . . . here it is again. This time you roll before the game is started! The laurels for this one will go to the player best able or lucky enough to guess his opposite's choices and keep his own disguised.

The rule will quite often serve its purpose, which is to make short an otherwise lengthy game. The cost is flexibility and occasional artificial "wins" by a player.

### 6. VARIABLE TIME SUDDEN DEATH VICTORY CONDITIONS (\*), 3 Points

**RULE:** This option is a variation of the regular Sudden Death rules, only instead of picking the objectives for the complete game at the very beginning, the objectives are selected for the period two years in advance.

That is, each player selects his objectives for the next following year. The objectives must be selected in advance according to the two-year time interval. For example, 1942 and 1943 at the start; in 1942 they select their objectives for 1944, and so on. The selection of objectives must be made during the first turn of each year for the appropriate interval.

This rule takes precedence over the regular Sudden Death Victory Conditions.

This is a more flexible version of the original rule. As such, it may not result in a shorter game. The greatest advantage is that it will assuage the luck problem inherent in the regular option. Two year intervals are a good compromise. The benefits are the same as in the usual Sudden Death Conditions.

## II. OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO THE GERMAN PLAYER

### 1. RIGA, MINSK, KIEV, & ODESSA ON THE FIRST IMPULSE (26.7), 1 Point

In most games this option will affect only Odessa. If the German player sees an opportunity in the Russian set-up, some of the others could be hit. Although this could have a long-term impact on the way the game plays itself out, anyway you cut it, the German advantage remains transitional.

### 2. EXTRA SS REPLACEMENTS (26.2), 2 Points

The help offered by this option will arrive too late for the crucial 1942 session.

On the other hand, if it turns out that 1943 is to be the year of decision, the SS or their substitutes could very well tip the balance against the burgeoning Red hordes. Usually, this rule serves to either prolong the German defense or to drive the final nail into the Red coffin. The overall effect is strong, but rarely pivotal.

### 3. HEXES A4, A5 AND MURMANSK (\*), 2 Points

**RULE:** If the Axis player controls hexes A4 and A5 (control defined as being the last to move a unit or its ZOC through) during any two consecutive snow impulses, Murmansk falls and the 14th Army surrenders. The Archangel replacement roll is lost and the German North Finland force enters in the next clear weather impulse.

The replacement roll is regained the turn after the Soviets move a unit north off the edge of the map at either hex A4 or A5. This unit is placed in the 14th Army's box and re-enters the game under the same circumstances as the lost army.

Murmansk may not fall again after recapture if the German North Finland force has entered the board. If that force has not entered, should the hexes fall yet again to the Germans, all conditions above again apply.

This rule depicts the cutting of the supply lines to Murmansk, as tried historically without success. With Murmansk as a hostile base, Allied shipping via this route, even in summer, would have been an extremely dubious proposition. Doubtless Murmansk could have held out for an extended period in good weather, as fresh troops and their munitions could debark from Archangel. In the Arctic winter, I think it would have been a different story.

This option forces the Russians to actively resist raids into this area. It opens up real campaign possibilities for the Germans in the north, commensurate with the forces needed. No longer can the Russians dig in near Leningrad and let go of everything North of that city.

If Murmansk falls this is a strong option indeed.

### 4. EXTRA RUMANIAN AND FINNISH UNITS (\*)

**RULE:** The Axis player receives two extra 2-4 Rumanian units, the 3rd and 11th corps. These units are placed one each in Bucharest and Ploesti on the June impulse of 1941. He also receives the Finnish 3rd corps, a 3-4, which is placed with the German North Finland group. This unit will enter with, and only if, the German units do.

The Rumanian 2-2 that enters in Sept/Oct 1942 is substituted for the 3rd Corps.

These are actual units that were not included in the game since historically their scope of activity is not depicted on the map. The Rumanian units were operational at the time of the siege of Odessa. Of course they are useful for garrisons and exchanges. If the Murmansk option is exercised in tandem with this, the Finnish 3rd corps can prove to be very useful.

### 5. OSTARBETTER (\*), 3 Points

**RULE:** Starting with Jan/Feb 1942 turn, and ending on the Sept/Oct 1944 turn, the German player may replace each turn the *weakest* infantry corps available. Only regular Wehrmacht units can be taken under this option.

This option is frankly very ahistorical. Its function is to enhance the handicapping system by strengthening a less expert German player.

In most cases the German will gain over 50 combat factors in 17 units. Lone panzer corps guarding sectors of the front will often be replaced by 3-4 infantry corps, thus freeing the armor for more offensively oriented tasks. The loss of corps-sized units in the historical campaign was rare, particularly for the Germans. To accurately portray this in the game would entail a fundamental, and in my view, foolish revision of the current rules.

However, this rule does depict the fleshing out of depleted units by fresh drafts of men and material in an abstract fashion. The rationale for ending it in Sept/Oct 1944 is that, faced with collapse both east and west, the Germans stripped their regular replacement units for stop-gap forces at this time.

One of the strongest German options, hence the five point cost.

### 6. UNRESTRICTED INITIAL ATTACKS FROM POLAND (\*), 4 Points

**RULE:** Any Axis belonging to Army Groups North, Center and South may attack any Russian units that belong to the Baltic, Western or Kiev Military Districts without restriction on the initial impulse of the first turn.

This and the following "Unrestricted Attacks in Poland and either Rumania or Finland" are the most controversial of my optional rules. Cunning use of either one of these two rules can result in a "catastrophe effect" (to quote Richard Hamblen) that the Russian player may find it hard to cope with.

If the goal is to break through and capture objectives such as Moscow early, the Fall weather die rolls will probably be the final arbitrator. In this case, care must be taken to trap or eliminate enough Soviet units to restrict the effectiveness of their countermoves.

With this rule, the German player is not forced to adhere to the original starting dispositions for "Fall Barbarossa" on the main sectors; as such, this is a perfectly plausible historical alternative.

### 7. UNRESTRICTED INITIAL ATTACKS IN POLAND AND EITHER FINLAND OR RUMANIA (\*), 8 Points

**RULE:** The German and Italian units may set up and attack on the initial impulse of the first turn without restriction in Poland, and in either Finland or in Rumania.

The Russian forces belonging to the Baltic, the Western, the Kiev Military Districts, and one of either the Odessa Military District or the Finnish border may be attacked in the very first impulse without the restrictions found in rule 3.4. If Finland is selected, German and Italian units may set up there. All other Axis-Allied units must start in their home country.

Skillful use of this rule will allow twin breakthroughs and the possible entrapment of the majority of the Russian defenders. Again, the "catastrophe effect" may well cost the Soviets the game in 1941.

On the other hand, success of this, like the pre-



vious option, depends very much on good weather luck and can be frustrated occasionally by bad rolls on a crucial battle or two, and astute Russian counterplays. This rule, given Finland's political attitude, is historically very dubious.

#### 8. ENHANCED GERMAN INITIAL ATTACKS (\*), 2 Points

**RULE:** The German has at his disposal on the first turn of the Campaign Game four Stukas instead of the usual three. This extra Stuka is available for that turn *only*, and may originate from any HQ. Further, the range of the German Stukas is now nine instead of eight hexes, for the remainder of the game.

The Russian player must roll a six-sided die after the German player has finished his first turn, the number indicated by the result is the number of rail moves he receives for that turn. This includes all replacements. The Soviet rail capacities and restrictions are per the normal *TRC* rules on the following game turns.

The confusion generated by the surprise onslaught on the 22nd of June 1941 is well documented. This rule adds a little extra to the advantages already given to the German player for that impulse. It depicts the added strength of airpower when it is operating from established bases, air attacks on transport lines, and the overall superiority of German air technology throughout the war.

The "Stalin Surprise?" rule has no effect on this option.

### III. OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO THE SOVIET PLAYER

#### 1. ARMOR HALVED VS. WOODS AND MAJOR CITIES (26.3), 2 Points

While this option has the potential for either hindering or helping either player, the fact is that during the Russian general offensive the Soviet player can usually bypass centers of resistance, leaving them for mopping up by his infantry a turn or so later. The German player, on the other hand, often must take key points with his panzers while he is on the attack. The German infantry tends to be the follow-along force that will reinforce important assaults and protect the flanks.

As the campaign runs its course, it can be noted that the defensive anchor points for the Russians are normally cities, woods, and rivers. The anchor points for the German are most often rivers and mountains.

This is a good option for a Soviet player who can't quite keep those pesky panzers out of Red Square. This is also an interesting option for the German player to work against, as it forces the use of more sophisticated tactics in order to take important targets.

#### 2. TWO WORKER UNITS IN SIBERIA (26.4), 2 Points

If the Russian player likes to be conservative about his placement of worker units, which is usually a good idea, this is a well considered rule.

There are five or six locations which are very hard for the Germans to reach, even in a close game, as opposed to nine new worker units. The "breaking point" at which an eventual win for the Russians becomes less and less likely is with, I feel, about 10 to 12 worker factors. This will give the Soviet player two locations for workers which, rather than being merely hard, are impossible to get at.

#### 3. HISTORICAL WEATHER (26.5), 2 Points

While it can be argued that over the long run the historical weather does not treat the German player too badly, and that it also allows a certain amount of planning ahead, in more than one game the Wehr-

macht has lost badly by "gambling" on hopes that the weather will stay good long enough for the current offensive to pay off. But as many experienced player can tell you, favorable to excellent weather in 1941 gives the German his best single shot at winning the game.

For this reason, the option is available to the Russian player only. The relatively high point cost will ensure that it will not be over-used.

#### 4. DOUBLED REPLACEMENTS THE FIRST TWO TURNS (\*), 2 Points

**RULE:** The replacement value of all worker units is doubled for the first two turns of the campaign game only.

A good ploy against the German who always seems to have an overpowering opening. It is also perfect for the player new to the game, who while confident of his abilities does not fully understand the flow or mechanics.

The average number of units gained is low, yet the timing of their arrival is the key. A couple of extra units may easily make the difference between the Wehrmacht wintering in cities such as Bryansk or Dnepropetrovsk.

The option replicates the flow of activated Russian reserves to the front.

#### 5. EVACUATION OF WORKER UNITS (\*), 5 Points

**RULE:** The rules concerning rail movement, placement of reinforcements/replacements, immobility of Russian Worker units, and sea movement are altered by use of this option.

A: Rail movement is allowed during both impulses of each player turn, provided the unit being so moved has the ability to move that impulse. Under certain circumstances Soviet Worker units *may* be moved by rail. Units may not move by rail unless they can trace a line of rail hexes unbroken by enemy units or ZOC's to their respective board edge or to a friendly controlled major city. There are NO changes in the routine by which railroad control is determined. Rail and sea movement is done each impulse prior to any other movement.

B: Each side is allocated a certain number of rail moves per impulse. The Axis allocations vary with location and weather. All rail movement including that of replacements and reinforcements uses one rail allocation per unit that is moved; in the case of worker units, one per unit inverted or inverted unit that moves (see D below).

C: The Soviets receive five rail allocations per impulse. The Axis player may move 3 units per impulse in Russia, one unit per impulse in Russia during "Snow" turns only. The Axis may also move two units by rail per impulse extra, outside of Russia, regardless of weather.

D: Worker units may be evacuated (i.e., they may be moved by rail). During the first impulse of evacuation the worker unit is only inverted; after the initial inversion the worker may move up to 10 hexes per impulse, and they must re-invert if they finish on an eligible major or minor city. Worker units may not count their factors toward replacements while they are inverted. Inverted worker units have no ZOC's, nor do they have any combat value. If they are alone in a hex, they are eliminated if attacked. Worker units may not invert on the first turn of the Campaign Game, unless the Russian player gains a pre-game impulse via the "Stalin Surprise?". Inverted workers may be moved off the east edge of the board and reinverted during the same impulse.

E: The replacements for both sides must enter at specific locations. All Russian replacements must enter at a non-inverted worker unit at the normal one-to-one ratio (22.1). The Axis-Allies

must enter at their respective capitals (Hungarians at T32), or in the case of the Italians at Bucharest, T32 or Breslau. All German replacements and reinforcements must enter at either Berlin, Posen, Konigsberg or Warsaw. Russian replacements may enter in Siberia if worker units have been placed there.

F: Except for seaborne evacuations, all units using sea invasions or transport must start the impulse of movement at a port on the sea over which they propose to move.

G: Soviet Guards Armored units are counted as both Guards AND as armored units for the purpose of replacement limitations.

One of the most crucial strategic decisions of World War II was taken by the Soviet High Command in the summer of 1941. This decision moved a large portion of Russian industry to safer havens in the east and out of Hitler's immediate reach. This was done despite the grave wartime production dislocation that it entailed. This supremely important decision is not modeled closely in *TRC*.

With this particular rule, what you will not see is a massive movement of worker units to the east, the Russian player must weigh the needs of the front, the need for replacements, and then finally, the timely evacuation of workers. Nonetheless, the worker units saved by this rule, once they are "safely" emplaced will do much to grind down the invasion, and then to turn the tide back toward the German borders.

The effects of this rule are very broad. The Axis will have a slight advantage in the early game, as they will have most of their forces "forward," while the Soviets will have to use the rails both to move armies to the front and to evacuate worker units. Single factor workers are liable to be used in a more aggressive manner. Critical battles are likely to be fought by smaller forces on both sides. The Wehrmacht will experience a sharper loss of momentum as it penetrates deeper into Russia. Finally the German player will be hampered in his ability to respond to Red offensives by using mass rail transshipment of troops to threatened areas.

A good tactic for the Russians to use with this option, is to "leapfrog" workers back to the nearest available site (i.e., Kiev to Kursk, Kharkov to Voronezh, and so forth). This economizes on both lost replacements and rail allocations.

#### 6. SOVIET "STURMOVIKS" (\*), 4 Points

**RULE:** The Russian player now has access to air support similar to the German Stukas, which originate from his Stavka HQ units. This air support, or "Sturmoviks", although not as effective as that of the German, grows as the war proceeds. There are also extensive changes in the rules covering parachute operations, and the movement and utility of HQs on both sides.

A: Air support and paratroops may originate from HQ in either impulse, in so long as that HQ has not moved in that impulse, and is located on a valid friendly rail supply hex or a controlled city. HQs may move in either impulse and by rail if so desired.

B: If eliminated, the Stavka HQ may be replaced the second turn following its destruction—unless it has "surrendered" which will eliminate it permanently. Replacing the Stavka unit will cost the Soviets one replacement point and is done in lieu of a Guards or armored unit. The German HQs are replaced in the normal fashion.

C: Paratroops are taken in lieu of air support. All paratroop units are eligible to drop any number of times as long as the air support quota is not exceeded. To drop, the unit must be "recovered" and with the HQ, the hex the drop originates from. To recover a unit, the HQ must end a impulse in the same hex



as the unit. Paratroops may enter the map at the location of their current HQ at any time in the game, even during the opponent's phase.

- D: The German XI Fleigerkorps is in the "dead" pile at the start of the Campaign Game. The 2nd Parachute corps enters the game as a reinforcement in the July impulse of 1943. Paratroop units may be replaced in substitution for a panzer corps on the annual Axis replacement impulse. The rules covering the use of German paratroops are as outlined in the *Mediterranean Distraction* section of the "But What If . . ." variation with the following differences: they may drop during either impulse, and they may drop during any weather as long as there is a Stuka air support mission available for which the drop may be substituted.
- E: German paratroops may airlift from HQ to HQ each impulse. This has no effect on the availability of air support, but a side record must be kept in case verification of their location becomes necessary. They may not airlift and drop on the same impulse.
- F: If "Monthly Weather" is used, the availability for Stukas is determined on the basis of the roll for the first impulse. The German player is granted one extra Stuka which he may use in any impulse, regardless of weather, in 1944.
- G: The number of Sturmovik/paradrops missions per year, per impulse are as follows:  
 1941 . . . . . 2 missions, one per impulse;  
 1942 . . . . . 4 missions, one per impulse;  
 1943 . . . . . 8 missions, two per impulse;  
 1944 . . . . . 12 missions, three per impulse;  
 1945 . . . . . 16 missions, four per impulse;  
 Unlike the Soviet paratroops, the Sturmoviks may be used in any weather.
- H: Sturmovik air support missions shift any Soviet attack one column to the right. Only one Sturmovik mission may be used with each attack. They may be used, however, in conjunction with artillery to gain up to the maximum of three-column shift in an attack.
- I: Soviet paratroops may only drop in snow impulses in both 1941 and 1942. They may drop in either snow or mud/light mud impulses in 1943. They may drop in any weather in 1944 and after. Soviet parachute units may be replaced at a cost of one replacement point per unit and in lieu of a Guards or an armored units.

This rule will be invaluable in breaking the very stubborn Axis defenses found in the latter stage of the game, as it will turn a lot of those vile 1-1 attacks into 2-1s, 2-1s into 3-1s, etc. It can also help in the few crucial early Russian attacks where the Soviet player is occasionally attacking a large force surrounded at low odds. One or two of these, if successful, can cost the German his chance to win the game.

On the other hand, the Wehrmacht can accrue large initial advantages by hitting important objectives with Stukas on the last impulse of his turn. And, if the parachute unit is revived, the German player can strike at places far in the Soviet rear (such as the Stalin HQ or Archangel).

The overall effect is to put steam into the post-1943 Russian steamroller and turn a lot of ties into Soviet victories.

#### 7. LEND-LEASE (\*), 3 Points

**RULE:** Starting in Jan/Feb 1943, in a fashion similar to that of Archangel, the Russian player gets an extra die roll's worth of replacement points, in so long as he holds either Saratov or Astrakhan. In addition to this, he is able to replace one extra Guards or armored unit if he has control of both of these cities.

The Lend-Lease program did not reach its full effect until the longer, albeit much safer, land route through Persia was implemented. In the game, this is largely factored into the doubling of replacements in May 1943. However, not enough.

This is a game balancing rule, which gives the Russians a little more leeway as to losses in worker and second-impulse capable units. It also depicts historical events in a bit less abstract fashion.

**8. ARTILLERY CORPS (Variant I), 1 or 2 Points**

**RULE:** The one-point option is the regular rule. The two-point option allows for the arrival of the Soviet units as reinforcements from the East, and at earlier dates. The arrival times for the two point version of this rule are: the 1st Artillery corps—Sept/Oct 1942; the 2nd corps—May/June 1943; and the 3rd corps in March/April of 1944. The German 7th Artillery unit arrives, under the two-point scheme, as a reinforcement in May/June of 1943. All arrivals are available in the initial impulse of the scheduled turn.

This, of course, is another method of assisting the Soviets in the mid-and end-games. The second impulse movement of the German unit makes it a much more valued force, yet the Russians are granted more units, and they are more in need of the extra "punch" these units give. I believe, except for perhaps the German unit, the two-point option's arrival dates are more accurate than those given.

#### 9. AXIS WITHDRAWALS TO ITALY 1943 (\*), 3 Points

**RULE:** During the July/August 1943 turn, the German player must withdraw at least 12 combat factors of panzer/panzergrenadier units, and 10 factors of infantry off the west edge of the map. Italian units may be substituted for German infantry, but other Axis-Allied units may not.

While this option is too severe to be considered historical, the fact remains that some units were pulled out and sent to Italy and the Mediterranean about this time. In actuality these withdrawals were replacements "not taken," as many of the units destroyed at Stalingrad and subsequently rebuilt were the mainstays of the bitter Italian Campaign.

Use of this rule will have a marked effect on what is usually a very crucial period in the game. It will either take the steam out of a rampaging Wehrmacht, or it will signal the start of the long road to Berlin.

#### 10. HISTORICAL SET-UP (\*), 1 Point

**RULE:** The Axis player is obligated to operate under historical constraints, or suffer a penalty. Units belonging to Army Groups North, Center and South are not required to set up in Poland yet, if there is more than one extra Axis unit starting in Finland, or more than two extra units in Rumania, then the next option ("Stalin Surprise?") is automatically enforced. Note that only via the use of the free-deployment rule may extra units begin in Finland.

Hungary is considered neutral until July 1941. If any Axis units start in Hungary, all Hungarian infantry units entering the game must remain in Hungary. If any Axis units enter Hungary, even as a result of a retreat, Hungary will remain neutral until either all Black Sea ports are occupied by the Axis, or until Red Army units enter that country. In either case all restrictions on Hungarian units are lifted at that time. Units forced to retreat into Hungary may, at the owning player's option be eliminated instead.

For the remainder of the game, the hexes at T24, T25, and U24 are considered wooded *not* mountainous terrain.

This simply eliminates two anomalous features of the game, one historical, the other geographic. The infamous Lwow position is now rather more porous, and no longer will Army Group South come charging out of the Carpathian Mountains. The Germans will still face quite a bottleneck, but after all, this is a Russian option.

#### 11. STALIN SURPRISE? (\*), 1 Point

**RULE:** After both sides have set up and prior to any movement, the Russian player rolls one die to find out if his High Commander is taken by surprise.

Results: 1-3; Yes, no changes. Proceed as usual.

4; Minor, river effects are not cancelled on the first impulse.

5; No! River effects are not cancelled, and the Red Army gets a free pre-game second movement phase.

6; No! River effects are not cancelled, and the Russian player gets a free pre-game first impulse movement phase, including rail.

ADD +1 to the die roll if more than two "extra" Axis units start in Rumania, or if any units start in Hungary.

+1 to the die roll if any extra units start in Finland.

No Axis ZOC's are in effect during any pre-game movement, nor may any Soviet unit cross any national border, nor may they attack Axis units. However, all Soviet units are released from their original Military Districts, or their reserve status. If the Soviets have selected "Evacuation of Worker Units" along with this option, he does not get any rail movement if he rolls a "5" or its equivalent.

It is ironic that a regime that prided itself on "objectivity" could have been taken in so well by its own propaganda and wishful thinking. "They won't come this year", became "They can't come this year."

A favorite option of mine, and at times a good antidote to the Nazi free set-up options. Depending on the die, the "Stalin Surprise?" could mean nothing, in which case you've wasted an option point. On the other hand, it might be very meaningful indeed. At the very least, occasional use of this rule will make your opponent think twice about loading up in Rumania or Hungary.

## SUMMARY

### I: BOTH SIDES

- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| 1) Off-board Rail and Supply              | 2 Points |
| 2) Unlimited Invasions Until Failure      | 2 Points |
| 3) Monthly Weather                        | 1 Point  |
| 4) "But What If . . . ?"                  | 3 Points |
| 5) Sudden Death Victory Conditions        | 2 Points |
| * 6) Variable Sudden Death Conditions     | 3 Points |
| This category subtotal = 13 Option Points |          |

### II: GERMAN PLAYER ONLY

- |  |          |
|--|----------|
| 1) Riga, Minsk, Kieve, and Odessa on<br>on the first impulse                       | 1 Point  |
| 2) Extra SS Replacements   | 2 Points |
| * 3) Extra Finnish and Rumanian Units  | 1 Point  |
| * 4) Hexes A4, A5, and Murmansk  | 2 Points |
| * 5) Ostarbeiter (Slave Labor)   | 3 Points |
| * 6) German Infantry Draft Replacements  | 5 Points |
| * 7) Unrestricted Set-Up and Attacks in<br>Poland                                  | 4 Points |
| * 8) Unrestricted Set-Up and Attacks<br>in Poland and either<br>Rumania or Finland | 8 Points |
| * 9) Enhanced German Initial Attacks   | 2 Points |
| This category subtotal = 28 Option Points  |          |



### III: SOVIET PLAYER ONLY

- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| 1) Armor Halved vs. Woods and Major Cities        | 2 Points     |
| 2) Two Worker Units in Siberia                    | 2 Points     |
| 3) Historical Weather                             | 2 Points     |
| * 4) Doubled Replacements for the First Two Turns | 2 Points     |
| * 5) Evacuation of Worker Units                   | 5 Points     |
| * 6) "Sturmoviks"                                 | 4 Points     |
| * 7) Lend-Lease                                   | 3 Points     |
| * 8) Artillery Corps                              | 1 1/2 Points |
| * 9) Withdrawals to Italy in 1943                 | 3 Points     |
| * 10) Historical Set-Up                           | 1 Point      |
| * 11) Stalin Surprise?                            | 1 Point      |

This category subtotal = 26/27 Option Points

\* Newly Developed Options

### SUGGESTIONS

I recommend that equal players stay with a fairly low option points apiece. Four to eight points each would be a reasonable estimate. The rationale is that *THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN* is a very dynamic and psychological game. The play-balance side of the handicapping system is weakened as options are loaded one onto another. Large numbers of optional rules are likely to yield very unpredictable results.

