

KampfPanzer Expanded

by Charles C. Sharp

KampfPanzer is the latest example of the long line of tactical games in a modern setting. The game system used in *KampfPanzer* (and in *Desert War*) solves most of the problems associated with a modern small-unit tactical situation. Notably, the combination of simultaneous movement and "random walk" (Panic Level effects) finally builds in the confusion and uncertainty of small unit actions. The Panic Level effects also provide a technique for reproducing the variation in small unit tactical abilities long needed to simulate such situations as Russia 1941-42 or France 1940, where the tactical response of the units involved varies so greatly. All of this gives the *KampfPanzer* system a tremendous flexibility.

Unfortunately, *KampfPanzer* does not realize the full flexibility of this simulation system. Several of the most important elements of warfare of the period are left out of the game. Adding these elements is not difficult and provides a chance to test many more varieties of simulated situations. What follows is a discussion of the additions in counters and rules and the reasons for some of the additions and the precise manner in which they were added.

HORSE CAVALRY

Horse cavalry was combined with tanks and other motorized elements by the French, United States and Soviets in the 1930's, and the Soviets continued the combination right up to 1945. Many smaller armies, especially in eastern Europe, had large amounts of horse cavalry in service for most of World War Two, used with or in place of mechanized forces. Particularly in a game which purports to represent mechanized actions in their earlier development, horse cavalry must be represented.

Now, cavalry has some peculiarities to it which make it something more than just fleshy tanks or fast infantry. The horse is, after all, much

more vulnerable to modern firepower than a man because of its size, while its greater speed is matched by his increased unreliability under fire — the horse will not give up its sense of self-preservation due to patriotism, the way a man can be induced to do. Cavalry has also much lower firepower due to lack of automatic and heavy weapons and the shorter range generally of the cavalry carbines as opposed to infantry rifles. Cavalry, by the period of the twentieth century that we are considering, dismounted to fight — but the time required to mount or dismount can be included in the three minute, forty second period of the *KampfPanzer* Game-Turn, so separate mounted and dismounted units will not be necessary to add cavalry to the game. Finally, the maneuverability of cavalry is a special problem requiring special rules for the cavalry charge and the overrun combat associated with it.

A cavalry charge might seem hopelessly out of date by 1940, but in fact there are records of successful saber charges by the Soviets against the Germans and by the Hungarians against the Soviets during 1941-42. Such headlong attacks, because of the moral and physical impetus of the mounted man, greatly increase the close-combat effectiveness of the cavalry unit, while they also greatly increase the disorganization of the unit — not only the men, but the horses must be brought back under control to continue military operations.

The *KampfPanzer* rules allow for only one type of High Explosive fire, that of the 75mm cannon or howitzer in direct fire mode. Actually, even the earliest mechanized units included such diverse HE weapons as the 81mm mortar and the 105mm howitzer. Besides the range differences, there are distinct differences in the amounts of HE which each of these weapons can deliver to the area defined by the *KampfPanzer* game

hex in one turn. The 75mm weapon can deliver 1350 pounds of HE in 90 rounds, the 105mm 1500 pounds in 60 rounds, and the 81mm mortar 1100 pounds in 180 rounds in a single Game-Turn's time scale. It is reasonable, therefore, to make some distinction between the effects of three such diverse types of weapons.

ARMORED CARS

Armored cars were an integral part of virtually every early motorized or mechanized formation, and were frequently combined with horse cavalry as well. Essentially, the armored car is a tank on wheels, with the mobility of a truck and at least in the period 1935-40, armor and armament equal to that of the light tank or tankette. Originally, the armored car was envisioned as the true successor to the horse cavalry in the roles of reconnaissance and screening, and the armored car became the most common mount of the "mechanized" cavalry in the mid-twentieth century.

TACTICAL AIR SUPPORT

Perhaps the most important innovation in warfare in this century, short of atomic weapons, was the combination of tactical air support and mobile mechanized forces. This combination started back in World War One, when the German "schlachtflugzeuge" strafed and bombed enemy front-line positions prior to an attack, and Allied light bombers strafed and bombed roads, bridges and artillery positions behind the lines. Between the two world wars, many air forces, notably the British and French, spent a great deal of time and effort developing special planes like the Hawker Hart for light bombing and close air support.

