Hold the Line '39

An Operational Megagame

by Paul Howarth

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Timetable for the day

0900-0930	Arrival, Booking In
0930-0945	Plenary Briefing
0945-1100	Planning Game & Military Exercises
1100-1130	Day 1 – 45min turn
1215-1245	Day 2 – 30 min turn
	Game continues with 30 min turns until:
1615-1645	Debriefing
1645-1715	Clear Up and Leave

We **may** play an additional turn if it would add to the game. Please bear this in mind when arranging travel

Once begun, the game will move ahead at without pause apart from tea breaks.

Within that time players will need to complete their tasks whilst communicating effectively.

The Venue

Endcliffe Hall, S10 3EU, an Army Reserve Centre to the west of the centre. As it's an operational base, we will have someone on the gate to let you in from **9.00am** - **please don't arrive before then as we'll be having a Control briefing**. Tea, coffee and soft drinks will be provided throughout the day and Broomhill shopping arcade is on the way to make sure you have enough sustenance.

CAR - There is car parking available in the grounds. We may have to move cars afterwards, but there is a lot of on free suitable street parking after 5pm.

TRAIN/TAXI - It's about 10 minutes in a taxi from Sheffield Central - anyone who is in that situation, wants to share and in the absence of a copy of the Guardian is advised to carry a copy of the attached sheet by the taxi rank around 9.20am

TRAIN/BUS - A 120 Bus service runs from the bus station/Pond Street across the the train station at 8.53, 9.03, 9.11 and 9.19. You're travelling to Ranmoor, getting off just before Thornbury Hospital and it's about 20 minutes.

DRESSING UP: This is not normally an expectation at megagames and given the venue and subject of this game, I would ask that you leave the uniforms at home for the day.

PHOTOS: will be taken on the day for social media, Pennine Megagames and the Story-living Games website - please let us know if you don't want your photo taking.

Game Expectations

We want everyone attending Pennine Megagames events to enjoy the experience, no matter the outcome of the game. Key to this is recognising the responsibility we ***all*** have for ensuring this happens as part of a social contract. People have many different reasons for enjoying megagaming and come to the day with a range of expectations. Please bear this in mind when playing or as part of the Control team. The day is long and can be confusing, frustrating and stressful; don't underestimate the value of taking time out or asking for advice in dealing with a situation.

As an attendee you can expect:

- A game which someone has laboured over for many hours, with the aim of providing fun for everyone involved on the day.
- The opportunity to ask questions in advance and also on the day, in the form of a game briefing.
- A Control team who've been briefed on the game in advance, are supportive of one another and committed to helping provide a positive experience for all.
- Someone to talk to privately if you're not enjoying yourself or being made to feel uncomfortable - Player Liaison, who will be identified during the game briefing.

In return, we all expect:
Respect for one another – Confrontation rarely resolves issues and we have a Control team to help address them. Abusive, overly harsh, consistently derogatory, insulting, or intentionally demeaning behaviour of any kind will not be tolerated by Pennine Megagames. This behaviour may take the form of verbal or physical expressions, or any other behaviour directed at attendees.
Respect for privacy – Good photos can be a great way to promote the hobby and we encourage them at events. However, please respect the wishes of other Participants regarding their desire not to be included in photographs, video and other recordings. The opportunity to identify themselves as such will be given to all attendees at the start of the day.

This also includes whether they are amenable to being tagged by name in such recordings on the internet (for example, in a photograph posted on a social networking site).

Respect for others' time and effort - if you can't make it or are running late, let game control know ASAP, so your role can be reassigned or changes made. Feedback offered should be constructive.

Respect for personal space - megagames are non-contact. Although there are elements of Live Action Roleplay (LARP) activity at times, there is never a need for physical contact.

Respect for boundaries - Dressing up is optional and in some cases there may be guidance from the designer on what is appropriate and costume choices are not an invitation for inappropriate comments. Drinking alcohol, if specifically permitted, should not impact on others' experience of the day. One person's exuberant roleplay is another's aggressive shouting. Be prepared to moderate language and behaviour, particularly with younger attendees or in a public space.

Consequences
These expectations are part of the Code of Conduct. If the Control team become aware of attendees demonstrating poor behaviour and a lack of respect, in person or online, they will speak to the individual(s) concerned to resolve the situation appropriately. Poor behaviour will not be tolerated for any reason and the Pennine Planning committee reserve the right to ask attendees to leave games and even suspend them from attending future Pennine events until the issue is resolved satisfactorily. See the Code of Conduct for role-specific guidance and more information on sanctions.

Cast List

Control Team:

Paul Howarth, Tess Matthews, David Sweeney, Tony Morphet, Ken Hay

German High Command

von Brauchitsch – Keith Wright

Keitel – John Sharp

Halder – Nick Wright-Carter

Jodl – Amelia Sharp

Army Group North - Von Bock – Simon Guard

4th Army - von Kluge – Frank Tippin, Staff Officer – James Smith

3rd Army - von Küchler – John Powney, Staff Officer – Andrew Parkin

Army Group South - Von Rundstedt – Chris Chester

8th Army - Blaskovitz – Jonathan Fulcini, Staff Officer – Howard Halliday

10th Army - von Reichenau – Alan Marshall, Staff Officer – Robin Murray

14th Army - List – Marcel Nijenhof, Staff Officer – Pete Sizer

Poles - High Command & Air Force

Kasprzycki – James Barber

General Staff – Matt Tippin, Tom Halliday, Alex Lazenbury

Karpaty Army – Fabrycy – James Titterton

Kraków Army – Szylling – Graham Tasker

Łódź Army- Rómmel – Phillip Howarth

Modlin Army - Krukowicz-Przedrzymirski – Robert Hetmanski

Pomorze Army – Bortnowski – Dean Heathcote

Poznań Army - Kutrzeba – Rory Gurdon

Prusy Army – Biernacki – Simon Bowers

Warszawa Army – Czuma – Daniel Bürkle

Designer's Notes

It's now 80 years since the term 'Blitzkrieg' ('foolish' according to Hitler) became widely known after the invasion of Poland. Operational games are my favourite type of megagame and unfortunately in short supply, so I thought it was about time I designed one myself to mark the anniversary and also try out some new ideas I've been mulling over after working with Rob Cooper to bring 'Not Over By Christmas' up North. It was tempting to try and develop a double blind game, with a completely hidden map, but this usually requires a large number of umpires to adjudicate and feedback, often with significant 'lag' between orders and resolution. For many megagamers this is a feature, not a flaw, but bearing in mind a desire to encourage more people to try operational games, an open map has been chosen for this run. Also, when you spend time and money on a map and playing pieces, I do think it's a shame that players rarely see the fruits of your labours.