In my experience, the following bonuses will even out a game given these conditions:

- |                      |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| An Expert Player vs. |                   |
| A Good Player:       | +3 to +5 Points   |
| An Expert Player vs. |                   |
| A Fair Player:       | +5 to +9 Points   |
| An Expert Player vs. |                   |
| A Novice:            | +10 to +15 Points |
| A Good Player vs.    |                   |
| A Fair Player:       | +3 to +5 Points   |
| A Good Player vs.    |                   |
| A Novice:            | +5 to +9 Points   |
| A Fair Player vs.    |                   |
| A Novice:            | +3 to +5 Points   |

Another way to use this system is to "handicap." When one player wins, he should grant the loser a point or two for the next encounter. If this is done, the losing player is likely to be more amenable to having a rematch. If you think one side or the other has an edge, then factor this into your play with bonus points.



### ORDER BY PHONE TOLL FREE

If your favorite game store does not have the game you want in stock and you have a valid American Express, Mastercard, Choice or VISA credit card, call our Toll Free number 800-638-9292 from anywhere in the Continental United States except Maryland to place your order. Our prompt mail order service will then speed your order to you with our usual lightning dispatch. You must give the order taker the number, expiration date, and name of your credit card along with your order and shipping address. We ship UPS wherever possible. If you prefer Parcel Post, be sure to specify this.

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Maryland residents must call 301-254-5300 and ask for extension 234. Absolutely no collect phone calls can be accepted. The Toll Free number is not valid in Maryland.

# ASK NOT WHAT WARGAMING CAN DO FOR YOU . . .

## A Report on GROTEKA

By Thomas Machowski

This brief article will not deal with tactics or strategy, nor will it analyze any game, nor will it record a sample playing. Ostensibly, it doesn't really pertain to any game. But it is about a group of dedicated gamers in Poland, the incredible difficulties they face in simply enjoying the hobby we take for granted, and brings their request for assistance.

I recently returned from a visit to Poland, where I met an interesting gentleman by the name of Urbanowicz in the beautiful city of Warsaw. He first came to my attention while reading a "Letters to the Editor" column in Vol. 19, No. 6 of *THE GENERAL*. A second letter from him was published in Vol. 21, No. 1. It was upon reading this second letter that I contacted Mr. Martin and indicated that I would be willing to take copies of *THE GENERAL* and wargames across the border into Poland. Due to a lack of time and Mr. Martin's concern for my not being detained upon entering the country, only copies of *THE GENERAL* were forwarded to me. I took these to my first meeting with Mr. Urbanowicz. He was most appreciative of this gesture by gamers in our country. And he further voiced a desire to be contacted by other gamers.

Mr. Urbanowicz, for those who may not know, is the Manager of the Youth Centre in Warsaw and has been affiliated with that organization for more than seven years. He was born in Vilna, Latvia in 1927 and served as an infantry sergeant in the Red Army during the Second World War. He has seen more of strife and struggle than most of us who play these paper wars. He has been interested in military simulations for many years, and is trying—with the help of some enthusiastic youngsters—to establish a corps of wargamers in his adopted country.

At the current time, there are approximately 30 members in the Warsaw Chapter, and there are other Chapters being formed in various cities throughout Poland. For those interested (see photo), the translation over the entrance-way is *Youth Centre for Games and Amusements, General Youth Organization of Poland*. The excitement of these few gamers is infectious. How wonderful to see a group who play for the sheer enjoyment of the game again, and who are not troubled by petty bickering.

The organization has been able to secure a few wargames in the past, but only a very limited number have trickled in from the West. Their members have even designed their own. The games they have obtained have been handpainted on wooden boards by some of the artistic among the ranks and are used constantly by the members.

As anyone who reads the newspapers will appreciate, the economy of Poland is quite depressed. Due to financial limitations and the fact that no company behind the Iron Curtain manufactures wargames, they have asked for help in acquiring some new games. I informed Mr. Urbanowicz that I would make a "plea" to the readership of this magazine. Personally, I would ask that anyone interested in contacting the group personally write to Mr. Urbanowicz at the following address:

Tad Urbanowicz, Manager of the Centre  
GROTEKA  
Młodzieżowe Centrum Gier i Rozrywek ZSMP  
00-370 Warszawa A1. Jerozolimskie 2.



Entrance to the Youth Centre in Warsaw



From Left to Right: Messrs Piesiewicz and Pensko, the author and Mr. Urbanowicz



The group would be more than happy to hear from you and your club newsletter would bring them closer to the hobby. I have been assured that they will try to respond as quickly as possible. Mr. Urbanowicz himself does not speak English, but the other two gentlemen shown (Messrs Piesiewicz and Pensko) are fluent and will be able to translate all your letters and correspond in turn.

As I have mentioned, wargames are a rare commodity in Poland, and there are no funds at the Centre with which to purchase any. On behalf of the Youth Centre, I am calling on the generosity of all gamers reading this report to consider supplying games to them. I am, quite simply, asking for "donations". Obviously, no one will be reimbursed for giving their unwanted wargames to the Centre; but this gesture of friendship among gamers will be warmly thanked. If any of you could have been with me when I presented Mr. Urbanowicz with a handful of copies of *The GENERAL* and seen the sincerity with which he thanked me, they would fully realize the situation and their gratitude for even the smallest kindness.

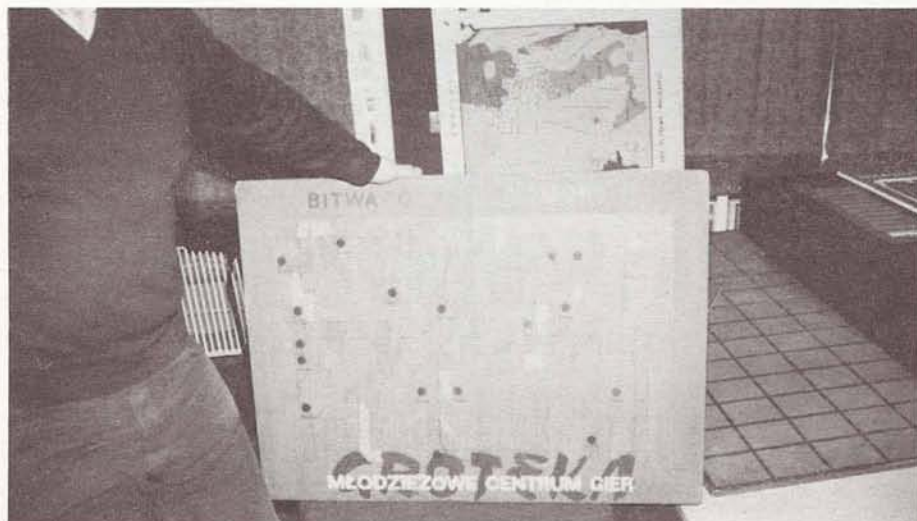
The question arises as to how to send the donations on to Warsaw. Through my experience in sending packages to my family, I have learned that the "regular" mail is not the recommended procedure. The reason is simple—many items are "confiscated" and never reach their destination. Therefore, I'd like to volunteer to act as liaison with the Centre responsible for forwarding all items received. (Throughout this article I have made reference to wargames only, but wish that to be understood to include any magazines on wargaming that anyone would wish to send as well.)

Through an agency in the Detroit area, I am able to forward packages to Poland under guaranteed delivery. Obviously, those interested in making donations will need to send the items to me and I will, in turn, send them on to Warsaw. Please send any donations to the following address:

Mr. Thomas Machowski  
14651 Ludlow  
Oak Park, MI 48237

I've already several games to send, but will be delaying the final packaging until I receive further donations. There is a charge for the shipments, and I would ask that those who forward anything to me carefully weigh their items and submit a \$1.00 per pound donation to help defray the costs. When I receive your donations I will repackage the items and make them ready for shipment, take them to the organization that will deliver them to Warsaw, and see them off to our fellow gamers across the sea. I will supply all names and addresses of those making donations to Mr. Urbanowicz (unless requested otherwise) and I am sure that each will hear from him.

On behalf of the Youth Centre, I would like to say *Dziękuję*. And, from me, a simple thank you.



The GROTEKA Logo

## AREA TOP 50 LIST

Rank	Name	Times On List	Rating	Previous Rank
1.	K. Combs	47	2559XOV	1
2.	D. Burdick	46	2188GGN	3
3.	B. Sinigaglio	32	2150GHT	4
4.	P. Siragusa	41	2150EHK	5
5.	E. Mineman	17	2119DFG	6
6.	F. Preissle	44	2104LNX	7
7.	D. Garbutt	45	2072GIN	8
8.	J. Beard	36	2068HIQ	9
9.	J. Kreuz	41	2063GGL	10
10.	H. Newby	12	2058OUJ	11
11.	P. Gartman	12	2052HGJ	12
12.	D. Barker	12	2014GHN	14
13.	S. Sutton	14	2012FHM	16
14.	D. Munsell	42	2002NHM	15
15.	M. Sincavage	36	1988EFK	17
16.	B. Remsburg	30	1979GIP	19
17.	P. Landry	21	1967HIN	13
18.	W. Scott	44	1964LJU	18
19.	F. Freeman	21	1964EFG	20
20.	J. Cormier	6	1957CEF	21
21.	P. Flory	23	1942DGK	23
22.	G. Charbonneau	10	1937HJG	24
23.	F. Reese	27	1935HDH	22
24.	R. Beyma	22	1910DDF	25
25.	R. Leach	48	1906ILS	26
26.	L. Kelly	40	1889WWZ	27
27.	M. Simonitch	17	1874DEH	28
28.	B. Schoose	12	1871GIM	29
29.	M. Rogers	7	1855CEH	30
30.	C. Wannall	23	1852HLP	31
31.	N. Cromartie	32	1838GHO	32
32.	R. Berger	8	1833CDE	33
33.	P. DeVolve	13	1828DED	37
34.	E. O'Connor	5	1824EFL	38
35.	D. Greenwood	47	1821GFJ	39
36.	G. Smith	1	1821FFL	—
37.	B. Salvatore	14	1816GKO	40
38.	F. Ornstein	30	1813GHM	41
39.	J. Anderson	4	1809DDF	44
40.	J. Martin	5	1807DFI	45
41.	R. Phelps	28	1806HIQ	46
42.	T. Oleson	56	1800XZZ	34
43.	P. Ford	12	1797GCP	49
44.	M. Miller	33	1795GHO	50
45.	R. Shurdut	13	1793DEJ	41
46.	M. Frisk	1	1793CDH	—
47.	E. Miller	1	1783HJQ	—
48.	K. McCarthy	1	1782CEH	—
49.	D. Kopp	6	1766GIN	48
50.	M. Mitchell	1	1757DGJ	—

## MEET THE 50...

Mr. Michael Mitchell is 38, married and father of two, holds a BA in Architecture and is a practicing architect in Roswell, Georgia.

Favorite Game: RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN  
AREA Rated Games: TRC, FE, AK, STAL  
AREA W-L Record: 9-3 % Time PBM: 90%  
Gaming Time/Week: 8 hrs. Play Preference: PBM  
Hobbies: Camping, Tennis, Reading  
Pet Peeve: Other's pet peeves.

Mr. Mitchell injects a note of optimism: "From a player's perspective, one can only be heartened by the outlook for the future of wargaming. Through the vehicles of magazines, AREA service, clubs, AHIKS and conventions the hobby has matured into a legitimate pastime. Gone are most of the make-believe SS goons of old. In general, today's opponents are capable, intelligent and courteous with an ever-increasing degree of ability and devotion to their hobby. Actually, the term "opponent" is a misnomer, as most have become friends. The Avalon Hill Game Company cannot be thanked enough for the professionalism and leadership they have given this hobby. Without their stability and continuity, we would still be in the dark ages of wargaming."



# ACTIVE RETREAT

## Effective Defense in PANZERKRIEG

By James Werbaneth

The *PANZERKRIEG* player with the burden of defense cannot carefully arrange his units in an immobile line, absorb his opponent's powerful blows, and still hope to win. Effective defense in *PK* requires methodical retreat combined with judicious counterattacking. A mobile, active defense is indispensable.

Central to the dynamics of the game is the concept of *Initiative*. The initiative is what determines which player enjoys the strategic offensive and which is charged with defense. In every scenario, the player for whom territorial objectives are listed possesses the initiative, and in each scenario except "Pocket at Korsun" that player moves first. But initiative is not simply the task of conducting the offensive. It is also the ability to dictate the time and place at which the most important combats will take place. The player with the initiative in *PANZERKRIEG* acts; strategically, the other player reacts.

The initiative and offensive ability gives the active player a hefty advantage over the reactive player. The defensive player must erode these advantages. He has to stand and offer combat in terrain that aids the defense. He must simultaneously retreat his forces to a final line that will be difficult, if not impossible, to breach during the waning turns of the game. And he must use calculated counterattacks to take the offensive to his opponent and force him to react, if only for a short time.

In most scenarios, the non-initiative player deploys his units second. But this is of slight use, as the victor in *PANZERKRIEG* is most often determined in the final two or three turns. Therefore the defending player should view the early and middle turns as a vital prelude to the actual time of decision. The combination of retreat, local defense, and counterattack is crucial to the defensive player's efforts toward placing himself in the strongest possible strategic position late in the game.

In a properly executed active defense, territory and objective hexes are traded for time and the preservation of one's forces. It should lead to the ability of the player to shift to an effective rigid defense late in the game, or launch a strong counterattack that will lead to victory. Prior to the time of decision, the defender must be willing to concede everything except, ultimately, the game.

### THE RETREAT

The heart of the defense in *PANZERKRIEG* is the retreat. Paradoxically, effective defense relies upon

the concession of territory to the opponent. Only through the surrender of territory, sometimes in appalling quantities, can the defensive player have a reliable chance of preserving the bulk of his forces for later counterattacks and the establishment of a final defensive line. If this goal calls for abandonment of objective hexes to the enemy, those hexes must be conceded. The defensive player must be willing to sacrifice anything but the final decision.

The defensive player should try to retreat his forces in an orderly line. It is almost certain to be penetrated, especially by armor and motorized infantry, but the integrity of the line can usually be regained through further retreat or counterattacks, and massive envelopments of defensive positions can thus be averted.

But the defensive player cannot confine his efforts to perpetual retreat and occasional counterattacks. He must choose points at which part of his forces will stand and accept combat. Cities are the best and most obvious places to center one's stand. Towns, fortifications, and hexes bordered by minor rivers are much more frequently encountered and are very good places to defend in combat. Bridges across major rivers and river crossing hexes are better defensive positions in a tactical sense. But for strategic reasons that will be treated below, they are best not considered for combat prior to the end of the retreat.

There are two criteria for choosing a site for a defensive stand. First, the terrain must be favorable to the defense in combat. Second, the site should be located in an area that gives the offensive player little choice but to attack. Offering combat is pointless if one's enemy is not discomfited or in fact gains by temporarily halting his advance in that area.

Stacks to be attacked by offensive units at such a site should consist of at least one armor unit and the strongest infantry unit available. Since the strongest armor types will probably be withheld for counterattacks and to act as reserves, weak armor units can be utilized. Soviet 4-11 tank corps are most likely to be used by that player, or 6-11 units if they can be spared. The Axis player's best units for this purpose are his panzer and panzergrenadier *kampfgruppen*, 5-11 panzergrenadier divisions, and the Hungarian, Rumanian and Italian armored formations. German panzer divisions should be held ready for counterattacking if the Axis is on the retreat.

Because of the relative rarity of his armored formations, the Axis player will often be forced to defend with stacks consisting only of infantry

divisions. In some scenarios he starts with four or more panzer battlegroups, but he will find that they are insufficient to lend an armored presence to all his attacks that are to stand and defend. In such cases, he can break down a German panzer division into three battlegroups to augment his defensive capabilities. But the choice to exercise this option should be made with greatest caution, as it represents a significant sacrifice of counterattack potential.

Leader units are as valuable to defensive combat as they are to the attack (or counterattack). They should be included in defensive stacks wherever possible. However, leaders should never be placed in stacks in which there are no units that cannot be reduced to battlegroups. Leaders are too valuable to be risked through the destruction of weak units.

A retreat that is conducted for an entire game of *PANZERKRIEG* represents a concession of victory. Before the beginning of the game, the defensive player should choose a major river to serve as his final line. Ideally, at least one objective should be located behind the river, and fortifications should be located behind the river, and fortifications should be constructed behind bridges and in river crossing hexes by units arriving as reinforcements. The final line is the point at which the defensive effort ceases being a delaying action and becomes a holding action. Once the bulk of the player's units have reached the far side of the river, he should concede no more territory, opting for a combination of static defense and counterattacks to restore any ruptures. The offensive player's forces must be held across the river, and significant breaches of the line resisted. The strongest units should be stacked, with leaders whenever possible, at points at which the river can be crossed. Similarly potent units, especially armor, should act as reserves. Weaker units can be positioned close to bridges and river crossing hexes to contain penetrations.

The concept of the final defensive line gives added importance to the necessity of preserving as much of the defending player's units as possible during the early and middle play. Reinforcements can be sizable in some scenarios, but if the bulk of one's starting forces are destroyed, victory is extremely difficult. Despite favorable terrain, the final defensive line cannot be maintained without the preservation of some of the initially deployed units. The player should consider using reinforcements not only in the line itself but to build fortifications along what is to become the final line.

The defensive player can use the final line in several ways to win the game. If he can conduct





the retreat at a slow pace, he should be able to conduct a point defense of objectives between initial deployment and the final defensive line. And these objectives would be subject to his counterattacks once they have fallen.

On the other hand, an exceptionally rapid retreat can also lead to victory. In many instances, it is easier for the defensive player to retreat in good order than for the offensive player to pursue in a comparable state. Some units, particularly armor and mechanized infantry, tend to advance more quickly than others when unopposed, often moving so rapidly that their flanks and rear become endangered. Ironically, this is especially prone to occur after great tactical successes, particularly breakthroughs. No player can expect his initiative to insure complete tactical success. Weak units are destroyed, strong units become battlegroups, and units of any strength can be halted in their advance by retreats or stalemates mandated by combat. Thus, a very successful offense can result in greater disorder among offensive forces than those of the defensive player, especially if the defensive player retreats skillfully.

The final defense line is a very strong location for the defensive player to regroup and absorb reinforcements. In most instances in which the advancing army approaches in the disorder of its momentum, the final defense line would be a difficult feature for the leading elements to penetrate, if the retreating forces have crossed the river line in mass. The defensive player could then recross the river and either counterattack the leading offensive units or threaten them with envelopment. Execution of a sort of "backhand blow" is entirely feasible.

## THE COUNTERATTACK

In *PANZERKRIEG*, the counterattack is a short term and most frequently local appropriation of the initiative by the defensive player. Even if a counterattack appears to be tactically risk free, it almost always entails some degree of strategic risk. The defensive player has to measure the risks of his counterattack and compare them with the probably tactical and strategic benefits of this small battle.

The defensive player (and the offensive player in "Pocket at Korsun") can normally expect to have his initial lines penetrated in several places at the beginning of the game. As he retreats, his opponent will pursue and continue to pierce the defensive positions during the next several turns in most games. This reflects the supremacy of the offense in *PANZERKRIEG*.

Such breakthroughs can be perfect targets for counterattacks, especially if the originally defending units were forced to retreat instead of being eliminated. If the counterattack is successful, the offensive penetration is negated. If it fails, the counterattacking units will most probably be forced to execute a two-hex retreat. Since retreat would have been the most probable alternative to the counterattack in any case, the defensive player's strategic situation will probably suffer little.

Combat units are a finite resource and must not be squandered. The offensive player will often, however, give his opponent an opportunity to destroy offensive combat units. He does this by leaving some segments of his line lightly defended while concentrating forces elsewhere for his primary attacks. Such a situation almost always exists during the first few turns, when the offensive player masses his strongest formations (especially his armor) for his initial assault. The defensive player can use such opportunities to erode his opponent's almost inevitable initial qualitative superiority.

Perhaps the best target for a counterattack during the early turns of the game, if allowed by the offensive player, is a city that he controls at the outset. A counterattack against such would have to

come in the first turns, as the defensive player's retreat will probably put any enemy-held objective well beyond the reach of his forces during the middle and late turns. By definition, the initiative gives the offensive player the ability to largely determine the time, location and scope of combat. But by seizing a city, the defensive player reverses roles. The loss of that city directly and immediately adds to the difficulty of the offensive cause.

The offensive player is presented with a difficult choice. He can concede the city and risk having to take one more objective in order to win, as well as accepting a probable threat of further counterattack on his flanks or in his rear. Even if offensive advances in other areas force the defender to retreat from the city, the retreat will most likely need not be as rapid or lengthy as it would have been if the city had not been taken. Or the offensive player can divert needed units from his main thrusts to retake the city. In this situation, offensive forward progress will be slowed until the defensive players have left the city.

Late in the game, the counterattack can be used to seize victory from the "jaws of defeat." The defensive player can counterattack to deprive his opponent of objectives, principally towns, needed for offensive victory. If the offensive player has been able to advance over vast amounts of territory and dominate in combat and yet is robbed of that last objective he needs to win the game, you have played a brilliant game—just as if his advances had been minuscule or his forces resoundingly defeated in battle. If the defensive player sees a need for a last minute counterstrike, he should try to keep his units within striking distance of the objective. Outside of reaching the final defensive line, this is the only reason to abandon the strategic retreat. Further, counterattacks (or feints) should be made against as many exposed objectives as possible in order to increase the chances that at least one will succeed.

The defensive player should adhere to several general rules of the counterattack throughout the game. Counterattacks should be made with the greatest possible force. They should include at least one armor unit to take advantage of armor superiority or to deny it to the opponent's forces. Pure infantry counterattacks should be undertaken only against weak forces and be of limited duration. Furthermore, a leader unit should always be among the counterattacking forces.

When he is on the defensive, the Axis player in *PANZERKRIEG* has his best weapon for the counterattack in the German panzer division. If an Axis counterattack includes a stack of three panzer divisions, especially if at least one is a 16-11 or 13-11 unit, and the defending stack lacks armor or is composed of weak armor units, success is almost inevitable. The stack of panzer divisions can be further augmented by a (13)11 leader. Panzergrenadier divisions have the potency and mobility to join panzer divisions on the counteroffensive, and are suited to exploit breakthroughs. German 5-7 infantry divisions can attack in concert with panzer and panzergrenadier, or in purely infantry assaults against weak Soviet stacks. Counterattacks by German 4-7 and 3-7 units, or any Hungarian, Rumanian or Italian units, should not be made unless accompanied by stronger divisions as the cutting edge.

The Soviet player should be governed by similar rules for allocating units to the counterattack. He should employ his strongest units for this purpose. But he should exercise caution about using his own 5-7 infantry divisions because they differ from similar German units in that they cannot be reduced to battlegroups. Soviet 4-7 and 3-7 infantry units should never be used alone for counterattacks.

## AIRPOWER

Although it is much more vital to the offensive cause, airpower is of great use to the defense. The

defensive player should therefore try to preserve his airfields and air units, though not at the expense of significant numbers of ground units.

The most frequent use of air units will be the disruption of the offensive player's units. Disruption can severely hamper the ability of the most powerful offensive formations to pursue and attack. Furthermore, air units attacking without ground units can mount an effective prelude to a counterattack in which other air units function in a close support role.

Combat air patrol is a constant and sometimes very important aerial aid to the defense. It can prevent the offensive player from attacking a hex by denying air support to the effort. Offensively, air units can transform a tactical situation only slightly favorable to the attacking party to one of almost certain offensive triumph. On the other hand, denial of close air support to a player can force him to attack at unfavorable odds, or it can induce him to forego the attack altogether. Therefore the defensive player should place CAP markers over the stacks that he believes are most likely to be attacked with close air support.

