



DUNKIRK

DESIGNED BY DOUG BRYANT

FRANCE 1940



WORTHINGTON



1. INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW: DUNKIRK! is a board game that allows players to re-create the German attack against the Low Countries, France, and her British allies during the spring of 1940.

The game lasts six Game Turns and uses wooden blocks as playing pieces to represent the combat formations of both sides. Each block contains from one to four Steps, representing the number of ten-sided dice the unit will roll in battle. Each step on a block represents roughly a division, with some adjustments to that scale made in the name of game balance.

The wooden blocks are maneuvered and have combat on a gameboard that represents a stylized depiction of the terrain over which the actual campaign was conducted. Each hex on the gameboard represents approximately 20-25 miles from side to side.

In addition, cards are used for a variety of functions to enhance the variety of player decision options and to streamline certain game functions. There is an Allied deck and a German deck.

A key concept in the game is the use of Formations. The units of the opposing sides are grouped in Formations. The game uses a chit pull mechanic to determine the Activation Sequence for the Formations.

At the start of a game, the German player will select a Strategy Card. There are six Strategy Cards, from which the German player selects one. Each card outlines the specific objectives the German player will attempt to complete, scoring Victory Points for the completion of each objective and (in some cases) losing Victory Points based upon Allied achievements during the campaign.

During the game, Command Chits are placed into an opaque container at the start of each Game Turn and are drawn one at a time. The Command Chits correspond to the various Formations of the two main sides, as well as the Neutral powers. When a Command Chit is drawn, that Formation must "activate". The Active Formation will move its blocks and (if required or desired) engage in battle with the forces of the opponent. Once the Formation has completed its Activation, a new Command Chit is drawn and that Formation will move, battle, etc. The process continues until all Command Chits are drawn, ending the Game Turn. The opaque container is then "seeded" with Command Chits for the next Game Turn. After six Game Turns are complete, the German player reveals the selected Strategy Card and the Victory Point totals – and the game result – are determined.

The Allied and German cards provide a variety of functions, all grouped into three broad categories: BATTLE, REINFORCEMENT, or EVENT. Each individual card contains two possible functions (e.g. Battle/Reinforcement, Battle/Event, Reinforcement/Event, etc.). When using a card, the player will select one of the two functions listed on the card. After the card is used, it is removed from play. Cards may be played at various points during a Game Turn, depending on their function and / or any text instructions on the card.

2. HOW DO I WIN?

The game is played between two players. One plays the French-British side – including the neutral nations of Belgium and the Netherlands, while the other plays the Germans. (The game's organization of the fighting forces lends itself to "split command" and can accommodate more than two players, if desired.)

The game is won by accruing Victory Points. The German player will select a Strategy Card at the start of the game, keeping secret the card selected and also placing out of sight of both players the ones not chosen. The Strategy Card outlines what objectives will gain VPs for the German player, as well as identifying events which will subtract VPs from the German total. The Strategy Card lists the Victory Conditions once the final VP total is determined at the end of the last game turn.

3. GAMEBOARD / COMPONENTS

The gameboard depicts a stylized representation of the area over which the actual campaign was conducted. A hexagon grid is superimposed over the board to regulate movement and combat. Certain terrain features affect the movement of blocks, combat, and Victory Points. Full details are found on the Terrain Chart. The game also uses 10-sided dice to resolve combat, with the zero meaning ten.



4. GAME UNITS

The combat units of the two sides are represented by wooden blocks upon which are attached labels. The French blocks are blue, the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) blocks are red, and the German blocks are gray. The Belgian blocks are yellow and the Dutch blocks are orange.

The labels are arranged on the sticker sheet by nationality. Prior to your first play, you will need to affix the labels to the appropriately-colored block. Place one French label on each blue block, one BEF label on each red block, and one German label on each gray block. The Belgian labels are affixed to the yellow blocks, and the Dutch labels are affixed to the orange blocks.

A block's label indicates the current "strength" of the block (a value from a low of 1 to a high of 4). These values are called "steps" and are an abstract representation of the combat effectiveness of the forces represented by the various blocks.

During play, the blocks stand upright – facing their owner – with the current “step” at the top. The only time a block’s “face” is revealed to the opponent is during combat (thus creating a “Fog of War” effect) and during Formation Headquarters activation.