Common perceptions of the German armed forces in early years of the Second World War involve a well-oiled machine, running rings around the enemy and overcoming all odds through aggressive exploitation and combined arms. In recent years various myths have been addressed, leading to a more realistic appraisal of German capabilities. The game will try to present some of the problems faced by commanders on both sides, in a contest which should be a little more even than conventional wisdom suggests. The trial game 'Czech Mate '38' last year provided an opportunity to run the system through and make some tweaks.

Open maps themselves, of course, present their own challenges, including enough familiarity with rules to move turns along quickly, the inability of umpires to adjudicate most likely outcomes rather than fight out every single combat, as well as fog of war, hidden movement and what is known as 'friction' – the difference between what a commander intends happening and what actually happens when plans meet reality. This can be replicated to a degree through using several layers of command.

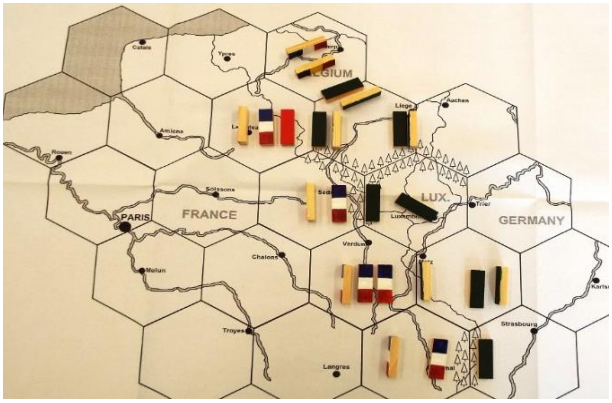
Blockspiel

The original inspiration for this system came from watching 'A Bridge Too Far' and other films featuring map rooms with great big, painted wooden blocks and national flags on maps, often with some token German for effect and subtitles, e.g. "Wo ist PATTON?!" The visual effect appealed to me as a starting point.

In addition, wooden blocks have become more popular in a number of relatively recent games. Richard Borg used them in the Commands and Colours series with a hex map, usually to fight a full ancient or Napoleonic battle and using stickers to differentiate unit types, with relatively simple rules. The system and other wargames has also influenced my thinking on Command Points and dice.

I must also credit my brother Phillip's game 'Megamunda' for implementing a faster combat resolution system, with one roll to determine both success and effects.

At the smallest skirmish level there are games such as Urban Operations, modelling modern warfare and adding a layer by rotating blocks to show different strengths. I then started to think about using all the sides of a block to try and reduce clutter on the map.



I've also been influenced by games such as Phil Sabin's 1914 (above right, with wooden Jenga pieces from a run by Bob Cordery). Whilst I felt more detail was required for a megagame with corps commanders in it, the idea that tracking individual strength points was 'below their pay grade' and could also speed up play was worth trying. Likewise, combat resolution has been kept deliberately simple, with the assumption that lower-level commanders are doing the best they can. There are a limited number of cards in play which will represent those times when it's not the case.

I'm also aware that the game for the land commanders is often more involved than that of the air commanders, so in this game the respective high command players will take on this latter responsibility once the game begins. As ever, there's a compromise between trying to replicate actual command situations and ensuring players have a good day. For this reason too, political roles will be played by Control, due to the limited role for them within the timeframe of the game. This will also apply to other countries, such as France, Britain and the Soviet Union. A broad outline of their respective viewpoints at the start of the conflict will be found in the briefing.

The main body of the game covers the military operations by both sides in which the outcome is entirely dependent on player decisions. There is a historical baseline against which to measure success and the key for all players is as much about teamwork and good communication as it is about strategic brilliance.

With thanks to Rob Cooper, Tony Morphet, Pete Sizer and Pennine Megagames for advice, playtesting and the regular application of common sense when I get carried away with another new idea.

Paul Howarth

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The Chain of Command

This game focuses on military decisions as much as possible and therefore in this game you are part of a chain of command which will need to be observed as far as possible. You can disagree with senior commanders but you may not wilfully disobey them without consequence. The game simulates a real military hierarchy and will allow negative consequences for failure or disobedience.

This means that, as in real life, no commander has a completely free hand to do as they like. National political authorities (represented by Control) have the power to replace formation commanders. This might be done by moving a new player into the role from another team, or by swapping roles within the team. Sacking like this isn't done for being unlucky or losing a battle. It is done for obvious incompetence or blatant insubordination. If you like your role, the best way to hang onto it is to do a good job.

Hold the Line '39 - Setting the Scene

Game Setting

Choosing this campaign is in part due to wanting to run Second World War games on the 80th anniversary – if anyone is still interested in 2025 I'm rather tempted to do the Reichswald, a Soviet race for Berlin or campaigns in Hungary. However, I also think Poland offers possibilities for re-writing history a little. As with the Czech Mate game, this period pits two armies still relying on marching infantry, horses and railways to achieve their aims. The Germans did not have it all their own way and unfortunately for the Poles, a mismanaged counter attack deprived them of the opportunity to inflict a serious reverse on the advancing invaders. The Poles lack of military investment in the 1930s is reflected in some of the mechanics though and they have the harder job. The invasion would have started slightly earlier too, but for Polish-British Common Defence Pact and so there will be the opportunity for some decisions to make. The later invasion of Poland by the Soviet Union is beyond the timeline of this game and so the focus will be on the first fortnight.

