

Moving Overwatch

Author: pbeccas ()

Date: 05-17-07 23:33

How many tanks per side would you guys suggest for a late war battalion level meeting engagement primarily focused on infantry? Tommies v Huns. I don't want to get bogged down with vehicles but want some in there for flavour.

Cheers

Paul

Re: How many tanks

Author: Andy P ()

Date: 05-18-07 02:51

On a Infantry level the British would normally be supported by a squadron of tanks. 7x Churchill or 9x Sherman.

The Germans would normally have a reduced tank company in support say 5x tanks

Andy

Re: How many tanks

Author: Stephen Uden ()

Date: 05-18-07 03:44

Depending on how late in the war and the particular scenario the germans could have anything down to no tanks. The late war german orbats contain a lot of Panzerschreks and most infantry squads have Panzerfausts. These, plus maybe a couple of ATGs, can easily hold up the allies. Also, a lot of the "tanks" were assault guns.

So while it's great to bring out the tasty german heavies from time to time, if you want to be historically accurate these have to be a rarity. :(

Stephen

Re: How many tanks

Author: Luke Willen ()

Date: 05-18-07 04:16

A German infantry battalon wold be more likely to be supported by assault guns (Stug IIIG etc), probably just a platoon, more rarely maybe a company. Tigers are also a possibility from one of the Independent Tiger Battalions but support like this would be very rare and indeed more likely in Russia.

Luke

Re: How many tanks
Author: Paddy Green ()
Date: 05-18-07 04:44

If you want a "balanced and reasonably historic game" I would suggest that the Tommies have a Battalion of Infantry and a squadron of tanks (say 9 Shermans) and be supported by a Regiment of Artillery (say 4 batteries of 4 25 pdrs). The Germans have a reasonably good defensive position, 2 companies of Infantry, support weapons (2 heavy mortars, 1-2 ATGs and 1-2 leIGs or 1 sIG) and a platoon or weak company of Stugs (2 possibly 3 - 4 at the very most). They should be supported by a battery of Artillery (3 105mm guns). If you want to use tanks then remove the infantry and replace with Pz Grens and substitute Stugs for PzIVs.

If you want Panthers then reduce their numbers by 1. Adding a single Tiger would unbalance the game so much as to make it almost unwinnable by the Tommies.

Paddy

Re: How many tanks
Author: pbeccas ()
Date: 05-18-07 06:54

Balance and historic is good. The setting is not long after Normandy in a field somewhere in France, not far from the village *whatsitsname*. I like your idea Paddy but a squadron of Shermans is a wee bit excessive. Looking for around three maybe.

Re: How many tanks
Author: Luke Willen ()
Date: 05-18-07 07:50

Here I agree with Paddy. A squadron of Shermans (or quite possibly Churchills instead) is quite typical support for an infantry battalion. The squadron could well be understrength though I think a 3 tank squadron might be considered combat ineffective (less than 50% strength). On the other hand, if three Shermans is all you have at the moment you will have to live with that until you get around to buying a few more.

Luke

Re: How many tanks
Author: Bill Slavin ()
Date: 05-18-07 08:46

As others have said, it's almost always a squadron of tanks in support of a battalion of infantry, at least as far as the Canadians were concerned. However, I'm reading a history of the battles in the Gothic Line In Italy right now, and by the time sides engaged, because of the difficult terrain, that squadron was almost always down to 8 or 9 tanks (3 models in BF terms) due to bogging down, etc. Or just place your engagement a few days into the fighting where squadron strengths have been severely depleted. You can justify almost any supporting tank strength below normal in a scenario!

Bill

Re: How many tanks
Author: Mark Middleton ()
Date: 05-18-07 11:40

Im afraid the way the turn sequence is played you will need more than 3 Shermans if good old Jerry has a couple of AT assets around. You'll advance said Shermans and German Defensive Fire will take out one if not more. Then comes the German turn and Offensive Fire will take care of the rest.

My advice buy more Shermans !

Re: How many tanks
Author: Carlos Sanz Ramírez ()
Date: 05-18-07 13:54

Paul,

We usually play with a Sherman Sq. (about 9 tanks including the Fireflies) or with 2 T-34 squadrons when playing Russians (that's about 11 T-34s plus a BA-64 recco per Sq.). When using Cromwells or Achilles I usually field just a troop (a leader plus two tanks), sometimes for accuracy, sometimes due to limited playing time, sometimes because I have no more models!

Anyway, as Mark said, if the Germans have some well placed guns and a clean field they can flatten your armour before you say "Ivan". A couple of Tigers or Panthers can deal with a lot of tanks if given enough space...

Oh! Our German counterpart always uses his Panzergrenadiercompaniewithlotsofarmour, composed of half a dozen Mk.IV, 4 Stugs, Marders and many (always too MANY) halftrack, sometimes supported by Nashorns, Panthers or Tigers in very limited quantity.

Carlos.

Re: How many tanks
Author: Richard de Ferrars ()
Date: 05-18-07 15:29

I'd agree with Paddy and Mark Middleton. In Normandy it would have been unusual for a battalion to have had less than a squadron of tanks in support - often more. An infantry brigade would typically go with "2 up" but those 2 battalions would often have had a tank Regt (3 squadrons of Shermans / Churchills) in support. Also, the Brits & Canadians worked very hard in Normandy to keep tank sqdns up to strength (in the end they ran out of pbi and not tanks), so I'd keep the squadron strength high.

Defenders - depends how you organise it. But if I was attacking with a Brit infantry battalion (2 companies up) supported by a tank squadron, I would NOT like to be against more than 1 dug-in company with HW / ATG / tank platoon in support. If the German has a couple of companies, then make sure that the board is bis enough to spread them out a bit and that the scenario stops them all from redeploying behind the assault

Panthers are a real SOB. If you are fighting Gep. Pz-Gren, then I'd try and keep German tanks off the board - that way the British tanks can look after the German HT's while infantry fight infantry. Put in Panthers and the British tanks are forced to deal with them while the German HT's make mincemeat of the British infantry

Richard

Re: How many tanks
Author: Luke Willen ()
Date: 05-18-07 16:36

I would also reduce the strength of the German infantry companies, sometimes quite significantly which has much the same effect as making them spread out or go for a strongpoint defence. They should have Stugs in support unless they are Panzergrenadiers. If I were going to bring German tanks onto the table these would be reinforcements and I would be inclined to make their arrival time variable and possibly they might not arrive at all. I would also give the British air support unless weather conditions do not permit this.

Luke

Re: How many tanks
Author: Luke Willen ()
Date: 05-18-07 16:36

I would also reduce the strength of the German infantry companies, sometimes quite significantly which has much the same effect as making them spread out or go for a strongpoint defence. They should have Stugs in support unless they are Panzergrenadiers. If I were going to bring German tanks onto the table these would be reinforcements and I would be inclined to make their arrival time variable and possibly they might not arrive at all. I would also give the British air support unless weather conditions do not permit this.

Luke

Re: How many tanks
Author: Dan ()
Date: 05-18-07 22:14

For a meeting engagement, a Sherman squadron would be the most likely. The heavier Churchills were typically reserved for planned attacks as most were allocated to the Independent Tank Brigades which were army level assets. Also, the Churchills were used almost exclusively used to support British infantry formations (Divisions). Other Commonwealth infantry divisions relied on Independent Tank Brigades equipped with Shermans.

Cheers

Dan

Re: How many tanks
Author: Dan ()
Date: 05-18-07 22:53

Regarding a German infantry force in a meeting engagement, an infantry battalion would likely be supported by either a StuG Battery (3 MEs), if the StuGs were from an army level StuG Brigade. Doctrine wise, StuGs were to be deployed by the Brigade C.O. in battery (company) strength to be effective. A battery would normally support the leading infantry battalion on the attack, or an infantry regiment on the defense. However, there were instances (usually on the defense) when the senior infantry commander parcelled his attached StuGs out in sections (platoons) to provide armour support to sub-formations of infantry. Some infantry divisions received StuGs in one of its anti-tank companies. These were often used as a 'fire-brigade' at the most crucial situations.

Don't forget that the German infantry divisions often used their Marders, and similar SP Guns, to support the foot soldiers. Afterall, in the late war period armoured vehicles of any kind were at a premium.

As stated earlier, you may want to adjust the strength of the German force if it is from a Panzer/Panzergrenadier division. Panthers can be difficult to deal with. The Panzer IV and StuG were more likely to be encountered, as either or both AFVs equipped one of the Panzer battalion. The latter also equipped many divisions' organic anti-tank companies.

Also, the StuG (III or IV) usually equipped the organic panzer battalion in most Panzergrenadier Divisions because there simply were not enough (Panzer IVs) tanks available, and the Panzer IIIs were phased out as a battle tank. I would tend to avoid deploying Tigers in a meeting engagement, mostly because of play balance, unless their numbers are greatly restricted.

Cheers

Dan

Re: How many tanks
Author: pbeccas ()
Date: 05-18-07 23:44

Thanks guys. Lots of great idea's that I am taking on board. Looks like I am buying more tanks! boo hoo

Re: How many tanks
Author: Keith Lowman ()
Date: 05-19-07 09:41

Paddy

Are tigers that effective?
If the Germans were to field three tigers what sort of Brit tank force do you need to balance to game. Assuming the infantry assets are at bat level?

Keith

Re: How many tanks
Author: Luke Willen ()
Date: 05-19-07 13:16

I think Paddy somewhat overinflates the effectiveness of this particular "cat." While it has very good armour and a good gun there is a couple of antidotes for it. One is the Sherman Firefly with its 17 pounder gun. the other is a Typhoon. Pf course, you might well lose one or two Shermans to take out a Tiger and if really desperate you can always attempt a close assault. However, bearing in mind hat happened to all those Soviet T-34s at Prokhorovka this could be expensive.

Seriously though, try for a flank shot.

