**URANUS**

Explanatory Notes

By H.J. Baltjes

**Introduction**

The present scenario covers the first five and a half days of operation ‘Uranus’, the Russian two-pronged attack on the German 6th Army near Stalingrad on November 19th, 1942. The scenario is 220 turns long, lasting from the initial assault of the Northern Soviet wing on the 19th through the tight encirclement of the Germans on November 24th.

The scenario is predominantly inspired by “Stalingrad ‘42”, a John Tiller Game of the *Panzer Campaigns* Series (HPS simulations). Further, several other sources (books, internet sites, data bases, road maps, etc.) were used to develop this scenario. The most important were:

* Antony Beevor: *Stalingrad,* 1998; Viking, London
* John Erickson: *The Road to Stalingrad*, 1985; Panther Books
* James F. Dunnigan (editor): *The Russian Front, Germany’s War in the East, 1941-45,* 1978; Arms and Armour Press
* Stephan Walsh: *De Hel van Stalingrad*, ?; Zuidnederlandse Uitgeverij N.V.
* Wikipedia
* [www.stalingrad.net](http://www.stalingrad.net)

The scenario is a very large one; it has 300.000 hexes (500 x 600) and over nineteen thousand units (counters).

As previous experience with large scenario’s has shown that the limits of the memory capacity on my computer ( 1 GB) might have been reached when playing and/or developing them, I considered it necessary to take some measures that could probably reduce the memory requirement. These measures will be briefly outlined in the following chapters.

The scenario comes, beside these Explanatory Notes, with an Excel-file with a full Order of Battle of the forces involved, a highly important ‘time table’. It is strongly advised to print the **‘Time Table’** since it contains all information on one of the specific features of this scenario:

* ***Variable visibility***

The other specific feature is:

* ***variable- and conditional supply***.

Both features will be discussed in depth later on.

**Map**

The map is North-South orientated; South at the bottom, North at the top. Its size is 500 x 600 hexes (w x h) with the standard hex width of 250 meters. So, the total area covers about 18.750 km2. The delta-value – the difference in height between adjacent height classes - is 20 meters.

It can be observed that some full-river-hexes of the Volga-river ‘bordered’ by hex-side rivers when adjacent to land hexes. For example hex 444,359 and hex 441,358. This is done because of the fact that at many places, the Russians had ad-hoc ‘pontoon-bridges’ at these sites in earlier stages of the battle for Stalingrad. Such crossings were barely to be denominated as bridges; they were more often than not just a bundle of poles capable of bearing foot-moved soldiers to reach the western shore of the river. One such a crossing is still to be found running from hex 470,320 to hex 473,322. Note that in this two-hexes-wide river, the mid-river hex side is also a river hex side (provided with a light brigde for enabling crossing that hex side).

Bridged full-hex rivers have at least a hex-side bridge (mostly a heavy bridge) at each of their ramps over the hex-side river. Otherwise, the bridge won’t function. This ‘construction’ makes bridge blowing and –rebuilding over full-river hexes possible. Some of such bridges will also have one (or more) heavy bridges at each of their full water hex sides. For example, the river at Kalach, the 3 three hexes wide river Don, has four heavy bridges hex sides crossing a major river hex side. The first connects the ramp-hex 110,371 with the river hex 111,371. The second connects the river hex 111,317 with the river hex 112,370. The third connects the river hex 112,370 with the river hex 113,370. The fourth connects the river hex 113,370 with the ramp hex 114,369. Remark that there are no bridges over the Don river near Krasno’skiy (65,460 – 69,462) and near Verkhne-Chirskiy (19,479 – 19,483), although the major river hex sides are present. The reason for this will be explained when discussing *variable- and conditional supply*.

**Order of Battle (OOB)**

The OOB of ‘all’ units involved in Uranus is given in the ‘Uranus.org’-file. Some of these units, however, are not incorporated into the scenario itself. These units have the suffix NUITS; **N**ot **U**sed **I**n **T**his **S**cenario; they entered the battlefield after 24th of November, the last day of the scenario.

The number of units is large: 6668 Axis and 12473 Allied units, including all kinds of transport, HQ’s and commanders. To reduce the number a little, quite some units are ‘squeezed’; for example, 3 platoons of 3 T34’s each have been ‘squeezed’ into one platoon of 4 and one platoon of 5. Later I found out that HQ’s of artillery units do not have any function in supply, thus could have been deleted from the OOB (as I nowadays normally do!).

