

Kampfgruppe Von Schroif

Campaign Mission Briefings & Narrative



Vom 11. 8. 44

Combat Mission: Red Thunder Campaign

Designer: George MC

Technical Support: Combatintman



CMRT Campaign

Kampfgruppe “von Schroif”

Introduction

The genesis for this campaign came about after playing SeinfeldRules’ scenario “Assault Position”. I played it several times and really enjoyed the experience. I enjoyed the fact it focussed around a SPW unit, around company size. It gave me the idea to create a small campaign based around this type of unit – at the company level on a variety of maps. SeinfeldRules has graciously given me permission to use that scenario in this campaign.

About the Campaign

This campaign covers a short and sustained period of combat operations taking place over a period of less than 72 hours, in Poland, on the Eastern Front in early August 1944. Although fictional it is heavily based on actual events.

In the campaign you take the role of 1 Kompanie Commander Hauptmann Hans von Schroif, of the [3rd Panzer Division’s](#) (Known as the Berlin Bear division – the bear features on the city coat of arms) I(gep)/PzGrn Rgt 3 equipped with half-track carriers (SPW), who has been tasked with commanding a small kampfguppe, to which has been attached the 6 Kompanie (Panzer IVs) under the command of Hauptmann Eric Faust. You have a sister kampfguppe – commanded by Hauptmann Krüger – with roughly the same make-up, SPW and PzIVs. Krüger is a glory hunter with a desire for a Knights Cross. Correspondingly his unit is very aggressive. Other elements from Division will be attached given the situation – mostly recce units from Aufklärungs-Abteilung 3 (AA3).

Reinforcements; Resupply and Refit

It is worth noting that the player’s [CORE UNITS](#) receives no reinforcements and little in the way of refit in the 72 hour period.

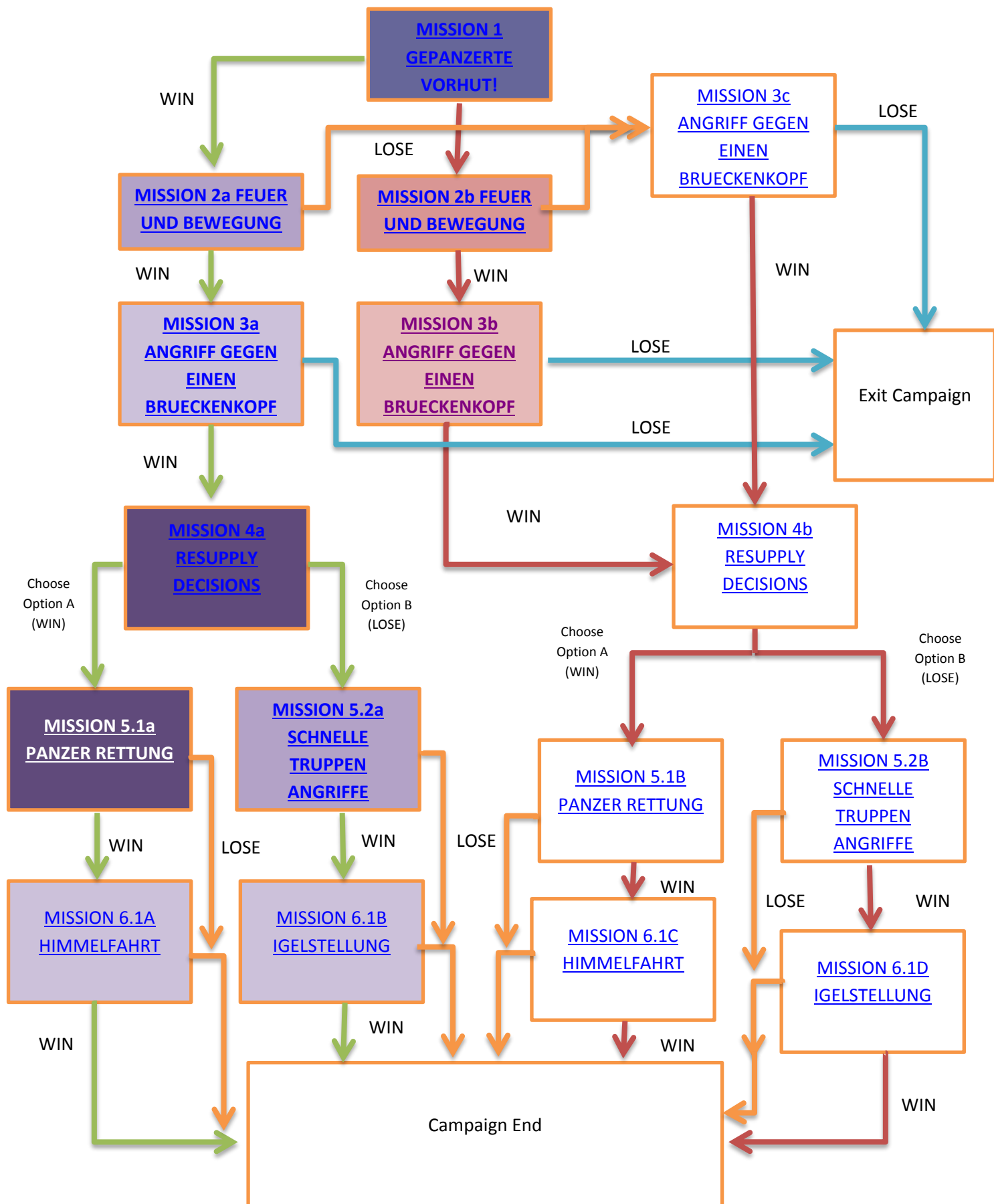
Therefore the player has to use their forces wisely, especially your panzergrenadiers. Keep your casualties as low as you can for as long as you can. The key to success is close co-operation between your SPW, panzergrenadiers and panzers.

[Key characters, including platoon leaders, are all named individually and are tracked throughout the campaign.](#) You’ll notice, as casualties mount that key names slowly start to disappear. Don’t get killed yourself though early on as it may lead to you ending the campaign, like your life, prematurely. Please see the [Designer Notes](#) for full background.

Player Tactical Maps

There is a pack of Tactical Maps included in the zip file. These are maps of all the main missions and are blank unannotated JPGs. They offer the player the ability to use them to plan their actions either on paper (print them out) or digitally on your PC/Laptop.

KG von Schroif Campaign Flowchart (click on mission name to go to its briefing).





Kampfgruppe von Schroif

Operational Situation

Ever since it launched its major offensive against Heeresgruppe Mitte, on the 22nd June 1944, the Red Army continued to advance to the west, occupying considerable portions of White Russia

and Poland. In early July, South of Sandomir, the 1st Ukrainian Front of Field Marshal Koniev crossed the Vistula along 30km of front and formed the Baranow bridgehead. The right wing of the Russian field-army group was able to expand its militarily decisive bridgehead by 4th August to a depth of 50km and a width of 50km.

The German Army High Command planned to reduce this bridgehead – which potentially provided a jumping off point for a full scale attack at the heart of Germany- by means of armoured forces. Under cover of darkness the 3rd Panzer Division “Berliner Bärendivision” (Berlin Bear division – the bear features on the city coat of arms), under the command of Generalleutnant Wilhelm Philipps, detrained at Kielce in southern Poland and was assigned to General der Panzertruppen Breith’s III Panzer-Korps.

The III Panzer-Korps’ order for the attack arrived at the division command post shortly after midnight on the 11th August 1944 - “The III Panzer-Korps eliminates the enemy that has broken across the Vistula. The 19.Panzer Division (right) advances along the Vistula in the direction of Baranow and takes the crossing point. The 3.Panzer Division (left) covers the flank, advancing simultaneously into the deep flank of the enemy, thus preventing further enemy attacks to the north...”

In order to allow all units of his division the time needed to prepare for their next commitment, and at the same time secure his route of advance, Philipps decided to form an armoured kampfgruppe from the units that had detrained first (Panzers from II/PzRgt 6 and SPW from I/PzGrn Rgt 3) under the command of Panzer Regiment 6’s CO Oberst Bernuth. This kampfgruppe was to launch a surprise attack to seize the bridges at RAKOW over the CZARNA River, in order to permit the main body of the division to advance towards the Vistula.



The III Panzer-Korps eliminates the enemy that has broken across the Vistula.

The 19.Panzer Division (right) advances along the Vistula in the direction of Baranow and takes the crossing point.

The 3.Panzer Division (left) covers the flank, advancing simultaneously into the deep flank of the enemy, thus preventing further enemy attacks to the north.

This campaign covers the subsequent 72 hour period of intense combat which focusses on the actions of elements from this armoured kampfguppen spearheading the attack against the Soviet units holding the Baranow bridgehead.

Terrain: The terrain in our designated Area of Operations (AO) is hilly, covered with fields planted with grain, potatoes, and beets, interspersed with patches of dense forest. The road network is sparse consisting mainly of narrow sandy tracks. Numerous streams and rivers cut across the proposed line of advance. These crossing points will be both tactically and operationally significant in the coming operation.

Weather: The current overcast damp weather is expected to clear up becoming sunny, warm and dry by mid-day on the 11th August. However it is then expected to deteriorate overnight on the 11th with heavy downpours of rain. The 12th August should see the weather improving, although it'll still be overcast with light winds and cool.

Ground Conditions: Initial ground conditions are expected to be damp. This increases the risk for tracked vehicles becoming bogged during off-road movement. The drier weather on the 11th should see this improve. However the forecasted heavy rain on the night of the 11th will mean damp ground conditions once again by dawn on the 12th August. We have limited panzer and vehicle recovery capability. So to maintain our attack tempo, and reduce the risk of tracked vehicles becoming stuck, it's important we make maximum use of the available road network.

The hours of sunrise and sunset are 0445 and 1930, respectively.

Friendly Forces

So far only some elements from the II Battalion Panzer Regiment 6 have arrived. These first units are equipped with Panzer IVs.

In addition the I(gep)Panzergrenadier Regt 3 equipped with SPW has arrived at KIELCE, although not all the unit has been off-loaded from the trains.

Enemy Forces

According to air reconnaissance information obtained at 1800 on 10th August, the approach leading to and around RAKOW is held by relatively weak dug-in Russian infantry forces with some limited armour support – which mostly appears to be concentrated around RAKOW.

No major troop movements have been observed in the area. However radio intercepts do suggest that the Russians are starting to bring up armoured units to assist their push out of the bridgehead. As part of this preparation armoured patrol activity will most likely increase.

Of more concern is that these ground troops will, in all likelihood, be heavily supported by dug-in and well concealed PAK batteries. These pose the single largest threat to our panzers. Identifying these positions and taking them out quickly is key to the success of our advance.

Operational Orders

2000Hrs 10th August 1944

Kampfgruppe Orders Group

Oberst Bernuth received his orders from Generalleutnant Philipps at 2000Hrs 10th August and immediately began to study the plan of attack. It was immediately obvious since the units that were to participate in the operation had not yet been alerted, the entire task force could not possibly be ready to move out before 0300.

He also knew the state of the roads in this sector and quickly worked out that the maximum speed at which his force could drive over a dusty dirt road, without headlights, was 9km an hour. The approach march to RAKOW would therefore require a minimum of 5 hours. Taking into account the time required for securing his line of advance, refuelling and deploying his units, Bernuth arrived at the conclusion that the attack to seize the vital bridges over the CZARNA RIVER at RAKOW could not be launched before 1100Hrs on the 11th August.

Since the operation might thus be deprived of the element of surprise, he decided to employ an advance guard, based around the armoured units that had so far arrived, that was to move out one hour earlier than the bulk of his force. It was expected that this mobile kampfguppe could reach and secure a large wooded area 500m SE of the village of OSINNIK by 1000Hrs at the latest. This covered area, 7km from RAKOW could serve as a jump-off point for the attack on the bridges. After a short halt here, the advance guard could cover the remaining 9km in 1 hour and be in position to launch the attack on RAKOW just before mid-day.

Operational Plan

At 2020Hrs the task force commander conferred with the commander of I Panzergrenadier Regiment 3 - Oberstleutnant Voss - at his CP and, after a brief discussion issued the following verbal orders:

“A company of SPW from I/PzGrn Rgt 3 supported by a company of Panzers from II/PzRgt 6 will form an advance guard that will be ready to move out at 2200Hrs.

The attack to seize the bridges over the CZARNA River is to be launched at 1100Hrs on 11th August 1944.

You will advance with all possible speed, using your armoured punch and ability to break through the enemy defences, in order to seize BONDARISKI and secure a jump-off point (wooded lot east of OSINNIK) for the attack at 1100Hrs on the CZARNA RIVER crossings, vicinity RAKOW, which will be seized by a coup de main. You will secure the bridge crossings within boundaries by 1300Hrs on the 11th August in order to allow follow-on elements from the divisional main body to continue offensive operations' north then east cutting the enemy's main supply and escape route.

The key tasks to ensure success are: destroy enemy forces along the axis of advance, deny enemy reconnaissance the ability to determine our array of forces, secure the bridges at

RAKOW, and prevent enemy reinforcements from linking up with their advance guard isolated on the west side of the VISTULA RIVER.

By 1800Hrs on the 13th August we will have defeated the enemy forces east of the VISTULA RIVER; we will have maintained the viability of the crossing point at RAKOW, and have retained sufficient fighting power and mobility to defend against future Russian attacks or postured to attack with our kampfgruppe within 12 hours."



PLAYER NOTES AND HINTS

Panzer Vorwärts! Aber mit Verstand! (Armour Forward! But with Intelligence!)

Key points to keep in mind when playing this scenario...

- No reinforcements for your core units
- Conserve your unit strength – especially your panzergrenadiers
- Only careful combat reconnaissance can protect you from surprise. Protect to your flanks as well as the front. ALWAYS KEEP YOUR EYE OUT FOR THE ENEMY!
- In combined operations with panzers and armoured infantry, you must make certain that the arms stick close together; only so can they help each other and achieve success. Which of the two is leading is a secondary matter; what must be known is that it is the intention of the enemy to separate them and that you must prevent this in all circumstances. Your Battle cry must be "Protect the Infantry!" and the infantry's Battle cry is "Protect the Tanks!"
- Unarmoured or lightly armoured units attached to you must be protected from any unnecessary losses until they are needed for their own operational tasks, for which reason they were attached to you.

GO TO MISSION 1 GEPANZERTE VORHUT BRIEFING

Core Units - Kampfgruppe von Schroif

KGr von Schroif Core Units	Call Sign	Soft Factors'			
I(gep)/Panzergrenadier Regiment 3	Sperber	Experience	Motivation	Fitness	Leadership
Battalion CO Oberstleutnant Voss 'The old man'	Sperber Führer	Crack	High	Fit	2
1st Kompanie (gep)	Call Sign	Soft' Factors			
1st Kompanie (gep)	Sperber 1	Experience	Motivation	Fitness	Leadership
Kompanie Commander Hauptmann Hans von Schroif	Maus Führer	CRACK	HIGH	FIT	2
2 IC Leutnant Jorn Ehrlichmann	Maus Gehilfe	VET	HIGH	FIT	1
Hauptfeldwebel Neitzel					
1st Zug	Maus 1				
CO Leutnant Altshüller	Maus 1	CRACK	HIGH	FIT	2
1 st Gruppe	Maus 11				
NCO Altnr		VET	HIGH	FIT	0
2 nd Gruppe	Maus 12				
NCO Diemers		VET	NORMAL	FIT	1
3 rd Gruppe	Maus 13				
NCO Tappe		REG	HIGH	FIT	2
		Experience	Motivation	Fitness	Leadership
2nd Zug	Maus 2				
Feldwebel Lärman	Maus 1	VET	HIGH	FIT	2
1 st Gruppe	Maus 21				
NCO Pöppel		REG	NORMAL	FIT	1
2 nd Gruppe	Maus 22				
NCO Baumhauer		REG	HIGH	FIT	0
3 rd Gruppe	Maus 23				
NCO Liebig		REG	NORMAL	FIT	0
		Experience	Motivation	Fitness	Leadership
3rd Zug	Maus 3				
Feldwebel Rannenberg	Maus 3	VET	HIGH	FIT	2
1 st Gruppe	Maus 31				
NCO Vogt		VET	HIGH	FIT	1
2 nd Gruppe	Maus 32				
NCO Winnings		REG	NORMAL	FIT	0
3 rd Gruppe	Maus 33				
NCO Sehmel		REG	NORMAL	FIT	0
		Experience	Motivation	Fitness	Leadership
4th Zug (Heavy Weapons)	Maus 4				
CO Leutnant Guhrs	Maus 4	CRACK	HIGH	FIT	2
Mortar Truppe	Maus 41				
NCO Dänicke		VET	NORMAL	FIT	1
HMG Truppe	Maus 42				
NCO Eichel*		VET	HIGH	FIT	2
NCO Gres		REG	NORMAL	FIT	1
Cannon Truppe	Maus 43				
NCO Boedecker		VET	HIGH	FIT	2

KGr von Schroif Core Units cont.	Call Sign	Experience	Motivation	Fitness	Leadership
Forward Observer Leutnant Wolter	Kohl 1	VET	HIGH	FIT	2
2nd Kompanie	Sperber 2				
CO Hauptmann Wilhelm Dietrich	Hund Führer	REG	HIGH	FIT	1
3rd Kompanie	Sperber 3				
CO Hauptmann Hardy Krüger	Bussard Führer	VET	HIGH	FIT	2
4th Kompanie	Sperber 4				
CO Hauptmann Horst Buchholz	Zaunkönig Führer	REG	HIGH	FIT	1

KGr von Schroif Core Units cont.	Call Sign				
II Panzer Regiment 6	Rose				
Battalion CO Oberst Bernuth	Rose Führer				
6th Panzer Kompanie	Call Sign	Soft' Factors			
6th Panzer Kompanie	Rose 6	Experience	Motivation	Fitness	Leadership
Kompanie Commander Hauptmann Eric Faust	Adler Führer	VET	HIGH	FIT	2
2IC Leutnant Paul Kerscher	Adler Gehilfe	VET	HIGH	FIT	1
1st Zug	Adler 1				
NCO Fuchs	Adler 1	VET	HIGH	FIT	2
Gerber	Adler 11	REG	NORMAL	FIT	0
Baur	Adler 12	REG	NORMAL	FIT	1
Hummel	Adler 13	REG	NORMAL	FIT	1
Schmidt	Adler 14	VET	HIGH	FIT	2
2nd Zug	Adler 2				
NCO Amsel	Adler 2	REG	HIGH	FIT	2
Foth	Adler 21	GREEN	HIGH	FIT	1
Lorenzen	Adler 22	GREEN	HIGH	FIT	1
Metz	Adler 23	REG	NORMAL	FIT	1
Aleshite	Adler 24	REG	HIGH	FIT	1
3rd Zug	Adler 3				
Feldwebel Hirsch	Adler 3	VET	HIGH	FIT	1
Bocker	Adler 31	VET	NORMAL	FIT	1
Hofmeister	Adler 32	REG	NORMAL	FIT	0
Rettig	Adler 33	REG	HIGH	FIT	1
Oelberg	Adler 34	GREEN	HIGH	FIT	0
4th Zug	Adler 4				
Feldwebel Traugott	Adler 4	VET	HIGH	FIT	2
Engel	Adler 41	VET	NORMAL	FIT	0
Janson	Adler 42	REG	NORMAL	FIT	1
Lange	Adler 43	REG	HIGH	FIT	1
Sorge	Adler 44	VET	HIGH	FIT	1

German WWII Map Symbols Key

The following key outlines the symbols commonly used on German maps in WWII to denote the types and strength of units. These symbols are also used on both the tactical and operational maps used both 'in game' and in this handbook.



































PANZERTRUPPEN INSPECTORATE UNITS

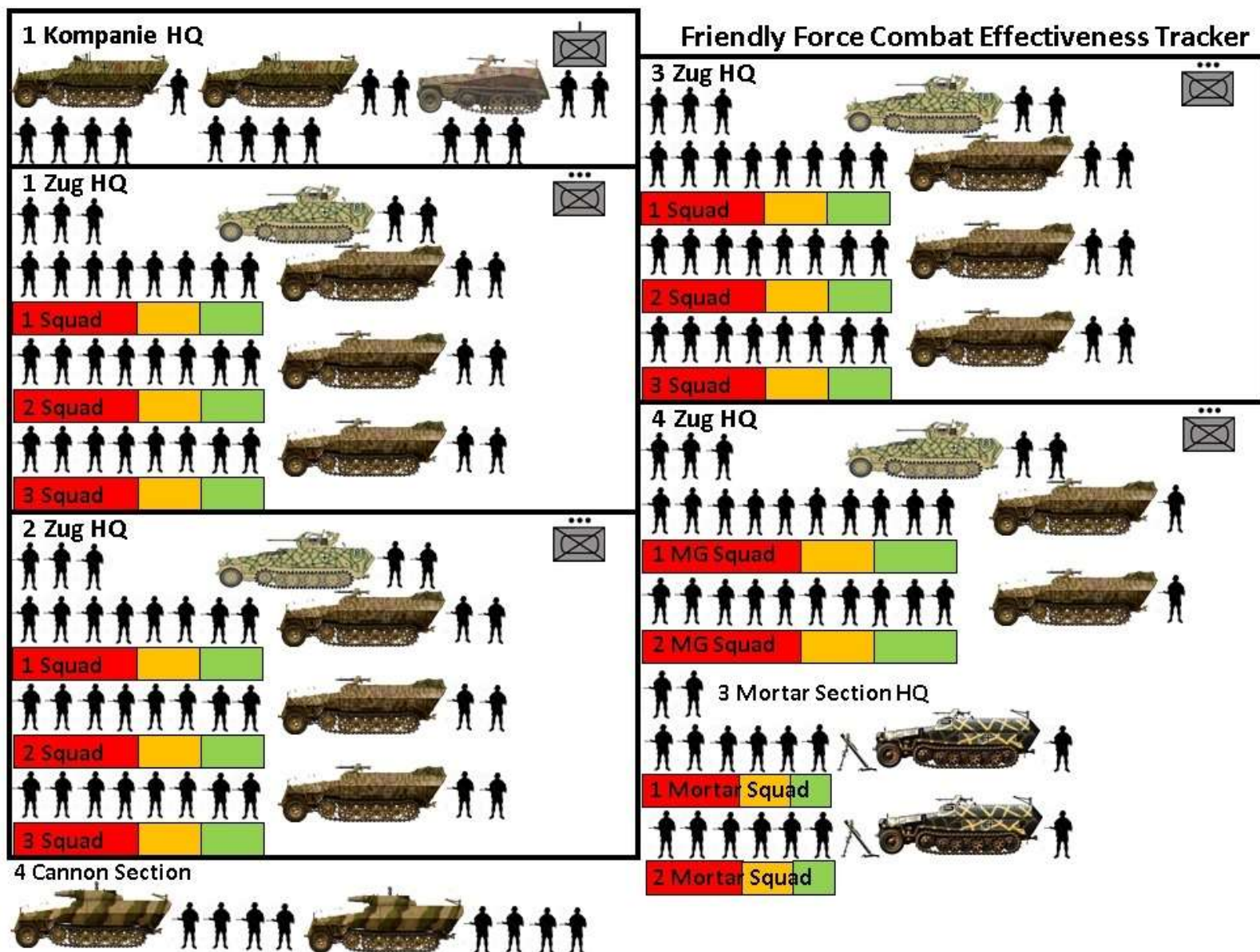
 Motorized Infantry Platoon	 Motorized Infantry Company	 Motorized Heavy Company (Typical Example)		 Armored Infantry Platoon	 Armored Infantry Company	 Armored Flamethrower Platoon	 Armored Gun Platoon	 Armored Heavy Company (Typical Example)		 Motorized Infantry Gun Company	 Self-Propelled Infantry Gun Company
 Motorcycle Recon. Platoon	 Motorcycle Recon. Company	 Kettenkrad Recon. Company	 Motorized Recon. Company	 Armored Recon. Company	 Motorized Heavy Reconnaissance Company (Typical Example)		 Armored Car Platoon	 Armored Car Company (wheeled)	 Armored Car Company (half-tracked)	 Armored Car Company (tracked)	 Light Recon. Transport Column (mot)
 Tank Platoon	 Tank Company	 Radio-Controlled Tank Co.	 Tank (Assault Gun) Company	 Assault Tank Company (Sturmpanzer)	 Headquarters Company	 Tank Maintenance Platoon	 Tank Maintenance Company	 Flame Tank Platoon	 Motorized Anti-Tank Company	 Self-Propelled Anti-Tank Company	 Light Panzer Transport Column (mot)

WEAPON SYMBOLS

Classification	Machine Gun	Anti-Tank Rifle	Infantry Gun	Mortar	Anti-Tank Gun	Rocket Launcher	Gun	Howitzer	Heavy Howitzer	Anti-Aircraft Gun	Flame Thrower
Light	le	to 79mm	to 75mm	to 79mm	to 39mm	to 109mm	to 99mm	to 129mm	—	to 36mm	man-packed
Medium	m	—	—	80 - 119mm	40 - 69mm	110 - 169mm	—	—	—	37 - 69mm	—
Heavy	s	with tripod	over 80mm	over 76mm	80 - 89mm	190 - 219mm	100 - 209mm	130 - 209mm	210 - 249mm	60 - 159mm	vehicle-borne
Heaviest	sw	over 16mm	—	—	over 96mm	over 220mm	over 210mm	over 210mm	over 260mm	over 160mm	—

INFANTRY INSPECTORATE UNITS

											
Infantry Platoon	Infantry Company	Infantry Mortar Company	Infantry Machine Gun Company	Infantry Pioneer Platoon	Infantry Anti-Tank Platoon	Infantry Anti-Tank Company	Infantry Gun Platoon	Infantry Gun Company	Light Anti-Aircraft Co. (mot)	Infantry Bicycle Platoon	Infantry Bicycle Company
											
Mountain Infantry Platoon	Mountain Infantry Company	Mountain Mortar Company	Mountain Machine Gun Company	Mountain Pioneer Platoon	Mountain Anti-Tank Platoon	Mountain Anti-Tank Company	Mountain Infantry Gun Company	Light Mtn. Anti-Aircraft Co. (mot)	Mountain Bicycle Platoon	Light Mtn. Transport Column	
											
Cavalry Platoon	Cavalry Company	Cavalry Mortar Platoon	Cavalry Machine Gun Company	Cavalry Pioneer Platoon	Cavalry Anti-Tank Platoon	Cavalry Anti-Tank Company	Cavalry Infantry Gun Platoon	Mounted Recon. Platoon	Lt. Inf. Company (motorized)	Mortar Company (motorized)	Machine Gun Company (motorized)



6 Kompanie HQ



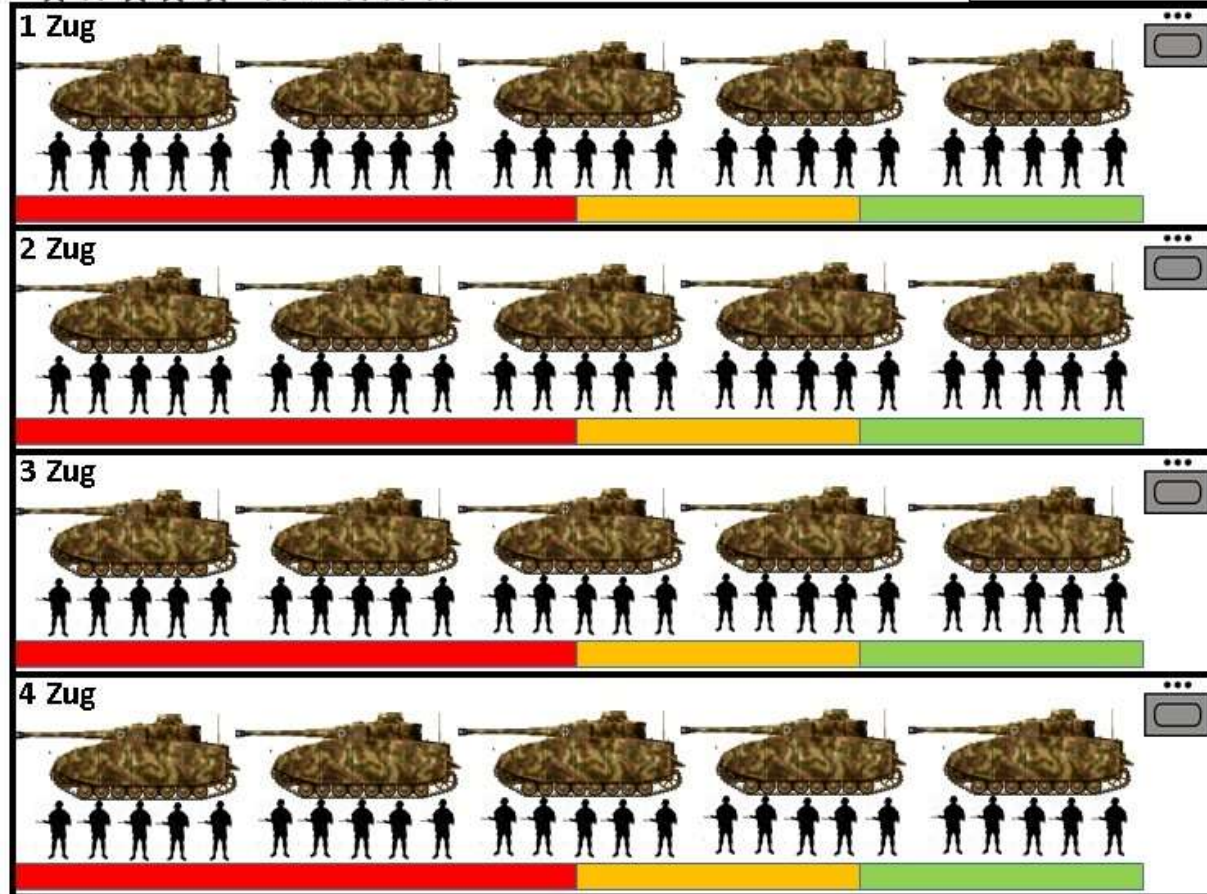
Friendly Force Combat Effectiveness Tracker

Instructions:

Mark Kills with an X

Mark Damage/Wounds with an /

Mark from right to left to show combat effectiveness



Key:

Red = Ineffective <50%, Orange = Partially effective 50-75%, Green = Effective >75%

“Very good Herr Oberstleutnant. The mission Sir?”

“Ah yes. I was getting to that. Interruptions my dear boy – they spoil the flow don’t you know? Right, our Russkie friends have broken across the Vistula – here. At Baranow.”

Voss indicates a spot on a large scale map spread out on the table in his command SPW.

