

This is a game report of our first game played at EuroWifCon 2003. It started on Sunday and was conceded by the Allies on Tuesday in M/J 42. The report concentrates on the action i experienced in Europe and notably Russia. Someone may or may not supply more details about the Pacific, where as far as i was concerned not much happend that was noteworthy. I may have several details wrong, but be assured that this report is more correct than any of the wild rumors i have heard so far being told about this particular game.

The players were:

Germany: Kai Kunze (me)
Japan/Italy: Björn Steinborn
CW: Russ Craft
US: Rüdiger Rindscheidt
Russia: Eric Schultz

Notable options - 2D10 with all options, no Oil, no Pilots, no CVPs, otherwise pretty standard.

The Axis game plan was to take out Poland in 39 with overwhelming force, take Belgium with the PARA in the first impulse of M/A where aircraft can fly while leaving the Netherlands neutral. The first goal was to take Paris by J/A, and if possible a port on the Atlantic as well to base Italian ships there. Italy was to declare war on France in S/O 39 to help reducing their production and help out in the north in the summer, then send some SCS and the SUBs into the Atlantic and declare war on the CW after Germany provided a port in the Atlantic, S/O 40 if possible. Four good German corps were to be shipped into Albania during the winter and Germany would build the MAR to take out Greece in late 40 once Italy was in the war to provide supply, and if possible Malta as well. Suez was not contemplated as units used there would not be back in time for Barbarossa.

Japan would concentrate on China but be prepared to counter any early Russian adventures and assist Germany in a Barbarossa. US Entry was to be played conservatively. Except for the double Italian DoW and Chinese cities, no avoidable actions were to be made.

If everything went to plan to this date, Germany and Italy were to declare war on Russia in J/F 41. Forces would advance into Eastern Poland and Rumania in J/F and enter Russia in M/A. The goal was to take out Chisinau, Minsk and if possible Odessa and Kiev by M/A and to have both the army and the airforce in front of the Dnepr in the south and Vitebsk/Smolensk in the north at the start of M/J. Manstein was to be advance built in J/A 40 to arrive at Königsberg in M/J 41 and Balbo would assist with all Italian FTRs except the Freccias, two ATRs, the Stuka and the two LND-3 available at game start.

In the west, a garrison was to be kept sufficient to keep the CW from getting ashore in any useful place. Sardinia, Bordeaux and Denmark would get particularly strong garrisons, while the coast between Brest and Kiel would be weakly held as invasions there could be contained and thrown back by German reinforcements at this early date. Graziani and Badoglio would command the defense of France. All German and Italian SUBs were to be built to slow down the CW somewhat.

For the time after this - Caesar would have said "Alea iacta est", my desire was to give me the most secure position in the west and the strongest and earliest Barbarossa possible with a strong commitment to the west, and then we would have to see how the German army performed in Russia.

Production - in the first turn, Germany and Italy would build aircraft for France and SUBs. Germany would also build the MAR in J/F for Greece and possibly Malta. From M/A, all INF and as many MIL as possible were to be built. Rommel would be built in M/A and Manstein would be built in M/J. Other than these, Germany would only build the other ARM-Div and the two MECH-Divs for Barbarossa. Italy would build Badoglio for the defense of Bordeaux and a couple of NAVs and most or all FTR and an ATR and the Stuka for the Eastern Front. Germany would try to build all FTR and Stuka. All SUBs were to be built.

To summarise the game, Germany suffered some losses and setbacks, but essentially everything went according to plan until the second impulse of J/F 41. Thereafter, the German army outpaced my expectations. Russia could be considered dead by the end of M/J. Germany suffered huge losses in J/A by bad luck, several tactical mistakes and very skilled Russian play accepting risks in order to

salvage an impossible position but Russia still had to concede the Caucasus in the winter and would have faced the possibility of conquest in 43 had we continued. The US entered the war in S/O 41 and the CW invaded the Netherlands in that turn but evacuated again in M/A 42 in the face of overwhelming German strength.

Details -

S/O 39: Germany fails Ground strikes on Warsaw and Lodz (8 rolls on 5, no hit), but takes out Poland with no losses anyway. Italy DoWs France and lands at Oran to cut off the Resource. The Bearn is sunk by a port attack. During the winter, most of the French fleet is sunk by Italy with minimal losses due to several lucky search rolls. Axis Strat Bombardment reduces the French production to 3 BP, Allies retaliate with 3 hits on Germany. Russia demands Bessarabia, Germany grants all claims on Rumania. The Finnish Borderlands were not demanded in this game, nor the Baltic states. Japan fails a couple of attacks.

