

# NO RETREAT!

*The Russian Front: 1941-1945*



RBM

## SCENARIO BOOKLET

3rd (reprint) Edition, 2016



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## [3.0] SCENARIOS

Each of the six Scenarios and Campaign Game includes a setup map and ending Game Turn. When the indicated ending Game Turn is completed, that scenario's listed Victory Conditions are checked and the winner is determined.

**Important:** A scenario cannot end in a tie; if the player with the Initiative (12.9) does not win, the other player does.

**Campaign Games:** Alternately, each scenario can be used as the starting point for a Campaign Game played to the end of Game Turn 22 using the standard Victory Conditions (12.0; including Objectives and Sudden Death *not* used in the scenarios).

**Joker (Event) Card:** If used, the Axis player has possession of the Joker card in the Campaign Game and Scenarios A, B, D; the Soviet player in Scenarios C, E, F.

**Optional Units and Markers:** If used, both players can have the Optional units available at the start of the scenarios, but they are not set-up on the map, unless agreed upon by both sides: if so, then the German player always sets his Optional units up first, followed by the Soviet player, as per the specific rule for each Optional unit.

## A. BARBAROSSA & THE CAMPAIGN GAME

### Set Up Procedure

1. Place the round markers in the Unused Markers Holding Box.
2. Place the round Game Turn marker in the '1' box of the Game Turn Track on its Axis side, and the square Victory Points marker in the '12' box of the Victory Point Track on its *Drang Nach Osten* ("Drive to the East") side and the round VP marker in the '0' box of the VP Track.

3. Each player takes his remaining square units and turns them face-up. Those with a Reinforcement Number are placed in the corresponding turn box on the Game Turn Track (e.g., the Russian 'Steppe' Front unit is placed in the '13' box). As a memory aid for the first winter shock bonus (10.6.2) put a Soviet control marker on the Map's turn track on Turn 4.

4. Both players take their remaining square units and place them on the map as shown in this scenario's setup illustration on their indicated sides.

**5. Starting Axis Hand:** The Axis player shuffles the deck of cards, minus the 10 cards with the **Green-circled "45"** and the **Joker** card (the green-circled "45" cards are used in 1945 only), and places them face-down next to the map forming the Draw Pile. He then draws **six cards** from the top of the Draw Pile.

*DESIGN NOTE: The Soviet player begins with no cards to simulate the German surprise attack of June 22, 1941.*

**Special First Turn Restrictions:** In addition to the inequitable distribution of cards during setup, the following special restrictions apply to the Axis player's forces on Game Turn 1 (only):

- 'N' units can only attack the Russian **Northwest** Front unit.
  - 'C' units can only attack the Russian **West** Front unit.
  - 'S' units can only attack the Russian **Southwest** Front unit.
  - 'R' units cannot move on Game Turn 1 (they may attack).
6. Players must note the Game Turn 1 Effects. These include:



- **Weather:** It is Clear weather.
- **Drang Nach Osten:** The Axis side has the Initiative through Game Turn 11, affecting the ability to play certain Event cards (as per 5.3.3) and how Victory Points are scored (Rule 12.0).
- **Blitz! markers:** The Axis player begins the game with three Blitz! markers available.
- **Rail Disruption:** During Game Turns 1 and 2, Rail Movement capacity is limited (see 13.5 case 1-2).
- **No Axis Replacements:** During Game Turns 1–4, the Axis player cannot discard cards in order to Improve (7.1) or Replace (7.9) units. Only certain Event cards can be used by the Axis player for these purposes during the first four Game Turns.

7. After completing these steps and noting the above special rules, the Axis player commences Game Turn 1 with his Phase 4: Movement.

#### 8. Game End & Victory Conditions:

**A. Barbarossa Scenario:** At the end of Game Turn 5, the Axis player wins if his final score is 21 or more Victory Points - OR - he controls Moscow and at least one other Axis Objective Hex. Otherwise, the Soviet player wins.

**B. Campaign Game (all 28 Turns):** The entirety of rule 12.0 fully applies.

## B. FALL BLAU

### Set Up Procedure

- Place the round markers in the Unused Markers Holding Box.
- Place the round Game Turn marker in the '7' box of the Game Turn Track on its Axis side, and the square VP marker in the '21' box of the Victory Point Track (with *Midway* already taken into account) on its *Drang Nach Osten* side, and the round VP marker in the '2' box of the VP Track, Axis side up.

**3. Reinforcements:** Each player takes his combat units and turns them face-up. Those with a Reinforcement Number greater than 6 are placed in the corresponding turn box on the Game Turn Track.

**4. Setup:** Both players take their remaining square units and place them on the map as shown in this scenario's setup illustration on their indicated sides.

**Not Shown:** The 8th Italian Army starts in the Rail Movement Box. The Soviet "Central" Front starts in the Destroyed Units Box.

**5. Starting Axis Hand:** The Axis player shuffles the deck of cards, *minus* the 10 cards with the Green-circled "45" and the Joker card, and places them face-down next to the map forming the Draw Pile. He then draws **seven** cards from the top of the Draw Pile and takes them into his hand, examines them, and then **discards two** of those cards, face-up, into a Discard Pile.

**6. Starting Soviet Hand:** Next, the Soviet player receives his starting cards, drawing **three** and discarding one.

**7. Weather:** It is Clear weather.

After completing these steps, the Axis player commences Game Turn 7 with his Phase 4: Movement.

**9. Scenario End & Victory Conditions:** At the end of Game Turn 10, the Axis player wins if his final score is 26 or more Victory Points - OR - he controls 3 or more Axis Objective Hexes. Otherwise, the Soviet player wins.



## C. OPERATION SATURN

### Set Up Procedure

1. Place the round markers in the Unused Markers Holding Box.
2. Place the round Game Turn marker in the '10' box of the Game Turn Track on its Soviet side, and the square Victory Points marker in the '25' box of the Victory Point Track (with *Egyptian Alamein* already taken into account) on its *Drang Nach Osten* side, and the round VP marker in the '0' box of the VP Track.

**3. Reinforcements:** Each player takes his combat units and turns them face-up. Those with a Reinforcement Number greater than 9 are placed in the corresponding turn box on the Game Turn Track.

**4. Setup:** Both players take their remaining square units and place them on the map as shown in this scenario's setup illustration on their indicated sides.

**5. Starting Axis Hand:** The Axis player shuffles the deck of cards, minus the 10 cards with the **Green-circled "45"**, and places them face-down next to the map forming the Draw Pile. He then draws **two cards** from the top of the Draw Pile and takes them into his hand, examines them, and then **discards one** of those cards, face-up, into a Discard Pile next to the Draw Pile.

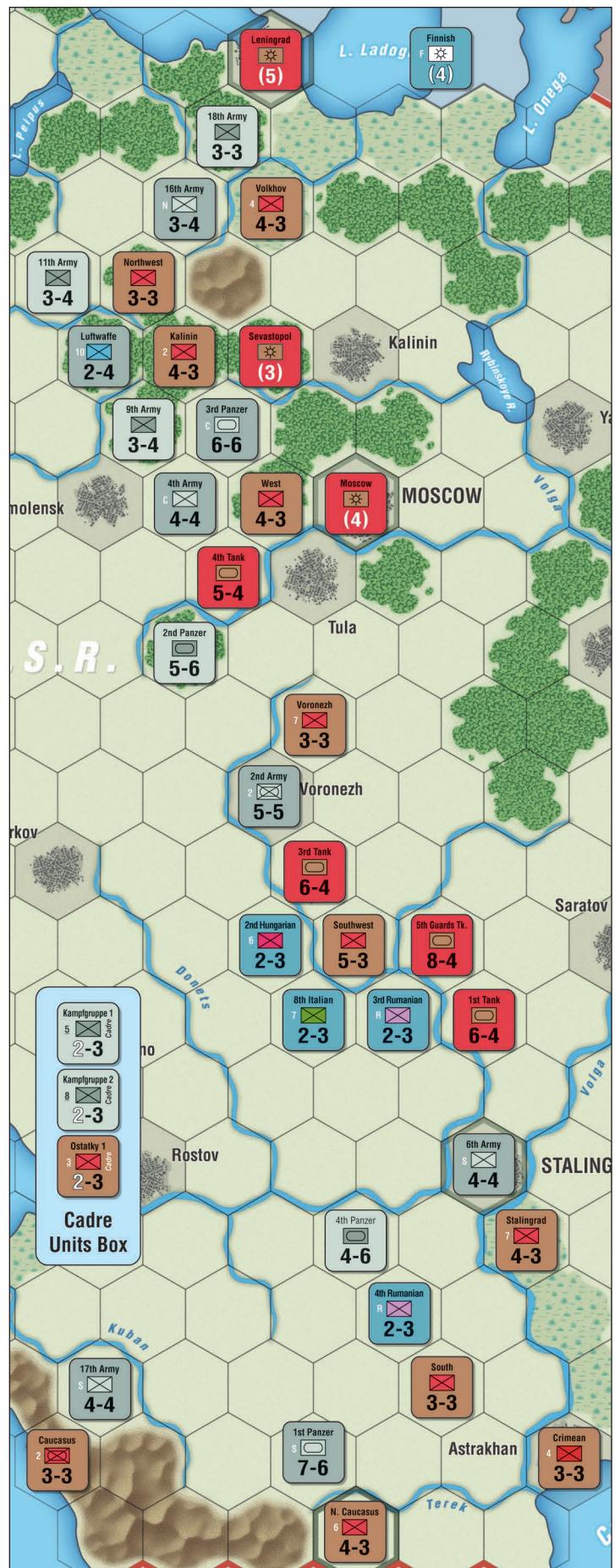
**6. Starting Soviet Hand:** Next, the Soviet player receives his starting cards, drawing **six** and **discarding two**. He also receives the **Joker** card.