“Our friends from the 19.Panzer Division will take the right flank and advance along the Vistula in the direction of Baranow and secure our Russian friend’s crossing point. We, by that I mean 3.Panzer Division, will take the left flank and cover their advance. We’ll advance simultaneously into the deep flank of the enemy, thus preventing further enemy attacks to the north. Simple is it not?

Surprise is the key to success. Hence we’re forming a kampfguppe from our panzers and our own SPW that will be the advance guard. The main body of the division will follow on behind. We’re the spear old chap, and you’ll be at the very tip.”

You stare at the map and think there appears to be a lot of ground between your current position and the Soviet bridgehead at Baranow.

“Ivan’s going to sit tight whilst we do this Sir?”

“Of course not dear chap. He’s dug in nice and deep, salted his positions with PAK and he’s busy, no doubt, ferrying his panzers across to widen his current bridgehead. He’s no fool – as soon he works out what we are up to he’ll hit us, and hit us hard. That’s why we need to move, and move fast. It’s all about surprise old chap. We need to seize BONDARISKI and secure a jump-off point at this wooded lot east of OSINNIK, for the planned attack at 1100Hrs on the CZARNA RIVER crossings, in the vicinity RAKOW. This will be seized by a coup de main. We must secure the bridge crossings within boundaries by 1300Hrs on the 11th August in order to allow follow-on elements from the divisional main body to continue offensive operations’ north then east, cutting the enemy’s main supply and escape route. Oh, one other point. We’ll not be sending out any reconnaissance detachments. Don’t want to attract the attention of the Russians eh?”

Mission

“I want your Kampfguppe – let’s call it Kampfguppe von Schroif – to be ready to march out at 2200Hrs. Your “stosslinie” is ROGACHYEVKA/BONDARISKI/OSINNIK/RAKOW.

I want you to conduct an advance to contact with the initial aim of clearing and securing the kampfguppe’s line of advance. Once you’ve done that it’s on to OSINNIK.”

You glance up from the map.

“Herr Oberstleutnant – I only have a few züge from my Kompanie that have detrained and are ready to move. The rest will take a while to detrain and be ready. My 2IC, Leutnant Ehrlichmann is currently supervising this.”

“That’s as may be, but take what you have. I’ve arranged for you to hook up with a panzer zug from Faust’s unit. You’ll also have a FOO attached to you – chap’s name is Leutnant Wolter – I’ve also arranged for you to have the support of a ‘Wespe’ battery, although ammo is limited.

Be sure to be on the march by 2200Hrs at the absolute latest. We’ll aim to get the rest of the kampfguppe on the move by 0300Hrs at the latest. Speed old chap. And surprise. Best get a move on eh?”

You swallow and think - “Christ the old bastard IS out to kill me...”

“Understood Sir. Our objectives?”

“Ah yes. Glad you mentioned that. One of our recce units will show you the way until this point here, just at the AO*. From here you are in the enemy’s HKL.

I want you to reconnoitre the following objectives for suitability of fords/crossing points:

AZ001
AZ002
AZ003
AZ004
AZ005

And check out AZ006 for possible enemy observers.

In addition you’ll secure our route of advance by:

Clearing and securing (OCCUPY) the following objectives of enemy forces:

PRIGNITZ
OBERHADEL



I’ll send over up to date intel in the form of air recce images and an assessment of the enemy’s dispositions from the Ic – he’s busy working on it this moment. Herr Schroif, I need you to have completed this mission by 0645Hrs. You’ll then reform, and be ready to proceed

along this route east for your next mission: to secure our jump off point, in these woods 500m south east of OSINNIK for the proposed attack on RAKOW at 1100Hrs."

You scribble down notes on your notepad.

"What about rearming and refuelling?"

Voss looks up from the map.

"Good point Herr Schroif. As I've said surprise is the key to success. We need to keep the Russkies on their toes..."

The look of surprise on your face is obvious. Just as you are about to voice your concerns Voss raises his left hand, palm up.

"I am aware of the principle that armoured vehicles going into combat must carry sufficient fuel to assure their mobility throughout a day's fighting. However, since the element of surprise is of decisive importance for the success of this operation, everything is subordinated to catching the Russians unprepared."

Voss stares hard at you – checking your reaction.

"Understood Sir. Can I ask when we can expect to refuel and re-arm?"

Voss' face relaxes, he checks some notes on a pad then indicates on the map - "We've arranged for some fuel bowzers and ammo trucks to rendezvous with your kampfguppe at this location – here at 1800Hrs. You'll refuel and re-arm at this point."

You nod agreement and note down the location and timings.

Voss stares at you intently.

"We don't want to give too much away to our Russkie friends, so ensure radio silence during your approach march Herr von Schroif.

You'll be issued new copies of the brevity table*. You will only use the radio if and when you make contact; or to let us know you have secured the objectives - codenames only.

It is my intent Herr von Schroif that you clear and secure the main body's route of advance through this AO. I don't want to be hit by surprise Russkie attacks. I'm relying on you old chap. Don't let me down"

"Understood Herr Oberstleutnant! With your permission? I'll be on my way to organise my unit."

Before you can turn and head off to see to your unit Voss adds:

"I don't need to remind your Herr von Schroif that your soldiers do not belong to you, but to Germany. Personal glory hunting and senseless dare-devilry lead only in exceptional cases to

success, but always cost blood. We don't have any reserves – so use your men wisely. I'm counting on your superior tactical leadership in battle to ensure your unit suffers few, or better still, no casualties. Understood?"

You nod. Voss warms to his theme.

"I don't have to tell you Herr Hauptmann that in battle against the Soviet- Russians you must temper your courage with your judgement, your cunning, your instincts and your tactical ability. Only then will you have the prerequisites to be victorious in battle and only then will your soldiers look on you with loyalty and respect and always stand by you in untiring combat readiness."

"JAWOHL Herr Oberstleutnant!"

You stifle a wry grin. He should write the scripts for "Die Deutsche Wochenschau"!

You salute and turn away. As you duck down to scramble out of the back of the SPW Voss calls to you.

"Oh Herr von Schroif, one last thing?"

"Herr Oberstleutnant?"

"Viel Glück!"

"Thank you Herr Oberstleutnant."

Then you are out of the vehicle and into the dank evening where you quickly head off to where your company is assembling under the careful supervision of Leutnant Jorn Ehrlichmann, your trusted and effective 2Ic.

Friendly Forces

Your walk back to your command SPW, parked in the lee of a railway building, takes you through the noisy chaos of tracked vehicles and running men. It's the organised chaos of a panzer unit assembling and readying itself for combat.

As you approach your unit you see three individuals, two of whom are dressed in black panzer uniforms, standing by the side of the SPW smoking. You recognise one of the black panzer uniformed figures as Hauptmann Eric Faust. Faust and yourself know each other very well. During multiple operations over the past few months both your SPW unit and Faust's panzers founded a close working relationship based on mutual respect and trust forged in the white hot crucible of armoured warfare on the Eastern Front in 1944.

You recognise the other panzerman as Feldwebel Traugott, a hard bitten old hand and commander of 6 Kompanie's 4th Zug. Beside them is your 2Ic – Leutnant Jorn Ehrlichmann.

“Guten abend Eric, Jorn, Traugott!”

Faust nods and smiles in the dank gloom. You notice Traugott stiffen and nod perceptibly. Jorn smiles broadly. Faust is the first to speak.

“Well Hans – looks like we’re back in it at the deep end once again. I’ve a message from “The Old Man” to provide you with a panzer zug. Feldwebel Traugott’s unit is the only one I have anywhere near ready. What’s the job?”

You quickly run through the operation as you were briefed by Voss on the map provided.

“What’s the situation regarding our readiness Jorn?”

“Both Leutnant Altshüller and Feldwebel Rannenberg’s 1st and 3rd Züge are ready to move Herr Hauptmann. They are both at full strength with no reported vehicle issues. That gives us:

6 x SPW; 2 x 251/17; 6 x squads

Plus your own command SPW.

The 2nd Zug and 4th Heavy Weapons Zug are still on a train awaiting space to be unloaded. They should be ready to roll by 0300Hrs Sir.”

You nod.

“Good – What’s your situation Eric?”

Faust leans back against the SPW.

“I’ve only Traugott’s zug operational. The rest of my panzers are still stuck on a train. I expect to be off-loaded by 0400Hrs and ready to roll by 0600Hrs.”

“Good. OK. Jorn you’ll stay behind and supervise the rest of the unit off-loading then you’ll make all speed with 2nd and 4th Zug to link up with myself, 1st and 3rd Zug, at BONDARISKI for no later than 0645Hrs.”

Jorn nods.

“Paul I’ll work with Feldwebel Traugott’s Zug in the meantime but if you can force the pace with the rest of your unit and rendezvous with us at the same location at 0630Hrs.”

“OK Hans but that’s a tight deadline. Even assuming we off-load in time, my panzers will have a tough time travelling these dirt tracks the Poles call roads in the dark. We’ll make every effort though.”

“Thanks Paul – that’s all I ask.”

“OK we’ve a few more details to work on, let’s get to it. Now refuelling and re-arming, you’re going to love this...”

Enemy Forces

Just as you finish up your briefing a despatch rider roars up and hands over a wrapped bundle to one of your NCOs who brings it across to you.

The NCO salutes.

“Package from battalion Herr Hauptmann.”

You take the package and unwrap it. Inside are aerial images of the AO plus closely typed sheets of paper containing the Ic’s intel assessment of the current situation.

Overall the detail is sparse, as you’ve come to expect from such reports. Still at least it’s positive. You read the document and scan the aerial images. The gist of it is broadly summed up by:

Based on reconnaissance reports from friendly forces there has only been light enemy patrol activity – mostly armoured cars and some dismounted units occupying observation posts.

Additional information from the Ic (gleaned from radio intercepts) is that an enemy motorised unit (around company strength) appears to be travelling south towards BONDARISKI along the same route you have been tasked to take.

You also notice that all the bridges appear to have been assessed. Only bridges marked as ‘Heavy’ are crossable by heavy armour. The lighter bridges have been surveyed as taking the weight of lighter panzers and SPW.

Plan

0445Hrs

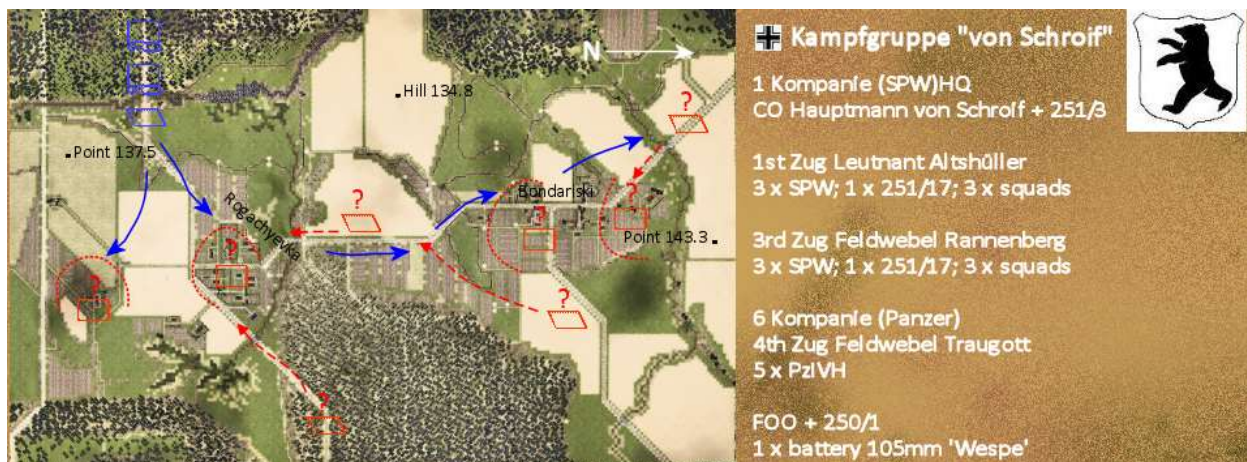
The throaty rumble of SPW and panzer engines throbs through the dank mist. You look at your watch – 0445Hrs - dawn, although in the shadow of the fir trees it is difficult to tell.

You lean against the MG shield of your command SPW and rub your eyes. The effects of the ersatz coffee served before you headed off at 2200Hrs last night have worn off. Now you are struggling to keep your fatigue at bay.

The ‘road’ your unit has been following turned out to be little more than a sandy dirt track. Movement amongst the small convoy of armoured vehicles, travelling just with the dim light from their NOTEK headlight to light their way, was in fits and starts. Vehicles kept getting bogged, or drove off the sandy track. The surrounding woods were very dark, with the overall result that orientation was difficult requiring careful navigation. Now your unit is poised, it’s objective in sight.

Ahead of you in the gloom are the SPW from your 1st and 3rd Zug. You turn around. Behind, you can just make out the blocky shape of the lead Panzer IV – the commander’s head looking out from the cupola. The other apertures of the tank are buttoned up.

In the dim red glow of your fieldlight you can see on the map that the woods the track you are on winds through, thin out just ahead. Just after this the sandy track crosses a small boggy stream before heading up into a small village marked as ROGACHYEVKA on the map. It looks like the village has line of sight to the bridge crossing the stream, although you think, and hope, that in the poor light and mist anyone sitting up there would be struggling to see anything approaching, although the noise of the tracked vehicles would be easily heard and alert anyone there.



You decide to gather the Zug commanders round for a last briefing. A brief radio message and a few moments later your Zug commanders - Leutnant Altshüller from 1st Zug and Feldwebel Rannenber from 3rd Zug are standing by your command SPW. Standing out from the grenadiers in their field grey and camo, in his black panzer uniform, is Feldwebel Traugott.

“Ok men we need to maintain the element of surprise. We can’t allow Ivan time to identify and spot our vehicles and let his pals know what we are up to.”

Everyone crowds around your map board. You point to several locations marked on the large scale map with a blue Chinagraph pencil.

“It’s likely Ivan has OPs in that village dead ahead. We also know that BONDARISKI is held by at least a platoon of Ivans. I’ve also had confirmation that Ivan has some tanks and armoured cars heading south along this track here towards BONDARISKI.

To stick with the timetable we need to move out at 0500Hrs. So here is what we’ll do...”

Notes

German player secures victory by:
Advancing as far into the map as they can and:

Touch	AZ001 200
Touch	AZ002 150
Touch	AZ003 150
Touch	AZ004 150
Touch	AZ005 150
Touch	AZ006 150
Occupy	OBJ OBERHADEL 2000
Occupy	OBJ PRIGNITZ 650

Total points available from securing all objectives (both TOUCH and OCCUPY) is 3450.
German player gets points for 'destroying' Soviet units – up to a total available of 3500.
So simply put the German players wins this by advancing as far as they can, taking as many objectives (both TOUCH and OCCUPY) as they can on the way, whilst destroying any Soviet units you come into contact with.

The Russians score maximum points for spotting and identifying any German units. They don't get points for KOing them, except von Schroif – they get 3000 points if he gets whacked, so don't get your character killed!) but this will leave you with less units for later...

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AO = Area of Operations

Sprechtafel – "brevity table" list of codenames and alternate radio frequencies.

HKL = Hauptkampflinie or Main Battle Line.

Zug = platoon

ANGR.Z = Angriffsziel or attack objective.

Ic = Intelligence Officer

"stosslinie" = which means "thrust point." This was a system the Germans used to be able to give map references 'in the clear' i.e. over the radio without being coded. A line is drawn on a map. Theoretically, it may run in any direction, but in practice ran either in the direction of the German intended advance or down the axis of a reconnaissance unit. The line begins at a fixed point and continues indefinitely in the required directions. For convenience it is usually divided into centimetres. To give a map reference, a perpendicular is dropped from the reference point to the thrust line.

Measurements are then given from the starting point of the line to the point where the perpendicular cuts the thrust line; then along the perpendicular to the reference point. Since the point may lie on either side of the thrust line, the second figure has to be prefaced by either right or left as one looks toward the enemy.

draufgängerisch' – reckless; daredevil; swashbuckling



Mission2a Feuer und Bewegung

Situation

0650Hrs 11th August 1944

The dank air is thick with acrid smoke. You find it impossible to describe the smell. Burning diesel fuel, rubber, cloth and human flesh combine to produce a truly awful stench.

Flames suddenly shoot up from the cupola of a burning T-34, sprawled in the blackened sandy ground amongst the debris of the shattered T-34 lay the remains of its crew. It's a sight all too familiar to you.

You re-focus. Time to radio battalion and update them. You key the mike.

"Sperber Führer this is Maus Führer. Over!"

You repeat – once, twice.

Then a burst of static and you hear Voss on the radio.

"Maus Führer this is Sperber Führer – send. Over!"

"Location 003456: Objectives PRIGNITZ and OBERHADEL secure.
Enemy armour and PAK engaged and destroyed.
Proceeding to next objective as arranged. Over!"

"Maus Führer – understood.

Maus Gehilfe en-route to your location with other mice friends ETA 0730Hrs. Larger friends ETA 1000Hrs. Over!"

"Sperber Führer – understood. Out!"

You are still buzzing from the adrenaline of the fight. As your mind races you start to plan your next move.

Speed and surprise you think, they are key. Now we've eliminated the enemy recce units we need to keep moving. However the remaining accompanying panzers are both a blessing and curse. Whilst their firepower would be useful in a fight, the poor state of the roads means their slow progress will hamper your SPW's fast movement.

With your 2lc en-route with the 2nd and 4th Zug bringing your company up to full strength you decide to leave the remaining panzers to secure the road and press on, at all speed, with your SPW towards OSINNIK. Faust (Call sign: Adler Führer) was en-route with the rest of the panzers from 6 Kompanie, with their ETA at your current location for 1000Hrs. Still too late to join the party though you think.

The next half hour is busy as you take stock of your situation. An NCO steps up to your SPW to announce that the wounded have been taken care of and that the unit is good to go. Your SPW with their loads of grenadiers have 'herringboned' by the roadside. At that moment you hear the clatter and roar of SPWs approaching.

That'll be Ehrlichmann you think. You glance at your watch – 0730Hrs. Good timing! A short while later Ehrlichmann's SPW draws up parallel with yours.

"Good morning Herr Hauptmann!" He waves cheerily. You nod. "How does the bastard remain so cheerful" you think.

"Good of you to join us Herr Leutnant. We'll move out for OSINNIK and our next objective. We'll stop just before the village at a clump of woods for a briefing with all the zug commanders."

You face the direction of travel, hold your arm extended to the rear; then in one movement swing your arm forward palm down. Move out! With a roar and clatter the SPW head off down the sandy road leading to the small village of OSINNIK 9km away.

Mission

0730Hrs 1.5km west of OSINNIK

After a short drive your SPW company has pulled off the road and down a small sandy track in some mixed woodland. Although the sun has been up for several hours it's still misty and damp, although it does appear as if the mist is slowly starting to thin.

You give some quick instructions to the driver of your SPW who cuts the engine and clambers out of his seat to take over the MG position. You dismount and gather your zug commanders round you.

"Time is tight men. We're going to conduct a hasty terrain reconnaissance of our approach to OSINNIK."

The small group of NCOs and Officers all nod, then quickly adjust their gear and weapons.

"Follow me!" You order

You all stealthily make your way through the trees. Despite the dank mist it's not long before you feel the hot sweat start to run down your back. Even with light kit for the recce, each of you is carrying 10-15Kg of weight with weapons, helmet, ammo and pouches.

You stealthily move forward into the cover of some bushes near a feature marked on the map - POINT 13.2. The zug leaders stealthily gather around you and you all peer through binoculars at the roofs of the buildings of OSINNIK through the mist at just over 400m away.

Crouched behind the cover of the bushes you lay out your map and talk the leaders through the mission.

"We're to secure the jump-off point for our attack on the bridges at RAKOW. It's this large section of woodland SE of OSINNIK – marked here on the map. To do that we have been ordered to clear and occupy objectives MUNCHEN; COCHEM; BERLIN; AACHEN; and KOBLENZ."

You look up and see all your leaders listening intently.

"There are several other features that the enemy will likely hold to prevent access to this woodland. They are AZ DIETER which is this wooded knoll giving good views on the approaches to OSINNIK; AZ OTTO which is FARM001 which controls the southerly road approach to the woods; AZ FRITZ which is this long strip of woodland which has good fields of fire across these wide open fields. And lastly AZ HERMANN which is the village itself and controls the westerly approaches to the village itself.

Looking at the terrain I'm also concerned that the woodland at POINT 20.1 has a good enfilade field of fire on the road running west to east."

As you talk you trace the features on your map as the other leaders follow on their own copies making their own notes.



Friendly Forces

"Although we don't have any panzers we do have the not inconsiderable firepower of our SPW company. We need to make maximum use of our mortars and SPW support weapons."

"Do we have any artillery support Herr Hauptmann?" Asks the zugführer of I Zug, Leutnant Altshüller.

You shake your head.

"No, they are currently being used for other fire missions. So we've only got fire support from our own mortars and heavy weapons."

Altshüller acknowledges your reply. Would have been good though you think...

Enemy Forces

“Ok – what’s Ivan got there I hear you ask?! Well, you’ll not be surprised to hear we’ve no firm intel on either the strength of the enemy or their positions. Given the speed and surprise of our attack it’s unlikely that Ivan knows we’re here. So it’s likely that all that’s guarding this AO is a platoon sized outpost, maybe supported by some HMGs and a few ATRs. However, there is the chance they’ve got some PAK out there, most likely 45mm, one maybe two guns, so we need to be careful in that regard. They’ll also have mortar support – it’ll be zeroed in to key locations – so keep moving. Don’t stop - not even to scratch your arse!”

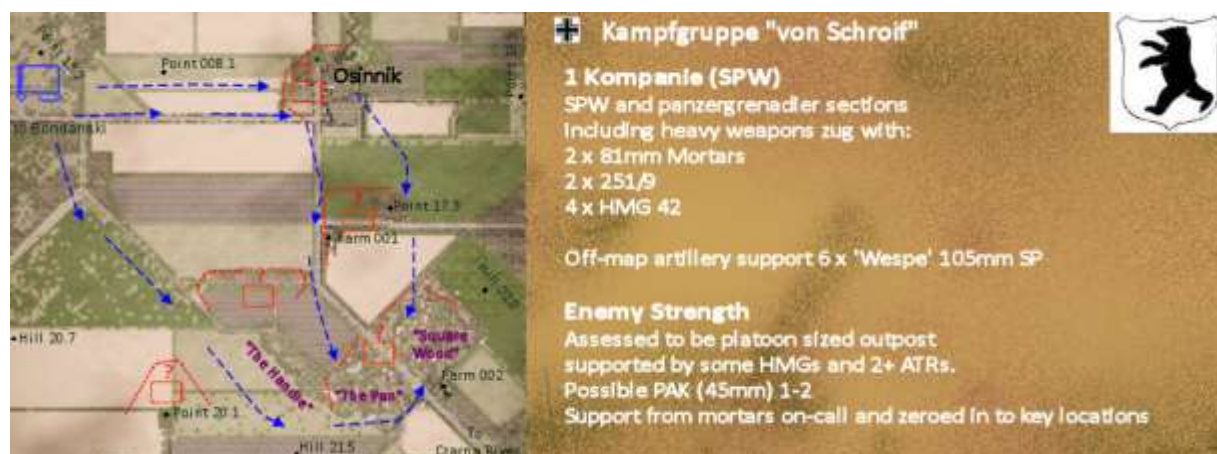
The men chuckle.

“Herr Hauptmann...” says Feldwebel Lärmann, II Zug’s platoon leader and an ‘old sweat’.
“...understood sir but what if the enemy is in the woods in force?”

“If they are there we’ll plaster them with our mortars. That’ll give Ivan a sore head. We just have to find him, that’s the challenge!”

You look at the dirt streaked faces of your zug leaders, all of them highly experienced panzergrenadiers.

“We’ve been in this situation before men. Stay alert and pay attention and we will beat these bastards. Now let’s get back to the vehicles – final briefing at 0745Hrs and we move off at 0800Hrs.”



Plan

Back in the company assembly area each Zug leader headed off to brief his unit about what lay ahead. You climb up into your SPW. One of your crew hands you a hot cup of coffee and two slices of bread with what you hope is cheese between them. “You’ve got to look after yourself Herr Hauptmann” he says. You nod your thanks and take a gulp of scalding coffee. You mull over what info you know about the terrain and the enemy.

It was good to get a look at the ground you think, but I don’t know much more about the enemy than I did earlier. You look once more at your map. From what you learned from

your reconnaissance and what little intel you have you realise you have the following options for your attack...

Notes

German player secures victory by:

Occupying:

OBJ MUNCHEN 100

OBJ COCHEM 100

OBJ BERLIN 100

OBJ AACHEN 100

OBJ KOBLENZ 100

Touching:

AZ DIETER 25

AZ OTTO 25

AZ FRITZ 50

AZ HERMANN 50

Touching:

LINE EVA 0

LINE ANJA 0

German player also scores up to 550 points for destroying any Soviet units.



Mission3a Angriff gegen einen Brueckenkopf

Situation

1015Hrs 11th August 1944 South East of OSINNIK

“Herr Hauptmann!” As you became conscious of the words being shouted, you also became aware of your shoulder being shaken, vigorously.

“HERR HAUPTMANN!” Again louder and more violent shaking.

“What!?...Huh...” You mumble, eyes still closed. Blearily you open your eyes, which feel like they are full of grit. Your stomach feels hollow, your body is stiff and sore. As you shift your body out of its cramped position on the bench in your command SPW, you suddenly feel slightly nauseated. As you focus your red rimmed eyes you see Hauptfeldwebel Neitzel’s grimy face peering down at you. “The Old Man is on the radio and wants to speak to you right now!” You struggle upright as Neitzel hands you the radio headphones and MIC. You clumsily place the headphones over your head and key the MIC.

“Sperber Führer this is Maus Führer. Over!” You croak. Your throat is dry and parched. You try to swallow.

“Maus Führer this is Sperber Führer – rendezvous at my command post 10 minutes. Over!”

“Sperber Führer understood. Over!”

“Maus Führer this is Sperber Führer. Out!”

You take off the headphones and hand them back to the radio operator.

“Contact Leutnant Ehrlichmann inform him I’m off to Battalion for further orders, and he is to ready the company, for immediate movement on my orders. Understood?”

The radio operator nods and sets to work.

You rub your red rimmed eyes with your grimy hands, then lean across into the cab and tap the driver on his shoulder. “Let’s go – drive us over to the Old Man’s command post.” The driver nods and guns the engine. With a lurch the SPW clatters out onto the dirt road. You notice the sun dapples the track ahead as sunlight filters through the tall pine and birch trees. Least the weather has improved you think. You can’t believe you’d only been asleep for fifteen minutes. The first sleep you’ve had in over fifteen hours. You look around the SPW. The strain of no sleep and near constant combat is showing on the faces of your young grenadiers. One of whom is still slumped against the side walls of the SPW, oblivious to the sudden movement and noise.

You lean against the MG shield staring ahead. As the SPW clatters along the dirt track you reflect on the last action. Your success in capturing the jump-off point at OSINNIK for the division means the forthcoming attack on the CZARNA bridges is on time, as planned. 'Old Man' Voss made his pleasure very clear, in that farmhouse in the woods just after you'd cleared it of the last Soviet occupants. Although less than half an hour ago it felt like an age. However the slow attrition of men and machines - the grist to the mill of mechanised combat - and the expenditure of ammunition and fuel is slowly, but surely starting to degrade your unit's operational effectiveness.

That short moment of satisfaction, at having completed several challenging missions and creating the conditions for the key attack on the CZARNA bridges, has passed. Now your thoughts turn to the next phase - what Voss will require of your weary panzergrenadiers, and the state of your SPW Company, currently running low on ammunition and fuel.

On the plus side, you think, at least the rapid pace of the kampfguppe's advance, and the destruction of the enemy's reconnaissance units means we have the advantage. Given the speed and pace of the attack Ivan is unlikely to have managed to push much more in the way of tanks and PAK into the path of your advance. Looks like the plan for seizing the CZARNA bridges by a coup de main might just well work.

Looking over the side of the SPW you see a long line of camouflaged Panzer IVs pulled up, herringbone fashion, under the cover of the woods. Their crews are busy checking over their tanks. From the turret numbers you recognise them as belonging to Faust's 6th Panzer Kompanie. Not long after your SPW pulls up beside Voss' command SPW. Parked beside this you recognise Faust's command Panzer IV number 601. Standing in the lee of both vehicles you see a small gaggle of black and field grey clad officers. In amongst them you recognise the familiar figures of Oberstleutnant Voss 'The old man' and Hauptmann Eric Faust, 6th Panzer Kompanie's CO.

With a clatter and roar of the engine your SPW pulls up beside the other vehicles. You grope for your gear and helmet, and then stumble out of the rear door of the SPW. As you move, you realise just how much your body aches. As you exit the back of the SPW you straighten up and quickly try to stretch out your back, then moving like a man returning from the grave, you walk over to the group of figures.

You quickly bring yourself to attention and salute Voss who casually salutes back. "Good of you to join us Herr von Schroif!" He says, a thin smile briefly playing about his mouth. "Thanks to your efforts over the past twelve hours we find ourselves in the fortuitous position of having caught Ivan with his trousers down. Now, let's get down to business. Shall we gentlemen?" Voss gestures to a map spread out on a map board held by one of the officers.

Mission

1020Hrs

I/PzGrn Rgt 3 Command Post

South east of RAKOW

As you all crane over the map Voss starts to talk whilst indicating key points on the map. You remove your notebook from your tunic pocket and start to make notes.

“As you know gentlemen the III Panzer-Korps has been tasked with eliminating the enemy that has broken across the Vistula. Our friends over in the 19.Panzer Division are advancing on our right along the Vistula in the direction of Baranow. They’ve been tasked with taking Ivan’s main crossing point - here. We, the 3.Panzer Division, are to cover their left flank, whilst advancing simultaneously into the deep flank of the enemy, thus preventing further enemy attacks to the north”

Voss looks up to ensure everyone has so far followed this. Satisfied at the response he continues. You, staring with bloodshot eyes at the map marshal your strength to focus on his words.

“Thanks to von Schroif’s SPWs, with help from Faust’s panzers, we have secured a jump-off point at this wooded lot east of OSINNIK on schedule.”



Voss looks across at a slim panzer officer, of medium build, with sharp aquiline features who graciously inclines his head in acknowledgment.

“We have some recce units from Major Deichen’s I/Pz.AA.3 screening our flank; they have been keeping the enemy’s positions under observation and have gathered some useful intel on the enemy’s dispositions. It does appear, gentlemen, that we have caught Ivan on the hop.”

