

DESIGN NOTES FOR SCENARIOS IN ODE TO PANZERBLITZ V

**By
Alan R. Arvold**

Given the success of the Ode to Panzerblitz series, the time has come to finish out the set and so here is the final installment. These scenarios are conversions of the six situations published in the article “New Expressions for a Familiar Face” by myself in the General Vol.28, #3 and also a couple of situations published way back in the early 1970s in the same magazine. Again, these scenarios enjoyed great popularity among Panzerblitz players and it seems only natural to bring them to East Front II. There is no overall theme to these scenarios, but they are presented in chronological order.

As noted in previous design notes, these scenarios are converted to the same standards as those in the previous installments of this series. Again, refer to the original design notes in “Ode to Panzerblitz” for the set up and construction of these scenarios. Variables such as environmental conditions, morale levels, and changes in the order of battles I leave to the discretion of the individual players.

The battles occur in various seasons of the year and the description of them is rather general, given the nature of the Panzerblitz board game. However, the unit designations are historical to each situation.

Scenario #38

Scenario #38 depicts a Russian infantry/cavalry assault on a German motorized infantry line which is supported by armor. In the original situation description the Russian units were only identified as being from the 50th Army. Here I was able to better identify their sub-units. The Germans start the game set up on the board, anywhere north of Hexrow 10,xx (exclusive). Being the defender, the Germans get to set up in improved positions but once they move out of them they will have to rely on the defense of the terrain that they are in. The German order of battle was a pretty straight forward conversion, except that I converted one of the 81mm mortar and one of the halftrack units in Panzerblitz into three Sd Kfz 251/2 units in East Front II. The Russians enter on the northern edge of the board on Turn 1. Again, the conversion was pretty straight forward with no major changes. There are no reinforcements for either side.

In the original victory conditions the Russians scored victory points for how far their units were from the northern edge of the board, plus for units exited off of the southern edge of the board by the end of the game. The Germans scored points for Russian units destroyed. In this scenario, both sides get points for enemy unit elimination. The Russians also get points for capturing objective hexes and for exiting units off of the southern edge of the board. Thus the Germans will have to conduct a delaying action of sorts across the board for twelve turns.

There is a lot of room for variation in this scenario. As the Germans can set up anywhere north of Hexrow 10,xx, they can change their set up. (The set up that I have will cause maximum casualties on the Russians on Turn 1, but will also cause heavy loss to the Germans as well.) The Russian player can change the entry hexes for his units along the northern edge of the board.

Scenario #39

Scenario #39 depicts a Russian armored assault on another German line defended by motorized infantry with a panzer battalion in reserve. Now the original scenario listed it as a meeting engagement and historically that is what occurred. However, because of the nature of the Panzerblitz board configuration, a defensive line is more in order. The Germans start the game with most of their forces set up in between Hexrows 32,xx and 64,xx (exclusive). There is a smaller force that is set up in the town of Opustoschenia. The Russians start the game set up east of Hexrow 64,xx (exclusive). There are no reinforcements for either side. The conversion of the orders of battle for both sides was again, pretty straight forward. For the Germans though I did take one 81mm mortar unit and one halftrack unit from the original scenario and converted them into three SdKfz 251/2 sections. Also even though the Pz IIIh is the primary short barreled 50mm gun armed model of the Pz III during this time period, I opted for the PzIIIg models as these were what were specified in the original scenario. Likewise for the Russians, the T-34 model used in the scenario is the M-41 model, even though the original scenario specified the M-43 model (which was not around yet).

The original victory conditions depended on the capture of the town of Opustoschenia by the Russian player. If the Russians were able to capture the whole town by the end of the game they won, if not they lost. In East Front II I kept the original idea by putting high point objective hexes in each hex of Opustoschenia, plus added some low point objective hexes in Grabyosh, Golod, and Bednost. In addition, both sides get the usual points for unit elimination.

There is a lot of variation for the set up of the main German force in the central part of the board. The set up I present is a more forward defense. There is not much one can do about the units set up in Opustoschenia as there are only four hexes to choose from. The Russians do not have much variation do to the narrowness of the board. Although my set up has them either behind or under cover, a more forward set up will allow them to engage in combat almost immediately.

