

"LEARNING BY PLAYING"

Squad Leader (TM, TAHGC) will appear to most people as a fairly complex game, and this will not be an erroneous impression. However, initial play of Squad Leader can be relatively easy, deferring much of the inevitable complexities of squad-level tactical combat to an incremental introduction method.

The original Squad Leader "programmed instruction" method is ideal for helping the "squad leader" (actually company commander) learn the ropes as he/she advances into this system. However, the original SL scenarios do not actually do a very good job of helping a player learn tactical combat implementation. This circumstance is undoubtedly due to initial game design decisions, choices that were made well before it was known how popular the game would become. The two biggest problems with the original scenario set are: (1) city combat tends to be an exception to normal tactical maneuver and decisions, which makes it harder to translate the lessons out of the city and (2) the original system does a terrible job of properly easing the player into vehicle use.

It is these difficulties that are meant to be dealt with through this alternative "programmed instruction" sequence of scenarios. There is an effort to introduce tactical issues of maneuver, firepower, mass, leadership, vehicles, special weapons (among others) as the player proceeds through these scenarios. Of course, the original 12 scenarios from the SL game are always available for additional play, and all players are urged to consider their use as well, particularly once all of the relevant rules sections have been introduced through this alternate system.

A considerable effort has been made to discuss (through side commentary) issues that are often the subject of controversy among SL players. Surprisingly enough, the SL rules are pretty well drafted, as they leave only a few areas that could be called rules "grey areas." By discussing these areas as they are initially encountered through their scenario introduction it is hoped that all players will be provided with the tools that they may need to play this great game among a wide variety of gamers worldwide. Note that these areas of confusion often come and go, so additions may be introduced into future versions of this scenario series.

Although these scenarios have been designed as an aid to learning the Squad Leader system, take this as a warning. Any scenario in Squad Leader will present both players with many decisions to be made. These scenarios are not an exception, execute your tactics poorly and you are much more likely to find failure than success on these battlefields! As others have introduced into the wargaming world, many scenarios may be simple but this does not mean that they will be simplistic!

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INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

This alternate "programmed instruction" scenario series are sequentially identified by greek alphabet, starting with ALPHA. Each scenario is provided with varying complexity levels, usually from zero to three. Recommendations for play sequence through these scenarios is outlined below.

Although it would be possible to create a fictional "story" behind each scenario, this has been avoided as it might distract from the real goal of the series, namely "how can one apply the rules presented on the battlefield to achieve the desired result?" Note that in Squad Leader a player will ALWAYS be presented with a Victory Condition. This states what your higher command has asked you (as the company commander) to attain on the tactical battlefield. Normally there are few restrictions placed on your options (how to achieve them). The only thing that matters is achieving your specified objective. Pay attention to it, get it done, and you will be a WINNER at this challenging game of tactical combat!

Once one learns the how of tactical combat it is relatively easy to proceed to any and all other scenarios, as you will have the tools to succeed! But perhaps I should add a word of caution: SL is very much about the probabilities of success. Every action that you will attempt is likely to have a chance of failure, bear this in mind because there will always be times when you fail in your efforts. The recommended approach is to try to figure out how to do your best to increase the probability of your success.

So good luck and good SL'ing!

RULES SPECIFICATIONS: Care has been applied to specifying exactly which rules within the rulebook are needed for the play of each scenario. In all cases these will differ somewhat from the rules ordering of the basic 12 SL scenarios. This procedure should help segregate the rules sections into more contiguous sections, permitting more time for the examination of battlefield tactics as the rules are gradually expanded.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PLAY: All of the scenarios in this series are designed to be relatively quick play with tactical challenges for beginner and experienced, alike. In face-to-face (ftf) play it ought to be possible to complete any one of these scenarios in less than two hours. It is actually hoped that in a typical ftf session there should be time to play any of the scenarios at least twice. Are there shortcuts? Yes, if a player wants to charge ahead real fast some of the presented levels can be skipped. However, doing so will tend to remove some of the valuable tactical experiences that these scenarios attempt to demonstrate. Those who have been through the SL learning process know that there is no better teacher than painful experience!

CHOOSING SIDES: Between an EXPERIENCED player and a BEGINNER, the beginner ought to always be given the choice of side. It often is also helpful if the experienced player is willing to answer any tactical and/or game procedure question that the beginner may have during play. Needless to say, it is also polite to wait for a beginner to ask! Remember that the goal should be to introduce the game system and to help develop successful tactics, not necessarily to use these scenarios to blow a beginner away! Between TWO BEGINNERS the "zero" level should always be played first. Sides might also be exchanged at each play, so that both players can experience the tactical issues of both combatants. Once the players are comfortable with a level, it is encouraged that the next level be tried. This process can easily be repeated until the last scenario level has been reached or the players decide that they would like to move onto the next scenario in the sequence. SOLITAIRE experimentation with these scenarios should also be a viable approach, although learning in this manner will tend to limit one's introduction to enemy tactics that you might not consider, if using this method it is recommended that you proceed as two beginners would.

