

VARIANTS FOR ARDENNES BATTLES

Expanding the

BATTLES FOR THE ARDENNES™

Game by Jerry Epperson



WITH THE REPRINTING OF THE BATTLES FOR THE ARDENNES™ GAME, PLAYERS who enjoy the tactical fee of regiment/battalion level games have the rare opportunity to obtain this relatively new classic for their libraries. This is reason enough for celebration, as *BFTA* is easily the best game about the Battle of the Bulge on the market. It is also the most versatile. *BFTA* has a simple game system which produces some hidden qualities that do not manifest themselves until after a few playings. The game stresses the proper use of bridges, air support, artillery, and logistics, while having to deal with such variables as weather and terrain factors.

Though there are numerous scenarios in the game, *BFTA* also provides a host of optional rules which can be used to balance situations or change an entire scenario. Suggestions on using the variant rules in this article follow the case format numbering system. If there are any doubts about any of the various optional rules given in this article, the *BFTA* rules take precedence. Each of the following options have their counterparts in history, and are possible variations that might have affected the outcome of battles recreated in the game.

[16.4] Operation Greif

(1944 Games Only)

Operation *Greif* (Griffin) was a covert action which had two sections of troops assigned to it. The first section consisted of English-speaking German commandos who dressed as American soldiers. These men infiltrated the American lines just after the initial breakthroughs and were led by the very capable Otto Skorzeny. Throughout the first days of the offensive, they cut lines of communication, turned road signs to misdirect reinforcements, placed minefield warning markers, and created a great deal of confusion in all sectors. Traveling in small groups, their effectiveness was startling. Massive traffic jams occurred as real American soldiers questioned everyone with trivia, arresting those who couldn't produce the correct answer — including several British liaisons and one American general.

The second section never really started. This would have involved the infiltration of an entire panzer brigade camouflaged as American soldiers and vehicles. Their objective was to race toward the Meuse River and capture the bridges there before they could be destroyed. Thanks to a shortage of promised vehicles, the second section failed to begin its infiltration.

[16.41] Prior to play, the German player secretly notes on a piece of paper the hex numbers of *five* primary targets to be sabotaged (all targets must be road hexes). When an American unit enters the target hex, the German player immediately stops that unit's movement, regardless of the number of movement points remaining in that unit's movement allowance.

[16.42] Once the American player has had a unit stopped in a target hex, he may no longer trace a line of supply through that hex until it has been cleared (see 16.43). The halted unit also blocks any following movement through the hex in such a way that all other non-German units must stop their movement upon entering the hex.

[16.43] Once discovered, target hexes can be cleared. To clear a target hex, the American player rolls one die for each tar-

get hex during his Mutual Supply Determination Phase. If the result is a 6, the target hex is cleared and reverts back to a normal hex in all respects. The German player crosses that hex off his list of primary targets. Attempts to clear a target hex are made each Mutual Supply Determination Phase, starting on the game turn following the one during which the target hex was originally encountered. Attempts continue until such time when the unit is removed by a roll of 6.

[16.44] If an American engineer unit is present in such a hex when the attempt to clear it is made, one is added to the die roll. If a non-artillery, non-engineer unit is present in a target hex when the attempt to clear it is made, two is added to the die roll, provided that the unit was not stopped because of the hex on the game turn the hex was first encountered.

[16.45] The Skorzeny/150th Panzer Brigade is removed from play immediately following game turn 9.

[16.46] VARIANT: If both players agree, the German player is allowed to plot the locations for *ten* target hexes: three primary and seven secondary. The primary hex locations are noted by underlining them on the paper which lists the targets, while the secondary ones remain unlined. Primary target hexes operate normally, with 100% effectiveness; the secondary hexes are less effective. Whenever the American player moves into a secondary target hex, the die is rolled. On the result of a 1 or a 2, the American units are stopped, just as if the hex were a primary target hex. If the die roll result is 3 through 6, then the hex is crossed off the German player's list and the American player does not have to end that unit's movement in the hex.

[16.47] VARIANT: If both players agree, the target hexes do not automatically take effect from the start of the game. Instead, a certain amount of game turns must elapse before the hexes become active. This time represents the actual movement of the commandos to the target hexes and their activities in those hexes which block the American movement. The German player counts the number of Mechanized Movement Points expended to move from hex 1125 (Stadkyll, the town from which the commandos started their attacks) to the target hexes. Once the Movement Point Total is determined, the number is divided by 8, rounding all fractions up. The result is the number of game turns, including the first game turn of the scenario, that must fully elapse before the target hex is operational. If units traverse the hex before this time, the hex is not revealed and the die roll needed to check the efficiency of the commandos in the hex (see 16.46) is not rolled.

