

Players:

Holger Schulz (D), Germany at +3, 6th EuroWifCon

Julien Sauloup (F), Japan at +2, 4th Con

Jens Christian Storgaard (DK), CW at +1, 2nd Con

Christophe Huart (B), Russia at -4, 4th Con

Sven Günther (D), US at -2, 3rd Con

Options : most of LoC15 options, 2D10, RAW Vichy rule, no warlords/friction markers, Chinese attack weakness, no Presence of the enemy, DSB (limited to half land units strength), no SS winterized, no Intel, no leaders, no PoliF.

Germany is set up heavily against Poland and Japan against Chinese Commies since Cheng Chow is left undefended. Poor debut of the German army in Poland (very bad rolls) but still overwhelming the Poles. Si An conquered in the first impulse whereas the remaining Commies are being outflanked from the north. In a surprise impulse, German cities are bombed with effect on war production. French cities will be badly hurt in reprisal. On German advice, Italy declares war on France to take several opportunities. First of them is a possibility of advance across the Alps into an empty hex. Béarn is sunk at port, Tunisia and Oran are invaded. The British don't bother and remain friendly to the Italians. German troops following in the Italian wake take position in the French Alps. The long and sunny turn allows the Japanese to kill one more communist Corps, to isolate Mao and penetrate Lan Chow, unopposed. Hurrah, Commies are out of the war fast! As a consequence, Shang Sha is evacuated by the Nationalists. Poland, Denmark and Tunisia are conquered whereas Bessarabia becomes part of the USSR.

N/D sees not fully defended Strasbourg taken in a frontal assault across the Maginot. With reinforcements sailed from Japan into southern China, Kwei-Yang is attacked from one hex with elite troops led by Yamamoto. The city is taken at the cost of the Engineers division and a WP Marine Corps! Yamamoto courageously (or stupidly?) rushes into the city though. The easy Chinese counter-attack fails with heavy losses and weakens the whole front. So was it a trap? Only Tojo knows... US are very aware of Japanese steps into China... French cities are still being bombed effectively. Meanwhile Italians continue their advance towards Algiers from captured Tunisia and build up their beachhead around Oran. Russian build up at the Persian border. Italian economy is boosted by German aid.

Belgium is attacked in March with Antwerpen taken by paratroop. More Chinese withdraw upon increased pressure: second hex on Chung King. Nice is taken by the Italians. That's nice. Heavy naval battles are fought in the North sea between the Kriegsmarine and the Royal Navy. Scharnhorst is sunk. More ships are damaged. Chung King is first assaulted in M/J but still resists. The German-Italian breakthrough in southern France and in the Ardennes with the French ARM killed. First hex on Paris. Still no Russian move into Persia, Russians seem prevented by something or someone in doing so. Obviously the Soviet ambassador in Washington is reporting home that the Americans really would not like a Soviet attack on Persia now... Partisans appear on Burmese oil, cutting supplies to the Chinese.

J/A. Metz falls. Nanning is evacuated. Two Chinese pockets remain: Kunming and the plains of inner China. 2nd attack on Chung King doesn't clear the city. Japan is now building up in Manchuria. Lot of action in France: Lille and Rouen fall. The (in)famous '14' is rolled on Paris giving the French a shot at the lone Rundstedt... Missed ! by the way, fourth hex on Paris managed before turn end despite of the very heavy British commitment to the continent. The usual Gort is there with his usual company, but Wavell has come up from Egypt, too, allowing in some more corps. And in late summer even Alexander enters as a third British HQ to organize the defence of southwestern France that is threatened by Germans and Italian alike.

A beautiful autumn and a double move allow the Germans to trap a lone Wavell out of supply in central France. The front extends along the Garonne with Bordeaux defended by the British and Toulouse by the French. Lyon also still holds out behind the lines; all the rest of France is gone. German seems definitely to go after Spain and Gibraltar. Kriegsmarine is being reduced to one capital surface ship due to furious battles in the Bay of Biscay, but is still not able to cut an oversize convoy line still going through there. Thus the British pocket also stays in supply. 3rd and last (failed) attack on the Chinese capital before China is surrendered, giving the US a hell of a lot of chits as a result of mass murders in every single Chinese city. Tojo is forced to demobilize (with concern). ALLIED FRICTION : China was surrendered against Mao's last will, and to the greatest damage to the planned Stalin's Far East Empire ! Will the Allies also surrender the USSR and the CW? Probably not.

