

AFTER ACTION REPORT

A Typhoon! on the Road to Moscow: A PBEM summary

BY JEAN-PHILIPPE BIRON and BENOIT LAROSE

As a tester/developer for Typhoon!, and a developer for Barbarossa: AGS, I've grown quite fond of the Typhoon! system. It really pleases me to see other gamers out there get excited about the system too. The following article is from two such players who let neither time nor distance (not to mention the quirks of the Americanese language rules) stop them! Thanks to the Internet, Jean-Philippe Biron in France and Benoit Larose in Quebec played Scenario Three through to a very, very close conclusion.

Tony Curtis

With three maps and 960 counters, **Typhoon!** is a large, beautiful and intense game with excellent historical hindsight and play value. With the hectic pace of modern life or simply when opponents are scarce in the area, it may be difficult sometimes to enjoy a face-to-face match of a game of that magnitude. However, play by E-mail can be a solution for the dedicated gamer.

Looking for an opponent to play on the Internet, I have found Jean Philippe on a Wargamers List. After a quick exchange of messages, we had a game going.

We chose to play scenario #3, the final push towards Moscow, because we felt it would be more practical to start with a smaller one. I had the *Aide de Camp* set for the game, a DOS program which allows you to play **Typhoon!** right from your computer screen, but Jean-Philippe didn't since he was using a *Macintosh* (*ADC* requires a PC system to operate). It was alright, though, because all I had to do was to print my moves in a file and send it to Jean-Philippe who simply executed it on his board and relayed me back the file with his own

moves which I updated on my computer. I was using the Roll Die feature from *ADC* and he used a Dice Server. We felt the overall flow of the game was very satisfactory, and so it went for 12 turns.

For those less familiar with play-by-email (PBEM) principles, it's just like the play-by-mail method except that the Internet is used to transmit the moves to the other player. You don't need a program like *Aide de Camp* to PBEM, but it helps, since the program does remove the need to keep the game set up on your table for a long period. *ADC* is just a tool and is useless if you don't have the set for the game you want to play, although *ADC* allows you to create your own sets. The **Typhoon!** set, for example, includes the maps with all terrain symbols and all the units. You can actually move the units on your "virtual" map with great ease. PBEM via the Internet also allows players using any computer platform to play. In our case I had a PC and Jean Philippe a *Macintosh*.

This is an after action report from both player's perspectives. Both players explain their moves and strategy in alternating paragraphs.

After Action Report

Scenario 3: Renewed Typhoon

This scenario links Scenarios #1 and #2 together into one common scenario. There are twelve game turns, starting with game-turn #24 and ending with game-turn #35. The first two game-turns are automatically Frost weather.

Soviet Initial Strategy

Benoit: My overall plan, as the Soviet, was to assume that the German would concentrate on two main spearheads only centered on Klin (2122) and the Istra Reservoir

(2326) in the North and obviously on Tula (3450) in the South. I felt, from previous playings, that the Germans could not sustain a wide front offensive, so I prepared to meet the main pushes, while trying to open sideshows between Kalinin (1216) and Redkino (1619) in the North and Aleksin (2846) in the South to draw away some Panzer units and attention. I was ready to lose Klin and even the Volga Reservoir (2316) in the North early in the game, but I was determined to keep the Istra Reservoir and Kubinka (2232). In the South, I knew Stalingorsk (4050) was to be lost early, but I was convinced Tula's survival depended on keeping it free of encirclement.

Axis Initial Strategy

Jean-Philippe (hereafter referred to as J-P): In the North, the plan was to concentrate a large armor force, poised to break through Klin (2122) and Istra reservoir (2316), then rush toward Dmitrov (2821) and, *why not* - to Moscow. This plan also aimed to force the Soviet to sustain a wide defensive front, taking advantage of their small number of units at start. The general tactic was to take the roads and try to not spend too much time in the forests, which slow down motorized units considerably. The idea to reach Bezhetsk (1702) was set aside from the very beginning. In North-center, the Istra reservoir (2326) was just a secondary objective, and you will see why as you read on. Only Kubinka (2232), much more accessible, was coveted. In South center, I had no special plan. Only some mechanized units and the 268 Inf Div were ordered to reinforce Tula (3450) and Aleksin (2846) areas. In the South, the capture of Tula and Stalingorsk (4050) were essential and, if achieved quickly, would be followed by a rapid push for Kashira (3740) and Serpukhov (3040). However, the Serpukhov-Tula rail and

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road lines had to be cut (imperative), to interdict all reinforcements coming from the Center towards Tula. This task had been reserved for the infantry.

