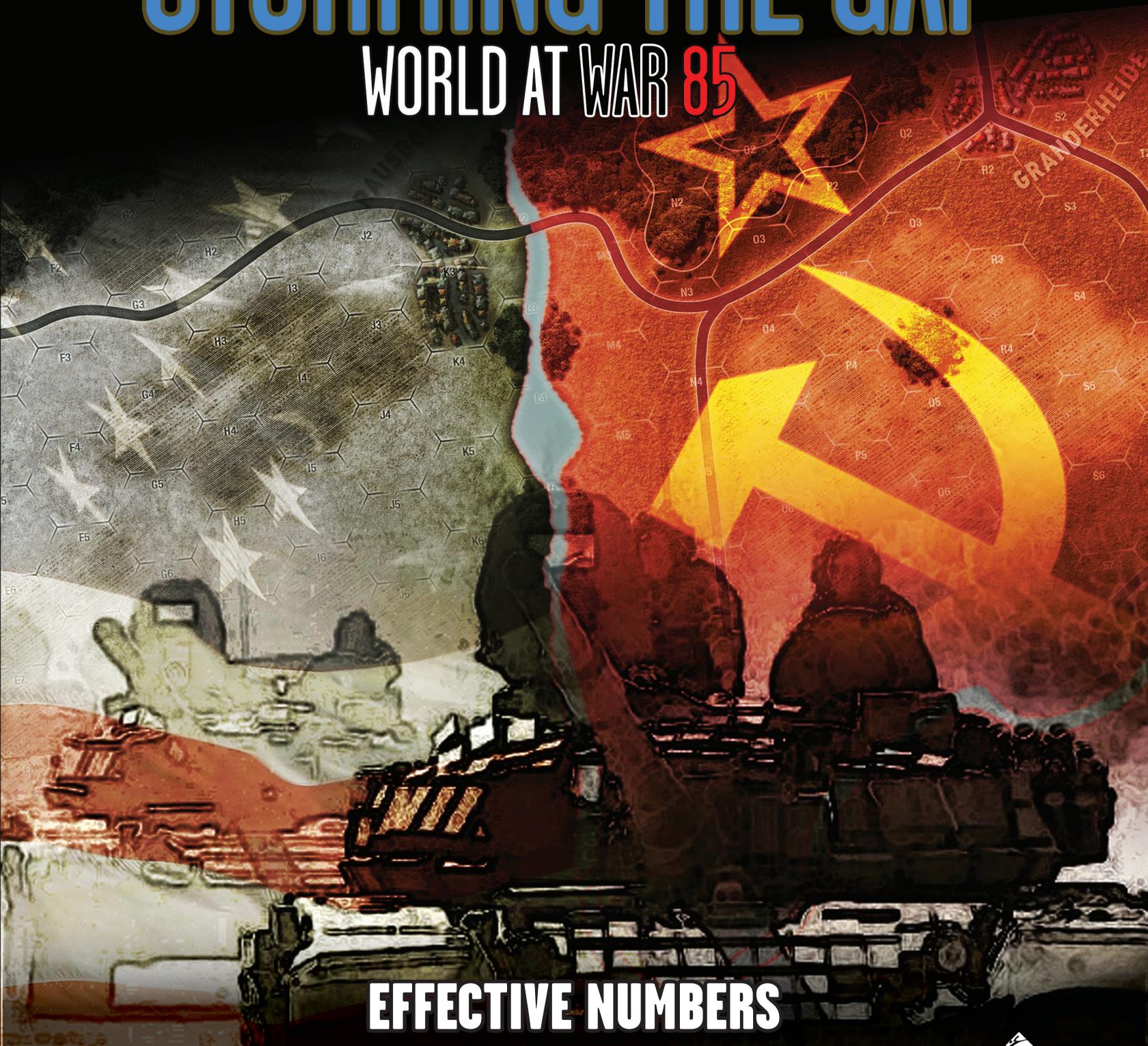


STORMING THE GAP

WORLD AT WAR 85



EFFECTIVE NUMBERS

A METHOD FOR WORLD AT WAR 85 SERIES PLAYERS TO
ANALYZE FORMATIONS AND MAKE BETTER TACTICAL DECISIONS



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WORLD AT WAR 85: STORMING THE GAP

1.0 Introduction

We wanted to take a moment from our hobby to talk about Effective Numbers, a method for World At War 85 series players to analyze formations and make better tactical decisions.