EXAMPLE: The German player designates hex 1512 as a target for his commandos. Tracing a line of hexes from 1125 to 1512, he comes up with a total of 19. Dividing 19 by 8, the result is 2.375 or 3 complete game turns. The hex becomes operational at the start of game turn 4.

[16.5] American Supply Dumps

(1944 Games Only)

The biggest obstacle facing the Wehrmacht in 1944 was a severe shortage in petroleum. It was extremely common to use estimated gas expenditures, based upon the amount of fuel consumed to move a division 100 kilometers. Logistics experts learned very early in the war that the figure was very conservative at best and that a more realistic figure could be reached by at least doubling the amount. Crossing rugged terrain or participating in moving battles often consumed more fuel than could be accounted for.

When Hitler's "Last Gamble" was launched, only 1½ times the standard estimates of fuel were available. Most of these stores were held in lorries far behind the front lines, requiring that they be transported forward. This proved very difficult after the weather changed and Allied airpower could be exerted upon the lines of transport vehicles heading toward the front. In fact, the German logistics planners were depending upon captured petroleum stores to make up for the supply deficiencies. The lack of gas, along with the problems of a long and vulnerable supply line, inhibited the execution of an otherwise very masterfully planned offensive.

The German Supply Shortage Table reflects the fact that fuel was not plentiful, but does not reflect the chances of a German force capturing a large supply of American fuel. One instance where this was illustrated took place near the town of St. Vith. The town of Stavelot (hex 1211) held a huge supply of petrol, more than 2½ million gallons. Up to this point, the Germans had captured dumps holding around 20,000 gallons. Just a half mile away from Stavelot sat the 1st SS Panzer Division, stalled for lack of gasoline!

[16.51] Prior to the start of the scenario, the American player secretly plots, on a piece of paper, the hex location(s) of his fuel stores. The site locations and the number of Petrol Points to be allocated are given on the American Supply Dump Chart (see 16.57). The American player finds the scenario being played on the chart; following this is a choice of hexes where the supply dumps may be placed. The American player divides the Petrol Points between one or more of the dump sites as he sees fit, but all Petrol Points must be allocated to some dump site.

[16.52] When the German player captures a hex which contains a supply dump, the American player must immediately notify him of this fact, along with the number of Petrol Points captured. Capture, for the purposes of this rule, merely requires that the hex be occupied by a German unit. Once captured, the American player crosses the supply dump and its Petrol Points off his checklist.

[16.53] Each Petrol Point captured by the German player allows him to either ignore the results of *one* roll from the German Supply Shortages Tables (see 11.7) or ignore the effects of *one division's* worth of Out of Supply units (see 11.4). The German player must state if he is expending a Petrol Point to supply a division and, if so, which units are to be supplied. The Petrol Point is crossed off his point total, and the units do not have to trace a line of supply for that *one* game turn. In the case of the German Supply Shortages Tables, the German player still rolls for Supply Shortage, but if any division must go "Out of Supply" the player may negate the requirement by expending a Petrol Point.

[16.54] One Petrol Point will supply the requirements for only *one* division. The German player may expend as many or as few Petrol Points in a game turn as he desires, but any expenditure over *one* Petrol Point per division will not benefit the units in any way. The division's worth of units being supplied by the Petrol Point is not required to be from the same division, just that no more than one division's worth is supplied by one Petrol Point. If there are any remainders left, the Petrol Point total is rounded up. For example, if only one unit from a division is supplied and no others, one Petrol Point is expended.

[16.55] VARIANT: If both players agree, the German player may negate the results of the German Supply Shortage Tables or the effects of being Out of Supply, if the division (or units) affected can trace a normal Supply Line to the supply dump from which the Petrol Points are originating. In this case, the German player determines which division is Out of Supply prior to expending the Petrol Points. The German player is only able to supply those units capable of tracing a supply line. Those units for which such a supply line cannot be traced are Out of Supply, as called for in the Supply rules (see 11.4) or on the German Supply Shortages Tables (see 11.7). The German player is required to keep track of all Petrol Points and their locations, crossing them off as they are expended.

