

The Seventh Army Attacks

A Replay of the *Tigers in the Mist* Introductory Scenario

By Jeff Petraska

The month of September 1999 saw the publication of *TIGERS IN THE MIST*, GMT's highly playable game of the first week of the Battle of the Bulge. Resembling the old Avalon Hill classics *War at Sea* or *Victory in the Pacific* in terms of complexity, historical accuracy and combat resolution, *TIGERS IN THE MIST* is one of those wargames that emphasizes playability over detail, and tension over strict historical realism.

This article presents a blow-by-blow replay of "The 7th Army Attacks," the introductory scenario. This scenario uses only the extreme southeast corner of the map and a small number of units for both sides. However, it provides players the opportunity to exercise almost every rule and provides some rudimentary tactical training before one progresses to one of the three larger scenarios. As such, it is well suited for a detailed replay article that demonstrates the major gameplay elements.

INTRODUCTION

This scenario lasts three turns (December 16-18), for a total of nine impulses. Impulses will be referenced in the replay by day and impulse number. For example, impulse 16-3 is the third and final impulse of the first turn, December 16. Each side's impulse begins with movement, which is followed by combat resolution, and ends with bridge repair attempts. Each game turn ends with the Attrition Phase and Victory Determination Phase.

In the first impulse of the game (16-1) only those US units marked with a green triangle in the lower

right corner of their counter are allowed to move. Conversely, German units marked with a red triangle in the lower right corner of their counter are prohibited from moving on impulse 16-1. All units are free to move normally from impulse 16-2 onward.

There are five types of units in the game, listed here in order of quality rating: engineers, armor, mechanized infantry, motorized infantry and foot infantry. Movement allowances are 5 MPs for foot infantry units and 8 MPs for all other units. Armor units have an attack factor of 4 and a defense factor of 5, and all other units have an attack factor of 3 and a defense factor of 4. Artillery counters, which only participate in combat and are not placed on the map, have an attack factor of 3 and a defense factor of 5.

The Germans receive one artillery counter for each artillery support die roll of 1-6 when fighting in an initial US front line position (Echternach and Beaufort in this scenario), and on a roll of 1-4 in all other locations. The US receives one artillery counter for each die roll of 1-8.

There are a few specific rules concerning allocating targets to units, but suffice it to say for this replay that artillery is assigned against the most numerous type of enemy unit (armor, foot infantry, etc.) and ground unit fire is generally allocated against targets of equal or lesser unit quality rating. In instances where more than one viable target unit is present, the player controlling the firing unit selects the target. In this scenario zone P and Mersch (per the 11/9/99 errata)

are US supply sources and zone C is the German supply source.

Victory in "The 7th Army Attacks" is determined by the control status of two map areas, Luxembourg and Mersch, after three turns are completed. The victory conditions are:

Allied Decisive Victory:

Neither area contested

Allied Tactical Victory: One area contested

Draw: Both areas contested

German Tactical Victory: One area German-controlled, one area contested

German Decisive Victory: Both areas German-controlled

Mutual Defeat: One area German-controlled, the other not contested

A side controls an area if it was the last side in sole possession of it. A contested area is one in which units of both sides are present.

THE REPLAY

The starting situation for this scenario is shown in Figure 1. The replay will start out with pre-game commentary from both players' perspectives, followed by an impulse-by-impulse description of the progress of the game including player comments. At the end of each turn, I will provide some neutral commentary and observations, as well as providing a post-game wrap-up.

German Pre-Game Commentary

With a duration of just three days, I'll have to aggressively clear a path or two to the objective areas (Luxembourg and Mersch) in order to win. I've only had one victory as the Germans in three previous

Replay: TIGERS IN THE MIST

playings of this scenario, and that victory came on the final impulse.

A look at the initial setup in Figure 1 shows that the Germans have two possible attack strategies. The first is to have the foot infantry in Irrel and Nusbaum attack over the blown bridges into Echternach and Beaufort, respectively. This approach results in both offensives converging on Consdorf. From there they can separate into two thrusts, one up the main road toward Luxembourg and the other along the side roads toward Mersch.

