



GAME INFORMATION: TROOPS

Soviet

Political and Strategic Elements

The Soviet Army has gone a long way from June 22, 1941, when the USSR was attacked by the Germans and their allies, through the fall of 1944. Forced to retreat first to Leningrad and Moscow and then during the summer campaign of 1942 further to the Caucasus and the Volga River, the Soviet army was not defeated and did not subdue to Wehrmacht. In the battles of Stalingrad (fall 1942 – winter 1943) and Kursk (summer 1943) the USSR managed to defeat the Germans and retake the strategic initiative. And already in the fall of 1944 the Soviets stood in Poland and Eastern Prussia...

Germany lay ahead. But the path to the main objective of this war – the city of Berlin – still held fearsome battles for the Soviet infantry, artillerists, tankers, and airborne. They still had to force the Oder River, take the fortress of Kustrin, break through the German defense lines in the Seelow Heights, repulse the flank strikes of the enemy tank armies... And Berlin itself was turned by the Germans into an undefeatable stronghold, which they, following the orders of their Fuhrer, intended to defend to the last.

The Soviet Campaign in the 'Faces of War' spans the closing phase of the war in Europe, when the troops of three army groups lead by Marshals Zhukov, Konev, and Rokossovsky surrounded Berlin, took it by storm and broke through to the Elbe, where they met the western allies.

Soviet Forces

The backbone of the advance force of the Soviet Army was comprised of tank corps and armies. These employed a magnificent medium tank, the legendary T-34, KV and IS-2 heavy tanks, and self propelled artillery units SU-76, SU-85 and SU-100. After crushing through the enemy defense lines the tanks would be hurled into battle in large detachments and chased the enemy for hundreds of kilometers, shaking the German defense in huge scales.

By 1945 the Soviet infantry, which bore the main hardships of war, became an excellently equipped and armed force. Its elite, the cream of the crops were the assault squads (or officially - "assault engineering brigades") and the recon troops. The assault squads were equipped with steel cuirasses, PPSH submachine-guns and DP machineguns, PTRD and PTRS AT guns, trophy grenade launchers, flamethrowers and explosives. These squads would be used to break open reinforced enemy defense positions, assail enemy fortresses and strongholds, and in street battles. Although formally a part of regular infantry divisions, the Soviet recon troops were an analogue of western special forces: the rangers and commandos. They were used not only for recon mission, but also for sabotage raids, did para-drops, blew up bridges, and captured strategically important facilities in the enemy rear. In order to accomplish this, the sabotage squads would often be manned with specially trained sergeants and officers of GB NKVD (States Security Department of the USSR Internal Affairs People's Commissariat).

The main firing force of the Red Army was the artillery, which the Soviet generals often called the "God of War". The Russian artillery employed self-propelled guns and howitzers (ISU-122, ISU-152), as well as an enormous number of regular cannons, the most famous thereof being the 76-mm ZIS-3.

A separate place in the Soviet artillery hall of fame is occupied by the famous Katyushas – BM-8 and BM-13 – 82-mm and 132mm multiple launch rocket systems, known among the Germans as

“Stalin's Organs”. In just a couple of minutes a regiment of Katyushas could launch a rain of hundreds of projectiles against the enemy positions, sowing panic and destruction.

Aerial support to the ground troops was provided by Pe-2 dive bombers and the famed IL-2 fighter-bomber – an armored plane, which the Russians nicknamed the "Flying Tank", and the Germans christened it the "Black Death" or “Schwarzer Tod”.

Short version:

In the fall of 1944 the Soviets already stood in Poland and at the borders of Eastern Prussia, which by that time has already become part of the Third Reich.

Germany lay ahead. But the path to the main objective of this war – the city of Berlin –still held fearsome battles for the Soviet infantry, artillerists, tankers, and airborne. They still had to force the Oder River, take the fortress of Kustrin, break through the German defense lines in the Seelow Heights (the Eastern analogue of the “Siegfried line”), repulse the flank strikes of the enemy tank armies... And Berlin itself was turned by Germans into an undefeatable stronghold, which they, following the orders of Fuhrer, intended to defend to the last.

The Soviet Campaign in the ‘Faces of War’ spans the closing phase of the war in Europe, when the troops of three army groups lead by Marshals Zhukov, Konev, and Rokossovsky surrounded Berlin, took it by storm and broke through to the Elbe River, where they met the western allies.

