

BALKANS 1944



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CREDITS

Design: Javier Romero
Managing Game Developer: Doug Johnson
Playtest: Ken Brown, Keith Powell, Terry Rooker, Paul Riegel-Green, Stephen Wagstaff
Proofers: Hans Korting, Michael C. Neubauer, Brendan Whyte
Map Graphics: Joe Youst
Counters: Nadir Elfarra
Production: Richard Aguirre
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These rules use the following color system: **Red** for critical points such as errata and exceptions, **Blue** for examples of play. Check for e-rules updates to this game at www.worldatwarmagazine.com/waw/e-rules

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Balkans '44 is a simulation of the Soviet offensive across the Balkans in the late summer and fall of 1944. The Soviet-Yugoslav player must conquer as much territory as possible within a limited period, while the German Hungarian-Croatian forces must try to delay or halt the Soviet advance as much as possible.

1.1 Game Scale

Each game turn represents ten days. Each hexagon is 30 miles (50 kilometers) from side to opposite side. Units are corps, divisions, brigades, or equivalents with smaller specialized units.

1.1.1 Rule Abbreviations

The below are common abbreviations used in the rules:

1d6: Used when referring to the number of dice to roll.

DR: Die Roll

DRM: Die Roll Modifier

GT: Game Turn

OOS: Out of Supply

USS Hex: Ultimate Supply Source Hex

VP: Victory Points

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2.0 COMPONENTS

A complete game of **Balkans '44** includes a 22×34-inch game map, this rule set, and a sheet of 176 ⅝-inch counters. Players must provide one six-sided die to resolve combat and other probabilistic game events.

2.1 Game Map

The map shows the Balkans and adjoining areas as they were in 1944. The national boundaries (gray lines) depict the New Order as imposed by the Axis after the Spring of 1941. A hexagonal grid (hexes) has been superimposed over the terrain features on the map to regulate the movement and positioning of the playing pieces. The hexagons are called hexes in the game rules.

Important: The victory point value of specific hexes is noted on the map.

Historical Note: The Transylvanian cities annexed by Hungary in 1940 show their Romanian and Hungarian names. Same for the northern Serbian city of Ujvidek/Novi Sad. The city of Ljubljana, annexed to the German Reich, shows its German name (Laibach).



East Front & Yugoslavia: The white and dashed orange line running from hex 0110 to hex 0701 shows the frontline between Soviet and Axis forces in late August 1944. The solid yellow line shows the pre-1941 border of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Note that pre-1941 Yugoslav border overlays the existing black borders, such that the area around Laibach belongs to the German Reich, the area around Novi Sad to Hungary, the area around Skopje to Bulgaria, the area around hex 1918, and hexes 2022 & 2021 to Albania, and 2820 to Greece.



Important: Zadar (hex 1428) is part of the Kingdom of Italy. Units from either side may enter Zadar during the game.

Turn Record Track & Replacement Chart: This is used to track the current game turn (GT) and provides the replacements each nationality receives that GT.

Terrain Key: Provides the player with a graphical reference for terrain and other map features.

Important:

- 1) All rivers on the map (no matter the width of the river) have the same effect on game play.
- 2) The only lake hexsides on the map that affect play are Lake Scutari (2020/2021) and Lake Balaton (0623, 0624 & 0723, 0722).

Terrain Effects Chart: Provides the players with the combat, movement, stacking and other information regarding the types of terrain on the map.

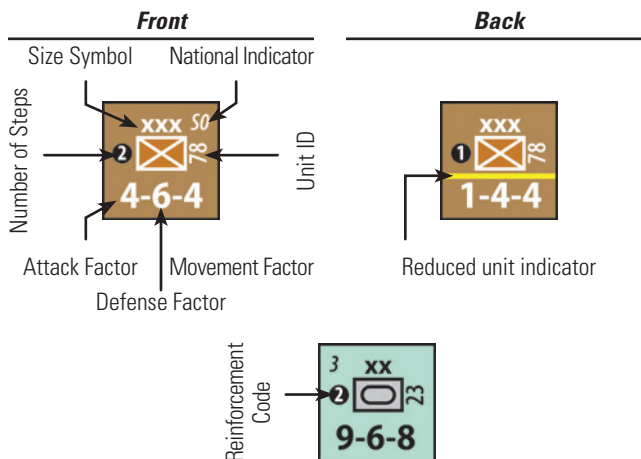
Regular Combat Results Table: Used by the players to resolve ground combat.

Guerrilla Attack and Counter Guerrilla Tables: Used by the players to resolve guerrilla and counter-guerrilla combat.

2.2 The Playing Pieces

There are two general types of playing pieces (counters); combat units and informational markers. Combat units are referred to as units.

2.2.1 Combat Units



Attack Factor: The unit's basic combat strength when attacking (10.0).

Defense Factor: The unit's basic combat strength when defending (10.0).

Movement Factor: The basic number of hexes through which a unit can move in a turn (9.0).

Number of Steps: The number of step losses the unit can suffer before being destroyed and moved to the dead pile (10.0).

Unit Identification: Each unit has a nationality, shown by its background color and one or two-letter abbreviation. Units also have a unique identifier.

Reinforcement Code: A number in the upper left-hand corner of units denote which turn the unit enters play as a reinforcement (13.10).

Partisan Units: Partisan units in guerrilla mode have special capabilities (6.0).

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Front (Regular Mode)



Unit Types:



Panzer or Tank
(Mechanized)



Panzer grenadier or Motorized Infantry
(Mechanized)



Infantry

2.2.2 Markers

There are two types of markers, support markers that enhance combat and other functions within the game and administrative markers that track game functions.



Air Support Marker



Special Forces Support (optional 16.4)

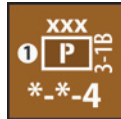


Naval Support
(optional 16.2)



Leader (optional 16.3)

Back (Geurrilla Mode)



Mountain Infantry



Partisans



Cavalry



Soviet Front HQ



Out of Supply Marker



Random Event Marker (14.0)



Game Turn Marker



Chetnik Force Marker (14.0)

⊠ Soviet (SO):

Regulars: White on Light Brown

Guards: White on Red

AA: Air Army

UKR: Ukraine

⊠ German (GE, AL, RO, YU): Black on Light Green

BlA: Blaue, Croatian

Cos: Cossack

FA: Feldausbildung (Field Training)

FG: Florian Geyer

FHH: Feldherrnhalle
(Hall of the Commanders)

Ha: Handschar (Scimitar)
Bosnian SS

J: Jäger (Light Infantry)

Ka: Kama SS Division

LFD: Luftwaffe Field Division

LW: Luftwaffe

MT: Maria Theresia

Pol: Polizei (Police)

PE: Prinz Eugen

Teu: Teufel (Devil) Croatian

Skan: Skandenberg. Albanian SS

Tgr: Tiger, Croatian

RSS: Russisches Schutzkorps
Serbien (Russian Infantry Corps
Serbia)

VG: Volksgrenadier

⊠ Romanian: White on Gold

CIAR: 1st Romanian Air Corps

M: Mountain Corps

⊠ Croatian (CR): Black on Blue

UA: Ustasha Army

⊠ Bulgarian (BU): White on Dark Brown

⊠ British (shown as Western Allies on counter sheet): White on Olive Green

SS: Special Service (Commandos)

⊠ Hungarians (HU): Black on Light Green

⊠ Albanian Partisans: White on Orange

NLA: National Liberation Army

⊠ Greek Partisans (GR): White on Green

OMM: Macedonia Group of Divisions

2.2.5 Sides

There are two sides in **Balkans '44**, the Soviets and Axis.