Consistent with this, the defensive player should place CAP markers over any stacks attacked by the enemy in the previous turn in which the result was a stalemate. If the previous attack was undertaken with close air support, some of the strength that gave the offensive player the confidence to attack can be negated. If no air units were involved, the offensive player will not be able to renew combat at more favorable odds, or precede it with a disruption attack. Combat air patrols represent a local denial of the initiative to the offensive player.

## CONCLUSIONS

When playing the defense in *PANZERKRIEG* scenarios, one should remember that the game simulates truly mobile warfare in which the offense is more potent than the defense. Truly, playing the defense well is a much more difficult task than that of playing the offense. But the defensive disadvantages are not insurmountable if the player relies on a mobile, active defense and is willing to take losses in territory if not in combat units.

The defensive player must deal with the initiative as well as his opponent's forces. He must at times deny the initiative to his opponent and take it as his own. But since the defensive player is seldom able to possess the initiative for more than two turns, he must always be able to diminish the advantage when it swings back to the attacker.

Effective defense requires perfect timing. A player has to exercise good judgement as to when to stand and offer combat, when to counterattack, and how to determine the pace at which the retreat will be conducted. Much of the challenge of *PANZERKRIEG* has its roots in that sense of appropriate timing.

The principles of the active retreat are applicable to all the scenarios, although they are less apparent in "Battles for the Dnepr." In this scenario, the Axis player begins the game in the unenviable position of standing on what should be his final defense line. To make his plight even worse, the Dnepr line has already been breached by the Soviet player, who holds the initiative. Therefore the Axis player should opt for a more rigid defense from the outset, with a strong emphasis on counterattacking.

In "Aftermath of Zitadelle," the Soviet player does not have towns and cities as his objectives. This scenario is especially suitable for the active retreat, as the Soviet player can win only through crossing the Dnepr in force. And the Dnepr is tailor-made to serve as the final Axis line, especially since there is nothing worth denying to the offensive player on its east side.

The war of *PANZERKRIEG* is one of maneuver. The popular image of war in the southern USSR



is one of offensive pincers that tear through enemy flanks and surround large pockets of hapless defenders, whether at Kiev or Stalingrad. But the great mobility that allows such stunning victories for the offensive side in *PK* does not necessarily insure the defeat of the defending player. In *PANZERKRIEG*, retreat is not the same as "flight." Properly undertaken, it may instead be the same as "victory."

### Errata for PANZERKRIEG Scenarios

The following modifications should be made to the scenarios to bring them into balanced play:

#### Kiev Pocket Scenario:

- 1) Only two German 6-11 units should start, not three.
- 2) All ten units shown are withdrawn on Turn 5.
- 3) Leaders Geyr and Guderian are also withdrawn on Turn 5 if still in play.
- 4) Set-up Area "D" is hex 0222, Sevastopol.
- 5) The Start Line around Odessa should be black (i.e., an Axis Start Line). Soviet "A" units may set up anywhere in hexes 1114, 1115, 1214 or 1215.
- 6) German units need not set up on every hex of the line that says, "No German panzer units may set up south of this line."
- 7) All black-on-grey Axis forces are German except three 2-7 infantry divisions in Force "X", which are Hungarian.
- 8) All white-on-grey Axis forces are Rumanian except three 3-7 infantry divisions in Force "X", which are Italian.
- 9) The two 2-7 infantry divisions arriving on Turn 6 are Rumanian.

#### Winter Counteroffensive Scenario:

- 1) The Axis may not set up in hexes 0427 and 0527.
- 2) All black-on-grey Axis forces are German except three 2-7 infantry divisions initially deployed and one arriving on Turn 11, which are Hungarian.
- 3) All white-on-grey Axis forces are Rumanian except three 3-7 and three 2-7 infantry divisions, which are Italian.
- 4) There should be no Soviet Inf/Gds replacements.

#### The Backhand Blow Scenario:

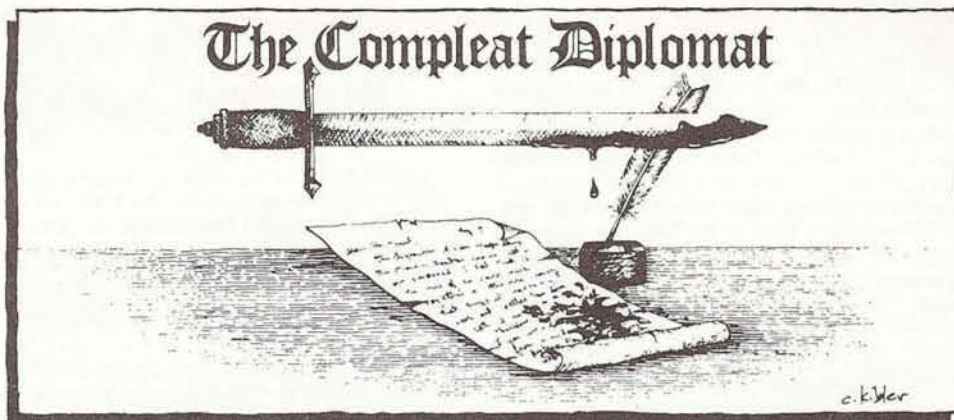
- 1) Add the SS Totenkopf Division, 8-11, arriving on Turn 2, entering areas 14-16.

#### The Drive on Stalingrad Scenario:

- 1) The Soviets should only start with three headquarters units, not four.
- 2) All Axis forces initially deployed in area "X" plus one 3-8 Air unit and the Turn 3 reinforcements are Italian.
- 3) All Axis forces initially deployed in area "Y", the Turn 4 reinforcements, and two 2-7 units of the Turn 7 reinforcements are Hungarian.
- 4) All Axis forces initially deployed in area "Z", two 3-8 Air units, the Turn 5 and Turn 11 reinforcements, and two 2-7 infantry divisions arriving on Turn 7 are all Rumanian.

#### The Stalingrad Scenario:

- 1) Axis deployment notes that the Axis player is required to garrison twelve cities and towns. Those within the "Y" deployment area may be garrisoned by "Y" forces.



## Russia: Master of Two Worlds

By Rod Walker

In the two previous columns [Vol. 22, No. 1 and Vol. 22, No. 3], I've discussed the sources of Russia's weakness and what a player might do to overcome the initial blow of losing his northernmost or southernmost supply center (something that happens quite a bit to Russia). The fact remains, however, that Russia has won more postal games than any other Great Power. In this column, I am going to examine why and how Russia has accomplished this.

The world of *DIPLOMACY* (that is, the playing board) may be considered to be two worlds, "East" and "West." Across the continent of Europe there is a zone of provinces which are not supply centers—Piedmont, Tyrolia, Bohemia, and then Galicia-Ukrania and Silesia-Prussia-Livonia. Most of the stalemate lines in *DIPLOMACY* run through this "empty zone" in one way or another. A stalemate line is one which a single Power (or group of Powers) with fewer than 18 centers can hold forever against a combination of Powers with 18 or more centers. Holding a stalemate line can often force a drawn game. Three Powers lie west of this line—England, Germany and France. Three Powers lie east of it—Austria, Turkey and Italy. Russia alone lies on both sides of the empty zone.

Similarly, the world of *DIPLOMACY* may be said to have two ocean fronts: Mediterranean and Atlantic. This is important because the Atlantic is defensible; an Atlantic Power can deny entry to the Atlantic to any Mediterranean power. Any Power holding England and Portugal can block the entrance to the Atlantic to all Mediterranean Powers, even though their land forces occupy the whole of the continent. (Conversely, the Atlantic Powers can't be denied entry to the Mediterranean but they can be stopped at a stalemate line in and around Italy.) The Atlantic and Mediterranean Powers are the same as the West and East above . . . and again, Russia fronts both oceans. She can build fleets on the Atlantic behind the Gibraltar blockade, and fleets on the Mediterranean behind the Italian stalemate line.

Because of this situation, Russia wins more often than she might otherwise. We can see why this might be if we examine the most common and typical situation which occurs in *DIPLOMACY*: Turkey versus England/France. On her side of the stalemate line, Turkey can get as many as 16 supply centers. On the other side, England/France can have as few as 18. The result is a single power with not quite enough centers to win, facing a pair of powers which share enough centers to win . . . but if one of them stabs the other for the 18, Turkey gets across the stalemate line and wins instead. *Stalemate*, nobody wins and the three Powers draw. This situation can exist in many different combinations: two (or more) Eastern Powers versus two (or more)

Western Powers. In this case, one of the Eastern Powers could be South Russia. Of course, draws can occur for many other reasons (and not infrequently for no good reason at all), but this sort of East-West draw is by far the most common.

The effect of this situation can be seen in the win/draw ratio of the various Powers: Austria, 167/254; England, 172/379; Germany, 154/303; Italy, 121/253; Turkey, 163/320. As you can see, the Great Powers win considerably less often than they draw, averaging a ratio of about 1:2. But Russia's ratio is almost 1:1 (251/262)! This means, using a rough extrapolation, that Russia has won about 80 games which she should have drawn, or just about one-third of all her victories!

It is likely that this considerable advantage is conferred by Russia's position on both sides of the stalemate line. A Russia grown gigantic (say, 12-16 centers) presumably has considerable power in the Baltic/Atlantic and in the Black/Mediterranean. Although it often happens that Russia is allied with an Eastern Power who is handling the Mediterranean flank. A Power with fleets in the north has automatically outflanked the stalemate line. A Western alliance can, by clever tactics, delay the Russian juggernaut . . . but in the end they cannot force a stalemate. They might possibly be able to secure the southern front so that they can put more power into the north than Russia can and push Russia back or get a draw, but the line cannot be held as easily as it can be held against one (or more) of the other Eastern Powers.

A Russian player should therefore plan carefully so that this potential advantage will be usable in the end-game if he is successful in reaching, say, 12+ units in the mid-game. The secret is a strong presence in the Baltic/Scandinavia area. (Of course, Russia can win by a major sweep through the center and south, but this can be stymied by determined defense at the stalemate line, which in turn can only be outflanked in the north.) If Russia's margin of victory is going to be in the north—as it often is—then sooner or later Russia must face England (or whichever Power controls the English island). If it happens early in the game, Russia will be in a very strong position. Normally, Russia's early supply center gain amounts only to Norway; but that is enough—the *strategic* gain in position is by far the most important objective. If the clash with England is to come later in the game, then Russia must be ready for it. Having two fleets in the area, with St. Petersburg free for the build of a third, is a good objective. But don't expect England to be happy about it and it may be impossible to achieve it without war with England right away. Russia's immediate objective when the northern front becomes active would be Norway, Denmark, Berlin and Kiel—thus totally outflanking the stalemate line (and



with hopes of bringing five fleets into play eventually). Once this is achieved, Russia may not be unstoppable (after all, anything is possible in DIPLOMACY), but the steamroller has gotten a running start.

It is important, therefore, for the Russian player to keep in mind the inherent advantage of his position. He can afford to lose his northernmost or southernmost home center and still hope to do well. If he keeps them both, he can hope to outflank the stalemate line in the north, press forward in the center (and perhaps also in the south), and win the game. It is an advantage which increases his chances of a win (as opposed to a mere draw) by 30%. With skillful diplomacy (always!), this potential can be a real strategic boom. If he uses it.

Rod Walker is Editor Emeritus of DIPLOMACY WORLD and author of Avalon Hill's own GAMER'S GUIDE TO DIPLOMACY. The quarterly DIPLOMACY WORLD is devoted exclusively to the game and each issue contains articles, statistics, humor, news and general information for and about the DIPLOMACY fandom. For a year's subscription (\$12.00) to DIPLOMACY WORLD, contact the publisher, Mr. Larry Peery (Institute of Diplomatic Studies, P.O. Box 8416, San Diego, CA 92102). A sample issue is available for \$4.00, and several back issues are still available. The GAMER'S GUIDE TO DIPLOMACY is available from The Avalon Hill Game Company for \$4.50.



## SO THAT'S WHAT YOU'VE BEEN PLAYING

Titles Listed: 121

Total Responses: 531

Rank:	Title	Pub	Rank Times			Freq.
			Last	On	List	
			Time	Ratio	Ratio	
1.	Flat Top	AH	7	2	3.7	
2.	Ambush	VG	—	1	2.8	
3.	B-17	AH	14	12	2.7	
4.	Up Front	AH	5	11	2.5	
5.	Third Reich	AH	4	29	2.4	
6.	Squad Leader	AH	3	29	2.2	
7.	Firepower	AH	2	3	1.8	
8.	VITP	AH	9	2	1.7	
9.	G.I.	AH	18	19	1.5	
10.	War & Peace	AH	6	7	1.4	
11.	Hitler's War	AH	15	7	1.3	
12.	Stalingrad	AH	—	1	1.3	
13.	Civil War	VG	13	2	1.2	
14.	Banzai	AH	—	1	1.1	
15.	Cross of Iron	AH	8	4	1.1	
16.	Diplomacy	AH	—	1	1.1	
17.	Russian Campaign	AH	1	29	1.1	
18.	WS&IM	AH	11	14	1.1	
19.	Civilization	AH	17	2	1.0	
20.	PA Afrika	AH	16	2	1.0	

On the strength of the "Pacific issue" (Vol. 22, No. 2), VITP BANZAI and, of course, FLAT TOP all make strong showings on this survey of how our readership has been spending their gaming time. Meanwhile, the members of the SL family (with the exception of COD) remain firmly ensconced; it remains to be seen what impact the recent release of ASL will have on this fact. Most gratifying for the designers and developers here, several of the new releases seem to be holding steady—notably FIREPOWER and HITLER'S WAR. I predict that the next two featured games, RUSSIAN FRONT and DEVIL'S DEN, both released at ORIGINS '85, will soon join them. Victory Games' Ambush, along with STALINGRAD and DIPLOMACY, return to the fold. And BULGE '81, TITAN, STORM OVER ARNHEM and PANZERBLITZ drop to make room for them.

# RUSSIA AND THE U.S.

## Historical Capabilities in THIRD REICH

By Robert Beyma

THIRD REICH is one of the all time great games; it has been one of my favorites since I first laid eyes on it. One fundamental problem with the game that has always bothered me, however, is Russia's relative strategic weakness vis-a-vis Germany after 1941. It is not uncommon for Germany to have over 300 BRPs as compared to around 100 for Russia by 1943. Germany can literally afford to attrition Russia right out of the game. Something is not right here. Russia reached strategic parity with Germany in 1942 and overwhelmed the Germans with superior manpower and material resources thereafter. The designer's own historical notes address the Soviet resources as well as mentioning that "they managed to increase their armaments production even though the Germans had captured vital Soviet production centers." But one does not get that feeling of vast Russian resources when playing THIRD REICH. The following four modifications will better simulate the Russians' strategic strength and their counteroffensive capabilities in 1943-1945.

### 1. RUSSIAN BRPS

Beginning with the 1942 Year Start Sequence, the Russian player adds the indicated BRPs for control of the following cities to his BRP total:

CITY	1942	1943	1944-1945
Rostov	5	10	15
Stalingrad	5	10	15
Grozny	5	10	15
Kuibyshev	5	10	15
Sverdlovsk	5	10	15
Magnitogorsk	5	10	15

The Russian player loses the BRPs for these cities if they fall to the Germans and the Russian player fails to recapture them in his following player turn. Likewise, the Russian player gets one turn to recapture Leningrad or Moscow. Besides reflecting the increasing industrial capability of Russia as the war progresses, this places some strategic emphasis on the key industrial cities and oil fields in the south as well as the Urals.

### 2. GERMANS BRPS

The German player gains 5 BRPs for each of the above cities that he captures. Additionally, the German player only receives 5 BRPs for Leningrad and 10 BRPs for Moscow (not the current 15 BRPs each). These cities' BRPs, including those for Leningrad and Moscow, are added to the German BRP total only during the Year Start Sequence. The German player loses the BRPs for these cities if they are retaken by the Russians and the German player fails to recapture them in his following player turn.

### 3. FORCE POOL

The following units are added to the Russian Force Pool in Spring 1943: two 4-5 armor and one 5-4 air. These units may be built at no BRP cost. They may be placed at Leningrad, Moscow, or any of the aforementioned cities with a maximum of one unit per city. If the Russian player holds less than three of these cities, the excess units do not arrive. These units will go a long way towards rectifying the armor and air disparity between Russia and Germany from 1943 to 1945. (Note: Players will have to make these three counters.)

### 4. FREE SIBERIAN TRANSFER

The Siberian transfer is indeed free; delete Rule 15.63. By the time the Siberians were brought west, Japan had already decided on its grand (or not so grand as it turned out) strategy.

THIRD REICH perpetuates a myth that Russia was able to survive the German onslaught and win the war only with massive Western aid. In the game Russia oftentimes receives over half of its annual BRPs from Lend Lease. This forces the German player to center his strategy on severing the Lend Lease routes. The truth is that Russia produced over 90% of its war material and won the war mostly as a result of its own efforts.

A frequent explanation of the "need" for Russia's weakness is that it balances the United States being too strong initially. Now, where I come from, two wrongs do not make a right. In THIRD REICH, the United States has the capability to launch a major counteroffensive by the end of 1942. The essence of this misrepresentation of American capability lies in the Force Pool. Simply, the United States can build a large counteroffensive force much too soon. Eisenhower and Churchill would have drooled over the strike force that the U.S. can deploy into England by late 1942 in the game. The following three modifications will better simulate the build-up of U.S. strength as the war progresses.

### 1. FORCE POOL

The United States force pool is modified as shown below:

UNIT TYPE	AT START	ALLOWABLE BUILDS		
		1942	1943	1944
Fleets	4	1	1	1
Air Units	2	1	1	1
Armor	1	1	1	2
Infantry	5	3	3	4
Airborne			1	
Replacements		2	2	3

Thus, the United States will have limited forces in 1942-1943 while building up to a maximum counteroffensive potential in 1944.

### 2. INITIAL DEPLOYMENT

The U.S. Initial Deployment capability is modified as shown below:

YEAR	NUMBER OF UNITS PER TURN
1942	4
1943	5
1944	6
1945	7

The capability of the United States to deploy forces to Europe increased as the war progressed. Besides the U-Boat problem, there was a shipping shortage until 1944.

### 3. LENDING BRPS

The United States may grant a maximum of 20 BRPs per turn during 1942. The Americans were still gearing up the war industry and overcoming the U-Boats.

It is highly recommended that the Russian and American changes be used together. Not only will these result in a more realistic strategic simulation but they will also improve the balance of the game between the Eastern and the Western fronts. Russia will be less dependent on the Western Allies and will have sufficient forces and BRPs to take the war to Germany from 1943 to 1945. The U.S. build-up will be slowed initially but the Americans will be there in force by 1943-1944 with at least as many BRPs as Germany. On balance, these changes probably help the Allies (but this is as it should be).





# ON PATROL

## Solitaire Rules for SUBMARINE

By Robert Harmon

Many of this magazine's readers can testify to the difficulties of finding a live opponent—even in urban areas. In rural regions, this can be a serious problem, as I found when I moved away from the San Francisco Bay area in 1978. Although living near Mount Shasta does have its advantages, fit play is much more difficult when opponents are twenty or thirty miles away (as the crow flies).

My first experiences with *SUBMARINE* were in solitaire play. A problem with the *SUBMARINE* rules is that the few scenarios devised for solitaire only involve a sub against randomly moving cargo ships, which are unchaperoned. The resulting game soon becomes reminiscent of wooden ducks under fire on a carnival midway. I decided to produce something more challenging.

The new rules provided below should change that problem, and add to *SUBMARINE*'s enjoyment for many players. In these rules, the player assumes the role of sub commander but will face escorts that can shoot back as well as unarmed merchantmen. Players will find that the escorts will move automatically—and implacable. The rules may appear complex at first, with added terminology to boot. The aim of the rules is to provide for automatic escorts that will give the player something more than target practice. Once in operation, players will find that the system is fast-moving and playable once the rules have been mastered.

### 100.0 SOLITAIRE RULES

The solitaire player assumes the role of submarine commander, and opposes the surface vessels in any convenient scenario. The surface ships (escorts, capital ships, and merchantmen) move automatically according to the rules provided below. The solitaire player moves both submarine and surface units, and maintains log entries for all of them. Surface units move and attack as set forth in these rules, automatically rather than by choice of the solitaire player. The player should strive to move these units as the rules dictate. The result will be a real fight against a faceless but *active* enemy.

#### 101. Applicable SUBMARINE Rules

**101.1** All rules for *SUBMARINE* are in force, unless amended or cancelled by these rules.

**101.2** Players may select to play either the Basic Game, the Optional Rules with the Basic Game, or the Advanced Game (optional rules included). Whichever of these three options are selected, they must be played in their *entirety* with all rules involved (as amended by the solitaire rules). In other words, each of the three possible rules configurations must be used as a "package".

**101.3** Any of the "Design Your Own" scenario rules may be used at the player's discretion, except those specifically deleted below.

#### 102. SUBMARINE Rules Deletions

**102.1** Disregard Rule 20.3.2. In any scenario where escort placement is not dictated by the rules, escorts are placed according to Rule 103.2 at start.

**102.2** Disregard all rules in Section 21.0 (Submarine Hidden Movement) except rules 21.2, 21.6 and 21.7. Rule 21.2 is amended to apply to the submarine at all times; the bow hex is to be noted each turn in the Submarine Log. Submarine visibility and "hidden" movement is discussed in Section 104 below.

**102.3** Disregard Section 40.0 (Torpedo Hidden Movement) in its entirety. Torpedoes are presumed visible under Rule 21.6 and will have their counters on board throughout their movement.

**102.4** Cancel Rule 50.0 (Weather) in its entirety. Presume *Clear* (i.e., calm) conditions unless a scenario specifically states otherwise.

**102.5** Delete Sections 61.0 and 62.0 (Depth Charge Capacity and Torpedo Availability) entirely. Submarines start each solitaire game with all tubes loaded and the maximum reload allowed by the Data Chart; choice of torpedo types is left up to the player, subject to the availability restrictions shown on the Torpedo Data Charts. Escorts have *unlimited* depth charge and ATW capacity, and all carry only the latest, heaviest depth charge allowed by the Weapon Availability Chart (e.g., 600 lb. depth charge instead of 300 lb.). ATW are always present when indicated by the Ship Data and Weapon Availability Charts. (EXC: One-ton, MK X depth charges are carried in addition to 600 lb. depth charges on British DDs, with a limit of *one* Mk X per ship under Rule 51.5.1!)

#### 103.0 Starting the Solitaire Scenario

##### 103.1 Convoy Formations:

**103.1.1** Formations must adhere to those shown on Page 11 of the *SUBMARINE* rulebook or on Chart 103.1 (New Formations Table). The formation is automatically determined by the number of merchantmen available; 18-ship convoys will automatically set up in Formation 1, for example.

**103.1.2** If a 12-ship convoy is being set up, roll a die. A roll of 1-3 will require they be placed in Formation 3; a roll of 4-6, Formation 4.

##### 103.2 Escort Formations:

**103.2.1** Placement of escorts is mandatory, and is performed according to Chart 103.2 (Escort Stations Chart). This is done after placement of merchantmen or capital ships, and is based on the number of escorts present as the chart indicates.

**103.2.2** Escorts move in unison with the convoy, maintaining their place in the overall formation, until torpedoes are fired or a sub is detected as the Solitaire Movement rules direct.

**103.3** Placement is in order of priority: Escort Station A being the highest priority. The highest valued escort (i.e., highest VP) is placed in Station A, the next-highest in Station B, and so forth in descending order.

**103.2.4** Escorts placed in Escort Station B may be placed inside the convoy box in compliance with the Escort Station Chart.

**103.2.5** In scenarios where escorts are the only surface units, placement will be directed by the scenario rules, and the escorts will move in unison as directed by Rule 104.2 below.

##### 103.3 Capital Ship Formations:

**103.3.1** Capital Ships (defined as carriers, battle-ships and cruisers) are placed in convoy formation (i.e., columns) in the patterns dictated by Rule 20.2.7 and Chart 103.1.

