

## Operational Combat Series

# Hungarian Rhapsody (v1.1)

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Special Assistance. The *Mastelleone's Italian Cold Cut Submarine* (with the works). In keeping with OCS tradition, we must recognize the very important role played by “the greatest Italian cold cut sub in the universe,” without which *Hungarian Rhapsody* would not have been possible. (No offense intended to any Burritos, including the big ones.)



## Introduction

*Hungarian Rhapsody* (HR) depicts the Soviet drive into Hungary which led to the battle of Debrecen, the siege of Budapest and the German Konrad counter-offensives attempting to relieve Budapest.

Romania's defection in August 1944 allowed the Soviets to outflank well-defended Axis positions in the Carpathian Mountains from the south. In the process, the German 6th Army was almost destroyed, losing most of its heavy equipment (which explains the relative weakness of the German artillery at the start of the campaign).

The game begins on the October 5, 1944 turn with the 2nd Ukrainian Front and the 4th Ukrainian Front launching an offensive to isolate the German 8th Army which is still defending an area off-map to the east in the Carpathian Mountains. It allows players to play the two major Soviet offensives and several

smaller scenarios covering the German counter-offensives, concluding on February 26, 1945.

## 1.0 General Special Rules

### 1.1 Map & Terrain

**1.1a Common Terrain Effects Chart.** The movement and combat effects for the terrain types are explained in the *Terrain Effects Chart* (“TEC”).

**1.1b Weather.** Each turn's Weather is determined by rolling one die for Ground Conditions and another die for Flight Conditions.

WEATHER TRACK					
Normal Flight	Limited Flight	Dry	Light Mud	Mud	Frozen
Flight Conditions		Ground Conditions			

The Weather Table gives the full effects of each condition for the current date.

Do not roll for Weather on the first turn of any scenario; the applicable conditions are listed in each scenario.

**1.1c Entry Areas.** These are marked on the map edges. There are



several Entry Areas designated by the same letter (for example, B39.35 and B49.34 (Sibiu) are each Entry Area G). Units designated to arrive at a given Entry Hex Area can enter at any of the corresponding hexes unless otherwise indicated. Other Entry Areas are marked with a bar going through multiple hexes.

**1.1d Railroads.** Rail movement can use “off-map” connections to depart from the map and then re-enter at another point where both the exit and

the entry hexes are controlled by the railing player.

*Point of Interest* hexes are considered to be Detrainable. (This is in addition to the terrain types listed in OCS 13.3c).

All *map-edge* Railroad hexes controlled by the Axis player are Detrainable. All *map-edge* Road hexes are Deroadable for the Soviet player (3.1d).

**1.1e Map Printed Hedgehogs.** There are Axis defensive fortification lines on the map shown by Map Printed Hedgehogs (“MPH”) and some special rules apply:



They cannot be improved.

They only benefit Axis units (the Soviet player may build their own Hedgehogs in these hexes).

They cannot be destroyed.

MPHs, with a **black background in the oval and black hex border** are



Close terrain for combat and barrage. Attacking armor is 1x strength even in a hex that is otherwise Open terrain (see TEC).

**1.1f Hedgehog Markers.** A Hedgehog Marker is reduced one level when its hex is occupied by an enemy Attack-Capable unit. This does not apply to MPHs (1.1e).

No Hedgehog greater than Level 2 can be built in this game.

*Design Note:* The Hungarian Fortification Lines benefited from constant effort by Axis engineers to maintain these positions, with their particularly good knowledge of the area

## 1.2 Areas and Area Restrictions



### 1.2a Northern Operations.

The forces confined to Northern Operations (both Soviet and Axis) have counters depicted with a White Frame border. They are referred to as White Frame units. White Frame units cannot

move south of the White Line between the 19.XX and 20.XX hex rows on either map. White Frame units may



retreat south of the White Line, but must return north of the White Line at the first opportunity. Breakdown Regiments from White Frame units must also adhere to those White Line restrictions. White Frame units can never rail off edges of the map in order to re-enter south of the White Line. There are two Dead Pile boxes, one for the White Frame units and one for other units. If a White Frame unit is rebuilt, it must be placed and remain north of the White Line.

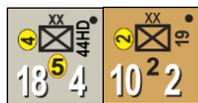
Air units of the Soviet 8th Air Army assigned to the 4th Ukrainian Front are also White Frame units. Those units start in the 8th Air Army Box and can only conduct missions north of the White Line. **Only White Frame aircraft may use the 8th Army Air Box.**

All other units may operate freely on either side of the White Line.

*Design Note.* Both sides had forces fighting for the passes across the Carpathian Mountains in Slovakia. Because of difficulties with command, communications, and control, these military forces did not significantly coordinate with friendly forces to the south. 1st Panzer Army and 1st Hungarian Army were not part of Army Group South, but rather reported to Army Group A. Likewise two armies from the 4th Ukrainian Front, the 1st Gd Army and the 18th Army were not part of the 2nd or 3rd Ukrainian Fronts fighting south of the Carpathian area of operations.

### 1.2b South Balaton Restrictions & Garrison Withdrawal.

No combat unit of either side may move into the South Balaton Restriction Area (see TEC) or into Yugoslavia west of the Danube River. If a player must retreat a unit into either area, that unit is eliminated. The Axis player (only) can



Trace Supply and move SPs through the South Balaton Restriction Area using Roads, Tracks or Railroads, prior to 1 Dec.

Each player must immediately withdraw from the map the units of their South Balaton Garrison (see the OoAs for 1 Dec) when the Soviet Player has a combat unit in Trace Supply either in

Pécs (A56.13), AND either Entry Hex I

~OR~

west of the Danube on 1 Dec or

*Design Note.* This rule deals with two large forces sidelined during the campaign. The Axis forces were positioned to guard the Nagykanizsa oil fields, by occupying the fortification line from A48.03 to A55.03. The Soviets ignored this economic objective and focused all their efforts on capturing Budapest. The Soviet forces formed a garrison along the Drava River to oppose Axis troops from the South-East Command. Stalin wanted to have at least one Soviet Army near Yugoslavia to influence Tito, but he did not wish to unduly provoke Churchill, who was always wary of a Soviet Army presence in Southern Europe. Rather than compel players to march these forces to the southwest corner of the map and just sit there, we chose to withdraw them.

thereafter.

Each South Balaton Garrison unit, Axis and Soviet is identified with a Black Dot in the upper right corner of its counter.

**1.2c The Budapest Zone.** The Budapest Zone consists of all hexes inside the Budapest Zone boundary area marked on the map. (2.1e, 2.4, and 2.5b.)

## 1.3 General Air Operations

**1.3a Air Boxes.** Both players have boxes containing air bases which are outside the map area.

- No combat or barrage is allowed in any Air Box.
- Ground units can never move to any Air Box.
- No Fighter sweeps are allowed in an Air Box.

- Air Unit Refit is free in an Air Box however; there is NO source of Supply Points in any Air Box. Supply from a player's Supply Table allocation may be placed in an Air Box to be available for air transport or air drop from that Air Box.

**1.3b Air Entry Points.** Certain Entry Hexes also correspond to Air Boxes, with a designated range from the Air Box to the Entry Point. Aircraft conducting missions from these Air Boxes start on any hex with their respective letter having already moved the number of hexes indicated.

For example, a Soviet air unit flying out of the 8th Air Army Air Box would enter the map at Entry Hex D having already expended 25 hexes of movement.

**1.3c Soviet 8th Air Army.** These units are White Frame Units and based in their 8th Air Army Box at start. On 29 Oct and thereafter, they may base at any air base north of the White Line (1.2a).



**1.3d Hip Shoots.** Only German aircraft and Soviet Guard IL-2 aircraft can Hip Shoot (OCS 14.7d). No other aircraft have this ability.

**1.3e Flak Nightmare.** Flak use was extensive during this campaign. To reflect this:

Add a +1 Flak die roll modifier (“DRM”) against all Barrage missions, not just Trainbusting.

Facility Barrage by Air Units on an Airbase is NOT allowed. Facility Barrage of Air Bases by Artillery is unchanged.

***Design Note.** The level of Flak assets positioned on airbases at this stage of the war meant that any air attack on them was essentially suicidal. The Germans had one of their strongest Flak Divisions and an additional Flak Brigade deployed in the Budapest area. The Soviet forces included more than 70 anti-aircraft Regiments. Our research found that the missions represented by Air Base Barrage virtually never occurred during the campaign.*

The Axis player can decide to inactivate any aircraft at any airbases at the start of each friendly Aircraft Refit Phase.

## 1.4 The Danube and pontoons

**1.4a Danube River.** The Danube River can only be bridged by Pontoon Units (HQ have no bridging capabilities across the Danube). An unbridged Danube River hex side may be crossed by units using Leg MA only when the Danube is Frozen. Whenever a Soviet Ground Unit moves adjacent to a Danube River bridge, that bridge is destroyed (bridge capture is not possible). ZOCs do extend across the Danube River. It is important that players understand that in the OCS, an attack can be made only where movement is possible into the hex under attack (OCS 9.1f). Accordingly, there are limitations on when units may attack across the Danube River. (See the TEC.)

**1.4b Pontoons: General.** A Pontoon Unit is deployed when in Combat Mode or in DG Mode, oriented on its Combat side. Deployed Pontoon Units bridge all river hex sides adjacent to the Pontoon, as if a track is crossing the river, a “Pontoon Bridge Track.” While deployed a Pontoon unit also restores the bridging capability of all previously destroyed railroad and road bridges adjacent to the Pontoon. During any Movement Phase (even while in Combat Mode) a Pontoon Unit can move across any river hex side it is bridging. Pontoon Units cannot be captured or used by the enemy. Any time a Pontoon (Soviet or German) moves adjacent to the Danube River, it must be placed at the top of the Stack to reveal its position.

### 1.4c Pontoons: Soviet Restrictions.

At the beginning of the game, Soviet Pontoons cannot bridge the Danube (but CAN bridge Major and Minor River hex sides normally).

***Player's Note.** A Pontoon Bridge Track bridging a hexside connects to all transportation lines in each hex on both sides of the hexside being bridged. OCS 6.2a.*

Starting 8 Nov, Soviet Pontoon Units



have “Light Capability” for bridging the Danube River. Deployed Pontoon Units with Light Capability create Pontoon Bridge Tracks (1.4b) across Danube River hex sides, but only for the movement of units with Leg MA on their Move Mode side. There can be no draw or throw of Trace Supply or Supply Points by Truck movement across the Danube until 1 Dec. Deployed Soviet Pontoon Units with Light Capability do not restore destroyed rail and road bridges (1.4b).

***Player's Note.** The Soviets have one HQ (57th Army) with leg movement points available for draw and throw.*

Starting 1 Dec, the Light Capability



restrictions for these Pontoon Units are removed. Soviet Pontoon Units now have “Full Capability” to create Pontoon Bridge Tracks for units of any movement class and to restore all destroyed rail and road bridges across the Danube River normally per 1.4b.

***Design Note.** The Danube was an immense military obstacle to the Soviets, similar to the Volga and the Rhine in other OCS games. Therefore, some constraints are necessary to depict how extremely challenging the Danube River crossings were for the Soviet forces operating far from their logistical base.*

## 1.5 Special Units

**1.5a Engineer Units.** HQ units have full engineer capabilities. No other units have engineer capabilities, except the Bridging abilities of Pontoon Units (1.4).

**1.5b Airborne units.** Neither side has any units which can be air dropped. Air Drop missions to deliver Supply Points are unaffected.

***Design Note.** Airborne designations are honorific only.*

## 1.6 HR Player Booklets

HR provides each player with a booklet with game specific and player specific tables and charts and an Order of Arrival (“OoA”), entitled, Axis Tables and Order of Arrival and Soviet Tables and Order of Arrival, respectively. Those booklets provide for reinforcements, withdrawals, substitutions, time sensitive special rules, etc. They are important for the play of HR.

## 1.7 Scenarios Booklet – Victory Conditions

HR includes a Scenarios booklet providing fifteen scenarios. Each scenario states the particular Victory Conditions of that scenario. Victory is primarily determined by the Soviet player controlling certain geographic objectives.

"Control" is determined by which Player has an Attack Capable unit in a particular hex (or was the last to have an Attack Capable unit there).

There are VP Objective markers provided to track those objectives in whatever fashion suits your style of play. They can be used for all scenarios.

## 1.8 Displays

HR includes various displays for each Player to aid the play of the game.

Axis:

Player Aid:

Unit & Marker Identification

Dead Piles

Goulash Markers Available (2.1e)

General Record Track

Reinforcements Track (1.8b)

Breakdown Regiments Display (2.5c)

Corps Markers Display (1.8a)

Soviet:

Player Aid 1:

Unit & Marker Identification

Reinforcements Track (1.8b)

Special Wagon Extenders (3.1e)

General Record Track

Player Aid 2

Dead Piles

RVGK Box (3.3b)

Corps Markers Display (1.8a)

**1.8a Corps Marker Displays.** HR provides each player with markers to



use for holding combat units off map on the Soviet and Axis Corps Markers Displays. Simply pick up the units and place them on the display. Then place the marker on the map associated with those units.



Players must show their opponent the top Combat unit in the stack and any Hedgehog level upon request. A Corps Marker on map must contain at least one Combat unit. These are not Formation Markers with fueling or Barrage density benefits, simply holding markers for units in a hex.

***Development Note.** Use of these markers and these displays will aid in the play of the game where counter density is particularly acute, such as Budapest. In addition, this will provide some additional fog of war effects because a player's opponent will not know the size of a stack shown on the map at that marker. Regarding the fog of war aspect, I feel players have way too much information regarding their opponent's forces, which is the same with most wargames. So, by using these off-map markers a little more, fog of war is added to the game with good effect.*

**1.8b Reinforcements Tracks.** HR provides each player with month markers to use in organizing reinforcements on the player's respective Reinforcements Tracks. Place a marker for the relevant month on the display at the relevant date to indicate for that date and each date above, the month associated with those particular dates. A player's monthly date markers will rotate out and in as time progresses in the game. (In practice this process is much easier than this explanation.)

## 2.0 Axis Special Rules

### 2.1 Logistics

**2.1a Supply Sources and Reinforcement Entry Areas.** All rail, road, and track hexes on Axis Entry Areas North, West, South, A, B, C, K, J, and both I's are Axis Supply Sources and reinforcement entry areas unless controlled by the Soviet player.

Rebuilt German units arrive at the Axis West Entry Area.

Rebuilt Hungarian units arrive at any village, minor city or major city hex in Hungary in Trace Supply (even in enemy ZOC).

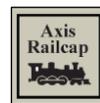
However, all Axis White Frame units arrive at the Axis North Entry Area or Entry hexes A, B or C.

**2.1b Supply Points and Replacements.** These are received each turn in accordance with the Axis Supply Table and Replacements Tables respectively. Note that there are separate German and Hungarian Replacements Tables; roll for each.

The Axis Supply Table is affected by the control of Komárom (A30.09) and Kassa (B9.01). See the Axis Supply Table notes.

In HR, replacements must be used to rebuild dead units immediately: Pax and Eq counters are not used.

**2.1c Rail Capacity.** Rail Cap is provided in the Axis Player's Booklet. The Soviet Player has no rail capacity in HR.



**2.1d Danube Shipping Capacity.**

Once per turn, the Axis player may ship one on map SP (not units) to any Budapest hex with a Danube river hex side (Shipping Capacity = 1SP).