Again Voss looks up to check that everyone is following what he is saying.

“Our priority is the heavy bridges, in the vicinity of RAKOW, over the CZARNA, here, here and here. We need the heavy bridges to allow our heavy panzers the ability to cross the river. They must be secured and a bridgehead established to enable the main body of the division to cross. Our attack to seize these crossings is timed for 1100Hrs. It will be seized by a coup de main. Once the crossing is secured, ideally by 1300Hrs, then we continue our

advance north, then east, with all possible speed, using our armoured punch cutting the enemy's main supply and escape route."

You follow Voss' pencil as it tracks across the map. It looks a very large area.

"Gentlemen, it is my intent that by 1800Hrs on the 13th August we will have defeated the enemy forces east of the VISTULA RIVER. To do this it is essential we secure, and maintain, the viability of the crossing point over the CZARNA near RAKOW, and have retained sufficient fighting power and mobility to defend against future Russian attacks."

Friendly Forces

Voss straightens up and looks around at the small gaggle of officers. His gaze falls on yourself and Faust.

"Herr von Schroif. I'd like your kampfguppe to spearhead this attack. Major Deichen has very kindly agreed to attach one of his zugs from 2/I Pz.AA.3 to your command to provide some scouts for your attack. Their key mission is to scout out approaches to your objectives – not as assault infantry."

As this news sinks in and before you can respond Major Deichen speaks.

"I'd appreciate if my men, from Leutnant Hofner's 1st Zug, attached to your command, are protected from any unnecessary losses until they are needed for their own operational tasks?" Deichen looks at you enquiringly. You can tell he's not especially pleased his men have been assigned to your command.

"Naturally Herr Major. I fully appreciate and understand none of our soldiers belong to us but to Germany. Be rest assured we'll treat them as our guests, not as servants."

Voss, clears his throat.

"Excellent Gentlemen! Herr von Schroif please do ensure they are not used as bullet magnets. We'll need these recce boys later on in this mission. Use them with respect." Voss looks at you intently, in a manner whose meaning is clear. It's not a request but an order.

"Jawohl Herr Oberstleutnant!"

Voss nods appreciatively.

"Good! Now, back to the main business in hand. Herr Faust I believe your panzer company is fully operational?"

"Indeed Herr Oberstleutnant. We have lost some vehicles to breakdowns but otherwise we are 90% effective."

"Very good. Herr von Schroif?" Voss looks at you.

“Off course Herr Oberstleutnant, we are ready. However, we are low on ammo and fuel...”

Before you can continue Voss raises a hand.

“I fully appreciate your concerns regarding the supply situation. However, as I have said before, since the element of surprise is of decisive importance for the success of this operation, everything is subordinated to catching the Russians unprepared. We will re-supply this evening – after we have secured these bridges over the CZARNA.”

“Jawohl Herr Oberstleutnant!”

Enemy Forces

Before Voss can reply, you continue.

“Herr Oberstleutnant, do we know what the enemy have got defending this crossing? It’s an important crossing point so I’m sure Ivan hasn’t left it unguarded.”

“Good point Herr von Schroif. We have some intel that is reasonably accurate from the reconnaissance units on our flanks, plus some from local sources. It’s sparse but it has enough detail to allow us to plan. However as I have stated, to allow for speed and surprise we have not pushed any patrols further forward to make contact, just in case they tip off Ivan that we are indeed after his bridges. However the intel we have indicated that there are PAK and infantry covering the approaches along the line DEBNO/RAKOW/JAMNO, around company strength. I’m sure there will be the usual anti-tank rifles and heavy machine guns. It’s also likely Ivan will have zeroed in some mortars on key approaches. We’ve marked their estimated locations here on the map. We’ve also intercepted some radio messages that suggest Ivan is moving a tank unit through this area. We’re keeping an eye on this. As and when we receive firmer intelligence we’ll let you know. But for now speed is of the essence. We must catch them unawares.”

Well that’s not good you think. If that armoured unit arrives at the bridges at the wrong time... You still your thoughts and join the others craning to look at the red Chinagraph pencil marks on the map indicating Soviet units. You make notes on your own map.

Voss continues.

“In addition to our organic 120mm mortars we have artillery support in the form of one battery of 105mm Wespe and one battery of 150mm Hummel. That should be more than enough to take care of any enemy PAK we encounter and give Ivan’s infantry a sore head. Don’t you think?”

Voss smiles.

“Right gentlemen. Get to it. We attack in half an hour.”

You step back and salute as the other officers do the same.

You motion to Faust.

“Eric, can we get our Zugführers together to brief them on the attack in five minutes?”

Faust scratches his chin.

“We’ve not much time but I’ll see what I can do.”

Faust turns to his 2IC Leutnant Paul Kerscher.

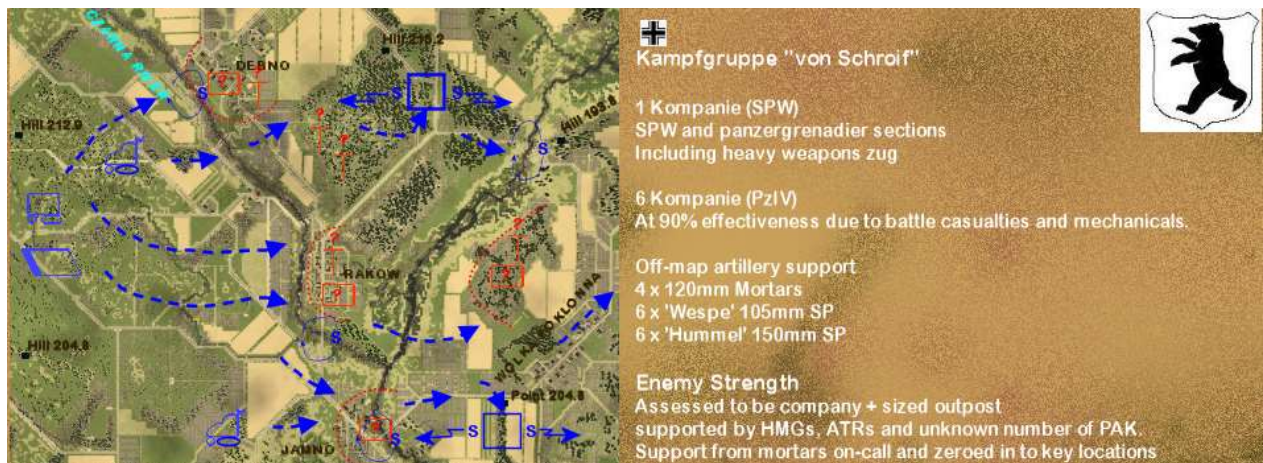
“Paul can you round the guys up for a briefing at 1030Hrs?”

Kerscher nods and heads off at a jog to his command panzer parked 100m away.

“So what do you reckon Hans? “Coup de main” my arse. The “Old Man” has been reading too many articles in “Der Völkischer Beobachter”. I’m not so keen on attacking across that open ground and getting my arse shot to pieces by every Russkie PAK in the area.”

You look at Faust and laugh.

“Well. I don’t like this situation any more than you do. We’ll just have to come up with a plan that keeps our arses in one piece! It’s the “ratschbumm”* that really concern me. Ivan will have a lot of them set-up and they’ll let us advance right on top of them before they open up. We need to work out a plan that will negate their PAK and limit our losses...”



Plan

The column of armoured vehicles you are in has just stopped. You are the spearhead of the attack. You look at your watch – 1057Hrs. In front of your SPW is the Panzer IV of Leutnant Amsell from 2 Zug, and in front of him are the SPWs of Feldwebel Lärmann's 2nd Zug. You look behind and see the long line of Panzer IVs in the bright morning sunshine. A bead of sweat trickles down your neck.

You realise that the SPWs have stopped at the edge of the woods. Just beyond the treeline the ground opens out as it slopes down to the CZARNA River. We'll soon see how good our plan is you think.

You stand up in your SPW to get a better view. Ahead you notice Lärmann in his SPW giving the signal to move forward...

Notes

German player secures victory by:

Touch

Angr.z BLAU	100
Angr.z ROT	100
Angr.z GELB	100

Occupy

Wilhelm	600
Friedrichshagen	600
Wannsee	1000

German player also scores up to 2000 points for destroying any Soviet units.

*ratschbumm – German slang for the Soviet 76-mm-Division gun M1942. So named because of the distinctive noise incoming rounds made.



Mission4a Resupply Decisions

Situation

1430Hrs

Woods on main road to OLSZOWNICA 1km north of RAKOW

After tough, bloody, fighting your kampfguppe has secured the operationally important bridges over the CZARNA River, however there is no time to relax and let your guard down.

Your kampfguppe is slowly running low on the essentials of mechanised combat – fuel and ammo. You radio Leutnant Jorn Ehrlichmann, your 2IC and order him to get a quick status on fuel and ammunition. Your SPW and Panzers are thirsty beasts, and you think, before you can resume operations, that you will need to refuel and rearm.

At that moment Faust's command panzer roars and clatters up beside your command SPW. Faust is standing in the cupola with a large grin on his face.

"Looks like we kicked Ivan's arse today eh?" He shouts.

Despite your weariness you grin back.

"We did Faust – thanks to your panzers! If we carry on like this we might get through this "Knights Cross job" of a mission with our arses intact!"

As you are shouting across to Faust your radio operator taps your shoulder.

"Herr Hauptmann – Oberstleutnant Voss on the radio."

You reach for the proffered headphones and MIC.

"Sperber Führer this is Maus Führer. Over!"

"Maus Führer this is Sperber Führer – I am calling an orders group at 1530Hrs. Adler Führer and Sperber Führer to attend, Location ANTON, NORDPOL 23, 45, 83, 90. Repeat back. Over!"

"1530Hrs; Location ANTON, NORDPOL 23, 45, 83, 90. Over!"

"Maus Führer this is Sperber Führer! Affirmative, Out!"

You take the headphones off.

"Faust – the "Old Man" is calling an orders group at 1530Hrs. We're both to attend."

Faust waves, and hoists himself out of the cupola of his Panzer IV. You watch as he stiffly works his way onto the rear deck and jumps off the rear deck to land heavily in the sandy soil. You ease yourself over the side off your SPW and join him.

"You're moving like an old man Eric!"

Faust, his face caked in grime, snorts.

"You're not so nimble yourself Hans, I saw you clamber over that SPW like some old housewife."

You laugh. It was true. The accumulation of several days of violent action, both travelling in cramped AFVs and combat, was taking its toll of everyone. You feel the pain of minor bruises, from head to foot, overlaid on the ever present tiredness that pervades every muscle in your body. You gently arch your back seeking some relief from the dull ache at the base of your spine.

"What's the state of your panzers and crews, Eric?"

Faust scratches the day old stubble on his chin.

"So far combat casualties are light. I've a few non-runners with mechanicals. The guys are all dog tired, and we're starting to run low on ammo, but more importantly, on fuel. These "mess tins" guzzle a lot of gas."

You nod.

"I'm in the same state. My grenadiers have been on the go for over 36 hours now. They're tired, the SPW crews are tired, and we're running low on ammo and fuel. We've not had a hot meal for two days now."

You pause. Take your helmet off and scratch your head. Simple pleasures. Your hair is matted, dirty.

"So, what do you think the "The Old Man" has planned for us?"

Before Faust can answer, you look up. Dark clouds are starting to form on the horizon.

"Looks like the hot weather is kicking off a storm."

Faust looks up. Several large anvil shaped clouds are forming up on the southern horizon.

"Well, looking on the bright side. It'll keep Ivan's Jabos at bay, and we'll get a wash! Least we'll be clean for the next phase of this "Knights Cross job" of a mission."

You laugh.

“We’d better get a readiness report on our respective units’ condition. I’m sure it’s going to be essential to what we do next. Better get moving Eric. Meet at my command SPW at 1515Hrs with your report ready? I’ll give you a ride over to the orders group.”

“Jawohl Herr Hauptmann!” Barks Faust as he clicks his heels together.

You laugh. “Cheeky bastard!”

Mission

1530Hrs I(gep)Panzergrenadier Regt 3 Command Post;

Location ANTON, NORDPOL 23, 45, 83, 90

south of RAKOW

The short ride back over to Voss’s command post, located in a small farm, allows you a view of the battlefield. Smoke from burning tanks drifted across the fields. Everywhere you look there is the detritus, mechanical and human, of war. Your command SPW drives into the courtyard which shelters a cluster of vehicles, mostly SPW, but a few kubelwagens and trucks. You both climb out of the SPW and amble into the wooden farmhouse.

In the dim light you are surprised to see the commander of Panzer Regiment 6, Oberst Bernuth, leaning over a large kitchen table, talking to “Old Man” Voss. You both approach the table and salute.

“Hauptmann von Schroif, Hauptmann Faust...” Bernuth salutes you both.

“Excellent job! Text book panzer warfare men. My congratulations.”

Bernuth pauses, then indicates the large map spread out on the table.

“I don’t have to tell you both how tight things are just now. We’ve got away with this attack because we’ve pushed, and pushed our attack, taking Ivan totally by surprise. However I’ve no doubt he’s now fully aware of what we are up to and I fully expect he’ll be assembling reserves to block our advance. We’re still unloading elements from the division – mostly our grenadiers and artillery. Meanwhile our Tigers are still strung out on these dirt tracks the Poles call roads. It’ll take us at least another day or so before the main strength of the division is fully assembled in this sector. By then I suspect Ivan will have strengthened his lines and be waiting for us.”

Bernuth looks up at you.

“What’s the condition of your kampfguppe Herr Hauptmann?”

“Our grenadiers are dog tired Herr Oberst but still in good spirits. Our SPW are travel weary, and we’re low on both fuel and ammo. Herr Hauptmann Faust’s panzer Kompanie is in a similar state – crews tired but in good spirits, panzers low on ammo and fuel. Overall both units still up to reasonable strength”

Bernuth nods. He looks across to Voss.

“Herr Oberstleutnant Voss and I have been discussing this situation.”

Bernuth leans his elbow on the table and gently strokes his jaw.

“As we see it we’ve two options.

Option A, Hauptmann von Schroif, is your kampfguppe rests; refuels; and re-arms this evening. This will mean you will be in good condition to carry on operations by dawn on the 12/8/44. However, as it’ll take time to assemble another kampfguppe, I estimate around 6 hours, it gives Ivan time to react to our attack. Potentially this makes the continuation of our attack more problematic as Ivan will have pushed more armour and PAK north into this sector along these routes – here and here – and be waiting for us. This option does mean that we continue the fight with our main armoured punch at full operational readiness.”

Bernuth indicates the two roads leading out of BARANOW on the map.

Option B is a high risk option. Your kampfguppe continues its advance immediately and seeks to secure the road and crossings in the vicinity of SZUMSKO/HILL 133.9. Once secure, Kampfguppe Krüger, who will be following on behind, will then pass through your lines and continue the advance. We’ve got the Russkies on the back foot, they won’t have time to react adequately and it gives us the opportunity to push our advance further. However I am fully aware that this potentially could leave your kampfguppe dangerously low on fuel and ammo. Given the seriousness of the operational situation in this sector it is a risk worth considering.”

Bernuth stands back from the table.

“Herr von Schroif, Herr Faust. I fully appreciate what I am asking you and your men to undertake here. Both options have their risks. Whatever is decided I do need you both to be fully committed to it.”

You look at Bernuth - a controlled look but one that fails to hide your apprehension. Your brain races whilst you process the options. Whilst the first option appears the sound one; taking time to refuel and re-arm your kampfguppe, it does mean that the Russians would have ample time to reorganise their forces and create a coherent defence against future attacks by the division – attacks which in all probability your unit would be spearheading.

The principle that armoured vehicles going into combat must carry sufficient fuel to assure their mobility throughout a day's fighting is one that has been drilled into you. However so has the value of the element of surprise in armoured operations – keeping your enemy on the back foot, always trying to second guess your next move. Therefore to carry on, despite your unit being low on fuel and ammo with dog tired troops, will at least give you the element of surprise. Since the element of surprise has been of decisive importance for the success of this operation to date, with everything subordinated to catching the Russians unprepared, you do wonder how much longer it will have value. You know your enemy from

long years of combat on the Eastern Front. Ivan will soon adapt and react effectively to any further attacks. Being caught out in hostile country, out of fuel and ammo does not bear thinking about. Yet if we can just fully exploit the current dislocation of the enemys' plans, it may yet lead to success.

Friendly Forces

Bernuth interrupts your thoughts.

"Herr Hauptmann...?"

Before you can answer, Faust interrupts.

"Herr Oberst – it might help reach a decision if we can have more detail as to the situation of our forces, what units you have to prosecute the attack and the enemy dispositions and possible course of action?"

"Very well Herr Faust. The 3 Kompanie under Hauptmann Krüger can team up with the other panzer Kompanie and some Tigers from Panzer-Abteilung 501. They will be ready to move out by 1800Hrs at the latest and carry on the attack. This will allow them to move out in early evening and advance through the night to secure the road and crossing in the vicinity of OLSZOWNICA. Your unit, after refuelling and re-arming would follow up this attack. As and when they secure the crossings you will pass through their lines and continue the advance east cutting the main road to OPATOW."

Bernuth looks at Voss.

"Could you outline the resupply plan Herr Oberstleutnant Voss please?"

Voss clear his throat.

"We can arrange for your kampfguppe to resupply this evening at your unit's current location. This will be a full re-supply and have you ready to move out for first light tomorrow. Alternatively you can cross-load your ammo and top up your fuel tanks and move out as soon as possible. We can schedule a re-supply for dawn tomorrow."

Both you and Faust look at each other. That's a long way into Indian country you think...

Enemy Forces

Bernuth indicates on the map.

"As regards enemy forces we know that most, if not all the key crossings will have detachments guarding them – mostly platoon/company sized forces with some limited PAK support. However we are receiving reports that the enemy are starting to react. Several armoured units are on the march now, and at their present rate of advance, should make contact with our units sometime later tomorrow. Corps intelligence expects a regiment sized force to attack through the area near OLSZOWNICA tomorrow morning. Hence the importance of seizing that crossing point."

Plan

Bernuth looks at both you and Faust.

“Well? Herr von Schroif? Herr Faust? Your decision please?”

Notes

Your kampfguppe is lined up in a wooded lot.

You can review the current condition of your unit, especially ammo load outs, state of rest of troops; vehicle conditions etc and make your decision.

To select an option you have to drive a unit onto one of two marked TOUCH options then hit ceasefire. You will then proceed onto the next appropriate mission.

Option A: pause to re-supply, re-ammo, and re-fit which takes time. This means the Soviets have the chance to bolster defences or launch spoiling attacks against the German bridgehead. These inform the conditions the German player faces in the next few missions. Your unit will be 50% rested; fully re-supplied (100%) with a 25% chance of vehicles being repaired. However this means the possibility of better prepared Soviet defenders/attackers and hence missions with the possibility of increased casualties.

Option B: do a quick cross-level of ammo and basic fuel loads and carry on with attack. Your unit will not be rested; only 10% re-supplied with no vehicles repaired. Advantage is that the Soviets have less time to bolster defences so potentially easier missions for the Germans with less risk of serious casualties BUT you run the risk of running low on ammo and may not get the chance to re-supply in later missions depending on the tactical and operational conditions you create (if you win = favourable). This is a high risk strategy which may pay big rewards in the long run if you fight well.





Mission 5.1a Panzer Rettung

Situation

1830Hrs 11th August 1944

Woods on the main road to OLSZOWNICA 1km north of RAKOW

You are standing beside your command SPW smoking a cigarette and drinking a very welcome cup of hot coffee. Your unit has remained halted in the woods on the main road to OLSZOWNICA.

Both the panzers and SPW have formed two rows, one on each side of the road, while dismounted panzergrenadiers provide security to the east and west of the halted column. You've ensured that sentries are posted at 50m intervals in the forest north and south of the road. The resupply trucks moved along the road, stopping at each vehicle pair to offload full fuel cans. They'd pick up the empties on their return trip. On the panzers you notice the loaders helping the drivers to refuel and check their vehicles. In both the SPW and Panzer IVs the gunners are checking their weapons. Mobile field kitchens have lines of grenadiers and tank crews queuing to draw coffee and food for their units.

All in all the refuel and rearm is being efficiently carried out. Now some sleep - that would be great you think. As you watch the men busying themselves with their myriad tasks you wonder how the newly formed Kampfgruppe Krüger is doing.

After your decision to stay and refuel, Hauptmann Krüger from 3/I Battalion (gep) was given the mission of continuing the attack towards OLSZOWNICA. With some Panzer IVs from 5 Kompanie and several Tigers from the 501st, they headed off less than half an hour ago. A fantastic job you think to get organised, you reckoned it should have taken them at least until 2000Hrs this evening before they'd be ready to move off.

"Good evening Hans!"

You wake from your reverie to find Eric Faust standing beside you.

"Evening Eric. I was just thinking."

"Pfennig for your thoughts Hans?"

"I was just wondering how Krüger and his Kampfgruppe will get on."

"Ah you know Krüger - he loves that sort of shit. Driving through the night deep into 'Indian country', bet he has 'Panzerlied' blaring from the radios! He'll take any opportunity to seek a cure for his 'Halsschmerzen' eh?"

You laugh. It was no secret that Hauptmann Krüger had 'throat ache' - a deep desire for a Knights Cross. This obsession manifested itself in Krüger's leadership style being

characterised as reckless or glory-seeking. It was a style of command that had cost the needless loss of lives of the men under his command in the past.

“Well I think this operation will give us plenty of chances to become heroes, whether we want it or not.” You snort.

“How is your re-supply going Eric?”

“It’s going well Hans – we’re managing to top up our ammo and be fully refuelled.” You nod.

“Excellent news Eric. The men are doing an excellent job.”

Thinking through your rate of work you calculate at this rate your kampfguppe will be 100% fully re-fuelled and re-armed; the men will have had a few hours’ sleep (around 50%) and the mechanics should have managed to recover and repair 25% of the broken down and damaged vehicles by the early hours of tomorrow.

Mission

12th August 1944

0405Hrs Woods on the main road to OLSZOWNICA 1km north of RAKOW

The noise and metallic voice sounded as if they came from the far end of a long, dark corridor. There are no other feelings or sensations as you drift from a dead sleep through that transitional period of half-asleep – half-awake. The radio crackled back to life again.

“Sperber Führer this is Maus Führer. Over!”

The noise and metallic voice sounded as if they came from the far end of a long, dark corridor. There are no other feelings or sensations as you drift from a dead sleep through that transitional period of half-asleep – half-awake. The radio crackled back to life again and you become aware of your radio operator speaking.

You begin the grim process of waking up. First the aches and pains and muscle spasms, the result of sleeping on an uneven bed of personal gear, vehicular equipment, ration boxes, ammo boxes and the other odds and ends that clutter the interior of your SPW.

As you open your eyes you hear another static crackle and notice the radio operator’s face lit up by a bright orange light. Without changing his expression, or moving any other part of his body, except his right arm and hand, which hold the radio hand MIC, the radio operator raises the MIC to within an inch of his mouth and speaks.

“Maus station acknowledged. Wait-over!”

The radio operator hands you the MIC and says “it is the ‘Old Man’ on the net with a warning order.”

You take the MIC and a pair of headphones and speak.

“Maus Führer ready to receive transmission over.”

“Ready your kampfguppe to move out at 0500Hrs – objective OLSZOWNICA! Elements from Kampfgruppe Krüger are isolated and surrounded. Location THEODOR, WILHELM 56, 45, 83, 98. Position south east exit of OLSZOWNICA. You are to break through the enemy lines and rescue them. I am en-route to brief you directly, ETA ten minutes, over.”

“Maus Führer – understood – over!”

“Sperber Führer out!”

Sounds like the crap just hit the fan you think. You immediately busy yourself alerting your kampfguppe to their impending departure.

* * * * *

12th August 1944

0413Hrs Woods on the main road to OLSZOWNICA 1km north of RAKOW

You check your watch. It’s nearly 0415Hrs. The past ten minutes have been frantic as men run about throwing gear into their vehicles, the cool night air rent by the rattle and roar of Maybach engines starting up. The down pours of late yesterday evening have given way to a slow persistent drizzle.

Eric Faust is huddled beside you against the cold steel sides of your command SPW.

“Well, it would appear we have run out of luck and surprise. What shit do you reckon Krüger got himself into?”

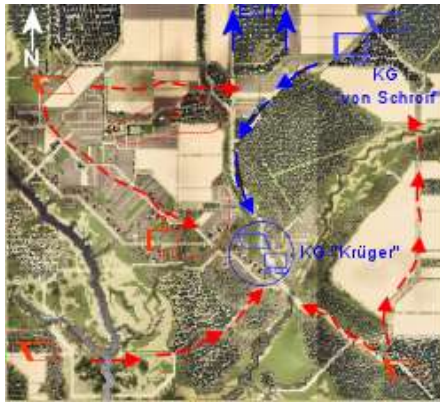
You take another draw of your cigarette.

“No idea – but we’ll find out soon enough – look! There’s “Old Man” Voss now.”

You motion towards an approaching SPW, the weak light from it’s Notek headlight dimly lighting the steady drizzle and the dark shapes of SPW and panzers lining the road.

Voss clambers out of the SPW.

“No time for pleasantries.” Voss says waving a hand dismissively. Voss looks slightly haggard and dishevelled from too much stress and too little sleep. Voss unfolds a map and spread it against the side of the SPW.



Exit KG "Krüger" units for a total of up to 1600p
NOTE: any element from KG "Krüger" that does not exit, or is destroyed, their points count as destroyed in the final AAR. You have a bonus of 1600 points.

Occupy BRIDGEHEAD 2000p
NOTE: To get these points NO Soviet unit can be allowed to be in the marked objective area by the scenarios end.

You get a total of 1800 points for destroying any Soviet units you contact.

Soviet units score points for IDing any of KG "von Schroif" units up to a value of 1600 points.

"Here is the situation chaps. During their overnight movement advance elements from Kampfgruppe "Krüger", call sign 'Bussard' - a zug from the 3 SPW Kompanie - became separated and isolated from the main unit in enemy territory in the vicinity of the main crossing point on the OPATOW road at OLSZOWNICA. Krüger went to their aid with 4 x PzIV. However they rolled into a PAK ambush on the road which KO'd two of the Panzers.

Krüger pushed on with the remaining panzers and made contact with the cut-off unit. They took up a hedgehog position covering the main approach road. However, due to the poor travel conditions they are both low on fuel. They've been holding off probes from Ivan but are now also running low on ammo.

Krüger radioed for help saying his unit is now surrounded by enemy infantry. It's also likely this little fiasco has given Ivan a great deal of time to organise a suitable armoured welcome come dawn. I want your kampfguppe to link up with Krüger and his unit, and, here I give you some tactical flexibility, assess whether we can hold the crossing against Ivan's attacks, and if so, do so."

Both you and Faust look at each other. The look says it all. You both know this sounds all too much like a 'Himmelfahrt' mission - 'journey to heaven' - or in other words a suicide mission. A drive in the dark, along a main road, into enemy territory, straight into an unknown tactical situation with the enemy attacking hard across the route of advance...

"I appreciate the urgency Herr Oberstleutnant but surely the other elements of KG Krüger are better placed to assist. It'll take us hours to get to their location."

"Correct, however the other elements of KG Krüger have been engaged by enemy armour advancing west, most likely armoured patrols sent out to establish contact with our advance, and are currently screening the main eastern approaches to OLSZOWNICA. It would appear Ivan is on the move quicker than we anticipated, and appears to be heading for OLSZOWNICA from the east, the south and the south west with a significant number of tanks and motorised infantry. The crossings and road network at OLSZOWNICA have become even more operationally important. If the Russians manage to seize them it threatens our ability to continue our attack and hence screen 19th Panzer's advance along the Vistula."

You know what is coming next.

“So my dear von Schroif I want your SPWs and Herr Faust’s panzers to advance with all possible speed – drive ‘karacho’* dear boy – to OLSZOWNICA and support Krüger’s unit, see if you can’t keep them alive. I want you to assess whether we can hold the crossing against Ivan’s attacks, and if so, do so. I’ll see if I can’t arrange for support to help bolster your position. Understood Herr Hauptmann?”

“Jawohl Herr Oberstleutnant!”

“One last thing - my intent is that you first and foremost rescue the trapped elements of KG Krüger whilst denying the enemy the ability to control the main road and crossing points at OLSZOWNICA, whilst retaining sufficient fighting power and mobility to defend against future Russian attacks or postured to attack with your kampfguppe within 12 hours.”

“Understood Herr Oberstleutnant!” You quietly acknowledge Voss’s last statement. Thankfully this gives you room for manoeuvre in what appears to be a ‘Himmelfahrt’ mission...

Friendly Forces

Before you head off to ready your unit you have a question for Voss.

“You mentioned support Herr Oberstleutnant. Can you give me some indication of what type and level of support, and when it may arrive in our Area of Operations?”

Voss smiles, thinly.

“I can’t give you any firm undertaking. We are looking into freeing up some elements, most likely some Tigers, currently attached to KG Krüger. Given the state of the roads I’m not sure how long it will take the heavy armour to reach your position. So, make your decisions based on what you have and what you encounter. I’ll make every effort to ensure you are supported. However I cannot promise you that any support, armoured or otherwise will be forthcoming.”

“Understood Herr Oberstleutnant.”

Enemy Forces

“Herr Oberstleutnant?” Faust chips in.

“Do we have any indication of what enemy units, strength and type, are in the AO?”

You look enquiringly at “Old Man” Voss.

Voss looks slightly uncomfortable and for a brief moment his usual calm confidence and slightly arrogant manner slips. But just as quick as it occurs, the moment passes.

“Herr Hauptmann – the combat situation is very fluid. I’m afraid there is not much information I can give you than what I have already clearly explained. All I have from the

intelligence officer is that Ivan is on the move with armour and infantry. Ahead of his main body he is sending out small advance guards, mainly company strength, consisting of tanks, motorised infantry and some towed PAK. Key operational and tactical points along the route of their advance are most likely guarded – mostly by small infantry detachments with some PAK.”

Faust nods. You also nod. You know from your study of the enemy’s tactical doctrine that Ivan usually sent ahead small groups of tanks and tank riders to find points of German points of resistance, or often the ways around them. There was nothing of use in this report that you could not have deduced yourself.

Voss continues.

“I appreciate that this is an especially dangerous mission gentlemen. But of all my officers you are the team that can pull this off. I have seen what you both can achieve in combat, and you have good units.”

“Herr Hauptmann von Schroif” Voss says as he claps your shoulder, “you are going to do a good job. Just get in there, link up with Krüger and his detachment, assess whether you can hold the crossing against Ivan’s attacks, and if so, do so. If not all of you get out of there. That is your decision. I’ll do my best to get whatever support I can to you.”

