BOLT ACTION

TANK WAR

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World War II Wargames Rules

BOLT ACTION

TANK WAR
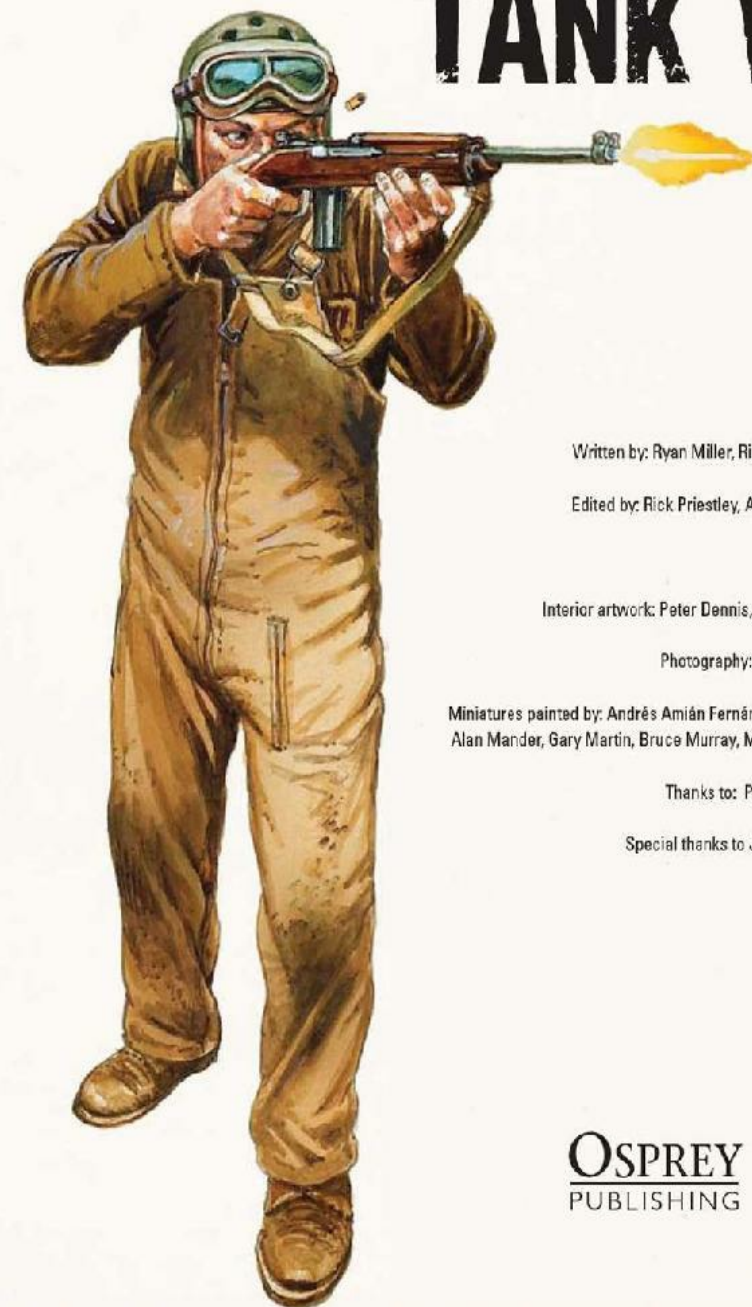
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ERRATA AND FAQS – THE COMMAND POST

For your convenience, we have created the Command Post – a section of the Warlord Games online forum that is your one-stop place for all of the official rules material we publish to support the *Bolt Action* series of books.

In the Command Post you will find, as free downloads, the latest PDF documents of the

Errata and Frequently Asked Questions. These documents fix any typos and/or rules issues that have crept into our books. For example (and it's a very relevant example for this book!), in these documents we have addressed the problem that heavy tanks used to be too easily pinned – now Veteran armoured vehicles are only pinned by weapons that actually have a chance of penetrating their armour!

But that's not all you can find in the Command Post – this area also includes useful gaming aids, like **reference sheets**, as well as the evergrowing **Additional Units** PDF, which lists a number of new units that we have added to the game, for many of the belligerent nations. And then there's extra optional rules, tournament guidelines, get-you-by army lists, rules commentaries, scenarios and more – please come and have a look!

WHAT IS THIS BOOK?

15th Panzer Division attacks towards Alam Halfa Ridge, by Howard Gerrard © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Campaign 158: El Alamein 1942.

elcome to *Bolt Action – Tank War*. This book is all about armoured formations in the *Bolt Action* game. As *Bolt Action* players will know, the

Wrulebook envisages that players who wish to do so will adapt historical formations to represent forces that are as realistic, or representative, as they want. However, the standard selectors given in the *Bolt Action* game allow you to field only a limited number of vehicles in an army. This is because the standard game is built around the infantry platoon as its basic element, with other troops taking supporting roles. Even when including as many vehicles as possible in the standard game, the tanks and armoured cars are likely to be outnumbered by infantry squads. Not so in *Tank War*. *Tank War* is built around armoured formations and makes provision for entire armies of tanks as well as fully mechanized units such as Panzer Grenadiers. The rules in this book enable you to field forces based upon these most powerful of fighting formations, and to field them either against each other or against forces chosen using the selectors from the main *Bolt Action* rule book or 'Armies of' series supplements.

Panzer III Ausf M

The last thing many Soviet tank crews saw – the monstrous Ferdinand taking aim...

The book is divided into the following sections:

ARMOURED PLATOONS

This is the core section of the *Tank War* book – the new Armoured Platoons selector enables players to build a *Bolt Action* force representing a platoon of armoured fighting vehicles. This armoured platoon can be accompanied by supporting infantry and artillery units together with their attendant transportation. This new selector can be used to represent any armoured or mechanized division of World War II.

As in the case of the Reinforced Platoons in the *Bolt Action* rulebook, with a force for *Tank War* you can field either a single Armoured Platoon or multiple Armoured Platoons, so long as the total requisition points value remains within the agreed limit for the game.

TANK BATTLE SCENARIO

A new Tank Battle scenario is provided to stage games between armoured forces. This scenario is ideally suited for fighting battles between armoured units, as opposed to the scenarios included in the *Bolt Action* rulebook, which are better suited to fighting games between Reinforced Platoons. This new

scenario is very adaptable because it features a random number of objectives that are positioned by the players. This means the same scenario can be adapted to represent many different types of engagement.

VEHICLE CREW EXPERIENCE

This section introduces new rules to represent the cumulative effect of experience on tank crews. See your tankers improve in quality and gain special fighting skills.

LEGENDARY CREW

Tank aces and other noteworthy tankers of history, with details of their stories and special rules for your games of *Bolt Action*.

GREAT TANK BATTLES OF WORLD WAR II

Some of the most famous armoured engagements of World War II and suggestions to help you recreate them on the tabletop.

APPENDIX 1: ADDITIONAL COMMAND VEHICLES

New command vehicles to go with the 'Armies of' series of supplement books for *Bolt Action*.

APPENDIX 2: ARMOURED RECOVERY VEHICLES

Rules for and a list of Armoured Recovery Vehicles, for recovering knocked out vehicles from the battlefield under fire.

APPENDIX 3: TALK LIKE A TANKER

Tanker jargon and slang in several languages to bring extra colour to your wargames – *Zmeya*!

APPENDIX 4: TANK ACE!

A light-hearted mini-game pitching the Red team against the Blue team in vehicular mayhem. May the best tank commander win!

A IS FOR…

The **Archer** was a most unusual vehicle, used principally by the British, and was an attempt to give some mobility and protection to its mighty 17-pounder heavy anti-tank gun. The 17-pounder was a most destructive gun, which no German tank could stand up to, but paid for this ability with

its great length and weight. Experiments were carried out with the reliable but obsolete Valentine tank chassis, and the two were married together to give a reasonably mobile and low-profiled weapon system.

Peculiarly, the only way to make it fit together was to have the gun firing to the rear, the breech literally recoiling next to the driver's seat! This odd arrangement worked well enough, and in fact gave the Archer the advantage of being able to shoot from cover then drive away as quickly as if advancing. It saw action in October 1944 crewed not by tank troops, but by the Royal Artillery, with over 600 seeing service.

German counterattack on D-Day, by Peter Dennis © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Command 5: Erwin Rommel.

ARMOURED PLATOONS

German reinforcements for Operation Fischfang, by Peter Dennis ©
Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Campaign 155: Anzio 1944.

Players can pick a Bolt Action force using the Armoured Platoon selector given below instead of the Reinforced Platoons selector on page 124 of the Bolt Action rulebook.

Such a force will inevitably be vehicle-heavy and might prove a tough challenge if you play with an Armoured Platoon against an infantry-based Reinforced Platoon. When arranging a game we encourage players to agree beforehand whether both sides will play Reinforced Platoons, both Armoured Platoons, or allow either. Keep in mind that many of the scenarios in the *Bolt Action* book can only be won by forces that include at least some infantry. This means that Armoured Platoons may well enjoy an advantage in some scenarios, but are equally likely to fare worse in others. You will have to take this into account when deciding which scenarios you are going to play. Be prepared to be flexible, and agree these things in a spirit of camaraderie, choosing a scenario that works for your forces and which gives a fair chance to both sides. Of course, it can also make an entertaining game to take on an armoured force with a lightly equipped infantry force; paratroopers against tanks in 'A Bridge Too Far' inspired encounter, for example. This kind of asymmetric game is fine when arranged in advance and where both players are willing participants in the fight; however, it is hardly sporting to spring a platoon of King Tigers on an unsuspecting infantry platoon! Event organisers will of course decide whether to include Reinforced Platoons and/or Armoured Platoons and which scenarios to allow, as is necessary when arranging games within a tight time limit and between players who may be meeting for the first time.

B IS FOR…

The **Buffalo** was originally a civilian vehicle, manufactured and used in the swamplands of the USA. With the Pacific war thrust upon America, the Marine Corps looked for a vehicle that could get supplies rapidly from ship to shore. The Buffalo, with some modification, did that very well, being propelled in the water by its tracks, carrying either a large load of supplies, jeeps, or packed with 18 or more troops.

They were first used at Tarawa, initially unarmoured, and suffered frightful casualties. Later models had their armour increased and were equipped with heavy machine guns and even cannon in turrets for suppressive fire on the way in.

The British equipped the Buffalo with the useful Polsten 20mm gun, and used them in the crossing of the Rhine and in operations over the Scheldt, transporting commandos.

Baron Nishi leads the cavalry – the new and the old

ARMOURED PLATOON SELECTOR

1 Command Vehicle from: Tank, Tank Destroyer, Assault Gun, Self-propelled Artillery, Anti-aircraft vehicle, Armoured Car.

A Command Vehicle is simply any of the vehicles in the list above, which has the Command Vehicle special rule, or that has been given this rule from its entry's Options. If no such vehicle is available to the player, any one of his vehicles can be given the Command Vehicle special rule at +25 points, even if its entry does not normally allow this option.

2 Vehicles from: Tank, Tank Destroyer, Assault Gun, Self-propelled Artillery, Anti-aircraft vehicle, Armoured Car.

Plus:

0–2 Vehicles from: Tank, Tank Destroyer, Assault Gun, Self-propelled Artillery, Anti-aircraft vehicle, Armoured Car.
0–3 Infantry squads
0–1 Lieutenant (First or Second)
0–1 Captain or Major
0–1 Medic
0–1 Forward Observer (either Artillery or Air)
0–1 Machine gun team
0–1 Mortar team
0–1 Sniper team
0–1 Flamethrower team
0–1 Anti-tank team
0–1 Artillery unit: Field Artillery, Anti-aircraft or Anti-tank gun

Plus:

In addition to the above the Armoured Platoon **must** include enough transport vehicles and/or tows (either soft-skin or armoured) to transport all models in the infantry and artillery units in the platoon, up to a maximum of one transport vehicle per unit of Infantry and/or Artillery. The only units that are an exception to this, and which cannot have a transport vehicle, are mounted cavalry units and units on motorcycles. These units can be included in an armoured platoon without having to give them a transport.

M26 Pershing Heavy Tank

SPECIAL RULES FOR ARMOURED PLATOONS

The following rules are supplementary to the basic rules in the *Bolt Action* game, or provide optional modifications to the basic rules in the *Bolt Action* rulebook. All of these rules are cost based – i.e. they either add or reduce the cost of a vehicle – and as such they are presented as options that the players can choose to use if they so wish. For example, the reduction in cost to forego radio communication in favour of hand signals will reduce the effectiveness of command vehicles, so a points deduction is applied. This is entirely optional where allowed: you can choose to equip your forces with or without radios.

COMMAND VEHICLES

A force chosen from the Armoured Platoon selector will always include at least three vehicles including a Command Vehicle. There is no need to inform the opposing player which vehicle is the Command Vehicle in the platoon; instead, secretly note down which vehicle is the Command Vehicle at the start of the game. This means the opposing player will not necessarily know which of your tanks is the Command Vehicle, just as in a real life battle it may not be obvious which vehicle carries the platoon leader. Keeping your Command Vehicle secret in this way means that the enemy will not be able to concentrate his fire on your leaders. There is no need to reveal which are your Command Vehicles until the end of the game - so you might need to ask the opponent to look away when you need to measure the range of the Command Vehicle rule, for example. Of course a cunning opponent might eventually deduce which of your tanks is the Command vehicle... just like in real life!

LACK OF RADIOS
In World War II, effective communication by radio made it possible for armoured formations to co-ordinate over a relatively large battlefield. Forces that lacked radio communication found themselves at a considerable disadvantage. Very few French tanks were equipped with radios, for example, and this severely hindered their effectiveness both strategically and in the field. The same is true of Russian tanks, especially during the early war when Soviet forces found themselves hopeless outmatched by the German Panzer divisions. Japanese armour also commonly lacked radios during the early part of the war, although this would prove less of a problem in the Far Eastern theatre.

A9 Cruiser tank Mk I

To represent units lacking effective radio communication **French**, **Soviet** and **Japanese** Armoured Platoon Command Vehicles can reduce their morale bonus distance from 12" to 6" at a reduction in cost of 10 points for the Command Vehicle. This represents communication by means of flags or hand signals.

Platoons that lack radios cannot benefit from any of the following rules for Radio Networks.

C IS FOR…

The **Char 2c** was an enormous French super-heavy tank, originally conceived in 1916 to break the stalemate of the trenches. It had some impressive statistics, weighing in at 64 tons, with 45mm of frontal armour and a top speed of just under ten miles an hour. The French built 11 of these behemoths and used them principally in a propaganda role, moving them around by rail to impress all who saw and photographed them. It had a reliable 75mm gun and four machine guns, all served by a mighty crew of 12.

They came to a sad end, when they were caught on rail transport and were threatened with capture. Rather than allowing these assets, if assets they were, to fall into German hands the French crews disabled and destroyed their charges. The Germans did however take one away with them to their testing ground to examine the value of this, the largest tank to see service in World War II.

The battle for the Ramushevo Corridor, by Peter Dennis © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Campaign 245: Demyansk 1942–43.

RADIO NETWORKS

During World War II tanks and other fighting vehicles were organized into platoons comprising the same kind of vehicle, and – at least by the war's end – usually provided with radios. Radio allows a platoon commander to communicate with individual tanks in the same unit, and also to receive directions from more senior commanders at the company or battalion level. In the basic *Bolt Action* game we assume all vehicles are equipped with radios, but in the *Tank War* game we also allow for improved communications networks for armoured formations. This works as follows:

ARMOURED PLATOON COMMANDER

If the three compulsory vehicles forming an armoured platoon are all taken from the **same** entry in the relevant army list (for example three T34/76s) then the player can add a Radio Network. The Radio Network adds one to the Command Vehicle's morale bonus when adding its bonus to any armoured vehicle that form part of that platoon. This costs an additional 5 points for the Command Vehicle.

This extra +1 boosts the Command Vehicle's bonus from the usual +1 to +2 – but **only for vehicles that belong to the same platoon**. Vehicles from

other platoons still receive the +1 bonus as usual.

Note that the three compulsory vehicles of the same type can have different options if these are part of the same entry. They could have different weapons, for example, or the crews might be of different qualities, and so forth. These differences do not matter. It is only important that the three vehicles are chosen from the **same** entry in the army list. Other vehicles in the platoon can be chosen from any of the permitted entries, and any armoured vehicles still benefit from the boosted morale for the Radio Network. Of course, players are free to choose a mixture of vehicles to form the compulsory portion of their armoured platoon if they prefer, but such a 'mixed' armoured platoon cannot be given a Radio Network.

'BOYS, SCRATCH MY BACK'

Not a common practice back in the day, given its potential for danger, but used often enough nonetheless. When a tank commander found his tank covered in enemy troops, he would radio to a nearby tank and ask it to 'scratch his back' with a machine gun or other light weaponry in order to get those pesky foot soldiers to run away.

As you can imagine, the prospect of intentionally shooting at your fellow tanks is counter-intuitive to say the least, but desperate times…

VEHICLES & PINNING

This section overrules the one of the same title on page 81 of the rulebook.

Fully enclosed armoured vehicles, such as most armoured cars and tanks, cannot be pinned by hits from small-arms.

Inexperienced vehicles

Fully enclosed Inexperienced vehicles receive a pin marker every time they are hit by an enemy unit firing a heavy weapon (or any other attack that has a Pen value).

Veteran vehicles

Fully enclosed Veteran vehicles are not pinned by hits that are not powerful enough to damage them. They can only be pinned by hits from attacks that are powerful enough to potentially cause damage on the vehicle (after applying all Pen modifiers).

Therefore, if you score a hit with a Pen value of at least +1 against a Veteran vehicle, work out whether the hit can actually damage the target or not (after all modifiers). If it cannot, then it causes no pinning. If your shot can actually damage the target, then place a pinning marker on it and roll to damage as normal.

In other words, if you roll to damage a Veteran vehicle, but fail to equal or beat its armour, at least you get to place a pin marker on it!

Example: *you score a hit with a light anti-tank gun against the front of a Veteran Tiger I (damage value 10+). Work out the roll to damage – the Pen value of your gun is +4, but the shot is at long range, so the Pen suffers a -1 modifier, making it +3. As the maximum result the shot can reach is 9 (roll of 6 +3), the shot cannot even equal the Tiger's front armour – so no pinning marker is placed. If the hit had been from short range, or against the side armour (or both!), it would immediately cause a pin marker, and then you'd roll to damage.*

Note that if a weapon or rule applies pin markers automatically, and/or does not have a known Pen value, then the pin markers are inflicted normally, even on Veteran vehicles.

Example: *if a veteran vehicle with damage value 10+ is the subject of an air strike, it automatically receives the D3 -1 pin markers at the start of the air strike sequence, like all units around it. However, when the type of plane and the Pen value of its attacks are determined, the vehicle might be immune to the additional pin markers, if the Pen value of the attack is not enough to damage it.*

Regular vehicles

Fully enclosed Regular vehicles hit by attacks with a Pen value of at least +1 will randomly behave either as an Irregular or a Veteran – every time they are hit by one such attack, roll a die. On a 1–3, treat them as Inexperienced – place a pin on them regardless of the hit's chances of damaging. On a 4+, treat them as Veteran – place a pin on them only if the hit can damage them, and then roll to damage.

Panzer III Ausf M

ARMOURED COMPANY COMMANDER

If your force includes two or more armoured platoons with Radio Networks as described above, then **one** of the command vehicles with a Radio Network can be upgraded to a company commander. This adds 2 to the Command Vehicle's morale bonus when adding its bonus to any armoured vehicle units that form part of that platoon – making +3 in total. This costs a further 10 points for the Command Vehicle on top of the Platoon Commander's +5, so +15 points in total for the Radio Network.

Regardless of how many platoons are included in your force only one Command Vehicle can be upgraded to a Company Commander, and the extra bonus only applies to units from the Company Commander's platoon.

ARMOURED BATTALION COMMANDER

If your force includes three or more armoured platoons with Radio Networks as described above, then **one** of the command vehicles with a Radio Network can be upgraded to a battalion commander. This adds 3 to the Command Vehicle's morale bonus when adding its bonus to any armoured vehicle units that form part of that platoon – making +4 in total. This costs a further 20 points for the Command Vehicle on top of the Platoon Commander's +5, so +25 points in total for the Radio Network.

D IS FOR…

By 1944 the Allies knew that a second front had to be opened up. A landing in Normandy was discussed, but it was vital that armour accompanied the infantry in the beach assault. The British put great effort into examining the notion of using canvas screens supported by compressed air-filled tubing to make a truly swimming tank. The Sherman M4 was chosen, and after the tank rolled from the landing craft, it swam ashore using two propellers at the rear. These were known as '**Duplex Drive**', or 'DD' tanks.

The Germans were surprised at the emergence of the tanks from the sea, and on four out of five D-Day beaches they were most helpful in providing close in support for the hard-pressed assault troops. The Canadians, Americans and British all used them, and some were also used in the Rhine crossings and in Italy.

Regardless of how many platoons are included in your force only one Command Vehicle can be upgraded to a Battalion Commander, and the extra bonus only applies to units from the Battalion Commander's platoon.

Note that a force of three of more armoured platoons equipped with a Radio Network can therefore include one Battalion Commander, one Company Commander, and one Platoon Commander costing +25, +15, and +5 points respectively. We do, of course, realise that we have allowed our units to be commanded by quite senior officers, and that perhaps – in reality – such high ranking individuals would lead larger formations. However, the same is true of the high ranking officers allowed in the standard reinforced platoon, and we would cite the same reasons for doing do, namely that it is convenient to associate our bonuses with ranks, and players need not assume that individuals hold the literal ranks indicated if they prefer not to do so.

After all, in reality many relatively junior commanders were highly effective, whilst in some cases seniority would prove no guarantor of competence. However, for purposes of our game, it is convenient to associate our bonuses with ranks as described.

SOME GUIDELINES FOR TANK PLATOONS

During World War II a tank platoon would typically number from three to five vehicles, depending upon nationality and time period. Of course, particularly during the late war, armoured formations were sometimes thrown together from whatever happened to be available, forming improvised and often mixed combat groups. It was also common practice to have nimbler vehicles, such as armoured carriers or lighter tanks, as command vehicles. The Armoured Platoons selector allows players to mix and match different types of vehicles in an armoured platoon if they wish. This gives players the freedom to base a platoon on real unit organization, or to put different kinds of vehicles into an improvised armoured platoon.

Type 94 tankette

HQ Section

Maintenance Section

AM&S Section

1st Platoon

2nd Platoon

3rd Platoon

US Medium Tank Company, September 1943 © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken From Battle Orders 10: US Tank and Tank Destroyer Battalions in the ETO 1944–45.

HQ Section

Maintenance Section

AM&S Section

1st Platoon

2nd Platoon

3rd Platoon

US Light Tank Company, September 1943 © Osprey Publishing Ltd.
Taken From Battle Orders 10: US Tank and Tank Destroyer Battalions
in the ETO 1944–45.

Company HQ
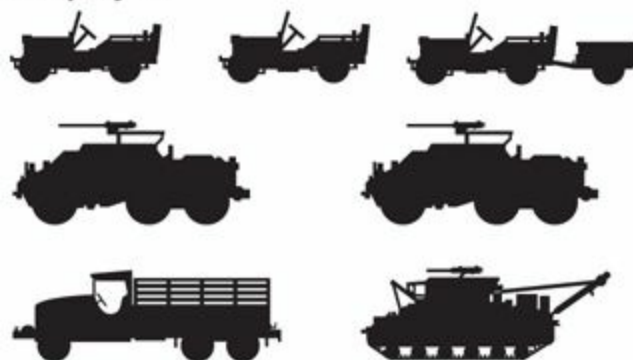
1st Platoon

2nd Platoon

3rd Platoon

*US Tank Destroyer Company, May 1943 © Osprey Publishing Ltd.
Taken From Battle Orders 10: US Tank and Tank Destroyer Battalions
in the ETO 1944–45.*

E IS FOR…

The Germans wanted a heavy tank destroyer that would batter its way through deep Soviet defensive lines and that's exactly what they got when Dr Ferdinand Porsche designed the Ferdinand heavy tank destroyer. It was a turretless vehicle and quite innovative in design, based on his rejected plans for the more famous Tiger tank.

Ninety-one were built in 1943 and were put into action at Kursk in Russia in two units: Panzerjäger battalions 653 and 654. Their baptism of fire was spectacular, using their L71 88mm guns to great effect, destroying T-34 tanks out to ranges above three kilometres. The six crew were kept very busy, knocking out literally hundreds of Soviet vehicles over the battle's duration, but they lost some vehicles to close assault, not being provided with an integral machine-gun for defence. This was addressed in the later improved version, the **Elefant**. Other losses were due to artillery and mines, but crew casualties were remarkably light.

