

WDS Donbas '43

Design and Campaign Notes



Dedicated to the Ostfront enthusiasts, to our players, without you, this would not be possible.

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Design Notes	7
Scenario Design Notes.....	11
Scenario Planning.....	11
The Campaign and Operational Phases Scenarios	17
#43_0816_01: Donbas Strategic Offensive Operation (398 Turns)	20
#43_0816_03: Donbas Strategic Offensive Operation, First Phase (158 Turns).....	21
#43_0901_01: The Donbas Strategic Offensive Operation, Second Phase (198 Turns)	22
#43_0909_01: Counterattack at Znamenka (38 Turns)	23
Optional Rules	24
Order Of Battles Notes.....	25
The Soviet Order of Battle.....	26
The German Order of Battle.....	33
Map Notes.....	42
Donbas, The Campaign.....	44
Introduction	44
The July Offensive: Izyum-Barvenkovo Offensive Operation.....	46
The Southwestern Front Offensive	48
The Offensive on the Mius Front	51
Donbas Strategic Offensive Operation.....	53
The August Offensive of the Southwest Front	56
The August Offensive of the Southern Front	59
The German Counterattacks and the Fight for Taganrog	62
Operations in September and the End of the Donbas Strategic Offensive Operation	69
Conclusions	73
List of Scenarios.....	74
Appendices.....	100
Selected Bibliography, Articles and Books	100
NARA Rolls.....	102
Russian Army Staff Documents	102
Websites.....	103
Credits	103

Introduction

The Strategic Offensive Operation in the Donbas and its predecessor, the Izyum-Barvenkovo Offensive Operation, were, in part, another of the STAVKA offensives planned to exhaust and destroy a large portion of the German armies comprising Army Groups Center and South. After a spring in which an expectant Red Army awaited the German summer offensive, the German high command presented Hitler with various options, and he decided to strike his major blow at the Kursk salient. Operation Zitadelle (see WDS Kursk '43) which was the name of the German summer offensive, had the objective of hitting the Soviet army decisively, the Kursk salient was a semicircular protuberance around the city of the same name, this bulge in the front of the Ostfront, had to be cut off by the joint attack from its northern and southern base by the German armies of the 9. Armee of General Model and the 4. Panzerarmee of General Hoth together with the Armee-Abteilung Kempf.

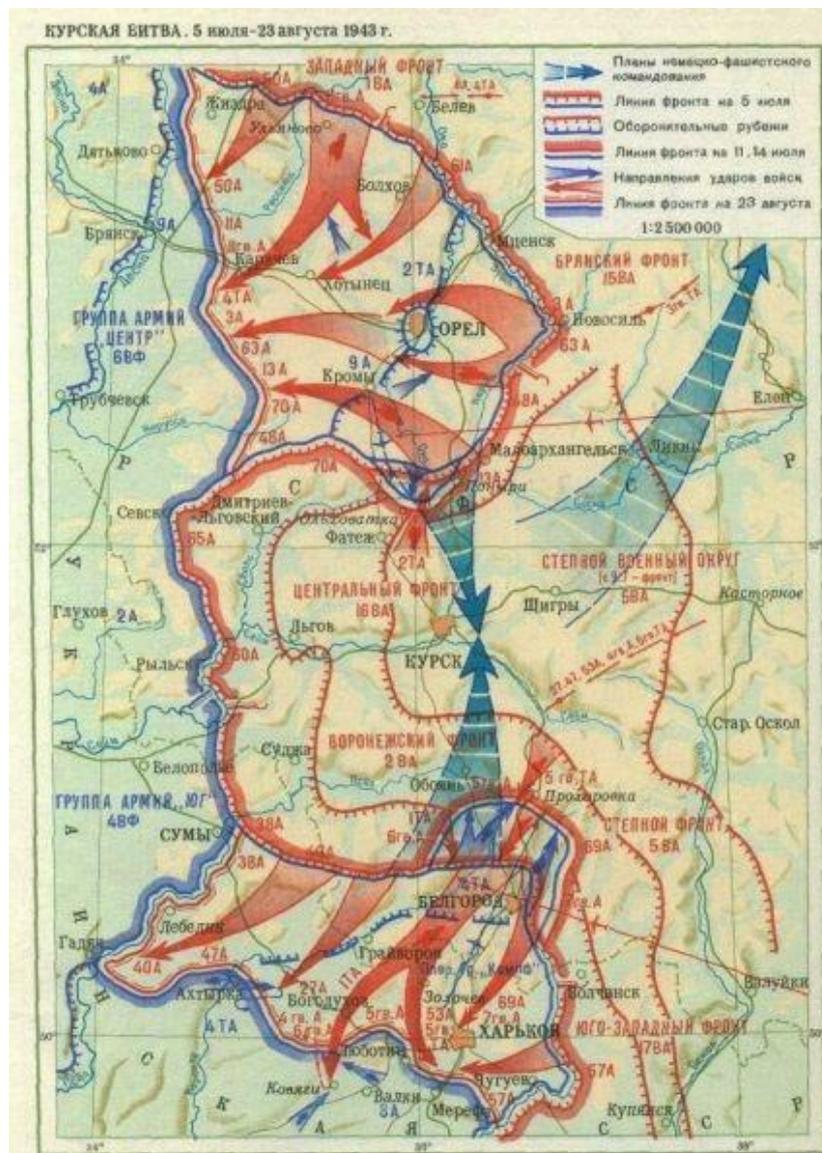


Figure 1, Operations Zitadelle, Kutuzov and Rummyantsev

The three German armies sought to destroy the Soviet fronts defending the salient, STAVKA, aware of the German plan through its excellent espionage services and the ENIGMA decoding by its Western allies, planned a strategy that would be executed in two distinct phases, the first phase, of a defensive nature, would deal with bleeding the German armies leading the advance during Operation Zitadelle, among other measures, the Soviets extraordinarily reinforced the Soviet units that would defend the area, fortified the Kursk salient with various staggered defensive lines in depth and provided a large number of anti-tank weapons and minefields of such density that had never been seen on the Ostfront during the preceding war years. The German attack began on July 5, 1943, and after slow progress by German units, it was halted after several days of fierce fighting. The Soviet forces took advantage of this moment to begin the offensive phase of the Soviet strategic plan. The offensive part of the Soviet plan began first on the southern flank of the Kursk salient, with the strategic reserves accumulated by STAVKA behind the dense, well-constructed Soviet defensive lines. From that moment on, it was followed by another in the Orel salient, north of the Kursk theater of operations, with the intention of destroying the 2. Panzerarmee and Model's own 9. Armee, which was still advancing on Kursk from the north of the salient. This offensive would be known as Operation Kutuzov (see WDS Orel '43) and began on July 12, 1943.

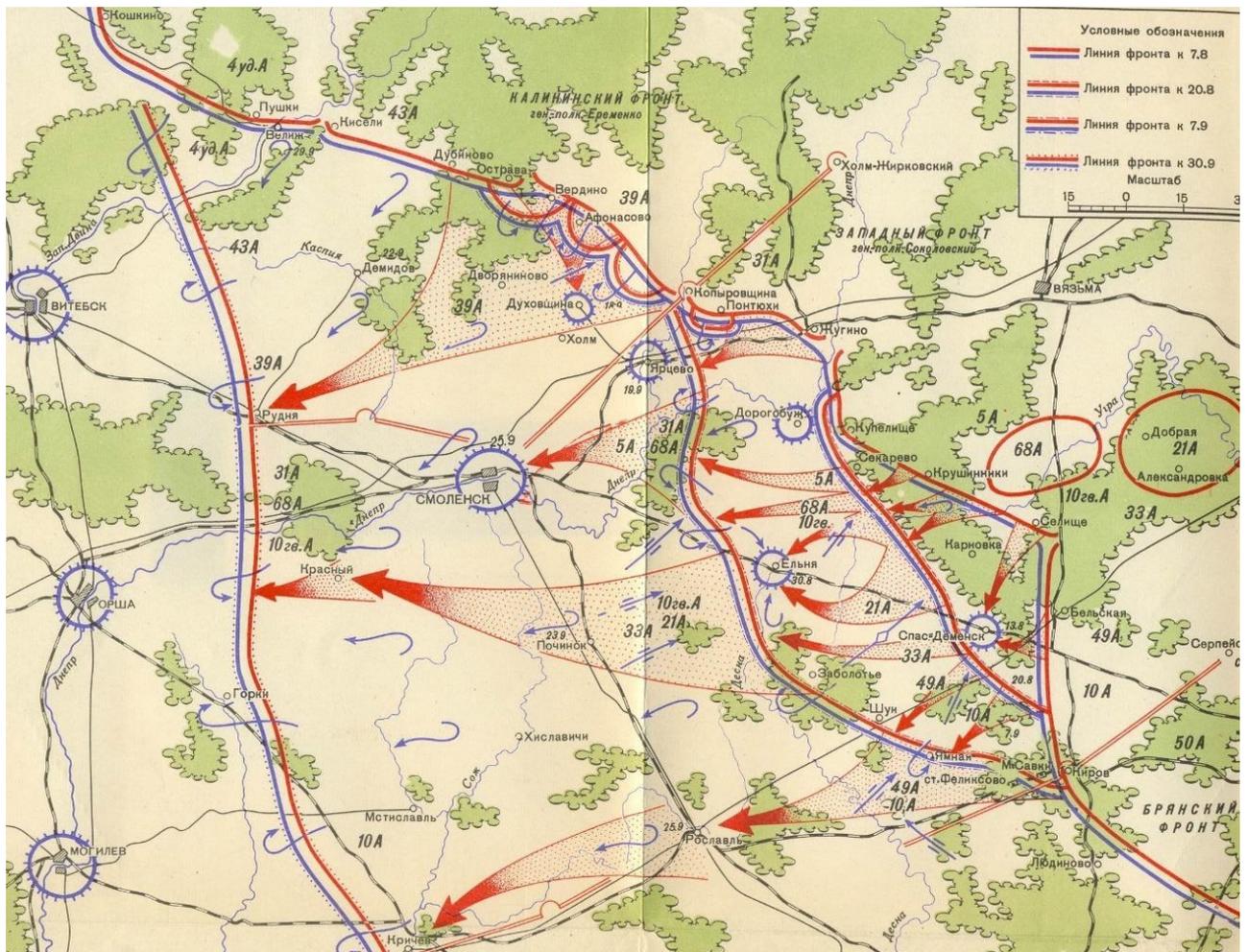


Figure 2, Operation Suvorov, August 1943

It is at this time that WDS Donbas '43 begins, and the STAVKA orders the prevention of reinforcements being sent to the area where the Zitadelle operation was taking place. The Soviets were aware that the 1.Panzerarmee and the 6.Armee may have been weakened to bolster the strength of the German armies participating in the Kursk offensive. They unleashed an offensive operation that had to cross the Severnyy Donets and Mius rivers, to defeat these two German armies and liberate the rich mining and industrial basin of the Donbas. The operation was not kept secret; the usual effectiveness of the Soviet Maskirovka was deliberately ignored. The Soviet high command that had planned the offensive on the Donbas wanted the Germans to detect not only the planned movements but also the imminence of the attack. This meant that the few armoured units available in the area, which could have been sent north as reinforcements for the 4.Panzerarmee or the Armee-Abteilung Kempf, remained in the zone of the 1.Panzerarmee or the 6.Armee.

The Izyum-Barvenkovo offensive, as it was officially known, and the offensive on the Mius began on July 17, 1943. Both offensives, part of the same plan, failed tactically, as the Soviets failed to defeat the German troops despite a promising start. Strategically, they achieved their objective: diverting attention to the Donbas and preventing the dispatch of fresh troops to the north, where an intense battle was underway. However, the Soviets' first offensive in the Donbas cost them serious losses, especially in the Mius area.

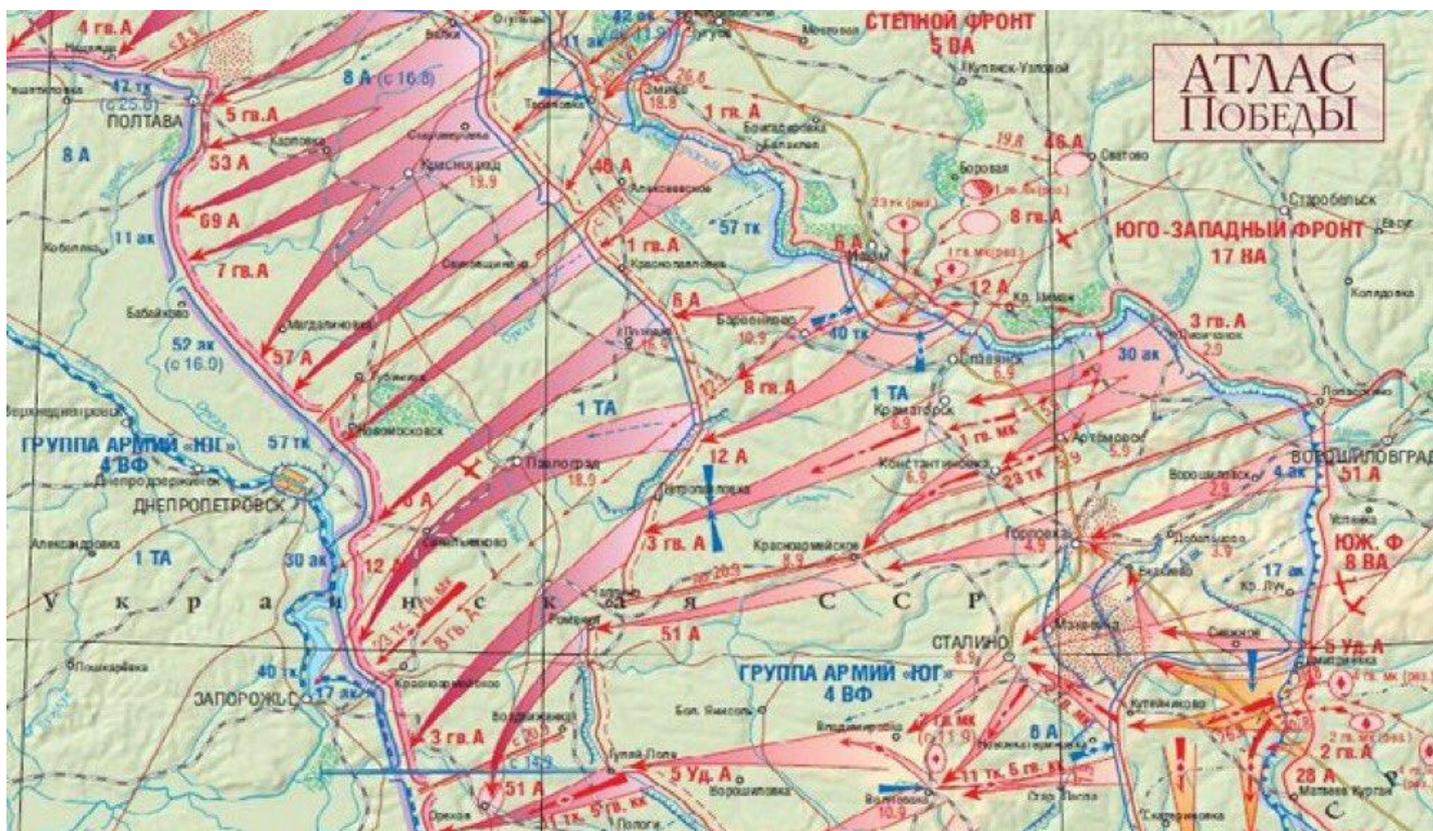


Figure 3, Donbas Strategic Offensive Operation, August 1943

On 3 August 1943, Operation Rumyantsev (see WDS Rumyantsev '43), also known as the Fourth Battle of Kharkov, began. Despite the heavy losses suffered by the Soviet armies during Operation Zitadelle and the subsequent Soviet counterattack, the Soviet high command was able to rebuild its units in the area within a short period and launch this major offensive that sought the destruction of the 4. Panzerarmee and the Armee. Abteilung Kempf, and later 8. Armee. The liberation of the Belgorod-Kharkov region occurred in parallel with other events—the STAVKA unleashed the Suvorov operation in the Smolensk-Roslavl area (see WDS Smolensk '43). This great offensive, which began on August 7, 1943, sought the liberation of Smolensk and the removal, by destroying the 4. Armee and the 3. Panzerarmee, the German armies on the Moscow axis, were still dangerously stationed in that area for almost two years.

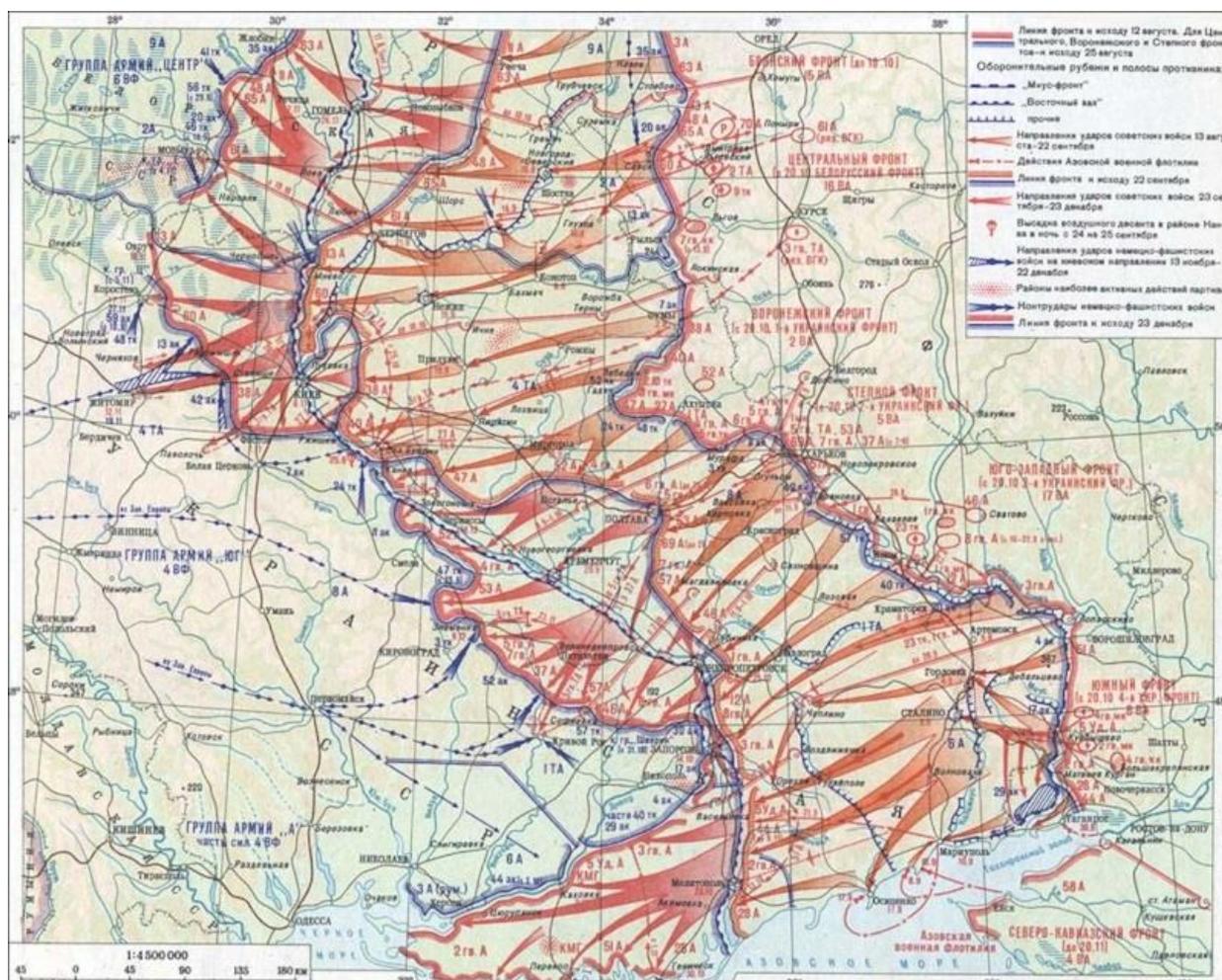


Figure 4, Dnepr Offensives, summer-autumn 1943

As we can see, strategically, the Soviet counteroffensives of the summer of 1943 were multiple interconnected offensives aimed at destroying the German armies of Army Groups Centre and South. In a succession of attacks without pause on a front of more than 1000 km, these various offensives would liberate vast areas of the still-occupied Russia and Soviet Ukraine, and the Donbas was not going to be an exception. STAVKA planned another major offensive very similar to the one unleashed during July at the Severnyy Donets and Mius rivers, but this time

the objectives were much more ambitious, since they included the destruction of the 1.Panzerarmee and 6.Armeekorps, the liberation of the Donbas region. Reaching and crossing the Dnepr River was a key focus, to prevent the Germans from using this great waterway as a line of defence for Army Group South, something its commander, Manstein, was planning. The Donbas Strategic Offensive Operation, as it was known in Soviet historiography, began on August 16, 1943, and ran parallel to other major Soviet operations launched during August in the areas of Smolensk, Orel, Belgorod-Kharkov, and the Kuban. These operations led the Red Army to the banks of the Dnepr River and the gates of Crimea and liberated large areas of central Russia. For the Donbas region, its recapture would enable the Soviets to benefit from one of the former USSR's richest mining and industrial basins.



Design Notes

WDS Donbas '43 has been a complex project, both in its selection and execution, and in its research phases and content creation. The decision to recreate the Donbas campaign was a personal commitment driven by my interest in studying the operations on the Eastern Front in 1943. I was not aware of any wargame that covered the fighting and liberation of the Donbas region. Once the operations in the Belgorod-Kharkov, Orel, and Smolensk areas were modelled in detail within the Panzer Campaigns series with specific titles for each, my focus was on the Donbas. During the violent and intense days of July and August 1943, these operations became a priority in my plans to study this specific part of the Front.

With the Russian invasion of the Donbas in 2022 still resonating in all the newscasts of the world, I began the study of the operations in the same theater of operations that the Germans and Soviets disputed during the summer-autumn of 1943. As I began analysing the campaign, I

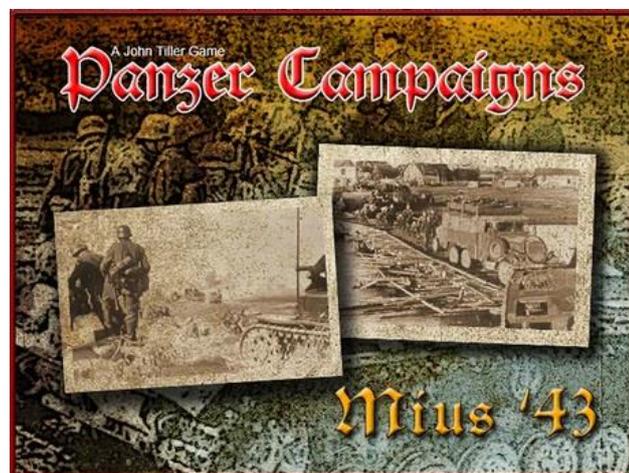


realised that the July 1943 operations in the Severnyy Donets sector and on the Mius Front ran parallel to the German operations in the Kursk salient during Operation Zitadelle. The operations in the Donbas region during July were partially covered by recently published texts. When I say partially covered, I am referring to the Mius Front area, not in the case of the area covered by the 1.Panzerarmee on the Severnyy Donets River.

A general trend in the studies carried out by contemporary historians is that operations in which several SS Divisions or Corps were involved on the Eastern Front fascinate these authors. It is relatively easy to find a study that describes them in detail; the defensive battles on the Mius Front and the subsequent counterattack by the II.SS PanzerKorps are covered in detail in German primary sources and an extensive bibliography. This assisted with the study of that part of the battle, which could be researched in detail.

Western historians have published little on the July operations in the Severnyy Donets sector, or on those in August and September, when the Soviets planned to liberate the entire Donbas area; these operations have not received the same attention. The source of information for this period has been based on primary sources from both Germany and the Soviet Union.

One of the first decisions made when designing WDS Donbas '43 was what content should and shouldn't be included in the project. It was clear that the Donbas Strategic Offensive Operation, as this major Soviet operation is officially called, was going to be part of the project, as it is the Soviet plan designed by STAVKA, aimed at liberating the entire Donbas industrial region with its important ports on the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea. However, there was also a little-



known Soviet offensive launched in July 1943 in the exact same area where the August offensive would take place. The Izyum-Barvenkovo Offensive Operation and its southern arm on the Mius Front had already been partially covered in a Wargame Design Studio product, the Mius '43 Demo. This free game describes the operations of the Southern Front in the Mius River area. This sector of the front was defended by elements of the 6.Armee, although the engagements are covered in detail, does not cover the entire period of operations in the Mius area, nor does it cover operations north of the Mius Front.



Figure 5, Donbas Area of Operations

The operations in the Donbas of July 1943 apparently had the objective of liberating the entire Donbas area, but when analyzing the Soviet primary sources, they say quite the opposite. In fact, during the preparation of this offensive, the Red Army deliberately did not conduct any “Maskirovka” or misinformation actions.

It was intended that the Izyum-Barvenkovo Offensive Operation and the attack on the Mius would be fully detected by the German army, thereby preventing reinforcements from being sent to the Kursk area. Beyond preventing the Germans from diverting resources from the Donbas theatre, it was hoped to achieve a crossing of the Severnyy Donets and have forward positions for subsequent operations. In the south, the aim was to breach the Axis defensive positions along the Mius.



Given its importance, the Izyum-Barvenkovo offensive operation of July 1943 was an important inclusion in WDS Donbas '43.

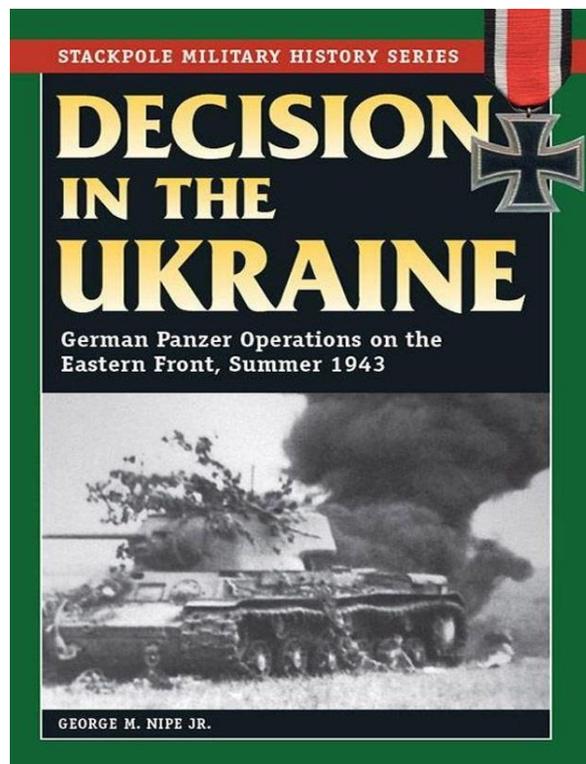
Both the Donbas and Izyum-Barvenkovo operations are related, and they would bring together the means and context for the subsequent events during the offensives in August. That said, we decided to keep it separate from the primary offensive aimed at liberating the Donbas. It would not be represented as a complete campaign, but as two separate operations, each with its own tactical objectives. This decision was taken by the designer and adapts perfectly to the idiosyncrasies of the July offensive

operations. The July operations need to be viewed as part of the Kursk operations, whereas the August operations were part of the strategic advance to the Dnepr.

Therefore, the addition of the July operations to this area of the Eastern Front provides more context and depth to WDS Donbas '43, and gives players of other Wargame Design Studio titles set during the summer of 1943, such as WDS Kursk '43, WDS Orel '43, WDS Smolensk '43 or WDS Rumyantsev '43, more insight, giving them a sense of the sheer scale and scale of the war operations across these sectors of the Eastern Front during the summer of 1943.

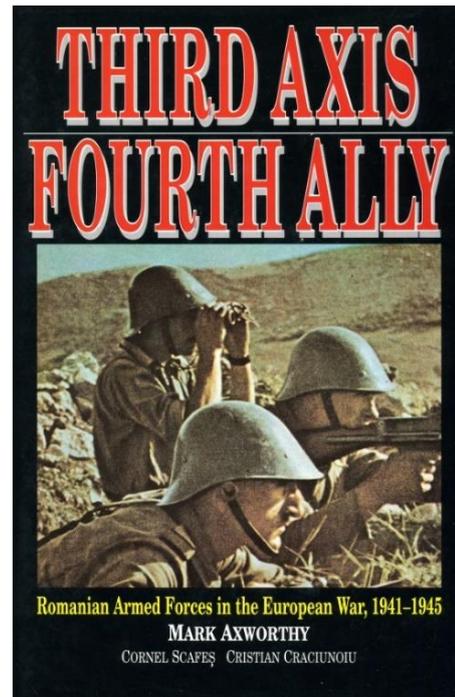
The August offensive is of greater importance, as its main objective was to liberate the entire Donbas and reach the Dnepr River, thereby preventing the German army from using this great river as a winter defensive line.

There are few texts on the campaigns in the Donbas region; the best study available to date is George M. Nipe's *Decision in Ukraine*. This excellent work was already used during the research phase of WDS Rumyantsev '43, and Nipe covers in detail the operations on the Mius Front during July 1943 and the subsequent counterattack by the II.SS PanzerKorps. It is a must-read for anyone who wants to know the ins and outs of the Soviet attack on the Mius River and the subsequent German recovery of it, since Nipe offers a deeply researched essay based mainly on German sources.



Another of the works used to document a specific aspect of the campaign, following the steps of the only Romanian Division present in this sector of the front, was *Third Axis, Fourth Ally* by Mark Axworthy. In this important and rare work, the Romanian Army's performance on the Eastern Front is examined in detail. The author describes all the operations in which the Balkan Army was involved. Romanian collaboration in the German Army's war operations was vital. As the title of the book says, the status of the fourth Axis ally was due to the importance of its numbers and resources to the war effort on the Ostfront. As indicated, the book covers events from 1941, making it very interesting for any scholar of the Eastern Front who wants more detail on the Romanian Army in WWII.

The main source of data for documenting the campaign has been the available primary sources, both German and Soviet.



In the case of the German forces participating in the defense of the Donbas region, both in the July and August operations, we used the German archives available at both the NARA and the Bundersarchiv-Militärarchiv in Freiburg, Germany. With these documents available and reviewed, we have been able to research the campaign in detail, uncovering valuable historical data reflected in the orders of battle and scenario construction. For the Soviet side, we have also obtained original documentation from the units involved and situation maps from the era of the most important formations that participated in the liberation of the Donbas region.

Scenario Design Notes

Scenario Planning

WDS Donbas '43 includes two major operations that have been included in the game. Both operations, apparently similar in planning, had very different strategic objectives. This has been reflected in the game so that the player is very clear about which scenarios to play, depending on the historical outcome of events during that period.

In the case of the July offensive, STAVKA designed it as a two-pronged operation, each with its own main objectives. The first objective was to achieve by the Red Army was that the offensive was detected by the German army, in this way, it was intended to prevent the Germans from sending reinforcements to the Kursk area, since in parallel to the July operations in the Donbas region, critical events were developing during Operation Zitadelle, obviously the operation unleashed in the Severnyy Donets by the Southwestern Front and in the Mius Front by the Southern Front had as main objectives to cross both rivers and their fortified lines to head in any case towards the German rearguard and converge on Stalino but at no time did the Soviets have the opportunity to achieve such a strategic victory during the month of July, since they did not have the strength or the necessary means to achieve it and the Germans had sufficient forces to confront the Soviet offensive.



Figure 6, Donbas Strategic Situation on July 17, 1943

Therefore, when designing these first scenarios, which in addition to serving as a prologue provide context to the offensive unleashed during the month of August, this one with the intention of liberating the entire Donbas region and reaching the Dnepr River, in order to deny, in passing, the use of this important river barrier as a line of defense to Heeresgruppe Sud. The campaign of the month of July has been divided into two major scenarios, the first, in the area where the Severnyy Donets River runs, was defended by the 1.Panzerarmee under the command of Eberhard von Mackensen, in this sector, Malynovski's Southwestern Front unleashed what is officially known as the Izyum-Barvenkovo Offensive Operation, Malynovski's objective was to cross and pierce the defenses on the Severnyy Donets River and once this objective was achieved, head south, where it would meet with the Southern Front at Stalino, destroying both the 1.Panzerarmee and the 6.Arme.



The other major scenario describing the operations of July was already partially covered in another Wargame Design Studio product, the free game WDS Mius '43. The version we'll find in WDS Donbas '43 has benefited from the publication and study of the various works written

and published over the years. Furthermore, an exhaustive study of available German and Soviet sources has been conducted, resulting in a substantial body of data describing this particular scenario. The first major difference we can find in the scenario describing the operations on the Mius Front is that it is much larger, as it also describes the diversionary operations that the Southern Front started just north of the main Mius Front position, furthermore this large scenario is also longer in duration as it includes the German counterattack executed by the II.SS PanzerKorps which would end up recovering the positions lost during the month of July to the beginning of August, in fact this scenario connects WDS Donbas '43 with WDS Rumyantsev '43, since after recovering the lost ground and restoring the situation on the Mius River, the II.SS PanzerKorps Divisions were rushed north to the Kharkov area to restore the critical situation on that sector of the front.

The Mius Front was defended by the 6th Army of Generaloberst Karl-Adolf Hollidt. This army, rebuilt after the catastrophe of Stalingrad seven months earlier, would never be what it was, but it defended formidable defensive positions that had been built and improved since the winter of 1942 and had not stopped being fortified since. This defensive line, known as the Mius Front, ran from north to south across the river of the same name and ended in the port city of Taganrog on the shores of the Sea of Azov. Its dense defensive sectors were a solid fortified barrier that Tolbukhin's Southern Front had to overcome to liberate Taganrog itself and head towards Stalino, the nerve center of the entire Donbas, where it had to converge with the Southwestern Front, which was advancing from the Severnyy Donets to the north.



Although the plan appeared to be the destruction of the German 1.Panzerarmee and 6.Armeekorps and the subsequent liberation of the Donbas region by the Red Army, the real objective was much more discreet: the Soviet army had to fix the most powerful German units of both armies in the area. These units were the 17.Panzer Division, the 23.Panzer Division, the Viking SS Panzer-Grenadier Division, and the 16.PanzerGrenadier Division. The objective of this action was to prevent them from altering any of the results predicted by STAVKA in the major operation in the Kursk salient. The fact that Von Manstein, commander of Heeresgruppe Süd, did not at any time consider the use of these or any other units at the height of Operation Zitadelle, was due to the intelligent use made by the Soviets of their “negligent” Maskirovka, as they were sending alarming signals to the Germans that a major offensive operation could be unleashed in the Donbas area, for this reason, we decided that the scenarios of the July campaign would be played individually and not as one large campaign scenario, therefore, there is a scenario with the operations during the month of July in the Severnyy Donets and another in the Mius Front.



