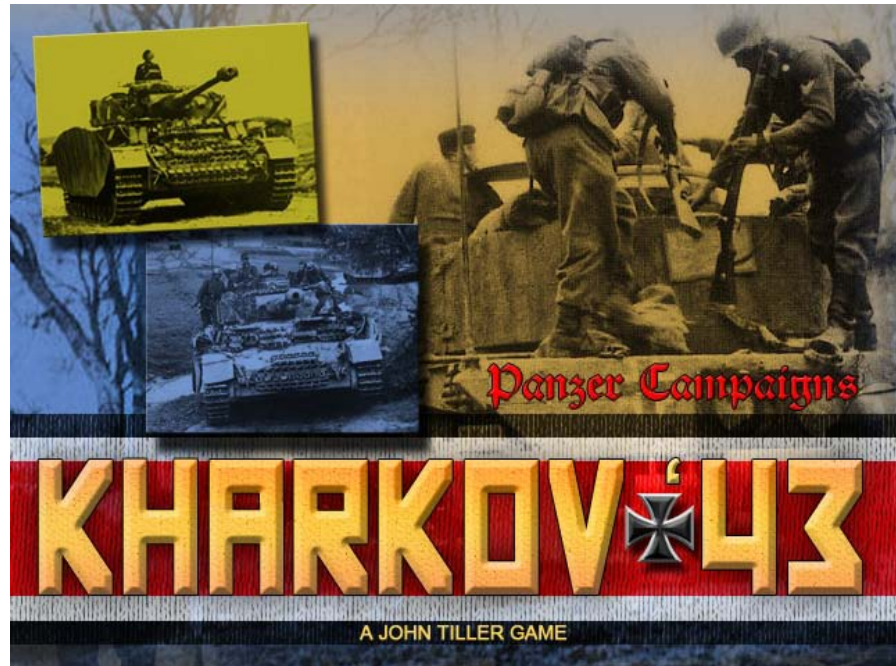


DESIGNER NOTES & HISTORY DOCUMENT

THE CAMPAIGN

Kharkov '43 was the final successful operation for the Axis forces in Russia. It marked the end of the Stalingrad tragedy and the prelude to Kursk. It was a sweeping campaign, with large distances and low unit densities making it more akin to a desert campaign than the Eastern front.



This operation was actually the Third battle of Kharkov following on the German capture of the city in September 1941 and the Soviet attempt to recapture the city in May 1942 (as simulated in Kharkov '42). There was a Fourth battle of Kharkov in August 1943 where the Soviets liberated the city for a final time in the Polkovodets Rumyantsev offensive post Kursk.

When looking at this operation it became apparent that there were three distinct phases in the battle.

- The Soviet Offensive – The Star & Gallop operations, Feb 2nd to Feb 19th.
- Manstein's Backhand blow against South Western Front, Feb 20th to Mar 5th
- The German recapture of Kharkov and the shattering of Voronezh Front, Mar 6th to Mar 18th

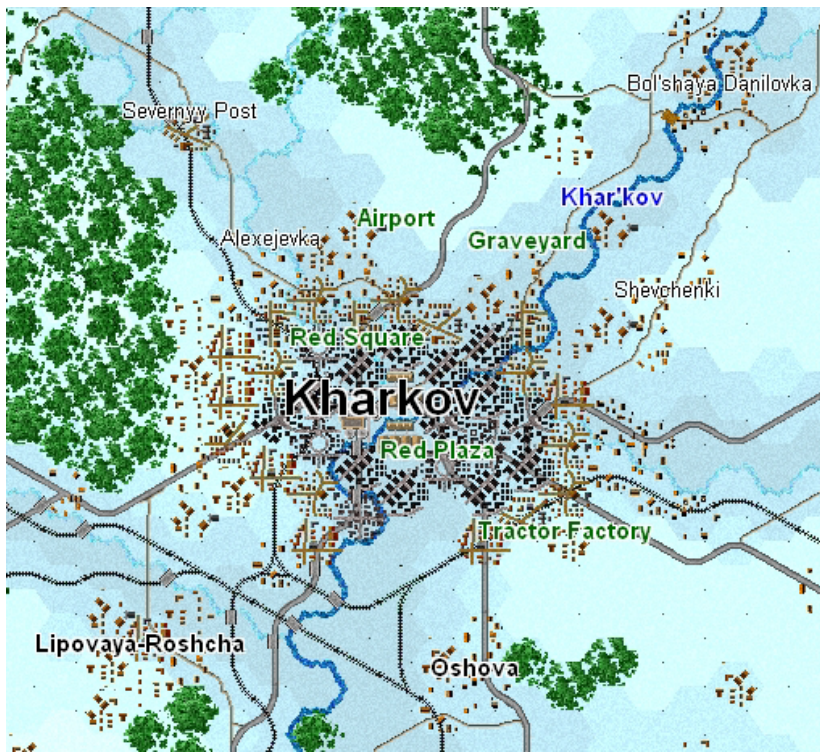
It was decided to create a base campaign for each of these periods, rather than one 450 turn game. The reasoning behind this decision was the extremely fluid situation and the fact that building victory conditions for each side in a 'mega campaign' where the objectives changed over time was next to impossible. Further complicating this was that some units were

withdrawn and refurbished (Gross Deutschland, for example) which would be very difficult to handle in terms of game play.

Once this decision was made it ensured that the individual campaigns would be playable due to their moderate length (57 – 180 turns), and allow all scenarios to be tested sufficiently. Very few players have the stamina or time to play a 400+ turn campaign, but are more likely to give a shorter campaign a try.

THE MAP

The map used for Kharkov '43 is an amalgamation of the Kharkov '42 map and a slice off the Kursk '43 map. Essentially, 26 hex rows were added to the top off the old Kharkov '42 map.



Some areas of the battle were excluded either because they were fairly static or only saw forces manoeuvring on them. For example the Mius River front was essentially little changed despite substantial forces being employed there. To include this map section and attendant forces could seriously change the strategic options a player could have in the campaign so it was excluded. In addition, though the Soviets approached Zaporozh'ye south of Dnepropetrovsk, this section was left off as it would add little to the overall game.

The additional hex rows were added to allow the Soviet 40th Army to start on map and prevent the German player from getting a false sense of security. With 40th Army present, it is very clear how easily the German flank could be turned.

Minor changes have been made to the road network and other features, as the Kharkov '42 map was one of the first released. It is now up to a standard with later maps in the series.

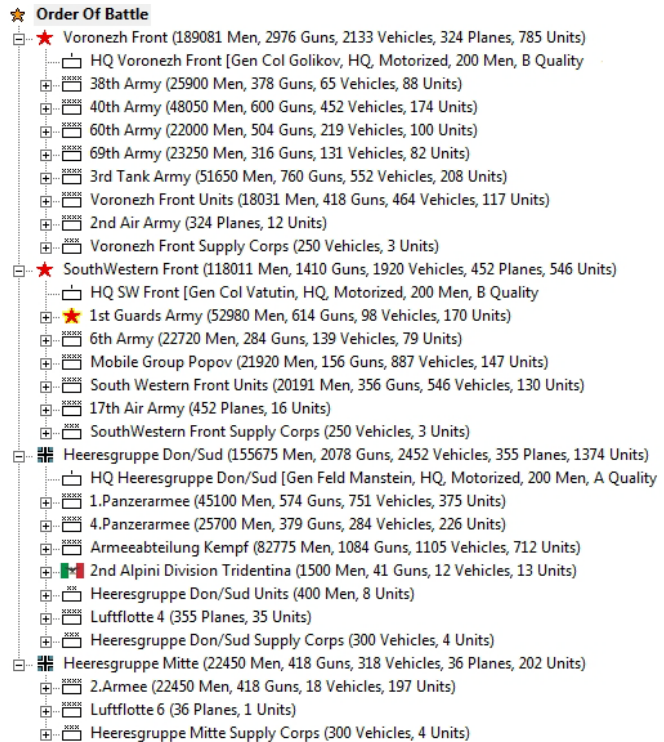
A planning map has been included with the game and can be accessed from the Kharkov '43 menu under John Tiller Software. You can print this out or zoom in. Additionally two scenarios with the complete map without units are included. These will enable search for location:

[#998_Map_Viewer_Winter](#) & [#999_Map_Viewer_Summer](#)

THE ORDER OF BATTLE

There are a number of decisions that need to be made when building an order of battle for a Panzer Campaign's game. Fortunately, others had preceded us and we could look at the other Eastern Front games that had been published for inspiration. This battle conveniently fell between Stalingrad '42 and Kursk '43. Even more conveniently many of the same forces were involved in one or more of these battles. An initial decision was made to run with the standard company level organization for the Germans and battalion for the Soviet and Axis Allies (Hungary and Italy).

Rick Bancroft (aka RickB @ theblitz.org) had a very complete offering that he had done for a 2002 mod (right down to German spellings etc). With his permission we used Rick's OB and validated as much of the data as possible before including it in the final order of battle. Rick's German OB was largely left intact but the Soviet side was extensively reworked.



THE SOVIET ORDER OF BATTLE

Glantz's book 'Colossus Reborn' was absolutely invaluable for the Soviet forces. Glantz's book provided data covering key periods including a February 1st, 1943 Soviet order of battle identifying all the major formations (Divisional / Corp). In addition all Corp and Army attachments were identified at a regiment, brigade and battalion level. This book was used as a primary source and has plenty of information for future Panzer campaign games.

Formation strengths were another area to be considered and came in two flavours – how many men, tanks etc should be in a formation and how many were at a particular point of time. A general view was taken on Infantry and Cavalry forces with most texts mentioning strengths in the 40% - 60% range. This reflects the hard fighting that had been ongoing since Operation Uranus started nearly 3 months previously. The basic Infantry or cavalry battalion was given a base strength of 500 men and then adjusted down considering the prior engagements in the Kharkov '43 campaign.



Another gem in Glantz's book is the armoured strength and composition of each tank formation at various dates. This proved invaluable to getting the armoured strengths right at various dates.

When it came to supporting arms such as artillery and engineering forces, Glantz provided the nominal table of equipment (TOE). For example questions such as 'how many Katyushas are there in a Guards Mortar Regiment?' could be answered. The number is 36 by the way, but we halved this to 18 to reflect the attrition of a long campaign and as a play balance mechanism considering the devastating impact these units can have in game.

The Soviet forces are fairly standardized consisting of cookie cutter Rifle Divisions and Tank Corps. There were no Mechanised Corps present in the campaign simulated (5th Mechanised Corp was on the Mius River front). The Cavalry Corps present are a little more diverse with variation in both their composition and experience.

Popov's command was an experiment by the Soviets to run their Tank Corps under a specialist command that could keep up with the mobile forces rather than languish in the rear. Previously, Tank Corps had worked singularly or at most in pairs. The grouping of four Tank Corps and the requisite command and support formations set a precedent that ultimately impacted the structure of future Tank Armies. The key failing of Popov's force structure was insufficient provision of infantry. Voronezh Front found that it had to attach additional infantry (usually in the form of Ski Brigades) to bolster the feet on the ground for Popov.



More specialist forces for the Soviet's include the independent Ski Brigades and the exotic 13th Guards Miner Battalion which was a forerunner to the Spetsnaz forces of later years. The Czech Battalion made up of expatriates was a Voronezh Front asset that was committed in an attempt to stop XLVIII Panzer

Corp from encircling Kharkov in early March 1943. The Czechs successfully held the Mzha river crossings long enough for Kharkov to be evacuated. The Shelestova Partisan Brigade fought on the front line in March 1943. These units do not have any of the special capabilities attributed to partisans; they are infantry (irregular) for game purposes.



THE GERMAN ORDER OF BATTLE

For the German side it was actually surprising how little information was available. There have been very few extensive English language text books on the battle (Nipe's Last Victory in Russia, is an example) and even less information on Corp and Army assets.

Rick Bancroft's OB ultimately was good for all the major formations, but was updated for the composition of those units and also all attachments. The website Axis History Factbook <http://www.axishistory.com/> is a fabulous resource for Axis formations and a lot of the company level data came from this source. All in all though, Rick's OB was very solid at a

Divisional level with the bulk of new work required mainly for Corp assets and other attachments. German language websites helped here and an example of the sort of information available can be seen here:

<http://www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht.de/Gliederungen/KorpsPz/LVIIPzKorps-R.htm>



Unlike the Soviet forces there was much more variation in the German formations, whether they be infantry or Panzer. There is some disparity between the number of battalions in the infantry regiments with most having two battalions and newer formations shipped in from Europe normally having three. This, like the Soviets reflects casualties taken prior to the Kharkov '43 operation. It also prevented the starting German Infantry Divisions (168th, 298th, 320th & 333rd) from covering too wide a frontage.

The composition of some of the Infantry forces reinforced how desperate the Axis were to fill the gap left after the German 6th & Axis allied armies were lost in the Stalingrad campaign. Elements of two Field Training Divisions (153rd & 382nd FeldAus) as well as 213th Security (Sicherung) ultimately fought in the front line.



There was also substantial variation between the Army (Wehrmacht) Panzer Divisions. All were very under strength in available tanks with both the 1st & 4th Panzer Armies particularly hard hit after retreating from the Caucasus. Of note, 19th Panzer Division had the 901st Lehr (Training) Regiment attached making it stronger than its other Wehrmacht brethren. Others were mere kampfguppe, 27th Panzer Division being a good example. All had great variation in their recon battalions with a range of motorized and tracked formations coupled with armoured cars.

The pre-eminent Wehrmacht formation is undoubtedly the Gross Deutschland Panzer Grenadier Division, a lavishly equipped, over strength unit. It was particularly strong in motorized infantry, artillery and tracked anti tank and anti air groups. Gross Deutschland fought for nearly the whole operation being briefly withdrawn and refurbished on the 24th February. It subsequently returned to spearhead the drive on Belgorod and the bloodying of the Soviet 40th & 69th Army's.

The SS were probably better represented at this battle than any other in World War II. All four of their premier Panzer Divisions was present (Liebstandarte, Das Reich, Totenkopf and Wiking). In addition the 6th SS Polizei Regiment was attached to the 213th Sicherung Division. All were full strength (other than Wiking) having spent much of the winter in the West refitting and training replacements. All had varying formations with attachments creating unique configurations. For example, Das Reich had a Kettenrad (motorcycle) battalion that was not present in the other divisions. Totenkopf having been recently rebuilt had put many of its veterans in the attached Thule regiment and filled out its normal regiments with recruits. The Thule Regiment subsequently



fought for most of the Kharkov operation independent of its parent. Wiking had probably performed one of the most epic marches on the Eastern Front having retreated from the Terek River deep in the Caucasus back through Rostov at the mouth of the Don to fight at Kharkov. It was essentially up to strength for manpower but down on armoured vehicles.



The Axis allied forces were a motley lot. The bulk of the Italian, Rumanian and Hungarian forces had been destroyed during Operation Uranus and the subsequent Soviet offensives. These were usually lost not because of a lack of fighting élan, but rather due to their infantry being out manoeuvred by the Soviet Mechanized and Cavalry forces. Three Axis allied formations are included – the Hungarian 1st Armoured & 23rd Light Infantry Divisions and the Italian 2nd Alpini Division Tridentina. All were either destroyed or withdrawn after the Kharkov operation.

As far as specialist units, the German's were driven to build custom formations for any purpose. An example is Kampfgruppe Steinbauer which was cobbled together to hold the Dnepr river crossings at Zaporozhe and subsequently mopped up the out of fuel Soviet 25th Tank Corp. The Fuhrer Begleit Battalion (Kampfgruppe Pohlmann) fought at Belgorod attached to Gross Deutschland. The Fuhrer Begleit was Hitler's personal base guard for wherever the Fuehrer was commanding from. It was nominally two battalions with usually one protecting Hitler and the other in the field at any particular time.

THE FEATURES OF THE PANZER CAMPAIGNS KHARKOV '43 ORDER OF BATTLE

- One Order of Battle for all campaigns. Formations were setup in such a way that the Corp attachment feature could be used to reflect the changing subordination of Divisions.
- All values have used Ed William's McNamara system that standardizes across his alternate mods of all Panzer Campaign games
- Soviet Tank & Mechanised Corps were built using a divisional structure that both made it easier to identify the whole formation and to easily subordinate it using Corp Attachment. Soviet Cavalry Corps have not been setup this way as they were true Corp formations with attached Divisions vs. a Tank Corps brigades.
- The Tank Brigades motorised infantry battalions are deemed tank riders and will move at the same rate as the tanks. This represents both the difficulty of moving motor vehicles in heavy snow and mud as well as the scarcity of trucks.
- All German infantry and Panzer Grenadier battalions have four identical companies rather than the more standard three. In real life, the actual setup was three infantry and one heavy weapons company. By including a fourth company, it solved a number of issues that had arisen while playing other Panzer Campaign games. Primary amongst these was the company fatigue rule which could quickly decimate 'A grade' German formations that were spread out to cover significant ground. By providing four

companies it was possible to customize deployments with a default of two half battalions being the most often used.

