

Shouldnt it take two actions to regroup a disorder

Author: [Peter G. Robbins](#) (166.44.64.---)
Date: 06-16-03 12:04

Our group played this weekend at a local hobby shop (<http://www.trianglesimsociety.org> for some photos if you care to gander.)

One thing that I still find ever so slightly odd, is the lack of 'levels' of suppression. Specifically, its a bit strange that the only difference between a suppressed and disordered unit as far as "regrouping" is concerned, is .. well no difference. They both get to involuntarily regroup in manuever phase, then if they rolled to have two "action"s successfully, they can move once. [unless we are not understanding the rules correctly.]

Personally, I think a regrouping disordered unit should not be allowed to move at all.

Opinions? Likely this topic has been beat into a pulp, but i couldn't find a thread similar to this specific observation.

Peter G. Robbins
Still a novice.. so be gentle..

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Re: Shouldnt it take two actions to regroup a diso

Author: [Eric Feifer](#) (
Date: 06-16-03 16:06

I believe there is an indirect difference. It comes on the Discipline Rating chart. A Disordered unit is -1 compared to a Suppressed unit for Elite and Veterans. For Experienced and Trained it is an extra -2 with the lowly Raw troops being a -3 compared to their Suppressed comrades. This reduces the chance to recover at all. This may produce a two, or more, turn difference to recover from disorder versus suppression. Of course, rolling a 10 on the Maneuver chart takes a lot of the mystery out of things.

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Re: Shouldnt it take two actions to regroup a diso

Author: [Mark Hayes](#) (
Date: 06-17-03 08:59

Peter,

As Eric suggests, the differences are somewhat subtle. A Maneuver Element like a company, will lose it's cohesion (and thus player's ability to effectively employ it against his opponent) when more of its units become disordered, are within 5 inches of the enemy, and as the casualties mount. When considering how the game mechanics work as a simulation, think in terms of maneuver elements rather than individual units.

There, that was painless, wasn't it? :-) Questions and opinions are always welcome.

Mark

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Re: Shouldnt it take two actions to regroup a diso

Author: [Peter G. Robbins](#) (166.44.64.---)

Date: 06-17-03 14:28

Thank you both. Considering the elements as a whole - I see the bigger picture. That's actually what I believe most people like about BF:WW2 ; it's abstractions wash themselves off the body of results.

cumulative effects...again

Author: [chris](#) ()
Date: 05-19-05 17:45

Hi All:

I still love playing BFWWII but still think that it is a slow game regardless of what many of you seem to think. We have about 3 hours to complete a game, and although we could reduce the size of action, I want to be able take advantage of the rule mechanics that make combined arms so effective. Also, I have literally hundreds of 20mm vehicles and infantry stands and I want to use more than a couple of companies in a game. Now, before you tell me to go and play FOW, I say again that I like BFWWII. So, by way of this long intro.....

I was wondering if anyone has continued to play with, or recently tried, an idea floated years ago (?) about using cumulative effects to speed play? What I mean is of course, saying that repeated disorders cause kills and, more dramatic in some ways, repeated suppressions cause disorder. It seems that this would speed play dramatically. ANY thoughts?

Cheers,
Chris

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Re: cumulative effects...again

Author: [Andy parkes](#) ()
Date: 05-20-05 05:49

Hi Chris,
It seems fair to do this, i would be happy with it, but i think you cannot suppress a unit any more than it already is. But you can disorder it more, but as the forum keeps saying, these rules are a guide line, so if you have an idea try it, if it works let us all know and we can try it.

You never know Jim, or Rich might add it inot the rules;-)

Andy

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Re: cumulative effects...again

Author: [Steve Burt](#) ()
Date: 05-20-05 10:42

It would be worth trying; certainly make things bloodier.
But what we find slows the game up is having to fire all the stands individually. It's not too bad for tanks, but once you have several companies of infantry on table, there is a *lot* of dice rolling.

If there were some way of doing combined firing, that would be great:
e.g. I fire 6 infantry, one MMG and a commander at your troops.
Tot up factors, make a roll. Look at a table. It says something like:
1 kill, 1 disorder, 2 suppressions.

The devil is in the details, of course, but I think one could speed things up a lot like this.

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Re: cumulative effects...again

Author: [Mark Hayes](#) (
Date: 05-20-05 11:06

Chris,

I think you will find your proposed solution to be counter-productive. What tends to slow the game down is too much shooting that doesn't contribute to a winning tactical plan. When given an opportunity during the Offensive Fire phase to take a poor shot or maneuver closer for a better one, players all too often settle for the poor shot. The "maneuver" part of "fire and maneuver" takes a back seat, and the game slows down. Logically, by making the effects of fire combat cumulative you further encourage this tendency. Why should I risk my forces by maneuvering closer when I can roll dice knowing that I will eventually be able to kill an enemy unit through cumulative effects?

I think you would have better success speeding up play if the guys you gamed with agreed to the same style of play such as:

1) Try and devote as much of the three hours as you can to actually playing the game. So, if someone can have the table set up and the forces deployed before everyone arrives that can save a lot of time. Have scenario maps available to the commanders prior to game day so that they can develop a plan and not have to spend so much time thinking about what to do during the game.

2) Roll the die BEFORE consulting the table. In some cases, depending on the depth of knowledge of the rules, the result will be obvious. In fire combat you can often ignore low rolls as having no effect.

3) Don't waste time with absurd or irrelevant shots. For example: firing machine guns at disordered tanks.

4) When figuring out the results of a maneuver roll start with the unit in the worst situation, calculate it first, and move up from there. Usually you have a few units that are disordered or suppressed and then you work your way up to the result that applies to most units in the maneuver element.

5) Finally, limit the number of close actions you initiate in a game. These are invariably risky and the downside of a loss is seldom worth it. Plus, each one takes time to calculate and resolve.

I don't want to discourage folks from experimenting with the rules to try and accelerate play. IMHO, we, as gamers, have more opportunity to get what we want by making changes in our style of play.

Mark

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Re: cumulative effects...again

Author: [Steve Burt](#) (
Date: 05-20-05 12:52

We do all of points 1..5 already, but we still find that with more than about a Battalion a side with 4 players we can't finish a game in 3 hours if it requires more than about 10 turns. Maybe that's just an unrealistic expectation; I'll tinker around and see if I can come up with anything.....

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Re: cumulative effects...again

Author: [Steven Lee](#) (
Date: 05-20-05 20:57

The points Mark makes definitely help speed up the game, of course most experienced players already do these.

There are a number of other variables that can contribute to how "quick" a game plays, but there are two that I think really determine the speed of the game; Scenario design and number of troops per player.

If playing a scenario that requires a lot of maneuver prior to heavy engagement with the enemy, its going to take longer to knock out MEs, thus making the game take longer.

Inexperienced players are obviously going to take longer to play than experienced players, but experienced players with too many MEs or stands to push around are going to take a while as well.

Typically, I run con games with each player running one ME (basically a company commander) of from 8 - 12 stands, and maybe some organic fire support. The games are 4 hours long and range from 10 - 12 turns long.

Being convention games, I get a variety of experience levels, so I think keeping it to one ME each is pretty key. If need be, obviously I would give more experienced players multiple MEs, but haven't had that situation (other than playtesting), yet.

Next is that generally, by turn two most of the forces are engaged. This gives 8 - 10 turns of combat, and by that time a clear outcome typically can be determined. For reference, my games have usually ranged from a couple companies vs. a battalion (most common) to just over a battalion vs. 2 battalions.

As I said before, these have been run in 4 hour blocks at conventions. This 4 hours includes a brief historical reference to the battle, a description of the terrain and its affects, pulling each force aside and giving them their 5 paragraph orders along with their victory conditions in game terms, and the players deployment of forces. Therefore actual game time is from 3 to 3 1/2 hours.

So, I truly believe a game of BFWWII can be played in 3 hours with battalion + size forces, but there most likely needs to be more than 2 players per side, and the biggest factor is scenario design. Having said that I think 3 hours is on the bubble and it wouldn't take much to put a game over 3 hours to finish.

I guess that's a bit more than 2 cents, so there's my \$1.50 worth.

C ya,
Steve

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Re: cumulative effects...again

Author: [Chris](#) ()
Date: 05-20-05 21:42

All of this is sound advice and we do all of the things that Mark has noted. I must stress that my guys are not regular WWII gamers but all are very experienced gamers, so the mechanics of play or making tactical decisions is not a big issue. What 'is' an issue is that deciding what is a reasonable shot or not can be subtle, and given the large number of shots the game can generate compared to the amount of movement, it is not surprising that players err on the side of shooting. And yet, while there is lots of shooting and many suppression and disorder effects, there are few KOs. MARK is absolutely right that correct tactics of fire and movement are rewarded in this game that essentially is easy to play mechanically, but in 2-3 hours it just does not allow for a sweeping narrative to unfold with forces that are more substantial than a couple of companies. I am going to try the 'multiple disorder equals a kill' approach. This might also reduce the tendency of units to charge into close combat -- especially the

bizarre vehicle vs. vehicle close combat mechanic, which can be rationalized, but is not intuitive.

I just bought the Desert supplement. I really like the new 251 and 250 cards with the /10 variants included. I was still a little surprised that the 251/250 are frontal armour '2'. Regardless of the armour thickness etc. this leads to some strange early war tactics.....

