

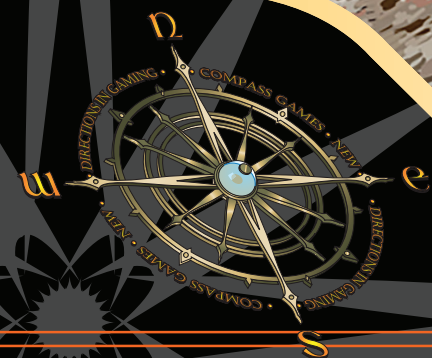
American Tank Ace

1944-1945

Rules of Play



A Solitaire Tank Combat Game
by
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Compass Games
New Directions in Gaming



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[1.0] Introduction

The Second World War has dragged on for five years. D-Day marks the Allies' promise kept to the Soviet Union in opening a second front. American armor fared reasonably well in North Africa against second line German and Italian tanks, but in Normandy they faced Panthers for the first time and received quite the shock. The German tanks were severely outnumbered but exacted a terrible toll on the mostly Sherman tanks of the U.S. Army. Fortunately, the "Arsenal of Democracy" had been hard at work continuously improving and upgrading the Sherman tanks, and improved versions were delivered to the frontline units as the war continued.

Over 49,000 Sherman tanks were built, in many different models to include many delivered to the British and the Soviets. It remains to this day the iconic American tank of the Second World War. Significant upgrades include "Wet Stowage" of ammunition in the hull to help prevent explosions, the HVSS (Horizontal Volute Suspension System) which helped mobility, and the 76mm gun, which finally evened out the playing field quite a bit. Frontal penetration of German tanks (especially Tigers and Panthers) continued to be an issue, but the M26 Pershing finally arrived in 1945 to help with its 90mm gun.

American Tank Ace is a solitaire, tactical level game that places you in command of a U.S. tank during World War II in the European Theater of Operations. You will make the tactical decisions a tank commander faced and control the actions of your crew, while trying to survive.

You will be assigned missions to attack, defend, or conduct movement to contact depending on the current tactical situation. As time progresses and players survive, they may use the experience gained to improve their odds of success by purchasing skills. As their prestige increases, they may request improved versions of the Sherman tank when they suffer the loss of their previous tank. Awards and promotions help to narrate the player's eventual goal – to survive the war and help defeat Nazi Germany.

Players will find it *extremely* challenging to survive an entire tour from June 1944 to April 1945, at which time the game ends. You will start with one of the tank models available to the Army at start of the game, but as your fame and prestige rise, more advanced tanks will be available to choose from.

The rules are numbered and presented in sets of major sections, each section divided into numerous major and secondary cases. The rules cross-reference other rules using (parentheses), so for example you will see, "This is limited by the tank commander's available commands, which is normally two per Combat Round (exception: Synergy Skill, 7.7)" meaning case 7.7 is related to this rule. The rules of this

game have been arranged both for ease of comprehension on first reading and for ease of reference later.

Online game support is available. There are several options to choose from:

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General customer service and game parts support are provided by Compass Games.

We also recommend you visit the official game discussion topic on ConsimWorld for game support, to read after action reports, and to share your play experience with others. You will find the *American Tank Ace* game topic by visiting talk.consimworld.com and navigating to the *Western Front* individual game discussion area.

Throughout the rules you will see numerous indented sections such as this one. These sections are filled with examples, clarifications, play hints, design notes, and other assorted wisdom in order to help ease you along. Additionally, game charts are normally referred by letter and number in [square brackets] in the rules to assist you in identifying them.

[2.0] How to Play the game

OBJECT OF THE GAME

The object of the game is to conduct numerous missions as the commander of an American tank crew and accomplish your assigned missions. The success of each mission is reflected by the total number of enemy ground forces destroyed and terrain gained or held, depending on the mission. Successful missions may lead to promotion and advancement—and the possible award of medals up to the Medal of Honor. You will face relentless risks as each mission becomes more hazardous as you drive across Europe to the heart of Germany. The ultimate success you achieve rests considerably on the decisions you make while conducting these missions during the course of your career.



Overall victory level is determined at the end of the game based on total enemy forces destroyed and the number of successful missions you conduct (which can also be determined posthumously if you are killed in action).

The key game components used to facilitate play are the various Tank Display Mats, which reflect the status of your tank and crew, with areas to track your ammunition and vehicle status as well. Other key components include the Battle Board and the Mission Log Sheet to track the activity and success of each. The various Player Aid Cards are used to resolve other game functions.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

In general, play revolves around conducting numerous mission assignments and resolving combat as part of those missions. Upon completion of each mission, you assess the success achieved by consulting your Mission Log Sheet, which may result in a promotion or award for yourself. Between missions you may check if you have become eligible to command a more advanced type of tank. You may also need time to recuperate from any personal injury before being able to conduct your next mission, or may have to sit out a mission while your battalion refits from battle losses.

CONDUCTING MISSIONS

Your Tank Display Mat shows the overall status of your tank as you conduct missions. When conducting missions, your tank is placed on the Battle Board, fighting the enemies to your front and flanks, until they have been defeated or you are destroyed or withdraw.

Typically, missions involve attacking enemy forces, or assaulting dug in enemy forces. At times you will be forced to defend. For each mission you will decide what enemy forces to engage, and hopefully defeat, or at what point you need to withdraw. You will also record all enemy forces you engage during combat on the Mission Log Sheet, noting whether you damaged or destroyed them.

END OF MISSION

As you conduct combat, you will inflict and receive damage. At the end of each mission, you will scavenge the battlefield for trophies, refit your tank, receive any awards earned, and receive replacement crewmen if required. You can also check to see if a more advanced type of tank is available. Convalescence due to wounds received may delay your next mission. If you have experience points to spend, you may do it at this time to buy new skills for your crew.

END GAME

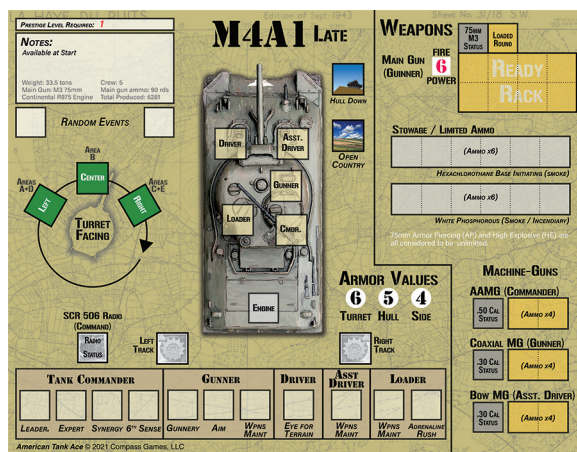
Once all mission assignments have been carried out through April 1945, the game ends. The game also immediately ends should you be killed in action. Whether you survive until your final mission or not at the end of April 1945, tally the total

number of mission victories to determine your level of victory achieved. Typically, to record an entire career, you will want to note all enemies destroyed or damaged, your final rank, and any awards achieved. Of course, if you have been killed, any accolades and results are recognized posthumously.

[3.0] Game Equipment

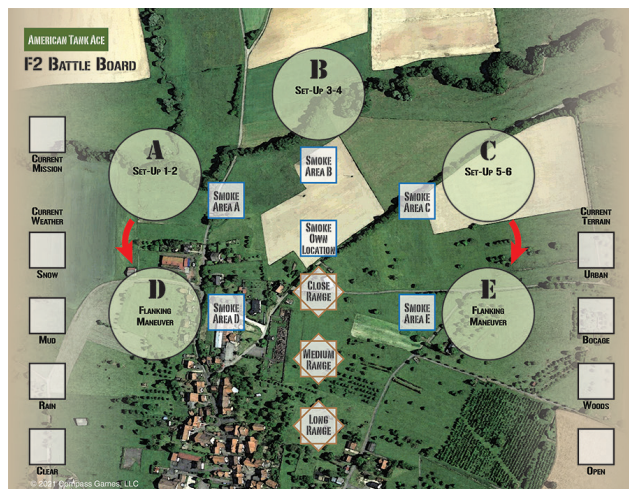
[3.1] TANK DISPLAY MATS

The five double-sided Tank Display Mats (ten different tanks) provided correspond to each tank type available to the player. This mat helps track the status of your tank and systems, including available weapons and ammunition at your disposal. Select the appropriate Tank Display Mat corresponding to the tank type you have selected for play. This mat is the centerpiece when conducting game play and carrying out missions. The mat's use is explained in the appropriate rules section.



[3.2] BATTLE BOARD

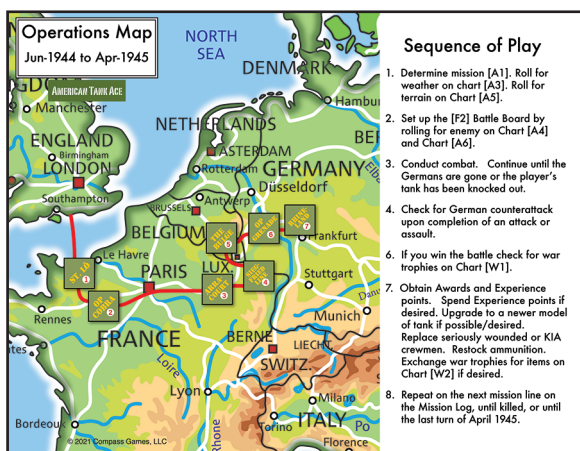
The Battle Board is used to resolve combat against enemy forces and is typically set beside your Tank Display Mat during play. The use of this board is explained in the appropriate rules section.





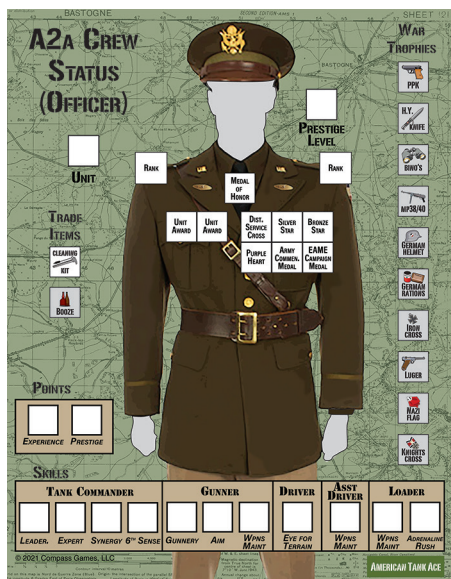
[3.3] OPERATIONAL DISPLAY

The Operational Display is used to track any active Major Events. The player will sometimes participate in a Major Event, and success will earn extra Experience Point credit. It also has an abbreviated Sequence of Play to assist players.



[3.4] CREW STATUS CHART

The Crew Status Chart [A2] (or [A2a] if you have reached Officer rank) is used to track your unit, skills, awards, and your tank commander's current Prestige Level, which is used to determine which tank you can upgrade to.



[3.5] THE PLAYING PIECES

There are two die-cut sheets with playing pieces included with *American Tank Ace*. These playing pieces are referred to as markers (or counters) and are placed on either the Tank Display Mat to track status of your tank and crew or on the Battle Board. Markers are provided for individual tanks, ammo rounds, random events, and the status of your commander, crew, and systems.

Note: some extra markers (damage markers, for example)—have been printed as spare parts should any become missing or damaged.

[3.5.1] HOW TO READ THE MARKERS

American Tank Ace counter mix provides markers to track the status of your tank and for resolving engagements. These markers may include information, such as die-roll modifiers, to facilitate play. An explanation of each marker type is explained below.

[3.5.2] GAME MARKERS

FRIENDLY TANKS:



The ten tank markers correspond to the model of tank you have selected or have upgraded to (two markers per tank type). One of these markers is placed on the Battle Board to track the progress of your assigned mission. The other is placed on your Tank Display Mat to mark whether you are Hull Down or in Open Country.

RANK:



Four Non-commissioned Officer Rank markers (two markers for each of the two ranks) are provided for your promotion level as an NCO.



Six Officer Rank markers (two markers for each of the three ranks) are provided to track your promotion level once you have reached officer status. These are placed on the Chart [A2] or [A2a] Crew Status.

