

Stalingrad - Win With Either Side

by SGT. LOU ZOCCH

"STALINGRAD - WIN WITH EITHER SIDE" first appeared in Vol. 1, #3 of The General (Sept. '64) which is now out of print. The article is used with the kind permission of the Avalon Hill Company. Sgt. Zocchi is a designer of some note, having created both Luftwaffe and Battle of Britain, among others.

Here is the opening I use for Stalingrad when I play the Russian side. We will put a grid system on the board so you can put your units in the right place. Sit on the German side of the board so that Greece will be on your right and Sweden on the left. The word Greece will be in the #1 column. Turkey will be in the #2 column and Warsaw will be in #25 column. The numbers of the columns will be progressively higher as you go from south to north. If you have done this correctly, Dnepro Petrovsk and Stalino will both be in column #16.

The southernmost railroad in Poland is in column 20. The square where the railroad runs off the board should be labeled square A. Work eastward from square A and label each succeeding square, B, C, D, E, etc., until you have worked your way across the board. If you have done it correctly, Minsk and Kiev will be on the M line. Smolensk, Kharkov, and Stalino should be on the S line. The lines bearing the names of letters intersect the numbered columns at a 60 degree angle. Lettered lines run in a Northwestern to Southeastern direction while the numbered columns run west to east. To make sure you have the letters and numbers correct, I am listing the coordinates of a few cities: Kiev M20, Kharkov S19, Stalino S16, Minsk H27, Moscow Z32. I used the railroad to place the letters on because of its fairly central location. The Russians rarely go past Bucharest so coordinates for the lower portion of Rumania aren't needed. Since the Germans seldom get to the Northern Divina, I saw no need for giving coordinates to that area. You can use this system to play by mail if you've got the guts. Anyway, here are the red starting positions.

G13 - 4-6-4	E19 - 4-6-6, 5-7-4
G15 - 5-7-4	F11 - 7-10-4
F16 - 4-6-4	G24 - 6-9-6 Brest Litovsk
C19 - 2-3-6	J32 - 5-7-4, 5-7-4
G22 - 5-7-4	L32 - 4-6-6
H25 - 4-6-6	W40 - 2-3-6 Leningrad
H27 - 2-3-6	AA45 - 5-7-4, 5-7-4
L30 - 4-6-6	BB49 - 5-7-4, 5-7-4
G14 - 4-6-4	G11 - 7-10-4, 4-6-4
G16 - 4-6-4	G12 - 5-7-4, 4-6-4
G21 - 4-6-4	D15 - 4-6-4
G23 - 4-6-4	K32 - 5-7-6
K29 - 5-7-4	J33 - 4-6-6
	H26 - 5-7-4
	BB47 - 5-7-4

Winning with the Russians

The basic German strategy is to stretch the Russian lines to the breaking point. The Russians have 34 units. Any time the Reds are forced to guard more than 34 squares, there will be weak places in the lines. The Jerrys would be foolish not to attack the weak points and leave the Reds with less units to guard an even greater area. If the Germans successfully attack across the Prut River, the Red commander has a longer front to defend. To guard against this, I have defended most strongly in the south. My setup discourages the Jerrys from attacking across the Prut because the Germans will have to sacrifice more in soak-offs than they can hope to win in the attack. To attack the 7-10-4 at F11, the Jerrys can leap off from 4 different squares. Since we can put 3 men in a single square, Jerry could have a total of 12 units available for the siege. With the Germans 12 strongest units, he can muster a total force of 80 factors in the 4 attack squares. This would give him a 4-1 fight against our 7-10-4 if he didn't have to soak off anybody else. But here is where the rub comes in. The 7-10-4 and 4-6-4 in G11 have a total of 32 defensive factors because of the river. The Germans must use a minimum of 6 combat factors to soak them off. The troops in G12 must be soaked off too. Their combined factors are 26, so Fritz has to spend 5 combat factors to soak them off when the Hiene uses F12 to attack from. Units sitting in F12 are also adjacent to the red 4-6-4 sitting in G13 so 2 more factors are needed for soakoff. Jerry has a choice of trying to soak off the man in G13 at the same time he soaks off the man in G12, which requires 7 factors for the combined soakoff, or he can put a man in F13 to soak off the G13 and G14 defenders.

After Fritz places all his soak-offs in position, he will find that he can muster only 69 combat factors against the man in F11. This means that he will be risking about 15 combat factors in 6-6 soak-offs to get a 3-1 attack against a unit that could cost him 20 more factors if an exchange is called for. This attack could cost Hiene as much as 35 combat factors and the most Hiene could win would be 10 combat factors. The fact that an exchange would cost Fritz 20 combat factors from his strongest units generally encourages him to look elsewhere for an opening attack. I believe that the entire Rumanian front is too strong for an attack at any point. When I play the Germans against this setup, I put just enough force in Rumania to be a menace. Red Commander will be forced to watch the border with some fairly strong units.

I have placed 25 combat factors on the Finland border because it is vital that you eliminate those pesky Finns as soon as possible. The 2-3-6 in Leningrad will withdraw to H26 on your first move. This slows up the German attack along the Nemunas corridor and costs you little. Move your 5-7-6 from K32 into Finland and attack the Finns on your first turn. Never attack at less than 5-1 in Finland. If you get exchanged out of one of your 5-7-4's you won't be able to kill off the Finns as soon as you should. The Jerrys might eventually cross the Nemunas but if you work the Finland attack right, your Finnish troops will be free to defend the Divina.

Winning with the Germans

I want to help the Germans because I hate Communists. In fact, I've been agin' Communists ever since they burned Richmond and tricked General Lee into surrendering. So, now General Von Chicken Koopen, we will explore your side of this campaign. You are allowed to place 8 combat factors in Finland. I have

managed to keep the 30 Russian combat factors tied up in Finland for 6 or 7 moves when I have a little luck.

Place a Rumanian 2-2-4 at V43 and another at W49. Put your 3rd Rumanian 2-2-4 at T43 and the last one at U48. Make 2 piles of 7 factors out of your Finns and place them at U45 and U47. When the Reds attack they will kill off the Rumanians at V43 and W49, but they won't be able to reach the rest of your men. 7 factors in a single square is too much force in one place for the Reds to battle without the risk of a soakoff and exchange. The Reds will probably eliminate your last two Rumanians on the 2nd move. If the Reds leave any holes for you to slip out of Finland through, make a run for it with one unit. Your objective is to tie him up as long as possible and you can't do that if you try to run for it with all of your men.

If the Reds don't leave holes, move one 2-2-4 to T46, and another to T43. Place a 3-3-4 in Helsinki and make a stack of 7 factors at T44. The Reds will usually pounce the two lone 2-2-4's and leave your stack of 7 alone. On your next turn retreat one 2-2-4 and 3-3-4 to Q42. If you should be so lucky move your 3-3-4 to P41. On the 5th Russian move, your 2-2-4 at Q42 will probably be smeared, but I doubt that the Reds can get into position to wipe out the men at P41. If that's so, you might be holding out for one or two more turns, depending on how conservative the Russian commander is in his attacks.

I have ruled out any thought of counter attack by the Finns and Rumanians because if they attack, they must bunch their forces together and this makes it easy for the Reds to surround and wipe them out.

The grid-coordinate system described in the above article is not the official AH system currently in use for play-by-mail, etc., but is one devised by Zocchi before there was an official one.