Cheers,
Chris

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Re: cumulative effects...again

Author: Eric Feifer ()
Date: 05-20-05 21:50

>Typically, I run con games with each player running one ME (basically a company commander)...

And Steve does a fine job! One ME per player is good. Having an extra ME (or two) is also good if one player gets heavily stomped. He can then pick it up and keep 'in the game'.

>2) Roll the die BEFORE consulting the table. In some cases, depending on the depth of knowledge of the rules, the result will be obvious. In fire combat you can often ignore low rolls as having no effect.

To me this is important even for new players. My first rule is, "Roll a 10 and take out all the mystery". Having new players understand the steps and mechanics is good. But like all games I want to know, do I want to roll high or low. Then I can keep things moving.

Of course, the other thing we might deliberately ignore is the "Old Hen" syndrome. This is not empirical but close to half our game time must be spent with 'clever' dialogue and other chit-chat.

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Re: cumulative effects...again

Author: Doug Knoop ()
Date: 05-23-05 09:22

I'd suggest setting scenario objectives beyond 'engage and destroy.' I like to encourage players to 'get on with it' by making rolls and doing stuff without the entire table needing to know about it, just the player who is directly affected. This tends to create a bit of fog of war that can add to the fun/chaos.

Also, try making most of the forces Trained rather than experienced, not only does this make sense it will speed things up as that D will really start meaning something!

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Re: cumulative effects...again

Author: Chris ()
Date: 05-23-05 13:53

Thanks for all the comments. I will try the approach of 2 dis equals a kill in the next game and report back to you. It will certainly encourage even more the use of combined arms/fire groups.

Cheers,

Re: cumulative effects...again

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) ()

Date: 08-16-05 07:22

A system I have used for quite some time and I have found works well is to have all disorder effects cause a hit on the unit. This represents a significant number of casualties/damage at the infantry squad/tank section level.

I use markers from 2nd Edition Command Decision to represent this and so grade the results by colour of marker. The system I use is as follows

Yellow 1st hit - 1 on all fire and close combat dice rolls

Red 2nd hit -2 on all fire and close combat dice rolls

The next time a disorder result occurs the stand is automatically eliminated.

I did consider having poorer or more elite units having different attrition rates to those outlined above but I felt that the fire combat results table represented these differences already.

The implication of using the above rule is that squads are gradually attrited down every time a disorder result is achieved. The effectiveness of the squad is gradually reduced as it suffers casualties. They can still be knocked out suddenly in the event that a Knocked Out result is caused. In most games I have played the level of overall losses remains believable as it is actually statistically quite difficult to get disorder results on a large number of units unless your opponent is foolish enough to bunch large numbers of infantry squads closely together. This was a mistake I made once when first learning these rules. This led me to do some research on company level tactics and deployment with the result that my infantry tactical deployments improved dramatically and became far less vulnerable to artillery as a result. Many of the "experienced" Rapid Fire players at the club I attend seem unable to learn this lesson, deploy their squads very closely together, often in a linear deployment. This creates an excellent target for artillery concentrations. Such infantry deployments take heavy losses. The Rapid Fire players in question start to wonder why and have often blamed the BF WW2 rules rather than examining whether the tactics they have learned under Rapid Fire are historical or militarily sensible. Personally, I would suggest that the lesson of this is that Rapid Fire teaches tactics that are unrealistic, unhistorical and tactically foolish. BF WW2 on the other hand realistically simulates the tactics of the period and rewards those who use correct period tactics at company/battalion level which is what both of the above rules claim to do.

Suggestion for an optional stand attrition rule

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) ()

Date: 03-10-06 14:01

Some people have expressed concerns that it is "too difficult to kill something" under the BFWW2 rules. For example this concern was raised in the recent (March 2006 article by Geoff Wooten in the magazine Miniature Wargames.)

I and others have mentioned the issue both on this site and in my local club. Quite possibly there are others who feel the same way.

While the existing rule is simple it does allow disordered stands to get away with it too often assuming that they survive the additional +1 fire modifier for disorder long enough to rally by a successful role on the maneuver table.

In reality and in one to one skirmish games we see that individual tanks are damaged or knocked out. Individuals in squads or gun crews become casualties. Eventually the casualties become significant enough to impact upon a unit's ability to fight even though it is still capable of doing so/

In order to resolve this problem we could use a hit marker to show partial damage on a unit that has taken losses but is still relatively combat effective.

Under the rule we developed at my local club a Hits Marker is placed every time a stand is disordered by fire or close combat. We assume that a disorder result causes significant damage so we ignore suppression results for the purpose of simplicity.

A stand may take a maximum of 3 hits and will be automatically eliminated on the third hit. Troop quality is already considered on the fire and close combat tables so there is no need to vary the number of hits a stand can take as in Command Decision.

The first hit is indicated by a yellow marker causes the stand to suffer a -1 modifier for fire and for close combat.

The second hit is indicated by a red marker resulting in a -2 modifier for fire and close combat.

This represents the fact that a stand has taken casualties, damage to vehicles or individual vehicles knocked out. Losses to any passengers is dealt with under the existing bail out rule.

Play testing we have done indicates that the rule works efficiently and is a simple way to resolve the problem.

With sensible historical tactics such as this being used we have found that there is little overall difference in the number of stands being knocked out during the course of a game. However, you do end up with more stands which have taken partial damage to some extent and these are somewhat less effective in consequence of this. Those who want to kill something can be satisfied by this rule.

Indeed, this rule makes the Fire and Maneuver tactics central to BFWW2 even more important. In order to avoid Hits you must suppress the enemy positions or risk stands being either being attrited to the point where they are almost ineffective or are knocked out by an accumulation of damage.

Please feel free to give this modification a try. I would welcome your comments and feedback on the rule

Luke

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Re: Suggestiion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Stephen Uden](#) ()
Date: 03-10-06 16:43

Interesting idea, but I shudder at all the thought of those extra markers to be carried round with the stands.

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Re: Suggestiion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Craig Simms](#) ()
Date: 03-10-06 20:46

Not sure I like the firing mods for taking hits. A 10% swing in these rules can be massive. Remember you are already disordered right? (unless I missread you which is always likely :)).

I also subscribe to the theroy that 10% of the soldiers do 90% of the fighting so the way I see it as long as you don't kill the 'Sargent Rock' figure on the stand then the stand should be still able to return fire with only the normal suppressed/disordered mods dispite the fact that Pvts Crowe and Frost are already dead.

I must also confess agreeing with Stephen on the marker clutter which puts me off a bit,

cheers

Craig

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Re: Suggestiion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: Dave Savage ()
Date: 03-11-06 11:05

Luke,

Just to put the other side of our previous discussion about this - but not wanting to dissuade anyone from trying your optional rules if they want to:

Rules for cumulative damage will just give you another thing to record and may slow the game down. They do require additional record keeping and will to some extent complicate an otherwise beautifully simple game. (Stephen Uden's point above)

They will affect game play and make Trained or Raw troops almost impossible to keep on the table in any reasonable length scenario. Worse still they will prevent units recovering fully from any disordering damage as frequently happened historically. Furthermore they do not take into account that the fighting ability of a unit can remain little changed even after taking quite substantial damages. (Craig Simms point above)

They do not take into account that a unit can be disordered without actually taking substantial casualties - it is a measure of the morale effect of combat and not the physical effects?

In an evenly balanced game they may prevent a player from recovering from a couple of poor dice rolls early in the game and effectively kill off a game as a contest after the first few rolls. I also feel that it would increase the effectiveness of IDF (which in my experience does the lions share of the disordering if properly used) to disproportionately and unhistorically high levels.

Lastly I consider that cumulative damage rules only serve to represent small unit (squad

level) effects and not the effects at the Battle Group level which is where BFWWII is set. These effects were abstracted out by the games original authors and by reintroducing them it will change the structure of the game.

That said if your proposal was modified so that the cumulative damage effects applied only when an already disordered unit suffered a second or successive disordered result then I would have fewer reservations. (I probably still wouldn't like them but I'd have fewer reservations.)

Dave

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Re: Suggestion for an optional stand attrition rule

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) (
Date: 03-11-06 11:44

Stephen and Craig

The Hits Marker is intended as an option for people who want to see somewhat more effective firepower to give them a better opportunity to "kill something" or those who, like myself, see the disorder marker as being too short term and ineffective. It is also intended for experienced BFWW2 gamers who want to add more detail to the game.

Yes, I would agree that marker clutter is a potential downside to this rule. I use the markers that originally came with the 2nd Edition of Command Decision which are small and the right colour. Indeed, it was the sight of these markers that gave me the idea for the Hits rule in the first place. However, you can easily make your own markers or improvise using tiddly winks if you prefer. The other option that I considered (very briefly) was paper book keeping. For obvious reasons this was a solution that I very quickly discarded, hence the selection of markers. If you can think of another solution please feel free to let me know.

The -1 and -2 modifiers is a permanent effect on the stand carrying the marker and are in addition to any disorder marker the stand may be carrying. I interpret the disorder marker as representing a short term loss of unit cohesion meaning that the squad could be in a state of some confusion and is probably not using the terrain to best advantage (hence the +1 penalty on the fire table and the discipline table penalties)

Most of the time stands recover from this quickly and suffer no long term effects. I believe that this is wrong because the disordered stand is likely to have taken a significant number of casualties. This comes from my experience in WW2 Skirmish gaming. Obviously it would not be desirable or practical to keep a record of exactly how many members of a squad have become casualties in a set of rules intended for a battalion or regimental battle group level game. The Hits System is intended to be an abstraction indicating that a significant level of losses has occurred. We do not need to know how many casualties have actually been suffered and the commander would not have such information until after the battle in any case. All we need to represent is a relative decrease in a squad's ability to fight effectively, hence the my decision to represent this in the abstract manner of a Hit Marker.