As result of combat, blocks may lose “steps”. This reduction is easily handled by rotating the block so that its new value is at the top when the block is stood upright. The same is true when a block gains steps by Reinforcements.

In addition to the number of steps, the labels also show the Unit Type of the block. Blocks are either Infantry, Mechanized, or Armored. Infantry blocks have two (2) Movement Points, while Mechanized and Armored have three (3) Movement Points.

The labels also show the Combat Rating for the block. This number represents the number (or lower) needing to be rolled on a ten-sided dice in order to the block to score a “hit” against enemy blocks. In battle, a block will roll the number of ten-sided dice equal to its number of Steps. For example, a three-step block with a Combat Rating of “4” would roll three dice; for each die showing a “4” or less, a hit is achieved.

Finally, the blocks also show the Formation to which the block belongs. The concept of Formation is central to the mechanics of the game. Each block belongs to a Formation.

4A. UNIT TYPES

The combat units for both sides are either: Infantry (signified by an X in the middle of the label), Mechanized (an oval with an X across it), or Armor (signified by an oval in the middle of the label).



Unit type comes into play in certain terrain/combat situations.

4B. SUPREME HEADQUARTERS



Each side has a Supreme Headquarters (SHQ) block. The block is placed in its side’s “Supreme Headquarters” box on the gameboard. The SHQ never moves and is not considered “in play”.

When it performs a Supreme Headquarters Action, it loses one or more steps. When it is rebuilt (via a card play), it adds one or more steps.

SHQs are able to perform certain “special” actions. Each action has a cost in SHQ steps. The actions and their cost are explained here:

OUT OF COMMAND MOVEMENT: Cost one SHQ step. Allows normal movement (up to a block’s maximum Movement Points) of an Out of Command block from the Active Formation. Block may not move again this Activation. Block may not move into battle.

STRATEGIC MOVEMENT: Cost two SHQ steps. Allows a non-Field Headquarters block from the Active Formation to move up to four (4) non-enemy occupied hexagons. Block may not move into battle or capture enemy cities, fortresses, or ports.

RESERVES: Cost one or two SHQ steps. Allows the return to play of one eliminated non-mechanized or armor block. Block returns at one or two steps, per the Reserve rules.

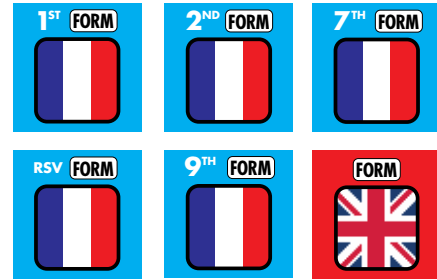
BUY SECOND BATTLE ROUND: Cost two SHQ steps for Germans, three SHQ steps for Allies. Purchase enables a second round of battle in a contested hex.

BUY ANOTHER CARD: Cost two SHQ steps. Allows the purchase of an additional card during the Card Distribution step of a turn. May not buy on Turn 1.

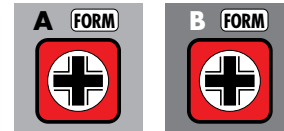
5. FORMATIONS

The combat units for both sides are organized into Formations. Formations are the key mechanic in the game. The formation to which each block belongs is signified on its label. The formations for the two sides are as follows:

FRENCH-BRITISH FORMATIONS: French 1st, 2nd, 7th, 9th, Reserve and BEF



GERMAN FORMATIONS: Group A, Group B



NEUTRAL NATION FORMATIONS: Netherlands, Belgium



5A. FORMATION COMMAND CHITS

Prior to your first play, find the Command Chit labels on the sheet. Affix one of these to an appropriately-colored block. Belgians=yellow, French=blue, Germans=gray, etc.. Those blocks become the Command Chits that will be drawn throughout the game to “activate” a formation.

The Command Chits are seeded into an opaque container (bowl, soup mug, small opaque bag, etc) as indicated on the Turn Record Chart on the gameboard. Each turn, players will blindly draw Command Chits until none remain in the opaque container. At the end of the turn, the container is re-seeded with Command Chits as indicated on the Turn Record Chart.

When a Formation’s Command Chit is pulled, that Formation must become the Active Formation. Each In-Command block of the Active Formation is eligible to move and engage in combat (unless moved by Strategic Movement).

