

PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN

THE BATTLE OF SMOLENSK · JULY 1941

Rules of Play

Version 1.2.1 · Tronsoft Games

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1. Introduction

On 10 July 1941 the German Army Group Centre stood on the Dnepr and the Western Dvina. Hoth's 3rd Panzergruppe had taken Vitebsk; Guderian's 2nd Panzergruppe was crossing the Dnepr between Orsha and Bykhov. In front of them lay the Smolensk gate — the land bridge between the two rivers on the road to Moscow — and behind it Marshal Timoshenko was assembling army after army. What followed was a month of encirclements and counter-attacks around Smolensk, Yelnya and Vyazma.

The game covers 12 turns of two days each, 10–11 Jul 1941 to 1–2 Aug 1941. Each hex is roughly 12 km across; units are divisions. One player commands the Germans, the other the Soviets; either side, or both, may be played by the computer staffs.

1.1 Scenarios

The Battle of Smolensk — 12 turns. The whole battle, 10 July – 2 August.

The Smolensk Gate — 6 turns. The race to Smolensk and Yelnya, 10–21 July.

1.2 The opening screen

Choose the **command** (German, Soviet, Hotseat for two players on one screen, or Watch the two computer staffs), the **scenario**, the **handicap** (Lenient: Levels shifted 8 VP in your favour; Historical: Victory levels as measured; Severe: Levels shifted 8 VP against you) and the **intelligence** setting (open map, or fog of war). The handicap moves only the victory thresholds; it changes neither the dice nor the enemy.

2. The map and the units

The map is laid out from the real geography: 24 towns, the Dnepr, Western Dvina, Desna, Sozh and Vop rivers on hexsides, and the road net between the towns. The west edge and the south-west corner are the German supply edges; the east edge, the north edge east of Polotsk and the south-east are Soviet. They are shaded on the map.

Terrain	Movement cost	Defender column shift
Clear	1	—
Forest	2	−1
Swamp	2 (3 for mechanized units)	−1
Town (VP 1–6)	1	−1
City (Vitebsk, Orsha, Mogilev, Roslavl, Vyazma ...)	1	−1
Smolensk	1	−2
Road, along the road	½	—
River hexside, off the road	+1	−1 when every attacker is across it
Leaving an enemy zone of control	+1	—
Thunderstorm, mechanized, off the road	+1	—

2.1 German units

Every German division has two steps, except the Grossdeutschland regiment and the cavalry, which have one. Values are attack-defence-movement.

Type	Full strength	Reduced	Mechanized
Panzer division	9-6-8	5-3-8	yes
Motorized division	6-6-8	3-3-8	yes
SS motorized division	7-6-8	4-3-8	yes
Motorized regiment (Grossdeutschland)	4-4-8	—	yes
Cavalry division	3-3-6	—	no
Infantry division	5-6-4	3-3-4	no

2.2 Soviet units and untried divisions

Every Soviet division is a single step and starts **untried**: face down, its strength unknown to *both* players. A division's chit is drawn at random from the published mix below when the game begins and is turned over the first time the division attacks or is attacked. Some are paper divisions (0 defence) that are overrun without a die roll; a few are excellent.

Rifle divisions (67 chits, movement 4)

Attack-defence	Chits	Share
0-0	4	6%
0-1	5	7%
1-1	6	9%
1-2	9	13%
2-2	9	13%
2-3	10	15%
3-3	8	12%
3-4	7	10%
4-4	4	6%
4-5	3	4%
5-6	2	3%

Tank and motorized divisions (14 chits, movement 6)

Attack-defence	Chits	Share
1-1	2	14%
2-2	3	21%
3-2	3	21%
4-3	3	21%
5-3	2	14%
6-4	1	7%

Cavalry divisions (7 chits, movement 6)

Attack-defence	Chits	Share
1-1	2	29%
2-2	3	43%
3-2	2	29%

3. Sequence of play

Each turn has five phases, always in this order:

1. **German Movement**
2. **German Combat**
3. **German Mechanized Movement**
4. **Soviet Movement**

5. Soviet Combat

At the start of each side's turn its reinforcements arrive on its map edge, supply is traced, isolation is counted, air sorties are issued and (for the German, from turn 3) one replacement step is added. From turn 2 the weather is rolled at the start of each turn.

