

OCS By The Numbers

by Ric Van Dyke

Game: Sicily, Triumph and Folly
Scenario: 5.1 Gela Counter Attack
Player: Ric Van Dyke (solo)
Setup: Per Scenario, Destroyers in Hexes 49.11 and 50.12

The intent of this replay is to act as a vehicle to show how the rules of OCS (Operational Combat Series) version 3.0 fit together in a player turn. This is not to show any great strategy techniques or tricks of OSC gaming. Rather this is should help those who are trying to learn the game without the benefit of having a person available to help you sort all the various rules in OCS into a player turn. It would be best to setup the Gela Counter Attack scenario and follow along.

This scenario is really tailor made to learn OCS. It's only a half turn, and as such is a great way to walk through the basics of OCS. There is a little bit of all the basics you need to get into OCS. As we go along, the rules will be referenced as much as possible. To differentiate between the series rules and the game specific rules the following notations will be used: OCS 9.8 means the OCS series rules, number 9.8; and SR 2.11 means Sicily Rules number 2.11. This entire scenario is on map B, hence there will not be any mention of the map letter when referring to hex numbers. Also all dice (or die) rolls are the real ones that I rolled while recording the game.

We will be going phase by phase and will skip the pre turn phases. There is no weather roll in Sicily SR 1.2, and there is only one player for this scenario so first player determination is rather a mute point.

Air Unit Return

We have nothing to do here in this scenario. If there were aircraft out on the AO (Area of Operations) they would now need to return to a friendly air base, OCS 14.4.

Air Unit Refit

Again we have nothing to do. The only aircraft are already active based on the scenario setup. OSC 14.8 covers how to refit. Refitting costs one supply token per air base, and each base can refit two air units per air base level.

Reinforcement

Again we have nothing to do (well, this is getting a bit old). There are no reinforcements in this scenario.

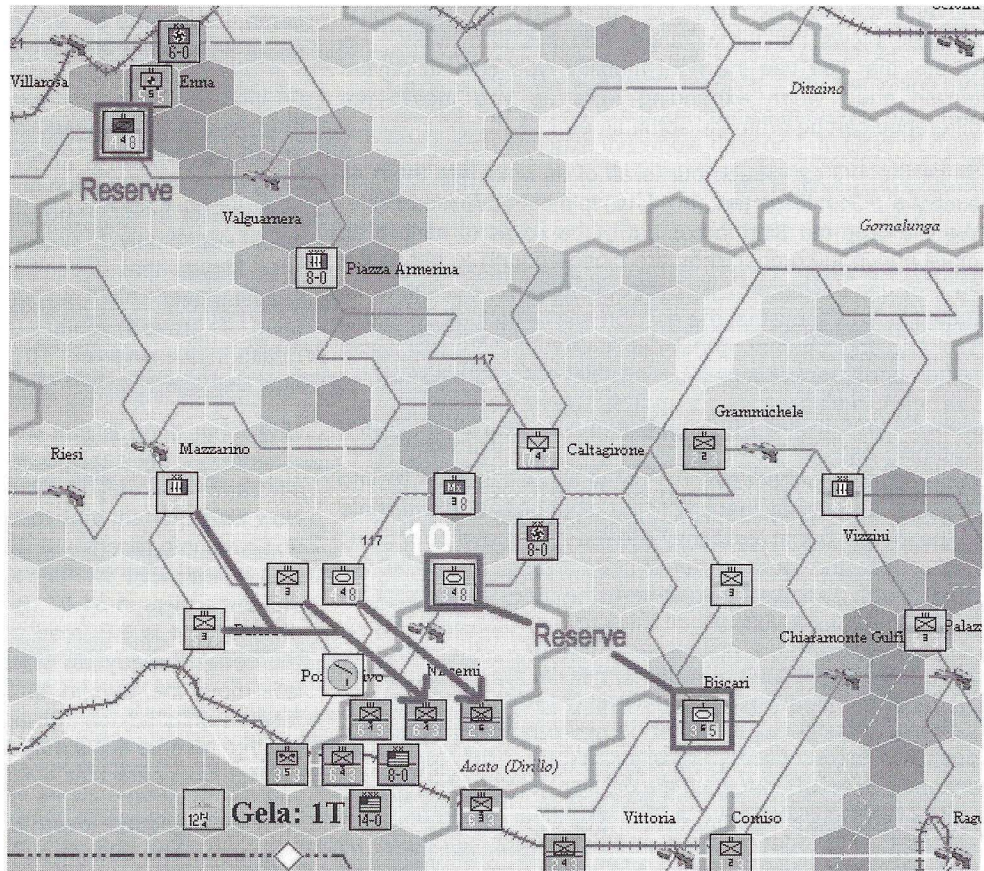
When reinforcements are due, place them at their entry points. Reinforcements do not use movement points to enter the map.

