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Without further ado, I turn over this column to one Albert Founer and our own Don Greenwood (for reasons that should be readily apparent):

Dear Avalon Hill,

Screw you, and all the butthead that work for you, and that includes Don Greenwood. You jerks have gone too far, this time. I refer, of course, to your new game TURNING POINT STALINGRAD.

When I read about it in a recent issue of The GENERAL, I could hardly wait. This was for two reasons: one—Stalingrad has always been of interest to me, and two—I've got THUNDER AT CASSINO which I enjoy. These combined I felt would make for an excellent game. So I bought it; and, as I eagerly examined the contents and studied the rules, I felt sure I had made a good choice. Well, imagine my surprise as I was looking at the OOB for the extended games and noticed that it said that most of the units below were not included but could be purchased separately.

I was shocked, amazed, dumbfounded even. The box made no mention of this fact, and neither did the article in your magazine "Coming Attractions" in Vol. 25, No. 31. How could you do this, to me? I've never before been so outraged by one of your products. You misled me. Even if the box had said something about this, I probably would have still bought it. But nooo! Instead you butthead have to be devious and underhanded. You've destroyed something about this, I probably would have still bought it. So I chose the way of the "outback".

I guess I'm still an evil butthead because I made a similar decision with TURNING POINT STALINGRAD. The game was originally designed to cover only the first three weeks of the battle for the city for three reasons:

1. The game was designed to be playable in an afternoon—any games extending past the three-week mark certainly couldn't be finished in a day.
2. The most interesting and mobile part of the battle took place at the outset. After three weeks, the Germans had chance for neither embus and confusion and the writer's sensibilities would not have been offended and no-one would have had cut counters. Instead, I chose the way of the "outback".

I put the question to my playtesters. Should we include the complete OB and increase the price (decreasing sales) or forego it altogether? Opinion was split. "No" said the playability camp, "we never play past the third week anyway; virtually all our games are ended by the Sudden Death victory conditions in the first three weeks." "Yes" said the simulation camp, "we want to fight the whole battle!" Betwixt and between as usual, I tried to please them both. We would prepare and test the complete OB but offer it in the game only as an extension—purchasable separately. So those who wanted to buy the complete simulation would do so at a price, while those interested only in the game could play it at a lesser price. Each camp paying according to what it consumed was my reason.

Albert Founer
Zion, Illinois

I should have known better. I got a similar letter years ago when we included variant counters for STORM OVER ARNHEM in the game and advised players that the variant rules would follow in The GENERAL featuring that game.

My logic was simple, or so I thought. The variant was just that—a different way to play the game which added considerably to its length. It had not yet been tested and inclusion in the game itself would have exceeded the 16-page format of the rulebook and required a price increase. But, there was room on the game's counter sheets, and by including the extra counters there I saw a way to give GENERAL readers a free set of die-cut counters for the feature article of that issue... and give myself some more time to test the variant rules and scenario. Although it was interesting, in my opinion, adding it to the game itself would have detracted from the overall effect of the simulation. I reasoned, "Why charge more money for an untested variant which will increase the playing time of a game that is already too long?" I soon found out: "it was all a scheme to force people to buy The GENERAL!" Oooh... are we ever evil or what?

It did no good to reason with the writer then that the variant was an "optional"—a freebie that would not have existed at all were it not for the magazine. I had no intentions of ever including it in the game itself, and included it there only at the last instant because I saw a way to give GENERAL readers some die-cut counters. Had I left it out of the game entirely and printed the variant with paper counters in the magazine, the writer's sensibilities would not have been offended and no-one would have had cut counters. Instead, I chose the way of the "outback".

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It's September 1942, and General Paulus has just left the Fuehrer's new headquarters at Vinnytsia with orders that Stalingrad must be taken as soon as possible. The general makes haste to board the flight bound eastward, where the decisions he makes will ultimately decide the fate of Germany. Stalingrad must fall quickly, and with modest cost to his already tired Sixth Army—for another Russian winter is on its way. But as he boards the plane, he finds his old nemesis, General Chuykov, pouring over a mint copy of TURNING POINT: STALINGRAD.

Chuykov looks up, smiles, and asks, "Ready for the dry run, Comrade?" General Paulus, a little shocked at seeing Chuykov on a Luftwaffe flight in the first place, can only nod in the affirmative.

This fanciful introduction serves to lay the foundation for my article on the play of this new title from the boys on the Luftwaffe. It is a demanding game, one which the player who best manages his orders that Stalingrad must be taken as soon as possible. The general makes haste to board the flight bound eastward, where the decisions he makes will ultimately decide the fate of Germany. Stalingrad must fall quickly, and with modest cost to his already tired Sixth Army—for another Russian winter is on its way. But as he boards the plane, he finds his old nemesis, General Chuykov, pouring over a mint copy of TURNING POINT: STALINGRAD.

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before getting bogged down in a protracted fight. The 29th Motorized is the best offensive and most mobile stack the Germans have in the opening order of battle. Losing them in the opening day disruption is obviously harmful to the German cause.

"As an alternative, for instance, the Mamayev Kurgan (#56) is the focal point of the whole game, and if the Germans manage to control it in the first week, the Russians are finished . . . ."

"Paulus, I think we should just go ahead and talk about the Basic Game set-up since historically set-up should be reserved only for the first week. However, it is an excellent place to visit during the second.

"My 'Very Low' areas include the Grain Elevator (#62), the Downtown Ferry Landing (#63), the Red Barricades Factory (#68). the Brickworks (#69) and the Infamous Dzerzhinsky Tractor Factory (#70). In a battle between equally experienced players, these areas should never fall to the Germans in the first week. However, 'never say never' applies here, so they are rated as 'Very Low'. Should these areas fall at all the first week, it is usually to a lone mechanized unit exploiting a breakthrough by moving into a vacant area. This situation is precarious, at best, and a Russian counterattack can usually dislodge the invader (or cut off his supply)."

"Nevertheless, Paulus, a wise Russian will strive to leave a hedgehog defense of one Fresh unit in every other area along the riverbank to prevent such a catastrophe."

"So, the Victory Point area tour is over. It is time to look at the combinations which will provide those additional five VP I need—assuming always that Latashanka (#H) is held throughout the battle (or at least on September 19th when it counts). Most of my German victories have fallen into one of the configurations below:

1. Kuporosnoye (#30); Kuibyshev Sawmill (#31); plus two of the following three: Minina Gully (#32), Ryork (#74) or Skuchaya Mechetka Gully (#72).

2. Kuporosnoye (#30); the Mamayev Kurgan (#56); plus one of the following: Kuibyshev Sawmill (#31), Minina Gully (#32), Ryork (#74), Skuchaya Mechetka Gully (#72), or the Oil Refinery (#65).

"While it doesn't always happen this way; it's the basis for my strategy, Chuykov. What can you do to stop this manifest destiny?"

**SETTING UP**

Paulus seemed pleased with himself, and his smile had disappeared. "Well, Chuykov, you get the honors of setting up first. Shall we use the historical set-up, or the normal set-up for the Basic Game?"

"My choice is obvious, Paulus—the historical set-up suits me fine."

[The pilot mutters something about the fact that the historical set-up should be reserved only for the first week."

"No, no, Chuykov. I think we should just go ahead and talk about the Basic Game set-up since we'll be in the real thing tomorrow."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: TPS Victory Point Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#30 Kuporosnoye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#31 Kuibyshev Sawmill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#32 Minina Gully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#62 Grain Elevator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#63 Downtown Ferry Landing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#64 Oil Refinery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#66 Tennis Racket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#56 Mamayev Kurgan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#76 Red October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#68 Red Barricades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#69 Brickworks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#70 Dzerzhinsky Tractor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#71 Spartakova</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#72 Skuchaya Mechetka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#74 Ryork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H Latashanka</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Those Russians who are in an offensive frame of mind should note that if the elements of the 131st Division all set up in Kuibyshev Sawmill (#31), this will represent one of the strongest Russian forces
possible at start which can attack the enemy. A total offensive value of nine is possible with the 131st Division’s units when including artillery. But this offensive power is short-lived; it vanishes as soon as the area takes a casualty loss because the armor must take the first hit.

“My units which set up in the ‘red’ areas should be concentrated on Hill 109.4 (#19), Hill 108.3 (#12) should be protected by two units. The other same-colored areas need only one unit each. This placement allows the Mamayev Kurgan (#56) to be reinforced while units from other areas only need Hill 108.5 to help fill in the void in the north in the same offensive value of nine is possible with the 131st impulse. But this deployment can backfire if the area takes a casualty loss because the armor happens, usually, when things are falling apart in the south; if so, it has the nasty effect of making a bad situation worse. Those comrades wishing to be conservative can just split the forces between Hill 109.4 and 108.3. But I am reminded of an old Russian saying: ‘Those who will defend everything, defend nothing.’

‘Those poor units which begin at the Hospital (#24) are going to be subjected to the biggest onslaught of the first week. Therefore, lead it with every available unit. Hill 153.7 (#89) should have two or three units to absorb the artillery bombardment, hopefully maintaining a fresh unit after the storm. Every day the central German stacks are slowed allows the Russian time to fortify Mamayev Kurgan and the surrounding areas.

‘My purple areas should each have roughly the same number of units, with the exceptions of the Tsaritsa Gorge (#26) which needs but one. A counterattack made up of elements of the 244th Armor Division can be located in the Tsaritsa Woods (#34). And this group can also be used for rapid deployment to any weakened areas which may need reinforcements.’

Looking up from the map, Chuykov emphatically says, ‘There are a couple of other points which must be made at this point. First, the Russian player should learn to forget about the Regimental Integrity Bonus. This may be hard to swallow, considering that the Russians have more full-set regiments than do the Germans. But, they must be spread out to cover territory, and rarely will the Russians have the luxury of going on the offensive anyway. In addition, casualties will surely hinder the application of the bonus, usually when things are falling apart. The element of surprise is what makes Level 2 Rubble so desirable for the Russian player in late weeks in the campaign. A stack of German mechanized units trying to enter a level 2 Rubble which is controlled and occupied by Fresh Russians can easily be brought to a halt.

‘A major concern for both players is the success of Russian reinforcements in crossing the Volga. German infiltration points are the controlling and modifying factor. Table 4 shows the odds of successfully entering the Volga in a non-disrupted state in the face of the number of German infiltration points.

‘The Germans will always have, at the least, a control of a river bank area (meaning they should have at least two infiltration points); this translates into an 83.3% chance of the Russian seeing his reinforcement. However, as soon as the German player gains additional reinforcement from the Mamayev Kurgan, things start looking grim for the Russian. If it is German controlled and an observer is present, the odds of success in crossing drop below 50%.

‘One last item which can make a big difference between winning and losing the game is the number of day and night impulses available to you to work within. Every German impulse must see a dice roll, which will see whether sunset or sunrise arrives. Table 5 shows the likelihood that there will be seeing German reinforcements during the day/night.’

‘Well put, General. I was saying that it’s time for my Germans to set up. And it’s fairly straightforward, since most of the units will be concentrated into great stacks. A total of five stacks, each with greater than a ‘10’ in offensive power, can be put together at the start. Let me explain:

‘Elements of the 29th Motorized Division should be placed on Hill 120.0 (#1) where they can muster an attack strength of ‘16’. The other three ‘grey’ start areas should only contain one unit apiece. The resultant stack should be able to take control of Kuporosnaya (#30) in the first day of the fighting.

‘The units of the 94th Infantry Division can be committed to the reserve in either Yelshanka (#28) or Sadovaya Station (#3). Personally, I prefer Yelshanka because it is closer to the Volga and can be used as a base for attack on either the Kubyshev Sawmill (#31) or on the Leatherworks (#27) on the 13th. Even without armor, this group can muster a respectable attack strength of ’15’.

‘The 244th Panzer units usually wind up on Gummak Road (#6). I prefer to stack all of these units together at the start, but will not necessarily move them together. Splitting up this force into two offensive groups results in smaller independent offensive values—but provides more options. This stack could also be placed on Hill 133.4 (#5) if desired. It operates as a reserve in either Yelshanka or even Yelshanka (#28) or Sadovaya Station (#3). Personally, I prefer Yelshanka because it is closer to the Volga and can be used as a base for attack on either the Kubyshev Sawmill (#31) or on the Leatherworks (#27) on the 13th. Even without armor, this group can muster a respectable attack strength of ’15’.

‘The last stack consists of the men of the 295th Infantry Division, capable of a ‘15-factor’ attack. My location of choice is Raguzlyayevka Station (#9). However, as you’ve already pointed out Chuykov, the alternative for this group is to be placed on Hill 109.6 (#11). Placing these at the Station (#9) however, gives them more freedom in direction since both the central and north-central areas can be assaulted.

‘Wasn’t that simple? Efficient, as the Wehrmacht stresses. You shake your head and smile? Ok! Ok! Let’s roll for Rubble and I’ll wipe that smile from your lips.’

Table 1: Chance of Success to Obtain a Given CP Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attack Modifier</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minus CP Required</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success</td>
<td>96.1%</td>
<td>96.1%</td>
<td>91.7%</td>
<td>81.3%</td>
<td>71.9%</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>53.1%</td>
<td>43.7%</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
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Table 2: Chance of Rubble Creation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEM</th>
<th>Odds of Rubble</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Chance of Entering Rubble

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>German Impulse</th>
<th>Odds for Level 1</th>
<th>Odds for Level 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>97.3%</td>
<td>91.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>92.3%</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
<td>63.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
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<td>54.4%</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
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Table 4: Chance of Crossing the Volga

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>German Impulse</th>
<th>Odds of Entering Rubble</th>
<th>Points Untroubled</th>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
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Table 5: Chance of Another German Impulse

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<th>Days/Night Impulse</th>
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<td>25.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"And that, according to the Generals, is the basis for success or failure in TP: STALINGRAD. So if you seek to blame luck for your poor showing, the above are ammunition for the contrary viewpoint."
OPENING MOVES

As the pilot banks the plane to avoid a stately stormfront, the general is rolling dice. Both are grumbling; Paulus because he wanted less Rubble, and Chuykov because he wanted more than he got. But regardless of the status of the Vols, the battle is ready to begin.

"Chuykov, let's begin the first day with... ah, an opening bombardment of Kuporosnaya (#30), the Sawmill (#31), and the Hospital (#24)." He was going for it with the 389th's artillery, which is saved for deployment on the Mamayev Kurgan (#56) if the Germans can contest it before the 17th. I feel that the benefit of saving the Stuka this first day "One I'm fond of," he thought, "to gain control of the area. Another potential use of the Stuka is to create a successesive weapons. The following should be considered:

"I'm considering the option of saving the Stuka for later this day. "Let's take a look at the differences in disruption duration and the impact on German plans. The most common result of a German attack is a Duration-2 disruption. This means that the units which participate will be unable to perform any additional operations for the remainder of the day, and all of the following day as well. This implies that in a one-week game, the German player might possibly get a total of four attacks with a particular unit, if they all resulted in Duration-2 disruption. This compares with... but two attacks for a unit which fails (two Duration-4 losses). On the other hand, if a unit were to fire a single time it attacked, it would be able to get in a minimum of seven attacks during the first week. Of course, an overrun a day also implies at least one Russian unit eliminated each day as well."

"General Paulus, you're getting sidetracked again. Are you done with your first impulses?"

"The 389th's artillery will fire. All but one or two units, it may be worth using the Stuka—even risking the 'Mistaken Attack' in order to gain control of the area. Another potential use of the Stuka this first day..." '[One I'm fond of,]" he thought, 'is to attack any Russian reinforcements which have moved onto the Mamayev Kurgan (#56) while they are disrupted, and therefore are more susceptible to attack and less able to absorb the resulting casualties.

"My Stuka unit is one of Germany's best offensive weapons. The following should be considered when executing its attack. I always do.

1. The riskiest, yet most profitable, use is to use it to clear the enemy from a friendly-occupied VP area, leaving only friendly units and leaving the enemy with the freedom of the field.
2. It can be used to strike a lone, fresh enemy unit in the vicinity of a stack in hopes that it will suffer a casualty point and so become disrupted, thus reducing the movement costs for entering the area and/or circumventing it. Ideally, an area can be vacated completely, allowing a breakthrough in an unoccupied quadrant.
3. Early in the week, while many Russian forces are still in lower TEM areas, the Stuka can be used to effectively generate casualties. A steady stream ofcasualties from the enemy is certain. But this alone will not be enough to force a breakthrough in the area."

Support is gathered generally is the proper choice. A classic example of this is when a German gallery is subjected to a counterattack and suffers casualties, which are absorbed by retreating some quantity of units out of the area. The units which retreat will be used to reduce the German gallery, which will remain under, let's say, Duration-2. After the Duration-2 disruption wears off, the original stack will not be as powerful as it once was, since it is missing those units which retreated. This is a case where holding this group of units back until its other elements can recover and regroup might be more profitable. Committing them early, and losing this force to a day and a half before being able to recombine it, will usually mean the entire force has been wasted—"for the remaining elements when they recover will stand little chance of succeeding on their own."

"The Stuka should be used every day; however, do not let it interfere with whatever objectives have been targeted unless it can. When I first began study of the game, I would open each day with a blow by the Stuka. However, experience has taught me that this might well result in worse consequences. At best, it will turn over a stack of units which might otherwise become a victory or an overrun against the vaunted Wehrmacht?"

"Chuykov. During the first week you can hardly be contemplating overruns when you'll be lucky to attack with better than 50% chance of any success. But, back to disruption. What it all leads to is the fact that the German must be very selective about which attacks he chooses. He must be aggressive to win, but not blindly so. If he is aggressive, he must keep key units out of action for four days, then waiting another day while additional
ideally these units will get an overrun. This is by no means a guaranteed outcome. If the Russian player has placed more than three units in Kuporosnoye, the odds of achieving that overrun drop dramatically."

"General, some of my comrades are probably wondering why my preference is to put only three units in Kuporosnoye if adding more units can make such a difference. The primary reason is simply that any extra units placed there imply that less units will be available to hold the Sawmill (#31). The two VP for the Kubyshev Sawmill are, of course, more important to me than the one for Kuporosnoye. If the Sawmill falls before Kuporosnoye, the remaining forces there will be cut off and will be easy prey for the Germans anyway. In addition, an early capture of the Sawmill by the Germans will allow them an opportunity to attack and likely control the Minina Gully (#32) by the end of the first week. Such would give them six victory points, almost as though they had invaded the Sawmill itself will usually take a good four days to secure. In addition, the potential of Russian counterattack is higher in the Sawmill than in Kuporosnoye.

"My personal preference on the second German impulse is to go for Kuporosnoye (#30) first, and save the opening attack on the Sawmill for later in the day. This sequence can also result in neutralizing Russian artillery in the southern quadrant, and therefore improve the odds in my Sawmill assault. By saving this impulse for the Sawmill, I would consider that a wise maneuver, but anything is possible in Stalingrad. The Sawmill itself usually will take a good four days to secure. In addition, the potential of Russian counterattack is higher in the Sawmill than in Kuporosnoye.

"Let's talk about some Russian options for this first day. Our artillery attacks out in perfect order, so Refft die rolls are not necessary. My first piece of advice is to maintain your morale. It will be tough watching 15 to 25 units get eliminated ... in the first day alone. Countless others will suffer four-day disruptions.

"The second thing the Russian player must do on every impulse is scan the city for any holes in your defensive lines. So, when resolving casualty losses, my disrupted units which retreat are moved to locations that block German movement when possible, and allowed to retreat rerolls at least one mechazined unit. This means that a powerful stack can be reduced significantly in offensive value when entry to a Russian-controlled area is prevented by failure of the Rubble entrance dice roll. Another advantage is that the Rubble adds directly to the defensive value of the area. This will usually work in our favor. Rubble also makes the attack die roll for Russian units. The only drawback is that Rubble creation requires either three infantry units, or one rear unit engineer. Committing three infantry units to knocking down walls on the first day should not be attempted until after sunset, unless the Stuka has already been ordered in. If the Stuka does not go in, a Rubble attack may be attempted early in the day will disrupt three units which may be needed to plug holes later.

"There are no engineering units at start. The first (and last) engineer of this week arrives the night of the 15th. It should be used whenever possible to create Rubble, including the impulse it lands. Personally, I like to land this unit in the Red October Factory (#67) and try a Rubble creation die roll immediately. Ultimately, the engineer can work its way south while, hopefully, creating Rubble in Banny Gully (#55), Mamayev Kurgan (#56) and Kurgan (#57) until he can make his way into daylight hours, as few German commanders will waste a Stuka sortie to attack it, and its defensive value is minimal for plugging gaps. Conversely, it is too valuable to our cause. Russian artillery in the southern quadrant, and therefore improve the odds in my Sawmill assault. By saving this impulse for the Sawmill, I would consider that a wise maneuver, but anything is possible in Stalingrad. The Sawmill itself usually will take a good four days to secure. In addition, the potential of Russian counterattack is higher in the Sawmill than in Kuporosnoye.

"The Kubyshev Sawmill (#31), my other option for the second impulse, can be attacked in order to get a foothold in the area and prevent reinforcements from reaching Kuporosnoye. If Kuporosnoye has not been occupied by German units, the Russian could try to capture several areas with one impulse. If fighting the next Russian impulse, I would not consider this a wise maneuver, but anything is possible in Stalingrad. The Sawmill itself usually will take a good four days to secure. In addition, the potential of Russian counterattack is higher in the Sawmill than in Kuporosnoye.

"But the nature of defense does not work in the southern or Kurgan (#56) regions because the room for an in-depth defensive line does exist—at least not for long. I've already mentioned that Mamayev Kurgan should have at least five units on it. The two areas (#57 and #39) next to it are key breakthrough points for the Germans and should be guarded by three to five units as well. The units in these areas can be used for counterattacks and infiltration into the Kurgan, once it is contested by the enemy. Obviously, some of these units must come from the reinforcements arriving later in the week. Today's task is to begin building the lines of defense, while making sure that the Germans never get a breakthrough to an unoccupied riverbank area. So, when resolving casualty losses, my disrupted units which retreat are moved to locations that block German movement when possible, and allowed to retreat rerolls at least one mechazined unit. This means that a powerful stack can be reduced significantly in offensive value when entry to a Russian-controlled area is prevented by failure of the Rubble entrance dice roll. Another advantage is that the Rubble adds directly to the defensive value of the area. This will usually work in our favor. Rubble also makes the attack die roll for Russian units. The only drawback is that Rubble creation requires either three infantry units, or one rear unit engineer. Committing three infantry units to knocking down walls on the first day should not be attempted until after sunset, unless the Stuka has already been ordered in. If the Stuka does not go in, a Rubble attack may be attempted early in the day will disrupt three units which may be needed to plug holes later.

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"The second thing the Russian player must do on every impulse is scan the city for any holes in his lines. The northern or Kurgan (#56) Russian defeat due to German units walking to the Volga with no opposition in their path. Most of your first day will be spent shutting units to fill these holes. The north and north-central units should be pulled back when possible to fill the void. I usually try to create a two-deep line of units between our two fronts. At least the enemy should have two units per area, and the second one should contain one unit per area. This allows my disrupted units to be retreated into the second row, allowing time to create a new second row. This set-up should keep the Germans from making any major breakthroughs in the north.

"But the nature of defense does not work in the southern or Kurgan (#56) regions because the room for an in-depth defensive line does exist—at least not for long. I've already mentioned that Mamayev Kurgan should have at least five units on it. The two areas (#57 and #39) next to it are key breakthrough points for the Germans and should be guarded by three to five units as well. The units in these areas can be used for counterattacks and infiltration into the Kurgan, once it is contested by the enemy. Obviously, some of these units must come from the reinforcements arriving later in the
impulse where they might be used to knife through the Hospital and attack the Airfield (#38). If the men of the 295th are available, I recommend going for either the Tartar Wall (#22) or the Vishnevaya Woods (#21). The key to the central thrust is to get both Stalingrad (#38) and Ovruchenskaya Woods (#39), so that there are two locations from which to attack the Mamayev Kurgan (#56). The Kruty Gully (#57) is also an excellent stepping-off point to the Kurgan, but will be harder to secure.

The only group of German units left to discuss are the elements of the 589th Infantry Division which begin on the north of the 71st (#52) or Hill 108.2 (#13). The only advantage I see to this, however, is that it forces the enemy to maintain a stronger defense in the northern quadrant. It will rarely, if ever, generate any victory points.

"The men of the 589th could also move to the north-central region. This will put even more pressure on the 11th over there. This might allow the enemy to transfer units from the north to the central or southern sectors as needed. ["Force the Russian, is more likely,'] mutters the pilot, "since they will be stretched pretty thin in the central region if most of the German forces are attacking there."]

"If done as a feint, this maneuver can potentially reduce Russian northern forces to a low level, and a powerful motorized stack—such as the 9th Motorized Infantry—can swiftly swing around from the south for the kill."

"Well, Chuykov, that about wraps up my thoughts on the opening moves. Do you have anything else to add?"

"Of course I do, Paulus. But I can tell by your expression that you would much rather hear the sound of your own voice. This may be a good opportunity to speak on the 'Advantage'."

"Why, an excellent idea General. That thought just occurred to me too. The proper use of the Advantage is critical to a German victory. Let's consider it for a moment.

"First of all, the Advantage should never—and I mean never—be used on the first day. In fact, as far as I am concerned, there is not a single good reason to use it before September 18th."

"But what happens if the motorized stack of the 71st does not rise to the occasion on the 16th or 17th and becomes spent for the rest of the week?"

"That's war boy. If, by some chance, it makes a difference between getting some VP or not, it might—just might—be worth surrendering the Advantage, but that's unlikely. On September 18th, criteria for its use is limited to those cases where victory hangs in the balance. I personally feel that it should not even be used until the 19th, thereby assuring that the Russians will never have an opportunity to make use of the Advantage in a one-week game."

"I can see some merit to your view, but I may make use of it if it made the clear difference between losing the game and continuing into the next week. This may seem to rigid for some German commanders, but personal experience has shown that this method will improve the German odds of sucess. Following the motto, you never steal that precious Advantage for something that really counts. It hurts to watch a powerful stack taken out of action for four days; but this is less painful than watching 'snake-eyes' appear on the second daylight impulse of September 19th and ending any chance of a German victory.

"Well, General Paulus, if you'll never give it up, there is nothing for me to discuss as I'll never have the Advantage anyway. However, when you do—and you will, I assure you—the same advice applies for the Russian commander. The Advantage should never be surrendered for less than a game-saving move, and it possible should be hoarded for use on the 19th for two tries against Latashanka (Zone #2) and later I will be using it against the victory from you.'

AS THE SUN SETS

General Chuykov continued, "Speaking of last-minute victories, there is nothing to compare to racing reinforcements across the Volga and saving the day for Mother Russia. I await every nightfall with anticipation. As the sun sets, German offensive and defensive values drop by one as the Stuka flies home. This is complemented by an increase in the Russian defensive value of one, due to our skill and cunning in night fighting. Russian movement factors are increased by one. Infiltration by my infantry into enemy locations becomes possible. The east bank lifeline extends across the Volga as my men and supplies are raced over the water under the cover of darkness. The only thing to stop these reinforcements are German interdiction points. Yes, night is a wonderful time for the Russians."

"But my Germans can use it to advantage also, taking care of unit movements in preparation for new daylight offensives, or even chance a major night attack breaking free of the restrictive effects of daylight ZOC."

"Yes, Paulus, the Germans are still dangerous—even at night. But the night is when we grow stronger. The first wave of Russian reinforcements arrive on the night of the 14th. Generally, at this stage of the battle, the Russian situation is at its bleakest. However, seven fresh units are ready to cross the river. The offensive capabilities of those new units are good, but it is their defensive values that are truly impressive. One (6-7-4) unit of the 13th Guards should come across in that first landing and proceed immediately to the Mamayev Kurgan (#56). The other infantry units should go to locations which are in immediate danger. Frequent destinations include the suburbs of Stalingrad (#61), the Southern Railway Station (#62), Minina Gully (#52), Kruty Gully (#57), Banny Gully (#55) and the Little Mushroom (#48). The worst Russian nightmare is watching the German player roll a '2' or '3' during the first night impulse of September 14th, bringing it to a sudden end."

"Red October" is my favorite crossing point, being the most centrally located ferry landing. Units arriving here can reach anywhere from Spartakovka (#71) to the Downtown Ferry Landing (#63), assuming a movement factor of five and no Germans in the way. The Red Square (#64) and the Downtown Ferry Landing (#63) are my preferred areas for making any crossings in the south.

"The proximity interdiction points should be avoided whenever possible. The Germans are almost guaranteed to have at least two interdiction points for control of a riverbank area—usually Kuporosnoye (#50). They may also have one or two interdiction points in the area of the Tractor Factory to turn away a lone German armor unit infiltration is also another important night activity. After reinforcements have completed their cross-river movements, the elements of the 389th Infantry Division are free for Russian counterattacks and infiltration. Infiltration requires some planning and can be done only by infantry adjacent to the area which is to be infiltrated. That area can contain only disrupted German units. During the first week, Russian forces are so thin that our infiltration is usually limited to one or two units which are trying to give additional support to a Russian-controlled position being contested by the Germans. The best areas to infiltrate are those which have to be infiltrated, as well as a high terrain effect modifier. Failure of the infiltration die forces the unit to the attack the German formation which is in immediate danger, creating a temporary disruption for the infiltrating Russian unit. A successful infiltration, on the other hand, undergoes only a Duration-1 disruption. This means that, come sunrise, the unit will be fresh (if not disrupted further in the night by German activity). Once a Russian-controlled area is disputed by the enemy, infiltration can be the best method of maintaining a Russian presence in the area."

"General Chuykov, I'd like to point out a very important point with respect to infiltration. The key factor which allows Russians to infiltrate is the absence of a fresh German unit in the area. A German commander must be constantly aware of this during daylight impulses, and should try to make sure that a fresh unit is left in each area where the Russians may have an opportunity to infiltrate during the coming night. Obviously, when moving into a Russian-controlled area which contains numerous combat units, the attack will bring significant levels of disruption. But once that wears off, any subsequent attacks against the enemy in that area (or any other area from there) should leave at least one German unit in good order. This totally eliminates any chance of infiltration, and also serves to fortify the German presence in the area. Any Russian counteroffensive there will have to go at several areas and points against two groups before regaining control."

BLASTING ALONG

Paulus paused. "Well, General, we have spent a lot of time talking about options on where, when, and to move... but we have yet to discuss the act itself. My units all have movement factors ranging from 1-5 and may infiltrate for a multitude of movements, as long as they remain within the points allowed. I can make use of movement points possible for my Germans when moving into an enemy area during the day. Moving into one containing a fresh Russian unit means that a full four movement factors will be spent; this
forces the German infantry to begin its impulse adjacent to such an enemy area if they wish to enter it. (They will also not be able to make a second adjac -ent and then enter.) But if moving into an area containing only disrupted Russian units, this problem is alleviated.