With 200mm of frontal armour it was an excellent defensive weapon and went on to serve also in the battles of Anzio in Italy.
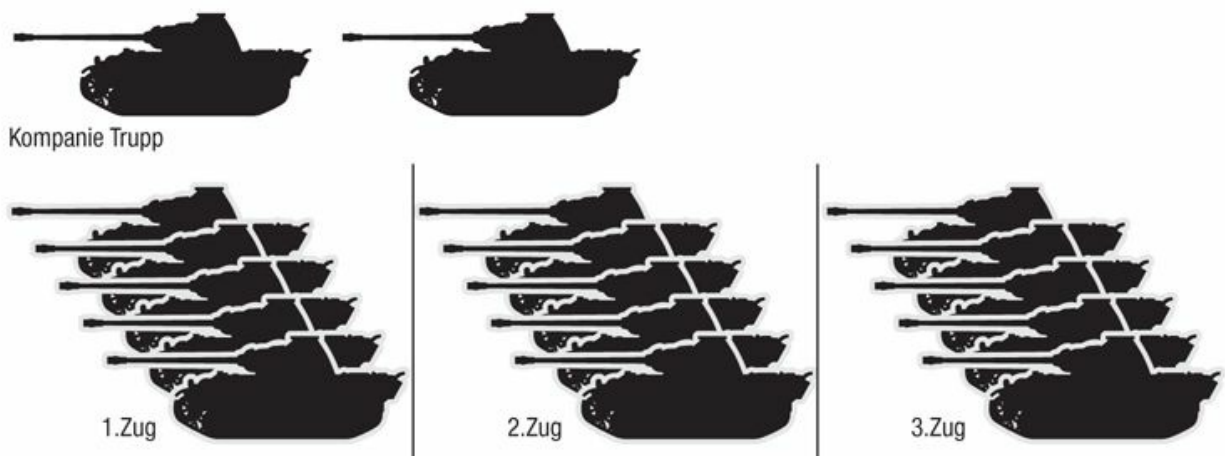
Panzer Kompanie, Stab and I. (Panther) Abteilung, November 1943 © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken From Battle Orders 38: Panzer Divisions 1944–45.
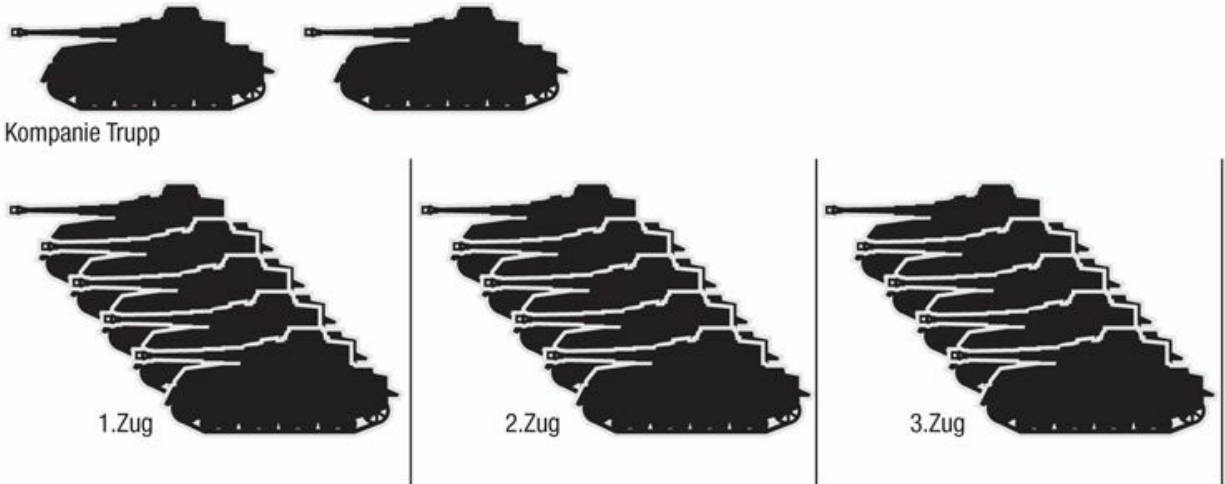
Panzer Kompanie, II. Abteilung (PzKpfw), November 1943 © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken From Battle Orders 38: Panzer Divisions 1944–45.
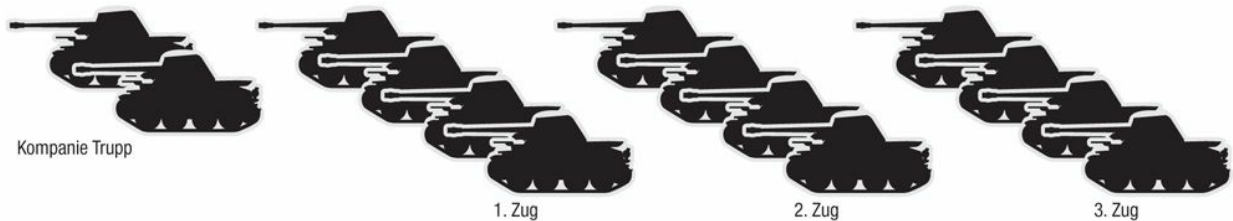
Panzerjäger Kompanie, November 1943 © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken From Battle Orders 38: Panzer Divisions 1944–45.

To help those wishing to put together plausible armoured platoons, the following guidelines cover the more typical composition of these units amongst the various belligerent nations during the war:

Germany: typically, a German armoured platoon of light or medium tanks (up to and including Panthers) would consist of five tanks, except in the very early war, when platoons of six, four and three were tried. Heavy tanks, like Tigers, were instead normally organized in platoons of four.

Soviet Union: Soviet tanks were usually formed in platoons of three, with the exception of the heaviest types like KVs, which were in small platoons of two.

USA: Tank platoons of all types in the US tended to be in fives. Tank destroyers were organized into platoons of four.

UK: British tank platoons were normally three vehicles, but with the introduction of Fireflies later in the war they often consisted of three normal Shermans and one Firefly. US tank destroyers in British service were

organized in platoons of four.

Italy: Italy organized tanks in fives, while the Semovente tank destroyers operated in fours.

France: French tank platoons were normally organised in threes, except for the R-35 and H-35 tanks of the light mechanized divisions, which were in fives.

Japan: Japanese tanks normally operated in platoons of five.

TANK BATTLE SCENARIO
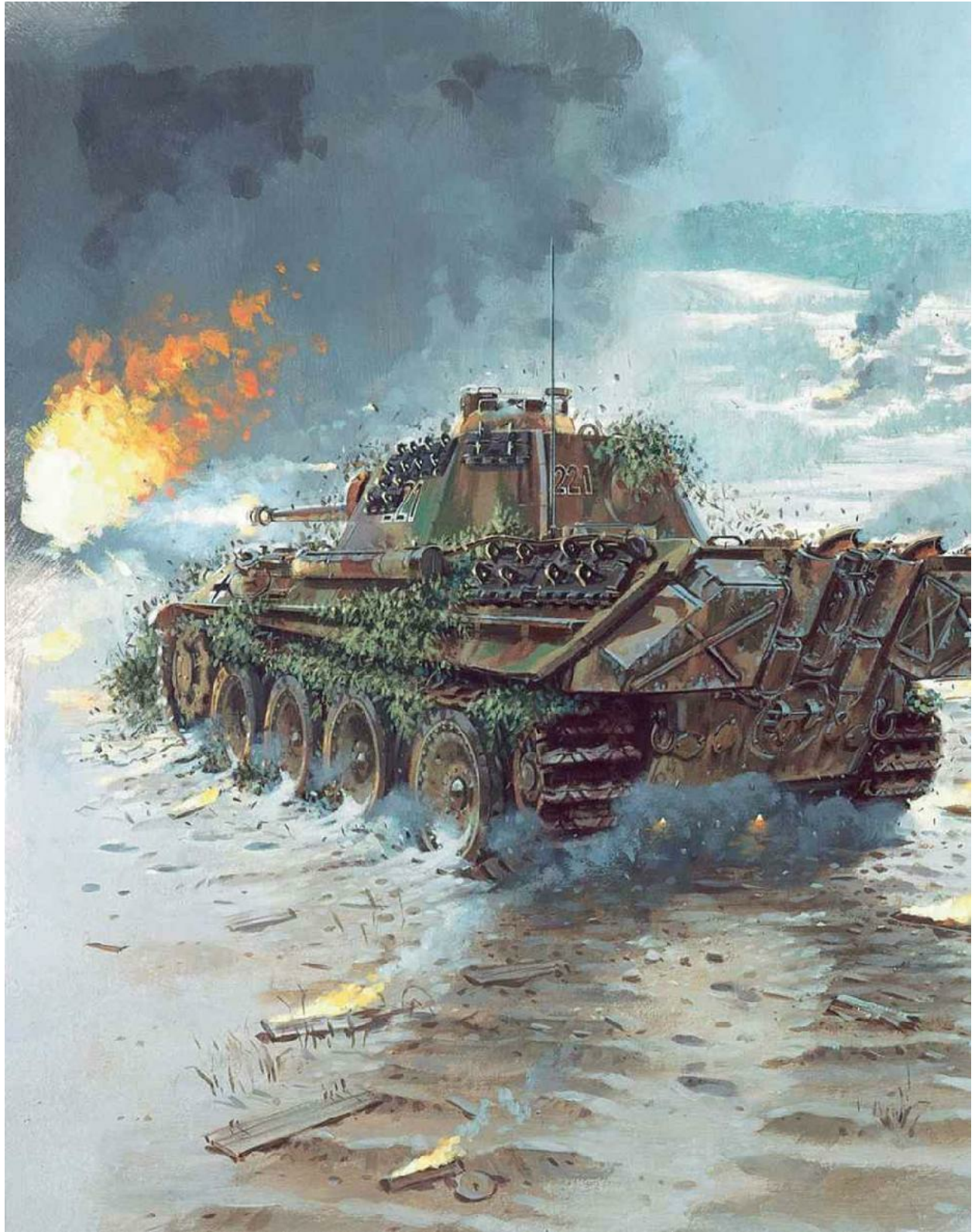
Panthers attack Freyneux, Belgium, by Howard Gerrard © Osprey
Publishing Ltd. Taken from Duel 13: Panther vs Sherman

This section describes how to assemble forces, set up the battlefield and begin a game of Bolt Action with armoured platoons.

ASSEMBLING THE FORCES

First of all, agree on the number of **requisition points** available, exactly as you would for any other game of *Bolt Action*. The difference is that you will be building your forces using the Armoured Platoon selector on page 11 rather than the normal Reinforced Platoon from the *Bolt Action* rulebook. Each player selects models from his chosen list – either the lists included in the *Bolt Action* rulebook or those in the 'Armies of' series of supplements.

Keep in mind that, because vehicles are more expensive than infantry, in *Tank War* you might want to use a greater points value than you would in a regular game of *Bolt Action*. A Reinforced Platoon gives you plenty of choice in a 1,000 points game, but you might want to play a Tank Battle with 1,500 or even 2,000 points a side to allow for the greater cost of armoured units. Our experience is that 1,500 points is sufficient to field most of our Armoured Platoons, so we tend to use **1,500** as a 'standard' Tank Battle. A 1,000 points game is still very playable though, as long as you stick to vehicles that are not too expensive. In some respects it makes for a more interesting challenge, as hard choices will have to be made when you build your force.

ARMOURED US – 1,000PTS

1	Veteran M4A4	244	
	No 'easily catch fire'	10	
	HMG	25	
	Command	25	304
1	Regular M36 Jackson	255	
	HMG	25	280
1	Veteran M3A3 Stuart	172	
	Recce	10	182
1	Regular 3-inch AT gun	110	110
1	Regular artillery tractor	15	
	HMG	25	40
1	Regular Bazooka team	60	60

1	Regular jeep	21	21
Total			**997**

IN SUMMARY

One mixed armoured platoon, one artillery piece, one infantry team.

ARMOURED US – 1,500PTS

1	Veteran M4A4 Sherman	244	
	No 'easily catch fire'	10	
	Command + Radio Net	30	284
1	Veteran M4A4 Sherman	244	
	No 'easily catch fire'	10	
	HMG	25	279
1	Veteran M4A4 Sherman	244	
	HMG	25	269
1	Regular M36 Jackson	255	255
1	Veteran M3A3 Stuart	172	
	Recce	10	182
1	Regular 3-inch AT gun	110	110
1	Regular artillery tractor	15	
	HMG	25	40
1	Regular Bazooka team	60	60
1	Regular jeep	21	21
Total			**1500**

Call up the Crocodile!

IN SUMMARY

One armoured platoon with radio net and platoon commander, one artillery piece, one infantry team.

F IS FOR…

The British tanks of World War II were always playing catch up with their German rivals. When the invasion of Normandy came about, the British needed to face down the Tiger and Panther tanks they knew would oppose them. They took a standard Sherman and, with some ingenuity, squeezed in the mighty 17-pounder, a powerful anti-tank gun that could handle any known tank of the war. This tank was called the **Firefly**, and as many were made as possible, though there were rarely enough to go around. Commonly there would be one Firefly in a troop of three, rising to two in four as more were available.

They were fine weapons, and so deadly that the crews did their best not to be singled out by camouflaging or painting their long barrels to appear to be the normal 75mm short gun of the Sherman. No bow machine gun was carried, as the space was needed for extra ammunition.

ARMOURED US – 2,000PTS

1	Veteran M4A4 Sherman	244	
	No 'easily catch fire'	10	
	Command + Radio Net Company	40	294
1	Regular M4A4 Sherman	195	
	No 'easily catch fire'	10	205

1	Regular M4A4 Sherman	195	
	No 'easily catch fire'	10	205
1	Regular M36 Jackson	255	
	Command	25	280
1	Regular M36 Jackson	255	255
1	Regular M36 Jackson	255	255
1	Veteran M3A3 Stuart	172	
	Recce	10	
	Command + Radio Net	30	212
1	Regular M3A3 Stuart	135	
	Recce	10	145
1	Regular M3A3 Stuart	135	
	Recce	10	145
	Total		**1996**

IN SUMMARY

Three armoured platoons – Shermans with a radio net and Company Commander, TD platoon, and Stuart Recce platoon with a radio net and Platoon Commander.

PREPARING THE BATTLEFIELD

Open ground with a clear view of the enemy provides the ideal battlefield for rapidly moving armoured formations armed with long-range weapons. It is hardly surprising that many of the most significant encounters between armoured forces took place in the Western Desert and on the steppes of Russia. Similarly, a satisfying game of *Bolt Action* can be played with relatively little terrain, allowing the opposing vehicles more room for manoeuvre. However, we think a better game results from placing at least a few large terrain pieces on the table to break up lines of sight and encourage outflanking movements. If you are playing on a table 48" wide – a commonly used size for general gaming purposes – then it is especially important to break up lines of sight in this way, as many tank weapons are capable of hitting and destroying targets at these kinds of ranges. If you are playing on a larger table, which we would certainly recommend if available, then this is

less important, because there will be more room for manoeuvre before tanks get within killing range. Of course, regardless of the size of your battlefield, you can pile on the terrain if preferred. For example, players might want to pitch their tanks into an urban battle, where mobility and long-range firepower are less of an advantage, and where assault by tank-hunting infantry becomes an ever-present danger.

Raging Bulls – the 11th Armoured Division storms forward

TANK BATTLE SCENARIO

Battles between large armoured or mechanized formations are dynamic confrontations in which mobile forces try to outmanoeuvre their enemy and seize control of critical objectives while inflicting maximum damage.

SET UP OBJECTIVES

First of all, take D6 objectives markers – ideally a 25mm-diameter round token such as a plastic *Bolt Action* base or two-pence coin. Players can of course decorate these markers with suitable models, such as flags, crates or fuel drums, if they so wish. Then both players roll a die. The highest scorer places the first objective marker on the table anywhere more than 6" from any edge. Then the other player places the second objective (if any) more than 18" from any other objective marker and more than 6" from any edge. Players then alternate placing the remaining objective markers, until all markers are on the table or it becomes impossible to place any further markers.

G IS FOR…

The British urgently needed a tank that could match the German Panzer III and Panzer IV tanks in armour and firepower, as they felt outclassed in the Western Desert. The long-term solution was of course the American Sherman, but a stop-gap was needed. As a result, the M3 medium tank was hastily assembled and shipped out to the hard-pressed Allied forces. The British insisted on a few changes, leading the Commonwealth forces to field a modified version which they called the **Grant**, referring to the other model as the Lee.

The tank was in no way perfect. Its off-road speed was poor, it had a huge profile making it a prime target and, worst of all, had its big 75mm gun mounted in a restricted traverse casemate. This was not ideal, but an army does the best with what it has. The Grant gave the British tankers the chance to open fire at long range and kill Panzers, and also to put down destructive HE fire on Africa Korps anti-tank guns.

Its armour was adequate for the time, and over 6,000 were built, nearly 2,000 being shipped out to the Far East to equip the Indian and Australian forces combating Japanese aggression. It had a 6-man crew who between them operated the main gun and a turret-mounted 37mm gun.

Crusader Mk II

Type 3 Ho-Ni III tank destroyer

ROLL FOR SIDES

Both players roll a die. The highest scorer picks a side of the table.

PREPARE FORCES

No units are set up on the table at the start of the game. Both sides must nominate at least half of their force to form their first wave. This can be the entire army if desired. Any units not included in the first wave are left in **reserve** (see Reserves – *Bolt Action* Rulebook p119)

OBJECTIVE

Players are trying to capture as many objectives as possible. To capture an objective you must have one of your units within 6" of the objective marker at the end of a turn, and there must be no enemy units within 6" of it. Markers can be captured and recaptured several times during a battle, but only objectives captured at the end of the game count towards your victory score, so bear this in mind when you formulate your battle plans. In addition to capturing objectives, destroying enemy units also counts in your favour, as explained in the Victory conditions below.

H IS FOR…

The French knew that another war was coming with Germany and, like many other nations, put effort into building large numbers of light tanks. The **Hotchkiss 35** was the result. It was unusual in that, although small and only crewed by two over-worked men, it was quite slow, with a top speed of 17mph. It was, however, reasonably well armoured, with sloping plates adding effectiveness to its 34mm armour.

The French made 1,200 of these tanks and they were to be found in many theatres of war and many countries, even serving briefly in the Norwegian campaign. They carried a modest 37mm main gun and a coaxial machine gun. This vehicle was later adopted by second line German units, who used over 550 of them in their armies. The commander also had to fulfil the roles of loader and gunner, making an otherwise reasonable light tank somewhat ineffective. Perhaps its most famous use was by Major Becker of the 21st Panzer Division, who used the captured chassis for innumerable SPGs and tank destroyers in Normandy.

Wait for it, gunner. Wait for it...

THE GERMAN '88'

One of the most recognizable German weapons of the war is the famous 88mm, or 'eighty-eight'. It actually referred to an entire family of weapons, from anti-aircraft to tank guns.

The first 88s were designed and used exclusively as anti-aircraft or 'flak' guns. Mounted to a cross-base and aimed at steep angles, they were capable of filling the skies with explosive shrapnel guaranteed to ruin any pilot's day. When Germany intervened in the Spanish Civil War, the Flak 88s were often used against land targets such as tanks and enemy emplacements to devastating effect. The potential of the deadly 88 began to be fully explored.

With the Nazi rise to power in the 1930s, development of the 88 increased in urgency. As the war broke out, Germany would invest heavily in air defence, pushing thousands of 88s throughout the Western and Eastern fronts. While the initial purpose of the weapon was to knock out enemy planes, the gun would soon be better known as a tank-buster.

During the Battle of France, the Germans had no weapons that would pierce the thick frontal armour of the British Matildas or the French B1s. Their troops had to focus on flank attacks in order to try and hit the tanks' lesser side or rear armour, a dangerous prospect. Once the 88s were brought into the fight, the armoured advances of the Allies came to a screeching (and smoking) halt. The 88 could penetrate the armour of any Allied tank at a distance of over a mile. The Allies

had nothing to stand up to that kind of firepower that early in the war.

The 88mm calibre would eventually see use as the main gun on the Tiger and King Tiger tanks, making them the most powerful tanks of the war, and certainly the most feared! Such was the ubiquity of the 88 that the Allied soldiers began using the term '88' to refer to just about any German mounted cannon.

Ferdinand heavy tank destroyer

FIRST TURN

The battle begins. During turn 1 both players must bring their first wave onto the table. These units can enter the table from any point on their side's table edge, and must be given either a *run* or *advance* order. Note that no order test is required to move units on to the table as part of the first wave.

GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of turn 7, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3 the game ends; on a roll of 4, 5 or 6 play one further turn.

VICTORY!

At the end of the game the side that has captured the most objectives has won.

If the players capture an equal number of objectives, then the winner is determined by using victory points. Players score one victory point for every enemy unit destroyed. If one side scores at least two more victory points that the other then that side has won a clear victory. Otherwise the result is

deemed too close to call and honours are shared – a draw!

Note that if a side destroys every single enemy unit, the game ends and that side wins, regardless of any other consideration.

I IS FOR…

The Soviets had made the KV-1 as a heavy tank that performed well against German armour, but knew that the latest generation of Panzers had caught up with them. They therefore planned a larger breakthrough tank, designated the **IS heavy tank** (in tribute to their leader Joseph (Iosef) Stalin). It was a real brute of a tank and was well armoured in sloping and rounded armour plate, making it difficult to knock out by any but the heaviest guns.

The main strength of the IS-2 was its strong armour and a deadly gun that fired a huge 122mm round. Despite its length and cartridge size, the main gun was of most use in firing HE at soft targets such as anti-tank guns, as its velocity was insufficient to pierce the toughest panzers from the front. The size of the round also meant that it was supplied in two parts – the projectile and the charge – slowing its rate of fire considerably, and only leaving room on board for 28 rounds. Nonetheless, an IS-2 was a frightening tank to come across on the field.

VEHICLE CREW EXPERIENCE

Urban warfare in Berlin, by Peter Dennis © Osprey Publishing Ltd.
Taken from Campaign 159: Berlin 1945.

Tankers lived and fought in close proximity and crews often became extremely tight-knit. With so much ordnance specifically designed to kill

them, they knew that they had to work in unison to get the most out of their machines. While they were limited by the capabilities of their vehicles, a seasoned crew often meant the difference between victory and fiery defeat.

This section expands on the base rules for vehicle crews given in the *Bolt Action* rule book. Specifically, it provides a set of optional rules that allows crews to gain experience and skills from one game to another.

USING THESE RULES

Since these rules are entirely optional, both players must agree before a game begins whether to use them or not. If you wish to field your vehicles with experienced crews, you must agree this with any opponents beforehand so they know what they are getting into.

When putting together your army, if you plan to use the crew experience rules, you may only purchase *inexperienced* vehicles, to represent them at the beginning of their (hopefully long) combat career. The exception to this rule is if there is no inexperienced option for a particular vehicle. In that case, you may purchase the *regular* version and the vehicle starts with two skills, generated as explained below.

CREWS

While the exact make-up of crews varied somewhat from one vehicle to another, these rules concern themselves with the three core crew members of any vehicle: the commander, the gunner and the driver.

It is important to note that it is the crew that is gaining experience and not the vehicle itself! Even if a vehicle is knocked out, as long as its crew survives they bring their expertise to their replacement vehicle for the next battle. Furthermore, the crew gains experience as a unit, so you do not have to track experience for each individual crew member.

M5 Stuart

J IS FOR…

The Allies had learned the hard way in North Africa that the German pioneers were experts in mine craft. They developed a range of mine clearing vehicles which ranged from the usual American pragmatism to some most unlikely looking devices. Perhaps one of the strangest looking vehicles of World War II was the awesome T1E3 mine exploder, popularly known to the troops who used it as '**Aunt Jemima**'. The name came from a colourful painting on the box of pancake mix on sale in the USA at the time, whereby the troops thought that the huge rolling steel disks looked like a stack of thin round pancakes, and hence the name stuck.

    It first saw action in 1944, 22 of the contraptions being built. It was a cumbersome machine, the tracked chassis pushing in front of it many tons of steel in the form of ten giant disks in bundles of five, which rolled the ground ahead of the advancing tank. Posing a huge target and with a speed of 3mph when clearing, it was unwieldy at best. It worked, to a degree, but it was not the answer to mine clearance.

EXPERIENCE

The more fighting a crew takes part in the more experience it accumulates in the form of Experience Points (XP). There are two ways a crew can gain XP:

- **Destroying enemy units**: Whenever a vehicle destroys an enemy unit, it gains XP equal to the points cost of that unit divided by 10 and rounded down. For example, if a crew were to destroy a Veteran Sherman 76mm (which costs 282 points), it would gain 28 XP.
- **Surviving**: At the end of a game, a surviving vehicle crew gains 20 XP.
- When one of your vehicle crews gains XP during a game, be sure to note it down on their entry in your army list, adding it to any XP already gained.

SPENDING XP

You can spend a crew's XP during a game at the same time as you give that

unit an order as described below under Gaining Skills.

XP is spent to gain skills. It costs 50 XP to roll for a skill on the tables below. Once a skill has been determined, note it on the vehicle's entry in your army list. The skill is active immediately; the crew can use their new ability right away!

SKILLS AND CREW QUALITY

As already noted, vehicles using these rules start out as *inexperienced* in most cases. This gives them a base morale value of 8 and all the rules specific to inexperienced units. As a crew gains skills, its quality will improve. The number of skills a crew has earned determines its quality as shown on the following chart.

A Burmese village now in Japanese hands

- **0–1 skill:** Inexperienced
- **2–3 skills:** Regular
- **4+ skills:** Veteran

Whenever a crew gains a skill, its quality is adjusted immediately. So, once a crew gains its second skill, its quality is immediately elevated to Regular and its morale value goes up to 9. It also gains all the other benefits for being

Regular, which normally means the crews' chances of scoring a hit improve too.

K IS FOR…

The Canadians, like most armies in World War II, found themselves short of infantry, and needed to preserve their men in Normandy in the advance to the front. They dreamed up a plan to remove the howitzer from 102 of their Priest self-propelled guns, and instead fill the space with infantry, giving them good protection from small arms and shrapnel, if little defence from plunging fire.

This field conversion proved so effective that it was applied to the Canadian Ram tanks from then on. They could fit 12 men in each vehicle, more if pressed, and fitted the recently christened **Kangaroo** with a .30cal machine gun for local defence.

They were first used in Operation *Totalize* in the savage fighting around Caen where they were highly effective.

If a crew member is killed (as described below), the crew loses all skills that crew member had, and the overall crew quality is likewise re-evaluated and might decrease.

USING SKILLS

Skills represent special abilities associated with seasoned crews. Skills are once-per-game bonuses, which is to say a skill can be used only once by that crew during each game. The description of each skill tells you when it can be used, but its use is always optional. Whenever you use a skill, it is a good idea to make a tick mark next to it on your force list, so you'll remember which skills have been used by which crews that game.

If, somehow, opposing players wish to use a skill simultaneously during play, the player whose unit is active must commit to using his skill first. The opposing player can then decide whether to use his skill or not.

Example: The US player gives one of his experienced Sherman crews a fire order, and wishes to use that crew's 'Deadeye' gunner skill to increase his to-hit roll. The Tiger crew that the Sherman is firing at has the 'Quick Reflexes' driver skill, allowing the Tiger to make an escape move as a reaction to being fired at. Since the Sherman is the active unit, the US player must decide whether or not to use the deadeye skill before the German player decides if he wants to use his quick reflexes skill.

GAINING SKILLS

Whenever you pick a vehicle unit to give an order to, you can spend 50 of

that vehicle crew's XP to roll for a new skill on the tables below. Note that the test to gain a skill is made **before** making any order test that is required, before the unit acts upon its order or not, and regardless of whether the unit subsequently makes an action or otherwise.