Luke

Re: How many tanks
Author: Dan ()
Date: 05-19-07 20:58

By mid-1944, the Tiger I was no longer 'unbeatable' as it was in 1943, when it earned its reputation. However, I will pit a company of Tiger Is against a squadron of British Shermans...Luke :)

As Luke points out, there are effective tactics to counter the Tiger. Outflanking is ideal, however a competent german commander will try to protect the flanks of these cats with other Tigers or less powerful tanks or SP guns. Engaging Tigers on equal terms (numerically) is unappetizing. Pffh! Tigers have too much hair! The Firefly is a great equalizer, but one would not want to trade shots for long because of its moderate armour compared to the Tiger's firepower. From August 1944, there is no differential advantage because of the new discarding sabot rounds for the 17 Pdr. Also, a Sherman squadron only has 1-3 of these cat-killers, so British commanders use these carefully (i.e. overwatch). As for Typhoons, their ability to destroy tanks was over-rated as post-war investigation revealed.

As Paddy observed, if the germans are fielding Panthers and Tigers, one may want to reduce their numbers to preserve play-balance. Otherwise, in a meeting engagement of equal forces, the germans will have an advantage.

Cheers

Dan

Re: How many tanks
Author: Mark Hayes ()
Date: 05-20-07 00:10

One of the things that made a Tiger unit a force to be reconned with was the experience of its crews. They were often a "cut above". In game terms you would rarely have a Tiger ME rated less than VET, and I don't think it would be too unusual to find some formations deserving of an ELT rating.

Oddly enough, the Germans had a tendency to place relatively inexperienced crews in newly formed Panther units. I seem to remember that the U.S. 4th Armored division made its reputation dicing up independent Panther formations in Lorraine.

Mark

Re: How many tanks
Author: Andy P ()
Date: 05-20-07 03:32

The Panzer Einsatz Abteilung 500 was an unexperienced unit that had not seen combat before.

Re: How many tanks
Author: Luke Willen ()
Date: 05-20-07 06:05

Certainly, the Waffen SS Tiger Battalions that fought in Russia and Normandy could be considered for Elite status and probably Gross Deutschland's Tiger battalion as well, Indeed, this is how they are graded in the rules. Having said that the grades can be varied at different stages of the war.

The Panzer Brigades that fought in Lorraine were newly raised troops and I doubt they had much unit training before they were sent into action, rather similar to the situation of the 10th Panzer Brigade at Kursk only with more of an excuse.

The use of Tigers should in any case be quite rare considering that they were mostly placed in independent battalions apart from a few divisions that only had a company and of course the Gross Deutschland's own Tiger battalion. Panthers on the other hand are a much more common feline threat.

Perhaps I should not mention the Maus :-) I think there were only two prototype models.

Luke

Re: How many tanks
Author: Mark Middleton ()
Date: 05-20-07 07:18

Lets not get too excited about Tigers.
As the stats currently stand a 1944 Stuart can knock one out frontally with a roll of 10, a vet Stuart on a 9 or 10 !!!

In a recent game, I had a couple of troops of Stuarts 4 stands that were left on by 2 Tigers. I was totally out maneuvered and caught by surprise (due to the fact we always use complete hidden movement) in the rear. The Tigers came round the corner of an orchard into my rear shit I thought that's the end of my Stuarts! Well as the sequence of play is set out (heavily in favour of the defensive minded sit and wait and see what my opponent does type player) I need not be worried. Tigers moved, 4 rolls on the

dice for the Stuarts (Defensive Fire), -1 Fire to rear, +1 Veteran = par dice, 1 x 10 rolled, 1 x Tiger dead. Next comes Brit turn, 4 more rolls of the dice (Offensive Fire), yep you guessed it, another 10 rolled, second Tiger dead. So Tigers hold no fear for me. Yep if you play on a billiard table they're a good piece of kit but if there's any terrain about and god forbid you are aggressive with them, stand by to watch them destroyed with comparative ease.

In fact the above example along with another very similar one (this time I was on the receiving end), made us look at the rules to see how we could even things up for the poor old SS Tigers and Panthers that had to face these Stuarts. I had sent two Panthers into an orchard to flush out 4 Stuarts. After 8 rolls of the dice before the Panthers even had a chance of returning fire we realised some rule tweaking was in order (needless to say both Panthers died horribly by that well known heavy tank killer THE 1944 VET STUART.

We simply changed the Overwatch rule to allow a unit that gets 2 actions on the manouevr table to move for one action and then go on Overwatch. Simple but quite effective. The clever aggressive player can now be rewarded with at least a few rolls on the old dice before his beloved SS heavies go up in smoke.

Mark

Re: How many tanks
Author: Luke Willen ()
Date: 05-20-07 07:40

Mark is correct. It does depend on the terrain, In close terrain like towns, forest, bocage etc you are much more likely to get that close range shot that gives you a good chance of knocking out that Tiger even with a frontal shot without being knocked out before you get the chance. On the other hand, if you are fighting in open terrain like the Western Desert, the Steppes and to a lesser extent even parts of North West Europe (such as the area in which Operation Goodwood took place) the Tiger has the advantage of the long range shot that is able to destroy your Sherman or T-34 long before it gets into effective range. In this situation the Allies need a lot more tanks.

Is the change you made o the overwatch rule official or a house rule?

Luke

Re: How many tanks
Author: Stephen Uden ()
Date: 05-20-07 07:59

You sent Panthers into an orchard! They could have been taken out by infantry (in CC) let alone Vet Stuarts.

Stephen

Re: How many tanks
Author: Mark Middleton ()
Date: 05-20-07 09:09

Luke

House rule

Stephen

You master tactician you no infantry in vicinity! So if you were sat in a Panther you would be scared to go after a couple of Stuarts eh Don't think you would last long as an armoured commander !

Re: How many tanks
Author: Phil Callcott ()
Date: 05-20-07 10:19

Luke,

There were no Tigers in the Western Desert, a few were sent to Tunisia in '43, which is why Partridges (17pdr on a 25pdr carriage) were rushed out.

Regards Phil

Re: How many tanks
Author: Luke Willen ()
Date: 05-20-07 13:01

Phil

I am well aware that there were no Tigers in the Western Desert and there was a small number sent to Tunisia. To be precise these were deployed in two Abteilungen, the 501st (19 Panzer III lg and 11 Tigers deployed in one companies) and the 501st (25 Pz III 75s and 20 Tigers deployed in two companies) The terrain references were merely examples and some parts of Tunisia are quite open albeit hilly which may sometimes help the Tiger.

Stephen and Mark

I have seen people send Panthers and Tigers into a vineyard and have on one occasion been guilty of it myself falling victim to a PIAT. I am sure we have all done it at least once when we thought the terrain was clear :-)

Luke

Re: How many tanks
Author: Stephen Uden ()
Date: 05-20-07 13:54

We've all done it once, but rarely twice.

Stephen

Re: How many tanks
Author: Mark Middleton ()
Date: 05-20-07 15:03

Stephen and Luke

Don't think either of you chaps read the post correctly see me after school !

NO INFANTRY ABOUT IN EITHER EXAMPLE is that clear ?
Stuarts beating the mother of all beasts due to the Defensive and Offensive fire phases being back to back was my main point.

Mark

Re: How many tanks
Author: Stephen Uden ()
Date: 05-20-07 15:45

The Panther must have some remarkable equipment to know that an orchard is free of infantry, almost psychic! It's interesting that in games with truly hidden deployment (I know that Paddy is a fan of these) the tanks are much more wary of any area cover unless accompanied by their own infantry.

I'm not sure I'm aware of a specific historical example of where it occurred, but I would have thought that Panthers and Tigers would be vulnerable even to Stuarts whilst blundering about in orchards.

One of the things that works well in Battlefront is the way it gives the advantage to the defender, from everyday stories of infantry trying to locate hidden Spandaus in the

bocage to the failure of 21st Panzer's counterattack on D-Day against a well sited ATG screen.

You are very welcome to create and run your own house rules, I just don't think that the core mechanism is broken.

Stephen

Re: How many tanks
Author: Mark Middleton ()
Date: 05-20-07 16:42

Stephen

The orchard had been cleared by a friendly infantry platoon just before the Stuarts entered..... no psychic powers just run of the mill sound tactics im afraid.
Again, if you read the post correctly..... you will note in the first example both Stuarts and Tigers were in the open and not blundering around in orchards.
I would imagine a lucky shot from a Stuart could immobilise both Tigers and Panthers with a track hit or a hit on the running gear, so I agree with that one.
Yep I can name hundreds of occasions where a few well sited defenders slaughtered numerous attackers.
Is there any other way of truly playing a wargame than with hidden deployment/movement, sorts the generals from the corporals, men from the boys and commanders from blanket stackers.
You hit the nail on the head imho where you stated BF gives the advantage to the defender, thats my point. Even if youre sat in a Stuart, out manouvered, out played and climbed all over from the rear by Tigers the advantage is still with the Stuarts. Simply because they get to roll the dice and then roll em again before the Tigers respond. Didn't feel right, fair or in any way historical so thats why I tried a little tweak. Give it a whirl doesn't change things a great deal as when conducting Overwatch fire you can only engage enemy that have fired AA fire, opportunity fire or defensive fire during the friendly player turn. So you can't go engaging all and sundry and the core mechanism still favours the defender.

Mark

Re: How many tanks
Author: Luke Willen ()
Date: 05-20-07 18:03

Steven Uden wrote "The Panther must have some remarkable equipment to know that an orchard is free of infantry, almost psychic! It's interesting that in games with truly hidden

deployment (I know that Paddy is a fan of these) the tanks are much more wary of any area cover unless accompanied by their own infantry"

Maybe the Nazis invented Thermal Imaging without anyone being aware of it - one of the "Secret Weapons" Hitler was always talking about" :-)

Having said that, I prefer to play with hidden deployment as well. Ideally, I would love to play with hidden deployment on both sides with units appearing and disappearing but most of the time this is not practical given time constraints and other administrative issues.

