

## SCENARIOS &amp; VARIANTS

# FIREFIGHT ALONE

## A System for Solitaire Play

by Robert A. Kunz

Two scenario and variant articles in one issue of *MOVES!* Quick, Martha; the Flit! Actually, staff readers have indicated that this article is knowledgeably written and has redeeming social value. I'm not qualified to analyze *FireFight* any more (my tiny brain completely erased the rules in favor of 86 more recent titles). In the minds of others, however, *FireFight* has not been supplanted (*Mech War 2* being a trifle elephantine). So those loyal to our one and only 'contract' game — enjoy. —RAS

"To fight and win the first battle of the next war."<sup>1</sup> That is the stated objective of the U.S. Army. *Firefight*<sup>2</sup> is one of the tools used by the Army to train company level leaders to "win the first battle." It is designed to challenge both the military and non-military gamers in the proper use of small unit tactics, maneuver techniques, terrain, and suppressive fire.<sup>3</sup> It does these things well, but it has one minor drawback: it requires a player for the Soviet side who not only knows the rules of play, but also has an understanding of Soviet tactics and has experience in interfacing these tactics with the game's mechanics. A player with these qualifications is not always available. This article offers a solution to this problem by describing a solitaire version of *Firefight*.

The U.S. commander in *Firefight* faces a Soviet force that routinely uses standardized organizations, formations, and tactics. Because of this standardization, it is possible to develop a solitaire game that accurately simulates Soviet tactical doctrine. The following scenarios and rules have been developed using the Soviet tactics described in current U.S. Army publications.<sup>4</sup>

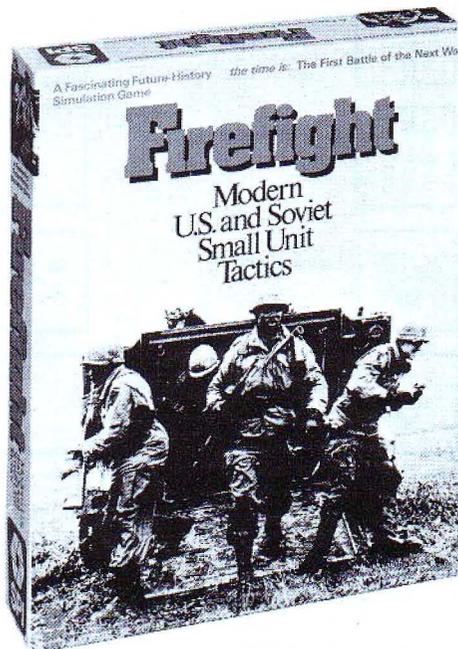
First, it may be helpful to review Soviet small unit tactics. The *Firefight* Supplement gives a general description of Soviet doctrine, as well as the organization of the Soviet units. Therefore, the following discussion is directed specifically toward Soviet platoon, company, and battalion level tactics with emphasis on formations and fire support as they relate to *Firefight* scenarios.

### Soviet Offensive Tactics

The goal of the Soviet attack is to push through weakly held areas and disrupt the enemy rear, rather than to seize enemy defensive positions and key terrain. Strongly held enemy defensive positions are freely bypassed and left for following units to mop up.

The Soviets do not normally use fire and movement, but continuously advance by firing from short halts. Heavy losses are accepted if the advance can be sustained.

The Soviets believe the meeting engagement will be the most common form of combat on the modern battlefield. It will normally follow and advance to contact with initial actions carried out by the reconnaissance elements. The Soviet battalion does not have an organic recon platoon, so the recon elements come from either the regimental recon company or from designated platoons of the motorized rifle companies. In any case, the recon vehicles move as pairs about 100 meters apart. The pair operates about 1000 meters ahead of the lead company and probes for unguarded routes.



The Soviet battalion will maneuver and conduct probing attacks to find gaps or an exposed flank in any defensive line it encounters. It will then conduct a hasty attack to exploit the weak point. If the attacking force is halted, it will form a hasty defense and wait for following units to continue the advance. A three-to-one superiority is considered necessary to conduct a sustained offensive, and if possible forces are massed to achieve a six-to-one superiority.<sup>5</sup>

The Soviet motorized rifle battalion conducts a hasty attack on a 1500 meter front with two companies on line and one com-

pany following 1000 to 2000 meters to the rear. Alternatively, the battalion could employ three companies on line. Each reinforced motorized rifle company is deployed with a platoon of four tanks on line on a 500 meter front with ten BMP's on line, following 300 meters behind, as illustrated in **Figure 1**. Naturally, these distances may vary somewhat, depending on the situation, but they tend to be more standardized than in U.S. units.