"The Germans certainly have the advantage over the Russians when moving into an enemy-occupied area during the daylight. If the original attack against fresh units results in an overrun, the German infantry can still make a second attack, against any spent Russian units that may be in the area. Russian infantry, on the other hand, are unable to do so because they have a movement allowance of only '4' during daylight."

[The pilot, in his pessimistic manner, reminds General Chuykov that this point is moot, since the Russians aren't going to get many overruns anyway this first week.]

General Paulus, ignoring the comment, continues, "Moving into an area containing only disrupted units costs three. Therefore, it is possible to move a stack of German infantry into a friendly area, and then into an enemy-occupied area adjacent all in the same impulse. Ideally, the area being crossed will contain fresh friendly units. These units can then be used to launch a follow-up attack in a future impulse. The German player should try to use such leap-frog tactics whenever possible. This type of maneuver usually needs to be supported by mechanized units, which have higher movement allowances and are not restricted by the infantry's limitations. However, an all-infantry leap-frog attack can be made when attacking an area containing only spent Russian units."

"To help clarify what is meant by my leap-frog tactic, let's use an opening-day example. Look here (pointing to the map). The units of the 29th Motorized which begin the dawn. This will minimize the Russian's opportunity to respond. Obviously, since dawn will come by the second week. Tomorrow will bring the 13th. There are many other occasions where the Germans have secured five Victory Points as the initial week ends; for example, if the Russians have stripped their northern front to shore up the south. Although successful in keeping the enemy off Mamayev Kurgan, their denuded northern front has tempted the Germans to risk a night attack in the north on the last day of the week which, because the Advantage chit, has captured Little Mushroom and Sluchaya Mechetka Gully (for the sixth Victory Point needed to prolong the game). Immediate Russian infiltration and counterattacks have failed to dislodge the German penetration.

Although the Germans presently have no available reserves with which to exploit their foothold, the Russian nonetheless is in desperate straits as dawn is about to break on the opening of the second week. Tomorrow will bring the Germans three new armor units (two 5-4-7 and a 5-5-7) as reinforcements, while the Russians have no scheduled reinforcements or units east of the Volga, nor any replacement armor factors accumulated. The German northern flank in Zones F, G and H is considered secure, and the only forces available to this sector for either side in the coming 24 hours are those listed below (and the alluded-to German reinforcements). What also becomes clear is that his last two remaining chits in the Random Draw cup are less than the German's remaining two.

### CONTEST 150

Incredibly, it is the final Russian impulse (11th night) of September 19th in a game of Turning Point: Stalingrad. The fighting has been confined largely to the south, where the Germans have secured five Victory Points as the initial week ends. The Russians have stripped their northern front to shore up the south. Although successful in keeping the enemy off Mamayev Kurgan, their denuded northern front has tempted the Germans to risk a night attack in the north on the last day of the week which, because the Advantage chit, has captured Little Mushroom and Sluchaya Mechetka Gully (for the sixth Victory Point needed to prolong the game). Immediate Russian infiltration and counterattacks have failed to dislodge the German penetration.

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#### Area Control Units

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<td></td>
<td>1/345 &amp; III/346 [all Disrupt-1]</td>
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<td>Russia</td>
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</tr>
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<td>149th X</td>
<td>149th X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Units

Units are as shown above: Disruption is indicated in brackets; nationalities are separated by semi-colons (Russian always listed first); if no units listed, area is vacant. Russian PAG is under Refill War task, as the Russian commander, is to take your final impulse of the week which will give you the best chance of relieving Ryneck from isolation while inflicting casualties on the exploiting German armor.

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 a merchandise credit from The Avalon Hill Game Company. To be valid, an entry must include a numerical listing for this issue as a whole and a listing of the three best articles in the judgment of the contest. The solution to Contest 150 will appear in Vol. 26, No. 3 and the list of winners in Vol. 26, No. 4.
Why Stalingrad? It is a question Hitler’s generals must have agonized over many times in and after 1942. But for him, it was only one more stunning success after another, the German blitzkrieg had met its match in the limitless expanse of Russia. What the Red Army couldn’t accomplish, the freezing cold of the Russian winter and the German logistical difficulties had. Their ranks thinned, the Wehrmacht nonetheless once again proved themselves the masters of the steppes with one resounding success after another, the spring and summer offensives of ’42. It made little difference. The combination of mounting losses and the ever widening front and lengthening supply lines sapped the German strength. They no longer could attack everywhere. Paced by strong defences in the north and center before Leningrad and Moscow, Hitler turned south. If he could not attack everywhere, he would at least have the Caucasus oil fields to fuel his war machine. But that was not enough. He wanted more. Stalingrad—Stalin’s city—beckoned from the Volga. The city’s military value was significant but not all encompassing. Taking it would break a transport link in the flow of American lend-lease supplies and force more Russian industry behind the Urals, but contrary to Hitler’s belief it would not bring Russia to her knees. It had been hurt, yes, but it had remarkable recuperative powers and like any wounded animal was still very dangerous. It could bear back hurt, but the tireless and overconfident hunter deeper into Soviet Russia. Emboldened, Hitler grasped for both prizes. He regularly asked miracles of his generals, and heretofore they had frequently delivered. The Caucasus drive was now weakened to strengthen Sixth Army’s attempt on Stalingrad. Despite the inefficiencies of such shuffling, another in the seemingly endless series of victories ensued. The Russian armies before Stalingrad were battered and beaten. German forces were poised at the gateway to the Urals. Their heavy guns and airstrikes brought the city under siege and threatened river traffic. Surely one more push would topple this symbol of the Communist leadership completely. The city took on a political importance to Hitler that far exceeded its military value.

Stalin saw things differently. He was justly concerned about the deteriorating situation before Stalingrad, but unlike Hitler who still feared an invasion of France by the western Allies, he had strong reserves on the way as the Russians stripped their Far East defences facing Japan. Moreover, he saw a developing opportunity to deal the Germans a crushing blow not unlike the one he had dealt his opponents a generation earlier during the Russian Civil War not far from this very place. The flanks of the German front were now held by ill-equipped Rumanian and Italian Armies. If the Germans could be forced to expend their strength taking the city while the Russian reserves massed for a sudden pincers attack against the satellite armies, the German Sixth Army could be trapped in Stalingrad. Hitler was only one who could have compelled his generals to accept such a plan. At the 13th, Paulus began the battle for the city. It has been argued with the advantage of hindsight that it was a battle the Germans couldn’t win. Yet, they came exceedingly close to doing just that. The battle hung in the balance with the Russians teetering on their last ounce of strength on several occasions—only to be saved each time by the arrival of fresh troops rushed across the Volga under fire. For the Russians, beaten consistently by the precision of the German application of “Combined Arms” on the open steppes, were now in their own element. Red Army soldiers who had melted away before panzers and stukas in the open field now took heart in the rubble of Stalingrad.

Not coincidentally with this sudden stiffening of Russian resolve came a change of command. General Lopatin, the previous commander of 62nd Army, had decided that Stalingrad could not be held and ordered his men to make a stand. Without higher authority. Dismissal was swift. His replacement was 42-year old Lt. General Vasily Ivanovich Chuykov who immediately countermanded the withdrawal orders and set about fortifying the city with the remnants of 62nd Army. Simply put, Chuykov’s plan for defending the Germans was to stay as close to them as possible so as to hinder their use of artillery and aircraft to soften Russian defenses. The city’s rubble streets became the obvious battlefield of choice. German armor, already at a disadvantage in an urban environment, would be further hindered in their movements by the rubble of the battered city. The German’s greater mobility was neutralized somewhat by the same rubble which masked the movements of Russian units from the eyes of the ever present stukas. The precision movements of the German forces would be hindered by the communication problems posed by a battered city. The battle would become one of the infantry now found themselves engaged in bitter street fighting for which they were ill-prepared. Chuykov’s mode of operation was simple. Maintain close contact with the enemy and launch limited counterattacks whenever and wherever practical to keep him close. Major forces would never be risked—only small groups. The object was not necessarily to take ground, but to cause casualties and remain at close quarters, much like a boxer with inferior reach who stays inside his opponent’s range and flails at his adversary with body punches to wear him down while preventing him from extending his arms to land a knockout punch.

The battle for the city opened on 13 September with a two-pronged attack against the city from Gorodishche and Peschanka. The Germans quickly sliced through the outer defences. The next day found them threatening the Central Railway Station in the heart of the city. The only arrival of the 13th Guards Division that evening prevented its loss. Rebuffed, the Germans shifted their attack on the 15th to a small hill (called Mamayev Kurgan) which dominated the river near the city. Again the hill was saved only by a last ditch effort of the 42nd Regiment—the last of the 13th Guards Division to cross the river. The fighting switched back to the Central Railway Station which fell to the Germans on the 17th, only to be retaken and subsequently permanently lost on the 18th. It had changed hands 15 times in the preceding five days. The 18th saw the Kurgan fall, completing the isolation of 62nd Army which was now surrounded on three sides with the Volga to its back. A counterattack on the 19th by the Russian 64th Army towards Gunmaur to regain contact with the Stalingraders failed. Chuykov’s 62nd Army was alone and in desperate straits—but it had not given up. The most celebrated example of many such dogged defences was that posed by less than fifty Guardsmen and Marines stationed in a grain elevator on the southern outskirts who opposed a German battalion for five days—the position falling only when the few survivors defenders had run out of water and ammunition. On the 22nd, the Germans nonetheless took the Central Landing. It marked the end of the first phase of the battle for Stalingrad.

Such fighting took a heavy toll on the attackers, especially among the dazed and confused infantry who bore the burden of the assault. Paulus lacked the opportunity to regroup his troops, even with periods of rest and refit his units were being worn to the point at which they would soon lose their ability to attack altogether. Replacements were inadequate. Other service arms were stripped for personnel and given hurried infantry training. It was no accident that Stalingrad would not fall quickly. Any chance for a precipitate collapse of the city had been lost in the ferocious defense of the Railway Station and Mamayev Kurgan.

The horrendous attrition inflicted on the attackers now called for an end to the battle. The Russian lines of communication had been severed. The job remaining was one for the artillery and the Luftwaffe. But Hitler wanted the city. The drive on the Caucasus oil fields had been stopped, and Hitler demanded a prize—a symbol of progress for the year’s campaign. Here, at Stalingrad, was one within his reach. More divisions were fed into the city to renew the attack; units stripped from their buttressing role on the German flanks behind the Rumanian Armies. The spearhead grew increasingly heavy, the shaft ever weaker.

Meanwhile, Russian reserves were congregating near those exposed flanks. Reinforcements and ammunition were fed into the city only in sufficient quantity to keep 62nd Army in place—the bulk of both were husbanded for the planned counteroffensive. German leaders grew increasingly alarmed at the dangers posed by their weak flanks, but Hitler was adamant. “Take Stalingrad and you can winter there in relative comfort while withdrawing the necessary forces to back up the satellite armies.” Thus reminded of the ravages of the approaching Russian winter, the Germans renewed their attack in earnest on October 14th with attacks led by elite combat engineers trained in street fighting techniques. It marked the beginning of a month of the most intense fighting of the war, with no quarter given by either side.

At this point, the fate of the German Sixth Army was largely decided. The Germans could “win” the battle of Stalingrad only if they did so quickly. They needed to clear the city with sufficient time to redeploy back into supporting positions on their flank. The longer the battle raged in the city, the weaker the “shaft” became and the more imposing the Russian battle-axe poised to shatter that shaft. When the blow finally fell on November 19th, it did so with colossal force. The IVth Rumanian Army broke and ran, as did the IIIrd following the Kurgan on the 18th. The German Sixth Army, which had launched the assault from the north, was now isolated in the city.
Army. But as the immensity of the calamity befalling them became realized, the Germans withdrew the 29th to form a defensive line southwest. The pocket of approximately 300,000 German and allied troops were trapped inside. Only 91000 would live to surrender in February. Of these, only 5000 saw Germany again—the last being released in 1935. But what if the Germans had seen the folly of continuing to feed the meat grinder of Stalingrad? What if more German divisions had been in position to stop Operation Uranus instead of hurling themselves against prepared defenses in the Red Barricades? Could the catastrophe have been avoided?

No one will ever know. However, it is clear that the quicker the Germans finished their assaults in the city and moved to support their flanks, the less likely they could have been defeated. The Germans pursued it. Any hope for a German victory grew dimmer with each passing day.

So why TURNING POINT: STALINGRAD? Several factors led to my decision to design this game. Avalon Hill’s original STALINGRAD was one of my first wargames and a childhood favorite. So I had mixed emotions when the game was discontinued to make way for state-of-the-art replacements. I understood that Avalon Hill didn’t need three strategic Eastern Front games and “Stalingrad” had always been a misnomer as a title anyway. After all, it was just a single hex on a map depicting all of European Russia and but one of three cities required for German victory. Here was my chance to salvage that great title—truly the most recognized turning point of World War II—with a design more in keeping with the great struggle that was waged there. However, I was determined that, in this case, state-of-the-art would not mean more complicated and I tried for a design as inherently simple as the original.

The battle itself required no excuses for the lack of “fog of war” mechanism, as neither side had a pretty good idea throughout the battle of what they were up against. The Germans used prisoners, aerial reconnaissance and possession of the higher West Bank to give them a constant operational view of what to expect from the Russians. Unfortunately, this foresight did not apply itself to the grand strategy of the battle. Consequently, I wanted night to be a regularly occurring event to rid the game of this conceptualization problem. There were other reasons as well. In my study of the battle I was constantly struck by the greater care they had to take in masking their movements and making for a better simulation.

Making the change from squad- to platoon-level wasn’t that big a leap of faith, but jumping from platoon- to battalion-level gives one pause. Major changes were needed to the game, but I had no experience with it. The more I studied the battle, the more convinced I became that the design—while still owning allegiance to the SOA/CASSINO systems for its inspiration—would require an entirely different angle.

On a larger scale, was that the SOA system still played a unique and vital role? Ranged attacks into adjacent areas would be rare. The vast majority of combat would be conducted at close-quarters—by actually entering an enemy-occupied area. More important, to mirror the German’s early successes, the system must allow the possibility of achieving major breakthroughs in one or two moves rather than simply shaving off the outer rim of defending areas each turn. Consequently, the Overrun system was devised to allow a unit to attack, succeed, and move/attack again until it is stopped by the enemy or exhausts its MF for that impulse. But what should the MF be? At this scale, with one-week turns, any unit depicted could realistically move from one end of the board to another. The “time bytes” had to be smaller, yet if we used SOA’s semi-diurnal turns in which all units could move, a game on a nine-week battle would last an eternity. Even the “day” victories every week. This allowed units to move the entire length of the board within a week’s time but limited their capabilities during any one day to more realistic levels. More importantly, it led to the introduction of the day/night dichotomy which is the very essence of the new game system.

THUNDER AT CASSINO had night impulses too, but they only occurred for the balance of a turn after a player had spent the Advantage marker to declare the nightfall. As such, night impulses represented a special night offensive planned to take the enemy by surprise and not a regularly scheduled and occurring event as it is in both SOA and my game. I had no problem conceptualizing the other night hours not being depicted as such being used as periods of rest and inactivity, but I’ve talked to others for whom this posed a credibility problem. Consequently, I wanted night to be a regularly occurring event to replace this “daylight” victory conditions every week. This allowed units to move the entire length of the board within a week’s time but limited their capabilities during any one day to more realistic levels. More importantly, it led to the introduction of the day/night dichotomy which is the very essence of the new game system.

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to master a new game system requiring a different type of unit still will not be one of the lucky individuals where dice are concerned. Indeed, I'm the butt of several standing jokes among local players when dice rolls are discussed. Yet, I've never lost at CASSINO and seldom at ARRHYM. That doesn't strike me as a game system that's too luck dependent. Of course, I have been known to find a dice roll that is unusual, but I would not recommend that alternative to those who, like me, regularly curse "the bones". In point of fact, I would make a case for this system being less luck dominant than most wargames when employing the chit system instead of dice.

By now you've probably pegged me correctly as belonging to the playability camp as opposed to that school of wargamers for whom simulation is the thing. My approach to design has always been that wargames should allow you to recreate historical results, not force them upon you. I don't believe in saddling the armchair general with the same tactics taken by his historical counterpart. That type of thinking pervaded my decision not to include the German Withdrawals in the Basic Game. Who is to say whether such withdrawals would have been made were the situation different from the one that faced the commander at that time? The 64th Army obviously expected his scheduled withdrawals if he's willing to pay the price of likely incursions by the SOA to the south—the most likely result of failing to bolster that flank with the withdrawn units. Forcing such withdrawals upon a player regardless of the circumstances at the time is more unrealistic to my mind then ignoring them altogether. I subscribe to the theory that you give the respective sides all the troops they had at the time, reflect their supply, tactics and terrain advantages and then let them make their own history. It if mirrors real life, fine. If not, so much the better because it shows the fascinating might-have-beens. Keep in mind that although you are getting reinforcements at the time they entered the battle historically, had the circumstances at the time is more unrealistic than using standard NATO military symbology of previous casualties inflicted or a more exposed unit such cataclysms can occur only by making two successful attacks. The Overrun concept allows breakthroughs to occur, but the two-tiered defenses within an Area make it more difficult.

One common theme in all these impulse games whose validity I've occasionally seen questioned is the concept of the "Groups" themselves. Why should a Group occupying the same Area with another Group be spared the effects of an Artillery barrage simply because there are a seeming solid line of "bones"? The answer is that they don't occupy the same "area". In general, Areas encompass far more territory than traditional hex games on the same subject. Within such an expanse it is entirely possible and likely that positions would be set up in depth so that troops could be under fire in one section of the Area while those in another receive no attack at all. This strikes me as both reasonable and more realistic than if they were treated as one combined target. I've never read an account of any barrage—no matter how intense—completely eliminating the defending force. By allowing the defense to move in place simply because there are two separate Groups in an Area such cataclysms can only occur by making two successful attacks. The Overrun concept allows breakthroughs to occur, but the two-tiered defenses within an Area make it more difficult.

Others have questioned why it is the attacker who selects which Group is his target. Wouldn't the defender want to select which Group constituted his first line of defense? Again, my answer lies in the size of the Areas depicted. It is foolish to envision a layer of Fresh units across a front backed by a layer of disrupted units resting behind them. Indeed, it is the very act of moving into the line that turns a Fresh unit into a Vulnerable Spent one. Each Group in an Area is assigned a certain frontage within that Area. By choosing which Group he will attack, the attacker is merely specifying a point along the Front of that Area at which he is making his attack.

Yet another seeming quirk of the system which may bear some explanation is the ability of units to move through a seemingly intact defense when a perimeter is not defended in depth. Consider what happens when a German armor unit manages to Overrun a Group in an Area and then ends its impulse with another Russian Group still intact in the same Area. On the surface, the perimeter seems to still be intact. However, if the Russian has not backed up that Area with another unit in a second line of defense, at Dawn when that German armor unit returns to Fresh status it may leave that Area in a disrupted state. If this condition persists for any length of time it will allow a frontal attack of enemy units behind it. It will probably be out of supply, but it is willing to take that risk a temporary breakthrough has occurred with the lines closing automatically behind it. This is not a rules anomaly, but an intended feature of the design. The Overrun placed the Russian perimeter at the point of attack in that Area. When the Russian failed to respond by moving another unit into the adjoining Area to block the German advance, he allowed the Germans to exploit his initial success the following morning. Although Russians still occupied the Area, they were not considered strong out in a continuous line in front of the German armor unit in that Area and therefore the perimeter had been pierced. The same logic is used when an attack is disrupted. The defender has the foresight to reinforce the point of attack with a unit in the next Area to prevent a direct move from an occupied Area to an occupied Area. The Overrun concept prevents such breaks with the proper counter move, but if he fails to make it the system assumes that the in-Area fighting has continued in the interim and allowed the attacker to break the enemy line.

One of the biggest improvements of CASSINO over SOA was the use of MG units to give a semi-ZOC effect during daylight turns. The need for MG to slow enemy movement and for infantry to protect them was a serious flaw in games such as SOA. I felt better "combined arms" feel than that of its predecessor. This restraint of enemy movement was an effect that I wanted to preserve, but the different scale meant that it couldn't be accomplished with MG units. At battalion level, most of the units inherently contained that type of combat that the ZOC effect already. So I theorized that the greater combat readiness of fresh units in contrast to disrupted units could be used to achieve the same effect. In most games the only difference between a fresh unit and a disrupted one is that the latter has taken casualties. However, in all the impulse system games that I use you to disrupted that type of combat readiness as units disrupted units regularly return to fresh status while those in another receive no attack at all. This strikes me as both reasonable and more realistic than if they were treated as one combined target. I've never read an account of any barrage—no matter how intense—completely eliminating the defending force. By allowing the defense to move in place simply because there are two separate Groups in an Area such cataclysms can only occur by making two successful attacks. The Overrun concept allows breakthroughs to occur, but the two-tiered defenses within an Area make it more difficult.

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One of the more recent criticisms of the game, which has merit at least on the surface, is that it fails to portray the weakness of armor in an urban environment. John Berry (see his article following) has come from those getting their first taste of the game. They complain that its not much fun playing the Russians and watching your forces being slaughtered. The Russian player has to keep in mind that his objective—as it was in the battle—is not to destroy German units but to hold them in place by denying the territory they sought. If he does that, the Impending Operation Urumas will trap and eliminate the entire German Army. As such, Chuykov was given only enough force to keep the trap bailed and the players in place. So it is not surprising then that this game does not suffer from this problem. The Basic Game ends in three to five hours—even quicker for players abiding by the resolution rule. The solution, believe it or not, was borrowed from CASSINO and expanded upon. The game is played in nine weekly intervals—each of which is divided into seven separate days. At the end of each week, the German player must exceed the Victory Point level for that week to win the game. If he scores less, the Russian wins and the game continues for another week, after which the process is repeated. This results in the majority of games ending quickly. Although we did have one game continue for five weeks using the Basic Game Victory Conditions, the vast majority were decided within three, which is why the Basic Game ends at that point. Some will see this as a drawback because they are more interested in simulating the battle in its entirety than in playing a quick game that ends when the German's chances of a historical victory are gone. For them, I prepared an expansion set that contains the remainder of the OB for the last six weeks and a more lenient set of Victory Conditions in which the most likely occurrence at the end of each week is a draw and thus continuation of the game. The idea was to have no major breakthroughs and eat it two. In this way we were able to drop the price of the product for those most interested in the game, while also providing the complete OB/battle at a slightly higher price for those more interested in the simulation aspects. Hopefully, it is a solution that appeals to both camps.

Before ending this discourse, there is one important difference in the system that can't be ignored for explanation: the absence of close combat. "No close combat in a Stalingrad game...is he mad?" True, close combat was the very essence of the battle of Stalingrad, but I like to think that it is better represented by the system as a whole than by adding a specific phase of combat resolutions entitled "Close Combat." Sometimes the best rule in a game is the one you leave out. A specific Close Combat Phase poses the elimination of whole units on a daily basis is obviously less viable on the battalional level than at the squad level. The combat system already depicts close combat in the natural course of play. Whether it takes some form of Non-Ranged fire or extended risk on his part. The fact that the game became shorter and simpler in the bargain was just icing on the cake.

The only real complaint I've heard about TURNING POINT: STALINGRAD has come from those who think the system as a whole is not a good representation of the battle. They complain that it's not much fun playing the Russians and watching your forces being slaughtered. The Russian player has to keep in mind that his objective—as it was in the battle—is not to destroy German units but to hold them in place by denying the territory they sought. If he does that, the Impending Operation Urumas will trap and eliminate the entire German Army. As such, Chuykov was given only enough force to keep the trap bailed and the players in place. So it is not surprising then that this game does not suffer from this problem. The Basic Game ends in three to five hours—even quicker for players abiding by the resolution rule. The solution, believe it or not, was borrowed from CASSINO and expanded upon. The game is played in nine weekly intervals—each of which is divided into seven separate days. At the end of each week, the German player must exceed the Victory Point level for that week to win the game. If he scores less, the Russian wins and the game continues for another week, after which the process is repeated. This results in the majority of games ending quickly. Although we did have one game continue for five weeks using the Basic Game Victory Conditions, the vast majority were decided within three, which is why the Basic Game ends at that point. Some will see this as a drawback because they are more interested in simulating the battle in its entirety than in playing a quick game that ends when the German's chances of a historical victory are gone. For them, I prepared an expansion set that contains the remainder of the OB for the last six weeks and a more lenient set of Victory Conditions in which the most likely occurrence at the end of each week is a draw and thus continuation of the game. The idea was to have no major breakthroughs and eat it two. In this way we were able to drop the price of the product for those most interested in the game, while also providing the complete OB/battle at a slightly higher price for those more interested in the simulation aspects. Hopefully, it is a solution that appeals to both camps.

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John Berry was just one of an extremely proficient group of “blind” playtesters for TURNING POINT: STALINGRAD who contributed greatly to the final development of the game. As you’ll come to realize while reading the article that follows, his forte is simulation. While Don’s emphasis has always been on playability, he inevitably wants as much realism as he can get without compromising the elegant simplicity of the design. Time and again, Berry’s criticisms drove Don back to the keyboard to send out updates to the playtesters. Apparently, he was not totally successful, as Major Berry found plenty to point to (as we knew he would) when asked to write upon the value of the wargame as a simulation. While I do not agree with all of his gibbles, we nevertheless thank him for pulling no punches. The art of simulation design has no rigid rules of right and wrong, but it is indeed a matter of individual perception. What “works” for me may be purest “hokum” to you, and vice versa (one reason why no one has yet designed a game that appeals to every wargamer). For Don’s reposte to Mr. Berry’s notes, see his preceding “A New View of Stalingrad” in this issue.

This article will attempt an examination of TURNING POINT: STALINGRAD (TPS) and its contribution to (or failure in) realistic simulation of the battle. No boardgame can ever simulate the fear, the misery, and the confusion of actual combat. However, proceeding from this point, some boardgames have been more successful than others in simulating events and conditions of the actual battle or campaign being portrayed. The point being, of course, does the game inform as well as entertain?

Invariably, TPS will be compared to two previous games by other publishers on the fighting along the Volga—Streets of Stalingrad and Battle for Stalingrad. No other game has so closely paralleled the use of area movement. Front lovers have played at least one, if not both, of them. Fair or not, TPS will be measured against these games by experienced simulation enthusiasts. Even with their several flaws, until now they set the standards for simulating the battle. Thus, from time to time, comparisons with both games will creep into my judgments on TPS.

FAILURE?

Since TPS is based on the SOA system, simulation is greatly affected by the map used and the effect of “areas” for movement and combat. Area-versus-Hexagon maps have been an off-and-on controversy for many years in wargaming. Some early attempts at area versus hex as a compromise failed, but not the best stories of the wargaming public. Some jumped to the conclusion that the use of area movement was the sole reason for failure of the design. Given time and more reflection, it became clear that other problems in these games may have contributed more to their lack of success than their use of area movement.

In theory, at least, area movement games come closer to simulating the reality of military operations than do hex-based games. A commander tends to think in terms of moving his unit within its assigned boundaries (an area) to seize an objective or defend (again an area of ground) it. When coupled with a well-designed system, area movement has proven to be very successful in a simulation.

Then the question becomes, “Are the areas apportioned correctly on the map board?” Some discrepancies appear to exist in this game. For example, some areas border on gullies. Yet movement costs for fighting the area remains the same whether entering from the direction of the gully or from an open field. While this is somewhat disconcerting, over numerous playings it did not appear to have a major effect upon the outcome of the fighting. Interestingly enough, the approach is not uniform throughout the map. That portion of the Minina gully within the built-up area is actually treated as an area for movement purposes. A more accurate appraisal of terrain would have called for other gullies (such as the Tzaritsa Gorge) to be portrayed as a separate area as well.

Next, consider the Order of Battle. For the most part, the division level German OB appears to be correct. However, a number of German corps and army level units not present. The designer justified their absence by factoring such formations into the German divisional units. Such factoring takes the form of increasing the combat power of units—permanently assigning a corps or army level unit to a division. In terms of simulation, this was probably a poor choice. For example, the 635th Pioneer battalion begins the game assigned to the 24th Panzer Division, and will remain so throughout the game. While it is historically correct to place the 635th Pioneer with the 24th Panzer on 13 September, the unit was attached—not assigned. This presents an incorrect picture with regard to the organization of the German 6th Army.

Even worse, such a structure of the German OB fails to teach the gamer the reason for the existence of fire and maneuver assets above division level. Combat and combat support units at corps and army level allow the commander to lend “weight” to certain portions of the battlefield. At present, TPS the German player can only weight the battlefield at divisional level or below. Even the use of generic “support points” would have been better.

The initial Soviet OB is a “no-win” situation. To this day, official Soviet writings on the battle do not fully agree as to both presence and location of the units of the 62nd Army on 13 September. One reason is due to the confusing state of affairs that existed in the 62nd Army—an army not so much falling back on Stalingrad as reeling back. The forced infusion of the male population of the city furthered to increase confidence as to actual unit status. Another reason is political. The Soviet government will not openly admit that a unit could disintegrate and leave the field while participating in the defense of the Socialist Motherland. Or, even more strangely, that a penal unit (political “unreliables”) could fight as well or better than a Guards unit.

“Official” Soviet sources (in the opening phases of the battle) tend to write in terms of overall army strength and do not offer figures for individual brigades and regiments. For example, on 13 September, the 62nd Army is credited with 110 tanks; but there is no indication of tank strength of individual units. Even figures for overall tank strength don’t tell us if the Soviets were counting in so-called “inoperable” tanks placed in strategic positions. Or how about the falsification of personnel reports in order to gain additional food and vodka rations? Under such limitations, the Soviet OB in TPS is about as accurate as it is possible.

Possibly the weakest aspect of the game, in terms of simulation, concerns the effects of artillery. The rigid disruption of German artillery is an overly simplistic way to simulate the ammunition shortage. Four days out of the battle each time a unit fires is much too predictable. The effects of ammunition shortages and German counter-battery fire are handled much better with regards to the Soviet artillery east of the Volga. Neither player knows for sure just when the Soviet artillery will become available, or for how long.

Worse than the rule on artillery disruption is the conduct of bombardments. The density of units (or targets) under attack has no influence on the effectiveness of barrages. Only terrain and the strongest unit in a group are considered in the resolution of the attack. Some will argue that placing a large number of units in an area still risks a greater number of casualties should the attacker come out way ahead on the dice. While this is true, it is a poor approach since it is purely luck-dependent and not related to unit density. Even unit differentiation has no real effect. A tank company can be just as effective as a target as an infantry battalion.

The use of artillery in TPS does not unfigure the game, however. Overall, it seems to work. Consider the effects of German artillery and air in the campaign version of the Old Battle for Stalingrad. The power and accuracy of both made the game virtually unwinnable for the Soviet player. Unfortunately, TPS fails to teach players the correct lessons about artillery in general, and its use at Stalingrad in particular.