All World At War 85 series players know this: the Warsaw Pact has all the units, but NATO has all the formation cards. Most Warsaw Pact players, however, find themselves consistently beaten in spite of their numerical advantages. It would seem as if that NATO truly does have all the cards.

There can be a reason for this is: if you assume there are wide-open fields of fire, a typical attacking Warsaw Pact tank or mechanized infantry battalion is actually outnumbered by a NATO company on the defense, as is the situation in many scenarios. There are force multipliers that actually make a NATO formation the same size, if not larger, and I'm not referring to fire support or air strikes. There are numbers; and there are Effective Numbers.

The crude math for calculating a formation's Effective Numbers goes like this: take a formation. Count the number of infantry and armor units in a formation that have LOS to each other. Multiply that by the number of formation cards. If the formation is defending or attacking through cover, you could add its original unit count or twice that. That is a good estimate of its effective number of units in play.

Let's look at some examples.

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Pictured below is Figure 1, a hypothetical example of many small scenarios in the game.

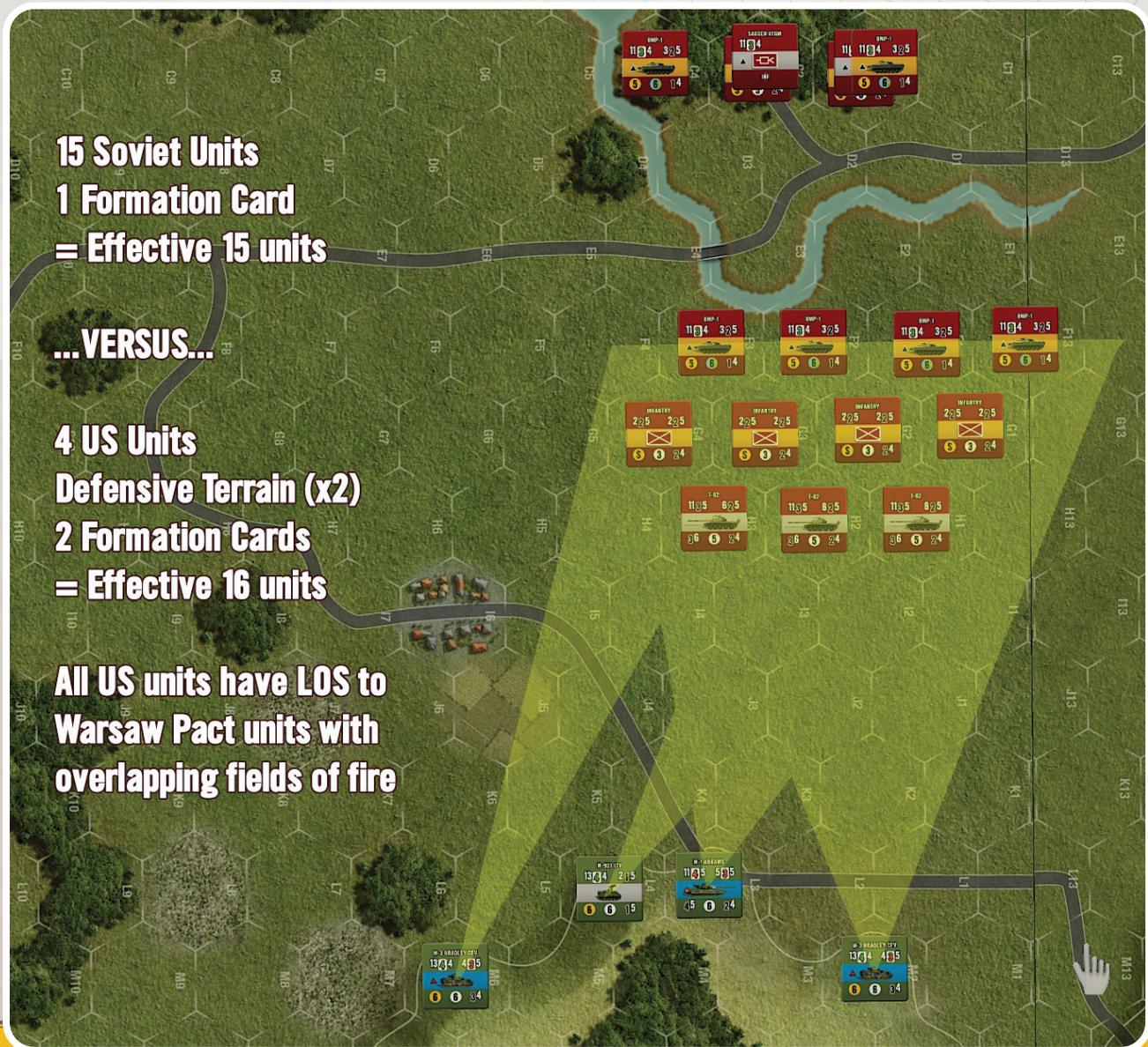


Figure 1: Warsaw Pact Mechanized Infantry Battalion attacking in the open.