SCENARIO BALANCE: It is expected that each "numbered" level of these scenarios should be roughly balanced. Thus play with each side having their "zero" level, or their "one" level, etc. should generate game play with approximately equal chances of a victory for either side (hopefully within the 60% - 40% range). However, many games by many players will be required to verify this balance. IMPORTANT: Levels are usually meant to be played with all the prior level's forces, eg. a straight level "one" is played with all the level one forces _plus_ all the level "zero" forces. For ease of reference, the level should be specified along with the scenario (Alpha-zero, Beta-two, Gamma-one, etc.).

AN AUGMENTATION LEVEL NOTE: As each scenario's augmentation levels add a certain amount of complexity to scenario play, some scenario characteristics are never changed. These constants will always include: the board configuration, the victory conditions, and the number of scenario turns. These characteristics tend to be the most basic attributes of any scenario.

THE EARLY SCENARIOS: All of the "early" scenarios of this series start with unit set up specified, at least at the "zero" level. This is to encourage each "Squad Leader" to examine what can be done from a specified deployment rather than mandating flexible deployment before a player has been given the chance to explore some of the elements of deployment choice through scenario play. As one learns the system it will become apparent that these initial specified deployments are specifically designed to be sub-optimal, so that players will be encouraged to "find better ways" once variable deployment is added. It is hoped that this will "train" better SL tacticians, since many SL scenarios are, in effect, quick tests of effective deployment. Learning these why's and where's will always pay great dividends during subsequent scenario play!

BATTLEFIELD TACTICS?: These scenarios will reference tactical topics that are likely to become concerns as players proceed through the series. In most cases the players will not be provided with more than a one or two word statement of a possible issue. This is intended to be an alert to issues that may be key to the scenario or the added "level" augmentations. At some point there may be specific reviews of these tactical issues, perhaps inspired by these scenarios. Do you have the inspiration to write some commentary? Please forward them (preferably to the SL MAILING LIST) for eventual linking to the scenarios for future players! There are a couple of sequences within the series, see below. None of the TTS scenarios use the city board (#1), as city tactics are both very different from tactics in the country and fairly well covered by the first three original SL scenarios. All of the armies of WW2 prepared their tactics for the country, where much of the actual combat occurred. Only later were they forced to modify their tactical approaches for use in the city, the reverse of the process provided by the original SL scenarios.

How this game works: Alpha, Beta

Basic Tactics: Alpha, Beta, and Gamma

Intro to Set Up: Alpha (2 + 3) and Beta (1, 2 + 3)

Defensive Set Up: Delta, Epsilon, and Zeta

Vehicles: Gamma, Delta, Epsilon, (and Zeta)

Infantry against Vehicles: Gamma, Delta, (and Zeta)

Assault Tempo: Beta, Delta, and Zeta

Americans: Delta, (Epsilon), and Zeta
 Fortifications: Delta, Epsilon, and Zeta
 Intro to Combined Arms: Delta and Zeta

Russians attack Germans: Alpha (plus Epsilon 2 + 3)
 Germans vs Russians: Gamma (both will "attack")
 Germans attack Russians: Beta
 Germans attack Americans: Delta
 Americans attack Germans: Zeta (plus Epsilon 0 + 1)

TACTICAL TRAINING SERIES

(for Squad Leader) [March, 2005 update]

SCENARIO ALPHA "Forced March" (v1.3)

All of Board 4, 5 turns, Russians attacking Germans.

[Introducing: SEQUENCE OF PLAY (of course), BASIC TERRAIN (woods, buildings, walls and hedges, roads, shellholes), INFANTRY MOVEMENT (maneuver), INFANTRY FIREPOWER (interdiction), EFFECTS OF RANGE, LEADERSHIP, ROUTING, RALLYING, BOARD ENTRY, BOARD EXIT.

RULES: 1-2.6, 3.2-3.5, 3.7-5.6, 6-7.3, 7.8, 8-15.2, 15.4- 16.6, 18.3-20.4, 20.6-20.83, 20.9-21.3, 44.3-44.32.

Level One adds:

Russians: [OFFENSIVE MASS] Germans: [MG's and penetration]

RULES: 2.7-2.9, 5.7, 17, 18.1, 18.2, 20.5, 20.84.

Level Two adds:

Russians: [MG's (range/firebases)] Germans: [VARIABLE DEPLOYMENT]

Level Three adds:

Russians: [SEASONAL TERRAIN] Germans: [TEMPO and INITIATIVE] RULES: 44.2-44.24.

SCENARIO BETA "Hasty Assault" (v2.4)

Half of Board 3, 5 turns, Germans attacking Russians.

INTRODUCING: more with BASIC TERRAIN (stone buildings, more walls and hedges, more wheatfields), HILLS, ADVANCED LOS (Hills), DIRECT ASSAULT, DEFENSIVE OPTIONS, MANEUVER IN (and against) AN ASSAULT, CLOSE COMBAT, BERSERK INFANTRY, SOLE CONTROL.

