

## Ostfront 43

Looking at the map I realise two things first that it is huge and second, it is really devoid of much cover. This means that smoke will be imperative to cover advances and allow withdrawals, hampering this though is that I only have 1 pre plot so I have to make that count. The force I have chosen is compact, and I am starting to think that it is too compact to capture the objectives. My plan was to advance several infantry companies into a hole knocked out by my armour then counter attack when forces arrive to plug that hole, seeing the lay of the land however this plan no longer seems possible, since the distances involved would result in the two separate entities I have being gobbled up. Also the other thing that concerns me was that I have very little in the way of heavy artillery, I do have what would have been considered divisional assets but I find in PBEM most people use a lot of artillery usually much more than is historically 'accurate' so this concerns me.

### Deployment

I deploy a motor SS company and a SS support company near the road approaching Bykowo along with a Panzer company to support them or break off if needs be. Along this road as well I have a 88 battery in trucks to deal with the Soviet heavy tanks I am sure to encounter. Below these I have three SS rifle companies which I have replaced the last platoon with a Marder zug in two of the companies and in the company just below the Panzer company, they have the last platoon replaced with a special weapons Panzer Grenadier zug. I hope these 75mm guns are enough to add some organic firepower I might need if the Panzers suffer heavy losses to things like aircraft. Finally in front of the Panzer formation is a unit of motorcycles.

Outside of Otrada I have deployed a special weapons Panzer company. Basically it is a unit of Tiger tanks with their excellent 88mm guns and some Panzer III's to support them. I have also deployed a Panzer Grenadier recon zug with mortars in case this group needs to go on offensive action. My plan however is to hide in the town behind the buildings and trees and catch any Soviet troops who swing down the crossroads that is directly opposite Otrada. Behind the town I deploy all my artillery fairly close together, along with my rocket artillery I should hopefully be able to get good coverage of the entire battlefield.

To the far side of the map I deploy a Auf zug to keep an eye of things so that I can't be easily flanked.

### Turn 1

No bombardment as agreed, I send several spotter planes and see a group of 6 KV-1, 3 T-34, several trucks carrying infantry and a armoured car in a recon position. Based on the dust patterns it looks like they are heading for the crossroads in front of Otrada. The plane is then shot down which is a blow since I only have two recon flights, I will have to be very careful with my spotter from now on. At the end of turn 1 I move all my units forward but keep the swPz Co. hidden and move the Kav forward.







