

WAR STORIES® - LIBERTY ROAD

World War II: The Western Front 1944

INTRODUCTION

Get ready for a fun, strategically challenging ride. War Stories® offers a realistic fog of war in a World War 2 tactical setting, providing many historical details and extras in an elegant and easy-to-learn system.

In War Stories you are the commander issuing orders to infantry squads and armored fighting vehicles. Each game presents a scenario using a modular map with different terrain that regulates movement and impacts combat in a unique system that does not require charts or endless modifiers. Players receive a secret set of instructions with hidden deployment and objectives. Unit blocks have a variety of information that regulates their ability to move, fight and remain cool under fire.

War Stories also offers "rule breaking" asset and event cards. These enable War Stories to have additional complexity with minimal rules weight: the rules and effects are on the cards themselves. Assets are special equipment, troops, and abilities that a player has access to during the battle, such as machine guns, infiltration

units, and the ability to lay mines. Events are random things that happen and create memorable moments on the battlefield such as reinforcements arriving, a gust of wind that starts a wildfire, or a damaged vehicle suddenly brewing up.

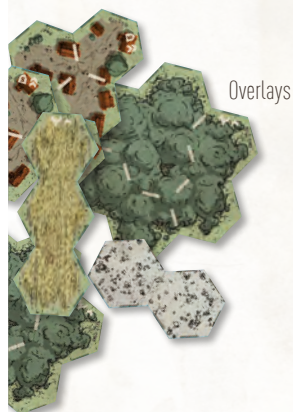
Getting started with War Stories is simple. Each player takes a faction and decides which scenario to play. Players separate their pieces and the defender builds the event deck for the scenario and sets up their pieces and fog of war markers in the deployment zone. Then the attacker sets up and play begins. Each side has access to at least four order tokens, any of which they can use each turn. These provide opportunities to move, shoot, and regroup, based on the abilities and doctrine of each nation. Play is fast-paced as the combatants alternate taking orders, trying to achieve their objectives. The game continues until one side meets their scenario requirements or the Time's Up card is revealed from the event deck. Whoever achieves the most objective points is the winner!

"We are going to have peace even if we have to fight for it." - Dwight D. Eisenhower





Mapboards



Overlays

GAME COMPONENTS

5 DOUBLE-SIDED MAP BOARDS

Each mapboard is made up of areas and hexes. Areas are groups of hexes that, together, represent one unit of movement. Hexes are used for placing and orienting units, and for measuring combat distance. All terrain effects are baked into each area. Roads cut movement costs in half while rivers and ponds are impassable. The difference between areas and hexes are important; the game uses these terms very precisely so be comfortable with and on the lookout for them.

24 DOUBLE-SIDED TERRAIN OVERLAYS

Like the mapboards the terrain overlays regulate movement in areas that are larger or smaller depending on the type of terrain. In addition they have combat effects: all overlays block line of sight, and most additionally impact the action in ways such as: cover, fortification, destructible, flammable.

38 GREY GERMAN UNIT BLOCKS (14 small infantry blocks, 24 large vehicle blocks)

37 GREEN ALLIES UNIT BLOCKS (12 small infantry blocks, 25 large vehicle blocks)

1 STICKER SHEET for blocks (1 sticker per block)

Unit blocks hold lots of information, provide for fog of war, and allow simple tracking of unit status. How blocks are placed within hexes communicates important things. The hex edge the block sits on is used to establish line of sight when this unit is shooting or being shot at. For the player who owns the unit, each block has icons on between 2 and 4 of the edges that communicate the condition of the unit and how it may order during a turn. The icon on the top of the block as it sits on the map indicates the current condition.

ALL UNITS

The top of the block shows which side the unit fights for, and what their valor rating is. Valor ranges from zero to three medals. This is used any time the unit is required to perform a valor check.



Conscript Valor



Regular Valor



Veteran Valor



Elite Valor

The middle of the block has a drawing and the name of the unit.

The bottom of the block shows the unit's ratings:

Combat range when firing at infantry. Some also have an upshift indicator (▲), giving them an "upshift" to their combat results.

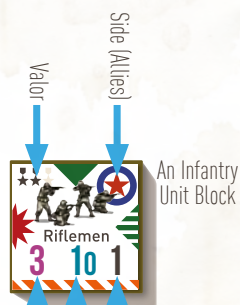
Combat range (large number) and firepower rating (small number) when firing at vehicles. If the firepower rating is higher than the armor being fired at, the attack receives an upshift. If the firepower is equal to the armor being fired at, there is no modifier. If the firepower is less than the armor being fired at, the attack receives a downshift equal to that difference.

A blue arc behind a combat rating (☞), against either infantry or vehicles, indicates the unit is restricted to a forward field of fire. Consult the diagram on page 16.

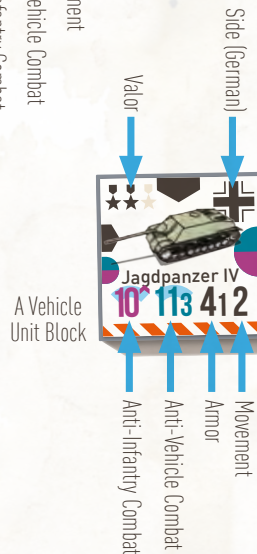
Armor ratings for the front (large number) and rest of the tank (small number) of the vehicle. These are compared to the firepower of an attack as explained above.

Movement rating indicates how many areas this unit may move in a turn. Some units have a portage rating to transport units in cover.

"Sweat saves blood." - Erwin Rommel



An Infantry Unit Block



A Vehicle Unit Block



Before the first game, attach 1 sticker to the front of each block. The vehicle stickers go to the larger blocks, the infantry stickers to the smaller ones.

Attach the German stickers to the grey blocks and the Allies stickers to the green blocks.



The edges of a block show what orders the unit is able to complete:

INFANTRY

Ready - Unit may move or fire at full strength, after which they are turned to spent

Spent - Unit may make a reduced strength move, moving just a single hex, or fire at reduced strength by suffering a downshift in combat. They can be turned back to ready by using a regroup.


Reduced - Unit is permanently reduced and, until eliminated, may only move or fire at reduced strength


Suppressed - Unit is suppressed and may only move or fire at reduced strength. Units may also become broken in which case they are placed face-down on the board

VEHICLES

Move - Unit may move at full strength

Fire - Unit may fire at full strength

 may fire at **both** infantry and vehicles in the target hex on the same order

 may only fire at infantry **or** vehicles in the target hex

Support - Unit may move and fire at reduced strength. Reduced strength movement for vehicles is one hex per movement point. As with infantry, reduced strength fire receives a downshift.