N/D 39: German army moves towards the west. During the winter, Graziani, Balbo, MECH, Mot-Div and several Italian aircraft are deployed in Germany, while some German corps occupy the French-Italian border and four corps are shipped into Albania. Wavell and Gort appear in France with a couple of units. Wavell stays well away from the front though. A German division occupies Cyprus. Strat Bombardment again reduces the French production to 3 BP. Japan kills several corps in southern China.

J/F 40: Unexpected fine weather combined with a weakly defended North Sea incites an early DoW on Belgium. A successful invasion would have allowed to ZoC Brussels. Allies find and damage the German AMPH from the 1 box and occupy Brussels. Germany assaults and takes Brussels in Rain on something like +8, losing the ENG to two dead Brits. Japan gets nowhere.

M/A 40: Poor weather in Europe, Germany does not gain much ground if any. Japan still gets nowhere.

M/J 40: A short turn with some poor weather, Germany kills several French corps but does not come close to Paris. The BEF is shattered. Japan finally takes out Cheng-Chow but faces a very strong Communist defense in Si-An.

J/A 40: Paris falls in the fourth(?) impulse, Germany also takes Brest and La Rochelle. The BEF evacuates with no further losses, no attempt to hold Bordeaux or Bayonne is made. Von Bock is railed to Italy, the MAR walks to Trieste, the PARA rails to Messina. Vichy is declared. Germany lost very few land units but about 5 planes in France. A Partisan cuts off basic supply to Brest, three Italian cruisers and a SUB return to base into St. Nazaire. The Frogman rails to Hamburg. Russia declares war on and conquers Persia. Japan declares war on Russia later in the turn and in the following turns occupy most of the Russian Far East which is weakly defended.

S/O 40: First Axis impulse Germany and Italy invade Greece, Germany establishes supply to La Rochelle. Second Axis impulse Italy declares war on the CW. Ships are sent all over the Med and the Atlantic and the Frogmen go into Plymouth. The Frogmen fail to find the port, while the Italian navy accomplishes the underwhelming feat of sinking 1 CP and damaging two cruisers. Greece is conquered by the end of the turn with no losses by an Italian division (with a little help from von Bock with 4 German corps), six convoys get away, four are sunk in the surprise port attack.

N/D 40: Malta is put oos and taken by the MAR, the PARA and a division. German forces take position on the Russian border.

A short overview on the deployment at this time - Germany has Guderian, von Rundstedt and Rommel with all armored units and most good INF and a very few MIL in the east. Von Leeb arrived by rail from Bordeaux in J/F, von Bock arrived on his own legs from Macedonia. Von Manstein arrived in M/J in Königsberg. A few more land units arrived during the spring from the spiral as well. Germany had every INF on the map and about half the MIL, with the remaining MIL arriving during the summer to reinforce the west. Italy had built no land unit except for Badoglio.

Balbo arrived in M/A by rail, and took command of several FTR-2, an ATR and two Sparviers. The Stuka arrived in M/J, the second ATR in J/A. Germany had only 2 BF109 and all Stukas and LND-3 in the east.

A couple of Rumanians were used in southern Russia. Mannerheim arrived with the Ski divisions in the RTB of M/A, the supercombined of M/J was used to ship in the 7-6 MECH and the TRS stayed at sea to ship in the 6-5 MOT in J/A also. These units were used in the Moscow area in the winter. Russia had a low odds assault or two at Petsamo in the fall which failed.

Denmark was defended by 4-5 corps and a BF109. France had Graziani near Brest, Badoglio (from J/F) near Bordeaux and several land units including the Italian MECH. Sardinia had at least 3 wp corps, Malta was fully stacked.

The Axis had the German 6-4 FTR, two or three German FTR-3 and the two Italian Freccias and 4 NAVs in the west, the 7 factor FW190 arrived in M/J.

German factories were defended by only 1-2 FTRs. A couple of strat hits were suffered during spring and summer, but that is almost impossible to prevent effectively prior to the nightfighters arriving anyway.

I felt very confident with the garrison in the west, I feared nothing for Denmark, Bordeaux or Sardinia, while Italian Coast was off limits without airbases and a landing between Brest and Kiel could be contained and thrown out again later.

Russia had a loose line in the traditional place and a few speed bumps up front. He was not prepared for a DoW this early but his army was in position to deal with it effectively. He had built few FTRs (probably the right choice playing without pilots) but a few bombers and a lot of land units.