“Jawohl Herr Oberstleutnant!” You bring yourself smartly to attention and salute as Faust does likewise.

Plan

0640Hrs 1km north east of OLSZOWNICA

The past few hours have been gruelling and nerve wracking in equal measure. To avoid contact with enemy patrols and roadblocks your kampfguppe has been slowly grinding its way towards OLSZOWNICA via minor ‘roads’ and farm tracks. The sandy soil combined with the heavy overnight rain has created challenging travel conditions. Luckily, although several vehicles became stuck and were recovered, none have broken down. You are thankful that the men have made good use of the limited R&R time keeping their vehicles in tip top condition. Now the night rain has cleared away and the morning promises to be clear and warm with a light breeze from the NW. Although the ground conditions are damp you think the drier, warmer weather will firm up the cross-country going.

You have avoided approaching OLSZOWNICA directly from the west. Instead your unit took a detour further north and crossed the KOPRZYWIANKA River at a minor, and unguarded, crossing point several kilometres upstream.

You’ve been maintaining radio silence ever since your departure and in order to exercise control, your vehicle is positioned to the front of the column. Now your unit is just over a kilometre from the last known position of Krüger’s unit. You signal for the column to halt. Slowly the column comes to a halt. The MG gunners on the SPW train their MG42s to cover possible firing arcs, the panzers’ turrets do the same. You order the driver to turn the

vehicle around and you head back to where Eric Faust's command panzer is located. As the SPW clatters past the line of AFVs you order the radio operator to send an encoded message with the single code word indicating you are in position.

As your vehicle draws level you wave to Faust, who waves back. You get out of the SPW and walk over to his panzer, your map board and notebook tucked under your arm. Faust hoists himself out of his turret, and clambers over the rear deck and drops heavily to the damp ground. Faust looks like I feel you think.

"We've been lucky Eric. All that way and not one sign of Ivan."

Eric Faust gives his grimy face a quick wipe.

"We have. How much longer will it last though Hans?"

You shrug your shoulders.

"We're here Eric - let's work out a quick plan before Ivan comes along!"

"What are you thinking Hans?" Faust asks.

You get out your map board.

"The last known position of Krüger's detachment was here. I think we should expect enemy units to be positioned here and here. There is also the possibility of enemy armoured units approaching from the south west along these tracks here and here."

Faust looks at the map and nods.



"I think we keep the main strength of our kampfguppe away from prying eyes. We don't want Ivan to get too good a feel for who we are and what we are. So better we use covered approaches."

Faust nods again, then looks at you directly and asks:

“What about the “Old Man’s” intent to hold that crossing?”

“Hmmm... I think the first priority is to make contact with Krüger and assess the condition of his detachment. Once we do that then we’ll see what the tactical situation is and take it from there. Whether we bite and hold, or grab and run really depends on what Ivan has in the sector and what support, if any, Voss can arrange for us. Given the overall operational situation I’m not very confident we’ll get any support. So, if we do decide to exit we’ll use these two roads I’ve marked here, on the map. They should be easy to hold open if we have to exit. After all the “Old Man” left that call whether to hold the crossing to us.”

Faust smiles then grins.

“Sounds like a plan Hans!”

“Ok. We roll out at 0700Hrs. That gives us twenty minutes. Let’s quickly run through how we’ll do this, and then we brief our respective zugführers. We’ll break radio silence when we are ready to move out to make contact with Krüger’s unit...”

Notes

You score points for:

Exit KG "Krüger" units 1600 (NOTE: any element from KG "Krüger" that does not exit, or is destroyed, their points count as destroyed in the final AAR). However you do have a bonus of 1600 points.

Occupy BRIDGEHEAD 2000

To get these points NO Soviet unit can be allowed to be in the marked objective area by the scenario’s end.

You also get a total of 1800 points for destroying any Soviet units you contact.

Please note Soviet units score points for identifying any of KG “von Schroif” units up to a value of 1600.

So the German player has to make choices given the above scoring options.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Karacho – German slang word, often used by panzer troops which means to drive at full speed. In English and in that context the phrase would be ‘drive like crazy’.



Mission 5.2a schnelle Truppen Angriffe

Situation

1540Hrs I(gep)Panzergrenadier Regt 3 Command Post;

Location ANTON, NORDPOL 23, 45, 83, 90 south of RAKOW.

In the dim light of the rural cottage, Oberstleutnant Voss, CO of your SPW Battalion, is using as a temporary Command Post, the commander of Panzer Regiment 6, Oberst Bernuth, is currently leaning over a large kitchen table. On the table is spread a large map and he is looking intently at you. He's just given you two options. Option one, is to stay at your unit's current position to refuel and re-arm. Option two, is your kampfguppe immediately continues its advance with the mission to secure the road and crossings in the vicinity of SZUMSKO/HILL 133.9.

Both you and Eric Faust, the company commander of the 6th Kompanie/II/Panzer Regiment 6 attached to your kampfguppe, have just had your questions regarding the detail of the request clarified, and you now both know exactly what is being asked of your men and machines. At the close of these discussions your brain is quickly processing the pros and cons of the courses of action that have been presented to you.

The principle that armoured vehicles going into combat must carry sufficient fuel to assure their mobility throughout a day's fighting is one that has been drilled into you. However so has the value of the element of surprise in armoured operations – keeping your enemy on the back foot, always trying to second guess your next move. Therefore to carry on, despite your unit being low on fuel and ammo with dog tired troops, will at least give you the element of surprise. You know your enemy from long years of combat on the Eastern Front. Ivan will soon adapt and react effectively to any further attacks. Being caught out in hostile country, out of fuel and ammo does not bear thinking about. Yet if we can just fully exploit the current dislocation of the enemy's plans, it may yet lead to success, you think. You swallow. Decision time...

"We'll go now Herr Oberst - continue the attack."

Bernuth allows a brief smile to play across his face.

"Excellent Herr Hauptmann! That's the spirit of the panzerwaffe! When do you think your kampfguppe can depart?"

You look at Faust.

"What you think Faust? How long will your panzers take to get back on the road?"

Faust rubs the stubble on his grimy, dust caked chin.

"We will be able to roll out as soon as we can cross level our ammo. Half an hour should be enough to complete that task."

"Excellent. My unit is at a similar state of readiness. Herr Oberst we should be able to resume our advance within half an hour of us returning to our units – that would put our ETD at around 1630Hrs."

Both Bernuth and Voss look pleased with this news.

Voss clears his throat.

"That's the spirit of aggression I expect from German armoured officers. Excellent! You'll catch the Russkies with their trousers down, no doubt eh? Now let's get down to your orders."

Mission

Voss pointing at the map addresses you.

"Herr von Schroif - I want your kampfguppe to continue your thrust north, as the advance guard of our divisional main effort. Along the route of the proposed advance are several small streams with crossing points, plus some vital road junctions. They are key to controlling the advance route.

These key points are marked, on the map as your objectives.



You will DESTROY any and all enemy units encountered in the AO and secure our route of advance by:

Clearing and securing (OCCUPY) the following objectives along the route of advance of enemy forces:

Angr.z SAPHIR
Angr.z DIAMANT
Angr.z OPAL
Angr.z QUARZ
Angr.z RUBIN

You will advance past LINE SCHAFKOPF and LINE SKAT as far as objective Angr.z STAHL, on the ridge line HILL 133.9/HILL 133.4, which you will occupy.

Kampfgruppe "Krüger" will be following behind you. Once you have secured Angr.z STAHL they will pass through your positions and continue the advance.

It is my intent that you attack north towards the line HILL 133.9/HILL 133.4 destroying any enemy units in the AO." Voss looks at you directly.

"Understood Herr Hauptmann?"

"Jawohl Herr Oberstleutnant!"

Friendly Forces

"Can we expect any artillery support for this mission?"

"Good point Herr von Schroif."

"I have arranged for a battery of Wespe SP Howitzers to be attached to your command. They will accompany your kampfgruppe to provide dedicated fire support. You'll also have fire support from our battalion's own 120mm mortars."

"Thank you Herr Oberstleutnant – that should help pave the way if Ivan decides to put up any resistance."

"Herr Oberstleutnant – you mentioned that Krüger's kampfgruppe will be trailing us, and that they will pass through our positions once we seize Angr.z STAHL. Do you have timings for this?"

"The 3 Kompanie under Hauptmann Krüger can team up with the other panzer Kompanie and some Tigers from Panzer-Abteilung 501. They will be ready to move out by 1800Hrs at the latest and carry on the attack. This will allow them to move out in early evening, pass through your positions at Angr.z STAHL around 2015Hrs and advance through the night to secure the road and crossing in the vicinity of OLSZOWNICA by dawn on the 12th August. Your unit, after refuelling and re-arming would follow up this attack. As and when they secure the crossings you will pass through their lines and continue the advance east cutting the main road to OPATOW."

"Understood Herr Oberstleutnant!" You hastily scribble some notes into your notepad.

Enemy Forces

“Herr Oberstleutnant?” Faust chips in.
Voss stands back from the map on the table.

“Herr Hauptmann Faust?”

“Do we have any indication of what enemy units, strength and type, are in the AO?”

You look enquiringly at “Old Man” Voss.

Voss looks slightly uncomfortable and for a brief moment his usual calm confidence and slightly arrogant manner slips. But just as quick as it occurs, the moment passes.

“Herr Hauptmann – the combat situation is very fluid. All I have from the intelligence officer is that Ivan is on the move with armour and infantry. He’s desperate to identify the main route of our advance and stop us. He’s desperately pushing forward small advance guards, mainly company strength, consisting of tanks, motorised infantry and some towed PAK. They are most likely being tasked with either making contact with our spearhead, or reinforcing key operational and tactical points along the route of their advance. These are points most likely guarded – we estimate mostly by small infantry detachments with some PAK. However given the pace of our advance we have had no clear indication that the enemy has direct knowledge of our location or intent – at present.”

Both you and Faust nod agreement. You know from your study of the enemy’s tactical doctrine that Ivan usually sends ahead small groups of tanks and tank riders to find points of German points of resistance, or often the ways around them. Plus their key tactic in stopping a German armoured attack is PAK, lots of them. Interconnected and well camouflaged. There was nothing of use in this report that you could not have deduced yourself. However, given the pace of the attack they would still be struggling to co-ordinate units to oppose the German attack.

Voss continues.

“I appreciate that this is an especially dangerous mission gentlemen. You are in effect, attacking into the unknown. But of all my officers you are the team that can pull this off. I have seen what you both can achieve in combat, and you have good units.”

“Herr von Schroif – Herr Faust...” Voss says as he claps your shoulder, “You are going to do a good job. Just get in there, secure our route of advance, and occupy that high ground at Angr.z STAHL.”

“Jawohl Herr Oberstleutnant!” You bring yourself smartly to attention and salute as Faust does likewise.

Plan

1715Hrs 1km south east of SZUMSKO at Point 132.8

A short while earlier your unit made contact with a small Soviet scout vehicle. The occupants didn't put up much of a fight. One of the survivors, most likely in an effort to save his life, talked freely. His information however sounded very useful. It appeared that he and his comrades were a scout party from an anti-tank battery. This same PAK battery was currently en-route to take up position in SZUMSKO. And, so it sounded from the prisoner's description, was just down the road approaching the village from the north.

Sensing an opportunity to catch the battery before it deployed, you took your kampfguppe off the main route and onto a small side track that leads into the east side of SZUMSKO. For the past ten minutes your kampfguppe has been slowly grinding it's way towards SZUMSKO via minor 'roads' and farm tracks. The sandy soil continues to create challenging travel conditions.

You've been maintaining radio silence ever since your departure and in order to exercise control, your vehicle is positioned to the front of the column. Now your unit is just over a kilometre from the village of SZUMSKO. You signal for the column to halt. Slowly the column comes to a halt. The MG gunners on the SPW train their MG42s to cover possible firing arcs; the panzers' turrets do the same. You order your SPW driver to turn the vehicle around and you head back to where Eric Faust's command panzer is located. As the SPW clatters past the line of AFVs you order the radio operator to send an encoded message with the single code word indicating your current position.



As your vehicle approaches you wave to Faust, who waves back. As your SPW draws level with his panzer you shout across for him to join you. Faust hoists himself out of his turret, and clambers over the rear deck and drops heavily to the ground then makes his way to the rear of your command SPW and into the back. Faust looks like I feel you think. You tap the SPW driver on the shoulder and order him to drive back up to a small track leading into a wood towards POINT 132.8.

Eric Faust gives his grimy face a quick wipe.

“You need a wash Eric!” You grin and slap him on the shoulder, raising a small pall of dust from his faded black panzer tunic. Faust makes a grimace.

“Bloody sand and dust – gets everywhere.”

“We’re here Eric – I want to get a look at the terrain and village ahead of us. Give us a chance to work out a quick plan before Ivan comes along!”

Slowly the SPW crawls to a halt. Both you and Faust get out of the vehicle and work your way to the edge of the small wood. Taking cover behind some brush you both start to scan the ground using your binoculars, whilst referring back and forth to the map. Through the binoculars, about a kilometre away, you can make out the roofs and houses of the central section of SZUMSO.

Then you become aware of the low rumbling noise of vehicles on the road ahead. Peering through binoculars you can see a low dust cloud drifting up from among the houses. Something’s on the move you think. At that moment you make out several large trucks towing some heavy PAK – 7.62cm ‘ratschbumms’.

“You see that Eric?”

“I do Hans. That’ll be the PAK battery our ‘tongue’ told us about. I don’t relish these boys setting up their guns ready for my panzers. These ‘ratschbumms’ will make a mess of my ‘mess-tins’...”

However, it’s soon clear that the battery of PAK is still in transit and moving into the village. As you peer through the binoculars you realise that the vehicles are coming to a halt. Some soldiers, armed with what look like anti-tank rifles and LMGs, get out of the cabs and make their way to the front of the convoy but are soon lost to view. A few others, who appear to be officers also get out and appear to move to the front of the convoy.

“Looks like they are stopping Eric? If we attack immediately we stand a good chance of catching them before they have a chance to deploy their guns.”

Faust peering through his binoculars lowers them.

“They’ll certainly be easier to knock out attached to their trucks rather than dug in that’s for sure.”

You turn to look at him then see the large grin. You grin back.

“The last thing we want or need is a PAK battery set-up astride our main route of advance. So we need to attack these guns before they get the chance to set-up; we also need to consider how we are going to secure our objectives.”

Faust nods agreement.

“Ok. Here is what I propose. We move quickly. It’s 1720Hrs. We roll out at 1730Hrs. That gives us ten minutes. Let’s quickly run through how we’ll do this; then brief our respective zugführers...”

Notes

You score points for:

Occupy

Angr.z SAPHIR 100

Angr.z DIAMANT 250

Angr.z OPAL 250

Angr.z QUARZ 250

Angr.z RUBIN 500

Angr.z STAHL 1000

Touch

LINE SCHAFKOPF 50

LINE SKAT 100

You also get a total of 1500 points for destroying any Soviet units you contact.



Mission 6.1a Himmelfahrt

Situation

0530Hrs 5 km SE of OLSZOWNICA 13th August 1944

You feel a shiver up your back. In the dank early morning mist it's cool. You are standing in the lee of your command SPW parked under a stand of tall fir trees. You look down the sandy dirt track where the rest of your kampfguppe, or at least what is left of it - panzers and SPW - are herringboned off to the side of the track under the cover of tall fir trees lining the track on either side. You have stopped for a short halt after your difficult overnight drive along rutted sandy tracks. In an effort to avoid detection from enemy recce units your kampfguppe has used small tracks and farm roads, away from the better main routes which are more likely to have enemy units on them. So far you have avoided any contact. Somewhere up ahead light SPW patrols from Aufklärungs-Abteilung 3 are scouting your route of advance in an effort to identify any enemy patrols or possible ambushes.

In the mist you can make out the shadowy forms of small groups of grenadiers and panzermen as they busy themselves around their respective vehicles - checking track tensions and redistributing ammo. You turn back and lift your water bottle up to your lips and take a long draught of the brackish liquid that passes for water. It does little to slake your thirst. Beside you, crouched down, taking long pulls on his cigarette is Faust, his red rimmed eyes staring blankly ahead. Ehrlichmann, your 2IC, is also slumped beside him, eyes closed, catching a few moments of rare sleep.

This brief moment of inaction has been a godsend, giving you time to collect your thoughts. You realise that since you left KIELCE on the 10th August, over two days ago, the engines of the vehicles and the barrels of the guns have been constantly warm through near constant combat and movement. The unrelenting nature of the operation is now taking its toll, physical and mentally, on both men and machines. You wipe a dirty hand over your weary face...

Your thoughts turn to yesterday afternoon, after the successful but hard fought action near OLSZOWNICA, where your commander, Oberstleutnant Voss 'The Old Man', had slapped you on your dusty back - congratulating you and your command on a job well done - even dishing out cigarettes. Now that should have made me immediately suspicious you think! He's never done that. Off course "The Old Man" was buttering you up. Not soon after both you and Faust were looking at Voss's map as he outlined his next "tip of the spear" job for your command.

"I know your chaps are tired. After this final mission I promise that I'll pull your chaps out of the line to rest and refit. But my dear fellows – for now we've got Ivan on the hop! Your

magnificent efforts here today – rescuing Herr Krüger and his unit from the mess they got themselves into – were inspired. I guess he'll have to nurse his 'Halsschmerzen' for a while longer eh? Still you've created an opportunity! With Ivan on the back foot we need to capitalise on that. Now!"

Voss looks intently at you and carries on, his voice animated.

"You know as well as I do that the key strength of our panzer force – our SPW, grenadiers and panzers - lies in unexpected, concentrated and determined attack; aggressive leadership and daring operations eh?"

Both you and Faust feign agreement. Given the state of your exhausted and worn out unit there's little left in the tank for determined and aggressive you think. What's the old bugger going to have us do now you think...?

Then Voss starts to outline the mission. It soon becomes very apparent that Kampfgruppe "von Schroif" is to push on deep, 10km or more, into "no-mans" land and seize another set of bridges over another bloody river so the division can continue its attack.

After Voss had outlined the mission Faust asked – "What about Ivan – does he have any forces in that sector?"

Voss shook his head – "No. However we are getting information from the radio intercept unit that something is up. They've been picking an exchange of test signals at regular hourly intervals from what are assessed to be elements of the 69th Mechanised Brigade and 64th Tank Brigade both subordinate to the 3rd Guards Tank Army. From early intercepts it appears that this unit is planning a local attack to seize these same bridges. You chaps just need to beat them to it..."

On hearing Voss outline the mission you thought not another 'Himmelfahrt' mission – 'journey to heaven' - or in other words a suicide mission. A drive in the dark, along shit roads, into enemy territory, straight into an unknown tactical situation with the possibility of the enemy attacking hard across the route of advance...

"HERR HAUPTMANN!" You snap out of your reverie. Slightly dazed you try to focus and look around for the voice. Faust is looking up at you an amused smile on his face.

"You OK Hans? I thought we'd lost you!"

You nod, then rub your hands across your dirt streaked face. "I was thinking about this mission." You realise you are still clutching your water bottle. You reach around and place it back on your belt, then reach for your map board balanced on the front fender of your track. Once more, as if you have not looked at this map many times before, you re-check your current situation. Faust takes one last long drag on his cigarette, flicks the butt into the

dust then slowly stands up, exaggerating the stiffness of his muscles. "I'm getting too old for this shit!" he exclaims. At that moment Ehrlichmann who has awoken groggily staggers up to his feet and stretches. He looks exhausted.

Faust yawns. "So, Hans? You thinking about this 'himmelfahrt' mission?" He stretches out his back, groaning.

You nod your head. "I can't help shake of the feeling it's a one way ticket Paul. We're attacking into a sector which in a few hours' time will, in all likelihood be teeming with Russkies and their bloody T-34s!"

Faust shakes his head – "We've got this far Hans – you've made some good tactical decisions and shown strong leadership. We'll get through this. In any case my panzers will look after your Landsers and their tin crates!"

You laugh, but it sounds hollow.

"I hope you are right. Very well. Now let's work out our next course of action."

Mission

0535Hrs 5 km SE of OLSZOWNICA 13th August 1944

You lift your map out of the wooden map board and spread it flat on the bonnet of the SPW. You check your watch. Nearly time for the orders group to convene. As if on cue a young officer in the grey uniform of the armoured recce troops approaches your small group and salutes. It's Oberleutnant Fuchs, the company commander of the armoured recce unit, equipped with light SPW, from Aufklärungs-Abteilung 3 (AA3) which has been attached to your command.

"Good morning Herr Oberleutnant Fuchs – how are your men?"

"I just received a radio report from them less than five minutes ago – so far no observed enemy activity Herr Hauptmann."

You nod – "Good. I'll be asking you for a full report during my situation briefing Herr Fuchs."

Fuchs nods – "Jawohl Herr Hauptmann!"

"OK Meine Herren gather round and I'll outline the situation!" You place your finger on the map, ready to start to trace your route as you brief your officers. They crane forward to see the map. Faust rests his head against the driver's open visor block and unfolds his own map from its map case. You begin your briefing.

You look at the faces of your senior officers. "That was damn fine work at OLSZOWNICA men. It's that zest for attack and boldness, linked to lightning-fast decision-making and great flexibility that distinguish the panzer grenadier."

Noting the sour expression on Faust's face you add with a grin "Oh and it goes without saying we couldn't have done it without the steadfast co-operation and assistance of our panzer chums!"

Faust grins back. "Good of you to notice our efforts Herr Hauptmann!" Everyone laughs. You continue your briefing.

"After this engagement we were once more tasked with taking the lead and to push SE along this road OLSZOWNICA – BARANOW SANDOMIERSKI – to seize these bridges in and around BUKOWA/BUDY/WIAZOWNICA KOLONIA/WOLA WISNIOWSKA. We're now at this location 5km West of BUKOWA."

You look at Oberleutnant Fuchs – "Herr Oberleutnant perhaps you could update us on the news from our light SPW recce friends as to the situation ahead?"

"Jawohl Herr Hauptmann!" Fuchs quickly glances at his notebook, and starts to indicate on the map as he talks.

"I have sent two patrols on ahead – both keeping to farm tracks away from the main routes as instructed. One patrol has been tasked with scouting the northern approaches along this route here leading from OLSZOWNICA/BUKOWA/BARANOW SANDOMIERSKI. They are three kilometres from the outskirts of BUKOWA. The other patrol has been tasked with scouting out the southern approaches. They have been following the route from OLSZOWNICA/WIAZOWNICA MALA/WIAZOWNICA KOLONIA/WOLA WISNIOWSKA keeping to the north side of the river. They are currently two kilometres west of WIAZOWNICA MALA. To date they have not reported any significant enemy activity along their respective routes."

You nod briefly, and think you can't believe your luck that your plan appears to have worked!

"Thank you Herr Oberleutnant. It appears Meine Herren that the plan to avoid using the main routes, instead keeping to minor tracks has meant we have, to date escaped detection by the enemy's forces."

You look up to check your men are following the brief. They are all attentive, so you continue.

"Now onto our mission – as you know we are tasked with securing and occupying the following objectives:

ANGR. Z BLAU

ANGR. Z ROT

ANGR. Z GELB

ANGR. Z ORANGE

It is the commander's intent that we secure these crossing points thus denying the enemy their use, whilst facilitating the continued advance of our forces to BARANOW SANDOMIERSKI."



You look at your 2IC Leutnant Jorn Ehrlichmann.

"What's the current effectiveness of our SPW company Herr Leutnant?"

Ehrlichmann referring to his notebook quickly runs through the unit's level of combat effectiveness – "In summary Herr Hauptmann we're at about 50% effectiveness; our ammo loadout is around 80%; and we've enough fuel for one more day's combat – at the most. I should add the men are near exhausted, but still in good spirits Herr Hauptmann."

"Thank you Herr Leutnant. They are seasoned fighting men – they'll see us through this next action."

You look at Faust.

"What's the situation with your panzers and crews Herr Hauptmann?"

Faust rubs his chin – "We've lost a handful of panzers; three are wrecks but the others are repairable but no way we'll get them within the week. Several broke down on our night ride. The mechanics and crews are working on them this minute and I fully expect them to be up and running by dawn. Our ammo loadout is around 80%, although we are a bit short on AP. We've got enough fuel for a full day's combat – say 70km movement. But we're in dire need of time out of action to repair our vehicles and rest the crews. But they and their tanks will fight though. We can't leave it all to your Landsers and their tin crates!"

Faust's quip lightens the mood.

Friendly Forces

You look around your commanders. "Meine Herren - our main concern at the moment is our current supply situation. We have just enough fuel and ammo to continue attacking. Thereafter the situation becomes tenuous. I was informed that as and when Krüger could reorganise that they would link up and support our attack on these objectives."

Ehrlichmann, your 2IC interrupts. "Herr Hauptmann have we had any confirmation as to KG Krüger's current strength, and where and when they will arrive?"

"I have had no contact with "Bussard Führer" (NOTE: Krüger's call sign) nor any up to date information regarding their strength from Battalion. As you know KG Krüger consists of our 3rd SPW Kompanie along with the 7th Panzer Kompanie. They also have several Stug from 5th Kompanie attached. Like us they have been attrited by our recent operations, but are classed as capable of offensive action. However, we know they took heavy casualties in their last actions. I fully expect they will be combat effective enough to support us as and when they arrive. As I have said we don't know when exactly they will be arriving. My best guess is around 0930Hrs, most likely later. They will follow our march route here..."

You indicate on the map with a grimy finger "...this track from OLSZOWNICA to BUKOWA."

You look at your men. "That's the situation for now. In the meantime we continue with our advance to contact. We'll reappraise the situation when we get to the vicinity of HILL 205.9, 500m SW of BUKOWA our ETA will be 0745Hrs. We'll maintain the current order of march. Understood?"

Both panzergrenadier and panzer commanders nod in agreement.

"Right let's complete our re-organisation. We move out at 0545Hrs!"

Enemy Forces

0740Hrs vicinity of HILL 205.9, 500m SW of BUKOWA; 9km SE of OLSZOWNICA 13th August 1944

You are slumped on the hard seat of your command SPW, braced against piles of personal baggage and ammo boxes, eyes closed but not sleeping. You mull over your mission and the latest reports filtering down from battalion and via AA3 of enemy AFV activity NE, E and SE of your location. Far enough away to not be an immediate threat; close enough to be concerning. The SPW vibrates and rolls as it makes its way over the uneven dusty surface of the track. Despite the shade from the fir trees that line the track it's already getting hot.

The vehicle suddenly stops with a jolt.

You open your eyes. In the front cab you can make out the driver, face pressed up against the open visor, a pair of round goggles protecting his eyes. Next to you, facing across you on your left the radio operator is manning the radio – headphones fully clamped down. The gritty feeling in your eyes and your aching muscles tell you that you've not slept in nearly three days. You look up at the gunner manning the MG42.

“What’s up?”

The gunner, his face streaked with dirt and sweat, blood shot rimmed eyes encased by round goggles, looks down at you.

“We have just reached our checkpoint near HILL 205.9 Herr Hauptmann!”

You nod your head and clumsily push yourself up from the seat. Through the haze of dust, thrown up by the tracks of the armoured vehicles, you can make out the sandy track. Dimly through this haze you can make out a low rise topped by trees – HILL 205.9. You are about to grab your headphones and key the MIC to speak to the zug leading the column when you hear the radio operator’s main set hums and hisses into life and through the hiss and crackle the sound of Morse code - an incoming ENIGMA transmission. The radio operator is scribbling the numbers down.

For a message to come via ENIGMA means it contains detailed intelligence, not suitable for voice broadcast via radio, from a higher HQ – battalion, maybe even the regiment. You straighten up and watch the operator. Once he has the message written down he then opens up the ENIGMA machine and starts to key in the numbers. His assistant notes the decoded message from the lights lighting up on the unit. For you, waiting for this valuable information, it seems like an age.

Rather than wait you decide to call Ehrlichmann, Kerscher and Faust and have them meet you at your SPW to discuss the kampfguppe’s next move – no doubt the in-coming transmission will heavily influence what that move is. Not long after you make contact with them the radio operator’s assistant hands you the message, you reach for it and start to scan the text written neatly on the paper:

“MAUS FÜHRER: ENY THIRD GUARDS TANK ARMY ATTACK TO SEIZE HVY BRIDGES IN YOUR SECTOR IMMINENT ETA 0800HRS. TWO SPEARHEADS COMPANY PLUS STRENGTH #1 ADV WEST TO BUKOWA PZ AND INF. #2 ADV NORTHEAST TO WOLA SPG AND INF. MAUS BLOCK ENY ATTACK UNTIL LINK UP WITH BUSSARD FÜHRER ETA 0900HRS. ATTACK TO SEIZE OBJ AS ORDERED 13 AUG; SPERBER FÜHRER”

An attack by a Soviet tank army appears to be heading your way and due in your sector in less than ½ hour. With two spearheads each at around a reinforced company – one headed for your rear via the village of BUKOWA; the other heading straight for WOLA WISNIOWSKA. You quickly calculate what strength this means - assuming each company at full strength that would mean something like 15-24 tanks and SPGs with infantry attacking into this sector.

What is not clear is whether the Soviets know that your unit is in this sector? Given the lack of any enemy recce units during your approach it’s likely they have not realised that German armoured forces are in this sector.

You think this could be to your advantage, offering the chance to ambush the attacking Soviet units. With Krüger’s kampfguppe (Call sign BUSSARD) due in your sector by 0900Hrs

there was a good chance that united you could hold off Ivan's attack, and once it was blunted continue your own attack to seize the bridges.

Plan

0745Hrs vicinity of HILL 205.9, 500m SW of BUKOWA; 9km SE of OLSZOWNICA 13th August 1944

As the sun has risen it's burned off the damp early morning mist. The clear blue skies and rapidly warming temperatures indicate another hot day in store. You, Ehrlichmann, Kerscher and Faust are standing by Faust's command panzer, which is parked next to your command SPW, just off the sandy track near some farm buildings. A map is spread out on the fender of your SPW.



You look at your officers.

"We've not got much time Meine Herren! Intelligence from battalion states that Ivan is attacking westwards with a view to seizing the heavy bridges in this sector. We have been ordered to hold them in this sector until we link up with Krüger's kampfguppe; then we are to continue our attack to seize our objectives as per our orders."

Faust looks at you – "Have you had any news from KG Krüger as to when they'll be with us?"

You shake your head. "As per our earlier brief their ETA is 0900Hrs – I've still had no confirmation as to their exact time in this sector, nor as to their strength."