Game Structure

The game will start with a split briefing. Map commanders will be able to run through some sample combats and confirm assumptions. They will start the game with approximately a dozen units at most, with reinforcements to follow. As it's an operational game with a very limited timescale, political effects will be introduced by Control.

High Command will be asked to make a number of limited decisions which will have an impact on timescales, available resources, reinforcements and some capabilities. Whilst Control adjudicate the impact of decisions, national teams will be able to make final plans all together before the game starts. High Command will also run through the air game.

After that the game will run through without team times. However, each side will have the option of calling one 20 minute tea break each at any point and game control will retain the option of insisting on a further one. This worked well at Czech Mate and turns tended to rattle along around the 20-25 minute mark after that.

As it's an open map game with a fast tempo, the fog of war and logistics are more difficult to replicate than in a closed system. However, army corps headquarters will be the only markers at the start of the game until recce identifies component units, there will be dummy units and the use of command counters does limit commanders, forcing them to prioritise. The air game mainly focuses on recce, logistics interdiction and terror bombing (if you're a shabby Nazi), with limited opportunities for effective ground support.

Team Structure

I want to make life harder for the Poles so the Germans will operate in five army teams, most of three players and a high command. Army commanders will be able to provide regular liaison between high command and the map and provide more detail on what is happening. It also allows players to take a break if necessary.

The Poles will have around seven single-player army commands at the start, with limited liaison opportunities between them and high command which should restrict the ability to allocate resources effectively to counter-attack. As the campaign develops they might well need to create new units and find commanders from the high command team or re-allocate players.

Game Overview and Principles Behind Mechanics

- Each turn will consist of alternate movement and combat, with initiative (who goes first) decided separately on the map. Each side will have a set number of initiative cards at the start of the game which they commit to seize the initiative each turn. They do not know how many their opponent has. Polish players will struggle to win the initiative on more than the odd occasion. Accept this.
- Hidden movement and maps adds greatly to both the fog of war and logistics of running a game. Instead, dummy units and deploying only corps markers initially should highlight the need for recce and encourage a degree of caution.
- Command and Control are crucial to success on the battlefield. Units without orders will be passive unless an umpire rules otherwise. Commanders will have limited information and capacity in a confused situation. Therefore they will use command points to activate and re-order units. The number of points will vary between players but there are unlikely to be enough for every unit to be doing something each turn. The planning cycle for prepared attacks in particular will occupy a good number of tokens. Plan ahead and make sure your superiors or underlings are aware.
- As Army and Corps commanders, there will be a minimum of record-keeping relating to regiments and their ability to fight. It is assumed that there is a replacement system in place for units so there is no tracking of 'hits' or 'steps'. Regiments (infantry) and Battalions (armour), as the lowest units represented, are fit to fight or not and can be destroyed as viable units. The main consideration will be their 'stance' (attack/defence/move/exploit) and whether the unit is fit to fight (Disordered or not). Disordered units are weak and vulnerable.
- Commanders must decide for themselves whether divisions (rather than regiments) are fit for the front-line or need replacing. Reserves are important in this game. If you have assembled your units correctly, secured local superiority and have terrain in your favour, then you should have a very high chance of success.
- Although it is a commonly accepted 'rule' that attackers need odds of 3:1 to likely secure victory, the statistics of those such as Trevor Dupuy do not seem to back this up and other issues should be considered. http://www.dupuyinstitute.org/blog/2016/07/11/trevor-dupuy-and-the-3-1-rule/
- What will be a crucial factor for commanders is the use of terrain, artillery support in the attack/defence and motorised troops in exploiting breakthroughs.
- Supply will be heavily abstracted within the 'command point' mechanism given the time represented in game. Infantry troops can march regardless, but a key issue will be fuel for motorised troops and ammunition for attacks and artillery. High Command will allocate command points to Army Group teams to distribute further. These will be fed into the game through identified supply routes which have a limited capacity. Corps Commanders must decide which resources to bring in for divisions and how to allocate them.
- 'Zones of Control' are a common feature in many wargames which use hexes, but are not a major feature of Hold the Line, a historical campaign which saw very fluid lines and operations. In this game, the commander must decide whether to concentrate his forces for movement or attack, or spread them to cover more ground. If your units are caught in movement mode then they are weaker.
- Air power is not the major factor it becomes over the course of the 20th century with regard to the land battle. Having secured air superiority within a region, the main decision will be whether to focus on bombing lines of communication or urban areas. Close Air Support as we know it is not an effective option and tends to result in heavy air casualties. The air game is designed such that players should have time to learn how to develop a rhythm when it comes to operations.

Hold the Line '39 – The Forces

The main focus for this game is land forces and these are organised as follows:

Germany – 5 armies, each of 1-3 Army Corps Player numbers in brackets, with a high command team responsible for Luftwaffe during the game.

Head of OKH: Generaloberst Walther v. Brauchitsch **Chief of Staff:** Generaloberst Franz Halder Plus up to 2 staff officers: **Keitel, Jodl** High Command team to play air game whilst Army Commanders are running the ground war. **Luftwaffe:** 2 Luftwaffe Fleets				
Army Group North – von Bock Reserve: 1 Panzer, 3 Infantry Div.		**Army Group South – von Rundstedt Reserve: 1 Mountain, 5 Infantry Div.**		
3 Army	**4 Army**	**8 Army**	**10 Army**	**14 Army**
CO von Küchler.	CO von Kluge	CO Blaskovitz	CO von Reichenau	CO List
1 Panzer Div. 8 Infantry Div. 1 SS Mot. Regt.	1 Panzer 2 Mot. Infantry Div. 6 Infantry Div.	1 SS Mot. Infantry Div. 4 Infantry Div.	2 Panzer Div. 2 Light Div. 2 Mot. Infantry Div. 6 Infantry Div.	2 Panzer Div. 2 Mountain Div. 6 Infantry Div. 1 SS Mot. Regt.
Location: East Prussia	Location: Western Pomerania	Location: Northern Silesia	Location: Southern Silesia	Location: Moravia/Slovakia
OKH Reserve: Dependent on French decisions				

Poland – 8-10 independent armies and groups, with local border and fortress units added into them. These will be at varying strengths, depending on how much notice the Poles have.

