OPERATION TYPHOON

BRIAN LAIDLAW

On the last day of September 1941 the divisions of Panzergruppe Guderian wheeled north from the Ukraine towards the 'last great battle of the year' which Hitler had said 'would finally destroy the enemy'.

They had three days to reach their jumping off point for the operation which would be launched on the 2nd of October and was aimed directly at the very heart of Russia – Moscow. The code name for this operation was Typhoon.

Guderian's 2nd Panzergruppe would form the right hook in a pincer movement which would surround Yeremenko's 3 armies on the Bryansk front. Hoepner's 4th Panzergruppe would burst through the Soviet line between Bryansk and Vyazma, acting as the anvil for both Guderian to the south and Hoth's 3rd Panzergruppe to the north. Hoth's drive would be north of the Moscow – Smolensk highway turning south towards Bryansk trapping 6 armies of Timoshenko's, West Front. Infantry support would come from the 2nd, 4th and 9th Armies.

It was a victory that staggered even the victors. Seventy to eighty Russian divisions were destroyed in these classic battles of encirclement and well over half a million dun clad Russian prisoners trudged westwards probably to be seen no more. The road to Moscow was open only two weeks after the great battle had begun. What now could stop the Panzers?

On Oct. 19th Stalin proclaimed a state of siege in Moscow and civilian worker units set out to dig a second line of defence outside their capital. Siberian troops had been sent to stiffen Moscow's Mozhaysk defence line and it had rained since Oct. 8th. German mobility was suddenly strangled in the mud and the momentum of the original push, which had slowed while the huge pockets were reduced, could no longer be maintained. Furthermore the stubborn refusal of the Soviet defenders to give an inch surprised the Germans who were convinced that the enemy was a spent force. Supplies were low and a halt was called at the end of October, not only to allow units to be resupplied but also to safeguard the line because large gaps had appeared through breakdown in communications and a lack of reinforcements who trickled up to the front through conditions which rivaled Passchendaele.

The early days of November saw the onset of cold weather and with the frost came increased mobility for the supply columns. Many of the trucks however were still abandoned where they had sunk in the mud and only limited use could be made of the captured rail network because of problems with the gauge. The men had been fighting almost non stop since June 22nd. In the Panzer divisions their strength was down to 50% while only a third of the original tank force remained. Ammunition was desperately short and the troops, whose clothing was so badly worn that it afforded little protection against the cold, had to rely on local foraging to provide themselves with food.

In the meantime Hoth's 3rd Panzergruppe had now become the 3rd Panzer Army commanded by General Reinhardt while the commands of Guderian and Hoepner had been similarly altered. Field Marshal Fedor von Bock still commanded Army Group Centre.

Stalin had made a further order on Oct. 19th whilst panic spread through the streets of Moscow. The defence of the capital was to be entrusted to the Commander of the Western Front, General G.K. Zhukov.

Typhoon resumed on 15th November – the temperature was -20°C.

It is at this point that SPI's game **Operation Typhoon** takes up the story and its three maps plot the November 15th start line from Klin in the north to Tula in the south. The basic campaign game is 16 turns long with a time scale of one day per turn, but provision is made for extending this by a further 15 turns to December 15th. Despite the extension however there is no scenario which recreates Zhukov's counter-strike launched on December 6th. It is covered only indirectly in the rules by the steady flow of Soviet reinforcements which arrive at about that time.

Typhoon employs a healthy mixture of the proven **Wacht** and **P.G.G.** game systems with a new approach to the question of unknown variable strength units. The map area measures about 5½ft x 3ft and there are 800 counters, less than half of which represent actual combat units. I found that despite their apparent complexity the rules are soon mastered and the pace of the game quite fast considering its size.

ORGANISING THE GAME

As with all games of this scale a little organisation and method before play starts will be well rewarded. At first, for example, there seems to be a bewildering number of conditions which might affect the combat strength or movement allowance of units, but if these are summarised on an 'idiot sheet' it saves referring to the rule book before each combat or, worse still, realising half way through the game that you've completely ignored an important factor.

You'll need containers for the five 'pools' of strength chits which are drawn for each unit when it first goes into combat and I found paper cups to be ideal for this purpose.

The map is pleasing to look at and of course heavily wooded. the counters are reasonable and my only real complaint here is that the Russian units (white on red) are a little difficult to read under light especially the few company units, which are very hard to distinguish. These units have no ZOC so its worthwhile marking them in some way so that they can be spotted easily during play.

German control counters, with a black cross, are provided to mark captured city hexes but I found it better to use these to mark in advance the towns which featured in the victory conditions, especially in the scenarios. (Incidentally why does nobody copy those little Nazi flag markers found in **Narvik**).

