

# Operations

## The Wargaming Journal

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# The Limitations of Series Designs

## Wargame Design Concepts

*by Dean N. Essig*

When we first started planning to begin a game company (which eventually became, you guessed it, The Garners), I decided that we would religiously follow a series format. The idea was, and is, that a player need learn one set of rules in order to play a number of games. I believe that one rather complex set of rules takes less time to learn to play when divided over a number of games which use them, than several sets of even the simplest rules which only stand for one game. That is a plus that I still believe can make up for many sins. Chief among the "sins" generated by a series approach is a limitation of topic by the series available, and-as noted in a letter by Mr. Hastings in the Letters section of this issue- potential round-peg/square-hole problems when the series is applied to something it can't quite handle.

To get around both of these problems, multiple series are required. If we were to want an Ancients game, for instance, we would never dream of trying to make use of the Civil War, Brigade or Tactical Combat Series rules. We would need a separate series devoted to a time period and scale that is appropriate. Naturally, this makes with decisions that invariably will cause a row in some players.

For instance, the more I learned about WW2 tactical actions after my background in modern operations, the more I was struck by the similarity between them. That was in the development of the TCS. The TCS's Modern Expansion came later. A player who is convinced that some great revolution in warfighting has occurred since 1945 is going to say that there is no way that the TCS rules could be applied, whole or in part, to modern actions. My research indicates that the process of change since 1945 was much more evolutionary--with changes in lethality and range generating more dispersion and smaller maneuver units-but that the basic methods remain mainly unchanged.

A set of series rules can be applied to a given time period and scale based upon the transition points of revolution in the art of war. Such points are readily identifiable-the origin of gun fire weapons-the development of line and musket tactics-the application of rifle weapons and decline of cavalry-- the tactical impasse generated by the machine gunmotorization, mass armor and aircraft, etc. Certain periods require a change in game style to be able to correctly portray the action-such as the relative

merits of musket, artillery, and horse vis a vis the Napoleonic and Civil War time periods.

## **No Great Revolution**

While much evolution has occurred since 1945, no great revolution has. Units still fight dispersed using fire and maneuver. Armor remains a viable battlefield weapon. Only the attack helicopter and its use as a maneuver element has the potential for a revolutionary change in warfare-much the same way as did the tank when used in blitzkrieg style tactics. That remains to be seen.

Of course, modern warfare enthusiasts will say I'm all wet-but of course the same thing happens when ever you have to draw a line in the sand and state that on this side of the line something is true and on the other it isn't. There will always be a voice pipe up that X (which lies just over the line) proves that the line is in the wrong place-history is too fuzzy to pin down in the way we need to when designing the parameters of a series.

Naturally, a series is set up with a central point of time and scale where it is designed to be correct. As games are designed away from that center of mass, a case by case decision must be made as to the applicability of the series to the given topic. For instance, I suggested that the CWB rules be applied to the German wars of unification (1866-1871, etc.) but we decided that actions of the Franco-Prussian War wouldn't work because of the large scale introduction of the needle gun and the French 75mm artillery. The earlier war might work (1866, Austria), but not the later.

The second issue of multiple application of a set of rules to more than one engagement (given that the issues of series parameters are not in doubt as in the above) is a different question. It is built upon the one game per system method thought to be followed by SPI in the seventies (a detailed examination of many SPI games will reveal that in fact a couple of different systems were used for the bulk of the games, with what amounts to chrome rules and phases snapped on to give a different appearance.)

This school of design would have us believe that different actions require stand alone rules and that such things as type of ZOC and format of combat table could and should be tailored to a given battle. Sorry, game design art is not, nor has it ever been, capable of making as fine a distinction in design decisions required to tailor basic game concepts to a given battle. What you end up with, instead, is a set of basic game rules with a "Russian Throat Slitting and Repair Phase" tacked on because some Russian general at the battle attempted to commit suicide. The netresult is agame that simulates a given battle no better than a series game of the correct period on the same topic. EXCEPT, you, the player, get to read more rules to be able to play that stand-alone opus.

The design of a set of series rules (as opposed to a specific set of rules for one game) requires a different train of thought and method. First off, you must be all-inclusive enough to provide a set of rules that will be able to handle different actions in a period with limited special rules. For instance, in the OCS there are rules for amphibious assaults and port capacity even though these are unused in Guderian's Blitzkrieg.

Since the goal is to cover most general situations and not every tiny detail, this is not as difficult as it might sound at first. What is needed is a framework for doing an amphibious assault, not specifics on applying that assault to Norway, as opposed to Tarawa! Certainly, some things end up overlooked and need to be addressed in the game specific rules even though they should have been in the series rules-errors aside, we try to make them as all-inclusive as we can without overloading the system with specific place and time related concepts.

The second skill a satisfactory series designer must have is the ability to give the potential game designer a tool kit to work with. In the series rules there should be variables to apply which can take into account wide variations in armies and methods (the numeric Command Prep Rating in the TCS and the Morale Values in the CWB come to mind.) From these and a limitation placed by the series designer describing what differing values in a variable mean-to allow for consistency between games and the proper functioning of the system, A game designer then only needs to know that the series is designed with an "average" morale being the border between B and C where B is slightly above average, and C slightly below, and not that a B has a 33% chance of being Shaken (or whatever it is) when fired upon. The system of variables in the game must be given in a way where the correct range of values and their application can be readily be determined and applied by the game's designer to his topic.

A further part of the tool box the series designer must provide is the "Standards" sheet for the series. The standards sheet gives explicit instructions about how the units for a given series are to be rated. For instance, the OCS Standards sheet defines the correct manner of determining: the combat factor a unit has based on its TO&E; the types of units to be included and not included; barrage values of artillery units whether part of a combat factor or not; unit action ratings and movement rates; and aircraft and HQ values. Both the acceptable range of values and special conditions affecting them must be specified.

The TCS has a vehicle listing that, while not all-inclusive, allows the designer to quickly determine the correct series values for a given vehicle type-even if not explicitly on the chart. What the standards sheet gives the game designer is a method in a concise format of determining unit values consistent with the charts and tables of a given series and any other games in that series. I have not always been so organized with my standards sheets as I should be and as the OCS is--the CWB one consists merely of a quick way of determining the fire level size of a unit based on starting strength and calculation of a unit's wrecked level. The TCS standards is even more

unusual. Other than the vehicle listing, it has an "oral tradition" where one generation of designers passes the standards down to the next. Maybe when I design my next TCS game I'll codify the method on paper--and maybe not.

Given that the variables are readily apparent and designed into the rules and the appropriate standards sheet, a game designer of a given topic is now armed with the tools needed to come up with the correct series values for the units and occurrences he is looking at. If the series designer has done his job correctly, the game designer will only need to assign the series values which make sense for his action, come up with an OB and map, and start deciding what special rules might be needed. He doesn't (as would be the case with a stand alone project) have to re-invent the wheel of a movement system, combat system and all the other sundry rules required to make a game function--with the inherent threat of error at every corner.

The game designer's job is greatly simplified if the series designer did his task correctly. The game designer then can concentrate his efforts on examining the action at hand and the play of his game and does not have to deal with the minutia of whether or not his new combat table gives the right results and if he remembered to take into account that change to rail movement in the section on supply. The game designer is left with what we have determined is the fun part of game design--the history and its application to a game.

## **Pitfalls**

There are pitfalls in the series method of game design. Certainly the series designer may incorrectly define the boundaries of his series or the variables in it, thereby giving the game designer too limited a range to work with (or too much freedom, for that matter) or a license to apply the rules to something it will not simulate--a World War I game using the CWB comes to mind! Since I alone have been responsible for our series rules so far I have been able to follow my own standards of control on series development. Series design seems to have been something I've been specializing in since The Gamers formed. The lessons of repeated series design with the requirement to answer and address all rules questions and complaints send in by our players world-wide have left a deep mark on me and the value of the experience cannot be overestimated. At this point, I can almost tell at a glance when a proposed rule will confuse a large number of players or will not meet the stringent demands of other players as to clear definition. And, that is all for the good.

I cannot say that the series concept is one that would work for all game companies, time periods or designers. Some designers, especially, would find the desire to meddle with the design after release too strong and would be constantly redesigning the system--at that point all resemblance to a series (except perhaps in name) vanishes. Without the key benefit of rule familiarity and the ability to play a game right after cracking open the box and reading a limited set of special rules--there is no point to having a series at all.

This is not to say a series should remain entirely static. It should evolve slowly as more and more play hours are spent finding quirks and anomalies that were not readily apparent during the initial playtesting-where much larger monsters were obscuring them! Certainly this has been the case with both the TCS and CWB. Both are, or soon will be, in second edition form and a third edition of the TCS rules is being tossed about as gamers investigate the Point Fire Table and Overwatch Trigger concepts as presented in this issue.

The Gamers, however, remains quite happy with the series concept as we have it defined. Of all the initial ideas and concepts for this company formulated in the fall of 1987, during our inception, the series has stood the test of time the best. It has pleased thousands of gamers world-wide who enjoy being able to crack open a box of the latest entry into "their" series and play it right away.

*Now that both GMT and Decision Games are either considering or adopting the series concept, I think my decision in 1987 is more fully vindicated than ever.*

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# Barren Victory Slopes

## Wargame Map

*by Gerry Palmer*

The following is a list of all slope and extreme slope hexsides in Barren Victory.

### Slopes:

A1.22-1.23

A1.23-2.22

A1.23-2.23

A1.27-2.27

A1.28-2.27

A2.27-3.28

A2.28-2.29

A3.25-4.25

A3.26-3.27

A3.26-4.25

A3.27-4.27

A4.28-5.29

A4.32-5.33

A4.34-5.34

A6.11-7.12

A7.27-8.26

A7.27-8.27

A7.34-8.33

A7.34-8.34

A7.35-8.34

A7.35-8.35

A7.34-8.33

A7.34-8.34

A7.35-8.34

A7.35-8.35

A8.10-8.11

B2.30-3.30

B3.17-4.16

B3.30-3.31

B5.29-6.29

B5.30-5.31

B6.29-7.29



B7.29-7.30

B7.29-8.29

B8.28-8.29

B31.10-32.09

B32.09-32.10

B37.25-38.24

B42.01-42.02

B42.03-42.04

B43.28-44.28

B45.27-46.26

Extreme Slopes:

A1.24-1.25

A1.25-2.24

A1.25-2.25

A1.27-2.26

A4.244.25

A4.24-5.25

A4.24-5.26

A4.254.26

A4.34-5.35

The above are listed such that the hexside is identified. The order of listing has nothing to do with the direction of the slope.

And, yes, we have improved our slope symbols since these maps were made! Also, we are adopting new slope hexside symbols which will make play for our colorblind players much more acceptable.

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# **One-Book Willy Goes to War**

## **American Civil War: Wargame Realism**

*by John Kisner*

*..And speed glum heroes up the line to death.*

*--Siegfried Sassoon*

You know the type, the fellow that reads one book on a subject and is evermore an expert on the subject. Someone like me...

A recurring subject for articles in magazines like *Fire & Movement* over the years has been the debate over the level of realism in Civil War battle games. And, as often as not, the general conclusion has been that these have been better games than simulations. Having recently acquired and read *Military Affairs' Military Analysis of the Civil War* I thought the subscribers of this magazine would be interested in hearing how *The Gamers'* line of Civil War games seems to conform to the excellent article on "Civil War Infantry Assault Tactics" contained therein.

Basically, John K. Mahon's analysis features the following main points. First of all, the more spread out a line was, the greater its tendency to break morale. At the same time, the more spread out a line was, the fewer casualties the troops would suffer. Civil War tactics, then, consisted in managing the tradeoff between unit morale and safety. Furthermore, generals were highly aware of this relationship, and chose tactics over the years accordingly.

Those of you who have played the Civil War, Brigade Series (CWB) know full well what a marvelous morale system is built into the games. What struck me most after reading Mr. Mahon's article were the many subtleties of the system. CWB is not, however, perfect--as I think is shown by the following observations, both pro and con:

1. Much as in Mahon's analysis, brigades which "spread out" in CWB have their morale penalized in so far as each part of the line must roll its morale checks separately. And, as we all know, a brigade that must make three morale checks a fire phase is much more likely to rout than one that is concentrated in a single hex.

2. Unlike Mahon, morale suffers in the case above without regard to the actual "line spacing." For example, an "AAA" brigade and an "A" brigade have the same morale disadvantage when each is spread over three hexes. Obviously, however, the ranks of the former unit are still much more closed.

3. Brigades which spread out do not receive the expected defensive advantage. In fact, in CWB they receive an offensive advantage instead, in that this is the only way all the fire levels in a "big" brigade can fire.

In defense of CWB, I will admit that the chosen scale diminishes somewhat its responsibility to treat battle tactics with the accuracy I would like: it is, after all, a brigade rather than a regimental-level treatment of battle. Nonetheless, it is my feeling that the adoption of the following changes would correct what few faults I have been able to find in an otherwise marvelous design:

### **Column Formation**

Column formation is created solely as a maneuver formation in CWB. Those of you who have tried to charge across the Stone Bridge at Sharpsburg, an action that must be undertaken in column, already know full well the futility and frustration of trying to use the formation in combat. I suggest two changes that would make use of tightly-packed column attacks (like Ferrero's charge across Burnside's Bridge and Upton's bayonet assault at Spottsylvania) a bit more feasible.

Units in column formation can exchange fire in a close combat with a "C" fire level (regardless of their actual size.)

The Morale Table modifier for being in column is now changed from "-6" to "+6". (This may be too extreme a change, but at the very least I suggest dropping the "-6".)

### **Line Spacing**

The following modifiers are somewhat faulty in that they do not give small brigades the option of choosing their own spacing, but do provide a simple fix to the general problem:

Add the following modifiers to the Morale Chart, based on the total number of fire levels in hex:

- +1 if fire levels stacked in hex >A
- +0 if fire levels stacked in hex = A
- 1 if fire levels stacked in hex <A

Add the following modifiers to the " 1/2 Loss" rounding die roll that often is needed to resolve losses resulting from Fire Combat. Like the modifiers for the Morale Chart, it is based on the total number of fire levels in the hex:

- +1 if fire levels stacked in hex &GT A
- +0 if fire levels stacked in hex = A
- 1 if fire levels stacked in hex &LT A

Adding much more detail to a brigade-level game is probably not cost effective, and those of you who would like to see things like actual skirmisher formations on the map would be wise to allow the dust off Command Perspectives' Sharpsburg rather than tinker much further with CWB. ith these rather simple changes, however, CWB inches a few steps closer to modelling the assault tactics described by Mahon, and my Civil War battle system of choice becomes that much better.

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## Defensive Orders

### American Civil War: Wargame Realism

*by David Powell*

When playing a CWB game, have you ever wondered why the defensive player gets off so easily concerning the command system? After all, the guy on the attack has to do all the work. He writes the orders, rolls for corps attack stoppage, and when it all falls apart, starts over. In the meantime, the defensive player just sits there, smug in the knowledge that his orders won't fail. After all, in most cases, he doesn't have any.

But what if he did? Why not issue defensive orders as well? I think that by forcing both sides to participate fully in the command system, some very interesting games might result. Therefore, I propose that the following rules be used, and be considered a variant of the CWB command system. All of the below rules should be considered additions to the existing rules, except the No-Orders status, which must be changed to reflect these additions.

No-Orders is no longer defined as being an assumed defensive status. Instead, a unit that is attacked while having no orders is allowed to engage in rifle combat for no more than two turns. By the end of this two turn limit, the force must have accepted some form of orders (via initiative or from a superior) or must immediately implement an Emergency Corps Retreat, paying the straggler die-roll penalty for same. Additionally, a force with no orders, and with no units currently engaged in any combat (except artillery fire from 4 or more hexes distance) has 2 added to the acceptance number for order acceptance, or 1 added to any initiative dice rolls made by leaders in that force. Any unit that has not accepted an order is considered to have no orders, including units that have orders currently delayed.

Defensive orders must be written for all forces that the player wishes to defend positions. Defensive orders are accepted Re any other order. A defensive order needs to specify the geographic limits of the ground to be defended. Sometimes the orders may be fairly simple, as in "defend Cemetery and Culp's Hills from attack from the North." In most cases, defensive orders should specify right and left flanks and some degree of the depth of defense needed. When doubt arises, create a defensive 'box' by specifying limits in all four directions. All of the same conditions that apply when writing normal orders apply to writing defensive ones. Once a force has accepted a defensive order, that force may defend the position to the best of its ability subject

only to new orders or an unsuccessful Corps Defense Failure die roll.

## **Corps Defense Failure**

Once a corps with a defensive order has been attacked by enemy infantry or dismounted cavalry units, it must start rolling for Corps Defense Failure. On every Command Phase after the triggering attack, the defensive player must roll two dice on the Corps Attack Stoppage Table, which now does double-duty as the Corps Defense Failure Table as well. Whenever rolling for a defensive order, automatically add one to the roll since defensive orders were usually easier to carry out than attacks. All normal modifiers to the table also apply to units in defensive situations. the dice are rolled and the table is consulted just as if attack stoppage were being checked.

If the force passes the dice roll, nothing happens and the defensive units may continue to fight normally. If the force fails its roll, however, the force must implement an Emergency Corps Retreat in the next friendly Movement and Close Combat Phase. Subsequently, the force is then considered to have no orders.

If the attacking player ceases his attack for any reason, the defensive player no longer needs to make defense failure checks. In other words, the defensive player only rolls for checks during command phases which immediately follow turns where enemy infantry are dismounted cavalry made attacks on units of the defending force. In all cases, enemy artillery bombardment alone does not trigger a defense check dice roll.

Divisions operating under defensive divisional goals are also subject to defensive checks, just as if they were corps. A division rolls on the table as if it were an independent corps of one division strength, and all normal modifiers apply. If the divisional leader is killed or wounded, apply the modifier for a killed or wounded corps commander to the dice roll.

I hope that these variant rules spark some interest out there, and elicit comment from those of you who try out this concept. We at The Gainers would like to hear your opinions concerning the effectiveness of these rules, as well as the results of any games played using defensive orders. Good luck and good hunting!

What follows is a simple listing of various CWB Series games, and a scenario by scenario breakdown of what units would be considered to have defensive orders at start (if any).

### **Thunder at the Crossroads**

1. First Day, Historical Battle, and Jackson Lives Scenarios USA: All Union troops' orders are defensive. The Cavalry have defensive Divisional Goals.

CSA: No CSA troops have defensive orders.

## 2. Second Day Scenario

USA: All units except 3 Corps have defensive orders.

CSA: Pdr/3, And/3, Rds/2, and Erly/2 have defensive orders to defend in place. No other CSA units have defensive orders.

## 3. Little Round Top Scenario

USA: All units except 5 Corps have defensive orders. CSA: Same as

Scenario 2. 4. Third Day Scenario USA: All USA troops have defensive orders. 3/6 has a defensive divisional goal.

CSA: 2 Corps and 3 Corps have defensive orders (but notice attachments). Hd/1 and M/I have defensive divisional goals.

## 5. Fourth Day Scenario.

USA: All units have defensive orders.

CSA: All units have defensive orders except I/Cav.

## 6. Arrivals.

USA: Only units whose orders specifically mention defending an objective (or joining a corps HQ whose orders are currently defensive) are considered to have defensive orders.

CSA: No units have defensive orders. (Unless joining a Corps which already has a defensive order.)

## August Fury

1. Scenario One. No units either side have defensive orders at start. 2. Scenarios Two and Six. USA: No units have defensive orders. CSA: The LW has defensive orders. 3. Scenarios Three and Four. USA: No units have defensive orders. CSA: All units have defensive orders. 4. Scenario five. USA: No units have defensive orders. CSA: LW has defensive orders.

*Next Time: Defensive Orders for Barren Victory.*

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# Writing Your Orders: What Do They mean?

## American Civil War Wargame

*by David Powell*

The CWB series is not, by and large, a complex beast learn or play. It does contain an element that may give many potential players pause-written orders. While not a hex-by-the plotting system (with all of the slow play that entails), it is necessary to issue to your corps concise instructions for movement and attacks. In effect, this is a free-form orders system governed by that ominous phrase: "use common sense..."

The series has been around several years now and many gamers have found that they can use the system without fear or loathing. Others, however, have written to us seeking aid or a least further exposition. For these players, let me try to provide further insight into the "common sense" factor in more detail than is possible in rules booklets or designer's notes.

First of all, we have rewritten the CWB series rules cleaning them up and correcting them where necessary. Certain abuses have been corrected (e.g. the excessive use of initiative using initiative to get orders which failed acceptance in the same turn, etc.) These changes have been summarized in an addenda sheet in *Barren Victory* with the full-rewrite to appear in *Bloody Roads South* next April.

In general, we have made initiative more difficult to obtain. No order may be checked for acceptance and then, failing that check, use initiative to attempt to get that very same order. A player may try for a different initiative order, but failing that roll-the original order remains uncanceled and he is still obligated to make acceptance rolls for it.

Note that the receipt (not acceptance) of an order will automatically cancel any orders in delay, but currently accepted orders remain in force until a new order is accepted. The most recently accepted order always supersedes other instructions. A force may only have two sets of orders (at most) at one time: one currently accepted and being followed, and one in delay which is undergoing the acceptance process.

