

SYBEX Sample Chapter

Close Combat™ III: The Russian Front Official Strategies & Secrets™

by Mark L Cohen

Historical Battles 1941

Screen reproductions produced with Collage Complete.
Collage Complete is a trademark of Inner Media Inc.

SYBEX, Network Press, and the Network Press logo are registered trademarks of SYBEX Inc.
Mastering, Expert Guide, Developer's Handbook, and No experience required. are trademarks of SYBEX Inc.

TRADEMARKS: SYBEX has attempted throughout this book to distinguish proprietary trademarks from descriptive terms by following the capitalization style used by the manufacturer.


Netscape Communications, the Netscape Communications logo, Netscape, and Netscape Navigator are trademarks of Netscape Communications Corporation.

Microsoft® Internet Explorer ©1996 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Microsoft, the Microsoft Internet Explorer logo, Windows, Windows NT, and the Windows logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries.

The author and publisher have made their best efforts to prepare this book, and the content is based upon final release software whenever possible. Portions of the manuscript may be based upon pre-release versions supplied by software manufacturer(s). The author and the publisher make no representation or warranties of any kind with regard to the completeness or accuracy of the contents herein and accept no liability of any kind including but not limited to performance, merchantability, fitness for any particular purpose, or any losses or damages of any kind caused or alleged to be caused directly or indirectly from this book.

Photographs and illustrations used in this book have been downloaded from publicly accessible file archives and are used in this book for news reportage purposes only to demonstrate the variety of graphics resources available via electronic access. Text and images available over the Internet may be subject to copyright and other rights owned by third parties. Online availability of text and images does not imply that they may be reused without the permission of rights holders, although the Copyright Act does permit certain unauthorized reuse as fair use under 17 U.S.C. Section 107.

Copyright ©1998 SYBEX Inc., 1151 Marina Village Parkway, Alameda, CA 94501. World rights reserved. No part of this publication may be stored in a retrieval system, transmitted, or reproduced in any way, including but not limited to photocopy, photograph, magnetic or other record, without the prior agreement and written permission of the publisher.



This chapter covers the war's early battles, beginning with D-Day in Russia, Hitler's massive assault on the Soviet Union. Steamroller and Fighting in Hell continue through the summer offensive, in battles that took place just inside the Russian border, near the town of Lvov. The chapter's final three battles—Panzers in the Snow, The First Fortification Ring, and Next Stop Moscow—trace the German army's drive to Moscow over the final months of 1941.



D-DAY RUSSIA—BARBAROSSA

This battle marks Operation Barbarossa, Hitler's campaign for the domination of Eastern Europe. Although they had been warned of the impending invasion, the Russian forces were ill-prepared to confront the German army as it swept across the border. The element of surprise enabled German forces to strike swiftly and make dramatic gains during the first week of the war. Hence, this opening battle in *Close Combat III* strongly favors the German army.

Commanding the Germans

The narrow, north-south strip of deployment terrain limits your options in this aggressive offensive. The north ridge is a key location, providing an elevated line of sight to the tall grass below. When the Russians place troops across the river, they often attack this ridge by sneaking through the grass. The ridge is an excellent spot to position your StuG IIC self-propelled gun. Place your 80mm mortar team just behind the ridge, out of direct line of sight but still very close to the action. A light infantry team provides excellent additional support, but your tank, too, is effective in a support role (Figure 8.1). After turning back any Russian teams attempting to climb the ridge, move your StuG and infantry down toward the ford—your first victory location east of the ridge.

Pavlov's house is a good central location for your HMG infantry team. It can provide suppression fire for your SP gun and infantry coming down from the ridge, or for machine-gun and infantry teams advancing from fields of crops or grass behind and south of the house. Hill 101 is a key access point for any advance over the south bridge. A flanking attack to the hill is difficult given its location at the bottom of the map, but the trees offer some cover.

Expect mortar fire as you approach the hill. Once you take the victory location, regroup for your move down to the bridge. Expect heavy machine-gun and rifle fire from the house in front of the bridge and from teams across the river. It's a good idea to lay some mortar fire on the house as you come down the hill. After you take the house (see Figure 8.2), move one team into the fields on the west side of the river to provide suppression fire on the bridge and houses east of the river. With the team in the house to provide cover fire, move another team to the river. If the Russians attempt to cross the bridge, or begin firing from the other side, you can lay down a deadly triangular line of fire that will dispatch the troops quickly, or force their surrender.



FIGURE 8.1

A German StuG III moves up on the ridge to take out the advancing Russian infantry below. As the German mortar team pulls back, the remaining Russian soldiers walk up the ridge to surrender.



FIGURE 8.2

By the time you take the house, you should be in a strong position to cross the river.

As you cross the south bridge, your tank and support teams should be across the north ford and pushing the Russians back to Hill 115. After taking the hill, move south to meet up with your teams that crossed the bridge. From there, you can pinch any Russian forces still holding out in the pasture, and then roll to the Lvov road for your final victory location.

Commanding the Russians

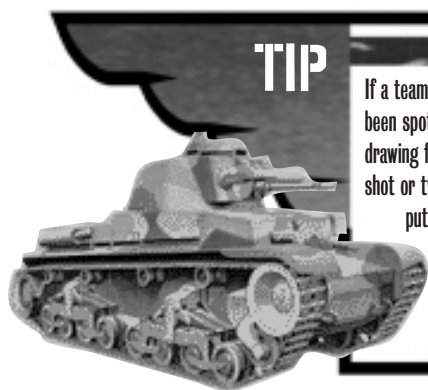
How you choose to defend the river is your biggest consideration. Once the Germans pull within range of the banks, they can pick you off easily, so don't set up too close to the river.

Hill 101 is a disposable victory location. If you choose to defend a position on the west side of the river, place a squad behind the

house west of the bridge to delay the German advance. Support it with squads on the east side, on either side of the bridge. You should be able to ambush the Germans as they approach the bridge. If you can weaken the German forces during their initial attacks, you have a better chance of retaking the hill later.

When the German self-propelled gun appears on the map, move your AT gun immediately to get a good line of sight. If you take out the tank early, move quickly across the river at the bridge and reinforce your position behind the house. By then, German infantry probably will approach through the fields north of the house. Bring another squad up close to the river to support the team behind the house (Figure 8.3). Maintaining three angles of fire around the house makes it more difficult for German forces to advance.