The main scenario of WDS Donbas '43 describes the entire campaign that liberated the region from German occupation. This operation, officially known as the Donbas Strategic Offensive Operation, was a campaign that extended from August 16 to September 22, 1943. Given the duration of the operations in this area of the eastern front and its wide territorial dispersion between the areas of the Severnyy Donets and Mius rivers, we decided, as is usual in the scenarios designed by me, to divide the great Donbas campaign into two operational phases that coincide with the initial moments of the advances in them after separate stops in the

fighting due to the intensity reached during the execution of combat operations and which were taken advantage of by the two armies to rest, withdraw or improve existing positions.



Figure 7, Donbas Strategic Situation, August 16, 1943

The first operational phase of the Donbas liberation operation extends from the breakthrough operations at the Severnyy Donets River and the Mius Front until the liberation of the city of Taganrog on August 30, 1943. During this first phase we will face the Southwestern and Southern Fronts against the 1.Panzerarmee and 6.Armee. The second phase of operations in the Donbas region, describes the operations during the month of September, in them, the pursuit of the two German armies by Soviet troops is detailed. In these operations, we will encounter remarkable military feats such as the liberation of the city of Stalino (currently Donets) which was the great communications and logistics node in the area, the only major German operational counterattack of the campaign at Znamenka, and the achievement of the final Soviet objective of reaching the



Dnepr to deny Manstein the use of this great river as a defensive line. However, a single Grand Campaign scenario is available that allows you to play all operations in a long scenario covering the fighting during the months of August and September.

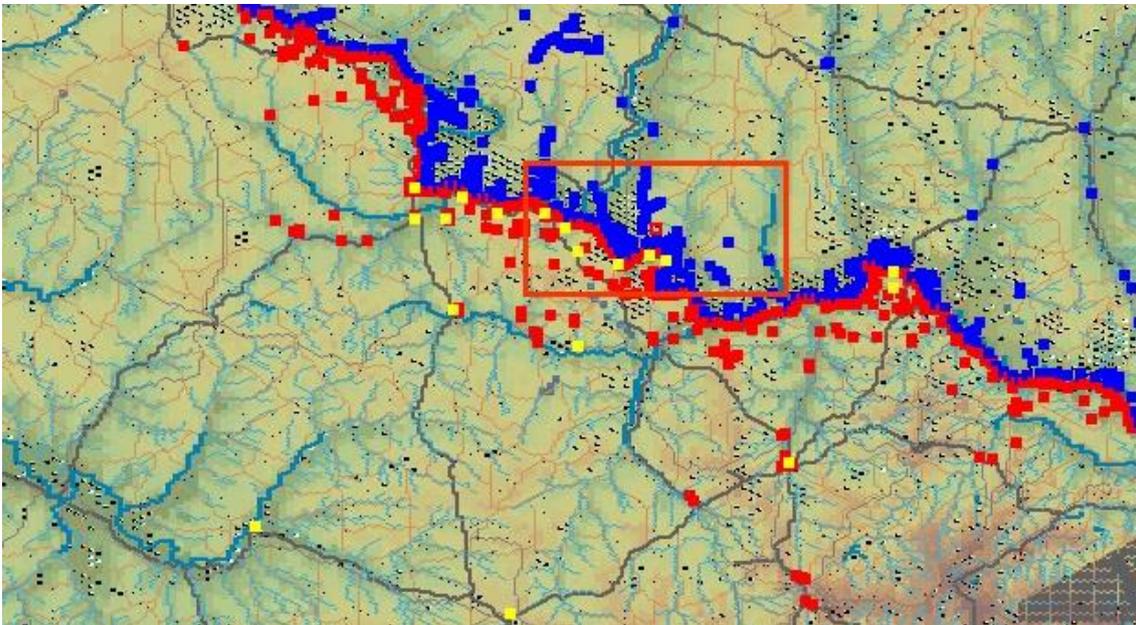


The reason for dividing the campaign scenario into two operational phases is, in my opinion, a decision solely by the designer. By dividing the larger campaign into two shorter scenarios, it gives players who either don't have the time or patience to complete such a long campaign the opportunity to play all the operations in the Donbas. At the same time, it offers the player the option of gaining a more enjoyable and detailed look at everything that happened in this important area of the former Soviet Union, an area of great industrial and mining importance with key outlets to the Black and Azov Seas. However, without forgetting the historical reasons for the designer's choice of two operational phases of the campaign. In this case, a first phase covering the breakthrough operations and the fight for Taganrog, and a second detailing the operations in September, as in the other games in which I have considered dividing these phases.

The Campaign and Operational Phases Scenarios

The Prelude: #43_0717_01: Izyum-Barvenkovo Offensive Operation (109 Turns)

While in the north the dramatic days unfolded in the Kursk salient during the German Zitadelle offensive, STAVKA planned an offensive in the Donbas area between the Severnyy Donets and Mius rivers. This sector of the Ostfront was defended by the 1.Panzerarmee and the 6.Armeekorps, already diminished in strength due to the titanic effort the Germans were making just north of their positions. The Severnyy Donets sector was to be crossed by the Southwestern Front, and once the river crossing was consolidated, it was to advance in the direction of Barvenkovo and Slavyansk. Once both objectives were achieved, the Southwestern Front was to turn south, to Stalino, to converge there with the Southern Front.

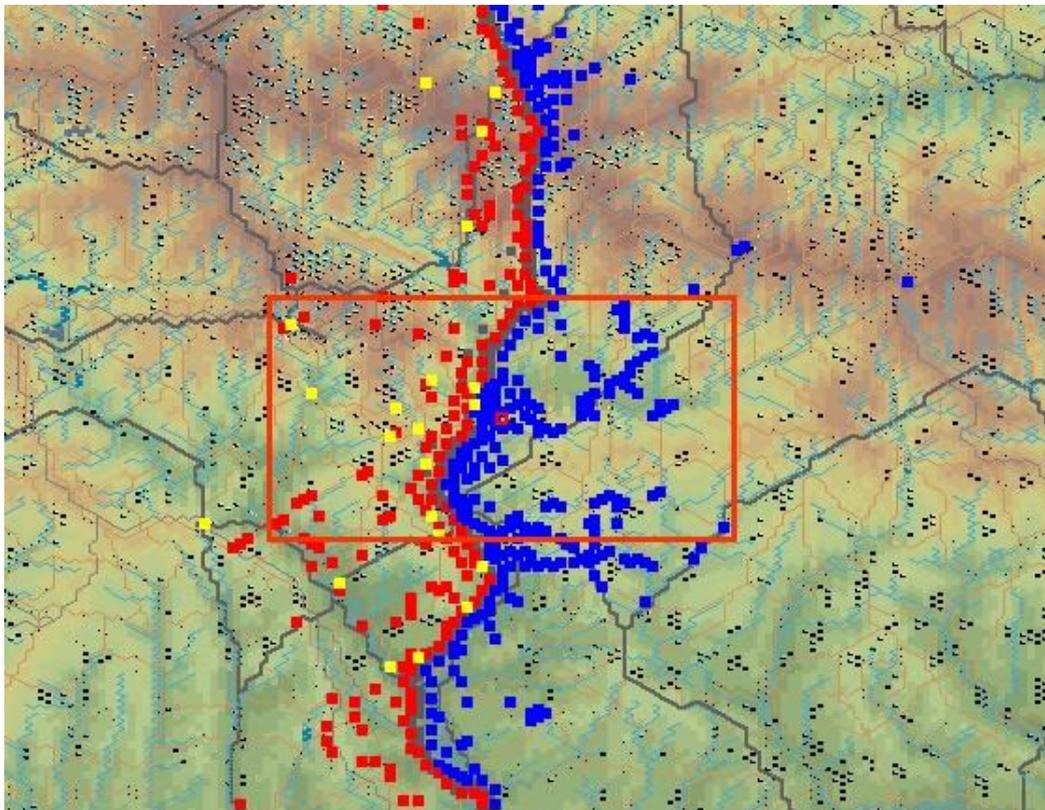


This scenario describes the operations of the Southwestern Front against the 1.Panzerarmee. The primary mission of Malinovsky's Front was to break through the strong German defenses based on the river and pin down all possible units, thus preventing the delivery of reinforcements to the Kursk area. For this mission, Malinovsky had five armies, four in the front line, with which to force the river and attempt to gain strong positions on the west bank to continue the offensive. To this end, the player has 109 turns to achieve his objectives, which in

this scenario were limited to a limited area of the Donbas region. This is the first major scenario into which the major July offensive in the Donbas area was divided. To defend the area, Von Mackensen's 1. Panzerarmee had an armored reserve of three divisions, the Viking SS Panzer Grenadier Division, the 17. Panzer Division and the 23. Panzer Division, although the latter would be sent to the Mius Front to support the defense in that sector, one of the scenarios in this series explores the possibility that the 23. Panzer Division would not be sent to the Mius River area.

The Mius River during the July Offensive: #43_0717_14: Mius Front (69 Turns)

The German defensive line, which runs primarily along the west bank of the Mius River, began construction following the German withdrawal from Rostov during the winter of 1941. This large, fortified area, known as the Mius Front, featured solid defensive positions built and improved during the two years of German occupation. This defensive line, commanded by General Hollidt's 6. Armee, was rebuilt after the debacle of the winter of 1943. It had sufficient units to defend the fortifications and had a small reserve armored force, including the 16. Panzer Grenadier Division.



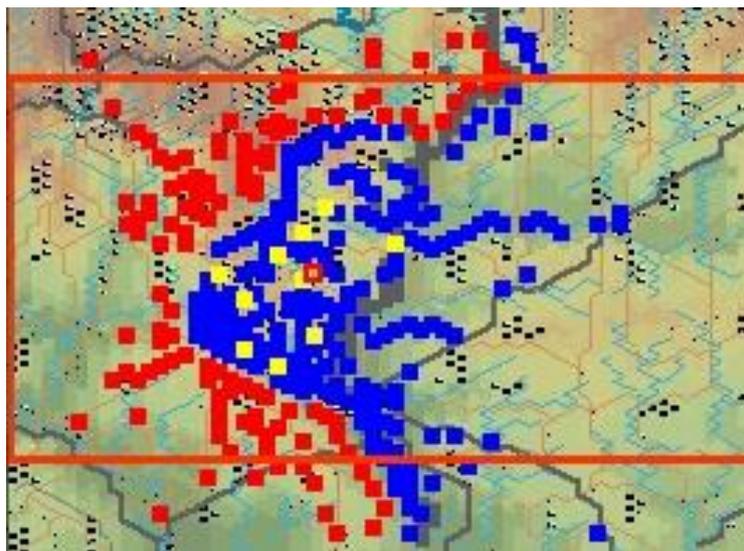
The STAVKA entrusted the mission of overcoming this powerful fortified position to the Southern Front. This large unit, under the command of Tolbukhin, had five armies, four in a first echelon, the 51st Army, the 5th Shock Army, the 28th Army, plus the 44th Army and another army in a second echelon prepared to exploit the expected success, the 2nd Guards Army. The chosen plan was relatively simple, with the two most powerful armies, the 5th Shock Army and the 28th Army, were to attack and break through the defensive line known as Mius Front in the center of the device, between the towns of Dmitriyevka and Kuybyshevo. Once this objective was achieved, the second echelon army, the 2nd Guards Army, would follow shortly after. These units were intended to break through enemy lines and destroy the

German units defending the area, then turn both north (toward Stalino) to converge there with the Southwestern Front, and south, in this case, with the intention of capturing the port city of Taganrog and the units garrisoning it. The operation in the Mius was intended to pin down and destroy the units of the 6.Armee garrisoning this entire sector and thus prevent the possibility of sending reinforcement units to the Kursk salient area, where Operation Zitadelle was currently underway.

This 69-turn scenario, which also includes two scenarios in the series with operations extended to the north, in the sector of the 54th Rifle Corps of the 51st Army, is of an unusual intensity and violence, since the STAVKA and the commander of the Southern Front, chose the frontal attack on the Mius Front as the chosen strategy to overcome the solid and deep German defensive lines, for this, it has two powerful armies, the 5th Shock Army and the 2nd Guards Army with which to try to successfully cross the German fortifications.

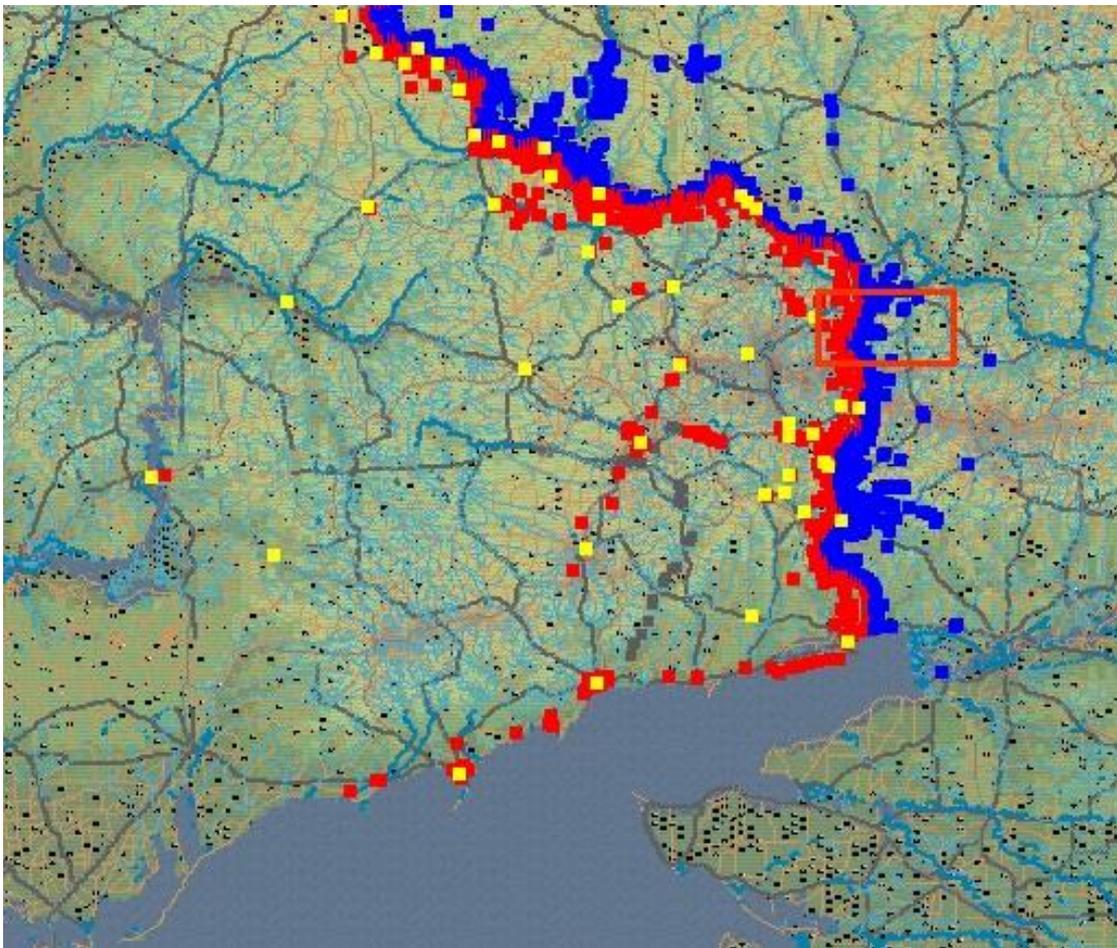
The Counterattack: #43_0730_01: The German Counterattack in the Mius (37 Turns)

This scenario will allow the player to recreate, over its 37 turns, the German counterattack on the Mius Front carried out by the II.SS PanzerKorps and the 3.Panzer Division. Due to the poor situation in which the 6.Armee had been left during the Soviet offensive on the Mius Front, Von Manstein decided to move the II.SS Panzerkorps to recover the lost positions and restore the previous situation, allowing the 6.Armee to regain its old defensive positions. Once again, SS units acted as firefighters, traveling back and forth to threatened sectors of the front. To this end, Von Manstein deployed the 3rd Panzer Division alongside the usual units of the II.SS PanzerKorps, since the Leibstandarte SS PanzerGrenadier Division was sent to Italy to reinforce the German units there following the Allied landings in the country. However, not before leaving all its armored vehicles to the Totenkopf and Das Reich SS PanzerGrenadier Division. As I mentioned above, this scenario links WDS Donbas '43 with WDS Rummyantsev '43, since after this counterattack on the Mius, Operation Rummyantsev was unleashed just north of the Donbas in the Belgorod-Kharkov area. Therefore, von Manstein deployed the II.SS PanzerKorps to that area to confront the Soviet offensive.



#43_0816_01: Donbas Strategic Offensive Operation (398 Turns)

Following the conclusion of the July offensive in the Donbas, STAVKA began preparing another major offensive in the region as part of the planned counteroffensive strategy for the summer of 1943 in response to Operation Zitadelle. This major offensive ran parallel to Operation Rummyantsev, which began on August 3, 1943, in the Belgorod-Kharkov area, just north of the Donbas theater of operations. The Donbas Strategic Offensive Operation, the official name with which Soviet historiography baptized the war operations that led to the liberation of the Donbas, had a very similar planning to the July operation in the same area, although now, the STAVKA gave it much clearer and more ambitious objectives, these objectives were: to defeat and destroy the German forces defending the area of Severnyy Donets and the Mius River, liberate the rich industrial and mining basin of the Donbas, reach and cross the Dnper to deny the German forces its use as a major defensive barrier.



To achieve this objective, STAVKA planned a concentric attack from the positions of the Southwestern Front in the Severnyy Donets and the Southern Front along the Mius River, both Fronts were to converge on Stalino after destroying the German units of the 1. Panzerarmee and the 6. Armee and liberate large areas and cities of the Donbas such as Taganrog, Slavyansk or Kramatorsk, then, the two Fronts were to head towards the Dnepr River in order to deny its use to Heeresgruppe Sud as a defensive barrier, this plan was very ambitious, since it foresaw the liberation and destruction of the German units defending the region and laid the foundations to begin successive operations that could liberate Kiev or Crimea.

This is the WDS Donbas '43 campaign scenario and describes, throughout its 398 turns, all combat operations in the Donbas region. The German player will have two German armies, the 1st Panzerarmee and the 6th Armee, to defend the area. These armies will contain the Red Army from their solid fortified areas such as the Mius Front or the western bank of the Severnyy Donets, with which to face the Red Tide. In addition, the two armies of Heeresgruppe Sud also had fortified lines in their rear, taking advantage of rivers such as the Kal'mius, and field fortifications in important cities such as Stalino and Slavyansk. It should be noted that this area of the Ostfront was a relatively quiet sector for a long time, a fact that the German army took advantage of to improve the defenses in the area and build new ones. Given the advantage that the Soviet player has in both means and number of units over the German, quite high scores have been planned in the victory levels to complicate and add an extra level of difficulty to the Red Army in order to win the campaign, however, as the designer of WDS Donbas '43, I recommend playing with the German side and thus experience the maximum level of difficulty possible.

#43_0816_03: Donbas Strategic Offensive Operation, First Phase (158 Turns)

One of the ways to play large campaign scenarios in the games I've been involved with as a designer has been to divide the large campaigns into operational phases that can be easily identified with the big moments that may occur during the course of them, in this way, in my opinion I think it can be a good choice for those players who either don't want to or can't play long duration scenarios for whatever reason, at the same time, I want to offer the player the most enjoyable scenarios possible and in this way, deliver the best experience to our players and in this way, know the events that occurred in different time periods of the same.

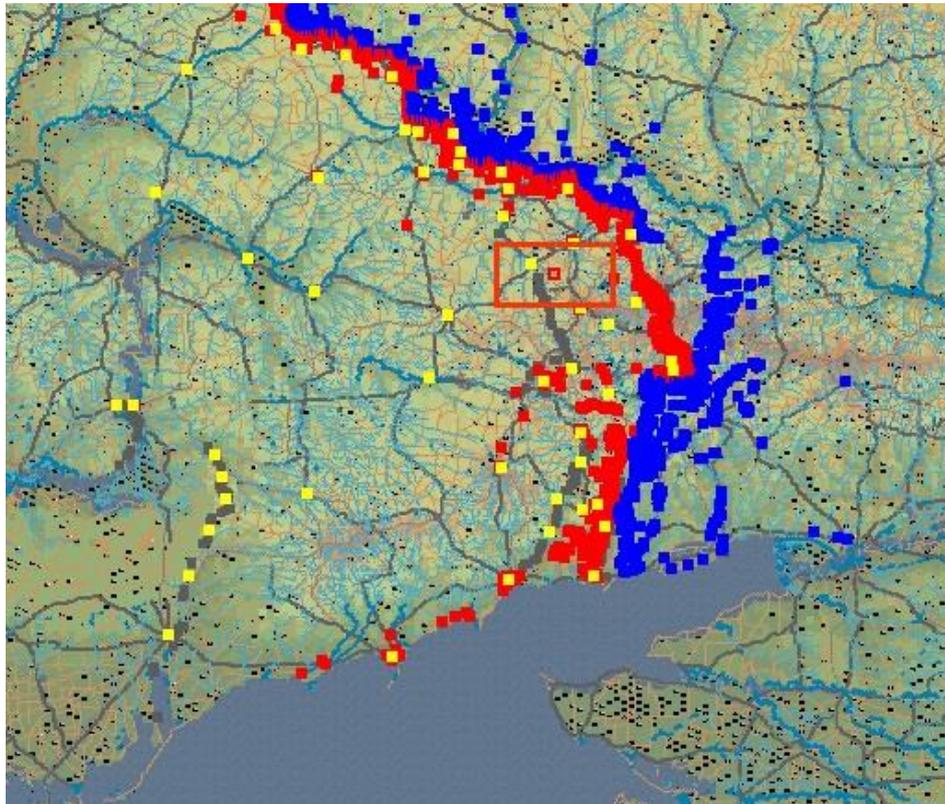


WDS Donbas '43 was not going to be an exception. During the study of the campaign, I was able to identify two major operational moments during the Donbas Strategic Offensive Operation. The first of these, which corresponds to this major scenario, describes the

operations during the month of August both in the area of the Southwestern Front in the Severnyy Donets, and in that of the Southern Front in the Mius Front. During this time, breakthrough battles were fought on both Fronts and the liberation of cities such as Slavyansk, Kramatorsk, Lisichansk and, above all, Taganrog, a port city on the shores of the Sea of Azov, which brings this interesting phase to a close. Both the German and Soviet players will have to make many difficult decisions in a short space of time that may mean the liberation or not of important areas of the Donbas region, an area of vital importance for both contenders.

#43_0901_01: The Donbas Strategic Offensive Operation, Second Phase (198 Turns)

Following the liberation of Taganrog and a brief period of rest, operations resumed on 1 September. After more than 30 days of violent and uninterrupted fighting, the situation in the Donbas was beginning to become more complicated for the German army. The 1st Panzerarmee was still holding off the Southwestern Front in the Severnyy Donets, but the 6th Army was retreating after losing all its ground on the Mius Front and the city of Taganrog, escaping the encirclement that the Southern Front had planned for the German battle group defending the city. However, German foresight meant that long before the expected Soviet offensive, defensive lines were prepared in the German rearguard, the most important of which was the one that ran between Slavyansk-Kramatorsk-Stalino-Mariupol, this defensive line, built by the Todt organization, was intended to defend the city of Stalino, the nerve center of the Donbas region and which had been fortified to face a long siege, from there and across the Kal'mius River, the defensive line snaked towards the city of Mariupol, on the shores of the Sea of Azov and another important port city.



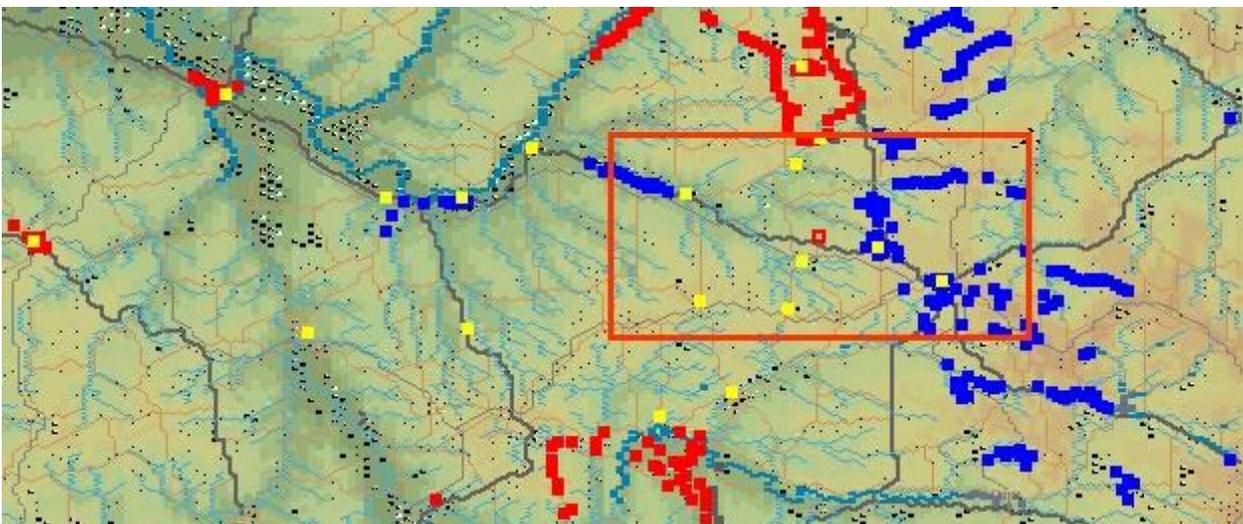
The German army had suffered heavy losses in the defense of both the Severnyy Donets front and the Mius Front, Soviet casualties had been even higher but Von Manstein, the commander of Heeresgruppe Sud, had planned a defense in stages, relying on the various defensive lines

built behind the units defending the Donbas region, in addition, Manstein hoped to delay the advance of the Soviet army enough to prepare a defense consisting of the Dnepr as a last resort, this great river constituted a formidable defensive barrier for any army attacking from the east.

This scenario describes operations for the month of September. During this period, the German player will have units in full retreat, suffering heavy losses, reflected in the state of their two armies, the 1st Panzerarmee and the 6th Armee, after more than 30 days of nonstop fighting. The Soviet Army, meanwhile, is clearly on the offensive and pursuing German troops, with the objective of liberating large areas of the Donbas, especially the fortified city of Stalino, its first major objective. During this second operational phase of the Donbas campaign, important events are described, such as the liberation of the cities of Slavyansk, Kramatorsk, Gorlovka, Stalino, and Mariupol, and the race to reach the Dnepr River and deny its use to the southern wing of Heeresgruppe Sud.

#43_0909_01: Counterattack at Znamenka (38 Turns)

I have decided to include this scenario because it is the only operational counterattack the Germans launched during the entire Donbas campaign. With this attack, the Germans were trying to close the gap that had opened between the 1. Panzerarmee and the 6. Armee, a hole of more than 60 kilometers that occurred after the withdrawal of Hollidt's army from the city of Stalino and its fortifications, the "Turtle" position, and the asynchronous withdrawal of the 1. Panzerarmee to the north. Von Manstein planned this counterattack using his depleted armored and motorized units in the area with the aim of closing the gap and stabilizing a situation that had become very dangerous for his units in the Donbas region, another stroke of genius, after many others, by the German Marshal.



This scenario is not at all simple, since during its 38 turns the German player must try to close the gap by facing the Soviet mechanized units that had launched themselves en masse towards the west, towards the Dnepr River, with the intention of crossing it and thus preventing the German army from being able to use it as a defensive barrier with which to protect, among others, the city of Kyiv and the Crimean peninsula.

Optional Rules

Optional Rules Dialog

<input type="checkbox"/> Manual Defensive Fire	<input type="checkbox"/> Optional Fire Results
<input type="checkbox"/> Automatic Defensive Fire	<input type="checkbox"/> Optional Assault Results
<input type="checkbox"/> Alternative Indirect Fire Resolution	<input type="checkbox"/> Locking Zones-Of-Control
<input type="checkbox"/> Alternative Air Strike Resolution	<input type="checkbox"/> Higher Fatigue Recovery
<input type="checkbox"/> Alternative Direct Fire Resolution	<input type="checkbox"/> Indirect Fire And Air Strikes By The Map
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alternative Assault Resolution	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Counterbattery Fire
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Artillery Set Up	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Night Fatigue
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recon Spotting	<input type="checkbox"/> No Low Fuel Effects
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Virtual Supply Trucks	<input type="checkbox"/> Explicit Supply
<input type="checkbox"/> Optional Surrender	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Programmed Weather
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low Visibility Air Effects	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Limited Air Recon
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quality Fatigue Modifier	<input type="checkbox"/> Delayed Disruption Reporting
<input type="checkbox"/> Optional Amphibious Rules	<input type="checkbox"/> Extended Patrolling
<input type="checkbox"/> Nuclear Scenario Termination	<input type="checkbox"/> Low Ammo Prevents Firing
<input type="checkbox"/> Blocking Helicopter Elimination	<input type="checkbox"/> Use Wireless Intercept

OK Default Help

Below are the suggested optional rules for WDS Donbas '43, A detailed description can also be found in the briefing for each scenario.



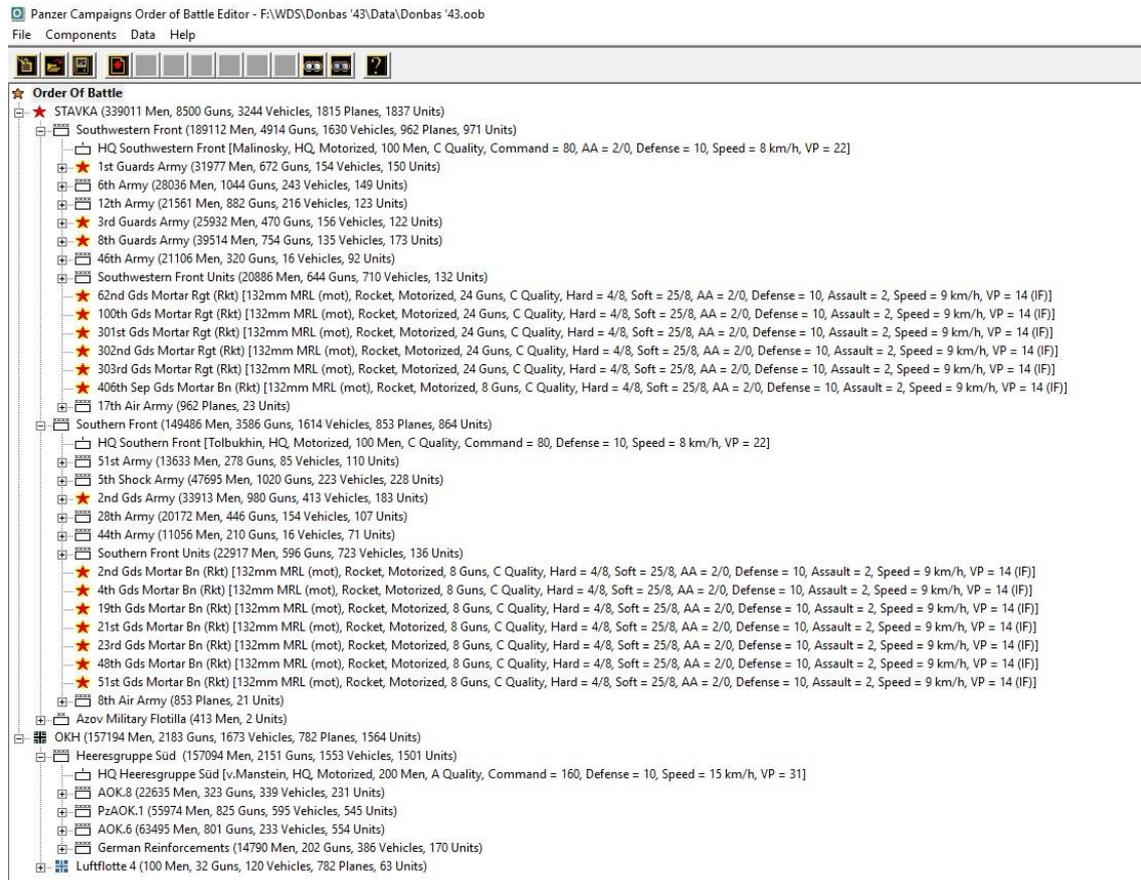
Order Of Battles Notes

One of the characteristics of any game of the Panzer Campaigns series is the deep research carried out on the great units involved in the campaign and in the case of WDS Donbas '43, this was not going to be an exception. To address the search for information about the different armies involved in the Donbas campaign, it was first to decide the future composition of the content that was going to describe the operations in the region, at first, the July operations that were taking shape in the future project, would not be part of WDS Donbas '43 but were designed to be part of another project that saw the light a long time ago, WDS Rumyantsev '43. These scenarios described the operations during July 1943, focusing on the offensive operation at Izyum-Barvenkovo. These operations involved part of the southwest front that was already present in the operations of the Belgorod-Kharkov area, although these scenarios had a problem to locate it in WDS Rumyantsev '43, since at that time it was not available for the land within the Kharkov map where the fighting occurred, I mean the Proletarsk, Lisichansk and Verkheneye area, since I don't He had ever been mapped and was not part of the large maps catalog available for the WDS Panzer Campaigns series, despite this, the possible introduction of this scenario with the map available at that time was studied, to give more context to the scenario on the south flank during Zitadelle that is included in WDS Rumyantsev '43, since the operations in the area of Izyum-Barvenkovo parallel to the final operations on the southern flank of Kursk outgoing.

Once we decided that the next project, it would be the one that described the operations that would release the Donbas region, the great Bill Peters began the titanic work of mapping the area just south of the map where the Kharkov region is located, at that time, it was decided that the offensive operation of Izyum-Barvenkovo and all the operations of July would be part of WDS Donbas '43 and also the Donbas Strategic Offensive Operation, that is, the operations that led to the release of the entire Donbas region and arrival of the Red Army to the Dnepr River. The July operations not only include the offensive operation of Izyum-Barvenkovo, which is essentially a Southwest Front operation, but also include operations in the Mius Front, where the South Front is the protagonist. The operations in the Mius Front are included in a single campaign scenario in the free demo of WDS Mius '43, so it was decided to have an updated take of this interesting campaign in WDS Donbas '43, so that our players had a completely different experience from what they could find in the free demo.

Once the content that was going to be part of WDS Donbas '43 was decided, in this case, the operations of July 1943 in the Izyum-Barvenkovo area and the Mius Front, in addition, of the August operations throughout the Donbas region, an intense, vibrant and deep research began in the German and Soviet sources of the battle order, of the forces involved in the operations of the two campaigns that went Treat WDS Donbas '43. In this game, the player is going to have three different battle orders, with the precise composition of both contestants. In the first battle order, Izyum-Barvenkovo '43, it is the one that corresponds to the operations initiated on July 17 with the Soviet offensive and ends in early August, with the German counterattack in the Mius by the II.SS Panzerkorps. The operations during August have been divided into two different operational phases, so there are two different battle orders that coincide with these two moments, in the first battle order, Donbas '43, the composition of the German and Soviet units that took part in the first phase of the operations during the month of August is detailed, this battle order also throughout the Donbas campaign. In the second order of battle, Donbas '43 September, the units that took part in the second phase of the operation

in the Donbas region are detailed, including the German counterattack of Znamenka. These operations describe the fighting during the month of September.