Movement (Also called Mode Determination & Movement)

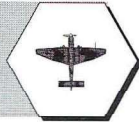
Now the fun begins. You must have a plan. The plan here is simple; in the Movement and/or Combat phase open a whole in the US line and then, in Exploitation, drive down and take the LST. One thing to consider is that you only have three reserve markers, so you can only have three stacks in reserve. First you will need to fuel up the units you want to move; generally you need one SP (supply point) to fuel up a division. The fuel supply rules are covered in OCS 12.5.

The Italian Nipoli Division is not worth fueling. First they are way too far away from the FEBA (Forward Edge Battle Area) to be of any real value. Second there are really only two units that need fuel, the two artillery units in hex 42.20. Third they don't pack too much punch. Better to save the SP for something else.

The Italian Livno (Livorno) Division is one that can get into the fight and has some combat power worth bringing to bear, so let's fuel them up. To fuel them, the Livorno HQ must consume one SP then throw that supply (in the case fuel) out to all of its units, OCS 3.4 and 13.1d. But from where will you get the SP? A tip is to always pull supply from the furthest distance first. The way an HQ (or any unit) draws supply is



The Plan



OCS By The Numbers (Cont.)

the 5 MPs (Movement Points) plus one hex method. This means, the supply must be within 5 MPs at the truck movement costs plus one hex or closer, OCS 12.0 and 12.3. Try counting to any of the locations with SPs on them and you cannot reach them.

But there are 2 Mules loaded with supplies on in hex 37.11. Each one has 1SP, move one of them up to fuel the Livno Division. They can move 6 leg MPs. Let's follow the path down the track, 38.11 – 39.11 – 39.12 – 40.12 – 41.12 – 41.11. Now count from the HQ to the mules, 41.08 – 40.08 – 40.09 – 41.10 and you are next to the loaded mules at a cost of only 4MPs, so you can use the SP to fuel up the division. Flip the mules over to their empty side (does that mean the mules are hungry?). Now count out from the HQ (hex 42.08) to all of the units belonging to the division. All are within the six MPs of the HQ.

Notice that in both cases (drawing the supply to the HQ and then the HQ throwing the supply to the units) that you count out FROM the HQ. This is important and can make a difference many times. Think of it this way, it is up to the HQ personnel to go get (or draw) the supplies from the dump and then give (or throw) the supplies out to the units. See OCS 12.3b.

The movement type for the count out from the HQ is leg, why? This is because the Six on the Livno HQ is in white. OCS 6.2 covers the mobility types, White is LEG, Red is TRACK (like a tank) and Black is TRUCK. For most units this color-coding is on the right most number on the counter (the movement allowance number). But for an HQ the left most number shows the throw range, and this is in MPs. Be careful that you use the right mobility type column on the terrain chart when expending MPs as you move; the difference can be dramatic some times.

Since the HQ can reach out to all of its units, flip them all except the 34th Regiment (in 44.10) to their move mode side. We will keep the 34th in combat mode so as to have a bit more punch in combat; they are close enough to get to the fight in combat mode. Also flip the division marker to its fueled side to show that the division has been fueled. In this scenario the counter density is pretty low so you could remember it, but it's a good idea to get in the habit.