N/D 40 is VERY short but brings hot action nonetheless. The Garonne is crossed and Italy finally declares war on the Commonwealth also. Italian naval bombers based in Oran take a shot at two lone British TRS in Rabat. These had just rushed in British peacekeepers into French Morocco to contain the advancing Italian army group Balbo after the fall of Algiers. Both British TRS are plainly sunken! The Italian frogmen have even a chance on a third British TRS in Belfast but miss. Nonetheless the British transport capacity is halved on one hit, and one of the remaining two TRS is even in the Indian Ocean. This will mean trouble for the oversized British expeditionary force still ashore in France! No return ticket bought, no Dunkirk evacuation in sight. Malta is assaulted by purposely built German Marines. The significant British fleet here has to rebase. The British troops and

resources transportation capacities are further targeted as Axis priority and severely battered as a TRS is again damaged and the tonnage of CP sunk by SUBs finally gets impressive. But still the link to Bordeaux isn't completely cut. US gears up their production very early, thanks to the timely surrender of China...

M/A 41. Greece is invaded from the sea by the German Marines from Malta searching for a new job. they are joined by the German PARA corps using the long range Italian Marsupiale transport planes. Germany concentrates on finishing off the BEF and does so. But another rolled 14 in the attack on Bordeaux itself cost much German blood also, including the fine 9-4 INF. The Führer is rampaging! And this attack failure even opens the way for a potentially even bigger catastrophe. The Allies feel invited to counterattack, even get a chance on a lone Guderian. But they have used up enough luck already (except for French land attacks) and miss. The Führer sighs of relieve. And this introduces the end to the British/French pocket in southwestern France. Losses are horrendous for the British: Gort, Wavell, Alexander, a PARA, a MECH, and several more corps paid with their lives in France. But strategically they achieve their goal of pushing the Germans of their time table. With the considerable delay reached in combination with the foreseeable early US-Entry, Germany decides to hold off from the originally intended attack on Spain and Gibraltar. But at least the French finally surrender their motherland and move their exil-gouvernement to Syria. Will the Allies also surrender the USSR and the CW? Probably not.

M/J 41 sees the Asian theater heating up again after the interlude of neutrality of Japan. After pressures at the highest level, Japan is prevailed upon not to make a pact with the Soviets, Japan has to anticipate and declare war, simply to avoid being crushed by the threatening Russian air and land superiority being brought into position in the meantime. So Soviet HQs are successfully preemptively ground struck. Manchuria should be safe for this turn at least (by the way, not the Japanese factories – Sapporo gets bombed by that nasty Soviet TB-3 away and is gone for ever !). So banzai on the Commonwealth now! The spectacular early US entry is just around the corner anyway. So next impulse, Singapore is caught off-guard (lone Territorial only – luckily ground struck and not less luckily put out of supply) and seized the shortest way by direct amphibious operations that one seldom sees in that spot only just before the underway reinforcements could arrive. Rabaul, Hong-Kong, Brunei follow, Malaysia is well-defended. At turn end, we have now a nice pile of 16 chits in US-Japan entry pool. War appropriation Bill passed. Greece is conquered, but had been a game of nerves at last! The Allies were systematically hunting for the Italian transports and convoys. Again and again Exil-French cruisers went on suicidal missions from Syria. sometimes they are joined by British. And they are quite lucky and successful on these bold actions! In two turns they sink one Italian TRS and then damage the other one. Just as they were needed for that Greece operation. Thus the Axis attack group there is barely reinforced. The original MAR and PARA are reinforced by Guderian on the last TRS passage and a MTN flown in by air, after that MTN has arrived by rail from the fightings in France and been reorganised by other transport planes. These four corps are enough for Greece with lot of German air support. but they still need supply! And the Allies continue to kill every Italian convoy that shows up! Finally on the last convoy the attack on Athens goes off and is successful! The Führer has to sigh of relieve once again. So the Balkans are to be freely shaped by the Axis. But all Axis ambitions in Northern Africa are gone for good. Balbo and his group later at least manage an orderly retreat using rails and casual supply to go back to Tunis.

J/A 41. US DOW European Axis. Following impulse Japan DOWs the US before being DOWed (Japan that saw the entirety of US chits sees that probability would be 80% - even without the fleet in Honolulu), taking out one US AMPH in Mendocino and a French TRS – the hunting goes on. Netherlands and NEI are invaded. No land attacks in Manchuria but Mongolian hordes cross the Chinese big wall after a long ride to spot a hole in it, i.e. they rode all along the southern border of Mongolia to stay in reorganisation supply until making their dash eventually into Lan Chow. Japanese troops can't even get railed in before as China is full of partisans (5 Res. blocked). That is what the axis got in compensation for the huge entry effect of the surrender. UK gets heavily strategically bombed to substantial effect. The Führer sings: "Bomben auf England", but will soon regret it when the British will start to return the favour.

