

Panzer: What's in the Box

Panzer is designed for small unit actions from platoon to battalion-sized formations, simulating combined-arms operations during World War II. The game is all about commanding a force of vehicles, crew served weapons, leg units and their attached weapons, and a slew of supporting elements including artillery and aircraft. It's about understanding their strengths, whether they be armor, firepower or speed, or the weaknesses whether they be grade, morale or limited command control.

In keeping with this approach **Panzer's** scale is 1:1 for vehicles, towed guns, and aircraft with each counter representing a single combat unit. The leg unit counters are scaled at squads, half-squads and sections, including their attached weapons. Off-map artillery units are batteries of 2-6 tubes. The ground scale is 100 meters per hex. The time scale is fluid with each complete turn representing approximately 30 seconds to 15 minutes.

More than just a single game, **Panzer** is a game system that will eventually encompass the entire Western Theater during WWII. The initial three releases, **Panzer**, and **Panzer Expansions #1** and **#2**, focus on the Eastern Front and the massive battles that highlight its brutal action from 1941 to 1945.

The **Panzer** base set kicks off the action with a cross-section of units from the Soviet and German Forces covering a period from 1943-1945, including everything needed to fight it out. These 32 (16 Soviet and 16 German) distinct units are represented on individual double-sided, Data Cards that contain all of the information necessary to fight those units. Some of the Data Cards contain the information for more than a single unit. For example, the Soviet and German Squads, Half-Squads & Sections Data Cards contain the information for all leg units. Reference either the **Data Card Key - Vehicle** or the **Data Card Key - Leg** for example Data Cards and an explanation of



what all the information means.

In addition, the base set includes the rule book for the entire series, organized into Basic, Advanced and Optional Rules sections. The Basic Game rules are structure for just vehicle on vehicle situations. They outline how vehicles move and fight as well as utilizing a simpler front/rear armor system for resolving AP (Armor Piercing) direct fire than the Advanced Game, as illustrated in the **Basic Game AP Fire Example**.

The Advanced Game Rules expand on the Basic Rules by addition of specific vehicle armor locations, GP (General Purpose) direct and indirect fire, the addition of Leg units and Towed Guns, Artillery, Aircraft, Close Assault and Hand-to-Hand Combat, and Overrun Combat. In **Panzer** GP Fire is the collective term used for HE, leg small arms, artillery, aircraft, and close combat actions. Reference either the **AP Fire Example** or the **GP Fire Example** for more information on Advance Game Fire types.

The Optional Rules expand the game to all new heights with a slew of possibilities including Morale, Platoon and Section Command Control, Non-Radio Units, Turrets (opened or buttoned up), Pinning Fire, Engineer vs. Terrain Combat, Mines & Mine Fields, Weight Limitations, Camouflage, Dual Driving Controls, Amphibious Movement, Fires, Long Guns, Terrain, Time of Day & Weather Conditions, Limited Spotting, Counter Battery, Variable AP Penetration, Illumination Fire Missions, Towed Unit Platform Gun Mounts, Variable Track Damage, Soviet Early War Communications, Brew Up Modifiers, Hidden Units, Reaction Fire, Lower Hull Hits, Narrow Roads & Paths, Fire Priority, Vehicle Collateral Damage, Infantry Smoke, Crawling, Tank Fright.



At first, that may seem like a complicated list of rules. However, optional rules are just that, optional. Players employ them as desired. In fact, many of the Advanced Game elements are not even required in the scenarios. The game system is very modular in design. It can be as simple or as complicated as desired.

Speaking of scenarios, the basic set includes a good selection plus all the tools necessary, including comprehensive TO&Es (Tables of Organization & Equipment) to create player-designed scenarios or to just research the various Soviet and German units. Armed with this information it's not necessary to look to the publisher for additional scenarios; anyone can create their own scenarios.