Suppressed - Unit is suppressed and may only move or fire at reduced strength. Units may also become broken in which case they are placed face-down on the board



Infantry Ready



Infantry Spent



Infantry Reduced



Infantry Suppressed



Vehicle Move



Vehicle Fire



Vehicle Support



Vehicle Suppressed

56 PLAYER MARKERS, 28 FOR EACH PLAYER

40 Unit markers, placing one on a unit and the other on an off-board asset card with equipment controlled by that unit. This tracks which units are in control of which assets. You may also use these on units on the board as a bluff so your opponent does not know which if any units have special equipment. In that case, for example, place the number 1 marker next to a unit but the corresponding number 1 is not attached to anything.

10 Order markers, using one each turn to indicate the order you choose to prosecute for your part of the turn. The orders are different for the Germans and Allies, and all of the orders are available to you on every turn.

6 Ambush markers, placed by ambushing unit(s) off the map that corresponds to the same numbered fog of war ambush marker.

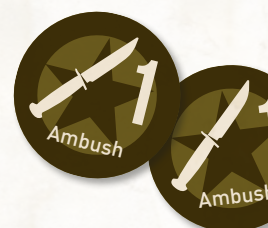


Order markers



Unit markers

Ambush markers





Battlefield damage markers



Vehicle damage markers

56 COUNTERS

15 BATTLEFIELD DAMAGE MARKERS

Blaze, Haze, Smoke, Wreck. These are placed on the board when the indicating asset or event is played, or when a vehicle is eliminated it is replaced by a wreck.

12 VEHICLE DAMAGE MARKERS

One of these is randomly chosen by the owner of a vehicle when it is reduced. They look at it and place it face-down by the vehicle. The other player does not know what damage your vehicle has taken unless they take a spotting action. When a reduced vehicle is reduced for a second time it is destroyed.

29 FOG OF WAR MARKERS

Placed on the board by the defender as indicated on their scenario sheet.

A maximum of one marker may be placed in each area. The specific hex it is placed on may or may not matter, depending on the rules for that asset.

Ambush - A unit is hidden in the hex and may be activated on the defending player's turn. Alternately, if it is revealed by the normal movements of the attacker the ambushing unit may take an immediate action upon being revealed.

Bunker - Provides a defensive bonus to any two infantry in that hex. Forward field of fire only.



Fog of War markers

Empty - Simply a bluff to confuse; there is nothing there.

Ford - Enables crossing of a river in the hex the ford is placed.

Foxhole - Provides a defensive bonus to any one infantry in that hex.

Mines - Reduces the first enemy to enter the area and forces all the rest to only move in the area at reduced speed.

Trench - Provides a defensive bonus to any two infantry in that hex.

Wire - Infantry and wheeled vehicles may not enter a wired area. If a tracked vehicle enters a wired area remove the wire marker.

33 ASSET CARDS

This includes 4 attacker assets, 6 defender assets, 11 German assets and 12 Allied assets. Each scenario includes some of these, breaking the rules of the game and providing goodies for each player. The scenario sheet you are playing indicates which player is the attacker and defender, so these assets may be used by the correct player. Make sure that you mark which units have control of which assets with your numbered unit markers. There are five different types of asset cards:

Equipment - May be used by any infantry or vehicle, as indicated

Fortification - Defensive structure for infantry

Obstacle - Defensive obstacles that impact the battlefield

Strategic - A catch-all for other assets

Weapon Team - Powerful weapons only for use by weapon teams



21 EVENT CARDS

Each turn there will be one event that impacts the action on the battlefield. The event is triggered in one of two ways: if a combat chip is drawn that has an event icon on it play stops and the top event card is drawn and immediately resolved. Or, if no event was triggered by combat chips during either player's turn, then the second player simply draws and resolves the top event at the end of their turn.

Events are organized based on the target unit for the event. If an event is triggered by firing at an opponent then the unit being fired at and the player who controls it are the target for the event. If an event is triggered by taking a valor check then the unit attempting the valor check and that player is the target. There is no target unit when drawing the event at the end of the turn.

There are four types of events: infantry events, vehicle events, player assets, and the time's up event. If there is a target unit for the event, depending on whether that unit is an infantry/weapon team or vehicle, resolve the corresponding event. If the battlefield conditions are not present for the event to have any impact then consult the action icon next to the event. This indicates whether it is the attacking or defending player that receives the indicated number of bonus actions. If the player receiving the actions is the player currently ordering they must wait until their first order is complete and then take this as an extra order using any of their forces they choose - including those just ordered. If the player receiving the actions is not the player currently ordering they take their actions immediately, continuing to interrupt the other player's turn until their action is complete.

Player assets and time's up events always resolve immediately when drawn and do so under any circumstance.

24 COMBAT CHIPS, 1 BLACK DRAWBAG

The combat chips go into the bag and are drawn out to determine combat results as well as valor checks. The valor is the same on both sides of the chip so either side may be referenced for valor checks. For resolving attacks you instead consult the side of the chip which corresponds to the type of unit being attacked: infantry (boot icon) or vehicle (tank icon). After applying any unit, asset or terrain modifiers to the initial result on the chip determine the final combat result and resolve it.

2 16 PAGE SCENARIO BOOKLETS

Each player, the German and Allies, has their own scenario booklet which helps guide setup and establishes the rules and conditions for each game. We recommend starting with the first one and progressing through in order. For maximum fog of war goodness you should play the same side every time until you've gone through all of the scenarios. While War Stories is at its best when each scenario is first played and the enemy position largely unknown the scenarios may continue to be played just like other tactical games where the scenario specifics are known to all.

2 PLAYER AIDS

Each player, the German and Allies, has their own player aid with a key relating to all of the icons used in the game, how each turn works, and helpful charts for planning your attack based on the firepower and armor of the enemy. The player aid also serves as a shield to obscure your asset cards and reinforcements.

1 20 PAGE RULE BOOK

This one's obvious: you're holding it!



Early, Late and End Event



Infantry, Infantry & Vehicle and Vehicle Event



action icon



Scenario Booklets and Player Aid



Combat Chips



Event Cards

SETUP

① Determine who will play the Germans and who will play the Allies. Each player, then, takes all of their **unit blocks**, **scenario booklet** and **player aid**. Decide which scenario you are going to play and identify which player is thus the attacker and defender.

② Separate the **markers** into five piles: battlefield damage (hex-shaped), vehicle damage (triangles), fog of war (squares), and player markers (circles; Germans and Allied separately). Keep the battlefield damage near the board handy for both players. Place all of the vehicle damage markers on their unknown side, mixing them up so neither players knows which is which. The attacker takes their player markers while the defender takes both their player and fog of war markers.