The Soviet Order of Battle

As in previous games, the Soviet Order of Battle has been made based on the publication

ВОЕННО-НАУЧНОЕ УПРАВЛЕНИЕ ГЕНЕРАЛЬНОГО ШТАБА

БОЕВОЙ СОСТАВ СОВЕТСКОЙ АРМИИ

ЧАСТЬ III

(Январь – декабрь 1943 г.)

Ордена Трудового Красного Знамени
ВОЕННОЕ ИЗДАТЕЛЬСТВО МИНИСТЕРСТВА ОБОРОНЫ СССР
МОСКВА – 1972

“Boyevoy Sostav Sovetskoj Armii - Combat Strength of the Soviet Army (BSSA), this series of books, lists month by month the composition of the Soviet armies that participated in the Second World War at an incredible level of detail, even at the battalion level, so it is mandatory to review to begin any Order of Battle on the east front. In the case of Izyum-Barvenkovo Operation, Mius Front and Donbas Strategic Offensive Operation, the status of the Southwestern Front and South Front during the months of July, August and September 1943 was

reviewed, these lists not only detail the ground units but also the air units that supported the ground operations for the liberation of Donbas region.

Наименование объединений	Стрелковые, воздушнодесантные войска и кавалерия	Артиллерия РВГК, армейская и корпусная	Бронетанковые и механизированные войска	Военно-Воздушные Силы	Инженерные войска
3 гвардейская армия	34 гв. ск (47, 59 и 61 гв. сд), 32 ск (259, 266, 279 сд), 78 сд	итпап, 525 минп, 35, 301 гв. мп, 579, 580 зенап, 139 озадн	5 гв. мсбр, 11 тбр, 52, 243 отп, 50, 54 омцб	—	322 оиб
8 гвардейская армия	28 гв. ск (39, 79 и 88 гв. сд), 29 гв. ск (27, 74 и 82 гв. сд)	99 пап, 184 итпап, 141 минп, 302 гв. мп, 878 зенап	5 и 9 гв., 224 отп, 1443 сап	—	326, 327 оиб
6 армия	4 гв. ск (20 и 35 гв., 228, 263 сд), 26 гв. ск (41 и 62 гв., 6 сд), 34 ск (152, 267 сд), 25 и 38 гв. сд	11 ад (31 лабр, 45 пабр, 40 габр), 40 гв. кап, 170 гв. пап, 33, 1176, 1249 итпап, 524 минп, 75, 87 гв. мп, 115 огв. мдн, 241, 1290 зенап, 126 озадн	115 тбр, 212 отп	—	350, 370 оиб
12 армия	172, 203, 244, 333, 350 сд	103 гв. пап, 1248 итпап, 531 минп, 1587 зенап	141 отп, 56 омцб	—	181, 269 оиб
46 армия	31, 223, 236, 353, 394, 409 сд	437 итпап, 462 минп, 1651 зенап	—	—	68, 273 оиб
57 армия	27 гв. ск (14, 48 и 58 гв. сд), 19, 24, 52, 113, 303 сд, 1 оибр	26 лабр (9 ад), 9 гв. пабр, 1110 пап, 374, 595 итпап, 523 минп, 45, 303 гв. мп, 71 зенап, 227 озадн	173, 179 тбр	—	—
17 воздушная армия	—	1613, 1614, 1615 зенап	—	1 сак (5 гв. шад, 288 иад), 3 сак (290 шад, 207 иад), 9 сак (305 шад, 295 иад), 244 бал, 306 шад, 262 нбад, 39 рап, 3 санап	—
Соединения и части фронтового подчинения	104 сбр, 10 отд. батальон автоматчиков, 1 гв. кк (1, 2 и 7 гв. кд, 143 гв. итпап, 1 гв. мп, 1 гв. онпдн, 49 омидн, 319 зенап)	9 ад (456 лап/26 лабр, 23 габр, 10 минбр), 11 лабр (7 ад), 9, 10, 11 итпабр, 61, 62 гв. мп, 406 огв. мдн, 3 зенад (1084, 1089, 1114, 1118 зенап), 4 зенад (253 и 254 гв., 606, 658 зенап), 22 зенад (1335, 1341, 1347, 1353 зенап), 247, 303, 470, 1474 зенап	1 гв. мк (1, 2 и 3 гв. мбр, 84 мцб, 116 гв. ап, 1504 итпап, 267 минп, 1699 зенап, 407 гв. мдн), 2 тк (26, 99, 169 тбр, 58 мсбр, 83 мцб, 1502 итпап, 269 минп, 1698 зенап, 307 гв. мдн), 23 тк (3, 39, 135 тбр, 56 мсбр, 82 мцб, 1501 итпап, 457 минп,	—	15 иминбр, 44 ибр с/н, 51 псбр, 4, 5 пмбр, 8 пмп, 19 гв. батальон минеров

Activar!
Ve a Confli

Figure 8, Southwestern Front, July 1, 1943

However, despite the great level of detail these lists offer, they are only the beginning of developing a more precise and in-depth Soviet order of battle, but they are the best start for offering the player maximum historical fidelity.

These tables, for both the Southwestern and Southern Fronts, show the composition of units on 1 July, 1 August and 1 September. The Orders of Battle coincide with the time periods during which Izyum-Barvenkovo Offensive Operation, Mius Front and Donbas Strategic Offensive Operation was in effect, but apart from giving us a clue as to which units might have been part of either large unit, they do not tell us much more, as the movements, retreats or possible reinforcements of units that might have reached the combat area of the two Soviet fronts during the thirty days that make up the months of July, August and September are not available in these wonderful compilations. To find out more, we have to go up several levels of detail in the Soviet sources in order to complete the organisation of the Southwestern and Southern Fronts

Наименование объединений	Стрелковые, воздушнодесантные войска и кавалерия	Артиллерия РВГК, армейская и корпусная	Бронетанковые и механизированные войска	Военно-Воздушные Силы	Инженерные войска
			1697 зенап, 442 гв. мдн), 9 гв. тбр, 10 гв. отп, 3 гв. мшп		
Всего во фронте: общевоинских армий – 7, воздушных армий – 1	ск – 10, сд – 51, сбр – 2, кк – 1, кл – 3, оибр – 1	ад – 3, оабр – 1, оап – 11, иптабр – 3, оиптап – 13, оминбр – 1, оминп – 7, гв. мп – 11, огв. мдн – 2, зенад – 3, зенап – 18, озади – 4	тк – 2, мк – 1, отбр – 5, омсбр – 1, отп – 8, сап – 1, мшп – 1, омцб – 4	сак – 3, бад – 1, шад – 4, иад – 3, нбад – 1, рап – 1	инжбр – 4, пмбр – 2, пмп – 1, инжб – 12
Южный фронт:					
2 гвардейская армия	1 гв. ск (24, 33 и 86 гв. сд), 13 гв. ск (3, 49 и 87 гв. сд)	1095 пап, 483 минп, 18 зенад (160 и 166 гв., 297, 1262 зенап), 1530 зенап	2 гв. мк (4, 5 и 6 гв. мбр, 37 гв. тбр, 99 мцб, 408 огв. мдн)	–	63 исбр, 355 оиб
5 ударная армия	31 гв. ск (4, 34 и 40 гв. сд), 96 гв., 126, 127, 221, 315 сд, 1 гв. оибр	506, 1162 пап, 85 гв., 331 гап, 507, 1255 иптап, 489 минп, 1617 зенап	22 гв. отп, 28 одн брп	–	827 оиб
28 армия	55 ск (118, 271 сд), 1 гв., 78, 116 УР	110 гв. пап, 521 иптап, 488 минп, 1485 зенап	140 тбр	–	57, 130 оиб
44 армия	37 ск (130, 248, 387 сд), 151, 320, 347, 416 сд	1101 пап, 274 гап, 491, 530, 747, 1250 иптап, 19 минбр, 133 гв. минп, 2 зенад (1086, 1113, 1117 зенап), 607 зенап	32 и 33 гв. тбр, 30 одн брп	–	5 гв. оиб
51 армия	3 гв. ск (50 и 54 гв., 91 сд), 54 ск (87, 99, 302 сд), 346 сд	2 гв. ад (4 гв. лабр, 6 гв., 114 пабр, 5 гв. габр), 1105 пап, 113 гв., 13, 14, 764, 1246 иптап, 486 минп (19 минбр), 125 минп, 15 зенад (281, 342, 723, 1264 зенап), 77 гв. зенап	6 гв. тбр, 33 одн брп	–	258, 275 оиб, 121 пмб
8 воздушная армия	–	1600, 1601, 1602, 1603 зенап	–	10 сак (289 шад), 270 бад, 1 гв. шад, 6 гв. иад, 2 гв. нбад, 8 рап, 406 лбап, 678 трап, 5 санап, 87 гв. ап ГВФ	–

Active
Ve a Co

Figure 9, Southern Front, July 1, 1943

– 196 –

Наименование объединений	Стрелковые, воздушнодесантные войска и кавалерия	Артиллерия РВГК, армейская и корпусная	Бронетанковые и механизированные войска	Военно-Воздушные Силы	Инженерные войска
Юго-Западный фронт:					
1 гвардейская армия	4 гв. ск (38 гв., 195 сд), 6 гв. ск (44 и 57 гв. сд), 20 и 60 гв. сд	40 и 42 гв. кап, 518 пап, 174, 536 иптап, 525 минп, 1347 зенап (22 зенад), 579, 580 зенап, 126, 139 озади	5 гв., 141 отп, 67 омцб	–	62 исбр, 4 пмбр, 351, 358 оиб
3 гвардейская армия	34 гв. ск (59 и 61 гв. сд), 32 ск (259, 266, 279 сд), 78 сд	312 пап, 152 гап, 179, 534, 1312 иптап, 526 минп, 1257 зенап	5 гв. мсбр, 11 тбр, 52, 243 отп	–	322 оиб
8 гвардейская армия	28 гв. ск (39, 79 и 88 гв. сд), 29 гв. ск (27, 74 и 82 гв. сд), 33 ск (50, 243, 297 сд)	11 ад (45 пабр, 40 габр), 99 пап, 184 иптап, 23 минбр, 141 минп, 22 зенад (1335, 1341, 1353 зенап), 626, 878 зенап, 60 озади	9 гв., 224 отп, 1443 сап, 16 гв. тп (1 гв. мк)	–	11 шисбр, 326, 327 оиб
6 армия	26 гв. ск (25 гв., 6 сд), 27 гв. ск (14, 48 и 58 гв. сд), 34 ск (152, 263, 267 сд), 35 гв., 228 сд	7 адп (11 лабр, 9 гв., 17 пабр, 25 габр, 105 габр БМ, 3 минбр), 9 адп (30, 115 пабр, 23 габр, 113 габр БМ, 10 минбр), 31 лабр (11 ад), 170 гв. пап, 33, 1176, 1249 иптап, 524 минп, 241, 1290 зенап	115 тбр, 212 отп	–	51 исбр, 350, 370 оиб
12 армия	66 ск (244, 350 сд), 67 ск (172, 333 сд), 203 сд	103 гв. пап, 1248 иптап, 531 минп, 1587 зенап	–	–	181, 269 оиб
57 армия	64 ск (41 гв., 24, 113 сд), 68 ск (19, 52, 303 сд), 1 оибр	26 лабр (9 адп), 1110 пап, 374, 595 иптап, 523 минп, 71 зенап, 227 озади	173, 179 тбр	–	251, 252, 254 оиб
17 воздушная армия	–	1613, 1614, 1615 зенап	–	1 сак (5 гв. шад, 288 над), 3 сак (290 шад, 207 над), 9 сак (305 шад, 295 над), 244 бад, 306 шад, 262 нбад, 39 рап, 371 трап, 3 санап, 34, 58, 63 каэ	–

Active

Figure 10, Southwestern Front, August 1, 1943

фронтового подчинения	автоматчиков, 1 гв. кк (1, 2 и 7 гв. кд, 143 гв. иптап, 1 гв. мп, 1 гв. оингдн, 49 гв. оминди, 319 зенап)	61, 62, 75, 87, 100, 301, 302, 303 гв. мп, 115, 406 огв. мдн, 3 зенад (1084, 1089, 1114, 1118 зенап), 4 зенад (253 и 254 гв., 606, 658 зенап), 247, 303, 470, 586, 1474 зенап	9 гв. тбр, 84 мцб, 1544 сап, 116 гв. ап, 1504 иптап, 741 оингдн, 267 минп, 407 огв. мдн, 1699 зенап), 23 тк (3, 39, 135 тбр, 56 мсбр, 1501 иптап, 739 оингдн, 457 минп, 442 огв. мдн, 1697 зенап), 10 гв. отп, 3 гв. мщ		8 тпм, 19 гв. батальон минеров	
Всего во фронте: общевойсковых армий – 6, воздушных армий – 1	ск – 14, сд – 43, ойбр – 1, кк – 1, кд – 3,	адп – 2, ад – 1, оап – 9, иптабр – 2, оинптап – 12, оминбр – 1, оминп – 6,	огв. мбр – 1, гв. мп – 11, огв. мдн – 2, зенад – 3, зенап – 17, озадн – 4	тк – 1, мк – 1, отбр – 4, мсбр – 1, отп – 8, сап – 1, мшп – 1, омцб – 1	сак – 3, бад – 1, шад – 4, над – 3, нбад – 1, рап – 1	инжбр – 4, пмбр – 2, пмп – 1, инжб – 13
Южный фронт:						
2 гвардейская армия	1 гв. ск (24, 33 и 86 гв. сд), 13 гв. ск (3, 49 и 87 гв. сд)	2 гв. адп (4 гв. лабр, 114 пабр, 5 гв. габр, 20 гв. габр БМ, 33 минбр), 1095 пап, 113 гв., 14, 747, 1255 иптап, 19 минбр, 483 мшп, 18 зенад (160 и 166 гв., 297, 1262 зенап), 1530 зенап	2 гв. мк (4, 5 и 6 гв. мбр, 37 гв. тбр, 99 мцб, 744 оингдн, 408 огв. мдн), 4 гв. мк (13, 14 и 15 гв. мбр, 36 гв. тбр, 62 мцб, 348 огв. мдн, 591 зенап), 7 гв. отп, 1543 сап	–	63 исбр, 355 ойб	
5 ударная армия	31 гв. ск (4, 34 и 40 гв. сд), 96 гв., 126, 127, 221, 315 сд, 1 гв. иобр	506, 1162 пап, 331 гап, 8, 15 иптабр, 491, 507 иптап, 489 минп, 15 зенад (342, 723, 1264 зенап), 1617 зенап	32 гв. тбр, 22 гв. отп, 28 одн брп	–	43 ибр с/н, 258, 827 ойб	
28 армия	37 ск (271 сд), 118, 127, 347, 387 сд	110 гв. пап, 85 гв., 274 гап, 521, 1250 иптап, 488 минп, 2 зенад (1069, 1086, 1113, 1117 зенап), 1485 зенап	33 гв. тбр, 1 гв. отп	–	57, 130 ойб	
44 армия	130, 151, 248, 416 сд	1101 пап, 530 иптап, 133 гв. минп, 607 зенап	30 одн брп	–	5 гв. ойб	
51 армия	3 гв. ск (50 и 54 гв., 91 сд), 54 ск (87, 99, 346 сд)	6 гв. пабр (2 гв. адп), 1105 пап, 13, 764, 1246 иптап, 125 минп, 281 зенап (15 зенад), 77 гв. зенап	6 гв. тбр, 33 одн брп	–	275 ойб, 121 пмб	

Figure 11, Southern Front, August 1, 1943

– 225 –

Наименование объединений	Стрелковые, воздушнодесантные войска и кавалерия	Артиллерия РВК, армейская и корпусная	Бронетанковые и механизированные войска	Возно-Воздушные Силы	Инженерные войска
Юго-Западный фронт:					
1 гвардейская армия	6 гв. ск (44 и 57 гв., 195 сд), 34 ск (6, 24, 152, 228 сд), 20 гв. сд	42 гв. кап, 518 пап, 33, 174, 536, 1249 иптап, 525 минп, 579, 580 зенап	–	–	51 исбр, 351, 358 ойб, 2 гв. пмб
3 гвардейская армия	34 гв. ск (59 и 61 гв., 297 сд), 32 ск (259, 266, 279 сд)	312 пап, 152 гап, 179 иптап, 526 минп, 1257 зенап	5 гв. мсбр, 243 отп	–	322 ойб
8 гвардейская армия	28 гв. ск (39, 79 и 88 гв. сд), 29 гв. ск (27, 74 и 82 гв. сд)	99 пап, 184 иптап, 141 минп, 878 зенап, 60 озадн	5 и 16 гв., 212 отп, 1888 сап	–	326, 327 ойб
6 армия	4 гв. ск (38 гв., 263, 267 сд), 26 гв. ск (25, 35 и 47 гв. сд), 33 ск (50, 78, 243 сд)	40 гв. кап, 170 гв. пап, 266 гв. иптап, 524 минп, 271 гв. зенап	–	–	350, 370 ойб
12 армия	66 ск (203, 244, 333 сд), 67 ск (60 гв., 172, 350 сд)	103 гв. пап, 1248 иптап, 531 минп, 1587 зенап	9 гв. отп	–	181, 269 ойб
46 армия	31, 223, 236, 353, 394, 409 сд	437, 1312 иптап, 23 минбр, 462 минп, 626, 1114, 1651 зенап	17 гв., 52, 224 отп, 1816, 1889 сап, 513 отб	–	68, 273 ойб
17 воздушная армия	–	1613, 1614, 1615 зенап	–	1 гв. сак (6 гв. шад, 11 гв. над), 1 сак (5 гв. шад, 288 над), 9 сак (305, 306 над, 295 над), 244 бад, 262 ибад, 39 рап, 371 трап, 3 санап, 14 ап ГВФ, 50 раз, 34, 58, 63 каэ	–
Соединения и части фронтового подчинения	1 гв. кк (1, 2 и 7 гв. кд, 143 гв. иптап, 1 гв. оингдн, 1 гв. мп, 49 гв. минди, 319 зенап), 1 ойбр	7 адп (11 лабр, 9 гв., 17 пабр, 25 габр, 105 габр БМ, 3 минбр), 9 адп (26 лабр, 30, 115 пабр, 23 габр, 113 габр БМ, 10 минбр), 11 ад (45 пабр, 40 габр), 5, 11 иптабр, 534 иптап, 14 гв. мбр, 1, 35, 45, 58, 61, 62, 75, 87, 100, 301 гв. мп, 115, 406 огв. мдн, 3 зенад (1084, 1089, 1114, 1118 зенап), 4 зенад (253, 254	1 гв. мк (1, 2 и 3 гв. мбр, 9 гв. тбр, 1544 сап, 84 мцб, 116 гв. кап, 1504 иптап, 741 оингдн, 267 минп, 407 огв. мдн, 1699 зенап), 23 тк (3, 39, 135 тбр, 56 мсбр, 1443 сап, 82 мцб, 1501 иптап, 739 оингдн, 457 минп, 442 гв. мдн, 1697 зенап), 31 гв., 11, 115 тбр, 10 гв., 141 отп, 1890 сап, 3 гв. мшп, 517 отб, 67 омцб	–	11 ишсбр, 44 иобр с/н, 62 исбр, 4, 5 пмбр, 8 тпм, 19 гв. батальон минеров

Figure 12, Southwestern Front, September 1, 1943

Наименование объединений	Стрелковые, воздушнодесантные войска и кавалерия	Артиллерия РВГК, армейская и корпусная	Бронетанковые и механизированные войска	Военно-Воздушные Силы	Инженерные войска
		и 268 гв., 606 зенап), 22 зенад (1335, 1341, 1347, 1353 зенап), 241, 247, 303, 470, 586, 1474 зенап, 126, 139 озади			
Всего во фронте: общевоейсковых армий – 6, воздушных армий – 1	ск – 11, сд – 41, оибр – 1, кк – 1, кд – 3	адп – 2, ад – 1, оап – 8, иптабр – 2, оиптап – 11, оминбр – 1, оминп – 6, огв. мбр – 1, гв. мп – 10, огв. мди – 2, зенад – 3, зенап – 18, озади – 3	тк – 1, мк – 1, отбр – 3, омсбр – 1, отп – 10, сап – 4, мшп – 1, отб – 2, омцб – 1	сак – 3, бад – 1, шад – 4, над – 3, нбад – 1, рап – 1	инжбр – 4, пмбр – 2, пми – 1, инжб – 12, пмб – 1
Южный фронт:					
2 гвардейская армия	1 гв. ск (24, 33 и 86 гв. сд), 13 гв. ск (3, 49 и 87 гв. сд), 151, 295 сд	5 гв. габр, 6 гв. пабр и 33 минбр (2 гв. адп), 1095 пап, 8, 9 иптабр, 113 гв. иптап, 483 минп, 1069 зенап (2 зенад), 1530 зенап	2 гв. мк (4, 5 и 6 гв. мбр, 37 гв. тбр, 1543 сап, 99 мшб, 744 оиптап, 408 гв. мди), 32 гв. тбр, 22 и 62 гв., 128 отп, 1892 сап, 510, 511 отб	–	63 иебр, 355 оиб
5 ударная армия	3 гв. ск (50 и 54 гв. сд), 31 гв. ск (4, 34, 40 и 96 гв. сд), 9 ск (230, 301, 320 сд), 55 ск (87, 126 сд), 99, 127, 271, 387 сд, 78 УР	506, 1162 пап, 85 гв., 274, 331 гап, 507, 747, 1255 иптап, 487 минп (19 минбр), 489 минп, 15 зенад (281, 342, 723, 1264 зенап), 1617 зенап	140 тбр, 7 и 60 гв. отп, 28 оди брп	–	43 ибр с/л, 3 гв., 827 оиб, 17 гв. батальон минеров
28 армия	37 ск (118, 248, 347 сд), 416 сд	110 гв. пап, 521, 1250 иптап, 488 минп, 2 зенад (1086, 1113, 1117 зенап), 1485 зенап	512 отб	–	57, 130 оиб
44 армия	130, 221 сд, 1 гв. УР	1101 пап, 530 иптап, 133 гв. минп, 607 зенап	30 оди брп	–	5 гв. оиб
51 армия	10 ск (216, 257, 328 сд), 54 ск (346 сд), 63 ск (91, 315 сд), 116 УР, 1 гв. оибр	1105 пап, 764 иптап, 125 минп, 77 гв., 223 зенап	33 оди брп	–	275 оиб, 121 пмб
8 воздушная армия	–	1600, 1601, 1602, 1603 зенап	–	7 шак (206, 289 шад), 3 иак (265, 278 иад), 270 бад, 1 гв. шад, 2 гв. нбад, 6 и 9 гв., 236 иад, 8 рап, 406, 994 лбап, 678 трап, 5 санап, 87 гв. ап ГВФ, 61 краэ	–

Figure 13, Southern Front, September 1, 1943

Given the level of excellence and historical fidelity we want for the operations described in WDS Donbas '43, we must delve deeper into the Soviet Order of Battle and offer the player the same situation that the German and Soviet commanders had to face with the availability of their units during this campaign, by dividing the Donbas Offensive Operation into two phases and allowing players the possibility of enjoying more flexibility to be able to play shorter and more enjoyable campaign scenarios, the information available in the "Boyevoy Sostav Obshchevoyskovykh Armiy - Combat Strength of the Combined Armies (BSOA) is extremely useful, this listing of the composition of the Soviet armies every ten days offers the level of detail necessary to configure the organization of the different forces involved in the campaign in various orders of battle and even more so in the case of the Donbas Strategic Offensive Operation whose duration is so long.

In this table we can see the composition of the 12th Army belonging to the Southwestern Front on July 20, August 1 and 10, 1943, so every ten days, we can confirm the exact composition of this army, where we can check the casualties and gains of the units that comprised it, this is the level of detail we look for in our Orders of Battle.

Дата	Состав	Состав	Состав	Состав	Сведения
20.7.43	172, 203, 244, 333, 50 сд.	103 гв пап РГК, 1248 иптап, 531 мп, 1587 ап ПЗО.	-	181 миб, 269 имб	Донесение о боевом составе на 20.7.43г. - Арх.МВО, ф.359, оп.7048сс, л.4, стр.281-282.
1.8.43	66ск /244, 350 сд/; 67ск /172, 333 сд/; 203 сд.	103 гв пап РГК, 1248 иптап, 531 мп, 1587 ап ПЗО.	-	181 миб, 269 имб	Донесение о боевом составе на 1.8.43г. - Арх.МВО, ф.359, оп.7068сс, л.4, стр.283-292.
10.8.43	66ск /203, 244, 350 сд/; 67ск /172, 333 сд/; 60 гв сд.	9 ад/26 лабр, 30 пар, 113 габр б/м, 10 мин. бр./; 221 гап-9 арт. див.; 103 гв. пап РГК, 229 гв лап, 1248 иптап РГК, 531 мп, 45, 58, 68 гв мп, 14 гв. мин. бриг., 3 вен. арт. дивизия, 1587 ап ПЗО.	-	181 миб, 269 имб	Сведения о численном и боевом составе на 10.8.43г. - Арх.МВО, ф.359, оп.7068сс, л.4, стр.280-282 и Журнал боевых действий Северо-Западного фронта - Арх. ЦКХ ГИИ № 156, стр.85 и 190.

Figure 14, 12th Army, Southwestern Front, July 20, August 1 and 10, 1943

Since the Donbas Strategic Offensive Operation was divided into two phases, great care has been taken in the composition of the Soviet Order of Battle for the August and September operations. Particular care has also been taken in the condition of the units, both in terms of the number of men and vehicles, and in the quality of the formations that took part in the operations and their commanders, as can be seen from the Soviet sources of the time, in order to offer our players the highest possible historical accuracy.

WDS Donbas '43, like previous games dealing with the summer of 1943 such as WDS Orel '43, WDS Rumyantsev '43, WDS Smolensk '43 and the expansion pack for WDS Orel '43 describing the offensive on Bryansk, also reflects the transition from a Soviet army with the doctrines existing before 1943 to the degree of experience that soldiers and commanders were painfully acquiring during those years. Through 1943, it was the year in which the balance of war on the Eastern Front began to tip in favour of the Red Army, after the end of Operation Zitadelle, the

20.7.43	1 гв.СК(24,33,86 гв.сд); 13 гв.СК(3,49,87 гв.сд)	5 гв.Габр; 506,1095 пап; 483 минп;113 гв.,747,1255 интап;18 зад, 1500 зап.	2 гв.МК(4, 5,6 гв. мбр; 37 гв.тор); 4 гв.МК(13, 14,15 гв. мбр; 36 гв.тор;) 1543 сап.	65 иобр; 355 инж. б-н.	Донесение о боевом составе на 20.7.43 года. Арх.МВС, и. 244, оп. 7826сс, д.2, стр.70.
1.8.43	1 гв.СК(3,33,49 гв.сд); 13 гв.СК(24,86, 87 гв.сд);	2 гв.АДП(5 гв.габр;114 пабр; 4 ла- бр;19 мин. бр;20 габр;М) 1095 пап;483 минп;113 гв, 14,747,1255 интап;18 зад; 1500 зап.	2 гв.МК(4, 5,6 гв. мбр; 37 гв.тор); 7 гв.тп, 1543 сап.	65 иобр; 355 инж. б-н.	Донесение о боевом составе на 1.8.43 года. Арх.МВС, и. 244, оп. 7826сс, д.2, стр.89
10.8.43	1 вв.СК(24,33,86 гв.сд); 13 гв.СК(3,49,87 гв.сд); 151,302 сд.	5 гв.Габр;6 гв.Пабр;4 гв. лабр;33 мин. бр;8,9,15 интап;1095 пап;483 мп; 113гв,14,491 интап;18 зад; 1069,1500 зап	2 гв.МК(4, 5,6 гв. мбр; 37 гв.тор); 33,37 гв. тор;22,62 гв.тп;510, 511 тб; 1543,1892 сап.	65 иобр; 355 инж. б-н.	Донесение о боевом составе на 10.8.43 го а. Арх.МВС, и. 244, оп.7826сс, д.2,стр.111.

Figure 15, 2nd Guards Army, Southern Front, July 20, August 1 and 10, 1943

1.9.43	3гв СК(50,54,96гв сд) 31гв СК(4,34,40гв сд) 9ск (37,39,126 сд) 127,271,387 сд, 78 УР	114 пабр,85гв, 274 гап, 306, 1162 пап, 489 минп, 19 минор, 9 интабр, 507,1255интап, 15 зад,1617зап	140 тор, 7,60гв тп, 28 д-н БЕПО	43 инжбр, 258,827 инжб	Донесение о боевом составе на 1.9.43г. Архив МВС, фонд 244, опись 7826сс, дело 2, стр.124.
10.9.43	3гв СК(50,54,96гв сд) 31гв СК(4,34,40гв сд) 9ск(230,301,320сд) 99 сд, 78 УР	114 пабр, 85гв,274 гап, 506,1162 пап, 489 минп, 19 минор, 507,1255интап, 15 зад,1617 зап	140 тор, 7,60гв тп, 28 д-н БЕПО	43 инжбр, 258,827 инжб	Донесение о боевом составе на 10.9.43г. Архив МВС, фонд 244, опись 7826сс, дело 2, стр.124.
20.9.43	3гв СК(50,54,96гв сд) 31гв СК(4,34,40гв сд) 9ск (230,301,320сд) 99 сд, 78 УР	5гв габр(2гв ад), 114пабр(3гв ад) 274 гап,306, 1162 пап, 489 минп, 19 минор, 507,747,1255 интап.	3гв,140 тор,7гв тп, 28 д-н БЕПО	43 инжбр, 258,827 инжб	Донесение о боевом составе на 20.9.43г. Архив МВС, фонд 244, опись 7826сс, дело 2, стр.30.

Figure 16, 5th Shock Army, Southwestern Front, September 1, 10 and 20, 1943.

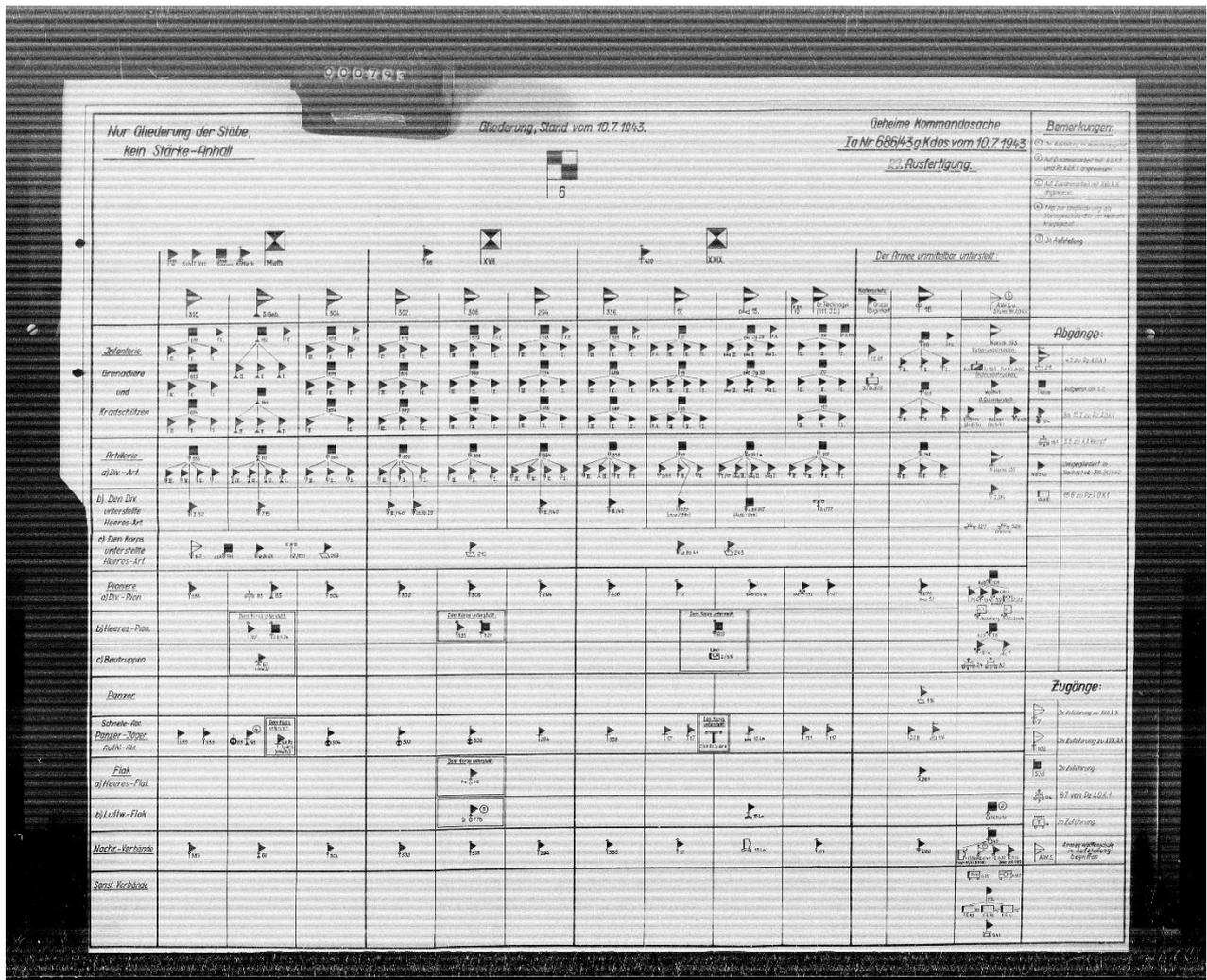


Figure 18, 6.Armee, 10 July 1943

In the case of the research on the German armies and their Romanian allies it has been like this, the methodology I have used in the search for the necessary information to form the battle orders is investigated from the most general point of view, and often more superficial in terms of detail, which begins with the study of the archives of the army group involved, in this case, Heeresgruppe Sud. This is the point where the search for information on all my battle orders begins. From here, I am immersing myself more and more in the archives, delving into the different levels of command that make up the order of battle. In this case, the second level of research was the 1.Panzerarmee and the 6.Armee, and to a lesser extent the 8.armee, for the period that covers combat operations in the Donbas, both for the months of July, August and September 1943, from here, the detail is increasingly more precise as the researcher delves into the archives of the following levels of command, which are the armeekorps, infantry and panzer divisions...etc.

All of these steps are necessary to achieve the level of accuracy and historical fidelity we seek for our future players in any title in the Panzer Campaign series, and this is what has been followed, as with the others, in WDS Donbas '43, where the main source of information always comes from primary German sources, either from the archives stored at NARA in Washington

or the Bundesarchiv in Freiburg. Other sources have also been used to fill some of the gaps in the German and, especially, Romanian order of battle. Although few works have been written, at least by Western authors, about this interesting campaign, one of the studies that have been used, and also one of the best that have been written, although only of a specific part of the battle, in this case of the Mius Front, has been "Decision in the Ukraine" by George M. Nipe, I highlight this work, because the detail of the data offered there are amazing, at battalion and company level, being able to follow in detail and with millimetric precision on the map, the movements of the different units on the ground.