Now it's time to fuel up the German KG Knr (Kampfgruppe Koerner) back in hexes 33.08 and 34.07. Put them all in move mode (flip them over). Put the stack in hex 34.07 into reserve. It's unlikely that any of the other units will participate in the attack, but at least they are ready to move out. Don't bother with the Nebelwerfer Bn (Battalions) in hex 33.08; cool as they look we wouldn't be using them this time. Use an SP from hex 32.08.

Also move the wagon supplies closer to the FEBA. From 32.08 move it up to 43.15, where the HG Pz (Hermann Goering Panzer) HQ is. Next we will fuel up HG Pz. But don't use the supplies you just moved up. Pull from 37.11 instead. Use 1SP to fuel up the division. Notice that several units of this division have a Red movement number. This means that in order to move at all you must fuel them, as they are tanks. Tanks without fuel are at best a pillbox and

at worst nice targets for everyone to shoot. Put the following units of the HG Pz in move mode: Hex 44.13 III-HG Arty Bn, and the Pioneer Bn. In hex 47.18 I-2 HG PG Bn and I-HG Arty Bn. Put that stack in 44.13 in reserve.

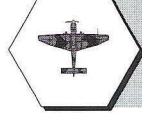
Also we have this really neat unit in 47.18, a Tiger Tank company. Uh, ah, Tigers! you say.... Well just for fun we will fuel them up too. First to get them in to the fight we have to put them in move mode, in combat mode they only have five MPs (dang it all!). Not really enough to get them in there. In move mode they have 10 MPs, but their combat strength drops to two! Hum, doesn't sound that good. But the combat strength is not what is really important. There is that little five between the two and the ten that may prove to be more important. We'll get to it later when we start into combat.

But how do we fuel them? Since they are an independent unit they could draw directly, but there are no SPs in range. Or they can draw from a friendly HQ. In this case the HG Pz can throw to them just like it did to its own units in the same hex. But there is a little bit of a trick to this. OCS 12.5 covers three methods for fuel supply. The Tigers fall into either method B or C. Method C looks attractive because it would only cost 1T to fuel them, but that will only last for the current movement phase, not the entire player turn. We want to put this stack in reserve to use as a final thrust to get that LST if needed, which would be in the exploitation phase. So that means method B. In a real game (that is, a game with more than one half of a turn!) this might not be a real good idea. We are spending an entire SP to fuel one unit. I know that Tiger Tanks are cool, but not that cool! Since this is not a full game, I'll burn the SP, this time. Flip the Tigers over to move mode and mark this stack as reserve.

(In later review and with some hints from Dean, it appears that we could have used method C to fuel the Tigers. We would fuel them now with the 1T and then burn another 1T later when moving them in the exploitation phase. It doesn't make a lot of difference in this particular scenario, but it would spend only 2T (which is half of an SP) instead of a full SP. Maybe that doesn't seem like much, but in a larger scenario that could be significant, conservation is a good thing. To prove to yourself that every T counts, try playing the British in scenario 5.2 "The Battle for the Primasole Bridge" after this one.)

One more thing is that we can move the units that are in reserve. They can move one quarter of their movement allowance and stay in reserve. OCS 5.7 covers all of this. Now it's important that you do this in the right order. First a unit goes into reserve, and then it can move one fourth of its MPs. Not move one fourth then put it in reserve. So let's move the guys in 34.07 up to 38.11 (slowest mover is a 14 divided by 4 is 3.5, road movement for trucks is one half). Now push the guys in 47.18 (the Tigers) up to 48.16. Also let's move the guys in 44.13 up to 46.14. It's OK to move reserve units adjacent to an enemy unit, but a unit can't be put into reserve if it is adjacent to an enemy unit. Check out OCS 5.7a in particular.

Now let's try some overruns! OCS 8.0 is the rule covering overruns. The goal of our initial attack is to open a hole in



OCS By The Numbers (Cont.)

the line so we can get to the LST. At first glance the 1-505th of the 82nd Airborne (Hex 47.14) looks like the likely candidate. Heck with a combat value of only two it looks rather easy. We can get to it with the 11-HG of the HG Pz, four attacking two in the open, attack factor is doubled (terrain effects page 36 of Sicily Rules) so 8:2, making a 4:1 in the open. But there is this little five on the 1-505th and a four on the 11-HG. What is that all about? It's called an AR (Action Rating). OCS 3.1d goes in to detail about it. This number is pretty important. When I first started playing OCS I didn't give it enough attention. It didn't take me long to figure out that it can make a very big difference.

