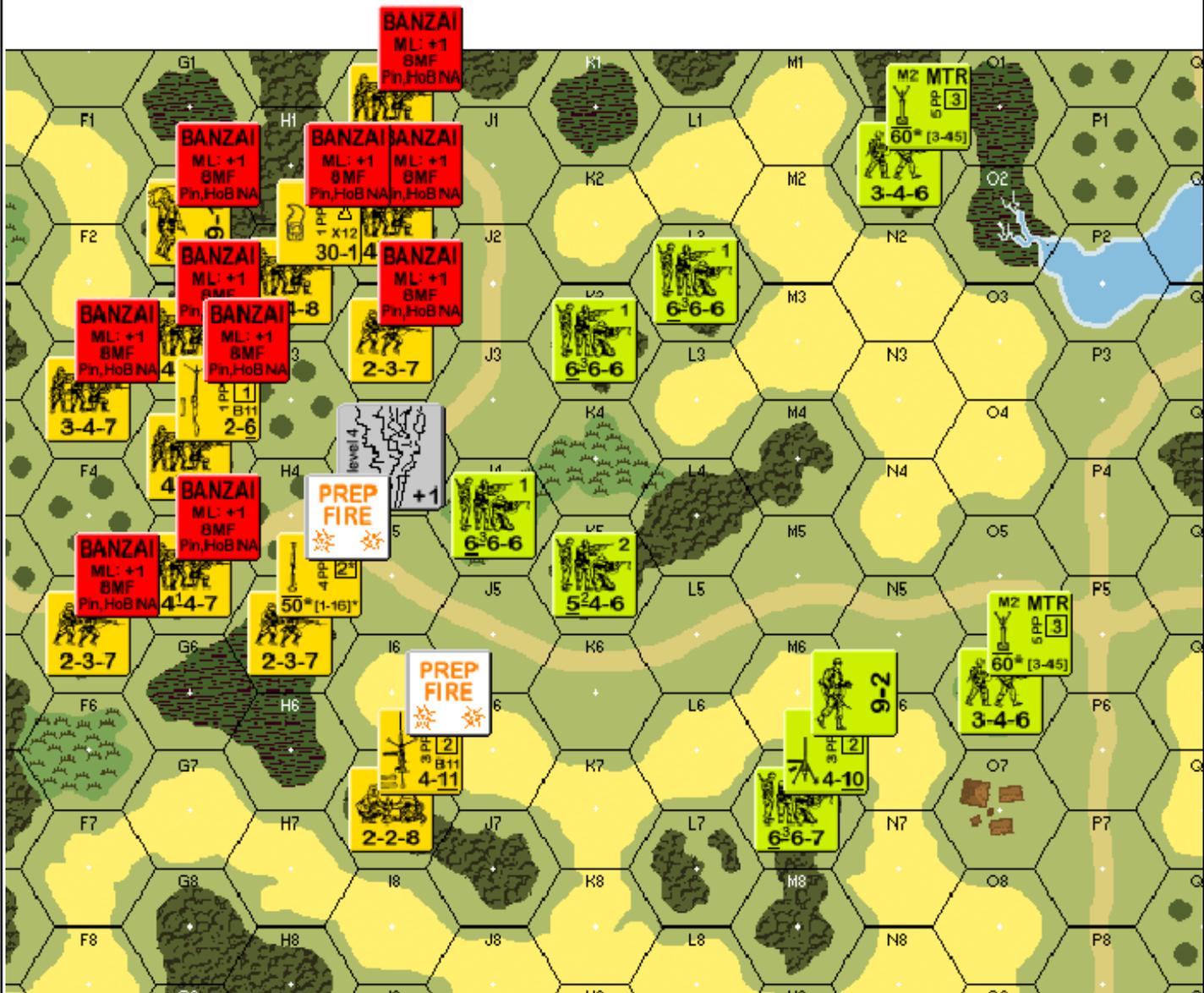


BANZAI!!!



Special Edition

The Newsletter of the Texas ASL Club

December 2020 Volume 25, Number 3

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EDITOR'S FOXHOLE

Rick Reinesch



Welcome to this very special edition of the newsletter of Texas ASL, *Banzai!!*. We received it a little late for the previous issue, but a very detailed and inciteful analysis of RO5 *Men of Steel* from the indomitable Rich Spilky and his partner in crime Frank Canzolino has arrived on our doorstep. Given the size of the article I had contemplated breaking it up into parts and spread it out over several issues. But in discussing it with Rich, we felt that there would be a risk of a loss in the overall continuity of the article taking that approach. So we are going to go ahead and publish it all at once. Given its size we are dedicating the entire issue of *Banzai!!* solely to it. So break out your Red October maps and scenario card{s} and follow along with their very detailed scenario analysis. Rich and Frank have done a fantastic job with it and *Banzai!!* is proud to publish it. We hope you enjoy it.

SCENARIO ANALYSIS AND AAR: MEN OF STEEL [RO5]

Rich Spilky and Frank Canzolino



Note to the Reader

We suggest that you read this first section with the RO5 and RB5 scenario cards in hand for ease of reference. We also want to let the reader know that the first section of this article (in which scenario RB5 is compared to scenario RO5) is also available in either audio form or visually too (via YouTube). See <http://www.the2halfsquads.com> and look for episode #250 if interested.

Introduction

Yeah, I know. Surprise, surprise. You knew this write-up was coming. Some of you may be wondering why it has taken me this long. After the somewhat detailed article regarding RB5 - *The Last Bid*, which was published in *Banzai!!* in March 2019 (V24.1), I guess I just couldn't resist following it up with an analysis of what I consider to be its sister scenario (RO5 - *Men*

of *Steel*) from the *Red October* module. [See http://texas-asl.com/banzai/banzai24_1.pdf]. Subsequently, my friend and relatively new ASL player Frank Canzolino agreed to play it with me and try his hand at joining me in writing this article, too. Frank agreed to take the Russians on the defense in this scenario and I took the Germans on the attack, and our descriptions and views are taken from these perspectives.

Scenario Overview*1

Men of Steel – RO5 has 21 game turns and features 149 squads and 33 leaders in the at-start order of battle (OB) for both sides. It also incorporates an interesting mix of SWs, guns, HIP units/fortifications, AFVs, and OBA, as well as more than 33 squads and 16 AFVs as reinforcements (for both sides), and all of the ASL action and drama that these units can create unfolds over the entire *Red October* (RO) map!

The victory conditions for RO5 are simple yet very dynamic. The Russians start the scenario in control of about 40% of the map and set up concealed on the east side of the RO5 SSR2-defined perimeter. Meanwhile, the Germans control the remainder of the map and set up in Building/Rubble/trench locations on/west of the perimeter*2. The victory condition states that the Germans must net +50 stone Building/Rubble locations at the end of scenario.

Comparing RO5 and RB5

For those of you who read the previous article on scenario RB5 referenced above, you may recall that I found that scenario to be significantly pro-German from a scenario balance perspective. In order to address this, I took the liberty of suggesting several alterations to RB5 toward the end of that article that I hoped would move that scenario towards more of an even match. Thus, even though these are different scenarios, I supposed that they were similar enough in size, scope, terrain and victory conditions that it would be instructive to make some high-level comparisons to get things started.

At-Start Squads (Figure 1/Table 1)

Figure 1 shows a simple comparison between RB5 and RO5 based on the number of at-start squads. At the same time, Table 1, below the figure summarizes the percentage differences in the number of squads for each side. In RB5, the number of German squads (80) were attacking a slightly smaller number of Russian squads (78). In the RO5 scenario however, we find that 73 German squads are attacking a tad larger number of Russian squads (76). While the RO5 scenario contains a reduction in the number of at-start squads for both sides, the proportion of reduction is higher for the Germans (-8.8%) than it is for the Russians (-2.6%). I'll take the liberty of defining this as a mild tilt in play balance in favor of the Russian side.

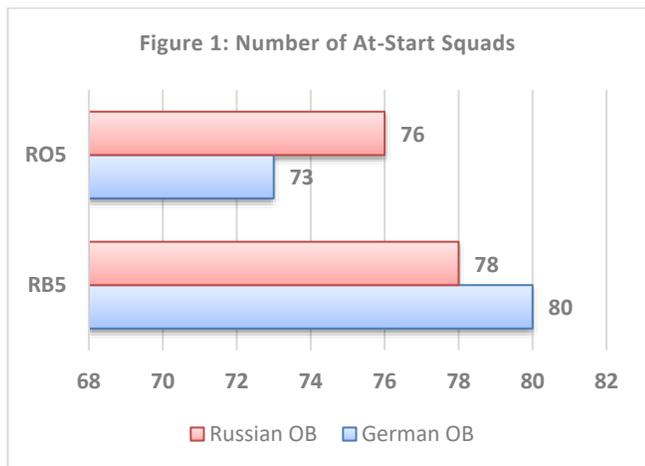


Table 1: Number of At-Start Squads

| Scenario | RB5 | RO5 | % Difference |
|------------|-----|-----|--------------|
| German OB | 80 | 73 | -8.8% |
| Russian OB | 78 | 76 | -2.6% |

At-Start Leaders (Figure 2/Table 2)

Figure 2 shows a comparison based on the number of at-start leaders while Table 2 below the figure summarizes the percentage differences in the number of at-start leaders for each side. The Germans still have 20 leaders to the Russian complement of 13 in both scenarios. No difference here at all with respect to number of leaders in the at-start orders of battle between the scenarios.

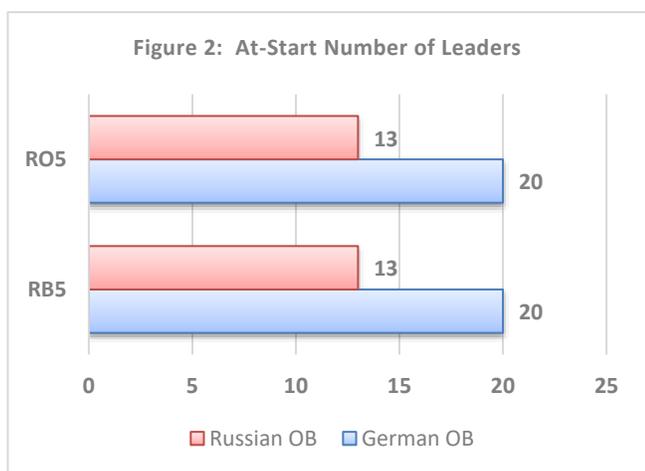


Table 2: At-Start Leaders

| Scenario | RB5 | RO5 | % Difference |
|------------|-----|-----|--------------|
| German OB | 20 | 20 | 0.0% |
| Russian OB | 13 | 13 | 0.0% |

At-Start Leadership Modifiers (Figure 3/Table 3)

Moving on, we see that Figure 3 shows a comparison based on the cumulative at-start leadership modifiers. Meanwhile, Table 3 below this figure summarizes the percentage differences in the cumulative at-start leadership modifiers for each side. Here we observe a meaningful difference. The Germans see a deterioration in the number of negative leadership modifiers by two (11.8% worse), while the Russians see an increase in the negative leadership modification total by the same number (but this represents a 22.2% improvement in leadership direction for them). So, while there is no difference in the number of leaders between the scenarios, RO5 has taken away some leadership direction ability from the at-start German leaders while adding in some better leaders into the at-start Russian OB. When we consider the ramifications of these modifiers being spread over a potentially 21-game turn scenario in which leadership is used for so many things like directing fire, passing MCs, rallying broken units, etc., these differences in leadership modification will likely make a big impact over the duration. I'm going to classify this as a meaningful lean in balance toward the Russian side with respect to changes to this parameter between the scenarios.

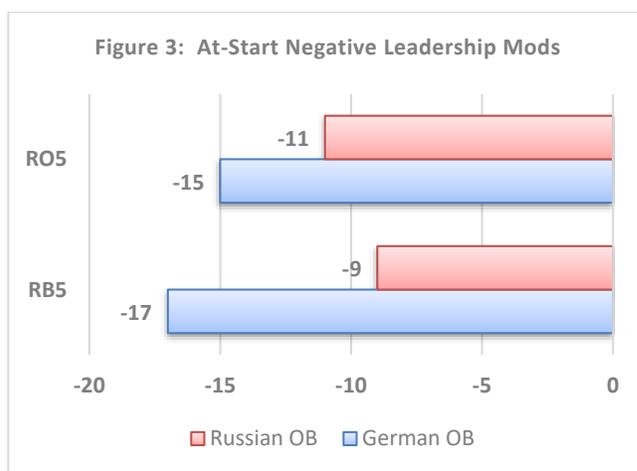
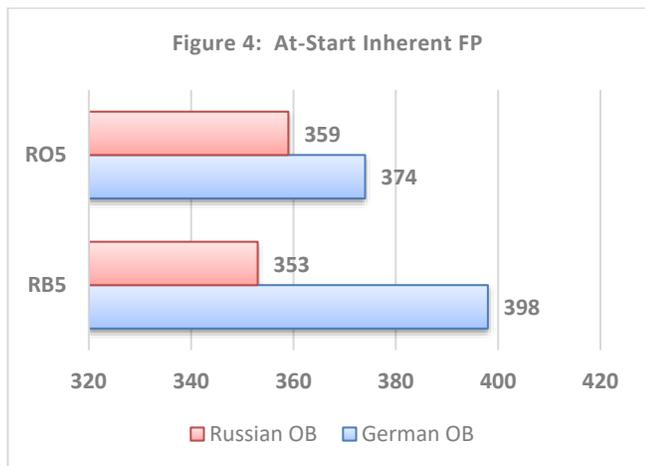


Table 3: At-Start Leadership Mods

| Scenario | RB5 | RO5 | % Difference |
|------------|-----|-----|--------------|
| German OB | -17 | -15 | -11.8% |
| Russian OB | -9 | -11 | 22.2% |

At-Start Inherent Firepower (Figure 4/Table 4)

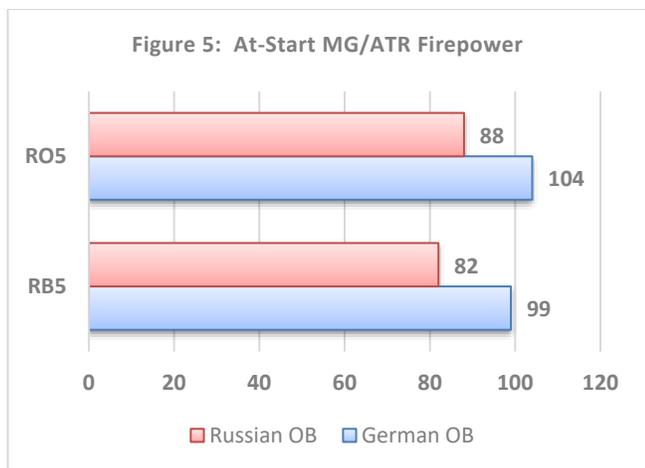
Figure 4 shows a comparison based on the at-start inherent firepower and Table 4 below the figure summarizes the percentage differences in the at-start inherent firepower for each side. Here we note that the at-start German inherent firepower has decreased by 6.0% while the at-start Russian inherent firepower has increased (albeit by a small amount, 1.7%). This is not a big difference either way, but I will consider it a small nudge in balance in favor of the Russian side with respect to changes in the at-start inherent firepower differences between the scenarios.



| Scenario | RB5 | RO5 | % Difference |
|------------|-----|-----|--------------|
| German OB | 398 | 374 | -6.0% |
| Russian OB | 353 | 359 | 1.7% |

At-Start MG/ATR Firepower (Figure 5/Table 5)

Figure 5 shows a comparison based on the at-start MG/ATR firepower while Table 5 below the figure summarizes the percentage differences in the at-start MG/ATR firepower for each side. Here we find that both sides have increased a bit both from a raw numbers and percentagewise perspective, but there really is no appreciable difference in my view for this statistic. Consequently, I'll call this a wash with respect to changes to the at-start MG/ATR firepower differences between the scenarios.



| Scenario | RB5 | RO5 | % Difference |
|------------|-----|-----|--------------|
| German OB | 99 | 104 | 5.1% |
| Russian OB | 82 | 88 | 7.3% |

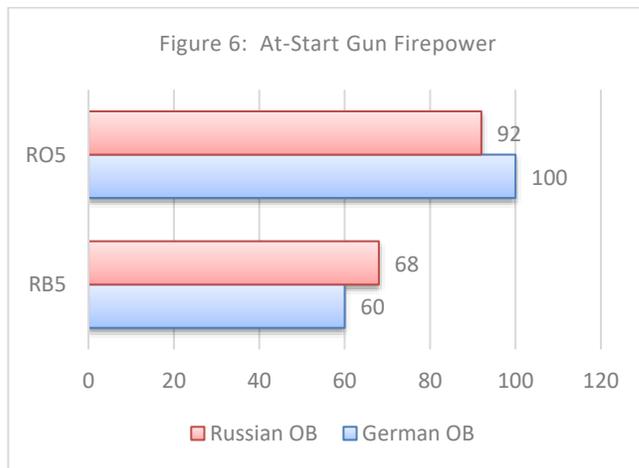
At-Start Gun Firepower (Figure 6/Table 6)

Figure 6 shows a comparison based on the total (non-AFV) gun firepower in each scenario. Meanwhile, Table 6 below the figure summarizes the percentage differences in the gun firepower for each side. In this case we see both sides gaining between the scenarios with the Russian side realizing a 35.3% increase while the Germans are benefiting from a 66.7% increase. While I'd be tempted on this occasion to classify these differences between scenarios as a benefit to the German side, I'm going to hold back on doing so for two reasons:

1) The major reason why the German gun firepower has gone up so much between scenarios is because of the inclusion of a single 150mm INF gun in the at-start German order of battle in RO5 that wasn't made available to the Germans in RB5. How much use this gun will be once the Russians see it brought into action is my concern (as it is nearly immobile per the Manhandling (C10.3) discussion below) when it comes to measuring this weapon's effectiveness.

2) The Germans are on the attack, and these German guns (and this 150mm gun in particular with an M# of 6) might be considered pretty close to immobile from where they set up at start. Yeah, yeah, I know all about Manhandling (C10.3), but it's a difficult process and its uncertain as well. Once revealed, I just don't see the Russians hanging out too long in LOS of these guns, (especially the 150mm INF gun).

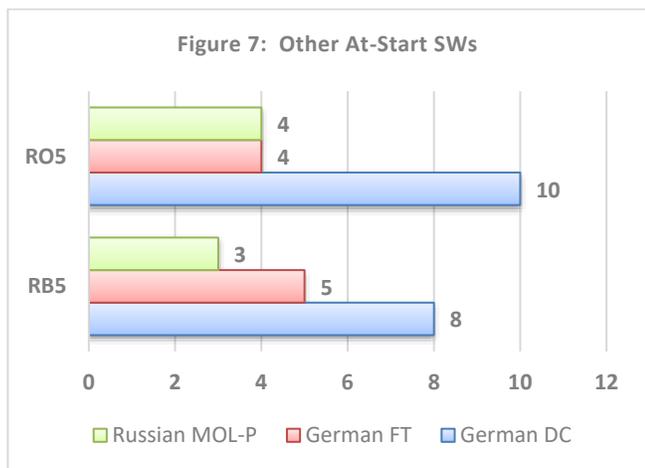
For these reasons, I am discounting the increase in gun firepower between the scenarios in favor of the Germans. My conclusion therefore is that this comparison is again just a wash with respect to changes to the gun firepower differences between the scenarios.



| Scenario | RB5 | RO5 | % Difference |
|------------|-----|-----|--------------|
| German OB | 60 | 100 | 66.7% |
| Russian OB | 68 | 92 | 35.3% |

Other At-Start Support Weapons (Figure 7/Table 7)

Figure 7 and its corresponding Table 7 below are a little different than the figures and tables previously described and are serving here as more of a catchall for the remaining comparisons in the at-start orders of battle. Figure 7 is a straightforward comparison of the German allotment of at-start number of DCs and FTs between the scenarios as well as a comparable assessment in the number of at-start Russian MOL-Ps. Similarly, Table 7 below the figure summarizes the percentage differences in the at-start DC/FT/MOL-P allocation for each weapon type between scenarios. Here we find that the Germans have been allotted a couple more DCs, but one less FT. The Russians meanwhile have been given one more MOL-P between the two scenarios. I'm not seeing any of these differences as too significant and am also going to call this a wash with respect to changes to the at-start number of DC/FT/MOL-P SWs between the scenarios.



| Scenario | RB5 | RO5 | % Difference |
|---------------|-----|-----|--------------|
| German DC | 8 | 10 | 25.0% |
| German FT | 5 | 4 | -20.0% |
| Russian MOL-P | 3 | 4 | 33.3% |

OBA and Minefields

No figures or tables are here to supplement the commentary, but I don't see any big changes between the scenarios to tilt the play balance between scenarios one way or the other. The exception to this statement might be with respect to the inclusion of a 200mm rocket OBA module for the Russians in RO5 that wasn't available in RB5. The rocket OBA module is not allowed pre-registered Fire (C1.73), per SSR6. Therefore, due to the absence of pre-registered Fire this OBA module resembles a high risk/high reward opportunity for the Russian player to carefully consider. It could end up being a smash hit for the Russians, a big nothing, or even cause devastating harm to the Russians themselves (see C1.54 for OBA effects v. friendly units) depending on its Extent of Error DR (C1.31). Meanwhile, the

remaining OBA modules are the same between the scenarios for each side while the minefield count is slightly reduced for the Russians in RO5 (54 factors, down from 60 in RB5).

Final Thoughts on RB5 v. RO5

My overall conclusion then is that RO5 may indeed be significantly more in balanced than RB5 as several significant components seem to have been allocated differently to slide the balance bar over towards the Russian side. So, while I recognize that the scenarios are different, I think these comparisons are still worthwhile. In any event, we'll soon find out how balanced this scenario may be by actually playing it!

Moving On

At this point in the article, we will be leaving scenario RB5 in our rearview mirror and transitioning over to a specific discussion of tactics and outcomes concerning the RO5 scenario. Consequently, at this point the RB5 scenario card can be put away, but we recommend that the reader keep the RO5 scenario card handy. We also suggest that the reader might want to break out the RO map as a reference in order to better follow the discussion and turn-by-turn details described.