S/O. Russia's starting to withdraw from Asia. Obviously they have some appointment somewhere else. CW is making active preparations to conquer the African horn. Italy is garrisoning Malta, Sardinia and Corsica. Build up at the Nazi-Soviet border.

N/D. US take initiative in the Pacific and invade 2 Marshall islands not occupied by japanese troops. Batavia falls to the Japs. Bitter naval air battles in the Med with a lot of LBA.

J/F 42. Germany DOWs Russia who chose a rearward defence. Speed bumps in Kaunas and Brest-Litovsk are wiped out. Slow and cautious advance. Skirmishes in the red sea between British and Japs. Supply from India to Suez regularly cut, but who does really care with no German-Italian threat of major invasion there. CW has been running short of CPs for a while and the shortage of shipping gets even worse with sinkings increasing as a consequence of the continuous enlargement of the german-italian SUB fleet, who both heavily invested in that stuff.. Over 50 CPs were sunken already up to that time since the beginning of war. Finally CW production will be hurt. AMPHs continue to be chased everywhere they dare to show up. Two of them (loaded) escape destruction just thanks to damage control. Germany halts at the USSR border in order to deny a production multiple and the right to rail factories. But they do start to stratbomb some Soviet cities, in fact even in the

surprise impulse, achieving several hits. The Italian Piaggio heavy bomber joins that fun. The alignment of Hungary, Bulgaria, Rumania, Finland and Yugoslavia drags on to March/April though since the shortness of the turns. The Germans even fear that the CW will try to interfere with that by moving back to Greece and bringing in four corps first just in time previously. But they do not dare such move in fear of damage to their scarce TRS. The Baltic States are also occupied in March/April. Not less than 9 Axis HQs are ready for the summer offensive into the Soviet Union, all German ones being among them. Italian Generals take over the defence of France for the time being. A lightly defended Tripoli meanwhile falls to the British. Indochina is conquered by Japan. M/J 42 begins by the worst weather possible. The snow allows anyway to get rid of the pesky Russian corps who thought to be safe in the swamps. And it allows to move into a good starting position to attack Pskov later. Disrupting totally the "swamps" defensive system of Stalin, which was mandatory with the full engineer rule (city defence more difficult), Minsk falls, Odessa at the second try (with factory captured) and Kiev also. But these attacks had used up a lot of reorganisation capacity and spread the Germans thin. They now fear for a Soviet counterattack which could be devastating. But the Soviets are anxious, too, and don't want to get caught on the west bank of the Dniepr at the start of the next turn. Thus both stay on their side and the front is stabilizing in the Ukraine along the river with Dnepropetrovsk staying Russian. Up in the north, a never-ending turn favors German infiltration in the Russian lines with very concentrated attacks. The resurrected Wavell HQ is finally ordered to Sudan after having spent 6 months on the Seychellian beaches. Asmara in Eritrea is successfully assaulted. It's still hot in the Med as usual, the Italian pilots of a Gabbiano teach us how to use a bounce to survive the fire of a Kittyhawk at +8 and get rid of it at -4 (with pilot). Japan is assaulting Vladivostok, which falls. As will Khabarovsk in a daring assault later in the turn. Blagovyeshensk and Lan Chow are encircled at the last moment thanks to the long turn in which the Western Allies declined to pass at first and are therefore lost by the cursing Russian when he sues for peace. ALLIED FRICTION: And was so rewarded to have sacrificed all his planned conquest to please the greedy American! Moreover the US refuse to send any BP to USSR and barely tolerate the CW lend-lease to the Bear (Russia received about 12 bp's all through the war)! In the meantime and next to this land war, action is warming up in the Pacific. Truk is port struck and Zuikaku avoids destruction. Nearing the end of turn, Japan commits the rest of her fleet to get rid of a lone US cruiser. But turn doesn't end and US send the fleet in the China sea, which was left without LBA-cover available. US don't find but Japan does and then aborts the sea zone to avoid a 40% chance of having its 11 CP here rampaged. Units in Japanese ports are saved from devastating port strikes only by ALLIED FRICTION, Russia summoning western allies to pass and threatening to declare war on Spain and all South American countries if not (although it remains unclear, how serious this was meant)! Turn then ends automatically. Prior to it, an emergency convoy had been sailed in front of the whole US fleet to make it possible to resupply the whole Pacific Japanese operations, avoiding total incapacity for the following months. By the way, Japan is able to build at full capacity thanks to the oil stored in her home islands.