**103.3.2** Capital ships, when in a convoy with merchantmen, must be placed in column in the following priorities:

a) The first ship in column, beginning with the center column and working outward (alternately first the nearest left, then the nearest right) toward the outer edges of the convoy.

b) When the lead positions in all columns are filled with Capital ships, any remaining Capital ships are to be placed in the outermost columns (left and right) in equal numbers in each.

c) If the process leaves an odd Capital ship, place it in the rear of the center column.

**103.3.3** Placement of Capital ships is to be by order of Victory Point value, and is done before merchantmen are placed.

#### 104.0 Solitaire Movement

##### 104.1 Submarine Movement:

**104.1.1** Submarines are moved by the Solitaire player acting as the sub commander. Submarine movement is voluntary and is performed in accord with normal *SUBMARINE* rules.

**104.1.2** Submarine counters are on board and visible to the player at all times. "Hidden" or "visible" status is now determined by the Escort Action Table (Chart 104.2.1) and the Submarine Detection Table (Chart 104.1.3) as the result of searches performed during turn.

**104.1.3** Whenever a submarine is contacted by radar or sonar search, or is "visible", an additional submarine marker is placed according to the Submarine Detection Table. This indicates that the sub has been detected by the enemy. Submarine markers may not exceed one per active submarine.

#### 103.1 New Formations Table

These formations may be added to those detailed in Rules 20.2.7-12 in order to cover all situations that have appeared in print to date.

##### Formation 7

This convoy formation is composed of six ships in three columns with two ships per column.

Column	1	2	3
Bow Hex	E20	M20	U20
Direction	3	3	3

##### Formation 8

This convoy formation is composed of three ships in one column.

Column	1
Bow Hex	X22
Direction	1

##### Formation 9

This convoy formation is composed of five ships in three columns with two ships in each outside column and one in the middle.

Column	1	2	3
Bow Hex	E20	M20	U20
Direction	3	3	3

##### Formation 10

This convoy formation is composed of four ships in two columns with two ships in each column.

Column	1	2
Bow Hex	I40	Q40
Direction	6	6



### 103.2 Escort Station Chart

	E	A	E	
C	O	C	O	C
	U	E	U	
	T	N	T	
	R	E	R	
	M	R	M	
	O		O	
	S		S	
	T		T	
	C	C	C	
	O	O	O	
	L	L	L	
	U	U	U	
	M	M	M	
D	N	N	N	D
	F	B	F	

Convoy Escort Station	Position In Formation
A	Stern of escort six hexes ahead of lead ship, center column (5-hex gap).
B	Bow of escort six hexes behind trailing ship, center column (5-hex gap) (position used only with even number of escorts).
C	Even with lead ship in outer columns, and eight hexes to left AND right.
D	Even with trailing ship in outer columns, and eight hexes to left AND right.
E	Even with A, and ahead of outer columns.
F	Even with B, and behind outer columns.
—	Remaining escorts: paired off behind C, with 5-hex gap in front and behind. Must be symmetrical on both sides.

#### 104.1.4 A submarine is visible when:

- it is on the surface or at 25-foot depth during daylight.
- it is on the surface or at 25-foot depth at night and is within four hexes of an enemy vessel (including merchantmen) or within seven hexes of a vessel torpedoed on the previous turn and which is still afloat.
- it has been sighted under Rule 47.0.

104.1.5 Submarines may only attack vessels visible to the sub under the Submarine Visibility Table (see the Data Cards).

#### 104.2 Escort Movement:

104.2.1 Escort movement is automatic and is determined by the Escort Action Table (which itself is based on the Submarine Detection Table's results). The Escort Action Table is consulted at the end of each turn, and will determine movement for the escorts for the coming turn.

104.2.2 The Escort Action Table is also consulted at the beginning of the game, prior to movement. Unless the scenario actually states that contact has been made, or if the initial depth of the submarine is 25 feet or less, the escorts will begin play in *Mode 1*.

104.2.3 As detailed in the Escort Action Table, escorts move in one of three general ways:

- In formation. Escorts move in unison with the merchantmen or capital ships, maintaining their convoy stations. Escorts will match convoy movement exactly. They break formation only when the Escort Action Table so dictates.
- Radial Movement (see 105.0).
- Diameter Movement (see 106.0).

104.2.4 When escorts appear in a scenario alone (with no merchantmen or capital ships), they move according to the Escort Action Table. When in *Mode 1*, they move according to the Fleet Movement Table (Chart 104.3.1) at *Fast Convoy Speed*.

The die roll for movement is done prior to each turn's movement, and is performed for the escorts in unison (i.e., one die roll only, with results applying to all ships).

#### 104.3 Merchant Movement:

104.3.1 Merchantmen (cargo and tanker vessels) move according to the Fleet Movement Table. One die is rolled at the start of each Convoy Movement Phase and is performed *regardless of the tactical situation*. This same die roll will also apply to escorts moving in formation (*Mode 1* on the Escort Action Table), but applies to merchantmen every turn regardless of what the escorts do.

104.3.2 Merchantmen move and turn in unison. They maintain their relative positions in formation unless sunk or dead in the water.

104.3.3 Merchantmen will *not* collide with ships dead in the water. If an individual ship is to perform a movement directed by the Fleet Movement Table that will result in collision, the moving vessel stops the moment it comes within three hexes (inclusive) of a stopped ship (i.e., a two-hex gap) and the ship's bow is pointed at the stopped ship. The moving merchantmen halts movement at that point and remains stopped until the Fleet Movement Table dictates a movement that won't bring the bow closer to the stopped ship. Ships stopped by this rule will continue to make all turns dictated by the Fleet Movement Table (i.e., the bow will face the same direction as the remainder of the convoy).

#### 104.4 Capital Ship Movement:

104.4.1 Capital ships also move according to the Fleet Movement Table. Movement is made in unison with the entire convoy, as directed by the table.

104.4.2 Once torpedoes have been fired, and as long as Capital ships are not in convoy with merchantmen, Capital ships move according to the *Emergency* column on the Fleet Movement Table. When moving in Emergency mode, which begins the turn after torpedoes are fired, Capital ships increase their speed by one hex *each turn* until the maximum speed of that ship is reached. That speed will continue in effect until the end of the scenario. One die roll for the Fleet Movement Table is made each turn, and the results followed in the appropriate column, for all Capital ships.

104.4.3 If capital ships move off the board in Emergency mode, they may not return to play.

104.4.4 Since Capital ship counters have no ID numbers, the ship's position in a convoy is to be determined by writing the ship's name across the spaces in the convoy section of the Log normally used for merchantmen. (Example: if the *Enterprise* is in Row 1, Column 1, the word "Enterprise" is written across the five boxes in the corresponding location on the Convoy/Escort Log.) Capital ships will continue to be shown in the escort group section in the Log; the name in the convoy section merely identifies which counter is which. Since capital ships are set up in convoy formation in solitaire play, and since they may not deviate from it unless sunk or dead in the water, this rule is necessary to distinguish Capital ships despite their lack of ID numbers.

104.5 Capital ships perform evasive action as described in 104.3.3, and will not collide with other surface ships in any circumstances.

#### 105.0 Radial Movement

105.1 *Radial movement* is the term applied to the procedure used to move escorts toward a submarine contact. Radial movement also describes the procedure for escort attacks under solitaire conditions.

105.1.1 Radial movement procedures are automatic, and are instigated as dictated by the Escort Action Table. These actions are mandatory in solitaire play.

105.1.2 The "radials" used for this movement are the six straight-line hexes extending from each of the six hex-sides. These radials extend from a given target hex in all directions towards the board edges.

105.1.3 A "target hex" is one of two locations indicating a point of aim for the escort—either one hex ahead of the bow of a submarine marker, or the point of launch of torpedoes (hex "B" on the Submarine Log sheet in all cases). The submarine markers described in Rule 104.1.3 are used to indicate the target hex.

105.1.4 A *radial vector* is the route to be followed to enter a radial; the vector will bring the escort onto the path with only one turn necessary to follow the radial to the target hex (see illustration). Vectors are 60 degrees off the radial itself.

105.1.5 An *assault zone* is the area centered on the target hex and extending two hexes in all directions (see illustration).

105.2 A "Williamson turn" is a movement which will bring an escort around 180 degrees (the opposite facing) and *back into the same row of hexes in which it began the maneuver* (see illustration).

#### 105.3 Movement Performance:

105.3.1 Radial movement begins when directed by the Escort Action Table. This determination is made at the end of each turn.

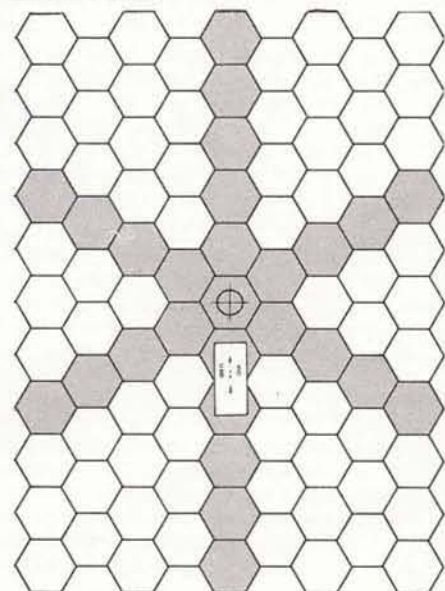
105.3.2 Radial movement proceeds as follows:

- Each escort turns (in the general direction of the target hex) till it is on a vector to the *nearest* radial. Escorts then move along the vector in a straight line until the radial is reached. The escorts' turns and movement must comply with *SUBMARINE* rules (i.e., one turn per hex).
- The escort, on reaching the radial or if already on it, heads directly toward the target hex. (If the proper vector has been followed, only one 60-degree change of facing will be necessary.)
- The escort proceeds in a straight line to the assault zone, aiming at the target hex.

105.3.3 If the escort is already on a radial, but cannot make a legal turn onto the course to the target hex (i.e., facing away from the target hex), the escort performs a Williamson turn on its initial course for the turn and proceeds thus until it is on the radial and on course for the target hex.

105.3.4 When the target hex changes due to new sightings, each escort will correct its movement by the same method as described above (i.e., following a new vector and radial).

Illustration—Radials





**105.3.5** When performing radial movement, escorts speed up to maximum speed (in the progression described by Rules 8.2.1 and 31.1) unless the Escort Action Table states otherwise. Search Speed, when mentioned on that table, is always *three* hexes per turn.

#### 105.4 Escort Attack:

**105.4.1** Escorts attack automatically when they reach the assault zone, as long as radial movement is in effect. All weapons able to reach the assault zone (ATW, depth charges, K-guns) do so, up to their maximum and in as many hexes of the assault zone that can be reached. This is done regardless of the escort's speed. Remember that the assault zone is the target hex and all hexes in a two-hex radius—effectively, the range of movement of a submerged submarine.

**105.4.2** An escort may, in solitaire play, steam across hexes undergoing Hedgehog attack. No escort may steam across a hex undergoing depth charge or K-gun attack.

**105.4.3** ATW does not take effect immediately in solitaire play. ATW attacks are resolved along with the depth charges in the Anti-Submarine Attack Resolution Phase.

**105.4.4** Priority of Attacks: Where range and escort characteristics permit (see 105.4.6), assault zone hexes are to be attacked in the following priority, with at least one ATW, depth charge or K-gun each:

- the target hex;
- the hexes adjacent to the target hex, starting with the hex ahead of the target hex (i.e., two hexes ahead of the sub marker's bow), then

the two hexes adjacent to that hex and the target hex, last in priority of the inner circle of the assault zone is the bow hex of the sub marker (i.e., the hex behind the target hex).

c) the hexes at a distance of two from the target hex, starting with the hex directly in front of the sub marker, then proceeding around the circle of hexes evenly in both directions from front to rear.

**105.4.5** Order of Attacks: The nearest escort to the target hex (distance counted from the escort's bow) moves first in the Escort Movement Phase. The other escorts move in order of proximity. Where two escorts are equally near, the escort whose bow points the closest to the target hex moves first.

**105.4.6** The Attack: each escort moves on a straight line through the assault zone, firing all possible ATW, K-guns and depth charges in such a manner as to put at least one such weapon in all reachable assault zone hexes. When sufficient hexes cannot be reached to allow one-attack-per-hex, weapons will be fired as evenly as possible (e.g., when six depth charges can only reach three assault zone hexes, the escort drops two in each of the available hexes). In all cases, the escort will adhere as closely as possible to the priorities of Rule 105.4.3.

**105.4.7** All movement and attack by escorts is final; no die rolls may be made again nor movement retraced.

**105.4.8** Escorts may not move through hexes containing previously-moved escorts or depth charges dropped by same. Escorts may deviate from Rule 105.4.6 but will, in all cases move parallel to its radial and as close to the target hex as possible.

**105.4.9** Escorts move through the assault zone and leave it on the same course they entered it. When the stern of the escort is outside the assault zone, the escort executes a Williamson turn and launches a new attack. Escorts will attack repeatedly, so long as Radial movement is in effect.

**105.4.10** If an escort cannot reach enough assault zone hexes to spread its attacks evenly, (especially if K-guns are involved) and no vacant assault zone hexes can be reached, K-guns and ATW may be fired into hexes already containing other attack markers.

**105.4.11** Escorts may *only* attack assault zone hexes, *only* when Radial movement is underway, and *must* fire all weapons able to reach the assault zone (see Escort Action Table for surface gunfire, which is not used in Radial movement and not defined herein as "weaponry"). Escorts may not be moved so as to collide with other escorts, or in violation of Rule 105.4.8. Escorts may *not* fire ATW into hexes occupied by other surface vessels.

**105.4.12** Attacks are resolved as prescribed by the *SUBMARINE* rules, except that the Submarine Depth Combat Table is rolled *first* for all depth charge and K-gun attacks (including Squid). This represents the enemy's guess as to your depth.

#### 106.0 Diameter Movement

**106.1** *Diameter movement* is a maneuver used when escorts move *around* a target hex rather than towards it. This is used especially when firing on a surfaced submarine and, in any event, is implemented by the Escort Action Table.

**106.1.1** A "diameter", for the purposes of this

#### 104.1.3 Submarine Detection Table

The submarine counter itself, of course, remains on board at all times, since the solitaire player is the sub commander. However, markers are used to show the various levels of detection by the enemy—and are used to orient escort movements. The markers indicate the target hex—the hex ahead of the marker's bow—and provide a convenient basis for using the Escort Action Table at the end of each turn.

PHASE	EVENT	ACTION
any	Sub visible or surfaced (depth 0-25)	Place submarine counter (any) of the sub's own nationality <i>under</i> the sub counter. Move the marker with the sub as long as it remains at 0-25' depth. Do <i>not</i> confuse it with your real sub!
8	Sub disappears from visible depth (50+)	Put submarine counter of escort's own color in the exact position sub began its movement, to include precise facing/bow direction. Do <i>not</i> move with sub in sub movement phase.
6	Sub found by radar/sonar search, not visible (50+ day, 0-50+ at night)	Put sub marker of escorts' own color on sub position, pointing in same direction. Do <i>not</i> move with sub in sub movement phase.
6	Sub missed by radar/sonar search, not visible	Invert marker already on board. If there was no sub marker to begin with, continue in Mode 1.
8	Torpedoes appear; sub not previously sighted or contact lost	Place inverted torpedo marker in hex ahead of sub bow (hex B on Submarine Log sheet), pointing in the same direction (this marker IS the target hex for escorts). Remove any inverted sub markers. This marker remains on board till new sub markers appear. This marker is not placed if the firing sub was already visible or in radar/sonar contact.
10	End of turn	Consult Escort Action Table.

**NOTE:** The actual submarine remains on board at all times. Only one sub or torpedo marker may be on board for each submarine in play. If the submarine is visible at start, mark it accordingly and consult the Escort Action Table before beginning game.

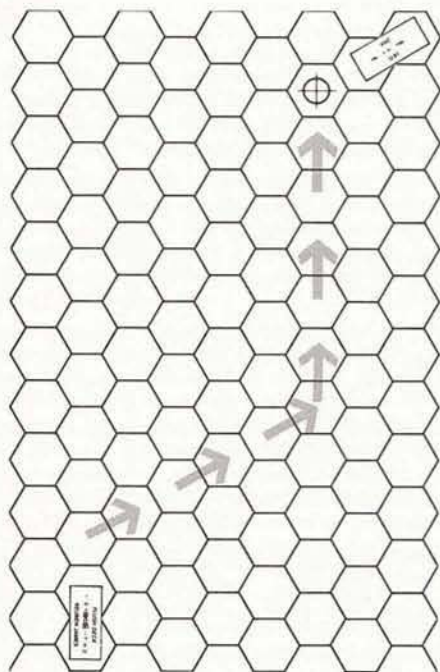
#### 104.2.1 Escort Action Table

Movement of escorts on the following turn is determined by this table at the end of Phase 10 of the preceding turn. Placement of submarine markers, which determines the result on this table, is done using the Submarine Detection Table.

SUB MARKER	MODE	ESCORT ACTION
none	1	No previous sightings. Escorts proceed in formation, moving in unison with convoy. All escorts conduct sonar and radar search.
torpedo marker	2	Torpedoes launched. Escorts begin RADIAL MOVEMENT at Search Speed, using marker as target hex.
sub marker, escort color	3	Sonar/radar sighting. Escorts begin RADIAL MOVEMENT, full speed—with the exception of escorts with sonar contact, which move in RADIAL MOVEMENT at Search Speed.
sub marker, sub color	4	Submarine sighted (25-foot depth). Escorts begin RADIAL MOVEMENT, full speed.
sub marker, sub color (surfaced)	5	Submarine on surface. Escorts begin DIAMETER MOVEMENT, full speed. All surface vessels open fire whenever LOS permits. Nearest escort to sub this turn begins RADIAL MOVEMENT, orients on bow of sub (not target hex), and will RAM if sub hasn't submerged by then.
sub marker, inverted	6	Contact lost. Begin DIAMETER MOVEMENT, Search Speed.
	7	GAME END. Begin prolonged attack procedure. Escorts are selected for this in order of VP value, as permitted by Rule 34.7.
Two markers	Double	A second sub is sighted. The nearest escorts (half of them, rounded down) proceed accordingly to appropriate mode.
Three markers	Triple	A third sub is sighted. The nearest escorts (half of each force detailed to the other two subs) proceed according to the appropriate mode.

**NOTE:** Sonar search is always conducted by vessels at Search Speed, each turn. Radar search is always conducted by vessels having that capability, each turn.





Illustration—Radial Vectors The most direct route to the radial, and one requiring only one more turn onto the radial itself.

game, is a circle of hexes that is an equal distance at all points from the target hex. A diameter of six, for example, is that circle of hexes that is six hexes from the target hex in all directions (the circle forming a large hexagon).

**106.1.2** Diameter movement is executed by following the diameter and never having the bow hex leaving the path (the bow hex must always remain at the same distance as dictated). This means a 60-degree turn at each radial (as a glance at the illustration will show).

#### 106.2 Movement Procedure:

**106.2.1** Diameter movement is directed by the escort Action Table, and continues as long as the Table directs.

**106.2.2** Escorts follow, in order, their respective vectors and/or radials toward the target hex as in Radial movement (Rule 105.3.2). However, upon reaching the assigned diameter distance, each escort will turn and follow the diameter hexes in a counter-clockwise direction.

**106.2.3** In the diameter pattern, all vessels move at either Search Speed or, when the Escort Action Table is calling for "Full Speed", at the maximum speed of the *slowest* ship in the diameter.

**106.2.4** The diameter to be followed is a distance of 12 hexes from the target hex. If a vessel commences Diameter movement already within that distance, it moves to and follows a diameter of six hexes.

#### 105.4.12 Submarine Depth Combat Table

This table is rolled on for each depth charge or squid attack launched. This must be done prior to resolution of attack and replaces the announcing of depth by Escort Player. Attacks are then resolved normally, or are not rolled for in the event of a "Miss" at all.

Dice Roll	Depth Charge Detonation
54-66	Same depth as submarine.
41-53	Within 25 feet of submarine.
24-36	Within 50 feet of submarine.
11-23	Miss. No attack.

#### 104.3.1 Fleet Movement Table

This table is rolled upon at the start of each Convoy Movement Phase and applies to all merchantment, Capital ships and escorts *moving in formation*.

Convoy Type	Die Roll					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Slow Convoy (Speed 1)	L1	R1	1	1	1L	1R
Slow Convoy (Speed 2)*	L2	R2	2	2	2L	2R
Fast Convoy (Speed 2)	L2	R2	2	2	2L	2R
Fast Convoy (Speed 3)*	L3	R3	3	3	3L	3R
Emergency (Speed M)	LM	RM	M	M	ML	MR

\* Advanced Game

#### 107.0 Night Illumination

**107.1** Section 107.0 applies whenever Section 25.0 of the original *SUBMARINE* rules is to be followed, and *only* in night scenarios.

**107.1.1** Starshells are fired whenever torpedoes or a submarine is detected. This is automatic and is spelled out in detail on the Escort Action Table.

**107.1.2** Starshells are fired by the escort *furthest* from the target hex.

**107.1.3** Starshells are fired in the target hex and three hexes ahead of it (in the direction of the sub marker or torpedo). Line of sight considerations do not apply when firing starshells; they may be fired over one or more surface ships.

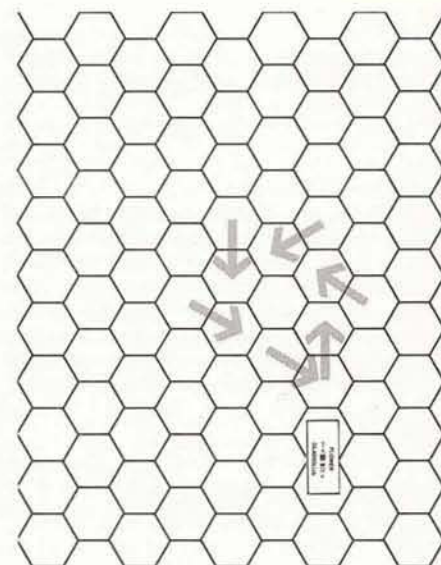
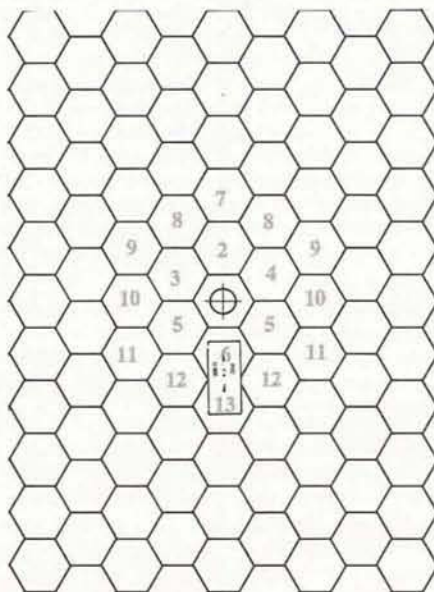
#### 107.2 Tankers and Cargo Ships:

**107.2.1** Visibility of submarines at night is described in Rule 104.1.3.

**107.2.2** Daylight conditions prevail for a seven-hex radius around any tanker torpedoed on any previous turn (regardless of whether still afloat); cargo ships so illuminate an area only under the provisions of 104.1.3.

**107.2.3** Daylight visibility prevails within 20 hexes of any tanker torpedoed while containing aviation fuel. These conditions will prevail until the turn after the ship sinks, ending with the Star Shell Phase. Mark the location until then with a starshell counter in both hexes of the tanker.

Illustration—Assault Zone The hexes where attacking escorts launch their weapons. The target hex is the first priority; remaining hexes are numbered in order of priority.



Illustration—Williamson Turn The escort turns 180 degrees and returns to its original course in reverse. When leaving the assault zone, the turn may begin only when the stern is no longer adjacent to any hex of the assault zone.

#### 108.0 Evasive Action and Searches

##### 108.1 Ships:

**108.1.1** Escorts may not move into any hex that a merchantmen might enter on its move that turn, as determined by the Fleet Movement Table. In this case, Escorts may deviate from radials and vectors but must parallel them as close as possible.

**108.1.2** Escorts may not move into any hex that a merchantmen's stern might pivot into—that is to say, the hex on either side of the ship adjoining both bow and stern.