**7. Weather:** It is Snow weather.

**8. Soviets Move First:** After completing these steps, the Soviet player commences with his half of Game Turn 10 with his Phase 3: Organization. The setup situation shows the end of the Axis Player Turn; the Axis *Blitz!* marker is already spent for this turn.

**9. [12.9] Shifting the Initiative:** During the Victory Phase of Game Turn 12, the Soviet player receives 1 VP for each City or Oil Field they control; plus any Russian (red) VPs OR minus any Axis (grey) VPs as indicated by the round VP marker. Flip the square VP marker to its Soviet side and adjust it to reflect the above-determined Russian VP total.

**10. Scenario End & Victory Conditions:** At the end of Game Turn 13, the Soviet player wins if his final score is 16 or more Victory Points. Otherwise, the Axis player wins.



## D. CITADEL

### Set Up Procedure

1. Place the round markers in the Unused Markers Holding Box near the northwest corner of the map.

2. Place the round Game Turn marker in the '14' box of the Game Turn Track on its Axis side, and the square VPs marker in the '15' box of the Victory Point Track (with *Italy Invaded* already taken into account) on its *Na Berlin!* ("On To Berlin!") side, the round VP marker in the '3' box of the VP Track, Soviet side up, and the square Axis High Tide marker in the '24' box of the VP Track.

3. Both players take their square units and place them on the map as shown in this scenario's setup illustration on their indicated sides.

4. Look through the Event cards and find the Soviet's "Hitler Orders Attack" (#19). The Soviet player places it in his card hand.

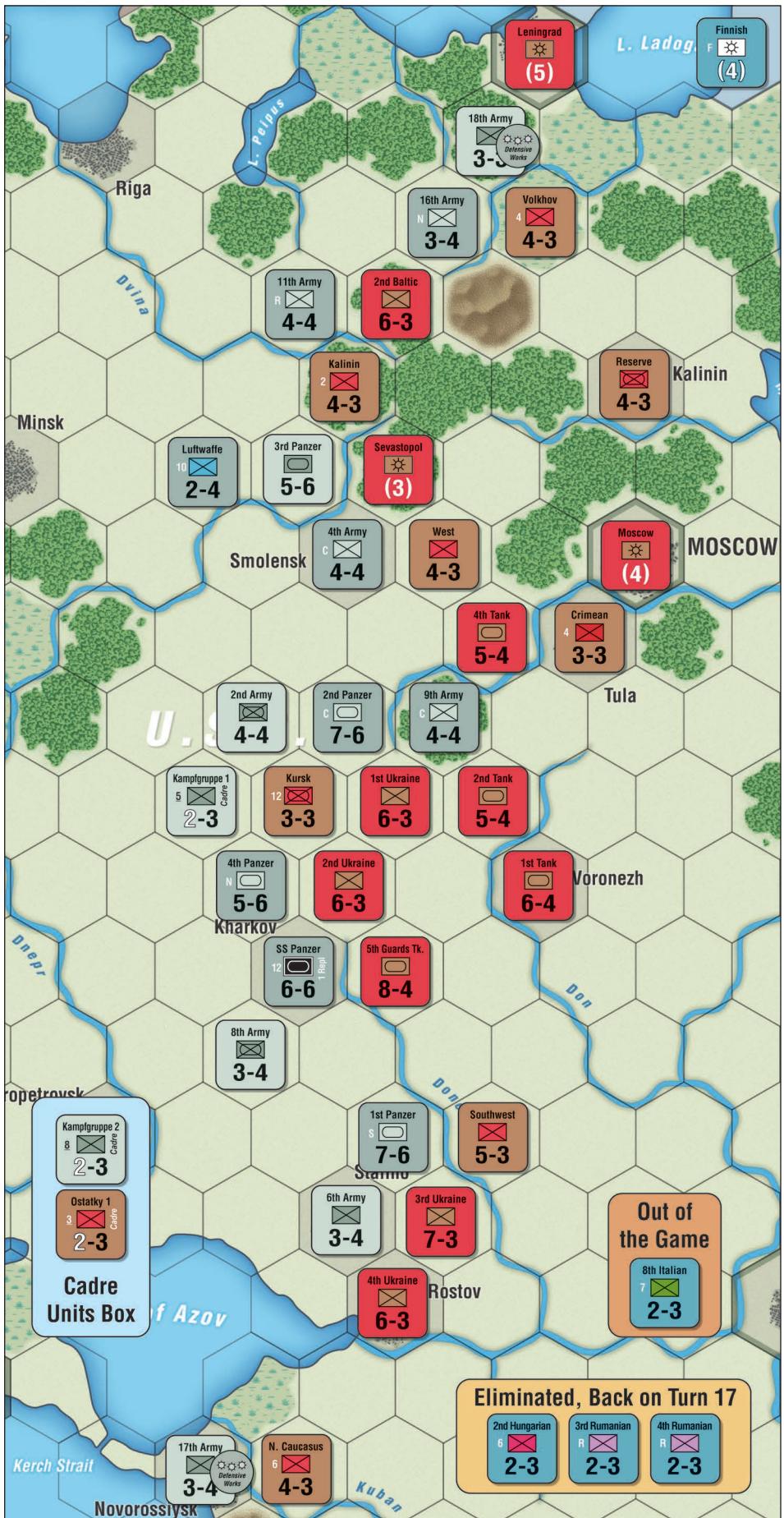
**5. Starting German Hand:** Then the Axis player shuffles the remaining deck of cards, *minus* the 10 cards with the Green-circled "45" and the Joker card, and places them face-down next to the map forming the Draw Pile. He then draws **six cards** from the top of the Draw Pile and takes them into his hand, examines them, and then **discards two** of those cards, face-up, into a Discard Pile.

**6. Starting Soviet Hand:** Next, the Soviet player draws **four cards** and discards **zero**, adding these cards to his "Hitler Orders Attack" card for a total of five cards in his starting hand.

**7. Weather:** It is Clear weather.

8. After completing these steps, the Axis player commences Game Turn 14 with his Phase 3: Organization.

**9. Scenario End & Victory Conditions:** At the end of Game Turn 19, the Soviet player wins if his final score is 22 or more Victory Points. Otherwise, the Axis player wins.



## E. OPERATION BAGRATION

### Set Up Procedure

- Place the round markers in the Unused Markers Holding Box.
- Place the round Game Turn marker in the '19' box of the Game Turn Track on its Soviet side (the Axis' Game Turn 19 is already completed), and the square VP marker in the '23' box of the Victory Point Track (with *D-Day* already taken into account) on its *Na Berlin!* side, the round VP marker in the '3' box of the VP Track, Soviet side up, and the square Axis *High Tide* marker in the '24' box of the VP Track.

- Both players take their square units and place them on the map as shown in this scenario's setup illustration on their indicated sides.

(Note that the Moscow Regional Unit is not used in this scenario).