Somewhat related to artillery use is the use of the anti-aircraft units in the game. Once again, TPS fails short. AA units are not allowed to enter an area containing enemy units (even if accompanied by friendly infantry or armor). This is ablistorical. The Germans used vehicle-mounted AA guns to support assaults on Soviet positions. There is no doubt that an AA unit should not be allowed to enter an enemy occupied area unsupported. However, when combined with infantry, there should be no such restriction.

One last complaint with regards to units and combat system relationships remains. With the exception of being hit by rubble, tanks are too deep within the city itself. A player could easily come away from playing with the idea that in city streets, tanks were just as effective as they were on the steppes. Streets of Stalingrad handled this problem in an elegant, but realistic manner. Armor units inside the city received no terrain benefits when fired upon. Such an approach allows the firepower of the tanks, while increasing the risk of loss. In TPS, once past any rubble, armor is not vulnerable unless it happens to be the strongest unit in the group.

Finally, let us turn to the use of the “Advantage” rule. The side possessing the Advantage chin can extend the day (or night) phase, or force a re-roll of the dice in a particular battle. There is more to it than that, but that should convey the idea. Use of the Advantage is supposed to represent the application of large resources in a major offensive or of one side having a tactical edge over the other. The participants I have been associated with felt that this was a controversial rule. One player even refused to make use of the Advantage when he possessed it, condemning it as too “gamy”. Even those who used it were uneasy with it.

On the surface, it is understandable that the designer wished to have something that would allow a player to overcome very bad luck (e.g., the Soviet player’s worse fear—a impulse night). How-
ever, I would have to admit that this rule doesn’t help in terms of simulation. Maybe it tries to cover too much ground. And then there is something odd about re-fighting a battle that you just lost (or won).

SUCCESS!

By now you’re probably thinking, “So what if this guy nitpicks simulation problems; it’s still a great game!” Well, I happen to believe it is more than just a great game. Even with its shortcomings, I feel that TURNING POINT: STALINGRAD is the best simulation yet of the battle.

The alternating movement system in TPS is a simple and uncomplicated attempt to reproduce the “fog of war” and some degree of simultaneous movement. To reach for further simulation of reality would require the use of two maps, cumbersome rules, an umpire, etc. Well, the idea is to actually play the game and, at least in this case, the alternating movement system is much better than sequential or hidden ones. Thanks to the situation, complete hidden movement in the game would actually be inaccurate. Both sides tended to have fairly good intelligence about enemy units in contact. In addition, the Germans could rely on aerial recon, while the Soviets excelled at small unit patrolling behind German lines.

The real benefit of the movement system in TPS lies in the feeling both sides have of fighting the clock. The alternating movement system coupled with the uncertain length of day/night impulses can present the player with some frustration akin to that of planning and executing a military operation. Timing and sequencing of events is difficult and elusive. The successful commander realizes that it will be important to do everything. He sets his priorities and sees them through, all the while prepared to take advantage of any unexpected opportunity.

The movement system and its relationship to the day/night impulses of the game turn gives an accurate picture of how each side’s operations evolved during the battle. The application of massive firepower meant that 6th Army would be most likely to achieve success during daylight hours. Concurrently, the Soviets learned to avoid German firepower and conduct their major offensive actions or movement under the cover of darkness. Regardless of Soviet actions, the German may run out of day-light. An important Soviet move or attack may be delayed due to dawn. But, as in real life, the players are not forced to always operate in such a manner.

The unexpected—a risky German attack at night or a bold Soviet move in broad daylight—can bring about a surprising victory. While far from perfect, the movement/turn sequencing utilized in TPS does an excellent job of depicting the environment peculiar to each side at Stalingrad. Suffice it to say that this is an approach to simulating the battle that is overdue.

Couple the turn structure with Soviet infiltration, and it begins to become clear as to why the Germans could not simply blow their way through the city, even with their superior firepower and organization. The Infiltration rule does a nice job of demonstrating the difficulty the Germans had in controlling newly-won ground. While complicating the game very little, it presents a very important characteristic of the fighting in Stalingrad.

Finally, the disruption of an attacker or of moving units brings about the appropriate situation for counterattacks by the Soviet player. This alone is a significant design advance and sets TURNING POINT: STALINGRAD apart from earlier efforts to simulate the battle. In both Streets of Stalingrad and Battle for Stalingrad, the prevailing strategy for the Soviet player was to let the German come to him, use defensive fire to attrite German units, and counterattack only under the most desperate (e.g., to take back a ferry landing) or advantageous (e.g., German units cut off with no hope of support) circumstances. Such simulations make it difficult to understand why Chulikov time and again ordered counterattacks right into the teeth of major German thrusts. TPS makes it painfully obvious why the 62nd Army sacrificed units to blunt German attacks and to keep elements of the 6th Army off-balance.

As a result of all the above, TPS achieves a level of simulation rarely seen in a wargame. What I am referring to here is the psychological struggle that ensues between the players. Time and again I have participated in, or witnessed, games where one (or even both sides) lost their nerve and failed to make a much needed move or attack for fear of leaving strong units vulnerable. In the title of this article I used the Russian word borb, which is sometimes translated as “battle” (as in “Battle of Stalingrad”). However, it can also be interpreted as “struggle”. I feel that this is the more appropriate interpretation as it relates to this game. The ability of TPS to create in the minds of players a feeling of hopelessness is uncanny. Both players are slowly forced into a psychological struggle with each other and with themselves. Fear and uncertainty can make either player his own worst enemy. (Sounds a little like reality, doesn’t it?)

Thus, as a simulation, TURNING POINT: STALINGRAD does have its flaws. Fortunately, the problems do not appear to have affected play balance or the overall portrayal of the pivotal battle of this century. Unfortunately, they can give some players several wrong impressions about the historical situation, or about combat in general. As with any historical work, you must be objective and sort out the accurate from the inaccurate. In other words: learn the correct lessons and recognize the incorrect when playing the game. Once this is done, you will find TURNING POINT: STALINGRAD to be an outstanding blend of game and simulation.

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

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Quite a lot of movement among our twenty most-played games—and some surprises. The strength of ASL, following our recent feature of the system, shows yet again. RED BARRICADES, the newest and most unique module to date, is getting some play; rather obvious, given that its first printing has already sold out (it is being reprinted right now). Even our venerable HEDGE-ROW HELL got a boost onto the listing. Besides RB, several of the other new titles continue to show strong (GE '83, EIS, TPS) or appear for the first time (MBT, MoV, SoJ). And it would seem that Mr. Burnett's excellent column on sports is beginning to have some effect, for STATIS-PRO BASEBALL makes an appearance. Or perhaps fans of that sport, disenfranchised by the lockout, have simply turned to another way to pursue their peculiar tastes.
The shelling has gone on for close to a day now. You and your men anxiously await the final order to proceed to win the city of Stalingrad for the Reich. You are Sgt. Krause of the 29th Motorized Division, and your unit is poised to launch an assault against the last Russian remnants in the Kuporosnaya area (#30). Little do you realize that it is here that you will be spending your Christmas—and not at home in Hamburg with the leave you've accumulated. The banks of the Volga beckon, but wait... your dual personality is setting in. You find yourself on a ferry in the middle of the cold river. The waters appear to be full of jumping fish, which you soon realize are only the impact of shrapnel and bullets on each other unerringly as they go, without a sound as he takes a hit from the deluge of fire aimed at the landing point. You have been transformed into one Sgt. Tomochev (and under the circumstances, you'd much rather be Sgt. Krause)!

All of this may seem a little confusing, but if you’re going to play TURNING POINT: STALINGRAD solitaire, you should know it is from both the Russian and German points. The Germans are usually forced to apply brute force, just as in real life, while the Russians must improvise with what resources they have in the early stages. TPS is a highly competitive two-player game. However, it can be played solitaire with no rules changes or awkward artificial mechanics.

WHY SOLITARE?

Let’s proceed into the cauldron and see what Sgts. Krause and Tomochev have to say about this newest game from Avalon Hill being played solitaire. It should be noted that Sgt. Krause’s preference for solitaire play is to play the Simulation Game; this allows a player to experience to the fullest extent of the battle for the city day-by-day. Sgt. Tomochev likes the Basic Game because it offers excellent solitaire opportunities for trying out new strategies during the first week of the fighting without having to worry about suffering a crushing defeat after long hours of play.

Sgt. Krause says the primary reason for playing the Simulation Game solitaire is that after the third week, the game becomes completely defensive for the Russian player. By this point, the Russian is simply trying to hold onto every single area he controls. Depending upon events up to this point, the majority of the Russian-controlled areas should have at least Level 1 rubble, and many could have Level 2 rubble. All this tends to keep the German gains to a minimal, house-to-house level—unlike the bounding slashes that prevail in the opening weeks. In addition, at this stage in the game, the Russian player is no longer receiving real powerful units, but only men which add support to existing positions. Even then, these are coming in at a much slower rate than during the first weeks. The net result is that the game remains a challenge to the German, but the Russian player tends to be limited to impulses that consist mainly of the four R’s: repair, rubble creation, reinforcement, and redeployment. The key point is that the game is a challenge for the German player—and this is what makes the Simulation Game such an excellent solitaire candidate.

Sgt. Tomochev has already indicated that playing the Basic Game solitaire offers an excellent opportunity to explore new strategies. This is something that seems to be a never-ending process; as soon as the Germans come up with some innovative offensive strategy (whether on purpose or due to some incredible luck), the Russian player must find some way to defend against it. As the fictional General Paulus has already noted earlier in this issue, a strategy that works during one game may not be so successful in the next. It is only by playing the game a multitude of times that a successful player will become well-versed in the art of solitaire. The best way to get this experience is by playing the game solitaire... at least in Sgt. Tomochev’s opinion.

Another obvious reason, less specific, for playing a game solitaire is simply the lack of an opponent. A quick look in the “Opponents Wanted” section shows which are set up for immediate use. The increased availability of games designed specifically for solitaire shows that a market for such play is growing. So, how does TURNING POINT: STALINGRAD measure up in solitaire? Actually, an excellent game can be enjoyed by the solitaire player by playing both sides to their maximum potential. Read on.

RANK AND FILE

TPS is the latest in the series of games using the highly playable impulse movement/combat system pioneered in STORM OVER ARNHEM. Both our sergeants agree that it includes all the key elements which make up an excellent game: a good subject; high playability; high excitement level; high quality components; reasonable historical accuracy; and solitaire capability.

The subject is, of course, the battle for Stalingrad, and it is presented in a time and size scale appropriate to such a monumental battle. Sgt. Tomochev feels that play balance is very good to excellent, while Sgt. Krause says the primary reason for playing the Basic Game is that it offers excellent opportunities for trying out new strategies during the first week of the fighting without having to worry about suffering a crushing defeat after long hours of play.

Sgt. Krause says that the Basic Game setup can definitely result in the Germans annihilating the Russian forces; but this is not a frequent occurrence. Concealment, hidden units, true simultaneous movement, and record-keeping have also been left out of the game. These are the usual culprits which make up a level of playability that is not always under the gun. It is not at uncommon in a one-week game to see victory gained or lost on the last day, perhaps several times.

The game comes with one of the best mapboards ever produced to date. The map is a 16" by 44" masterpiece, an overhead view of the city and outlying steppes. For one area, with the top three German units. An inset section includes the Strategic Movement zones, day/night Impulse Track, and the Turn Record Track—all most helpful in playing the game.

Russian and German forces are represented by the large ¾” counters, and they include the usual combat information, plus setup, withdrawal and reinforcement information as required.

Surprisingly in such an interactive game, solitaire suitability is excellent (and that is the gist of this article, of course). It is not fair to compare this game with others such as PATTON’S BEST, RAID ON ST. NAZARE and B-17, since those were all specific designs. However, no one ever claimed life is fair, and occasionally it is easier to describe something by listing what it is not as opposed to what it is. Fairness aside, it’s worth the time to take a quick look at these three solitaire titles. B-17 and PATTON’S BEST are of the same ilk since they both involve gathering your friends (unbeknownst to them) and loading them all in a piece of machinery, which then heads off into enemy territory. These games stress the “personal” feel, and this can obviously generate a high excitement level (a strong streak of role-playing comes through). However, this is not the kind of challenge you’ll find in TPS. In Stalingrad, you command regimental and battalion level forces which are no longer personal than the cardboards they are mounted on. As the later turns are controlled by pushing these forces to their limit trying to gain (or hold onto) each precious area. Battles for these areas can literally drag on for days, and occasionally whole weeks.

The moment of conquest (or the agony of defeat) is followed by the threat of counterattack while your forces are at risk recuperating. All this leads to a tempo of play not quite as fast as other two-player games solitaire. The semi-simultaneous movement system of TURNING POINT: STALINGRAD eliminates the log-keeping generally required in sim-games. In fact, the only written record required is for the armor replacements coming from the Dzerzhinsky Tractor factory (#70); and for the one-week game, the turning point is contained in a box.

So, what compares with TURNING POINT: STALINGRAD? In terms of solitaire play—nothing. The closest comparison in terms of excitement and playability would have to be ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER. (This statement does imply high playability; to contrast to those who think that a game which has a 300+ page rulebook cannot possibly be played.) The movement/combat mechanics of the game are similar to STORM OVER ARNHEM and THUNDER AT CASSINO. The primary differences are the removal of the Close Combat Phase (which actually enhances playability over the latter by an order of magnitude) and the obvious necessity to include special rules for such as artillery, Stukas, Russian armor replacements, and river crossing interdiction. The transition from one of these titles to TPS is minimal due to the fact that a good chunk of the rulebook is paralleled in those games.

Historical accuracy is very good if playing the Simulation Game for the entire nine-week period. The interpretation of historical accuracy is not necessarily a strict one. However, the bottom line is whether a game has all the key factors that were involved in determining the outcome of the actual battle. TPS fulfills this criteria because it emphasizes such factors as Russian infiltration, German superiority by day, Russian superiority by night, interdiction of river crossings, east bank artillery, air
power, rubble/fortifications, and Russian tank replacements from the Tractor Works. In addition, the fact that a solitaire player is omnipotent, knowing the location and strength of each sides' forces, is not out of line since in the historical battle both were able to keep good tabs on their opponents.

THE SIMULATION GAME

Playing the full-blown Simulation Game requires a tremendous amount of time, but it is time well spent. Sgt. Krause says the average solitaire playing time for this is about 20 hours. Therefore, plan on storing the game in a safe place (away from junior's projector tips) when nesy constraints of sleep, work and family interfere with your gaming session.

The Simulation Game uses the "red" Victory Point conditions at the end of each week to determine whether the game will continue for another week of play. This almost always assures a continuation of the game into the next week up to the sixth. From this point on, one side or the other stands a pretty fair chance of attaining that long-awaited victory. The Simulation Game also demands the use of the historical setup and unit withdrawals. Using the historical setup results in a slower start for the German player due to the lack of large offensive values in a single stack at the start. German withdrawals do not have a large effect for the first three weeks. However, during the period from September 30th to October 11th, his withdrawals will have their biggest impact. The loss of the 29th Motorized Division can bring the German offensive potential to a halt. The units withdrawn during this time period will amount to almost 20% of the German force.

Sgt. Tomochov offers the following suggestions to his comrades. The Russian plan in the Simulation Game is to move the line to hold onto VP areas. This is, of course, easier said than done. However, in the first week it is very important that losses be kept low. Traditionally, Russian losses will be in the range of 35 to 45 units when playing a one-week game. It is essential that the Russian player reduce this level by about ten units when playing the Simulation Game. This is not unreasonable, considering the fact that the Germans are more spread out and (less effective) at the start and that the German player [hoping] will not have to make desperate moves on the last day of the week (October 11th). In addition, as it is easier for the German to gain a draw (and continuation) in the Simulation Game, the Russian death grip on VP areas can be somewhat relaxed in favor of preventing casualties. Non-essential territory must be sacrificed to save men whenever possible. Try to absorb casualty points through the disruption and confusion that your moves can cause. RUSSIANstrategy for each side is inherently known by the generals Paulus and Chuykov previously. However, the granting on the line have a few salient points to make.

The one problem that faces a solitaire player in any game designed for two is that the strategy for each side is inherently known by the solo participant. But this problem is almost completely nullified in TPS for several reasons. One, there are no hidden units. Second, strategic redeployment of units at the end of the board to the other requires an entire unit's movement before leaving it disrupted; this allows the other side time to respond to that redeployment, although the Russians (being less mechanized and concentrated) can't match the Germans for pure swiftness. And third, holes in the Russian defensive line which are not plugged can only be exploited (by the Germans) to a small degree because of movement restrictions and supply constraints.

All of the previous items serve as damping factors to an unknown, as well as a known, strategy. The one thing that can not be successfully employed by a solitaire player is the selective use of feints. These are the kind that demand long planning. Moves such as pushing for Mamayev Kurgan and then switching to an out-all drive for the north-central river front is just one example. This statement has a couple of caveats. A solitaire player's knowledge of his "opponent's"'s' impending plan can cause confusion of certain units—which then create entirely different opportunities for the enemy. And thereby making the original omnipotence faulty.

BRINGING UP THE REAR

Sgt. Krause and Tomochov ultimately had the chance to get it together. The reunion occurred in the heart of Stalingrad where they were both lucky enough to preserve their skin(s) intact. They reached a consensus that playing TURNING POINT: STALINGRAD can provide hours of enjoyment. In addition, the game is fresh and challenging each time it is played, and is presented in a format which generates high excitement while maintaining high playability.

They both would like to leave a final note to those who have not played the Simulation Game, but are considering it for future use. The game is not completely one-sided for any given setup. TPS takes a good ten playing sessions to "get up to speed." The trend which seems to be prevalent is one of Russian wins fading into German wins as the experience of the players increase. In addition, the casualty rate of Russian units is less than that of the German player becomes determined in his accuracy in fire. Removal of this threat allows the German player to concentrate his own artillery in the remaining two quadrants and thereby improve the odds of taking out the enemy artillery there with counterbattery fire.

TP: STALINGRAD Expansion Kit

Those readers who have played and enjoyed TURNING POINT: STALINGRAD will no doubt wish to pick up the Expansion Kit. The kit brings another sheet of counters, giving players the ability to extend the game beyond 3 October (the weeks of 4, 11, 18 & 25 October and 1 & 8 November). The new counter sheet provides additional dispositions, random number chits, and reduced daylight markers as well as the new German and Soviet combat units. Details of the arrival and withdrawal of these new units are already provided on the set-up cards found in the original game, so no additional rules or components are required. Readers are advised that extending the game to 14 November, while certainly increasing the simulation "value," will demand a greater commitment in terms of playing time. The Expansion Kit for TURNING POINT: STALINGRAD is available for $6.25 from The Avalon Hill Company (817 Hartford Road, Baltimore, MD 21214). The usual 10% for shipping/handling applies (20% for Canadian orders; 30% for overseas). Maryland residents please add 5% state sales tax.

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Also, I didn't count on offending Mr. Founer. What he doesn't realize is that there was never any other choice. Either we sold the game as originally designed to cover only the first three weeks of the battle, or we didn't do the game at all. The "Simulation" version was only an add-on to placate those who wanted to fight out the entire battle. By designing the extension I was trying to please both camps, and place the extra expense only on those who would benefit from it. The game Mr. Founer has is complete in every respect. If he wishes more, he'll have to pay for it.

It is very easy for gamers to pontificate on what should be in a game. But, in this day of inflation and declining wargame sales, there are limits to what we can put in a box and still hope to keep it sellable at the retail level. I'd love to sell $15 war-games again. I'd also like to buy fifteen-cent hamburgers and ten-cent sodas again, but I don't think I ever will. Sigh ...
Jared Roach and Ken Bender are officers of the Cornell Strategic Simulations Society and have played one another numerous times, although Jared has considerably more experience with this particular game system. The introductory scenario ("Kuibyshev Sawmill") was chosen for the replay due to its brevity, even though it lacks the movement and overall scope of the main game. Our commentator is the designer of the game and, as you'll see, a demanding Taskmaster. His victims are volunteers from one of his "blind" playtest groups and therefore are expected to furnish some stiff competition.

If Mr. Greenwood seems overly harsh in his criticisms, forgive him for he is driven by an unending love of his game, and lacks patience to deal with those who don't treat it with the same studied respect. His comments, in case you can't identify them by tone, are in italics.

INTRODUCTION:

Russian: TURNING POINT: STALINGRAD is a wonderfully addictive game. The impulse system forces players to constantly on their toes. The Russian must make the all-important decisions of how to respond economically and effectively to a German move and when to pass to conserve his strength. The German must attack quickly, overwhelm and, successfully before the Russian can build impeneetrable defenses. Above all, luck, in the form of a throw of the dice, can dramatically change the strategic situation. Overcaution can be as fatal as a botched assault.

I really dislike playing the historical setup—both in this scenario and in the main game—because it leaves the Kuibyshev Sawmill much too weak. This area is the key to victory in both versions. By taking the Sawmill, the Germans can cut off Areas 29 and 30 and deal with them at his leisure. I will try to pull my units out of these areas as quickly as possible to shore up the Kuibyshev defenses.

The German needs to take two river areas besides Kuporosnoye to win. There is no way I can hold both Kuporosnoye and Kuibyshev. By trying to hold both, I will just be throwing away units, probably to an Overrun attack. I will give it up willingly. Two Interdiction Points and one Victory Point are no big deal. I will concentrate my defense in Area 31 and make a last ditch stand in 32 if need be. It will be hard for him to break through from the west to Areas 62 and 63; he has too far to go. A week can go by very quickly.

My opponent is unpredictable. He usually tries bizarre strategies, and occasionally gets away with them. The options for sweeping movement are limited in this scenario though, so I am prepared for a sluggish match. If I keep in mind that casualties don't determine victory, I'll win. My troops may not love me, but Stalin will.

German: My "grand plan" is to sweep along the Volga from the south, bypassing Area 32 if the Russian defends it strongly. I'll mass my forces to crush Kuibyshev and then sweep around Minina Gully to isolate the Russian forces to the north. Meanwhile I'll keep those forces occupied with my armor from Areas 3 and 4.

I know from extensive experience that Jared is an excellent player. If I can have a chance at taking the number of riverside areas necessary to win, I can only hope to roll well and perhaps execute a bizarre move or two to confuse him. He usually doesn't like it when I do that sort of thing—which is exactly why it's so much fun to do. I need not conserve troop strength since time is short; all-out assault will be the order of the day.

The introductory scenario is like riding a carousel in an amusement park full of roller coasters. It's OK, but it pales in comparison to the surroundings. By restricting play to just one of the four map sections, the overall scope and movement of the game suffers. The opportunity for strategic feats and quick movement of forces behind the front is lost, and the battle becomes more of a set-piece shooting match (which is far less interesting than the battle of maneuver offered by the overall game). Nevertheless, brevity is the most important factor in a Series Replay and therefore we've chosen the Sawmill scenario to give you a taste of what TPS is like.

My other pre-game concern revolves around the "blind" players. Both were active in the "blind" pre-publication playtest and should be experienced with the game system. However, Jared's reports were often so top-sided in his own favor that they had to be dismissed lest they upset the curve. He won every game with either side and dominated play in his group—a veritable shark among the tuna. Such a mismatch does not bode well for an interesting replay, but at least the tuna got a break at start with four failed ripple rolls.

Each move will be listed in abbreviated form as:

[German/Russian Impulse] Units moved [area moved from] area move to [odds—attacker: defender, attacker roll/defender roll] (Casualty Points: units killed or retreated (Disruption Level)]. Any independent impulse dice rolls are listed in parentheses.

DAY, SEPTEMBER 13:

[G1] 29th Div. Art. [1] vs 29 [8:7, 11:9] [3CP: R: 4-4-6, 1-2-4 (D4) to 31; voluntary R: 2-2-4, 1-2-4 (D1) to 31; attack rubble 29]

94th Div. Art. [28] vs 27 [9:5, 7:5] [7CP: R: 1-2-4; R: 1-3-4, 1-2-4 (D4) to 33]

I'm taking advantage of the Opening Bombardment rule (20.4) to squeeze two artillery attacks into one impulse. This is a low risk way to flatten as many Russians as possible before committing troops. Unfortunately, I also flattened the buildings in Minina.

[R3] Both units [30] to 31

In accordance with my operational plans, I'm pulling in my outer defenses to strengthen Kuibyshev Sawmill. If I had left them there, you can bet they would have become mincemeat. The German attack actually helped my plans because I was able to voluntarily retreat units from Minina without using an impulse. As a bonus, he now has rubble to contend with on his perimeter. That makes up in small measure for my failure to get any pre-game rubble.

Our inexperienced German betrays his lack of expertise immediately. Wasting a bombardment on Minina is foolish while so many better targets abound. Aside from the daylight "ZOC" it inflicts on Areas 1 and 28, Minina has little value and its terrain (+3) is too strong to use as a killing ground for Russian troops. Apparently the Russian agrees, because he forsakes the rubble it created and uses the attack as a form of free impulse to retreat all four of his units into the Sawmill while the three casualties inflicted required only one to exit. Kuporosnoye would have been a better target for the 29th's Artillery as it would have softened the opposition in an Area the Germans need both for Interdiction and Victory Points.

Attacking the Leatherworks with the 94th Artillery is a more reasonable tactic. Although the Sawmill is definitely the key to the scenario—and often the whole game as well—maximizing Russian casualties with bombardments in the +1 TEM Areas is a viable strategy—especially inasmuch as it lessens the chances of creating rubble. Holding back the Stukas for later use is also the correct choice as it should hinder Russian movement and is in no danger of being phased out by an early nightfall.

If the opening German move is less than inspired, the Russian riposte is at best curious. Using voluntary retreats as a form of semi-free impulse is a vital Russian tactic, but here it is overused. Although the Russian is correct to reinforce the Sawmill (which is the key in his house of cards), doing so by completely stripping the buffer between it and the German power in Area 1 is a mistake. At least one Fresh unit should be left behind to man the rubble in Minina and force the Germans to attack it again to remove its ZOC. Instead, he neutralizes the German threat by handing him the very rubble his error created without opposition.

If the Russian retreat was foolish, his opening move is moreso. Abandoning Kuporosnoye without a shot fired is highly questionable. Sure, Area 30 can't be held against a determined attack; but the idea is to make the Huns pay a price for their first Victory and Interdiction Points—in time, if not in men. By handing over Areas 29 and 30, the Sawmill has no buffer between it and the German power in Area 1. The withdrawing Russians now defend the Sawmill with a disrupted strength of 5 instead of defending the buffer with a Fresh strength of 6 and 7. And in the process of this pre-mature withdrawal, he has offered the Stukas a prime target at massed moving units. A far better move would have been a simple Pass to defend in place. If he had to reinforce the Sawmill now, better it come from the killing fields of the Leatherworks +1 TEM than the +3 and +4 TEM of Areas 30 and 29.

Advantage: German, due to a terrible Russian strategy.

[G3] All four units [A] to 1

I'm concentrating my 29th Division for a push up the river. With my division together, I can get the maximum advantage from the Regimental Integrity bonus.
This beefs up the defenses of Kuibyshev to the maximum ten units, and starts a second line of defense at Minina Gully in the same impulse. The German response to being handed the keys to the city is to picnic on Hill 120. The opening day is not the time for consolidating troop movements—that is best done at night. Never waste daylight and the opportunity to attack with air support. If you must think in terms of consolidation, at least move into Kaplanovo. You can then consolidate the 29th on the next impulse and make a Ranged attack from 30 at 13:8. By consolidating in Area 1, the German ensures that the 29th Division—his strongest force—will strike no blows on the opening day and have to pay at least two MF before even coming into contact with the enemy when he does move. Almost anything would have been a better move.

The Russian move is better, but flawed. Ten units in the Sawmill may be an over-reaction. If he’s not careful, the German will bypass it altogether and catch him with a shortage of troops. The defense-in-depth is a good idea, but two units in 32 is wasteful. The Russian cause would be better served if one of those fresh units were to appear in 33 or 61 in the morning. Two units exert no more ZOC than one. The Russian wins this exchange, but the German still enjoys the edge if he cares to use it.

This diversionary attack, quite successful in its own right, should keep the Ivans guessing as to where my real thrust will occur. If I had rolled one higher, it would have been an Overrun.

Any action I take now would disrupt more of my units and weaken my defenses. Disrupted units are easier to eliminate. I see no need for unnecessary sacrifices. I have retreated into a nice tight defensive circle easily. Three dead units is no problem at this point and reinforcements loom big tomorrow.

Although the Russian lost two units, I rate this move a toss-up and the German owes that to winning his third straight dice roll. Why attack 26 which the Russians will have to withdraw from anyway if the Germans can penetrate 27? The 7-6-6 could have hit the Leatherworks at 8:4, which matches the casualty potential of the 9:5 vs 26, and the 5-2-5 could still have hit 26 at 6:5 to shorten the line and cause more casualties. With ten units already in the Sawmill, the German should be flexing his muscles in the Leatherworks and looking to bypass 31.

There is nothing wrong with the Russian “Pass”, although it shows how pre-mature was his commitment of the 272nd Regt. last impulse. He has very little left in the way of a mobile reserve. I’d have attacked into 26 just to keep the 24th’s Armor at arm’s length. The Russian won the move, but the German still holds an overall edge due to an 8:6 average Dice Roll advantage.

This continues my diversion but exhausts my resources in this area of the board.

This unit was in danger of being cut off, so I pulled it back into a reserve position. By concentrating my disrupted units I can take more Casualty Points as retreats instead of eliminations. Disrupted units can still hold an Area; dead ones can’t. I have been using voluntary retreats (8.3554) to contract my lines.

Another unimaginative frontal attack... was this guy in charge at Verdun? The German continues
pay to lost opportunities this day. Not only is the German strategy wrong, the occupation of Minina isn’t even handled efficiently. Why break up a 9-factor attack force in Yelshanka when the flak unit in B, the PAK unit in 2, and the PAK unit in 4 are all idle? A horrendous move!

The Russian regrouping is fine, but another one exists. With night falling, I’d return units in the Sawmill to Kuporosnoye before the German sleepwalks and takes it accidentally.

The turn—and the day—belong to the Russians.

[G3] 9-6 [B] to 3 (8)

This move allows me to shift my entire 94th Division to Yelshanka without leaving a hole through Sadovaya Station.

Regroup all six units [33] to 32

Now I have an excellent second line of defense should Kuibyshev fall.

Night doesn’t bring any better moves.

The German move just undoes part of the damage done by his last move. Moving that flak unit into 29 last time would have saved an impulse and left a 9-factor attack force intact. The “entire 94th” won’t be at Yelshanka because one of its infantry battalions is off guarding Minina. He had been hammering 27, he wouldn’t have to worry about any hole at Sadovaya Station. This scenario is supposed to be Custer versus Sitting Bull, and here we see the spectacle of Sitting Bull circling his own wagons. Attack before it’s too late! There are plenty of round eyes across the river. A better move—-need I say it—would be to finally take Kuporosnoye with that Plak unit.