4. Stacking and zones of control

At most 2 divisions may share a hex. The six hexes around a unit are its zone of control. A unit that enters an enemy zone of control stops. Leaving one costs +1, and a unit may not move directly from one enemy zone into another. Friendly units do not block one another.

5. Movement

Select a stack; every hex it can reach is lit and the hex panel gives the cost. Movement costs are in the table in section 2. A unit at full allowance may always move one hex, whatever it costs. A stack moves together at the allowance of its slowest member; click the stack again to single out one division. Moves and refits can be undone until the phase ends; an overrun cannot, because it turns chits over.

In **German Mechanized Movement** panzer, motorized and SS divisions move again with half their movement allowance. Units out of supply move at half allowance.

5.1 Overrun

In any movement phase a stack of mechanized units with at least 2 movement points left may overrun an adjacent enemy hex in clear country — not a town, not across a river hexside, not an entrenched hex — once per hex per phase. Untried chits turn over. If the stack's attack strength is 4 times the defence or more, the defenders are destroyed and the stack moves into the hex with the movement points it has left after paying 2. Otherwise the stack stalls: it loses the rest of its movement and may not attack in the combat phase. The orange ring around an eligible hex shows the chance of success worked out from what both players know — revealed chits and the published mix — never from the hidden values.

6. Combat

In its combat phase the moving side may attack each adjacent enemy hex once; each unit attacks at most once. All units in the defending hex defend together. Add the attackers' attack strengths (halved when out of supply) and divide by the total defence, rounding in the defender's favour, to find the odds column; then apply column shifts:

- Forest, swamp, town or city: one column left; Smolensk two.
- Every attacker across a river hexside: one more column left.
- Defenders entrenched: one column left.
- Air support: one column right per sortie, at most 2.

Odds below 1:3 are an automatic AE; a defender with no defence strength is overrun without a die roll. Odds above 6:1 are resolved on the 6:1 column. Roll one die:

Die	1:3	1:2	1:1	2:1	3:1	4:1	5:1	6:1
1	AR	DR	DR	DE	DE	DE	DE	DE
2	AE	AR	DR	DR	DE	DE	DE	DE
3	AE	AR	EX	DR	DR	DE	DE	DE
4	AE	AE	AR	EX	DR	DR	DE	DE
5	AE	AE	AR	AR	EX	DR	DR	DE
6	AE	AE	AE	AR	AR	EX	DR	DR

AE Attacker Eliminated (each attacker loses a step). **AR** Attacker Retreats 1. **DR** Defender Retreats 2. **DE** Defender Eliminated. **EX** Exchange. In an **EX** the defenders are destroyed and the attackers lose steps whose attack strength at least equals the defence, infantry before armour. A unit that cannot retreat the full distance, because of enemy units, enemy zones of control or full stacks, is destroyed instead. After DR, DE or EX the surviving attackers may advance into the emptied hex.

7. Supply and isolation

A unit is in supply when it can trace a line of no more than 8 movement-equivalent hexes (road hexes cost one fifth) to one of its own supply edges, through hexes free of enemy units and free of enemy zones of control not contested by a friendly unit. From turn 4 German-held Vitebsk, Orsha, Mogilev and Polotsk are railheads and count as supply sources.

A unit **out of supply** (an amber dot on the counter) attacks and moves at half strength. A unit that cannot trace a line of any length is **isolated** (a red dot); after three turns isolated it loses a step at the start of each of its turns. Supply is traced at the start of each side's own turn.

8. Air support

Each player turn the air forces fly the sorties below. Commit up to 2 to one attack with the Air buttons before pressing Attack; each shifts the odds one column right. Unused sorties are lost at the end of the turn. No air flies in a thunderstorm.

Turns	German sorties	Soviet sorties
1-3	2	0
4-6	2	1
7-12	1	1

9. Entrenchment

A Soviet division in supply that does not move in its movement phase digs in where it stands, except in a town. Attacks on an entrenched hex shift one column left, and it cannot be overrun. The trench is lost the moment the division moves, retreats or advances. Entrenched divisions show a row of teeth under the counter.

