



SQUADRON BRIEFING

No. 2

African Warlords

NATO Forces

Shapeways

Game Report & Analysis

A Periodical for **SQUADRON**

Sit Rep

Don't you just hate it when life get in the way of your wargaming? I suppose we shouldn't complain, even if it means that the second edition of Squadron Briefing has taken much longer to finish than the first. The good news is that is the length is longer too. In this issue we see how players can utilise figures bought for African warlord games in Sabresquadron through an idea for an 'imagination' conflict, have a close look at - Article 5 - our NATO Cold War supplement, see our new markers in action, read about some of the gems for the modern period hidden away on Shapeways, and finish with a detailed report from the Cold War with an analysis of what happened and why. At 20 pages, at least there is a good return for the wait!

As before, we're interested in feedback so let us know what you think. If you have any articles or ideas please send them to the e-mail address below.

Thanks and have a good one.

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Simbasquadron!

Back in the mid-1990s my wargaming group got the taste for conflicts set in post-WW2 Africa amongst hypothetical factions, often led by some rather distasteful warlord. After a considerable investment in 15mm forces, we had loads of fun representing religious fanatics, populist dictators and diehard colonials. An advantage of the system was that the generic nature of the forces meant that one was free to add whatever items of equipment that took one's fancy, so we ended up with a variety of tanks, APCs, trucks and guns in our faction's own paint scheme. Alas games tend to go out of fashion, so eventually the forces were consigned to their boxes and found their way to the bottom shelf of the 'armoury'.



Hunting through some boxes one day, I came across the long-demobbed African faction and realised it had potential for use in Sabresquadron. There was the idea of fighting one faction against another, but the French mission in Mali against jihadists was still recent so I realised the potential of basing games around a similar intervention set vaguely in the early 1990s. This led me to La Cote d'Ivoire.

La Cote d'Ivoire is a former French colony somewhere in West Africa. It has a coastal plain, and a hinterland mainly of desert but with some highlands carrying a substantially forested area (i.e. plenty of scope to vary the terrain). Since independence in the 1960s, the state has had a turbulent political history with one strongman replacing another at regular intervals, but a lack of bloodshed - by contemporary African standards - and anything worth having has meant it has mainly been left to sort itself out. Unfortunately the latest President has been more repressive than his predecessors meaning that, first he has held onto power longer and, second his inevitable fall has had much worse consequences. A set of ill-conceived policies carried out in the heartland of the main tribe resulted in M. Le President offending some deeply held beliefs and provoking a full-scale religious-uprising led by a self-styled 'Saviour'. Officers sent to quell the revolt have defected, taking their troops with them, and the dictator has boarded his private jet and sought safety at the George V in Paris.

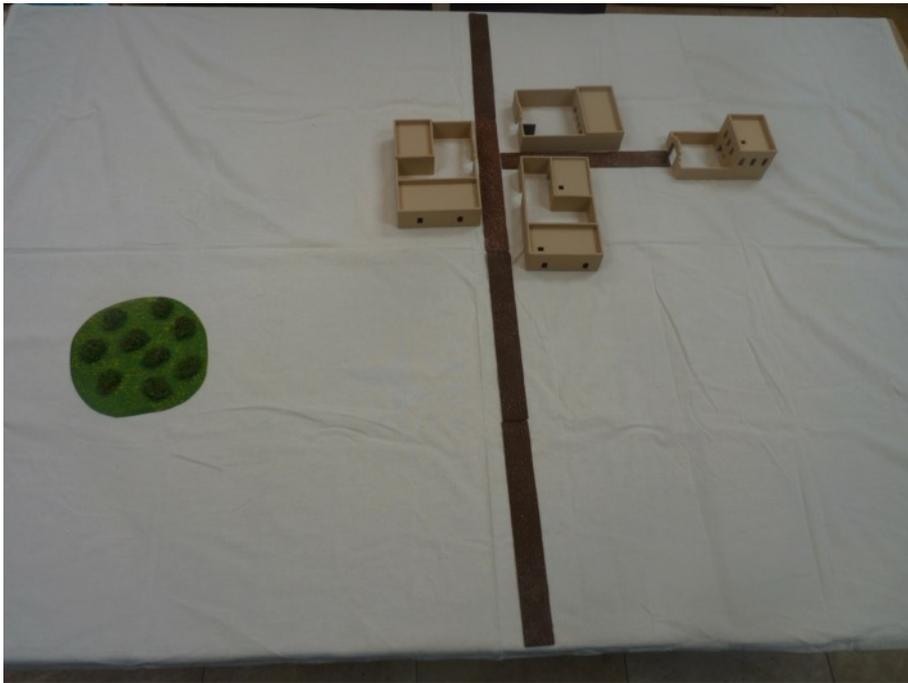


The Peter Pig Modern Africa range is divided into 3 types of soldier - Militia, Regular and Professional. I was keen that these games should be very different to the Cold War clashes, so decided to stress these distinctions for the different groups in the La Cote d'Ivoire. The Militia (bare-chested or wearing t-shirts and carrying minimal webbing) were to be the religiously-inspired rebels, with high morale (*Superior*) and next to no training (just right for the *Inept* rating). The Regulars were to represent the army of La Cote d'Ivoire, either as opposition to the rebels or as defectors to the uprising, and were to be rated as having *Raw* training and *Poor* morale. The Professionals were originally painted as mercenaries so that is what they were to be - although the current term is Private Military Contractors - and would represent troops hired to protect business interests in the country, rated as standard *Trained* soldiers with *Average* morale.

With the forces mustered and some buildings obtained, the scene was set for the opening game.

Simbasquadron- Game On!

The first game involved a nice and simple attack-defence scenario set on an open desert table. A small force of Private Military Contractors (PMCs) - consisting of 2 infantry platoons, a command section, a support section with a pair of recoilless rifles, and another support section with 2 SFMGs - was given the mission of defending an outpost in the desert against a much larger approaching rebel force. The table is below:



The terrain was open desert except for the outpost of 4 buildings and a small area of open woodland. The rebels were to enter from the bottom as a force consisting of an overall commander, a company of rebels with 3 infantry platoons, a support section with 2 SFMGs and a tank section of 2 T55s (both purchased at a knock-down price after the fall of the Berlin Wall and now crewed by very enthusiastic rebels who have little idea of how to use them). Assisting the rebels was a company of defected regulars that consisted of 2 platoons of infantry and a support section of 2 recoilless rifles towed by light trucks.

The PMCs deployed on the roofs of the outpost buildings behind the walls that gave them cover. One platoon was at the front with the recoilless rifles positioned so as to have a good field of fire along the road, the second platoon covered the right flank and the SFMGs were placed to make use of their longer range and to protect the left flank.