The second option is to attack from Irrel into Echternach along the main road, and move the foot infantry from Nusbaum to Vianden, and from Sinspelt to Diekerch, in preparation for an attack into Larochette in the following turn. If the US player doesn't move any infantry into Larochette before the attack there is no risk of the bridge being blown, and 9 SPs of foot infantry can enter the zone and initiate combat. Even if a US infantry unit does occupy Larochette before the attack, the chances of the bridge being blown are 20-40%. This approach is the one I used successfully in my last playing, and the one I intend to use in this game as well.

Finally, it's important that the engineer unit in Irrel get that blown bridge repaired on the main road on the first or second impulse of the first turn, or the whole timetable for the German offensive toward Luxembourg will be thrown off schedule by preventing the mechanized units in Bitburg from following up the initial attack into Echternach.

US Player Pre-Game Commentary

My role in this scenario is almost purely reactionary. The US doesn't have enough strength to muster a credible counterattack (although the 3 SP armor unit in Larochette provides some temptation), so I need to focus on delay and attrition tactics. The scenario is only three turns long, so I take some comfort in knowing that each German unit will only get to move three times. I need to use my individually weak and

meager forces like highway construction workers, creating "speed bumps" that delay the German advance long enough for me to win.

The entrenched infantry in Echternach will certainly be attacked on the first impulse (16-1). Since most of my units are locked in place until the second impulse (16-2), the German player will get to see the result of that attack, and of the bridge repair die roll, before committing to an attack elsewhere. I would jump at the chance to pull the infantry back from Beaufort to defend Consdorf, but I don't expect to get away without being pounced upon by the foot infantry in Nusbaum.

Turn 1: 16 December 1944

IMPULSE 16-1 REINFORCEMENTS: None.

GERMAN IMPULSE 16-1: The Battle of the Bulge begins with a dawn attack through the fog across the Sauer River (2x 4 SP foot infantry move from Irrel to Echternach [4 MPs]).

Dawn Attack at Echternach:

US artillery support: 4 =1 artillery
German artillery support: 5,8 =1 artillery

US Fire (modifiers: -1 non-combined arms attacker, -1 attacker crossing a river):

Artillery: 8 =miss
2 SP motorized inf.: 2,10 =1 hit
Total German Losses: -1 SP on 4 SP foot infantry

German Fire (modifiers: +1 entrenched defender):

Artillery: 7 =miss
4 SP foot inf.: 2,5,5,10 =1 hit
3 SP foot inf.: 7,9,9 =miss
Total US Losses: -1 SP on 2 SP motorized infantry

Bridge repair attempt at Irrel-Echternach is (9) unsuccessful.

German: *Not exactly a Stirling performance by the Wehrmacht. The only good news is that my loss of 1 SP will allow me to move a 3SP mechanized unit into Echternach on a later impulse this turn to try to finish the job the foot infantry started-assuming the bridge is repaired on 16-2, that is.*

US IMPULSE 16-1: No movement, combat, or bridge repair.

US Player: *Since my infantry unit in Echternach held out against the initial attack, there is no need to move anyone yet. I can only move the two armor units in this impulse, anyway, and I would rather wait to see what the Germans have in mind for 16-2 and 16-3.*

IMPULSE 16-2 REINFORCEMENTS: None.

GERMAN IMPULSE 16-2: One 3 SP foot infantry moves from Sinspelt to Diekerch (4 MP). Bridge repair attempt at Irrel-Echternach is (1) successful.

German: *I delayed moving the units in Nusbaum to continue giving the US something to think about before deciding to move his infantry from Beaufort. The repaired bridge now frees my mechanized units in Bitburg to attack up the main road in the following impulse.*

US IMPULSE 16-2: One 2 SP motorized inf. moves from Grevenmacher to Junglinster (2 MP). One 2 SP motorized inf. moves from Beaufort to Consdorf (3 MP). No combat or bridge repairs.

US: *Now that the bridge between Irrel and Echternach is repaired I expect the German mechanized units will be on the way. I pulled my infantry out of their entrenchments in Beaufort to help defend Consdorf. I intend to leave the entrenched infantry in Echternach to the bitter end to delay the Germans as long as possible. If they can hold out one more impulse I will be able to entrench my infantry in both Consdorf and Junglinster, creating a tough defense in depth that I hope will keep the Germans out of Luxembourg. The lone 3SP armor unit in Larochette may turn out to be a weak point, but I can reinforce it with the Rangers from Luxembourg in the next impulse if necessary.*

IMPULSE 16-3 REINFORCEMENTS: One 1 SP US armor unit enters in Zone P.