10. German refit

From turn 3 the German receives one replacement step at the start of each turn and may hold at most 2. In German Movement select a reduced division that is in supply, has not moved and is not in an enemy zone of control, and press Refit: it regains its step, the step comes back off the loss count (worth 2 VP), and the division may neither move nor attack that turn.

11. Weather

From turn 2 there is a one-in-six chance each turn of July thunderstorms. In a storm neither side has air support and mechanized units pay +1 per hex off the roads. The sky is shown beside the date, and the map darkens.

12. Fog of war (optional)

With fog of war chosen on the opening screen, enemy stacks more than 2 hexes from any of your units are shown only as a "?" counter in the enemy's colour, and the hex panel, tooltips and Order of Battle list only what you have seen. The computer staffs do not use the fog; it hides information from human players only.

13. Victory

German victory points = the value of Soviet towns taken (Vitebsk and Lepel, German at the start, do not count) + 1 for each Soviet division destroyed – 2 for each German step lost (net of refits). The result is read at the end of the last turn; the handicap moves these thresholds by 8 VP. The thresholds were set by playing the two computer staffs against each other on two independent sets of starting positions, so a Draw means you did as well as the computer does against itself.

The Battle of Smolensk

Result	German VP
German Decisive Victory	80 or more
German Marginal Victory	66 or more
Draw	52 or more
Soviet Marginal Victory	38 or more
Soviet Decisive Victory	below 38

The Smolensk Gate

Result	German VP
German Decisive Victory	54 or more
German Marginal Victory	44 or more
Draw	33 or more
Soviet Marginal Victory	23 or more
Soviet Decisive Victory	below 23

13.1 Town values

Town	VP	Start
Smolensk	15	Soviet
Vyazma	12	Soviet
Yelnya	6	Soviet
Rzhev	6	Soviet
Velikiye Luki	5	Soviet
Vitebsk	5	German
Mogilev	5	Soviet
Roslavl	5	Soviet
Orsha	4	Soviet
Dorogobuzh	4	Soviet
Polotsk	3	Soviet
Bely	3	Soviet
Yartsevo	3	Soviet
Nevel	2	Soviet
Velizh	2	Soviet
Dukhovshchina	2	Soviet
Krichev	2	Soviet
Rudnya	2	Soviet
Pochinok	2	Soviet
Lepel	1	German
Demidov	1	Soviet
Shklov	1	Soviet
Krasny	1	Soviet
Gorki	1	Soviet