MEDALS & AWARDS:

Various awards may be bestowed on you based on your career success. Although mainly for historical interest, the major game impact is that most of them raise your Prestige Level, an important game mechanic that allows you to gain priority and choice when upgrading to new tank types as they become available.



All of the medals in the game (with the exception of the Medal of Honor) have their ribbon versions included. Normally soldiers would wear the ribbons and not the medals, but that choice is left to the player as it is merely cosmetic in game terms.

CREW SKILLS:



As you gain experience, another key game mechanic is the improvement of your commander by the purchase of skills. These skills have a direct impact on your combat capabilities and survival.



Your commander begins the game with one Experience Point, granted for having graduated from the Fort Knox Tank School. Different skills have different costs to purchase. Depending on how well training at Fort Knox went (Chart [F1]), you may have markers that will reduce the purchase cost of some of these skills.

ARMAMENTS:



There are ammo markers that represent single main gun rounds. Machine gun ammunition is two-sided, showing either “1” or “2” ammo points. It is tracked in the regard that although unlimited, the machine guns must still be reloaded.

DAMAGE:



Damage markers are provided to track damage to tracks, weapons, radios, and any possible damage to other systems.

These markers are only placed on your Tank Display Mat when damage occurs. Gun jams, while not technically damage, have their own markers.

CREW STATUS:



Status markers are provided to track severity of injury or KIA results.

MAP MARKERS:



Markers are provided for the Battle Board to represent the current weather, the current mission, and your assigned unit.

ENEMY UNITS:



Enemy units include tanks, recon vehicles, infantry (INF) units, etc. They include important game information – a number in red in the lower left-hand section of the counter indicates it can fire armor piercing (AP) rounds on the Main Gun/AT (AntiTank) Chart with that value for penetration. The letters MG on the counter indicate the unit fires on the High Explosive/Machine gun (HE/MG) attack chart. The three numbers in black at the bottom of armored counters represent their armor value for the Turret Front, Hull Front, and Sides, in that order.



Enemy INF comes in several grades, with differing ML ratings (Morale Level). The front is full strength and the backside of the counter has



a yellow stripe to indicate reduced strength. Pictured here are the front and back sides of a Wehrmacht INF unit.



Enemy AT guns do not have armor values, as they are considered soft targets. They do have an AP value in red, which is their penetration.



Enemy armored cars (RCN) normally fire machineguns, but some versions are armed with a 2cm cannon (20mm). These can possibly penetrate your tank with a lucky hit on Chart [B3].

[3.6] CHARTS AND TABLES

Five double-sided Player Aid Cards are provided to facilitate game play and resolve game functions. The functions of these charts and displays are explained in the appropriate rules section. Specific charts and tables are referenced by their identification in [square brackets].

When a die roll is called for, each table specifies the die roll combination necessary. This is normally 1d6, a single 6-sided die; 2d6, which is 2 six-sided dice added together, or 1d10, a single ten-sided die.

DRMs: Throughout the game players will find references to “DRM” – this stands for “Die (or Dice) Roll Modifier.” This is a number that affects the outcome of a die (or dice) roll up or down.

[3.7] THE MISSION LOG SHEET

The Mission Log Sheet is used to record information for each game session and the results of battles. Feel free to photocopy these sheets as needed.

[3.8] GAME SCALE

Each mission is conducted in a day, with sometimes a follow-up mission that must be conducted immediately (a Counterattack or possibly an assault after a movement to contact). Select markers represent individual tanks, other vehicles, infantry platoons, damage, and ammunition.

[3.9] PARTS INVENTORY

A complete game of *American Tank Ace* includes the following components:

- Two full-color counter sheets
- Four Player Aid Cards, 2-sided
- One Crew Status Display, 2-sided
- One Mission Log Sheet pad, 2-sided
- Five Tank Display Mats, 2-sided
- One Battle Board
- One Operational Display



Two 6-sided dice and one 10-sided die
 One Rules Booklet with Designer's Notes
 One Game box

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***Note on game terminology:** The game is conducted by "Missions" but these are sometimes referred to as "Battles." The terms are interchangeable in the game.*

[4.0] Game Setup

GENERAL RULE

Game setup consists of selecting a starting tank and rolling randomly for a tank division to be part of, or by selecting your tank type and unit, preparing your Mission Log Sheet, and placing the corresponding Tank Display Mat in front of you for initial marker placement prior to conducting your first mission. You should also have the Battle Board [F2] set nearby, as it will be referenced when resolving engagements against enemy forces. Next, you will put your tank commander through the tank school at Fort Knox, Kentucky (see rule 4.6) by referring to Chart [F1] and performing all actions listed there.

[4.1] START DATE

[4.1.1] Your first mission will be in June 1944 unless you choose to start later.

[4.1.2] You may choose a newer type of tank when it becomes available, but only if you have a sufficient Prestige Level that allows you to use it. A player's Prestige Level increases with awards and promotions.

[4.2] PREPARE MISSION LOG SHEET

[4.2.1] Prepare a narrative of your tank career by recording the following information in the header of the Mission Log Sheet:

Player Name: Self-explanatory.

Nickname: This is the nickname you choose for your commander, although in reality, it is normally chosen "for him" by his crew due to a funny incident or a similarity to his real name. You may do this right away or wait for a mission or two to choose something appropriate.

Tank Name: You may choose to name your tank. Tank names in the U.S. Army generally (but not always) followed a letter in the alphabet corresponding to the company's letter. For example, a tank in C Company might be called "Crusher" or "Can Opener," etc.

***Note:** the tank's name and the player's nickname have no impact on game play other than building a narrative around your career to enhance your game session or after-action reports. You could name yourself "Wardaddy" and your tank "Fury" for example, but that wouldn't be very creative.*

[4.2.2] The Mission Log Sheet is used to capture information about each mission, including the enemy vehicles and other forces you have encountered and/or destroyed, any wounds received, and experience gained and awards gained.

[4.2.3] Each month on the Mission Log Sheet consists of eight missions (**exception: June 1944**) – this is the number of main operations your unit will be involved in during the month. Some missions will be missed due to refit, getting a new tank, serious wounds, etc.



[4.2.4] Ten markers are provided to represent the unit (tank division or smaller unit) you are part of. This has no play impact in the basic game, but serves to give additional historical flavor to the game. Roll 1d10 to choose randomly, or simply pick your historical favorite. The marker is placed on Chart [A2] or [A2a]. Besides divisions, additional markers have been provided for specific battalions and regiments.

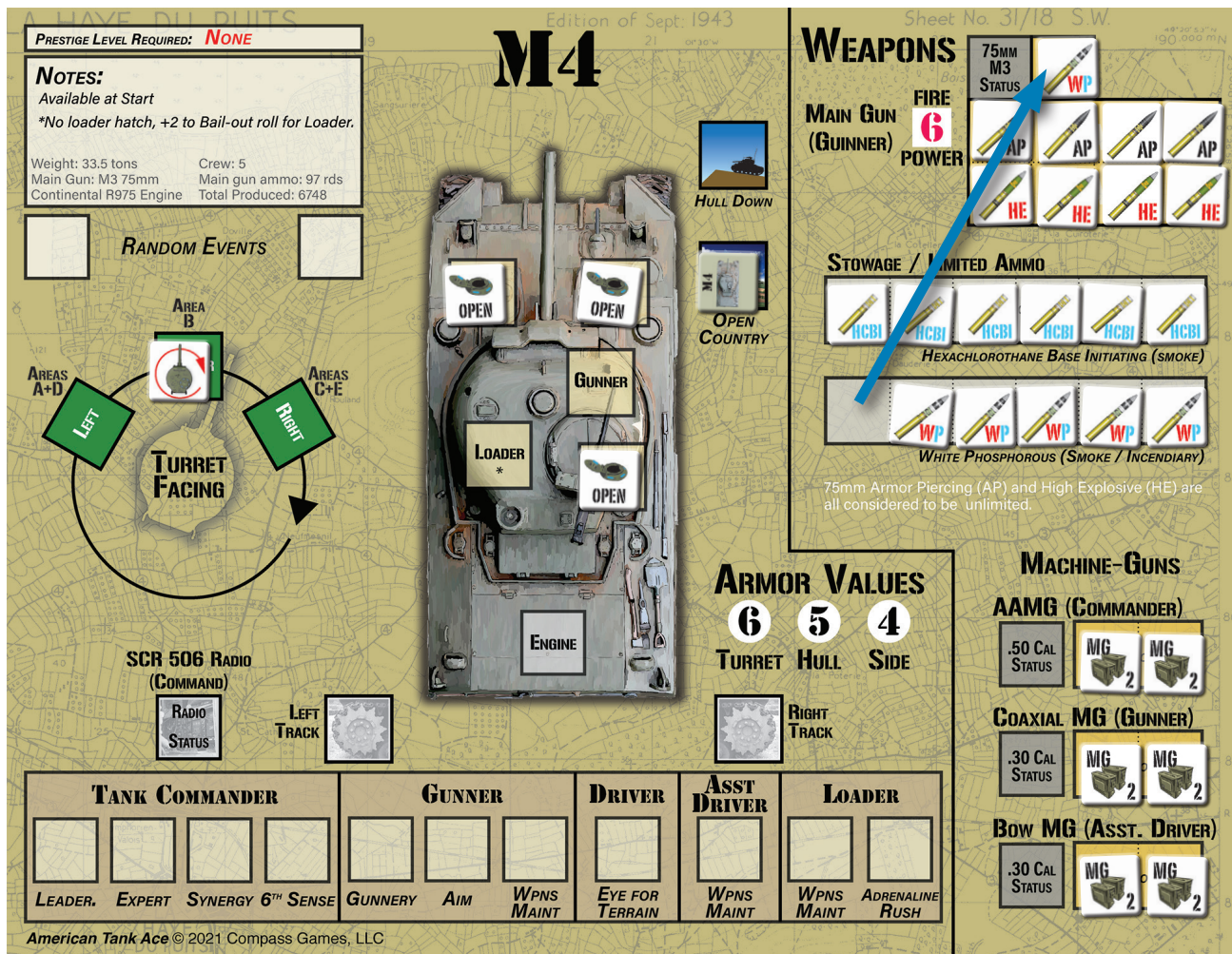
***Note:** this time scale is somewhat abstracted, in that in reality, you might fight seven battles in a single week, one after the other. Or there may be a week or two spent waiting on gasoline and supplies while higher command forms a plan. Or your unit may be held in reserve. Believe it or not, there can be significant down time during combat. Regardless of this somewhat artificial framework, it is needed to regulate game play. Players should just keep in mind that over all, it generally more or less works out.*

[4.3] TANK DISPLAY MAT SETUP

[4.3.1] Place in front of you the Tank Display Mat that corresponds to the type of tank you have selected (*see example on the following page*). You will be referencing this display often while conducting missions to record the status of your tank.

[4.3.2] Place the following markers on your Tank Display Mat:

1. Place the Turret Facing marker on the Center Box.
2. Place a Buttoned Up or Open (exposed) side on the commander's marker box on your selected Tank Display Mat. Do the same for the driver and assistant driver. This is your choice. Regardless of their status, the loader and gunner are always assumed to be operating Buttoned-Up (7.3.2).



- Place the Tank marker in the Open Box, or in the Hull Down box if the mission is Defense.
- Place the appropriate Ammunition markers in the armaments section of your Display Mat (rule 4.5). Once all ammunition markers are placed on the Display Mat, choose any single ammo marker from those on the mat and place it in the Loaded Round box. You will note in the example illustration on this page that a “WP” ammo marker was selected and placed in the box.
- Before the first mission of the game, you may spend your experience point (your commander starts the game with one for having graduated from Tank School). If you do so, place the purchased skill on the Tank Display Mat, if you can afford one. If not, the Experience Point is saved for future use.

Example of a M4 Sherman Tank Display Mat with markers placed for the start of the game. In this example, the player chose to start with an open hatch. He has placed his main gun and MG ammunition on the mat and a WP round in main gun, loaded and ready. He has placed his Turret facing forward. His tank marker is on “Open Country.” He is now ready to start his first mission.