The CW had an impressive army sitting around in England with an OC. They were short on airforce though. The usual invasion units were scheduled to arrive in S/O 41.

Germany would build Kesselring and the two 8-4 INF in J/F and Model and all available MTN in M/A in order to keep the offensive going in the winter with the MTNs and Finns and in the next summer with improved HQ power. A couple of ARM and MECH were to be built over the summer as well.

J/F 41: Initiative at +2 Axis, Allied initiative, Axis moves first, three impulses each. Germany and Italy declare war on Russia. Germany gets 3 Snow impulses. In the first two, the German army reaches the Russian border. In the third, Germany enters Russia and kills a number of speed bumps. This was not according to plan, but the demise of 4-5 Russian units combined with the chance to advance several more hexrows more than compensated the Russian production boost. Germany aligns Bulgaria, Rumania and Hungary, Italy aligns Yugoslavia. Germany conquers Lithuania.

M/A 41: Initiative at +2 Axis, Allied initiative, Allies move first, four impulses each (F/F, St/R, R/F, St/St). Germany takes Kiev and Odessa and crosses the Dnepr. In the north, three Russian stacks retreat a bit too slow and are encircled and crushed around Vitebsk. Germany aligns Finland. US play Oil Embargo.

M/J 41: Initiative at +2 Axis, Axis initiative, Axis moves first, four impulses each (F/F, R/F, F/F, St/R). Germany starts with a supercombined and crushes the Russian defense. In the third impulse Russia throws an OChit on Zhukov and kills two German stacks near Rostov. Poor weather in the fourth impulse saves that army group from immediate encirclement. A Russian unit sneaks back into Odessa. The first attack on Rostov fails. Germany ends the turn in front of Moscow, Voronesh and Rostov. CW reinforces the Pacific.

J/A 41: Initiative at +2 Axis, Allied initiative after reroll. Allies move first, six fine impulses each. Odessa is reinforced. The Russian double move allows Russia to extract the Army Group near Rostov. In the first impulses, Germans advance, Russians retreat or are encircled. Several dangerous pockets remain while Germans push east to destroy as much as possible of the Russian army before it can escape. German attacks on Moscow (+6, two flipped planes in the city, Timoshenko and Koniev in the pocket behind), Rostov (two attacks on good odds, three flipped planes and Yeremenko in the city),

Saratov (+10, one flipped plane and Zhukov in the city) and Stalingrad all fail. Germany uses an OC to reorganise HQs in the fourth impulse. An inadequately screened Russian speed bump in the north sneaks into Smolensk and almost puts the entire front oos. Smolensk is retaken, the only successful German city assault of the turn. Numerous German units end up flipped and partially oos by the failed assaults and several are killed by gutsy Russian counterattacks, including Rundstedt. Several planes are overrun, Axis supply situation is extremely tenuous. Axis uses global pass to end the turn. Partisans kill three more planes. Estimated losses in J/A are 60 German BP to 20-30 Russian BP.

S/O 41: Initiative at +1 Axis, Axis initiative. Axis moves first, four impulses each with some good weather. Germany rallies to the rear and takes Rostov and Voronesh. Russia consolidates around Stalingrad and Saratov. Japan declares war on the CW and lands near Rabaul. Allies declare war on the Netherlands and take Amsterdam and Rotterdam. A transport loaded with an ARM is sunk in the North Sea and another aborted with a MECH, the Bridgehead is contained. NEI is aligned with Japan. US declares war on Japan and sinks two CPs. Germany and Italy declare war on the US.

N/D 41-M/A 42: Germany takes out Moscow and sends a small army group towards the Caucasus. More and more German units arrive opposite the Russians. Russia abandons the Caucasus except for a strong garrison at Baku. Saratov and Stalingrad are garrisoned as Russia withdraws to the Asian map in the spring. The Russian army is less than 20 corps strong at the start of the summer. Germany aligns Turkey. The Allies withdraw from the Netherlands in the face of massive German reinforcements.

M/J 42: Germany advances on the Volga and Baku. After the second(?) impulse, the Allies concede the game. Russia faces conquest by 43 or 44, the Western Allies have no hope of landing in a meaningful place in 42 and Japan holds a solid position.

A thank you to Björn for perfect cooperation (i expected no less), to Rüdiger, Russ and Eric for a good game in pleasant company and to Eric especially for giving me a good fight as much as he could. The game was decided in Russia, but not because of difference in player skill between Eric and me, nor because any particularly good or poor luck on either side. The combination of a strong early Barbarossa 41 with the 2D10 table left Russia with no viable defense anyone of us could think of.

Gruß,
Kai