RO5 - German vs. Russian Firepower Comparison

One thought I had while preparing for this scenario was a comparison of firepower between the sides using the at-start OB of each as a function of range. For this comparison, I considered the firepower and/or the effects of:

- inherent firepower (A1.21)
- MG firepower (A7.351)
- FT firepower (A22.1)
- point blank Fire (A7.21)
- Long Range Fire (A7.22)

Not considered for this comparison were:

- DC firepower (A23.1)
- Gun firepower (C.6)
- Assault Fire Bonus (A7.36)
- Rate of Fire (A8.23)
- MOL firepower (A22.611)
- Potential for covering (A7.371)

With these assumptions, Figure 8a was produced. Figure 8a shows us that even though the Russians outnumber the Germans in at-start squads (76 to 73, per Figure 1 and Table 1 discussed previously) the Germans possess greater firepower at every range! This may be the reason we can reconcile why the Germans can be on the attack in this scenario despite being outnumbered.

However, if the Germans want to maximize their additional firepower to greatest advantage, they're going to want to confront the Russians at ranges in which they will typically have the greatest *proportional* difference in firepower. With this additional idea in mind, Figure 8b was produced. Figure 8b has

the same green (German) and blue (Russian) line charts on it indicating the firepower totals at each range. However, Figure 8b also includes a bar chart at each range that is measured against the 2nd Y-axis on the right side of the chart which indicates the percentage difference in firepower that the Germans have over the Russians for each range. So, for example, at a 2-hex range the Russian total at-start firepower is 441, while the German at-start firepower is 526. The bar chart indicates that at this range the Germans hold a 19.3% advantage in firepower.*³

An examination of Figure 8b shows that at ranges of 6, 11, and 12 the Germans should realize firepower advantages over their adversaries of 121.1%, 156.6% and 156.6% respectively. I believe that one of the reasons why the six-hex range specifically is on this list is because that is the precise range in hexes at which the numerous 4-5-8 Russian squads in their at-start OB see their firepower cut in half due to long-range fire (while the comparable German 4-6-7s do not). Similarly, at ranges of 11 and 12, these 4-5-8s see their inherent firepower go to zero, while the German 4-6-7s retain half firepower (A7.22) at these distances. There are many other reasons we could point to in order to explain why these large proportional differences exist at these specific ranges, such as the differences in MG

ranges between the OBs, the Russian 5-2-7s and 6-2-8s vs. the comparable German 5-4-8s and 8-3-8s, but I'll just stick to the 4-5-8 v. 4-6-7 example at this juncture to serve as an illustration as to why these large percentage discrepancies are occurring at these specific ranges shown in Figure 8b.

Suffice it to say that as the German player in this scenario, I'll be looking for 6, 11, and/or 12 range distances from which my kill stacks might maximize their effects. Additionally, my general strategy as the German player is to go for multiple breaks in order to eliminate as many Russian squads as I can, because in the long run, I want to gain a numerical advantage over the Russians as well in order to satisfy the victory conditions. If not eliminated, then the Russian units will generally be able to rally back, and I'll have to break them all over again in order to gain ground. I don't expect to be able to eliminate Russians by cutting off their rout paths for quite some time, so double breaking will be my only option if I want to permanently eliminate Russian units during the first half of the scenario. Eliminated units don't rally back is my mantra!

Figure 8a - Scenario RO5 - Inherent/MG/FT FP Comparison by Range

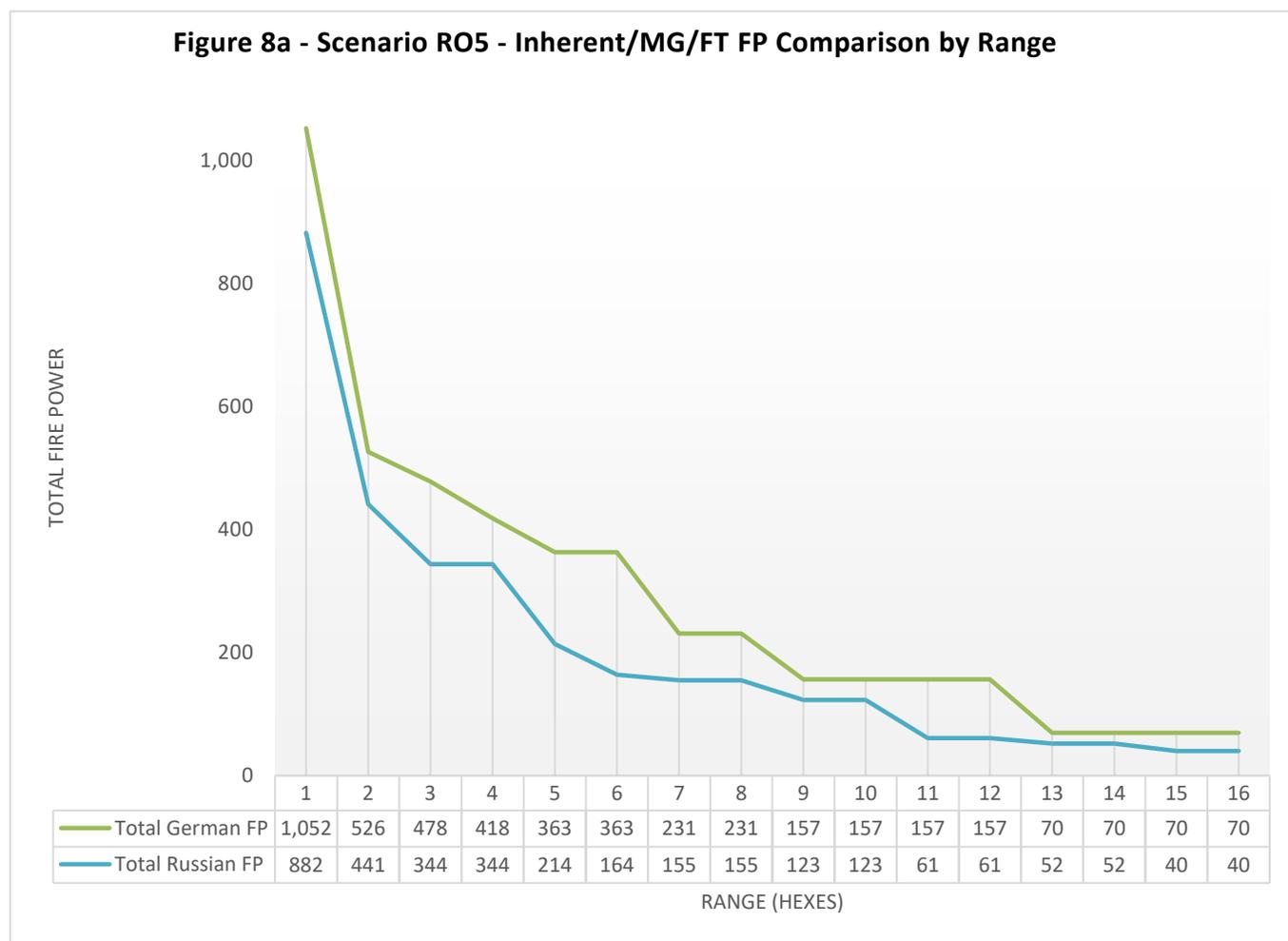
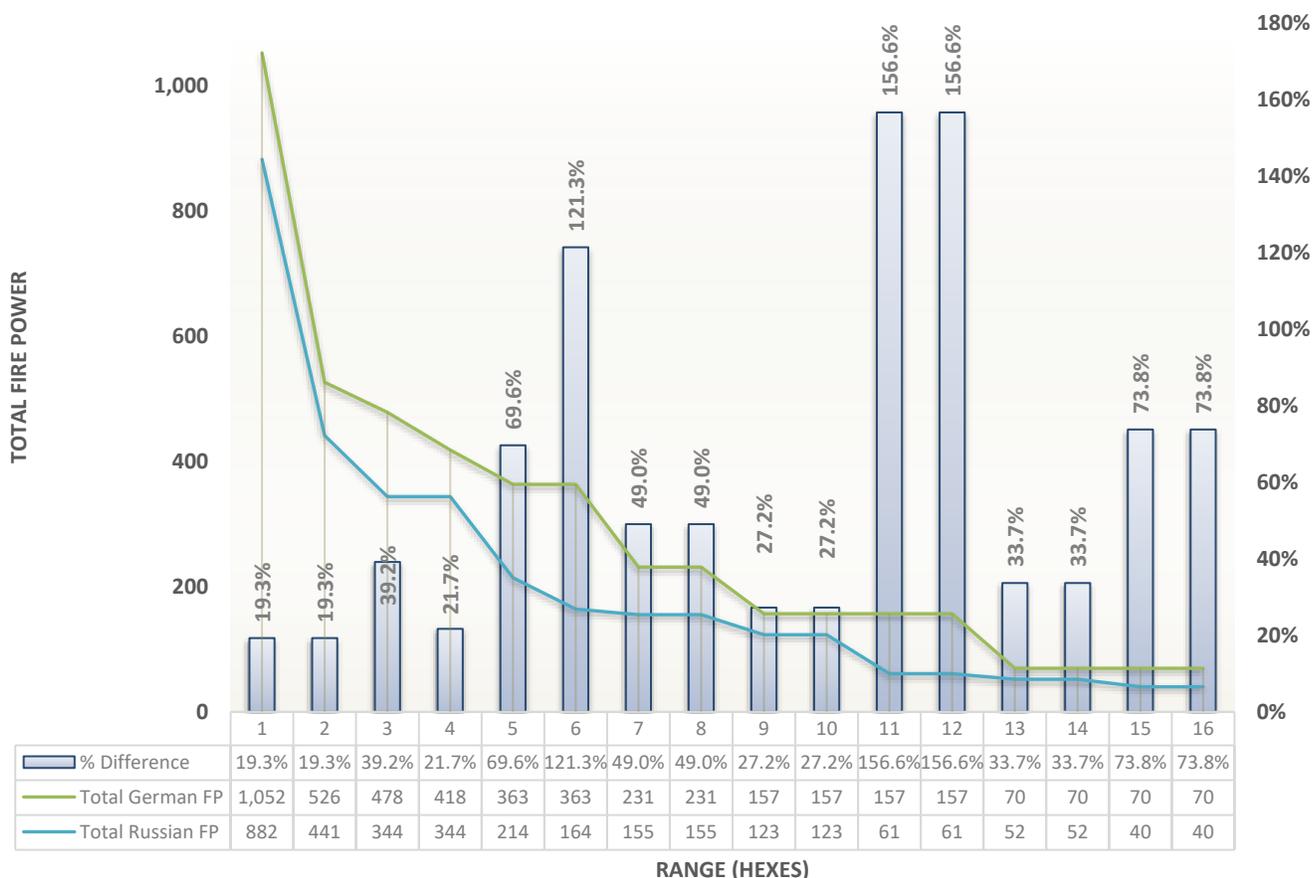


Figure 8b - Scenario RO5 - Inherent/MG/FT FP Comparison by Range



Conversely, as the Russian side in this scenario, I would want to draw the Germans in for close-in fighting where the German advantages are diminished at shorter ranges. This includes the CC option which I suggest the Russians should utilize at nearly every opportunity due to their Stealth (A11.17, RB18) advantage in the ambush dr, and also because they are the more numerous (albeit slightly) side. A one-for-one trade-off in squads lost during CC should be considered an acceptable tactic for the Russians in this scenario, but not so from the German perspective.

German Pre-Registered Hex

Moving on then, the first thing I must do as the German player before any setup is to select my pre-registered hex and my observer's location for my at-start 100mm OBA module. I believe that the split-level factory locations (RO5.7) in Z35/Y36 represent a key area that I presume the Russians will want to occupy and therefore I want to hit these locations with HE OBA right off the bat in order to possibly find (and hopefully neutralize) at least one of the two Russian OBA observers. I am particularly concerned about his 200mm rocket OBA (C1.9) not to mention his 120mm standard OBA module (both delineated in SSR6) and the potential deadly effects from either or both of

these OBA modules. My hope is to neutralize at least one of them before they can do too much damage to the at-start German units. Consequently, I want my observer's location to have a LOS to at least one level 2 location in one or both of these hexes, as I suspect there to be at least one of the Russian observers (likely HIP with a field phone) in the vicinity. Ideally, my observer will also have a LOS to other helpful locations as well in order to aid the attackers in this vicinity. With these thoughts in mind, I selected the 2nd level of hex V36 as the pre-registered hex and choose the first level of R33 as the location for the 7-0 leader with a radio. The observer's initial location in R33.1 has LOS to the 2nd levels of both split-level factory building hexes Z35/Y36 and can also aid in the attack on Hall 9 as a secondary target. Readers should note that SSR6 allows both sides the choice of a field phone (C1.23) or a radio (C1.6) for their non-rocket OBA modules. In this case I am choosing a radio over the phone to gain mobility with the observer should I need it. In doing so, I'm sacrificing a bit percentage-wise in radio contact/maintenance (C1.22) performance, as well as observer HIP status (per C1.23), but I'd rather have the mobility with the radio should I need it. Part of my reasoning in going with the radio over the field phone is that the German draw pile (C1.211) is 10B/3R due to the two extra black cards afforded by SSR6, which gives this module both plentiful ammunition (C1.211)

and a pre-registered hex (C1.73), respectively. Thus, my rationale is that if I am fortunate, I can use up a couple of fire missions in this area and potentially still retain a couple more fire missions for use elsewhere at a later point in the scenario. This scenario, having the potential for 21 game turns, certainly affords the possibility for achieving additional fire missions that I don't want to forfeit just because I selected an immobile field phone. However, this being ASL and knowing the fickle nature of OBA, I'm probably asking too much of this radio/OBA module. Nevertheless, I can dream, can't I? In any event, it will be important for me to locate the Russian observer(s) as quickly as possible in order try to neutralize them.

The reader should note at this point that comments in standard black font are from my (Rich's) perspective as the German side in the first playing. The comments in blue font are from Frank's perspective as the Russian player in the first playing.

Notes from the Russian player's (Frank's) perspective regarding his defensive setup:

My very first impression of the Advanced Squad Leader scenario RO5 – Men of Steel was based on looking at who sets up first. Normally, one would expect that the side that sets up first would be the defender in the scenario while the player that

moves first is on the attack. A quick glance at the turn record says the scenario plays at 21 turns. Since I am a relatively new player with three years under my ASL belt, the only scenario that I've ever played that approaches anywhere near this length is THREE DAYS of a typical campaign game. The victory conditions reinforce that the Germans will be bringing the fight to the Russians as the Germans are tasked with controlling 50 more stone locations than they lose over the course of the scenario.

Unusual in this scenario is the amount of firepower and morale provided the Russians. I've seen after action reports on various RB scenarios, including one written for the sister scenario to this one, RB5 – The Last Bid, and it seems that the Germans normally outclass the Russians. It appears that the designers of Men of Steel are addressing this right out of the blocks. The Russians are given a relatively well-led force, (being able to trade for a Commissar or two would have been nice, except that two weeks ago STAVKA recalled Commissars from the frontline; A25.22), having high morale and packing a good punch. I see some close-in body punches coming in the scenario. The Germans have an elite force backed up by an almost equal number of first-line troops and are awash in their typical leadership and plenty of support weapons (including four

| Russian On-Board Units At Start | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|------|-----------------------------|------|---|-----|-------|
| Hex | Units | Hex | Units | Hex | Units | Hex | Units |
| AA8 | ?, 5-2-7 1sq(?) | CC12 | Trench | N40 | A-T Ditch | | |
| Z8 | ?, 5-2-7 1sq(?) | Y15 | Wire | X19 | Wire | | |
| M21 | Wire | Y10 | ?, ? | Y19 | A-T Ditch | | |
| L21 | Wire | Y9 | ?, ? | Z18 | A-T Ditch | | |
| BB10 | ?, 9-1(?), Fort Bldg Level 1 | T23 | ?, ? | T19 | Wire | | |
| | | | | | ?, MMG(?), 4-4-7 1sq(?), Building Level 1, Minefield (2 Factor Anti Tank Mine)(HIP) | | |
| Y22 | ?, HMG(?), 4-4-7 1sq(?) | U36 | ?, ? | S38 | | | |
| V26 | Trench | M42 | ?, ? | R37 | ?, 6-2-8 Esq(?) | | |
| X24 | Trench | R38 | ?, LMG (b)(?), 6-2-8 Esq(?) | V31 | MOL-P(HIP), 2-2-8 lcr(HIP), Building Level 1(HIP) | | |
| U25 | ?, HMG(?), 4-5-8 Esq(?), 9-2(?) | U29 | ?, ATR(?), 4-5-8 Esq(?) | V39 | ?, HMG(?), 4-4-7 1sq(?) | | |
| M23 | ?, 6-2-8 Esq(?) | U30 | ?, 6-2-8 Esq(?) | Z40 | 45LL AT PTP obr. 42 ca6, 2-2-8 lcr | | |
| AA9 | Trench | T28 | ?, 4-5-8 Esq(?) | X38 | 82* MTR BM obr. 37 ca5, 2-2-8 lcr | | |
| Z9 | ?, 5-2-7 1sq(?) | T26 | ?, 4-5-8 Esq(?) | AA46 | ?, 82* MTR BM obr. 37 ca5(?), 2-2-8 lcr(?) | | |
| V34 | ?, 4-5-8 Esq(?) | P22 | ?, 4-5-8 Esq(?) | W34 | MOL-P(HIP), 2-2-8 lcr(HIP), Building Level 1(HIP) | | |
| V35 | ?, 4-5-8 Esq(?) | M22 | ?, 4-5-8 Esq(?) | EE24 | 76L ART obr. 39 ca5, 2-2-8 lcr | | |
| X34 | Trench | N22 | ?, 4-5-8 Esq(?) | AA21 | 1+3+5 PTObox ca6, 76* INF PP obr. 27 ca6, 2-2-8 lcr | | |
| BB17 | ?, ATR(?), 5-2-7 1sq(?) | Q38 | ?, 6-2-8 Esq(?) | AA19 | 1+5+7 Pillbox ca5, 76* INF PP obr. 27 ca5, 2-2-8 lcr | | |
| X20 | 1+3+5 PTObox ca5, 4-5-8 Esq | P39 | ?, 6-2-8 Esq(?) | EE12 | 45L AT PTP obr. 32 ca5, 2-2-8 lcr | | |
| W21 | Trench | S39 | ?, 5-2-7 1sq(?) | Y11 | ?, 5-2-7 1sq(?) | | |
| S21 | 1+3+5 PTObox ca6, MMG, 4-5-8 Esq | V36 | ?, MMG(?), 4-4-7 1sq(?) | BB6 | 45L AT PTP obr. 32 ca5, 2-2-8 lcr | | |
| O42 | ?, 4-4-7 1sq(?) | X35 | ?, ATR(?), 5-2-7 1sq(?) | Z24 | MOL-P(HIP), 2-2-8 lcr(HIP) | | |
| U20 | ?, 4-5-8 Esq(?), Fort Bldg Level 1 | R39 | ?, 6-2-8 Esq(?) | EE23 | ?, LMG (b)(?), 4-4-7 1sq(?) | | |
| V20 | ?, LMG (b)(?), 4-5-8 Esq(?) | O22 | ?, 6-2-8 Esq(?) | V22 | ?, 8-1(?) | | |
| T24 | ?, 6-2-8 Esq(?) | T25 | ?, 4-5-8 Esq(?) | W25 | ?, 8-0(?) | | |
| Q23 | ?, 6-2-8 Esq(?) | U26 | ?, 6-2-8 Esq(?) | DD15 | 82* MTR BM obr. 37 ca5(HIP), 2-2-8 lcr(HIP) | | |

| Russian On-Board Units At Start | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|------|---|------|---|
| Hex | Units | Hex | Units | Hex | Units |
| N21 | ?, 6-2-8 Esq(?) | T27 | ?, 6-2-8 Esq(?) | CC16 | ?, 5-2-7 1sq(?) |
| Z4 | ?, 4-4-7 1sq(?) | T29 | ?, 4-5-8 Esq(?) | DD16 | 45L AT PTP obr. 32 ca5(HIP), 2-2-8 lcr(HIP) |
| GG25 | ?, .50-cal(?), 4-5-8 Esq(?), Building Level 1 | U28 | ?, 4-5-8 Esq(?) | EE15 | 45LL AT PTP obr. 42 ca5(HIP), 2-2-8 lcr(HIP) |
| X21 | ?, ATR(?), 4-5-8 Esq(?) | V28 | Trench | Z21 | ?, 2-2-8 lcr(?), MOL-P(?) |
| W2 | Trench | W28 | ?, 8-0(?) | V1 | ?, 4-4-7 1sq(?) |
| Y2 | Trench | Q22 | ?, 10-2(?) | X32 | 1+5+7 Pillbox ca5, MMG, 4-4-7 1sq |
| Z2 | ?, 8-0(?) | P21 | ?, LMG (b)(?), 4-5-8 Esq(?) | T37 | A-T Ditch |
| X2 | ?, ATR(?), 5-2-7 1sq(?) | HH6 | ?, 8-1(?), MMG(?), 4-4-7 1sq(?), Building Level 1 | Y33 | 76L ART obr. 39 ca5(HIP), 2-2-8 lcr(HIP) |
| Z3 | Trench | T39 | ?, 9-1(?) | W19 | Minefield (6 Factor AP Mine)(HIP) |
| CC13 | ?, 4-4-7 1sq(?) | O40 | ?, 5-2-7 1sq(?), Fort Bldg Level 1 | U37 | Minefield (2 Factor Anti Tank Mine)(HIP) |
| O46 | ?, ATR(?), 4-4-7 1sq(?) | W4 | ?, ? | Z10 | 1+3+5 PTObox ca5, 5-2-7 1sq, LMG (b) |
| R22 | ?, 6-2-8 Esq(?) | BB15 | ?, 7-0(?), 4-4-7 1sq(?), Fort Bldg Level 1 | GG24 | ?, .50-cal(?), 4-5-8 Esq(?), Building Level 1 |
| S23 | ?, 6-2-8 Esq(?) | AA16 | ?, LMG (b)(?), 5-2-7 1sq(?), Fort Bldg Level 1 | L42 | Minefield (6 Factor AP Mine)(HIP) |
| V23 | ?, MMG(?), 4-5-8 Esq(?) | V2 | ?, 5-2-7 1sq(?) | N20 | Minefield (6 Factor AP Mine)(HIP) |
| U34 | ?, 6-2-8 Esq(?) | V19 | ?, 4-5-8 Esq(?), Fort Bldg Level 1 | U33 | Minefield (8 Factor AP Mine)(HIP) |
| U35 | ?, 6-2-8 Esq(?) | T20 | ?, 4-5-8 Esq(?) | Z34 | Field Phone(HIP), 7-0(HIP), Building Roof Level(HIP) |
| W35 | ?, 9-2(?) | O23 | ?, 6-2-8 Esq(?), Fort Bldg Level 1 | Z33 | Field Phone(HIP), 9-1(?)(HIP), 4-4-7 1sq(HIP), Building Roof Level(HIP) |
| AA5 | ?, 4-4-7 1sq(?) | T22 | ?, 6-2-8 Esq(?) | Y14 | Minefield (2 Factor Anti Tank Mine)(HIP) |
| V21 | ?, 6-2-8 Esq(?) | T38 | ?, 5-2-7 1sq(?) | AA18 | Minefield (2 Factor Anti Tank Mine)(HIP) |
| Y16 | Wire | Q39 | ?, 4-5-8 Esq(?) | U19 | Minefield (2 Factor Anti Tank Mine)(HIP) |
| BB13 | 1+3+5 PTObox ca5, LMG (b), 4-4-7 1sq | BB11 | ?, HMG(?), 4-5-8 Esq(?), Building Level 1 | | |

flamethrowers and 10 demo charges) and some heavy infantry support tanks and ordnance to back up their efforts. I cannot imagine this thing going 21 turns.