- The Soviet player controls the following nationalities:

Soviets and Soviet Guards

Albanian (regular and partisan)

Greek (regular and partisan)

Yugoslavian (regular and partisan)

Bulgarian (see 6.3 for Bulgarian activation)

- The Axis player controls the following nationalities:

German (this includes all units marked as GE, YU, RO, and AL)

Croatian

Hungarian

Romanian (Romanian units begin the game allied to the German side but may surrender and join the Soviet side (6.1)).

2.2.3 Unit Sizes

Combat unit size is the relative operational echelon of each combat unit.

XXXX: Front HQ

XXX: Corps

XXXX: Corps Group

XX: Division

2.2.4 Nationality

The nationality of a unit is identified by the abbreviations listed below and by the unique background colors of the counters.

Important: Throughout the rules, when reference is made to Axis RO, YU, AL, and GE units, it is referring to the Black on Green units and are part of the German army. These units are all referred to together as Axis units. If the nationality is spelled out (i.e., Romanian) the rule is referring to the units in their national colors.

⊠ Yugoslav Partisans (P): White on Brown

B: Bosnian

C: Croatian

Dal: Dalmatia

Pro: Proletarian

Slav: Slavonia

Ud: Udarni (Assault)

Zg: Zagreb

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3.0 HOW TO WIN

Victory is determined at the end of GT 10 (November 1944). Players must determine which side controls each victory point (VP) hex. (VP hexes are listed clearly on the map with yellow on black circles). There are 13 VP hexes worth a total of 21 VP.

2VP Example: Bucharest (hex 1308) is worth two VPs.

- Keeping track of who controls each hex is important when tracing supply (15.0) and victory (3.1). A side controls a hex if:
 - 1) A friendly unit occupies the hex; **or**,
 - 2) A friendly unit was the last unit that occupied or moved through the hex; **or**,
 - 3) The hex is not occupied by an enemy unit and is behind the current frontline.

Designer's Note: Players should use common sense when determining the frontline. In most cases it should be obvious if a unit is behind the frontline, if it is in question, treat control as in 1) and 2) above.

3.1 Determining Victory Points

Players must count the number of VP hexes controlled by the Soviet player.

- If the hex is controlled by Soviet, Yugoslav, Romanian, or Bulgarian units and can trace a line of supply to a Soviet supply source, the Soviet player receives the listed number of VP.

Important: A partisan unit in guerrilla mode cannot control a VP hex for victory determination purposes.

- If the VP hex is controlled by the Axis player, but that hex cannot trace a line of supply to an Axis supply source, the Soviet player receives one-half (round up) of the listed VP for that hex.

3.2 Determine Victory

The total number of VP awarded to the Soviet player determines the winner and the level of victory.

14 to 21 VP: The Soviet player wins a strategic victory. The war in Europe will end three months earlier than historically.

8 to 13 VP: The Soviet player wins an operational victory. The war will end historically.

7 or Fewer VP: The Axis player wins. The war in Europe is extended by two to three months.

4.0 SET UP

Set up according to the following general rules. Play proceeds according to the sequence given in section 5.0 for ten GTs (GT 1 through GT 10). The Axis player set ups first, followed by the Soviet player.

Important: Players must abide by all stacking restrictions.

4.1 Markers

- Place the game turn marker in the GT 1 box on the Turn Record Track.
- Place all event markers into an opaque container to create the event marker pool (14.0).

- Place all six Chetnik force markers into an opaque container to create the Chetnik marker pool (14.0).
- If not using any of the optional rules (16.0), set aside the five optional rule markers (Balkan air support, partisan navy, Tito, British comando brigade, and German parachute battalion).

4.2 Axis Set Up

All units that do not have a reinforcement code (2.2.1) are at start units.

- Place the LW, Hungarian, Croatia, and Romanian air support markers aside. They are available beginning on GT 1.
- Deploy all at start German "RO" and Romanian units on a frontline hex (0111–0802) with following restrictions:
 - 1) Set one "RO" Panzer and one "RO" Panzergrenadier division aside. These two units may be rebuilt by the German player using the procedures in 13.2.1.
 - 2) No more than two Romanian units may stack with German units.
 - 3) At least ten German units (of any type) must deploy on frontline hexes 0503 to 0802.
- Deploy all Hungarian units within Hungarian territory.
- Deploy all available German "YU" and Croatian units within the pre-1941 Yugoslavia territory. At least three units must be within three hexes of the Adriatic coast.
- Deploy the German "AL" division within Albanian territory.
- Place any three German "GE" units in Greek territory. Place all other "GE" units in the Greece Box on the map. These may enter the map as per rule 13.3.
- Place all nine Axis reinforcement units (reinforcement units have a turn number in their upper-left corners) in the corresponding box of the Turn Record Track in the corresponding box.

4.3 Soviet Set Up

All units that do not have a reinforcement code (2.2.1) are at-start units.

- Place all Soviet, Croatian, Hungarian, and Romanian air support markers aside. They are available beginning GT 1.
- Deploy (in support mode; "S" side up) the 2 UKR Front HQ in Chernovtsi (hex 0209).
- Deploy (in support mode; "S" side up) the 3 UKR Front HQ in Tiraspol (hex 0502).
- Deploy all other at-start Soviet nationality units to the east or northeast of the Soviet frontline.
- Deploy in guerrilla mode all 12 available Yugoslav partisan units in any hexes within pre-1941 Yugoslavia not already occupied by German or Croat units.
- Deploy in guerrilla mode all Albanian partisan units in any hexes within Albania not already occupied by German forces.
- Deploy in guerrilla mode both Greek partisan units in any hexes within Greece not already occupied by German forces.
- Place all the Soviet player's units (four Yugoslav partisans and one Soviet Guard) in the corresponding box of the Turn Record Track.

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4.4 Bulgarian Set Up

Set aside all three Bulgarian units. They enter play only when Bulgaria enters the war against Germany (6.3).

5.0 SEQUENCE OF PLAY

Every game of **Balkans '44** is divided into ten game turns (GTs).

- Each GT is divided into ten phases, which must be played in the order given. Phases 5 and 6 are the Soviet player turn, while Phases 7 and 8 are the Axis player turn.
- Every action taken by a player must be conducted in the appropriate phase.

