

DESIGN NOTES FOR SCENARIOS IN ODE TO PANZER LEADER III

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This continues the conversion of scenarios from Panzer Leader to West Front. The scenarios presented here are from the article "Panzer Leader, 1940" by Ramiro Cruz, from the General magazine Volume 15, #2. The main theme of these scenarios is the Battle for France in 1940. Nine of the scenarios deal with battles from that campaign and the other scenario deals with Operation Sealion. Eight of the battles are already covered in scenarios in West Front and its various expansions, so why present these? Well, remember that we are converting Panzer Leader scenarios, and these scenarios were really nothing more than caricatures of the real battles. While the real battles make for good scenarios in West Front, the Panzer Leader ones make for some interesting ones as well.

As before these scenarios are converted to the same standards as those in Ode to Panzer Leader I & II. For the original design notes for this series, refer to those in Ode to Panzer Leader. Thus these design notes will deal with the set up and construction of the scenarios. Variables such as changing the environmental conditions, morale, or changing the orders of battle for either or both sides, I leave to the discretion of the individual players.

One will note that most of the scenarios are rather small compared to previous ones in the series. Many have a low unit density on big boards and thus will lead to more free-wheeling play in the scenarios.

Scenario #21

This scenario simulates the meeting engagement between the German XVI Panzer Corps and the French Cavalry Corps in central Belgium. This is primarily an armored battle as both sides have mostly tanks and armored cars. The artillery and infantry for both sides are small in number and in supporting roles. Although the Allies move first in this scenario, both players are on the offensive and thus each side has a high A/I rating. Both sides enter the board in road march order on roads, thus it takes two or three turns for the entire force to come on the board.

I counted up the total number of tanks each side had and made sure that each side had the correct number of each type of AFV. For the Germans this was easy since in Panzer Leader 1940 all of their tanks units come in five vehicle size counters. In West Front the Pz Ib, Pz IIIf, and Pz IIIIf have five strength point units in the order of battle so these were easily convertible. However the Pz IVd tanks only come in four Strength point size units, so for five tanks I would have to make two reduced size platoons. For the French there was more of a challenge as their tanks come in either five, ten, or thirteen vehicle size counters in Panzer Leader 1940. Thus the platoons in a company will be of unequal size,

just to get the require number of tanks in the company. In addition, the AMC tank counters in Panzer Leader 1940 have no equivalent in West Front so I substituted AMR tanks for them. The rifle units for both sides I assigned to the reconnaissance battalions as these units would be leading the columns for both sides, with the French ones riding on motorcycles (for which I used a truck counter in Panzer Leader) and the German ones riding in halftracks. One would think that the French Chenillette counters in the Panzer Leader version are for the infantry and Ramiro Cruz probably meant them to be. But I chose to convert them into artillery tractors for the artillery and anti-tank guns as they are part of a mobile division. The Germans also get four air attacks in the form of JU -87b Stukas.

The victory conditions in the original scenario were based on victory points earned for destroying enemy units. This was easily duplicated in West Front as it is naturally part of the victory points earned in each scenario. However, I gave additional victory points for the possession of certain towns that lie on the road from the east side to the west side of the mapboard. This is to give the German additional incentive to move to the west as historically they were on the offensive and the French the necessity to defend them.

About the only variation in this scenario is the order of entrance for the units on both sides. The players can change which units come in first. I have the reconnaissance units coming in first for both sides as they would in fact be first.

Scenario #22

This scenario simulates the attack of the French 55th Infantry Division on the German 1st Panzer Division bridgehead across the Meuse River. This primarily an infantry fight with armor support on both sides. The French are the first player and, being the aggressors in this scenario, have a more than adequate force (one armored, one light artillery, and two infantry battalions) to achieve their objective. The Germans, who are the defenders, start off with an engineer company reinforced with some anti-tank elements. The Germans do have reinforcements that arrive on Turn 8, which are composed of one panzer and one motorized infantry battalions. The scenario is 15 turns long.

The French are set up anywhere on or south of Hexline --, 20. The German starting force is set up in the four hex town of Nece. Being the defender the Germans naturally have Improved Positions in the town. In the original Panzer Leader version of this scenario, the German reinforcements entered the board anywhere along the northern edge. In this version I have them entering in and around the town of Khun. There was one change that I made to the German order of battle. In the original Panzer Leader scenario, the Germans had a late war 88mm AT Gun. I changed this to the Flak 18 88mm anti-aircraft gun being used in an anti-tank role in the West Front version.

