

Cold War Clash, 1985

I had another good game of CWC at my house last night with my mate, Lon. Since I had done absolutely no preparation, we diced (d10) to randomly select one of the first ten scenarios, resulting in Scenario #8 "Encirclement". We agreed on a date for the clash (mid '80s = 1985), then selected forces using the 'Battlegroups Online' Tool to a limit of 3500 pts (the scenario called for equal points). This reminded us just how easy it is to generate a mutually agreeable situation for a battle using the CWC system.

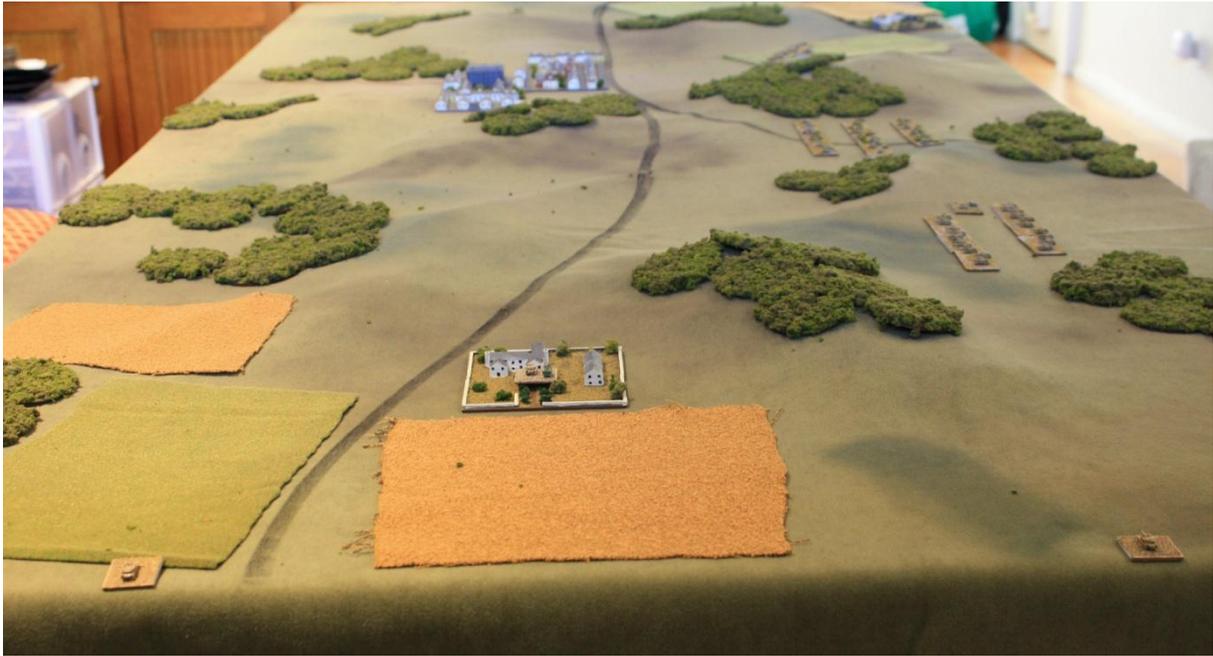
The random points modifier resulted in no modification for me (ie. I got 3500pts). I purchased: a CO, 2x HQs, a Battalion of 9x Conscript Infantry in BMP-2s and a Battalion of 9x T-64 with AT-11 and ERA. The random points modifier was cruel to Lon, deducting 10% off his points (ie. he had 3150pts) and he purchased a 'square' battle-group comprising a CO, 4 HQs, 2 Companies each of 3x M1, 2 Companies each of 3x Mechanised (Regular) Infantry in M2s, with a battalion of M109 (ie. 3 Batteries / stands) in support. All infantry on both sides had LAW Infantry upgrades (RPG-7 and M-72 respectively).

After selecting armies and setting up the table, we diced to determine the attacker / defender. I was to be the 'defender' with the Russians and Lon the 'attacker' with the Americans. As per the scenario, I set up 1/3 in from my baseline and had to 'occupy' the opposite 1/3 of the battlefield for a minor victory, or get 25% of my force off the opposite edge for a major victory. Lon could enter from one or both flank table-edges and had to destroy 25% of my force for a minor victory, or break my force for a major victory.

The battlefield and initial Russian (defender) deployment is seen in the two pictures below.