Without much thought, I went ahead and began to set up for a typical (for me) Russian defense, with men spread out to not present too many targets and pulled back one hex to hide from the Germans to blunt successful first turn PFPh attacks. I also spread some cannon fodder around the flanks to try to block any early attempt by the Germans to use their superior range to encircle Russian troops. As I was doing my initial setup, I began to realize that all is not as it appears. A huge majority of the fighting will be taking place in and around several factories. The Russians are fanatic in any factory per SSR1/CG11, and two-thirds of their squads have eight morale that would be boosted to nine in factories. Non-interior factory locations are fortified per SSR4, giving the defender additional advantages, and the Russians are given supplemental fortified locations, pillboxes, trenches, antitank ditches, wire and mines. Just looking at the OB reinforces the impression that the Russians are on the defense.

Many people will set up guns in the factories, but I've chosen to set them behind the factory line to try to pick off any German tanks or infantry that try to do end runs around the back of the

factories. If I can hold off the initial German onslaught, and survive a few turns, I've selected nearby hexes to enter my reinforcements and those reserve tanks will eventually get in the game if I haven't surrendered by then. I know that encircling is the best way to root out a stubborn opponent (a skill I haven't yet mastered) and I know my German opponent loves to do it whenever given the chance. I'm relying on tough Russian troops to hold back the German onslaught against Hall 4 (Q22) with perimeter emplaced guns to cover the flanks and rear. Using a mix of wire, A-P and A-T mines, I've tried to funnel any encircling Germans to the pillboxes and guns guarding the rear.

I've established three concentrations of troops, Group North who is tasked with covering the right flank and supported by guns on the Slag Heap (DD15), Group Center concentrated in the middle of the battlefield and Group South, tasked with covering the right Russian flank.

Group North

Within this group there are two concentrations of troops. Since this area only contains one stone building, there is little reason for the Germans to commit a significant number of troops there. I've positioned some light infantry at the farthest north stone building (School V2) that I hope to immediately release to travel

south if the Germans don't commit a serious force there and I want to reinforce the main efforts in the middle of the board, or better to release them west to wander around the German backfield. I'll head to the sewer at the M1 road junction and use sewer movement to keep some German troops busy. This may be a weak maneuver and a waste of a couple of squads, but I've never used sewers before, so it's a learning experience.

The second northern group is just west of the Burg/Castle (BB11). A heavy machine gun in the Castle will support this group. Its primary function is to guard the right flank of the main Russian troop concentration, but this is the group I really want to be able to counterattack toward the Rolling Shop (V14). Again, there are few victory locations in this area, so I anticipate that the Germans will try to create a corridor for their tank and troop reinforcements to head into the Russian rear areas. I've tried to make attacking out of the Rolling Shop difficult by placing wire along the German perimeter and joining the wire up with a line of A-P and A-T mines, emplaced guns on the Slag Heap and in pillboxes all in an effort to discourage German penetration in that area. I think that ultimately, the Rolling Shop may be a hinge pin in this scenario since it controls the entire northern access to Hall 4.



I've HIPed a leader & squad with a field phone on the roof of the New Production Shop (Z33.R) to spot for the initial rocket artillery mission which I plan on bringing down at the beginning of the game, hopefully in a place that can maximize the damage to the Germans but won't have too much chance to harm my troops. Since the rockets have a two-hex radius and cannot be accurate, I'll need to ensure that a three-hex buffer exists between any German and Russian troops when I bring this FFE down. Consequently, I expect that if the Germans set up in any strength near this observer, they're in for a bruising.

Group Center

This area is where the historical action took place. The aftermath described on the scenario card talks of bloody, inch-by-inch fighting that took place there, and it's easy to see why. German and Russian troops are lined up (potentially) nose-to-nose. This area contains and leads to most of the stone victory locations. I'm anticipating that the German initial artillery mission will go into this area, and with a pre-registered first mission, my guys will be taking a hit. There are four Russian leaders (did I mention I'd like a couple of Commissars?) spread out three or four hexes apart to perform initial rallying duties, and without exception, no more than one MMC will be stacked in Hall 4 or its southerly neighbor, the New Production Shop.



Group South

Group South has two main objectives. Any incursions from the Germans out of the Plate Mill (N36) hopefully will be blunted by these elite troops. If the opportunity presents itself, and the Germans concentrate troops elsewhere, the Russians can jump across the initial perimeter and use the Plate Mill as the jumping off place for mischief behind the German lines. I also have set up this area to be guarded by antitank guns and a mortar. The roadwork system on this board makes this the easiest flank to penetrate the Russian defenses with the German armor. I've established some antitank mines and trenches in the area, including an antitank minefield in bypass in S38.



German Player's Observations of the Russian Setup (Rich)

At first glance, I observe the following general dispositions of the Russian defensive setup:

- School Building (V1/V2), 8 Victory location points (VL) points, lightly defended (≈ 3 MMCs)
- Rubbled Building (Z8/AA8), 2 VL points, moderately defended (≈ 5 MMCs)
- Berg Castle Building (BB9-11), 12 VL points, lightly defended (≈ 4 MMCs)
- Buildings V19/U20, 10 VL points, moderately defended (≈ 4 MMCs)
- Halls 4 & 6, Lots of VL points but heavily defended
- Hall 9 – Calibration Building (U35), 8 VL points, moderately defended (≈ 6 MMCs)
- Hall 8a - Warehouse (R38), 8VL points plus 5 VL points nearby, moderately defended (≈ 8 MMCs)

Of course, I have no idea where his hidden MMCs, guns, pillboxes, fortified buildings (tunnels?) and minefields are located at this point, so an area that looks at first to be 'lightly' defended might actually be more heavily defended than I can tell at this juncture. Nevertheless, I have no choice but to base my plan of attack on what I can observe at this time, but need to allow for flexibility in my plan.

I will cover each of these areas separately for ease of reference. However, I realize that to succeed in fulfilling the challenging victory conditions as the German player in this scenario, each of these attack plans need to be coordinated and mutually supporting. Otherwise, the attacks might break down into piecemeal efforts that will give the Russians the ability to successfully counterattack at German weak points and take back stone building locations to make victory even more unlikely for the Germans in this battle.

School Building (V1/V2)

This is my most northerly attack. I plan to jump off from the TR in S1 through wooden buildings in T1 and U1 in order to move towards and eventually take over the School Building. It is only two hexes but worth 8 VL points as it contains four stone locations per hex. The next objective for these units will be to then start moving south towards rubbled building Z8/AA8 and on to the Berg Castle (the attacks on these buildings are described below).

Rubbled Building (Z8/AA8)

The kill stacks in W14.1/V13.1 should be able to soften up the defenses in this building by the time the units that attacked the School Building above are moving towards its capture. It's only worth two VL points but it's on the way towards other objectives, so I might as well take them in my sweep south.

Berg Castle Building (BB9-11)

Like the Rubbled Building attack plan, I'm counting on the same kill stacks to soften the defenses here up a bit by the time the same attacking German units described above are getting there (perhaps around turn 5 or 6 is my estimate at this time). Am I asking too much of these kill stacks? One bad 12 IFT DR (A9.7) followed by a 'yahtzee' on the random selection (A9.71) DR or an unfortunate sniper attack (A14.3) outcome vs. a key leader could easily neutralize these kill stacks and bring the entire plan to naught!

Buildings V19/U20

I don't anticipate attacking this building until mid/late game. My units in the southern part of the Hall 2 factory in/near V17/W18, (i.e. those units that are not part of the kill stacks on the northern side of this factory) are there to defend it and/or to take advantage of any opportunities that may present themselves. For example, if the kill stacks in O18.1/O18.2 go on a shooting spree and soften up the units in V19/U20, then this would be the type of opportunity they would be in position to exploit should it occur.

Halls 4 & 6

I really don't plan to attack what I perceive to be the heart of the Russian defense here at least until I can bring superior forces to bear. I don't see this happening until at least turn 10 or later. Part of my reasoning is because the non-interior factory locations are considered fortified (B23.9) per SSR4. Furthermore, the Russians are fanatic while in factories (per SSR1: CG11). It's very tough to destroy fanatic Russians in fortified factory locations. If you're fortunate enough to break one they rally back on a $DR \leq 7$ if they're being rallied by an -1 leader, have a base 8 morale level and are being rallied in a factory location (and that's while they're under DM)! Do the math and you'll see what I mean. Therefore, when I do get around to attacking these guys it will be when I can deny them safe rout paths. I don't have the resources to break them time and again when they can rally back into action so quickly, and I don't have the units to deny them safe rout paths until I can free up units in the north and south to attack them all at once. So, I'll let these powerful fanatic Russians just sit there and enjoy their 9-morale level within fortified locations for a long while until I'm good and ready to go after them.

Hall 9 – Calibration Building (U35)

This building I do plan to attack with my assault engineers (H1.22). The German units in the vicinity have a couple of DCs at their disposal as well as one of my four FTs. It is also important to note that I can advance into the fortified factory locations from the 'connecting' trenches that were placed in T33/T34 per RF6 (even if there is an unpinned G.O. Russian in the location)! Consequently, I don't need to 'waste' my DCs by breaching (B23.711) the exterior of the factory to get inside. After taking this building, these units can continue to Hall 10, go south and aid in the attack on Hall 8a if needed, or, turn north

to look inside Hall 7 which looks surprisingly empty to me right now. Hmmm?

Hall 8a - Warehouse (R38)

This factory will be attacked directly, not because it's worth a ton of VL points (although it is worth 8), but because it's the southernmost stone building. As I've mentioned earlier, I'm wanting to secure both flanks while the bulk of the Russian defense drinks coffee and eats Cheetos*⁴ in Halls 4 & 6. As mentioned above, I really don't think that I can effectively attack the fanatic Russians in fortified factory locations until such time as I can do so while preventing them from routing back safely/rallying quickly. The units attacking the Hall 8a warehouse will be part of the additional forces I deem necessary when that time comes. Meanwhile, in order to make sure I capture Hall 8a, I've got a few assault engineers, good leaders, three DC's and two of my four FTs assigned to this sector. I may have to burn a DC in breach mode in order to get gain the ability to advance into hex Q38 or Q39.

Other Considerations

Deployment: Per A2.9, I have maximized the legally allowable 10% FRU (8 full squads) at-start deployment allotment and plan to roll liberally for deployment of my remaining (4-6-7 and 4-6-8) squads throughout the game. There are several reasons for this:

- The standard reason (which is to dissipate Russian defensive firepower at advancing units).
- To hold key multi-hex stone building locations in areas where Russian hidden units may emerge later in order to reclaim them.
- To help occupy sewer locations and serve as +1 drmm per MMC in the sewer emergence dr (per B8.42).
- To perform searching activities in areas where hidden mines and/or units are suspected.
- sniper attack absorption (protecting my strongest leaders).
- However, The Russians have booby traps (level C) per RB SSR15. Consequently, the German player must watch out for DRs of 12 when attempting to deploy! This is based on my understanding that a deployment DR in the RPh is a task check and is therefore vulnerable to booby trap activation (B28.9).

Sewers: In the RB5 scenario, the pathways afforded by sewer movement provided a lot of interesting and potentially lucrative options for the Russians to sneak into the backfield and reclaim VL points. But on the RO map, I'm just not seeing too many good avenues for the Russians to use this tactic. So, while I am certainly aware of the possibility and consequences of Russian sewer movement and will endeavor to prepare for it, I'm just not seeing it as too much of a threat in this scenario (unlike in RB5).

Clearance Duty: In scenario RB5, I did devote a number of German MMCs and leaders to clearance duty (B24.7, O1.5) of

key rubble/debris/road locations in order to improve the movement path for the reinforcing AFVs to get into the action more quickly. This time however, I don't believe that I can afford to assign a significant contingent of my forces to this task. The vehicles will have to get where they're going on their own. I'll talk more about my rationale along these lines in the German AFV section below.

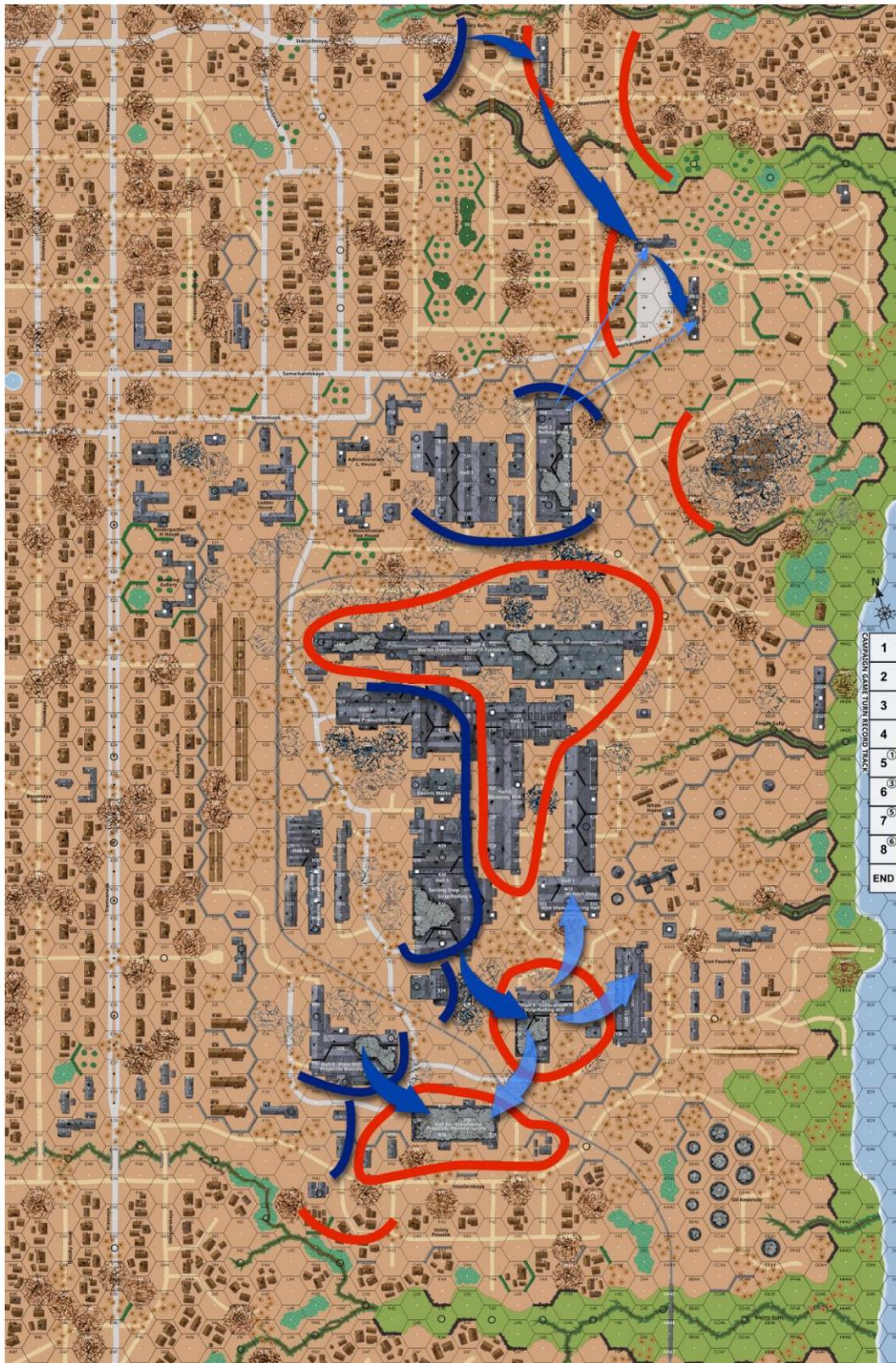
Rooftop LOS: The sole German HS that starts in M31.R is within 16 hexes of the most likely rooftop locations that may contain hidden/concealed at-start Russian units. Per O.5/B23.82, "a unit can remain hidden or concealed on a rooftop only if there are no Good Order enemy ground units within 16 hexes of it that are at the same or higher level with a LOS to it", so this single HS should reveal any at-start Russian rooftop units before play begins. While I really don't expect my opponent to have too many units in rooftop locations, it doesn't hurt me to place this single HS on the roof at-start just to make sure. He'll quickly leave his rooftop locations on turn 1 and join the action.

Breach Duty: For those who read my previous article on the RB5 scenario, you may recall that I "burned" a couple of DCs early on in order to breach (B23.711, B23.9221, O5.33) a couple of factory interior walls (O5.3) on turn 1 for the reasons stated in that article. In this scenario however, I plan to use this tactic in a more defensive posture rather than in an offensive one. For example, I have placed DC-toting units in both hexes R25 and Q25. Should the Russian attack this way into the Hall 3 factory the Germans will have a choice to breach the factory interior walls and counterattack, or, simply let the Russians try to come around these obstacles the hard way. Since the Russians have no means themselves of breaching the factory interior walls with DCs at this stage of the scenario, the Germans have the luxury of making this choice when/if the time comes. I even have my fourth and final FT in Q25 to fire at full 24 firepower into R24 after the factory interior wall has been breached in the AFPh!

Meanwhile, when the Germans do choose to use the DCs in an offensive role, they will look for opportunities to allow the German leaders with zero leadership modifiers to place (A23.3) the DCs. I often like to use my 7-0 and/or 8-0 leaders for DC placement duty as they possess those extra 2MFs as SMCs (as compared to MMCs), and those extra MFs often become valuable when placing those DCs in avoiding the CX (A23.4) penalty. Additionally, we're not sacrificing a negative leadership modifier for directing fire by using them in this way.

Russian HIP Tracking: From the German player's perspective it is important to account for all the HIP guns, units, fortifications, and dummies (A12.11). In order to facilitate this task to make sure I've accounted for everything as the German player, I have made the following table to record everything I discover of the Russian HIP allotment in order to understand what's left of his hidden units. I don't want to lose on the last turn of the game by allowing the Russians to reveal some hidden crew somewhere that takes back a few stone VL points turning an apparent victory into a defeat, and to help prevent this, I will track each of the HIP Russian units as I find them with the associated table at the end of this article.

Initial German plan of attack



German AFVs: These AFVs are slow, have mediocre armor factors (D1.6) and are without MG firepower. Consequently, they are not too effective when attacking the Russian infantry and are particularly vulnerable to enemy infantry CC attacks (A11.51). One somewhat redeeming quality is that they each have smoke ammo potential and the StuG IIIBs also have SD (D13.31) capability. I expect that the primary use of these AFVs will simply be to cut off enemy rout paths in order to eliminate broken Russian infantry for failure to rout (A10.5) when they finally get into position to provide any value. Of course, I'll need to be particularly careful in utilizing this tactic as the Russians have MOL (A22.6) capabilities per SSR5. This means these AFVs will try to stay at least two hexes away from any G.O. Russians and will also stay in motion as frequently as possible to lessen the chances of a successful Russian MOL attack (A22.612). Since according to the scenario card the Russian AFVs will eventually be entering in the far south at hex HH48, I'll be moving the two StuG IIIB 75mm AFVs to the northern sector so as to be as far away as possible from these reinforcing Russian T34s that, despite being radioless (D14), significantly outclass the German AFVs in number, armor piercing capability, armored protection, and movement points. Meanwhile, the StuG33Bs (with their 150mm guns) will move towards the southern flank to see what help they can provide in that sector alongside their German friends on foot. These StuG33Bs at least have a decent chance of harming the T34s should they come to loggerheads in the southern sector since they each have the potential for H7 ammo (C8.3) with a TK# of 21, which is more than enough to harm the T34s with frontal armor factors of 11 hull, 8 turret. If HEAT is not found in the ammo bay, the 150mm HE TK# is 16 which at least has a modest chance to do damage vs. these T34s. Coming back at them, the T34s have an AP TK# of 13 (and a bit better TK# with a APCR (C8.11) TK# of at ≥ 14 , albeit with a fairly low depletion number (C8.1) of 5.^{*5} This will be compared against my StuG33Bs frontal armor of 6 hull, 8 turret. So, when/if my German AFVs have to fight the T34s, I expect to come out on the losing end when all is said and done, but if I can take down a couple of the T34s with me in the meantime, I will consider that a satisfactory tradeoff.

Another potential use for these big boys will be to crash into the fortified locations, breaching (B23.9221) them. (Note that although the Germans will try to avoid CC generally, they will need to impose CC on the Russians in certain situations and may need to utilize the breaching option in order to advance into a fortified location to do so). They can also be used to leave trail breaks through AP minefields (B28.61), making it easier for infantry to pass through them afterwards. Should there be any German AFVs left in the end game, I'll be looking to deploy them in that manner.

TEM Table: As a carry-over from my RB5 scenario analysis found in *Banzai!!* (V24, #1), I have also included what I hope will again be a useful table to be used as a reminder and/or reference indicating the various factory-related TEM modifiers in play. Since SSR4 makes all non-interior factory hexes fortified, there are several possible TEM permutations created depending on circumstances. Most important of all, indirect fire vs a unit in a roofless factory hex only receives a +2 TEM per O5.45--this establishes a number of unique TEM possibilities that are likely to come into play in this action (which may also be handy references for other scenarios taking place on the RB or RO maps).

| | | TEM v. Direct Fire from <i>outside</i> of Factory | TEM v. Direct Fire from <i>inside</i> of Factory | TEM v. Indirect Fire |
|-------------|--------------------------|---|--|----------------------|
| Roof Intact | Non-Fortified RB Factory | +3* | +1 | +3 |
| | Fortified RB Factory | +4 | +2 | +3 |
| Roofless | Non-Fortified RB Factory | +3* | +2 | +2 |
| | Fortified RB Factory | +4 | +3 | +2 |

*: Grayed out areas are N/A in scenarios RB5 and RO5 due to the SSR4 making all non-interior Factory hexes Fortified.