The Soviet tank battalion normally conducts a hasty attack with three companies on line on a 2000 meter front. Each tank company is deployed on line as shown in **Figure 2**. A battalion conducting a hasty attack will normally be supported by three artillery batteries of on-call fires.

If the hasty attack cannot overcome the enemy resistance, the Soviets then plan a deliberate attack. The goal of the deliberate attack is to break through the enemy's forward defense to allow exploitation forces to pass through. The breakthrough attack is characterized by narrower attack frontages and extensive artillery support.

Tank units are normally used in the deliberate attack for both the breakthrough and the exploitation force. A tank battalion conducts a breakthrough attack with two tank companies abreast, followed by a motorized rifle company 400 meters to the rear, and a third tank company 400 meters further to the rear. The lead tank companies are normally deployed with two platoons on line and a third platoon 200 meters to the rear (**Figure 3**).

Artillery is essential to the success of the breakthrough attack. A first echelon battalion will have six to nine artillery batteries in support. These batteries fire a concentrated preparation lasting from 30 minutes to an hour. The preparatory fires are intended to destroy enemy forces in immediate contact and neutralize enemy supporting fires. The fires are shifted when the lead elements of the attack approach to within 200 to 400 meters.

As the fires are lifted, the lead Soviet companies assault the enemy positions. The infantry remains mounted unless either forced out of their carriers by enemy fire, or required to clear obstacles. The assault force normally continues through the objective. Primary emphasis is placed on penetrating enemy defenses to carry the battle to the enemy rear, rather than seizing and consolidating on terrain objectives.

### Soviet Defensive Tactics

The Soviets consider defensive action as a temporary measure to gain time or to economize in one area to provide more forces in another area. The Soviets recognize two forms of defense — the hasty defense and the deliberate defense. The hasty defense is used during temporary halts, and the deliberate defense is used when the halt will be for more than a few hours. The hasty defense is characterized by company-sized strong points with all-around defense, backed by large reserves. The deliberate defense is characterized by battalion-sized strong points, successive defensive belts, and a strong counterattack force.

The motorized rifle company usually defends a zone 2000 meters wide. The first echelon companies are normally reinforced with a tank platoon. The defensive area is organized into platoon strong points forming two lines of defense. Two platoons are on the first defensive line, and one platoon is on the second defensive line, about 450 meters to

the rear. The platoons occupy defensive zones of about 500 meters (Figure 4). The tanks are dug in between the first and second defensive zones.

There is little general firing from frontline positions until the enemy attack is definitely underway. When the enemy reaches a line about 400 meters from the first defensive line, the artillery barrages are fired, and the enemy is brought under anti-tank fire. Here the enemy also encounters mine fields and obstacles.

Soviet tank companies defend an area up to 1000 meters wide. Two tank platoons occupy the first defensive line, and one tank platoon occupies a second defensive line about 400 meters to the rear. The tank platoons occupy a frontage of 300 to 400 meters. Individual tanks are dug in and are located to support each other. One motorized rifle platoon is normally assigned to each tank company to provide close-in support. In broken terrain, two or three tanks may occupy ambush positions in front of the first defensive line and in gaps between platoons.

As the enemy approaches the defensive position, the tank company concentrates fire on the most threatened approaches, and artillery fire is called in. The targets are engaged at 1000 to 2000 meters. Tanks are maneuvered to meet threats. The infantry units fire on enemy personnel and supplement tank fire with their anti-tank fire.