5.1 The Turn Sequence

The turn sequence is given below. The rest of the rules are organized, as much as possible, to explain things in the order they are encountered as you progress through each turn.

Important: Each turn begins with the Random Event Phase. However, on GT 1, do not conduct the Random Event, Reinforcement, Replacement, and Evacuation Phases.

1) Random Event Phase: The Soviet player randomly picks one event. Apply the results as directed (14.0).

2) Reinforcement Phase: Each player receives the reinforcements scheduled for that GT (13.1).

3) Replacement Phase: Each player adds up the number of RPs available for each nationality and uses them to rebuild/replenish units (13.2).

4) Evacuation Phase: The German player may try to evacuate units from the Greece Box (13.3).

Soviet Player Turn

5) Soviet Movement Phase:

1) Mode Determination Segment: Determine which partisan units will operate in regular mode this GT (6.0) and determine Soviet HQ mode (12.0).

2) Movement Segment: Move units in the following order:

Soviet
Romanian
Bulgarians
Yugoslav/Greek/Albanian Partisans

6) Soviet Combat Phase: Soviet units conduct attacks in any order desired by the Soviet player (10.0).

Axis Player Turn

7) Axis Movement Phase:

German
Hungarian
Romanian
Croatian

8) Axis Combat Phase: German units and those of countries still allied to the Axis side conduct attacks in any order desired by the Axis player (10.0).

9) Supply Check Phase: See 15.0.

10) End GT Phase:

1) Check for the arrival of Soviet allied Romanian (6.1.3) and Bulgarian units (6.3).

2) If it is not the end of GT 10, move the game turn marker to the next box on the Turn Record Track and conduct the next GT.

3) If it is the end of GT 10, determine victory (3.0).

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6.0 BALKAN NATIONAL FORCES

6.1 Romania

In **Balkans '44**, Romanian units begin fighting on the Axis side, but end up fighting on the Soviet side.

Historical Note: By 1945, the Romanian army fighting against Germans and Hungarians was the fourth largest in Europe. Only the US, British, and Soviet armies were larger.

6.1.1 Romanian Surrender

Beginning GT 1, during the Soviet Combat Phase, Romanian units must check for surrender using the following procedure:

- After each Soviet attack on Romanian units, the Soviet player rolls 1d6. This roll is modified as follows:
 - 1) Modify the DR by -4 if it is the first Soviet attack on Romanian units during GT1.
 - 2) Modify the DR by -1 after all Soviet attacks in GT 1, including the first attack.
 - 3) Modify the DR by +1 if all Romanian units in the current combat were eliminated.
- If the modified DR is 4 to 6, Romania surrenders.

Example: It is the combat phase of GT 1. The Soviet player launches an attack against two Romanian units, destroying one of them. He rolls a 2, subtracting 1 as it GT 1, and a further 4 as it is the first Soviet attack on Romanian units on GT 1. His modified die roll of -3 does not trigger a Romanian surrender. He then conducts a second attack against a hex with a single Romanian unit, destroying it. For this second attack he rolls a 5. He adds +1 to this die roll for eliminating all Romanian units in this combat and subtracts a -1 for it being GT 1. His modified die roll of 5 triggers a Romanian surrender.

6.1.2 Effects of Romanian Surrender

Immediately withdraw all Romanian units from play. They may return to play on later GTs to fight for the Soviet player.

6.1.3 Soviet Allied Romanian Units

All Romanian units eliminated by Soviet forces, or Romanian units withdrawn due to Romanian surrender, may reenter play as reinforcements.

- In the End GT Phase of any GT during or following which Romania has surrendered, and if a Soviet unit occupies Bucharest (hex 1308), the Soviet player rolls 1d6 for each eliminated Romanian unit and places the Romanian unit on the Turn Record Track as follows:

1: GT +3	2-3: GT +2	4-6: GT +1
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- Romanian units are deployed in or adjacent to Bucharest (hex 1308).

Example: Romanian forces surrender during the Soviet Combat Phase of GT 3. During the End GT Phase of that GT, no Soviet units occupy Bucharest. The Soviet player does not roll for Romanian reinforcements. During the End GT Phase of GT 4, a Soviet unit does occupy Bucharest and the Soviet player rolls for Romanian reinforcements. The player selects the 4th Corps and rolls a 3. The 4th Corps is placed in the GT 6 box. It is eligible to enter as a reinforcement during the Reinforcement Phase of GT 6.

6.1.4 Romanian Units Eliminated After Surrender

Romanian units eliminated in combat against Axis forces can be returned to play after being rebuilt with replacement points (13.2). They do not use the procedure in 6.1.3.

6.2 Yugoslav, Albanian & Greek Partisans

Partisan units may operate in one of two modes: guerrilla or regular, indicated by the side of the unit currently uppermost. Partisans (in either mode) may only operate as follows:

Albanian Partisans: Albanian partisans may only operate within Albania.

Greek Partisans: Greek partisans may only operate within Greece.

Yugoslav Partisans: Yugoslav partisans may only operate in former Yugoslavian hexes, and Zadar (hex 1428).

Important: Partisan units, regardless of mode, may never launch attacks into hexes outside their own operating areas.

6.2.1 Guerrilla Mode



Units in guerrilla mode do not conduct combat using the standard combat procedures (10.0); instead, they may conduct guerrilla attacks (6.2.3).

- All partisan units start the game in guerrilla mode.

Important: Partisan units in guerrilla mode may not be stacked with any other unit types of any nationality, including partisan units in regular mode that are of the same nationality as the partisan unit in guerrilla mode. Partisans in guerrilla mode may, however, stack with other partisans (of any nationality) in guerrilla mode.

- Partisan units in guerrilla mode move normally.
- During the Soviet Movement Phase, partisan units in guerrilla mode may convert to regular mode. Converted units are flipped over so that their regular side shows. To be converted a unit:

- 1) Cannot have expended any movement factors that phase; **and**,
- 2) Must be able to trace supply to a Soviet supply source.

Important: Conversion is a one-way process, once converted to regular mode, partisan units cannot convert back to guerrilla mode.

- The Soviet player may convert a maximum of three units (this is the total from all three nationalities) each GT.
- Units converted to regular mode, may move in the turn that they converted.
- Units in guerrilla mode ignore enemy zones of control (EZOC) exerted into mountain and rough terrain hexes (7.0).
- Units in guerrilla mode do not exert ZOC for enemy movement or supply tracing purposes. See Guerrilla Attacks (6.2.3).
- Units in guerrilla mode may launch guerrilla attacks (6.2.3) against enemy units moving through adjacent hexes.

6.2.2 Regular Mode



Once converted to regular mode, partisan units operate as standard combat units for all purposes (10.0) for the remainder of the game.