**108.1.3** Escorts may not move into any hex that a Capital ship might enter on its move that turn, as indicated by the Fleet Movement table, nor any hex that a Capital ship's stern might pivot into (as in Rule 108.1.2).

**108.1.4** Capital ships and merchantmen move in unison in the solitaire game, so no collision is possible. Avoidance of vessels dead in the water is discussed in Rules 104.3.2 and 104.3.3.

**108.1.5** Surfaced submarines may be rammed by merchantmen and Capital ships if the Fleet Movement Table happens to dictate such. Ramming of surfaced subs by escorts is not only possible, but mandatory under the Escort Action Table. However, only one escort may ram an individual submarine.

##### 108.2 Torpedoes:

**108.2.1** No escort may intentionally steam over a torpedo, nor end its move directly ahead of one, when performing Radial or Diameter movement. Escorts will instead avoid such an event by leaving its vector, radial or diameter and paralleling its former path as close as possible, or by slowing to the point that it will not be in the path.

**108.2.2** Capital ships and merchantmen move according to the Fleet Movement Table regardless of where torpedoes may be. The first firing of torpedoes in a scenario will trigger *Emergency* movement for Capital ships; no other response is possible.

##### 108.3 Search:

**108.3.1** All ships possessing sonar, and moving at speeds permitting search, are required to do so each turn. The player may dispense with this if all submarines are surfaced or sunk.

**108.3.2** All ships possessing radar must conduct radar search each turn. The player may dispense with this if all submarines are at depths of 50 feet or greater.

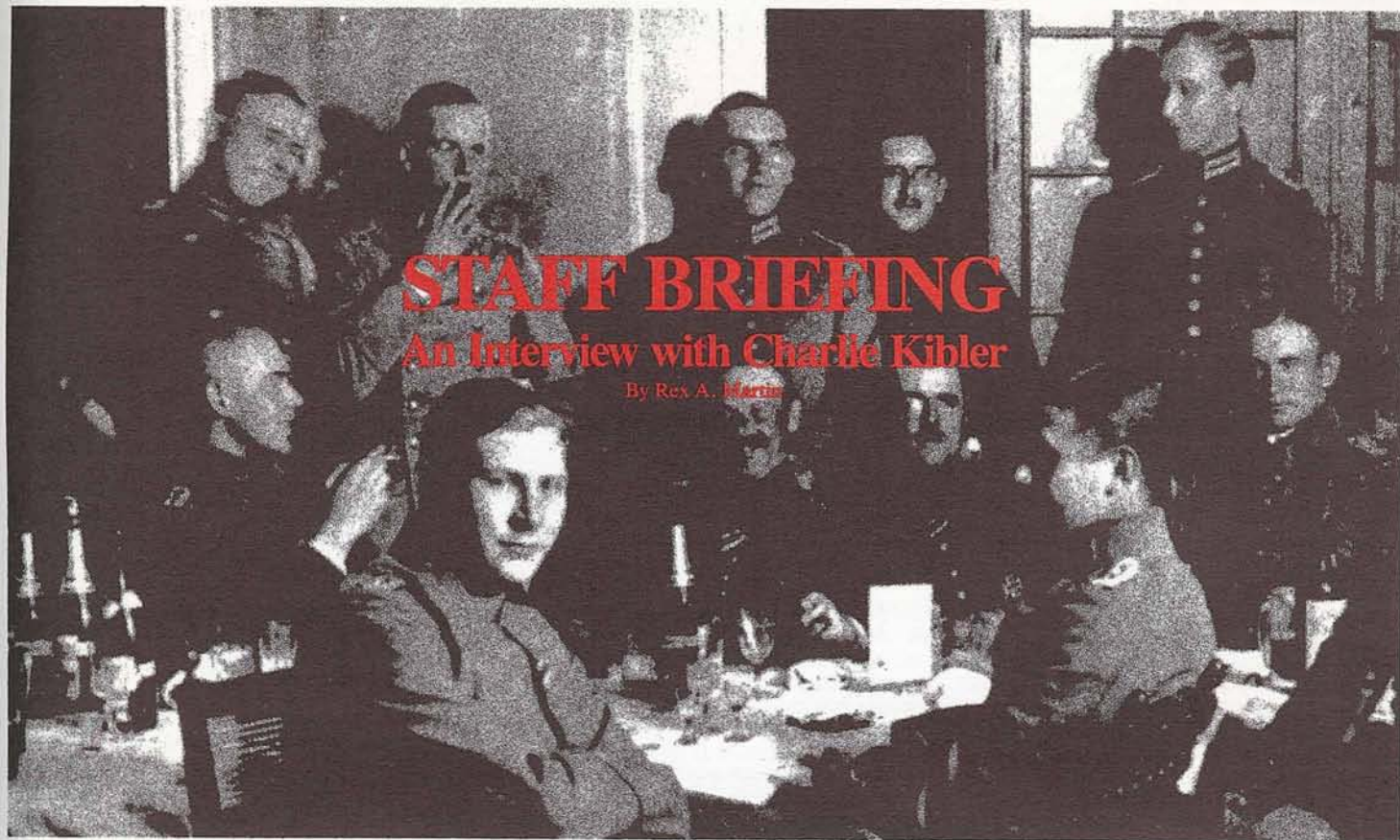




## STAFF BRIEFING

An Interview with Charlie Kibler

By Rex A. Martin



**Q.** Most of our readers are aware of your fine work, Charlie. where did you get your artistic training?

**A.** The University of Tennessee in Knoxville, Class of '79, a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Communication Design.

**Q.** And how was it that you came to work for the Avalon Hill Game Company?

**A.** I had just quit an ad agency job. Dropped in at Avalon Hill. Just so happened they were looking to replace a retiring artist from the department. Stroke of good fortune. The right place at the right time, it seems.

**Q.** You have done a number of things for the company, from mapboards to advertising, from counter art to box covers. Where does your inspiration come from?

**A.** My cats. No, seriously most of my "inspiration" (if you will) comes from research into photo studies of the various time period that needs this art—at least for historical projects.

**Q.** You've proved yourself adept at blending functionalism and attractiveness in your mapboards. The many SL boards stand out. How do you do it?

**A.** With a paintbrush, acrylics and a lot of TLC.

**Q.** So much for the tools. Do you use actual overhead views? I've heard rumors of boards crafted to depict historical locations (Dieppe, Stalingrad, Cassino, and such); any truth to those or are there plans to produce any?

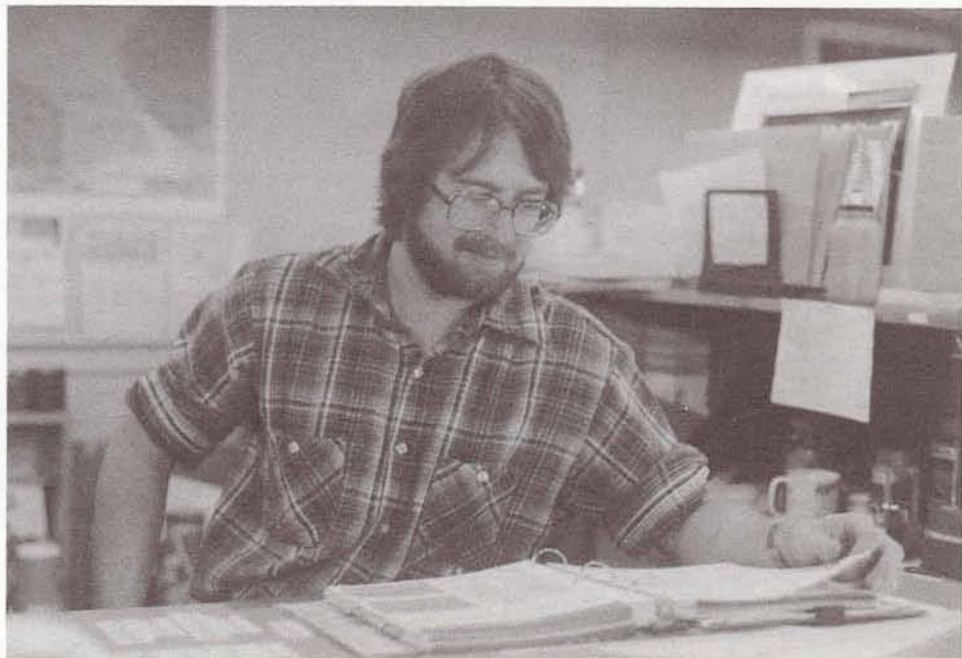
**A.** As a matter of fact, there is right now (on the "back burner") an ASL project of mine depicting the area of the Red Barricades Ordnance complex in Stalingrad.

**Q.** Do you check all the potential lines of sight, or have you developed a "feel" for the SL terrain?

**A.** No, I never check the LOS (unless playing a scenario, of course). Don, however, has accused me of having all the lines of sight memorized. There's no truth to the matter; he's just a sore loser!

**Q.** On the average, how long does it take you to complete a mapboard? Are there many steps to its final production, and do you oversee each?

**A.** A "normal" sized ASL mapboard probably takes about 15 to 20 hours, depending on the complexity of the terrain (i.e., city versus open). There are about five major steps to the production: 1) layout, 2) painting, 3) color separations, 4) in-house camera work (i.e., adding the grid and registration), and of course 5) actual printing (also done "in-house"). I do the first two steps myself; the rest



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**Full Name:** Charles J. Kibler II  
**Birth:** May 1956 in Kingsport, Tennessee  
**Started Wargaming:** December 1977  
**First Wargame:** *Fulda Gap*  
**Favorite Wargame:** *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER*  
**Favorite Non-Wargame:** *Mille Borne*  
**Outside Interests:** camping, fishing, philately, beer drinking  
**Employed by AH:** January 1980  
**AH Mapboards:** *RUSSIAN FRONT, DEVIL'S DEN, FIREPOWER, FLIGHT LEADER, KNIGHTS OF THE SKY* all ASL boards numbered 9-11 and 16 onward, and those for *Deluxe ASL*  
**AH Covers:** *BLACK SPY* and numerous MicroComputer game covers

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we must depend on the skill of others. The most critical one to oversee, I've found out, is our camera room's work.

**Q.** I've seen the superb three-dimensional views of all the *SL* terrain features that you drew for the *ASL* rulebook? What's the story behind that clever idea?

**A.** I reckon Donald thought of this, and I carried it out to fruition. They were quite enjoyable to do; you have to "see 'em to believe 'em".

**Q.** A number of the covers for our microcomputer games are yours. Any of them a masterpiece in your mind? Any stories to go along with them?

**A.** No, none of them are "masterpieces". My two favorites are *TANKTICS* and *MOON PATROL*, however. *TANKTICS* (by the way, the first box cover I ever did for Avalon Hill) is a rather straightforward approach, but its directness (a Panther tank approaching head on) and simple color scheme really "pops it off" the shelf. *MOON PATROL*, on the other hand, aptly depicts my more whimsical drawing style.

**Q.** Do you happen to know what Avalon Hill does with the original artwork that the covers come from? Any hopes of a reader ever obtaining the original cover painting to their favorite game?

**A.** MacGowan's, under contract, were all returned to him. Most others' art simply languish in the Art Department. All of George Parrish's, for instance, are still on shelves here.

**Q.** Recently there have been some minor controversies concerning wargame covers. Looking at them with a professional eye, and with the jaundiced view of personal taste, which of our covers do you feel best succeeds in the purpose of selling the game within? And which is the uttermost failure? What makes you say so?

**A.** I think one of our best is the new *DEVIL'S DEN* cover (done, by the way, by George Parrish) as it combines an illustration that is both accurate and beautiful with plenty of action. Perhaps one of our worst is the lid wrap of *BLITZKRIEG*, certainly a very repulsive cover—at least to me. The color selection and composition (and the actual art) leave a lot to be desired. Of the more recent covers, I also find the original *PENNANT RACE* cover rather ugly. The red-violet faced manager in the background, and the entire composition, is distasteful.

**Q.** Which of your projects for the company are you most proud of?

**A.** The *ASL* deluxe mapboards for *STREETS OF FIRE*.

**Q.** Why so?

**A.** First of all because one gets a true 3-D effect from the over-large scale (even though the perspective is still 100% overhead) due to the extreme detail and shadowing of the roof tops. Secondly, perhaps, because there were no "production errors"!

**Q.** I know that, like most of the staff here, you are an accomplished gamer—a fierce opponent. I also know that you like to play *SQUAD LEADER*, and have been heavily involved in the playtest and development of *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER*. Why do you favor these games?

**A.** For one thing, I have always favored tactical-level wargames. This probably has its roots in the days when I was a small boy with my "army sets" in the sandpile! Mainly, however, I enjoy them because once you have a handle on the rules, the way is open for a literally limitless variety of gaming situations. You don't have to keep relearning new rules to play different games.

**Q.** You have also shown a proclivity for devising scenarios for the game system, and have had a number of them published. Which are yours?

**A.** So far, "Operation Hubertus" (Scenario 2000) and "The Fugitives" (*BEYOND VALOR*'s #10)

**Q.** Any words of advice for those masses who hope

to submit new *ASL* scenarios for our consideration?

**A.** Keep 'em simple, clearly defined and then playtest 'em lots. Furthermore, a neatly polished (i.e., "professional") presentation is a plus. And, of course, from now on they *must* be done with the *ASL* rules system in mind.

**Q.** To change tack a bit, are you interested in military history?

**A.** Sure am . . . an avid fan.

**Q.** Do you favor one period over others? Which?

**A.** WW2, East Front—the *real* war. My second favorite period would be the American Civil War I guess.

**Q.** The "real" war. That might raise some eyebrows—why do you say that? And what fascination does that particular phase of the war hold for you?

**A.** Because, in my opinion, it *was*. All the rest ("Europeanly speaking" at least) was simply a sideshow, or "tidying up". It was "Lebensraum" in the East, and the destruction of the Communist "menace" that Hitler was after, as attested to in *Mein Kampf*.

**Q.** Do you suggest to would-be artists looking to work in the game industry that they steep themselves in military history?

**A.** No, it's not vital. Though, if seeking work in the wargame industry it would certainly be to their advantage. In today's art world, you need every advantage you can get.

**Q.** What would you suggest for them? Any courses or training that would give them an edge? How should they approach a game company to obtain work?

**A.** Firstly, they should get as much experience as possible in other graphics work, collect a good portfolio, and make your move. Of course, dedication and hard work are a must . . . and a little luck never hurts.

**Q.** Among other artists, are there any whose work you particularly admire?

**A.** I especially admire the work of George Parrish (mentioned previously) who has done all the covers of the *ASL* modules so far, among some other covers. Certainly a great find for The Avalon Hill Game Company.

**Q.** Do you do any other artwork—fine art or otherwise? I notices you didn't mention any among your list of hobbies.

**A.** Actually, I don't do much "outside" artwork (though I have done some "free-lance" projects for friends in need). Most of my outside leisure time is spent gaming and designing *ASL* maps/scenarios these days.

**Q.** At the moment, there are only a couple of awards for the artists that are so vital an element of this industry. Would you like to see them get more recognition? Of what sort?

**A.** More recognition wouldn't hurt. I'd like to see awards for best graphics (highlighting the functionalism, in particular) for *each* major game component—counters, map, rules, covers.

**Q.** Given your views, do you hope to win a Charles Roberts Award for graphics someday?

**A.** I've never seriously considered it. But, being the vain guy I am—sure, I'd be plum "tickled pink"!

**Q.** What lies ahead for Charles Kibler? Do you have any goal in mind that you've not yet attained?

**A.** To become rich and famous. Now that I'm "famous", I just need money. Send all donations to The *GENERAL*, Artist Relief Fund, c/o C. Kibler".



## Russian Front . . . Cont'd from Page 11

replacements should be concentrated on the more powerful armies (5-4-4 and larger) and the air units while allowing the weaker armies to absorb a hit or two and then be used to back up the fronts to provide depth and to convert the liberated rail hexes. (The fact that Axis units can convert rail hexes faster than Soviet units is no reflection on the capabilities of Soviet engineers but simulates the fact that the Axis forces proved more diabolical and ruthless in tearing up trackage.) Many of the Soviet armies were historically reduced to mere cadre strength as the war continued and the Soviet player will be doing extremely well to avoid the same situation. Use the artillery corps to support direct assaults on cities or other strong defensive positions. By 1944, there should be enough Soviet armor available that some true blitzkriegs can be used to hasten the Axis demise. Even in 1943, if the Soviet Tank armies are used *en masse* or in close proximity, they can bludgeon their way forward and exploit on broad fronts.

For the Axis player, the endgame strategy should be one of the stubborn defense of cities to hold the maximum numbers for the bi-annual Victory level Phases interspersed with selected withdrawals to avoid the pounding for a turn or two (preferably during bad weather so that the retrograde movements can be shorter) and—I can't emphasize this enough—slashing local counterattacks to keep the Soviet player conservative, destroying powerful Soviet spearhead units and generally try to help the overall attrition. Standing on the defensive is not enough. The Axis cannot win a war of attrition. If the Axis player adopts a flexible defensive strategy, middle to late 1943 can be one of the most interesting periods of the game to play—a maelstrom of see-saw battles with attacks and counterattacks, salients to hold or evacuate, pockets and counter-pockets, and break-ins and breakouts. If the Soviets start in mid-1943 with a victory level of "+1" or above, it is unlikely that the Axis can win, although it may be fun trying. If the Soviets start mid-1943 with a victory level of "0" or less, anything is possible.

All-in-all, *RUSSIAN FRONT* presents a fresh approach to wargaming the largest land campaign in history. Although the game is currently selling very well, it is a new release and time and continued sales are the only true measures of success or failure for a new gaming system. New systems are always a gamble. But *RUSSIAN FRONT*, which I'll be playing for many years to come, looks to be a sure bet.

## Clarification and Errata for RUSSIAN FRONT

**5.2.1.2** Mapboard edge hexes used for reinforcement placement must, like cities, be located in the unit's home country.

**7.2.1.1** If both sides have a choice, the defender chooses first.

**7.3.6** If both sides' engaged units are eliminated and both sides still have unengaged units in the hex, the attacker must retreat.

**Scenario Two.H.2** "22" hits on German infantry instead of "12".

**Soviet Order of Battle Card** In January 1943 (20), the 19th Army unit pictured should be a picture of the 27th Army unit.

**Game Card Replacement Chart** The Dec '42 line of the "on Board" column should include a dot next to the "14".





## CONVENTION CALENDAR

The *GENERAL* will list any gaming convention in this space free of charge on a space available basis provided that we are notified at least four months in advance of the convention date. Each listing must include the name, date, site, and contact address of the convention. Additional information of interest to our readership such as tournaments or events utilizing The Avalon Hill Game Company's games is solicited and will be printed if made available.

The Avalon Hill Game Company does not necessarily attend or endorse these gatherings, nor do we guarantee that events using The Avalon Hill Game Company's games will be held. Readers are urged to contact the listed sources for further information before making plans to attend.

### MARCH 1-2

**BASHCON '86**, Toledo, Ohio

Contact: UT-Bash, BashCon '86, 2801 West Bancroft, Toledo, OH 43606.

### APRIL 4-6

**CAPCON IX**, Columbus, Ohio

Contact: Jeff Gerckens, OSUMGA/CAPCONA, Box 21, The Ohio Union, 1739 North High Street, Columbus, OH 43210. (614) 876-2170.  
Note: A number of tournaments, including those in *DIPLOMACY*, *SQUAD LEADER* and *RAIL BARON*.

### MAY 30-31, JUNE 1

**DIPCON '86**, Fredericksburg, Virginia

Contact: Pete Gaugan, 3121 East Park Row, #171A, Arlington, TX 67010.

Note: An exclusively *DIPLOMACY* event featuring the national championship.

### JUNE 19-22

**ATLANTICON '86**, Trenton, New Jersey

Contact: Atlanticon '86, P.O. Box 15405, Baltimore, MD 21220. (301) 298-3135.

Note: The largest of the East Coast gaming conventions, with events for all tastes.

### JULY 3-4-5-6

**ORIGINS '86**, Los Angeles, California

Contact: Strategicon, P.O. Box 8399, Long Beach, CA 90808. (213) 420-3675.

Note: The National Adventure Gaming Convention, featuring the latest game releases and hundreds of events. Tournaments, seminars, demonstrations, and more for all aspects of the hobby.

### AUGUST 16-17

**BAYCON '86**, Traverse City, Michigan

Contact: Tom Ockert, P.O. Box 219, Lake Ann, MI 49650.

### AUGUST 29-31, SEPTEMBER 1

**GATEWAY 1986**, Los Angeles, California

Contact: Diverse Talents, Inc., P.O. Box 8399, Long Beach, CA 90808. (213) 420-3675.

## AH Philosophy . . . Cont'd from Page 2

enough to tie up with two excellent local wargaming clubs in my life (in Helena and St. Andrews) and so satisfy my craving. And, I suspect, that those experiences did much to keep me in the hobby and deepen my interest in it, bringing me to explore it to its limits. How about you?

On Page 29 of this issue, there is a brief report on GROTEKA—the Polish Gaming Society—and their appeal for more wargames. I find their enthusiasm contagious, as did Mr. Machowski. When I contrast their efforts with the response to this survey, I must wonder. But I've still hope.

To take up one of Mr. McMahon's suggestions—and given the response to this informal survey of wargaming clubs, it seems particularly timely—Henry Robinette drafted some notes on his experience in organizing a local club. His suggestions seem perfectly reasonable, and a must for any of those who would hope to promote wargaming in his area. Of course, there is also the selfish motive to all this—we all gain new opponents and the challenge of improving our own play.

## Notes on Organizing a Wargame Club

By Henry C. Robinette

You are new in town. Your one and only wargaming buddy just got transferred to another city. You're tired of playing solitaire. How do you find someone else to play? Every wargamer at one time or another has had difficulty in finding opponents. And who of us has not lamented, "Why doesn't somebody start a club?"

When I moved to Douglasville, Georgia in September 1977, Battleline Games was located there and I thought I would be able to play face-to-face every week. Well, two months later Battleline moved to Dallas, Texas [subsequently, their line of excellent games was absorbed by The Avalon Hill Game Company] and I had nobody to play. Like a lot of other closet wargamers, I played the occasional solitaire game and waited patiently for somebody else to start a club. Fortunately, nearby Atlanta is a big place and two years later a fellow did try to start a club. However, after three or four months he quit. Once again, I had nobody to play.

Then in February 1980 I decided to start that club myself. I won't bore you with the trials and tribulations of the Atlanta Wargaming Society. But I want to share a few tried and proven techniques for starting a club. As Hunter says on his TV program, "It works for me."

*Know thyself.* Not everybody should try starting a club. If you are not a committed wargamer, then you should skip reading the rest of this article. A committed wargamer is willing and able to set aside time each and every month (or week for the hard core) to play wargames. There can not be any excuses for not playing. The wife and kids will just have to understand that you are going to play wargames.

Once you have made the commitment to start a club, you need the ability to follow through. This means you must be able to find a facility and have access to it on a regular basis. If you cannot get off from work to pick up keys to a meeting room or to make reservations, then you will need to find someplace else or give it up.

A good facility is essential. You can always rent a meeting room in a hotel. However, for those of you who are not wealthy there are a number of free or cheap alternatives. You may find a meeting room in a church, fire station, or library. You may have a local hobby store where you could play. You may find a meeting room in a restaurant. Your local Civic Club or American Legion may have a room. Where I live, the banks have community rooms available for meetings. My club has played in a library, a fire station, a pizza palace, a church, a bank, and a Naval Air Station. You, too, can find a place to play if you use your imagination and then simply ask.

*Publicity.* If your local hobby store does not have a bulletin board, it should get one. Suggest it. Your notice in a hobby store will stay up for months, and anybody with more than a passing interest in wargaming will notice it. Contact your local newspaper. Many newspapers publish listings of club meetings and activities; they will publish yours, too. You should, of course, use an ad in The *GENERAL* and be prepared to run it for several issues. Many supermarkets have bulletin boards. Your notice in a supermarket will get some results. Some stores post notices in their windows; give that a try, too. Suburban shopper papers hunger for feature articles; your club notice will be published and handed out free to thousands.