- Armour formations have tank strengths that match the records of the day.
- All Divisional units and higher have named commanders where that information was available. Some lower formations (Czech Battalion, Fuehrer Begleit) also have named leaders
- Supply units are more varied when using explicit supply. Supply dumps of up to 150 points (50 range) are in place for the start of offensives or at major logistical centres (Belgorod & Kharkov). The Germans have rail supply units (15 range) to cover large areas of the map due to the paucity of roads and the impact of ground snow. This makes holding and cutting the rail net critical for both sides. The Soviets will find it harder and harder to supply their forces as they move further away from their supply heads.
- Inclusion of static Axis & Soviet rear area troops in major towns. In the initial Soviet advance (and Manstein's counter offensive) the only way to determine its extent was via air reconnaissance or reports from towns the enemy had passed through. These static troops represent the small garrisons present in these centres.
- Morale ratings are standardised with Soviet forces either C (Guards/NKVD) or D (all others). German forces are usually A or B with a few exceptions such as security or training troops. 3rd SS Panzer Grenadier Division Totenkopf is predominantly B morale as it had only recently been filled out with new recruits and then rushed to the front. It suffered from unfamiliarity operating as a whole division for a period of time. Some sub units were seasoned – such as the Panzer Grenadier Regiment 'Thule' and these units are A morale accordingly. Axis minor Allies are C or D – the 1st Hungarian Armoured Field Division was an elite unit in that army. The Italian Alpini Division Tridentina was the only Italian Division to survive the post Stalingrad operations and was withdrawn from the Eastern Front not long after Kharkov.



THE PARAMETER DATA FILE

The Parameter file within Panzer Campaigns gives the scenario designer an unprecedented ability to change the way a game plays. It was particularly important in simulating some of the unique situations in the Ukraine in February 1943.

MOVEMENT

Seasoned players of Panzer Campaigns will probably find the new movement costs in Kharkov '43 the largest change to earlier titles. During the months of February and March 1943 there were substantial climactic changes with a mix of extremely heavy snow on the ground turning to mud (occasionally deep) followed by further periods of freeze and thaw. There was not a period of 'dry ground' that allowed rapid off road movement.

Therefore, there is an increased difficulty for infantry and motorized units to move cross country. During this period the snow was chest deep. Snow of this depth was impossible to drive across in anything less than tracked vehicles and extremely exhausting for infantry to traverse. Many of the eyewitness accounts mentioned this challenge and the fact that most forces were road bound.



Bundesarchiv, Bild 1011004-2804-11
Foto: Mehl, Pichard | 1842, Arhang

When 10th Tank Corp moved into action at the start of Operation Gallop they had to fit a number of tanks with snow ploughs to both clear the snow and push back up to a metre of soil to find solid ground. The speed of advance and the toll on running gear was horrendous. With rapid thaws that turned the excessive snow into water, the terrain was hardly conducive to rapid cross country movement.

To reflect this, the penalty for not moving in travel mode on road or rail is high with most infantry forces restricted to a single hex move per turn. On road movement is certainly quicker and factors such as streams have been removed for infantry movement purposes (it is assumed that this is factored in the overall difficulty of movement). In the Ukraine many of the railroads were raised above the local topography to ensure that lines were not washed away during the spring thaw. Foot and mounted troops will find that movement along rail is equivalent to secondary roads. All other unit types will find it more expensive in movement points.

This change makes the road and rail network extremely critical and players will find that they will be fighting for key junctions, villages and towns along that network. Some units - cavalry, ski and mechanized are less affected and will be the units of choice when moving away from



Bundesarchiv, Bild 1011004-2804-27
Foto: Mehl, Pichard | 1842, Arhang

the road net, particularly to flank blocking positions and strong points.

In play testing we have found that the advance rates are very close to historical – that is slow. It does have the impact that our ‘shorter’ scenarios average about 20 turns due to the slower pace of movement.

NEW PARAMETERS IN THE PDT

Bunker building is 5%. In the main, during this operation defensive positions were not static enough to allow units excessive time to dig extensive fortifications. Ground conditions (snow / mud) were also a great hindrance. That said, the SS found Soviet forces had fortified parts of Kharkov and other urban areas when they went to recapture it in mid March and the inclusion of this rule allows the Soviet player to do so.



PROGRAMMED WEATHER

The programmed weather was sourced from George Nipe's book 'Last Victory in Russia'. Nipe has a reference to every day of the campaign through the text. The only challenge with the weather is that any change impacts the entire map. Many of the weather variations were more local but unfortunately the game does not cater for multiple weather zones. Weather will predominantly be snow with mud becoming more prevalent during March. There is a limited chance of both frozen ground condition and storms. This again matches the historical record.

Visibility will normally be 2 with a possible range of 1 to 4 hexes. February was a period of heavy rain and snow storms and there was a limitation both in terms of movement and air availability. March was clearer and warmer, but with an increased chance of mud.



Bundesarchiv - Bild 1011-090-3914-13
Foto: Etzhold | 1944 Frühling

DESIGNER NOTES

The first thing that became obvious when designing Kharkov '43 was the distances involved and the low density of units in some parts of the front. This created a conundrum for the defender on where to place his troops when the attacker can roam almost anywhere at will. The revision of off road movement was an elegant change that reflected the current climatic conditions as well as making advance paths more predictable. Historical accounts abound with references to long columns of troops moving along communication lines in poor terrain. Players will need to carefully examine advance and retreat routes when developing their operational plans.

The change in movement rates now encourages more historical employment of unit types. Soviet cavalry is now fantastic as an off road, flanking formation but extremely vulnerable if faced by heavy troops. Soviet players will find that they are using their formations in more historical roles, with the infantry grinding forward and pinning the axis lines while the cavalry / mechanized troops move to flank strong points.



German troops are blessed with a wider choice of units within their Panzer Divisions. They have the ability to hold the road networks with their Panzer Grenadier battalions and position tracked vehicles in the open terrain. It also highlights the largest German weakness – a scarcity of infantry. Post Stalingrad, Army Group South had very little in the way of Infantry Divisions. This forced the Panzer Divisions to hold the front line resulting in heavy attrition to these specialist troops. How to achieve their objectives and preserve their forces is the biggest challenge for the Axis player. In fact another three German Infantry Divisions (168th, 298th & 320th) were badly mauled during the Kharkov operation and this carried over as a negative impact on the later Kursk offensive.

On the other hand, the Soviet player is faced with such disparate objectives over such great distances that they are forced to lead with their Tank and Cavalry Corps, just as Popov's mobile group did. These Soviet formations, like the German Panzer Divisions are not designed for holding ground indefinitely and leave these fragile forces vulnerable to counter attack while awaiting the Soviet infantry and supply to catch up.



Supply considerations will dominate play. The explicit supply or virtual supply truck rules should be used to model this. The Soviet forces will be moving away from their logistics and were in real life suffering from huge distances to their supply heads after the rapid advances of the winter. The Star and Gallop offensives were started from the march with minimal time to stockpile and the Soviet Player will find their dumps empty by day three. From that point all supplies will be truck / wagon borne and need to be constantly moving to the front. The Axis forces are falling back on their dumps but have a conundrum in the south, as all supply was going west to east on the

railways across the southern edge of the map. Historically, the cutting of the railroad at both Krasnoarmeyskoye and Sinel'nikovo prompted a desperate response to reclaim these towns and get the supplies moving again. With the bulk of the Axis supplies rail borne there is an incentive for both sides to own / interdict the rail network.

All in all we have included 30 scenarios in this initial release of Kharkov '43. With such a large map and fluid situation many more could have been done. If the player chooses to read the following history document it will become apparent how many potential scenarios are still available. There are no 'variants' included in the released 30 scenarios and we hope to release new material some time in the future.

Look for suggested playing notes in the scenario briefings for both sides.



KHARKOV '43 – HISTORY & SCENARIOS

PRELUDE



The genesis for the Kharkov '43 Operation was when the Soviet's launched Operation Uranus on November 16th, 1942. The rapid surrounding of the German 6th Army and mauling of the Axis Ally forces on the Don River left the Army Group South forces in a desperate plight.

Operation Uranus was only one of the 'Planetary' operations. Operation Mars (Rzhev '42) was launched at the same time as the Stalingrad operation and had no lesser goal than destroying Army Group Centre's 9th Army and any subsequent reinforcements. Stalin was following a pattern that had begun in 1941 of launching offensives all along the Eastern Front to try and restrict the German freedom of movement and hopefully force a strategic breakthrough. Both Operation Mars and Uranus were to be followed by the even larger Jupiter and Saturn. Operation Jupiter was called off due to the failure of Mars and Operation Saturn was diminished to 'Little Saturn' after the energetic defence and break in attempts by the Axis forces at Stalingrad.

Operation Saturn's initial objective was to reach the Azov Sea at Rostov – the city at the mouth of the Don River. If successful, the trapping of 1st & 4th Panzer Armies as well as all the Italian, Hungarian and Romanian armies would have dwarfed Stalingrad in magnitude and quite possibly been a war winning blow. With the removal of the bulk of the forces for Saturn, Operation Little Saturn focused on destroying the Italian 8th Army and Army Detachment Hollidt and to draw the Germans off from liberating Stalingrad. Only later would the drive for Rostov resume.

Many have criticized Hitler for his decision to focus the 1942 summer offensive on both Stalingrad and the Caucasus. Author John Mosier in his book 'Death Ride, Hitler vs. Stalin – the Eastern Front 1941 – 1945' builds a persuasive case for why this was the right strategy versus capturing the city targets of Moscow and Leningrad. Mosier argues that this was an economic war and that only by capturing the resources necessary to prosecute the war could the Axis powers win. Blocking Allied aid and other movement on the Volga at Stalingrad as well as capturing the oil fields at Baku, Maikop and Grozny would quickly strangle the Russian bear. Clearing the eastern Black Sea ports would remove the threat the Soviet Navy posed along the extended Axis southern flank and possibly even convince the Turk's to throw their lot in again with the German's. If successful there was a reasonable chance that Hitler could win the war in the East.

Unfortunately a scarcity of forces and the sheer enormity of the distances meant that it was harder to both take and hold ground. The Germans had in many cases got to within 100 km of the proposed 'finish lines' as laid out in the original Operation Barbarossa plan. With Operation Uranus launched in November, 1942 German forces were on the Terek River in the Caucasus and within striking distance of Baku and Astrakhan. When Operation Little Saturn was launched, the immediate peril to German forces became apparent and the decision was made to both abandon the Caucasus and also the relief of Stalingrad. Paulus' 6th Army was on its own.

The Soviet offensive continued through December and January while the German forces tried to retreat back from the Don River and points south. Rostov became the focal point for both sides as both 1st & 4th Panzer Armies had to retreat through the city and into the Ukraine beyond. The Axis forces managed to hold this key city until the bulk of the two armies had passed, though in some cases German forces had to cross the frozen Sea of Azov to escape the pursuing Soviets.

THE SOVIET STAR & GALLOP OPERATIONS

It was at the end of January 1943 as Rostov was captured that the Soviet's looked for their next push. Though their forces had been ground down by over two months of hard fighting, Stavka believed that the Axis forces were in disarray and in full retreat to the Dnepr River - a further 200 km to the west. It was believed that a quick drive across the Severnyy Donets River at Slavyansk and a push directly south to the Sea of Azov



would finally trap the German Panzer Armies that had just escaped through Rostov. This operation, codenamed Gallop was essentially the successor to Operation Saturn with the same lofty goals. South Western Front with 1st Guards Army, 6th Army and Popov's Mobile Group were the forces earmarked.

In tandem, Stalin expanded the Soviet offensive to include the capture of both Kursk and Kharkov. Voronezh Front was given these tasks and ordered 38th & 60th Army to take Kursk and 3rd Tank, 40th & 69th Armies to capture Kharkov.

On the German side, little in the way of forces existed anywhere between the Dnepr and the Oskol. 1st & 4th Panzer Armies were still arriving from beyond Rostov and Army Detachment Kempf was being grouped around Kharkov. Its first major reinforcement, Panzer Grenadier Division Gross Deutschland only arrived from Western Europe on January 21st, but was then subsequently followed by SS Panzer Grenadier Division's Liebstandarte and Das Reich over the next two weeks. In the meantime Kempf only had three weak Infantry divisions (168th, 298th & 320th) to cover over 200 km of front. Remnants of Hungarian Divisions and other rear area troops were used to form some semblance of a line.

South of the Severnyy Donets, forces from 1st Panzer Army were only just arriving and throwing up hasty defences along the Zherebets River and Slavyansk. The tie in between 1st Panzer Army and Kempf's forces was at best tenuous.

THE INITIAL SOVIET ASSAULT – JANUARY 30TH, 1943 TO FEBRUARY 19TH, 1943

Please note - All locations in the following text can be found using the Location Dialog under the View menu. Opening Scenario #0202_03s_Initial Soviet Offensive will show all formation placements. Formations can be located using the Find Unit Dialog under the View menu.



Vatutin's South Western Front launched their assault on **January 30th, 1943**. The initial aim was to clear Krasnyy Liman and break through the heavily wooded Severnyy Donets river valley and into the Donbas steppe beyond. 1st Guards Army was to lead this push and the four tank corps of Mobile Group Popov was to exploit. 6th Army was given the task of capturing the city of Izyum and maintaining a link with Voronezh Front to the north.

This action is represented in the scenarios :

[#0130_01 Operation Gallop – Preamble](#) & [#0130_02 Krasnyy Liman or Bust](#)

By **February 2nd**, 320th Infantry Division had been pushed back across the Oskol River, while 19th Panzer Division had pulled back south of the Severnyy Donets and detached its armour and the 901st Lehr Regiment to counter Soviet Forces off map at Lisichansk. This left a 40 km gap in the German lines. With the German front ruptured Popov ordered 4th Guards Tank Corp to exploit the gap and to drive south to Kramatorsk. 4th Guards Tank Corp like the rest of Popov's command was very light on tank strength and had grouped nearly all its armour in the 14th Guards Tank Brigade. Popov's other Tank Corp's waited for the Soviet infantry to clear Slavyansk.

This action is represented in the scenario :

[#0202_05_1st Guards Army - Storming Slavyansk](#)

While 4th Guard's Tank Corp waited for support at Kramatorsk, the Soviet 6th Army crossed the Oskol River. 320th Infantry Division had to break into regimental groups to cover the main

crossing points and the remnants of the 382nd FeldAus Division were regrouping in Izyum. 6th Army was successfully across at Kopyansk Uzlovoy, Sen'kova and Gorokhovatka but were stymied initially in front of Izyum. A prepared assault with 267th Rifle Division and elements of 35th Guards was needed to force the river and then capture the city.

This action is represented in the scenario :

[#0202_07_Cracking Izyum – Forcing the Oskol](#)

To the north of South Western Front, Golikov's Voronezh Front launched Operation Star on **February 2nd**. 3rd Tank Army was given the task of crossing the Oskol, capturing the communications centres of Ol'khovatka and Kupyansk and driving west directly toward Kharkov. They were faced by 298th Infantry Division, 6th SS Polizei Regiment and the Deutschland Regiment of Panzer Grenadier Division Das Reich.

6th Guards Cavalry Corp quickly crossed the Oskol north of Kupyansk at Dvurechnaya and using its mobility swung around behind the defending German forces on the river. Hampered by the heavy snow, facing fast moving Soviet forces the 298th was ultimately forced to abandon its defences along the Oskol.

This action is represented in the scenario :

[#0202_02 Kupyansk - The Trials & Tribulations of 298th Infantry Division](#)

North of 6th Guards Cavalry Corp, 48th Guards, 62nd Guards and 160th Rifle Divisions advanced out of their bridgehead near Valuyki with the aim of clearing the 'highway' to Ol'khovatka. Das Reich's Deutschland Regiment put up a spirited defence at Kozinka and Borki but were ultimately forced to retreat as the roads behind them were cut. Faced only by Soviet Infantry, the fast troops of the SS Aufklarung (Recon) Battalion were able to harass the Soviet columns.

This action is represented in the scenario :

[#0202_06 Road to Ol'khovatka – Deutschland's Desperate Defence](#)

Bordering to the north of 3rd Tank Army, Kazakov's weak 69th Army was tasked with clearing the highway to Volchansk. 69th Army had 4 Rifle Divisions (161st, 180th, 219th & 270th) as well as a number of attached brigades (including 173rd Tank). This infantry heavy force was faced by the elite Panzer Grenadier Division Gross Deutschland. Gross Deutschland was able to slow the 69th Army but not stop it due to the wide frontage it had to cover. Ultimately, it was the threat of the Soviet 40th Army advancing behind Gross Deutschland's lines that forced it to retreat.