The Russian regrouping is even worse. Given the Russian strength in Kuibyshev, the German’s best chance to win now is to bypass both 31 and 32 and try for the Grobn Elevator and Downtown Ferry Landing. Such a win is very possible with a good dice roll in 27 and a pinning attack in 31. The Russians would then have a mere handful of mobile units with which to respond. This game is still very winnable with some luck, a long day, and the right moves.

The Russian move was worse than the German’s—and on potential alone—I give the edge back to the German... if only he’ll use it.

All three fresh units [3] to 28 (4) [Night ends]

With two full-strength divisions in position, I am now prepared to crush Kuibyshev Sawmill. I will launch my attack at dawn.

DAY, SEPTEMBER 14:

Dawn: Russian Reinforcements see two 4-6-4, 6-7-4 allocated to this sector.

Pass

I’m prepared. Let him come.

Uh-oh! The German’s comments reveal he is sticking to his original plan of attack. Having finally assembled his sledge-hammer force, he fully intends to break it on the anvil of Kuibyshev. A better move would have been to regroup the 94th in Area 3 and then to do the same with the 29th into 28 next time so as to pound 27 and better threaten the Sawmill. As it is, the 29th’s infantry can’t even reach the Sawmill in the morning. Tk, tk.

Given the arrival of dawn, the Russian “Pass” is appropriate. However, if he were facing me, this Russian might wish he’d moved some of his sitting ducks in 27 back to 33 and 61 where they’d be fresh now.

Give the turn to the Russian by default—and now that I know the German’s intent, the game as well. Fortunately for the Germans, only three of the seven Russian reinforcements are allocated to this sector of the front.

All eight fresh units in 28 Range attack vs 31 [11:8, 6/7] [4CP: R: 2-2-6, 1-2-4 (D4) to 32]

Kuibyshev is almost clear, but I have little left with which to take it before night brings the Russian reinforcements.

Pass

One defender left in the Sawmill! At least Ken was nice enough to make a Ranged attack. This leaves Kuibyshev open so I can slip reinforcements in without having to attack him. However, I am still worried that he will send his last infantry battalion into Kuibyshev to accomplish this interdiction task.

I will attack it with my 13th Guards Division. If I were to send a unit to Kuibyshev now it would be disrupted and thus easier prey for the last eligible German attacker. The three other remaining German units are incapable of entering an enemy-occupied area. Therefore I pass.

The German has played his last ace and now lies spent, unable to take advantage of the destruction
he has wrought. The Russian dilemma is illusory and can be made good by the arrival of his rein­
forcements. Making a Ranged attack into the Saw­
mill instead of a 12:8 infantry assault was probably the right decision—provided he follows it up with an infantry attack from Minina next impulse to force the Russian reinforcements to attack if they enter the Sawmill. Keeping the 94th intact in Yelshanka will allow it to combine with the 29th’s armor for another potent blow. Moving it into 31 would have forced the Russian to fall back into 33 where he should have been all along. Why force him to make the right move?

The Russian “Pass” is acceptable, but given the German’s exhaustion a better move would be to finally abandon 27 for the superior defense of the Southern Railway Station. The first night impulse will have to be used to land reinforcements.

This dice roll discrepancy bears watching. Let’s call it the “Fate Gauge”. Currently, it reads 8:6.9 for the Germans. As for the game, it is too close to call now.

Move a 29th Division unit to Kuporosnoye in order to bring the forces along the river to the maximum allowed here and further concentrate my division. The day was short but sweet. At least I got my two big battles in during daylight hours.

**NIGHT, SEPTEMBER 14:**

**[R3]** All three Reinforcementss land safely in 62; 4-6-4, 6-7-4 [62] to 31

My reinforcements make life bearable. The 4-6-4 at the Grain Elevator remains in reserve.

No wonder Hitler had migraines. Area 31 had to be occupied this time—thus forcing the Russians to win a 7:7 attack with his reinforcements. Now the Sawmill will defend with 12 in the morning instead of 8. He’s even allowing the Russians the option to regroup there from Minina Gully. All of this could have been avoided by attacking with the I/7276 from 29 at 4:7. Hell, with his luck, he might have even taken the area.

As for the Russian move, the last 4-6-4 could have served his reserve role better in 33 than in 62.

*Turn to the Russian, and with it he recaptures the edge in the game.*

**[G3]** Regroup 29th Artillery [1] to 28 (10)

When this unit recovers its Fresh status, it will be in position for a bombardment.

**[R5]** 1-3-4 [27] to 31

Beefing up the Sawmill is more important than defending the Leatherworks.

Having already made the mistake, the German seems determined to make it fatal. Moving the 276th into 31 now has far less benefits, but still beats letting the Russians further reinforce the Sawmill unless . . . it is still not too late to bypass 31. Regroup the 29th into Minina and hope for a long night.

The Russian move is a good one except that he still refuses to see that he should abandon the Leatherworks save for one unit and fall back into the Southern Railway Station.

*Give the turn to the Russian and with it a tighter grip on the game.*

**[G5]** Pass (11)

Nothing to do but wait for morning.

**[R7]** Regroup 4-4-4, 2-2-6, 1-2-4 D4 [32] 33

Now if the Leatherworks falls, I will have a defense to fall back on at the Southern Railway Station.

PASS??! Just when I thought he couldn’t do any worse . . . . time is a precious commodity in this game. There is almost always something worthwhile to do with your impulse that improves your situation—especially as the German. What’s wrong with moving the PAK in 4 to Minina to free that infantry unit to rejoin the 94th, instead as you refuse to attack with your PAK in 5? Is the German finally seeing the light, but it may be too late. He compounds his earlier errors by throw­ing away the Advantage on a non-critical attack for a reroll. Now, when he does need it he won’t have it. The Russian response is both dangerous and necessary. The Leatherworks should be a scene of many battles, but not major Russian defenses. This is where the Russian armor should counterattack in piecemeal fashion to buy time for the stouter defenses in the Southern Railway Station. The Russian is now in danger of paying for his folly in not strengthening 61 and 33 earlier. Area 34 is now the weak spot in the Russian lines, and although the German waste of the 24th, he may have a chance to exploit it. On the other hand, if he takes back and holds 61, the Fate Gauge now reads 8:3:7.6 for the German.

**[G5]** All three units [25] vs 34 [10:5, 11/8] [SCP: K: 2-3-4, 2-2-5, Overrun] all three units [34] continue to 61.

Exploit the weak spot while hemming the enemy in. Now I have more freedom in choosing where to make my next main attack with the 94th Division. Two more Riverside areas are now vulnerable.

**[R7]** 1-3-4 [31] to 63

Had Ken not overrun Area 34 (he had only a 34% chance), my last move would have been an effective delaying tactic. I realize a mistake in not pack­ing a couple of Disrupted units in West Stalingrad earlier. I was hoping that I would have some remnant of my force from 34 to retreat there and prevent just the kind of penetration he has made. You may wonder why I do not move a unit into Tsarsilla Woods to isolate the Germans who broke into West Stalingrad and prevent a further thrust into the Downtown Ferry Landing. Unfortunately, I have only five Fresh units left. At least three of them have to stay at Kuibyshev Sawmill if I want to have a chance of keeping it. The 134th Guards unit at the Grain Elevator moves slowly into Area 61. As things stand, the only unit capable of reach­ing the Downtown Ferry Landing is his 6-6-8 Recon unit. By sending my 1-3-4 there first he has only a 55% chance of gaining control with such an attack. A move into the Tsarsilla Woods could be easily crushed by units of the 94th, and then I would no longer have a unit to move into the Ferry Landing if he manages another daylight turn.

**BINGO!** Lady Luck continues to smile on the German and he responds with the perfect attack at the right time. Although I normally dislike using two armor units in the same attack, it’s getting kind of late in the day to hope for two attacks into 34. The Overrun is needed beforehand, to the combined armor attack in this case is the right choice. I’ve felt a lot better about it though if the German still had the Advantage for a second shot at it. This was a spot worthy of its sacrifice. Having made the perfect attack, our German now gets carried away and rushes to occupy the Downtown Ferry Landing. Unfortunately, he doesn’t cut off that breakthrough now he will have three Fresh German armor units poised to attack 62 and 63 in the morning. On the other hand, if he takes back and holds 34, they are harmless and will require extermination rather than pushing on to the Volga. “He who defends everything defends nothing.” The Sawmill can spare two units. To attack the Sawmill with enough force to take it, the German would probably have to abandon
the 24th Armor—he can't do both at once with any prospect of success. So what if the 94th retakes the Tsaritsa Woods? That leaves that much less to attack Kuibyshev and the Russian can still move his I-3-4 to the Downtown Ferry Landing on the next impulse if the day continues. Need I say that all of this could have been avoided if any of the Russian hordes wasted in 32 had been left in 61 to prepare a defense in depth?

The turn is overwhelmingly German, fortified further by an 8:6:7:5 reading on the Fate Gauge. The game is now the German's to lose.

[G7] 5-2-5 [26] vs 27 [6:2, 6:7] [B3P: K: 3-2-5; Overrun] (Day ends)

This is a good opportunity to destroy a helpless unit.

**NIGHT, SEPTEMBER 15:**

[R3] All three reinforcements to 63 (one 4-6-4 and the 0-1-4 (D2))

That plugs that gap—although not as well as I had hoped. I wish the Germans would stop blowing my boats out of the water.

And lose it he shall with moves like this. Attacking the Leatherworks does absolutely nothing to safeguard the rear of the 24th’s penetration. An open highway through the Southern Railway Station to 34 still exists. The German should attack 33 with the Pioneers at 6:5 to plug that gap, or at least move his rear FLAK/PAK units to 34. And what’s wrong with moving that 6-6-8 into 63 and taking that 55% chance to win the area that the Russian offered? Even if it fails, it will further interdict the arrival of Russian reinforcements. The name of this game for the German is get to the river.

The Russian landing site choice is perfect, although I’m sure he wished two of them hadn’t been disrupted in the process. The German continues to enjoy more luck than his play deserves.

The turn goes to the Russian—although he is hanging on by his fingernails.

The rubble clearance attack in 31 is an interesting choice, but not the best I fear. The German is relying too much on favorable dice rolls; although he’s getting them, that can't last forever. As the Russian points out, his play is too conservative—at least for my tastes. In waiting to prepare an optimum attack, he gives the defense time to recover. I'd have preferred a night attack into 33 from 28 at 13:6 which—with even dice—would have cleared 33 and left the Germans poised to strike into any of the four riverside areas.

With the Pioneers in 31, the Russian no longer has freedom of movement in the Sawmill. To isolate the 24th, he must move the 4-6-4 from the Grain Elevator and through 33. To do that, he must first regroup from 63 into 62. That would be my move.
If dawn breaks soon after the Russian move into 34, it might hold long enough to cut off the 24th. The Fate Gauge climbs to 8.5-7.5, and with it a strong hold on the game.

**[G5]** All seven battalions of the 94th Division [38] to 27 (9)

These units are preparing for a big assault in the morning while the Russians are still disrupted. I've abandoned my original plan to move up the Volga from the south since it seems to have stalled. If we can't go through the Sawmill, we will go around it.

**[R7]** Regroup 4-4-4, 2-2-6 (D3) [33] 62

**[R7]** Regroup +3-5 [33] 32

The defense of the Southern Railway Station is no longer important. Ken has won other avenues to attack all of my riverfront property. I left a unit behind just to inconvenience him since it was disrupted, now I can't go through the 33rd Guards at the Grain Elevator as a Reserve for next turn.

At least he's moving in the right direction, but I question the German's reluctance to attack at night. I'd have moved all but the PAK unit from 28 to 33 for a 12.6 attack. Even without an Overrun, they would still most likely have two more attack opportunities this week against their choice of VP areas. The German failure to block 33 while temporarily expending so many resources with a single move leaves the Russian with a glaring counterattack opportunity.

Both moves are terrible. The German's is worse because it is so obvious. It is easy to miss a good move in this game and such oversights can be forgiven—but especially in the full game where the scope of play is so much larger. That's why it takes balls to volunteer for a replay and let someone take potshots at you with the advantage of hindsight.

**[G1] 6-9-6 [3] to 61 via 34 [Night ends]

I need to retake the Tarasitsa Woods that the Russians are too afraid to hold.

**DAY, SEPTEMBER 16:**

Dawn: Three of four Russian 4-6-4 Marines are given to the sector. Meanwhile, the German 3-2-7 reinforcement arrives in B.

**[R1]** Pass

Just waiting for the axe to fall. At least he retook 34. He still didn't bother to prevent the same thing from happening again, although the opportunity will never be as ripe as the one just squandered by his opponent.

The Russian "Pass" is the best move taken in quite some time. The allocation of three of the four Marines to this sector bodes ill for the Germans.

**[G1] 3-2-7 [R] vs 33 [4:4, 7] [6CP: K: 2-2-6; Overrun]

Another opportunity to kill a helpless Russian and get my reinforcements into the fray.

**[R3]** Pass

Ken's luck continues unabated and the storm is just starting. Well, at least I can stop ranting about blocking 33 to protect the 24th. A long overdue move, but the German will have to get bolder than that. Time is on the Russian's side now. Three potent reserves will cross at night and eight disrupted units are due to return to Fresh status in the morning. The German strength is at its zenith. He must strike today—or hard and often. A four-factor attack is not my idea of striking hard. He can't afford to wait for his Artillery and Stuka on the 17th—but it looks like that is exactly what he is doing.

The Russian move is the better move (or non-move) of the two, but the Fate Gauge continues to climb: 8.8-7.6. How long can his luck hold? Give me chits anyday.

**[G3] 7-5-6, 5-2-5 [27] vs 32 [9-5, 9] [6CP: K: 1-2-4; R: 1-3-4, 2-3-4, two 1-2-4 (D4) to 62]

The enemy has suffered another crushing defeat and permitted the occupation of a riverisde area. Soon Minina Gulny will be mine.

**[R5]** 4-6-4 [D3] 62 vs 33 [4:5, 8] [6CP: attacker (D3)]

Note the advantage of consolidating disrupted units. I absorbed four Casualty Points from his last attack by retreating units that were already disrupted. And they can do it again if the need arises. Even a disrupted Guards unit can be a potent defense. After my last move, Ken will have to fight to break this attack on Minina Gulny. I was hoping to get lucky and clear out the wimpy German presence in the Southern Railway Station and actually isolate the Germans in Minina Gulny!

Area 32 is a good target choice lest all those disrupted units come back fresh tomorrow, but why only a two-unit attack? Committing the 94th Division's infantry would have added another five Casualty Points. The 94th's PAK should be dropped off in 33 to guard against a Russian counterattack. Apparently the Russian agrees because that's just what he does—but without conviction. If 33 is a good enough target to attack with a Guard unit, it's important enough to win. The Russian should have thrown in his Artillery for an even-evens attack. The Russian should not be so smug about his consolidated disrupted units. Those retreated units were due to become fresh in the morning. In addition, if one of them had been in 61 yesterday he wouldn't be in his present hole.

The Russian move is the better of the two but can't compete with the German luck, which holds the Fate Gauge steady at 8.7-7.6. The game is still the German's to lose.

**[G5]** 4-7 [4] to 28 (5) [Day ends]

It is senseless to leave this unit where it is. Moving it to Yelshanka will free the 29th Recon for more important, aggressive action elsewhere.

**NIGHT, SEPTEMBER 16:**

**[R3]** Reinforcements to 63 safely; all three 4-6-4 [63] vs 33 [8-4, 7-8] [6CP: K: 3-2-6; Overrun] Counterbattery disrupts artillery

Thank God for the night. Getting all of my reinforcements ashore intact allowed me to attack with them in unison and preserved the Regimental Integrity bonus, which was just enough to score the Overrun. This not only isolates the Germans in Minina Gulny but reopens a path to reinforce Kulchevskoy.

This Von Paulus should be a private in the Fuhrer's Honor Guard. The Russian demonstrated last time how precarious his supply line was to Minina Gulny, and yet he wastes precious daylight making a frivolous move that could have been done during any of his previous passes and leaves the Southern Railway Station fully exposed to a Russian counterattack. Does he think he'll never lose a dice roll?

The Russian is not blind after all. He makes the perfect response and hands Jerry his walking papers. The German does not deserve to win—and this move probably ensures that he won't.

The Fate Gauge holds steady at 8.7-7.6—but the turn belongs overwhelmingly to the Russian, and with it he recaptures the edge in the game.

**[G3] 6-6-8 [28] to 27 (10)

The Minina Gulny force is isolated and must be rescued before attrition sets in. However, the relief force will have to wait for daylight. The 29th Recon is in position to attack with the 94th on the next day, is closer to the action, and the option of a two-pronged attack sometime in the future is available. The only way this attack could be able to achieve the Tsaritsa Woods is busy defending the Downtown Ferry Landing, so there is no pressing need to place a defensive unit there.

**[R5]** Regroup 4-6-4 (D4) [33] 62
This consolidates my disrupted groups for next turn as the Marines will be Fresh in the morning.

Given the self-inflicted noose his neck now occupies, the German move is fine, although he continues to underestimate the Russian capacity to counterattack through 33 to Tsartia Woods to isolate the 24th.

The Russian move is likewise satisfactory—but a better one exists. By regrouping one of the Marines to 62 also, he could then regroup to it 63, and if the night continues he could then retake Tsartia Woods with the 4-6-4 to 63 (or least threaten doing so). Isolating the 24th now when it is Fresh is not nearly as effective as when it was briefly disrupted, but it is still worth considering because it will buy time and that commodity is running out for the German.

The Artillery is now safer and in position to bombard either the Sawmill or the Railway Station.

[R7] Regroup all four (D4) units; 4-6-4 (D3) [62] to 63
Now my two fresh units at the Downtown Ferry Landing are free to leave should I need them as a reserve.

Again no complaint about the German preparations—standard fare for so conservative a player—other than that I find it ironic that he now contemplates bombing Tsartia with his precious Artillery when the area was his for the keeping a few impulses ago but he couldn’t be bothered to reinforce it. Lost opportunities always come back to haunt you. A night attack into 62 and 33 with a pair of infantry units would have been better. The goal was not to produce casualties, but to pin the Russian Marines in 33, and gain an Interdiction Point for proximity to hamper the arrival of further Russian reinforcements.

The Russian move is fine, but my previously mentioned plan to regroup one of the Marines twice would have been better, as it would leave a fresh unit in 63 should he get rambunctious. It is always best to have at least one Fresh unit in an Area to cut down opposing movement options.

[G7] Pass (9)
Night is for resting.

[R9] 1-3-4 [61] to 33
4-6-4 [63] vs 31 [4-10, 5-6] [ICP: K: 4-2-5; R: 5-2-5 (D4) to 30]
I sent the 1-3-4 to the Railway Station in anticipation of moving the Marines there to Kulibyshev. I finally get to do so but losing a unit to Kulibyshev. If Ken doesn’t react I’ll be able to slip the Marines in there tomorrow and he’ll never take it. I again think I can win now.

No, “night is for doing the frivolous movements you do in the day”. You’ll have plenty of time to rest in a POW camp.

The attack on 31 by 4-6-4 in 63 should he get rambunctious. It is always best to have at least one Fresh unit in an Area to cut down opposing movement options.

[G9] 7-8-6, 5-5-7, 6-6-6 [61] vs 62 [9-8, 3-3] [ICP: attacker (D4)]
Russian uses Advantage

[3/7] [ICP: attacker (D4)] (Night ends)
Lady Luck lured me on, then slapped me. I have a foothold in another riverside property, but this may not be enough to hold it.

DAY, SEPTEMBER 17:
Dawn: Isolation – 1 marker placed on Germans in 32. Only one of four Russian reinforcements is allocated to the sector; the 3-5-4.

[RI] Reffit Artillery Attempt fails

I had to use the Advantage Chit to force a reroll or be left with only one disrupted unit in the Grain Elevator. Fortunately, the reroll went my way or I’d be in trouble. Let’s hope it has changed my luck.

As usual, I refrain from disrupting my units in daylight so I try to refit the Artillery.

Consider the possibilities had the German interdicted 33 and 62 last time as I suggested. In this impulsive, in all probability the last night opportunity of the 16th, two Regiments of the 29th could have moved to 61 where they would add eight factors to the ten of 26th. The Downtown Ferry Landing could have been attacked down at 17:6. An even exchange of dice rolls would have overrun the area and left this massive force free to repeat the blow on the Grain Elevator the next day. An 11-factor blow from the 94th and three artillery/Stuka barrages would also be available. As long as the German pinning units remained in 33 and 32, the Grain Elevator could be reinforced only across the Volga and in the face of five I.P. This game could still have been won.

The Russian decision to return the Advantage was certainly correct given the outcome. The reroll should have taken the Russian move, although he is not entirely out of the woods if his lucky opponent can summon a few more big dice rolls. The Fate Gauge still registers an 8.3-7.4 German edge.

[GI] 94th Artillery vs 31 [9-10, 11] [ICP: increases rubble]
And me without any Engineers left to clear the rubble ...

[R3] Successfully reffits Artillery

This success brings my Rollits up to an average performance. My defenses are looking real good. I should give the game another go to tighten and hold on to what I have. The Germans are even helping me dig.

The German has made his bed. He is now reduced to negative attacks and hopes of a big dice roll differential. He’s already been luckier than he deserves to be. Russian inactivity is all that is needed. All he has to do now is avoid shooting himself in the foot. God knows there are enough German toes lying around.

[G3] Stuka vs 31 [8-6, 7/5] [ICP: K: 4-6-4]
Since the use of the Stuka is limited to daylight hours, I need to use it now before I lose the chance.

Is that the best you can do?

Kulibyshev is the wrong target. It is still too late to win. Put a pinning unit in 33, use the Stuka against 62’s Disrupted units at 8-6, and move everything possible to 61 to hit the Downtown Ferry Landing tomorrow.

The Russian Pass is adequate versus this German.

[G5] 9th Division Artillery vs 31 [8-10, 7/9] [ICP]
I guess it’s time to give up on the Sawmill. Lousy dice!

[R7] Pass

What happened to that vaunted German luck? The German has no gripe about his luck. He has rolled 226 in 27 tries for an 8.4 average (1.4 above normal) while the Russians rolled 308 for a 7.7 average. The problem is not the dice—it is the guy throwing them.

[7-6-8, two 3-4-5, four 2-3-5 [27] vs 33 [14-10, 7/10] German employs Advantage [7/7] [ICP: R: 4-6-4, 1-3-4 (D4) to 62] Counterbattery fails
(Day ends)

What happened to my luck? Actually, I can’t complain too loudly. But I did need one last good throw to give me a chance at victory tomorrow. That’s why I sacrificed the Tactical Advantage chit.

NIGHT, SEPTEMBER 17:

[R3] Reinforcement to 31 returns to East Bank (D2)

Lady Luck abandoned you for a more worthy maestro. This is a first move to close this little tragedy. Of the five areas still in Russian hands, the German elects to use his last dwindling strength attacking the only one that won’t yield Victory Points. It is the worst of the available choices and gets the face it deserves.

EPilogue:

In the remaining two days the German is unable to take another Area and loses one of his isolated units in Minina Gully to starvation.

This replay was certainly entertaining in that it showed us a little of everything the game has to offer: breakthroughs, isolation, even rubble clearance. However, the level of play was what I’d expect from relative newcomers—not blooded play testers. The German’s play was overly conservative and grossly inefficient. He allowed his strongest and most mobile force (the 29th Division) to do little most of the time staring at the defenses in the Sawmill—totally isolated from the rest of the battlefield. Just as bad, he showed us nothing of what can be accomplished by German use of pinning attacks to restrict Russian movement. Instead, he blundered slowly ahead with massive frontal attacks against prepared defenses.

The Russian play, although considerably better, displayed numerous errors that the German failed to take advantage of, and therefore was able to prevail despite a significant shortfall in the luck category.

Nonetheless, this replay has provided us with an excellent vehicle to discuss the strategy and tactics of the game while witnessing the many changes of fortune which so typifies its play. It also demonstrates how some of the new developers have not only raised the game to a more standard level on their own instigation, but we hope, are learning by playing it. The level of play varies remarkably from group to group; if the majority of test results reveal that side X is kicking butt while I am winning handily with side Y, I have to question the level of expertise of the testers. A game that appears unbalanced will often prove to be balanced (or even favoring the other side) with improved play.

GENERAL INDEX 1964-1989

Updating the previous effort at listing every article and author in these pages, the new 16-page Index of The General brings 25 years of continuous publication into sharp focus. From the AH Philosophy to the contests, from our Series Replays to those excellent gamers featured in the “Meet the Fifty”, every important facet of the game could be referenced by those interested in a specific game. The major portion of this new index is devoted to a game-by-game listing of every article that has appeared in these pages since the early enthusiasm of this hobby flared in the 1960s. Whether for the aficionado of a particular Avalon Hill game or the casual gamer seeking every word printed on it by the experts, for the collector looking to insure that his AH collection is complete, or simply for the gamer wanting a new (though old) idea for winning, the GENERAL Index is a must. The GENERAL Index is available now for $5.00 direct from The Avalon Hill Game Company (4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, MD 21214). Please add the usual 10% shipping and handling to your payment (20% for Canadian; 30% for overseas). Maryland residents please add 5% state sales tax.
In my last column, I mentioned some of the advantages of play-by-electronic-mail as a means of conducting AREA matches. This time I would like to expand on that topic by including some information that may help you get started with PBEM. The first two things you will need are a computer and a modem. That’s it for the hardware. Next, you must subscribe to a service that has an electronic mail facility. Two commercially available services are GEnie and Compuserve. Finally, you need an opponent. That could be a problem, for they will need the above also, but it will get easier as electronic mail becomes more commonplace.

In the meantime, feel free to contact me at my GEnie address (D.S. BURDICK). I’ll be glad to forward any information that may help you get started. I would like to expand the topic by including some information that may help you get started with PBEM. The first two things you will need are a computer and a modem. That’s it for the hardware. Next, you must subscribe to a service that has an electronic mail facility. Two commercially available services are GEnie and Compuserve. Finally, you need an opponent. That could be a problem, for they will need the above also, but it will get easier as electronic mail becomes more commonplace.

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THE FORGOTTEN YEAR
PANZERBLITZ Situations for 1942

By David Howery

No doubt about it, 1942 was an exciting year. And a turning point in the history of the world. Rommel was stopped at El Alamein; Japan lost the initiative in the Pacific at Midway. And, central to the cause of the Allies was Stalingrad, where the Wehrmacht lost the best part of an army and their Russian front was torn asunder.

The year began with the German army fighting for survival in front of Moscow. The Russian winter offensive was taking a heavy toll of their men and horses, as well as the fresh reinforcements pouring in from the Far East. But as spring came, the Russian attacks faltered; and the Germans launched their own massive offensives in the summer. Striking in the south, the German forces charged over the River Don, grabbing at both Stalingrad and the Caucasus. In the end, they held neither. In late fall, the Russians launched the pincer attack which trapped the 6th Army in the ruined city. As 1943 began, the German army was again fighting for survival—but this time there would be no resurgence. The war had turned against Germany in the East.

Although the battles of 1942 can provide many interesting tactical situations, PANZERBLITZ alone is not sufficient to recreate them; thus the period has been mainly ignored by scenario designers. However, with the counters given in the game, and the counters originally provided with Ramiro Cruz’s “PANZERBLITZ 1941” (hereafter, PB 1941), found in Vol. 13, No. 3 of The GENERAL, and a few odd counters as described, actions from this pivotal year can be simulated.

The following is a brief overview of the counters necessary:

Infantry: All counters given in the game are used, including cavalry forces and CPs.

Towed Guns and Mortars: The Russians may use all units except the 57mm anti-tank gun (not in service until 1944). The 152mm howitzer from PB 1941 is also needed. The German player may make use of all types given in the game. The 37mm anti-tank gun from PB 1941 was discontinued in early 1942 in the Wehrmacht, but was still in use in some minor Axis units. New counters in this category are the 75mm, 105mm and 150mm howitzers; these are not found in the game, but may be adopted from PANZER LEADER where they appear in German colors.

Transport: Both sides may make use of all types provided in the game. However, the Russian halftrack was so rare, it should be restricted to Recon battalions (as noted in the “Designer’s Notes”).

Self-Propelled Artillery: The Russian player has one new unit available not found in any counterforce: the T-13 Katyusha rocket launcher. The T-13 has the same movement penalties as a truck. The German Wespe first entered service in late 1942, and should be restricted. No other SPA are available.

Armored Cars: The German 234/1 in the game can be used to represent the 231 model extant in 1942; both were very similar. No other AC are available.

Assault Guns: Only the German player will have these. The SU-76 from PB 1941 will be needed for any early-year situations. The SU-102 from PL 1941 is available in the latter half of the year. No other Assault Guns are available, since the Russian KV2 (from PL 1941) was discontinued in 1941.

Tank Destroyers: The Russian SU 76 is available in the second half of the year. The German PzKg IV from PB 1941 was in service through the winter months of early 1942. By summer, though, they were replaced by the Marder and STG III/175 present in the published game.

Tanks: Some say that 1942 was the year of “transition” for the tank. The Germans did away with the BT5, BT8, T60, T28 and T26B; all of these were available only in the first months of the year. The KV1 (from PB 1941) and T34c are available all year long. The Germans have the Lynx (PzKw II) available throughout. For the early winter, the PzKw IIIh and PzKw IVd (PB 1941) are present. Beginning with the summer offensive, the PzKw III Special and PzKw IV Special become available; the III and IV are both found in PANZER LEADER (although only two of the former are provided therein, so players may have to craft more). The minor Axis powers made use of the obsolete PzKw 38, which was very similar to the PzKw III from PL 1941, so that counter may be substituted. Finally, the ever popular Tiger I is available in the final months of the year. No other tanks are available.

As for the situations themselves, a word on the history of each action should serve to give players some basis for play. I don’t claim that these are exact simulations of the specific battles; but they are representative of the given time and place. These situations have been designed for fun and balance, rather than slavishly copying history:

Situation 1: By January 1941, the German Army was clearly on the offensive. Russian counterattacks threatened to encircle Army Group Centre. Hundreds of thousands of Russian troops were forced to retreat. The rescuers had come within 35 miles of the trapped 6th Army, but it was all in vain. One month later, the 6th was gone. The year 1943 opened with a retreat from which the Wehrmacht never recovered.

Situation 2: The German summer offensive opened with both tactical and strategic surprise paralyzing the Russians. The Russian command had expected the Wehrmacht to attack towards Moscow again, not to the south. Even worse, the Russian armies in the Ukraine had been weakened by an abortive attack on Kharkov in May. The Germans simply rolled over the enemy in their path, tearing open a huge gap between Kursk and Kharkov, and drove to the Don with little to slow the advance. Russian counterattacks at this stage were piecemeal affairs, badly coordinated and easily brushed aside. But, once STAVKA realized fully what the German intentions were, they deployed massive reserves to blunt and stop the summer advance.