The rebels entered the table with the irregular company on the right. The SFMGs were deployed close to the road to deliver direct supporting fire onto the forward PMC position. The tanks were in the centre of the table on the left flank of the irregulars, also to support the attack by pounding the forward defenders. The regulars entered on the left with one platoon heading for the wood, and the towed RCLs using the wood for cover as they motored into a flanking position. The plan was to deliver fire from the support elements while attacking on a broad front in order to stretch the defence and (hopefully) find a weak spot. The commanders stayed out of harm's way at the rear.



The rebel 2nd Platoon came under fire from the forward defenders and the SFMGs, rapidly losing 4 rifle groups dead and another one neutralised. The other rebel platoons also came under fire but lost only one group between them, however one tank was hit and destroyed by a recoilless rifle. These losses were shrugged off by the rebel units and the advance continued unabated.

The SFMGs commenced firing making some of the defenders duck behind the walls. Several thousand rounds of AK47 fire put other PMC rifle groups off their aim and worried the crew of one recoilless rifle.

With bullets hitting around them the seasoned gunners of the recoilless rifles coolly took aim and inflicted lethal hits on the remaining T55. Fire from the SFMGs destroyed 2 more groups in the rebel 2nd platoon, and infantry fire did similar damage to the rebel 1st platoon near the road and neutralised an SFMG.

Again these losses were ignored and morale remained high amongst the irregulars who chanted the Saviour's name to provide encouragement.

The leader of the irregular 2nd Platoon decided to try some of the tactics he had heard about and ordered his troops to halt and fire. They blazed away wildly to no effect. The irregular 3rd Platoon on the extreme right ran forward shouting and shooting from the hip with no effect either, but at least they had advanced. The 1st Platoon also advanced firing ineffectively and the working SFMG added to the noise. A regular platoon fired with more effect Suppressing some defenders.

On testing to recover Suppressed and Neutralised elements, the neutralised SFMG failed its roll so continued to be out of action.



Concentrated PMC shooting at irregular Platoon 1 inflicted 3 more kills, 3 neutralisations and 2 suppressions, resulting in morale falling to Uncertain. Irregular platoon 2 got off lightly with 3 suppressions. Regular platoon 2 suffered a neutralisation and a KO, making it retreat as the survivors decided the Saviour wasn't saving many of them.

Loads of shooting at the PMC position finally had some effect as 1 SFMG was neutralised and the other was suppressed. Morale dropped to 'Halt' in the MG section, although it had no intention of going anywhere. The infantry suffered a pair of neutralisations and 4 suppressions.



The effect of the hits on the PMCs was felt as they inflicted only a few hits - none of them lethal - on platoons 2 and 3. Platoon 1, however, took 2 more kills and broke, leaving a big hole in the rebel centre.

At last an irregular SFMG found its range and destroyed 2 rifle groups in the frontal PMC defences. Another rifle group fell to heavy fire on the left flank. The regular platoon 1 reached the wood and advanced through it as the RCLs set up on its left flank.



With bullets pinging around them, the PMC SFMGs fired at the irregular platoon 3 scoring 2 kills, 2 neutralised and 1 suppressed from 6 firing dice. Further hits from rifle fire saw morale drop to Uncertain.

Regular platoon 2 came under fire at the edge of the wood suffering 1 destroyed and 3 suppressed. Both RCLs were neutralised and their morale dropped to Uncertain.

Irregular Platoon 3 passed its motivation to advance, not that there was much advancing possible with so many suppressed and neutralised elements! Mass shooting at the PMCs hit masonry and thin air.

1 irregular SFMG was destroyed and a brace of kills on Platoon 1 left it feeling rather Uncertain about its morale.

A lethal hit on PMC platoon 2 suddenly spooked the mercenaries as they failed 2 morale tests and dropped to Halt.

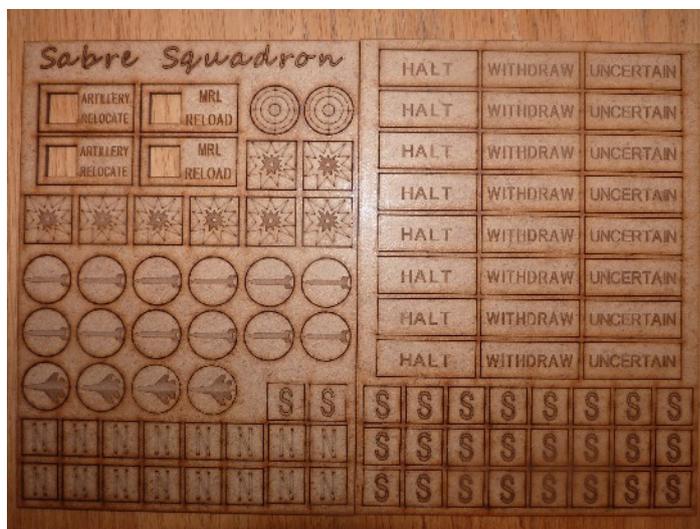
A kill on irregular platoon 3 reduced its morale to Withdraw leaving just 4 groups (1 of them neutralised) and one SFMG of the irregulars left. Concentrated shooting at the wood inflicted a pair of KOs and a neutralisation that sent the last of the regulars running. Game over!



A game of no great subtlety or clever manoeuvres. The rebels had to grit their teeth and go for it and the PMCs had to grit their teeth and hold on - read Alamo or Rorkes Drift. It wasn't easy for the defenders who were just one failed morale test away from losing their flank that would have resulted in a disaster.

Marked Up

Once you've got the rules, a pair of opposing forces and a table, a small set of markers to denote element condition, unit morale level and artillery aim points is all you need to play Sabresquadron. For markers you could use coloured counters or printed paper tokens, but paper is easily mangled and the meaning of a counter is not always immediately clear so we were asked for something that was both durable and specific for Sabresquadron. Our good friends at Products for Wargamers, who know a thing or two about mdf, came up with a stylish solution that enables a game to be played with one set.



Each set contains 96 markers, and consists of 26 Suppressed, 16 Neutralised, 8 Uncertain, 8 Halt, 8 Withdraw, 12 Dodge, 2 Artillery Aim, 8 Artillery Fire Zone, 2 Artillery Battery Moving, 2 Multiple Rocket Launchers Reloading, and 4 Air Support. The Artillery Battery Relocating and MRL Reloading have a square hole that can hold a small six-sided die to record the turns spent moving/loading.

Each Suppressed or Neutralised marker is an easily spotted and handled 2cm square. This makes them ideal for 15mm scale models but still useable for 6mm. You can see them compared to a 1/300 M1 Abrams and a 15mm Centurion on the right.

Markers can be purchased directly from us, or from Products for wargamers at UK shows, for £7 per set.