③ Separate the **asset cards** into four piles: attacker, defender, German and Allied. The attacking player takes the attacker cards and those of their nation; the defending player takes the defending cards, those of their nation, as well as the **event cards**.

④ Place all of the round **combat chips** in the **combat bag** and mix well.

⑤ Using the codes indicated, set up the **maps and overlays** for this scenario. Each player should be sitting toward the edge of the map on the bottom of the illustration in their scenario booklet. This illustration of the map also provides additional information:

In the upper left corner is an arrow indicating the **direction the wind** is blowing. If there are blazes on the map and an event indicates that blazes might spread each one would do so into the single adjacent hex in the indicated direction from the blaze.

When appropriate, numbers on or next to the map specify the location of the corresponding **objective(s)**.

Shaded areas indicate your **deployment zone**, where you set up your units.

The map may only be left or entered from edges or hexes without a red line.

If the scenario uses special **scenario events** or **special rules**, they are listed in this box, alongside instructions as to where specifically the **fog of war** markers may be placed.

The text in this box provides additional background information.



Battlefield damage markers



Vehicle damage markers



Fog of War markers



Player markers



20 - Eine namenlose Schlacht - 5. Sep

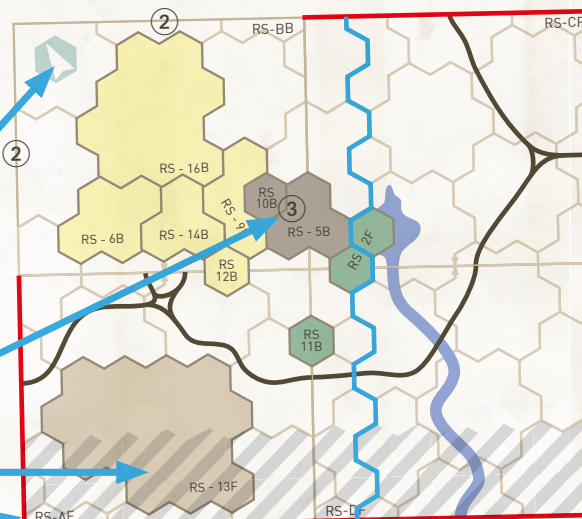
20 - A Nameless Battle - September 5, 194

The counter-attack is fierce. They've pushed past the to keep pushing us even further. We have fought hard essential to our operation. The 6th Army is advancing support, but we need to keep the enemy off-balance.

Your Objectives

- ① Destroy four Enemy units: 7 VP
- ② Get at least two units off the northwest map edge: 6 VP
- ③ Take control of all town structures: 4 VP

The countryside just south of a small town:



Scenario Events & Special Rules

Reinforcements 1 enter at (A)
The Trench is set up face-up anywhere in your deployment zone.
Fog of War markers may be placed in any area east of the blue line.

5 Early
3 Late
5 Late + En

The Unnamed Battle was part of Germany's Operation Gustav, a made-up offensive for the purpose of filling the background story box of the example scenario sheet in the rules book. The content of the scenario booklets is to be considered secret and only the mission you are playing at the moment should be accessed.



In this scenario, the German player is the defender.

September 1942

, 1942

the River and may be able to hold, and this town is facing quickly to give us

Deploy
Elements of the 4th Panzer Army, Army Group South

3x Grenadiers
1x Grenadiers
1x Weapon Team

1x Pz II F
1x Pz III J1
1x Semovente 47/32

2x 7.5cm Pak 40 AT Gun

1x Smoke

1x Trench

Reinforcement 1
1x Pz II F
Early Deck

Fog of War

6x Empty 2x Ambush

- ⑥ Consult your secret **objectives, units and assets** for the scenario and prepare a strategy.

Objectives: The winner of the scenario will have earned the most victory points from completion of their objectives.

Units: Your units will be moving and firing, trying to overcome the opponent and achieve the scenario's objectives.

Assets: Your assets fall into one of five different types:

Equipment: These are upgrades to one or more of your units, making them more effective. In some cases they are single-use only. Indicate which unit(s) have the equipment by putting a numbered unit marker on the asset card and the corresponding marker next to the equipped unit on the map. When a unit carrying equipment is eliminated their equipment remains on the hex as indicated by the marker. Any unit from either side that starts or ends their move in that hex may attempt to take it by passing a valor check. If the valor check is passed they take and now may use the equipment. If it is failed the equipment is removed from the game.

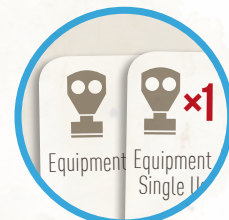
Fortification: Defender-only assets that provide exceptional protection for the defender's unit(s).

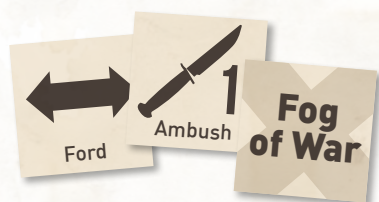
Obstacle: Defender-only assets that make it more difficult for the attacker to traverse the battlefield. They may also confer defensive benefits. These are part of the fog of war, and appear on fog of war markers which are revealed when an attacker's unit first enters the area in which they are located.

Strategic: This includes things like ambush, which are set up at as part of the fog of war; intelligence, which gives the attacker insight into the defensive position; or off-map weapons of tremendous power such as artillery and dive bombers.

Weapon Team: Crewed weapons such as machine guns, mortars and towed anti-tank guns that are manned by a weapon team. As with equipment, indicate which weapon team crews each asset by putting a numbered marker on the asset card and the corresponding marker next to the weapon team on the map. Weapons may only be crewed by the weapon team they started the scenario with.

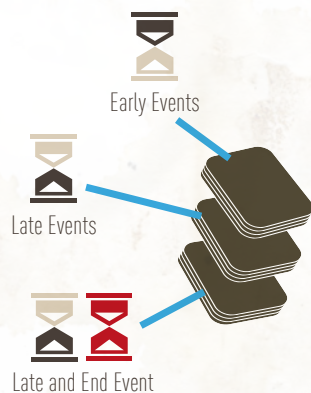
"Wars may be fought with weapons, but they are won by men. It is the spirit of men who follow and of the man who leads that gains the victory." - George S. Patton





7 Early
4 Late
2 Late + End

Only the defender has this event deck composition diagram on his scenario sheet.