• **Chief of Army:** General of the Army Kasprzycki + 2 staff officers High Command team to play air game whilst Army Commanders are running the ground war. **Polish Air Force:** 6 Air Regiments (3 Mixed, 1 Fighter, 2 Bomber).
Players may take command of more than one smaller army. (Units in brackets will take longer to activate) Karpaty Army – Fabrycy 1 Mountain, 1 Infantry Division (Div) Kraków Army – Szylling 1 Mountain, 5 Infantry Div, 1 Mountain, 2 Cavalry Brigades (Bde). Lublin Army – Piskor 1 Motorised, 2 Infantry Brigades Łódź Army- Rómmel 4 Infantry Div, 2 Cavalry Brig. Modlin Army - Krukowicz-Przedrzymirski 2 Infantry Div, 2 Cavalry Bde. Pomorze Army – Bortnowski 5 Infantry Div, 2 Cavalry, 1 Reserve Bde. Poznań Army - Kutrzeba 4 Infantry Div, 2 Cavalry Bde. Prusy Army - Biernacki (+1 staff officer) 6 Infantry Div, 1 Cavalry Bde. Warszawa Army - Czuma (+1 staff officer) 11 Infantry Div. 1 Cavalry, 1 Infantry Bde. Operational Group Wyszków – Kowalski 3 Infantry Div. Operational Group Narew – Fijałkowsk 2 Infantry Div, 2 Cavalry Bde.
Army Reserve: Dependent on German decisions

The Map

These are the historical deployments and movements. As part of the pre-game is determining exactly when and where the Germans will attack, which will impact Polish preparations, it is anticipated that there will be some divergence. However, the location of German armies (even if their composition changes slightly) and **intended** Polish deployment areas is unlikely to change.

Non-Played Countries

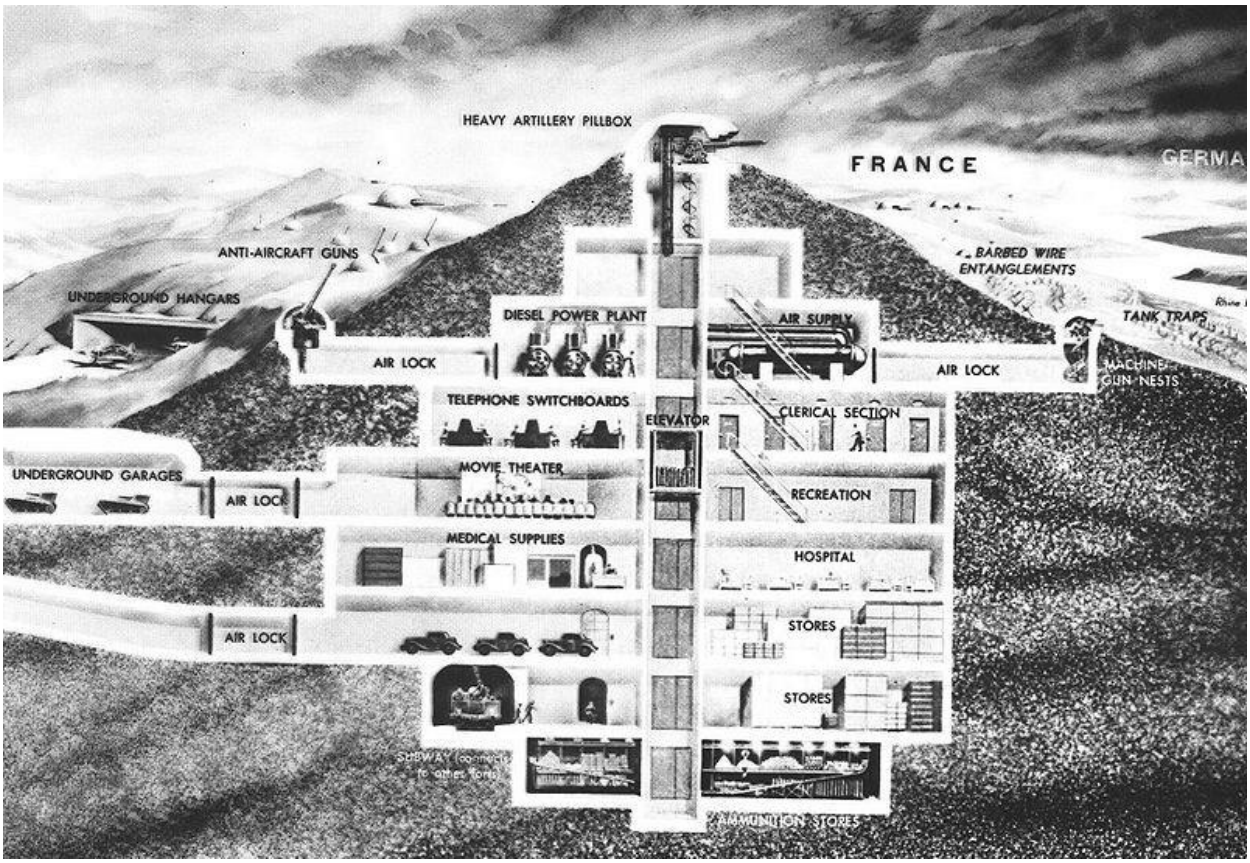
Pre-game, the German High Command must make a decision as to whether to go for a surprise attack or wait a few days to better prepare and ensure units are in place. Obviously this will have an impact on Polish preparations. Thus, the date of the invasion will be determined by German players. Following this there will be a number of set events and timescales adjudicated by Control:

France – will give Germany an ultimatum on Turn 1 and will go to war and order a general mobilisation on Turn 2/3 which can result in several million men under arms within a couple of weeks. The Maginot Line is partially manned and limited motorised forces have increased their readiness. Whilst they have not mobilised at this point, reconnaissance flights along the border seem to be increasing. They will be able to carry out military activity on the Western Front but are reluctant to venture too far without encouragement in the form of German setbacks and vulnerability.