The Alternative Materials Report

This is a special contribution, kindly compiled and submitted by Fred Oliver. Fred has composed a fuller report that contains listings of much equipment originating prior to 1950 that can be read on the excellent website Microarmor Mayhem - <http://www.microarmormayhem.com/>

Introduction. This is an attempt to summarize 6mm (1/300, 1/288, and 1/285 scale) airplanes and ships from other than the traditional metal manufacturers like H&R, Scotia, GHQ, CinC, and ISM. I'd like to apologize up front to any manufacturers and designers whose products I've overlooked. Subsequent editions (should there be any) will look at recent discoveries, new releases, and 6mm vehicles. I started off calling this "The Shapeways report," but realized that I needed to talk about other manufacturers as well. Note that this version emphasizes post-1950 models. The complete version can be found on the Micro Armor Mayhem website.

Aircraft in Miniature. These are wonderful models cast in creamy resin. They require very little cleanup and are quite inexpensive. The 6mm product line currently includes the C-17, C-74, C-97, C-119, C-123, C-124, C-130, C-133, C-141, B-50, An-12, An-22, Il-38, Il-76, Mi-26, Tu-95, and AS-4 missile. You'll probably never find a better deal in this scale. AiM's website is at <http://armamentsinminiature.com/>

The PT Dockyard has a small range of 6mm products, including a SOC-R SEAL support boat. You'll find pictures and ordering information at <https://ptdockyard.com/1300-aircraft/>

Nichimo models had an extensive line of modern U.S. Navy and WWII Japanese navy aircraft. You can still find them on eBay occasionally. The models are very nice, with landing gear and often underwing stores, but they're also very delicate and probably not suitable for wargaming. U.S. planes include the A-4, A-5, A-6, A-7, E-2, EA-6, F-4, F-8, F-14, F-18, and S-3. The E-2 comes with a nice set of flight deck equipment, including a starter, fire engine, and crane. You'll find photos of some of these and models by other manufacturers on the Micro Armor Mayhem website at http://www.microarmormayhem.com/Manufacturers_Nichimo.html

Other plastic kits. Revell had a brief series, which included the AH-64, F-15, SR-71, Tornado, MiG-29, and Concorde. Eastern Express/Toko offered the An-24, An-26, An-30, An-32P, An-71, An-72. Starfix made a C-5A model. There are also models of the XB-70, Tu-160, B747, DC-10. Beware of a model which claims to be an E-3. It's really a B747 with a radome! Look for them on eBay.

Finished plastic models. F-Toys Famous Wings offers the Japanese YS-11, PS-1/US-1 flying boat, C-1, C-130, P-2, and P-3C. Pre-painted and marked with just a little assembly required. A couple are available in American finishes. Just beautiful models.

Finished metal models. B-2, B-29, B-52, L-1049G Super Constellation (commercial and President Truman's Columbine I), DH-106 Comet, Tu-22M. I wasn't going to talk about metal models, but these are very nice and ready to display.

Shapeways prints three-dimensional products designed by private individuals around the world. Their website contains thousands of items, many of which are models of aircraft and vehicles in 6mm. Most are either in FUD (frosted ultra detail) or WSF (white strong and flexible) material. FUD models are (I believe) made of acrylic. They're brittle, relatively expensive, and often have wonderful detail. WSF models are made of nylon. They're very robust and relatively inexpensive but don't have the detail of FUD. In my mind WSF works well for airplanes but not so well for vehicles. Some WSF models are available polished. This gives them a smoother finish but may remove details and costs a little more. Some strong and flexible models are available in other colors, like green and blue. Very few of the models offered by Shapeways are also available in metal from the traditional manufacturers, which is why I like the company so much. WSF prices are roughly comparable to metal models, while FUD models are much more expensive. Typical turnaround time for an order is less than two weeks. (Remember: each model is printed specifically for you.) The people are very easy to deal with. If you're not happy with your model, tell them within (I believe) ten days. They may ask you to send a photo that shows your complaint. The photo should show the model in "as received" condition, before you've started to paint. My experience has been that, if it's their fault, they'll make it good at no expense to you. Sometimes models are withdrawn from the website, usually because they couldn't be printed. Designers usually correct the faults and they're put back up for sale. Shapeways designers will often re-scale a model to 6mm if you ask them. When requesting a scale-up of a large airplane, you might want to ask about the probable cost when it's printed. (Big airplanes are pretty expensive, even in WSF.) Models in 1/700 scale don't have a lot of detail; so, when they're scaled up, they appear to have even less detail. The following link will take you to the website: <https://www.shapeways.com/search?q=1%2F285>. When you get there, search for specific airplanes or on the scale of your choice. Unless I'm doing something wrong when I search on "newest," I get lots of products not related to 6mm. If you're new to Shapeways, you may find it more effective to search on "relevance" or look for a specific product. Shapeways provides pictures of all their products. They recently added a feature that lets you rotate the image on the screen, so you can view it from any direction.

Working with WSF. The models need a little preparation but no cleanup. Unpolished WSF models should be scrubbed with a small brush to remove any residual powder. I give mine two or three coats of acrylic floor sealer before painting. Be sure to blow out any acrylic webs that might form in the landing gear or between the struts. The sealer is very runny. If it pools under your model, you can scrape off the excess with a fingernail when it's dry. I usually prime my WSF airplanes. It shows up glitches and makes the model much easier to examine than the bright white plastic. The enamel primer appears to react chemically with the acrylic sealer but eventually dries hard after a few days. That's a good time to do any filing and repairs. Liquid cement for plastics will soften both the primer and the acrylic sealer beneath it. WSF drills pretty well but isn't easy to smooth. Use a sprue cutter to trim something or remove a part from a sprue tree. Droopy gun barrels can be replaced with brass rod. I've found that epoxy works better than superglue – for example to repair broken propeller blades.

Working with FUD. FUD models need to be cleaned in hot, soapy water or rubbing alcohol. I prefer the latter because it reduces the risk of losing small parts down the drain and it's something I can do conveniently at my desk. One designer suggests exposing FUD models to sunlight for a day to make sure they're properly cured. I use an ultraviolet bulb for this purpose, but I don't know if it makes a difference. Some modelers have reported a reaction between certain enamel paints and FUD, which is why I switched to acrylic paints. I haven't experienced any chemical reactions yet, but I have noticed tiny silver particles emerging from some of the FUD models painted with acrylics. These are easily removed with a brush. Maybe this is a result of incompletely cured FUD or maybe it's caused by the paint. My biggest concern is how much material I may lose over time by doing this. You'll find many more tips on the Shapeways forum. FUD drills and files well, but don't forget that it's also brittle. I've read of modelers adding tiny drops of superglue where struts meet wings and fuselages. It sounds like a good idea. Broken struts and gun barrels can be replaced with lengths of plastic or brass rod.