**4. Reinforcements:** Each player takes his remaining square units and, those with a Reinforcement Number greater than 19 are placed in the corresponding turn box on the Game Turn Track. Those with an Event Designation (e.g., "Oil") are set aside near the *Na Berlin!* Game Turn Track.

**5. Starting Axis Hand:** The Axis player shuffles the deck of cards, *minus* the 10 cards with the Green-circled "45", and places them face-down next to the map forming the Draw Pile. He then draws **three cards** from the top of the Draw Pile, examines them, and then **discards one**, face-up, into a Discard Pile.



**6. Starting Soviet Hand:** Next, the Soviet player draws **six** cards and discards one. He also receives the **Joker** card.

**7. Weather:** It is Clear weather.

**8. Who Moves First:** After completing these steps, the Soviet player commences with his half of Game Turn 19 with his Phase 3: Organization. (The setup situation shows the end of the Axis Player Turn.)

**9. Scenario End & Victory Conditions:** At the end of Game Turn 22, the Soviet player wins if his final score is 30 or more Victory Points. Otherwise, the Axis player wins.



## F. NA BERLIN! (ON TO BERLIN!)

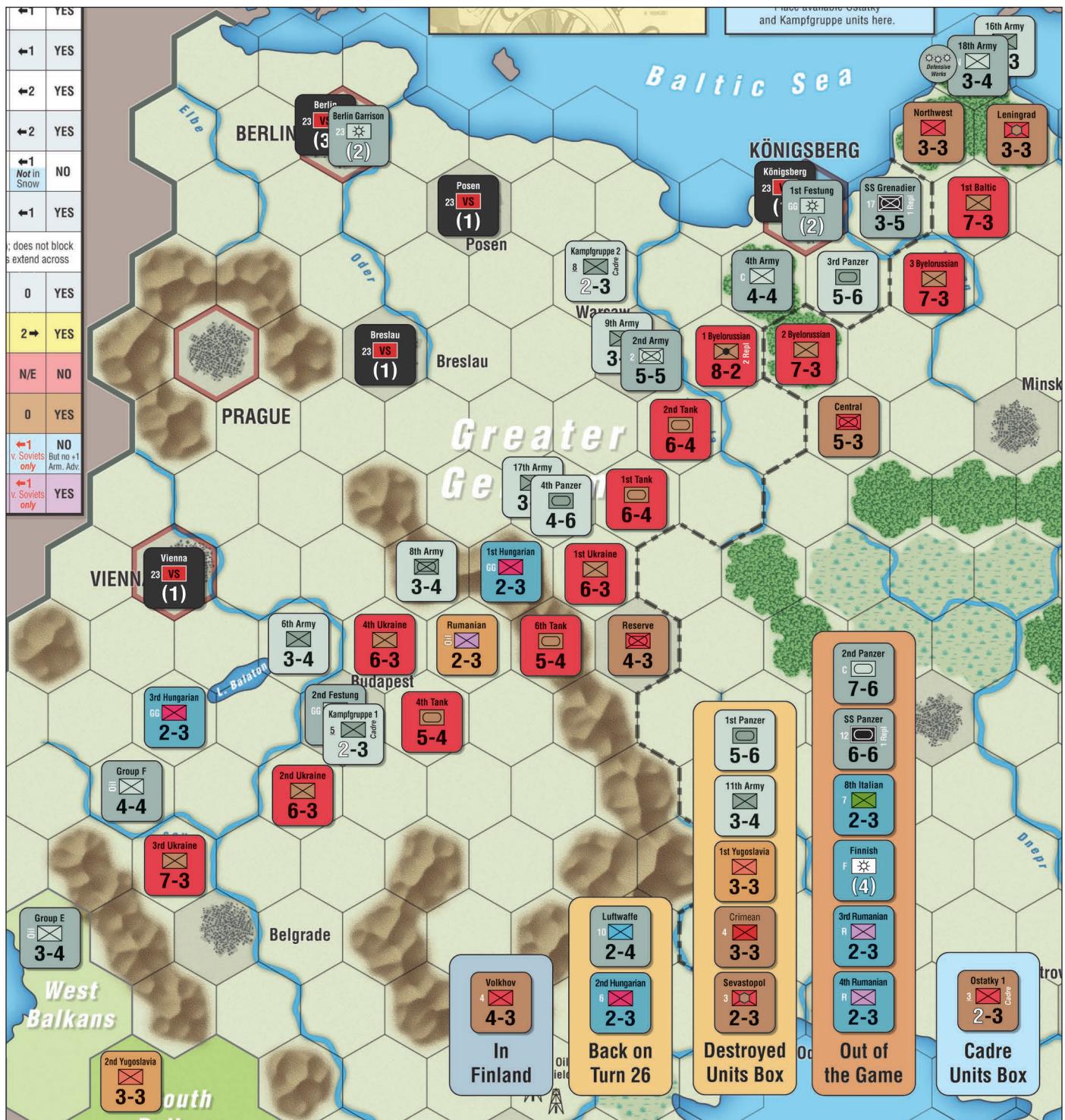
## **Set Up Procedure**

1. Place the round markers in the Unused Markers Holding Box.
  2. Place the round Game Turn marker in the '23' box of the Turn Track on its Soviet side (the Axis' Game Turn 23 is already completed), and the square VP marker in the '6' box of the Victory Point Track on its *Na Berlin!* side, the round VP marker in the '2' box of the VP Track, Soviet side up,

and the square Axis *High Tide* marker is set aside (it is not used after Turn 22).

Note that the Soviets have 4 VPs on the eligible portion of the map (Lublin, Belgrade, Bucharest, and the Rumanian Oil Fields), and have an extra 2 VP from the round VP Marker.

- 3.** Both players take their square units and place them on the map as shown in this scenario's setup illustration on their indicated sides.



(Note that Moscow Regional Unit is not used in this scenario).

**4.** The Soviet player takes his remaining square Polish unit with an Event Designation ("Warsaw") and sets it aside near the *Na Berlin!* Game Turn Track.

**5. Starting Axis Hand:** The Axis player shuffles the deck of cards, *minus* the 10 cards with the **Red-Barred "45"**, (the Red-barred "45" cards are not used in 1945) and places them face-down next to the map forming the Draw Pile. He then draws **two cards** from the top of the Draw Pile, examines them, and then **discards one** of those cards, face-up, into a Discard Pile.

**6. Starting Soviet Hand:** Next, the Soviet player draws **seven cards** and **discards one**. He also receives the **Joker** card.

**7. Weather:** It is Snow weather.

**8. Who Moves First:** After completing these steps, the Soviet player commences with his half of Game Turn 22 with his Phase 3: Organization. The setup situation shows the end of the Axis player Turn.

**9. Scenario End & Victory Conditions:** At the end of Game Turn 28, apply the *Na Berlin!* Victory Conditions (12.0). The Soviet player wins by either: Sudden Death, capturing three Axis Objective Hexes, or killing Hitler (12.5)—otherwise the Axis player wins.

## G. TOURNAMENT SCENARIO

### Set Up Procedure and Rules

1. Use the same setup as for Barbarossa (Scenario A).
2. The Optional Rules and Counters (those with an asterisk turn of entry) are not used.
3. The Cadre units (those with an underlined turn of entry) are not used, disregard rule 14.9.
4. The Objectives Victory Conditions are in use, but the Soviets need only to control *one* of the four Russian Objectives to win, not three (12.1). The Sudden Death Victory Conditions are in use (12.2).
5. **Scenario End & Victory Conditions:** If the game doesn't end in Sudden Death (12.2), then at the end of 1944, Game Turn 22, check for a German Operational Victory (12.4): The Soviet player will win if the "*Na Berlin!*" VP marker is higher than the Axis "*High Tide*" VP marker. Otherwise the Axis player wins.

The Tournament Scenario game is close to the original basic Victory Point Games edition, and plays faster than the regular Campaign Game. Without the Cadre units play of the late portion of the game will be far less forgiving.

## [17.0] DESIGNER'S NOTES

First, I would like to gratefully acknowledge Alan Emrich and Victory Point Games. Thanks to them, and now to GMT, you're holding the Deluxe version of my first wargame. Wow! Ever since I bought Avalon Hill's *The Russian Campaign*, as a teenager in the late 1970's, the Eastern Front of WW2 never ceased to fascinate me. For years, my quest for the "perfect" Eastern Front game was on, and now I am making deluxe *No Retreat!* my contribution to that quest.