Furthermore, a given formation may have only one leader in its chain of command can be used to check for initiative in a single turn. If a corps leader is used and fails, then division commanders under him may not then be used to negate the failure of

the corps leader. The player should select which level of leader he wishes to use to get initiative for a given formation. For example, if Longstreet is commanding the divisions of Hood, McLaws, and Pickett, the player may use either Longstreet or Pickett to obtain initiative for Pickett's division-but not both in a single turn. Note that if a player does use Pickett, he may then use Longstreet to obtain initiative to use for McLaws and Hood but such use will then preclude the use of McLaws and Hood in the same manner as above with Pickett.

As an added kicker, we have included a further possible penalty triggered by excessive initiative use: a rule we like to call the "Loose Cannon" effect. Beware of rolling too much, because with a roll of 2, the enemy will get to issue your force an order up to and including foolish attacks! (BUT, not against your own troops, etc.) This effect lasts only one turn and you get to conduct the actual execution of the treacherous command. A loose cannon order at the wrong moment can be quite upsetting and embarrassing.

Still, common sense is required. We do not subscribe to the old saw that common sense is anything but common. We, instead, maintain that gamers are intelligent and once they understand the thrust of a concept they can apply it to individual cases with ease.

Command in the Civil War had yet to become the science that's taught today in war colleges world-wide. Compared to the operations orders of the modern military, Civil War instructions between a commander and his subordinate were much more informal. Approaching Gettysburg on July 1st, 1863, Ewell and A.P. Hill (CSA Corps Commanders) were simply ordered to concentrate their troops in the vicinity of Gettysburg and "not to bring on a general engagement before the rest of the army [was] up."

Another example is Lee's infamous Special Orders 191. This is the order which was lost and fell into the hands of McClellan during the Antietam Campaign alerting him to Lee's dispositions. This order, which covered the various movements of all the major elements of Lee's army down to the division level, was only a couple of pages long--9 short paragraphs in all. Yet this order controlled the movements of more than 40,000 men, accomplishing no less than three different operations, and included logistical instructions.

In short, Civil War orders were usually informal, quickly jotted notes, which ideally covered the commander's full intent. (An ideal that was frequently not attained with the resulting confusion that implies.) Players should try to match this same goal.

The most frequent abuse of the command system is not poor order writing, but rather stems from the fact that units are allowed to move and fight freely within command radii. Units within command radius can find themselves doing all sorts of things simply because there is no reason to move the HQ. After all, everyone is in

command range-so why not attack? Command radius abuse is easily solved. In short, two criteria should be applied-command radius and requirement for orders. Not only must the player check for command range, but must also ask if the involved units need orders to be able to undertake the desired actions. If the answer to the second question is yes, then the next step is to ask if, indeed, these units have orders (either from higher command or via initiative) allowing units to undertake the action in question. If both of these needs are not met, the activity should not occur.

For clarification, I will attempt also to provide more in -dep the definitions of various order types:

**Complex Orders** should be very broadly interpreted. Not only do complex orders cover easily defined attacks such as frontal assaults-Pickett's charge is a very clear-cut case of an attack order but also movement that could bring about an encounter with the enemy. Any movement towards an objective not currently or last held by friendly units should be construed as a complex order and handled appropriately.

For example, assume that neither player has occupied Little Round Top. If either player wishes to send troops to that location and defend it, such orders would still be complex orders since the hill was not previously held by friendly forces and such movement might initiate combat. If there is any real doubt about the combativeness of a particular movement, make it complex. Imagine that the same doubt is mirrored in the real-life commanders those orders are issued to and that they are preparing to meet the enemy.

**Simple Orders** will be less frequently used. Simple orders are designed to allow troops to be shifted from one position to another within friendly lines, etc. Arriving reinforcements, for example, often are ordered simply to report to the army HQ. Assigning these units a position in a defensive line, so as to shift other troops elsewhere, is a simple order.

The key questions to ask here are: 1. Is the end point of the route still in friendly hands, and 2. Does the route specified involve conflict? An order directing a command to move between friendly controlled points, but specifying a route that is blocked by enemy forces, requires a complex order, not a simple order. As a rule of thumb, a simple order that has its instructions negated by enemy activity is considered unfulfillable and new orders must be issued. Also, simple orders prohibit offensive not defensive combat.

**No Orders** is a condition rather than a positive order. Troops without any orders should be considered to be defending in place. *[Ed. Note: See also the Defensive Orders article in this issue.]*

Forces without orders are still allowed considerable latitude in order to fight off attacks. Implied in this condition is the ability to counterattack on a limited scale,

which is why the rules state that units do not need orders to move and fight. It is fully within the scope of the rules to allow units, once attacked, to counterattack to recapture lost ground. Of course, units under orders (complex or simple) in this situation are still obligated to try to fulfill (or alter) previous instructions. The mere act of being assaulted while under orders does not automatically void existing commands. Once attacked, however, units without orders should be free to move and fight without restriction up to the limits of command radii. Of course, any action which calls for the Movement of the Corps HQ must be triggered through orders or emergency corps retreat. In trying to decide if a given combat is legal in the current framework of a unit's orders, remember that a no-orders force cannot initiate attacks in the larger sense of that word. They can fire during "offensive" fire and conduct close combats. They can conduct counterattacks and other such limited offensive actions needed to defend their position.

**Divisional Goals** represent a different kind of order and are most useful for detached missions. In many cases, players won't want to send an entire corps off on some flank protection or other such mission, but will still want a force to guard against emergencies. Divisional goals should contain more detail than a corps order. A corps is always limited because its HQ is unable to move without positive orders and, therefore, operations are ultimately limited by command radii.

A divisional goal has no such self-governing mechanism. Therefore, a division with a goal to attack or defend a certain locale should have specific geographic limits placed upon its operations. For instance, a division assigned to defend a road between points X and Y would be unable to advance or retreat past X or Y without new orders, initiative or an emergency corps retreat.

Issuing orders is only part of the job. Once implemented, the player is expected to carry them out--even if events have changed enough to make a player regret his earlier choices. The varying amounts of pressure a player brings to bear while carrying out such orders can cause controversy at the game table. However, we do not want to impose any mandatory restrictions on exact percentages engaged or loss levels--rejecting these solutions as "gamey."

No Civil War general sat down with some master chart that told him how much pressure to bring to bear on an objective. He would tend to press the issue as much as he could without endangering his command.

*[Ed. Note: Thereby leaving himself open to bitter debate and fingerpointing after the war...]*

In game terms, the player is obligated to make some effort to put troops into combat as long as the order holds. Piecemeal brigade attacks or several brigades engaging only at two hex range seem to me to be a fine re-creation of foot-dragging. In my own reading, I can find several instances where such 'attacks' were 'pressed,' usually

to the dismay of the higher command. However, this caution may not suit some players. For those players, I suggest the following:

When any order is written, indicate with a number from 1 to 3 how aggressively it is to be followed. For instance, a player who assigned a 1 to an attack is allowed to press very lightly perhaps one brigade at a time or the two-hex range option. A player who commits himself to a 3 is doomed to a full scale assault, no matter what the odds. A 2 would commit a player to the middle ground, perhaps using 50% of his force at a time. This number doesn't affect acceptance in any way. Changing intensity value would require a new order or initiative.

*[Ed Note: For the rules lawyers out there who are now planning to issue 1's to everyone in order to have maximum flexibility, not that the above is also the hardest a force can attack at a given level. Giving a force a 1 does not allow it to attack from the one brigade level all the way up it confines the attack to the light pressure and the light pressure alone.]*

Alternatively, a player could jot down a descriptive word or two indicating the intended ferocity of his assault. These would range from "probing attack" to "all out attack." Using a word as opposed to a number would still limit the player to some prearranged guideline, but allows somewhat greater latitude in interpretation.

In closing, a few words need to be said about trust as it applies to the game. A certain minimal amount of trust is expected from all players-to obey orders, etc. Many die rolls are to be made in secret and players should feel comfortable concerning the honesty implied in these rolls.

Personally, I care very little for playing a game where tension of suspicion exists, and make it a point not to repeat games against such opponents. There is no mechanism in our games to prohibit cheating and it is easy to circumvent the system if one intentionally tries. It has been our experience that this presents little problem for the vast majority of our customers.

Our hobby purports to "put you in the driver's seat" (so to speak) and give you some sense of the commander's job. While board games can succeed at this goal only in a limited fashion, much can be done, and I think the CWB accomplishes much in this direction.

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# **The Cornfield A Scenario for In their Quiet Fields**

## **American Civil War**

*by Dean N. Essig*

As I alluded in the first issue of Operations when I gave the Bloody Lane scenario, here is the second installment. This scenario can be a lot of fun to play and is very quick. It does not, however, require a large amount of rules, etc. Set ups are done as per the normal initial game set up, with the following special rules:

This scenario actually consists of two parts: the First Corps Attack and the Twelfth Corps Attack. The two parts can be played from one to the other (First Corps, then Twelfth) but the Twelfth Corps version cannot be played alone (yet. If there is interest in such a thing I can come up with it later ... ) Note that there is some abstraction evident when played through to 10:00 am as the Union 2nd Corps does not make its appearance. Generally, if that causes a concern, I would have to direct you toward playing the entire game and not this scenario (or at least the 12th Corps addition to it.)

**Map Area:** The portion of the map used in this scenario consists of all map area to the North and West of the hex containing M/ DH/2 and Db(2) at the end of the Sunken Road. While the exact eastern edge of this zone is bluffed-because of the hex grain it can be determined exactly just prior to play to the satisfaction of the players. Note that the Db(1) in the Union First Corps area and Longstreet are both in play.

**Set Up:** Set up both sides as per the printed set up on the map (only those within the restricted area above.)

**Game Length:** Version A(The IstCorpsAlone) 5:30am to 7:30 am. Version B (1 st and 12th Corps) 5:30 am to 10:00 am.

**Artillery Ammunition:** Both sides may fire as much as they want.

### **Reinforcements:**

Union: The 12th Corps is the Union reinforcement (used in either version) and it is a

variable entry. Roll one die each turn during the Union Corps Attack Stoppage Check Phase. If the number rolled is less than the number of the current turn (5:30 is 1, 7:00 is 4, etc.) then the 12th Corps (all) arrives at the hex where the Smoketown Road from Line's Farm exits the large hunk of woods. The hex is adjacent to the initial set up position for the Db(1) battery which lies along the eastern play boundary.

Confederate: During Version A-None.

During Version B: R.H. Anderson's Division arrives at 8:00 entering the south edge of the play area along the Hagerstown Pike.

### **Victory Conditions:**

Union: The Union Player wins if, at the end of either version of play, if he holds both the Cornfield and the Dunker Church.

Confederate: The Rebel player wins if he holds both the Cornfield and the Dunker Church at the end of play.

Draw: The game is a draw if neither player can lay claim to both objectives. It is also a draw if both players claim to hold the Cornfield but neither has complete control over the feature's extent.

Obviously, historically version A ended in a draw and version B in a Union victory (of sorts.) A victory in these scenarios cannot be counted as more than a tactical success of the most precarious sort. The effect on the battle as a whole and (gasp!) the war itself must betaken with a major dose of salt! But, it's fun anyway...

*Coming soon to a Gamer's mag near you-The Ninth Corps Attack Scenario...*

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## CWB Command System vs. Solitaire Play

### American Civil War Wargame

*by Dean N. Essig*

A frequent comment is made to the effect that our games are somehow less playable solitaire than most because of the command systems in use. A point further from the truth would be hard to make. Our command systems actually enhance and assist solitaire play. This article will look at a solitaire game of Barren Victory I am playing and the influence of the command system on it.

I am playing the full two-day battle (although my progress has been very slow due to other projects), starting with the morning 14th Corps attack and moving from there. A couple of divisions of 14th Corps (Baird, 1/14 and Brannon, 3/14) have been ordered to attack the Confederates around Jay's Mill. The Rebels there (Forrest's Cavalry soon to be reinforced by Walker's Reserve Corps) are the only Confederates on the map to start the game with orders.

I decided if 14th Corps is going to attack, then I should help them out as best I could-so, I rolled for and got initiative to send forward the Union Reserve Corps under Granger. When I play these games solitaire, I try to give only the orders to troops that I reasonably think are based on intelligence they might have a way of knowing. Sending an aide to Granger from Thomas letting him know what 14th Corps is doing is hardly shocking, and that Granger might decide to "join in the fun" is also not surprising.

While the Union units deploy for the big attack on Forrest, Braxton Bragg starts belting out orders-at 9:00am he issues orders to Hood and Buckner to attack abreast of each other (1st Corps on the right, Buckner's on the left) through the Brotherton House to capture Snodgrass Hill. These orders were based on Bragg's wanting to kick off the show with his own actions and his historical feelings about the location of the Union left flank. He envisions this attack as on the Union extreme left with his troops taking up a blocking position between the Union army and Rossville.

We can see that this reasoning is faulty-but we are letting Bragg do what comes naturally. This leads to the following situation-14th Corps and Reserve Corps move into position, leaving a gap in the Union lines which Hood and Buckner move through without contest. The Confederates occupy Snodgrass Hill, form a perimeter,



and await future developments.

14th Corps lurches into Forrest generating heavy loss on both sides. Before the Reserve Corps could arrive, Thomas fails a corps attack stoppage check and frantically gets initiative to try again. Reserve Corps arrives and starts to deploy when they, too, get a corps attack stoppage. Going it alone again, Thomas continues halfheartedly and fails another check, The attack on Forrest at Jay's Mill ends with a wimper.

Meanwhile, Bragg-who is assumed to have been alerted to the big Yankee attack on Jay's Mill-orders Polk to attack with his corps on the right flank of the Union troops attacking Forrest. A convenient road route into a position which is logically to the right-rear of these troops is obvious and Bragg repeatedly orders Polk to move out. Giving orders from Bragg to Polk is a frustrating experience-as I'm sure it was to Bragg in real life. After several attempts failed, Bragg personally goes to Polk and grabs him by the throat until Polk nods that he will gopresumably before passing out.

The Union command is hardly inactive during this period. Rosecrans arrives and tries to take measure of the situation. He guides Sheridan's Division opposite Lee and Gordon's Mill, relieving 2 1 st Corps of that duty, and orders 21st Corps to attack toward and capture the Brock House. He is presumably unaware of the Snodgrass Hill problem and is only vaguely aware of Thomas' situation. The attack he plans is to support Thomas, although he must realize that on arrival at the Brock House, 21 st Corps will need further orders to more fully support 14th Corps.

Thomas, for his part, manages to get word of the capture of Snodgrass Hill. Seeing his future fame fading before he has a chance to enjoy it, he orders 14th Corps to withdraw from Jay's Mill, form near the Layfayette Road, and attack to capture Snodgrass Hill. The roles are reversed, but his chance for fame and glory still beckons.

Granger takes the 14th Corps orders under advisement, and sits down to have lunch.

Polk finally gets in gear and, after catching his breath, he moves out toward the Union troops attacking Forrest. By the time he arrives, however, 14th Corps is gone and the attack had ended. Without instructions on what to do next, he forms line and does nothing. Bragg, meanwhile, takes stock of what his uncoordinated batch of orders has done and notices that there is nothing between his HQ and the Union army but air and trees. A frantic order is dispatched to Polk to return and form line in the Rebel center. Amazingly enough, Polk likes this idea and moves rapidly back to patch up a line.

Done with his lunch, Gordon Granger decides to join in on 14th Corps' attack on Snodgrass Hill and begins moving the Reserve Corps toward that end. 21st Corps-after an amazing impersonation of Polk by Crittenden-finally begins its attack. The

net result of all this confusion is shown in figure 3. Crittenden's attack skims the edge of Polk's new line. After a few turns of useless loss, Rosecrans himself arrives to call the whole thing off.

The attack on Snodgrass Hill is a grotesque repeat of the abysmal performance earlier in the day at Jay's Mill. 14th Corps goes in first and gets bloodied. Two of its divisions are now wrecked. Refusing to quit-and, believe me, I tried both corps attack stoppage and initiative to end this bloodbath-Thomas pulls his two wrecked divisions out of the attack, and orders Johnson's Division (2/20, attached, and proud of it, until now) to take that [expletive deleted] HILLN! Knowing this is stupid, Johnson says "Yes, sir" and proceeds to try. The attack is supported (laughably) by Negley's Division.

Granger's Reserve Corps arrives at the height of the Snodgrass fighting. They form line. They advance toward the enemy. They look MEAN. Then, they fail their corps attack stoppage roll and leave with a wimper-thanks for all the help guys! I decided it was too late in the day to mess with getting them started again.

The situation at 4:30 pm is as follows: Union losses 6,400; Confederate-5,300. Several leaders have been killed or wounded-Negley, Van Cleve, and Hindman.

Then the unbelievable happens. Johnson's attack reaches the edge of Snodgrass Hill. There, protected by a slope hexside, is Hood's Texas Brigade in a line studded with cannon. Giving it the good ole' college try, Johnson's Division fires everything it has at the Texans, who-with an incredibly bad dice roll- manage to scurry back in terror! The flank of Snodgrass Hill is wide open. Johnson, in sheer amazement, can now run amok atop the hill and it everyone in the flank-oh, happy days!

At the start of the next Union turn, Thomas-looking over the crippled remains of his corps, and untold about the success of Johnson's forlorn hope-fails his corps attack stoppage check. Figuring Johnson would react violently to orders calling off the attack at this time, I rolled immediately for initiative to restart the attack-believing Johnson himself would have rode back to give Thomas a peice of his mind.

Thomas thinks that's the most idiotic idea he has heard lately, fails the initiative check, and proceeds to pull back for the night. Try simulating this sequence of events and drama without the command system, I dare you. First off, all of 14th Corps would still be attacking at this point, if the smallest hole had opened up, Johnson would have poured into it-while the other Union Divisions would have attacked Hood on two or three sides. You tell me, which is more "realistic," the super-soldier version or what happened in my game?

By the time night has completely fallen, the situation is as it appears in figure 4. Most of the Union army is hemmed into the lower left hand corner of map B. The Confederate army forms a line facing it in a semi-circle facing south around to facing

west. Hood's Corps, however, forms a short line facing *north* at the extreme right of the Confederate line. They are there to face Granger's Reserve Corps which is now isolated from the rest of the Union army to the north. Sensing disaster if he keeps close to the Confederate line, Granger pulls back to the north some 12 hexes and goes into camp for the night.

Planning for the next morning begins. My first inclination is to have the Rebs go over to the attack. The Union attacked all through the first day in a haphazard and "behind the eight ball" manner-I wanted to see if circumstances would be different for the Rebels. Taking stock of the Confederate army, I've decided D.H. Hill's Corps would have to be the main body for the attack. They have hardly been blooded in the battle (unlike Hood, Buckner, and Forrest) and aren't commanded by an idiotlike Polk. Besides, Cleburne's Division is one of the best and its commander is the best. Hill is no slacker either. During the night, Longstreet and McLaws's Division is supposed to show up, so I've decided to add McLaws and Stewart (from Buckner's Corps) to the attack and put Longstreet in overall command of the effort.

The position of Hill's people at the end of the day is good--right at the point of the Union line, a rupture here would destroy the entire Union army, and they have no good line of retreat. The plan would be put together shortly after midnight when everyone is up and would be planned to kick off shortly after daylight.

I had thought about detaching some troops to bag Granger but decided against it. The main object of operations is the destruction of Rosecrans and his army. Granger can be mopped up later. Any detachment of troops to go round him up now would be a waste of forces needed for the real objective everyone not involved in the big assault is holding the Union army in the corner of the map. The only concession to Granger's presence is the facing of Hood's depleted corps. That's just a precaution in case Granger gets froggy and attempts to attack.

Next time I'll cover the action of the second day-with the hammer blow of Longstreet's attack coming at dawn.



Figure 1: Confederate Movements till 5:00 pm, 19 Sept.



Figure 2: Union Movements till 5:00 pm, 19 Sept.

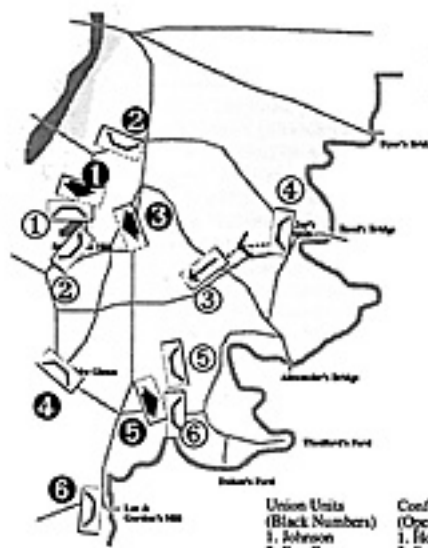


Figure 3: Locations at 5:00 pm

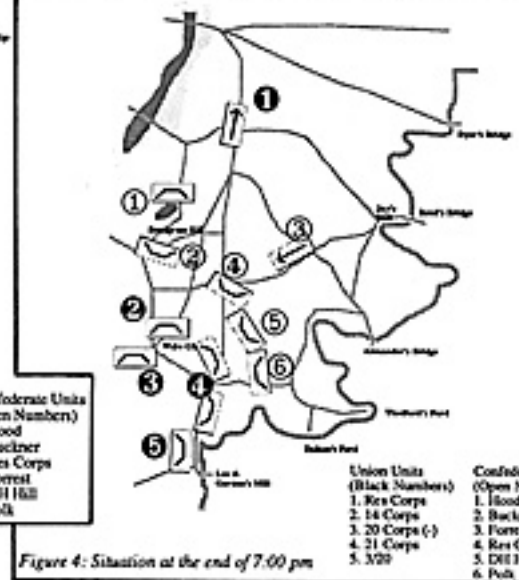


Figure 4: Situation at the end of 7:00 pm

## [Jumbo Map \(slow: 176K\)](#)

### [Barren Victory Solitaire](#)

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# Overwatch Triggers

## A Potential 3rd Edition Change

*by Dean N. Essig*

Shortly after **Omaha** was shipped to the pre-pub purchasers, Rod Miller cornered me on the phone with what he insisted on calling a "fundamental change" in the philosophy of the TCS system. The culprit was the seemingly unobtrusive rule regarding Bocage Hexsides. As was intended, units which move adjacent to a bocage hexside are exempted from creating an overwatch trigger for enemy units which must use an LOS which crosses the bocage hexside to see the trigger. Rod was sure that if units were exempt in this situation, the same rule should be applied to when units enter the edge of a forest, village, or come up to a regular hedgerow hexside. I wasn't so sure--and felt that the designer had specified the terrain correctly for the effect he wanted (units tended to move along the bocage, not in the open field behind it.)