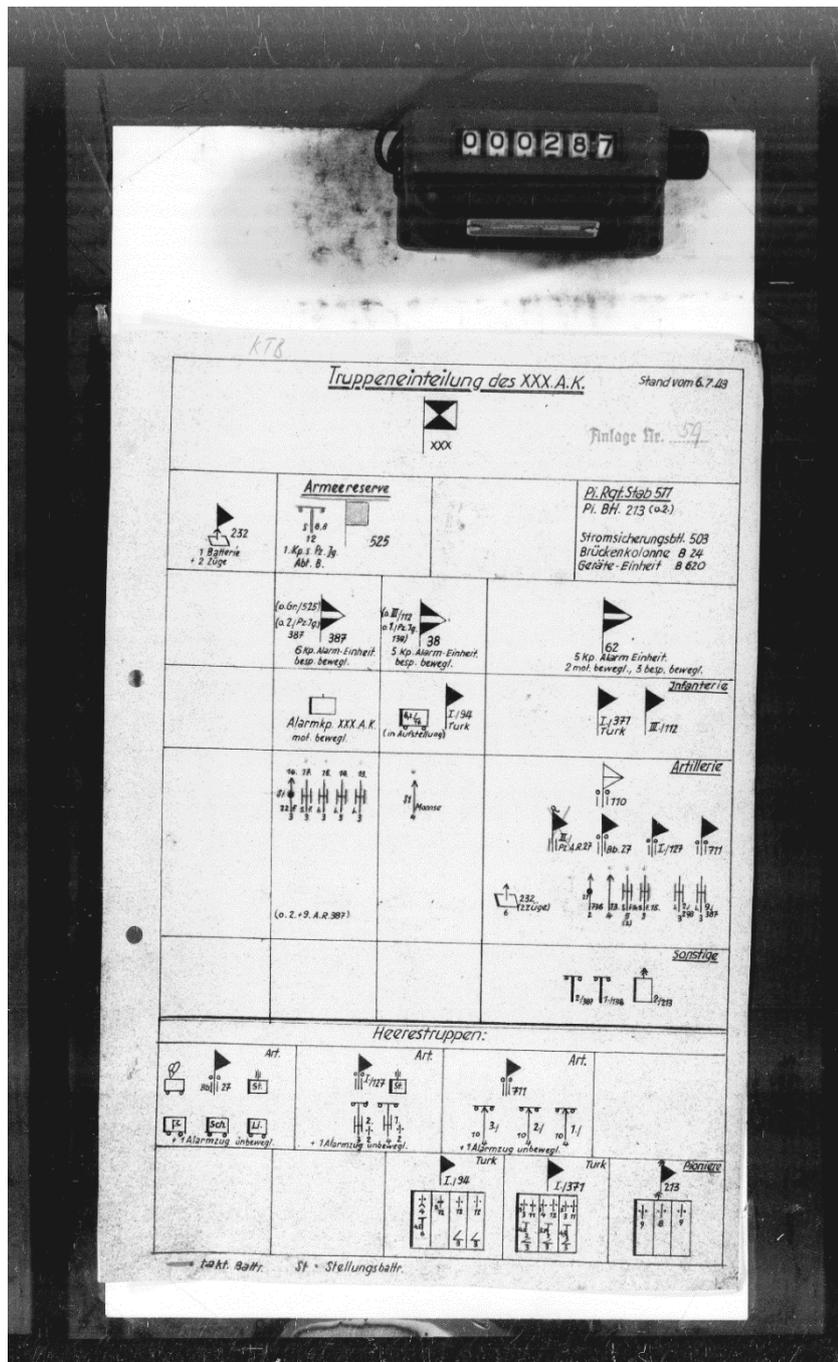


Figure 19, XXX.Armeekorps, 8 July 1943

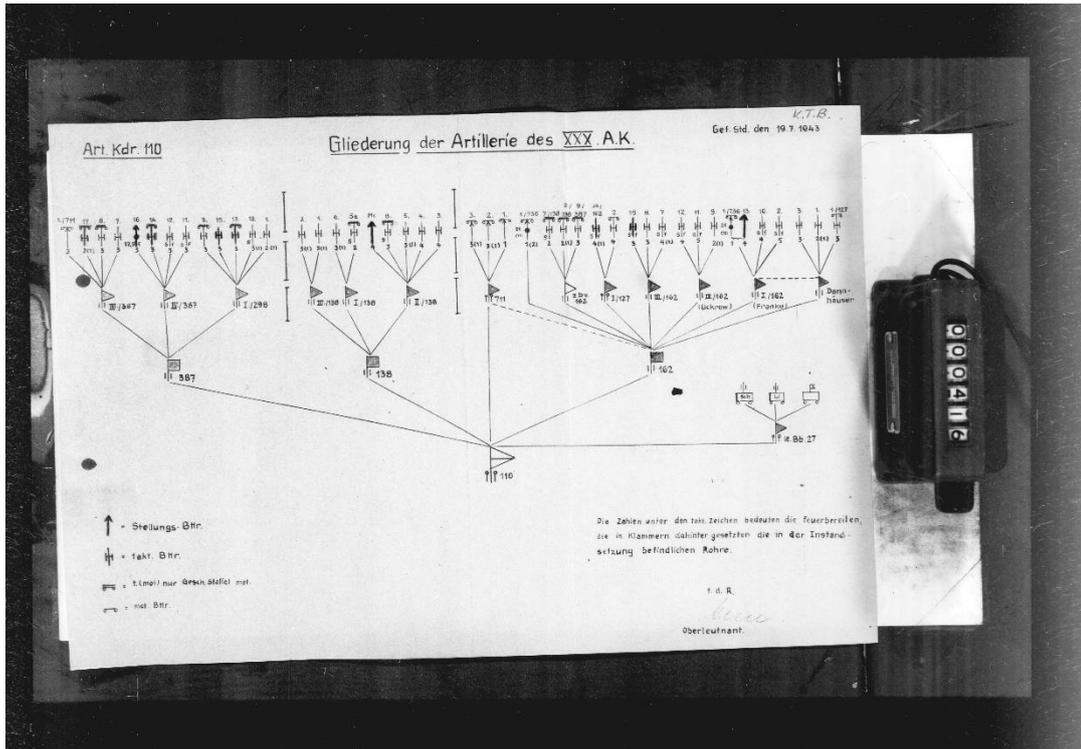


Figure 20, Gliederung Artillerie XXX.Armeekorps, 11 July 1943

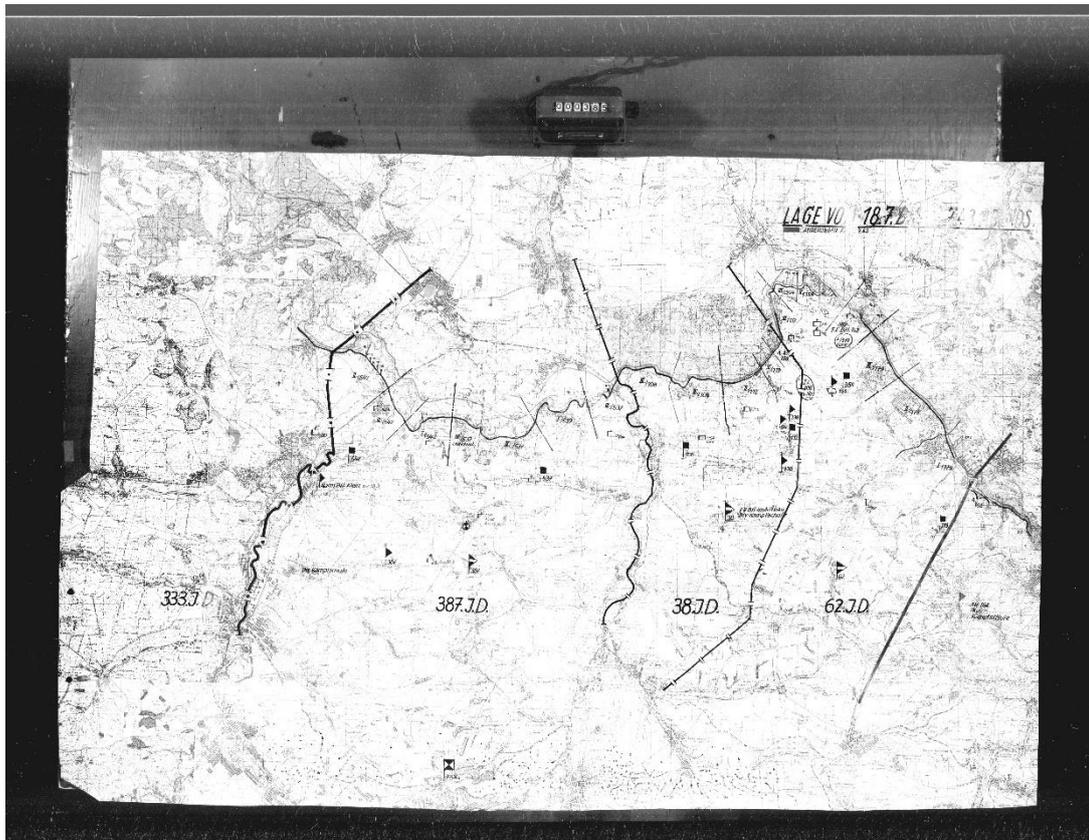


Figure 21, Lagekarte XXX.Armeekorps, 18 July 1943

Truly, this journey into the depths of knowledge of the composition of an order of battle is fascinating, and with some units in particular, it has been most rewarding. In researching the order of battle for the Izyum-Barvenkovo Offensive Operation and the Mius Front, I was very lucky to have started it long before for the title WDS Rummyantsev '43, this title described the events of both the German offensive during Operation Zitadelle on the southern flank of the Kursk salient and the Soviet counteroffensive of Operation Rummyantsev during August 1943, all this data, already researched in depth at the time, has been put into the order of battle that describes the Soviet offensive of the month of July in the Severnyy Donets and the Mius Front, in particular, the II.SS PanzerKorps and the 3.Panzer Division that arrived at the Mius at the end of July to begin the German counteroffensive in the area and that would end with recovering the positions lost a few weeks earlier. In reviewing the notes and delving into the various available sources, we discovered that the Leibstandarte SS PanzerGrenadier Division, before being sent to Italy, left all its armored vehicles to the two remaining SS divisions of the Corps, the Totenkopf and Das Reich SS PzGrenadier Divisions.

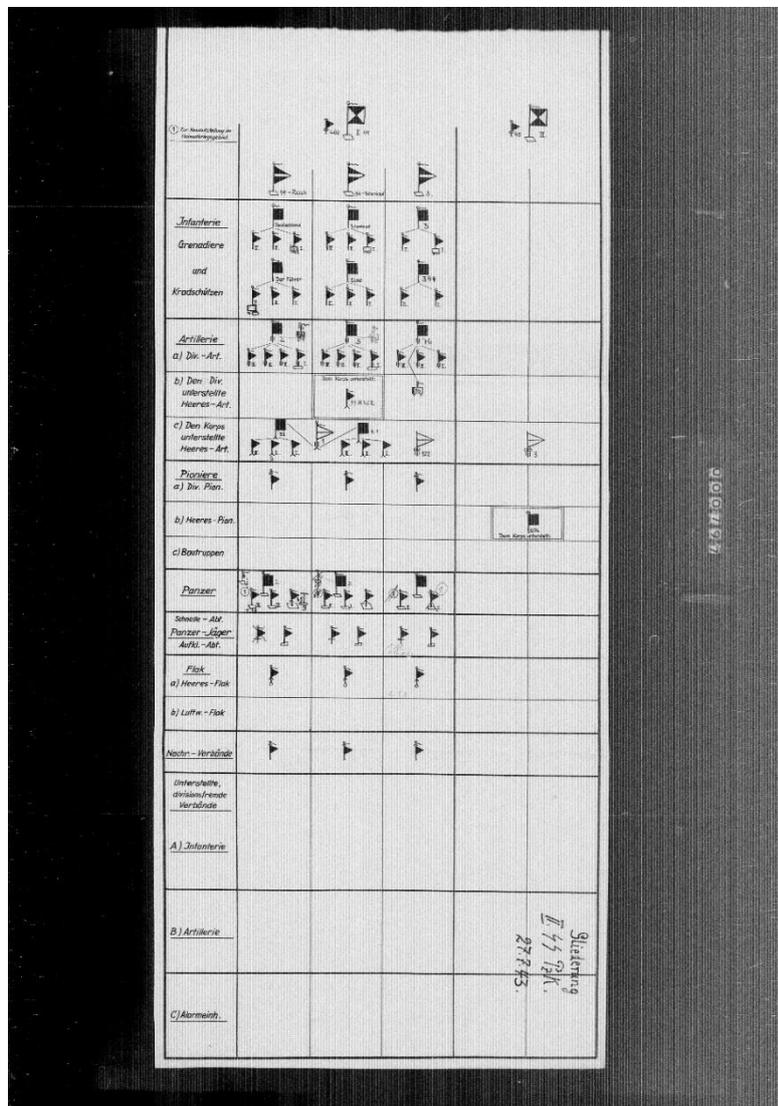


Figure 22, II.SS.PanzerKorps, 27 July 1943

Another very specific aspect of the investigated orders of battle has been the troops located in the rear of the German armies involved in the defense of the Donbas, I am referring to the Koruck.593 and the 15.Flak Division, both large units have been included, like other titles, in the game due to their undoubted value as last-minute defenses, in case the Soviet forces manage to break through the German defenses. These units are present in the orders of battle that represent the various phases into which the campaign in the Donbas has been divided. To achieve the necessary detail for these large German units, we have delved into German primary sources to determine the composition of the forces present, including the Romanian troops, also part of these rearguard defensive forces.

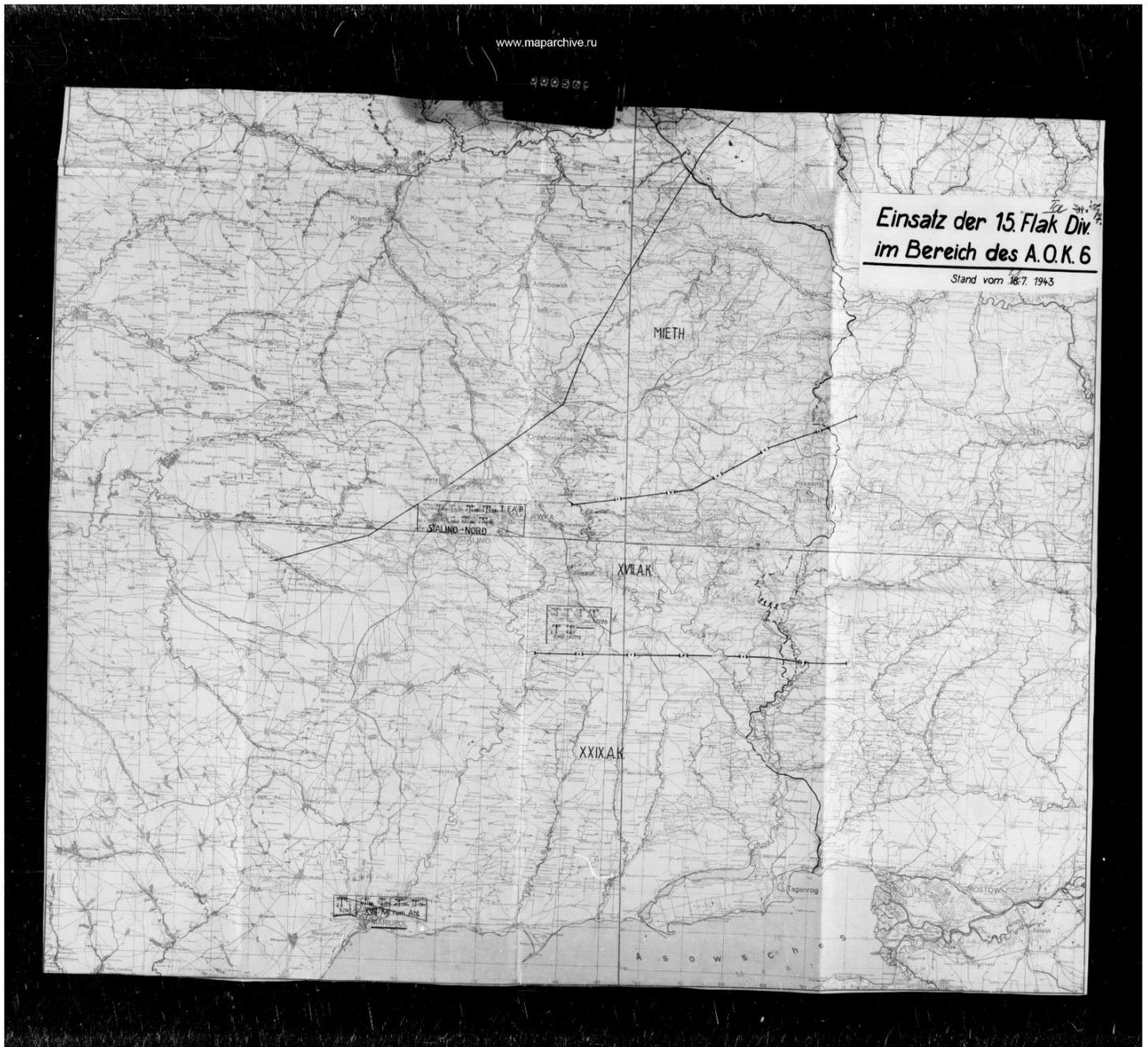


Figure 23, 15.Flak Division, July 1943

Some units have had an exclusive research phase because they have not been present in any of the campaigns in which I have been fortunate enough to be involved. One of the reasons I enjoy the design and development of the scenarios that make up, in this case, WDS Donbas '43 so much is that it allows me to study the different types of units that made up the German army and its allies during World War II. In my previous research for projects describing the campaigns of the summer of 1943, I did not have the opportunity to study mountain units, and more specifically, the 3rd Gebirgsjäger Division, which was deployed in the Donbas, and which I have now been able to investigate in depth, both in its composition and status. Another unit that I was able to study in depth, although I already had the opportunity to do so for WDS Smolensk '43, was the ground divisions of the Luftwaffe, the 15. Luftwaffe Feld Division was deployed in the Donbas, and its composition, status and performance in battle could be perfectly traced in the sources, so it could be perfectly described for use in the two orders of battle that make up the Donbas Strategic Offensive Operation.

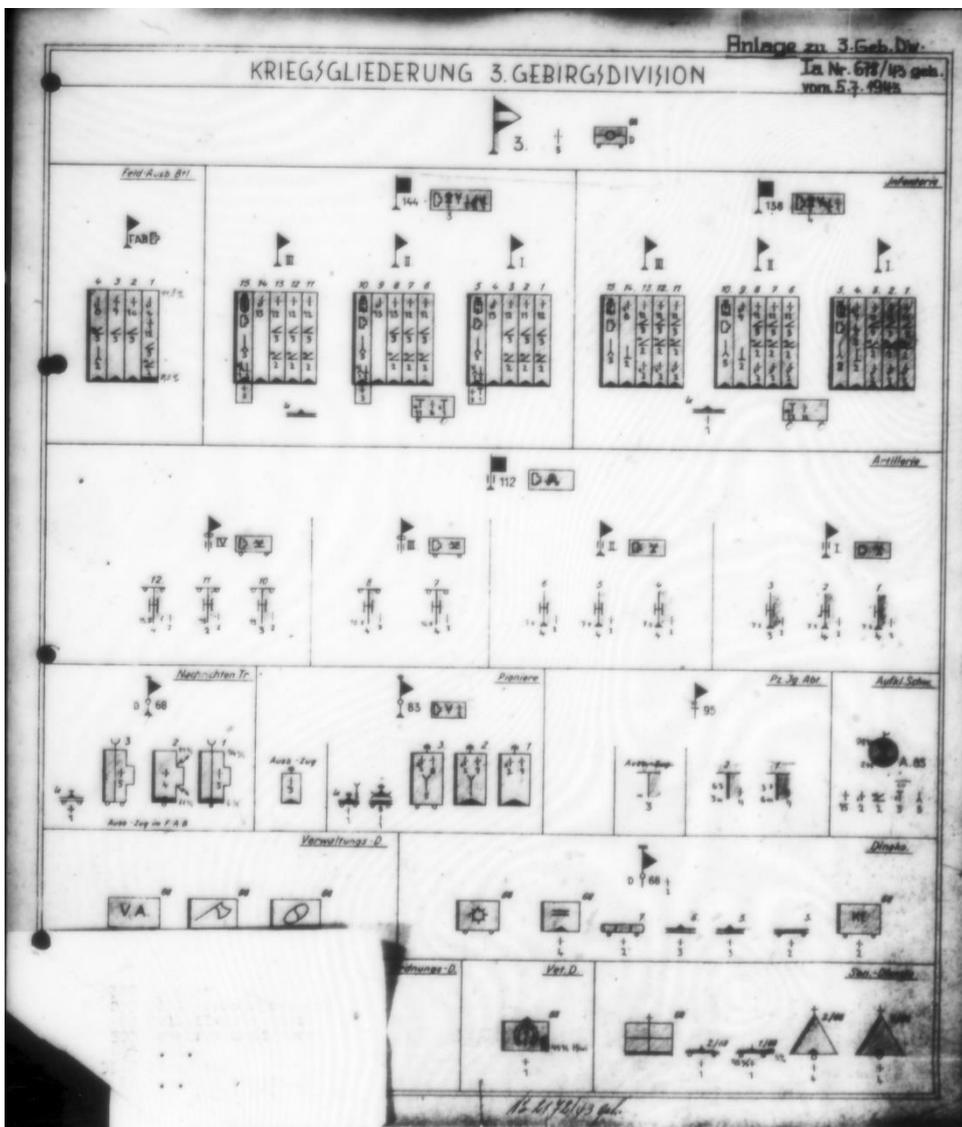


Figure 24, 3.Gebirgsjäger Division, July 1943

A particular case that needs to be explained is that of the 111. Infanterie Division, this Infantry Division that defended the southernmost point of the Ostfront, had a curious composition, this

Division, under the command of General Recknagel, had under his command, both the units that defended the front line, as well as those that defended the city of Taganrog and its immediate rearguard across the coast, these under the command of the commander of the city of Taganrog. This set of forces, which depended on the 111. Infanterie Division, have been, by design, detached from the command of the Division and placed under the command of the troops dependent on the XXIX. Armeekorps, this non-historical decision and exclusively taken for the purposes of the design of the order of battle by myself, was not easy to make but I believe that for the purposes of the campaign scenario it is the one that best adapts to the historical facts due to the limitations of the game engine, especially following the loss of Taganrog and the withdrawal of the German battle group that defended the entire area, this decision, taken especially with the perspective of the campaign scenario is the one that offers, in my opinion, flexibility to the German player in the choice of decision making with that vital part of the front, respecting as much as possible the historical events that occurred in the city and area of Taganrog.

I./117 II./Lw.J.R. 30		II. Battr. 1./A.R. 15 (L)	
<u>111. J.D.</u> G.R. 117 (o.I.u.III.) " 515 III./514 III./21	Pz.Hg. 111 (o. 1 Kp.)	Stu.G. 243 o. 2 B. Stu.G. Battr. 15 I 3 Stu.G. Abt. 210 A.R. 117 m.I. u. IV. 1., 2., 6., 7., 8., II./117 u. Stb. I./53 mi. 1./336/3/117	PI. Btl. 111 o. 1 Kp. 1 Kp. PI. 294

Figure 25, Gliederung 111. Infanterie Division, 29 July 1943

To conclude the notes on the German order of battle in WDS Donbas '43, we must discuss the participation of the Romanian Army in the Donbas campaign. The Romanian Army has appeared repeatedly in various titles in the Panzer Campaigns series that involve the third major Axis ally on the Ostfront. At the time of the Donbas Strategic Offensive Operation, the Romanian Army was recovering from the heavy losses suffered during the winter of 1942-1943. The Romanian forces present were primarily deployed in rearguard defense roles, protecting the extensive coastlines along the Sea of Azov and Crimea. Furthermore, the best combat units were deployed in the Kuban with the 17. Armee. In the case of the Donbas, the Romanian forces present were the 24th Infantry Division under the command of General Niculescu-Cociu and an anti-aircraft artillery group attached to the 15th Flak Division, both units were deployed protecting the port cities of Osipenko and Mariupol.

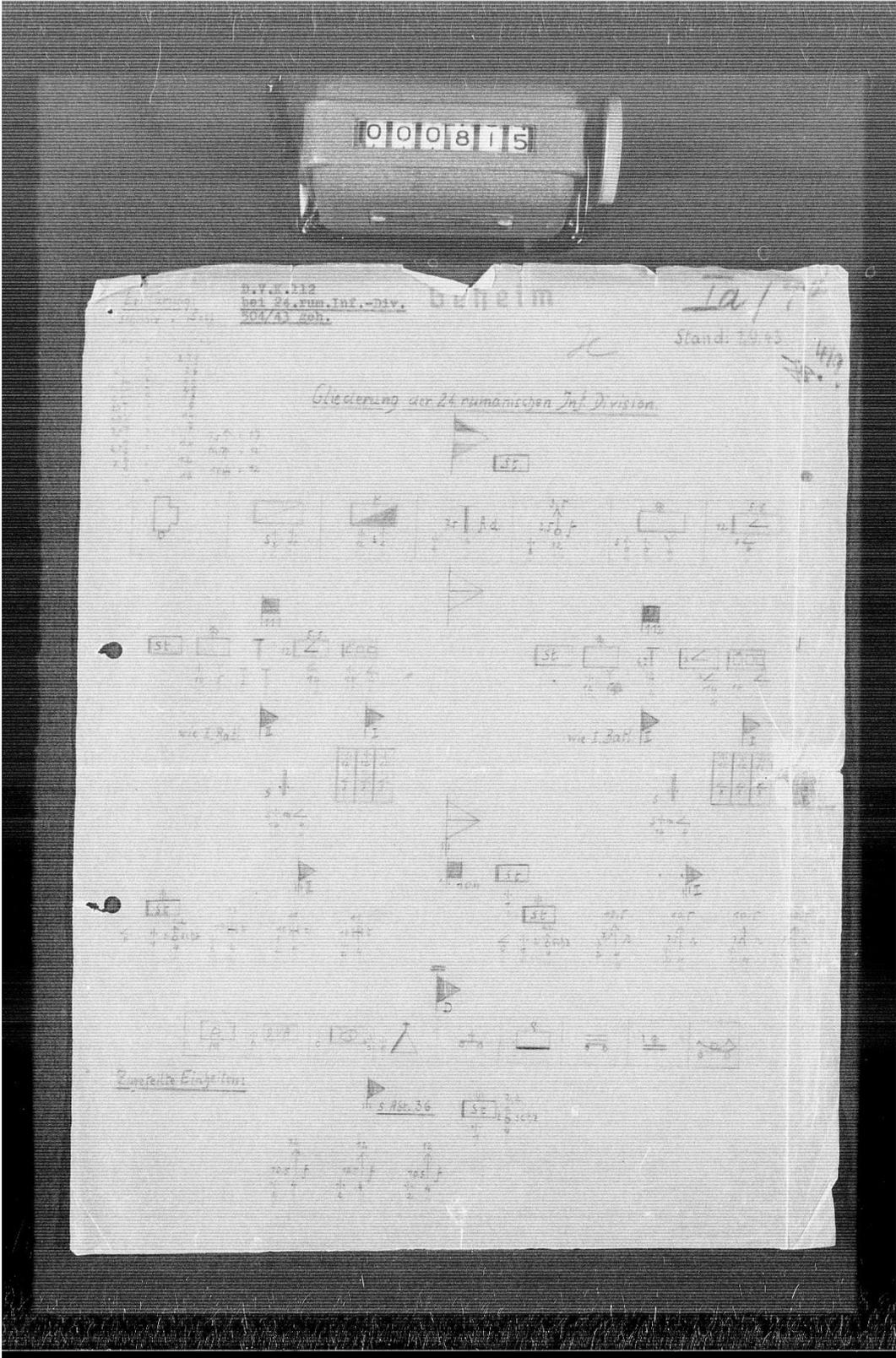
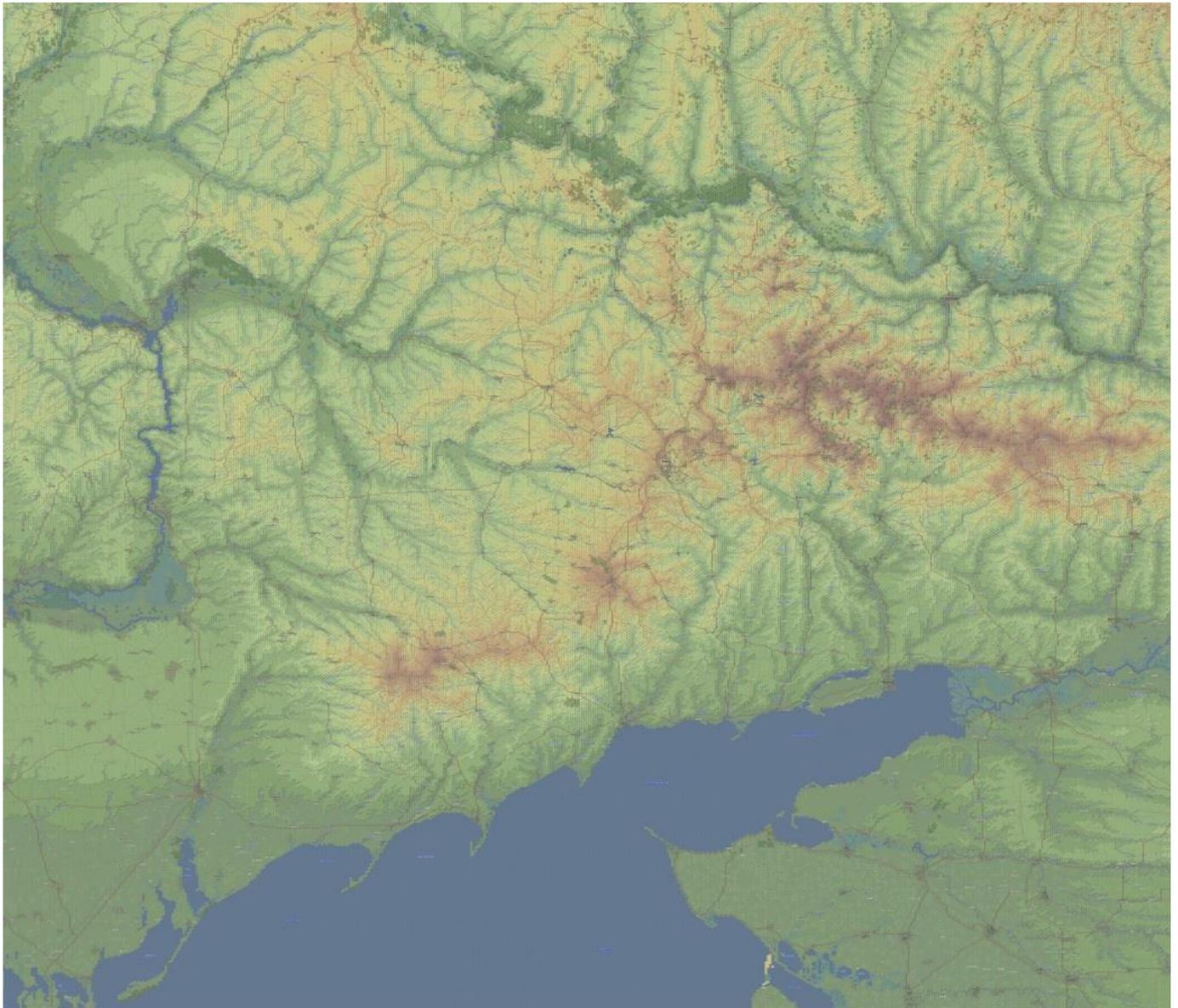


Figure 26, order of battle 24th Rumanian Infantry Division, August 1943

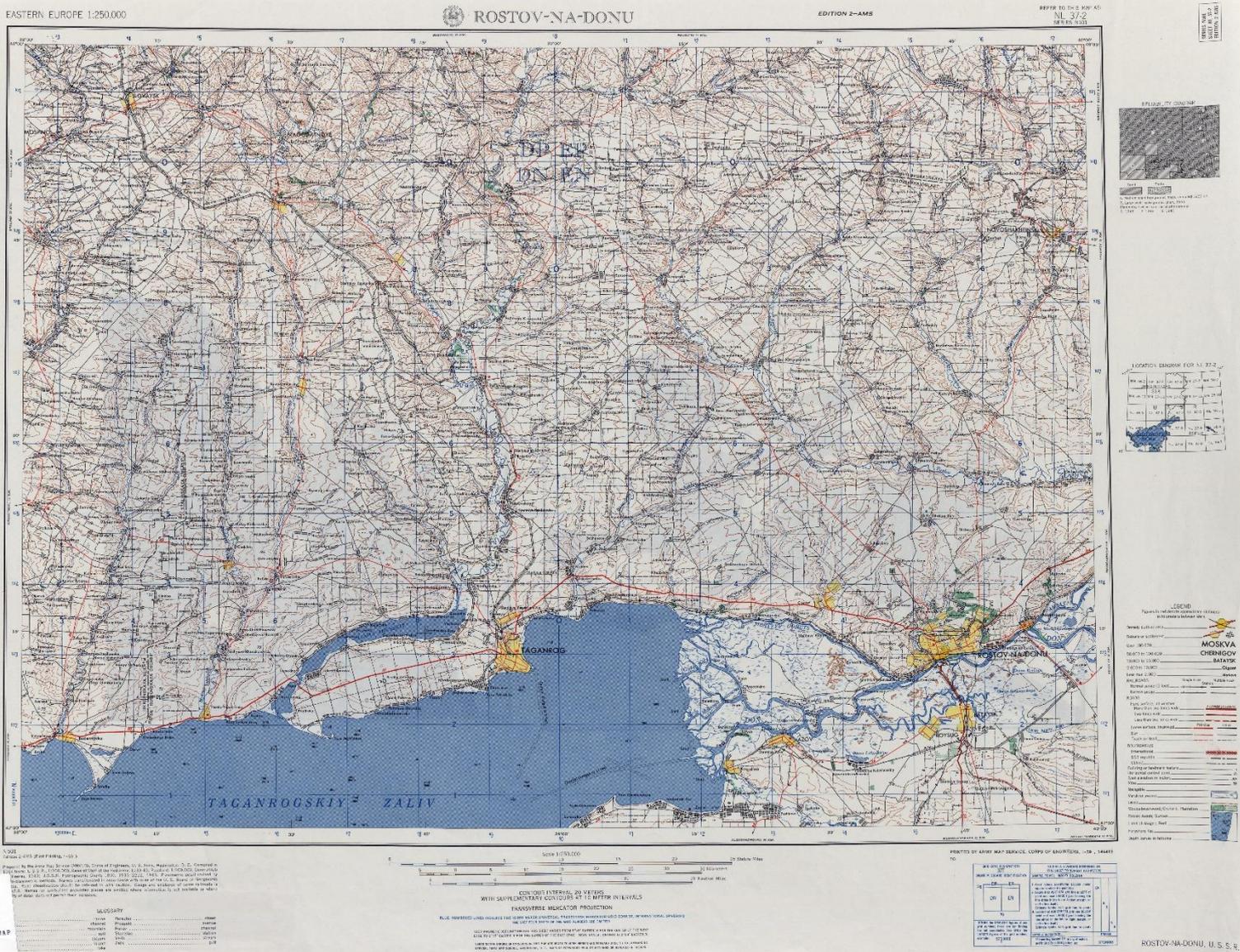
Map Notes

The WDS Donbas '43 map is a new map made by the great Bill Peters, Bill's maps are characterized among other things, by their attention to detail and their great historical accuracy, this accuracy is not only based on the use of maps of the period but also on in-depth historical research in German and Soviet sources to capture the necessary nuances on the ground that simulate the difficulties that had to be overcome by the different units participating in the war operations.