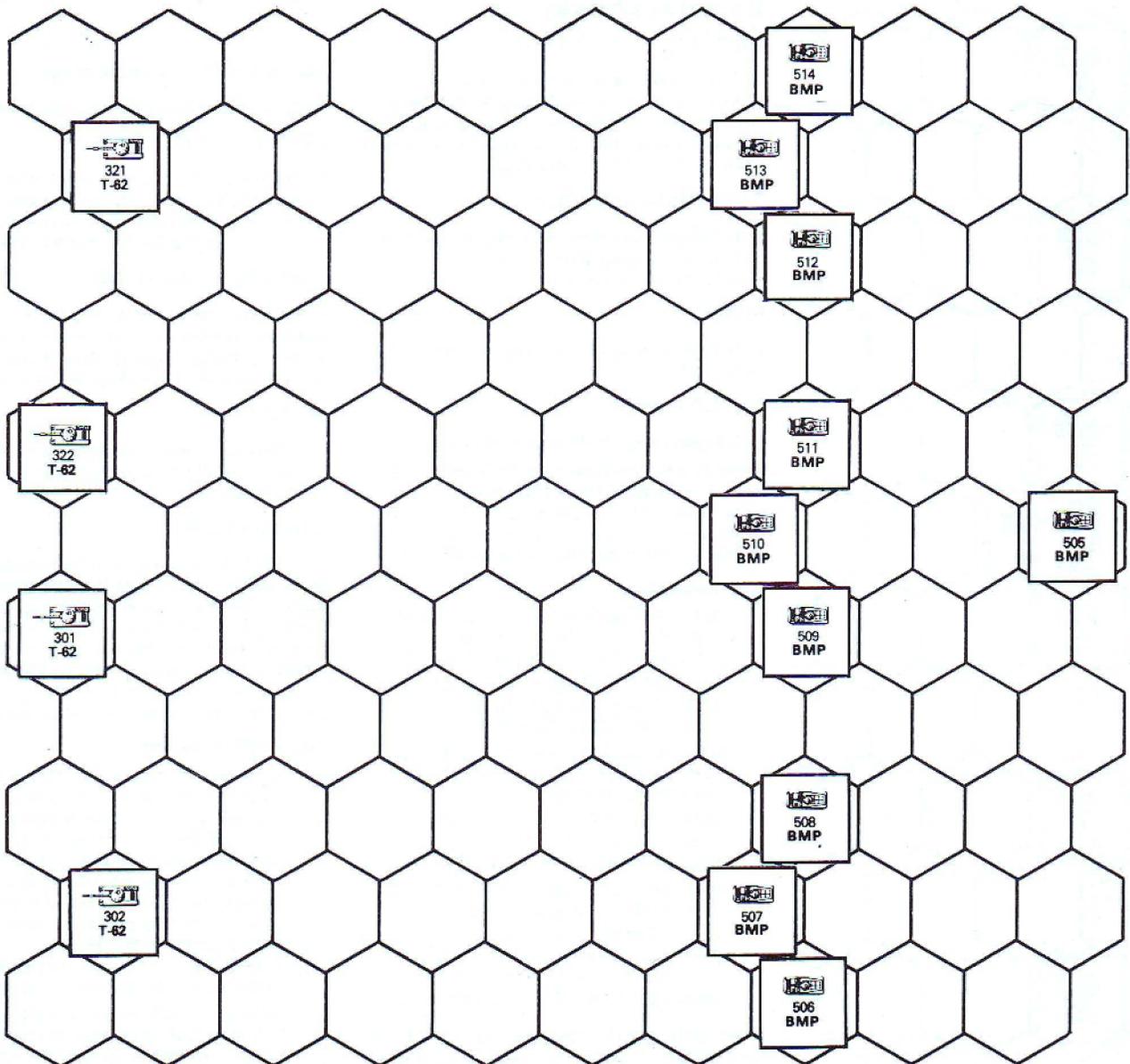
At company level, there is not much difference between the conduct of the hasty defense and the deliberate defense. Naturally, the deliberate defense allows more time for the preparation of defensive positions, gun emplacement, mine fields, and artillery support. But the main difference is the deliberate defense is a series of successive belts of defense, up to 30 kilometers in depth.

### Solitaire Firefight Rules and Scenarios

#### GENERAL RULE:

The following modifications of the *Firefight* rules reflect the Soviet tactics at platoon and company level. These rules are not intended to be all-inclusive, but to provide a framework with which an intelligent player can create the elements of

FIGURE 1: Reinforced Motorized Rifle Company Attack Formation



realism and surprise that a U.S. company commander would face on a modern battlefield. In cases not specifically covered by these rules, or when a Soviet unit has more than one option, the unit will take the course of action that is most favorable to the Soviet force. In cases where there is no clear-cut advantage to the Soviet force, Soviet course of action can be determined by a roll of a die.

