DONNERSCHLAG

ESCAPE FROM STALINGRAD

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VUCA SIMULATIONS

RULEBOOK
JULY 2023

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This version of Donnerschlag rules has been extensively rewritten. If you are familiar with the previous version of the rules, we recommend downloading the errata to the original printed rules.

Formatting

- *Useful notes and additional information about the rules are styled this way.*

❗ *Exceptions to the rules are styled this way.*

Important Clarifications and Errata are formatted in this way.

Errata and Corrigenda of the previous Errata are formatted in this way.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Historical Context

From December 12 to December 23 in 1942, "Unternehmen Wintergewitter" was in progress. This was the code name for a relief attack by Heeresgruppe Don to free the trapped 6th Army in Stalingrad. The Axis formations entered with 50,000 men and 250 tanks, while the strength of the Soviet formations was reported to be about three times that.

For the enterprise to have any chance of success, the troops in the encirclement had to break out and meet the advancing Axis troops. The breakout had to be precisely coordinated with the advance of the relief troops and was to commence on the cue "Donnerschlag". The breakout was never ordered and the troops in Stalingrad were never able to be relieved. This sealed their fate.

Players will be recreating this episode, with the Axis side attempting to secretly establish and reach a meeting point, thus effectively freeing the 6th Army, while the Soviet will try to impede such outcome.

1.2 Scale

One hex equals 4 km. One turn equals 2–3 days. A game lasts, at most, 8 turns. Units are mostly Brigades & Regiments for the Soviets and Romanians, Battalions & Abteilungen for the Germans.

1.3 The Game

In Donnerschlag players will activate units to move and combat through the use of cards (6.0). In each turn each player will draw 5 or 6 activation cards, which they will play in an alternating fashion (5.2). Each activation card allows the activation of a subset of units.

There are no victory points in Donnerschlag. During the first four turns of the game the Axis player will secretly commit to one of the areas on the map: A, B, or C, by calling Donnerschlag! (9.1) The Axis player wins if they have units on the chosen area exactly on the 4th turn (and sometimes on the 5th turn) after they have called Donnerschlag. Otherwise the Soviet Player wins (9.2).

2. COMPONENTS

The game includes:

- 1 rulebook
- 1, 55cm x 87cm mounted map (2.1),
- 234, 15mm counters in 2 counter sheets (2.2, 2.3)
- 2 player aid charts (2.5);
- 2 setup display charts (2.5);
- 126, 58mm x 88mm cards (2.4, 6.2, 6.3);
- 2, 6-sided dice;
- 1 box + 1 lid (23cm x 31cm x 5cm).

You will need 3 cups (or equivalent) to randomize the draw of counters (3.3).

2.1 The Map

- The game map represents the area of the Soviet Union to the south of Stalingrad where Unternehmen Wintergewitter took place.
- A pattern of numbered hexagons (referred to as hexes) overlays the map to facilitate the placement and movement of the game pieces called units (represented by counters).
- Units may not leave the hex portion of the map, unless eliminated.
- Arrows on hexes 0810, 0914, 2124, and 4607 represent the entry points of Reinforcements (3.3).

- Terrain features are explained in 3.7, 7.2, and 8.3.
- Supply map edges are marked with dark orange/red for Soviets, and field gray for the Axis (3.6).
- At the top of the map there are the following features:
  - The turn track (5.0). Some boxes of the turn track are painted in a player color as a reminder that Reinforcements of that player will enter that turn. In addition the following errata applies. "Reshuffle Cards" should point to turn 4 instead of being between turn 3 and 4 and it should say instead: "Add Late cards together with the discard piles to form new draw decks." "Reshuffle Late Cards" should point to both turn 7 and turn 8, instead of being in between and it should say instead: "Reshuffle discarded Combat Cards to form new draw decks."
- 3 marker spaces for each side, 2 denoting current Hand Limit for each type of card (2.4), and 1 for the Schlachtenglück marker (3.10).
- The Donnerschlag Advance Track, which will track how many turns have passed since the Axis player called Donnerschlag (9.1).
- 3 spaces for the Axis Player to secretly place the meeting zone markers once Donnerschlag is called (9.1).
- The OKH and STAVKA box (3.8), which is used by players to optionally commit one Combat Card each turn in order to guarantee its effect.
- 4 card spaces for each player (2.4). Activation Draw Deck, Combat Draw Deck, Discard Pile, and the Combat Card Removed Pile (this box can be repurposed to ease the gameplay as described in 5.2, Activation Segments, Bullet Point 4).

2.2 Units

Units are organized and colored by formation:

Parent	Symbol		Formation	HQs
Axis Units				
Parent	Symbol		Formation	HQs
LVII Panzer Corps (German)	××		6th Panzer Division	1
	¥		17th Panzer Division	1
	↗		23rd Panzer Division	1
VI & VII Corps (Romanian)	VI		1st Infantry Division 2nd Infantry Division 18th Infantry Division 4th Infantry Division	2
	VII			
Gr. Popescu (Romanian)	GP		5th Cavalry Division 8th Cavalry Division	1
Soviet Units				
Parent	Symbol		Formation	HQs
2nd Guards Army	1G		1st Guards Rifle Corps	1
	2GM		2nd Guards Mech Corps	
	6M		6th Mechanized Corps	
	7T		7th Tank Corps	
	13G		13th Guards Rifle Corps	
	38		38th Rifle Division	
	87		87th Rifle Division	
	300		300th Rifle Division	
51st Army	4C		4th Cavalry Corps	1
	4M		4th Mechanized Corps	
	13T		13th Tank Corps	
	91		91st Rifle Division	
	126		126th Rifle Division	
	302		302nd Rifle Division	
	☆	None	Independent Units	

Each formation is composed of several units. Each unit is represented by a counter. There are 4 types of units in Donnerschlag: 3 types of Combat Units (Infantry, Motorized Infantry, and Tanks), and Headquarters (HQs). Combat Units represent the military forces that took part in the historical campaign, while HQs represent the high-echelon formations. During the game, HQ's will exert a command radius to activate Combat Units (6.1).

Combat Units

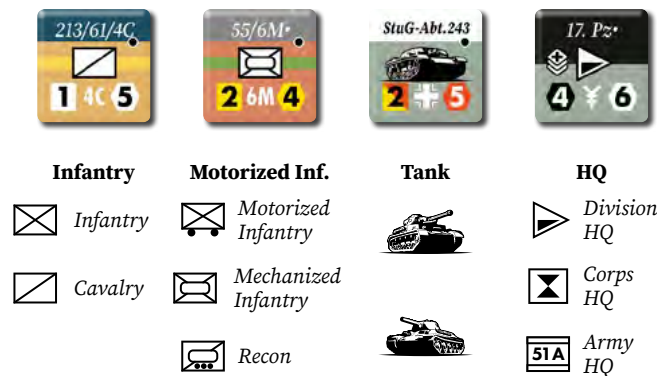- Formation Color
- Unit Symbol
- Combat Strength
- Unit ID
- Steps
- Nationality Color (Axis only)
- Movement Points (MPs)
- Formation Symbol
- Color Code (Soviet Only)
- Army Color (Soviet Only)

HQ's

- Formation Color (Axis Only)
- Free Stacking Symbol (3.4)
- Command Range
- Formation Symbol
- Nationality Color (Axis only)
- Movement Points (MPs)
- Name
- HQ Symbol
- Army Color (Soviet only)
- Only for Aesthetics (Soviet only)

Unit types are identified by the Unit Symbol:

- ◆ All units with an Infantry or Cavalry Symbols are considered Infantry Units for game purposes.
- ◆ All units with a Motorized Infantry, Mechanized Infantry, or Recon symbols are considered Motorized Infantry Units for game purposes.
- ◆ All units with an armored vehicle silhouette are considered Tank Units for game purposes.
- ◆ All units with an HQ symbol are considered HQ Units for game purposes.

There are more Unit Symbols than unit types purely for historical reasons.

Infantry	Motorized Inf.	Tank	HQ
⊠ Infantry	⊠ Motorized Infantry	🚜	▷ Division HQ
⧄ Cavalry	⊠ Mechanized Infantry		◨ Corps HQ
	⊡ Recon	🚜	51A Army HQ

Combat Strength values are only present in Combat Units. Infantry, Motorized Infantry, and Tanks have Combat Strength values with a white, yellow, and yellow/orange background, respectively (with the exception of Recon Units which have a white background). These are reminders of Combat bonuses (8.3). HQ's do not have Combat Strength. Instead they have Command Range values, which feature a black background as a reminder (6.1).

Infantry, Motorized Infantry, and Tanks, have MP's with a white, yellow, and orange background color respectively. These are reminders of specific Movement rules (7.2). HQs also have MP's with a white background. Note that Soviet HQ's have 0 MPs and do not start on the map. They enter the map (and relocate) through card play (C55, C56, and C69).
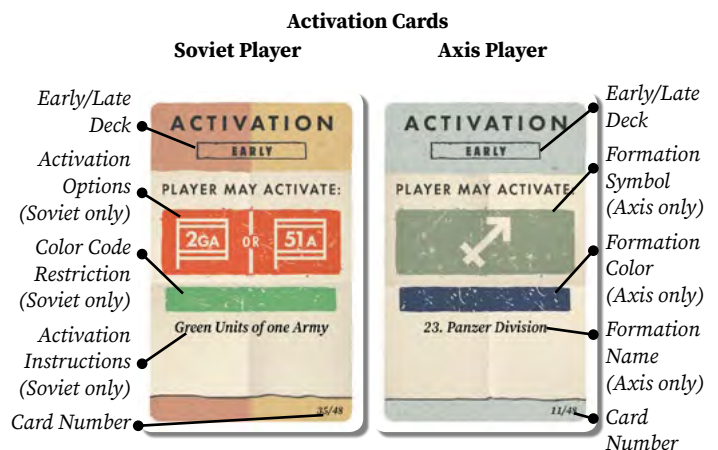
Some units have a dot after their identifier. This is a misprint and has no meaning.
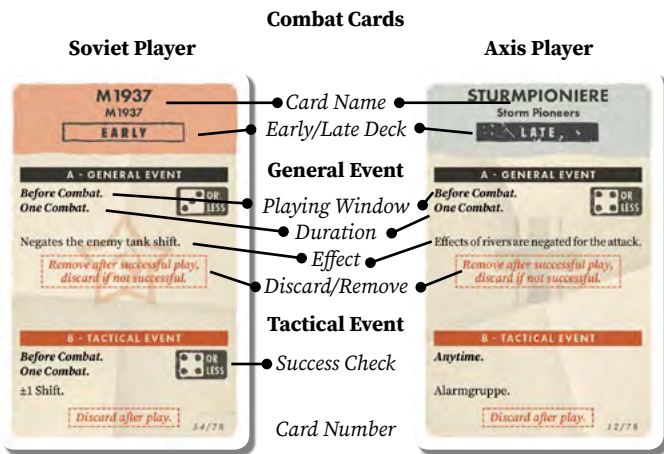
2.3 Markers

	Turn Marker x1 *Enter: Setup* *Rules: 5.2*		**HQ Overrun Markers** x2 *(1 each)* *Enter: Axis Movement* *Rules: 7.3*
	SNAFU Markers *Soviet x3, Axis x1* *Enter: Setup* *Rules: 3.3*		**Out of Supply Markers** x10 *(not limited)* *Enter: OOS checks* *Rules: 3.6, 5.2*
	Card Limit Markers x4 *(1 each)* *Enter: Setup* *Rules: 2.4, 5.1, 5.2* *Cards: C34, C35, C57, C62, C75, C76*		**Schwerpunkt Marker** x1 *Enter: Card Play* *Rules: Card C33, 6.1*
	Schlachten-glück Marker *Enter: Setup* *Rules: 3.10*		**Yak-9 Markers** x7 *Enter: Card Play* *Rules: Card C74*
	Meeting Zone Markers x1 M. Zone, x2 Dummy		**No Movement Marker** x1 *Enter: Card Play* *Rules: Cards C40, C67*
	Donnerschlag Marker x1 *Enter: Turns 1-4* *Rules: 5.2, 9.1, 9.2*		x1. This marker is not used. It was from an earlier version of the game and was printed by mistake.
	Snowdrift Markers x2 *Enter: Card Play* *Rules: Card C52*		x21. These markers are to be used with a different game: Operation Theseus. They are not needed to play the game but enhance the experience.

2.4 Cards

Donnerschlag contains 126 cards (58mm x 88mm): 48 Activation Cards and 78 Combat Cards. Activation Cards and Combat Cards are numbered from 1 to 48 and 1 to 78, respectively. The notation used in this manual to refer to Combat Cards will prefix the number of the card with a C (e.g. Card C30 means Combat Card 30). There is no need for a notation for Activation Cards. Cards can be also divided according to player (Axis cards have gray backs, while Soviet cards have light red backs), and period (Late or Early). These 3 divisions (Activation/Combat, Axis/Soviet, Early/Late) are used to build 8 distinct decks.

Activation Cards

Soviet Player   **Axis Player**

- Early/Late Deck
- Activation Options (Soviet only)
- Color Code Restriction (Soviet only)
- Activation Instructions (Soviet only)
- Card Number
- Early/Late Deck
- Formation Symbol (Axis only)
- Formation Color (Axis only)
- Formation Name (Axis only)
- Card Number

Activation Cards are used to activate units on the map in order to perform Movement and Combat. Each player starts the game with a hand limit of 5 Activation Cards (during the game this can be increased to 6 Activation Cards with Cards C34, C75). Each turn, players will draw cards up to their hand limit (5.1), and then play 1 card at a time (5.2) alternating between them until all drawn Activation Cards have been played. See 6.0 for instructions regarding which units each card activates.

Combat Cards

Soviet Player   **Axis Player**

- Card Name
- Early/Late Deck
- **General Event**
  - Playing Window
  - Duration
  - Effect
  - Discard/Remove
- **Tactical Event**
  - Success Check
  - Card Number

Combat Cards are used to provide a layer of uncertainty by giving players various bonuses and effects. Each player starts the game with a hand limit of 5 Activation Cards (during the game this can be increased to 6 Activation Cards with Cards C35, C76). Each turn, players will draw Combat Cards up to their hand limit (5.1). Players can keep up to 1 Combat Card between turns (this card counts against the hand limit).