Any Soviet Combat unit that has a ZOC occupying a hex adjacent to the Danube North and West of Budapest from A29.04 to A31.18 or A31.19 entirely blocks the use of this shipping capacity. This capacity is lost when the Danube is Frozen.



**2.1e Goulash.** The Axis player has seven Goulash markers, which can be



placed in any Budapest city hex in any Budapest Fortress (2.4) during the Supply Phase.

Any Axis units in a Budapest Fortress (2.4) that can trace a supply path (OCS 12.6) to a Goulash Marker, by direct draw or throw from an HQ during the Supply Phase “eat off the map” (OCS 12.6c) without the expenditure of Supply.

If a Goulash marker is used, it is permanently removed from play, unless the Axis player expends 1T from within that particular Budapest Fortress. If that 1T is expended, then roll one die: On a 1-3, the Goulash marker is permanently removed; on a 4-6 it remains available for use again.

The Axis player is free to use a Goulash marker as desired in any Budapest Fortress, but it is not required.

## 2.2 Air Operations

**2.2a Tank Busters.** One Hs-129B and two Ju-87G units are designated as



Tank Busters. These units have their Barrage strength printed in Red.

Apply the following special rules to any Tank Buster Barrage mission:

- 1) Tank Busters can only perform a Tank Buster Barrage mission, which can be conducted as a Barrage mission or a Hip Shoot. If conducted as a Barrage mission, other aircraft cannot add their barrage factors but are allowed to serve as escorts.
- 2) If the hex does not contain a Yellow or Red symbol unit, the Tank Buster unit immediately aborts.
- 3) If the hex contains a Yellow or Red symbol unit, then perform a Tank Buster Barrage as follows:
  - A spotter is required.
  - Treat all [1/2], 1/2, 2 or 3 Barrage Table results as 1.
  - The Soviet player must choose a Yellow or Red symbol unit with the

highest Combat Mode combat strength to take any loss.

Aside from the above, the roll and effects of the Barrage Table are handled normally.

### 2.2b Rudel Ju 87G Group.

**Design Note.** One of the Ju-87G Tank Buster counters represents Hans-Ulrich Rudel, the famous ace and his small unit, and accordingly is designated “Rudel.”

In addition to the rules for Tank Busters (2.2a), any loss to the Rudel counter from Flak converts to an Abort. Also, immediately abort the Rudel counter if ever involved in an air combat (no air combat roll.)

## 2.3 Nationality Issues

**2.3a Restrictions.** There are no nationality restrictions on the Axis. All Axis units can operate together freely.

**2.3b Hungarian Collapse.** The OoA may require the Axis player to roll for Hungarian Collapse.

When Hungarian Collapse occurs, remove all Hungarian units permanently from the game except:

### Hungarian air units

Hun Pz Div.

2nd Hun Pz Div.

All Budapest Garrison units.

All 4-AR Hungarian Infantry and Cavalry units.

Any 3 Hun HQs, 3 Hun Arty units, and an additional 12 Hungarian steps of the Axis player’s choice.

**Hungarian Collapse is a one-time event. The total number of Hungarian units on the map may subsequently exceed these numbers through arrivals and replacements.**

## 2.4 Budapest Fortresses

The Axis player can declare a “Budapest Fortress” using any Budapest city hex or a group of contiguous hexes containing one or more Budapest city hexes, all of which are inside the

Budapest Zone (1.2c). There can be multiple Budapest Fortresses.

A Budapest Fortress can be declared in the Axis Reinforcement Phase if one or more Axis units are cut off from Trace Supply and within a hex, or hexes eligible to be declared a Budapest Fortress. Axis units in a Budapest Fortress in the Axis Supply Phase that a Budapest Fortress is declared “eat off the map” (OCS 12.6c) without the expenditure of Supply. No use of a Goulash Marker is necessary (it’s free, but only on that first turn).

These special rules apply to all Axis units inside a Budapest Fortress:

Defensive Combat Supply (OCS 12.4) for Axis units defending in a Budapest Fortress is free.

Axis artillery units in a Budapest Fortress may, enter Reserve Mode in, 1.) a hedgehog and/or 2.) an EZOC. Axis artillery units can remain in a hedgehog in a Budapest Fortress.

Internal Stocks can be used for Attack purposes, and do not need to be Recovered (OCS 12.10e).

Goulash (2.1e) can be used to “eat off the map” (OCS 12.6c) in the Supply Phase in which it is placed.

**Player’s Note.** *The campaign scenario (5.2) provides for a Sudden Death Win if the Soviet Player controls all seven Budapest city hexes prior to 12 Feb. Conversely, the Axis Player will achieve a Sudden Death Win if Trace Supply is reestablished to any Axis unit occupying a Budapest city hex in Budapest Fortresses.*

## 2.5 Special Units

**2.5a 109th Panzer Brigade.** This unit has two steps and is handled like a multi-step “mini division” of 2 RE. This will affect its stacking, fueling and combat-supply costs. Note that a “division” is never independent (OCS 3.2f), so this brigade cannot get “free fuel” from a HQ with a fuel marker, rather it must pay 1T to fuel.

**2.5b Budapest Garrison.** Axis units with a Hungarian flag in their upper

right corner are Budapest Garrison units. They may not move outside the



Budapest Zone (1.2c). Should they retreat outside of it, they must return as soon as possible.

**2.5c Breakdown Regiments.** Axis Breakdown Regiments are limited to the counters provided. Use the Axis Breakdown Regiment Display to control the use of those breakdowns.

## 3.0 Soviet Special Rules

### 3.1 Logistics

**Development Note.** *The Soviet offensive into Romania and Hungary moved so quickly that they were unable to convert the railways to keep up. As a result, all supply had to be transported by truck and wagon from the Dniester River. The Soviet forces are at the very limit of their logistical capabilities on 5 October 1944, a situation that slowly improves throughout the campaign, but then again hits a limit west of Budapest. The advance into Hungary was a secondary operation during October and November 1944, and supply went to other Fronts. In December 1944, STAVKA provided top priority in resources to Hungary. It was designated as the only active theater. STAVKA also had the objective of drawing Axis mobile divisions from the defense of Berlin, as actually happened. Supply in Hungary decreases back to "normal" 1 January 1945 when the Vistula-Oder Winter Offensive begins. Therefore, the Soviet player must contend with multiple logistical issues.*

**3.1a Supply Sources.** At start, all rail, road, and track hexes in the Soviet North Entry Area, plus Entry Hexes F and G only, are Supply Sources and Reinforcement Entry Areas. **Note Entry Hex F should be Hex B29.35.**

The Soviet OoA indicates when all rail, road, and track hexes of other Entry Areas become available as Supply Sources and Reinforcement Entry Areas.

Soviet Front Markers are also Supply Sources (3.1c).

**3.1b Supply Points and Replacements.** These are received each turn in

accordance with the Soviet Supply Table and Replacements Table respectively.

The Soviet Player has special rules for the replacement of infantry (3.3a).

The Soviet Supply Table has three columns:

- SPs listed under the North column must arrive in the North Entry Area.
- SPs listed under the East column must arrive in the East Entry Area or in Sibiu (B49.34).
- SPs listed under the South column must arrive in the South Entry Area.

**3.1c Soviet Front Markers.** The Soviet Player has three Front Markers (2nd Ukrainian, 3rd Ukrainian, and 4th Ukrainian) to represent the administrative and logistical capabilities and restrictions faced by their historical counterparts.

A Front Marker is NOT a HQ Unit and does not have any HQ Special Functions, as listed in OCS 13.1b.

The following pertain to each Soviet Front Marker:

- 1) Supply. Each Front Marker is a Soviet Trace Supply Source if it can trace a path of contiguous Road hexes (only) back to a map edge Supply Source or Sibiu, free of Axis units and unnegated enemy zones of control (OCS 4.5b). A Front Marker has no Throw Range; however, HQs and other units, may Draw from its hex normally.
- 2) Placement and Movement. A Front Marker may only be placed on a Road hex and may only move once during a Soviet Movement Phase. Each Front Marker costs 1 SP to fuel for movement. It may only enter hexes along a Road (not Tracks or Railroads) and may travel any number of hexes. A Front Marker can carry all SPs with which it is stacked prior to moving. Front markers may not pick up or drop off SPs while moving. A Front Marker may not move west of the Yellow Line (3.1f).

3) Enemy Units. A Front Marker cannot move within 5 hexes of an Axis Combat Unit that exerts a ZOC (OCS 4.5). A Front Marker cannot be destroyed. If the Axis Player moves a Combat Unit that exerts a ZOC within 5 hexes of a Front Marker, the Front Marker is immediately displaced by the Soviet player to a "legal" hex, along with any SP with which it was stacked. The Soviet player may then immediately place any or all units in the RVGK Box (3.3b) being held for rebuild by that Front on the map within five hexes of that Front Marker.

4) Specific Restrictions. The 2nd Ukrainian Front Marker may not move prior to the 29 Oct turn. The 4th Ukrainian Front Marker may not move south of the 16.xx hex row on Map B, and may not move south of the 9.xx hex row on Map A. The 3rd Ukrainian Front Marker may not move north of the 40.xx hex row.

**3.1d Truck Cap.** The rail net is completely inactive for the Soviet player during the game. Therefore, the Soviets have no Rail Cap and there are no Detrainable hexes which function as Soviet Trace Supply Sources. The only sources of Trace Supply for the Soviets are Active Entry Areas, Sibiu and Soviet Front Markers.

The Soviet Player receives "Truck Cap" each turn in accordance with the "Soviet Truck Cap Table." Truck Cap can only be used to move SP in the Movement Phase. Truck Cap cannot move combat units. Truck Cap cannot be saved for use in another Movement Phase (use it or lose it).

Truck Cap may move SP(s) any distance along contiguous Road hexes (not Railroad or Track), and those SP(s) must be delivered to a hex containing a Soviet Front Marker or to a "Deroadable" hex. A Deroadable hex is a Road hex under Soviet control that contains a Major City, Minor City, Village, Point of Interest or Engineer-Capable HQ and has a path of contiguous Road hexes free of enemy ZOC back to a supply source.



One point of Truck Cap moves two SPs if those SPs are delivered to a Front Marker and moves one SP if delivered to a Deroadable hex. Truck Cap cannot move SPs into a hex containing enemy units or an enemy ZOC (this ZOC

cannot be negated) (OCS 4.5b).

Truck Cap is unaffected by Trainbusting.

**Development Note.** *The Soviets did not convert railroads to Russian gauge during this campaign. Truck Cap represents primarily the available trucks specifically assigned to the operational movement of supply to the Fronts involved during this campaign. Think of Truck Cap as the Soviet version of the American Red Ball Express.*

**3.1e Special Wagon Extenders.** HR does not make normal use of truck or wagon Extenders under the series rules for the Soviet Player (OCS 12.7). The Soviet Player may not create truck extenders.

The Soviet Player has available two Special Wagon Extenders (“SWE”).

When deployed on the map, each SWE functions as a wagon Extender for the extension of Trace Supply range in accordance with OCS 12.7.

However, a SWE cannot flip to convert into wagon transport points.

The only method to move the position of a SWE is to first take it off the map during the Movement Phase and place it in the “Moving” section of the Special Wagon Extenders Holding Box. During the Soviet Clean Up Phase, move each SWE from the Moving section to the Ready section. During the Soviet Movement Phase, a SWE in the Ready section may be deployed on the map wherever the Soviet Player desires. If an Axis combat unit moves into a hex containing a SWE, immediately place the SWE into the Moving section of the SWE Holding Box.

**3.1f The Yellow Line.** Supply expenditure by any Soviet unit west of

the “Yellow Line” (see TEC) at the moment of use is multiplied by FOUR (x4). This applies to any type of supply expenditure by Soviet units west of the line AND by Soviet units conducting ground attacks or barrages at targets which are west the line.



**Design Note.** *This line represents the very “outer limits” of Soviet logistical capabilities during this campaign.*

**3.1g Arty Ammo Markers.** These Ammo Markers are received from the Variable Reinforcements Table and placed in the Sibiu Box until used. No more than two can be stockpiled at any one time (ignore additional Arty Ammo marker results if the Sibiu Box already contains two markers).



The Soviet player may use an Arty Ammo Marker during any Barrage Segment of any Combat Phase. When using the marker, the maximum SP cost of any barrage is 4T. This applies to all Soviet artillery barrages that phase. Remove the marker at the end of that phase.

There is no additional effect for using both markers in the same phase.

### 3.2 Air Operations

**3.2a Limited Air Unit Refit.** From 12 Oct through 29 Oct (inclusive) and from 1 Jan through the end of the game (inclusive), only 10 Soviet aircraft can be Active at the end of each Soviet Air Unit Refit Phase. **This includes Soviet air units in off-map boxes. The Soviet must deactivate air units to meet this restriction if necessary.**



Rumanian Air Units, Soviet Air Units with a White Frame and Soviet Air Units of the LRAF (Yellow Frames) do not count against this limitation.

**3.2b Long Range Air Force (LRAF).** The LRAF is distinguished by a Yellow

Frame on each aircraft counter. These aircraft must be based in the LRAF Box.



LRAF missions are restricted to the Soviet Movement Phase only.

When the Refit Capability below is used, all aircraft in the LRAF Box can refit at once.

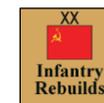
Refit of those aircraft is limited to two turns each month. Use the LRAF Refit Capability Track marker to indicate the remaining refit capability of the LRAF for each month. Return the marker to the “2” box during the Aircraft Refit Phase of the first Soviet Player Turn of each month.



### 3.3 Special Rebuilds

**3.3a Infantry Division Rebuilds.** The Soviet player does not receive Soviet Infantry Replacements and the Soviet Rebuild Table is not used for Soviet Infantry.

Instead, the first 10 Soviet Infantry Divisions or UR Brigades destroyed in the game are automatically rebuilt and must return in the Soviet Reinforcement Phase of the next game turn, but with only 1 Step remaining. There is a Soviet “Infantry Rebuilds” Marker provided to keep track of these rebuilds.



Each Soviet Infantry Division or UR Brigade destroyed, after the first 10 rebuilds, is also rebuilt and will return in a future Reinforcement Phase but with only 1 Step remaining. **For each unit, roll one die and add two.** The unit then returns in the Soviet Reinforcement Phase that many turns in the future.

Soviet Infantry includes all variations of Infantry unit types, to include “airborne”, motorized, “UR,” and Guards.

Soviet infantry rebuilds are placed on or within two hexes of any Soviet Front Marker, except White Frame units, which are placed on or within two hexes of the 4th Ukrainian Front Marker. These rebuilt infantry units may also

enter at the Soviet East Entry Area, Sibiu, or South Entry Area, except for Soviet White Frame units which may enter at the Soviet North Entry Area or Entry Area A, B or C (when Soviet controlled).

### 3.3b The RVGK: Multi-Unit Formation Rebuilding.

Units belonging to a Soviet Multi-Unit Formation (“MUF”) may only be rebuilt when each component unit of the MUF is in the Soviet dead pile or has been withdrawn from the map and placed in the RVGK Box (See Soviet Player Aid).

During any Soviet Reinforcement Phase (after rolling for replacements), the Soviet Player may pick up all the units of a MUF remaining on the map (that are in Trace Supply) and place them in the RVGK Box (no fueling required). This action constitutes placing the MUF in RVGK Box for rebuild. **Organic Trucks maintain their load status.** Any units of a MUF being rebuilt in the RVGK Box that have regained Trace Supply must be removed from the map and placed in the RVGK Box during the Reinforcement Phase. If all units of an MUF are in the dead pile, that MUF may be designated by the Soviet Player during the Reinforcement Phase, as rebuilding in the RVGK Box.