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6.2.3 Guerrilla Attacks

Partisan units in guerrilla mode can launch a guerrilla attack (a special type of attack) against enemy units if an enemy unit (those controlled by the Axis player) attempts to move through a hex adjacent to a partisan unit in guerrilla mode during the Axis Movement Phase.

- Guerrilla attacks can be launched against Axis units that are using regular or railroad movement.
- The Soviet player rolls 1d6 and consults the Guerrilla Attack Table (on the map) and cross-references the DR with the result.
- Each partisan unit in guerrilla mode can conduct only one guerrilla attack per Axis Movement Phase.
- Only one partisan unit can attempt a guerrilla attack in each hex.
- A moving unit can be subjected to more than one guerrilla attack during a single Movement Phase.

Example: The German 41st Infantry Division (movement factor of 4) attempts to move from hex 2513 to 2414. There is a Greek partisan unit in guerrilla mode in 2415. As the German unit attempts to enter hex 2414, the Soviet player announces a guerrilla attack against the unit. The Soviet player rolls 1d6 with a result of 3. The German unit must add 1 to the cost of entering hex 2414 (1 for rough terrain). The German unit may continue moving, however the unit expended two movement factors to enter 2414. The partisan unit in 2415 cannot launch another guerrilla attack this phase; however, if a Yugoslavian partisan unit was in hex 2315 and the German unit attempts to enter hex 2314, the Soviet player could launch another guerrilla attack against the unit.

6.2.4 Counter-Guerrilla Attacks

During the Axis Combat Phase, Axis units may conduct counter-guerrilla attacks against adjacent partisan units that are in guerrilla mode.

- Units conducting counter-guerrilla attacks cannot conduct regular attacks in the same Combat Phase.
- A hex containing partisan units in guerrilla mode can only be attacked by counter-guerrilla attacks and each hex may only be attacked (one die roll) once per Axis Combat Phase, no matter how many German units are adjacent to the guerrilla unit.
- The Axis player declares the counter-guerrilla attack, consults the Counter-Guerrilla Table (on the map), rolls 1d6, applying the following cumulative DRMs:
 - +1:** If the partisan unit is being attacked from two or more hexes.
 - +1:** If the hex occupied by the partisan unit contains a railroad (does not have to be connecting from the hexes containing the attackers).
 - +1:** If more than one partisan unit occupies the hex being attacked.
- The Axis player cross-references the modified DR with the result.
- If the result is "Elim" and a range of numbers, roll 1d6 for each partisan unit in the defending hex.

If the DR falls within the range listed: eliminate the partisan unit.

If the DR falls outside the given range: nothing happens.

6.3 Bulgarian Operations

Bulgarian units are not set up at the beginning of the game. They only enter play if a Soviet unit occupies Sofia (hex 1813) during the End GT Phase.

- If a Soviet unit occupies Sofia, the Soviet player rolls 1d6 for each Bulgarian unit and places that Bulgarian unit on the Turn Record Track as follows:

1–2: GT +1

3–4: GT +2

5–6: GT +3

Example: A Soviet unit enters Sofia during the Soviet Movement Phase of GT 2. During the End GT Phase, if the unit is still in Sofia, the Soviet player rolls 1d6 for each of the three Bulgarian units. The result for the 1st Army is 3. The unit will enter as a reinforcement on GT 4. The result for the 3rd Army is 1. The unit will enter as a reinforcement on GT 3.

6.3.1 Bulgarian Unit Operations

Bulgarian units may operate anywhere on the map.

7.0 ZONES OF CONTROL

The six hexes immediately surrounding a unit's hex constitute that unit's zone of control (ZOC). Hexes into which a unit exerts a ZOC are called controlled hexes.

- All units exert ZOCs (**exception:** Partisan units in guerrilla mode (6.2.1)).
- The presence of friendly or enemy units does not negate the effects of enemy zones of control (EZOCs).

Exception: When determining control of a hex (3.0).

- Partisans in guerrilla mode are not affected by EZOC projected into mountain or rough terrain (6.2.1).
- A unit's ZOC does not extend across prohibited hexsides, nor does it extend into a hex in which the unit could not enter due to national restrictions.
- ZOCs have the following effects on enemy units:
 - 1)** A unit must stop its movement when entering an EZOC.
 - 2)** If a unit begins its movement in an EZOC, the unit may move out of an EZOC.
 - 3)** A unit cannot move from one hex in an EZOC directly into another hex in that EZOC.
 - 4)** Units may not retreat into EZOC.
 - 5)** EZOC block enemy supply lines.
- Both friendly and enemy units may simultaneously exert ZOC into the same hexes.
- There is no additional effect if more than one unit, friendly or enemy, exerts ZOC into the same hex at the same time.
- If a given unit is in an EZOC, the unit projecting that EZOC is also in the friendly unit's ZOC. The two units are equally and mutually affected.

Exception: Partisan units in guerrilla mode (6.2.1).

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8.0 STACKING

Having more than one friendly unit in a hex at the same time is called stacking.

- Markers, including support markers do not count against stacking limits.
- Stacking limits vary by terrain type and are given on the Terrain Effects Chart (TEC).
- Stacking limits are given in term of units. Each unit, no matter its organizational size, counts as one unit for stacking purposes.
- Stacking limits apply for all units of both sides at the end of each Reinforcement, Movement, and Combat Phase.
- Friendly units may move through hexes occupied by other friendly units at no extra cost.
- A friendly unit or stack may never enter a hex containing an enemy unit or stack.
- There is no limit on the number of friendly units that may pass through a single hex or cross a single hexside in one Movement, or during the Combat Phase when advancing after combat.
- If, at the end of any friendly or enemy Reinforcement, Movement or Combat Phase, one or more hexes is over-stacked, the excess units must be eliminated by the owning player.

8.1 Soviet Stacking & HQs



Soviet units stacked with or adjacent to Front HQs in support mode (12.0) may:

- 1) Stack up to five units in clear terrain.
- 2) Stack up to four units in rough terrain.

8.2 Stack Movement

To move as a stack, units must begin their movement already stacked. Units are not required to move together just because they started the Movement Phase in the same hex; in such situations, those units might be moved together, individually, or in smaller sub-stacks.

- A moving stack may temporarily halt its movement to allow a unit or sub-stack to split off and move away on a separate course. The units left behind in the original stack may then resume their own movement, even splitting off other units and sub-stacks. Once a unit or stack starts moving, all its movement must be completed before that of another unit/stack is begun.

Important: If a stack drops off its slowest unit, the stack retains the MF determined when it started moving. The stack does not “speed up” having dropped off its slowest unit.

- If units with different movement factors are traveling together in a stack, the stack must use the movement factor of the slowest unit.

Example: A stack containing two units (4 MF and a 8 MF) expends one MF to enter a hex, and then the player splits off the unit with the 4 MF, moving it one more hex. The 8 MF unit still retains 3 MF remaining.