Meanwhile, to the north, concentrate mortar fire on Pavlov's house. If you can cross at the ford and take the house, prepare for the inevitable German attack. This move must be decisive, because the German advance is swift and deadly. Send your remaining squads up to the river (east side) to support your



TIP

If a team loses the chance of ambush because it's been spotted, bleed the enemy's ammunition by drawing fire from the safety of heavy cover. Fire a shot or two to draw the fire, and then immediately put your team into Ambush mode. The enemy will continue firing blindly at your soldiers, who hug the dirt and are unlikely to be hit.



FIGURE 8.3

The longer you hold the bridge, the better your chance of victory.

team(s) at the house. If you must give up your positions west of the river, pull back to Hill 115 and make your stand. Once you give up the hill, your only hope is to take cover behind the house just south of the Lvov road. Now it's just a question of maintaining your position long enough to log the victory.

BLACKHAWK'S ALTERNATIVE: D-DAY RUSSIA

This battle provides the Russian player with the perfect opportunity for a devastating ambush, because there are only two places the enemy can attack—the ford and the bridge.

Put your AT gun in the northernmost house on the east side of the river. Leave it on Ambush until the enemy StuG presents a flank shot on or near the ford. You're virtually guaranteed a kill if the StuG attempts to cross. In support, place a light infantry team in the fields in front of the gun, facing the ford in Ambush mode. Your MMG or one of your LMG infantry squads will further ensure the gun's safety when placed in the building in front of Hill 115, just southeast of the ford.

To the south, position either an LMG infantry team or your MMG (depending on which you used in the north) in the L-shaped building east of the river. This gives them a good line of sight to the bridge with no immediate threat of assault. Place another LMG infantry team to the south in the tree line on the east bank of the

river, just below the confluence of the stream coming from the east. This team can provide a deadly cross fire against enemy teams that may attempt to cross the bridge.

Use your extra points at the beginning of the game to purchase an AT rifle team. Because you have plenty of infantry, this will bolster your antitank capabilities. Position this team at the same confluence as the foregoing infantry team to get flank shots on vehicles attempting to cross the bridge—useful if your enemy decides to employ the StuG in the south.

Place your remaining infantry as you see fit in support roles east of the river. You might consider deploying a reserve in the trenches on Hill 115, which can react to a threat to either river crossing. Those same trenches are ideal for your mortar team. Consider deploying more infantry to support the bridge, which usually suffers an enemy infantry assault: once your ambush wipes out the enemy assault, you'll be in a position to counterattack.

Whatever you do, keep your teams on ambush until the enemy approaches the ford (in the north), or the building west of the bridge (in the south). Holding your fire until the last moment assures you many kills in the opening volley of your ambush.

PART 3

★
Steamroller—
On to Lvov

Historical Battles 1941

CHAPTER 8

8

STEAMROLLER—ON TO LVOV

Lvov is the last battle of the summer offensive as the German advance gathers steam. The German bridgehead at the Bug River is the focus of this battle. Once a military stronghold from which Stalin kept a close watch on Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, it was destined to become Hitler's gateway to the Ukraine.

Commanding the Germans

Fill your one remaining roster spot with a machine gun or rifle infantry team, or a light halftrack armed with a heavy machine gun. You have a relatively long distance to cover from the river crossing to your final three victory locations, and the halftrack can provide needed mobility.

Your first goal is to cross the river at the north and south bridges. The north bridge is easier to cover from the woods west of the river, so it's fairly safe. However, the south bridge sits just below a split in the river, with a cluster of trees protecting the fork. You can expect a Russian ambush from these trees, so have one team lay fire on the trees as you cross. After the first team crosses, it

should take cover in the trees and concentrate fire on the Russians while the original cover team follows.

If you have at least three teams intact when you cross the south bridge, move carefully toward the Lvov road. Your first resistance may come from the crest just east of the bridge. If you make it to this point, stop and wait for support from the north. If you continue without reinforcements, you face heavy fire from Hill 122 and the two houses south of the Lvov road.

Moving back north, the going gets considerably tougher after you cross the bridge. Hill 121 is your main objective, and if you approach it with two teams from the northwest under cover of trees, you should reach the hill in fine shape. Send two teams and your StuG IIIC over the bridge and east along the road for added support. Your tank will easily take care of Russian infantry in the house below Hill 121 (Figure 8.4), and the diversion allows your teams to complete their moves to the top of the hill.



FIGURE 84

The German StuG IIIC makes short work of a Russian rifle platoon as a machine gun team approaches Hill 121.

Now comes the really hard part. Despite the hill's excellent high ground, you're vulnerable to no fewer than three ambushes. (In one battle, I faced all three.) First, a Russian infantry team often sneaks out of the woods north of the victory location as your teams approach the hill. If you use one team to protect

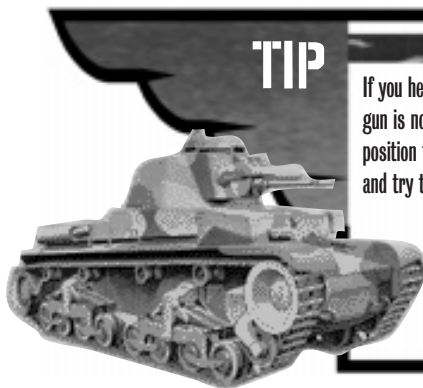
your back at all times, this should pose no major problem. The next two attacks are potentially fatal. A Russian AT gun can hide in the bushes in front of the house below Hill 121. (Figure 8.5 shows the potential aftermath.)



FIGURE 8.5


Moments later, a Russian AT gun hidden in the bushes disables the German StuG III and levels the half-track before taking one last hit from the tank.

Two Russian LMG infantry teams from the fields behind the two houses applied additional pressure, cutting down my team on the hill: it was a bloodbath. When the dust cleared, everyone was dead and the taking of Hill 121 was a hollow victory, indeed. Two of my squads remained in the north, however, including a machine gun team. I crossed the ford, met up with my teams in the south, and took four of five victory locations before the remaining Russian teams fled the map.



TIP

If you hear an AT gun and see its tracers, but the gun is nowhere in sight, then your teams are not in position to see it. Fan out around the line of fire and try to bring it into view.



To avoid a potential ambush on and below Hill 121, sweep your mortar fire across the bushes, houses, and fields below the hill before you approach. Instead of sending your armor down the road, swing north and come up behind the hill. If you just edge over the hill, you should get an excellent angle on the ground below.