Players must choose between playing a Combat Card for its General Event or for its Tactical Event, but not both. Each event has a playing window denoting when it can be played. Events cannot be played outside their playing window, but multiple events can be played within the same playing window. Some events require a success check by rolling 1d6. The check is made after playing the card and declaring targets if applicable, but before resolving its effect:

- If your result is higher than what the success check shows, you failed the check. Discard the card without performing its effect.

- If your result is equal or lower than what the success check shows, you passed. Perform the effect. Then discard the card if it was played for its tactical event, or remove it permanently from the game if it was played for its general event (discarded cards will cycle into their draw pile in Turn 4 and in Turn 7 or 8, while removed cards will not).

- If there is no success check, the event is an automatic success. Follow the same procedure above, as if you passed the success check.

See 12.0 for more information on events.

2.5 Player Aid and Setup Display

Each player has access to a Player Aid and a Setup Display.

Make sure to download the errata player aid sheet from:

https://vucasims.com/pages/downloads.

3. CONCEPTS

3.1 Steps

Steps represent the number of states a unit can be in, between being full strength and being eliminated. In Donnerschlag units are either 1 or 2 Step-Units. A 2 Step-Unit that suffers a step loss will become a reduced 1 Step-Unit (flip the counter). Any 1 Step-Unit (full strength or reduced) that suffers a step loss is eliminated (take the counter out of the map). To easily differentiate between reduced and full strength 1 Step-Units, reduced units feature a horizontal white ribbon. The color of the dots indicating the current amount of steps is red if the unit has 2 steps remaining or black if the unit has 1 step remaining.
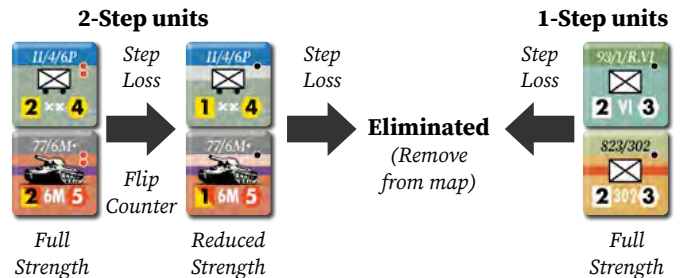
3.2 Replacements

Replacements allow Combat Units to recover lost steps. Replacements are triggered by the play of Combat Cards (C10, C11, C20, C39, C68). Units at full strength are not eligible for Replacements. For each Replacement step either:

- Flip one reduced unit counter to its full strength side (even in EZOC),
- Bring back into play a previously eliminated unit at 1 step strength (full or reduced). The unit must be placed:
  - Stacked with or adjacent to a Friendly Unit in Supply (3.6);
  - Respecting stacking limits (3.4);
  - Cannot overrun a lone enemy HQ (7.3).

If a Stug Combat Unit (4.0) is brought back into play after being eliminated it must attach to the same formation it was attached previously.

If an Axis Combat Unit is brought into play that has had their formation HQ eliminated (7.3) the unit enters the map stacked with their HQ in the same manner as a Turn Reinforcement Unit.

3.3 Reinforcements

Reinforcements allow new units to enter the game. There are two types of Reinforcements.

Turn Reinforcements

In turns 2, 3, 6, and 7 for the Soviet Player, and turn 4 for the Axis Player new units will enter the map according to the Setup Display (see section 2.5. Player Aid and Set-up Display for errata regarding the Setup Display). Units enter one at a time in any order, and will travel an unlimited number of hexes by following an unbroken path of roads (3.7), without entering any EZOC hexes or hexes occupied by Enemy Units, and finish respecting stacking limits. In the case that there is not enough space to allow all Units to enter the map (e.g. by EZOC blocks), as many units as possible must enter. The remaining units will attempt to enter in the following turns, until they are able to enter.

Ad Hoc Reinforcements

As part of setup, 3 opaque cups should contain the following units and markers (the opaque cups are used to perform a blind draw, and as such do not need to be, strictly speaking, cups. You can use any other method such as a bag as long as it produces a blind draw):

Alarmgruppe | Soviet Ad Hoc Infantry | Soviet Ad Hoc Tanks

Units shown in the image are just examples, not all units are equal.

Free-Stacking Icon
(Alarmgruppe & Schwerpunkt)

All 3 types of Ad Hoc Reinforcements can enter play through Combat Cards (e.g. C6, C47, C55). In addition Alarmgruppe and Soviet Ad Hoc Infantry can enter play as a result of Combat (8.4). When instructed to add one Ad Hoc Reinforcement, blindly draw one counter from the respective cup:

- If it is a SNAFU marker, return the marker to the cup. Do not add a unit to the map.
- If it is a unit, place it on the map on its full strength side according to the following conditions:
  - Stacked with or adjacent to a Friendly Unit in Supply (3.6);
  - Not in an EZOC (3.5);
  - Respecting stacking limits (3.4),
  - Cannot overrun a lone enemy HQ (7.3).

Eliminated Ad Hoc Reinforcements are returned to their respective cups. As such they are not eligible for replacements. Players are allowed to check the composition of each cup at any moment (except when blindly drawing a counter). If a cup has no units, it is impossible to bring Reinforcements of that type until a unit is eliminated and added back into the cup.

> ⚠️ *Alarmgruppe Units do not belong to a formation, and cannot be activated (cannot move and/or attack, are never Out of Supply (3.6), but can retreat as a result of Combat). These units can only be used for defense (Combat Strength printed in gray is a reminder). They do not count against the stacking limit (3.4). Soviet Ad Hoc Reinforcements belong to both armies and have two background colors as a reminder.*

3.4 Stacking

Two or more Friendly Units in the same hex constitute a stack. A maximum of 2 Combat Units (full or reduced), together with a maximum of 1 HQ Unit, can occupy a hex. Axis Alarmgruppe Units and the Schwerpunkt Marker do not count against the stacking limit, and are marked with a special icon (HQ's are printed with the icon by mistake, please ignore it). Axis Units can never stack with Soviet Units in the same hex and vice-versa. German Units can stack with Romanian units and vice-versa.

The stacking limit is enforced at the following instances:

- At the end of (but not during) each Turn Reinforcement Unit entry (3.3),
- The moment Ad Hoc Reinforcements units or Replacement Units are added to the map (3.2, 3.3).
- At the end (but not during) each unit: Movement (7.1), Retreat (8.4), or Advance After Combat (8.4).

3.5 Zones of Control (ZOCs and EZOCs)

Every Combat Unit exerts a Zone of Control (ZOC) into the six hexes surrounding it (HQ's are not Combat Units and as such do not exert ZOCs). Treat each hex as a single ZOC, so the unit can exert at a maximum, six ZOCs, each 1 hex in size.

> ⚠️ *The only exception is that ZOCs do not extend across river hex sides (with or without a bridge).*

A ZOC of an Enemy Unit is called an EZOC (Enemy Zone of Control). EZOCs affect Supply (3.6), Movement (7.2), Retreat (8.4), and Reinforcements (3.3).

Two or more ZOCs overlapping in the same hex have no additional effect. An hex can be under the influence of ZOCs of both players simultaneously. With the exception of Supply (3.3) a Friendly Unit in an EZOC hex does not cancel its effects.

166/98/1G only exerts a ZOC in 3014 and 3015. ZOCs cannot cross river hexsides.

6. Pz. does not exert a ZOC because it is an HQ unit.

54/6M exerts a ZOC in 3015, 2915, 2916, 3017, and 3116, but not in 3115 because of the river.

The StuG unit exerts a ZOC in 2916, 2917, 3018, 3117, 3116, and 3016.

3.6 Supply

A unit is out of Supply (OoS) if it has an OoS marker, otherwise it is in Supply.

A unit receives an OoS marker when all the following conditions apply:

- The unit is performing an OoS check, which occurs after being activated, but before starting its Movement (see 5.2);
- The unit does not already have an OoS marker;
- The unit cannot trace a Supply Line. A Supply Line is a series of connected hexes of any length starting from the unit and ending in a friendly Supply map edge (2.1). A Supply Line cannot cross river hex sides unless there is a bridge, cannot

pass through Enemy Units, and cannot pass through EZOC hexes unless those hexes contain at least one Friendly Unit (including HQs)—check each hex individually.

A unit removes its OoS marker when all the following conditions apply:

- The unit has an OoS marker;
- The unit can trace a Supply Line (see definition above);
- The unit is not Active (5.2).

This means a unit that fails the OoS check at the start of its Activation will remain OoS during the whole Activation Segment (Movement and Combat). After the Combat Phase ends, unit Activation also ends which means units can regain Supply the moment they can trace a Supply Line. This can be immediately after the Combat Phase, or at any moment later in the game (including during the opponent's Activation Segment).

OoS Combat Units have their Combat Strength and Movement points halved, and are not eligible for the Tank Combat Bonus or the Combined Arms Combat Bonus (both attacking and defending). OoS Combat Units still exert a ZOC. OoS HQ's have their MPs halved, but their command range remains unchanged.

Do not round numbers to the nearest integer. When moving (7.1) the unit must have enough MPs to move (e.g. unit has 1,5MPs and spends 1MP to move, leaving 0,5MPs remaining). When in Combat (8.2), calculate the Combat Ratio without rounding (e.g. 4/1,5 = 2:1 ratio).

3.7 Roads

All minor roads, major roads, and railroads are considered "roads". They all have the same effects on game play. They are differentiated on the map for purely historical reasons.

- - - -	Minor Road
━━━	Major Road
━━━	Railroad
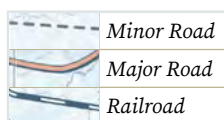
Note that the bridge connecting hexes 3112 and 3212 is the only bridge not connected by roads. All other bridges are connected by roads on both sides.

An unbroken path of roads is defined as tracing a continuous line on top of any road(s). This path is not broken by minor villages, train stations, towns, cities, bridges, or changing the road type. Cities connect all roads that enter the hex.

1810-1709-1609-1708-1608 is an unbroken path.

1810-1709-1609-1608 is a broken path as there is no road connecting 1609 and 1608.

1810-1709-1708-1608 is a broken path as it requires jumping between roads in 1708.

1810-1709-1610-1510-1509-1609-1708-1608 is an unbroken path.

3.8 OKH and STAVKA Boxes

Each player has a box on the board, called OKH for the Axis Player and STAVKA for the Soviet Player. In the Admin Phase, each player has the option to place one Combat Card from their hand, face down in the respective box. Each box holds one card maximum (with the exception of cards C57 + C62 and C60 + C63).

Cards in the OKH/STAVKA box can be played as normal for one of the events within the corresponding playing window (including during the Admin Phase, 5.1). When played, they will automatically pass their success check and are immune to the general event effect of the card "No one answers the phone", which cancels the play of a card after a successful check (C30, C38, C44, C66).

Cards in the OKH/STAVKA box are not part of the hand and thus do not count against the hand limit of Combat Cards, both when checking the hand limit at the end of a turn, as well as when drawing Combat Cards up to the hand limit at the beginning of a turn. If the card in the box ends the turn unplayed, the player can either return it to their hand (to have space for a new card next turn), or keep it in the respective box for next turn (but will not be able to play a new card next turn, with the exception of C57 + C62 and C60 + C63).

3.9 High Command

High Command allows a player to choose a Combat Card before they draw their hand. This card counts against the Combat Card limit. It is only available in specific turns and subject to restrictions.

- Turn 1 - Players choose a Combat Card from the Early Deck.
- Turn 4 - Players choose a Combat Card from the Late Deck.
- Turn 8 - Players choose a Combat Card from the draw deck or discard pile (removed cards are not eligible).

3.10 Schlachtenglück Marker

The marker starts the game under the ownership of the Axis Player. The marker exchanges owners (flip it and place it to the box of your opponent) when:

- It is used;
- At the end of the Admin Phase of each turn (5.1), if it is owned by the Soviet Player it returns to the Axis player possession.

This marker can be used in one of two ways by the current owner:

- The owning player may re-roll one of their die-rolls (not the opponent's), and must keep the new result.
- After the card draw at the start of the turn (5.1), the owning player may exchange one card from their hand with a card from the respective draw deck (Activation Card deck or Combat Card deck). The player can look at the cards in the deck and choose the one to keep. The card that was used in the exchange returns to the draw deck (do not discard the card). The draw deck is then reshuffled. This ability can only be used once per turn per player. Both players can use the ability in the same turn, one immediately after the other.

3.11 Fog of War

Cards in the draw piles are kept secret from both players. Units and Markers in the cups at the moment of a blind draw are also kept secret from both players.

Cards in hand or in the STAVKA/OKH box are kept secret from the opposing player. After the Axis player has called out "Donnerschlag!", the selected Meeting Zone remains secret for the Soviet Player (but see Card C73).

However, there is no "fog of war" for units on the map. (You and God can see them quite plainly). Cards in the discard piles, or removed from the game, are also public information. The

units and markers in the cups can also be checked by any player except when performing a blind draw.

4. SET-UP

1. Place the map on the table. Give each player a Player Aid.
2. Decide which side each player will play. If undecided, the player closest to Stalingrad (Volgograd) plays the Soviet side. If playing the game in Volgograd, the player closest to Berlin plays the Axis side. Give each player the Setup Display corresponding to the side they will play.
3. Each Tank Unit has two counters, each with a distinct art style. Choose one set of counters, and return the other set to the box. They won't be used in the game.

4. Place all units on the map according to the Setup Display (see section 2.5. Player Aid and Set-up Display for errata regarding the Setup Display). Do not place the Turn Reinforcements on the map (they will enter on the specified turns). Note that some units start reduced. You can place units directly onto the map, or place them all on top of the setup display and then onto the map.
5. The Axis player must attach each StuG Unit to an existing **formation** (same or different). They will remain attached to the selected **formation(s)** for the entire game. Place them stacked with any Axis Unit of the formation they will be attached to, respecting stacking limits. There are 2 StuG Units. Note: in case one StuG Unit is eliminated, place the counter on the set-up display near the formation it was attached to as a reminder. If it is brought back into play (3.2), it must return to the same formation it was attached to at the start of the game.

6. Put the Ad Hoc Reinforcements and SNAFU markers in 3 opaque cups according to 3.3.
7. Place the Turn Marker on the turn track on the 1st box. Place the 4 card limit markers with the 5 limit side face up on their respective boxes on the board. Place the Schlachtenglück marker on its box on the Axis side with the gray side face up. Keep the other markers nearby. They may be used during the game.
8. Divide the cards in 8 decks according to Player (Axis or Soviet), Type (Activation or Combat), and Early or Late (2.4). Shuffle each of the 4 Early decks and place them face down on their respective box on the board (Activation Deck and Combat Deck for each player). Players will draw cards from those decks. The 4 Late decks will enter the game in turn 4.