With all that in mind, below is the German initial setup that I went with for this playing: (note that superscript d indicates that the squad will attempt to deploy (A1.31) during the first RPh and if unsuccessful in a subsequent friendly RPh).

German Turn 1:

After all of my previous blather in the pre-registered hex section provided in my opening remarks in which I tried to justify my preference for a radio over a field phone, wouldn't you know it that I would roll a ten for my opening radio contact DR and that would end the opportunity to quickly place an FFE utilizing the advantages afforded by the pre-registered (C1.73) hex option (for the first player turn anyway). At least I didn't roll a 12 to break the radio, so I'll count myself lucky as far as that goes.

Subsequently, my two kill stacks in the north did manage to eliminate a Russian 4-4-7 that was in the pillbox in hex BB13 due to multiple breaks. Meanwhile, the Russian 4-5-8 (also in a pillbox in S21) survived consecutive 4MC, 2MC and 1MC DRs dished out by my two kill stacks in O18.1/O18.2 respectively, only to find itself pinned at the end of all that firepower! Wow.

Despite not getting my pre-registered OBA down, I did manage to break the Russian 9-1 leader/observer in Z33.R. Let's hope I can keep him under DM for a little longer in order to keep that 120mm OBA off my back for a while.

In his DFPh, my wily opponent opened up with his two .50cal MGs from GG24.1/GG25.1 as a fire group. Their target was naturally my kill stack in W14.1. They decided to go on a 3, 4, 5, 4 IFT DR rampage with ROF each time. Naturally, my 10-2 (and best leader) broke twice and became wounded (A17).

| German On-Board Units At Start | | |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| Hex | Units | Notes |
| S26 | 2X? | Faux Defense of these buildings. May draw Rocket Fire? |
| R23 | 2X? | |
| R24 | 2X? | |
| Q24 | 2X? | |
| P23 | 2X? | |
| O24 | 3X? | |
| N23 | 2X? | |
| V13.1 | 9-2, (3) 4-6-8d, (2) MMG, (2) HMG | 32FP Kill stack |
| W14.1 | 10-2, (3) 4-6-8, (3) HMG | 33FP Kill Stack |
| O18.2 | 9-2, (2) 4-6-8, (2) MMG, 4-6-7, LMG | 25FP Kill Stack |
| O18.1 | 8-1, (3) 4-6-7, (2) MMG, LMG | 25FP Kill Stack |
| S1 | 9-1, (3) 5-4-8, (3) LMG, TR | Attack North End and move South. Gain at least 6 Victory Locations. |
| R1 | 9-1, (2) 5-4-8, (2) LMG, 4-6-7 ^d | |
| S5 | 7-0, (4) 2-4-7, 4-6-7 ^d | |
| W14.0 | 2-4-7 | sniper bait |
| V13.0 | 2-4-7 | sniper bait |
| V18 | 8-1, (3) 8-3-8, TR | Defense of V15 factory. Eventually will attack U20 stone building. |
| U18.C | 8-0, (2) 5-4-8, 4-6-7 ^d | |
| N24 | 2-4-7, 4-6-7, 5-4-8 | Defense of New Production factory |
| O25 | 8-0, (2) 4-6-7 ^d | |
| P24 | 2-4-7, 5-4-8 | |
| Q25 | 5-4-8 DC, 8-3-8 FT | |
| R25 | 5-4-8 DC | |
| R26 | 8-0, 4-6-7 ^d | Defense of Electric Works stone building |
| R27 | 4-6-7 | |
| S28 | 5-4-8 | Defense of Hall 5 factory |
| S29 | (2) 4-6-7 | |
| S30 | 2-4-7, 4-6-7 | |
| S31 | 5-4-8 DC | |
| R28 | 5-4-8 | |
| R29 | 8-0, 5-4-8 DC | |
| M31.R | 2-4-7 | Rooftop unit to reveal any at-start Russian Rooftop units |
| T33 | 9-1, (3) 8-3-8, (2) DC, FT, TR | Attack Hall 9 Factory |
| T34 | 8-1, (3) 8-3-8, (2) DC, TR | |
| R33.1 | 7-0 rad, (2) 4-6-7 ^d | OBA to hit Hall 10, P.R. Hex at V36.2 |
| R34.1 | 8-1, (3) 5-4-8, (3) LMG | Attack Hall 9 Factory |
| Q34.0 | 2-4-7 | sniper bait |
| P36 | 5-4-8 | Attack Hall 8a factory from NW |
| P37 | 9-1 DC, 4-6-7 ^d , (2) 8-3-8, (2) FT | |
| O37 | 247 | sniper bait |
| N37 | 7-0, (2) 4-6-7 ^d | Attack Hall 8a factory from West and South |
| N38 | 8-1, (3) 5-4-8, (3) LMG | |
| M39 | 8-0 DC, (3) 8-3-8, TR | |
| L38.C | (3) 2-4-7 | |
| J41 | 2-4-7 | hold gains eventually in south |
| | TR | 'secret' pathway through Russian ATDs and PBs (eventually) |
| ----- HIP Guns At Start ----- | | |
| O25.6 | 2-2-8, 150* INF | |
| X14.2 | 2-2-8, 75* INF | |
| P36.2 | 2-2-8, 75* INF | |
| L28.1 | 2-2-8, 75* INF | |
| S27.2 | (3) 2-2-8, (3) 20L AA | Defense of Electric Works stone building |
| N27.2 | 2-2-8, 81mm MTR | |
| S32.2 | 2-2-8, 81mm MTR | |
| ----- Turn 1 Entry ----- | | |
| A27 Entry | StuG 33B 150mm AFV | Move towards south of Hall 8a factory to support attack there/cut off |
| | StuG 33B 150mm AFV | |
| | StuG IIIB75mm AFV | Move north to reinforce attacks/cut off Rout paths/etc. Should arrive |
| | StuG IIIB75mm AFV | |

Meanwhile, two of my 4-6-8s in this same location also broke twice and became half-squads. Finally, another four DR from a low-odds DFPH shot caused an NMC result which broke my 9-2 leader in V13.1. The silver lining to this cloud (from the German's perspective) is that my 10-2 leader was not eliminated after breaking twice but has now effectively become a 9-1 wounded leader with 3MF for the duration of this scenario. Furthermore, all those IFT DRs of 4 that my opponent rolled produced both a 1 and a 2 SAN result, each of which happened to select the southernmost German sniper and also produced an effective result. One of these sniper attacks eliminated the 7-0 rocket OBA observer in Z34.R and the other eliminated a lone 9-2 leader hanging out behind the factory in hex W35. This could be important in the long run because as we mentioned earlier, the Russians only have 13 leaders in total and two are KIA already with another broken.

Russian Turn 1:

Naturally, the Russian 9-1 observer in Z33.R self-rallied successfully. My radio man in R33.1 does establish contact this game turn, but the FFE is off target despite the advantages afforded by pre-registered fire (C1.73). His 76L ART in Z20 fires repeatedly at the kill stack in O18.2.

This Russian gun's Prep Fire was incredible, rolling TH DRs of 3, 4, 5, 3, and 4 respectively before losing ROF, causing significant damage to the Germans residing in the O18.2 location. The Russians also started utilizing some sewer movement (B8.41) to get things going. However, I don't think the sewers on the RO map are quite as good for the Russians to get behind the Germans as they are on the RB map, although one particular sewer move was deemed by the Germans to be of concern as they moved a 6-2-8 (via sewer movement) from N37 to beneath my 2-2-8/MTR in N37. This Russian squad successfully emerged from the sewer, did not ambush the German crew but did easily eliminate it during the Russian CCPh. However, the crew itself cut the 6-2-8 in half during its return CC attack. Nevertheless, now I'll still have to circle back with other units in order to take care of this pesky Russian 3-2-8 that remains in the backfield. In other CC action, the Germans were fortunate to eliminate a 6-2-8 in P39 that had advanced into CC vs. CX German units there. But despite these advantages going into the fight, the Russians lost a squad while not inflicting any losses on the Germans in return.

I'll also say that I am surprised that the Russians did not attack the German weak areas which were defended lightly (i.e. Hall 3, Hall 5 and the Electric Works).

Turn 1 Russian Player Commentary

Well, I sure did mess up the placement of my OBA observers. Through a thorough misreading of the rules, I did not realize that rooftops would not conceal a hidden unit as any opposing unit on an equal or higher level could see it (B23.82). Since there are so many obstacles to the line of sight, and since I chose to go with field phones because of their increased contact odds, I had placed both observers side-by-side on the rooftop of Hall 10. Big mistake. The German observer in R33.1 has rained down some smoke and HE FFEs right on top of my spotters, breaking one and blinding another. A sniper then took one out and machine gun fire killed another. So far, I have managed to run another 9-1 leader to the building, and I hope he can weather the storm long enough to get my rocket battery mission and some 120mm action into the game. Of course, I drew red cards twice, so after four turns I have still not had a fire mission, and I pity this guy in the upcoming German Prep Fire phase.

There is yet another problem, I am down two leaders almost immediately. I will now have to devote a third leader to try to use the OBA. The original plan was to use the rocket battery and release that spotter leader (a 9-1) into the factory fight. Instead, I've had to pull a leader from the factory in the center to try to reacquire the field phones.

In the north we see things go pretty much as expected. Through the placement of trenches, I have a path to the valley to move troops safely. I am slowly retreating back and will use these troops to defend the building BB10. Since this area only contains one stone building, few Germans were committed to this area. I decided to fall back as quickly as possible and let the Germans have the farthest north stone building without much of a fight, but I have managed to get some troops into the nearby

sewers to cause some mischief. I sent a couple of dummy stacks into the German rear area acting as a couple of concealed squads with the intent of wandering around the German rear to cause them to commit troops. The Germans also sent far fewer troops to the center, so I was able to release a couple of squads from Group Center, and these have already managed to capture some stone locations near the German entry hexes. The Germans will have no choice but to devote troops to burrowing these guys out since each of the locations in the German rear are worth at least 4 victory points (sometimes more) while the ones he can get from the factories are worth one or two. I will use sewer movement to try to keep them alive to further complicate German efforts.

I've positioned some light infantry at the farthest north stone building (School V2) that I hope to immediately release to travel south if the Germans don't commit a serious force there, and I want to reinforce the main efforts in the middle of the board, or better to release them west to wander around the German backfield. I'll head to the sewer at the M1 road junction and use sewer movement to keep some German troops busy. This may be a weak maneuver and a waste of a couple of squads, but I've never used sewers before, so it's a learning experience.

The Russians also made the area between Groups North and Center a likely entry point for German Armor. That's turning out to be the case, as two German tanks are moving directly towards the AT mines in AA18 and Y14.

The gun on the Slag Heap tries to shoot smoke and fails, depleting smoke from this gun for the duration. The German MG nests in the Vise House (O18) draws a bead on Russians during defensive fire in the Martin Open Hearth Furnace and causes damage. Russians in K22/K23 find a gap in the German lines and Russian troops are now advancing toward the west edge of the map. I'm beginning to see a major flaw in the Russian setup and battle plan though, one I fear will become more evident as the game progresses. With twenty-one turns in this scenario, there's no way the Russians can withstand the kind of firepower they have been subjected on turn 1 for the duration of the scenario.

In the center, the Russians will use their factory positions to push off toward the Rolling Shop and Hall 5. Since units are spread out, there are very few situations in which multiple units are stacked. The Russians will try to disperse and survive German fire while maintaining enough integrity to return fire using multi-location fire groups. This is normally a sound tactic when playing the Russian.

In the South, the Germans have come out aggressively here, placing a DC (Q38 and breaching the fortified wall). The Russians can see the FT just waiting to light up the first Russian they see. The Germans are also making use of smoke to create a second attack on the building through the N39-O40-P39 nexus.

See end of turn 1 pictures for north, center and south areas respectively*6.



North: RO5, Game Turn 1



Center: RO5, Game Turn 1



South: RO5, Game Turn 1

German Turn 2:

Fortunately, I was able to re-break the 9-1 observer with the field phone in Z33.R before he could lay down a fire mission. I was also able to take one corner hex (U34) of Hall 9 as the Germans inch their way forward into that factory. The Germans have also pressed into the outskirts of Hall 8a (Q38/9) and have also taken the four stone buildings in the vicinity which are worth one VL point apiece. The Germans also took the school building in V1 which is surprisingly worth 8 VL points in total when all the stone level locations are considered. Additionally, I was able to advance two concealed 2-4-7s, one unconcealed 4-6-8, two unconcealed 2-3-8s and the unconcealed (and wounded) 10-2 leader back into W14.1 where the three (unmanned) HMGs are located. My plan is to try to recover them in the RPh of Russian turn 1 with the unconcealed guys (since recovery is a concealment loss activity (per A12.121)) while allowing the concealed half squads to remain so. If they can stand up to the onslaught of firepower that is likely forthcoming from the Russians who have LOS to this important level 1 location, it will be a minor miracle, but it's a chance I feel I must take. Finally, despite my previously stated aversion to CC in this scenario, I did enter into four CC situations where I felt I would hold the advantage either because of a favorable ambush dr (A11.4) and/or due to advantageous CC attack ratios (A11.11). In the end, I did succeed in three of the four CC attacks with one remaining unresolved. The unresolved CC situation will remain a melee (A11.15) until the next player turn.

Russian Turn 2:

In the Russian PFPh, the Germans were busted up once more in the W14.1 location with a series of 3 and 4 TH and IFT DRs from various Russian units in the vicinity. Although the Russians didn't always roll low, and did manage to break one of their .50cal MGs in GG25.1 with an IFT 12 DR (A9.7) during the PFPh. Hopefully, this will give the Germans in W14.1 some respite going forward. Sewer movement-wise, one of the Russian sewer-moving squads was discovered on their emergence dr (B8.42) in hex V17 - presumably trying to advance in and destroy one of the German units there in the CCPh - but broke in the sewer which basically means elimination (per B8.45). The Russians took another hit when they moved a squad via sewer movement to (what looked like an empty) S27 location but which actually contained my 3 HIP crews manning the 20L (6) AA guns (which I deliberately revealed to affect the sewer emergence dr). This Russian squad was also discovered on the emergence dr and bit the dust with a nice 12 FP -2 shot from the crew's inherent firepower (remember that ordnance cannot fire into a sewer location per B8.3 so I could only use the inherent firepower of the crews and was not able to use the IFE from the AA guns). I don't mind revealing these units at this time if they're going be dishing out death like that! Last point of note that I must mention: remember the 4-5-8/MMG in the pillbox in S21 mentioned on German turn 1? Well, I eventually did break this squad with my kill stack shots from O18.1/O18.2 during German turn 2 and the cunning Russian wisely choose to rout via the low crawl (A10.52) out of

the pillbox into the same hex in order to avoid interdiction (A10.53) during the RtPh of the previous player turn. So, my thinking was that I ought to try to finish him off by breaking him again during the German DFPh of Russian turn 2, since it was already broken and had no TEM protection at that point. And, what do you know, (you probably already guessed it) - my 20 FP shot caused a 3 MC which was "rewarded" with a snakes MC DR followed by a 5 HOB (A15.1) DR. Shortly thereafter, during the Russian APh, the (now fanatic and unbroken) Russian 4-5-8 simply popped back into the pillbox in his same hex. At the end of the day then, this 4-5-8 has now endured all the MCs described in the German turn 1 section, a couple more on German turn 2 (one of which actually broke the squad), followed by a 3MC while already broken on Russian turn 2, and in the end, the 4-5-8 is back where it started in its original setup position, only now is in even better shape than it was before and has effectively become a 4-5-9 since it's become fanatic (A10.8)! All I can say is should all the Russians fight this hard and be this resistant to firepower, then the Germans are in for a tough time.

Meanwhile, the Russians again didn't attack my soft spots in Halls 3/5 and the Electric Works, but they did start to sneak over in the middle area from the Hall 4 factory from around hex M22 moving towards the H20 "shooting gallery" building which is worth a lot of VL points. I really don't have a countermove to offer in response to this other than to hope that my reinforcements on turn 7 will eventually be able to retake these locations and eliminate these 2 or 3 sneaky squads in the long run. The only good thing is that by removing these squads from the Hall 4 factory to go on their little VL point-grabbing excursion, the Russians have weakened the defense of the Hall 4 factory and which should make the Germans' job easier later on when they do start to attack that sector in the future. Finally, the Germans did manage to win the CC in W2 (the carry-over melee from German turn 1 CCPh). Additionally, the Rooskies did try to sneak another 5-2-7 into the melee to improve their CC odds, but fortunately for the Germans they were able break this Russian squad and it routed away prior to its APh.

Finally, the Germans did draw their 2nd black card for their OBA module (of 10) and placed an SR way over to the west which ended up in hex J31. I'm thinking that I will take a pass on rolling for radio contact*7 on my turn 3 PFPh and instead double time the leader and an MMC (after first passing the radio to an MMC in the RPh in order to avoid the PP penalty (A4.52) when double timing if the leader were to carry it) over to hex N29 or thereabouts and in the APh end up in a hex that can still see the SR blast height (C1.32). I can repeat the skipping of the radio contact DR again on German turn 4 and end up on the roof of Hall 5a in/about hex M30. The goal is to bring the FFE down onto those pesky Russians who have snuck into my backyard by turns 6/7. This will hopefully be just in time for my turn 7 reinforcements to mop these guys up and take back any/all VL points they may have acquired by then.

Turn 2 Russian Player Commentary

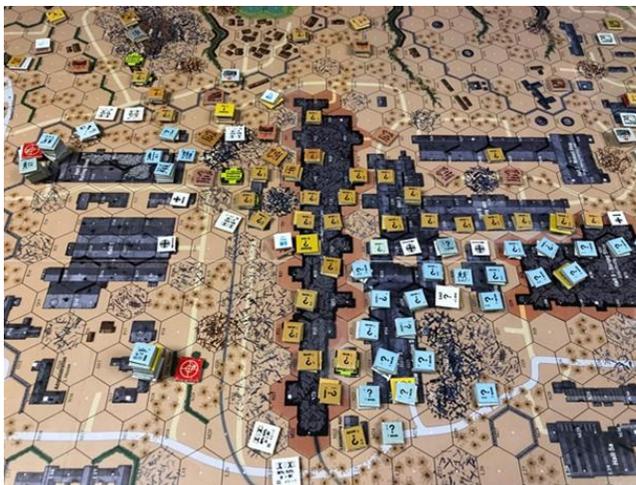
We see a melee has developed in X2 that will hold the Germans up for a turn or two. The Russians have also positioned some troops to enter sewers and begin heading to the German rear area. Through some long shots from Lend-Lease American HMGs, I have been able to keep the Germans bottled up in Hall 2 (W14). The Russians have wounded a German 10-2 leader, and through mortar and other fire have kept this position mostly unusable to the Germans. However, one of the two HMGs rolled 12 and then 6 on its repair roll. I don't see holding the Germans up much longer.

The Russians still haven't learned to pull back and reduce the number of shots the Germans can take against them. They are playing this with the mentality of having five turns instead of twenty-one. What looks like advantages the Russians can exploit will turn out to be opportunities that the Germans will take to deplete the Russians.

See end of turn 2 pictures for North, Center and South areas respectively.



North: RO5, Game Turn 2



Center: RO5, Game Turn 2



South: RO5, Game Turn 3

German Turn 3:

The .50 cal Russian MG permanently broke down with a repair dr of 6 (A9.7). This will provide for some respite for the good guys. Furthermore, I was able to recover all three HMGs in W14.1, but all are possessed by half-squads. I suppose it matters not because the Russians busted me up bad again in this location in the DFPH with IFT DRs of 3, 4 and 5 from a couple places, and this, after another fruitless PFPH for these three HMGs. My best kill stack has done little or nothing and has been on the receiving end of numerous low-firepower shots accompanied generally by low IFT DRs causing murderous effects in return. In response, I don't think these German HMGs have obtained ROF (A8.23) once in five fire phases. The only good news is that the 10-2 (now wounded and heroic) leader is still hanging in there while his troops melt away around him turn by turn.

One dumb move I did make was moving a 2-4-7 half-squad via U16 in bypass and didn't see his 4-5-8 in T20 that had a LOS to a hex spine being bypassed (A4.34). Naturally, the Russian player rolled snakes again with the 4 FP down 2 shot to make me pay dearly with a KIA for this error in judgment. Some good things did happen on the other side of the board. I chose to use my two FTs in Hall 8a, neither of them has broken down (yet) and each caused a break result on their respective targets. Consequently, I'm making good progress in my planned takeover of the Hall 8a factory. I also managed to break (again) his (now fanatic) 4-5-8 with MMG in the S21 pillbox. This time however, during the RtPh, the Russian risked interdiction in order to rout this unit back into the Hall 4 factory behind him. I think this was a wise move needing only a MC DR of 8 or less to make it (while 9 would have prevented the unit from routing further and 10 or more would have caused CR (A10.31, A10.53).

Russian Turn 3:

Not a hugely consequential turn. I have now discovered eight of the fifteen dummies (A12.1) from the Russian at-start OB. These have been noted on my "RO5 - Hidden Russian Units

Tracker". I also got to feel a little consternation when I decided to voluntarily break (A10.41) my 8-3-8s in both hexes T37 and U36 this player turn in order to avoid CC that I saw as likely coming from the adjacent (A.8) Russians. In both cases the odds were probably about even overall as the Russians would have had a slight ambush dr (A11.4) advantage while my 8-3-8s (assuming they survived the ambush result), would have held the CC odds (A11.11) advantage. In any event, CC was avoided as I stuck to my original plan which is to generally avoid CC (in this case by voluntarily breaking) as I think in the long run avoiding CC serves the interests of the German player to meet the steep victory conditions, but it still doesn't feel so good. I note that the Russians may have missed a good opportunity to eliminate a broken 8-3-8 in Z19 after it experienced a point blank (C6.3) shot from the 76* INF gun in the pillbox in AA19. The Russians might have moved a nearby unit to cut off this 8-3-8's rout path afterwards but as it went, the 8-3-8 was able to rout away through the antitank ditch and trench in Y19 and X18 respectively and back into the W18 factory from there.