Commanding the Russians

Your greatest challenge in this battle is to stretch nine teams across a broad battlefield. You must select high ground and covered positions. There's a lot to choose from, so you have no excuse for leaving a team out in the open. Given all the ambush potential, you shouldn't start firing until after the Germans reveal their positions. Remember to acquire an AT rifle team before the battle to increase your AT firepower.

Hill 121 is difficult to defend, but easy to ambush. Rather than place teams on the hill, deploy a light infantry team in the

grass along the north edge of the map. Set them in Ambush mode so they won't respond to initial enemy advances. Your MMG team sits nicely in the first house below the hill; the ridge protects it but it still has a clear shot at anything that comes around the curve in the road. If you place your mortar team at the back of Hill 122, it will be safely tucked away from the early action but still in range of the north bridge. Tuck your AT gun in the trees just south of the ford. Find a spot that allows a clear line of sight to the southwest tip of Hill 121. Remember to place the team in Ambush mode.

In most of our battles, the Germans sent two or three teams running toward the north bridge, while another team approached Hill 121 from the woods to the north. Again, you're better off trying to trap the Germans after they take the hill, rather than concentrating your defenses at the top. When the Germans begin their rush toward the bridge, slow them with mortar fire (Figure 8.6). The

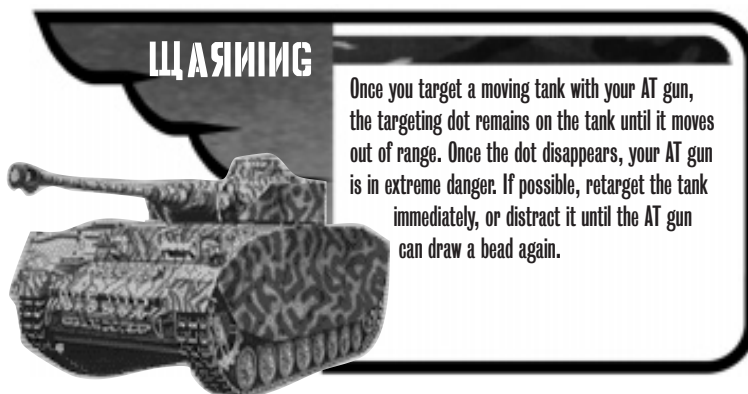




FIGURE 8.6

The lead German infantry team retreats after taking casualties from Russian mortar fire.

Germans will regroup and hit the bridge again, and that's when you should move infantry up to the gully to get a better line of sight. You'll take some casualties, but the combined infantry and mortar fire will take its toll on the German advance.

As you meet the challenges of advancing German infantry teams, don't forget about the rogue tank that may appear at any time. In most of my battles, it came across the north bridge with the infantry. In one, however, it took the southern route and tried to come around behind my teams in the gully. Fortunately, my AT gun trained on the bridge road also had a narrow line of sight to the south. After moving cautiously around the house, the tank finally emerged to get a better angle on my dug-in infantry, and the AT gun found its mark (Figure 8.7).

After you destroy the tank, concentrate on the north bridge. If the Germans suffer heavy losses trying to get across, you also should be able to retake Hill 121. Remember, all this is possible only with the tank out of commission.





FIGURE 87

The German StuG took the south bridge in this battle and, after taking a few shots at Russian infantry on the bank, continued east along the path and wandered into the sights of the AT gun in the trees.

FIGHTING IN HELL—NEXT STOP LVOV

Lvov lies just beyond the river. If they can establish a bridgehead, the advancing German army can push the Russians into the village. The forces are relatively even in this battle. However, the Germans must advance across open fields under Russian hilltop positions to secure their victory locations.

Commanding the Germans

You have enough requisition points at the beginning of this battle to deploy another tank; because the Russians have a T-34 on the battlefield, this should improve the odds a little. Your most critical decision during deployment is whether to utilize the tiny strip of land on the east side of the river, or hold back your forces and cross the river after assessing the battlefield. Either way, the Russians concentrate mortar fire along the riverbanks early on, so be decisive and move quickly to cover positions beyond the bridgehead.

I recommend splitting your tanks, sending one across the shallow ford to the north and the other across the bridge to the south. The southern route is more

dangerous, because the Russians frequently place teams in the house just east of the bridge and in the grass behind the bunker to the north. The Russian T-34 usually makes a late battle appearance in the same area (Figure 8.8).



FIGURE 8.8

The Germans took heavy casualties attacking the bunker, but when the StuG IIIIC bested the T-34 at close range, the Russians lost their edge.

In case you don't have the picture yet, this battle revolves around the bunker. You must come at it from all sides. Because the surrounding land is clear (except for barbed-wire fences), it's a difficult position to assault. You'll make things a lot easier if you can get a squad or two across the south bridge, but infantry in houses on the other side usually defend it heavily. If you can spare your AT gun, a little concentrated fire will soften the Russian position.

Once you take the bunker, you should experience little or no resistance on the road to Lvov. Then you can divide your forces and come around behind the remaining Russian troops defending the south bridge. After you surround them, they'll surrender quickly.

BLACKHAWK'S ALTERNATIVE: FIGHTING IN HELL

Because the enemy T-34 outguns either of your AFVs alone, keep them together to even the odds a bit. Better yet, if you deploy both AFVs in the north, they can force the issue with the bunker. Crossing south with an AFV gives enemy AT teams potentially point-blank flank shots, so a concentrated attack in the north is attractive all the way around.

To support your tanks, place the 50mm AT gun in the only house in the south that will take it. You'll get flank shots on the T-34 if it attempts to redeploy from the south to meet your AFVs in the north. When engaging the bunker, keep the vehicles separated to give one or the other a flank shot on the T-34 when it appears. Don't separate them by too much, however: you want both vehicles to have a shot when you find the enemy tank!

After neutralizing the bunker with HE fire and machine guns, you can stage an infantry assault on the bridge. Support the assault with flanking fire from one of your vehicles, but leave the other on overwatch facing the ridgeline, if you haven't encountered the enemy tank yet. When the T-34 does appear, you *must* engage it with everything you have.

Commanding the Russians

You must hold one victory location to win this battle for Mother Russia. Of the four possible locations, three are worth defending—the bunker, the road to Lvov, and Hill 101. I would have to put Hill 101 on the swing list. Although it provides a six-meter height advantage over the bridge road, it's not worth dying for. If you must, you can fall straight back to the town and take advantage of the excellent cover 13 structures provide—three with elevation. As for Hill 119, the Germans can attack from a height advantage of more than five meters, so don't waste your time or your men's lives.