By default, these MUFs will be rebuilt by, and arrive at the 2nd Ukrainian Front Marker. However, two MUFs may be marked for rebuild and arrival at the 3rd Ukrainian Front Marker. There are two markers included in HR to indicate those 3rd Ukrainian Front rebuilds, which must be marked when placed into the RVGK Box. No MUFs may be rebuilt for arrival at the 4th Ukrainian Front. These markers can be used multiple times, but only two MUFs can be rebuilt by the 3rd Ukrainian Front at any given time.

Only an MUF which has been Placed in the RVGK Box may have its component units rebuilt by Replacements.

Place rebuilt units in the RVGK Box with the rest of the units of that MUF. When all divisions of a Cavalry Corps or all brigades of a Tank or Mech Corps are available in the RVGK Box, the MUF may be returned to play during the Soviet Reinforcement Phase.

To return an MUF to play, remove all component units of the MUF from the RVGK Box and place them within two hexes of the Front Marker which rebuilt that MUF.

At his discretion the Soviet player may rebuild the **Organic Truck**, support battalions and/or regiments of an MUF using this procedure. (This is the only way to rebuild these units.)

An MUF may not be placed into the RVGK Box for rebuild and then returned to the map in the same Reinforcement Phase.

Rebuilt MUFs are NOT fueled when returned to the map at the Front Marker.

This RVGK rebuild process does not apply to the Rumanian 9th Cavalry Division or to “non-divisional” units.

***Development Note.** Soviet practice with their mobile formations was to keep them in combat until they were “used up,” then to withdraw the formation for a complete refueling. They were returned to front-line combat only after they had been brought back to full strength. The Front HQ units also represent STAVKA Reserves, unit assembly areas and associated transportation and support spread over a large area.*

### 3.4 Nationality Issues

**3.4a Cooperation.** Soviet units cannot use Rumanian, or Yugoslav HQs. Rumanian or Yugoslav units cannot use Soviet HQs. Czech units CAN use Soviet HQs.

Soviet Front Markers can be a source of Trace Supply for all Soviet, Rumanian, Yugoslav and Czech units (see 3.1c)

Rumanian, Czech, Yugoslav and Soviet units can stack, barrage and attack together.

However, only Soviet units can spot for Soviet Air and Arty units and only Rumanian units can spot for Rumanian Air and Arty units.

**3.4b Rumanians.** Rumanian Ground Units cannot move west or south of the Danube River. Rumanian air units cannot be rebuilt.

**3.4c Yugoslavians.** Yugoslavian units cannot move north of the A47.xx hex row.

### 3.5 Special Units & Unit Requirements

**3.5a Artillery Rigidity.** Soviet Artillery units must stack in the same hex to combine barrages strengths to fire a Barrage on a particular target hex.

**3.5b Artillery Divisions.** Soviet Artillery Divisions are represented by multi-step units. Defense Strength of these units is the current RE value and Barrage strength is reduced in proportion to losses. For instance, a 90-factor, 3-RE division with 1 step loss would have a Defense strength of 2 and a Barrage strength of  $90 \times 2/3 = 60$ .

**3.5c Slovakian and Czech Partisans.** The Slovakian Partisan and Czech 2nd Airborne units draw Trace Supply from Slovak Partisan Supply hexes only (see TEC). These units can attack or defend for free without SPs. They cannot spot for any air units.

Slovakian Partisan units only have a Combat Mode and cannot stack with any other units including other partisans.

The Slovakian Partisan and Czech 2nd Airborne units may not use Breakout (12.8e).

**3.5d Rumanian Mountain Group “Partisans”.** These units only have a Combat Mode and cannot stack with any other units including other partisans. They are always in Trace Supply. They can defend for free and can spot for Rumanian Air units.



They can NEVER leave Rough or Heavy Woods Terrain. Destroy them if they do so.

During any Soviet Reinforcement Phase, the Soviet Player can replace the four Rumanian Mountain Group units (even if some—or all—of them are destroyed) with the 8-2-2 Rum Mtn Div (2). Just remove all the Rumanian Mountain Group units and place the Rumanian 2nd Mountain Division on a Soviet HQ.

*Design Note. Technically, those troops were not partisans, but they operated as such early in the campaign.*

**3.5e Soviet Breakdown Units.** The Soviet Player has no breakdown units in Hungarian Rhapsody.

**3.5f No Soviet Consolidation.** Soviet or Rumanian Infantry Divisions may not use Unit Consolidation (OCS 13.9).

*Design Note. Soviet infantry quality was decreasing by this point in the war. Lack of flexibility was a characteristic of the late war Soviet Division. Many were only regimental size in 1945 as replacements were hard to find. These Divisions relied more on their intrinsic heavy artillery and heavy weapons than on infantry flexibility.*

## 4.0 Optional Rules

**4.0a Series Optionals.** Given the exhausted state of both Armies, we strongly recommend players do not use OCS 21.2 Proportional Loss or OCS 21.10 Supply Caches. While these rules are popular among many players, attack capability was more limited and supply reserves were marginal in this theatre by the end of 1944.

OCS rules 21.4 Long Range Air effects, 21.5 Re-Basing Limits and 13.7b Fog of War are the only Series optional rules we recommend for use in this game.

**4.0b Horthy Speech.** On 15 October 1944, Hungarian leader Admiral Horthy made a speech by radio requesting an armistice with the Soviets, causing some confusion among Hungarian troops. On that turn, roll one die for each time any Hungarian unit wishes to move, change Mode, barrage, and/or attack (do not roll for air units):

Make one die roll per unit counter (Exceptions: 1 Hung Pz and 2 Hung Pz Divs make one roll per Division).

On a roll of 1-3, the unit Fails.

On a roll of 4-6, the unit functions normally.

If the unit Fails, it cannot move, attack, barrage or change Mode at all this turn. Rotate the counter of the units that Fail to mark them as such.

This event happens only during one turn and only once in the game.

Optional. If both players agree to add surprise, the Axis rolls one die starting on the 12 Oct turn:

On a 1-2 the speech takes place this turn; on a roll of 3-6 it does not and the Axis player rolls again next turn.

On 15 Oct the roll becomes: On a 1-4 the speech takes place this turn, on a roll of 5-6 it does not.

The speech happens automatically on 19 Oct if it has not occurred before then.

*Design Note. Admiral Horthy was attempting to arrange a surrender of Hungary to the Soviet forces and negotiations were taking place during the October fighting. Immediately after the speech, the Germans carried out a coup led by famous commando Otto Skorzeny, which installed the fascist Arrow Cross party in power.*

**4.0c Hungarian-Rumanian Antagonism.** Every time Rumanian units attack any Major or Minor City hex of Budapest; the Rumanian units have their step losses multiplied by two.

*Design Note. The Hungarians fought ferociously when they had to face what they regarded as their “old” enemy. At one point, Malinovsky had to withdraw the 7 Rumanian Corps from the battle of Budapest for this reason.*

**4.0d Plijev & Gorskov HQs.** These two HQs were created to control a mixed group of cavalry and armored units for fast-moving exploitation. They can only throw Trace Supply or Combat Supply to Cavalry, Mechanized or Armored units (including Cavalry, Tank, and/or Mechanized Corps) and an unlimited number of independent units (Artillery Divisions included). They cannot throw Trace Supply or Combat Supply to Infantry Divisions, including the three Motorized Divisions (68 Gd Inf, 99 Inf and 316 Inf Div).



**4.0e KG Pape.** This formation marker can be used to place any Axis Track and/or Truck MA units (independent or belonging to other divisions) in the same hex, into an area off the map. These units then function as a multi-unit formation per OCS 13.7. It has the same properties as a Pz or PG multi-unit division marker. Units must stay off the map and are considered in the same hex as KG Pape.

*Design Note. This special Kampfgruppe is commanded by Günther Pape.*

**4.0f Jansen Fueling Rule.** A Multi Unit Formation (“MUF”, such as a Soviet Mech corps or German Pz division) can fuel and move in a player’s Movement Phase (not the Reaction or

Exploitation Phases), for the supply cost of only 1T, with the following restrictions:

The units to be moved cannot start, move or end next to an enemy combat unit. (Note that enemy ZOCs are not an issue here.)

The units can only be in Combat Mode. No road movement bonus can be used (i.e. moving on a road at 1/2 is prohibited). Road movement costs at least 1MP (weather effects must be followed). A Road still functions to negate other terrain in the hex for movement purposes.

All units of the MUF are not required to use Jansen Fueling. Any unit or units can move normally at the cost of 1T each, if desired.

***Development Note.** Steve Jansen is the leader of the Baltimore NEBO Grogards, our war gaming club. He developed this house rule during our recent play of Beyond the Rhine. Our club has been using this rule with great results since April 2016. Give it a try; I think you will find it works very well. (Highly recommended.)*

#### 4.0g Barrage Table—Player Choice.

For any barrage, a player may choose the barrage table column on the Barrage Table limited only by the barrage strength available for that barrage. For example, if the Soviet player has an artillery division with 144 barrage strength, he does not have to resolve the barrage on the 117+ column of the Barrage Table, paying 10T. He may choose to use a lower strength column: for instance, the 41-68 column, paying 6T. (Saving 4T, 10T – 6T = 4T). (Highly recommended.)

#### 4.0h Mountain Unit Capabilities.

A mountain unit attacking into or defending in a mountain terrain hex adds +1 to its action rating. (Highly recommended.)

## Designer's Notes

### By Stéphane Acquaviva

Hungarian Rhapsody depicts the five-month campaign which took the Soviet Army from Romania to the capture of Budapest.

#### The Map

The battlefield covers the Carpathian Basin in southern Slovakia, western Romania and most of Hungary. We chose to show the borders and town and city names as they were in October 1944.

There are three Axis defensive fortification lines printed on the map.

The Árpád Line (which is non-contiguous in the northern part of the map).

The Margit Line southwest of Budapest, and

The Budapest/Attila fortifications (north and east of, and inside Budapest).

The oil refinery at Komárom (A30.09), and the oil fields at Nagykanizsa (A52.01) and Zisterdorf (a few hexes west of the map edge approximately at the 19.XX hexrow) were the last remaining such facilities to the Axis powers. Their loss was viewed as catastrophic by the German high command. In addition, the area around Budapest contained the largest Axis sources of bauxite and manganese.

Stalin and Stavka, on the other hand, paid these resources little attention. The Soviets fixated on geographic objectives and the activity of major Axis mobile forces, ignoring economic targets.

The Soviet Ground Forces

Three different Fronts participated in this campaign:

- The 4th Ukrainian Front (commanded by Petrov) had the difficult mission to attack from the north through mountain passes. This Front was active in Hungary from 6 Oct 1944 through 12 Feb 1945, when most of the troops were transferred further north.

- The 2nd Ukrainian Front (commanded by Malinovsky) attacked from the east and could have potentially outflanked the Carpathian Mountains to the south by seizing Budapest and advancing towards Vienna. It was the strongest Front in the theater.

- The 3rd Ukrainian Front (commanded by Tolbukhin) arrived at the start of November 1944 from Yugoslavia and fought in Hungary and Austria beside the 2nd Ukrainian Front through the end of the war.

The Soviet offensive backbone was three Tank Corps, five Mechanized Corps and three Cavalry Corps. Russian Cavalry Corps now had one Tank Regiment, one SU Battalion and one Katyusha, so they could better stand up to armored attacks. In late 1944, each Soviet Cavalry Corps had three Tank regiments attached but in Hungary, the 4 Gd, 5 Gd and 6 Gd Cav Corps had never enough T-34/76 or Lend-lease Tanks. That's why the three Tank Regiments are amalgamated to form one Tank Regiment by Cavalry Corps (Labelled 4, 5 and 6).

These hard-hitting units were supported by 89 Soviet, 17 Rumanian, and 3 Yugoslavian Infantry Divisions together with some small Czech units and Slovak Partisans. While the Allied divisions were generally of low quality, the three Soviet Fronts have 24 Infantry divisions that are 3-AR and 15 Infantry divisions that are 4-AR, so nearly half of the Soviet infantry is of good quality.

For those ratings, we used the Sharp documentation text and it was assumed that Guard units were of higher quality.

For Soviet infantry divisions, we applied a basic 1-AR if the unit had no awards. A 2-AR a unit had 1 or 2 awards, 3-AR for 3 awards, and 4-AR for 4 awards or more.

With Guard units, 2-AR was the base where there were no awards, 3-AR for 1 or 2 awards, and 4-AR for 3 or more awards.

The awards used in this determination were Red Banner, Suvarov, Kutuzof, Lenin, and Bogdan Khmelnitskyi.

The best Soviet infantry divisions included small independent units of SU-76 and SU-85 assault guns serving as support. These were then integrated into the infantry divisions with additional small artillery and/or AT units.

The Soviets have large numbers of artillery units ranging in size from regiment to division level. These are difficult to utilize when the front is moving but are formidable when the lines stabilize.

### The Soviet Air Forces

The Soviet air forces contained three Air Armies. These were greatly limited at the beginning of the campaign (due to logistical constraints) and faced a relatively strong German air presence, but the balance shifted steadily to the Soviet's favor.

I would like to share something I found during my research for Hungarian Rhapsody concerning the use of the Soviet air forces (VVS). I had been surprised to find that the Axis did not suffer at all from Soviet air attacks on airbases.

I assumed this was because of heavy Flak concentrations (3 or 4 times early war standards), but I continued to dig and found two excellent books and finally a quite interesting answer. These were James Sterrett's *Soviet Air Force Theory 1918-1945*, 2007 and Ivan Timokhovich's *The Operational Art of the Soviet Air Force during the Great Patriotic War*, 1977.

Both authors agree that the VVS was not capable of launching efficient strikes on air bases. They tried to do so on rare occasions (such as when German airbases were near the front and during the Battle of Kursk), but even these had very poor results.

Here are the figures from the Soviet archives, showing the percentage of air missions which were attacks on enemy airbases:

1941: 2.8%  
1942: 3%  
1943: 2%

1944: 1.5%

1945: 1.4%

In game terms, there are no Air Barrages against Air Bases. Fighter Sweeps are allowed as they deal with a very different operational activity.

The Luftwaffe did not bomb airbases during this campaign as well. This was late war doctrine. Most OCS games model warfare in the early period of the war where striking enemy air bases was standard procedure in the east. The rules work very well for that period and also for the Western Front until the end of the war. Modelling the late air war in the east, however, is another story.

Soviet flak assets were formidable. Bombing behind Soviet lines became a nightmare for the Germans after May 1943. The German high command decided to stop bombing the Soviet airbases at that time. By the time of Kursk, doctrine had completely changed, and no air base strikes were allowed. The Luftwaffe tried airbase bombing missions again in May and June in the Kursk area during Operation Carmen. They did their best using 95 bombers, 64 fighter-bombers, 299 fighters from Luftflotte 6 and 138 bombers from VIII Fliegerkorps, but these missions were unsuccessful.

Christer Bergström researched the failure of these airbase missions, saying, "These two major setbacks over Kursk contributed to the OKL's decision to REFRAIN from carrying out any air operations in daylight against the Soviet rear area..." (p. 21, Christer Bergström, *Kursk, the Air Battle: July 43*, Ian Allan Publishing 2007) (emphasis added).