The more I thought about it, however, the more I became convinced that his argument actually had a great deal of merit. Adjusted correctly, a new overwatch fire trigger rule could add greatly to the TCS's handling of terrain and its effect on tactics. Units would be allowed to move through covered and concealed routes in order to take up firing positions without tripping overwatch fires on themselves. An insignificant hedgerow near your troops may provide the enemy an easy way to get into range to set up for a big suppressive fire. It looks very good.

In writing, however, this rule must be carefully set up--or new loopholes and so on would appear much like a freshly opened can of worms. It would require a painless insertion into the existing rules (to include the latest addenda regarding permission to fire.) The below is the initial roughed out rule--I will be looking for your feedback on its merit, weaknesses, and whether or not inclusion is warranted. At this point, consider it no more than an official optional variant rule.

The idea of this rule is to apply a variable definition of to which point, exactly, the overwatch trigger or LOS is determined. It is best set up in the form of a table:

Trigger or Reason	Trigger or LOS Point	Hexside features of Target's hex
Regular Suppressive Fire	Center of target's hex	Ignored for LOS
Triggered by Fire	Center of target's hex	Ignored for LOS

Triggered by Movement	Center of hexside crossed to enter hex	Blocks if LOS crosses
-----------------------	--	-----------------------

In all cases, hexside features of the firer's or "trigger observer's" hex are ignored. In all cases, units can always see triggers in hexes adjacent to themselves.

Therefore, a unit moving through a forest to that forest's edge to enter a firing position would be free from a movement generated overwatch trigger if the final hex of movement contains forest which blocks the observer's LOS attempting to reach the hexside the moving unit crossed the enter the hex.

Give this rule a try and see what you think. I believe it opens up a world of new tactical possibilities. Let me know what you think and will consider or ditch this for the 3rd Edition TCS rules.

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## A Forum for Constructive Change

### Towards a 3rd Edition TCS

*by Dean N. Essig*

The following batch of articles represent a growing interest in modifying the current version of the TCS rules (2nd Edition plus the addenda in **Omaha** and printed here in the last issue.) These modifications address issues both real and merely perceived. As opposed to taking the comments I get and eventually making a decision pertaining to their viability for series change (basically if a change is warranted ... ), I am bringing out the most frequent comments for your examination. No such comment is valid without a viable alternative presented in which the critic can suggest a method of change which not only addresses the perceived "problem" but also does not engender further problems of its own.

As we are now entering a down period in TCS production (the next release isn't until 1993) and at that time the rulebook will need to be re-printed, we are in a perfect period to examine the system and see if any constructive changes are needed. If you have any thoughts or comments regarding what is presented here, other issues not yet addressed, or comments on what not to change, be sure to write and comment. By all means set up small scenarios from any of the existing games and test these ideas to see if they are to your liking...

#### More Tactical Combat Series Wargame

[Some TCS Ideas](#)

[TCS Terrain Effects Chart](#)

[TCS New Fire Point Table](#)

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## Some TCS Ideas

### Towards a 3rd Edition TCS

*by Mark R. Stricker*

*[Ed. Note: The following is condensed from a rather lengthy letter. I have consolidated here the variants and house rules used by Mr. Stricker's group.]*

I recently came across the premier issue of Operations, and since I currently have five of your games I decided to pick up a copy. I noticed that in your "InBrief" article you asked for help in two areas: subscriptions and letters. Well, you will find my payment for a one year subscription enclosed. And, since you are one of the few game companies who have asked for our comments, the rest of this letter contains the thoughts of several players in my gaming group. Let me preface these comments with some background on our group and where our areas of interest and expertise are.

Currently, all of our group are assigned to the Intelligence Directorate of United States Central Command. Although we did not have as much time to game as we would have had over the past year (wars tend to disrupt your routine), we have enjoyed several of the simulations published by The Gamers when we have found the time. In particular the Tactical Combat Series has produced many hours of enjoyable play and much discussion. As an Army officer who has been a Battalion/Squadron and Brigade S-2, I wish this series had been available when I was using other wargames as training tools for the officers in my units.

As I rotate back to Saudi Arabia for 90 days (yes, there are still over 40,000 US personnel in the Arabian Gulf area) I will be taking Bloody 110 and Force Eagle's War along with me. I hope to obtain a copy of Objective: Schmidt from my local game store before I leave, since I understand it has the new second edition rules. So much for background, the following reflects some of the changes and additions we are now using.

Our feeling is that the TCS is one of the best simulations of tactical level modern and World War II combat on the market. Obviously, the command system is a strong point as are the infantry rules; however we have decided to make some modifications to the armor rules. First, we have started to use the "overwatch marker," "facing" (in a modified form), and "mode change in movement" rules which were proposed in a recent Moves article written by Mr. John Kisner.



*[Ed. Note: The mode change in movement rule was applied to TCS in the addenda in our last issue and in the **Omaha** game rules. I still disagree that facing has any place in a game with 20 minute game turns!]*

There are many flawed wargames which just collect dust on my closet shelf, but the virtues of the TCS system outweigh areas where we feel the rules might be weak.

*[Ed. Note: The original letter here explained why Mr. Stricker developed a new Point Fire Table. I have omitted that section as an "official" new Point Fire Table is proposed in this issue. His table (while using two dice) has much the same probabilities and feel as the one printed on page 19.]*

As I mentioned earlier, we have made a few changes to the TCS rules. Here are some additional rules we are using:

**Armor Platoons:** We came up with this rule to cut down on the number of counters on the map, and bring in some of the doctrinal characteristics of particular nationalities (i.e. Soviets.) Instead of vehicle units having only one step, the vehicle counter on the map represents a vehicle unit of up to a platoon (2-5 steps.) Step loss markers are placed under the counter to indicate the number of vehicles in the unit. For combat purposes, the vehicle unit is generally treated as individual vehicles occupying the same hex. The unit will, however, conduct actions together. Use of the platoon rule is optional for some armies, but others must use it. We have all modern Soviet tank units operate in platoons with three steps. Unlike US armor platoons, the Soviet units may not break down below the platoon level. Additionally, we force all steps in a Soviet platoon to engage the same target. If this is point fire and there is more than one target in the hex, the Soviet player must designate the vehicle being engaged. We have also found that this rule forces Soviet units to operate on frontages which are more doctrinal.

**Wheeled Vehicles:** We have modified the movement rates for non-truck wheeled vehicles *[Ed. Note: roughly x1/2.]* This cuts their cross-country movement, but we changed the primary road movement rate to 1/4 and the secondary road movement rate to 1/3. We felt that the off-road rates which you gave were too high.

**Rate of Fire:** We changed the "permission to fire" roll for overwatch fire to a number which varies with vehicle type. Now a Sherman with its fast turret traverse will get off more shots (since its subsequent overwatch fires will be allowed on a roll of 4-6) than a slower firing Tiger 11 (roll of 6 only.)

**Modifiers for Flanking Fire:** We use all of the facing rules proposed by Mr. Kisner with the exception of his modifiers to defensive strength. We use one modifying situation for the defensive strength of the target-if the incoming shot is not entering the target's hex through the 60 degree frontal hexside, then the target's defensive rating is cut in half (rounding down.) We felt this was easier than keeping track of

three different target aspects as required by Mr. Kisner's rule.

**Direct Fire HE:** We found that the area attack values for point firer type units seemed low. We use the cannon size of each vehicle and allow the weapon to fire its artillery firepower for that caliber out to nominal range. As with artillery, range effects do not apply. Now a 150mm SP gun can attack with a seven firepower. Without this rule it has less attack strength against area targets than some 75mm guns.

*[Ed. Note: I believe this change is incorrect--rhe values in the current version of the game take into account both the limited HE ammo in tanks and the multiple machineguns available (usually) for fire at closer ranges. That is why tank guns when firing at area targets use the same range effects as other units.]*

## More Tactical Combat Series Wargame

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# The Terrain Effects Chart

## Towards a 3rd Edition TCS

*by Dean N. Essig*

Prompted by the comments of a player on GENie, I looked again at the Terrain Effects on Combat Chart in the TCS rules. His point was that dug-in troops in urban terrain were *too* hard to blast out. I'm sure he understood that they should be hard (doctrine states a 3:1 attack is desirable in the open, but 12:1 or more is needed in urban areas), but his point may be valid that it may be too hard given the modifiers in the current system. See the following TEC let me know what you think...

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# New TCS Point Fire Table

## A Proposal

*by Dean N. Essig*

A number of players have taken time to comment that they did not feel the current TCS Point Fire Table did justice to some tank vs. tank engagements. Some came with no more than a "Panthers are godlike" attitude and I had to dismiss their arguments as subjective. Others, however, gave a good case for a new point table which would increase the difference in probability based on the differential-in effect it would change faster as you moved away from a zero differential. Taken in its simplest form, this too would not work. The better tanks (out there at the +3 or more level) would literally wipe weak ones off the face of the earth. The problem was, in that area, that these tanks would be trading excessive armor penetration for increased hit probability, which is wrong. A more correct table would tail off rapidly in attacks at less than 0, but would maintain a slower increase on the positive side.

A second problem was that there are only so many numbers available to use on two dice and the original table was limited by them. The proposed table below uses three dice (3-18) to help with that limitation. A problem generated by this change was the various modifiers applied to the original table. Were they still valid? After some examination, I found that the differences in probability were not all that great between the two tables and only a little accuracy was sacrificed by using the existing modifiers. This effect is greatest with large modifiers-but then, I never liked they way they affected the table at the extremes anyway.

For those of you who dislike the current TCS table, use the one below and send me some feedback. If it is liked, it may be incorporated into the 3rd Edition rules.

Many thanks to those who wrote and asked about this problem- for bringing it to my attention and especially for giving alternative ideas too. Many thanks to CPT Mark Stricker and Rod Miller for their suggestions and help.

Also provided is the exact percentages of chance on which the table is based for players who might want to use percentile dice to avoid the slight probability distortions caused by the limitations imposed on the available probabilities with three dice.

## **Tactical Combat Series Suggested Tables:**

What do YOU think?

## Point Fire Table

Use modifiers from original table, roll three dice instead of two.

Range	Firer's Attack Minus Target's Defense									
	+5 or More	+4,+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	- 5
2 or Less	6	8	9	10	11	12	13	13	14	15
Close	9	10	10	11	12	13	13	14	15	16
Nominal	11	12	12	13	13	14	15	16	16	18
Long	13	14	14	15	15	16	17	18	18	P

Roll # or more to kill (after modifiers). P means shot is incapable of effect.

Note that shots at less than -5 are automatically of no effect at any range and are not allowed. The above table has been slightly tailored ("creative rounding") to give a desired effect of limiting the effectiveness Of Poor shots at great ranges. The base probabilities are below, but have not been re-aligned as are the above. I would suggest that the above table be used or that players carefully tailor fire below to be more like the above.

## Point Fire Table Probabilities (Unmodified)

Range	Firer's Attack Minus Target's Defense									
	+5 or More	+4,+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	- 5
2 or Less	95	84	71	60	48	40	31	24	16	8
Close	75	66	56	47	38	31	25	19	13	6
Nominal	50	44	38	31	25	21	16	13	8	4
Long	20	18	15	13	10	8	7	5	3	2

## Terrain Effects on Combat

Terrain	Target Description	
	Area Fire Table	Point Fire Table

	<b>Fire Mode</b>	<b>Move Mode (carrier mounted)</b>	<b>Fire Mode (not AT gun)</b>	<b>Move Mode</b>	<b>Fire Mode (AT Gun only)</b>
Open	NE(-2)	+2(NE)	+2	+1	+1(-2)
Swamp	-1(-2)	NE(-1)	+3	+3	NE(-2)
Woods/Hedge	-1(-2)	+1(-1)	NE	-1	-1(-2)
Buildings	-1(-2)	NE(4)	-1	NE	-1(-2)
Forest	-2(-3)	-1(-1)	-2	+2	-2(-3)
City/Village	-3(-4) #-Normal (#)-Dug in	+1(-2) #-Normal (#)- Suppressed or paralyzed	-2	-1	-3(4) #-Normal (#) Dug in

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## Force Eagle's War

### A New Unit Tri-Cap Division

by James E. Meldrum

During the 1970's, the US Army considered forming a new kind of unit-the Tri-Cap Division. Tri-Cap was an acronym for "triple capability." This new formation was to be a flexible, quick-reaction unit capable of launching a counterattack able to stop any advancing Soviet unit in its tracks.

A Tri-Cap division was to have consisted of three very different components plus the usual assets. These were a brigade each of attack helicopters, airmobile infantry, and armor. Whenever a Soviet breakthrough occurred, elements of the Tri-Cap division would move to intercept. The attack helicopters would rush in and shoot up the Soviet spearhead. The airmobile infantry would drop in front of the breakthrough to seal off the gap and halt the enemy advance. Meanwhile, the armored brigade would move up and eliminate the Soviet spearhead and force remaining Soviet units back.

*[Ed. Note: This thinking (the Army's, not Mr. Meldrum's) reflects a very linear attrition-based doctrine. Note that the division is using its force on the enemy spearhead (their strongest point) in an attempt to plug a gap and force them back to "their" side of the line. A more modern doctrine would allow the spearhead in, cut it off from its support, and mop up the spearhead afterward. That type of plan focuses our strength on their weakness-the support of the spearhead. Once unhooked from support, the supply-hungry spearhead will be much easier to destroy. This is a doctrinal point I wanted to make before Mr. Meldrum moves on. I won't interfere with his article again. I just wanted players to notice the type of doctrine the Army is using at this point in their development.]*

The problem, however, is that the Tri-Cap division was good for only one thing: the set-piece counterattack. Army research and wargaming revealed that this kind of unit was not able to take and hold ground. It was also far too prone to attrition. Such a unit would work well against Soviet units strung out across miles of European roads and fields, but to go up against a concentrated Soviet Tank Division would be an entirely different proposition.

The Army's unsuccessful experiment with the Tri-Cap division, however, does appear to have left its mark on current US Army formations.

Currently, most US Army heavy divisions have an attached Aviation Battalion consisting of scout, attack, and transport helicopters. Also, US Army Armor and Mechanized Infantry Divisions are almost identical in composition with only an emphasis on either armor or mech depending on the formation. This is in contrast to the Tri-Cap division which was basically an Airmobile Division with an attached Armored Brigade. So, it seems that the "legacy" of the Tri-Cap experiment was to balance US Army heavy divisions with respect to their composition and to add aviation capability to improve their firepower and flexibility. Adding transport helicopters also permits heavy divisions to "convert" a limited number of their organic mechanized infantry into airmobile infantry.

The main objective of this article is to provide players with a Tri-Cap unit that they can substitute into existing scenarios using existing game equipment. Players can then see for themselves whether the Tri-Cap concept would have actually worked in the field or whether it would have proved unworkable in combat.

There are actually two separate Tri-Cap units for this game. The first is intended to be a battalion-sized unit composed of several companies and additional assets. This is intended for use in the campaign game and NATO scenarios of Force Eagle's War. The second formation is intended to be a company-sized "slice" of the battalion for use in the company/team scenarios. This is just a company-sized force with a proportion of the same number of vehicles and assets as the battalion.

*[Ed. Note: Jim, does your research indicate the application of Tri-Cap doctrine down to the company level? I was under the impression that Tri-Cap was the function of the division and it didn't form Tri-Cap "task forces." I'm just curious if this is the way the doctrine was meant to work or if it's a representation in miniature of it. At this point it is not clear to me and I am interested in it.]*

Unless otherwise mentioned, all rules from Force Eagle's War are in effect at all times. Please refer to the original game rules for resolving disputes between the game rules and the variant material presented here. Unless specifically mentioned, all scenario parameters remain unchanged.

## **Force Eagle's War Scenarios:**

For Scenario 1, use a Tri-Cap unit composed of.

All Task Force Eagle HQ and asset units  
All helicopters  
All units of 2-75 th Rangers  
All units of companies A, B, and E.

Set up is the same as for scenario I for both sides. The US player may add one task force asset as an option. The AH64's enter on turn one, followed by the UH60's and the Rangers at 0600. All remaining US units enter play at 0800.



### **Scenario 3:**

All US HQ units, assets and Company A are deployed as per the regular scenario. All Rangers and helicopters are in the US Holding Box. The Soviet player may use either the Tank Battalion or MRB L but not both. Soviet attack helicopter use is optional but not recommended.

### **Scenario 5:**

All scenario parameters are the same. Deploy all US HQ units and assets plus all units of Company A on the map at full strength. The UH60 and Rangers are in the holding box, Soviets may use either the Tank Battalion or MRB 1. but not both.

### **Scenario 9.**

All scenario parameters are the same. Deploy the US HQ, assets and A/2-75 Rangers as indicated in the regular scenario. Place 3x AH64 in the US Holding Box for the US player. Soviets use the units and set up from the regular scenario.

### **Company and Team Scenarios:**

The Tri-Cap unit for these scenarios consists of: US Tank Heavy Team' version 1; battalion/task force elements; A/2-75 Rangers, 6x UH60.

Modify the company and team scenarios as follows:

1 -Same but US tanks enter on turn 2, all other US units enter on turn I .

2--Same as 1.

3-As indicated.

4-Put the AH64's in the US Holding Box. They may appear on rum 5.

5- Same as 4.

6-As indicated.

### **NATO Scenarios:**

The Tri-Cap unit for the NATO scenarios consists of all Force Eagle HQ units and assets, all AH64 and UH60 helicopters, all Rangers, and all units of Companies A, B and E.

Modify the NATO scenarios as follows:

1-Same as US attack helicopters enter on the 0600 game turn.

2-As indicated.

3-As indicated.

4-Reverse sides: US becomes the Soviet player and uses the Soviet set ups and victory conditions-and vice-versa. The Soviet player must use the Tank Battalion.

5-Use the initial set up. At 1100, the UH60's and Rangers enter play. As an option, add 2x AH64. At 1300, the US HQ, assets, and Companies A, B, and E enter play.

Note: In all Tri-Cap scenarios in this article, the Rangers may not enter play unless carried in by UH60 helicopters. The UH60's may enter and leave the map any number of times until all of the US Rangers have been moved from the US Holding Box onto the map.

If the Soviet player has shot down all of the US transport helicopters, then the US player gets sufficient UH60 units to enter all remaining Ranger units into play one turn later. The Soviet player, however, gets credit for shooting down the helicopters together with the units that they were originally carrying.

**[Response: Letter to Editor \(Ops 4\)](#)**

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# The Mother of All Rules Changes

## Guderian's Blitzkrieg

*by Dean N. Essig*

While the last issue was at the printer and final preparations were being made to conduct the actual playtests of **Guderian's Blitzkrieg**, a few OCS issues came to a head. The changes based on those issues caused some of the "OCS: a First Peek" statements of last issue to be incorrect.

Specifically, the combat chit was exterminated as a game concept. During months of playtesting, I found myself repeatedly questioning the value of the chit selected combat levels. Combat seemed unwieldy and awkward. More often than not, I had little or no opinion as to which chit to pick for a given combat-there weren't many combats in which a decent case could be given as to one level or the other. In the original system, after the announcement of a combat, each player selected a '.combat chit' which determined the level of intensity he wanted. The idea of having players commit themselves to a level before odds were chosen was a good one-its execution, however, left something to be desired. Because of its good points, I gave this system the benefit of a doubt and allowed it to run its course without major change throughout the series rules tests using our test-bed game.

As time went on and I watched the effects of the system and player reactions to it, the concern regularly resurfaced. Any of the playtesters could tell I was unhappy with the system as it stood, but none of us had any profound ideas on how to fix it. We let the issue ride.

The combat chit system's rope ran out while I was doing final preparations for GB's first real playtests. All the problems I saw in the system came into the open and could no longer be considered acceptable-there were too many combats going on in GB to allow them anything but a streamlined appearance. I didn't like the way most combats had little priority for one player or the other-such that no intelligent decision as to level could be made. We forever had to remind ourselves to "pick yer chits" and so on. The mental bridge between the Combat Table result and the cross-indexing to find the final result was a pain and frequently caused attentions to drift. And, most importantly, the thing took too long. It had to be replaced.

