

Some Like It Hot!

General Patton versus the Russians, Summer 1945

An Active Armor WWII Scenario



Introduction

Whether you admire General George Patton as one of the great American generals of WWII or view him as a right-wing lunatic warmonger (or both), it is a well-documented fact that he was in favor of taking the war to the Soviets in May of 1945:

"If we have to fight them, now is the time. From now on, we will get weaker and they will get stronger."

In 1945, Winston Churchill had plans drawn up under the codename "Operation Unthinkable" in which half of the Allied divisions in Europe, supplemented by 100,000 German soldiers, would take the war to the Soviets over the post-War situation of Poland. (Whether the element of surprise on which the plan depended would work against a fully mobilized Soviet army which enjoyed a 2.5-to-1 numerical superiority was something which was never put to the test. It is doubtful, especially since the plan had been betrayed to Stalin by the infamous "Cambridge 5" and the Soviets had taken up a defensive posture in readiness.)

This scenario depicts what might have happened had Patton had his way, along the lines envisioned by Churchill's planners. A surprise attack against the Soviets is launched in Czechoslovakia, where Patton's 3rd Army holds position near Prague. Its spearhead is the

crack 4th Armored Division, re-equipped with some of the latest in US armor. To help them, the veterans of the 14th Panzer Division - hold-outs from the Courland Pocket - have been re-equipped and brought up to strength with captured Nazi equipment. They are supported by massive airpower, including the Allies' latest jet-powered aircraft.

The Soviets, meanwhile, have re-deployed their forces in anticipation of such a move. The Allies are unaware of this, and expect that they will face a Motor Rifle division or similar forces, unprepared and not expecting any further fighting. Instead, they will run up against a well-equipped Soviet force: the 12th Guards Tank Corps. This formation has a great deal of heavy armor, and has dug in in preparation for an attack. While Soviet air assets are more numerous, the Allies superiority in strategic bombers has been utilized to draw off a significant portion of the Russian fighter strength. Both sides will enjoy air support, but there will be no clear-cut domination of the skies. Although falling behind in the race to develop jet-powered aircraft, the Soviets have deployed some of their few available jet aircraft to counter the British Gloster Meteors and American P-80s.

The Allied attack will focus around the town of Hrádek. The town itself is not an objective, merely an unimportant settlement on the road to Prague. The Allies plan to bypass it and push on toward the capitol, hoping to cut off a significant portion of the Soviet forces along the German border by pushing northward from there. First, however, they will have to establish a passage through Soviet lines.

The Soviet plan is simple: they have larger armies, and time is on their side. They simply need to hold the line until enough additional troops can be brought up to stop the Allies in their tracks. This scenario depicts the beginning of the Allied attempt to break through the Soviet lines, and the efforts of the Soviets to stop them.

Orders of Battle

Allies: Corps-Level Assets

All units on the Allied side are rated as Veterans. They are supported by:

1st US Supply Battalion (truck-borne re-supply)

2nd US Supply Battalion (truck-borne re-supply)

613th Squadron, Royal Air Force (Gloster Meteors equipped for ground-attack duties)

614th Squadron, Royal Air Force (Gloster Meteors equipped for ground-attack duties)

615th Squadron, Royal Air Force (Gloster Meteors equipped for ground-attack duties)

616th Squadron, Royal Air Force (Gloster Meteors equipped for ground-attack duties)

Allies: United States 4th Armored Division

8th Tank Battalion (M26 Pershings)

35th Tank Battalion (M4 Shermans)
37th Tank Battalion (M4 Shermans)
704th Tank Destroyer Battalion (M10 Wolverines)
10th Armored Infantry Battalion (M5 Halftracks)
51st Armored Infantry Battalion (M5 Halftracks)
53rd Armored Infantry Battalion (M5 Halftracks)
24th Armored Engineer Battalion (M5 Halftracks)
25th Cavalry Recce Squadron (M5 Stuarts)
4th Armored Division Artillery (M7 Priests)
276th Armored Field Artillery (M12 155mm Howitzers)

Allies: Occupied Germany 14th Panzer Division

36th Panzer Regiment - Tiger Battalion (Tiger Is)
36th Panzer Regiment - Panther Battalion (Panthers)
103rd Panzer Grenadier Regiment - 1st Battalion (SdKfz 251 Halftracks)
103rd Panzer Grenadier Regiment - 2nd Battalion (SdKfz 251 Halftracks)
103rd Panzer Grenadier Regiment - 3rd Battalion (SdKfz 251 Halftracks)
15th Pioneer Battalion (SdKfz 251 Halftracks)
14th Recon Battalion (SdKfz 234 Armored Cars)
14th Anti-Tank Battalion (Panzerjager IVs)
4th Artillery Regiment (Wespes/Hummels)
1st Nebewerfer Battalion (210mm Nebelwerfer Rocket Launchers)

Soviets: 12th Guards Tank Corps

All units are rated as Average. They are supported by:

Company A, Motor Transport Battalion (truck-borne re-supply)
Company B, Motor Transport Battalion (truck-borne re-supply)
1st Assault Aviation Squadron (equipped for ground-attack duties)

2nd Assault Aviation Squadron (equipped for ground-attack duties)

Combat Units

48th Guards Tank Regiment (T-34/85s)