The original victory conditions totally depended on the possession of the town of Nece. If the French held at least one hex of it by the end of the game they won. I changed this to

making each hex in Nece an objective hex, all which start the game in German control. These objective hexes, plus the usual victory points for the destruction of enemy units, round out the source of victory points for this scenario.

The French have a great amount of variety possible within their set up area on how they want to set up their units. The Germans on the other hand are restricted to those four lonely hexes in the town of Nece, but then they do not have that many units to set up with. The Germans can also alter the entrance hexes for their reinforcements to anywhere along the northern edge.

Scenario #23

This scenario simulates the attack of the French 3rd DCR and 3rd Motorized Division against the German Gross Deutschland Motorized Regiment and elements of the 10th Panzer Division. This is a combined arms battle for both sides. The French are again the first player, and being the aggressors, have a powerful force consisting of three armored, two motorized infantry, and three artillery battalions, plus a heavy tank company. The Germans, as the defender, have two motorized infantry, one panzer, and one artillery battalions, plus some self-propelled anti-tank units. Both sides have all of their units set up on the board and there are no reinforcements. The game is twelve turns long.

The Germans are set up on or north of Hexline --,10, and the French are set up anywhere to the south of there. The Germans defenders have their Improved Positions. They were given three halftrack counters in the original scenario, so I made these into the unarmored types used to tow artillery as these are where they are placed with. I also added an SG IIIb battery to the German order of battle as it was present at the battle. One will notice that the Gross Deutschland Regiment has a morale rating of 7 for all of its units. This is historical as it was the elite unit in the German Army. The French were given four Chenillite carrier counters in the original scenario. I made these into artillery tractors for the anti-tank guns. I added a motorcycle platoon to the order of battle as the French did have it in the battle. The French are given enough trucks for all of their dismounted units in the original scenario, thus in the West Front version they have them also. However they are largely left under cover as the assault against the Germans will be largely dismounted.

The original victory conditions depended on control of the town of Wiln. I improved this by making both Wiln and St. Athan towns to be controlled and put objective hexes in each hex of both towns. Both towns are worth 200 victory points if one controls all of the hexes of each one. Besides that, the game has the usual victory points for destroyed enemy units.

Both sides have great variety in how they want to set up their units. The French have twice the area that the Germans do but are on the offensive so their sets would reflect what their axis of attack is. The Germans on the other hand have highly defensible terrain

in their area and can make the going slow for the French, given the limited time that they have in the game.

Scenario #24

This scenario simulates the attack of the German 1st Panzer Division against the French 14th Infantry Division and 3rd Spahis Brigade. This is essentially an armored assault against a static defense line. The Germans are the first player in this scenario. They have a powerful force with two panzer battalions, an armored infantry battalion, a motorcycle company, and eight airstrikes. The French, as the defenders, have one infantry battalion, part of another, two artillery battalions, and a cavalry troop. Both sides have all their forces set up on the board. There are no reinforcements for either side. The scenario is ten turns long.

The Germans are set up anywhere on or east of Hexline --,10. The German armored infantry battalion has all three line companies mounted in halftracks. This is rather unusual for 1940 as every panzer division then only had at best one infantry company mounted in halftracks. But the original designer had ten halftrack counters in the order of battle so I assigned them to the infantry, plus one of the 81mm mortar units. The motorcycle company I created by taking three truck units and matching them to the three remaining infantry counters in the original scenario to make the motorcycle units in West Front. The eight airstrikes are JU-87b aircraft. The French are set up on or in-between Hexlines --,11 and --,20. Unfortunately this makes for a very linear defense with no depth, especially given the French order of battle. Still they do get Improved Positions as the defenders. The Spahis cavalry troop I created by taking three infantry and three wagons from the original scenario and making them into cavalry. That is how Panzer Leader represented cavalry without using real cavalry counters.

The original victory conditions were for the Germans to clear a path from the East to the West edge of the board free of French units or their fields of fire. This could not be duplicated in West Front. Instead I just used the road that goes from the East side to the West side of the board for the path and every town along that road has an objective hex in it for the Germans to capture (actually they already control the first town at the beginning of the game). The further west that you go, the larger is the point value of the respective objective hex. Also there is the usual victory point for destroyed enemy units.

Both sides have about the same amount of variety in their set up possibilities, in other words, not much. The Germans have to set up close to the western edge of their set up area as they do not have much time to achieve their objectives. The French have to cover all avenues of approach with a slightly inadequate force.

