

## But can the Combat! game system do Kursk...

A few comments about what's in the Combat! 'can' and not obvious from the Normandy presentation to date. I chose to avoid \_needless\_ detail in the armor rules for Combat!. The idea is to allow the gamer to manipulate a company or two of tanks with his focus on getting 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon to this or that hill, hamlet, etc. and dealing with battlefield situations. Simplifying does not mean important factors were not taken into account. The design analysis took into effect the following AFV related information:

1. Target/Aerosols/Light/Optics and their effect on identifying bogies
2. Turret facing
3. Firing on the move issues
4. Machine gun armament

Let's look at the question of aerosols and their 'friends' for a moment as regards target acquisition. In a purely 'weapon on target' analysis the only factor we might concern ourselves with is that of maximum effective range. Hal's tables, used in Combat! Normandy, (and the upcoming Tobruk: Silver Anniversary – this is all new data, BTW) take more aspects of the problem into account.

Line of sight (LOS) through what are termed "landforms" in LOS evaluation are pretty self-explanatory. We represent them through the on-map terrain depictions. LOS advantages for firers that are on hills and military crests, blind zones created by tall obstacles, etc.

After landforms are taken into account, an overall 'feel' for the battlefield we are depicting (desert, steppe, bocage country, etc.) is 'dialed up' to take into account dust and other aerosols and then the decisions begin along the lines of the ranges which the humans we are simulating can perform the following analysis of their environment: Detect – Classify – Recognize – Identify. Follow the examples: Detect – there is something on the horizon; Classify – it's got treads, not wheels; Recognize – it's a tank, not a halftrack; and Identify – it's a Crusader tank.

Then we get to the range when the word, "fire" get shouted by the tank commander. The ranges where that all happens is delineated on our fire tables with their percentages of K-KILL, M-KILL, F-KILL and SUPPRESS results.

A Combat! Kursk module at this level can do a couple of things. We can break some new ground in the depiction of armored warfare (heavy wine!) It can be fun and easily accomplished by 'zooming in' to a portion of the Kursk battlefield that is manageable from a gaming standpoint. A portion of the fighting along the Psel, for example. We have the maps and orders of battle.

But most importantly, the game system was truly designed for this presentation. The gamer did not see a lot of the above come into play in the bocage country of Normandy. Don't think the game can't 'do' armored warfare because we started your 'tour of duty' out with the paras in Normandy and the close-in combat ranges that battlefield entails.

Ray Tapio, wearing his designer hat

p.s. The natural question regards the choice to use the Combat! system for Kursk instead of Tobruk. Tobruk: SA will be followed by additional desert modules using its system. It was designed as a desert game and while we're adding new desert terrain, weapons systems, AFVs and scenarios to the original, it was never intended to simulate urban or Pacific Theatre warfare.

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