The Hit Marker is intended to indicate that some proportion of the stand is permanently destroyed (killed, seriously wounded, damaged/destroyed vehicles). This is the reason for the permanent negative modifier.

Let us assume that we have a stand representing a German MG-42 machine gun. It may be that the weapon itself is still working and will therefore fire at its normal rate, at least in theory. In practice, a large proportion of the crew was actually employed on duties other than firing the weapon, for example fetching and carrying ammunition, spotting targets for the crew members actually firing the weapon. If some of them have become casualties then it is likely that these duties will be carried out less effectively and more probably more slowly. For example, ammunition will not reach this

fast firing weapon quite so quickly as it should.

In another case we have a Rifle squad which has raken some casualties. It is still capable of fighting but now fewer people are in a position to actually shoot. Hence it cannot deliver its firepower so effectively as it could when at full strength. A similar argument can be made for a tank section.

It may well be that there are 10% of the soldiers who do most of the fighting and I have assumed that a proportiom of these will become casualties.

If we have a 10 man squad where only half of its members actually fight and 2 of these become casualties then this will mean that there are now 3 men doing most of the fighting. The remainder who at most support those who actually fight will be becoming more discouraged. I represent this with the Yellow Marker giving the -1 modifier.

The situation becomes worse. More casuaties on the squad are incurred and the above effects are exacerbated. The squad is still capable of achieving something but not much so we can consider it to be nearly combat ineffective which I represent with the Red Marker and a -3 modifier.

Finally the squad has taken so much damage that it has become combat ineffective and is removed. I assume that this will occur on the 3rd hit.

I did consider a system of allowing a sqaud to take 4 hits before being eliminated and/or taking fewer hits depending on troop quality in a manner similar to that used in Command Decision.. I discarded this idea for a number of reasons. Firstly, it seemed overly beuraucratic. Secondly, I felt that a stand with a -3 modifier (excluding disorder would be so completely ineffective that it would be pointless keeping such a stand on table. Thirdly, the issue of troop quality has already been taken into account on the Fire Table. since the existing rules take the trainiong and quality issue into account already, and therefore this factor has been taken into account, I saw no reason to take it further.

Under the current Fire Table we know that troops with a worse discipline rating are more likely to become disordered. With the Hits Rule coming into effect when a stand is disordered it follows that a stand with a poor discipline rating is likely to take more hits and accrue them faster than one that is better trained. History indicates that soldiers who have received little training and/or have little experience are more likely to do something stupid that will get them and their comrades killed. A classic example of this would be the experience of many of the US infantry replacements in the Hurtgen Forest or inexperienced Soviet tank crews who do not yet know how to use the ground to best advantage. Many of the 5th Guard Tank Army crews at 4th Kharkov may well have been new replacements. Given, as George Nipe demonstrates in Decision in the Ukraine that the this Tank army lost some 400 tanks at Prokhorovka a significant proportion of tank crews must also have become casualties. Given that the army was re-equipped and rebuilt in a matter of only a couple of weeks and was recommitted to battle at 4th Kharkov on 8 August 1943, a mere three weeks after Prokhorovka and allowing a week or ten days to get into position we can infer there would have been very little time to train new replacements, certainly as far as any kind of unit training was concerned. Consequently, even if the individual replacement crew could work with each other effectively they could not operate very efficiently with the rest of their company or battalion. If the tank crew was ntrained, as was often the case during the early years of the Russian campaign the situation would be even worse as demonstrated by the huge losses incurred during Operation Barbarossa.

Luke

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Re: Suggestiion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) ()
Date: 03-11-06 12:50

Dave

I have found the Hits Marker system to be a quick and simple method of record keeping. My play testing has demonstrated that people pick the idea up quickly and easily. Having said that the rule is intended for people who already have a knowledge of the rules and probably should be used only after developing some experience with the basic rules.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT A DISORDER RESULT IS THE CRITERIA FOR A HIT MARKER. There is NO penalty if a suppression result occurs. It is far more likely under the Fire Table that a stand will be suppressed or that individual stands firing will in fact have no effect at all. The assumption I have made is that the Disorder result represents a situation where firepower has had some quite considerable effect but not to the extent that the target is destroyed as an effective force.

You say "Worse still they will prevent units recovering fully from any disordering damage as frequently happened historically. Furthermore they do not take into account that the fighting ability of a unit can remain little changed even after taking quite substantial damages. (Craig Simms point above) They do not take into account that a unit can be disordered without actually taking substantial casualties - it is a measure of the morale effect of combat and not the physical effects?"

I would reply that this specific situation is already represented under the rules by the Suppression result. I would argue that the Disorder result in fact indicates a situation that is far worse than a Suppression result and that it is likely that a number of casualties have been incurred. See my above post for details.

On the fire table we see that a disorder result occurs on a 7 higher. The chances are that this will only occur when a significant die roll modifier is possible (short ranges, artillery concentrations, lack of cover etc) If a player has got himself into a situation where he takes a lot of damage (e.g. because he has neglected basic real world tactical principles such as reconnaissance or the need to spread out to avoid artillery and machine gun fire in the event that the grazing fire optional rule is in force) then I would suggest that this individual only has himself to blame. If on the other hand you study and use period tactics you will do better.

If you are attacking send a patrol to check out a likely enemy position, use smoke, use fire and manouver tactics, use artillery to soften up known enemy defensive positions. Consider how you deploy your battalion. Do you send in all companies in one long line or do you deploy your companies one or two forward and the rest back when approaching an enemy position. This would increase your manouver options at battalion level and may therefore help to decrease casualties.

I agree that Indirect Fire does often cause disorder effects. This is particularly true in situations where people deploy their infantry company poorly with stands too close together. It is very likely in this situation that people will find that many more stands will become disordered and, using the Hits rule, they will find that they take higher casualties.

I have been there myself in my very earliest experiences with the rules. To deal with this I invested some time and effort in researching infantry company deployment. If for example you examine film archives you will see that platoons and companies are often spread out in a wedge shaped formation. I often organise my infantry companies into a series of wedges of perhaps three stands per wedge (roughly a platoon) Each "platoon" forms its own wedge, line or echelon. A company may for example have one "platoon" forward and two back although other variations are possible. It still may not be possible to keep every stand in the company under constant command. Usually this does not matter as failure to keep a stand under command only loses you a +1 modifier and you only need a 3 or more to enable you to act with complete freedom. If your stands are in good order you are fine most of the time. You will however need to anticipate where you need your commander, particularly when stands become suppressed or disordered and have a poor discipline rating. However, because your stands are more spread out they are now

less vulnerable as a group to enemy artillery, particularly concentrations. That is the whole point of spreading out. I have found that the minor command and control problems are more than fully compensated for by decreasing your vulnerability to artillery concentrations. With careful thought given to your company deployment fewer stands can be covered by an artillery template. Furthermore, if the opposing player wants to cover more stands he may not be able to do this with a Concentration or Thickened concentration. Consequently he will lose the +1 or +2 fire modifier for these missions. If he chooses to use a concentration type fire mission he will only be able to cover a more limited number of stands if a more historical company deployment is used. Again you have limited the amount of damage he can do. Yes, some stands could be disordered and will therefore take a hit marker under my suggested ammendment. However, the overall number of stands that are vulnerable to this can be reduced by the player who uses a historical company deployment .

Of course, there are some players, including some I know who still do not get the point. Strangely enough they often do less well under the BFWW2 rules, particularly when on the offensive when a significant amount of artillery is in use. This is still true when they are on the defensive in dug in positions.

Did you know that the German army on the Somme in 1916 deployed most of their men in the forward trenches and suffered heavy losses from the British artillery as a result of the density of manpower in the forward trenches. After the Somme, in the 1917 battles the Germans kept most of their men out of the front line trenches because of this experience.

In short, the use of sensible historical tactics will miinimise casualties. IIF YOU ARE FINDING THAT YOU ARE TAKING HEAVY LOSSES OR A LOT OF DISORDERS FROM ARTILLERY FIRE YOU NEED TO LOOK AT THE TACTICS YOU ARE USING.

The Hits Marker is intended to show, in a simple abstract manner, the effects of casualties on squads and is similar in principle to the existing effects of suppression or disorder. My suggested modification is intended to add something to the existing rules to deal with the squad level aspect of the game in a simple and abstract manner which I am sure we would both agree is essential for any such ammendment of this nature given the Battlegroup nature of the rules.

Luke

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Re: Suggestiion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Bill Slavin](#) (
Date: 03-11-06 13:00

Further to Craig's comment, I read the other day that there was a military study done of frontline, American infantry troops in italy in WWII, and it was discovered, to everyone's surprise, that an astounding 70% of those soldiers never fired their weapons in combat. Even the soldiers who weren't firing were surprised to learn this, thinking that they alone were the ones that were refusing to shoot at the enemy. This was brought about by the greater dispersal of soldiers in the style of fighting that automatic weapons had brought about, and the lack of others (officers, especially) to view the soldiers' actions. Peer pressure was probably the greatest motivating factor to fire their guns, a reluctance to take another's life the greatest deterrance. It was estimated (as Craig hypothesizes) that only 10% of the soldiers were actually natural fighters (in other words, enjoyed their job), so this would go a long way to supporting the idea that it was much more difficult to make a section of infantry ineffective than one might think. Just fuel for thought...