Shapeways 6mm aircraft. The following is an attempt to summarize what's currently available. It's probably not complete but should be enough to whet your appetite. Note that it does not include fictional aircraft, of which there are quite a few. I've taken the easiest approach to organizing this and simply listed things by country. (It could also be done by era or type of aircraft. Maybe someday I'll turn it into a spreadsheet that does all those things.) American aircraft are broken down by type because there are so many. It's important to note that most models – including biplanes with struts – are in a single piece, with no assembly required. (Propellers are sometimes separate.) Detail usually includes windows and canopy framing, control surfaces, engine exhaust, and sometimes wheel wells – about all you need in this scale. In most cases you'll have to add your own gun barrels. I recommend thin brass rod. Many of the models come with underwing stores already in place and some have detailed landing gear. Some airplanes come in sets of more than one, which brings down unit cost. Models are light in weight, which means even large aircraft are fairly stable on bases. You'll find photos of some painted models at http://www.microarmormayhem.com/FO_Shapeways/index.html. (Micro Armor Mayhem specializes in 6mm military vehicles, but includes airplanes.) Note that not all of the models shown are from Shapeways. (Many are in metal.)

British aircraft. Avro Vulcan, Bristol (Brabazon, Britannia, Bloodhound), DeHavilland (Vampire, Sea Venom), Douglas Skybolt, English Electric Lightning, Eurofighter Typhoon, Fairey Gannet, Folland Gnat, Handley Page Victor, Hawker (Nimrod, Harrier, Hunter, Sea Hawk), Panavia Tornado, Saunders Roe AV1, Sepecat Jaguar, Supermarine (Attacker, Swift), Vickers (VC-10, Valiant), Westland (Lynx, Sea King), BAC (111, TSR-2)

Canadian aircraft. Avro Arrow, Bombardier C-100 and C-300, DHC-3 and DHC-4

Chinese aircraft. J-7, J-8, J-10, J-11, J-20, J-31, Q-5, WZ-10 (two versions), WZ-16 (three versions), WZ-19 (three versions), Harbin SH5, Shaanxi KJ-500, Shaanxi V8-600 (three versions)

French aircraft. Airbus (A300, A320, A400, Beluga), Breguet (Alize, Atlantic), Dassault (Mirage III, Mirage F1, Mirage 2000, Rafale), Eurocopter (Dauphin, Fennec, Super Puma), SNECMA Coleoptere

German aircraft. Do.31 (two versions), VJ-101 (two versions)

Israeli aircraft. Kfir, Lavi, F-16I

Polish aircraft. M-15 Belphegor

Russian and Soviet aircraft. An-2, An-12 (two versions), An-20, An-22, An-32, An-71, An-74, An-124, An-158, An-225, Beriev VVA-141IM, Be-10, Be-12, Be-42 (A-40), Be-103, Be-200, Beriev A-50, Il-76, Il-95, Ka-50, Ka-52, La-15 (three versions), M-4, M-20-14 (the "large" version is about 6 mm), MiG-15, MiG-21, MiG-23, MiG-29, MiG-31, Mikoyan 1.44, Mi-17, Mi-26, Su-15, Su-22, Su-24, Su-25, Su-27, Su-30, Su-33, Su-34, Su-37, Su-47, Sukhoi PAK-50, PAK-DA (two versions), PAK-FA, Tu-14, Tu-16, Tu-22, Tu-104, Tu-154, Yak-23, Yak-38, Yak-44, Yak-130 (actually the M-346), Yak-141, Buran spaceplane

Swedish aircraft. Gripen, Tunnan, Viggen, Saab 105

American fighters. F-4, F-14, F-15 (two versions), F-16, F-18 (several versions), F-22, F-23, F-35, RF-84F (three versions), XF-84F, XF-85, F-86, XF-90, XF-91, XF-92, F-94C, F-104, F-106, F-107, F-108, F-111, F3B, XF8B, F3D, F4D, F9F, XF10F, F11F, FJ, FJ-4, F2R, F4U, F6U, F7U, FV, FY, F2Y (three versions), XFV-12A (two versions), Northrop Fang (two versions), Boeing F/A-XX

American strike aircraft. A-1, A-4, A-10, A-12 Avenger, A-26, AT-28 (several versions), A-37, A2D, A3D, AF-2S/2W, AJ, AM, Textron Scorpion, Piper Enforcer

American bombers. B-1, B-29, B-36, XB-42, B-45, B-47, YB-49, B-51, B-52, B-66.

American transports. C-2, KC-10, C-17, C-23, C-27, C-119, C-123, C-124, C-125, C-130, C-141, MV-22, Boeing 707, Boeing 737, Boeing 747, Boeing Sonic Cruiser, Grumman G400, Gulfstream 550 (including an AEW version), Lockheed L-1049 Super Constellation

American helicopters. H-1 (several versions), UH-2, HH-3, H-5/R-5, MH-6, H-13 (four versions), H-19, CH-37, HH-43, CH-46, CH-47, CH-53, CH-54 (two versions), AH-56, MH-60, AH-64, UH-72, HUP, S-55, MV-22, V-280 Valor, S-97 Raider, Bell-Boeing Quad Tiltrotor

American seaplanes. P5M, P6M, UF/SA-16 (three versions), XF2Y (three versions). Note that some of the flying boats are depicted both in flight and resting on the water.

American trainers. T-28, T-34, T-43 (actually the B737-200), T-45, T-50, T-2/T2J, T2V (two versions)

American missiles. Bomarc, Snark, Navaho (two versions), Matador, Mace, Regulus I, Regulus II, Polaris, Poseidon, Trident, Thor, Jupiter, Corporal, Sergeant, Redstone, Pershing, Atlas, Titan, Minuteman, Peacekeeper, Rascal, Hound Dog, Nike Hercules

American experimental aircraft. X-1, X-2, X-3, X-4, X-5, X-13, X-15 (several versions), X-20, X-32, X-37, X-43, X-45, X-47A, X-47C, X-51, Douglas Skystreak and Skyrocket, Boeing Bird of Prey

Other American aircraft. E-1, E-2, E-7, P-8, U-1, U-2/TR-1, SR-71, AD-4W, Firebee, Predator C, Convair Fish, Boeing 737 AEW, OV-1 (two versions), Global Hawk, P4M, P5M, P6M, P2V (two versions), S-2, S-3, AF-2W, Boeing 737 AEW&C

Aircraft of other countries. Indian Tejas, South Korean A-50 and T-50, Pakistani JF-17

Carrier accessories. Bacon Fist Models provides replicas of modern U.S. MD-1 and MD-3 tow tractors and a lovely model of a CVCC “Tilly” crash crane. You can see them at <https://www.shapeways.com/shops/baconfist?section=1%3A285+USN+Parts&s=0>

Military vehicles. There are hundreds of 6mm military vehicles available from Shapeways. I haven't been maintaining a list as I have with airplanes, so I'll simply summarize what's available from some of the more prolific designers. Maybe I can provide more details in a future report. For starters I suggest you check the following Shapeways stores, listed alphabetically.