He concludes, "...it was clear that the intended strikes against the Soviet airfields simply could not be carried out with any success...the Soviet air defense at these airfields had proved to be too strong to permit the kind of massive attack which the German plan envisaged. When the crews received the instructions, it was obvious that this would be quite an unorthodox operation. For the first time since Operation Barbarossa, two years previously, the Wehrmacht would

launch a major offensive without any preceding aerial onslaught against supply routes, rail, installations, headquarters, airfields, etc. in the Russia rear area. That there would be no attacks against Russian airfields was particularly unusual." (p.37, *Kursk, the Air Battle: July 43*).

I have confirmed that after 5 July 1943, the Germans virtually never struck Soviet rear areas or airfields. Therefore, under the circumstances cited, I believe that after 5 July 1943, there should be no air base barrage missions allowed on the Eastern Front.

One unique exception to this policy was the German attack on the US Air Force shuttle-bombing base which had been created at Poltava. German He-111s and Ju-88s destroyed over 50 Allied aircraft and did extensive damage to the airfield on June 22 1944. However, this was a night operation carried out by those charged with defense of Germany from the Allied strategic bombing campaign, completely separate from operational-level activity.

### The German Army

The campaign started in October with three principal German Armies:

- The 1st Panzer Army facing the 4th Ukrainian Front to the north. Most of the 1st Panzer Army departed to go north in mid-February 1945. It was "Panzer" in name only and contained only infantry divisions.
- The 6th Army in southern Hungary and the 8th Army to the east facing the 2nd Ukrainian Front.
- The 6th SS Panzer Army arrived later in the campaign, during February 1945, after their unsuccessful battles in the Ardennes Offensive on the Western Front.

Many panzer divisions took part in the campaign at various times. Unlike the Soviet OB which is quite stable, German units experienced considerable turnover. This was the result of the situation on other Fronts.

In total, the Germans had 13 panzer, 3 panzergrenadier, 2 cavalry divisions and

2 cavalry brigades present in this theater at different times from Oct 1944 to Feb 1945. The total seems large, but the actual presence at any one time was much smaller.

Examining the counters, there was also a qualitative decline—the Panzerwaffe was not the force it used to be.

The Wehrmacht suffered massive infantry losses during the summer of 1944 and could spare only 26 infantry divisions of all types in the theater (Infantry, Jager, Mountain, and Ski). This was insufficient to face the Soviet advance. A wise German player will need to carefully conserve infantry steps.

The Germans also fielded good quality supporting AT, Panzer, StuG and King Tiger units.

By this time of the war, some StuG units were quite elite and had much better effectiveness than any other tank or AG units. This had to be reflected in the game in view of the large number of Soviet tanks these units destroyed.

The German StuG units are divided into three levels.

- The 4-5-6 AG Battalions represent the most famous units with many high scoring aces.
- The 4-4-6 AG Bn represent the standard StuG units. They are of normal competence.
- The 4-3-6 AG Bn represents a unit of poorer quality and no StuG aces.

Three battalions of King Tigers fought in Hungary (501, 503 and 509 s.Pz.Abt.). At this point of the war, Axis doctrine was to NEVER group these three units together because of Soviet artillery and air superiority. The units were always dispatched to separate locations. It was therefore decided to represent them as companies (3-5-4 Pz Co). Our sources show that each battalion was never concentrated to fight in one location, let alone work with the other battalions.

The (1)-5-6 PJ represents the small number of Nashorn tank destroyers

available. This unit is too small to have any attack capacity but was formidable in defense.

Another significant asset was the 15th Flak Division with its numerous 88mm guns deployed in their anti-tank role. Given the lack of infantry, the division fought in the front lines and provided excellent AT support.

There are two German Training Divisions (153 and 154 Tng Div) in the area. I decided to not include those as such because they were too precious to engage in battles and formed the core of the Wehrmacht training system. On certain occasions, those divisions sent Regiments or Kampfgruppe into battle when the situation deteriorated too much. However, entire divisions were never deployed. I showed those Regiments or Kampfgruppen as 3-3-2 instead.

#### The Luftwaffe

The Luftwaffe was quite strong in the theater given the presence of the prestigious Jägdgeschwader 52 as well as numerous elite pilots, such as Rudel.

One of those elite units, II /JG 52, was the best fighter unit in the entire Luftwaffe. It contained aces such as Erich Hartmann, Gerhard Barkhorn and Helmut Lipfert. Those pilots had between 200 and 300 victories (or more). The unit is represented by the 6-1-53 rated Me-109G.

However, the Luftwaffe began to field more and more inexperienced pilots. German aircraft of a given type (except Ju-52s) have two different quality ratings based on their pilot experience levels.

#### The Hungarian Army

Three Hungarian Armies were available to fight in this theater.

- The 1st Hungarian Army fought with the 1st Panzer Army in the north.
- The 2nd Hungarian Army fought with the 8th Army to the east.
- The 3rd Hungarian Army fought in the south with the 6th Army.

Hungarian forces, while not a match for the Soviets, could delay the Red Army. Without German units present, they would melt away fairly easily. The exceptions are their two small armored divisions, the 1st Hussar (1st cavalry Division) and the Szent-László Divisions. Those were veteran or elite divisions with a rating of at least 3.

The Hungarian air force, although small, was considered of outstanding quality and fought very well until the end of the war. The Hungarians locally produced German aircraft designs under license for their forces.

#### Acknowledgments

When I started this project, I could never have imagined the amount of work actually needed to complete it. It simply exceeded all the estimates I had in mind.

I would like to thank all the people who helped me to give life to Hungarian Rhapsody. The playtesters who patiently played and replayed so many scenarios (my friend Martin Staunton in particular, his role was crucial). This was real team effort, thank you all.

I would like to thank Kamen Nevenkin and Számvéber Norbert both of whom I had the pleasure to meet. Their knowledge of the theater of operation was priceless. I strongly recommend their books for those interested in the Hungarian Campaign and most are translated into English.

A special thanks to Carl Fung; he is really one of the finest specialists of OOB on earth.

This *OCS* game would never have arrived on your tables without two individuals: Curtis Baer (the developer) and Chip Saltzman. It was their *OCS* experience and extreme patience that made HR what it is now. Their input and innovative ideas were crucial. I could never imagine a better development team. Thank you, guys!

Finally, I would like to thank Dean Essig without whom Hungarian Rhapsody would have never existed. He

made us understand what was needed and what was not. We all learned a lot from him. Thank you Dean!

Now, I let you discover the Beast and wish to all of you "Bon Jeu!" (Good game!)

## Developer's Notes

### By Curtis H. Baer

Stéphane Aquaviva was kind enough to playtest Reluctant Enemies ("RE") for me back in 2011 and 2012. He and his friend Martin Staunton did a very good job of this. They provided detailed reports often accompanied by great action photos. It was the next best thing to being there. So, when Stéphane mentioned that he was designing a game on the operations by the Soviets to capture Budapest in 1944-45, I just couldn't refuse his request to return the favor.

I began playtesting HR in June 2014, primarily with Chip Saltsman. We got some other local OCS enthusiasts involved and quickly became absorbed with the game. I found myself questioning Stéphane more and more about the game specific rules, each time getting detailed answers which educated me regarding this campaign. I started reading many of the books on this campaign. Some of those were located conveniently on the bar counter of the first floor game room in my house. As our involvement increased this room in my house became the "War Room" for development of HR.

John Kisner in May 2015 asked if I would develop HR. I was hesitant about this because I was aware of the work required by the development process from my experience with RE. After consultation with Chip Saltsman, and realizing our full commitment to HR, I accepted this development assignment as the right thing to do and something I could do, but only with Chip's assistance.

Little did I know that developing HR would be (well, to keep it civil), "such a challenge."

My experience at development is limited to RE. For those who don't know, RE is a very small OCS game (one map, one-half countersheet) designed, devised and published as an OCS beginner's, learning type game. While the research and design of RE was not insubstantial, it was nowhere near the scope and size of the Soviet's operations to capture Budapest in HR. There were some significant development challenges presented by HR.

### Soviet Logistical Limitations

By far the most difficult development issue was the severe logistical limitations faced by the Soviets in this campaign. In OCS terms the most significant was: the Soviets had no functioning rail net on the map, and they did not convert rails to Soviet broad gauge at all during the campaign. They did however make some very limited use of the European gauge rails and local rolling stock.

Stéphane's design first addressed those limitations by having no Soviet rail net prior to Dec 1944 and by providing numerous trucks and wagons to move supply points forward from the east map edge. Then in Dec 1944 a full blown rail net, with 10 Soviet rail cap instantly materialized. I know, looking back on that, it never seemed right from the beginning. We went through many iterations of supply net mechanics, including the monkey drill of moving back and forth masses of truck markers to move supply forward in an OCS literal way (which was in fact what the Soviets were doing.) It was the Soviet equivalent of the American "Red Ball Express."

I wanted to avoid this tedious process for the sake of the player's sanity (I'm a player too). After conferring with my local Baltimore game club leader (and OCS mentor) Steve Jansen on this subject, the solution which is now the rule in HR came into focus. Soviet Truck Cap (3.1d) is the representation of the literal movement of supply by trucks without the tedious physical work of moving the OCS counters. The Truck Cap Table was developed to allow for the "statistically expected"

amount of supply to be received in a given month to arrive at Soviet Front HQs (3.1c) directly. This was the way Soviet resources were actually distributed, from Stavka to the fronts. Accordingly, on-map truck and wagon counters were greatly reduced as most of these transportation assets were accounted for moving supply via Truck Cap. In like regard, the forward point of Trace Supply became the three Soviet Fronts. There is some help in the form of two "Special Wagon Extenders" (3.1e) which function only as extenders of Trace Supply (they cannot be flipped to regular wagon points.) So beware, as in most OCS games, but even more so for the Soviet Player in HR, the proper positioning of the Fronts and their respective army HQs becomes very important for the establishment of an effective supply net. In addition, I strongly advise that you not let the enemy cut off your line of communications from a map edge supply source to a Front Marker.

There were two other primary Soviet logistics concerns that had to be addressed.

First, there was a nearly complete lack of coordination of operations between Petrov's 4th Ukrainian Front located in the north along the Carpathian Mountains and Malinovsky's huge 2nd Ukrainian Front fighting just south through the Hungarian plains to Budapest. The solution to this issue in HR is a prohibition on movement by the 4th Ukrainian Front units south of the "White Line" (1.2a), which runs east/west the length of the map, twenty hexes below the north map edge. These 4th Ukrainian Front units have all been given a White Frame on the counter for easy identification. The same holds true for the Axis. The German 1st Panzer Army and the Hungarian 1st Army (again all White Frame units are restricted to movement north of the White Line, only).

Second, regardless of the ostensible effectiveness of the "Soviet Red Ball Express," the research made clear that the Soviets had a pretty hard geographic limit on their supply net. The further

west they had to truck supplies, the more wear and tear it put on the system. Stéphane established early on that this outside limit was ten hexes east of the west map edge. The Yellow Line (3.1f) can be crossed by Soviet forces, but at a great cost in *OCS* terms. Any use of supply by the Soviets is quadrupled across the Yellow Line. Simple and effective, but not entirely satisfactory (it's another damn line on the map).

### **South Balaton Garrison**

The South Balaton restriction Area (1.2b) came about as a practical mechanism to ease the burden of game play for this area of operations. Hitler was very much focused on the last of his oil wells at Nagykanizsa (A52.01). He had a substantial force committed to their defense. Stavka was not as focused on those oil wells. Stalin was concerned primarily with the capture of Budapest, in time to brag about it at the upcoming Yalta conference. Playtesting revealed what happened in reality: there was a standoff in this area. Thanks to Forest Webb for finally recognizing what now appears obvious. He called for the withdrawal of the troops involved in this stand off as not worthy of an interesting gaming situation.

### **Tank Busters**

There is a new type of Aircraft in the *OCS*, the Tank Buster (2.2a). We decided to include those mission-focused, specially-equipped air groups after much discussion on this issue by many knowledgeable *OCS* guys, sometimes heated discussion.

The purpose of the rule is simple: to provide for the apparent effect at an operational level for the specialized missions flown by those units. Those groups literally existed to find and destroy enemy AFVs. The record shows they were quite effective.

I feel the rule in its final iteration is no more than what was originally intended: a little bit of chrome to show the effects of these specialized air units later in the war. This rule can have a small but noticeable effect on the game.

All the rounds of agonizing over this rule were apparently nothing more than a tempest in a tea pot (or a storm in a teacup for my British friends).

### **Soviet Infantry Support and AT AFVs**

The configuration of the Soviet SP Infantry Support and AT units is based on much research and robust discussion about how these units were employed during the war. The Soviet units resemble German Assault Gun (Sturmgeschuetz) units but were not tactically employed the same way. They were always self-propelled artillery, and not designed for an assault role as a tank substitute. Part of the confusion comes from comparison with German practice, which commonly used assault guns to replace tanks. We handled these units differently depending on how they actually functioned:

- Su-76 – These can best be described as infantry support vehicles. They had only very limited anti-tank capabilities, so they are not given AT effects (coloring their unit type box red would give them a multiple when attacking that isn't warranted). They are instead "SP Artillery" type.
- Su-85 – Intended as a tank destroyer, but its gun was not particularly effective against later-war German tanks. We have denoted these "Anti Tank" but not colored the unit type box.
- Su-100 – This was very effective tank destroyer and employed as such by Soviet forces (some are still in service around the world). These have Anti-tank symbols with a yellow box.
- JSU 122/152 – Referred to as "Beast Killers" by the Soviets, these were used as an AT platform (albeit up front and personal), Assault Gun, and SP Arty. These have been designated AG with a yellow box.

### **Heavy Tanks**

We had contemplated using a Heavy Tanks rule being playtested in Tony Birkett's upcoming *OCS* design, The Third Winter ("TTW"). This game will depict the battles from late September 1943 through the spring mud of 1944

along the Dnieper River, from about 50 miles north of Kiev, south to the Black Sea. This was the period when the first truly heavy tanks for each antagonist began to come into operational use. The rule added another level of "tank heaviness" to the armor effects table, making the heavy tanks 2x combat strength in clear against "regular" tanks. I playtested TTW using this rule the past few years and found it intuitive and easy to accommodate in play. You really had to beware of open terrain, whether planning as the attacker with the heavies or preparing a defense against the same. It was another level of *OCS* play that I thought added to that particular game. I wrote a rule to include it here in HR.

However, when dealing with an evolving military technology such as more effective tanks, it presents a problem for the game designer. In *OCS* terms, what we envisioned was another level of armor and AT Effects as in TTW. We found another way to deal with this issue is to have small but effective units (5-AR Company-sized formations) which reflect the way these super tanks were often employed. As a developer, it is a really tricky balance to decide whether something unique to a given campaign is important enough to warrant a special rule.

After much discussion (again sometimes heated) we decided to abandon the Heavy Tanks rule as unnecessary at this time. Instead we included the heavy's as company sized units. As John Kisner pointed out, you could make a case for an extra level of heavy tanks (or two or three) at almost any point in the war. So, where would it end? We may revisit this rule in the future, with the purpose of showing where the end should be in fact.

### **Soviet Fronts and RVGK**

Again, from my playtesting of TTW, I have borrowed from Tony Birkett – Soviet Fronts and the RVGK.