49th Guards Tank Regiment (T-34/85s)

66th Guards Tank Regiment (T-34/85s)

71st Guards Heavy Tank Regiment (IS-2s)

18th Guards Recon Battalion (BA-10 Armored Cars)

34th Guards Motor-Rifle Regiment - 1st Battalion (Trucks)

34th Guards Motor-Rifle Regiment - 2nd Battalion (Trucks)

34th Guards Motor-Rifle Regiment - 3rd Battalion (Trucks)

36th Guards Motor-Rifle Regiment - 4th Battalion (Trucks)

36th Guards Motor-Rifle Regiment - 5th Battalion (Trucks)

36th Guards Motor-Rifle Regiment - 6th Battalion (Trucks)

16th Guards SMG Battalion (Trucks)

136th Guards Engineer Battalion (Trucks)

226th Guards Mortar Battalion (BM-13 Katyushka Rocket Launchers)

375th Self-Propelled Artillery Regiment (SU-122s)

843rd Guards Artillery Regiment (Zis-3 76mm Guns)

933rd Self-Propelled Anti-Tank Regiment (SU-100s)

163rd Self-Propelled Gun Regiment (SU-76s)

75th Guards Anti-Tank Regiment (M-42 45mm AT Guns)

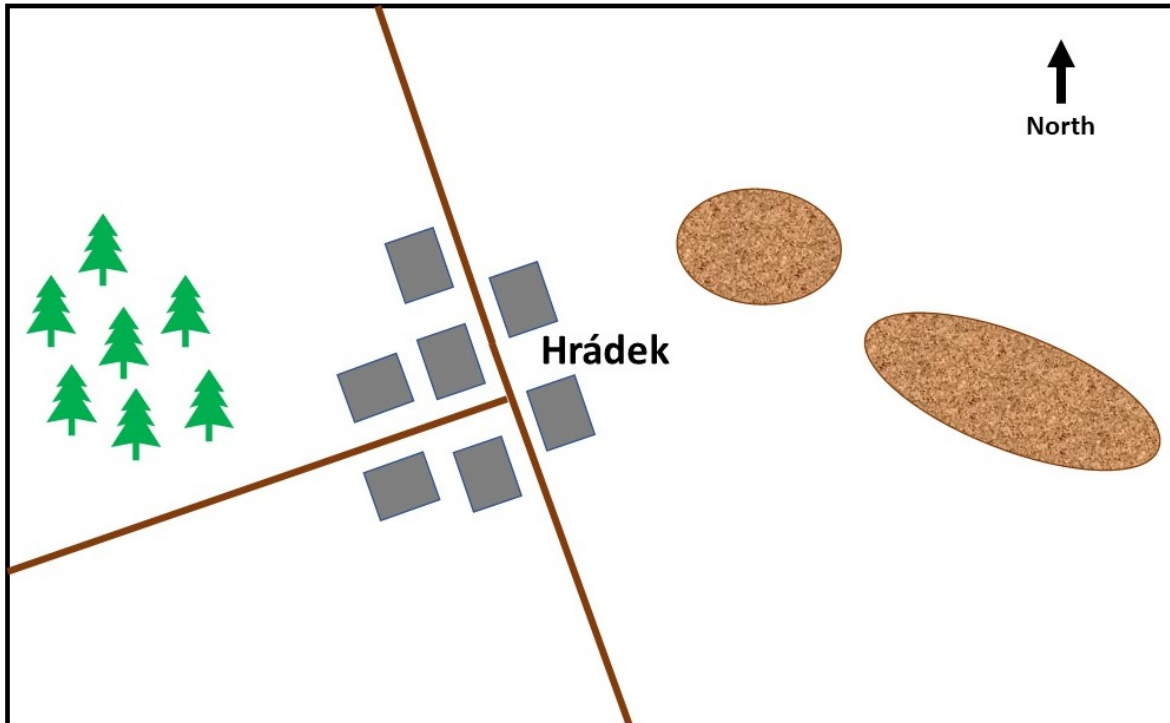
Set-Up and Game Length

The map below depicts the area around Hrádek. The woods and hills provide soft cover - the town is largely intact and is considered built up.

The Soviet forces set up first, with up to 8 units occupying entrenched positions (these are considered improvised hard cover, not fortifications). Units may be positioned anywhere on the line drawn from the wooded area through Hrádek and up around the hills, and anywhere to the south. No Soviet units may appear north of this line.

Allied units move onto the table from the northern edge, starting on the first turn, or on any turn thereafter. They may make a moving fire on the turn they enter the table if capable, and if Soviet targets are within range. No fire from off-table is allowed by combat units (only air-strikes).

The game begins at dawn (Turn 1). It will last for a full day (12 turns), and may be played for a second day if both players agree. (After the second day, it is assumed that Soviet reinforcements would arrive and the attack called off if not yet successful.)



Victory Conditions

Both sides expect heavy losses, so the number of units destroyed is unimportant. By the end of the game, the Allied player must have a clear path from the north table edge to the south table edge, such that friendly units could theoretically transit the table without coming within enemy zone of control. In practical terms, a gap at least 12 inches wide at its narrowest point must be established across the entire table.

If the Allies do not win, the Soviets do.