Reduce the crew's XP total by 50 and roll on the crew member table to see which crew member gains the new skill. Once the crew member has been determined, roll on that crew member's skill table to see which skill he has gained.

If you roll a skill that the crew member already has, you may choose any skill from that crew member's table.

If the crew member you rolled already has all six skills, you may choose either of the other crew to roll a skill for. If all of your crew members have six skills, congratulations – you should be a tank instructor! All crew with all six skills each is the best you can get.

- **1–2:** Driver
- **3–4:** Gunner
- **5–6:** Commander

For simplicity, we have chosen to use the three key roles to derive our skills, but of course in reality some vehicles had more or fewer crew members. For suggestions on how to adapt this system to such vehicles, see *'Unarmed Vehicles and Vehicles with Smaller or Larger Crews'* below.

DRIVER SKILLS

- **Quick Reflexes**: *Play when an attack is declared against the vehicle.* This vehicle may make an escape move, as if it had the Recce ability.
- **Lead Foot**: *Play when you give this vehicle a run or advance order.* The vehicle gets an additional 6" for this move.
- **Crank Head**: *Play when you give this vehicle a run or advance order.* The vehicle may make an additional turn of up to 90 degrees during its move.
- **Eye for Terrain**: *Play when the vehicle ends its move at least 12" away and in cover from all enemy units.* The vehicle goes *hidden,* as if it used the hidden deployment rules.
- **Push Through**: *Play when this vehicle is given a down order die, for any reason.* The die is turned from Down to Advance and the vehicle is given an advance order instead, even if it has already acted that turn. If the vehicle is pinned, take an order test (again), as normal.
- **Bulldozer**: *Play when you give this vehicle a run order.* The vehicle may assault another vehicle without the need to roll an order test, even if it is pinned. Furthermore, it automatically rolls a 6 for the resulting assault.

A US M10 tank destroyer with a great field of fire

GUNNER SKILLS
- **Deadeye**: *Play before you roll to hit.* Add 3 to a single shot's hit modifier. Remember that a result of 1 is a miss, regardless of modifiers.
- **Snap Shooter**: *Play after a target attempts to react.* The target of the shot cannot react to being targeted, including abilities like recce.
- **Hair Trigger**: *Play after this vehicle makes a run move.* The vehicle may shoot after making a run move.
- **Adrenalin Rush**: *Play after you fire this vehicle's main gun.* The main gun may be fired a second time this turn, but must target the same unit as the first shot.
- **Skill Shot**: *Play when you give this vehicle a fire order.* The Pen value of the vehicle's main gun is increased by D3, including HE.
- **Long Shot**: *Play before you select a target for this vehicle's main gun.* The range of the main gun is doubled.

COMMANDER SKILLS
- **Lucky**: *Play when the enemy is about to roll on the damage results chart against this vehicle.* The roll is not made and the vehicle does not suffer any further adverse effects from the hit.
- **Strict Discipline**: *Play before you give this vehicle an order.* This vehicle loses all of its pin counters.
- **Eagle Eye**: *Play when this vehicle is nominated as a target of a ranged attack or assault.* If this vehicle has LOS (line of sight) to the attacker, it may react by shooting at the attacker with any one weapon that has LOS to the attacker.
- **Motivational Leader**: *Play when you give this vehicle an order.* When you use this skill, choose one of your driver or gunner skills that you've already used this game. You may use it one more time this game. If your crew does not have any gunner or driver skills yet, you may choose to re-roll on the Commander skill table instead of receiving this skill.
- **Battle Awareness**: *Play after both sides have deployed. If both players wish to use this ability, roll off to see who goes first.* You may reposition this vehicle up to 12" away from its original position, but still abiding by the deployment rules.
- **Follow Me**!: *Play before you give this vehicle a run or advance order.* Choose a friendly vehicle

within 12" and LOS of this vehicle. If it has a down order, put that die back into the cup.

L IS FOR…

Perhaps considered the most handsome of tanks in World War II – if a tank can be called handsome – was the light reconnaissance tank the **Lynx**, or *Luchs* in German. Developed from the venerable Panzer II, the Lynx was remodelled extensively to give the Panzer divisions a fast, well thought-out scouting vehicle, and it served in small numbers from 1944 to the end of the war in Russia and in France.

Small, but fast, it could attain 32mph on a road, and had 30mm of armour.

UNARMED VEHICLES AND VEHICLES WITH SMALLER OR LARGER CREWS

Some vehicles lack armament, and by logical extension also lack a commander and a gunner. In this case, these vehicles automatically roll on the driver skill table whenever they gain a skill. Since these vehicles cannot destroy enemy units, they only gain XP by surviving battles.

Similarly, if you are rolling for a vehicle that in reality had fewer than three crew, adjust the roll on the charts accordingly. For example, if you know that your light tank had only a crew of two, and the commander was also the gunner, keep in mind that one model is accruing both the commander and gunner skills; if he dies, then the crew lose both type of abilities.

The Italian Ariete Division attacks south of Ruweisat Ridge, by Howard Gerrard © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Campaign 158: El Alamein 1942.

On the other hand, where in reality vehicles had more than three men, we normally just assume it has three as far as the rules are concerned for the sake of simplicity. However, if you prefer to come up with your own set of skills for radio operators, loaders etc. please do so and do share them with us on our forums.

Panzer II

OPTIONAL RULE: FIGHTING CREWS

If you prefer a more narrative and exciting finale for your battles, which gives your crewmen a chance of taking a more active part in the game, you and your opponent may agree to use the following rules for the surviving crew.

When a tank is knocked out and the surviving crew is moved 2D6" towards their own edge of the table as described above, do not remove them. Instead, place the tank's Order dice next to the crew, showing Down, and from then on the crew forms an infantry unit of its own, operating normally. Note that the vehicle still counts as destroyed where that matters from the point of view of victory conditions, and that the surviving crew now counts as a new infantry unit in your army, worth the same as a unit costing 50 points.

The crew are armed with either pistols, rifles or submachine guns, as depicted by the models themselves.

They are a normal infantry unit in all respects, except that they can always move off their own table edge if they want.

As well as being good fun, the advantage of leaving a crew on the table is that you gain a new combat unit that can even capture objectives and the like, but on the other hand you might give the enemy some extra points and, if you are using the crew XP system, you risk losing crew members and their skills along with them.

M8 Scott

M IS FOR…

World War II saw all manner of strange weapons, some of which reached the front line, while others were too extraordinary in concept to have any chance of success. The **Maus**, Panzer Mk VIII, was developed by the Germans in 1943 as the ultimate breakthrough tank. In concept it was breathtaking, a 188-ton monster with frontal armour of 200mm and mantlet armour of 460mm. It

was to be equipped with a 128mm main gun, with a coaxial long 75mm gun. After some consultation, an anti-infantry mine thrower was included, and a machine gun and side ports for close-in defence.

It seems incredible now that such a white elephant could have been seen as feasible, let alone desirable, but the stresses of warfare and a totalitarian regime ensured that good money, time, and energy were wasted on making two nearly complete working models.

Its vast bulk and weight meant that it could not cross bridges, so it was designed to be submersible. Fortunately for the crews, more so than the Allies, both tanks were destroyed by their own side, though the Russians completed a model and it stands today in the wonderful Kubinka tank museum. However, it always remains a great 'what if' for the wargamer.

CREW SURVIVAL

If a vehicle is knocked out, roll a D3 to determine how many of the crew managed to escape. If the vehicle was an armoured vehicle that was knocked out by a Massive Damage result, or in any case if it was a soft skin, apply a -1 modifier to the roll. If the crew is Inexperienced, you roll two dice and pick the lowest result, while if the crew is Veteran you roll two dice and pick the highest result.

After determining how many crewmen have survived, move these survivors 2D6" towards their own edge of the table. At the end of that turn, any crew member that is still alive will escape and is removed from play.

In addition, you must determine *which* crew members survived. Roll a die for each surviving crew member on the crew member table above. If you roll the same crew twice, re-roll one of the dice until you roll another crew member.

KV-1 heavy tank

N IS FOR…

The **Nimrod** was an unusual Hungarian self-propelled gun with an open turret, based on the light Toldi 1 tank chassis. An elegant looking vehicle, it was hoped that it could be both a tank destroyer and an anti-aircraft gun. This 10-ton AFV had a crew of six, light armour and a 40mm Bofors automatic main gun, and normally operated in platoons of two. It served well in the Hungarian armoured divisions, but it was quickly relegated to anti-aircraft use, as the 40mm gun had poor results against the heavy Soviet armour. To help in those circumstances the Hungarians produced a HEAT round that would fit over the muzzle and give the Nimrod some chance against heavy armour.

If a crew member doesn't survive the battle, the crew lose all the skills that crew member possessed. This may also affect the crew's quality, as outlined above. As long as at least one member of the crew survives, the crew keeps any unspent XP it has.

Polish 7TP

OPTIONAL RULE: NAMING AND KILL MARKS

While not universal by any means, often crews did give their vehicles colourful names. In *Bolt Action*, giving your vehicles names serves as a useful reminder of which ones are experienced, as well as personalizing the story of each tank crew's exploits.

A vehicle doesn't get a name until its crew has earned their first skill. Try to think of a name that embodies something about how the tank performed in battle – for example, if it was a tank that somehow survived two direct hits, you might name it 'Double Down'.

Once you've decided on a name, paint it on the side of the vehicle. If that vehicle gets knocked out, you can always add a Roman numeral after it to represent the replacement vehicle.

'Double Down IV' tells quite a story!

Likewise, it's gratifying to paint kill marks on the side of vehicles to commemorate your successes. Using hash marks, or even silhouettes (for the ambitious!), paint them somewhere on the vehicle's hull.

LEGENDARY CREW
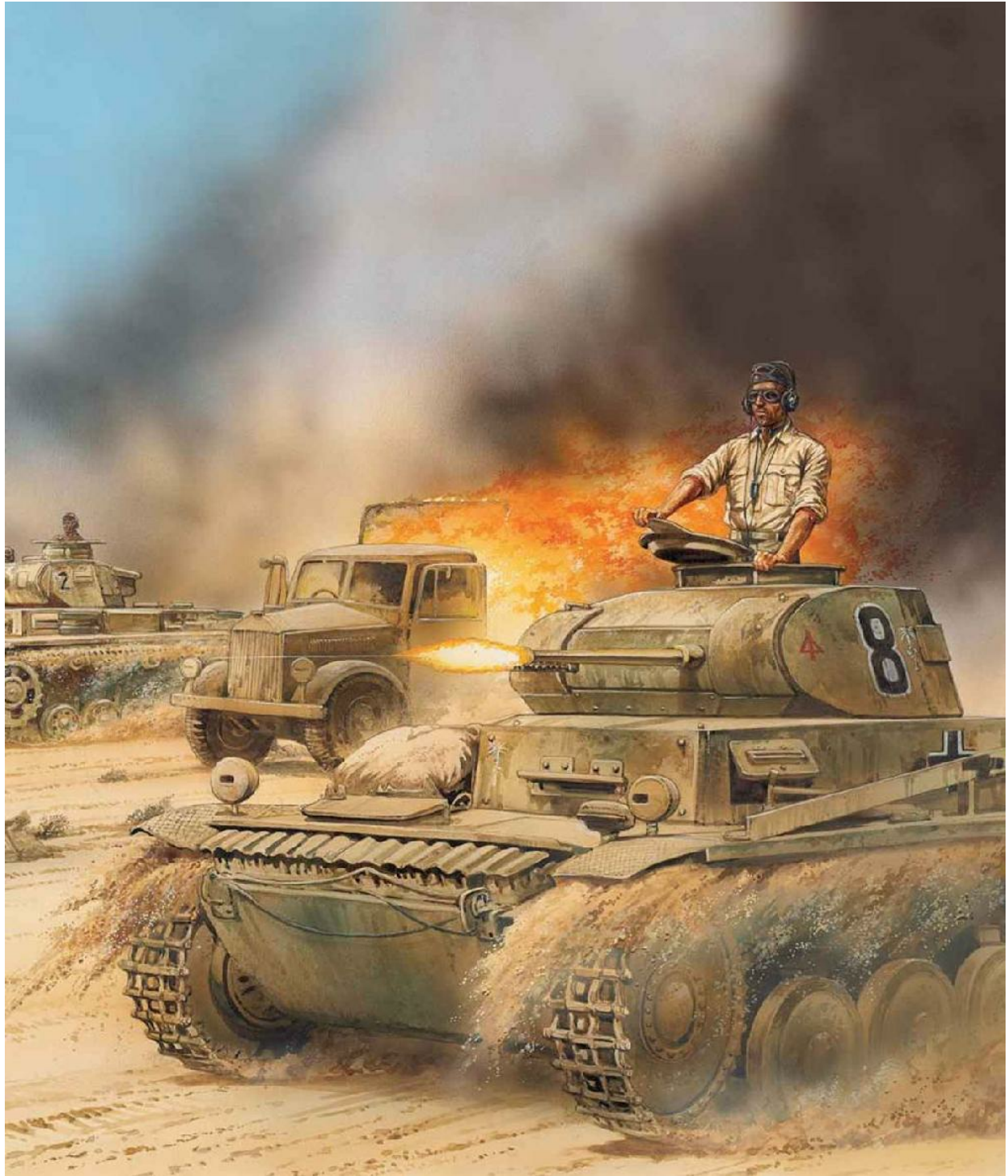
German Panzers at the battle of Totensonntag, by Peter Dennis ©
Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Command 5: Erwin Rommel.

*Taking a tank into battle called for no small amount of personal courage.
Crews had to be strong, vigilant, and work well as a team to succeed. As a*

result, the credit for most armoured victories goes to the unit, rather than the individual commander or gunner. But even in this world there were those who rose above their peers by leadership, talent and sheer grit.

This section describes some exceptional tankers and provides rules for using them in your games.

M24 Chaffee

USING LEGENDARY CREW

These men were exceptional individuals, and as such you can only include one of them in your army. This means that among all of your vehicles, only one of them can contain a legendary crew member.

Of course, the reputation of these heroes precedes them, so they confer a +1 morale bonus to their unit and any friendly unit within 6", much as does a second lieutenant. This bonus is in addition to any officer bonus from which the units already benefit. However, remember that regardless of any bonuses that apply, the maximum morale value a unit can have is 10.

### SKILLS

Skills are once-per-game bonuses that are explained in greater detail in the XP section. Whenever you use a skill, it is a good idea to put a tick mark next to it on your army list so you'll remember that you've already used it.

GERMANY

Germany boasts many of the highest-scoring tank aces of the war. Kurt Knispel, Germany's top tank ace (as well as the top tank ace of the war) had

168 confirmed tank kills, with many more unconfirmed. Compare that record to the top Allied tank ace, Russian Dmitry Lavrinenko with 52 kills, as well as the top US tank ace, Lafayette Pool, with 12 tank kills.
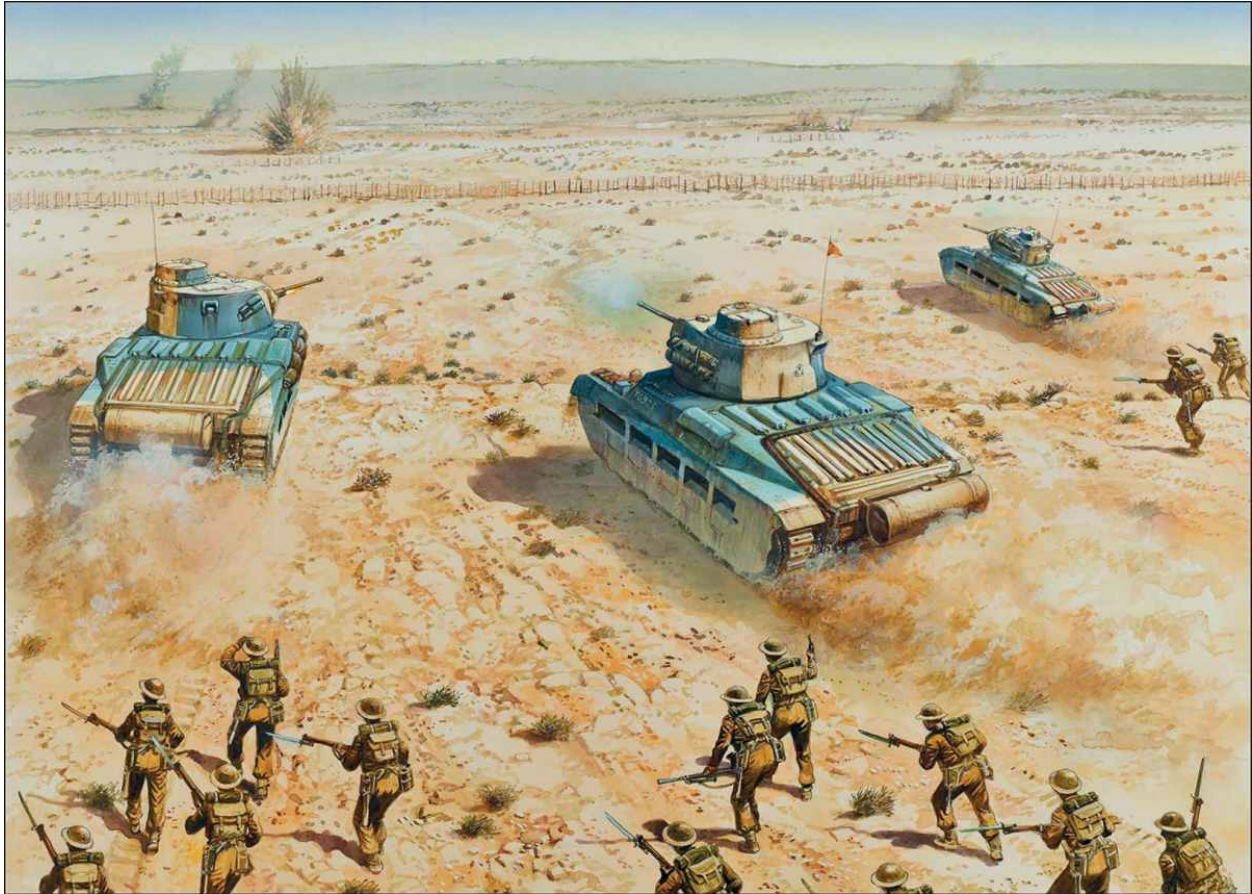
Matilda tanks lead the assault on Fort Nibeiwa, by Peter Dennis ©
Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Command 28: Archibald Wavell.

The reasons for this wide disparity are varied and, like many aspects of the war, debatable. The sheer number of targets available to a German tank commander is worth consideration. The Allies sent over 65,000 T-34s and 40,000 Shermans into battle, let alone all the other kinds of tanks fielded throughout the war. The Germans only made about 25,000 tanks across all different models.

The next point concerns the comparative abilities of the opposing tanks. German tanks were generally considered to be better fighting machines than their Allied counterparts in terms of their powerful guns and thicker armour. These qualities, it is argued, gave the German crews a huge advantage in any encounter, allowing them to achieve high kill counts compared to their

adversaries.

Finally, it is worth remembering the German tank crews had been fighting since the Blitzkreig of 1939, and as such had greater experience (on average) than the Allied crews joining the battle later on.

While the reasons can be argued, the sheer number of German crews that fought their way to legendary status cannot; Germany had the most deadly tank crews of the war.

KURT KNISPEL

'The last thing a soldier wants is a fair fight.' – Kurt Knispel With 168 confirmed kills, Kurt Knispel holds the crown as World War II's top tank ace. He was well known for camouflaging his tank and attacking the enemy from great distances, even scoring a kill on a T-34 at 3,000 meters (nearly two miles).

An unorthodox soldier, he sported long hair, a goatee and even a tattoo. While he was highly decorated for his exploits, his advancement through the ranks was slower than it should have been due to frequent conflicts with Nazi authorities.

Knispel wasn't concerned with medals or awards. Whenever there were conflicting accounts of enemy kills, he was known for stepping back and offering the credit to other crews. As a result, he never received the coveted Knight's Cross, even though most of his fellow aces did.

O FOR…

By 1943 the Germans knew they were losing control of the skies. They developed many anti-aircraft vehicles, but perhaps the best of them was the **Ostwind** (east wind), a 37mm automatic gun based on the proven Panzer IV hull. The main gun was fitted into a snug hexagonal turret, nicknamed the Keksdose (biscuit tin), and it retained the hull machine gun. Its crew of five had a powerful machine and a good gun with effective hitting power against all ground attack planes, as well as good striking power at ground targets. In 1945 there were plans to build another 100 models with twin 37mm guns, which would have undoubtedly made a truly nasty weapon system, but ultimately fewer than 50 were built.

Tiger I Ausf H

A lone King Tiger prepares to face the Soviet hordes

Knispel was a soldier's soldier, a rebel, and a brilliant tank commander. On his journey to becoming the war's top tank ace, he ruffled many feathers with his command – only his unparalleled track record kept him out of military prison.

KNISPEL'S TIGER I

Though Knispel fought in just about every tank model fielded by the Germans, he is presented here in the Tiger I, as that is the tank he would score most of his victories in.

Cost: 519pts
Quality: Veteran
Weapons: One turret-mounted super-heavy anti-tank gun with coaxial MMG and forward-facing hull-mounted MMG.
Damage Value: 10+ (heavy tank)
Special Rules:
- **Camouflage**: While this tank has cover from a unit shooting at it, that unit must pass an order test in order to fire. If the shooting unit already has to take an order test to fire (because it had pin counters, etc.), then it suffers an additional –1 modifier to its morale for that test, rather than taking a separate one.
- **Long Range**: Knispel could hit targets at long range with ease. As a result, he does not get the normal –1 hit modifier for shooting at long range targets.

Skills:
- Deadeye
- Battle Awareness
- Skill Shot
- Snap Shooter

KNISPEL'S FATE

During a battle near the village of Woztitz, Czechoslovakia on 28 April 1945, Knispel was fatally wounded and died in a field hospital in nearby Urbau. The war would end only ten days later.

He was buried in a local cemetery, though the exact location remained a mystery until April 2013, when Czech officials were able to verify his remains using his dog tags and a tattoo on his neck.

MICHAEL WITTMANN

'He was a fighter in every way, he lived and breathed action.' – SS-Obergruppenfuhrer Josef Dietrich

Known as 'The Black Baron', Michael Wittmann (pronounced 'Vittmann') was a model soldier, courageous fighter and widely considered to be the best tank commander of World War II.

This is s a bold statement to make, especially given the fact that his kill count is lower than Kurt Knispel's – 138 to Knispel's 168. But kill counts only tell part of the story.

Wittmann's deadly abilities are perhaps best illustrated by his famous ambush of parts of the British 7th Armoured Division during the battle of Villers-Bocage on 13 June 1944. Hiding in cover with four tanks from his unit – one of which was damaged – he saw the British advancing into the area much sooner than he had anticipated.

He had no time for a planned assault, so he fearlessly charged into the town on his own. He cut a swathe of destruction through the British lines,

leaving a staggering number of British tanks, self-propelled guns, anti-tank guns, and personnel carriers as smoking hulks in his wake.

When he finally reached the town, his tank was immobilized by a hit to the tracks, but he still managed to rack up a few more kills before he and his crew ran the 16 kilometers back to base, where he promptly acquired a new tank and went back out to the front.

German big cats on the prowl

During this battle, in the span of 15 minutes he had knocked out 14 enemy tanks, 15 personnel carriers and two anti-tank guns. For his efforts, Wittmann was promoted to SS-Hauptsturmführer (captain) and awarded swords to his Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross by Adolf Hitler himself.

WITTMANN'S TIGER I

Cost: 519pts
Quality: Veteran
Weapons: One turret-mounted super-heavy anti-tank gun with coaxial MMG and forward facing hull-mounted MMG.
Damage Value: 10+ (heavy tank)
Special Rules:
- **Fierce Ambush**: Whenever this unit fires from Ambush, it may fire
- its main gun twice, either against the same target or two different targets.

Skills:
- Lucky
- Hair Trigger
- Eye for Terrain
- Battle Awareness

WITTMANN'S FATE

Michael Wittmann was killed in action on 8 August 1944, during a German counter-attack that was trying to retake the high ground outside the French town of Saint-Aignan-de-Cramesnil. Oddly enough, that is about the only part of the story that everyone can agree on – just *how* he was killed, or by whom, remains the subject of much debate.

Some say it was a killing blow from a tank of the British Northamptonshire Yeomanry, others say it was the Sherbrooke Fusiliers Regiment of the 2nd Canadian Armoured Brigade. The Nazi propagandists even put forth the theory that his tank was destroyed by fighter-bombers, though this has been widely discredited. There are many more theories, too many to list here.

While it is almost impossible to determine without a doubt what really happened that day, few can argue that Michael Wittmann was a truly legendary tank commander.

His remains were discovered in an unmarked grave in 1983, and reinterred with honours at the German War Cemetery of La Cambe in France.

OTTO CARIUS

Otto Carius, one of Germany's most famous tank commanders of the war, was rejected from the draft twice for being underweight. He was finally drafted in 1940, and by 1943 he was commanding the 2nd Company of the Schwere Panzer-Abteilung 502 (the 502nd Heavy Panzer Battalion.) Commanding a Tiger I, and later a Jagdtiger, he would go on to destroy more than 150 enemy tanks.

He was severely wounded on 24 July 1944. He had taken up the practice of reconnoitring ahead of his tanks on a motorcycle, and while this led to many of his successes, on this day it resulted in his suffering bullet wounds in his leg, arm, back and neck.

Despite these grievous injuries, he would bounce back, returning to the front at the helm of a Jagdtiger tank destroyer. He would command this tank destroyer until the end of the war.

Like many accomplished tank commanders, he was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross, though he would only wear it while at the front. He claimed it helped him get his requests filled faster!

CARIUS' JAGDTIGER

Cost: 717pts
Quality: Veteran

Weapons: One casement-mounted forward-facing super-heavy anti-tank gun and one forward-facing hull-mounted MMG.