Since German divisional integrity is a feature of the game it is a good idea to note those divisions which still have regiments to come on later as reinforcements. If these forces can possibly be kept in reserve you'll have fresh divisions to push into the line when their full complement is made up.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Only the German player gains victory points in **Typhoon**. These are awarded for the elimination of Soviet units and the occupation of city hexes. At the end of each turn the German calculates his victory point score as this has a direct bearing on the commitment of the Soviet 20th and 1st Shock armies.

There are three alternative plans for the German to choose from, each with its own set of victory conditions.

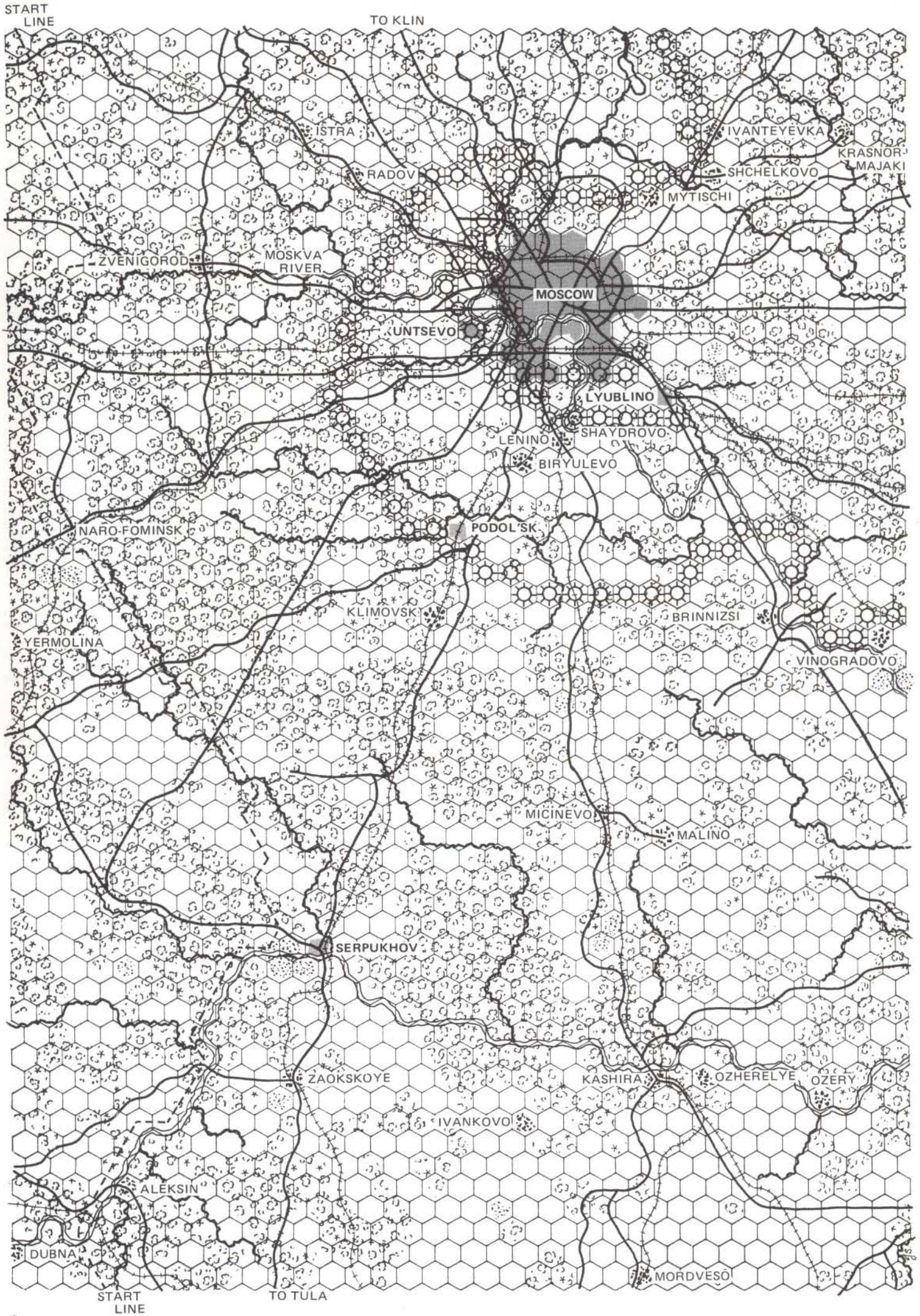
1. Historical direct assault on Moscow.
2. Encirclement of Moscow to isolate it from the Russian interior.
3. A general eastward push.

The plan adopted before the game begins is not revealed to the Soviet player until the end and the victory points attained by the German determines the level of victory for either side.

This idea of alternative plans which I first encountered in **Wacht** must be applauded, adding as it does interest and uncertainty to the game. It seems that the one big remaining problem in wargaming is that of perfect intelligence and this sort of idea is at least another step along the way to coming to terms with it.