[16.56] VARIANT: If both players agree, the American player can retake a supply dump simply by capturing the hex in which the supply dump is located. The benefits of

this maneuver are that once the dump is retaken, the American player is free to attempt the destruction of the supply dump. The American player is prohibited from destroying a supply dump before it falls into the German player's control. This accurately represents the incredible display of tunnel vision that American leaders had in foreseeing German objectives. Once the supply dumps are retaken by the American player, destruction can commence during the next Bridge Phase. During the Bridge Phase, the American player rolls a die for each American unit in the supply dump hex. If the result is less than or equal to the unit's Combat Strength, the supply dump has the die result subtracted from its Petrol Point total. If the result is greater than the unit's Combat Strength, then no Petrol Points are subtracted.

If an engineer unit is present in the supply dump hex, one is subtracted from the die roll to destroy the dump. However, the unmodified die result is doubled, and the final number is subtracted from the Petrol Point total. If an artillery unit is present in

movement at all. Counters are placed on the mapsheet when a new supply dump is captured by the German player and are removed immediately upon their destruction (see 16.56) or when all Petrol Points are used up from that counter (see 16.53).

[16.6] Intensive Fire (All Games)

Though all armies had regulations governing the proper usage of ammunition supplies, critical situations often called for the increased expenditure of ammunition. By increasing the amount of rounds fired, the unit would effectively increase the firepower or combat strength of that unit. However, using Intensive Fire also increased the chance of exhausting ammunition stores.

A general guideline for players to follow, when employing this rule, is that Intensive Fire should be limited to only situations where desperate measures are required. Neither the Allies nor the Germans ever made a common practice of wasting ammunition unnecessarily. Artillery units operate under a different set of rules called Saturation Fire (see 16.7). The two types of fire

[16.58] AMERICAN SUPPLY DUMP CHART

Scenario	Petrol Points	Supply Dump Hex Locations
CELLES	38	0215, 0510, 0518, 0812, 1215, 1421, 1612, 1815
CLERVAUX	24	0715, 1006, 1115, 1611, 1706, 1914, 2308
ST. VITH	65	0108, 0711, 0716, 0805, 1110, 1211, 1319, 1413, 1420, 1518, 1609, 1919, 2009, 2010
ANGRIEFEN!	89	Map B: 0108, 0711, 0716, 0805, 1110, 1211, 1319, 1413, 1420, 1518, 1609, 1919, 2009, 2010 Map D: 0715, 1006, 1115, 1611, 1706, 1914
22 DECEMBER	76	Map A: 0517, 1215, 1421, 2223, 2224, 2323, 2324 Map B: 0108, 0711, 0716, 0805, 1110, 1211, 1413, 1609, 2009, 2010 Map C: 1027, 1727 Map D: 0408, 0713
1944 CAMPAIGN	89	Map B: 0108, 0711, 0716, 0805, 1110, 1211, 1319, 1413, 1420, 1518, 1609, 1919, 2009, 2010 Map D: 0715, 1006, 1115, 1611, 1706, 1914

the supply dump hex, two is *added* to the die roll to destroy the dump. If the roll is successful, the entire number of Petrol Points left in the supply dump is reduced to zero. In order for a unit to be eligible to participate in the destruction of a supply dump, they must not have attacked during the previous Combat Phase.

[16.57] VARIANT: If both players agree, supply dumps may be represented by actual units on the mapsheets. Supply Dump Combat Strength of 0; they defend as per the Cases in 16.56; and they have a Movement Allowance of 1. They move, in many ways, like artillery units: for example, they require a game turn to change from supply dump to movement mode or back again; they cannot be used for supply purposes while in movement mode; and supply units are not allowed to utilize march mode

should not be confused.

[16.61] Intensive Fire may be used by either or both players in a scenario, depending upon the agreement reached between them. Intensive Fire cannot be used by either player to shift the attack odds more than *one* column on the Combat Results Table (see 9.4). Thus, if Intensive Fire were used to bring an attack of 1-1 up to 2-1, additional fire could not raise it beyond this column. An exception to this is Case 16.64.

[16.62] When a unit employs Intensive Fire, the chance of running out of ammunition is increased dramatically. The chance of this occurring is based upon the amount of Intensive Fire undertaken by the unit and upon a die roll. Prior to resolving each attack by a player, both state the number of Combat Strength Points their individual units are attempting to gain through Inten-

sive Fire (begin with the defender). These figures are given before determining the success or failure of any Intensive Fire combats.

[16.63] A unit may not attempt to utilize Intensive Fire if it is currently in state of being Out of Supply (see 11.4) or Out of Ammunition (see 16.66).