NOTE 1: Not all Command Chits are seeded into the container on Game Turn 1. Some enter later than Turn 1.

NOTE 2: The German player has two Command Chits for each of his formations (reflecting the German operational command superiority). For the first two game turns, the German player will

receive two Activations per turn for both of his Formations. At the start of Turn 3, the German player will remove the second chit for each of his Formations; from Turn 3 to the end of the game, each German formation receives only one Activation per turn. This reflects a slight slowing of the operational pace of the German attack due to the supply, communications, and unforeseen considerations that an attacker experience once having advanced into enemy territory.

NOTE 3: IMPORTANT: Prior to seeding the opaque container at the start of Game Turn 1, the German player pre-selects a Command Chit from one of his two Formations. This Formation will be the first one Activated. Obviously, therefore, one of that Formation's chits is NOT placed in the container. In this way, the German advantage of a surprise attack is represented, as the German player gets to choose which of his Formations will make the first moves / attacks of the game.

5B. FORMATION HEADQUARTERS

Each Formation has a block that serves as the Formation Headquarters (HQ). These are Infantry blocks that are specially marked as HQ. These are extremely important blocks; it pays not to use them in combat unless absolutely necessary.

Each FHQ has a "Command Range". This represents a range of hexagons over which the FHQ exerts its command influence. The Command Range includes the hexagon the block occupies plus an additional number of hexagons counting out from that occupied one. Command Range is NOT blocked by terrain or the presence of enemy blocks.

The two sides have different Command Ranges for their FHQs, to better reflect the communication and coordination superiority of the Germans during the actual campaign. The Command Ranges (in addition to the hexagon the FHQ occupies) are as follows:

FRENCH-BRITISH: two (2) hexagons

GERMANS: three (3) hexagons

NEUTRALS: Do not have FHQ units. All of their blocks are automatically "In Command" when their Command Chit is drawn.

Any block of a Formation that begins the Formation's Activation within the Command Range of its Formation's Headquarters block is considered as being In Command. Conversely, any which is not within its Formation's Headquarters block AT THE END OF ITS FORMATION'S MOVEMENT PHASE is considered Out of Command. Players may wish to note Out of Command blocks with a token.

Tip: Move the FHQ last when moving the blocks of that formation. That way you can be sure to have it end its move in the best possible hexagon to exert its Command Range.

5C. OUT OF COMMAND EFFECTS

Blocks which become Out of Command suffer the following effects:

- » Their Movement Point allowance is reduced to one.
- » Their Combat Rating becomes "2" (i.e. they must roll a "2" or lower to score hits).
- » They may not move into battle.

- » They MAY be moved via SHQ movement during their Formation's Activation.

These effects last until the block is brought back to an In Command status.

A player may, if desired, intentionally move a block into an Out-of-Command hexagon. (This might, for example, be done to capture a key terrain feature, but entails the above negative consequences.)

FORMATION SPECIAL QUESTION

May blocks of different Formations be in the same hexagon at the end of a Movement Phase? Yes, but such blocks cannot "attack" together. Only blocks of the Active Formation may "attack" (i.e. make rolls as the Attacker in a Battle). However, if two blocks from different Formations in the same hex are attacked, they both roll in defense.

6. SET UP

Prior to play, separate the blocks by side and Formation. Shuffle the cards for each side and create a deck for each. Use a token (if desired) to mark the current Turn on the Turn Record Chart.

Players place their Formations on the gameboard within the set-up area hexagons marked for each Formation. Not all set-up area hexes must be occupied. All blocks start the game at maximum steps. Blocks are placed standing upright, at full strength, with the labels facing the owner. (Note that for rules reference purposes, the German player sits at the North side of the board, with the Allied player at the South side of the board. This is important for the Reserves rules (Section 11).)

The maximum number of blocks that either player may have in any hexagon at the end of any Movement or Combat phase is two (2). (Thus, in a Battle Hex, up to four total blocks could be present – two from each side.)

Tip: Give careful consideration to the placement of each FHQ during setup, making sure all of its Formation's blocks are within the Command Range of the starting hexagon you have selected.

NEUTRALS SET UP: The Allied player sets up the Neutral blocks. They must be placed, one block to a hex, in every Dutch or Belgian city. The Belgians must also have a block in the Eben-Emael hex.