At this point then, the Russians have now successfully counterattacked and taken over stone building hexes H19, H20 and G21 which are worth 4 VL points each. They also have taken hex T30 for a total of 13 VL points on their side. Meanwhile, the Germans have accumulated 23 VL points for a net total of only 10 VL points. I'm not too worried though for two reasons:

- 1) Firstly, my OBA observer will be in position in another turn or two to start hampering these units with OBA from the Shop 1 roof. I'm looking at L28.R or thereabouts as a good vantage point from which to direct the remaining OBA modules for this purpose.
- 2) Secondly, I'm confident that any VL points these 3 or 4 squads can accumulate will eventually be taken back by my reinforcements which will arrive on Turn 7.

Meanwhile, several Russian MMCs in the German backfield appear to be leaderless and are no longer in factories enjoying the fanaticism benefit where they might have been even harder to root out. So, from a short-term perspective they may cost me as many as 20 or so VL points, but in the long run, I think the Germans will be able to recover from this situation.

Turn 3 Russian Player Commentary

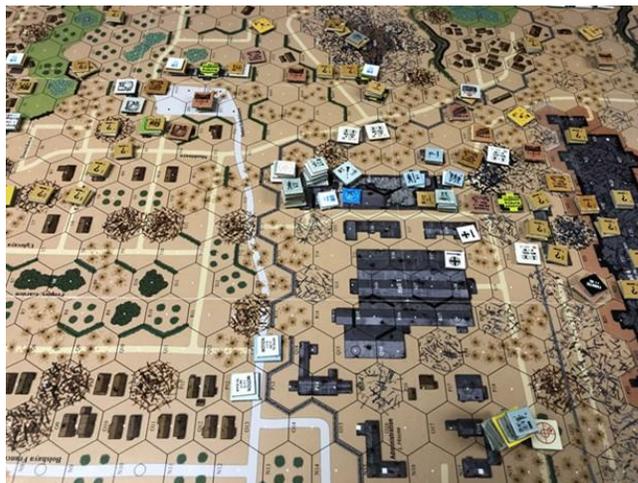
The Russians have managed to sneak a series of concealed stacks through the German lines. A couple of the stacks are just dummies, but they all aren't. I hope to keep the killer German stack in V13 honest as I try to maneuver these Russians toward the German entry hexes and with luck, meet up with my troops from the center. The Russians have managed to keep the W14 location under indirect fire which is denying the Germans that location. W14 has a line of sight to many Russian locations and the longer the Russians keep the Germans bottled up here, the less likely the Germans can break into the Russian rear. The Germans are sending tanks into this zone, but the Russians have

some hidden AP and AT mines to slow the Germans should they break through, which they inevitably will.

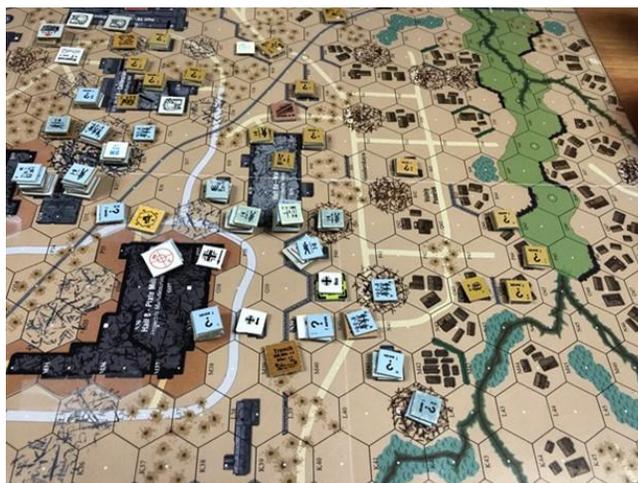
As indicated earlier, the Russians had placed a .50cal HMG in each of the GG24 and GG25 hexes. These MG locations were planning to dominate the north, center and south regions with their high firepower strength, long range and high ROF potential. The Germans did suffer significantly from these two MGs until one of them broke down which has enabled the Germans to build up enough firepower to return fire. One more thing the Russians might have considered doing is fortifying these two locations to get the +4 TEM (but this they didn't do). Between the Russian HMG nest in GG24 and GG25 and guns set up on the Slag Heap, the three German HMGs in V17 have been bottled up since turn 1. There are several tricky LOS possibilities that are not obvious until you check them. However, as mentioned earlier all good things must come to an end as one of the Russian Lend-Lease .50 cal malfunctions (and was disabled with a repair dr =6 on the first repair attempt). With the firepower now diminished from this Russian MG nest, I fear that the Germans will soon reconstitute their position and start supporting the German advance in the north.

The Russians also tried to infiltrate Hall 3 (Q26) and ended up wandering in the dark. Meanwhile, the disastrous placement of the OBA spotters in Hall 10 (ZZ33, ZZ34) is under constant fire by every German that has a LOS. Two of the Russian leaders are on this rooftop, and they are constantly being broken (and sometimes killed outright due to double breaking) as they try to call in the 200mm rockets and the 120mm OBA module.

See end of turn 3 pictures for north, center and south areas respectively.



Center: RO5, Game Turn 3



South: RO5, Game Turn 3

German Turn 4:

Highlights include the Germans winning a CC battle in T37. We also had the O5.82 "smokestack" sniper rule come into play by hitting my (already broken) 8-3-8 which had routed back from Z19 to W18 in order to be safe and was hoping to be able to rally. This result CR'ed this 8-3-8 elite unit to a broken 3-3-8. Despite this, the German tactic of chipping away at the Russians with double breaks and (generally, but not always) avoiding CC is starting to pay off.

Russian Turn 4:

The Germans lost a StuG IIIB in V40 while passing next to a Russian squad due to low CC Reaction Fire DR. Additionally, I continue to lose lots of VL points in the H18 area. At this point the Russians have 22 to the German 28 VL points, but I still think I'm in the driver's seat for the reasons stated previously.



North: RO5, Game Turn 3

Turn 4 Russian Player Commentary

The Russians have been trying to slow down the Germans since turn 1, leaving only minimal forces in front of the German advance while retreating the bulk of their forces under cover of the Russian MGs and guns scattered around the Slag Heap. As you can see, the Germans have finally softened up the northern area sufficiently to shoot their troops out of a cannon. Almost every unit in the north has moved apart from the units in Hall 2, and the Rolling Shop (V14) who were used to harass the Russians in this area. The Russians have managed to position some troops in the gully sewers who are intended to dart into the German rear areas and support the efforts of the Russians from Group Center who have begun raking up some VLs. The low-morale Russians melt before the long-range fire of the Germans, and there is not much cover in this area to provide rout paths as the Russian units break. The Russians have also had to slide one of their remaining leaders (who are now becoming an increasingly rare commodity) to the center. A center leader had to try to man the field phones to try to call in a Russian OBA mission. Russian troops without supporting leaders to rally them back will likely become fodder for the Germans. Meanwhile, the Germans have pretty much cleared the resistance north of the gully. Some light Russian resistance remains, especially if the Russians can pass a morale check on non-DM troops. Unfortunately, the past couple of turns have seen Russians roll a 12 MC DR a couple of times.

By the end of Russian turn 4, the crying is over on the north Russian flank. Anybody that can get out of the area has, and the Germans have killed all the broken units either by direct fire or failure to rout. The entire northern area of operations is difficult to manage. Your choices appear to range from not defending it at all, lightly defend it to the point of worthlessness, heavily defend it, which you cannot mask from the Germans in which case they can meet the troops with overwhelming force (stripping their center and south efforts) or bypassing this area with a thrust along the seam between Group North and Group Center. Since there are so few victory locations in this area, I think the Russians should lightly defend the north. Its primary value to the Russians seems to be providing protection to the Slag Heap which has some of the only high ground the Russians can use. All is not hopeless though as the Russians have managed to sneak a series of concealed stacks through the German lines.

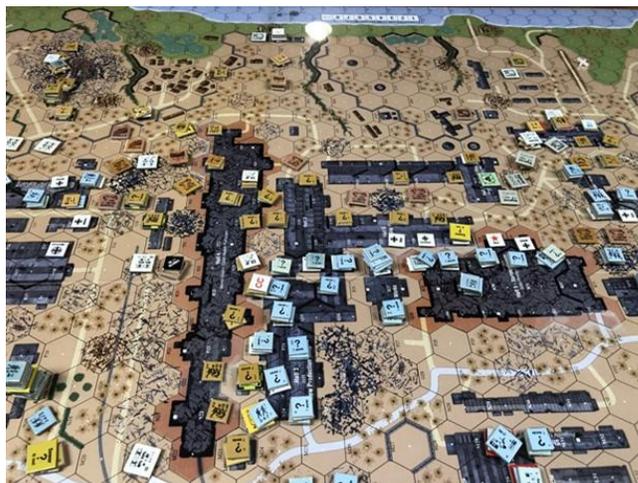
Meanwhile, the Germans have made a play for Hall 9 (U35) and have driven the Russians out of all but one hex of this factory. Here again, the fallacy of trading shots with the Germans shows itself. Instead of standing toe-to-toe, hanging back and making the Germans come to the Russians is the way it should have been played as the defender. However, quickly occupying the T26 and T27 Hall 6-Blooming Mill locations reveals that there are multiple (3) AA in the S27 hex. That's as good a kill stack as any. The Germans take a low-firepower shot against a Russian in R22, and turn it fanatic; this unit will leave the factory and take its fanaticism to a fortified location outside the factory where it may become more useful.

In the center, German firepower has continued to take its toll on the Russians. Russian units are killed, broken and dispersed all over the map. Even at this early stage, I fear that this game may well be over. Perhaps it has been since the initial setup.

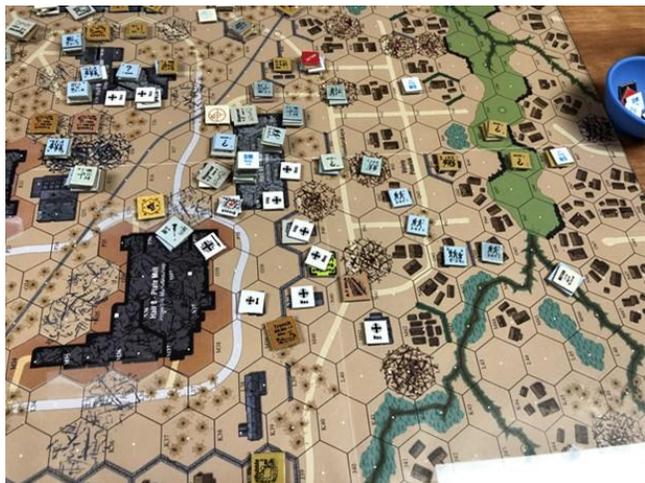
See end of turn 4 pictures for north, center and south areas, respectively.



North: R05, Game Turn 4



Center: R05, Game Turn 4



South: RO5, Game Turn 4

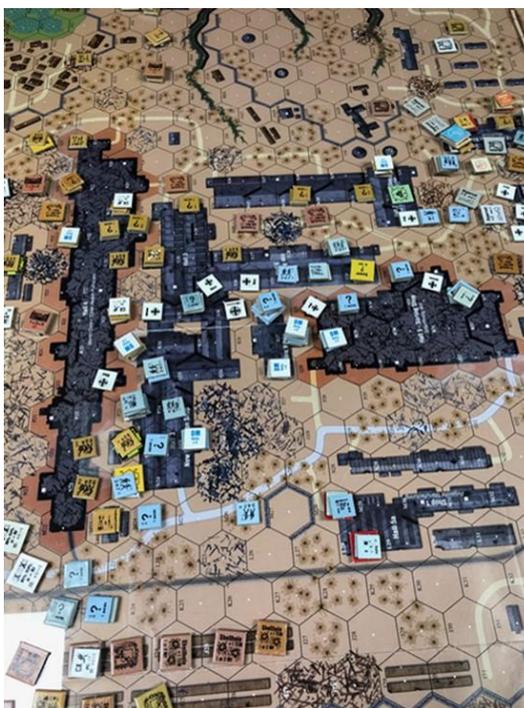
German Turn 5:

An interesting thing happened in the RPh this turn. We got a shift in the direction of the wind. This moved the drifting smoke around in some interesting ways (B25.65, A24.61). Following this, the Germans benefited from a succession of favorable PFPh and MPH outcomes which made it apparent that the Russians just weren't going to be able to make this a close contest in this playing and consequently, it wasn't going to take anywhere near 21 turns to prove it. We determined that at this point in this scenario the Russians had already lost 35 of their initial allotment of 76 full squads, leaving 41 remaining. Equally, if not more importantly, the Russians had also lost 5 of their initial allotment of 13 leaders. Furthermore, of the 8 Russian leaders remaining, one was wounded while another was berserk (and without accompanying MMCs when it goes forward in carrying out his charging duties per A15.43)! German losses meanwhile were but a fraction of these totals at this point. Accordingly, it was during this game turn that the Russians threw in the towel and surrendered the scenario. However, with all the work we had put in beforehand while preparing for and recording our thoughts and actions we wanted to give this scenario another go to see if it really could/would play out for the full complement of game turns. With that desire in mind, we agreed to play it again, this time I (Rich) would be on defense with the Russians and Frank would try his hand as the attacking Germans.

See end of German Turn 5 Pictures for North, Center and South areas, respectively.



North: RO5, Game Turn 5



Center: RO5, Game Turn 5



South: RO5, Game Turn 5

Turn 5 Russian Player Commentary

In the north, you can see that the Germans have done their jobs on this flank. The German armor in Y14 is caught in an AT minefield of two factors, but has survived entry into the hex. There's a one-in-three chance of damage if it moves out, but it's in a good position to keep hammering the guns on the Slag Heap from where it stands. It has already broken crews a couple of times, and with its partner in Z13 will probably neutralize the Slag Heap in a couple of turns. Additionally, all those German troops are about to get in range to assault this high ground and I don't anticipate that the position will hold. At the same time, the Russians are about to be driven out of the Hall 2 factory.

The center region of the board saw both some of the bright spots and low points of the Russian play. The Russians are holding their own in the Halls 4 & 6 factories in which they started, and a platoon from the Open Hearth Furnaces (T22) have released to the west to see how many VLs they can gobble up before a combination of existing German troops/reinforcements have to be devoted to reclaim them. However, Russian units are running about in the German rear area, where they can easily gather the requisite stone VLs. It was way too early to use this tactic, but if used toward the endgame, it will force a commitment of German troops to retake these buildings touched by the Russians. In late turns, the German reinforcements would probably be tasked with this hunt. Meanwhile, the considerable loss of Russian units elsewhere is obvious and I'm aware that dead men tell no tales.

All I can say is that I've played campaign games, and I've played standalone scenarios, but I've never played a 21-turn standalone scenario. In the end, I think my planning and tactics represented my experiences in terms of seven-turn campaign game days and/or standalone scenarios of that sort of length, and

it showed. The Russian defensive setup was too far forward in order to sustain anything this long, especially since there are no immediate VLs whereby the Russians may opt to select an aggressive counterattack. I'll say that if the Russians can find a way to get into the German rear areas, while defending the factories, I think a quick victory for them would be possible, but the victory conditions don't enable that outcome. Therefore, toss out the strategy I used here.

At the same time though, I think that we've learned here that the exact opposite strategy may be the way to play this scenario as the Russians. Deny the Germans any meaningful targets at all on turn 1 for example? How about hanging back and forcing the Germans to come to the Russians and utilizing their fanaticism benefits and +4TEM in the exterior factory locations to make it exceedingly difficult for the Germans to root them out? How about positioning a few units in a handful of sewer locations in order to (in the long run) get into the German rear areas to slide through stone locations and gather up VLs? I would also emplace a couple guns in places that might enable them to be pushed (manhandled per C10.3) into better positions if they're not optimally placed to start with. This would provide the Russians with some additional firepower and perhaps rubble a few hexes on top of the Germans. In any event, time to switch sides and see what develops!

THE SECOND PLAYING

This time the reader should note that the comments in standard black font are again from my (Rich's) perspective as the Russian side for this second playing. Meanwhile, the comments in blue font are still from Frank's perspective, but this time as the German player in this second playing.

Now I (Rich) will be taking the Russian side on the defense. Meanwhile, I recognize that Frank will have obtained the benefit of seeing my previous German attack and will certainly have gained many insights regarding which tactics work and which are less effective. In particular, he will have noted the importance (for both sides) of controlling the split-level factory (O5.7) locations in this scenario.

With the many lessons learned from the previous scenario, here is my at-start Russian setup. Note however, that the Germans will not initially see any of the HIP units (including those in pillboxes) when they plan their setup. However, the pillboxes and units therein will be revealed as soon as any G.O. German unit has LOS to them within 16 hexes and I expect this to be the case right after the German setup. See A12.33 and B30.7 for details.

Here are some of my thoughts regarding my defensive Russian setup.

- Firstly, note the dummies in V1.1, BB10.2, Y36.1 and Y36.2. I anticipate that Frank will expect powerful MGs to be in these locations directed by decent leaders. I therefore suppose that Frank will set up to decimate these guys with big time kill stacks including his OBA pre-registered fire. With

that potential outcome in mind, I didn't want to expose any good units (or any units at all for that matter) to this type of potential decimation right off the bat and so am hopeful that these dummy stacks will absorb much of this firepower. Of course, the trade-off is that I'm giving up some prime locations in which to locate these types of units myself, but I'm hoping that I can move units back there if needed should the option present itself. Remember that this is a long scenario.

- Secondly, note the tunnels I've selected for two of the seven fortified locations allowed (B8.6, B23.9). I'm expecting that attacks will naturally gravitate towards these two locations and the use of a tunnel maximizes my ability to enter CC, gain an edge in the ambush dr and hopefully take out a few good German units in the process. It doesn't guarantee me such an outcome, but it certainly makes the odds favorable. This will be especially true if the enemy has broken units in these hexes. That would be a joy to behold!
- Thirdly, note the pretty strong defense I have established to defend the 8 VLs represented by the School Building (V1/V2). I'm sure the Germans can still take it if they want it, but my set up includes a pretty strong defense in place there to make them pay for this real estate including the use of mines, pillboxes, wire and one of the two aforementioned tunnels.
- Fourthly, note the HIP 8-0 leader manning the phone in the AA41 pillbox. This phone is connected to the rocket OBA module which I'm considering akin to a one-shot weapon. Once the rocket module does its thing, this 8-0 leader will shore up this southern side of the Russian defense with rally and fire direction duties. Effective, efficient use of the limited leaders that the Russian side possesses in this scenario is essential (which we observed during the last playing) and the Russians must maximize the use of each SMC in order to hold off the Germans in this scenario.
- Fifthly, note the fire lane potential from the MGs in pillbox hexes AA41 and Y38. These should slow the Germans down should they attack across towards the Hall 9 factory from the south.

- Finally, note the HIP units in locations like R37.1, T20.1, U20.1 and X0. These units are really there not so much to shoot at anyone (as they don't have much firepower), but rather, to hopefully hang out until near game end and hopefully retake the many stone VLs in the vicinity that may tilt the victory conditions in the Russians' favor at the last minute. Alternatively, they might also be able to deny a rout path unexpectedly to a stack of broken Germans and eliminate them for failure to rout (A10.5). We'll see if any opportunities like this emerge. In a similar way the two guns in O41.2 and U41.6 represent my least powerful AT guns, but they might land a rear shot on a passing German AFV should they move that way which will increase their TK chances. Alternatively, the 2-2-8 crews manning these guns may also see an opportunity to take back a few stone VLs near game end if they haven't been discovered by that point through other means.

Here are the Russian units that the German side will be able to 'see' when they set up their initial forces:

| On-Board Units At Start | | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------|--------|--------|-------|--------|
| Hex | Units | Hex | Units | Hex | Units |
| AA09 | Trench | V20.0 | ? +1 | U23 | ? +2 |
| AA09 | ? +1 | V21 | ? +2 | U24 | ? +1 |
| AA40 | Trench | V22 | ? +1 | U25 | ? +1 |
| BB09.C | ? +5 | V23 | ? +2 | U26 | ? +1 |
| BB10.2 | ? +3 | V24 | ? +1 | U27 | ? +2 |
| BB10.C | ? +2 | V30 | ? +2 | U28 | ? +2 |
| BB19 | Trench | V31 | ? +2 | U29 | ? +2 |
| CC10 | Trench | V34 | ? +1 | U30 | ? +1 |
| CC11 | Trench | V35 | ? +1 | V01.0 | ? +2 |
| GG24.0 | ? +1 | V36 | ? +1 | V01.1 | ? +2 |
| GG25.1 | ? +5 | V39 | ? +2 | V01.C | ? +2 |
| M46 | ? +1 | W02 | Trench | V02.0 | ? +2 |
| N40 | ATD | W02 | ? +3 | V02.C | ? +3 |
| N43 | ? +4 | W03 | Trench | V04 | Trench |
| R39 | ? +1 | W22 | ? +1 | Y07 | Wire |
| S22 | ? +1 | W24 | ? +2 | Y16 | Wire |
| S38 | ? +1 | W26 | ? +2 | Y17 | Wire |
| S39 | ? +1 | W30 | ? +2 | Y36.0 | ? +1 |
| T21 | ? +1 | W31 | ? +2 | Y36.1 | ? +3 |
| T22 | ? +1 | W34 | ? +2 | Y36.2 | ? +3 |
| T24 | ? +1 | X02 | ? +3 | Y36.C | ? +2 |
| T37 | ATD | X21 | ? +2 | Y37 | Trench |
| U02 | Wire | X38 | ATD | Z08 | ? +1 |
| U03 | Wire | X39 | ATD | Z21 | ? +1 |
| U20.C | ? +2 | Y05.IN | ? +1 | Z32 | ? +2 |
| U22 | ? +2 | Y06 | Wire | Z35.0 | ? +1 |

Notes from the German player's perspective after seeing the Russian Defense:

During the second playing of Men of Steel, we have switched sides, with my opponent now playing the Russian while I take on the role of the Germans. From the first playing of this scenario, it became obvious that this scenario is a marathon and not a sprint. As such, the Germans will be limiting their exposure to Russian fire unless there is an immediate objective to the exposure. The Germans will take opportunities to divide elements of the Russian forces, take out Russian leaders whenever possible, or eliminate Russian units. Any other minor objectives should only be attempted if there is minimum chance of German losses, there's plenty of time to grab stone locations in accordance with the victory conditions as the scenario wears on.