How to create the Event Deck

- ⑦ The **defending player places** the **units** and **fog of war markers** in their respective deployment zones as indicated on their scenario sheet. There is never a stacking limit for units in hexes; only one fog of war marker may be in each area and the specific hex within the area will usually matter (consult the corresponding asset card for the rules on that asset). Units that have equipment and weapon teams must have a marker placed next to the unit with the corresponding marker on the asset card it pertains to. Like units, asset cards are hidden information.
- ⑧ The **attacking player places** the **units** within the deployment zone indicated on their scenario sheet. Same process as the defender except that the attacker does not have fog of war markers, and may not place units in an area that has a fog of war marker.
- ⑨ The **defending player creates** the **event deck**. Only that player knows how many events are in play; this is secret and important information! To create it:

A Remove the **Time's Up event**, then separate the remaining event cards into **early** and **late** piles, shuffling both.

B Have your **opponent** give you any **strategic assets** to add to these piles based on their scenario setup, without revealing to you what they are. They would, for example, give you an asset and say "this is early," meaning it will be added to the early pile in step D below.

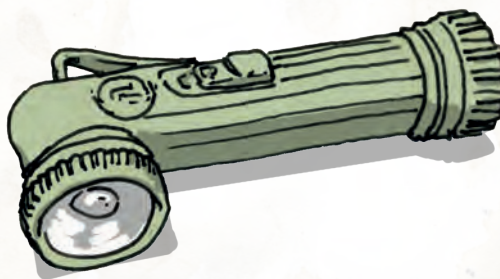
C Consult your **own** scenario sheet and combine any **strategic assets** you need to add with those of your opponent.

D **Prepare** the **early**, **late** and **late+end event piles**. This will be accomplished by shuffling the indicated number of event cards for each of the three game phases into three separate piles.

First, identify how many strategic assets are being added to each pile. Any strategic asset contributed by you and/or your opponent is added into the appropriate deck and counts as one of those events. *For example, if the scenario calls for seven early events and you and your opponent are each contributing one asset to it, take five early events in addition to those two assets and shuffle them together to make the early event pile. The Late+End pile always includes the Time's Up event. Separately shuffle the three piles you've created.*

E Once the three piles are correct and shuffled, **stack** them **into a single pile** with the early events on top, followed by the late events, and then the late+end event cards on the bottom. Along with spicing up the battle this deck serves as the timer for your scenario.

You are now ready to begin!



"My soldiers are my children." - Walter Model

TAKING ORDERS & TURNS

ORDERS

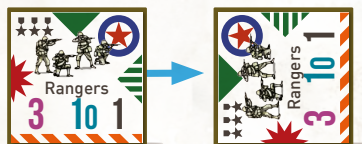
The game begins with the attacking player choosing one of their orders - usually an order marker, but in some cases an asset card - and resolving it. Units are ordered one at a time, and each unit must complete its activation before the next unit may activate. Once their order is complete the defending player repeats the same process. When the second player's order is complete the turn is over. Players may use the same order again and again, or change orders from turn-to-turn. You may pick from all of your orders on each turn. Each side has slightly different orders that reflect the training of their troops and combat doctrine of the moment.

Each order has two functions: **first** it indicates whether it allows the **activation** of infantry, vehicles or both types of units, and how many of those units you may activate. You are not required to order the full number of units allowed by the order. Some orders restrict you to ordering "NEARBY" units, which means a group of units that occupy adjacent areas.

Second, the marker also shows the maximum number of units you may **regroup** at the end of your turn. Each regroup allows an infantry to be changed from spent to ready, or a vehicle to be changed between any of move, fire or support that they are rated for.

Infantry and vehicles function differently. **Infantry** are a group of men who are less coordinated than the crew of a vehicle. They are also susceptible to moments of exhaustion or lost focus that the vehicle being manned by a tightly integrated crew is not. As such, after an infantry unit in a ready state activates, the block must be turned to the spent side indicating that it may only function at a reduced level. Reduced strength infantry moves are a single hex while reduced strength vehicle moves are the number of hexes equal to their movement rating; all reduced strength fire suffers a combat downshift. As a result, infantry will frequently need to be regrouped - spending a regroup point to turn the block back from its spent to ready side - in order to operate at full effectiveness.

Vehicles, on the other hand, can continue moving or firing at full effectiveness without being regrouped. They only need to be regrouped when the crew is being asked to shift from full strength movement to full strength firing, or to be on a support order that enables them to move and fire at reduced strength. In any of these cases turn the block so that the status you want the vehicle to be operating in is on the top.



After firing, turn the infantry block from the ready to the spent side.



After firing, a vehicle remains on fire orders ready to fire at full strength once again.



An Allied order marker:
This one allows to activate up to 4 infantry units and then to regroup up to 2 units.



Activate X infantry



Activate X vehicles



Activate X infantry or vehicles



Regroup X units



Infantry Ready



Infantry Spent



Infantry Reduced



Infantry Suppressed



Vehicle Move



Vehicle Fire



Vehicle Support



Vehicle Suppressed



Weapon Team Ready

INFANTRY

Ready - May either move or fire at full strength - An intact unit ready to take optimal action. After either moving or firing in a ready state the infantry must immediately be turned to a spent state indicating they need to regroup in order to regain full effectiveness.

Spent - May either move or fire at reduced strength - An intact unit that is not fully cohesive. Units moving or firing in a spent state do not further degrade, but reduced strength actions are substantially weaker than full strength.

Reduced - May either move or fire at reduced strength - A unit that has lost a meaningful number of soldiers and will permanently perform at reduced strength. This is the result of a ready or spent unit suffering a reduced combat result. Any further disruption they suffer - a result of eliminated, reduced or suppressed - eliminates them.

Suppressed - May either move or fire at reduced strength - An intact unit that is operating cautiously given the battlefield conditions they have been subjected to. This is the result of a ready or spent unit suffering a suppressed combat result. To return back to ready they must, instead of moving or firing during an order activation, attempt to rally (*see page 11*). If they suffer an eliminated or reduced combat result they are eliminated. If they are suppressed again they become broken.

Broken - Move only, at reduced strength - An intact unit that is ineffective and in danger of fleeing the battlefield. This is the result of a suppressed unit suffering another suppressed combat result. When units are broken their blocks are turned face-down. To return back to suppressed they must, instead of moving or firing during an order activation, attempt to rally (*see page 11*). Any further disruption they suffer - a result of eliminated, reduced or suppressed - eliminates them.

VEHICLES

Vehicles are more robust than infantry. Reduced vehicles may be suppressed without being eliminated. Eliminating a vehicle requires either an eliminated combat result, two reduced combat results or further degradation from a broken state.

Move - May move at full strength - The crew is positioned and ordered to support rapid, optimal movement.

Fire - May fire at full strength - The crew is positioned and ordered to support rapid, accurate fire.

Support - May move and fire at reduced strength - The crew is operating flexibly, supporting simultaneous combat and maneuver.