Bill

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestiion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) ()
Date: 03-11-06 13:20

Bill

First we are dealing with a statistic here. Clearly only a sample population was questioned and this may or may not reflect the actual reality. The second question is whether the respondent was referring to all the engagements he had ever been in or just the last action he was in.

However, if we assume that up to 70% of soldiers really never fired their weapons in combat during their whole military career up to the time the research was done then this would in fact reinforce my argument assuming, as you appear to be that the 70% figure is reflected at company, platoon and squad level.

If only 30% of the men in these units are actually fighting then they will be the ones taking the casualties. Once a significant proportion of these men have become casualties then the squad, platoon or company has become combat ineffective.

The hits rule can represent this at squad level without incurring significant complication to game play.

Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestiion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: Dave Savage ()
Date: 03-11-06 13:39

Luke,

Thanks for the lesson in basic infantry tactics - but I think I got enough of that when I attended the Army's Advanced Command and Staff Course (coming top of my year - who said a life wasted playing wargames doesn't pay!) Also thanks for questioning my experience with basic rules - 36 years playing wargames so far and still going!

The flaw in your argument is when you admit that "The disordered stand is likely to have taken a significant number of casualties. This comes from my experience in WW2 Skirmish gaming." I am not sure that it is statistically valid to apply your experience of one game system and then use that to historically justify modifying another! Please provide some historic examples that your rules will address but the current rules can't.

Lastly no I don't think we need to deal with the squad level aspects of the game. If I wanted to do that I'd play squad leader.

Dave

P.S. The Caps Lock on your computer seems to be broken - its always getting stuck!

P.P.S. Lets not make this a 65 post slanging match again! As I said I'm not wanting to dissuade anyone from trying your optional rules if they want to.

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestiion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) ()
Date: 03-11-06 17:02

Dave

Congratulations on the Army Advanced Command and Staff course! :-)

It was not of course my intention to question your knowledge of the rules which I am sure is excellent.

In connection with the infantry tactics issue I was simply pointing out the errors that I have seen made by wargamers at my local club and which may be quite common by those, unlike ourselves who have attained some knowledge of infantry tactics either through professional training (in your case) or study of military history (in my case) These points may be of interest to readers who have not yet developed such awareness. I have certainly found that my losses have been considerably reduced compared to other people who use "wargamers tactics" as opposed to real world tactical doctrine.

Just as a matter of interest do you spread your infantry out in a manner similar to the way I have suggested and, if so, how effective do you find it bearing in mind the trade offs necessary?

Perhaps we could have an offline discussion about infantry tactics sometime? I am sure your professional knowledge and insights are something I could learn much from.

In relation to the skirmish game issue I currently use Arc of Fire which is probably the best 20th Century skirmish rules I have seen (taking over from Overlord and Free Fire Zone in my affections :-)) I am of course using this experience as an illustration of my point for the general wargaming audience.

Looking at military history casualties tend to be relatively small in most actions where commanders have used reasonably sensible tactics and the troops were reasonably well trained. At Goose Green the British lost 16 dead with estimates of killed Argentines being 100 - 250. Casualties in World War 2 could be much higher than that which is not surprising given the intensity of the combat and training of the troops. In an action at Juvigny on 17 August the Durham Light Infantry lost 200 men killed, wounded or prisoners (Breaking the Panzers Kevin Baverstock P179) At Rauray Baverstock tells us that the Tyneside Scottish lost 132 men In an action at Red Hill November 8 1944 in Lorraine described in Biography of a Battalion P124 - 130 (James A Huston) we are told that K Company 3rd Battalion 134th Infantry lost at least 40 casualties and I suspect that the company started at something less than full strength because a couple of pages later we are told that battalion strength after the action was "down to a fraction of normal" Often, particularly in German accounts we find that strengths were often much less than the book strength particularly after intensive periods of action. While this is in part due to the nature of the German replacement system it does show that Company K's experience at Red Hill was no isolated case. After a particularly disastrous engagement at Vossenack (Hurtgen Forest) on 7 December K Company 112 Infantry Regiment 28th Division withdrew across the Kall River with 1 officer and 31 enlisted men After the same action 1st Battalion 110th Infantry had only 75 men in its infantry company rifle strength including replacements (Dark and Bloody Ground Edward G Miller P89) As their battalion commander is recorded to have said "We left a hell of a lot of our best men up there)"

Casualties on the Russian Front must have been far higher at battalion level but even the quite detailed sources I have available do not usually cover anything below regimental level and even then usually not in as much detail as I would like.

In my experience with Battlefront which I have been playing for nearly 3 years (out of a total wargaming career of 17 years) I find that casualties under the original version of the rules are actually much lower even in an intense action, perhaps at most an average 6 - 10 infantry stands knocked out from a full strength battalion using correct historical tactics. Playtesting the Hits Rule gives about the same number of stands actually knocked out but there are sometimes considerable numbers of stands who have either a yellow or a red hit marker resulting from disorder results. Obviously in both the case of a hit marker or a knock out result not everyone in that squad will actually be a casualty. The squad has simply become combat ineffective to some degree depending

on the number of hit markers it has accrued or is completely ineffective (knocked out)
This is as much a loss of cohesion as it is actual casualties.

My suggested rule gives an abstract and simple way to represent the combination of casualties and lost cohesion at the small unit level. While there will probably be relatively little difference in the number of stands knocked out (assuming nobody does anything really stupid or incurs disaster) a more realistic level of casualties and other relatively combat ineffective squads will usually result according to the results of my [lay test games.

Regards
Luke

PS The caps lock key on my computer is NOT broken. In the absence of any other facility to emphasize a point on this forum the use of capital letters is the only way to achieve this.

PPS I agree that we do not want a 65 post discussion on this issue (even to break the existing record! For one thing I simply do not always have the time to indulge!

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestiion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: Dave Savage ()
Date: 03-12-06 03:45

Luke,

You started this post by saying "some people have expressed concerns that it is "too difficult to kill something" under the BFWW2 rules" but in your latest post you recognise that "looking at military history casualties tend to be relatiely small...." and use the Goose Green example to illustrate this point. I consider that these 2 statements are incompatible and that it is the later statement that is the only one backed up by historical fact. BFWWII makes it difficult to kill something because it was historically difficult to kill something!

Returning to Goose Green (as that is what you are familiar with) - some British squads recieved intensive enemy fire and would in game terms be counted as being "disordered." With relatively light casualties when compared to WWII battles, I doubt you could consider any to have been KO'ed (maybe the CO?). However, these units still closed with the enemy and engaged in fighting that cannot be regarded as having been any less successful than any other squad. In fact it was in the squads that were mortared during the run in that the greatest proportion of decorations were won. The conclusion here is that "disorder" is a temporary effect that should not cause a lasting effect on combat ability.

I'd be interested to hear the historical evidence supporting the counter argument.

Dave

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestiion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) ()
Date: 03-12-06 05:59

Dave

It is a fact that there are indeed some people who have expressed a concern that it is "impossible to kill anything" under the BF rules as demonstrated in the recent Miniature Wargames article.

I would point out that it is also quite difficult to disorder something in BF. Most of the time troops would be suppressed rather than disordered. Even in the case of troops with a trained or raw discipline rating you require at least a 7 to achieve the disordered result. Experienced or better require an 8. As you no doubt know this is quite difficult to achieve except at the closest ranges. A suppressed result is a much more likely outcome as I am sure you know.

I selected Goose Green as one of my examples because there have been quite a number of highly detailed accounts going down to squad level. For a battalion level engagement such a detailed analysis seems to be quite rare although Nolan does do something similar for a number of Vietnam fire fights. I am sure you will have read some of his accounts.

In the Goose Green example 2 Para would certainly qualify as at least Veteran and probably Elite. Under battlefront such a unit would be much more difficult to disorder or suppress. You need a 7 to even suppress an elite unit. Given that the Argentines at Goose Green would probably rate at best a Trained rating and some would be raw and since we can assume that many of them would have become suppressed or disordered at some point in the action the explanation for the low British casualties and the fairly high Argentine losses, which I did say have been estimated at between 100 and 250 according to my sources on the battle, does become clear when you at the action in terms of the BF rules. While I am somewhat wary of analysing historical battles in terms of wargaming rules there are quality products like BF that can achieve similar results and may therefore be a valid analytical tool despite any flaws the rules may have. If we can correct those flaws then perhaps we can develop the rules further.

Going back to Goose Green I would argue that the British squads that you suggest were disordered should in fact be considered as being suppressed in many cases. Sometimes no doubt there would have been instances where the a squad would count as being disordered under BF terminology and would therefore take a hit under the optional rule I have suggested.

It would be most interesting to refight the Goose Green battle under BF rules as and when suitable cards are produced. It would be particularly interesting to compare a refight with the basic rules and the modified rules with the hit markers with the original action. My suspicion is that the casualties would still be fairly similar with the hit rule. Possibly they could be slightly higher. However, this would also include seriously wounded. It also would be representative of a loss of cohesion to some extent.