GERMAN IMPULSE 16-3: One 1 SP engineer moves from Nusbaum to Diekerch (7 MP). Three 3 SP foot infantry move

from Nusbaum to Vianden (4 MP). One 3 SP mechanized infantry moves from Bitburg to Echternach (4 MP). One 4 SP mechanized infantry and one 1 SP foot infantry move from Bitburg to Irrel (2 MP).

Panzergrenadiers attack at Echternach:

US artillery

support: 1
=1 artillery

German artillery support: 3
=1 artillery

US Fire (modifiers: -1 non-combined arms attacker, -1 attacker crossing a river):

Artillery: 10
=miss

1 SP motorized inf.: 4=1 hit

Total German

Losses: -1 SP on 3 SP mechanized infantry

German Fire

(modifiers: +1 entrenched defender):

Artillery: 6 =miss

2 SP mechanized inf.: 6,8 =miss

Total US Losses: none

No bridge repair attempts.

German: *My combat dice are running cold, and the US still maintains a hold on Echternach. With one-third of the game completed and the Germans still held up at the Sauer River crossings, it looks like I will have to put my faith in the battle for Larochette next turn and try to enter Luxembourg via Mersch. Unfortunately, I expect the US to reinforce that area now that my main highway thrust has been blunted.*

US IMPULSE 16-3: One 1 SP mechanized infantry moves from Luxembourg to Larochette (5 MP). One 1 SP armor moves from Zone P to Mersch (3 MP). No combat or bridge repair.

US: *My situation looks good. The move of the mechanized infantry from Luxembourg to Larochette will allow me a bridge demolition attempt when the Germans try to cross from Diekerch next turn. I also have some depth to the defense of Mersch, with more reinforcements due to arrive next turn. The Germans have their work cut out for them.*

Neutral Commentary

Figure 2 shows the situation at the end of the December 16 turn.

This turn did not go well for the Germans. Instead of being embroiled in a battle for Consdorf and eliminating one or two US defenders, they have only inflicted a single SP loss on the US and are still tied up in Echternach. Worse yet, they will have to commit the entire 9 SP stack to the attack in Echternach next turn to clear the zone, leaving only 6 SPs available for a follow-up attack into Consdorf against another (probably) entrenched 2 SP infantry and 1 SP armor unit. Their best hope now lies through Larochette, and both players know it. The only bright

Replay: TIGERS IN THE MIST

spot for the Germans is that the US artillery has been unexpectedly ineffective so far.

One wonders at this point if not attacking the US infantry in Beaufort on 16-2 was a good decision. Given average die rolls the Germans could have eliminated the 2 SP infantry unit and could be poised now for a thrust into Consdorf on impulse 17-1. This would not have allowed the US the luxury of a defense in depth along the main road to Luxembourg, plus it would not allow any time for an infantry defender in Consdorf to entrench before the attack.

Turn 2: 17 December 1944

IMPULSE 17-1 REINFORCEMENTS: Two 2 SP German armor units enter in Zone C. One 1 SP US motorized infantry unit enters in Zone P.

GERMAN IMPULSE 17-1: One 3SP foot infantry moves from Diekerch to Larochette (3 MP). US attempts to destroy the Diekerch-Larochette bridge, but (8) fails. One 1 SP engineer moves from Diekerch to Larochette (3 MP). Two 3 SP foot infantry move from Vianden to Larochette (5 MP).

Struggle at Echternach:

US artillery support: 6 =1 artillery
German artillery support: 1,3,9 =2 artillery

US Fire (modifiers: -1 non-combined arms attacker)

Artillery vs. 3 SP foot infantry: 6 =1 hit

1 SP motorized inf. vs. 2 SP foot infantry: 6 =miss

Total German Losses: -1 SP on 3 SP foot infantry

German Fire (modifiers: +1 entrenched defender)

Artillery: 3,5 =miss

2 SP mechanized inf.: 2,6 =1 hit

Total US Losses: 1 SP motorized infantry unit eliminated

Dawn Assault at Larochette:

US artillery support: 8 =1 artillery
German artillery support: 5,6,8 =no artillery

US Fire (modifiers: -1 non-combined arms attacker, -1 attacker crossing a river):