You check your watch – 0800Hrs.

At that moment the radio operator in your command SPW leans over the side of the vehicle and shouts out – "HERR HAUPTMANN! MESSAGE FROM "HEINRICH"! ENEMY VEHICLE ACTIVITY HEARD APPROX. 1KM EAST OF BUKOWA!"

You turn around – "CONFIRM MESSAGE RECEIVED – TELL "HEINRICH" TO OBSERVE BUT NOT TO ENGAGE!"

You then turn back to address your senior officers – their grim faces tell of what is in store.

“RIGHT! It’s on. We’ll monitor Ivan’s approach via “Heinrich” - meanwhile this is what we’ll do...”

Notes

German player secures victory by:

Occupy

ANGR. Z BLAU 600

ANGR. Z ROT 300

ANGR. Z GELB 1500

ANGR. Z ORANGE 2000

Destroying enemy units up to 6800 points

Minimise own losses whilst maximising terrain gains.

This is the last action of the campaign – focus on the task!

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Himmelfahrt – This is a public holiday in Germany and celebrates the Ascension of Christ into heaven forty days after Easter. It literally means ‘heaven journey’ and used in this context it implies this is a suicide mission.



Mission 6.1b Igelstellung

Situation

**1930Hrs WOLA WIŚNIEWSKA 10km SE of
OLSZOWNICA 12th August 1944**

You feel the sweat trickle down the small of your back. Even in the late evening sun it's still hot. You are standing in the shade of your command SPW parked by some old houses that also appear to contain shops. You lift your water bottle up to your lips and take a long draught of the warm brackish liquid that passes for water. It does little to slake your thirst. Beside you, crouched down, taking long pulls on his cigarette is Faust. Ehrlichmann, your 2IC is also sitting beside him. His eyes closed, catching a few moments of sleep.

This rare moment of peace has been a godsend, giving you time to collect your thoughts. You place your water bottle back on your belt, then reach for your map board balanced on the front fender of your track. Once more, as if you have not looked at this map many times before, you re-check your current situation.

Your kampfguppe is now deep in, what at best can be described as no-man's land, and at worse - surrounded by enemy forces. The fluidity and pace of the fighting has left you unclear as to where the enemy is or their intentions. You hope the enemy is in the same position!

You look at your watch – 1930Hrs – then glance down at Faust smoking his cigarette.

“Back to work men! It's time for the orders group!” Faust looks up. He takes another long drag on his cigarette, then slowly stands up, exaggerating the stiffness of his muscles. “I'm getting too old for this shit!” he exclaims. Ehrlichmann staggers up to his feet and stretches.

At the moment you hear the throaty popping sound of an SPW straining its way up the hill to the village. It soon appears in the square. Your surviving panzergrenadier zug leaders dismount from the vehicle. Several panzer commanders are also in the mix. They approach your SPW, stop and salute. As you look at their dust and powder streaked faces you realise just how many of the old familiar faces are missing.

You lift your map out of the wooden map board and spread it flat on the bonnet of the SPW.

“OK men gather round and I'll outline the situation!” You start to trace your finger on the map as you begin your briefing. Your men crane forward to see the map. Faust rests his head against the drivers open visor block and unfolds his own map from its map case. You begin your briefing.

“At dawn this morning, after Kampfguppe Krüger passed through our lines north of SUMSKO - vicinity HILL 133.4 - they ran into some heavy resistance from an enemy PAK ambush at this point here - a few kilometres NE of OLSZOWNICA - and took a bit of a

beating. After an urgent request from “Bussard Führer” (SCENARIO NOTE – this is Krüger’s call sign) we moved to support KG Krüger and outflanked the PAK battery and very quickly, with no casualties, overran them.”

You look up at the faces of your men. “That was damn fine work men. It’s that zest for attack and boldness, linked to lightning-fast decision-making and great flexibility that distinguish the panzer grenadier.” Noting the expression on Faust’s face you add with a grin “Oh and it goes without saying we couldn’t have done it without the steadfast co-operation and assistance of our panzer chums!”

Faust grin’s back. “Good of you to notice our efforts Herr Hauptmann!” Everyone laughs. You continue your briefing.

“Continuing - after this engagement we did hasty re-supply which took us up to around 70% of our normal ammo loadouts, and a bit extra on fuel. As you know we were once more tasked with taking the lead. We pushed SE along this road OLSZOWNICA – BARANOW SANDOMIERSKI, meeting very little in the way of opposition, save a few stragglers or patrols. We’ve seized control of our objectives - these three key bridges, and this village which overlooks this sector.”

You look up to check your men are following the brief. They are all attentive, so you continue.

“Currently we have taken up 'hedgehog' defensive positions around these objectives. These objectives are crucial - they are the only crossing points over these water features in this sector. Our holding them limits the enemy’s possible attack routes, forcing them into choke points at these crossing points. To give us warning of any possible enemy incursions, armoured elements from AA3 are screening our NE flank in the vicinity of BUKOWA. We are now awaiting KG Krüger to link up with us in this sector and help to consolidate our gains.”

You look up. “Questions?”

Faust clears his throat. “When is KG Krüger due to arrive in our sector?”

“Last communication I had from battalion was they are still doing a re-organisation after their bruising PAK encounter. Realistically I don’t expect them to arrive in this sector until dawn tomorrow.”

Faust nods. “It seems to me that Ivan is not going to sit around and let us stay put awaiting reinforcements – you think they’ll attack?”

“Good question. From what we can gather the speed of our attack has caught them off guard. They’re not too sure where exactly our kampfguppe is – this intel is from radio intercepts. I’m sure it won’t take them long to work out, then we can expect company. Battalion, via the recce guys from AA3, will keep us updated regarding any enemy activity threatening our sector.”

Faust nods. "Is it worth us sending out our own patrols in the meantime?"

You nod – "Yes, good idea. We'll arrange to establish some mobile outposts as a screen against any enemy infiltrators."

Mission

"Now onto our mission - Battalion insist we hold our current positions until we link up with KG Krüger. In that regard we are tasked with securing and occupying the following objectives:

ANGR. Z BLAU
ANGR. Z ROT
ANGR. Z GELB
ANGR. Z ORANGE

It is the intent of Battalion that we deny the enemy these crossing points, thereby delaying any possible advance by enemy armoured units, until midday on the 13th."



Friendly Forces

You look around your commanders. "Meine Herren - our main concern at the moment is our current supply situation. We have enough fuel and ammo to hold our ground against any attacks - for up to 24 hours. Thereafter the situation becomes tenuous, although I fully expect KG Krüger to have linked up with us long before then..."

Ehrlichmann, your 2IC interrupts. "Herr Hauptmann have we had any confirmation as to KG Krüger's current strength, and where and when they will arrive?"

"I have had no contact with "Bussard Führer" or any up to date information regarding their strength from Battalion. As you know KG Krüger consists of our 3rd SPW Kompanie along with the 7th Panzer Kompanie. They also have several Stug attached. Like us they have been attrited by our recent operations, but are classed as capable of offensive action. However, we know they took heavy casualties when ambushed. I still expect they are strong enough to support us as and when they arrive. As I have said we don't know when exactly they will be arriving. My best guess is around dawn tomorrow, maybe later. Their most likely route of approach will be heading SE along this route here..."

You indicate on the map with a grimy finger "...the road from OLSZOWNICA to BUKOWA."

You look at your men. "That's the situation for now. We remain in our hedgehog positions until "Bussard Führer" makes contact to inform of his kampfguppe's ETA. For now I want each SPW zug to push out a patrol EAST/SOUTH EAST to help give us advance warning of any moves by Ivan. Other than that we sit tight. Understood?"

Both panzergrenadier and panzer commanders nod in agreement.

"Ok – you can return to your units."

As one the soldiers salute then head off. Some embark on the SPW which brought them here. Its engine splutters and pops into life. The vehicle lurches forward then makes its way out of the village square in a small cloud of dust.

You turn to Faust and Ehrlichmann.

"I've had a radio message from "Old man Voss" – he's promised that he'll pull us out of the line to rest and refit if we can just hang on to the river crossings."

You note the momentary flash of relief pass across the faces of both men.

"However, to be pulled out of the line we have to survive this coming action. I want it to be our last action – not our final one."

Both men nod and murmur their understanding.

"If Ivan hits us hard then I doubt we'll be able to hold all these objectives. We're spread too thin with too little. I'm relying on Ivan not making a concerted effort to attack us, and Krüger arriving here in time to support us. Liaise with the units from AA3 – their call-sign is "Heinrich" - at BUKOWA regarding any enemy activity from that sector."

Enemy Forces

0530Hrs WOLA WIŚNIEWSKA 10km SE of OLSZOWNICA 13th August 1944

You are huddled on the hard seat of your command SPW, eyes closed but not sleeping. You open your eyes. In the front cab you can make out the driver fast asleep. Next to you, on your left the radio operator is manning the radio – headphones fully clamped down. You are chilled by the damp mist rising from the small river below the village. You've not slept much. Overnight there have been reports of the noise of enemy AFV activity NE, E and SE of your location. Far enough away to not be an immediate threat; close enough to be concerning.

Just then you hear the radio crackle and hiss into life and through the hiss and crackle the sound of Morse code - an incoming ENIGMA transmission. The radio operator is scribbling the numbers down. For a message to come via ENIGMA means it contains detailed intelligence not suitable for voice broadcast via radio. You straighten up and watch the

operator. Once he has the message written down he then opens up the ENIGMA machine and starts to key in the numbers. His assistant notes the decoded message from the lights lighting up on the unit. For you, waiting for this valuable information, it seems like an age. After a few minutes the assistant hands you the message, you reach for it and start to scan the text written neatly on the paper:

“MAUS FÜHRER: ENY THIRD GUARDS TANK ARMY ATTACK TO SEIZE HVY BRIDGES IN YOUR SECTOR IMMINENT ETA 0800Hrs. TWO SPEARHEADS COMPANY PLUS STRENGTH #1 ADV WEST TO BUKOWA PZ AND INF. #2 ADV NORTHEAST TO WOLA SPG AND INF. MAUS HOLD CURRENT POS UNTIL LINK UP WITH BUSSARD FÜHRER ETA 0830HRS 13 AUG”

Your hopes that the Soviets will hold off any offensive action are dashed by that message. An attack by a Soviet tank army appears to be heading your way and due in your sector in less than 2½ hours. With two spearheads each at around a reinforced company – one headed for your rear via the village of BUKOW; the other heading straight for your main position in WOLA WIŚNIEWSKA. You quickly calculate what strength this means - assuming each company at full strength that would mean something like 15-24 tanks and SPGs with infantry attacking into this sector.

The attack against BUKOWA is concerning as if successful it could cut-off both your line of retreat and supplies you think. What is not clear is whether the Soviets know that your unit currently holds these bridges or the village. Given the lack of any enemy recce units probing your positions it's likely they have not realised that the bridges and village are currently held by German forces.

You think this could be to your advantage offering the chance to ambush the attacking Soviet units. With Krüger's kampfguppe (Call sign BUSSARD) due in your sector by 0830Hrs there was a good chance that united you could hold off Ivan's attack. You decide to alert your command to “stand to”. You pick up the radio MIC and start to organise your command...

Plan

0730Hrs WOLA WIŚNIEWSKA 10km SE of OLSZOWNICA 13th August 1944

As the sun has risen it's burned off the damp early morning mist. The clear blue skies and rapidly warming temperatures indicate another hot day in store. You, Ehrlichmann and Faust are standing by Faust's command panzer, which is parked next to your command SPW, just off the village square. A map is spread out on a table which has been moved from one of the houses close by. You've all been studying the map in detail working out options for stemming the coming Soviet attack.

"Remember this is our last action – then we'll be pulled out of this hell-hole and back for a rest and re-fit. We've certainly earned it!"

You look up into the faces of the two officers, lined and haggard from the unrelenting stress of continual combat. They grin back. Whatever state the unit is in at least our morale is still high you think.

You look at Faust.

"How do you plan on combating Ivan's armour old pal?"

Faust looks at you quizzically, most likely slightly taken aback by the informal tone of your question. Then just as quickly grins back.

"Well, we need to be mindful as to how we halt Ivan's panzers. Ideally we don't want to attack them head on. His T-34s will shoot up my 'mess tin' armoured panzers in short order. No, we avoid them until we can move into favourable firing positions, and surprise them from the flank or rear. That'll sort the bastards out!"

You laugh.

"Very good! My grenadiers are relying on your panzers to deal with Ivan's armour. You knock them out we'll deal with their infantry. We all need to ensure that our first and main concern is to ensure we hold these heavy bridges and prevent Ivan from capturing them until we can hook up with Krüger's group."

Faust looks at you – "Have you had any news from KG Krüger as to when they'll be with us?"

You shake your head. "Not as yet."

You check your watch – 0759Hrs.

"We can only assume that they are on track to arrive in our sector at 0830Hrs - that's in half an hour. So for now we wait and see. I'm sure Ivan will not keep us waiting!"

At that moment the radio operator in your command SPW leans over the side of the vehicle and shouts out – “HERR HAUPTMANN! MESSAGE FROM “HEINRICH”! ENEMY VEHICLE ACTIVITY HEARD APPROX. 1KM EAST OF BUKOWA!”

You turn around – “CONFIRM MESSAGE RECEIVED – TELL “HEINRICH” TO OBSERVE BUT NOT TO ENGAGE!”

You then turn back to address the stony faces of your junior commanders.

“RIGHT! It’s on. We’ll monitor Ivan’s approach via “Heinrich” - meanwhile this is what we’ll do...”



Notes

German player secures victory by:

Occupy

ANGR. Z BLAU 300 points

ANGR. Z ROT 150 points

ANGR. Z GELB 750 points

ANGR. Z ORANGE 1000 points

Destroying Soviet units 1850 points.

Minimise own losses whilst maximising terrain gains.

This is the last action of the campaign – focus on the task!

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Igelstellung – Hedgehog position

**THE BRIEFINGS
THAT FOLLOW
ARE FOR THE
ALTERNATE
BRANCH
SCENARIOS.**



Mission2b Feuer und Bewegung

Situation

0650Hrs 11th August 1944

The dank air is thick with acrid smoke. You find it impossible to describe the smell. Burning diesel fuel, rubber, cloth and human flesh combine to produce a truly awful stench.

You re-focus. Time to radio battalion and update them. You key the mike.

“Sperber Führer this is Maus Führer. Over!”

You repeat – once, twice.

Then a burst of static and you hear Voss on the radio.

“Maus Führer this is Sperber Führer – send. Over!”

“Location 003156: Have reached Objectives PRIGNITZ and OBERHAVEL.

Heavy contact with enemy armour, infantry and PAK in vicinity BONDARISKI/POINT 143.3.

Enemy have counterattacked with armour and infantry. Have pulled back to current location 003156. Objectives PRIGNITZ and OBERHAVEL no longer secure. Over!”

“Maus Führer – understood.

Maus Gehilfe en-route to your location with other mice friends ETA 0730Hrs. Larger friends en-route ETA 1130Hrs. Await further support. Over!”

“Sperber Führer – understood. Out!”

You are still buzzing from the adrenaline of the fight. As your mind races you start to plan your next move.

Speed and surprise you think, they are key. However now you’ve failed to totally eliminate the enemy recce units before they’ve radioed in your location and strength, Ivan will have advance warning of your intentions. You know you need to keep moving. Panzer support is now going to be vital to punch through Ivan’s efforts to stop the advance. However accompanying panzers are both a blessing and curse. Whilst their firepower would be useful in a fight, the poor state of the roads means their slow progress will hamper your SPW’s fast movement.

With your 21c en-route with the 2nd and 4th Zug bringing your company up to full strength, you decide to wait until Faust (Call sign Adler Führer) and his panzers reach your position. With their support you can then press on, at all speed, with your SPW and Faust’s panzers towards OSINNIK.

The next half hour is busy as you take stock of your situation. An NCO steps up to your SPW to announce that the wounded have been taken care off. Your SPW with their loads of grenadiers have 'herringboned' by the roadside. At that moment you hear the clatter and roar of SPWs approaching.

That'll be Ehrlichmann you think. You glance at your watch – 0730Hrs. Good timing! A short while later Ehrlichmann's SPW draws up parallel with yours.

"Herr Hauptmann!" He salutes. You nod.

"Good to see you Herr Leutnant. We'll remain here until Faust's unit links up with us, and then move out for OSINNIK our next objective. We'll stop just before the village at a clump of woods for a briefing with all the zug commanders."

Mission

1040Hrs 1.5km west of OSINNIK

With the assistance of the rest of Faust's unit you managed to destroy the remaining Soviet defenders. You decided to leave the remaining panzers from Traugott's badly mauled zug to secure the road.

After a short drive, going as fast as the road conditions allowed, your SPW company has pulled off the road and down a small sandy track in some mixed woodland. The sun has burned off the earlier misty and damp weather. However, the bulk of Faust's panzers are still a few kilometres behind and are making slow progress. They've already had several panzers either breakdown or become stuck in the soft sandy soil. However one zug, under the command of Feldwebel Hirsch has managed to keep up with your SPW, although one of his panzers broke down and was left behind so as not to slow your convoy down. In your last radio contact with Faust he reckoned his point zug would be at your AO for 1110Hrs.

You give some quick instructions to the driver of your SPW who cuts the engine and clambers out of his seat to take over the MG position. You dismount and gather your zug commanders, including Hirsch in his black panzer uniform, around you.

"Time is tight men. We're already behind schedule. We're going to conduct a hasty terrain reconnaissance of our approach to OSINNIK."

The small group of NCOs and Officers all nod, then quickly adjust their gear and weapons.

"Follow me!" You order

You all stealthily make your way through the trees. Despite the dank mist it's not long before you feel the hot sweat start to run down your back. Even with light kit for the recce, each of you is carrying 10-15Kg of weight with weapons, helmet, ammo and pouches.

You stealthily move forward into the cover of some bushes near a feature marked on the map - POINT 13.2. The zug leaders stealthily gather around you and you all peer through binoculars at the roofs of the buildings of OSINNIK through the mist at just over 400m away.

Crouched behind the cover of the bushes you lay out your map and talk the leaders through the mission.

“We’re to secure the jump-off point for our attack on the bridges at RAKOW. It’s this large section of woodland SE of OSINNIK – marked here on the map. To do that we have been ordered to clear and occupy objectives MUNCHEN; COCHEM; BERLIN; AACHEN; and KOBLENZ.”

You look up and see all your leaders listening intently.

“There are several other features that the enemy will likely hold to prevent access to this woodland. They are AZ DIETER which is this wooded knoll giving good views on the approaches to OSINNIK; AZ OTTO which is FARM001 which controls the southerly road approach to the woods; AZ FRITZ which is this long strip of woodland which has good fields of fire across these wide open fields. And lastly AZ HERMANN which is the village itself and controls the westerly approaches to the village itself.



Looking at the terrain I’m also concerned that the woodland at POINT 20.1 has a good enfilade field of fire on the road running west to east.”

As you talk you trace the features on your map as the other leaders follow on their own copies making their own notes.

Friendly Forces

“We’ll have the support of Hirsch’s panzer zug for our attack, with more of Faust’s unit on the way. In addition we have the not inconsiderable firepower of our SPW company. We need to make maximum use of our SPW support weapons and mortars though. I’ve also been informed we’ll have support from a Wespe battery.”

Enemy Forces

"We've no firm intel on either the strength of the enemy or their positions. Given our earlier set-back it's highly likely that Ivan knows we're here. So whilst it's likely that all that's guarding this AO is a platoon sized outpost, maybe supported by some HMGs and a few ATRs. There is a high chance they've got some PAK out there, most likely 45mm, possibly a battery, so we need to be careful in that regard. They'll also have mortar and artillery support – it'll be zeroed in to key locations – so keep moving. Don't stop - not even to scratch your arse!"

The men chuckle.

"Herr Hauptmann" says Feldwebel Lärmann, II Zug's platoon leader and an 'old sweat'.
"Understood sir but what if the enemy is in the woods in force?"

"If they are there we'll plaster them with mortars and artillery. We've a Wespe battery, fully 'bombed up'. They'll give Ivan a sore head. We just have to find him, that's the challenge! However we do need to use the Wespe battery sparingly. They're ammo is currently in short supply and it'll most likely be urgently required for our main attack. So we'll only use arty fire missions as a last resort. Understood?"

You look at each of your men in turn. They quietly nod acknowledgment. You notice Hirsch is looking very uneasy at the mention of PAK.

"Herr Hauptmann... Ivan's PAK – given the possible fields of fire it appears they have, as soon as my panzers show themselves we'll be shot full of holes."

"Ja! I'm aware of this. But we need you to provide fire support. See if you can't identify a suitable location to cover our advance? We will need your support though. My SPW will be easy meat for Ivan's PAK otherwise."

You look at the dirt streaked faces of your zug leaders, all of them highly experienced panzergrenadiers.

"We've been in this situation before men. Stay alert and pay attention and we will beat these bastards. Now let's get back to the vehicles – final briefing at 1055Hrs and we move off at 1100Hrs."

Plan

Back in the company assembly area each zug leader headed off to brief his unit about what lay ahead. You climb up into your SPW. One of your crew hands you a hot cup of coffee and two slices of bread with what you hope is cheese between them. "You've got to look after yourself Herr Hauptmann" he says. You nod your thanks and take a gulp of scalding coffee. You mull over what info you know about the terrain and the enemy.



It was good to get a look at the ground you think, but I don't know much more about the enemy than I did earlier. You look once more at your map. If as you suspect Ivan has a battery of PAK then they will prove troublesome. Hirsch's reticence is well placed. A well placed battery of PAK would soon chew up his handful of panzers. Question is do you wait for the rest of Faust's unit to arrive? From what you learned from your reconnaissance and what little intel you have you realise you have the following options for your attack...

Notes

German player secures victory by:

Occupying:

OBJ MUNCHEN 100

OBJ COCHEM 100

OBJ BERLIN 100

OBJ AACHEN 100

OBJ KOBLENZ 100

Touching:

AZ DIETER 25

AZ OTTO 25

AZ FRITZ 50

AZ HERMANN 50

Touching:

LINE EVA 0

LINE ANJA 0

German player also scores up to 800 points for destroying any Soviet units.

Be careful with your use of your Wespe battery – they don't get re-supplied...



Mission3b Angriff gegen einen Brueckenkopf

Situation

1315Hrs 11th August 1944

South East of OSINNIK

“Herr Hauptmann!” As you became conscious of the words being shouted, you also became aware of your shoulder being shaken, vigorously.

“HERR HAUPTMANN!” Again louder and more violent shaking.

“What!?...Huh...” You mumble, eyes still closed. Blearily you open your eyes, which feel like they are full of grit. Your stomach feels hollow, your body is stiff and sore. As you shift your body out of its cramped position on the bench in your command SPW, you suddenly feel slightly nauseated. As you focus your red rimmed eyes you see Hauptfeldwebel Neitzel’s grimy face peering down at you. “The Old Man is on the radio and wants to speak to you right now!” You struggle upright as Neitzel hands you the radio headphones and MIC. You clumsily place the headphones over your head and key the MIC.

“Sperber Führer this is Maus Führer. Over!” You croak. Your throat is dry and parched. You try to swallow.

“Maus Führer this is Sperber Führer – rendezvous at my command post 10 minutes. Over!”

“Sperber Führer understood. Over!”

“Maus Führer this is Sperber Führer. Out!”

You take off the headphones and hand them back to the radio operator.

“Contact Leutnant Ehrlichmann inform him I’m off to Battalion for further orders, and to ready the company for immediate movement, on my orders. Understood?”

The radio operator nods and sets to work.

You rub your red rimmed eyes with your grimy hands, then lean across into the cab and tap the driver on his shoulder. “Let’s go – drive us over to the Old Man’s command post.” The driver nods and guns the engine. With a lurch the SPW clatters out onto the dirt road. You notice the sun dapples the track ahead as sunlight filters through the tall pine and birch trees. Least the weather has improved you think. You can’t believe you’d only been asleep for fifteen minutes. The first sleep you’ve had in over fifteen hours. You look around the SPW. The strain of no sleep and near constant combat is showing on the faces of your young grenadiers. One of whom is still slumped against the side walls of the SPW, oblivious to the sudden movement and noise.

You lean against the MG shield staring ahead. As the SPW clatters along the dirt track you reflect on the last action. Your earlier delay in securing the division's panzer kampfguppe route of advance has meant the proposed timetable for the attack on the CZARNA bridges is now behind by several hours. Several hours that the Russians could be using to create a more coherent defence against any further attacks by the 3rd Panzer Division.

'Old Man' Voss made his displeasure very clear, in that farmhouse in the woods just after you'd cleared it of the last Soviet occupants. Although less than half an hour ago it felt like an age. However the slow attrition of men and machines - the grist to the mill of mechanised combat - and the expenditure of ammunition and fuel is slowly, but surely starting to degrade your unit's operational effectiveness.

Now your thoughts turn to the next phase - what Voss will require of your weary panzergrenadiers, and the state of your SPW Company, currently running low on ammunition and fuel.

On the plus side, you think, despite the delays, the rapid pace of the kampfguppe's advance, means we have a slight advantage. Given the speed and pace of the attack Ivan is unlikely to have managed to push much more in the way of tanks and PAK into the path of your advance. However it does leave very little or no time, for doing any sort of preparatory reconnaissance. The plan for seizing the CZARNA bridges by a coup de main appears fraught with risk.

Looking over the side of the SPW you see a long line of camouflaged Panzer IVs pulled up, herringbone fashion, under the cover of the woods. Their crews are busy checking over their tanks. From the turret numbers you recognise them as belonging Faust's 6th Panzer Kompanie. Not long after your SPW pulls up beside Voss' command SPW. Parked beside this you recognise Faust's command Panzer IV number 601. Standing in the lee of both vehicles you see a small gaggle of black and field grey clad officers. In amongst them you recognise the familiar figures of Oberstleutnant Voss 'The old man' and Hauptmann Eric Faust, 6th Panzer Kompanie's CO.

With a clatter and roar of the engine your SPW pulls up beside the other vehicles. You grope for your gear and helmet, and then stumble out of the rear door of the SPW. As you move, you realise just how much your body aches. As you exit the back of the SPW you straighten up and quickly try to stretch out your back, then moving like a man returning from the grave, you walk over to the group of figures.

You quickly bring yourself to attention and salute Voss who casually salutes back. "Good of you to join us Herr von Schroif!" He says. His face is grim, set with a look of steely determination.

"Now, let's get down to business. Shall we gentlemen?" Voss gestures to a map spread out on a map board held by one of the officers.

Mission

1327Hrs

I/PzGrn Rgt 3 Command Post

South east of RAKOW

As you all crane over the map Voss starts to talk whilst indicating key points on the map. You remove your notebook from your tunic pocket and start to make notes.

“As you know gentlemen the III Panzer-Korps has been tasked with eliminating the enemy that has broken across the Vistula. Our friends over in the 19.Panzer Division are advancing on our right along the Vistula in the direction of Baranow. They’ve been tasked with taking Ivan’s main crossing point - here. We, the 3.Panzer Division, are to cover their left flank, whilst advancing simultaneously into the deep flank of the enemy, thus preventing further enemy attacks to the north”

Voss looks up to ensure everyone has so far followed this. Satisfied at the response he continues. You, staring with bloodshot eyes at the map marshal your strength to focus on his words.

“Thanks to von Schroif’s SPWs, with help from Faust’s panzers, we have secured a jump-off point at this wooded lot east of OSINNIK, albeit behind schedule.”

Voss looks across at a slim panzer officer, of medium build, with sharp aquiline features who graciously inclines his head in acknowledgment.

“We have some recce units from Major Deichen’s I/Pz.AA.3 screening our flank; they have been keeping the enemy’s positions under observation and have gathered some useful intel on the enemy’s dispositions. It does appear, gentlemen, that we have caught Ivan on the hop.”



Again Voss looks up to check that everyone is following what he is saying.

“Our priority is the heavy bridges, in the vicinity of RAKOW, over the CZARNA, here, here and here. We need the heavy bridges to allow our heavy panzers the ability to cross the river. They must be secured and a bridgehead established to enable the main body of the division to cross. Our attack to seize these crossings now timed for 1400Hrs. It will be seized by a coup de main. Once the crossing is secured, ideally by 1600Hrs, we continue our

advance north, then east, with all possible speed, using our armoured punch cutting the enemy's main supply and escape route."

You follow Voss' pencil as it tracks across the map. It looks a very large area.

"Gentlemen, it is my intent that by 1800Hrs on the 13th August we will have defeated the enemy forces east of the VISTULA RIVER. To do this it is essential we secure, and maintain, the viability of the crossing point over the CZARNA near RAKOW, and have retained sufficient fighting power and mobility to defend against future Russian attacks."

Friendly Forces

Voss straightens up and looks around at the small gaggle of officers. His gaze falls on yourself and Faust.

"Herr von Schroif. I'd like your kampfguppe to spearhead this attack. Major Deichen has very kindly agreed to attach one of his zugs from 2/I Pz.AA.3 to your command to provide some scouts for your attack. Their key mission is to scout out approaches to your objectives – not as assault infantry."

As this news sinks in and before you can respond Major Deichen speaks.

"I'd appreciate if my men, from Leutnant Hofner's 1st Zug, attached to your command, are protected from any unnecessary losses until they are needed for their own operational tasks?" Deichen looks at you enquiringly. You can tell he's not especially pleased his men have been assigned to your command.

"Naturally Herr Major. I fully appreciate and understand none of our soldiers belong to us but to Germany. Be rest assured we'll treat them as our guests, not as servants."

Voss, clears his throat.

"Excellent Gentlemen! Herr von Schroif please do ensure they are not used as bullet magnets. We'll need these recce boys later on in this mission. Use them with respect." Voss looks at you intently, in a manner whose meaning is clear. It's not a request but an order.

"Jawohl Herr Oberstleutnant!"

Voss nods appreciatively.

"Good! Now, back to the main business in hand. Herr Faust I believe your panzer company is fully operational?"

"Off course Herr Oberstleutnant, we are ready. However, we are low on ammo and fuel..."

Before you can continue Voss raises a hand.

"I fully appreciate your concerns regarding the supply situation. However, as I have said before, since the element of surprise is of decisive importance for the success of this

operation, everything is subordinated to catching the Russians unprepared. We are already behind schedule. This is time the enemy could use to stem our advance. I do not intend to give him any more time than he already has. We will re-supply this evening – after we have secured these bridges over the CZARNA. Understood?”