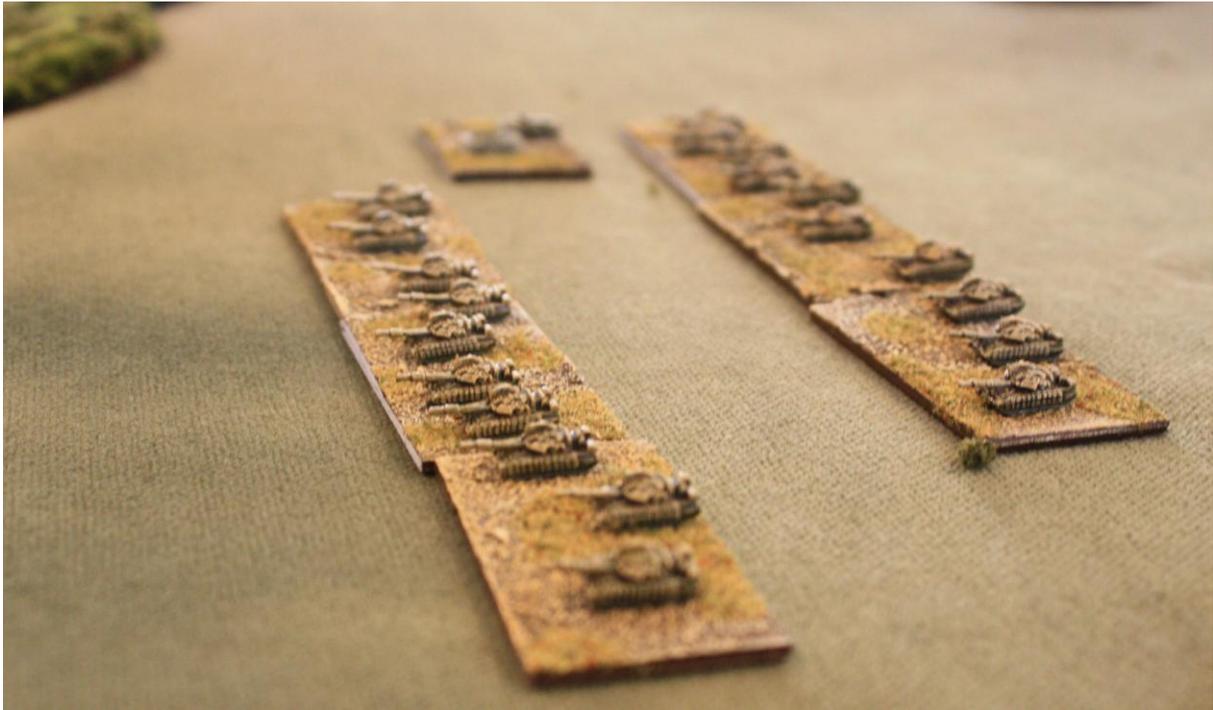
View from the East (above), including Russian deployment. Entry points of the M-2 companies can be seen in the foreground, a T-64 Company is on the left of picture and the BMP-2 Battalion beyond that between the wooded areas in the centre of the Russian deployment zone.



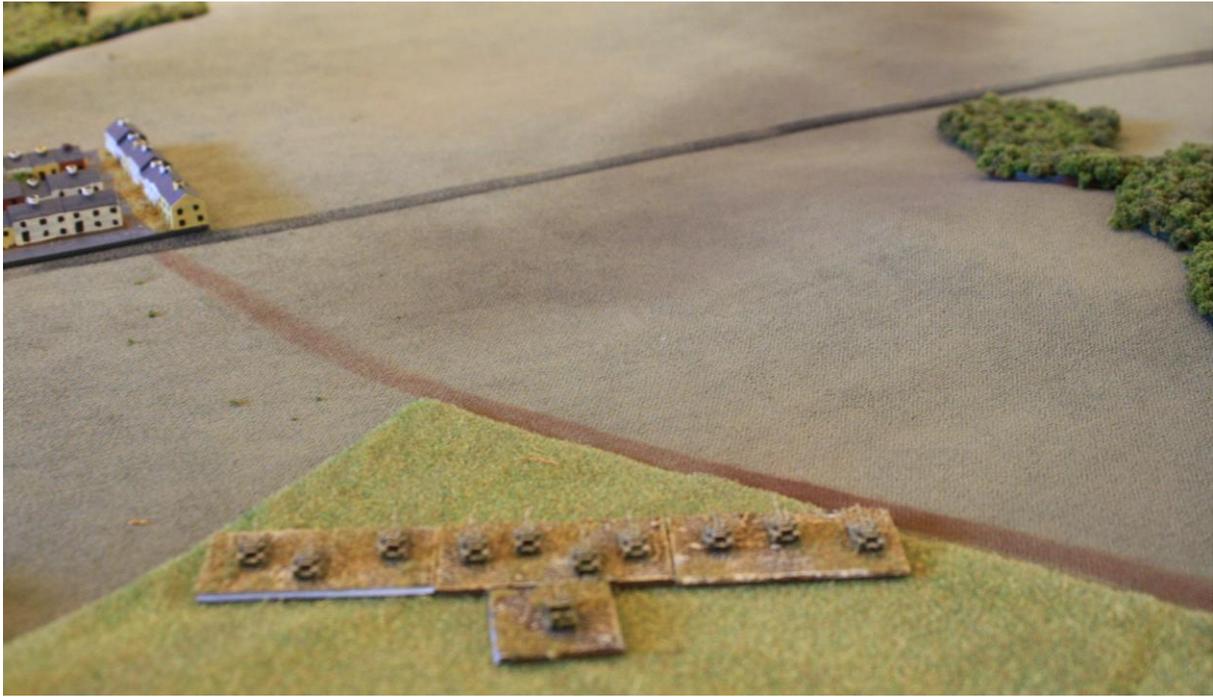
View from the West, including Russian deployment. The entry points of the M1 Companies can be seen at the western edge of the table. Then looking from bottom to top of picture, two companies of the T-64 Battalion can be seen, then the BMP-2 Battalion to the east of them.