Luke

Re: How many tanks
Author: Dan ()
Date: 05-20-07 22:17

Mark

For the four M5 versus two Tigers, given a roll of '10' knocked out the Tiger, I presume the range was 200 yards (range 5). In which case the outnumbered Tigers are engaging the M5s at close range. I would chalk up the abnormal roll results to catching the Tigers unawares and on the move before they took up proper facing or firing positions. Also the outnumbered situation helps the M5 obtain fire superiority and levels the combat slightly. All in all, anomalies happen in real combat too. May I borrow your dice for my next big cat hunt? :)

Regarding the orchard, were the M5s inside the orchard or outside? If they were outside, the Tigers did not need to traverse the corner of the orchard because sparse area terrain does not automatically block line of sight. The Tigers could have sat out at range 40 and peppered the M5s at their leisure.

Cheers

Dan

Re: How many tanks
Author: Mark Middleton ()
Date: 05-21-07 04:12

Hi Dan

Stuarts were awarded VC's and dice have been placed too one side in preparation for my next cat hunt.

Although 2 x 10's in 8 rolls of the dice wasn't overly lucky.

With regards to the orchard we use orchards in Normandy as dense cover. Having visited the area several years ago one of the things I noticed was just how dense a lot of the orchards in Normandy are and presumably were. In a lot of cases they were thicker and afforded more cover than woods..... Yep I know I need to get a life visits Normandy and spends time looking at bloody trees !!

It just seemed to be an event that was happening in our games with increasing frequency (probably due to our hidden movement) and we felt a slight tweak was necessary. As mentioned in the above post it doesn't change the advantages the defender has it just gives the attacking player or the player that grasps the initiative firmly by the "ollocks" some form of response after performing a master stroke of tactical genius, instead of sitting there and receiving two rounds of fire before he can do anything !

Mark

Re: How many tanks
Author: Paddy Green ()
Date: 05-21-07 04:44

Despite all the stories I think I stand by my comment that.....adding a single Tiger would unbalance the game so much as to make it almost unwinnable by the Tommies. This is in the context of a game of 4 Companies + Sherman Squadron vs 2 Kompanies, HW and a 3-4 Stugs. In this context a single Tiger (used properly) could mash the Fireflies at range (assisted by the ATGs) and then take on the 75mm Shermans a little closer whilst the Stugs support the infantry. Sure the Allied counter to this is lots of smoke and trying to use the terrain to best advantage - but on average a single Tiger will make a huge (and unbalancing) difference to this type of game!

When using Tigers it is important to realise that they are not King Tigers. Their Frontal armour is Very Good by not Great. Also they are not close range killers but long range snipers - outside 10" of they are great but inside 10" and the allies have a slim chance. Keep them back, preferably hull down, with good lines of fire and away from infantry; only ever put them into orchards if supported by infantry but if there are Typhoons around then you'll need to keep them on the edge of dense! So basically if you use them like they were used on Hill 112 - they are killers! Use them like Wittman did in Cintheaux and you'll probably be lucky but deserve what you get if you aren't. However, I think the golden rule is to make sure you are playing Richard, and then small problems like a bunch of Stewarts rolling "10s" will never happen! In fact anything above an "7" should be taken as evidence of unusual and disproportionate luck on his part.

All this said - wasn't the Tiger I at Bovington taken out by Crusaders with 3prds fighting in Tunisia? I seem to remember that they stumbled on it in much the same way that Mark's Stewarts did and one on their small shells (that would never have penetrated the armour) hit the Tiger right on the turret ring where the shot trap effect wedged the Tiger's turret and forced the crew to bail.

Paddy

Re: How many tanks
Author: Luke Willen ()
Date: 05-21-07 05:03

Tiger Tiger burning bright. Just what all British WW2 commanders like to see :-)

I assume that the incident took place at close range (5 inches or less) but I would just like clarify whether those Tigers were knocked out by a frontal or a flank shot..

Reading your description of what happened I would say that those Stuarts got very lucky this time and that this is not a result that one would normally expect. Though I like the idea of the overwatch being available to good order MEs that have rolled two actions I really see no need to legislate for bad luck on the part of the German commander. Maybe he should have taken out those Stuarts before they got so close. How far should we be legislating for tactical errors or simple bad luck?

Luke

Re: How many tanks
Author: Mark Middleton ()
Date: 05-21-07 07:18

Hi Paddy

For info

It was knocked out in action with Churchill tanks of No. 4 Troop, A Squadron, 48th Royal Tank Regiment at Medjez-el-Bab on 21 April 1943. It was abandoned by the crew after one hit had shattered the loader's hatch and another had deflected off the underside of the gun, jamming the turret and clipped the armour vent housing, causing internal damage near the driver.

Yep I've seen Richards dice. Infact if Richard had Tigers I would drive Stuarts at him safe in the knowledge I would win hands down.

Yep I agree on the text book use of Tigers, it was just a general comment on what seems to be quite a common occurence during my recent games with as much hidden deployment and movement as is humanly possible. Infact Andy and I have been using a bastardised Spearhead points system to "build" battlegroups lately, all based around the HJ sector in Normandy. This adds even more to the FOW as you are pretty much in the dark as to what your opponent has let alone where it is.

Luke

Frontal shots I'm pleased to say not only that they were in the rear of my Stuarts, so that really did ad insult to injury !

Mark

Re: How many tanks
Author: Keith Lowman ()
Date: 05-21-07 07:45

Hi Paddy

You did not answer the second part of my question, two german inf companies +HW and three tigers against what size Brit force for a balanced game?

Keith

Re: How many tanks
Author: Chris Ginn ()
Date: 05-21-07 08:58

Try two companies of Motorised Infantry, 2 Squadrons of Shermans, Regt of artillery, plus air support. If you win too easily, scale it back, but calculate the victory conditions, and my bet is you will have lost on victory points.

If you want an Infantry based force, Try a battalion of infantry, Squadron of Churchills, 1/3 with 6pdr, 4x A/t troops, half with M10, half with Achilles, Regt of Artillery, plus Air support. Same comments as above.

Tigers are lethal in defence, particularly when dug in. I am assuming here that all the germans are dug in, including the Tigers, and in my view you should provide at least one additional preprepared position for each Tiger, and use the creep rules.

However, a lot depends on how open the terrain is.

Re: How many tanks
Author: Mark Hayes ()
Date: 05-21-07 08:59

As Clint Eastwood said in Kelly's Heroes, "The Tiger is an open country tank." Closed terrain, like a village (or orchard) does improve the overall odds. All the WWII tactics I ever needed I learned from watching Kelly's Heroes (he says only half-jokingly). :-)

Are the odds too high for the Stuarts to come out on top in Mark's example? Perhaps so. But what British armor unit in Normandy deserves a discipline rating of Veteran? That's not an Anglophobic challenge, as I would not rate any American armor as Veteran in Normandy either.

BTW, if any of you have not seen the 1970 classic, Kelly's Heroes, I highly recommend it. The technical quality of war movies has generally gotten better in recent years, but this gem can't be beat for sheer entertainment value.

Mark

Re: How many tanks
Author: Paddy Green ()
Date: 05-21-07 09:02

Mark - thanks for the detail on the Bovington Tiger - Richard was not throwing the dice that day!

Could you e-mail me your Spearhead points system used to "build" battlegroups. Richard and I scratched one together before getting hooked on the historical HJ scenarios. However, it is always interesting to compare and contrast systems used to balance scenarios.

Keith - good question. I'll wriggle and say it depends on the terrain/the mission/ Discipline Ratings/air support etc. However, I have just written a Taming the Tigers scenario (Totalize Phase 2 - death of Michael Wittman) where the Germans are attacking with 4 Tigers, 8 PzIVs and 3 companies of infantry pitted against 25 Shermans (4 Squadrons) and 3 Companies of Infantry. I generally ratio PzIVs at 1.2:1 against Shermans (possibly lower IMHO they are fairly even) so given this metric the Tigers are at 5:1. Not sure that this applies at the lower scale but if it did that given 9 attacking Shermans it would be reasonable to give the Germans 2 Tigers.

All this said I am reading up for an historic Op Tractable scenario post covering Soulangy and Hill 168 for Blood and Honour. This is shaping up to be 2 German Companies, some heavy weapons plus a single Tiger verses an 2 Allied Infantry Battalions and Squadron of Shermans. Historically - it was a marginal Allied victory. OK the HJ are Elite by then, the ground is ideal defensive terrain and the German Artillery/Nebelwerfers can wreak havoc against any advance in the open but it was one of those battles where small numbers of Tigers stopped a Divisional Advance.

However, having re-read your question - if the German force were 2 inf companies +HW and three tigers I'd want to give the Allies (assuming good defensive position and a reasonably sized table with open terrain): EITHER 1 Squadron of Shermans and a cab rank of 3 Typhoons plus battalion of Infantry OR 2 Squadrons of Shermans and 1

Typhoon plus battalion of Infantry. Doing it with Shermans alone I'd probably want 4 Squadrons of Shermans (see above). However, the trouble with Tigers in numbers is that they so unbalance the game it is difficult to work them into a scenario and prevent it from becoming polarised. One side tends to win big and it tends to come down to a lucky shot. If the Fireflies get the Tigers then the glut of accompanying 75mm Shermans will mince the German Infantry (no fun for the German player). If the Tigers get the Fireflies then the 75mm Shermans can still do some good work to support the infantry and it becomes a game of trying to sort the German infantry (who should be stalling and retiring back to the line held by the Tigers by now) before all the Allied tanks roll low and scuttle away! (not much fun for the Allied scrap metal merchant!)

Paddy

Re: How many tanks
Author: Luke Willen ()
Date: 05-21-07 11:17

Mark (Middleton)

So essentially what happened was that the Stuarts just got very, very lucky. As I am sure we know there is an old axiom in tank warfare to the effect that he who gets the first shot in often wins. The Stuarts got the first shot in and were lucky enough to destroy the Tigers before they got a shot in.

On the evidence now given the commander of the Stuarts failed to anticipate the presence of the Tigers before he moved p. This should have cost him the Stuarts. I would assume that the Tiger commander was not in a position to take a shot at the Stuarts as they came in and perhaps he should have ensured that he was in such a position. To remedy a tactical error he had to move and did the best thing possible under the circumstances. He should have succeeded in this move as the chances of losing a Tiger to a Stuart is very small. Unfortunately the Stuarts were very quick off the mark and did some highly accurate point blank shooting. My conclusion is that this is just the fortunes of war. As Sherman said "War is Hell"

I think the German commander (presumably your good self, will just have to live with it and just remember the lesson for next time around :-)

Luke

Re: How many tanks
Author: Mark Middleton ()
Date: 05-21-07 13:17

Hi Luke

May surprise you to learn with all my bitching and all, that I was infact the glorious commander of said Stuarts.

