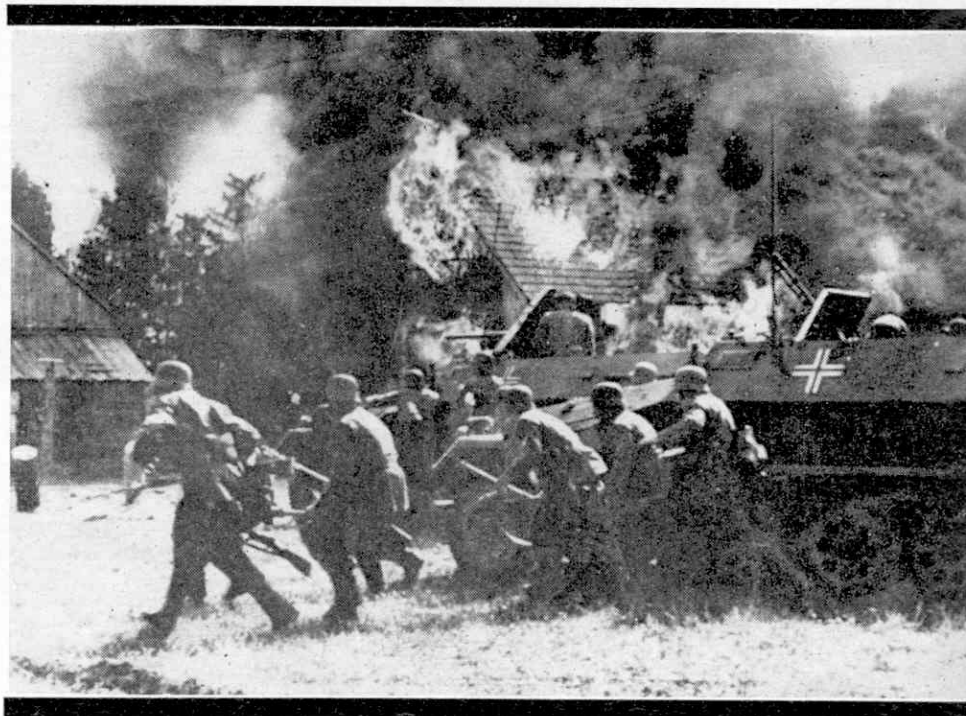


TABLE TOP BATTLES

the rules of the
game by H.L.D.



LAST month we gave you some ideas on the types of heavy equipment and formations used during World War 2. By scaling down these formations you can use them for battle-games, and in doing so we hope you will find the hobby of modelling military equipment a most rewarding and worthwhile pastime. Meccano Magazine will help you by describing the actual construction and painting of such models and next month we start off by showing how you can equip your American forces with essential artillery support. Now, here are a few basic battle-game rules. We must emphasise that these are only examples intended to help you form your own set of rules to suit your particular circumstances. Further ideas can be gained by reading 'Little Wars' by H. G. Wells—the book that started this type of game, and Donald Featherstone's books on War-gaming.

Movement

In addition to your models and troops, you need a ruler and a pair of dice, moves being made when it's your turn to throw the two dice. The maximum distance travelled is determined by the dice. For instance one inch can equal every ten miles per hour of the vehicle's speed. This, in effect, represents all the chance factors that exist in any journey. For every point on the dice a vehicle moves a distance depending upon its maximum speed (i.e. 25 m.p.h. equals $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches, thus a dice thrown ten points equals twenty-five inches).

The average road speed of those vehicles we have already mentioned can be grouped as follows: 10 m.p.h. Churchill VII.

20 m.p.h. Tiger I. Assault gun, Sherman, Matador and 5.5 inch howitzer.

25 m.p.h. Panther, Carrier Quads with 25 pdrs.

30 m.p.h. M-3 halftrack, Sd Kfz 234 Armoured car, most lorries.

35 m.p.h. Jeeps.

Tracked or semitracked (i.e. halftrack) vehicles usually are the only ones that can successfully travel off the roads. Wheeled vehicles can sometimes where the terrain is suitable. However, in all cases travel cross country is at half speed. A division can move as a unit but its overall speed is reduced to half that of the slowest vehicle. This allows for any traffic congestion that may be caused by a large unit on the move.

The Battle

For the actual fighting: any gun can take three shots but only at one target. A tank with its fully rotating turret can engage a second target but can only have one shot at each. Before firing you must indicate your target. Again the dice decides whether or not it is a hit or miss. Above six being a hit, below a miss. Once you have taken your firing move you must wait until the opponent returns fire or moves away. Camouflaged anti-tank guns, or even dug-in tanks cannot be fired upon until they have given away their position by firing. They can, however, be overrun by advancing infantry. To prevent capture you can blow up equipment but each demolition is equivalent to one shot. Once equipment has been captured, the troops must be given time to familiarize with it before using it.

Armour

The armour of real tanks is thickest in front where they are most likely to be hit. In exceptional circumstances it may be possible to attack them from the rear and this will result in the destruction of even the heaviest tank. However, the actual chance of this happening is small (and in battle-games it can lead to arguments). So let's assume a uniform armour thickness all round. Here is a table that sets out armour thickness of tanks for practical purposes, so that direction of attack does not matter.

Sd Kfz 234 armoured car : 20 mm.

Sherman : 30 mm.

Assault Gun (StuG 111) : 60 mm.

Panther : 80 mm.

Tiger I, Churchill VII : 90 mm.

The M-3 halftracks and the carriers are proof only against machine gun fire and high explosive blast, and the 'soft skinned' vehicles (lorries) can be destroyed even by machine guns. The following table shows the distance at which various calibre guns can penetrate armour and destroy the tanks.

Armour Thickness.	Up to	20mm	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100mm
6pdr./57mm Antitank guns;	12	12	12	12	12	12	9	6	2	in.
75mm Sherman, Churchill;	12	12	12	12	9	6	2			in.
75mm Assault gun, Sd Kfz 234;	12	12	12	12	11	9	6	2		in.
75mm Panther;	14	14	14	14	13	13	12	12		in.
88mm Tiger.1.	14	14	14	13	13	12	12	9	6	in.

In last month's caption to the photograph of the Roco Minitanks models, the impression may have been given that since the tracks do not move, the vehicles are therefore immobile. This is not the case, since beneath the tracked vehicles there are concealed four wheels which hold the tracks just clear of the ground and enable the model to be rolled. The wheels are designed so that they can be quickly unclipped when their removal is required. An enlarged Roco Minitanks catalogue is now available and costs 6d., plus a stamped and addressed envelope, from Model Hobby Products, Mebro Works, Cuckoo Hall Lane, London, N.9.

Photographs

Above: German Panzer Grenadiers charge into action from their armoured halftracks

Left: a rare photograph of an M-3 American halftrack in German markings (Warpics Photo)