I have always thought there was a missing element of operational command and control in the *OCS*. The almost tactical use of corps level HQs to show engineering functions,

contrasted with the all-important army (or higher) level function of providing resources to your fighting formations (SPs, Trace Supply and replacements) by the same corps level HQs struck me as odd. It seems to me we need to address this higher-level HQ function much more comprehensively in the OCS, as well as provide for engineering functions without a corps HQ physically present. However, I'm digressing into an OCS Honcho role here that will be left for another time.

I have explained above the importance of Soviet Fronts in HR regarding supply. The Fronts also play a vital role as the focal point to the massive Soviet higher-level, "backfield" replacement and rebuild function for primarily tank and mechanized corps. The RVGK (3.3b) (an acronym for Reserve of the Supreme High Command) was provided by Stavka to prepare the Fronts for major operations. To show this process in OCS terms in HR, surviving units of a Soviet multi unit formation must first be withdrawn from the map to allow its dead component units to rebuild from the dead pile. When the major units of that MUF (Tank and Mech brigades primarily) have all been rebuilt, then the entire formation may return to play within two hexes of the rebuilding Front. This simulates the actual method employed by Stavka to rebuild these corps, especially later in the war. It seems cumbersome at first, and may take getting used to, but with experience it simply becomes another aspect of OCS play.

I encourage you to embrace these higher-level HQ functions. As I stated above I intend to address OCS treatment of higher-level HQs in the future.

### Acknowledgements

Stéphane Aquaviva has done a superb job researching this topic. This necessary grunt work is expected for any wargame and Stéphane's effort here is impressive of itself. But it's his genuine, unbridled enthusiasm for all aspects of this campaign which will truly impress you when you have the chance

to speak to him about it. He was a wonderful guy to work with. In addition, he notably kept his cool when things got a little crazy. Thanks Stéphane for HR, another nail biter OCS game. Now, maybe I've repaid my debt for your dedicated playtesting my RE.

This game would not have been produced without all the dedicated and persistent hard work of Chip Saltsman, the Assistant Developer. I have worked successfully with Chip on OCS projects for the past 6 years now. Back then he was the "OCS Newbie" who wrote the OCS Starter Guide that came with RE. And now he is the Assistant Honcho for the OCS. This is all well deserved. Thanks Chip, for this body of work on HR. Your support means a great deal indeed.

Forest Webb provided dedicated service as a lead play tester. In addition, he challenged our assumptions on the game-specific rules which thankfully resulted in a more thoroughly developed HR. Thanks, Forest, for all your help making this game better.

Steve Jansen, as I mentioned above, played a significant role in the development of this game. I must tell you he plays another important role – "The Idea Guy." He actually sits quietly and really thinks carefully about these matters I ask him to consider. And with great effect. For this I'm grateful. He's a dear friend, my OCS mentor, and an important member of the OCS Kitchen Cabinet. Thanks Steve, for all your help on HR.

Special thanks are due to Alan Murphy, Alden Greene and Martin Staunton. These gentlemen were early play testers for Stéphane and without their help in this regard, we wouldn't have HR as another OCS game for our consideration.

My thanks also go out to every play tester, proofreader and utility infielder-type guy who answered the call to help on this project. I know from experience what hard work this is, and I truly appreciate the effort. In fact, each of you should please remind me to buy you

an adult beverage of your choice when I next see you. Thank you, gentlemen.

## Soviet Players' Notes

### By Chip Saltsman

#### Campaign Game as the Soviets

Playing the Soviets in Hungarian Rhapsody is like being a ferocious dog that charges at Budapest, only to jerk up short when it reaches the end of its chain.

The Germans dance maddeningly out of reach of your slavering snout. Every so often, the chain gets longer and you can surge forward again. It's a fun challenge.

Here are some tips:

- The Red Star Rule: Every unit you kill in the open is one you don't need to kill in Budapest!
- Needless to say, you never have all the supply you would like, so you need to be sparing. What don't you absolutely need to fuel this turn? You have mounds of artillery you don't want to fire unless your Red Air Force fails to DG a vital target. Save artillery ammo for the scrum and shoving near Budapest unless its expenditure is vital.
- Not only don't you have the Supply Points you need, you don't yet have the supply net you need. You cannot make Truck Extenders, but in time you will have two Special Wagon Extenders (3.1e.) Plan very carefully where you will put those and the Headquarters that draw Trace Supply from them, so that you maximize your reach. One extender might go somewhere between Nagyvárad (B34.11) and Debrecen (B27.08) to support your forces operating to the north or on the direct route to Budapest. The other might be positioned to support a drive west across the Danube River through Szeged (A50.31).
- You have more Headquarters than you need to create your supply net. Use some of them for their Engineering capabilities, particularly Bridging. They can make Minor River hex sides vanish and open a path over the Tisza River.

- And you have pontoons! Three to start with, six over time. Before they are used for the Danube, you want to think hard about where these vital units go. A pontoon when deployed in combat mode creates a track across all adjacent major and minor rivers. One might go north to assist your forces in seizing Csap (B12.10) and cutting off the retreat of the German 8th Army. One might go south of Szeged (A50.31) to facilitate a southern hook. One might go to any of several spots along the Tisza River north of Szeged up to the White Line hex row so you can rush the center. They only need to be on the top of a stack when they are adjacent to the Danube River, so employ lots of Maskirovka.

- The Axis player has a Pontoon too. It has a habit of materializing most inconveniently. And their Headquarters have the same Bridging tricks yours do (they also have more HQ units than they need to deal with supply). Effective German players are always looking to strike a backhand blow in a sensitive area. You have been warned!

- During the first 8 game turns (5 Oct to 29 Oct), your goal is to create more problems than the Axis can react to. Bust into Szeged (A50.31) to force him to react with his mobile units and tie them down, before popping over the Tisza River elsewhere. Drive violently north, so that your opponent must garrison every Tisza River bridge crossing, and either trap the German 8th Army or ensure it departs as fast as possible (hinder them by Trainbusting choke points along their escape path). Surround the 1st Panzer and 23rd Panzer divisions in their starting positions and force them to spend their energies saving themselves instead of hurting you. The historical battle of Debrecen happened in part because the Germans and Hungarian forces weren't pressed hard enough elsewhere. Did I mention that every unit you can kill now in the open is one you don't have to pry out of Budapest later? Just as you will find yourself lacking in Infantry steps, so will your opponent. A German 4-AR Division that starves attempting to

garrison Debrecen (B27.08) or Nyíregyháza (B20.07) is one you won't face later.

- When you break through in a vital area, swarm the field with units. The Axis can play Whack-A-Mole against a one (or two) hex bridgehead, so make your exploitation too big for them to deal with. Decent Axis players can cut through a light cordon! I have seen them create Wagon Extenders to get around the loss of Csap (B12.10) and escape what I presumed to be a fatal encirclement.

- Like any OCS game, you need to map out your anticipated supply net a few turns in advance, and then work to create it. Same with the places where you want your key units and major forces. Ask yourself at the start of every turn: "What is The Key Thing to do?" Then focus on that Key Thing relentlessly and exclusively. There is so much you can do in OCS that inexperienced players often get distracted with Mission Creep, or they spend SPs and units on secondary matters. Go sit down on your opponent's side of the table and ask yourself how you would deal with the situation confronting them.

- Prior to 1 December, pontoons over the Danube River do not function at full effectiveness. As a consequence, no major operations across the Danube River are realistic until then. You can get infantry forces west of the Danube River before then, but they are vulnerable. This is a use of resources that must be seriously evaluated. Think hard on this point.

- You get GREAT Variable Reinforcements, particularly Equipment, aircraft and Cavalry/Motorized units. Let them take the casualties, as they can come back.

- December will be a magical time for the Soviets in 1944. Hungary is the only active front, and Stalin favors you with showers of SP. At some point, your opponent will suffer the Hungarian Collapse. Suddenly your forces that were gasping for supply have more than they seemingly could ever use. It's a

wonderful holiday gift from Santa Stalin, but he wants results!

- Should you have been lucky enough to obtain Artillery Ammunition markers, this is the moment you have been waiting for. All that artillery, silent until now, can thunder into life. Use it as "Breakthrough Artillery" to DG entire sectors you plan to steamroll, or to get your forces adjacent to Budapest.

- Don't forget that you need to surround Budapest from the North as well as the South (and possibly get a Pontoon up there to increase the Axis player's pain), if you declared "Surround Budapest" as your Objective. When you surround the city, it needs to be a massive, decisive, overwhelming kind of encirclement, since letting the Axis restore Trace Supply is A Very Bad Thing.

#### **Axis Tendencies to Take Advantage of...**

There are some tendencies of inexperienced Axis players which can throw the game out of balance in your favor.

#### **Tendency #1:**

Stretched Too Thin.

Defending north of the White Line (19.xx hex row) too far forward so their forces are too stretched out. All that defensible terrain looks just too good to give up!

Welcome this. You can stretch them out, push along all the transportation lines, and ooze around them. The north can become a real sinkhole for Axis units. The mountain battles are like the chess match you see between opponents in OCS Burma.

#### **Tendency #2:**

Sticking One's Head into the Lion's Mouth.

Launching late November/early December spoiling attacks with Axis mobile units. With the massive Soviet supply, you can make holiday mincemeat of them—need I remind you that every unit you can kill in the open need not be killed in Budapest?

You might even leave something that looks tempting to lure them out (like a Pontoon! They come back with an Eq, so losing one isn't fatal).

**Tendency #3:**

Budapest is too Weak.

When the Soviet jaws snap shut around the city, the Axis player must defend with what's there. It ought to be 6-9 steps per hex, but it's so easy for those steps to be somewhere else that seemed vital a few turns earlier. Any unit the Soviets can lure out of Budapest doesn't need to be blasted out. The Soviets might even capture a few hexes with a breakthrough, particularly as you come around west of the city.

**Tendency #4:**

Believing in the Margit Line.

This is the line of "hogs" between Budapest and Lake Balaton. It's a lovely defensive line, but the Soviets can power through it more easily than the Axis player would expect! A few hexes back are Heavy Woods and other, MUCH better locations for defensive works. The Axis player may not have sufficient supply to Hog the whole thing but putting Hogs on the transportation lines will give them a few more turns to escape encirclement. The Soviets can pulverize the Margit Line with massive artillery during December and choose their spot to pierce it.

**Countering Konrad**

By January, the Soviets are quite likely to have encircled Budapest. Now they must reduce the city while simultaneously holding off the frantic Axis efforts to break through the Soviet lines. To make things even more difficult, the other Fronts in the Great Patriotic War are again active. Supplies for your Front return to stingy levels.

•The Danube River is a shield the Axis can't cross without their Pontoon. But they have one, so the Soviets should not fail to line the river with units if facing a creative player.

•North of Budapest the Danube River is not a barrier for German forces so

make sure they can't easily come that way.

•The most likely routes of the Axis counterattacks are the river road (A31.11 to A29.15), through the center (A33.11 to A34.15) or sweeping through the open terrain back towards the Margit Line. Of these, the Margit Line route plays to Axis strengths—they would LOVE to engage the Soviets in the open with all their 5-AR units. Oh, and when they re-occupy the Margit Line, remember that those Hogs magically become active again.

•Budapest is a transportation nexus, but it doesn't have a "beltway." Shifting units around the encircled city is difficult. Soviet players will find it helpful to bring up some Pontoons to provide as many water crossings as possible.

•The Soviet player doesn't have to beat the German counterattacks as much as block them. Plus, Soviets may have sufficient supply to only choose between reducing the city and bludgeoning the German Panzers.

•Budapest is a tough nut. Once the Soviets take all the outer defensive works, they are faced with seven city hexes that have printed Hogs. Two of those city hexes are Major City (Extremely Close terrain), and one of those has a Level 2 Hog. Taking these hexes, particularly if filled with Axis forces, can require several turns of layered attacks.

The Soviet menu of options includes:

•DG the target hex before anything else, hopefully with a Hip Shoot.

•Overrun it with adjacent stacks of Infantry or bring in a Cavalry Corps.

•Barrage it with the monster Soviet 144-Strength Katyusha division (which can often kill a step outright).

•Attack it during the Combat Phase.

•Overrun it again with a Cavalry Corps in Exploit Movement.

•Attack with Exploit stacks.

•Keep a 90-Barrage Strength Artillery unit in range and in Reserve, to pound

the hex during the Axis turn—you might kill another step.

Hit Budapest City hexes every single turn, maybe even focusing on two hexes at a time. The Soviet player will take losses. They will get AL2's. They will suffer AL1o1's while the Axis forces get measly Do1's. It's OK. Keep plugging away at this (historically, Budapest was surrounded on 26 December and finally fell on 12 February, so it took the Soviets about 14 turns to capture these 7 hexes).

Caution—at some point the Axis will realize that Budapest is a big nest of spotters and commence bombing adjacent stacks of assaulting forces. The Luftwaffe is only so big and it can't be everywhere.

The Axis cannot be allowed to re-establish Trace Supply to a Budapest hex controlled by the Soviets, so the Soviet player might focus on the more western side of the city first (A32.17 and A34.17). The Level 2 Hog in hex A33.18 (Gellert Hill or Castle Hill) may be the one to save for the end since it is a particularly tough nut to crack.

If your German opponent takes the southern route, you don't have to fight him in the open. Jump behind the Váli Creek (it flows between A33.13 to A37.17) and set up in the terrain there. The Soviet player might even build a few Hogs of his own. Place Mech Corps and Tank Corps ready to jump in where needed—they may need to stay in reserve around hex A34.16 to avoid overcrowding in the terrain just west of Budapest.

When facing an Axis double-turn, the Soviet player should DG every Axis unit in reach to reduce their effectiveness. A well-placed Trainbusting marker can also seriously mess with their evil little plans.

Look at that Soviet replacement schedule! Yum yum! The Soviets can count on 2-3 Eq per turn, 2-3 Cav/Motorized per turn, and often a Rumanian. Let those units do most of the dying—once you burn out your 5-AR Assault Engineers, anything with a 4-AR becomes your lead unit, and the

Cavalry or Armor units are most easily replaced.

You might find an opponent who gives up Pest and stacks units 10-high in Buda (Budapest was originally two cities, Buda west of the Danube, and Pest to the east). Thank him. It actually gives the Soviets more freedom of movement once they own the road network in the eastern city hexes.

## **German Players' Notes**

### **By Chip Saltsman**

When I was a kid, I loved riding roller-coasters. They often started slowly, with a long climb up to the highest point before the fast descent and exciting part happened. There is a class of newer amusement park rides: roller-coasters that launch the cars with a steam catapult, going from zero to high speed in seconds. That instantaneous “zero to sixty” experience is what you get as the Axis player in *Hungarian Rhapsody*.

October. It will start as you watch the Soviet blob engulf your front-line forces on the 5 October turn. Don't panic. A few things to consider in this first month of the campaign:

As you do your setup, we encourage you to setup the 13th Panzer in 40.25, in Reserve Mode on their Move Mode side. Their objective is to help Szeged hold out. (If the Soviets read this, they may try to Trainbust the path these units would take.) You might even put the units in 50.30 in Reserve to jump into Szeged as well. Place Fighters in 54.27.

The Axis forces cannot go toe-to-toe with the Soviets in the Hungarian Plain. You can try, but you will get swarmed. You CAN execute very effective limited-goal counterattacks (the historical Battle of Debrecen was one of these) but be very careful not to over-extend. Hit them, hurt them, and hustle away!