Britain – will also be at war with Germany within a couple of turns. At this stage it can do little more than commence a blockade but there are talks about moving RAF squadrons to Northern France and supporting ground operations.

Russia – The Russo-German partitioning agreement is a secret at this stage and its consequences are unlikely to have much effect within the game's timeframe. However, certain agreed partition lines may result in German commanders being given possibly confusing orders directly from the Fuhrer.

There are a number of 'tripwires' and determining foreign responses, which may become apparent as the game develops. Sabotage, disruption and espionage by a disaffected population in parts will also be factored into events. These will not be outlined in advance.

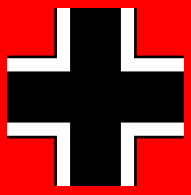
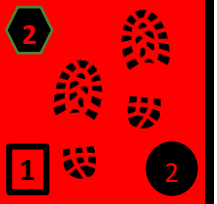
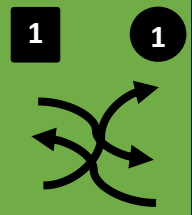
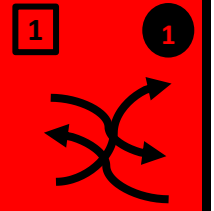
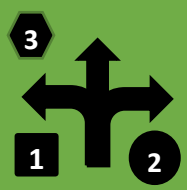


Key Information to bear in mind when planning and playing:

- Each turn represents 24 hours
- Each hex represents 7 miles
- 5cm Cubes (In Red and Green) represent 1 infantry, cavalry or armour regiment
- 30mm Counters represent artillery (in Red and Grey) or Polish Fortress and Border units
- The side which is uppermost on a cube or counter signifies its current **posture**. It requires command points to change this (except for units which become disordered as a result of combat).

- 1cm cubes represent command planning capacity and supplies reaching the right place at the right time. The regular supply of these may be disrupted during the game.
- Access to the map will be limited to tactical players so you should take advantage of the tea break to coordinate and discus next steps.
- High Command will allocate Command Points each turn. The Poles will have more pre-committed Command Points and additional Points will initially be committed to armies a turn in advance. This will give German commanders more flexibility in the opening stages at least.
- German armies are sub-divided into corps, for the Poles the lowest level is the army or group.
- The dice used at the map will not have numbers, but successes (s - ticks) or a critical success (k – a star).
- Polish and German units will use different dice to reflect better overall German capabilities. This may change during the game. Superior Polish units will use additional dice.

Blockspiel is a game system which utilises cubes to represent units, as well as their status, through stickers on each side. The six sides allow for a range of unit postures to be represented by rotating blocks. Each posture may cost Command tokens to enter, **per unit,** but some are free.

		**National Emblem** – These face the enemy most of the time. Combined with colour-coding of the blocks, it should make it easy to distinguish units on the map. And look good.
		**Movement mode** – the default for motorised or foot/cavalry. **Cost is 1 Command Token/motorised unit to move, free for infantry or cavalry**. Move OR Fight (successful attack allows ground to be taken). The **hex** indicates movement points per turn. The **square** indicates the number and colour of dice rolled in combat. The **circle** indicates the number of kills to destroy the unit in one combat.
		Unit Type and Identification - This normally faces its owning player. Units within an army are colour-coded to aid players and usually corps are sub-divided too.
		Prepared attack – **It costs 1 Command token/unit to prepare an attack.** This represents scouting, preparation and planning. Successful attacks allow units to occupy the hex attacked. The advantage is next turn it only costs 1CP for the whole hex to launch the attack. After launching a prepared attack (not defending if they are attacked first – this can represent a counter-attack too) they go into move mode.
		Dug In – Only available to infantry regiments who have not fought during the turn. **It costs 1 Command tokens/unit to Dig In**, in terms of time and resources. Dig in dice bonuses can be used in addition to fortress and terrain bonuses.
		**Disordered** – Losing units which are hit but not eliminated are disordered. If disordered units are hit again and lose then they are removed. It costs **2 Command tokens** and a 'success' or 'critical' in most cases on one dice to go into Movement Mode or Dug In. One additional command token (in advance) allows for a re-roll.
		**Exploit** – only an option for armour. Move AND FIGHT immediately. This allows units to breakthrough and exploit gaps in the enemy's front line and disrupt their command control by threatening headquarters and rear areas. It costs **1 Command Point to enter and 1 to move**. Units go into Movement Mode after carrying out an Exploit action).

Forces Represented

In this game each block represents one regiment, with three regiments usually representing a division (of around 10-14,000 men) and two or three per brigade (usually cavalry, who are weaker than infantry regiments). Each corps or army (group of divisions) will have a container to mark where its headquarters is and units deploy nearby.

Divisional Artillery is represented by red or green barrage markers (1 dice rolled per counter) and the number relates to the number of artillery units in a division. When 50%+ of units in a division/brigade have been destroyed then remove one artillery counter.

Additional resources and forces are represented by red, green or black counters. These are allocated by army and must spend a turn with Army HQ before being reallocated. They roll the appropriately coloured dice, **cost 1 CP to use** and are as follows:

Corps Artillery – Black: capable of rolling 1 or 2 dice, indicated on the counter. They cost a Command Point and may only fight in one combat per turn. They must be within 2 hexes of the Corps HQ.