Deal the Allied player three (3) cards from the Allied Card deck and the German player four (4) cards from the German card deck.

The German player will select one of the six German Strategy Cards. These cards outline the Victory Conditions for the game. The German player keeps this card secret until the end of the game, as well as placing out of sight of both players the remaining cards (in order to prevent the Allied player from deducing which Strategy Card has been selected).

The German player then selects either an Army Group A or Army Group B Command Chit. This is the Formation that will Activate first for Turn 1 of the game.

Take the remaining Command Chits as indicated on the Turn Record Chart and seed the opaque container with them.

Play then begins with the German player Activating the Formation (either Group A or Group B) that he selected as described above, engaging in Movement and Combat.

7. CARDS

Each player has a deck of cards. The number of cards each player receives per turn is listed on the Turn Record Chart.

The cards are used in a variety of ways during a game turn. The three classification of card types are BATTLE, EVENT, or REINFORCEMENT. Each card contains two options (e.g. Battle/Reinforcement, Event/Battle, Battle/Battle, etc.). The player chooses ONE of the two options when playing a card. The card is removed from play once used.



When a card may be used is determined by its classification or card text. For example, Battle cards may be used in a battle, but some Battle cards may only be used when attacking and some only when defending. Event cards are dependent on the card text. Reinforcement cards are played during the Reinforcement Phase.

NOTE: Only one Battle card may be played per side in a battle; only one Reinforcement card may be played per side in the Reinforcement phase.

7A. SPECIAL CARD SITUATIONS

Most cards are self-explanatory, but three require special note:

GERMAN PARATROOPS: Played as a Battle Event and negate the Garrison of Eben-Emael. Fortress effects are ignored. Treat the hex as Clear terrain for Combat.

DYNAMO: Played during a BEF Activation. Blocks must end their Movement phase in Dunkirk AND/OR Calais. If Event is played, stand the evacuated BEF block(s) (with evacuated steps at the top) on top of the card alongside the gameboard so the number of steps evacuated / VP deductions can be counted during the Victory Point determination phase.

AIR STRIKES / ARTILLERY STRIKES: Air Strikes and / or Artillery Strikes may reduce a block to one step in strength, but may NOT eliminate a block. Any hits greater than those needed to reduce the enemy block(s) to one step are ignored.

8. GAME TURN SEQUENCE

Note: For Game Turn 1, Steps 1–4 below are skipped. For that part of Turn 1, simply follow the directions just stated in Section 6 (Setup).

- 1) Add or Remove Command Chits per the Turn Record Chart.
 - 2) Add one step to each side's SHQ block. (Each side receives a "free" SHQ step every turn from Turn 2 to the end of the game.)
 - 3) Deal each player a card(s) as indicated on the Turn Record Chart.
 - 4) Seed the opaque container with the Command Chits indicated on the Turn Record Chart.
 - 5) One player (does not matter which) draws a Command Chit from the container. That Formation is now the Active Formation.
 - 6) **FHQ ACTIVATION:** The owner of the Active Formation reveals to the opponent the location of the FHQ (in order to prove that FHQ's Command Range).
 - 7A) **FORMATION MOVEMENT PHASE:** In-Command blocks of the Active Formation may move to their full Movement Rating, limited only by terrain and enemy blocks.
 - 7B) **POSSIBLE SHQ STRATEGIC MOVEMENT:** Owner of the Active Formation may, if desired, spend a SHQ step(s) to perform a Strategic Move with a block(s) of the Active Formation. This may be done concurrent with the Movement described in 7a above, but NO BLOCK MAY USE BOTH Formation Movement and SHQ Movement during the same Activation.
 - 8) **POSSIBLE SHQ OUT OF COMMAND MOVEMENT:** Owner of the Active Formation may, if desired, spend a SHQ step(s) to perform Out of Command movement with a block(s) of the Active Formation.
 - 9) **COMBAT PHASE:** Battles exist in any hexagon containing enemy blocks and at least one block of the Active Formation. Owner of the Active Formation selects the sequence in which Battles will be resolved.
 - 9A) **BATTLE CARD PLAY:** Each player may play ONE (1) Battle Card per battle, if desired. Players simultaneously declare (show) a Battle card if they wish to play one.
- NOTE: The Allied player may NOT play a Battle card in any battle involving solely Neutral blocks as the attacker or defender. (i.e. a French or BEF block must be in a battle in order for an Allied player to play a Battle card in a battle.)*
- 9B) **BATTLE ROUNDS:** Each battle last for one Round of combat. A second round may be purchased BY THE ATTACKER ONLY using SHQ steps or (possibly) a card play. No battle may have more than two rounds for an Activation. A side may NOT play a Battle Card in the second round of battle if that side played a Battle card in the first round.
- 9b Question: As the German player, I have the "Press the Attack" Event card. May I play it at the end of the first round to buy another round of battle, even though I played an Air Strike Battle Card in the first round? Answer: Yes! "Press the Attack" is an Event card, not a Battle card.*
- 10) Repeat Steps 5 through 9b until no Command Chits remain in the opaque container.