[4.4] AMMUNITION

Commentary: World War 2 American tanks normally carried a huge amount of ammunition – the M4A1 Sherman tank had, for example, 90 rounds of main gun and over 4750 rounds of .30 caliber for the machine guns. Therefore, machine gun ammunition is tracked by determining whether or not reloading is required. The same holds true for the main gun – what matters is if the ammunition is readily available in the ready rack or must be pulled from stowage. Some types of main gun round are limited. Once they have been all fired, they are no longer available in a mission. The limited ammo types are Hexachloroethane–Base Initiating (HCBI) (smoke round), White Phosphorous (WP), and APCR (Armor Piercing Composite Rigid. Armor Piercing (AP) and High Explosive (HE) rounds are considered unlimited for game purposes.

Note that sometimes APCR is referred to in historical documents as “HVAP” (High Velocity Armor Piercing) but I have chosen to use the more technically accurate acronym APCR.

Procedure:

- Consult the initial Ammunition Load information next to each weapon on your tank.
- For machine guns, select a total number of ammunition markers that adds up to the ammunition points on the display. When these markers are gone, the machine gun



is considered to be out of ammo and must be reloaded. There is no limit to the amount of times reloading can occur during a battle. For example, if this number is “4”, then it means two markers will be placed on the “2” ammo side. Place these markers next to the appropriate weapon(s). Each time you fire your machine guns, one ammo point is expended per system firing.

3. For the main gun, place one ammunition marker of your choice in the “loaded” box. Then place ammunition markers, one per box, on the Ready Rack display (this is the ammunition readily available to be reloaded during a battle). You may fill the Ready Rack from any combination of your endless supplies of HE and AP rounds, or your limited stores of HCBI or WP Rounds. Note: You may never have more than the listed amount of limited starting main gun ammunition (HCBI, WP, and APCR) loaded in various places in the tank. Once the Ready Rack is empty, ammunition must be pulled up from stowage or taken off the turret racks. It takes a combat turn to reload four rounds into the ready rack while the loader does nothing else (**exception: Adrenaline Rush, rule 7.7**). Alternately, the loader can load one round if desired of any available type if the Ready Rack is currently empty.
4. Some tanks have a 2” smoke mortar, operated by the loader, fired out of the top left of the turret. Its ammunition is limited to only three uses per mission, and therefore starts with a “2” and a “1” ammo markers. It places a Smoke 2 marker in front of the tank.
5. WP (White Phosphorous) rounds are unique in that they roll to hit vehicles on the B1 Chart, but place smoke in addition to possibly destroying the vehicle. Against soft targets (Trucks, INF, AT guns) they simply roll on the B2 chart and place smoke in addition to any other results.

[4.5] CHANGING TANKS

You may change your tank at the end of each mission to a newer type, if one is available by date and if you have a sufficient Prestige Level to command it. You are not required to upgrade tanks. However, if you do, it costs you Prestige Points to upgrade to a different type of tank. It costs one Prestige Point to upgrade to a newer tank if you’ve lost your old one due to combat. It costs two Prestige Points if you want to upgrade to a newer type of tank and your current tank is still battle-worthy. If you lose your tank due to combat, you may always simply replace it for free for the next battle with the same type as was lost.

[4.6] FORT KNOX TANK SCHOOL

Players will prepare their crew by attending the tank training at Fort Knox, Kentucky. Tank training is accomplished by rolling on the Fort Knox Training Chart (Chart [F1]),

gaining certain benefits to game play or skill cost reductions if successful in each section of training. The tank commander (only) will also choose between several optional choices to see if extra time in physical training will give him a better chance to survive wounds, or if extra time spent studying will give him a better knowledge of the tanks he is expected to command, or perhaps he will spend extra time at the bars drinking and lead his friends into a fight, leading to a reputation for aggressiveness. After performing all Fort Knox training checks per Chart [F1], the player is ready to begin.

Benefits earned in Tank School for a specific crewman (say, for example, –1 to the purchase of Gunnery Skill for the gunner) are lost if that specific crewman dies or leaves the crew before the skill is purchased.

[4.7] MAJOR EVENTS



There are seven Major Event markers that will be placed on the Operational Display. Place before the first mission of the listed month for the event.

If you roll for a Major Event on Chart [A1], you are participating directly in this event, and may gain a full experience point if the mission is a success. These Major Events are listed by a number in parentheses on the [A1] chart after a mission. It is possible to roll a Major Event that is not yet active. For example, in August you might roll for the Arracourt Major Event, but that marker is not yet active. If this happens, treat it as no effect, and just conduct the listed mission. Major Events can only be activated once, so remove the marker after participating in one. It is also possible to never roll a Major Event mission while it is active, in which case it simply expires and is removed from the Operational Display. The seven events and the months they become active are:

1. Saint Lo (St. Lo) (7/44)
2. Operation Cobra (7/44)
3. Arracourt (9/44)
4. Siegfried Line (10/44)
5. Battle of the Bulge (12/44)
6. Operation Grenade (2/45)
7. Rhine crossing (3/45)

Note: You will sometimes miss a Major Event. It might seem illogical to not have a tank unit fighting in the Battle of the Bulge, for example. However, this doesn't mean you didn't actually participate. It just means your unit served on a flank mission or in a supporting capacity instead of in the “heart” of the operation.

[4.8] PREPARE CREW STATUS

As a non-commissioned officer, you will start the game with Crew Status Chart A2. Place the counter for your



starting rank (Staff Sergeant) on this display, as well as the “1” marker on your Experience Point track, to represent the point earned at Fort Knox Tank School.

[5.0] How to Win the Game

GENERAL RULE

A full game consists of completing numerous missions up to and through April 1945. The game will end early if you are killed in action. While the results of each mission may result in promotion and awards, overall victory level is determined at the end of play based on the successful missions.

[5.1] ENDING THE GAME

[5.1.1] The game ends upon completion of your final mission in April 1945—no missions are conducted after the end of April 1945.

[5.1.2] If it is determined after calculating missed time due to injuries that your next mission would commence after April 1945, the game ends.

[5.1.3] The game immediately ends if you are killed in action, regardless of the date.

[5.1.4] Once the game has ended, you can determine victory.

[5.2] DETERMINING VICTORY

[5.2.1] I would assume most players will usually enjoy topping their previous performances when playing the game. As a solitaire experience, it’s more about the journey than the destination. However, for those who wish a general historical “yardstick” for their efforts, I offer these victory conditions:

DEFEAT:

0–4 missions completed successfully.

You have failed to adequately defeat the Nazi threat to humanity. After the war you return to a war-weary nation, assuming you are alive.

DRAW:

5–10 missions completed successfully.

You have bloodied the defending Germans, but they have stymied your efforts long enough such that most of Germany, to include all of Berlin, falls under an Iron Curtain.

MARGINAL VICTORY:

11–20 missions completed successfully.

You have enjoyed success as a tank commander. Your crew is thankful you have led them across Europe. Your commander respects your abilities. Germany has been defeated, and you prepare mentally for Japan.

SUBSTANTIAL VICTORY:

21–30 missions completed successfully.

You are considered a leading tank expert and valued combat leader. You have gained the respect of your peers, your unit, and commanders. You are often mentioned in the nation’s papers and are requested to make War Bond Drive appearances.

DECISIVE VICTORY:

31+ missions completed successfully.

You are the scourge of the Nazis and the pride of the entire European Theater of Operations. Your legendary exploits place you at the top of all tank commanders and you were mentioned prominently in Nazi newspapers as a devil in human form. Your peers are amazed at your steel nerves and combat abilities. You retire peacefully after the war in Hardin County, Kentucky.

[5.2.2] TANK COMMANDER DEATH



Should you be killed in action you still (posthumously) determine your victory level.

[6.0] Sequence of Play

[6.1] DETERMINE YOUR MISSION



Determine your mission by rolling on the Mission Chart [A1] on the appropriate column. Roll for weather on chart [A3], which has certain combat effects. Roll for terrain on Chart [A5], which will also have combat effects. Place any current Major Event markers on the Operational Display. (The first one is for St. Lo and it is placed on the display on the first mission of July 1944). Remove any expired Major Event markers.

[6.2] SET UP THE BATTLE BOARD



Set up the [F2] Battle Board by rolling for enemy forces on Chart [A4]. Roll to see what type of enemy units are present. “2 T”, for example, means 2 Tanks. Roll 1d10 on the tank column. Both tanks will be the same type rolled. Repeat this procedure if you have rolled any R (Recon), SPG (Self Propelled Guns) and AT (Anti-tank guns). W means a Truck carrying an INF unit, and HT means a Halftrack that carries an INF unit. INF is simply an INF unit without transport. Allocate these forces to the Battle Board by rolling 1d6 for each enemy unit and then place them in Areas A, B, or C as appropriate. Roll on Chart [A6] to determine the quality of the troops and therefore their morale rating. The range always starts at long (exceptions: Bocage and Urban missions always start at Close, and Woods always starts at Medium).



Setup your tank by deciding which, if any, of the crew are buttoned up to start the mission.

also abandoned and removed from the Battle Board in that manner.

[6.5] COMBAT ROUNDS

Continue with rounds of combat until the Germans have all been removed from the Battle Board or the player's tank has been knocked out. The side holding the field at the end is the victor, and will result in a successful mission or a failure for your commander. Conceptually, the notional unit you are part of might be doing well, but if your vehicle is knocked out, it is still a mission failure for the player, even if it would probably have been a "win" for the Americans.

[6.6] GERMAN COUNTERATTACKS

If conducting an attack or an assault, check for German counterattack upon completion. If that occurs due to a 1d6 roll of six, the mission continues (without a chance for resupply). Set up the Battle Board again, with the Germans attacking and the Americans considered to be in defense. The weather and terrain do not change. If your tank is destroyed, do not check for a counterattack. (Even if it occurs, you won't be participating, as you are either wounded or dead, or have withdrawn what remains of your crew).

[6.7] CHECK FOR WAR TROPHIES



If you have remained on the battlefield (by winning) you may check for war trophies by consulting Chart [W1].

[6.8] AWARDS AND EXPERIENCE



Obtain Awards and Experience points. Spend Experience points if desired. Upgrade to a newer model of tank if possible/desired. Replace seriously wounded or KIA crewmen.

Restock ammunition. Exchange war trophies for items on Chart [W2] if desired. For every three missions completed (regardless of success or failure) the crew gains an Experience Point, which the player may spend to buy skills (7.7). Exception: Major Events (4.7).

[6.9] NEXT MISSION

Repeat this process on the next mission line on the Mission Log, until killed, or until the last turn of April 1945.

[7.0] Combat

[7.1] MISSION TYPES

Players will receive one of five different missions to execute, as explained below.

[6.3] INFANTRY



Infantry (also called "INF" in the game) start a mission by dismounting if mounted, but this is their only action on the first Combat Round (both the vehicle and the INF). Halftracks then can fire machine guns and become a separate unit. Trucks only stay on the Battle Board for one Combat Round, if not destroyed by the end of the

first round. They are considered to have withdrawn and are removed from play at the start of the second round. If a truck or halftrack is destroyed before the INF unit can dismount in the first combat round, the INF unit is not placed. INF can suffer losses and/or suppression. After the first loss, flip the INF unit to its reduced side (with the yellow bar across the center). After the second loss, remove it from the Battle Board. Suppression of INF units reduces the effectiveness of their ability to fire. Enemy INF may fire on the MG table to force you to button up, or may possibly fire on the Panzerfaust table if you are at close range to them.

Note: Infantry do not fight to the death, as they are not mindless robots. Removing an INF unit from the map does not mean you have killed all of them. What it does mean, however, is you have killed or wounded enough of that unit to render them combat ineffective, and the survivors have decided they need to reposition, withdraw, or else cease resistance and surrender.