This is my own 'designer's take' of the struggle between the Soviets and Nazis in WW2. After reading the VPG web site, their offer to help aspiring game designers and their 'small format' publishing model it made this an irresistible challenge for me. I wanted to make a reasonably accurate game with only 40 counters, a small map, and 8 pages of basic rules. Looking back at the hundreds of hours I've enjoyed working on this project, the effort was far greater than I ever anticipated—but what a great learning experience it has been. Now this version includes the two later modules (*Na Berlin!* and *No Surrender!*), and a few more tweaks. The number of counters is still a very manageable 80 pieces, with less than 10 pages of basic rules.

While doing research for this game, many of my preconceptions about this war in Russia were thrown to the wind. For example, I learned that, right up to the end of 1944, the Germans were still able to field a very large army despite having taken staggering losses. I also discovered that the Soviets never had much over a 2:1 advantage in soldiers along the entire front (around 6 million Russians to about 3 million Axis). I found it fascinating that, during each year of this war, the Soviet army suffered casualties amounting to more than their total front line strength (that is 30 times more casualties than the US Army suffered in the war), yet the Russians never gave up. Also, that Allied Lend-Lease to Russia supplied around 25% of all Russian war materiel. Make no mistake, WW2 was won on the Eastern Front; although victory was an Allied effort, it was largely paid for in Russian blood. It was a war of manoeuvre yes, but also a terrible war of attrition.

I hope that *No Retreat!* will entice you to learn more about this decisive military campaign, show how close a fight it was, explain the why's of the strategies used by both sides, and give you many hours of enjoyable challenges and gaming fun.

I also encourage you to go to the Victory Point Games or the GMT Web sites, and inspect the *No Retreat!* page for additional game material (like Vassal and Zun Tsu Computer Game boxes).

The very first thing I tried to make work in *No Retreat!* is to simulate as closely as possible, without any artificial rules and gimmicks, the historical German capabilities and advance rate in 1941. With a little experience, players will be able, barring extremely bad luck, to achieve historical

success with the Wehrmacht in the early game. There is even a fair chance of Moscow falling in 1941 if the Axis go all-out, but the flanks of their advance will probably be very tenuous; this is certainly a high risk/high reward strategy.

## The Soviet Order of Battle

For a relatively “simple” wargame, a large amount of historical research was involved. I studied the actual performance and locations of all the armies and Fronts of this campaign, and this in two-month steps (one game turn) from 1941 to 1944. Within the 40-counter limitation, a simulation engine of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the two sides in presence was created. In case of the Soviets this was doubly difficult because of the gradual upgrade of their forces: most of the time, I was able to use the actual historical names, and time frames of improvement, for the Fronts, using the early units that were not upgraded (but disappeared) for the making of the Tank Armies. And these Tank counters do represent more than the actual Armies, they also include supporting/attached troops! You should be able to represent most historical situations with a reasonable degree of accuracy using the game pieces included despite the minor “fudging” that had to be done.

## The Combat Results Tables

The Combat Results Tables are a bit unusual; as an attacker, even at lower odds, you do not suffer many losses (save for the occasional EX result), but you could get a “CA” result, and that opens some interesting possibilities. It gives your opponent the option of counterattacking and possibly upsetting your position—thus making it easier for them to charge at you during your opponent’s upcoming Player Turn, or your opponent might simply “pass” the opportunity to counterattack and opt to simply play it safe and stay on the defensive. The Combat Results Tables are also tailored for the “Counterblow” rule. Upon study of the two different CRTs, you will notice subtle differences between them that have a substantial impact on how to play each side.

## Counterblows

What does the “Counterblow” rule represent?

We wanted players to have some say in when it is their opponent’s turn and to reward the careful management of precious Event cards. Players need to envision counterblows as local spoiling counterattacks launched in reaction to the enemy offensives. We did not go as far as to allow an actual attack by the defender (this is what players should do on their own turns), but it’s close. And because your troops are leaving their positions to engage the enemy, they lose their defensive terrain benefits—thus, some risk is involved in launching a counterblow.

It is a good idea to use this rule to quickly wipe out pockets of surrounded enemy units, and to allow your units a chance to advance during your opponent’s turn (if a CA result is rolled, and followed up with a successful counterattack of your own). You can also use it to put pressure on unsupported fortified cities, lowering their defensive advantages, or even as an end-run advance. In the new GMT version this result can also happen by a CRT result, to be resolved next turn, representing a drawn-out engagement. There are myriad possibilities for a well-timed counterblow, but alas all of this fancy footwork has a cost in precious Event cards, and you never have enough of those.

## Event Cards

The very heart of the game is the Event card “engine;” players simply never know what surprise their opponent can spring upon you with a sneaky card play. Consequently, perfect planning of moves or attacks is never entirely possible. For example, can you afford to temporarily leave a hole in your line, or will your adversary be able to play a card allowing him to move a unit there during your own turn, thus creating an unexpected breakthrough?

Those cards are an excellent indicator of the resources a side still has at his disposal: if you start your turn with a full hand of 6 cards, and your opponent has none, then things are potentially very good for you! The cards you

**Evolution of the Soviet Army**  
*Game Turn*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Regional Infantry units can be upgraded to 2-step Fortified Infantry unit (7.5).																										
1 Free Soviet Upgrade (7.2)																										
Armor Advance Bonus (10.8.2)																										
2 Free Soviet Upgrades (7.2.1)																										
Soviet Units have Two Steps (7.3)																										
Stacking (8.4.1)																										

have in reserve represent energy you can spend: to replace troops, for rail moves, for Counterblows, etc. With a low card count, your options are limited; sure, a player can still get by holding only a card or two, but the game's initiative is probably being held by the opponent who is holding five or six cards!

In the early years, for example, the Soviets can probably replace most of their losses easily, but this will leave them with precious few cards, if any, to react and try to take back control of the on-map situation. In fact, if both sides engage in an orgy of low odds attacks, and bleed themselves to death, they'll probably have to use so many of their cards to replace losses that few decisive moves will be possible since there will not be many Event cards left to use for these endeavors.

## **Victory Conditions**

Speaking of initiative, you really have to carefully read and make sure that you understand the rule 12.0, "How to Win". While the scenarios have their own, defined separate victory conditions, the last page of the rules tells you how to win the Campaign Game. There are many ways to win the Campaign Game, and they are all important.

The Objectives Victory is straight forward and works as most traditional wargamers might expect: capture key cities and you win the game. In fact, to play a simpler version of *No Retreat!*, use only that victory condition. The game will still play just fine and a good time will be had by both sides.

The Sudden Death Victory Condition is very intriguing and keeps player paying attention to the current Victory Point (VP) score. Here is how it works: every three Game Turns, this victory condition is checked against a sum of VPs that the Initiative Player (the Axis during the first half of the game, the Soviets during the latter half; and both sides on Game Turn 12) has. If the Initiative Player has sufficient VPs at that moment, the game is over and that player wins outright.

A sufficient sum of VPs are not that easy to get, but not impossibly hard to obtain either. This fact will stop your opponent from becoming complacent (i.e., from "knowing" in advance what the historical outcome of the war was; e.g., "Bah, I can just withdraw and lose Kiev without a fight! The Axis never got farther than Stalingrad anyway and I'll get tons of new units in 1944."). Also, because only the side with the Initiative can win by Sudden Death, neither side can afford to lose too much ground too quickly, even if this is tactically a good idea on the map, hence the game title: *No Retreat!*

If you want a very short game, try to get a lot of your units killed while being Out of Supply, never do the same to your opponent, and never fulfill the *Hitler/Stalin Orders Attack* Event cards played by your opponent; that is a sure road to ruin!

Finally, there is the German Operational Victory Condition. If things go that far without an Objectives or Sudden Death winner, then the more territory the Axis player has captured by Game Turn 11 (i.e., when they place their *High Tide* marker on the Victory Point Track), the better the Axis' chances of salvaging a victory out of a bad situation. If the Axis player was timid and didn't advance boldly into Russia, chances are he will not win via this, and the game will continue on to the bitter end in 1945. Or perhaps not, if the Soviet player is equally timid. One thing is certain: the Axis player has to keep as many German units in Russia as possible for a cautious advance approach toward winning to work. The tricky part is that the entire Axis front can crumble surprisingly fast in 1944!