My own plan was direct assault; option 1. Both the remaining alternatives require breaking the Russian fortified line to the north and south of Moscow as well as attacking the triple line of defence around the western edge of the city itself. The initial set up demonstrates the paucity of the German reserve strength with the line spread as thin as the jam on a workhouse sandwich. There is little room for error and few units ready to exploit a breakthrough in the Soviet line when this occurs. The elasticity in the line demanded by options 2 and 3 appeared a daunting task and anyway I'm a sucker for following the historical path. I hoped that by pushing the 3rd Panzer Army towards the Moscow Volga canal in the north and the 2nd Panzer Army to the Moskva river in the south I would be able to conserve enough of their strength to fight a slow controlled withdrawal when the Russian counter-offensive began. In the meantime 4th Army and 4th Panzer Army would punch a hole in the Moscow shield.

It is not at all clear from the rules, whether the German player loses his V.P's for occupied city hexes should they be recaptured by the Soviet player. The wording of the rules is such that they do not even imply an answer one way or the other. I proceeded on the assumption that V.P's would be lost on recapture so that only the V.P's held by the German on the final turn could be applied to the victory conditions.


START LINE
TO KLIN
ISTRA
RADOV
IVANTEYEVKA
KRASNOR
MAJAKI
SHCHELKOVO
MYTISCHI
ZVENIGOROD
MOSKVA RIVER
MOSCOW
UNTSEVO
LYUBLINO
SHAYDROVO
LENINO
BIRYULEVO
NARO-FOMINSK
PODOL'SK
KLIMOVSK
BRINNIZSI
YERMOLINA
VINOGRADOVO
MICINEVO
MALINO
SERPUKHOV
ZAOKSKOYE
KASHIRA
OZHERELYE
OZERY
IVANKOVO
ALEKSIN
DUBNA
MORDVESO
START LINE
TO TULA

The extended campaign game offers the Soviet player an opportunity of shifting the victory level one step in his own favour by having 12 units west of the Nov.15th start line at the end of the game. If he can exit these units from the western map edge he gets a further shift awarded to him.

With one point for each Soviet unit destroyed and five points for each city hex held I felt that a total of 50 V.P's and a marginal German victory would be a reasonable conclusion to my first game.

SCENARIOS AND OPTIONAL RULES

The alternative plans described above apply to the campaign game. Typhoon also has 3 shorter scenarios, one for each of the individual game maps. These simply illustrate the offensive in that particular area and indeed the historical set up from each of the scenarios forms the basis of the campaign game. As learning tools they are excellent but I found that whilst playing them the 'edge of the world' syndrome was more than usually evident. They have evocative titles, Panzergruppe Guderian; Objective Moscow, and — von Kluge on the Nara? If playing space is at a premium this is not a game I would recommend buying for the scenarios alone. They are good but this is a classic case of the whole being greater than the sum of the parts.

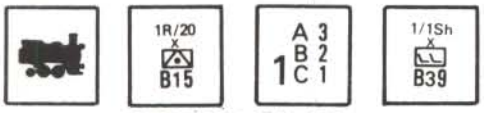
Three optional rules may be used either with the scenarios or the campaign game and add a lot of interest to the game without greatly increasing its complexity:-

a) German infantry units may move into a hedgehog defensive formation which entitles them to have the attackers ratio shifted in their favour. However they lose their ZOC.

b) Soviet ski troops. These units are included in the standard order of battle as are paratroops, anti-aircraft units, but this rule gives them a raison d'etre. During snow conditions they are entitled to combat ratio shifts both in attack and defence.

As we shall see later anti-tank units are also given the opportunity to use their functional ability and it seems a pity that the anti-aircraft brigades also could not have been allowed to play out their role; particularly as air points can be used in ground support.

c) The final optional rule offers an alternative German Support total. I'll discuss the Support rules later but basically this option provides for an increase in German logistical support over the historical level for those who want to experiment.



CRITICAL RULES AN ACHILLES HEEL ?

In my opinion the two most critical rules in any proposed simulation of this battle are Weather and Supply.

It could be argued that Weather is the more important of these since the Germans blamed the ultimate failure of their operation, firstly on the mud which choked the impetus of the original drive and then the intense cold which caused more casualties than enemy action and froze weapons into useless heaps of metal.

To reflect this, all units in the game are classified as having either a good or poor Winterisation level. All German and some Soviet units therefore have their combat strengths and movement allowances halved when there is snow present. There is some compensation for mechanised units however in that their mobility is marginally increased during a freeze.

I've never felt comfortable pushing mech. units across a river regardless of whether there is any bridge in the vicinity. In Typhoon these units may cross rivers only where they are traversed by roads (even in advance after combat) and with satisfying logic this rule is suspended should the rivers freeze. At the same time defenders attacked from across a frozen river lose their terrain advantage.