The reinforced Warsaw Pact mechanized battalion in Figure 1 above is effectively outnumbered. A poor choice of attack axis gives NATO line-of-sight to all units in the mechanized battalion. What players need to ask themselves, especially if they are playing the Warsaw Pact, is how many units with LOS to each other will be activated in one turn in one area of the map?

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Now let's take a look at the same encounter, but with better utilization of the terrain in Figure 2 below.



Figure 2: Mech inf battalion performing a flanking maneuver through cover.

It could be argued that some of those Warsaw Pact units would be destroyed on the way to the attack staging area (OK, almost a guarantee in this lethal game) and that NATO would have shifted over to face them upon seeing the flanking maneuver, thus evening the odds. But the Warsaw Pact player would still be in a better attack posture. Using terrain could possibly boost its Effective Numbers an extra 50%.

The trick for the attacking player, like in so many tactical-level wargames, is to make sure their units are exposed to as few defenders as possible. This can be done through a better scheme of maneuver; use of terrain; and/or the use of smoke, which could be considered creating terrain you want to use.

Also, consider deploying dismounted infantry early, since this would negate the Armor-piercing (AP) attack values of the defenders by forcing them to use High Explosive (HE), which usually has a shorter range, lower firepower rating, and higher to-hit numbers. Although the attackers will still not outnumber the defenders, even with the use of Effective Number estimates, it will force the defenders to use a less effective mode of fire. See Figure 3 on the following page.