[16.64] A unit can never use Intensive Fire for more than one less than its printed Combat Strength: for example, a 5-3 infantry unit could not use Intensive Fire for more than 4 Combat Strength Points, one less than its printed value of 5. However, a unit may always attempt to employ Intensive Fire for at least 1 Combat Strength Point, regardless of the actual Combat Strength of the unit. Likewise, Case 16.61 is ignored if the unit doubles its Combat Strength by the application of only one Strength Point of Intensive Fire

[16.65] Each unit must have its Intensive Fire success determined separately. The player rolls one die for each unit. If the roll for a unit is less than or equal to the number of Combat Strength Points attempting to use Intensive Fire, the attempt fails (see 16.66). If the roll is greater than the number, that unit's attempt succeeds (see 16.68).

[16.66] When a player's roll for a unit's Intensive Fire fails, that unit attacks or defends, as the case may be, at its normal value for this attack. However, the unit is considered to have exhausted its ammunition supply and has an Out of Ammunition marker placed on it. Players can make these from spare counters in the game or use Out of Supply markers, keeping in mind what they represent. A unit remains Out of Ammunition for one complete game turn and is removed on the next Mutual Supply Determination Phase in which the unit is not Out of Supply.

[16.67] While Out of Ammunition, the unit cannot attack; it defends at half its printed value (round up), but its Movement Allowance is unaffected (as it's only out of ammunition, not supply). If a unit is both Out of Ammunition and Out of Supply, it suffers the most adverse effects of either of these conditions.

[16.68] If success is indicated by the Intensive Fire die roll, that unit adds the number of Combat Strength Points with Intensive Fire effects to its normal Combat Strength (see 16.62).

[16.69] VARIANT: If both players agree, those units which fail the Intensive Fire die roll (see 16.65) can still increase their Combat Strength by a sum equal to one less than the die roll, superseding Case 16.66, which states that the unit attacks or defends at its printed Combat Strength. This represents the limited success of an attempted Inten-

sive Fire by a unit.

[16.7] Saturation Fire (All Games)

The artillery counterpart to Intensive Fire is Saturation Fire. The two types are similar in effect, but are resolved quite differently, since artillery units generally have a more diverse range of Barrage Strengths. Saturation Fire is much more devastating in terms of overall damage and is free from the stringent conditions that accompany Intensive Fire.

[16.71] Only artillery units which are currently In Battery and not Out of Supply or Out of Ammunition may undertake Saturation Fire. Saturation Fire may only be used by an artillery unit when it also employs the use of its Barrage Strength (both cannot be used at the same time, since Saturation Fire must follow the same guidelines and restrictions as Barrage Strength).

[16.72] The player undertaking Saturation Fire states whether or not the fire will be Normal or Withering. Consulting the Artillery Saturation Fire Table (see 16.79), the player rolls a die and cross-references the result with the Saturation Fire Type. This yields a series of three numbers separated by slashes: the numbers represent the range at which the artillery unit is firing at the target (either one, two, or three hexes respectively). The proper number is found, then is multiplied by the Barrage Strength of the firing unit.

[16.73] Once the final Barrage Strength is found, the attack is resolved by the player normally, including any modification for firing into blocking terrain (see 10.19). Intensive Fire (see 16.6) cannot be employed by any enemy units in the barrage attack unless the unit is adjacent to the firing artillery unit, in which case it could then employ Intensive Fire. Resolution of combined attacks (see 10.2) is done normally. It also allows for both Intensive Fire and Saturation Fire, though if artillery units are involved and the Combat Results Table shows an adverse result, the artillery units are only affected if they are adjacent to the units attacked. The Saturation Fire multiplier only multiplies the artillery unit when attacking, not defending.

[16.74] Once the attack is resolved, the player must consult the table again, this time for the Breakdown Number for the Saturation Fire Type and the die roll previously made for the unit. The player rolls two dice; if the result is less than or equal to the Breakdown Number, that unit is eliminated from play. If the result is greater than the Breakdown Number, the unit has an Out of Ammunition marker placed on it (see 16.76).

[16.75] Artillery units which are eliminated from play due to a failed Breakdown Number die roll count toward the full Vic-

tory Point total, depending upon the scenario being played.

[16.76] Artillery units which are considered to be Out of Ammunition remain in this condition for one complete game turn, and the marker is removed on the next Mutual Supply Determination Phase in which the unit is not Out of Supply (see 11.0).