Scenario #25

This scenario simulates the first attack of the French 4th DCR against the German 1st Panzer Division. This is essentially a double armored assault against individual defensive positions. The French are the first player in this scenario. They have a powerful force of four armored battalions, one motorized infantry battalion, and an artillery battalion. The Germans, as the defenders, have various rear echelon units covering the flank of the main German drive across northern France. They also have reinforcements coming in on Turn 8. In addition, they have four airstrikes. The scenario is twelve turns long.

The Germans set up in three towns; St Athan, Artain, and Nece. In addition, I set up the main headquarters in a separate location other than the towns. Being the defender, the Germans get their Improved Positions for their starting units on the board. In the original Panzer Leader scenario, the Germans had the late war 88mm AT Guns. I replaced them in West Front with the Flak 18 88mm Anti-Aircraft Guns in an anti-tank role. The airstrikes are JU-87b planes. The French are set up south of Hexrow 21,--, in two columns. Each column contains a Demi-brigade of armor, with the rest of the supporting elements being divided between the two columns.

The victory conditions in the original scenario were based on control of the three towns mentioned above. To simulate this in West Front, I put objective hexes in each town hex of the three towns in question. These, plus the destruction of enemy units, provide all of the possible victory points for this scenario.

The French have great variety in the set up possibilities within their set up area. The Germans on the other hand are rather restricted to the three towns for their set up area, although the main headquarters can be moved around a bit.

Scenario #26

This scenario simulates the second attack of the French 4th DCR against the German 1st Panzer Division. It is again a double armored assault, but this time against a recon unit screening a main position. The French are the first player in this scenario. They have a powerful force consisting of five armored battalions, a motorized infantry battalion, and two artillery battalions. The Germans, who are the defenders, have part a recon battalion, part of a motorized infantry battalion, part of an artillery battalion, and some anti-tank support. They also have eight airstrikes. Neither side has any reinforcements beyond the initial appearance of the French force on the board on Turn 1. The scenario is twelve turns long.

The Germans are set up in two locations. The recon battalion is set up south of Hexline --,20, east of the north/south river running the width of the board. The rest of the German force is set up north of Hexline --,11. In the north, most of the German force is set up in Grancelles as this is the French objective in the game, with the artillery and main headquarters set up further to the west. Being the defender the Germans get their Improved Positions. The German airstrikes are JU-87b's. I made one change from the

original scenario, the German late war 88mm Anti-tank gun unit I changed to a Flak 18 88mm Anti-aircraft gun unit in an anti-tank role.

One important terrain note, in the original scenario all bridges on the main north/south river, save those connecting the two parts of Grancelles, are considered to be knocked out and unusable. To simulate this I removed the four bridges across the main river going into Artain, St.Athan, and on the road going west from Caverge. This in effect, confines the action to east of the main river, at least until the French are able to cross over the main river at Grancelles.

The French enter the board on the southern edge, east of the main north/south river. The force is divided up into two Demi-Brigades, one with two armored battalions and the other with three, with the other supporting units divided up between them. Each Demi-Brigade has its own sector to enter in.

The victory conditions in the original scenario are based on possession of the hexes of the town of Grancelles and the bridge hexes linking the two halves of the town. To simulate this I made each hex in Grancelles an objective hex. The hexes which contain the bridges are not objective hexes as bridges are hexsides, and since they are also on hexsides to objective hexes in Grancelles, I consider this to be good enough. Also enemy unit destruction awards victory points as is normal for West Front.

There is really not that much room for variation for either side. The Germans in the north have to concentrate most of their forces in Grancelles, thus limiting set up to that town, though it is a big town. In the south the recon elements got to cover the two main sectors of approach plus the eastern edge of the board as these are the areas where the French will enter. The French have to enter east of the main north/south river and this limits them to two sectors, the rest of the sectors being hampered by the terrain. The French can change which units enter where, but that is about it.

Scenario #27

This scenario simulates the combined British/French “Frankforce” attack on elements of the German Totenkopf SS Motorized and 7th Panzer Divisions. It is another double armored assault carried out by a mixed nationality force. The British/French are the first player in this scenario. They have a strong force consisting of four armored battalions (regiments in the British Army), 1 ½ infantry battalions, a weak artillery battalion (again called regiments in the British Army) and some supporting anti-tank guns. The Germans have two forces, one being an infantry battalion, plus supporting elements from the Totenkopf SS Division and the other being a small force from the 7th Panzer Division. Neither side has any reinforcements, all units start set up on the board. The scenario is twelve turns long.