Scenario #40

Scenario #40 depicts a German armored assault on a Russian defensive line. Although this scenario is hypothetical, I set the scenario as happening in June 1942, when such actions were indeed occurring, and gave the units on both sides historical designations of actual units involved in these actions. The original scenario was designed to be a Russian

delaying action and the Russian set up reflects a defense in depth, with successive positions in the rear for the Russian forward elements to fall back on. However the nature of the terrain allows for the Russian to set up a forward line that will allow them to hold out for two to four turns, thus considerably delaying the Germans in that manner. The Russians start the game set up anywhere west of Hexrow 64.xx (exclusive). Being the defender, they naturally get improved positions. The German enter on the western side of the board on Turn 1. There are no reinforcements for either side. Unit conversion was again pretty straight forward, although the Germans had most of their halftrack units used to make the anti-aircraft units and one mortar section self-propelled and to give the artillery units un-armored halftrack transports. This means that the Germans only have one company of infantry, plus the engineers, actually mounted in halftracks, the rest of the infantry being transported by trucks.

The victory conditions reflect the German objectives, eliminating Russian units and exiting units off of the eastern edge of the board in twelve turns. The Russians just get points for eliminating German units. This exactly duplicates the original scenario's victory conditions. The Germans will probably not get many, if any at all, units exited off the eastern edge of the board, given the distance to that edge and will have to earn the majority of their victory points destroying Russian units.

There is a great deal of variety possible in the Russian set up, given their vast set up area. The Germans can only vary the entry hexes of their units and there are not very many of them given the narrowness of the board.

Scenario #41

This scenario depicts the German armored assault on the Russian northern defensive line on the opening of the day of the Kursk offensive. I had to changed the German unit designation of the infantry division in this scenario from that of the original one. The German 258th Infantry Division, which was the designation in the original scenario, was actually further west in the German lines, defending the shoulder of the German penetration and was not involved in the actual assault. But the scenario was designed 35 years ago and a lot of information on the Battle of Kursk was inaccurate, though at the time taken as gospel truth. The German 6th Infantry Division is now a more proper designation as they did assault the Russian 15th Rifle Division on this day. Another inaccuracy evident in this scenario is the presence of Panther tanks. As we all know now, there were no Panther tanks in the German northern wing of their Kursk assault. But then back in the early 1970s they were frequently portrayed as being there. The original scenario was a product of the times in which it was created and East Front II version of it also reflects this.

The Russians start the game set up south of Hexline xx,10 (exclusive). The units of the 15th Rifle Division set up in-between Hexlines xx,11 and xx,20 (inclusive), with the units of the reinforcing tank brigade and heavy tank regiment set up south of Hexline xx,20 (exclusive). As in the original scenario, they received fourteen blocks and eleven 2-1

minefields (which I converted to Level 2 minefields). They also received eight fortification counters which I converted into five trenches and three bunkers. All other units not in these fortifications received the mandatory improved positions as they are in the defense. The conversion of the Russian units was pretty straight forward. The Germans were another matter though. Besides have units from the 6th Infantry Division, they also had units from the 20th Panzer Division and supporting heavy tank and heavy tank destroyer battalions mixed in with them. In the original scenario, the Stug IIIb's should have been Stug IIIg's. In this scenario they are Stug IIIg's. I also used five of the halftrack units to make the five anti-aircraft artillery units self-propelled in the East Front II version of this scenario.

In the original scenario, both sides received victory points for each enemy unit destroyed and the Germans also received victory points for each friendly unit on Board 1 and also for each friendly unit exited off of the southern edge of the board, all in twelve turns. In this version of the scenario, both sides will have their unit elimination points as that is a natural part of the game. I gave the Germans two high point objective hexes to capture in the southern third of the board and an exiting hex on the southern edge of the board. This should duplicate the victory conditions of the original scenario nicely.

There is a lot of variation in the set ups for both sides, especially the Russians, within the confines of their respective set up areas. Feel free to experiment with them.

Scenario #42

This scenario depicts a German pincer type attack against a Russian supply line. It is based on the original scenario presented in the article "Pincers... another Panzerblitz Situation" by Mathew S. Buynoski, published in the General Vol.8, #6. The original scenario presented a pincer type attack, sealing a surrounded pocket of Russian forces, with the Russians desperately trying to hold the pocket open to allow some of their forces to escape, certainly a situation common in 1941 and even into 1942. However, the units used in the scenario were from 1943. Thus I looked for a situation where a similar action might have occurred and I found it in the Russian summer offenses of July and August of 1943. So I placed this scenario in August of 1943 with no exact date as this type of action occurred several times during the month. Here German mechanized units have gotten behind advancing Russian forces and are attempting to cut off their supplies in order to aid in the Russians' destruction. The Russians on their part are using second echelon forces to defend against the Germans' attempt.