US artillery vs. 3SP foot infantry, combat die roll: 7, 1 hit

US 3SP armor vs. 3SP foot infantry, die rolls: 2,6,9, 2 hits

US 1SP mechanized inf. vs. 3SP foot infantry, die roll: 1, 1 hit

Total German Losses: -2 SP on 3 SP foot infantry, -1 SP on 3 SP foot infantry, -1 SP on 3 SP foot infantry

German Fire (no modifiers):

German 1SP engineer vs. 3SP armor, combat die roll: 1, 1 hit

German 2SP foot infantry vs. 2SP armor, combat die rolls: 2,7, 1 hit

German 2SP foot infantry vs. 1SP mech. inf., combat die rolls: 1,2 2 hits

Total US Losses: -2 SP on 3 SP armor unit, one 1 SP mechanized infantry unit eliminated

No bridge repair attempts.

German: *Echternach is finally cleared, opening the way for a follow-up move into Consdorf on 17-2. I wish now that I hadn't sent my 3 SP mechanized infantry into combat last turn, as I effectively lost their use for this turn when their attack failed.*

The battle in Larochette turned out to be a bloody one, as I feared it would. My poor foot infantry got mauled, but they managed to dish out almost as good as they got. If it weren't for the engineer unit, I would have put both 2 SP infantry against the armor, but the unit quality and fire distribution rules left me no choice. Unfortunately, since all four of my units in Larochette survived the battle, I won't be able to move the remaining 3 SP infantry from Vianden into Larochette to finish the job this turn.

US IMPULSE 17-1: One 2 SP mechanized infantry unit in Consdorf entrenches. No combat or bridge repair.

US: *The Germans had remarkable success in Larochette after the beating they took. The fact that I still maintain a presence there means his stack of units will have to devote all their energies to clearing the area next turn instead of moving into Mersch. The freshly-entrenched infantry in Consdorf have donned*

their orange vests, put out the highway construction barrels and detour signs, and await the opportunity to delay the oncoming German traffic. The question now is, will he attack with the maximum available force or will he gamble and hold some strength in reserve for a move into Junglinster if his attack in Consdorf is successful?

IMPULSE 17-2 REINFORCEMENTS: None

GERMAN IMPULSE 17-2: Two 2 SP armor units move from Zone C to Consdorf (7 MP). One 1 SP foot infantry and one 4 SP mechanized infantry move from Irrel to Consdorf (4 MP).

Panzerblitz at Consdorf:

US artillery support: 8 =1 artillery
German artillery support: 5,6,8 =no artillery

US Fire (modifiers: -1 non-combined arms attacker)

Artillery vs. 2 SP armor: 7 =miss
1 SP armor vs. 2 SP armor: 10 =miss

2 SP mechanized inf. vs. 4 SP mechanized inf.: 8,8 =miss

Total German Losses: none

German Fire (modifiers: +1 entrenched defender [infantry only])

2 SP armor vs. 1 SP armor: 3,6 =1 hit

2 SP armor vs. 2 SP mechanized inf.: 2,4 =1 hit

4 SP mech. inf. vs. 1SP mech. inf.: 2,4,8,9 =1 hit

Total US Losses: one 2 SP mechanized infantry unit eliminated, one 1 SP armor unit eliminated

No bridge repair attempts.

German: *Artillery? We don't need no stinkin' artillery! Just a few good panzers and some hardy panzergrenadiers, and we roll into Consdorf like we own the place-which we do, now. Watch the dirt fly in Junglinster now as US shovels dig some hasty foxholes. Unfortunately, that pretty much shoots my bolt for this turn.*

US IMPULSE 17-2: One 1 SP motorized infantry moves from Zone P to Mersch (4 MP). One 2 SP motorized infantry unit in Junglinster

entrenches. No combat or bridge repair.

US: Man, he cut through my defenses in Consdorf like a hot knife through butter. This time it was my dice rolling that was terrible, getting my defenders wiped out without inflicting any casualties-and with an entrenched infantry unit, no less. Now it's time to start seriously looking at the endgame possibilities, as the German fortunes have taken a significant turn for the better. It's a good thing I'm getting another reinforcement on the next impulse.

IMPULSE 17-3 REINFORCEMENTS: One 2 SP US mechanized infantry unit enters in Zone P.