Damage Value: 11+ (super-heavy tank)

Special Rules:

- **Grit**: This unit ignores the first pin marker it receives in the game; simply discard it.
- **Decisive Advance**: When this unit executes a run order, it may fire its main gun.
- **128mm PaK 44**: The main gun does not suffer the –1 penetration penalty when shooting at targets over half range. It counts its full +7 at all ranges.

Skills:

- Strict Discipline
- Eagle Eye
- Adrenaline Rush
- Crank Head

CARIUS' FATE

Otto Carius was the commander of a Jagdtiger battalion in 1945 when the war ended and his unit surrendered to the US Army on 15 April of that year. He lives on at the time of writing. Watchful visitors to the Herschweiler-Pettersheim municipality of Germany might find a pharmacy with the odd name of Tiger Apotheke. One of Germany's most decorated and successful tank commanders still works at the pharmacy he founded just after the war, named after the tanks he fought in.

ERNST BARKMANN

In the early stages of the war, Ernst Barkmann distinguished himself as an infantryman in the Waffen-SS. He fought in Poland, France and Russia. Later, after recovering from serious wounds, he asked to be transferred to the newly formed armoured SS units. He started as a gunner in Panzer IIIs of the *Das Reich* SS Panzer Division. His career advanced quickly and soon he was promoted to tank commander. Later he was given command of one of the new Panthers at the battle of Kursk.

It was as a Panther commander that Ernst Barkmann achieved the status of tank ace with an impressive number of victories against the Soviets. He earned the Iron Cross whilst fighting on the Eastern front. When the Allies invaded Normandy he was transferred to the Western Front. His experienced Panther crew scored many victories against their opponents during the German retreat through the Falaise Pocket. Barkmann's heroic rearguard actions gained him the Knight's Cross.

Later he took part in the Battle of the Bulge. He was involved in ferocious clashes with American tanks. His Panther was even rammed by a Sherman and had to retreat with a damaged engine and jammed turret. Even in such

extreme conditions, Barkmann made it back to the German lines.

Panther Ausf A

BARKMANN'S PANTHER

Cost: 496pts
Quality: Veteran
Weapons: One turret-mounted super-heavy anti-tank gun with coaxial MMG and forward-facing hull-mounted MMG.
Damage Value: 9+ (medium tank)
Special Rules:
- **Decisive Advance**: When this unit executes a run order, it may fire its main gun.
- **Exceptional Leadership**: After this unit executes a run order, choose a friendly unit within 6" that has an order die next to it. Place its order die back in the cup.
- The Panther's heavy frontal armour means that against all shots hitting the front of the vehicle it counts its damage value as 10+.

Skills:
- Motivational Leader
- Deadeye
- Push Through
- Quick Reflexes

BARKMANN'S FATE

Ernst Barkmann fought his last actions against the Soviets in the defence of Germany. After his tank was finally immobilized, Barkmann and his crew destroyed their own vehicle and made their way to the British zone to offer their surrender to the Western Allies.

 After the war, Barkmann lived in the town of Kisdorf, where he held both the jobs of fire chief and later town mayor – he was obviously a capable leader in peace as well as war. He passed away in 2009.

THE UNITED STATES

When it entered service in late 1942, the US-built M4 Sherman was the best all-round tank available to the Allies. In the Western Desert the Sherman gave the Allies the weapon they needed to confront the Germans on an equal footing, while in the Pacific it was far superior in every respect to the tanks used by the Japanese. By 1944 the Sherman's armour and firepower were barely up to the standards set by the latest Panzers, but the Sherman soldiered on with incremental improvements right up until the end of the war.

The American practice was to send the most successful crews back home to train recruits and beat the drum for the war effort. This was generally true of most of the technical aspects of war: flight crews, ship crews and tank crews. Exceptional ground-pounders were usually rewarded with more missions!

The legendary tankers who shone through generally did not do so by kill count alone, but with exemplary leadership, steadiness under fire, and sometimes by sheer bravado.

LAFAYETTE G. POOL

'The men would draw straws to see who would lead the spearhead the next day. Pool would just say "I'm leading this time" and stand there grinning while we cussed him out.' – Corporal Wilbert 'Baby' Richards, Pool's driver

Born in Texas in 1919, Lafayette Pool tried to enlist in the Navy, though an eye injury kept him out. He went back to school, and even started college and pursued an engineering degree, but the call to serve was too strong. He left college and enlisted in the summer of 1941, months before the rest of the country would be swept up in the post-Pearl Harbor furore.

Pool was a 6'3" Texan who believed that the best way to win the war was to kill as many Germans as possible, and that his crew were the ones to do it. He always held himself and his crew to very high standards, wanting things done his way.

'His way' was hard to argue with, since throughout the course of the war he managed to destroy 12 enemy tanks, as well as 246 other armoured vehicles. In this time he had three tanks shot out from under him – each one named 'In the Mood' and each one with the same crew.

POOL'S SHERMAN, 'IN THE MOOD'

Cost: 304pts

Quality: Veteran
Weapons: One gyro-stabilized turret-mounted medium anti-tank gun with coaxial MMG and one forward-facing hull-mounted MMG.
Damage Value: 9+ (medium tank)
Special Rules:
- **Lead from the Front**: While Pool's Sherman is further from your table edge than any of your other units, all of your units that can draw LOS to his Sherman get +1 morale.
- **Rapid Fire**: When you give this unit a fire order, it may fire its main gun twice, either against the same target or two different targets.
- **HE**: instead of causing D2 HE hits, an HE shell causes D6 hits.

Skills:
- Strict Discipline
- Quick Reflexes
- Hair Trigger
- Skill Shot

P IS FOR…

If Germany dabbled with many exotic weapons, then it is only understandable that the Germans were not alone. In 1937 a British private individual had a notion that he thought would revolutionize the battlefield. He made a prototype of a vehicle that would enable the infantry to bring automatic fire on to the enemy whilst keeping its body in cover. Thus was born the **Praying Mantis**, an extraordinarily unorthodox machine that married a universal carrier with a long extendable steel box that could be raised automatically with a boom, and engage the enemy with machine gun fire.

This inventive idea was tried out with two prototypes. The two crew had to lie down in the hull, and the boom was raised to a firing position, over a hedge, for instance, and the gunner would use periscopes to aim his twin Bren guns at the enemy, sighting and firing them individually or together. To make magazine changes easier, the guns were mounted upside-down. The idea did not catch on.

POOL'S FATE

Pool's legendary luck ran out on 19 September 1944, while fighting in the town of Munsterbusch, Germany. He and his crew were due to rotate home in just a few days for a war bond drive, so his commanding officer put him on the flank, which was considered safer.

After spotting an anti-tank gun hidden in a house, he gave the order to fire, but his tank's main gun jammed. The enemy shell hit right in the turret, knocking Pool off and destroying most of his right leg. He gave himself a shot of morphine and promptly attempted to cut his own leg off with his pocketknife before the medics arrived and stretchered him away.

His career did not end, though. He remained in the service and taught tank mechanics, eventually retiring from the army in 1960. He went back to

school and worked the rest of his days as a pastor. He died in his sleep on 30 May 1991, and was laid to rest in the military cemetery in Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

CREIGHTON ABRAMS

'I'm supposed to be the best tank commander in the army, but I have one peer: Abe Abrams. He's the world champion.' – General George Patton

Few men have had tanks named after them – Pershing, Sherman, Grant are all notable examples. During World War II, another man would make a name for himself that will be forever attached to the history of US armoured warfare: Creighton Abrams.

When he graduated from West Point in 1936, he went into the army as a cavalry officer, back when the cavalry still meant riding actual horses into battle.

He then moved into the armoured division in the early years of that branch's service, and would later help mould the future of armoured warfare in the US as the head of the department of tactics at the armour school in Fort Knox.

He would spend much of the war at the front of the lines with the 4th Armoured Division. Given the technical shortcomings of the Sherman tank, he was able to use its superior speed and reliability to great success against forces that were vastly superior on paper. He also led one of the units that busted through the German lines at Bastogne and reconnected with the encircled US forces there.

Uncle Sam's armoured divisions roll into action

He was remembered by many who served with him as a brilliant commander and compassionate individual. He really took an interest in the lives of the soldiers around him, and as a result they fought like hell for him.

ABRAM'S SHERMAN, 'THUNDERBOLT'

Cost: 314pts

Quality: Veteran

Weapons: One gyro-stabilized turret-mounted medium anti-tank gun with coaxial MMG and one forward-facing hull-mounted MMG.

Damage Value: 9+ (medium tank)

Special Rules:

- **Colonel**: Abrams's 'legendary' morale bonus is +4 instead of the normal +1.
- **Decisive**: At the beginning of each turn, if this unit is already on Ambush from a previous turn, you may put the first Order die drawn back into the cup and draw again. The ambush orders represent this unit watching the battleground and directing other units as needed.
- **HE**: instead of causing D2 HE hits, an HE shell causes D6 hits.

Skills:

- Eagle Eye
- Follow Me
- Lead Foot
- Quick Reflexes

Sherman M4A3 75mm

ABRAM'S FATE

Creighton Abrams had a career befitting his legendary abilities. He would begin the war as a captain in charge of a tank battalion. In just three months he would rise to the rank of lieutenant colonel, and he would be a colonel by the war's end.

He went on to fight in Korea and Vietnam, where he would succeed General Westmoreland as the head of the Military Assistance Command in Vietnam (MACV). He would finish his illustrious career in 1974 as the Chief of Staff of the United States Army, a fitting finale for a gallant warrior.

He died on 4 September 1974 of complications from lung cancer. He was buried at the Arlington National Cemetery. His loving wife Julia would join him there 29 years later.

BRITAIN AND COMMONWEALTH

Information about the feats of British tank crews is harder to come by than for their enemies. The reason sits squarely in the realm of British propriety – it was simply not acceptable to brag about one's accomplishments! It certainly happened from time to time, but the societal norms of English culture would ensure that not many stories of exceptional armoured action

would surface.

The British people were (and are) a fierce lot, having been under Nazi guns for years before the Russians and Americans became involved. 'Show respect to our hosts', a US Army pamphlet for incoming servicemen said, 'the average English woman or child has seen more combat than you have'.

GEORGE 'KILLER' DRING
Sergeant Dring had a quality ascribed to many able warriors: a great love for and understanding of terrain. His confidence riding atop his tank was born from a childhood of riding horses – exploring his native Lincolnshire, hunting and participating in local steeplechases.

It was a childhood that served him well as a grown man. He began his military career on horseback, joining the Sherwood Rangers in 1935 as a farrier. He went with them to Palestine in 1939, still riding horses. In 1941 the unit converted to armour and Dring got his first taste of tank warfare in North Africa.

While there, he became known for his practice of leaving his tank to climb nearby berms to get a better look at the enemy. He called these quick reconnaissance missions 'Shuftis' (pronounced 'shuf-tee') from the Arab word meaning 'a quick look'.

While he was not the only one to employ such tactics, his shuftis were a good example of his battlefield ethic – always at the front, always aware.

He got his introduction to the European theatre on 6 June 1944, and on that day destroyed so many enemy tanks he earned the nickname 'Killer'. He would fight through the rest of the war, even after losing three fingers during one of his 'shuftis'.

A British Cromwell cruises into town

GEORGE DRING'S SHERMAN, 'AKILLA'

He had originally named his tank 'Achilles' with no small amount of gallows humour. After his actions on D-Day, he got the nickname 'Killer' and his tank's name changed to 'Akilla'.

Cost: 269pts
Quality: Veteran
Weapons: One turret-mounted medium anti-tank gun with coaxial MMG and one forward-facing hull-mounted MMG.
Damage Value: 9+ (medium tank)
Special Rules:
- **Shufti**: You may give this unit a Down order to represent Dring going on a shufti. When you do, the tank may not do anything that turn, as normal. Place a crew model next to the tank model to represent Dring. The next time you give this unit an order, the order is automatically successful, no order test needed. In addition, roll a die for each of Dring's Skills that have been used previously during this game – on a 4+ that Skill 'resets' and can be used again, as if it had not been used yet.
- **HE**: instead of causing D2 HE hits, an HE shell causes D6 hits.

Skills:
- Eye for the Terrain
- Lucky
- Eagle Eye

- Snap Shooter

'KILLER' DRING'S FATE

Dring would survive the war with mental scars to go along with his physical ones. He didn't like to talk much about his war experiences, and often had problems walking down a country road at night or watching a war film.

He worked with POWs after the war, learning German and French. He would finish his career years working for the UK's immigration service.

He lived to the ripe old age of 85, a tanker until the end. Just a year before his death, he was invited to the naming ceremony of a Sherman that the owner had decided to paint up as the Akilla. Probably calling on the experience of decades before, Killer Dring started climbing right up the front armour to the turret, just like he had done in the old days. In consternation, members of the Sherwood Rangers who had gathered around to watch rushed up to help the aged soldier as he mounted the turret one last time.

George 'Killer' Dring died on 12 January 2003.

SYDNEY VALPY RADLEY-WALTERS, 'RAD'

Rad was born in Gaspé, Canada in 1920. By 1940 he had graduated from college and was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Sherbrooke Fusiliers Regiment.

In those days it was an infantry regiment, so Rad began his career as an infantry officer. Working with men in such close quarters, Rad learned many lessons in leadership. Chiefly, he maintained that a good leader knows his men, and honestly cares for their welfare. These traits would thrust him into distinction later in the war.

RAD VS. THE BLACK BARON

Perhaps no conflict in all of history has spawned more debate than World War II. Given the enormous complexity of the war, coupled with the more-often-than-not conflicting eyewitness accounts of the battles, it is no surprise that some momentous occasions remain controversial even today.

One such event occurred on 8 August 1944, near the French town of Saint-Aignan-de-Cramesnil. It was here that Michael Wittmann's tank, part of the 12th SS Panzer Division, clashed with opposing tanks from the 1st Northamptonshire Yeomanry and Rad's Sherbrooke Fusiliers Regiment. In the ensuing ambush, Wittmann's tank was hit by a shot that penetrated its upper hull, igniting the ammunition and blasting the turret off. The crew compartment was engulfed in flames and none of the crewmen survived.

For decades it was believed the shot that killed the German tank ace came from a Sherman

Firefly gunned by Trooper Joe Ekins. There were many other claims, though they had been generally discredited when battle records were scrutinized.

There is, however, a compelling case for giving the credit to Rad's Fusiliers. Some say that they were closer to Wittmann's unit than the Yeomanry, they had better cover, and their position lines up more closely with the damage suffered by Wittmann's tank.

There is simply no way to say with certainty who fired the shot. Those who took part in the action were generally quoted as saying something to the effect of 'it doesn't matter who got him, it only matters that somebody did'. Rad had nothing but respect for Wittmann, and indeed, all his German foes in the field. He would later visit Germany several times, even going game hunting with men he was once trained to kill.

In 1942, his unit, by now re-organized into an armoured regiment, was off to England. He took part in the D-Day landings, and soon scored his first tank kill: a Panzer IV. It would be the first of 18 confirmed tank kills, making Rad the top tank ace of the Western Allies.

Rad was a fierce and sometimes stern commander. He was known for his concern for his troops and his ability to improvise on the battlefield. He was one of the first to 'up-armour' his tanks, while placing sandbags on the floor of the crew compartment to better protect his men.

It is no coincidence that leaders who genuinely cared about their men tended to excel. Warriors are quick to respond to this type of respect. Leaders like Rad proved this in combat.

RAD'S SHERMAN, 'CARIBOU'

Cost: 304pts
Quality: Veteran
Weapons: One turret-mounted medium anti-tank gun with coaxial MMG and forward-facing hull-mounted MMG.
Damage Value: 9+ (medium tank)
Special Rules:
• **Major**: Rad's 'legendary' morale bonus is +4 instead of the normal +1.
• **Exceptional Leadership**: After this unit executes a run order, choose a friendly unit within 6" that has an order die next to it. Place its order die back in the cup.
• **HE**: instead of causing D2 HE hits, an HE shell causes D6 hits.
Skills:
• Strict Discipline
• Motivational Leader
• Follow Me!
• Hair Trigger

RAD'S FATE

Rad went on to command the Sherbrooke Fusiliers. He would later continue to mould future Canadian soldiers as the commandant of the Royal Canadian Armoured School. Later he became the director-general of training and

recruiting for the whole Canadian Army. He ended his active military service as a brigadier general.

Following his retirement, Rad spent eight years in the reserves with the 8th Canadian Hussars (Princess Louise's) and as commandant of the Royal Canadian Armoured Corps.

At the time of writing he is 93 and still lives in Ontario, in an apartment that overlooks the armoury where his military career began. His house is filled with mementoes of his service, including the torn-up bits of the tank that was shot out from under him on D-Day!

SOVIET UNION

On 22 June 1941 the Germans launched Operation *Barbarossa* – the invasion of Russia. It remains the single largest invasion in military history. Three million German soldiers marched across the border accompanied by over 4,000 tanks.

The Russians were taken by surprise. They had over 15,000 tanks, but few were a match for the German Panzers.

The operation would ultimately fail in its objectives despite initial successes. Hitler's army was stopped before taking Moscow and was obliged to wait as 'General Winter' once again defended his homeland. Thousands of German troops died of exposure in the icy wilderness.

Though the Russians would eventually prevail over their invaders, the German attack left the country severely wounded. Millions of soldiers and citizens were killed. Forged in this crucible were the Russian tankers. Their enemy outmatched them even though they were fewer in number. They would prove to be fierce defenders of their homeland, racking up kills that would rival many of the German aces.

Q IS FOR...

The Infantry Tank Mark II Matilda was a heavy tank developed by the British just before the start of the war. It fought in the battles in France where it acquitted itself well, even throwing back the German advance and giving them a scare. It was in the Western Desert, however, that the Matilda proved the excellence of its design, earning it the fond nickname '**Queen of the Desert**'.

The Matilda sported a good combination of gun and armour, if a rather lumbering speed performance. Its 2-pounder 40mm gun was accurate and hard-hitting, if short of a high explosive shell. The armour was simply invulnerable to standard German or Italian antitank and tank guns;

DMITRY LAVRINENKO

Lavrinenko came from a modest background. He was a schoolteacher and a bank teller before joining the Russian Army in 1934. By the time Russia was invaded, he was a combat veteran, having taken part in the Soviet occupation of Bessarabia in northern Romania.

He was an aggressive T-34 commander, preferring to close with the enemy quickly and using the element of surprise to gain the advantage. He also had a considerable understanding of his tank's capabilities, such as its mobility and the protective value of its sloped armour.

He would eventually obtain 52 confirmed tank kills. This pales in comparison to those of his German foes until one considers that he was able to do this in only 2½ months. Had he survived for the rest of the war, there is little doubt that number would have been far greater.

Even though his war ended early, he remains the Allied Tank Ace of Aces.

T-34/76

LAVRINENKO'S T-34

His T-34 was painted white to make it nearly invisible against the Russian snow.
Cost: 289pts

Quality: Veteran
Weapons: One turret-mounted medium anti-tank gun with coaxial MMG and forward-facing hull mounted MMG.
Damage Value: 9+ (medium tank)
Special Rules:
- **Mobility**: When you give this unit a run order, it may fire its main gun after the move.
- **Rapid Fire**: When you give this unit a fire order, it may fire its main gun twice, either against the same target or two different targets.

Skills:
- Quick Reflexes
- Lead Foot
- Crank Head
- Hair Trigger

LAVRINENKO'S FATE

On 18 December 1941, Lavrinenko was killed during a battle near the village of Goriuny near Moscow. It wasn't an enemy tank that claimed the kill; a lowly landmine would spell his demise.

Before he died he had been awarded the Order of Lenin for his valiant defence of his country. He was recommended for the title of Hero of the Soviet Union shortly after his death, but he would not receive that honour until 1990, when he was finally officially recognized for his skill and sacrifice to Russia.

He is buried in the village of Denkovo. A nearby school was named after him.

ZINOVIY KOLOBANOV

'I'm often asked – weren't you afraid? But I'm a military man, and my orders were to fight to the death. That means that the enemy can only go through my position after I'm dead.' – Zinoviy Kolobanov

Born in December 1912 in the small Russian village of Arefino, Senior Lieutenant Kolobanov is something of an enigmatic figure. He is widely considered to be the second-highest scoring Russian tanker of the war, with 23 confirmed tank kills, but little else is known about him.

Twenty-two of his kills would be during a single engagement on 20 August 1941, during the Battle of Krasnogvardeysk (part of the Battle of Leningrad). The vanguard of the German 8th, 6th and 1st Panzer divisions were approaching the town, and Kolobanov's small unit of five KV-1s was the only force standing in their way.

As the Germans moved up, the lead tank was struck by a round from one of the KV-1s. Kolobanov had a stroke of luck; the Germans thought it was an

anti-tank mine at first and did not realize they were under attack. Kolobanov took advantage of the confusion and knocked out the enemy tank at the rear of the column, boxing the rest in. It was a textbook ambush executed to deadly effect.

KV-2 self-propelled gun

It wasn't long before the Germans realized they had been ambushed. They reacted by driving off the road and into the mud. The mud slowed them down and made them easy targets. Kolobanov took out 21 more Panzers before he ran out of ammunition. After the battle, his crew counted 135 hits on his KV-1, none of which had penetrated its thick armour.

For his actions that day, Lieutenant Kolobanov was awarded the Order of the Red Banner.

KOLOBANOV'S KV-1

Cost: 465pts
Quality: Veteran
Weapons: One turret-mounted medium anti-tank gun with coaxial MMG, one turret-mounted rear-facing MMG, and one forward-facing hull-mounted MMG.
Damage Value: 10+ (heavy tank)
Special Rules:
- **Fierce Ambush**: Whenever this unit fires from Ambush, it may fire its main gun twice, either against the same target or two different targets.
- **Slow**
- **Armoured all round**: no modifiers apply for penetration when shooting at the side, rear or from above. All shots count the full armour value.
Skills:
- Deadeye

- Skill Shot
- Snap Shooter
- Lucky

Winter War!

KOLOBANOV'S FATE

After the war, he served with the Soviet occupation zone in East Germany, but was convicted of fraternizing with the enemy when one of his subordinates fled to the western side of Germany. Instead of being discharged, he was moved to the reserves, where he retired as a lieutenant colonel. Not content with the doldrums of inactivity, he got a job at the Minsk Auto Works, where he finally retired some years later.

He died in Minsk at the age of 82. In 1980, the villagers of Noviy Uchkhoz placed a monument at the site where Kolobanov's tank was dug in. A KV-1 could not be found, so an IS-2 heavy tank was used instead.

In 2006 a monument to this great Russian hero was unveiled in Minsk.

R IS FOR…

Canada is sometimes overlooked as a major contributor to the Allied victory, which is unfair on many levels. The Canadians sent huge amounts of troops to fight and helped produce in enormous quantities the machines and supplies to ensure victory. One such example is the **Ram** tank. The Commonwealth needed tanks, and fast. Rather than wait for the Sherman, Canada took the M3 Lee chassis from the USA and developed their own turret and gun. By June 1941 they had built the first models and by the end of the war had produced a staggering 2,000 tanks, none of which saw service, but were of enormous use in training. The tank had a crew of five, a 6pdr gun and up to three machine guns, as well as a useful 25mph speed. The chassis did however equip the excellent Sexton self-propelled gun, the infantry carrying Kangaroo and a small number of flame-throwing tanks.

FRANCE

The Battle of France was perhaps over too quickly for French crewmen to develop the sort of skills seen amongst German tankers of the late war. However brief that fighting might have been, the French showed no lack of courage in individual actions, often achieving localized successes in encounters against Hitler's Panzers. Once such occasion took place outside the village of Stonne in May 1940.

CAPTAIN PIERRE BILLOTTE

The son of French general Gaston Billotte, Pierre Billotte was in command of a Char B1 bis heavy tank during the heavy fighting around the town of Stonne. This was a vital strategic point on the road to Sedan. The town had already changed hands several times in earlier fighting when, on the 16th May 1940, Billotte's company advanced against what were now German held positions. Despite coming under heavy fire from enemy guns and tanks, Billotte's tank, nicknamed the 'Eure', broke through the opposing defences. In the action that followed he destroyed two Panzer IVs, eleven Panzer IIIs and two guns. The Char B's thick armour shrugged off 140 hits from enemy guns and tanks without any of them penetrating.

BILLOTTE'S CHAR B1 BIS

Cost: 314pts
Quality: Veteran
Weapons: One turret-mounted light anti-tank gun with coaxial MMG, one forward-facing hull-mounted light howitzer, and one forward facing hull-mounted MMG.
Damage Value: 9+ (medium tank)
Special Rules:
- **Exceptional Commander**: the normal one-man turret rule does not apply to this tank. It is not necessary to make an Order test when issuing an Advance order if the tank if not pinned.
- **Slow**
- **Armoured all round**: no modifiers apply for penetration when shooting at the side, rear or from above. All shots count the full armour value.

Skills:
- Push Through
- Adrenaline Rush
- Strict Discipline
- Lucky

S IS FOR…

Despite the up-armouring of all of their main battle tanks, the Germans still found their Panzer III and Panzer IV tanks to be vulnerable on their flanks, particularly to the massed firepower of Soviet anti-tank rifle squads. This archaic weapon was still used in huge numbers, and enough penetrating hits to the sides meant that something had to be done.

By placing simple large flat plates of steel, 4mm thick, hung suspended from iron stanchions, the Panzer crews gained a very good measure of protection, disrupting enemy anti-tank rifle bullets and light anti-tank rounds. Much of the work was done in the field, so many varying designs appear in photographs. These thin aprons of armour were called ***schürzen***.

Other vehicles that used *schürzen* widely are StuGs, and there were smaller versions on Panthers, Jagdpanthers and Hetzers. They were also of some effect in combating bazooka and PIAT rounds.

BILLOTTE'S FATE

Billotte was imprisoned by the Germans after the fall of France, but escaped to England where he became de Gaulle's Chief of Staff. Afterwards he took command of the 10th Division of the Free French in Europe. Following the war he went on to serve in various staff roles in the French Army, becoming the French military representative to the UN. Subsequently he enjoyed a successful political career as – amongst other things – minister of national defence. He died in 1992 aged 86.