8.3 National Stacking Restrictions

Units of different nationalities may not be able to stack with other nationalities.

Axis: Units of different Axis nationalities (Germans, Hungarians, Romanians, Croatsians) may stack together.

Soviet:

- 1) Soviet units may stack with Romanian, Bulgarian and/or Yugoslav units.

Important: Partisan units in guerilla mode may not be stacked with any other type of unit (including partisan units in regular mode) at the end of any Reinforcement, Movement or Combat Phase. Partisan guerrilla units and other types of friendly units may move through each other.

- 2) Albanian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Greek, and Yugoslav units cannot stack together.

9.0 MOVEMENT

Each unit has a printed movement factor. The phasing player may move any and/or all friendly combat units in that player's Movement Phase.

Important: A unit must stop moving upon entering an EZOC (7.0).

- Units are moved tracing a path of contiguous hexes through the hex grid, until all movement factors are expended, or the player decides to cease moving the unit, whichever comes first.
- As each unit enters a hex it expends one or more of its movement factors (MF). Consult the TEC for further details.
- Units can move in any direction or combination of directions.
- The number of MF a unit expends during a single Movement Phase cannot exceed its printed movement factor.
- A unit can never enter a hex containing an enemy combat unit.
- A unit cannot accumulate unused MF from turn to turn nor may unused MFs be transferred from one unit to another.
- Units cannot enter all-sea hexes or cross all sea-hexsides (TEC).
- A unit expends one MF to enter a clear terrain hex. To enter other types of terrain, the player must expend the number of MFs designated by the TEC.
- If there is more than one terrain type in a hex, use the highest single movement cost from among all the types involved.
- Units crossing certain hexsides pay additional MF (TEC). The crossing cost is in addition to any cost for entering a hex.

9.1 Railroads & Bridges

A unit that moves directly from one railroad hex to another railroad hex expends one-half a MF regardless of other terrain in the hex.

- A unit moving across a river hexside via a bridged hexside ignores the +1 cost of the river hexside. Bridges cannot be destroyed in the context of the game.

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9.2 Minimum Movement

A combat unit can always move a minimum of one hex, regardless of terrain or hexside costs. This does not allow a unit to enter prohibited terrain or cross a prohibited hexside.

Important: A unit cannot move from one hex in an EZOC directly into another hex in an EZOC (7.0). A unit may exit an EZOC and move into a hex not in an EZOC and then may enter in a hex in an EZOC.

9.3 Operational Movement

A unit may double its MFs if the unit:

- 1) Starts the Movement Phase in supply (15.0); **and**,
- 2) Does not start in or move into a hex in an EZOC; **and**,
- 3) Does not start or move adjacent to a partisan unit in guerilla mode.

Important: Units using operational movement may use railroad movement (9.1).

9.4 National Restrictions

Units of some nationalities may be restricted to move and attack only within specific areas.

German: German units may move freely through any territory of the map.

Croatian, Greek & Albanian Units: These units may only move and attack within their own territories.

Example: Croatian units can only move and attack in Croatia. Greek units can only move and attack within Greece.

Soviet, Yugoslav, Romanian, & Bulgarian Units: Active units of these nationalities (if active) may operate anywhere on the map.

Important: No more than four Soviet corps (of any type) may be present within the pre-1941 Yugoslav boundary at any one time.

10.0 COMBAT

Combat takes place between adjacent opposing units during the Combat Phase of each player turn.

- Combat is always voluntary; the mere presence of an enemy unit adjacent to a friendly unit does not require a unit to attack the enemy units. Both players may always choose not to attack.
- In the Combat Phase, the phasing player is the attacker, and the other player is the defender, no matter the general situation across the map.
- A unit can only conduct one attack each Combat Phase and each unit may only suffer one attack each Combat Phase.

Exception: If a unit retreats into a friendly-occupied hex and if the units in that hex are subsequently attacked, the retreated units will suffer the results but do not contribute to the defense of that second attack.

- A player cannot split a unit's combat factor between multiple combats.
- An attacking player cannot attack more than one hex with a single attack.

- The defending player may never refuse combat. All units in an attacked hex must participate in its defense, except for retreated units (see the exception above) which, cannot participate but are subject to the results of the combat in that hex.
- A player may attack an enemy-occupied hex with as many friendly units as can be brought to bear from one, some, or all the surrounding hexes.
- There is no requirement for all units in a stack to participate in the same attack. Some units in a stack might attack into one hex while others attack into another hex or not attack at all.
- There is no limit on the number of attacks a player may resolve during his friendly Combat Phase.
- The attacker need not declare all his attacks beforehand and may resolve each attack in any order.
- The attacking player must fully resolve each attack before beginning a subsequent attack.
- Neither player may look beneath the top unit of enemy stacks until the odds are computed. Once the odds are known, the attack may not be called off.

10.1 Combat Procedure

Each combat during a Combat Phase must follow the below steps:

- 1) The attacking player declares the attack, identifying the attacking units and the defending hex.

Important: Once an attack is declared, the attacking player may not call off the attack. The attack must be fully resolved.

- 2) First the attacker and then the defender, declares the number of air support markers he will use (see step 6 below).
- 3) Each player determines the total combat strength for his side by totaling the combat factors of all his own units involved in the combat.

Important: Halve the attack or defense strengths of each unit marked out of supply, then total the modified combat strengths, and round all fractions up to the next highest whole number.

- 4) The players then divide the attacker's total by the defender's total to establish an odds ratio (combat odds).
 - a) If the attacker's total modified combat factors are equal to or greater than the defender's total modified combat factors, round down any remainders. Express the result as an odds ratio (result: 1).

Example: If 26 attack factors attack 7 defense factors ($26 \div 7 = 3.71$, rounded down, yields an odds ratio of 3:1 (three to one).

- b) If the attacker has fewer total modified combat factors than the defender, round any remainders up. Express the result as an odds ratio (1:result).

Example: If 8 attack factors attack 12 defense factors ($8 \div 12 = 1:1.5$, rounded up, yields an odds ratio of 1:2).

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5) The attacking player consults the Combat Results Table (CRT) and locates the corresponding odds column on the table.

6) Players determine and apply all combat shifts: for terrain, Soviet HQ support, or air support, and event. All applicable odds shifts are cumulative. Apply all applicable shifts to get one final left or right shift. Leftward shifts favor the defender; rightward shifts favor the attacker.

Important: If the odds column derived in step 4) is greater than 7:1 or less than 1:3, make all column shifts beginning from those columns.

Rough/Town: Units defending in a rough or town hex receive a one leftward column shift.

Rivers: If all attacking units are attacking across a lake or river hexside (whether bridged or unbridged) apply two leftward column shifts.

Cities: Units defending in a city hex receive two left column shifts. Do not apply concentric attack bonus to units defending in a city.

Marsh/Mountains: Units defending in a marsh or mountain hex receive two leftward column shifts.