At the same time as this was all coming together, we were finishing another playtest

of Stalingrad Pocket. And, we were having a blast at it. Combats in that game were very simple to calculate and resolve—a marked difference to what we were doing across the table in the OCS game. I began to feel that a combat resolution sequence more like SP would make GB a better game. The time came to make the change.

The first thing that had to go was the combat chits. The selection of these little monsters was the root of most of the problems we had. With them gone, the Combat Table itself could be streamlined by applying the old "normal vs normal" results throughout, thus eliminating the cross-indexing problems we had before. I went through and simplified the "special modifiers" (these affect different unit types in different ways in order to show terrain effects) so that they were easier to remember and use. These changes resolved the original problems of speed and complexity, but they also dispensed with the good things involved with the combat chits. Namely, this was the ability to dictate how hard you wanted your troops to fight.

Before I decided to make the changes above, I had determined that I would not make any changes unless some of the good things of the current system could be retained—I didn't want to kill the patient while saving him! The answer was to allow each player to pick (as an option) to fight extra hard--*at all costs attacks* and *last bullet defenses*.

Since these remained entirely out of the way until a player actually wanted to use them, they did not interfere with the above new-found playability. The way it works is that either player may elect one of these choices when the combat is announced. Normally, they are quietly ignored. The at all costs attack doubles the attacker's supply requirements and allows two rolls on the Combat Table instead of the usual one. The second roll comes with an add on -4 DRM. The result is that given one of these attacks, at good odds, the defender will take a lot of lumps and the attacker will take some of his own. At poor odds, the attacker will probably bloody himself trying to take the hex. Since this form of attack must be announced before the odds are determined, a player cannot be sure of only doing AAC's at decent odds.

The defender's version, Last Man/ Last Bullet (L1vV LB) gives an additional -3 DRM to the attack. At first glance, any defender would be quick to say, "I'll do that all the time..." What's the catch? Many combat results have an "option number" which may be taken as step losses or hexes: of retreat. Normally, the defender has a free choice. Not so when he makes an LTYV LB—all options must be taken as step losses. Again, the actual effects of his choice will not be known until the odds are determined and dice rolled. At lower odds, he may inflict heavier loss on the attacker at little or no cost to himself. At high odds, he may destroy himself for little gain.

Dave Powell expressed an excellent concern of what happens when both players pick the optional level of attack—a immovable object meeting an irresistible force, as it were. My final decision on that issue was to simply combine the effects giving one dice roll with an additional -3 and another with an additional -7. This will generate the sort of bloodbaths you get when good troops fight over important objectives—like

the city of Stalingrad or, in GB's case, Moscow. It works easily and well--I like it.

After allowing the problem to show itself repeatedly for months while differing any decision until reasonably thorough tests were done, the final set of changes came about rapidly and gave decent results from the first. This was the benefit gained by waiting as long as I did--I was able to make the right fix, to the right problems, and for the right reasons. Further playtests will decide if any adjustments are needed.

Other than the death of the combat chit, the system remains much as advertised in the last issue. A few numeric and table modifications were made to clear up concerns of mine dealing with attacker supply, flak and ground support air effects. These changes are in the background of what is going on in the game and behind the scenes/out of sight of the players. A conceptual adjustment was made to the disorganized combat result such that defenders now are given a DG result whenever they retreat 2 or more hexes. DG's happened entirely too infrequently previously and I decided that any time a defender retreats 10 miles or more he should require a brief period to regroup and get everyone settled into their new surroundings. During this time, the defending troops are vulnerable to attack by enemy units in the exploitation phase. A good and justified effect.

## **Work on Guderian's Blitzkrieg**

After much gnashing of teeth, order has finally been made of the German logistical situation at the beginning of the game. The first GB playtest revealed that the allotment of supply points to the Germans was far too small and the Nazi offensive ran out of gas almost before it started. Much digging revealed that records of the German supply services at this time of the war are laughable--they were, after all, very busy! Accounts of the stockpiles available prior to the campaign are nearly nonexistent. Comments during the campaign are subjective and not based on any sort of firm numbers-- numbers, as they do exist, are local in nature and cannot be applied on the broad front.

After the historical record drew a blank, I sat down to determine (in game terms) what was needed based on different amounts of stockpiling. This was given in terms of the number of weeks at full supply the troops drawing from a given dump had available. The numbers tried were from one to 2 weeks worth in the forward dumps and the same in the main dumps from which to resupply forward. After much calculator work and another rereading of the pertinent sections of Van Creveld's *Supplying War*, I gave them 1.5 weeks in the forward dumps and 1.0 weeks in the rear. This amount will be subject to the adjustments of further playtests, but seems good for now.

German SP's each week are made available at the railheads of Smolensk and Konotop based on an availability table. This table too has been a source of heartburn. It is built around the rough amount the German force needs each week, with variability each

way. As the game progresses the average number of SP's entering drops. The problem is if I allow it to drop at the rate which seems to be required by history, the Germans might as well quit the game before it begins because by the halfway mark they will be at a consistent No Supply status and doomed. The problem is that the German units were slightly more frugal than the supply tables give them credit for, and they were adept at scrounging what they could from the land and the villages they ran into. This leads to a slight abstraction in the size of a supply point (varying its exact tonnage) which then allows all these things to take their place properly.

On-map German rail capability was, on the other hand, fairly easy to deal with. The capability was fairly limited and the extent of its use was limited severely by the amount of converted rail available. The big thing here was the effect of the deep freeze weather on the German-built locomotives. German engines had their water pipes built outside their boilers. When it got as cold as it did in the Russian winter, they would freeze and burst ' Therefore, German rail capability drops some 70% when the cold weather hits.

Speaking of weather, the Rasputitsa is often invoked as the reason for the German defeat in front of Moscow. Usually the mud is blamed in conjunction with the winter cold. This is true as far as it goes-but is not the reason for the defeat. The defeat occurred for three main reasons and weather is but one. The other two reasons are the Red Army and German logistics.

German generals (who gave us our popular accounts of the war in the East) were loath to give any credit to the Red Army for their defeat. The Soviet army was portrayed as an inept, slobbering horde of sub-humans who only managed to win through sheer weight of numbers. Sound like Nazi racial theory? It is.

Don't get me wrong, the Red Army had a lot to learn in the fall of 1941. The simple fact is that they did so. By the summer of 1944, they all but obliterated the masters of the blitzkrieg at their own game. They did not have the kind of intensely educated lower enlisted ranks as did the Germans-they had to make due at higher levels. Make no mistake, by the end of the war, the Red Army was a master of the operational art. They made their first tentative steps in that direction in the fall of 1941 and spring of 1942. In GB, this progression can be seen as the Soviet player can develop operational level groups by the end of the game and strike back at the Nazi "supermen" as they huddle in the cold!

The other major cause for the failure of the offensive aimed at Moscow and Operation Barbarossa itself, was the German logistical system's utter failure to "make ends meet." In a flying leap of unreality and overconfidence, OKH planned a war in Russia that just couldn't work. The limited availability of wheeled transport, over-expectations of Russian rail abilities, the lack of a war footing at home, all doomed the operation from the outset.

Unless OKH was correct in assuming a "couple of months duration, at most," there was no way it could work. By the time in GB, German logistical systems have all but failed and the entire effort is hanging on by its fingernails. Before the mud season, the German rail lines and the feeders running to the front had almost collapsed. I've been generous with German rail deliveries in GB and it's still not quite enough. By the time the winter really hit, the rail system had more or less failed. Truck transport, limited as it was, was more efficient and reliable than the rail lines and consistently out-performed them. It's amazing the thing worked at all and their weren't mass German surrenders by the fall of 1941.

There you have a brief look at some of my thinking and conclusions that went into the **Guderian's Blitzkrieg** game. Here we have the German army, arguably the best in the world at the time, unleashing its final assault on the capital of the Soviet Union—a blow that *might* win the war—and this operation is hanging on a thin thread of logistics. They have roughly 3-4 turns of good weather before both armies get stuck in the mud for three weeks. It is indeed a very delicate situation requiring masterful use of the resources at hand to pull it off. There is no time to lose—a mistake that costs a turn may doom the attack entirely. Building throughout the period is the new Soviet Army which will destroy the weakened Panzer spearheads if they do not win and win fast.

### **What we have here is a situation...**

For the second major playtest of GB, all of the corrective adjustments based on the first are in effect. This game will be a dress rehearsal for the third playtest—the one at our fall retreat. The goals of #2 are to examine the refinements made in #1, test the game further to see if other refinements are needed, and catch any anomalies before game #3 and the playtest copies are sent out to blindtesters.

Since I'm the Germans (John and Owen have split the Russians between them) I'll give you an idea of my plans and how they went in #2. The game's first turn actually occurs the week before the offensive began historically. This is done to allow players to determine for themselves the relative merits of either another week to accumulate supplies or to gain an extra week of good weather. I've chosen to straddle the fence. On turn one, the 2nd Panzer Group will be launching its initial offensive—with two corps at full supply and the third at low supply. 4th Army and 4th Panzer Group will be in low supply and static. 2nd Army does not arrive until turn 2, and does not figure into these calculations.

My initial operational posture is designed to capture some of the benefits of both uses of the first turn. I will be able to stockpile some supply, and I will have the extra week of good weather applied to the south where it's most important.

The missions of the corps of 2nd Panzer Group are straightforward. 47th Panzer Corps is to decimate the 13th Army. It is at full supply and well reinforced with

independent artillery units. The portions of 13th Army that live through this will be pushed north and east as the 47th Corps does a left wheel to redirect its forces towards the north. This operation should free up the rail line running to Orel.

24th Panzer Corps is to run through the gap between 13th Army and its neighbor to the south, the 40th Army. It is at low supply-which inhibits its ability to attack but not to move, which is what I need. It has been reinforced by a few assets which are capable of speed-an MG Battalion, an Assault Engineer Battalion, and a fully-motorized artillery regiment. 24th Panzer is to literally blitzkrieg out to Orel and beyond-final dispositions to be determined based on Soviet reactions.

This movement will disrupt Soviet rail links, seize control of the entire line to Orel, and allow regauging to begin right away. This first phase of the 24th Panzer Corps operations is to be completed by the end of turn 1. In support of this drive, almost all of 2nd Panzer Group's truck assets will load at Konotop and begin a relay to Orel. I want Orel to be loaded with supply by the time the mud hits. A large Orel dump will also allow deeper operations in later phases of the attack.

24th Panzer Corps also is tasked with the capture of the Soviet Orel airbase. I do not expect to do any damage to the aircraft there-they will displace unless inactive-but want the base to start ferrying supplies by air. Also, displacing the Luftwaffe forward won't hurt for future operations.

While not under 24th Panzer Corps control, the 2nd SS Motorized Division makes its appearance on turn two. In order to completely annoy the enemy, these gangsters will be tasked with a drive through the Russian hinterland in order to seize the ungarrisoned (I hope) city of Voronezh. With luck they might grab a big Russian dump and the airbase south of the city. With these (or, at least, the airbase), I'll be able to keep Das Reich in supply and defending the city.

Since Voronezh is one of the two Soviet supply centers on the map (the other being Moscow itself), I'm hoping this will disrupt the thought patterns of the Russian players and severely limit their ability to mess with the 2nd Panzer Group's right flank which will get more and more into the air as they advance. Historically, the Soviet Winter counteroffensive on this front came against that very flank--which is obvious a weak point in the historical German plan of operations.

Right flank operations are the province of the 48th Panzer Corps. Its mission is to destroy the 40th Army to its front and then advance on the right of 24th Corps covering the Army's right as it goes. It is at full supply and has been heavily reinforced (mainly with Assault Gun Battalions and artillery regiments.) I'm hoping to finish the 40th Army off to the last man by the end of turn 2.

Since 4th Army and 4th Panzer Group will be sitting on their hands for the first couple of turns (providing a threat value but little else), I've allocated the lion's share



of Luftwaffe assets, including all the Ju-52's, to 2nd Panzer Group's operations. A few meager ground support aircraft have been given to the northern two armies-an ability to hit opportunity targets but little more. A decent fighter force has been provided to each German airbase because our first playtest showed a strong desire on the part of my two Russians to launch deep raids against German dumps with their strategic bomber force. A lucky bombing mission versus one of my big dumps will be a disaster for the German effort and I'm going to disperse the Luftwaffe's fighter strength more than I'd like, in order to ward off such raids.

4th Panzer Group is to await developments. It could launch a massive thrust due east (which is what they did historically), but I'm more inclined to avoid the losses that would give, keep these Panzer Divisions safe for reinforcement elsewhere, and save on supply consumption. Possibly after the fall of Bryansk, I'll dispatch this Panzer Group to the south east so they can add strength to 2nd Panzer Group's attack. The again, some or all of these divisions may be removed from play if the 4th Panzer Group is withdrawn from play (to join in the fighting north of the maps.) I'll wait and see.

2nd Army, which enters on turn 2, will either follow- up 2nd Panzer Group or seal off Bryansk from the west. More than likely these troops will be engaged in the taking of Bryansk from one side or another.

4th Army will be poised to advance slowly due east toward Moscow to keep the pressure on the Russians if they decide to strip their line in this area to deal with other threats. Being an infantry army, I cannot expect any rapid dashes from them like I can of the Panzer forces. If they must plod, at least let them plod in the right direction by the shortest route.

This outlines my planning before the start of the game. After the playtest shows how it went, I'll report below on the actual outcome...

## **The Playtest, Game #2.**

It was both brutal and a lot of fun. The new German supply dumps seem to have enough in them. I went into "hyper aggressive" and attacked where ever possible. By the end of the turn, the Soviet 13th and 40th Armies were all but destroyed. The 24th Panzer Corps blitzed up the middle, was delayed briefly by an interesting Soviet counterattack while strung out on the road, and seized Orel. Falling into my hands by that capture was the Soviet Supply Dump at Orel which had grown from its initial 3 SP's to over 30 by the time I got it. Uncle Joe has fueled up my panzer columns quite well and I give him many thanks.

The flipside of the first turn was that all that attacking cost the Germans heavily in almost irreplaceable panzer and recon battalions. The Soviet players may not realize it but the armored spearhead of the 2nd Panzer Group has been almost crippled. Most

of the panzer divisions in that group have lost one or more of their "heavies"--the three panzer and one armored recon battalion in each. I'm not sure of the effect of this loss on the rest of the German effort and I have yet to see if I can rebuild many of these units using repls.

Because of all the activity, play took along time. Even so, playtester enthusiasm for the system and the game reached a new high--which was very encouraging. I was apprehensive about the application of the system to the much more unit intensive and active Eastern Front environment after having its roots in the limited numbers of units in our North Africa game. The very positive comments from the playtesters after the session, including the interest in solving the intriguing operational problems involved (How do I best use my reserves? Is the frontal reserve best placed forward or to the rear? What's the best way to set up the rear services to provide supply to the front? ... ), showed that play was absorbing and interesting---even to the Russians who took a fair number of lumps in that turn.

As the 2nd Panzer Group advanced into Russian territory it soon became painfully evident that all that advancing wasn't really doing the Germans much good. The advance was a lot of fun and dramatic. Most of the 2nd Panzer Group dashed into the Russian hinterland at great speed-ranging far and wide. The main objective (Moscow) however stands at the far corner of the map opposite the Group's start line--they must traverse the map's diagonal. It is a long way. We looked at it and after the initial reactions, the Russian players decided that all that advancing hadn't really given the Germans much of an advantage.

At the very pinnacle of the advance, weakened Panzer Divisions would have to assail a strong Russian position in the woods. And, this would be at a tightest stretch of the logistical system. Basically, they had traded space for time--allowing the depth of their position to absorb the force of the German Blitzkrieg. This is what happened historically, too. That has been my belief for a long time that blitzkrieg operations require relatively close objectives-- their intensity cannot be produced for long and deep operations may require the blitz to last longer than most forces are capable of. Future playtests will determine if the power needed to crack the Russian line near Tula is available to the Germans or not--with adjustments made to the victory conditions as warranted.

A diversion from the plan above occurred when the 9th Panzer Division went into high gear and took Voronezh. Large Soviet dumps were captured at Orel and Voronezh which placed the entire operation ahead of schedule logistically.

Unfortunately, we had to stop play at that juncture because it was time to restart the game for test #3 at the retreat. A large number of minor modifications to various numeric values in the game rules were made which will be tested in game #3--which I'm hoping will run through more of the 13 tam game than #2 was able to. I'll report on that playtest next time. See you then.

PS-A number of you have written and called expressing how much you were looking forward to the OCS as a "quicker to play" alternative to our TCS games. If you want quicker, I'll have to suggest that you look to our SCS games (Stalingrad Pocket) and not the OCS or (especially) **Guderian's Blitzkrieg**. Let's put it this way, while not overly complex, GB requires a large amount of thought on the subtle interactions between the forces, modes and phases so as to not be caught short by the enemy. Plus, GB gives a lot of action-overruns, attacks, air missions-which takes up a bit of time each, but when put together take quite a while. Average turn (actually two turns and an overphase) play time of the first few turns probably ranges in the 2-3 hour timeframe for *experienced* players who know the system. Turns during the mud season are shorter since there is little going on. GB is the perfect game for you if you like intense games of moderate complexity, have a place to leave two maps set up for extended periods, and don't mind a gaming session once a week or so of two hours in length to knock out another game-week.

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# A TCS Proposal

## Ost-Front

*by Dean N. Essig*

The following is a game proposal for the TCS. If you like this idea, let me know. I already know of people who will fight this, so the only way it will fly if support is generated from you, the readership.

Many have suggested we do a TCS game covering an action on the Eastern Front, but no one has yet to be able to pin anything specific down to do. Several have suggested Kursk (or parts thereof) but that seems a bit too big. What follows is an idea for a solution.

The game proposed would be "representative" of East Front actions, but not specific to a real one. It would consist of a counter mix containing several different TO&E forces (different models of the German Infantry Battalion, as it evolved during the war, say) and a large mix of vehicles from both sides. A side might be capable of fielding a couple of infantry battalions and numerous tank platoons or companies. The mix would be made to maximize the ability of the player to generate his own scenarios.

There would be 5 maps in the game 4x 22x14" maps, 1x 6x22" map and a 6x22" play aid. This is the same as a two map game, except the two maps have been split up into smaller parts. While not geomorphic, these small maps would give representative portions of East Front terrain. For instance, these might be Steppe, Hills & Villages, Forest, Urban (this would be the 6x22"), and Mixed terrain.

The Command System could be either ignored or abbreviated to quicken play. Since all the scenarios would be of short duration (8-12 turns), a single op sheet per side would suffice. I've been thinking about generating a number of op sheets per scenario for each side so a player could just pick one and go, or make his own as he desires. Since this pre-game op sheet determination would be a] I that would be needed, it wouldn't be hard to arrange a game in advance, and have both sides work on their "master plans" before the game-so they can show up ready to play.

A mix of methods would be used. A given scenario would have the capability of being done in the normal op sheet fashion, using game supplied op sheets, no command at all, or with simple Objectives given. As an example of the latter, one

side might be given orders to "Defend hill 373" and the other orders to "Capture hill 373." The small size of the maps and the short duration of the game would help keep distortions caused by the Command system being truncated or ignored in this manner.

The game would come with some 20 scenarios with a great variety of actions in different types of terrain. Scenarios would place a premium on tactical handling of forces.

The potential for modules with new maps and forces from different countries would exist. Scenarios would be designed to allow play in a couple of hours or less and custom scenarios would be encouraged.

Such a game would be priced at the \$34.00 level. Give me your opinion, if this project is to be started at all, it will need a high level of support.

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## **101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)**

### **Operations Desert Shield Desert Storm Command Report 1 Jul 91**

*by 1LT Clifford M. Lippard*

#### **A Line in the Sand**

On 2 Aug 90, tank led Iraqi troops stormed into Kuwait after months of arguments over oil pricing. Kuwait was overcome in less than a day. On 6 Aug, the United Nations Security Council imposed economic sanctions against Iraq. On 7 Aug, President Bush ordered U.S. armed forces into Saudi Arabia to prevent further aggression.

FORSCOM issued its Operation Desert Shield deployment order to the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) at 0023 Zulu on 10 Aug 90. The 101st was going to war for the first time since Vietnam. The division issued FRAGO 90-1 at 0445 Zulu. This FRAGO provided guidance to the division's units on leave cancellations and the postponement of permanent change of station moves. Also on 10 Aug 90, the division's Assault Command Post (ACP) personnel began processing for deployment.

Before deploying, the 101st had to pull back to Fort Campbell numerous units from far-flung training exercises. The division had an aviation element supporting the US Southern Command with Joint Task Force Bravo in Honduras, the 2-187th Infantry task force at the Jungle Operations Training Center in Panama, and the 3-327th Infantry task force training cadets at the United States Military Academy.

A third battalion task force, the 2-502nd Infantry, was preparing to deploy as part of the United Nations' peacekeeping force in the Sinai. Additionally, the 101st had air defense artillery soldiers from A and HHB/2-44th Air Defense Artillery at Fort Knox, KY, training West Point cadets, and selected leaders involved in the training and evaluation of National Guard and Reserve forces.

The training in Honduras and Panama was cancelled on 10 Aug 90. The next day, the 2-502nd peacekeeping mission was cancelled. By 17 Aug, with the return from West Point of the 3327th Inf, most of the division was back at Fort Campbell preparing for

war. The last of the helicopters serving in Honduras would not return until 24 Aug.