If the game continues past December of 1944, then the Soviets have the opportunity to bring the war right up to Hitler's doorstep. Yes, this means that the Russians cannot win using rule 12.4: it's just a stepping-stone on their road toward victory! To represent the increased tempo of operations and the race to Berlin, the turns are only one month long instead of two.

## **Finland**

What's the deal with the strange way Finland is treated?

Given that Finland pretty much kept to its own agenda for the duration of the war (the re-conquest of lost Finnish territory only) and never made any serious penetrations into Russia after this was achieved, I decided to represent them by a simple Fort unit—it doesn't move or attack by itself, and it has no ZOC to influence Soviet units beyond the Finnish border.

The Fort counter also represents the easy defensible and rugged Finnish country and the fierce fighting qualities of the Finnish army when attacked by the Russians. A similar rationale applies to the Balkans Yugoslav "Partisan" areas.

## **Axis Allies**

Why are there no restrictions on the placement of the other Minor Axis nationalities?

Besides not being able to move into Finland (the Finns wouldn't be too keen on that), I decided not to add an extra rule limiting the use of the Rumanians, Hungarians and Italians to the southern part of the map (as about half the larger size wargames on this subject do). I found no solid historical reason to do so other than the fact that they didn't do so in the real war. In addition, I wanted to keep the game as simple as possible to fit in the small format rules. I mean, there were Spanish (and others) troops operating in the Leningrad area, and if Hitler had asked, I don't see why those nationalities would not have been moved up north. If this bothers you, then by all means create your own House Rule artificially restricting Minor Axis units from entering the upper half of the map.

## Zones of Control

Why are you allowed to move through one Enemy Zone of Control, and then stop if the destination hex contains a friendly unit? Not every wargame allows that.

This one is easy to answer. Given the very large scale of the map (100km per hex), the Zones of Control mainly represent a unit taking up some space in adjacent hexes, and not actual firepower controlling that adjoining hex. A bit of “reaction movement” is also being simulated by this rule—that is, where you displace some sub-units there to stop an enemy from advancing. All these occurrences are partially negated by the presence of a friendly unit that is helping you stay out of trouble, keeping open a path of retreat.

## Conclusion

I hope you have fun playing Deluxe *No Retreat!* and that this intense little game gives you some insight on what went on during this cataclysmic and tragic campaign. Following these notes are some more basic tips for both players. Also, I am looking forward for your comments, suggestions and replays on the game’s discussion folder at [www.consimworld.com](http://www.consimworld.com) and [www.boardgamegeek.com](http://www.boardgamegeek.com).

## [18.0] PLAYER’S NOTES

Here are a few very rough guidelines on how to play the game. It is not a difficult game to learn, but it can take time to master, especially when you are on the defensive strategically.

### German OKH Directives (Avoiding Götterdämmerung):

- Concentrate your troops and attack at high odds, thus limiting the losses you’ll take, especially in 1941 when you get almost no replacements.
- “Counterblow Attacks” are your friend, especially early in the game when you want to advance faster: if you have a stack of units next to a Soviet city, this could be a very effective way of gaining some ground in the opponent’s turn if he decides to stand and fight unsupported.
- At every opportunity, surround Soviets and let them die “Out of Supply”, this will save German blood, and give you the precious VPs that you need to achieve a “Sudden Death” victory. Plus, it makes the enemy pay double to replace the lost armies.
- Have a goal, don’t just run away chasing after Soviets to blast them frontally. You can be sure that they will rebuild those troops, and fast, while you suffer hard-to-replace losses.
- Always keep some units in the Rail Movement Box to reinforce areas where you are making progress.

- Your Army will almost inevitably dwindle in quality (as it costs double to flip units to full strength). So know when to cut your losses and switch to the defensive if outright victory seems out of sight.

- When everything crumbles away in 1944, do remember that at the end of Turn 22 you can still win an Operational Victory if you hold enough Victory Point hexes. So there is still hope for German arms. For example, pockets of troops along the Baltic coast are in supply (by sea), and can be useful to that purpose, diverting Soviet resources, and can hold out indefinitely (as historically happened).

### The German War Years in review:

**1941:** You are the unstoppable Germanic Monster Blitzkrieg Army, all fear and tremble before you! So, you can go everywhere you wish, BUT you cannot be everywhere at once. What is an aspiring world conqueror to do? An interesting option is the initial historical OKH plan: Going full tilt for Leningrad and Moscow, coupled with a steady advance in the south, aimed at capturing Kiev, Odessa and Dnepropetrovsk. But beware of the difficult northern terrain; your Panzers might very well end up bogged-down in the woods and swamps. You don’t want another war of attrition, right?



**1942:** If you have weathered the Soviet winter counter-offensive and hold two Objectives, now is the time to try to finish them off before their army starts improving too much. If you don’t have the Objectives, then your best bet is probably going south, trying to grab as many cities as possible, surrounding troops on the way, to get the biggest “High Tide” VP score before the VP flip on Turn 11. Do watch your losses, they can pile up very fast when you are fighting an ever-improving Russian army, and of course watch your flanks, and those unreliable Axis Allies.

**1943:** If the game is still on, the “Tide of War” is probably starting to turn against you. Gone is “Drang Nach Osten!” (Drive towards the East!) It’s “Na Berlin!” (On to Berlin!) time now. You will lose a lot of your nice attack Event cards, in exchange getting mostly lame defensive cards. Gone is the possibility of a “Sudden Death” victory, but make no mistake, your army is still powerful, and you get the useful Elite Panzer unit to spearhead those last big offensives. So don’t be afraid to counter-attack over-extended Soviets, but be ever watchful of being attrited to death! Mud weather is a good time to dress up your line and replace some losses. If you are still in a good map position, an “Objective Victory” might even be a possibility!

**1944:** Well, the writing is on the wall (the Berlin walls!). Now you’re probably facing a huge, angry, and dangerous Red Army; very capable of inflicting the disastrous reverses

you made it suffer in 1941/42. Try not to get your units surrounded (this could be difficult to do), hold Königsberg at all costs, and keep as many German troops as possible in USSR proper until the end. If things really went bad in the south and you lost Rumania, and a lot of troops, then it's maybe time to look for a nice farm in Argentina where to retire...

**1945:** You must try to hold the line almost everywhere as long as possible, as now you can lose the game to a Sudden Death victory easily if you abandon Yugoslavia and Budapest to concentrate too much on the defense of Berlin. So consider the implications in the rules and cards carefully!

### Soviet STAVKA Directives (Winning the Great Patriotic War):

- Most of the time you will be able to build back your army every turn, just don't get units killed while "Out of Supply" or over-extend yourself making too many attacks too early in the game, as you initially have barely enough to cover the whole front. Leningrad with a fortress is a very good anchoring point, don't lose it!
- Clear terrain is almost impossible to defend with regular infantry against a competent Axis player, so be aware that you'll most certainly get your line breached.
- You have to start wearing down the Germans as soon as possible. The "EX" combat result is your friend. But don't overdo it and create holes in your lines! Small-scale counter-attacks are the name of the game early on.
- "Counterblow Attacks" can be very effective in the first winter, where you have lots of "Shock" markers to use; plus lost troops will be rebuilt right away in your turn!
- ALWAYS, if possible, keep a minimum of one unit in the Rail Movement Box if you intend to attack in your turn, so as to plug any holes created by "EX" results.
- Attrition up north, maneuver down south. If you ever have the possibility of killing "Out of Supply" German units: go for it! This will help final victory immensely.
- Go after lone enemy infantry, especially the Axis Allies.
- Starting in late 1943 you probably can pretty much do as you wish strategically, so start doing some serious killing and advancing, be aggressive, now is payback time! *Na Berlin!*

### The Soviet War Years in review:

**1941:** Oh boy, I bet you dearly regret doing all those army purges now! Your forces start weak and badly deployed. You will indeed take quite a licking in this awful year. But don't despair, with all the reinforcements and replacements you'll get, the huge Red Army will "keep on ticking". You must strive to field all of your troops each and

every turn; if counters stay in the Destroyed Units Box, things are not good! And get those Fortresses deployed in Leningrad and Sevastopol ASAP. If you ever get the chance, even before winter, counter-attack some, and let the Nazis bleed for a change. Remember that they can't buy replacements before 1942, and that they will strive not to lose many when they are on the offensive, so you have to do the killing. If everything does go bad, try not to lose Leningrad and Moscow.



