

Game Report: 8th Eurowifcon Oct. 8th-16th 2004, Table 3

Players:

Bob Rodriguez (US): USA, China
Josef Gundel (GE): Commonwealth
Bernard Genin (BE): USSR, France
Johan Sahlin (SW): Germany
Matthias Eckel (GE): Italy
Julien Sauloup (FR): Japan

Insight of the Optional Rules in play / not in play:

2D10, RAW-Oil, MiF-Corps at discretion in the Force Pool, AiF units but no Heavy Units, Warlords, no chinese tension markers, Chinese Attack Weakness, no Japanese Command Conflict, no CoiF, no CLif, no In the Presence of the Enemy, no Railway Movement Bonus, no HQ movement, no Carpet Bombing, no Partisan HQs, defensive shore half the value of defending unit, Bottomed Ships, no limited AC interception, no Scandinavian map, variable Reorg, ...

Set Up:

German set-up against Poland, Russian set-up at romanian and persian borders, Asia being lightly defended. Japan has all her Manchurian units around Blagovyeshchensk. Axis came with the intent of doing a 40-Barbarossa, or in case a strong 41 one.

Report:

Poland is rapidly crushed and Japan attacks Russia on the third impulse, Italy ships armored corps and HQ into Lybia. CW declares war on Italy and tries to sink the two TRS in Bardia. One of them is bottomed. Russia claims Bessarabia which is denied; Romania aligns to Italy and german and italian reinforcements are railed in. USSR is not able to seize East Poland due to the absence of chits in the US Entry pool.

Italy besieges Alexandria but makes no attack, waiting for shore bombardment factors to get through. What is getting through however are the italians subs, which sink 14 CPs(!) on the very first turn. Germany is multiplying the combined and still doesn't move West. USSR commits everything to the romanian front and makes some progress but don't get neither Ploesti, nor Bucharest. Mongolia and Portugal (incompletely) are conquered by Japan.

Denmark is overrun only in J/F40 after french subs attacked in the Baltic. Japan assaults Kabharovsk and takes a second soviet city in Siberia after Blago. The chinese front being relatively quiet with one try on Si-An which is a failure. More fightings in Romania with heavy commitment on both sides. Allies wonder why Germany only takes combined and doesn't move its army at all. The end of M/A40 shows that Russia wouldn't be able to keep the needed garrison ratio if certain moves were to be done (ZOCing). Germany hesitates but waits until M/J hoping to be able to break the pact and move East. The situation is very tense, because if it fails the summer offensive in France will be very delayed.

In the meantime, the egyptian campaign has turned as a disaster for the Italians. Graziani was contemplating a +11 on Alexandria but the Gods of Initiative decided otherwise. A self-confident Wavell then made a sortie at +5 Blitz, resulting in a 21 and putting an end to the italian adventure. No one would escape. Tripoli would soon fall.

But Finally the german-soviet pact is broken and Germany makes an all out attack on the Soviet Union, having a shot at Leningrad (-/-) and trying to trap the whole russian army in Romania. An OC is used to reflip Zhukov but it does not help, Odessa is taken in a

breakthrough and the pocket will be eventually reduced. Russia is practically empty and reserves are mainly set up in the south. The turn ends relatively soon saving many face-down Reserves from destruction. J/A is a catastrophe for the Russian with 2 land OCs and 8 impulses for the German, who takes cities as far as Rostov, Krasnodar, Stalingrad and even Stavropol. Only Tiflis, Sevastopol, Voronezh and Moscow are left and no more than 6 factories were able to escape.

Japan, after having occupied the 4 siberian Resources, decides to take Vladivostok (Compulsory peace ensues). The war with Russia cost no unit but some CPs and 2 entry markers, Japan being once in default of CPs in the Japanese Coast sea area.

The war in China is limited to nationalist ground strike attempts with communist offensives and japanese counter-attacks on disrupted Chinese and the shooting of many chinese lend-leased airplanes with a rather stable line.

The winter 40/41 sees the fall of Moscow and occupation of north Caucasus. The Russians are entrenched in the south Caucasus, very difficult to dislodge. Germany keeps advancing in the asian map and also sets-up at the bulgarian border. Japan invades Athens with a frontal assault and prepares to align Yugoslavia as Sofia is taken. Then the CW delivers a terrible blow to the Axis side, paradropping on an empty Tirana, which was totally forgotten, and preventing the alignment of Yugoslavia. A good tentative on recapturing the city gets intercepted at sea. The CW eventually aligns Yugoslavia and steps in in the Balkans for the rest of the game, ruining Axis hopes of conquest of Russia. At that the weather of J/A41 is horrible with a '10', '11' and '11' = 2 straight Rain impulses in Arctic.