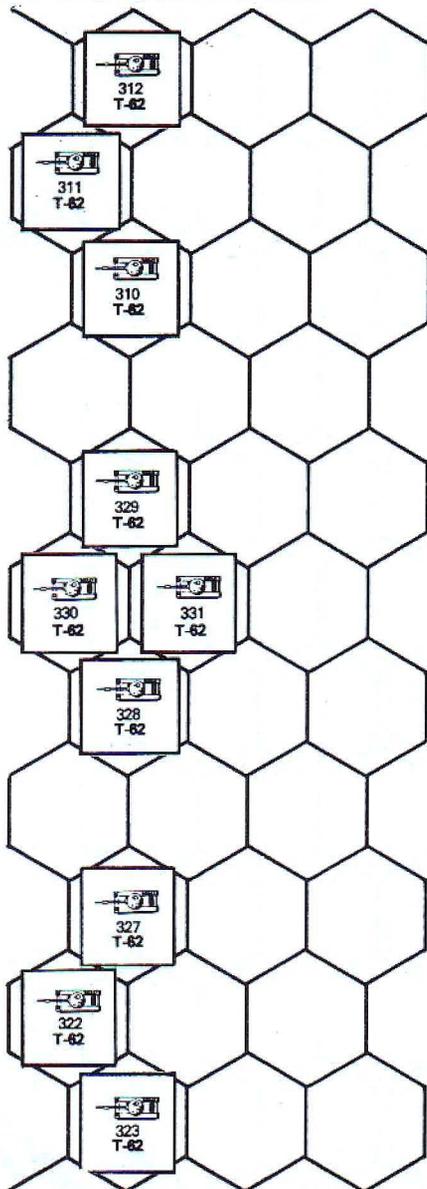
#### DIRECT FIRE:

All vehicles of a Soviet platoon mass their fire on a single target whenever possible (see Case 6.3). If there is more than one U.S. target to fire at, the Soviet platoon will fire at the target that poses the greatest threat.

#### MOVEMENT:

In Soviet offensive scenarios, each attacking Soviet unit is given an entrance and an exit hex. The line between these two points describes the route of advance of the Soviet unit. The unit enters the map with the center of mass on the entrance hex in the formations given in **Figure 1, 2, or 3** for that unit. The unit then moves on the route of advance toward the exit hex. The unit may deviate up to three hexes from this route to gain more cover, avoid restrictive terrain, etc. Company-sized units

**FIGURE 2:**  
Tank Company Attack Formation



maintain the company formation to the maximum extent possible. Individual vehicles normally move at the maximum movement rate, but they adjust their rate of march as necessary to maintain their approximate relative location in the company formation.

The Soviets normally do not use overwatch fire at company level. If a U.S. unit is spotted within 20 hexes of a Soviet tank, the tank fires at the U.S. unit using the Short Halt Technique (Section 17.0). All tanks within a platoon normally fire at the same target. If the Soviet company comes under effective anti-tank fire, the BMP's in the company halt and return fire. The BMP's, however, must maintain a distance of 6 to 10 hexes from the lead tank platoons of that company. If there are no tanks present, the BMP's maintain the momentum of the attack halting and firing only once every three turns. Normally, one platoon will halt and fire at a target while the other BMP's continue. The next turn, another platoon halts and fires, and so on until the anti-tank fire has been suppressed or by-passed. The infantry remains mounted and fires from their BMP (Section 16.0).

When defending, Soviet vehicles can move up to four hexes to obtain better firing positions.

#### U.S. ATTACK (Map B)

##### GENERAL SITUATION:

A U.S. tank-heavy company team has been ordered to seize the high ground northeast of Gerlafingen as part of a battalion attack. A Soviet company is defending in zone with a platoon-sized strong point on Hill 492 (hex 2832).

##### TASK ORGANIZATION:

**U.S. Forces:** Two armor platoons, one mechanized platoon; Organic Support: two 4.2" mortars; Direct Support: two 155mm.

##### MISSION:

**U.S. Forces:** Attack and seize the high ground vicinity hex 2832.

##### DEPLOYMENT

**U.S. Forces:** Enter north edge of Map B.

**Soviet Forces:** Soviet units are deployed following the U.S. Movement Phase in Game-Turn 7. At the completion of the U.S. Movement Phase, a die is rolled and the result cross-referenced on the following table to determine Soviet deployment.

##### Die Soviet Force

- BMP (with infantry\*):** 2027, 2625, 3024, 3826. **T-62:** 3029, 1632. **Artillery:** 1913, 2112, 2018, 3215. **Minefield:** 3328-3727.
- BMP:** 0825, 2732, 2526, 3024. **T-62:** 2027, 3029. **Artillery:** 2020(S), 2013(S), 2319(S), 3216(S). **Minefield:** 3425-3928.
- BMP:** 0532, 2732, 2930, 3230. **T-62:** 1632, 3131. **Artillery:** 2029, 2113(S), 3127, 3529. **Minefield:** 2331-2828.
- BMP:** 1632, 2732, 3029, 3331. **T-62:** 1838. **Artillery:** 3530, 3127, 2529, 2029. **Minefields:** 3328-3529, 2729-2928.
- BMP:** 0825, 2027, 2831, 3024. **T-62:** 3029, 3628. **Artillery:** 2019(S), 2113(S), 2529, 2827. **Minefield:** 3325-3922.
- BMP:** 1733, 2930, 3227, 3427. **T-62:** 1838, 2732. **Artillery:** 2628, 2927, 3227, 3427. **Minefields:** 3328-3529, 1731-1930.