Important: The defending player may apply one hexside shift and one in-hex terrain shift.

Soviet HQ Support (12.0):

- a) Attacking Soviet units receive one rightward column shift if at least one Soviet attacking unit is in supply and is stacked with or adjacent to an in-supply Soviet HQ in support mode. Multiple HQs do not increase this shift.
- b) Defending Soviet units receive one leftward column shift if the Soviet units are in supply and are stacked with or adjacent to an in-supply Soviet HQ in support mode. Multiple HQs do not increase this shift.
- c) If, during a Soviet Combat Phase, both HQ units are in movement mode, the Soviet side receives one leftward column shift.

Important: During GT 1, whether attacking or defending, the Soviet player receives three column shifts in his own favor if there is a Soviet HQ stacked with or adjacent to at least one in-supply Soviet unit involved in that combat.

Air Support:

Important: A player can only commit air support markers to a combat if at least one friendly unit is of the same nationality as the air support marker (**Exception:** Optional rule 16.1).

a) Each player rolls 1d6 for each air support marker committed to the combat:

3–6: the marker is effective.

1–2: the marker is not effective and is placed aside.

b) After determining the number of effective air support markers, the side that has more effective air support markers receives one column shift in its favor. If both sides have the same number of effective air support markers there is no shift for either side.

Events: Hungarian Armistice, Mandatory Offensive, and Help for Yugoslavia events provide column shifts (14.0).

Important: If after applying all shifts, the total sum of shifts has moved the attack column higher or lower than the limits on the CRT, the player resolves the combat on the lowest (1:3) or highest (7:1) column as appropriate.

7) After applying all applicable odds shifts, the attacker rolls 1d6 and applies the applicable die roll modifiers given below. Once these are applied, the attacking player cross references the modified DR with the final odds column to determine the combat result.

Air Support Markers: The below die roll modifiers are listed as attacking/defending only apply if the side listed is attacking:

+1/-1: If any German air support markers were effective.

+1/-1: If any Soviet air support markers were effective and the defending hex is within two hexes of a Soviet HQ in support mode.

Example: The German player commits two air support markers to an attack, and the Soviet player commits one air support marker (the Soviet defending hex is within two hexes of a HQ in support mode). After rolling for effectiveness, all German air support markers were ineffective, and the one Soviet air support marker was effective. The Soviet player would be awarded one left column shift and then receive a “-1” die roll modifier.

Concentric Attacks: The attacking side adds one to the DR if attacking a defending hex with:

- a) Units in two opposite hexes; **or**,
- b) Units from three surrounding hexes with one hex between each; **or**,
- c) Adjacent attacking units in more than three hexes.

10.2 Combat Results

Players resolve combat using the CRT result of the modified DR as explained below. Players must resolve each result in the order given in the explanation. The owning player apportions step losses to friendly units as desired.

- The number to the left of the slash is the attacker's combat result and the number to the right is the defender's result.
- The numbers signify the number of steps each side must eliminate from their forces involved in that combat.
- The attacker resolves losses first, then the defender.
- Losses can be distributed among all types of ground units as the owning player sees fit, but no unit may be eliminated until every two-step unit involved in the combat (even if they are attacking from different hexes) has absorbed one step loss.

10.3 Retreat after Combat

If a combat involves only German (GE) and/or Hungarian (HU) units on the Axis side, the Axis player may absorb one step loss by retreating all his units involved in the combat.

- The Axis player may conduct a retreat whether attacking or defending.
- All units must be retreated one hex. The hex(es) retreated into cannot be in an EZOC or occupied by enemy units.

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- If the Axis player is attacking from multiple hexes, all attacking units must retreat. Units may retreat into different hexes.

Example: Three Soviet corps attack 1 Pz. Div in hex 1205 at 3:1 odds. 1 Pz. Div is at full-strength. The result is 1/2. The Soviet units absorb one step loss. The German unit absorbs one step loss and withdraws to hex 1206, thus absorbing the second step loss allocated to the Axis player.

10.4 Advance after Combat

If all defending units are eliminated, or in the case of defending German/Hungarian units that retreated, the attacking player may advance units into the defending hex up to the maximum stacking limit allowed.

Important: Soviet Guard units may advance two hexes. The first hex must be the defending hex. EZOC have no effect on advance after combat. Defending units never advance, even if all attacking units are eliminated or retreat.

11.0 AIR SUPPORT MARKERS



Players should set available markers set in one stack, and those markers that have already been used this GT in another stack.

See Combat Procedures (10.1) on how to apply air support markers to combat.

- Each nationality's air support markers are available for use at the start of the scenario.

Exception: Bulgarian air support markers are only available after Bulgaria enters the war on the Soviet side.

- Each available air support marker can be used to support one combat each GT. This applies whether they were effective or not.

12.0 SOVIET HQS



Soviet HQ units represent concentrations of artillery support, as well as the logistical centers of their respective Fronts.

- At the beginning of each Soviet Movement Phase, the Soviet player must determine the mode for each Soviet HQ.
- HQs have two sides: support and movement, indicated respectively by **S** or **M** to the left of their unit type symbols.
- HQs are motorized units for movement purposes.
- HQs in movement mode do not provide combat shifts (10.1).

Exception: If during a Soviet Combat Phase, both Soviet HQ units are in movement mode, the Soviet side receives one column shift to the left.

- HQs in support mode provide combat shifts if they meet the requirements in 10.1.
- HQs in support mode cannot use railroad movement rates.
- Each Soviet HQ can give support to any Soviet units, regular or guard.
- HQs trace supply like normal units. OOS HQ units cannot provide support and their movement factors and defensive factors are halved.

13.0 REINFORCEMENTS, REPLACEMENTS & EVACUATIONS

13.1 Reinforcements

Reinforcements are units that arrive during specific GTs. At the beginning of the game, units shown with a reinforcement code (a number in the upper-left corner of the counter) are placed on the Turn Record Track in the box corresponding to the number on the counter.

Important: EZOC have no effect on the placement of reinforcement or replacement units (13.2).

- During the Reinforcement Phase, both players deploy all reinforcements listed as entering play on the current GT.

Important: When deploying reinforcements, players must comply with stacking restrictions (8.0).

German: Deploy on a German a supply source.

Hungarian: Deploy in or adjacent to Budapest (hex 0520). If Budapest cannot trace a line of supply to a German supply source, or it is occupied by Soviet forces, no Hungarian reinforcement units can be received that GT. Reinforcements not received can be delayed until the above conditions no longer apply.

Romanian: Deploy in or adjacent to Bucharest (hex 1308).

Bulgarian: Deploy in or adjacent to Sofia (hex 1813).

Croatian: Deploy in or adjacent to Zagreb (hex 0926) or Split (hex 1626).

Yugoslav, Greek, Albanian Partisan Units: Deploy in their own national territory in any hex not occupied by enemy units or that contains an EZOC.