After you have lined up a place and publicized your meeting, you are not through. You must

arrive early and stay all day. When people show up to play, get their names and addresses. Then follow up with a mailing for the next meeting. Do not slack off on your publicity. Keep on publicizing. Persevere. Do not get discouraged. It will take time for the word to get out.

Of course, there will be personality clashes and petty squabbles; the minor crises will arise. But you, and the other members, have one serious matter on which you must agree—what is the scope of your club to be? Will you, as many do, limit the type of games played? How about role-playing; ban it from club meetings? Miniatures? What of family games? Chess anyone? Bridge? You must put some limit on the central concern of your club. This question even extends to the complexity level that your membership will accept. And, once you've determined all this, be up front about making it common knowledge. Save yourself and others some frustration by "truth in advertising".

But starting a wargame club is not the most important thing you can do for your hobby. The future of our hobby is in your hands. Whether or not The Avalon Hill Game Company and wargaming are around to celebrate their fiftieth anniversary depends on how well we succeed in getting people to play wargames. If you have children, teach them to play wargames. [And they make the most stalwart members of your club, you'll find.] If you have friends, encourage them. And, always make your club meetings open to the public. In that way, the hobby will grow and your efforts will have helped.

Finally, as promised, I'll close out this installment of the Philosophy with a listing of the clubs whose secretaries were kind enough to contact me. I'd like to thank the secretary of each one, and hope that his small tribute might cause them to prosper in their endeavors to better our pastime.

**Anchorage Wargaming Club**, meeting every second and fourth Saturday monthly at the UAA/ACC campus. Contact: Joseph R. Regan, 3912 Merrill Drive, Anchorage, AK 99503. (907) 243-5297.

**Atlanta Wargaming Society**, monthly meetings on variable dates. Contact: Henry C. Robinette, 3172 Lake Monroe Road, Douglasville, GA 30135. (404) 942-7416.

**North Shore Gaming Club**, twice monthly meetings on variable dates. Contact: Alan R. Moon, 11 Boardway, Apt. 6, Beverly, MA 01915. (617) 7488.

**Michigan Gamers Corps**, irregular meetings on variable dates. Contact: Mitchell Balicki or Todd Brady, 16191 Thomas, Allen Park, MI 48101. (313) 928-7420.

**Bartlesville Military Simulaton Association**, meeting every first and third Saturday at various locations. Contact: Roger Dunnell, 245 NE Roselawn Avenue, Bartlesville, OK 74406. (918) 335-2887.

**Texas War Department**, meeting second Sunday every month (after 12pm) at Armadillo Soldier Shop. Contact: Richard Osborne or Glen Taylor, 4325 Alpha Road, Dallas, TX 75244. (214) 239-2679.

**Fox Valley Gamers**, meeting fourth Saturday every month at Appleton Jaycees. Contact: John Butitta, 1444 East Northland Avenue, Appleton, WI 54911. (414) 725-7218.

For those of the readership in these areas, I'd hope that you might find some kindred souls by contacting these organizations.





# THE QUAGMIRE DEFENSE

## Playing the Reds in PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN

By Brett Murrell

Few wargamers who have played *PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN* would probably admit that they enjoy playing the Russian forces against the German war machine. Factors in the game just seem to pile up against the Russians; they require purely defensive thought and are allowed very little offensive action, their supply system is fragile at best and easily disrupted, and even after well-played games the Russian player is many times "rewarded" with a German marginal victory. Equally deflating is the sight of yet another red piece being flung off the map after destruction by the superior race, while the German "dead pile" remains empty.

Perhaps these difficulties are what make *PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN* the challenging game that it is. Few other games can give the rewarding feeling that a Russian player gets when he sees the Wehrmacht ground to a dead stop against a quagmire of Russian defenders. Creating this quagmire, however, takes meticulous play, plenty of forethought, and a generous amount of prior experience, but it is far from the pipe-dream of "legend."

### THE QUAGMIRE PRINCIPLE: How to be Russian Flypaper

*PG* has some fairly novel rules systems not found in most other games. The most important one to the Russian is the "Zone of Control Pin." When a unit enters an enemy Zone of Control, it may never move again until it somehow escapes that Zone of Control during combat. This escape can be engineered by eliminating the enemy or by causing the enemy or yourself to retreat.

Because the German panzer units have the ability to move 20 movement points in one turn, first priority for the Russian is to limit the German mobility as much as possible. The best way to do this is by pinning the panzers with Russian units. This is usually easy to do; the difficulty comes in maintaining that pin. One or two Russian units sent up to pin German units can usually expect to be surrounded and overrun with virtually no loss of time to the Germans. Because of this, more than simple pinning is needed.

The Combat Results Table in the game does not create many casualties in and of itself. Attackers can be totally eliminated only at odds of 1-2 or less, and even then the chances of elimination are never greater than 33%. On the other hand, attackers need at least 6-1 odds for a meager 16% chance of rolling a *Defender Eliminated*. Attackers need at least 9-1 odds to get a better than 50-50 chance of causing complete elimination of the defender; these odds are very difficult to obtain against an average Russian unit in good defensive terrain.

What the Combat Results Table does create is a lot of retreats—so surrounded units who have no retreat option are living on borrowed time. With the lightning speed of the German panzer and motorized units, the German player needs only one hole in a Russian line to pour units through and surround a whole region. This is where the Russian challenge comes. You, as the Russian player, must create a line which cannot be outflanked, which has no significantly weakened area and which can deal with small German breakthroughs aggressively. A well-planned Russian line in good defensive terrain is a tough nut to crack and can win the game by itself; a hap-hazard "delaying" line is usually doomed on the first contact with the panzers and allows the Germans a lot of practice throwing red

pieces into the "dead pile" without delaying his army more than a turn.

The basic principle of the Quagmire Defense, then, is this: A solid, permanent Russian line is possible to create if enough planning is put into it. This line must be strong and must be wholeheartedly adhered to or it is just a waste of time and units. If successful, it will stop the German push, pinning it down for at least the first eight turns—and possibly until the end of the game.

### THE LINE: Where?

The Quagmire Defense requires that the Russian player plan exactly where his defense line is going to be before play even begins. Many players believe that the line from the V1 entrance area to Smolensk and down to Roslav offers the best defense area. This line is shaky at best. Certainly Roslav has good terrain, and the area north of Smolensk is no place for mechanized units; but the area between, around Smolensk, is a playground for panzers. Even stacks of three Russian units are easily cut down in clear terrain once surrounded or put out of supply. And the number of Russian units needed to defend just the middle area in a permanent line is prohibitive.

The Russian defense line cannot be put any farther eastward than Smolensk, however, because the German gets a marginal victory by taking just Smolensk and either Roslav or Yel'nya with the three towns on the west edge of the board. Only one place is left—the west.

The most common assessment of the western area, the line running basically along the 0500 row, is that it is too far forward to defend well. The Smolensk line is preferred because it is farther back and allows more time for the line to be set up. These assessments are fallacious for two reasons. First, if both the 16th Army and the 19th Army can move on the first turn, a total of 23 infantry divisions, five armor divisions and four good leaders are available to create a line along the 0500 defense line—plenty of units to stop the German first-turn forces with ease. Secondly, in relationship to the speed of the German units, the Smolensk line is only one turn (in fact one movement phase) farther eastward of the 0500 line—hardly much delay to be worried about how far forward you are defending.

### THE 0500 LINE: How?

The 0500 line offers by far the best natural terrain anywhere on the board. In the south, the river flowing south of Orsha, along with hexes 0424, 0422, and 0420, offers the Russians a defense line that is perfectly straight and doubled in every position. This line is extended by the woods along the Vitebsk-Orsha highway, which allows doubled and tripled defensive positions up to the West Dvina river. From here, the line can be extended along the West Dvina as far as the Russian player wishes.

The strength of this line is that it offers no undoubled positions to the German and, if the Russian can get two divisions on each of the required defense hexes, he can possibly be worth up to 32 defense points; with many of the defense hexes attackable from only two hexes, the German motorized divisions (worth 12 points each) cannot be used to attack a defense hex containing two untried Russian units on the first two turns without the possibility of getting a 1-2 odds attack—disasterous if a six is rolled.

Figure 1 gives a possible setup for the first turn along the 0500 line if both the 16th and the 19th Armies can move. The 13th Army deploys south of Orsha, sending its armor division to 0518 to help in the center. The 20th Army deploys its infantry in 0512, 0515, 0517 and 0518, leaving the defense of Orsha and Vitebsk to the 16th Army units railed up to these hexes. Another 16th Army infantry division moves to 0417 to blunt an attack in the center, while the last infantry division is sent to 0825. The 20th Army's armor moves north along the West Dvina, while one goes to 0517. Finally, the 19th Army spreads out north and west, offering reserves to all of the north front.

This line is more than a match for the first turn German forces, who are too few in number to exploit a breakthrough even if they should make one. But what if the 16th and 19th Armies cannot move? A line is still possible, as shown in Figure 2. The 13th Army takes over the defense of Orsha, while the 20th commits units to Vitebsk. Even though the line is fairly weak along the West Dvina River, it is the place that you should hope the Germans attack, for the 19th Army can stop any first-turn breakthroughs along the north, and you have one ace in the hole in the north: Yershakov's Army.

### YERSHAKOV'S ARMY: The Northern Anchor

For the first two turns, the German threat is in the north. Containing a breakthrough at or north of the West Dvina river is vital at this time to insure that your line is unruffled when the German hordes come in on Turn 3. Yershakov's Army is the key to holding the north.

Figures 3 and 4 show Yershakov's advance from the north. He should come in as far west as possible. If he does, he can be set up in the forest area at 1204—blocking an end-around by the German forces entering at A on Turn 2. If the German first turn forces have already swept around the north, Yershakov is there to pin them or cut their supply line. Later, if the Germans ignore Yershakov and embroil themselves in a battle around the West Dvina, Yershakov's forces can pull in behind them, threatening to surround the German and perfectly able to do so if the Germans continue to ignore him.

### THE SOUTH: Planning is a Must

The line south of Orsha is a tranquil place for the first two turns, as no Germans can attack it without wasting valuable time getting there. But do not let the peace lull you into a sense of security; on Turn 3 all hell will break loose with German panzers dog-piling onto your defensive line along the whole south front. You must begin preparing the south on the second turn before you realize it's too late on Turn 3.

The south line requires at least ten units: two units each in 0430, 0428, 0426, 0424, and 0422. Never spread your troops out by putting one division in each hex; this just allows the Germans to attack one hex and advance through without touching the rest of the line. If possible, several other divisions should be behind the line to block breakthroughs. The divisions needed for this must come from units which are either moved down from the north line or sent by rail. Usually this means sending the bulk of the 24th Army, as the 21st Army coming in on Turn 3 on Entrance Hex Z will not make it in time. Even if interdicted by German planes, two rifle divisions of the 24th Army can make it to 2319 on



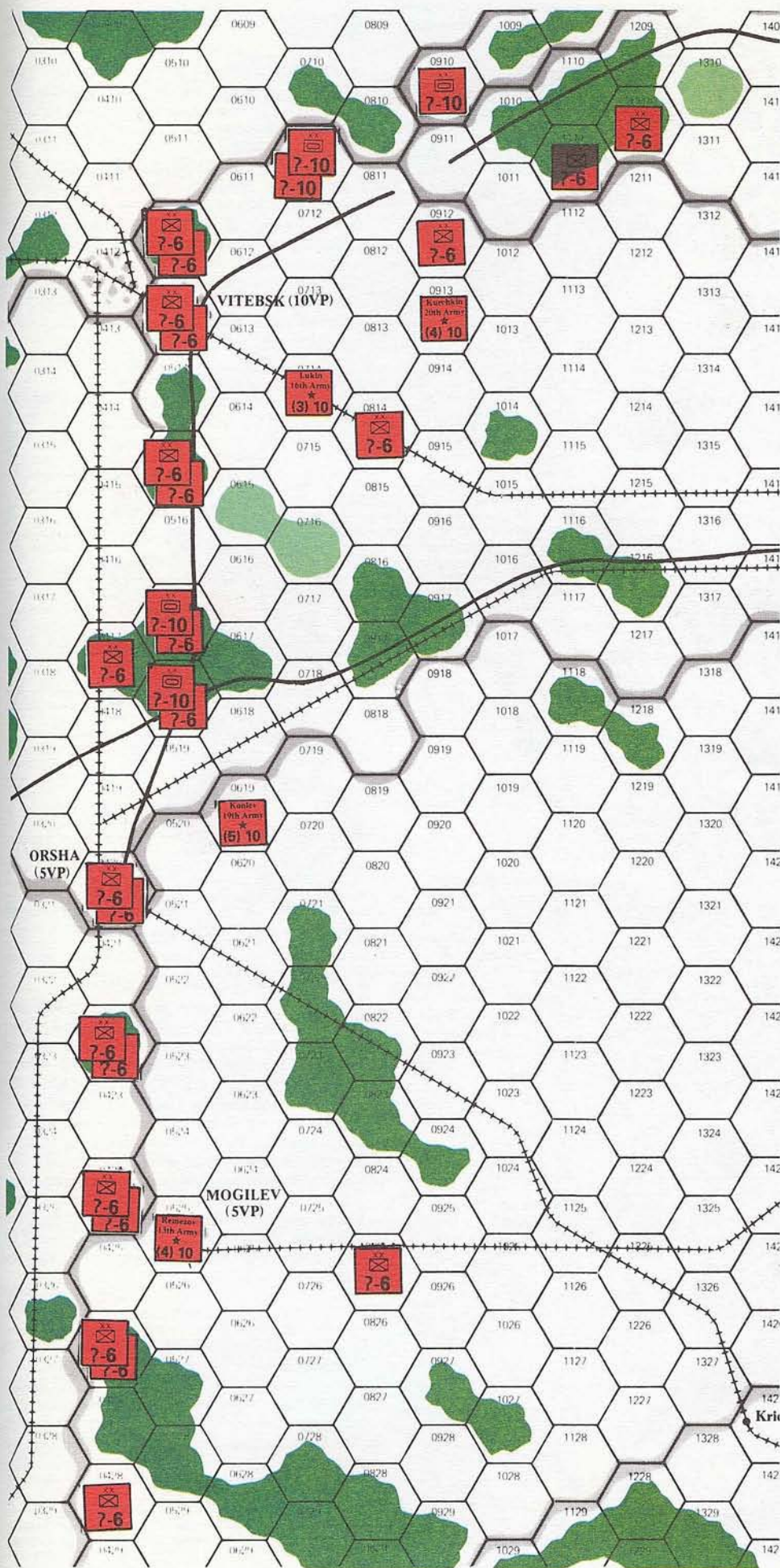


Figure 1: Russian 0500 Line on Turn 1 if 16th and 19th Armies can move.

Turn 1 (assuming the other six divisions moved by rail were units of the 16th Army.)

The German player then faces a decision. He can either continue to interdict them on the rail south of Smolensk, keeping the reinforcements from the south line but allowing the rest of the 24th army to race to any spot on the north line, letting north line units shift southward. Or he can ignore the units. The last option is obviously best for the German player; but with these two divisions, the division from Smolensk, and the seven already down on the south line from the 13th Army, the minimum requirement of 10 divisions is available.

If the 16th Army was unable to move on the first turn, the south front will need to be reinforced from the north if the German player is intent on keeping the 24th and 16th Armies from railing south on Turn 2. If the German player does interdict south of Smolensk, simply rail west to Orsha and the central road area, moving the divisions already at those places south. Whatever way it is done, the Russian must have the units able to pull into position in the south by Turn 3.

### A GERMAN BREAKTHROUGH: Do not Panic

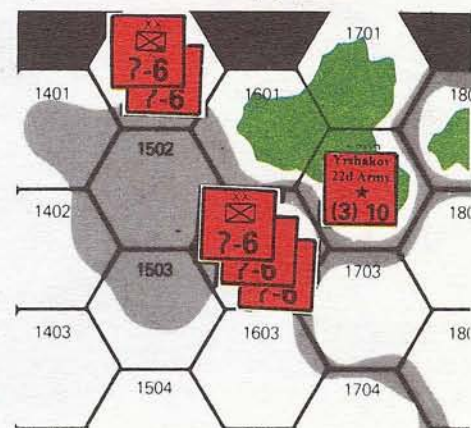
No matter how well your defense is planned, some 0-0-6 infantry in the wrong place or a lucky die roll can open a hole in your line to allow some German units to pass through. Do not fret; one breakthrough does not mean Doomsday. Any competent German player will be able to get some type of breakthrough sooner or later; you must be able to react to it without going into a headlong retreat.

Most German breakthroughs happening on the first four or five turns will be one of two types. Either the German player will make a breakthrough and have a lot of mobile divisions to run through it (which means that he has few units elsewhere that are pinning your units down). Or he will make a breakthrough with just a few mobile divisions and have you pinned in most places.

Reaction to the first option should be very forceful. Send everyone that can to pin the breakthrough units; and if the German player has left any unit by itself, especially ones on the front pinning you, attack them if you can surround them. You must give the German player a motive for coming back to the front and saving his attacked units instead of driving around your interior.

Another possibility is to close the line back up after the German player's divisions have moved through, cutting him out of supply and forcing him to reopen the hole somehow. Anytime you can knock German units out of supply during this time you should do it. Hang tenaciously to your line and if he finally totally breaches it, find a good defen-

Figure 3: Yershakov Turn 1 Deployment.





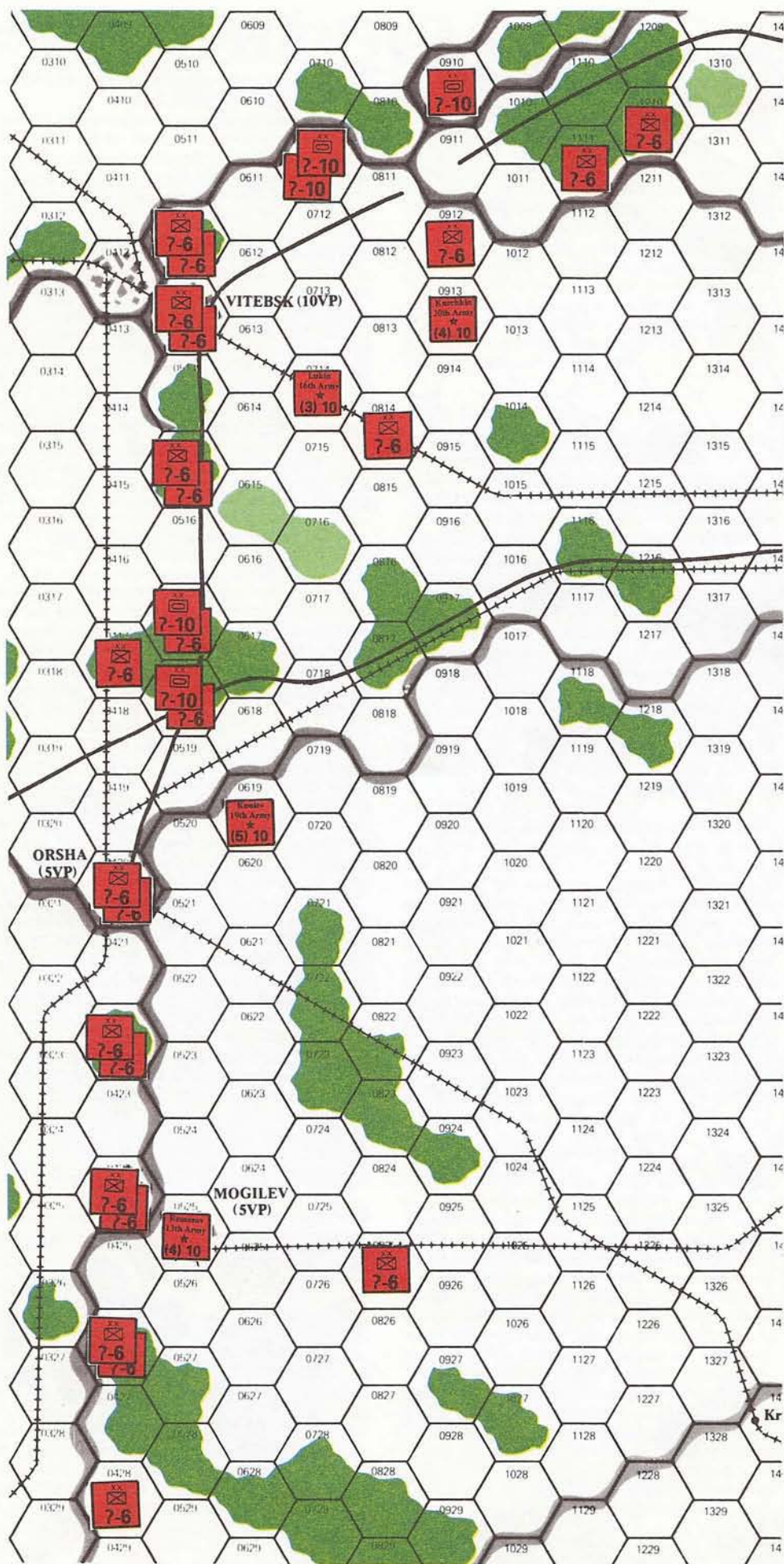


Figure 2: Russian 0500 Line on Turn 1 if 16th and 19th Armies cannot move.

sive hex and make him dig you out of it. Digging out a large defensive line even after it has been surrounded is time-consuming and cannot always be left to the infantry if the German supply roads are still in your hands.

Reaction to a small breakthrough should be more conservative. Somewhere behind your lines you should have kept several reserve units. Use these to plug the hole, but do not react by weakening your whole line to pin down a breakthrough; doing this just makes your line susceptible to another and usually bigger breakthrough. In fact, most of the deadly breakthroughs are the third or even the fourth after a Russian player has over-reacted to the first breakthrough.

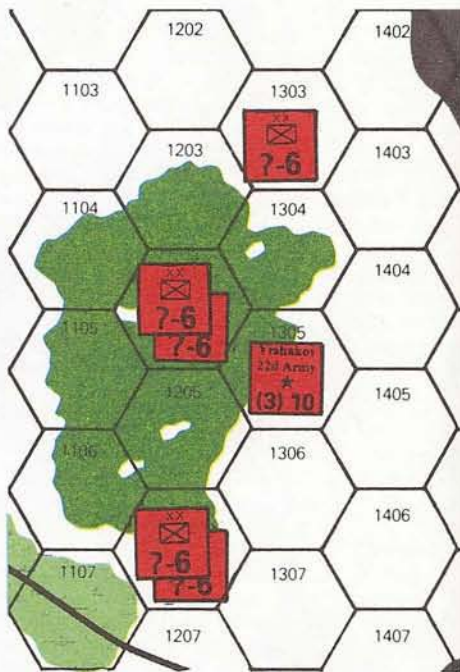


Figure 4: Yershakov Turn 2 Deployment.

## CONCLUSION: The Payoff

The Quagmire Defense, or any defense in general for that matter, is difficult to master without practice and planning. Your plans and your line are like a chain; the strength of it is equal to your weakest link and in this case you can bet that a good German player will find any weak links you might have. Whatever line you try to hold, only practice will make it perfect, and few lines that are less than perfect will be able to stand up to the German's blitzkrieg. That is the challenge of it. If, at the end of a game of *PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN*, you still have a line of red between the German panzers and Smolensk, you will know that you have pulled off one of the toughest juggling acts in the wargame field.



Back in Vol. 21, No. 4, Henry Robinette ("Is Smolensk Burning") first looked at a number of Russian defense strategies for *PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN*. He traced the history and explored the strengths of such ploys as *The Orsha Landbridge*, *The Main Line of Resistance*, and *The Egg*. His seminal work was obviously the goad for Mr. Murrell's "Quagmire".



Dear Sirs:

I just received my copy of *The GENERAL* (Vol. 22, No. 2) featuring *BANZAI* as the main article. I read with great interest and concern the "Infiltrator's Report" which listed the games that will not be reprinted. I was rather surprised that *STRUGGLE OF NATIONS* is being slated for "retirement". It is rated #17 on the RBG rating scale, so it seems to have a following. Also, since it was published in 1981 it has only been available for four years.