Even with a hit marker it is still possible for a stand to close with the enemy. Remember that the hit marker affects close assault as well, not just fire modifiers. It will just fight somewhat less effectively because of the -1 or -2 modifier. This could just as easily be a factor affecting the defending stand which may also be carrying a hit marker from an earlier disorder result.

If you read my previous post in full you would have seen that I did not only mention Goose Green. I also gave several examples from the World War 2 North West European campaign including Juvigny, Rauray, Red Hill and Vossenack as examples. While I did say that military history does tend to indicate relatively light casualties there are also many occasions such as Red Hill and Vossenack where the casualties were high, in some relatively rare cases such as Vossenack, very high indeed.

In your first post on this thread you said "That said if your proposal was modified so that the cumulative damage effects applied only when an already disordered unit suffered a second or successive disordered result then I would have fewer reservations. (I probably still wouldn't like them but I'd have fewer reservations.)"

I think you mean that, in the event suffers a first disorder it would just remain disordered. On the next disorder result it would take a hit marker and so on.

Under my current version of the hit rule a stand that has already taken a disorder result and suffers a second disorder would take another hit. Possibly this is an issue that worries you at the moment. In my play test games and bearing in mind that it is

relatively difficult to disorder this is rarely a problem even if the opposing player "gangs up" on a particular stand. Of course, if he does this he is sacrificing opportunities to fire at other stands and possibly disordering them.

However, taking our earlier discussions into account it may be that there is a case for a modification along the lines you suggest. I do have some reservations about the "tracking" issue which play testing may or may not prove to be justified.

Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestiion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [James Baker](#) ()
Date: 03-12-06 08:31

We experimented with attrition rules (we tried two disorders = a kill) early on and found 1) they slowed the game down considerably, 2) that they caused too MANY casualties, especially when compared with historical results. When people criticize BF as not being bloody enough, they indicate that they are not using proper tactics. True, long range "plinking" will not result in many casualties, but to destroy an enemy you need to close. If you assume that troops on both sides are taking reasonable measures for their survival, a battle between infantry units at the 2-5" range band corresponds to shooting at targets hiding behind rocks and bushes from 1-2 football (either type of football :-)) fields away—you may kill a few, but you are more likely to keep their heads down. The use of long range fire should be to suppress and disorder a target so that your other forces can close. Also, the odds are deceptive. A measly +1 net modifier is a 20% chance of a KO, which is enough inflict serious attrition on your opponents over the course of several turns. This is what makes a massed artillery target so attractive - if you can put 4-5 infantry targets under a +1 template, you almost certainly will KO 1-2 of them, and the others will likely be suppressed or disordered.

While I don't want to discourage people from trying out Lucas's suggestions, I think you will find that they add a lot of work and do not necessarily change the feel of the game for the better.

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestiion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [ronald w.](#) ()
Date: 03-12-06 09:48

Keep the scale of the game in mind. Since I know that 1 Sherman tank represents multiple tanks I have no problem with the game as it is written. The high number of disordered and suppressed results make sense on that basis. When you get up close and personal, things really get tense. The tactical level of BF WWII is outstanding IMHO.

Ronald

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestiion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) ()
Date: 03-12-06 10:33

James

When play testing the rules did you use historical company formations of the type I have suggested? If not then this would explain why you found casualties were so high. In my early games that is what my experience was and that is why I changed my tactic, very quickly.

In terms of whether these markers slow the game down I have not found this to be the case. Having said that, the Hits Marker rule is something that I would only use with players who already have a decent amount of experience with the basic rules. When enough people know what they are doing you can then introduce optional or experimental rules. Indeed, this is the reason I indicated in the subject title that the rule should be treated as an optional one. Indeed, the rule I have suggested is no more complex than a number of other optional rules that have been published under the Free Stuff section (eg engineering, grazing fire, multiple BUS etc) Indeed, it could be argued by some that many of these rules also risk slowing the game down considerably which is one of the two main critiques you make of the hits rule.

While the suggestion I made is an option that may not appeal to all players I have found from my own play test games that casualties are not unduly or unrealistically heavy in terms of actual stands being knocked out. This may be the effect of the -1 and -2 modifiers for the yellow and red hit markers which can be rather more common depending on how many disorders are inflicted during a game.

If you want to minimise disorders I would argue that historical tactics are even more important if the modification is used (suppressive fire, preparatory artillery bombardment, fire and manoeuvre, use of smoke screens etc)

My experience with the standard rules was that you only get disorders at the shorter range bands and this remains the case under the modification.

I would also suggest that the threat of heavy losses as can happen under my modification would encourage greater dispersal of troops. If we look back to the early days of the First World War we see French and German armies (probably also the Russians and other minor states) we see that they did try to use the massed assault tactic that I have so often criticized some members of my local club for. These tactics resulted in massive casualties causing the tactics to be changed by entrenching troops when defending or dispersing them when attacking.

That is not to say that all armies learned. Even in World War 2 some armies such as the Chinese, Russians and Japanese used the Human Wave tactic on a number of occasions. Very often these failed with very heavy losses as they do in Battlefront. By the way I have adapted the Human Wave rule from Command Decision for armies that historically used it giving a +3 modifier in close assault (if anyone gets that far) but made it a better target by giving an additional +1 fire modifier.

If players know that they do risk heavy losses by deploying their troops too closely together as you infer when you quite rightly say "This is what makes a massed artillery target so attractive - if you can put 4-5 infantry targets under a +1 template, you almost certainly will KO 1-2 of them, and the others will likely be suppressed or disordered" then we need a mechanism to deter them from using tactics that were usually suicidal. That is what my hit rule is intended to do. I have found that because I disperse my companies in a historical manner it is much harder for the opposing player to get a concentration against a significant number of stands. If they want to cover a significant proportion of one of my infantry companies then they have to conduct an ordinary shelling mission or divert artillery from other missions to achieve the result they want. Either way I have been able to minimise my casualties. Likewise, if the grazing fire optional rule is in effect it is much harder and requires more resources to affect a significant number of stands. Consequently I am better placed to keep a properly supported attack going using my dispersed tactics than someone who bunches his stands together which will only get them killed. As we all know troops who bunch in the real world modern and World War 2 battlefield only get killed more easily in consequence of their bad tactics. Veteran troops and commanders know that to survive you must disperse at all levels of command.

Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestion for an optional stand attrition rule

Author: Dave Savage ()

Date: 03-12-06 12:01

Luke,

Returning to Goose Green, what you argue, that the British squads that I suggested were disordered should in fact be considered as being suppressed, whilst possible, is statistically highly improbable. Assume the extreme position, that 2 Para were Elite and the Argentinians Raw. Also assume that each had weapons ratings of +2, +1, -1 going down the range scale. Even if the Argentinians were suppressed they would still be disordering on an 8 or 9 and killing at a 10 at the closest range scale. Add to this the fact that the Argentinians were dug-in and were probably ambushing and there was precious little cover to protect the Para's advance! Therefore, if 1 Argentinian unit were in this position there is a 30% chance that a Para unit would be disordered or worse, 10 units and the probability goes up to 98%, 25 units and we are up at a 99.98% probability. As I said I can't say that you are not right but I can suggest that bit is improbable and IMHO on the wargames table, as in real life, the most probable thing usually happens.

Flicking through a few books today I suggest if we were looking at Goose Green alone there is an argument that any unit that was disordered and recovered should get a +1 thereafter rather than a -1. 2 Para because they got more fired up and were determined not to see casualties taken in vain. The Argentinians because if they hadn't run when disordered then they were obviously made of sterner stuff than a Trainer or Raw discipline rating would suggest.

However, I agree that it would be most interesting to refight the Goose Green battle under BF rules and it would be particularly interesting to compare a refight with the basic rules and the modified rules with the hits markers with the original action. You write it and I promise I will use your optional rule when I play it!

Dave

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Re: Suggestion for an optional stand attrition rule

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) ()

Date: 03-12-06 14:05

Dave

I think that 2 Para at Goose Green do deserve an Elite rating. The Argentinians should probably be a mix of raw and trained. Looking at Not Mentioned in Dispatches by Spencer Fitz Gibbon we find that Task Force Mercedes (aka the Argentinians defending Goose Green) was a hodge podge of units composed of reservists recently recalled to the colours and some considerable numbers of air force personnel. Task Force Mercedes was also rather short on equipment and a number of serious discipline problems had been experienced. They were also experiencing serious food supply problems and had been bombed/shelled, apparently on a number of occasions so morale seems to have been rather poor (particularly owing to the food situation in the middle of a Falklands winter) This could well explain why Piaggi never attempted any sort of counter attack even at the stage of the battle where 2 Para was experiencing serious difficulties. The information Fitz-Gibbons provides is hardly glowing recommendation for Task Force Mercedes as an effective fighting force.

I would suggest that the only reason Task Force Mercedes performed as well as they did was because they were very well dug in. In BF terms I would suggest improved positions as it would appear that many of them were quite hard to spot as evidenced by the fact that Colonel H Jones may have been shot from a previously unseen trench as little as 6 metres from his position.

If we rate 2 Para as elite they only have a -1 factor when disordered which means that even with their worst possible discipline rating modifier (-1 for disorder) a stand

would tend to recover easily from even a disorder result. The trained or raw Argentine stand on the other hand would find itself in a much harder position with a - 4 or - 5 respectively for disorder. The improved position would give them a +1 and if a commander in good order was near enough then another +1 for that. Consequently we would have a net - 2 or - 3 modifier respectively (- 3 and - 4 for anyone without a commander) . In the event that the British are within 5 inches this would go down to a - 3 or - 4 (- 5 and - 6 for anyone without a commander. It would be much more difficult to get the Argentine troops to hold their positions once they had been disordered.