The town is an excellent place to deploy your tank until you decide where it's needed most. Your mortar works well here, also, as long as you maintain a good line of sight to the bunker. Spread at least three squads around in the grass behind the bunker to provide different lines of fire to the hilltop.

The German SP gun usually appears early in the battle. It likes to concentrate fire directly on the bunker, so be prepared to pull back your troops. Because you don't have an AT gun, you can sit tight and absorb the shelling or deploy your T-34 to go after the StuG. Head for the hill behind the bunker, where you can lob shells down on the German tank before it gets too close. Our T-34 scored a direct hit on the StuG, but was disabled in the exchange (Figure 8.9).

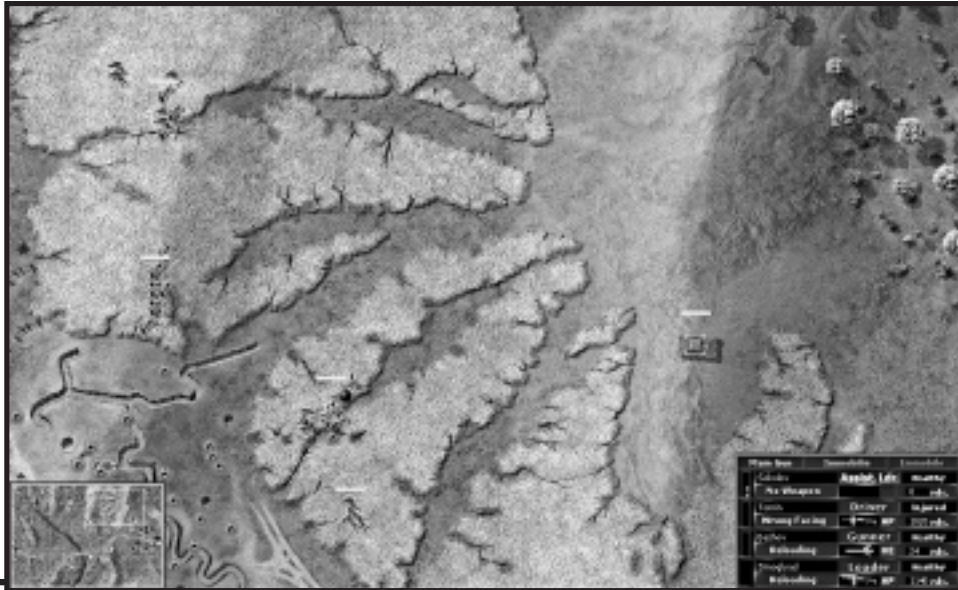


FIGURE 8.9

Our T-34 is unable to move, but from its position on the hill, it still can do some damage.

After the German forces cross the ford on the north end of the river, they must move through light woods to Hill 119, directly in front of your teams deployed in the grass. You have excellent visibility there, so keep up heavy fire to halt the advance. In Figure 8.10, the Germans take Hill 119, but Russian counter-fire exacts a heavy toll, and the lone survivor runs for cover.

Now that you've driven the Germans back at both crossings, reinforce both positions, if necessary, and use mortar fire to pressure the heaviest counterattack. You have the high ground: now hold it.





FIGURE 8.10

In a nasty exchange, Russian infantry and light machine gun teams drive the Germans back from Hill 119.

BLACKHAWK'S ALTERNATIVE: FIGHTING IN HELL

Purchase an AT rifle team in the requisition screen. Deploy it in the southernmost building on the near side of the river, near the bridge. From there it can get flank shots if an AFV tries to cross. Bolster your defense of the south bridge with infantry teams; you should be able to hold out long enough for your T-34 to deal with the pesky German armor.

With the south relatively secure, position your T-34 on the north edge of the map, behind the bunker ridgeline. If enemy armor engages the bunker, it will be from the ridge near the ford. The north edge of the bunker hill is nearly equal to the other hill in elevation; better yet, a vehicle on the other hill facing the bunker will present its flank to your position. The enemy SP gun must turn to face your T-34 when you move up into line of sight on the ridge—buying you perhaps two more unanswered shots. That should be sufficient to kill the StuG without losing or damaging your T-34.

Do your best to engage enemy vehicles one at a time—from the flank, if possible. Using an infantry team to distract the enemy tanks often works, but saving the team may pose a problem! It may be worth the sacrifice, however, because once the enemy armor is eliminated, your T-34 will rule the battlefield.

PANZERS IN THE SNOW—THE FIRST SNOWS

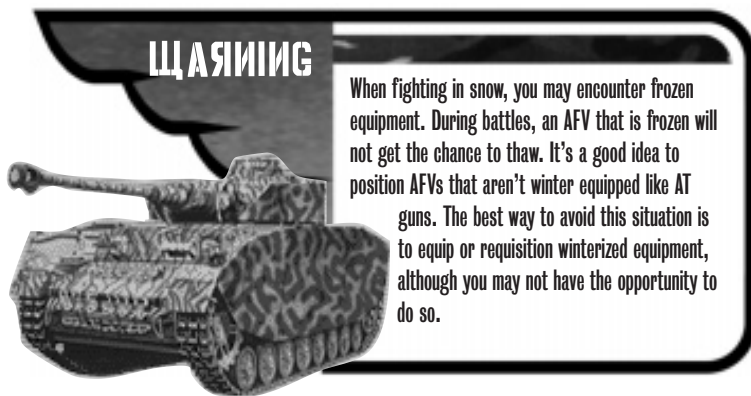
The drive to Moscow has begun, as Germany's Army Group Center pushes northeast from staging points in East Prussia and Poland. Panzergruppe Guderian leads the way. The 19th Panzer Division clashes with the Russian Fifth Army in this battle and, regardless of which side you command, you must deal with the onset of another harsh Soviet winter.

Commanding the Germans

Although you have a wide area of deployment, your terrain comprises either snow or snow and trees. Support it with an MG infantry team and one of your Mark II tanks set back in the woods behind the building. Continue north and place another MG team halfway up the map, just west of the road at the edge of the trees.

Finally, place your third MG team at the extreme north edge of the map, behind the German victory location. These three fire points provide excellent sight lines into the clearing, and any Russian squad that ventures out in the open will be history (Figure 8.11). Given the heavy concentration of Russian troops around Hill 132, consider positioning your 75mm infantry gun in the woods across from the hill.