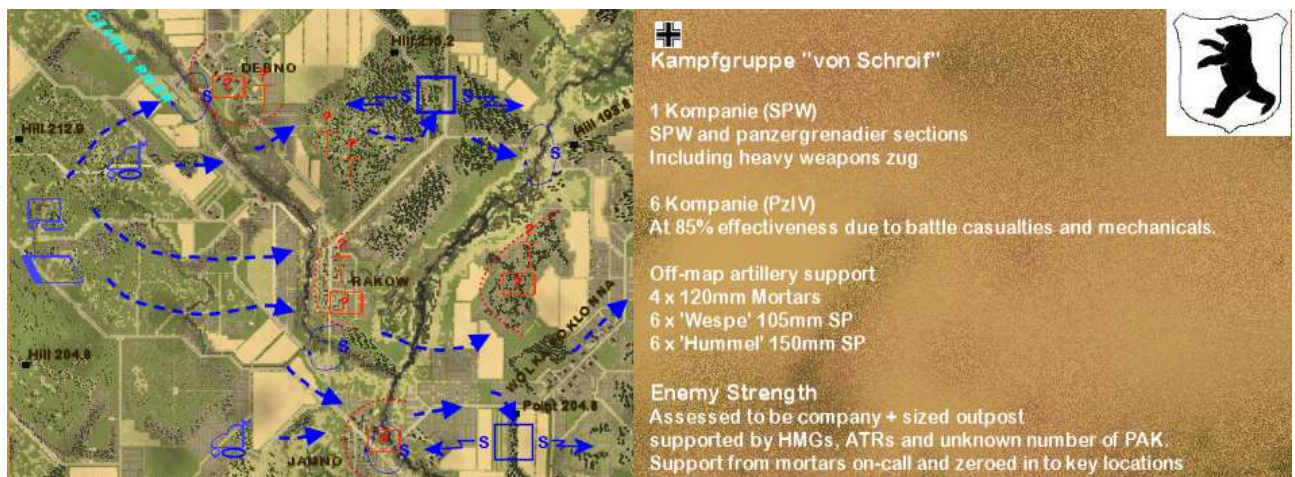
“Jawohl Herr Oberstleutnant!”

Enemy Forces

Before Voss can reply, you continue.

“Herr Oberstleutnant, do we know what the enemy have got defending this crossing? It’s an important crossing point so I’m sure Ivan hasn’t left it unguarded.”

“Good point Herr von Schroif. We don’t have very accurate intel I’m afraid. To allow for speed and surprise we have not pushed any patrols forward, just in case they tip off Ivan that we are indeed after his bridges. However the last intel we had from local sources indicated that there are some PAK and infantry covering the approaches along the line DEBNO/RAKOW/JAMNO, around company strength. I’m sure there will be the usual anti-tank rifles and heavy machine guns. It’s also likely Ivan will have zeroed in some mortars on key approaches. We’ve marked their estimated locations here on the map. We’ve also intercepted some radio messages that suggest Ivan is moving a tank unit through this area. We’re keeping an eye on this. As and when we receive firmer intelligence we’ll let you know. But for now speed is of the essence. We must catch them unawares.”



Well that’s not good you think. If that armoured unit arrives at the bridges at the wrong time... You still your thoughts and join the others craning to look at the red Chinagraph pencil marks on the map indicating Soviet units. You make notes on your own map.

Voss continues.

“In addition to our organic 120mm mortars we have artillery support in the form of one battery of 105mm Wespe and one battery of 150mm Hummel. That should be more than enough to take care of any enemy PAK we encounter and give Ivan’s infantry a sore head. Don’t you think?”

Voss smiles.

"Right gentlemen. Get to it. We attack in half an hour."

You step back and salute as the other officers do the same.

You motion to Faust.

"Eric, can we get our Zugführers together to brief them on the attack in five minutes?"

Faust scratches his chin.

"We've not much time but I'll see what I can do."

Faust turns to his 2IC Leutnant Paul Kerscher.

"Paul can you round the guys up for a briefing at 1335Hrs?"

Kerscher nods and heads off at a jog to his command panzer parked 100m away.

"So what do you reckon Hans? "Coup de main" my arse. The "Old Man" has been reading too many articles in "Der Völkischer Beobachter". I'm not so keen on attacking across that open ground and getting my arse shot to pieces by every Russkie PAK in the area."

You look at Faust and laugh.

"Well. I don't like this situation any more than you do. We'll just have to come up with a plan that keeps our arses in one piece! It's the "ratschbumm"* that really concern me. Ivan will have a lot of them set-up and they'll let us advance right on top of them before they open up. That and the fact no reconnaissance has been carried out. We need to work out a plan that will negate their PAK and limit our losses..."

Plan

The column of armoured vehicles you are in has just stopped. You look at your watch – 1357Hrs. In front of your SPW is the Panzer IV of Leutnant Amsell from 2 Zug, and in front of him are the SPWs of Feldwebel Lärmann's 2nd Zug. You look behind and see the long line of Panzer IVs in the bright morning sunshine. A bead of sweat trickles down your neck.

You realise that the SPWs have stopped at the edge of the woods. Just beyond the treeline the ground opens out as it slopes down to the CZARNA River. We'll soon see how good our plan is you think.

You stand up in your SPW to see better. Ahead you notice Lärmann in his SPW giving the signal to move forward...

Notes

German player secures victory by:

Touch

Angr.z BLAU	100
Angr.z ROT	100
Angr.z GELB	100

Occupy

Wilhelm	600
Friedrichshagen	600
Wannsee	1000

German player also scores up to 2500 points for destroying any Soviet units.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

"ratschbumm"* German military slang for Soviet 76mm Field gun. So named due to the distinctive sound incoming rounds made.



Mission3c Angriff gegen einen Brueckenkopf

Situation

1415Hrs 11th August 1944

South East of OSINNIK

“Herr Hauptmann!” As you became conscious of the words being shouted, you also became aware of your shoulder being shaken, vigorously.

“HERR HAUPTMANN!” Again louder and more violent shaking.

“What!?...Huh...” You mumble, eyes still closed. Blearily you open your eyes, which feel like they are full of grit. Your stomach feels hollow, your body is stiff and sore. As you shift your body out of its cramped position on the bench in your command SPW, you suddenly feel slightly nauseated. As you focus your red rimmed eyes you see Hauptfeldwebel Neitzel’s grimy face peering down at you. “The Old Man is on the radio and wants to speak to you right now!” You struggle upright as Neitzel hands you the radio headphones and MIC. You clumsily place the headphones over your head and key the MIC.

“Sperber Führer this is Maus Führer. Over!” You croak. Your throat is dry and parched. You try to swallow.

“Maus Führer this is Sperber Führer – rendezvous at my command post 10 minutes. Over!”

“Sperber Führer understood. Over!”

“Maus Führer this is Sperber Führer. Out!”

You take off the headphones and hand them back to the radio operator.

“Contact Leutnant Ehrlichmann inform him I’m off to Battalion for further orders, and to ready the company for immediate movement, on my orders. Understood?”

The radio operator nods and sets to work.

You rub your red rimmed eyes with your grimy hands, then lean across into the cab and tap the driver on his shoulder. “Let’s go – drive us over to the Old Man’s command post.” The driver nods and guns the engine. With a lurch the SPW clatters out onto the dirt road. You notice the sun dapples the track ahead as sunlight filters through the tall pine and birch trees. Least the weather has improved you think. You can’t believe you’d only been asleep for fifteen minutes. The first sleep you’ve had in over fifteen hours. You look around the SPW. The strain of no sleep and near constant combat is showing on the faces of your young grenadiers. One of whom is still slumped against the side walls of the SPW, oblivious to the sudden movement and noise.

You lean against the MG shield staring ahead. As the SPW clatters along the dirt track you reflect on the last action. Your earlier delay in securing the division's panzer kampfguppe route of advance has meant the proposed timetable for the attack on the CZARNA bridges is now behind by several hours. Several hours that the Russians, in all probability have used to create a more coherent defence against any further attacks by the 3rd Panzer Division.

Now your thoughts turn to the next phase - what Voss will require of your weary panzergrenadiers, and the state of your SPW Company, currently running low on ammunition and fuel. The slow attrition of men and machines - the grist to the mill of mechanised combat - and the expenditure of ammunition and fuel is starting to degrade your unit's operational effectiveness.

Now, for the first time, you begin to have doubts about the outcome of this attack. Having lost the element of surprise Ivan is by now fully aware of what the division's intent is and will have managed to push much more in the way of tanks and PAK into the path of your advance. With very little or no time, for doing any sort of preparatory reconnaissance, the plan for seizing the CZARNA bridges by a coup de main appears wishful thinking. Now if there is to be any chance of taking these bridges it is going to be against an organised and determined Soviet defence.

Looking over the side of the SPW you see a long line of camouflaged Panzer IVs pulled up, herringbone fashion, under the cover of the woods. Their crews are busy checking over their tanks. From the turret numbers you recognise them as belonging Faust's 6th Panzer Kompanie. Not long after your SPW pulls up beside Voss' command SPW. Parked beside this you recognise Faust's command Panzer IV number 601. Standing in the lee of both vehicles you see a small gaggle of black and field grey clad officers. In amongst them you recognise the familiar figures of Oberstleutnant Voss 'The old man' and Hauptmann Eric Faust, 6th Panzer Kompanie's CO.

With a clatter and roar of the engine your SPW pulls up beside the other vehicles. You grope for your gear and helmet, and then stumble out of the rear door of the SPW. As you move, you realise just how much your body aches. As you exit the back of the SPW you straighten up and quickly try to stretch out your back, then moving like a man returning from the grave, you walk over to the group of figures.

You quickly bring yourself to attention and salute Voss who casually salutes back. "Good of you to join us Herr von Schroif!" He says. His face is grim, set with a look of steely determination.

"Now, let's get down to business. Shall we gentlemen?" Voss gestures to a map spread out on a map board held by one of the officers.

Mission

1427Hrs

I/PzGrn Rgt 3 Command Post

South east of RAKOW

As you all crane over the map Voss starts to talk whilst indicating key points on the map. You remove your notebook from your tunic pocket and start to make notes.

“As you know gentlemen the III Panzer-Korps has been tasked with eliminating the enemy that has broken across the Vistula. Our friends over in the 19.Panzer Division are advancing on our right along the Vistula in the direction of Baranow. They’ve been tasked with taking Ivan’s main crossing point - here. We, the 3.Panzer Division, are to cover their left flank, whilst advancing simultaneously into the deep flank of the enemy, thus preventing further enemy attacks to the north”

Voss looks up to ensure everyone has so far followed this. Satisfied at the response he continues. You, staring with bloodshot eyes at the map marshal your strength to focus on his words.

“So far our attack has not gone entirely according to plan. Our attempts to secure our jump-off point at this wooded lot east of OSINNIK, met with stubborn resistance that eventually cost us dear to secure. It has also given the enemy time to strengthen their defences and push more units into the path of our proposed advance. It appears, gentlemen, that we have lost the element of surprise.”

Voss looks across at a slim panzer officer, of medium build, with sharp aquiline features who graciously inclines his head in acknowledgment.

“We have some recce units from Major Deichen’s I/Pz.AA.3 screening our flank; they have been keeping the enemy’s positions under observation and have gathered some useful intel on the enemy’s dispositions. It does appear, gentlemen, that we have caught Ivan on the hop.”

Again Voss looks up to check everyone is following what he is saying.

“However, our priority is still the heavy bridges, in the vicinity of RAKOW, over the CZARNA, here, here and here. We need the heavy bridges to allow our heavy panzers the ability to cross the river. They must be secured and a bridgehead established to enable the main body of the division to cross. Our attack to seize these crossings is timed for 1500Hrs. Once the crossing is secured, ideally by 1700Hrs, we continue our advance north, then east, with all possible speed, using our armoured punch cutting the enemy’s main supply and escape route.”

You follow Voss’ pencil as it tracks across the map. It looks a very large area.

“Gentlemen, it is my intent that by 1800Hrs on the 13th August we will have defeated the enemy forces east of the VISTULA RIVER. To do this it is essential we secure, and maintain,

the viability of the crossing point over the CZARNA near RAKOW, and have retained sufficient fighting power and mobility to defend against future Russian attacks.”



Friendly Forces

Voss straightens up and looks around at the small gaggle of officers. His gaze falls on yourself and Faust.

“Herr von Schroif. I’d like your kampfguppe to spearhead this attack. Major Deichen has very kindly agreed to attach one of his zugs from 2/I Pz.AA.3 to your command to provide some scouts for your attack. Their key mission is to scout out approaches to your objectives – not as assault infantry.”

As this news sinks in and before you can respond Major Deichen speaks.

“I’d appreciate if my men, from Leutnant Hofner’s 1st Zug, attached to your command, are protected from any unnecessary losses until they are needed for their own operational tasks?” Deichen looks at you enquiringly. You can tell he’s not especially pleased his men have been assigned to your command.

“Naturally Herr Major. I fully appreciate and understand none of our soldiers belong to us but to Germany. Be rest assured we’ll treat them as our guests, not as servants.”

Voss, clears his throat.

“Excellent Gentlemen! Herr von Schroif please do ensure they are not used as bullet magnets. We’ll need these recce boys later on in this mission. Use them with respect.” Voss looks at you intently, in a manner whose meaning is clear. It’s not a request but an order.

“Jawohl Herr Oberstleutnant!”

Voss nods appreciatively.

“Good! Now, back to the main business in hand. Herr Faust I believe your panzer company is fully operational?”

“Off course Herr Oberstleutnant, we are ready. However, we are low on ammo and fuel...”

Before you can continue Voss raises a hand.

"I fully appreciate your concerns regarding the supply situation. However, as I have said before, since the element of surprise is of decisive importance for the success of this operation, everything is subordinated to catching the Russians unprepared. We are already behind schedule. This is time the enemy could use to stem our advance. I do not intend to give him any more time than he already has. We will re-supply this evening – after we have secured these bridges over the CZARNA. Understood?"

"Jawohl Herr Oberstleutnant!"

Enemy Forces

Before Voss can reply, you continue.

"Herr Oberstleutnant, do we know what the enemy have got defending this crossing? It's an important crossing point so I'm sure Ivan hasn't left it unguarded."

"Good point Herr von Schroif. We don't have very accurate intel I'm afraid. We've not had the opportunity to push any patrols forward. However the last intel we had from local sources indicated that there are PAK and infantry covering the approaches along the line DEBNO/RAKOW/JAMNO, around company plus strength. I'm sure there will be the usual anti-tank rifles and heavy machine guns. It's also likely Ivan will have zeroed in some mortars on key approaches. We've marked their estimated locations here on the map. We've also intercepted some radio messages that suggest Ivan is moving a heavy tank unit into this area. We're keeping an eye on this. As and when we receive firmer intelligence we'll let you know."

Well that's not good you think. If that armoured unit arrives at the bridges at the wrong time... You still your thoughts and join the others craning to look at the red Chinagraph pencil marks on the map indicating Soviet units. You make notes on your own map.

Voss continues.

"We have the support of three King Tigers from the 501st which despite the poor state of the roads, and breakdowns, have managed to make it through. In addition to our organic 120mm mortars we have artillery support in the form of one battery of 105mm Wespe and one battery of 150mm Hummel plus a battery of Nebelwerfers. That should be more than enough to take care of any enemy PAK we encounter and give Ivan a sore head. Don't you think?"

Voss smiles.

"Right gentlemen. Get to it. We attack in half an hour."

You step back and salute as the other officers do the same.

You motion to Faust.

“Eric, can we get our Zugführers together to brief them on the attack in five minutes?”

Faust scratches his chin.

“We’ve not much time but I’ll see what I can do.”

Faust turns to his 2IC Leutnant Paul Kerscher.

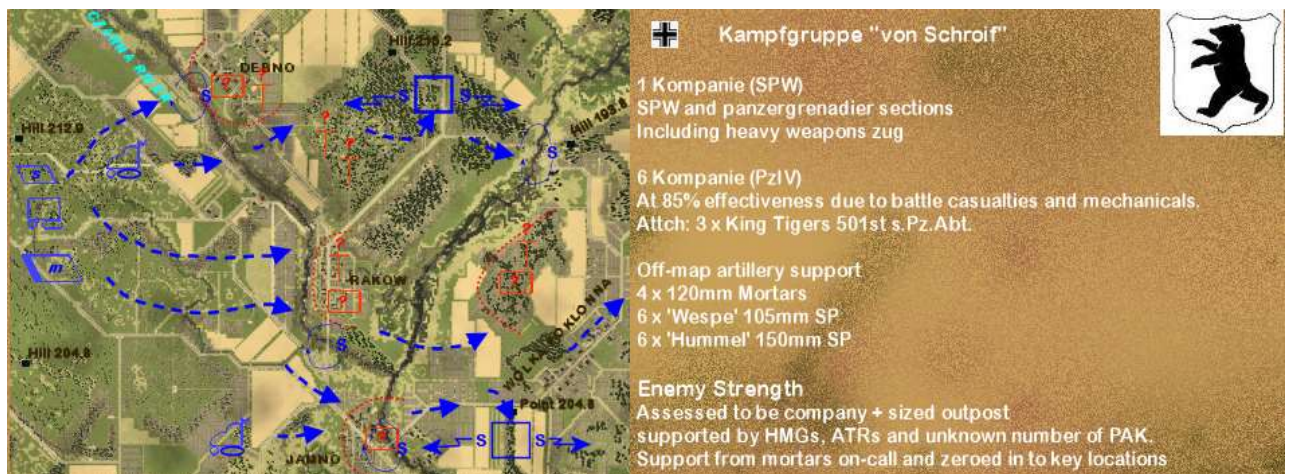
“Paul can you round the guys up for a briefing at 1335Hrs?”

Kerscher nods and heads off at a jog to his command panzer parked 100m away.

“So what do you reckon Hans? I’m not so keen on attacking across that open ground and getting my arse shot to pieces by every Russkie PAK in the area.”

You look at Faust – the seriousness of what you are both being asked to do slowly sets in.

“Well. I don’t like this situation any more than you do. We’ll just have to come up with a plan that keeps our arses in one piece. It’s the “ratschbumm”* that really concern me. Ivan will have a lot of them set-up and they’ll let us advance right on top of them before they open up. That and the fact no reconnaissance has been carried out. We need to work out a plan that will negate their PAK and limit our losses...”



Plan

The column of armoured vehicles you are in has stopped. You order your driver to pull off the sandy road and drive up towards the head of the column. You look at your watch – 1457Hrs. Your SPW stops near the head of the column, just opposite the SPWs of Feldwebel Lärmann's 2nd Zug. Just ahead are the King Tigers of the 501st. This is the first time you have seen these huge machines. Beside the SPW they appear massive. You look behind and see the long line of Panzer IVs in the bright morning sunshine. A bead of sweat trickles down your neck.

You realise that the Tigers have stopped at the edge of the woods. Just beyond the treeline the ground opens out as it slopes down to the CZARNA River. We'll soon see how good our plan is you think.

You stand up in your SPW to see better. You check your watch again. 1500Hrs – panzer marsch! With a roar and a belch of smoke from their exhausts the King Tigers lurch forward...

Notes

German player secures victory by:

Touch

Angr.z BLAU	100
Angr.z ROT	100
Angr.z GELB	100

Occupy

Wilhelm	600
Friedrichshagen	600
Wannsee	1000

German player also scores up to 2500 points for destroying any Soviet units.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

"ratschbumm"* German military slang for Soviet 76mm Field gun. So named due to the distinctive sound incoming rounds made.



Mission4b Resupply Decisions

Situation

1830Hrs 11th August 1944

Woods on main road to OLSZOWNICA 1km north of RAKOW

After tough, bloody, fighting your kampfguppe has secured the operationally important bridges over the CZARNA River, however there is no time to relax and let your guard down.

Your kampfguppe is slowly running low on the essentials of mechanised combat – fuel and ammo. You radio Leutnant Jorn Ehrlichmann, your 2IC and order him to get a quick status on fuel and ammunition. Your SPW and Panzers are thirsty beasts, and you think, before you can resume operations, that you will need to refuel and rearm.

At that moment Faust's command panzer roars and clatters up beside your command SPW. Faust is standing in the cupola with a large grin on his face.

"Looks like we kicked Ivan's arse today eh?" He shouts.

Despite your weariness you grin back.

"We did Faust – thanks to your panzers! If we carry on like this we might get through this "Knights Cross job" of a mission with our arses intact!"

As you are shouting across to Faust your radio operator taps your shoulder.

"Herr Hauptmann – Oberstleutnant Voss on the radio."

You reach for the proffered headphones and MIC.

"Sperber Führer this is Maus Führer. Over!"

"Maus Führer this is Sperber Führer –I am calling an orders group at 1530Hrs. Adler Führer and Sperber Führer to attend, Location ANTON, NORDPOL 23, 45, 83, 90. Repeat back. Over!"

"1530Hrs; Location ANTON, NORDPOL 23, 45, 83, 90. Over!"

"Maus Führer this is Sperber Führer! Affirmative, Out!"

You take the headphones off.

"Faust – the "Old Man" is calling an orders group at 15300Hrs. We're both to attend."

Faust waves, and hoists himself out of the cupola of his Panzer IV. You watch as he stiffly works his way onto the rear deck and jumps off the rear deck to land heavily in the sandy soil. You ease yourself over the side off your SPW and join him.

"You're moving like an old man Eric!"

Faust, his face caked in grime, snorts.

"You're not so nimble yourself Hans, I saw you clamber over that SPW like some old housewife."

You laugh. It was true. The accumulation of several days of violent action, both travelling in cramped AFVs and combat, was taking its toll of everyone. You feel the pain of minor bruises, from head to foot, overlaid on the ever present tiredness that pervades every muscle in your body. You gently arch your back seeking some relief from the dull ache at the base of your spine.

"What's the state of your panzers and crews, Eric?"

Faust scratches the day old stubble on his chin.

"So far combat casualties are light. I've a few non-runners with mechanicals. The guys are all dog tired, and we're starting to run low on ammo, but more importantly, on fuel. These "mess tins" guzzle a lot of gas."

You nod.

"I'm in the same state. My grenadiers have been on the go for over 36 hours now. They're tired, the SPW crews are tired, and we're running low on ammo and fuel. We've not had a hot meal for two days now."

You pause. Take your helmet off and scratch your head. Simple pleasures. Your hair is matted, dirty.

"So, what do you think the "The Old Man" has planned for us?"

Before Faust can answer, you look up. Dark clouds are starting to form on the horizon.

"Looks like the hot weather is kicking off a storm."

Faust looks up. Several large anvil shaped clouds are forming up on the southern horizon.

"Well, looking on the bright side. It'll keep Ivan's Jabos at bay, and we'll get a wash! Least we'll be clean for the next phase of this "Knights Cross job" of a mission."

You laugh.

"We'd better get a readiness report on our respective units' condition. I'm sure it's going to be essential to what we do next. Better get moving Eric. Meet at my command SPW at 1515Hrs with your report ready? I'll give you a ride over to the orders group."

"Jawohl Herr Hauptmann!" Barks Faust as he clicks his heels together.

You laugh. "Cheeky bastard!"

Mission

1530Hrs I(gep)Panzergrenadier Regt 3 Command Post; Location ANTON, NORDPOL 23, 45, 83, 90 south of RAKOW

The short ride back over to Voss's command post, located in a small farm, allows you a view of the battlefield. Smoke from burning tanks drifted across the fields. Everywhere you look there is the detritus, mechanical and human, of war. Your command SPW drives into the courtyard which shelters a cluster of vehicles, mostly SPW, but a few kubelwagens and trucks. You both climb out of the SPW and amble into the wooden farmhouse.

In the dim light you are surprised to see the commander of Panzer Regiment 6, Oberst Bernuth, leaning over a large kitchen table, talking to "Old Man" Voss. You both approach the table and salute.

"Hauptmann von Schroif, Hauptmann Faust..." Bernuth salutes you both.

"Excellent job! Text book panzer warfare men. My congratulations."

Bernuth pauses, then indicates the large map spread out on the table.

"I don't have to tell you both how tight things are just now. We've got away with this attack because we've pushed, and pushed our attack, taking Ivan totally by surprise. However I've no doubt he's now fully aware of what we are up to and I fully expect he'll be assembling reserves to block our advance. We're still unloading elements from the division – mostly our grenadiers and artillery. Meanwhile our Tigers are still strung out on these dirt tracks the Poles call roads. It'll take us at least another day or so before the main strength of the division is fully assembled in this sector. By then I suspect Ivan will have strengthened his lines and be waiting for us."

Bernuth looks up at you.

"What's the condition of your kampfguppe Herr Hauptmann?"

"Our grenadiers are dog tired Herr Oberst but still in good spirits. Our SPW are travel weary, and we're low on both fuel and ammo. Herr Hauptmann Faust's panzer Kompanie is in a similar state – crews tired but in good spirits, panzers low on ammo and fuel. Overall both units still up to reasonable strength"

Bernuth nods. He looks across to Voss.

“Herr Oberstleutnant Voss and I have been discussing this situation.”

Bernuth leans his elbow on the table and gently strokes his jaw.

“As we see it we’ve two options.

Option A, Hauptmann von Schroif, is your kampffgruppe quickly refuels; and cross-loads ammo this evening. We don’t have time to do a full refuel and re-arm I’m afraid. This will mean you will be in good condition to carry on operations by dawn on the 12/8/44. However, as it’ll take time to assemble another kampffgruppe, I estimate around 4 hours, it gives Ivan time to react to our attack. Potentially this makes the continuation of our attack more problematic as Ivan will have pushed more armour and PAK north into this sector along these routes – here and here – and be waiting for us. This option does mean that we continue the fight with our main armoured punch at partial operational readiness.”

Bernuth indicates the two roads leading out of BARANOW on the map.

Option B is a high risk option. Your kampffgruppe continues its advance immediately and seek to secure the road and crossings in the vicinity of SZUMSKO/HILL 133.9. Once secure, Kampffgruppe Krüger, who will be following on behind, will then pass through your lines and continue the advance. We’ve got the Russkies on the back foot. They won’t be expecting an armoured attack at night. This means they won’t have time to react adequately and it gives us the opportunity to push our advance further. However I am fully aware of the risks involved in a night attack into an unknown tactical situation, and that this potentially could leave your kampffgruppe dangerously low on fuel and ammo. Given the seriousness of the operational situation in this sector I believe it is a risk worth considering.”

Bernuth stands back from the table.

“Herr von Schroif, Herr Faust. I fully appreciate what I am asking you and your men to undertake here. Both options have their risks. Whatever is decided I do need you both to be fully committed to it.”

You look at Bernuth - a controlled look but one that fails to hide your apprehension. Your brain races whilst you process the options. Neither option is appealing. Whilst the first option appears the sound one; taking time to quickly refuel and cross-load ammo loadouts it still leaves your kampffgruppe effectively poorly supplied. It also means that the Russians have more time to reorganise their forces and create a coherent defence against future attacks by the division – attacks which in all probability your unit would be spearheading.

The principle that armoured vehicles going into combat must carry sufficient fuel to assure their mobility throughout a day's fighting is one that has been drilled into you. However so has the value of the element of surprise in armoured operations – keeping your enemy on the back foot, always trying to second guess your next move. Therefore to carry on, despite your unit being low on fuel and ammo with dog tired troops, into the night, will at least give you the element of surprise. Since the element of surprise has been of decisive importance for the success of this operation to date, with everything subordinated to catching the

Russians unprepared, you do wonder how much longer it will have value. You know your enemy from long years of combat on the Eastern Front. Ivan will soon adapt and react effectively to any further attacks. Being caught out in hostile country, out of fuel and ammo does not bear thinking about. Yet if we can just fully exploit the current dislocation of the enemys' plans, it may yet lead to success.

Friendly Forces

Bernuth interrupts your thoughts.

"Herr Hauptmann...?"

Before you can answer, Faust interrupts.

"Herr Oberst – it might help reach a decision if we can have more detail as to the situation of our forces, what units you have to prosecute the attack and the enemy dispositions and possible course of action?"

"Very well Herr Faust. The 3 Kompanie under Hauptmann Krüger can team up with the other panzer Kompanie and some Tigers from Panzer-Abteilung 501. They will be ready to move out by 2130Hrs at the latest and carry on the attack. This will allow them to move out in the evening and advance through the night to secure the road and crossing in the vicinity of OLSZOWNICA. Your unit, after refuelling and re-arming would follow up this attack. As and when they secure the crossings you will pass through their lines and continue the advance east cutting the main road to OPATOW."

Bernuth looks at Voss.

"Could you outline the resupply plan Herr Oberstleutnant Voss please?"

Voss clear his throat.

"We can arrange for your kampfguppe to top up your fuel tanks this evening at your units current location. This will also give you time to top up your ammo loadouts. This should allow you to be ready to move out for first light tomorrow. Alternatively you quickly cross-load your ammo and move out as soon as possible. We can schedule a re-supply for dawn tomorrow – although this does depend on the tactical situation..."

Both you and Faust look at each other. That's a long way into Indian country you think...

Enemy Forces

Bernuth indicates on the map.

"As regards enemy forces we know that most, if not all the key crossings will have detachments guarding them – mostly platoon/company sized forces with some limited PAK support. However we are receiving reports that the enemy are starting to react. We have radio reports that indicate several of their armoured units are on the march now, and at their present rate of advance, should make contact with our units sometime around dawn

tomorrow. Corps intelligence expects a regiment sized force to attack through the area near OLSZOWNICA tomorrow morning. Hence the importance of seizing that crossing point."

Plan

Bernuth looks at both you and Faust.

"Well? Herr von Schroif? Herr Faust? Your decision please?"

Notes

Your kampfguppe is lined up in a wooded lot.

You can review the current condition of your unit, especially ammo load outs, state of rest of troops; vehicle conditions etc and make your decision.

To select an option you have to drive a unit onto one of two marked TOUCH options then hit ceasefire. You will then proceed onto the next appropriate mission.

Option A: pause to re-supply, re-ammo, and re-fit which takes time. This means Soviets have the chance to bolster defences or launch spoiling attacks against German bridgehead. These inform the conditions the German player faces next few missions. Your unit will be at 75% re-supply; 10% rested with a 10% chance of vehicles being repaired. However this means the increased possibility of better prepared Soviet defender/attacker and hence missions with the risk of increased casualties.

Option B: do quick cross-level of ammo and carry on with attack. Your unit will not be rested and only 10% re-supplied; with a 10% chance of damaged vehicles being repaired. Advantage is Soviets have less time to bolster defences so potentially easier missions for Germans with less risk of serious casualties BUT you run the risk of running low on ammo and may not get the chance to re-supply in latter missions depending on the tactical and operational conditions you create (if you win = favourable). This is a high risk strategy which may pay big rewards in the long run if you fight well.