11) REINFORCEMENTS & RESERVES PHASE: Players may play ONE Reinforcement card, adding steps per the Reinforcement rules. Players may ALSO spend SHQ steps to conduct a SHQ Reserves action, returning an Eliminated block(s) to play, per the Reserve rules.

12) Start the next turn with Step 1 above. At the end of Turn 6, calculate Victory Points to determine the winner of the game based upon the information on the German Strategy Card selected.

9. MOVEMENT

Activated, In-Command blocks may move to the full extent of their Movement Rating, limited only by terrain and enemy blocks.

A block must STOP its Movement when it enters a hexagon containing an enemy block(s). (This is how a Battle is created.)

Carefully consult the Terrain Effects Chart during play, as it contains several Effects regarding Movement.

MOVEMENT QUESTIONS

May a block “disengage” from a Battle simply by moving out of the hexagon during its Formation’s Activation?

Yes, but such a block may NOT enter a hexagon containing an enemy block this Activation.

May French-British blocks enter Neutral controlled hexes?

Yes, but only if the German player has previously entered the Neutral nation’s territory.

May Neutral blocks ever move out of their national boundaries?

No. Belgian blocks must remain in Belgian hexes; Dutch blocks must remain in Dutch hexes.

10. COMBAT

When at least one block of the Active Formation is in the same hexagon as an enemy block at the end of the Active Formation’s Movement Phase, a Battle occurs. Combat is mandatory; players may not decline combat if a Battle condition exists.

In all Battles during an Activation, the blocks of the Active Formation (only) are considered to be the Attacker; enemy blocks in a Battle are considered to be the Defender.

Battles last one Round, with an SHQ purchase of a second Round possible (as well as possible card play).

The owner of the Active Formation selects the sequence in which Battles will be resolved.

For every “hit” rolled by a block (or an Air Strike / Artillery Strike) during combat, one step of reduction is applied to an enemy block in the Battle. Remember that Air Strikes / Artillery Strikes may NOT eliminate a block.

In Battles, hits are applied evenly; in other words, both of a side’s blocks in a Battle must absorb one hit before either absorbs two hits. In all cases, the owning player selects which blocks will receive hits, so long as the “evenly distributed” rule is followed.

10A. COMBAT RATINGS

In Battles, each block will roll the number of ten-sided dice equal to its current strength in steps (e.g. three steps = three

dice). (Note that certain Cards and/or Terrain might modify the number of dice rolled.) The Combat Rating of a block indicates the number (or lower)

The Terrain Effects Chart indicates in what order blocks fire during a battle and other details impacting the combat performance of block(s). For example, Armor blocks fire first in clear terrain, but fire last in City hexes.

In all Battles, the Defender’s blocks for a particular Unit Type roll before the Attacker (i.e. Defender armor before Attacker armor, Defender Mechanized before Attacker Mechanized, etc.) Note that certain cards might modify this sequence.

When a block rolls, it scores a “hit” for every number rolled that is equal to or less than its Combat Rating. Hits are applied immediately. The owner of the impacted blocks decides which block (if two are present) will receive the first hit during the Battle, but remember that hits are applied evenly for the duration of the Battle.

10B. AIR STRIKES / ARTILLERY STRIKES

Certain cards contain Air Strikes and Artillery Strikes. These are rolled during the Air Strike / Artillery Strike phase of a Combat Round. Hits are applied immediately. If both players play such a card, it does not matter in which order they are resolved, as both will be conducted before any blocks roll in that Round.