**1942:** This is another dangerous year: You probably do not have that much ground to give up; your army is improving, but not yet able to fight the Germans on even terms. Do continue to attrition them; make them pay for each City hex taken! "Not a Step Back!" At the end of the year, when winter comes, you can now mount bigger attacks against weak parts of the German line. You must now have a half dozen improved units: You did remember to have a couple of Tank Armies and a Shock Front built in that lot, right?

**1943:** Now at last the tide starts turning. Payback time, Soviet style. You get a lot of strong attack-oriented Event cards: use them! Late in the year you'll have the capability of making impressive territorial gains; a lot of the Germans will be at half-strength by now, don't let them recover! Make at least two attacks per turn, four at lower odds are better for you than a few high-odds attacks, unless of course you have the possibility of a big encirclement happening. But always be aware that taking unnecessary losses will divert those precious Event cards for replacements purposes instead of the victorious offensives you want to start making.

**1944:** Put the Soviet steamroller into high gear! Your units have two steps now. This is a blessing (more staying power) but also a curse (you can only flip them using cards, no more free improvements), so try not to lose too many each turn: indeed, your huge troop reserves are becoming exhausted. Oh yes, kick the Finns out of the war for an easy 1 VP. Remember that if the German "High Tide" point total is high, you might have to evict most of the "Huns" out of the USSR, so be prepared for a savage fight up north. If the total is less impressive, you could have the luxury of concentrating your attention in the south, capturing Rumania; and thus really start putting some nails (lend-leased of course!) on Hitler's coffin. If all goes well, start polishing those medals for the big victory parade in Berlin!



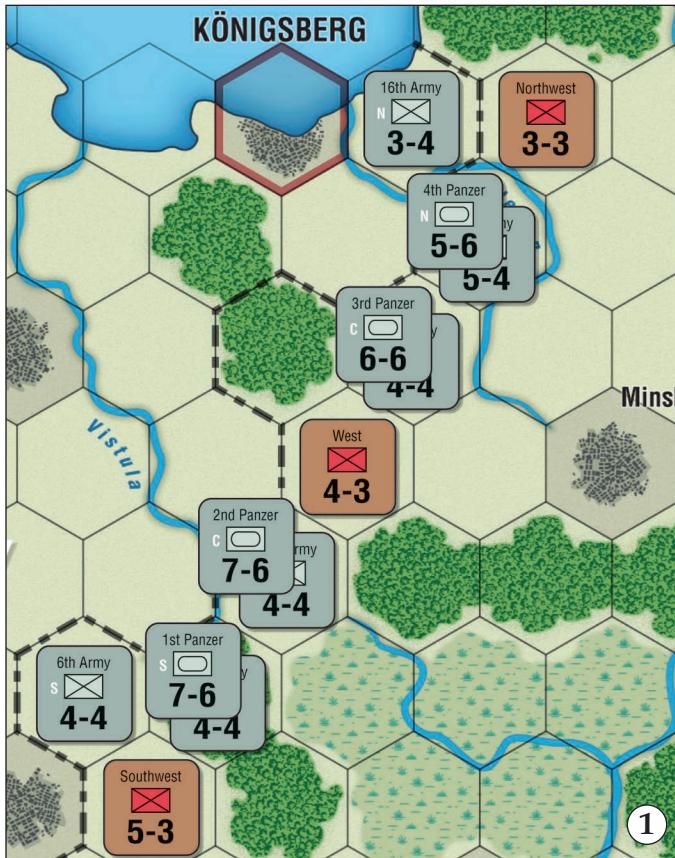
**1945:** The Soviet player must not be too complacent; the enemy can still spring some nasty surprises on him despite the overwhelming superiority of the Red Army. So, comrade, don't let the western bourgeois beat you to the finish line! Attack, attack, attack! *Na Berlin!*

—Carl Paradis

## [19.0] EXTRA EXAMPLES

### Army Group Center Gambit

Here is the situation after the Axis Turn 1 Movement Phase.

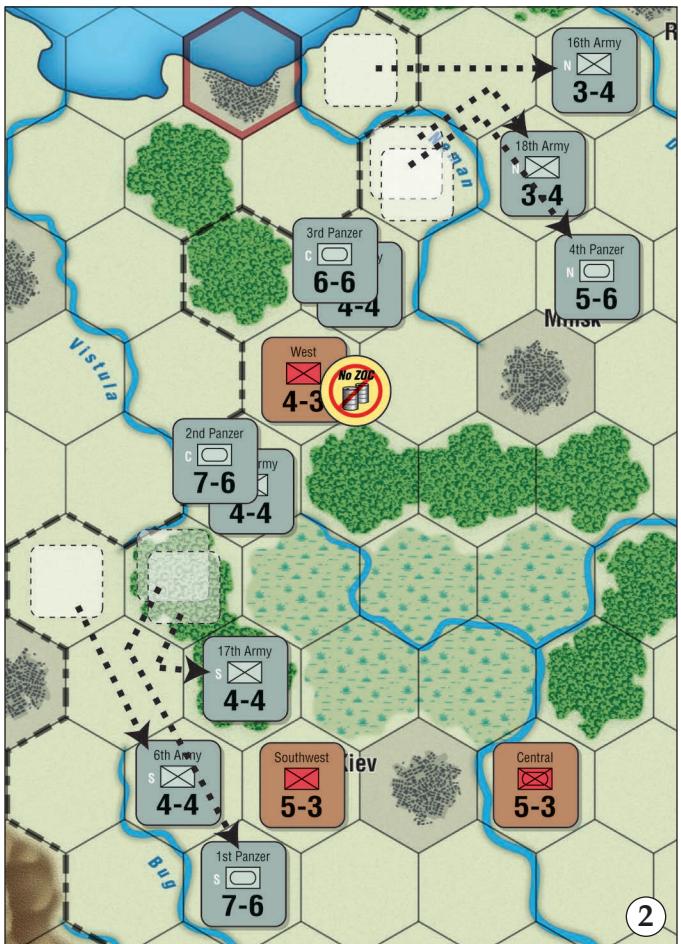


Nothing very extraordinary here. Each German army group (N, C, and S) can only attack their opposing Soviet Fronts (NW, West and South). I'll show you an interesting twist to this, if the Axis player feels bold, and has cards to spare (usually he has, as he starts the game with six cards to the Soviet who has none).

See illustration #2 for the situation at the end of the turn. Yes indeed, the German Army Group Center has *not* attacked the Soviet West Front, but merely surrounded it, putting it "Out of Supply".

During the Soviet Turn 1 the Axis will put two Counterblow counters on both stacks adjacent to the surrounded unit. Since the odds will be lower than 1-3, it will be an automatic CA (at odds of 6-1). This will guarantee the elimination of the West Front (and "Out of Supply" to boot!), and 1 VP for the Axis player!

The only way the Soviets can try to save this unit is to have a replacement arrive in Minsk (the city to the East), and move to break the encirclement. But this will probably not delay the Germans very much, and will most certainly end up with not one, but TWO Soviet Fronts dying Out of Supply!



A note for the Germans: If your opponent is known for taking *kamikaze*-like risks, and you suspect he might just try to save the West Front (and there is a very small chance he might succeed with the right mix of cards). Then make sure, before doing this, that you still have three cards and one *Blitz!* marker left in your hand. This combination the Soviets will not be able to defeat!

### Soviet Turn 1 Defence

Illustration #3 shows an example of a Soviet Turn 1 defense. The Germans decided to try the "Counterblow Gambit" against the West Front on Turn 1 to get an easy 1 VP and just surrounded the unit (they will use two cards for Counterblows in the Soviet Combat Phase). The position shown is at the start of the Soviet turn. The Southwest and Northwest Fronts were destroyed, but the South Front held its own against Army Group Rumania. What can the Soviets do to minimize the German gains? Let's suppose the Russians will use two cards to replace the lost units, and keep the last two for future turns (it is always a good idea to save some cards if possible).

The surrounded West Front is almost surely a lost cause; so let's not waste any more resources in trying to save it.

The Reserve Front is too far away from the action, let's put it in the Rail Move Box (remember that for the first



two turns you cannot move more than one unit per rail). It will be able to react to the German advance after the Counterblow is resolved.

We bring the two rebuilt units as shown (A & B in the illustration below). Note that the Southwest Front (B) can reappear next to Kiev even if the City is in an enemy ZOC. It was put near the City to stop the German player trying



another Counterblow here too: a remote possibility, but it could be disastrous if it worked, so better play safe!