Mission 5.1b Panzer Rettung

Situation

1830Hrs, 11th August 1944

Woods on the main road to OLSZOWNICA 1km north of RAKOW

You are standing beside your command SPW smoking a cigarette and drinking a very welcome cup of hot coffee. Your unit has remained halted in the woods on the main road to OLSZOWNICA.

Both the panzers and SPW have formed two rows, one on each side of the road, while dismounted panzergrenadiers provide security to the east and west of the halted column. You've ensured that sentries are posted at 50m intervals in the forest north and south of the road. The resupply trucks moved along the road, stopping at each vehicle pair to offload full fuel cans. They'd pick up the empties on their return trip. On the panzers you notice the loaders helping the drivers to refuel and check their vehicles. In both the SPW and Panzer IVs the gunners are checking their weapons. Mobile field kitchens have lines of grenadiers and tank crews queuing to draw coffee and food for their units.

All in all the refuel and rearm is being efficiently carried out. Now some sleep - that would be great you think. As you watch the men busying themselves with their myriad tasks you wonder how the newly formed Kampfgruppe Krüger is doing.

After your decision to stay and refuel, Hauptmann Krüger from 3/I Battalion (gep) was given the mission of continuing the attack towards OLSZOWNICA. With some Panzer IVs from 5 Kompanie and several Tigers from the 501st they headed off less than half an hour ago. A fantastic job you think to get organised, you reckoned it should have taken them at least until 2000Hrs this evening before they'd be ready to move off.

"Good evening Hans!"

You wake from your reverie to find Eric Faust standing beside you.

"Evening Eric. I was just thinking."

"Pfennig for your thoughts Hans?"

"I was just wondering how Krüger and his Kampfgruppe will get on."

"Ah you know Krüger - he loves that sort of shit. Driving through the night deep into 'Indian country', bet he has 'Panzerlied' blaring from the radios! He'll take any opportunity to seek a cure for his 'Halsschmerzen' eh?"

You laugh. It was no secret that Hauptmann Krüger had 'throat ache' - a deep desire for a Knights Cross. This obsession manifested itself in Krüger's leadership style being

characterised as reckless or glory-seeking. It was a style of command that had cost the needless loss of lives of the men under his command in the past.

“Well I think this operation will give us plenty of chances to become heroes, whether we want it or not.” You snort.

“How is your re-supply going Eric?”

“It’s going well Hans – we’re managing to top up our ammo and be fully refuelled.” You nod.

“Excellent news Eric. The men are doing an excellent job.”

Thinking through your rate of work you calculate at this rate your kampfgroupe will be 100% fully re-fuelled and re-armed; the men will have had a few hours’ sleep (around 50%) and the mechanics should have managed to recover and repair 25% of the broken down and damaged vehicles by the early hours of tomorrow.

Mission

12th August 1944

0405Hrs Woods on the main road to OLSZOWNICA 1km north of RAKOW

The noise and metallic voice sounded as if they came from the far end of a long, dark corridor. There are no other feelings or sensations as you drift from a dead sleep through that transitional period of half-asleep – half-awake. The radio crackled back to life again and you become aware of your radio operator speaking.

You begin the grim process of waking up. First the aches and pains and muscle spasms, the result of sleeping on an uneven bed of personal gear, vehicular equipment, ration boxes, ammo boxes and the other odds and ends that clutter the interior of your SPW.

As you open your eyes you hear another static crackle and notice the radio operator’s face lit up by a bright orange light. Without changing his expression, or moving any other part of his body, except his right arm and hand, which hold the radio hand MIC, the radio operator raises the MIC to within an inch of his mouth and speaks.

“Maus station acknowledged. Wait-over!”

The radio operator hands you the MIC and says “it is the ‘Old Man’ on the net with a warning order.”

You take the MIC and a pair of headphones and speak.

“Maus Führer ready to receive transmission over.”

“Ready your kampfgroupe to move out at 0500Hrs – objective OLSZOWNICA! Elements from Kampfgroupe Krüger are isolated and surrounded. Location THEODOR, WILHELM 56, 45, 83,

98. Position south east exit of OLSZOWNICA. You are to break through the enemy lines and rescue them. I am en-route to brief you directly, ETA ten minutes, over.”

“Maus Führer – understood – over!”

“Sperber Führer out!”

Sounds like the crap just hit the fan you think. You immediately busy yourself alerting your kampfguppe to their impending departure.

* * * * *

12th August 1944

0413Hrs Woods on the main road to OLSZOWNICA 1km north of RAKOW

You check your watch. It’s nearly 0415Hrs. The past ten minutes have been frantic as men run about throwing gear into their vehicles, the cool night air rent by the rattle and roar of Maybach engines starting up. The down pours of late yesterday evening have given way to a slow persistent drizzle.

Eric Faust is huddled beside you against the cold steel sides of your command SPW.

“Well, it would appear we have run out of luck and surprise. What shit do you reckon Krüger got himself into?”

You take another draw of your cigarette.

“No idea – but we’ll find out soon enough – look! There’s “Old Man” Voss now.”

You motion towards an approaching SPW, the weak light from it’s Notek headlight dimly lighting the steady drizzle and the dark shapes of SPW and panzers lining the road.

Voss clambers out of the SPW.

“No time for pleasantries.” Voss says waving a hand dismissively. Voss looks slightly haggard and dishevelled from too much stress and too little sleep. Voss unfolds a map and spread it against the side of the SPW.

“Here is the situation chaps. During their overnight movement advance elements from Kampfgruppe “Krüger”, call sign ‘Bussard’ - a zug from the 3 SPW Kompanie - became separated and isolated from the main unit in enemy territory in the vicinity of the main crossing point on the OPATOW road at OLSZOWNICA. Krüger went to their aid with 4 x PzIV. However they rolled into a PAK ambush on the road which KO’d two of the Panzers.

Krüger pushed on with the remaining panzers and made contact with the cut-off unit. They took up a hedgehog position covering the main approach road. However, due to the poor travel conditions they are both low on fuel. They’ve been holding off probes from Ivan but are now also running low on ammo.

Krüger radioed for help saying his unit is now surrounded by enemy infantry. It's also likely this little fiasco has given Ivan a great deal of time to organise a suitable armoured welcome come dawn. I want your kampfguppe to link up with Krüger and his unit, and, here I give you some tactical flexibility, assess whether we can hold the crossing against Ivan's attacks, and if so, do so."



Exit KG "Krüger" units for a total of up to 1600p

NOTE: any element from KG "Krüger" that does not exit, or is destroyed, their points count as destroyed in the final AAR. You have a bonus of 1600 points.

Occupy BRIDGEHEAD 2000p

NOTE: To get these points NO Soviet unit can be allowed to be in the marked objective area by the scenarios end.

You get a total of 1800 points for destroying any Soviet units you contact.

Soviet units score points for IDing any of KG "von Schroif" units up to a value of 1600 points.

Both you and Faust look at each other. The look says it all. You both know this sounds all too much like a 'Himmelfahrt' mission – 'journey to heaven' - or in other words a suicide mission. A drive in the dark, along a main road, into enemy territory, straight into an unknown tactical situation with the enemy attacking hard across the route of advance...

"I appreciate the urgency Herr Oberstleutnant but surely the other elements of KG Krüger are better placed to assist. It'll take us hours to get to their location."

"Correct, however the other elements of KG Krüger have been engaged by enemy armour advancing west, most likely armoured patrols sent out to establish contact with our advance, and are currently screening the main eastern approaches to OLSZOWNICA. It would appear Ivan is on the move quicker than we anticipated, and appears to be heading for OLSZOWNICA from the east, the south and the south west with a significant number of tanks and motorised infantry. The crossings and road network at OLSZOWNICA have become even more operationally important. If the Russians manage to seize them it threatens our ability to continue our attack and hence screen 19th Panzer's advance along the Vistula."

You know what is coming next.

"So my dear von Schroif I want your SPWs and Herr Faust's panzers to advance with all possible speed – drive 'karacho'* dear boy – to OLSZOWNICA and support Krüger's unit, see if you can't keep them alive. I want you to assess whether we can hold the crossing against Ivan's attacks, and if so, do so. I'll see if I can't arrange for support to help bolster your position. Understood Herr Hauptmann?"

"Jawohl Herr Oberstleutnant!"

"One last thing - my intent is that you first and foremost rescue the trapped elements of KG Krüger whilst denying the enemy the ability to control the main road and crossing points at

OLSZOWNICA, whilst retaining sufficient fighting power and mobility to defend against future Russian attacks or postured to attack with your kampfguppe within 12 hours.”

“Understood Herr Oberstleutnant!” You quietly acknowledge Voss’s last statement. Thankfully this gives you room for manoeuvre in what appears to be a ‘Himmelfahrt’ mission...

Friendly Forces

Before you head off to ready your unit you have a question for Voss.

“You mentioned support Herr Oberstleutnant. Can you give me some indication of what type and level of support, and when it may arrive in our Area of Operations?”

Voss smiles, thinly.

“I can’t give you any firm undertaking. We are looking into freeing up some elements, most likely some Tigers, currently attached to KG Krüger. Given the state of the roads I’m not sure how long it will take the heavy armour to reach your position. So, make your decisions based on what you have and what you encounter. I’ll make every effort to ensure you are supported. However I cannot promise you that any support, armoured or otherwise will be forthcoming.”

“Understood Herr Oberstleutnant.”

Enemy Forces

“Herr Oberstleutnant?” Faust chips in.

“Do we have any indication of what enemy units, strength and type, are in the AO?”

You look enquiringly at “Old Man” Voss.

Voss looks slightly uncomfortable and for a brief moment his usual calm confidence and slightly arrogant manner slips. But just as quick as it occurs, the moment passes.

“Herr Hauptmann – the combat situation is very fluid. I’m afraid there is not much information I can give you than what I have already clearly explained. All I have from the intelligence officer is that Ivan is on the move with armour and infantry. Ahead of his main body he is sending out small advance guards, mainly company strength, consisting of tanks, motorised infantry and some towed PAK. Key operational and tactical points along the route of their advance are most likely guarded – mostly by small infantry detachments with some PAK.”

Faust nods. You also nod. You know from your study of the enemy’s tactical doctrine that Ivan usually sent ahead small groups of tanks and tank riders to find points of German points of resistance, or often the ways around them. There was nothing of use in this report that you could not have deduced yourself.

Voss continues.

"I appreciate that this is an especially dangerous mission gentlemen. But of all my officers you are the team that can pull this off. I have seen what you both can achieve in combat, and you have good units."

"Herr Hauptmann von Schroif" Voss says as he claps your shoulder, "you are going to do a good job. Just get in there, link up with Krüger and his detachment, assess whether you can hold the crossing against Ivan's attacks, and if so, do so. If not all of you get out of there. That is your decision. I'll do my best to get whatever support I can to you."

"Jawohl Herr Oberstleutnant!" You bring yourself smartly to attention and salute as Faust does likewise.

Plan

0640Hrs 1km north east of OLSZOWNICA

The past few hours have been gruelling and nerve wracking in equal measure. To avoid contact with enemy patrols and roadblocks your kampfguppe has been slowly grinding its way towards OLSZOWNICA via minor 'roads' and farm tracks. The sandy soil combined with the heavy overnight rain has created challenging travel conditions. Luckily, although several vehicles became stuck and were recovered, none have broken down. You are thankful that the men have made good use of the limited R&R time keeping their vehicles in tip top condition. Now the night rain has cleared away and the morning promises to be clear and warm with a light breeze from the NW. Although the ground conditions are damp you think the drier, warmer weather will firm up the cross-country going.

You have avoided approaching OLSZOWNICA directly from the west. Instead your unit took a detour further north and crossed the KOPRZYWIANKA River at a minor, and unguarded, crossing point several kilometres upstream.

You've been maintaining radio silence ever since your departure and in order to exercise control, your vehicle is positioned to the front of the column. Now your unit is just over a kilometre from the last known position of Krüger's unit. You signal for the column to halt. Slowly the column comes to a halt. The MG gunners on the SPW train their MG42s to cover possible firing arcs, the panzers' turrets do the same. You order the driver to turn the vehicle around and you head back to where Eric Faust's command panzer is located. As the SPW clatters past the line of AFVs you order the radio operator to send an encoded message with the single code word indicating you are in position.

As your vehicle draws level you wave to Faust, who waves back. You get out of the SPW and walk over to his panzer, your map board and notebook tucked under your arm. Faust hoists himself out of his turret, and clambers over the rear deck and drops heavily to the damp ground. Faust looks like I feel you think.

"We've been lucky Eric. All that way and not one sign of Ivan."

Eric Faust gives his grimy face a quick wipe.

“We have. How much longer will it last though Hans?”

You shrug your shoulders.

“We’re here Eric - let’s work out a quick plan before Ivan comes along!”

“What are you thinking Hans?” Faust asks.

You get out your map board.



“The last known position of Krüger’s detachment was here. I think we should expect enemy units to be positioned here and here. There is also the possibility of enemy armoured units approaching from the south west along these tracks here and here.”

Faust looks at the map and nods.

“I think we keep the main strength of our kampfggruppe away from prying eyes. We don’t want Ivan to get too good a feel for who we are and what we are. So better we use covered approaches.”

Faust nods again, then looks at you directly and asks:

“What about the “Old Man’s” intent to hold that crossing?”

“Hmmm... I think the first priority is to make contact with Krüger and assess the condition of his detachment. Once we do that then we’ll see what the tactical situation is and take it from there. Whether we bite and hold, or grab and run really depends on what Ivan has in the sector and what support, if any, Voss can arrange for us. Given the overall operational situation I’m not very confident we’ll get any support. So, if we do decide to exit we’ll use these two roads I’ve marked here, on the map. They should be easy to hold open if we have to exit. After all the “Old Man” left that call whether to hold the crossing to us.”

Faust smiles then grins.

“Sounds like a plan Hans!”

“Ok. We roll out at 0700Hrs. That gives us twenty minutes. Let’s quickly run through how we’ll do this, and then we brief our respective zugführers. We’ll break radio silence when we are ready to move out to make contact with Krüger’s unit...”

Notes

You score points for:

Exit KG "Krüger" units 1600 (NOTE: any element from KG "Krüger" that does not exit, or is destroyed, their points count as destroyed in the final AAR). However you do have a bonus of 1600 points.

Occupy BRIDGEHEAD 2000

To get these points NO Soviet unit can be allowed to be in the marked objective area by the scenario’s end.

You also get a total of 1800 points for destroying any Soviet units you contact.

Please note Soviet units score points for identifying any of KG “von Schroif” units up to a value of 1600.

So the German player has to make choices given the above scoring options.

GLOSSARY

Karacho – German slang word, often used by panzer troops which means to drive at full speed. In English and in that context the phrase would be ‘drive like crazy’.



Mission 5.2b schnelle Truppen Angriffe

Situation

11th August 1944

1940Hrs I(gep)Panzergrenadier Regt 3 Command Post;

Location ANTON, NORDPOL 23, 45, 83, 90 south of RAKOW.

In the dim light of the rural cottage, Oberstleutnant Voss, CO of your SPW Battalion, is using as a temporary Command Post, the commander of Panzer Regiment 6, Oberst Bernuth, is currently leaning over a large kitchen table. On the table is spread a large map and he is looking intently at you. He's just given you two options. Option one, is to stay at your unit's current position to refuel and re-arm. Option two, is your kampfguppe immediately continues its advance with the mission to secure the road and crossings in the vicinity of SZUMSKO/HILL 133.9.

Both you and Eric Faust, the company commander of the 6th Kompanie/II/Panzer Regiment 6 attached to your kampfguppe, have just had your questions regarding the detail of the request clarified, and you now both know exactly what is being asked of your men and machines. At the close of these discussions your brain is quickly processing the pros and cons of the courses of action that have been presented to you.

The principle that armoured vehicles going into combat must carry sufficient fuel to assure their mobility throughout a day's fighting is one that has been drilled into you. However so has the value of the element of surprise in armoured operations – keeping your enemy on the back foot, always trying to second guess your next move. Therefore to carry on, despite your unit being low on fuel and ammo with dog tired troops, will at least give you the element of surprise. You know your enemy from long years of combat on the Eastern Front. Ivan will soon adapt and react effectively to any further attacks. Being caught out in hostile country, out of fuel and ammo does not bear thinking about. Yet if we can just fully exploit the current dislocation of the enemy's plans, it may yet lead to success, you think. You swallow. Decision time...

"We'll go now Herr Oberst - continue the attack."

Bernuth allows a brief smile to play across his face.

"Excellent Herr Hauptmann! That's the spirit of the panzerwaffe! When do you think your kampfguppe can depart?"

You look at Faust.

"What you think Faust? How long will your panzers take to get back on the road?"

Faust rubs the stubble on his grimy, dust caked chin.

“We will be able to roll out as soon as we can cross level our ammo. Half an hour should be enough to complete that task.”

“Excellent. My unit is at a similar state of readiness. Herr Oberst we should be able to resume our advance within half an hour of us returning to our units – that would put our ETD at around 2010Hrs.”

Both Bernuth and Voss look pleased with this news.

Voss clears his throat.

“That’s the spirit of aggression I expect from German armoured officers. Excellent! You’ll catch the Russkies with their trousers down, no doubt eh? Now let’s get down to your orders.”

Mission

Voss pointing at the map addresses you.

“Herr von Schroif - I want your kampfguppe to continue your thrust north, as the advance guard of our divisional main effort. Along the route of the proposed advance are several small streams with crossing points, plus some vital road junctions. They are key to controlling the advance route.

These key points are marked, on the map as your objectives.

You will DESTROY any and all enemy units encountered in the AO and secure our route of advance by:

Clearing and securing (OCCUPY) the following objectives along the route of advance of enemy forces:

Angr.z SAPHIR
Angr.z DIAMANT
Angr.z OPAL
Angr.z QUARZ
Angr.z RUBIN

You will advance past LINE SCHAFKOPF and LINE SKAT as far as objective Angr.z STAHL, on the ridge line HILL 133.9/HILL 133.4, which you will occupy.

Kampfgruppe “Krüger” will be following behind you. Once you have secured Angr.z STAHL they will pass through your positions and continue the advance.

It is my intent that you attack north towards the line HILL 133.9/HILL 133.4 destroying any enemy units in the AO.” Voss looks at you directly.

“Understood Herr Hauptmann?”

“Jawohl Herr Oberstleutnant!”

Friendly Forces

“Can we expect any artillery support for this mission?”

“Good point Herr von Schroif.”

“I have arranged for a battery of Wespe SP Howitzers to be attached to your command. They will accompany your kampfguppe to provide dedicated fire support. You’ll also have fire support from our battalion’s own 120mm mortars.”

“Thank you Herr Oberstleutnant – that should help pave the way if Ivan decides to put up any resistance.”

“Herr Oberstleutnant – you mentioned that Krüger’s kampfguppe will be trailing us, and that they will pass through our positions once we seize Angr.z STAHL. Do you have timings for this?”

“The 3 Kompanie under Hauptmann Krüger can team up with the other panzer Kompanie and some Tigers from Panzer-Abteilung 501. They will be ready to move out by 1800Hrs at the latest and carry on the attack. This will allow them to move out in early evening, pass through your positions at Angr.z STAHL around 2015Hrs and advance through the night to secure the road and crossing in the vicinity of OLSZOWNICA by dawn on the 12th August. Your unit, after refuelling and re-arming would follow up this attack. As and when they secure the crossings you will pass through their lines and continue the advance east cutting the main road to OPATOW.”

“Understood Herr Oberstleutnant!” You hastily scribble some notes into your notepad.

You look at Bernuth.

“Herr Oberst – do we have access to reconnaissance – to scout our proposed attack route?”

Bernuth nods.

“We have arranged to have a small recce patrol from Pz.Aufl.Abt.3 available to scout out your approach route. They’ll be attached to your command.”

“That would be excellent Herr Oberst.”

As you take this information in you are also weighing up the pros and cons of advancing in the night with a small armoured force. Whilst it will be challenging at least it negates the main advantage the enemy may have with long line of sight for their PAK batteries. However being able to scout ahead would be an advantage you think.

“Herr von Schroif” Voss says as he claps your shoulder, “you are going to do a good job. Just get in there, secure our route of advance, and occupy that high ground at Angr.z STAHL.”

“Jawohl Herr Oberstleutnant!” You bring yourself smartly to attention and salute as Faust does likewise.



Enemy Forces

“Herr Oberstleutnant?” Faust chips in.
Voss stands back from the map on the table.

“Herr Hauptmann Faust?”

“Do we have any indication of what enemy units, strength and type, are in the AO?”

You look enquiringly at “Old Man” Voss.

Voss looks slightly uncomfortable and for a brief moment his usual calm confidence and slightly arrogant manner slips. But just as quick as it occurs, the moment passes.

“Herr Hauptmann – the combat situation is very fluid. All I have from the intelligence officer is that Ivan is on the move with armour and infantry. He’s desperate to identify the main route of our advance and stop us. He’s desperately pushing forward small advance guards, mainly company strength, consisting of tanks, motorised infantry and some towed PAK. They are most likely being tasked with either making contact with our spearhead, or reinforcing key operational and tactical points along the route of their advance. These are points most likely guarded – we estimate mostly by small infantry detachments with some PAK. However given the pace of our advance we have had no clear indication that the enemy has direct knowledge of our location or intent – at present.”

Both you and Faust nod agreement. You know from your study of the enemy’s tactical doctrine that Ivan usually sends ahead small groups of tanks and tank riders to find German points of resistance, or often the ways around them. Plus their key tactic in stopping a German armoured attack is PAK, lots of them. Interconnected and well camouflaged. There was nothing of use in this report that you could not have deduced yourself. However, given the pace of the attack they would still be struggling to co-ordinate units to oppose the German attack.

Voss continues.

"I appreciate that this is an especially dangerous mission gentlemen. You are in effect, attacking into the unknown. But of all my officers you are the team that can pull this off. I have seen what you both can achieve in combat, and you have good units."

"Herr von Schroif – Herr Faust..." Voss says as he claps your shoulder, "You are going to do a good job. Just get in there, secure our route of advance, and occupy that high ground at Angr.z STAHL."

"Jawohl Herr Oberstleutnant!" You bring yourself smartly to attention and salute as Faust does likewise.

2055Hrs 1km south east of SZUMSKO near POINT 132.8

Your drive to this location has been challenging to say the least. Not long after you left Voss' CP the heavens opened up with an impressive thunderstorm and accompanying deluge. However, whilst the torrential downpour created difficult travelling conditions for your SPW and panzers, and unpleasant conditions for the panzergrenadiers huddled in their SPW, it did help to conceal the noise of dozens of AFVs grinding their way along the road from hostile listening ears. Small mercies you thought as the rain trickled off your helmet and down the neck of your tunic...

Once again in an effort to maintain security by preventing the enemy eavesdropping into your unit's movements you've been maintaining radio silence ever since your departure. In order to maintain control of your vehicles, you have once again positioned your command SPW toward the front of the column. Somewhere ahead, hopefully, is the small armoured scout patrol led by a very young Leutnant who looked like he should still be at school. However you knew, through reputation, that Leutnant Kühn's youthful appearance belied a young veteran, who at 20 years of age had significant experience of armoured reconnaissance. The Iron Cross 1st Class ribbon on his tunic was testimony to this, as was the bronze infantry assault badge pinned to his left hand tunic pocket. After briefing Kühn on his mission - to probe ahead of your kampfguppe's route of advance and identify any potential trouble - you had arranged a rendezvous, at a small road junction a few hundred metres south of POINT 132.8, just 1km south east of the village of SZUMSKO.

You check your map. Now your unit is approaching that point. You signal for the column to halt. Slowly the column comes to a stop. You double check your folded map. Then look around you, then back to your map. The blue circle you have made on your map appears to coincide with the surrounding terrain. The MG gunner in your SPW trains the MG42 to cover possible firing arcs; you notice the panzers' turrets doing the same. Eric Faust's command panzer is close to your SPW. You motion for him to come across and join you. In the fading evening light you can make out Faust as he hoists himself out of his turret, and clambers over the rear deck and drops heavily to the ground then makes his way to the rear of your command SPW and into the back. Faust looks like I feel you think. Then you notice that the rain has stopped and the skies are beginning to clear revealing an ominous blood red

evening sky. In the cool damp air you suddenly catch an acrid smell you are all too familiar with. The combination of burning fuel, rubber, cloth and human flesh combine to create an unmistakable truly awful stench. Somewhere up ahead, and close by at that, is a burning armoured vehicle. Then you hear the faint snap, crackle and pop of ammo cooking off.

You tap the SPW driver on the shoulder and order him to drive up to a small track leading into a wood towards POINT 132.8

Eric Faust takes off his panzer 'crusher' cap and scratches his head vigorously.

"You smell the burning Eric?"

Faust nods.

"Someone has had a bad evening. You think it's the recce boys?"

"I'm not sure – but given they're the tip of the spear and so far there has been no fighting in this sector – there is a good chance it's them."

You catch a whiff of Eric's body odour. Cooped up in a tin can, sweating has created a distinctive odour. You wrinkle your nose theatrically.

"You need a wash Eric!" You grin and slap him on the shoulder. Faust makes a grimace.

"What do you think I just had? That rain was awful. I thought we were going to drown in our panzer!"

"We're at the rendezvous point. Now we just need to find Kühn and his chaps. I assume as we've not passed any wreckage that they are still alive and somewhere close by – unless that burning is them. I also wouldn't mind a look at the terrain and village ahead of us. Give us a chance to work out a quick plan. Let's go find them!"

You tap the driver's shoulder and order him to drive to the small junction. As your SPW approaches the junction you notice a small glimmer of red light as it blinks four times.

"Look! There they are – 12 o'clock; 20m; by that clump of bushes."

You order your MG gunner to reply to the signal with three flashes each with a long pause. As the SPW slowly grinds to a halt you order the radio operator to send an encoded message with the single code word indicating your current position.

At the junction, just pulled into a clump of bushes is a light SPW. It's so well camouflaged you could almost be on it before you'd see it. Standing by the gun shield is Kühn who had signalled using his field torch. Both you and Faust get out of the vehicle and walk to the small SPW. Kühn has already gotten out.

"Good evening Herr Leutnant" You offer your hand.

"It would be good to have a look at the terrain ahead. And I'd like to get eyes on these PAK positions."

"I can take you up our OP near POINT 138.2." Kühn motions at the map. "You'll get a good view of the eastern approach, and my knocked out vehicles."

Plan

You nod. "Good idea. Let's head up there." You glance at your watch.

"I don't want to spend too much time stalled here though. There is a good chance our column may have been heard approaching. It won't be long before Ivan sends someone over here to have a look and see who is driving about at night. Ok. Here is what I propose. We move quickly. It's 2100Hrs. We roll out at 2130Hrs. That gives us thirty minutes. Let's quickly scout out the approach. Run through how we'll do this; then brief our respective zugführers..."

Notes

You score points for:

Occupy

Angr.z SAPHIR 100

Angr.z DIAMANT 250

Angr.z OPAL 250

Angr.z QUARZ 250

Angr.z RUBIN 500

Angr.z STAHL 1000

Touch

LINE SCHAFKOPF 50

LINE SKAT 100

You also get a total of 1500 points for destroying any Soviet units you contact.



Mission 6.1c Himmelfahrt

Situation

0530Hrs 5 km SE of OLSZOWNICA 13th August 1944

You feel a shiver up your back. In the dank early morning mist it's cool. You are standing in the lee of your command SPW parked under a stand of tall fir trees. You look down the sandy dirt track where the rest of your kampfguppe, or at least what is left of it - panzers and SPW - are herringboned off to the side of the track under the cover of tall fir trees lining the track on either side. You have stopped for a short halt after your difficult overnight drive along rutted sandy tracks. In an effort to avoid detection from enemy recce units your kampfguppe has used small tracks and farm roads, away from the better main routes which are more likely to have enemy units on them. So far you have avoided any contact. Somewhere up ahead light SPW patrols from Aufklärungs-Abteilung 3 are scouting your route of advance in an effort to identify any enemy patrols or possible ambushes.

In the mist you can make out the shadowy forms of small groups of grenadiers and panzermen as they busy themselves around their respective vehicles - checking track tensions and redistributing ammo. You turn back and lift your water bottle up to your lips and take a long draught of the brackish liquid that passes for water. It does little to slake your thirst. Beside you, crouched down, taking long pulls on his cigarette is Faust, his red rimmed eyes staring blankly ahead. Ehrlichmann, your 2IC, is also slumped beside him, eyes closed, catching a few moments of rare sleep.

This brief moment of inaction has been a godsend, giving you time to collect your thoughts. You realise that since you left KIELCE on the 10th August, over two days ago, the engines of the vehicles and the barrels of the guns have been constantly warm through near constant combat and movement. The unrelenting nature of the operation is now taking its toll, physical and mentally, on both men and machines. You wipe a dirty hand over your weary face...

Your thoughts turn to yesterday afternoon, after the successful but hard fought action near OLSZOWNICA, where your commander, Oberstleutnant Voss 'The Old Man', had slapped you on your dusty back - congratulating you and your command on a job well done - even dishing out cigarettes. Now that should have made me immediately suspicious you think! He's never done that. Off course "The Old Man" was buttering you up. Not soon after both you and Faust were looking at Voss's map as he outlined his next "tip of the spear" job for your command.

"I know your chaps are tired. After this final mission I promise that I'll pull your chaps out of the line to rest and refit. But my dear fellows - for now we've got Ivan on the hop! Your magnificent efforts here today - rescuing Herr Krüger and his unit from the mess they got themselves into - were inspired. I guess he'll have to nurse his 'Halsschmerzen' for a while

longer eh? Still you've created an opportunity! With Ivan on the back foot we need to capitalise on that. Now!"

Voss looks intently at you and carries on, his voice animated.

"You know as well as I do that the key strength of our panzer force – our SPW, grenadiers and panzers - lies in unexpected, concentrated and determined attack; aggressive leadership and daring operations eh?"

Both you and Faust feign agreement. Given the state of your exhausted and worn out unit there's little left in the tank for determined and aggressive you think. What's the old bugger going to have us do now you think...?

Then Voss starts to outline the mission. It soon becomes very apparent that Kampfgruppe "von Schroif" is to push on deep, 10km or more, into "no-mans" land and seize another set of bridges over another bloody river so the division can continue its attack.

After Voss had outlined the mission Faust asked – "What about Ivan – does he have any forces in that sector?"

Voss shook his head – "No. However we are getting information from the radio intercept unit that something is up. They've been picking an exchange of test signals at regular hourly intervals from what are assessed to be elements of the 69th Mechanised Brigade and 64th Tank Brigade both subordinate to the 3rd Guards Tank Army. From early intercepts it appears that this unit is planning a local attack to seize these same bridges. You chaps just need to beat them to it..."