In reality it was 8 Stuarts knocking out 4 Tigers a bit more than just luck one thinks. Had the Tigers survived we were going to apply the Tank Fright modifier to the Stuarts Manouver roll as it scared the shite out of me.

Thinking out loud here..... and this should probably be the subject of another post. All the games I've witnessed and played (which includes Bovington with a dozen or more players) I can hardly recall a single instance where units have been placed on Overwatch as the rule stands. If you can see the enemy people fire at them in their Offensive Fire Phase if not they move in which case they can't fire.

Anyway we felt that in a Btn/Coy level simulation where a turn equates to approx 10 minutes it wasn't unreasonable to allow units with two actions to spend one action to move and the second to go on Overwatch, skirmishing if you will.

Mark

Re: How many tanks

Author: Richard de Ferrars ()

Date: 05-21-07 15:15

All these comments about my dice rolling - at least you don't comment about the tactics that lead up to them! Now you know why it is fairest for all if I umpire at Bovington. You must admit that it is really useful for play-testing as it allows you to look at "the worst case scenario" - ie forces commanded by yours truly!

Mark - regarding overwatch, I have never really used it that much, Paddy a bit more. But I remember RMD putting a post suggesting that in your Sherman squadron, try and put the Firefly's onto overwatch whenever possible. I tried this the other day when play-testing part of this year's Bovington game with Paddy and I was really impressed. Never "wasted" a shot because there were always targets AND you got to see what were the biggest threats and had a chance to undo the defenders "double-shot" advantage that you mentioned earlier. If your opponenet sees 2 Firefly's on overwatch, the he thinks twice about defensive fire.....

Richard

Re: How many tanks

Author: Mark Middleton ()

Date: 05-21-07 15:52

Hi Richard

No point whatsoever you putting fireflies on Overwatch cause you can't hit the side of a barn with your dice.

Did you buy any new ones at Salute ?

Mark

Re: How many tanks
Author: Richard de Ferrars ()
Date: 05-22-07 00:57

No new dice - but I have finished off a pair of Tiffies, so let them Tigers roll! I agree with Paddy's comments about what to field as opposition for the Tigers and the risk of leaving an unbalanced scenario should the Tigers get KO'd early. Another option would be to get some 6pdr and 17pdr ATG's - so one squadron of Shermans, battalion AT platoon and a troop or two (2 models per troop) of either towed or SP 17pdrs. 6pdrs sound puny but the added advantage of ambush and the fact that they are damned hard to spot makes them pretty effective.

If you look at "Breaking the Panzers" - yes, that book again. (BTW, no one else dare do this one as a scenario as its between me and RMD. We have even compared photos of the 5-sided field) - anyway, that was a very finely balanced battle with the Brits on the defensive. Their AT support was the battalion 6-pdrs, a squadron of Shermans (from 24 Lancers) and at least one towed 17pdr from the divisional AT regt. Agree they were facing Panthers and not Tigers, but that mix of assets would be justifiable historically. By upping the guns with AT guns there is less risk of an unbalanced fight with early KO of the Germans tanks.

Richard

Re: How many tanks
Author: Paddy Green ()
Date: 05-22-07 04:32

Its true - our playtests are routinely punctuated by comments like " lets assume that you rolled average there" or "if that ME runs away now it will spoil the game so roll again." And in the wash up "I think that scenario would play rather well - assuming average luck." I'm sure Richard is saving all his high rolls and one game he'll throw nothing by 10s! I'm sure that the B&H series is weighted in favour of the Allies for this very reason!

Overwatch - A very useful tactic if used correctly. I think it is one of those subtelties in the rules that take a while to master - and I was surprisewd how effective it was when Richard started employing it during our last Bovingdon 07 playtest (maybe he just rolled slightluy higher than average that turn!) It seems useful in defence and comes into its own when used during a slow attack when it can slowly peel back a defensive line during

a gradual build up by limiting the defenders ability to "shoot and scoot." However, doing it slowly has its own problems and can often leave the attackers exposed to Artillery fire - so perhaps more suited to the side with dominance in IDF.

However, I often find that BFWWII games can equally be won by rapid decisive action (a Max Wunsche moment) - in which case stopping for overwatch is perhaps a bad move. Having seen Mark and Andy play - they are definately from the Max Wunshe or Jochen Peiper mould.

Paddy

Re: How many tanks
Author: Luke Willen ()
Date: 05-22-07 05:16

Mark

In that case congratulations on some inspired dice rolling and comiserations to the German commander on some most unexpected bad luck . There is clearly a small risk in Tigers going to point blank range with an AFV that has a +5 V rating at 5 inches. Perhaps people need to consider whether they should move their Tigers quite so close in the future. Perhaps moving to a position in the 10 inch range band woud be better - firing almost as effective and much less risk.

I think that the German commander simply got too cocky for his own good, tried to pull off a Villiers Bocage and ended up dead as a result

Any chance of selling me those dice? :-)

Luke

Re: How many tanks
Author: Mark Middleton ()
Date: 05-22-07 06:01

Paddy

Yes I agree I often dress my wife in a Jochen Peiper outfit, all that shiney black leather and SS runes, if only I had a real Sdkfz 251D to stand her in the fantasy would be complete. I used to know a WOII at Lymphstone who used to wear a full SS dress uniform for mess do's it was pretty spectacular !

Probably because we're both quite aggressive players the problems have come to light. Anyway the ammendment we use seems to suit us ok.

Mark

Re: How many tanks
Author: Luke Willen ()
Date: 05-22-07 07:41

I honestly don't feel there is a real problem here. you rolled 10s at 5 inches with a net modifier of 0 giving you a 10% chance of a Tiger being knocked out at 5 inches or less. Most of the time I doubt tanks would actually be able to get close to each other without being knocked out or disordered with the exception of an ambush situation in close terrain as in this case.

I am curious to know whether the Tigers in this particular instance would have had the option to shoot at the Stuarts in the position they were in before they moved to their final resting place either as the Stuarts advanced or when the Stuarts reached their destination. with a Tiger I I would consider shooting at a Stuart or similar target even at maximum range.

I can only guess that due to some particular circumstances in the game in question this was not an option. For example, if the Tigers were reinforcements and the terrain blocked LOS until the Tigers moved into position during the turn in question making the events you describe an explicable possibility. This is a situation that is fairly unique given the likely circumstances mixed with some very good dice rolling. I doubt situations like this happen very often.

Luke

Re: How many tanks
Author: James Baker ()
Date: 05-23-07 08:28

Owners of the big units should always be wary of putting them in a situation where they can be knocked out by a lucky roll. In one of Al Gaspar's game a Jagdtiger (with +7 frontal armor) moved into a range band where a US M36 had a 10% chance of destroying it with ambush fire. Guess what happened :-). It had the option of sitting one band back with a huge gun and armor advantage over anything that was on the other side. Just putting it on overwatch would then force the US player to keep his head down.

Correct tactical employment of your units starts with examining strengths and weaknesses. A Tiger I has an overwhelming gun/armor advantage against most units beyond 10". In closer, it is still stronger but can be killed. In close combat, it is better than most units opposing it, but its advantage is not so great. The Tiger's only real disadvantage is its value. They tend to be few in numbers and a loss is a significant hit to

the Germans. This would indicate that their best tactics should be to stay back and engage in gun duels. The Russian T34/76 has almost the opposite situation. They have weak guns, average armor, and a decent CC strength. Also, the loss of a single T34 is not usually a catastrophe for the Russians as they usually travel in packs. This would dictate that they want to swarm their opponents with a 2-3 to 1 CC attack.

Another unwise tactic is moving a major unit into closed terrain where it can get swarmed by infantry. The +2 addition to the normal +1 or +2 V CC infantry strength will bring a multiple infantry attack into a situation where one of the attackers can score a mutual kill without requiring a miracle on the dice. For example, 3 units attacking in CC at -2 have an 8% each of an exchange, yielding a net probability of about 23% of actually knocking out the Tiger. An infantry stand for a Tiger is a nice trade for the infantry.

Re: How many tanks
Author: Luke Willen ()
Date: 05-23-07 09:10

This leads us on to the tactic of tanks close assaulting other tanks. I see this as being primarily a desperation tactic in a situation where your chance of success in a firefight is very small due to your gun rating and armour thicknesses. On the other hand a successful close assault against a high value target like a Tiger, which, in this case means knocking out the enemy vehicle even if your own is also destroyed can be worth a try.

The down side is that you may well be knocked out by defensive fire before you get to the close assault but if you have enough tanks you might be lucky enough to get a successful close assault.

Most of the time however you will simply be knocked out before you get to the close assault which, as at Prokhovka, is what usually happened so this is not a tactic that I would try unless there was no other alternative.

What might be happening in a situation where a tank attempts to close assault another tank is either a very close range exchange of fire (under 40 yards) or an attempt to actually ram the target. Historically this was attempted and there were strictures against the practice at least in German regulations which would indicate that the practice was at the very least considered even if officially frowned upon. The results you are likely to get in the rules if you do attempt this show why this was so and I certainly would permit anyone attempting to use the tactic to try it if they really want to.

Luke

Re: How many tanks
Author: James Baker ()

Date: 05-23-07 10:10

CC tank vs tank is not meant to indicate ramming, but rather a close range maneuver combat battle, where factors such as turret rotation, rate of fire, and close-in maneuverability factor in as much as gun power and optics. This is a viable tactic when the situation and unit capabilities warrant it. The Germans frowned on it because they generally had superior guns and optics (especially late in the war) that made the gun duel their favored tactic. Still there was one of the famous first encounters with the KV-1 which found the Germans unable to penetrate the frontal armor with the PzIII main gun so both formations intermingled driving back toward the German lines with the Germans pumping shells out as rapidly as possible to hit a vulnerable point - this is the kind of thing that we mean by CC, which is hard to model with gun/armor values alone. To set up a close combat swarm, the ideal thing is to set up a base of fire to attempt to suppress the defenders before the swarm hits. This means that more of your attackers can get through the DF intact.