Because of the wide clearing west of Hill 132, the upper half of the map is relatively easy to defend from the forest. The Russians' five-meter height advantage makes attacking this hill a bad idea, however. Your best chance for success is to move along the south side of the road that splits the map—that's *best*, not *easiest*. At the bottom of the map, you must contend with a machine gun team, or, worse, an AT gun at the darkened Yelnya crossroads. A gun positioned in a



When fighting in snow, you may encounter frozen equipment. During battles, an AFV that is frozen will not get the chance to thaw. It's a good idea to position AFVs that aren't winter equipped like AT guns. The best way to avoid this situation is to equip or requisition winterized equipment, although you may not have the opportunity to do so.



FIGURE 8.11

A Russian squad moving south across the snowy clearing is cut down.

burned-out building on blackened dirt is all but invisible, so watch for tracers. Once you pinpoint the location, lob mortar fire to soften up the position, and then try a combined arms rush with one or two light infantry teams and one of your Mark II tanks (Figure 8.12). This attack had mixed results.

After clearing Yelnya, move east along the road toward Begoslav. Your HG team can lay fire onto Begoslav as you approach with one or two tanks and light infantry. A little mortar fire wouldn't hurt, either. At this point, you must assess your troop strength and available ammunition. If your northern teams have contained the Russians and eliminated two or three squads in the process, you have a good chance of concentrating your southern teams and moving toward Hill 109—and eventually the road to Moscow. But make no mistake: you'll pay for every inch of terrain with the blood of your troops. As in the real march on Moscow, this is a grueling battle, with no clear advantage for either side.

Commanding the Russians

Deploy infantry teams well into the lee of Hill 132, far behind the crest so no German elements in the trees can support an attack on the hill. Destroy the Germans piecemeal as they come over the ridge (Figure 8.13). Position your AT



FIGURE 8.12

An AT gun at the Yelnya crossroads has been silenced, but a German infantry team died in the process.

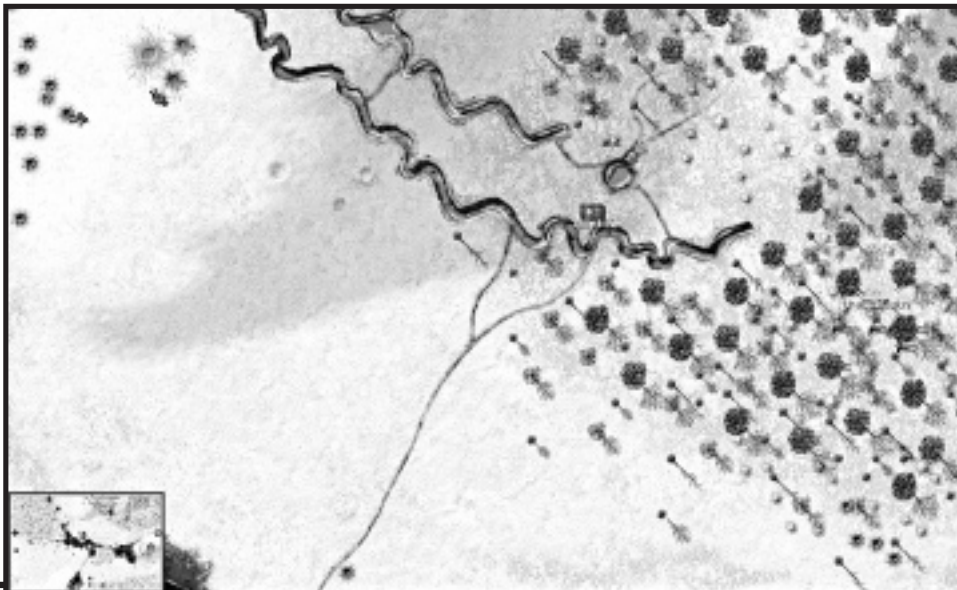



FIGURE 8.13

As two German teams approach Hill 132 from the west, a Russian LMG team scrambles up the hill and opens fire, immediately killing two German soldiers and causing both teams to retreat.





rifle team there, in case the Germans try to force the issue with armor; it will get close-range shots at the enemy tanks. If you're heavily pressured on the hill, give ground, withdrawing steadily into the trees.

Put the AT gun in the shelled-out building in front of the crossroads. This gives it an excellent line of sight down the road and across Hill 132, while protecting it from fire from the flanks. Protect it with infantry ahead in the trench, and possibly also in the trench below. Put the MMG team in the weapons pit up on Hill 109; from there it can also see down the road and protect the AT gun from infantry. Also deploy one or two infantry on the far side of the small patch of trees near the road. They can harass enemy infantry, draw out enemy armor, and then withdraw through cover of trees to your waiting AT-gun ambush. An infantry team in the building to the far south also can help cover the road, and thus the approaches to the AT gun.

THE FIRST FORTIFICATION RING— THE LINE IN THE SNOW

When Hitler launched Operation Typhoon, he anticipated a swift victory that would place Moscow under German control before the first winter snows. However, with its massive front—250 miles wide and 180 miles deep—the offensive slowed as it moved through dozens of towns, villages, minefields, and man-made fortifications on its way to Moscow. The city still is not in view, but a successful drive here soon will have the German army knocking on the Kremlin doors.

Commanding the Germans

You can add one more MG infantry team to your forces before the battle: with this extremely wide front, you'll need every soldier you can muster. Because minefields stretch virtually top-to-bottom before the Russian fortifications, your deployment is less important in this battle. Rather, it's your *route* that's critical. As the map in Figure 8.14 shows, there are two narrow paths paralleling the northern and southern roads through the mines, as well as two corridors, the widest of which hugs the north edge of the map.