On **February 3rd**, Voronezh Front's Golikov released his two Tank Corps (12th & 15th) a day earlier than planned to support the forces held up by Das Reich on the road to Ol'khovatka. This

premature release meant less tanks were available than hoped for and the troops had had the briefest of rests. 12th & 15th Tank Corp were attached to 3rd Tank Army and tasked with driving to Chuguev on the Severnyy Donets.



Simultaneously, further German forces were arriving at Kharkov. Das Reich's Der Fuehrer Regiment was ordered to Verlikiy Burluk north of Kupyansk to be hopefully joined by the Deutschland Regiment and the divisional armour. SS Panzer Grenadier Division Liebstandarte was deployed along the Severnyy Donets east of Kharkov at Staryy Saltov and Chuguev with the Panzer Regiment in reserve.

The Soviet Infantry of 1st Guards Army was closing on Slavyansk and found it defended by the newly arrived 7th Panzer Division. 195th Rifle Division was heavily mauled in an ambush just north of the city and this prevented a quick capture of this key location.

February 4th, saw the Soviet forces advancing slowly on all fronts. 3rd Tank Army managed to capture Verlikiy Burluk but found Das Reich well established just north of the village. This region became a bulwark for the Germans, creating a salient between the advancing 69th and 3rd Tank Army. Das Reich began to launch local counter attacks from this stronghold. 298th Infantry Division was forced to finally abandon Kupyansk and found the roads westward increasingly cut. Liebstandarte's Recon Battalion under Panzer Meyer left Chuguev on the 3rd to try and reach 298th Infantry but found the way blocked by Soviet Cavalry.

69th Army's 161st & 219th Rifle Divisions cleared Veliko-Mikhaylovka after a two day battle against Gross Deutschland's Fusilier Regiment.

3rd Panzer Division arrived from 1st Panzer Army and was immediately dispatched to east of Slavyansk. They arrived just in time to prevent 7th Panzer Division being encircled two days later.

On **February 5th**, Voronezh Front's 40th Army was ready to launch its offensive towards Belgorod. 40th Army was forced to attack in two echelons as three Rifle Divisions and 5th Guards Tank Corp were currently reducing bypassed Axis forces in its rear areas. Moskalenko, led with his five available rifle divisions, with an immediate aim of capturing Korocho and breaching the upper reaches of the Lipovyy and Severnyy Donets.

This action is represented in the scenarios :

[#0205_01s Drive on Belgorod – Golikov's Right Hook](#) & [#0205_02 Korocho – Assault from the March](#)

This attack was exceedingly dangerous for the Germans, for where 69th Army and 3rd Tank Army were faced by the elite Gross Deutschland and Das Reich Divisions, 40th Army was hitting a weakened 168th Infantry Division. Without mobile troops, 168th Infantry Division could not



cover enough ground to prevent the Soviets flanking them. Grenadier regiment 429th held out at Korocho for a day but then joined the rest of the Infantry Division in a fighting withdrawal back towards Belgorod. This retreat quickly exposed Gross Deutschland's flank and accelerated its pull back in front of 69th Army.

6th Army's, 172nd Rifle Division captured Balaklaya while Izyum fell to 267th Rifle Division. 6th Army's success prompted the retreat of 320th Infantry Division in regimental columns back towards Andreyevka.

3rd Tank Corp from Mobile Group Popov joined 4th Guards Tank Corp at Kramatorsk where they promptly halted and dug in. 11th Panzer Division's lead elements began detrainning at Konstantinovka and was joined by a Regiment of 333rd Infantry Division with orders to prepare to oppose Popov's Tank Corps.

Das Reich launched a heavy counterattack from the Verlikiy Burlok area preventing 69th Army from maintaining contact with 3rd Tank Army's right flank. The SS would continue to hold a salient in this area for a further 4 days.

On **February 6th**, the weather worsened as another blizzard reduced visibility and topped up the deep snow. 57th Guards and 195th Rifle Division fought their way into the outskirts of Slavyansk but the well entrenched 7th Panzer Division stopped them dead. So began a struggle that would continue for nearly two weeks. 11th Panzer Division marching north towards Kramatorsk fought a sharp meeting engagement at Druzhkovka against 4th Guards Tank Corp. Though successfully turning the Soviets back, the Panzer Division lost all of it's AT guns and a number of mechanised infantry carriers (SPW).

Further to the west, 333rd Infantry Division found 35th Guards Division at Barvenkovo sacking the German supply dump. 333rd Infantry was forced to retreat back down the railroad towards Lozovaya having failed to complete its link up with 7th Panzer Division at Slavyansk.

In Voronezh Front's sector, 15th Tank Corp and 160th Rifle Division attempted to cross the Severnyy Donets at Pechenegi for the first time. They were bloodily repulsed by Liebstandarte, though the Germans were forced to give up their bridgehead across the river at Chuguev. The SS resistance was forcing a Soviet reappraisal of how to breach the river and it was agreed to swing 6th Guards Cavalry Corp further south through 6th Army's sector and on to Novaya Vodolaga. This move could not start till the following day. The resistance at the Severnyy Donets forced 3rd Tank Army to take a 3 day hiatus while bringing up its heavy guns and other assets necessary to force the river.

In 40th Army sector, Moskalenko's second echelon began to arrive, reinforcing his rapid advance towards Belgorod. Fighting raged at Korochoa on both the 6th and 7th with 168th Infantry Division's 429th Grenadier Regiment forced to withdraw to prevent being encircled in the town.

February 7th, dawned with a slowing of Soviet advances on all fronts, other than in 40th Army's sector. German resistance at Slavyansk was forcing a reappraisal of 1st Guards Army's objectives. It was agreed to send a sizable force to skirt the German stronghold with Popov's 4th Guards Tank Corp ordered from Kramatorsk to Krasnoarmeyskoye. 4th Guards Rifle Corp headed southwest to Lozovaya and then planned to move on to Krasnoarmeyskoye. This change of plan to the path of least resistance sowed the seeds for Manstein's successful counter offensive.



The 298th Infantry Division having retreated from Kupyansk found itself overwhelmed by 3rd Tank Army forces that had already reached the Severnyy Donets ahead of it. The Division was destroyed for all intents and purposes on this day.

40th Army was approaching the outskirts of Belgorod by midday and the movement of Gross Deutschland forces into this sector increased the urgency to seize the city. Moskalenko concentrated his artillery and launched a night assault that evening. Despite strong initial resistance, the city fell a few days later, with 168th Division retreating towards Tomarovka to the west.

This action is represented in the scenario :

[#0207_01 Fall of Belgorod – 40th Army to the Fore](#)

By **February 8th**, Popov's 10th & 18th Tank Corp were supporting 6th Guards Rifle Corp attempts to capture Slavyansk and Lisichansk (off map to the east). Lisichansk fell on February 6th but any further attempt to expand the foothold over the Severnyy Donets failed. The unexpected German resistance at Slavyansk had divided Popov's forces and resulted in insufficient force to force a decision at either Slavyansk or Kramatorsk.

11th Panzer Division again advanced from Druzhkovka to Kramatorsk and broke into the town on the eastern side of the Krivoy Torets but with its armour road bound and the bridges blown, it was unable to reach the centre of the city on the western bank. Skirmishing continued for a number of days, but neither side had sufficient strength to dislodge the other.

The Soviet 6th Army continued to try and encircle the columns of 320th Infantry Division retreating northwest towards Kharkov. The large town of Andreyevka fell but 172nd Rifle Division found the approaches to Zmiyev on the Mzha River defended and the advance stalled. The 320th Infantry Division still remained separated in individual regimental columns and had been on the move in atrocious conditions for over a week.

With the capture of Andreyevka, Stavka ordered 6th Guards Cavalry Corp to begin its raid by crossing the Donets at this point, follow the highway through Velikaya Bereka and then turn north to Yubotin via Novaya Vodolaga.



Bundesarchiv, Bild 146-1973-084-35
Foto v. Reg. I. Nr. 1643

Kazakov's 69th Army continued to press Gross Deutschland back towards Volchansk which was steadily weakened as it sent units to support 168th Infantry Division at Belgorod. Finally the decision was made to pull back across the river all of Gross Deutschland's forces east of the Severnyy Donets. It would now be required to not just face 69th Army, but

also 40th Army's forces that were threatening to move on Kharkov from the north if Belgorod fell.

At dawn, 40th Army committed 183rd, 309th and 340th Rifle Divisions to assault Belgorod while mobile forces moved both east and west of the city in an attempt to encircle it. Kampfgruppe Pohlmann (Fuehrer Begleit Battalion) and Gross Deutschland's Aufklarung unit bolstered the defending 168th Infantry Division. The Hungarians of 23rd Light and 1st Armoured Division had moved through Belgorod and blunted the Soviet advance, but were themselves quickly pushed back to the city. With an open flank to the west, time was running out for the defenders.

On the morning of **February 9th**, Vatutin's South Western Front was frustrated with their inability to capture Slavyansk. 41st Guards Rifle Division left Lisichansk to bolster 195th & 57th Guards Rifle Divisions attempts to clear the city. More and more Soviet troops were being tied up by the resilient 7th Panzer Division.

At Barvenkovo, 35th Guards Rifle Division resumed its advance following 333rd Infantry Division towards Lozovaya.

Following Gross Deutschland's orders to cross to the western side of the Severnyy Donets, Das Reich also started to pull back, abandoning its forward position at Belyy Kolodez. 69th Army also captured Volchansk and Shebekino severing the road network on the east side of the Donets River.

The assault at Belgorod finally cleared the German forces from the city by the evening. The weakened Axis forces pulled back both to the south and west trying to block the major roads to Kharkov. 40th Army prepared to push on to the south.

The weather warmed measurably on **February 10th**, with roads impacted by the heavy flow of



Bundesarchiv, Bild 146 1082-184-32
Foto: H. J. 1041

traffic. 6th Army's 350th Division reached Zmiyev, but found units from Liebstandarte dug in and preventing a capture from the march.

6th Guards Cavalry Corp, made rapid progress and captured Novaya Vodolaga and the rail line heading north. In response to this dangerous penetration, Das Reich vigorously attacked the Cavalry. The deepening mud

was a key factor in saving 6th Guards Cavalry Corp as it was pushed back to Okhochaye late in the day.

Lozovaya fell to the pursuing 35th Guards Rifle Division, capturing substantial supplies. It would be four days before the Division would be ready to march on.

The general German withdrawal to prepared positions beyond the Severnyy Donets coincided with 3rd Tank Army's renewed offensive. The Soviets prevailed were they had been repulsed only three days earlier. Both Pechenegi and Chuguev fell in succession, but the advance again faltered once the defensive positions at Rogan were reached.

Kazakov's 69th Army captured Staryy Saltov after managing to cross the river the prior day. German resistance increased significantly as units became more compressed falling back on Kharkov. Again, the Soviet advance petered out.

40th Army having successfully cleared Belgorod, split in two with 3 Rifle Divisions despatched to Ol'shan and Bogodukhov to protect the western flank of the army. The remaining 4 Rifle Divisions attacked south along the Belgorod/Kharkov highway and railway. 5th Guards Tank Corp was held in army reserve in readiness for the final push.



By **February 11th**, Axis forces could only react to the Soviet moves. Kharkov was about to come under great pressure from three directions. A huge 130km wide gap had been torn between Slavyansk and Kharkov, and the German player could only imagine the Soviet forces passing through there.

Popov ordered 10th Tank Corp to disengage and reinforce 4th Guards Tank Corp at Kramatorsk. Simultaneously that evening, the aforementioned Guards Tank Corp headed off south on the road to Krasnoarmeyskoye. Attached Tank & Ski Brigades fleshed out the weakened 4th Guards.

The German defences at Rogan held against 3rd Tank Army and the decision was made to use both 12 & 15th Tank Corps to breakthrough the line and into Kharkov. 6th Guards Cavalry Corp was ordered to push back through Novaya Vodolaga and on to Yubotin as soon as the SS forces withdrew south of the Mzha River.

The weather again turned on **February 12th**, with a blizzard moving in, freezing the ground and dropping visibility.

4th Guards Tank Corp made rapid progress to the South capturing Grishino early that morning and Krasnoarmeyskoye later in the day. The German command was alarmed at this development and XL Panzer Korp reacted immediately as the loss of Krasnoarmeyskoye meant the loss of the railroad (and supplies) from the west. The newly arrived SS Panzer Grenadier Division, Wiking was tasked with retaking the town, while 11th Panzer Division was ordered to strike west from Kramatorsk in an attempt to cut across the Soviet's rear.



Bundesarchiv, Bild 1011-330-3021-21A
Foto: Michalik | 1943 Januar - Februar



Wiking's initial attack reached the outskirts of Krasnoarmeyskoye but then bogged down. Its tank strength of 5 resulted in a dependence on the infantry and a slower pace. 11th Panzer Division's sweep ran straight into the redeploying 10th Tank Corp supported by 41st Guards Rifle Division at Cherkasskoye. Fighting continued here till the following day when 11th Panzer Division withdrew – having failed to interdict the Soviet drive south.

South Western Front's Vatutin, the eternal optimist deduced that the German stand at Slavyansk was a rear guard action to allow 1st and 4th Panzer Armies to retreat back to the Dnepr River. Every bit of intelligence was interpreted in light of this view. For example, columns redeploying in preparation for Manstein's counter offensive were assumed to be retreating rather than moving into jump off positions.

With that fallacy foremost, Vatutin issued orders to move more forces south west to the Dnepr River crossings rather than the originally planned southern drive to the Azov Sea. 6th Army was ordered to send 267th Rifle Division and 106th Rifle Brigade southwest towards Pereshchepino and then onto the Dnepr crossings above Dnepropetrovsk. 1st Guards Army began a wholesale move of its forces to the west. 41st Guards & 244th Rifle Division left the Slavyansk area to follow 35th Guards Rifle Division on its march to Pavlograd and Sinel'nikovo beyond. 38th Guards Rifle Division left the stalemate at Lisichansk to replace the forces removed from Slavyansk.

Vatutin also transferred from his front reserve, 1st Guards & 25th Tank Corp as well as 1st Guards Cavalry Corp. These mobile forces were already nearing the Dnepr having followed close behind the advancing 6th Army infantry.

Once these units began their march southwest there was little organised resistance. The weather, supply state and the tyranny of distance were larger impediments.

40th Army committed both 5th Guards Tank Corp & 25th Guards Rifle Division in the push south from Belgorod. Their capture of Zolochiv forced the Germans back towards Kharkov and Korp Raus was concerned that it might not be able to prevent its flank from being turned.

February 13th saw fighting continue at Kramatorsk and Krasnoarmeyskoye with little gained by either side.

Golikov's Voronezh Front launched the penultimate assault on Kharkov. With 40th Army attacking from the north, 69th Army from the northeast and 3rd Tank Army from the southeast and east, the risk of the city being isolated increased. 6th Guards Cavalry Corp moved to follow its orders to push beyond Kharkov and meet 40th Army's spearheads west of the city.

6th Guards Cavalry Corps move was deemed the most dangerous of all the Soviet positions. Hausser's SS Korp pulled mobile troops out of both Liebstandarte and Das Reich to push the Cavalry back once and for all. Unfortunately, the removal of these troops coincided with 3rd Tank Army's push at Rogan and a situation where the Germans were attacking in one sector and being pushed back in the other.



These actions are represented in the scenarios :

[#0213_01 Fall of Kharkov – Act 1 : Liberation](#), [#0213_02 Novaya Vodolaga- Clash of the Elite](#) & [#0213_03 3rd Tank Army - At the Gates of Kharkov](#)

40th Army continued to advance on the back of the Guards units committed the prior day. Dergachi had fallen by nightfall and recon elements of 5th Guards Tank Corp had actually

reached the cities northern defences. 107th & 309th Rifle Divisions were poised to capture Garyvoron and Bogodukhov after Borisovka fell far to the northwest of Kharkov.

On **February 14th** XL Panzer Korp discontinued its attacks at Kramatorsk and Krasnoarmeyskoye. It resolved to pin the Soviet forces but not to try and dislodge them. This change allowed 10th Tank Corp to continue to move south after a two day hiatus.

3rd Tank & 69th Armies were still grinding forward northeast and east of Kharkov due to weight of numbers, but the SS defence took its toll.

The continued advance of 40th Army west of Kharkov was cause for concern. 183rd Rifle Division reached the northern outskirts of Kharkov and was joined later in the day by 5th Guards Tank Corp, 25th Guards & 340th Rifle Divisions.

6th Guards Cavalry Corp had again been pushed back to Okhochaye thus ending the hope for a rapid encirclement of the city.

3rd Tank Army had almost reached the factory district of southeast Kharkov, but advances of the last three days had been single digit km per day – at a horrendous cost.