Benoit: The northern drive was brutal, especially against Novo Savidovskiy (1820), where I lost several divisions and attached units, including the 30 Army HQ (a preventable loss). I tried to divert a portion of my forces towards

Redkino and Kalinin and even counter-attacked there, but this turned out to be a bad idea after all, with heavy losses suffered. I considered for a while to use my 1st Special Reinforcement Pool (see *Maslennikov Group Chart*) to go for Kalinin, but this remained a plan at the concept stage only, because his motorized units were threatening to break across the Volga and perhaps grab Bezhetsk (1702) for 1 VP in a possible mad dash to the north. So, I used the

Group, instead, to prevent that. I did, however, send 2 MSUs into that area to force the Germans to guard against the threat of an attack from the north, even if it never materialized.

J-P: So the Northern offensive was launched. 1st PzDiv, 14th Mot Div, 36th Mot Div and 900 Lehr pushed towards Redniko (1619), Novo Savidovskiy (1820) and Volga reservoir while 2nd, 6th and 7th PzDiv ran to Klin, through the forests

TYPHOON!

THE DRIVE ON MOSCOW, 1941

Scenario RENEWED TYPHOON GAME TURNS: #24 - #35

SCENARIO AREA: Map M

3

VICTORY CONDITIONS:
The Axis player wins automatically and immediately if at the end of any game-turn one or more of his combat units occupies any Moscow hex.


The Axis player wins at the end of the scenario if he has scored fifteen (15) Victory Points, as listed below. Additional VPs may be scored as a result of entry of special Reinforcement groups.

The Soviet player wins if he prevents the Axis player from achieving his conditions.


SCORE ONE VP FOR EACH LOCATION:

Babushkin	Kaluga	Lyuberzy
Bezhetsk	Kashira	Podolsk
Borodino	Klin	★ Stars
Borovsk	Kolomna	Serpukov
Dmitrov	Kubinka	Volokolamsk
Kalinin	Kunzevo	Zagorsk

SCORE THREE VPs FOR:
Tula



THE EASTERN FRONT
THE RUSSO-GERMAN WAR SERIES



By Rodger B. MacGowan ©1998

After Action Report: Scenario #3

and Kozlovo's road (1720). During the offensive, the 30 Army Soviet HQ was cleverly surrounded and destroyed. All in all, the Northern claw worked well, because Klin fell on Turn 28. The 14th and 36th Mot Divs took the Volga reservoir on that turn too, and 7PzDiv reached Dmitrov's gates on Turn 30 (2719, 2720, 2721 hexes). But, following the end of Turn 30, all Pz Divs had stopped their advance (after having formed a bulge in enemy territory) with mud and snow arrival, and stood completely stuck. So, 1st, 6th, 7th, 23th and 35th InfDiv tried to solidify the flank from 2720 to 2129, supported by 627th and HArko artillery. Dmitrov had unfortunately become impregnable, since First Shock Army did reinforce the town on Turns 31 and 32. The two Mot Div tried with several Inf Div to keep a front line going 2416 through 1017, including Kalinin (1216), and to counter a probable strike from 31th Soviet Army. First Shock Army settled down around Dmitrov awaiting the favorable moment to strike back. The counter attack finally came on Turn 33.

Benoit: The expected push on the Istra Reservoir never materialized. I did reinforce the area strongly, to no good use, with 2 motorized divisions and several tank brigades. These units simply killed time until the end of the game. What a waste. Some counter-attacks were made, but were highly ineffective. I only managed to lose armor steps, which (I had forgotten) counted against victory conditions.

J-P: In North-center, as I said before, Istra reservoir was not my first concern. An offensive in this area, in a direct axis towards Moscow, would have been a waste of time and would have been deadly. The positions were too strong (forests, hills and fortified lines) to be taken - they were also manned by a lot of strong and elite units.

Benoit: Perhaps... If I was really concerned that the enemy could shift the pressure towards the main highway and catch me off-guard, by

turn 30, most of my reserves were either committed in the North or South and not readily available to meet a serious threat near Istra or further south. Furthermore, a serious push on the main highway would have been difficult for me to stop, I think.