Let's do that attack and see what happens. Move the 11-HG from 44.11 to 46.13. Notice there is no movement cost for moving into an EZOC (enemy zone of control) as per OCS 4.0. It does cost three MPs to do the overrun, and it took three MPs to get here so we have two MP left to use after the attack. Now it is time for the attack.

First we must spend some supply for the attack. In the attack the cost is 1T per step in the attack, and the defender pays 1T. This is from the supply tables, page four of the Charts and Tables, also see OCS 9.5. The defender is only 1T because it's a battalion, and in Sicily it takes two battalions to equal one RE (regimental equivalent) SR 1.1, number three. For the Germans burn the 1T from 37.11 (the HG Pz HQ can through it from there) and the Americans get it from 49.12 (the LST).

The next thing you do is to roll for who gains surprise. Now we will be looking at page three of the Charts and Tables. First take the difference of the AR's. In this attack it is one in favor of the defender, which means you will subtract one from the surprise roll. The wording on the surprise table can be a bit confusing. The overrun chart says a nine or more Attacker surprise, six or less Defender surprise. What that means that on a nine or more the attacker achieves (or gains) surprise on the defender. I have misread this at least once where I thought on a roll of nine or more, the attacker was surprised.

So here we go. It is customary to roll three dice here, since if some one gets surprise you will need to roll a third die for the shift. Make sure the shift die is easily recognizable from the other two. The roll is a three, which becomes a two; this means the defender achieves surprise on the attacker (think of it that the attacker walked directly into an ambush kill zone). And as luck would have it the shift roll is a SIX!

On to the combat table, and let's see what happened to our nice 4:1 attack in the open. The shift is a six in favor of the defender, so we shift to the LEFT on the table, now it's a 1:4 in the open. Roll for results and get an eight, but the AR affects this roll also. This is true even if no one had achieved surprise. So we subtract one from the roll for a seven. The result is an AL1o1. OK, what does that mean?

AL1 means the attacker must take a step loss. And the o1 means the attacker has the option of taking another step loss or retreat one hex. In this case the option can be ignored because all units in Sicily are one step, so there is no one left to exercise the option with. The 11-HG goes to the dead pile.

Granted the surprise roll was VERY good for the Americans in this case, but you can get an idea of the power of the AR. Just for kicks let's look at that attack as if there had been no surprise. A seven on the 4:1 in open is an Ao1DL1o1. Say that one five times fast. The attacker must always take losses and exercise options first, then the defender. In this one, attacker would either have to retreat one hex or lose a step. Then the Defender would loss a step. For the defender the o1 part is ignored just like we saw before (because there is only one step to lose here as well).

Well that didn't go to well, the 11-HG just kind of bounced off of those pesky airborne types. Let's let the Italians have a crack at it. They can't pull off an overrun. Well the H Mx could, but the odds are bad and given it has an AR of three it doesn't seem like a good idea. We will move the H Mx up to 46.11 instead. This is not so much to grab the air base, but more to allow truck units move through. The ZOC (zone of control) rule OCS 4.1 tells us that truck moving units must either halt all movement or conduct an overrun when they enter an EZOC (enemy ZOC). But a friendly unit will negate this. In this case you can think of the H Mx acting as a road guard to allow others on trucks to move through.

We will move up all of the Livno Division, except the HQ. OCS 4.2 covers stacking, no more then 10 RE per hex. With the entire division we have 3 Regiments and 3 Battalions. That equates to 4.5 RE, no problem with over stacking. Move them all up to 46.12 and the E Mx guys too. They now wait for the combat phase.