Note that an air strike or artillery strike may not eliminate a block.

10C. COMBAT PROCEDURE

Follow this procedure for all Battles:

1) Air Strike / Artillery Strike Phase: Players may decide to play an Air Strike or Artillery Strike Battle Card. Roll dice to resolve those strikes.

NOTE: Play of an Air Strike or Artillery Strike counts as the battle’s sole Battle card play.

2) Battle Card play: If a side did not play an Air or Artillery Strike Battle Card, they may play some other type of Battle card.

3) Unit Types roll as per the Terrain Effects Chart, with Defender blocks of a given Unit Type rolling before any Attacker blocks of the same Unit Type. Note that this sequence may be modified by certain card plays.

4) Possible Battle Round 2 (via SHQ purchase or card play) – repeat Steps 1 through 3.

NOTE: Purchase of a second Round does NOT permit the play of a second Battle card for the battle.

5) End of Battle. If blocks from both sides remain, stand the original occupier of the hexagon upright and leave the Attacker face up.

10D. SPECIAL BATTLE SITUATIONS

» **FHQ ELIMINATED:** If a FHQ block becomes eliminated as a result of combat, it is placed on the next Turn of the Turn Record Chart and re-enters play (at two steps) during the Deal Cards phase of that Turn. It is placed by its owner

somewhere within Command Range of at least one of its Formation's blocks, no farther North (Allied) or South (German) than the hex of that Formation block.

IMPORTANT: If there are no blocks of its Formation still in play, the FHQ may NOT re-enter play. That Formation has thus been completely eliminated.

- » **MINOR POWER CITIES:** If a German unit(s) captures (i.e. be the last side solely occupying) a Dutch or Belgian City, mark it as such using a token. Conquered Neutral cities may never be "liberated" by the French-British player and do NOT need to be constantly occupied by the German player to remain conquered for Victory Point purposes.

- » **FRENCH CITIES / PORTS:** If a German unit(s) captures a French City, mark it as such using a token. A captured French city/port need NOT be constantly occupied by the German player to remain captured for Victory Point purposes. However, a captured French city/port MAY be liberated by the French-British player.



- » **EBEN-EMAEL:** If captured by the Germans, the hex loses its Fortress characteristics.



- » **MAGINOT LINE HEXAGONS:** Impassable to both sides.



11. REINFORCEMENTS / RESERVES

During this phase, players may use Cards to add steps to damaged blocks and/or use SHQ steps to bring eliminated blocks back into play.

11A. REINFORCEMENTS

Add the steps as indicated on the Card, with the following exceptions:

- » No block in a hexagon with an enemy block may receive Reinforcement steps. No block may receive more than two (2) steps of Reinforcement per turn.

11B. RESERVES

Using SHQ steps, bring an eliminated block back into play, with the following limits:

- » The block returns at a maximum of two (2) steps of strength. One SHQ step used per step returned. May return at one (1) step. See SHQ rules for limitations on unit types that can return.
- » The block is placed within the Command Range of its FHQ block, no farther North (Allied) or South (German) than

its FHQ block, but not in a hexagon containing an enemy block.

- » If the block's FHQ block is out of play, the block may not return until such time (if at all) that the FHQ block is back in play (See Section 10d).

12. VICTORY DETERMINATION

At the end of Turn 6, consult the Victory Point instructions on the German Strategy Card to determine the winner of the game.

Remember to include not only the points awarded to the German player for completion of the Strategy Card's objectives, but also any deductions from the German total by Allied achievements listed on the Strategy Card.

13. OPTIONAL RULES

The following are some optional rules which may be used for variety and/or to adjust play balance between players of unequal experience.

- » **KEEP EXTRA GERMAN COMMAND CHITS LONGER:** You might boost a German player by allowing him to keep the extra Command Chit for one – or both – of his Formations for Turn 3 (or longer).
- » **REMOVE EXTRA GERMAN COMMAND CHITS SOONER:** You can significantly challenge a German player by removing one or both extra Command Chits at the end of Turn 1. However, this is only recommended if the German player is very experienced and the Allied player someone completely new to war-gaming, as this option would make German victory impossible against even a moderately experienced Allied player.
- » **ADD/SUBTRACT CARDS:** Players may wish to modify the number of Cards a side receives at the start of the game and / or each round.
- » **MODIFY SHQ COSTS:** Players may wish to modify the cost for each SHQ action, making actions less expensive for a less-experienced player.

