

**The Beginning of The End.
The Start of Operation Kutuzov.
Orel Salient, Russian Front, July 12 1943**

“ The almost two years of enemy preparation of the Orel salient had a telling effect.”

Lieutenant General L.M. Sandalov.

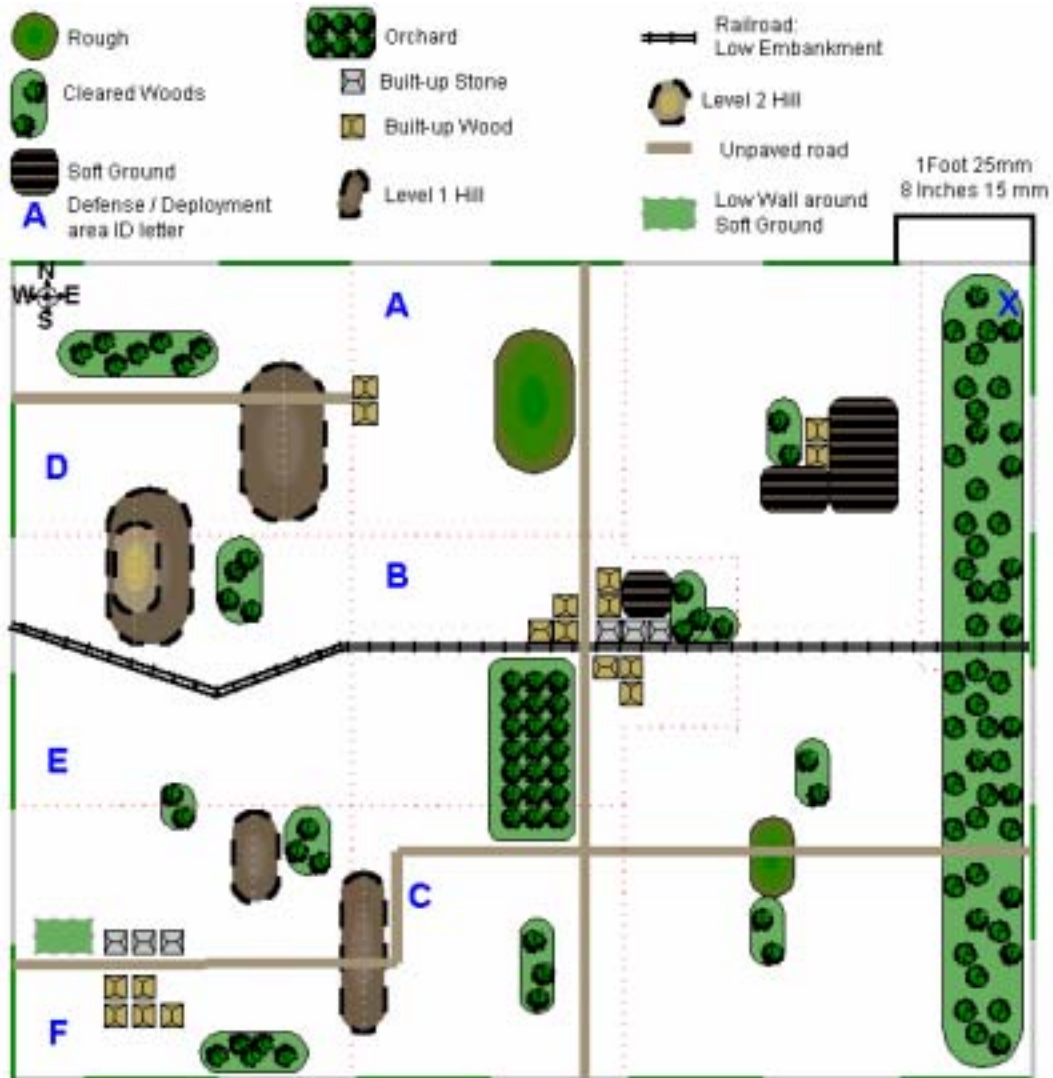
As the battle of Kursk raged to the south, the Russians unleashed an offensive of their own just to the north. This offensive had been in the planning stages from early April 1943. The goal of the offensive was to eliminate the Orel salient, liberate Orel and destroy the German 2nd Panzer and 9th armies. This would be the first of the many unstoppable offensives that would end in Berlin.

The nose of the Orel salient near the village of Novosil and the Suscha river, was covered by the German XXXV Army Corps commanded by Major General Lothar Rendulic. Against this force the Russians would throw, their 3rd and 63rd armies. Rendulic discovered that the Russian hammer blow was to fall on the junction of his 56th and 262nd Infantry Divisions. The Germans concentrated six infantry battalions, eighteen artillery batteries and twenty-four heavy antitank guns in the attack sector. These forces were bolstered by several lines of trenches and minefields.

After crossing the Suscha river the Russians attacked with six rifle divisions supported by tanks (including KV-1 heavy tanks), engineers and artillery. But the attack faltered with the Russians being caught in minefields and antitank cross fire. The Russians gained only the first defensive line at a cost of sixty tanks. The Russian commanders organized renewed assaults for the next day.