The Germans are set up south of the main east/west river that goes across the board. Being the defender, the Germans get their Improved Positions. I have the SS troops

defending the area west of Hexline --,10 and the 7th Panzer troops defending east of that line, but there is no restriction on where each group may set up, save south of the river. One may wonder why the SS units have a morale level of 6. Well in 1940 the SS were not the elite troop that they were later in the war. In fact they were more like second line troop due to their lack of real infantry training. However, this being the West Front, they must have a morale level of at least 6 so that is what they have. I made some changes of units between the original and this scenario. The late war 88mm Anti-Tank unit was exchanged for the Flak 18 88mm Anti-Aircraft unit in an anti-tank role. The three halftrack units in the original scenario I made into un-armored halftracks for the heavier artillery units.

The Allies are divided into two groups for set up purposes. The half infantry battalion is set up in Grancelles on both sides of the main east/west river. The rest of the force is set up anywhere west of Hexline --,10, north of the main river. The main group I divided into two sub-groups, the British one being set up around Artain and the French one being set up around St Athan. As the British Matilda I and II tanks come in five tank platoons in Panzer Leader, I had to break them down into two or three tank platoons for West Front. In the original scenario the Allies were given two Bren carrier units. In this scenario I placed them in the HQ Company of the full infantry battalion and gave them each their carrier infantry unit that would normally be assigned to them. I made a unit change in the British force. In the original scenario, the British have an 18/25 Pounder artillery unit. This type of unit does not exist in West Front, so I converted it into two 18 Pounder batteries.

There is a change in the terrain. In the original scenario, the bridge on the road going south from Caverge is knocked out. In this version I merely removed it from the board to get the same effect.

The victory conditions in the original scenario were based on control of the towns south of the main east-west river. I assigned an objective hex in each town south of the river to simulate this. These plus the points for unit destruction provide all of the victory points in the game.

There is a great deal of variety of set ups possible for the Germans, given their big set up area. The Allies, on the other hand, are rather limited given their small set up area.

Scenario #28

This scenario depicts the flank attack by elements of the British Mobile Division against the German 1st Panzer Division. It is listed in the scenario mission type as a pocket breakout. The British are the first player in this scenario. They have a small force of one armored regiment (battalion), a weak motorized infantry regiment, and an artillery battery. The Germans have two forces. The on-board starting force consists of a reduced infantry battalion and a medium artillery battalion. Their reinforcements, which arrive on

Turn 4, consist of a panzer company and a motorized infantry company. There are no more reinforcements for either side. The scenario is ten turns long.

The Germans set up anywhere on the board, at least five hexes away from the town of Rieux. I have the infantry battalion set up defending the scenario objectives. As such they are really screening the British force rather than surrounding it. The artillery and higher command headquarters are set up further to the rear. As the defenders, the Germans of course get their Improved Positions. I have the reinforcements arriving at hex 16,00.

The British are set up in or within two hexes of Rieux. The armored regiment is set up with four regular line squadrons (companies) and a headquarters company. The motorized infantry battalion has only two line companies. In the original Panzer Leader scenario the artillery battery was armed with 18/25 Pounder howitzers. Again, as in the previous scenario, that gun does not exist in West Front so I have to use the old regular 18 Pounder guns as a substitute.

The victory conditions in the original scenario list three different objectives, one of which the British must control at the end of the game in order to win. They are the bridge at hexside between hexes 7,12 and 8,12; the town of Volle and the woods to the immediate east of the town; and the woods in and around hexes 16,11 and 17,11. In each of the locations I placed two objective hexes under German control. These, plus the points for enemy unit destruction, are all of the victory points possible in this scenario.

There is really not much variation possible in this scenario. The British have a very small set up area and the Germans must defend the three objective areas. The German player might want to switch where the reinforcements come in as they can come in anywhere along the east side of the board.

Scenario #29

The scenario depicts the attack of the British 1st Tank Brigade against the German 7th Panzer Division. It is listed as an armored assault in the scenario mission box. The British are the first player in this scenario. Their force contains an armored regiment (battalion), a motorized infantry battalion (well part of one), and an artillery battery. The Germans have two forces, first being the on board starting force, and the other being the reinforcements which arrive on Turn 4. The on board force consists of an infantry company backed by some artillery and anti-tank assets. The reinforcements consist of a panzer regiment with reconnaissance and artillery assets attached to it. The scenario is fifteen turns long.