Note also that I try to put the regular infantry units in non-nuclear terrain to cancel the German Armor Bonus. The situation at the end of the turn is shown in illustration #5.

Things are not rosy, but major encirclements shall now be avoided next turn. You are missing one unit (the out of supply West Front), so the line is pretty thin, but next turn you'll get two new units.

The area West of Smolensk is a bit weak but there is nothing you can do about it, you don't want to weaken the South more—the two 5 SP units there form a good defense group (one can Counterblow in support if the other is attacked alone). The Leningrad Front could be moved one or two hexes in front of the City if you think that the Germans might have a card giving them some extra movement points. Hey, it's rough being the Soviets in 1941!

### Soviet South Defense Quiz

See illustration #6. This is the Soviet Turn 1 of the game, because of having to replace heavy losses this turn, you have only one card left in your hand now, but a good one: card #18 (*Operational Reserves/ Conflicting Hitler Directives*).

The Germans still have three cards, and for the sake of the problem let's assume they could be any other card in the deck.

You have one unit that can be used as reinforcements (the Southwest Front, shown on the map with a disruption marker); and Stalin, in his wisdom, has allotted you one





Rail move to use as you wish. Since things are going badly up North, you fear that there is a great possibility that the Germans will commit their 2nd Army here in the South next turn.

Stalin expects you to guarantee that the Germans do not capture all three cities on the board by the end of next turn. You were also promised to get the Caucasian Front on Turn 2, coming from Sevastopol. How do you BEST defend, and what are your actions, Comrade Marshal?

Here is a way to do it, remember, you have to make sure here that the three Cities do not fall by the end of Turn 2.

You know that the Germans will not be able to move during your own turn (as you have card #18, which includes

the German event “*Operational Reserves*”). Plus with it you can cancel any other card the Germans can throw at you (like “*General Staff*”).

You HAVE to give up Odessa and Kiev right away, as there is the danger that the Germans could “Counterblow” you, and if you lose one of your units because of bad luck, your front line will be wide open and disaster will ensue next turn.

You have your Southwest infantry unit appear in Kiev, move it away safely behind the Dnepr River. The Central Front will hold the main front in clear terrain (it will give no Armor Bonus to the Germans because it is a Mechanized unit). You use your precious Rail move to withdraw the South Front to Dnepropetrovsk, to ensure than a German Advance After Combat will not occupy it. See illustration #7.

If the Germans are extra-lucky during their turn, they could perhaps “Counterblow” against the City next turn, but you will be able to use the reinforcing Caucasus Front unit to help hold the line. So let’s see what will happen for “real”, and play the situation!

## **German AGS Turn 2 at Start:**

Illustration #8 shows the position at the start of Turn 2. The OKH puts three cards at the disposal of the AGS commander, and one *Blitz!* marker:

- #06 *Luftwaffe Support*
  - #37 *Heinz Guderian*
  - #19 *Roving Cauldron* (Not usable for the event because it is a Red Star card) The Soviets still have card #34 in hand (*Conflicting Hitler Directives*).

## Attack #1

The Germans decide to do a high risk strategy, trying to get all three cities (which would give them a good chance of getting a "Sudden Death" victory at the start of Turn 3 because of events elsewhere on the map). So they use most of their troops to strike south towards Dnepropetrovsk,

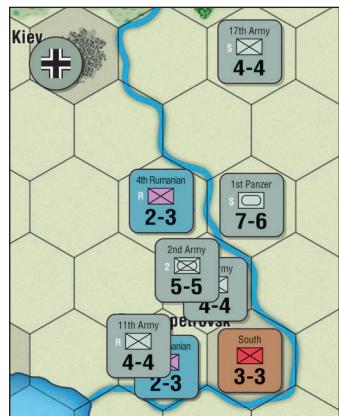
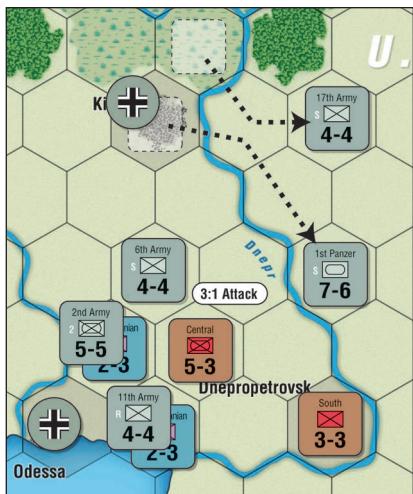


The Germans victoriously advance East, and surround the Central Front with their ZOC. Things are looking good for the Nazis!

### German AGS Turn 2 Attack #2

Now comes the big gamble: The Axis player attacks the Central Front at straight 3:1 odds. They have a 2/3 chance of success, the combat would be a guaranteed success using the "Guderian" card (a 2:1 or better attack is an automatic DR); but he keeps the card for later. Result: a 5! DEFENDER SHATTERED! The combat result becomes "Defender Destroyed", as the Soviet player cannot retreat. Here is the final position after the German advance:

Things are bad for the Soviets.



### Soviet Turn 2

But help is coming. Stavka will not give you any more new cards but for #34 you had last turn. The Southwest Front is built again and will defend Kharkov. The Caucasus Front appears in Sevastopol and moves south of Dnepropetrovsk. No attacks are declared by the Soviets.

So with some glee the Axis player discards his card #19 "Roving Cauldron", to put a "Counterblow" marker on his stack as shown. The Soviets will have to attack back at 1:3, a 4/6 chance of a CA; and the Germans will be able to use their "Guderian" card in the Counter-attack, guaranteeing success!

### Soviet Turn 2 (End):

Then the Soviets play their own Ace in the hole: Theirs is card #34 "Conflicting Hitler Directives", which cancels the play of the German card.

Cursing, his opponent the Axis player now has no other choice but to discard his #37 "Guderian" card, to put back the "Counterblow" marker on their stack. Now things are a bit more even!



The Soviet South Front must attack the two German armies at 1:3 odds. The die roll is 1: COUNTERATTACK! The Gods of War are really not kind for the Communists. NOW the Germans get to attack back. And since it's a battle occurring because of a CA result, the City does not help the defense. The Attack is at 3:1 odds.

The die roll is 2: EXCHANGE! The South Front is eliminated, and one German army is reduced. No advances. So, against all odds, the City holds (but barely)!

Note that if the Soviets had one unit in the Rail Movement Box, it could be redeployed in the City at the very end of the turn.

Alas, there is now a huge hole in the line, a hole that the Germans will surely exploit, but at least Turn 3 is a Mud turn, and their "Sudden Death" victory was denied! And winter is approaching fast...



*Situation at the end of the German attacks.*

## Save Smolensk and the Bryansk Front!

It is the Soviet Turn 2 Movement Phase. The situation is critical because of very bad results on the southern part of the front, the Axis are but ONE point away from a Sudden Death

victory at the start of next turn (Turn 3)! Two welcomed reinforcements have just arrived in Moscow and Tula (the West and Northwest Fronts). Infinite thanks, Comrade Stalin!

The rest of the frontline is safe, but for here, around Smolensk.

The Soviets have one card left (*Conflicting Hitler Directives*), the rest were used to replace our huge losses. The Germans still have three cards left in their hand (and it can be any card but the Soviet one), plus one “Blitz!” marker.

How can you move your patriotic troops (and do your battles, if need be) to make 100% sure that you do not lose 1 VP (and the game) before the start of next turn? If possible it would be nice if Moscow does not fall to the Nazi invaders on Axis Turn 3; unless, of course, you want to go on a sightseeing tour of Siberia’s lead mines. Only the part of the map shown is playable.

**Hint:** Your soldiers are expendable (they are all heroes).

### SOLUTION:

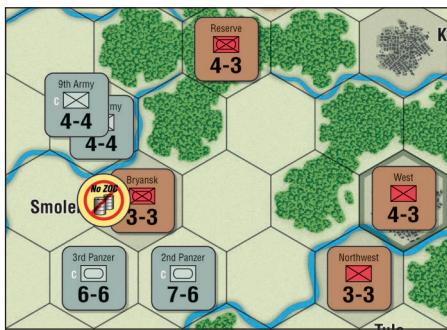
“This looks like a trick question: I believe it is impossible.”

Your lack of patriotic faith is disturbing, comrade!