Re: How many tanks
Author: Luke Willen ()
Date: 05-23-07 11:07

That is true James. Having said that, the Close Combat mechanism is an abstract mechanism that represents a number of different mechanisms including very close range exchanges of fire (including the throwing of grenades), actual hand to hand fighting and ramming. It may well be that a crew attempting to ram another tank would be firing at it as they close in and I am aware of at least one occasion where this happened, the attempt by a T-34 to ram Wittmann's Tiger at Prokhorovka which is described on P285 - 8 of Panzer Aces (Kurowski). It could well involve more than one activity of this sort given the turn duration. However, at battalion level all we really need to know is what the result was.

For example, in a close assault situation involving two opposing tanks where both tanks were knocked out (a result of 0 on the close assault table) could be explained by saying that there was a ramming attempt that succeeded in knocking out the defender. However, by its nature ramming will most likely write off the attacking tank as well. In the case of infantry, so many casualties were inflicted on both sides as a result of close range firing and/or hand to hand fighting that the some units involved became combat ineffective.

Speaking of which on a 0 result, there may be a case for suppressing all surviving attackers to reflect disorganisation. Perhaps this might be related to troop quality (eg only Experienced troops or lower would be affected - Veteran and Elite are assumed to re-organise very quickly).

It is more likely that another result will be obtained. If one of the vehicles was knocked out this was a close range exchange of fire. In the event that the stand fell back disordered they bugged out at the last minute.

Luke

Re: How many tanks
Author: Mark Hayes ()
Date: 05-23-07 15:24

Luke,

While historical incidents of ramming are reflected in the close combat system, what Jim describes is what we were thinking of when designing those game mechanics. Ramming as a tactic was not considered important enough to influence our design.

In addition to Jim's account, there is the case of the 3rd and 4th Panzer Divisions vs. the 2d and 3rd DLMs in Belgium during fighting in the Gembloux gap in May 1940. These German divisions had a lot of Panzer IIs and few Panzer IIIs (more like a 1939 division). When facing French S-35s, German commanders instructed their tank crews to rush the enemy vehicles and engage them in the sides and rear at point blank range with the Panzer II's quick-loading 2cm gun. This is the type of articulated tactic that the close combat game mechanics were designed to reflect.

Mark

Re: How many tanks
Author: Luke Willen ()
Date: 05-23-07 17:12

Mark

Perhaps I have not been sufficientl clear on this occasion. I see close assault as being an abstract mechanism representing a number of possible forms of combat.

Ramming is therefore something that could be happening in the "reality" which we represent in a close assault. All I was saying was that, in a situation where we have two opposing tanks involved in a close assault it is possible that in the real world situation we are representing a ramming attempt might have been ,made. After all, someone has, in game terms, chosen to attempt to close assault an enemy tank with one of his own, very like the T-34 that may well have been attempting to ram Wittman at Prokhorovka. In the event that an end result of 0 is obtained (knocking out both tanks) the attacker might have rammed the defending tank qriting off both tanks in the process. On the other hand it is equally possible that this result may represent a situation in which such a great amount of damage has been done to both sides in material and unit cohesion that both are now combat ineffective.

It is quite legitimate for someone to attempt to close assault enemy armour with his own tanks although it is a tactic that I regard as very much one of desperation and indeed I have tried it myself once or twice for this very reason. However, the most likely outcome is that anyone trying it will be shot up and most likely destroyed or disordered before the close assault needs to be resolved. Most of the time the question ends up being academic but it is possible that the close assault will occur and a 0 result is obtained. The above explanation should serve if anyone asks for a justification of this particular outcome.

I am not on this occasion suggesting any form of amendment to the rules.:-)

Luke

Re: How many tanks
Author: Luke Willen ()
Date: 05-23-07 17:12

Mark

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I am not on this occasion suggesting any form of amendment to the rules.:-)

Luke

Re: How many tanks
Author: Bry Barnard ()
Date: 05-24-07 05:00

Reading through this post I quite like Mark's suggestion of allowing going onto Overwatch after a move action. It "sort of" simulates the short halt during an advance.

It also helps get round the big disadvantage you get with these rules of having 2 shots at you if you move.

Re: How many tanks
Author: Steve Burt ()
Date: 05-24-07 05:40

Luke wrote:

All I was saying was that, in a situation where we have two opposing tanks involved in a close assault it is possible that in the real world situation we are representing a ramming attempt might have been made. After all, someone has, in game terms, chosen to attempt to close assault an enemy tank with one of his own, very like the T-34 that may well have been attempting to ram Wittman at Prokhorovka.

Except of course there's more than two tanks involved - there's 3 per model, so at least 6 actual tanks in a Close Combat. The 'Knocked out' tank might just be a lone tank fleeing the battle after its mates were destroyed or the crews forced to bail out by mobility hits or running out of ammo.

That's the beauty of a set of rules which are not 1:1 - you don't need to model the detail

Re: How many tanks
Author: Luke Willen ()
Date: 05-24-07 06:27

Steve

What I meant here was one model tank, not one actual tank. We both agree that there is a level of abstraction involved here, and at the level we are playing at this certainly should be the case. As I have said before the close assault mechanic reflects a number of different activities, one of which might be ramming. At the level we are at all we really need to know is what the end result was.

Bry

I rather like the idea as well. An additional option would be that, alternatively to being placed on overwatch the tank would be allowed to fire on an additional -1 after any

opportunity fire has been resolved. This modifier would reflect the fact that the tank was firing fewer shots.

Stabilization is an issue that would be considered as a separate issue. I see this as representing the ability of a tank to fire with accuracy on the move. In this case a World War 2 tank could be allowed to fire while maneuvering at targets it spots during its maneuver actions but it would suffer from quite severe penalties for firing on the move depending on whether it is firing while trying to conduct a Rapid Advance or not.

Vehicles with more modern fire control and stabilization would suffer lesser penalties or none at all for the most modern tanks. However, even these would still suffer the above -1 penalty

Luke

Re: How many tanks
Author: Bry Barnard ()
Date: 05-24-07 08:33

Oh yes - just remembered.

Bovington's Tiger: as mentioned above the shot that took it out was a shot that deflected off the underside of the gun mantlet and then ricocheted down between the driver and hull gunner. Apparently somebody worked it out that if the shot had been an inch higher it would have travelled straight down the gun barrel. That would have rated a 10 on a d10 :-)

6lber shot IIRC.

Re: How many tanks
Author: Paddy Green ()
Date: 05-24-07 08:53

The idea of a move and Overwatch rule is interesting. It reminds me of a set of Skytrex micro-tank rules I used to play in the past. All vehicles were given 2 move stats (I remember that Panthers were 3" - 7" most other tanks were 2" - 4") and there was 2 fire period and 2 move periods. Players could opt to either fire twice, move twice or move once and fire once. I seem to remember that this used the lower move factor. It worked quite well but it wasn't BFWWII.

The fact is with BFWWII you do get to fire and move - it is just that your fire comes after enemy defensive and offensive fire. If you allow units to move once and then go into overwatch - when do they fire? It can't be offensive fire because they moved and it can't be defensive fire because they are the phasing player. So we have created another

segment within the turn. Also what can they fire at - anything that came into sight during their move - or only things that fired? Can moving units ambush? It also seems to increasingly create 10,000ft commanders with psychic powers who can move to exactly where they are needed and shoot the moment targets reveal themselves. The fact that under the current rules you get shot at twice before a return fire represents the fact that you are advancing against largely unknown terrain and defences. Hence I am rather sceptical about this idea and would need to be further convinced of its merits.

I certainly think that if it were adopted there should be a large move penalty (i.e. half speed if then go into overwatch) and/or there should be a large firing penalty (-1 may be too little, how about -2 for WWII tanks). Possibly you could move at half speed before going into overwatch and get a -1 penalty but if you move at full speed you get a -2? When Luke plays with his moderns this could be reduced to represent better stabilization.

Paddy

Re: How many tanks
Author: Bry Barnard ()
Date: 05-24-07 09:27

I get where you're coming from Paddy but I disagree about the move penalty.

I don't think there should be any.

After all a Sherman moving at Rapid Advance is only moving at 2.5mph. That's barely moving.

Granted it is an average speed but the game doesn't take into account any mods for firing at a moving target or a stationary one.

So I'd say don't use any mods at all.

And the 1 move then Overwatch seems a sensible thing to do if you're a tanker. Standard tactics?

What to shoot at if you're on Overwatch? Anything that moves or shoots (preferably enemy).

Re: How many tanks
Author: Mark Hayes ()
Date: 05-24-07 10:01

Paddy,

You raise some good points. Mark's change to make overwatch a single action does create an extra segment in the sequence of play. It allows a single unit to perform fire and movement. A player can move his entire company/squadron ME, and still be employing fire and movement techniques. That isn't what we were looking for in the original game design.

I can understand the desire to break up the "two shots in a row" advantage that the game sequence confers upon the defender. I have also felt the frustration of having my "brilliant" maneuver cut off at the knees by a lucky double-shooting opponent.

There are two ways to avoid this under the current game mechanics. One is to rush your opponent and declare close combat. Hopefully you have had some supporting fire in your offensive fire phase that increases your odds of success. The second way is to place part of your company/squadron ME or another ME on overwatch. Generally it is effective if your potential target was only suspected or hidden during your offensive fire phase but becomes spotted or suspected (repectively) after firing in the defensive fire phase.

I think the larger point is a question of where you want fire and movement focused. If you want to reflect a single tank covering the movement of another tank, then allowing a unit to move one action and go on overwatch with the other makes sense. However, if you want to focus on having parts of a company/squadron or specialized weapons covering the movement of other parts of the company/squadron then the current game mechanics make more sense. BF WWII designers wanted to focus on the latter and give players a feel for WWII fire and movement, which I think the "move one action and declare overwatch watch" idea would get away from.