In this scenario the Germans start the game with their entire force set up in the board in two groups, each one set up in opposite ends of the board, with one group being set up east of Hexrow 92,xx and the other group being set up west of Hexrow 08,xx. The Germans do not receive any reinforcements during the game. The conversion of the units was pretty straight forward except that I had to replace the Sd Kfz 234/4 armored car unit in Panzerblitz with the PSW 233 armored car unit in East Front II as the 234/4 did not exist yet during this time period. The Russians also have two forces. The main force is set

up on the board anywhere east of Hexrow 07,xx and west of Hexrow 93,xx. This force is divided into two large groups, each facing one of the German groups, and a small reserve stationed in the middle of the board. Being on the defense, this group starts the game set up in improved positions. The second force is a large convoy of supply wagons that enters the north side of the board at hexes 47,0; 48,0; 49,0; and 50,0 over a five turn period, starting on Turn 3. This force is supposed to traverse the width of the board and exit on the south side at hex 48,10.

The German objectives are of course enemy unit destruction, and seizing the town of Bednost which has an objective hex in each of its hexes. The Russian objectives are, like the Germans, enemy unit destruction, and the exiting of units off of the south side of the board through the exit hex. Although in the original scenario, only the supply wagons can exit off of the board, in the East Front II version any Russian unit can exit off of the board. This duplicates the original scenario's victory conditions rather nicely. The scenario is twelve turns long.

There is a lot of variation possibilities in the Russian set up, given the vast area of the board that they have to start in. The convoy force is restricted to its entry and exit hexes though. There are not many possibilities in the German set up, given their limited starting area.

Scenario #43

This scenario depicts a Russian armored assault against a German mobile defense. This scenario, like the others in this article, was originally created back in the early Seventies and reflects a lot of the misinformation that was being passed on as historical fact back then. For example, the Elefant units depicted in the scenario did not actually appear in any units in Army Group South until late 1943. The 3rd Panzer Division did not receive its Panther tanks until December 1943, although they do appear in this scenario. The Russian 60th Guards Heavy Tank Regiment was actually in the 5th Shock Army in August 1943, not the 5th Guards Tank Army as depicted here. But this information was not known in the early 1970s and much information for the scenario was based on photographic evidence, with misleading captions underneath them. But then the scenario is a product of the times during which it was created.

Both sides start the game set up on the board and neither side receives any reinforcements during the game. The Germans set up anywhere in-between Hexrows 32,xx and 64,xx (exclusive). Being on the defensive, the Germans receive improved positions for their units. The Russians set up anywhere east of Hexrow 64,xx (exclusive) and are on the offensive. All unit conversions from Panzerblitz to East Front II were straight forward and no substitutions had to be made.

The game victory conditions are pretty simple in this scenario. Both receive points for unit elimination and the Russians also receive points for friendly units exited off of the western edge of the board at the two exit hexes. In the twelve turns in the scenario, it is

doubtful whether the Russians will be able to exit anything off of the western edge of the board, barring a faulty German set up, so the game will be decided upon unit destruction for both sides.

There is a lot of variation for the set up for the Germans, given their large set up area. The Russians are rather limited in their variations of set up, given the narrowness of the board.

Scenario #44

This scenario depicts another Russian armored assault, this time in the late war. In a way it is almost a virtual repeat of the previous scenario. The date and location of the scenario could put it in conflict with the scenario “Crisis on the Oder” that comes with the East Front game. But in truth, that scenario actually happened the day before as the Russians actually took Kustrin on the 21st of March and the next day attacked out of it to the west, thus initiating the battle depicted in Scenario #44. Also the original report that described the battle never identified the Russian tank corps other than it being a Guards Tank Corp. Checking in other records, I found that the Russian 9th Guards Tank Corps was supporting the 5th Shock Army on that date and so I used them by default as being the unnamed tank corps listed in the report. The German force had no name or number in its designation as it was an adhoc unit put together the day before, so I just made it into a kampfguppe using the name of the commanding officer to give it a designation in this scenario. Also in the original article that this scenario came out of, there was an error in the Russian forces, where the 18 T-34c tank units listed really should have been 18 T-34/85 units. In this scenario they get the latter type of tank.