The Scenario

This scenario is a representation of the fighting that occurred on the 12th. The orders of battle do not represent actual units that fought in this action, they are representations of the types of forces available to the commanders during this action. The terrain is also an approximation of the type of terrain found in the Orel area.



Terrain

The scenario requires a 4' by 5' playing surface for 15mm, or 6' by 8' for 25mm. Terrain should be laid out according to the scenario map. All roads are (secondary) unpaved roads. Tracked vehicles moving along the railroad bed should treat it as an unpaved road. The railroad is on an embankment and it should be treated as a Low Embankment. Units on top of the railroad are treated as if they are in open ground. Large vehicles not on the embankment but conforming to it edge are considered hull-down from fire that crosses the embankment. All woods are cleared woods.

Order of Battle

The order of battle lists the organization of all units needed to play the scenario.

Starting units. All German units and fortifications start the game deployed in any of the defense areas as hidden or hidden markers (note the position of mine belts on scrap paper). Units not in fortifications can start the game in improved/hull-down positions. Additionally only the following fortifications are placed on the playing surface at the start; four bunkers, all entrenchments and two anti-tank positions (just the fortifications, not any guns or troops that may or may not occupy them are placed on the playing surface). Smaller troop sized dug-in positions or weapons-pits are only placed on the playing surface when the troops in them are suspected or spotted. Once placed on the playing surface they are not removed.

Only the Russian scout platoon is deployed on the board anywhere in area X.

Off-board Fire Support Units. The line of fire for the off-board German units is perpendicular to the western edge of the playing surface. German off-board is pre-registered. The line of fire for the off-board Russian units is perpendicular to the eastern edge of the playing surface.

Entering Units. Except for the scout platoon all Russian units enter the playing surface anywhere in area X. Starting on the second Russian player turn and continuing each turn until all Russian units are deployed, the Russian player/players may elect to place zero, one or two maneuver elements on the playing surface in area X during the Maneuver phase. Each maneuver element can perform one action in that maneuver phase.

Game Length

The scenario is played in 15 and ½ game turns starting at 430 hours (4:30 A.M.) with the Russian player turn. The game ends after completing the Russian player turn at 710 hours (7:10 A.M.).

Victory Conditions

The Russian player needs to have accumulated more victory points than the German player after the last turn of the game and cleared one German defense area of undisordered German units for a Russian victory. The German player must accumulate a 3:2 superiority in victory points over the Russian player to win. Any other outcome is considered a draw.

Victory points are gained in the following ways. First, both players may accumulate victory points by inflicting casualties upon enemy units as listed on the Victory Points Table (Page 12 of rule book). Second the Russian player also receives 5 victory points each, for clearing any of the defense areas A, B or C and 7 victory points each, for clearing defense area D, E and F, of undisordered German units by the end of the game.

Special Scenario Rules

Log bunkers may hold one troop or small gun stand. The German player may not deploy 75mm PaK40 Antitank guns (GE-41) or mortars in the log bunkers. Weapons-pits may only hold type T units. Entrenchments may hold type T or G units.

Russian scouts and engineers may elect to detect mines during their maneuver phase. To detect mines the stand must use two actions and move at ½ speed. As the unit moves it detects any mine belts that it comes into contact with. Once a unit detecting mines touches a mine belt it must stop. The portion of the mine belt that was detected may be marked and the unit's movement is ended. The unit need not resolve Minefield Passage unless it attempts to cross the mine belt in a subsequent phase. Mine detection does trigger opportunity fire.

The Russian engineer company is equipped with 6 Line Charges. Line Charges once deployed, clear a path (large enough for any unit) through a mine belt or wire obstacle. To deploy a Line Charge the engineer unit must conform with its front aiming point to the edge of a known mine belt or wire obstacle and use one action to lay the charge. A second action is required to detonate the charge. A roll of any thing but 1 detonates the charge and clears the path. If a one is rolled, the line is a dud and a new line must be deployed. Any cleared path is considered a defile, vehicle units passing through them trigger Opportunity fire. Russian engineers may also use one action during the maneuver phase to clear wire for T type units. The engineer unit must conform to the wire with its front aiming point, then use the next action to clear the wire. Wire clearing does trigger opportunity fire..

Recommendations

This is a large scenario, I recommend 4-6 players.

For the Russian players: Mass your armor. Remember the Smoke. Check the Mine Field Passage rules.

For the German players: Interlocking fields fire (The KVs are hard to kill, you may need to hit them with arty and AT guns in the same turn) and defense in depth. The 50mm PaK38 Antitank guns with the veteran crews can do some damage. You can't defend it all, so don't try. Use your mines and wire to channel the Russian attack. Check the Mine Field Passage rules.

Sources

Glantz, David M. House, Jonathan M. *The Battle of Kursk*. University Press of Kansas 1999

Erickson, John. *The Road to Berlin*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1983.