Important: Partisan units are always placed with their guerrilla mode side up.

Soviet: Deploy on a Soviet supply source.

13.2 Replacements

Replacement points (RP) are received during the Replacement Phase of the GT.

- Each player consults the Turn Record Track to determine the number of RP received for each nationality.

Important: Bulgarian replacements are only received if Bulgaria has been activated.

- Romanian replacements are received by the German player until Romania surrenders. On the GT after Romania has surrendered, the Soviet player begins receiving Romanian replacements.
- RP cannot be accumulated from GT to GT. Unused RP are forfeited at the end of the Replacement Phase of each GT.
- RP can only be used to rebuild units of the same nationality.

Example: German RP can only be used to rebuild German (GE) units.

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13.2.1 Rebuilding Units

Eliminated and reduced units can be rebuilt. After determining the number of RP each nationality receives, the owning player may rebuild eliminated units or rebuild reduced units that are on the map.

- All types of units may be rebuilt and the cost in RP for all units is the same.
- Reduced units that are on the map may be rebuilt by expending one RP. The unit must be able to trace a line of supply (15.0) to a valid supply source for the nationality of the unit being rebuilt.
- Eliminated units may be rebuilt by expending one RP for each step rebuilt. Eliminated units may be rebuilt to their reduced side. Deploy rebuilt eliminated units at the locations given in 13.1.

13.3 German Evacuation of Greece

Evacuation operations simulate the withdrawal of German units garrisoning southern Greece and the Aegean Islands.

- During the Reinforcement Phase, beginning the GT after the surrender of Romania, the German player may attempt the evacuation of up to one German unit in the Greece Box per GT. Follow the below procedure:

Important: To attempt an evacuation, Thessaloniki (hex 2513) must be able to trace a line of supply to a German supply source. If this condition is not met, an evacuation may not occur; however, if in later GTs the condition is met, the German player may attempt an evacuation.

1) Select one unit and roll 1d6:

4–6: the evacuation is successful.

1–3: the evacuation fails. The unit remains in the Greek Box.

2) If the evacuation was successful, place the unit in Thessaloniki (hex 2513).

- Evacuated units may move normally during the German Movement Phase and engage in combat during the German Combat Phase.



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14.0 RANDOM EVENTS



Random event markers are placed in an opaque container and randomly picked by the Soviet player during the Random Event Phase. Events must be played the GT that they are drawn.

Exception: Skip the Random Event Phase on GT 1.

- Beginning GT 2, the Soviet player picks one random event each Random Event Phase.
- Picked events must be played as directed, whether played or not an event is either discarded at the end of the GT on which it was drawn or returned to the pool as specified below.



Stand Fast: No Axis retreat after combat is allowed during the current GT. Discard.



Chetniks: The Axis forces in Yugoslavia strike a deal with local Chetnik forces. Randomly pick one Chetnik force marker. Add the number listed as a DRM to any one counter-guerrilla operation during the current GT. Return to the pool.



Mandatory Offensive: Stalin orders a mandatory offensive. The Soviet player must launch attacks with a total of 12 corps during the current GT if possible. Apply one shift to the left to all Soviet attacks. HQs cannot provide support. Discard.



Truce: The Germans strike a deal with local guerrilla forces, trading supplies and ammunition in exchange for free passage. At the beginning of the German Movement Phase, the German player may place the marker on any one German unit that will move within Greece or Albania. The unit cannot be subjected to guerrilla attacks. Return to the pool.



Help for Yugoslavia: The Western Allies send support to the Yugoslav partisans. This event can be used as follows:

- +1 DRM to all guerrilla attacks made during the current GT; **and**,
- 1 DRM to any counter-guerrilla attacks made during the current GT; **and**,
- 1R column shift when attacking in regular mode.

Return to the pool.



Hungarian Armistice: The Hungarians try to opt out of the war. Apply a one rightward column shift to any Soviet attack against a defending hex containing Hungarian units (including mixed stacks of German and Hungarian units) during the current GT. Return to the pool.



No Event: Nothing happens. Return to the pool.

15.0 SUPPLY

Units trace lines of supply (LOS) to supply sources. Supply is needed to be able to move and fight at full effectiveness. Supply is checked for all units of both sides at the end of each game turn during the Supply Check Phase. Mark all units that cannot trace a LOS with an out of supply (OOS) marker.

- A unit is OOS if the unit cannot trace a path of hexes free of enemy units and/or EZOC back to a supply source (see below).

Important: The path of supply may be traced through a hex in an EZOC if a friendly unit occupies that hex.

Yugoslav, Albanian, and Greek Partisan Units: Yugoslav partisan units are automatically in supply in Yugoslavian hexes. Greek Partisan units are automatically in supply in Greece. Albanian Partisan units are automatically in supply in Albania.

German: German units must trace a LOS back to a supply source marked on the map as a German supply source.

Soviet: Soviet units must trace a LOS back to a supply source marked on the map as a Soviet supply source.

Romanian: Romanian units must trace a LOS back to Bucharest (hex 1308).

Bulgarian: Bulgarian units must trace a LOS back to Sofia (hex 1813).

Hungarian: Hungarian units must trace a LOS back to Budapest (hex 0520) or to any German supply source.

Croatian: Croatian units must trace LOS back to Zagreb (hex 0926) or to any German supply source hex.

15.1 Out of Supply Effects



Place an OOS marker on units determined to be OOS during the Supply Check Phase. This marker is withdrawn during the Supply Check Phase of any subsequent GT during which the unit is again in supply.

- Units that are marked OOS:
 - Cannot be rebuilt to full strength.
 - Cannot expend more than one-half (round down) of their printed movement factors.
 - Have their attack and defense factors halved (round down to a minimum of one).

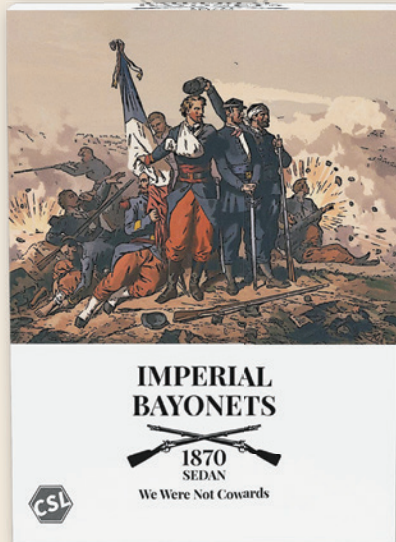
Exception: OOS Soviet HQ retain their attack strength but halve their defense strength.

- Units in partisan mode receive a +2 DRM when conducting guerrilla attacks against units marked out of supply if the unit being attacked is in a clear terrain hex.