I sent my BMP Motor Rifle Battalion (shown above) across in the centre, trying to protect both flanks with T-64s in overwatch to stop the nasty M1s. Two Companies of T-64s were on the left (shown below), and one Company on the right.



The T-64 company initial positions, as seen from the South (above), and looking towards the North-East (below). The town at the top of the picture (centre of battlefield) had to be avoided so as not to slow the Russian advance.



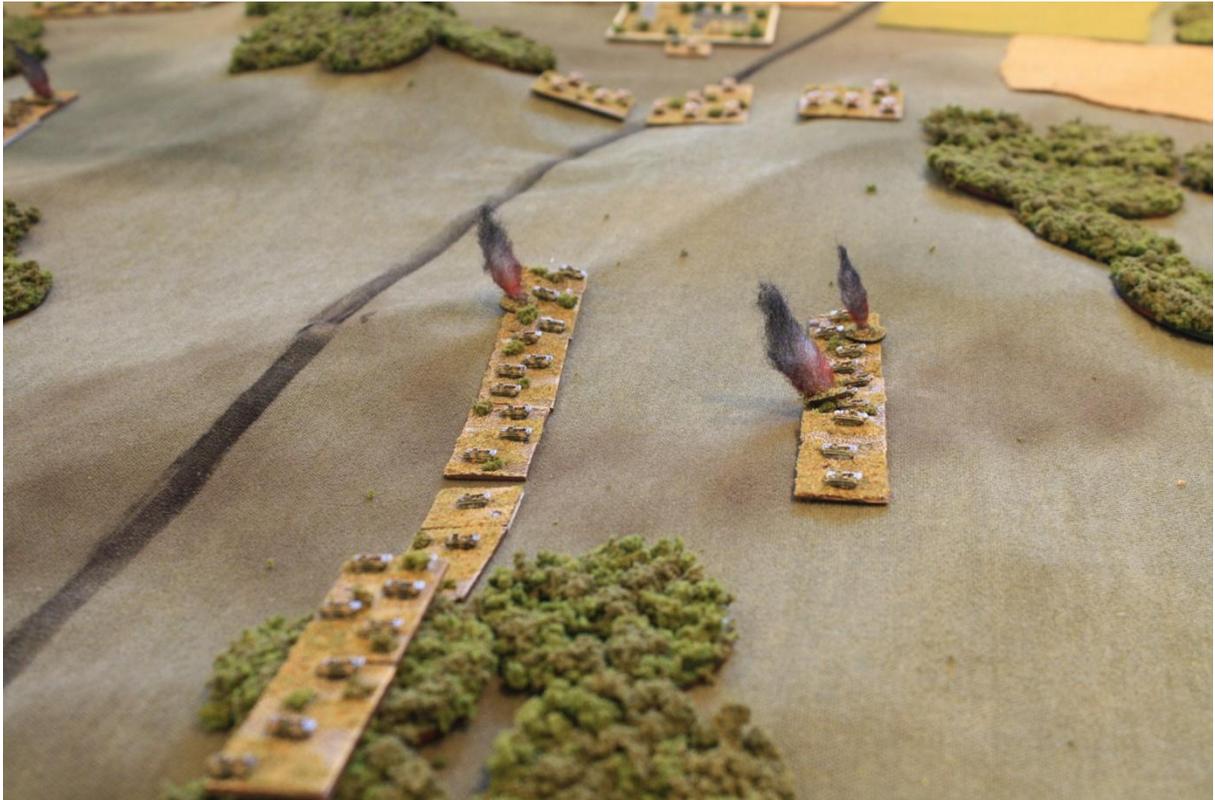
Using Mobile Deployment, Lon brought both M1 companies on from my left flank (west), and both M2 companies from the right (east). The first turn saw me get very lucky with my BMP battalion's command rolls and they moved three or four moves in a row. As a result, they rocketed across the battlefield and it looked like the game would be over with a decent second turn allowing them to exit the field! The T-64 company on the right also got a couple of moves, moving up the right flank to intercept anything that might come onto the table. To counteract my luck elsewhere, the main T-64 force of two companies on the left flank failed its command roll and failed to move. But all up, things were looking good.

In Lon's first turn, all his companies successfully entered from both flanks. The M2s moved on, and then moved up out of LOS (behind hills and woods) towards the T-64s in a couple of moves.