Sensing its imminent liberation, a citizen uprising occurred in Kharkov further distracting the Germans. With this background, Hausser made his first request to abandon the city, which was denied.

As **February 15th** dawned, Hausser independently ordered a withdrawal which he subsequently overturned that evening. This counter order though was too late to prevent Das Reich from abandoning its positions northeast of the city and the Soviets taking advantage of the withdrawing Germans.



Meanwhile, 111th & 184th Rifle Divisions moved away from the city in an attempt to help 6th Guards Cavalry Corp. 40th Army's 5th Guards Tank Corp and 340th Rifle Division were hampered by deep snow and the heavily wooded suburbs as they entered West Kharkov.

3rd Tank Army's 15th Tank Corp and 160th Rifle Division were involved in heavy street fighting with Das Reich in East Kharkov – forcing the Germans back.

The SS decided that any further sacrifice at Kharkov was counter productive and abandoned the city by noon of **February 16th**. 3rd Tank Army's 62nd Guards Rifle Division had made a serious penetration into Kharkov from the southwest and this tipped the German hand.

The fact that the Axis forces had not been encircled and left in good order was significant considering the forces the Soviets had thrown at them. The chaos of having three armies converge on one city was evident and it would take a full three days to reorder the forces that had captured the city.

In the south, 1st Panzer Army made the critical decision to abandon Slavyansk after two weeks of intense fighting. This move was intended to allow forces to be concentrated in preparation for Manstein's coming counter offensive. 7th Panzer Division left the city unimpeded just hours before 4th Guard Rifle Corp's 38th Guards, 57th Guards & 195th Rifle Divisions resumed their push into the city. III Panzer Korp's 3rd Panzer Division took over defensive responsibilities just south of Slavyansk.

10th Tank Corp had made contact with 4th Guards Tank Corp at Krasnoarmeyskoye and centred its defence on Grishino.

7th Panzer's retirement was again viewed by Vatutin as further proof of the German intention to withdraw behind the Dnepr. Nothing could be further from the truth.

17th February was a (relatively) quieter day. 40th Army's 107th & 309th Rifle Divisions captured Garyvoron and Bogodukhov essentially unopposed.

The Soviet armies in Kharkov continued to reorganise themselves and prepare to push onto Sumy on the Psel River, Poltava and Krasnograd.

7th Panzer Division having left Slavyansk the prior day arrived in the area northeast of Krasnoarmeyskoye centred on Krasnoye.

Das Reich was withdrawn to Krasnograd to rest and reorganise and to protect this key supply nexus while further south 35th Guards Rifle Division captured Pavlograd routing the Italian garrison.

The peace though did not last long. **18th February** saw Wiking and two regiments of 333rd Infantry Division begin an assault on Krasnoarmeyskoye and Grishino for the second time. Of interest, the regiments of 333rd Infantry Division had marched all the way from Barvenkovo via Lozovaya before joining 1st Panzer Army. With 10th Tank Corp newly arrived and yet to dig in

and Poluboyarov's 4th Guards Tank Corp's tank strength down to 17, the German attack made progress immediately.

This action is represented in the scenario :

[#0218_01_Krasnoarmeyskoye - Poluboyarov's Swan Song](#)

As Soviet forces were released from Kharkov, they moved out to continue the advance. 3rd Tank Army forces battled Gross Deutschland at Yubotin and captured Merefa.



Korp Raus' battered Divisions were forced to slow the Voronezh Front with 320th Infantry working in tandem with Gross Deutschland & 168th Infantry at Vysokopol'ye. Liebstandarte was now defending south of Novaya Vodolaga.

In the meantime on **February 19th**, 6th Army continued its push westward with 6th & 172nd Rifle Divisions advancing to within 15 km of Krasnograd. Pereshchepino had fallen to 267th Rifle Division.

1st Guard Army's 35th Guards Rifle Division sent a regiment along the highway to Novo-Moskovsk, cutting the Dnepropetrovsk to Krasnograd railway. The other two regiments marched on Sinel'nikovo.

With 6th Army's forces approaching the Dnepr River, Vatutin transferred 25th Tank Corp and 1st Guards Cavalry Corp to that army, while retaining 1st Guards Tank Corp in reserve. 25th Tank Corp immediately bypassed Sinel'nikovo and headed for Zaporozh'ye south of Dnepropetrovsk on the Dnepr.

In a moment of incomprehension, Stavka ordered Poluboyarov's forces at Krasnoarmeyskoye to *'encircle and destroy the enemy at Krasnoarmeyskoye, fully restore the situation. Do not in any case, permit an enemy withdrawal'* these orders arriving as his forces were themselves being assaulted and encircled.

There are three campaign games that represent the Soviet offensive :

Voronezh Front

[#0202_01s Operation Star - Forward to Kharkov!](#)

South Western Front

[#0202_02s Operation Gallop - One more push to the Azov Sea](#)

Combined Soviet

[#0202_03s Initial Soviet Offensive - Combined Star & Gallop](#)

MANSTEIN'S BACKHAND BLOW

Please note - All locations in the following text can be found using the Location Dialog under the View menu. Opening Scenario #0220_01s_Manstein's Backhand Blow - The German Riposte will show all formation placements. Formations can be located using the Find Unit Dialog under the View menu.

The aura of unreality that pervaded both Stavka and the Front commands in February 1943 had parallels with the previous 1941 / 42 winter. Then, exhortations to advance all along the front, given to armies that were both over extended and undersupplied had resulted in none achieving a strategic breakthrough.



The Soviet command though thought this time was different, the body blows handed to the Germans since Stalingrad had to be mortal and any forces shipped in from Western Europe would be inadequate. For further proof, the ejection of the SS from Kharkov was a demonstration of just that point. Little did the Soviets realise that the traditional Russian strategy was being played against them – allow an enemy to advance into the depths of the country and when at the end of a long supply line – cut them off and chop them up.

When the dual Star & Gallop operations were launched, Manstein tossed around for the riposte. He intended to ruthlessly strip some sectors, while holding fast in others and ultimately accruing the operational reserves required to counter the Soviet advances. Manstein intended to use the German strengths of mobility and command flexibility. The challenge for the Germans was how to achieve force concentration and preservation while the Soviet offensive was ongoing. This was further complicated by Hitler's rejection of any proposal to abandon Kharkov, tying up key forces when operational mobility was required.

Manstein's plan coalesced around the Slavyansk bulwark. By holding firm here, the Soviets were leaving a dangerous bubble in their flank. With the fall of Kharkov, Krasnograd became the left flank of the bag that Manstein was allowing the Soviets to enter. Liebstandarte was tasked with holding here and would not be used in the counter offensive until a later date.



Bundesarchiv, Bild 146-1995-041-23A
Foto: o. Ang. | März 1943

Hitler though had been resistant of the plan initially as it ceded territory in the Donbas to the Soviets. The economic value of the coal mining in the region drove his arguments. He specifically met with Manstein to discuss and was swayed when Soviet tanks from 25th Tank Corp were reported only 25 km away from his conference with Army Group staff at Zaporozh'ye. After confirming the plan, Hitler quickly boarded his plane and headed back to Rastenburg!

Manstein's plan to confront South Western Front, called for three Panzer groups to rout the Soviets back to the Severnyy Donets River.

The SS Panzer Korp, consisting of the resting Das Reich and the newly arrived Totenkopf were to strike south along the highway from Krasnograd to Pereshchepino and then on to the Dnepr if necessary. The SS were tasked to specifically isolate the 6th Army forces that were approaching the Dnepr River crossings. Once secured, they were to turn east towards Pavlograd and then turn north towards Lozovaya in tandem with the other involved Panzer Korps.

As part of his redeployments, Manstein moved 4th Panzer Army's HQ to Dnepropetrovsk. The subsidiary command, XLVIII Panzer Korp with 6th & 17th Panzer Divisions also moved west with its forces concentrating south of the Samara River. Again the intention was to advance directly north to Pavlograd and then on to Lozovaya.

Finally, XL Panzer Korp was to continue what it started, the direct confrontation with Popov's mobile forces. Though powerful on paper, with Wiking, 7th & 11th Panzer Divisions, all had been engaged for at least a week in heavy fighting with 7th Panzer having been in action for twice as long. The plan for this force was to destroy Popov's armour and then rout the remaining infantry. Once completed, they were to advance on Barvenkovo, and in parallel with the other two Panzer Korps push on to the Donets.

With the Soviet capture of Krasnoarmeyskoye and Sinel'nikovo, the clearing of the railway through these towns accelerated the offensive's schedule. That said, there was no front line. Regiments and Divisions were scattered across a vast area holding key towns and communication nexus. There was now an opportunity to use mobile forces to break up and isolate each of these concentrations. The coming battle was to be more akin to a desert campaign than Russia in the winter. Manstein's plan counted on the Soviets exhausting all their reserves and supplies in their rush to the Dnepr.

THE OPERATION AGAINST SOUTH WESTERN FRONT – FEBRUARY 20TH, 1943 TO MARCH 5TH, 1943



With 35th Guards Rifle Division established at both Novo-Moskovsk and Sinel'nikovo, German forces were left with only a single rail line both north/south (via Poltava) and east/west (via Zaporozh'ye) for supply and reinforcement. The whole of Manstein's counter offensive would be at risk if the second line could not be re-established.

On **February 19th**, 15th Infantry Division had arrived in Dnepropetrovsk, direct from France. Immediately, two regiments were despatched to clear Novo-Moskovsk, while one was sent by rail to the more distant Sinel'nikovo. Riding right up to the town's outskirts, Grenadier Regiment 81 stormed the town in a night assault and cleared it.

This action is represented in the scenario :

[#00-Started - Coup de main at Sinel'nikovo](#)

February 20th, saw Das Reich drive south from its assembly areas at Krasnograd, capturing Pereshchepino on the Orel River and linking with 15th Infantry Division at Novo Moskovsk. This advance of more than 80 km in one day resulted in cutting the supply line for 267th Rifle Division and 106th Rifle Brigade currently en route to Kremenchug on the Dnepr.

35th Guards Rifle Division pulled back from Novo-Moskovsk along the Samara River with the rest of the Division holding just north east of Sinel'nikovo.

XL Panzer Korp committed both 7th & 11th Panzer Divisions to engage Popov's 3rd & 18th Tank Corps – currently moving to support the forces under siege at Krasnoarmeyskoye. Wiking was also ordered to push north to Vodyaroye and pin 10th Tank Corp while 333rd Infantry Division mopped up Krasnoarmeyskoye.

Voronezh Front's 69th Army committed its 2nd echelon (161st Rifle Division) to try and advance south west of Bogodukhov.

40th Army continued to advance northwest approaching Slavgorodok on the Pazhayna River. Only scattered German forces impeded the spearheads.

Surprisingly, 6th Army on **February 21st** continued to push 25th Tank Corp south of Sinel'nikovo. Its lead Tank Brigade (111th) reached Chernoar-meyskoye only 25 km from Zaporozh'ye. 25th Tank Corp was unopposed but dwindling fuel and heavy attacks from the air significantly slowed its progress. The Luftwaffe operating from bases around Dnepropetrovsk would have a decisive influence during the counter offensive.

The 16th & 17th Guards Tank Brigades from 1st Guards Tank Corp were positioned to support infantry between Lozovaya and Pavlograd while 267th Rifle Division and 106th Rifle Brigade attempted to pass back between Pereshchepino and Novo-Moskovsk and rejoin the main body of 6th Army.

Unfortunately for the Soviet formations, lead elements of Totenkopf were arriving at Pereshchepino from Krasnograd.

XL Panzer Korp continued to attack a desperate Popov, assisted by a cold spell hardening the ground. A heavy engagement at Maryevka between 7th Panzer Division and 10th & 18th Tank Corps, left the Soviets smashed and Popov requesting permission to withdraw.

Voronezh Front's 3rd Tank Army attempted to encircle elements of Gross Deutschland at Yubotin, with 12th Tank Corp battling for the control of Ogul'tsy.



40th Army captured Krasnopol'ye on the highway to Sumy.

February 22nd dawned with Das Reich moving from Novo-Moskovsk to Pavlograd overnight. The town was cleared of 35th Guards Rifle Division troops by midday. Further forces were sent southwest to Sinel'nikovo again forcing the Guards to retreat north. A regiment of 41st Guards Rifle Division near Sinel'nikovo also started to retreat back towards Boguslav.

Totenkopf moved southwest of Pereshchepino actively engaging 267th Rifle Division and 106th Rifle Brigade.

25th Tank Corp now 100 km away from the nearest friendly forces continued its faltering advance. It was now short of all supplies.

Wiking swung in a wide arc westward through Krivorazh'ye to catch Popov's Tank Corp in the flank. This move prompted Popov to accelerate the retreat of his forces to the north.

Gross Deutschland was forced to abandon Yubotin as 3rd Tank Army threatened the final exit routes. This withdrawal allowed 15th Tank Corp to join 12th Tank Corp in clearing Ogul'tsy.



The battle between Popov and XL Panzer Korp is in the scenario :

[#0220_02_Death of Mobile Group Popov - An armoured clash](#)

February 23rd saw XLVIII Panzer Korp launch its attack northward from Chaplino (off map). 6th Panzer Division advanced north to Boguslav engaging the scattered 41st Guards Rifle Division's outposts. 17th Panzer Division reached the Samara River at Petropavlovka – opposite 244th Rifle Division. 15th Infantry Division linked up with 6th Panzer Division as it drove north.

Elements of Totenkopf drove southeast to Papisnoye engaging 16th Guards Tank Brigade and elements of 35th Guards Rifle Division. It then split into two columns with the northern column finishing the day 20 km west of Lozovaya and the southern at Vyazovok.

Das Reich at Pavlograd awaited the arrival of Totenkopf and XLVIII Panzer Korp before advancing north.

The remnants of Mobile Popov Group, joined by the arriving 38th Guards Rifle Division fought a delaying action on the highway north to Barvenkovo. 4th Guards Tank Corp's 13th Guard Tank Brigade assisted having just been refurbished with 50 new tanks. XL Panzer Korp slowed as it tried to cope with the stiffening resistance and numerous stragglers from Krasnoarmeyskoye.

By evening Vatutin finally realised the peril his forces were in. Both 6th & 1st Guards Army had elements isolated by the German spearheads. Worst still, his mobile forces were either committed in the wrong area (25th Tank Corp on the Dnepr) or smashed (Popov's Mobile Group). Vatutin transferred further Divisions from 6th Guards Rifle Corp and requested that Voronezh front assist him. Stavka ordered that 3rd Tank & 69th Army stop their advance and turn south to assist.

40th Army reached its westernmost advance along the Psel River. Its line stretched from Sumy down to Lebedin and then on to Akhtyrka until reaching Kotelva. The arrival of 167th Infantry Division and VII Armeekorps from Army Group Centre stopped all further progress.

Manstein's Panzers on **February 24th** were in a rough line stretching from Pavlograd to Kramatorsk. Das Reich spent the day mopping up around Pavlograd while Totenkopf cleared Vyazovok. Totenkopf's northern column captured Orelka.

During the day both Panzer Divisions of XLVIII Panzer Korp bridged the Samara River. 6th Panzer Division also pressed 41st Guards Rifle Division back towards Pavlograd causing it great loss in men and materiel.



Voronezh Front in response to Stavka's request, ordered 3rd Tank Army to capture Krasnograd while 69th Army advanced on Poltava. 40th Army was to hold in situ. These orders again ignored the current situation with 3rd Tank Army heavily committed near Yubotin and 69th Army lacking in strength.

With the fall of Yubotin, the German line was shortened and Manstein pulled Gross Deutschland out of combat and back to Poltava. During this time it was rested and took on replacements. A second Panzer battalion and new Tiger company were also added to its Panzer Regiment. When Gross Deutschland returned to action on March 7th it was measurably stronger.

February 25th saw Vatutin desperately trying to form a line to slow the German advance. Lozovaya and Barvenkovo were chosen as the two linchpins of the defence and engineers went to work fortifying them.

25th Tank Corp finding its lines of communication cut by the advance of 6th Panzer Division, turned back to the northeast. With no air supply, its armour and motorised units had to abandon most of their vehicles, with the remainder of the Corp under heavy air attack. Ad hoc Kampfgruppe Steinbauer was tasked with mopping up the remnants as it retreated back from the Dnepr.

The two SS Divisions started their advance from Pavlograd to Lozovaya abreast. Totenkopf on



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Foto: Kammin, Richard | 1942

the left planned to rejoin its northern column at Orelka. 267th Rifle Division having retreated from beyond Pereshchepino held a line east of Orelka. Das Reich advanced along the highway and railway from Pavlograd to Lozovaya. With open flanks and bypassed Soviet units, actions were sporadic but unexpected. 58th Guards Rifle Division newly arrived, halted Das Reich southwest of Lozovaya.

