

# Spring Thaw


After a cold winter of entrenchment and depredation, both sides are ready for a fight. The Germans are eager to push on to capture major population centers and force a Socialist capitulation. The Russians, being continually bolstered by a seemingly unending string of reinforcements, are ready to follow Uncle Joe's dictate to drive the Huns from Mother Russia. With the spring thaw, operations have begun to pickup as both sides feel out each other's positions and strengths.

Spring Thaw mission uses **Delayed Reserves**, **Fair Fight**, **Mobile Battle**, and **Scattered Reserves** special rules.

## YOUR ORDERS

### ATTACKER

The German force was advancing when it encountered strong opposition. You have called for assistance, but so have the Russians, so you must attack now while they are still weak. You must crush the Russian resistance and seize one of your objectives before the Russians capture one of theirs.

### DEFENDER

A section of the line has crumbled and it's fallen upon your shoulders to repel the enemy advance. The enemy is stronger than you expected, so you must act aggressively until your reinforcements arrive. Capture one of your objectives before the Germans capture theirs.

## PREPARING FOR BATTLE

1. The German forces are the attacker and the Russian forces are the defenders. The force allocation is dependent upon the outcome of Counteroffensive. The Russians are allowed to fully recover any losses realized in the previous battle and may Reorganize their forces freely. If the Russian forces captured:

- 2 contiguous objectives, then the Germans may recover half their losses and reorganize their forces freely, but may not exceed the reduced point total.
- 0-1 objectives, then the Germans may recover all their losses and reorganize freely.

2. Starting with the Germans, both sides place two objectives on the opposing side of the battlefield. The objectives must be at least 16"/40cm from the center line of the battlefield and may not be placed within 8"/20cm of the side table edges. The objectives must be at least 42"/105cm apart.
3. Both sides now place an additional objective on their own side of the battlefield, following the placement guidelines above, with the exception that the final objective must be at least 16"/40cm from any other objective (and not 42"/105cm).
4. Starting with the Germans, both sides now nominate at least half their platoons to be held off the table in Delayed and Scattered Reserves at the start of the game.
5. Both forces, starting with Germans, now alternate placing remaining platoons in their own half of the battlefield. The platoons may not be placed within 12"/30cm of the center line of the battlefield.
7. Both forces now place their Independent teams in their deployment areas, starting with the German forces.

### **BEGINNING THE BATTLE**

1. Starting with the Germans, both players make Reconnaissance Deployment moves for any Rece Platoons they have on the table.
2. Finally, both sides roll a die. The side finishing deploying their platoons first adds +1 to their roll. The player with the higher result has the first turn.
3. Remember that this mission uses the Mobile Battle special rule so, for the first turn of the game, all teams are considered moving at the beginning of the battle.

### **ENDING THE BATTLE**

The battle ends on or after the sixth turn when:

- a side starts their turn in possession of any of the objectives in the enemy deployment area, or,
- time has expired (four hours).

### **DECIDING WHO WON**

The side that took their object wins the battle. They have secured key terrain, forcing the enemy onto the defensive, and opening the way for the final decisive blow.

### **KURSK**

The final battle in the campaign has the Germans pushing for a final breakthrough as both the political will and military materiel needed to continue the eastern war begin to run short. A smashing success is critical and may break the spirit of the Soviets, who are themselves teetering on the edge of collapse. On the other hand, a loss is sure to set in motion a long and tortuous withdraw back to more defensible lines, or perhaps even the ultimate defeat of the Third Reich. The winner of Spring Thaw may add an additional 2,500 points to arrive in Reserve for Kursk; the loser may add an additional 1,250 points to arrive in Delayed Reserve. Both sides may fully recover their losses and otherwise Reorganize as described on page 239.