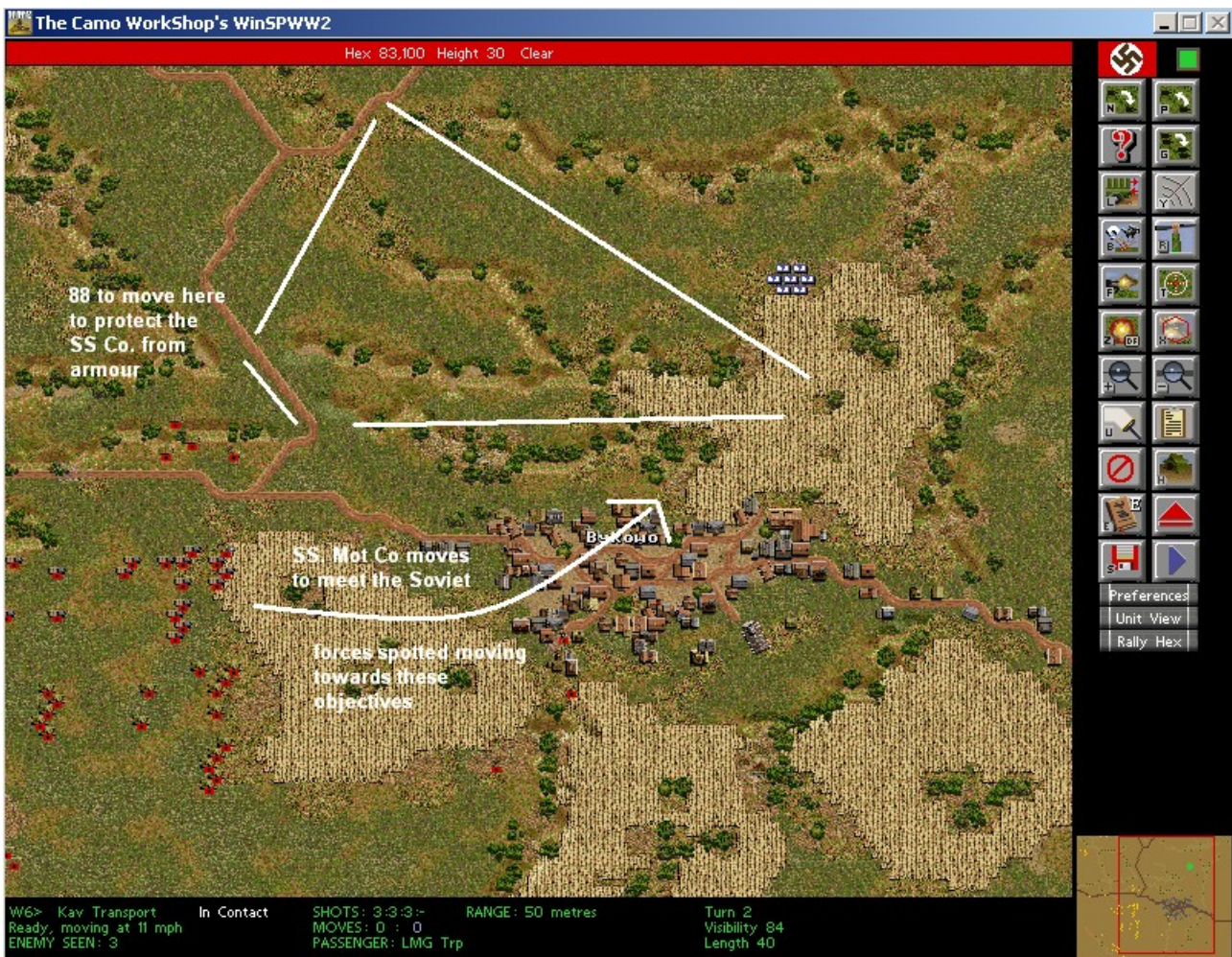




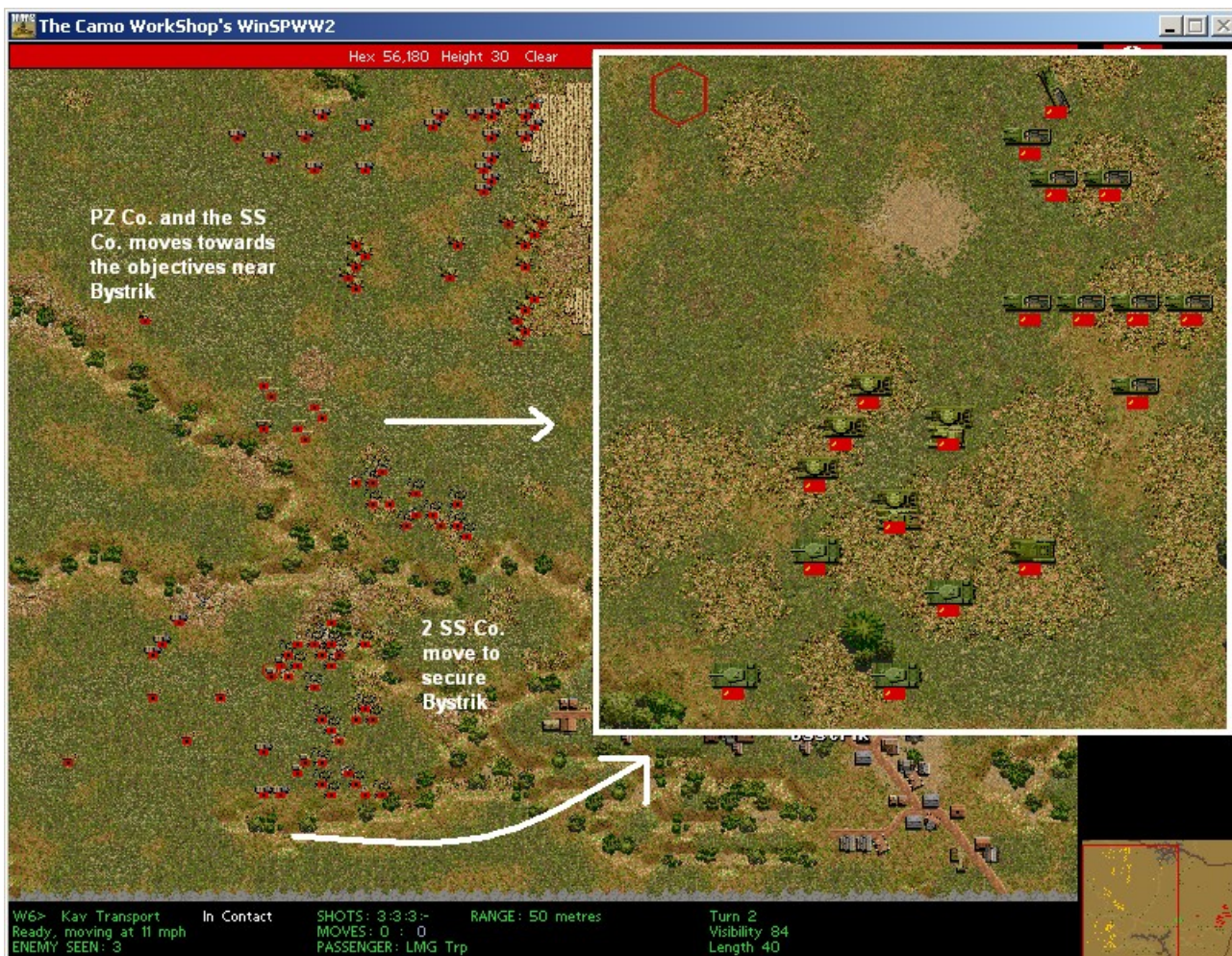
## Turn 2

Everything moves forward again and soon I get a better picture of the Soviet advance. Several mechanised elements heading toward the objectives near Brystik and the crossroads. My plan is to funnel the Soviet forces into the Panzer Co. and secure my flank with the SS companies near Brystrik.













### Turn 3

At the start of turn 3 I spot more and more vehicles heading towards my position on the right flank of Brystrik. Im not too sure if my SS rifle Co. is visible but they can see 11 tanks as a precautionary measure I move the entire company closer to the trees so they aren't too visible. Whilst the Soviets are nearly 3.5km away I'm afraid that if they see my movements too much then I will have massed artillery to deal with which I don't want this early in the game. I move my motorcycles closer for a look and get a view of the entire formation. Which looks like at least 2 tank companies and a mech company. At the far side of the map I move my Kav further south to stop his motorcycles from penetrating my positions and showing how weak my flank is. To this end I set up the 88's at a crossroads. The tanks at Otrada stay put and wait for his other troops to head towards them. I think I will hold them for this turn then move them next turn backwards so I can create a full sense of suprise, that is if they have not been spotted yet. I decide to change plans and use my motor SS units to support the defense of my tanks, and I will counter attack with my other two foot companies once I get to grips with the enemy. The meeting engagement is a waiting game, but I'm not very patient. I decide to rattle up his formation with a bit of artillery fire.













## Turn 4

Not much has happened a spotter plane flies over the top most positions I have. Based on experience it doesn't look like it was flying close enough to Otrada to spot my units, so I think keeping them in the same place will probably hide them well enough, I bide my time a little longer before opening fire. I do wish I had a more mobile force, it would enable me to dash from cover to cover right now I am waiting for my smoke rounds to land so I can set up a good position and create a kill zone.