As we were originally 18th and 19th century gamers, our perspective is different than many other 20th century game designers. We started with the multi-base maneuver element (in this case a company/squadron) and wanted a game design reflect how it performed rather than starting with the individual components, as I think most other designs do. I think Frank Chadwick also had this perspective when designing Command Decision, and of all the WWII games that I have seen, his is the closest to our philosophy.

All that said, with fire team tactics and stabilized vehicles in the modern period, there may be a strong arguement for adopting Mark's idea. In fact, my first reaction is that it is a better idea than my original thought of allowing an appropriate unit to fire in the offensive fire phase and move one action. It does seem like a significant modification that would have a ripple effect on the way the game is played, and I would have to playtest it a lot before adopting it.

Mark

Re: How many tanks
Author: Luke Willen ()
Date: 05-24-07 10:02

My thinking for vehicles moving and firing would be

All World War 1 Vehicles are not permitted to move and fire at all

All World War 2 Vehicles may do so with a penalty of -2 if moving for one action and a -3 if on Rapid Advance,

All 1950s modern vehicles have a penalty of -1 for moving one action and -2 if on Rapid Advance.

All 1960s vehicles get a penalty of 0 for moving one action, -1 if moving for two actions

1970s or later vehicles have no penalty.

Modern Soviet Vehicles suffer an additional -1

Basic Fire Control Computers (1970s) give a +1

Early modern Fire Control Computers (1980s) give a +2

Ultra Modern Fire Control Computers (1990s) give a +3

In answer to Paddy's questions I would say that all "moving fires" occur in the Manuever phase. This could be done by troop quality and opportunity fire such that highest troop quality always fires first. In the case of an ambush the ambusher always fires first. In the event of troop quality being the same and there is not an ambush situation the defender always fires first. Moving ambushes are not permitted unless the firer moved into position along a concealed route and the target could not spot the firer before being shot at.

Luke

Re: How many tanks

Author: Mark Middleton ()

Date: 05-24-07 11:17

Hi Paddy

Bit of a cynical non objective post from you whats a matter lost a sub ?

I'm trying to find what I have and have not said already, I can only seem to find posts from Luke On a 65 post thread I do wish you would'nt post everything twice Luke.

Its Overwatch fire so it occurs in the "Friendly player resolves overwatch fire" segment !
The normal overwatch fire restrictions apply so thats what they fire at.
No they can't ambush.

No psychic 10000 ft commanders, we play with hidden deployment as you do, so you don't know whats there.

We have'nt found the need for any penalties as all it simply does is break up the back to back dice rolls for the defending player. I think I mentioned above we've found and I've observed in other games that as it stood the "sit on my arse watch what my opponent does" type player is rewarded time and time again due to the back to back rolls.

We've played 5 games now (a couple of your Authie scenarios) all reasonably big a couple of Btns + per side and found it works pretty damn good. It hasn't changed the feel of rules in the slightest. It just seems to reward the player who takes the initiative or performs a tactical master stroke a bit more than it did before.

I'm not asking for an official ammendment, I was just explaining how we got round what we percieved to be one of the very few downsides to BF..... in our opinion.

I'll give you a quick example using Authie as we've played it a fair few times now. When Stuf Prinz and his boys come on in part 2 the Allied player knows this is happening and guess what alot of them are out of sight, so theres not much for prinz to offensive fire at. On a recent refight Prinz advanced off the slope (crest line) towards Authie as per their orders, the Canadians conducted defensive fire and then offensive fire bye bye Prinz, so much for the glorious hard hitting fast moving Meyer inspired counter attack. The last time we played we used our overwatch variant and Prinz had much better results. As he moved for one action and then went on overwatch, the Canadians had a choice to make. If they fire Prinz gets to return it. Using the old system every piece of Canadian kit south of the beaches opened up on Prinz as they knew they had two rolls of the dice comming. Under our tweaked system alot of the Canadians decided discretion was the better part of valour and they waited for a better closer shot to materialise.

Mark

Re: How many tanks
Author: Dan ()
Date: 05-24-07 11:34

I agree with Mark on this. There needs to be far more play-testing on a "combined move an fire (overwatch) option". At first glance this would swing the advantage away from the defender too much because it allows the attacker to close on mass while still retaining full firepower capability. This move and fire option is better suited to modern tank combat, where fire and manouver is more fluid.

Also, moving and firing involves more than the influence of gun stabilisation. Moving vehicles even at speed makes it more difficult to spot and acquire a target. Not only is the vehicle bouncing around the terrain, the commander's vantage point of the terrain, and potential ambush sites, is continually changing.

I think we've strayed from Paul's original question :)

Cheers

Dan

Re: How many tanks
Author: Luke Willen ()
Date: 05-24-07 11:50

I agree that all of the issues around stabilization need to be more thoughtfully playtested although what I posted is the result of earlier play testing and it has been simplified from what it was. I would however argue that the stabilisation and fire control modifiers take into account the other issues Dan has outlined.

So far play testing I have done indicates that with WW2 tanks moving and firing is likely to be rather ineffective as it was except at the very closest of ranges. Even with some of the vehicles around during the Yom Kippur war sometimes have a problem at the longer ranges or if they fire to flank/rear.

The Fire Priority system I outlined is intended to prevent an attacker from massing too easily though troops quality and tactical situation are also considerations. This idea has precedent having been used in Command Decision and it seemed to work fairly well. Does need to be play tested in Battlefront however.

Luke

Re: How many tanks
Author: Paddy Green ()
Date: 05-24-07 12:43

Mark,

Not subjectively cynical but just trying to understand the merits and/or the problems with your idea. I think the mental block I have with it is that (as Mark Hayes indicates) it challenges the concept of the game - taking it from one where the ME conducts fire and manoeuvre to one where the unit can also do this.

By allowing all units to manoeuvre and overwatch without any penalty then this will become the defacto tactic for attack. No one will ever place a unit entirely on overwatch and the current offensive desire to close rapidly to CC to avoid the double tapping would almost entirely disappear. Thus units will never again reveal themselves one turn so that they are ideally situated to provide overwatch the next if they can stay hidden and move out of cover with the same effect. This will reduce the utility of ATGs and tend to make units act in block formation advances rather than advancing by platoons as is now the case. Have you found this to be the case?

I can see it being very useful in the Authie scenario and would obviate the need for the highly artificial rule covering surprise. I suspect it needs the sort of truly hidden deployment you use to prevent the psychic 10000 ft commanders. On the up side I can see it possibly giving a game that is more freely flowing and potentially a little more fun. However, would it be more realistic? The trouble is that all too often in warfare "sitting on your arse and watching what the opponent does" pays off in spades! Lets face it - that was pretty much the lead strategy during most of the cold war!

Paddy

Re: How many tanks
Author: Bill Slavin ()
Date: 05-24-07 12:46

My question around allowing movement and overwatch would be how that would impact shoot and scoot. It's a tactic I use a lot and as it stands, and it's the only chance for some units to survive firing on the big boys. It seems to me that with this rule change you would have far more units in a position to return fire before the shooter could bugger off, essentially making it ineffective.

(Do you think we can change the subject of this to "How many tank posts?" We do love our toys. Give me infantry any day.)

Bill

Re: How many tanks
Author: Luke Willen ()
Date: 05-24-07 13:59

It think these are questons that can only be resolved by play testing.

Bill

Tanks played a major role in World War 2 and have continued to do so right up to the present day (depending on which conflict we are talking about and therefore should be a valid topic for debate. Given the scope of the rules and the variety od scales that can be used in BF both infantry and sizeable tank actions are quite feasible. Nice to have a set ofd rules that can actually do both and can also be developed to cover modern conflicts.

Luke

Re: How many tanks
Author: Bill Slavin ()
Date: 05-24-07 16:27

Luke,

Major role, yes. Like in the Gothic Line where they bogged down, broke down, arrived late, and went home every night when the street lights came on.

Just joking. of course everyone was happy when the big S.O.B.'s showed up! But I've played more than one game where the Tigers and Panthers present fell pray to CC by infantry when every Sherman was smoking on the battle field.

Bill

Re: How many tanks

Author: Dan ()

Date: 05-25-07 02:09

I couldn't agree with you more Paddy on the wisdom of sitting and meditating upon the actions of an opponent. In one Normandy game we had a Sherman squadron supported by a M-10 platoon, M5 platoon, and an infantry company, going up against an almost equal number of German AFVs (including 2 Panthers and one Tiger I) supported by some infantry. Four Shermans pinned down the Germans right flank, the remaining AFVs and most of the infantry closed in on the key town by using blocking terrain to mask their movement from German fire, and leap-frogging units into overwatch. The game bogged down into a chess match. The Brits were slowly flanking the town, all the while the British were nibbling away at the German forces. Frustrated by the lack of dramatic action by the British, the Germans pushed forward to engage our tanks. One of the German commanders believed that a battle is won by advancing often. Within a couple of turns, half of the German armour was knocked out, including both Panthers (knocked out by the M5s), and the British infantry gained a foothold in the town.

There are times to take aggressive action. Likewise sitting and waiting for a better opportunity has its merits too.

Cheers

Dan

Re: How many tanks

Author: Andy P ()

Date: 05-25-07 03:09

I agree with Dan, give me infantry any day.

Andy

Re: How many tanks
Author: Luke Willen ()
Date: 05-25-07 05:21

Paddy

As I am sure we both know there were plenty of big armoured actions on the Russian Front and several big tank battles in the desert and NW Europe. Even one or two in Italy

It is more expensive to game a large armoured action in 15mm so the smaller scales of 5 and 10mm are probably the best choice.

I enjoy infantry actions as well, just as much as Dan and Andy. However, a big armoured action has challenges of its own. Another kind of challenge would be forcing armour to attack dug in infantry and a strong screen of anti tank guns and some of their own tank support as at Medinine (6 March 1943) or the Mius River in July/August 1943 (Decision in the Ukraine by George Nipe for a detailed description) Battles of this sort were actually quite common during the final years of WW2.

It is not unrealistic to have large numbers of tanks being knocked out. This did happen, particularly when the defender has a strong PAK screen. That was just what the defending commander intended. To deal with the problem you need to use a combined arms team of tanks, infantry, artillery and airpower to deal with the defence.