14. DESIGN GOAL

The goal in designing the game was to create a fast-playing game with a solid historical basis and feel. My approach was to insert as many "decision levers" into the game as possible, providing a rewarding gaming experience without bogging the game down with complications that might slow the pace of play. The target playing time was two hours, and I believe that two players who have mastered the game's mechanics and rhythm will be able to complete a game in that time, if not less.

As I play-tested the game with gaming friends at conventions or game club meetings, bystanders would ask me if the game is "a simulation or a game"? My answer was a resounding "Game – with (hopefully) a strong feel of the history upon which it is based."

The campaign that the Germans waged against the Allies in the Spring of 1940 has fascinated me ever since I became interested in WWII history (and military boardgaming) during my early teens. I could never understand exactly how the Germans dominated what seemed – on paper, at least – to be an equally strong (if not superior) enemy force.

Over the years, my reading of the history of the event showed me the answers known to anyone who has studied the campaign: superior German command, control, and coordination on the battlefield; ineffective Allied leadership at the highest levels, betraying the heroism of their countrymen in the field and in the air; remarkable German self-confidence; crippling Allied irresolution.

Despite those historical truths, I always felt that an enjoyable military board game could be produced that did not simply amount to a "replay" of the historical event. And that was my design goal: an enjoyable game, which could be played multiple times and enjoyed by gamers of all experience levels. If, during the design process, I faced a decision between an option which, on the one hand, would add "historical simulation value", but might weaken "game play value" and another option that enhanced game play, possibly at the loss of a little more simulation value, I chose the second option every time.

The result is, I hope, a game that will provide many hours of enjoyment, all while immersing the players in the history of the campaign and in the decisions that the leaders on both sides faced.

TIPS: Given the nature of the chit pull mechanic, there is (intentionally) no "set piece" tips to give either side at the start of the game. What follows is some general advice for players.

GERMAN: At the start of the game, you select a Strategy Card. Pay close attention to all of the options on each one before selecting. Once you have made your selection, remember to focus ruthlessly on the achievement of the assigned objectives. I have designed the game to be a challenge for the German player to win, despite the many advantages (better Command/Control, stronger Air Power, etc.) the German army possesses. Keep in mind that you want to keep the Allied player guessing as long as possible as to your exact objectives. Perhaps drive one of your Army Groups toward the coast, even though your objectives are toward Paris. Or make a feint toward the capital, when your real targets are the coastal ports. In addition, you will get to pick which of your two Army Groups will start the game. Select wisely and use that advantage to get yourself off to a good start.

ALLIED: Always keep in mind that you are not – despite appearances at times – a mere punching bag. Although you are (just as the Germans at times are) subject to the mercy of the Command Chit pull order, it will be important to look for opportunities to "stick it" to the German forces – either through focused counter-attacks by your blocks or by the skillful, timely play of certain Event or Battle cards. Do not be alarmed if some of your weaker Formations are completely wiped out early in the game. You will need to understand the fundamental importance of using your Supreme Headquarters steps to bring blocks back into play. I cannot emphasize how important this is to Allied survival and possible victory. You will have holes to plug throughout the game. Make sure you understand the SHQ and Reserve rules so that you may do so. Lastly, it is (obviously) helpful to determine the main German objectives as quickly as possible. Your goal is to toss a monkey wrench – several, actually! – into your opponent's plans, disrupting his timetable and making him wish he had never crossed the border in the first place.

DEDICATION: To my brothers, one who introduced me to military gaming, the other who was the wind in a Desert Storm; both now gone, neither ever forgotten...

DEEP GRATITUDE: To Mike and Grant Wylie for believing in my idea, to Grant Dalglish for initially challenging me to pursue it, to Ron Draker for steadfast advice and support, and to my wife and daughter for allowing me the time to complete the project.

SPECIAL THANKS: to the following for Play-testing and/or suggestions: Matt Looby, Fred Bauer, Dennis Culhane, Bill Powers, and my sister, Sharon.