Situation 3: As the panzers thundered on toward Stalingrad, the infantry of the 2nd Army protected the exposed northern flank between Orel and Voronezh. The Red Army tried several times to penetrate this line, but their attacks were disorganized and ultimately failed. The Russian attacks, however, did cause some concern among the German High Command, which was tempted to hold back the armor to support the infantry formations. But in the end, the attacking Russian 5th Tank Army was nearly destroyed due to fuel shortages, poor communications, internal disorganization and German attacks.

Situation 4: As the savage street-fighting continued in Stalingrad, the 14th Panzer Corps took up positions on the hills north of the city. The Russians quickly moved the 1st Guards Army onto heights across from them, leaving an expanse of flat, open fields between. The Guards were then launched in a series of disastrous attacks, all of which failed. Finally, the 66th and 2nd armies were pinned with the Guards and all three hit the corridor, covered by heavy artillery barrages. But the 14th, though pressed, was saved by its own artillery which broke up the massed Russian formations with accurate fire.

Situation 5: What need be said? The famous Russian counterattack around Stalingrad was brilliantly executed. Not only did it take the German High Command by surprise, but the initial bluffs on the Second Front fell upon Rumanian armies, badly-led and poorly-equipped. North of the city, Rokosovsky’s 5th Army stormed out of their positions around Kremenskaya and smashed into the thin lines of the Rumanian 3rd Army. The Rumanians put up stiff resistance at first, but were simply overwhelmed. Some formations fled the battlefield at midday (even leaving their artillery intact for the Russians to capture). In truth, the Rumanians had little chance against the powerful forces massed against them, and saving men from capture was more important to their commanders than futile last stands. [The German equipment given in the situation was not what the Rumanians actually had, but it is inferior enough to represent them adequately.]

Situation 6: With the German 6th Army trapped at Stalingrad, the 4th Panzer Army was given the task of opening a corridor to it. In fact, it was planned for the rescuers to drive within twenty miles of the 6th’s lines, due to the severe fuel shortages inside the Russian ring. The 4th attacked in the Kotelnikovskiy sector and fought their way 30 miles to the River Askay. But at this point the Russians launched several spoiling attacks in other areas, forcing the German command to divert troops from the 4th Panzer to block these threats. After a series of intense struggles along the Askay, the Germans were forced to retreat. The rescuers did not come within 35 miles of the trapped 6th Army, but it was all in vain. One month later, the 6th was gone. The year 1943 opened with a retreat from which the Wehrmacht never recovered.
**1942 Situation #1**

RUSSIAN FORCES

Local Partisans, supported by tank and cavalry elements of the 50th Army. The partisans (the Recon units) are deployed after German set-up, anywhere on either board but at least three hexes from any German unit; these units may not be stacked together at start. All other Russian units enter the south edge of board 1 on Turn 1.

VICTORY CONDITIONS:
The Russian player wins a Tactical Victory if he has any non-dispersed combat unit able to fire on any hex of the main east-west road (2GG3-2A3j at the end of play; he wins a Decisive Victory if he has two such units. Any other result is a German victory.

GERMAN FORCES

Elements of the 10th Motorized Division escorting a supply convoy. Set up first, anywhere on board 2.

VICTORY CONDITIONS:
Marginal = destroy 8 Russian units. Tactical = destroy 14 Russian units. Decisive = destroy 19 Russian units.

**1942 Situation #2**

GERMAN ARMORED BLITZ AGAINST POSITIONAL DEFENSES

RUSSIAN FORCES

Forward Elements of 63rd Rifle Division, set up first anywhere on row M, inclusive, on any/all board(s).

VICTORY CONDITIONS:
The Russian player receives one point for each German unit destroyed or remaining on the mapboard at the end of play. Marginal = gain 20 points. Tactical = gain 30 points. Decisive = gain 40 points.

GERMAN FORCES

Elements of the 11th Panzer Division, enter on the west edge of any single board on Turn 1.

VICTORY CONDITIONS:
The German player receives one point for each unit exited off the east edge of the mapboard by the end of play. Marginal = exit 15 points. Tactical = exit 30 points. Decisive = exit 45 points.
1942 Situation #3

**Russian Forces**
Elements of 11th Tank Corps, enter anywhere on the north edge of board 1 on Turn 1.

- The Russian player wins a Decisive Victory if, by the end of play, he has established a north-south corridor (from edge to edge) at least four hexes wide and free of all German units. Any other result is a German victory.

**German Forces**
Elements of the 45th Division, set up anywhere on boards 2 and/or 3.

- Marginal = destroy 7 Russian combat (i.e., not truck or wagon) units.
- Tactical = destroy 15 Russian combat units.
- Decisive = destroy 25 Russian combat units.

1942 Situation #4

**Russian Forces**
Elements of 39th Guards Division, enter anywhere on the north edge of board 3 on Turn 1.

- Marginal = destroy 26 German units.
- Tactical = destroy 35 German units.
- Decisive = destroy 45 German units.

**German Forces**
Elements of the 9th Panzer Division, set up anywhere on boards 1 and/or 2.

- Marginal = destroy 5 German units lost.
- Tactical = destroy 36 German units lost.
- Decisive = destroy 24 German units lost.
1942
Situation #5

**RUSSIAN FORCES**

Elements of 252nd Rifle Division, enter anywhere on the north edge of board 2 and/or 1 on Turn 1.

**GERMAN FORCES**

Elements of the 5th Infantry Division, set up anywhere on either board between rows W and Q, inclusive. Trucks and Wagons may not set up loaded. The PzKw III may not transport any unit.

**VICTORY CONDITIONS:**

- The Russian player receives one point for each Russian unit exited off the south edge of the mapboard and one point for each German unit destroyed at the end of play.
  - Marginal = gain 20 points.
  - Tactical = gain 35 points.
  - Decisive = gain 50 points.

Russian moves first

**END TURN**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

END

1942
Situation #6

**RUSSIAN FORCES**

Elements of 96th Rifle Division, set up anywhere on board 2 and/or 3 north of row Q, inclusive.

**GERMAN FORCES**

Elements of the 6th Panzer Division, enter on the southern edge of either single mapboard on Turn 1.

**VICTORY CONDITIONS:**

- Marginal = destroy 12 German units.
- Tactical = destroy 25 German units.
- Decisive = destroy 35 German units.

German moves first

**END TURN**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
Strategies and Solutions
By John Huff

Before I get started, we [the stuff of Microcomputer Games] wish to extend our thanks to those 350 or so readers of The GENERAL who responded to our plea for playtesters. All of you have been installed on our new database and will be contacted as soon as we have suitable products available for the testing. Because of the number of responses, we can expand the test base for each product. Also, the quality of the responses was (on the average) far above that for any previous calls we had put out. This not only speaks well for our readers, but gives us great hope for the future.

Winning Strategies for COMBOTS

Many COMBOTS players by now may have noticed that it is somewhat difficult to destroy an alien machine. This is especially true in the beginning, when you are operating a 10- (or at most 20-) ton machine. In addition, if you have been pounding away at the wrong sections, you will ruin the salvage value of the target even if you do take it down.

There are a few simple tactics you can employ to give yourself an edge over the computer. One such strategy is to try to locate the power plant of the target machine. This is done by keeping track of and working over one section of the machine at a time and, while doing this, take note if the power output of the TVD reflects any power loss. Once you have found the proper location, devote all your efforts to destroying the power plant. You cannot salvage it anyway, and destroying it will minimize damage to the devices which can be salvaged.

A second tactic involves timing. Keep in mind that close combat is resolved first, then missile strikes, then ground movement, and finally normal combat. If the target is not jumping, you can get in two strikes before he gets to move. If you elect to remain stationary, your normal ranged weapons (lasers, autocannons, tractor beams) will get to go off first. If you make good use of terrain, you can get in three or four shots first.

With energy weapons, make use of the shield data on the target. If the target is showing a 40KW shield and your energy weapon is damaged to where its maximum output is less than 20KW, you cannot penetrate his shield under any circumstances. Remember also that energy weapons attenuate at a rate of 1KW per hex. Simple mathematics will keep you from wasting shots.

When designing missiles, if you don't have a lot of credits, build small armor-piercing rockets. If you have some credit to burn, a magazine with a few large area-effect rounds will give you the ability to reduce the target's armor. When you find an opponent with no shields but seemingly impervious to your weapons, this is a way to weaken him. Remem-

ber, area-effect energy weapons will not damage the armor. They are used to overload shields and do some damage (through feedback) to the power plant. Once you weaken the armor on a given section, it eventually becomes possible to penetrate that armor.

When constructing your fighting machines, one approach is the "hit-and-run". Put a lot of firepower and speed into your machine and then try to pick your best time to attack. A good hit-and-run machine also makes a good scout or forward observer as well. However, always team it with a slower, more heavily protected machine with lots of teeth. By itself, it is too easy to disable.

One final bit of advice. In COMBOTS, it is very easy to get into a toe-to-toe slugfest. This can even be a winning strategy upon occasion. But using a more elegant strategy will (in the long run) give you more victories and reduce material losses. Like anything else, this takes practice.

Level Two
Thieves' Tower

Solutions to LOLR

Some of you may have been stumped by the three-dimensional maze on the 2nd level of the Thieves' Tower in LEGENDS OF THE LOST REALM. Here is the map. Remember to bring an adequate supply of rope before you start, and to check out all of the rooms. Once you enter the trapped maze (it's through one of the doors you will find), you're on your own.
It is one of the strange paradoxes of military history that the country which first developed the use of military parachute forces suffered from a marked inability to properly employ them. This nation was, of course, the Soviet Union. At the end of World War I, two of the defeated nations began researching new ways of employing their treaty-limited military strength. These two countries were Germany, and Soviet Russia. They both looked at the carnage that had been caused by positional warfare, and both independently decided that another war could be governed by the use of maneuver elements to prevent the staggering losses that were common during the war past.

Germany’s research and military theories led their high command to adopt combined arms elements of armor, motorized infantry and artillery to exploit the breaches made by conventional infantry divisions. The use of the air force, especially in the ground support role, was developed to augment the ground forces. Late in the ‘30s, the Wehrmacht decided to develop a parachute force after witnessing a military demonstration hosted by the Soviet Union. The early history of World War II has shown how well Germany learned its lessons.

After the Russian Revolution, there arose in the Soviet power structure men that had the ability and foresight to plan and implement a combined-arms organization for their fledgling Red Army. They also realized that airborne forces could play a significant role in any war of maneuver. The Soviet theories of maneuver warfare were, in part, laid down in the writings of Mikhail Frunze during the early 1920s. In these, he rejected the entire concept of defensive positional war and presented bold new approaches involving maneuver, constant activity and offense. Even though Frunze died in 1925, his work led other Soviet military leaders in their efforts to modernize and develop a new Soviet army and air force.

In 1929, the Soviet military establishment embraced the theory of the “Deep Battle”, which proposed that a battle should encompass not only the tactical and operational areas of an opponent, but the rear elements also. This “rear battle” would disrupt communications, command and logistical operations as an aid to the defeat of forward enemy combat units. What was needed to implement these theories, however, was a technological base. This lack of technology was the primary weak point in Soviet military plans (and was one of the main objectives of the five-year plan of the early 1930s). So it was that an effort to develop unique, “low-tech” efforts of carrying the war into the “rear” of the enemy came about.

Research and experimentation conducted in 1929-30 resulted in indications that large-scale dropping of troops behind enemy lines from the air was feasible. During the same period, other military agencies had begun development of equipment adaptable to airborne use (including domestically produced parachutes in April 1930). The proponents of the “Deep Battle” seized upon these and lobbied for concentration on this revolutionary tactic. On 2 August 1930, an airborne operation was conducted to test landing techniques during maneuvers in the Moscow Military District. During the operation, two detachments of 12 men were parachuted in the rear of the opposing forces to perform a diversionary operation by attacking its headquarters. The exercise was repeated in September by an 11-man detachment who were to seize documents from a divisional headquarters. Both tests were highly successful, and a mandate to conduct more extensive tests in 1931 was given by the Red Army command.

The first “motorized airlanding” detachment was actually created in the Leningrad Military District in March 1931. This early detachment comprised a rifle company (with attached sapper, communications and light vehicle Platoons) and a heavy bomber aviation squadron. Equipment included two 76mm guns, two T-27 tankettes, and numerous light and heavy machineguns. In June, a 46-man parachute detachment was added to the TO&E. The 1st Aviation Brigade was born, and began practicing the concepts of a combined-arms airborne force. During August and September, the brigade trained in both the Leningrad and Ukraine regions, making several successful airdrops and airlandings.

Based on these, the Revoensovet (Revolutionary Military Soviet) ordered the creation of four aviation landing detachments in January 1932. There was to be one landing detachment in each of the Leningrad, Belorussian, Ukrainian and Moscow military districts. It was at this point in the progress that the limitations of Russian industry raised its ugly head. The Red Army just did not have the aircraft and equipment to raise these four forces. Only the 3rd Motorized Airborne Landing Detachment (Leningrad District) was actually filled out and equipped. The detachment had one parachute battalion of two companies and an airlanding group of one rifle company and one artillery battery. A parachute platoon of 30 men was raised by the Ukrainian District. During 1932, three important directives were issued for airborne operations. First, Tukhachevsky stressed that the operational and tactical mission of an airborne operation must be deep enough in an enemy’s rear to affect operations of the entire corps or army under attack. Second, the Chief of Airborne Forces also argued that separate airborne forces should be created that could operate in close coordination with other aviation units in attacks on enemy rear areas. The third decision was that an aviation park of aircraft suited for airborne operations would have to be developed and built. It was decreed that some TB-1 and TB-3 bombers could be converted for airborne use immediately, but these aircraft were already in short supply and only a few would actually be converted.

On 11 December 1932, the Revoensovet once again ordered the creation of new airborne units; but these were to be brigade-sized. The Volga Military District was added to the list of districts that were to have airborne forces. The 3rd Motorized Airborne Landing Detachment at Leningrad was transformed into the 3rd Airborne Brigade, a combined-arms unit of one parachute battalion, one mechanized battalion, and one artillery battalion. The other military districts established landing detachments similar in organization to the original Leningrad detachment. Also, each rifle corps and division was authorized a parachute battalion in its own TO&E for use as special purpose troops. By the beginning of 1934, the Soviet Airborne Forces numbered some 10000 men; the structure included one airborne brigade, four airlanding detachments, and some 29 independent parachute battalions.

This airborne structure was to remain the same until 1936. The major cause of the slowdown in Soviet development of airborne forces was the lack of equipment, notably aircraft. Also, radios were found to be unreliable, and caused command problems in the control of units spread wide over the countryside. The manpower was available, but technology would not catch up before Hitler invaded. Two types of theoretical airborne assault were studied by the Soviet High Command during this period. One was carried out on the tactical level, and consisted of a company or battalion drop. The other was operational, and involved either regiments or full brigades. The Soviets were to excel in the tactical, but fail in the operational use, of airborne forces.

The Red Army maneuvers of 1935 were held in the Kiev Military District, and observers from Germany and several other nations were invited. The successful wargame was operational in size and included two parachute and two airlanding rifle regiments. The German observers were so impressed that the Luftwaffe immediately began an airborne program. Like the Russians, they were looking at maneuver warfare as the successor to positional warfare. By 1938, the Germans had developed an airborne force in secret under the command of Kurt Student. As we know, German airborne tactics and techniques were to be wildly successful in a number of theaters.

On the other hand, British observers were not greatly impressed and saw little future for airborne forces (until they saw them in action in the invasions of the Low Countries in 1940 and Crete in 1941). Like the British, the Americans saw nothing in this revolutionary weapon, and did not even begin to
study the possibilities seriously until 1940. The French would come to create two parachute companies, and this small force was overwhelmed during the 1940 debacle. Italy’s military establishment had experimented with airborne units in 1928, and even had a company of trained parachutists, but then lost its interest until the opening days of World War 2.

The years 1938 through 1940 were the years of crisis for the Soviet military establishment. For this was the period of Stalin’s infamous purges, which caught many who had developed the Red Army. The primary focus was to limit the abilities of the Red Army by pushing poorly trained officers into command positions at the expense of the innovative and daring. Unfortunately, these political creatures did not have the experience nor knowledge necessary for high command. So it was that, during this period, the Red Army—along with the airborne units—continued to grow in quantity, but decline in quality.

In 1938, the existing airborne units were used as the core in development of six airborne brigades of 3000 men each. The 3rd Airborne Brigade at Lenigrad became the 201st Airborne Brigade. During 1939, an additional three airlanding regiments were formed in the Moscow Military District. And in 1939, these airborne regiments began receiving trained paratroopers in addition to their trainee units.

In 1939, the airborne units were again reorganized. With all eyes turned toward the storm clouds over Europe, the expansion was to be made to upgrade to a wartime formation. Each brigade was to field 10419 men, 50 AFVs, 18 artillery guns and supporting fire. Each airborne unit was to form as a whole, each with its own support, parachute, and sapper, medical and support platoons for each. The airborne forces finally gave the Germans a taste of what all the airborne forces along with the 1st Panzer Division. The 3rd Airborne, encircled at Konotop, managed to fight its way out to the east, with great casualties. (In November, the 3rd would be reorganized as the 87th Rifle Division; later it was renamed the 13th Guards, earning its battle honors in the defense of Stalingrad.)

By August, only the 4th and 5th Airborne regiments retained any semblance of fighting order. In September, all airborne forces were pulled from the front lines and placed directly under the command of the 1st Panzer Army, reconceived as five new airborne corps (of 6th through 10th) were created. The battalion TO&E for all parachute units were strengthened from 458 to 678 men. But, due to the number of Soviet aircraft caught on the ground by the Germans, the Red Air Force was sadly depleted. STAVKA set about collecting and protecting all the suitable aircraft that could be located; it was realized that to be deployed as intended, these aircraft would be vital in the future.

On the night of 14 December 1941, Soviet airborne forces finally gave the Germans a taste of what the 4th and 5th Airborne corps had in November. This operation was to be made to upgrade to a worthwhile foot. Each airborne brigade would include two parachute battalions, two glider battalions, and an airlanding contingent of two battalions, plus tanks and artillery. Each brigade had 3000 men, 11 AFVs and four field guns, as well as attached recon, sapper, medical and support platoons for each. The airborne forces grew again in March/April 1941 with the creation of five airborne corps (see Table 1), using the brigades as a core. Each corps was to field 10419 men, 50 AFVs, 18 artillery guns and 18 heavy mortars. As always, the specter of deficient tank support was a constant. Field radio signals companies were never fielded because of a lack of radio equipment. The tank battalions that should have had 50 T-37s were never at full strength (later the tank battalions would be reduced to a TO&E of 32 AFVs). Numbering over 100000 men in five corps, the Soviet airborne forces could have been land landing site for an airborne of fighter regiment. This they did successfully, and one battalion of the 250th Rifle Regiment landed before winter weather closed in to prevent further reinforcement. And, on the nights of 18 through 22 January, the rest of the 201st Airborne made several drops in the Zholan‘y yo area west of Moscow along the Moscow-Warsaw highway. Their goal was to reinforce the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, operating west of the main German defensive lines. Together, the paratroopers and cavalry were to assist the Soviet 43rd and 49th armies in their westward push. Tactically, the airdrop was a complete success and the two formations operated together for the next several months.

Most of the combat history related thus far centers around the use of the airborne forces because of the large numbers of airborne units employed. But there were airborne operations along the southern fronts as well. On 13 December, STAVKA ordered the 44th Army and Black Sea fleet to recoup the Kerch Peninsula of the Crimea. As part of this operation, a small group from the 2nd Airborne Corps was to drop onto the airfield at Kerch. But, having missed landing area near the mainland across from Feodosia. Under extreme weather conditions, the paratroopers jumped in the night on the 31 December. In heavy winds, the small battalion was scattered across several kilometers. After spending several hours reassembling, the paratroopers began their long trek toward their target, the small town of Ak Monai. By early on 1 January, the battalion had occupied the town and set up defensive positions. Meanwhile, the Soviet 44th Army made its landing at Feodosia, and the 51st landed at Kerch. With enemy units on three sides, the German commander pulled his Rumanian and Ukrainian divisions back, allowing the paratroopers to be relieved without combat occurring.

Even more common were the raids, conducted independent of any offensive or counterattack, designed to keep the enemy off balance. More than ten small airdrops were made by the 204th Brigade in January 1941. Here in the Ukraine these paratroopers were used to raid behind the German lines. Small units were dropped to strike at headquarters and logistical facilities. In one such, on 22 September, a 23-man unit staged an airborne raid on a German communications center near Odessa. This raid disrupted communications for the next week. Two Rumanian divisions were pulled back from the Siege of Sevastopol and Odessa to secure the area. This reduction gave the Soviets time for evacuation of the Odessa garrison.

Airdrops were being made also to partisan units organizing behind the German lines, and often included Soviet paratroopers who were to lead or create new partisan bands. Against extensive German air patrols, courageous Russian pilots in inferior aircraft would fly on dark nights to reinforce and resupply the paratroopers and partisans behind enemy lines. Tactically, the Soviets were taught the use of airborne forces to support resistance behind the lines. One lesson, however, would apply to both the Soviets and the Germans: the Russian winter. The same first winter which caused such German misery prevented many of the Soviet airborne operations from being as successful as they might.

STAVKA was ambitious in its planning for the February counteroffensive. Without taking into account the fatigue of its units, the state of equipment and supplies, and the lack of suitable aircraft, the high command prepared plans for a major assault, with the objective being no less than the destruction of the German army corps. As part of this grand scheme, the entire 4th Airborne Corps was to drop behind enemy lines to shut the “back door” in the encirclement. Due to the lack of enough suitable aircraft, the corps had to be dropped piecemeal over several nights. The inexperienced paratroopers found the work of landing in the clouds that were eventually dropped to be scattered over a 20-kilometer area of frozen ground. After the initial drop, surprise was lost for those units transported on later nights. Worse, the paratroopers had been assigned too many missions. The counteroffensive was a disaster, with only some of those paratroopers managed to escape to the Russian lines.

From this beginning, the next six months saw the Soviet paratroopers become a constant thorn in the
German rear areas. From company-sized drops up to a drop by two airborne brigades, the Desantniki were to make numerous attacks deep in German territory. In a strategic or operational sense, these drops by the reconstituted 4th Airborne were not a success; but in the tactical sense, a few thousand Soviet paratroopers managed to tie down five enemy infantry divisions and two panzer divisions for four months. Survivors of these drops either made their way back to Russian lines, or joined local bands of partisans.

In the summer of 1942, the Germans made a major offensive effort in southern Russia. To aid in this critical situation, STAVKA ordered all ten airborne divisions converted in Guards rifle divisions. That this help was sorely needed is shown by the fact that nine of the former airborne formations fought in Stalingrad as Guards. Still, Stalin and the Soviet high command foresaw the utility of paratrooper formations to replace those chewed up at Stalingrad, and another eight airborne corps were authorized in the fall of 1942. In December 1942, these airborne corps were increased in size and labeled Guards Airborne Divisions.

In what was becoming standard practice, STAVKA deployed all ten of the new Guards Airborne divisions on the northwestern front in February 1943. Here they fought in a ground role with the 1st Shock Army and the 6th Army at Staryy near Russia and Demyansk, with only limited airdrops employed. Next, during April and May, all of the airborne divisions were transferred south in response to the German threat in the Kursk region. Seven of the divisions went to the Central Front, while the remaining three (the 1st, 7th and 10th) divisions went to the 37th Guards Corps. The 37th took part in the pursuit of the retreating enemy. To aid in this critical situation, STAVKA ordered all ten Guards Airborne brigades to drop behind German defenses along the Dniepr River. By attacking from the rear simultaneously with units forcing the river from the east, it was hoped that Soviet armor could be ferried across rapidly after the bridgehead was expanded. As before, this operational airdrop failed. Beyond repeating the mistakes made in early 1942, Soviet intelligence had failed to note that the Germans had strengthened the defenses in the area with various panzer and infantry formations. This increase in the defenses was not discovered by the Russians until after the staged airdrops had begun.

A preview of what would happen to the US 82nd and 101st in Normandy occurred. Lead elements of the 3rd Airborne Brigade dropped directly over elements of the 19th Panzer Division. Most of the airborne units created during the remainder of the war, creation of brigade-sized parachute units continued. These brigades totaled 3345 men each, with six 76mm guns, eight 45mm guns, 28 37mm AT guns, and numerous machineguns and antitank rifles. While wartime realities demanded that the

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<th>TABLE 1: Table of Organization—Soviet Airborne Corps, 1941</th>
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<td>Unit</td>
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<td>3 Brigades (each)</td>
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<td>HQ Company</td>
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<td>Brigade Artillery</td>
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<td>Recon Company</td>
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<td>AA Company</td>
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<td>Signal Company</td>
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<td>Mobile Equip Company</td>
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<td>Long Range Recon Platoon</td>
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<td>4×Parachute Battalion (see Table 2 below)</td>
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<th>TABLE 2: Table of Organization—Soviet Parachute Battalion, 1941</th>
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<td>Unit</td>
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<td>HQ Company</td>
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<td>HQ Staff &amp; Starring Co.</td>
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<td>Signal Platoon</td>
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<td>MG Platoon</td>
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<td>MG Section</td>
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<td>3 Rifle Cos. (each)</td>
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<td>3 Rifle Platoons (each)</td>
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<td>Control Squad</td>
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<td>Mortar Platoon</td>
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<th>TABLE 3: Table of Organization—Soviet Parachute Battalion, 1940</th>
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major airborne units be used in ground roles, several small tactical and diversionary airborne operations were performed during the long months of 1945.

Fitting the Desantniki into ASL

The Soviet airborne forces were the Soviet elite. These men, usually volunteers, received better training, equipment and leadership. Because of their training and leadership, the morale of the paratroopers was uniformly high. The leadership was particularly noteworthy. Even though the purges of the late 1930s stifled many of the lower-echelon officers of the rifle units, some small amount of initiative remained and was encouraged among the airborne units. It was this independence that would, allow small numbers of men to inflict such confusion in the German rear during raids and larger operations. While the airborne forces never had much in the way of heavy weapons, the Soviet command did outfit them with more light infantry weapons than the normal Red Army squad had.

Because Soviet paratroopers were elite troops, I have chosen the 4-5-8 MMC as a good representation for the squad. Since these troops were trained to operate independently and in small groups on a regular basis, these should have the ability to deploy (A1.31) and fight in the front line. The morale of these exceptionally well-trained (for the Soviets) troops does not fit in the ELR Chart (as given in H1.28). Like their brothers the world over, the Soviet paratroopers were high in courage and eager to fight. Combined with their training, I would recommend that for the 7-41 through 7-42 columns the Russian paratroopers be given an ELR of "4", and given "5" ELR for the remainder of the war. For the 7-44 and 1945 columns, it should also be noted that their morale should be underlined.

Two Tables of Organization have been included with this article. The first, showing the 1941 Parachute Battalion, should be used for any scenario involving Soviet parachute forces. The second, the 1940 Parachute Battalion, would serve as a guide in establishing any of the 29 independent parachute battalions and brigades that were assigned to various divisions and fronts during the war. (As stated elsewhere in this Module, the parachute battalions are listed in the battlefront and company HQ sections; exact assignment will have to be made after reference to your historical sources for the scenario being designed.)

As can be seen, the organization of the 1941 Parachute Battalion is much more complex than that of the 1940 battalion (Table 3). After the fighting in Mongolia and Finland, the Soviet High Command reorganized and strengthened the parachute battalions. More squad weapons and men were added to each battalion. The HQ Company now included the staff, medical, supply and clerical personnel that are associated with any headquarters. The mortar platoon is equipped with two 50mm MTRs and has two 4-2-8 HMG to man them. The FT platoon consists of three 4-5-8 and three flamethrowers.

Each of the three parachute rifle companies included a MG section in 1941. The company leadership is an 8-1 and an 8-0, with a 4-5-8 to show the HQ personnel. A company weapons pool of two LMGs, two ATRs and one 30mm MTR is shown in the HQ platoon as well. These weapons would be assigned to the company on an as-needed basis, as the situation warranted.

Where the battalion CO controlled the HMGs, the company CO had at his disposal two MMGs and their crews.

The 1940 Parachute Battalion was a smaller unit, having a manpower of 566 men. It had what was known as a "starting unit," with a battalion commander, an 1941 SMC as battalion commander, with an 8-0 SMC assistant. Each of the three rifle companies includes a Company HQ, a mortar platoon, and a "Control" squad. The mortar platoon is equipped with two 50mm MTRs and has two 4-2-8 HMG to man them. The Control squad would be a politically reliable squad that would act much as American MPs would, with the added duty of assisting the company commander in the direction of his platoons. These men were equipped with sub-machineguns exclusively; therefore, a 4-2-8 MMC will be used to represent these political troops. Each of the three parachute platoons will be composed of three 4-5-8 squad counters still.

The Parachute Corps TO&E (Table 1) should be used in any situation where an airborne force fought as part of a ground army or front. This would be the only instance where the paratroopers would be mechanized by American standards. (A1.19 131) With this setup, the SMC would be given an ELR of "4", and given "5" ELR for the remainder of the war. For the 7-44 and 1945 columns, it should also be noted that their morale should be underlined.

For any scenario set during the 1941-42 Winter Counter-offensive, players should incorporate the weather into their design. For December 1941, Ground Snow (E3.73) and Extreme Winter (E3.74) rules should be in effect. For scenarios in January and February, institute Deep Snow (E3.73) and Snow Drifts (E3.75) should be placed. For any other scenario featuring Soviet paratroopers should have Russian forces of no more than Heavy Elements.

For any scenario set during the 1941-42 winter, the players should incorporate the weather into their design. For December 1941, Ground Snow (E3.73) and Extreme Winter (E3.74) rules should be in effect. For scenarios in January and February, institute Deep Snow (E3.73) and Snow Drifts (E3.75) should be placed. For any other scenario, players should determine the weather as per the usual procedure (E3.) for the appropriate month. As the vast majority of Soviet airfields were made at night, invoke the Night (E1.) rules.

As a final note for scenario designers, the Soviet paratroopers were equipped with more cold weather clothing. The soldiers were lightly armed and equipped with limited supplies. In any action depicting this operation, the Soviet paratroopers should not receive the -1 Entrenching DRM. Any scenario dated after the initial day of the airborne should also force the Soviet units to use the -1 Entrenching DRM. (A19.131)

The use of Soviet parachute formations in ASL has not before been considered. In fact, I hadn't really used until recently that the Soviet Union even conducted combat airdrops, much less pioneered the military use of parachute forces. Even in a world built around airframes, the possibility of learning how to use these aircraft for military purposes with we players. As with my other articles on light infantry forces, a scenario has been provided. Readers are urged to try the accompanying scenario highlighting one of the many successful tactical drops, this one at night in the depth of winter, made by the Desantniki.
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We feel that the best possible use of ASL is the ability of the system to recreate, on a very small scale, many of the problems that beset the commanders of World War II. Not to say this game system is a "simulation" (players have much too much knowledge and control), but rather an "artful copy". The bitter lesson of World War I was that massed infantry assaults could not prevail against defending machine guns. Many of the weapons and tactics of World War II were in direct response to the failure of World War I armies. One of the best new weapons to arise was the "tank". This article, and scenario, reviews early World War II armored force players into reviewing armor play. A rather good test of the natural outgrowth of the technology of the World War II as applied to armor—that is, the rapid use in play. A rather good test of the system's ability to recreate, on a very small scale, many of the problems that beset the commanders of World War II. Not to say this game system is a "simulation" (players have much too much knowledge and control), but rather an "artful copy".