Suppressed - May either move or fire at reduced strength - A unit that is operating cautiously given the battlefield conditions they have been subjected to. This is the result of a unit suffering a suppressed combat result. To return back to move, fire or support they must, instead of moving or firing during an order activation, attempt to rally (*see page 11*). If they suffer a reduced combat result and have not yet been reduced they remain suppressed but draw a vehicle damage marker for the reduction. If they are suppressed again they become broken.

Broken - Same as infantry

WEAPON TEAMS

Weapon Teams are small teams of infantry that are crewing a weapon. Other than firing that weapon they are ill equipped to succeed against full infantry squads and armored fighting vehicles. As a consequence they are eliminated on either an eliminated or reduced result. They are able to be suppressed and rally from it. Suffering another suppressed result while already being suppressed eliminates them.

SPECIAL ORDERS

When playing an order you may elect to either rally or spot with a chosen unit instead of moving or firing.

RALLY

Rally is available only to suppressed or broken units, attempting to return them to a more effective combat state. Units in a suppressed or broken state may attempt to rally by being activated during an order and, instead of moving or firing, making a valor check: draw a combat chip and compare the valor on the top of the chip to the valor on your unit block. If your unit's valor is equal to or greater than the valor indicated on the chip the unit rallies. If your unit's valor is less than the valor indicated on the chip the attempt was unsuccessful and nothing happens. You may only attempt to rally each unit once per turn. Results of a successful rally attempt:

For a suppressed unit, returns infantry and weapon teams to the ready state; vehicles return to their owner's choice of any available move, fire or support.

For a broken unit: returns them to the suppressed state.

SPOTTING

Spotting is available to any unit that is not suppressed or broken and has line of sight to a hex containing enemy units or a fog of war marker. The spotting unit may, instead of moving or firing on their order activation, reveal everything in the spotted hex. This flips over the fog of war marker, reveals all unit stats, any assets, and/or allows the owner of the spotting unit to read the rules of any related card. Be careful to maintain unit's states when revealing or viewing it, so you don't get confused about their block side or hex side. Spotting is important because it is otherwise difficult to gain information about your opponent's force disposition. Infantry units that spot are not spent.

TURNS

A full turn includes both players' orders. It also includes playing an event card. Event cards bring cinematic battlefield happenings to life, while also serving as the scenario timer; when the Time's Up event is revealed, the scenario immediately ends. Each event card has two parts, the primary event indicated by the main text and the secondary event indicated by the attacker (▲) or defender (◀) icon and number. The secondary event only occurs if the primary event is not applicable to the situation on the battlefield or if the event was simply drawn at the end of the turn. In that case the indicated side may order that number of units.

Events are split into early and late events - those that happen early in the battle, and those things that happen later - as well as into infantry events and vehicle events. Consult the infantry event if the target of the attack or valor check is an infantry unit or the vehicle event if the target is a vehicle. Just one event is triggered each turn. This can happen in two ways:

1. When pulling a combat chip. If the chip has the event icon on it, draw the top event card and resolve it immediately, treating the unit being attacked or attempting the valor check as the "focus" of the event card unless the card indicates otherwise; this determines whether the infantry or vehicle section of the event is consulted and, in some cases, where its effect takes place.

An attack that was interrupted by an event always takes place after the effects of the event card, if possible.

Only one event is triggered each turn so ignore any subsequent event icons after the first one.
2. If no event was triggered by a combat chip during the turn. At the end of the turn the last player to act draws the top event card and plays it. The exception is if it is the Time's Up! event, in which case the game is immediately over.

Once both players have prosecuted an order and one event has been played the turn is over and the next one begins.

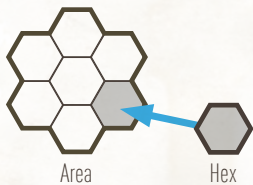


The secondary event of this card allows the defender to activate 1 unit.



One event is resolved every turn. They are either triggered by drawing a combat chip with an event icon or, if no such chip is drawn during the turn, drawn by the defender after both players orders are complete.



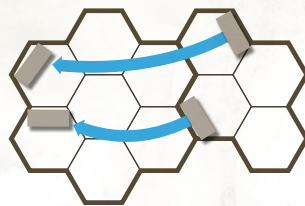


MOVE ORDERS

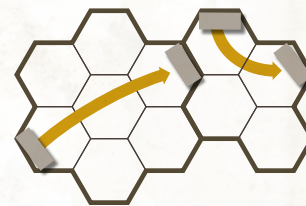
Moving units around the map in War Stories is regulated by the unit's movement rating and the areas on the map. An area is a group of hexes - as few as one or as many as seven - which are grouped together. Areas are naturally modeled around the terrain it represents, making it more or less difficult to traverse. Even the same terrain may vary in area size as not all terrain is created the same on the battlefield. The edges of the map board has partial hexes which may not be entered or travelled through. They are completely out of play.

Units are rated to move up to 1, 2 or 3 areas per activation at full strength, as indicated on the unit block.

At full strength, units may move in increments of 1 movement point. A full movement points allows a unit to:



Move into a new area directly adjacent to the **hex** it currently occupies and into any hex in that new area, **or**



Remain in its current area and move into any other hex within that area.

At reduced strength, infantry units may only move one hex while vehicles may move one hex for each point of movement rating.

At the end of the movement activation, the activated unit must establish a facing. Place it on the hex edge corresponding to the direction it should face in relation to the hex center.

Regular movement is solely handled by areas: there are absolutely no modifiers beyond what is on the base map pieces, terrain overlays, asset cards and markers used in the game that sit on top of the map. Some icons that impact movement:



Impassable by all units



Impassable by vehicles



Impassable by wheeled vehicles



Impassable by infantry



double your speed



disables 'double your speed'



half your speed

Impassable by infantry, Impassable by all vehicles, Impassable by wheeled vehicles, Impassable by all units - Infantry and/or vehicles may not enter the indicated hexes. Rivers and ponds are map examples; roadblocks and tank traps are asset examples.

×2 movement - For each regular movement point a unit spends entirely on a road it may immediately spend a free bonus movement point on that road.

½ movement - This icon always affects a whole area. For movement purposes, each hex of this area is considered to be its own area.

"Discipline strengthens the mind so that it becomes impervious to the corroding influence of fear." - Bernard Montgomery

Units naturally seek out the best terrain for a combat situation within a hex, regardless of their hex facing. As such they always inhabit the best defensive position available in the hex regardless of the specifics of the art.

Units must stop moving when entering a hex containing enemy units. Once the current order is completed any hexes that contain units from both players will engage in close combat which is explained on page 14, until only one player has unit(s) remaining in the hex.

PORTAGE

Infantry may travel on or inside a vehicle. Every vehicle in War Stories may transport one infantry unit. The vehicle is limited to reduced movement and the infantry unit on board does not receive a cover benefit from the vehicle. The infantry must be visibly travelling on the board with the vehicle, making it obvious such a transport is occurring.