For me, I'm finding these two scenarios to be giant learning opportunities. My opponent is using his far greater experience to teach me aspects of the game that I haven't had the time to learn. As such, there is a lot of discussion during the games to walk through rules and discuss tactics. This and the large number of counters and map area slow this game down, but to me, it's a fantastic time. I plan on trying out various ideas like breaching walls with DC and AFVs, trying to always keep concealed units within reach of the battlefield action, ATMM and other unique aspects of the Stalingrad RO map.

Another effort for the Germans will be to figure out if there is a way to influence the Russian use of sewers. The Germans will task one squad to always cover the marked sewer locations. Unmarked sewers at road intersections present different troubles-- there are more locations than you can possibly man. It is also difficult to get away from the whack-a-mole syndrome of chasing Russian troops around the board to stop the Russians from controlling hexes in the German rear areas. It seems almost impossible and quite dangerous, to put Germans into the sewers to fight the Russians. There are probably some articles out there that address the tactics, but the Germans haven't had the time to seek out those technical manuals (if they even exist).

Based on the initial Russian setup, there appears to be an opportunity to try to split the Russian forces along the Hall 1 – Hall 2 axis. Since the Germans want to use their pioneer shock troops elsewhere, this task will be given to other elite infantry units with reinforcing fire from MMGs and HMGs. The Russians have placed wire in Y16 and Y17 so care will be taken along the perimeter looking for minefields. A holding force along the north will be established using weaker infantry and hidden guns. There are streams in this zone that may allow the Germans to sneak some troops into the Russian northern backfield, but this will not be a priority and only be done if the opportunity presents itself.

And here is the entire Russian set-up including HIP units/Fortifications, etc.:

| ----- On-Board Units At Start ----- | | ----- On-Board Units At Start ----- | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Hex | Units | Hex | Units |
| AA09 | Trench | X39 | ATD |
| AA09 | ? 4-4-7 | Y05.I.N | ? 6-2-8 |
| AA40 | Trench | Y06 | Wire |
| BB09.C | ? 10-2, (2) HMG, (2) 4-5-8 | Y07 | Wire |
| BB10.2 | 4X? | Y16 | Wire |
| BB10.C | ? MMG, 4-5-8 | Y17 | Wire |
| BB19 | Trench | Y36.0 | ? 4-5-8 |
| CC10 | Trench | Y36.1 | 4X? |
| CC11 | Trench | Y36.2 | 4X? |
| GG24.0 | ? 4-4-7 | Y36.C | ? ATR, 4-5-8 |
| GG25.1 | ? 9-2, (2) 0.50 cal., (2) 4-5-8 | Y37 | Trench |
| M46 | ? 4-4-7 | Z08 | ? 4-4-7 |
| N40 | ATD | Z21 | ? 5-2-7 |
| N43 | ? (2) ATR, (2) 4-4-7 | Z32 | ? 7-0, 4-4-7 |
| R39 | ? 4-4-7 | Z35.0 | ? 6-2-8 |
| S22 | ? 5-2-7 | Z35.C | ? (2) 4-5-8 |
| S38 | ? 6-2-8 | Z36 | Trench |
| S39 | ? 4-4-7 | ----- HIP PBs At Start ----- | |
| T21 | ? 4-4-7 | AA19.5 | 1+3+5, 8-1, 4-5-8, MMG |
| T22 | ? 6-2-8 | AA41.5 | 1+3+5, MMG, 4-5-8 |
| T24 | ? 6-2-8 | CC12.4 | 2+3+5, 9-1, (2) MMG, (2) 4-5-8 |
| T37 | ATD | V04.3 | 1+3+5, LMG, 6-2-8 |
| U02 | Wire | Y38.5 | 2+5+7, 9-2, (2) HMG, (2) 4-5-8 |
| U03 | Wire | ----- HIP Guns At Start ----- | |
| U20.C | ? (2) 5-2-7 | AA32.5-L1 | 2-2-8, ART, 76L |
| U22 | ? LMG, 6-2-8 | BB11.5-L2 | 2-2-8, ATG, 45LL |
| U23 | ? LMG, 6-2-8 | CC16.5 | 2-2-8, MTR, 82* |
| U24 | ? 6-2-8 | DD15.6 | 2-2-8, ATG, 45LL |
| U25 | ? 6-2-8 | EE15.5 | 2-2-8, INF, 76* |
| U26 | ? 6-2-8 | O41.2 | 2-2-8, ATG, 45L |
| U27 | ? (2) 5-2-7 | U41.6 | 2-2-8, ATG, 45L |
| U28 | ? (2) 4-5-8 | W23.5 | 2-2-8, ART, 76L |
| U29 | ? (2) 6-2-8 | X02.4 | 2-2-8, ATG, 45L |
| U30 | ? 6-2-8 | Y22.6 | 2-2-8, INF, 76* |
| V01.0 | ? ATR, 5-2-7 | Y33.5 | 2-2-8, MTR, 82* |
| V01.1 | 3X? | Z21.5 | 2-2-8, MTR, 82* |
| V01.C | ? LMG, 4-5-8 | --- HIP FORT Locations At Start --- | |
| V02.0 | ? ATR, 5-2-7 | AA32-L0 | |
| V02.C | ? 9-1, LMG, 4-5-8 | AA32-L1 | |
| V04 | Trench | BB11-L0 | |
| V20.0 | ? 4-4-7 | BB11-L1 | |
| V21 | ? LMG, 6-2-8 | BB11-L2 | |
| V22 | ? 4-5-8 | W02 | Tunnel to T1 |
| V23 | ? 8-1, 4-4-7 | X21 | Tunnel to V19 |
| V24 | ? 6-2-8 | ----- HIP MMC/SMC At Start ----- | |
| V30 | ? LMG, 4-5-8 | AA41 | Ph, 8-0 |
| V31 | ? LMG, 4-5-8 | GG24.2 | Ph, 8-0 |
| V34 | ? 6-2-8 | R37.1 | (2) MOL-p, (2) 2-2-8 |
| V35 | ? 5-2-7 | T20.1 | MOL-p, 2-2-8 |
| V36 | ? 6-2-8 | U20.1 | MOL-p, 2-2-8 |
| V39 | ? ATR, 4-5-8 | X0 | 5-2-7 |
| W02 | Trench | ----- HIP Mines At Start ----- | |
| W02 | ? (3) 5-2-7, note Tunnel to T1 | U01 | 12AP |
| W03 | Trench | U31 | 6AP |
| W22 | ? 6-2-8 | U32 | 6AP |
| W24 | ? (2) 6-2-8 | U33 | 6AP |
| W26 | ? 9-1, 4-4-7 | Y08 | 6AP |
| W30 | ? 8-0, 4-4-7 | Y09 | 6AP |
| W31 | ? (2) 5-2-7 | Y10 | 6AP |
| W34 | ? LMG, 4-5-8 | Y11 | 6AP |
| X02 | ? 7-0, MMG, 4-5-8 | ----- Reserve Group Entrances ----- | |
| X21 | ? (2) 4-4-7, note Tunnel to V19 | Group A | EE25 |
| X38 | ATD | Group B | EE18 |

As mentioned already, the German pioneers are going to be handed the heavy lifting. They will be concentrated in the center factory zone, and German armor will be sent there to back up their efforts. This is where AFV exterior wall breaching and interior walls will get breached by demolition charges. Further judicious use of flamethrowers will overcome the +4 fortification TEM. It will be important to rotate these troops back and forth to keep them concealed so they can more easily absorb Russian fire. Another tactic I want to try here is locating an 81mm Mortar inside a roofless factory with a spotter (C9.3) both inside and outside the factory on adjacent hexes. We'll see if HE rounds can be popped off (and ROF maintained) to hit troops all around while enjoying +4 TEM and being out of line of sight. Meanwhile, the Germans will try to bring their pre-registered artillery down in the region of V22.

Using Row 23 – 24 as a jumping off point, the Germans will try to split and defeat the Russians in the two adjoining factories. If the Germans can control W24 and W25, a split can be achieved between Russian units. This will be a primary objective for the German units. Hexes S23 – S33 will be primarily a holding action to tie up Russian troops and act as a reinforcement/rally area. This factory can be reached by the entering reinforcements under good cover and without a long march.

In the south, the Germans will put a small force of pioneers with other elite units as backup to try to quickly take Hall 8a (R38) and hold it since there are several lines of sight to possible Russian reinforcement areas. Initially, a couple of German squads will guard the sewers along the stream until some second line reinforcement squads are available to take over that duty at which time the first line troops will be released for other more important work.



The Second Playing, Turn 1

During the Defensive Fire Phase of turn 1, and per my pre-game plan, I placed the AR for the rocket OBA all the way down to hex P35 from the HIP 8-0 observer in AA41 and drew the appropriate black card for battery access. Now I know that rocket OBA is notorious for inaccuracy and harming the owner of such more so than the enemy sometimes. To address this concern, I'll admit that I'm more than a little embarrassed to say that I had actually practiced several different placement hexes and rolled a handful of potential C1.31 extent of error DRs to simulate potential rocket OBA blast areas. My hope was to find an AR placement hex that, after drifting for inaccuracy, would encompass each of the following potential outcomes:

- Have some potential to cause some harm to the enemy
- Minimize the risk of hitting my own guys, and,
- If it ended up hitting nothing, then in my view that would be an acceptable outcome as a trade-off to avoid friendly fire casualties.

While no AR placement hex that I could find was without risk, I found hex P35 to be a good one from a risk/reward point of view to balance the objectives listed. Unfortunately, all my simulations did not pay off. To the contrary, the C1.31 error/direction DR was 3,3 resulting in an FFE placement hex of S37. Consequently, with a rocket OBA blast radius of 2-hexes, this both revealed and harmed my two HIP crews in R37.1, and broke two other Russian squads in Hall 8a. It also created a flame per B25.13 in one of the factory hexes of Hall 8a which will have implications later (stay tuned). It did break one nearby German 8-3-8 squad but this unit quickly rallied back on the next turn. Hardly a good trade-off and not worth the effort. As a final insult, the rocket OBA also destroyed my antitank ditch in hex T37 (B2.1) making it a shellhole instead. This event helped open the way for the German AFVs to move through this area later in the scenario if desired. In retrospect, I wish I would have either rolled a 12 for radio contact thereby breaking the phone and/or drawn a red card! Unfortunately, per SSR6, the rocket OBA cannot use a pre-registered hex. This would have helped immensely but was not the case. I don't think the German side could have asked for a better outcome than this from the Russian rocket OBA module on turn 1!

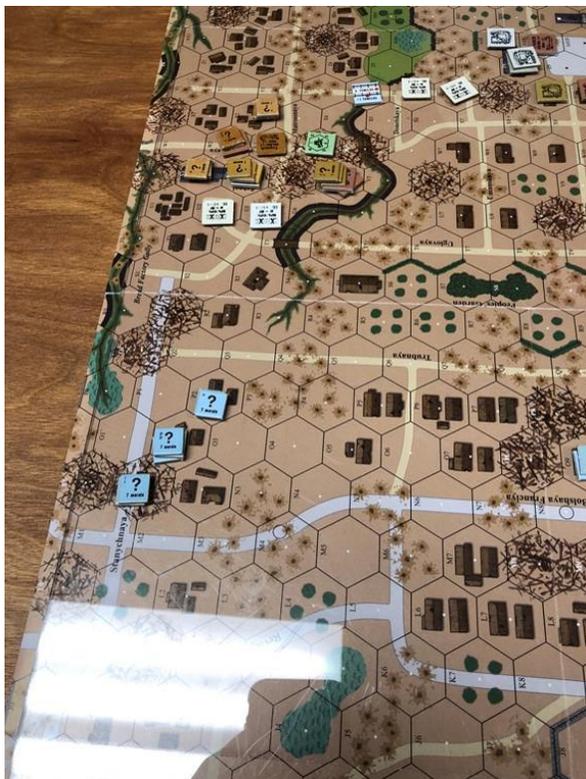
The Second Playing - Turn 2 Highlights

- CH on German AFV in Q12 from 45LL ATG in BB11.2.
- However, the German returned the favor by eliminating this same ATG with a CH from a different 75* StuG IIIB during a subsequent fire phase.
- Also, the German SAN was reduced from 4 to 3 from a successful Russian sniper check (A14.4) DR.

- I (Rich) am quite surprised that the Germans did not set up to engage the School Building in strength (V1/V2) in order to procure it's 8 VLs.
- I (Rich) am also surprised that they did not set up to pound the split-level factory locations (RO5.7) in Z35/Y36. Hmm?

The Second Playing - Turn 3 Highlights

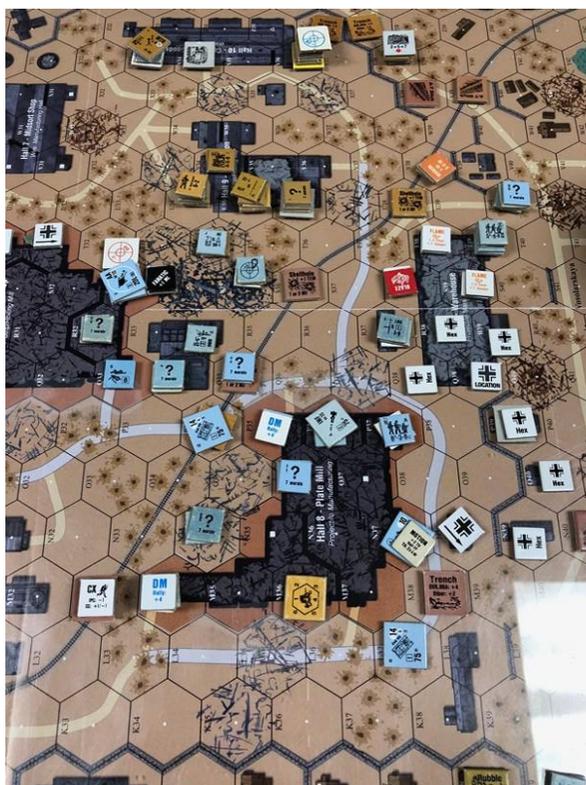
- Some sewer-based infiltrations are moving forward effectively, but some are not. Notable bad outcomes in V17, P22, T24, R29 and H47.
- Russian dropped a 120mm (24 FP) FFE on the U18 German kill stack of guys and only broke one half-squad while pinning most of the others. The Germans also hit this location with 16 FP +2 from their two .50 cal MGs from GG24.2 and rolled an 11 of course! Whining moment for German side: Why can't I get the multiple ROF shots like my opponent seemed to get repeatedly last scenario when these opportunities arise?
- Meanwhile, Russian units got clobbered by a CH from a freshly repaired (A9.72) INF gun in P36 while moving in a manner that I considered reasonably safe into Z37 on my way to reinforce Hall 10.



North: RO5, Second Playing, Game Turn 3



Center: RO5, Second Playing, Game Turn 3



South: RO5, Second Playing, Game Turn 3

Note to Readers: For turns 4-7, we neglected to take pictures. We began taking pictures again on turn 8.

The Second Playing - Turn 4 Highlights

- Some good fortune occurred this turn for the Russians as they took out two broken 4-6-8s in W18 in CC.
- Another Russian 6-2-8 sewer unit in M22 came out in the APh and took out a German unit in CC. However, they now found themselves surrounded during the subsequent German turn and endured some devastating firepower from 4 of the 6 adjacent locations in the turn 4 German PFPh. Luckily, they did not break and were therefore able to pop back into the sewer on Russian turn 4 to make their way out of this encirclement to the M25 sewer!
- Meanwhile, a modest 6 FP +2 attack from the CC12 pillbox on the German U18 kill stack caused a 2MC. The 9-2 German leader rolled a 12 which broke and wounded him and the other German units in U18 broke too. This will give my busted-up Russians in GG24 a chance to recover.

The Second Playing - Turn 5 Highlights

- On German turn 5, the Germans sacrificed a '1' sniper dr in order to move their SAN back up to their original SAN of 4 per SSR7. Meanwhile, the Russian SAN dropped to 4 on a lucky snake eyes DR from a German sniper check (A14.4).
- Meanwhile, the Russians were ambushed (A11.4) themselves in T28 and lost a 6-2-8 without corresponding recourse.
- One development in favor of the Russian side at this point is that the Germans have seemingly left behind a decent sized pile of unmanned MGs in U18 [three HMGs and one MMG to be exact] that were abandoned when the units there broke and/or were CR'ed previously and routed away and could not carry SW in excess of their IPC (A10.4). The Russians really want to get ahold of these if for no other reason, than to destroy them and prevent the German from using these powerful MGs against them any longer. But I'm not confident that I have enough units in the area to do anything about it!
- Simultaneously, the German player, (Frank), is making good progress down the middle in Hall 6 and the Russians are reeling backwards. I've got to slow him down there somehow. All I seem to be able to do right now is counterattack in the north or nip away here and there with my sewer guys to pull some pressure off.
- We estimate that the Germans have about 37 stone VLs already at this juncture while the Russians may

have obtained a handful of VLs themselves in response. In one way I, (Rich), feel that this has been a pretty good start for my opponent. On the other hand, I pretty much gave away a lot of these VLs in Hall 4 by withdrawing my units there rather than sacrificing them in a lost cause. So, I will be in a much stronger position to stand up to the German onslaught later when I expect the German player will find the VLs harder to come by.

- We are also loosely keeping track of casualties and our count at this point (at least as far as infantry is concerned) looks like this: German casualties: 9.5 squads (including three 8-3-8s), and one 9-1 leader. In addition, they have already burned up seven of their initial ten DCs. Russian casualties meanwhile are 6 squads and 3 crews, and a 9-1 leader. Maybe a slight edge to the Russians here but I'm certainly not feeling too comfortable right now.

The Second Playing - Turn 6 & 7 Highlights

- A German AFV reinforcement group entered on turn 6 and a powerful German infantry reinforcement group entered on turn 7, both on the western edge per the RO5 scenario card.
- The Russians lost several units due to an improbable CH (C3.6), [i.e. snake eyes followed by a subsequent dr = 1] from the StuG IIIB in S13 at the Russian units in T15. Fortunately, my 10-2 leader survived it alive and unwounded (but broken).
- In return, the Russian MOL-P in U20.1 rolled a CH on the German AFV in R19. (This turned out to be pretty much the only useful outcome that my MOL-Ps produced during this scenario. As the reader will see I ended up sacrificing a number of my crews in an effort to bring these weapons back into play).
- Some of my Russian infantry reinforcements from Group A are now getting ready to join the fray on turn 7 per SSR3. In fact, the 4 units allotted this RPh were able to enter on hex EE25 on turn 7 made it all the way to Z22 by CXing in the MPh and getting to this hex during the APh.
- However, the Russians have now rolled six consecutive unsuccessful reinforcement DRs for the Russian AFVs as of turn 7.
- Additionally, the Russians have now made the practical decision to abandon GG24.2 with their two (now dm) .50 cal MGs and move forward with their 9-2 leader from that location to become more engaged in the battle, up close and personal, in or near Hall 4. My reasoning for this decision is twofold: firstly, the Germans have got one of their two sniper counters in this area and so it's just a matter of time before this precious 9-2 leader gets hit with the limited number of units in the area and he's too

important to let this happen to, and, secondly, we need to get these .50 cal and the 9-2 into the action and from GG24.2, there just isn't much they can do based on the way this scenario is unfolding. I'd also be taking advantage of the ability to dm these weapons in order to move them more readily which is something the Russians are not usually allowed to do (but since these are actually American-made weapons, they can dm in order to be moved more readily!

- Meanwhile, my broken guys in cellar hex Q27 are still hoping to survive. It doesn't look good. I should have moved these guys out sooner to safety. In similar fashion, my broken 6-2-8 in M30 needed a DR ≤ 9 to self-rally and of course they failed!
- During this timeframe, the Russians fired a modest firepower shot directed at the broken German 8-3-8 in S33 in hopes of double breaking them and causing a casualty thereby. Yeah, you guessed it already, in response to a 1MC DR IFT result he rolled snakes and now has a Good Order (and fanatic) 8-3-8 squad sitting there rather than a broken 3-3-8 HS as I had anticipated. All I can say is that if the Germans continue to get stronger (and better) after I shoot at them, then I'm going to be in serious trouble as this scenario progresses.
- Meanwhile, my Russian berserk squad was KIA in U39 as it made its obligatory charge. More imprudent was my lackadaisical decision to double time my 2-2-8 crew towards the north sector for either gun and/or MOL-P duty up there (since I'm short on crews right now up north). This idea ended badly when my opponent noticed an open shot at 2 FP -2 DRM in hex W34/bypass. He promptly rolled a IFT DR of 3, killing that unit too. So much for that idea.
- Finally, just to put the finishing touches on this terrible turn sequence for the Russians, my concealed 4-4-7 came up from the sewer in N37 to ambush the CX German 5-4-8 there. I did ambush them as hoped, declared HtH CC to push this advantage, and ultimately rolled a 9 CC attack DR (needing an 8 or less to at least CR the 5-4-8). Of course, their return CC attack (which they wouldn't have even had been able to make if I had just rolled a bit lower) required a 4 DR or less to eliminate my 4-4-7 (despite the German 5-4-8 being both ambushed and CX). This was duly obtained by the German player (Frank). The best laid plans...

Note to Readers: Pictures again available for turns 8 and beyond.