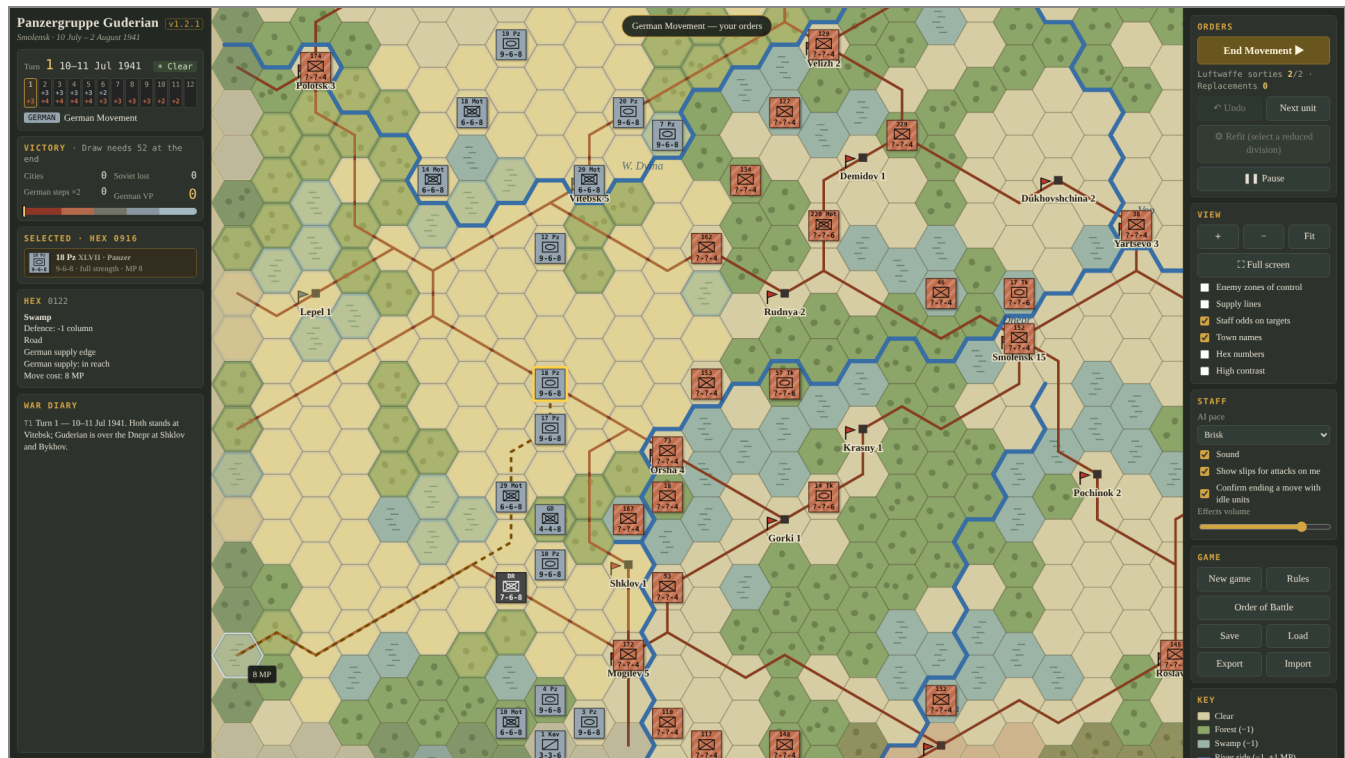
14. Reinforcements

Reinforcements arrive at the start of their side's turn on their own map edge near the road they come in on. If the entry area is blocked they are delayed until it clears.

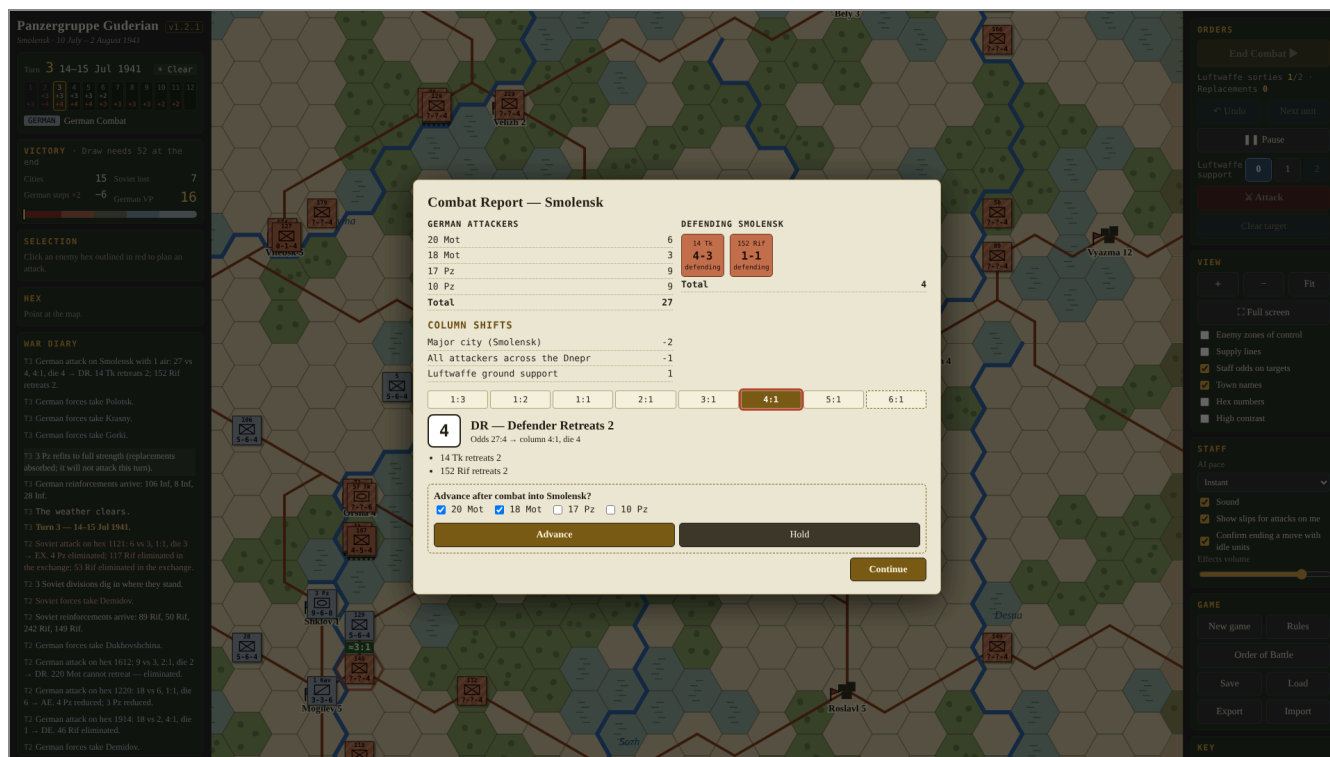
Turn	Date	German	Soviet
1	10-11 Jul 1941	—	91 Rif, 166 Rif, 120 Rif
2	12-13 Jul 1941	5 Inf, 35 Inf, 129 Inf	89 Rif, 50 Rif, 242 Rif, 149 Rif
3	14-15 Jul 1941	106 Inf, 8 Inf, 28 Inf	101 Tk, 251 Rif, 19 Rif, 104 Tk
4	16-17 Jul 1941	161 Inf, 15 Inf, 137 Inf	107 Rif, 100 Rif, 250 Rif, 50 Cav
5	18-19 Jul 1941	263 Inf, 292 Inf, 268 Inf	102 Tk, 243 Rif, 222 Rif, 53 Cav
6	20-21 Jul 1941	7 Inf, 23 Inf	248 Rif, 103 Mot, 303 Rif
7	22-23 Jul 1941	—	244 Rif, 247 Rif, 217 Rif
8	24-25 Jul 1941	—	249 Rif, 254 Rif, 211 Rif
9	26-27 Jul 1941	—	119 Rif, 279 Rif, 52 Cav
10	28-29 Jul 1941	—	133 Rif, 298 Rif
11	30-31 Jul 1941	—	316 Rif, 18 Opolch