The Donbas region is located in Ukraine. This geographical area was a rich mining and industrial basin with abundant factories, taking advantage of the proximity to raw materials such as coal that fed the metallurgical industry. The administrative capital of Donbas was the city of Stalino (present-day Donetsk), although there were also other large population centers ideal for defense throughout the Donbas region, cities such as Sloviansk, Kramatorsk, Konstantinovka, Horlivka, Taganrog or Mariupol, to name just a few examples.



The geography of the Donbas is defined by the Severnyy Donets and Mius rivers, which meander from north to south, marking the front line during the offensives of July and August 1943. The western banks of both rivers, which were also elevated relative to their eastern banks, were fortified by the German army; the Mius River's fortifications were known as the Mius Front due to their density. At the same time, irregular mountainous undulations can be seen right in the center of the Donbas region. This terrain, with its notable elevations, was very favorable for defense. Just to the south runs the coast of the Sea of Azov, where the cities of Taganrog and Mariupol stand out, important ports from which connections with the ports of the Black Sea and the Crimean Peninsula. These cities, together with the capital Stalino, were fortified by the Germans and prepared for a prolonged offensive in accordance with the directives of the OKH. Further west, we find the great Dnepr River, the border of the Donbas and the Red Army's objective after the liberation of the entire area. Manstein considered the possibility of an orderly retreat towards the river and taking advantage of its great width to anchor his defense in the following months.



Donbas, The Campaign

Introduction

On July 17, 1943, troops of the Southwestern and Southern Fronts launched an offensive in the Donbas region, occupied by German forces since 1941, the Red Army advanced from Izyum toward Krasnoarmeyskoye with forces of the Southwestern Front and from Kuibyshev toward Stalino with forces of the Southern Front, the objective was to defeat the two German formations defending the area, including the 6.Armee, and liberate the Donbas, however, by August 1, the German army managed to contain the front's breakthrough at the Mius River line and regain its positions in the area of the villages of Kuybyshevo and Dmitriyevka. After this action, the front remained relatively calm until August 18, the fortified defensive line that the Germans had built on the west bank of the Mius River entered history as the "Mius Front", this defensive line was established in December 1941 and, during two winter campaigns, supported the retreating German forces following the Red Army's advances, this fortified line was conceived following the withdrawal of Heeresgruppe Süd from Rostov-on-Don in November and early December 1941, the west bank of the Mius River rose above the east bank, creating favorable conditions for the construction of a defensive line.

German troops reached the Mius River line in October 1941, on November 20, the Wehrmacht



entered Rostov-on-Don and on November 28, Soviet troops under the command of S.K. Timoshenko recaptured the city after a brutal and bloody battle. The commander of the Heeresgruppe Süd, Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt, was forced to give the order to retreat, although Hitler did not give permission to withdraw troops to the Mius River line. Soviet troops attempted to break through the German defenses but were unable to do so. During the winter of 1941-1942, the German army created a dense defensive line along the river, and by spring, the Germans had constructed a sophisticated system of trenches, minefields, anti-tank ditches, and barbed wire, the fortifications were reinforced with chains of pillboxes and bunkers, machine-gun nests (up to 20-30 per kilometer) and artillery positions, as well as dozens of settlements converted into resistance centers with circular defenses.

In the spring of 1942, the Soviet command prepared an operation in this area, the Southern Front troops, under the command of R.Y. Malinovsky, were to cut the salient created between Matveyev Kurgan and Sambek with a concentric attack and liberate the port city of Taganrog, the depth of the planned operation was relatively shallow, about 40 kilometers, and it was supposed to last two to three days. The 56th Army, with four divisions and six brigades, was to take part in the operation, supported by 260 guns and 60 tanks. The 3rd Guards Rifle Corps, whose core was the 2nd Guards Rifle Division, and a tank brigade were allocated from the STAVKA reserves to carry out the operation, and Naval Rifle Brigades also took part in the

offensive. On March 8, 1942, Soviet troops went on the offensive but were unable to break through the powerful German defenses. Two further attacks, on March 14 and March 24, 1942, failed in the Red Army's attempts to break through the German defenses.

In the summer of 1942, the German army launched an offensive on the Volga, the Kuban Peninsula and the Caucasus, the Mius Front remained in the rear but after the defeat of German troops at Stalingrad and in the Battle for the Caucasus, the Mius Front was needed again, the line was reoccupied in February 1943 by troops transferred from other parts of the front and reinforcements sent from the west. On February 14, 1943, units of the Southern Front liberated Rostov and continued advancing westward. The front's mobile units were tasked with exploiting their operational success to the west, forcing the Mius River and occupying the Amvrosiyevka area. By the end of February 17, the 4th Guards Mechanized Corps crossed the river in the Matveyev Kurgan area and broke through to Amvrosiyevka, it should be noted that at that time the corps had only 14 tanks and was exhausted from the previous battles, the 2nd and 3rd Guards Mechanized Corps only reached the river on February 20, as they encountered problems with fuel supplies, the rifle units were also left behind, with only two Rifle Regiments of the 4th Guards Rifle Division managing to cross after the 33rd Guards Mechanized Corps. The German command took advantage of the separation of the advanced Soviet units from the main forces and closed the gap in the Matveyev Kurgan area on the night of February 20, the 4th Guards Mechanized Corps and the two rifle regiments were trapped in a pocket in the Amvrosiyevka area, the 2nd and 3rd Guards Mechanized Corps and units of the 2nd Guards Army attempted to break free of the encircled forces, but were unable to do so. On the night of February 22, by order of the Soviet command, the encircled forces broke through to their own. Until the end of February, Soviet troops attempted to break through the German defenses, but were unsuccessful, and the front line stabilized for several months.



The July Offensive: Izyum-Barvenkovo Offensive Operation

During the spring and summer of 1943, both the Wehrmacht and the Red Army were preparing for a decisive battle that ultimately erupted in the Kursk salient. This offensive would later be known as Operation Zitadelle. In this context, units of the Southwestern and Southern Fronts were to play an important role, launching offensives in their respective sectors to prevent the German command from transferring reinforcements to the Kursk area from other sectors of the German-Soviet front.



One of these key sectors was the Severnyy Donets and the Mius River region, the Southwestern and Southern Fronts, under the command of Generals Rodion Malinovsky and Fyodor Tolbukhin, respectively, were tasked with launching an offensive in the Donbas region. Their main objective was to anchor the forces of the German 1.Panzerarmee and the 6.Armee and prevent them from being used as reinforcements at Kursk, the July offensive in the direction of Donbas thus played an important role in the Battle of Kursk, as the German command was forced to divide and divert part of the 4. Panzerarmee from the southern flank of the Kursk salient towards the Mius River, deploying troops both on the Mius Front and in the defense zone of the 1.Panzerarmee.

At the start of Operation Zitadelle, the front stretching from the Sea of Azov to Kharkov was relatively calm. Both sides, the Red Army and the Wehrmacht, were dug in, and extensive fortification work had been carried out in preparation for future offensive actions. By July 1943, German troops had established a powerful and deeply echeloned defense on the so-called Mius Front; these defenses consisted of two or three fortified lines. The first, considered the main line, had a depth of between 6 and 8 kilometers, reaching 10 or 12 kilometers in some sectors, a third defensive line had been built approximately 40-50 kilometers west of the Severnyy Donets and Mius rivers. The use of minefields was particularly intensive, with anti-personnel and anti-tank mines up to 200 meters deep and a high density of placement, reaching between 1.5 and 1.8 linear kilometers of mines per kilometer of front. In some sectors, such as on the right bank of the Severnyy Donets, the density of fortifications reached almost two linear kilometers of trenches and communications per kilometer of front, accompanied by anti-personnel obstacles, bunkers, and more than a hundred open machine gun positions. The geography of the terrain itself favored defense as it was an undulating plain

with numerous ravines and elevations. In addition, the heights along the right banks of the Severnyy Donets and Mius rivers offered excellent observation points and fortification sites. All of this made it extremely difficult to carry out an effective offensive and significantly strengthened the German anti-tank defense, especially in the Mius Front sector.

The German positions in the Donbas were part of Heeresgruppe Süd under the command of Field Marshal Erich von Manstein, the defense of the sector that included the Severnyy Donets and Mius rivers was entrusted to the 1.Panzerarmee, 6.Armee and part of the Armeekorps Kempf, in total, the Germans had about 27 divisions in the area, including five Panzer divisions and one PanzerGrenadier, Of these, 22 divisions were in the first line of defense, while the operational reserve consisted of five divisions: three Panzer, one motorized, and one infantry.



Despite the solidity of the fortifications, German troop density was low, estimated at between 15 and 30 kilometers per division, which represented a significant weakness, typically, the three regiments of each infantry division were deployed in a single line, lacking tactical or strategic depth, Division-level reserves were usually limited to one or two battalions, while corps-level reserves were even smaller, with just one or two battalions and a few specialized support units. The second line of defense was not permanently manned by troops but had to be covered by fire from the first line in the event of a Soviet breakthrough, the stability of the entire defensive system depended largely on the tactical maneuverability of the reserves, in a crisis, the only viable option was to transfer units from other sectors of the front, which was risky given the vastness of the area and the speed of Soviet operations.

On July 7, 1943, by order of the Soviet Supreme Command Headquarters (STAVKA VGK), units of the Southwestern and Southern Fronts began preparations for an offensive operation in this area. The Southwestern Front, under the command of Rodion Malinovsky, launched a concentric attack from Izyum toward Krasnoarmeyskoye, while the Southern Front, under the command of Fyodor Tolbukhin, advanced from Dmitriyevka toward Stalino (present-day Donetsk). Until the start of the offensive, Malinovsky's troops held defensive positions along the left bank of the Severnyy Donets; his front consisted of the 1st, 3rd, and 8th Guards Armies, and the 6th, 12th, and 57th Armies; the 17th Air Army provided cover for the operations. These forces occupied a defensive position facing the German group in the Donbas, which created favorable conditions for the attack. The Southwest Front directly confronted Eberhard von Mackensen's 1.Panzerarmee and elements of the Armeekorps Kempf.

The Southwestern Front Offensive

General Rodion Malinovsky, commander of the Southwestern Front, decided to concentrate his main efforts on the central sector of the front, in the direction of Barvenkovo-Krasnoarmeyskoye. The main attack was carried out by the flanking armies, the 8th and 1st Guards Armies. For these, Soviet troops used a bridgehead in the Izyum area and were also forced to cross the Severnyy Donets River southwest and southeast of this city. The second echelon of the attacking forces was the 12th Army, whose troops were to exploit the gaps created by the front-line armies. The Front's forces were to develop the offensive southwest between the 5th and 7th days of the operation, covering 100 to 120 kilometers to reach the Grushevakha-Gemini-Petropavlovka-Krasnoarmeyskoye-Konstantinovka line. The Front's mobile units, the 23rd Tank Corps and the 1st Guards Mechanized Corps, were advancing at the 12th Army's tip and were to advance toward the Stalino area to complete the encirclement and defeat of the German 6.Armee, in coordination with the forces of the Southern Front. Meanwhile, the 3rd Guards Army launched an auxiliary attack on the left wing of the German front, utilizing a bridgehead at Privol'ye, it attacked from the Lisichansk-Privol'oye area in the general direction of Artemovsk, on the right wing of the Southwestern Front, the 6th and 57th Armies maintained a defensive posture in their positions.



At dawn on July 17, an intensive artillery preparation began, supported by the 17th Air Army's aviation, the 1st Guards Army, under Vasily Kuznetsov, concentrated its main efforts on its left flank, composed of eight rifle divisions and three tank brigades, its mission was to break through the German defenses on the Chervony Shakhtar-Semenovka stretch and advance in the Barvenkovo-Petropavlovka direction. Units of the 4th Guards Rifle Corps successfully crossed the Severnyy Donets River and attacked the positions of the German 257.Infanterie Division, however, they were met with intense artillery, mortar, and machine-gun fire, and the

Germans launched repeated counterattacks to drive the Soviets back to the river. In addition, German aircraft bombed Soviet troops in support of their ground forces.



The 8th Guards Army, under the command of Vasily Chuikov, advanced on its right flank in the Kamenka–Cenicheno sector, its forces were organized in two echelons, the first echelon comprised of the 29th and 33rd Guards Rifle Corps and the second echelon comprised of the 28th Guards Rifle Corps, the army's mission was to advance toward Krasnoarmeyskoye and capture bridgeheads across the Severnyy Donets, to this end, shock battalions reinforced with artillery and mortars were formed. A part of the 33rd Corps, operating on the left flank, successfully crossed the Severnyy Donets. Despite German counterattacks, they advanced up to 6 km in depth, enabling the construction of an 89-meter bridge, completed in just 11 hours. The 29th Guards Rifle Corps faced stiffer resistance but managed to build two bridges, one with a 16-ton load capacity and the other with a 60-ton carrying capacity. In total, four crossings were planned for the units on the first day, and later, the temporary bridges were replaced with permanent wooden structures. By the sixth day of the operation, four more bridges had been built; however, that same afternoon, the German command sent reinforcements from the reserve to the battlefield and the Soviet troops were driven back to the north near the village of Khrestishche. On July 18, the 28th Guards Rifle Corps entered action, tasked with advancing southward, west of Slavyansk. That same day, in the 29th Corps zone, the 1st Guards Mechanized Corps entered combat, which was to support the advance on Krasnoarmeyskoye together with the 23rd Tank Corps, however, the German forces remained firmly entrenched in their main defensive positions, and the Soviet advance was slow and

costly, the fighting was particularly intense, with frequent German counterattacks, while the Luftwaffe actively operated in support of ground units.

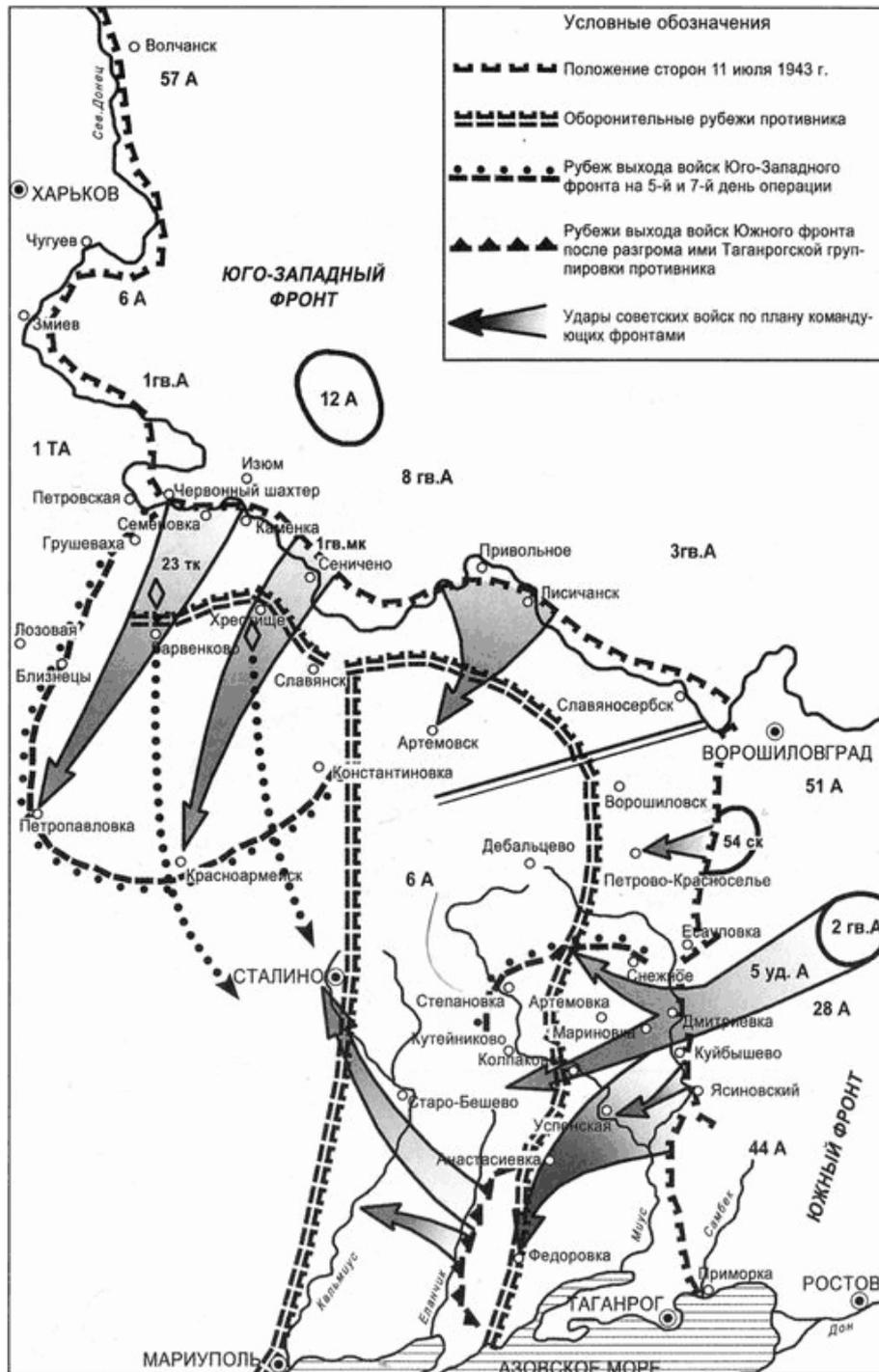


Figure 27, The situation on the southern sector of the Soviet-German front by July 1943, The plan of operations of the South-Western and Southern fronts, Source: M.A. Zhirokhov Battle for Donbas. Mius-front. 1941 – 1943

On other sectors of the front, equally fierce fighting raged. After ten days of intense fighting, the 3rd Guards Army managed to occupy the right bank of the Severnyy Donets on a 36-kilometer front, with a depth of 3 to 5 kilometers. On July 27, the Southwestern Front went on the defensive. Although Malinovsky achieved some tactical success, he failed to break through the German defences. This was due both to the solidity of the German positions and the combat skill of his troops. The Germans launched multiple daily counterattacks in some sectors, while their aircraft constantly attacked Soviet troops, bridges, and ferries. During those ten days of battle, Soviet forces recorded more than 2,600 enemy aircraft sorties. In addition, the German command reinforced the Donbas with armored units, including the XXIV Panzer Corps and the II SS Panzer Corps.

Although the Southwestern Front's offensive failed to achieve a decisive breakthrough, its actions played an important role in overall Soviet strategy, thanks to this offensive, a considerable number of German troops were pinned down on the southern sector of the front, preventing their transfer to the Kursk salient, in doing so, the Southwestern Front contributed significantly to the defensive success of the Voronezh and Steppe Fronts, which successfully repelled the German assault south of the Kursk salient during Operation Zitadelle.

The Offensive on the Mius Front

The Southern Front, under the command of General Fyodor Tolbukhin, included the 51st, 28th, 44th, 5th Shock, 2nd Guards, and 8th Air Armies. These forces faced the German 6. Armee, commanded by Karl-Adolf Hollidt, on the fortified line of the Mius River, also known as the "Mius Front." The Front's shock group attacked on the central sector, along a line approximately 30 kilometers between Dmitriyevka, Kuybyshevo, and Yasinovski, the objective was to defeat the Wehrmacht's Taganrog Group, liberate Taganrog, reach the Yelanchik River line, and from there advance toward Stalino to link up with the troops of the Southwestern Front.

The 51st Army, deployed on the right flank, was to launch a supporting attack in the direction of Petrovo-Krasnosel'ye, to this end, it had seven rifle divisions and an independent tank brigade. The 5th Shock Army, whose main offensive began in the Dmitriyevka area, was to



advance northwest. This army, under the command of General Tsvetaev, was composed of seven rifle divisions, one tank brigade, and one tank regiment. Four divisions attacked in the first echelon and two in the second. The 28th Army's mission was to break through the enemy defenses south of Kuybyshevo, advance southwest, and destroy German troops in the Taganrog area. The 28th Army included six

rifle divisions, one tank brigade, and one tank regiment. The 44th Army, with only three rifle divisions, held the Yasinovka–Primorka line and was to facilitate the 28th Army's offensive. In the second echelon of the Front was the 2nd Guards Army, with six rifle divisions and two

mechanized corps. Its entry into combat was planned for when the 5th Shock Army and the 28th Army broke through the German tactical defenses. The 2nd Guards Army's objective was to advance toward the Kuteynikovo–Stalino line.

On the night before July 17, 1943, Soviet aircraft bombed German defensive positions and key points. At 6:17 a.m., after nearly four hours of artillery preparation, the ground offensive began. Soviet forces managed to cross the river and seize some of the enemy's advanced positions. However, from the outset, the offensive encountered fierce German resistance. The Soviet attacks were met by artillery fire, constant counterattacks, and Luftwaffe bombing. By the end of the first day, the 2nd Shock Army, under the command of Vyacheslav Tsvetayev, had achieved a limited advance of 6 to 8 km. By July 18, the Soviet troops had established a bridgehead on the right bank of the Mius, 10 km deep and 10 km wide, which forced the German command to bring the 16th Panzer Grenadier Division, a reserve unit initially intended for Kharkov, into combat, meanwhile, the 28th Army made minor gains, the Front High Command then ordered the regrouping of the 28th Army's main forces on its right flank to support the partial success of the 5th Shock Army, this maneuver was completed on July 19, but by then, the Germans were already moving units from the Belgorod-Kharkov region toward the Mius sector.



On the afternoon of July 18, with the 5th Shock Army and the 28th Army having failed to achieve a decisive breakthrough, the Southern Front command anticipated the 2nd Guards Army, commanded by Yakov Kreizer, entering combat. Its units, in coordination with the already deployed forces, penetrated deep into the German defenses and occupied several localities. In response to this advance, the German High Command quickly mobilized elements of the 23. Panzer Division (which was already en route to Kharkov), the 336. Infanterie Division and other additional units, German aviation simultaneously increased its operations in the sector, enabling them to stabilize the front. The Soviet command planned to

launch a new large-scale offensive on July 31 in the general direction of Uspenskaya, but the situation changed dramatically. On July 29, elite SS divisions, Totenkopf, and Das Reich Panzer Grenadier Divisions, along with the 3rd Panzer Division, were transferred from Kursk to the Mius area. On July 30 and 31, these units, supported by intense Luftwaffe bombing, launched heavy counterattacks that forced Soviet troops to retreat to the left bank of the Mius

River. By August 1, 1943, the front had stabilized again, with no significant breakthrough achieved.



The joint offensive of the Southwestern and Southern Fronts on the Severnyy Donets and Mius rivers failed to achieve its operational objectives, German forces in the Donbas region held their fortified positions and the expected liberation of Taganrog and advance toward Stalino failed to materialize, however, the operation had important strategic consequences: it prevented the German command from transferring key reinforcements from the Donbas to the Kursk salient, where Operation Zitadelle was being conducted, it forced the Germans to withdraw up to five panzer divisions and a significant portion of their tactical aviation from the Kursk sector to reinforce the Mius and Severnyy Donets areas and it significantly weakened the German Belgorod-Kharkov grouping, creating more favorable conditions for Operation Rummyantsev, launched by the Voronezh and Steppe Fronts.

Thus, although the offensive on the Mius did not achieve a tactical victory, it did accomplish its primary strategic objective: to divert German forces from the main front and prevent Army Group South from committing its reserves to Operation Zitadelle.

Donbas Strategic Offensive Operation

In early August 1943, the Soviet High Command (STAVKA VGK) ordered the Southern and Southwestern Fronts to prepare a new offensive aimed at liberating the strategic industrial region of Donbas and defeating the Wehrmacht's Army Group South. Directive No. 30160, issued on August 6, established that the Southern Front should advance in the general direction of Kuybyshevo–Stalino, coordinating with the Southwestern Front to ensure a joint and effective advance. Although the plan maintained the operational structure of the failed July offensive, significant strategic adjustments were made to improve the chances of success.

On August 5, forces from the Voronezh and Steppe Fronts launched the offensive known as Operation Rummyantsev (see WDS Rummyantsev '43), directed toward Belgorod and Kharkov, with the objective of engaging the 4.Panzerarmee and Armeekorps-Abteilung Kempf. According to STAVKA's plan, success in this offensive would open Army Group South's flank, facilitating a joint intervention by the Southwestern and Southern Fronts from the Donbas to complete the



encirclement of German forces south of the Kursk salient. Despite the failure of the July Soviet offensive in the Severnyy Donets and Mius areas, the troops retained much of their combat capability, the defensive lines did not collapse, there were no significant encirclements, and most formations retained their artillery and recovered some of their armored equipment; for this reason, a new large-scale offensive was considered feasible.

Marshal Aleksandr M. Vasilevsky, a representative of STAVKA, together with commanders Rodion Y. Malinovsky (Southwestern Front) and Fyodor I. Tolbukhin (Southern Front),



developed a new operational plan. Vasilevsky proposed that Malinovsky organize an operation aimed at preventing the delivery of German reinforcements to the Kharkov region, thus facilitating the offensive of the Voronezh and Steppe Fronts, initially, Malinovsky proposed that his right flank launch an attack from south of Zmiyev toward Taranovka and subsequently toward Merefa, with the intention of penetrating the southern flank of the German forces in Kharkov, however, this proposal was rejected by the High Command, which on August 6 ordered the transfer of the 57th Army from the Southwestern Front to the Steppe Front, assigning it the mission of attacking Kharkov from the south. On August 8, Vasilevsky presented the final plan for the Donbas Operation, which was approved by STAVKA on August 10. Following the Soviet advances at Kharkov on August 12, the objectives were redefined:

The Southwestern Front, under Malinovsky's command, was to launch the main attack from Izyum toward Barvenkovo–Pavlograd, crossing the Severnyy Donets river south of Chuguev and advancing toward Zamost'ye and Taranovka, in coordination with the 57th Army. For its part, the Southern Front, with its weaker offensive capabilities, would attack from the Dmitriyevka–Russkoye line, crossing through Staro-Beshevo in the direction of Stalino, concentrating its main effort on a 10–12-kilometer front between Kuybyshevo and Amvrosiyevka. The key forces in this offensive would be the 5th Shock Army, the 2nd Guards Army, and the 28th Army. Once the German defenses had been breached, mobile units would be introduced: the 2nd and 4th Guards Mechanized Corps, followed by the 4th Guards Cavalry Corps, known as the Kuban Cossacks. Due to the relative disadvantage of the Southern Front,

their offensive would begin on August 16, three days after the start of the Southwestern Front's offensive, scheduled for August 13.

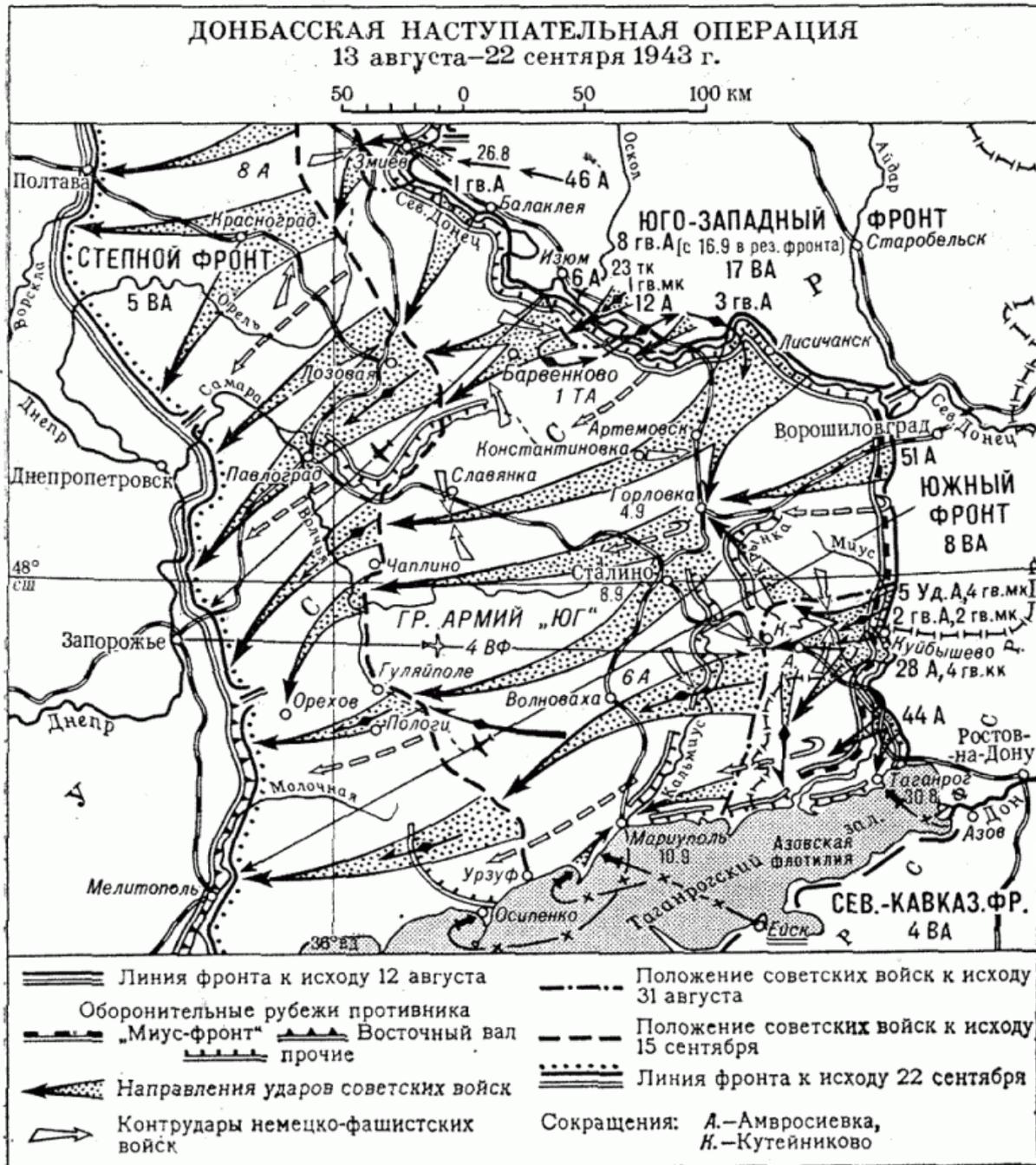


Figure 28, Donbas Strategic Offensive Operation, August 1943

The August Offensive of the Southwest Front

The Soviet command was fully aware that defeating the enemy in the Donbas sector would be an extremely difficult task, Red Army troops had to advance through terrain that clearly favored the defender, facing natural barriers such as rivers and a deeply organized and fortified German defense, to achieve the breakthrough of the German front, massive fire support was essential, in addition to intense individual personnel training, special attention



was paid to coordination between artillery and air support. The commander of the Southwestern Front, General Rodion Yakovlevich Malinovsky, organized the artillery attack in three successive phases: first, an initial five-minute barrage directed at the enemy front line, then, a methodical and sustained sixty-minute fire attack aimed at destroying the first defensive line and finally, a concentrated ten-minute fire attack just before the infantry assault, which was to advance supported by tanks, once the infantry began its advance, the artillery would shift its fire toward positions deep within the enemy defensive system. Air support in the Southwestern Front sector was provided by the 17th Air Army, while the 8th Air Army operated in the Southern Front zone, during the preparations for the offensive, Soviet aircraft conducted exhaustive photographic

reconnaissance of the German defensive system, intercepted and blocked enemy reconnaissance flights, and launched attacks against airfields to weaken enemy air capabilities, at the start of the ground attack, the aircraft carried out concentrated attacks on fortified positions and, throughout the operation, provided close support for mobile units, hampered the movement of German reserves, and attacked retreating forces.

The Southwestern Front was organized with four armies in the first echelon, two in the second, plus a tank corps and a mechanized corps, the main direction of the attack was set on the Izyum–Barvenkovo axis, where the key forces, composed of the 6th Army under the command of Lieutenant General Ivan Shlyomin and the 12th Army led by Lieutenant General Alexei Danilov, were to break through a 32-kilometer strip in the Raisin sector and advance toward Barvenkovo, Pavlograd, and Orekhovo, with the strategic objective of cutting off the German retreat to the west. On the flanks, the right wing corresponded to the 1st Guards Army, commanded by General Vasily Kuznetsov, whose mission was to cross the Severnyy Donets river south of Chuguev in coordination with the 57th Army, for its part, the left wing was under the command of the 3rd Guards Army, under the command of General Georgy Khetagurov,

which was to advance from Lisichansk toward Artemovsk, Konstantinovka, and Slavyansk, in close cooperation with the Southern Front.

In the second echelon was the 8th Guards Army, led by General Vasily Chuikov, tasked with exploiting the breakthrough toward Pavlograd. Alongside it were the 23rd Guards Tank Corps and the 1st Guards Mechanized Corps, ready to intervene in the sector of the 6th and 12th Armies. Finally, the 46th Army, under the command of General Vasily Glagolev, remained in operational reserve, ready to be deployed as the battle progressed, especially on the right flank or in the center of the front.



Due to the evolving situation on the Steppe Front sector, it was decided to advance the offensive of the right wing of the Southwestern Front. On August 12, the 1st Guards Army launched its attack. Units of the 34th Rifle Corps managed to cross the Severnyy Donets River and capture the first line of enemy trenches, despite fierce resistance. In response, the Southwestern Front command reinforced Kuznetsov's Army with additional artillery and assigned a tank regiment from the 3rd Guards Army to support the offensive. On August 18, Soviet troops liberated the town of Zmiyev and advanced approximately 20 kilometers into the enemy front. This constant pressure forced German forces to withdraw southwest, concerned about a possible flank attack that directly threatened the German 4. Panzerarmee and the 8. armee. Following the assault on Kharkov by the Steppe Front on August 23, Commander Malinovsky decided to redirect the 1st Guards Army's attack toward the Taranovka–Lozovaya–Chaplino line, with the aim of breaking through the German defensive line in the Severnyy Donets and putting the entire German grouping in the Donbas in check.

On August 16, the 6th and 12th Armies launched their offensive after intensive artillery preparations. The 6th Army attacked from the northern sector of the Izyum bridgehead, supported by a tank brigade and two armored regiments, while the 12th Army launched its offensive from the south, deploying seven rifle divisions along with multiple armored units.