[6.4] VEHICLES



Enemy vehicle come in several varieties. There are tanks, SPGs (self-propelled guns, i.e., non-turreted tank destroyers), recon vehicles, half-tracks, and trucks. They can be outright destroyed by main gun fire, but sometimes are



[7.1.1] MOVEMENT TO CONTACT



This mission is to gain contact with the enemy. It is essentially the same as an Attack, except the enemy forces are not considered dug-in on a starting 1d6 roll of 1–2. Enemy vehicles in areas A and C will move forward to flanking positions D and E (if possible) on the first German turn.

[7.1.2] ATTACK



Enemy forces are defending terrain. INF is considered to be dug-in. Enemy forces fire first only in the first combat round. Possible enemy counterattack at mission completion.

[7.1.3] ASSAULT



Enemy forces are defending prepared positions. INF is considered to be dug-in, enemy vehicles are considered to be Hull Down (7.3.1). The player receives one Field Artillery Fire Mission (7.6) to start the mission, which is executed without delay. Enemy vehicles (except Trucks) will not move. Enemy forces fire first, after the Field Artillery Fire Mission, in just the first combat round. Possible enemy counterattack at mission completion.

[7.1.4] DEFENSE



Enemy forces are attacking your position. Enemy forces in areas A and C (**exception: AT guns**) will move forward to flanking positions if possible. At the end of each Combat Round, decrease the range marker until it becomes close range (unless you started at close range due to bocage). You may begin Defense missions Hull Down (7.3.1) as you are assumed to have had time to find a good spot.

[7.1.5] REFIT

This is not a mission per se, rather more of a “non-mission.” Your unit has been halted to absorb new replacements, possibly to wait for fuel or resupply, etc. Write “Refit” on the Mission Log then roll another mission on the next line. It does count as a successful mission for all purposes, however.

[7.2] GENERAL COMBAT PROCEDURES.

Combat is resolved in Combat Rounds for each mission after the battle board is set up.

Note that during the first Combat Round only for Attack or Assault missions, you may be engaged and attacked by enemy units prior to conducting any actions. Roll for each enemy per Step 4. Note that enemy units are not eligible to roll twice in the same Combat round (their action simply precedes any action you can take).

Combat Rounds follow the following sequence:

1. Degrade smoke from previous Combat Rounds. (Smoke 2 markers flip to become Smoke 1, Smoke 1 markers are removed). Reduce Call For Fire (CFF) markers from previous rounds (a CFF–3 marker becomes a CFF–2 marker, etc). A CFF–1 marker becomes an Arty or Mortar CFF Marker, and is placed on an enemy unit. Remove suppression markers from last round.

Note: Your tank is the exact type of target AT guns, Tanks, and SPGs are supposed to engage, hence the check. INF will also fire to attempt to button you up. There are other friendly tanks and forces fighting with you, but you will eventually draw your share of fire, even if you are not actively engaging those forces.

2. Resolve CFF if a marker is on an enemy unit.
3. Conduct actions by having the tank commander issue commands. Normally this is two commands per Combat Round, but if the commander possesses and has activated the “Synergy” skill, he may give three commands. Commands are not given to the Loader during main gun firing, as he operates automatically when a command is given to the gunner. Think of those two crewmen as a team. They only operate independent of each other during ready rack reloading, and coaxial machine gun firing. The following commands can be given by the tank commander:
 - A. **Fire at a target.** The gunner will fire the loaded main gun round at the desired target, whatever that round happens to be. The loader, as part of this command, then loads a new or different round. Alternately, you may have the gunner fire the coaxial machine gun at an INF, a wheeled vehicle, or AT gun target. This requires no assistance by the loader, so it may be done while the loader is doing something else like filling the ready rack, for example.

Note: The coaxial machine gun was sighted in, and aligned with, the tank's main gun, and operated by the gunner instead of firing the main gun.

If the turret facing had to change, only one round can be fired at a target this Combat Round (a turret facing forward can only hit targets in Area B; facing left can hit targets in Areas A and D; and facing right can hit targets in Areas C and E). The turret can move all the way from left to right with one command to fire. HCBI (smoke) rounds from the main gun place a Smoke 2 marker on the area being fired at (A through E). WP rounds also place a Smoke 2 marker, but also have combat effects. AP and APCR rounds are considered ineffective against AT gun and INF targets.

Tank main gun fire rolls to hit on B1, then applies the results on B3 if against vehicles. Against AT/INF



targets, only HE or WP have an effect per the chart's note. AP, APCR, and HCBI have no casualty effect against INT or AT targets. All MG, mortar, and artillery fire rolls on chart B2.

If the ready rack is empty, only ONE main gun fire command may be given per Combat Round, regardless of how many commands the tank commander has left.

Ammo Round Expenditure: A fire action involves firing a SINGLE ammo round at a SINGLE enemy target. It is not possible to fire multiple ammo rounds during a single Fire Action. Note that a tank commander will typically have two commands per Combat Round, so you will effectively be able to fire two ammo rounds at a single target or one round each at two different targets.

- B. **Fire again at the same target.** This gains an accuracy bonus of -1 for previous target (due to sensing of the first round's impact). This bonus carries over to the next Combat Round if the first command of the next Combat Round is to fire again at that target.

Historical note: The term "sensing," as taught by the U.S. Army Armor School, refers to the commander's judgment of the location of a fired round's impact in relation to the actual target, if the target was not hit. Based on "sensing" he can have the gunner adjust fire up, down, left or right as needed. This makes subsequent rounds fired by a tank against a target more accurate.

- C. **Reload the Ready Rack.** This command to the loader causes him to load four rounds (six if he possesses and uses his "Adrenaline Rush" skill) into the Ready Rack each Combat Round, and do nothing else. Alternately, he may unload rounds (up to 4) or conduct a combination (unload 2 and load 2 new rounds, etc). He will continue to do this until the Ready Rack is full or is interrupted by a firing command.
- D. **Move forward.** This command causes the driver to advance. Reduce the range from Long to Medium or Medium to Short. You cannot advance closer than short range. Immobilization may occur after movement. Check on Chart [B5].
- E. **Move to Hull Down.** This command causes the driver to find a hull down position nearby. The range does not change unless the player desires to. This may or may not be successful, depending on the terrain. The skill "Eye for Terrain" gives a benefit. Immobilization may occur after movement. Check on Chart [B5].
- F. **Angle the Hull.** This command causes the driver to spin the tank's hull toward a different enemy area (A, B or C) from which it is currently facing. A tank facing to area A will receive flanking fire from any enemy in areas C and E. A tank facing toward area C will receive flanking fire from any enemy in areas A and D. Changing the hull

facing allows you to fire at different areas with the bow machine gun. Facing toward area A allows you to shoot the bow machine gun to A and D. Facing toward area C allows you to shoot the bow machine gun at areas C and E. Move your tank marker on the Battle Board to show the current orientation of the hull. Immobilization may occur after movement. Check on Chart [B5].

- G. **Move backward.** This command causes the driver to withdraw. Increase the range from Short to Medium, or from Medium to Long. If already at Long range, this command ends the mission in defeat. Immobilization may occur after movement. Check on Chart [B5].
- H. **Fire Bow MG.** This command tells the assistant driver to open fire on a target. It must be to a target at the same direction the hull is facing.
- I. **Fire the .50 caliber MG.** This command is given to himself by the commander, in effect. You cannot be buttoned to perform this fire as this is the machinegun mounted outside the tank.
- J. **Move for a Flank shot.** This is dangerous, in that your tank will be exposed to a flank shot itself from any enemy that shoots at it from the non-targeted area during the enemy's next chance to fire (only). However, all shots this round (only) against the target you are maneuvering against will be a flank shot (**exception: 7.4.5, Immobilization**). Place a "flank shot" marker on your intended target. The range does not change unless the player desires it. The shot will go against the enemy vehicle's side (or side turret), which is the third armor value on the counter. Normally you will only have one shot, but if the commander has the skill "Focus" you could fire twice depending on available ammo.
- K. **Fire 2" Smoke Mortar** (if available). This command is given to the loader. Place a Smoke 2 marker at your location on the Battle Board.
- L. **Call for Fire.** The tank commander may use a command to call for fire support. This will either be company mortars, battalion mortars, or possibly artillery. Place a CFF marker down on an enemy unit corresponding to the type of fire available per rule 7.6. Only tank commanders with an operational SCR 506 radio are allowed to call for fire (1st Lieutenants or Captains).
- M. **Button Up.** The tank commander may use a command to button up (close any or all hatches). Flip Open Markers to their Buttoned side. Although he is now immune to small arms fire, the tank operates less effectively when firing. Sometimes a player will be forced to button up from INF fire or artillery (which can engage your tank on the HE/MG Attack Chart [B2]). If a player



is unbuttoned and receives a “B” result from such fire on Chart [B2], he must button up and potentially roll for a wound for each unbuttoned crew member (refer to Chart [B7]).

- N. **Unbutton.** The tank commander may use a command to order any or all hatches to open up. Flip Buttoned Markers to their Open side. The crewmen operating from open hatches are now vulnerable to small arms fire, but operate more effectively.
- O. **Switch Rounds.** This command makes the loader unload the currently loaded main gun round and switch it with a round in the ready rack. This may be desirable if the current round in the main gun would be inappropriate or ineffective.

Historical note: Normally, if a non-optimal round was loaded, we were taught to just fire it and use the sensing to help adjust the fire for the second round (which would be hopefully a better match to the target). Seconds count in combat. But there may be times it would be more beneficial to waste an action and switch rounds. It's a judgment call.

Some actions by the crew require no commands: reloading machine gun ammunition, bailing out of a penetrated tank, clearing a stoppage (a jammed machine gun), or loading the main gun (the gunner does this as part of a fire command to the gunner).

4. Enemy forces will now fire or move. Roll 1d6 for each enemy unit on the first round: On a roll of “1” they will target your tank (including INF units). Otherwise, they are busy fighting the other forces with you. Your tank is also automatically targeted by any enemy unit you have shot at (placing HCBI Smoke does not elicit a response). Therefore, it is best not to target multiple enemies, as only the ones you have shot at will engage you (unless they roll a “1” in a combat round). When conducting an attack or an assault, the enemy fires first in the first Combat Round. They will fire second in all subsequent combat Combat Rounds, however. Enemy vehicles starting in Areas A or C will move to areas D or E, respectively, unless the player's mission is an Attack or an Assault, in which case they will not move. See 6.a. on the back of the rule-book for more on how enemy forces fire.
5. The final step of an action round is the Event Check, [B9]; process any results. You are now ready to cycle back to step 1 above and start a new action round. Skip this step if all enemy forces have been removed or destroyed.

Note: this prevents a highly unlikely, although possible, endless supply of German reinforcements.

6. A Mission is considered over if all enemy forces have been destroyed or removed from the Battle Board, or if your tank is destroyed, or if you have withdrawn from the Battle Board. Alternately, if the enemy has been reduced to a single INF unit, they are considered to withdraw or surrender and the mission ends.

[7.3] SPECIFIC COMBAT SITUATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

Certain concepts peculiar to armored operations and tank combat need some explanation as how they relate to the game and game play.

[7.3.1] HULL DOWN



A tank can position itself by using terrain (normally sloping terrain, or a fold in the ground, or a slight hill) so that only the turret, roughly, is visible to the enemy. This is known as being “hull down.” The advantage is that if struck by the enemy, the shell will hit the turret armor, which is (usually) thicker than the hull. Additionally, the tank itself presents a smaller target, since the hull is masked by terrain. This is why there is a +1 DRM “to hit” on chart B1 for hull down targets. Players may start hull down in defense missions, as you are assumed to have had time to find a good spot. You may also attempt to gain “hull down” status by using the Move to Hull Down command to your driver. If a B result arises from MG/2cm fire, only exposed crewman in the turret are affected. The bow machine-gun may not be fired while Hull Down.

[7.3.2] BUTTONED UP



A tank commander can operate with closed hatches by looking out the vision blocks, but this greatly reduces his ability to see the tactical situation and command the tank. The driver and assistant driver may also operate buttoned up, but it degrades their performance, which is why there is a penalty for operating buttoned up. On the flip side, they are immune to small arms and artillery while buttoned. Regardless of their status, the other crew (loader and gunner) are always assumed to be operating buttoned up. A player should start the mission by deciding on either a buttoned up or open status for his driver, assistant driver, and commander.