Additionally, some vehicles are designed for the rapid, safe transport of troops. These are indicated by one or more dots next to their movement rating. This indicates they may transport that number of units, providing those units with cover, at full strength movement. These vehicles may simply have a unit marker next to them on the board with the corresponding unit marker located with the infantry blocks off-board. It is thus invisible to the opponent that you are in the process of transporting infantry with that vehicle unless your opponent takes a spotting order on the vehicle's hex.

It costs one full movement point for an infantry unit to get on or off a vehicle in the same hex. Since units must complete their full order one-at-a-time this precludes a vehicle from moving, picking up infantry and moving again on the same turn. However, this does not prevent a vehicle from having infantry mount or dismount before or after it has or will move.

COMBAT DURING MOVEMENT

There are three types of combat triggered by movement: opportunity fire, ambush combat and close combat.

OPPORTUNITY FIRE

Infantry and weapon teams in a ready state, and vehicles on fire orders, may take opportunity fire during their opponent's orders. Opportunity fire may be taken at units that move into an open ground hex. The moving unit may be targeted for opportunity fire so long as the firing unit has line of sight to any hexside in the target hex. Infantry being targeted are not flanked, and vehicles being targeted defend with their front armor. Each opportunity firing unit may only make one such attack per turn. After the opportunity fire is declared the target's movement is paused and the firing unit resolves combat normally, at reduced strength. If the target unit is reduced or suppressed it ends its move in the hex in which it paused with any facing of that player's choice. Infantry that opportunity fire are spent as usual. Weapon teams and vehicles remain in their ready and fire states, respectively, after taking opportunity fire. Reduced units may not take opportunity fire.

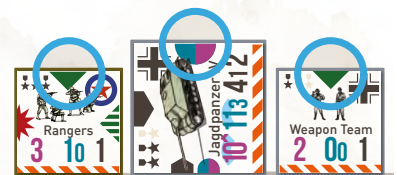
AMBUSH COMBAT

When an attacker's unit enters an area which has a Fog of War/Ambush marker, or moves into a hex adjacent to the hex with such a marker, the defending player reveals the marker, removes it, and places its associated unit in the marker's hex in its ready state for infantry or any of move, fire or support for a vehicle. This ambushing unit may immediately take any action, as if it had been activated normally, interrupting the attacking unit's move.

On their turn the defending player may activate a hidden ambush unit. Remove the fog of war marker, replace it with the unit in any state, and ordering it as normal.



The SdKfz 251 may transport up to 2 units.



May opportunity fire.





The Rangers above have a total value of 6, winning this close combat round against the Grenadiers below, who have a total of only 4.



In a close combat attack by the Grenadiers above, the Grenadiers, with a total of 4 valor, would win, immobilizing the M10 TD below with its total of 3 valor.



The M10 TD above has a total close combat value of 10, the Jagdpanzer IV below a total of 12. The Jagdpanzer IV would win this close combat.



CLOSE COMBAT

Close combat occurs at the end of one player's orders for the turn after which there are units from both players in the same hex. It continues until there are only units from one player remaining in the hex. The ordering player chooses which hex is resolved first, and that hex must be fully resolved before moving onto another. The moving player wins all ties in the procedure below.

- ① The moving player indicates which unit they will use for the first round of close combat.
- ② The defending player chooses which unit they will use for the first round of close combat. Both players reveal their units and any equipment or assets they have attached.
- ③ Combat between those two units resolves:

Infantry vs. Infantry: Each player draws a combat chip and adds the valor indicated on the chip to the valor of their unit. The unit with the lower total reduces their unit. If the reduced unit is still alive their opponent then reduces their unit as well. If this reduced unit is also still alive return the combat chips to the bag and repeat the process until only one of the units remains.

Infantry vs. Vehicle: If the vehicle is capable of anti-infantry combat, each player draws a combat chip and adds the valor indicated on the chip to the valor of their unit. If the vehicle's total is higher than the infantry's then the infantry is eliminated. If the infantry's total is higher than the vehicles' then the vehicle is automatically immobilized. If the vehicle is incapable of anti-infantry combat it is automatically immobilized. Once a vehicle is immobilized it is eliminated if it has already suffered a reduction during the game. If the vehicle is still functional the infantry escapes to an adjacent hex of that player's choice without any enemy units in it. If there is no such hex the infantry is eliminated.

Vehicle vs. Vehicle: Each player adds together their unit's valor, anti-vehicle firepower, movement and both front and rear armor. Compare the two results:

The higher vehicle's total is 2x or greater than the lower vehicle's total: The lower vehicle is eliminated

The higher vehicle's total is greater than the lower vehicle's but less than 2x greater: the lower vehicle is reduced. If the lower vehicle is not eliminated by the reduction then the higher vehicle is also reduced. If this reduced unit is also still alive return the combat chips to the bag and repeat the process until only one of the units remains.

- ④ If the enemy still has one or more units in the same hex with the surviving unit from the previous round of close combat they must select another unit to attack it and resolve combat once again. This continues until only one player has surviving units in the hex. If there are other hexes with units from both sides move on to resolve those.

Special vehicle vs. vehicle "swarm combat" rule: When your opponent has a vehicle allocated for close combat you may elect to attack it with as many of the vehicles you have in the hex as you choose. There are two differences to the combat resolution compared to one-on-one vehicle vs. vehicle close combat:

First, the player who is swarming with multiple vehicles is adding all of those vehicles' factors up into a single total that is used. However, the valor ratings of these units is not included, even though the other player still includes valor in their total.

Second, in the resolution, any "reduced" result suffered by the swarming player is an eliminated result instead. The player being swarmed gets to pick which unit is eliminated.

If the swarming player wins, has more than one vehicle still operational, and their opponent still has unit(s) in the hex, the swarming player chooses one single vehicle among the swarmers to participate in the next round of close combat.

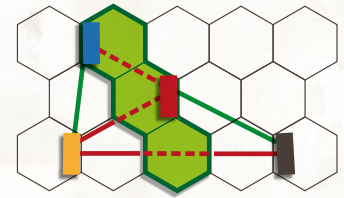
FIRE ORDERS

Most World War 2 battlefield combat took the form of firing weapons at the enemy. When conducting a fire order follow these steps:

1 - ESTABLISH A VALID TARGET.

To determine **line of sight** the **hex side** of the firing unit must be able to draw a straight line to the **hex side** of the targeted units without crossing terrain that blocks line of sight. **All terrain overlays** that sit on the map block line of sight if located between units. (See *example 1 and 2*). **Fog of war markers** with the “blocks line of sight” icon also block line of sight.