J-P: However, some local attacks had to be done for two reasons. First, to destroy a great number of armor units then impacting and slowing the Soviet war effort. Second, to bring constant pressure in this area to lead the Soviets into believing that a frontal offensive on Istra reservoir (along Novopetrovskove's road) was imminent and force him to withdraw troops from other areas, especially Kubinka.

Benoit: This stratagem almost worked. I was concerned, but not enough to shift troops to meet the challenge. Or, maybe it was, because things in the North were too bad already! But I did reinforce Istra from the Kubinka area nonetheless, and this was my mistake.

J-P: So, 5th, 10th, 11th PzDiv and SS/DR Mot Div marked time. They fought locally, waiting for the favorable moment to run a surprise attack on Kubinka, which very nearly succeeded. As expected, troops from Kubinka were withdrawn. 10th PzDiv and SS /DR Mot Div rushed towards the town and fought for it on Turn 31 (a 3-1 ratio, but a bad die roll result


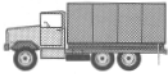






denoted an armor attrition, leaving only an armored train on the town). Benoit consolidated the town in a hurry, and as best as he could. Finally, Kubinka held on till the end. 2nd, 5th, 10th, 11th PzDiv, SS/DR Mot Div and Inf Divisions formed a line going 2024 through 2032, with an opening going through 2032-2333 2336 hexes.

Benoit: This drive almost caused a surprise at Kubinka. I was not prepared to face this and I was lucky to keep the damage to a minimum. The reason for this situation was I shifted troops from the Kubinka area to Istra too early.

J-P: In South-center, nothing happened except that 20th Pz Div, 3rd Mot Div, 276 Mot AA, 201 and 202 Mot AG, 505 Mot Eng and 268 Inf Div moved away towards the Tula Front. 19th Pz Div did the same on Turn 29, along with a lot of Soviet mechanized and cavalry units. This is why 260th InfDiv was placed two hexes from 3041-3042 Serpukhov road and rail hexes, slowing reinforcements from the center towards Tula. I thought for awhile that the Soviet 5th Guard Inf Div in 2841 would react, so I put 618 artillery in support. Here, two lines of infantry faced each other during the whole game. I knew nothing would happen here.

Benoit: And nothing did happen. I should have done something to keep Germans more than two hexes away from the Serpukov rail line, though, as a single enemy unit in 2841 prevented me to use railroad or strategic movement along that axis, which caused lots of problems as reinforcements from Moscow became available. I was tempted to strike there with infantry, but figured that this would only bring me troubles.

J-P: In the South, 3rd, 4th, 10th PzDiv and 10th Mot Div first fought for Tula and Stalinogorsk. After a good blitz offensive in the first turns, 4 PzDiv reached the gates of Stalinogorsk on Turn 25, 17PzDiv had surrounded Tula from the East, while 3PzDiv and 10th Mot Div did it from the West. 20PzDiv and 3rd Mot Div were on the

Maslennikov Group ORGANIZATION			
		SPECIAL REINFORCEMENT POOL	
		Cost = 1 VP	
Game Turn 28	119 4  4-4-4 N2029	243 4  3-4-4 N2325	250 4  4-4-4 N2334
Game Turn 31	262 4  3-4-4	Maslen 2  2-3-5 N2027	54 3  3-2-6

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road (19PzDiv came later). I had two solutions. First, to take Stalinogorsk for 1VP and run towards the North (cutting roads and railroads) through Venez (3946), then interdict Soviet Supply and Reinforcements for Tula. This would also have opened-up for me the possibility to rush towards Kashira, creating disorder behind Soviet lines. But it would have been difficult to sustain a wide front, becoming wider and wider, with a limited number of units. This would have also have decreased the number of units allocated for the fall of Tula. The second solution, more tempting, was to go for Tula and only for Tula, which is the key to victory in Scenario #3 anyway (because it is worth 3 VPs). So, the new plan was to concentrate all the German Southern forces on Tula, leaving Stalinogorsk under Soviet control. Then 4PzDiv would be retreated. The following tells us that it was a bad idea, as the lack of Stalinogorsk's 1VP impacted cruelly on the final score. Successive attacks, in the first turns, on Aleksin and its area were inefficient, and weakened considerably my Inf Divs. Furthermore, these Infantry units would have better been placed around Tula. With motorized units alone around Tula, during snow weather they projected no ZOCs into adjacent hexes. This error allowed the Soviet to regularly reinforce Tula with fresh troops. It's very disheartening to eliminate 4 steps on Tula (with 1 step remaining) and find again 5 steps on the next Turn!!