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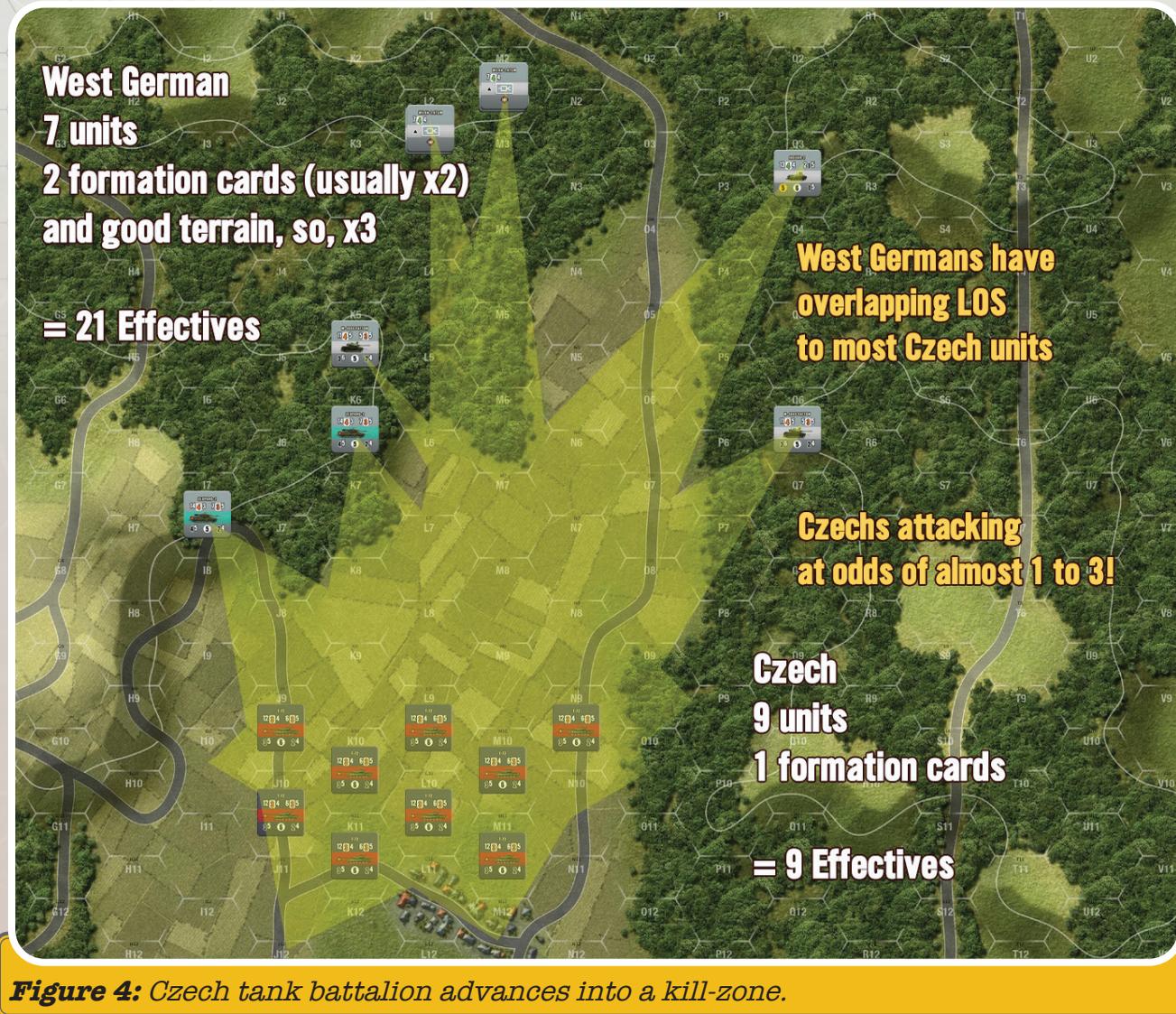


Figure 3: Czech infantry performing dismounted attack. It costs 1 Movement Point for infantry to move through cultivated hexes, and will also provide them a Defensive Bonus while approaching.

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Here is one final example. Featured below in Figure 4 is a Czech tank battalion advancing through a cultivated valley.

After two turns, it is likely the Czech's will be no longer combat effective. The cultivated hexes give the tanks no Defensive bonuses and also cost 2 Movement Point's to move through, slowing them down. The West German Effective Numbers are almost 3 to 1 over the Czechs!