Aaron's Miniature Corner has an extensive line of modern American fire engines rendered in WSF. You'll find them at <https://www.shapeways.com/shops/amc>

Bill's Models are printed in WSF and its colored variations. In 6mm, Bill's specialties are British and American soft-skin vehicles from World War Two to the present. The mobile missile launchers are among my favorites. Incidentally, most of the cabs are hollow, which means you can add your own windows with Kristal Kleer. Bill also offers models of landing craft (LCI, LCM-1, LCM-6, LCT-6, LCVP-1, LSMR), U.S. Coast Guard vessels (Cape and Point Classes), PT boats (PT-5, PT-48, PT-61, PT-564), Viet Nam vessels (CCB river boat, PTF Nasty boat, PGH with foils up or down, PCF Swift boat, PG-95 class gunboat, air-cushion PAV, APL-29 barracks ship, ATCH, river monitor, ATC and ASPB), USS Avenger (MCM-1), USS Carronade (IFS-1), and SEAL support craft. You'll find his huge store at <https://www.shapeways.com/shops/bill-s-models>

Der Kampfflieger has several very nice military vehicles in FUD. You'll find his shop at <https://www.shapeways.com/shops/kampfflieger?section=1%2F300+and+1%2F288&s=0&page%5Bnumber%5D=2&page%5Blimit%5D=48&page%5Border%5D=asc>

Dragoman's Depot offers many unusual WSF military vehicles in 6mm. You'll find them at <https://www.shapeways.com/shops/dragoman?section=6+mm+Scale+-+All+Items&s=0&page%5Bnumber%5D=2&page%5Blimit%5D=48&page%5Border%5D=asc>

Kokoda Trail Models has scaled up many modern military vehicles in WSF, as you'll find at <https://www.shapeways.com/shops/frenobulax?section=1%2F285+Custom+Orders&s=0>

Masters of Military has a fantastic product line of almost 600 models in 6mm. They're printed in FUD and are consequently rather delicate. Some have multiple parts. Referring to the pictures on the website will help with assembly. The Russian SAMs and radars are incredible. You'll find these and many more at <https://www.shapeways.com/shops/mom>. MoM also offers models of German midget submarines (Molch, Biber, Hecht, and Seehund), assault boats, river-crossing craft, and a USMC Zodiac.

Mini and Beyond is new to me. The designer offers Vietnam artillery barges, airboats, sampans, and a complete set of Seabee construction equipment which could well be used post-1950. Check them out at <https://www.shapeways.com/shops/miniandbeyond>.

Structures in 6mm. I'm not a wargamer, so this is not my area of expertise. However, a number of companies offer buildings, scenery, and other ground-based accessories in 6mm. Some that come to mind are GHQ at <http://www.ghqmodels.com/store/military-models-pewter-buildings.html>, Gamecraft Miniatures at <http://gcmmini.mybigcommerce.com/6mm-1-285th/> and CinC at <http://www.pfc-cinc.com/page/page/303757.htm> I'm sure there are many others.

Defence of the Free World!

Article 5 - named after the critical clause of the NATO treaty committing members to military action in defence of any member state that is attacked - was published in December to provide organisations for the forces dedicated to repelling the Red Hordes. With 'Seven Days To The Rhine' we aimed to provide the most complete set of organisations for the Warsaw Pact forces facing NATO's Central Front in the 1980s available. To this end we included lists for formations such as the East German workers' militia, Czechoslovakian airborne, Polish reservists and northern USSR-based units, each with equipment outside of the BMP/T72 'norm' seen on many a wargames table.

It was natural, therefore, to do the same for NATO and cover a wide variety when compiling Article 5 . The British lists feature not just the BAOR and UK-based reinforcements, but also the airborne and air mobile forces (nasty opposition for Soviet breakthroughs), plus the RAF Regiment to face VDV assaults on air stations. The American lists cover the ROAD and Division 86 organisations plus the H and J

Series Armored Cavalry (carefully fitted into the Sabresquadron way of organising forces), and also the National Guard. The West Germans have a good range of Heimtazschutz organisations and the Berg (mountain) brigade. We managed to decipher the tangled web of French organisation to work out some lists and offer alternatives for many types of formation, and include the famous Foreign Legion 2eme REP for when the going gets really tough. The Dutch lists reflect their unique approach to reservists, with second-line companies integrated into main force battalions, plus the alternative structures for their armoured reconnaissance squadrons. The Belgians have front line and, Provincial units plau the Para Commando. Finally, the Canadians - like the British and US - have a 'pick-and-mix' approach to creating a force. We didn't forget Berlin either as the forces in all three Western zones are included.

A total of 65 lists are included and each of the seven nations covered has several example force lists to enable a quick start.

Article 5 is available from the website at £8 for the PDF or with Seven Days To The Rhine as a bundle at £15.



The Game Report

This is a report from a recent game using the traditional basis of a Warsaw Pact attack on the West in the mid-1980s. It was mainly an infantry fight and is presented as a blow-by-blow account to show how a game might run from start to finish.

Game Set-Up

The scenario was the Planned Attack from the suggested set-ups in the Sabresquadron rulebook. The defending force was a dug-in West German Heimatsschutz Jaeger Company (3 platoons plus the company headquarters) with a weakened platoon (effectively a section) of 2 M48A2GA2s and an off-table artillery battery with an on-table observer in support. Attacking this force was a full Soviet BTR-mounted motor rifle company supported by a platoon of T64Bs and a programmed artillery bombardment. The attack was being launched through a quiet sector of the front where heavily-wooded terrain was considered by the NATO high command to make a breakthrough difficult so only reservists were allocated to its defence (perhaps somebody in the Bundeswehr should have asked Grandad about what he did in 1940!).

A view of the table from the east is shown below:



The game commenced with the Soviet artillery softening up the NATO positions. The West Germans had been careful with their deployment to avoid obvious targets and Platoons 2 and 3 and the CHQ were unaffected by the exploding shells and rockets. Platoon 1, however, lost a pair of Rifle Groups and had the survivors Suppressed. The tanks and the AOO were also left Suppressed by the bombardment. With the dust still settling and the last echoes of the explosions dying away, the Red Horde came into view.