Tactical air support, for our purposes, is of three types:

1. Level bombing, characterized by some inaccuracy of delivery but able to affect a wide area due to the number and size of bombs dropped.

2. Dive bombing, characterized by considerable accuracy but pinpoint effect due to only one bomb per plane usually being available.

3. Strafing, which in our period (1935-41) was for all intents and purposes performed entirely with rifle-caliber machine-guns. Strafing is characterized by a linear pattern of effect following the firing pass path of the plane, and extreme disruption of unarmored targets, caused by masses of men and animals' instinctive attempt to scatter to shelter while under strafing attack.

Tactical air support has one other characteristic which is, perhaps, its major drawback: unreliability. Weather, poor communication, bad navigation or missed ground-air identification can all cause "tac" air to be at best unavailable and at worst used against the Friendly forces. World War Two is full of instances where the tactical air support expected either did not appear or appeared and bombed the wrong side by mistake.

In addition to allowing new scenarios to be put together, these new rule concepts may be used to balance the scenarios provided with the original game. This is particularly true of airpower, which may be added on to the weaker side as realistically-available increased firepower.

It is not easy to tell what will balance a scenario, since the usefulness of the various types of airpower varies with the targets to be engaged. Basically, however, level bombing and strafing are useless against mobile armored forces, strafing is useless against entrenched troops, while dive bombing is effective against any target but is not realistically available to all opponents in 1940.

For example, several of the more unbalanced scenarios can be quite legitimately balanced. Bain-Tsagan Hill (scenario 14.3) can be fairly evened up by adding four level bombers to the Japanese order of battle. The Japanese Army Air Forces did not use dive bombing at that time, but the Japanese Navy did, so by stretching things slightly, you could use dive bombers in place of the level bombing attacks. This, however, tends to unbalance the game in the opposite direction.

In the Summa Scenario (scenario 14.5) the Soviets could be given air power to even things up — anything except dive bombers, which they did not employ at the time. The trouble here is "panic"-affected aircraft can do more damage to the attacker than they do to the defender — especially if they end up strafing the Soviet infantry. This scenario is liable, therefore, to wind up as a game of chance.

In all the German scenarios any type of air support can be added to the German side, but only in the hypothetical Czechoslovakian

scenario (Scenario 14.2) would it be legitimate to give any air support to their opponents — after all, close and continuous air support was one of the mainstays of the "blitzkrieg" system. Only the Flaviion scenario (Scenario 14.7) actually warrants any balancing, and there two dive bombers with one additional strafing pass each are usually more than enough to edge the scales over in the Germans' favor.

Of course, any scenario can be "player-balanced" for you and your opponent by adding air support to one side or the other. However, remember that a little goes a long way — two or three bombers can completely destroy or neutralize the artillery or anti-tank support for a force for the most critical part of the game very easily. The small forces represented in the *KampfPanzer* scenarios are not likely to have had massive air support available to them anyway — especially not in the period 1935-40, when the entire ability of air forces to deliver such support was much less than it became later in the war.

EXTRAPOLATING TO OTHER GAMES

A final note: no doubt some people out there are already considering how to apply *KampfPanzer* rules and system to the earlier tactical games, such as *PanzerBlitz* or *Combat Command*. The rules suggested here would remain applicable for any scenario up to the present day, with the following changes.

1. After 1942 most strafing would become two or three Strength Points per hex of "M" type fire. Some of the special "tank busting" aircraft, like the Ju-87G or the Hawker Typhoon, could be given an "A" type of five or six Strength Points. "A" type firepower from aircraft should be slightly inflated because for the most part the aircraft is attacking the weakest armor on the tanks.

2. After 1941 most good infantry would try to fight tanks at close-quarters. This should probably be simulated by a "close-assault counter-attack" against overruns based on the Panic Level of the infantry unit(s). However, recent psychological studies have shown that armored cars do not have the terrifying morale effect that tanks have, and so are more likely to be engaged by infantry at close quarters. Possibly this special effect could be indicated by requiring a die roll equal to or less than the Panic Level to close-assault counter-attack, except against armored cars, which any infantry can automatically counter-attack.