The fighting was fierce, as the German defenses in towns such as Kamenka, Bororodichnoye, and Khrestishche were heavily fortified, with artillery barrages, extensive minefields and constant air support provided by the Luftwaffe, during the first day, the Soviet 17th Air Army flew 1,338 sorties and claimed the destruction of 25 enemy aircraft, by the end of the day, the Soviet advance had reached between 2.5 and 3.5 kilometers, and although progress continued in the following days, it was slow due to intense German counterattacks.



On August 22, the 8th Guards Army was brought into the battle along with the 23rd Tank Corps and the 1st Guards Mechanized Corps, on their first day of fighting, troops commanded by Chuikov managed to advance six kilometers, repelling up to six enemy counterattacks, however, despite these advances, the German forces maintained fierce resistance, especially in the Poltava and Barvenkovo sectors. Finally, on August 28, the 6th, 12th, and 8th Guards Armies were ordered to go on the defensive to consolidate their positions, due to troop exhaustion and persistent enemy resistance.

The 46th Army, under General Glagolev, entered combat on August 26, replacing units of the 1st Guards Army. This army managed to advance up to 10 kilometers in the direction of Taranovka and Novaya Vodolaga, resisting attacks from the German XXXII. Armeekorps and massive Luftwaffe bombing raids, however, on August 30, it had to go on the defensive in the face of strong opposition. The 3rd Guards Army, commanded by Khetagurov, launched its offensive on August 22 in the Mayaki region, crossing the Severnyy Donets. Despite the initial advance, it failed to break through the German defenses and was forced to go on the defensive on August 27. Overall, the August offensive represented, in many ways, a continuation of the July attempt to use the Izyum bridgehead to penetrate Army Group South's communications and defeat German forces in the Donbas.

The August Offensive of the Southern Front

The attacks of the Southwestern and Southern Fronts on the flanks of the German grouping in the Donbas of Heeresgruppe Süd, were carried out at different times, the troops of the Southern Front were to begin their offensive two days after the forces of the Southwestern Front began theirs, the main objective of the Southern Front was to break through the Mius Front, defeat the forces of the 6. Armee defending it, and advance into the center of the Donbas region, where they planned to coordinate their actions with the Southwestern Front. The main attack took place in a 25-km strip between Dmitriyevka and Kuybyshevo, executed by three armies: the 5th Shock Army, under the command of Vyacheslav Tsvetaev; the 2nd Guards Army, commanded by Georgiy Zakharov; and the 28th Army, led by Vasily Gerasimenko. On the flanks of this breakthrough zone were Jacob Kreyzer's 51st Army and Vasily Khomenko's 44th Army, tasked with containing the enemy with defensive actions on their sectors. The 4th Guards Mechanized Corps, the 4th Guards Cavalry Corps, and three rifle divisions were in the echelon of developing success.

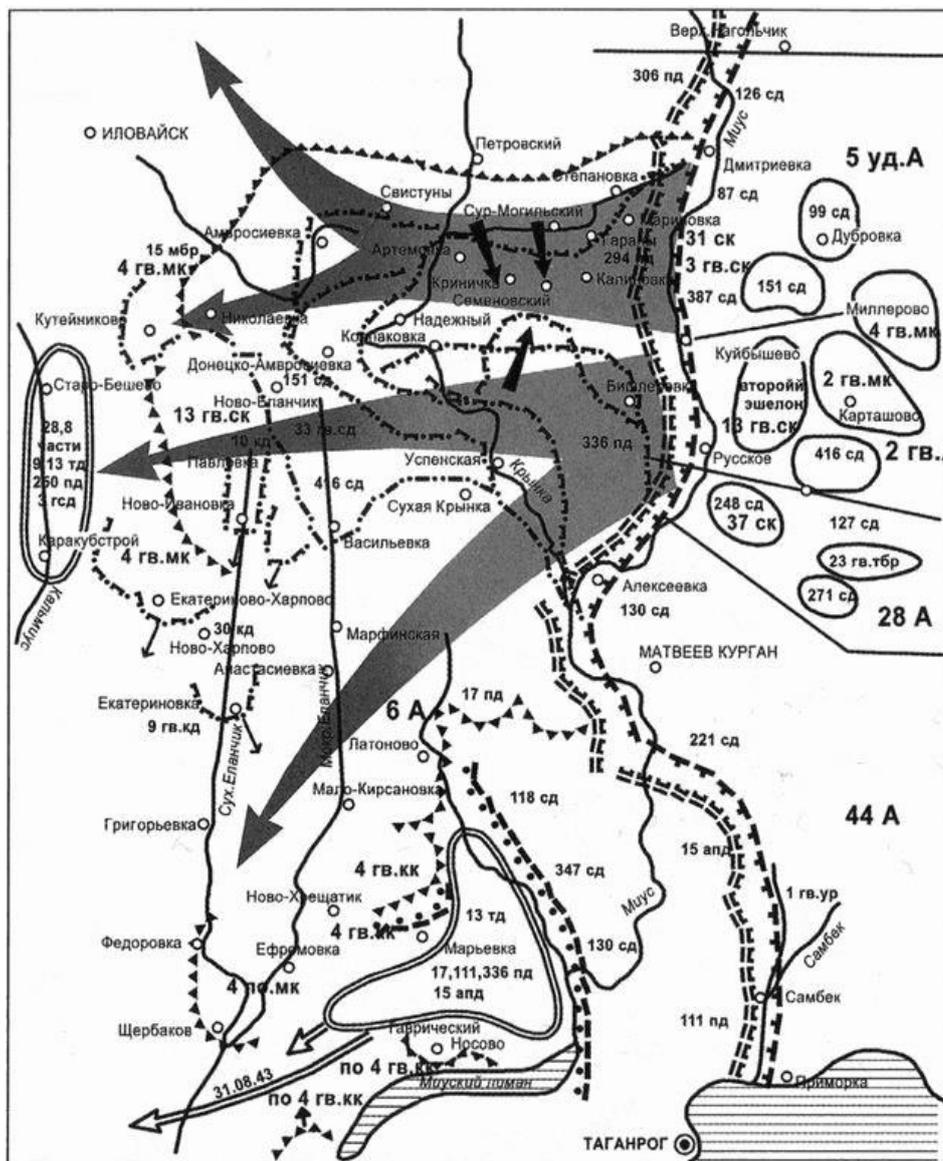


Figure 30, Mius Front Operations, August 1943

The 5th Shock Army launched its left-flanked offensive in the area between Dmitriyevka and Kuybyshevo, on a 10-km front in the direction of Kuteynikovo. By the fifth day, the troops were to advance 55–60 km, reaching that town. This army consisted of nine rifle divisions, a separate tank brigade, an anti-tank artillery brigade, and an engineer brigade, with approximately 100 tanks and some 1,300 guns and mortars. Four divisions advanced in the first echelon, while the second echelon included two divisions from the 31st and 3rd Guards Rifle Corps. The first-echelon divisions were assigned the 7th and 60th Guards Separate Tank Regiments. In addition, the 4th Guards Mechanized Corps was planned to be used to advance toward Kolpakovka and Donetsk-Amvrosiyevka.

The 2nd Guards Army was advancing in a 9 km strip south of Kuybyshevo. By the end of the fifth day, it was to reach the Kal'mius River line, threatening the flank of the German units defending the center of the defensive system protecting the Donbas. This army included six rifle divisions along with the 2nd Guards Mechanized Corps, with 261 tanks (32 in reserve) and approximately 800 guns and mortars, on the right flank, the 1st Guards Rifle Corps advanced, with the 24th Guards Division in first echelon and the 33rd and 86th Guards Divisions in second; On the left flank, the 13th Guards Rifle Corps had the 13th Guards and 49th Guards Divisions in the front line, and the 87th Guards in the second.



The 28th Army occupied the left flank of the Southern Front's attack group. Its mission was to break through the enemy front on a 2.5-kilometer sector and advance toward Anastasiyevka and Fedorovka. In the second stage, it was to reach the coast of the Sea of Azov and, in coordination with units of the 44th Army, destroy the enemy grouping in the Taganrog area. This army was equipped with five rifle divisions, a tank brigade, anti-tank artillery and Guards mortar regiments,

totalling more than 400 guns and mortars. In cooperation with the 28th Army, it was also planned to employ the 4th Guards Cavalry Corps, tasked with developing the offensive in a south-westerly direction and participating in the elimination of enemy forces in Taganrog. The 28th Army's combat formation consisted of three echelons: in the first, the 248th Rifle Division reinforced with a tank company and a mortar regiment; In the second, the 118th and 347th Rifle Divisions of the 37th Rifle Corps; and in the third, the 127th and 271st Rifle Divisions. The reserve was formed by the 33rd Guards Tank Brigade.

Regarding flank defense, the 51st Army defended the right flank of the Southern Front along a line of approximately 65 km. It was composed of three rifle divisions, two fortified areas, a tank brigade, and over 600 guns and mortars. The 44th Army protected the coastal flank, specifically the Yasinovski–Primorka line. It was the weakest army on the Southern Front, weakened to strengthen the offensive armies, and it had two rifle divisions, the 130th and the 416th Rifle Divisions, the 1st Guard fortified region, and about 500 cannons and mortars.

Air support was provided by the 8th Air Army, under the command of Timofey Khryukin, this force included multiple air divisions, including the 27th Bomber Aviation Division, the 1st Assault Division, the 6th Fighter Division, the 2nd Guards Night Bomber Division, and the 7th

Assault Air Corps, as well as the 9th Guards Fighter Division, brought in from the Kuban and featuring many Soviet aces such as Pokryshkin, Rechkalov, and Glinka. In total, the 8th Air Army had 248 fighters, 244 attack aircraft, and 175 day and night bombers, the Southern Front launched its offensive without receiving reserve units from STAVKA, achieving success through the maximum concentration of available forces and resources, new units began arriving during the offensive, including the 4th Guards Cavalry Corps, which received reinforcements such as the 134th Tank Regiment, the SU-76-armed SP Regiment, the 4th Flamethrower Tank Battalion, and the 2nd SP Regiment.



German intelligence detected some activity in the Southern Front's defense zone but failed to identify the impending offensive. Soviet forces were similar in number to those in July, with no massive troop movements; therefore, the German 294.Infanterie Division, weakened by previous battles, was not replaced. Furthermore, on the day of the Soviet attack, the 16th.PanzerGrenadier Division 23.Panzer Division were transferred to the 1.Panzerarmee. The 6.Armee headquarters and its commander, Carl-Adolf Hollidt, believed there would only be auxiliary attacks in their sector; in total, the 6.Armee had three corps (IV.Armeekorps, XVII.Armeekorps, and XXIX.Armeekorps) and eleven divisions. The southern flank of the Mius Front was defended by the XXIX.Armeekorps with units such as the 111.Infanterie Division, the 15.Luftwaffe Feld Division, the 17.Infanterie Division and the 336.Infanterie Division.

On August 18, the Southern Front launched its offensive after an 80-minute artillery preparation. During the night, the 8th Air Army attacked enemy strongholds, and in the morning, its attack aircraft continued pounding fortified positions. At 7:15, Soviet troops began their advance. In the 5th Shock Army's sector, the attack was successful. German artillery had been well-located and destroyed, and Soviet aircraft had acted effectively. During that day, the 8th Air Army flew 919 sorties and shot down 12 enemy aircraft. The infantry and tanks of the 5th Shock Army broke through the German lines and advanced 8 km, overcoming a 16 km front, the German 294.Infanterie Division was virtually destroyed. At night, the 4th Guards

Mechanized Corps entered the gap and captured Kolpakovka, reaching the Krinka River the next day. With this, Tsvetaev's forces divided the enemy into two tactically isolated groups. South of Kolpakovka were the remnants of several divisions, while to the north were the survivors of the 294. Infanterie Division and three other divisions. In contrast, the 2nd Guards Army made limited progress; artillery preparation was less effective; the enemy resisted more successfully; the advance was only 1–2 km per day; the German 336. Infanterie Division held firm to the initial onslaught. The 28th Army, whose progress depended on the success of the 2nd Army, also failed to break through the front, despite capturing the fortress of Petropol'ye; it made no significant progress.



The German Counterattacks and the Fight for Taganrog

When it became clear that the Red Army was launching a large-scale offensive in that direction, the command of the 6. Armee began taking measures to respond. Hollidt had no mobile units at the time; on August 18, only the transfer of the 13. Panzer Division from Crimea was promised, in addition to the possible arrival of the 9. Panzer Division and the 258. Infanterie Division from Heeresgruppe Mitte. Lacking operational reserves, the German command quickly began assembling reserves from divisions stationed on passive sectors of the front, coast guard battalions, and various special and rear units, the concentration of these forces took place on the flanks of the Soviet penetration created by the assault groups of the 5th Shock Army, with the aim of closing the Soviet wedge in the Artemovka-Nadezhny-Kolpakovka area through decisive counterattacks from the north and south. To the south, Gruppe Reznagel was formed, comprising units of the 111. Infanterie Division, 17. Infanterie Division and the 15th Luftwaffe Division. In addition, almost all the 111th Division's artillery was transferred to support this group. To the north, Gruppe Picker was organized consisting of a regiment of the

3.Gebirgsjagger Division reinforced with artillery from that same division, as well as the 304th and 335.Infanterie Divisions and an assault gun battery.

By the afternoon of August 19, the 5th Shock Army had established a bridgehead on the Krinka River and captured the villages of Krinichki and Artemovka, however, the Soviet offensive advanced only in a narrow sector of approximately 8 km, this was due to the failure of units of the 2nd Guards Army to penetrate the German defenses during the second day. Therefore, the Southern Front command decided to concentrate its efforts on expanding the area of advance. During the night of August 20, the 2nd Guards Mechanized Corps was deployed to advance toward Ouspenskaya, facilitating the advance of the 2nd Guards Army. The tankers received support from troops of the 3rd Guards Rifle Corps and the 7th Assault Aviation Division. By the afternoon of that day, the attack force advanced between 2 and 4 km but suffered considerable losses, leaving the Mechanized Corps with a significantly diminished offensive capability, in the second half of August 20, the Germans launched a counterattack with solid artillery support, they quickly captured Semenovskiy, reducing the Soviet bridgehead to just 3 km, however, they failed to completely cut the Soviet wedge, the situation became critical, as the 5th Shock Army's force was at risk of being encircled. Simultaneously, an intense air battle erupted: on August 20, the Soviet 8th Air Army flew 738 sorties, losing 28 aircraft, while the Germans responded with 660 sorties.

The Soviet command responded to these counterattacks with actions on the flanks of the advancing German groups, two rifle divisions and a tank brigade attacked the Gruppe Picker from Kalinovka in the direction of Semenovskiy, at the same time, tank and mechanized brigades of the 4th Guards Mechanized Corps attacked at Garany, from the west, units of the 5th Shock Army attacked the open flank of the 3.Gebirgsjagger Division. On the southern flank, opposite the Gruppe Recnagel, units of the 2nd Guards Mechanized Corps launched an attack at



dusk on August 21. Thanks to these actions, the crisis on the flanks of the 5th Shock Army was overcome, the Germans abandoned Semenovskiy and withdrew, while the 2nd Guards Mechanized Corps performed less successfully, around August 22, the Gruppe Recnagel withdrew to the Krinka River line, the gap in the German defenses then widened to 12 km.

The 5th Shock Army was able to continue its advance and, on August 22, occupied a new springboard on the Krinka River, south of Packing. Under intense Soviet artillery bombardment, a vital railway line supplying the XXIX.Armeekorps was severely damaged, the 6.Armeekorps command, forming attack groups on the flanks of the Soviet wedge, managed to considerably weaken the divisions protecting its flanks. In parallel, the 2nd Guards and 28th Armies advanced toward the west, breaking the resistance of the German 336.Infanterie Division.

At that moment, the 6.Armeekorps received its first reinforcement, the 13.Panzer Division, which arrived late for the first counterattack. On August 22, this unit concentrated in the area southwest of Saur-Mogilsky and the following day, August 23, units of the 13.Panzer Division

launched an offensive. German tanks, supported by intense artillery fire, initially advanced 6–7 km southward; however, German forces were halted and repulsed by the effective use of Soviet anti-tank artillery and attack aircraft. The Germans again failed to cut the tip of the Soviet wedge and reestablish the connection between the XIX.Armeekorps and XVII.Armeekorps, thus sealing the last attempt to hold the Mius front. That same day, the 4th Guards Mechanized Corps penetrated the Nikolayevka and Donetsk-Amvrosiyevka regions, the combined forces of the 1st Guards Rifle Corps and the 2nd Guards Army, which was advancing in the west direction created a direct threat to German troops in that area, as a result, Soviet forces managed to cut the railway line from Kuteynikovo to Taganrog at two points, leaving the German grouping in Taganrog practically supplied only by sea and coastal roads. Seeing the failure of the 13.Panzer Division to break through from the north, the 6.Arme command decided to redeploy it south to the Anastasiyevka-Marfinsk area, thus strengthening the defence of the XXIX.Armeekorps. On August 25 and 26, the Germans launched two counterattacks against the Soviet troops, but without achieving significant results.



On the sixth day of the operation, because of intense fighting, the Southern Front's attack force made significant progress, German troops suffered heavy losses and had no real prospect of receiving significant reinforcements, while the German command was forced to divert considerable forces to the Kharkov region. At the same time, the Southwestern Front's offensive encountered a solid and deeply organized German defense that could not be breached, under these conditions, continuing the offensive westward, without sufficient reserves to withstand possible enemy counterattacks, represented a high risk, furthermore, an attack in that direction, without effective coordination with the forces of the Southwestern Front, offered no guarantee of success, therefore, the Southern Front command decided, without abandoning preparations for a future offensive westward, to carry out a local operation with the aim of destroying the enemy forces in the Taganrog region.

On August 25 and 26, the front-line troops regrouped. At the same time, the front's forces carried out local operations aimed at occupying advantageous positions that would facilitate a future offensive. The 5th Shock Army attacked in the directions of Saur-Mogilsky, Petrovsky, and Svistunyy, thus securing its right flank against possible enemy counterattacks from the north. The 2nd Guards Army redirected its advance southward, while the remaining troops took up defensive positions along the Yelanchik River and headed west. Meanwhile, the 28th Army, with three divisions, launched an attack in the Pervomayskiy area, with the aim of breaking through the enemy defenses in that sector and continuing the advance southward. Once the Pervomayskiy area was secured, the 44th Army was scheduled to enter the fray. This army was to be partially integrated into the group of forces that would continue the offensive southward, while the remaining units were tasked with capturing the town of Sambek.



On August 26, the 4th Guards Cavalry Corps, under Nikolai Kirichenko, was ordered to deploy in the Novo- Amvrosiyevka area and, on the morning of August 27, advance toward the Novo-Kharprovo and Yekaterinovka regions, subsequently breaking through to the Malo-Kirsanovka and Latonov areas, at the same time, the 4th Guards Mechanized Corps was to be part of the group of forces tasked with capturing Kuteynikovo from the west, meanwhile, its main

units advanced southward, tasked with reaching the Pokrovo-Kireyevo area, securing the western flank of the 4th Guards Cavalry Corps.

On August 25 and 26, 1943, the Red Army's Southern Front was preparing for a new offensive, the armies were regrouping their forces and carrying out local operations to improve their tactical position on various sectors of the front. At 8:00 p.m. on August 26, units of the 4th Guards Cavalry Corps, together with the 2nd Guards Light Artillery Brigade of the 2nd Guards Artillery Division, began the attack, the 30th and 9th Guards Cavalry Divisions participated in the initial offensive echelon, while the 10th Division was placed in operational reserve, the 30th Cavalry Division was reinforced with a Guards mortar division and a tank battalion, which advanced to the vicinity of Yekaterinovka - Novo-Kharprovo, there, Soviet troops encountered strong enemy resistance, with counterattacks by German infantry and tanks, however, the arrival of advanced units of the 4th Guards Mechanized Corps changed the balance of power on the battlefield and allowed the Red Army to occupy the village.

At the end of August 27, units of the 4th Cavalry Corps and the 4th Guards Mechanized Corps managed to overcome enemy resistance, reaching the Kuteynikovo, Pokrovo-Kireyevo, Yekaterinovka, and Novo-Ivanovka sectors. Soviet forces thus positioned themselves behind the Wehrmacht's Taganrog Group, successfully achieving their encirclement objective. This advance was significantly facilitated by Soviet aviation, which that day concentrated its efforts on supporting the advance of mobile units. German troops massing in the Anastas'yevko-Marfinskaya area, intending to counterattack the Soviet forces, were severely punished by aerial bombing. Although the Luftwaffe initially showed little activity, it later intensified its operations, inflicting significant casualties on the Soviet mechanized columns. The 2nd Guards

Army, taking advantage of the successful thrust of the cavalry and mechanized corps, launched an offensive on its right flank and advanced up to 9 km. General G. F. Zakharov's army reached the Novo-Yelanchik-Vasil'yevka-Dry Krinka line, pressing the enemy southward. The German high command, which until then had been confident in the solidity of the Mius Front defense, began to become seriously alarmed on August 27, when the situation changed dramatically. The XXIX.Armeekorps was threatened with total encirclement, and the 6.Armeekorps did not have sufficient forces to stabilize the situation. That same day, Field Marshal Erich von Manstein, commander of Heeresgruppe Süd, travelled to Hitler's headquarters in Vinnytsia with his commanders, including General Hollidt, commander of the 6.Armeekorps. They explained to the Führer the seriousness of the situation in the Donbas and the inability to hold the region with exhausted forces. They proposed reinforcing the front with divisions from Heeresgruppe Nord and Heeresgruppe Mitte, or surrendering the Donbas to free up troops. Hitler promised to send all possible units from quieter sectors of the Eastern Front and considered rotating weakened divisions.



Upon his return, General Hollidt ordered a series of defensive maneuvers and regroupings, shifting forces from the south to the northwest, between Anastas'yevko and Latonov. He also initiated the orderly withdrawal of units toward Tel'manovo and Mariupol, while reinforcing

Ilovaisk, an important railway junction, at the same time, assault guns from the IV.Armeekorps began deploying, covering the sector opposite the Soviet 51st Army. The Soviet high command quickly detected the German movements, General Fyodor Tolbukhin informed N. Ya. Kirichenko, commander of the 4th Guards Cavalry Corps, stated that the 13.Panzer Division had concentrated at Anastas'yevko-Marfinskaya, and the German rearguard troops were moving toward Tel'manovo. Orders were given to avoid prolonged fighting, intercept the enemy withdrawal, and destroy their forces in small groups before they could regroup.



On the evening of August 28, a representative of the Soviet General Staff, headed by A. M. Vasilevsky, arrived at the Southern Front and assigned new missions. The 2nd Guards Army was to advance toward Pokrovo-Kireyevo, and the 2nd Guards Mechanized Corps, toward Yekaterinovka - Novo-Kharprovo. The units were to occupy bridgeheads on the west bank of the Sukhoy Yelanchik River. The 4th Mechanized Corps was to take Malaya Yekaterinovka, Krasny Kurgan, and Grigoryevka, and protect the western flank of the 4th Cavalry Corps, preventing the enemy from breaking through from Anastas'yevko. On August 29, the 4th Cavalry Corps captured Latonov, Novo-Petrovsky, and Novo-Khreshchatyk and secured the passage over the Mius estuary. The 9th Cavalry Division approached Taganrog but encountered heavy resistance at Mar'yevka. The 28th and 44th Armies occupied positions at Samoilov, Pechersky, and Stepanovsky, enclosing the German troops in an area of 25x25 km, the German command began withdrawing from the Sambek bridgehead.

The German XXIX.Armeekorps was on the verge of total encirclement, and the German command assembled an assault group with remnants of the 3.Gebirgsjäger Division, 9.Panzer Division and 258.Infanterie Division, plus a battle group from the 17.Panzer Division sent by the 1.Panzerarmee, the IV.Armeekorps led the attack, which began on August 30. The objective was to allow the XXIX.Armeekorps to escape the encirclement, the German attack was launched against the junction of the Soviet 33rd and 87th Guards Divisions. General P. G.

Chanchibadze of the 13th Guards Rifle Corps reinforced the sector with antitank artillery, mortars, and a howitzer brigade. In turn, the 1st Guards Rifle Corps received additional artillery. That day, the 2nd Guards Army simultaneously fought against the German breakthrough group and the encircled forces of the XXIX.Armeekorps

In parallel, German troops were abandoning Taganrog. On August 29, the destruction of infrastructure began. At night, General von Bülow's battle group withdrew from Sambek. German troops escaped along the northern and southern banks of the Mius estuary. On August 30, the Soviet 130th and 146th Rifle Divisions entered Taganrog, followed by detachments of the 2nd Guards Mechanized Corps. That same night, the Soviet 384th Naval Infantry Battalion carried out a landing near Bezymennoye, west of Taganrog, an auxiliary landing force to the east also participated, along with a reconnaissance company from the 58th Army. With support from Rear Admiral S.G. Gorshkov's Azov Military Flotilla, the Soviet naval troops destroyed German fortifications and positions, eliminating enemy units and capturing vehicles, tanks, and depots. Three German ships were damaged, although two Soviet vessels were lost with their crews, the soviet naval units subsequently occupied the port of Taganrog without resistance.



On August 31, the Germans launched another counterattack to free the encircled troops. Again, the Soviet 33rd and 87th Guards Divisions held, the 5th Shock Army's breakthrough at Ilovaisk forced the German command to commit the 17.Panzer Division to contain the breach, meanwhile, the German XXIX.Armeekorps attempted to force its way south, spearheaded by the 13.Panzer Division. On August 30, they achieved a limited breakthrough between Shcherbakov and Kuznetsky, with Luftwaffe support, temporarily securing local air supremacy. On August 31, the Soviets attempted to close the gap with the 10th Guards Cavalry Division but failed. During the night, the XXIX.Armeekorps split into three columns and managed to escape, despite heavy losses. They evacuated wounded, artillery, and some equipment. Brandenberger's Corps dug in at the bend in the West Yelanchik River. The scarcity of Soviet reserves enabled this breakout's partial success.

German losses were heavy, the 15.Luftwaffe Feld Division and the 336.Infanteire Division were destroyed, the 111th and 17.Infanterie Divisions suffered enormous losses. General von Bülow was lost; more than 2,000 German soldiers were captured, along with 45 guns, 11 tanks, and 100 vehicles. The German right flank in the Donbas had collapsed, and the defeat of the Taganrog group forced the 6.Armee to withdraw from the Mius Front to previously fortified rear positions, between August 18 and 30, the Red Army broke through the Mius Front, one of the Wehrmacht's strongest defensive lines, advancing up to 50 km and extending the front by 90 km, the Southern Front achieved a significant victory, although the lack of mobile reserves prevented the complete destruction of the German forces.

Operations in September and the End of the Donbas Strategic Offensive Operation

As a result of the defeat of the southern flank of the Wehrmacht's Donbas group (Taganrog group), a wide gap formed in its defensive line between Donetsk-Amvrosiyevka and the coast of the Sea of Azov. The German command lacked the forces or time to close it, Heeresgruppe Süd operational reserves were practically exhausted, the Soviet troops continued their advance, threatening to penetrate the flank and rear of the Donbas group, at the same time, the Voronezh and Steppe Fronts advanced from the north in the direction of Belgorod-Kharkov, encircling the German forces in the Donbas, Thus, the threat of encirclement and total destruction of German troops in the region became imminent.



The German High Command attempted to halt the Soviet advance from the north through limited counterattacks and, at the same time, began an organized withdrawal of its troops from the Donbas, the intention was to retreat to previously prepared defensive positions, stabilize the front, and maintain control over at least part of Ukrainian territory. On August 31, Hitler authorized Heeresgruppe Süd commander Erich von Manstein to begin the withdrawal of the 6.Armee and the right flank of the 1.Panzerarmee, at the same time, a directive was issued regarding the evacuation, destruction, and transfer of property. The Germans pursued a scorched-earth policy, destroying key infrastructure in the Donbas, with the aim of slowing the Red Army and buying time to build a new defensive line on the Dnieper River, furthermore, they carried out massive looting and forced deportations, especially of young men and men of military age.

The German withdrawal sought to be meticulous and planned, allowing for both the transfer of material resources and the destruction of cultural, industrial, social, and agricultural facilities, to gain time, intermediate defensive lines were constructed, taking advantage of favorable terrain, including rivers, streams, ravines, and hill ranges, these lines consisted of nodes of resistance in fortified settlements and strategic heights. Troops withdrew in stages, from one line to another, generally 25 km apart, under cover of artillery and machine-gun fire,

and limited counterattacks. The withdrawal was carried out at night, with strong rearguards formed by companies or battalions reinforced with tanks, artillery, and armored vehicles. The Red Army pursued the enemy using forward detachments composed of Rifle regiments or battalions reinforced with artillery, sappers, and mobile units. Mobile pursuit groups with mortars, tanks, and self-propelled guns were also deployed. The Southern Front began the pursuit on September 1, followed by the left wing of the Southwestern Front on September 2, 1943.



Despite its losses, the German 6.Armee remained a formidable adversary, reinforced in late August, it comprised 14 divisions (11 infantry and 3 panzer divisions) and 18 independent battalions, its objective was to establish a new defensive line on the right bank of the Moloachanaya River, protecting the approaches to the lower Dnieper and Crimea, to this end, several intermediate defensive lines were built, the most powerful was the so-called “Turtle Position,” which stretched from Makeyevka to Konstantinovka and further south along the Kal’mius River, this line protected Stalino (present-day Donetsk), the key city in the Donbas, the line was hastily constructed by the Todt Organization, military engineers, and forced labor from the local population. A key element in its defense was the “Panther” tank battalion, assigned to the XVII.Armeekorps in early September, however, German hopes of holding the “Turtle Position” quickly faded, the Southern Front was reinforced following the liquidation of the Orel Salient and the German retreat below the Hagen Line, the front was shortened, and the 11th Tank Corps, which had fought at Orel, was transferred to the Southern Front, on September 7, this corps engaged in combat near Volnovakha, undermining the defensive stability of the 6.Armee.

Simultaneously, the Soviet 51st Army, commanded by General Ya. G. Kreizer launched an offensive on the right flank, which was reinforced by the 10th Rifle Corps of the North Caucasus Front. On September 1, its units detected the enemy withdrawal and the following day, broke through the Mius Front, capturing numerous towns, including Voroshilovsk. On

September 7, the army occupied Ocheretino, threatening the left flank of the 6.Armees and the right flank of the 1.Panzerarmee, the German command moved the 9.Panzer Division and the 209th Assault Gun Battalion to the area, but the situation was already untenable. That same night, a withdrawal from the "Turtle position" was ordered.

The 5th Shock Army, under the command of V. D. Tsvetaev, advanced alongside Kreizer's army. It liberated Snezhnoye, Chistyakovo, Zuyevka, and other towns. On September 3, a forward detachment of the 40th Guards Rifle Division surprised an enemy column heading toward Yenakiyev, inflicting heavy losses. Soviet forces entered Yenakiyev from three directions, forcing a German retreat. For their role in the operation, three divisions were awarded the honorary title of "Yenakiyevskaya."

G. F. Zakharov's 2nd Guards Army reached the Kuteynikovo-Pokrovskoye line, and the enemy counterattacked with the 9.Panzer Division and the 258.Infanterie Division, but the Soviets launched an encircling counterattack with air support. On September 1, the enemy began to



withdraw after suffering heavy losses. The Soviet 28th Army reached the Sukhoy Yelanchik River and, in the following days, reached the Kal'mius. The 44th Army, under V. A. Khomenik, pursued the remnants of the Taganrog group, liberating Mariupol on September 10 after intense fighting. The city was defended by German units and reinforced by a powerful defensive line known as "Mius-2". The battle was resolved with an amphibious landing by the Sea of Azov Flotilla, which disrupted the German rearguard.

With the breakthrough of the German defenses on the Kal'mius, the liberation of Donbas was virtually complete, German troops withdrew westward, toward Gulai-Pole and the Wotan line, along the Chingul and Molaochanaya rivers, on September 20, the Southern Front halted its advance to prepare for a new offensive operation, thus successfully concluded the operation to clear Donbas, completed by the Red Army on the Southern Front sector.

In parallel with the Southern Front's offensive, troops of the Southwestern Front launched their own advance; this front covered a wide sector of more than 300 kilometers along the left bank of the Severnyy Donets River. Facing them was the German 1.Panzerarmee, under the command of General Eberhard von Mackensen. By September 1, 1943, this army comprised ten divisions, including one Panzer and one PanzerGrenadier Division. In early September, German troops began a general withdrawal toward Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporozh'ye, seeking to stabilize the front along the Slavyansk-Kramatorsk-Konstantinovka intermediate defensive line. This withdrawal was covered by intense artillery and mortar bombardment to contain the pursuing Soviet forces.

The 3rd Guards Army, under the command of General Dmitry Lelyushenko, was the first to go on the offensive, on September 1, the commander ordered the formation of mobile detachments within the Divisions to begin the immediate pursuit of the enemy, that same night, units of the 32nd Rifle Corps, positioned on the army's left flank, crossed the Severnyy Donets River in the Lisichansk area, at the end of the day, the 279th Rifle Division, under the command of General V. S. Potapenko, captured the city, the Division was later given the honorary name "Lisichansk", on September 3, troops of the 3rd Guards Army completed the liberation of the Voroshilovgrad region (present-day Luhansk). The Germans had established a solid defense in the Slavyansk and Kramatorsk regions; however, Soviet forces managed to overcome enemy resistance and, on September 5, liberated several settlements, including the town of Artemovsk. In recognition, the 266th and 259th Rifle Divisions were given the title "Artemovsk".



To exploit the breakthrough, significant reinforcements were brought in, the 33rd Rifle Corps and the 23rd Tank Corps, previously attached to the 6th Army, were incorporated into the offensive sector. In addition, the 1st Guards Mechanized Corps, from the 8th Guards Army, the 7th Artillery Division, two Guards mortar regiments, and the 47th Engineer Brigade were added. The main attack was directed at the junction between the 1. Panzerarmee and the 6. Armee, a particularly vulnerable area. On September 5, the 23rd Tank Corps, commanded by General E. G. Pushkin, penetrated Konstantinovka, a town that was liberated on the night of September 6, the 135th Tank Brigade and the 179th Anti-Tank Artillery Regiment, both later designated "Konstantinovskie," were involved in the operation, at the same time, the 1st Guards Mechanized Corps, under the command of General I. N. Russiyanov, liberated the town of Druzhkovka, meanwhile, the 34th Guards Rifle Corps liberated Slavyansk and Kramatorsk on September 6. As a result, troops of the 3rd Guards Army advanced between 60 and 75 kilometers westward in less than a week. On September 7, the 23rd Tank Corps captured Krasnoarmeyskoye, and by September 9, the army's cumulative advance had reached between 150 and 180 kilometers, and more than 700 settlements had been liberated. Beginning on

September 8, other armies of the Southwestern Front also joined the offensive, on the morning of September 10, the 8th Guards Army liberated Barvenkovo.