There is a way of making sure the Soviets do not lose 1 VP (and the game). Remember my hint, that the Russian troops were expendable? In this case, the Northwest Front in Tula will sacrifice itself for the sake of the Motherland!

The first picture shows how you move your units. You first place the Northwest Front next to Smolensk, thus allowing the Bryansk Front to slip out of the encirclement. Read this rule:

**[8.5.3] No Infiltration:** Units cannot move directly from one hex in an EZOC to another, unless the hex being entered



is also occupied by a friendly unit.

Of course, the hex is now overstacked. So the Northwest Front is eliminated to the “Shattered” holding box. But their sacrifice was not in vain, as the Bryansk Front is now safe (remember, you lose 1 VP when an “Out of Supply” unit dies). The invaders will not be able to Counterblow and take Smolensk either.

**Another important move:** The Reserve Front is placed next to the two German infantry armies, to absorb any possible Counterblow. You do not want the “Out of Supply” Bryansk Front to be forced to attack!

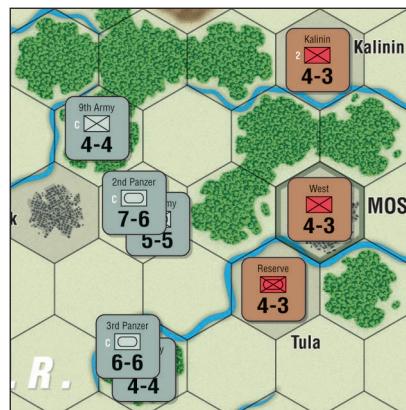
The West Front takes a defensive position in front of Moscow in the Woods/Fortified line (the Woods hex also simulates the Soviet late 1941 fortifications built there), there is an excellent chance of keeping your Capital (especially if you keep the “*Conflicting Hitler’s Directives*” card in your hand), at least in the Axis Turn 3; and most probably your own turn, too (with the help of some reinforcements). But after this victorious defense, chances are the German Panzers will move south in search of an easier prey.

DO NOT set up next to the enemy armor: your infantry could be “Counterblown” in clear terrain: not a good thing, as the Panzers could exploit right into Tula, or Smolensk.



### Protect Moscow at all costs!!

You are at the start of the Turn 3 Russian Movement Phase, and the German AGC is poised to make a try at capturing Moscow next turn. Because of heavy losses to be replaced from Turn 2, you don’t have any cards left in your hand. The Germans still have two cards, but “OKH” and “General Staff” are (for now) in the Discard Pile.



How do you defend Moscow, Kalinin and Tula with the three Soviet Fronts available on the map?

“I believe it is critical that Moscow has to be in supply and thus is able to have a unit placed in it next turn.”

Exactly! Besides stopping the German advance in put-

ting your units in Woods hexes and NOT occupying Moscow, the important factor is to insure that a supply line will be kept open to the City so that your Turn 4 reinforcements (aka. the Volkov Front) can be deployed in the city even if the hexes occupied by the West and Kalinin Fronts are taken by the Germans. Tula is a lost cause for now, of course ("He who wants to defend everything, defends nothing"—Frederick the Great). But you'll have two turns of Snow weather to take it back.

DO NOT set-up next to the large German stacks (unless you feel very lucky), as the chances for a "Counterblow" disaster are much too high. And in Jan/Feb 42 the Germans have a -2 CRT shift for their attacks because of the weather: good luck to them in taking Moscow with that modifier!

The capital is saved, well done, Comrade!

## How to crack open a Fortified City?

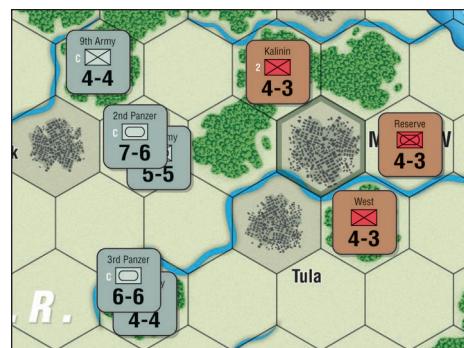
Here is a classic situation in Late 41 / Early 42. Von Manstein with the German 11th Army and the Rumanians are poised at the Gates of Sevastopol. This is the start of the German Turn. Sadly, you don't have "Siege Artillery" in your hand to help against the Fortifications.



What are the prospects of victory if you attack the Soviet Fort without this card? The maximum you can get is 8 SP vs 3 SP, so 2-1 odds. This goes down two columns because of the terrain (City plus Objective). Final odds: 1-1.

Even a *Blitz!* marker will not help here, as 3-2 odds are not better.

The prospects are not very good: DR results do not affect Forts, so the best you can hope is an EX result; and you can bet the Soviet player will probably spend a card to flip



back the unit to its Fort side in his Organization Phase! So there is a zero chance of taking the City.

What's a German commander to do?

Well... here is an idea: You don't attack the City during your turn right away! You "Counterblow" it first during the opponent turn, hoping to cause some losses, THEN you attack it during your turn—in a series of one-two punches. So as

you can see, Isolated Fortresses are far more vulnerable than supported ones. You need to have other troops nearby to absorb those "Counterblow" attacks. Historically, the Soviets strived to do exactly that—attacks from the Kerch Straits to support Sevastopol, and south of Lake Ladoga to help Leningrad survive.



Look at what a world of difference it would be if the Caucasus Front was adjacent to Sevastopol, instead of the 4th Rumanian Army being there!



So let's suppose that the Germans were able to CA at 3-1 and got an EX result (50% chance of that happening). In the Exchange the Fort was flipped to its weak infantry side, and the 3rd Rum Army is eliminated. The Soviets also attacked the 4th Rum Army with the Caucasus Front and got a lucky DR result, too.

Well, things are not as rosy for the Germans now. Even with good cards and a *Blitz!* marker. Why? Because the Soviets can pull the same exact stunt the Germans did last turn, and put a "Counterblow" marker on their Caucasus Front if the Germans attack Sevastopol—now both units must be attacked!

Of course, all those sneaky maneuvers cost Event cards; and you never have enough of these. But you did keep some in reserve this turn, right comrade? RIGHT? Stalin is not very forgiving of major mistakes like these you know...

# Rule Clarifications

## TURN OF ENTRY

- Some units have an asterisked (\*) Turn of entry number: it indicates that they are Optional Units.
- Some units have an underlined turn of entry number: it means they are Cadre units and go to the Cadre Holding box when entering the game.

## AFV SILHOUETTES

The Panzer/Tank counters in the game are offered in two styles: NATO Icons or AFV silhouettes. Use only one set in the game that suits your preferences.

## COUNTERBLOWS

You always place counterblow markers of the colour/ownership of the stack it is put on (look at the example of play on Page 13).

- Soviet (Red) Counterblows are always placed on Soviet units.
- Axis (Gray) counterblows are always placed on Axis units.
- On the combat table, "Phasing Player" for Counterblow placement on a "CB" result means the player whose turn it is, at all times. Ex: During the Soviet player-turn you will ALWAYS put the Counterblow markers created from a combat result on the Soviet units involved in the combat, even if they are defending from a "CA" (Counterattack), never on the Axis units!

## TERRAIN COMBAT BONUSES

In a multi-hex battle the defender will chose a single defending hex to use for the combat terrain modifiers.

## SOVIET IMPROVEMENTS

Do not forget that as per rule 7.1 you can only improve by card discards:

- Regional Units to Fortresses: starting on Turn 3.
- All other Soviet units: starting on Turn 17 (before this they can only be flipped using free upgrades (7.2)).

# 2nd Edition Rule Owners

Pay attention to these rules sections, as there are some significant changes from the 2nd edition:

- [6.2] Seas as a Supply Source.
- [7.5] Fortress Conversion.
- [7.6] Unit Placement.
- [9.2] Detraining.
- [15.1] Abteilung (Detachment) units.
- [15.2] Fortified Front units.
- [15.5] Counterblow Advance (new rule).
- [15.8] Rezervy (Reserve) units.
- [15.11] Variable Card Initiative (rule deleted).

## 3rd Edition Event Cards

The cards' play timing was clarified and some events slightly modified.

You can purchase separately the 3rd edition deck of card directly from GMT, or get the cards in .pdf format at the game topic page on [www.gmtgames.com](http://www.gmtgames.com)

Precision for Card #33 SIEGE ARTILLERY: If the Fort units has to retreat, flip it first to its Regional infantry side.