Border Command Troops – Green squares incapable of movement but can slow the enemy.

Machine Gun Battalions – Green/Red counters.

Tanks/Armoured Trains – Poles only. Green counters.

You have a chance to destroy trains, tanks and MG counters when they are used in combat against you. Look at the score required – s (success), k (critical) or s/k (either) and roll this on a dice of your national colour.

Bridges – place in corps pots. May be placed at the end of movement within 2 hexes of the corps pot. They are committed when trying to assault across a major river if one is not already there. If successful, place them on the map, if unsuccessful they are destroyed.

In some cases units have been folded into one another to make a regimental block, particularly in the case of the Poles.

Hex Limits

This game uses hexes representing 7 miles to help regulate movement and combat. It also allows representation of some of the issues faced by commanders. Unit refers to a cube or HQ – border troop counters do not count. HQs are considered motorised and in movement mode at all time and include artillery and divisional logistics.

3 non-motorised units

2 units if at least one is motorised/armour (greater logistics 'tail')

Random Events & Card Play

A lot of megagames do make use of cards to represent the fortunes of war but they can slow things down and in this one I want to see how players respond to situations rather than having too much control over them. Umpires will have a random event generator, which will identify events by corps or armies.

The Land Game

Turn Order

- **INITIATIVE:** Each side on a map plays initiative cards face down.
- **COMMAND:** Corps Commanders allocate CP and artillery counters to hexes. Unallocated CP may be placed in Corps pots.
- **INITATIVE:** Reveal Initiative cards within each region. Previous turn winner wins ties.
- **ACTIONS 1:** Winning Player resolves in this order – Disordered units from last turn attempt to rally - Prepared Attacks – Other Attacks – Exploit (includes chance to disrupt HQs/attack disordered units)
- **ACTIONS 2:** Losing Player – Disordered units from last turn attempt to rally - Prepared Attacks – Other Attacks – Exploit (includes chance to disrupt HQs/attack disordered units)
- **MOVEMENT:** Winning player, then losing player take it in turns to move (this gives the opportunity for counter attacks)
- **POSTURE:** Both players change unit posture, if necessary with CP (prepare attack/dig in).

Initiative

Within each region on the map, initiative for actions will fluctuate. To provide some degree of uncertainty, at the start of each turn, both sides will commit initiative cards (numbered playing cards). These will be revealed part-way through the turn, when CP have been issued. You will have an allocation for each region initially, with a strategic reserve.

It is important to remember that choosing to change unit postures normally happens at the end of a turn, so commanders should plan ahead. It takes time to prepare an attack, dig in effectively or issue movement orders, particularly when the necessary support and logistics units are considered.

Command Points (CP) & HQs

This game does not focus too heavily on supply, given the short timescale and distances involved. Polish units will have access to supply depots and there are sufficient German stockpiles for a limited campaign. The limitations on commanders are represented by Command Points – small cubes in army colours. These represent both staff time and getting supplies to the right place at the right time along routes likely impeded by refugees and traffic heading both to and from the front.

Each German Corps/Polish Army will have a small container representing the HQ.

A Main Supply Route (MSR) is traced from table edge to German Corps HQs through friendly hexes with coloured stickers. Polish HQs need to be able to trace a line through friendly hexes to a named town. There will be a set limit on the maximum number of CP per army/town, marked on the map.

Units normally need to be within **two friendly hexes of their HQs or adjacent to the MSR** to receive CP from their HQ. (In mountains or across minor rivers they must be adjacent – large rivers require a bridge). Named Polish towns count as static HQs for CP and may give them to Corps HQ or units. Fortress and Border units are always in supply unless an event rules otherwise.

Corps HQ move 2 hexes/turn in the movement phase & extend/expand MSR with up to 3 stickers.

Note: if a Corps HQ is alone in a hex and has an enemy unit move adjacent with sufficient movement to enter its hex it must retreat one hex unless it has a friendly unit in the hex with it.

There is a limit to the number of Command Points available per army at any one time and unused ones can be kept within the Corps HQ to represent dumps and depots.

Actions Order

1. Disorder

Disordered Units from Last Turn – Rallying disordered units. Each unit has a value which must be rolled, indicated top left on the rally face of the cube, e.g. s (success),k (critical success), s/k (either). Players may use 1 CP allocated to the hex for a re-roll. Rallied units go into Movement mode.

2. Attacks

Prepared Attacks – **1 Command point per hex for all units in prepared attack mode**, plus any additional tokens for artillery support (1 dice per token, limit is given on the artillery counter). **Sequential attacks from multiple hexes are the default.** If you wish to attack from **two hexes simultaneously** (the maximum), this costs an **additional 2 tokens for the staffwork and briefings**. Units move from prepared attack to Movement Mode whether successful or not. After a successful attack which forces the enemy to retreat, all units involved may occupy that hex, even if disordered. Units in Movement Mode in the hex, may move forward and dig in at turn end for 1 CP. Note that they may be counter-attacked whilst in movement mode.

NOTE: Dug in Troops can gain an extra red/green dice per hex when attacked, by giving them 1CP.

Other Attacks – Units in Movement mode but **who are not moving** may choose to attack an adjacent hex at a cost of **1 Command token per unit**. *These attacks cannot be combined with a prepared attack,* but artillery may be committed as above. After a successful attack which forces the enemy to retreat, then all units involved in the attack may occupy that hex. They may not move again this turn.

Combat

Feedback suggests that many players like to roll dice, even if the enemy has the initiative, so in this game there will be opposed dice rolls to determine the outcome of battles, with a small number of modifiers. Players will generally use two type of dice, one their national colour and the other black.

Green (Polish), Red (German) and Black (Heavy Artillery/Armour) dice are used for different effects. Most units and divisional artillery use their national dice. Heavy artillery and some units in limited cases use the black dice. On each face of a unit cube it says which dice they use and how many in that posture.