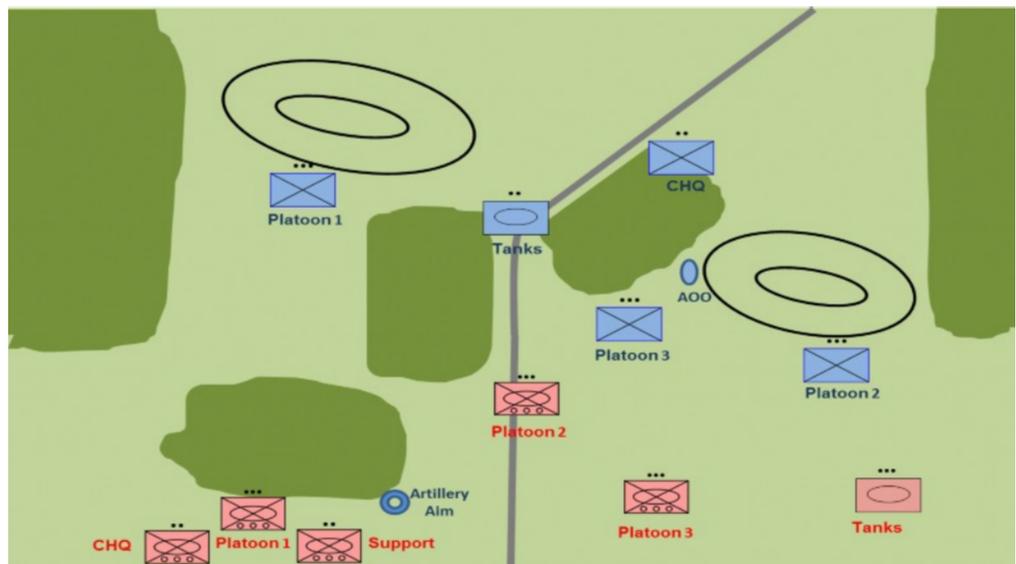
Platoon 1 entered on the left followed by the Support Platoon and the CHQ, using the nearest wood for cover. Platoon 2 advanced quickly along the road intending to wrong foot the defence. Platoon 3 moved forward to the right of the road and the tank platoon advanced to outflank any defenders on the hill in front.

The German AOO placed an Artillery Aim Marker on the corner of the wood near to Soviet Platoon 1 and checked his radio.

The M48s sprang from ambush and fired at a T64. The Long Range (-2) and Raw Training (-1) gave a die modifier of -3. A roll of 9 modified to 6 meant a hit on the side of one Soviet tank. The Effect roll of 5 left the side armour unable to withstand the 105mm APDS round's Firepower of 9 and the T64 exploded. The other M48 rolled a 2 so missed the next tank. Both of the M48s turned and made use of the road to speed back behind the wood before the rest of the T64s could retaliate.

Platoon 3 launched a Milan at the side of another T64. The Dodge roll was going to be a challenge as it was modified by -2 (by coming from out of the frontal arc) and by -3 (from being fired from within 60" of the target) and the roll of 2 indicated that the crew were oblivious to the threat until it hit. Even an effect roll of 9 was not enough to save the T64 from the full force of the HEAT warhead as it tore through its thin side armour. The bigger threat to the German Platoon 3, though, was the rapid advance of the Soviet Platoon 2 along the road so they opened fire with their Carl Gustavs. The first BTR was hit at close range and put out of action. The passengers bailed out into a hail of G3 and MG3 fire that eliminated one rifle group and left the other unable to influence the battle for a while at least.

Platoon 2 fired a Milan at a T64 but missed the target. The successful Soviet morale tests indicated that the losses were to be taken and the advance was to continue.



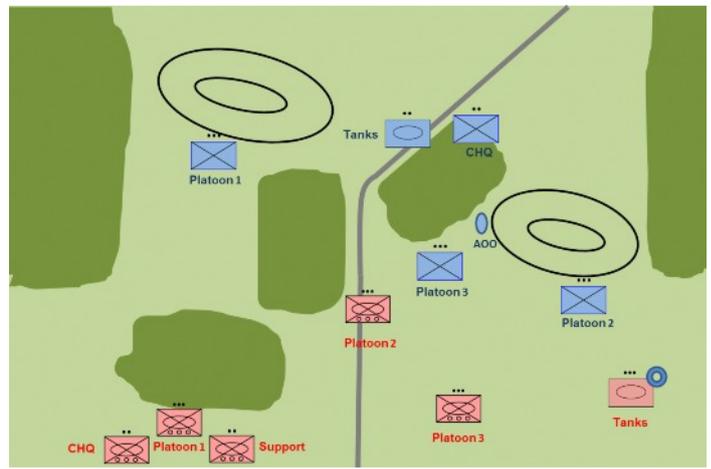
Turn 2

The remaining 2 BTRs in the Soviet Platoon 2 responded to the losses inflicted by the German Platoon 3 by opening fire with their HMGs, suppressing one rifle group, as the infantry dismounted. The Soviet Platoon 3 did the same and suppressed another rifle group.

The commander of the T64s decided to deal with the enemy to front by halting and firing a succession of HE rounds at the German Platoon 2 that suppressed the Milan launcher and a rifle group and neutralised another rifle group.

The German artillery observer saw the tanks as the biggest problem and moved the aim marker to their location.

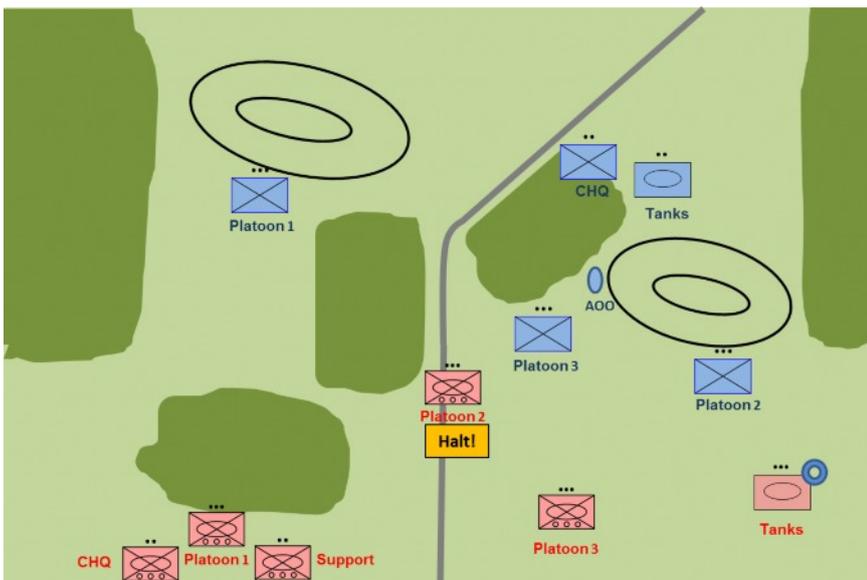
The effect of the neutralised group was not a problem for the morale of the West German Platoon 2.



West German Platoon 1 held its position and sorted out its defences after the initial Soviet artillery barrage in anticipation of a Soviet thrust in its direction.

Platoon 3 fired its Milan at a T64. The missile was not dodged but the -3 modifier for being suppressed proved decisive as the die came up 5 to indicate a miss. The platoon's 2 Carl Gustavs fired at long range at the BTRs on the road hitting and destroying one. The rest of the platoon fired rifles and machine guns at the dismounted infantry, scoring 2 hits which were converted to kills by saving throws of 1 and 2.

Platoon 2 fired its Milan at a T64 and missed again. Long range small arms fire at the Soviet infantry around the knocked out BTRs on the road served only to suppress one rifle group.