SPECIFICS OF APPLICATIONS

AIR SUPPORT

1. Strafing.

a. Strafing affects three hexes in a straight line at the discretion of the player owning the air support for the scenario. Each of the three hexes is attacked with four points of firepower, "R" type.

b. Strafing is considered to be a direct fire plot. It affects only those units in the target hexes at the start of the turn.

c. Any cavalry, dismounted infantry or dismounted artillery in a strafing target hex in open terrain are automatically "D1" as a result of the strafing. This is the minimum strafing effect on such units, which may suffer worse effects as a result of the die results from the CRT rolls. Use the worst possible effect, in such cases.

2. Level Bombing.

a. Level bombing affects one hex, the target hex, and its contiguous six hexes as a "loose pattern HE fire" direct fire plot.

b. The target hex as designated in a level bombing plot may "scatter" according to chance. After plotting, but before any other fire is executed for the turn, roll one die for each level bombing plot and consult the "scatter diagram" (Panic Effects). The target hex will move one hex in the direction indicated by the scatter diagram and the die roll.

c. Level bombing affects hard targets in the target hex only, and only soft targets in the surrounding six hexes.

d. Level bombing, though an HE plot, only affects those units in the target hex and its adjacent hexes at the beginning of the turn, and has no effect on units moving through those hexes later in the turn.

e. All units in hexes affected by level bombing are considered to be stationary for the "H Results Table."

3. Dive Bombing.

a. Dive bombing affects one hex as a "tight pattern HE fire." The dive bombing is plotted and results are obtained just as if it were a normal tight pattern HE fire, except that dive bombing only affects units in the hex at the start of the turn, and has no effect on units moving through the hex later in the turn.

b. Dive bombing is not subject to scattering.

4. Reliability.

a. When rolling for Panic Effects each turn, roll an additional die for each air attack plotted for that turn. If the result on the die is less than or equal to the Panic Level of that side's ground units, the air attack "scatters." In scattering of an air attack, the target hex (the middle of the three for a strafing attack) goes for a "random walk" on the scatter diagram, just as if it were a ground unit affected by Panic Effects.

b. The target hex scatters in the direction indicated by the scatter diagram and the die roll for same until it intersects a ground unit of either side. The air attack then takes place in the normal fashion, against that unit, including scattering of level bombing plots. If no unit is intersected then the air attack does not take place that turn, and it may be plotted for the next Game-Turn, or any Game-Turn thereafter.

KampfPanzer & Desert War: A Wider View by John Fernandes

The following is a series of observations, suggestions, additions and ideas for players of *KampfPanzer/Desert War* who wish to widen the scope of the game system to include situations not included in the original version

as well as additional unit counters, rules and notes on tactics.

THE ARTILLERY

1. The artillery fire tables for *KampfPanzer* and

Desert War are different. This shouldn't present any problems if you realize that the caliber of the guns in the two games are different by several millimeters (as much as 30mm). To reconcile this difference simply

consider artillery to be divided into two-classes:

- a. 76mm and smaller caliber (see table I)
- b. 87mm and larger caliber (see table II)

2. In post-publication playtesting it was found that tank units, especially heavy tank units, can often run the gauntlet of opposing tanks and AT guns and rush the artillery pieces in the hope of knocking out much of the opposing side's firepower.

The rules as they stand do not provide for short range direct fire by large caliber guns. The Germans in Russia often found that their tanks and AT guns could simply not stop T34's and KV's when they first appeared. And these tanks would simply roll through this screen and close with the artillery which had to deal with them in a direct fire mode at ranges of 500 meters or less. The effect of a 105mm shell on a tank at less than 500 meters is, to say the least, devastating. Yet, the rules do not take this into account. Artillery has exactly the same effectiveness at 100 meters as at five kilometers.

To alleviate this annoying situation I have developed a simple means of improving artillery effectiveness at short ranges:

ARTILLERY RANGE EFFECT TABLE.

Hex Range	Effect on Artillery Die Roll
25 or less	subtract 1
12 or less	subtract 2
6 or less	subtract 3
3 or less	subtract 4

(See revised artillery fire tables: Tables I and II) Fire must be tight pattern; fire must be direct fire; table applies only if fire is to affect *only* units which *begin* their turn in the hex fired upon.

3. In the "New units" section, you will see several SP (self-propelled) artillery weapons. These fire like artillery and move like vehicles. They must obey artillery facing rules. SP units may change facing freely at the end of their Movement Phase, whether or not they have fired. Disrupted SP units cannot change facing.