The division staff had also just returned from an offpost deployment when Iraq invaded Kuwait on 2 Aug 90. They had been at Fort Bragg, NC taking part in the INTERNALLOOK command post exercise. The US Central Command had based the INTERNAL LOOK scenario on an Iraqi invasion of Saudi Arabia. This exercise not only foreshadowed the coming crisis, it provided the division staff with a valuable familiarization of the Persian Gulf region.

The first 101st Abn Div soldiers to deploy to Saudi Arabia were the five troopers of the division's Advon Party. The Advon reported to Fort Bragg on 12 Aug 90 and departed for Saudi Arabia at 2150 Zulu on 14 Aug 90. They arrived in Saudi Arabia on 15 Aug 90. Major Huber, Chief, G3 Operations, and Captain Lake, of the G4 staff, simultaneously stepped onto the airport tarmac at Dhahran so that they could both claim to be the first Screaming Eagles in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The first combat force to deploy from the division was the first Division Ready Brigade (DRB-1). The DRB-1 was made up of an aviation task force and the Second Air Assault Brigade Task Force. Two C5A and three C 141 Air Force jets carrying the first wave of the DRB-1 equipment departed Campbell Army Airfield at 2230 Zulu on 17 Aug 90.

## **Transport**

It would take thirteen days for fifty-six C 141s and forty-nine C5As to transport the task forces' 2,742 personnel, 117 helicopters, 487 vehicles and 123 equipment pallets. This strategic deployment was done multi-echelon and started well. However, several last-minute adjustments to the Time Phased Force Deployment List (TPFDL) were made by higher commanders. This caused the deployment to become hectic and required constant re-configurations for transportation. Once in Saudi Arabia, the DRB-1 force was configured to provide division command and control and a brigade task force with attack aviation and sustainment support.

The DRB-1 movement, as well as the movement of the rest of the division and the 101st Support Group (Corps), was coordinated and controlled primarily through the division's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at Fort Campbell. The EOC monitored movement requirements and progress, requested transportation assets, and positioned liaison officers at the Jacksonville port. The EOC also coordinated the movement of the 2229th Aviation Attack (AATX) Battalion from Fort Rucker, AL, and the movement of OH58D Kiowas from the 1-9th Cav from Fort Lewis, Washington. These forces were attached to the division throughout the conflict.

Simultaneous with the DRB-1 airflow, the rest of the division was moving vehicles and aircraft to the port at Jacksonville, FL, for shipment to Saudi Arabia. The division received its call to port order from the Military Traffic Management

Command (MTMC) at 1930 on 13 Aug 90. MTMC directed the division to move its vehicles, equipment and aircraft to the port at Jacksonville, FL. The vehicles were to report to the port's Blount Island Terminal. Enroute to Jacksonville, self-deploying helicopters were to land at Camp Blanding, FL, for shipping preparations.

Operations at Jacksonville went smoothly as the division organized, prepared and loaded 5,258 pieces of equipment. During the convoys to Florida, the 101st had a glimpse of the tremendous public support the military would enjoy throughout Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Throngs of flag waving people lined interstate overpasses all along the route to the port at Jacksonville.

Once at Jacksonville, the equipment was loaded on ten ships of various sizes. The American Eagle, the first ship carrying 101st equipment to depart Jacksonville (19 Aug) for Ad Damman, Saudi Arabia, had also carried the division's equipment to Vietnam. The American Eagle departed Jacksonville on 19 Aug 90. Each of the ten ships, had on-board a handful of 101st soldiers serving as equipment supercargoes.

The ten ships crossed the Atlantic Ocean, moved through the Mediterranean Sea, and transited the Suez Canal into the Red Sea. They then made the turn around the Arabian Peninsula to the Persian Gulf port of Ad Damman, just north of Dhahran. The average trip took 23 days. The sea transport was not without problems, as a number of the cargo ships of the Navy's contingency fleet were in poor repair.

While posturing for movement, the division implemented an extensive training plan to prepare its soldiers for duty in the desert. The 101st placed emphasis on NBC training, weapons skills and increased physical training. A key component of this training plan was the division's pre-deployment schools, which provided additional training to approximately one third of the division's soldiers in such critical areas as field sanitation, M60/M249 techniques and combat lifesaver skills.

The bulk of the division's manpower deployed from Campbell Army Airfield to Saudi Arabia in commercial aircraft from the Commercial Aircraft Reserve Fleet (CRAF). Thirty-six aircraft deployed 13,500 soldiers over a twenty day period, from 5 to 25 September 1990. They arrived in Saudi Arabia at Dhahran Airport, and were then transported to King Fahd International Airport (KFIA), an incomplete international airport located 35 miles north of Dhahran.

## **Heat**

The soldiers stepped off of the aircraft into intense heat. Temperatures ranged from 120 to 140 degrees Fahrenheit on the airfield surface during the hottest part of the day. Brigadier General Shelton, the division's Assistant Division Commander for Operations (ADC(O)), was credited with saying that Hell could not compete with the heat in Saudi Arabia. The division avoided mass heat casualties through the implementation of an acclimation period at its KFIA reception center.



The division built its base camp at KFIA. The camp was called Camp Eagle II in recognition of the 101st Airborne's Vietnam base camp, named Camp Eagle. Camp Eagle II resembled nothing so much as the Civil War era's massive fields of white tents. Row after row of tents provided the living quarters for the division's soldiers. Camp Eagle II provided such life support systems as showers and latrines. Camp Eagle II also provided the division a link to key logistical nodes. The base camp was critical to the division in the earliest days of the deployment, for the air assault troopers had to be prepared to fight immediately upon their arrival.

As the Screaming Eagles began arriving in Saudi Arabia, the division staff started to shift their planning focus from strategic deployment to tactical employment.

With the 101st capabilities in mind, the XVIII Airborne Corps was already tasking the division to participate in defensive operations well forward in Saudi Arabia as early as 30 Aug 90. On 1 Sep, the division deployed an aviation task force with an infantry platoon and combat service support elements to the vicinity of An Nu Ayriyah. The division was to establish a forward operating base (FOB) there in order to support covering force operations. The corps had named the base FOB Essex. On 2 Sep, the division received permission to rename the base FOB Bastogne in honor of the site of the division's historic stand in World War II.

The division officially assumed control of FOB Bastogne from the 82nd Abn Div on 4 Sep 90. The mission included an aviation screen in Area of Operations (AO) Apache. A day prior, the division was relieved of a mission it had had to provide medical evacuation helicopter support to the Corps.

### **First Operational Plan**

The division issued its first operation plan (OPLAN) of Operation Desert Shield, OPLAN 90-1 (Eagle Defense), on 11 Sep 90. The mission statement read: "when directed 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) (-) defends King Fahd International Airport (KFIA) to protect the airport and key facilities."

In developing this plan, the division staff proposed two possible courses of action. Both courses of action took into account the division's then current strength and unit locations. The 101st had its Aviation Brigade TAC, B/1-101 AATIC, B/3-502d Infantry and a platoon minus from B/426th Supply and Transportation Battalion forward in FOB Bastogne. The rest of the division then in theater, to include the I-502d Infantry (-), the 3502d Infantry (-), 2-44th Air Defense Artillery (-), 2d FASCO, 1320th Field Artillery (-), 1-101AATK (-), 2-229th AATK, and TF 9-101st Aviation, was located in Camp Eagle II. Both courses of action also took into account the continued arrival in Saudi Arabia of the division's combat power. Both proposals called for a defense strengthened over a period of three weeks by newly arriving troops.

Course of action one proposed that the division defend with the Aviation Brigade and the Second Air Assault Brigade Task Force conducting a delay between phase lines Stone and Cantaloupe. One infantry battalion would conduct a cluster defense while an infantry brigade (-), would establish anti-armor positions along likely Iraqi avenues of approach. Another infantry brigade would eventually establish blocking positions along the main highway leading to KFIA.

The second course of action proposed that the division integrate into the right flank of the 82nd Abn Div's defense of Dhahran. This proposal called for a battalion air assault north to establish blocking positions along likely avenues of approach. The division commander selected course of action one, which was developed into OPLAN 90-1.

OPLAN 90-1 directed that the division's troops in FOB Bastogne conduct covering force operations in sector with the bulk of Aviation Brigade prepared to attack in support of this defense. Meanwhile, each unit at Camp Eagle II would prepare to augment the base defense. Three battle positions were to be established outside the base perimeter, with priority of manning going to Battle Position 1. Each infantry brigade, as they arrived in Saudi Arabia, was to be prepared to establish anti-armor ambushes along the avenues of approach to KFIA. Each infantry brigade was also to be prepared to provide a platoon sized reaction force. 2-71th Cav would provide aerial observers to adjust artillery fire forward of the battle positions. DISCOM was to provide all 2 1/2 ton and larger trucks not carrying ammunition to the infantry for troop transportation.

The 101st would have probably been hard pressed to support this defensive plan due to the lack of adequate ammunition stocks and late echelonment of Corps and EAC combat service support elements into the theater. This late arrival strained the ability of combat forces to sustain themselves through the first few months of Operation Desert Shield. The division was forced to be self-sustaining from a bare-bones General Support Supply Base for much of the operation. Host nation support proved to be absolutely essential for providing various types of required equipment, transportation and life support services.

The division suffered from an initially low supply of ammunition due to an unrealistic ammunition basic load. The Division Ready Brigade ammunition package maintained at Fort Campbell was insufficient to meet the needs of a deployment involving the entire division. The Forces Command plan to have necessary ammunition meet the division at the port of debarkation was never realized.

As more and more of the division's forces arrived, the division amended OPLAN 90-1 to reflect the increase in strength. During Sep 90, the division staff developed an updated plan, OPLAN 90-2, for the conduct of the Corps covering force mission vicinity An Nuayriya. OPLAN 90-2 proposed that the 101st conduct screening and covering force operations in AO Apache, provide attack helicopter support and fire

support to the Eastern Province Area Command (EPAQ forces (deployed between the 101st and the Kuwaiti border) to disrupt and delay Iraqi forces and assist in the passage of lines of EPAC forces. On order, the division would screen the west flank of the 18 Abn Corps, revert to the corps reserve and prepare to defend KFIA.

## **Assumptions**

OPLAN 90-2 was based on the assumptions that all of the division's forces would be in Saudi Arabia by 6 Oct 90 and that there would be eight to twelve hours warning prior to the initiation of hostilities. It also assumed that one brigade would be located at Camp Eagle II at the start of hostilities. OPLAN 90-2 was never published, but it did serve as a foundation for the development of OPLAN 90-3.

OPLAN 90-3 (Operation Desert Destiny) was the division's mature theater OPLAN for the defense of Saudi Arabia. Published on 15 Oct, OPLAN 90-3 was extensively rehearsed and would have been executed had Iraq attacked into Saudi Arabia.

The division based OPLAN 90-3 on intelligence predictions that an Iraqi attack would have the objective of seizing and controlling the petroleum handling facilities at Dhahran and Abqaiq within 72 and 96 hours. Of the nine divisions that Iraq then had in forward positions in Kuwait it was expected that Iraq would commit six to the initial assault.

One mechanized division and two armor divisions would make the main attack while one each mechanized and armor division would make a supporting attack. A third infantry division would make a fixing attack and Republican Guard Force Corps forces would exploit any successes within 48 hours after the initial assault. The 101st expected to be hit head on by one division, followed twelve hours later by a flank attack by a second division.

The 18th Abn Corps had the on order mission to establish a defense in sector to defeat attacking Iraqi forces, defend approaches and critical oil facilities vicinity Abqaiq-Al Hufuf and defend the approaches to the Ad Damman-Dhahran enclave. The Corps was also to ensure the integrity of ARCENT'S western flank and facilitate the transition to offensive operations. The 101st's plan supported the Corps' mission.

## **Op Plan 90-3**

The 101st mission in OPLAN 90-3 was similar to that in OPLAN 90-2. The division's mission was to, when directed, conduct covering force operations in sector, provide attack helicopter and fire support to EPAC forces to disrupt and delay Iraqi forces, and assist in the passage of lines of EPAC forces. On order, the division was to guard in sector to protect the western flank of the 18th Abn Corps. The division was also to be prepared to conduct future operations as required.

In order to conduct this mission, the 101st was given operational control of the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR), with its 123 Abrams tanks, 116 Bradley cavalry fighting vehicles, 26 Cobra helicopters and 24 self-propelled 155mm howitzers. The attachment of the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade further augmented the division with 37 Apaches, 7 Chinooks and 22 Iroquois helicopters. The division artillery was reinforced by the 75th and 212th Field Artillery Brigades.

The division developed a five phase plan based on the Commanding General's intent to execute the covering force mission with maximum use of the division's mobility and tank killing capabilities. Highly mobile forward operating bases and forward area refuel points would support the covering force mission.

The first phase of the plan called for the movement of the 101st from Camp Eagle II to AO Normandy, the covering force area (CFA). AO Normandy covered 4600 square kilometers of land. Movement would have been by air and ground with priority of movement going to the infantry brigade task force (TF) at Camp Eagle II, DIVARTY, the division main command post, the two aviation brigades and then DISCOM. Two infantry brigades and the 3d ACR would already be positioned in the CFA.

The covering force operations, phase II of the plan, would have begun with the initiation of hostilities and ended with a battle hand over to the 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized). The 101st Abn Div (Air Assault) was to provide Aviation Brigade's attack helicopters in support of the EPAC forces. The rest of the division was to cover in sector with two brigades abreast in the north and three abreast in the south. First Brigade TF and the 12th CAB were to be positioned along Phase Line Shovel, with First Brigade TF covering in the west and the 12th CAB covering in the east. South of Phase Line Axe, Second Brigade TF would take up position in the west, Third Brigade TF in the center and the 3rd ACR in the east. The 3rd ACR, operating out of FOB Bastogne in defense of An Nu Ayriyah, would have been the main effort of the covering force operations.

On order, First Brigade TF was to conduct a battle hand over to Second Brigade TF and then move to AO Carentan, which occupied 6200 square kilometers of land along the corps western flank. Also on order, the 12th CAB was to conduct a battle handover with Third Brigade TF and the 3rd ACR. The 12th CAB would occupy Assembly Area (AA) Clarksville and become the division reserve, with priority of support going to the 3rd ACR. The 2-17th Cav would screen northwest of the division along Tapline Road. Upon completion of EPAC support, Aviation Brigade would put one aviation attack battalion under the operational control of First Brigade TF, move to FOB Oasis and become the division reserve with priority of commitment to the west flank.

During Phase III, the 101st would withdraw from the covering force area, conduct a rearward passage of lines through the 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized) and move

toward its guard positions in AO Carentan. Following the passage of lines, the 3rd ACR would become attached to the 24th ID and the 12th CAB would be released to the 18th Abn Corps. Aviation Brigade would remain the division reserve with priority of commitment to deep attacks against high value targets along Tapline Road.

Phase IV called for the division to occupy its guard positions with Third Brigade TF in the south, First in the center and the Second in the north. Third Brigade TF was to be prepared to become the Corps reserve. The 2-17th Cav would maintain its screen along Tapline Road and Aviation Brigade would continue as the division reserve.

Phase V, the future operations phase, provided for a counterattack against the Iraqi second echelon forces. The 101st was to support the 1st Cavalry Division, which was the main effort for the counter attack. The division conducted a field training exercise in Oct 90 to rehearse the passage of lines phase of OPLAN 90-3 down to the company level.

On 10 Nov 90, the division issued Change I to OPLAN 90-3. The major change was that the 12th CAB would remain under the division's control throughout the plan. The 12th CAB was to conduct a counterattack in support of the division's passage of lines. Following the passage of lines the 12th CAB was to move to FOB A Shau or FOB Dak To and prepare for future operations.

### **Aggressive Plan**

This aggressive plan for the defense of Saudi Arabia required an equally aggressive logistical support plan. The Division Support Command (DISCOM) was task organized to provide support to all assigned and attached units. A division support area (DSA), located at Camp Eagle II, would support division forward operating bases (FOBs), which in turn would support logistic assault bases (LABs) at each brigade. Each of these light, tailored bases would be resourced from DISCOM's assets.

LABs are designed to provide the smallest capable element forward to support logistical requirements. LABs are supported through the more robust FOBs. 3d ACR, which was only under the division's operational control, would have been supported by either the 24th ID or the 1st COSCOM.

During Phase I of OPLAN 90-3, two FOBs, FOB Bastogne and FOB Oasis, were to support the division's brigades' LABs. FOB Bastogne was to support the Third Brigade TF and the 12th CAB LABs, while FOB Oasis was to support the First, Second and Aviation Brigade LABs. In Phase II, DISCOM was to establish two additional FOBs, FOB A Shan and FOB Dak To. During Phase III, DISCOM would have displaced the FOB Bastogne assets to FOB Dak To, and the FOB Oasis assets to FOB A Shau. These FOBs would continue to support the LABs during Phase IV

while the 1st COSCOM would be providing throughput supply of cargo and equipment to the FOBs. The division's external support from the 1st COSCOM would have been primarily supplied by the 101st Support Group (Corps). DISCOM was to be prepared to support the division using the DSA/FOB/LAB concept throughout future operations.

During November, the division conducted a second field training exercise to rehearse the defense of Saudi Arabia. This exercise rehearsed the division's command posts on the critical phases of the defensive plan and the timing of the 3rd ACR and 12th CAB counterattacks. The counterattacks were executed on a scaled down size.

In addition to the field training exercises, the division established a very rigorous training program to prepare for battle. At all times, two thirds of the division was deployed forward in the covering force area, while the other one third was refitting at Camp Eagle 11. A unit spent thirty days forward for every fifteen spent at the base camp. During this time, the division improved and adapted many air assault techniques. The division also made extensive use of training areas and ranges established in Saudi Arabia. This training plan paid large dividends in preparation for combat.

The Iraqis did not simply sit still during the months from Aug through Dec. The Iraqis had established a multi-belted, hardened defense in the eastern portion of the Kuwaiti Theatre of Operations (KTO). Military intelligence expected Iraq to develop strong point defenses in the west in the vicinity of As Salman and An Nasiriyah. The Republican Guards were the Iraqi's reserve force for the entire theater.

The 101st continued in the defense throughout the holiday season. Secretary of the Army Stone, General Powell and President Bush visited with the troops during this period. Also, visits by such celebrities as Bob Hope, Johnny Bench, Jay Leno and Steve Martin were well appreciated by the soldiers. Morale continued to stay high as the soldiers were served outstanding holiday meals and were entertained by the division band. The constant influx of mail, both personal and that addressed to "any soldier," also helped boost morale. The holidays passed rapidly as the division began to prepare for the inevitable attack into Iraq.

Even as it concentrated on the defense of Saudi Arabia, the division was already leaning forward in preparation for any offensive strike to liberate Kuwait. The division developed two offensive OPLANs, OPLAN 90-4 and OPLAN 90-5. OPLAN 90-4, which was eventually shelved, was developed during Nov 90. It called for the 101st to conduct a wide envelopment from the west, in order to block Iraqi escape routes in the Euphrates River Valley, vicinity of As Sarnawa.

#### **OPLAN 90-4**

OPLAN 90-4 supported the 18 Abn Corps' mission, which was "on order, 18 Abn

Corps attacks to penetrate Iraqi forward defenses and to occupy blocking positions along the Euphrates River in order to prevent reinforcement of and escape from the KTO by Iraqi forces; on order, continues the attack east to assist in the destruction of the RGFC (Republican Guard Force Corps)." The division's mission statement was "at G-day H-hour 101st Abn Div (AASLT), air assaults to establish a forward operating base (FOB) Viper and attacks by air assault to establish blocking position vicinity Objective Green (As Samawah) to prevent enemy movement through Objective Green, -defeat enemy forces in Objective Green, establish FOB Scorpion and screens corps northern flank. On order, 101st Abn Div (AASLT) attacks Objective Silver (An Nasiriyah) by air assault to defeat enemy forces in Objective Silver and to deny enemy access to crossing sites over the Euphrates River; continues to screen corps northern flank and prepares for future offensive operations."

OPLAN 90-4 defined four maneuver phases. Phase I was a logistics buildup at Logsite Romeo, a logistics base to be established near King Khalid military city. Phase II would be the repositioning of the division's troops in a tactical assembly area far to the northwest of King Khalid military City. Phase III was to be the seizure of FOB Viper, Objective Green and Objective Silver. At the end of Phase III, the division would consolidate in Objective Silver in preparation for Phase IV, future operations, which called for air assaults either to the south-east or north-west of Objective Silver to destroy enemy forces.

The OPLAN 90-4 mission was feasible, but further analysis showed it would be difficult to reposition forces and sustainment operations that far west. It was replaced by OPLAN 90- 5, which gave the division a zone of operations further east. OPLAN 90-5 supported the 18th AirborneCorps mission, which was "on order, 18th Airborne Corps attacks to penetrate Iraqi forward defenses and to interdict Iraqi lines of communication along the Euphrates River in order to prevent reinforcement of and escape from the Kuwaiti theater of Operations by Iraqi forces; on order, continues the attack east to assist in the destruction of the RGFC."

The 101st Abn Div mission was "when directed, 101 st Airborne Division (Air Assault) moves by air and ground to TAA Campbell, and prepares for offensive operations; commencing G-day conducts air assault to establish FOB Cobra and attacks to interdict, block and defeat enemy forces operating in and through AO Eagle; on order conducts attacks to the east to assist in the defeat of RGFC forces."