On September 11, German forces launched a counterattack aimed at cutting communications between the 23rd Tank Corps and the 1st Guards Mechanized Corps and the Soviet main forces. Intense fighting raged for several days, but the German attempt was repulsed. On September 16, units of the 3rd Guards Army reached the Chaplino area, while the Soviet 6th Army liberated Lozovaya. Faced with the failure of the “mobile defense” concept, Field Marshal Erich von Manstein issued the order on September 15 to withdraw all German troops behind the Dnieper and the Molochnaya River, from then on, the pace of the Soviet advance accelerated further, on September 22, troops of the Southwestern Front reached Novomoskovsk, east of Zaporozh'ye, towards the end of the month, the right flank of the front reached the banks of the Dnieper, effectively marking the culmination of the Donbas operation.

Conclusions

The July offensive of the Southern and Southwestern Fronts deprived Heeresgruppe Süd command of the reserves necessary to execute Operation Citadel, forcing Manstein to withdraw Divisions from the direction of the main attack, this situation considerably weakened the German effort at Kursk, thus, the offensive actions of the Southern and Southwestern Fronts contributed decisively to the Soviet victory in the Battle of Kursk, which consolidated the strategic turning point of the entire war on the Eastern Front.

In August, troops of the Southern Front broke through the German fortified line of the Mius Front, liberated Taganrog, and destroyed the German XXIX.Armeekorps, as a result, the German command was forced to begin a general withdrawal towards the Dnieper River. In September, forces of the Southern and Southwestern Fronts completed the liberation of the

Donets Basin, completely expelling enemy troops from the region, the Red Army managed to advance up to 300 kilometers, reaching the Dnipropetrovsk–Melitopol line and opening the strategic corridor through northern Tavria to the Crimea and the lower Dnieper. These advances directly contributed to the victory of the Voronezh and Steppe Fronts over the enemy group concentrated in the Belgorod–Kharkov salient.

As a result of these defeats, the German command was forced to evacuate the 17th Army to Crimea, abandoning the Kuban. Germany lost the Donbas, one of its main economic centers in the east, vital for its production of coal, metallurgy, engineering, and agricultural products. The liberation of this region significantly strengthened the Soviet Union's war economy.

List of Scenarios

#43_0717_01: Izyum-Barvenkovo Offensive Operation, 109 Turns

Date: July 17th 1943 -Size: Campaign -Location: Izyum

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI, Axis vs AI or HTH

Designer Notes: This campaign scenario describes the Izyum-Barvenkovo Offensive Operation that runs parallel to the Zitadelle Operation during the month of July, prologue to the liberation of Donbas in August.

Scenario Briefing: During Operation Zitadelle, the Soviet command planned a series of offensives parallel to the German attack on the Kursk salient. In the month of July, there were two Russian offensives that together intended to prevent the movement of troops into the area of operations of Zitadelle and the destruction, or at least the removal of the PzAOK.1 defensive positions on the Severnyy Donets River and AOK.6 on the Mius river. Soviet preparations were not concealed, the Soviets experts in deception and camouflage techniques, were very concerned that their movements would be detected, the German command and Hitler himself, ordered that the XXIV.Panzerkorps, with the 17th Panzer Division, the 23rd Panzer Division and the Wiking SS Division, which remained in the sector of the front of the PzAOK.1 so that once the Soviet offensive began, the Germans would have a reserve with which to counter-attack the Russian units, in addition, the Germans had months to fortify the line of the Severnyy Donets. The so-called Izyum-Barvenkovo Offensive operation, together with the one against the AOK.6 on the Mius River, was one of the most intense fighting that occurred during the summer of 1943 and although it did not produce the expected tactical results, it was a Soviet strategic success, by not allowing the Germans to use the XXIV.Panzerkorps first and the III.Panzerkorps after it was sent to the Mius front.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0717_04: The Izyum Bridgehead, 43 Turns

Date: July 17th 1943 -Size: Medium -Location: Izyum

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI, Axis vs AI or HTH

Designer Notes: This scenario is limited to the attack made by the 1st Guards Army and the 8th Guards Army for getting and strengthening the bridgehead in Izyum.

Scenario Briefing: On July 17, 1943, the troops of the Southwest Front of General Malinovsky began an offensive operation near Izyum. according to the plan, both General Kuznetsov's 1st Guards Army and General Chuikov's 8th Guards Army, would launch an attack across the Severnyy Donets with the aim of creating and strengthening a bridgehead on the west bank of the river and then advancing over the rear of part of the PzAOK.1 and German AOK.6, the latter on the Mius River. The Germans, aware of the Soviet movements, concentrated the only armoured units in the area, the XXIV.Panzerkorps, after the units defending the Severnyy Donets, these troops had had months to fortify the river. The XXIV.Panzerkorps counterattacks were one of the most violent operations of the war, with a high rate of casualties on both sides.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0717_08: The 28th Guards Corps, 32 Turns

Date: July 17th 1943 -Size: Medium -Location: Golina Dolina

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI, Axis vs AI or HTH

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the operations of the 28th Guards Corps to cross the Severnyy Donets river.

Scenario Briefing: The 28th Guards Corps, commanded by General Savelyevich, was part of the 8th Guards Army. Its primary mission was to traverse the Severnyy Donets, secure a bridgehead that would allow both the 29th Guards Corps and the 1st Mechanized Corps to safely cross the river to follow their advance inland. The 28th Guards Army was a veteran corps with divisions that had fought six months earlier in Stalingrad. Their divisional commands were competent and courageous who were immersed in very intense fighting as they crossed the river and captured the various fortified villages in the area such as the 79th Guards Rifle Division in Golina Dolina, also had to face the attacks of the 17th Panzer Division.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0717_11: Gusarovka, 12 Turns

Date: July 17th 1943 -Size: Small -Location: Gusarovka

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the operations of the 4th Guards Rifle Corps beyond the Severnyy Donets.

Scenario Briefing: The right wing of the 1st Guards Army under the command of Kutznesov was formed by the 4th Guards Rifle Corps. This body had three Rifle Divisions, deployed in two echelons, the first was formed by the 38th Guards Rifle Division, whose main mission was to defend their positions on the western bank of the Severnyy Donets, after this division, the commander of the 4th Guards Rifle Corps, Zaporozhchenko, deployed the 62nd and 20th Guards Rifle Divisions in the second echelon. After the beginning of the Izyum-Barvenkovo Offensive Operation, whose maximum effort was made much further south, the 38th Guards Rifle Division went on the attack trying to open a gap in the German positions of the 15. Infanterie Division. As the German defenses were very solid, the commander of the 4th Guards Rifle Corps employed all the units he had at his disposal to advance and expand the Soviet attack in this area.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0717_12: Kamenka, 14 Turns

Date: July 17th 1943 -Size: Small -Location: Kamenka

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI, Axis vs AI or HTH

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the main attack carried out by the 44th Guards Division on the Izyum bridgehead. Scenario Briefing: The 1st Guards Army had a bridgehead on the western bank of the Severnyy Donets opposite the city of Izyum, the bridgehead was defended by the 44th Guards Rifle Division. This unit of the 6th Guards Rifle Corps had the mission of crossing the solid German defenses of the 46. Infanterie Division and opening a gap in it to capture the town of Kamenka since further back, and in a second echelon, the 23rd Tank Corps was waiting, which would follow the progress of the 44th Guards Division to head south breaking the German front.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0717_14: The Attack of the 3rd Guards Army in the North, 24 Turns

Date: July 17th 1943 -Size: Medium -Location: Rubezhnoye

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI, Axis vs AI

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the operations of the 3rd Guards Army as they advance from the north.

Scenario Briefing: The left wing of the Southwestern Front was formed by General Khetagurov's 3rd Guards Army, this army was deployed along the course of the Severnyy Donets until linking with the Southern Front south of the curve of the Severnyy Donets. Within the Izyum-Barvenkovo Offensive Operation, the 3rd Guards Army had a secondary role both in the events that occurred to the west of its position and to the south in the Mius. The mission of the 3rd Guards Army was to cross the German defense lines that were supported by the Severnyy Donets, cooperate with the attack launched by the remaining armies of the Southwestern Front, and capture the city of Artemovsk. For this mission, the 3rd Guards Army

had one head across the river between the towns of Kremennaya and Rubezhnoye, within the bridgehead, the commander of the 3rd Guards Army, Khetagurov, placed the 78th Rifle Division and in a second echelon, behind the river, the 11th Tank Brigade and 5th Guards Motorized Rifle Brigade, on the flanks of the bridgehead and behind the Severnyy Donets, Khetagurov disposed of the 47th Guards Rifle Division and threatening the cities of Proletarsk and Lisichansk to the 59th Guards Rifle Division. The chosen plan was the following, the 78th Rifle Division had to pierce the defenses of the German 62nd Infantry Division, once this objective was achieved with the help on the flanks of the 47th and 59th Guards Divisions, the 11th Tank Brigade and the 5th Guards Motorized Rifle Brigade would advance south with the objective of capturing the city of Artemovsk, the area's communications center.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0717_15: The Kremennaya-Rubezhnoye Bridgehead, 19 Turns

Date: July 17th 1943 -Size: Small -Location: Kremennaya

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the fighting to expand the Kremennaya-Rubezhnoye Bridgehead.

Scenario Briefing: The 3rd Guards Army, which formed the right wing of the Southwestern Front, had a bridgehead in the Kremennaya-Rubezhnoye area behind the Severnyy Donets River. The commander of the Southwestern Front, General Malynosky, entrusted a secondary mission to the 3rd Guards Army in the planning of the Izyum-Barvenkovo Offensive Operation, in this, it was to cooperate with the main attack that would be carried out further west and to fix German units there, preventing the delivery of reinforcements at the main crossing of the Severnyy Donets. The 3rd Guards Army would begin its main advance from the bridgehead and advance towards Artemovsk but to do so it had to pierce the defenses of the 62. Infanterie Division that was deployed in the area defending the approaches from the north to the cities of Proletarsk and Lisichansk.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0717_16: Mius Front, 69 Turns

Date: July 17th 1943 -Size: Campaign -Location: Mius River

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI, Axis vs AI or HTH

Designer Notes: This campaign scenario describes the Southern Front's operations on the Mius River, these operations are part of the Izyum-Barvenkovo Offensive Operation.

Scenario Briefing: The Mius Front, the German fortified line along the Mius River, created during the winter of 1941 after the withdrawal of Heeresgruppe Sud from Rostov, was a vital support for the German units in the sector during the following two winters. During the spring of 1943, both the German and Red Army armies were preparing for battle, the planned

Operation Zitadelle was unleashed in July 1943 and the Soviets planned a defensive battle to wear down the German armies and then launched several counteroffensives with a view to destroying much of the units of Heeresgruppe Mitte and Sud. One of the planned offensives to prevent the sending of reinforcements to the Kursk salient was the Izyum area and another in the Mius River, in this case against the solid German defensive line that protected this sector. The Mius Front was formidable; for two years the Germans had built up powerful fortifications protected by the west bank of the river and dense minefields, and although the 6.Armee, the large unit manning the line, was a shadow of the one that had advanced impetuously towards the Volga a year earlier, it had sufficient forces to protect the fortifications, including the 16.PanzerGrenadier Division. The Southern Front's plan under Tolbukhin was to employ the 5th Shock Army and the 2nd Guards Army in the centre of the German formation between Dmitriyevka and Kuybyshevo with support from the 28th Army and the 44th Army to the south; in the north a diversionary attack was planned with the 54th Rifle Corps of the 51st Army in the area of Malaya Nikolayevka. The German defence was very tough and the commander of the 6.Armee Hollidt requested reinforcements after bringing up his only armoured unit in the sector, the 23.Panzer Division. After the arrival of the II.SS PanzerKorps at the end of July, without the SS Leibstandarte but with the 3.Panzer Division, the 6.Armee counterattacked and recovered the ground ceded to the Soviets at the cost of significant losses on both sides.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0717_20: Through the Mius Stellung, 24 Turns

Date: July 17th 1943 -Size: medium -Location: Mius River

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI, Axis vs AI or HTH

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the main actions of breaking the German line at Mius.

Scenario Briefing: The Southern Front consisted of the 51st Army, the 5th Shock Army, the 2nd Guards Army, the 28th Army and the 44th Army. Tolbukhin, the commander of the Southern Front, decided that the maximum effort would be made in the center of the formation between the towns of Dmitriyevka and Kuybyshevo, and in this sector he concentrated his two most powerful units, the 5th Shock Army under Tsvetaev and the 2nd Guards Army, its armored fist, under Zakharov, in second echelon. The 5th Shock Army was to break through the solid defences of the Mius Front, and the 2nd Guards Army was to push through the gaps left by it with its mechanised and infantry units. A little further south, between the Kuybyshevo and Alekseyevka sectors, the 28th and 44th Army were to cooperate in the general attack advancing to the south-west. The Mius Front was defended in this sector by the XXXIX.Armeekorps and XVII.Armeekorps, and at Kolpakovka, a few kilometres from the front, Hollidt, the commander of the 6. Armee, had the 16.Panzer Grenadier Division in reserve and further back, in the Izyum-Barvenkovo area, he had the 23.Panzer Division under his direct command.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0717_23: Dmitriyevka, Breaking the Mius Front, 14 Turns

Date: July 17th 1943 -Size: Small -Location: Dmitriyevka

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI, Axis vs AI

Designer Notes This scenario describes the main Soviet attack carried out on the Mius Front opposite Dmitriyevka, the central area of the front.

Scenario Briefing: The main effort of the Southern Front on the Mius Front was in the sector between Dmitriyevka and Kuybyshevo. At Dmitriyevka, Tolbukhin deployed the 31st Guards Rifle Corps under Utvenko. The mission of this corps was to attack the Mius Front and penetrate the German defenses with its four rifle divisions. Once this mission was accomplished, the 2nd Guards Mechanized Corps of the 2nd Guards Army was to advance through the gaps created by the 31st Guards Rifle Corps towards Stepanovka. For this purpose, the mechanized corps under Sviridov had three mechanized brigades and one armored brigade. This sector was garrisoned by the 306. Infanterie Division of the XVII. Armeekorps, which had very good and solid fortifications on the Mius Front.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0717_25: Fighting in the South of the Mius Front, 24 Turns

Date: July 17th 1943 -Size: Small -Location: Kuybyshevo

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI, Axis vs AI

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the fighting in the southern sector of the Mius Front between Kuybyshevo and Alekseyevka. On the German side, the 16. Panzer Grenadier Division will NOT be available because Hollidt decided to use it in Dmitriyevka, the centre of the Mius Front. On the Soviet side, the 1st Guards Rifle Corps will also not be available, also used in the same sector of Dmitriyevka.

Scenario Briefing: For the attack of the southern wing of the Southern Front, Tolbukhin had two armies, the 28th and the 44th. The main effort was to be carried out by the 28th Army under Gerasimenko, this army consisted of six rifle divisions, four in the first echelon and two in the second echelon, a tank brigade and a tank regiment. The 28th Army would attack in the sector between Kuybyshevo and Alekseyevka, supported by the 130th Rifle Division of the 44th Army, the objective of the 28th Army was to penetrate the defenses of the Mius Front defended by the 294. Infanterie Division of the XVII. Armeekorps and the 336. Infanterie Division of the XXXIX. Armeekorps and head southwest with the intention of gaining the German rear and advancing towards Taganrog, although to do so it had to face a solid and well-constructed line of fortifications.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0717_28: The Siege of Alekseyevka, 14 Turns

Date: July 17th 1943 -Size: Small -Location: Alekseyevka

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI, Axis vs AI

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the Soviet attempts to capture the town of Alekseyevka.

Scenario Briefing: The southern wing of the Mius Front in the Southern Front sector consisted of the 28th Army under Gerasimenko and part of the 44th under Khomenko. The main effort in this part of the front was to be carried out between the Kuybyshevo and Alekseyevka sectors by the 28th Army with support from part of the 44th Army. Both armies were to penetrate the German defenses and drive southwest with the goal of reaching the Taganrog region. One of the towns in this sector was Alekseyevka, which was defended by the 336. Infanterie Division under General Kunze. Alekseyevka, protected by important fortifications on the Mius line, was to be taken by the 130th Rifle Division of the 44th Army with support from further north by the 347th Rifle Division of the 28th Army.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0717_30: The 54th Rifle Corps in the North, 24 Turns

Date: July 17th 1943 -Size: Small -Location: Malaya Nokolayevka

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI, Axis vs AI or HTH

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the attack carried out by the 54th Rifle Corps of the 51st Army north of Dmitriyevka.

Scenario Briefing: The 51st Army, which formed the right wing of the Southern Front on the Mius Front, was tasked with delivering an auxiliary blow towards the Petrovo-Krasnosel'ye sector. To this end, General Kreizer, commander of the 51st Army, planned to deploy the 54th Rifle Corps, which consisted of three rifle divisions supported by a Guards Tank Brigade and an Assault Engineer Brigade. The objective of this attack was to prevent the delivery of reinforcements to the south, more specifically to the sector between Dmitriyevka and Kuybyshevo, where the main effort of the offensive was taking place. The 54th Rifle Corps also had the objective of penetrating the German defenses in order to create a bridgehead on the west bank of the Mius.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0730_01: The German Counterattack on the Mius, 37 Turns

Date: July 30th 1943 -Size: medium -Location: Dmitriyevka-Kuybyshevo sector

Intended for play as Axis vs AI, Axis vs AI or HTH

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the German counterattack on the Mius front after the arrival of the II.SS PanzerKorps.

Scenario Briefing: The situation in the 6.Armees area was deteriorating so quickly that Heeresgruppe Sud decided to send the II.SS PanzerKorps to the Mius Front area. This Corps, which had just fought in Operation Zitadelle, did not arrive in full force, as Hitler ordered the Leibstandarte SS Division to be sent to Italy to confront the Allied landings. Before leaving for the Italian peninsula, it left its armored cars and tanks to the Totenkopf SS Division and the Das Reich SS Division, thus increasing its armored means. To replace the Leibstandarte SS Division, the 3.Panzer Division was added to the II.SS PanzerKorps. On July 27, 1943, the SS armored corps arrived in the Mius area and began to deploy in its assembly areas. The commander of the 6. Armees, Hollidt, planned a counterattack against the Soviet bridgehead on the west bank of the Mius River, this counterattack would add his existing armored corps, the XXIV. PanzerKorps with the 16.PanzerGrenadier Division and the 23.Panzer Division, with the newly arrived II.SS PanzerKorps in order to drive the Soviets behind the Mius River and recapture the fortified line of the Mius Front, the counterattack was unleashed on 30 July 1943.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0813_01: The Battle for Zmiyev, 18 Turns

Date: August 13th 1943 -Size: Small -Location: Zmiyev

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the battle for the city of Zmiyev.

Scenario Briefing: On 12 August 1943, the 1st Guards Army, commanded by Vasily Kuznetsov, began the offensive in the Donbas with an attack through the Severnyy Donets. Right-flanking units, the 34th Rifle Corps, were to cross the Severnyy Donets, break through the German defenses and take the city of Zmiyev by the end of August 14. The mission was entrusted to the 152nd Rifle Division which was the first unit to cross the Severnyy Donets and overcome the strong German defense on the west bank to gradually head towards the city, the German high command, aware of the danger of ceding the Severnyy Donets south of Kharkov, defended every inch of ground with furious resistance.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0816_01: Donbas Strategic Offensive Operation, 398 Turns

Date: August 16th 1943 -Size: Campaign -Location: Donbas Region

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI, Axis vs AI or HTH

Designer Notes: This scenario covers the entire Donbas Strategic Offensive Operation, from August 16 to September 22, 1943.

Scenario Briefing: After the completion of the Izyum-Barvenkovo offensive and the Mius Front in July 1943, STAVKA began preparing a new operation in the Donbas region. The plan, very similar to the previous offensive, provided for the Southern Front to again attack in the direction of Kuybyshevo and then join up with the Southwestern Front at Stalino. This operation would cooperate with the general Soviet effort in their summer counteroffensives, as the operation of the Voronezh and Steppe Fronts in the Belgorod-Kharkov area had begun on August 5, 1943. On August 8, 1943, Vasilevsky, the STAVKA representative, presented the plan to Malinovsky, the commander of the Southwestern Front, and Tobulkin, the commander of the Southern Front, for the new August offensive. It was planned that the Southwestern Front was to deliver its main blow in the center, in the area of Izyum in the direction of Barvenkovo and Pavlograd, its right wing was to force the Severnyy Donetsk south of Chuguev and advance in the direction of Zamost and Taranovka. Further south, the left wing was to cooperate with the 57th Army of the Southern Front to cut off the retreat of the German group defending the Mius, the troops of the Southern Front were to advance towards Dmitriyevka, Russkoye and then the town of Stalino. The main blow was to be delivered just north of Kuybyshevo. Given the weakness of the Tobulkin part of the Southern Front, operations began about two days later than the previous ones. Units of the Southwestern Front, for this one they would begin on August 16, and for the Southern Front they would begin on August 18. The plan, which was part of a series of large strategic operations, sought not only to liberate the Donbas but, in cooperation with the Voronezh and Steppe Fronts, to destroy the German Army Group South.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0816_03: The Donbas Strategic Offensive Operation, First Phase, 158 Turns

Date: August 16th 1943 -Size: Campaign -Location: Donbas Region

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI, Axis vs AI or HTH

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the campaign in the Donbas from 16 to 31 August 1943, starting with the breakthrough operations on the Severnyy Donetsk-Mius front and ending with the capture of Taganrog.

Scenario Briefing: For the new operation in the Donbas region, STAVKA planned to use two fronts, the Southwestern Front under Malinovsky and the Southern Front under Tobulkin. The Soviet high command was aware of the difficulty of the operation, since it had to advance in different directions, forcing several important water courses, and the July offensive had not substantially weakened the German units defending the area. The Southwestern Front consisted of four first-echelon armies and two more in the second echelon. The main effort on the part of the Southwestern Front would be in the centre where the 6th and 12th Armies

were to advance from Izyum to Barvenkovo-Pavlograd-Orekhov, the 1st Guards Army, the right wing of the Southwestern Front, was to cooperate initially with the 57th Army of the Steppe Front, force the Severnyy Donets south of Chuguev and then advance southwards, the 3rd Guards Army, starting from the Lisichansk area and cooperating with the right wing of the Southern Front, was to force the Severnyy Donets and advance towards Artemovsk-Konstantinovka-Slavyansk. The second echelon, consisting of the 8th Guards Army and the 46th Army, would advance first into the zone of the 6th Army and the 12th Army in the direction of Pavlograd, while the second echelon would be reserved to operate either on the right wing or in the centre of the Southwestern Front as needed. Malinovsky also had two army corps in reserve, the 23rd Tank Corps and the 1st Guards Mechanized Corps, which would be introduced into the area of the 6th and 12th armies. Tobulkhin's Southern Front had to break through the Mius again, the main attack was developed in an area of 25 km in the area of Dmitriyevka and Kuybyshevo and was executed by three armies, the 5th Shock Army, the 2nd Guards Army and the 28th Army, the right flank of the Southern Front consisted of the 51st Army whose main mission was to defend its sector of the front and then cooperate with the left wing of the Southwestern Front, the right wing of the Southern Front, the 44th Army would also remain on the defensive and then cooperate in the liberation of Taganrog.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0816_05: The Offensive of the Southwestern Front, 88 Turns

Date: August 16th 1943 -Size: Large -Location: Severnyy Donets Area

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI, Axis vs AI or HTH

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the operations of the Southwestern Front during the first phase of the Donbas offensive operation and its advance towards Barvenkovo, Lozovaya, Slavyansk and Pavlograd.

Scenario Briefing: The Southwestern Front was commanded by General R. Y. Malinovsky and formed part of the right wing during the Donbas strategic offensive operation. The Front consisted of four armies in the first echelon, two armies in the second echelon, together with a tank corps and a mechanized corps of the Guards. The right wing of the Southwestern Front consisted of the 1st Guards Army under the command of V. I. Kuznetsov. This army was tasked with forcing the Severnyy Donets south of Chuguev and advancing south towards Pavlograd, the center of the device was formed by the 6th Army under the command of I. T. Shlyomin and the 12th Army under the command of A. I. Danilov, both armies had to break the German front and advance in the direction of Barvenkovo-Pavlograd-Orekhov, for this they had a bridgehead in the area of Izyum, on the west bank of the Severnyy Donets, once the German front was broken through, Malinovsky had the 23rd Tank Corps and the 1st Guards Mechanized Corps ready to support these two armies in their advance to the south, the left wing of the Front was formed by the 3rd Guards Army under the command of General Khetagurov, this army had the mission of cooperating with the 51st Army of the southern front to free the Lisichansk area and advance along the Artemovsk-Konstantinovka-Slavyansk axis. Both air and artillery support were of great importance in the challenge of breaking through the German defenses, and air support for the Southwestern Front was entrusted to the 17th Air Army.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0816_07: The Zaliman Bridgehead, 18 Turns

Date: August 16th 1943 -Size: Small -Location: Zaliman

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the combat operations of the 4th Guards Rifle Corps on the Zaliman bridgehead with support from the 1st Guards Army.

Scenario Briefing: The right wing of Shlemin's 6th Army consisted of the 4th Guards Rifle Corps, this corps was deployed along the Severnyy Donets River but had a bridgehead on the west bank of it, this bridgehead, which had already been formed in the failed July Operation, was defended by the 38th Guards Rifle Division under Soloviyov. The mission of the 38th Guards Rifle Division was to break through the German defenses in that area, for this, they had the direct support of the 212th Separate Tank Regiment and engineer and artillery units to clear and soften the strong German defensive positions, these fortifications were garrisoned by the 15th Infantry Division. The 38th Guards Rifle Division was also supported on the flanks by units of the 1st Guards Army and the 6th Army, the mission of these units was to cross the Severnyy Donets to the north and south of the Zaliman bridgehead.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0816_08: On the Way to Volobuyevka, 8 Turns

Date: August 16th 1943 -Size: Small -Location: Volobuyevka

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the combat operations of the 38th Guards Rifle Division in its attempt to force the German positions at the Zaliman bridgehead.

Scenario Briefing: The 6th Army had a bridgehead on the west bank of the Severnyy Donets, this bridgehead, located south of the town of Zaliman, would be used by Shlemin's army to force its right wing into the German positions of the LVI.Panzerkorps. The defensive positions covering the bridgehead were defended by the 15th Infantry Division, this unit had already successfully defended the fortifications during the Soviet offensive in July, so they had excellent defenses. The unit in charge of breaking through the German defensive line was the 38th Guards Rifle Division, which was supported by a tank regiment and extra units of engineers and artillery. The objective of the Soviet division was to break through the defenses and then head in the direction of Volobuyevka.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0816_09: The Attack of the 26th Guards Rifle Corps on Izyum, 18 Turns

Date: August 16th 1943 -Size: Small -Location: Izyum

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI, Axis vs AI or HTH

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the attack of the 26th Guards Rifle Corps of the 6th Army in the Izyum bridgehead.

Scenario Briefing: The right wing of the 6th Army under Lieutenant General Ivan Shlemin was tasked with crossing the Severny Donets and heading towards Barvenkovo. Malinovsky, the commander of the Southwestern Front, had planned that the maximum effort would be made at this point and so he placed the 26th Guards Rifle Corps of the 6th Army with the support of the 115th Tank Brigade at the Izyum bridgehead, from there crossing the Severny Donets and heading south towards Kamenka and then turning and heading towards Barvenkovo. The area was defended by the XXXX.PanzerKorps under General Sigfrid Henrici command who had two divisions in the area, the 257.Infanterie Division and the 46.Infanterie Division, both divisions having good defensive positions with which to meet the Soviet attack.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0816_12: Breakthrough Towards Barvenkovo and Slavyansk, The 6th and 12th Armies in Action, 28 Turns

Date: August 16th 1943 -Size: Medium -Location: Izyum Bridgehead

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI, Axis vs AI or HTH

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the operations of the 6th Army and the 12th Army from the Izyum bridgehead and the Severny Donets.

Scenario Briefing: The zone of maximum effort in the August offensive by the Southwestern Front was in the centre of the offensive formation prepared by Malinovsky. In this position were the 6th Army under Shlemin and the 12th Army under Danilov, which were deployed along the Severny Donets River and with a bridgehead near the town of Izyum. Malinovsky's plan was as follows: the 6th Army was to cross the Severny Donets and from the Izyum bridgehead advance towards Kamenka and then turn towards Barvenkovo. In the case of the 12th Army, which also had bridgeheads on the western bank of the Severny Donets, it was to force the German defensive positions and head south towards Slavyansk. The area was defended by the XXXX.PanzerKorps, this German armored corps had a panzer division in reserve, the 23.Panzer Division and another in the front line due to the lack of units to defend the excellent defensive positions in the area of PanzerKorps under the command of Sigfrid Henrici.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0816_16: Bannovskiy Bridgehead (With 1st Guards Mechanized Corps), 18 Turns

Date: August 16th 1943 -Size: Small -Location: Bannovskiy

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the advance of the 12th Army from the Bannovskiy bridgehead with the support of the 1st Guard Mechanized Corps from the beginning of the Soviet offensive, in reality, this corps was not available until 22 August.

Scenario Briefing: The 12th Army also had bridgeheads on the western bank of the Severnyy Donets, these bridgeheads were the result of the previous offensive launched by the Red Army in the Donbas in support of their comrades engaged in the fighting in the Kursk salient during Operation Zitadelle. The commander of the 12th Army, Danilov, planned an advance that had to break through the German defenses and head south, one of the objectives of Danilov's army was the city of Slavyansk. The 12th Army had an important bridgehead at Bannovskiy, where the 244th Rifle Division was deployed. This division was tasked with breaking through the German defenses and heading towards Slavyansk, the objective of the 66th Rifle Corps, via the road that linked Bannovskiy with Slavyansk. To assist in its mission, Danilov supported this division with the 11th Tank Brigade and the 224th Separate Tank Regiment, also adding the 9th Artillery Division as artillery support. The German defenses in this sector were excellent, as was the case almost throughout the entire course of the Severnyy Donets in the Donbas region, and were defended by the 387. Infanterie Division, a relatively strong division in the German defensive system.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0818_01: The Southern Front Offensive, The Southern Front Offensive, Battles on the Mius Front and Taganrog, 137 Turns

Date: August 18th 1943 -Size: Campaign -Location: Mius River

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI, Axis vs AI

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the operations of the Southern Front during the first phase of the Donbas strategic offensive operation, these operations extend from the breakthrough operations to the conquest of Taganrog.

Scenario Briefing: The attacks of the Southwestern and Southern Fronts on the flanks of the German grouping in the Donbas of Army Group South were carried out at different times, the troops of the Southern Front were to go on the offensive two days after the forces of the Southwestern Front went on the offensive, the armies of the Southern Front were supposed to break through the Mius Front, defeat the units of the 6th Army defending it and reach the center of the Donbas region, where they planned to act together with the forces of the Southwestern Front. The main attack took place in the 25 km long zone between Dmitriyevka and Kuybyshev and was carried out by the forces of three armies: the 5th Shock Army under the command of Vyacheslav Tsvetaev, the 2nd Guards Army of Georgiy Zakharov and the 28th Army of Vasily Gerasimenko. On the flanks of the breakthrough zone, they were defended by the 51st Army of Jacob Kreyzer and the 44th Army of Vasily Khomenko. These two armies were tasked with containing the German forces with their defensive actions against their sectors of

the front. At the forefront of the development of the Southern Front's success were the 4th Guards Mechanized Corps, the 4th Guards Cavalry Corps and three rifle divisions, the main objectives of the operation were the cities of Taganrog and Stalino.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0818_04: The Mius Front, 2nd opportunity in August, 47 Turns

Date: August 18th 1943 -Size: Medium -Location: Mius Front

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI, Axis vs AI or HTH

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the operations of the center of the Southern Front offensive formation formed by the 5th Shock Army, 2nd Guards Army and 28th Army during the offensive of August 18th.

Scenario Briefing: For the offensive operations of the Southern Front, its commander, General Tolbukhin, had three armies in the place where the maximum offensive effort would be made, which would be the center of the front between Dmitriyevka and Kuybyshevo. The 5th Shock Army under Tsvetaev's command launched an offensive on its left flank in the front zone between Dmitriyevka-Kuybyshevskoye (5 km north of Kuybyshevo). The attack was made on a 10 km section in the direction of Kuteynikovo. On the fifth day of the offensive, the army's troops were to break through to a depth of 55-60 km. On the Kuteynikovo line, the 5th Shock Army planned to involve the 4th Guards Mechanized Corps in battle with the task of advancing to Kolpakovka and Donetsk-Amvrosiyevka. The 2nd Guards Army, under Zakharov's command, was advancing in a 9 km wide strip south of Kuybyshevo, by the end of the fifth day of the offensive, the Guards were to reach the line of the Kal'mius River, creating a threat to the flank of the German center group in the Donbas. The 28th Army, commanded by Gerasimenko, was positioned on the left flank of the Southern Front's strike group. Gerasimenko's army was to break through the enemy front on a 2.5 km sector and advance in the direction of Anastasiyevka and Fedorovka. At the second stage of the operation, the 28th Army was to reach the coast of the Sea of Azov and, in cooperation with units of the 44th Army, destroy the German grouping defending Taganrog. Also, in cooperation with the 28th Army, it was planned to use the 4th Guards Cavalry Corps, which was to develop an offensive in a south-westerly direction and cooperate in the liberation of Taganrog.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0818_07: Kuybyshevo, 27 Turns

Date: August 18th 1943 -Size: Small -Location: Kuybyshevo

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI, Axis vs AI

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the operations of the 5th Shock Army, the operations of the 55th Rifle Corps are not represented, this corps formed the right wing of the 5th Shock Army and maintained a defensive attitude during the early stages of the Donbas strategic offensive operation.

Scenario Briefing: The 5th Shock Army launched an offensive on its left flank in the front zone between Dmitriyevka- Kuybyshevskoye (5 km north of Kuybyshevo), the attack was made on a 10 km section in the direction of Kuteynikovo and by the fifth day of the offensive the troops of the 5th Shock Army were expected to have broken through to a depth of 55-60 km on the Kuteynikovo line. The 5th Shock Army consisted of 9 rifle divisions, a separate tank brigade, an anti-tank artillery brigade and an engineer brigade, the 5th Shock Army also had about 100 tanks, plus about 1,300 guns and mortars. In the first echelon, 4 divisions advanced, in the second echelon - 2 divisions of the 31st Rifle Corps and the 3rd Guards Rifle Corps. The advancing divisions of the first echelon were assigned the 7th and 60th Guards Tank Regiments. In addition, in the main zone of the offensive, the 5th Shock Army planned to introduce the 4th Guards Mechanized Corps into the breakthrough with the task of advancing towards Kolpakovka and Donetsk-Amvrosiyevka.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0818_09: Déjà vu on the Mius Front, The Offensive of the 2nd Guards Army and the 28th Army, 27 Turns

Date: August 18th 1943 -Size: Small -Location: Bol'shaya Kirsanovka

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI, Axis vs AI

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the operations of the 2nd Guards Army and the 28th Army on the Mius Front during the August offensive.