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Now let's look at what might be a better scheme of maneuver: advancing through the forest hexes:

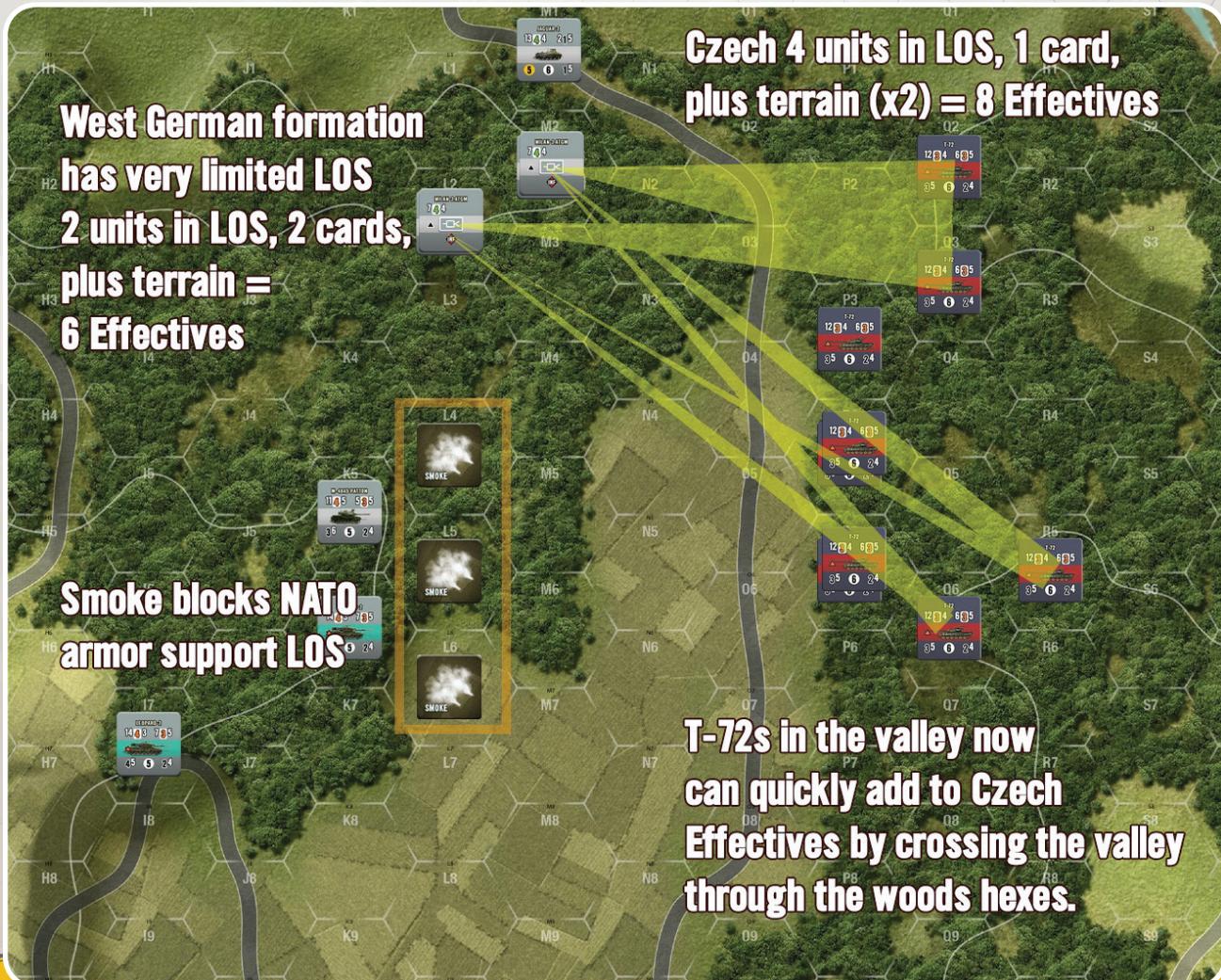


Figure 5: The tank battalion has advanced via the road through the woods off map to the right in the figure.

A note on Smoke: Smoke can effectively cut down on NATO numbers down by cutting off LOS (the optional Thermal Imaging rule notwithstanding), giving the Warsaw Pact better odds in the fight.

The World At War 85 series has a great way of modeling flexibility and initiative in command as a force multiplier. It's important to think of these things when making a battle plan, especially for the Warsaw Pact player. Just make sure that you have more units activating per turn in a given area than the other player: better Effective Numbers of units.

- Mark Cabrera