You are now ready to start playing Donnerschlag!

5. SEQUENCE OF PLAY

The sequence of play is followed each turn. It is composed of two phases: the Admin Phase, and the Action Phase. In the Admin Phase players will perform some game maintenance tasks to prepare them for the Action Phase, where they will move and Combat with their units.

5.1 The Admin Phase

1. If the Schwerpunkt marker is in play (C33), the Axis player can reassign it to a new unit.
2. Turn Reinforcements enter the map according to 3.3. and the Setup Display (see section 2.5. Player Aid and Set-up Display for errata regarding the Setup Display).
3. In turns 1, 4, and 8 players choose a card according to High Command rules (3.9).

4. Players draw Combat Cards up to their Combat Card limit (cards left in the OKH/STAVKA box from the previous turn are not part of the hand), and Activation Cards up to their Activation Card limit. In turn 4 there won't be enough cards to replenish the hand. Draw the remaining Combat and Activation Cards. Then each player takes all Combat Cards from their discard (but not those removed from the game), shuffles them together with their Late Combat Cards, and places them face down in the respective box on the board to form a new Combat Draw Pile. Perform the same steps for the Activation Cards to form a new Activation draw pile. Then continue to draw cards from these newly formed draw piles up to the hand limit. In turn 8 do not draw Activation Cards (9.3). In turn 7 or 8 there might not be enough Combat Cards to replenish the hand. Draw the remaining Combat Cards, then reshuffle the Combat discard pile to form a new draw pile. Continue drawing until the hand limit.
5. The Schlachtenglück marker may be used to exchange cards at this moment (3.10). Each player can use it for this purpose once per turn.
6. Players may choose one Combat Card from their hand to place in the STAVKA/OKH box (3.8).
7. The Axis Player may declare Donnerschlag! (9.1) If declared, the Axis player places the Donnerschlag marker on the Donnerschlag Advance track in space 0, and secretly places the meeting zone markers (the Soviet player must not be able to differentiate the meeting zone marker from the dummy markers). If it is turn 4 and Donnershlag! has not been declared, it must be declared.
8. Return the Schlachtenglück marker to the Axis Player if it is owned by the Soviet Player (3.10).

5.2 The Action Phase

1. Players alternate performing Activation Segments (see below). The first Activation Segment of each turn is performed by the Axis Player. Each Activation Segment requires the play of an Activation Card. A Player must perform an Activation Segment if they have Activation Cards in hand. When one Player runs out of Activation Cards they will no longer perform Activation Segments in that turn. The other player will continue to perform Activation Segments until it runs out of cards too. Note that cards C13, C16, C24, C29, C70 allow the play of additional activation segments (without changing the alternate order of activation segment play), even if a player has run out of Activation Cards.
2. Advance the Donnerschlag marker one space forward. This also applies during the turn Donnerschlag is declared.
3. If the Donnerschlag marker is in space 4 or 5 check Victory Conditions (9.2).
4. If the OKH/STAVKA card was not played, the corresponding player has the option to leave it there or take it to its hand (3.8).
5. Players with 2 or more Combat Cards in hand must discard until they have 0 or 1 Combat Cards in their hand (cards left in the OKH/STAVKA box are not part of the hand).
6. If applicable, flip or remove Snowdrift Markers (C53), or Yak-9 markers (C74).
7. Advance the turn marker one space forward and start over the sequence of play.

Activation Segments

1. The player performing the Activation Segment plays an Activation Card. Each Activation Card allows the player to activate a subset of its units (6.0). A player must activate all units the Activation Card allows them.
2. Units are activated one by one. When a unit is activated it immediately makes an Out of Supply (OoS) check (3.6), and then performs its Movement (7.1). Only after it completes

The Axis Orders the 17.Pz HQ. The 17/17Pz unit is out of command range and will not activate in this activation segment. The I/40/17P is at risk of being OOS. If activated first it will receive an OOS marker. 2216 and 2217 are blocked by the river, 2417 has an enemy unit, and 2315, 2416, and 2317 are EZOC hexes. The Axis player can activate the I/39/17Pz, or the III/40/17P, and move at least one of them to hex 2317. This will allow the I/40/17P to be in supply when it activates. Friendly units cancel the EZOC restriction for supply purposes.

its Movement does the next unit activate (once a new unit activates you cannot move previously activated units). In this way, the order in which the player chooses to activate and move their units may change the OoS check result of subsequent unit Activations. Each unit can only be activated once per Activation Segment, and will remain active until the end of the Activation Segment.

3. After all units have been activated (and possibly moved), Combat occurs (8.1, 8.2). Only activated units can attack. Combats are resolved one by one in an order decided by the player performing the Activation Segment.

4. Discard the Activation Card. To ease the gameplay it is suggested that Activation Cards be discarded to the side of the board. This way when it is time to cycle the cards back into their respective decks (turn 4 for activation and Combat Cards, and turn 7 and/or 8 for Combat Cards only) there is no need to separate Combat Cards and Activation Cards from the same discard pile. Alternatively you can use the Perm. Removed Combat Cards box on the board to discard your Activation Cards and actually remove from the board Removed Combat Cards, since they will no longer be needed.

6. ACTIVATION CARDS

6.1 Unit Activation
Activation Cards activate units in 3 different ways:

◆ Activate Combat Units directly (Soviet Only).

◆ Order HQ's:

◆ When a card orders an Axis HQ, all Friendly Units of the same formation as the HQ, and within its command range must be activated. This also includes the HQ.

◆ When a card orders a Soviet HQ, all Friendly Units within the HQ command range must be activated, including the HQ (units don't need to be of the same army or formation).

Soviet HQ's can only be ordered if they are in play and not overrun (7.3). Soviet HQ's come into play via Cards C55 and C56.

◆ Command range is measured in hexes from the HQ to the Combat Unit, without counting the HQ hex, but including the Combat Unit's hex. HQ's never activate other HQ's. Command range is not obstructed by any terrain, EZOCs or units (including Enemy Units). Command Range is checked for all units before any unit is activated (this means that moving the HQ first does not make new units be within command range). After being active units can leave the command range without any penalty.

◆ Order the Schwerpunkt marker (Axis only). This is only allowed if the marker is in play. The Schwerpunkt marker comes into play via Card C33. When the Schwerpunkt marker is ordered, all Axis Combat Units (HQs are not Combat Units) within 4 hexes of the marker must be activated, even if they belong to different formations. Like HQs, check which units are within 4 hexes before activating any units. See card C33 for rules governing the Schwerpunkt marker.

COMMAND RANGE EXAMPLE

The 6th Panzer Division HQ may activate the 6/6P, II/11/6P, and I/114/6P, but not the II/4/6P or the I/128/23P.

A. The activation of II/11/6P or 6/6P isn't hindered by the position of the Soviet 6/2GM, they may be activated even though 6/2GM's EZOC and the unit itself are present in the Command Range.

B. II/4/6P is outside activation range.

C. I/114/6P is within range so it can be activated.

D. I/128/23P belongs to a different formation so it may not be activated.

If the Schwerpunkt marker had been the source of activation instead of the 6.Pz HQ (in the same hex as the HQ), the I/128/23P and any other Axis units in a 4 hex radius could have been activated.
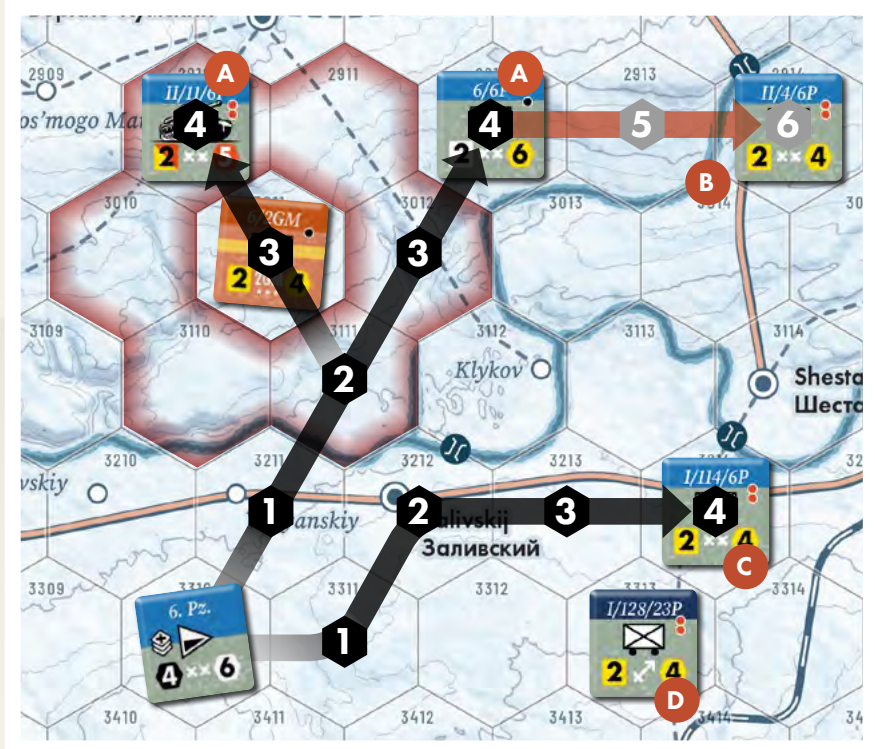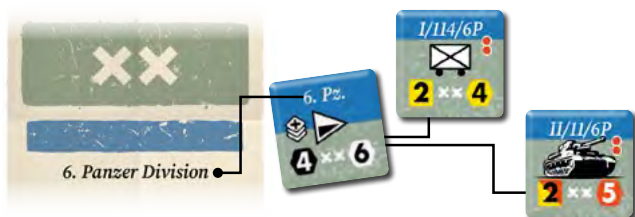
6.2 Axis Activation Cards

There are 3 types of Axis Activation Cards:

Single Formation Activation Cards

Single Formation Activation Cards order a specific HQ as dictated on the card.

- The Romanian VI Corps HQ and Romanian VII Corps HQ are ordered together. *In addition each HQ can activate units of the other formation.* A unit under command range of both HQ's can only be activated once (in the same Activation Segment).

Any Formation Activation Cards

Any Formation Activation Cards work exactly like the Single Formation Activation Cards, but the Axis player may choose which formation HQ is ordered (the rules for Romanian VI Corps HQ and VII Corps still apply). Although there is no Single Formation Activation Card for the 17th Panzer Division, Any Formation Activation Cards can order its HQ.

Schwerpunkt or 17th Panzer Division Activation Cards

These Activation Cards allow the Axis player to either:

◆ Order the 17th Panzer Division HQ, or

◆ Order the Schwerpunkt marker.
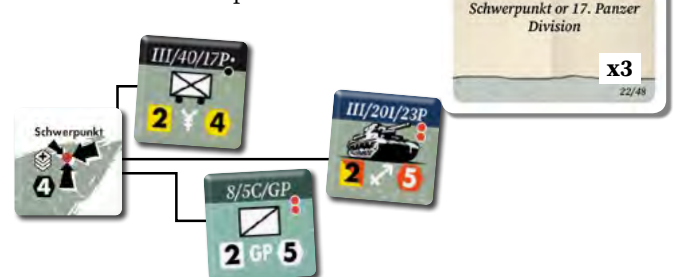
6.3 Soviet Activation Cards
There are 3 types of Soviet Activation Cards:

Single Color Activation Cards

These cards activate units directly. The Soviet player chooses one army. Then it must activate all units of that army with the corresponding color code: red, blue, green, or yellow. Due to a misprint on the counters, purple should be blue (e.g. 60/4M). Units can belong to different formations and be far apart on the map.
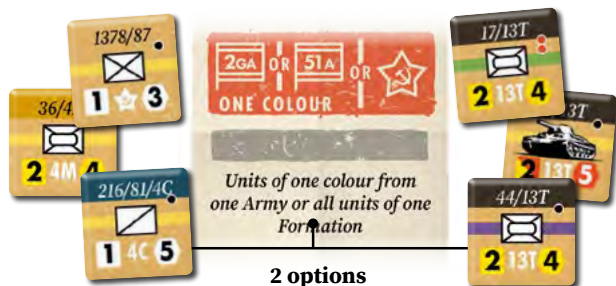

Yellow Units of one Army
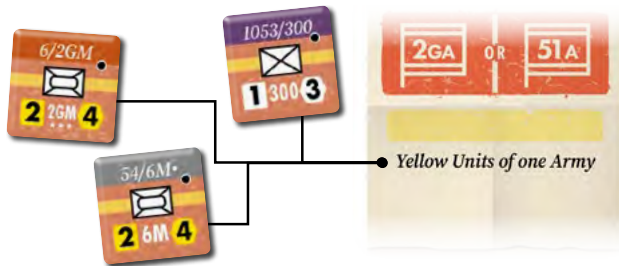
Any Color or Any Formation Activation Cards

These cards activate units directly. The Soviet Player can:

◆ Choose one army and one color code. Then activate all units of that army with that color code (effectively copying a Single Color Activation Card), or

◆ Choose one formation. Then activate all units of that formation.

2 options

One HQ or Any Formation Activation Cards
The Soviet Player can:

◆ Order one HQ, or

◆ Choose one formation. Then the player must activate all units of that formation directly.

One HQ or one Formation

2 options
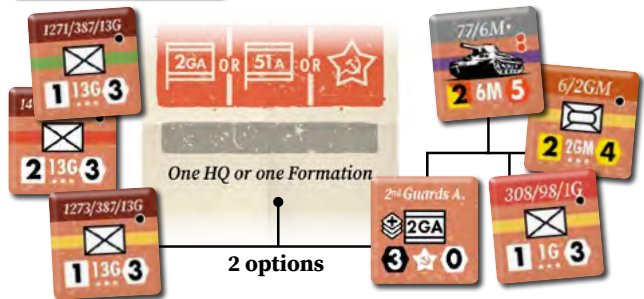
7. MOVEMENT

7.1 General Rule
All units have a number of Movement Points (MPs) per Activation Segment (bottom right number on the counter). Units spend MPs when they move from one hex to an adjacent hex, by paying the cost to enter the hex they move into. All Movement is done between adjacent hexes (units cannot jump hexes), however units can move several hexes during their Movement provided they have the MPs to do so. If a unit cannot pay the MPs to enter a hex, the unit cannot enter that hex. OoS Units have their MPs halved.