I would like to cast my vote that this fine game be retained in your line. I would also like to see you keep *AIR ASSAULT ON CRETE* as well. I wish you had given us, the buying public, a little more warning that these games were being discontinued and I hope your decision is not irreversible. It is my intent to purchase some extra copies of these two games so that at least I will be able to play them for some time to come.

There were some other games such as *ALEXANDER THE GREAT* and *FRANCE 1940* which were also good in their time and which could use a rework, although I realize the appeal may be too limited to do this. Some games which probably need to be pulled and given a serious "face-lift" would be *BLITZKRIEG*, *LUFTWAFFE*, *WATERLOO* and even *PANZERBLITZ* and its sister game *PANZER LEADER*. *BLITZKRIEG* really should be pulled and re-vamped with new maps, counters, and rules—in essence, a whole new game that would retain the basic "hypothetical" concept of the original. The other games also need work on the various components to restore their enjoyment.

Well, I've probably said enough for now. I realize that individually I may not have a great impact and I am aware of some of the economic reasons for the decisions that are made. I only hope that there are others that share my interest enough to urge retaining *STRUGGLE OF NATIONS* and perhaps upgrading some of your other games.

Peter M. Skaar  
Moreno Valley, California

Before any of our readers go rushing out to buy a dozen copies of their favorite old warhorse, let me lay a couple of fears to rest. The "retirement" of *STRUGGLE OF NATIONS*, along with that of a number of others, has been prompted by their sales compared with other titles in our extensive line. Too, it reflects the fact that the judgement has been made that our current stocks are sufficient to fill projected demands for these games over the next few years. When stocks are depleted, they will simply not be reprinted. So, you see, these endangered species will still flock the shelves of local retail outlets for some time to come. I announced that they would not be reprinted for the sole reason of alerting fans of those titles that they will be becoming scarcer over the next couple of years; I think two years or so to be ample warning of the phase-out of a favorite game.

And, we are working on plans to revamp the PB/PL system. As to the others mentioned by Mr. Skaar, the thought hadn't crossed our mind—yet. Much depends on the current popularity of the game in question; the re-development of such games is as lengthy and difficult a task as that of any new game (simply look at the effort expended on the latest *THIRD REICH* or on the new *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER*). Too, there is a tendency to leave well enough alone, unless the greybeard is starting to creak a little too loudly—as with *PANZERBLITZ* and *PANZER LEADER*. A sort of vicious cycle dominates in all such decisions: if unpopular, it is not worth redoing; but if popular, why mess with an old friend and possibly come off worse?

★★★★★

Gentlemen:

My husband just pointed out to me the article entitled, "Married to A Gamer" by Geraldine Brennan (Vol. 22, No. 1). I think it is about time a lady wargame player stood up.

I am a young lady who is married to a very serious gamer also. He has always been an advocate of the wargames, fantasy games and adventure games of Avalon Hill. We have quite a collection. When I first met my future husband, I couldn't believe it. I thought at the time, "Who can be so into playing games? What is this Avalon Hill? How can anyone fit a good game into a box this small?" (Let's face it, America has been "monopolized".) However, one night he asked me if I would like to "attempt" to play one of the games, since I was always in "awe" when I looked over his game shelf. "Me? Play this?"

## Letters to the Editor ...

Well, the game we began and finished that night was *TITAN*, and I won. I learned fast. And I loved it! That was the beginning of a newfound joint interest in our relationship. Gaming—a competitive, challenging, enjoyable, indoor sport.

My husband and I have found that we are more partial to the fantasy and adventure games as opposed to the true wargames. By now, we have been married two years, and we own a vast collection of Avalon Hill games. My favorites, in order, are *CONQUESTADORS*, *DUNE*, *CIVILIZATION*, *FIREPOWER*, *TITAN* and *DOWN WITH THE KING*. I find that my husband and I share in victories as well as the defeats in our frequent gaming sessions—one to two games a week. I love it, and he loves it.

No! I am not a tom-boy. I design fashions, paint in water-colors, make unique jewelry, read good mysteries and science fiction; I like good, challenging mystery games, enjoy music (classical and rock), and love nature and modern art.

My husband and I have grown through our joint gaming sessions. We are both excellent sports. When one loses, we know that the other has played the better thought-out game. Our attitude is positive, yet competitive. Together, we learn through the losses and are rewarded by the victories. I love gaming through Avalon Hill with my husband and other gamers—we have fun: tough fun, smart fun—in a world more exciting than any other kind of entertainment.

I hate soap operas. The average game from AH offers ten times more glamour and vicarious excitement, with plenty of worldly advantages over TV. You can participate anytime, taking breaks as needed. And, best of all, you are testing your own creative mind. It's an art in a special form.

So, to all you male gamers, there is a female gamer among you—one not afraid of being feminine and not enamored of soap operas. I hope there's more out there in this world. I'd like to meet them.

Elvira Atkinson  
Pasadena, California

I never heard of our games playing match-maker before, but it is true that the play has strengthened many a relationship. I owe the friendship of some fine folk to this hobby (and I've always held marriage to be a special form of friendship). Yet I've the suspicion that Ms. Brennan reflects the views of the majority of the female species when viewing our pastime, with Ms. Atkinson very much in the minority. And I'm not sure that that ratio will ever change.

★★★★★

Dear Rex,

Thank you for running my *TOBRUK* article in Vol. 22, No. 1. The article had been submitted several years ago, and had passed from my memory. It was a joy to see it published.

It comes as somewhat less of a joy to admit that this writer "goofed" on the handling of the "K" results for weapons that kill side armor at every range. All I can say is that I was younger and more reckless when the article was put together. Sorry. To make amends to *TOBRUK* players, I propose the following chart for the maximum "K" range against side armor when Oblique shots are taken:

### Maximum Range for K Results On Oblique Hits

Firing Weapon	Target			
	Semovevent	M13/40	Marder	Matilda
		Honey	PzKw III	
50S-AP	11	—	—	—
50S-APRC	—	—	—	—
50L-AP	All	—	—	—
50L-APCR	—	—	—	3
88 FLAK	All	—	—	14
75S	11	—	—	—
2 pdr	10	8	—	—
37mm	8	8	—	—
Grant-75	All	All	—	—
ATR	—	—	—	—
6 pdr	All	All	—	—

Firing Weapon	Target (Cont'd)		
	Valentine	Crusader	Grant
50S-AP	6	All	1
50S-APRC	6	—	8
50L-AP	5	All	12
50L-APCR	10	—	15
88 FLAK	All	All	All
75S	—	All	1
2 pdr	—	—	—
37mm	—	—	—
Grant-75	—	—	—
ATR	—	3	—
6 pdr	—	—	—

The above chart uses the same data source as my previous *TOBRUK* article in Vol. 18, No. 2. "S" refers to the short weapon used by the Germans; "L" to long. Marder upper side hull cannot take any hits at any angle. To obtain C(P) ranges, increase the above ranges by two hexes when a range is indicated.

And I'm afraid that I have been caught "in the wrong" again. As noted by one of your readers, the "Playing the Angles" article misinterpreted the *TOBRUK* flank shot definition. How embarrassing.

To save the day, and shine up my tarnished reputation, I would note that there is still justification for including an "oblique" shot area. In the following cases, the side armor is seen to be distinctly different from the front armor. Therefore, to handle "oblique" hits it cannot be assumed that the "oblique" armor value equals the frontal value:

AFV	Front Armor		Oblique Armor
	TUR-78	TUR-58	
PzKw III	UH-75	UH-112	
Matilda	UH-66	UH-80	
Valentine	UH-40	UH-24	
Crusader	LH-32	LH-51	

This cloudiness over the *TOBRUK* rules can only be attributed to too much involvement in armor minutiae recently. My apologies. With this letter, I have "covered my tracks" and feel that the article is complete. Thanks once again for publishing my work.

Lorrin Bird  
Greenfield Center, New York

★★★★★

Dear Mr. Martin:

I was surprised to see such a poorly worked article as "The Quality Point System" in the latest *GENERAL* (Vol. 22, No. 2). The author, Dan Ryan, spends almost half of his article berating other measures of quality and popularity for games, then proceeds to present the worst of the lot. He misses statistics at every step to achieve a questionable result. It's this misuse of basic statistics that bothers me.

Ryan's system combines three measures of game popularity: average rank point, average frequency ratio, and pages per issue. Each of these is first misused by itself. Then the crowning mistake is made when Ryan tries to add the three items together. And the source of Ryan's new measure is the "So That's What You're Playing" column, the intrinsic merits of which have been discussed enough already, so I won't spend any more time on it now.

To demolish the props of this "Quality Point System", step by step:

The author uses the column for his first two parameters. He first measures the rank of each game over time. But you can't just combine ranks like he does—for several reasons. The easiest to see is that the total vote varies from issue to issue. Thus "first place" in one issue is based on a different number of votes than it is for any other issue. More importantly, there are no discrete steps between ranks, so you can't perform arithmetic on them. Thus, a "first place" combined with a "third place" is not the equivalent of two "second places". One listing may have a first-place game taking a 1000 votes, second with 100 and third with 50. The next issue may have only 500 for first place, 400 for second and 390 for third. Yet Ryan's method treats both the 1000 and the 500 vote first place as equivalent. Any valid comparisons that might be drawn from the

original survey are lost when this sort of improper manipulation is done.

With his second value, Ryan is on even shakier ground, but he plunges forward despite the problems. Frequency ratios are valid only for the particular survey in which they occur. They also cannot be compared across issues. A frequency ratio of 2.1 in one issue has no relationship to a frequency ratio of 2.1 in the following issue's results. There might be a way with more careful analysis to extract a meaningful measure from these frequencies, but simply taking the average frequency is meaningless.

The third measure Ryan uses is pages per issue. This measure also distorts a qualitative observation into a quantitative rule. His point is that, for example, "GP's heavy coverage did considerably more to stimulate that game's performance on the list than did *CIVILIZATION*'s light coverage." That's really about as much as can be said statistically. But having embraced statistical fallacies for two measures, this isn't the place to stop. We are now treated to "PPI" as a negative measure of a game's quality. Ignoring the different species of article in *The GENERAL*, ranging from variant to feature to series replay, Ryan merely counts pages and subtracts this from his accumulated total.

This brings us to the crowning achievement of the article—summing three completely unrelated parameters to get the long-sought Quality Point total. Even if the three measures were legitimately derived, one would need some justification for a simple sum as the description of their interaction. Why not their product? Or the square root of their inverses? In fact, I could make just as strong a claim that instead of measuring pages he should measure columns. This simple change shuffles his final results unmercifully. Many other weightings could be applied. The final test should be whether the system performs a predictive or explanatory function. That is best left to the readers, but one final point should convince any remaining proponents of the system.

The system was supposed to measure a game's popularity and quality, yet Ryan ends up with a system that will suffer gross swings in ratings merely because a game is written about in *The GENERAL*. For example, *BULL RUN* and *PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN* both suffer because they recently had high page counts. (*BANZAI*'s proponents had best duck after the 20-page treatment in this latest issue!) Thus the system fails to account for even the simplest real life event—any time an article is published in *The GENERAL*, interest in that game is going to rise, if only for a short time. Any rating system which penalizes a game because it has such articles just doesn't belong in a serious wargaming magazine.

Steve Estvanik  
Seattle, Washington

★★★★★

Dear Rex—

In my *UP FRONT* article that was previously published in these pages (Vol. 21, No. 1) and later included in the *BANZAI* rulebook, I discussed the statistical nature of the game. One major table was omitted, namely one giving the odds on winning a Close Combat or other situation where the players were drawing in a "high card" resolution. The following table is now presented, giving the chances of winning a draw versus the amount that is needed for that win. For example, if your opponent has a CCV of 9 to your 8, you need to win by two; therefore the percentage chance is calculated at 33.43%.

Number	Percent
1	43.72%
2	33.43%
3	24.47%
4	16.83%
5	10.95%
6	6.58%
7	3.56%
8	1.95%
9	0.97%
10	0.42%
11	0.15%
12	0.03%

Obviously, if you have an advantage by a certain factor, merely subtract that factor from 100% to obtain the result. In the example given above, your opponent's chances of winning are 56.28%. The remaining 10.29% of the time gives a tie.

Jim Burnett  
Clinton, Tennessee



## THE QUESTION BOX

### PANZERKRIEG Errata and Clarifications

**3.0** Section B.3.a of the Sequence of Play states, "(air units ignore adverse combat results unless an '\*' appears, indicating that the air unit(s) is disrupted)". This is incorrect. Adverse combat results have no effect on attacking air units whatsoever as stated in Rule 9.3.

**4.0** Weather is checked at the beginning of the first turn of each scenario.

**5.12** Enemy units crossing (but not occupying) a friendly railroad hex have no effect on friendly supply.

**5.13** All railroad hexes on friendly map edges are supply sources.

**5.13 A** friendly reinforcement entry hex is one where friendly forces have appeared from, are due to appear from later in the scenario, or have started the scenario from. They are friendly supply sources.

**6.0** Units may move single hex even if movement points are insufficient, except to move from one ZOC to another.

**6.0 A** unit may be affected by both weather and supply for movement purposes—halved and halved again, rounding down.

**6.1** River crossing costs only apply when moving across a River between two River Crossing hexes. Otherwise, River Crossing hexes count as Clear terrain.

**6.3 A** unit sitting on a railroad hex in any enemy ZOC may not use railroad movement.

**6.3** Units using rail movement may not move adjacent to an enemy unit, regardless of whether the enemy unit has a ZOC or not. Units using rail movement may not conduct Exploitation movement.

**6.3** Railroad hexes that were not friendly at the start of a scenario may not be used for rail movement.

**6.3** There is no limit to the number of units which can use rail movement in a turn.

**7.0** One Air Base and its air units may stack in a hex in addition to normal stacking restrictions.

**8.0** ZOCs do not extend across Lake hexesides. ZOCs do not extend across River Crossing hexesides or Bridges over Major Rivers.

**8.1** This rule states that ground units may not enter enemy occupied hexes, but Rules 17.1 and 17.2 permit this against enemy artillery and anti-tank units, and 11.0 for leaders. Sections 17.1, 17.2 and 11.0 should be noted as exceptions to

Rule 8.1. Hexes occupied only by these type of units can be entered and passed through, destroying the units.

**9.0** Air ranges and sea supply movement may be traced through areas of sea with hexes.

**9.1** Air bases are doubled (or tripled) in towns (or cities).

**9.1** An Air Base must set up in a hex containing a railroad line.

**9.11** An Air Base containing Air units may be moved by rail with its onbase air units, but the air units may not conduct any missions this turn.

**9.12** If the hex which an Air Base occupies receives a combat result causing the elimination or retreat of all friendly units, the Air Base and any air units stacked with it are eliminated only if the attacker occupies the hex.

**9.2** If all friendly Air Bases within range of a CAP Marker are eliminated, the CAP Marker is immediately removed.

**9.2** CAP Markers may not be placed on enemy airbases. If their range is cut due to a weather change, CAP Markers must be repositioned within range or be removed from play for the turn.

**9.3** Air units which move to a hex but don't attack in anticipation or participating in an attack during the Exploitation Phase may make a separate attack by themselves during the Exploitation Segment, or return to their bases unused if the Exploitation attack does not take place.

**9.32** Air units attacking alone do not have to attack all the defending units in a hex. They may choose to attack one, some or all defending units in a hex, ignoring the others. Terrain benefits apply for the unit(s) attacked.

**9.42** For Air Supply purposes KGs, BGs, Anti-Tank units and Artillery units each equal one-third of a division. HQs are free.

**10.1** The seven-hex radius from a Headquarters unit to a friendly unit required for Command Control can be traced through any type of terrain.

**10.21** Reserves may not overstack.

**10.21** Reserves may cross Major Rivers only at Bridges or Bridgeheads, not over River Crossing hexesides.

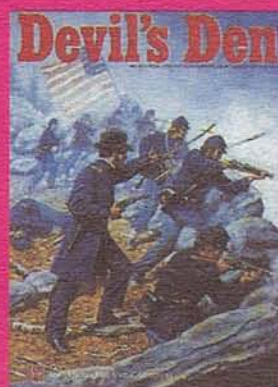
**10.3** If more than one Combat Strength modifier applies simultaneously, they are considered in this order: 1) Command Control; 2) Supply; 3) Disruption (from air attack); and 4) Terrain. Fractions are dropped after each modification is applied.

## AH RBG RATING CHARTS

The following games are ranked by their reader-generated overall Value rating. Further aspects of reader response to our titles are indicated by the ratings in other categories. By breaking down a game's ratings into these individual categories, the gamer is able to discern for himself where the title's strengths and weaknesses lie in the qualities he values highly. Readers are reminded that the Game Length categories are measured in multiples of ten minutes (thus, a rating of "18" equates to three hours).

### WARGAME RBG

Title	Overall Value	Components	Complexity	Completeness of Rules	Playability	Authenticity	Shortest	Longest	Year	Sample Base
1. GI	2.02	1.93	10	3.01	3.38	1.88	12.84	35.33	1982	264
2. COI	2.06	1.95	9	3.29	3.13	1.99	11.61	29.27	1978	532
3. 3R	2.21	2.67	10	3.81	3.40	2.73	25.94	69.24	1981	273
4. COD	2.23	1.97	10	3.12	3.08	1.85	12.15	30.20	1980	224
5. JRC	2.29	2.53	4	2.52	2.12	3.11	17.44	37.74	1976	540
6. SL	2.31	2.09	8	3.48	2.87	2.45	10.17	27.90	1977	680
7. UF	2.42	2.26	4	2.57	1.31	2.84	4.84	13.05	1983	58
8. B-17	2.51	2.62	3	2.52	1.86	2.21	3.30	11.50	1983	87
9. WS&IM	2.53	3.04	6	2.93	2.67	2.39	7.01	34.90	1975	464
10. FP	2.57	3.10	4	3.12	2.91	2.87	5.42	16.81	1985	85
11. HW	2.59	3.27	4	3.68	2.13	4.25	8.27	21.73	1984	63
12. W&P	2.61	2.76	5	3.46	2.93	3.04	13.04	57.19	1980	374
13. BB'81	2.67	2.46	4	2.53	2.94	2.91	19.62	35.09	1981	277
14. TLD	2.68	1.95	8	3.72	3.54	2.04	24.44	170.68	1980	119
15. VITP	2.72	2.86	2	2.89	2.22	4.52	16.96	22.36	1977	420
16. CAE	2.85	3.01	4	2.32	2.89	2.52	25.14	32.57	1976	252
17. SON	2.92	3.03	10	3.72	4.09	1.92	29.50	81.78	1981	123
18. SOA	2.97	2.79	3	2.73	2.41	3.88	18.22	22.57	1981	232
19. FE	3.00	2.72	7	3.21	3.21	3.00	21.17	49.05	1980	345
20. FRED	3.00	3.41	4	2.93	2.58	2.75	12.25	24.67	1983	58
21. SUB	3.08	2.64	8	3.13	3.08	2.74	9.41	26.15	1978	281
22. CON	3.12	3.64	7	3.08	2.52	3.52	25.8	49.1	1983	73
23. MD	3.13	3.51	3	2.80	2.21	3.44	14.75	20.74	1964	395
24. AZ	3.17	2.72	7	3.18	3.86	2.68	18.63	63.40	1978	292
25. PL	3.19	2.94	7	3.31	3.13	3.50	9.49	25.80	1974	479
26. 1776	3.21	2.97	7	3.09	3.03	3.10	10.16	45.09	1974	373
27. FT	3.23	3.12	10	3.22	3.67	3.16	24.51	57.39	1981	196
28. PB	3.35	3.08	6	3.73	2.90	3.94	10.35	23.07	1970	448
29. BIS	3.45	2.96	6	3.43	3.25	3.06	12.41	26.35	1979	248
30. AAOC	3.52	2.95	5	3.02	3.26	3.07	15.52	26.53	1978	239
31. FIW	3.53	3.14	4	3.17	2.94	3.72	16.14	30.01	1981	100
32. CL	3.54	3.35	5	3.15	3.33	3.79	12.53	25.53	1975	136
33. DL	3.61	4.02	7	3.85	3.22	3.29	6.66	19.94	1981	120
34. GOA	3.66	3.37	5	3.67	3.79	2.98	18.68	60.06	1981	297
35. WAS	3.71	3.67	1	2.48	2.37	5.98	9.09	12.71	1976	396
36. GE	3.72	3.12	6	4.64	4.41	2.84	13.25	57.13	1977	248
37. AF	3.74	4.16	7	3.98	3.34	3.35	5.61	16.02	1980	192
38. AIW	3.74	3.05	8	2.92	3.52	3.06	8.69	25.36	1977	308
39. LRT	3.75	3.60	4	3.53	3.39	2.96	13.04	17.00	1982	56
40. TR	3.80	3.76	3	3.33	3.60	3.70	9.51	25.79	1980	72
41. WAT	3.83	4.17	2	2.95	2.64	5.00	17.08	23.13	1962	296
42. NP	3.87	3.29	3	3.27	2.56	4.89	9.69	14.40	1978	159
43. AK	3.92	4.38	2	3.30	2.48	5.09	14.49	19.13	1964	492
44. AL	4.03	4.05	5	3.69	3.18	3.57	12.34	17.93	1974	217
45. TB	4.06	3.53	7	3.48	4.47	2.50	11.28	32.50	1975	304
46. RW	4.14	3.14	5	3.32	2.91	3.98	4.22	21.15	1973	311
47. JU	4.17	3.20	6	3.61	3.83	3.22	16.01	36.66	1974	193
48. PAA	4.17	4.24	5	3.79	3.99	3.70	15.51	25.24	1981	144
49. DD	4.22	4.07	2	3.04	2.88	4.64	17.54	26.25	1977	367
50. CH	4.39	3.80	4	3.35	3.52	4.67	14.76	24.96	1961	140
51. STAL	4.39	4.29	2	2.88	2.75	5.83	20.57	28.85	1963	320
52. LW	4.45	3.75	5	3.77	3.79	4.79	13.36	34.14	1971	372
53. FR	4.79	3.49	4	3.47	3.75	4.06	16.27	26.95	1972	244
54. BL	4.73	4.16	7	3.65	3.77	5.27	20.43	41.44	1965	336
55. TAC	5.62	5.25	1	2.79	3.23	6.34	11.70	19.29	1961	285



COMING UP  
NEXT  
TIME

### BANZAI

#### Tactical Warfare in the Southwest Pacific, 1941-45

\$12.00

**BANZAI**, first adjunct to the popular *UP FRONT*, was rated well enough (2.95) to place it 18th on the RBG Chart—if enough readers had responded. Although these will not appear on the ongoing RBG, I think the size of the sample base gives some validity to the numerical values. As such, it is interesting to compare these values with the corresponding values of *BANZAI*'s parent.

In almost every case, the ratings for *BANZAI* are higher than those for *UP FRONT*. This indicates either a dissatisfaction with the gamette (an almost unheard of event—witness the ratings for the *SL* family of games) or simply a jaundiced view due to overfamiliarity. Since a round of cards can be played so quickly, a player may have completed hundreds of games of *UP FRONT*/*BANZAI* by the time he rated *BANZAI*—an uncommon concentration (in terms of numbers of playings) in this frenzied hobby these days. The excitement and challenge of the system has now become commonplace, and the ratings for the module suffered accordingly. This hypothesis seems to be supported by the fact that the ratings for *Complexity* and *Game Length* are considerably lower for the gamette than for its parent, *UP FRONT*.

The survey of readers resulted in ratings for *BANZAI* about .50 higher than those for *UP FRONT* in similar categories. However,

the values for *Counters* (3.31 as compared to *UF*'s 2.01), *Playability* (2.41 as opposed to 1.31), *Excitement Level* (2.63 compared with 1.89) and *Play Balance* (2.82 to *UF*'s 1.58) are significant. All these, with the notable exception of that for *Playability*, can be explained in terms of overfamiliarity I think. Obviously, those experts on *UP FRONT* among our readership are very demanding after all those hours at the cardtable.