The ‘Volga flotilla’ is important in ferrying units over the Volga river. This flotilla consisted of a large variation of vessels, each one with its own characteristics. Be aware of that!

**The scenario**

**Varying visibility**

In the time-table it is indicated whether the turn is a night-turn, a day-turn or a dusk/dawn turn. Each type of turn has its own visibility range, given at the bottom of the time table.

To change the visibility, the game should be closed (and saved!)after resolving the Russian artillery bombardments (if any) of the appropriate turn. Then, the Russian player opens the ‘battle-file’. This can be ‘*Uranus.btl*’ for a Human vs. AI Game; ‘*Uranus.btt*’ for a Hot-Seat Game; ‘*Uranus.bte*’ for a PBEM-Game, etc,. Let’s give it a general name: ‘*scenarioname.btx*’.

To open this .btx-file, Notepad is used as default, but any word processor will do.

The top of the *.btx*-file looks like:

*11*

*Uranus*

*6 0 0 1650*

*2 3 0 2 8*

*324 622 7411 1270 90 80*

*0*

*1000 3000 4500 8000 0*

*90 80 0 1885*

The last figure in the second row under the scenario title is the visibility range in hexes. (Here given in red). Just change it into the correct number (e.g. ‘1’ at night turns; ‘4’ at dusk/dawn turns). Save the file and start the game. You will see that the visibility is changed now into the correct range.

**Variable and conditional supply**

The German supply-situation was rather good at the beginning. Although supply routes were long hard, the winter has at least driven away the terrible mud. However, during the operation the supply became more and more fragile and at the end, when the 6th Army war surrounded, only the Luftwaffe was able to send some supply via the airbases Pitomnik, Gumrak and the airstrip Stalingradksi. Supply was determined by possession of the bridges and ferries across the river Don. If these crossings fell in Russian hands a supply penalty for the Germans will be effected.

There are three functioning ‘second road’ bridges over the Don. Each one that falls in Russian hands (that is one or both riverside(s) are owned by the Russians), will mean 5% less supply for the Germans.

There is one functioning ‘main road’ bridges over the Don. If this falls in Russian hands (that is one or both riverside(s) are owned by the Russians), the German supply level will be lowered by 20%.

There is one functioning ‘railroad’ bridges over the Don. If this falls in Russian hands (that is one or both riverside(s) are owned by the Russians), the German supply level will be lowered by 15%.

There are two ferries over the Don. If these **both** fall in Russian hands, 5% is subtracted from the German supply level.

At the other hand, as mentioned above, there are two sites where bridges can be build over the river Don. Near Krasno’skiy (65,460 – 69,462) and near Verkhne-Chirskiy (19,479 – 19,483). If the German player is building a proper river crossing at these sites (that is; a bridge has to be built at each ramp!), his supply level will increase with 5% per crossing successfully established.

Summarizing:

Vertyachiy 241,240 – 245,242 -5%

Luchinsky 215,260 – 215,264 -5%

Kalach 110,371 – 114,369 -20%

Pyatiizskiy 97,416 - 101,418 -5%

Krasno’skiy 61,470 – 65,472 -15%

*Gelubinskiy 135,304 – 135,308*

*+ +*

*Rubezhny 98,349 – 102,347 -5%*

Krasno’skiy 65,460 – 69,462 +5%

Verkhne-Chirskiy 19,479 – 19,483 +5%

For the actual change of the supply values in the scenario, we have to go again to the btx-file. In the 4th row below the scenario title you see a number of figures. The last two represent the supply levels for the Allies and the Axis respectively. In the table below, these are illustrated with a green figure (Allies) en a red figure (Axis).

*11*

*Uranus*

*6 0 0 1650*

*2 3 0 2 8*

*324 622 7411 1270 90 80*

*0*

*1000 3000 4500 8000 0*

*90 80 0 1885*

So, the German supply can vary from 90% (all Don crossings are operational and in German hands) to 25% (the Luftwaffe has to keep its promise).

The Germans start with 80% supply, the Russians with 90% (they have build up huge stockpiles and are more capable in transport under harsh weather conditions).

I will not give a ‘Players Notes’ this time. The only thing I want to say is that you should carefully study the capabilities of all your units and use them wisely (What a open door, isn’t it?).

Hope you enjoy the scenario,

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