The Soviets mechanized blob can go north, east or center in a big phalanx, but not all at once. The seemingly irresistible blob has a very limited logistical tail. Use river lines as blocking

positions, especially at the bridges, as you backpedal. Get your Panzer Divisions reassembled and out of the line where they can function as Reserves or a counterattack force. I said “line” but it is really a series of staged retreat blocking positions. Nagyvárád and Debrecen are places where a force with some SP might hold out for a few turns and they dominate the local road net. Trainbusting key choke-point hexes helps as well.

You have to get as many of your east-edge units back as possible. For the first few turns, this is the sole occupation of your Rail Cap. If the Soviets get north of the Tisza in the vicinity of Csap or Beregszász before these forces can escape, it is real trouble. These units, particularly the infantry, are needed all along your front.

We have seen the Partisan force hold out past 29 October, but that's unusual. Forcing the Axis to tie down units and expend SP is their primary function. Unfortunately, they have to be dealt with rapidly. Try to kill a unit each turn and keep pressing them.

November. You will be helped this month by the inability of the Soviets to get across the Danube with anything but Leg MA units. If your campaign is following the historical pattern, the Soviets will be pressing your forces back to the defensive lines around Budapest. This is easiest for them coming up via Kecskemét, but they also need to get around to the north and usually aim at Vác (A28.18). You have much better defensive terrain here and can stage a fight for every hex. At the same time, you will be holding off the White Frame units in their march across the top of the map. Great defensive terrain, but don't let that lull you into under-defending the area. As this is going on, you will need to ensure you have enough force gathered in several places (it's instructive to look at the setup for later campaign starts to see where the Axis forces are positioned):

West of the Danube. “Winter is Coming” is the refrain in the popular video series “Game of Thrones”, and in

your case this means the twin terrors are mountains of Soviet SP and full bridging capability over the Danube. You need troops to confront this.

Budapest. The Budapest garrison is insufficient on its own to hold the city. By December 1 you need units holding every hex in case of a sudden breakthrough. Don't get caught short here. Hex A35.18 needs some Hedgehog construction.

North of Budapest. The area between Budapest/Vac and Salgótarján (A22.23) will get pushed on from the vicinity of Hatvan (A29.24) and Gyöngyös (A27.25).

Slovakia. There are only a few avenues of advance in this area, and Rough Terrain the whole way. But you don't need Soviet forces bursting through undermanned lines here.

And all this will lead to...

December. The Soviet player will come whooping towards Székesfehérvár (A39.13) in the south. The line of map-printed Hedgehogs isn't going to ward them off. Consider having more in-depth fortifications waiting around Bicske (A34.14), Mór (A36.10), Pétfürdő (A39.10) and Veszprém (A41.09). They probably can't push past the Yellow Line, but make sure they decide not to try. You also need to guard against a “backdoor” seizure of the Budapest hexes west of the Danube. Should the Soviets surround the city, you might be able to re-open Trace Supply to the city for a sudden death win against an unwary opponent (who assumed they were safe before your Konrad forces arrive).

The Soviets may go straight at Budapest. Have at least six steps per hex ready for it.

Any encirclement of Budapest requires a northern pincer, and sometimes this is the weakest Soviet thrust.

Historically, Budapest was surrounded on the 26 Dec turn.

January. Your Soviet opponent has his most difficult challenge during this month. He must reduce the Budapest

Fortress and hold off your Konrad counteroffensive. Not an easy task. Make it harder for him! This is your best chance to win the game via Sudden Death. Look carefully at your routes into Budapest, and don't forget you have a Pontoon unit to employ as well. Then bash away!

Your Soviet opponent starts the Konrad Campaign scenario with diminished forces, he has a lot of units in the dead pile including many of his tank and mechanized brigades. You do have a considerable force to work with, which includes the most panzer divisions at any one point in the game. In addition you will receive a full panzer division on January 5 (the 20th) however, it's use it or lose because it will withdraw on January 19th (along with the 8th panzer.)

It's tempting to try the northern route to Budapest along the roads just west of Komarom (A30.29) and south of the Danube because your forces are close to your objective. However, the terrain is mostly very close, heavy woods. Consequently, trying to get into Budapest by this route will be a slow grind and very costly in supply and units. Playtesting has revealed that the southern route into Budapest may offer the Axis player his best chance for a Sudden Death Win by reestablishing Trace Supply to Budapest.

The terrain is much better in the south, but there is a narrow corridor available, allowing the Soviet player to pack his defense. There no secret formula here, the Axis player must use simply use good OCS play technique to give himself his best chance. Having the initiative to allow the possibility of a double turn is critical in this regard (as it is for any important operation in the OCS). Also, consider launching the decisive offensive in the Exploitation Phase thereby avoiding the barrages of the Soviet Reaction Phase. This is best done where there is full flight; however that's only a one in six chance in January. Planning is required here. So, while you're waiting for full flight, a diversionary attack along the Northern route may draw Soviet forces to that

action and away from your southern operation. During playtesting I've seen just one Axis player (a seasoned OCS player) come close to the relief of Budapest, missing by just one hex. However, it appears to be possible. Good luck.

February. The 1st SS panzer corps arrives February 15 consisting primarily of the SS-AH and SS-HJ divisions to make one last attempt to breakthrough to Budapest. This will again be a hard grind for the Axis player and the notes above all pertain. Be advised the Soviet player gets six free hedgehogs each turn in February to stiffen his defense. So, the sooner the Axis player gets his offensive moving the better.

## Historical Notes & Play Commentary

### By Stéphane Acquaviva

Nearly 30% of the military operations of the Second World War were battles for built-up areas. A sizeable proportion of these took the form of city sieges, which proved the bloodiest of all. On the Italian front the average number of German casualties between 1943 and 1945 was 400 per week, and even on the western front it did not exceed 1000 in the same period. On the other hand, the suppression of the Warsaw uprising alone cost the German command 1250 troops a week. In Budapest the number of German defenders fell from 45,000 to 24,000 in seven weeks: in other words, every week almost 3000 German troops were lost, three times as many as on the western front, and that in addition to the Hungarian casualties. For the Soviets, the siege of Budapest also proved to be one of the costliest operations of the Second World War. In the battles for the five largest cities (Berlin, Budapest, Vienna, Stalingrad and Moscow), the Soviets lost almost as many men and more material as were lost by the British and US armies lost in the whole of the Second World War in the ETO.

### Battle for Budapest, Krisztian Ungvary

By early October 1944, only one Axis allied country remained in the war: Hungary. The Soviet steamroller eyed Budapest to the west across the Hungarian Plain. Beyond Budapest was Vienna, and for Stalin the opportunity to seize as much ground as possible before the end of hostilities. Stalin also viewed Hungary's capital city as a key political prize. He considered the swift seizure of Budapest and Vienna would position the Soviet Union well for the post-war world.

Stalin ordered Marshal Rodion Malinovsky, a future Soviet minister of defense, to seize Budapest "in the shortest possible time—in days even."

For Adolf Hitler, Budapest was vital. It was the capital of Germany's last remaining ally in Europe and the gateway to Vienna and southern Germany. In addition, the last available crude oil plants were in Hungary (Nagykanizsa and Komárom). Hitler believed that strong counteroffensives in Hungary coupled with a stout defense in Poland would keep the Soviets off-balance and prevent them from massing their forces against Berlin.

The stage was set for the Battle of Budapest, a brutal campaign featuring the very last German offensive of the war.

### The Battle of Debrecen

5 - 26 Oct 1944

The main initial objective for the Soviets was to isolate the 8th Army and the 2nd Hungarian Army far away to the east in the Carpathians. Reaching the Danube was the second objective as part of gaining the approaches to Budapest, intended as the task of the 46th Army.

The plan was simple. From the north, the 4th Ukrainian Front was to cut the railroad line from Sátorajújhely (B14.05) to Beregszász (B15.15) and from the east and south, the 2nd Ukrainian Front was to occupy Debrecen (B27.08) and Nyíregyháza (B20.07).

The Germans at this time were concentrating mobile units to launch their own “Operation Gypsy Baron” which aimed at the destruction of the 2nd Ukrainian Front. This was forestalled when the Soviets attacked first.

The Soviet advance bogged down immediately in the north. The 1st Panzer Army was able to stop the 4th Ukrainian Front’s strong attacks and the mountain passes provided the Axis good defensive positions. It was soon apparent that only the 2nd Ukrainian Front had the potential to reach its objectives. It had the forces on hand but was contending with extremely difficult logistics. It proved impossible to ensure normal levels of supply. Spare parts for aircraft, materials, and new tanks were not available during October as everything had to be transported across the Dniester River. Malinovsky had to do the job with what he had and could not count on any consistent logistical support.

The dates when the Soviets occupied various cities were: Nagyvárád (B34.11) (14 Oct), Debrecen (B27.08) (20 Oct), Nyíregyháza (B20.07) (21 Oct), Ungvár (B9.11) and Munkács (B11.15) (28 Oct).

However, the Soviets could not maintain their position in Nyíregyháza for long as the Germans counterattacked strongly and retook the city by 22 Oct, surrounding Plijev’s three corps—most of these conducted what *OCS* calls a Breakout and returned to the Soviet lines, with the loss of much equipment.

Nyíregyháza was finally occupied by the Russians for good on 30 Oct, but this was too late. All the Axis troops the Soviets had wished to isolate had withdrawn northwards into Slovakia.

#### Axis Play

In Slovakia, the Axis must deal with the Slovak partisans. They are not a great threat but can block all railroads and supply roads to the north, which can become a problem if Malinovsky succeeds in his offensive. It is advised to

attack one partisan each turn in order to conserve precious supply.

Regarding the 2nd Ukrainian Front offensive, first of all: Don't Panic! The situation is not as bad as it seems. The Axis position consists of a weak Hungarian first line with five good mobile formations in its second line.

The first turns will be hard, but the Soviets will suffer losses as their supply situation deteriorates. Moreover, you will receive reinforcements from both the 8th Army and 2nd Hungarian Army plus Tigers, the 24th Pz Division, and some good PJ units. The balance will shift your way slowly. You’ll have to show the same talent as Gotthard Heinrici who was able to withdraw his 1st Panzer and the 1st Hungarian Armies skillfully. For example, the 6th Hungarian Corps started to withdraw from the passes on 15 Oct 44. By 29 Oct, Heinrici’s lines were at B7.10, B8.10, B9.10, B10.10, B11.11, and B12.10 with Level 2 Hedgehogs in each hex. The withdrawal should be done gradually and carefully with 8th Army and the 2nd Hungarian Army. Otto Wöhler, the commander of the 8th Army, had been Manstein’s talented Chief of Staff and further demonstrated his skills here.

During this time, you should delay the 2nd Ukrainian Front with all the Hungarian, AT, and Flak units you have. Stall so you can regroup the Panzer Divisions for a counterattack at the right moment. Yes, you should also be an expert in elastic defense like Johannes Friessner (Army Group South) and Maximilian Fretter-Pico (6th Army).

What happened historically? The 46th Infantry division was quickly sent by rail from the 8th Army to the 6th Army in order to hold the area behind Nagyvárád (B34.11). This city was quite important and had to be held for as long as possible to delay the Soviets. The Germans counterattacked locally to buy time.

In a second phase, the 4th SS Pol PG Division was sent to the north at Szolnok (A36.28) and counterattacked

on 16 Oct alongside the weak 24th Pz Division and the 503rd Tiger Bn. They did not get very far and were stopped around Mezőtúr (A37.34), but the attack forced the Soviets to divert troops and weakened their offensive towards Debrecen and Nyíregyháza.

The Axis player has the option to launch the same kind of counterattack but must prepare it carefully.

Finally, Germans launched a strong attack around Nyíregyháza and surrounded the Plijev group while at the same time, all Axis troops to the East (8th Army and 2nd Hungarian Army) escaped from the trap, passing north into Slovakia.

By 29 Oct, both armies were exhausted. One Soviet objective had been taken (Debrecen), but no Axis units had been trapped. However, German mobile forces were now in poor condition, while the Russians could count on only two new strong formations (2nd Gd and 4th Gd Mech Corps) to immediately launch operations on Budapest. The Germans had to wait until mid-December to receive significant additional mobile formations.

#### Soviet Play

Do not expect miracles with the Slovak partisans. Despite high motivation, they were poorly armed and organized. The Czech Paratroopers will give useful assistance, but their main objective is to divert use of German SPs and to occupy important railroads as long as possible.

The 4th Ukrainian Front (Ivan Petrov) has enough assets to represent a strong force, but its obstacles are terrain and Axis fortifications. Against a competent German opponent, it will be hard to force the passes. You will not be able to attack every turn and will have to prepare two or three attacks and calculate the Supply needed. Once the Axis troops withdraw, you should use any opportunity to attack the retreating units. The task of the 4th Ukrainian Front was a difficult one as they were facing Heinrici, a defensive specialist. By way of illustration, Csap (B12.10)

and Michalovce (B8.07) were captured by the Soviets on 26 Nov 1944.

Regarding the handling of the 2nd Ukrainian Front, the key issue will be planning.

First of all, you will have to DG the 1st Pz Div and the 23rd Pz Div. You cannot afford to leave them free to attack you. The Soviet player should attack directly in the north towards Debrecen (as Malinovsky did) without delay.

This front will have the main job and you should carefully choose your first objectives and the routes you wish to use.

Rodion Malinovsky sent the 46th Army against Szeged (A50.31) and Óbecse (A60.31) in order to obtain a good bridgehead around the city. Two pontoons were used, one in A58.33 and a second in A52.31, allowing easy crossing of the Tisza River there. 53rd Army and 1st Rumanian Army were sent between Csongrád (A43.30) and Szolnok (A36.28) in order to protect the flank of his main attack.

The 7th Gd Army, the 6th Gd Tank Army, Plijev, and Gorskov were allocated to take Debrecen and Nyíregyháza. In the east, the 27th Army joined the attack and arrived at Nagyvárad (B34.11) after the withdrawal of the 8th Army, while the 4th Rumanian Army and the 40th Army conducted the pursuit in the north through Szatmárnémeti (B20.18) and Nagykaroly (B23.15). The plan had to be modified when the Germans counterattacked from Szolnok (A36.28) and the 7th Gd Army had to turn back and abandon its push to Debrecen.

Malinovsky tried his best by sending the Plijev Group far behind the Axis lines, but this was probably too risky to obtain a decisive result. The Soviet player should plan well and always keep the balance between being too cautious (because of logistical issues) and being too audacious (because of objectives). The lack of SPs will be frustrating, so you will have to maneuver and try to isolate poor quality Hungarian units while your mobile troops attack

“serious” objectives. Be careful with German counterattacks and always keep in mind that you have no reinforcements at all from the Replacement Table until 29 Oct. Prior to 29 Oct, you receive only 2 Eq and the 2 Cav from the OoA.

#### Timeline...

- 12 Oct: Soviets occupy Nagyvárad (B34.11).
- 15 Oct: 6th Hungarian Corps starts to withdraw from the Eastern Pass.
- 16 Oct: German counterattack starts with the 24th Pz Div, Polizei PG Div, and Tiger support.
- 20 Oct: Soviets occupy Debrecen (B27.08).
- 21 Oct: Soviets occupy Nyíregyháza (B20.07).
- 22 Oct: Germans retake Nyíregyháza (B20.07) with 1st Pz Div and 23rd Pz Divisions.
- 28 Oct: Soviets occupy Ungvár (B9.11) and Munkács (B11.15).