On hearing Voss outline the mission you thought not another 'Himmelfahrt' mission – 'journey to heaven' - or in other words a suicide mission. A drive in the dark, along shit roads, into enemy territory, straight into an unknown tactical situation with the possibility of the enemy attacking hard across the route of advance...

"HERR HAUPTMANN!" You snap out of your reverie. Slightly dazed you try to focus and look around for the voice. Faust is looking up at you an amused smile on his face.

"You OK Hans? I thought we'd lost you!"

You nod, then rub your hands across your dirt streaked face. "I was thinking about this mission." You realise you are still clutching your water bottle. You reach around and place it back on your belt, then reach for your map board balanced on the front fender of your track. Once more, as if you have not looked at this map many times before, you re-check your current situation. Faust takes one last long drag on his cigarette, flicks the butt into the dust then slowly stands up, exaggerating the stiffness of his muscles. "I'm getting too old for

this shit!" he exclaims. At that moment Ehrlichmann who has awoken groggily staggers up to his feet and stretches. He looks exhausted.

Faust yawns. "So, Hans? You thinking about this 'himmelfahrt' mission?" He stretches out his back, groaning.

You nod your head. "I can't help shake of the feeling it's a one way ticket Paul. We're attacking into a sector which in a few hours' time will, in all likelihood be teeming with Russkies and their bloody T-34s!"

Faust shakes his head – "We've got this far Hans – you've made some good tactical decisions and shown strong leadership. We'll get through this. In any case my panzers will look after your Landsers and their tin crates!"

You laugh, but it sounds hollow.

"I hope you are right. Very well. Now let's work out our next course of action."

Mission

0535Hrs 5 km SE of OLSZOWNICA 13th August 1944

0535Hrs 5 km SE of OLSZOWNICA 13th August 1944

You lift your map out of the wooden map board and spread it flat on the bonnet of the SPW. You check your watch. Nearly time for the orders group to convene. As if on cue a young officer in the grey uniform of the armoured recce troops approaches your small group and salutes. It's Oberleutnant Fuchs, the company commander of the armoured recce unit, equipped with light SPW, from Aufklärungs-Abteilung 3 (AA3) which has been attached to your command.

"Good morning Herr Oberleutnant Fuchs – how are your men?"

"I just received a radio report from them less than five minutes ago – so far no observed enemy activity Herr Hauptmann."

You nod – "Good. I'll be asking you for a full report during my situation briefing Herr Fuchs."

Fuchs nods – "Jawohl Herr Hauptmann!"

"OK Meine Herren gather round and I'll outline the situation!" You place your finger on the map, ready to start to trace your route as you brief your officers. They crane forward to see the map. Faust rests his head against the driver's open visor block and unfolds his own map from its map case. You begin your briefing.

You look at the faces of your senior officers. "That was damn fine work at OLSZOWNICA men. It's that zest for attack and boldness, linked to lightning-fast decision-making and great flexibility that distinguish the panzer grenadier."

Noting the sour expression on Faust's face you add with a grin "Oh and it goes without saying we couldn't have done it without the steadfast co-operation and assistance of our panzer chums!"

Faust grins back. "Good of you to notice our efforts Herr Hauptmann!" Everyone laughs. You continue your briefing.

"After this engagement we were once more tasked with taking the lead and to push SE along this road OLSZOWNICA – BARANOW SANDOMIERSKI – to seize these bridges in and around BUKOWA/BUDY/WIAZOWNICA KOLONIA/WOLA WISNIOWSKA. We're now at this location 5km West of BUKOWA."

You look at Oberleutnant Fuchs – "Herr Oberleutnant perhaps you could update us on the news from our light SPW recce friends as to the situation ahead?"

"Jawohl Herr Hauptmann!" Fuchs quickly glances at his notebook, and starts to indicate on the map as he talks.

"I have sent two patrols on ahead – both keeping to farm tracks away from the main routes as instructed. One patrol has been tasked with scouting the northern approaches along this route here leading from OLSZOWNICA/BUKOWA/BARANOW SANDOMIERSKI. They are three kilometres from the outskirts of BUKOWA. The other patrol has been tasked with scouting out the southern approaches. They have been following the route from OLSZOWNICA/WIAZOWNICA MALA/WIAZOWNICA KOLONIA/WOLA WISNIOWSKA keeping to the north side of the river. They are currently two kilometres west of WIAZOWNICA MALA. To date they have not reported any significant enemy activity along their respective routes."

You nod briefly, and think you can't believe your luck that your plan appears to have worked!

"Thank you Herr Oberleutnant. It appears Meine Herren that the plan to avoid using the main routes, instead keeping to minor tracks has meant we have, to date escaped detection by the enemy's forces."

You look up to check your men are following the brief. They are all attentive, so you continue.

"Now onto our mission – as you know we are tasked with securing and occupying the following objectives:

ANGR. Z BLAU

ANGR. Z ROT

ANGR. Z GELB

ANGR. Z ORANGE

Friendly Forces

You look around your commanders. "Meine Herren - our main concern at the moment is our current supply situation. We have just enough fuel and ammo to continue attacking. Thereafter the situation becomes tenuous. I was informed that as and when Krüger could reorganise that they would link up and support our attack on these objectives."

Ehrlichmann, your 2IC interrupts. "Herr Hauptmann have we had any confirmation as to KG Krüger's current strength, and where and when they will arrive?"

"I have had no contact with "Bussard Führer" (NOTE: Krüger's call sign) nor any up to date information regarding their strength from Battalion. As you know KG Krüger consists of our 3rd SPW Kompanie along with the 7th Panzer Kompanie. They also have several Stug from 5th Kompanie attached. Like us they have been attrited by our recent operations, but are classed as capable of offensive action. However, we know they took heavy casualties in their last actions. I fully expect they will be combat effective enough to support us as and when they arrive. As I have said we don't know when exactly they will be arriving. My best guess is around 0930Hrs, most likely later. They will follow our march route here..."

You indicate on the map with a grimy finger "...this track from OLSZOWNICA to BUKOWA."

You look at your men. "That's the situation for now. In the meantime we continue with our advance to contact. We'll reappraise the situation when we get to the vicinity of HILL 205.9, 500m SW of BUKOWA our ETA will be 0745Hrs. We'll maintain the current order of march. Understood?"

Both panzergrenadier and panzer commanders nod in agreement.

"Right let's complete our re-organisation. We move out at 0545Hrs!"

Enemy Forces

0740Hrs vicinity of HILL 205.9, 500m SW of BUKOWA; 9km SE of OLSZOWNICA 13th August 1944

0740Hrs vicinity of HILL 205.9, 500m SW of BUKOWA; 9km SE of OLSZOWNICA 13th August 1944

You are slumped on the hard seat of your command SPW, braced against piles of personal baggage and ammo boxes, eyes closed but not sleeping. You mull over your mission and the latest reports filtering down from battalion and via AA3 of enemy AFV activity NE, E and SE of your location. Far enough away to not be an immediate threat; close enough to be concerning. The SPW vibrates and rolls as it makes its way over the uneven dusty surface of the track. Despite the shade from the fir trees that line the track it's already getting hot.

The vehicle suddenly stops with a jolt.

You open your eyes. In the front cab you can make out the driver, face pressed up against the open visor, a pair of round goggles protecting his eyes. Next to you, facing across you on

your left the radio operator is manning the radio – headphones fully clamped down. The gritty feeling in your eyes and your aching muscles tell you that you’ve not slept in nearly three days. You look up at the gunner manning the MG42.

“What’s up?”

The gunner, his face streaked with dirt and sweat, blood shot rimmed eyes encased by round goggles, looks down at you.

“We have just reached our checkpoint near HILL 205.9 Herr Hauptmann!”

You nod your head and clumsily push yourself up from the seat. Through the haze of dust, thrown up by the tracks of the armoured vehicles, you can make out the sandy track. Dimly through this haze you can make out a low rise topped by trees – HILL 205.9. You are about to grab your headphones and key the MIC to speak to the zug leading the column when you hear the radio operator’s main set hums and hisses into life and through the hiss and crackle the sound of Morse code - an incoming ENIGMA transmission. The radio operator is scribbling the numbers down.

For a message to come via ENIGMA means it contains detailed intelligence, not suitable for voice broadcast via radio, from a higher HQ – battalion, maybe even the regiment. You straighten up and watch the operator. Once he has the message written down he then opens up the ENIGMA machine and starts to key in the numbers. His assistant notes the decoded message from the lights lighting up on the unit. For you, waiting for this valuable information, it seems like an age.

Rather than wait you decide to call Ehrlichmann, Kerscher and Faust and have them meet you at your SPW to discuss the kampffgruppe’s next move – no doubt the in-coming transmission will heavily influence what that move is. Not long after you make contact with them the radio operator’s assistant hands you the message, you reach for it and start to scan the text written neatly on the paper:

“MAUS FÜHRER: ENY THIRD GUARDS TANK ARMY ATTACK TO SEIZE HVY BRIDGES IN YOUR SECTOR IMMINENT ETA 0800HRS. TWO SPEARHEADS COMPANY PLUS STRENGTH #1 ADV WEST TO BUKOWA PZ AND INF. #2 ADV NORTHEAST TO WOLA SPG AND INF. MAUS BLOCK ENY ATTACK UNTIL LINK UP WITH BUSSARD FÜHRER ETA 0900HRS. ATTACK TO SEIZE OBJ AS ORDERED 13 AUG; SPERBER FÜHRER”

An attack by a Soviet tank army appears to be heading your way and due in your sector in less than ½ hour. With two spearheads each at around a reinforced company – one headed for your rear via the village of BUKOWA; the other heading straight for WOLA WISNIOWSKA. You quickly calculate what strength this means - assuming each company at full strength that would mean something like 15-24 tanks and SPGs with infantry attacking into this sector.

What is not clear is whether the Soviets know that your unit is in this sector? Given the lack of any enemy recce units during your approach it's likely they have not realised that German armoured forces are in this sector.

You think this could be to your advantage, offering the chance to ambush the attacking Soviet units. With Krüger's kampfgruppe (Call sign BUSSARD) due in your sector by 0900Hrs there was a good chance that united you could hold off Ivan's attack, and once it was blunted continue your own attack to seize the bridges.

Plan

0745Hrs vicinity of HILL 205.9, 500m SW of BUKOWA; 9km SE of OLSZOWNICA 13th August 1944

As the sun has risen it's burned off the damp early morning mist. The clear blue skies and rapidly warming temperatures indicate another hot day in store. You, Ehrlichmann, Kerscher and Faust are standing by Faust's command panzer, which is parked next to your command SPW, just off the sandy track near some farm buildings. A map is spread out on the fender of your SPW.

You look at your officers.

"We've not got much time Meine Herren! Intelligence from battalion states that Ivan is attacking westwards with a view to seizing the heavy bridges in this sector. We have been ordered to hold them in this sector until we link up with Krüger's kampfgruppe; then we are to continue our attack to seize our objectives as per our orders."

Faust looks at you – "Have you had any news from KG Krüger as to when they'll be with us?"

You shake your head. "As per our earlier brief their ETA is 0900Hrs – I've still had no confirmation as to their exact time in this sector, nor as to their strength."



You check your watch – 0800Hrs.

At that moment the radio operator in your command SPW leans over the side of the vehicle and shouts out – “HERR HAUPTMANN! MESSAGE FROM “HEINRICH”! ENEMY VEHICLE ACTIVITY HEARD APPROX. 1KM EAST OF BUKOWA!”

You turn around – “CONFIRM MESSAGE RECEIVED – TELL “HEINRICH” TO OBSERVE BUT NOT TO ENGAGE!”

You then turn back to address your senior officers – their grim faces tell of what is in store.

“RIGHT! It’s on. We’ll monitor Ivan’s approach via “Heinrich” - meanwhile this is what we’ll do...”

Notes

German player secures victory by:

Occupy

ANGR. Z BLAU 600

ANGR. Z ROT 300

ANGR. Z GELB 1500

ANGR. Z ORANGE 2000

Destroying enemy units up to 6800 points

Minimise own losses whilst maximising terrain gains.

This is the last action of the campaign – focus on the task!

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Himmelfahrt – This is a public holiday in Germany and celebrates the Ascension of Christ into heaven forty days after Easter. It literally means ‘heaven journey’ and used in this context it implies this is a suicide mission.



Mission 6.1d Igelstellung

Situation

1930Hrs WOLA WIŚNIEWSKA 10km SE of
OLSZOWNICA 12th August 1944

You feel the sweat trickle down the small of your back. Even in the late evening sun it's still hot. You are standing in the shade of your command SPW parked by some old houses that also appear to contain shops. You lift your water bottle up to your lips and take a long draught of the warm brackish liquid that passes for water. It does little to slake your thirst. Beside you, crouched down, taking long pulls on his cigarette is Faust. Ehrlichmann, your 2IC is also sitting beside him. His eyes closed, catching a few moments of sleep.

This rare moment of peace has been a godsend, giving you time to collect your thoughts. You place your water bottle back on your belt, then reach for your map board balanced on the front fender of your track. Once more, as if you have not looked at this map many times before, you re-check your current situation.

Your kampfguppe is now deep in, what at best can be described as no-man's land, and at worse - surrounded by enemy forces. The fluidity and pace of the fighting has left you unclear as to where the enemy is or their intentions. You hope the enemy is in the same position!

You look at your watch – 1930Hrs – then glance down at Faust smoking his cigarette.

“Back to work men! It's time for the orders group!” Faust looks up. He takes another long drag on his cigarette, then slowly stands up, exaggerating the stiffness of his muscles. “I'm getting too old for this shit!” he exclaims. Ehrlichmann staggers up to his feet and stretches.

At the moment you hear the throaty popping sound of an SPW straining its way up the hill to the village. It soon appears in the square. Your surviving panzergrenadier zug leaders dismount from the vehicle. Several panzer commanders are also in the mix. They approach your SPW, stop and salute. As you look at their dust and powder streaked faces you realise just how many of the old familiar faces are missing.

You lift your map out of the wooden map board and spread it flat on the bonnet of the SPW.

“OK men gather round and I'll outline the situation!” You start to trace your finger on the map as you begin your briefing. Your men crane forward to see the map. Faust rests his head against the drivers open visor block and unfolds his own map from its map case. You begin your briefing.

“At dawn this morning, after Kampfgruppe Krüger passed through our lines north of SUMSKO - vicinity HILL 133.4 - they ran into some heavy resistance from an enemy PAK ambush at this point here - a few kilometres NE of OLSZOWNICA - and took a bit of a beating. After an urgent request from “Bussard Führer” (SCENARIO NOTE – this is Krüger's

call sign) we moved to support KG Krüger and outflanked the PAK battery and very quickly, with no casualties, overran them.”

You look up at the faces of your men. “That was damn fine work men. It’s that zest for attack and boldness, linked to lightning-fast decision-making and great flexibility that distinguish the panzer grenadier.” Noting the expression on Faust’s face you add with a grin “Oh and it goes without saying we couldn’t have done it without the steadfast co-operation and assistance of our panzer chums!”

Faust grin’s back. “Good of you to notice our efforts Herr Hauptmann!” Everyone laughs. You continue your briefing.

“Continuing - after this engagement we did hasty re-supply which took us up to around 70% of our normal ammo loadouts, and a bit extra on fuel. As you know we were once more tasked with taking the lead. We pushed SE along this road OLSZOWNICA – BARANOW SANDOMIERSKI, meeting very little in the way of opposition, save a few stragglers or patrols. We’ve seized control of our objectives - these three key bridges, and this village which overlooks this sector.”

You look up to check your men are following the brief. They are all attentive, so you continue.

“Currently we have taken up 'hedgehog' defensive positions around these objectives. These objectives are crucial - they are the only crossing points over these water features in this sector. Our holding them limits the enemy’s possible attack routes, forcing them into choke points at these crossing points. To give us warning of any possible enemy incursions, armoured elements from AA3 are screening our NE flank in the vicinity of BUKOWA. We are now awaiting KG Krüger to link up with us in this sector and help to consolidate our gains.”

You look up. “Questions?”

Faust clears his throat. “When is KG Krüger due to arrive in our sector?”

“Last communication I had from battalion was they are still doing a re-organisation after their bruising PAK encounter. Realistically I don’t expect them to arrive in this sector until dawn tomorrow.”

Faust nods. “It seems to me that Ivan is not going to sit around and let us stay put awaiting reinforcements – you think they’ll attack?”

“Good question. From what we can gather the speed of our attack has caught them off guard. They’re not too sure where exactly our kampfguppe is – this intel is from radio intercepts. I’m sure it won’t take them long to work out, then we can expect company. Battalion, via the recce guys from AA3, will keep us updated regarding any enemy activity threatening our sector.”

Faust nods. “Is it worth us sending out our own patrols in the meantime?”

You nod – “Yes, good idea. We’ll arrange to establish some mobile outposts as a screen against any enemy infiltrators.”

Mission

“Now onto our mission - Battalion insist we hold our current positions until we link up with KG Krüger. In that regard we are tasked with securing and occupying the following objectives:

ANGR. Z BLAU
ANGR. Z ROT
ANGR. Z GELB
ANGR. Z ORANGE

It is the intent of Battalion that we deny the enemy these crossing points, thereby delaying any possible advance by enemy armoured units, until midday on the 13th.”



Friendly Forces

You look around your commanders. “Meine Herren - our main concern at the moment is our current supply situation. We have enough fuel and ammo to hold our ground against any attacks - for up to 24 hours. Thereafter the situation becomes tenuous, although I fully expect KG Krüger to have linked up with us long before then...”

Ehrlichmann, your 2IC interrupts. “Herr Hauptmann have we had any confirmation as to KG Krüger’s current strength, and where and when they will arrive?”

“I have had no contact with “Bussard Führer” or any up to date information regarding their strength from Battalion. As you know KG Krüger consists of our 3rd SPW Kompanie along with the 7th Panzer Kompanie. They also have several Stug attached. Like us they have been attrited by our recent operations, but are classed as capable of offensive action. However, we know they took heavy casualties when ambushed. I still expect they are strong enough to support us as and when they arrive. As I have said we don’t know when exactly they will be arriving. My best guess is around dawn tomorrow, maybe later. Their most likely route of approach will be heading SE along this route here...”

You indicate on the map with a grimy finger “...the road from OLSZOWNICA to BUKOWA.”

You look at your men. “That’s the situation for now. We remain in our hedgehog positions until “Bussard Führer” makes contact to inform of his kampfguppe’s ETA. For now I want each SPW zug to push out a patrol EAST/SOUTH EAST to help give us advance warning of any moves by Ivan. Other than that we sit tight. Understood?”

Both panzergrenadier and panzer commanders nod in agreement.

“Ok – you can return to your units.”

As one the soldiers salute then head off. Some embark on the SPW which brought them here. Its engine splutters and pops into life. The vehicle lurches forward then makes its way out of the village square in a small cloud of dust.

You turn to Faust and Ehrlichmann.

“I’ve had a radio message from “Old man Voss” – he’s promised that he’ll pull us out of the line to rest and refit if we can just hang on to the river crossings.”

You note the momentary flash of relief pass across the faces of both men.

“However, to be pulled out of the line we have to survive this coming action. I want it to be our last action – not our final one.”

Both men nod and murmur their understanding.

“If Ivan hits us hard then I doubt we’ll be able to hold all these objectives. We’re spread too thin with too little. I’m relying on Ivan not making a concerted effort to attack us, and Krüger arriving here in time to support us. Liaise with the units from AA3 – their call-sign is “Heinrich” - at BUKOWA regarding any enemy activity from that sector.”

Enemy Forces

0530Hrs WOLA WIŚNIEWSKA 10km SE of OLSZOWNICA 13th August 1944

You are huddled on the hard seat of your command SPW, eyes closed but not sleeping. You open your eyes. In the front cab you can make out the driver fast asleep. Next to you, on your left the radio operator is manning the radio – headphones fully clamped down. You are chilled by the damp mist rising from the small river below the village. You’ve not slept much. Overnight there have been reports of the noise of enemy AFV activity NE, E and SE of your location. Far enough away to not be an immediate threat; close enough to be concerning.

Just then you hear the radio crackle and hiss into life and through the hiss and crackle the sound of Morse code - an incoming ENIGMA transmission. The radio operator is scribbling the numbers down. For a message to come via ENIGMA means it contains detailed intelligence not suitable for voice broadcast via radio. You straighten up and watch the operator. Once he has the message written down he then opens up the ENIGMA machine and starts to key in the numbers. His assistant notes the decoded message from the lights

lighting up on the unit. For you, waiting for this valuable information, it seems like an age. After a few minutes the assistant hands you the message, you reach for it and start to scan the text written neatly on the paper:

“MAUS FÜHRER: ENY THIRD GUARDS TANK ARMY ATTACK TO SEIZE HVY BRIDGES IN YOUR SECTOR IMMINENT ETA 0800Hrs. TWO SPEARHEADS COMPANY PLUS STRENGTH #1 ADV WEST TO BUKOWA PZ AND INF. #2 ADV NORTHEAST TO WOLA SPG AND INF. MAUS HOLD CURRENT POS UNTIL LINK UP WITH BUSSARD FÜHRER ETA 0830HRS 13 AUG”

Your hopes that the Soviets will hold off any offensive action are dashed by that message. An attack by a Soviet tank army appears to be heading your way and due in your sector in less than 2½ hours. With two spearheads each at around a reinforced company – one headed for your rear via the village of BUKOW; the other heading straight for your main position in WOLA WIŚNIEWSKA. You quickly calculate what strength this means - assuming each company at full strength that would mean something like 15-24 tanks and SPGs with infantry attacking into this sector.

The attack against BUKOWA is concerning as if successful it could cut-off both your line of retreat and supplies you think. What is not clear is whether the Soviets know that your unit currently holds these bridges or the village. Given the lack of any enemy recce units probing your positions it's likely they have not realised that the bridges and village are currently held by German forces.

You think this could be to your advantage offering the chance to ambush the attacking Soviet units. With Krüger's kampfgruppe (Call sign BUSSARD) due in your sector by 0830Hrs there was a good chance that united you could hold off Ivan's attack. You decide to alert your command to “stand to”. You pick up the radio MIC and start to organise your command...



Plan

0730Hrs WOLA WIŚNIEWSKA 10km SE of OLSZOWNICA 13th August 1944

As the sun has risen it's burned off the damp early morning mist. The clear blue skies and rapidly warming temperatures indicate another hot day in store. You, Ehrlichmann and Faust are standing by Faust's command panzer, which is parked next to your command SPW, just off the village square. A map is spread out on a table which has been moved from one of the houses close by. You've all been studying the map in detail working out options for stemming the coming Soviet attack.

"Remember this is our last action – then we'll be pulled out of this hell-hole and back for a rest and re-fit. We've certainly earned it!"

You look up into the faces of the two officers, lined and haggard from the unrelenting stress of continual combat. They grin back. Whatever state the unit is in at least our morale is still high you think.

You look at Faust.

"How do you plan on combating Ivan's armour old pal?"

Faust looks at you quizzically, most likely slightly taken aback by the informal tone of your question. Then just as quickly grins back.

"Well, we need to be mindful as to how we halt Ivan's panzers. Ideally we don't want to attack them head on. His T-34s will shoot up my 'mess tin' armoured panzers in short order. No, we avoid them until we can move into favourable firing positions, and surprise them from the flank or rear. That'll sort the bastards out!"

You laugh.

"Very good! My grenadiers are relying on your panzers to deal with Ivan's armour. You knock them out we'll deal with their infantry. We all need to ensure that our first and main concern is to ensure we hold these heavy bridges and prevent Ivan from capturing them until we can hook up with Krüger's group."

Faust looks at you – "Have you had any news from KG Krüger as to when they'll be with us?"

You shake your head. "Not as yet."

You check your watch – 0759Hrs.

"We can only assume that they are on track to arrive in our sector at 0830Hrs - that's in half an hour. So for now we wait and see. I'm sure Ivan will not keep us waiting!"

At that moment the radio operator in your command SPW leans over the side of the vehicle and shouts out – “HERR HAUPTMANN! MESSAGE FROM “HEINRICH”! ENEMY VEHICLE ACTIVITY HEARD APPROX. 1KM EAST OF BUKOWA!”

You turn around – “CONFIRM MESSAGE RECEIVED – TELL “HEINRICH” TO OBSERVE BUT NOT TO ENGAGE!”

You then turn back to address the stony faces of your junior commanders.

“RIGHT! It’s on. We’ll monitor Ivan’s approach via “Heinrich” - meanwhile this is what we’ll do...”

Notes

German player secures victory by:

Occupy

ANGR. Z BLAU 300 points

ANGR. Z ROT 150 points

ANGR. Z GELB 750 points

ANGR. Z ORANGE 1000 points

Destroying Soviet units 1850 points.

Minimise own losses whilst maximising terrain gains.

This is the last action of the campaign – focus on the task!

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Igelstellung – Hedgehog position

Designer Notes

Introduction

The genesis for this campaign came about after playing SeinfeldRules' scenario "Assault Position". I played it several times and really enjoyed the experience. I enjoyed the fact it focussed around a SPW unit, around company size. It gave me the idea to create a small campaign based around this type of unit – at the company level on a variety of maps. SeinfeldRules has graciously given me permission to use that scenario in this campaign.

About the Campaign

This campaign covers a short and sustained period of combat operations taking place over a period of less than 72 hours, in Poland, on the Eastern Front in early August 1944. Although fictional it is heavily based on actual events.

In the campaign you take the role of 1 Kompanie Commander Hauptmann Hans von Schroif, of the 3rd Panzer Division's I(gep)/PzGrn Rgt 3 equipped with half-track carriers (SPW), who has been tasked with commanding a small kampfguppe, to which has been attached the 6 Kompanie (Panzer IVs) under the command of Hauptmann Eric Faust. You have a sister kampfguppe – commanded by Hauptmann Krüger – with roughly the same make-up, SPW and PzIVs. Krüger is a glory hunter with a desire for a Knights Cross. Correspondingly his unit is very aggressive. Other elements from Division will be attached given the situation – mostly recce units from Aufklärungs-Abteilung 3 (AA3).

Reinforcements; Resupply and Refit

It is worth noting that the player receives no reinforcements and little in the way of refit in the 72 hour period. Therefore the player has to use their forces wisely, especially your panzergrenadiers. Keep your casualties as low as you can for as long as you can. The key to success is close co-operation between your SPW, panzergrenadiers and panzers.

Key characters, including platoon leaders, are all named individually and are tracked throughout the campaign. You'll notice, as casualties mount that key names slowly start to disappear. Don't get killed yourself though early on as it may lead to you ending the campaign, like your life, prematurely.

Historical Background

The campaign is based around the 3rd Panzer Division's attempts to reduce the bridgehead of the 1st Ukrainain Front of Field Marshal Koniev, which had crossed the Vistula along 30km of front, forming the Baranow bridgehead. The right wing of the Russian field-army group was able to expand its militarily decisive bridgehead by 4th August to a depth of 50km and a width of 50km. This bridgehead potentially provided a jumping off point for a full scale attack at the heart of Germany- by means of armour forces.

Under cover of darkness the 3rd Panzer Division "Berliner Bärendivision" (Bear division from Berlin), under the command of Generalleutnant Wilhelm Philipps, detrained at Kielce in southern Poland and was assigned to General der Panzertruppen Breith's III Panzer-Korps.

The III Panzer-Korps's order for the attack arrived at the division command post shortly after midnight on the 11th August 1944 - "The III Panzer-Korps eliminates the enemy that has broken across the Vistula. The 19.Panzer Division (right) advances along the Vistula in the direction of Baranow and takes the crossing point. The 3.Panzer Division (left) covers the flank, advancing simultaneously into the deep flank of the enemy, thus prevents further enemy attacks to the north..."

Area of Operations

Terrain: The terrain in your designated Area of Operations (AO) is hilly, covered with fields planted with grain, potatoes, and beets, interspersed with patches of dense forest. The road network is sparse consisting mainly of narrow sandy tracks. Numerous streams and rivers cut across the proposed line of advance. These crossing points will be both tactically and operationally significant in the coming operation.

Weather: The current overcast damp weather is expected to clear up becoming sunny, warm and dry by mid-day on the 11th August. However it is then expected to deteriorate overnight on the 11th with heavy downpours of rain. The 12th August should see the weather improving, although it'll still be overcast with light winds and cool.

Ground Conditions: Initial ground conditions are expected to be damp. This increases the risk for tracked vehicles becoming bogged during off-road movement. The drier weather on the 11th should see this improve. However the forecasted heavy rain on the night of the 11th will mean damp ground conditions once again by dawn on the 12th August. We have limited panzer and vehicle recovery capability. So to maintain our attack tempo, and reduce the risk of tracked vehicles becoming stuck, it's important we make maximum use of the available road network.

The hours of sunrise and sunset are 0445 and 1930, respectively.

Mission

Your key mission is to support the division's main effort to advance north, then east cutting the enemies main supply and escape route. As part of this overall mission, you or elements from your kampfruppe have been tasked with breaking through the enemy defences, in order to seize BONDARISKI and secure a jump-off point (wooded lot east of OSINNIK) for the attack at 1100Hrs on the CZARNA RIVER crossings, vicinity RAKOW, which will be seized by a coup de main. Securing this crossing is vital to ensure the main body of the division can continue the advance north.

References

"The Battle for L'Vov July 1944" The Soviet General Staff Study trnls by David M. Glantz and Harold S. Orenstein

"Armoured bears Vol 2" by Veterans of 3rd Panzer Division

"Fire Brigades: The Panzer Divisions 1943-1945" by Kamen Nevenkin

3rd Panzer Division History

The 3. Panzer Division (Known as the Berlin Bear division – the bear features on the city coat of arms) was formed on 15 October 1935 at Wünsdorf. On 20 September 1936 the men from the 1st and 2nd Battalions of Panzer Regiment 6 were asked if they wanted to volunteer for a foreign assignment, almost all of them agreed and were transferred to Spain forming the Gruppe Imker of the Condor Legion.

It took part in the occupation of the Sudetenland area of Czechoslovakia in October 1938 and later fought in Poland and in France. It lost several units to the forming 5. Leichte Division in January 1941 and in March received replacement units from other divisions.

It fought on the central sector of the Eastern front before being transferred to the southern sector in March 1942, taking part in the drive into the Caucasus. It later fought at Kharkov, the Dnieper and then withdrawing through the Ukraine and into Poland before being transferred to Hungary. It fought in Hungary until April 1945 when it was transferred to Austria where it later surrendered to the US Army.

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Any subsequent errors, omissions and weirdness are entirely my fault!