GERMAN IMPULSE 17-3: One 3 SP foot infantry moves from Vianden to Beaufort (4 MP). One 1 SP engineer unit moves from Irrel to Wecker (7 MP). No combat or bridge repair.

German: *My last two available units position themselves for action in the next turn. With Larochette already clogged up and only minor roads leading from Diekerch to Mersch, it would be impossible for the 3 SP foot infantry to contribute anything to an attack on Mersch. However, from Beaufort it can jump into the initial attack on Junglinster on impulse 18-1. Moving the engineer unit to Wecker was a tougher decision, as I could have moved it to Echternach and had it available to move up the main road toward Luxembourg or through Larochette to Mersch. Instead, I moved it to Wecker in the hope that successive attacks on 17-1 and 17-2 would clear Junglinster and Luxembourg and open a movement route into Mersch on 17-3 via the "back door" of Heisdorf, avoiding a possibility of a blown bridge preventing my contesting the area. Admittedly not a likely outcome, but one that could have given me a victory rather than a draw.*

US IMPULSE 17-3: One 2 SP mechanized infantry unit moves from Zone P to Luxembourg (1 MP). No combat or bridge repair.

US: Decisions, decisions. Should I move my final 2 SP mechanized

infantry reinforcement into Junglinster and put up an all-or-nothing defense to stop the Germans short of Luxembourg, or move to Luxembourg and dig in to contest the victory area? I need to deny the Germans control of both Mersch and Luxembourg to prevent a German victory. I think I can best accomplish that through a defense in depth, which means I should stop and entrench in Luxembourg. On the other hand, if I can keep him out of either Mersch or Luxembourg and prevent him from controlling the other, I will win at least a tactical victory. I can keep him out of Mersch by a successful bridge demolition die roll, which has a 40% probability of success. I will also have time to entrench the infantry unit in Mersch before being attacked, improving my chances of at least contesting Mersch if the bridge demolition fails. If I can destroy the Mersch-Larochette bridge and keep him out of Luxembourg as well, then I would win a decisive victory.

Should I play to win, or play to avoid defeat? My conservative nature gets the better of me in this case, and I decide to defend Luxembourg. I'll trust to my dice rolling to win me a victory, and in the meantime play for no less than a draw.

Neutral Commentary

Figure 3 shows the situation at the end of the December 17 turn. The German dice rolling this turn has turned around a bleak situation, and it appears they have reasonable chance at victory. Everything looks like it will hinge upon how the Germans split their forces between Luxembourg and Mersch, and the outcome of the US bridge demolition die roll.

Turn 3: 18 December 1944

IMPULSE 18-1 REINFORCEMENTS: None

GERMAN IMPULSE 18-1: One 3 SP foot infantry moves from Beaufort to Junglinster (5 MP). One 4 SP foot infantry moves from Echternach to Junglinster (4 MP). One 2 SP armor unit moves from Consdorf to Junglinster (2 MP).

Roadblock at Junglinster:

US artillery support: 5 =1 artillery
German artillery support: 1,7,8 =1 artillery

US Fire (no modifiers):

Artillery vs. 4 SP foot infantry: 6 =miss

2 SP motorized inf. vs. 4 SP foot infantry: 5,9 =miss

Total German Losses: none

German Fire (modifiers: +1 entrenched defender):

Artillery: 3 =miss

2 SP armor: 1,10 =1 hit

4 SP foot inf.: 1,7,8,8 =1 hit

Total US Losses: One 2 SP

motorized infantry eliminated

Panzerfausts at Larochette:

US artillery support: 10 =no artillery

German artillery support: 8,10 =no artillery

US Fire (modifiers: -1 non-combined arms attacker):

1 SP armor vs. 2 SP foot infantry: 3 =1 hit

Total German Losses: -1 SP on 2 SP foot infantry

German Fire (no modifiers):

1 SP engineer: 5 =miss

2 SP foot inf.: 2,9 =1 hit

Total US Losses: One 1 SP armor unit eliminated

No bridge repair attempts.

German: *Marvelous! The roads to both victory areas are now clear. I added the armor unit to the attack on Junglinster in the belief that I might need its additional combat power against the US entrenchments. That leaves one more armor unit as yet uncommitted and positioned to move to either Mersch or Luxembourg as desired. So far, so good.*

US IMPULSE 18-1: One 1 SP motorized infantry in Mersch entrenches. One 2 SP mechanized infantry in Luxembourg entrenches. No combat or bridge repair.