J/A 42. Allied naval routes are still hard-pressed all around the world. Special accredited guest (Björn) whom the German lets make his search rolls finds five times in a row for the Axis in northern Atlantic, killing one more US AMPH among dozen of CPs. Russian front is stable along the Dnepr but the Germans are still progressing in the north with the successive fall of tough nuts such as Pskov, Vitebsk, Novgorod and finally Smolensk. Behind the Pripet marshes, next to Gomel, a well coordinated paradrop operation is successfully carried out, reducing the front length to the minimum possible, and sniping of some smaller Soviet troops remaining in the swamps to be mopped up later.. All seems smiling to the Germans who kind of opened themselves the way to Moscow, as it looks like on the map. 1st Australian MOT corps is entering Addis Ababa. Mugadiscio will follow, ending the sideshow campaign that consumed so much of CW attention and material. Weather clears in north monsoon and US invade Kwajalein successfully. In a gamble, Japan then tries out a small chance to isolate the US units in the Pacific and manages it for the moment but turn doesn't end before convoy lines can be reformed. All the ships on the Pacific map are now committed. In the Marianas, a fierce naval battle is fought, trading the Shokaku for the Hornet. Number of objectives controlled by the Axis is 21 in Europe and 13 in Asia. Will this be the Axis' high water at the halftime of the game? No changing sides though. Axis that turn produces at 76, Allies at 119, a 3 to 2 ratio.

S/O 42. hitherto neutral Lisbon falls to the Allies as Mc Arthur is driven away from Manilla. In a very good weather, except for besieging Leningrad, the Germans are now halting as they have reached very good defensive positions by now. Russia fails to retake ground. German subs off Norwegian coast clear Lend lease to Russia. After a long march of two years across the Sahara, the French Sudan Territorial arrives in Algiers as a liberator! At the first snow, Leningrad is assaulted (with OC) with no chance left to the Russians on a +24(!) with no cap for all the assembled MTNs, Finns, PARAs. and especially ENGs. Even without OC it would have been a +15, so this probably was overspent. But the Führer wanted to make sure on the first attempt. The MTNs were urgently needed to be put back into the main line when the Soviets started approaching benefiting even more from the snow weather. They demonstrate their ability by blitzing away a whole stack of stunned Germans (19 is rolled). A Guard banner is first created at this occasion. The Russians get one more chance for such a show in snow, before the weather deteriorates even further to blizzard for the whole remaining winter, stopping even the Soviets "cold". The French navy is peu à peu disappearing in the Med with three ships left. A hazardous landing of precious units in Sardinia goes through with allied luck as well as Malta is liberated afterwards. US subs are

suffering heavy losses in Japanese controlled waters. These Subs with the Russian and British ones have been acting throughout the war and they kept therefore a large part of the Japanese navy committed to convoy escort duty everywhere in the Pacific. This battle should be considered as a draw as much shipping sank but subs suffered equally – as did US/CW shipping, hit from Japanese raiders/subs. In a combined action Japan clears the Caroline Islands retaking minor port Ponape S-E of Truk, eliminating a (distant) threat on Truk. In retaliation Eniwetok is attacked by the US but Japanese troops are holding firm. With the new year US try again and almost conquer it but Yamamoto in person saves the day (and his ass).

M/A 43. Eniwetok suffers a double move and an exhausted Yamamoto gets eventually wiped out. Next turn Majuro (last Japanese port in the Marshalls) will be evacuated, the place being considered too dangerous. Kuala Lumpur in sight of the Japs for a year is finally taken. Resources hex next to it will follow. Japan only targets such limited objectives for now and tries to react to the US moves. Thanks to the won land wars which released troops for garrison duties, the Pacific is very well defended.

M/J 43. Risky Russian attack N-E of Vitebsk goes down again (5 is rolled) as at the same moment in Scandinavia 20 is rolled against a face down out of supply Finnish ski division; and bad luck goes on : 12 dice ground strike on Smolensk succeeding on a 4 or less... guess what, not a single unit flipped ! Germans ward off the attack. But only 2 impulses of fair weather during this turn in the Arctic zone didn't help neither. As was the weather for the all year 43, no snow ever and only 4 fair impulse for Russia. Smolensk is the fortified keystone of the whole German front, which otherwise follows fine geographical opportunities. Landings are now occurring in a lightly defended France. Nonetheless the original invasion is only one hex strong. Brittany is targeted (Lorient) and Brest is occupied with the capture of several SUBs.

