Berlin '45

by James C. Gordon

Berlin '45: The Nightmare Ends (XTR Corporation, 1992) includes a variety of scenarios and modifiers as part of the design, which simulates the final drive on Berlin by the Allied armies. Historically, diplomatic machinations determined that the Soviet Army would capture Berlin, with the remote possibility of taking Hitler alive. Western Allied armies halted along the Elbe, short of the ultimate goal. **Berlin '45** explores historical might-have-beens with improvements to the German position, plus the addition of direct participation by the Western Allies with an Operation ECLIPSE airdrop into Berlin, and the premise for a Third World War. The additional variants offered here tap into some of the established features of the game and expand on the general theme of rewriting history.

Free German Deployment

Using the Historical scenario, the German player redeploys most of his forces at start. The Berlin garrison and 12th Army units must be placed in the hexes specified in the scenario rules. The entire fortification line must be covered by either German units or ZOCs. All remaining German units are placed in a fortification hex or anywhere west of that line.

Full German Deployment

In Maximum Historical scenario, the German player adds the extra units (those marked with an asterisk) salvaged from the Kurland Pocket and the abortive Ardennes Offensive to reinforce the Eastern Front. Using full German deployment, all historical, reinforcement, and extra units deploy at start. As above, the entire fortification line must be covered by either German units or ZOCs. The Berlin garrison and 12th Army units deploy as per the standard setup rules.

Combat Modifier Variants

The following combat situations add die roll modifiers of +1 on offense and -1 on defense. Modifiers are cumulative and cancel each other out if more than one applies in a given combat resolution. Modifiers for either side: a combined arms combat involving both armor and infantry (mechanized or nonmechanized) units from the same nationality.

German modifiers:

(1) any combat involving a supplied SS unit;
(2) an anti-tank unit included in a stack defending against a purely armored attack.

Soviet modifier: a supplied Guards unit attacking any non-SS German unit.

Allied modifier: any attack on the turn when an airdrop takes place involving an Allied paratroop unit and a supplied ground unit.

Soviet Paratroops

Any one non-mechanized Guards Infantry Corps from both the 1st Ukrainian and 1st Belorussian Fronts are designated as paratroopers. These units are held off the map and flipped to their reduced strength side (making them one-step units). They may be dropped once during the game anywhere on the map. Soviet paratroop units possess enough supply to last for two turns after landing. By that time, they must be reached by ground forces, or they become unsupplied until they make contact.

Zones of Control

All ground units except artillery, antitank, airborne, and Berlin garrisons exert a standard ZOC. Units do not have to stop or initiate combat upon entering enemy ZOCs. Continuous movement through an enemy ZOC doubles the movement cost of the hex. Units may not move directly between hexes under the influence of enemy ZOCs. This rule does not alter the effect of the rigid ZOCs exerted from German fortress hexes.

Variable Game Length

Roll the die and increase the result by five to determine the game length. If the Allies hold at least one Berlin hex, but not the Fuhrer Bunker, the game continues. Otherwise, the game ends in a negotiated peace.

Multiple Allied Airdrops

If the 1st Allied Airborne Army does not assault Berlin under the standard Operation Eclipse scenario rules, the American and British airborne units may be dropped elsewhere. The Allied player is allowed a maximum of three separate airdrops, but none of them may be conducted against a city hex. Any number of units can be used in a single drop. Each unit can be airdropped only once. Airlanding units are exempted from this option. Airborne units automatically have two turns of supplies after they conduct an airdrop. Then they must be reached by ground forces or they become unsupplied until they make contact.

Multi-player Variants

The scenarios provided in the game can be played by three or more players. The intention is to create rivalry and competition between the alliance partners to achieve the same goal, or for team play. Unless noted, follow the rules, restrictions, and victory conditions provided in the game for each scenario.

Historical Scenario

• The German player controls all German forces.

• Soviet player "A" controls the 1st Ukrainian Front units, two air units, and two mechanized and one mechanized replacement steps each turn.

• Soviet Player "B" controls the 1st and 2nd Belorussian Fronts units, two air units, and two mechanized and one nonmechanized replacement steps each turn.

• A hex occupied by the forces of one Soviet player may not be attacked by other Soviet forces. However, a hex is controlled by the last player to occupy it and a vacant hex can be occupied by any unit. The command demarcation line is in effect only until the Fuhrer Bunker is captured by either player, at which point the command restriction is lifted.

• The German player wins if he controls the Fuhrer bunker after ten turns. Otherwise, the Soviet players gain victory points for controlling city hexes and exiting units off the map. The Fuhrer Bunker counts ten victory points, other Berlin hexes are worth five VPs, and other city hexes are worth three VPs. The 1st Ukrainian Front player receives one victory point for each unit above four which he exits off the west map edge. The 1st/2nd Belorussian Fronts player receives one VP for each unit above twelve which he exits off the north or west map edges. (Thus, the players must exceed the historical scenario requirement to collect any VPs for that action.)

Maximum Historical Scenario

• The German player controls all German forces.

• Soviet player "A" controls the 1st Ukrainian Front units, the game turn eight reinforcements, two air units, and two mechanized and one mechanized replacement steps each turn.

• Soviet Player "B" controls the 1st and 2nd Belorussian Fronts units, two air units, and two mechanized and one nonmechanized replacement steps each turn.

• The rules for hex control outlined in the "Historical Scenario" above apply. The command line demarcation restriction is enforced across the map except inside Berlin where there is no restriction. 2nd Belorussian Front units may not attack until turn three.

• The German player wins if he controls the Führer bunker hex after game turn thirteen. Otherwise, victory goes to the Soviet player city

hexes at the end. The Führer Bunker counts ten victory points and all other Berlin hexes are worth three VPs.

