



BATTLEFIELD WALKAROUND

1. CLASH ALONG THE PSEL—THE BATTLE OF KURSK 1943

The free map provided in the Kursk UPGRADE kit is an earlier generation tactical game map and thusly contains a few different terrain symbols than found in the 'state of the art' of the current ATS game system. These are detailed later in this 'walkaround' document.

1.1 Locale—It came as no surprise, especially to the Russians, that the German 2nd SS Panzer Corps would spearhead the summer offensive against the Kursk salient.

The Germans were involved in some of the heaviest fighting in the most crucial sector of the southern front. Despite the immense difficulties, they had made the best progress of any formations in the assault so far. By the 9th of July, the 2nd SS Panzer Corps had reached the final Soviet defense line. On the left flank, the SS Totenkopf's 3rd Battalion of the 6th Panzergrenadier Regiment was able to overcome the maze of Russian fortifications and ford the Psel river—the last remaining obstacle between the Fourth Panzer Army and Kursk.

The Germans quickly captured the north bank villages of Vasilyevka, Koslovka, and Krasny Oktabyr, and established bridges to funnel more troops into the bridgehead. This alarming progress forced the Russian High Command to prematurely release its reserves to crush the SS Panzer Corps.

Now more thoroughly in control of a foothold across the Psel River the German commanders sought to strengthen their hold while driving north toward Oboyan and Kursk itself. Having secured Hill 226.6, the Germans pushed northeast, while funneling greater numbers of troops in support of this drive. The enemy did not remain idle, ever-greater numbers of Soviet troops launched desperate attacks to sever the German spearhead at its base.

Soviet attacks caused the Germans to divert and weaken their main attack in order to protect their flanks. The Germans also found themselves attacking eastward along the river to protect and support the flanks of the remainder of the 2nd SS Panzer Corps, across the Psel. This diversion from the *schwerpunkt* brought drastic consequences to the base of the German bridgehead and its defenders. The fighting would be quite extreme (even by Battle of Kursk standards) as strong elements of two Russian corps attacked in the direction of Kliuchi and Krasny-Oktabyr. In the end, the German drive would reach several miles north of the river, and astride yet another