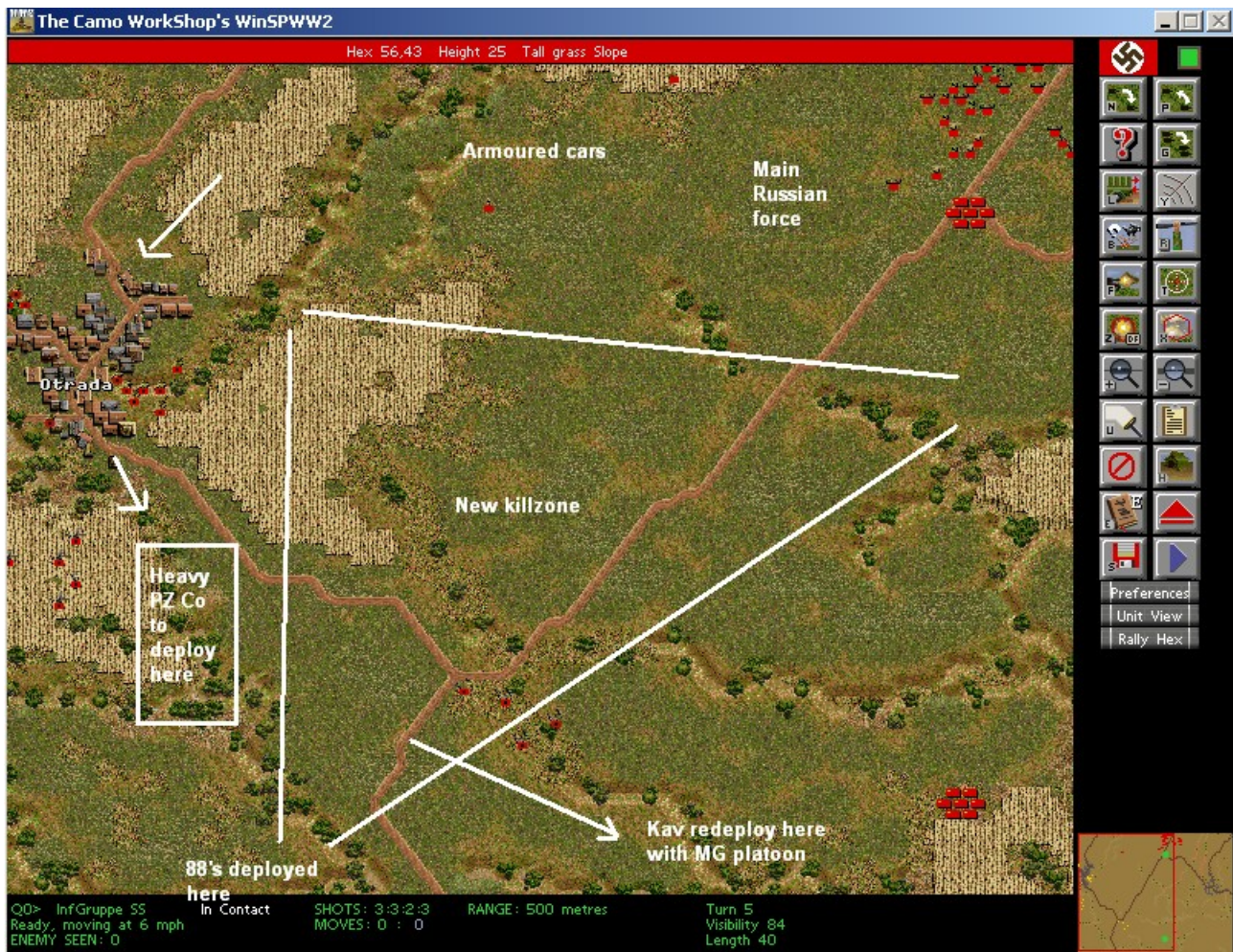




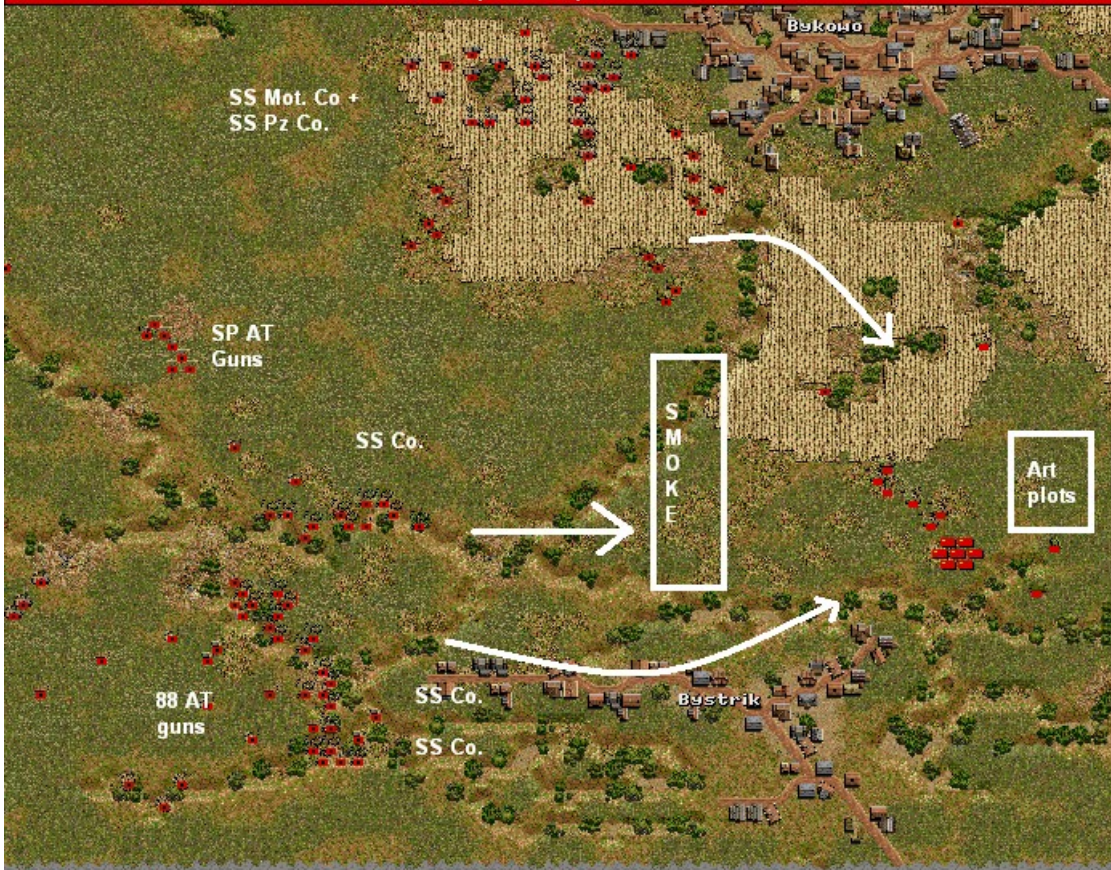
## Turn 5

Things are starting to happen here, after being impatient I decide to take some potshots at some armoured cars, I justify it saying that I know that my positions at Otrada are definitely know so waiting anymore is a waste of time. I open fire with my Tigers but kill nothing. Even at 3000 m I get an accuracy rating of 22 per cent which supprises me. I notice that the Soviet mech infantry is deployed well past the kill zone I plotted with my artillery so before any rounds fall I push the plots forward as much as I can an I will have to just creep the barrage forward when it starts falling. I keep my tanks moving forward as well as my motor SS companies, at the end of their movement I disembark they will walk the rest of the way hopefully I can get some good smoke down in the next few turns to protect them long enough to get in a good position to hit the flags. In terms of objectives I am definitely having to take the initiative here, but I think that is good I prefer to assault a position in strength rather than try to hit it piecemeal.









Q0> InfGruppe SS  
Ready, moving at 6 mph  
ENEMY SEEN: 0

In Contact

SHOTS: 3:3:2:3  
MOVES: 0 : 0

RANGE: 500 metres

Turn 5  
Visibility 84  
Length 40







Soviet advance before my artillery fire

Turn 6

Watching my plots fall down on dirt instead of bodies annoyed me but I knew it would happen, I shift some of the tubes forward and some down, I have managed to hit a few of the halftracks with the rocket fire and pin some of the rifle units with rocket fire. I move my heavy Panzer Co. away from Otrada since it seems like the rest of the Russian formation north (?) of them seems to speeding towards them and I want to be prepared to receive them in the killzone. I manage to score a kill on a halftrack and pin the rifle squad it was transporting, hopefully next turn I can kill some tanks! When I press play Russian rocket fire rains down on the crossroads and looks like it will pin my 88's there. I was afraid I would get a hit of fire on the SS companies so I am lucky.