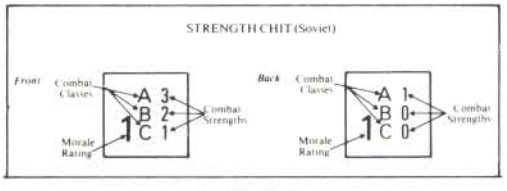
I don't think however that sufficient thought has been given to these rules because even at first glance they begin to lose credibility. For example it is possible in mid November to have days of snow which will disappear overnight and from the beginning of December rivers are liable to freeze and then flow quite freely from day to day. Now I'm no meteorologist but this looks odd to me. We're not talking about your Berkshire Christmas card type winter here but undiluted Arctic conditions which could and did freeze men solid. Once snow sets in the rules should have provided for this either to be left as a permanent condition or at least to stagger a thaw over several days, and if rivers freeze they should remain frozen till the end of the game. It's extremely disconcerting after all to have your units abilities reduced by half and their supply radius shortened by one days light snow which vanishes next morning.

Weather also affects air support in that any precipitation will deprive both players of all air points. I should explain that ruleswise a state of precipitation when combined with a ground freeze condition will result in snow. Logically then precipitation combined with a normal ground condition must result in rain so why on earth should this also ground all aircraft? My solution is to treat rain as being the same as a simple overcast condition and consequently reduce the available air points by half.

I can see that playability (as distinct from simulation) is increased through having as unpredictable weather pattern but I stress that final word pattern, not the random selection of possibilities found on an English Bank Holiday. For me there is no satisfaction in taking advantage of an opponents bad luck when he suddenly finds himself compromised by a rule which had little or no basis in reality. It may be worth tinkering around with these rules and imposing some regularity on the weather condition for yourself; even just to the extent of rejecting silly results when the crop up.

It was an attractive touch when the historical weather was listed as an alternative in the **Wacht** rules on which the game system is loosely based. I'm puzzled as to why similar data could not have been provided for **Typhoon**. I suspect however that almost permanent snow conditions would have weighted the game too heavily in favour of the Russian. The weather rules would appear to be the Achilles Heel in the designers representation to us of the game as a simulation.

The supply rules are a different story as one might expect from S.P.I. since their development has been forged and tempered over a long series of games. They are well integrated into the system, and the only major departure from the norm is that unsupplied units defend at full strength. Isolation however has more serious consequences: attack strengths are reduced to one and defence and movement capabilities are considerably reduced.



TACTICS

One of the fascinations of this game is the approach to untried units and I can see this feature forming the basis of many articles and much comment in the future.

All units in **Typhoon** apart from H.Q.'s and German tank battalions begin the game untried. Instead of the standard attack/defence strengths each unit has a printed Morale Rating (M.R.) and a Combat Class. German units have two possible M.R.'s; 2 or 3 while the Russians have three viz I, 2 or 3. As a general rule the higher the number the greater the chance of the unit being strong! Within these ratings the units are further subdivided into A B or C Combat Class; though only the Russian has 'C' class units. Combat Class describes in general terms the manpower and weapons capabilities of the unit.

As each unit faces combat for the first time a strength chit is picked randomly from a 'pool' which matches the Morale Rating of the unit in question. There are obviously five such 'pools', two for the German, three for the Russian. Each chit shows a range of combat strengths, one for each of the possible combat classes.

Take for example the 8th regiment 3rd motorised Infantry Division which forms part of the 57th Panzer Corps. It has an M.R. of 3 and its Combat class is A. A good strong unit to throw against the Soviet line? — lets see. Picking a chit from the German '3' pile we come up with a 6. Had this regiment been B Combat Class the same chit shows us that its strength would have been 4.

The strength chits remain with the unit in the style of TSS and are back printed with the reduced strength to be used when the unit suffers a loss. Further step reductions cause the unit to lose its ZOC and take on a cadre status only.

At last then we have system which scotches the plans of the arithmetic 'arolds' who scratch among their forces to factor in precise odds to each combat. It would be foolish though to begin the game with no idea at all of the possible strengths of your own units or the enemy's. But SPI don't even give you the range of possible strengths of units let alone average strengths:— so if you want a job doing — do it yourself. Beats me though why they don't tie up loose ends like this when it takes so little extra effort.

Table 1

German Units

	Morale Rating 2		Morale Rating 3	
Combat Class	**A**	**B**	**A**	**B**
Max Strength	8	5	8	5
Min Strength	1	1	4	3
Avg. Strength	4	3	6	4
No. of Units	52	10	51	15
No. of Chits	65		40	

Soviet Units

	Morale Rating 1			Morale Rating 2			Morale Rating 3		
Combat Class	**A**	**B**	**C**	**A**	**B**	**C**	**A**	**B**	**C**
Max Strength	10	5	4	16	8	7	20	10	8
Min Strength	1	1	1	2	1	1	10	5	3
Avg. Strength	4	2	2	9	5	4	16	8	6
No. of units	33	34	20	37	8	13	4	13	2
No. of Chits	95			65			21		

There are none of the now discredited 0-0-8 **P.G.G.** type units but enough variety to make each playing of the game a whole new adventure. Remember when studying the table that much of the Soviet strength appears on the reinforcement chart and that two whole armies are waiting at Moscow to be commited to the line when triggered by the state of play. Step losses are dramatic even for the strongest units, 50% of their strength is lost with the first step and a second reduction leaves the unit at cadre strength only.