4. In the "New units" section you will also find the Russian SU152 and 122mm field artillery. These are solely direct fire, close support weapons and may *not* use indirect fire.

5. The British 25lbr. (87mm) gun was mounted on a platform which allowed full 360° traverse. This weapon should be allowed to change facing freely at the end of any turn it is not panicked or disrupted. The same applies to the 88mm l gun.

REVISED ARTILLERY TABLES

Table I.			Table II.		
76mm (or smaller)			87mm (or larger)		
Die	Static	Mvng	Die	Static	Mvng
-3	D4	D4	-3	D4	D4
-2	D4	D4	-2	D4	D3
-1	D3	D2	-1	D4	D2
00	D3	D2	00	D4	D2
+1	D3	D1	+1	D3	D1
+2	D2	D1	+2	D3	D1
+3	D2	●	+3	D2	●
+4	D1	●	+4	D2	●
+5	D1	●	+5	D2	●
+6	●	●	+6	D1	●

INFANTRY

The Germans.

The Germans started the war at a fairly high level of efficiency and kept up that level until well into '43 at least. After that, increases in firepower kept anybody from catching onto the fact that the rot was beginning to set in. Therefore, I agree to the strength given German units in the game system.

The Russians.

Unlike the Germans, the Russians entered the war with something less than adequate tactics and weaponry. But, it didn't take very long for them to recover from the initial shock of the Blitzkrieg and begin the long climb toward tactical superiority.

The values given Russian infantry may be relevant to June 1941, but they are not accurate if the scenario in question is taking place in November of the same year. The "New Units Chart" includes several different types of Russian infantry, along with when they may be used.

Other Infantry.

The values for the other infantry in both games is relatively accurate (at least up to mid-'43). In the New Units Chart you will find an Allied infantry unit circa '44. This can be used to represent just about anybody on the allied side from 1944 on, with the exception of the Russians.

Additional Infantry Rules.

Certain infantry units should be allowed to close assault armored vehicles under the following restrictions:

- a. The vehicle must be in other than clear terrain.
- b. The infantry unit(s) must be adjacent to the vehicle at the end of the Movement Phase.
- c. The intention to close assault must be plotted for the infantry units that turn. (CLA) This takes place after movement and is not considered a separate operation.
- d. Strengths of Close Assaulting Units (may be added freely to any other plot):

German: 2 ('39-'41); 3 ('42); 4 (mid '43 on)

Russian: 1.5 ('41); 2 ('42); 4 (mid '43 on)

Allies: 4 ('44 on)

Terrain effects are not taken into account when computing Attack Superiority.

Infantry should be able to stack 2 high. In this state they attack normally but defend at half-strength (round up fractions).

Entrenchment markers should increase the defense of infantry (and AT guns) by 1.

The "counterattacks against overruns" rule should be kept in both games (*KampfPanzer* and *Desert War*), but units should use their close assault strength if they have one (see *KampfPanzer*, 9.68).

Russian infantry may be able to ride on tanks. They defend with a Defense Strength of 1. If the tank they are being transported by is hit by A Fire, the infantry scatters one hex at random. If the tank receives H Fire, both units are affected. The infantry unit is considered moving if its transporting unit is. If the tank receives R Fire, only the infantry is affected. Opportunity Fire, hit or miss, causes the infantry to scatter. In mounting tanks it must be plotted, and both units may not move that Game-Turn. In dismounting the tanks have their Movement Allowance cut in half.

TERRAIN EFFECTS

Trucks should expend 6 Movement Points when entering slope hexes. Since trucks are not on board when empty, this rule takes into account that trucks are always fully loaded. They, therefore, have more trouble climbing slope than AFV units.

AFV units should only receive 3 additional Points in town defense. This reflects the fact that they cannot get the complete benefit of buildings as cover and still be able to fire effectively.

Otherwise, I find terrain effects acceptable as they stand.

TACTICS

There is a great deal to say on this subject. In fact, it really ought to be the subject of a completely separate article. To really play the game properly, study closely the writings of Romel, von Melenthin and Liddel Hart. What works in the actual campaigns works in the game. I'm not going to conjecture whether the reverse might also be true.

That is one of the truly great things about the *KampfPanzer/Desert War* system. It really captures the flavor of small unit actions. With this in mind, here are some ideas.