A driver who is buttoned up receives a -1 DRM per chart B5.

An assistant driver who is buttoned up receives a +1 DRM to his MG fire per chart B2.

A commander may use a command to make any/all hatches go to buttoned up status. If the tank receives a “B” or “IMM” result everyone must button up who currently isn't, and those crew must roll to see if they are wounded (1d6 roll of 1-2 means they must check on the B7 Wound Chart).



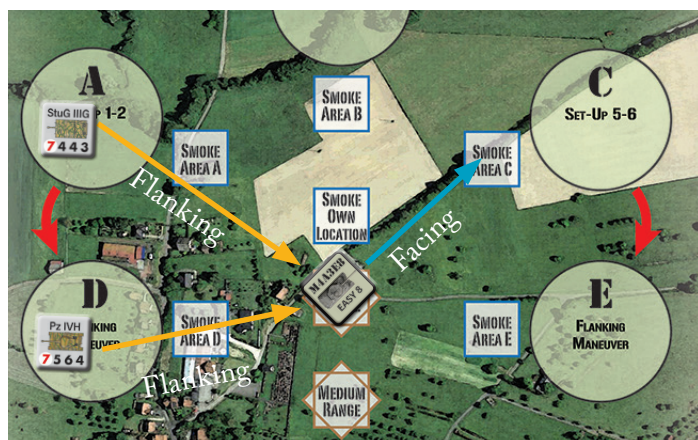
Note: The Israeli tank commanders operated almost exclusively unbuttoned during the Six-Day and October wars, and they suffered the lion's share of tank crew casualties because of it. They felt the increased effectiveness of the tank was worth the risk. Creighton Abrams, of the 37th Tank Battalion, was also well known for operating unbuttoned in World War Two. Sometimes discretion is the better part of valor, however, and think twice about staying unbuttoned in a situation where you may take a lot of MG fire or 2cm fire from recon vehicles.

[7.3.3] FRONTAL AND FLANKING FIRE



The optimal shot you can take against an enemy tank is against its flank (side armor). The thickest armor on a tank is generally the front turret and front hull. In fact, several of the German vehicles cannot be penetrated by the U.S. guns to the front barring a miracle lucky hit. An enemy tank or vehicle that moves to areas D or E is considered to be vulnerable to a flank shot in the first Combat Round you fire at it (unless they shoot at you first). After that, they are assumed to have moved to face your tank. You may also attempt to gain a flanking position by movement against any enemy vehicle in any area, but this is only in effect for the rest of the combat.

The player's tank can be angled to the left, right, or be facing forward, just like the turret. Tanks angled to the right take flank fire from areas A and D. Tank hulls angled to the left take flank fire from areas C and E. Tanks facing forward take flank fire from areas D and E. The same flanking penalties apply to the turret, so it matters if an incoming round hits the hull or turret if they are facing in different directions. An incoming shot could possibly hit side armor against the hull or frontal armor if it hits the turret; for example, if the turret is pointed toward the shot but the hull is not.



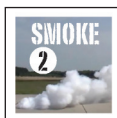
[7.3.4] AT GUN SPOTTING RESTRICTION



The Germans were reasonably adept at hiding their AT guns. In any mission, you are not allowed to target an AT gun on the first Combat Round, unless it has fired on your tank first (which might happen in an Attack or Assault, as the Germans fire first

in the first round for those missions). However, starting in the second Combat Round, you may target any AT gun, because it is assumed they fired at SOMEBODY in the first round, even if it wasn't you.

[7.3.5] SMOKE EFFECTS



Smoke is a two-edged sword – while it lessens the accuracy of incoming fire, it also lessens the accuracy of outgoing fire. Smoke affects ALL fire into, or out of, the area in which it is located. At the start of each Combat Round it degrades one level (Smoke 2 becomes Smoke 1; Smoke 1 is removed). If you smoke an enemy area, those units will suffer a negative DRM when firing, but any enemy units in other areas will not be affected. If you smoke your own location (2-in. mortar only), ALL enemy units suffer a negative DRM firing at you, but you also suffer a negative DRM firing at anybody in any area.

White Phosphorous (WP) is a unique round in that it combines an HE effect (incendiary, technically) with a smoke effect. After determining the damage from a WP round, place a Smoke 2 marker in the area.

There may be an instance where you place smoke in an enemy location and then the enemy reduces the range (you are defending and they move closer). In that case, the smoke is removed instead of being reduced, as they have moved past it. This also applies to smoke in your location, if you reduce the range by moving up. Note that flanking moves by the enemy do not reduce range.

Note: Smoke is best used judiciously. The best use is probably to buy time, allowing you to restock your ready rack, for example. Think twice before firing it or using the loader's 2" smoke discharger (mortar).

[7.3.6] FIREPOWER RATING AND PENETRATION



A tank's "Firepower" rating on the Tank Display Mat is the Penetration value used on Chart B3. This may be modified by range (+1 or -1 depending if it's short range or long range) or APCR ammo (+1 at all ranges).

[7.3.7] SPECIFIC AMMUNITION EFFECTS AND LIMITATIONS

Some rounds have specific effects (or no effects) based on the type of target. These are:



HE rounds do not affect enemy tanks/SPGs, but cause the enemy to button up. Place the HE marker next to a vehicle that is hit by HE to indicate it is Buttoned Up (+1 to hit you on Chart B1).



WP rounds always place a Smoke 2 marker in an area, but a hit against a tank or SPG destroys it with an additional 1d6 roll of "1." (The crew thinks they are on fire and abandon their vehicle).



A WP hit against a tank or SPG will also cause it to button up, just like a regular HE round.



AP rounds have no effect whatsoever against INF and AT targets. APCR adds +1 firepower (penetration) at all ranges.

Tank main gun fire rolls to hit on B1, then applies results on B3 if against vehicles. Against AT/INF targets, only HE or WP have an effect per the chart's note. AP, APCR, and HCBI have no casualty effects against INF or AT targets. All MG, mortar, and artillery fire rolls directly on Chart B2.

[7.3.8] SHOCK AND INTERIOR FRAGMENTATION



If the player's tank is hit but not penetrated by a main gun or AT round that has less penetration than his armor, the crew is subject to "Shock." The commander loses an action, assuming he has any left this round. If not, the commander receives a "Shock" marker and will lose the first action of the next Combat Round.

If the tank is hit by main gun or AT round that has penetration equal to or greater than its armor, but the tank is not penetrated, spalling (interior fragmentation caused by shock waves that flake armor off the inside of the tank) may occur in addition to "Shock." Roll 1d6: spalling happens on a 1 with penetration = armor, and happens on a 1-2 when the penetration was greater than the armor (but the tank was not penetrated due to lucky rolling). Roll 1d6 for a crewman to be injured:

- | | |
|-----|------------------|
| 1-2 | Commander |
| 3 | Gunner |
| 4 | Loader |
| 5 | Driver |
| 6 | Assistant Driver |

Roll to determine the wound on the [B7] Wound Chart.

[7.4] TANK/VEHICLE DAMAGE/INF LOSSES

A "DE" result means a vehicle is immediately destroyed. If this is your tank, roll for crew survival on the Fire/Bail Out Chart [B6]. Your next mission is lost (similar to a "REFIT" mission) in that you don't roll for a mission on that line of the Mission Log Sheet. It is considered to be spent getting a new tank and/or crewmen.

When a target is destroyed, write down the type of target and circle it on the Mission Log Sheet.

Note: Unlike some currently popular video games, tanks do not suffer damage bit by bit, until finally destroyed. Normally, there are two outcomes: In the first, a round will bounce, or fail to penetrate, resulting in typically no or limited cosmetic external damage. The second outcome is more lethal: if a round does penetrate, the results are generally catastrophic, and at a minimum, all crew members will be injured. This is not completely

the result of the round itself causing damage upon entering the vehicle. The tank's armor that occupied the space of the penetration hole liquefies and fragments, splashing and bouncing around inside the tank, causing fires, injuries, and sometimes explosions.

Enemy vehicles are normally destroyed by direct AP fire penetrating their armor. However, Recon vehicles and halftracks may also be destroyed by HE fire, and possibly by WP. Finally, trucks are destroyed by ANY result on any fire chart – even just a suppression – other than a miss or stoppage.

INF and AT units can suffer suppression, which reduces their ability to attack, and also numeric results, which are step losses. An INF unit that takes a "1+S" result, for example, flips to its reduced side and is also suppressed. A second numeric result removes a reduced INF from play. INF units, therefore, have two steps, and may possibly be destroyed outright by a "2" result.

INF units that are suppressed and receive a second suppression in the same Combat Round also receive a step loss in addition to other results. A "1+S" result against an already suppressed INF unit would therefore eliminate it. An "S" result against a full strength suppressed INF flips it to its reduced side and it is still suppressed. A second suppression against an AT unit has no additional effect.

[7.4.1] MISSION END

A player may abort his mission at any time, but this results in mission failure. This is accomplished by tank movement from long range to off the Battle Board. Alternately, a mission may end due to all enemy forces having been removed from the Battle Board, or due to your tank having been destroyed.

[7.4.2] CREW INJURY

The game tracks wounds for the entire crew. Each injury will result in lost time or in extreme cases, medical retirement or death (and the game ends if this was the commander.)

Crew may possibly be injured from a "B" result on Chart [B2] or [B3], artillery if unbuttoned, etc. A 1d6 roll of 1-2 indicates a check is required on the Wound Chart [B7]. Crew may also be wounded from spalling (rule 7.3.8).

Three results may happen from injury: Light Wound (LW), Serious Wound (SW), or Killed in Action (KIA). Each time a crewman is wounded, check on the Wound Chart [B7] for the severity.

[7.4.3] INJURY DURATION AND EFFECTS



LW: The effect is that the commander loses one command per Combat Round and cannot use any skills he might have. Other crewman cannot use skills if lightly wounded. No lost missions in time. The LW is removed at the start of the next mission.

Note: Unlike other games, where you might have to lose a mission,



this is the Army and there's a war on. Lightly wounded personnel get to "suck it up" and drive on.



SW: If this occurs, since you are still in combat, you should consider withdrawing immediately. At the end of each Combat Round in which a crewman is seriously wounded, roll 2d6. A result of 11 or 12 means that crewman is now DOW (Died of Wounds). After the mission has ended, roll on the Serious Wound Chart [C1] for resolution.

During combat, a seriously wounded crewman cannot perform any functions. If this is the commander, the gunner will temporarily take over with one command point per Combat Round. A SW driver cannot drive. The tank is immobilized for the rest of the Combat Round while the assistant driver takes over. A SW assistant driver cannot fire the bow machinegun. A SW loader cannot perform any duties, and the tank cannot fire for one round until the assistant driver takes over his position. A SW gunner cannot fire, and the tank cannot fire for one round. Afterwards, the tank can fire 1 round per Combat Round, with the Tank Commander firing. He gives the fire command to himself in essence, and is considered buttoned-up as he is down in the gunner's seat.

A hospital stay is required for any crewman who is out for eight or more missions. You will receive a new crewman (with no skills) to replace him. If it is the tank commander, you lose your old tank and will receive a new tank with all new crew when you are released. This tank will be the latest model available (or your choice) that you have the ability to command from a Prestige standpoint.



KIA: If the tank commander is KIA, the game ends at that point. Other crew members who are KIA are replaced and any skills they may have had are lost. Obviously, KIA crewmen cannot perform duties.

[7.4.4] STOPPAGES



The machine guns in the game are susceptible to stoppages (gun jams) during firing. An "ST" result on chart B2 means a machine gun has suffered a stoppage. Place a "Gun Jam!" marker on the affected weapon. It must be cleared by the assistant driver (Bow MG), gunner (Coaxial MG) or commander (.50 caliber) before it can fire again. Stoppages do not apply to the main gun or German weapons.