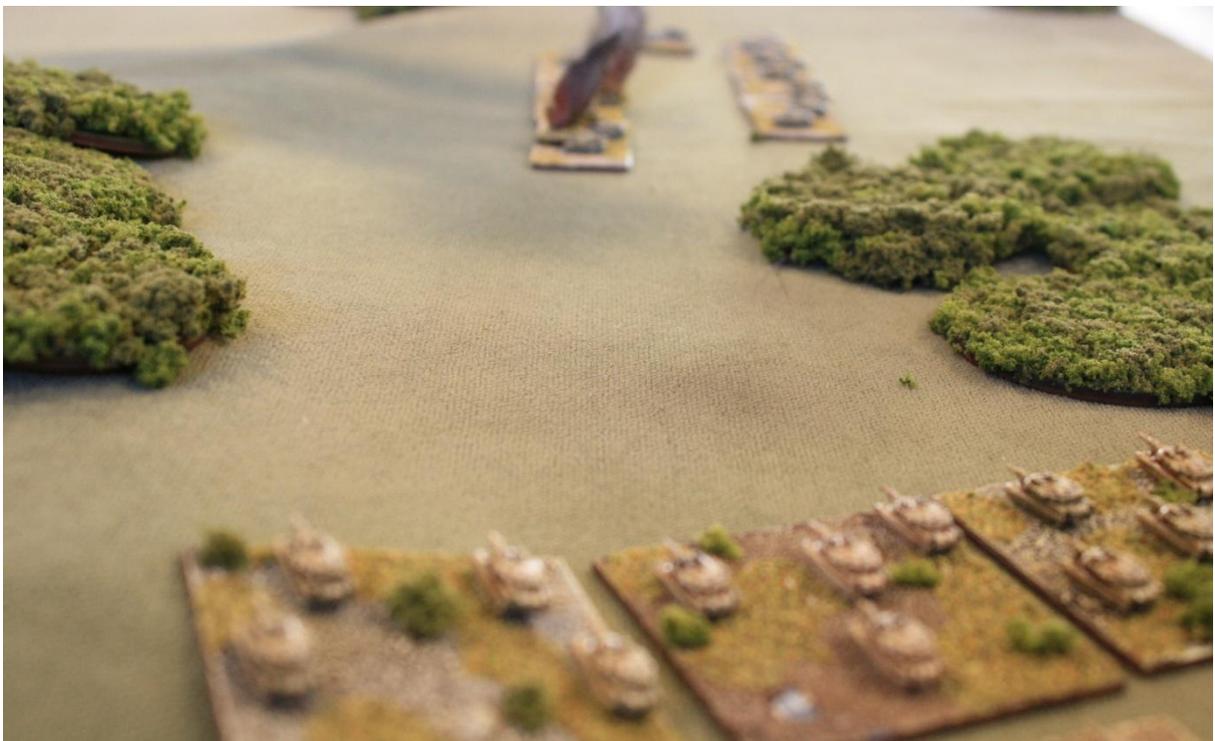


Turn one action on the eastern flank. The US M-2 Mechanized Infantry Companies move up under cover (mostly!). Both the left-hand and the right-hand companies are in dead-ground, plus shielded by woods. Unfortunately the left-most US platoon exposed itself to the opportunity fire of the T-64s (top of picture), and paid the ultimate price.

On my left, the M1s moved onto the table, one company making about three moves to move to within firing range of the BMPs (which were sitting nicely silhouetted on a ridgeline), engaging and destroying three of them. All of a sudden, maybe things weren't looking so rosy for the rapid exit of the BMP battalion?



The early action in the centre (looking from the east). The BMP battalion advances North through the central corridor between woods and hills. In the distance can be seen the M1 company that has moved onto the Russian's flank. The immediate result is three BMPs (a full company) destroyed in the first salvo.