But it could have been worse. The CW had debarked in Italy and had tried to cross the Alps from France. But these 41 invaders were repelled and let us mention some successes which took place at sea where 8 more CW convoys went to the bottom, what some fat-loaded TRS refused obstinately to do, saving a total of 3 X.

S/O41: US make their first gear-up. From now on, Russia will be lend-leased 7BPs a turn. CW garrisons the crucial BP-shipping ports of Murmansk and Archangelsk.

N/D41: Japan declares war on the CW, occupies Rabaul, Ceylon and debarks in Brisbane, and then between Melbourne and Canberra. CW rushes reinforcements but it's too late, Melbourne is taken and Canberra only occupied by a flipped CW division, Australia is in a bag, but wait a minute what's happening? Allies end the turn on a '1'! New turn, new weather: Storm!! It's over, Canberra is occupied by two Corps and the three japanese Corps there won't be enough. The blitz-conquest of Australia has failed, Yamamoto and his army evacuate. CW has sent everything it has to the Pacific (at the cost of 5 TRS) and Batavia and Singapore are heavily defended. It will be a very long process to clear these cities and other ports in the South China sea, taking almost 2 years of bitter fightings and furious naval battles.

At the spring of 42, France finally decides to get serious about invading Germany and strikes Belgium, delaying somehow the US declaration of war on the european Axis, only successful on their 3rd attempt in M/J 42, following with Japan (1st attempt).

In the summer of 42, the German lacks the punch (units) to cross the Ural river/mountains and hardly holds on what he already has. After alarming russian thrusts in the South, he finally manages to clear the situation and to conquer the pivot city Astrakhan. The US land in Sardinia and subsequently in Italy with some set backs. Italy will eventually fall in N/D43. In Russia, 1943 is a very quiet year with two coherent fronts, difficult to breach for either side. But it's a huge mêlée in the West. After many disappointments despite the deployment of

special troops and De Gaulle's conduct of operations (from Liège, Bernard's home city), the French endly manage a percée in south Germany and in Holland and eat german fighters like candy, pilots being immune to bullets though.

From then on the general retreat from Russia is ordered, the remaining troops there are not enough to build a new line anywhere and it seems it will be a home run to Germany. But the Russians will find it difficult to kill the retreating Germans as two –almost- automatic assaults on the german rearguard in an out of supply Stalingrad will end in bloodbaths. A '2' is rolled and a subsequent '3' destroys the 12 ARM Guard Banner!!

An amazing string of low dice rolls has hurt the US too since they are at war. Even with Land OCs falling like rain, Rabaul only surrenders on the 6th attempt and Truk on the 3rd, both at the very end of this game (M/A44). Invading US HQs have been stranding on the beaches one after the other, showing up again turn after turn, dying again turn after turn in a three-step movement: Nimitz, Hodges, Mc Arthur, Nimitz, Hodges, Mc Arthur, ... Japan being always able to sneak in that other one guy who would replace the loss and save the next day. During this time Japan had a free hand to remain aggressive and at the end of 43, makes a debarkment on Calcutta, takes the city and manages to reinforce it.

Conclusion:

The game ends in M/A 44 with the German retreating in good order and still strong (the whole anglo-american air-borne arm (4 Corps) is decimated within a few weeks). The western allies are reaching the Alps from an incompletely conquered Italy (France taking Milan). There was little allied cooperation as a look at the map clearly indicates: a light blue fleck in Belgium and southern Germany, a green one in Italy and a dark blue one in the Balkans. In the Pacific, The US are at last in possession of Truk and Rabaul. Japan is in a good shape as her losses remained low until late in the game (many CVPs shot down but no carrier lost) and her production never affected.

Aftermath:

This was a very uncommon game, and everyone had a great time. To win, the Axis needed to KO Russia either in 41 or 42. This may have happened but this was prevented by the CW, delivering the decisive blow at the right time.

Some strategic issues remain though:

- the question, if a 40-Barbarossa is winable, is still unanswered. Germany stood strong in the end and drove back France, and Russia's own production had been minimal since 40, so why not.
- Should have the German tried to take Paris in 41 and get rid of the French instead of trying to completely conquer Russia?

Objectives:

occupied by the Axis at the end of M/A44: 23

Japan: Tokyo, Port Arthur, Vladivostok, Shanghai, Taihoku, Saigon, Manilla, Singapore, Batavia, Calcutta ~ 10

Germany: Berlin, Kiel, Munich, Leningrad, Moscow, Kiev, Warsaw, Helsinki, Budapest, Prag, Vienna, Belgrade ~ 12

Italy: Bucharest ~ 1

Axis high-water mark in J/A43: 26