The C.R.T. interrelates with the step reduction system in several ways and those of you who have played **Wacht** or **P.G.G.** will be familiar with most of the tactical possibilities associated with the system. Almost all results generated on the C.R.T. indicate both mandatory step losses and retreat requirements. You may elect to lose extra steps instead of retreating except when the result is printed in bold type which indicates a breakthrough. Take for example a simple D2 (1). Here the defender must lose at least one step (parenthesised). He then has the option of apportioning the 2 result between retreats and step losses in any way he chooses. Should the defender have insufficient steps to satisfy the mandatory step loss requirement the remaining steps are available to the attacker as extra hexes in his advance after combat. The rules do not state whether following a successful single hex attack against more than one stack of defenders, the defender may take his loss entirely from one stack whilst voluntarily retreating the others.

Enough has been written about these retreat/loss options following the publication of **P.G.G.** for even the least imaginative player to benefit. One new ploy came to light however during the playing of **Typhoon**. We'll discuss German Support later, suffice to say for the moment that the effect of being unsupported renders the unit out of supply. Tank and mechanised infantry units have their movement allowances halved whilst unsupplied, and to leave an enemy ZOC a unit must use half its movement allowance plus the terrain cost of the hex moved into. When there is no freeze condition present the cost of moving through wooded country for mechanised units is 5 MP's. All mech units have a basic movement allowance of 14 and for unsupplied units this is halved to 7. In wooded country then, during fine weather, unsupplied mech units are 'locked' into the ZOC of even a weak enemy unit — there is a glut of woods defending Moscow. Tank units are extremely vulnerable since step losses are taken from these units first, and the German tank battalion particularly so, as they have a combat strength of only 1. The Russian player therefore should pounce on this sort of opportunity and by standing firm against the panzers either bring up reinforcement to hammer them hard or oblige them to attack at unfavourable odds.

The power of German tank battalions in this game is reflected not in their combat strength but in their ability to combine with other types of units to gain a Combined Arms Combat Bonus. Russian tank units also qualify for the same bonus and being of brigade size are more able to operate independantly of other units. For each tank unit in such an attacking stack the owning player gains one shift in his favour on the C.R.T. A rule like this is an ingenious device for persuading the player to make realistic use of his armoured units and to employ the correct tactics. You will see from Table 1 that on average the basic combat ratio is likely to be only marginally in favour of the attacker if at all. Add to this the other factors such as snow, supply and rivers which might affect combat strengths and it becomes obvious that the German player especially relies heavily on his combat bonuses. It is vital therefore that he thinks carefully before deploying his precious armour. Again, as in **Wacht** the Combat Arms Bonus (CAB) is effective only in attack. In defence its role is limited to negating any C.A.B. used by the attacker. Soviet anti-tank units may be used in such defence when combined with non armoured units.

The tank battalions are ignored when computing German Divisional Integrity (D.I.) leaving them free to join the foot slogging infantry if needed, rather than the motorised regiments they usually accompany. For each participating division fulfilling the D.I. requirements the German may shift the ratio column by one in his favour. There is a maximum of three such shifts allowed for each attack. In attack all regiments of a division need only be adjacent to the defender to gain the bonus. They need not necessarily be stacked in the same hex. This is helpful not only in narrowing the line of retreat for the Russian but since only one regimental or divisional sized unit may attack out of a single hex the German can maximise his attack strength by having all the divisions regiments participate in the attack. Indeed he can use one of those regiments in a diversionary attack on another defender and so long as it is still adjacent to the main defender it still qualifies for the D.I. attack bonus.

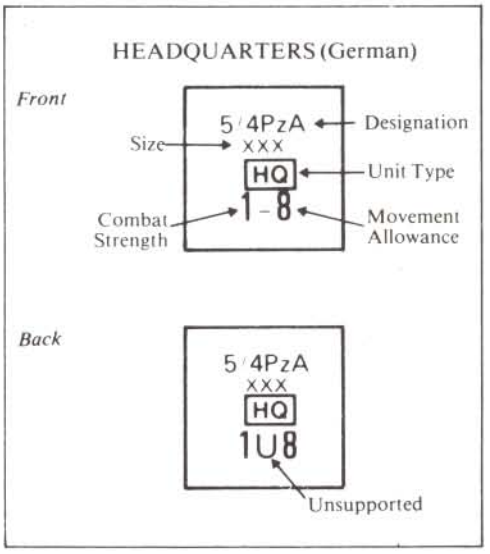
For D.I. in the defence it is important to note that the defending regiment need only be adjacent to *another* regiment of the same division.