Both sides start the game set up on the board. There are no reinforcements for either side. The Germans set up anywhere in-between Hexrows 32,xx and 64,xx (exclusive). Being on the defensive, the German of course get improved positions for their starting units. The Russians set up anywhere east of Hexrow 64,xx (exclusive). In converting the units from Panzerblitz to East Front II, I had to make some changes. On the Russian side I converted the Recon units into Motorcycle units. In the original scenario the Motorized Rifle Brigade had Rifle units instead of Guards units to reflect the reduced nature of the brigade after some heavy fighting. I used Guards units in the East Front II version but reduced all units in the motorized rifle battalions by one, save the mortars which remained at full strength. On the German side took one of the halftrack units and the 20mm AA units in Panzerblitz and made them into Sd Kfz 10/4 units in East Front II. One will note the rather strange organization of the Panzer Battalion in the German force, with rather strong HQ platoons in the tank companies and a very strong HQ company in the battalion itself, but again this reflects the adhoc nature of the unit.

The victory conditions in the original scenario were totally based on the number of friendly units that the Russian got on the western third of the board (Board 1 in Panzerblitz) by the end of the game. To duplicate this I set up a number of objective hexes in that same area for the Russians to capture. Also both sides have enemy unit

elimination to earn them victory points. With ten turns in this scenario, the Russians have plenty of time to achieve their objectives and the Germans have a powerful enough force to challenge them.

Again, as in the last scenario, the Germans have a lot of room for set up variations, given their big set up area. The Russians are again in turn, rather restricted given the narrowness of the board.

Scenario #45

This scenario depicts a German blocking action against a Russian assault, thus allowing another German force to traverse across, and exit off of the board by the end of the game. It is based on the scenario presented in the article "Situation 101" by Roy Easton, published in the General Magazine Vol.9, #2. This scenario depicts the historical action of the German 15th SS (Latvian) Division as it fought its way across northern Germany in order to surrender to the British rather than the Russians who were pursuing them. However, most of the information in the original scenario seems more based on a made-for-TV movie that came out about that time, which was based on the same subject. (Indeed, Easton may well have based the entire scenario on that movie.) Easton, or more likely the movie, got the identification of the pursuing Russian units wrong. The Russian 26th Guards Tank Brigade was in East Prussia at the end of the war, so I replaced it with elements of the 3rd Guards Tank Corps.

In this scenario the German (Latvian) force is divided into two groups. The battle group is set up anywhere on the board although most of it is concentrated near the Russian entry area to block it. The convoy group enters the board on the Eastern edge at hex 16,0 starting on Turn 3 and lasting until Turn 6. The convoy group contains empty trucks and wagons, representing the fleeing families and refugees. The Russians enter the board on Turn 1 on the northern edge of the board in-between hexes 0,10 and 0,19 (inclusive). The conversion of the units was pretty straight forward, however there are some counters that were in the original scenario that do not appear in this scenario. For one thing, the civilian counters in the original scenario could not be duplicated. Thus in the spirit of the original scenario, the vehicular units in the convoy group should not be used to transport units already on the board as they would be already loaded with civilians. Another set of counters that were left out were the British counters. East Front II does not have any provisions for Western Allied units from West Front. Besides, the only purpose of the British force was to give the Germans someone to surrender to and to protect the surrendered units from the Russians. In this scenario that can be accomplished just as easily by giving the Germans an exit hex to escape off the board from.

The victory conditions in the original scenario required the Germans to surrender a set number of units to the British, depending on the victory level. The Russians earned victory points solely by eliminating German units. In this scenario both sides earn victory points for eliminating enemy units. The Germans also earn victory points for exiting

friendly units off of the western at the exit hex at Hex 16, 30. The game lasts twelve turns, although in the original article no game length was given.

There is a lot of variation in the German set up of their on-board starting forces. In fact it is recommended that the German player experiment with different set ups. The one presented in this scenario is quite capable of stopping the Russians cold, but leaves the units exposed to destruction by the surviving Russian forces, thus giving them a lot of victory points. The Russians can only vary the entry of the units onto the board as they have a big force and a small area to enter from.

Conclusion

This ends this series of scenario conversions from Panzerblitz to East Front II. While there are certainly other Panzerblitz scenarios that have been published in other magazines and mediums, I leave those to other dedicated East Front players to convert. Enjoy these scenarios that have already been done.