6th Panzer Division became entangled with the retreating 41st Guards & 244th Rifle Division. 17th Panzer Division found the road they were on filled with panicked Soviet troops and abandoned equipment. These columns put up uneven resistance and the division captured Dobrovol'ye ahead of the day's objectives.

Resistance in front of XL Panzer Korp grew as it neared Barvenkovo, 1st Guard's Army Kuznetsov had moved as many units as he dared from beyond Slavyansk in the hope of stopping the Germans.

3rd Tank Army's 11th Rifle Division and 15th Tank Corp captured Novaya Vodolaga while further west, 12th Tank Corp cleared Valki.

Vatutin by **February 26th** had finally fashioned a line to try and stop the German advance. Totenkopf's thrust from the west and Das Reich's drive from the south pocketed a sizable force

just west of Lozovaya at Alekseyevko. Das Reich also entered Lozovaya but found that 58th Guards Rifle Division fought fanatically supported by tanks from 1st Guards Tank Corp. The SS had the dual issue of storming the town and reducing the encircled Soviets.

This action is represented in the scenario :

[#0226_02 A Lozovaya too Far - Das Reich's wrath](#)

6th Panzer Division continued to engage 41st Guards & 244th Rifle Division, but was relieved by 15th Infantry Division so it could continue north. 17th Panzer Division broke through Vatutin's line east of Lozovaya and actually had recon elements in Mechebilovka, blocking the highway into Lozovaya from the northeast.

Wiking crossed the rail line west of Barvenkovo against heavy resistance. 11th Panzer Division reached Barvenkovo's southern outskirts while 7th Panzer Division bridged the Sukhoy Torets under fire near Grigorovka.



On **February 27th**, the German Panzer forces were heavily engaged against Vatutin's defensive line. Das Reich took all day to clear Lozovaya while Totenkopf tried to reduce the pocket west of the town. The Soviet troops inside the pocket had been ordered to try and breakout to the north. Significant numbers of Soviet stragglers were scattered across the German rear areas and supply columns were constantly being disrupted and harassed.

6th Panzer Division struggling to follow 17th Panzer Division north became involved in numerous engagements behind the German front line. 17th Panzer Division, whose tank strength was down to two, dug in at Mechebilovka waiting for its supply lines to be cleared.

XL Panzer Korp decided to bypass Barvenkovo, only tasking 11th Panzer Division to directly assault the town. Wiking started to slip through the Soviet line and head north towards the Severnyy Donets. 7th Panzer Division broke out of its bridgehead at Grigorovka, aiming for Izyum, 30 km away.

Rescuing 1st Guards & 6th Army on **February 28th** become Stavka's priority. All troops belonging to those armies were ordered back to the Severnyy Donets. 3rd Tank Army was transferred from Voronezh Front to South Western Front to try and cover the retreat. It was ordered to pivot left and drive directly south towards Lozovaya. It was expected to concentrate between Kegichevka and Virkhnii-Bishkin by March 1st. 3rd Tank Army began to disengage its mobile troops and transferred two Rifle Divisions to 69th Army (160th & 350th) to hold their defensive sector.

Das Reich & Totenkopf advanced up the Krasnopavlovka railway capturing both Krasnopavlovka and Mikhaylovka. Totenkopf's commander, Eicke was killed at Mikhaylovka while trying to locate his Panzer Regiment. His Fiesler Storch aircraft was shot down.

XLVIII Panzer Korp Divisions continued north slowly with most engagements in the rear areas with Soviet stragglers.

11th Panzer Division captured Barvenkovo while Wiking and 7th Panzer moved up to the Severnyy Donets. The Soviets held a bridgehead across the river at Izyum to assist any units retreating from the south.



On the **1st March**, 3rd Tank Army's, 15th Tank Corp & 3 Rifle Divisions (111th, 184th & 219th) arrived in the Kegichevka area. 6th Guards Cavalry Corp formed up between Alekseyevskoye and Cherkasskiy Bishkin. 12th Tank Corp joined the other units that evening.

Totenkopf turned northwest liberating first Ligovka and then Sakhnovshchina. Das Reich approached Mironovka from the southeast.

Movement slowed appreciably for both sides as 6 days of clear weather had steadily thawed the snow cover and the roads became very slushy. The cloudless conditions had helped the Luftwaffe but also thawed then frozen the ground solid every night turning the roads into unnavigable ruts.

2nd March saw 3rd Tank Army delay its attack due to a lack of fuel and ammunition. It would take another day to bring forward sufficient quantity.

Das Reich captured Mironovka and was just short of Alekseyevskoye. They were joined by 6th Panzer Division who had reached the Donets near Andreyevka and was moving northwest along the southern bank. Totenkopf, struggling across poor bridges and worsening roads eventually linked up with Liebstandarte 10 km from Kegichevka.

As XLVIII & XL Panzer Korp reached the Severnyy Donets, Manstein reorganised his forces. Liebstandarte was transferred back to the SS Panzer Korp. 11th Panzer Division joined XLVIII Panzer Korp while 17th Panzer Division joined the newly arrived LVII Panzer Korp. Wiking and 7th Panzer Division were tasked with holding the river line and protecting the right flank of Manstein's attack.

Early on **3rd March** 3rd Tank Army initiated an attack comprising two Tank Corps (12th & 15th), 6th Guards Cavalry Corp and 3 Rifle Divisions (111th, 184th & 219th). Rybalko's attack was stopped dead as soon as it met the advancing SS. He immediately went on the defensive.

Totenkopf launched its attack from the west and headed for Kegichevka.



Liebstandarte moved directly north to Staroverovka while Das Reich moved towards Yefremovka. Late in the day, Liebstandarte sent a force to Yefremovka where it joined Das Reich and closed the Kegichevka 'Kessel' (encirclement in German).

Further to the east, 3rd Panzer Division supported by a Regiment of 333rd Infantry Division recaptured Slavyansk which had been stripped of most of its defenders.

When the **4th March** dawned all but 6th Guards Cavalry Corp of 3rd Tank Army was encircled by the SS. 6th Guards Cavalry Corp & 350th Rifle Division were steadily being pressed back by 6th Panzer Division. 17th Panzer Division followed in its partners wake.

Rybalko immediately ordered his forces to break out of the pocket. A number of columns were able to evade the Germans but many were not so lucky. Most of 12th Tank Corp escaped but without any of its heavy equipment. Less than a regiment survived from each of the Rifle Divisions.

This action is represented in the scenario :

[#0303_01_Destruction of 3rd Tank Army - An army sacrificed](#)

March 5th marked the rout of 1st Guards & 6th Army and the destruction of 3rd Tank Army's mobile troops. South Western Front's defeat had seen it pushed back beyond the Severnyy Donets – essentially the position from which it had begun its advance a month earlier. The men of South Western Front had paid with their lives for the euphoria and mistaken analysis of both Stavka and their Front command.

SS Panzer Korp commander Hausser tasked Totenkopf with destroying the Kegichevka pocket, while Liebstandarte & Das Reich prepared to attack Kharkov from the southwest.

6th Panzer Division and the arriving 11th Panzer Division formed up to the right of the SS and would be expected to breach the Mzha River and protect their flank.

There are two campaign games that represent Manstein's offensive against South Western Front :

Feb 20th – Mar 1st [#0220_01s_Manstein's Backhand Blow - The German Riposte](#)

Feb 26th – Mar 4th [#0226_01s_Stemming the Flow - Vatutin's Desperation](#)

MANSTEIN'S PUSHES NORTH

Please note - All locations in the following text can be found using the Location Dialog under the View menu. Opening Scenario #0306_01s_Manstein Pushes North - The road to Kursk will show all formation placements. Formations can be located using the Find Unit Dialog under the View menu.



Manstein had achieved the seemingly impossible. In two weeks he had turned a dire situation into a stunning victory.

South Western Front had retreated with little of its equipment over the Severnyy Donets. It would take a week or more before any of its units could influence the battle around Kharkov.

The Soviets were forced to cobble together a defensive line and had to again reorder their forces. Moskalenko's 40th Army had to transfer three Rifle Divisions (107th, 183rd & 340th) to 69th Army. Moskalenko was left with only a weak Tank Corp (5th Guards), 3 Rifle Divisions (100th, 303rd & 309th) as well as two Tank Brigades (116th & 192nd) on an extended front.

Rybalko's 3rd Tank Army was rebuilt around two Guards Rifle Divisions (48th & 62nd), 6th Guards Cavalry Corp (in reserve) and new arrivals – 253rd Rifle & 179th Tank Brigade. Col Svoboda's strong Czech Battalion was also committed.

6th Army still had 6th & 267th Rifle Divisions and had been bolstered by 25th Guards & 52nd Rifle Division. Additionally 179th Tank Brigade had been released from Front reserve and placed in Taranovka.

69th Army was strong on paper with five Rifle Divisions (160th, 161st, 180th, 270th & 305th). It now had a further three in reserve transferred from 40th Army. 69th Army also had two Rifle Brigades (37th & 129th), three Ski Brigades (4th, 8th & 6th) as well as two Tank Brigades (96th & 173rd). Unfortunately all these units had been in continuous action for well over a month and their strength was illusory.

The Germans intended to continue to press the retreating Soviets. Three Korps were earmarked to participate in the initial action. The three SS Panzer Grenadier Divisions were to move up to Kharkov and if there was an opportunity to capture it quickly, enter the city. XLVIII Panzer Korps was to cross the Mzha River and cut the roads entering Kharkov from the east. Korps Raus built around the refurbished Gross Deutschland was to push along the seam between 3rd Tank & 69th Army with the ultimate goal of capturing Bogodukhov.



THE OPERATION AGAINST VORONEZH FRONT – MARCH 6TH, 1943 TO MARCH 18TH, 1943



Ensuring that the Soviets had little respite, Manstein kept the Panzers moving north. On **March 6th**, Das Reich attacked directly towards Novaya Vodolaga defended by 253rd Rifle Brigade. By evening the town was isolated. Liebstandarte attacked toward Valki and having pressed 48th Guards Rifle Division back crossed the Mzha River at Fedorovka. Totenkopf was preparing to join the other SS Divisions as it had completed mopping up operations at Kegichevka.

This action is represented in the scenario :

[#0306_02_The SS Recapture Kharkov - Act II : Conquest](#)

6th Panzer Division found Taranovka heavily defended and though its initial attack entered the town, it found it could go no further.

This action is represented in the scenario :

[#0306_03_XLVIII Panzer Korp battles at Taranovka](#)

The German's committed both Korp Raus and 11th Panzer Division to attacks on **March 7th**.

Das Reich sent elements forward to capture crossing points over the Mzha. Staraya Vodolaga just north of Novaya Vodolaga, was a logical objective. Das Reich's right wing had also made good progress pushing back 62nd Guards Rifle Division. Liebstandarte engaged 48th Guards & 305th Rifle Divisions at Valki. The fighting at Valki was particularly stiff. The village was quite spread out with a hill dominating part of it. Totenkopf moved forward from Kegichevka, ready to join the other two SS Divisions.

6th Panzer continued to battle in Taranovka. A regiment of 25th Guards Rifle Division and 179th Tank Brigade battled to hold the town. Fighting was particularly intense around a large church.

11th Panzer Division was committed and attacked Okhochaye defended by 350th Rifle Division. The Soviets quickly fell back as Das Reich had already started to push back the neighbouring 62nd Guards Rifle Division. The pull back of 350th Rifle Division opened up an opportunity to hit Taranovka from the west.

Korp Raus began their attack on 69th Army with Gross Deutschland and Totenkopf's detached Thule Regiment leading the way. Gross Deutschland made good progress up the Kolomak River valley. Thule had a harder battle at Iskrovka and Shelestova. A major Partisan Brigade had been operating out of the large forests nearby and chose to stand and fight with the regular Red Army units. Both Thule & Gross Deutschland Recon Battalion had a hard time clearing the Partisans from their wooded bunkers.



This action is represented in the scenario :

[#0307_01_Gross Deutschland leads the way - Korp Raus attacks](#)

Voronezh Front's 38th Army took over some of 40th Army's frontage, covering the Psel River from Sumy to Lebedin.

March 8th found Soviet forces pulling back. XLVIII Panzer Korp finally broke the dogged resistance at Taranovka. The town had been fought over a number of times since the campaign began. 6th Panzer Division moved up to the Mzha River and found the 1st Czech Battalion defending a bridgehead at Sokolovo. 11th Panzer Division also reached the river at Merefa. The

Mzha River line was defended by Soviet units that had been pushed back over the prior two days.

All three SS Division went into action. Das Reich attacked Yubotin from the south. Liebstandarte captured Ogul'tsy and then swung around Yubotin to attack it from the north. Totenkopf, further to the west captured Telsavka.

Gross Deutschland working in tandem with Totenkopf reached Kovyagi. Thule continued to battle with the Partisans and other troops at Shelestova.

The temperature had plummeted yesterday continuing into **March 9th**. Visibility dropped and the Luftwaffe was unable to fly.

Early in the day, Yubotin fell to Das Reich who then advanced east towards Kharkov. Liebstandarte captured Peresechnaya with elements continuing north until they were west of Dergachi. Totenkopf turned northwest and entered Ol'shan. The SS Panzer Korp had almost separated 3rd Tank Army from 69th Army. The tired cavalry of 6th Guards Cavalry Corp were the only formation linking the two armies.

Gross Deutschland mirrored the advance of the SS and turned north towards Bogodukhov. Thule finally bested the resistance at Shelestova and moved on to capture Vysokopol'ye. 320th Infantry Division continued to mop up Soviet formations that had been overtaken by Gross Deutschland's advance.

In the evening the three Rifle Divisions (107th, 183rd & 340th) transferred from 40th Army arrived at Bogdukhov. The intention was for these Divisions to launch a counterattack against Gross Deutschland the following day and re-establish firm contact with 3rd Tank Army.

Further west there were signs that the Germans intended to hit the outposts of both 38th & 40th Army.



The Soviet infantry counterattack from Bogodukhov on **March 10th** came to nought. It was so ineffectual that Gross Deutschland did not report it in their summary of the day.

6th Army's infantry around Andreyevka began spoiling attacks against LVII Panzer Korp in an attempt to pull units away from Kharkov.

LII Armee Korp Infantry Divisions (57th, 255th & 332nd) in tandem with 167th & 168th Infantry Divisions attacked the strung out Soviet Divisions along the Psel and at Akhtyrka.

Das Reich hit the prepared defences of 19th Rifle Division and 86th Tank Brigade just west of Kharkov. Totenkopf battered the Soviet Cavalry and captured Dergachi. It sent strong elements on to Cherkasskiye Tishki, forming a flank guard for the SS Divisions preparing to capture Kharkov. Liebstandarte moved around the northern suburbs of Kharkov following Totenkopf into Dergachi where it prepared to assault the city the following morning.

6th Panzer Division looked for a crossing position near Zmiyev on the Mzha. The arriving 106th Infantry Division took over 11th Panzer Division's sector allowing it cross the Mzha further west. 6th Panzer Division was desperately low on tank strength, reporting only six operational vehicles. Vatutin launched an attack from Zmiyev to delay 6th Panzer Division's operations.

Gross Deutschland approached Bogodukhov from the southeast while Thule cleared Krasnokutsk and 320th Infantry Division held a bridgehead over the Merchik at Murafa.

The collapsing situation for Voronezh Front, coupled with the previous defeat of South Western Front moved Stavka to action. Two reserve armies (1st Tank & 21st) as well as 64th Army refitting after Stalingrad were ordered to move forward. Little could be expected from them in the short term as it would take at least two weeks to bring them into theatre.

Before dawn on **March 11th**, Liebstandarte set off in three columns to enter Kharkov's northern suburbs. All soon found themselves enmeshed in urban defences raised by the 17th NKVD Brigade. Heavy resistance was reported at Alexejevka as well as the graveyard. A battalion of 1st SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment had to assault across the airport into the fire of AA guns. By the end of the day spearheads had reached Red Square but could not take it.



Bundesarchiv, Bild 10 111-Zschaeckel-109-13
Foto: Zschaeckel, Friedrich | März 1943

Das Reich, similarly found the city's defences formidable as it tried to break in from the southwest. It made little progress. Totenkopf continued to screen to the north of Liebstandarte and tied in with Gross Deutschland near Gurinovka.

This action is represented in the scenario :

[#0311_01_Platz der Liebstandarte - Street Fightin' Man](#)

11th Panzer struggled to make headway near Merefa, but 6th Panzer & 106th Infantry Divisions managed to build small bridgeheads over the Mzha after armour that was facing them was drawn off to Kharkov.

This action is represented in the scenario :

[#0311_04_XLVIII Panzer Korp Tries Again - Crossing the Mzha](#)

Gross Deutschland launched its assault on Bogodukhov and cleared the town by early evening.