There is no Mechanised Unit Movement Phase in Typhoon and I mentioned before the alarming lack of German reserve strength. It's important then to make optimum use of these rules to spread the line as thinly as you dare and to concentrate what offensive power you can at the point where you hope to break the Soviet line. Breakthrough results are printed in bold type on the CRT and indicate that the phasing player may decide on the path of retreat and advance his victorious units and those with which they are stacked, one hex more than the number retreated by the defender; the defender loses his option of taking step losses instead of retreating. Since units advanced after combat will not usually be reinforced during the phasing player's turn he should ensure that the initial advance is made by as strong a force as possible to guard against counter attack. If necessary the German should move his units into hedgehog formation though of course they immediately lose their ZOC.

The German can take advantage of these rules only if he can keep his army in some semblance of order and this is no easy task. For example the supply radius of his units from their headquarters, normally 6 hexes, is reduced to 4 hexes when snow appears. Unlike **P.G.G.** the German will be constantly stacking and unstacking his divisions to optimise their use and he is further encouraged to do this by the ruling that adverse results affect all units in a hex irrespective of whether they participated in the combat. Fascinating stuff, and gratifying to see that so much thought has been given to the Operational level simulation since the clumsy **D.O.S.** albeit that it comes by way of a tactical game system.

I made the mistake during my game of trying to pinch off large portions of the Soviet line rather than settling for smaller pockets. Without a mech movement phase this gives the Russian the chance to escape the trap before it snaps shut. Movement is severely restricted during snow so in my opinion the German plan should be centred on short sharp disabling shock attacks rather than the grand plan. Smaller localised attacks will enable both players to force retreating units to stack with units yet to be attacked. If these latter units suffer an adverse result in that phase the retreated units stacked with them are automatically eliminated. If enough holes can be punched through his first line the Russian will be obliged to surrender large areas of land and retreat. This is the moment for the German to break for the rearward targets.

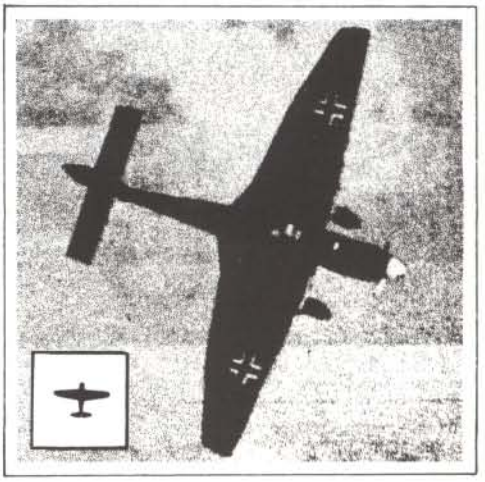
Typhoon uses an integrated CRT and only terrain which directly affects unit's combat strengths are rivers and entrenchment hexes. Two dice are used with the table giving a wide range of possible outcomes. The lowest odds attack which is certain to be in favour of the attacker is 8-1 in clear terrain, 9-1 in woods or town and 10-1 in city or rough hexes. Even on this combat results column there is only a 45% chance of a breakthrough result, while even maximum odds give only a 55% chance. Most of the combat in **Typhoon** uses the row covering woods-town. There is no distinction between light and heavily wooded areas. The terrain types do not follow the contours of the hexes (with the exception of rivers) and you'll have to decide for yourself which terrain type takes precedence. In my opinion its the terrain most favourable to the defender, but the choice is yours.



I found it wise more often than not to stack the German H.Q. units with strong combat units. These HQ's are not as vulnerable as in **P.G.G.** for example, since they have a retreat before combat option of sorts, but it is imperative for the German player to keep his forces organised and his forward units in supply. Like HQ's, cadre strength units stack for 'free' with combat units as do the Russian battalion and company sized units. It is a good idea to use these as cannon fodder to absorb losses so protecting the more powerful infantry regiments and divisions which, as we have seen, lose their combat capabilities so quickly.

Air power in Typhoon is handled in the standard SPI manner, that is to say, Air Points which are available for ground support or German air interdiction. In the early turns especially I committed about all my available air points to ground support. By using his own Air Points the defender may negate some of the attackers advantage but if he employs enough air power the attacker will always get one shift in his favour on the CRT for his critical attack. The Luftwaffe may interdict the Soviet rail system but is apparently not allowed to interdict on roads. This is most odd when one considers that by using strategic movement a Soviet mech unit can move 42 hexes along a road in normal weather.

Finally if he gets that far the German finds a small nuance in the rulings for combat among the entrenchments. Defenders in an entrenchment hex are not obliged to attack adjacent enemy units. I know there is nothing new in the rule itself but it divides nicely, into separate categories, the tactics required for each type of fighting. Its an inspired little rule which at the end of the hard slog gives you a whole new ball game.