As the battle begins, German artillery pounds the fortification line as Russian infantry teams immediately open fire. If you place units in Bukarin's house, in the

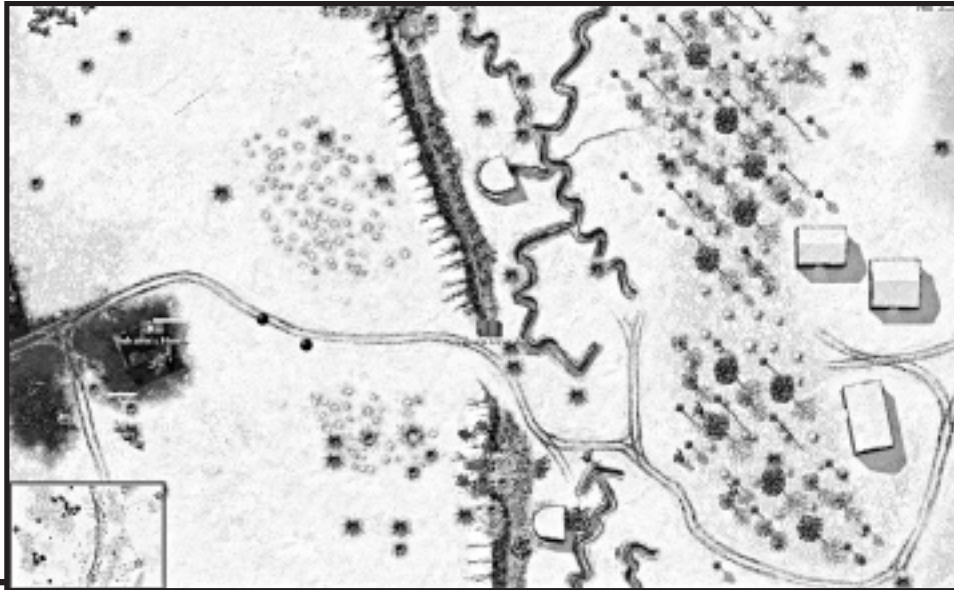


FIGURE 8.14

German mortar and machine-gun fire decimates the front lines of the fortification, sending Russian soldiers scurrying from the bunker at the bottom of the screen.

center of the map, they come under intense fire, so be sure and provide sufficient support. If you covet the open corridor on the north edge, lay mortar fire on the infantry to drive them back; then advance with your light infantry and one tank or AT carrier. Wherever you plan to breach the line, watch for bolting Russian troops (Figure 8.14), and take advantage of breaks in the line.

After clearing the fortification lines, watch for a KV-II tank roaming behind the lines. It can take out both your tanks quickly, so don't relax just because you've chased away the Russian infantry. Without AT guns, you're in serious trouble if you lose your armor, as Figure 8.15 shows.

Once you eliminate the KV-II, you'll have a clear path to the Moscow road; however, you must watch for Russian infantry appearing at the bottom of the map. They'll sneak along the inside of the fortification and try to come up behind you. Place one of your tanks or the AT carrier just inside the north end of the wall, where it can watch your back.

Commanding the Russians

From the outset, your troops take a mighty artillery pounding along and behind the fortification line (Figure 8.16), so why hang around? Rather than try and



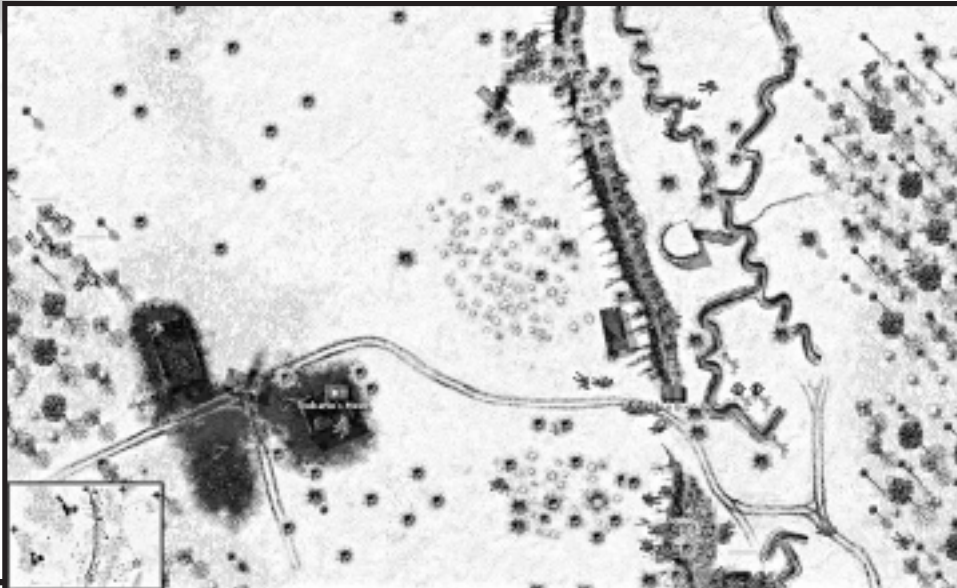


FIGURE 8.15

Despite German troops occupying the Moscow road, this KV-II tank escaped fire, and then leveled two German tanks and an AT carrier.

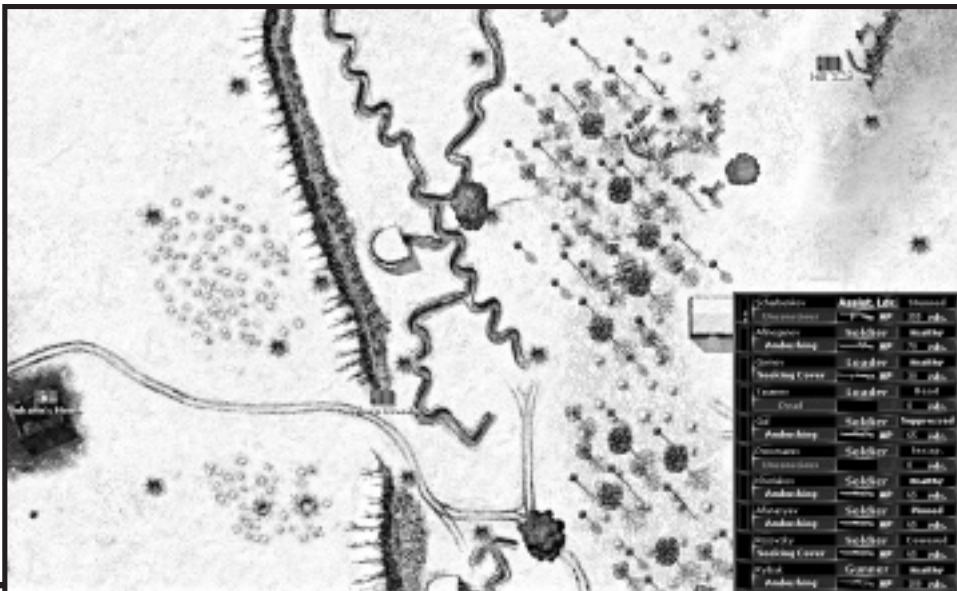
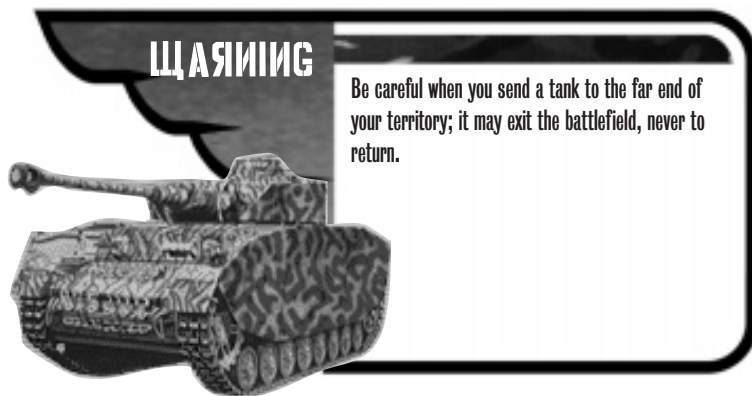