Green Dice – 1 success face (tick). 1 critical success face (star)

Red Dice – 2 success faces (tick). 1 critical success face (star).

Black Dice – 1 success face (tick). 2 critical success face (star)

All dice in a combat are rolled together. Results are applied to both sides simultaneously.

Combat Modifiers

- **Artillery** - 1 green/red (divisional) or black (corps) dice per Command Point spent. An additional black dice if supporting dug-in troops (pre-registered targets/comms).
- **Combat across a minor river, in a town/forest** – 1 dice fewer for each armoured unit attacking, +1 Red dice to the defender. These are all cumulative factors.
- **Combat across a major river/fort/mountain/marsh** – 2 dice fewer for each armoured unit (river needs a bridge), +1 Red dice to defender, ignore withdrawal if you choose and ignore 1 success/critical at any point during combat. These are all cumulative factors. Fort hexes generate an additional 'free' red dice and are marked on the map.

Combat Results

FIRST, More successes than your opponent – you win. They take 1 hit. This will disorder one unit or destroy a disordered unit involved in the combat, **of your choice**. The front stabilises.

Double the successes of your opponent – you win. They take 2 hits (this may disorder two units or destroy one unit with a defence of 2) and must withdraw one hex unless in defences. Your choice.

THEN, in addition to the successes (and even if a draw), total the number of 'criticals'. If there are enough stars to destroy one or more units **involved in the combat (check the black circle)** they are removed immediately. BOTH sides can lose units due to hits and the **player inflicting hits chooses**. ***If you score criticals but not enough to destroy attackers, you may disorder one unit.***

If any special units (MG, Train, etc.) by your opponent are used, get a free roll to try to destroy them.

3. Exploit

Armour in Exploit mode may move through friendly units to contact enemy HQs and attack **disordered** units for at no CP cost. This does not count towards a hex limit but the unit must either force the enemy to retreat (automatic vs HQs) to occupy that hex or return to starting hex to laager and go into Movement Mode. Note that artillery cannot be used in exploit attacks.

4. Movement

1 Command token per motorised unit. Infantry & cavalry NONE

All uncommitted units in movement mode may now move without fighting. Disordered units may retreat **one hex** (no river crossing permitted, except by bridge).

Normal Terrain – 1 Movement Point (MP) per hex

Marsh/Forests – 2 Movement points per hex non-motorised, 3 for motorised.

Mountains – 2 movement points per hex and no motorised units unless through passes, only one non-mountain unit per hex, unless in fortresses.

Congestion – only two units in each hex when at least one is motorised, even if one is just passing through.

Tank reliability – Any tank unit which uses its full allocation of 4 MP or laagers after Exploiting rolls a dice. On a critical success the unit has suffered breakdowns and is now disordered.

Polish Fortress & Border counters do not move when in place and are always classed as dug in. Polish commanders have the option of combining some of these units to form new regiments.

5. Changing Posture

Players spend the Command Points remaining in hexes to change unit postures. This may no longer be possible, depending on what has happened during the turn and represents interrupted activity**.**

It costs 1 CP for a unit to change posture. Non-disordered units which have moved hex (including successful attack) may use CP from the Corps/Army pot if within range of HQ/adjacent to MSR.

The Air Game

This is heavily abstracted, partly because it is just one task for the High Command each turn. Whilst the Luftwaffe has played a part in the Spanish Civil War, the air-ground cooperation which becomes a feature of 20th century warfare is still very difficult to manage. Accordingly the impact of air combat (beyond establishing superiority) will be to focus on the bombing of supplies, rear areas and troop movements. There will also be some dummy blocks available in the game, so air reconnaissance can be useful.

Aircraft are represented by a counter, labelled for modern or older and aircraft type.

Counters are colour coded by nationality. Given the size of the regions it is possible to transfer groups/regiments between regions, but it takes a full turn to despatch them and they go one Rear Area Box lower to account for unfamiliarity and relocating staff.

There are four standard target choice for bombers – there will be boxes on the map showing the precise impact of their activities, but in essence:

- Lines of Communication (limits Command tokens for land players and possibly Initiative)
- Cities (Germans only, but will have political consequences)
- Airfields (Makes it harder to repair withdrawn aircraft)
- Recce (Enables land players to identify enemy unknown enemy units)

The Board

There will be two air zones on one board, so that the both sides can play head to head. The diagram below shows the German bottom half of a single air zone board, for clarity.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="6">Attrition →</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Modern Fighters
FAST & FRESH</td><td colspan="4">Any Fighters
FRESH</td><td colspan="4">All Fighters
WORN</td><td colspan="4">All Fighters
SPENT</td><td rowspan="5">RECOVERY CHECK
No combat possible

All units which enter roll 1d6 at the start of the turn

1-3 Broken Up
4-6 To Rear Area Box 1 at</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Hit on a 4, 5, 6</td><td colspan="4">Hit on a 5 or 6</td><td colspan="4">Hit on a 6</td><td colspan="4">Hit on a 6</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Modern Bombers
FAST & FRESH
AA - Damaged on a 6</td><td colspan="4">All Bombers
FRESH
AA – Damaged on a 5+</td><td colspan="4">All Bombers
WORN
AA – Damaged on a 4+</td><td colspan="4">All Bombers
SPENT
AA – Destroyed on a 4+</td></tr>
<tr><td>LOC</td><td>Cities</td><td>Airfields</td><td>Recce</td><td>LOC</td><td>Cities</td><td>Airfields</td><td>Recce</td><td>LOC</td><td>Cities</td><td>Airfields</td><td>Recce</td><td>LOC</td><td>Cities</td><td>Airfields</td><td>Recce</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Rear Area Box 5</td><td colspan="4">Rear Area Box 4</td><td colspan="4">Rear Area Box 3</td><td colspan="4">Rear Area Box 2</td><td>Rear Area Box 1</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">← Recovery</td></tr>
</table>