#### “Operation Budapest”

29 Oct - 26 Dec 1944

By the end of Oct 1944, the Battle of Debrecen was ending. Stalin was not satisfied with the progress, being more interested in political issues than military ones. He wanted Budapest captured as soon as possible. The fall of this big capital would have a significant impact on troop morale, allow the installation of a Hungarian Communist regime, and would advance the Soviet Union’s influence in Central Europe. We have a record of an interesting discussion between Malinovsky and Stalin about this. Malinovsky wanted to wait 5 to 7 days in order to have more tanks and reorganize his armies, but even this was refused by Stalin who desired to take Budapest immediately. Malinovsky tried his best but was proven right; it was impossible to enter the city quickly and it required a long siege. That is why the Stavka (Soviet High Command) decided to isolate the city before attempting its capture.

The Soviets launched eight different offensives over two months before finally succeeding in surrounding Budapest. In order to achieve this, they used what they called Maskirovka; they would mask and hide unit concentrations and always attacked with surprise at a weak point.

- 29-31 Oct 1944: The first offensive started prematurely with only 2nd Gd Mechanized Corps against Kecskemét (A41.25) and was quickly stopped by the presence of the 23rd and 24th Pz Divisions.
- 1-5 Nov 1944: The second offensive targeted the area between the Danube and Kecskemét (A41.25). The attack by 2nd & 4th Gd Mechanized Corps with the 23rd Rifle Corps (motorized) enabled the Soviets to at least reach the suburbs of Budapest before grinding to a halt due to stiff resistance.
- 8-26 Nov 1944: The third offensive was launched by the 57th Army and allowed the Soviets to obtain bridgeheads on the western banks of the Danube (between A53.20 and A59.21). This was difficult, but eventually successful.
- 10-26 Nov 1944: This fourth offensive was conducted by 2nd & 4th Gd Mechanized Corps and Plijev (4th & 6th Gd Cav Corps and the 23rd Tank Corps) with the help of 7th Gd Army between Cegléd (A36.25) and Szolnok (A36.28) towards the direction of Hatvan (A29.24). The advance was slow, but the objective was finally reached.
- 26 Nov-10 Dec 1944: In the south, the 4th Gd Army joined the 57th Army to continue to push from the bridgeheads on the Danube River’s west bank. These two armies reached the Margit Line before being halted there.
- 5-20 Dec 1944: This was the largest Soviet offensive in Hungary to date and was north of the capital. The 6th Gd Tank Army (5th Gd Tank Corps and 9th Gd Mechanized Corps), Plijev (4th & 6th Gd Cav Corps and the 4th Gd Mechanized Corps) and 7th Gd Army kicked off from Hatvan (A29.24), crossed the Ipoly River to the

northwest, took Léva (A22.12) and isolated Budapest from the north by occupying A28.14. This operation was successful, but costly.

The southern part of this same Soviet offensive started at Csepel Island to the south of Budapest (A35.18/A36.17). 2nd Gd Mechanized Corps, 23rd Rifle Corps, and 37th Gd Rifle Corps were tasked to cross the Margit fortifications and occupy Esztergom (A29.15). The attack failed and was stopped in front of the Margit Line.

- 20-29 Dec 44: This last offensive to surround Budapest was launched by Gorskov (5th Gd Cav Corps and 7th Mechanized Corps) from the area between Lake Velence (A38.14) and Lake Balaton (A42.11), while the 18th Tank Corps and 2nd Gd Mechanized Corps attacked from north of Lake Velence. This last push collapsed this part of the Axis front and on 26 Dec 1944, the 18th Tank Corps entered Esztergom (A29.15).

Budapest was totally isolated.

#### **Axis Play**

The Soviets will play numbers against you for sure. In the north, the situation can stay under control for a while thanks to the terrain, but it is more difficult to stop them in the south. A good Axis player will anticipate Soviet movements and attacks while keeping some mobile divisions in reserve.

The main problem will occur after the arrival of the 4th Gd Soviet Army on 19 Nov 1944 when it will join the 57th Army to expand the Danube bridgeheads. At this point, most of your mobile troops must be sent there. But be careful!

When the front stops, the Soviets are able to line up their Artillery Divisions and the effect can be terrible. Do not hesitate to withdraw (if you can) as soon as you feel that the Soviets are ready for these barrages. Try to use the good terrain in defense, use the Luftwaffe at maximum and pray that “Gott mit uns” isn’t just a slogan!

#### **Soviet Play**

You receive lots of SPs in December, so spend November getting ready for them. Study the historical Soviet offensives profiled above and plan your campaign. You may face an opponent who tries to hold the line of the Tisza River for too long, and you can slip up from the south to seize Hatvan (A29.24) before they can withdraw.

Focus on positioning yourself for the influx of supply, which will greatly accelerate your efforts.

The Germans have some good mobile formations, but they can’t be everywhere at once. Unless you break through their lines, you need to prepare for three slogs: 1) around the north of Budapest to seize A28.14, 2) around the south to pierce the Margit Line then advancing to Esztergom (A29.15) and Székesfehérvár (A39.13), and then 3) straight ahead to capture the Attila Hedgehogs. You have the numbers to swarm them, though you will find it better to take losses in more-easily-replaced Cavalry/Eq units.

When the Germans present you with a line, you have plenty of air force (LRAF included) and massive amounts of artillery to DG it.

If you are using this setup as the campaign start, we have found that less experienced German players often under-garrison Budapest, making it more easily captured than historically. They also tend to counterattack a little too aggressively, opening up their mobile units to destruction.

#### **“Konrad I” & “Konrad II”**

1 - 12 Jan 1945

After the disastrous encirclement of Budapest, the German high command reacted as rapidly as possible. The 4th SS Pz Corps had just disembarked at Győr (A32.04) close to the front, so the Germans had two possible solutions:

- Send the SS Corps south in order to rescue Budapest from that direction as the open terrain there was easier for armor. The problem? This would give the Soviets the time to react and prepare.

- The second idea was to attack directly toward Budapest, south of the Danube. Here there is terrible terrain, but the advantage of confronting unprepared Soviet troops.

The second option was selected. This developed into a race between the relief attempt and the Soviet effort to crush the Budapest garrison. The drama was even more personal to many soldiers of the 4th SS Pz Corps who had close ties with the garrison and were powerfully motivated. A successful rescue would give the SS a “romantic” storyline that would have been used in Nazi propaganda... even after the war.

The Soviets decided to mount an attack across the Garam River with the 6th Gd Tank Army in order to divert the maximum number of German troops from the relief attempt. Their objective was Komárom (A30.09), if possible, but any Axis forces they could distract from other areas would help the Soviet forces there as well.

Konrad I (1-7 Jan 1945): This attack was quite successful in the beginning. It came as a complete surprise to the Soviets because they failed to detect the 4th SS Pz Corps. Curiously, throughout the war, the Soviets were usually able to detect Wehrmacht troop deployments, but they always had problems identifying SS units. The main objective was Bicske (A34.14) and the road south of the Danube River leading directly to Budapest. During this same time, the 6th Gd Tank Army approached to within 15 km of the oil refinery of Komárom (7 Jan 1945) and it became clear to the Soviets that the German attack’s direction would have to shift.

- Konrad II (8-12 Jan 1945): Two routes were possible: One through Esztergom (A29.15), just south of the Danube, River and another directly through the hills via Pilisszentkereszt (A30.16). The latter was chosen. Meanwhile, Kampfgruppe Pape (6th Pz and element of 8th Pz Divisions with the 239th StuG Bn) continued to push around Bicske (A34.14) while a strong attack was done north of Székesfehérvár (A39.13).

Pilisszentkereszt (A30.16) was taken on 11 Jan 1945, but Hitler had already decided to send the 4th SS Pz Corps south to try an offensive in the open terrain there. This came as a terrible disillusionment for the soldiers of the Totenkopf (3rd SS Pz Div) and Wiking (5th SS Pz Div) divisions who were convinced they could break through to Budapest and hated to withdraw when they were so close. In the meantime, the 20th Pz Division was able to stop and push back the 6th Gd Tank Army, which saved Komárom for the time being.

### **“Konrad III”**

19 Jan - 12 Feb 1945

The third time is the charm, hoped the Germans, and they maximized the chances for this offensive by adding Tiger IIs and Assault Engineers. The attack came from the south with the objectives of Dunapentele (A41.18) and Dunaföldvár (A43.18).

The attack started out very promisingly with the two cities occupied quickly, and even Székesfehérvár (A39.13) was captured.

While Soviet logistics were thrown into turmoil, the Germans did not have enough infantry to hold the terrain and they were unable to cross the Váli (A36.15) south of Budapest. Under pressure and continuous attack against their flanks, they were forced to withdraw at the end of January.

The Budapest garrison was doomed from this point on. During all the Konrad operations, the 4th SS Pz Corps fought bravely, usually outnumbered, and inflicted extremely high losses on Soviet tanks. It was, however, not enough. The Soviet high command reacted professionally and never lost their nerve.

The Red Army had become a tough opponent.

In Budapest, things deteriorated rapidly. The Axis supply situation in the pocket became critical. As it was evident that no help was forthcoming, the survivors decided to break out on 11 Jan 1945. Of the remaining 28,000 Hungarians and

German soldiers, only 700 were able to reach Axis lines. All the others were killed or captured.

On 13 Jan 1945, Budapest was taken.

### **“Operation Südwind”**

15 - 22 Feb 1945

After the fall of Budapest, Hitler prepared for a new offensive in Hungary in order to secure the oil fields of Nagykanizsa (A52.01).

The 1st SS Pz Corps arrived in mid February 1945 and (as usual) wasn't detected by Soviet intelligence. The Germans wanted to use those troops immediately to destroy the Soviet bridgehead over the Garam River in preparation to launch an offensive to the east, north of the Danube River.

The attack was a surprise for the Soviets. At this time, the 6th Gd Tank Army was refitting, and Stalin was preoccupied with offensives to take East Prussia and Silesia. The attack was a success and the Soviets were pushed behind the Garam River with heavy losses.

On the other hand, the Soviets had now located the 1st SS Pz Corps.

### **“Spring Awakening” to “Operation Vienna”**

5 - 29 Mar 1945

While not part of Hungarian Rhapsody, the Axis' last gasp took place in March. The Axis objectives of “Spring Awakening” were to push to the Danube River around Dunaföldvár (A43.18) and occupy the terrain north of Lake Velence (A37.14 & A37.15). At the same time, there was a double attack from south of Lake Balaton with the 2nd Pz Army, and from the Drava River with the 91st Corps to occupy Pécs (A56.13) and Dombóvár (A52.12).

The entire plan was a complete fantasy and a remake of Kursk coming from an even weaker position. At this point of the war, the SS units had significantly deteriorated in ability. Following their losses at the Battle of the Bulge, the SS divisions were manned with some inexperienced and very young men

from the Kriegsmarine and the Luftwaffe. They were up against qualitatively ever-improving Soviet units, especially AT forces. The latter only accepted experienced gunners and were considered elite units at this point in the war.

The weather was terrible and the terrain a sea of mud, not ideal for Panzer operations.

Worse, the Soviets anticipated exactly when and where to expect the offensive and were more than prepared to receive it. They prepared massive defensive works on a Kursk-like scale, up to 25-30 km deep.

The SS units battered their way forward 1-3 hexes in 10 days. To the south of Lake Balaton, the 91st Corps and 2nd Pz Army did not have the strength to do much of anything. By 14 Mar 1945, the last offensive had petered out. Finally, on 16 Mar 45, the Soviets counterattacked with “Operation Vienna.”

The Germans had used up virtually all their oil and ammunition reserves without achieving a breakthrough. Moreover, the last oil refinery complex in Army Group South's sector was totally destroyed in a raid by the US Air Force on 14 Mar 1945.

Considering the already terrible ammunition supply conditions, the lack of oil had a disastrous effect on the German mobile units. One after the other, the Panzers had to be abandoned and destroyed by their own crews.

The Soviets launched the new 9th Gd Army, the 6th Gd Tank Army, and all troops already present towards Tata (A31.11), Tatabánya (A33.12) and Mór (A36.10). At the same time, the Plijev Group and all troops east of the Garam River attacked towards Komárom (A30.09) and Érsekújvár (A26.08).

The weather cooperated with the Soviets, drying the ground to the point where mud was no longer an issue.

The end came quickly:

- The Soviets tried to surround the SS forces between Lake Velence and Lake

Balaton. Despite all their efforts, they couldn't close the bag and many German troops escaped via a very small pass under constant Soviet artillery fire.

- On both sides of the Danube River, the German front collapsed. By the end of March 1945, Soviet forces were in Austria. The main breakthrough area was just south of the Danube River.

Without supply, ammunition, or fuel, the German remnants retreated under pressure, but still miraculously avoided encirclement.

Vienna fell on 13 April 1945 after a week of bitter fighting. German forces were disintegrating everywhere by this point, as the war entered its final weeks.

## Hungarian Rhapsody Personalities

By *Chip Saltsman*

The battles in Hungary during late 1944 and early 1945 featured an interesting cast of characters, some for their infamy and some for the mark they would make on the world stage in the years after the war.



**Leonid Brezhnev** (December 19, 1906 - November 10, 1982) Major General Leonid Brezhnev became leader of the Soviet Union from 1964 until his death in 1982. Helped in his rise by political patron Nikita Khrushchev, Brezhnev was the Political Officer of the 18th Army in the Caucasus, particularly supporting their landings at Novorossiysk (about which he wrote a book named "The Little Land").

During the Hungarian Rhapsody Campaign, Brezhnev was the Chief of the Political Directorate of the 4th Ukrainian Front (the white frame units in the northern part of the map).



**Maximilian Fretter-Pico** (6 February 1892 - 4 April 1984) commanded 6 Armee during the Hungarian Rhapsody campaign. Fretter-Pico followed a path similar to many German senior officers: a decorated World War I junior officer who stayed with the military between the wars. He was the German Military Attaché to Turkey in 1938. At the start of Operation Barbarossa, he commanded the 97th Jaeger Division in Army Group South. He was promoted to lead XXX Corps at the end of 1941 and participated in the Battle of Sevastopol. In mid-1944 he was given command of 6 Armee until the end of the year. After being relieved for failure to halt the Soviet advance, he was placed in command of IX Corps, an under-strength reserve unit. He surrendered to the Americans and was interned until 1947.

**Herbert Otto Gille** (8 March 1897 - 26 December 1966) Gille was a recipient of the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves, Swords and Diamonds, making him the most highly decorated Waffen-SS member of the war. Gille joined the Nazi Party and the SS in 1931 and in 1934 he joined the SS combat support forces. As the commander of a battalion in an SS-V regiment, Gille participated in the invasion of Poland and in the western campaign. In 1940 he was appointed a regimental commander in the SS

Division Wiking, eventually becoming its commander. Early in 1944, Gille participated in the breakout of the Group Stemmermann from the Korsun-Cherkassy Pocket. In January 1945 Gille, as leader of the IV SS Panzer Corps, led the failed attempt to relieve the encircled German and Hungarian troops in the Battle of Budapest. He surrendered to the U.S forces in Austria. After the war, Gille became active in HIAG, a lobby group and a revisionist veteran's organization founded by former high-ranking Waffen-SS personnel in West Germany in 1951. Gille died in 1966.