While the 101st would be air assaulting to the Euphrates, the French 6th Light Armor Division, to the west, would be attacking to seize As Salman. The 82d Abn Div was to support the French. The 24th ID would attack to our east and position their forces north of Phase Line Viking, while the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment was to screen and establish a blocking position along the corps' eastern flank.

## **OPLAN 90-5**

Like OPLAN 904, OPLAN 90-5 defined four maneuver phases. Phase I was again a logistics buildup in preparation to support a short duration, high tempo, high consumption ground offensive. Phase II called for the division to reposition its forces from Camp Eagle II and the covering force area into a tactical assembly area several kilometers southeast of Rhafha, Saudi Arabia.

Phase III, offensive operations, of OPLAN 90-5 contained four subphases. Subphase A was the seizure of FOB Cobra, deep in Iraq, by the division's First Brigade TF. Subphase B was the buildup of a robust FOB Cobra by DISCOM in order to support security operations in the FOB and prepare for further air assaults into AO Eagle. Subphase C was an armed aerial reconnaissance into AO Eagle on the second day of the ground war. This attack would cut Iraq's lines of communications along the Euphrates River. Second Brigade TF would then attack into the Tallil Airfield (Objective Strike) on the fourth day of the ground war to prepare for further strikes during Phase IV, future operations.

The Division Support Command (DISCOM) was again to provide tailored direct logistical support to all of the division's assigned and attached units. The division support area (DSA) was to be located in the Tactical Assembly Area (TAA). DISCOM was to establish the FOB Cobra base and be prepared to establish a second FOB as required. The DSA was to move from the TAA to FOB Cobra during Phase III of the plan. Throughput supplies were to be pushed by the 1st COSCOM, with the division's primary support again coming from the 101 Support Group (corps).

The division developed several innovative supply procedures. Among these was the use of one fuel, Jet A-1, for both ground vehicles and aircraft and the use of configured support packages for forward deployed troops. Innovations such as these, when combined with the light logistics tail allowed by the tailored FOBs and LABs, were critical to our success during Operation Desert Storm.

## **Attack**

With an offensive plan in hand, and the United Nations' approval for President Bush to attack Iraq if Iraq failed to withdraw from Kuwait by 15 Jan 91, the division implemented OPLAN 90-5, Phase 1, the logistics buildup at Logsite Romeo. The first DISCOM forces arrived at Logsite Romeo on 5 Jan 91. The division also positioned engineer assets at the logsite to assist in the eventual preparation of the Tactical Assembly Area.

As the January 15 deadline drew nearer, there were fears that Iraq would launch a pre-emptive spoiling attack into Saudi Arabia vicinity King Khalid Military City (KKMC). To strengthen newly arrived 7th Corps elements only beginning to deploy near KKMC, the division's Second Brigade TF was put under the tactical control of the 1st Cavalry Division and moved into position in the vicinity of Al Qaysumah, northeast of KKMC. The feared attack by Iraq never materialized.



The 101 st Abn Div was destined to fire the first shots of the coming war. Back in Sep 90, LTC Cody, Commander of the 1- 101 st AATK Battalion was instructed to begin planning for a covert strike into Iraq. The strike was to be against two early warning radar sites in western Iraq in order to open up a twenty mile wide air corridor for coalition jets to use in bombing Baghdad. Cody named the operation NORMANDY, after the site of the 101st Abn Div 's famous airborne insertion on D-Day during World War II.

The pilots selected to conduct the mission were formed into two teams of four Apaches, Red Team and White Team, and trained on the mission for three months. LTC Cody did not brief them on the particulars of the mission until two days before the strike. In addition to these eight Apaches, there was a standby Apache and a Blackhawk to carry four Apache mechanics. The assembled team was named TF Normandy.

On 14 Jan 91, the pilots made a 720 mile trip from Camp Eagle 11 to their staging base in western Saudi Arabia. They were joined by Air Force helicopters, to be used for any needed search and rescue missions. The trip was made possible partly by the innovation of a young officer in the 1- 101st AATK. The officer, ILT DeVito, recommended a fuel carrying option that allowed the Apaches to carry extra fuel in addition to their heavy load of ammunition.

All last minute diplomatic efforts to avert war failed as the United Nation's 15 Jan deadline came and went. D-Day, the start of the air war against Iraq, was secretly set for 17 Jan 91. The entire world held its breath in anticipation of war. War would come, and the Screaming Eagles would draw first blood.

*Next Issue: The Hail Mary and 100 Hours of War.*

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# Bloody 110th

## Umpired Play

*by Dean N. Essig*

In the last issue, I described the ground rules we used in a umpired game of Bloody 110th we played at our retreat last April. This article will be a postscript to that one and will give a rundown of how it went and what lessons were learned by us in the operation of umpired games of this sort. I will not give more than a brief description of the operations run by the players, the intent here is to examine the umpired game operating system, not game play.

We ran this game with eight people. I played the roll of judge, fate, and (when required) god. Each team was made up of one off-map player, one on-map primary player, and one on-map assistant. For the Germans, this consisted of Rod Miller, Dave Powell, and Al Wambold respectively. The American team consisted of Sam Simons, Tom Watson, and Ric Walters. Our own Dave "Sticky" Combs played the role of CNN and journalistic pest with a camcorder. (Yes, there is a VCR tape of this game, if Dave Powell hasn't burned it yet.) Wolf Blitzer had better watch out...

Teams were formed Friday night and they got together to thrash out overall strategy for their side. This was a very important period because it was the last time the off-map players could describe what they wanted to the on-map players face to face with a game map to point at. The German team got down to business and laid out a campaign plan that they developed in a committee fashion which actually worked for most of the game without major alteration.

I wondered if Rod would ever take charge of his subordinates during this process--he didn't. As opposed to telling them what he wanted them to do, he'd throw out an idea to see if they liked it. I'm not quite sure how they developed the plan they did. My sharpest memory is of Dave Powell getting aggravated at the process and repeatedly asking Rod, "Well, what do you want us to do..." The major problem with the German plan was its predictability. It looked much like other game plans we've seen in face to face play. Anything unexpected--a deep southern pincer or a hide-away force in a batch of woods--would have given the US team more to chew on and pull their hair out about.

The American team was made of different stuff. Tom Watson, senior US on-map player was to arrive late, so Sam and Ric had to come up with a plan of their own.

Ric didn't want the burden of giving Tom a plan he couldn't live with, so he let Sam work it out himself. And Sam set about doing just that. It took several hours. Planning the likes of which the world hasn't seen since Hitler ordered around every battalion on the Eastern Front! We're talking micro-management here, folks, big time. Sam was planning the movements and releases of individual AT Guns, etc.

The US plan was set up like a big shotgun--on cue, all reserves would be released to pre-planned positions. The problem was that the plan was very inflexible. It depended little on the type and location of threat being faced (after Rod and the Germans revealed their hand.) Instead, it deployed the US's meager reserves evenly to each of the village bastions. When Tom arrived he pretty much accepted what he was given, although his understanding of the plan was hampered by not being there for the planning process. As it turned out, his understanding of the plan proved a bonus--he applied very loose interpretations to his orders which were no where near the strict move-by-move way they were planned.

Satisfied with their initial planning, the two on-map teams collected in the playtest room to set up. The off-map players, isolated one each in the front and middle offices, proceeded to twiddle their thumbs. Set up finished with little problem and we broke off for the night.

## **The Day of Reckoning**

Early the next day (around 7:00 am, I think) we all arrived to start play. The off-map players went back to their cloisters, the on-map ones to the playtest room. I started the timer. At first only a few messages started to move, followed in a few minutes by a literal deluge. Calls for fire poured off the map to the off-map players who were quick to allocate resources and fire what they thought was important. Play proceeded at a good clip. Early

n, much friction was apparent in the workings of the US team. Sam would ask the map for information and would get sarcasm or nothing for an answer. It came to a head when Sam asked for a weather report and Tom yelled back at him "Look out your ##% clo@ \* window!" They must have noticed that this was getting in the way of efficient play and, somehow, they resolved their differences and by afternoon were proceeding in a much more business-like manner.

By our lunch break several things were evident. There was nowhere near enough bogus information coming from the map to help keep the off-map players in the dark; Sam had lost track of nearly all of his own units; and Rod had little to do since his masterplan was working like a well-oiled machine. It was time to change.

I decided to start inventing assorted phoney intelligence problems for the off-map players to deal with. Reports of tank platoons and other enemy contacts in strange places on the map gave the off-map players more to worry about. I tried to make

these "vapor-forces" follow realistic plans and give them coherent stories. A tank report at Roder would be supported by further reports. Answers to clarification questions would be forged, etc. Rod failed to take any of the bait and continued to read the sports pages from his paper. Sam bit on a couple but his op sheet reactions never had time to reach the map.

Some weird orders were issued from Sam to Tom moving some units to counter vapor-force threats, but Tom managed to ignore most of them again he seemed to be stretching it. The bogus report campaign failed due to my inability to lie effectively and due to some "screening" going on by the on-map players. An on-map judge would have been a valuable addition-someone who could take the time to give official interpretations to op sheets coming in so that the on-map players couldn't take liberties. I was far too busy to be able to do this. Also, the on-map judge could give "valuable" BS reports and unimportant reports to the off-map players. I was, again, too busy to sit down to collect my thoughts and come up with a decent set of bogus reports which would have a better chance of buffaloing the off-map players.

Sam, in order to find out where his guys were, made an excellent move of sending explicit "where are you" questions to each of his commands-and in sending several of each one. In this way, he managed to get at least one positional report from everyone (to the great consternation of Tom who retorted several times "I already told him that *twice!!!*" (expletives deleted.) By the end of the game, Sam had decent idea of where his forces were.

Derailing Rod's master plan proved impossible since he didn't believe any of my bogus reports and reacted accordingly. On the map, his forces butchered themselves in the taking of Mamach and his northern pincer drive was well on its way to Reuler. Sam's forces (run by Tom with his radio to higher firmly in the "off" position) formed a tight defensive line just west of Mamach making a semi-circle to the north and south from Reuler down and around to directly south of Clervaux.

As play went into the afternoon (game and real time), a curious problem occurred. Basically, the on-map players were slowing down due to burn-out--they had, after all run through half the first day already-and the off-map players went nuts sending artillery fire missions to the map, AND a flood of old fire missions on my desk (held up in transmission) were released to the map. The result? With a thousand-yard-stare with no rivals, the on-map players attempted to get through fire mission after fire mission. My information periods came and went so that each time they were *almost* finished firing their missions-a new batch of "hot off the presses" fire missions would show up. After some undefined period of this hammering, both on-map players baited the Artillery Fire Segment and went on to the next phase incoming fire mission orders be damned! The lesson here is to allow the map time to determine the information periods, not to have them separated as I attempted. While the full 20 minute turn is too long for the information period, possibly a mid point in the turn could be selected when play is suspended and the judge runs his orders about. This would allow for two periods per turn plus a brief respite for the burdened on-map players.

All during the game and especially during their most frazzled moments, the off-map players were pinned down by our erstwhile CNN team of Sticky and his traveling camcorder. While no troops from either side surrendered to him for milk and cookies, he was, at any rate, able to document on film much of the inner workings of the minds of the two off-map players. His efforts added to the enjoyment of all concerned, especially when Sam was raving that all was lost (again) and Sticky put to him the question: "Is there anything you'd like to tell the people at home?" While we have yet to get one of Sam's classic rave-outs on film-this came close. If you play an umpired game, be sure to have your own CNN crew-with imagination it's a blast, plus watching the film afterward is great. Nothing will ever beat the scene of the Nazi command post, Rod Miller in charge, with his feet up on my desk reading the sports pages and the "mellooldies" music floating the background as he repeatedly ignored pleas for help against imaginary US tank attacks! As with U.S. Grant, Rod Miller don't scare worth a damn.

We had a lot of fun playing this umpired game, although there are a few things I'd do differently next time. The changes I've mentioned above, plus I'd want to do something other than be the judge! If you can find the time and the people, give this method of play a shot--you'll have a blast, too.

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## Where Does Your Gaming Dollar Go?

by *Dean N. Essig*

The following figures are provided for your interest. They reflect the operations of this and most other small game companies in a way that I haven't seen since SPI in the seventies. I used to enjoy greatly the facts and figures given to me then in S&T and since no other *truthful* facts of this type are being given to the gaming consumer, I thought you might be interested.

These are provided to all as a measure of what I believe is fairly normal in small wargame publishing. They represent the straight facts and are not "edited for effect" in any way. These can be used to give meaning (or expose falsehoods) to the many wild claims we all hear. A good dose of reality is useful sometimes. Especially for those of you with dreams of grandeur about starting your own companies.

A common refrain I hear is "I would pay the extra buck for (fill in your pet idea here)." The concept that an extra dollar of production costs can be compensated by another dollar of retail cost is simply invalid. While we would love to provide such extras in our games, prudent business sense dictates against it. As you can see below, an extra dollar in production costs must be compensated by no less than \$6 in retail price for us to maintain our already skimpy safety levels. To do otherwise would be irresponsible.

And, I do *not* agree that games are free from price considerations. Games are expensive enough without tacking on a bunch of gold fixtures to drive their price through the roof.

### **Each \$1.00 spent on gaming is divided as follows:**

(Based on sales and expenses in 1990)

To Stores and Distributors 54 Cents  
Actual Cost of Production 16 Cents  
Boxing/Shipping/Postage 4 Cents  
Salaries and Royalties 18 Cents  
All other expenses 7 Cents  
Profit 1 Cent

## Units sales for us are as follows:

Year	Year Total	1-01	1-02	1-03	1-04	2-01	2-02	2-03	3-01
1988	1674 units	942	732	-					
1989	2687 units	263	719	106	-	1599	-		
1990	4684 units	-	248	1497	-	588	1073	-	1278
1991 (to Oct)	4899 units	1188	-	251	1376	250	325	1183*	326
Total to date	13,944	2393	1699	1854	1376	2437	1398	1183	1604

\*To be fair, Omaha's numbers are only based on pre-pubs and the initial distributor shipment. The game isn't even one month old as of this writing.

## For what its worth, as of mid-October 1991, here is: "The Gamers Best Sellers List"

Game	Units	Notes
1. Bloody 110	2437	First 2500 print run game, handful of games remain (< 100)
2. In their Quiet Fields	2393	2 Editions (first of 1205, then 1200, both all but sold out)
3. August Fury	1854	Very heavy initial distributor orders
4. Thunder at the Crs'rds	1699	Short run-more than 800 countersheets ruined by die-cutter
5. Force Eagle's War	1604	An underdog from the very start
6. Objective: Schmidt	1398	Slow, yet steady, seller
The following do not have enough track record to be rated fairly against the above.		
Barren Victory	1376	Only 3 months
Omaha	1183	Less than 1 month

Be very wary of figures touted by others which seem radically different from the above (unless speaking of Avalon Hill or TSR.) I am a cynic by nature and my four years in the game biz have made that only stronger. If I may paraphrase... "beware of small game companies shouting of good fortune." Actually, what the wargame consumer needs is Mark Twain's 100% shock-proof crap detector!

As always, if it sounds too good to be true, it isn't.

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# Figuring Line of Sight

## Wargame

by Dave Demko

The ultimate test of Line of Sight (LOS) rules is your visual imagination. If you were standing somewhere on the real terrain represented by the map, what do you think you would see? Keep that point in mind as you try out two rules that have worked for me.

1. Some games aimed at topographical precision by using a graph-paper-like LOS gauge-but those rules made elevations too artificial, like stacks of plateaus instead of hills. The TCS system uses the more sensible "halfway rule" (8Ab) and invites us players to use "a more detailed or precise LOS rule" if we want to (8.4f.) Here's my quick and easy to use variation on the halfway rule. It applies only when units are at different elevations, so it replaces the second-to-last sentence of 8.4b. The rule works with the CWB maps too, and for any games with topographic-style maps.

If the potential obstacle is at the same elevation as the high unit and the range from the high unit to the obstacle is greater than  $1/2$  the range from the high unit to the low unit, the LOS is blocked.

If the potential obstacle is lower than the high unit, the LOS is blocked only if the range from the high unit to the obstacle is greater than  $1/2$  the range from the high unit to the low unit plus the difference (in elevation levels, not meters) between the obstacle's height and the high unit's height. (Elevation levels are defined by contour lines or color coding, with the difference between one elevation and the next being one level.)

*Example: A tank at 500 meters elevation is attempting to fire on an infantry platoon at 440 meters elevation and 8 hexes range. A hex on the LOS at 500 meters and 4 hexes away from the tank does not block the LOS but at 5 (or more) hexes away it would, since  $1/2 \times 8 = 4$ . A hex at 480 meters (one level lower than the tank) and 5 hexes away would not block the LOS, but a hex at 480 meters and 6 (or more) hexes away would block, because  $(1/2 \times 8) + 1 = 5$ .*

The effect of this rule, compared with the standard TCS rule, is to make units in high places slightly more able to observe--and be observed. This rule makes the blind spots created by rolling terrain shrink or grow in direct proportion to the height of an

observer relative to rises in the landscape.

2. The Slope and Extreme Slope hexsides in the CWB games give units a quite realistic defilade advantage (as a column shift on the Combat Table) when defending against fire from lower units. In effect, units at the base of such a slope can see little beyond the slope's crest, probably only the heads and shoulders of enemy troops near the slope. Units further back from the slope will be totally concealed. So, try this rule...

A unit in a hex with a Slope or Extreme Slope hexside may trace a LOS across that hexside to a higher elevation only into adjacent hexes. Conversely, only units in hexes adjacent to the up slope side of a Slope or Extreme Slope hexside may trace a LOS across those hexsides to lower hexes bordering those hexsides.

This rule may feel overly restrictive, so you might want to disregard it in cases where the high unit is in a hex with an elevation even higher than that of the hex immediately on the high side of the slope. In this case, you would allow a unit in hex A5.26 of the Barren Victory map to fire into, and be fired upon from, hex A3.25, but not A5.24.

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## Cons, Clubs, and Things...

1991

*by Dean N. Essig*

**Desolation Con IV** Feb 28 - March 1, 1992. Richland, Washington Dealer's room, Tournaments, Open Gaming. To get more info: Contact Melanie Cower, 1514 Hunt Avenue, Richland WA 99352 (509) 9463544 \$10.00 fee until 1 Feb 92.

**San Diego State Univ Conflict Simulations Club** Meetings every Friday 1pm to midnight at rooms B & G Aztec Center, Lower Level. Contact: D. Burmeister 460 Graves Ave. #3 1 A, El Cajon CA 92020, president.

**Egyptian Campaign '92** Feb 7 - 9, 1992. Carbondale, Illinois SIUC Strategic Games Society. Office of Student Development, 3rd Floor Student Center, Carbondale, IL 62901 or call Sean Callahan at (618) 549-7764

**POCON 3 - 5** April, 1992. Holiday Inn, Bartonsville, PA Includes RPG, miniature wargaming, SF, boardgames, and painting contests. \$6 for day, \$10 for weekend, no per game fees. To get more info: Contact Ed Dowgiallo, PO Box 390, Effort PA 18330 (717) 629-7218

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## In Brief

### Editorial

*by Dean N. Essig*

Small wargame publishers do not need extra lessons in humility. Every time a small publisher puts out anything, all of his foibles, inadequacies, and errors come home to roost. Once under the blistering lights of public purview and the inquisition of literally thousands of astute eyes, the publisher's finest efforts reveal all of their flaws. It's a lesson that hits home--making one redouble his efforts for next time, only to be reminded again "next time" that he is still mortal. Such is life.

In spite of hundreds of hours of final layout, editing, checking and rechecking, of sweated blood (I'd be more graphic, but that would be in poor taste...) and the extensive counter-by-counter examination cross-referenced with the designer's original roster and the final proofs, 18 of the 1680 counters in **Omaha** were printed with the wrong information. 13 of them were the Panzer Lehr variant Panthers, the rest had their backs screwed up in one way or another. Is this acceptable? It isn't to me and I'm sure it isn't to you. None of you need to be reminded of the tight resources of a small wargame manufacturer--Omaha's final artwork and checking was done in the main by one person--as are all our games--me. Given that fact, especially, I find no excuse for this sort of error in our games--especially in a monster like **Omaha** where errors like this will keep customers from noticing the thousands of things that did go right.

A player called me from Reno complaining (rightly) about the number of counter errors he had seen recently from many different publishers. While I can do little to help the others, I *can* clean up my own act. And, I will, This caller was of a mind that we should issue new (corrected) counters for our games and even offered to pay for them. I have no objection to issuing collected counters--that is fair and correct--but I will not be caught dead *charging* people for them. When a person buys a game from us, he buys it in good faith that we put our maximum effort into what he is getting in the box.

While he cannot, reasonably, expect perfection (reality dictates against that), he should expect that his purchase will be of the finest workmanship of the skills we have available. If, later, an errata countersheet is made available--the original purchaser has the right to expect such counters to be made available to him at no charge. Perhaps a minimal postage fee, but no charge for the actual item.

The discussion with this player encouraged me to take a look to see how we could do this. A look back reveals 22 bad counters published in our 9 releases (including the ITQF 2nd Edition.) These include the 18 from Omaha, 1 from ITQF, 1 from Bloody 110, and 2 from Force Eagle's War. That means that before **Omaha** we had an error rate of .06% or 6 per 10,000 counters. **Omaha** (with nearly 5 times as many bad counters as all previous games combined) reduced the overall rate to .3% or 3 per 1,000.