**Overall Value:** 2.95

**Components:** 2.91

**Map:** —

**Counters:** 3.31

**Player's Aids:** 2.72

**Complexity:** 3.77

**Completeness of Rules:** 2.90

**Playability:** 2.41

**Excitement Level:** 2.63

**Play Balance:** 2.82

**Authenticity:** 3.32

**Game Length**

**Shortest:** 34 mins.

**Longest:** 1 hr., 52 mins.

**Year:** 1984

**Sample Base:** 44



Our look at the Pacific Theater, via the medium of *BANZAI* and *FLAT TOP*, brought some kudos (Overall Rating for the issue of 3.15) with only a few brickbats. Ironically, the best rated articles proved to be those devoted to the naval game, and not those on the featured subject. Fred Helfferich's fine piece exploring the scope of *FLAT TOP*'s watery warfare marks his welcome visit to these pages as an author and analyst. The ratings for all the articles in Vol. 22, No. 2—with three points assigned each first-place vote, two points assigned each second-place vote, and one point awarded each third-place—are as follows:

PACIFIC DREAMS	364
THE AIRPOWER SYSTEM	292
BANZAI SERIES REPLAY	157
RETURN TO THE FRONT	125
T.K.O. IN TWO	109
TORPEDO JUNCTION	78
THE QUALITY POINT SYSTEM	55
AH PHILOSOPHY	20

Andrew Blauvelt's comprehensive look at the complex simulation *NAPOLEON AT BAY* ("Test of Arms" in Vol. 21, No. 2) has brought him the Editor's Choice Award for the best article of the past volume year. In an extremely close tally of the readers' votes, his effort is rewarded with a \$100 bonus and a lifetime subscription to *THE GENERAL*. "Test of Arms" is obviously the "first and last word on *NAB*", to quote one respondent. The nominees, and their percentage of the total votes received from the readership, are as follows:

TEST OF ARMS	
by Andrew Blauvelt	25.6%
UP FRONT BY THE NUMBERS	
by Jim Burnett	24.1%
'41 IS GONNA BE A GOOD YEAR	
by Nayyer Ali	19.3%
THE GRAND ART	
by W. Woon	13.5%
WHICH WAY THE WITCH KING?	
by Paul Bolduc	8.4%
FORCE MARCH TO VICTORY	
by Neil Schwarzwald	3.9%
BLITZKRIEG '85	
by Jim Mishcon	3.3%
LEBANON	
by Michael Anchors	1.9%

Terry Treadway reports that the first National *On All Fronts* Tournament (G.I. level) has recently narrowed the field to five finalists. In a series of *SQUAD LEADER* tournaments at various scattered conventions, using four new scenarios designed for quick play, the best players of the game were encouraged to pit their skills against others equally experienced. Points were awarded to each player for his performance, not just for his victories. Five players accumulated at least 1440 points each, advancing them to the final round of competition. They are, in no particular order, Bill Conner (Ohio), Ed Schroeder (Ohio), Bill Shade (Arizona), Howard Sylvester (Illinois) and Scott Martin (California).

The annual British "blood bath", Games Day, once again expanded its scope and scale over the conventions of previous years. Similar to *ORIGINS*, the 1985 convention saw hundreds of enthusiasts engaged in competitions, seminars, and product previews. The usual Games Day Awards (the British "Charlies") brought The Avalon Hill Company all three awards in the *Best Historical Boardgame* category, in order: *DIPLOMACY*, *KING-MAKER* and *SQUAD LEADER*. Placing second in the *Best Fantasy Boardgame* category was our own *DRAGON PASS*; and third among *Best Science Fiction Boardgames* was *DUNE*.

## Infiltrator's Report

On the insert of this issue, the readership will find the nomination form for this year's H.G. Wells and Charles Roberts Awards, to be presented at *ORIGINS '86* in Los Angeles by "The Academy of Adventure Gaming Arts and Design". While I do not belong to the Academy (indeed, none of the staff of The Avalon Hill Game Company does), I'd like to encourage the readers to complete and dispatch the nomination ballot. It costs nothing more than a stamp. Yet from those ballots received will come the five products formally nominated in each category (quite simply, the five mentioned the most)—perhaps your only chance to have a say in the process. And from these five, the membership of the Academy will then vote one as the award winner. So if you've a few moments to spare between now and May 3rd, take up a pen and play your part in recognizing the best of the hobby's new offerings.

I would stress that the products nominated must be from among those released in the calendar year 1985. The Avalon Hill Game Company has won more "Charlies" than any other in the gaming industry (the award is, after all, named after our founder). Among our broad line, the following wargames were released in 1985: *FIRE-POWER*, *STELLAR CONQUEST*, *RUSSIAN FRONT*, *DEVIL'S DEN* and, of course, *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER* and *BEYOND VALOR*.

The MicroComputer Games division of The Avalon Hill Game Company is looking for playtesters who have experience with two of our more popular games. Computer versions of *PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN* (for the Commodore 64, Atari 130ST/800XL, and Apple II) and *WOODEN SHIPS & IRON MEN* (for the Commodore 64) will be finished in the near future. Playtesters are needed to help "de-bug" the programs and ensure that the games adhere faithfully to their boardgame versions. The playtest list will be limited to about 20 people per version. Applicants must own the boardgame version. This type of playtesting is not meant to be fun so, please, only those willing to put in the work should apply. If interested, send a letter describing your gaming background and what computer you own to Avalon Hill addressed to the attention of Bill Peschel.

Of the two hundred or so entries to Contest #126, twenty-four proved to be single-minded enough to concentrate on the CV *Saratoga*. Despite some discrepancies in the math involved, all brought the Japanese player a six- to ten-point lead by throwing both air formations at the carrier. Note that the winners all made the assumption that their planes were loaded with suitable bomb loads (torpedoes for the Kates and AP for the Vals) and that there were no planes on the beleaguered carrier (knowledge which, as we here play, the Japanese player wouldn't be aware of in any case). Both of these assumptions can be derived from the fact that the contest specified the best possible attack to *guarantee* the lead. From the twenty-four correct entrants, the following ten were selected at random and will be awarded merchandise credits: Ronald Barnett, New Hyde Park, NY; David Cottenden, Hatboro, PA; Paul Fretheim, Northport, MI; John Snider, Whitehorse, Yukon; Scott Spahr, Laramie, WY; Stephen Squibb, Carlisle, PA; David Sweezee, Flint, MI; David Thalheimer,

Hanscom AFB, MA; David Theil, Livingston, MT; and Scott Tomasic, Hobart, IN.

Contest #127 posed the age-old question for the die-hard wargamer—is there a chance of winning or shall I concede? Allied troops, having lost eight units in the process, had finally reached Nece, in a close-fought battle of Situation #6 in *PANZER LEADER*. The Germans have two possible methods of denying the Allies victory—recapture a hex of Nece, or eliminate three more Allied units. Let's look at each option.

Given the position in Nece, the only possible weak-points are hexes T3 and S3. The German infantry in V3 cannot take out either, nor can the halftracks (even in conjunction with fire from the 75mm howitzer). No other German unit can even reach these hexes. So this method of snatching victory from the jaws of defeat is obviously a "pipe-dream".

Turning now to the possibility of eliminating three Allied units and so making it a pyrrhic victory, only two Allied stacks seem vulnerable—those engineers at R5 and the spotted position at N8. Either can be pounded by the howitzer (the engineers subsequently being run down by the halftracks), but not both. The German infantry is, unfortunately, out of range to affect either; nor can infantry fire discomfort those Allied units in the town. So, while two units could be eliminated; the three necessary to seize victory cannot.

With both options discarded, it appears that the German player cannot win—even with the best die rolls possible. So, he might as well concede and get on to the next game.

### Dear Subscribers:

We, and some of our faithful subscribers, have gone through a difficult period of adjustment to the computer age. We at *THE GENERAL* feel that the problems have been resolved now. Our thanks for your patience. To avoid future problems, we take this opportunity to inform you of the following guidelines for maintaining your subscription without difficulty:

1. **CHANGE OF ADDRESS**—All address changes must be clearly marked as such, preferably on a separate sheet and in a separate mailing. Unless address changes are received within TWO weeks of the mailing of a given issue, the receipt of your issue cannot be guaranteed and no remailing of the issue will be made.
2. **RENEWAL**—The deadline specified for address changes above applies for renewals. Please renew promptly upon receipt of your last issue.
3. All correspondence, including address changes and renewals, should have the words "THE GENERAL" marked conspicuously to avoid any possibility of your mail being misdirected. In addition, please do not introduce matters concerning subscriptions in correspondence dealing with other subjects primarily; too often, such postscripts are inadvertently overlooked.

With the guidelines above, and your continued patience and kindness, we hope to eliminate all future problems in getting your magazines to you. As always, if a problem does arise, we will do everything in our power to help—the guidelines above are nothing more than a way that you can help us help you.

Richard Snider  
The Subscription Department



## OPPONENTS WANTED

The "Opponents Wanted" advertisements on this page are intended as a service to the readership of this periodical. This service will continue so long as certain editorial policies are adhered to strictly. The editors of *THE GENERAL* reserve the right to excise any part of or an entire advertisement should these not be followed.

Want-ads will be accepted only when printed on the appropriate form or a reasonable facsimile. Such must be accompanied by the appropriate fee. This may take the form of uncancelled US postage; note that foreign postage is not acceptable. No refunds of this fee will be made, even should the ad not be printed due to failure to conform to our policies.

Please print or type the ad copy. If the ad is not legible, it will not be printed. Too, no ad dealing with products of other manufacturers will be printed and any mention of such will be excised. Ads are accepted for single printing only. Should the reader desire that a specific ad enjoy multiple printing, a separate number of copies equal to the number of times the ad is to be run must be submitted—although only one total payment need be included to cover the printings.

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Finally, due to the pressure of various deadlines, often advertisements submitted weeks before an issue appears will not be printed in that issue. Please be patient; such will be printed in the immediately following issue. Please do not specify a particular issue for an ad to appear; such requests cannot be honored.

For Sale: many old Avalon Hill wargames including GUAD, 1914, etc. Cheap, also out-of-print GENERAL. SASE for list. Robert Zeit, 657 Park Lake, Philadelphia, PA 19144, (215) 848-8993.

A collection of World War II-era children's magazines, including 'GENERAL' and 'VICTORY', along with a 'Special Reader Club' card, a circular color chart, and a small book with a rainbow cover. The magazines feature various illustrations of soldiers, ships, and aircraft. The 'GENERAL' magazines are prominently displayed, with one showing a soldier in a trench and another showing a soldier in a field. The 'VICTORY' magazine shows a ship. The 'Special Reader Club' card has a blue and white striped border and a yellow star. The circular color chart has a red, yellow, and green design. The small book has a rainbow cover.

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21-44: PGG-S, SR; PB-A; 3R-S; TRC-S, V, Q; DIP-A; STAL-V, S; SL-Sc; PK-Q  
21-51: HW-S, V, A; MR-S; Q; OR-A; DIP-A; 3R-A; RB-S; CON-V; CIV-S; SL-A  
21-66: PF-H, V, SR; AIW-S; Sc; BL-V; TAC-V; Q; SL-A; PK-Q  
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22-22: BANZ-A, SR, Q; FT-A, S; SUB-S; VITP-S, Q; AK-Q  
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## Strategic Simulation of the Great Patriotic War

## INSTRUCTIONS:

Rate each category by placing a number ranging from 1 through 9 in the appropriate space to the right (1 equating "excellent"; 5, "average"; 9, "terrible"). EXCEPTION: Rate items 7a and 7b in terms of minutes necessary to play the game, in ten-minute increments. (Example: If you've found it takes two and a half hours to play the basic scenario of *FRANCE 1940*, enter "15" for category 7a.) For an explanation of the categories, refer to the AH Philosophy of Vol. 19, No. 4. Sub-categories are indicated by italics. Enter ratings only for those categories relevant to the game in question. Note that AH's ratings for **Complexity** and **Year of Publishing** have been provided; do not rate these categories.

1. Overall Value \_\_\_\_\_
2. Components \_\_\_\_\_
- 2a. Mapboard \_\_\_\_\_
- 2b. Counters \_\_\_\_\_
- 2c. Player's Aids \_\_\_\_\_
3. Complexity 5
- 3a. Complexity \_\_\_\_\_
4. Completeness of Rules \_\_\_\_\_
5. Playability \_\_\_\_\_
- 5a. Excitement Level \_\_\_\_\_
- 5b. Play Balance \_\_\_\_\_
6. Authenticity \_\_\_\_\_
7. Game Length \_\_\_\_\_
- 7a. Basic/Shortest \_\_\_\_\_
- 7b. Advanced/Longest \_\_\_\_\_
8. Year of Publication 1985

\$1.00

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This coupon is valid only for mail order purchases of complete games direct from The Avalon Hill Game Company. Each postage coupon entitles the sender to deduct up to \$1.00 from the postage charges of any order for a complete game provided the amount deducted does not exceed the total postage charge for that order. Coupons are not usable for parts, magazines, or phone kit orders.

Shipping charges are 10% of the dollar amount of your order if sent to a USA address. Shipping costs to Canada and Mexico are 20% of the order; overseas orders must add 30%. Any past GENERAL postage coupons previously offering different values may be used as the equal of this coupon.

Example: Customer A lives in the USA and orders a \$15 game. His postage charge is \$1.50 which he may pay by sending in 2 postage coupons and \$15, or 1 postage coupon and \$15.50. Customer B lives in Canada and orders the same game. He must pay \$15 in USA funds plus 3 postage coupons or \$15 plus \$1 for each postage coupon less than 3 which he sends.

Good for Postage Charges Only on Complete Game Purchases

# WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN PLAYING?

Top ten lists are seemingly always in vogue these days. Whether the subject is books on the Best Seller List, television's Nielsen ratings, or even games, the public never seems to tire of seeing how their individual favorites stack up numerically against the competition. Our preoccupation with this national pastime is almost akin to rooting the home team on to victory every Sunday. So to further cater to your whims (and to satisfy our own curiosity) we unveil The *GENERAL*'s version of the gamer's TOP TEN.

We won't ask you to objectively rate any game. That sort of thing is already done in these pages and elsewhere. Instead, we ask that you merely list the three (or less) games which you've spent the most time with *since* you received your last issue of The *GENERAL*. With this we can generate a consensus list of what's being bought. The degree of correlation between the Best Selling Lists and the Most Played List should prove interesting.

Feel free to list any game regardless of manufacturer. There will be a built-in bias to the survey because you all play our games to some extent but it should be no more prevalent than similar projects undertaken by other magazines with a special interest-based circulation. The amount to which this bias affects the final outcome will be left to the individual's discretion.

The games I've spent the most time playing during the past two months are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

# Opponent Wanted

50¢

1. Want-ads will be accepted only when printed on this form or a facsimile and must be accompanied by a 50¢ token fee. No refunds. Payment may be made in uncanceled U.S. postage stamps.
2. For Sale, Trade, or Wanted To Buy ads will be accepted only when dealing with collector's items (The Avalon Hill Game Company's out of print games) and are accompanied by a \$1.00 token fee. No refunds.
3. Insert copy on lines provided (25 words maximum) and print name, address, and phone number on the appropriate lines.
4. Please PRINT. If your ad is illegible, it will not be printed.
5. So that as many ads as possible can be printed within our limited space, we request that you use official state and game abbreviations. Don't list your entire collection, list only those you are most interested in locating opponents for.

Afrika Korps—AK, Air Force—AF, Alexander—AL, Alpha Omega—AO, Ambea Wars—AW, Anzio—AZ, Arab-Israeli Wars—AIW, Assault On Crete—AOC, Bismarck—BIS, Blitzkrieg—BL, Battle Of The Bulge—BB, Bull Run—BR, Caesar Alesia—CAE, Caesar's Legions—CL, Chancellorsville—CH, Circus Maximus—CM, Civilization—CIV, Conquistador—CON, Cross Of Iron—COL, Crescendo Of Doom—COD, Dauntless—DL, D-Day—DD, Diplomacy—DIP, Down With The King—DWTK, Dragonhunt—DH, Firepower—FP, Flat Top—FT, Fortress Europa—FE, France 40—FR, Frederick the Great—FRED, Freedom in the Galaxy—FITG, Fury In The West—FITW, Gettysburg—GE, G.I.: Anvil of Victory—GI, Gladiator—GL, Guns Of August—GOA, Gunslinger—GSL, Hitler's War—HW, Jutland—JU, Kingmaker—KM, Legend of Robin Hood—LRH, The Longest Day—TLD, Little Round Top—LRT, Luftwaffe—LW, Machiavelli—MA, Magic Realm—MR, Midway—MD, Napoleon—NP, Napoleon at Bay—NAB, Naval War—NW, Origins—OR, Outdoor Survival—OS, PanzerArmee Afrika—PAA, Panzerblitz—PB, PanzerGruppe Guderian—PGG, Panzerkrieg—PK, Rail Baron—RB, Richthofen's War—RW, The Russian Campaign—TRC, Squad Leader—SL, Stalingrad—STAL, Starship Troopers—SST, Storm Over Arnhem—SOA, Struggle of Nations—SON, Submarine—SUB, Tactics II—TAC, Third Reich—3R, Titan—TT, Tobruk—TB, Tirreme—TR, Up Front—UF, Victory In The Pacific—VITP, War and Peace—W&P, War At Sea—WAS, Waterloo—WAT, Wizard's Quest—WQ, Wooden Ships & Iron Men—WSIM.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
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 \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

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CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

# CONTEST #128

Axis Unit	Hex Entered	Reserve Placed?	Blitz Placed?	Blitz Movement
8-6-6 Pz				
7-5-6 Pz				
6-4-6 Pz				
5-5-6 Mt				
6-5-6 Inf				
5-4-6 Inf				
4-3-6 Inf				
3-2-6 Inf				
4-3-10 Air				
4-3-10 Air				
4-3-10 Air				

Issue as a whole . . . (Rate from 1 to 10, with 1 equating excellent, 10 equating terrible)  
 Best 3 Articles

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_



# ACADEMY OF ADVENTURE GAMING ARTS & DESIGN THE GENERAL OFFICIAL ORIGINS AWARDS NOMINATION BALLOT

for the year 1985, to be presented at ORIGINS '86, July 3-6, 1986, in Los Angeles, California  
(for information about Origins '86, write PO Box 8399, Long Beach, Ca 90808)

The Origins Awards, presented at Origins each year, are an international series of awards aimed at recognizing outstanding achievements in Adventure Gaming. They are comprised of the Charles Roberts Awards for boardgaming, and the H.G.Wells Awards for miniatures and Role-Playing games. An Awards Committee of hobbyists (some professionals, but primarily independents) directs and administers the awards system. The nomination ballot is open to all interested gamers. YOUR VOTE can make a difference! A final ballot is prepared by the committee and voted on by the members of the Academy of Adventure Gaming Arts & Design. Academy membership, \$3 per year, is open to active, accomplished hobbyists, both pro and amateur. Membership guidelines are available for a SASE from the addresses given below. Correspondance should be sent to the US address.

Instructions. Read Carefully. Print legibly or type nominations. Ballots that are messy, not filled out correctly, or show attempts at stuffing will not be counted. You may list three nominees per category. It does not matter in what order you list them. To keep the voting as meaningful as possible, do not make selections in unfamiliar categories. YOU MUST SIGN THE BALLOT! And include your address. You may vote only once.

Nominations should be for products produced during the calendar year 1985. Miniature figure series nominations should be for product lines which are either new or have been substantially expanded in 1985.

This ballot may be reproduced and circulated by any means available, provided its contents are faithfully copied.

DEADLINE: MAY 3, 1986

## THE H.G. WELLS AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN MINIATURES AND ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

1. Best Historical Figure Series, 1985: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Best Fantasy/SF Figure Series, 1985: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Best Vehicular/Accessory Series, 1985: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Best Miniature Rules, 1985: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Best Role-Playing Rules, 1985: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Best Role-Playing Adventure, 1985: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Best Role-Playing Supplement, 1985: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Best Professional Role-Playing Magazine, 1985: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Best Professional Miniatures Magazine, 1985: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Best Play-By-Mail Game, 1985: \_\_\_\_\_  
(all are eligible except last years winner: StarWeb)

## THE CHARLES ROBERTS AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN BOARDGAMING

11. Best Pre-20th Century Game, 1985: \_\_\_\_\_
12. Best 20th Century Game, 1985: \_\_\_\_\_
13. Best Fantasy/SF Game, 1985: \_\_\_\_\_
14. Best Professional Boardgame Magazine, 1985: \_\_\_\_\_
15. Best Adventure Game for Home Computer, 1985: \_\_\_\_\_
16. Best Amateur Adventure Gaming Magazine, 1985: \_\_\_\_\_
17. Best Graphic Presentation, 1985: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State or Province/Zip or Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Send in your ballot by May 3, 1986 to only one of the following addresses:

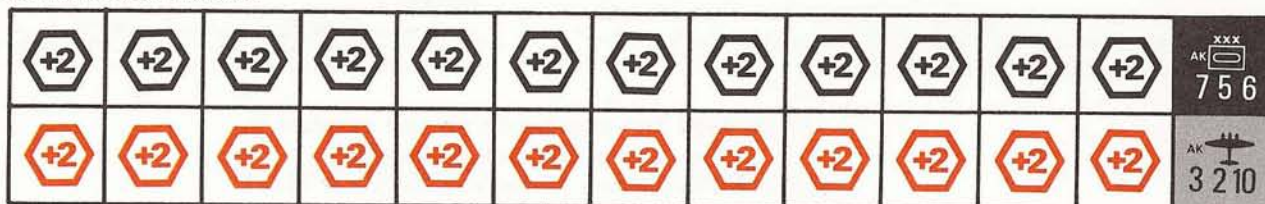
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## Variant Counters for RUSSIAN FRONT

(see Page 12)





## The GENERAL



# A Lifetime of Gaming Pleasure from The **GENERAL** ★ AVALON HILL

For over twenty years, the AH **GENERAL** has set the standard for magazines devoted to the challenging hobby of wargaming. And the oldest professional wargaming magazine is still the best value for the wargamer's dollar with the least expensive subscription rate to be found in the hobby. Every bi-monthly issue is packed with articles on the strategy, tactics and variations of AH games. Written by the AH staff and by fellow hobbyists who are enthusiastic experts on the games, the articles are usually thought-provoking, occasionally controversial, and always enjoyable. Graced with the best of graphics, each 48-page issue is full-color and blessed with numerous maps and charts to highlight the information the authors present.

Judging by responses to regular surveys of the readership—conducted in a continuous effort to bring them what they want—the many “extras” found within the pages of The **GENERAL** are as important as the articles. For the past year, *The Victory Insider* has brought our readers similar high-quality and informative articles on the products of Victory Games as a bonus insert. Many issues have Series Replays, move-by-move recreations of one of AH's games by expert players with neutral commentary on their efforts by the designer or developer. New product announcements, game strategy contests, historical background pieces, discount coupons, information on conventions and other doings within the wargaming hobby world—all are found in these pages; and all have but one intention: to increase the pleasure for those who play AH's fine line of games.

So, if you know of someone who hopes to make wargaming a hobby that they will enjoy for the rest of their life—all the challenge and color of the fascinating hobby of wargaming—you can't go wrong by giving them a subscription of The **GENERAL**. Even if that person happens to be yourself! And you can't beat the price: a two-year subscription represents a 50% saving over the newsstand cover price. (Ah . . . but if you are not quite convinced that this is for you, try ordering a sample issue—only \$3.00. We're sure that one look is all you'll need to understand the pride we take in The **GENERAL**. Individual copies may be ordered direct from The Avalon Hill Game Company at the address below.)

## FREE GAMES FOR LIFE

To express our thanks to our subscribers, The Avalon Hill Game Company is sponsoring a “GENERAL Subscriber's Sweepstakes”. By entering a two-year subscription for yourself or another, those reading this ad are entitled to fill out the form below (enclose it with your subscription payment). This places your/their name in the drawing for prizes guaranteed to excite any wargamer. The Grand Prize winner will be sent—free for the rest of his life—a copy of every new AH game published! Second prize will be a free life-time extension to the current **GENERAL** subscription; third prize will be a free copy of every game published by AH during 1986. The drawing will be held at ORIGINS '86 in Los Angeles at a time and place to be announced in the convention program.

OK, I'm convinced. Please enter a two-year subscription to The **GENERAL** in the following name:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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