\*Each BMP has two fireteams employed in Improved Positions in adjacent hexes (see **Figure 4**).

#### Special Rules

##### INDIRECT FIRE:

The Soviets have On Call Fire (Case 8.11) plotted for the hexes indicated. Each Game-Turn that a U.S. unit is within three hexes of a target hex, an Impact marker is picked at random and placed on the target hex. The fire is then checked for scatter and effect. The resulting impact hex becomes the target hex for the next Indirect Fire Phase. Artillery hexes listed with (S) are smoke targets (Section 14.0).

##### MINES:

If a U.S. unit enters a plotted mine hex, a die is rolled. The result of the roll, plus three, is the Attack Strength of the hex. The U.S. unit is then attacked with that number of Points (Section 18.0).

##### VICTORY CONDITIONS:

The U.S. Player receives one point for each destroyed Soviet unit and one point for each U.S. unit within three hexes of hex 2832. The Soviets receive one point for each destroyed U.S. vehicle.

##### GAME LENGTH:

The game lasts until the U.S. forces have secured Hill 492 (occupied by U.S. units not under Soviet direct fire, and no Soviet units within four hexes of hex 2832) or until twelve U.S. vehicles have been destroyed.

#### SOVIET ATTACK (Both Maps)

**Note:** See diagram on page 3 of rules booklet.

##### GENERAL SITUATION:

Soviet forces are expected to attack from the north with a battalion-sized force in this sector. A U.S. infantry-heavy company team has been ordered to occupy a battle position north of Rte. 298.

##### TASK ORGANIZATION:

**U.S. Forces:** One armored platoon, two mechanized platoons (infantry in Improved Positions), four TOW's; Organic Support: three 81mm mortars, two 4.2" mortars; Direct Support: two 155mm.

##### MISSION:

**U.S. Forces:** Occupy and defend Battle Position 1, located generally between hex 1134 (Map B) and hex 1230 (Map A).

##### DEPLOYMENT:

After the U.S. company team has been deployed, a die is rolled to determine the deployment of the Soviet force. Each Soviet company is given an entrance hex. This means the center vehicle of the company enters on that hex, and the rest of the company enters in the appropriate formation. The company then moves from north to south using the entrance hex row as its axis of advance.

##### Die Soviet Deployment

- A Soviet tank battalion is making three attacks to probe for gaps or flanks in the U.S. defense to continue the advance. Tank co. (see **Figure 2**) enters hex 1101 (Map B) on Game-Turn 1; tank co. enters hex 3301(B) on Game-Turn 5; one infantry plt. follows each tank co. two turns after the tank co. has entered. **Smoke Screen:** Hexes 1827-2325(B), 3028-3330(B), 1128-1329(A). **Preparatory Fires:** Hexes 3832(B), 3024(B), 0326(A), 0931(A).
- Regiment orders battalion to attack the U.S. left flank to create a gap there. Tank co. (+) (see **Figure 3**) enters on hex

- 1001(B); tank co. (+) enters on hex 2001(B); tank co. is initially deployed in woodline 0907-1707(B) and supports lead companies by fire until Game-Turn 10, then follows the advance. *Smoke Screen:* Hexes 2531-3128(B), 2226-2724(B), 0449-0947(A), 0428-0931(A). *Preparatory Fires:* 1533(B), 0831(A).
- 3 Regiment has ordered battalion to attack the center of sector to gain control of the dominant high ground. Tank co. (+) enters on hex 2601(B) on Game-Turn 1; tank co. (+) enters on hex 3601(B) on Game-Turn 1; tank co. enters on hex 3101(B) on Game-Turn 5 and supports by fire until Game-Turn 15, then follows in company formation. *Smoke Screen:* Hexes 2929-3128(B), 3128-3329(B), 0630-1128(A). *Preparatory Fires:* Hexes 2526(B), 2925(B), 3826(B), 0226(A).
- 4 Regiment has ordered battalion to seize the Asbachhohe (vic hex 0931A) which dominates the avenue of advance through Ebersburen. Tank co. (+) enters on hex 0201(A) on Game-Turn 1; tank co. (+) enters on hex 1001(A) on Game-Turn 1; tank co. enters on hex 0701(A) on Game-Turn 5, supports lead companies using Short Halt technique and passes through lead companies to continue the attack if necessary. *Smoke Screen:* Hexes 0531-1227(A), 3129-3330(B). *Preparatory Fires:* Hexes 0831(A), 1030(A), 0326(A), 0627(A).
- 5 Regiment has ordered battalion to by-pass to the east of the U.S. positions. Tank co. (+) enters on hex 1001(A) on Game-Turn 1; tank co. (+) enters on hex 1901(A) on Game-Turn 1; tank co. enters on hex 1061(A) on Game-Turn 5 and follows the lead companies. *Smoke Screen:* Hexes 0929-1128(A), 1228-1429(A), 3129-3330(A), 1843-1943-2043(A). *Preparatory Fires:* Hexes 3125(B), 3426(B), 0126(A), 0426(A).