### Suggestion

Taking the caller's suggestion as valid (it is), the question then becomes How? The problem here is not that there are too many bad counters or too many of you-- but *too few* of either. Mounting and die-cutting even the smallest job is not difficult--we'd just slip it in with a game's counters and pay for however many sheets extra it was. That's the easy part. The problem comes in the printing. We can fit up to 14 copies of the errata set on *one-half* of our regular countersheets.

That means to cover the 2,500 games in our basic print run (which would be enough for everyone to get one to cover his set of games) we would be printing only 89 of our 560 counter-countersheets! Since this would have to be a four-color print job, it would be fiscally irresponsible to print these separately--not to mention I'd hate to watch my printer laugh his way to the bank. Press runs of under a thousand are ridiculously expensive because of the small numbers. This method would not be sound and I owe you more responsible management than that.

Idea number 2 is to "slip them in using up some of the space to be allotted to markers in future games. The caller referenced Command Magazine and their publishing errata counters in the next issue. From a bimonthly magazine's point of view, that's the way to go. With us it's different. Putting them into our next game would mean two things: Civil War players will find themselves paying for errata counters for games they might not care about and WW2 players might find themselves having to purchase a CWB game they don't want, to get the errata they deserved for free. Tying errata counters within series is a good idea (the one ITQF counter would be in Bloody Roads South, etc.) but it leaves the bulk of the bad counters waiting for the next TCS release which won't be till 1993. An alternative idea was to put the TCS errata counters into Guderian's Blitzkrieg. That would be acceptable to hard-core WW2 "at-any-level" types but would do little for those that only like tactical games.

Another method would be to wait until we have enough bad counters to fill up enough of a counter sheet to make a separate run worth it--or so many customers that it doesn't matter anymore. While I don't want to eat my words, with the redoubled efforts at counter control in our next releases, I seriously doubt if the former will be any time soon. As for the latter, I can hope a lot...

### Final Resolution

I will leave the final resolution to your feedback. In the end I will make a choice and resolve the issue one way or another. I will appreciate your calls, fax's, and letters regarding the above. Please address the specific method you would prefer or tell me you don't want us to worry about it (contingent on future games having very few, if any, bad counters.)

We have added a couple of new features since last time. First, our 24hr-a day, 7 days-a-week fax line is now open. it can be used for orders, rules questions, and comments. If you leave your number, I'll reply as soon as I can. The number is (217) 896-2880.

The second new communications method for us is GENie. I check in most every day to see what has transpired. If you are on-line come say hello-- Category 4, topic 43. I will be happy to field any question, comment, or explain our reasoning about any matter.

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## OutBrief

### The Fine Art of Losing Wargames

by Dean N. Essig

"Did we win?"

"No, but if we move real fast, we might be able to live long enough to lie about it."

--Conversation in *Spaced Invaders*.

Nobody likes to lose, especially we wargamers. However, the simple fact of life is that upon completion of a game someone is usually told he lost and someone he won. (Ignoring for the sake of simplicity the result of "draw.") Many games never get to the bean counting stage of victory determination one player either throws in the towel quietly (or, with great drama, in over-turning the table and stamping away!) The games that do get decided in the end by the victory points of the game leave me cold.

Ty Bomba once mentioned that the enjoyment of games comes from what he termed "closure" which was the act of finishing the game and seeing who won. That has not been my experience, I enjoy games for the process of play. Turn by turn I enjoy myself in putting together what seems to be the right thing to do-my next big attack, a defense he'll never get through, or counterattacking his offensive just when he thought he had it in the bag. Rarely did a game end up in that final bean counting stage to see who won-we would either stop playing if the game lost its interest, or one (or both!) players would decide they had been beaten and quit.

Either way, to use some magical formula at the bitter end of the game to tell me how I'd done seems pretty moot-given the many hours of up and down record of play the dumb moves I made and the brilliant over the course of the entire game. I was too busy having fun to worry about the final bean count in any but the most limited ways. Players who shoot a recon company into a forgotten city hex on the last turn in order to win the game and then claim to have "won" based on the one or two victory points thus garnered, regardless of their poor showing to that point, are not players I want to play with. If you feel otherwise, we have a friendly difference of opinion-you play your way, I'll play mine, and we'll both have fun.

#### Attitudes

That said, I'd like to talk about the different attitudes of players as they determine that they have lost.

1. The first category are the "manly men" who acknowledge they were beaten fair and square. They look for nothing to whine about-they take their lumps and come up smiling. Our own "Sticky" Combs is just this sort of man. It is a pleasure to play against such mature individuals.
2. The next type is the rationalizer. You know this one (we all do it at one time or another), this is the player who decides he lost based on an "analysis" of his performance that he "blew it on turn 5..." Rarely is a single move so important that the entire game's outcome is decided upon it. Since I view a game's enjoyment on the process of play, this sort of argument may be used as to who won or lost-but certainly not as a determination of who had fun.
3. Then we get to the "blamer." We all know one or more of these types. I divided them into two subphyla: Metaphysical and physical.

Metaphysical blamers are everywhere. The primary belief of these guys is that the dice are against them. We all have bad dice rolls at critical moments and have runs of good or bad luck. I've seen it and so have you. The problem occurs when a player determines that nothing he can do will affect the game because the dice will destroy his efforts. Sorry guys, dice are inanimate objects and if your attacks habitually fail when rolled, I suggest the attacks might be pretty dumb and the dice just are refusing to give you the 1 in 12 roll you need for each attack you make. This is a dose of reality meeting with ineffective game play. If a player relies heavily on poor odds attacks which may turn out if a roll of 11 or 12 is made on two dice, simple probability is going to slap him in the face.

Physical blamers use the game itself to justify their loss and why they had "no" chance. These are guys who decide that they should be able to use the world's dumbest plan and carry the day. When their master plan disintegrates in the blistering light of reality- they announce the game system is wrong and proceed to quit the game. Other blamers of this type decide their force was weaker (had worse units, whatever) and that is why they lost. Never mind the fact that their "weak" force went onto the attack on turn 1 and never stopped.

This all leads to a short discussion on victory conditions. The above is not intended to mean that we don't care about victory conditions and just "slap any ole' thing in." On the contrary, we spend an inordinate amount of time deciding on victory conditions- inordinate in that I still believe the fun of the game is in the playing, not in a post-game bean count which "determines" who won or lost. What messes some players up is that our victory conditions are based not only on how players did in the game, but what was expected of them in real life and the effect their "victory" or "defeat" would have on events after the time of the game.



Let me use Stalingrad Pocket as a case in point. In SP, victory conditions are rated against two essentially opposite German concerns--the military and political effects of the campaign. Militarily, the Germans are attempting to save what is left of the flower of the German army for operations in 1943. Politically, they must hold onto Stalingrad for its symbolic value. In game play, players want to ditch Stalingrad at the first opportunity in order to save the army. This is a plan the actual German commanders had little or no choice in--they had to balance the military and political demands of the situation. They could not afford to "tell Adolf to stuff it" as most game players would want to. BUT, I didn't want players hamstrung into holding Stalingrad whether they like it or not. In SP, players must attempt to fulfill both sets of conditions as best they can--a task which is by no means easy. To earn the best level of victory, the Germans must hold onto most of Stalingrad (which must keep an overland connection to the west) and keep losses to an acceptable level. Players can ditch Stalingrad if they wish, but must then keep losses to a very low level to make up for it. Holding Stalingrad and taking excessive losses is not acceptable. Ditching Stalingrad and taking those losses is even worse. In the design of these victory conditions, we (myself and the two primary playtesters) discussed at length the requirements of the military situation--setting the stage for 1943 and the short-term situation in the post-game period--and that political influences and requirements could not be successfully ignored. The result are victory conditions that I believe satisfactorily blend the two opposing requirements placed on the player and the actual leaders who fought the campaign.

### **It's not whether you win or lose--it's how you play the game**

That about sums it up. I have my fun along the way to my victory of bitter defeat. As long as I feel there is something I can do to influence the outcome, I'll have a blast regardless of the end result. I prefer to win, but a loss against a capable opponent is nothing to be angry or ashamed of. Besides, he had all the good rolls...

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## Up&Coming

### News Update

*by Dean N. Essig*

As you read of the projects below, remember that only 1992 is "set in stone." The first NBS game and the Thunder at the Crossroads reprint (in one form or another) are also firm, anything else scheduled beyond the end of 1992 is still *tentative* and *subject to change*. I want to give you a good look ahead, but I want to make sure you understand that our schedules are only finalized around Origins time for the next year—so, until Origins 1992, any mention of projects in 1993 or beyond must be taken with a grain of salt...

### Projects at this Time...

#### **Bloody Roads South**

CWB #5. April 1992. Designer: Jim Epperson. \$32.00 Submitted in finished form in mid-September, this game is ready for the art "department." Dave Powell and Al Wambold played it at our September retreat and had a good time. Play at that point revealed a couple of "bolt tightening" problems, which have since been corrected. This game looks to be a very positive addition to the series. It will include the Second Edition rules.

#### **Guderian's Blitzkrieg**

OCS #1. Origins 1992. Designer: Dean Essig. \$39.00 Playtesting continuing. Our game from the retreat is being finished here. Full playtest games were shipped out and blind testing is proceeding well. We have discovered this to be a very engaging and intense game. See article this issue.

#### **Stalingrad Pocket**

SCS # 1. Origins 1992. Designer: Masahiro Yamazaki. \$22.00 Playtesting continuing. Last evening we played against the Germans are looking and acting as if they are on the ropes, but as the Soviet player, I'm not so sure. This is definitely the game for you if you think our other games are a tad too complex or timeconsuming. Since the system has been working so smoothly, our playtests are now boiling down to adjusting victory conditions. This is a fun, straight-forward, "classic" wargame.

## **Perryville**

CWB #6. Oct 1992. Designer: Dave Powell. \$22.00 Dave is now doing his final re-writes and counter adjustments to this game which has been done for some time.

## **Blood of Generals**

CWB #7. Oct 1992. Designer: Dean Essig. \$22.00 I've got my strengths and base maps done. The initial counter layout was being worked on until I was interrupted by other projects. The initial outline of the rules is done. This one has to wait until GB and SP are more finished, so that I am putting my priorities into them in the order they will be coming out.

## **Thunder at the Crossroads**

CWB #2. April 1993. Designer: Dave Powell. \$32.00 After some discussion, we decided to forego the short run reprint using the left-over parts from the first printing. Instead, we will be doing a full second edition treatment. The maps will be extended to add the cavalry battlefield, counters and maps will be re-done in the style of Barren Victory, and new (smaller) scenarios added.

## **Austerlitz**

NBS #1. Origins 1993. Designer: Dave Powell. \$32.00 Dave is working on the NBS system right now. He has the playtest maps for this game drawn and an Order of Battle, but his work is concentrating on the actual NBS series rules.

## **Notes regarding the next year or so...**

I will be having my left hand reconstructed in the fall of 1992. Potentially, this might mean a slowing of production while I recover. A final decision can't be made until after that surgery when I can see what kind of condition I'll be in. Given my experiences with my right hand, I don't anticipate anything drastic, but we might have to trim 1993 to 2 or 3 new games and a reprint.

## **Other Projects on the Horizon...**

**(None have a date yet)**

## **Matinikau**

TCS. Designer: Sam Simons. Attacks of the Marines in November 1942 around the Matinikau River, Guadalcanal. I've got this game in almost finished form here, except I do not have a roster of counters and can't yet begin playtesting

## **A Frozen Hell**

TCS. Designer: AJ Wambold. A battle in the Russo- Finnish War, 1940. Specifically, the Battle of Tolvajarvi, December, 1940. I'm really looking forward to this one. It should be great, and AI picked a battle where the Russians didn't fight in an idiotic manner.

## **The Seven Days**

CWB. Designer: Dave Powell. Divided into three games Mechanicsville/Gaines Mill, Seven Pines, Frayser's Farm Malvern Hill-when assembled it encompasses no less than nine maps. Fear not, each of the above will be playable separately and a number of smaller scenarios will be available. The full game will be something to be enjoyed- large map areas, yes, BUT no more counters than, say, Thunder or Barren Victory. We're talking maneuver room, and lots of it!

## **Yom Kippur**

SCS. Designer: AJ Sandrik. This game covers the Sinai portion of the Yom Kippur war at 5 Kin per hex/ one day per rum. AI sent me this game in an almost finished form a few weeks ago and with some minor re-writing and alterations it should make a fine addition to the SCS line. A very good effort for a first-time designer.

## **April's Harvest**

CWB. Designer: AI Wambold. This AI (not to be confused with Mr. Sandrik, above) brought this game in an almost finished form to our April retreat. It covers the Battle of Shiloh on one map. With a little more development and playtesting, this game will be ready to go.

## **The Campaign in Sicily**

OCS. Designer: Dean Essig. A game covering the entire Sicilian campaign in perhaps 4 game weeks. This would be a tense one map game which would be a very strong addition to the OCS line.

## **KG Hecker**

TCS. Designer: Dean Essig. This game covers the almost unknown plan to cut off Tobruk from Egypt during the Gazalla Battles. A composite unit consisting of Brandenburgers and Italian Marines were to land past Tobruk and cut the Coastal Road until the Panzers showed up. This game would include the landing and cutting of the road. The player would attempt to avoid detection, fight off Indian reaction forces, and build an air-strip to bring on a Penal Regiment as reinforcements!

## **Bekaa Valley**

TCS: Modern Expansion. Designer: Al Sandrik. Syrians vs. Israelis, 1982.

## **Arracourt**

TCS. Designer: James Meldrum. This game covers the battles between a US Armored Division and Panzer Lehr in the early fall of 1944.

## **Crete and Malta**

TCS. Designer: Dean Essig. This game covers the airborne assault against the New Zealand airfield defenders on Crete with another game allowing the same German forces to hit Malta instead.

## **Ostfront**

TCS. Designer: Dean Essig. Eastern Front actions using the TCS.

## **Future Planning...**

We will be putting out three to four games per year on average. I will decide over the course of next year about our abilities to maintain any higher rate than "just three." Certainly my work-load and ability to keep up with quality figure highly into that decision. We may very well decide to go for only three a year (which would be easier for you to absorb, anyway) in which case, with the number of series we are developing, I will be unable to follow my one-per-series-per-year formula. Some sort of rotation will be set up such that it might be one per year for a couple of years, then skip a year, etc. We shall see.

I will try to keep all the bases covered and to not leave anyone with no games in their favorite series for extended periods. I was an NCO long enough to be able to set up a duty roster, and that will be a good way to go.

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# Letters

## Letters to the Editor

*by the readers*

I appreciate your taking time a little while ago to respond to my letter. It's taken me a little while to write back.

You asked me what I meant by "examples of play." What I had in mind was a description of a couple of turns of actual play. This probably would only work well if you could include pictures of the map at several intervals. It also would work best if it covered only an isolated part of the map; something like Hooker's attack at the beginning of Antietam.

*[Ed Note: This type of detailed play example has been on my "things to do list" for a long time- -someday, I hope to get such an article written.]*

Maybe this wouldn't be helpful to most players, in which case I wouldn't expect you to print it, but I find it useful to look at the tactics other players employ. Similar articles have also made me realize a couple of times that I was making minor rules mistakes.

I also found the article on your **Omaha** game in the second issue of Operations (which was even better than the first) to be excellent. The description of an actual playtest, by showing how a game might go-i.e. showing what a player could expect to be doing- is about the most helpful information I can think of in aiding me to evaluate whether I want to buy a game. (How many times has a game review left you with the impression that the reviewer never played the game?)

*[EdNote: Naw, I won't take that bait...]*

It's also very helpful in getting me started thinking about the sort of strategies (or grand tactics) I might want to employ. Personally, I can't think of a better source of information about a game than the people who playtested it.

I also wanted to respond to your comments about the business practices of wargame publishers. I'm relieved to see that a lot of people in the hobby are becoming very conscious of the need for improvement in that area. XTR and Decision Games have both preached about it, and I notice that FGA promises to replace the defective

components in Operation: Crusader. (Of course, Richard Berg promised to provide real counters for Guns of Cedar Creek and never did, so I'll reserve final judgement.) Personally, I put wargame publishers into three categories:

- 1. Honest and Efficient:** Companies that meet their production schedules and deliver what they promise. The Gamers is the prototype for this category, but XTR seems to be doing quite well, especially for a magazine publisher. (I don't, however, share their Nazi fixation.)
- 2. Honest but Inefficient:** Companies that announce production schedules they can't meet, often not even remotely, but they don't take people's money until they are sure they can deliver. Most of the hobby falls here.
- 3. Slimeballs:** Companies that take people's money and don't deliver at all or deliver only after unreasonable delays. Pacific Rim and SDI spring to mind, 3W is getting there. I suspect that the problem may often be that some companies finance their projects through advance sales. I have serious objections to this practice. When I send my money off, I do so as a purchase, not an investment.

I find the "Honest but Inefficient" companies aggravating, but I put up with them. I won't, however, order anything in advance from a company until I have some good reason to believe it can be trusted, and I won't get burned twice. For instance, I decided it was OK to order in advance from The Gamers when you published August Fury *ahead* of schedule (I still can't believe it.) I stopped ordering in advance from SDI when First Blood was six months late.

The point of all this is that everybody in the hobby suffers every time somebody gets ripped off. Until I had dealt with your company some, to me you were just another small company that might be trustworthy and might not. And I'll bet there are plenty of wargamers out there who are more suspicious than I am, because I've been luckier than many: I didn't buy Blood and Sand; I've never bought anything from Pacific Rim; nor have I ever taken out a lifetime subscription to anything. The unfortunate experiences that so many wargamers have had are bound to have a continuing impact on the sales of even the most scrupulous companies, so I'm glad that you and others are speaking up as well as doing something about it.

I hope this hasn't bored you. I feel as though I should encourage the people who are doing things the way they should be done.

-W. Miller, Silver Spring, MD

Thank you for your comments in 'OutBrief.' As a veteran gamer weaned on D-Elim in the 60's, I'm very happy to finally read an editorial from a game designer who recognizes that the central point of the hobby is fun. Most gamers of my generation

couple this fun with a sense of history, comradeship, and playability. I am looking to enjoy my games, win or lose, and spend a pleasant evening with people of similar persuasion. The sweep of history and armies provide the fodder for the imagination; any time spent nit-picking rules, or just trying to figure what they *really* mean is wasted, dead time to me.

The recent whining in the industry about a gamer's duties-to bring in new members, support products that don't interest us, provide continuous feedback, etc., etc-is becoming very tiresome. Another crab I am hearing concerns the lack of introductory games, something which is just factually untrue. Today I counted 56 historical games ideally suited to beginners, including most of the D-Elim games that started me off. These comprised some 10-15% of the total products available and covered most periods-Rome to Iraq. I had 7 games to choose from when I started!

I imagine I will buy wargames until I die; I will certainly continue to purchase products that interest me. I will also continue to *not* buy products that are poorly designed, over- ruled, under-developed or not in my areas of interest. If this causes the companies who publish these games to close shop--so be it. That's free enterprise--swim or sink-and I do not apologize; it's my money to spend.

Most of the people I play with (including, gasp!, that rarest of all creatures--female wargamers) enjoy these games for the magnificent sweep of history or thunderous clash of armies they provide. This is what separates our hobby from Monopoly or Bridge. You are absolutely right when you say Low Intensity Conflict games are boring. *Boring! Boring! Boring!* If I want the "thrill" of LIC, I'll hand around a constituency association! No, thanks, I'll stick to Alexander and Guderian no matter how often I'm importuned by various trade publications.

I would like to suggest "Juno Beach" as a possible companion to the upcoming game Omaha. With the mighty 3rd Canadian Division, I'm sure this would be very popular North of the 45th Parallel..

*-J. Roberts Calgary, AB, Canada*

I just finished reading the first issue of Operations and since you invited comment, here it is. For starters it was a pleasure to see the magazine since I've always enjoyed the house organs of different companies. The style and tone reminded me of the mags put out by companies such as OSG, Yaquinto, and Battleline in their day and it was a welcome change of pace.

As for actual comments and answers to various things raised in the magazine...

1. I would like to see the following battles in a Napoleonic Series. The Battle of the Pyramids, the lines of Tordes Verdes, Talavera, Eylau, Albuera and Auerstadt.. As you can see, I lean toward the Spanish theater. I've loved it ever since I beat France as



the Spanish player in a game of Empires in Arms.

2. 1 question whether the OCS system is going to be workable in the format you describe it. I simply do not believe that any system can cover the period 1900-1950 due to all the changes in technology, doctrine and equipment. For example, how would you account for the far greater lethality of a NM howitzer as compared to a WWII howitzer, even though they fire the same caliber shell.

I believe that there is simply too great a mass of information and detail to be covered in a generic set of rules and any special rules would be so full of special cases that it would make playing the game a chore.

Certainly all previous efforts to expand game systems to cover multi-period episodes have not been very successful. To wit, SPI's Ancients and Medieval games, Arab-Israeli Wars, and attempts to produce a modern game using first the Squad Leader and then the Tank Leader systems. Indeed, having looked at both Objective: Schmidt and Force Eagle's War, I feel that the latter is the weaker game.

3. I'd like to suggest the following optional rule for Barren Victory. Instead of having the Confederates locked into having Longstreet and Polk as Wing Commanders, allow him to choose one of the following combinations:

- A. DH Hill and Polk
- B. Bragg and Longstreet
- C. Longstreet and DH Hill

Further, if DH Hill is a wing commander, have Polk serve under him.