However, it would still be quite hard to disorder troops in an improved position. If that position happened to be a stone building it would be even harder. Note that Goose Green was ended by a negotiated surrender. certainly a part of the reasoning would have been to spare civilian casualties. Also the British preferred not to try storming the settlements among 2 Para could well have been far higher unless the Argentines suffered a complete morale collapse This may have been fairly close by the evening of 28 May but the situation may not have been completely irretrievable and they were probably still in a position where at least some resistance could have been made.

At some point it would be interesting to do a scenario on the Battle of Goose Green and perhaps others covering the various actions around Port Stanley. These actions would certainly be well suited to BF. Cards and a TOE would also need to be developed for both British and Argentine units. Right now, unfortunately it cannot be a priority as I have many outside commitments which require my attention more so such a project will have to take a back seat Perhaps I may have a bit more time in the summer.

Another possible use for the hit markers would be for situations where a scenario designer wants to indicate a smaller number of casualties in the unit that perhaps does not warrant the loss of an entire squad

Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestion for an optional stand attrition rule

Author: [Ken Natt](#) ()
Date: 03-12-06 14:30

Hi everyone.

As the arch conservative (small c) on the group I have always not been convinced by Lukes "Hit Marker" theory, and feel that either by design or happy coincidence the rules as is are probably about right.

My main objection, apart from playability and clutter, is the assumption that a disrupted result always involves tactically significant casualties. Although Ds can be seen as casualties, they may also (IMHO) simply be a poor reaction to circumstances - a good example would be a squad forced out of position by a CC result that retreated to nearest cover disordered. Although casualties may have been received, it can also be seen as the squad morale failing and them pulling out as the attacker comes on. Given sufficient time and no further molestation this squad can expect to return to combat with little or no longterm adverse effect, but under Luke's suggestion this is not the case. There are plenty of examples of this happening "in real life"

Having said that, my usual caveat applies - if you and your oppo thinks it is valuable, viable and workable then go ahead, but in this case I don't.

Ken

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestion for an optional stand attrition rule

Author: [Andy P](#) ()

Date: 03-12-06 17:14

Now then im going to throw the cat among the pigeons,

I truly believe the rules as they stand "suck" no i,m lying they are great and simulate infantry combat very well. An infantry battle is a series of short bursts of adrenaline followed by lots of nothing. i.e takes a while for you to spot anything and then its all over.Or is that just my battles, recon by death....look!! theres a tank over....

Battles are normally fought by a small number of individuals who excel under fire while the rest keep incover and try to do something useful, i'm the latter. <G>

So suppression is exactly what it says, enough fire to stop you firing back effectively, what i dont understand is the disruption, unless it is trying to simulate the effect of broken cohesion, or losing the squad automatic weapon for awhile. Then i can understand this, as the fire going out does not = fire coming in and you are going to get yur ass kicked.

Am i making sense ?????

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestiion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) ()

Date: 03-12-06 17:39

Ken

You agree that casualties may well have been recieved as the result of a disruption. Given that a squad sized stand representing between 9 and 14 men and assuming that a hit marker caused by a disorder is representative of a tactically significant number of casualties, possibly combined with a loss of cohesion due to the NCO being killed/wounded and probably the morale effects of the above factors which you agree does happen.

The point where we disagree is the extent to which as squad will recover from this.

First, you assume that it will not be harrassed further. In reality it is in the middle of a battle and probably will recieve further unwanted attention.

Second, you assume that a squad will return to combat with "little or no long tetm effect." I would like to know what your historical evidence is for this assumption. It may be true that the squad or tank troop can base its fighting around some smaller sub group while the rest of the unit acts in support of them. When that group is eliminated I would agree that the unit becomes combat ineffective. However, before this happens it may well be that other members of the unit or part of the fighting sub group itself become casualties. Either possibility would cause the unit as a whole to become less effective.

Yes, the unit will keep fighting but its effectiveness must be reduced as a result of casualties and the gradual reduction of unit cohesion.

If I wanted to be totally realistic I could have included casuaties for suppression as well. However, since I did not feel that this was a viable alternative I compromised abstracting the likely overall effects of any preceding combat or perhaps even better than average disordering fire in that fire phase. I felt that the result should be abstracted like this for purposes of the hit rule because of the battalion battle group nature of the game. All the company commander would know, and would probably care about at this stage is that some of his units had taken losses but were still fighting, albeit less effectively.

In playtest games I have found it to be simple to administer the process. All you have

to do is provide some additional markers of two different colours (I use yellow and red) and remember that yellow gives a -1 modifier, red a -2 to all fire and close combat rolls.

Furthermore, as I said in my previous post the hit markers can also be used if it is wished to represent squads who have taken minor losses at the start of the action, for example in an engagement a couple of hours before and there has not been time to reorganise the platoons (perhaps a situation like von Manstien's counter offensive during 3rd Kharkov).

Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestiion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: Dave Savage ()

Date: 03-12-06 18:37

Luke,

I disagree that if 2 Para weres elite they would tend to recover easily from a disorder result under your optional rules. Yes they would recover easily under the published rules but under your optional rule they would carry the previous disorder result as a permanent -1 throughout the rest of the game like an albatross around their necks! -2 if they got disordered twice and woe betide them if they got hiy three times!

Also I'm not saying that 2 Para wouldn't win a Goose Green refight under your optional rules. What I am saying is that they would do so with considerably higher casualties on the tabletop than was historically the case. In fact even under the published rules, under which you think it is "impossible to kill" they would probably suffer far higher casualties than was actually the case - even if played using your eulogized infantry tactics.

Speaking in defence of Ken. I would regard a group of 2-3 tanks disordered when one recieves a track hit (or similar). It is more vulnerable to enemy fire whle stuck in the open while the crew disembark and fix the problem but afterwards that group is exactly as effective as it was before. Also listen to Andy (a infantryman by profession) when he says "battles are normally fought by a small number of individuals who excel under fire while the rest keep incover and try to do something useful." This means that a squad can take casualties form the 70% who never fire their weapon anyway without permanently affecting their combat effectiveness. If they take casualties from the other 30% then the stand would be KOed rather than disordered as the remaining 70% escort the injured to the RAP.

Lastly - the skirmish games on which you base so much of your argument assume that most if not all combatants are lions who all contribute in an ordered and choreographed way to a battle. This is simply not true of the majority of highly trained men who fight in battles, let alone the conscripts from WWII. The moment I find a set of skirmish rules that allow characters to "hit the deck and whimper like a baby for the next 10 minutes" or "return to RAP with light flesh wound" or "slink off to rear saying you'll bring up more ammo" then I'll agree that they can be scaled up and used to influence optional rules for BFWWII. Most soldiers are not Rambo - but the ones who are can swing a battle!

Dave

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestiion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Tom Schumacher](#) ()

Date: 03-13-06 06:43

Lucas

I think you are trying to "push" something on the forum that most, if not all by the responses, people will not play. Our group has been playing BFWWII since it came out and have always had "bloody" games in which whole companies have been wiped out. 6-10 stands killed in some of our games is light.

If it is a rule at your house, than play it, but by the responses almost all the people like the games as is.

Now, whne are we getting OB's for the Desert and are there going to be any additional rules?

Kindest Regards

Tom

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestiion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Ken Natt](#) (195.172.81.---)
Date: 03-13-06 09:02

Luke

Snip <"You agree that casualties may well have been recieved as the result of a disruption. Given that a squad sized stand representing between 9 and 14 men and assuming that a hit marker caused by a disorder is representative of a tactically significant number of casualties, possibly combined with a loss of cohesion due to the NCO being killed/wounded and probably the morale effects of the above factors which you agree does happen">

No Luke , thats the point - I don't accept that casualties have been recieved - they may well have been, but not always. As I said, a D does NOT assume tactically significant casualties. Please stop putting words in my mouth - I have enough already.

Snip <First, you assume that it will not be harrassed further. In reality it is in the middle of a battle and probably will recieve further unwanted attention>

Again you are putting words into my mouth. If the enemy are doing their job they will continue to place them under pressure, and the rules already reflect this well enough. I said that "given further time & no further molestation". These are conditions.

Ken

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestiion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) ()
Date: 03-13-06 11:19

Dave, Tom and Ken

My experience has clearly been quite different to that of your group. Though there are people in my group who do use tactics that are unwise, along the lines previously stated and do end up taking heavy losses there are some like myself who have taken the trouble to do a little bit of research into historical WW2 tactics. Using correct World War 2 tactics such as providing plenty of artillery/armoured support and using it effectively as part of a combined arms operation, using smoke and most importantly dispersing your infantry are invaluable tools in reducing your casualties to the level I indicated namely 6 - 10 stands for a battalion assuming that your troops have a good discipline rating. Troops that are trained or worse will take a higher loss rate which seems historical. However, even here casualties can be reduced.

Secondly Ken, for the purposes of the rule as I wrote it was that the disorder result does most likely inflict casualties. It is possible that the suppression result may also inflict casualties. The point I was trying to make is that, for reasons of playability (minimal record keeping for the purposes of administration) it seemed better to abstract this into the imposition of a Hit Marker at the point when a disorder result occurs. Surely this is a better solution than keeping track losses that might, in the real world be occurring against troops suffering a suppressed result.