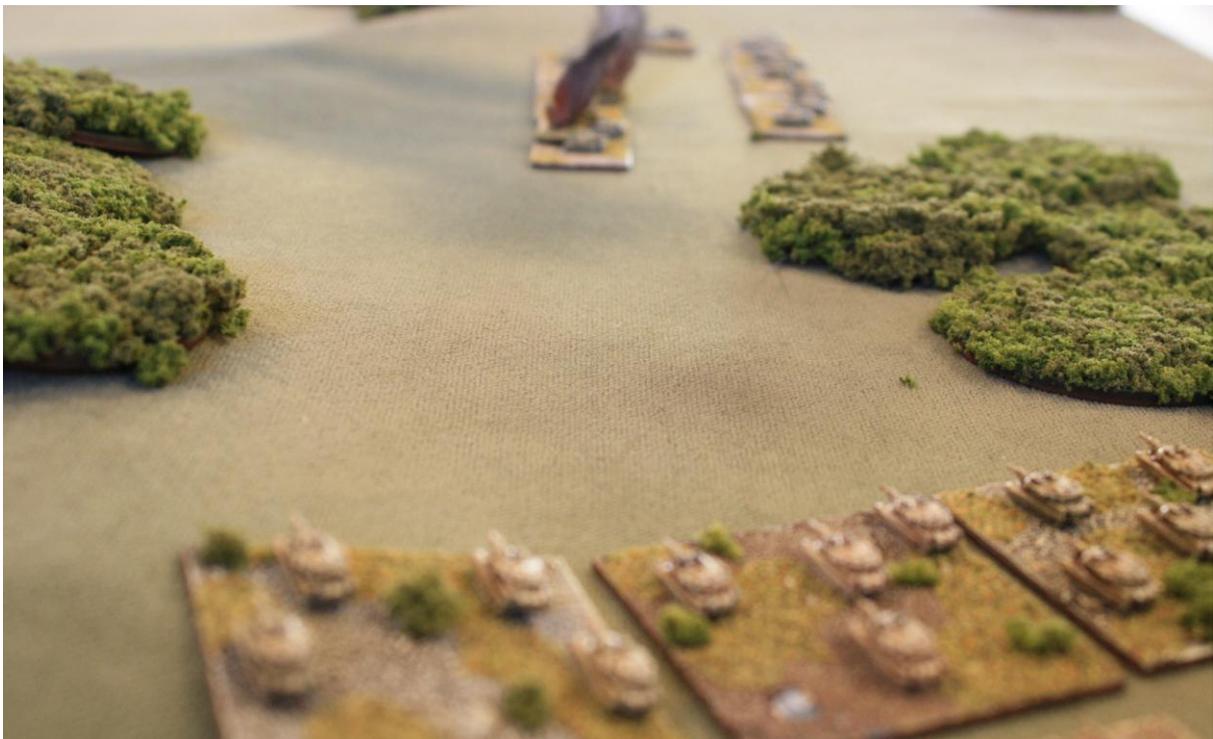


The same action viewed from the other flank (from the West). The fantastic enfilade position of the US M1 company through the gap in the woods is more apparent in this photo.

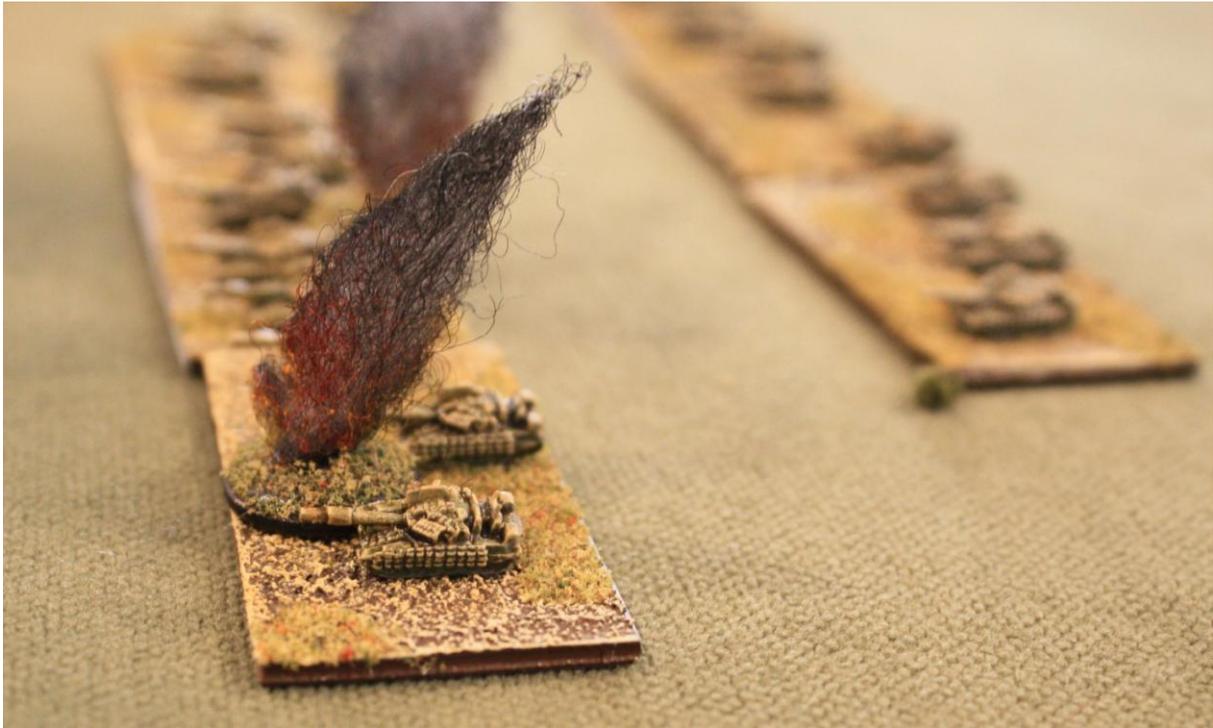


A close up of the M1 Company. Just because the M1s look so cool!

The other company (entering further south) moved on to a position flanking the T-64 Battalion. Luckily only a couple of T-64s were exposed (the rest had the LOS from the M1s blocked by woods), but both of these were destroyed by accurate fire from the M1's 105mm guns.