US: Well, he has managed to clear both the paths. There's nothing left for me to do now but dig in, hunker down, and trust in the dice. Not that they've been very trustworthy lately, of course. Looking on the bright side, I'm due for some good die rolls and hopefully they'll occur in the next two segments.

Replay: TIGERS IN THE MIST

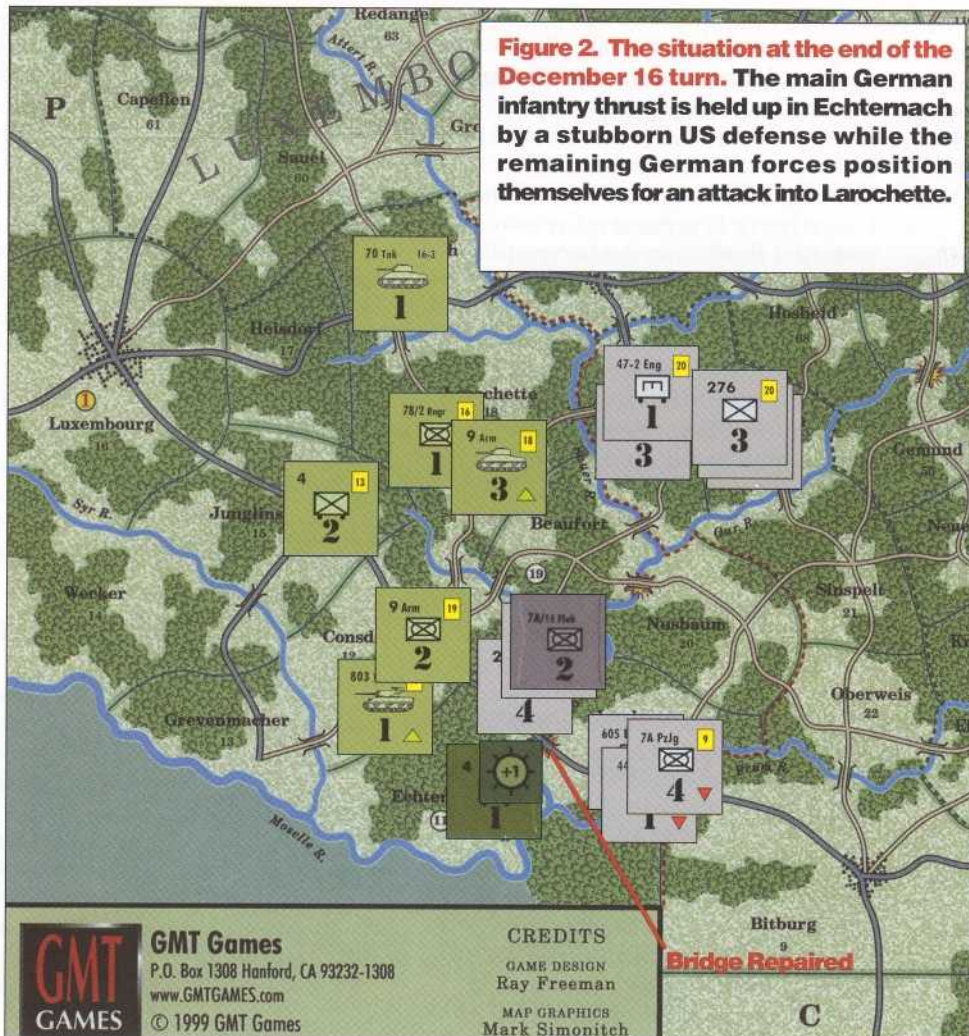


Figure 2. The situation at the end of the December 16 turn. The main German infantry thrust is held up in Echternach by a stubborn US defense while the remaining German forces position themselves for an attack into Larochette.

impulse and force a mutual defeat.

US IMPULSE 18-2: No movement, combat, or bridge repair.

US: This game appears to be headed for a mutual loss. I don't understand the Germans not attacking Luxembourg with their maximum strength. Was he not aware that he had no hope of reaching Mersch once the bridge was blown? All I had to do is move the armor unit from Mersch to Heisdorf to block his path. Since he'll now spend the final impulse of the game clearing Luxembourg, Mersch is out of reach.