The tactical deployment of these early massed tanks attacks tended to follow along different lines, depending upon the country of origin. The Germans tried to divide the assault into three waves. The first wave was normally composed of the medium tanks, usually in battalion strength. Their mission was to crash into and through the front-line defenses. In addition to exposing defenders, the initial tank "wedge" was to penetrate to the artillery positions behind the front line. The second wave was often made up of the heavier or support tanks. Often this second wave was the second battalion of the same panzer regiment. This wave, which often was accompanied by the mission commander, gave covering fire for the first wave, destroyed exposed AT guns, and hoped to open a hole wide enough for the safe passage of the third-wave troops. The third wave was usually infantry, whose job was to advance to positions to hold open the breakthrough and mop up any remaining defenders.

The Russians, given the limited independence of their subordinate commanders, often simply pointed a tank unit in a given direction, named an objective, and off the tanks went. Early tank units were frequently mixes of various AFVs and, so it was hoped, they all supported one another as they drove on. One positive aspect of the Russian approach was the reduced dependence on leadership. No thought was required by the local commanders. One could assume that either the assault would drive to its objective, or be destroyed in the attempt. However, this simple approach had the unfortunate effect of slowly separating the faster tanks from the slower on a long approach run. One element, rarely considered in board games, is that the small "fast" tanks often had poor cross-country performance. Bouncing along in a light tank tended to muddle your brains, while the heavier tank's ride was much smoother. In fact, after a trek across open terrain, the T-34s tended to arrive on the battlefield first, followed by the light tanks, and only later did the heavy tanks show up. On the combat field, or on roads, light tanks were still "faster", but mixing of vehicle types was such a problem that the Russians were later to use only "pure" tank formations. Note that in this case, "pure" refers to tank chassis; the armament could still differ from tank to tank, although this was still unusual because of Soviet supply difficulties. Additionally, the early Russian tanks, and those of many Western countries other than the Germans, were handcuffed together by the lack of radios.

Beyond consideration of the type of massed tank assault organization lies the tactical approach. German commanders recognized five different kinds...
of attack: a frontal assault, essentially running head-on into the foe; the wing attack, which sought to strike one side of the defenders' front line; the flank attack, which hoped to take the front-line defenders from behind the enemy's defense assault, which looked to strike at the rear of the defense; and finally, the encirclement, which hoped to avoid the defenders altogether and drive into the rear areas.

The scenario, "Land Leviathans," included with this clinic will give one player the joy, and pain, of controlling a powerful pure armor task force with a skilled infantry supporting arm. This attack is the easiest to assault as you only have to do this is to stay mounted and roll AFVs through the 2m8 gap. However, at least two or three AFVs are needed to help clear the road so that your trucks can drive forward. Consider putting one JgdPz IV onto the third level for long-range fire support (at the very least, the U.S. player will have to use some mortar fire to smoke it).

DEFENDER'S TACTICS: You'd like to hold all the Germans on Board 2 for seven turns. Against an aggressive German player, this is unlikely. You can hope to prevent the German Infantry, trucks, and any supporting AFVs that advance along the road from reaching Board 3 before Turn 9. The German force is so strong that even if you play the fallback defense, he'll be able to swamp any defensive position. Keep falling back so that the German must come onto your guns. Carefully tape out the LOS from the second story building. Use your mortars to protect your Board 2 defensive positions. Figure on losing everything that sets up on Board 2 if that lets your reinforcing armor get into position. If the German does throw his unsupported armor onto Board 3 before your armor arrives, use your engineers to counterattack.

The Road to Wiltz

AMERICAN: Set up one AT mine in each of 2S8, 2S1, 2Q1, 202, 2K2, 2J2 and 2R3. Then place Wire in 2J2 and 201. An M7 goes in 208, facing P7/P8; the M10 in 205 (VCA 06/N7; TCA P5/P4). With the M10 place 8-1, 6-6-6, DC and Baz. In 201, under the Wire, place 9-1, two 6-6-6, Baz and MMG and ?. In 2L1, the roadblock faces hexside M2. In 2L6, take a reconnaissance unit (H11/H1) with 2-2-7. In 3T4, one 7-0, with two 7-4-7s, 3-7-3, two DC and the FT. In 3R5, put an ATG (facing S6/S5) with crew. In 3P2, another ATG (Q0/Q3) with crew. In hex 301 goes an 81mm MTR (PT/PO) with two 2-2-7s. In 3N0, one 9-2, 6-6-6, two MMG. In the 2nd floor of 3N1, put an 8-0 under a 7. In 3N0, the other 81mm MTR (Q1/Q0) with 2-2-7. 3M1: ? over 8-1 and 3-3-7. In 3J2 facing K3/K2, an 105mm ART with crew.

ATTACKER'S TACTICS: The road may look enticing, but the U.S. player can bottle up you in a long column for turn after turn. You must immediately advance some MGs onto the heights of Hill 538 while your Stugs maneuver to go around Hill 621 away from the road. You are so strong that you can easily afford to throw away a bunch of HS, and even a tank or two, in recce. When possible, go behind the defenders. Your goal is to have tanks and infantry on Board 3 by Turn 7. The only way to do this is to create a strong defensive triple tank platoon at the junction of boards 4 and 3 so that more guys can move out on Turn 3. When you see the American is getting stronger, pull back. Remember, he has to come to you. Don't forget that fire lanes work great through Smoke and fog.

These notes continue the series of commentaries in the Clinic pertaining to the scenarios published with the previous installment of this column (in this case, with Vol. 26, No. 1). The intent is to provide the ASL player with one of the numerous possibilities for defensive secton, attacker initial placement and basic tactic approaches for both. Having had several months to examine your own approaches to our Clinic scenarios, the reader can now compare his findings with our summation.

After Action Report—

The St. Goar Assault

GERMAN: Place Wire in 2X5, 2V5, 2U6, 2R6, 3P9 and 3E10. In the 2nd floor of 1B4 goes an 8-1, 4-4-7, 2-2-7, two DC and the FT. In 1C1 the Stug III facing 1B1/IC2. In 1P6 goes two 4-4-7s and two LMGs. 1CCS has the 81mm ART with crew, a foxhole, and a Opel Blitz. In the 2nd floor of 1BB4 goes an 8-1, 4-4-7, 6-6-6, 2-2-7, HMG and MMG. Two LMGs manned by a 8-3-8 and a 4-4-7 in IY8. In 2N2, a DAK (facing 3E0) with 2-2-7. In 201, the other 81mm MTR (Q1/Q0) with 2-2-7. 3N0: ? over 8-1 and 3-3-7. In 3J2 facing K3/K2, an 105mm ART with crew.

Our recommendations? Well, to tell the truth, we think that each has its own merits if executed properly. Which brings us to the heart of this article. If you decide to accept the Russian model of mixed tank types, then a frontal assault can be quite acceptable. As your tank formations tend to be slow, you must be careful not just to string along the road. Use bypass movement to pass through the town. You have the time to use your heavier weapons to blow away any exposed defenders. Further, by staying bunched together, you will tend to have multiple shots on any unit that attempts to counter-attack. What you try to accomplish is "to leapfrog" forward by keeping the rear platoons in Motion and stopping the advancing troops. This minimizes the risk of throwing a track and gives you lots of time to shoot. The groups then switch roles. We have tried to channel the frontal assault onto one of the other boards, but there never seems to be enough time to exit. The KV-2 should always be in the middle of the formation to minimize any possible incoming Immobilization fire. As much as possible, everyone should initially be in platoons of three vehicles so that if one tank is lost, the rest may continue to move without a die roll.

If you prefer the German method, then go for the flank/wing or envelopment attack.

If we choose the flanking maneuver, we like to throw the T-34 plus a BT, perhaps followed later by the KV, onto the ridge line of hill 532. The rest of the tanks get forward in positions of similar units down either Board 2 or 4. From the fire from the ridge line suppresses German movement and prevents the defender from shifting everything over to the threatened flank. The advancing troops can't take a lot of time to shoot, but your guys on the ridge can shoot all day. Keeping the maneuver element close to the edge of the board insures that one flank is secure. The trick here is knowing when, or if, to move the support team off the ridge. We recommend that the support platoon be two vehicles; that the KV operate independently (since it has a radio), and that the advancing elements be three tank platoons.

The envelopment is surely the most difficult tactic. We select the vehicles with the best cross-country movement for advancing across Board 4. The slower AFVs, plus your armored car, move along the road and ridge line of Board 2. What you want to happen is to have the BTs and T-34 get into position to fire on the rear of hills 534 and 547, thus allowing your vehicles on Board 2 a chance to exit. Your best bet is to mix two- and three-tank troops, for you will surely need to roll for independent movement.

Our testers found this scenario to be well balanced. The likelihood of success depends more on skill of execution than on luck. Although a heavy dose of bad luck can sink any plan, the Russians in GEN-O have more powerful guns, units with almost invulnerable armor, and the ability to take notable losses and still win. We hope you enjoy the accompanying scenario.

The junction of boards 1 and 2, and three squads at the junction of boards 4 and 3 so as to leave the German in doubt as to your final intention. If you decide to go for Board 1, go for either end of it with everything. Flamethrowers and HS should land across it. Time is incredibly short, so go ... go ... go!... go!
Letters to the Editor

Dear Mr. Martin:

I am not writing to respond to Mr. Gralewicz's article. Instead, I would like to respond to the letter from the editor that he submitted. It is clear from the letter that Mr. Gralewicz is expressing concerns about the future of the hobby, and he is seeking to understand what can be done to prevent its decline. I would like to offer my thoughts on this issue.

First, I would like to acknowledge the importance of the hobby. Wargaming has provided me with an outlet for my creativity, a way to engage with history, and a means of socializing with others who share my interests. It is a hobby that has brought me immense joy and satisfaction.

However, I also believe that the hobby is facing challenges. The number of wargamers is declining, and the audience is becoming more specialized. This trend is concerning, as it means that fewer people are engaging with the hobby and its history.

To address this issue, I propose the following solutions: first, we need to promote the hobby to new audiences. This could be done through marketing campaigns, social media, and partnerships with schools and libraries. Second, we need to create more accessible gaming experiences. This could be done through online gaming platforms, mobile apps, and tabletop games that are easier to learn and play. Third, we need to support the development of new games and expansions. This could be done through funding new developers, providing feedback on existing games, and encouraging the creation of diverse and inclusive gaming environments.

In conclusion, the hobby of wargaming is facing challenges, but it is not doomed. By promoting the hobby, creating more accessible gaming experiences, and supporting the development of new games, we can ensure its continued growth and success.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]
In his article, "Axis Southern Yearnings" (Vol. 24, No. 6), Mark Nixon’s strategy for the conquest of the Mediterranean is feasible, but full of dangers and potential delays—as he readily admits. Conquering all the Western and Mediterranean Front minor countries and enemy colonies by the Spring of '42 is ambitious, to say the least, and even possible; but in practical terms, it is not as easy as it sounds. Although he is certainly free to make assumptions, which he believes to be true, there’s still those precarious Axis positions in the Fall of 1941 to consider.

At that point, most of the Axis armor is either in Spain or spread throughout the Mediterranean Front, along with the entire Luftwaffe poised to strike at Gibraltar. A crucial period, which I call "The Custer Syndrome", as there exists too many opportunities for Russia and Britain to spring nasty surprises on the overextended Axis. This is especially prevalent along the Eastern Front, where German infantry, along with Hungarian and Rumanian troops, guard the "back door" of the Fall of '41. Of these minor forces, half may not even be active, since Mark’s preference lies in not sending Foreign Aid in 1939, but instead waiting until late 1940. In my opinion, a miscalculation, for a determined Allied response can send around 70 BRPs (36 British and 34 Russian) of Foreign Aid in 1939-41 to approximately 33 German BRPs during 1940-41. The table below illustrates some possible consequences:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>German BRPs</th>
<th>Rumania</th>
<th>Hungary</th>
<th>Bulgaria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>1940</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Total</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allied Total</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Although only an example, Allied Foreign Aid can be allocated at the end of the Winter turns in 1939-40, whereas Germany could not counter it until the following year. In the Spring 1941, Allied aid is distributed after the German allotment, thereby preventing Summer activation of up to three-fourths of Germany’s minor allies. Of course, this fraction can be lower, dependent on when/how Germany attacks Turkey.

Therefore, instead of Bulgaria being active in 1941 (as Mark shows), it is more realistic to believe it (and other minors as well) will remain inactive in the Summer of '41. But the problem doesn't end here, as all inactive minors will be saddled with an additional handicap since Germany is due to declare war on Spain on the following turn. Thus, instead of rolling a "1" or higher to activate the remaining minors in the future, Germany must then roll a "6" or better (45.3). In essence, this equates to having more Allied BRPs to overcome for each inactive minor. Because of this, Germany would not gain the inactive minor's BRPs in the Summer, nor carry them over into the 1942 YSS.

As the examples show, Germany must overcome the Allied Foreign Aid lead, the imposed penalty for attacking Spain, plus counter potential British Spring 1942 Aid. But even this effort won’t be able to activate any minors in the Spring, since activation takes place at the start of a turn before any Foreign Aid obtained on the Eastern Front; but by removing the infantry garrison in Finland, if not careful Germany could then default on the 20-factor minimum requirement. Building or SRing a new unit to the Eastern Front is too late, since the requirement must also be met at the end of the Movement Phase. Furthermore, this breach lifts the ban permanently (45.2), so Russia needs only await an opportune time to launch a surprise attack. This is not to say a German player couldn’t avoid this situation, but how many of us have ever played a faultless game?

In his recommended invasion of Turkey, the Italians are to first secure northern Greece as a staging area, as this effectively doubles the German's assault strength. A viable strategy, which works very well. Mark also mentions that Britain's intervention in Greece could tie up one or two British units; in Turkey, it's better to face and mail them there rather than in Egypt. This military assessment could be true, but on the other side of the coin, there are the economic factors to consider. Although chances are good for a German Winter attack on Turkey, there are reasons for not doing so. With Italian troops in Greece and the Greeks across the Turkish Straits, what might the British do? One answer is to intervene in Greece by SRing a replacement unit to mainland Greece, or to one of the Greek islands (i.e., Andros). Meanwhile, another unit can be SRed into Turkey.

The cumulative economic effect is immediate in the Fall of 1941 YSS. By carrying over Turkey’s 30 BRPs (30 = 4 + 26) and some British BRPs (8 = 4 + 4), Britain achieves a new total BRP base of 140. Adding Greece’s and Turkey’s BRP values, Britain’s 1941 allowance increases to 180 BRPs. This allows Britain to build six ASW units and to increase Foreign Aid to 18 BRPs—a 50% increase above standard game levels in both areas. Some might think Britain would suffer economically through such an action, but this is not the case. In gaining the above advantages, Britain spends zero BRPs to intervene in Greece and Turkey. And even the replacement units can be saved by SRing them out on the turn prior to activation. So, even though Britain might spend more on Foreign Aid/ASW units yet lose Turkey, Greece, Egypt and Gibraltar in 1941, her economy would still be in better shape than if she had done nothing at all. This is because gaining the Turkish and Greek 40 BRPs for free and then losing them equates to a zero-sum loss. And Egypt/Gibraltar’s 50 BRP loss would be offset by the 12 BRP carryover from Turkey in the YSS.

Ironically, this carryover gives Britain the minimum number of BRPs necessary for its 1941 Foreign Aid program. One should remember that all eventual BRP losses will be subtracted from Britain’s new 230 BRP allowance, rather than from a much lesser normal amount. Note also, that such losses would not affect Britain's new BRP base, ASW, or Foreign Aid totals. With these thoughts in mind, an experienced German player might adjust his time frame for the attack so as to avoid giving Britain such a windfall. This decision, of course, rests with your own particular timetable. The key though, lies in the timeframe of the French surrender. If France succumbs in the Fall of 1940, Winter will be needed to SR the elite airborne and air units into the Balkans in order to blitz across the Turkish Straits by Spring. Although Britain could still intervene, her economic gains would be significantly reduced.

Although my comments concerning the “Mediterranean Power Play” may seem censorious in nature, they are meant only as constructive criticism. I have enjoyed Mark’s many fine articles in THE GENERAL; so, with all due respect, the following is intended to polish a few rough facets off Mark’s otherwise "diamond" strategy.

And so, how can one sidestep a potential "Custer's" fate when using the "Mediterranean Power Play" concept? Mark discusses flexibility, adaptability, and the opportunity to divert back to a standard game strategy. An analysis into which my "Bulgarian Gambit" fits right in, allowing Axis players to:

1) Place unlimited firepower (more than 20 factors—25.6) in Bulgaria prior to blitzing Turkey.
2) Slash British Foreign Aid to Hungary and Rumania (33.6).
3) Launch an attack on Spain prior to the Fall of 1941, without being overly concerned about prestige (46.3).
4) Avoid the "Custer Syndrome".

State Funeral

Just how does one amass enough firepower to rend Turkey apart on an initial blitz? In Mark's "Base Greece", the additional northern Greek hexes
To conduct several attritions between 1939 and the Fall of 1940, until Bulgaria's army literally disintegrates. Militarily, the loss of five Bulgarian factors can be made up by other Axis forces in combating Yugoslavia in the traditional method (attrition, the significant strategic impact on the Mediterranean). And, for this purpose only, such BRPs can also transit neutral countries and inactive Axis Minor Allies hexes. But, when the Axis attacks Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, a diplomatic wall surrounds Hungary and Rumania (see Figure 1), through which British aid cannot penetrate. Note also that British aid cannot cross any Russian-controlled hexes until Russia and Germany are at war (33.62). The cumulative effect locks Britain out of the Balkans and limits Russian aid to Greece. Therefore, the 20-factor restriction no longer applies. Naturally, Bulgaria's army is then no more, but considering that it is only good for garrisoning Yugoslavia, Greece or European Turkey, and that the Slav/Greek partisans outnumber its tiny army anyway, the end result is worth the loss. Militarily, the loss of five Bulgarian factors can easily be made up by other Axis forces in combating future partisans. A minor adjustment considering the significant strategic impact on the Mediterranean Front. So, who's to do the deed? Germany might offensively crush Bulgaria in the Fall of 1939, but such action definitely overstretches the Reich's manpower and treasury early in the war. A less costly method is to conduct several attritions between 1939 and the Fall of 1940, until Bulgaria's army literally disappears. The negative aspect of this is that Germany does not then receive Bulgaria's BRF value in 1940. (However, there is a positive side, which will be discussed shortly.) Another method might be to first let Italy conquer Yugoslavia in the traditional method (attrition, then offense), and then have three Italian infantry factors from Belgrade march against Sophia in the Spring of 1940. Air staged in from Italy supports the attack, and it's "goodbye Bulgaria". Neat, clean, simple; plus, being neutral, Italy will receive Bulgaria's BRPs on the following YSS. With Bulgaria knocked out, Italy is then free to join the Axis coalition in the Summer of 1940. Although Italy still receives Bulgarian BRPs, this will not occur until the 1941 YSS. Therefore, the overall economic gain in conquering Bulgaria is, in reality, no greater than if the minor were activated normally in Summer '41. However, my point is not concerned with economic gains or losses, but lies in removing Bulgaria as a stumbling block from southern Axis actions. Basing Axis strength in Bulgaria eliminates the need for Italy to attack Greece and avoids tying down Italian troops in the Balkans when they are of more use in North Africa. Additionally, I feel it's more advantageous to leave Greece as a buffer zone, for now, in order to prevent any possible British intervention. And once the Mediterranean becomes a backwater area, Greece can then meet its destined fate. "Nice," one might respond, "but is the Bulgarian Gambit really necessary for attacking Turkey?" In this single aspect, no it's not. If this was the gambit's only value, I'd go along with Mark's proposal of limited factors based in the minors. However, the gambit is composed of several levels, each acting as a catalyst for the next event. Enhancing the Turkish attack is only the first.

**Foreign Aid**

The gambit's second primary effect is to eliminate all British Foreign Aid to Hungary and Rumania when Germany declares war on Bulgaria in the Fall of 1939, or significantly reduce the amount when Italy declares war in the Spring of 1940. In order for Allied aid to reach the Balkans, a legal SR path must exist through controlled hexes. And, for this purpose only, such BRPs can also transit neutral countries and inactive Axis Minor Allies hexes. But, when the Axis attacks Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, a diplomatic wall surrounds Hungary and Rumania (see Figure 1), through which British aid cannot penetrate. Naturally, the gambit doesn't reduce Britain's total Foreign Aid grants; it just diverts them elsewhere. But at least it ensures that Hungary and Rumanian troops will be manning the Eastern Front's defenses in 1941. Much safer than the potential hazardous situation lurking within the "Mediterranean Power Play". So, by having alleviated the Foreign Aid threat, we now move on to the gambit's third effect.

**The Plains of Spain**

Instead of attacking Turkey after the fall of France, why not attack Spain immediately? After all, the Wehrmacht's already concentrated in France so it shouldn't be a problem to move the armor and stage air down to the border. In this way, sufficient SRs are available to bring in Axis infantry, airbases and the airborne units. But some players might be adverse to this early invasion, due to 46.3 (in which Axis variants 1, 3, 5 and 7 are cancelled) and that Germany must then roll a "6" or higher to activate each minor ally. Concerning the variants, there's a 60% chance that you won't draw one anyway, and this increases...
to 70% if the Allies draw one of the variant numbers first. But even assuming that you have one, which is unlikely in light of the odds, the French Minor Ally is nice, but not essential for either Mark’s or my strategy. Having Vichy France as a Minor Ally is more practical and, dependent on its size, will determine whether or not it’s worth leaving Spain alone for now. Luckily, a decision like this you’ll only have to make once out of ten games.

For this point, this will take half a year to set up. And, the this point, French controlled airbases in North Africa which could be used to defend Gibraltar. Mark illustrates British controlled airbases in North Africa which these colonies as being Free French, and therefore, this is the same additional amount Germany must spend in order to activate its minors under the gambit. Since there’s no difference in cost, is the gambit worth it? Let us look forward.

The Eagle versus the Lion

Basically unaffected by the loss of prestige, Germany could rule Spain by the Spring of 1941 (as the books of Eire), but six tactic charts were so well documented in Mark’s article that I see no reason to duplicate them here. Suffice to say, The Rock will fall, closing off the Mediterranean approximately one-half year earlier than in Mark’s plans.

However, a question might arise regarding British controlled airbases in North Africa which could be used to defend Gibraltar. Mark illustrates these colonies as being Free French, and therefore, allowed an entire year to overrun them. Of course, there’s always a 50% chance of these colonies becoming Vichy, so the whole point would then be moot. But for the sake of argument, does the gambit allow the Axis sufficient time to dash west in Africa? If Germany bashes Bulgaria and Italy enters the war by Spring, there are then five turns to accomplish this task. If Italy conquers Bulgaria first, there’s still four turns to reach Oran in conjunction with Germany’s Spring ’41 conquest of Spain.

A difference between the Mediterranean Power Play and the “Bulgarian Gambit” is the timeframe in conquering North Africa. In the former, British and Free French forces are available for defense; but in the latter, French and British reserves would still be engaged in the battle for France itself. Therefore, if only one French unit is defending all of North Africa (i.e., Tunisia), an Axis advance and air superiority might allow a total of five and two Lent Italian armored units, using the exploitation method (14.4), would simply sweep across Tunisia, overrun Algiers, and be adjacent to Oran within a single turn. Conquering the port of Tunis could then be left up to other forces on the following turn.

Another factor, which may or may not be helpful during the trek through North Africa, is exactly when Paris becomes Axis-occupied. At this point, the French are restricted to a Mediterranean Front Pass option (26.815), meaning any unit(s) adjacent to Axis forces are frozen in place. Unable to move of supply, and not could move west. And after Vichy determination, if Free French they are exposed to attack. If Vichy, Axis forces could move through the French position on the following turn, possibly catching the British offguard.

In marching west, there’s no need to advance faster than Oran whenever Morocco is Free French; once Oran is controlled, all Allied supply routes to the west are cut. Although British air would still be in supply, any airbase would not be (and therefore, must be returned to London). This leaves but one 5-4 air (in Casablanca) within of the former, the fortress, all eight Axis air units are sufficient to counter/interrupt all British air and still support a -1 attack against Gibraltar. And, in the event that the airborne is still in control of “The Rock”.

So, in the end analysis, there’s still time for the Panzerwaffe and Luftwaffe to deploy east to deter the “Custer Syndrome”. Besides allowing Axis sailors shore leave, Gibraltar’s loss reduces the British lion’s roar to that of a cough due to the suppression of its four BRPs. British forces are certain to pare its military strength down to four ground units (not counting Free French) and four naval/air counters. In the resulting scramble to evacuate excess units, several could end up buried in the Egyptian sands. Thus, by the end of Britain’s turn, the canal’s defense might look something like that in Figure 2. Now only a shell of its former self, the British Desert Army is no longer a threat in the Mediterranean and is certainly in no position to impede the Axis advance through Turkey. In fact, because the Italian navy now rules the Med, Axis seaborne invasions, loaded with armor, combined with deployed forces in Bulgaria, would make short work of Turkey.

After Turkey’s demise, there is no need to send massive panzer forces rolling towards Egypt. Instead, a few Italians can pick off Persia and the British colonies through cheap attritions, while Germany unleashes Barbarossa against Russia. Mark’s strategy serves, except for a few Italian fleets, a prestige loss through the French position on the former, the three objectives (including Malta) and the 25 BRP loss that threatens. In this way, British fleets, air and ground forces might remain in the Mediterranean and not be around to support the Allied invasion of Europe. Such forces being out of the picture might even delay the Allied landings in France for a turn or two. Every little bit helps to run out the game clock.

However, if the British start withdrawing strong units and replacing them with weak 1-3 infantry units, then the ploy is no longer valid. At this point, a quick surgical strike is needed to finish off Egypt, leaving surviving British fleets and ground units trapped and out of the action for three turns. Remaining British air forces can be contained in Egypt forever (or until they self-destruct)—a nice touch.

The reader might ask, “While the British are in Egypt, won’t Axis forces be tied down defending all of the Mediterranean?” In answer, study Figure 2 again. Although only an example, it is unrealistic to expect that any British seaborne invasion would be successful. Of course, the point of invasion is premature, especially since only one fleet is based in Egypt. However, by dispatching both air units back to England and bringing in two units from the Mediterranean, the British would be able to mount a counterattack. Naturally, this will take half a year to set up. And, before sailing on the following turn, Italian troops could cull from the British invasion defenses from the east and the west, finishing off Britain’s plans, Egypt and eventually Malta.

If British armor were to guard the east-west approaches to Egypt, a two-infantry invasion force might land somewhere—but to what end? Occupying a bit of beach would hardly be sufficient to excite Britain’s Parliament and people. In counting, only one Axis armor need be SRed near the Allied beachhead to prevent any Allied units from marching inland. Doing so would only endanger their own supply line. Meanwhile, with Egypt’s defensive garrison cut in half, it would not survive long. So, the end result is that not one Mediterranean beach need be defended against seaborne invasion from Egypt.

The Eagle versus the Bear

Whether Russia is attacked after Gibraltar falls, or immediately after Turkey is conquered, pushing the Russians back is fairly easy; but it is almost impossible to force a Russian surrender, due to several reasons.

1) Barbarossa is launched too late in the war.
2) Russia possesses vast areas into which to retreat. Therefore, loss of territory is a minor inconvenience.
3) Its recuperative powers allows Russia’s army to take a licking and still function.
4) Massive reinforcements arrive from Siberia in the Spring of ’42.

Russia doesn’t need to match Germany’s quality in firepower, as the sheer quantity of Russian force has a quality all its own. If you believe, otherwise, then “good luck”, because a fully mobilized Russia possesses more ground combat units that the combined might of Britain, France and the U.S. (discounting replacement units). Therefore, I wholeheartedly agree with Mark’s assessment of pushing the Russians as far back as possible, before their inevitable counteroffensive takes place.

Once the Russian bear rises up to its full height and the Allied invasion of Festung Europa is imminent, you’ll have to direct your efforts towards organizing some effective withdrawals. Like the Roman Fabius against Hannibal, you must become known as the “Delay”. Initial conquest is easy; being skillful in defense, that’s an altogether different matter.

In Other Words

The “Bulgarian Gambit” can enhance, but not guarantee, an Axis victory in THIRD REICH. No strategy can promise that, as for every new idea that comes along, you’ll be able to work it out a counter-strategy. This is what makes the game endlessly interesting—all the variables that constantly alter the tide of war and the eventual outcome. Thus, I feel, both sides can never have enough options to consider in this ever-changing game. I hope to have demonstrated the gambit’s value in “Mediterranean Power Play”. Or if it fits your style of play.

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COUNTERING THE BLITZKREIG
Soviet Strategy in HITLER'S WAR

By Tim Kitchin

Commanding the Soviet Union in HITLER'S WAR can be a rather thankless job. In most games you're taking the brunt of a massive German offensive while the Allied player is comfortably sitting behind the Atlantic building bombers and amphibious points. Oh, he may be playing cut-and-mouse with Rommel in the deserts of North Africa; but that is one of the things you are facing. Ever wonder why Stalin was so adamant about the Allies launching a second front as early as 1942? Play the Russians in HITLER'S WAR and find out.

This article will consider some strategic concerns for the Soviet Union, both before and immediately after an expected German invasion, as well as some general defensive tactics to counter that invasion. As later games are much more complex and varied, it would be difficult to accurately present a late-game analysis.

As with any proposed strategy, some assumptions need to be made regarding the German plans for winning the game. Most successful German strategies I've seen follow one basic path. First, an invasion of France (or through the Low Countries, followed by a march through Spain and the taking of Gibraltar. This is followed by an invasion of Poland, projected into Soviet territory in Spring 1941. This is not straying far from the historical path, although the order of things is somewhat different. There is little reason in this game for Germany to invade Denmark (perhaps in support of their drive on Narvik), though the Low Countries will be picked off at some point, and at least a token force will be sent to North Africa as most Axis players seem to like seeing the PZAA counter used historically. The German will be spending most of his production effort on mechanized SP while researching infantry, mechanized, tac air and U-boat. Air defense and bombers may also rate some research too, though this will largely depend upon Axis production expenditures. The outcome of the game will be decided in the Soviet Union, as was the outcome of World War II.