Thirdly, I did make it clear in the subject field that the rule was intended as an optional rule. The original intention was to outline a house rule that, from my experience with the rules, I have found works well. If you personally do not wish to use the rule that is fine. There are some rules provided on the Free section of the site that I have not used yet either because I have not got around to it yet or, very rarely, because I have not yet seen the point of a particular option. This is my personal choice, just as much as it may be your choice not to use the house rule I suggested. Having said that I would be willing to try the optional rules suggested at some stage. What I do not do is knock them until I have actually tried them.

If you want to criticise you may like to consider trying the rule suggested and see how well (or otherwise) it works rather than condemning it out of hand before even testing the idea on the table.

Taking some of the other points raised. Whether a tank losing a track would cause the rest of its troop to become disordered is a moot point. It may well be true, particularly in the case of less well trained troops. I would however suggest that a tank in the same troop that is disabled (i.e. abandoned by its crew but not burning) or a tank that has actually blown up is actually far closer to what I would think of in relation to the disorder. It may be the troop commander's tank that has suffered and you would probably agree that such a result would cause disorder but would not necessarily eliminate the unit as an effective fighting force.

The Skirmish rules I use are Arc of Fire. These rules do not, unlike other skirmish rules assume troops are somehow "lions" as you put it. If you have seen this set of rules you would know that under this ruleset troops can be extremely fragile in terms of their morale. While this is not the place to go into details I will say that under the Arc of Fire rules a squad that has taken 41 - 60% killed or broken (i.e. scrabbling around on the ground in considerable fear for life and limb) suffers a hefty -4 modifier. If it has suffered 61% or higher you have a - 6. Depending on troop quality you need to roll higher than a 4 (for troops with excellent morale) through an 8 for troops rated as shaky (the worst morale grade under Arc of Fire) on a D10 when you take the unit morale test. There are a small number of other modifiers as well but the main factor is the percentage currently unavailable. There is also an Individual morale check which results from the fire table but this is a simple dice roll which you modify by a - 1 if the result on the fire table was an M1. This is hardly an example of the skirmish rules Dave implies that I use where troops behave like Rambo. If Arc of Fire portrayed troops in that manner they would not be the kind of rules I would go for. I do not know if they are available in the US but certainly are in Britain. With a little careful thought given to basing (eg using single figures for Arc of Fire and mounting them on a BF base for BFWW2 you could use the same 15 or 20mm figures for both games. This is what we do at my local group.

Also some considerable experience playing the computer game Combat Mission. While by no means perfect I find most of the results believable most of the time. Certainly the best computer wargame of its kind that I have seen so far.

If you read my previous post carefully you would have realised that I am thinking along similar lines to Andy. Specifically I do recognise the fact that there are some soldiers who probably do most of the fighting. My argument was that since this is usually the case it is likely to be this group who are at most risk. If we assume for discussion purposes that out of a 10 man squad half of them actually fight and 2 become casualties you only have 3 out of a possible 10 now fighting. 3 people fighting cannot expect to be

as effective as 5.

While we are on this subject Dave you have yet to answer my earlier question about the data behind your "70% never fire argument" When looking at any statistical data, as I am sure you would agree, you must bear in mind the nature of the sample population. Do you have any information on the background of the sample? How long had they been in theatre? How many actions had they been in?

All of these factors and no doubt many others would influence each individual's responses. That would determine the outcome of the survey. I know this because I have had a little experience in analysing data both during Higher Education and being involved in some assessment of data in my current position. While I am certainly no expert I do know enough to be aware that you have to be careful in interpreting results.

In reference to the question regarding the Western Desert I think that some rules may be required to deal with climatic conditions (dust storms, mirages, sun position etc) Given the high daylight temperatures in this part of the world battles at certain times of the year were fought in the early morning or in late afternoon at which point the position of the sun would become important due to its intensity. If you doubt this next time there is a bright day try walking down the street facing towards the sun so that it is shining into your eyes. You will find this extremely uncomfortable. Now imagine that you are in the Western Desert facing a more intense sunlight that we experience very rarely if at all in the Northern Hemisphere and you are trying to look for a target either through your optical equipment or directly with the "Mark leyeball" I have had this described to me when I was much younger by someone who actually fought in the Western Desert.

Regards
Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestiion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Richard Gause](#) (12.10.219.---)
Date: 03-13-06 13:54

I think the current rules are plenty bloody enough. I don't see a reason to increase casualties or go to all the bother of seeing how many times a unit has been disordered. If you are firing at a squad with a net +1 modifier you have a 20% chance to wipe them out already every time you shoot at them. If you want to see more stuff die then you need to disorder then close assault. All the games I play see plenty of casualties as soon as players close in. When they are doing nothing but long range plinking there should be very few casualties. IMNSHO

Rich Gause

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestiion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Mark Hayes](#) (
Date: 03-13-06 16:01

Luke,

I have refrained from commenting on this subject because I am delighted that you and your group enjoy playing BF, even though you have modified the game mechanics to some degree. But your statement in your third post that you believe the game mechanics regarding recovery from disorder are "wrong" prompt to write a few words. I have commented on my philosophical reservations about the hit point system on a previous post, so I won't repeat myself, but I think it is important to emphasize a point Ken made.

A "disorder" result does NOT necessarily mean a significant number of casualties (or

even any) occurred. However, it might have. The "disorder" and "suppressed" results represent the myriad of things that happen on the battlefield that reduce the effectiveness of the unit, including significant casualties. Since I've been reading the last several months about combat in Iraq, I've noticed how units that come under heavy fire and take wounded are put out of action until they attend to the casualties (maybe only one or two guys) and are then ready to engage fully in combat. Even vehicle crews are temporarily confused by RPG hits that start fires, cause a vehicle to go off the road and get stuck, &c. Usually, the other vehicle(s) in the section or platoon stand by while the problem is addressed. Anyway, I have come to appreciate that there are many things that happen when a unit comes under fire that may only have a temporary effect. What BF does not do is distinguish between effects that are temporary and those that are permanent. However, one could say that permanent effects are those confirmed by subsequent die rolls.

I would argue that it is probably better for the player not to know whether the effects of the disorder are permanent or temporary because a company commander is unlikely to know for some time whether a particular squad or section of his company is crippled or not by heavy enemy fire.

Anyway, I don't want to dissuade you from enjoying the game with the modifications that you feel enhance play. But we do have some philosophical differences, and I hope you see that under our definition of the terms, our approach is equally valid.

BTW, one of our local guys, Michael Montemarano, is a big Falklands Island enthusiast, and I believe he has the figures in 20mm to play Goose Green. I'll check with him about that. From my vague familiarity with the events, I thought it would be a tough fight for 2nd Para using just about any gaming system, but it is worth looking into.

Mark

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestiion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Nick Yankosky](#) (
Date: 03-13-06 22:41

I agree with Mark's explanation. Even in the bloodiest of situations, taking Omaha Beach as an example, there are no examples I can think of where the "elite" unit was destroyed. In most of those cases the unit may no longer operate as an effective fighting unit and in some situations a few individuals may continue to fight on and make some contribution to the general situation. As a result using your 'Hit Marker' system you would need to allow each unit to take hits totaling the number of men represented by the stand. If you're saying 1/2 the men in the unit are killed or permanently out of action each time they get a disorder result then why not agree it's really only 1/4 or say 1/8. Maybe Audie Murphy's in my unit! Let me fight to the last man!

I've seen too ,any good rules sets ruined by additional "special rules." If you're group agrees to modify, do so. I think the system works very well as it stands.

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestiion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Bry Barnard](#) (
Date: 03-14-06 04:45

This is an interesting discussion with good points for and against.

The original rules are certainly a good set, but in my experience they do tend to NOT produce many casualties.

As a result we have made a local decision to use the "x2 Disruptions = Kill" rule, which works for us.

It also fits in with other rules of this type, eg Command Decision and Squad Leader, so players use to those rules understand BF quicker.

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestiion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) (
Date: 03-14-06 05:22

My interpretation of destroyed is that the stand is completely combat ineffextive due to a combination of killed, wounded and loss of cohesion. Individuals may be fighting on but as a unit the stand is incapable of making an effective contribution to the battle.

A number of people have raised concerns that the Hits Rule would cause too many casualties. While it may be that you will end up with a potentially significant number of stands carrying hit markers at one of the two levels that seems fair enough to me.

However, the concern may instead be that too many stands will be knocked out. Although I personally have not found this to be the case in my own play test games it may be that other people may have a different experience. If this is a problem for you then perhaps you could try a solution similar to that used in Command Decsion. Under that set of rules you could regroup stands with a similar weapon type belonging to the same unit on a ratio of 1 stand regrouped for every two stands destroyed.

I would only permit this "Regroup Action" for infantry stands, not tanks, guns or mortars.

If a "Regroup Action" is attempted it must be performed either by the company commander or by the next most senior commander. All regroup standss must be placed within the command radius of that commander and the process would be the only action permitted for that turn.

You could expand this to regroup stands with hits removing one hit for every two inflicted. Again this action would have to be performed by the commander of the stands affected or his immediate superior and could only afrfect stands in his command radius.

The Regroup Action would simulate the ability of a commander to rally and regroup destroyed units, appoint new squad leaders etc.