[7.4.5] IMMOBILIZATION



Becoming immobilized is a tanker's worst nightmare, usually because tanks need to move to be at their most effective, not to mention you are now a stationary target for the rest of the battle. Unlike certain video games where you can press a button and be instantly repaired, a thrown track can sometimes

take hours to fix, and at a minimum, 15–20 minutes if you're lucky enough to be able to "walk it back on." Immobilization in the game can also represent road wheel/drive sprocket/return roller damage, which can involve significant repairs. After a battle in which you were immobilized, roll 1d6. On a roll of 1–2 you will miss the next mission for repairs.

Enemy vehicles that are immobilized must check for bail-out for every subsequent main gun round that you hit it with, regardless of penetration, assuming you don't destroy it outright. On a 1d6 roll of "1" an immobilized enemy vehicle's crew will bail out, and the player receives credit for a destroyed vehicle.

An enemy vehicle that is immobilized is considered "flanked" for the rest of the engagement if the player uses the "Move for a Flank Shot" action (7.2 J) instead of just for the next shot.

[7.5] WEATHER EFFECTS



The weather for each mission on the Weather Chart [A3]. The weather will likely degrade your mobility (mud and rain increase the chances of bogging down) as well as firing (rain and snow also affect firing, similar to a Smoke 1 marker).

Note: The effects of weather are obviously abstracted a bit to keep the game playable, but the main considerations are covered.

[7.6] CALL FOR FIRE

Indirect Fire Support comes from a Call For Fire given by the tank commander, which requires one of his commands for the Combat Round. This requires an SCR 506 command radio, which is only present in the tanks of 1st Lieutenants and Captains. The Call For Fire (CFF) can be a request for one of two types of indirect fire:



Mortars: Place a CFF 2 marker on an enemy unit. To execute, conduct an HE attack with a –1 DRM against an enemy unit.



Field Artillery: Place a CFF 4 marker on an enemy unit. When it is executed, conduct an HE attack with a –3 DRM against the enemy unit.

The number on the CFF counter represents tracking the time lag between issuing an order to when it is executed on the battlefield. Each Combat Round, numbered CFF-# markers are reduced by one to represent the passage of time until the fire action can be executed.

Example: Once a CFF-1 marker is reduced, the strike is resolved, per step 2 under [7.2] General Combat Procedures.

An Assault Mission (not an Attack) starts with a bonus Field Artillery fire mission that commences the battle, after forces are set up for both sides and before the start of the first



Combat Round. This does not require a radio (somebody else is requesting it for you in this case).



It is possible for an airstrike to get called in by Random Event. Select a target that receives an HE attack against it with a -4 DRM. If a “2” or less is rolled, the target is also destroyed, even if it was an SPG or tank.

Players are limited to calling for either two mortar missions or one artillery mission per Mission. (There is only so much fire support available). The “free” Field artillery CFF for an Assault, or a Field Artillery CFF purchased with a Prestige Point, do not count against this limit.

It is also possible enemy indirect fire will target you from the Event Check. If this occurs, it is resolved immediately on Chart [B2] with either a -1 DRM (mortars) or a -3 DRM (field artillery). The main effect will be to button your tank up, although this may also cause you to be wounded if you are operating with an open hatch. Field artillery will also immobilize your vehicle with a “B” result.

As an exception to the normal call for fire requirement of a command radio, a player (even an NCO) may spend a Prestige Point before starting a mission and receive a Field Artillery CFF, which is resolved immediately on the first Combat Round. This is in addition to the bonus Field Artillery for an Assault Mission, in which case you would resolve two Artillery CFFs to start.

Note: Hollywood aside, indirect fire was almost completely ineffective against tanks, barring a direct hit, although the larger rounds could immobilize tanks by destroying the tracks and suspension with a close miss.

[7.7] CREW SKILLS

The skill system should be considered the heart of the game. A player may increase his crew’s skills during the course of the game to improve his crew’s combat effectiveness. For every three missions completed (regardless of success or failure) the crew gains an Experience Point, which the player may spend to “buy” skills. Missions that are skipped due to injury, tank repair, or other reasons, do not count toward gaining experience points. The skills cost different amounts of experience points to purchase. The Skill Effects Listing Chart [B8] gives a summary of all the skills and costs, with the full explanation below in the rules. Most skills can only be used once per mission, and should be flipped to the “USED” side after use. This will be reset upon starting the next Mission.

Some discounts to the purchase price of skills may be earned at Fort Knox during Tank School. These are for Weapons Maintenance, Expert, Eye for Terrain, and Gunnery. If the

skill discount marker is available and that skill is purchased, the discount marker is removed and replaced by the actual skill marker.

If you participate in a Major Event by successfully rolling for one that is currently active on the Operational Display, and you succeed in the mission, you receive one full Experience Point. In essence, success in a Major Event mission gives you the same credit as if you had completed three missions. If you fail, you just receive the normal credit for having completed a single mission.

The player starts the game with one Experience Point for graduating from tank school.

The skills confer various benefits during game play, as listed below. The cost to buy each skill is listed after the skill name in parentheses.

SKILLS:



GUNNERY (4) – This skill gives the gunner a -1 DRM to the “to hit” dice roll for the main gun on Chart [B1], and -1 to the HE/Machine gun Attack Chart [B2]. This skill is always active.



AIM (2) – There are three results on the [B3] Main Gun/AT Penetration Chart listed as “IMM**.” Normally an immobilized result, the Aim Skill converts these results into “DE” results due to skillful aiming at a weak point on the target. This skill is always active.



SIXTH SENSE (1) – The commander has developed an uncanny sense of impending danger. Once per mission, after receiving fire, he is considered to button up before any incoming fire arrives if he chooses.



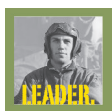
EXPERT (3) – A commander may become an “expert” in his current series of tank: This skill allows the player to reroll one of his attacks or “to hit” rolls, if desired, once per mission. He must use the results of the new roll, even if it does less damage or even misses. This skill applies to ONLY the specific tank series for which it was purchased (the implication being, you must repurchase the skill if you switch to the M26 Pershing tank).



SYNERGY (2) (1) – A commander may, once per mission, issue three commands instead of two in a Combat Round. A player loses this skill if any of the crew are killed or seriously wounded and sent to the hospital. Costs one Experience Point to rebuy this skill if lost, but it cannot be rebought until the player earns at least one new Experience Point (exception: the “Booze” war trophy). This represents the “synergy” of a crew finally working together in harmony.



"The whole is greater than the sum of the parts." – Aristotle. A tank crew that has worked and fought together long enough learns to anticipate commands and operates at a higher level of efficiency.



LEADERSHIP (1) – This skill allows the tank commander a –1 DRM to all promotion attempts.



EYE FOR TERRAIN (2) – This skill allows the driver to receive a +1 DRM to the Immobilization Chart [B5] and a –1 DRM to the Hull Down Chart [B5a]. This skill is always active.



ADRENALINE RUSH (1) – This skill allows a loader to load six rounds into the ready rack instead of just the normal four, once per mission.



WEAPONS MAINTENANCE (1) – This skill allows a crew member to ignore the first (only) Stoppage (Jammed Weapon) result from firing his machine gun per mission. This skill is specific to the crew member: The gunner's skill applies to the coaxial machine gun, the assistant driver's skill applies to the bow machine gun, and the loader's skill applies to the .50 caliber Antiaircraft Machine gun (AAMG).

[7.8] END OF COMBAT ROUND EVENT CHECK

An Event Check occurs at the end of each Combat Round by rolling on the Chart [B9] Event Check. This event's effects can range from very good to very bad. Often, nothing will happen at all. The first 12 (only) rolled during the event check triggers a Random Event instead of the listed event. (9.0)

[7.9] EXAMPLE OF PLAY

The following text show an example of play using basic rules:



It's late July 1944. Rolling a "6" on chart [A1] means you are conducting an Attack as part of the St. Lo campaign (major event), You roll a "9" for weather on Chart [A3] and a "6" for the terrain on Chart [A5], so your M4A1 Sherman (*Chuck Wagon*) is conducting an Attack in Open Terrain with Rain (+1 to Main Gun/AT to hit, +1 to MG/INF attack).

Your tank commander (Staff Sergeant) and driver's hatches are open. Assistant driver and loader are buttoned-up. Your loader has pre-loaded HE. Turret orientation is to the front. Your tank will start at long-range. Since it is an Attack, the enemy acts and fires first in the first round.

You roll 2d6 for Enemy units on Chart [A4] and roll an "8" (1 AT + 1 INF). Now, roll 1d10 on the bottom of A4 for the AT unit. You roll a "6" in the AT column (7.5 cm PAK 40). Next step is to place the units on F2. You roll 1d6 for the AT unit (die roll of 3: Area B) and 1d6 for the INF (die roll of 6:

Area C). Lastly, roll 1d6 on Chart A6 for the INF unit's morale. This may come into play if the INF attack at close range with a Panzerfaust (Chart B4). Because it's an attack, you don't roll to see if the INF is dug-in – they automatically have that status. Place a dug-in marker next to the INF unit.



Next, roll 1d6 to see if the enemy has detected and targeted you. The AT rolls a "1" and the INF rolls a "5". Bad news as the AT knows where you are and will engage. You normally couldn't target him on the first round, (Rule [7.3.4] but that is a moot point here, as he is shooting first.

Now the enemy acts. To determine if the AT gets a hit, roll on 2d6 on Chart B1. The only modifier that applies is +1 for rain. You roll a "4", +1 DRM for the rain, which still results in a "Hit". That's not good. Go to Chart B3 and roll 1d6 to see if the hit is a turret or a hull hit. You roll a "4", which means your hull is hit. But did the round penetrate? The AT gun penetration number is "7" straight up. It is "–1" for long range but that is still a "6." The penetration of "6" versus your tanks front armor of "5" means you will roll on the PEN>Armor column of Chart [B3]. This means you refer to the third column, but your luck changes (sort of) and you roll a "3", which means you've lost a track and are immobilized. This beats the hell out of being destroyed outright, however.



The INF has not detected you so no activity from them. To end the Combat Round, roll on Chart B9. Your luck has improved considerably as you roll a "5", which means you can "DE one random GE AT gun". The notional tank to your left flank targeted the AT gun when he fired on you. Notice you do not get credit for a destroyed AT gun, but you will get credit for a successful mission. You live to fight another day. As per rule [7.2.6], the lone remaining INF unit decides to reposition and withdraws.

What happens to "*Chuck Wagon*" and the crew? The area is clear of enemy units so we roll 1d6 [7.4.5]. You roll a "5" which means your crew and the unit maintenance team repaired the tank in time for your unit's next mission. You check for a counterattack (per rule 6.6) but roll at 1d5 "4" so there is no counterattack. You check Chart W1 for War Trophies. Rolling 2d6, you get a "3" which means one of your crew found a Hitler Youth Knife on the battlefield. Place it on your Crew Status Chart [A2] as it will come in handy in a future trade for something useful. Finally, you will now conduct the after-mission activities of rule 6.7.

Please note the example of play does not include the two command actions taken by the tank commander, which would have occurred before the end of the Combat Round (prior to rolling on Chart B9 in the second-to-last paragraph).



[8.0] Awards, Promotions, Prestige, Trophies

[8.1] AWARDS

The various awards in the game are representative of the major awards given to Army personnel during World War II. Each award confers one Prestige Point to a player (and also raises his prestige level by one), which he may spend at his convenience to upgrade to a newer tank or obtain an old crewman after his release from the hospital.

[8.1.1] EUROPEAN–AFRICAN–MIDDLE EASTERN CAMPAIGN MEDAL



This is awarded to a tank commander upon completion of his 1st mission. The award does not confer any prestige.

[8.1.2] ARMY COMMENDATION MEDAL



This is awarded to a tank commander upon completion of his 5th mission. The award confers one prestige point.

[8.1.3] PURPLE HEART



This is awarded to a tank crewman who is wounded in action. The first Purple Heart confers one prestige point to the player if the commander received it.

[8.1.4] BRONZE STAR



This is awarded to the tank commander who destroys or damages two enemy vehicles and/or AT guns during a single battle. The first award confers one prestige point.

[8.1.5] SILVER STAR



This is awarded to the tank commander who destroys three enemy vehicles and/or AT guns during a battle and completes his mission. The first award confers one prestige point.