How about the airpower? The Germans can use what are called Hip Shoots SR 2.4a. It's kind of an odd term for an air unit when you think about it, but as OCS 14.7 says these are air overruns. In the restrictions for Hip Shoots, B states that these attacks must have a ground spotter. Also in SR 2.4b it states that German units must spot for German air. All of this adds up to the fact that we need to move a German unit up to the FEBA to spot for these attacks. We can move the HG PJ up from 41.15 to 46.13, now we have a spotter for 47.13 and 47.14.

Let's pound 47.13 with one He-111h. First comes the flak roll. The flak table is on page two of the Charts and Tables (same page as the barrage table). OCS 14.9 covers flak, in this case there are just a couple of regular combat units so no additional flak points. Need a nine or higher to have any effect. Roll a seven. Now do the barrage attack. Let's first get all the modifiers, it's open terrain (no shift), there is more then one RE and less then three RE's (no shift), so it's a on the 12-16 column. Roll an eight, good for a DG (Disorganized, but I think it really means Disgruntled...) The He-111h now flies home and becomes inactive, OCS 14.4.

OK, how about hitting 47.14 (those pesky 1-505th guys) with the other He-111h? This is mostly the same for modifiers, but there is only one half an RE here so there is a one-column shift to the left. For the flak roll I got a seven. The barrage roll is on the 8-11 column; get a six, no effect. It would be nice to DG those guys at least so let's bring in the last air unit, the JU-88. It's on the 5-6 column, roll another six. Rats!



OCS By The Numbers (Cont.)

Supply Trace

OCS 12.6 covers supply trace. This is subsistence supply better known as food to most of us. The basic idea is that a unit has to be able to trace to a supply source. A direct draw uses the 5MPs +1 one hex method, same as combat supply talked about earlier. The good news is that rail lines act as arteries out from the supply source to points all over the AO. This makes rail lines much more important in OCS than in most other games.

You need what is called a detrainable hex on a rail line to draw from. For this scenario we have two, 32.08 Enna and 50.22 Ragusa. Also SR 2.11 lets the Axis (not the Allies) use roads (not tracks) just like rail lines, except you don't need a "deroadable" hex. Using all this you can see that everyone is in supply. (Note: 50.18 Comiso is not a detrainable hex because the 2-505th/82nd is adjacent to 52.18 and that stops the supply line, OCS 4.1 note C). The key with supply trace is to be thinking about it as you move.

Reaction Phase

Since the US has no units in reserve the only thing for the US to do is fire the ships. It would be most productive to blast the reserve stacks that the Axis has. This is because if you can get them at least DG'd then they lose their reserve status, OCS 5.10d. At first it looks like no one is in range. But ships can move in all phases where movement is allowed, OCS 18.1. And with 20 MPs they can go pretty much anywhere you want for this scenario.

The killer stack is in 46.14 so let's move the four US destroyers to 50.12, and the Polish and Greek destroyers to 51.14. This way they can all reach out and touch someone. Naval barrage is always unspotted, OCS 18.3. Hitting 46.14 with 48 points on the 14-24 column roll a four! Arrge! OK, the other destroyers will blast at 48.16 with 11 points, on the 3-4 column, roll an eight for no effect. Well, these are typical of my barrage rolls. That ends US reaction phase.

Combat Phase

To start the Axis Combat phase I'll try some barrage. Like many others I feel that barrage is rather expensive. So I tend to shoot only when I have a good opportunity and or I have to. This time there isn't anything really worth it but just for fun let's fire off the Livno motors and artillery at the hex they will attack, 47.13. They are all ready DG'd so mostly we are trying to knock off a step, fairly unlikely the way I roll barrages. Nine points, cost is 2T. Can do a direct draw for the supply from 41.15 Caltagirone. Rolling on the 8-11 Column, get a six. I'm sure the guys in 47.13 are saying, "Hey did you hear something?"

Next we will do the attack. Lead with the E Mx, this will be the unit that provides the AR (and will have to take the first loss if there is one). Total attack strength is 12, action rating of three. For the US, lead the defense with the 16th Regiment, the action rating is normally a four, but it is reduced to a three because they are DG'd OCS 5.10b. Also their combat strength is halved, OCS 5.10a. Defense is a 3.5. Supply cost for the Italians is 1SP, which they can draw

again from 41.15 Caltagirone and for the US is 2T, drawn from the LST.