Panic.

Anything worth doing is worth doing more than once. Always shoot at a target with more than one unit. Three or four units per target is a good idea if you really need to knock the thing out. If you really need a certain piece of ground, go after it with half your available force. This way you have a chance of taking it.

What this all boils down to is: With a high panic level, keep you objectives clearly defined. Don't compound your trouble by trying to do more things at once than you can handle. Mass your fire. Keep together but don't bunch up. *Don't* wait for stragglers!

The Russians in the last war had it pretty well figured out by mid '42. The tactics they developed worked equally well for them, the Chinese in Korea, and the Egyptians in '73; to wit: "When you are faced by a superior enemy, overwhelm him at a crucial point. Pour all you can into the breach. Dig in! Let him beat his brains out trying to get you out again!" Just grab some piece of real estate that your opponent can't do without and hold on. This forces him to do all the maneuvering. This practice necessitates giving the terrain a really close scrutiny. Watch for bottlenecks: road junctions, rough terrain he can't bypass, ridge lines. If you're lucky you'll find the ideal spot: good fire protection, with a good field of fire, in a place which cannot be bypassed. Mastery of "reading" ground is necessary in any good field commander (or wargamer) but with an unreliable army, it's vital!

The Mixed Assault.

Every player has his own style. And whether he knows it or not, this style becomes predictable to an observant eye.

Realizing the pattern of your opponent's actions is terrific. But, using a system that gives you flexibility combined with the greatest possible security gives you the time to feel out your opponent's style and thus control *his* plan. Always keep in mind, "You're playing against another person, not his pieces. They are just extensions of him." Always remember that any game is a friendly contest between minds.

Flexibility is based on mobility and foresight. Keep your tanks out in front. Light tanks first (when possible) then heavier types. Behind these should come the infantry and AT guns approximately one half Movement Phase to the rear (depending on speed and weapon range).

Lastly should come the artillery. For this you should find a safe position with good fields of fire and leave it there. The whole formation should resemble a fan with the artillery at the apex and the other units radiating from it. This gives you maximum firepower forward with the fast units out in front, but able to call on fire support whenever necessary to eliminate strong points. You might even say it resembles a hand with the fingers outspread. Anything that falls between those fingers is crushed against the palm.

Security is a function of interlocking fire and a good eye for ground. This formation is very hard to outflank. Even if you do, you're in for trouble. You are faced with increasing firepower as you near the apex until the "fingers" close in on you from all sides.

The Pure Tank Force.

The Allies are saddled with this formation in Africa. There's only one real tactic for this

force. Alternate firing and moving units. This sets up a sort of leapfrog pattern that is very hard to predict. It also retains some semblance of tactical flexibility. Somewhere around half your units should fire each Game-Turn and half should move. Your opponent's artillery won't have any sure targets this way except disrupted units, and it will be a while before he figures out what your objective is.

Defense.

There is an old maxim, "He who would defend everything, saves nothing." Don't spread your units all over the map, but don't bunch them up. "Read the ground." Interlock your fire. Don't lose your nerve! When the reinforcements arrive, use them as a group with some positive goal in mind.

Tank-to-Tank.

Don't over-kill. Keep your priorities straight and you can't go too far off.

- a. Set out to disrupt as many enemy units as possible;
- b. Give undisrupted units priority when allocating fire;
- c. Then, and only then, build the disruptions into D4's.

By disrupting as many enemy units as possible as early as possible you destroy his mobility. By repeatedly hitting any units that become undisrupted you keep your opponent off balance. Now the artillery (if you've got it) can easily pick off the disrupted enemy units while your tanks keep everybody else from returning to normal.

Parting Shots.

I really think the *KampfPanzer/Desert War* system is great (And I own 12 sets of *PanzerBlitz* counters!). The possible variations are endless. The scope is limitless. And it's fun! Two little things though:

1941 Breakout Scenario:

German mixed Assault force defending; Russian tank Assault force attacking (no artillery). Russians get Points for each unit that gets past the Germans.

Katyusha: Russian Rocket Artillery.

This may be used once per game. Pick a target hex. "Katyusha" fire affects it and the six hexes around it. Now, roll the die for each of the seven affected hexes. A roll of one and the hex is impacted. Anything else and the fire on that hex scatters 1 or 2 hexes in a random direction.