The Second Playing - Turn 8 Highlights

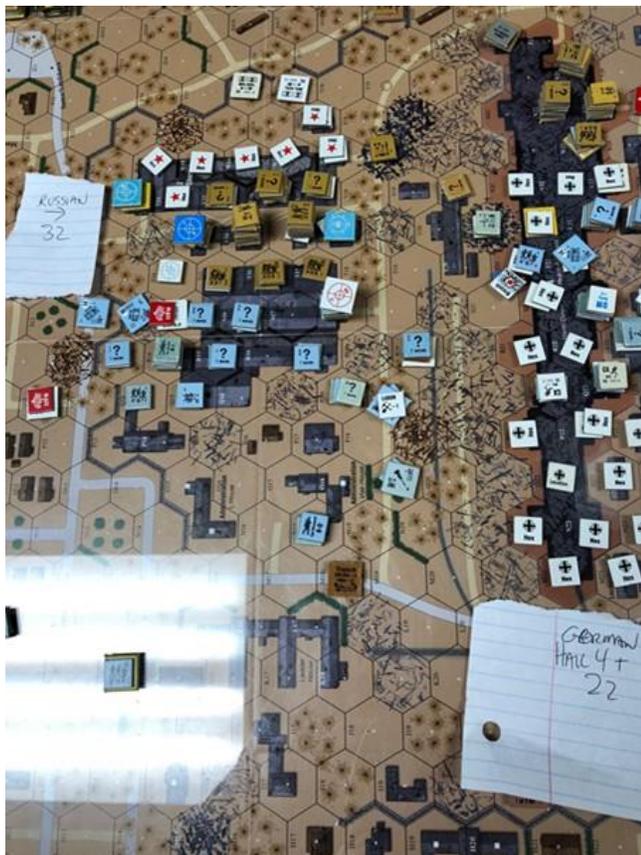
- Russian reinforcement dr this time was a 1, so one more squad coming on board as a reinforcement leaving one more unit to enter on turn 9 from the Group A reinforcement group. Again, rolled too high for the Russian AFVs to enter on turn 8. Looking ahead, turn 9 will see the second (and last) German infantry reinforcement group entering and turn 10 will see the final Russian infantry reinforcement (Group B) begin its entry.
- Like what the Germans did on turn 5, on Russian turn 8, the Russians held back on a '1' sniper dr in order to move their SAN back up to their original 5 per SSR7.
- The Germans in U34 took a snakes IFT result from a relatively low-firepower Russian shot delivering a NMC there (and +1MC on the FT guy) and became broken.
- Once more my self-rally attempt needing a 9 or less with the 6-2-8 in M30 failed. I don't see how the Germans could just leave this unit back there without DM status and let it try to self-rally twice that way, but I guess it hasn't hurt them since I seemingly can't roll less than 10 when I try to self-rally this Russian squad anyway (remember this unit is still considered fanatic while in a factory per SSR1: CG11, even if broken).
- My berserker in T15 was planning on charging the wounded 9-1 leader in hex T16 next turn. This would have been a fairly safe proposition for them to achieve and I was hopeful that this Russian squad would likely survive this endeavor and be able to return to normal per A15.46 after (presumably) eliminating this SMC in CC at 6-1 odds. This was my thinking. However, fate once again intervened in a way I would have never even contemplated as possible. The two Russian sniper counters allotted in this scenario were nowhere near this area. Nevertheless, I experienced one of those smokestack sniper results per O5.82. The theoretical sniper counter generated by this special rule ended up in hex X16 after randomly determining which smokestack hex it would move from and then rolling for random hex direction/distance from that point. The closest enemy unit to this theoretical sniper counter became the wounded German SMC in T16. This eliminated the SMC. Consequently, the Russian berserker remained berserk, but since they didn't eliminate this unit himself, he didn't fulfil the conditions in order to return to normal per A15.46. So, now they'll have to charge at a much more dangerous place and likely be eliminated during my upcoming turn 9. Who'd a thunk it?
- The Russians were fortunate to capture a German flamethrower and used it effectively to inflict a 4MC result on that aforementioned fanatic German 8-3-8 assault engineer squad still in S33. Frank rolled a MC DR of 11 this time which yielded a final MC result of 15 (which is 6 higher than his fanatic morale level of 9). Since the German ELR of this elite unit is 5 (not 4 like the rest of the German OB per A1.23), we now see the very rare situation occur in which a fanatic 8-3-8 failed a MC by a large enough amount to exceed its ELR and as a result became two broken 3-3-8 (yet still fanatic) half-squads per A19.13! I've never seen this before.
- The Russians did manage to take advantage of an opportunity that presented itself in the W23 melee hex. During German Turn 8, Frank had advanced in with his 10-2 leader and two full squads against 1.5 Russian squads that I had there, both of which were pinned (thus enabling his legal advance into CC to a fortified location per B23.922). Fortunately, I had a single half-squad that survived this CC, so these units were all now held in melee against each other. I had this hex surrounded by other Russian units in such a way as to potentially gain the ability to encircle them per A7.7. If I could do this, then their morale level would drop by one (as described in A7.7). I expected then that this lowered morale level would increase my chances of breaking one or more of the German units in the melee. This, while being careful not to double break my remaining half-squad in the melee which would have eliminated them and at the same time freed up the (presumably now broken) German units by enabling them to rout rather than to withdraw from melee (A11.2). In the end, I was able to encircle the location, my Russian half-squad broke once (but not twice), both German squads broke, while the 10-2 battle hardened to a heroic 10-2. Now, if I could just withstand the firepower that the Germans were bound to dish out in the upcoming DFPh from their other units nearby, I myself could get some Good Order Russian squads adjacent to W23 in order to reinforce the CC and potentially eliminate the 10-2 (not broken) and the two German squads that were both now broken (and would need to withdraw from melee per A11.2). This was achieved, and although the Russians sacrificed 1.5 squads themselves to achieve this result, eliminating two German squads and the 10-2 leader at this crucial area was significant at this point in the game.
- The Russians were also privileged to eliminate two hapless German half-squads in S17 who were adjacent to Good Order Russians but prevented from routing due to the factory interior walls (O5.3) behind them!

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- At this point then the Germans have captured 14 stone VLs in the Hall 8a area, 22 more in the Hall 4 area, and 14 others in the Hall 6 area. That's 50 VLs in total. Meanwhile, the Russian counterattacks have captured 4 VLs in the R33 building area and 32 more in the Hall 2 area. Therefore, the net German total is $50 - 36 = 14$ at this point of the game.
- Regarding casualties, to this point the Germans have lost five SMCs and twenty squad equivalents (including six 8-3-8s). They've also expended nine DCs, one FT, one LMG and one MMG. The German side has also lost three AFVs destroyed, one recalled (D5.341), while another has a malfunctioned MA which may or may not be able to repair itself. Meanwhile, the Russians have lost three SMCs, 13.5 squad equivalents and six crews. Additionally, they've lost an HMG, two MOL-Ps, and a 45LL ATG. The Russians have captured a LMG, MMG DC, FT and three HMGs from the Germans!



Center: RO5, Second Playing, Game Turn 8



North: RO5, Second Playing, Game Turn 8

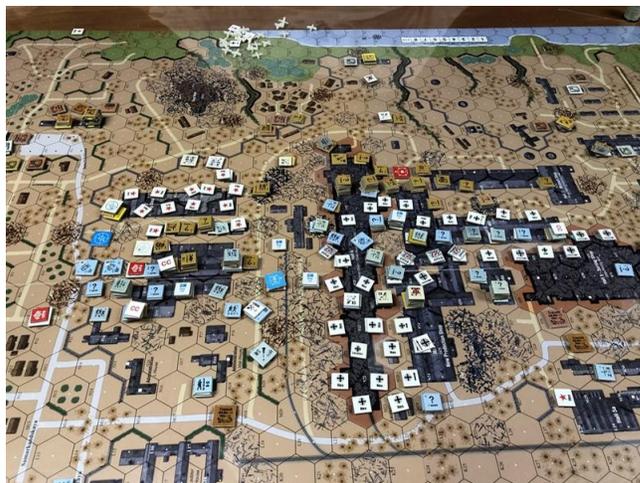


South: RO5, Second Playing, Game Turn 8

The Second Playing - Turn 9 Highlights

- The Russian player (me, Rich) rolled two casualty (A10.31) rally DRs of 12 in both M30 and X25 (one a self-rally attempt in M30 and one leader-directed in X25). There go two more half-squads taken away in casualties that won't be coming back. My only consolation here is that the 6-2-8 in M30 may have deserved this fate after failing two consecutive self-rally attempts when they only needed a 9 or less each time. When you think about it, this 6-2-8 unit in M30 actually failed four consecutive self-rally attempts. Here is what I mean:
 - Turn 7 needing self-rally $DR \leq 5$, (while under DM)
 - Turn 8 needing self-rally $DR \leq 9$, (not under DM)
 - Turn 9 needing self-rally $DR \leq 9$, (not under DM)
 - Turn 10 needing self-rally $DR \leq 5$, (while under DM)
 - Doing some quick math, the odds of failing this many attempts in succession in this situation is less than 1.5%. Lucky me!
- Enough whining about the dice on my (Rich's) part, let's move on (although I wish to retain the option to whine more later if need be). My berserk squad in T16 was fortunate to survive a 20 FP -2 Defensive First Fire shot from the Germans in hex S17 as they moved through S18 during their charge. This was followed by a 12 FP flat and an 8 FP flat from the units in S18 neither of which harmed the berserker. However, they could not survive the subsequent CH from the 150mm gun in O19 which achieved something approaching a 36 FP, -6 DR or something like that. Doesn't matter though. This berserk squad died to serve a higher purpose because by soaking up all this fire, it gave the Russians the opportunity to make a move towards the SMC holding the German radio in the R19 (burning wreck) hex.
- Meanwhile, the StuG 33B in bypass in Q38 hit a concealed 3-2-8 in T35 with yet another German CH event. Another KIA vs. the Russians and another half-squad I'll never see on the game board again. As my opponent stated previously, dead men tell no tales. I would add to that statement that they don't rout nor rally back too well either.
- Meanwhile, three CC outcomes resolved themselves predominantly in the Russians' favor:
 - T29: Russians ambushed the German 5-4-8 there, caused a half-squad casualty, were not hurt in return and withdrew to U30 per A11.41.

- S16: Russians did not ambush the German unit here but eliminated it without experiencing any casualties in return and remained in S16.
- Q15: My sewer guy emerged, ambushed the German leader here who was saddled with two broken half-squads. Their HtH CC attack eliminated the German 8-0 leader and two broken half-squads and then they withdrew to Q16.



North and Center: RO5, Second Playing, Game Turn 9



Center and South: RO5, Second Playing, Game Turn 9

The Second Playing - Turn 10 Highlights

- At the top of German turn 10, Germans received a leader creation (A18.11) self-rally attempt in hex R16, creating an 8-1 leader in the process. This is the second time the Germans have created a leader due to a leader creation event during their RPh in this scenario (although I don't think we recorded the first one that occurred about 5 game turns ago). My opinion of course is that it is the Russians who need

these extra leaders, not the Germans, they have plenty already!

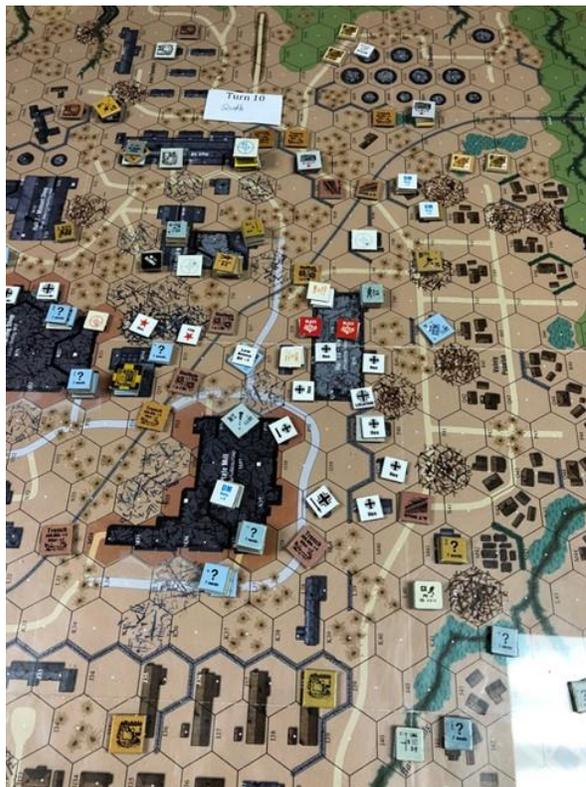
- Another successful German DR=3 result for a sniper check (A14.4) in F40 brings the Russian SAN back down to 4 once more. I had just sacrificed a dr =1 sniper attack to bring it back to 5 and on turn 8 and almost immediately we're back down to a SAN of 4 again. How does the German player always seem to roll a 2 or 3 on sniper checks? It's like automatic for him!
- Meanwhile, the German StuG IIIB in S13 started up and crashed through the factory wall creating a breach (B23.711) in T15. While it did bog down there due to this move, it will still tie up the Russian 5-2-7 squad in CC in that hex.
- Amazingly, the StuG IIIB in T22 passed the first 2 of 3 bog checks and then an ESB (D2.5) DR to OVR (D7.1) my Russian squad in V21! This AFV has led a charmed live in my view as it had already passed several previous bog checks whilst plowing through the factory walls a couple of turns ago as it's made its way through the Hall 4 factory and now has moved through the factory all the way to hex V21 at this point. The German player (Frank) responded at my astonished reaction about this situation as, "I don't even worry about bog checks". This is an incredible perspective to have in my view because I have found in my playing experience that my AFVs bog nearly every chance they get, and I consequently have learned the hard way that I should not mess with fate unless desperate. My opponent, however, apparently has a different view on this!
- The Russians did manage an IFT DR of 3 vs. the German units in R16 (from S16) with a 36 FP flat shot, causing a 4KIA or something like that. Scratch one 8-1 leader, two squads, and a half-squad on the German side.
- German also rolled another 10 with a FT shot from U25. This means of the four FTs they started with, two have now malfunctioned with DR=10, one is captured and in Russian possession in hex U34 leaving the Germans with only one remaining FT from their at-start OB (I think the remaining one is in hex R25 possessed by a broken 8-3-8). However, the Germans had also obtained two more FTs in their reinforcement group back on turn 7 which are moving into the action at this point. So, they've got three now in total. I (Rich) suggest that it's important to track these weapons because they are very powerful, and the Russians need to be very wary of them even though they can be brittle with X10. In my opinion, the Germans should be satisfied (but I doubt they are) with the damage these FTs have already inflicted because they did

get quite a few shots in before breaking down. By contrast, I usually break mine on the first shot. By my count, the Germans got off at least three successful IFT shots apiece with these two (now malfunctioned) FTs before the malfunction DRs occurred and as stated earlier they still have one left that hasn't malfunctioned. Meanwhile, my two FTs obtained during the Russian reinforcement group on turn 7+ per SSR3 are now in hex W22. Let's see if I roll a 10 or higher right off the bat with these FTs once the opportunity arises to fire them!

- Two CC/melee hexes remain that include both Russian infantry vs. German AFVs in hexes T15 and V21. Fortunately for the Russians, the German AFVs have no MGs, so they can't attack the Russians in the CCPh. However, note that while the infantry units may be held in melee per A11.15, AFVs are never held in melee per A11.7, so they can still fire on the Russian infantry in their hex during either the German PFPh or the DFPh of the Russian player turns.
- Next, the German units in Q15 tried to advance into CC vs. the Russian units in Q16 (the squad that had just emerged from the sewer) but I had to remind my opponent that they are prevented from doing so per the fortified building rules (B23.922).
- The Russians lost another leader due to a '2' sniper dr (A14.3) in U17 that was followed up by a fatal wound severity (A17.11) dr. After this, the Russians have been whittled down to 11 leaders remaining (not good). Recall that the Russians started with 13 leaders in the at-start order of battle and have received two so far as reinforcements, meaning that four have been eliminated so far. Leaders remain precious commodities to the Russian player, even wounded ones since rallying back is crucial to their defensive strategy and so each leader lost is of consequence.
- Meanwhile, my Russian 5-2-7 in melee (A11.15) with the StuG IIIB in T15 was hit and broken by a 30 FP point blank (C6.3) shot from the StuG 33B in T14. This will force them to withdraw (A11.2) from the melee since broken units in melee do not rout in the RtPh.
- The final event of consequence for turn 10 was the successful recovery (A4.44) of the radio by the German 7-0 leader in R19 (who subsequently advanced to debris hex R20. He then became both broken and wounded by a 16 FP +3 shot from the Russians in S18, and since wounded units have no portage capability per A17.2, could not rout away with the radio. The German player does have another (unwounded and unbroken) 9-1 leader next door in hex R21 that will probably try to move in and recover the radio next turn.



North: RO5, Second Playing, Game Turn 10



South: RO5, Second Playing, Game Turn 3



Center: RO5, Second Playing, Game Turn 3

The Second Playing - Turn 11 Highlights

- The Germans finally took the bait and wandered into a couple of my AP minefields in U31 and U32 respectively. I was deliberately leaving these hexes appear wide-open in hopes that the German player would be enticed into moving there and they finally did. One squad broke and another was pinned as a result.
- An intensive fire (C5.6) shot from the immobilized StuG IIIB in T15 hits the two Russian half-squds on S17 and causes a K/3 result. Naturally, random selection (A.9) results in a tie eliminating both of them instantly.
- Next, the Germans advanced into CC vs. the Russian squad in S16. In the subsequent CCPh, the Russians lost the opening CC by taking a K/ result while inflicting no casualties in return. However, the remaining Russian HS will tie the two German squads up in melee there which will tempt me as the Russian player into firing point blank into the melee during the upcoming Russian player turn.
- The Russians did manage to win a CC vs. a German half-squad in W31, but the Germans still successfully forced the Russians to move back a bit from a strong position held in V31 in order to preclude the possibility of becoming broken in that

hex and having to surrender two squads due to failure to rout penalties.

- The Russians first FT shot (with a Russian FT and not from the previously mentioned captured German one this time) managed a DR of 3 from W22 resulting in K/3 result v. the Germans in V22. Perhaps the elite Russian FT guys heard all my earlier grumbling about my previous bad luck with opening FT IFT DRs and decided to throw me a bone?
- Meanwhile, the flames/blazes that began with the turn 1 rocket OBA module in factory Hall 8a have now been steadily spreading (B25.6). Three of the 8 hexes of this factory now have an active terrain blaze going while two more have an active flame counter in them (including building hex R37 which is not officially part of the Hall 8a factory). If I counterattack there in hopes of regaining any VLs, I will need to familiarize myself with the weird building control rules when a building has unenterable terrain blazes in it (A26.161).
- Three more Russian reinforcements entered at EE18 per SSR3. They're all double timing (A4.5) it to the front as soon as possible. There are 6 more units left to go for Russian reinforcements and once these are accounted for, this will end any more reinforcing units entering the fray for either side.
- The Russians were more than fortunate to create two leaders this game turn! An 8-1 leader was created per A18.12 at the end of German turn 11 when they rolled snakes in CC vs. the AFV in V21. Then, at the start of Russian turn 11, they created a 7-0 leader from a self-rally attempt in CC19 per A18.11. After all my griping about needing more Russian leaders I sure didn't expect to create two leaders nearly simultaneously in back-to-back game phases!
- In the interim, the Russians did not win their CC battle in G16 which occurred when the Russian 5-2-7 emerged from the sewer previously and kept the German 4-6-7 from concealing on its game turn. Then the Russian 5-2-7 advanced from the cellar of that hex to the ground level and successfully ambushed the 4-6-7 with the -3 drm on the ambush dr (A11.4). The Russians promptly declared HtH CC (J2.31) with both the first attack, the -1 DRM ambush (A11.4) and the relative HtH CC advantages. Of course, they still rolled too high to take advantage of this situation and remain in melee. The Germans will now be able to reinforce this melee back there if they so choose and so this Russian squad is likely doomed despite the optimal circumstance that looked so promising at the beginning of the CCPh.

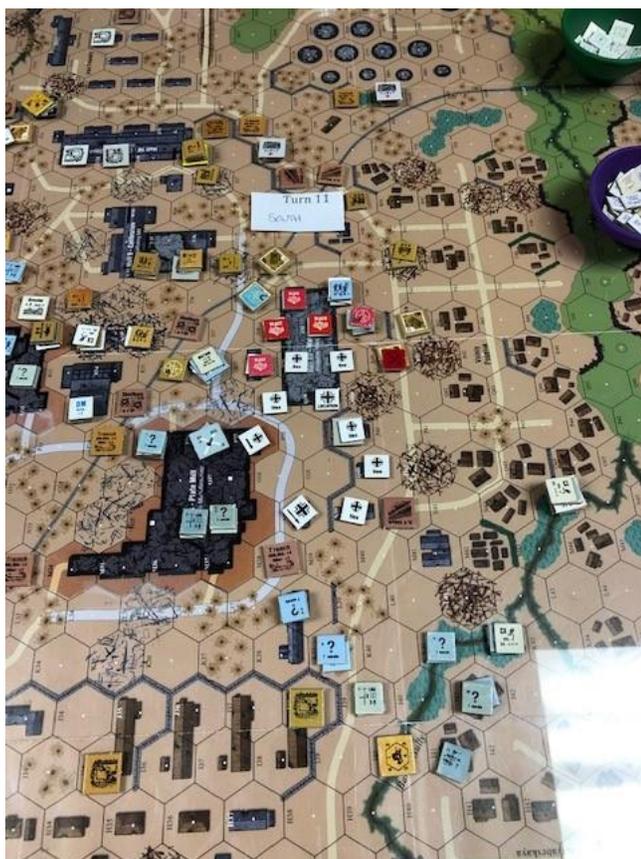
- Like the situation in hex V31 mentioned previously, the Russians felt the need to play it conservatively and withdraw back from a strongly held positions in R17 and T18 to prevent potential failure to rout circumstances which were in place had they remained there. They gave up a couple of large Prep Fire opportunities to do so. Hats off to my opponent (Frank) for causing these gut-wrenching decisions on me in order to put me into difficult risk/reward situations that maximized the German chances of eliminating the Russian units.
- Additionally, two of my Russian T-34 M41 tanks are now getting into the action and moved to S41 and R40 where they stopped (D2.13). This we hope will be a strong position from which to eliminate a few German units in either (or both) T39 and S40 who may have nowhere else to go should they break due to the proximity of these Russian AFVs and the presence of the aforementioned blazes now raging in the Hall 8a factory. The Germans have no anti-AFV weapons in the area so my AFVs should be safe. Better still, (and unlike the German AFVs), the Russian AFVs have a 2 FP BMG and a 4 FP CMG to assist in their anti-infantry duties.
- Finally, two more Russian AFVs make it to T37 and U38 respectively. This gives them potentially lucrative shots at the motion StuG IIIB in R36 and the stationary and overstacked (A5.132) StuG 33B in the same hex. With my frontal armor of 11 hull, 8 turret, I like my chances here. Remember that the Russians also possess APCR (4+1=5) capabilities as well per A25.2 and C8.2.



North: RO5, Second Playing, Game Turn 11



Center: RO5, Second Playing, Game Turn 11



South: RO5, Second Playing, Game Turn 11

The Second Playing - Turn 12 Highlights

- The German SAN went down from 4 to 3 again when the Russian sniper took one of the German snipers down with a '1' result. In retrospect however, this ended up turning out to be of significant benefit to the Germans who promptly

rolled a 1 SAN result in response to a Russian 3 DR (representing the now reduced SAN) and landed it right on top of the 10-2 leader and squad in S18. Naturally, the 10-2 leader was selected and is now in the Russian casualty pile.