Surprise roll is an eight, no surprise. On the 3:1 in open column, roll another eight. This gives an Ao1DL1o1. That's not too bad. Let's walk through this one because it offers some interesting results. First the losses are taken. The US loses the 16th Regiment, which hurts. Then the attacker must decide what to do. If the attacker decides to retreat then the defender can ignore his option, OCS 9.10a. This is the only time an option can be ignored. If the attacker takes it as a loss then the defender must either retreat or take the loss. Since the idea here is to bust open the line, the Italians take the loss, and so the E Mx is moved to the dead pile. The US retreats to 48.13. Since the hex was vacated by the US the Italians can move in, just move the 34th regiment of the Livno division into 47.13. That's it for combat.

Exploitation Phase

First, release the Tigers in 48.16 and run them in to try to get the DG'd artillery out of the way. Movement here hex by hex: 49.16 1MP, 49.15 1MP, cross the river 3MPs, 48.14 1MP and the overrun cost three for a total of nine movement points, one left over. The Tigers will have to burn internals for this attack. They cannot draw from anywhere and no HQ can throw to them. Mark them with a LOW counter; see OCS 9.5 about the use of internal supplies for attacking. The Artillery draws the 1T from the LST.

Compare the AR's, five for the Tigers and one for the artillery (reduced because of being DG'd). Surprise roll, seven add the four for the AR difference to get eleven, attacker gains surprise. The shift roll is a four. On the combat chart, start at the 2:1 column, then move RIGHT (in favor of the attacker) four columns to 7:1. Now the roll, a TWO! Yikes! Add four to it and get a six. Ao1DL1o1, at least we got the path clear for to the LST, retreat the Tigers to 47.15. The AR really saved the day in this attack!

Next, we release the guys in 46.14. And here is the move: 46.13, 47.13, and 48.13. We'll drop off the Artillery here, the rest can move to on to 49.13. Now the overrun, let's lead with the PIO Bn, AR of four, attacking with eight. The US lead the defense with the 1-41st AR of three, total defense is nine (four for 1-41st and five for the HQ OCS 13.1c). Attacker can get supply thrown to them from their HQ back at 43.15; defender gets supply from the LST (same hex this time).

Ok 1:1 in the open, with a +1 for the AR. Surprise roll is a five for a total of 6. Defender gains surprise, the shift roll is a one, not so lucky for the Americans this time. On to the combat table, now it's a 1:2 in the open, roll a six add one get a seven. Results are AL1o1Do1, ouch! OK, the PIO Bn dies, and I really need to take another loss to force the US to take their option. Painful as this is, loss the 1-HG.

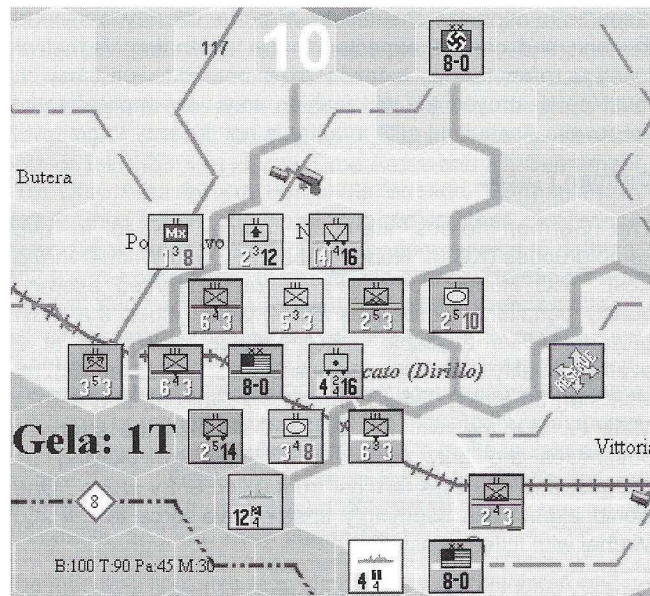
Now the US either has to retreat or lose the 1-41st. Since if they retreat that leaves the LST wide open, the only real option to avoid handing the Axis a win is to take the loss. The 1-41st goes to the dead pile.



