

Situation RPN35

Thanks to Bill Scott for the custom boards.

Victory Conditions: Russians (win ties)

1 pt for each combat unit (AF>0) off West side

1 pt for each German unit destroyed.

-1 pt for each German combat unit on board

-3 pts for each German combat unit on Road

The end of the Rzhev meat grinder was a final retreat of the German 9th Army. In this hypothetical situation, a Russian mechanised force moves through the mud and swamps only to be delayed by a German rear guard *kampfgruppe*. The spring thaw, *rasputitsa* limited maneuver of units such that only tanks equipped with special wide tracks could stay atop the mud. Infantry had to pick their way over minefields and skirt the swamps, or find themselves mired in the waist deep muck.

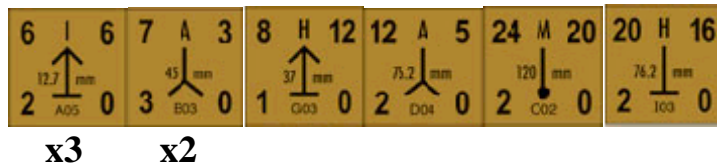
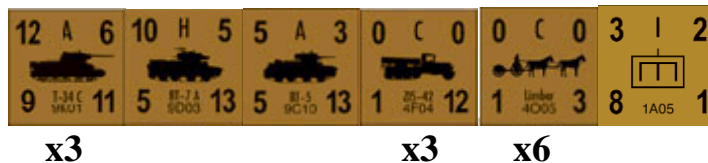
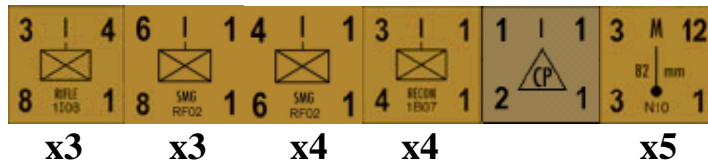
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Russian Forces

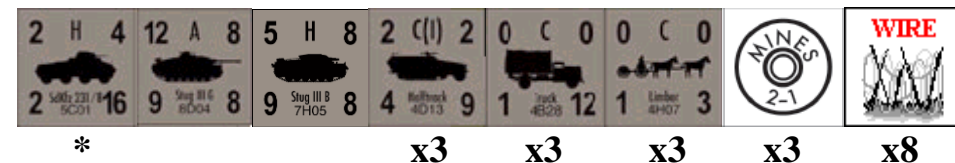
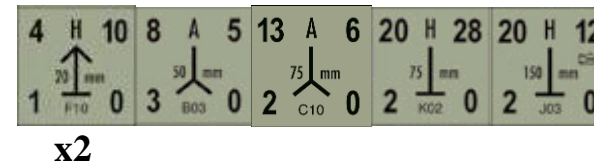
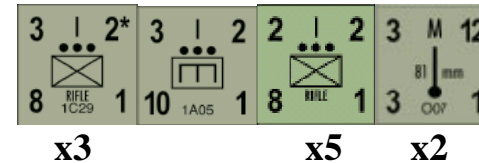
12 Turns

Move First and Enter from East side



Axis Forces

Set up First anywhere west of row 9.



Special Situation Rules for RPN35

Mud Movement Rules: *Rasputitsa* /No road movement bonus; All vehicles may move to the first of their movement hex anywhere, but then must make bog checks by rolling a d6 for each additional hex traversed off road. Tracked vehicles moving off road add 1 to all movement costs per hex and can't move further on a 5,6 (**EXC: Russian tanks have wide tracks, bog on a 6 only and add 1 movement moving up hillsides/gullies only**). Halftracks/armored cars can't move further on a 4,5,6 and otherwise expending double movement cost. Horse-carts cannot move further nor unload guns after attempting to move on a 2,3,4,5,6. Infantry may unload if their transport bogs down. Trucks must stay on roads, expending 4 MP per hex, cannot go off-road. Horse-carts, HT's, AFV's & AC's expend 1 MP on roads Infantry(all MF 1 units) move one normally, but if off road, must

make a fatigue roll of a d6 and are dispersed(cannot CAT) on a 4,5,6 (3,4,5,6 if into a swamp hex). If an infantry unit that is dispersed by fatigue has entered a minefield, it must suffer a minefield attack immediately using the dispersed status on the CRT. Tanks can carry infantry only. *AC's cannot carry a passenger. **Russian CP may spot for the mortars to use IF.**

Wire: Wheeled vehicles, HTs, ACs acts like a block, tracked vehicles +3MP, infantry must roll d6 (1,2,3 enter, 4,5,6 no entry).

Swamps(deep mud): Infantry must roll a d6 and on a 1,2,3 may enter a swamp(mud) hex, then must roll again for fatigue. Vehicles cannot enter swamp hexes. +1drm for all attacks. All swamp hexes on this special board are considered -1 elevation depressions with or without streambed/gully.

Town: act like woods hexes(not armored targets, not combined defence), but vehicles *may* cross grey hex sides.

Playtesting: G1: G22-R17, G2: R15-G15, G3: R14-G12, G4: G14-R13, G5: R16-G12.

Background of Büffel as told from a Red Army infantryman's diary

After the liberation of Rzhev, our forces kept moving forward, pursuing the Germans as they withdrew from the Rzhev salient. We didn't have time to stop and rest, for it was important not to let the enemy withdraw without hindrance and consolidate in new positions. With constant skirmishing against enemy rear guard units, we advanced, winning back a mutilated and emptied native land. But we also confronted another familiar antagonist. The first warm breath of spring had melted almost all the snow, turning it into slush, and soon the roads turned into a swampy sludge – we marched, barely able to move our feet. Overcoming with unbelievable labors the onset of the spring *rasputitsa* [literally the dissolution of roads, when the spring thaw turned Russian dirt roads into morasses], the division moved westward, approaching Smolensk. The land around had been disfigured by the blasts of bombs and shells and had been filled with mines, There was a lot of trouble with the mines, which also slowed our movement. At the same time, we had to lug everything for ourselves-our rifle, cartridges, kit bag, gas mask, sapper's shovel, canteen, and grenades. As we labored to move forward, some men were most surreptitiously ridding themselves of one or another of these items. It was especially hard for the machine gunners, the anti-tank riflemen, and the mortar crews. Even horses could barely pull their cannons along, which kept getting stuck in the muck. We started off at dawn each morning and slogged along all day. At a short halt we would collapse, hardly finding a place even a bit drier, and our eyes would close of their own accord. But it seemed that no sooner as that happened, someone would be nudging you in the side: "Get up, brother!" and we would march wearily on. We encountered buildings or huts rarely. Forest after forest, road after road – or more precisely, lack of roads. At first we battled only against rear guard elements. The Germans were retreating quickly, and whenever leaving an area, they left behind a barren wasteland. Whenever they had time to manage it, they blew up, destroyed, torched, or mined everything: "Here you go, Ivan, take your prizes!" The detours – and you couldn't avoid them-were all mined; the roads were also mined, and people occasionally triggered them. Between Gzhatsk and Viaz'ma alone, the Germans blew up fourteen bridges. Whatever official Russian historians might say, this was one of the best planned and skillfully conducted withdrawal operations of the entire war. We were unable to trap the German Ninth Army and elements of the Fourth PanzerArmy in the Rzhev salient, as had long been our ambition.