Operation Eclipse

• The German player controls all German forces. All units setup according to the standard rules but the orientation of forces is completely at the discretion of the German player. (Alternatively, two German players could operate independently, with their respective force pools determined by the standard rules for unit orientation)

• The Soviet player controls all Soviet forces. (Alternatively, the Soviet forces could be split between players A and B as described in the Maximum Historical variant above.)

• The Western Allies player controls all 1AAA, American, and Commonwealth forces. (Alternatively, the Western Allied forces could be played separately by American and Commonwealth players, with the 1AAA forces holding a strictly defensive position after landing in Berlin and then rejoining their respective national forces.)

• This scenario remains effectively unchanged except that the German player makes his own decisions and fights his own battles. The player who takes the German side should be warned not to "favor" either Allied player in directing his defenses or counterattacks.

• If the Soviet player declares an extension to the battle, the scenario continues according to the standard rules for Operation Eclipse extended game.

• Victory is determined according to the standard rules for the Operation Eclipse scenario. Watch on the Vistula/Watch on the Oder

• The German player controls all German forces.

• The Soviet player controls all Soviet forces.

• The American player controls all American forces.

• The Commonwealth player controls all Commonwealth forces.

• 1AAA units are deployed units in their national colors, controlled by the American and Commonwealth players separately.

Bleedin', Battlin', Bloody Bastards of Berlin

• Soviet player "A" controls the 1st Ukrainian Front units, the game turn eight reinforcements, two air units, and two mechanized and one mechanized replacement steps each turn.

• Soviet Player "B" controls the 1st and 2nd Belorussian Fronts units, two air units, and two mechanized and one nonmechanized replacement steps each turn.

• American player controls all American forces.

• Commonwealth player controls all Commonwealth forces.

• 1AAA units are deployed in their national colors, controlled by the American and Commonwealth players separately.

Early Operation Eclipse Scenario

The Western Allies launch an early invasion of France and enter Germany before the Soviets threaten the Fatherland from the East. Instead of planning Operation Eclipse as a desperate airdrop to grab the German capital before the Soviet forces arrive, the Allies engineer a full-scale assault toward Berlin. Realizing that the immediate threat is posed by the Americans and the British, the Germans have time to create a fortified line facing west. This new line of fortresses facing west which runs north to south, no further east than the 36XX hexrow. For example, a western fortress line could include hexes 3600, 3601, 3602, 3603, 3703, 3704, 3805, 3806, 3807, 3808, 3809, 3909, 3910, 3911, 3912, 3913, 4014, 4015, 4016, 4017, 4018, 4019, 4020, 3920, 3821—here a lake bisects the line— 3823, 3923, 4024, 4025, 4124, 4125, 4126, 4027, 4028, 4029, 4030, 4031, 3931, 3932, 3933, 3934, 3935, 3936, 3937, and 3938.

All German forces from the historical scenario are deployed at start in any western fortress hex or a non-fortress hex west of Berlin. The Berlin and Zossen garrison units deploy according to the standard rules. German reinforcements arrive as scheduled. In addition, the German player rolls one die at the start of each turn and draws that number of units from among the extra ("asterisk") units as reinforcements. Given the threat to Berlin, some divisions would have been withdrawn from the East despite the overall strategic threat posed by the approaching Soviet armies (which do not take part in this scenario.)

The Western Allied player has an option to conduct an airdrop by the 1st Allied Airborne Army onto Berlin at the start of turns one or two. After turn two, the airborne units may be dropped elsewhere on any non-city hex. All other Allied forces arrive according to the standard rules of the Operation Eclipse scenario. However, the turn of arrival for Allied units is moved forward two turns (i.e., turn 4 reinforcements arrive on turn 2).

To win, the Allies must have control of the Führer Bunker by the end of game turn ten. Otherwise, the Germans win.

In a two-player game, one player controls the Germans and the other controls the Western Allies. For multi-player rules, see "Watch on the Vistula/Oder" above regarding the Western Allied forces.

Final Defense of Berlin Scenario

As the Soviet and Western Allied forces reach Germany, the alliance splits apart. The respective offensives stall, enabling the Germans to retreat in better shape for the final defense of Berlin. Lacking diplomatic unity, the Allied powers begin the separate campaigns to finish the war. Each side intends to reach Berlin first.

The German player deploys all forces from the Historical Scenario as per the standard setup rules. The extra forces added in the maximum historical scenario and all reinforcements are deployed facing west, utilizing the western fortress line (see "Early Operation Eclipse Scenario" above).

Soviet forces deploy at start according to the Historical Scenario. The 1st Ukrainian and 1st Belorussian Fronts must abide by the command demarcation line, as in the historical scenario, and the 2nd Belorussian Front cannot attack until turn 3. All Soviet reinforcements deploy on turn 4.

The Western Allies have the option to assault Berlin with the 1st Allied Airborne Army on turn one or two, or conduct a maximum of three separate airdrops later on any non-city hex (see "Multiple Airdrop" above). All Western Allied forces scheduled to arrive on turns 1-3 in the Operation Eclipse scenario deploy at start in any hex west of the new German fortress line. All other Western Allied forces have their scheduled turn of arrival moved forward by three turns.

The game ends as soon as either Allied player captures the Führer Bunker. Victory is determined by counting points for the control of city hexes. The Führer Bunker counts 10 points, other Berlin hexes are worth three points, and all other city hexes are two points. The player with the higher point total at the end of the game wins.

In a two-player game, one player controls the historical German units (facing east) and the Western Allies while the other player controls the extra German units (facing west) and the Soviets. The Berlin garrison are deployed by either player as soon as the opposing player moves a units within five hexes of a Berlin hex. For multi-player rules see "Watch on the Vistula/Oder" above. ∎