[8.1.6] DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS



This is awarded to a tank commander who destroys four tanks/SPGs in a single battle and completes his mission. The first award of the DSC confers a prestige point, and also grants an automatic battlefield commission to 2nd Lieutenant if the player is still an NCO at the time. This promotion occurs at the next promotion attempt without a die roll required.

[8.1.7] MEDAL OF HONOR



This is awarded to a tank commander who destroys five vehicles and/or antitank guns in a single battle, while having received a wound

during said battle. The Medal of Honor gives a Prestige Point each time it is earned.

[8.1.8] AWARD LIMITATIONS

Players will only achieve one award per mission for heroism. This means that, although the criteria for several awards might be met at the same time, only the higher award will be received. The exceptions are the Army Commendation Medal (which is automatic after five missions), the European–African–Middle Eastern Campaign Medal (which is automatic after one mission), and the Purple Heart (which is automatic upon receiving a wound). Those awards can be simultaneously earned along with an award for heroism on the same mission.

[8.1.9] MULTIPLE AWARDS



Players may earn multiple awards of the Bronze Star, Silver Star, and Purple Heart, but these do not grant additional Prestige Points or any game play benefits. They may be tracked by the player by using awards with Oak Leaf devices. One Oak Leaf would indicate a second award, 2 Oak Leaves a third award, etc.

[8.1.10] UNIT AWARDS



Players may earn the right to wear a unit award if his unit receives it. The Valorous Unit Award (which is considered the unit equivalent to the Silver Star) is awarded to a unit (and therefore, the player) who successfully completes five missions in a row, and also destroys at least five enemy tanks/SPGs during those missions (vehicles destroyed by an Event Check do not count). The Presidential Unit Citation (PUC) (which is considered the unit equivalent to the Distinguished Service Cross) is awarded to a unit (and therefore, to the player) for successfully completing eight missions in a row, and who also destroy eight tanks/SPGs during those missions (vehicles destroyed by an Event Check do not count). The “clock resets” after a unit wins either award. Notice that it is possible for a unit to win the PUC first based on not having destroyed enough tanks/SPGs in the first five missions. Either unit award confers a Prestige Point the first time it is earned.

Historical Note: The Presidential Unit Citation was originally called the Distinguished Unit Citation. The game uses the commonly recognized term, although it is a bit of an anachronism. The Valorous Unit Award was not created until 1966 and may be disregarded if desired.

[8.2] PROMOTIONS



Players start as a Staff Sergeant, the standard rank for a tank commander. Having an officer rank higher than second lieutenant allows a player to have a tank equipped with a command radio, which impacts the ability to call in fire support. Rank has no other game impact, but also adds to the role–



playing aspect of the game and serves as an additional metric of performance.

[8.2.1] RANKS

The tank commander's possible ranks are:



FIRST RANK: Staff Sergeant – the player's normal and lowest possible starting rank.



SECOND RANK: Sergeant First Class – the rank of the platoon sergeant, who also still commands his tank.



THIRD RANK: 2nd Lieutenant – the rank of a platoon leader, who still commands his own tank.



FOURTH RANK: 1st Lieutenant – the rank of the company XO (executive officer), who commands his own tank which is equipped with a SCR 506



command radio.



FIFTH RANK: Captain – the rank of the company commander, who still commands his own tank. It is equipped with a SCR 506 command radio. It is



the highest rank available in the game.

[8.2.2] PROMOTION MECHANICS

The first promotion attempt is made after the 2nd month of service and the second attempt after the 4th month of service (and so on). Additionally, a player who earns the Distinguished Service Cross is automatically given a battlefield commission to 2nd Lieutenant if he is still a noncommissioned officer at the next promotion attempt (no die roll required).

Promotion to the next higher rank occurs on a successful 1d6 roll of 1–4, with the following modifiers:

- 2 For possessing the Medal of Honor (every promotion attempt).
- 1 Per award of the DSC or Silver Star during the period.
- 1 For possession of the Leadership skill.

A player may have multiple modifiers depending on how the period went. Once a player reaches officer rank, he should switch from the [A2] Crew Status Chart (NCO) to the [A2a] Crew Status Chart (Officer).

[8.3] PRESTIGE POINTS AND PRESTIGE LEVEL

American Tank Ace uses the concepts of “Prestige Points” and an overall “Prestige Level.” These two concepts are related, but serve different purposes. As a player's Prestige Level increases, newer and more advanced types of tanks

will be available for use. Prestige Points can be used to upgrade to newer tanks.

[8.3.1] PRESTIGE POINTS

Each time a player receives an award he receives a Prestige Point. Keep track of your current total of points on Chart [A2] or [A2a]. You also receive a Prestige Point for each promotion. Prestige Points may be spent on the following items:

1 Point: Upgrade to a newer tank. This requires your current tank to have been destroyed or damaged beyond repair (written off). If a newer type of tank is not available yet, or a player wishes to save his points, he will simply receive a replacement tank of the exact type he just lost for free.

2 Points: Upgrade to a newer tank. Normally crews stayed in their tanks as long as they were operational. By spending 2 points you can circumvent this policy and get a newer model of tank, if one is available. (You would do this if you are still in an operational, but older model).

2 points: Request a previous crewman's return. (This is for use when a skilled crewman was lost to the hospital due to a serious wound). Spend the points when the crewman is scheduled to be released and add him back to your crew the next mission.

You can only upgrade to particular type of tank if your current Prestige Level is high enough to allow you to command it. (See 8.3.2 below).

Historical Note: LTC Creighton Abrams, of the 4th Armored Division, went through multiple Sherman tanks, starting with an M4 and finally ending up in “Thunderbolt VII,” an M4A3E8.

[8.3.2] PRESTIGE LEVEL

A player's Prestige Level starts at zero. Every time a player receives a Prestige Point, his Prestige Level increases by one. It never decreases. Unlike Prestige Points, which can be saved and spent as desired, the Prestige Level is your overall Prestige within your unit. Your Prestige Level can only increase as the game progresses – it never decreases even if you spend all your Prestige Points. A Prestige Level of “5” is the maximum and once reached it no longer needs to be tracked. It is the highest level needed to request any tank. Prestige Points, however, can still be earned (and spent) even if you are currently at level 5 Prestige.

[8.4] WAR TROPHIES



At the end of any mission in which you retain the battlefield, you may scrounge around and look for war trophies. Roll 2d6 on Chart [W1] to see if one of your crew has found something of value.

These items may be kept for sentimental purposes, or traded to someone in supply or support for an item that has a game



function to assist you. Chart [W2] lists the items available and their cost. You do not get any “rebates” when purchasing an item. For example, if you possess 2 items worth 2 points each, you may trade them for an item worth 3, but you will not get a point back. You may collect multiples of the same item (and in fact, will almost always do so until you start spending them). You are not required to trade them at any time.

Historical Note: This is a time-honored tradition dating back to the dawn of time, and hence the phrase, “to the victor goes the spoils.” Support troops and supply troops normally didn’t get into direct combat; hence Luger pistols, medals, flags, etc. were normally in high demand and these troops would be very eager to trade for them. As a personal note, I regret not being able to bring home an AK-47, but the rules had changed for my war. C’est la Guerre.

[9.0] Random Events

During the Event Check at the end of each Combat Round, it is possible a Random Event will occur. These range from very good to very bad. Only one random event can occur per mission. The first 12 rolled during an Event Check becomes a random event instead of the Minefield event. Any subsequent 12 rolled will be the Minefield event (or no event, as the Minefield can only occur once per mission as well). Some random events are processed immediately, while others require a marker to keep track as they may trigger on the next or possibly some other future mission.

[10.0] Optional Rules

[10.1] MULTI-PLAYER

Despite the fact American Tank Ace is designed as a solitaire game, it can be played cooperatively or competitively by two or more players.

[10.2] COOPERATIVE PLAY

Two players can fight in the same unit, and assist each other. One player should roll for a mission, weather, terrain, and enemy troop quality. Both players will be using that setup. Both players will roll for enemy forces separately, however, and setup their Battle Boards. The Battle Boards are considered to be adjacent physically, but the players are assumed to be in different platoons of the same company. If one player eliminates all the forces on his Battle Board, he may begin firing on the 3 areas closest to his side on the other Battle Board. To wit, if the player on the left has no more Germans to engage, he may help the player on the right by engaging forces on the other Battle Board in Areas A, B, and D. The right-side player, once free, may engage forces on the other Battle Board in Areas B, C, and E. This firing is automatically considered flank shots on the Combat Round the assisting player first shoots.

Either player may call in artillery or mortar missions to assist the other player, but only if both players possess a SCR 506 command radio to coordinate it.

Both players must succeed if either is to succeed in a mission, so even if all German forces are eliminated, if either tank has been lost, the mission is a failure.

[10.3] COMPETITIVE PLAY

Two players can fight in the same or different units, and compete for the best score. When it comes time for return fire from enemy forces, the opposing player can roll the dice for the German Forces. If you choose to play in the same unit, the rules from [10.2] apply, so to a degree, you want to help your opponent, but the winner of competitive play is the player who ends up with the most vehicle/AT kills at the end of the game. First tie-breaker is highest award.

[10.4] INCREASED THREAT TARGETING

Enemy units will target you on a 1d6 roll of “1” per rule [7.2]-1 After you have eliminated any enemy unit by your tank’s fire, increase this for the rest of the mission to a 1d6 “1-2” as you are now seen as a greater threat.

Game Credits

GAME DESIGN: Gregory M. Smith

GAME ARTISTS: Nadir Elfarra, Matt White

COVER ART: Matt White

PROJECT DIRECTOR: John Kranz

PLAYTESTING: Christopher Schall, Ian Cowley, Rembert “Chip” Jarrell, Lee Smith, Steve Cavadini, Maurice “Moe” Fitzgerald.

EXAMPLE OF PLAY: Steve Cavadini

RULES EDITING: Michael Neubauer

SPECIAL THANKS TO: Dan Pacaldi for suggesting the Bar Fight could go either way ☺

This game is dedicated to Major Michael L. Mundell, United States Army. Fellow Armor Officer, Husband, Father and Friend. KIA Fallujah 2007. Rest easy, bud.





Designer's Notes

I was approached by Lee Smith to create an updated version of the old Avalon Hill classic, "Patton's Best." After digging out my old copy from the basement, and having reviewed the game, I was certain I could make a tactical solitaire tank game, but I was also certain it would only superficially resemble "Patton's Best."

I'll have to be honest – I never really cared for "Patton's Best." I realize this is heresy to the long-time fans, but I found it to be very tedious, and the percentile dice used for almost all routines to be a bit clunky. Patton's Best has a lot of intricate details that bogs things down, which I think don't really add to the "realism" considering that you're fighting on an abstract circle. I try to strive for ease of play in my designs, and I knew I could streamline things. American Tank Ace has this streamlining, I feel, but I've attempted to keep the historical accuracy despite the abstraction of certain events. It was a very difficult design for a variety of reasons. Land combat involves a large number of elements. Tactical land combat even more so. Ask any Advanced Squad Leader player ☺.

Furthermore, there are a lot of details that can be put into armor versus penetration. Not only is the armor of different thicknesses in various places on the tank, but the angling of the armor can also be critical in increasing the chances of a bounce. There is some painful mathematics in what the effective thickness of the armor really is based on angles, which also affects the chances of a bounce. Add to that there is upper hull armor, lower hull armor, upper side armor lower side armor, turret armor, gun mantlet armor (typically, all different thicknesses, and at different angles). I have made some abstractions by letting the players hit the hull, or the turret, or the side/rear. What really matters, though, is whether you can penetrate or not. This is reflected in the charts and I feel it adequately covers the reality without getting too far down into the weeds. Someone might argue, "but I might have hit his lower front instead of his upper front hull," to which I would say, "this is why we roll dice."

Another area I mostly abstracted out was spotting. Tanks are not subtle weapons. They are noisy, large machines and when they shoot, a pretty impressive fireball comes out of the end of the gun tube. Although Patton's Best featured spotting, I felt it really was not worth the trouble for what it added, which was not much. You quickly pick up on enemy fire in combat. However, the testers felt it appropriate that you couldn't fire on German AT guns in the first round, unless they fire on your tank first. So that made sense. AT guns were usually pretty well camouflaged by the Germans.