RULES: Through Alpha-3, HILLS (43.1-43.61, 43.7-43.9)

Level One adds:

Germans: [firepower support] Russians: [concealment]

RULES: 25.1-25.6, 25.8, 25.9

Level Two adds:

Germans: [engineers, smoke] Russians: [guards, deployment]

RULES: 25.7, 24.1-24.8

Level Three adds:

Germans: [DC, reinforcements] Russians: [Special Scenario Rules]

RULES: 23.1-23.8, note to rule 5.75

SCENARIO GAMMA "Through the Gantlet" (v1.4)

Other half of Board 3, 4 turns, Russian reinforcement column

INTRODUCING: Vehicles, Vehicle movement, more Hill and Shellhole movement, basic Multi-Story buildings, infantry options versus vehicles, panzerfausts, overrun, tactical choice.

RULES: Through Beta-1, Multi-story buildings (7.4-7.7, 7.9), Vehicles: 16.7, 28.1, 28.3, 29-30.5, 30.8-31.6, 31.8, 31.9, 32.3, 32.4, 32.6, 32.7, 40.1-40.3, 43.61, 44.1, 44.22, Trucks (51)

Level One adds:

Russians: [AFV, Halftracks] Germans: [Firepower]

RULES: 30.6, 30.7, 32.5, 33.5, 35.8, 40.5, 47

Level Two adds:

Russians: [Armed Halftracks] Germans: [Reinforcements]

RULES: 28.4, 33.2, 33.9, 34.8, 35.1-35.4, 35.6-35.9, 38.2, 38.3, 39.2, 41.2

Level Three adds:

Russians: [Force Flexibility] Germans: [Panzerfausts]

RULES: 37.1-37.37 [note 5.75]

GAME SET II: TTS GAME SET II comprises scenarios Delta (Back to the Sea), Epsilon (Tanker Delight) and Zeta (Hitting the Wall). This set of scenarios challenges the Squad Leader to explore the implications of initial battlefield deployment. This is the next big hurdle to tactical success in the Squad Leader system, since most SL scenarios will challenge the defender, and to a lesser extent the attacker, to find a deployment that will meet the immediate tactical requirements while avoiding the "mistakes" that lead to undesired casualties! These three scenarios introduce the American GI while completing the introduction of most vehicle issues via smaller incremental steps. They also introduce all of the varying types of fortifications available in the basic Squad Leader system. As an added touch, an effort has been made to use appropriate tactical formation terms from each combatant's language.

SCENARIO DELTA "Back to the Sea" (v2.1)

Half of Boards 2 and 4, 5 turns, Germans attacking Americans

INTRODUCING: Off-Board Artillery (OBA), radio use, High Explosive (HE) versus infantry, more smoke, infantry versus armor, machine gun positions, entrenchments, bazookas, crew (squads) as infantry.

RULES: Through Beta(two), (Americans) 50.1, 50.3, 50.4 (Off-Board Artillery) 46.1-46.53, 46.6-46.81, 46.9

Level One adds:

Germans: [Armor support, crews] Americans: [multiple firebases, crews]

RULES: Through Gamma(two), 28.2, 28.4, 31.5, 31.7, 32.1-32.2, 33.1-33.34, 33.8-34.8, 35, 38-39, 41.2-41.4, 58.4

Level Two adds:

Germans: [Assault guns, AFV differences] Americans: [Entrenchments, bazookas]

RULES: 33.6, 33.9, 37.4, 40.4, 54 [Note to rules 5.75, 41.2]

Level Three adds:

Germans: [augmented OBA] Americans: [defensive OBA]

RULES: 45.1-45.42, 46.54, 46.82

SCENARIO EPSILON "Tanker Delight" (v1.3)

Boards 2 and 4, 4 turns, Americans/Russians attacking Germans

INTRODUCING: Armored Fighting Vehicle (AFV) Tactics, Covered Arc, AFV versus AFV combat, Roadblocks, Anti-Tank Guns, Rate of Fire.

RULES: Through DELTA(zero), 33.1-33.6, 38, 39, 41, 44.22

Level One adds:

Americans: [Mixed Armored Elements] Germans: [Prepared positions]

RULES: 48.0, 62, 63.3 [rates of fire, HEAT]

Level Two switches to (with Board configuration change):

Russians: Dva Tankoviye Vzvody(two tank platoons) Germans: PanzerZuge IV(armored platoon)

Level Three adds:

Russians: SUA Batterie(self-propelled battery) Germans: PanzerJaeger 75(Anti-Tank Guns)

RULES: 48.1-48.5, 48.7-48.9 [Note to rule 33.6]

SCENARIO ZETA "Hitting the Wall" (still in playtest)

Half of Boards 2 and 3, 5 turns, Americans attacking Germans

INTRODUCING: Wire, Jeeps, Mines, Bunkers, Flamethrowers, Hidden Initial Placement, motorized/mechanized infantry, combined arms.

RULES: Through Delta-two, 52 (Jeeps), 53 (Wire)

Level One adds:

Americans: [Combined Arms] Germans: [Mines]

RULES: 53.8, 53.9, 55 (Mines), 63.4, 63.5

Level Two: Under Construction

Level Three: Under Construction