OCS By The Numbers (Cont.)

Well it all comes down to this. We have really only one stack left that can make a run for it. From way up at 38.11 rolling down highway 117, come elements of the KG Knr. Run them all the way down to the 49.13 and fire off the overrun. The attackers will burn internals for this attack, and since it is for all the marbles it's worth it. Lead the attack with IV-Knr with an AR of five, total attack strength of 6. The US has an AR of zero OSC 13.1c and a defense of 5. Odds start off at 1:1. Now roll for surprise get an eight, add five for 13. The shift roll is a SIX! Now the odds are 9:1. Roll for combat results get a THREE! Yikes, good thing we get to add five to that. An 8 gives a result of Ae4DL1o2. The Ae4 means that units with an AR of 4 or higher get exploitation, but because this is an overrun that is ignored, see the notes on the combat chart. The HQ dies and the Axis advance into the LST hex, roll for supply capture got a one. That means the Germans capture 0%, would have been nice to get some of it. Game over, Axis victory.

Even though this is a simple scenario it gives you a good feel of all the aspects of OCS, there are a verity of ways to approach the objective so you should be able to play this several times and try different techniques. Good gaming!



The End

Screaming Eagles in Holland - German Perspective

by Jean Jodoin

You have setup the TCS game **Screaming Eagles in Holland (SEiH)** and now you are staring down at those two maps, wondering how to achieve victory. In order to formulate a battle plan, you have to analyze the mission you have been given, the terrain over which you will be fighting, the forces facing you, and the forces at your disposal.

The Mission

The mission consists of interdicting the highway between Eindhoven and Arnhem. The town of Veghel must be captured and the four bridges located nearby destroyed. If Veghel is lost, it can be re-captured, but once a bridge is blown-up, it cannot be repaired and the victory points (VPs) are irretrievably assigned to the German commander. Moreover, the Germans get more VPs for destroying than controlling bridges. Once both canal or Aa river bridges are destroyed, the task of retaining Veghel will be made that much easier since no Allied vehicles can cross either water obstacle.

The Terrain

From an analysis of the terrain in conjunction with the VP schedule, one point becomes readily apparent: The Eindhoven-Mariaheide Highway is the dominant feature that must be controlled to achieve victory. Along this highway are 15 out of 21 VPs available: Kempkens [1], canal bridge [5], Aa river bridge at Veghel [3], Veghel itself [5], and Mariaheide [1]. The secondary axis consisting of the RR dyke crossing the canal at A28.13 and the Aa River at A35.04-A35.03 is worth a meager 6 VP, just enough to yield a draw to the Germans.

Running roughly north to south, the Wilhelm Canal and the Aa River conspire to divide the battlefield into three separate sectors: western — central — eastern. The RR dyke that runs west to northeast further subdivides these three sectors into north-south areas.

The Opposition

The Allied starting forces are not overly impressive, especially in the western sector, and are entirely lacking in tank support. Eastern Sector Allied forces are weak and widely dispersed: one under-strength airborne battalion supported by a dozen armored cars of varying AT capabilities and 9 x 20mm AA guns. Even the artillery batteries are not yet numerous. However, this state of affairs is purely temporary and the reinforcement schedule is nothing if not aggressive. The reinforcements amount to no less than: 8 x Fireflies tanks, 24 x Sherman tanks, 2 x AT battalions, and 5 x infantry battalions. The dominant factor here is that all Allied reinforcements show up in the Western Sector and must fight their way through KG Huber to cross the Zuid-Willems Canal over the RR or highway bridge.

Tactically British armor, save perhaps for the Firefly tanks, and American AT guns, are noticeably inferior to German models in lethality, armor protection, and range. The inescapable conclusion is that German armor wants to fight at what is considered normal range for itself and long range for the opposition. Only in built-up areas are close-range firefights likely to erupt, where the qualitative edge diminishes and first fire becomes the dominant factor.

Eventually American artillery will increase in weight of delivery and lethality. This forces German soft targets to