J/A 43. Hero City Smolensk survives for the third time even enduring a double move and after having lost a fat INF corps in the prior turn (a 4 is rolled !). Hoping to get better luck in the south, Russian tries to cross the Dniepr N-W of Dnepropetrovsk and manages it. But the hex is immediately retaken by the Germans with a glorious 19 !! No Russian beachhead behind the Dniepr other than the city of Dnepropetrovsk itself which was held continuously. The Russian avenges on an INF Corps in Petsamo : again 20 ! again in the polar North ! Stalin claims to be the king of the tundra! well, definitely, that claim allowed... Luckily enough, the Germans are retreated in good order west of Brest in front of British tanks (a 5 is rolled!). In the meantime CW proceeds with an invasion of Sicily (Trapani), which turns very badly with only the Marine Corps surviving, but for how long ? Italian Coast is a death trap for the Allies. Italy finds and clears 19 points A2S and decimates the last remaining British AMPH among battleships, cruisers and transports. This leaves no chance to the out of supply face down British Marine Corps and the Canadian infantry (sent sooner as reinforcement from an aborted transport) which were killed by the local garrisoning forces. Sicily is free of Allies again. The Allies then stop their effort there and instead concentrate on France. Situation in France is barely brighter as ALLIED FRICTION upon the directions to follow leads to separate attacks. US debarkement SW of Bordeaux turns bloody with one survivor again. On the other hand, CW seems to want St-Nazaire at all costs (+4) and fortunately rolls an 18! Now the hitherto contained landing becomes at least a middle sized crisis to Germany. And in quality the Allied beachhead impresses with its high share of tanks. Brittany is almost completely secured with no possibility of counter-attack from the Axis; this being illustrated by a concerned „Where is your Panzer-reserve? it's July-August 43 !!“ from an observer close to the game. Well, they are needed to hold the Dnieper still. But several reinforcing ARM will definitely go to France now. Not much to report in the Pacific, Japan was able to port strike and damage the NSU unit in Kwajalein before it could extend the capacity of this port. A battle is initiated by the Jap in the sea of Japan (against the odds), only leading to the damaging of the Soryu. US lands a Marine Corps in New Ireland, in front of Rabaul. Next turn (S/O 43), Japan decides to chase off this pioneer, kills him by rolling the feared modified 14 but hopefully in blitz as the defender chose it to be able to retreat across the sea! CW goes amok and invades with Alexander in the Normandy to help for a breakout from the Bretagne, but gets killed by a risky German counterattack led by the I SS ARM Corps. This is the second experience of that kind for Alexander in France in this game.. Model (in charge with Graziani of the western front) is slaughtered right away in retaliation. The Russian uses the good weather and takes an air action flipping around, trying again NW of Dnepropetrovsk, a 4 is rolled !! It seems he won't get anywhere... ever ! The Soviet player gives a cute show of cursing in French language. “Incroyable... (uncredible)” becomes the flying word of that table. Land combat rolls have been extreme for a while, leading to disasters or, to the contrary, saving bad engaged battles. Total “shaving” goes on in North Atlantic with 12 CP going to the bottom or aborted, continues in Faroes Gap, and in Norwegian Coast too. CW production finally gets really affected. But the worst is still ahead... With the invasion attempt in the Mediterranean gone and no more threat there, the huge built up Italian air force including a lot of NAVs rebases up to France in two air actions. Now they go out to the North sea fishing for the former Alexander invasion fleet. Supply to the allied beachhead in the Bretagne is safe through the Bay of Biscay though. But still there is a jackpot to get in the North Sea!: Huge naval air battle with Axis superiority, many US fighters down. Another of the hunted down AMPH sinks, cruiser sinks. US courageously stays only to be found again with even more surprise: Bye bye Black widow, Transport and CV Wasp!

The game ends on these brilliant Axis successes and Allies bad luck. Axis still is on its high water from J/A 42 (Japan still wondering what she could do with her at-start OC). But earlier or later the Russians would start rolling. And the Allies were at least ashore safely. And the huge US production from the early war entry would

definitely continue to have an effect. This would have been interesting to play it out to the end as the situation remained very open and the game undecided. Everyone enjoyed it, perhaps even the somewhat frustrated Russian...who will remember some thought; when you get such allies (Ungrateful Selfish Americans) you don't need enemies☺ ! Stalin would have definitely liked to play further than S/O 43, to test himself the engineer, off-chit , snow , hq bonuses on the weakened German cities !!