The on-board German starting forces set up east of Hexrow 32,--. Due to the town of Artain being the primary objective of the Allies, the Germans set up their infantry in there and their supporting artillery, mortars, and headquarters at various distances to the east of there. Being the defenders, the Germans receive their Improved Positions. In the original scenario the German reinforcements come on the southern edge of the board

anywhere east of Hexrow 32,--. In this scenario I have them all entering at Hex 48,10. The British set up anywhere west of Hexrow 32,--. Again as in the previous two scenarios, the British have the infamous 18/25 Pounder guns in the original scenario. I substituted the 18 Pounder guns for them in the West Front version.

In the original scenario the victory conditions depended on control of the bridge adjacent to the town of Artain. In the West Front version I made each hex in the town of Artain and the hex on the other side of the bridge all objective hexes. Those, plus the destruction of enemy units, provide all the victory points in the scenario.

There is not that much variation possible in the set ups, given the narrowness of the board. Indeed, the German has to set up in Artain to defend it. The German player can change the entry hex for his reinforcements, but in all fairness I would keep it east of the river.

Scenario #30

This scenario depicts a hypothetical Operation Sealion invasion by the Germans against the British. While the unit designation of the German division is quite real as it did exist at the time, the British divisional designation is fictional. Although in the original scenario the British moves first (so he can get first fire on the invading German units) in this scenario I have the Germans moving first as their units appear as reinforcement on the first turn and the British will get their opportunity fire against them as they land on the beaches. Being the invader, the German force appears as reinforcements on Turn 1. The invading force consists of two infantry battalions, with some artillery support and a panzer battalion, all mounted on landing barges. The British force consists of an infantry battalion supported by various artillery, armor, and engineer units. Other than the Germans on the first turn, neither side has any reinforcements. The scenario is fifteen turns long.

In the original scenario, the German panzer battalion had amphibious tank units. However in West Front the Germans do have these so I mounted them in landing barges. The Germans also have off-the-board naval gunfire support off the south. These consist of two 203mm batteries from the heavy cruiser Admiral Hopper and three 150mm batteries from the light cruiser Koln.

The British forces start the game set up anywhere on the board, except in the sea hexes. In addition to their ground forces, they British also have ten Blocks that they can place anywhere, as well as their usual Improved Positions, being the defender. Incidentally, the 18 Pounder artillery units are exactly what they have in the original scenario, that's right 18 Pounds. Presumably these were used for training purposes early in the war as the 18/25 Pounder artillery was in use in the field units, and is being pressed into field service to support the defenders.

The victory conditions in the original scenario depended on control of the eight towns on the board. To simulate that I placed an objective hex in each town, all which start the game under British control. These in addition to the destruction of enemy units provide all of the victory points in the game.

There is a great deal of variation possible in the British set up, given their large set up area. The Germans on the other hand, being restricted to their entry hexes on the south side of the board, can change the placement of his units so they land on different locations on the board.

Conclusion

This concludes this article on the scenarios from Ode to Panzer Leader III. There will more Panzer Leader scenarios from the General magazine converted to West Front in the future. Until then enjoy these scenarios from Panzer Leader 1940.

Errata

In my two previous Panzer Leader sets I made a number of serious errors in the number of smoke rounds that the Allies receive. All of these stem from the same mistake that I made. I assumed that the US 60mm Mortar fired Smoke. This turned out to be wrong as it doesn't. Thus I had to reduce the number of smoke rounds by the number of 60mm Mortars (or twice the number if on the offensive) in each scenario. Below is listed the correct number of smoke round for the Allies by scenario.

Ode to Panzer Leader

Scenario #1 – 2 Smoke

Scenario #2 – 6 smoke

Scenario #4 – 8 Smoke

Scenario #7 – 10 Smoke

Scenario #8 – 6 Smoke

Scenario #9 – 20 Smoke

Ode to Panzer Leader II

Scenario #11 – 18 Smoke

Scenario #12 – 4 Smoke

Scenario #13 – 14 Smoke

Scenario #14 – 0 Smoke

Scenario #15 – 6 Smoke

Scenario #16 – 8 Smoke

Scenario #17 – 28 Smoke

Scenario #18 – 7 Smoke

Scenario #19 – 36 Smoke

Scenario #20 – 0 Smoke