Char B1 bis

GREAT TANK BATTLES OF WORLD WAR II

Tank skirmish at Guébling, by Steve Noon © Osprey Publishing Ltd.
Taken from Campaign 242: Metz 1944.

THE BATTLE OF ARRAS

On 21 May 1940, during the Battle of France, the city of Arras was surrounded by Rommel's 7th Panzer Division. In an effort to halt the German advance, the British devised a counterattack. It was a bold move against numerically superior forces, but would it work?

In the spring of 1940, the Battle of France was not looking good for the Allies. The British Expeditionary Force (BEF) had been fighting alongside the French Army, but the speed and surprise of the German invasion was having the intended effect, as the French defence was crumbling and the Allies were being pushed back to the Channel.

The French had a massive armoured contingent, but it was spread thinly throughout the country, and not concentrated enough to pose a serious threat. French army doctrine saw armour in a support role, with infantry and artillery taking centre stage in any conflict. While not a completely unfounded notion, the failure to see the potential of an armoured brigade would be a mistake of which the Germans were happy to take advantage.

In May, the Germans surprised the Allies even further by breaking through their lines and threatening Boulogne and Calais, a move that would cut off the BEF from the French army, leaving it surrounded and vulnerable. The commander-in-chief of the BEF, Lord Gort, devised a counter-attack that would delay the German advance and give the BEF enough time to link back up with the rest of the Allied forces. He placed Major General Harold Franklyn in charge of the attack, and gave him two divisions including 74 British tanks and 60 French tanks. The group was given a codename worthy of a 1980s action film: 'Frankforce'.

On 21 May, the British launched their counter-attack. It turned out to be well timed, as the Germans were planning their own attack to be launched only an hour later. Seventy-four MKI and MKII Matildas rolled into battle, the Mk1s armed only with machine guns. The Battle of Arras had commenced.

OPPOSING FORCES

This scenario is between the Germans and the British.

The German armoured platoons should be taken from the **1940 – The**

Battle of France selector in the *Armies of Germany* book.

The British armoured platoons should be taken from the **1940 – Fall of France** selector in the *Armies of Great Britain* book.

If players want to fight along strictly historical lines, the British player must limit himself only Matildas only (either MKI or MKIIs) with no infantry, as the tanks had to roll in front of the fatigued infantry for much of the early part of the battle. The German player may likewise limit his choice of tank to the Panzer Is and IIs, as well as the 35 (T)s and 38 (T)s.

SET-UP

First, the objective area must be placed on the table. It may be represented with any piece of terrain, though no larger than 12" x12". It should be placed somewhere that is equidistant from each player's table edge.

Blitzkrieg! Can nothing stop the inexorable march of Hitler's Panzer Divisions?

The German player picks a table edge and sets up two of his units within 6" of the objective. Then he nominates half of his remaining units (rounded down) to form his first wave. Any units not in the first wave are left in reserve.

The British player may set up any number of his units anywhere on his half of the table so long as they are at least 18" away from the objective or an enemy unit. These units can use the hidden set-up rules found on page 117 of the core rulebook. All other units are left in reserves.

OBJECTIVE

The British player's objective is to hold the centre of the table in order to stall the German player's advance towards Arras. The German player's objective is to prevent the British from holding the objective at the end of the game.

FIRST TURN

Charge! The battle begins. During turn 1 the German player must bring his first wave onto the table. These units can enter the table from any point along the German player's table edge, and must be given either an advance or run order. Remember that no order test is required to move units onto the table as part of a first wave.

GAME DURATION

Keep track of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of turn 6, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2, or 3, the game ends. On a roll of 4, 5, or 6, play one more turn.

VICTORY!

At the end of the game calculate which side has won by adding up the attrition values of the enemy units that were destroyed. If one side scores at least 200 more points than the other then that side has won a clear victory. Otherwise the result is deemed too close to call and the battle is a draw.

   Furthermore, the British player gets the attrition value of any of his vehicles with damage value of 8+ that are within 3" of the centre of the table.

AFTERMATH

The opening phase of the battle was a rousing success for the British. They cruised through the German lines, taking prisoners and destroying enemy positions as they pushed forward. This was due not only to the surprise and confusion caused by the attack, but also the fact that the German PAK 36/37 anti-tank guns could not penetrate the thick armour of the Matilda tanks. The Panzer II guns proved to be likewise ineffective against the British armour.

Somua S35

The Germans were not immediately aware of this, however. The design of the Matilda had external stowage bins for the crew's field and personal gear. These had a tendency to catch fire when hit, but had no effect on the crew's ability to operate the tank. The Germans, seeing a tank engulfed in flames but still fighting, were justifiably terrified by the seemingly invulnerable tanks.

Only when Rommel ordered the 7th Panzer Division's Flak 88s and 105mm field guns to be used as anti-tank guns was the attack finally halted. Frankforce took heavy losses, and was forced to call off the offensive.

Even though the British were eventually stopped, the operation was considered one of the few Allied successes in the Battle of France. The Germans were convinced that a much larger Allied armoured force was on the move, and that may have led to their sudden halt on 24 May that gave the BEF the breathing room it needed to begin the evacuation of Dunkirk.

Frankforce had inflicted heavy losses – it is estimated that the Germans lost 700 men, most of whom were captured in the early part of the battle. They only lost about 12 tanks, which was probably due to the fact that most of the Matildas were armed only with machine guns. The British tank losses were much heavier at approximately 35 tanks, whilst 75 men were killed or wounded.

OPERATION *SUPERCHARGE*

The year was 1942, and even though the Allies had fought valiantly, they had yet to achieve a decisive victory. That would all change near an Egyptian town named El Alamein.

On 2 November 1942, the Second Battle of El Alamein had been raging for ten days. Rommel was in a tough spot; an expected shipment of fuel was bombed to the bottom of the Mediterranean Sea, and his fuel reserves were almost gone. He had just completed four brutal attacks against the Australian-held position at 'Thompson's Post', failing to take any ground and losing men and tanks in the process.

Montgomery, the overall Commonwealth commander, put together a British-New Zealander attack to the south of the Australian standoff, codenamed Operation *Supercharge*. Its objective was nothing short of sheer carnage; Montgomery wanted to destroy enemy tanks, supplies and supply lines, as well as the base of the Axis defence stationed at Tel el Aqqaqir.

General Freyburg, commanding the 2nd New Zealand Division, requested his forces remain in reserve for the attack. His motives weren't based on fear – his unit had lost over 1,400 men in just three days and he needed time to refit and regroup. Montgomery, not ignorant of the unit's heavy losses, put Freyburg in command of three British infantry brigades as well as a British armoured brigade to swell his depleted ranks.

Rommel was already planning a withdrawal, and had previously laid thousands of anti-tank mines to cover his retreating troops. The Allied plan was to send the infantry brigades in two columns supported by tanks, and clear a path through the minefield for the British 1st Armoured Brigade to pass through and open a gap in the German and Italian defences.

OPPOSING FORCES

This battle is fought between the forces of the British Commonwealth and the German or Italian armies.

German armoured platoons should be taken from the **1942–43 – Rommel's Defeat** selector in the *Armies of Germany* book.

Italian armoured platoons should be taken from the **1940–43 – The War in Africa** selector in the *Armies of Italy and the Axis* book.

The British force should be taken from the **1942 – Operation** *Lightfoot* selector in the Armies of Great Britain book.

SET-UP
The Axis player picks a table side.

No units are set up on the table as the battle commences. Both sides must nominate at least half their forces to form their first waves. This can be the entire army if desired. Any units not included in the first wave are left in reserve.

SPECIAL RULES
- **Dust Storm:** A dust storm is on the horizon and threatening to envelope the battlefield. At the start of each turn, roll a die. If the number rolled is equal to or less than the current turn number, the sandstorm hits and all weapons with a range greater than 12" have their ranges reduced to 12" for the rest of the game.
- **Minefield!:** Whenever a unit is ordered to Run, execute the move as normal, and then roll a die. On the roll of a one, the unit immediately takes D6 pin markers and suffers a hit with a Pen value of +2. Armoured vehicles are hit against the bottom armour (this is the same as a hit against the rear, so the Pen is actually +4 total). If the unit suffers this hit as a result of an assault move and makes contact with the enemy, this is handled as if the target had reacted by shooting at the charging unit, and then all pin markers are discarded.

An Afrika Korps column in the North African desert

OBJECTIVE
At the end of the game calculate who has won by adding up attrition points, using a multiplier of one as outlined on page 119 of the *Bolt Action* rulebook.

FIRST TURN

The battle begins. During turn 1 both players must bring their first wave onto the table. These units can enter the table from any point on their side's table edge, and must be given either a run or advance order. Note that no order test is required to move units onto the table as part of a first wave.

GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of turn 6, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3, the game ends; on a roll of 4, 5 or 6 play one further turn.

VICTORY!

At the end of the game calculate which side has won by adding up the attrition values of the enemy units that were destroyed. If one side scores at least 200 more points than the other then that side has won a clear victory. Otherwise the result is deemed too close to call and the battle is a draw.

AFTERMATH

Operation *Supercharge* was conceived as a stopgap measure, but it had to be accomplished with the resources at hand. Most of the commanders had problems with the plan, but there were no real alternatives. Even Freyberg compared it to the charge of the Light Brigade, but he felt there was no choice but to attack.

The charge had many initial successes. The Germans and Italians had set up a screen of antitank guns as well as some tanks that had managed to penetrate the British defences. As the Commonwealth forces advanced, these guns inflicted heavy damage, but the charge was undeterred. In the first half hour, the Allies had destroyed 35 guns and taken several hundred prisoners.

Crusader Mk I

Rommel had been taken by surprise, but a sandstorm swept the area and gave his forces the advantage. The Axis gunners were able to pick off stranded or lost tanks, inflicting many casualties. It was still not enough; Rommel simply didn't have enough tanks to counter the armoured forces arrayed against him, especially after Montgomery added the 1st, 2nd, and 8th Armoured Brigades to the peppered ranks of the battered 9th.

The 9th Armoured Brigade had started with nearly 100 tanks, but after the battle it was down to 24, and had lost over half its crew members. The 9th had failed to create the gap needed for the 1st to pour through, and had taken devastating losses to boot. It was a truly dark day for those brave tankers.

Rommel knew he had been beaten. He had no fuel, and not enough tanks or men to oppose the British. He sent a message to Hitler outlining the impending destruction of his army if things were to continue. Hitler responded with a simple command: hold at all costs. Rommel said that for the first time in the Desert War he had no idea what to do.

He would begin pulling back and consolidating his forces, but by then the back of his army was broken, and a turning point in the Desert War had been reached. The Axis hold on North Africa would soon fade, and the Commonwealth would secure a much-needed victory that would put the first nail in the Third Reich's coffin.

Winston Churchill summed up El Alamein thus: 'It may almost be said that before Alamein we never had a victory. After Alamein we never had a defeat.'

A10 Cruiser tank Mk II

KURSK: THE BATTLE OF PROKHOROVKA

During the Battle of Kursk, one engagement would come to be known as the greatest tank battle of all time: Prokhorovka. It was near this small Ukrainian village that the spearheads of two mighty armoured forces collided.

The summer of 1943 was a rough time for the Wehrmacht. They had just been handed a humiliating defeat at Stalingrad, and the Eastern Front was in danger of collapsing. To regain the initiative, the Germans launched Operation *Citadel* on 4 July 1943, aiming to cut off the Kursk Salient and capture or destroy the trapped Russian armies inside.

The Battle of Kursk was a huge engagement, spanning almost two months across hundreds of miles. The defining action of the battle would happen on 12 July 1943 as the Germans tried to sweep through Prokhorovka in an attempt to cut off the Soviets' line of retreat.

Hitler was looking to deliver a crushing blow, but he also desperately needed a big victory to tell the German people about. To this end he sent towards Prokhorovka all three Waffen-SS divisions of the II SS Panzer Corps, with close to 300 tanks and assault guns to do the job.

The Soviet defence consisted mainly of the 5th Guards Tank Army. They had received reports that the Germans were amassing armour near the village, so they concentrated their forces and were able to bring almost 800 tanks as well as a smattering of self-propelled guns to the field. The Germans were unaware that such a large force was assembling near the village until the morning of the attack.

As the sun began to rise, the Luftwaffe attacked. The Soviets weathered the storm with relatively few casualties, and they responded in kind with a massive artillery barrage. Day was turned to night as the battlefield was cloaked in black clouds of explosives.

The Soviets did not intend to sit and wait for the approaching Germans; they wanted to close in to negate the range advantage of the German tanks over their own T-34s. As soon as the bombardment was over, General Pavel

Rotmistrov (the Soviet commander) barked over the radio: '*Stal*! *Stal*! *Stal*!' – Russian for 'Steel! Steel! Steel!' – and, with the code word broadcasted, the Soviets advanced.

It was in this hazy mixture of dust and smoke that the two armies met, head-to-head and almost right on top of each other.

OPPOSING FORCES

This scenario is played between a Soviet force and a German one.

The German armoured platoons should be taken from the **1943 – Operation Citadel** selector in the *Armies of Germany* book. Legendary tank commander Michael Wittmann was there, so the German player is encouraged to include him in the army for some added historical flair. You can find his entry in the Legendary crew section on page 38.

The Soviet armoured platoons should be taken from the **Defence in Depth, July–August 1943** selector in the *Armies of the Soviet Union* book. In addition to their normal choices, the Soviets had access to British Churchills at this battle (these would be Mk IIIs or early Mk IVs with 6pdr guns).

SET-UP

Because they were taken by surprise, the Germans will play the defenders in this battle. The German player must deploy no more than half his units in his set-up area. These units can use the hidden set-up rules on page 117 of the core *Bolt Action* rulebook.

After that, the Soviet player deploys no more than half his units in his set-up area. These units can also use the hidden set-up rules.

Then the German player must set up the remainder of his force in his set-up area. These units *cannot* use the hidden set-up rules.

Finally, the Soviet player deploys the remainder of his force in his set-up area, and they likewise cannot use the hidden set-up rules. No units may be left in reserves for this scenario.

SPECIAL RULES

- **Dense Smoke**: The battlefield is completely covered by billowing clouds of smoke. As a result, roll a die at the beginning of each turn. On a roll of a 1, any weapon with a maximum range greater than 12" has its range reduced to 12" for that turn. On a roll of a 2 or 3, any weapon with a maximum range greater than 24" has its range reduced to 24" for that turn. On a roll of 4+, the wind disperses the smoke and visibility is normal for that turn, but shots at targets over 24" suffer an additional –1 to hit modifier.
- **Desperate Fight**: The Soviets were especially desperate in trying to repel the Germans, resorting to ramming on several occasions. Soviet tanks may assault enemy tanks without having to take the

usual order test to assault another tank.

- **Preparatory Bombardment:** Both sides peppered the battlefield before the battle commenced. As such, before the first turn *both* players resolve a preparatory bombardment against their enemy, starting with the German player.

KV-8 flamethrower tank

OBJECTIVE

The main goal is to inflict as much damage as possible. The Germans are trying to press on through to Prokhorovka and link up with other German units near the village.

FIRST TURN

'Stal! Stal! Stal!*'* The battle begins.

GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of turn 6, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3, the game ends; on a roll of 4, 5 or 6 play one further turn.

VICTORY!

At the end of the game, calculate which side has won by adding up the attrition values of the enemy units that were destroyed. If one side scores at least 200 more points than the other then that side has won a clear victory. Otherwise the result is deemed too close to call and the battle is a draw.

Furthermore, the German player gets the attrition value of any of his tanks

that exit the table on his opponent's table edge.

AFTERMATH

Like so many famous battles of the war, the outcome of this one has been the subject of some serious debate.

The generally accepted version of the battle derives mainly from Soviet sources. In this version, the Germans advanced side-by-side, hemmed in by the Psel River on one side and railroad tracks on the other. They were estimated to have over 500 tanks, all crammed into a relatively small battlefield.

The Soviets raced their speedy T-34s right into the German lines, throwing them into a state of massive confusion and causing a fair share of casualties along the way. At such close quarters, the deadly 88s of the German tanks lost their range advantage, and the Soviet force was able to outflank and outmanoeuvre the enemy, destroying dozens of enemy tanks. Taken aback by the sheer bravado of the Soviet battle plan, the Germans retreated, leaving hundreds of smoking hulks behind on the scorched field near Prokhorovka.

Za Stalina! Za Rodinu!

Tigers Marsch!

An exciting tale indeed; however, recent scrutiny of the war records of both sides has suggested that it may owe more to Soviet propaganda than actual events.

The daily combat reports of the II SS Panzer corps, still accessible via the US National Archive, tell a different story. These reports were generated to communicate the corps' combat effectiveness and fighting capabilities for future action, so their writers had little reason to embellish the numbers. They show that the Germans had closer to 300 armoured fighting vehicles, only 15 of which were the dreaded Tigers. Furthermore, after the action, reports show German losses more on the scale of 70 tanks, rather than the hundreds as previously believed.

There is not much debate about what happened to the Soviets. Their commander, General Pavel Rotmistrov, planned to swarm the enemy with more tanks than they could deal with, with seemingly little regard for the casualties such a strategy would likely incur. He felt that the speed of his T-34s would allow them to close with the enemy and get the much-needed flanking shots to take out the tougher German tanks. Whether this is accurate or not is arguable, but Rotmistrov would never hold a combat command after the Battle of Kursk, and perhaps the staggering losses incurred at Prokhorovka had something to do with this.

Michael Wittmann witnessed the boldness of the Soviet plan first hand as his group advanced to support the main German attack. The T-34s charged straight at his Tigers over open ground at long range in what was described as a suicide mission. The frontal armour of the Tigers was virtually impervious

to the T-34s' gun, so the Soviets had to rush through withering fire with little they could do in return. The result was an almost complete annihilation of the ill-fated T-34s.

Despite such losses, the Soviets were able to fight the Germans to a stalemate. The battle lines slowly pushed east, and the Germans were able to get near the town and occupy several strategic positions in the surrounding terrain. These gains were never fully exploited, however, as Hitler decided to cancel Operation *Citadel*.

The story of what really happened is still unclear, but the outcome remains: the battle was a tactical victory for the Germans, but it would turn out to be a strategic victory for the Soviets. As for the details, it is likely that the smoke may never fully clear over the battlefield of Prokhorovka.

T-34/85

HELL'S HIGHWAY: THE ROAD TO ARNHEM

*Operation **Market Garden** was a risky Allied ploy to strike through Holland, circumvent the formidable Siegfried Line, and cross the Rhine in force to attack Germany. It was the largest airborne operation up to that time and if successful, it could have ended the war within months.*

It was September 1944, and the Allies had just dropped more airborne troops into combat than ever before. The US 101st and 82nd airborne divisions, along with the British 1st Airborne and the Polish 1st Parachute Brigade, landed in Holland during a daylight drop against initially light resistance. Their mission was to seize control of several key towns along the road from Eindhoven to Arnhem, and the valuable bridges along the way. Without this key artery, the subsequent armoured push would not be successful.

The second operational phase of the mission was to drive the armour through the various waypoints that had been secured by the US paratroopers and link up with the British airborne in Arnhem. The British XXX Corps, veterans of North Africa and the Normandy invasion, were tapped for the job.

On 17 September, as the airborne troopers secured their objectives inside Holland, General Horrocks launched the armoured spearhead across the Holland-Belgium border. At each bridge, they were to link up with the airborne and strengthen their position before moving on to the next one.

A risky plan indeed, since the airborne troops were not equipped for a lengthy defensive battle, nor were they particularly able to deal with enemy armour. They were depending on a fast advancing XXX Corps for a sustained operation. The Allied commanders were under the impression that the German defence of the area was sparse, with mostly old men and young boys pressed into the army. As such, having the airborne placed somewhat out on a limb was deemed an acceptable risk.

Of course, this assumption would prove false, as the German defenders began to gradually amass at the beginning of September. In some cases, instead of the old men that the Allies had heard about, they were met by

veteran troops of the II SS Panzer Corps. The area leader had sent them to rest in what he considered to be 'safe' areas for refitting, and these areas turned out to be Eindhoven and Arnhem.

The surprise that the Allies were hoping to achieve never fully materialized. The German forces in the area had been aware for some time that an attack was coming, as there had already been no small amount of fighting in the area. Since many of those actions were in the direction of the Dutch border, it had given them some idea of the Allies' plans.

Before the advance, a massive barrage of artillery and aerial attacks was planned. The XXX Corps had an awesome arsenal at their disposal, and two hours before the attack a black rain of explosives pummelled the road into a cratered, scorched mess. Thus it earned the name 'hell's highway' before the battle even started.

INFLATABLE TANKS

Fooling the enemy with misinformation is certainly nothing new, even back in the days of World War II. When it comes to troop movements, making your enemy see a force where none exists can seriously affect his plans, often causing him to divert critical resources to deal with the 'threat'.

Impressed by the British successes with fake tanks in North Africa, the US Army began recruiting for a peculiar unit. Instead of combat veterans, they sought out artists, ad agency executives, and even stage magicians. The goal of the unit was to create armies out of thin air, and to confuse and confound the enemy wherever possible.

The 23rd Headquarters Special Troops set about taking movie magic to the battlefield. They created realistic inflatable full-sized models of many vehicles, including the M4 Sherman and the 2½ ton truck. These models were so light that a single soldier could move them around, creating the impression of an armoured division on the advance.

They took the deception even further by employing half-tracks with enormous speakers, projecting the sounds of tanks rolling through the area. Details like the sounds of soldiers coughing, tools being used, and others completed the illusion. False radio chatter accompanied the fake unit.

The Germans were thoroughly confused at what they saw. Sometimes, a tank would virtually disappear after being hit by nothing more than artillery shrapnel. Spies would report an infantry division being transported by trucks, with no idea that what they actually saw was the same pair of trucks with only two soldiers in the rear going in a wide circle through the woods.

Their mission was so secret that the unit's existence was classified until 1996, and parts of their methods and tactics remain top secret to this day. It would prove worth the effort, as they are estimated to have saved tens of thousands of soldiers' lives through their elaborate 'road shows' across Europe. They truly earned the nickname 'Ghost Army'.

XXX Corps struggles along Hell's Highway

OPPOSING FORCES

This scenario is played between a British and German force.

The German armoured platoons should be taken from the **1944 – Normandy** selector in the *Armies of Germany* book.

The British armoured platoons should be taken from the **1944 – Normandy** selector in the *Armies of Great Britain* book.

SET-UP

A road runs along the length of the table. The German player chooses at least half of his force and deploys it within the set-up zone on the diagram. These units may use the hidden set-up rules. Any units not deployed remain in the reserves.

The British player chooses one of the short table edges. He deploys no units at the start of the game. Instead, all of his force is in his first wave.

SPECIAL RULES

- **Preparatory Bombardment:** The British player resolves a preparatory bombardment against the German forces before the beginning of the first turn.

OBJECTIVE

The British player must move as many units off the German player's table edge as possible, in order to link up with the airborne troops at the town down the road. The Germans must stop or at least delay them. Note that in this scenario, British units are allowed to voluntarily leave the German player's table edge.

FIRST TURN

The battle begins. During the first turn, the British player must bring his entire first wave onto the table.

GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of turn 8, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3, the game ends; on a roll of 4, 5 or 6 play one further turn.

VICTORY!

At the end of the game, calculate which side has won by adding up the attrition values of the enemy units that were destroyed. If one side scores at least 200 more points than the other then that side has won a clear victory. Otherwise the result is deemed too close to call and the battle is a draw.

Furthermore, the British player gets the full attrition value of any of his units that successfully exit the board on the German player's table edge. The German player gets half the attrition value of any British units that remain on the table.

AFTERMATH

It would not be a good day for the Allies.

The initial barrage of ordnance failed to achieve any real results. The air cover, mostly Typhoons, spent the day flying many sorties to keep the Germans hiding in the woods. The combined efforts helped, but in the end would not be enough.

The terrain around the road would become a major limiting factor to the advance. It was either filled with various barriers or too soft to support heavy armour. Vehicles that strayed from the road often became sitting ducks, though they had little choice as the road quickly became clogged with the smoking and burning hulks of the British tanks.

As the British reserves were brought up, they faced repeated ambushes

from infantry and anti-tank guns hidden along the road. The XXX Corps had the objective of reaching Eindhoven within 2–3 hours, but by nightfall they had only reached Valkenswaard, falling a full six miles short.

The XXX Corps fought bravely, but in the end the German defenders were able to stall its advance enough to neutralize its effectiveness. Soon German armoured forces, including the dreaded Panthers, started to join the defenders, trying with several well-aimed counter-attacks to cut the road and thus disrupt the supply line of the advancing XXX Corps. Instead of pushing forward, many resources were diverted to counter these threats.

Market Garden was a gambit the Allies would pay dearly for. By the time they withdrew eight days later, over 15,000 Allied troops were dead or wounded, all part of the butcher's bill on Hell's Highway.

BATTLE OF BASTOGNE

In December 1944, a combination of German cunning and Allied overconfidence led to one of the bloodiest battles of the war – it would prove to be Hitler's last major offensive in a war that was already lost.

The Battle of the Ardennes; the Battle of the Bulge; the Ardennes Offensive; Operation *Watch on the Rhine*. It is known by many names, and is one of the most filmed, discussed, and debated battles of the entire war. For good reason: the images are the stuff of legends, if not of movie magic. A secretly amassed army and a lightning surprise attack; the desperate effort to plug the gap; valiant defenders completely surrounded by the enemy; a request for surrender and the immortal reply of 'Nuts!' Finally, it ended with an Allied breakthrough that rescued their trapped comrades and brought German hopes crashing down. Through the lens of these events, the brutally cold winter of 1944–45 would leave its icy stamp on world history.

Hitler saw the value of Antwerp, which was held by the Allies. It was a key port for supplying the Allied war machine on the continent. He thought that if he could mount one surprise offensive and retake Antwerp, he could fight the Allies to a standstill and force treaty negotiations.

Such an operation would require massive amounts of manpower and logistical support. Secrecy was absolutely essential, as such a move would surely fail if the Allies were able to counter it in its early stages. In this the Germans were entirely successful; the Allies had no idea that a large attack, through such an unfavourable region, was about to take place. Maintaining radio silence, the Germans moved only by night, amassing 30 divisions in the area without raising alarm.