FIGURE 8.16

If you deploy your troops too close to the wall, you'll take immediate and heavy casualties.

defend the line, deploy your troops in covered positions behind the lines and let the German teams come on through. Keep your KV-II as far back as you can, and place your AT gun in a covered position at the north or south end of the fortification, where it can fire up and down the wall. Don't place the gun in direct line of either breach or



it won't survive the battle's first few minutes. You should be able to sight through the breach and north along the inside of the wall. Dodge artillery shells as best you can until the German teams arrive; then regroup and fire along the wall as they burst through the openings. The minefields limit their access through the fortifications, so you should have a pretty good idea of where they'll come from.

You can't escape the artillery and mortar fire, but some deployment areas, such as the bunkers behind the wall, are no more than death traps. Instead, place your teams behind houses, on or behind ridges, or back behind Hill 128. The main German attack comes through the Northern Breach, so concentrate most of your forces in front and to either side of the Moscow road. Set all teams in Ambush mode to start the battle. Abandon any position that takes an unusually heavy pounding.

Be patient, especially with your tank and AT gun. The German tanks will come in and out of sight, so keep sweeping the map. You also can use your KV-II to draw the enemy armor into flank shots for your AT gun. Watch for the AT carrier supporting German infantry moving toward the Northern Breach (Figure 8.17). This armored vehicle can exact a heavy toll with its 3.7cm gun; however, you need your KV-II to go after the tanks, so don't reveal your position. If you lose your tanks and AT gun, your only hope is to pull back to the Moscow road and hope for a truce.

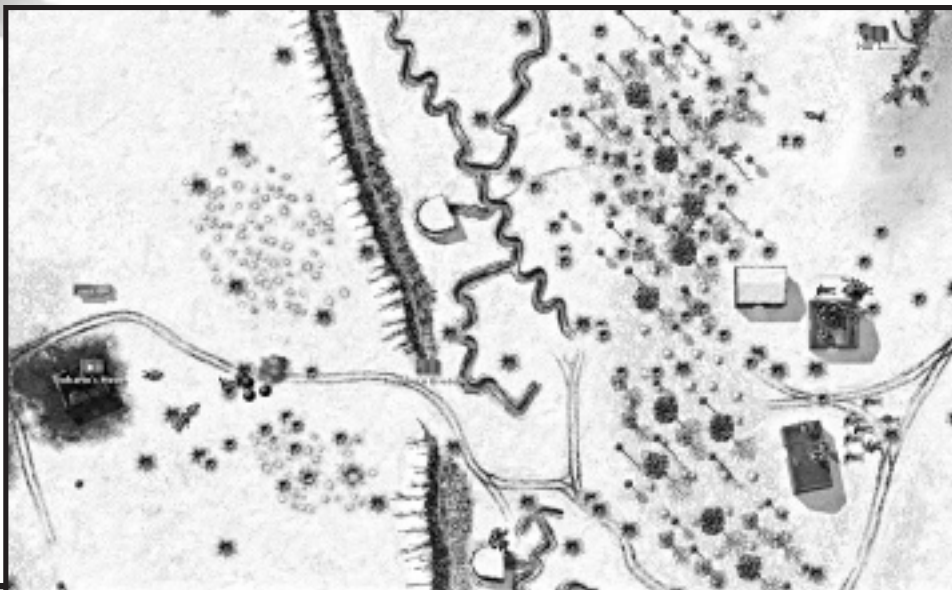


FIGURE 8.17

The German AT carrier will put heavy pressure on your positions behind the Northern Breach.

NEXT STOP MOSCOW

The German army can see the Kremlin spires from their encampment just 10 miles from Moscow. But that may as well be 1,000 miles, given your dwindling supplies, the stubborn Russian resistance, and the unforgiving Soviet winter. This is a battle of desperation for both sides, as German soldiers push to carry out Hitler's "war of extermination" and Russian forces rally to stop the Wehrmacht from absorbing their capital.

Commanding the Germans

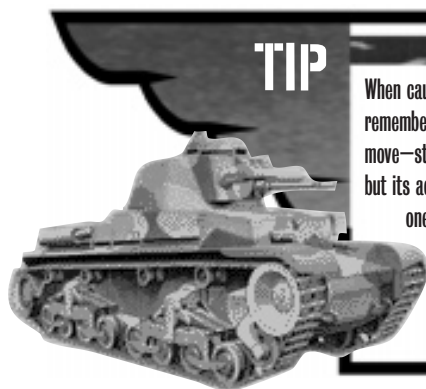
Unlike the previous two battles, the Russians have armor and plenty of trees and buildings to hide behind. This isn't the time to use *Blitzkrieg* tactics. Your four victory locations lie in the south half of the Russian map, but the ford at the map's north edge affords your best river crossing. Deploy your AT guns in the heavy forest west of the river; after the battle begins, move your tanks into the trees close to the river, still under cover. Line up a shot on the Russian-occupied house just across the river as you lay down infantry fire on the same location.

One or two tank shells should level the house and eliminate the squad. Immediately send your infantry team across the ford and look for a Russian BT-7 responding to the infantry. It should be an easy target for your AT gun or tank (Figure 8.18).

After you take out the BT-7, prepare for plenty of company: the Russians will assault your position with as many as four tanks. You might lose an AT gun in this exchange, but your Mark IVs are superior to the Russian armor, and the battle should end quickly (Figure 8.19).