By default all hexes costs 1 MP to enter with the exceptions listed below:

7.2 Exceptions
Traversing River Hex sides Without a Bridge

◆ Units with MPs in red background (tank movement) cannot cross a river hex side without a bridge.

◆ Units with MPs in yellow background (motorized movement) can cross a river hex side if it is the first move they make in that Activation Segment. After crossing the river they must stop and cannot move further in that Activation Segment.

◆ Units with MPs in white background (foot movement) can cross a river without any penalty. They must pay the cost of the hex they are entering and can continue moving provided they have enough MPs.

◆ Traversing River Hex sides with a bridge offers no Movement penalty. Units pay the cost of the hex they are entering and can continue moving provided they have enough MPs.

◆ A river is always on hex sides and colored dark blue. There are no rivers inside hexes (e.g. hex 1916 does not contain a river, or river hex side).

Road Movement Bonus
If a unit spends all its MPs moving through hexes by following an unbroken path of roads (3.7), the unit can spend 1 extra MP. The extra MP must be spent to extend the unbroken path

of roads to another hex. OoS Units are eligible for this bonus.

HQ's

Axis HQs must be on a hex with a road at the end of their Movement. They may leave roads during Movement, but must end Movement on one (they may end a Retreat on a hex without a road however).

Soviet HQ's can relocate through Card C59.

EZOCs

When units enter an EZOC hex, they must stop and cannot move further in that Activation Segment. In later Activation Segments when the unit is activated, the unit can leave the EZOC hex. However, it must stop again if and when it enters any other EZOC hex. Only in this way can a unit move from one EZOC hex directly into another EZOC hex of the same or different Enemy Units (note that ZOCs do not extend across river hex sides even if there is a bridge).

Enemy Combat Units

Units cannot move to an hex containing enemy Combat Units. They can move to an hex containing a lone enemy HQ (see 7.3).

7.3 HQ Overruns

A moving combat unit can overrun a lone enemy HQ (i.e. not stacked with Combat Units) by simply entering its hex either through Movement (7.1) or Advance After Combat (8.4), but not Retreat. HQs cannot overrun other HQs. If overrun:

◆ Axis HQs are eliminated if no unit of their formation remains on the map. Otherwise relocate them according to the following priority list (if there are multiple options on the same priority level, the Axis player chooses among them):

1. To a hex containing a Friendly Combat Unit on a road, not stacked with an HQ, within command range.
2. To any hex with a road without Enemy Units and within its command range, avoiding EZOCs if possible.
3. To any hex free of Enemy Units within its command range, avoiding EZOCs if possible.
4. To the closest hex free of Enemy Units, first preferring hexes closer to the Axis Supply map edge and second avoiding EZOCs if possible.

◆ Soviet HQs become inoperable (cannot be ordered). Mark the HQ with the corresponding HQ Overrun marker as a reminder. When a Soviet Unit re-enters the hex of the overrun HQ, the overrun marker is removed, and the HQ is again in operation (can be ordered).

A unit performing an HQ Overrun during Movement (7.1) can continue its Movement after the overrun. There is no MP cost to overrun an HQ, although the unit must always pay the cost of the terrain it moves into.

8. COMBAT

8.1 Combat Principles

Basics

◆ The Player performing the Activation Segment is termed the Attacker, while the other player is termed the Defender, regardless of the overall strategic situation. The attacker will perform a number of Combats against the Defender.

◆ A Combat involves attacking a single hex occupied by the defender's Combat Units (defending units). All defending units in the targeted hex must participate in Combat. Empty Hexes cannot be attacked. HQ's alone in an hex cannot be attacked (they are not Combat Units, they can only be Overrun (7.3)).

◆ Any attacker's Combat Units that are active and adjacent to the hex being attacked may participate in the Combat. Units that are not active cannot attack, even if adjacent. Units that are not adjacent cannot attack even if they are active. Attack-

ing with each unit is voluntary - the attacker's units are not forced to participate in a Combat even if they are active and adjacent. If no attacking units participate, no Combat will occur.

Restrictions

◆ A single hex cannot be targeted by two or more Combats per Activation Segment, i.e. only one Combat per hex per Activation Segment is allowed.

◆ Each attacker's unit can only participate in one Combat per Activation Segment, i.e. a single attacker's unit can attack only one hex, it cannot attack two or more hexes.

◆ During Combat, Combat Cards must be played in designated playing windows following specific rules.

Clarifications

◆ Two attacker's units stacked in the same hex may attack two different hexes in separate Combats.

◆ If there are multiple Combats, the attacker chooses the order in which they are resolved.

◆ Due to retreats, defending units can be targeted by more than one Combat (in different hexes) in the same Activation Segment.

Combat Results Table (CRT)

Die	0:1	1:1	1,5:1	2:1	3:1	4:1	5:1	6:1	7:1
≤1	1AR	1AR	1A	AR	—	—	DR	DR	1DR
2	1AR	1A	AR	—	—	DR	DR	1DR	1DR
3	1AR	AR	—	—	DR	DR	1DR	1DR	2DR
4	1AR	—	—	DR	DR	1DR	1DR	2DR	2DR
5	1AR	—	DR	DR	1DR	1DR	2DR	2DR	3DR
≥6	1AR	DR	DR	1DR	1DR	2DR	2DR	3DR	3DR

◆ Each Combat will be resolved with the aid of the CRT.

◆ Column names in the CRT show (modified) Combat Ratios (the relative attacker's strength compared with the defender's). Each Combat will have a single Combat Ratio.

◆ Row names in the CRT show the results of a (modified) die roll. Each Combat will have a single die roll (1d6).

◆ The outcome of each Combat is given by the intersection of its (modified) Combat Ratio, and its (modified) die roll.

8.2 Combat Procedure

For each Combat the following sequence applies:

1. Attacker designates target Hex;
2. 1st Combat Cards' playing window;
3. Calculate the Combat Ratio;
4. Determine Column Shifts, and Dice Roll Modifiers (DRMs) (8.3);
5. The Attacker rolls 1d6 and modifies its value with the DRMs from the previous steps;
6. 2nd Combat Cards' playing window;
7. Apply the Combat Outcome (8.4).

Attacker Designate Target Hex

This step marks the start of a Combat. The attacker chooses one hex to attack, as well as which units will participate in Combat (see 8.1).

1st Combat Card's Playing Window

Only events with playing windows stating "Before Combat" or "Anytime" can be played. Players alternate between them, playing one Combat Card or passing, with the attacker going first. A player that passes does not forfeit the right to play a Combat Card. When both players pass consecutively this playing win-

dow closes, and no more Combat Cards can be played during Combat until the 2nd playing window. Note that while cards with a playing window "Before Combat" can only be played at this moment, cards with an "Anytime" playing window may be played at other moments including outside of Combat.

Calculate the Combat Ratio

Sum the Combat Strength (bottom left number of combat units) of all attacking units participating in Combat to get the Total Attacking Strength. Perform the same calculation for all defending Combat Units participating in Combat to get the Total Defending Strength. Remember that OoS Units have their Combat Strength halved. Then divide the Total Attacking Strength by the Total Defending Strength to get the Combat Ratio. Lastly, round down the Combat Ratio to the nearest column on the CRT to get the Base Combat Ratio.

Here is an example, with the Axis as the attacker:

Total Defending Strength: 3

Total Attacking Strength: 11

The Combat Ratio is 11:3. The closest value on the CRT, rounding down, is a 3:1, meaning the attacker has at least 3 Combat Strength per each Defending Combat Strength (11 divided by 3 is around 3,67). If the Total Attacking Strength was 12 instead of 11, the closest value on the CRT, rounding down, would be a 4:1.

Determine Column Shifts and Dice Roll Modifiers (DRMs)

The play of Combat Cards, the composition of forces, and/or the terrain, can change the Base Combat Ratio and/or provide modifiers to the die result.

Column Shifts can "shift" the Combat Ratio several times, each time one column to the left or right. For example, a column shift to the right on a 3:1 ratio, would transform it in a 4:1 ratio. Each column shift to the right on the 7:1 column will not increase the ratio but will cancel a column shift to the left in the same Combat. Each column shift to the left on the 0:1 column will not decrease the ratio but will cancel a shift to the right in the same Combat. After all the column shifts have been applied we get a Modified Combat Ratio (the column in the CRT to be used to determine the Combat Outcome).

DRM's can change the die result, by adding or subtracting to the die roll. For example a DRM +1 will add a +1 to the die result. After all DRMs have been applied we get a Modified Die Roll. There is no value limit to a modified die roll, however all values equal or above a 6 will be treated the same, as will all values equal or below a 1 (See CRT).

These modifiers are described in 8.3 Column Shifts and DRMs.

Attacker rolls 1d6

Apply all DRMs to the result to obtain the Modified Die Roll.

2nd Combat Card's Playing Window

Only events with playing windows stating "After Combat" or "Anytime" can be played. Players alternate between them, playing one Combat Card or passing, with the attacker going first. A player that passes does not forfeit the right to play a Combat Card. When both players pass consecutively this playing win-

dow closes, and no more Combat Cards can be played until the Combat ends. Note that while cards with a playing window "After Combat" can only be played at this moment, cards with an "Anytime" playing window may be played at other moments including outside of Combat.

Apply the Outcome

The intersection of the Modified Die Roll with the Modified Combat Ratio in the CRT is executed. In addition, the deployment of Ad Hoc Reinforcements or Advance After Combat may occur. See 8.4. for a detailed explanation.

8.3   Column Shifts and DRMs

Consider all Column Shifts and DRMs from the three sources below, together with the effects of played Combat Cards.

Combat Units

◆ **Tank Bonus (attacker only).** If there is at least 1 attacking unit participating in Combat with the Combat Strength printed in an orange and yellow background (Tanks) the attacker gains 1 Column Shift to the right.

◆ **Combined Arms Bonus (attacker and defender).** If a player has in the same Combat at least one unit with the Combat Strength printed in an orange and yellow background (Tanks), and at least one unit with the Combat Strength printed in a yellow background (Motorized Infantry except Recon), that player gains 1 Column Shift (right for the attacker, left for the defender). The attacker does not need to have both units in the same hex. Both the attack and defender can benefit from the Combined Arms bonus in the same Combat.

◆ The attacker can benefit from the Tank Bonus and the Combined Arms Bonus in the same Combat (2 shifts to the right).

◆ OoS Units cannot contribute to the Tank Bonus or to the Combined Arms Bonus.

Defender's Hex Terrain

Train Station:
◆ Represented by a white rectangle on a railroad.
◆ Provides a - 1 DRM.

Minor Village:
◆ Represented by a white dot (italicized font).
◆ Provides a -1 DRM.

Town:
◆ Represented by a black dot with a white border (bold font).
◆ Provides a -2 DRM
◆ Cancels the Tank Bonus.

City:
◆ Represented by small rectangular shapes (orange font).
◆ The Total Attacking Strength is halved.
◆ Cancels the Tank Bonus, and the Combined Arms Bonus (attacker and defender).

If an hex has more than one type of terrain (e.g. hexes 0810, 1411, 3613) the defender chooses the benefits of one type only.

Attacking Across River Hex sides Without a Bridge

◆ Attacking tanks cannot participate in Combat if attacking across a river hex side without a bridge (Tanks can defend against attacks across river hex sides without a bridge).

◆ If all attacking units participating in Combat are attacking across river hex sides without a bridge apply a -1 DRM.

8.4 Combat Outcomes

Results in the CRT have the following structure:

Prefix	Body	Suffix
[1,2,3]	—/A/D	[R]

- ◆ Prefix: the number of steps to be lost among participating units. If it is zero the prefix is not shown.
- ◆ Body: the player to whom the effect (prefix and suffix) applies to. "A" for attacker, "D" for defender, or "- -" for neither player (no effect). A result in the CRT never contains at the same time an "A" and a "D".
- ◆ Suffix: shows if there is a Retreat or not. If there is no Retreat the suffix is not shown.

For example: 1AR, means the attacker loses one step and has to retreat.

Outcome Sequence

1. Step losses (CRT result);
2. Retreats (CRT result);
3. Advance After Combat.

- ◆ Ad Hoc Reinforcements;

If the Combat resulted in Ad Hoc Reinforcements, the owning player can decide to deploy them before and/or after any step of the outcome of Combat. Perform the blind draw from the cup only when deploying the Reinforcements.

Step Losses

Apply the number of step losses shown in the CRT (if any), to the corresponding player (attacker or defender). The owner of the units chooses which participating units are going to lose steps and how many each unit will lose (3.1) until the required number of step losses has been achieved. If after all participating units of the affected player have been eliminated and there are still step losses remaining, they are ignored.

Retreats

- ◆ If the CRT result calls for a Retreat, all participating units of the corresponding player must Retreat (at least) 1 hex or be eliminated.
- ◆ Each unit (or stack) must complete its Retreat or be eliminated before the next unit starts its Retreat. Stacked units can Retreat together or split and Retreat individually.
- ◆ An Axis HQ stacked with unit(s) that must Retreat does not need to Retreat (HQ's do not participate in Combat), but can optionally Retreat with the unit(s) if at least one of the unit(s) is able to complete its Retreat, i.e. is not eliminated. HQ's retreating with units do not need to end the Retreat on a road. Soviet HQs cannot retreat.
- ◆ Retreat is not considered normal Movement (units do not expend MPs).
- ◆ To perform a Retreat a unit (or stack) retreats to an adjacent hex following all these steps in order:

  1. The unit (or stack) are eliminated if they cannot retreat. It is not possible to retreat to:

     a. hexes occupied by Enemy Units (including HQs);
     b. hexes that require crossing a river hex side (with or without bridge) and are in an EZOC (even if they contain Friendly Units);
     c. (Tanks only) hexes that require crossing a river hex side without a bridge;
     d. (if the unit or stack has already retreated at least one hex) hexes previously occupied by the unit (or stack) during this Retreat;
     e. (if the unit or stack has already retreated at least one hex) hexes that require the crossing of a river hex side without a bridge.

2. If all remaining hexes the unit (or stack) can retreat into are in an EZOC, the unit (or stack) loses a step, owner's choice (a stack only loses a step, not a step per unit).

3. To choose which hex the unit (or stack) will retreat into, a priority list must be followed, eliminating possibilities until there is only one hex remaining (if a priority step of the list eliminates all of the remaining possible hexes after application of previous priority steps, ignore that step, and move down the list to the next priority step). The priority list is the following:

   a. Avoid EZOCs;
   b. Closest hex to a friendly supply map edge;
   c. Avoid overstacking;
   d. Owner's choice.