GERMAN STRATEGY

Luck plays an important part in this game and this is especially true for the German player since it is his units which are most affected by adverse weather and who rely to some extent on the die roll to enable them to perform at maximum efficiency.

At the beginning of every fourth turn starting on turn one, the German player allocates ten Support Points among his four armies. He then rolls a die for each of those armies and by cross referring the die roll to the Support Points allocated, can see the number of corps HQ units within that army which will be 'in support' for the next four turns. The maximum number of HQ units in any one army which can be 'in support' can never be greater than the original number of Support Points allocated to it. More likely it will be considerably less. The careful player should manage to retain an average of 7 or 8 out of 10. There are 14 corps HQ units on the board at the beginning of the game (47 panzer Corps arrives turn 8) so only about half the German army will be at full fighting strength at any one time. Units whose HQ is unsupported are considered out of supply.

Unless he has a carefully defined strategy then the German will quickly discover that his strength is dwindling away in un-coordinated attacks. On the other hand with so many variable factors I think it is impossible certainly at this stage, to define an optimum strategy for any of the 3 German plans.

The best attacking terrain is in the area of Guderian's 2nd Panzer Army around Tula. However this army is deemed to be unsupplied for the first three days and 47th Panzer Corps does not arrive until turn 8. (Its worth considering these details when allocating Support Points). The prime objective here must be Tula (10 V.P.'s).

All HQ's, Soviet included, may launch one accelerated assault during the game (the Soviets only after turn 16) which doubles the attack factor of each of the attacking units. I used this during the first turn to try to take Tula by surprise. My units

therefore attacked at normal strength (½ for unsupplied and doubled for accelerated assault) but had to attack across a river and against the entrenchment marker inside Tula as well as using the least favourable line on the CRT. I managed to reduce the defender to cadre strength units. The rules do not say whether a defender in an entrenchment hex attacked across a river has his defence strength doubled tripled or quadrupled. We assumed the worst. As German movement was then ended for that turn Tula was quickly reinforced and I spent several turns trying to breach the river that runs south round Tula then eastwards. It might be better to breach the river first and assault Tula from the north or east. If the battle looks like being prolonged it will be necessary to take Venev to cut the road and rail routes to Tula.

If Tula falls quickly it might be possible to try for a push to the Osetr river but a more realistic objective would be a line running from Tula through Venev to Kashira. The German should keep in mind that his final line should be in good defensive terrain and give himself time to deploy his forces when in position.

The Oka river bisects the map almost at the junction between 2nd Panzer and 4th armies. 4th Army is the most powerful of the German armies but lacks armoured support and faces stiff opposition. Its immediate objective should be the city of Podolsk to hold the bridge over the Oka and the road to Tula.

There are two Soviet armies near Moscow which are committed to the line as individual units when a combination of German VP's and die rolls released them or when German units encroach within 7 hexes. 4th Army, by striking from the south towards Moscow, can use the favourable open terrain and breach the outer ring of fortifications without disturbing the Soviets in the city. They then have a reasonable approach to Moscow from the south or south east.

4th Panzer Army have the northern approach to Moscow and have the bulk of the armour. They face the greatest concentration of entrenchment hexes and the powerful Soviet 1st Shock Army in reserve is in this sector. They may also have the responsibility of taking Klin on their extreme left flank if 3rd Panzer Army is unable to do so. They must also be looking for a finish line; if possible along the Moscow-Volga canal.

The open country on the Lipka river basin leading to Klin and Dimitrov is unfortunately on the extreme flanks of both 3rd and 4th Panzer armies. 3rd Panzer Army is the weakest of the German armies and faces some of the stiffest country though defended by few Russian units. They can pull off surprises but are best used to protect the 4th Panzer flank. My own plan was similar to this but I got only the briefest sniff of Moscow; being forced out of a couple of hexes during the same turn. The game finished on turn 25, with the Germans being pushed out of Klin and Podolsk and unlikely to regain them. I still held Serpukhov and Tula but it seemed pointless to continue as there was no way of calculating my performance within the context of the rules.

Some final ideas for the German to consider.

i) Use the accelerated assaults in the early turns, the Russian line must be broken in the first half dozen turns.

ii) Don't be afraid to attack with unsupported or unsupplied units at times. It often pays to do so against weak Soviet units.

iii) Keep your armies organised. Attacks must be pushed on relentlessly and there is little opportunity to stop and regroup.

iv) It might pay to transfer some of the tanks from 4th Pz army to 4th Army though of course infantry move more quickly through wooded terrain than armour.

v) If the extended campaign game is being played (its the only way) consider from the outset where your stop line will be and plan your defence. You can only delay the Russians but you must stop them pushing you back beyond the start line.