The sun sets on the Third Reich

When the attack commenced on 16 December, the Germans achieved complete surprise. The American troops facing the initial assault assumed it was a small counter-attack, which had been expected ever since they cracked a sizeable hole in the Siegfried Line to the north. This would, of course, prove not to be the case.

Once the enormity of the offensive became apparent to the Allied leadership, Eisenhower made the bold move to divert the 101st and 82nd airborne divisions to the area, using every available resource to get them there. The paratroopers did a 'tailgate jump', riding in trucks throughout the night, using headlights despite the danger of being spotted from the air. Within a week, a staggering 250,000 troops took the infamous 'Redball Express' into the Ardennes.

One of the key elements of the German plan was speed. In order to overwhelm the enemy they had to advance quickly, before the weather cleared and the Allied fighter-bombers could return to action. The 101st

found itself surrounded by the rapidly advancing Germans, fortifying the area around Bastogne in preparation for its defence. One by one, the roads out of town were cut by the German attackers, and the American paratroopers found themselves surrounded and cut off.

The 'battered bastards of Bastogne', as the 101st would come to be known, were stretched thin, holding strategic points in the area, but unable to man a proper battle line during the night. Their supplies were dwindling, and with the poor weather obscuring the ground to aircraft, supply drops could not be made. The men had little or no cold weather gear, not enough bullets or food, and few rounds for their tanks and artillery pieces. Still, they held back everything the German army could throw at them.

Finally, on 23 December, the weather improved and the supply drops commenced. Critical ammunition, food and medical supplies rained down on the beleaguered Allied troops. Many artillery units were firing newly acquired shells even as further drops were floating down from the sky!

Despite this, the 101st was still in dire straits. The supplies gave the unit hope, but what the soldiers really needed was an Allied breakthrough so that fresh troops could be brought in and the wounded could be taken out. As fortune would have it, they would not have to wait too much longer.

The Allied breakthrough took place the day after Christmas. Lt Colonel Creighton Abrams was in charge of 37th Tank Battalion and had orders to charge through the heavily defended town of Sibret to link up with the encircled 101st Airborne in Bastogne. Col Abrams could see that the attack would be costly and take up precious time, while the town of Assenois was lightly defended and also between him and Bastogne. He could see the supply drops floating in the distant sky and knew he had an opportunity to break the siege if he acted quickly. So he changed his target and set his sights on Assenois.

OPPOSING FORCES

This scenario represents the Allied push through the town of Assenois on the way to link up with the 101st in Bastogne. As such, it is a battle between US and German forces.

The German armoured platoons should be taken from the **1944–45 – Operation Watch on the Rhine** selector in the *Armies of Germany* book.

The US armoured platoons should be taken from the **1944 – Battle of the Bulge** selector in the *Armies of the United States* book. The American unit

was the 37th Tank Battalion of CCR, commanded by Lt Col Creighton Abrams, so the US player is encouraged to include him in his army. Also, the lead tank that would eventually be the first to link up with the 101st was a Sherman named 'Cobra King', so the US player should consider so naming one of his tanks!

SET-UP

The town of Assenois is set up in the middle of the table, with two roads intersecting at the middle. The objective is the crossroads in the middle of the town.

The German player deploys one infantry squad and one other unit within 6" of the crossroads. Then he nominates half his units (rounded down) to be in his first wave. The rest of his units are left in reserve.

The US player chooses one of the short table edges and deploys at least half his units within 6" of it. The rest of his units remain in the reserves.

OBJECTIVE

The goal is to control the crossroads in the middle of the town at the end of the game. To do so, a player must have a unit within 3" of the crossroads, with no enemy unit within 3" of the crossroads.

FIRST TURN

The battle begins. During turn 1, the German player must bring his first wave on to the table. These units can enter the table at any point on the German player's table edge, and must be given either a run or advance order. Note that no order test is required to move units onto the table as part of the first wave.

GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of turn 6, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3, the game ends; on a roll of 4, 5 or 6 play one further turn.

VICTORY!

At the end of the game the side that controls the crossroads is the winner. If neither side controls it, it is a draw.

AFTERMATH

Abrams' unit successfully pushed through the town, and at 5:10 pm he shook hands with General McAuliffe, the acting commander of the 101st at Bastogne. The line had been breached, and the 101st was no longer isolated.

The fight was not quite over, though. The corridor opened by the 37th now had to be defended, and the Germans would push against it with everything they had. The US troops spent the night of 26 December clearing pockets of German resistance that still dotted the landscape around Assenois. That evening the town itself was free of the enemy, while clearing the area around the road itself would take the rest of the night through to the next morning.

With the road in a relatively firm grasp, the lifeblood of supplies and reinforcements could now flow freely into the area, and the German hold on Bastogne and the Ardennes was dealt a terminal blow.

The men of the 101st, having lived through the snowy hell of the siege, expected to be relieved. This would not be the case, as they were ordered to resume the offensive and seize key towns in the area. It would be nearly a month before the 'battered bastards of Bastogne' would finally get the hard-earned rest that they deserved.

Panther Ausf G

T IS FOR…

The British developed all manner of tanks in World War II, flirting with many light designs in the 1930s. The **Tetrarch light tank Mk 7** was one such vehicle, designed for the army as a light tank. It was rejected for regular units, but later reprieved and issued to the 1st and 6th Airborne Divisions to be carried into battle by giant Hamilcar gliders. They saw service in the Normandy invasion and in the invasion of French-held Madagascar, not performing terribly well.

They were fast, 40mph on a road, and carried a 2-pounder 40mm main gun and a machine gun. Armour was paper thin, and God only knows what the Russians who were sent 20 of them thought about it all!

THE BATTLE OF IMPHAL

The Japanese Army was in dire need of a major victory. General Renya Mutaguchi felt it was his destiny to win such a victory, and against the advice of his subordinates he set his sights on India.

It was the spring of 1944, and the war was turning against the Japanese. The Pacific campaign had suffered major setbacks, and with the fading of Imperial naval power the Japanese merchant marine was being ruthlessly targeted by the Allied navies. Burma was one of the few fronts not hit by major losses, but that was about to change.

The British were planning a major offensive into Burma from neighbouring India and China. They had already secured several air bases and other supply depots, and these gave the Allies a critical advantage. One major supply station was located in the Burmese town of Imphal. It had several airstrips, fuel depots and encampments from which the Allies could stage their offensive. To the Japanese, it was obvious – Imphal had to be taken.

The Japanese general placed in charge of the attack, Renya Mutaguchi, had grander designs. He felt that Imphal would just be the beginning in a greater campaign to take India from the British.

His plan was flawed from the very beginning. It relied on capturing Allied supplies in order to feed the invading army, a risky ploy even under ideal conditions. The Allies had near-complete command of the skies, so dropping supplies by air would be next to impossible. The coming monsoon months would also make overland supply difficult. Mutaguchi envisioned a Genghis Khan-style sweep across India, with the successful army dining on the spoils of war.

His generals were pessimistic, and in one case openly insubordinate. They pointed out that the invading army had less than three weeks' worth of supplies, and any push after that point would be completely dependent on captured supplies. All their protests fell on deaf ears.

Mutaguchi's plan was codenamed 'U-Go', or Operation *C*. Its initial object was to break the Allied forward positions, then advance on Imphal in force and surround the town. Once in position, a coordinated attack on Imphal

would follow. They even enlisted the help of Azad Hind, a resistance movement that sought to overthrow British rule in India. Apparently, they were amenable to the idea of Japanese rule.

On 20 March, during the opening shots of the battle, British M3 Lee tanks would clash with Japanese Type 95s in one of the few tank-to-tank battles the Japanese fought during the war.

Chindits attack, supported by an M3 Grant of Pow's Dragoon Guards

OPPOSING FORCES
This scenario is fought between a British and a Japanese force.

The Japanese armoured platoons should be taken from the **Burma, 1944** selector in the *Armies of Imperial Japan* book.

The British armoured platoons should be taken from the **1942–45 – Burma** selector in the *Armies of Great Britain* book.

For added historical accuracy, the British player could restrict his choice of tanks to the M3 Lee, while the Japanese player only takes Type 95 Ha-Go tanks.

SET-UP
The terrain on the table should be quite dense, with large areas of forest and other vegetation, as well as a few rocky outcrops to represent the difficult

going of the area around Imphal. The Japanese player picks a table side.

No units are set up at the beginning of the game. Both sides must nominate at least half of their force to form their first wave. This can be the entire army if desired. Any units not included in the first wave are left in reserve.

SPECIAL RULES
- **Honour Bound**: The Japanese tankers feel that they must fight to the last in order to secure victory for Japan. Each Japanese armoured vehicle gets +1 morale. Remember that morale cannot be higher than 10.
- **Dawn Assault**: The Japanese often attacked at night to take advantage of the cover of darkness that denied Allied air superiority. During the first turn of the game, visibility is limited to 12". At the beginning of the second turn, roll a die – on a 4+ visibility returns to normal, otherwise it is limited to 12" for the second turn too and then reverts to normal at the beginning of turn 3.

Type 97 Chi-Ha

OBJECTIVE
The Japanese player must move as many units off the British player's table edge as possible, in order to reach and seize the much needed supplies of Imphal and its airstrips. The British must stop or at least delay them. Note that in this scenario, Japanese units are allowed to voluntarily leave the British player's table edge.

FIRST TURN
The battle begins. During turn 1 both players must bring their first wave on to the table. These units can enter the table from any point on their side's table edge, and must be given either a run or advance order. Note that no order test is required to move units onto the table as part of a first wave.

GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of turn 8, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3, the game ends; on a roll of 4, 5 or 6 play one further turn.

VICTORY!

At the end of the game calculate which side has won by adding up the attrition values of the enemy units that were destroyed. If one side scores at least 200 more points than the other then that side has won a clear victory. Otherwise the result is deemed too close to call and the battle is a draw.

Furthermore, the Japanese player gets the full attrition value of any of his units that successfully exited the board on the British player's table edge.

M3 Lee

AFTERMATH

The lighter Type 95 tanks proved no match for the M3 Lees. All of the Japanese tanks were destroyed and the advancing Japanese were forced to turn back.

The Battle of Imphal would rage on for four more months. The Japanese would score some early victories, cutting off British armies and threatening Imphal. Things were looking good for General Mutaguchi, and soon his forces would sweep down onto the Imphal plain from the south and the north.

While two divisions attacked the Imphal plain, one set its sights on the

main road going into the area, and the only road that could support the heavy metal Mutaguchi would need to assault the town itself. By mid-April, after failing to secure the road, the battle was at a near-stalemate.

The British chose this time to mount a counter-attack, focusing on the Japanese 15th Division, which was the weakest among them. While the 15th, as well as the other Japanese units, were able to hold their lines, they soon reached the end of their endurance. The troops were exhausted and, in some cases, starving. Mutaguchi's subordinates had warned him of this outcome, and now they would receive grim validation. The 15th Division had no choice but to leave their positions to find food and water, and the British quickly advanced into the abandoned land.

Mutaguchi would not admit defeat. The Japanese Prime Minister, Hideki Tojo, shared his optimism and even in the face of dismal reports ordered the battle fought to the end. Honour-bound Japanese officers downplayed the dire situation to the inspecting generals, as none of them wanted to be the one to suggest retreat.

Mutaguchi was furious with his divisional commanders. He felt they were being overly cautious and not exploiting their successes. He ended up replacing all of them at various points in the battle, but it would do no good. He finally ordered his 31st Division to join the 15th Division on a renewed attack on the town. Both divisions were short of supplies, and had suffered too many casualties to be effective. So dire was their situation that their commanders simply ignored Mutaguchi's order, something almost unheard of in the Japanese military. When he found out about their circumstances, he finally accepted the situation and called off the attack. The British had won.

It would be the Japanese Army's worst defeat to date. They had taken 55,000 casualties, with over 13,000 soldiers lying dead. Most of them perished from starvation and disease. The Allies had actually taken slightly more casualties, but virtually all of them a result of the fighting. The well-supplied Brits, with their secure air bases, simply could not be pushed from the plains.

Mutaguchi had visions of glory, but in the end his fervour just was not enough. A battle may be fought with bullets, but it is won with supply.

Type 3 Chi-Nu

THE BATTLE OF BERLIN

In April 1945, two Russian armies raced to the German capital. Each general wanted to be the first to take the city, and both were willing to commit their troops in a hasty assault that would cost hundreds of thousands of lives. Were they motivated by more than just pride?

At the beginning of 1945, the Wehrmacht was crumbling. Its last great offensive in the Ardennes, while achieving many successes, failed to create the stalemate that Hitler was counting on. The German army began to shrink back to the homeland, and the Allies were quickly closing in.

Facing the Russian advance in the east, as well as the Western Allies' armies to the west, it became apparent that soon there would be an attack on Berlin itself. Eisenhower wasn't really interested in a lengthy ground attack, as he felt that it would be too costly to fight over a city that would be under the Soviet sphere of influence after the war anyway. Stalin, however, was more than happy to commit his armies to the attack.

Some say it was revenge for the devastation caused during the German invasion of Russia. The truth is probably far more practical. Firstly, Stalin knew that after the war, Germany would be sliced up like a pie and served to the victorious Allies. If Soviet forces occupied more of that pie, he was likely to get more pieces. Second, it is possible he wanted to seize Germany's nuclear research facility at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute before the Western Allies.

Stalin was so desperate to take the city quickly he was willing to throw his armies at it. He needed speed and raw numbers, so he devised an ingenious plan. Instead of creating one massive army and simply ordering it to advance with all haste, he split it into two armies and essentially challenged the commanding generals to a race. He knew that the honour of being the conqueror of Berlin was a great prize, and by pitting the two generals against each other, they would probably move much faster.

The first step was to encircle the city, and this meant crossing the Oder and Neisse rivers at several points to the east of Berlin. The Russians outnumbered their enemy, but the Germans had the advantage of a defensive urban position.

This advantage was probably best illustrated during the Battle of the Seelow Heights. They were the scene of the most brutal fighting in the defence of the Oder-Neisse line. The Russians sent nearly a million troops to attack the crossing, and the Germans defended it with a little over 100,000 men – they were outnumbered almost ten to one! Despite these terrible odds, it still took the Russians three blood-drenched days to cross. At the end of the third day, the 'gates of Berlin' lay wide open for the advancing Soviet army.

*The Soviet advance on Kahnsfelde, by Peter Dennis © Osprey
Publishing Ltd. Taken from Duel 37: King Tiger vs IS-2.*

Soviet T34s thunder into a blazing German town

Five days later, on 24 April, the Soviet army had completed its encirclement of the city. The Battle *of* Berlin was about to enter its final, devastating phase: the Battle *in* Berlin.

OPPOSING FORCES
This scenario is fought between a Soviet and a German force.

The German armoured platoons should be taken from the **1945 – Last Levy** selector in the *Armies of Germany* book.

The Soviet armoured platoons should be taken from the **Death of the Third Reich, April–May 1945** selector in the *Armies of the Soviet Union* book.

SET-UP
This battle takes place in a dense, urban environment, so the table should be set up as such. One or two roads are okay, but the bulk of the table should be a claustrophobic mix of buildings and rubble.

The Russian player chooses a table edge. No units are deployed at the start of the battle. Both sides must nominate at least half their force to form their first wave. This can be the entire army if desired. Any units not included in the first wave are left in reserve.

SPECIAL RULES
• **Last Stand**: The German defenders are fighting their last stand, to the death. The Soviets are

incensed by hatred and revenge. As such, all units on the table have the Fanatic special rule.

• **Revenge**: The Russian tanks do not have to pass the normal order test to assault buildings.

OBJECTIVE

The goal is simple, brutal attrition. Each side is trying to inflict maximum damage on the other.

FIRST TURN

The battle begins. During turn 1 both players must bring their first wave on to the table. These units can enter the table from any point on their side's table edge, and must be given a run or advance order. Note that no order test is required to move units onto the table as part of a first wave.

GAME DURATION

The game continues until one side is completely wiped out, or the player surrenders.

VICTORY!

The last man standing wins.

AFTERMATH

The aftermath of this battle would be nothing more than the implosion of the Nazi regime and the end of the war in Europe.

The Soviet armoured advantage would prove of little consequence in confined street fighting. Hitler Youth armed with Panzerfausts stalked enemy tanks amongst the ruins. This would have a devastating effect on the Russians. The young fighters would hide in basements and other areas with low windows and fire their weapons as the tanks passed for maximum damage. The Russians reacted by demolishing any building they received fire from.

Despite pleas from his senior leadership, Hitler had refused to leave the city and was determined to direct its defence. He had hopes that the 12th Army to the south of the city could link up with the 9th Army, but these hopes were dashed when the 9th was slaughtered at the Battle of Halbe.

In the final dark days of the battle, Hitler committed suicide. His 'thousand-year Reich' had lasted a little over four years.

On 2 May, the commander of the German defences finally rendered his unconditional surrender to the Soviet general. Roughly 80,000 Russians and

150,000 Germans lay dead, while a Soviet flag flew over the Reichstag. The Battle of Berlin was over.

ISU-152 assault gun

THE BATTLE OF KHALKIN GOL

A pivotal tank battle happened before World War II even started in the west. The Japanese and Russian armies had been fighting border clashes in the Manchuria region for years. When the pivotal battle occurred over the Khalkin Gol River, the outcome was to have a profound effect on the coming world war.

The Empire of Japan had invaded Manchuria in 1931, and with a foothold firmly in the area the Japanese began to press against the adjoining Soviet territories. The reasons were twofold: first, Japan had been promoting its 'Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere', which was the Japanese version of the German Lebensraum ideology, essentially to gain more living space for the expanding population of Japan. It saw the lands to the west of Manchuria as a good target for this expansion.

Secondly, the area was rich with natural resources (especially petroleum) and lacked much in the way of local defenders. The Japanese leadership simply could not pass up such a gem.

In 1937, Japan took advantage of a China weakened by civil war, rolling over its borders and taking key cities such as Nanking and Shanghai. If the Japanese Army continued to succeed, Russia could find itself bracketed by two fierce enemies: Japan to the east and Germany to the west. Stalin immediately pushed back by making a treaty with China and sending over 200 warplanes to bolster the Chinese defence.

This all would prove to be but a prelude to the coming conflict. All through the summer of 1938, Russia and Japan repeatedly clashed over the border between Mongolia and Manchuria. It was a bitter campaign that did not really move the flag far in either direction. As a result, the Japanese high command decided to advance in force and put the whole matter to rest once and for all.

In May 1939, the Japanese struck into the Khalkin Gol region and seized the area near the Mongolian village of Nomonhan. It was an act of sheer defiance, meant to taunt Russia into a fight.

The command of the Russian forces in the area fell to a little-known

general named Georgy Zhukov. By the end of the summer, Zhukov had assembled 50,000 troops, over 800 armoured vehicles and artillery pieces, and nearly 600 aircraft. The date was 20 August 1939. The Japanese wanted a fight, and they were about to get one.

OPPOSING FORCES
This scenario is fought between a Japanese and a Russian force.

The Japanese armoured platoons should be taken from the **The Fall of Singapore, 1942** selector in the Armies of Imperial Japan book.

The Soviet armoured platoons should be taken from the **Attack on the Fortified Regions, June 1941** selector in the Armies of the Soviet Union book.

It must be noted that neither selector accurately describes the forces present at Khalkin Gol, as these selectors are for different areas and periods, but they are the ones that most closely describe the forces present at Khalkin Gol. When picking forces, keep in mind that the Japanese were using mainly the Type 89 Yi-Go tanks, but they also had some Type 94s and 97s. The Soviets used the BT-5 and BT-7 light tanks. Of course, players are welcome to use any tank models they like as part of a 'what if?' version of the scenario! What if the Soviets and the Japanese came to blows in this area in late 1945, for example?

HERO OF THE SOVIET UNION: GENERAL GEORGY ZHUKOV

The battle at Khalkin Gol would have many repercussions across the globe, but it would also be the springboard for the career of the Russian general who led the forces there: Georgy Zhukov.

General Zhukov was a career soldier, having served all the way back in World War I in the Russian cavalry. By the time he was fighting the Japanese in Mongolia, he had been promoted to the rank of general at the age of 42. He had come from an extremely poor upbringing, a fact that helped him survive Stalin's purge of high-ranking military men.

He was always a forward-thinker, and since he began working with armour, he saw that the rulebook of warfare would need to change to accommodate it. He would use Khalkin Gol as an opportunity to test many of his theories, including the use of underwater bridges and using concentrated armoured units to envelope the enemy. His experience with the light BT tanks would prove invaluable, especially in the development of the T–34.

General Zhukov would fight throughout the remainder of the war. His list of battles reads almost like a complete timeline of the Eastern Front conflict: Leningrad, Moscow, Kursk, Vistula-Oder, Berlin, among others. He would be present in Berlin as the surrender documents were signed, ending the war in Europe, and would go on to be the Soviet minister of defence.

This four-time Hero of the Soviet Union died in 1974. The town near his birthplace, as well as the district in which it resides, was named after him. He was not without his detractors, some who said he overstated his role in the war or those who disagreed with his personality or methods. None however could doubt his love for and dedication to the Motherland.

Type 95 Ha-Go

SET-UP

The Khalkin River crosses the table along the centreline. It should be no more than 12" across. It is a relatively shallow river that has been forded with underwater bridges and as such counts as rough ground.

The Japanese player chooses a table edge and sets up at least half of his army within the set-up area. These units can use the hidden set-up rules. Units not set up this way remain the reserves.

The Russian units are not set up on the table as the game begins. The Russian player must nominate at least half his force to form his first wave. This can be his entire army if he wishes. Any units not included in the first wave are left in reserve.

SPECIAL RULES

- **Tactical Upper Hand**: To represent Zhukov's inspired lead, the Russian player gets one extra die added to the dice cup each turn. If a Russian die is drawn, but all Russian units have already been issued an order this turn, the die is ignored. In addition, Soviet reserves do not suffer from the -1 modifier when they take the order to come on to the table, including when outflanking.
- **Preparatory Bombardment:** Before turn 1, the Russian player rolls a die. On a roll of 2 or greater,

he resolves a preparatory bombardment against the Japanese player.

OBJECTIVE
Zhukov's plan is to envelop the Japanese and eventually trap them. The Russian player's objective is to get his units in the Japanese set-up area or off the Japanese player's table edge. The Japanese must stop them. Note that in this scenario, attacking units are allowed to deliberately move off the table on the Japanese player's table edge.

FIRST TURN
The battle begins. During turn 1 the Russian player must bring his first wave on to the table. These units can enter the table from any point on their side's table edge, and must be given a run or advance order. Note that no order test is required to move units on to the table as part of a first wave.

GAME DURATION
Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of turn 8, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3 the game ends; on a roll of 4, 5 or 6 play one further turn.

VICTORY!
At the end of the game, calculate victory using attrition points as follows. If one side scored at least 200 more points than their opponent, they win. Otherwise, the battle is too close to call and the result is a draw.

 The Russian player gets *half* attrition value for any of his units in the Japanese set-up area, and *double* attrition value for any units that actually left the table on the Japanese table edge.

 The Japanese get *double* the attrition value of any units they destroy, and *half* the attrition value of any Russian units that remain on the table, but not in the Japanese set-up zone.

AFTERMATH
Japanese intelligence had failed to detect the Russian build up of forces in the area, and as a result they were ill equipped to deal with the ferocity of the attack. The Soviets crossed the river and pinned down the centre of the Japanese line, allowing the Soviet flanks to achieve a double envelopment, to the north and to the south.

Once the two arms of the Russian advance linked up behind the Japanese forces, the Japanese 23rd Division was trapped. Other Japanese forces in the area attempted a counter-attack, and it was repulsed. The 23rd attempted a breakout and it too was put down. The Japanese had been soundly beaten.

General Komatsubara, leader of the Japanese forces, refused to accept defeat and planned another counterattack. It was thwarted by the pen rather than by the sword: a cease-fire agreement was signed in Moscow on 15 September.

While this battle is almost unknown, especially to Westerners, its outcome had far-reaching effects on the course of World War II. Up until Khalkin, the Japanese were torn between attacking north toward Siberia and attacking south into Southeast Asia and the Pacific in their quest for more land and natural resources. After the defeat, focus shifted south – a decision that would eventually lead to the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Also, with the relaxed pressure on his eastern front, Stalin could now completely focus on his impending invasion of Poland and the threat of war with Germany. Stalin moved 15 infantry divisions, three cavalry divisions, 1700 tanks and 1500 aircraft into the European theatre, resources that otherwise would have been tied up fighting further Japanese aggression. They would also play a pivotal role in the Battle of Moscow in 1941.

What would have happened if the Japanese had prevailed here? The mind boggles at the thought. Would the attack on Pearl Harbor have happened? Would the Russians have defended Moscow against the Germans with so many of their forces committed against the Japanese? Would the US have got involved when it did, if at all? It is arguable, though not unthinkable, that the Axis powers had lost the war before it even started, right there on the banks of the Khalkin Gol.