4. If the hex the unit (or stack) retreated into is not overstacked the retreat is complete. If the hex the unit (or stack) retreated into is overstacked, the unit must retreat an additional hex, by following the retreating steps in order as if it is a new retreat (start at 1). This can occur multiple times until the retreating unit is either eliminated or ends its retreat in a non overstacked hex. A stack can split at this moment and have each unit retreat individually.

The Axis player attacked hex 2519 with the result of DR.

The 77/6M Tank is eliminated, as it cannot retreat across river hexsides.

The 166/98/1G will retreat to 2419 to avoid EZOCs. Because it is overstacked it will retreat again to 2318 to avoid EZOCs and be closer to a friendly supply map edge.

Advance After Combat

Only attacking Tank Units can perform an Advance After Combat. If the attacked hex becomes empty as a result of Combat (the defending unit(s) either retreated or was (were) eliminated), the attacking Tank Unit(s) may advance into the defender's vacated hex, respecting stacking limits. Advance After Combat is optional. The Attacker may Advance all, some, or none of the attacking Tank Units. Advance After Combat is not considered normal Movement: advancing units do not expend MPs and EZOCs are ignored. An advancing Tank Unit can overrun a lone enemy HQ by simply entering its hex (7.3).

COMBAT EXAMPLE

The Axis player (Attacker) wishes to perform an attack with a stack comprised of I/11 and I/114 of the 6th Panzer Division (the activated formation), against **hex 2413**, containing 62nd and 13th Bde of the 13th Tank Corps. The II/114 is also adjacent to the target hex and is also able to take part in the same combat. The Romanian 7/5C of Gr. Popescu has not been activated and so it cannot participate in this combat, even though it's adjacent to 2413.

Next, the Axis player declares he'll be using the 'Sturmpioniere' combat card's General Event (**A**), and rolls a d6 to check whether it's played successfully. He must roll 1-4 to be able to use the card, and with a 3, he plays it successfully, which will remove it from the game. This card will help negate the penalties for attacking across a river hexside, during this combat, and will allow the I/11 to attack.

The Soviet player now gets to attempt to play the 'M1937' card's General Event (**A**). She rolls a 5, which is higher than required (1-3), and fails to play the card. She discards it accordingly. Neither player wishes to play more cards, so the combat resolution proceeds to the units' strengths:

The Axis player now adds up the combat strengths of his

attacking units, for a total of 6. The Soviet player adds up her units' for a total of 4. The Total Attackers' CS is divided by the Total Defenders', for a Combat ratio of 1,5-1 (no rounding needed).

Modifiers affecting the combat result are accounted for:

Terrain: The unbridged river separating the target hex from the attacking hexes would have provided a -1 DRM after the final die roll, and it would have prohibited the Axis Tank unit from joining the attack, but it's been negated by the 'Sturmpioniere' card, and so terrain has no effect in this combat.

Axis Combined Arms and Tank shifts: I/11 and I/114 are Tank and Motorized Infantry units and so the attacker receives a column shift to the right. In addition, I/11, as an attacking Tank unit, provides another column shift to the right.

Soviet Combined Arms shift: Because the 13th and 62nd Bdes are Tank and Motorized Infantry units, the defender receives a column shift to the left. The 13th does not provide a tank shift because it is defending.

In total, the Combined Arms shifts from both sides cancel each other, and there is a single column shift right, benefitting the attacker. The column to be used when determining the results of the attack will now be 2-1.

Die	0:1	1:1	1,5:1	2:1	3:1	4:1	5:1	6:1	7:1
≤1	1AR	1AR	1A	AR	—	—	DR	DR	1DR
2	1AR	1A	AR	—	—	DR	DR	1DR	1DR
3	1AR	AR	—	—	DR	DR	1DR	1DR	2DR
4	1AR	—	—	DR	DR	1DR	1DR	2DR	2DR
5	1AR	—	DR	DR	1DR	1DR	2DR	2DR	3DR
≥6	1AR	DR	DR	1DR	1DR	2DR	2DR	3DR	3DR

The Attacker now rolls the die to determine the combat result. A roll of 6 on the 2-1 column returns a result of 1DR, meaning the Soviet units must retreat and also lose a single step. Both units have single steps, so the unit that loses the step will be eliminated.

Finally, neither player chooses to play any Combat cards for 'After Combat' use, so the situation after the combat results are applied is the following:
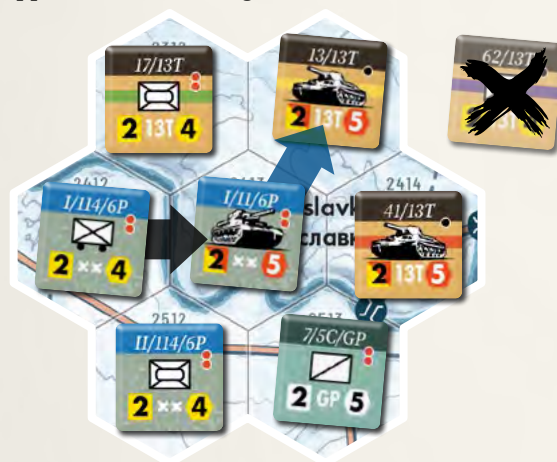
1. The Soviet player chooses to eliminate the 62nd Bde.
2. The 13th Bde retreats a single hex towards a friendly supply hex, and is able to do so without entering EZOCS or infringing stacking limits.
3. Advance after combat is possible for I/11 and it takes position in 2413, which has been just vacated by the retreating unit.

■ *If the German player had not succeeded in playing the 'Sturmpioniere' event, the tanks would not have been allowed to attack. II/114 would have been forced to attack alone in this case.*

Ad Hoc Reinforcements

If the Soviet Player is the attacker and the Modified Die Roll was a 6 or more, the Axis Player may perform a blind draw from the Alarmgruppe cup (3.3).

If the Axis Player is the attacker and the Modified Die Roll was a 1 or less, the Soviet Player may perform a blind draw from the Ad Hoc Infantry cup (3.3).

Perform the blind draw from the cup only when deploying the Reinforcements.

Ad Hoc Reinforcements are not units participating in Combat. If they are placed in the targeted hex they do not have to suffer step losses or retreats, and may be used to block Advance After Combat.

9. DONNERSCHLAG

9.1 Calling Out Donnerschlag

With the code word "Donnerschlag", the breakout of the 6th Army begins. On turns 1, 2, 3, or 4 the Axis player must call out "Operation Donnerschlag!" during the Admin Phase and secretly determine a Meeting Zone by placing the 3 Meeting Zones Markers face down in their boxes. Place the Donnerschlag Marker on the "0" box of the Donnerschlag Advance Track.

At the end of each turn (5.2), the Donnerschlag Marker advances forward to the next box, including in the turn it was declared. When the Donnerschlag Marker reaches Box 4 on the track, Victory Conditions are checked (victory conditions are not checked earlier, they must be met exactly when the Donnerschlag Marker is in box 4).

9.2 Victory Condition

The Axis player wins if at least one their Combat Units (HQs are not eligible) meets the following requirements:

◆ The unit must be able to trace a Supply Line (3.6). A Supply Line is a series of connected hexes of any length starting from the unit and ending in a friendly Supply map edge (2.1). A Supply Line cannot cross river hex sides unless there is a bridge, cannot pass through Enemy Units, and cannot pass through EZOC hexes unless those hexes contain at least one Friendly Unit, including HQs (check each hex individually). Do not add an OoS marker to the unit if it is found OoS.

◆ The unit must be within the Command Range (6.1) of its formation HQ or within 4 hexes of the Schwerpunkt marker.

◆ The unit must be in a hex inside the designated meeting zone.

One of three things will happen:

1. If the Axis player meets these conditions flip the Meeting Zone Markers to show to the Soviet Player that the Victory Conditions were achieved. The game ends and the Axis Player wins (regardless of play of C4).

2. If the Axis player does not meet these conditions and the General Event of Card C4 was not played (the event flips the Donnerschlag Marker to the 6th Army Survival side), the Game ends and the Soviet Player wins.

3. If the Axis player does not meet these conditions and the General Event of Card C4 was played, then an extra turn will be played. If the extra turn is turn 8 observe the special rules below (9.3). Then, after the Donnerschlag Marker reaches box 5 the game will end with an Axis victory if the victory conditions are met, or with a Soviet victory if the victory conditions are not met.

9.3 Turn 8 Special Rules

Turn 8 represents a great last effort by the 6th Army. It plays like other turns with the following exceptions:

◆ Players have access to High Command allowing them to choose any non removed Combat Card.

◆ If the Combat Deck was not reshuffled in turn 7, draw Combat Cards until the deck runs out. Then take the Combat discard pile (but not removed Combat Cards) and reshuffle it to form a new draw pile. Then finish drawing Combat Cards.

◆ Each player takes 5 Activation Cards, regardless of the Hand Limit. Activation Cards will be played face down, ignoring their contents, and are used just as an easy way to record how many Activation Segments are left. Each Activation Card can be used for:

◆ Axis Activations: Can Order one HQ or the Schwerpunkt marker.

◆ Soviet Activations: Can Order one HQ, or activate all units of single formation, or activate all units of the same color of one army.

10. HISTORICAL NOTES

On 8 November 1942, Adolf Hitler announced in the Löwenkeller, in Munich, that the city of Stalingrad had already been taken by German troops and that only isolated Russian resistance stood in the way of final military victory. Hitler should have known better, because the day before, the 6th Army radioed the OKH that due to numerous failures and enormous losses, the German troops were no longer in a position to conquer the entire city. The German attack in Stalingrad had begun to falter; the front was effectively no longer advancing.

Against all the advice of his generals, Hitler decided not to break off the fight in Stalingrad. On 17 November came the "Führer's order" that the German troops should now finally fight their way to the Volga.

Neither Hitler, nor the generals, nor German enemy-reconnaissance realised that the ultimate purpose for the Red Army's high readiness was not for the defence of Stalingrad —a city now in ruins —but to delay them in order to plan a counter-offensive.

The Russian leadership knew well the weak points of the 6th Army's flank defences. On 19 November, Operation Uranus began. Despite partial successes by the Wehrmacht, the Red Army was able to advance and soon the situation for the 6th Army turned precarious. Tentative proposals to lead the 6th Army out of Stalingrad were rejected with the Führer's decision: "6th Army holds despite danger of temporary encirclement".

Then, on 23 November, the two Soviet attack wedges met and the 6th Army was indeed encircled. Their headquarters quickly appealed to the OKH for freedom of action. A "breakthrough to the northwest, albeit at the sacrifice of materiel" was considered possible, and so the high commander also shared this proposal. But a retreat from Stalingrad was out of the question for Hitler.

In the cauldron of Stalingrad there was now disagreement within the German ranks. While preparations were being made for the encircled army to await relief, there were also voices calling for an immediate and unauthorised, total breakout.

The general staff had also informed Hitler that the encirclement could not be held indefinitely — and that a failure to break out would result in a military catastrophe. Feldmarschall Keitel, however, insisted on holding out in the encirclement and Reichsmarschall Göring assured him that the Luftwaffe could supply the encircled 6th Army. Hitler then declared Stalingrad a fortress and ordered the Volga positions to be held at all costs. It soon became apparent, however, that the air supply was not sufficient to meet the needs of the 6th Army, and so the situation in Stalingrad deteriorated daily.

On 26 November, Feldmarschall von Manstein took over supreme command of the southern front in Russia, assuring that everything would be done to break open the encirclement. Reinforcing troops had already been made available for the relief attempt . At the same time, the 6th Army was ordered to prepare forces for a breakout in order to — at least temporarily — open a supply route.
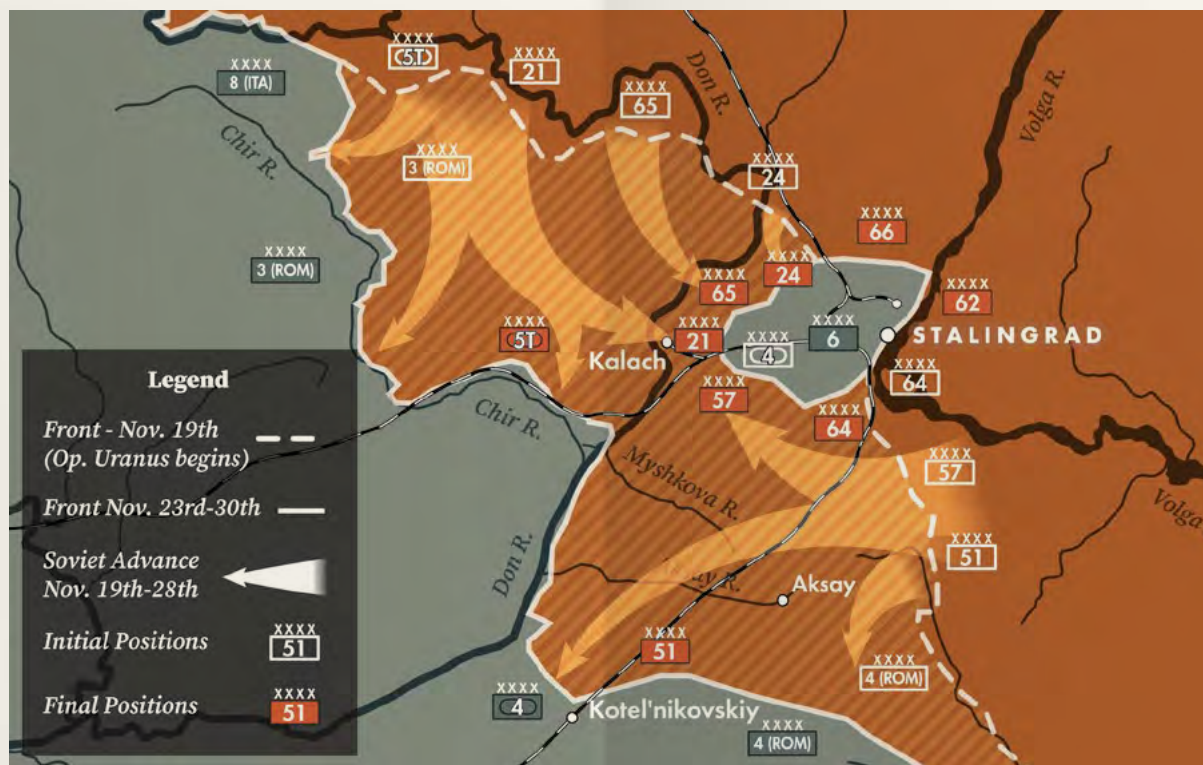
On 1 December, Hitler issued the directive for Operation "Wintergewitter". It was planned with 20 divisions and the attack was to include two panzer offensives. According to Hitler's conception, the offensive should restore the old front line and the 6th Army would thus be able to hold its position.