SOVIET STRATEGY

The most striking thing about the Russian starting positions is that the entrenchment hexes are completely unoccupied. These stretch the length of the Moscow-Volga canal; around the western edge of the city in a triple layer and then southwards along the Moskva river. Only the Soviet player may use these fortifications and it is never too early in the game to begin to man them. Any units from the weak 20th Army (in reserve in Moscow) which can be released through the commitment rules, should be thrown into these defences so doubling their defence strength.

The 1st Shock Army on the other hand, also in reserve, is for the most part excellent fighting troops and can be deployed anywhere in the line. The ski troops are the most exciting units here and during the game I played were responsible for killing several tank battalions in surprise hit and run attacks.

Obviously the onus is on the German to do most of the attacking in the early stages and the Russian does have a mainly passive role. However this is not to say that he won't be kept busy shifting his forces to cover the areas where the supported German corps are most prevalent. Where possible the armoured brigades should be stacked with infantry units to negate the German Combined Arms attacks and so that similar counter attacks can be made when the opportunity presents itself.

It is extremely important to hold Klin in the north and Tula in the south for as long as possible for not only will this keep the German stretched and starved of reserves but the cities also provide pivot points for Soviet flanks.

Since so much of the Russian activity will depend on the pattern of success or failure of the German it is difficult to give precise indicators to Soviet strategy from a terrain viewpoint. However the final retreat to the entrenchments should be made in good order so that the best use can be made of them.

The speed and success of the German advance will also dictate the committment of Soviet reinforcements but it is preferable if these can be accumulated and then launched in concentrated blows at the German line when it begins to flag! Remember that the requirement for shifting the victory level in favour of the Russian is for him to end the game with 12 non HQ units west of the Nov 15th start line, and his best chance of achieving this is to use just such a concentrated force in a type of reverse bulge situation.

Time is most definitely on the side of the Russian, not only in his reinforcement strength but also in regard to the weather. His forces are better able to cope and with luck frozen rivers will reduce the German defence options. Even so, the Soviet must be careful not to lose concentration in the early game, some of the German armies are weak and suffering from several disadvantages but are still capable of wielding a decisive blow. Treat this wounded tiger with respect.

SUMMARY

I followed the development of this game with great interest through Moves and S&T, but it seemed to be delayed, revised and amended so often that I had real fears that it would end up as 'another fine mess' in the tradition of **D.O.S.** It is gratifying to note then that what we end up with is a damn fine wargame. So I am mystified by Joseph Angiolillo's designers notes which read almost in the nature of an apology. He tells us that he felt hamstrung by the feedback question into beginning the game midway through the Operation and assures us that given a free hand he would have covered the whole battle using the **P.G.G.** system.

In the first place S.P.I. have demonstrated once or twice in the past that they don't always feel themselves hog-tied by feedback answers and secondly his original design was pure **Wacht** whilst the feedback specified **Wacht/P.G.G.** Also the two distinct halves of the Operation were so vastly different that in my opinion it would need two sets of rules (like **Atlantic Wall)** to cover the situation adequately. I doubt if mere ad hoc modifications (like weather) to the **P.G.G.** system would be enough to guarantee a reasonable simulation.

The weather rules, whilst irksome, are not beyond redemption since any adaptation or modification to them would not have any consequent affect on any of the other rules. One hopes that the V.P. calculation rule omission will shortly be rectified by the publication of errata which should also include some minor corrections to the O.O.B. Still it wouldn't be S.P.I. without the occasional glaring mistake would it? Every game a fortune cookie.

An added bonus with **Typhoon** is that it functions very well as a solitaire exercise. Both sides have a distinct offensive and defensive phase during the campaign game and the unknown strength units give an added tension to this type of play.

Undoubtedly the game will sell well containing as it does the wonder ingredient – tanks on the Russian front, but it also deserves recognition in its own right as a 'clean' manageable and often fascinating game with a wealth of strategic alternatives. There are few games one could recommend unreservedly and this certainly isn't one of them but if you enjoy Operational level simulations and the subject appeals to you then I think you'll find **Typhoon** is a very good buy.

TYPHOON POST-PUBLICATION ERRATA

If a unit in an entrenchment hex is also attacked across a river (e.g. Tula) is the defence strength doubled, tripled, or quadrupled?
Doubled

Rivers double defender attacked from across them. Confirm that this rule applies to streams also.
No, it does not.

COUNTERMIX

Ignore Soviet units 3Gd/16, 312/30, and 31/26 (brigade). They are not used in the game.

RULES

[7.14] A cadre unit can count as either a unit of its original size or as a cadre for stacking purposes. Thus, more than one cadre may stack in the same hex if the owning Player so desires (other stacking rules permitting).

[7.15] If Soviet battalion or company-size units are the only units to occupy a given hex, then an unlimited number of these unit-types may occupy this hex.

[15.3] Soviet Reinforcement Schedule

(a) Ignore reference to 185/30(Game-Turn 15).
(b) 31/26(Game-Turn 16) is a division.