1939-pattern KV-1

APPENDIX 1: ADDITIONAL COMMAND VEHICLES
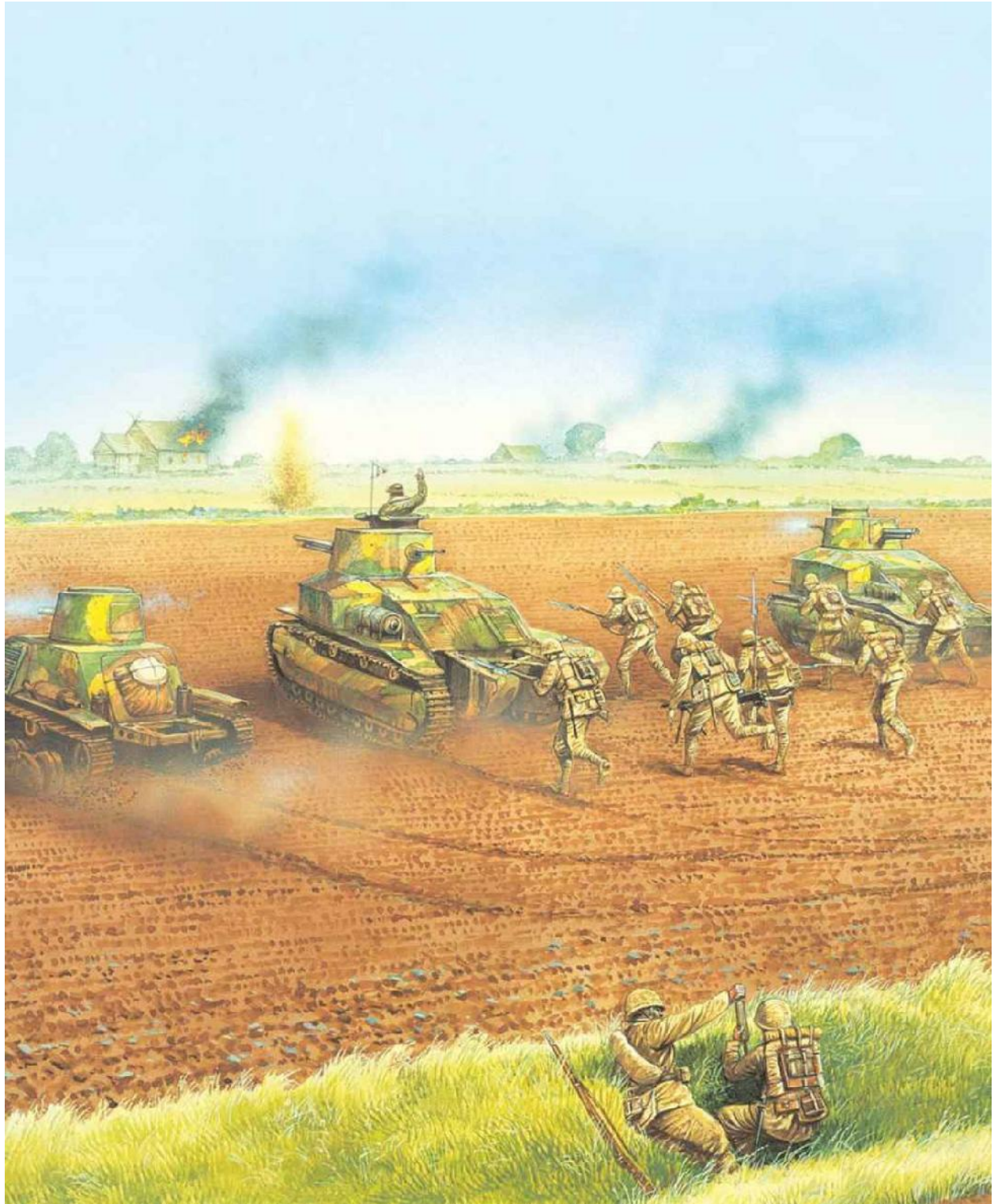
Two Type 89B Yi-Go medium tanks and a Type 94 tankette advance
towards the Chinese lines, by Peter Dennis © Osprey Publishing Ltd.
Taken from Elite 169: World War II Japanese Tank Tactics.

Many specialized command vehicles were developed during the war for the officers of the armoured formations who needed to command their men in the cauldron of battle.

The following vehicles simply add to the choices available to each country, just like additional entries in the relevant book of the 'Armies of' series.

COMMAND BONUSES

If you choose any of the following vehicles as the command vehicle to lead your platoon, it doesn't matter that the vehicle is of a different type from the other compulsory vehicles in the platoon. The platoon can still benefit from the Radio Network rules and associated bonuses as if the platoon consisted of vehicles of the same type. This is to allow for specialist command vehicles, which will often be of a different type from the other vehicles in the platoon. See Special Rules for Armoured Platoons p11.

GERMANY

SD.KFZ 253 ARMOURED COMMAND HALF-TRACK

A variant of the Sd.Kfz 250 half-track, the 253 was produced in small numbers and used as a mobile observation post for artillery observers and commanders of armoured units. It had no weaponry other that than carried by the crew, but it was fully enclosed for additional protection. Principal service: 1941–45. Numbers manufactured: 285.

Cost: 72pts (Inexperienced), 90pts (Regular), 108pts (Veteran)
Weapons: None
Damage Value: 7+ (armoured carrier)
Transport: Up to 5 men
Tow: Light howitzer; light or medium anti-tank gun; light anti-aircraft gun
Special Rules:
• Command Vehicle

SELECTORS

Sd.Kfz 253 half-tracks count as an Armoured Car for the purposes of the generic Reinforced Platoon selector from the *Bolt Action* rulebook. They also count as an Armoured Car for all of the theatre selectors of the *Armies of Germany* book (except for Operation *Mercury,* where they cannot be used).

The Red Army liberates another Russian village from the fascist invaders

SD.KFZ 263 ARMOURED COMMAND VEHICLE (8-RAD)

Based on the 232 series, the Sd.Kfz 263 'Panzerfunkwagen' was a dedicated command vehicle with a bedstead radio frame aerial.

Cost: 84pts (Inexperienced), 105pts (Regular), 126pts (Veteran)
Weapons: 1 hull-mounted forward-facing MMG
Damage Value: 7+ (armoured car)
Special Rules:
- Recce (dual direction steering)
- Command Vehicle

SELECTORS

Sd.Kfz 263 command vehicles count as an Armoured Car for the purposes of the generic Reinforced Platoon selector from the *Bolt Action* rulebook. They also count as an Armoured Car for all of the theatre selectors of the *Armies of Germany* book (except for Operation *Mercury*, where they cannot be used).

SD.KFZ 265 COMMAND TANK

Based on the Panzer I Ausf. B, this vehicle was effectively the first purpose-

built German command tank of the war. Principal service: 1939–45. Numbers manufactured: 190.

Cost: 68pts (Inexperienced), 85pts (Regular), 102pts (Veteran)
Weapons: 1 hull-mounted forward-facing MMG
Damage Value: 7+ (armoured carrier)
Special Rules:
• Command Vehicle

SELECTORS

Sd.Kfz 265 command vehicles count as a Tank for the purposes of the generic Reinforced Platoon selector from the *Bolt Action* rulebook. They also count as a Tank for all of the theatre selectors of the *Armies of Germany* book (except for Operation *Mercury,* where they cannot be used).

Panzer IV Ausf D

PZKPFW 35R(F) COMMAND TANK

The PzKpfw 35R(f) command tanks were a conversion of captured French Renault R35 tanks, which were used by the Germans in the defence of Normandy. Principal service: 1939–44.

Cost: 76pts (Inexperienced), 95pts (Regular), 114pts (Veteran)
Weapons: 1 hull-mounted forward-facing MMG
Damage Value: 8+ (light tank)
Special Rules:
• Command Vehicle
• Slow

SELECTORS

PzKpfw 35R(f) command vehicles count as a Tank for the purposes of the generic Reinforced Platoon selector from the *Bolt Action* rulebook. They also count as a Tank for the **1944 – Normandy** selector of the *Armies of Germany* book.

GROSSER FUNK PZKPFW 38H(F) COMMAND TANK

This command tank was based on captured Hotchkiss H38 tanks and was therefore faster than the PzKpfw 35R(f). It was also used to defend the Atlantic Wall. Principal service: 1939–44.

Cost: 88pts (Inexperienced), 110pts (Regular), 132pts (Veteran)
Weapons: 1 pintle-mounted forward-facing MMG
Damage Value: 8+ (light tank)
Special Rules:
• Command Vehicle

SELECTORS

Grosser Funk PzKpfw 38H(f) command vehicles count as a Tank for the purposes of the generic Reinforced Platoon selector from the *Bolt Action* rulebook. They also count as a Tank for the **1944 – Normandy** selector of the *Armies of Germany* book.

SD.KFZ 250/3, 250/5 AND 251/6 ARMOURED COMMAND HALF-TRACKS

Once again a variant of the 250 series half-track armoured personnel carrier, these platoon command vehicles were equipped with radio aerials. The 251/6 was a variant of the Hanomag equipped not only with radio, but with tables for maps, cipher and encoding machines and other equipment that turned into a veritable advanced command post.

Cost: 72pts (Inexperienced), 90pts (Regular), 108pts (Veteran)
Weapons: 1 pintle-mounted forward-facing MMG
Damage Value: 7+ (armoured carrier)
Special Rules:
• Open-topped
• Command Vehicle

A Panther on the hunt

SELECTORS

Sd.Kfz 250/3, 250/5 and 251/6 half-tracks count as an Armoured Car for the purposes of the generic Reinforced Platoon selector from the *Bolt Action* rulebook. They also count as an Armoured Car for all of the theatre selectors of the *Armies of Germany* book (except for Operation *Mercury,* where they cannot be used).

SD.KFZ 251/3 ARMOURED COMMAND HALF-TRACK

The most common command variant of the Sd.Kfz 251 'Hanomag' half-track. Principal service: 1939–45.

Cost: 84pts (Inexperienced), 105pts (Regular), 126pts (Veteran)
Weapons: 1 pintle-mounted forward-facing MMG
Damage Value: 7+ (armoured carrier)
Transport: up to 5 men
Tow: light howitzer; light or medium anti-tank gun; light anti-aircraft gun
Special Rules:

- Open-topped
- Command Vehicle

SELECTORS

Sd.Kfz 251/3 half-tracks count as an Armoured Car for the purposes of the generic Reinforced Platoon selector from the *Bolt Action* rulebook. They also count as an Armoured Car for all of the theatre selectors of the *Armies of Germany* book (except for Operation *Mercury,* where they cannot be used).

UNITED STATES

PRIEST OP (M7 COMMAND VEHICLE)

The Priest OP (Observation Post) was a command vehicle for batteries of self-propelled guns that carried extra radio and command equipment instead of the howitzer.

Cost: 92pts (Inexperienced), 115pts (Regular), 138pts (Veteran)
Weapons: 1 pintle-mounted HMG with a 360° arc of fire
Damage Value: 8+ (light tank)
Special Rules:
- Open-topped
- Command Vehicle

SELECTORS

Priests OP count as a Tank for the purposes of the generic Reinforced Platoon selector from the *Bolt Action* rulebook. They also count as a Tank for all of the theatre selectors of the *Armies of the United States* book (except for Operation *Market Garden,* where they cannot be used).

M3 SCOUT CAR

The M3 Scout Car was used by the Americans, British and Russians. Its Command variant loses the transport capacity and can mount fewer machine guns, but can act as a fast command vehicle for either armoured formations or recon elements. Principal Service: 1940–45.

Cost: 56pts (Inexperienced), 70pts (Regular), 84pts (Veteran)
Weapons: None
Damage Value: 7+ (armoured car)
Options:
- May add 1 pintle-mounted MMG, covering either the right and rear arcs, or the left and rear arcs for

+15pts
- May add 1 pintle-mounted HMG, covering the front arc for +25pts
- May have the Recce rule for +10pts

Special Rules:
- Open-topped
- Command Vehicle
- Recce (if option is chosen)

SELECTORS

White Command Cars count as an Armoured Car for the purposes of the generic Reinforced Platoon selector from the *Bolt Action* rulebook. They also count as an Armoured Car for all of the theatre selectors of the *Armies of the United States book.*

GREAT BRITAIN

COMMAND ARMOURED TRUCK

The British built small numbers of dedicated armoured command vehicles, based on truck chassis, like the AEC series and the Guy Lizard. Principal service: 1941. Numbers manufactured: 436.

Cost: 80pts (Inexperienced), 100pts (Regular), 120pts (Veteran)
Weapons: None
Damage Value: 7+ (armoured carrier)
Transport: up to 10 men
Tow: light howitzer; light or medium anti-tank gun; light anti-aircraft gun
Special Rules:
- Command Vehicle

SELECTORS

Command Armoured Trucks count as an Armoured Car for the purposes of the generic Reinforced Platoon selector from the *Bolt Action* rulebook. They also count as an Armoured Car for all of the theatre selectors of the *Armies of Great Britain* book (except for Raiders!, Behind Enemy Lines and *Market Garden,* where they cannot be used).

ITALY

CARRO COMANDO M41

Similar in construction to the Semovente 75/18 tank destroyer, the Carro Comando M41 was based on the chassis of the M-series tanks, but instead of the main gun it retained the machine guns of the original vehicles. Principal service: 1942–43.

Cost: 108pts (Inexperienced), 135pts (Regular), 162pts (Veteran)
Weapons: 2 forward-facing hull-mounted MMGs
Damage Value: 9+ (medium tank)
Options:
• Replace the two MMGs with a single HMG for free
Special Rules:
• Vulnerable: because of the riveted construction, all shots to the side and rear of the vehicle get an additional +1 penetration modifier (i.e. in total, +2 for side hits and +3 for rear hits)
• Command Vehicle

M4A3 Sherman 76mm

SELECTORS

Carro Comando M41s count as a Tank for the purposes of the generic Reinforced Platoon selector from the *Bolt Action* rulebook. They also count as a Tank for all of the theatre selectors of the Armies of Italy.

V IS FOR…

The British stuck to their policy of speedy cruiser tanks for breakthrough and envelopment, and slow infantry tanks to accompany the foot soldiers for much of the war. They had a good infantry tank in the Matilda, but it was expensive and time-consuming to build. An alternative was developed and produced in Britain and Canada, and christened the **Valentine**, infantry tank Mk 3. Eight thousand of this reliable tank were made, over a quarter of all tanks produced for the UK. It

saw good service firstly in North Africa, where its 65mm of armour and rugged low profile helped it to stand off the Panzers. Initially equipped with an overburdened 3-man crew and 2pdr, later models had four crew and a 6pdr, and even later a 75mm version was produced.

Many were sent to aid the Russians, and the New Zealand tankers used them well in the Far East.

Mussolini's troops reconnoitre the unforgiving desert

APPENDIX 2: ARMOURED RECOVERY VEHICLES

Five Soviet T-60s capture Tiger 100, 18 January 1943, by Peter Dennis
© Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Campaign 215: Leningrad 1941–44.

Armies went to great lengths to maintain their armoured forces, and the recovery of damaged or broken down vehicles was an important part of keeping units in service. The crews of Armoured Recovery Vehicles (ARVs) were often exposed to danger as they went about their jobs, recovering precious tanks from the battlefield.

ARVS AND FORCE SELECTION

ARVs were very specialized, and as such fit into the force structure in a special way. You may include up to one ARV in your army for every two non-ARV vehicles of damage value 8 or greater you have. This limitation is in addition to the requisition point cost of the ARVs themselves.

ARMOURED RECOVERY

Towing a tank is hard to do under the best conditions; towing it while being shot at is another matter entirely! We are aware that in reality it was sometimes necessary to use several towing vehicles together to move the heaviest of tanks, but for the sake of simplicity we have chosen to ignore this.

FIELD EXPEDIENT

In *The Art of War*, Sun Tzu said 'no battle plan survives contact with the enemy'. This truism has been the bane and boon of many an armed conflict for thousands of years. Sent into the field with partial or simply incorrect information, the boots on the ground are forced to improvise.

Of course, soldiers can't call it improvisation, that wouldn't sound very professional! That's where a term that is near and dear to anyone with dirty boots comes in: 'field expedient'.

It's a fancy term, to be sure, but it simply means 'having been improvised or jury-rigged'. One of the most famous tank-related examples is the Culin hedgerow cutter, ironically using the German's own tank obstacles and turning them into hedgerow-chopping blades affixed to the front of tanks. Their effectiveness might be in question, but the fact that the idea was hatched in the heat of battle, using items scattered around the battlefield by the enemy, ensured it achieved legendary status.

Another, perhaps more amusing story, came from a US tank crew in France just after the Normandy invasion. Their intercom system was notoriously unreliable, and the extreme noise on the inside of the tank made its existence all the more questionable. The crew came up with a field expedient solution: the commander tied ropes to the driver, and, as one crew member put it, 'steered him like a horse. Pull left to go left, right to go right, pull back to stop – and kick him in the back to go forward'.

Given a tough mission and limited resources, the average ground-pounder will figure out a way to get it done. As one officer was quoted as saying: '*Tell* a private to do something, just don't

ARVs can only be used to recover vehicles with a damage value of 8 or greater – anything less is not deemed worthy of risking the ARV. ARVs can only tow immobilized or knocked out friendly vehicles and knocked out enemy vehicles.

To tow a vehicle, the ARV must use an advance order to get into contact with the debilitated vehicle, or begin its activation in contact with it. The ARV must then pass an order test. This is in addition to any test it had to take to do the advance move, and uses the same modifiers.

If it fails, nothing happens. The ARV crew is still trying to get the vehicle hooked up to its winches, is having some sort of trouble, or are simply keeping their heads down for the time being.

If it passes, the ARV crew has successfully latched on to the affected vehicle. Turn the ARV 180°, then line up the affected vehicle right behind it to show that it is being towed.

While an ARV is towing a vehicle, it may not be given a run order. Also, if it fails an order test or a morale check, it has lost its connection to the towed vehicle and must re-attach. Separate the two models by an inch to show this. At the end of its move, the ARV may voluntarily stop towing; simply separate the two models just like you would if it failed a test.

If an ARV touches your table edge while towing a vehicle, remove both of them from the table. If your vehicle was knocked out, the opponent loses any victory points they got for destroying the vehicle. The ARV may not re-enter the table after it leaves, but does not count as a casualty.

At the end of the game, if your ARV is still towing a knocked-out friendly vehicle, your opponent loses half the attrition or VPs he got from destroying it.

If you somehow manage to tow an enemy's knocked out vehicle off the table, you score its victory points value again (this is in addition to the points you scored for knocking it out). At the end of the game, if one of your vehicles is towing a knocked out enemy vehicle, you get half that vehicle's victory points again.

GERMANY

It is often said that World War II was a war of supply. The Allies had the

resources of a whole planet while the Axis had to use what was already within their borders or conquered territory to wage war. For this reason, each German tank lost on the battlefield was doubly painful for the Wehrmacht. As a result, the Germans had to continually re-evaluate their recovery capabilities.

BERGEPANTHER

A common theme among German ARVs was to use a tank chassis and put the prefix 'Berge' on it. The Bergepanther was based on the Panther tank chassis, and was produced from 1943 until nearly the end of the war.

Cost: 102pts (Inexperienced), 128pts (Regular), 154pts (Veteran)
Weapons: 1 forward-facing pintle-mounted MMG covering the front arc
Damage Value: 9+ (medium tank)
Options:
• May replace the MMG with a forward-facing 20mm Light Automatic Cannon for +20pts
Special Rules:
• Open-topped (in the place of the turret there was a wooden box configuration, so even if it is closed it still counts as open-topped)
• It retains the heavy frontal armour that its battle version carried. It has the same frontal value as a heavy tank (10+)

BERGEPANZER T-34

When the Germans first encountered the superb Russian T-34 back in 1941, they were taken by surprise and very impressed by its quality. As a result, many captured T-34s were repainted and used against their former comrades. If a captured T-34s turret was inoperable, but the chassis could still move, it was sometimes converted into a Bergepanzer T-34.

Cost: 70pts (Inexperienced), 88pts (Regular), 106pts (Veteran)
Weapons: None
Damage Value: 9+ (medium tank)

SD.KFZ 9 'FAMO' HALF-TRACK

This vehicle was the heaviest half-track built by the Germans during World War II. It was used to tow the heaviest artillery pieces and as a powerful though unarmoured recovery vehicle.

Cost: 14pts (Inexperienced), 17pts (Regular), 20pts (Veteran)
Weapons: None
Damage Value: 6+ (soft-skinned)
Special Rules:
• Half-track

Polish defenders prepare to face the invading German forces

UNITED STATES

The US had so many tanks on the battlefield that recovery was sometimes more about clearing the way for assaulting forces rather than recovering the specific vehicle in question. The US also had the practice of fitting dummy guns to their ARVs, to confuse the enemy and assist the ARV in its mission.

M31 ARV

Based on the M3 Lee chassis, the M31 was a workhorse vehicle, outlasting its battle counterpart in the service. It was first fielded by the US Army 1st Armoured Division in Tunisia during the 1943 campaign.

Cost: 74pts (Inexperienced), 92pts (Regular), 110pts (Veteran)
Weapons: 1 forward-facing hull-mounted MMG
Damage Value: 9+ (medium tank)
Special Rules:
• Open-topped

M32 ARV

The more commonly used M32 ARV was also introduced in 1943. It was based on the M4 Sherman chassis.

Cost: 77pts (Inexperienced), 96pts (Regular), 115pts (Veteran)
Weapons: 1 forward-facing hull-mounted MMG
Damage Value: 9+ (medium tank)

W IS FOR…

Even before the fall of France, the Panzer generals realized that their armour was outstripping their artillery support in rapid advances, much of the German artillery still being horse-drawn at this point. What was needed was a vehicle that could keep up with the tanks and hit hard. The Panzer II was rapidly losing its effectiveness in tank combat, so it was decided to mount the excellent 105mm howitzer on to the chassis of the Mk 2F. This superb marriage was called the **Wespe**, or Wasp.

The engine was moved to the front, and just enough armour to keep out small arms fire was fashioned into an open-toppped armoured box. The crew of five then had a small but mobile armoured vehicle to shoot and move, meaning they could give close support to advancing forces. Altogether 676 Wespe self-propelled guns and ammunition carriers were built.

Wheels of Steel – an M26 Pershing looking for trouble

BRITAIN AND COMMONWEALTH

While many countries had taken to modifying their tanks for special missions, the British excelled at it. Recognizing the impending need for specialized tanks on D-Day, Major General Sir Percy Hobart was put in charge of the 79th Armoured Division and tasked with changing it to a unit of specialized armour. Soon 'Hobart's Funnies' would be born.

In addition to the vehicles listed below, the British also had access to the Sherman-based M32 ARV listed above.

CHURCHILL ARV

The massive Churchill tank was slow, but powerful, and as such made for an excellent ARV.

Cost: 122pts (Inexperienced), 152pts (Regular), 182pts (Veteran)
Weapons: 1 forward-facing hull-mounted MMG
Damage Value: 10+ (heavy tank)
Special Rules:
• Slow

CROMWELL ARV

As the Cromwell started replacing the Sherman in British armoured units, so too would the ARV variant find a home.

Cost: 77pts (Inexperienced), 96pts (Regular), 115pts (Veteran)
Weapons: 1 forward-facing hull-mounted MMG
Damage Value: 9+ (medium tank)

Churchill Mk VII

A continuation of hostilities as the Finns strike

SOVIET UNION

The staggering scale of the onslaught the Soviets faced as the German war machine swept into them in 1941 meant the Soviets needed all the tanks they could get into battle. One would surmise that recovery vehicles would subsequently be more valuable, but the opposite happened; the resources needed to construct an ARV were seen as wasted. As a result, Soviet ARVs were more often converted from damaged T-34s and stolen German ARVs, as well as American M31s on lend-lease.

In addition to the vehicles listed below, the Soviets also had access to the German Bergepanther as well as the American M31 ARV.

SALVAGED T-34 ARV
A battle-damaged T-34 sometimes gained new life as an ARV. As was the case with many other converted ARVs, the turret was removed and replaced with recovery equipment. It is presented here with a lower damage value than a normal T-34 to represent its salvaged status.

Cost: 64pts (Inexperienced), 80pts (Regular), 96pts (Veteran)
Weapons: 1 forward-facing hull-mounted MMG
Damage Value: 8+ (light tank)
Special Rules:
• The T-34 ARV's front armour was rebuilt, giving it the same frontal value as a medium tank (9+)

KV-1T ARV

Based on the massive KV-1 tank, the KV-1T turned some of the KV-1's drawbacks into advantages; its powerful engine and large chassis helped it tow tanks that other tractors and ARVs would have to double or triple tow.

Cost: 128pts (Inexperienced), 160pts (Regular), 192pts (Veteran)
Weapons: 1 forward-facing hull-mounted MMG
Damage Value: 10+ (heavy tank)
Special Rules:
• Slow
• Armoured all round – no modifiers apply for penetration when shooting at the sides, rear or from above. All shots count the full armour value

X IS FOR…

German rocketry was the best in the world in World War II. There are many secret weapons that may have helped the Germans prolong the war, and a good few others that were absurd flights of fancy. One weapon that at least reached test trials was the extraordinary **X-7 Rotkäppchen**, or Little Red Riding Hood. It was an anti-tank rocket with a shaped charge warhead that was to be launched from a sled-type trailer crewed by three men. It was about a metre long, weighed nine kilos and had a range of 1,200 metres.

The cunning idea behind the X7 was that as the missile flew towards its target, two wires unwound from it, connected to a guidance system controlled by the firer. Using a tracer flare in the rear of the rocket, he had vertical and lateral control of its flight, making corrections as he saw fit. If a hit was made, never easy in combat conditions, the tank was most likely to be knocked out as the charge was sufficient even to kill heavy tanks.

Three hundred were produced, but it is unlikely they saw action, which may well have been a relief to Allied tankers.

ALL NATIONS

While each country had their own ARV types, each of them also had one in common: the humble tractor. Since it was available to each army, and their capabilities were virtually the same, it is listed here rather than repeated in each army's list.

TANK RECOVERY TRACTOR

Cost: 10pts (Inexperienced), 12pts (Regular), 14pts (Veteran)
Weapons: None
Damage Value: 6+ (soft-skinned)
Special Rules:
- Slow

T-34/76

APPENDIX 3: TANKER'S GUIDE

Soviet KV heavy tanks counterattack on the Pulkovo Heights, by Peter Dennis © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Duel 46: Panzerjäger vs KV-1.

If you're reading this, then you no doubt have felt the joy of watching a

battle play out on a tabletop in front of you! There are lots of things you can do to enhance the experience, from wearing an old army cap to simply making sure your dice colours match your army. Another way is by employing the language of the day – to get 'in character' as commander of your army.

TALK LIKE A TANKER

Soldier slang has a long history, probably dating back to the first time two or more humans had to work together to overcome an enemy. Here is a list of slang from World War II that you may find useful in your games.