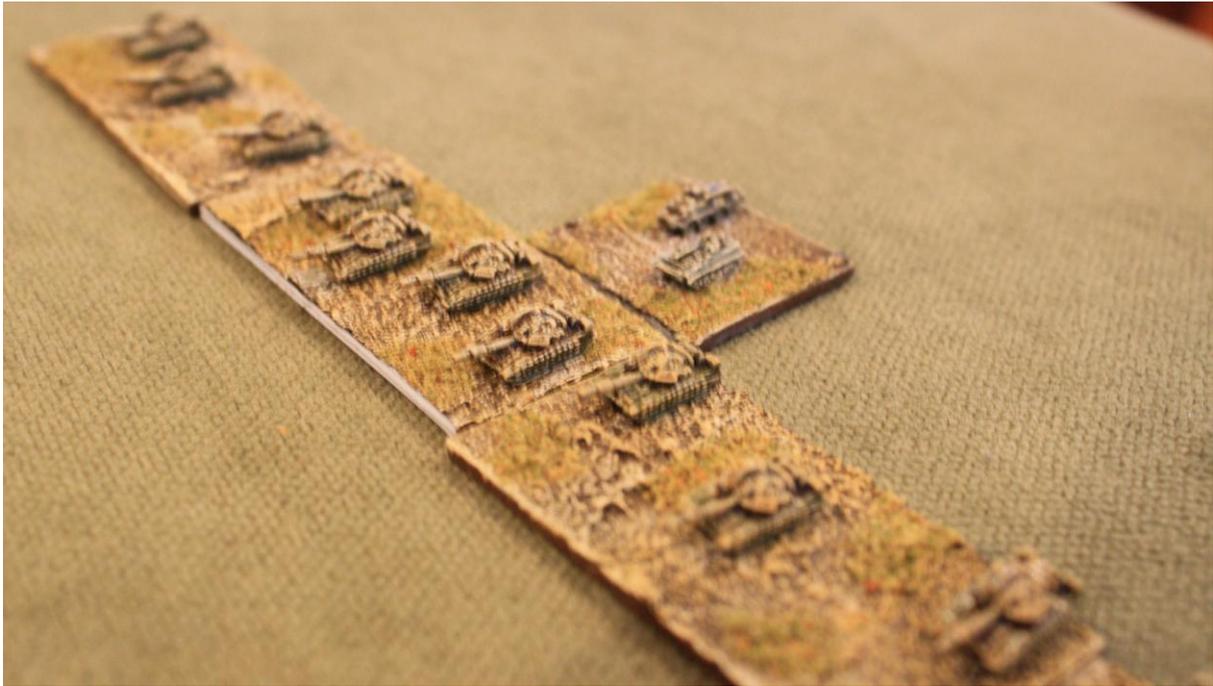
M1s (foreground above) are not what the Russians want on their flank! In the distance can be seen the first two platoons of T-64s, destroyed from the flank. Unfortunately ERA doesn't help against 105mm APFSDS (close-up of the lovely T-64s showing their ERA below).



In the following two turns, the Russians continued to move the BMP Battalion over the ridgeline and off the table, losing three more to M1 opportunity fire (one company of three BMP stands, plus HQ, was all that got off the table).



After coming under flanking fire, the T-64 Battalion moved back into cover, with the woods on their right flank screening them from the fire of the M1 company that had killed their comrades in turn one. A stalemate developed, with the T-64s unable to advance due to the M1s on their flank, and the M1s unable to move for fear of allowing the T64s to escape past the gap in the woods, and unable to advance themselves around of through the woods due to the danger of destruction by T-64 opportunity fire. For the T-64 Battalion, however, it didn't matter to much, since they could be employed otherwise. From their position, the T-64s were still able to engage the other M1 Company further North on the far ridgeline that was trying to destroy the advancing BMPs.



Due to the extreme range, however, the T-64s were only able to use their ATGW ammo against the M1s (rather than their smoothbore guns). In the exchange whilst concentrating on firing on the BMPs, the M1 Company lost two platoons to long range AT-11 fire from the remaining four T-64s. The ATGWs come highly recommended for any Russian commander with access to them, since they turn out to be a very useful (and effective!) option to compensate for the lack of range on the Russian MBT's guns. The two destroyed M1 platoons can be seen at the top of the picture below.