- 6 A motorized rifle battalion (+) has been ordered to attack the high ground northeast of Gerlafingen. Motorized rifle co. (+) (see **Figure 1**) enters on hex 1601(B); motorized rifle co. (+) enters on hex 2801(B); motorized rifle co. (+) enters on hex 0201(A). *Smoke Screen:* Hexes 0431-0929(A), 0648-0849(B), 2929-3128(B). *Preparatory Fires:* Hexes 1533(B), 2027(B), 2832(B), 0126(A).

#### Special Rules:

##### INDIRECT FIRE:

Preparatory fire is executed by placing a 152mm Impact marker on the target hex. The fire is then checked for scatter and effect. The resulting impact hex becomes the target hex for the next Indirect Fire Phase. This continues until a Soviet unit is within six hexes of the impact hex.

##### VICTORY CONDITIONS:

The U.S. Player receives one point for each destroyed Soviet vehicle. The Soviet player receives one point for each destroyed U.S. unit and one point for each Soviet vehicle to exit off the south edge of the map.

##### GAME LENGTH:

The game lasts until 30 Soviet vehicles have been destroyed or until all Soviet units have exited the map.

#### MEETING ENGAGEMENT (Map A)

##### GENERAL SITUATION:

A U.S. tank-heavy company team has been ordered to be the advance guard of a U.S. tank battalion moving to a blocking position (off map) to contain a Soviet penetration.

##### TASK ORGANIZATION:

**U.S. Forces:** HQ Section, two armored platoons, one mechanized infantry platoon; Organic Support: two 4.2" mortars; Direct Support: six 155mm.

##### MISSION:

**U.S. Player:** Advance south along Rte. 1 to block-

ing position (exit off south edge of map).

#### DEPLOYMENT:

The U.S. force enters the north edge of the map in any formation.

**Soviets:** Each Game-Turn after the U.S. units have completed all movement, roll the die to determine if a Soviet force is encountered. If a one is rolled, it means a Soviet force is encountered, and the die is rolled again to determine the Soviet deployment.

#### Die Soviet Deployment

##### Soviet Movement to Contact

- Three T-62 platoons: enter on hexes 2253, 1853, 2653. Objective: Exit north map edge. Two BRDM overwatch 2740, 1944.
- Three T-62 platoons: enter on hexes 0124, 0121, 0118. Objective: Exit hexes 3942-3946. Two BRDM overwatch 1129, 0728.
- Three T-62 platoons: enter 3925, 3922, 3919. Objective: Exit hexes 0103-0106. Two BRDM overwatch 2728, 3321.
- Three T-62 platoons: enter 3938, 3941, 3943. Objective: Exit hexes 0116-0124. Two BRDM overwatch 3438, 3421.