IMPULSE 18-3 REINFORCEMENTS: None

GERMAN IMPULSE 18-3: One 2 SP armor unit moves from Consdorf to Luxembourg (4 MP). One 2 SP foot infantry unit moves from Echternach to Luxembourg (5 MP).

Armor attack on Luxembourg:

US artillery support: 6 = 1 artillery

German artillery support: 5 = no artillery

US Fire (modifiers: -1 non-combined arms attacker):

Artillery vs. 2 SP armor: 5 = 1 hit
1 SP mechanized inf. vs. 2 SP foot infantry: 3 = 1 hit

Total German Losses: -1 SP on 2 SP armor unit, -1 SP on 2SP foot infantry

German Fire (modifiers: +1 entrenched defender):

1 SP armor unit: 6 = miss
1 SP foot infantry: 9 = miss

Total US Losses: none

No bridge repair attempts.

German: What I wouldn't give to take back my move in impulse 18-2. Not attacking Luxembourg earlier with my full available strength was a mistake that probably cost me the game. Or more accurately stated, it awarded the game to the US. My

IMPULSE 18-2 REINFORCEMENTS: None

GERMAN IMPULSE 18-2: One 2 SP mechanized infantry attempts to move from Echternach to Mersch. US attempts to destroy the Mersch-Larochette bridge and (4) succeeds. The German 2 SP mech. infantry unit finishes by moving from Larochette to Diekerch (8 MP). One 1 SP foot infantry and one 4 SP mechanized infantry move from Consdorf to Luxembourg (4 MP).

Infantry assault on Luxembourg:

US artillery support: 3 = 1 artillery
German artillery support: 1 = 1 artillery

US Fire (modifiers: -1 non-combined arms attacker):

Artillery vs. 4 SP mechanized infantry: 6 = 1 hit

2 SP motorized inf. vs. 3 SP mechanized infantry: 4, 10 = 1 hit

Total German Losses: -2 SP on 4 SP mechanized infantry unit

German Fire (modifiers: +1 entrenched defender):

Artillery: 1 = 1 hit
2 SP mechanized infantry: 4, 5 = miss

1 SP foot infantry: 5 = miss

Total US Losses: -1 SP on 2 SP mechanized infantry unit

No bridge repair attempts.

German: *Drat! The demolition of the Larochette-Mersch bridge was the defining moment of this impulse, and the game as well. With Mersch out of reach except through Luxembourg, I was forced to try a partial attack on Luxembourg in the hopes that I could clear the town and have enough uncommitted forces left to move along the main roads and contest Mersch. Instead, the US infantry held out and now all I can hope is to clear Luxembourg on the final*



and it looked like they just might pull off a victory in spite of their slow start. Unless they go to Mersch through Luxembourg the Germans have to cross two rivers and likely face at least one bridge demolition die roll in the process. If a bridge is blown it is difficult to get an engineer unit in place to rebuild it in a timely fashion without affecting the movement of other units through road congestion or stacking limits.

To their credit, the US played a flawless game. They positioned and entrenched their infantry when and where they were needed, and made the most of their capabilities. As this playing showed, opportunities for US counterattacks are very few in this scenario. As a result, I think it is easier to play the US side. As long as they keep positioning and entrenching units on the roads to Luxembourg and Mersch they can't go too far wrong.

In spite of being defeated, the German player demonstrated very good skill at managing the movement and attacks of his individual units. This is no small feat, and only comes once one has a few playings of *TIGERS IN THE MIST* under the belt. Positioning each unit such that it can reach the area where it will likely be needed to support an attack or exploit a

defeat was assured when the Mersch bridge was blown, and I failed to realize it. For some reason I assumed that the US armor unit would remain defending Mersch and never considered the possibility of it moving to Heisdorf to close the "back door"-a glaring oversight on my part.

US IMPULSE 18-3: No movement, combat, or bridge repair.

US: Ah, the sweet smell of an Allied tactical victory! It's been a game of ups and downs for both sides, but it ended like it started, with a tenacious defense by entrenched US infantry. The Germans made only one obvious mistake, and coming on the penultimate impulse it probably changed the outcome in my favor.