15. Playing on screen

The left sidebar holds information: the turn record (with arrivals on the track), victory points and the current victory band, the selected units, the hex under the pointer or cursor, and the war diary. The right sidebar holds the controls: End Phase, Undo, Next unit, Refit, Pause, the combat and air controls, the view options and the game menu.



German Movement: 18 Pz selected, its reach lit, the route to the pointer dashed.



The combat slip: chits turned over, column shifts, the die and the result.

15.1 Mouse, touch and keyboard

Click or tap to select and order; drag to pan; wheel or pinch to zoom. Everything can also be done from the keyboard:

Key	Action
8 2 7 9 1 3	Move the hex cursor north, south, north-west, north-east, south-west, south-east
Space, 5	Act on the cursor hex, exactly as a click
Enter	End the phase
U	Undo the last move
N	Select the next unit with movement left
A	Resolve the planned attack
R	Refit the selected division
O	Order of Battle
P	Pause or resume the computer staff
Arrows	Pan the map
+ - 0	Zoom in, out, fit
Esc	Clear the selection or close a window

15.2 Options

View: enemy zones of control, supply lines, staff odds on targets, town names, hex numbers, high contrast and full screen. Staff: the computer's pace, sound, effects volume, combat

slips for attacks on you, and a confirmation before ending a movement phase while units have not moved. The game respects the system's reduced-motion setting.

15.3 Saving

The game autosaves after every phase; Continue saved on the opening screen resumes it. Save and Load keep one further game in this browser; Export and Import move a game to a file and back. Saves from earlier versions load and are migrated.

15.4 After the battle

The after-action report gives the result, a chart of German VP against the victory levels, cumulative losses for both sides, and a replay of the battle turn by turn.

16. Credits

Original game: *Panzergruppe Guderian*, designed by James F. Dunnigan, Simulations Publications, Inc., 1976. This adaptation — map, unit values, combat table, rule extensions, scenarios and computer staffs — is an independent work by Calvin Robert Glomb for Tronsoft Games, developed with AI assistance. It is not affiliated with or endorsed by any owner of the original game.

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