Luke

Re: How many tanks
Author: Steve Burt (193.128.72.---)
Date: 05-25-07 06:30

I'd be very wary of allowing move and fire; players will just do this with everything all the time, and then you might as well be playing Rapid Fire :-)

It's precisely because Battlefield WW2 reflects how hard it was to attack well sited defenders that the game is interesting. You actually need to think and prepare your attack, have supporting units, use indirect fire and off table artillery, deploy smoke judiciously, and be prepared to wait until the defence has been softened up. A game where everyone can just charge forward shooting won't be as interesting, and won't bear much resemblance to WW2, either.

Re: How many tanks
Author: James Baker ()
Date: 05-25-07 08:30

I tend to agree with Steve, especially for WW2. The advantages given to a stationary defender (primarily shooting 2 times in a turn) are deliberate and reward proper attacking tactics - recon, combined arms, and fire and maneuver. I think that the current rules strike just about the right balance. The double-shots that people have complained about in this thread may just be a symptom of improper reconnaissance. If the defender has been located, the base of fire you should set up (where stationary attackers fire just as often as stationary defenders) will suppress the defense to allow you to move up. Rich Hasenauer often comments that adding special rules introduces "therbligs" - unintended consequences that ripple throughout the rules and ruin the balance. I could see move/overwatch doing this. Suddenly the attacker has just as much firepower as the defender. Units will rush forward, knowing that any defender that exposes itself will be overwhelmed by the follow up units. The entire texture of the game will change, and not probably not for the better.

However, in games set in the 1980s and beyond with modern equipment, move/overwatch might be appropriate for certain types of equipment. I would retain the current rules for infantry and most vehicles though and make it available only to special vehicles.

Re: How many tanks
Author: Bry Barnard ()
Date: 05-25-07 09:23

Improper reconnaissance?

How do you move any units up to spot defending units if they immediately get the "defender double-tap" back as soon as they move?

If you compare the turn sequence to other rules that simulate WW2 what are the differences?

I'm thinking of Squad Leader, say, as a comparison. The turn sequence is pretty similar to BF only in SL the attacker gets an 'Offensive Fire' phase for all attacking units that have just moved after the defender gets his shot in. The defender then shoots in his player turn. This then avoids the "defender double-tap".

What difference is there between using an Offensive Fire phase and allowing a moving attacking unit the option to goto Overwatch after a move? Not a lot in my opinion.

Overwatch after move gets my vote.

Re: How many tanks

Author: Bill Slavin ()
Date: 05-25-07 09:38

Just remember, 4 to 1 odds to win a fight against a dug in defender, 3 to 1 to make it a tough fight. Most units' locations in WW II were discovered by men dying and tanks getting blown up. The double attack on defence goes a long way to simulate that. And I would repeat my earlier comments about shoot and scoot. Just one of the many possibly unforeseen results of a rule change like this. And as Steve says, when wouldn't you use advance/overwatch if it was available?

Bill

Re: How many tanks
Author: James Baker ()
Date: 05-25-07 09:48

A scout out in front is always in danger (that is unfortunately part of the job). However, if he is backed up properly by overwatch, you can decrease the effect of the second shot (even suppression will make it less effective). After that, it is a straight-up firefight, with the attacker being able to bring artillery into play on suspected targets in his next turn. Where improper reconnaissance comes into play is where 3 or 4 units rush forward and get themselves shot up by ambush, leaving no one to spot for artillery. Allowing attackers to shoot would make the rush forward the recommended tactic.

Re: How many tanks
Author: James Baker ()
Date: 05-25-07 09:50

By all means feel free to try it out, but I think you will find that it makes the game unbalanced in favor of the attacker.

Re: How many tanks
Author: Mark Hayes ()
Date: 05-25-07 10:18

The intellectual challenges that the BF presents (like Steve mentions) are what pulled me out of my 19th gaming world when it was in its early platest stages.

To piggyback on Jim's comments about recon, I also find it useful to advance on an enemy position that my FO has a line of sight to. If you discover that the defender has armor that is pretty much invulnerable to your artillery, try laying smoke and maneuvering with your main attacking force to a better position to engage in a fire fight.

And by a better position I don't just mean closer. It is important for the attacker to make careful use of the terrain (in addition to his other tools) to isolate a portion of the enemy's defense to achieve fire superiority.

Gee! 82 post and not one that mentions "military-issue food"...until now. ;-)

Mark

Re: How many tanks
Author: Bry Barnard ()
Date: 05-25-07 10:30

I think I'll go through a few iterations of some attacker/defender scenarios over the weekend (long w/e in UK).

I recently played a cracking game against a great opponent of attacking Brits vs dug-in Vet Germans and Brit tanks would have been wiped out by double-tap without even getting a shot in in reply if it hadn't have been for accompanying infantry close-assault taking out the German tanks (like that happened a lot in WW2?).

My opponent (Paul Smith) is an ex-tanker and he was querying why you couldn't do the short-halt attack with tanks, as per WW2 practise.

Hence my feeling that Overwatch after a move simulates this.

Re: How many tanks
Author: Kurt Kramer ()
Date: 05-25-07 11:05

Some practical thoughts:

1. A game kill does not represent a unit being killed to the man.
2. Most games start at the point of the main assault - not when the scouting and deployment takes place. How many times does a game start with 3-6 turns of a troop stand or recon platoon out in from doing recon?
3. Often games involve an assault against a "front" where maneuver tactics don't work well.

With the exception of Mark Hayes most of the gamers do not like to use enough artillery since it is not generally considered "fun."

Example of proper tactics for an assault -

Turn 1. Maneuver element deploys out side of effective fire range to target area.

Turn 2. Most of unit goes on over watch patrol goes forward until it either spots something or is shot at. Over watch units will have two shots overwatch fire and defensive fire.

Turn 3 Indirect fire hits targets, mortars drop smoke and maneuver element advances to close assault

One of the best uses of this tactic was by Pete Landry against me at a Historicon Normandy game . Pete deployed - advanced a jeep to scout a hedge row where there where hidden unit markers , I killed the jeep on opportunity fire as it was falling back (we had a rules dispute over whether the rear move by his jeep was a second move for rapid advance triggering op fire - he was a gentleman and accepted my interpretation of the rule) and took overwatch fire. I then had to fall back on my turn to avoid being crushed or flanked.

As the game designers like to brag, this game is designed to reward good historic tactics.

Re: How many tanks

Author: Luke Willen ()

Date: 05-25-07 11:34

Kurt

Actually I use lots of atillery, For a late war British battalion level attack I usuallly giive them support from a regiment of artillery and sometimes more up to and including all or part of an AGRA in the case of a big offensive. German defenderas usually get a couple of batterues and sometimes a battalion.

I agree it is good practice to send a squad to recon a likely defensive position. For the pre attack recon the results of this should be included in the pre game brieing but of course there is no need to make this accuarate or indeed truthful.

Re: How many tanks

Author: Andy P ()

Date: 05-26-07 03:38

Always remember the 6 P's before planning anything.

Andy

Re: How many tanks

Author: Mark Middleton ()

Date: 05-26-07 05:40

Lots of tactical advice appearing !

I like most people who post here (or seem to play BF) am a fairly accomplished player 25 years wargaming + 10 years in the Marines (mainly spent in Recce Troop). So pretty much all the historical or "gamey" type tactics I've seen or used and agree pretty much with all of them.

I will make one quick comment on Recce as I speak with a reasonable amount of knowledge Recce in BF is generally Recce by death due to the back to back die rolls the defender gets!

Kurt your piece baffled me a bit..... why would you put units on overwatch outside effective range of the enemy? If you don't use hidden deployment and you know exactly what the enemy has and deploy accordingly then I would call that "gamey" possibly even cheating my friend. If you don't know what the enemy has..... how do you know you're deploying outside of effective range until you've done your recce? If you move your ME forward you can't go on overwatch the same turn and you're then on the receiving end of back to back die rolls from the defender before you can even think about going on overwatch.

I'll just make a few points we've noticed having played 5 games now using move for one action and then go on overwatch for the second action.

1. Do we use overwatch more or less than we did if i'm honest i would say slightly more.
2. Units rolling manouver for two actions still more often than not take the two actions as movement, to close with the enemy. Especially infantry..... as you don't want to linger around too much as you'll get DF'd with Arty.
3. Has it changed the amount of fire units use..... yes, but not in the way we thought it would. Under the current system we were finding that more often than not the defender was "opening-up" with pretty much everything he could with little or no regard to giving his position away. Why?..... well, "i've got 2 rolls of the dice of course before you can return fire, so hopefully a large portion of your ME will be burning and you'll run away". Sound historical tactics or unrealistic gamey tactics? Using the tweaked system we are finding the defender is a lot more carefull even cautious about the timing of his fire.
4. Justification..... well anyone who changes things can find a justification and give historical examples of the why's and wherefores, so i'm not gonna go there. We just felt back to back rolls was giving the defender too much of an advantage. We felt as its not a skirmish game, allowing units to move and return fire in the same phase wasn't out of character with the type of simulation BF is. We have found that it actually introduces a fourth "tactical option" :

- A. Do I fire in offensive fire, then I can't move or return fire.
- B. Do I move, then again I can't return enemy defensive fire.
- C. Do I remain stationary go on overwatch and be able to return enemy fire.
- D. I don't offensive fire, no enemy visible, I advance for one action, close cautiously and go on overwatch so I can return fire.

I will say we are currently half way through our sixth game using our tweak and we have made one small ammendment. If you move for one action and go on overwatch it counts as a rapid advance. So you can be opportunity fired and more importantly it reduces your spotting range.

The two important things to remember are you have to get a "two actions roll" on the manouver table to use it.....and we all know as battle is joined and it hits the fan this becomes harder.

Secondly, the normal overwatch fire restrictions apply, so you can't go blatting away at all and sundry!

Mark

Re: How many tanks
Author: Luke Willen ()
Date: 05-26-07 06:54

I think that what Kurt is doing (assuming the use of hidden deployment) is halting his main force outside of effective range of a possible enemy position and then sending a squad or two forward as a recon.

