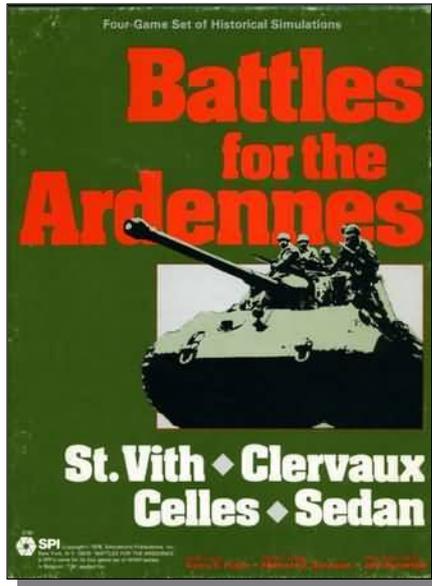

Tactical Tips

Battles for the Ardennes

By Paul Sheppard

Player's Notes



March Mode

When there are a number of units to be moved in March Mode, plan the sequencing of those moves beforehand. Usually, with proper planning, all units in March Mode can be moved where a player desires. Conversely, hasty movement inevitably results in a crucial road junction being blocked by a unit in March Mode that has already moved.

If it looks like a unit could benefit from March Mode movement in the *next* turn, make sure it is on a road and not stacked with other units. Keep in mind that a unit in March Mode *may* move adjacent to another unit in March Mode; the rule merely prohibits the units from being adjacent at the *end* of the movement phase (note that this applies to units in March Mode on roads; units in March Mode on non-road hexes may be stacked adjacent to each other).

Also, remember that a unit in March Mode only exerts a ZOC into connecting road hexes; don't be caught out by an enemy unit sneaking through your line because you tried to hold it with a unit in March Mode.

Offensive Tactics

Most of the time the German player is on the offensive and must try to maintain the initiative as long as possible so these comments are directed mainly at him. If there is a weak spot in the enemy line, forget about anything else; attack it with all you can muster, especially armour. A good combat result and the subsequent advance will devastate your opponent.

The importance of getting armour into such an attack cannot be over-emphasised; the advance after combat of such units must be utilised to its fullest extent. The game system rewards powerful attacks to such a degree that a good advance can move you faster than an entire Movement Phase. Do not make 1-1 and 2-1 attacks up and down the line; mass your forces for a few strong attacks in one or two areas with the aim of creating breakthroughs.

It is usually not wise to attack a strong defensive line, especially if it is located behind a river; there is not time to wear such a line away. Players often ignore this advice when they see valuable objectives beyond a strong enemy line, but it pays in the long run to attack the weak part of the line, even if it doesn't seem to lead directly to victory. When making such an attack, include at least one "junk" unit (such as a Volksgrenadier regiment or panzer brigade) to take a step loss in the event of a split result. It is never pleasant to lose a step from a strong mechanised unit if retreating is unattractive. Keep your strong, mobile units in the force of the attack; don't waste them defending an inactive part of the line.

Defensive Tactics

When setting up a defensive line, try to avoid placing units in clear or broken hexes, unless there is a town or improved position in the hex. Even strong units will be hard pressed to repel concentrated enemy attacks when in such hexes.

Never place armour or reconnaissance units in such a position that they could get caught between enemy units and an unbridged river. Their inability to retreat will make them easy pickings for the enemy (or easy to by-pass). On the other hand, defending in front of a river with infantry units is a fine idea; they can retreat across the river and the enemy cannot always follow up. Defending behind a river is even better; even if the enemy gets across the river in one spot he will be hard pressed to expand his bridgehead.

When forced to take an adverse combat result, carefully weigh up the options you are faced with. Remember, you can take a combination of retreat and step loss to fulfil a result. Always keep in mind the enemy's ability to advance when making such a decision.

Artillery

When planning future attacks, keep in mind that an artillery unit that starts the player-turn in March Mode cannot be put in Battery during that turn. Once the marker is removed, the artillery unit can be moved up to the front in Combat Mode and involved in an attack on the next turn.

The German player, especially, should never forget to move an artillery unit that is not being used in combat. The intolerably slow movement allowance of most of his artillery can be partially compensated for by keeping the units plodding forward. Never put an artillery unit in a position exposed to enemy units; its limited ZOC may lead to unpleasant results.

Engineers and Bridges

When the enemy is on the offensive do not wait a turn to blow an enemy-threatened bridge; the sooner the bridge is destroyed, the less chance of a bad die roll ruining your day. When the German player is on the offensive he should not use engineers to defend a flank or take a step loss. They should be right up front where they can help a stalled German drive across an unbridged river line.



Tactical Tips

1. In any given attack, a combined force is the ideal thus avoiding heavy losses to the armoured units. Try and put at least one infantry or "junk" panzer unit (these units should ideally be non-divisional or unassigned corps units) in with any attack involving armoured divisions. This latter unit can then take any required step loss as opposed to losing steps of the divisional units.
 2. Try and use engineers as they should be used - building or blowing bridges or building improved positions. They don't make very good combat troops due to their low unit strengths. They need to be 'kept up' with the main units to be of effective use. This way, they can not only perform repairs but they will also be protected.
 3. Units in March Mode are heavily penalised in combat so don't keep units in March Mode other than for 'strategic' movement.
 4. Zones of Control are crucial. In any given attack, try and cut off the retreat of the enemy unit(s). This will force step losses in most cases.
 5. Where possible, use artillery to assist units making "soak off" attacks. For the Germans, this is going to very difficult after the first few moves as their artillery will probably be unable to keep up with the other units.
 6. When attacking, try and ensure that you have an odds ratio that falls about midway across the CRT. If you mean to win a given combat, odds of at least 3:1 on Clear terrain are recommended (higher odds will be required for the less favourable terrain types).
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