This action is represented in the scenario :

[#0311_03_Last Stand for 69th Army - The Bogodukhov Bastion](#)

March 12th saw the SS inside Kharkov. Liebstandarte's position at Red Square was compromising the defence of West Kharkov as the Germans could interdict traffic moving through the city. The Soviet city commander Belov, started to pull forces out of the western side of the city to prevent them from being cut off. This eased the way for Das Reich who managed to break into the western suburbs. Liebstandarte though was not in the city in strength, at least one regiment was still fighting at Alexejevka trying to break into the defences. Liebstandarte's recon battalion was actually cut off and at risk of being overrun.



Totenkopf continued to shield Liebstandarte, but was ordered to prepare to sweep around the city to the east.

6th & 11th Panzer Divisions made small gains but had not yet reached the Udy River.

LVII Panzer Korp managed to build a bridgehead 5 km southeast of Andreyevka, but had difficulty expanding it.

Gross Deutschland moved northeast towards Garyvoron, while 320th Infantry Division was ordered to Merlo to tie in with Totenkopf. Thule, for the first time since arriving in Russia was transferred back to its parent Division Totenkopf.

40th & 69th Armies were in full retreat. Korp Raus pressing from the south and LII Armeekorps from the west were threatening to fragment the armies if they did not pull back. 69th Army desperately tried to rebuild its defences north of Kharkov, while 40th Army retreated up the Vorkslitsa River valley.

East of Kharkov, 58th Guards, 113th & 244th Rifle Divisions had arrived over the last three days and began setting up defences along the Severnyy Donets at Chuguev and Staryy Saltov.

Before dawn on **March 13th**, SS Panzer Korps commander Hausser was embroiled in another controversy. His superior Hoth determined that taking Kharkov by storm was too costly and should be encircled first. Both interpreted the orders given by Manstein differently. After disagreeing for over 18 hours, Hausser had no choice but to withdraw Das Reich from West Kharkov just as it was making headway.

Fortunately for Hausser, Liebstandarte had cleared the northern edge of the city and began to sweep south to prevent any Soviet troops from disrupting the rear of the Division. This allowed Das Reich to travel through the northwest suburbs rather than travel far to the west. Liebstandarte became embroiled in clearing Red Square which had to be taken building by building. Towards the end of the day, the Soviet defenders pulled back across the Lopan River that flowed through the city.



Totenkopf in the meantime had formed Kampfgruppe Baum (composed of a battalion of Panzers and two battalions of Panzer Grenadiers). The Kampfgruppe moved east to Bayrak after engaging a Soviet tank force. It then moved southwest to Rogan, before pulling back north to more defensible positions.

Gross Deutschland reached Bol'shaya Pisarovka and found it defended. After a two hour exchange the town was cleared and Gross Deutschland continued onto Garyvoron. An evening assault also cleared the town and the Germans had now blocked a key retreat route for 40th Army.

With Baum's reported move east of Kharkov it became apparent to Belov that the city could not be held. He slowly moved his forces to the southeast corner of the city where the large tank factory complex (Factory 183) dominated the Kharkov – Chuguev highway.

Hoth made a second critical decision – to pull 6th Panzer Division back to rest. Their failure to decisively breakthrough had been frustrating but unfortunately their withdrawal was ill timed. 6th Panzer Division handed their positions over to 106th Infantry Division.

Golikov committed the last of his reserves, the 2nd & 3rd Guards Tank Corp with over 300 tanks between them, but these units were still moving into position. 2nd Guards Tank Corp was ordered to Belgorod, while 3rd Tank Corp was to defend the highway at Tomarovka. 1st Guards Cavalry Corp was committed after resting for a week and started to move to Chuguev and Staryy Saltov to try and cover the retreating Soviet forces.

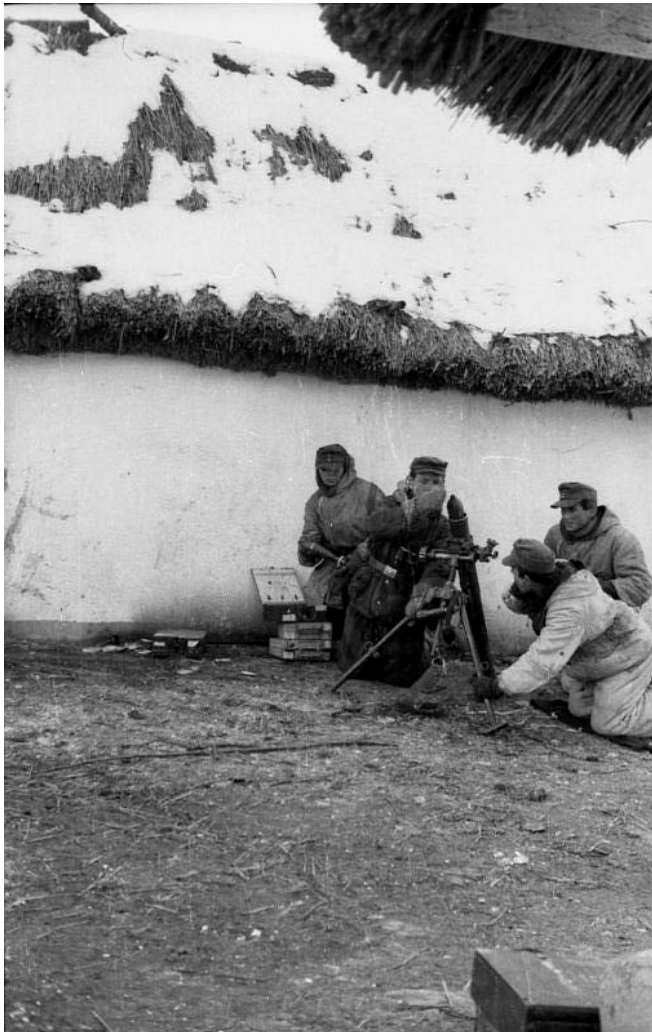
March 14th had Liebstandarte firmly in control of West Kharkov. Liebstandarte reported that much of the city had been abandoned and that only sporadic rearguards were being engaged. The retreating Soviet forces within the city allowed the Division to cross to the east bank. It also allowed Das Reich who was now northeast of the city to move around the eastern suburbs and prepare to assault the factory complex. Das Reich's initial assault went in at 1500 hours.



Kampfgruppe Baum ended up in a running battle at Rogan and did not clear the town till the evening. With Baum blocking the Kharkov – Chuguev highway, the Soviets began to abandon all

positions south of the Udy River. Unfortunately, the bulk of 6th Panzer Division had already left for Yubotin and was unavailable to follow the retreating Soviets.

Gross Deutschland advanced on Borisovka, southwest of Tomarovka and ran head on into elements of both 2nd & 3rd Guards Tank Corp. After a running battle that lasted most of the day, the Soviets withdrew having lost over fifty tanks. Gross Deutschland laagered in Borisovka overnight.



40th Army continued to retreat northeast, but with the highway cut at Garyvoron, it had to move further and further into 38th Army's sector.

With Kharkov essentially captured by **March 15th**, Manstein planned the next and final phase of the operation. He planned to trap the Soviet forces southeast of Kharkov that were still west of the Severnyy Donets. He also hoped to be able to liberate Belgorod, all before the mud season set in.

Liebstandarte completed mopping up in the southeast of the city while Das Reich intensified operations in the tank factory. The fighting here was extremely close quarters and brutal.

Totenkopf's Kampfgruppe Baum pushed on to Chuguev, capturing it but seeing the bridge over the Donets blown up.

6th Panzer Division returned back to Merefa and with 11th Panzer attacked retreating troops at Borovoye and Bezlyudovka. 106th Infantry Division proceeded to clear the large forested area northeast of Zmiyev.

Gross Deutschland was again engaged by elements from three Guards Tank Corp (2nd, 3rd & 5th). Dug in at Borisovka, Gross Deutschland destroyed another forty tanks in aborted Soviet assaults. By the end of the day nearly the whole Division was deployed around the town. Both 167th & 320th Infantry Divisions were coming up on either flank, needed to protect the Korps supply lines.

The Soviet Guards Tank Corps were trying to rescue 161st Rifle Division that was cut off at Shchetinovka by the advance of 167th Infantry Division.

On the **16th March**, after further heavy fighting, Das Reich cleared the tank factory, pushing the Soviet troops out. The remnants of 19th Rifle Division, 86th & 79th Tank Brigade as well as 17th NKVD Brigade broke out at night. They retreated to the northeast and reached 1st Guards Cavalry Corp outposts on the Severnyy Donets the following day.

Totenkopf was engaged at Lyptsy by several large Soviet groups trying to reach 69th Army lines. Meanwhile, Kampfgruppe Baum was attacked 113th Rifle Division at Chuguev. After multiple attacks, the Soviets had a foothold in both the north and south of the town.

Liebstandarte prepared to head north to Belgorod to try and relieve the pressure on Gross Deutschland. Moving along the main highway, Liebstandarte ran into a strong blocking position on the hills near Bol'shiye Prokhody

Many Soviet troops found they could not cross to the north bank of the Udy and retreated southeast towards Skripai. 106th Infantry Division harassed these troops as they pulled back.

Gross Deutschland continued to battle the Guards Tank Corps at Borisovka but were never challenged by the full weight of numbers. The Guards attacked in units no larger than fifty tanks which allowed Gross Deutschland to weather the storm. Gross Deutschland destroyed another one hundred tanks around the town for little loss to themselves.

320th Infantry Division captured Zolochev and was on the end of a line of German Infantry Divisions that stretched in a straight line from Zolochev to Sumy.



Bundesarchiv - Bild 1011732-0129-28
Foto: Göttert | 1943

The ground condition was now deteriorating quickly with mud conditions deepening as the long spell of clear weather moved in.

17th March saw Liebstandarte continue to move north slowly while Totenkopf and Das Reich continued to clear the areas east and northeast of Kharkov.

6th Panzer Division reached Chuguev and assisted Kampfgruppe Baum in clearing up the Soviet penetrations. By the end of the day the town was back in German hands.

Gross Deutschland was busy intercepting mechanised groups both east and southeast of Borisovka. It was surprised when fifteen tanks carrying infantry stormed the town and grabbed a foothold in the northern suburb. Repeated counterattacks failed to dislodge the Soviets.

On the **18th March**, all three SS Divisions moved north towards Belgorod. Totenkopf moved up the west bank of the Severnyy Donets and become enmeshed fighting 1st Guards Cavalry Corp. Das Reich was more successful and against light opposition reached Belgorod's southern outskirts late in the day.

Liebstandarte in a daring move ordered Peiper's SPW Battalion to reconnoitre the city. Peiper took this as permission to try and take the city. After a wild ride he secured the city by noon. 2nd Guards Tank Corp counterattacked but was driven off by Peiper's accompanying Tigers. Liebstandarte reinforced Peiper's success and moved further troops into the city.

There are two campaign games that represent Manstein's offensive against Voronezh Front :

Mar 6th – Mar 18th [#0306_01s_Manstein Pushes North - The road to Kursk](#)

Mar 11th – Mar 18th [#0311_02s_Kharkov Envelopment - Disaster on the Donets](#)



CONCLUSIONS



Bundesarchiv, Bild 1011-209-0086-12
Foto: Koch | 1941 Sommer

After the fall of Belgorod, operations slowed as participants' battled exhaustion and the deepening mud. The Soviet lines anchored on the Severnyy Donets, turned west just north of Belgorod.

Manstein proposed to continue north to cut off the Kursk bulge, going as far as to suggest to his peer Kluge in Army Group Centre that the operation should be jointly planned. Kluge politely declined. Manstein's suggestion was hardly practical. Mud conditions were starting to set in and the chances of dry conditions for any more than two weeks were low. He also had no fresh Panzer Reserves – all had been in combat for many weeks. Tellingly, many of the vehicles whether tank, truck or half track were breaking down due to lack of maintenance. The vast distances covered over the last six weeks had a cumulative effect that probably would not have carried the Panzer Divisions much further north. Infantry the Achilles heel for the Germans was also critically low and had taken disproportionate losses during the Kharkov operations.

The removal of the Kursk bulge would have been a crowning achievement, as it would have significantly shortened the front line and generated needed reserves. That said, Stavka was also starting to flood the immediate area with reserves. The armies that had fought at Stalingrad

were available for redeployment with the 64th Army already in transit. The Soviets had reserves that could be deployed – the Germans did not.

The cost in manpower and equipment was also high for the Germans. They would never again have the standard of recruit as was available at Kharkov. All three SS Divisions arrived from Europe in superb condition. The loss of almost 12,000 casualties during the campaign was the equivalent of one whole Division.

For the Soviets it was a sobering experience. Fresh from the success of Stalingrad and the subsequent advance something akin to victory disease took over. Working with little respite on the end of extremely long supply lines, their forces were expected to achieve impossible results. Stavka ignored the German strength to improvise and dangerously assumed that their analysis was flawless. There was also little co-operation between South Western and Voronezh Front. Both advanced on divergent paths which opened dangerous gaps between them and left little opportunity for mutual support.

It is estimated that the Soviets lost 600 tanks and over a thousand each of artillery and anti tank guns. Considering the forces involved these relatively low numbers reflects the poor initial strength of the units employed. Too much of the available Soviet material was still at Stalingrad and was yet to be redeployed forward to the front.

The percentage of killed vs. wounded for the Soviets was high with 40,000 killed out 87,000 total casualties. This is probably reflective of the distances that the Soviets penetrated to the Dnepr and the poor chance of returning to Soviet lines.

Following the third battle of Kharkov, the Eastern Front went into a three month hiatus – the longest for the war. This was partly due to the fatigued nature of the participants but probably more directly attributable to the grand plans both sides had for the summer of 1943 – plans that would see carefully husbanded forces smashed together at Kursk.



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SCENARIO DESCRIPTIONS AND PLAY NOTES

#00-Started - Coup de main at Sinel'nikovo

Turns : 9

Getting Started - Feb 18th to Feb 19th, 1943. Gen. Buschenhagen's 15th Infantry Division had just travelled from France for 10 days where it had spent the winter rebuilding after sustaining heavy casualties at Yelnya. With no time to spare, Grenadier Regiment 81 did not disembark at Dnepropetrovsk as planned but continued forward by rail to the outskirts of Sinel'nikovo where Russian troops were reported to be in residence. Riding almost to the outskirts of the town the regiment stormed into the town and quickly pulled off a coup de main by seizing it from the march. (Size, Small) The player should select the axis side to play for this getting started scenario.

#0130_01 Operation Gallop – Preamble

Turns : 49

Operation Gallop Preamble - Jan 30th to Feb 3rd, 1943. Vatutin's South Western Front was ordered by Stavka to attack from the march as soon as possible. Vatutin planned to cross the Sevrenyy Donets as quickly as possible with 1st Guards Army breaching the heavy forests and reaching the steppe beyond. Once across the water barrier, Popov's Mobile Group could thrust south for the Sea of Azov and pocket the German 1st & 4th Panzer Armies. This scenario covers the initial moves as Soviet 6th Army thrusts west for Izyum and 1st Guards Army and Popov push south beyond Slavyansk. (Size, Large) This is an interesting HTH scenario. It is possible to play either side against the AI but it will be a challenging defence and withdrawal for the German player. The Soviet player needs to get across the Zherebets River as quickly as possible while aggressively pushing 320th Infantry & 382nd Feldaus Divisions back in the north.

#0130_02 Krasnyy Liman or Bust

Turns : 25

Krasnyy Liman or Bust - Jan 30th to Feb 1st, 1943. As South Western Front prepared to launch Operation Gallop it was necessary to clear the forests north of the Severnyy Donets. This would require pushing 19th Panzer Division away from Krasnyy Liman and hopefully form a bridgehead over the Severnyy Donets, ready to push onto Slavyansk. The Soviet 4th Guards Rifle Corp is tasked with this mission and will be supported by 4th Guards Tank Corp. (Size, Medium) This scenario is recommended for HTH or Soviet player vs. the AI. The Soviet player has to focus on crossing the Zherebets River quickly and in force. The Germans have terrain and mobility on their side, but have to time when to abandon the river line.

#0202_01s Operation Star - Forward to Kharkov!

Turns : 149

Operation Star - Feb 2nd to Feb 16th, 1943. Stalingrad surrendered today and German forces had been pushed back more than 1,000 kilometres in less than three months. Stavka has demanded that Axis forces be destroyed at every opportunity and one more effort would be required to take Kharkov, the great German supply and communication centre in the Ukraine. Voronezh Front chose to assault from the march to take both Belgorod and Kharkov using 40th, 69th & 3rd Tank Army. To the north, 38th & 60th Army were tasked with capturing Kursk. This scenario ends on the historical date that the Soviets captured Kharkov. The German forces are few but fortunately elite including the SS Panzer Grenadier Divisions, Das Reich & Liebstandarte

as well as the Wehrmacht's Gross Deutschland. The Soviet player will win if he can capture Kharkov, the German if he can deny his opponent. (Size, Campaign Game) This is a very fun and challenging HTH campaign. The German player will have to skilfully withdraw to preserve his forces while slowing the Soviet advance on Kharkov. Historically, the 298th Infantry Division was destroyed during this operation and the remnants formed into Sturm.Btl.298. Do not be surprised to lose 298th Infantry Division in game. For the Soviet player this is a timed rush to Kharkov. 3rd Tank Army will make initial progress but the arriving SS units will slow their advance. 69th Army will only slowly force Gross Deutschland back until 40th Army threatens to turn its flank. As Kharkov is approached, river crossings and the compressed German Divisions will see the battles become more intense and solid fronts form.