4. Regarding Dave Powell's article "Forest for the Trees." I agree with him that woods did not affect losses in any significant manner. Indeed up to WWI losses in woods actually increased over time due to the increased power of weapons, particularly artillery. As far as Dave's proposed rule, I suggest that th efiring units also add one to their straggler rolls

*[Ed Note: I'm not sure if he's saying that whenever a unit fires it also makes a straggler check itself or not.*

I believe that this is valid since the accounts that I have read all indicate that the main problem faced in woods was the thick smoke that did not dissipate and the reverberation in the woods from the sound of gunfire. Both problems affected command control and made it difficult for men to hear their officers or really see what they were doing or what was going on around them.

5. Page Layout-A minor point but it would be useful for people who own several of your games to have errata all on one page in each issue. Also, if Questions and

Answers and errata can be placed on opposed pages it will help, as well, since it will cut down on any photocopying the players have to do.

*[Ed.Note:See this issue.]*

6. Regarding "OutBrief"-I have several comments to make.

A. I think your attitude regarding new games and the support of game companies is a little rough. This is a specialized hobby that is also very small. As I'm sure you know, it is difficult to produce a game on a subject that will appeal to a large enough segment of the hobby to make it commercially viable. And this has nothing to do with the intrinsic value of the game or how "good" it is (which is an extremely subjective call to make), but simply a question of taste and numbers.

I think the biggest problem in this area that wargaming has vis a vis hobbies such as doll houses, plastic models, and figure kits is the lack of a strong hobby group. Yes, over the years we've had organizations such as GAMA, The Game Designer's Guild, and The Academy of Adventure Gaming, however, these are all trade organizations and promote the activities and interests of trade, not the hobbyist. This is not to say that we should not have these trade organizations, all fields of business endeavor have their corresponding associations, I think we need a hobby organization similar to say IPMS that support and promote the interests and concerns of the hobbyist. If such an organization ever comes into being I believe that it will go far towards solving many of the problems that the hobbyist encounters today, be he an old grognard or a brand new member of the hobby.

B. Regarding Low Intensity Conflicts-I fail to see why you are ill-disposed towards them. Many of the conflicts of the [last] 15 or 20 years have been LIC in nature and would [make] interesting simulations/games with the right system. And I believe that the old GDW double-blind is one that could readily be adopted to support an LIC game. It is the right scale and also solves that problem that you mentioned of the guerrilla player having his clock cleaned. Further any such system would have to include political rules. After all, the majority of these conflicts are very political in nature and the support of the populace is often more important in determining who won/lost than actual combat results.

C. In terms of alternative history, I feel that the trend is more toward games that are science-fiction in nature with a historical wrapping to make them acceptable to the public. I really question the historical basis and veracity of some of these games and the events that they portray as being possible. While I certainly feel that there is a market and basis for alternative history games (by the way we can thank the science-fiction book market for that term) I prefer these games to be more in line with titles such as 3W's Fight on the Beaches.

*-T. Hastings, Whitestone, NY*

This letter is intended as a further clarification to my earlier comments regarding system games (see the letter above.)

I believe that there is a basic difference between game systems that are designed to simulate (or portray if you prefer) a particular conflict-whether that conflict involves one or more battles, and systems that are designed to simulate multi-conflict events. Examples of the former are Advanced Squad Leader, the La Bataille series, and The Gainers own TCS series.

When working with a common system for a series of games the problem that one encounters is that eventually one begins (indeed one may find one almost forced into) designing games to fit the system, as opposed to designing games to fit the event that the game is intended to simulate or portray.

When working with such [a system] as La Bataille or TCS one get[s] around this problem by the inclusion of the "special rules" folder that is so common in series games.

However, I believe that one is designing a multi- conflict system as the basis for a game series that sooner or later one will find that they cannot surmount the problem of forcing the game into the system. If we try the special rules approach we often find that the special rules are longer and more complex than the system rules (this was certainly my experience with Modern Tank Leader) and we often end up with a game that [fails to?] convey the historical flavor and in fact was intended to deliver. This was certainly the case with SPI's Ancients and Prestags games, to name just one example.

In the case of Force Eagle's War, I felt the game played more like a World War II panzer romp, than a hypothetical modern armor/mechanized encounter.

In the case of Force Eagle's War, Prestags, and the Ancients series it is obvious that the games were designed to fit the system and I believe that all three suffered for it. Although, I must admit that of the three examples cited Force Eagle's War does contain the most "historical" flavor.

I do not mean to say that an existing system cannot be used as the basis for a game in a different era, or a new system. After all, that is how probably 60-70% of the games on the market were born, however, I believe that one must be working to put in extensive work to achieve mating the game with the system and that at the outset one must accept the possibility that [one] will finally reach the point that one must accept that the system is not going to work with the event it is intended to portray and that one must start over. *[Ed. Note: Whew!]*

I hope that these [statements] further clarify my position on [this] issue (one that I'm

afraid has the potential to generate as much letter writing and mud slinging as the old playability vs. realism issue), and that you do not take these comments to mean that I do not like the games produced by The Gamers. I wouldn't own as many as I do if they were not worth the money.

*--T. Hastings, Whitestone, NY*

Enjoyed your first issue of the new magazine. I like the size and the layout. It's different, it's appealing-to look at, to read and to enjoy.

Back page, I agree with your sentiments, so we don't presumably mention Joe Miranda, right?

Concerning future contents, would it be possible to include some sort of playaids, [applicable] to existing games. For example, I own Bloody 110th and have lots of trouble sorting out the German order of entry onto the map--I could do with some sort of card or set up sheet to cope. It's my inexperience. There's so many options, could readers write in with their 'best' solutions? A Kind of forum perhaps? I expect there must be someone who has done a do- it-yourself kit to overcome this setting up task? [Ed. Note: Any takers?]

Then did I read about you requesting ideas for other WW2 simulations? I have just finished reading Famous Tank Battles by Col. R.J. Icks. He described a clash between India and Pakistan in September 1965. 22 days. Set in Kashmir, the area in dispute between the two countries. Tanks included the AMX 13 which I think might be French, M4, M4a4, M48, Centurion 5-7, and Russian T54a. Here's a mix of tanks from several nations, all fighting along side each other. Some of the Shermans had upgunned Canadian 76mm guns. Any good for a game?

If we must have another WW2, how about Russians vs. Japanese at Khalkin-Gol? Or how about the Allies vs. Japan at Mandalay Plain, Burma Feb-April 1945? All good armor and mech conflicts. River crossings, bridge blowing, great stuff. Sorry I'm not a designer! But I'll help with research if I can.

Finally, I like the idea of the Standard Combat Series. I think this might be designed with me in mind! Probably the degree of intensity I'm most happy with.

*-D. Packe, Gloucestershire, England.*

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## Civil War, Brigade Series

### Q&A

*An artillery unit limbers and then moves out of a ZOC hex. Does it check on the Gun Loss Table once or twice?*

The unit checks once, for the formation change only.

*Can a unit extend line in a ZOC?*

Extended lines must be treated as any other moving unit. If the extended line is attempting to move from the parent into a hex that the parent could not move into, the answer is no.

*In close combat, the attacker crosses a slope hex to get into the defender's hex. Does the defender get the benefit of the slope in the combat resolution?*

Yes. Terrain of the defender's hex and the hexside crossed to enter the hex counts during the combat resolution.

*Do gun points count on the casualty record?*

No. Only fire combat casualties are counted. Don't count stragglers either.

*Does a repl leader appear immediately when a leader is lost? Later?*

The repl appears at the instant of loss. In another brigade's hex of the same division. If the division has only one brigade or they are all in the same hex, the repl appears in the same hex, immediately, and before any morale check. (Not that a I rated repl matters in a morale check!)

*To re-supply with small arms ammo, does all of a brigade with extended lines have to be within range? Part? The parent?*

Any one part of such a brigade is all that need be in range, and that part need not be the parent.

*A leader has a brigade blown out from under him (sad face) and relocates to another*

*brigade of his division. This division is then fired upon. Does the leader have to check for loss again-suffering double jeopardy?*

This leader is having a bad day. He runs from one ruined brigade to another only to get fired on again. He checks twice. Life is like that!

*Why does close combat cost a unit a movement point? They are, after all, charging!*

This MP represents the time of the little battle engaged by the unit. Before you reach for a calculator, that means 5 minutes.

*Why does the defender get off without even a morale check in a close combat if the attacker retreats?*

The defending units can tell fairly easily when the attacker is giving up, this encourages them to hold on. Once the attacker starts withdrawing, the defender breaths a collective sigh of relief, and has no desire to withdraw himself.

*A unit attacking in a close combat must be within command radius. Ok, then which one-division to brigade, corps to division, both?*

In the extreme, the attacker in close combat may be at the furthest edge of both command radii-but no further. The division commander may be the full 8 MP's from the corps HQ. In short, both command radii must be intact.

*Who gets to rally in a Rally Phase? The current player? Both?*

In a given player's turn, only his units may rally. The enemy must wait for his own turn.

*My division wants to recover stragglers, but the Corps leader is not yet on the map. The rules state the recovering unit must be within normal command radii. Can this division recover or not?*

A more exact wording of the straggler recovery restrictions would be "the unit must be within normal command radii which is available at the time the unit was marked."

*Do units moving on a road in column get the road benefit if moving through hexes containing other units in column? Line?*

The units moving in column are allowed to use the road benefit even if they move through hexes containing other units (column or line.) The other units

are assumed to give "line of march" to the moving ones-no rules for traffic jams or the resultant fist fights here.

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## Civil War, Brigade Series

### Errata

#### 1-01 In their Quiet Fields, 2nd Edition

1. M/DM/2 should be M/DH/2 on the counter.
2. 1/3/2 and 2/3/2 arcoverstacked in the initial set up. Place 1/3/2 in any adjacent hex.
3. A number of Loss Charts were shipped which were improperly printed. If you do not have both Union and Confederate Loss Charts (printed on one big sheet in the 2nd Ed), let us know and will replace your sheet with a correct one.

#### 1-02 Thunder at the Crossroads

1. There are no Corps-level anti-initiative ratings for either side.
2. There is no Entry Hex 1. In all cases, the Union
3. The Confederate player gets 10 VP for entry Hex E (not F) and 5 VP for Entry Hex F (not G).
4. Each wrecked Union Cavalry Brigade is worth three (3) VP's, not one.
5. Current Strength Chart:  
S/J/2-strength on 3rd and 4th days is 14, not 10  
Stw1/J/2--strength on 3rd & 4th days is 10, not 14.  
B/Heth/3--strength on 2nd, 3rd, & 4th days is 8, not 9.  
A/Heth/3-strength on 2nd & 3rd days is 9, on 4th day is 5.

#### 6. Loss Chart corrections:

The Iron Brigade (1/1/1) is missing five strength circles. (Note: this error is on the original, two-color loss charts only. Later loss charts, all in black, have corrected the error.)

The 2/1/3 should have an original strength of 22, not 12.

## 7. Union Arrival Schedule:

At 12 noon July 2, Gregg and 1/2/Cav arrive with 1xCb, not 3xCb.

8. Confederate Arrival Schedules: In order to correct a game imbalance, allow the Rebel army supply train to arrive at 4:00 p.m. July 1, with Anderson's Division. This holds for both the Jackson Lives and historical orders of arrival.

9. Jackson Lives Scenario: Two new divisions are created in this scenario, Ew/2 and LD/2. Their wrecked levels are as follows: Ew/2 0/0 LD/2 00000/0

## 1-03 August Fury

1. If for any reason a newly arriving unit finds its entry area blocked by enemy forces, it may appear, one turn later, at the closest unblocked map edge hex. in any formation desired.

2. The RW Supply arrives at 9:00 a.m., the 29th, at area A.

3. Remove the 3v Supply wagon from both Scenario 2 and 6 set ups. The wagon enters at 5:00 a.m. on the 29th with McDowell which is the first turn of both scenarios and does not begin on the map.

## 1-04 Barren Victory

1. There are two Entry Area F's on the map. The one on the North map edge should be a G. There are supposed to be two Entry Area G's.

2. The Ammo and Casualty tracks for both sides were set up from I to 10 instead of 0 to 9. Please use the 10 as the 0.

3..The use of Kershaw and McLaws is not explained. McLaws is an optional unit for use when the "rest of M/1" variant is used. Kershaw is the normal commander of M/I. When the regular reinforcements of M/1 come on the map he is their commander. When the option is used, ignore Kershaw and bring on McLaws instead.

4. The example of forest in the terrain key was omitted. What the forest symbol looks like should be obvious. The use of the words forest and woods in the Terrain notes of the exclusive rules was unfortunate-please read woods as open.

5. The dice rolls given as examples in the rules for Lee and Johnston to bypass Wing Structure are incorrect. Johnston needs 11+, Lee needs 9+. The number listed for Bragg (12) is correct.

6. The two optional Reserve Corps Batteries-Rb(5), Rb(2) should be omitted when setting up the game. Where the set up calls for "Reserve Corps, all" it is too easy to forget that these two batteries are optional and should not be set up. Be sure to keep them with the optionals.

7. The reference to "5" in 4.2f should be to 4.2e.

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## Tactical Combat Series

### Q&A

*Can night and Thermal sights be used to spot mortar fires at night or through smoke?*

I'd say no, but I do not have the experience with thermal sights needed to make a good determination. If you know better go ahead and do what's right. I feel all night vision devices are very poor for spotting artillery and mortar fire because there is no depth perception available. Adjusting indirect fire accurately at night is nearly impossible without good illumination and you have them for it.

*Do you ignore the normal smoke modifiers when using Thermal sights? Use the mentioned modifier for Point fires and nothing at all for Area targets?*

Yes that is correct. Area fires are not modified because if the vehicle can identify the right hex in the smoke and observe its shot well (it can and does with thermals), that's good enough to give full effect to the fire.

*How high off the ground are the drop aircraft in Force Eagle's War for purposes of AA fires?*

The aircraft are roughly 300 feet or 100 meters. It is a good low jump-where you count to four and impact!

*Can only Clear hexes be selected for drops? What happens if a unit drifts off-map or lands on a nonclear hex?*

Any hex may be selected for the drop. Units that drift off map are gone forever. Non-clear landing losses are ignored. Good troops will be able to steer their chutes around most obstacles and the resultant loss from landing in a city (etc.) will be limited to a few broken legs and ankles-not counting bruises and the occasional trooper hanging from a church-and will not impact the unit greatly. So, these are ignored.

*The hit number for an aircraft is 8. Is this modified by terrain? etc.? Can targets be engaged which are in smoke hexes? Can an aircraft attack multiple point targets in a single hex in one "run?" What is the definition of a run, anyway?*

The aircraft hit number is never modified, for terrain or any other reason. Targets in smoke may not be engaged by aircraft-the pilots cannot identify a clear target and are wary to waste their ordinance. (Note that AA fires, however, are allowed to fire out of smoke hexes. Multiple point targets may be engaged in one hex, in a single run, if the aircraft has a multiple capability (hit roll of 8 against four targets ... ) A run is defined as an attack against one hex using point and/or area fires up to the limit of the aircraft's capability. A plane could engage multiple hexes, with its different capabilities, but would have to be engaged by AA each time as they would be considered separate runs.

*How far can an observer be from a mortar or artillery round impact and still observe it?*

As far as visibility and LOS allow. There are no other restrictions. Visibility as determined by the weather or night (whichever is less.)

*Do suppressed or paralyzed units go out of Move Mode? When?*

Suppressed and Paralyzed units may change to Fire Mode from Move Mode during the Mode Determination Phase. They may never change from Combat to Move Mode.

*If two units are adjacent to one another and one is assaulted, does the other unit get to Overwatch Fire? When is this resolved?*

Overwatch fire triggers occur when the moving unit finishes moving into a hex. Therefore, overwatch fire would be allowed, but only after the assault combat is resolved assuming the attacker is still in the assault hex when the dust settles!

*An overrunning or assaulting unit is running into the target hex on a road. When the combat begins, does the firer (the defender) get to use the "road moving" benefit for the fire-even though it says "for overwatch only?"*

Yes, the road moving modifier is allowed in this circumstance, even though the table is telling you it isn't. The tables were drawn up as they are because I needed a clearcut time when a unit could "absolutely, positively" be identified as moving on the road. Overwatch fit the bill, hence the rule caveat. Unfortunately, there are other instances (the above) where the units are definitely road moving at a given instant. So, the modifier should be used then, also. The problem confronted in design was what to do with units during the Suppressive Fire Phase which just happen to be on a road hex-are (were) they road moving? Are they still? To avoid those types of arguments the above "overwatch" attachment was made to the modifier.

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## Tactical Combat Series

### Game Errata

#### 2-01 Bloody 110th

1. Add the 38th PzJgBn (all) to the Historical Order of Arrival to the other units arriving at 0200, 17 Dec 44. The 273 Flak did not enter the map is correct in not being on the Order of Arrival.
2. Only one German Bridge may be built during the game. If a bridge allows the use of Areas 3 and 4, the player need not wait to reduce Hosingen before using Area 3 when the bridge is up. Hosingen only makes units wait which are trying to enter Areas 4 or 5.
3. 2 PG Regimental troops, 2x Gw38(t), enter with 212 PG in the Historical Order of Arrival.
4. One 38th Pioneer Platoon was printed without a morale. It has the same morale as the others in its company (5.)

#### 2-02 Objective: Schmidt

1. Teaching Scenario #4, Forward Observer, ignore the portion of the U.S. Victory Condition that calls for occupation of all of Vossenack.
2. Scenario 3: Ignore the German 150mm Artillery ammo supply. It is not needed.
3. Scenario 5: Under German Artillery Batteries Available, I/ 843 should instead be the 1/4/89.
4. The German Fus/275th should have morale boxes for each company, 1 through 4, instead of just one box for the battalion.

#### 3-01 Force Eagle's War

1. Two of 2/E's ITV's were printed with the same info on the front and back. The backs of these units should read P B 15, like the others.

2. modern Expansion rule 3.3c is in error. The T-80 may fire an AT-8 or its main gun during a single fire-never both-and this dual system does not free it from the standard "one shotperunit rule." Thanks to D. Demko for bringing this to our attention.

## **2-03 Omaha**

### Counters:

1. The Panzer Lehr Mk V's should have a defense of 4 and movement of 18.
2. One mortar platoon in 4/1/915 and M/3/116 is incorrect on the back-they should read A A 4.
3. An MG section in H/2/18 is incorrect on the back-should read A A 5.
4. The M3 in D[745 with A A 6 on the back should read the same as the other M3's.
5. One of the Recon platoons in the 1 st ID Recon Company is listed as A B on the back, should be A A.

### Rule :

1. Scenario 9 lists Panzer Lehr's artillery as 105mm, it should be 150mm and the ammo for the Germans should also be this type.
2. Add the following to the German Variable Reinforcement Table in scenario 1:

The dice roll result of 5-6 on the Reinforcement Table should read 1/352 PJ or 2/352 PJ. The German player has his choice of one of these units if one is already in play, he gets the other on a later roll of 5 or 6.

3. Pill Boxes are never considered dug in for terrain effects. All the Pill Boxes on maps A and B are used when determining the survival roll modifier. Pill Boxes do not get the benefit of "being stacked with infantry" on the AT Roll Table--unless an actual infantry unit is present in the pill box's hex.
4. Fortified Zone effects and other terrain effects are cumulative. The net modifier for terrain on a pill box in the open should be 0. Note that PB's are not considered AT Guns for terrain effects-they act like immobile tanks.
5. Artillery vs. Rocket Pits on the Artillery vs. Point Target Table: Rocket pits are assumed to have a defense rating of more than 2 and no modifier is applied for the reason of "weak defense."



6. LCT(R) fires whose center hex drifts off-map or into the sea are lost and of no effect. There is no effect for the "edge" of a rocket fire which a player might argue is still on the beach. If it goes out to sea, it is all lost. Let's keep it simple.
7. PB squads are considered dug in--in the hex their Pill Box was in--if they are in fire mode. If they move from that hex, they lose that status.
8. The Shingle modifier (-2) is in addition to the normal terrain effects of the hex the target is in--i.e. open.
9. AT Rolls against Pill Boxes at ranges one or less are allowed. Range two is not.
10. Leaders land with any of their own units: CO 1/16 lands with any unit of 1/16, CO 16 RCT would land with any unit of the 16 RCT, etc. Note the leader selection section on page 7 and the leaders who are to be in the pool. In one map scenarios, divide the number of leaders to be drawn by 2, round up.
11. Change the headings of the Pill Boxes Remaining Modifier when playing one map landing scenarios, use the following:

<b>Existing Headings</b>	<b>0-5</b>	<b>6-13</b>	<b>14-20</b>	<b>21 or more</b>
Scenario 3	0-2	3-5	6-8	9 or more
Scenario 4	0-3	4-8	9-12	13 or more

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## Operations #3:

### Large Cover (slow: 84K)

At The Gamers Fall Retreat, September 1991

Top: Into the Wilderness! Dave Powell, left and Al Wambold, right duke it out with the Bloody Roads South prototype.

Bottom: The Guderian's Blitzkrieg brain sweat left to right is: LTC Dave Benjamin, Dean Essig and Owen Fuller in the marathon playtest of GB.



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