##### Soviet Hasty Defense

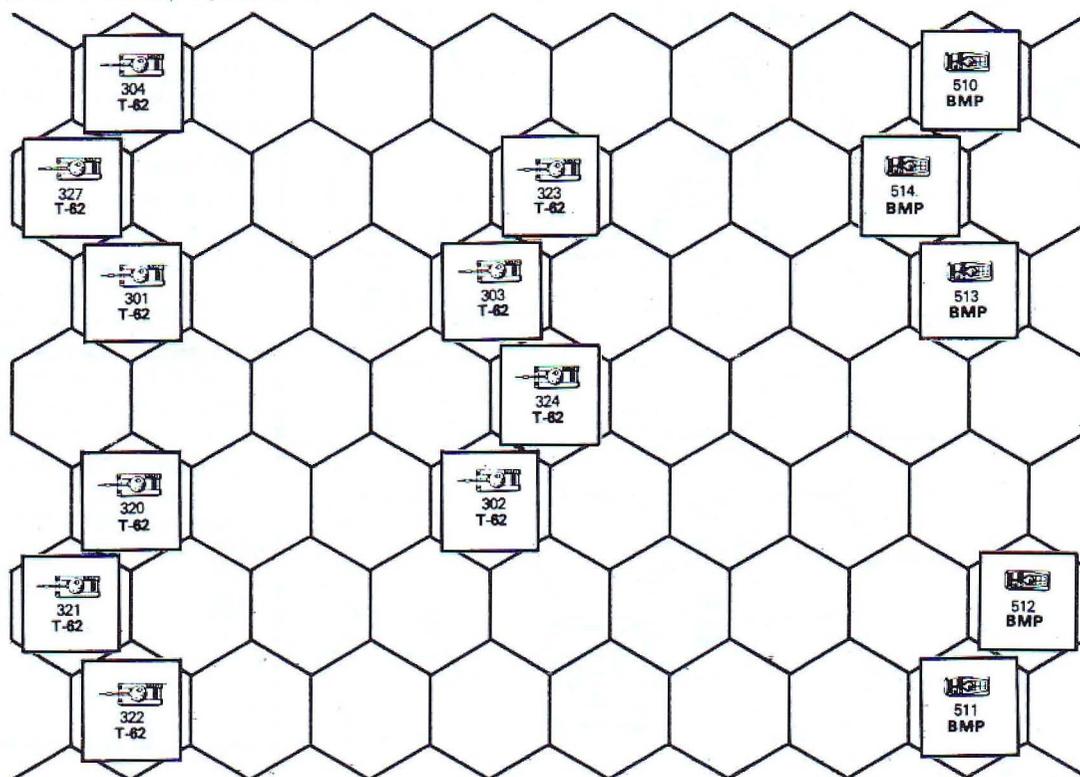
- T-62: 0930, 1029, 1129. BMP: 1844, 1944, 2044, 2640, 3538.
- T-62: 0731, 1229, 2728. BMP: 0426, 0627, 0828, 1944, 3321.

**Soviet Reinforcements:** Each Game-Turn after the Soviet main force is encountered and after all U.S. movement, roll the die to determine if the Soviets receive reinforcements. A die roll of one means the Soviets receive reinforcements, and the die is rolled again to determine the type.

#### Die Soviet Reinforcements

- One T-62 platoon: in overwatch positions on Hill 502 (0252)
- One T-62 platoon: enter 1854. Objective: Hill 485 (1945).
- One T-62 platoon: enter 3938. Objective: hill at 3539.

FIGURE 3: Reinforced Tank Company Attack Formation



- 4 Two 152mm artillery on nearest spotted U.S. unit.
- 5 Two 122mm artillery on nearest spotted U.S. unit.
- 6 One 152mm artillery on nearest spotted U.S. unit.

**VICTORY CONDITIONS:**

The U.S. player receives one point for each Soviet vehicle employed, one point for each Soviet vehicle destroyed, and one point for each U.S. vehicle that exits the north mapedge. The Soviets receive one point for each U.S. vehicle employed, one point for each U.S. vehicle destroyed, and one point for each Soviet vehicle that exits off the designated mapedge.

**GAME LENGTH:**

The game lasts until all U.S. units have exited the map. U.S. units may exit any mapedge, but they