I decided early on that "Tank School" would be a lot of fun, having pioneered the idea in "Defending America." It gives the player some early decisions that will affect his entire career, and decisions are always good in a solitaire game. A special thanks to Ian Cowley who thought of the "Bar Fight" concept – too iconic not to include. Unfortunately

for the players, Hardin County, Kentucky is a dry county, so any bar fights have to happen up in Louisville. We can assume he hitched a ride there as I often did as a lieutenant. Another fun addition was the concept of scrounging around after a fight to pick up "war trophies" which I will admit to having done myself in 1991. I only actually got a chance to trade them once, for some British rations. Quite tasty, if I recall.

As with many of my games, the heart of the game in my mind is the skill system. Decisions on purchasing skills will greatly affect your survival and combat effectiveness. Spend your points wisely.

However, unlike many of my games, there are many more tactical decisions than usual. AT guns, tanks, and SPGs are a huge threat. Infantry, thankfully, not so much, unless they are within Panzerfaust range. What is worse is the German tanks almost always can kill you – even from the front. Your gun, typically, can only penetrate the side armor of the larger German tanks. You must decide who, and when, to engage, and decide when you need smoke cover. Ammunition can also be a problem in a longer battle, not that you'll ever run out per se, but that your Ready Rack will be depleted and your rate of fire will decrease.

This design is a bit unusual in that it combines both very realistic and totally abstracted combat routines. The impact of the fact you are not alone in the battle is mainly represented by the end of round "Event Check." The impact of other friendly forces had to be represented somehow, and I chose the "Event Check" to account for them. I think I have done so in a way that does not bog down play excessively, while still accounting for it. In reality you would not ever be fighting alone in a tank (despite the final scene in the movie "Fury.")

As an Armor Officer for 20 years in the U.S. Army, I'm really not sure why I've avoided doing a tank game yet. I do have some personal experience, having participated in tank battles in 1991. It's possible I found submarines and aircraft more interesting – heck, I knew a lot about tanks already, and half the fun for me is learning new things. I think I was initially skeptical I could make a fun game from a situation that is, at best, grim. You are severely out-gunned by the German tanks and your chances for survival are bleak. The other reason I've avoided it, I think, is the nature of armored combat – penetration knocks your vehicle out. You either penetrate or you don't. And the Germans generally have no issues penetrating American tanks if they hit. But I'm glad I finally decided to do this game, and I hope you enjoy it.

Tank Unit Notes



1st Armored Division. "Old Ironsides." Fought in North Africa as part of Operation Torch and at Kasserine Pass. Landed at Naples in October 1943 and fought the rest of the war in Italy, slowly pushing north, and ended the war near Milan. Although not



A Real American Tank Ace...



Lafayette G. Pool in a 1949 photo.

Pool is credited with destroying 12 enemy tanks, 258 enemy armored vehicles and self-propelled guns, and over 1,000 enemy personnel during the 81 days he was in combat. Pool's awards for his service include the Distinguished Service Cross, the nation's second highest award for valor, the Legion of Merit, the Silver Star, the Purple Heart, the French Fourragère, and the Légion d'honneur

Pool was drafted into the United States Army in June of 1941 and assigned to the new 3rd Armored Division. Early in his training Pool was identified as an aggressive tank commander, always demanding top performance from his crew. In order to remain close to the action, Pool refused a commission. Promoted to staff sergeant, Pool deployed to Europe with the 3rd Armored Division in September 1943.

Assigned to 3rd Platoon, Company I, 32nd Armored Regiment, 3rd Armored Division, Pool saw action in France from June to September 1944. During that period he commanded three Sherman tanks: an M4A1, and two M4A1(76)Ws. All of his tanks had the nickname "In The Mood". Pool kept the same crew members during most of the war. Corporal Wilbert "Red" Richards was the driver, PFC Bertrand "School Boy" Close was the assistant driver, Corporal Willis "Ground Hog" Oller was the gunner, and Technician Fifth Grade Delbert "Jailbird" Boggs had the loader's position.

Pool's first tank, an M4A1, was knocked out by a Panzerfaust in fighting around Villers-Fossard. His second tank, an M4A1(76)W, was knocked out in a friendly-fire incident (air-strike) during fighting near the village of Fromental. His third and final tank, another M4A1(76)W, was knocked out by a Panther tank firing from ambush near Münsterbusch, Germany, southeast of Aachen. While Red Richards was trying to back the damaged tank out of danger, the Panther scored a second hit, which tipped the Sherman into a ditch. Pool's replacement gunner, PFC Paul K. King, was killed, and Pool's leg was badly damaged, eventually requiring its amputation.

technically part of the game's operational area, I have chosen to include them anyway as an option. We are rewriting history to a degree, after all.



2nd Armored Division. "Hell on Wheels." Also fought in North Africa, but was withdrawn afterwards in preparation for the Normandy invasion. Landed in France on the 9th of June 1944, and pushed across France to the West Wall in combat operations up to the Roer River. However, as part of the Battle of

the Bulge, they were sent to Belgium and fought hard battles near Celles. It continued pushing into Germany after refit from the Bulge operations. Of note was the fact this one was of the two armored divisions to retain the regimental structure (along with the 3rd Armored) as the other armored divisions went to a Combat Command system.



3rd Armored Division. "Spearhead." Arriving in France on the 23rd of June, 1944, they were a key element in closing the Falaise Gap, trapping a huge amount of Germans. The 3rd was another armored division redeployed to blunt the Ardennes offensive, and ended up fighting near Eupen. After the Bulge, they

continued combat operations, pushing into Germany.



4th Armored Division. "Name Enough." The 4th landed in France on 17 July 1944, but despite this late start, was involved in some of the heaviest fighting any armored division had seen. It contained arguably the best tank battalion in the ETO on the American side, the 37th, commanded by LTC Creighton

Abrams. It savaged the Germans at Nancy and Arracourt, and Combat Command A (CCA, of which they were a part) destroyed a counterattacking Panzer Brigade armed with Panthers. During the Battle of the Bulge, they played a key role in the relief of Bastogne. They continued to fight battles until the end of hostilities, ending up in Czechoslovakia.



37th Tank Battalion. Commanded by LTC Creighton Abrams (for whom the M1 Abrams tank is named) this battalion spearheaded the 4th Armored Division's drive to relieve Bastogne and fought in many major actions.



40th Tank Battalion. The 40th and 709th Tank Battalions were both in the 7th Armored Regiment. The 40th was part of the 7th Armored Division. It fought in the ETO starting in August 1944 and was involved heavily in the Battle of the Bulge at St. Vith.



66th Armored Regiment. The three battalions of this regiment were in the 2nd Armored Division, landing in North Africa. As part of the D-Day invasion, they fought near Carentan, then later against the 2nd Panzer Division near Houffalize, Belgium.



67th Armored Regiment. Another regiment in the 2nd Armored Division, they fought in Operation Cobra (the breakout from Normandy) for which they earned a Presidential Unit Citation. They ended up crossing the Rhine, after heavy fighting at the Siegfried Line.



69th Armored Battalion. The 69th Armored Regiment, originally part of the 1st Armored Division, was broken up after assignment to the 6th Armored Division. The 69th Battalion was retained by the 6th AD and served in Normandy, Alsace-Lorraine, and into Germany.



761st Tank Battalion. This battalion was unique in that it consisted of all African-American soldiers (at the time, referred to as "Colored") since in WW2 the US Army was still segregated. It fought all across France and Germany since just after D-Day, earning many awards to include a Presidential Unit Citation. One notable member was Jackie Robinson, who went on to break the color barrier in baseball after the war. They were known as the "Black Panthers."

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Top




































































































































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 M4A1
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 M4A1 (76)
 M4A1 (76W)
 M4A1 (76)HVS
 M4A3E2 JUMBO 75
 M4A3E2 JUMBO 76
 M4A3E8 EASY 8

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M26
M41
EARLY
M41
LATE
M41
(76)
M41
W (76)
M41
JUMBO 75
M4A3E2
JUMBO 76



American Tank Ace				Sheet 2 FRONT				Top				American Tank Ace				Sheet 2 FRONT			
																			
																			
																			
																			
																			
																			
																			
																			



SEQUENCE OF BATTLE

If the current mission type is **Attack** or **Assault**, begin the first Combat Round by completing Step 3 and Step 6 below, followed by Steps 5/7/8. Subsequent Combat Rounds will proceed in order as outlined below. If **Assault**, the mission begins with the player executing a free Field Artillery Fire Mission (7.6).

Before combat begins, you may spend one Prestige Point to purchase a Field Artillery CFF, which is resolved immediately on the first Combat Round (in addition to bonus Field Artillery on Assault missions)

1. **Degrade Smoke** and **Reduce Call For Fire** (7.2-1) counters from previous Combat Rounds.
2. **Remove Suppression Markers** (7.2-1) from previous Combat Round.
3. **Determine Enemy Targeting:** (7.2-4) Roll 1d6 for each enemy unit on the Battle Board that has not yet engaged with you. On a roll of 1, you are now that enemy unit's target. Your tank is automatically targeted by any enemy unit you have shot at (exception: HCBI Smoke).
4. **Resolve CFF** (7.2-2) if an Arty or Mortar CFF Marker has been placed.
5. **Conduct Actions:** (7.2-3) Make two commands from the Command Summary Player Aid (three if your commander possesses and has activated the "Synergy" skill).
6. **Enemy Forces Fire OR Move:** (7.2-4)
 - a. **Fire:** If the enemy unit has targeted your tank and they are not required to move by the current mission type, they will fire as follows.
 - i. If INF, roll on Chart B2 (Tank/SPG target column) to fire MGs or Chart B4 to potentially fire Panzerfaust if at Close Range.
 - ii. If Tank, roll on Chart B3.
 - iii. If SPG, roll on Chart B3.
 - iv. If AT, roll on Chart B1.
 - v. If Recon, roll on Chart B2 (Tank/SPG target column).
 - vi. If Half-Track, roll on Chart B2 (Tank/SPG target column).
 - b. **Move:** Enemy vehicles starting in Areas A or C will move to areas D or E unless the mission type is Attack or Assault. Enemy units will move even if they are not currently actively targeting you.
 - c. If Combat Round 1, Infantry units, if mounted, will dismount as their only action.
 - d. If your tank is hit but not penetrated by a main gun or AT round, check for Shock and Interior Fragmentation (7.3.8).
7. **Event Check** (7.2-5)
 - a. Roll 2d6 on Table B9
 - b. If a "12" result is rolled, a Random Event is triggered instead of the listed Minefield event. Roll 2d6 on Chart C1 to determine the Random Event and resolve as described.
8. **End of Combat Round** (6.3 & 7.1.4)
 - a. Remove Trucks after the first Combat Round
 - b. If Defense mission, decrease range by one.
9. **End of Combat** (7.2-6 & 8.4)
 - a. Combat ends when all German units have been removed from the Battle Board or your tank has been knocked out. The side holding the field at the end is the victor.
 - b. If your tank remains operational and the current mission type is Attack or Assault, roll 1d6 at end of combat. If 6, the mission continues with a German counterattack. Set up the Battle Board again for a Defense mission. Weather and terrain remain the same and there is no chance to resupply.
 - c. Proceed with Sequence of Play Step 6 on the Operations Map.

Mission Summary:

- a. **Attack:** INF dug-in, enemy forces fire first in Combat Round 1. Possible enemy counterattack.
- b. **Assault:** INF dug-in, enemy vehicles Hull Down and will not move. Start the mission with a Field Artillery Fire Mission. After resolving, enemy forces fire first in Combat Round 1. Possible enemy counterattack.
- c. **Movement to Contact:** Same as Attack, but enemy forces not dug-in on 1d6 roll of 1-2. Enemy vehicles in A & C will move to flanking positions D & E if possible on first German turn.
- d. **Defense:** Enemies in areas A & C (except AT) move forward to flanking positions if possible. Range decreased at end of each Combat Round.