Benoit: This was a turning point, from my point of view. I was convinced Stalinogorsk would fall during turn 2 and I was worried, since this meant that I would eventually lose the Venev-Tula highway for lack of defending units (presumably lost in the fight for Stalinogorsk). So, I closed my eyes and then, when I opened them again, the Panzers returned towards Tula! A siege he wants, a siege he will get... Because he neglected to use infantry around the city, I was able to pour new units in when snow (and the loss of ZOCs for motorized units) arrived. I was in control of both northern highways leading to the city and it took much effort for him to actually be able to

isolate the city, although I managed to put 5 steps in before the noose was tightened. Here again, I lost an HQ unnecessarily.

J-P: Tula held on 'till the End!!! Attack efforts were put in all along the line against hexes 3348, 3548, 3449, as well as on Tula. After alternating losses and conquests of 3348 and 3548 positions, trying to surround Tula (although keeping pressure on it), 3449 hex finally fell on Turn 33 (with a grateful "1" die roll). Tula was now completely surrounded. Positions 3248, 3348, 3549, 3649, 3749 and all six adjacent Tula hexes were held by German units on Turn 33. The plan was nearly completed, but there were only two Turns remaining to make Tula, still defended by 6 steps and 13 Defense Strength points, fall. I prayed to the dice and weather gods. Turn 34 was a Storm weather turn and despite the absence of Soviet air support, only one step was eliminated, decreasing Soviet strength points total to 11. On Turn 35, all of 4th, 17th, 19th, 20th PzDivs, 3rd and 10th Mot Divs gave battle with -3 DRM. Unfortunately, there was no Storm weather, and even with my 276AA aborting a Soviet aircraft, two other planes remained available for ground support, giving a +2 DRM. Then the final battle (6-1, -1 DRM) caused only 4 Soviet step losses and, eventually, a German defeat. I was short of one Turn to victory. Benoit can congratulate his Soviet Air Force!!!

Benoit: I survived many attacks in Tula before it got surrounded. I was lucky on two turns where the attacks were weak and did not cause too

much damage. I made several attacks myself with mixed results. I tried to open a new flank between Aleksin and Pashino where his Infantry was, but I failed, although Aleksin remained in my hands for the whole game. My 7th Guards Infantry Div. was stranded behind enemy lines in the process at 3250 (and destroyed), but I found it did distract him for a turn, so it was worth it. His ability to attack with Panzer Integrity DRM was really annoying. I couldn't believe he could stack so many of these against Tula. Yes, my airforce did save the day.

J-P: Weather was not so good (*see Weather Results Chart below*). A lot of Storm results, so airpower on both sides was generally inefficient.

Benoit: Actually, he lost a Ju-87 to my AA fire very early in the game. He was not happy! But weather was not so bad, after all..

J-P: In short, on Game-turn 35, I added up 14VP: 2HQ (4VP) eliminated. 24 Soviet armor or artillery step losses (3VP), Klin (IVP), Volga reservoir Red Star (1VP), Soviet special reinforcement pool (1VP), 5 "at start" VP (for Kalinin, Kaluga, etc...) and 5 German armor step losses (-1VP)

Benoit: The game ended with the Germans short of 1 VP, one small step *away* from victory. I do think this scenario is well balanced. As the Soviet player, I did find that my options were numerous enough to make it an interesting game.

J-P: Yes, indeed, one small step away from victory. Disappointing!! But in any case, it was a pleasure to play that game and on top of that, against an experienced guy with twenty years of wargaming experience.

Typhoon! is a very good and complete game and I advise other players to try and get a copy, since it is a must to own this "gem". However, there is just one thing I must complain about... why is Scenario #3 not ending on Turn 36?



Scenario 3: Weather Results	
Turn	Weather Results
24	Frost
25	Frost
26	Mud and Storm
27	Frost
28	Snow and Storm
29	Mud and Storm
30	Mud and Storm
31	Frost
32	Arctic
33	Snow and Storm
34	Snow and Storm
35	Lingering Snow