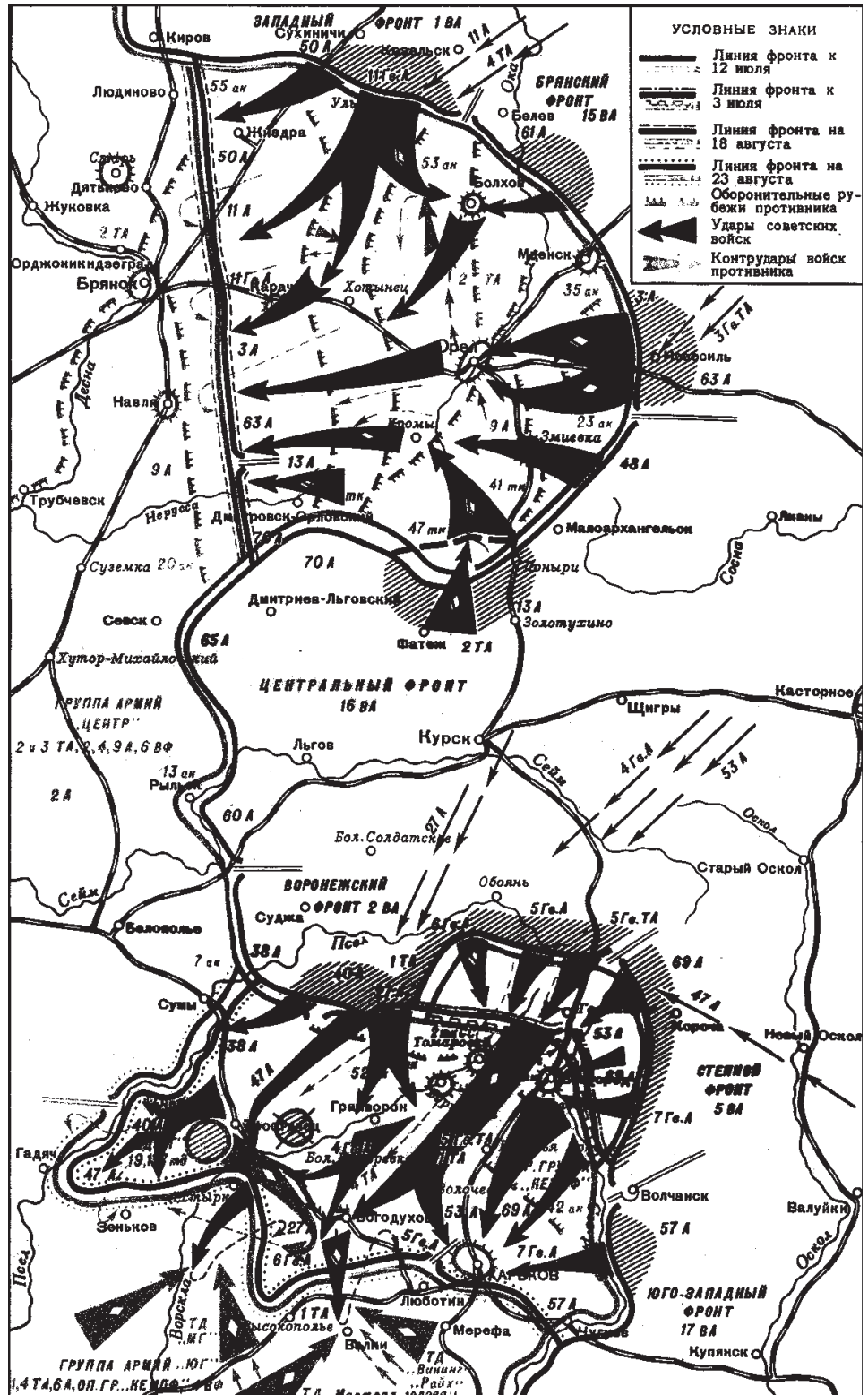
major highway. There the invader's thrust ran out of gas. The retreat back across the Psel was soon sounded.

The battle in this sector of the titanic struggle known as the Battle of Kursk would end a bloody failure, and outcome was in no small part due to the determination and grit of the individual Russian fighting man.

1.2 Land Forms—For the most part, the fought-over area of the map consists of a plateau overlooking the river Psel. The lightest-

green portion of the map, marked "Level 3" is at Level +30 in ATS terms. The portion marked "Level 2" is Level +20, and so on, as the map terrain rolls down toward the northwest corner (to hex A1) and southeast, to the river itself (to hex LL26). The Psel River itself is at Level -10 (marked as Level -1 on the map) and consists of unbroken adjacent blue terrain (e.g., hex AA25).

1.3 Terrain Forms—Most of the game map consists of Open Ground (e.g., hex E18). What



is not open is covered by a handful of large fields of Crops (e.g., hex G18). Orchards (e.g., hex B20) are depicted by smaller than usual green dots. Hillocks (e.g., hexside B20-B19) are also a bit simpler in terms of artistic presentation, represented by brown hash-marks. Brush (e.g., hex M17) uses a connected blue-green 'grass' and Woods (e.g., hex T11) uses a common architectural fill instead of individual trees found on modern ATS maps. A series of long Cliffs (e.g., hexside E25/E26) are found on the map. There is also some multi-level rises, i.e., Precipitous Terrain in game terms (e.g., hex I22 entered from I23, J22 or down in the Ravine of H22). Numerous Ravines (e.g., hex F20) are carved into the landscape. Players should note these move up and down with the rolling land, and pay MP costs according to movement UP and DOWN levels. Example: A unit IN the Ravine in hex H23 is considered entering a Precipitous hill hex if it moves to H22 since it is moving from Level -10 (a unit IN a Ravine at Level 0 is actually -10 lower in terms of levels) to Level +20 (same for the Ravine in a Level +30 hex).