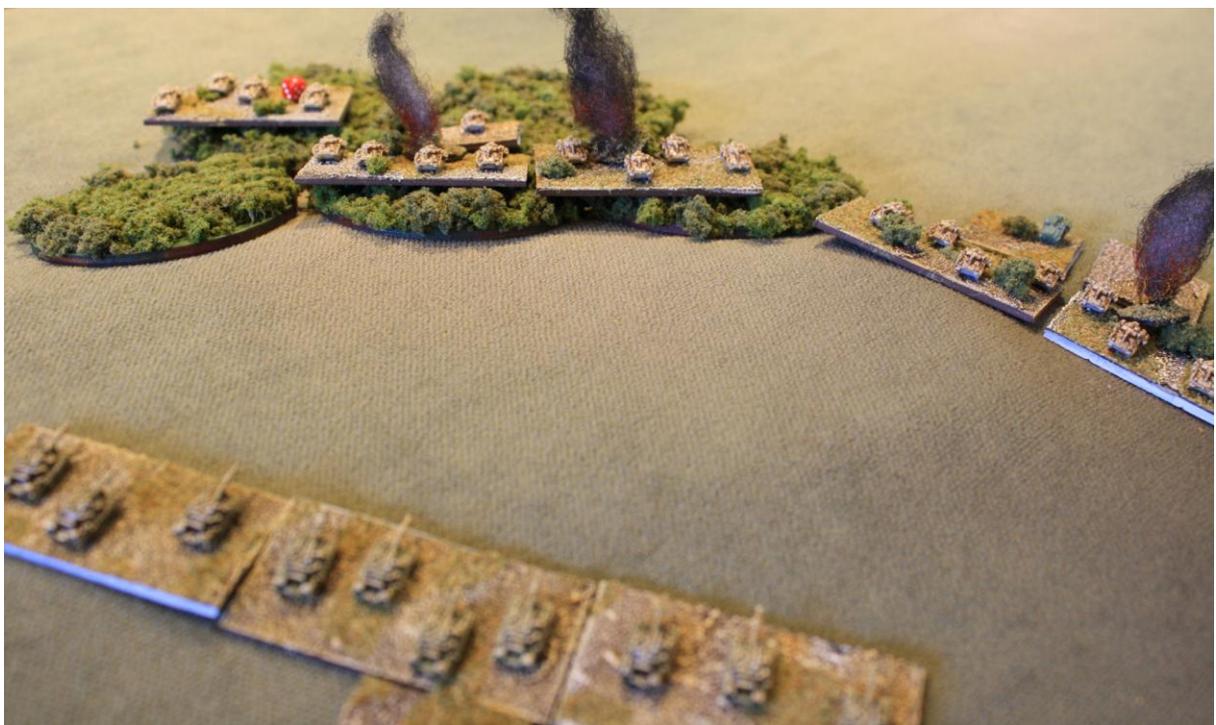


The M2s on the other flank moved up through the woods, moving up to the edge to fire on the T-64 company lurking there. In a brutal turn of events, they emerged to the edge of their cover but within the minimum firing range of their TOW missiles, leaving them to exchange fire with my MBTs at short range with only their 25mm cannon.

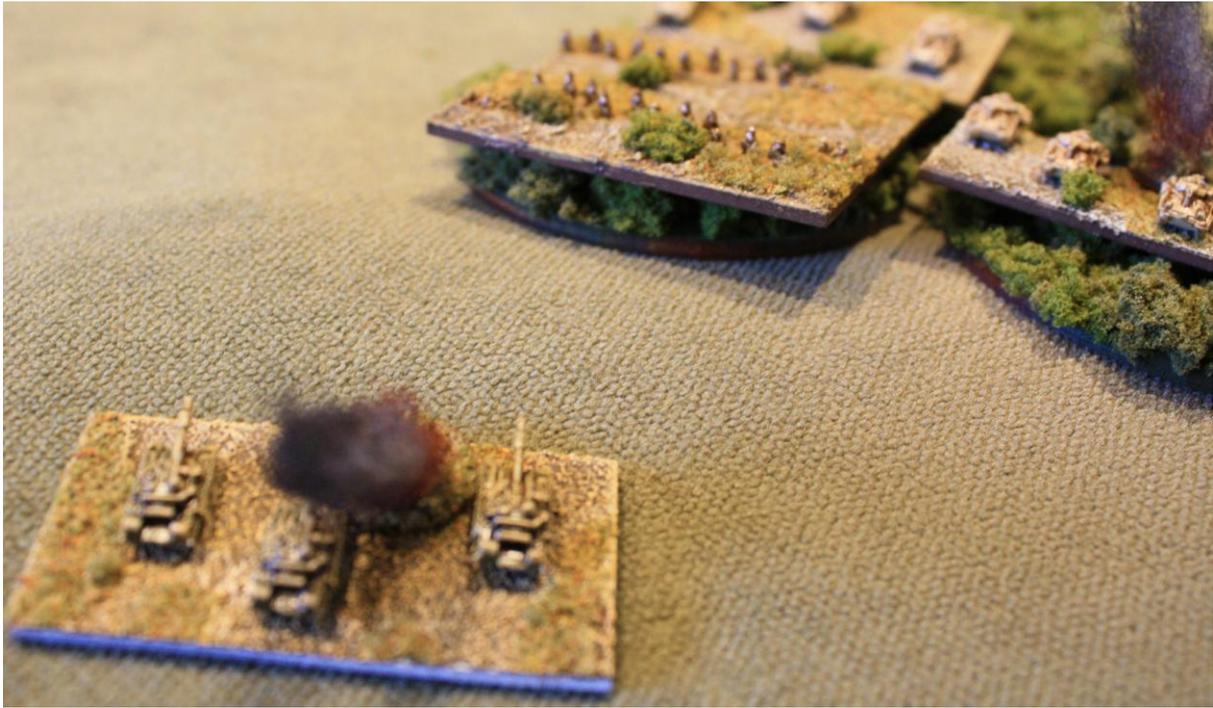


(A close up of the M2s, just before they burst into flames!)

