



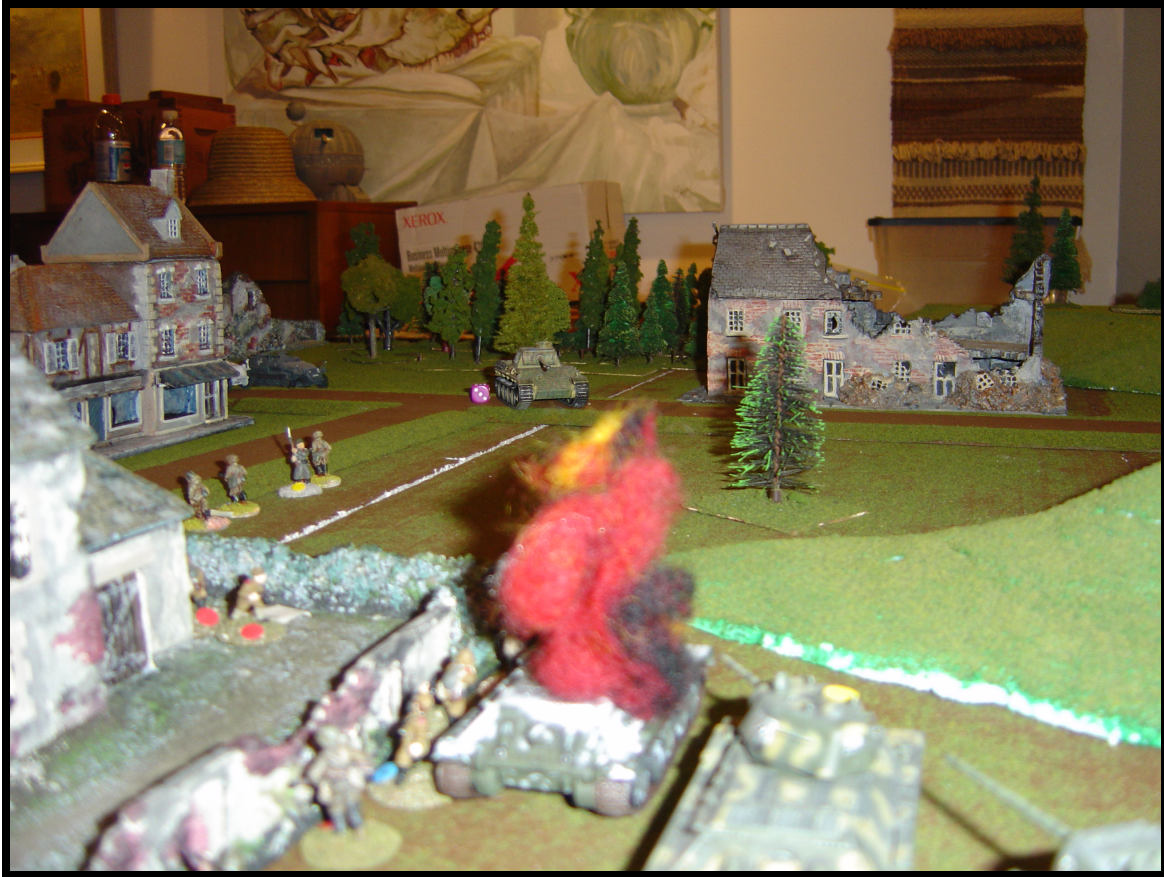
## **Lake Balaton Offensive *After Action Report***

I am Private Dimetri Drazenovic, a machine gunner with the 6<sup>th</sup> Guards Tank Army. I had a hand in defeating the German 6<sup>th</sup> SS Panzer Division on March 6, 1945 in what has become known as the Lake Balaton Offensive. This is my story.

We were camped in the town of Balatonszepezd awaiting orders for the final push towards Berlin. The last thing we expected was a German offensive, but they managed one last blitz. We heard the tanks before we saw them. My sergeant yelled for us to “Take cover!” As we dashed from behind a small house we were confronted by a Panther tank which immediately fired on us. We all dove for cover, but several of my comrades were wounded. From this spot, I watched the entire battle unfold.



As our infantry scrambled for cover, a platoon of half-tracks and Panther tanks bore down upon us. Machine guns barked and more Russian soldiers fell. Our armor crews had been caught totally off guard and they frantically jumped in their tanks to meet the Nazi Hun. As the lead Panther came into view, it fired on a T-34/76 before the crew was able to bring it into action. Fire belched from its engine and the crew had to bail out.



Just as we thought all was lost, two of our medium tanks came to the rescue. However, Andrew responded first to the Panther's attack and the mighty 85mm canon from his T-34/85 roared to life striking the beast on its mantlet. Comrade Andrew then had to roll a d4 to determine the angle at which the projectile struck the rounded surface. Unfortunately for him, the die revealed a 45° angle, the worst possible results. However, the Panther was a Model A with the chance of a phenomenon known as a "shot trap." A projectile striking the rounded mantlet would occasionally ricochet onto the weak deck armor. That's exactly what happened here. With a 25% chance for the shot trap results, Andrew rolled an 18. Our troops cheered wildly, but it was far from over.



Another German Panther fired at point blank range, but its 75mm projectile bounced off the turret face of a T-34/85 due to the unfavorable angle. Both crews frantically struggled to reload their guns. The two T-34/85 tanks were side by side and the second one fired on its brother's antagonist. The round crashed through the cupola, killing the commander. The German crew panicked and abandoned the vehicle.



To make matters worse for the Germans, a T-34/76 fired a high explosive round at the lead half-track. The round ripped through the thin skin of the vehicle, killing all onboard, but a nearby half-track was also disabled from the blast.



The German's luck was summarized by the final exchange. The Panther in the picture above quickly moved around the corner to challenge the two T-34/85s. Although his shell penetrated the hull, it did no damage and the Germans withdrew to lick their wounds.

## Summary

The map was a bit smaller than that called for in the scenario. Because of this, the battle began immediately at point blank range. After 2½ hours, the game was decided. A number of factors contributed to the outcome, not the least of which was the dice. A different roll here and there, and the Germans might have pulled out the victory.