1.3.1 Buildings—There are two villages on the map. One, Krasny Oktabyr, is situated north of the river. It consists of a handful of one-hex buildings, each containing a GROUND level ONLY (i.e., no roof or cellar). The two-hex buildings in G25/H25 and O21/P21 have a Ground Level and a second 'story' at Level +10. The village south of the river is Kliuchi (no name printed on map) and consists of four one-hex buildings. Note that most of the buildings on the map are Wooden buildings (e.g., hex J25). The only Masonry buildings on the map are in hexes N20 and O20.

1.3.2 Other Man Made Terrain—Some Wall hexsides are found on the map (e.g., hexside N20/N19), and are a bit light. Players may wish to highlight these with a fine-tip marker. A Paved Road runs from hex LL9-T0. An unpaved road runs from I27-L23-M25 and L23-Q22.

1.4 Terrain Rules—The following rules are provided in addition to the terrain rules presented in the main rulebook and apply ONLY to the CLASH ALONG THE PSEL mapsheet. The open terrain that dominates this map is unique in that it provides for long-range tank duels between circa 1943 Eastern Front AFVs.

1.4.1 Dirt and Paved Road—Some roads depict Paved roads (gray art; e.g., DD5) and Dirt roads (brown; e.g., K24). The ONLY difference between the two is that Hedgehogs, Foxholes, and AT Ditch emplacements may NOT be set up in a Paved road hex.

1.4.2 River and Ford Terrain—River hexes may ONLY be entered by units on a Watercraft (Exception: A Ford exists in hexes Y25 and Z25).

1.4.3 Pontoon Bridges—The ONLY hexes Pontoon Bridges may be placed in are hexes Y25 and Z25.

1.4.4 Map Labels—Some hexes bear labels. Example: Hex X24 has a green number '3' in it. These are known as Terrain Victory Point (TVP) hexes and are used ONLY when 'TVP' are referenced in the scenario Victory Conditions (e.g., scenario two). The off-map labels "FME CG1" and "FME CG2" represent the

extent of Friendly Map Edges for both sides. Hexes A8-LL0 represents the SOVIET Friendly Map Edge for ALL scenarios. Hexes E27-M27 and AA27-LL26 represent the GERMAN Friendly Map Edge for ALL scenarios.

1.4.5 Other Map Symbology—The "Eliminated Units" boxes may be used to place units lost by both sides and for later use when tallying Victory Points. The "Retained DC/FT/LATW" and "Attack Option" boxes are used in the earlier edition of this game and are ignored.

1.5. LOS and Movement Examples—The following examples clarify Lines-of-Sight on the CLASH ALONG THE PSEL—KURSK 1943 mapsheet.

a) A squad in hex CC4 cannot see one in CC8, CC9, and so on. One in CC3, can, due to the Hillock hexside on the CC3-CC4 hexside (creates a crestline).

b) A unit in T12 can see one in CC7 since the Woods along the LOS is ALSO at LOS +10, i.e., it does not rise ABOVE the units by +5 levels or more and thusly has no effect on their LOS to one another (or any other same-level units).

c) A unit in R16 can see into the Ravine in S16, S17, and R17. And due to the crestline created by the R16-R17 hexside (looking 'down' into the Ravine), a unit in R16 has an LOS all the way to R21, including any units down in the Ravine in R17-R18-R19-R20-R21. Note that this crestline does NOT provide an LOS to hex R22. If there were a Hillock hexside at R16/R17, there WOULD be an LOS to the lower level (i.e., Level 0 in this case) created by the contour.

d) A unit in R6 pays to move 'uphill' when entering R7. Note the crestline between Level +30 and Level +20 continues along Woods hexes O7-O8-P7-Q7-R7-S8-S9-S10-T10-T11.

e) A unit may NOT move from hex BB20 to BB21 due to the Cliff hexside between these two hexes.

f) A unit in GG11, firing at one in GG18, pays a 6L shift (or +6 HPN DRM) due to the six Crops hexsides along the LOS.