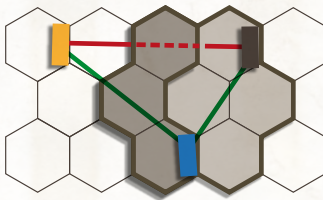
If the hex containing the firing unit has terrain that blocks line of sight then you may not trace line of sight through that hex, only from the edge the firing unit is sitting on. If the hex containing the target unit(s) has terrain that blocks line of sight then you may not trace line of sight through that hex, only to the hexside containing the target(s). (See *example 1*).



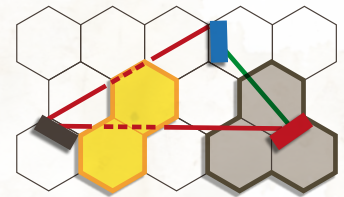
Example 1: The yellow and blue unit have LoS at each other. The red and the black unit have LoS at each other. All other LoS are blocked by the forest.

HIGHER ELEVATION

Hills and the one or more crests that sit atop them are **higher elevation**. Whereas other line of sight blocking terrain is treated as a dense cluster that completely blocks line of sight, a hill or crest is open. Units on higher elevation can trace line of sight or be traced across the rest of their hill or crest. (See *examples 2 and 3*). Units on a hill or crest enjoy an upshift when they fire; if infantry or weapon team they also receive a downshift when they are fired upon.



Example 3: The blue unit is on the crest, on higher elevation than both other units. The black unit is on higher elevation than the yellow unit. The yellow and blue unit have LoS at each other up-and-down the hill. The blue and the black unit have LoS at each other up-and-down the crest. The LoS between yellow and black is blocked by the crest.



Example 2: The red unit on the hill, on higher elevation, and the black unit have LoS at each other up-and-down the hill. All other LoS are blocked by the field.

Additionally while all infantry and most vehicles enjoy a 360° field of fire some units, assets or fortifications are restricted to a forward field of fire (🔱). These may only target hexes in their forward field of fire, marked blue in the diagram on page 16.

To determine whether the firing unit is capable of firing at units in the targeted hex, first make sure it has purple anti-infantry and/or blue anti-vehicle combat ratings on its block or via an assigned asset, depending if the target is infantry, vehicle(s) or both. Then, make sure the number of hexes from the firing unit's hex - but not counting that hex - between and including the target hex is less than or equal to their **effective range** rating for anti-infantry and/or anti-vehicle firing. For example, if the anti-infantry effective range is 10 the target hex may be no more than 10 hexes away from the firing unit. Units may fire up to twice the distance of their effective range but these attacks suffer a downshift.

Infantry are always able to fire at **all** units in the target hex so long as they are valid targets. Vehicles, depending on their block's specific fire order, may only be able to fire at the infantry in the hex, or the vehicles in the hex, or possibly at both. Firing always impacts the entire hex, so every infantry and/or vehicle in the target hex that the firing unit is capable of attacking will separately be targeted by the attack, including friendly units.

"The morale of the troops taking part was astonishingly high at the start of the offensive. They really believed victory was possible - unlike the higher commanders, who knew the facts." - Gerd von Rundstedt



This unit is restricted to a forward field of fire. See diagram page 16.



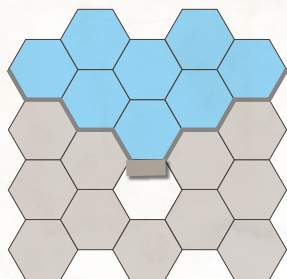
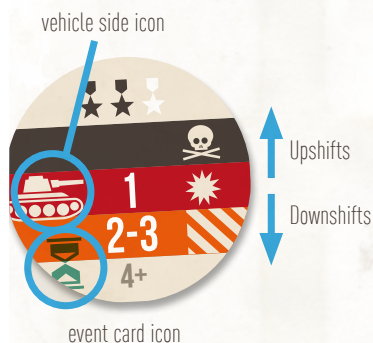
Anti-Infantry Combat
Range: 14 Hexes
1 Upshift (^)



Anti-Vehicle Combat
Range: 12 Hexes
Fire Strength of 3



Armor Rating
Front: 2
Side and Rear: 1



All attacks from grey hexes count as flank attacks. All blue hexes are in the unit's forward field of fire (↗).

2 - FOR EACH TARGET, RESOLVE THE ATTACK

Draw a combat chip from the bag. Consult either the infantry or vehicle side, corresponding to the type of unit you are targeting. If it is the first combat chip drawn with an event card icon then pause the attack, draw the top event card, and resolve it focused on the targeted unit for its resolution. Otherwise, find the range of numbers on the combat chip which includes the **number of hexes** away the target is from the firing unit. This is your base result; some chips simply say ALL meaning any combat distance begins with this result. This, then, may be modified via “**upshifts**”, which are good for the attacker or “**downshifts**”, which are good for the defender to determine the final combat result. Calculate the final shifts using this process, with each upshift cancelling out each downshift:

- If the firing unit is firing at **reduced strength** apply one downshift.
- Consult the **terrain** and any markers on top of it being occupied by the attacker and defender. Apply any upshifts (↗) in the firing hex or, if the target is an infantry, downshifts (↘) in the target hex.
- Consult the drawing at left, if you are firing from a gray hex (including the grey hexlines; extrapolate the range as needed), then it is a **flank attack**. Against infantry, add an upshift to the combat resolution. Against vehicles, fire on their rear armor.
- When firing at infantry, if the firing unit or the asset it is using for the attack has upshift(s) on their **anti-infantry fire rating** (↗), apply them.
- When firing at vehicles, compare the anti-vehicle firepower rating of the firing unit to the relevant **armor** - front or rear - of the target. If the firing unit's firepower is higher than the target's armor rating, add an upshift. For each number that the firing unit's firepower is lower than the target's armor rating add one downshift.



Example 1: The M5 Stuart, on the left, is firing at the Grenadiers, on the far right. They are 5 hexes away, well within the M5 Stuart's effective range against infantry of 14. The distance of 5 falls within the 5-9 row on the infantry side of the drawn combat chip. However, the M5 Stuart benefits from one upshift against infantry (↗), so the result of the attack is 'reduced' instead of 'suppressed'. Turn the Grenadiers block to its reduced side.



Example 2: The M5 Stuart, on the left, is firing at the Jagdpanzer IV, on the far right. It is 8 hexes away, just within the M5 Stuart's effective range against vehicles of 8. This distance falls within the row 2+ on the vehicle side of the drawn combat chip. However, the M5 Stuart managed to get into the flank of the German tank, so its firepower against vehicles of 2 is compared to the Jagdpanzer's rear armor of 1. It is higher and the M5 Stuart gains one upshift, suppressing the Jagdpanzer. Turn the Jagdpanzer block to its suppressed side.