#0202_02s Operation Gallop - One more push to the Azov Sea Turns : 179

Operation Gallop - Feb 2nd to Feb 19th, 1943. Stalingrad surrendered today. While Voronezh Front launched Operation Star, South Western Front pushed to take advantage of their multiple bridgeheads over the Sevrenyy Donets. This is the initial campaign by South Western Front to drive to the Sea of Azov and isolate Army Group South. The Soviets aim was twofold, firstly to drive directly south through Slavyansk and Artemovsk with Popov's Mobile Group. The second aim was to use 6th Army to push towards the west, covering the deep flank of Popov's troops. Once the German's resolved to hold Slavyansk against Popov, the Soviet offensive turned south west with the aim of cutting the east/west railway at Sinel'nikovo and if the opportunity presented itself, taking the Dnepr river crossings at Dnepropetrovsk. (Size, Campaign Game) This is another challenging HTH campaign game. Soviet forces will be able to push across the Donets and into the open steppe beyond. Unit density will be low and defending at critical towns or intersections more the norm. Slavyansk's control of the north/south road requires it be either cleared or bypassed to the west, with Barvenkovo the next major road south. The decision will be whether to storm Slavyansk or spread thinly west. For the German player the challenge is to survive the initial crisis at Slavyansk and then to counter the Soviet moves. Both sides have good mechanised forces, but the Axis player will find much of it tied down defending rather than counterattacking. Historically 320th Infantry Division had an epic march back to Andreyevka in three regimental columns. At various times each of these were surrounded, but ultimately all survived, partly on fortitude but more because it was opposed by the infantry heavy 6th Army.

#0202_03s Initial Soviet Offensive - Combined Star & Gallop Turns : 179

The Soviet Initial Offensive - Feb 2nd to Feb 19th, 1943. Flushed with the success of the victory at Stalingrad, Stavka launched Operation Gallop/Star on the day the Paulus surrendered 6th Army in ignominy. The Soviet operation was hurriedly pulled together from the march to take advantage of the perceived disarray of the Axis forces. Report after report was received and it was obvious to Stavka that the Germans were abandoning both Rostov and the Mius River line - just as they had withdrawn from the Caucasus. Pushing both south and west they could trap Army Group South and dwarf Stalingrad. The Soviets satisfied their strategic aim with Star - the capture of Belgorod and Kharkov. With Operation Gallop they went perilously close to capturing both the Dnepr crossings and isolating 1st and 4th Panzer Armies on the River Mius.

(Size, Campaign Game) Combining Operation Star and Gallop and using the whole map, this is the largest scenario in Kharkov '43. This campaign is a perfect team HTH game. Though the Soviets are strong the distances are significant. The German player will have to decide where to use his reinforcements and his better mobility while preserving his strength for tomorrow. The Soviet player will find that the march routes and supply considerations will be front of mind combined with river crossings and urban fighting.

#0202_04 Kupyansk - The Trials & Tribulations of 298th Infantry Division Turns : 19

Kupyansk - Feb 2nd to Feb 3rd, 1943. The German 298th Infantry Division and 6th SS Polizei Regiment took the full brunt of 3rd Tank Army's attack across the Oskul River. 3rd Tank Army's orders were to breach the German defences, clear the communications centre of Kupyansk and head straight for Kharkov as they were to be the southern pincer of Voronezh Front's plan to isolate the city. The Germans with few reserves could only try to slow the Soviet thrust. This scenario is the first two days of 3rd Tank Army's attack and its attempt to exit the map. (Size, Medium) This scenario is a good HTH and Soviet player against the AI challenge. The Soviet player needs to capture all the objectives on the river line and then try to exit forces west to the Severnyy Donets. The Soviet Cavalry in particular excel at flanking the German positions and outrunning the German infantry. Historically, 298th Infantry Division was ultimately destroyed due to the turning of their flanks at Dvurechnaya.

#0202_05_1st Guards Army - Storming Slavyansk Turns : 49

Operation Gallop (South Eastern sector) - Feb 2nd to Feb 11th, 1943. The initial operations of 1st Guards Army called for the German lines to be breached at Slavyansk. Popov's Mobile Group was then to move into the breakthrough and push to the south. Historically the German's stymied the Russians at Slavyansk beginning 9 days of heavy fighting with disastrous consequences for the Soviets. 4th Guards Tank Corp swung to the west and captured Kramatorsk, but could go no further due to a lack of tanks. Slavyansk ultimately became the right flank of Manstein's counterattack. (Size, Large) This is a good scenario for both HTH and play for either side against the AI. Both sides have to capture Slavyansk and that will be a focal point. If forced to the west the Soviet advance will be significantly slower due to the transport net. The German player will find that any reinforcements received will have to be fed into the line as they arrive and used to protect the flanks as the Soviets try to round them.

#0202_06_Road to Ol'khovotka - Deutschland's Desperate Defence Turns : 19

Road to Ol'khovotka - Feb 2nd 1943. The northern wing of 3rd Tank Army burst out of the Urazovo bridgehead in the early hours of February 2nd. With 2 Guards and 1 Rifle Division it was expected that the porous German line could be breached quickly and the key town of Ol'khovotka reached by the evening. Despite being heavily outnumbered, SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment Deutschland managed to hold the key villages of Borki and Kozinka for the bulk of the day. It was not until they were threatened with encirclement that they pulled back. The German defence was so successful that 12th & 15th Tank Corps had to be released prematurely to get the Soviet offensive back on track. (Size, Medium) This is a scenario that can be played in any configuration, HTH or against the AI. Watch the road network! The SS made a

stand at both Kozinka and Borki but were ultimately forced to pull out as the Soviets flanked these positions. It is easy to find units having to go cross country in deep snow because their exit road has been cut. The German player has the advantage of a number of armoured and mechanised units that can move much more freely than the Soviet infantry. The Soviet has might on his side with the ability to pressure the German player anywhere he decides to make a stand.

#0202_07_Cracking Izyum - Forcing the Oskol

Turns : 15

Cracking Izyum, Feb 2nd 1943. The 587th Infantry Regiment of 320th Division was tasked with holding the bridges over the Southern Oskol River. As the last German soldier crossed, engineers prepared the bridges for destruction. South Western Front was desperate to capture the bridges intact and had massed 267th Rifle Division in preparation to storm the crossings. As added insurance one regiment of 35th Guards Rifle Division was tasked to help compromise the river line. 35th Guards was expected to liberate Barvenkovo, but Izyum was of such importance that more of 35th Guards could be tasked to help clear the city. (Size, Small) This scenario is recommended for HTH or Soviet vs. the AI. This is a good little scenario to practice contested river crossings. It's a race to clear the river and then storm Izyum. For the Germans it's a challenge to slow the Soviets at every opportunity. Don't forget to get the engineers moving immediately to the bridges to blow them.

#0205_01s Drive on Belgorod - Golikov's Right Hook

Turns : 57

Drive on Belgorod - Feb 5th to Feb 11th, 1943. Col Gen Golikov, commander of Voronezh Front tasked Moskalenko's 40th Army to swing around the flank of Korp Raus' positions north of Kharkov - objective Belgorod. Moskalenko's forces would enter in two echelons with four Rifle Divisions leading and a further three Rifle Divisions and 4th Guards Tank Corp in his second echelon. Facing 40th Army was 168th Infantry Division and a regimental kampfguppe from 88th Infantry Division. Hitler's personal protection battalion, the Fuehrer Begleit had been despatched to hold Belgorod proper. The German line could not tie in with the Gross Deutschland Division further to the south east and had no friendly forces to the west. Golikov planned to take advantage of this, ordering 40th army to swing around the western flank of the German forces thereby enveloping and capturing Belgorod. (Size, Campaign Game) This is a short HTH campaign game. This situation is perfect for the German player who wants the ultimate in defensive challenges. The 168th Infantry Division plus a Kampfgruppe from 88th Infantry Division face off against all of 40th Army. For the German player it is about protecting your flanks while falling back on Belgorod. This is a challenge once the Soviets cross the Lipovyy Donets. With the first echelon of 40th Army consisting of Rifle Divisions there is a chance to slow the tide, but when the second echelon arrives.... For the Soviet player it will be a plod forward clearing the Axis forces wherever they choose to hold. Once the Soviet mechanised forces arrive they should be employed where any open flank is found.

#0205_02 Korocho - Assault from the March

Turns : 14

Korocho - Feb 5th, 1943. Korocho 100 km NW of Kharkov was the key defensive position on the Chernyanka to Belgorod road. If Moskalenko's 40th Army was to capture Belgorod on time

then the Korochoa position would have to be cleared. 100th & 305th Rifle Divisions on 40th Army's left flank were tasked to clear the town. 429th Infantry Regiment of 168th Division to hold it... (Size, Small) This is a short scenario that can be played either HTH or against the AI for either side. The scenario has a very simple premise. The Germans have Korochoa; the Soviets want it back...

#0207_01_Fall of Belgorod - 40th Army to the fore

Turns : 12

Belgorod - Feb 7th to Feb 8th, 1943. 40th Army's assault from the north was targeted to compromise the German line along the Severnyy Donets. Kicking off a few days later than 3rd Tank & 69th Army, progress was rapid against the weak German 168th Infantry Division. Gross Deutschland was subsequently called to provide some stiffening for 168th but it was too little to late against the significant forces of 40th Army. By the evening of February 7th, 40th Army's first echelon was ready to take Belgorod by direct assault. (Size, Small) This short scenario can be played in either position vs. the AI or HTH. The Soviets are tasked with capturing Belgorod quickly. The Severnyy Donets actually bisects the battlefield and limits how many Rifle Divisions can enter Belgorod. For the German player this is an exercise in delay while not losing the delayers...

#0213_01_Fall of Kharkov - Act I : Liberation

Turns : 39

Kharkov - Feb 13th to 16th, 1943. Voronezh Front launched its assault on the Ukrainian city of Kharkov on Feb 13th. The Soviet plan called for the 40th Army to thrust south and meet the northward attacking 6th Guard Cavalry Corp at Yubotin, thereby isolating the city. Concurrently, 3rd Tank Army and 69th Army were to assail the German defences east of the city, thereby holding the Germans in place while the other Soviet forces encircled them. The Germans determined that the Soviet cavalry south of the city were the most dangerous and attacked them with mobile troops from both Das Reich and Liebstandarte. This attack went in on the 13th and subsequently pushed the cavalry back. In the meantime the missing mobile troops weakened the remaining German positions and the Russians were approaching Kharkov's outskirts by the evening of the 14th. The situation quickly deteriorated and with the roads out of the city being progressively cut, SS General Hausser abandoned the city during the 16th. By nightfall the city was in Soviet hands. (Size, Large) This scenario is recommended for HTH play but could be played against the AI for either side. The German player has a quandary. 6th Guards Cavalry Corp threatens the German deep flank. SS mobile troops in position could either eliminate the threat which will take time or screen the cavalry off tying up some troops. It will be up to the German player to decide if these forces are moved back to try and shore up east of Kharkov. For the Soviet player, 3rd Tank, 40th & 69th Army have very significant forces that can be used to pressure the German all along the line. In 40th Army sector in particular, weight of numbers should be able to push Korp Raus back. 4th Guards Tank Corp and the Ski Brigades manoeuvrability will be key here. Historically, the SS mobile forces were too late to relieve the pressure exerted by 3rd Tank Army in particular. There was initially very heavy fighting at Rogan on the road to Chuguev, but once that position was stormed, there was little distance to Kharkov.

#0213_02 Novaya Vodolaga - Clash of the Elite

Turns : 15

Kharkov - Feb 13th to 14th, 1943. 6th Guards Cavalry Corp had crossed both the Oskol and Severnyy Donets in the last fortnight. One more push north would see them across the Mzha and ready to rendezvous with 40th Army at Yubotin, closing the ring west of Kharkov. The Germans saw the threat that the Soviet cavalry posed to their supply lines and ultimately their ability to hold Kharkov. Detaching mobile troops from both Das Reich and Liebstandarte, German forces attacked on Feb 13th and subsequently pushed the cavalry back. Though bloody and bruised the cavalry maintained their cohesion and withdrew in good order. Ultimately the drawing away of the SS mobile troops weakened the remaining German positions and the Soviets were approaching Kharkov's outskirts by the evening of the 14th. (Size, Small) This scenario is recommended as either German player vs. AI or HTH. The German player is again under a time bind to push 6th Guards Cavalry Corp away from encircling Kharkov. There are actually not quite enough units to encircle the cavalry and they will have to be pushed out of the two towns they have occupied. For the Soviet player it is a matter of holding on with Novaya Vodolaga probably coming under the heaviest attack. The use of 201st Tank Brigade will be important.

#0213_03 3rd Tank Army - At the Gates of Kharkov

Turns : 15

3rd Tank Army - At the Gates of Kharkov - February 13th, 1943. SS Panzer Grenadier Division Liebstandarte was struck by 3rd Tank Army at the worst possible time. Most of its mobile forces had been detached with Das Reich to push back 6th Guards Cavalry Corp near Novaya Vodolaga. Liebstandarte's 2nd Panzer Grenadier Regiment had to hold back the full force of 3rd Tank Army including its two Tank Corps - the 12th and 15th. The Soviet attack was focused particularly around Rogan on the fast road to the city. The inevitable happened with the SS troopers having to give ground as they were pushed back to the outskirts of Kharkov. (Size, Medium) This scenario is a very quick HTH fight. The German player will find themselves under immense pressure north of the Udy. The critical moment will come when the prepared positions of the Rogan line have to be abandoned. For the Soviet player it will be a classic link arms and move forward. There is enough artillery and infantry to force the German position. As usual though, the Soviet is under an immense time bind to get to Kharkov. Note the inclusion of the Soviet 13th Guards Miner Battalion a special operations unit and the predecessor to the Spetsnaz.

#0218_01_Krasnoarmeyskoye - Poluboyarov's Swan Song

Turns : 10

Krasnoarmeyskoye - Feb 18th to Feb 20th, 1943. 4th Guards Tank Corp commander Poluboyarov implored Vatutin, South Western Front's commander to allow him to retreat from the German forces slowly encircling his corp. In response both Vatutin and Stavka demanded that Poluboyarov 'destroy the retreating German forces' as it was assumed that the Germans were pulling back to the Dnepr River. The Soviet High Command had little understanding of both the conditions and lack of supply reaching the Soviet spearheads. The Germans attacked in earnest on Feb 18th and had essentially taken Krasnoarmeyskoye and shattered the Soviet forces by the 19th. (Size, Small) This is a short scenario that ideally can be played against the

Soviet AI. HTH is also a possibility. There are 8 victory objectives and the German has to take them all. The Soviet task is easier; they just have to retain them.

#0220_01s_Manstein's Backhand Blow - The German Riposte *Turns : 89*

Manstein's Backhand Blow (south) - Feb 20th to Feb 28th, 1943. With the fall of Kharkov on Feb 16th, Hitler flew to Manstein's HQ at Zaporozh'ye to demand the immediate recapture of the city. While there a report of Soviet tanks 25km away from the Fuehrer's person suddenly bought the Soviet's threat into perspective. Manstein's proposal to Hitler was to do no less than destroy the Soviet forces between Krasnograd and Slavyansk and ultimately restore the German line along the Severnyy Donets. Manstein's plan called for the flanks to be held by Liebstandarte on the left and III Panzer Korp near Slavyansk on the right. II SS Panzer Korp was to drive south from Krasnograd via Pereshchepino and cut off the Soviet forces heading for the Dnepr crossings. XL Panzer Korp was to encircle Popov's four tank corps while leaving 333rd Infantry Division to clear Krasnoarmeyskoye. 6th & 17th Panzer Divisions were to push north between II SS & XL Panzer Korp from the 23rd Feb and together the German armoured forces were to move line abreast until the Donets river was reached. (Size, Campaign Game) This is a definite HTH campaign. Welcome to the desert in the Ukraine - large distances and low unit density. For the German player the challenge is capturing enough victory points when they are spread so far across the map. Whether the German player chooses to follow history and drive south to protect Dnepropetrovsk or pushes east, potentially activating 6th Army anything is possible. Having a predominantly mechanised force the German player has a large advantage over the Soviets who are either on foot or low on fuel. For the Soviet player, it is important to work out which objectives are going to be defended, while preparing for any contingency. This campaign game is probably the most likely to have a historical play due to the uniqueness of the setup. Couple with that a low unit density and mechanised forces on both sides, anything could happen. Be aware that if explicit supply is not used in the scenario some forces such as 25th Tank Corp may be supplied more quickly than they were historically.