BRITISH

Ack Dum: Hurry up!
Aiwa: From an Arabic word meaning 'yes'.
Alley: Get out of here!
Anti-Wank: A crass term for 'anti-tank'.
Bash On: To continue moving under duress.
Beat-up: An air strike. 'Call in a beat up on that nest of 88s.'
Bloody: An adjective that means 'very' or 'extremely'. Liberally applied to all sorts of situations, such as 'That was a bloody good stew' or 'Aw, bloody hell'.
Blue: A big mistake.
Blue Pencil: A substitute for any swear word. Named after the blue pencil used by mail censors. 'That's one blue-pencilled major up at battalion.'
Boko: Plenty or a lot.
Boojum: A tank.
Box Up: To mess things up, to fail.
Brew Up: To catch fire. 'I'm afraid my tank brewed up back there.' Also the practice of British soldiers brewing tea at every available opportunity.
By the centre!: 'I can't believe it!'
C3: Worthless. It comes from the British Army classification for physical fitness. 'Holding that hill was C3, mate.'
Crack On: To move quickly.
Doddle: Any easy task.
Dorchester: An armoured command vehicle that was considered luxurious, like the Dorchester hotel in London.
Feet: The infantry.
Heine: A German.
Hitler War: World War II.
I tank: A tank used mainly to support infantry. Usually referred to the Churchill, Matilda, or Valentine tanks.
Jerry: A German.
Kag: Equipment stored on the outside of tanks, usually consisting of the crew's personal gear.

The BEF and British armour working in unison

Tank Proof: Terrain considered impassable by tanks.
Tin Opener: Any aircraft used to destroy tanks.
Tommy: A British Army soldier.
Type: An officer.
Unstick: To pull a vehicle out of mud or other binding terrain.
Wash-out: A failed mission or battle.
Wolverine: The M10 series tank destroyers.
Wouldn't it!: An exclamation used when one is frustrated or confounded. Useful when you roll poorly!
Wuff: To kill an enemy tank.
Yank: An American.
Lorry: A truck.
Maggie: A machine gun nest.
Para: A paratrooper.
PBI: Acronym that stood for 'poor bloody infantry'.
Pencil Line: The shortest distance between two points.
Pixie Suit: The coveralls worn by tank crews.
Pull a Flanker: To do a flanking attack.
Roller Skates: Tanks.
Show: A battle.
Stand on Everything: To stop a vehicle as quickly as possible; slamming on the brakes.
Stonk: A heavy barrage of artillery or mortar fire, or any heavy concentration of fire.
Suicide Squad: Any small unit of troops with a dangerous job, such as anti-tank or recon troops.
Tank Buster: An anti-tank gun.

British M5A1 Stuart

M26 Pershing

US

At Ease!: Stop what you're doing, stop talking, or cut it out!
Belly Out: When a vehicle has sunk in the mud, it has 'bellied out'.
Bowlegs: A derogatory term for cavalryman, a carryover from the days when they rode horses rather

than tanks.

Buttoned Up: A tank with all of its hatches and ports closed. A tank typically 'buttons up' before a battle.

Bought the Farm: Killed in action. The life insurance carried by all US service members was said to be enough to pay off a farm's mortgage.

Cooking with Gas: On the right track, doing well, being correct.

Deadeye: An expert marksman.

Dogface: An American infantryman.

Double Time: To run, or move at a fast pace. Comes from a marching command.

Kraut: A German.

FUBAR: 'Fouled' Up Beyond All Recognition. A situation or condition that is too messed up to fix. 'That tank's tracks are FUBARed.'

Full Bird: A colonel. Named for the eagles that a colonel wears to show his rank, and the fact that he is not a lieutenant colonel, he is a 'full' colonel.

GI: Stands for 'government issue'. Officially, it refers to all military issued equipment, weapons and vehicles. As a joke, soldiers started to refer to themselves as GIs as a statement about their perceived level of freedom in the service.

Go Juice: Fuel. Also 'give it some go juice' meant to speed up or go fast.

Hit the Deck: To dive down under incoming fire.

Jumbo: The M4A3E2 up-armoured Sherman tank.

Maggie's Drawers: Used when you miss a target. 'I must have used up a whole belt, but all I got was Maggie's drawers!' When you didn't get any hits on a target during range training, the spotter waved a red flag. That flag became known as Maggie's drawers.

Kraut: German. Derived from Sauerkraut, a German cabbage dish.

Ma Deuce: The M2 Browning .50 cal machine gun, still in use to this day.

Meatball: The red circle found on Japanese flags and insignia.

Mobile Pillbox: A tank or some other kind of mobile gun that has been dug into a pit.

Nervous in the Service: To be scared or jittery under fire.

Outfit: A military unit, usually the company level or lower.

Pip: Something that was easy to do. 'That last patrol was a pip!'

Purple Heart Box: A derogatory term for a half-track armoured vehicle, so named for the supposedly high chance of getting wounded while riding in one.

Repple Depple: Raw or green troops in one's unit. It refers to the replacement depot, where new recruits just out of basic training would report before being sent out to combat units.

Rommel's Asparagus: Stakes jutting out of the ground to prevent gliders from landing.

Serenade: An artillery barrage.

Short Round: An artillery round that fell short of its target. Usually indicated a round that fell among friendly troops. Can also mean a messed-up situation.

SNAFU: Stood for 'Situation Normal, All "Fouled" Up'. A situation that is out of control or a complete wash.

Squared Away: Everything is as it should be; in order or exemplary.

Stovepipe: Either a bazooka or a mortar.

Sugar-Sugar: A term for the SS, derived from the radio phonetic alphabet word for S.

Zero-Zero: Point-blank range.

Zippo Tank: A tank that has a flamethrower.

ISU-122 assault gun

Panzerjäger I tank destroyer

GERMAN

Amis: Americans.
Ausradieren: To completely destroy a vehicle or position.
Bakofen: An armoured vehicle. Translates as 'baking oven'.
Bepflastern: To 'plaster' an area with artillery fire.
Blaue-Bohnen-Eintopf: Heavy machine gun fire. Translated 'blue bean soup'.
Dauerurlaubs-Schein: 'Permanent leave.' Describes someone killed in action.
Die Behandlung: 'The Treatment.' Heavy fire, usually artillery.
Die Schwarzen: Tank crew. Translates as 'the blacks' due to the black coveralls that tank crews wore.
Faust: A generic term for any shoulder-fired anti-tank weapon. Translates as 'fist'.
Flammen: To kick someone's rear, or deliver a beating to the enemy.
Gangster: An American soldier.
Gartenspritzer: A light machine gun. Translates to 'garden sprinkler'.
Gretchen: The Panzerfaust klein 30, the first model of the Panzerfaust.
Grünhölle: 'Green hell.' Fighting in a forest, usually referring to the Eastern Front.
Hausfriedensbruch: To trespass. Used when attacking enemy territory.

Hinrotzen: Running for cover under fire. Translates as 'evading snot'.
Iwan: A Russian soldier.
Jabo: An Allied ground attack fighter.
Kattun: To receive heavy fire.
Klotzen: To 'pour it on', firing everything you've got at a target.
Komintern: Soviets.
Landser: A soldier or group of soldiers.
Pakfront: A cluster of anti-tank gun positions used to halt or slow armour advances.
Panzerschreck: The shock an advancing tank causes to ground troops.
Post Bekommen: To receive artillery fire. Translates as 'getting mail'.
Rabatz: Heavy enemy fire, used as an ironic understatement.
Rattenkrieg: Urban warfare.
Rotkäppchen: French soldiers.
Russe: A Russian.
Scheunentor: The PaK 43/41 anti-tank gun. It translates as 'barn door', so named because of the large shield they used.
Schleifer: A tank that needs repairs.
Schlumpschütze: A tank or soldier that can't seem to hit its target.
Schnatterpuste: A machine gun.
Sohlenschoner: Motorized infantry.
Spargelbeet: An area covered in tank obstacles.
Stiften Gehen: To escape from a tank or other vehicle.
Stoppelhopser: The infantry.
Tee-Salon: The Soviet T-34.
Teufelsgarten: A minefield.
Tommy: A British soldier – the Germans used the British term as well.
Tommykocher: The M4 Sherman tank. Translates as 'Tommy cooker' for its alarming habit of catching fire when hit.
Vater: The company commander. An affectionate term that translates as 'father'.
Verheizen: The needless sacrificing of troops in an attack.

JAPAN

Ameko: American troops.
Arigeta: American AMTRAC or other amphibious landing craft, translates as 'alligator'.
Batta: An unflattering term for infantry.
Hakuheisen: Close assault.
Heitai: A soldier, in the same vein as 'GI' for American troops.
Igirisu: The British.
Rosuke: An insulting term for Russians.
Shomohin: Gallows humour term for a Japanese soldier, since it translates as 'expendable article'.
Ta Dan: An anti-tank shaped-charge munition.
Tokko: An attack that was so dangerous it was considered suicide.

SOVIET UNION

Amerikosy: An American.
BEF: A common abbreviation seen on tank turrets, it means 'defeat the fascists'.

Bratskaya Mogila Dlya Semerykh: The US M3 Lee tank, on lend-lease to the Soviet army. A derisive term that translates as 'communal grave for 7', owing to the tank's 7-man crew.

Ferdinand: A German self-propelled gun.

Fritz: A German.

Grob: An armoured vehicle that was nonetheless vulnerable to enemy fire. Translates as 'coffin'.

Karandashi: A radio code for infantry.

Korobki: A radio code for tanks.

Spichechnaya Korobka: The 'matchbox', a derogatory term for the T-34 tank.

Zmeya: The German PaK 40 anti-tank gun.

Zveroboi: The Soviet SU-152 and SU-122 self-propelled guns. Translates as 'beast hunter' for their effectiveness against the German Tigers and Panthers.

Y IS FOR…

The British have been parsimonious with their army for many centuries, preferring a small regular professional army and a dominant navy. When they needed extra troops, rather than go to conscription they preferred to pull in soldiers from the militia or what later became the **yeomanry regiments**, volunteers who did not need to do foreign service. The Boer War saw the yeomanry actually clamour to fight overseas, and this was taken up in World War I and then World War II.

The yeomanry units were nominally cavalry so, by 1939, were all in armoured cars or tanks. They fought as well as the regulars on most occasions and still are in the British order of battle today in what is now called the Army Reserves.

Perhaps the most notable yeoman of World War II was Joe Ekins, a Firefly gunner in the 1st Northamptonshire Yeomanry, who was sent to Normandy after his training that had involved firing only five practice rounds. He ambushed three tigers with his Sherman Firefly and brewed up all three, also arguably killing the famous German tank ace Michael Wittmann.

ITALY

Crucco: A German.

Avanti! Forward.

Naia or Naja: military service.
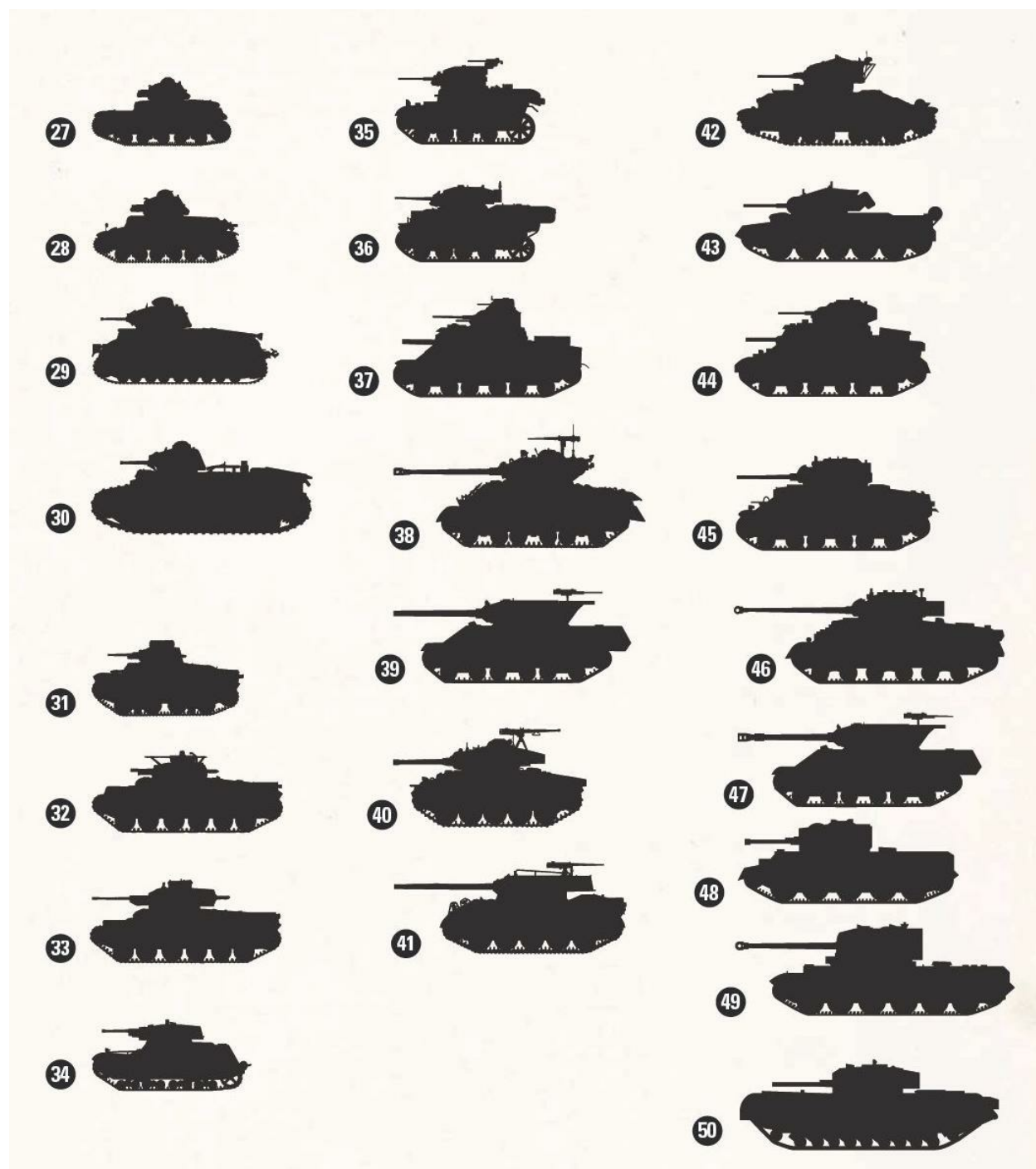
FRANCE

Bleu: A recruit.

Le Boche: A German.

Soviet lend-lease M10 tank destroyer

TANK RECOGNITION
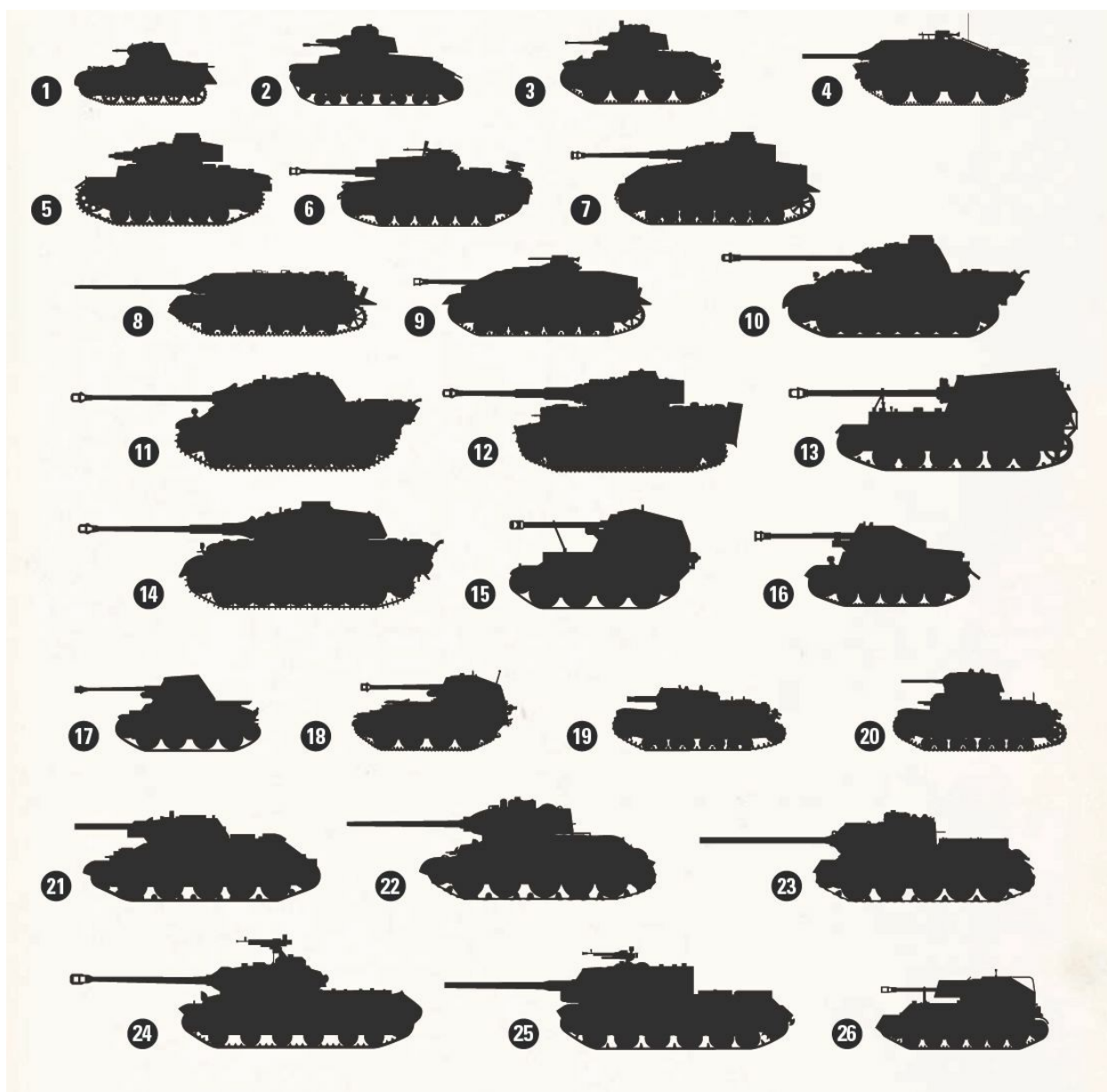
Germany) 1: Panzer I, **2:** Panzer 35(t), **3:** Panzer 38(t), **4:** Hetzer, **5:** Panzer III N, **6:** StuG III Ausf. G, **7:** Panzer IV, **8:** Jagdpanzer IV, **9:** StuG IV, **10:** Panther, **11:** Jagdpanther, **12:** Tiger IE, **13:** Ferdinand, **14:** King Tiger, **15:** Marder I, **16:** Marder II, **17:** Marder III, **18:** Marder III M **Italy) 19:** Semovente 75/18, **20:** Carro Armato 14/41 **Soviet Union) 21:** T34/76 obr.1941, **22:** T34/85, **23:** SU-100, **24:** IS-2, **25:** ISU-122, **26:** SU-76

France) 27: Renault R35, **28:** Hotchkiss 35, **29:** Somua S35, **30:** Char B1 bis **Japan) 31:** Type 95 Ha-Go, **32:** Type 97 Chi-Ha, **33:** Type 97 ShinHoTo Chi-Ha, **34:** 7tp **USA) 35:** M3 Stuart, **36:** M5A3 Stuart, **37:** M3 Lee, **38:** M4A3E8 Sherman, **39:** M10 Wolverine, **40:** M24 Chaffee, **41:** M18 Hellcat **Britain) 42:** A9 Cruiser, **43:** Crusader Mk II, **44:** M3 Grant, **45:** Sherman V, **46:** Sherman VC Firefly, **47:** Achilles, **48:** Cromwell, **49:** Challenger, **50:** Churchill

APPENDIX 4: TANK ACE!

A Firefly engages a Tiger, by Howard Gerrard © Osprey Publishing
Ltd. Taken from Duel 2: Sherman Firefly vs Tiger.

We conclude this book on armoured warfare with a not-so-serious multi-player mini-game, perfect for killing time at an event or club with a fast paced free-for-all.

In this game players are divided into two teams: the Red team and the Blue team. Each player controls a single vehicle.

GAME PARAMETERS

First of all, decide which vehicles are allowed in the game, you can restrict what is allowed with a maximum Defence Value and/or a maximum Penetration value for the main gun of the vehicles that are taking part. You can do this in any combination, as shown in the chart below – simply tick the relevant box!

	Penetration value of main gun			
Penetration	Up to +4	Up to +5	Up to +6	No limit!
Up to 8+				
Up to 9+				
Up to 10+				
No limit!				

Once the limits are set, each player selects one vehicle from his collection within the limit you have agreed. This doesn't have to be a tank – it can be any kind of vehicle so long as it falls within the limit determined for the game. If a player doesn't have a vehicle that fits within the agreed limit, he can always borrow one from a friend, or alternatively use a stand-in that is as close as possible to the vehicle that is allowed – just so long as everyone knows.

COST AND RANK VEHICLES

After each player has selected a suitable vehicle, all of the models are placed in a row, starting from the greatest points value at one end and working down to the least points value at the other. This is the vehicle's **ranking**.

When it comes to working out rank, vehicles are always Veteran if that option is available for them, and they therefore use the Veteran base points cost adjusted for whatever options are taken. If the Veteran option is not available, use the Regular version and cost where available. If only the Inexperienced version is available then use that. In other words, always use the best rating available for the vehicle you have chosen.

The most expensive vehicle – the one that starts the line-up – is vehicle Number One. The second most expensive vehicle is vehicle Number Two, the next Number Three, and so on all the way down the line. If two or more vehicles have the same points cost, roll a die to decide where they sit in the ranking. It is important that the number of vehicles is EVEN, so if you get an odd number of players, you need to place one extra vehicle in the mix, using any vehicle available to any of the players. If possible, this extra vehicle should be cheaper than the cheapest chosen by any player – an unarmed truck, jeep or similar vehicle will serve well in this role.

Here is an example:
- Vehicle Number One – Paul's King Tiger – 666pts
- Vehicle Number Two – John's Crocodile – 582pts
- Vehicle Number Three – Alessio's Pershing (with optional HMG) – 509pts
- Vehicle Number Four – Rick's IS-II – 384pts
- Vehicle Number Five – Wojtek's StuG III – 276pts
- Vehicle Number Six – Mark's Cromwell – 246pts
- Vehicle Number Seven – Steve's Chi-Ha – 162pts
- Vehicle Number Eight – Ches's AMD Panhard – 126pts

M3 Grant

Z IS FOR…

The story of **Zimmerit**, a coating of various substances over German tanks intended to make them less vulnerable to magnetic anti-tank mines, is interesting to study as many people hold differing views on its purpose. Suffice to say that it evolved because the German army had developed the Hafthohlladung, or Panzerknacker, in 1942, a man-placed anti-tank charge with strong magnets that held it on to, for example, a passing T-34 tank. It was a successful, if desperate, weapon and the Germans thought that a defence was needed in case a similar weapon was used against them. They asked a chemical company called Zimmer to develop a paste that could be applied to the structure of any tank that was vulnerable to infantry close assault, which would negate a magnetic charge from sticking to the tank.

The Zimmerit paste was applied in the factories from December 1943 until September 1944, when it was decided to discontinue its use for fears of it catching fire, an odd observation when it had to be hardened by a blow torch in the first place! There were many patterns of Zimmerit used on German tanks and, since the Allies never used magnetic charges, perhaps its greatest benefit to Panzer crews was in helping camouflage them and making light reflections poor.

FORM TEAMS

After ranking all vehicles, the players are divided into two teams – the Red and the Blue team. This is done using the method shown on the chart below, which ensures that the teams are roughly balanced.

- Vehicle Number One is Red.
- Vehicle Numbers Two and Three are Blue.
- Vehicle Numbers Four and Five are Red.
- Vehicle Numbers Six and Seven are Blue.
- Vehicle Numbers Eight and Nine are Red.
- Vehicle Numbers Ten and Eleven are Blue… and so on.

To continue our former example:

- Vehicle Number One – Paul's King Tiger – 666pts – **Red**
- Vehicle Number Two – John's Crocodile – 582pts – **Blue**
- Vehicle Number Three – Alessio's Pershing (with optional HMG) – 509pts – **Blue**
- Vehicle Number Four – Rick's IS-1– 384pts – **Red**
- Vehicle Number Five – Wojtek's StuG III – 276pts – **Red**
- Vehicle Number Six – Mark's Cromwell – 246pts – **Blue**
- Vehicle Number Seven – Steve's Chi-Ha – 162pts – **Blue**
- Vehicle Number Eight – Ches's AMD Panhard – 126pts – **Red**

If there is an odd number of players, the extra vehicle is controlled by the player of the indicated team who has the next cheapest vehicle. So, if the AMD Panhard in the example was an extra vehicle (because Ches had to leave early, but graciously left his armoured car behind), it would be controlled by Wojtek as well as his StuG.

Tiger, Tiger, burning bright. In the forests of the night...

ALTERNATIVE TEAM-FORMING METHOD

There is another way to select teams that is certainly a good deal more entertaining – although we leave it to you to decide whether it produces equally balanced teams. The players controlling vehicle Number One and vehicle Number Two in the rankings will alternately pick one player each to join their team. The player controlling Number Two vehicle gets to pick his team-mate first, to keep things balanced, and then each team selects a further team-mate one at a time.

TEAM COMMANDER

Once the teams have been formed, it's time to determine who is going to be the Commander. If only one vehicle in the team has the Command Vehicle special rule, that player automatically becomes the Commander. If there is more than one Command Vehicle in the team, then the player with the

highest ranked Command Vehicle is the Commander. Finally, if there are no Command Vehicles in the team, the player with the highest ranked vehicle becomes the Commander.

The Commander is the player who makes the decisions for the team, if for example some of the team members start debating what their comrades should do, who should get the next Order Die to come out of the mug, and so forth. This is to keep the pace of the game moving forward without too much time spent in discussion.

If the Commander's vehicle is destroyed, the next vehicle in the ranking (as stated in the selection process above) becomes the next Commander.

GAME ON!

Once the teams and commanders have been formed, play the Tank Battle scenario from this book (see page 17), or the Maximum Attrition scenario from page 110 of the *Bolt Action* rulebook. If in doubt, roll a die on the following chart:

- **1-2:** Tank Battle scenario
- **3-4:** Maximum Attrition scenario
- **5:** Red team choice
- **6:** Blue team choice

US Marines burst from the jungle