Pre-Invasion Production

Assuming that the German player does take this approach, how should the Soviets respond during the non-aggression period? I'd like to present what I consider to be a sound, if rather conservative, production schedule to keep those panzers out of your capital. For the production aspect of the pre-invasion turns, consider the following “One-Year Plan”:

**Turn 1**  Conquer the Baltic States. In the production phase, rebuild the devastated Baltic States production and build one fort in Moscow.

**Turn 2**  No attacks. In the production phase, buy one infantry point, one fort in Leningrad, and research infantry.

**Turn 3**  No attacks. In the production phase, buy one infantry point, one fort in Moscow, and research infantry again.

**Turn 4**  No attacks. In the production phase, buy one infantry point, one fort in Leningrad, and research infantry again.

The explanation of the production expenditures for the above plan is very straightforward. The only place in the game will see the Soviets with eight production points and limited options. The only place to attack that won't cost you production points is the Baltic States, so attack them. Take that production point and rebuild it in your own production phase. Actually, the rebuilding of the Baltic States' production is an even bet as far as payback goes; you will probably only have the production for three turns before the Germans take it. Rebuilding the point however, will make the German more likely to feel obligated to attack the Baltic Front during the invasion. Assume at least an even proposition, I like to have a healthy production point to entice the Germans. Who knows, you may actually get to keep it an extra turn or two. Rebuilding the Baltic production will cost you three of your eight points.

With the rest of your production, build a fort in Moscow. The best defense is a good offense—but you don't yet have a good offense, and forts are the best alternative in this game. This concludes Turn 1 for the Soviets. The next turns will be relatively quiet as far as the war goes for you. Your production phase is the only means of response, and should be taken very seriously.

On Turn 2 (Spring 1940), you will have nine production points to work with. You will have enough for one infantry (three points), one fort (five points), and you can spend one point for infantry research. In the next turn (Summer 1940), the Germans should be heavily involved elsewhere and not really trouble you. Again you have nine points to spend. And again, purchase a fort and an infantry SP. Spend the other for infantry research. This will put your infantry research on Track Two on the chart.

The Winter 1940 turn will probably be the last turn before the invasion, so the Soviets must arrange their defenses. In the production phase—a fort, an infantry point, and a space on the research track for infantry. My building that fort in Leningrad is simply to balance the numbers of forces between the two most important Soviet cities. An alternative would be to place all of the fort points in Moscow and leave Leningrad to the dogs since control of any one of the three “capitals” (Leningrad, Moscow, or Stalin-grad) allows the Soviet player to survive. It may be wise to select only one of these three to defend if the Germans have an overwhelming army built up, but I tend to like the dispersed setup. The Germans can undoubtedly concentrate and take at least one of the capitals. The effort, however, is greatly complicated when both Leningrad and Moscow are fortified because it causes the Germans to disperse his forces even more to provide enough support to take both. As illustrated below, fortifications can be a tough nut to crack.

The research track is really the roulette wheel in HITLER'S WAR. Success here very often equals success in the game. For the most part, the Soviets are restricted to an unplannous life on the wheel—especially in the early game. Deciding when to attempt cost reductions, however, is critical to a successful strategy. Although each game will be different, I would like to give some basic advice.

First, it is generally not a good idea to roll to reduce your infantry cost to “2” until the German has reduced his to “1.” By reducing your cost for infantry, you will simply help him build up his reserves for invasion. You will help yourself one turn later. It is better to keep one infantry point per turn while buying a fort and researching infantry costs (although you would now have two points per turn for research spending). Also, a research failure at this time will seriously hinder your defensive efforts later. In this case, although this is one of the few, I think a conservative research schedule is the best plan.

Second, you should never research mechanized costs until your own infantry costs are at one point, unless you happen to have a spare production point (left over) that you can't spend on anything else.

Third, always keep both your infantry and mechanized costs one tech level above the German player's until the German cost is at the lowest level, or until you can switch over to the offensive and start the march on Berlin.

Finally, you must convince the Allied player to follow this same strategy. If the Allied player researches and lowers the cost of his infantry or mechanized points too early (and usually for no good reason), you may have little hope of defending the Motherland. As ludicrous as it sounds, standing behind the Germans in these key technologies is vital to winning the game. The reason is simple. Typically, the German player will need many more mechanized and infantry SP to successfully invade the Soviet Union than you will need to defend it. Since the Germans will have close to double your production output, any research successes that you make that bring your tech level equal to his is actually helping him for starting with the next turn the German will be able to spend two points per turn for research on that item. Staying behind him, will keep the German research expenditures high (and also slow them down) until his army is to a point where he can actually take the Soviet Union.

Stopping Barbarossa

Hitler's 1940 turn will be a critical one for the Soviets, because it will be the last time you can move before the blitzkreig is unleashed. The Soviets should have some 18 infantry points (two in Siberia), nine mech points (three in Siberia) and two tac air points. The infantry strength point built during the Winter 1940 production phase must be built on a production point and cannot move before the invasion comes, so it should go in either Leningrad or Moscow. The Soviets will also have two fort points in Moscow and two in Leningrad (one under construction). The placement of these forces will determine your chances of survival. Historically, the Soviet Union tried to man the borders and the Red Army was crushed in the first few weeks of the campaign; but they then traded land for time and were ultimately victorious. In HITLER'S WAR, the Soviets must also trade territory for time, but there's no political reason to defend the borders here. A typical placement of Soviet forces would include:

- **Front Hex Inf Mech Tac Air Fort**
  - Baltic S14 4
  - SouthWest W18 3
  - SouthEast N15 3
  - Leningrad T17 5
  - Moscow Q17 6
  - Siberia Sib 2

Admittedly, I use many variations on this set-up depending on what the Germans can muster against you. Sometimes I'll abandon everything west of Moscow and protect my capitals. This is usually only called for if the Germans have had unusual luck in their dice rolls and have built up their mechanized forces.

More likely the German can field two large panzer groups consisting of 8-10 mech points, and another 4-6 mech points. There will usually be at least one infantry army group, and the panzer army
groups will be filled out with infantry SP. The German will usually have between two and six tac air points. If the German army is much stronger than this, the Soviets are in serious trouble and I'd recommend trying fronts in Leningrad and Moscow, instead of the Western Allies should be causing some real headaches for them.

Some would say that it's a waste of infantry points to assign them as "suicide troops", but consider the situation from the German viewpoint. The production points need to be taken and rebuilt both to keep his army groups supplied and to aid his own economy. Allowing the Soviets to control these production points ultimately aids the Soviet production, and could place a threat in the German rear. Bypassing the Soviet fronts invites some nasty responses by the Russians (partisan attacks in coordination with bypassed fronts can unsupply the German ghastly phenomenon, for instance). Why run the risk?

Consider the following situation: The German player has invaded in Spring 1941 and ignored all Soviet fronts except the Southwest in N15, which has been destroyed, the hex occupied, devastated, and rebuilt. The Germans have now occupied Q14, R14, R15, R16, O15, P15, P16, N14, N15 and M15. The two main panzer army groups occupy R16 and P16. In the German attack phase they have assaulted Moscow and caused a five-SP loss for the Moscow Front (four mech and one infantry), but have failed to advance into the capital because of the unfavorable die roll modifier. It looks pretty bleak for the USSR and the German sees Lebensraum opening up before his eyes. But in the Soviet movement phase, instead of pulling back his nearly surrounded fronts in S14 and Q15 to reinforce besieged Moscow, the Soviet player reinforces the fronts to contain the Wehrmacht, and attempts to assault and advance into hexes R14 and P15. The two mechanized SP left will not help either advance so they are left in Moscow. The assaults automatically succeed and both advances together have a 44% chance of succeeding. At least one of the advances will succeed 88% of the time. Also, consider the fact that you can attempt to take either or both hexes with partisan attacks in your production phase. With this "above-the-hole", your chances of cutting off the majority of the Wehrmacht's mechanized forces rises to a cool 60%, and this is enormous. If the player can play two or three attacks in each turn, he can have a vengeance in the Summer of 1942. This should be your number one priority. Remember that in your own Soviet production phase you can build armies on production points to fill in gaps in your line.

War-Time Economy

Production during the first three game turns of the invasion is varied with each game, depending on your research success and the state of your fronts in the field. Usually the Soviets must concentrate on infantry production and research through all of 1942, with the possibility of having one or two production points spent for a fort or two. I like to consider that Germany has ten or more, while the Allies have ten or fewer. This will bring the cost down to two per strength point. Spend two production points on research every turn thereafter, and roll every turn until your cost is down to one per SP. At this point, it will be critical to build up your infantry fronts in key spots to prevent the Germans from holding all three capitals. Research can then begin on the tools for offense—tac air, mech points, and even a bomber or two if you're well off.

Although the Soviets historically launched offensives as early as 1942, most major offensives as early as 1942, most major offensives in HITLER'S WAR must wait until 1943. Attrition is your real ally through the 1944 turns, when the Germans will usually be preoccupied with the Allies in Italy or Spain. This dispersion of German forces will provide the Soviets with some great opportunities for isolating and destroying large enemy concentrations, as the German does not have enough armies to guard everything. The key is to smash the enemy mechanized armies with assaults, and bypass and surround the infantry armies. Even if on a production point, they will not be able to effectively break out, and can be mopped up on the next turn. The Germans will not be able to build up such isolated armies if the production point they occupy is not in Germany. The general pattern is for the weak German forces to stage a last defensive, smash, consolidate, and attack again. By this stage of the game, Germany will hopefully be on the defensive in every phase of the play. The tide will have turned, and the Soviet and Allied players will be racing for Berlin.

I hope I've given players of HITLER'S WAR at least an alternative for successful completion of a game in the Soviet role—admittedly a sometimes dreary undertaking when compared with the 'glamour' of bombering, U-boats, amphibious points, and paratroopers. Taking on the role of the Soviets, however, can make a player appreciate the task with which Stalin and his Red Army faced in The Great Patriotic War. I find myself drawn to HITLER'S WAR time after time because of its simple rules and complex strategic decisions.
Was Lee a Great General...or Just Plain Lucky?

Was McClellan a Defensive Genius, or a Wimp?
Was Sherman a Brilliant Tactician, or an Opportunist?
Could the South Have Ever Won the War?

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**DEVIL'S DEN** $23.00. **Complexity:** Medium. **Playing Time:** 2 to 5 hours. **Solitaire Suitability:** High. Features four games in one, re-creating the critical battles of Devil's Den and Little Round Top on a giant 22" x 32" mapboard.

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**GETTYSBURG** $15.00. 125th Anniversary Edition—BRAND NEW DESIGN. Outstanding entry-level battlegame; ideal as a user-friendly introduction to the hobby of historical wargaming. It's Lee vs. Grant in an authentic recreation giving you the chance to re-live or alter history. **Complexity:** Low. **Playing Time:** 1-2 hours.

See them all at better gift, game, and hobby stores.
In spite of the disclaimers of the aficionados of the summer sport, baseball seems to have been surpassed by football as the "Great American Game". One thing is sure, however. Baseball, despite all attempts by other sports promoters, is still the great summer sport. Baseball seems to have been sur­ 
preyed by other sports (basketball, etc.) and baseball succeeds as no other at generating raw data. It seems that TV announcers spend half of each broadcast dredging up percentages that appear to have, in the main, questionable relevancy. (The other half of each broadcast is commercials.)

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Due to space limitations, I will present this data in two separate installments, one concentrating on the more common aspects of the game (hitting and pitching) and the other will delve into fielding, base running, and other slightly more esoteric topics. The information presented here is not intended to pro­ 
vide a detailed analysis of individual players. The numbers generated on their cards was a reflection of their performance in a particular season. It is, 
read, for you as "manager" to have some basis 
for the numbers only. This column should give you 
\% of successes as separate 
percentages. The data which will fill the player cards is generated over a 
60-game schedule. The FAC come from information 
obtained for the past 80 years. Absolute 
certainties in any one game are ridiculous. It is 
possible to be wrong for the right reasons, and 
vice versa. The numbers given in this article can be used 
to provide the small edge which will assist you to 
victory.

There are 389 separate card faces within the FAC deck. In a single game, you can expect to use about 300 cards. Each batter will use an average of three cards per time at the plate, an individual card has 
only a 25% chance of appearing for a given type of 
draw during a game. While it is obviously impos­ 

to cover every situation possible in a game, 
\% is more likely to hit into an error than others. Some of these 
differentials may seem small, but over the course of 
several games, they can add up. As stated before, percentages are just that and no more, but any player who ignores them will end up a loser in the long run.

Of prime importance for the offensive team is 
Table 3, a matrix of batter type versus hit location. Each possible result on a card has been listed here. These results have been totaled and condensed as percentages in Table 3A as to expectations for types of hits and defensive chances. In checking the results of this chart, we can see that the best bet for a "deep fly" to advance a runner from third on the sacrifice is a SN hitter. RN batters stay out of double-plays better than others and pitchers are more likely to 

Table 3B: Type of Play hit by versus Type of Hitter.

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COLD FRONT
The Winter War for UP FRONT
By Jim Burnett

Thus far, the different guises of UP FRONT have presented themselves in temperate and tropical climates. This ignores the other extreme of warfare in World War II—the fight for the frigid north. Numerous books and articles have been written concerning Arctic combat, the German woes in their invasion of the Soviet Union being frequently mentioned. We will, then, skip over any detailed description of these actions and, instead, attempt to add the necessary rules to the UP FRONT system to make it applicable to the final frontier of the Second World War.

1.0 THE WINTER WAR

The following rules for winter warfare are presented as modifications to the rules already found in the UP FRONT series. The only basic assumptions made are that the temperature is well below freezing, that there is snow on the ground (ice in wet areas), and that the weather is not otherwise prohibitive of combat.

2.0 TERRAIN

The terrain cards are modified to reflect the presence of snow and ice. Unless listed below, all other cards retain their effect and use.

2.1 STREAM: Stream cards are treated as impassable terrain. Any Stream card discarded on a group will remove the Movement card in place. A Stream is a break in the snow/ice surface sufficient to expose open water which would require a crossing. Icy streams would quickly freeze, and were to be avoided. Removal of the Stream card will require the play of one Movement card sideways. A player may place terrain after the first card is played however, but the Stream remains in place until the second Movement card has also had terrain played upon it. Semi-frozen water is a very strong deterrent to movement.

2.2 MARSH: Marsh cards are treated as Open Ground but may be discarded on any friendly or opposing moving group. Marsh is here considered equivalent to tundra.

2.3 MINEFIeldS: Minefield cards are discarded from all scenarios except where used as Booby Traps. The extreme cold and damp climate often resulted in frozen detonators, not to mention the difficulty of burying them in frozen ground and the muffling effects of heavy snow on their blast.

3.0 ACTIONS

Many of the normal actions used in combat were very different when performed in bitter cold against a snowy backdrop. These few changes are summarized here.

3.1 CONCEALMENT: Concealment for units which are assumed not to possess winter camouflage gear is reduced by one. These will typically include all German units of the first two winters in any East Front (i.e., versus Russian units) scenario. Thus, a "-2" Concealment for them would be "-1", or "-1" be read as "0".

3.2 ENTRENCHMENT: Effective entrenchment was difficult in the frozen expanses. Entrenchment is only successful if a black "0" is drawn.

3.3 SKI TROOPS: Ski troops are always considered to be Elite. A forward or backward Movement card played on Ski Troops which occupy a Hill will allow them to increase/decrease their range by one during their turn, and by one more at the end of the immediately following opponent's turn. This additional movement is at the option of the controlling player, of course.

4.0 WEAPONS

All types of weapons were more difficult to maintain and supply in the frozen North. However, some troops were supplied with weapons more suitable to the weather conditions, while others simply made do with what they had or devised makeshift methods to avoid the worst problems.

4.1 MALFUNCTION: All weapons are subject to malfunction on a number one less than listed on their card. For example, a weapon which has a breakdown of "5-6" now has a breakdown value of "4-6". These weapons are not exempt from this penalty.

4.2 REPAIR: Repair is only successful on a card of one greater than that listed on their card. Exceptions should be made for certain troops as listed in 4.1 above.

4.3 HE: All attacks by HE, except those against vehicles, will be resolved at one less power than listed due to the muffling effects of deep snow.

5.0 VEHICLES

Vehicles were particularly affected by cold temperatures. They became difficult to start, move and service.

5.1 MOVEMENT: A vehicle requires a black RNC Movement card to be played in cold conditions for movement of any sort. Exceptions are made for the Finns, Russians after 1940 and Germans after 1942. However, a vehicle must make a Bog check for each terrain card entered. This check will be modified from its normal Bog as follows: A Bog in Gully or Woods is resolved with a RPC number two less than listed; all other Bog checks are resolved at a RPC two greater. Note that the Bog RPC number may never be less than "11".

5.3 REMOVAL: Bogs and immobilization may be removed by the play of a Movement card and the draw of a black RNC greater than "0".

6.0 THE FINNS

The Finns were some of the most valiant warriors of the period when in defense of their homeland or liberating the parts occupied by others. Their tactical actions in both the Winter War and Continuation War are worthy of recognition. The following rules apply to them:

6.1 MANPOWER: The Finns use the German Personality cards. All cards will be modified by raising the Morale and Panic numbers by one. This is a reflection of their familiarity with the land being fought over, and their individual love of Finland.

6.11 SQUAD SIZE: The Finnish squad will, in all scenarios, have two less members than listed. The cards with the two lowest Morale values should be removed. Specific choice will be left to the controlling player, however.

6.12 MORALE BREAK: The Finnish squad will break at 60% losses.

6.2 HAND: The Finns will use the German card hand. Provisions for Elite, Line and Green troops are as per the German practice. The Finns should, however, have a greater likelihood of possessing Elite (Skis) or Line troops.

6.21 SPLIT ACTIONS: The Finns may make use of either side of a split-action card which contains Confrontation or Movement and any other action, regardless of nationality markings. This is a reflection of their adaptability to the tundra and the trackless forests of the north. Cards which contain neither are Cower cards for the Finns.

6.22 RADIO: The Finns use the Soviet radio cards. The Finns consisted of much artillery support.

6.3 VEHICLES: The Finns use only German Vehicles 30, 31, 37, 42 and 43. They never maintained a large fleet of AFVs.

6.4 LEADERS: The Finns are not subject to the leadership restrictions of Rules Section 15. Finnish leadership was not called upon to furnish the morale support or guidance to their troops that was required by the soldiers of other nations.

OTHER NATIONALITIES

I will also use this occasion to present the other minor powers which were combatants in the world war. The reader will note that only the Finns get special treatment as far as new and revised rules are concerned. This is because of their very special nature in the war. The other minor powers can be fairly easily assimilated into the ranks of their co-combatant great powers. This is in no way intended to lessen their own efforts or accomplishments, but merely recognizes the similarities in their own weapons, tactics and effectiveness. As is usual, it will be possible to find many instances where they over- or under-performed the nations with which they are equilibrated. In these cases, the reader should feel free to make his own interpretations concerning the use of Elite or Green troops.

These other nationalities are given as additions to the game system as a whole. The listed minor power will use the cards and hands of their equivalent major power. Also listed is the complement of AFVs which each nation possesses. Note that these are not intended to reflect actual vehicles in most cases, but AFVs which were similar in performance to those in the minor country's arsenal.
NEW WORLD is the beginner's version of the long-discontinued CONQUISTADOR. Simulation enthusiasts will find nothing here that Richard Berg's game didn't cover in greater detail; but game players will find it a much quicker, more playable, and more enjoyable game. It is a multi-player game for two-to-six players based on the discovery, exploration and colonization of the Americas. Each player assumes the role of a European power exploring and exploiting the New World. As such, it is a pleasing blend of economics and discovery, with just enough military overtones to keep wargamers interested. By wargame standards this is not a complicated game, coming closest to Risk in scope. It has purposely been kept simple to appeal to social gamers—but it is far from simplistic.

The game is played on a 16" x 22" mounted mapboard depicting the Americas, which has been divided into 26 hexagonal areas. Each area is rated for climate, native population, resources, and gold. At the outset, players bid for the right to an exclusive anchorage in the area of their choice. Thereafter, whenever players co-habit the same area there is usually combat. Each turn players must plot the number of Colonists they will take to the New World and where they will land. In addition, players must purchase or maintain Ships and buy any Soldiers or Merchants they desire. Each turn players also roll for losses sustained in the crossing (those furthest away charging the greatest losses) and lands the survivors where previously allocated. Colonists occupying mine sites roll to discover gold. Those working mines roll to see if the gold is depleted. At this point, chits are drawn to determine order of movement and players may move their forces one hex overland. After each has moved, the same order is used to resolve combat versus other players or natives in the same area. Natives are attacked to prevent their rising, or in the case of the Incas or Aztecs, to loot their cities. All players then undergo an Attrition die roll which is influenced by the climate of the area occupied. Those with sufficient colonists left (as well as a majority of both colonists and soldiers) in their area may claim Political Control of that area, which in turn translates to money in the bank.

The turn ends as each player returns his fleet to Europe packed with the gold and resources of the New World to turn into cash for the coming turns. The player with the most cash on Turn 10 wins, unless another player gains political control over five areas in the interim. This Sudden Death VC keeps the players balancing precariously at all times between the need for peace to maximize profit and war to prevent a political victory. The resulting blend of diplomacy, military and economic skills needed to succeed is truly unique.

That would be entertainment enough for many, but NEW WORLD contains much more when players move beyond the land game. In the Exploration version, each hex in the New World is covered by a tile masking its contents. Only by actually entering the area can a player see what that tile holds in store. This version better captures the spirit of the great explorers moving into the unknown. For the more military-minded, an advanced rule allows Naval Wars or Piracy to occur with raids on fleets and ports that can be as devastating as the English ravages of the Spanish Treasure Fleets. NEW WORLD should be available this summer.

The same designer, Derek Carver, is responsible for another new Avalon Hill offering called SHOWBIZ, and I should at least passing mention to it here (for those among you interested in great games regardless of subject). Derek, an Englishman, is highly thought of in Europe as a designer of simple, yet challenging, social games; SHOWBIZ may be his best. For lack of a better description, I’d peg SHOWBIZ as a cross between MASTERS OF THE AIR and CONQUISTADOR. Each player takes the role of a talent agent who must weight future demand and sign various types of performers. There are six types, ranging from six ventriloquists to 21 singers. Due to their rarity the ventriloquists would seem more valuable, but because the potential demand for each type is equal, there is no certainty that a ventriloquist will be worth more than, or even as much as, a singer on any given turn. Each turn a market forecast for the types of performers in demand is dealt out and given a reliability rating ranging from poor (15% accurate) to foolproof (100%). Based on this forecast, each player bids on the services of available performers—hoping to secure as many of the right type as possible. If he signs them, he must then decide the length of their contract (one to five years). A long contract saves resources in avoiding bidding wars for future performers but ties a player to that performer even when fickle public demand no longer is interested in him. Breaking contracts is expensive, but often necessary when you have a slew of outstanding talent. At ten turns, SHOWBIZ is a great evening’s family entertainment for 2-6 competitive gamers.

The Avalon Hill Game Company is again seeking playtesters for two games currently in the throes of development. SeaHawks is a proposed game dealing with the Age of Piracy for one to four players. Also on line is Sub Hunt, a card game from Courtney Allen very much in the mold of UP FRONT dealing with modern underwater combat. Playtest volunteers must be willing to spend some 20 hours per month in the testing, for a period of three months, and to send in regular written reports of their findings. Both solitary and multi-player testing is needed, so gamers able to enjoy either are sought. Applicants are cautioned that the playtest materials are pre-production quality and may involve some effort to assemble. Remuneration is limited to a free copy of the published game for each group of playtesters. In playing either of these games, applicants should send a short letter of introduction to Don Greenwood, e/o Avalon Hill. Please be sure to mention which game you are interested in testing. We regret that, due to the volume of mail such playtest invitations usually generate, we will be unable to reply to any but those actually accepted.
**EAST RUBBLE**
Shattering the Wall in the East

By John Hyler

**RUSSIAN FRONT** is a game that demands and rewards excellence in both strategic and tactical planning. For both Axis and Soviet players in the Campaign Game, the overall strategicebb and flow will be roughly similar from game to game. Within this strategic framework, countless tactical permutations and options can be explored and utilized, particularly for the Axis player in the early turns. The Soviet player, faced with an overwhelming qualitative superiority, must seek first to thwart the Axis threat with the means at his disposal. Later, when enough reinforcements arrive to establish strategic parity, Soviet tactical options will increase commensurately.

The tone of each Campaign Game is established by the end of Turn 2, at the latest. By this time, the relative success of the initial Axis blitz will be apparent. In his article "East Wall" (Vol. 24, No.1 of The GENERAL), as amended later in his letter to the editor (published in Vol. 24, No.5), Rich Miller explored a possible set-up of the Soviet forces in the Campaign Game. His set-up reflects his initial tactical goal of preventing Axis capture of Vitebsk, Odessa, and Vinnitsa on the Axis first turn. As far as Vitebsk and Odessa are concerned, he does succeed. Distance and lack of German airpower make it implosible for them in those cities without actually gaining any advancing units with hit points for excessive movement and/or unfavorable attack ratios. However, Vinnitsa falls with ease on Turn 1 (as will be shown later).

Throughout his article, Mr. Miller demonstrates a solid understanding of the rules, as well as of the potential of the different specialized units in the Soviet force pool. However, a Soviet player who uses this set-up, when faced by an astute Axis player, will find himself facing disaster. Only with tremendous skill and fortune will he be able to prevent an Axis Decisive Victory by November 1941 (1942 at the latest). This article will show to what extent the Axis player in the early turns can totally compromise this Soviet deployment—if the Axis first turn strategy is followed.

### Geometric Strategy

"The main objective for your Baltic Forces is to prevent the capture of Vitebsk in June... Army Group Center armor, starting at HH4, proceeds to blitz KK6... By sitting right on the boundary, they force back the placement of any reserve units."

These three sentences from "East Wall" reveal the flaw in Mr. Miller's strategic and tactical planning. He repeats a mistake made by generals over the ages. His planning and deployment is based on the belief that the enemy will do exactly as anticipated, with little thought for contingencies. What if the Axis' main objective is not capturing Vitebsk on Turn 1? What if AG Centre's armor does not blitz KK6, or even start in HH4? (Hex KK6 is a rather inauspicious place for AG Centre's armor to blitz anyway, since they will have to use four movement factors to move there and engage in a round of combat—leaving only two movement factors for blitz/pursuit movement. They would also then be in a blind alley, with the Soviet 11th Infantry in KK7, and would have no choice but to follow AG North's armor, assuming a blitz of LL6. Even then, they will have eight, and not seven, hexes before reaching JH12.) What if the Axis player has other plans which preclude the use of Reserve counters?

"Geometric strategy" requires the analysis of all aspects of the situation, avenues of approach, possible strategies and counterstrategies, tactics, etc., and then to allocate forces to permit maximum flexibility of response. Learning to think geometrically, as opposed to linear or planar thought, is one of the most important things that Avalon Hill games require. It can be done. By having the defender do nothing more than one Axis strategy, Mr. Miller leaves himself dangerously vulnerable in ways that can be easily exploited.

### Armor in the Swamp

Reviewing his initial deployment, one finds that Mr. Miller has placed the 13th Armor in CC5 and the 7th Armor in EE2—both marsh hexes. The 17th is safe from attack on Thrn I, so it can be moved later. However, the 13th is a sitting duck. Wallowing in the muck, it has a net defensive factor of "I" due to the negative modifier for armor in marsh hexes. With the +1 modifier for Axis First Turn Surprise, this gives the Axis no worse than a +3 advantage with its weakest infantry unit.

Needling speed, the Axis player may not voluntarily even send units through marsh hexes for flanking movements because of the prohibitive movement costs. This, plus the weakness of armor in the marsh, makes me wonder about the Russian's rationale behind this placement. The 13th Armor could be used as a line-backer for the main defensive line in Helsinki, either to hold the Soviet army exploits on narrow fronts, bypassing the strong points in favor of creating confusion in the enemy rear. The infantry then had the task of mopping up the strong points. By placing his strongest infantry units in places like Bialystok, Brest-Litovsk and Grodno, Mr. Miller insures that the German infantry will nail them down on Turn 1 as the panzers rumble on, making their chances of survival to the end of Turn 2 very slim.

### Freeing the Luftwaffe

Before proceeding further, a few words on Axis tactics are in order. Tactical success for the Axis is best measured by how many options for use are available for the air armies. The German air armies are easily the most versatile, and hence the most valuable, units in the Axis force pool. They can provide supply during the Special Movement/Combat Phase, defensive air support during the Special and Normal Combat Phases, ground support and air interdiction and attacks on naval and air bases, and even strategic bombing of railroad and replacement point cities.

If Axis success on the ground is extensive enough, the air armies will have great freedom of choice in this options. Being forced to provide ground support exclusively from turn to turn at the expense of other possibilities deprives the Axis player of much versatility when attacking. This may result in victory eluding him. For example, German failure to strategically bomb the railroads in a given turn results in the Soviet player moving a factory unit away from a threatened city; in the next Victory Level Phase, the Axis player finds that he is one VP shy of a Decisive Victory.

As a corollary, if the Luftwaffe is freed from having to provide only ground support, this is a good indication that the ground forces are also freed from necessarily having to directly attack the enemy every turn. This freedom of action opens a multiplicity of options. Therefore, the Axis first turn strategy must be calculated to decisively blow open the front so that many options for use are possible for the air armies, and hence for the ground forces as well.

### The Magical +3

The +3 attack is the benchmark attack advantage (even in a game which seems to have such a point). All +3 attacks are decisive, and the attacker can roll a retreat result. From +3 on, the attacker will never face a required retreat, enabling him to continue to attack in subsequent rounds until the enemy unit is eliminated, retreating or the attacker voluntarily retreats his own forces. At +3, the attacker has only a one-sixth chance of sustaining two hits in one combat round. At +4 advantage and above, the attacker can never suffer more than one hit per combat round. Clearly, if possible, and most definitely during the first Axis turn, attacks should be made at +3 advantage to insure success.

The key then, to my response to Mr. Miller's "East Wall," lies in Rule 15.5: "All Axis but Finns are +1 attacking." Just as the Soviet player must ruthlessly exploit the benefits of theAxis First Winter, so too must the Axis player take advantage of Axis First Turn Surprise to attack and destroy as many Russian units as possible.

Figure 1 shows my initial placement of the Finnish Army. Contrary to Dan Thompson's assessment in "Before the Snow Flies" (Vol. 22, No.4), Hango is a dangerous open back door to the Finnish defenses. Failure to eliminate the Hango garrison on Turn 1 can result in the Soviets transporting a much better unit to man the defenses there, making any future capture a bloody prospect. This compromises the Finnish defenses, inhibits their drive to Leningrad, and keeps another valuable port available for the Soviet fleets. So the 4th Finn is positioned to attack Hango. Alone, this is but a +1 attack—but it gives the Finns an 83.3% chance of eliminating it with one shot. Helsinki is garrisoned with the 7th Finn, and remains so until the threat of amphibious or paratroop assault is ended. The remainder of the Finnish Army are deployed to satisfy deployment requirements.