#0220_02_Death of Mobile Group Popov - An armoured clash *Turns : 19*

The Death of Popov's Mobile Group - Feb 20th to Feb 24th, 1943. South Western Front and Stavka had no appreciation for the situation that Popov found his mechanized group. Surely four Tank Corps with supporting arms could drive through the yawning gap in the German lines and on to the Sea of Azov? The German's after all were in full retreat to Dnepr River? The situation for Popov could not be more different. Somehow 1st Panzer Army had circumvented the Soviet trap closing on Rostov and its XL Panzer Korp composed of three Panzer Divisions was either attacking Krasnoarmeyskoye or grouping menacingly to the east of Popov's supply lines. To make matters worse, Soviet supplies were being systematically shot up by the Luftwaffe and little was getting through - were was the Red Air Force?? (Size, Medium) A swirling mechanised battle that is best suited for either HTH or German Player vs. Soviet AI. For the Soviet player the forces at Krasnoarmeyskoye are probably lost. The longer they can hold and delay the Germans the better. Keeping the main road open from Aleksandovka will be the priority but difficult in the face of the German strength. For the German, it is about haste. They

have to essentially destroy a sizable portion of Popov's forces and capture the objectives on the main road, all under a time constraint.

#0226_01s_Stemming the Flow - Vatutin's Desperation

Turns : 69

Stemming the Flow - Feb 26th to Mar 4th, 1943. South Western Front's commanding General, Vatutin finally understood the folly he had placed his troops in with his exhortations to reach the Dnepr. Even while Manstein's Panzers were decimating Popov's Mobile Group at Krasnoarmeyskoye he was pushing 25th Tank Corp ever further west. Vatutin's revelation was jarring with both 6th Army and now 1st Guards Army formations scattered across a wide swath of snow covered steppe. As the Soviet forces were recalled, their orders were too late to prevent them being overrun by the marauding German columns. It was not till the morning of the 26th that the Soviets were able to fashion a line anchored on both Barvenkovo and Lozovaya which had been fortified. There were little reserves to back it up. Even now Stavka viewed this as only a temporary setback and had 3rd Tank Army continuing its push towards Krasnograd. Only 5 days later would 3rd Tank Army be sent to try and rescue its comrades as they were steadily overwhelmed. (Size, Campaign Game) It is recommended that this campaign be played HTH due to its unique setup. The German has to contend with scattered Soviet forces in his rear area while trying to push to the northwest towards Kharkov. To protect the German flank it was intended to slowly advance to the Severnyy Donets and use the river in defence. The Germans should be able to punch through the thin Soviet line were desired, but it is a long way to the main objectives northwest towards Kharkov as well as the Severnyy Donets. For the Soviet player, this is desperation along the whole front. The defensive line that has been cobbled together does not have the necessary reserves to back it up. Ideally a slow fall back towards the river line is best, but that probably means abandoning the comrades retreating back from the Dnepr. In the meantime the weakened 3rd Tank Army forces will arrive with the intention of slowing the SS advance. Be aware that if explicit supply is not used in the scenario some forces such as 25th Tank Corp may be supplied more quickly than they were historically.

#0226_02 A Lozovaya too Far - Das Reich's wrath

Turns : 14

A Lozovaya too far - Feb 26th, 1943. Just west of Lozovaya, 1st Guards Tank Corp was fighting for its life. It was just one of the many Soviet formations surprised by the rapid German advance. In fact, there were so many Soviet forces appearing in the German rear that it was starting to slow the overall advance. It was key to liquidate the cut off forces quickly and clear the highway through Lozovaya so that Kharkov could be reached on time. (Size, Small) This scenario can be played HTH or either position vs. the AI. The German player has the challenge of reducing the Lozovaya pocket as quickly as possible to prevent the trapped Soviet forces from being rescued. The Soviet 1st Guards Cavalry Corp gives the Russian player a viable force to at least harass the Germans if not to actually have a chance of rescuing their trapped comrades. The Soviet player though needs to retain Lozovaya and has to weigh up these two priorities.

#0303_01_Destruction of 3rd Tank Army - An army sacrificed *Turns : 19*

The Destruction of 3rd Tank Army - Mar 3rd to Mar 4th, 1943. Stavka in desperation ordered Voronezh Front to hand 3rd Tank Army to South Western Front in an attempt to halt the German's northward push and rescue the scattered survivors of 6th Army. It took a full 3 days to disengage 3rd Tank Army and regroup its forces around Kegichevka. 12th & 15th Tank Corp's weakened forces were stopped dead by Totenkopf and Das Reich and gained no ground at all. The German forces resumed their offensive to the Donets and overwhelmed the stalled Soviet forces and quickly pocketed swathes of 3rd Tank Army. In tandem 6th Panzer Division brushed 6th Guards Cavalry Corp aside and cut 3rd Tank Corps communications at Velikaya Bereka. (Size, Medium) This scenario can be played from any position against the AI or HTH. The Soviet player is really up against it here. It is a huge balancing act to slow the SS down with weakened forces. Making the German player fight for every objective is the key to costing him just one more turn. For the German player it is important to break the Soviet line as quickly as possible and destroy a hunk of units as this will quickly weaken the defence and accelerate the rot. The Soviets are very light in armour and this is your major advantage.

#0306_01s_Manstein Pushes North - The road to Kursk *Turns : 129*

Manstein Pushes North - Mar 5th to Mar 18th, 1943. With German forces back on the Sevrenyy Donets and the Soviet 1st Guards, 3rd Tank & 6th Army badly mauled, planning continued apace to retake the city lost just under a month ago. The German plan called for the SS Panzer Korp to push to the west of Kharkov and envelop it. If the opportunity presented itself they were to take the city on the fly. XLVIII Panzer Korp was to cover the SS right flank and envelop Kharkov from the south. Korp Raus with the replenished Gross Deutschland Division was to launch their offensive a day later and to drive a wedge between 69th and 3rd Tank Army and ultimately cut off the Soviet 40th Army that was threatening both Poltava & Lebedin. This campaign covers combat operations until the Germans were stopped by the spring thaw. By that time both Kharkov and Belgorod had been recaptured and the stage had been set for the titanic battle of Kursk less than four months later... (Size, Campaign Game) This campaign game is recommended for HTH play. For the German player the initial objective is the capture of Kharkov by the SS. Korp Raus and the Army Group Centre forces are to pin the Soviet forces west of Kharkov until Kharkov is captured. Gross Deutschland has just returned from a short refurbishment and is the strongest German unit available. Understand the road network as the terrain is much more closed than further south, particularly around Kharkov. The Soviet player needs to use every bit of terrain to his advantage, forests and river lines will funnel the German advance and make defence possible. Try to rescue as many of your front line units as possible (particularly directly south of Kharkov) as they will be needed for the close in defence on both the Mzha and Udy rivers. Note that there are a number of Front engineers around Kharkov. Use them to lay minefields, obstacles and build bunkers. Further west, Gross Deutschland will be ascendant and again delaying tactics need to be applied, but be aware that a number of Rifle Divisions are transferred to 69th Army on the 8th March and should be moved to the Bogodukhov area.

#0306_02_The SS Recapture Kharkov - Act II : Conquest

Turns : 79

The SS Recapture Kharkov - Mar 6th to Mar 13th, 1943. Liebstandarte, Das Reich and 6th Panzer Division launched the major push to recapture Kharkov on the morning of March 6th. Totenkopf fresh from mopping up the Kegichevka pocket joined the drive north the following day in tandem with 11th Panzer. Progress though quick for the SS was very difficult for XLVIII Panzer Korp which took much longer to break through the Mzha River line at Zmiyev. Ultimately this saved the Soviets from being completely enveloped in Kharkov as the roads to the southeast remained open. (Size, Large) This scenario is ideally played as HTH but can be played against the AI on either side. The German player has to push hard to cross the natural barriers south of Kharkov. Destroying as many Soviet forces south of the Mzha River will ultimately weaken that defensive line. The SS should be trying to position themselves west of Kharkov so they have no river barriers to cross. For the Soviet player this is maybe not as bad as it initially looks. You have good artillery and good terrain. What is missing is a sizable mechanised force to provide a fire brigade and challenge the Germans. Fight a rear guard action while not losing the rear guards! Note : Totenkopf is only represented by the forces that were actually tasked with capturing Kharkov. The rest of the Division moved north of Kharkov and provided a screen to allow Das Reich & Liebstandarte to directly assault Kharkov. As there is no Soviet threat from the northern map edge, Totenkopf will never be required to perform the role it did historically. To prevent the Division being used a historically the bulk of it is not included in this scenario.

#0306_03_XLVIII Panzer Korp battles at Taranovka

Turns : 19

XLVIII Panzer Korp battles at Taranovka - Mar 6th to Mar 7th, 1943. While the SS Panzer Korp was the left hook, encircling Kharkov, XLVIII Panzer Korp was the right hook with the shorter distance to cut off Kharkov from the south east. Unexpectedly, Taranovka had been heavily reinforced by the Soviets and had to be taken before the Mzha and Udy Rivers could be crossed. The fighting here was particularly fierce and the time lost clearing the town cost the Korp dearly when it reached the Mzha. Ultimately it was to be five days before the Mzha could be breached. (Size, Small) This scenario can be played either HTH or against the AI. The German player has to use a weakened 6th Panzer Division and quickly capture Taranovka. This is easier said than done. Once 11th Panzer Division is released it is critical that the XLVIII Panzer Korp breaches the Mzha River line quickly to win. The Soviet player can potentially hold longer here as the Wehrmacht Panzer Divisions are substantially weaker than their SS brethren. The 350th Rifle Division is very exposed and an early retirement back onto the heights should be considered. Look for ways to force the Germans to lose time by interdicting the road network where ever possible.

#0307_01_Gross Deutschland leads the way - Korp Raus attacks

Turns : 49

Gross Deutschland leads the way - Mar 7th to Mar 11th, 1943. The day after the SS Panzer Korp launched the attack to recapture Kharkov, Korp Raus ordered the rejuvenated Gross Deutschland Division and Thule Regiment from Totenkopf to push north towards Bogodukhov. Gross Deutschland returned from refit, rejuvenated and having received a second tank battalion and a new Tiger company. Raus' plan was trap 69th army to the west of his forces,

which would then be hit by LII Armee Korp from the 2nd Armee. The Soviets, seeing the danger launched a counterattack on the morning of Mar 10th out of the Bogodukhov area with four Rifle Divisions which utterly failed. (Size, Large) This scenario can be played either German vs. the Soviet AI or HTH. For the German player it is a long way to Bogodukhov and its capture is probably required to win. Gross Deutschland is at full strength and will be decisive wherever it is employed. For the Soviet player this is again a very tough situation with essentially an infantry force facing off against the strongest mechanised division in the German inventory. The terrain will funnel the advance - work out how to use this to your advantage. Every turn delayed is a turn closer to victory.

#0311_01_Platz der Liebstandarte - Street Fightin' Man *Turns : 30*

Platz der Liebstandarte - Mar 11th to Mar 13th, 1943. SS Panzer Korp commander Hausser had been directed to take Kharkov if it was evident that the Soviets were abandoning it. Smarting from the loss of the city a month prior he was determined that the SS would be redeemed by the city's recapture. Hausser and his Army superior Hoth clashed after it became obvious that the Soviets were choosing to stand and fight and ultimately Hausser's determination to take the city cost the SS Divisions dearly. (Size, Medium) This is a really interesting city fight that can be played either HTH or against the Soviet AI. For the German, this will be a grinding battle once the city is reached, with strong points having to be overwhelmed individually. The Lopan River flows through the middle of the city and this essentially turns it into a battle of two fronts. Finding a crossing point or bridging the river will be key for clearing the east side of the city. The Soviet player needs to keep the SS out of the city for as long as possible. Don't forget your engineers and look to blow bridges that might help the German cross to the east side of the Lopan. Finally, be careful where you place your AT guns. They are much more difficult to move in the city and should ideally be on a road that allows them an escape path. NOTE ; The Bunkers in Kharkov are lower case bunkers and represent fortified houses. The Soviets prepared these ad hoc fortresses by placing AT guns in basements, bricked up windows or dug multiple gun pits into the floors. The bunkers force the Germans to have to close and assault out the Soviets as they did in real life.

#0311_02s_Kharkov Envelopment - Disaster on the Donets *Turns : 80*

Kharkov Envelopment - Mar 11th to Mar 18th, 1943. While the SS Panzer Korp prepared to storm Kharkov, Korp Raus prepared to destroy both 40th and 69th Army. A day after 69th Army's unsuccessful counterattack at Bogodukhov, Gross Deutschland prepared to push the Soviets away from this important communication hub. LVII Panzer Korp joined XLVIII Panzer Korp attempt to breach the river line south of Kharkov and encircle the city from the southeast meeting SS Totenkopf's push from the north. Voronezh Front was so alarmed by the situation the 2nd Guards Tank Corp were released from reserve to try and remedy the situation. (Size, Campaign Game) This scenario is recommended as a HTH game. The German player holds all the aces here, he has strong forces ready to assault Kharkov and Korp Raus has essentially neutralised the Soviet 40th & 69th Armies. What he has the opportunity to do is to isolate Kharkov and destroy the forces within rather than just push them out. XLVIII Panzer Corp on the Mzha River and Totenkopf, northeast of Kharkov has the opportunity to close the ring meeting

somewhere near Rogan. For the Soviet player it is important to maintain Kharkov as long as possible. This requires preventing the German link up mentioned above as well as bloodying the SS in the actual urban fighting. Around Bogodukhov 69th Army needs to hold the road network as it extricates its Rifle Division out of a dangerous bulge formed the prior day.

[#0311_03_Last Stand for 69th Army - The Bogodukhov Bastion](#) Turns : 19

Last Stand for 69th Army - The Bogodukhov Bastion - Mar 11th to Mar 12th, 1943. Gross Deutschland Panzer Grenadier Division had pushed over 60 km into Soviet territory in 3 days - their objective - Bogodukhov. Bogodukhov was a key rail and road centre that had to be held if contact with 3rd Tank Army was to be maintained. Korp Raus understood the importance of the town and wanted to breakthrough on the seam of the two Soviet armies. On March 10th, 69th Army launched a counterattack with 4 Rifle Divisions that were so debilitated that their assault went unnoticed. This further weakened the defence ahead of the German push on March 11th. (Size, Medium) This scenario can be played with either side against the AI or HTH. The Soviet player is again in the position of making every objective as difficult or bloody as possible for the Germans to capture it. With only two tank brigades, the Soviet infantry will be at a disadvantage against the tank heavy Gross Deutschland. Find good terrain and dig in. For the German, this is about clearing Bogodukhov as quickly as possible and then pushing onto the objectives beyond. There is potential to pocket the Soviets who have pushed south of the Merchik.

[#0311_04_XLVIII Panzer Korp Tries Again - Crossing the Mzha](#) Turns : 20

XLVIII Panzer Korp Tries Again - Mar 11th to Mar 12th, 1943. XLVIII Panzer Korp was stuck. Whereas the SS Panzer Korp had swept around Kharkov, XLVIII Panzer Korp had spent 6 days clearing Taranovka and trying to breach the Mzha River between Aleksandrovka and Zmiyev. The highway through Sokolovo was critical, but Col Svoboda's reinforced Czech Battalion was giving a very good account of itself. 11th Panzer Division swung west to take advantage of the breach created by the SS Panzer Korp and the stage was set for the Germans to try and roll up the river line. Could the Mzha and Udy be breached quickly enough to allow the last roads out of Kharkov to be cut? (Size, Medium) This is a great HTH scenario or good against the AI of either side. The German player has to rush; there is one bridge across the Mzha River near Zmiyev with the potential for another one near Sokolovo. Crossing both the Mzha and the Udy Rivers will be required to win the scenario. For the Soviets, resist the crossing of the Mzha for as long as possible, but then try and disengage back to the Udy River. Force preservation is the key.

[#998_Map_Viewer_Winter](#)

This is NOT a playable scenario, rather it is included so players can load up and view the complete map without having to use the scenario editor. This one shows the map in WINTER which is how all the scenarios are played. A second map viewer will be included for the Summer Map.

[#999_Map_Viewer_Summer](#)

This is NOT a playable scenario, rather it is included so players can load up and view the complete map without having to use the scenario editor. This one shows the map in Summer. There is also a Winter Map viewer scenario so you can view the map without changing the season in the editor.



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