The drivers of the M48s put metal to metal and drove at top speed towards a new shooting position as the wood and the hill protected them from Soviet fire.

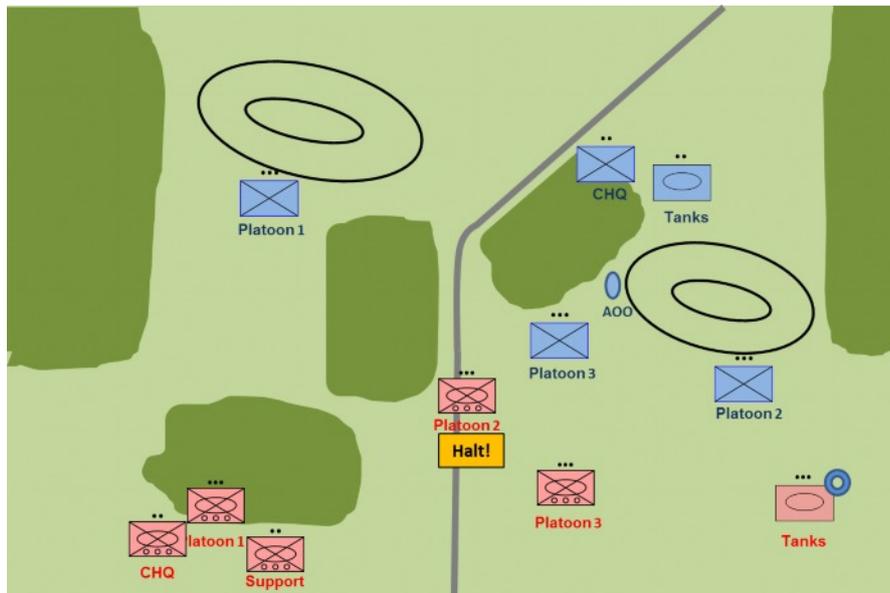
The losses on the Soviet Platoon 2 were felt as they rolled with a -2 modifier and saw 2 fails make them halt.

Turn 3

Things were getting desperate for Soviet Platoon 2 which fired every available weapon at the Germans in front. Every available weapon amounted to 1 HMG, 2 groups with AKs and a SAW; just 4 dice in total but the survivors found some much needed marksmanship from somewhere as they eliminated a rifle group and the Milan launcher, and suppressed another rifle group. The Soviet infantry certainly had it in for the German Platoon 3 as the BTRs kept up a sustained fire to cover the firing advance of their infantry and inflicted another brace of kills and a further suppression. Despite the sudden losses the German morale held.

The T64s fired more HE into the German Platoon 2 that suppressed their Milan launcher.

The German AOO called for some support but his request went unfulfilled.



The Milan operator in Platoon 2 braved the bullets landing around the top of his foxhole to fire at a T64, but the Soviet tank commander was alive to the threat and ordered the driver to make a quick manoeuvre that a die roll of 10 confirmed as a successful dodge. The rest of the platoon fired at Platoon 3, slowing the advance with 4 suppressions.

The German Platoon 2 was still in shock from its recent losses and missed with all six firing dice.

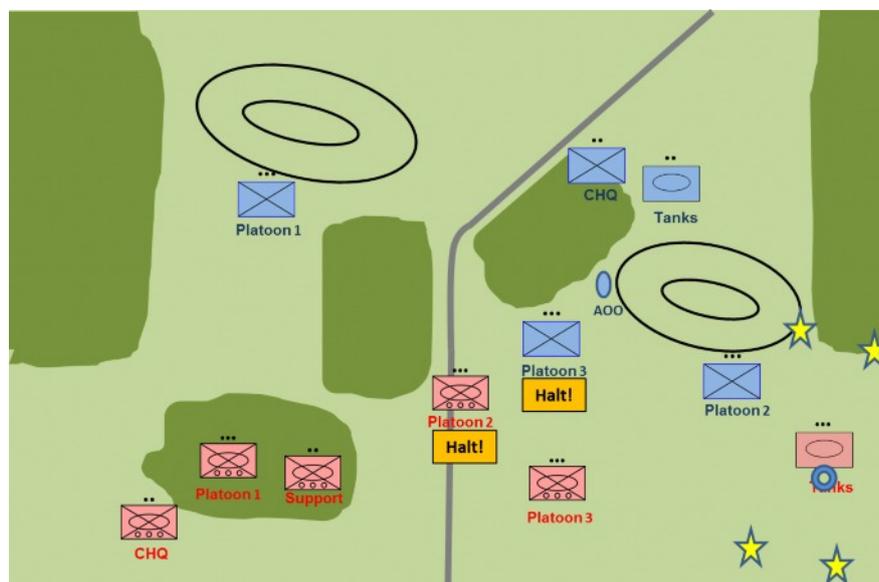
The M48s halted their sudden redeployment having spotted the BTRs of Platoon 3 through the gap between the central wood and the hill. Both fired at long range resulting in one BTR brewing up.

Turn 4

The Soviet Platoon 1 and the Support Section advanced rapidly through the wood as the BTRs manoeuvred around the edge. Firing by the other infantry and BTRs at the German Platoon 3 neutralised one rifle group. Losses were piling up on this unit whose morale dropped 2 levels to Halt.

The tanks resumed their advance still firing HE as they moved.

The German AOO at last had his call answered and brought in a barrage that covered both of the remaining tanks but only managed to suppress one.



The plucky Milan operator in Platoon 2 continued to ignore the fire directed at him and sent another missile towards the T64s. At long last a hit! The warhead detonated just below the turret ring and ignited the dangerously stored ammunition that propelled the turret into the air. This was too much for the crew of the remaining tank who decided that the KGB was less of a threat than the capitalists and drove for home.

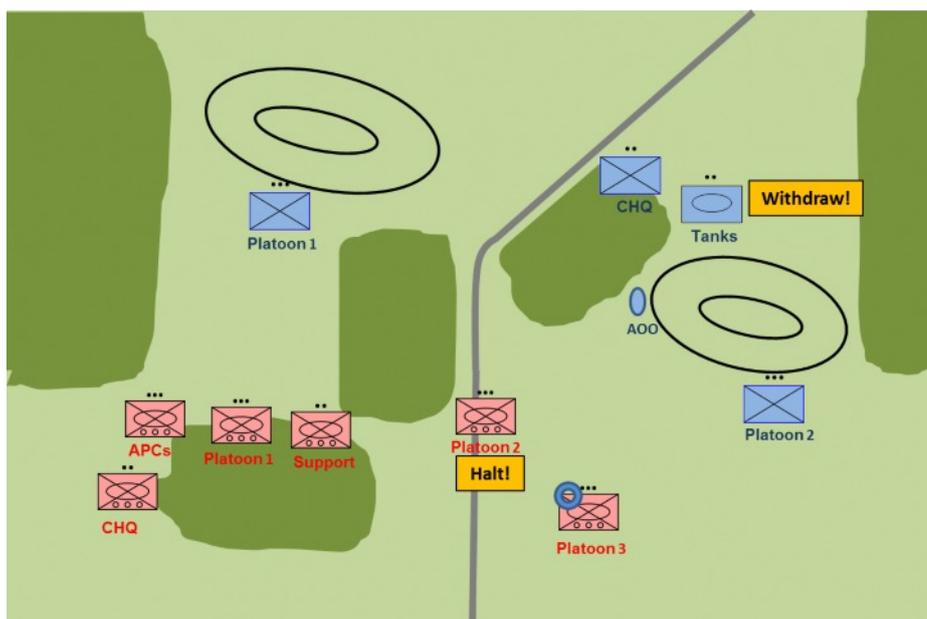
Fire from the German infantry and the M48s inflicted another loss on Platoon 3 whose morale held.