18 December Neutral Commentary

Figure 4 shows the game map at the end of the scenario. My experience has been that this scenario is difficult for the Germans to win against competent US play. I wasn't convinced the German strategy of not attacking Beaufort on the first turn was a good move, especially in light of the failed initial attack into Echternach, but the situation turned around on the second turn



Figure 4. The situation at the end of the game, December 18. The successfully destroyed bridge halts the German advance from Larochette into Mersch, and two successive attacks into Luxembourg fail to root out the entrenched US defenders.

Replay: TIGERS IN THE MIST

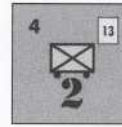
breakthrough-and accounting for road congestion and stacking limits-is the German player's prime resource management task. The sequencing of unit movement and the selection of attacking units on each impulse can make a big difference in the German performance, particularly in this small scenario where one missed movement or attack opportunity can be telling. This need to orchestrate unit movement and combat is what makes the German side the more challenging side to play in "The 7th Army Attacks."

The Germans took two gambles during the game (three if you count the ill-considered attack on Luxembourg on 18-2) and neither one paid off. The decision to avoid attacking the entrenched infantry in Beaufort in order to attack and clear Larochette with full-strength foot infantry on 17 December has already been mentioned. Had the attack successfully cleared Larochette,

the surviving infantry could have assaulted Mersch on 18-1 regardless of whether the bridge was destroyed or not. The other gamble was the decision to commit the 3 SP mechanized infantry into an attack on the surviving US infantry at Echternach on 16-3. Had it been successful, the Germans could have been knocking on the door at Luxembourg by 17-3 and likely prevented the US from reinforcing Mersch with their arriving infantry. That in turn would have prevented the bridge demolition and probably resulted in a German victory. Instead, the attack failed and the weakened mechanized infantry was doomed to participate in clearing Echternach on 17-1 instead of being free to join in the attack on Consdorf or even possibly Junglinster. Although both of these gambles had less than a 50-50 chance of success, the potential payoffs may have justified the attempts.

FINAL WORD

This replay has demonstrated the major features of *TIGERS IN THE MIST*. I hope it has provided readers with a flavor of its play. The remaining three scenarios of the game, which range from three



to seven turns in length, provide a much larger play area and open up greater opportunities for offensive breakthroughs, desperate defenses and counterattacks. I have had very different outcomes with these scenarios depending upon the vagaries of the combat dice and the risks one chooses to take. With no "perfect plans" that survive beyond the first impulse or two, *TIGERS IN THE MIST* is an easily-played and highly-replayable game that is a good choice for an evening's entertainment.



A Primer *continued from pg. 18*



Campaign Scenario. Generally, these divisions are really chewed up after about

three days of attacking. It is therefore critical that the German player release 2nd SS Panzer and 9th SS Panzer as soon as possible—ideally on the first day they are available. The difference in a release on the third impulse of the 18th instead of the first impulse of the 19th is considerable. You get a full day's march towards the front out from that earlier release date. Early German play should focus on strong drives towards those release areas and stretching the US line as much as possible.

The Campaign Scenario in particular enters a second phase once the Arlon-Liege highway is cut by the Germans. This highway permits rapid concentration of US

reinforcements from the north and south edges of the board. Once it is cut, the US player finds that he can no longer help out in one sector so easily with units from the opposite sector. The German player may want to keep this in mind and consider ways to take advantage of this mid- to late-game problem for the Allies.

Successful German play in *TitM* depends heavily on good traffic management. This includes getting units into combat when and where they are needed and keeping chewed up units out of the way. However, those weak units must be kept close enough to the front to lend a hand when they can (when better forces are either unavailable or are being held back for exploitation). Traffic control also means positioning mobile reserves in areas where they can exploit holes wherever they occur. It is very frustrating to open a hole in the US line only to

discover that there is no decent exploitation force available to take advantage of the opportunity.

CONCLUSION

TIGERS IN THE MIST was designed to provide an accessible, enjoyable gaming experience that is playable in a single session. The game portrays many of the problems both sides faced in the Ardennes and delivers the flavor of the battle. The German player will be struggling with the bad roads, a tight timetable, the lack of infantry mobility, poor artillery, and constant erosion of his attacking power. The US player will gain an appreciation for just how difficult it is to stop prepared assaults using mostly scratch forces with insufficient time to prepare defensive works. I think players will find the game illuminating as well as fun.