- The Russians also rolled back-to-back TH DRs of 12, first, from an ATR shot from U37 at the overstacked AFVs in R36. They had a nice rear facing vs. one of these AFVs too but a 12 TH DR just doesn't get the job done. The second 12 TH DR was from the ART in W23 while trying to defend this factory area from the pressing Germans. This gun was simply attempting to double acquire a likely hex they expected the Germans to advance into during the next German turn and now they have a malfunctioned gun to show for it. To add insult to injury the Germans fired back with their still-working FT for the umpteenth time with a 12 FP +2 shot from hex U23 and pinned the 9-2 leader there while breaking two squads that were each manning .50 cal. HMGs as well as the aforementioned crew that was manning the (now busted) 76L ART gun in W23. The Russians decided to rout the 2-2-8 crew away but leave their two broken 4-5-8s there with the unbroken 9-2 leader in hopes of rallying back in the upcoming Russian player turn 12 RPh. With fanatic status, the factory and the 9-2 leader modifier, they each will rally back with an 8 or less even though under DM and I like my chances. Must I always retreat when the Germans get near? I eventually must stand and fight somewhere and needing an 8 or less (twice) may be about as good as a situation as I can hope for in this circumstance.
- The Russians also created another berserk squad on a rally attempt during the German player turn 12 in hex U17. He will be required to charge to the two (overstacked and non-turreted) German AFVs in hex T15 but should have a safe pathway to enter this hex since both of these AFVs have a VCA that does not include the direction that he'll be approaching from (bypass of U16).
- Meanwhile, in U17 a low HOB (A15.1) DR following a snakeyes RPh DR which battle hardened (A15.3) a Russian 5-2-7 into a 6-2-8 and created a relatively rarely seen Russian hero to boot!
- Additionally, in R40 the two German squads and 8-1 leader there survived an 8 FP +1 CMG shot in the Russian PFPh followed by back-to-back CH's (C3.7) from the T34 in S41. One German squad did break, along with the 8-1 leader, but the remaining 5-4-8 is still there unbroken but pinned. At this point, I had thought about revealing my still-hidden ATG in O41 during the Russian MPH by moving it to the rubble in Q40 in order to cut off the rout paths

of the (presumably) now broken Germans there (which were supposed to be all three of them but per the previous event described, still has a pinned 5-4-8 remaining). Consequently, in an effort to make this move safer, I wanted to tempt the pinned 5-4-8 into firing at something else first in hopes that it would cower (A7.9) or at least use First Fire (A8.1) thereby reducing its Final Fire strength by half per A8.3. To effectuate this, I deliberately moved a nearby Russian 4-5-8 into U40 without benefit of the shellhole in order to force his decision. He took the bait and fired a 2 FP -2 as hoped and broke the 4-5-8 as we might have expected but did not harm it otherwise nor did the pinned 5-4-8 cower. Next, I decided to reveal and move my HIP 2-2-8 crew in O41 into the Q40 Rubble. The pinned and First Fired 5-4-8 did fire this Final Fire point blank (A7.21) 2 FP +1 shot and managed to pin the 2-2-8. However, my opponent knew that he had to break this 2-2-8 in order to gain the rout capability of the other DM units in his hex (R40). I pointed out to him that since the crew had expended 3MF moving into the Rubble and the still unbroken 5-4-8 had only fired once at him (which was Final Fire in this case) he had the option to PPF (A8.31) but that if he rolled too high and broke as a consequence, this 5-4-8 too would be eliminated for failure to rout along with the other broken German units in this hex. As noted earlier, Frank does not mind taking chances apparently and so he promptly decided to take his allotted PPF twice. He must have sensed that the dice gods were still with him as his first PPF IFT DR was a snakeyes! This first PPF shot consequently battle hardened (A15.3) the 5-4-8 to fanatic (A10.8) status and, like the Russians in the previous situation, created a German hero as well. The crew however, managed to stay pinned vs. the 1MC result. His second PPF shot also caused a result but the crew remained pinned and unbroken. So, his broken 5-4-8 and 8-1 leader were eliminated for failure to rout but his (now) fanatic 5-4-8 and hero remained intact despite several MC DRs, back-to-back CHs and the two aforementioned self-inflicted MCs caused by PPF shots!

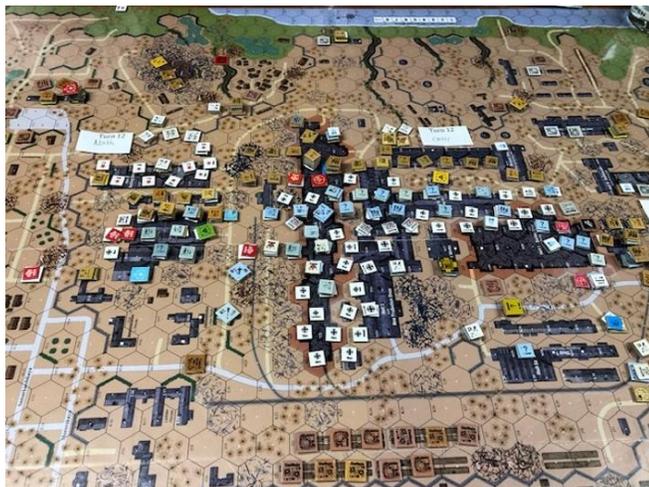
- Meanwhile, the berserk Russian squad in U17 charged into T15 containing both the immobilized StuG IIIB and the still mobile (D.7) StuG 33B. He took a 24 FP flat shot from the German squads in S16 and suffered a KIA result. While that sounds bad from the Russian perspective, it may be a mixed blessing as I plan to advance some Russian squads into CC with these German AFVs in hopes of destroying them in the upcoming CCPh. Had the Russian berserker survived in some manner, he would have added both a “berserk” and “Lax”

ambush drm during the CCPh which would have hurt my chances for successful ambush outcome after my other squads advanced into the location. So, I’ll call this an acceptable result if you’ll let me classify it such?

- The Russians again forfeited an SAN of 1 in the southern part of the map in order to raise their SAN number back to a 5.
- The lost sewer squad was discovered (B8.42) in K42 and faced an 8 FP -2 shot from the German squad camped above the sewer location. This time though, the Russians escaped death when the German squad rolled boxcars on its IFT attack. Remember, a broken squad in a sewer is eliminated per B8.45 so a break result is as good as a KIA which makes the use of sewers high risk ventures but also highly rewarding sometimes too. In this case, this Russian squad will live to see another day.
- The Russians did manage to win both an ambush and ensuing CC attack vs. a German squad in Q34.



North: R05, Second Playing, Game Turn 12



Center: RO5, Second Playing, Game Turn 12



South: RO5, Second Playing, Game Turn 12

The Second Playing - Turn 13 Highlights

- The German PFPh saw yet another KIA result when the INF gun in O19 fired at the 6-2-8 (manning two Russian HMGs) in the shellhole hex T18. How many snakes can this guy get?

- The German FT in U23 speaks yet again with a 12 FP +2 and rolls a 4 this time for a 2MC. Despite my fanaticism in factories, the 9-2 and both 4-5-8s manning the Russian .50 cal in W23 all fail their MC DR and break. How much fuel does this FT have and will my fanatic Russians ever pass a MC?
- My Russian FT in W22 tries to get into the action during the German DFPh and promptly rolls a 10 on its first IFT try thus eliminating this FT immediately without result. I commented at this point that I'd have been happy to receive even half of the number of FT shots that the German FTs have experienced in this scenario before breaking down.
- The Russians formed a multi-hex fire group (A7.5) in W24/W25 in order to elicit a 20 FP +2 shot on a concealed 5-4-8 in V24. This time, I rolled a 3 which resulted in a 4MC result. What do you think the German player rolled? You guessed it, snakes again! Another fanatic 5-4-8 and another German hero on the board!
- However, the Russians were able to eliminate two German half-squads and a leader in the cellar location Q34.C (O6.1) for failure to rout, as the immobilized T34-M41 in Q35 prevented the broken units from using the trench in P34 while the Russian units in the cellar of R34.C prevented a rout path in that direction as the adjacent Russian units in Q34.0 sealed their fate.
- Unbelievably, (or maybe I should start to be a believer now?) Frank's StuG 33B continued moving in the German MPH of T13 and stopped in hex M33 adjacent to my Russian T34 M41 in N32. Despite multiple shots from both of my T34s in this area during the Russian turn 11 AFPh (these first shots were admittedly low-odd shots taken for acquisition purposes), then, more favorable shots followed in the subsequent German turn 12 DFPh, and then even more high probability TH shots occurred in the following Russian PFPh of T12, and now once more in the DFPh of German T13 and these German AFVs are both still moving around and--you guessed it--one of them just took out the T34-M41 in N32! Several of my TH shots during these successive fire phases were successful but the subsequent TK DRs were always too high.
- During the Russian half of turn 13 the fanatic (and circled) 5-4-8 and hero in R40 was hit with multiple MC DR results from the various adjacent Russian units as on the previous turn. And, I'm not kidding, he rolled snakes again with this unit! We couldn't find any rule that prevented an already fanatic unit to be HOB results, so when his high HOB DR resulted in the unit becoming berserk, we went with that outcome. So, I can at least set up my nearby Russian units to be ready to make a warm

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welcome for him as he fulfills his berserk charging duties expected on German turn 14.

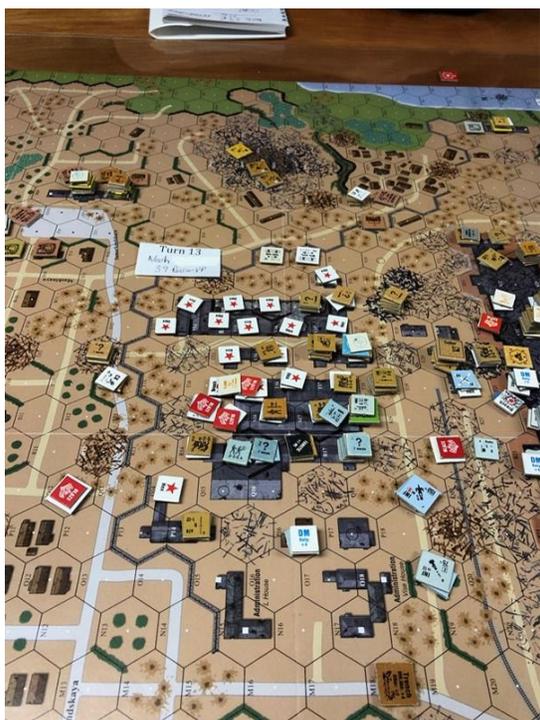
- I felt that the Germans did push their luck a bit in hex V23 when they (unnecessarily in my opinion) FPFed at the adjacent Russians in W23. They rolled an 11 on this occasion and had no effect IFT-wise, but broke both 8-3-8s. I suppose my opponent felt that he could easily rout back a hex or two in order to rally these two squads back relatively easily from this location, however the Russians had other ideas! I don't think the Germans expected my T34-M41s in motion (D2.4) nearby in bypass of X26 were any threat in this instance but I broke them out of platoon movement per D14.23 and moved one of them into bypass of V24. Of course, his FT in U24 turned this T34-M41 into a burning wreck on its first try (have I mentioned how effective the German FTs have been yet?) but the other T34-M41 made it through the vehicle-sized entrance (B23.742, O5.2) in W24 and then into the V24 factory debris hex thus surrounding the two broken 8-3-8s in V23 and cutting off their rout path. In the end, I had to sacrifice an AFV (and maybe even a second one too depending how the upcoming CCPh goes) but eliminating two 8-3-8s at once for failure to rout is an opportunity I didn't feel that I could pass up. All I can say is, thank goodness the German FTs don't get ROF!



Center: RO5, Second Playing, Game Turn 13



South: RO5, Second Playing, Game Turn 13



North: RO5, Second Playing, Game Turn 13

Situation Assessment (Russian Player Perspective)

At this point in the game, we took stock of VL's and casualties. As the pictures for the end of turn 13 indicate, we counted the following VL's for each side at this time (recall that stone building and rubble locations are worth 1 point a piece and that the Germans must be net +50 stone building/rubble locations at the end of scenario in order to claim victory).

| Victory Location Points Tally | | |
|-------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Map Area | German VLs | Russian VLs |
| North | 0 | 39 |
| Central | 33 | 14 |
| South | 9 | 0 |
| Totals: | 42 | 53 |

The Germans are consequently at net -9 VLs at this point, very far from the +50 required.

| Casualties | | |
|------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Unit Type | Germans | Russians |
| SMCs | 17 leaders and 2 Heroes | 5 Leaders and 1 Hero |
| MMCs | 43 squads and 3 crews | 25 squads and 6 crews |
| SWs | 8 MGs, 11 DCs and 3 FTs | 2 MGs, 3 MOL-Ps and 1 FT |
| Guns | 4 | 2 |
| AFVs | 8 & 1 Shocked (C7.4) | 3 & 1 Immobilized |

Looking at the figures above and counting the reinforcement groups from both sides we find that the Germans have lost about 70.8% of their leaders^a and 53.8% of their squads^b. By comparison, the Russians have lost about 31.2% of their leaders^c and 27.2% of their squads^d. This disparity in casualties, coupled with the deficit in VLs at this juncture make it clear that the Germans will not have a realistic chance of pulling out a victory. Therefore, the Germans decided to call it quits at this time, realizing that the chances for victory were nearly impossible in the present circumstances.

Situation Assessment (German Player Perspective)

Turn 13 - They say that no battle plan survives the first shot. That was certainly the case during the second playing of Men of Steel in which we had switched sides.

North

All of the real action in the North took place in the V15 and T16 factories. Since the Germans chose to not attack the School (it's a long walk under fire from Russian machine gun nests with little good cover just to grab the one building) all the Russians and Germans in the north headed to these two factories. German breaches of the factories took place, and this was where the Russians had their biggest gains in VLs. These factories should be a higher priority for the Germans than was given in this playing.

Center

One part of the overall battle plan that did go right was limiting the Germans exposure to Russian fire, especially in the center of the map. This back and forth took place for the whole game in Hall 6. Both the Russians and the Germans almost always stayed back one hex to avoid point blank fire and also to avoid LOS completely in order to gain concealment purposes. From the German perspective, lesser troops could hold Hall Six while the German pioneers were able to move into Hall 5 and advance to split the Russian forces into two groups.

The Germans were making good progress, coming within a couple of hexes of the end of the Russian end of this factory/building. A number of interesting events took place in this center area, from German wall breaches with both DCs and AFVs to guns from both sides firing at each other from with the buildings. Close combat, FTs and sewer movement all took place on this part of the map.

Considerable effort was expended by the Germans trying to figure out if there is a way to stop the Russian use of sewers. It basically became a game of Whack-a-Mole with German units chasing around (and covering manholes) while the Russians moved around the board in hopes of not rolling a '6' in order to become lost. It seems that the Germans would just wait until the Russians became lost, and then directed the Russian troops to where the Germans were stationed. But, by the Russians using a couple of lousy troops in a stack to go through the sewers, it forces the Germans to task two squads to cover the marked sewer locations to ensure winning any sewer emergence or CC that results from the Russians being lost and moved by the Germans. The marked and unmarked sewers at road intersections presented just too many locations than the German can possibly man with sufficient strength to bottle up the Russians. And if the Russians do manage to use sewer movement to sneak into the German rear area, the Germans now have to task platoons to move about trying to regain the stone locations the Russians move through. A thorough treatment of the defensive elements of stopping sewer movement may be an interesting article for someone to write.

South

The small force of German pioneers with elite backup quickly took Hall 8a (R38) and held it until lesser troops could garrison the building. At the end of turn 13, the building was pretty much ablaze and there were only second-line reinforcement squads available to the German player in that area. The Russians were beginning to touch adjoining hexes, which according to the rules would return control of the blazing hexes to them, but the platoon of second-line Germans were preparing to wrest back.

Final thoughts from Frank

- Scenario length and interim victory conditions
- Sewer movement tactics
- Play balance and other thoughts

Scenario Length and Interim Victory Conditions

Length adds a bit of repetitiveness to the playing of RO5 - Men of Steel, if you take a conservative tactical approach. In order to reduce casualties to retain forces for the long haul, this playing resolved into relatively static lines in the three center factories. The units would move up, normally concealed, into line of sight, take an Advancing Fire shot, then advance back out of line of sight, growing another concealment. Unless there was a line of casualties inflicted on the opponent, or some other objective became achievable, there was little advantage of direct confrontation along the line. Back and forth best describes many turns. If you try to flank with only modest cover, there is so much firepower on both sides that somebody's head will roll. This German player played both his best (when being conservative) and his worst (after growing tired of the slow roll) during this playing. Many campaign games go fewer game turns than this marathon. The difference is during a Campaign game, there are interim achievements for a campaign 'day', and refit phases, that break up the monotony. Here, reinforcements are pretty much done early in the game, even with bad Russian reinforcement rolls, and this playing evolved into a long slog. Similarly, some interim victory conditions (including ones that end the game immediately) would force the players to decide if they wanted to play conservatively or try to stretch to achieve a victory sooner than turn 21.

Sewer Movement Tactics

Good Russian sewer play is a real thorn in the side of the German player. The Germans need to play Whack-a-Mole through the entire game. My advice for the Russian is to devote as many troops as feasible to running around the German backfield via sewer movement. The Germans do not have enough low-quality troops to perform garrison duty on all the sewer locations, and eventually will have to devote higher quality troops to the effort. In this playing, there weren't enough opportunities or troops for the Germans to move lost Russians underneath German troops who even with hazardous movement could have taken a shot that nearly guaranteed that Russians wouldn't survive the attack and move into close combat and obliterate the Germans. Whatever the tactics are to combat numerous Russians roaming around the sewers, this German force never figured them out, and this commander would be interested in reading some articles in upcoming publications.

Play Balance and Other Thoughts

This scenario appears to have a fairly balanced OB for both the German and Russian troops at first glance. I'm confident the designers have reproduced the historical elements of the battle accurately; however, I would hold some of the at-start forces back and bring them into the battle over a longer length of time, or start some reinforcements on-board and release them as the game progresses, either if troops come within a few hexes of each other, or based on a specific turn number. If you decide to play this scenario, go into it with the realization that it will take many, many sessions to play 21 turns, or understand you won't be completing the scenario at all. Turns take a long time on the

real-life clock--there are many counters to shoot and move, on every turn. Complete turns often take 4-6 hours, and some turns take even longer than that. Again, during a campaign game it is more straightforward to understand where you are within the victory conditions. Here it is not.

Final thoughts from Rich

After all is said and done, I believe, despite our two outcomes that didn't go the distance, that it is still quite possible to play this scenario out in its entirety by utilizing the entire 21-game turn allotment and have the issue still be in doubt until the end. And, unlike my significant recommendations about balance provisions concerning the RB5 scenario made in *Banzai!!* (24.1), I will opine here that the RO5 - *Men of Steel* scenario is balanced as it is written and can be won by either side.

Footnotes

*1: It should be noted that as of 2020-12-24, the ROAR record on this scenario was 0 German wins to 2 Russian. This is clearly not enough information upon which to justify the use of any balance recommendations. Consequently, it was decided that no balance provisions would be used.

*2: We incorporated the errata published for this scenario which indicates that: "In the German OB setup instructions, after 'locations' add 'and/or trenches adjacent to building/rubble'." As of the date of this article, this scenario errata can be found at: <http://www.multimanpublishing.com/tabid/58/CategoryID/4/ProductID/343/PageIndex/3/Default.aspx>

*3: That is $(526-441)/441 = 19.3\%$.

*4: Did they even have Cheetos in 1942? If they were even invented, did the Russians have them? Maybe they acquired them via Lend-Lease?

*5: Russians are designated as Guards on the scenario card and are therefore considered elite. Consequently, they have their APCR Depletion # increased by one per A25.2/C8.2.

*6: For purposes of this article, the "North" section of the RO map is considered the area north of the RR tracks in row 20. The "South" section of the RO map is considered the area south of the RR tracks from L32-AA42, while the "Central" area is in-between these two sets of RR tracks.

*7: Read C1.22 very carefully. It's ok to 'voluntarily' not roll for radio contact in order to move, if you can see the SR. If the observer can't see the SR and he doesn't roll for radio contact (in order to move or do something else), the fire mission is lost. But this is not the case here as my observer can see the SR when he passes on the radio contact DR during the PFPH in order to move instead. For a more thorough examination of this tactic/rule, please see the Annual Crossfire: Probing Layforce article in the '93a Annual (pp. 20-21) by R. Banozic and M. Nixon.

http://www.advancedsquadleader.net/index.php?title=ASL_Annual_93a.

BANZAI!!!

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*a: German Leader Casualties: $[17/(20+4)] = 70.8\%$

*b: German Squad Casualties: $[43/(73+17)] = 53.8\%$

*c: Russian Leader Casualties: $[5/(13+3)] = 31.2\%$

*d: Russian Squad Casualties: $[25/(76+16)] = 27.2\%$

CLUB NOTES

Lunch Gatherings

Lunch gatherings have been more sporadic lately, but they still happen. Stay tuned to our yahoo groups email list. The club sends out email reminders, or you can call Matt or Sam for information on the next get-together.

Game Days

The Austin, San Antonio, Houston, and Dallas/Ft. Worth groups have remained active, hosting various gatherings for club

members to get together and knock cardboard heads. If you missed any of these you missed a lot of fun. It's like a tournament atmosphere for a day. The Austin group meets on the first Saturday of every month. The DFW group has been meeting on the second, the San Antonio guys on the third Saturday of every month, and the Houston group on the fourth Saturday of every month. To stay informed of upcoming club events, stop by our club website, www.texas-asl.com or better yet join our email group. You can post a message at central-texas-asl@yahoogroups.com or you can point your favorite browser to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/central-texas-asl> and take a look. For those still not connected, give Matt, Rick, or Sam a call for club information.

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Thanks to Rodney Kinney for VASL, Carl Fung for his VASL counter images, and the VASL Map Cabals for their VASL map images. We use a combination of VASL counter and map images for scenario layouts with permission of use for that purpose.

NEXT ISSUE

- More articles about ASL
- Player Profile
- Favorite Scenarios
- Club Meeting Recaps

And much more!