Now, apply the results of the attack:



Eliminated

The target unit is eliminated from the game and taken by the player that destroyed it. In the case of a vehicle, replace the eliminated vehicle with a wreck marker.



Reduced (infantry)

Turn the infantry block to its reduced side, where it must remain until it is eliminated by any future eliminated, reduced or suppressed result. Weapon teams are eliminated on any reduced result.

Reduced (vehicle)

Randomly select a vehicle damage marker. Look at it, then place it unrevealed on your reduced unit. This may limit your vehicle's function for the rest of the scenario. Your opponent may discover the nature of this reduction by having a unit spot the vehicle. Any further reduction automatically eliminates the vehicle and replaces it with a wreck marker.

Effects of the markers

Commander Dead - Vehicle may no longer attack infantry units

Crew Injured - Vehicle may either move or fire at reduced strength, and not both on the same turn, for the rest of the game

Gun Damaged - Vehicle may not fire for the rest of the game

Immobilized - Vehicle may not move for the rest of the game

Reduced/No Penalty - Vehicle is reduced but still functions normally

Turret Jammed - Vehicle may only fire from its forward arc for the rest of the game



wreck marker



Vehicle damage marker, front and back



Suppressed

The target unit must pass a **valor check**. If it passes by drawing a combat chip with equal to or less than as many medals showing as the unit there is no effect. If the combat chip has medals greater than the unit then the effects depend on the unit's current state:

Infantry

Ready or Spent - Flip block to suppressed

Reduced - Eliminate unit

Suppressed - Put block face-down to indicate broken

Broken - Eliminate unit

Vehicle

Move, Aim, Support or Reduced - Flip block to suppressed

Suppressed - Put block face-down to indicate broken

Broken - Eliminate unit



Miss

No Effect



This unit fails its valor check and must apply the suppressed effect.

DESTRUCTIBLE OBJECTS

The battlefield in War Stories is not static. Some terrain and assets may be **destroyed** by anti-vehicle weapons and assets. These are indicated by the icon to the right on the hex or marker on the board. In order to destroy this terrain a unit with anti-vehicle firepower must fire at the destructible object instead of firing at units. Combat is resolved the same way except terrain in the hex with the destructible object does not provide it combat downshifts, nor does it block line of sight. Any infantry in a hex with an object that is destroyed is immediately reduced.

Some terrain is **flammable** and can create a blaze, triggered by event and/or asset cards. Any infantry in a hex that becomes ablaze are immediately reduced. All units in a blaze hex may not activate again this turn and must immediately retreat to an adjacent hex without enemy units. Any units unable to retreat are eliminated. Blazes are impassable for all units.



Destructible, strength of X



Flammable

wooden houses, destructible, strength of 3

stone houses, destructible, strength of 5





End Event

END OF THE GAME

The game ends immediately when the time's up event card is revealed, or when one side has no more units or ambushes remaining on the board. Each player counts how many VP they achieved via their objectives and compare the totals. The player with the most VP wins. In the case of a tie the game is a draw.

Example: The Time's Up Event is revealed. The game is over and both players reveal their secret objectives: Heiko, the German player destroyed exactly 4 Allied units and managed to take control of all town structures. He has a total of $7 + 4 = 11$ victory points.

Dirk, the Allies player destroyed 5 German units and prevented the German player from crossing the river. He has a total of $9 + 3 = 12$ victory points.

A close win for the Allies!

Your Objectives

- ① Destroy four Allied units: 7 VP
- ② Take control of the road junction in the west: 6 VP
- ③ Take control of all town structures: 4 VP

Your Objectives

- ① Prevent any German units from crossing the river: 9 VP
- ② Destroy all 6 German StuGs: 5 VP
- ③ Destroy more German units than they destroy of ours: 3 VP

PLAYING WITH MINIATURES

War Stories is designed to work well with miniatures. To use the War Stories game but replace blocks on the board with miniatures just use unit markers by the minis on-board to indicate which blocks off-board they correspond to. The blocks themselves, then, may sit on or next to relevant asset cards. The blocks continue to provide the stats and unit status to keep the game going being turned as if they are on the board itself.

If you also want to replace our maps with terrain that you construct in order to emulate the scenario you will need to make sure that the terrain effects built into the War Stories system are preserved. These are essential to the system. Remember that every terrain overlay that sits on the board blocks line of sight. Additionally, most overlays and some parts of the base map board have combat impact as well.

For resolving combat, hexes in War Stories equal 100m of territory.

The War Stories area movement system is the most intricate aspect to model with a custom-built 3d environment. Since even the same type of terrain does not necessarily allow movement at a uniform rate you will need to either use terrain pieces that for each piece represent an area, or figure out some way to mark or identify area boundaries within the environment that you build.

Otherwise, the unit blocks for stats, asset cards, event cards and combat chip system are fully compatible with your miniatures play.

GAME CREDITS

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"I never worry about action, only inaction." - Winston Churchill

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DESIGNER'S NOTE

One of the philosophical choices with War Stories was to make the first play of each scenario be a unique, surprising, and fun experience, right out of the box. The scenarios are intended to deliver the most richness when no one truly knows what is happening on the other side. While the scenarios are replayable I've optimized for the first play and not the tenth. World War 2 tactical games generally pride themselves on optimizing for the tenth, so I am eager to see how War Stories is evaluated in that context. Longer term I have some ideas for drafting and points-based scenario creation but it will take some time with War Stories out in the wild being played and understood before this can be anything more than a mere idea.

Getting involved in the War Stories design some years ago, and taking it over entirely about a year ago, provided a delicious opportunity to bring a variety of innovative ideas to a popular thematic corner of gaming. The original design introduced unit blocks and event cards which were a smart foundation for a different kind of game experience that could be light on rules but heavy on strategy and tactics. From there I brought to life my ideas for biaxial movement and firing systems, chit pull combat resolution, the dual scenario book structure and defensive fog of war and asset cards. These contributions helped the game become mine instead of just something I was working on.

Over the course of its development War Stories benefitted from a variety of insightful and talented contributors. When I got involved with the project I was enthusiastic about World War 2 history but not an expert. Realism and adherence to history were critical in the game's development. In different ways the key developers played an essential role in assisting my education and contributing directly to the historical design. At the same time, the key playtesters were essential to evolving War Stories from concept to a system that works. I am most thankful to these and all of the contributors, each of which made a mark.

I hope War Stories provides a good time while bringing to life this terrible, interesting war that - more than any before it or since - reshaped the face of human history.

Dirk Knemeyer, Granville, OH, April 20, 2014



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