The planning staff under von Manstein envisaged, in the event of a successful operation, that the 6th Army would be taken out of Stalingrad and begin to retreat. This outcome would be the greatest possible success; Hitler would later be convinced of this.
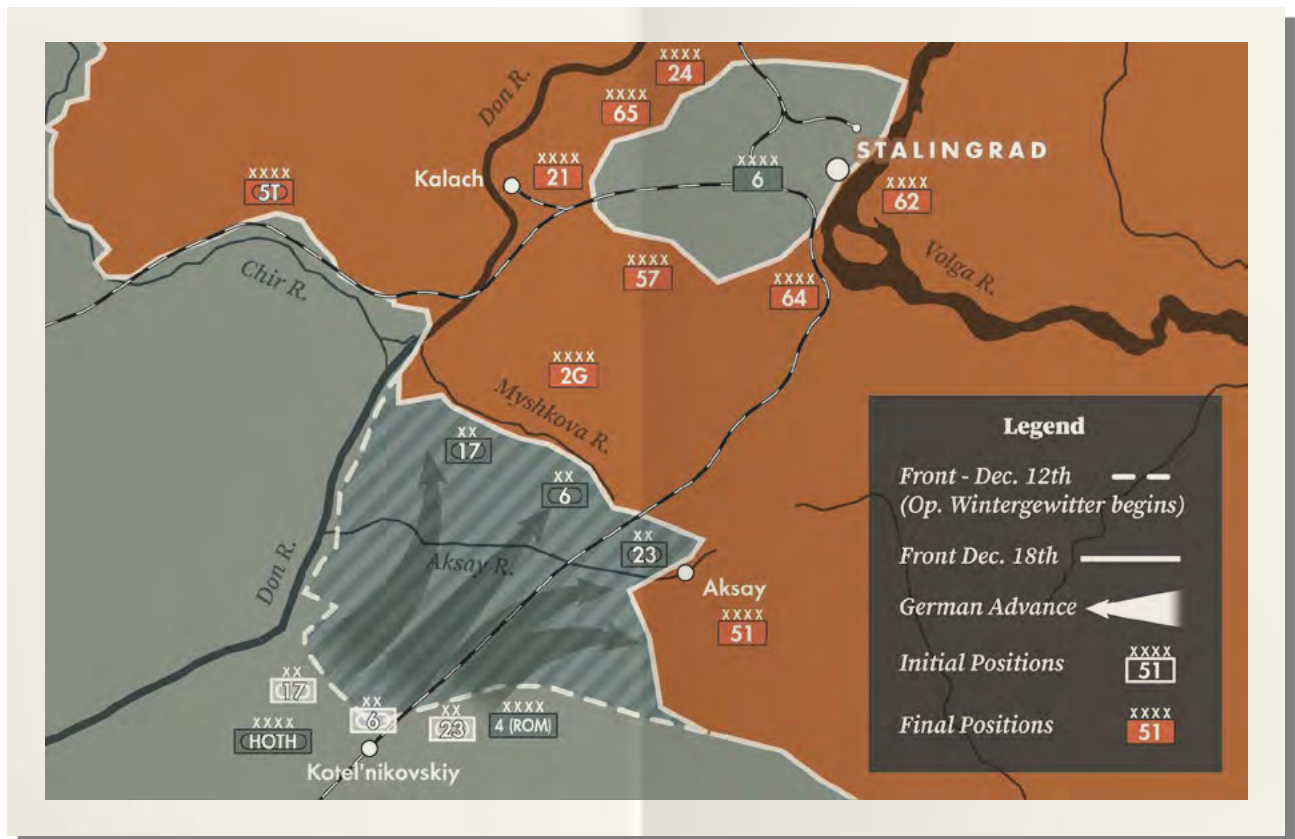
According to von Manstein's decree, if "Operation Wintergewitter" were to succeed, then the 6th Army should dare to break out and unite with the relief army. A breakout plan was readied by the staff of the 6th Army on 02 December and given the name "Fall Donnerschlag". According to the staff's assessment, success was doubtful due to the poor condition of the army, further, it would take 4 – 6 days to prepare. Additionally, it would have to be coordinated precisely with the relief troops, since the rearguard defence of the cauldron would have absolute priority.

Since the situation in the cauldron was deteriorating daily, and German enemy-reconnaissance reported that the Red Army was strengthening its positions in front of Stalingrad, haste was required. However, they also felt they should wait for the frost period, because then German tanks could advance faster. The operation was planned to begin on 3 December, but not enough forces had been brought in and critically: the onset of frost was nowhere to be seen. Consequently, the start of operations was postponed several times.

When "Operation Wintergewitter" finally began on 12 December, the hoped-for combat strength had not been achieved because numerous relief units could not be built up in time or brought in as quickly as the plans called for. Russian partisan activity and Red Army offensives also contributed by tying up planned reinforcement units.

Thus, only a single tank offensive was carried out, while the 20-division goal could not be reached either. Instead, scattered remnants were brought together and given the name "Panzer-

STALINGRAD

Legend

Front - Dec. 12th
(Op. Wintergewitter begins)

Front Dec. 18th

German Advance

Initial Positions

Final Positions

gruppe Hoth". They acted as the sole spearhead. The tank group assembled in the Kotelnikowo area with 100 kilometres of enemy territory in front of them. The Red Army was not unaware of their deployment, and thus Soviet units attempted to thwart their deployment and advance from the beginning.

At the beginning of this offensive, the German tank group still outnumbered the Red Army's units — so it was necessary to act quickly before the tide turned.

As the armour rolled in, Generaloberst Hoth radioed to Stalingrad "Hold on, we're coming!"

In the city itself, the Red Army tried to beat the German units *before* the relief campaign could reach them. At this point the fighting flared up once more, with increased ferocity. Critical German reserves for the breakout were used up by hot spots in the cauldron. Furthermore, their soldiers in Stalingrad were exhausted ; a successful attempt to break out became increasingly unlikely.

The attack by *Panzergruppe Hoth* was initially successful. Good weather and scant resistance from Soviet troops allowed German units to advance quickly. The first difficulties arose when troops were unable to cross fords in the Aksaj-Kurmoyarsky valley. Without the crossing of the Aksaj River,there could be no further advance. But due to poor Soviet leadership and tactical successes of the Wehrmacht, a crossing was eventually forced and the tank group continued on rapidly.

German reconnaissance then reported Soviet troop movements, so the advance had to be slowed to secure the flanks. In fact, this German attack in force had achieved a level of surprise in spite of the Red Army's responses. But now the Soviets gathered forces, took up defensive positions and carried out counterattacks. Even though they could be thwarted successfully, the advance of the tank group was slowed. In retrospect, those counterattacks could have been carried out with more force, but Stalin had so far refused proper troop reinforcements.

When Stalin realised that his generals were correct in calling this a full German offensive, "Operation Little Saturn" was ordered. Its aim was to stop this German advance, close a ring around the *Panzergruppe* , plus attack the 8th Italian Army in order to tie up forces there and stab the Wehrmacht in the back.

In the ongoing fight, *Panzergruppe Hoth* managed to break through on a 30-kilometre wide front and advance a total of 50 kilometres. Then, on 14 December, the weather changed and the ground turned to mud. This greatly hampered the German advance. Furthermore, a tank battle took place at the line Werchne-Kumskij, where strong Russian reinforcements had been deployed. In the end, only a gain of 3 kilometres was achieved, followed by further Russian counterattacks on the flank, which were only be beaten back with difficulty. However, operational movements were able to continue.

But with every kilometre closer to Stalingrad, Russian resistance increased. On 16 December, Generaloberst Hoth decided to continue his attacks without regard for sufficient flank protection. Now the initial position for the final advance towards Stalingrad was to be consolidated. For this purpose, the 17th Panzer Division was brought up to compensate for the German losses.

At this point, Hitler continued to reject a total withdrawal from Stalingrad and insisted that a supply corridor had to be created and held.

Meanwhile, the Soviet counterattacks in the Aksaij and Verkhne-Kumsky areas increased in intensity, though they were still repelled. Further reinforcements did not reach the tank group, as they were needed to repel flank attacks by the 51st Soviet Army.

On 17 December, fighting intensified in the Verkhne-Kumsky area. German units were able to make slight gains on the ground, but were unable to eliminate the danger, as Russian reserves were constantly being brought in. The 17th Panzer Division succeeded in advancing further north and formed a bridgehead near Generalovskij. Here both sides engaged in tough fighting.

On the morning of 18 December, a final decision was to be made. However, the danger of incursions on the flanks was everpresent, and no reinforcements could be brought in. The attacking spearheads made only slow progress; every ground gain was bought with heavy losses. In the end, the advance came to a standstill.

On 19 December, forces were concentrated in the Verkhne-Kumsky area and the stalemate was broken only with a massive deployment of the Luftwaffe. The Russian units withdrew.

A word about Hermann Hoth:

Most people will know Hermann Hoth as the commander of "Panzergruppe Hoth", who desperately tried to free his trapped comrades in the cauldron of Stalingrad. Even against the assessments of his superiors. At least, many films and documentaries paint this picture. However, Hoth belonged to Hitler's obedient generals who expressed in their orders their agreement with the mass murders in the conquered territory of the Soviet Union and left no doubt about their approval of the "extermination" of the Jewish population. In his order of October 17, 1941, he called "their extermination an imperative of self-preservation."

On November 17, 1941, he urged his soldiers to "show no pity or softness toward the population."

Hoth was among the generals who immediately implemented and also passed on both the "Kommissarbefehl" (Red Army political commissars were not treated as prisoners of war but shot without trial) and the "Reichenau-Erlass" (a decree on the deliberate racial ideological war of extermination that contributed to the brutalization of German warfare in the Soviet Union).

Ultimately, Hoth was one of the generals who actively participated in war crimes such as planning and carrying out wars of aggression and extermination, mass murders of civilians and those suspected of being partisans, mistreatment and murder of prisoners of war, occupation crimes, and direct and indirect participation in genocides.

Now, with the vital support of the Luftwaffe, the push towards Stalingrad was to succeed.

A breakthrough was achieved from the Krugljakov area with heavy losses. But then the river Myshkova had to be crossed before reinforcements of the 2nd Soviet Guards Army could intervene in the fighting. Dramatically, German units managed to take Gromoslavka and form a bridgehead across the Myshkova. Sixty kilometres separated the armoured group from the outermost ring in Stalingrad.

The breakout from Stalingrad *had* to take place soon so that the trapped formations could be taken out. Generaloberst Hoth was certainly aware of the dangers of not being able to protect his flanks, which were unavoidably left in an exposed position. He knew that keeping a corridor open to Stalingrad was something of an unrealistic fantasy. At present, the German troops faced a threefold Soviet superiority and for the breakout attempt to be successful, his relief force would have to advance at least another 20 kilometres.

By 20 December, the Red Army was bringing in reinforcements constantly, while all German forces were needed to secure the bridgehead and flanks. Only minimal terrain gains were made in the fighting. Due to the intensifying resistance, the various Wehrmacht staffs involved were in serious doubt about any possibility of a breakthrough.

On 21 December, the fighting continued with increasing ferocity. A determined German attacking force succeeded in getting to within 48 kilometres of the outermost Stalingrad ring. It was now apparent that "Fall Donnerschlag" had to be declared, but in Stalingrad, Generaloberst Paulus had not yet started any real preparations. Nevertheless, the planned-for 3,000 tons of supplies and tractors were brought in for the 6th Army to facilitate the breakout.

However, the intended advance of the Panzergruppe on 22 December had to be cancelled, as the Red Army threw more and more troops at the vulnerable flanks. At times, the attacking front was in imminent danger of being cut off. Although it seemed this ongoing crisis could be managed, the situation soon became untenable. Due to high losses and the suppression of supplies, holding the entire position became impossible in the long run. Generaloberst Hoth responded by planning a regroup; he decided to try a relief attempt on 24 December in the hope that the 6th Army would meet him.

However — no such order was issued. Hitler, as it turned out, could not be persuaded to let the 6th Army break out. Generaloberst Hoth now hoped that the 6th Army would make a breakout under its own authority. But for Paulus, "obedience was the highest duty" and so he refused to do any such thing without orders. Furthermore, Paulus insisted that he would only be able to cover 30 kilometres with the 6th Army in a best-case scenario and that a unification with Panzergruppe Hoth was therefore impossible.

On 23 December, it became clear that the situation on the larger southern front was becoming critical. The Italian troops were forced to retreat and Panzergruppe Hoth was in danger of being cut off. In fact, the situation of the entire Army Group Don was dire. Feldmarschall von Manstein thus ordered the withdrawal of Panzergruppe Hoth to help stop the Red Army's relentless counteroffensives.

Generaloberst Hoth asked to make one last attempt to rescue the 6th Army on 24 December and prepared everything for this. But when the day arrived, the attack plan was reluctantly revoked under the continuing pressure of the Soviet attacks. The Panzergruppe was forced to retreat further and further.

And so it was that the "Unternehmen Wintergewitter" came to a standstill in the snow of the steppes shortly before Stalingrad. The "Fall Donnerschlag" was never declared and no more help was possible for the trapped 6th Army, even though all orders for planning the "Fall Donnerschlag" were not officially cancelled until 30 December.

In 1942, the Wehrmacht suffered a series of defeats. As was often the case, adequate strategic plans for the possibility of failure had not been prepared. They did not know how to proceed from this defeat. This is when the National Socialist principle of "sacrifice" was supposed to come into play. One was to fight to the last cartridge, to the death. Any lack of materiel had to be compensated for with an iron will. In short, it was "death or victory".

And this permanent slogan was applied in the spirit of a

radical fanatical propaganda, over and over again. It was first deployed in a radio message to Erwin Rommel on 3 November 1942, when he was about to retreat in North Africa due to the lack of supplies. Generalfeldmarschall Rommel received the following announcement from Adolf Hitler: "It would not be the first time in history that the stronger will triumphed over the stronger battalions of the enemy. But you can show your troops no other path than that to victory or death."

It was only after Rommel withdrew his troops with heavy losses — despite the above order — that Hitler took the true military situation into account and gave his blessing for the withdrawal.