## Turn 7

This turn I move my Panzer companies closer through the field and advance with my infantry right behind them. The SS companies below them advance as well with the gun tracks moving behind the smokescreen to support them. I move the rest of my tanks by Otrada to reposition themselves into the killzone I am developing. Above Bystrik a motorcycle squad clashes with a cavalry unit and wipes it out with SMG fire. My artillery fire is shifted forward by my AOP vehicle which also moves forward to get a better view of the battlefield. I notice Russian tanks trying to flank me, I think I can catch them in my trap with the SS companies below. When I end the turn rocket fire, hits my 88's by the crossroads along with some howitzer fire, no casualties but a prime mover looks immobilised.

















## Turn 8

This turn I move my infantry forward and give them a little smoke cover, a Russian attack on my 88 being transported and kills the crew leaving the 88 stuck and pinned which puts a serious damper on my plan. I hope that my at guns are not seen so that John will advance them forward. I definitely think I have chosen the right spot to deploy my troops and this is the best spot to fight, up on the other side of the map my kav units take fire from a SU76 but it causes no casualties, I move them into deeper cover. My heavy tanks move further down hoping to spar with the Russians gunning it down the road. As I end the turn Katyusha fire rains down on the 88's by the cross roads routing, a prime mover and a 88 crew... Cowards!













## Turn 9

My position is now a lot weaker since the 88's have both routed or been wiped out by the crossroads I had hoped to turn into a killzone, fortunately one crew rallies but I hold them in place since I am positive more fire will land on them soon and I don't need the extra casualties. Everything else moves forward with not much action happening, the Russian tank force has completely slipped from my vision and I don't have enough recon units to waste in pushing them forward so I will have to be cautious. My heavy Panzer company continues to move to its new position to set up a better killing zone. Before I end my turn I get paranoid and think that John has shifted the majority of his tanks back and is trying to flank my position on Bykowo. I decide to commit my Panzer zug to moving around the village and see what happens. When I end the turn Katyusha fire destroys another 88 being carried into position around Bykowo, and howitzer fire damages a Panzer. I can't really afford to keep losing 88's like this out of 8 I have already lost 3 before the fighting has really started.









## Turn 10

This turn opens with some casualties to me which are not good. Firstly an 88 is destroyed by artillery fire. Now I have 3 destroyed and another is pinned. Not much has happened Russian cavalry has penetrated into my lines and I engage them with my motorcycles both sides cause casualties. My kav also gets in the action and kills some of his cavalry but fails to rout the squad that has got close to my lines.

















## Turn 11

This turn is pretty interesting so far, my Kav perform great, by killing the Russian cavalry, my Panzers exchange fire with the 85mm AT gun and cause 6 casualties causing it to rout which I am really happy about, so my movement is much less restricted. My Tigers are starting to prove their worth by destroying a truck at long range which had an AT gun in tow, good news for the Panzers. My Grenadiers accompanying them push forward and rout a Soviet motorcycle unit that gets too close. I rally a motorcycle unit near Bykowo but when I move it to scout a bit a heavy machine gun sings out 700 metres away and wipes them out. The Marders destroy a halftrack that gets too close and I move the Marder's back so my rifle units can protect them. John has been rather aggressive in terms of his manouvering I think but still no tanks have shown up as of yet, which supprises me. I assume he is going to try to neutralize the Marders and other guns first before give the armour a push. Russian artillery fire this turn is severe, I come under fire from heavy 152mm batteries which immobilise a Tiger tank and destroy 3 of my artillery pieces. Katyusha fire lands on my infantry advance it doesnt seem to cause casualties but I wont find out till I load up the next turn. Truly awful really. Rocket fire also damages some of my 82mm mortars I had brought up close to the front line. I definitely wish I had bought more artillery, the good news is that my ammo carriers have reloaded my rocket launchers and they are ready for action once more.