Scenario Briefing: Tolbukhin, the commander of the Southern Front, carefully prepared offensive plans for the 2nd Guards Army and the 28th Army, two of his armies poised to penetrate the German defenses on the Mius Front. Both armies, deployed with the 5th Shock Army in the center of the Southern Front formation, were to break through the German lines and advance into the German rear, albeit in two different directions. The 2nd Guards Army, under Zakharov's command, was advancing in a 9 km wide strip south of Kuybyshevo, and by the end of the fifth day of the offensive, the 2nd Guards Army was to reach the line of the Kal'mius River, thus threatening the flank of the German units defending the center of the defensive system protecting the Donbas. The 2nd Guards Army included 6 Rifle divisions together with the 2nd Guards Mechanized Corps, this army had 261 tanks and about 800 guns and mortars, the disposition of the 2nd Guards Army was as follows, on the right flank advancing the 1st Guards Rifle Corps, in the first echelon the 24th Guards Rifle Division and in the second the 33rd and 86th Guards Rifle Divisions, on the left flank was the 13th Guards Rifle Corps, with the 13th and 49th Guards Rifle Divisions in the first line and the 87th in the second. The 28th Army, commanded by Gerasimenko, was positioned on the left flank of the Southern Front's strike group, Gerasimenko's army was to break through the enemy front on a 2.5 km sector and advance in the direction of Anastasiyevka and Fedorovka. At the second stage of the operation, the 28th Army was to reach the coast of the Sea of Azov and, in cooperation with units of the 44th Army, destroy the enemy's Taganrog grouping. The 28th Army was equipped with 5 Rifle divisions, a tank brigade, anti-tank artillery and guards mortar regiments, the army had more than 400 guns and mortars. It was also planned to use the 4th Guards Cavalry Corps in cooperation with the 28th Army, which was to develop an offensive in the southwestern direction and participate in the elimination of the enemy's Taganrog grouping.

The combat formation of the 28th Army consisted of three echelons, the first consisted of the 248th Rifle Division, reinforced by a tank company and a mortar regiment, the second consisted of the 118th and 347th Rifle Divisions (of the 37th Rifle Corps), and the third consisted of the 127th and 271st Rifle Divisions, the army reserve consisted of the 33rd Guards Tank Brigade.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0819_01: Krasny Luch, 28 Turns

Date: August 19th 1943 -Size: Medium -Location: Krasny Luch

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the operations of the 55th Rifle Corps, this corps that was part of the 5th Shock Army had a secondary role in the offensive operations of this army.

Scenario Briefing: The 55th Rifle Corps was part of the right wing of the 5th Shock Army, Tsvetaev the commander of this army, gave a secondary role to the three divisions that were part of this corps, while further south, the bulk of his army forced the German defenses with the 2nd Guards Army. The mission of the 55th Rifle Corps was to defend the defensive line in front of Krasny Luch with the 99th Rifle Division with the help of the 116th Fortified Region while the 126th Rifle Division and the 87th Rifle Division would go on the offensive, breaking through the German defenses towards the towns of Snezhnoye and Chistyakovo, important railway nodes behind the German lines.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0822_01: Road to Gorlovka, The End of the Beginning, 48 Turns

Date: August 22nd 1943 -Size: Medium -Location: Gorlovka

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI, Axis vs AI

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the complementary operations of the 3rd Guards Army and the 51st Army in support of the Donbas Strategic Offensive Operation. Note to players, this is a very complex scenario from the Soviet point of view.

Scenario Briefing: On the left wing of the Southwestern Front, the 3rd Guards Army attacked. Its starting point was the Lisichansk district, where it had a bridgehead at Rubezhnoye. This army under Khetagurov's command was to, in cooperation with the forces of the right wing of the Southern Front, break through the enemy's defenses and advance along the Artemovsk-Konstantinovka-Slavyansk line. For this mission, the 3rd Guards Army had the 34th Guards Rifle Corps with three rifle divisions, supported by two tank regiments and a mechanized brigade, as well as the 32nd Rifle Corps with three rifle divisions. The first corps was to move south from its positions at Rubezhnoye while the second was to cross the Severnyy Donets. The force that was to cooperate with the 3rd Guards Army was the 51st Army of the Southern Front. This army, commanded by Kreizer, had a defensive role at the beginning of the operation in the

Donbas, but from the 22nd, it went on the offensive together with the 3rd Guards Army. For this mission it had two rifle corps, the 54th and the 63rd. The first had a rifle division and a fortified area, the second had two rifle divisions and a fortified area. In addition, the 63rd Rifle Corps was supported by a tank brigade of the Guards. The mission of both armies was to penetrate the German defenses and converge on the city of Gorlovka and destroy the German forces defending this sector of the front.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0822_03: Breaking through Rubezhnoye, 12 Turns

Date: August 22nd 1943 -Size: Small -Location: Rubezhnoye

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the operations of the 34th Rifle Corps in its breakthrough mission from the Rubezhnoye bridgehead.

Scenario Briefing: The 34th Rifle Corps under Makovchuk had held a bridgehead on the southern bank of the Severny Donets since the July operations. This bridgehead was located at Rubezhnoye and was supported by the 78th Rifle Division. This division under Lebedenko was to penetrate the German defences again, as in the July offensive, and to assist in the capture of the towns of Proletarsk, Lisichansk and Verkheneye. For this mission the 78th Rifle Division was supported by the 5th Guards Mechanized Brigade and two tank regiments, the 52nd and 243rd. After maintaining a strictly defensive role during the beginning of the offensive operation in the Donbas, the 34th Rifle Corps began its advance on August 22 with an attack on the German defensive line, which was manned by the 62. Infanterie Division of the XXX. Armeekorps, a veteran unit that had already performed brilliantly during the month of July.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0822_05: The Bloody Path of the 63rd Rifle Corps, 17 Turns

Date: August 22nd 1943 -Size: Small -Location: Voroshilovgrad

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the operations of the 63rd Rifle Corps of the 51st Army at the beginning of operations against the German defensive lines. Note to players, this is a complex and difficult scenario from the Soviet side.

Scenario Briefing: The mission of the 51st Army was to protect the right flank of the Southern Front, for this purpose, it had the 63rd Rifle Corps protecting the approaches to the city of Voroshilovgrad with two rifle divisions, the 91st and 315th, and a fortified region, the 116th, in support of this army corps, its commander, Butarin, received the 6th Guards Tank Brigade and the 1st Guards Destroyer Brigade. The mission of the 63rd Rifle Corps was a strictly defensive role but after the start of the Donbas Strategic Offensive Operation, both the 51st Army of the

Southern Front and the 3rd Guards Army of the Southwestern Front were ordered to go on the offensive, the 51st Army was entrusted with the mission of penetrating the German defensive lines and heading towards Gorlovka where it would converge with the 3rd Guards Army advancing from the northeast. The most powerful group of the 51st Army was the 63rd Rifle Corps, but facing it was, among others, an elite unit of the German army, the 3.Gebirs Division of General Picker belonging to the IV.AK. This German unit made the mission of the 63rd Rifle Corps very complex and bloody.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0901_01: The Donbas Strategic Offensive Operation, Second Phase, 198 Turns

Date: September 1st 1943 -Size: Campaign -Location: Donbas Region

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI or HTH and Axis vs AI

Designer Notes: This campaign scenario describes the second phase of the offensive operation in the Donbas after the fall of Taganrog.

Scenario Briefing: Following the August operations and the capture of Taganrog, the Southwestern and Southern Fronts simultaneously attacked the PzAOK.1 and AOK.6, the former defending their positions along the Severnyy Donets and the latter retreating from their old positions on the Mius and the city of Taganrog. The Germans had built several intermediate lines to allow an orderly retreat towards the Dnepr and the approaches to the Crimean Peninsula, the most important of which was built by the Todt organization during the weeks prior to the Soviet attack in August. This line ran from Slavyansk to Konstantinovka and from there to Makeyevka, protecting the city of Stalino, the nerve center of the Donbas region. The city of Stalino had also been fortified by the German army, calling this position the "turtle position" where the German command placed its confidence to stop the Soviet armies in case of a front breakthrough. The Southwestern Front, starting from its positions in the Severnyy Donets which had been so hard won since the beginning of the offensive in August, was to advance south-west through the positions of the PzAOK.1 and thus threaten the flank of the AOK.6 while the Southern Front was to advance towards Stalino and along the coast towards Mariupol in pursuit of the AOK.6, both fronts having as their ultimate objective to reach the Dnepr and the entrance to the Crimean peninsula, in order to liberate the rich region of Donbas.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0901_04: The Southwestern Front in September, 68 Turns

Date: September 1st 1943 -Size: Medium -Location: Severnyy Donets River

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI or HTH and Axis vs AI

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the operations of the Southwestern Front in September.

Scenario Briefing: The Southwestern Front under Malynovski was stationed along the Severnyy Donets which was defended by General Eberhard von Mackensen's PzAOK.1. Since the beginning of the operation in the Donbas in mid-August, the Southwestern Front had made some small advances at the cost of bloody losses due to the brilliant German defense, these advances allowed the Southwestern Front to establish strong positions on the west bank of the Severnyy Donets where the 46th Army, 6th Army, 8th Guards Army and 12th Army secured bridgeheads to resume the advance westwards, also the 3rd Guards Army managed to cross the Severnyy Donets liberating the city of Lisichansk and then pursuing the retreating German units. The Southwestern Front resumed the offensive on 1 September simultaneously with the Southern Front. The objective was to break through the German front and head southwest to threaten the flank of the AOK.6, which was defending the city of Stalino, in order to allow an orderly retreat towards the Dnepr, something that Malinovsky had been ordered not to allow.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0901_06: Storm in Taranovka, 18 Turns

Date: September 1st 1943 -Size: Small -Location: Taranovka

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI or HTH and Axis vs AI

Designer Notes: This scenario details the pressure exerted by the 46th Army from Severnyy Donets against the southernmost flank of the AOK.8 in early September 1943.

Scenario Briefing: The 46th Army under Glagolev arrived as reinforcements to the northernmost area of the Southwestern Front, replacing the units of the 1st Guards Army defending this sector. The 46th Army began operations against the XXXXII.Armeekorps of General Wohler's AOK.8, this army corps defended the southernmost part of its sector in connection with the PzAOK.1. The objective of the 46th Army was to bypass the PzAOK.1 through the XXXXII.Armeekorps and head southwest towards Pavlograd. For this mission, the general Glagolev had six rifle divisions and an artillery division with which to defeat the units of the German XXXII.Armeekorps. This corps, under the command of General Mattenklott, had three divisions, a weak 6.Panzer Division, an infantry division and an SS cavalry division that had arrived in this sector of the front to reinforce the defensive positions very recently.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0901_08: Sredniy-Zavodskoy Bridgehead, 18 Turns

Date: September 1st 1943 -Size: Small -Location: Sredniy-Zavodsky Bridgehead

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI or HTH and Axis vs AI

Designer Notes: The scenario describes the operations of the 4th Guards Rifle Corps of the 6th Army in its advance south from the Sredniy-Zavodskoy bridgehead.

Scenario Briefing: During the beginning of operations in the Donbas in mid-August, the 6th Army crossed the Severnyy Donets, the mission was then entrusted to the 26th Guards Rifle Corps which successfully completed it despite the heavy losses it suffered. The result was that the 6th Army gained a bridgehead on the west bank of the Severnyy Donets which was defended by the 26th Guards Rifle Corps and later replaced by the 4th Guards Rifle Corps of General Zaporozhchenko. The bridgehead at Sredny-Zavodskoy would serve to threaten from the north the positions of the XXXX.PanzerKorps under Henrici's command, who despite all his efforts could not eliminate or reduce it and what's more, the bridgehead also endangered the rearguard of the divisions defending the Soviet advance from the Izyum bridgehead, so once the advance was restarted at the beginning of September by the Soviet 6th Army, the attack from the Sredny-Zavodskoy bridgehead was a fact and the 4th Guards Rifle Corps attempted to break through the German defenses to, together with the rest of the 6th Army advancing from Izyum, destroy the XXXX.Panzerkorps.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0901_10: The 6th Army's Strike on Izyum, 18 Turns

Date: September 1st 1943 -Size: Small -Location: Izyum

Intended for play as Axis vs AI

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the operations of the 6th Army from Izyum in early September 1943, including the advance of the 4th Guards Rifle Corps from the Sredny-Zavodskoy bridgehead.

Scenario Briefing: The plan of the Soviet 6th Army under General Shlemin was very similar to the one executed in mid-August with the great advantage that now Shlemin had a bridgehead on the western bank of the Severnyy Donets, this bridgehead was garrisoned by the 4th Guards Rifle Corps which threatened not only the northern flank of the German XXXX.PanzerKorps but also the rear of the units defending the main defensive front of the Soviet 6th Army opposite the Izyum bridgehead. Here, Shlemin stationed his main units, including the 23rd Tank Corps, one of the few armored units available in the entire Donbas. This armored corps under the command of General Akhmanov would be the spearhead of the 6th Army and had as its mission to break through the German defensive line in conjunction with the 4th Guards Rifle Corps, destroy the German units defending the area. Behind the 23rd Tank Corps, the rifle divisions of the 26th Guards Rifle Corps and the 33rd Rifle Corps would advance, following the armored brigades. To support the beginning of the advance of the Soviet 6th Army, General Malynovski, commander of the Southwestern Front, added the 7th Artillery Division to Shlemin's army. This large artillery unit would be very important to achieve the destruction of the German defensive lines and allow an easier advance to the punished troops of the Soviet 6th Army.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0901_011: Hammer and Sickle in Dolgen'kaya, 18 Turns

Date: September 1st 1943 -Size: Small -Location: Dolgen'kaya

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI, Axis vs AI

Designer Notes: The scenario describes the operations of the 8th Guards Army from the Dolgen'kaya sector.

Scenario Briefing: The 8th Guards Army had an important mission when operations resumed in September. This army, which had been kept in reserve during the August operations, like the 46th Army, was inserted between the two armies that had led the advance of the Southwestern Front during the first phase of the Donbas operation, the 6th Army and the 12th Army. The 8th Guards Army under General Chuikov, with two Guards Rifle Corps, the 28th and 29th, and more importantly the 1st Mechanized Corps, which would be the unit that would lead the push in a southwestern direction, had suffered some wear and tear in the preceding phase, but the rest of the 8th Guards Army was in a remarkable state, so Chuikov had formidable units at his disposal to undertake the breach of the German defensive lines. The Soviet planning of the attack was relatively simple: the Guards infantry units would attack the German defensive lines with the aim of creating gaps through which the mechanized units of the 1st Guards Mechanized Corps could pass and launch themselves towards their main objective, the town of Barvenkovo.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0901_13: The Liberation of Slavyansk, 18 Turns

Date: September 1st 1943 -Size: Small -Location: Slavyansk

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI, Axis vs AI

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the liberation of the city of Slavyansk by the 12th Army, the city had been the scene of fighting between 1941 and 1943.

Scenario Briefing: The 12th Army under General Danilov was tasked with liberating Slavyansk and Kramatorsk, both cities having been heavily fortified in the preceding years as they had been the focus of fighting during 1941-1943 and had passed from one side to the other several times since then. The defence of the area was entrusted to the 387.Infanterie Division of the XXXX.PanzerKorps, although there were several units of the 333.Infanterie Division of the XXX.Armeekorps defending the Severnyy Donets, both divisions were veteran units that had been fighting in the area for a long time, so they had solid defensive positions to protect the approaches to Slavyansk. The 12th Army had two Rifle corps, the 66th and 67th, supported by the 9th Artillery Division, and the commander of the Southwestern Front had added the 1st Cavalry Corps to exploit the success of the operation and advance south with the intention of capturing Kramatorsk, where, along the Kazenny Toret, the Germans had built a defensive line in case the XXX.Armeekorps and the IV.Armeekorps of the AOK.6 had to withdraw from their positions on the Severnyy Donets in the east, so the Soviet operation to liberate Slavyansk and Kramatorsk became vital in this sector.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0901_15: To Barvenkovo!, 28 Turns

Date: September 1st 1943 -Size: Medium -Location: Barvenkovo Area

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI or HTH and Axis vs AI

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the main offensive of the Southwestern Front in early September executed by the 6th, 12th and 8th Guards Army in the direction of Barvenkovo.

Scenario Briefing: The Southwestern Front was positioned along the Severnyy Donets, although since the beginning of the August offensive it had achieved a solid bridgehead on the western bank of the river. From these places, the Soviet 6th Army, the 8th Guards Army and the 12th Army would set out in early September with the objective of breaking through the German defensive lines and capturing the towns of Lozovaya and Barvenkovo, important logistical and communications nodes, and the cities of Slavyansk and Kramatorsk, both along the Kazenny Toret where the Germans had erected important defenses to protect the city of Stalino, the nerve center of the Donbas. To support the advance of these three armies, Malynovski added the 23rd Tank Corps, the 1st Mechanized Corps and the 1st Cavalry Corps as reinforcements of the three armies to provide impetus and speed to the attack from the Severnyy Donets. Once these cities were captured, part of the Southwestern Front would move towards Pavlograd and from there to the Dnepr, with the objective of preventing the Germans from erecting a strong defensive line along the imposing river. The 3rd Guards Army, having crossed the Kazenny Toret at Kramatorsk, would support the Southern Front in capturing Stalino and advancing towards the Dnepr.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0901_17: Charge to the West, the 3rd Guards Army Attacks, 18 Turns

Date: September 1st 1943 -Size: Small -Location: Artemovsk Area

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI or HTH and Axis vs AI

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the fighting in the Artemovsk region between the 3rd Guards Army and the XXX.Armeekorps of the PzAOK.1 in early September 1943.

Scenario Briefing: The commander of the 3rd Guards Army, General Lelyushenko, ordered his divisions to form mobile groups and cross the Severnyy Donets. To do this he had the 34th Guards Rifle Corps with a bridgehead at Privol'ye near Kremennaya and the 32nd Rifle Corps along the Severnyy Donets. It was this last large unit that crossed the river and, pursuing German units retreating from the area, liberated the town of Lisichansk. Malynovski, seeing his opportunity, ordered the 3rd Guards Army to continue its advance once he had established that the German units were retreating towards a line built between Slavyansk and Makeyevka, this line protected Stalino from the northeast, so Lelyushenko directed his army towards Artemovsk and Kramatorsk with the intention of pursuing the enemy and crossing the Kazenny Toret at Kramatorsk whereupon units of the German XXX.Armeekorps and Gruppe

Kreysig of the AOK.6 defended the ground fiercely, slowing down the Soviet advance, to allow the defensive line to gain solidity and buy time for an orderly withdrawal.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0901_19: The Operations of Southern Front, 58 Turns

Date: September 1st 1943 -Size: Medium -Location: Stalino Region

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI or HTH and Axis vs AI

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the operations of the Southern Front from the fall of Taganrog to the capture of Stalino and Mariupol.

Scenario Briefing: Tolbukhin's Southern Front consisted of the 51st Army, the 5th Shock Army, the 2nd Guards Army, the 28th Army and the 44th Army. Once the strategic offensive operation in Donbas began in mid-August, the Southern Front gradually achieved its objectives, after crossing the Mius Front and capturing the city of Taganrog, putting the German group defending it to flight, it proceeded to pursue the 6.Armee with the aim of liberating Stalino and reaching the Dnepr River. Tolbukhin's intention was to prevent the German army from building a solid defensive line on the western bank of the great river. In order to resume the pursuit of the 6.Armee, STAVKA proceeded to reinforce the Southern Front, for this purpose, it transferred the 11th Tank Corps from the Orel area and the 10th Rifle Corps from the Caucasus, the latter corps reinforced the 51st Army, while the armored corps would do so to the 5th Shock Army. Once the Mius front was finally forced, the 5th Shock Army headed towards the city of Stalino, an industrial city in the Donbas and a logistical and communications center for the entire region, while a little further south, the 2nd Guards Army supported this advance by forcing the German defenses south of the city, on September 7 the city of Stalino was liberated. Further north, the 51st Army was collaborating with the 3rd Guards Army of the Southwestern Front in pursuing the left wing of the 1.Panzerarmee, liberating such important towns as Artemovsk, Konstantinovka and Gorlovka. To the south, the 28th Army and the 44th Army advanced along the coast with the aim of liberating Mariupol and reaching the gates of the Crimean Peninsula. The Donbas region was a rich, industrial area from which the Germans made considerable use of its resources, part of the German strategy was based on slowing down the Soviet advance by building defensive lines in their rearguard, In this way, they hoped to have enough time to carry out an orderly retreat and at the same time dismantle and destroy the most important equipment, including the forced evacuation of the male population of military age.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0901_21: Road to Stalino, 18 Turns

Date: September 1st 1943 -Size: Small -Location: Chistyakovo

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI, Axis vs AI

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the operations by the 5th Shock Army at the beginning of its offensive towards the city of Stalino.

Scenario Briefing: Tsvetaev's 5th Shock Army was the strongest grouping of the Southern Front, deployed in the centre of Tolbukhin's formation. The 5th Shock Army was tasked with advancing towards the town of Stalino with the collaboration of the 51st Army in the north and the 2nd Guards Army in the south. To this end, Tsvetaev's army had the 3rd and 31st Guards Rifle Corps and the 55th Rifle Corps, and had been reinforced in late August by the 9th Rifle Corps. Before advancing directly towards the Stalino industrial area, the 5th Shock Army had to clear the towns of Snezhnoye, Krasnaya Zor'ka and Chistyakovo, since the German retreat had created a significant grouping of forces at these points. This area was defended by two divisions of the XVII.Armeekorps, the 306.Infanterie Division and the 294.Infanterie Division, both divisions had orders to slow down the Soviet advance and withdraw towards Stalino, since the Germans had built there an important defensive position called the "Turtle position" from which they had high hopes to defend the city.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0901_23: Nikolayevka, The Defence of the IV.Armeekorps, 18 Turns

Date: September 1st 1943 -Size: Small -Location: Nikolayevka

Intended for play as Axis vs AI

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the operations of the 2nd Guards Army in its attempt to break through the Kal'mius Line.

Scenario Briefing: Zakharov's 2nd Guards Army regrouped in front of the line on the Kal'mius to continue the advance. Zakharov had the 2nd Guards Mechanized Corps and two Guards Rifle Corps, the 1st and 13th. Facing the 2nd Guards Army was General Mieth's IV.Armeekorps, which included among its units the 17th Panzer Division and the 3rd Gebirgsjager Division, both of which were among the best units in the 6th Army, although they had been depleted by the fighting in August, as had the 2nd Guards Army. Zakharov's orders were clear: cooperate with the 5th Shock Army, which would advance from the north towards Stalino and break through the German lines to threaten the central region of Donbas. To prevent this, the Germans had built a defensive line along the Kal'mius River in the hope of stopping the Soviet advance long enough to dismount and evacuate as much of the Donbas's riches as possible using a scorched earth tactic.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0901_24: Breaking the Kal'mius Line, 18 Turns

Date: September 1st 1943 -Size: Small -Location: Granitnoye

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI or HTH and Axis vs AI

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the 28th Army's operations against the Kal'mius Line.

Scenario Briefing: The 28th Army continued to pursue the 6.Armee after the capture of Taganrog together with the 44th Army a little further south. While the latter army followed the coastal road to the ports there, the 28th Army under Gerasimenko command assembled around Fedorovka to attack the German defenses there and break through the defensive line that the Germans had built on the Kal'mius river. For this mission, Gerasimenko had four Rifle divisions, the 118th, 248th and 347th grouped in the 37th Rifle Corps and the 416th Rifle Division. The main advance was to be made by the 37th Rifle Corps along the main line of communication, the Granitnoye road. To defend this sector of the front, the 6.Armee under Hollidt command, had the XXIX.Armeekorps under the command of General Brandenberger and part of the IV.Armeekorps of General Mieth. Among the units of both corps were the 3.Gegirsjagger Division and the 9.Panzer Division and 13.Panzer Division that protected the vital road that ran towards Granitnoye. These units, although weakened after the fighting in August, formed an important and powerful combat group to protect the retreat towards the Kal'mius line.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0901_27: The Capture of Budennovka, 18 Turns

Date: September 1st 1943 -Size: Small -Location: Budennovka

Intended for play as Soviet vs AI

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the operations to capture the town of Budennovka by the 44th Army.

Scenario Briefing: The town of Budennovka was the first step towards the port of Mariupol, both cities were connected by a road that meandered along the shores of the Sea of Azov. The Germans had planned a defence of the Budennovka area to stop the Red Army long enough to allow an orderly retreat to a line built in the rear across the Kal'mius River after the loss of the Taganrog region. General Brandenberger, commander of the XXIX Army Corps, had a relatively strong combat group to defend the area, this combat group formed by the 17.Infanterie Division of General Schwandner and the 111.Infanterie Division of General von Bülow, the latter unit was responsible for defending Budennovka and the coast, in the rear Brandenberger had two units in reserve that were in the process of retreating towards the Kal'mius line, the 15.Luftwaffe Feld Division and the 386.Infanterie Division, although the latter did not intervene in the fighting for Budennovka. To undertake the advance towards the city, the Southern Front had the weak 44th Army under Khomenko's command, this army, "the poor brother" of the Strategic Offensive Operation in Donbas, had to face, with its poor resources, the objectives that had been entrusted to it by the commander of the Southern Front.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

#43_0909_01: Counterattack at Znamenka, 38 Turns

Date: September 9th 1943 -Size: Medium -Location: Znamenka

Intended for play as Axis vs AI, Soviet vs AI

Designer Notes: This scenario describes the only operational German counterattack launched during the Soviet offensive in the Donbas.

Scenario Briefing: On 16 August, the Southwestern Front launched a first attack against the 1.Panzerarmee near Izyum on the Severnyy Donets River, but it did not have much success, two days later, however, the Southern Front launched an offensive on the Mius River and managed to break through at Kuibyshev. The 6.Armee deployed in this sector consisted of only three weak army corps, so it had no chance of resisting the attack of the Southern Front, which was supported by more than 800 tanks. The Soviet units that had managed to break through headed south towards the Sea of Azov and reached it at the end of August, as a result, the XXIX.Armeekorps was surrounded on the coast, but managed to escape after heavy fighting. Von Manstein then ordered a withdrawal to the Turtle Line near Stalino, this fortified position was occupied by the 6.Armee on 4 September, but the attacking Soviet forces quickly broke through the new defence line and took Stalino on 8 September, at the same time, due to the withdrawal of the 6.Armee to the Turtle Line, its northern neighbour, the 1.Panzerarmee, was also forced to withdraw, thus opening a gap between the two German armies, which eventually reached a width of 60 kilometres. The way was now clear for the Soviet rapid advance forces to advance towards the Dnieper, the gap between the two armies was to be closed by a pincer attack which began on 9 September, as the 16.PanzerGrenadier Division and the 23.Panzer Division advanced from the north, the 9.Panzer Division attacked from the south, the two wedges met at Znamenka on 12 September, encircling the Soviet units that had managed to break through but although the gap between the two German armies had closed, the temporary stabilisation could not hide the fact that the front could no longer be held.

Recommended Rules: (Default)

Alternative Assault Resolution, Artillery Set Up, Recon Spotting, Virtual Supply Trucks, Low Visibility Air Effects, Quality Fatigue Modifier, Counterbattery Fire, Night Fatigue, Programmed Weather, Limited Air Recon.

Appendices

Selected Bibliography, Articles and Books

- 7th Panzer Division: The Ghost Division, 1939-1945 – Tankwaffe Publishers
- 9th Panzer Division 1940-1943-Marek Kruk
- 9th Panzer Division 1943-1945-Marek Kruk
- Air War Over Kursk: Turning Point in the East - Dmitriy B. Khazanov
- Armored Bears: The German 3rd Panzer Division in World War II (Volume 2) - Veterans of 3rd Panzer division
- Battle for Donbass, Breakthrough Mius-front-Alexander Samsonov
- Battle Orders: Panzer Divisions: The Eastern Front 1941–43 - Pier Paolo Battistelli
- Cavalry in the Wehrmacht 1942 – 1945 - Unknow
- Citadel, Prokhorovka and Kharkov: The armoured losses of the II SS Panzer Korps Sonderverbände during the battle of Kursk, July-August 1943-Ben Wheatley
- Das Reich: The Military Role of the 2nd SS Division - James Sidney Lucas
- Decision in the Ukraine: German Panzer Operations on the Eastern Front, Summer 1943 - George M. Nipe
- Die Geshichte der deutschen Kavallerie - Klaus Christian Richter - Motorbuch Verlag
- Die Boeselagerschen Reiter, Das Kavallerie-Regiment Mitte und die aus ihm hervorgegangene 3. Kavallerie-Brigade/Division - Hans Joachim Witte and Peter Offerman - Schild Verlag
- Did Vatutin Err When Planning the Defense of the Voronezh Front While Preparing for the Battle of Kursk-Valerii Zamulin
- Drive to the Dnieper: The Soviet 1943 Summer Campaign - Steve Robert Waddell
- From the Don to the Dnepr: Soviet Offensive Operations, December 1942 – August 1943 - David M. Glantz
- German Military Symbols – Military Intelligence Division War Department
- German Order of Battle vol 1 panzer and Panzegrenadier Divisions – G.F. Nafziger
- German Order of Battle vol 2 Waffen SS - Luftwaffe - Mountain and Naval divisions – G.F. Nafziger
- German Order of Battle vol 3 Artillery independent Bn, Railroad, Coastal flak – G.F. Nafziger
- German Order of Battle Vol 4 German infantry divisions 1-299 – G.F. Nafziger
- German Order of Battle Vol 5 German infantry divisions 300-999 Named and Corps Detachment- G.F. Nafziger
- Germany And The Second War World (Vol VIII) – Karl Heinz Frieser
- Ghost Division: The 11th “Gespenster” Panzer Division and the German Armored Force in World War II - A. Harding Ganz
- Grossdeutschland - Guderian’s Eastern Front Elite-Michael Sharpe and Brian L. Davis

Kavallerie der Wehrmacht - Klaus Christian Richter - Podzun-Pallas

Kursk 1943: The Greatest Battle of the Second World War - Roman Töppel

Kursk 1943: The Southern Front - Robert Forczyk

Kursk: The Air Battle: July 1943 - Christer Bergstrom

Kursk: The German View - Steven H. Newton

Las Batallas por el río Mius – Isidoro Villena (in Spanish)

Mine and Countermine Operations in the Battle of Kursk-Andrew Remson and Debbie Anderson

Panzerkorps Grossdeutschland, Vol. 2-Helmuth Spaeter

Red Army Handbook, 1939-1945-Steven J. Zaloga and Leland S. Ness

Retribution: The Soviet Reconquest of Western Ukraine, 1943-44 - Prit Buttar

Soviet Defensive Tactics at Kursk, July 1943 (CSI Report No. 11) - Colonel David M. Glantz

Soviet Order of Battle WWII: Vol. 1 “The Deadly Beginning”

Soviet Tank, Mechanized, Motorized Divisions and Tank Brigades of 1940-1942 - Charles C. Sharp

Soviet Order of Battle WWII: Vol. 2 “School Of Battle” Soviet Tank Corps and Tank Brigades January 1942 to 1945 - Charles C. Sharp

Soviet Order of Battle WWII: Vol. 3 “Red Storm” Soviet Mechanized Corps and Guards Armored Units 1942-1945 - Charles C. Sharp

Soviet Order of Battle WWII: Vol. 6 “Red Thunder” Soviet Artillery Corps, Divisions and Brigades 1941-1945 - Charles C. Sharp

Spearhead: Grossdeutschland: Guderian’s Eastern Front Elite - Michael Sharpe & Brian L. Davis

SS-Das Reich: The History of the Second SS Division, 1941-1945 - Gregory L. Mattson

Smolensk 1943 – Robert Forczyk – Osprey Publishing

Smolensk Offensive Operation (1943) - M., Military Publishing, 1975 – V.P Istomin

Stalingrad to Berlin: The German Defeat in the East - Earl F. Ziemke

Surviving Prokhorovka: German armoured longevity on the Eastern Front in 1943–1944 (Journal of Intelligence History Vol. 21, 2022 - Issue 1) - Ben Wheatley

Taganrog, August 1943- A. N. Zablotsky & R. I. Larintsev

The Battle of Kursk - David M. Glantz & Jonathan House

The Battle for Kursk 1943: The Soviet General Staff Study (Cass Series on the Soviet Study of War, No. 10) - David M. Glantz & Harold S. Orenstein

The Battle of Kursk: The Red Army’s Defensive Operations and Counter-Offensive, July-August 1943 - Richard W. Harrison

The Forgotten Battle of the Kursk Salient: 7th Guards Army’s Stand Against Army Detachment Kempf - Valeriy Zamulin

The History of the Panzerkorps Grossdeutschland, Vol. 2 - Helmuth Spaeter

The Red Army Handbook 1939-1945 - Steven J. Zaloga & Leland S. Ness

The Romanian Army of World War Two – Mark Axworthy

Third Axis Fourth Ally – Mark Axworthy

Tigers of the Death's Head: SS Totenkopf Division's Tiger Company - Ian Michael Wood

Viking Panzers: The German SS 5th Tank Regiment in the East in World War II - Ewan Klapdor

Zitadelle: The German Offensive Against the Kursk Salient 4-17 July 1943 - Mark Healy

NARA Rolls

T-78 R-407

T-312 R-1467

T-312 R-1475

T-312 R-1476

T-312 R-1485

T-313 R-50

T-313 R-53

T-313 R-55

T-313 R-56

T-313 R-57

T-313 R-61

T-313 R-62

T-314 R-235

T-314 R-587

T-314 R-588

T-314 R-816

T-314 R-831

T-314 R-832

T-314 R-968

T-314 R-969

T-314 R-1001

T-314 R-1493

T-354 R-642

Russian Army Staff Documents

Boyevoy Sostav Sovetskoy Armii - Combat Strength of the Soviet Army (BSSA), July through September 1943 - Voroshilov Academy of the General Staff

Boyevoy Sostav Obshchevoyskovykh Armiy - Combat Strength of the Combined Armies (BSOA), 1st - 10th - 20th August through September 1943 - Military Historical Department of the Military Scientific Directorate of the General Staff

Websites

Axis History Factbook	http://www.axishistory.com/
Combat Operations of the Red Army in WWII	http://bdsa.ru/
Feldgrau: German Armed Forces Research	http://www.feldgrau.com/
Generals of WWII	http://www.generals.dk/
German Documents in Russia	
Infanterie-Divisionen	http://www.diedeutschewehrmacht.de/infanterie%20division.htm
Lexicon der Wehrmacht	http://www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht.de/
Orders of Battle and Organisations	http://niehorster.org/
Top War	http://en.topwar.ru/

Credits

Scenario Design: Daniel Asensio

Project Coordinator: David Freer

Order of Battle: Daniel Asensio

Game Maps: Mike Avanzini, Dave "Blackie" Blackburn, David Freer, Bill Peters

Unit Graphics: David Freer

Situation Maps: Paweł Piotroń

History & Designer Notes: Daniel Asensio

The Operational Art of 1943 Essay: Thomas Wulfes

Getting Started Document: David Freer

Quality Control: Rick Bancroft

Play Test Co-Ordinator: Carlos Anllo

Play testers: Kevin Burton, Martin Cole, Jeff Conner, Paul Krystofiak, Klaus Kuhlmann, Dan

Moyer, Mark Nelms, Trevor Preston, Thomas Wulfes, David Yomtov