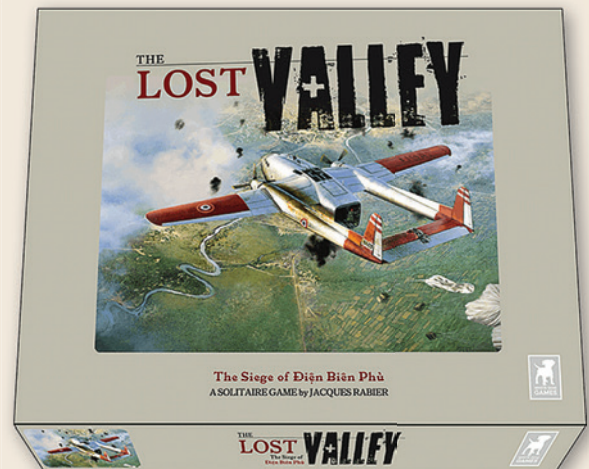
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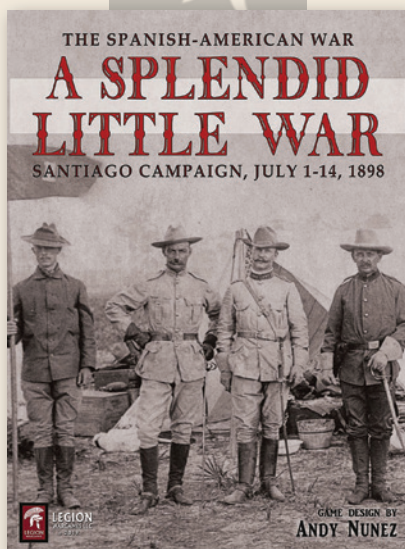
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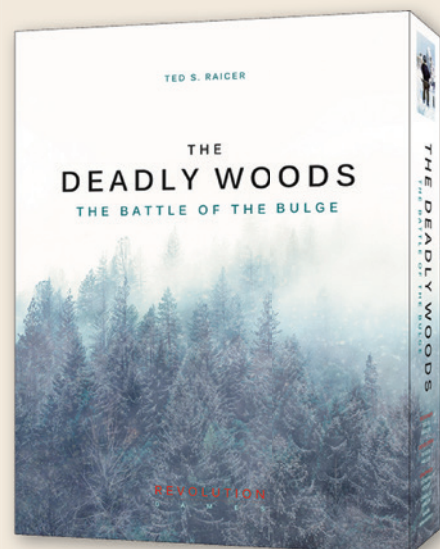
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16.0 OPTIONAL RULES

16.1 Balkan Air Force



The Soviet player may utilize the Balkan air support marker when conducting attacks using Yugoslavian partisans in regular mode. The marker is subject to all the rules for air support markers (10.2). It may be used in combat in conjunction with the Tito marker, but not with either the partisan navy or British commando brigade.

16.2 Partisan Navy



The Soviet player may use the Partisan Navy marker to provide a +1 DRM to guerrilla attacks conducted by Yugoslavian partisans against any enemy unit as it moves into a coastal hex. The marker can be used once per GT. The Partisan Navy marker can be used with the Tito marker and the British Commando Brigade.

16.3 Tito



The Soviet player can use the Tito support marker to provide support to Yugoslavian units. The Tito marker can be used in conjunction with the Partisan Navy, the Balkan Air Force, or the British Commando Brigade. The marker can be used once per GT in one of the following ways:

- 1) Provide a +1 DRM to a guerrilla attack by Yugoslavian partisans (6.2.3).
- 2) Provide a -1 DRM to a counter-guerrilla attack against Yugoslavian partisans (6.2.4).
- 3) Provide a +1 DRM to one attack with at least one Yugoslavian partisan in regular mode (6.2.2).

16.4 The British Commando Brigade



The Soviet player can use the British commando marker (2 Special Service Brigade) to support partisan units in Yugoslavia. The British Commando Brigade can only be used once per game. If an Axis unit enters a coastal hex anywhere in the Adriatic Sea, the Soviet player announces he is playing the marker, and rolls 1d6:

- 1-3: there is no effect, and the Axis unit may continue its movement.
- 4-6: the Axis unit is automatically OOS for the remainder of the current GT. In either case, the British Commando Brigade is permanently removed from the game.

16.5 Operation Rosselsprung



Whenever the Soviet player uses the Tito marker, the Axis player may decide to use the 500.SS Parachute Battalion to attempt to kill Tito. The unit can only be used once per game. If Soviet player uses the Tito marker, the Axis player rolls 1d6:

- 1: Tito is killed, and the Soviet player must subtract one VP at the end of the game.
- 2-3: Tito is killed, there is no effect on VP.
- 4-6: Tito escapes, no effect.

17.0 DESIGNERS' NOTES

The Soviet Front HQ unit is a variation of an idea developed in some of my operational WW2 games such as **Hungary 44-45** or **August Storm: Manchuria 1945**. They can operate in two modes: support or movement. When moving, they cannot provide support, and vice versa. This simulates in a simple way the operational pauses required to reorganize and resupply units after a period of offensive operations. The extra stacking limits for Soviet units adjacent to Soviet Front HQs in support mode also simulates the extra accumulation of forces allowed by extra staff and logistical resources concentrated in the Fronts.

With the variable air support odds shifts I wanted to add some unpredictability (players never know if their air units will provide odds shifts, and how many). This accounts for factors beyond the control of players such as weather, basing, etc. The nationality of air units also influences the combat die roll for air units, thus simulating air superiority in a fast and simple way. The fact that Soviet air support only adds a die roll modifier when operating near a Front HQ is a handy way to simulate the enhanced operational tempo of the first days of an offensive.

Soviet Infantry Corps represent an average of 2-3 divisions (3-4 for the "reinforced" ones, simulating independent divisions attached to their parent armies), whereas German infantry units, very weakened by this stage of the war, are one-steppers. Only Panzer and Panzergrenadier units have two steps. The German army, until the last weeks of the war, could deploy sizeable armor formations (as in Debrecen in October 1944, or in Operation Spring Awakening in March 1945). However, their infantry, after more than three years of total war in the East, had been bled white. They had much less infantry, and of much poorer quality. As David Glantz noted, the German armies had the resources to launch massed armored formations but lacked the infantry to hold the flanks and the terrain conquered.

Bulgarian units, although named "armies," along Soviet lines, were more like reinforced army corps.

In **Balkans '44**, we are simulating a situation where "the East Front meets the Mediterranean." We have East Front panzer armies and Soviet Fronts engaged in massive armored battles, but also the incredibly complex Mediterranean political situation that, as historian Douglas Porch put it, "bored and exasperated" Hitler. In **Balkans '44** we have Yugoslav Partisans and Croatian Axis forces (see my Partisan game in *World at War* #16) but also guest appearances by Greek and Albanian guerrillas, along with Romanians, Hungarians, and Bulgarians. The guerrillas were busy fighting the Germans, but they were also getting ready for the definitive clash with their local enemies: Royalists and Croatian puppet forces in Yugoslavia, and anti-communist forces in Greece and Albania.