Turn 5

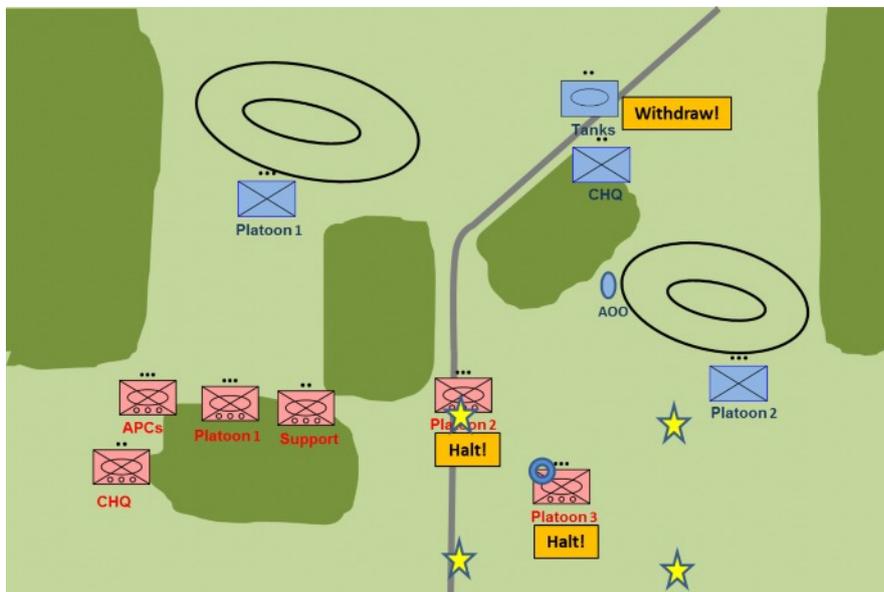
The Soviet Platoon 1 and Support Section broke out of the far side of the wood.

Soviet Platoons 2 and 3 inflicted another kill on German Platoon 3 that was the final straw for the reservists who abandoned their positions. A BTR fired its HMG at an M48 and scored a good hit on the side that panicked the crew of the tank and neutralised it. The idea that panic can be contagious was proven as the morale of the tank platoon immediately dropped 3 levels to Withdraw.



The un-neutralised M48 fired a parting shot as it withdrew and destroyed a BTR in Platoon 3. Further losses from small arms fire and artillery saw the unit halt with no chance of their morale recovering to advance later. The Germans had held the Soviet attack in the centre and on their own left.

The game would be decided on the German right where Platoon 1 finally entered the fight as the Soviet Platoon 1 advanced from the wood. A Milan and a long range Carl Gustav found their marks on a pair of BTRs while small arms killed a rifle group. Soviet morale held, the fight went on.



Turn 6

The BTRs fired at Platoon 1 inflicting 1 kill and 2 neutralisations. The Support Section set down its LMGs and opened up with a fire that destroyed another rifle group. The infantry of Platoon 1 advanced firing and eliminated a further rifle group and suppressed the Milan. 3 KOs and 1 neutralisation from one round of shooting was too much for this unit who, having come late to the party, decided to leave early.

The German position looked in dire straits, but here was to be a set of late twists. The M48s managed to recover their morale to Halt. Artillery landed again on the Soviet Platoon 3 inflicting a vital neutralisation that tipped them into a rout. Having one infantry platoon intact and their tanks able to hold their ground (with further improvements to morale possible), the Germans were deemed to be in the better condition and the Soviet commander conceded that the attack could not succeed.



The Analysis

The Germans used what every sensible infantryman should when facing a major attack - his entrenching tool (that's a spade to us civilian types). They also sensibly stayed away from obvious places to deploy. Fire plans for support artillery will target likely deployment places like hills; that is why there is a modifier for saving throws for defenders on hills or near objectives when affected by programmed artillery. Woods are very tempting places to deploy infantry as they provide cover, but a unit so placed can be left unsighted and out of the fight unless moved, and moving mars the point of digging in. Infantry are not fast moving so can be difficult to redeploy during a game to meet a speedily executed attack. This is exacerbated by every weapon being lethal to infantry while infantry are less effective when shooting and moving. Add the fact that halted infantry can be difficult to spot, an attacker who wrong foots a defender and forces him to move his troops has gained a big advantage in a game.



In the featured game, the German commander blocked movement along the road with one platoon - an essential deployment as the Soviets tried a quick rush to force a passage - and used the other 2 platoons to protect the flanks. The closeness of the terrain meant that there were not many avenues of attack, but also meant that Platoon 1 was isolated in its deployment position whereas Platoons 2 and 3 could support each other.

Platoon 1 made good use of being hidden to open fire at what could have been an optimal moment. The weight of return fire - and some bad luck - meant that they came off worst surprisingly quickly.

Timing a dismount is an art that can go badly wrong when done too late, as the Soviet Platoon 2 found to its cost. APCs are thinly armoured and don't carry much firepower so are easy meat for anti-tank weapons. MBTs they are not! Soviet Platoon 1 got it right by dismounting out of sight of the enemy and using the wood to cover their advance while the APCs got in position to add fire support. The lack of long range anti-tank weapons in the defence (the M48s fired a total of 7 shots and one of the 3 Milans fired only once) gave the BTRs a longevity that they might not have enjoyed had the Jaegers been better equipped (don't try this against a British airmobile force!).



The game was meant as an infantry fight and it certainly became one. The Soviet tank platoon achieved little, inflicting little damage - 14.5mm AP proved more destructive than 125mm HE - and failing in its flanking manoeuvre, and the German tank section destroyed one BTR and one rifle group before being panicked and sent packing by a well placed HMG burst. The T64s did draw Milans from the BTRs and kept the M48s wary of exposing themselves. The unpredicted survival of the M48s left the Germans in a position where they could stem the Soviet assault just when the Rhine beckoned.

SABRE SQUADRON



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