This is a sound tactic for avoiding a potentially nasty ambush.. You do risk the loss of the squad sent on the patrol but better that than to send a whole infantry company into a very nasty close range ambush and perhaps lose the lot.

The defender has two choices here. First he can destroy the squad revealing that some hostile force is present in the area. In this case the attacker will know he needs to be much more cautious regarding the way he approaches this area. If the defender takes no action then the patrol identifies all defending positions which means the attacker can plan a really effective attack.

Either way, the patrol has succeeded in its objective and the potential cost is minimal. At the most you lose the squads you sent on the patrol and either way you gain valuable tactical information.

Luke

Re: How many tanks

Author: Mark Middleton ()
Date: 05-26-07 08:06

Luke

You've gone back onto tactics.....I said I pretty much agree and use most tactics mentioned here..... including sending in a couple of squads. "halting his main force outside of effective range of a possible enemy position" So what is this range if you don't know what you're facing? Outside small arms range, outside ATG range, outside tank gun range, and god forbid theres any about..... outside 88 range? I'm not talking infantry vs infantry here, I'm talking combined arms battles.

Mark

Re: How many tanks
Author: James Baker ()
Date: 05-26-07 09:30

Mark Middleton's experiences indicate that the moving overwatch is worth a try. As we already have an overwatch phase, it does not mess up the sequence of play, although I still worry that it will unbalance the game in favor of the attacker. Mark can confirm that these are his rules:

- 1) A unit doing MO must have 2 movement actions available from the maneuver roll.
- 2) A unit performing MO may move one movement action and then go into overwatch. (Do we want to restrict this to cross-country movement rates?) However, if performing this action, it must declare it at the beginning of its move and is considered to be performing a rapid advance. Not only does this reduce its spotting range, but if successful op fire is performed against it (anything but no effect), it will lose its second action and be unable to go into overwatch. Also, as its spotting range is reduced, this effect should carry over into the opposing player's next maneuver phase, and it might allow shoot-and-scoot actions from units at the edge of concealment (you need to see a unit for the first inch of the move before they trigger disappearing fire).

Other thoughts here are negative modifiers for fire from units doing M/O, and restricting M/O to certain types of units. However, the simplest rules usually end up being the best so we should try them first.

If we can agree on these, I will put up an optional rules page.

Re: How many tanks
Author: Luke Willen ()

Date: 05-26-07 09:38

Depends what you have got. Spotting range is an issue here. Assuming infantry in no concealment it would be perfectly safe to stop 20 inches from a suspected enemy position (a moving infantry target cannot be spotted at more than that distance).

The threat from firepower depends on the army you are facing. Assuming you are facing Germans their infantry are no threat to you outside 10 inches (cards GE-44 and GE-49 have a maximum range of 10 inches) The main threats at a range greater than this are Heavy machine guns (range 20 inches) and mortars.

For tanks the main threat will be tanks and anti tank guns. For this you probably need to do what the Germans often did in the late war period (on those occasions when they still mounted attacks) and send dismounted infantry in first. The tanks stay back on overwatch to support while the infantry identify threats to the armour..

Depending on which stage of the war we are talking about you should have a pretty good idea of the likely anti tank gun ranges and their capabilities vis a vis your armour/ On balance I would keep the armour at least 20 inches from a suspected enemy position and preferably 40 inches until I had developed the situation.

Luke

Re: How many tanks
Author: Mark Middleton ()
Date: 05-26-07 10:15

James

Yep that about sums it up.

We've been declaring M/O before you move.

You lose your second move if you're successfully op fired during your movement action.

The main reason for deciding to count it as rapid advance is as you highlighted the effect it has on shoot and scoot tactics with regard to the attacker spotting hidden defenders.

Mark

Re: How many tanks
Author: Paddy Green ()
Date: 05-26-07 14:45

One question

If move & Overwatch counts as a rapid advance does this mean that if your unit is fired at during the move and is suppressed/disordered - it loses its fire?

One comment:

I fully support this going down as a playtest suggestion - but I still think it is unreasonable that a unit moving and firing has exactly the same stats as one just firing. I still consider that the rule should possibly be amended to include firing penalties. If you move at full speed before going into overwatch you get a -2 firing penalty move at half speed before going into overwatch you get a -1 firing penalty.

One opinion:

I still suspect that this will unbalance the game - making the attack too powerful, nullifying the shoot and scoot tactic and making tanks disproportionately powerful on the battlefield. Games would increasingly be unhistorically fast in their gameplay and possibly become unhistoric in their outcomes.

Paddy

Re: How many tanks
Author: James Baker ()
Date: 05-26-07 15:00

That is my fear as well, but it is worth a try. The one advantage to a modifier would be that we could scale it according to unit capabilities. A vehicle without a turret might get a -3, a vehicle with a turret or infantry a -2, stabilized turrets -1, etc. Otherwise really powerful units such as the Jagdtiger would become even more unstoppable than they are now.

Re: How many tanks
Author: Mark Middleton ()
Date: 05-26-07 15:37

In answer to your question Paddy.....yep it can't fire as it loses its second action so is unable to go on overwatch.

Yes I can also think of negative modifiers that can or should be applied. But as per you I use the kiss principle. I concluded the game mechanisms are in place to restrict things, the drawbacks of rapid advance (effect on spotting and losing your second action), you

can only use it if you roll well on manouver and the limitations on just what you can fire at when on overwatch.

Re: How many tanks
Author: James Baker ()
Date: 05-27-07 11:02

Added a moving overwatch optional rule to the extras page. This still requires some playtesting, so let us know how it goes.

Re: How many tanks
Author: Paddy Green ()
Date: 05-29-07 05:20

We can't allow James to have the last word here - not with only 3 more posts required before getting a Century!

Paddy

Re: How many tanks
Author: Steve Burt (193.128.72.---)
Date: 05-29-07 05:27

Bill wrote:

I'm thinking of Squad Leader, say, as a comparison. The turn sequence is pretty similar to BF only in SL the attacker gets an 'Offensive Fire' phase for all attacking units that have just moved after the defender gets his shot in. The defender then shoots in his player turn. This then avoids the "defender double-tap".

What difference is there between using an Offensive Fire phase and allowing a moving attacking unit the option to goto Overwatch after a move? Not a lot in my opinion.

As I recall, units firing in Offensive fire do so at half effect in SL.

But in any case I'm not sure how SL works is a good argument - I always felt it was a bit too easy to attack in SL.

Re: How many tanks
Author: Steve Burt (193.128.72.---)
Date: 05-29-07 05:31

Sorry Bill - it was Bry who wrote the comment about SL, not you.

Re: How many tanks
Author: Luke Willen ()
Date: 05-29-07 07:03

James

Having read through the moving overwatch rule you have posted, there are a couple of suggestions I would like to make: This rule is similar to the solution I am considering for the moderns amendments I am currently working on.

1 Defender gets opportunity fire first if defender has higher or same discipline rating than the attacker. If attacker has higher discipline rating fire is simultaneous.

2 Modern vehicles with advanced fire control and stabilization systems should be able to take advantage of this and the simplest way would be with a dice modifier. However, modern vehicles will also be able to fire on the move either with a lower deduction or no deduction at all. This could be dependant on whether the vehicle is stationary, moving for one action or two or is performing the moving overwatch action.

Luke

Re: How many tanks
Author: James Baker ()
Date: 05-29-07 10:20

1) I tried to put in M/O in the simplest way possible, which means that all overwatch fire occurs after defensive fire. Note that overwatching units can only fire at defending units that shoot, so it is not a completely free extra fire phase for the attacker. If the defender elects to hold fire, overwatching units cannot respond. This means that a comparison of discipline ratings is not needed, as which units can fire is determined strictly by the sequence of play. If you allow moving units to fire before defenders, it will be a major change that will lead to lots of rule haggling and adjustments. M/O now fits fairly well into the existing rules, although I am still afraid it will unbalance the game.
2) I agree that the one of the ways to lessen the effects of M/O is by applying modifiers to the fire of units that use it (see my suggestions on the M/O playtest page). Most modern tanks should be unaffected, but turretless vehicles should have a big minus. Also, there are certain units that should not be able to use it at all, such as G class units with movement capability.

More testing is needed.

Re: How many tanks
Author: Luke Willen ()
Date: 05-29-07 12:20

My view is that the Moving Overwatch fire and for that matter any moving fires at all (thinking primarily of moderns here) should take place during the manouever phase.

I think overwatching units should sill be allowed to fire at any defending unit that fires in the manuever phase on the grounds that this is their job.However, this is not resolved until the defensive fire phase.

Turretless vehicles are already penalised by not being permitted to fire to flank or rear and would also be affected by the Moving Overwatch penalties anyway so I am not sure a further penalty over and above this would be needed.

Luke

Re: How many tanks
Author: kurt Kramer (208.116.141.---)
Date: 05-29-07 14:55

My choice of the term "effective" range was unfortunately ambiguous. It is variable based on what weapons I have, the expected enemy, terrain and is focused on range bands. I want to be far enough away so that I am probably not the target of net +2 or greater shots but have a chance to at least suppress on overwatch if I take fire from hidden units and will be able to close assault the next turn if I rapid advance. Example would be infantry company advancing on a town. T1 - Move unit up to about 7-9 inches place mmg and lmg with clear lines of sight. Most defenders will not open up with their infantry at that range since they consider it a waste of the ambush bonus. T-2 place everything on over watch except scout - defender will have to open upon scout or loses bonus. T-3 use and close assault or as appropriate manuver.

If you are using vehicles or anticipate AT assets you adjust the range bands beyond which you deploy accordingly.

If you are allowing units to move and fire should units be allowed to fire and move?

Re: How many tanks
Author: Luke Willen ()
Date: 05-29-07 16:30

Kurt

On balance I consider effective range to be anything with a positive modifier with the caveat that it really does depend on the armour value whaevert you are up against. Obviously effective range against a Tiger would not be the same thing as effective range against a Sherman :-)

I would consider it reasonable to allow a vehicle to fire in either of its two actions if that is what you are asking hence the comments I made in my 05-24-07 10:02 post.

Luke