[16.77] While Out of Ammunition, the artillery unit cannot attack. It defends at half its printed FPF strength, but its Movement Allowance is unaffected, since it is only out of ammunition, not supply. If an artillery unit is both Out of Ammunition and Out of Supply, it suffers the most adverse effects of both conditions.

[16.78] VARIANT: If both players agree, when an artillery unit suffers a failed Breakdown Number roll, the unit is not removed from the game, but simply has a Burnt Tubes marker placed on it. (Players may make Burnt Tubes markers from the spare counters in the game or use Blown Bridge markers, keeping in mind what the substitutes represent.)

On every Building Segment of the player's Movement Phase, a die is rolled for each artillery unit with a Burnt Tubes marker. If the result is a 1, the artillery unit has its Burnt Tubes marker removed. If the result is a 5 or 6, the artillery unit is eliminated from play (see 16.75). When the Burnt Tubes marker is removed, it is replaced by an Out of Ammunition marker instead, and the unit functions normally hereafter (see 16.77). If the unit is neither eliminated nor has its Burnt Tubes marker removed, its status remains unchanged. An artillery unit with a Burnt Tubes marker may not attack in any way. It defends itself with an FPF strength of 1, but has its Movement Allowance unaffected by its status.

[16.79] ARTILLERY SATURATION FIRE TABLE

Die Roll	SATURATION FIRE TYPE			
	Normal	BN	Withering	BN
1	4/4/3	7	5/5/5	11
2	4/3/3	6	5/5/4	10
3	3/3/2	5	5/4/4	9
4	3/2/2	4	4/4/4	8
5	2/2/1	3	4/4/3	7
6	2/1/1	2	4/3/3	6

- 1 hex/2 hex/3 hex range multiplier

BN = Breakdown Number (see 16.74)

[16.8] Variable Game Ending (All Games)

Limiting the player's knowledge of exactly when a specific scenario is supposed to end decreases the likelihood of a last gasp push to fulfill Victory Conditions by either player. Moving toward their game objec-

After all, did Guderian, in real life, wait around until the last minute before surging across the Meuse?

tives as quickly as possible, players will more realistically portray their historical counterparts rushing toward the military objectives they had to seize. After all, did Guderian, in real life, wait around until the last minute before surging across the Meuse? He kept a steady stream of units moving into the heart of France (off the mapped area of *BFTA*) as quickly as he could. While the variable game ending option does at first glance favor the defender over the attacker, it can also instill a sense of urgency into an otherwise blasé gaming situation.

[16.81] The players may consult the Scenario Game Ending Chart (see 16.84) for the game turn on which the players begin checking to end the scenario. They should

read across the columns for the appropriate experience of the German player (see 16.82), then find the scenario being played. The index of the two columns results in the game turn which initiates the game ending checks. At the start of each game turn, beginning with the one printed on the chart, each player rolls a die. If the two results match, the scenario immediately ends, with the Victory Conditions being read to determine a winner. If neither side has accomplished the Victory Conditions, then the scenario is a draw.

[16.82] To determine the proper column to use on the Scenario Game Ending Chart (see 16.84), the relative gaming experience of the German player (compared to that of the Allied player) is rated at either *Better*, *Even*, or *Worse* than that of the Allied player.

If the German player is *better* than the Allied player, then he should win more often. If the German player is *even* with the Allied player, both share the same caliber of gaming experience. If the German player is *worse* than the Allied player, then the roles are opposite. If neither player is sure of the match-up, then assume both players are even in experience. Playing several scenarios may help players better gauge their playing levels.

[16.83] When using the variable game

ending option, players ignore the listed game turn length of the scenario, since this option supercedes those limits. If there is an extension on the game length, players do not receive any additional reinforcements for the remainder of the scenario.

[16.84] SCENARIO GAME ENDING CHART

Scenario	German Experience:		
	Better	Even	Worse
CELLES	17	19	21
CLERVAUX	8	10	12
SEDAN, 1940	10	11	12
ST. VITH	8	10	12
1940 CAMPAIGN	10	11	12
ANGRIEFEN	7	9	10
22 DECEMBER	16	18	20
1944 CAMPAIGN	20	30	34

THE BATTLES FOR THE ARDENNES game provides excellent challenges for each player. The one who most effectively utilizes the strengths of his units generally wins, though sometimes even the best made plans are laid waste by the luck of the dice. It is hoped that, through the addition of one or more of these optional rules, not only will the rules help correct any imbalance which may exist in the scenarios (a subjective opinion at best); also, players will rediscover this jewel of a game. ■■

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