The enemy might offer a truce here, but you still have victory locations to secure. Quickly, move your forces across the ford and over the river. You might receive light resistance at Strong Point Ivan, but with two tanks rumbling across the

snow, you should eliminate the targets quickly. The house behind Strong Point Ivan usually isn't occupied, but the cluster of buildings around Kanev's house may conceal three-man Russian recon infantry teams. Remember, the Russians have no AT guns in this battle, so you can point your tanks at each victory location and open up the throttles. Don't delay, because the enemy will try to flee the battlefield after the tank drubbing in the woods.



TIP

When caught in a tank battle with multiple vehicles, remember to stay in a continuous cycle of move—stop—fire. Your tank can fire while moving, but its accuracy is reduced. Above all, don't stay in one spot for too long.

Commanding the Russians

You don't want to mix it up with German armor at close range with your light BT-7s. Use the cover of the woods and buildings and, as always, be patient when you defend victory locations. Place one or two recon teams in and around the blackened area opposite the ford to slow the German infantry advance (Figure 8.20).

Wait until the last second to commit your tanks to battle, and when you do, look for long-range, covered attacks. Move quickly when the German tanks move into the forest, where it takes longer for them to maneuver for a good shot.



FIGURE 8.18

After drawing the BT-7 out into the light woods, the Panzer IVD finishes it off with a direct hit.

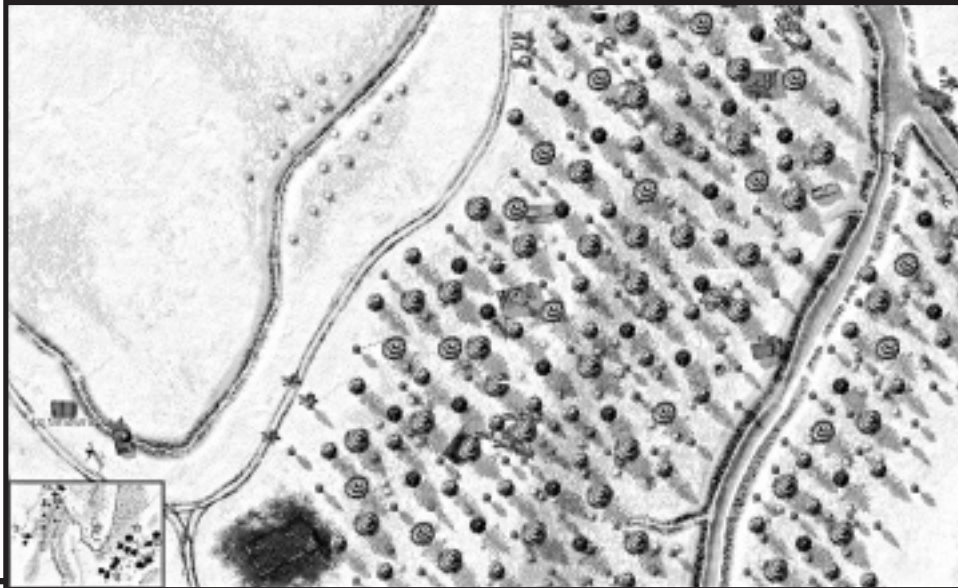


FIGURE 8.19

The woods are littered with burning and disabled BT-7s and T-26s, as German armor prevails in a tight skirmish.

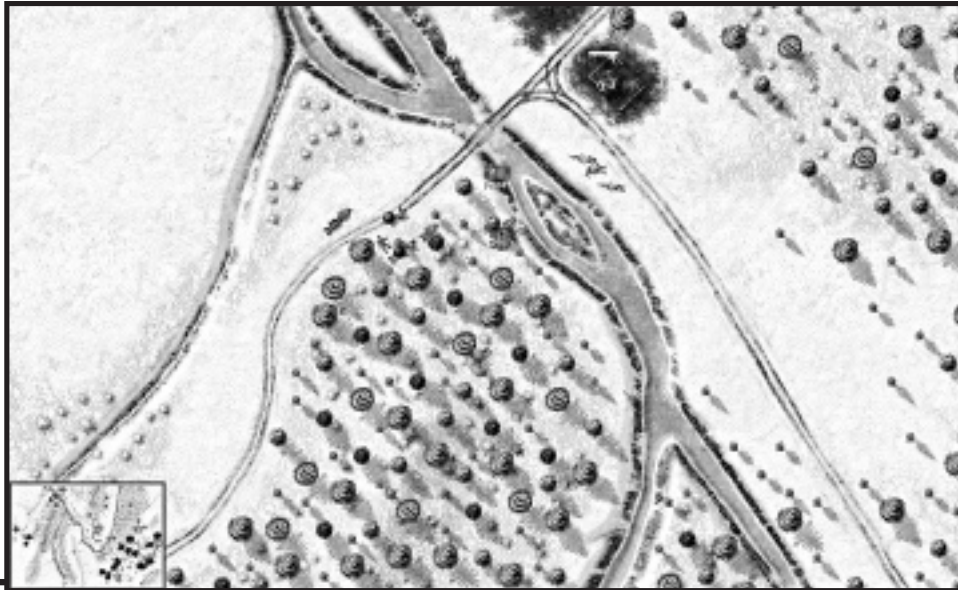


FIGURE 8.20

Russian recon teams cut down two German infantry squads attempting to cross the ford.

Whenever possible, engage the heavier German Mark IVs with two tanks (Figure 8.21).

If you can confine the German armor to the woods on the west side of the river, you should be able to hold two or more victory locations. Try not to commit more than two tanks to this strategy. If one or two German tanks break through, pull back your infantry and tanks to the buildings around the Moscow road. The excellent cover gives you a good chance of holding this location.

BLACKHAWK'S ALTERNATIVE: NEXT STOP MOSCOW

If the Russians hold back, the German AT guns are taken completely out of the picture. Hold your armor in reserve, out of line of sight of the German deployment area. Draw out the German tanks with your infantry, and then swarm them with your more numerous Russian vehicles. If you attack from several sides at once, or even drive up on both sides of an enemy vehicle, sometimes the enemy won't even get a shot off as they swing the turret to and fro in panic. German infantry has very little AT capability here, and once you eliminate the Mark IVs, you can sweep the map easily.





FIGURE 8.21

After destroying an AT carrier and Mark IV in the woods to the west, a Russian BT-7 and T-26C gang up on the remaining Mark IV at the top of the screen.