In the base set, scenarios are fought out on the included 22" x 34" mapboard with the 176 (88 double-



side) 7/8" (22mm) double-sided counters for the vehicles, towed guns and aircraft and the 120 (60 double-sided) 5/8" (16mm) counters for all the leg units. All of the damage, turrets, reference, status and terrain effects are also represented on 5/8" (16mm) counters. Also included are all the game charts, tables, reference sheets, and the 4 d10 dice necessary for play. The mapboard features large 1" (25mm) hexes for ease of play.

When playing, players utilizing the quick and easy counter-based command system, players 'order' each their units to fire, move, fire & move, overwatch (opportunity fire) or just sit tight (No Command). These five basic commands control all of the action in the game. In the Basic Game, each and every unit receives its own individual command counter. In the

Advanced Game, the Command Control rules (if the players decide to add that element to the game) limit the number of distinct commands available for each company-sized formation based on its formation grade. That means that some units must share a command, performing the same action dictated by the order.

Those companies with superior formation grade not only receive more commands they have a wider command range giving those units sharing a command greater flexibility. For example, a company of 10 tanks possessing Seasoned grade receives 6 distinct commands (and any number of No Commands), and those units sharing a command must be in adjacent hexes; if Green grade, it receives 4 distinct commands (and any number of No Commands) and those units sharing a command must be stacked in the same hex. Therefore, formation integrity is a critical aspect as well as the limits it places on formations.

The base set just starts things off. It also serves as the cornerstone for all of the expansion sets, the first two are currently on the P500 list. **Expansion #1: The Shape of Battle – The Eastern Front** introduces players to **Panzer's** geomorphic mapboards. Included are 4 double-side 10" x 27.75" (254mm x 705mm) mapboards. Each one sports 330 (10 x 33) 1" hexes, the same size hexes as in the base set. These geomorphic mapboards, besides representing 8 different mapboards, may be joined along both the long and short side to create any number of configurations. The expansion scenarios typical utilize from 1 to 4 of these mapboards depending on the situation depicted.



Expansion #1 adds 52 German and 24 Soviet units on 38 new Data Cards and 352 (176 double-side) 7/8" (22mm) double-sided counters for the new vehicles, towed guns and aircraft. These cover many significant units that saw action on the Eastern Front, including a number of variations of the German PzKpfw III, IV and STuG III; Soviet T-34/76 and KV-1 just to name a few. Also included are a number interesting vehicles with flamethrower tanks and armored cards.

Expansion #1 focuses on what many consider to be the most intense tank battle in history, Kursk, with OBs (Orders of Battle) for both forces and TO&Es for four of the most notable German divisions at the moment they saw action during that historic conflict, including the Grossdeutschland Panzer Grenadier Division, and the 1st, 2nd and 3rd SS Panzer Grenadier Divisions. The scenarios cover the battle from beginning to end plus other areas of conflict.

Expansion #2: The Final Forces on the Eastern Front completes the remainder of the German and Soviet units with a focus on the earlier war, less common and the critical Soviet Lend-Lease units in the form of

20 German and 28 Soviet units on 24 new Data Cards and 256 (128 double-side) 7/8" (22mm) double-sided counters for the new vehicles. These include a whole series of Soviet early war units from the sleek BT-7s, tiny T-38 and T-40, and the multi-turreted T-28s and T-35 'Dreadnaught'; German PzKpfw I, II, Czech 35 and 38, and the final versions of the 8-wheeled armored cars just to name a few. Players looking to complete the Eastern Front set will find all of the elements here plus 2 double-sided geomorphic mapboards. Of course, more scenarios abound and a couple of TO&Es for Soviet lend-lease formations.

That is not all. The future also looks very good. The plans are to cover, through additional expansion sets, the entire Western Theater. Remember, once the base set is purchased, all those components, including the German Forces from that set and **Expansions #1** and **#2**, integrate seamlessly with the all new expansion sets. There is no need to duplicate the rules, non-combat counters and all the game charts, tables, reference sheets, and even the d10 dice. Even the geomorphic maps carry over. The additions include the 1943 British and American Forces in Italy, France and into the heart of Germany in 1945. French Forces in 1940 Europe, and without question the North African campaign.

The order of release has not been set. Player input will dictate that outcome.