And so it was at Stalingrad. The situation on the southern front was indeed critical, yet Hitler's plans did not include any option for retreat. Positions had to be held — if necessary to the death. In contrast to North Africa, none of the generals on the Volga had the courage to make their own decisions. The result was a slow and agonising death for the trapped Axis soldiers of the 6th Army, for surrender was certainly not an option. And to take this to the extreme, on 30 January 1943, Reichsfeldmarschall Hermann Göring gave a speech on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of Adolf Hitler's appointment as Reichskanzler . His speech was completely overshadowed by the imminent dissolution of the forces trapped in Stalingrad. In an obvious deflection of this devastating defeat for the Third Reich, Göring cynically referred in his speech to the death of the Greeks in the battle of Thermopylae against the Persian hordes, as well as to the Nibelungen. Thus, the total annihilation of the 6th Army was revealed to the public without clearly naming it. Even phrases such as "heroic effort", "unswerving perseverance", or even "heroic struggle" and "heroic defence" allowed no other interpretation than that the battle was lost and involved immense losses.

An interesting aside here is that because of this major failure on the Eastern Front, a personal speech by Hitler on this significant occasion was clearly out of the question. "Der Führer" was never supposed to speak in connection with a clear defeat. For this reason, Hermann Göring had to take over this thankless task.

11. DESIGNER NOTES

After many years in the hobby, my enthusiasm for historical board games and conflict simulations continues unabated. And I like to sit at a table with my fellow players. Games are only good in company and I have laughed so many tears in some game situations, but also cried so many inner tears. And especially in conflict simulations, the sense of community usually goes as far as solving tricky situations together during a game. You really play with each other and not against each other.

Everyone will be familiar with adapting, refining, smoothing or extending the rules of games. The so-called "Houserules". From these "Houserules" often ideas for a new game system develop and from this then perhaps the idea for a new game. That's how it was for me with "Donnerschlag".

I like games with interaction. I get bored when I have to watch my opponent endlessly moving his units without being able to react. That's why the activations in "Donnerschlag" take place alternately. Game systems should also not be too complex and should have a high replay value. That's why I tried to write simple rules and deal with many special rules via cards and not include them in the gamerules. I know that many players don't like it when the luck factor is too high, but especially the high luck factor (I prefer to call it friction) in "Donnerschlag" guarantees a high replay value. At this point, I'm also happy to admit that if things go very badly, a game can be over early. Then you just had bad luck. But according to general experience, the luck factor balances out in a game and the games are more or less balanced.

With a little experience a game does not last longer than six hours, so that nothing stands in the way of an early revenge.

You just have to know the rules and the cards, but that's not a big thing with "Donnerschlag". And the revenge is then again a completely different game. VUCA Simulation tries very hard to live up to the motto "Easy to learn - hard to master". We hope we have succeeded.

Besides planning and resource management, what I like about conflict simulations is that I - as a player - have to make decisions all the time. Automatisms are necessary, of course, but too many of them undermine the fun of the game. And in "Donnerschlag" I constantly have to make new plans and decisions. When do I play which Activation Card, what do I activate, do I collect my Combat Cards for an accumulated attack or do I use them up individually in smaller actions? Do I take the Event or the Tactical Effect, do I use my "Schlachtenglück" right now, and so on and so forth?

And although you have to make decisions all the time, you also need a certain amount of luck. Do I get the right activations, do I roll the right events, do I get enough ad hoc reinforcements, and if so, the right ones? And am I playing vabanque or playing it safe? This combination of decision pressure and luck is what makes a good simulation for me and I hope VUCA Simulations has succeeded in this with "Donnerschlag".

It's hard for me to give game tips, because every game runs differently. In general, it can be said that for the Axis, speed should not be a sorcery. Terrain must be gained quickly and river crossings must be secured swiftly. Time works for the Soviet. And the longer you can hide your meeting zone, the more the Soviet must divide his forces. For the end of a game you should still have enough forces for a breakthrough, otherwise you will suffer the historical disaster. And don't neglect the Romanian units, because you will need them.

As a Soviet, you can only disrupt the Axis advance at the beginning of the game. But as the game progresses, you become stronger and stronger. Thus, strong bulwarks can be created and you can think about one or the other counterattack. Especially river crossings should be well defended. And attacks on the flank, are a sure way to annoy the Axis. The more you recognize the approximate meeting zone, the better you can organize the resistance. The Axis "Panzergruppe" is strong, but with proper planning, not strong enough.

I wish all players many exciting games and a lot of fun.

And never forget: Conflict simulation is just a game!

12. COMBAT CARDS CLARIFICATIONS

When a Combat Card contradicts the rules of the game the text on the Combat card has priority. Each Combat Card can be used for its General Event (GE) or its Tactical Event (TE), but not both. Players must declare the target(s) of the effect (if applicable) before they make their success check (if there is one). (Column) Shifts and DRMs always benefit the owner of the card.

12.1 General Clarifications

To avoid repeating the same clarifications/errata under several cards, these are referred with superscript in each card's entry:

[1] Soviet TE "Panzer Battalions" means a draw from the Soviet Ad Hoc Tank cup (C40, C55, C56).

[2] Soviet TE "Infantry Replacement" means a draw from the Soviet Ad Hoc Infantry cup (C41, C42, C43, C45, C46, C47, C48, C57, C58, C60, C62, C63, C64, C68, C69, C70, C71).

[3] Axis TE "Alarmgruppe" means a draw from the Alarmgruppe cup (C2, C6, C8, C12, C21, C31, C37).

[4] GEs/TEs that state "2 dice are thrown and you choose a result" (C1, C3, C15, C23, C29, C32, C33, C36, C39, C52, C53, C67, C73, C74):
- Replace the Combat die roll in one Combat.
- The effect cannot be used for success checks.

- **Only the attacker can play this effect**.
- Multiple effects/cards of this kind cannot stack with each other, since the card replaces a die roll and there is only one roll per Combat. However it is legal to use multiple effects/cards of this kind in the same Combat provided there is a reroll they can target (e.g. Schlangtenglück reroll, TEs of C34, C35, C75, C76, C77, C78). For example: use a "2 dice are thrown and you choose a result" event to roll 2 dice instead of one, then use the Schlangtenglück marker for a reroll of one die in combination with a second "2 dice are thrown and you choose a result" event to reroll both dice instead of only one. If there is access to another reroll another "2 dice are thrown and you choose a result" can be played and so on. This exceptionally violates the Combat Card playing windows during Combat.

[5] GEs that state "This Activation" in the duration mean the current Activation Segment (C14, C19, C27, C28, C40, C59, C67).

[6] TEs that state "± x Shift(s)", mean x column shift(s) to the left or to the right (C5, C7, C9, C10, C11, C13, C16, C17, C18, C19, C22, C23, C24, C27, C28, C30, C38, C49, C50, C51, C54, C66).

[7] GEs that state "German Player" mean "Axis Player" (C9, C18, C21, C45, C46, C47, C53, C57, C62, C64, C74).

[8] If applicable and unless stated, cards can be used defensively or offensively, as well as played in any player's turn.

12.2 Card Specific Clarifications

All clarifications below apply to the General Event unless noted at the start of the bullet point:

C1 (Loot Tank)[4]
- (GE/TE) Duration should say "One Combat" to be consistent with other cards.

C2 (Tank Forward)[3]
- At the end of own Activation means after all Combats but before the Activation Segment is completed (units are still active).
- "Additional movement" means the full Movement Points the unit(s) has(have) to spend, following normal rules of Movement (7.0).
- Restrictions imposed during the unit(s) normal Movement are ignored. For example if the unit had to stop in an EZOC during normal Movement, the unit can still move with this event, as if it was starting a new Movement.
- Units targeted by C40 or C67 cannot benefit from the effect.

C3 (Nebelwerfer)[4]
- (Card's name) The card's English name should be "Grenade Launcher".
- There should be no success check. The General Event is an automatic success.

C4 (Air Fleet 4)
- Playing Window should read "Play when Donnerschlag marker is in box 3" instead of "Anytime".
- Ignore the "Game ends when marker reaches box 5" from the effect. The game may end earlier if the Axis Player guarantees a victory condition when the Donnerschlag marker reaches box 4 (9.2), even when this event is in effect.

C5 (Assault Boats)[6]
- Playing window should read: "Before Combat".
- Duration should read: "One Combat".
- Ignore the 3rd line in bold stating: "All active units that participated in this Combat" because it is redundant.
- Effect should read: "Negates effects of rivers when attacking, not for Tanks."

- The only effects that this card negates are:
  - the -1 DRM if all units attack across a river hex side without a bridge. Tanks cannot attack across river hex sides without a bridge.
  - in combination with card C6, allows Motorized Infantry to not stop after crossing a river hex side without a bridge during Advance After Combat.
- There should be no success check. The General Event is an automatic success.

C6 (Prototype Tiger II)[3]
- Ignore the 3rd line in bold stating: "All active units that participate in this combat" because it is redundant.
- The effect should read: "All attacking units (including Infantry and Motorized Infantry) may Advance After Combat (8.4) up to 3 hexes. EZOC hexes can be ignored. The first hex entered must be the defender's vacated hex."
- After advancing through the vacated hex, units can split and move into different hexes. Overstacking is only checked after all units have Advanced After Combat.
- Tank Units cannot cross river hex sides without a bridge during an Advance After Combat. Motorized Infantry can cross a river hex side without a bridge but must stop their Advance After Combat immediately after crossing.

C7 (Assault Boats)[6]
- See card C5.

C8 (Foreign Armies East)[3]
- Cannot be used to see the card in the STAVKA box.

C9 (Stuka)[6,7]
- Effect should read: "The Axis Player chooses a Soviet Infantry Unit to lose a step (3.1)."

C10 (Bergetiger)[6]
- Effect should read: "One Tank Replacement step (3.2)."

C11 (Instant settlement close to the front)[6]
- See card C10.

C12 (Storm Pioneers)[3]
- Tanks can participate in Combat across river hex sides without a bridge.
- The -1 DRM if all units attack across a river hex side without a bridge is negated.
- Tanks can Advance After Combat across river hex sides without a bridge. This card also negates the restriction of cards C6 and C26 by allowing tanks to Advance After Combat across river hex sides.
- In combination with card C6, allows Motorized Infantry to not stop after crossing a river hex side without a bridge.

C13 (Construction Pioneers)[6]
- Playing window should read: "Play anytime during the Action Phase, but not during Combat". The event cannot be played during the Admin Phase. A Combat starts when the target hex is declared and ends when all outcomes of Combat have been executed. This allows for a small window to play the event inbetween Combats (or before the first Combat, or after the last Combat, of an Activation Segment).
- Despite having no explicit duration the effect can only be used once.
- The effect should read: "Immediately perform an Activation Segment without spending an Activation Card. No Combats can occur during this Activation Segment. Order any HQ or the Schwerpunkt Marker not currently being ordered."

- The card can be played during an Activation Segment, but cannot order the same HQ (or Schwerpunkt Marker) that is being ordered in that Activation Segment.
- This card will produce a new Activation Segment for the Axis Player, which means command range will be checked at the start of this Activation Segment (or the 4 hex range in case the Schwerpunkt marker is ordered).
- If the card is played during an Activation Segment, pause it, perform the effect of the card (an Activation Segment without Combat), and then resume the Activation Segment that was paused. This may require memorization of the game state regarding which units have moved, which have not, if a unit is performing its Movement and how many MPs has left to spend, as well as which units have performed Combat, and which hexes have been targeted by Combat.
- Card C16 and Card C13 can nest their effects (e.g. play Card C16 when performing the Activation Segment of Card C13).
- If the card is played during the Soviet Activation observe the following:
  - The event cannot be used to move units to an hex targeted by Combat. As soon as the Soviet player declares a hex to target, Combat has started and the playing window of the event is no longer legal. The event can, however, be played before the Soviet player declares a hex to target.
  - The event cannot be used to impede Advance After Combat, as that is still part of Combat.
  - If the card play interrupts the Movement of a Soviet Unit in a non EZOC hex, that then resumes its Movement in the same hex but now under an EZOC as a result of the card's effect, the Soviet Unit may continue to move. The unit is not considered to have entered in an EZOC hex.
  - If units move to block Supply of a yet activated Soviet Unit, the Supply rules apply as normal and the unit will become OoS when it activates (unless the Soviet can change the game state by activating other units first to create a Supply Line).
- Effects that are active during the normal Activation Segment do not carry to the Activation Segment that results from this card. However these effects will resume once the normal Activation Segment resumes. For example suppose an effect that says one unit cannot move (e.g. C67) is applied during the normal Activation Segment. The affected unit cannot move only in the normal Activation Segment. It can move during the Activation Segment that resulted from the play of this card.

C14 (Steyr 1500 A)[5]
- Effect should read: "All Infantry Units that move exclusively through an unbroken path of roads (3.7), have double MPs. The road bonus Movement is also doubled."

C15 (Assault Gun)[4]
- Effect should read: "Negates the effect of Minor Village, Train Station, or Town."

C16 (Construction Pioneers)[6]
- See card C13.

C17 (Artillery Shield)[6]
- Cannot negate step losses from retreats.
- Duration should read: "One Combat."

C18 (Fire roller)[6,7]
- Effect should read: "The Axis Player chooses a Soviet Unit to lose a step (3.1)."

C19 (Infiltration)[5,6]

- The event should read "One unit does not have to stop when entering in the first EZOC hex during its Movement."

C20 (Replacement)
- Effect should read: "One Infantry or Motorized Infantry Replacement step (3.2)."

C21 (Breakthrough)[3,7]
- Effect should read: "The Axis Player chooses one or two Soviet Unit(s) to lose a total of 2 steps (3.1)."
- The steps can be allocated to the same unit or to different units.

C22 (Mortar)[6]
- Effect should read: "Negates the effect of Minor Village, Train Station, Town, or City."
- (Tactical Event) There is a typo: "SHift" should be "Shift".

C23 (Nebelwerfer)[4,6]
- (Card's name) The card's English name should be "Grenade Launcher".
- The Success Check should be 4 or less.

C24 (Construction Pioneers)[6]
- (Card's name) This card should be named Good Run, like card C29.
- Despite having no explicit duration the effect can only be used once.
- The effect should read: "Immediately perform another Activation Segment without spending an Activation Card. The same formation HQ (or Schwerpunkt marker if applicable) must be ordered."
- This card will produce a new Activation Segment for the Axis Player, which means command range will be checked again at the start of this Activation Segment. Units that were out of the command range in the initial Activation but are now within the command range will activate. Units that were within the command range in the initial activation but are now out of command range, cannot activate.
- If the Axis Player has used the Schwerpunkt in the previous activation only units that are within 4 hexes of the Schwerpunkt marker in this new Activation Segment can activate (this will likely result in a different mix of units compared with the initial Activation Segment).