**Gotthard Heinrici** (25 December 1886 - 10 December 1971) came from a family of soldiers reaching back to the 12th Century. He was a World War I veteran, who fought on both the Eastern and Western fronts as a junior officer. He commanded the XII Corps during the Battle for France in World War II and succeeded in breaking through the Maginot Line. He commanded the 4th Army during the first two years of Barbarossa, honing his defensive skills during the winter battles in front of Moscow. In the summer of 1944, he was placed in command of the First Panzer Army and First Hungarian Army and skillfully managed to retreat into Slovakia in the face of determined Soviet attacks. Heinrici was appointed to command Army Group Vistula, facing 1.5 million Soviet soldiers advancing on Berlin in the final months of the war. Dismissed during the chaos of the fall of Berlin, he surrendered to the British forces and spent three years in captivity. Heinrici was featured

prominently in Cornelius Ryan's book *The Last Battle*. Married to a half-Jewish (Mischling) himself, Heinrici supported many Nazi policies including the Lebensraum concept. As a military commander, historians described him as the premiere defensive expert of the Wehrmacht and a genius admired by his peers, although little-known today because he was, in the words of one historian, "as charismatic as a 20-pound sack of fertilizer". However, he was revered by his officers and men who nicknamed him Unswer Giftzweg (literally "our poison dwarf" but meaning "our tough little bastard") in recognition of his character and lack of physical stature.



**Rodion Malinovsky** (23 November 1898 – 31 March 1967) was Commander of the 2nd Ukrainian Front and most of the Soviet forces present in the game. Malinovsky was turned out of his house by a stepfather at age 13 and survived by working as a farmhand. Despite being underage, he enlisted in the Russian Army during World War I and was promoted for courage under fire. He was part of the Western Front Russian Expeditionary Force and fought in the west, even earning the Croix de Guerre from the French government. Malinovsky fought in the Russian Civil war and in the Spanish Civil War (as a volunteer on the Republican side). During the early part of Operation Barbarossa, Malinovsky distinguished himself as one of the few competent Soviet generals. His command of the Second Guards Army against Hoth near Kotelnikovo during

the battle of Stalingrad was the first time the Wehrmacht lost a large-scale clash of armor. Malinovsky was a key figure in the battles against Army Group South all the way into Hungary. Following the Battle of Budapest, his forces liberated Vienna and Brno. He took part in the Soviet invasion of Manchuria at the end of World War II. Following the war, Malinovsky continued to rise, eventually becoming Minister of Defense from 1957 until his death in 1967. He commented about his career: "Service is service, wherever it occurred. The defense of the fatherland is no small thing."



**Issa Alexandrovich Pliyev** (25 November 1903–2 February 1979) was the commander of Group Pliyev. He was born in the Caucasus region (what is now North Ossetia) and spend his military career in the cavalry. The military historian David Glantz described Pliyev as a "great practitioner of cavalry operations in adverse terrain". At the start of the invasion of the Soviet Union, Pliyev commanded the 50th Cavalry Division (renamed 3rd Guards Cavalry Division). His unit participated in the Battle of Moscow and the Battle of Stalingrad. Pliyev commanded a cavalry-mechanized group consisting of 4th Guards Cavalry Corps and 4th Mechanized Corps during the Bereznegovataia-Snigirevka Operation along the Black Sea coast, as part of the 3rd Ukrainian Front under Army General Rodion Malinovsky. In the fall of 1944, he commanded a cavalry-mechanized group consisting of two corps during the Battle of

Debrecen. He ended the war in command of the Soviet-Mongolian Cavalry-Mechanized Group of the Transbaikalian front in Manchuria, fighting against the Japanese Kwantung Army. Pliyev reappeared on the historical stage during the Cuban Missile Crisis, as the commander of Soviet forces secretly deployed to Cuba as part of Operation Anadyr.



**Hans-Ulrich Rudel** (2 July 1916 – 18 December 1982) was the most decorated German serviceman of World War II. He is best known for flying a Stuka armed with twin 37mm anti-tank cannons mounted under the wings and inventing the anti-tank aircraft. He is credited with the destruction of 519 tanks, as well as several ships, including heavily damaging the Soviet battleship Marat. He flew 2,530 ground-attack missions on the Eastern Front and another 430 missions flying the Fw-190. Rudel was severely wounded on 8 February 1945, requiring the amputation of his lower right leg. Undaunted, he was flying in combat again on 25 March, finally surrendering to the Americans on 8 May 1945 at the Kitzigen airfield. His wartime career was described in detail in his book *Stuka Pilot*. Rudel was a committed and unrepentant National Socialist. After the war, he founded a relief organization for Nazi war criminals, and aided fugitives to escape to Latin America or the Middle East, including helping to hide Joseph Mengele. He became a military advisor and arms dealer in South America,

supporting the Peron government in Argentina, the Pinochet regime in Chile and the Stroessner government in Paraguay. Several of his business dealings were with former Nazi's, including Otto Skorzeny and Klaus Barbie. Despite missing a leg, he was an avid sportsman and mountaineer, succeeding in climbing Aconcagua, the highest peak in the Americas. Rudel was married three times, coincidentally to three women named Ursula.



**Gerhard Schmidhuber** (9 April 1894 – 11 February 1945) Schmidhuber was commanding officer of the 13th Panzer Division during World War II. When the Germans occupied Hungary in 1944, Schmidhuber was supreme commander of German army forces in that country. In that capacity, he had extensive dealings with the Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg and after being threatened that he would subsequently be treated as a war criminal, prevented the liquidation of the Jewish ghetto. The massacre was stopped at the last minute thanks to the courage and daring action of Wallenberg, but many believe – and some survival reports support the idea – that Schmidhuber did not do so to save himself but as an act of humanity. Schmidhuber was killed in action in the Battle of Budapest, during the chaos of the survivors attempting to break through the encircling Soviet forces. He was a recipient of the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves.

**Fyodor Ivanovich Tolbukhin** (June 16, 1894 – October 17, 1949) was the



commander of the 3rd Ukrainian Front during the events in Hungarian Rhapsody. He volunteered for the Imperial Army in 1914 at the outbreak of World War I. and was steadily promoted, advancing from private to captain by 1916. He was commander of the 58th Army during the Battle of Stalingrad, and impressed Yeremenko sufficiently to be given command of a Front. During the Summer Campaign, from June to October 1944, Tolbukhin and Malinovsky launched their invasion of the Balkans and were able to conquer most of Romania. On September 12, 1944, two days after Malinovsky was promoted to Marshal of the Soviet Union, Tolbukhin was promoted to the same rank. While Malinovsky moved northwest, towards Hungary and Yugoslavia, Tolbukhin occupied Bulgaria. Starting in the Winter Campaign, Tolbukhin shifted his army to the northwest axis, thereby liberating much of Yugoslavia and invading southern Hungary (these are the forces that enter the map on the southern edge midway through the events in Hungarian Rhapsody). Tolbukhin is generally regarded as one of the finest Soviet generals of World War II. Meticulous, careful, and not overly ambitious like some Soviet commanders, Tolbukhin was well respected by fellow commanders and by his men, especially since he had a dedication to keeping casualty rates low.

**Raoul Wallenberg** (4 August 1912 – 1947-1952?) was a Swedish architect, businessman, diplomat and humanitarian. He is widely celebrated for saving tens of thousands of Jews in Nazi-occupied Hungary during the Holocaust from German Nazis and Hungarian Fascists during the later stages of World War II. While serving as Sweden's special envoy in Budapest

between July and December 1944, Wallenberg issued protective passports and sheltered Jews in buildings designated as Swedish territory. On 17 January 1945, during the Siege of Budapest by the Red Army, Wallenberg was summoned to General Malinovsky's headquarters in Debrecen to answer allegations that he was engaged in espionage. Wallenberg's last recorded words were, "I'm going to Malinovsky's ... whether as a guest or prisoner I do not know yet." He was detained by SMERSH on suspicion of espionage and subsequently disappeared. He was later reported to have died on 17 July 1947 while imprisoned by the KGB secret police in the Lubyanka, the KGB headquarters and affiliated prison in Moscow. Other reports have him surviving until 1952. The motives behind Wallenberg's arrest and imprisonment by the Soviet government, along with questions surrounding the circumstances of his death and his possible ties to US intelligence, remain mysterious and are the subject of continued speculation.



For an expanded version of this article and other Hungarian Rhapsody related information visit [www.ocsdepot.com](http://www.ocsdepot.com).

## Composition of Selected Units

### Soviet

- 2-2-8 SP Arty Bn: SU-76
- 3-2-8 AT Bn: SU-85
- 3-3-8 AT Bn (yellow): SU-100
- 3-4-8 AT Bn (yellow): Gd SU-100
- 6-2-8 SP Arty Bde: Gd SU-76
- 3-4-6 AG Bn (yellow): Gd JSU-122 or Gd JSU-152

- 9-3-8 AT Bde (yellow): SU-100
- 4-4-6 Tank Bn (yellow): Gd JS-II
- 4-2-8 Tank Rgt (yellow): Mixed T-34/76 & Lend-Lease Tanks
- 9-3-8 Tank Bde (red): Gd T-34/76
- 9-3-8 Tank Bde (red): T-34/85
- 9-4-8 Tank Bde (red): Gd T-34/85
- 9-4-6 Tank Bde (red): M4 Sherman (Lend-Lease)

Rumanian

- 3-4-6 Tank Bn (yellow): PzIV
- 3-3-6 Tank Rgt (yellow): T-34/85

**German**

- (1)-5-6 AT Comp (yellow): Nashorn
- 1-5-7 AT Co (yellow): JgdPzV
- 5-4-6 AT Bn (yellow): JgdPzIV
- 4-4-5 AT Bn (yellow): Hetzer
- 4-3-6 AT Bn (yellow): MarderIII
- 4-3-6 AG Bn (yellow): StuGIII (Poor)
- 4-4-6 AG Bn (yellow): StuGIII
- 4-5-6 AG Bn (yellow): StuGIII (Elite)
- 2-2-5 AG Co (yellow): Mixed Italian Tanks
- 6-4-5 SP Arty Bn: Brummbär
- 2-5-5 Pz Co (yellow): Tiger I
- 3-5-4 Pz Co (yellow): Tiger II
- 3-3-6 Pz Bn (yellow): PzIII
- 5-4-6 Pz Bn (yellow): PzIV
- 6-5-6 Pz Bn (yellow): PzIV (Elite)
- 6-5-7 Pz Bn (yellow): PzV
- 7-5-7 Pz Bn (yellow): PzV (Elite)
- 10-4-6 Pz Bde (red): PzV & PG

**Hungarian**

- 4-4-5 AT Bn (yellow): Hetzer
- 4-4-6 AG Bn (yellow): StuGIII
- 5-3-6 Pz Bn (yellow): Mixed Turan & PzIV

**Modern Place Names**

Kolozsvár (B34.27) is now “Cluj.”

Nagyvárad (B34.10) is now “Oradea.”  
 Szatmárnémeti (B20.18) is now “Satu Mare.”

**Abbreviations**

A	Army	HD	Hoch und Deutschmeister
AG	Assault Gun	Hdsr	Handschar
AGS	Army Group South	HJ	Hitlerjugend
AH	Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler	HQ	Headquarters
AT	Anti-tank	Hung	Hungarian
Arty	Artillery	HW	Horst Wessel
BC	Budapest Csendőr (Gendarmerie)	Jg	Jäger
Bdbg	Brandenburg	Katy	Katyusha
Bde	Brigade	KG	Kampfgruppe
Bdpst	Budapest	Kom	Komárom
Bdr	Border	Kor	Korück (Rear-area units)
BG	Border Guard	LRAF	Long Range Airforce
Bill	Billnitzer	Lt	Light
Bn	Battalion	LW	Luftwaffe
BP	Budapest	M	Mechanized
Brkdwn	Breakdown	Mech	Mechanized
Cal	Calarasi	MC	Motorcycle
Cav	Cavalry	MT	Maria Theresa
Co	Company	Mtn	Mountain
Comp	Composite	Mtrd	Motorized
Det	Detachment	OoA	Order of Arrival
Div	Division	P	Partisan
Dlwgr	Dirlewanger	PG	Panzer Grenadier
Fest	Festung	PJ	Panzerjäger
FG	Florian Geyer	PO	Polizei
FHH	Feldherrnhalle	Pol	Police
Flm	Flamethrower	Pz	Panzer
Fus	Füsilier	PzA	Panzer Army
Gal	Galizien	Reco	Reconnaissance
Gld	Glider	RE	Regimental Equivalent
Gd	Guards	Repl	Replacement
Gre	Grenadier	Res	Reserve
Grp	Group	Rgt	Regiment
		Ros	Rosiori
		RR	Railroad
		Rum	Rumanian
		RVGK	Reserve of the Supreme High Command

S	Slovakian
SP	Self-Propelled
Sec	Security
SS	Schutzstaffel
Stu	Student
SU	Samokhodnaya Ustanovka
Süd	South
SzLz	Szent-László
T	Totenkopf
Tatra	Tatra Panzer
Tk	Tank
Tgr	Tiger
Tng	Training
UF	Ukrainian Front
UR	Fortified Area
Ukr	Ukrainian
VG	Volks-Grenadier
W	Wiking
Werfer	Nebelwerfer

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## **Countersheet 4**

### **Errata Counters.**

#### **Smolensk:**

Two German infantry divisions have the wrong Move Mode values. The 35th should be a 10-4-5, the 78th a 10-5-6.

#### **Korea II:**

The Move Mode values of four of the UN counters have been corrected.

## **The Blitzkrieg Legend:**

The Dutch 5<sup>th</sup> cavalry battalion had an incorrect AR in Move Mode.

## **Sicily II:**

The missing MC.202 is now provided.

## **Beyond the Rhine:**

The British 157 Bde of the 52.AL division now has a leg movement factor of 3 in Combat Mode. The Move Mode side remains unchanged (truck MA -16).

## **Supplemental Counters.**

### **Beyond the Rhine:**

Roland LeBlanc has revised the Commonwealth order of battle by providing six anti-tank battalions. Four British and two Canadian have been added. Place each unit with the associated Corps HQ in the OOA as below. The 63rd is independent and arrives October 8.

**September 5** Map A, west edge, south of 25.xx - (4)-4-3 AT Bde (73)

**September 8** Map A, west edge, south of 25.xx - (4)-4-3 AT Bde (86)

**September 19** Map A, west edge, south of 25.xx - (4)-4-3 AT Bde (91)

**September 29** Map A, west edge - (4)-4-3 AT Bde (62)

**October 5** Map A, west edge - (4)-4-3 AT Bde (6 Canadian)

**October 8** Map A, west edge - (4)-4-3 AT Bde (63)

**March 1** Map A, west edge - (4)-4-3 AT Bde (7 Canadian)

## **Interdiction Markers.**

I'm very happy to have the opportunity to prepare for the use of all OCS players these traditional Interdiction Markers. I believe that the change to TB Markers some years ago was a mistake. (I can't utter the actual words). I do see double rails being interdicted, but I most often see players placing interdiction markers to impede an opponent's road movement. So, the real role of the

marker is for interdiction, both rails and roads.

So freely use these markers as originally intended in the OCS, to interdict the movement of enemy forces in accordance with OCS rule 14.8. In each instance just substitute Interdiction for every mention of the dreaded TB in rule 14.8 and you'll be good to go.

**Fog of War – Zero “Strength” Step Loss Markers.**

As far as I know there is no use for a four strength step loss marker, which is the back side of a three step marker. There are no five step units known to me.

So, instead of this four step loss side, I've created these zero step markers to aid the fog of war. (My thanks to Mark Mazer for this idea). Simply place a zero step marker under a full strength four step unit and you have created some uncertainty in the mind of your opponent. In addition, you could use one of these markers to place under a single step brigade, regiment or battalion with the same fog of war effect.

Give it try and let me know what you think