The backbone of the advance force of the Soviet Army was comprised of tank corps and armies. These employed a magnificent middle tank, the legendary T-34, KV and IS-2 heavy tanks, and self propelled artillery units SU-76, SU-85 and SU-100.

By 1945 the Soviet infantry, which bore the main hardships of war, became an excellently equipped and armed force. Its elite, the cream of the crops were the assault squads and the recon troops. The assault squads were armed with PPSH submachine-guns and DP hand-held machineguns, PTRD and PTRS AT guns, trophy grenade launchers, flamethrowers and explosives. These squads would be used to break open reinforced enemy defense positions, assail enemy fortresses and strongholds, and in street battles. Although formally a part of regular infantry divisions, the Soviet recon troops were an analogue of western special forces: the rangers and commandos. They were used not only for recon mission, but also for sabotage raids, did para-drops, blew up bridges, and captured strategically important facilities in the enemy rear. The main firing force of the Red Army was the artillery, which the Soviet generals often called the "God of War". The Russian artillery employed self-propelled guns and howitzers (ISU-122, ISU-152), as well as an enormous number of regular cannons, the most famous thereof being the 76-mm ZIS-3.

A separate place in the Soviet artillery hall of fame is occupied by the famous Katyushas – BM-8 and BM-13 – 82-mm and 132mm multiple launch rocket systems, known among the Germans as “Stalin's Organs”. In just a couple of minutes a regiment of Katyushas could launch a rain of hundreds of projectiles against the enemy positions, sowing panic and destruction.

Aerial support to the ground troops was provided by the famed IL-2 fighter-bomber – an armored plane, which the Russians nicknamed the “Flying Tank”, and the Germans christened it the "Black Death" or “Schwarzer Tod”.

Allied

Political and Strategic Elements

The most important event of WWII for the UK and the USA was the landing of the Allied troops in the northeast of France (also known as Operation Overlord or D-Day) on June 6, 1944, and the advance from Normandy to Paris and further to Belgium, Holland, and Germany. D. Eisenhower, the Allied Commander-in-Chief called this campaign the Crusade in Europe. Over the course of this crusade (June 1944 – May 1945) the allied troops managed to liberate large territories, defeated the opposing German forces, and ended their war march at the Elbe River where they met the Soviet Army.

The Allied Campaign deals with the most dramatic months of the Crusade in Europe from June 1944 through January 1945.

Allied Forces

By D-Day, the Allied infantry was equipped with all kinds of state-of-the-art weaponry. The troops were armed with reliable Garand M-1 rifles, Thompson, M3 and Sten submachine-guns, Bren and BAR machineguns.

The commandos also had special silent firearms, such as, for instance, the legendary DeLisle Carbine. Another strong argument of the Anglo-American infantry was the large number of hand-held AT rocket launchers: Bazooka M1, M9 and PIAT. Thanks to those, even the relatively small infantry squads, left without artillery and tank support, were not quite defenseless against the attacks of the German panzers.

Another major achievement of the Allies, compared to other parties involved, was the experience they gained in dropping troops and materiel in the enemy rear. By the Summer of 1944 they had a total of five airborne divisions, which took part in all of the major operations of the Crusade in Europe and played a great role in the combat success of the Allied. Airborne troops were not only dropped with chutes, but also with special gliders, such as Horsa, Waco CG-4 and others. Some of the gliders, for instance the heavy Hamilcar could also drop jeeps, AT guns, and even the special light tanks: Mk VII Tetrarch and M22 Locust. This arsenal coupled with Bazookas turned the Airborne into a fearsome force, capable to effectively combat in the rear of the German troops and even resist tank attacks.

Tank detachments were comprised of different American and British modifications such as M3 and M5 Stuart, M4 Sherman, Cromwell and Churchill. They also employed all kinds of self-propelled antitank guns and self-propelled AA units. Of course the Allied tanks would not always win against the German Tigers and Panthers. Still the Anglo-American armored forces gained quite many glorious victories, including the famed General Patton's at Avranches and Pontaubault in early August, 1944, which ensured the defeat of the Germans in Northern France and opened the way to Paris.