Figure 3 shows placement of Axis forces on the Central Front. The initial set-up is fairly standard. However, to take advantage of weaknesses in Mr. Miller's set-up, most of AG North is positioned in Memel (MM5). The armor of AGs North, Centre and South are positioned adjacent to the hexes that they will blitz to maximize pursuit and blitz capability. Finally, Figure 2 shows the deployment of Axis forces on the Southern Front. As Mr. Miller left MM6 open, this is where the main Axis thrust will occur, with units poised to shot through the hole.

It is during the Movement Phase that the true focus of the Axis attack becomes apparent. The first Battle Location is in Helsinki. This seals the harbor and prevents the Soviet fleet from evacuating Helsinki when threatened. Next, the 6th Finn attacks the 10th Armor in WW20. The remainder of the Finnish Army moves to block any approach to Helsinki that the Soviets may contemplate.

Along the Central Front, a mixing of units into adjacent Army Group areas is required to maximize the invasion. First, the armor of AG North, plus the 38th Infantry, enters MM6; a Battle Location and a Blitz marker are placed there. Then the 5th Infantry of AG Centre is moved from HH4 to KK6,
followed by the 2nd Infantry moving to LL6. With the Soviet ZOC neutralized, the path through the gap is open. The 11th Infantry shoots through and moves to K10, sealing the port of Odessa off from the rest of the front. The 54th Infantry follows and enters Vinnytsia, absorbing a hit of damage for the extra movement taken. The Romanian Cavalry and 2nd Armor occupy M7 and N7. The 4th Romanian retreats to garrison Constanta until Odessa is taken and the threat of amphibious or paratroop assault passes.

In all applicable hexes entered (except those on the Southern Front and at Riga), the rails are converted either enroute to another hex or as an enemy hex is entered so that upon completion of combat, the rail will be converted. After combat is complete, the rail net will be converted right up to the front lines. No reserve counters are used. The focus and goal of the Axis is destruction of Soviet units in this first turn. No Axis unit will stand idly by on Turn 1, when their attack strength will never be greater.

After all ground movement is complete, the naval, air, land, air units move. The only naval movement is to move the German Baltic Fleet to Riga to sweep mines. The powerful Soviet Baltic Fleet may attempt intervention, but this would be suicidal. With help from the Luftwaffe, a +7 attack could be mounted against the Soviet fleet, with a 50% chance of inflicting three hits of damage. For the Soviets, destruction will be the better part of valor on the high seas.

The Finnish air force flies to Leningrad to make an airbase attack on the Soviet air there. This is a -1 attack, but it pins the enemy airforce and prevents them from being rude elsewhere. The air of AG North flies to Pskov and makes a railroad attack. The Soviet 3rd Air may fly to intervene, but it would be subject to a +3 attack, with a 50% chance of elimination on the first shot. As with the Baltic Fleet, the Soviets will likely opt for discretion. AG Centre's air moves to J7 for an air interdiction mission and to I7 for ground support. AG South's air flies to BB4 (Brest-Litovsk) and to X4 to provide ground support. The Romanian air wing goes to L6 (ground support).

Liquidation

The accompanying chart shows the 26 Battle Locations of the first turn and the units involved.

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<td>A4</td>
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A bit more detail on some of these might be in order, however.

Commencing the Combat Phase, the Finnish airforce fights one round and retreats. The railroad attack at Pskov and the air interdiction in J7 are resolved. The German fleet sweeps the mines at Riga. With Riga occupied by friendly troops and the 3rd Romanian gone, a rail attack is a source of supply—something to remember during the Return and Transfer and Exploitation phases.

With the preliminaries completed, the Axis player now turns to the Blitz attacks. The hapless Soviet 29th, facing a +7 attack from AG North's armor in MM6, will last no longer than two combat rounds. Assuming the worst die rolls possible for the Axis, after the first round it retreats to NN6. The 41st Armor pursues it while the 56th Armor blitz moves to KK8, converting the rail line in LL7 enroute. After eliminating the 29th Infantry, the 41st Armor then blitz moves to LL7.

The armor of AG Center, blitzing GG7, has as its objectives after blitz move hexes HH7, I8, FF7, EE7 and DD6. Getting there may be a problem, due to the Soviet 3rd Infantry in GG8. One of the weaknesses of Mr. Miller's set-up is the lack of any units in the immediate rear to act as line- backers. True, the Soviets suffer a paucity of extra units for use in this role, but those that are available should be carefully conserved and positioned.

The line-backers have a triple function: they can harass blitz movement by enemy armor, inhibit exploitation, and serve as safe "islands" for adjacent units attacked by non-blitzing ground units to retreat to. The 3rd Infantry at GG8 illustrates the potential effect that a few units in the rear can have. The attack of AG Centre's armor is conducted at +5, regardless of the worst possible round roll. This should eliminate the 5th Infantry. Unless a retreat back to Vilna is contemplated, the worst possible retreat path for this unit is to GG8 since an armored unit will pursue into that hex, effectively negating any benefits of having a line-backer. A retreat to HH7 or FF7 frees the 3rd Infantry for possible response movement against the blitzing armor.

This said, if the 5th retreats to HH7, then two armored units pursue since response movement by the 3rd into HH7 will not prevent occupation of I8. With the 3rd Infantry staying put, the remaining three armored units must then negotiate their way through the gap at FF7. Only one unit at a time should move. The first converts the rail at FF7. If the 3rd Infantry does not respond, the panners are then free to move on to DD6. Then the second armor unit follows, and so forth. If the Soviet 3rd does respond into FF7, the remaining German armor will have to blitz around FF7 through GG8. These units will have to move one at a time, since the last armored unit will have to absorb a hit of damage to reach DD6 (as per 19.2).

Regardless of ff, when and/or where the 3rd Infantry responds, the panners of AG Centre can still attain their objective hexes. A price in hit points for extra movement may have to be paid, but it is necessary for all that is to follow. The preceding discussion, however, illustrates how units in the rear can harass blitzing armor. It is true that either the Axis or the Soviets can afford a true "doubleline" defense (ala THIRD REICH), but with a few units in the rear as line-backers carefully placed, an armored thrust in that sector can be severely stymied. This also nicely sums up the weakness of Mr. Miller's set-up: strong units on the front lines or isolated, inappropriate units in swamp hexes, precious few units in the immediate rear as reserves.

AG South's blitz attack in X3 is on the +7 column, with a 50% chance of eliminating the 13th Infantry in one shot. The objective hexes for this thrust are X4, Y5 and V6. If the 13th Infantry survives the first round of combat and retreats to X4, an advance to V6 will not be possible unless hit...
for extra movement are taken. In any case, all the armor (plus air support) pursues into X4. A retreat into the woods in W4 by the 13th demands that one armored unit plus the air support pursue to prevent the 13th from response moving back into X4 and so halting further blitz movement as the panzers roar through the hole in the line (11.7.2.4). To assure unimpeded exploitation, the pursuing armor and air must make sure that W4 and X4 are clear of Soviet units. Hits for extra movement during pursuit may have to be sustained to insure this. However, since all attacks will be at +7, the odds greatly favor an easy diminution of any Soviet resistance.

Figure 4 graphically shows the situation at the completion of the resolution of the blitz movement. As can be seen, most of the Soviet forces north of the Pripet Marsh are caught between a rock and a hard place. That is to say, caught by German infantry with a wall of armor and air interdiction behind them to prevent retreat. The conclusion of the Combat Phase should see the virtual annihilation of the Soviet front line north of the marsh, and gaping rents torn in the lines south of the marsh.

A few of the regular combats merit attention. The battle in KK7 should be delayed until all combat in adjacent hexes are resolved. By absorbing a hit during movement to convert the rail, the 1st Infantry is vulnerable to elimination. If this occurred, there would then be an open hex for other Soviet units to retreat to. The 49th Mountain, attacking AA4, must force the Russian 17th Infantry to retreat to totally secure Brest-Litovsk from counterattack. Attacking on the +2 column and being able to absorb five hits of damage before elimination, the odds favor the mountain troops. The 1st Romanian in L6 should retreat after combat to M6 to keep the supply line open for the Romanian armor to exploit.

After the Return and Transfer phases, the armor heads east. The panzers of AG North moves to O012 and LL13 to inhibit movement of reserves south from Pskov and to be in position to shoot through the bottleneck at Narva on Turn 2. AG Centre's armor exploits to DD10 to freeze the factory and cut the railline; and elements go to I113, II12 and GG12—to partially trap the Soviet 22nd Infantry—and either to Vilna, if unoccupied by the enemy, or to HH11, if it is. AG South armor exploits to T8, U10 and S10, taking extra hits if necessary. This will partially trap the enemy 5th Armor and insure that the rails from Vinnitsa to Kiev will remain cut. The Romanian armor exploits to O10.

**Aftermath**

Clearly, the Russians are in deep doo-doo. With no reinforcements due until Turn 2, they must attempt to form a new defensive line with the meager forces remaining. No rail movement is possible because of the air attack on Pskov's railyard, so the Soviet Army can move only as far as their inherent movement factors permit.

What has not been eliminated by the Axis south of the Pripet Marshes is now largely out of supply. The Soviets can supply some of these forces by air south of hexrow R without running afoul of the Luftwaffe, now stationed in Brest-Litovsk, so the trap is not complete. Some units will be able to escape and establish a new defensive line. Ultimately, though, this line will be too shallow and have too few units to prevent yet another breakthrough on Turn 2. Except, possibly, for those units able to move out of Lvov, any other Soviet forces out of supply at the end of the Soviet Combat Phase on the first turn will probably disappear, or sustain so many hits during the "Remove Out of Supply" Segment that they will be overrun during the Axis combat of the coming turn.

With the front ripped as completely as it is, the Luftwaffe can devote its energies to more esoteric pursuits. Railroad attacks are particularly effective.
Two successful rail attacks in a turn freeze the factory counters where they sit. Several consecutive turns of this, if possible, will see one factory unit after another be captured by the Axis. Or, selective air interdiction attacks can be made to funnel a Russian retreat in a desired direction to keep an avenue for exploitation open. Other options for the Luftwaffe will no doubt present themselves to the experienced Axis player.

The scarcity of Soviet ground forces enables the Axis land forces to freely advance and consolidate gains. Armored units, in particular, do not have to make blitz moves every turn. To be sure, the Blitz counters should be utilized each turn; but not all the armor need participate now. The remaining panzers can help their own supply situation by converting a few rail hexes before positioning themselves for exploitation. Although the Axis armor may in places start subsequent turns out of supply, the Luftwaffe can supply them with relative ease and with a fighting chance of success should Soviet air intervene.

An Axis player using this strategy against the "East Wall" must have a certain complacency towards sustaining casualties. Heavy casualties and unit elimination can and do occur in this first turn. However, the infantry will usually have at least two turns before they catch up to the armor to recoup losses. Being as far ahead of the rest of the army as they are, the Axis player may not be able to replace armor losses for awhile due to their supply situation. So some care must be taken when contemplating extra movement for the panzers to ascertain that any hits sustained because of extra movement are really worth the cost.

Tactically, Mr. Miller succeeds partially in his goal. Vinnitsa will fall, but Vitebsk and Odessa will remain in Soviet hands through Turn 1. However, strategically he completely misses the boat. A Soviet player who uses this or a similar set-up will see his front line obliterated. In subsequent turns, the effect snowballs, with first one and then another hastily formed defensive line being blitzed, outflanked, encircled and destroyed.

As Craig Taylor pointed out ("The Russian Front Dissected" in Vol. 22, No. 4), through 1941 it is "springtime for Hitler". Among the examples of play he focuses upon is an initial blitz by the Axis in the Baltic, and so highlights the difficulties faced by the Russian player in his initial deployment. In short, the Soviet player will see his forces repeatedly overrun, isolated and mopped up. For him, the goal of the first few turns is to maintain a force in being until the snows come. Dan Thompson (in "Before the Snow Flies", same issue) offers an alternative Russian deployment; while having its own peculiar flaws, it does serve as a sound starting point for those seeking the optimum Soviet set-up in RUSSIAN FRONT—if such a thing even exists.

I feel, and hopefully have demonstrated, that Axis tactics in the first turn of the Campaign Game of RUSSIAN FRONT should center around the destruction of as many Soviet units as possible. The Soviet player's set-up should, in turn, center around preserving as many units as possible to create a defensive line in later turns, ignoring initially the protection of any particular location (except Leningrad). Only this will slow the Axis advance enough to let later reinforcements arrive and stem the tide. In effect, trade space for time and units if you have chosen to take the Russian side.

Mr. Miller writes extensively about offensive possibilities for the Red Army during the first few turns. I will state categorically that, with the few units remaining after Turn 1 (if his set-up is used), Soviet offensive capability disappears. This, in turn, provides a very real possibility for the Wehrmacht to take Moscow in September or October, and then go cruising to a Decisive Victory in November.
Figure 4: The situation at the end of Axis Blitz Movement.
BACK ISSUES

Only the following back issues of The GENERAL remain in stock; price is $4.00 per issue (plus the usual shipping and handling charges). Due to the low quantities of some back issues, if ordering, please specify alternative selections. Below is a listing of each in-stock back issue by subject matter; game abbreviations are italicized and standard (a partial listing may be found on the “Opponent’s Wanted” form on the insert of this issue). Type of article is indicated by the following abbreviations: H—Historical, DN—Designer’s Notes, V—Variant, SR—Series Replay, S—Strategy, Q—Questions, P—PBM (postal), Sc—Scenarios, A—Analytical. The featured game for each issue is always the first one listed. Those printed in red indicate one-color reprints of previously out-of-stock issues.

AREA TOP 50 LIST

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<td>A. Lipka</td>
<td>20 754G</td>
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MEET THE 50...

Mr. Greg Smith is 41, married, father of two, holds a M.S in Math, is a doctorial candidate and resides in Sewickley, Pennsylvania.

Favorite Game: original BULGE
Area Rated Games: STAUNGRAD, AK, D-DAY, BULGE

Mr. Smith writes:

"All I ask is that you take a few lines to urge those of you who haven't tried PBM recently to give it a try. Gaming by mail has been a unique opportunity to share some enjoyment with remote and total strangers, who become friends in the process. Some critics of play-by-mail have complained that it takes too long to complete a game by mail. It is true that you have forged a relationship with your opponent that holds years of future gaming enjoyment. I find that holds years of future gaming enjoyment. I find..."
OPPONENTS WANTED

COMRADES! The Workers and Peasants Militia needs volunteers to defend the orchestra works and to keep the soldier alive. BATTLE! War to the end! Our own people are our only friends. 

Lower Butte, 1516 E. 22nd Street, Saginaw, MI 48638, (517) 487-5814.

New Orleans Area Gamers Club seeks players for board games, wargaming, and role-playing games. We play in Ray Arenas, 2nd Floor, 1507 Canal St., New Orleans, LA 70112, (504) 523-2369.

Wanted: opponents for pbm RF. Two games with exchange for another. Russ Gifford, 320 E. 27th, South Chicago, IL 60601, (312) 776-8265.


Wanted: opponents for SUPERSTAR BASEBALL. Also will pbm. Robert Hickman, 75 Hazelglen Dr., Seattle, WA 98155, (206) 483-5166.

Looking for opponents in Puerto Rico. ftf; formation of new league. S. C. Pichardo, 152 Ponce de Leon Ave., San Juan, PR 00901, (809) 783-2143.

Adult gamer looking for opponents in Sandy/Salt Lake City area. I am equally interested in history, contemporary battles, and futuristic warfare. Contact: 101 Dundee Ln., Spring Lake, NC 28390, (919) 775-8234.

Adult playing for history and fun. Ftf. John Michalski, Box 60665, Okla City, OK 73139, (405) 235-7741.
The first of the Victory Games titles to be rated independently did not show well, although this small number of responses to our regular survey of a new design obviates almost any possible conclusions. However, certain of the number below are not far off the mark I suspect, and have a validity for those who may be contemplating a purchase of TOKYO EXPRESS.

Certainly, the "Complexity" rating seems in line with that assigned by the gnomes of VO. The "Game Length" is likely fairly accurate, since this tends to mean more an objective evaluation as a subjective one. If you are looking for an engaging solitaire challenge that will occupy an evening's play, the game seems to be tailor made. And, if small sample base is taken into account, the component quality is about what one has come to expect from Victory Games. Of the other value judgments in mind that these represent the collective opinion of but 16 of your fellow—several are not the average found on the RBG. In summation, while it is yet perhaps a bit early to judge this latest solitaire offering, if uncertainly in the subject matter, it would appear that the prospective buyer won't be disappointed.

**THE QUESTION BOX**

**READERS BUYER'S GUIDE**

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 individual 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 ratings take the form of a numerical value ranging from 1 to 9 (with "1" equating to "horrible," and "9" equating to "excellent.") However, the Game Length category is measured in multiples of ten minutes (thus, a rating of "18" equates to three hours). A "+" following the Year of release indicates that the game is continued or complemented by additional modules in successive years (for instance, the ratings for SL reflect the entire system—original game plus add-on modules). Game Type is broken down into three broad categories: SO = Solitaire; MP = Multi-Player; 2P = Two-Player. Minimum requirement of SO responses (see the "Sample Base") was judged necessary for a valid representation; additional titles that garner such will be added to the RBG in the future.

**WARGAME RBG**
Infiltrator's Report

Bowl (117-3 over the Green Bay Packers of Don Greenwood). The 28-member league then capped off their season by losing a challenge match with a rival league from Philadelphia five games to four. Players wishing to join either league, or to challenge the AHFSL to a match, should contact Don Greenwood (c/o Avalon Hill).

For fans of ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER, there is now available a computer program (designed by Mr. Tim Kitchen of Rochester, New York) that will generate DYO scenarios for them. The program is loosely based upon the systems introduced by Greg Schmittgen and Charlie Kibler back some time ago in The GENERAL (Vol. 24, No. 1); it was written for the IBM PC and should run on any true compatible with any memory configuration greater than 64K. Basically, the program generates a scenario using various charts; it randomly determines nationalities, date, initiative, board configuration, total point values, victory conditions, ELR ratings, weather, etc. In effect, it gives the players all the data necessary to play an AGL scenario (except the actual purchase of forces, which is left to them). The program is being distributed free of charge by Mr. Kitchen, so ASL players can look for it on local electronic bulletin boards, or they can call The Data Comm BBS in Litchfield, CT. I must also mention of one entry which, while certainly not a prize winner, deserves some sort of "honesty" award. Perry Cocks of Baltimore submitted the following in answer to the two questions:

1) I never roll low enough to get Critical Hits!
2) Are you telling me that even if I could manage to roll snake-eyes I might not get a Critical Hit? I hate this game!

Contest #149 pitted the entrant against the wealthy Whynoms in a playing of the final turns of MERCHANT OF VENUS. To snatch victory from them was not so much a matter of movement, but rather one of astute trading. Asked to show the human actions of the next two turns, the correct response would read as follows:

First Turn: Move to the Nik port at Wet Landing to trade with 10 (the Oossuth). There sell one port, factory, one Psychotic Sculpture, and one Infinite Puzzle.

Second Turn: If the Whynom moves to Cholos and buys a factory: Move to your own port at Paintfall and sell the Psychotic Sculpture, Infinite Puzzle and your Shield. You buy the other port and the factory, and claim the victory ... before the Whynom player gains for trading at your own port on the second turn described, you have just enough to claim the victory ... before the Whynom player can do so.
Journey to Moscow to experience first-hand a humorous behind-the-scenes look at the intrigue, double-dealing, back-stabbing and outright paranoia that has characterized the Soviet Politburo throughout history in a delightful, satirical study of power politics in its rawest form. Now you can plot your rise from the ranks of the people to candidate, and then on to the Politburo itself. Will your Five Year Plan succeed and raise you to a first-level Ministry, or fail and raise only the ire of the KGB? The price of failure is surely a one-way cattle car to Siberia...unless rumors of the KGB Head's son defecting to the west are true. Hmmm..."Comrade KGB Chief, before we discuss affairs of state, how are the wife and kids?" And so it goes...one hilarious purge after another in a system of sinister governmental checks and balances that only the Soviets could devise.

3 to 6 Players
Ages 12 Up

The very name conjures up images of power and intrigue beneath the onion-shaped spires of the world's most austere, yet powerful, capital. He who controls the governing body therein has his finger on the pulse of the world. Who is this man who holds the destiny of mankind in his hands? What is his power base? How did he become head of one of the strongest nations on earth?

No one is safe in this diabolical game of power grabbing. Your staunchest political ally may have one foot in a rival camp and sell you out for his own advancement. Even the walls have ears in the Kremlin. Is it any wonder that the stress of Party office weighs so heavily...literally aging characters before your eyes? But that's life...and death in the KREMLIN.

CONTENTS:
1 16" x 22" mounted Gameboard
260 die-cut 2-sided laminated Playing Pieces
24 Politician Cards
36 Intrigue Cards
1 Easy Basic Game Rules Folder
1 Advanced Rules Folder
1 20-sided Die

TIME SCALE: 1 Turn = 1 Year
UNIT SCALE: Individual Politicians
PLAYERS: 3-6 devious people, ages 12 and up
PLAYING TIME: 1-2 hours

The Avalon Hill Game Company
Division of Monarch Avalon, Inc.
4517 Harford Road
Baltimore, MD 21214

©Copyright 1986 The Avalon Hill Game Company, All Rights Reserved.
GRIBOVO, RUSSIA, 3 January 1942: In late December, while the battles for Moscow were still boiling cauldrons, STAVKA ordered four Soviet armies to attack and destroy the German 4th Army. To assist in the action, a tactical airdrop by Soviet paratroopers was planned to disrupt German command, communications and logistical systems deep in the rear. The 1st Battalion of the 201st Airborne Brigade was directed to take and hold as long as possible the villages of Gribovo and Maslova astride the main road. They were also to blow up bridges over the river Shanya in order to prevent German supplies and reinforcements from arriving at the front. Making the airdrop at night, Captain Surzhik led part of his command directly in its fall on the village of Gribovo.

BOARD CONFIGURATION:

BATTLEFIELD MAP:

SPECIAL RULES:
1. EC are Deep Snow (E3.73) with no Wind at start. Extreme Winter (E3.74) is in effect.
2. Night Rules are in effect. The initial Base NVR is five hexes with no Cloud Cover and no Moon. The German is the Scenario Defender (E1.2); the Russian is the Scenario Attacker. The Majority Squad Type for the German is Lax; for the Russian, Stealthy. Note that the Russians may not use Cloaking counters (E1.41 & E9.11).
3. All buildings on all boards are wooden. All paved roads are plowed; unpaved roads are not plowed.
4. The German Sniper counter is placed onboard just before the Russian parachutes land (E9.4). The Russian Sniper counter is placed onboard immediately after the first Russian Player Turn is completed.

AFTERMATH: After assembling as many men as possible, Captain Surzhik led his force in driving the surprised German troops out of the village in a sharp firefight. Deploying about half of his men around the village, Surzhik sent another group out to destroy the nearby bridge over the Shanya. During the next few hours, the Soviet paratroopers repulsed several attempts by the Germans to reoccupy the village. As dawn came, stronger counterattacks were mounted by the Germans, but the Desantniki kept the road closed between Medyn and Gribovo for several days. At last, running low on ammunition, the paratroopers began a fighting withdrawal toward the advancing Soviet 43rd Army. On 11 January, after some costly skirmishing, the cold but cheerful paratroopers linked up with friendly forces near Kremenskoye.
LAND LEVIATHANS

ASL SCENARIO Q

LIPKI, RUSSIA, 3 July 1941: Under pressure from Stalin to hold Smolensk, Yeremenko was desperate to halt the German offensive. On 1 July, he committed his sole armored reserve: the 1st Moscow Motorized Rifle Division under Major-General I.G. Kreyzer. It was a crack unit, the pride of STAVKA. Equipped with the new T-34 and KV-2 tanks, the division moved off to meet and defeat the 18th Panzer Division, the spearhead of Guderian’s 2nd Panzergruppe. On 3 July at Lipki, six miles east of Borisov, contact was made.

BOARD CONFIGURATION:

VICTORY CONDITIONS: The Russians win immediately if they have Exited ≥ three AFV (with functioning MA) off the west edge.

BALANCE:
* Add one MMG to the German OB.
* Substitute a 9-2 armor leader for the 9-1 in the Russian OB.

TURN RECORD CHART

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GERMAN Sets Up First</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2*</th>
<th>3</th>
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<th>5</th>
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<tr>
<td>RUSSIAN Moves First</td>
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Elements of Panzer Regiment 18 [ELR: 4] set up on board 3 on/west-of hexrow I {SAN: 3}

Enter on hex 2GG5 on Turn 2:

Elements of the 1st Moscow Motorized Rifle Division enter on hex 3GG5 on Turn 1: {SAN: 0}

SPECIAL RULES:
1. EC are Moderate, with no Wind at start.
2. All buildings are wooden. All 3rd-level hill hexes are considered 2nd-level.
3. All Inherent Russian crews have a morale of “9”.

AFTERMATH: A number of light Russian AFVs, supported by a single KV-2 and a single T-34, advanced on the lead elements of the 18th Panzer Regiment. Stunned by the appearance of the two armored monsters not encountered before on the Army Group Center front, the German infantry scattered. A handful of German tanks were all that stood in the path of the Soviet advance. The T26 and BT tanks were routed by the Pz IIIs. The German 37mm shells were unable, however, to affect the KV or T-34. Two panzers were quickly destroyed. At that point, several Pz IVs arrived to engage the KV-2, while the remaining Pz IIIs concentrated on the T-34’s vulnerable tracks. Soon both Russian heavy tanks were out of action, the KV bogged on soft ground and the T-34 with its treads shot away. Without the threat of the KV or T-34, the infantry were able to hold their position. This incident reveals the cardinal sin of the Russian command: employment of their superior T-34 and KV types not in formation, but individually among light and medium tanks, or as support for the infantry. It was a mistake Soviet Russia was to pay dearly for.
TURNING POINT: STALIN GRAD
$25.00
Battalion-Level, Area Movement Game of the Pivotal Eastern Front Battle

INSTRUCTIONS:
Rate each category by placing a number ranging from 1 through 9 in the appropriate space to the right ("1" equating to excellent; "9", average; "10", 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 HITLER'S WAR, enter "16" for category 7a.) For an explanation of the categories, refer to the AH Philosophy of Vol. 24, No. 5. Enter ratings only on those categories relevant to the game in question. Note that AH's ratings for Complexity, Year of Publication and Type (2P=two player; MP=multiples player; SO=solo) have been provided for your information.

1. Overall Value
2. Components
2a. Mapboard
2b. Counters
2c. Rulebook
3. Complexity
3a. Avalon Hill Complexity
4. Completeness
5. Playability
5a. Component Level
5b. Player Balance
6. Authenticity
7. Game Length
7a. Shortest
7b. Longest
8. Year of Publication
9. Type

What Have You Been Playing?

Top ten lists are always in vogue—the subject books, television, shows, movies or even games. The public seems never to tire of seeing how its favorite way of spending their leisure time stacks up against the competition. So, to cater further to your whims (and to satisfy our own curiosity), this is The GENERAL's version of the gamer's top ten. From the responses to this form the editors produce the regular column "So That's What You've Been Playing" found elsewhere in this issue.

We aren't asking you to subjectively 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 fewer) games which you've spent the most time playing since you received your last issue of The GENERAL. With the collection of these responses, we can generate a consensus list of what's being played by our readership. This list can serve both as a guide for us (for coverage in these pages) and others (convention organizers spring instantly to mind). The degree of correlation between this listing, the Best Sellers Lists, and the RBG should prove extremely interesting.

Feel free to list any game of any sort regardless of manufacturer. There will be, of course, a built-in bias to the survey since the readers all play Avalon Hill games to some extent; but it should be no more prevalent than similar projects undertaken by other periodicals with special-interest based circulation. The amount to which this bias affects the final outcome will be left to the individual's own discretion.

Opponent Wanted

$0.50

1. Want ads will be accepted only when printed on this form or facsimile and must be accompanied by a S50 token fee. No refunds. Payment may be made in un-cancelled U.S. postage stamps.
2. For Sale, Trade, or Wanted To Buy ads will not be accepted. 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 your ad one time and a half hours to play the basic scenario of HITLER'S WAR, enter "16" for category 7a.) For an explanation of the categories, refer to the AH Philosophy of Vol. 24, No. 5. Enter ratings only on those categories relevant to the game in question. Note that AH's ratings for Complexity, Year of Publication and Type (2P=two player; MP=multiples player; SO=solo) have been provided for your information.

CONTEST #150

As described on Page 12, the Russian player in this game of TP: STALIN GRAD should perform the following:

Impulse Area

Actions Taken

44: 45:
3-4-4
3-4-4

42: 43:
3-4-4
3-4-4

54: 55:
4-6-4
4-6-4

71: 74:
2-3-4
2-3-4

73:
2-3-4
2-3-4

Issue as a whole: (Rate from 1 to 10, with "1" equating excellent and "10" terrible).
To be valid for consideration, your contest entry must also include the three best articles, in your view:

1. 
2. 
3. 

CONTEST ENTRY FORM:

Name:
Address:
City, State, Zip:

Phone:

NAME
ADDRESS
CITY
STATE
ZIP

CONTEST ENTRY FORM:

Name:
Address:
City, State, Zip:

Phone:

NAME
ADDRESS
CITY
STATE
ZIP
The GENERAL

3 FOR THE PRICE OF 1...

Pick any 3 issues—pay only the single issue price of $4.00. If you want more—fine—pick out 3 more issues. In fact, select as many sets of 3 issues as you want! Then pay just $4 for each set of 3 issues. Offer expires December 31, 1990 or when supply runs out, whichever comes first. Select from these 25 great issues of past years; featured game is indicated under each...

Vol.14 No.5 SQUAD LEADER
Vol.17 No.4 FORTRESS EUROPA
Vol.18 No.4 GLADIATOR
Vol.19 No.5 FLAT TOP
Vol.20 No.1 VICTORY IN PACIFIC
Vol.21 No.5 HITLER'S WAR
Vol.21 No.6 FIREPOWER
Vol.22 No.4 PANZER ARMEE AFRIKA
Vol.22 No.2 UP FRONT/BANZAI
Vol.22 No.6 PANZER LEADER
Vol.22 No.3 SUBMARINE
Vol.23 No.4 EMPEROR IN ARMS
Vol.23 No.5 KNIGHTS OF THE AIR
Vol.23 No.6 PATTON'S BEST
Vol.24 No.1 SQUAD LEADER/ASL
Vol.24 No.2 FLIGHT LEADER
Vol.24 No.3 ASL
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