g) A unit in EE7 can see one in KK19 with NO Crops along the LOS due to its +10 elevation difference. Note that Level +5 terrain like Crops NEVER create Blind Hexes.

h) A unit in KK20 can see one in EE11 with NO Crops along the LOS due to its +5 elevation difference (up on a Hillock in KK20).

i) Moving from hex T19 to T18 involves entering Precipitous Terrain. Since the hex is otherwise Open Ground, the cost to enter T18 from T19 is 4 + CoT = 5 MP. Note Winded Personnel may NOT use Infiltration to make this move.

j) A unit MAY move in the Ravine from Y22 to Y21, noting this move involves Precipitous Terrain (and thus costs 4 + CoT, i.e., 4 + 2 = 6 MP and Personnel units may not use Infiltration to make this move if Winded).

k) A unit UP in the Ravine in hex S21 has an LOS to hex S19 (as well as S20; T19; U21; etc.) If down in the same Ravine hex, it ONLY has an LOS to adjacent hexes EXCEPT 'down' in S22 (UP in S22 represents an LOS from down in S21) as this latter clearly represents a break in the same Ravine art. A Personnel

unit may STILL make Grenade Attacks from DOWN in S21 to units DOWN in S22.

l) A perusal of the map will indicate there are FEW ways 'up' from the river valley that do NOT involve the difficulties inherent in crossing Precipitous Terrain. The ONLY hexes that afford normal movement up are hexes U20; V20; W21; and X21. The rest of the hexes, H22-I22-J21-K21-K20 and R18-S18-T18-U19 and Y21 entail the use of Precipitous Terrain when entered from the lower level, Level 0 hexes in 'the valley'.

m) If a turreted AFV was in hex B21, firing at another turreted AFV in B19, they would BOTH receive the benefits of Hull Defilade. If a turreted AFV was in hex B20, it could ROLL to obtain H-D status. Whether it was H-D or not, if it fired from B20 to a target in I15, it could ignore the Crops along the LOS.

n) A Personnel unit in E26 could fire normally at one in E25 (i.e., up the Cliff). However, a Gun or vehicle Main Armament may NOT fire up or down a Cliff into an adjacent hex IF the difference in levels is +20 or greater.

o) A unit in hex N18 is at Level +30, not at Level 0, since the Cliff is considered to be an extension of the HIGHER level terrain for LOS and hex location purposes.

p) A Personnel unit in the upper 'story' level, i.e., Level +10 location in the building hex H25, has an LOS to the Level +10 portion of hexes H22 (which could ONLY be entered from I23; I22; J21; and K21 as any unit moved into these hexes from the LOWER levels (hexes I23; J22; K22; L21; and K21 entered from L20). These locations of the hexes would ONLY be considered entered when using Opportunity Fire on moving enemy units—since they cross all levels of the hex as it is entered when a LOS touches that particular terrain level.

q) A unit in hex O26 (sorry, no hex ID printed on the map!) can see one down in the Ravine of hex O24 as the LOS goes from a crestline formed and does not leave the Ravine art.

r) A unit in hex B20 (up on a Hillock) can see down into the Level +20 hexes centered around hex I20, noting the absence of a reduction of ONE Blind Hex since the terrain mass is NOT considered part of the SAME Hill. Thus, hex H19 is a Blind Hex from B20.

1.6 Upgrade Kit—This product is provided as an 'upgrade' for owners of the previous "Combat! Kursk" game. However, in order to make it playable as a complete game, a copy of the earlier map has been provided. Plans for additional Kursk battlefields, reflecting new maps and scenarios, are in the works. Write us if you are interested and kindly provide details of your preference of future Kursk battlefields.

1.61 Campaign Game—With slight modification by the players the Campaign Game, including Sector System, provided in the original game, can be used with CLASH ALONG THE PSEL. Players that do not own the earlier game may obtain copies of those materials at our website free of charge. Please note these are considered OPTIONAL materials and not the future campaign rulebook planned for the ATS system down the road. We trust players will note the low cost of this release.