The Mech Infantry companies lost several vehicles to opportunity fire in turn two, before the remainder were destroyed in the third turn. The photos below show why IFVs don't tangle with MBTs!



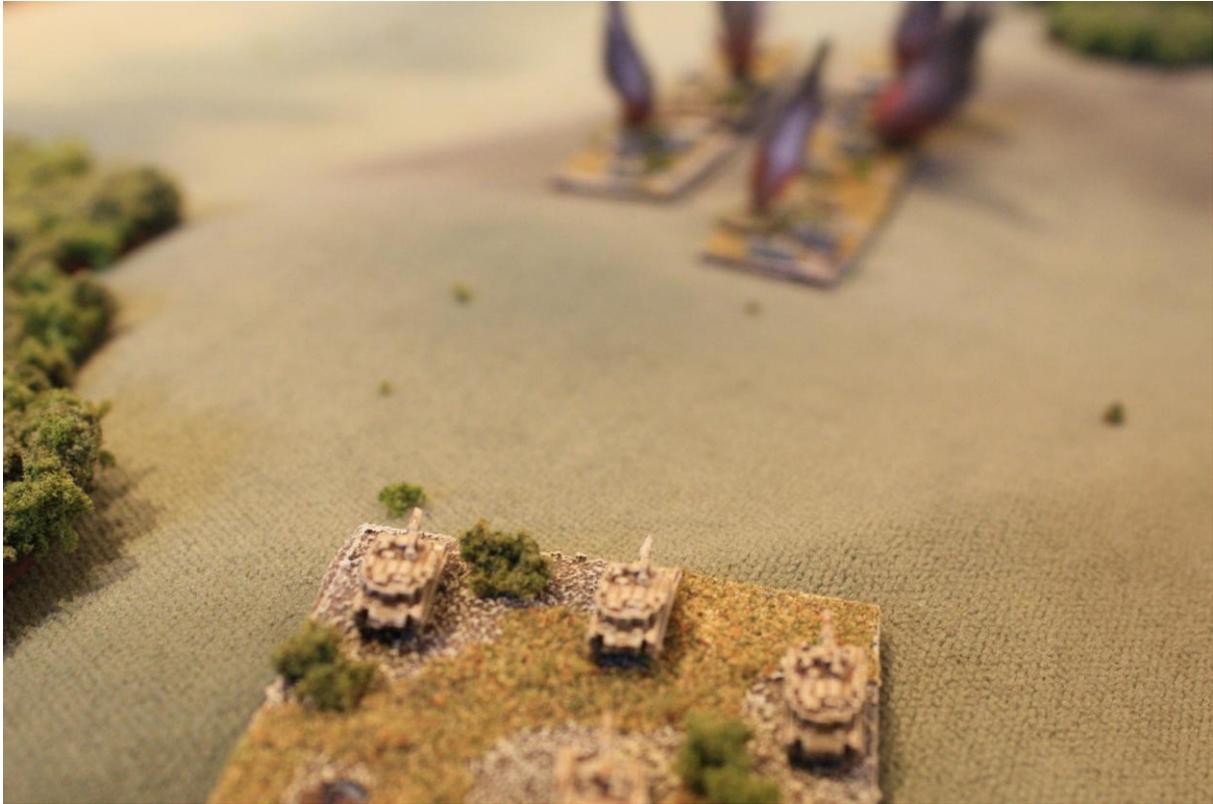
In turn three a single IFV that had been driven back by fire the previous turn managed to dismount an Infantry stand, which at extremely short range (and with the assistance of the surviving HQ) brewed up a T-64 with its M-72 LAW (below).



Turn Four saw the two remaining T64's on the right flank drive off-table, past the burning wreckage of the two US Mechanized Infantry Companies (the tanks can be seen disappearing off to the North at the top of the picture below).



With the already exited BMPs, this gave me the minimum five stands (25% of my force) that I needed to exit to claim a "major victory". Funnily enough, Lon also got a "minor victory" for destroying over 25% of my force (6 BMPs, and 3 T-64s). I don't know how we can both get a victory, but that's how the scenario reads.



The remaining M1 Platoon in the North surveys the carnage along the ridgeline. Unfortunately a Company of BMPs has already escaped off to the North (left of picture).

All up, it was an interesting and challenging scenario. We enjoyed it a lot and after the first turn, when it looked set to be an easy Russian victory, the game turned out to be an extremely closely fought battle.