Air Game Instructions

These processes are resolved by both sides simultaneously and aircraft travel in a clockwise direction as they suffer from attrition and recover

- **RECOVER:** Move rear area boxes (out of combat units) to left. Start with Rear Area Box 1 to 2. Finish with WITHDRAWN to Rear Area Box 1. Don't forget, only Modern Fighters and Bombers can move into Rear Area Box 5.
- **ROTATE:** Place any units you wish to rest in the Rest Box behind them and bring out replacements. Simultaneous, column by column. Players use boxes to keep spare units in.
- **COMBAT:** Roll for fighters first, counter by counter, column by column. Total number of hits inflicted as you go.
- **AIR LOSSES:** For each hit you score you have damaged one enemy unit. This results in them moving to the next attrition box along, e.g. from FRESH to WORN. You choose fighter or bomber. If there are no enemy units in either row, you may go onto the next column.

  NOTE: Take the first casualty from the All Fighters/Bombers FRESH column first, then WORN, then SPENT, etc. i.e. you need to inflict up to three casualties (if all boxes are filled) before you can start to take FAST & FRESH modern fighters/bombers down.
- **AA LOSSES & BOMBING:** These are rolled before bombing counts. Hit bombers move straight to the next box. Note where you wish to commit them within your area. They will impact on the next turn.
- **ATTRITION:** Move ALL engaged units one column to the RIGHT due to regular attrition. Start with SPENT to WITHDRAWN box, then work left to avoid confusion.

Air Superiority

- Count up the number of committed **fighters** in the two fresh columns for each side. If one side has double the number of others, they have air superiority. If you have air superiority then any hits on the enemy automatically send them to WORN.

Air Support

- **Two** FRESH LOC aircraft can be used for **one** additional red/green dice next turn, at the cost of 1 CP from the high command/map players. This dice can be used to try to destroy a bridge or in a combat.
- The aircraft go straight to a recovery check, adding +1 to the dice roll. (it's dangerous for the aircraft and they're still not very good at coordinating at this point).

Notes to Players

- Counters represent aircraft having an impact on the war. They do not necessarily represent a specific unit, nor every aircraft sortieing on that day.
- It is very tempting to pile all your aircraft into an early offensive but you will only be able to manage this for a few days and then suffer significant lag whilst units recover. This is a combination of losses, crew fatigue and limited supplies/spare parts.
- It is far better to try and hold some reserves back so that you can contest the skies and maintain a steady bombing campaign to keep disrupting the enemy.
- Remember that all aircraft in the SPENT box will have to roll for recovery at the end of the turn automatically due to attrition. Try and avoid letting too many get to that stage.

HOLD THE LINE '39 REFERENCE SHEET

TURN ORDER

INITIATIVE: Each side on one map plays initiative cards face down.
COMMAND: Command points allocated to **hexes**, excess may be placed in Corps pots until next turn.
INITATIVE: Reveal initiative cards within each region. Previous turn winner wins ties.
ACTIONS 1: Winning Player resolves in this order – Disordered units attempt to rally - Prepared Attacks – Other Attacks – Exploit
ACTIONS 2: Losing Player – Disordered units attempt to rally - Prepared Attacks – Other Attacks – Exploit
MOVEMENT: Winning player, then losing player take it in turns to move
POSTURE: Both players change unit posture, if necessary with command points.

Hex Limits

2 if at least one unit is motorised/armour, otherwise 3 non-motorised units.

Movement Mode	**No cost** to enter (default mode) Foot troops: no cost to move Armour/Motorised troops: 1 CP to move If attacking no further movement possible beyond occupying attacked hex.	**Movement** **Normal Terrain** – 1 MP/hex **Forests** – 2 MP/hex non-motorised. **Mountains/Forests** – no motorised units and only one non-mountain unit/hex, unless on roads/in fortresses **Road Bonus** – any movement along a road adds one hex per unit. Exploiting units must be able to enter a hex to combat/force HQs to retreat.
Exploit Mode	**1CP/unit** to enter, may move through units. Armoured troops only. **1 CP to move**, **free attack (no artillery).** Unless they win combat and take ground, must return to starting hex.	
Prepared Attack	**1 CP/unit to enter** This represents scouting, preparation and planning. Successful attacks allow units to occupy the hex they are attacking, even if disrupted.	**Combat** Units must have MP to enter a hex to attack. 1CP for all prepared units in a hex to attack 1CP per unit for those in movement mode Prepared and unprepared may not combine. **Prepared Attacks first - may occupy ground** Movement Mode Units/Exploit 1CP/Unit Multiple hex attack +2CP/Attack Small River ignore withdrawal unless at least 1+ defender is destroyed. Fort/Large River ignore 1 success/critical at any point during combat and may ignore retreat.. Defences +1 Black Dice **Count Successes**. Loser takes 1 hit. This disorders one unit or destroy a disordered unit involved in the combat of winner's choice. The front stabilises. If winner ≥ 2x successes each loser is disordered and must withdraw one hex unless in . **THEN,** in addition to the successes (and even if a draw), total the number of 'hits'. If there are enough criticals to destroy one or more units involved in the combat (check the black circle) they are removed immediately – if not enough then at least one critical disorders an attacking unit. BOTH sides can lose units due to critical successes and the player inflicting hits chooses. **ROLL FOR LOSS** of Special Counters (MG, Train, etc.)
Dug In	**1CP/unit to enter** Only available to infantry regiments who have not **fought** during the turn. May spend 1 CP for an additional red/green dice when attacked. Dug in units take disorder and hits before other units in the hex.	
Disordered	**Units enter this after losing in combat** (if players leave units out they avoid this). **Spend 2CP** & roll one dice per unit after initiative and get the required success/critical (top left). Enter Movement Mode or Dug In if successful. Commander may commit one CP to re-roll if necessary (must be allocated to the hex during placement). Disordered units may move 1 hex to the rear.	