C25 (Surprise)
- Do not round any values for intermediate calculations.

C26 (Flares)
- Ignore the 3rd line in bold stating: "All active units that participate in this combat, not only tanks" because it is redundant.
- The effect should read: "All attacking units (including Infantry and Motorized Infantry) may Advance After Combat (8.4) one additional hex. EZOC hexes can be ignored. The first hex entered must be the defender's vacated hex."
- Infantry Units and Motorized Infantry Units may advance one hex (to the defender's vacated hex). Tank Units can advance two hexes and can split into different hexes after moving through the defender's vacated hex. Overstacking is only checked after all units have Advanced After Combat.
- Tank Units cannot cross river hex sides without a bridge during an Advance after Combat.

C27 (Pervitin)[5,6]
- The effect should read: "Romanian Infantry Units have double MPs. The Road Bonus Movement is also doubled."
- The event can be played even when the units are activated

through the Schwerpunkt marker, but only applies to Romanian Infantry Units.

C28 (Pervitin)[5,6]

- See card C27.

C29 (Good Run)[4]

- See card C24.
- (Tactical Event) The playing window should read: "Before Combat".
- (Tactical Event) The duration should read: "One Combat."

C30 (No One Answers The Phone)[6]

- Cannot be used against a card played from STAVKA/OKH.
- Can only be used against Combat Cards. Activation Cards are excluded.
- The card can be played after the opponent rolls the die for the success check (if there is one).
- The playing window should say: "Play after an opponent plays a Combat Card but before executing its effect" This means the card can be played after the opponent rolls the die for the success check (if there is one).
- Cannot be targeted by another "No One Answers the Phone".

C31 (All In)[3]

- The effect should read "Choose a Combat Card from the discard pile and add it to your hand".
- Can only be applied to Combat Cards. Activation Cards are excluded.

C32 (Double Agent)[4]

- Playing should read: "Play after C73 has been played but before executing its effect."
- Effect should read: "Negates C73 (Eavesdropping), unless played from STAVKA."
- It is not possible to Negate C73 if played from STAVKA.

C33 (Schwerpunkt)[4]

- Immediately place the Schwerpunkt marker stacked with any Axis Combat Unit. It moves with the unit (Movement, Retreat, Advance After Combat, HQ Overrun) and gets temporarily removed if the unit is eliminated.
- In the Admin phase of each turn the Axis player may relocate the Schwerpunkt marker to any of his units (even if it was removed during the previous turn).
- HQs are eligible units for Schwerpunkt marker placement.
- (Tactical Event) Duration should read: "One Combat."

C34 (OKH)

- Effect should read: "Starting in turn 4, the hand limit for Activation Cards is increased to 6.
- Flip the Axis Activation Card Limit Marker to the "6" side.
- (Tactical Event) DR means die roll.

C35 (Heeresgruppe Don)

- Effect should read: "Starting in turn 4, the hand limit for Combat Cards is increased to 6.
- Flip the Axis Combat Card Limit Marker to the "6" side.
- (Tactical Event) DR means die roll.

C36 (Serendipity)[4]

- The effect should read "Choose a Combat card from the discard pile or draw pile and add it to your hand".
- Can only be applied to Combat Cards. Activation Cards are excluded.

C37 (Assault Boats)[3]

- See card C5.

C38 (No One Answers The Phone)[6]

- See card C30

C39 (Rally Point)[4]

- The capitalization of "ONE" has no special meaning. One replacement step can only be allocated to one unit anyways. Eliminated units are also eligible (3.2).

C40 (IL-2)[1,5]

- Use the No Movement Marker to mark the chosen unit. Remove it at the end of the Activation Segment. If the marker is already in use (C63), use the CR+2 Marker as a placeholder.
- The effect should read: "One Axis HQ cannot move during this Activation Segment. Soviet Player choice."
- If there is a stack of units, put the marker on top of the targeted HQ, and the remaining units on top of the marker.

C41 (Trenches)[2]

- Playing window should read: "Before Combat"
- Duration should read: "One Combat"
- Effect should read: "1 Column Shift Left when defending."
- (Tactical Event) Playing window should read: "Anytime".
- (Tactical Event) Duration should be ignored: "One Combat".

C42 (Conquest of Tazinskaya)[2]

- The effect should read "Choose a Combat card from the discard pile and add it to your hand".
- Can only be applied to Combat Cards. Activation Cards are excluded.

C43 (Ambush)[2]

- The effect should read: "Negates Axis Tank and/or Combined Arms Combat bonuses".
- (Tactical Event) Ignore the duration listed: "One Combat".

C44 (No One Answers The Phone)

- See card C30.

C45 (T-34)[2,7]

- (Tactical Event) Playing window should read: "Anytime".
- (Tactical Event) Duration should be ignored: "One Combat".

C46 (T-34)[2,7]

- (Tactical Event) See Card C45.

C47 (T-34)[2,7]

- (Tactical Event) See Card C45.

C48 (SMERSCH)[2]

- The retreating units are not eliminated due to not being able to retreat, because the effect of the card eliminates the Retreat result from the Combat Outcome.
- The card negates the Retreat result as a whole. It is not possible to negate only a portion of the Retreat.

C49 (Human Wave)[6]

- Effect should read: "In addition to the Combat outcome, both the attacker and the defender suffer one (additional) step loss. Can only be played if there are Soviet Units participating in Combat worth at least 2 steps when the card is played."
- The owner of the units chooses which units will lose the step.

C50 (Human Wave)[6]

- See card C49.

C51 (Human Wave)[6]

- See card C49.

C52 (Snowdrift)[4]

- When the Markers are on the "No Mvt" side no unit can enter the hex, either through Movement, Retreat or Advance After Combat. If the marker is placed on a hex containing Soviet Units they can leave the hex (but not enter).
- When the Markers are on the "+2 MP" side, that terrain costs 2 additional Movement Points to enter. Units can Retreat and Advance After Combat through the hex.

C53 (Hero of the Sowjet Union)[4,7]

- (Card's name) The card's name has a typo. It should be: "Hero of the Soviet Union".
- The Axis player chooses which unit(s) will lose the steps (can be the same unit or two different units).

C54 (M1937)[6]

- The success check should be 5 or less.
- Negates only the Combat tank bonus. The Combined Arms bonus is still available.
- (Tactical Event) Effect should read: "± 2 DRM"

C55 (Stavka)[1]

- If the hex the HQ is going to be placed on:
  - has an Enemy Unit, or
  - is under an EZOC and contains no Friendly Unit,

the HQ is deployed but immediately overrun (put the corresponding overrun marker in the hex).

C56 (Stavka)[1]

- See card C55.

C57 (Naval Rifle Brigade)[2,7]

- (GE) This card cannot be played for its General Event alone. It must be played together with card C62.
- (GE) Trigger should read: " Play anytime with C62 (Guard), when Axis Combat Card hand limit is at 6".
- (GE+C62) Both cards may be placed in the STAVKA in the same turn. If one card is already in STAVKA from a previous turn, the other card can be added to the STAVKA (this is an exception, usually if the STAVKA box is occupied no additional card can be placed there). If both cards are in the STAVKA they must be played for their combined event.
- (GE+C62) If both cards are played from STAVKA, there is an automatic success.
- (GE+C62) If both cards are played from the hand, the success check is passed with a single die roll of 2 or less.
- (GE+C62) It is not possible to play one Card from STAVKA and another from the hand.
- (GE+C62) If one card is negated by the play of the GE of cards C30 or C38 (No one answers the phone) by the Axis player, discard both cards without applying the effect.
- (GE+C62) Effect should read: "Reduce the Combat Card limit of the Axis Player to 5 (flip the marker)".
- (GE+C62) The duration of the effect is permanent (lasts until the end of the game).

C58 (No step back)[2]

- "Withdrawal" means Retreat. The effect should read: "Negates a Retreat result in a city."

C59 (Frozen Engines)[5]

- If the Axis players activates the Schwerpunkt marker to activate units (and thus activates units from multiple formations), the effect applies to all activated units.
- Units targeted by both this card and C14, C27, or C28 will have their MPs unchanged as both cards cancel each other out.

Note however that some units are only affected by one of the cards (e.g. Tanks are covered by C59, but not C14, C27 or C28).

C60 (SWT-40)[3]

- (GE+C63) This card may be played together with card C63 for a combined event.
- (GE+C63) Both cards may be placed in the STAVKA in the same turn. If one card is already in STAVKA from a previous turn, the other card can be added to the STAVKA in the current turn (this is an exception, if the STAVKA box is occupied no additional card can be placed there). If both cards are in the STAVKA they must be played for their combined event.
- (GE+C63) If both cards are played from STAVKA, there is an automatic success.
- (GE+C63) If both cards are played from the hand, the success check is passed with a die roll of 4 or less.
- (GE+C63) It is not possible to play one Card from STAVKA and another from the hand (unless they are being played individually). It is assumed that players will always take the best option if they want to play the cards for their combined event by placing them both in the STAVKA box.
- (GE+C63) The effect applies a -3DRM **(minus)** when defending in any terrain (does not need to be in a city).
- (GE+63) If one card is negated by the play of the GE of cards C30 or C38 (No One Answers the Phone) by the Axis player, the Soviet player chooses which card is cancelled, and, if possible, still applies the effect of the remaining card (as if it was played in isolation). It is not possible to apply the effect of C60 if not defending in cities, and it is not possible to apply the effect of C63 if the success check was passed with a 4 for the combined play.
- (GE) The effect applies a -1DRM **(minus)** when defending in a city.

C61 (Trenches)

- Playing window should read: "Before Combat."
- There should be no success check. The card should be an automatic success like card C41.
- Effect should read: "1 Column Shift Left when defending."

C62 (Guard)[3,7]

- (GE) This card cannot be played for its General Event alone. It must be played together with card C57.
- (GE) Trigger should read: " Play anytime with C57 (Naval Rifle Brigade), when Axis Combat Card limit is at 6".
- (GE + C57) See Card C57 for rules governing combined play.
- (Tactical Event) Playing window should read: "Anytime".
- (Tactical Event) Duration should be ignored: "One Combat".

C63 (Deadbolt Position)[3]

- (GE+C60) This card can be played together with card C60 for a combined event. See C60 for rules governing combined play.
- (GE) The effect applies a -1DRM (minus) when defending.

C64 (Little Saturn)[3,7]

- Effect should read: "The Axis player must eliminate one Combat Unit from one of the following formations: 6P, 17P, 23P."
- The unit is eliminated regardless if it has one or two steps.
- Only one unit total, not one unit per formation.

C65 (Reaction)

- "Target" refers to the hex being targeted by Combat, which includes both attacking and defending.
- Only Soviet Combat Units can move. Axis Units cannot benefit from the effect of the card.

- If the units move adjacent to the targeted hex when attacking they may participate in Combat.

- If the units move to the hex being targeted, respecting stacking limits, the Axis player may cancel the Combat, by not rolling the Combat die roll, with the caveat that all attacking units are considered to have participated in a Combat in that Activation Segment. If the Combat proceeds all units in the target hex must participate in Combat, including the ones just moved in.

- When defending, units can move out of the hex being targeted and avoid Combat. If all defending units leave the target hex, the Axis player ignores the Combat die roll, and may Advance After Combat (Tank Units). All participating Axis Units are considered to have participated in a Combat in that Activation Segment.

- Axis' HQ's can be overrun.

- Units may move further away from the targeted hex.

C66 (No One Answers The Phone)[6]

- See card C30

C67 (Winterfritz)[4,5]

- Use the No Movement Marker. Remove it at the end of the Activation Segment. If the marker is already in use (C40), use the CR+2 Marker as a placeholder.

- HQ's are eligible units to receive the marker.

- If there is a stack of units, put the marker on top of the targeted unit, and the remaining units on top of the marker.

C68 (Grand Slam)[3]

- The steps can be allocated to the same unit, or to different units. Both reduced units as well as eliminated units are eligible.

C69 (Secretary General)[3]

- Only Soviet HQ's can be relocated.

- The relocated HQ must already be in play. Soviet HQ's enter play through cards C55, and C56.

- Overrun HQs can be relocated. When relocated they will stop being overrun, unless the condition below applies-

- If the hex the HQ is going to be relocated to:

  - has an Enemy Unit, or

  - is under an EZOC and contains no Friendly Unit,

the HQ is relocated but immediately overrun (put the corresponding overrun marker in the hex).

C70 (Coordination)[3]

- Despite having no explicit duration the effect can only be used once.

- The effect should read: "Immediately perform an Activation Segment without spending an Activation Card. Activate units of 2 colors of the same army, or units of the same color of both armies."

C71 (Tank dog)[3]

- The Axis player chooses which Tank Unit will lose the step.

C72 (Minefield)

- The effect should read: "Negates Axis Advance After Combat (8.4)."

C73 (Eavesdropping)[4]

- The effect should read: "One Meeting Zone Marker is **randomly** revealed."

- Roll 1d6 to randomly determine which marker will be revealed:

  - 1-2, reveal zone A;

  - 3-4 reveal zone B;

  - 5-6 reveal zone C.

- To reveal a Meeting Zone Marker, flip it to the opposite side. The marker stays revealed until the end of the game.

C74 (JAK-9)[4,7]

- (Card's Name) The card's name should be "YAK-9".

- Effect should read: "Place the YAK-9 markers in seven non adjacent-hexes. Axis Units entering those hexes need to spend 2 additional MPs."

- No YAK-9 marker should be adjacent to any other YAK-9 marker.

- The markers are removed at the end of the turn.

- The markers do not affect Soviet Units, and can be placed on top of Soviet Units.

C75 (Time is blood)

- Effect should read: "Starting in **turn 4**, the hand limit for Activation Cards is increased to 6.

- Flip the Soviet Activation Card Limit Marker to the "6" side.

C76 (Instruction 277)

- Effect should read: "Starting in **turn 4**, the hand limit for Combat Cards is increased to 6.

- Flip the Soviet Combat Card Limit Marker to the "6" side.

C77 (Commissar)

- Can still be used when the HQ is overrun.

C78 (Commissar)

- Can still be used when the HQ is overrun.