

"Desperate Yuletide"



Zhitomir, Ukraine — December 25th, 1943

On December 24th, Soviet General Vatutin's 1st Ukrainian Front launched a massive offensive against the German positions east of Zhitomir. Vatutin succeeded in tearing a hole in the German front. On Christmas morning, the German 8th Panzer Division found itself surrounded. With fuel and ammunition dangerously low, the Germans decided to make an immediate breakout. German General Balck dispatched various kampfguppen to assist the efforts of the German 8th and 19th Panzer Divisions to escape the Soviet encirclement. As falling snow blanketed the woods, the German 8th Panzer Division streamed towards the safety of German lines. With few roads available, it was inevitable that contact with Soviet defenders would be up close and personal. Scattered Russian units tried desperately to move into blocking positions to stop the breakout.

Board Configuration:

37



VICTORY CONDITIONS: The German Player wins at game end if he has exited more VP off the south board edge than the Russian Player has accumulated CVP. If not, then the Russian Player wins.

Russian Player sets up first	+	1	2	3	4	5	6
German Player moves first		★					

Elements of 8th Panzer Division (ELR 5) (SAN 2) (Setup: enter Turn 1 on the north edge of Board 37)

12
3
2
4
2
3

Elements of 8th Panzer Division (ELR 5) (Setup: enter per SSR 2)

3
2
2

Elements 1st Tank Army (ELR 4) (SAN 3) (Set up on Board 37 on or south of Hex Row T)

8
2
3
4

Elements of Penal Labor Battalion (ELR 2) (Setup: enter on Turn 1 on the south edge of Board 37 & SSR 4)

2

Elements 3rd Guards Tank Army (ELR 4) (Setup: enter per SSR 3)

4
2
4

Special Rules/Notes:

- EC are Ground Snow with no wind and falling snow. All water and marsh hexes are frozen. Falling snow is in effect every turn irrespective of the Wind Change DR.
- The German Radio controls the entry of the German Reinforcements. After establishing Radio Contact, the German Player can choose to bring the reinforcements onto the game board the very next turn with the following stipulations. On Turn 1, Radio Contact roll is unmodified and the next turn, the reinforcements enter on the A6 Road / on Turn 2, Radio contact is modified by a -1 and the reinforcements can enter on the A6 Road or the I1 Road / On Turn 3, Radio contact roll is modified by -2 and the reinforcements can enter on the A6 Road, the I1 Road, the Q1 Road or the Q10 Road / On Turn 4 or later, the Radio contact roll is modified by -3 and the reinforcements can enter on the A6 Road, the I1 Road, the Q1 Road, the Q10 Road or the Y10 road. Should the German player fail to establish radio contact or break the radio, the reinforcements are lost.
- During each friendly Rally Phase, the Russian Player rolls 1d6 to determine entry of the reinforcements. If the roll is less than the current turn number, the reinforcements enter that turn.
- The Russian Penal Labor Battalion may construct a roadblock after declaring its construction on two consecutive Prep Fire Phases. Only one roadblock may be constructed.



Aftermath: The falling snow helped muffle the sound of the German retreat and limited visibility, which resulted in fierce close combat encounters throughout the wooded terrain. Isolated Russian units attempted to slow the retreating Germans long enough for reinforcements to help seal the exits. On the German side, constant communication was maintained by the various escape groups to ensure that all German units were able to move towards openings in the Russian defenses. By the evening, both the 8th and 19th Panzer Divisions had escaped from encirclement. It had been a Christmas to remember.