It is the general opinion that the Allied victories against Wehrmacht were mainly achieved thanks to the outstanding air forces of the Allies – strategic and tactical alike. Indeed the famous fighter planes P-47 Mustang and P-51 Thunderbolt, Spitfire and Typhoon, bombers B-24 Liberator, B-25 Mitchell, B-26 Marauder, strategic bombers B-17 Flying Fortress and Lancaster played an invaluable role both in the enemy rear and over the battlefields. However it is often forgotten that in some of the battles the Allied aviation simply could not cover their fellow-troops on the ground due to bad weather conditions. And then the entire load of struggle was shifted onto the shoulders of regular soldiers and numerous artillery squads. This was the case, for instance, in the Ardennes, where, according to many known historians, the strong German advance was stopped primarily thanks to the efforts of AT and heavy howitzer artillery.

German

By late 1944 Germany had suffered devastating defeats in the Eastern and Western Fronts and was forced to retreat from the larger part of the occupied foreign territories. Now Wehrmacht was tasked with the new objective: defend the "Vaterland".

However, since - as every strategist knows – the best defense is the attack, the German Ground Forces Supreme Command (Oberkommando der Wehrmacht) developed a brave, almost daring plan of defeating the Allies in Belgium and Northeastern France. The operation was called the Rhine Watch (Wacht am Rhein). According to the operation plan, three German armies, including two panzer ones, were to inflict a deep penetrating strike against the British and American positions in the area of the Ardennes, advance to the Maas River near Dinant and Namur, capture the bridges, advance to Brussels and, finally, reach the sea by Antwerp. In doing

so the Germans wanted to cut off the entire English group located to the north of Brussels from the Americans and, possibly, force the Allies enter into a separate truce.

Operation Wacht am Rhein began as planned on December 15, 1944, and it is this Wehrmacht swan song in the Western Front that the German Campaign of 'Faces of War' is devoted to.

Since the German industry could not produce materiel in the same numbers as the Allies, the Germans have always tried to gain the advantage of quality. And - in many ways - they succeeded. The world's first automatic assault rifle was the German MP-44 (or StG.44 - Sturmgewehr-44) and already by late 1944 it could be seen held in the hands of the German elite infantry - the Panzergrenadiers of Wehrmacht and the SS. Other achievements certainly worth mentioning were the MG-42 machineguns, FG-42 and K-43 rifles. In addition to these firearms, the German infantry was also supplied with a large number of AT launchers - the one-time Panzerfaust and the multiple-use Panzerschreck.

The best artillery systems to be mentioned were the 75-mm and 88-mm Pak-40 and Pak-43 antitank guns, as well as the legendary "Acht-Komma-Acht" 88-mm Flak-18, Flak-36, Flak-41 AA guns, which were also often used as AT guns, since no tank armor at the time could resist their powerful shells.

At the same time, when it came to their own tanks, the Germans tried to arm those with the most long-barreled guns and make them completely insensitive to enemy fire. Of course, this was the wish of every party involved in the conflict, but only the Germans (and maybe the Russians with their IS-2) were so determined in sacrificing the agility and maneuverability of a tank to armor thickness and cannon length. Not as prominent in the Pz.V Panther 75-mm tank, this concept was fully implemented in Pz.VI Tiger and Pz.VIB Tiger II (Koenigtiger or King Tiger) with their high-power 88-mm guns and thick frontal armor, while the self-propelled AT units 'Jagdpanther' and 'Jagdtiger' took it to the point of absurdity. The Germans would also willingly upgrade their main medium tank Pz.IV, building up the length of the main gun and reinforcing the armor, so that by the end of 1944 these panzers in Ausf.F and Ausf.H modifications with 75mm guns still made up the core of the German armored fleet.

The Germans also had their own version of the Russian Katyushas - the 150mm Nebelwerfer MLRS.

Since the time of their blitzkriegs in Poland and France, the Germans were paying great attention to the mobility of their forces, so their motorized infantry still kept its trademark APC SdKfz.251 Hanomag. This vehicle had a dozen of different modifications including the one with 20mm AA guns.

General Weaponry

Aside from the aforementioned, the game will feature different heavy machineguns, mortars, hand grenades and flamethrowers. Other materiel features will include motorcycles, passenger vehicles, trucks, and floating tanks.