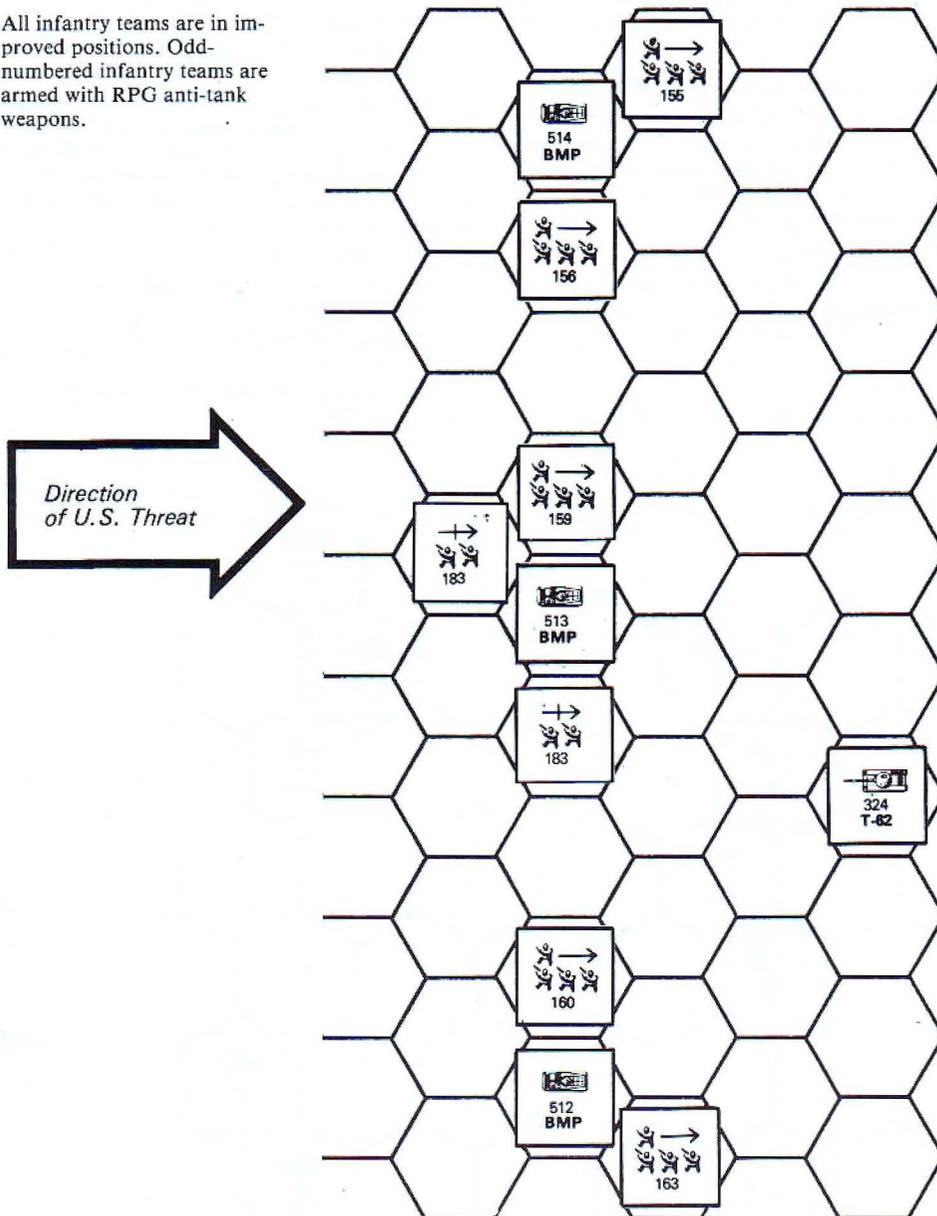
receive Victory Points only if they exit the north mapedge

**References**

1. FM 100-5 Operations (1976), p. I-1.
2. *Firefight* is a company level battle simulation designed for the U.S. Army by Simulations Publications, Inc., New York, N.Y.
3. FORSCOM Training Note Number 4, "Gaming Simulation," 19 May 1977.
4. USAITAD Report 14-U-76 "Military Operations of the Soviet Army," U.S. Army Intelligence Threat Analysis Detachment (1976), pp. 155-185. FM 7-20 The Infantry Battalion (1978), pp 2-1 to 2-26. FM 30-102 Handbook on Aggressor Forces (1969). ■ ■

**FIGURE 4: Motorized Rifle Platoon Defensive Position**

All infantry teams are in improved positions. Odd-numbered infantry teams are armed with RPG anti-tank weapons.



**SpiGroups**

The response to *MOVES* free listing of SPI Groups has not been overwhelming thus far. In order for us to maintain this service, we would appreciate more of you sending us information on your clubs and associations. For those of you who are planning to send that information for future issues, here are the closing dates for upcoming issues:

- MOVES* 50: End of February '80
- MOVES* 52: End of June '80
- MOVES* 54: End of October '80

Remember: we must have the complete information in hand by these dates in order to include your listing (see *MOVES* 40 for a detailed explanation of what information is required). The following key to listings provides an outline of the necessary items:

*LINE ONE*

Three Digit Zip Code, Town or City/Agent's Last Name

*LINE TWO*

Number of Current Members/Average Birthdate/Year formed/Frequency of meetings/and three ranked period preferences, based on the Feedback response numbers.

*LINE THREE*

Group Agent's full name and phone number.

*LINE FOUR*

Group Agent's full address.

**Reminder to All Existing Groups:**

You will not be relisted unless you re-submit your data (it is suggested that you photocopy an original file copy to save yourself the bother of re-typing every time).

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