Maybe people would find this ammendment more to their taste. Please remember that the Hits Rule is an OPTIONAL rule that can be used by groups who desire a little extra detail. As with the other optional rules published on the site no-one is forced to use any particular rule not in the main rule book.

As a final point I suspect that many, if no most wargamers when they have used a particular set of rules for a while will come up with ideas and house rules. The great thing about this forum is that it permits such house rules to be shared among the wider community. I personally am cautious about ammending rules at least until I know what I am doing and prefer to playtet any ammendment prior to submitting it to the wider community. If I find that an idea does not work in my own play testing then it never gets further than that.

Regards
Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestiion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Bill Slavin](#) (
Date: 03-14-06 13:53

Luke,

A few messages back you asked Dave where he got his "70% never fire" figure from, and I think it may have originated with me early on in this thread, in response to something Craig had said.

Anyway, I was mistaken - it was actually 15% of American soldiers who fired their weapons in combat, going up to 25% in some very rare cases. This was discovered as the result of interviews held immediately after close combat with frontline soldiers from over 400 American companies, in both the European and Pacific theatres, and didn't really vary whether it was a short fight, or a battle that went on for two or three days. It was conducted by Col. S.L.A. Marshall (S.L.A. Marshall, Men Against Fire, 1947). In the same study it was shown that crew served weapons had nearly a 100% fire rate.

Through recognizing this "problem" and more intensive training, the rate was lowered to 50% by the time of the Korean War and 80% by the time of Vietnam.

Interestingly enough, it wasn't just a factor of dispersal of troops in WWII. 90% of muskets collected after Gettysburg were unfired, and 50% were loaded more than once (up to 10 times) implying soldiers were loading but not firing. And this given that loading to firing time is 10 to 1.

I guess I might question your assertion that those actually doing the fighting would be the ones taking the casualties as well. As I understand it, casualties were more likely occurring amongst the inexperienced soldiers newly arrived to the frontline.

Bill

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestion for an optional stand attrition rule

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) ()

Date: 03-14-06 14:49

Bill

Thankyou for responding to my question on the origins of the statistical data. There are a couple of points to make about the data.

Firstly, given the size of the target population (a couple of hundred thousand in the US army of whom, I would agree would have been rear echelon although even this group was sometimes used in combat) I would question how valid the conclusions drawn actually are. It may be that out of the 400+ questioned a considerable number did not actually fire. The next question would be to what extent does the sample actually represent the reality?

This brings me to my second point. You say that with more intensive training the rate of troops who did not fire was reduced to 50% by the time of the Korean war and 80% by the time of Vietnam. I would be inclined to agree that better trained troops would be likely to perform better in both this respect and others. Given this we could expect that better trained armies like the Germans, certainly in the case of their best units would and did perform better.

Moving on to your point on muskets at Gettysburg. I do not see what relevance this has to World War 2 given the major technological differences between small arms between the two conflicts. Examples from the Korean War, Vietnam or other modern conflicts would have been of greater relevance given the relative similarity of twentieth century small arms, albeit with some relatively minor improvements. Many of these weapons at the time of the American Civil War were Rifled Muskets still using black powder This had a high misfire rate as I am sure you will be aware. The reason for the weapon being loaded multiple times was most likely due to inexperienced soldiers in the heat of battle not

realising that the weapon misfired.

In connection to your final point. When I say "those doing the fighting" I mean all troops on the front line. However, I certainly agree with you that inexperienced troops are far more likely to become casualties.

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestiion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Bill Slavin](#) (
Date: 03-14-06 17:26

Hi Lucas,

The study did make the point that these were the guys doing the fighting, and I'm sure the numbers were a sampling of those 400+ companies. I would agree that highly trained troops would of course perform better on average, but most gaming is probably happening with your average soldier. And I think the morale ratings already reflect this.

As for Gettysburg, the conclusion drawn was not my own, but I think still supports the fact borne out by this later study, that soldiers are generally reluctant to take the life of other humans (and risk their own in the process) without significant and focussed conditioning.

All of this is really a bit tangential to the discussion, but I find it fascinating, none the less. I do think it goes back to the central point, however, which was what exactly disordered means, and at what point is a unit no longer effective. At the moment, from a purely personal standpoint, I find myself already significantly and sufficiently frustrated by disordered troops bolting at inopportune times to want to see their (or my) agony prolonged with another stage of disorder.

Bill

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestiion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) (
Date: 03-14-06 17:55

Bill

Gaming may take place with the average soldier (Experienced in BF terms). It can equally involve better or worse quality troops and must be able to cater for both, which of course BF does.

I would suggest that the morale/discipline ratings reflect the range of responses. I do actually have some additional thoughts on morale but this will have to wait for another post.

I would agree that most people are reluctant to take the life of a fellow human being without the intensive conditioning you suggest or in extreme circumstances. We know that in WW2 there were certain elite units such as the Panzer/Panzer Grenadier Divisions of the Waffen SS who few could dispute were highly effective fighting organizations. Units like this regarded war as something that they had to win even if it meant breaking the rules. It is no accident that these units often achieved tactical success inflicting heavy casualties on the opposition. at least from time to time some of these units also committed war crimes including some against civilians but this is not the place to get involved in that debate.

The Hit Rule is not intended to be another stage of disorder. It is intended rather to reflect the attritional process of squads being worn down as a result of repeated disorder results. My standpoint is that it is currently too easy to recover from disorder and that there does need to be an option for those who would like a more long lasting effect. It is for people of this group that the rule is intended. If you are happy with the existing rules, fine. It is an optional rule like the others published on

this webstite so no-one is going to be forced to play it. I personally would however reccommend at least giving it a try with or without the "Regroup Action" I suggested in my 0522 post this morning. You may find that you like the way it works once you have tried it or you may not. On the other hand, if you decide not to try that is your decision although then you will probably never know.

Regards
Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestiion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Mark Hayes](#) (
Date: 03-14-06 21:38

For decades, people have been quoting S.L.A. Marshall's conclusions from MEN AGAINST FIRE, but in recent years military history scholars have uncovered some serious problems with his WWII collections methodolgy. It has been a long time since I read about this in, IIRC, the JOURNAL OF MILITARY HISTORY, so I can't remember what the arguement was exactly. It's bugging me now, so I'll probably have to search for it. Nevertheless, since then I have not accepted Marshall's statistics unquestioningly, as I had before.

Regarding the Korean and Vietnam War studies, scholars see that data more on solid ground, but still admit that an increase in the participation in the fight by soldiers in a U.S. infantry squad (which, IIRC, is what the studies are mostly about). As the arguement goes, the addition of another BAR to the infantry squad by the Korean War provided the squad with another automatic weapon. There is something about the psychology of an automatic weapon that encourages, not only the firer, but those around him, to participate in the fight. Of course, by Vietnam, 7 out of 9 men in the average infantry squad carry automatic rifles (the other two have M-79 grenade launchers).

Mark

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestiion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [James D. Gray](#) (
Date: 03-15-06 00:32

Mark;

I, too, have read these concerns about S.L.A. Marshall's research, and I found them very plausible.

Part of the objection was due to the opposition of many WW2 veterans, who did not recall it that way at all.

Another part rested on discussions with other US Army historians who served with S.L.A. Marshall, who recall the mass interviews but don't remember Marshall asking any such question of the assembled soldiers.

Part of the reason I find these accusations believable is that Marshall's conclusions differ from my own understanding of human psychology. I can well believe that most soldiers didn't *aim* their weapons...but it seems far more likely that they would blaze away blindly rather than not fire at all. The natural reaction to fear is to drive away the source of fear, or to flee, but not to simply lie defenseless.

I also find it difficult to believe - even if Marshall's conclusions were correct - that many of the soldiers would openly admit at these mass interviews, in front of their peers and companions, that they were so chicken that they just lay there during the fighting.

Interestingly, Marshall's conclusion also contradicts other conclusions he reached

during the Korean War; his book on the effectiveness of infantry weapons in that war states that isolated outposts seemed to survive, not on getting their men to fire, but on getting them to stop! Or to put it another way, the units that were overrun were those that shot off all their ammunition, while the units that survived were those that practiced strict fire discipline and conserved their ammunition.

There was an interesting discussion of all this in an introduction to a recent edition of Men Against Fire.

Yours,
James D. Gray

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Re: Suggestiion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) (
Date: 03-15-06 06:00

James and Mark

Very interesting to read your comments in the two above posts. I am naturally somewhat suspicious of statistics in any case, particularly without additional evidence to back them up. This comes both from my Higher Education (History and Politics) and employment experiences, both of which have involved exposure to statistical data. I was aware that there have been some criticisms of Marshall's work in relation to his data collection methods although I am not familiar with the details.

I would be inclined to agree with James' hypothesis that, rather than not firing at all soldiers in combat will likely blaze away in the general direction of the enemy, particularly in the case of inexperienced, frightened individuals.

There are some interesting observations regarding human psychological reactions to combat in Brasseley's Encyclopedia of Land Forces and Warfare edited by Franklin D. Margiotta (ISBN 1-57488-087). Although largely relating to modern warfare there are some interesting entries in regard to issues such as firepower, combat motivation and combat stress much of which would also be relevant to World War 2.

One interesting point is that, although casualty rates have declined in twentieth century warfare this was due more to the increase in dispersal of troops over the battlefield. According to the entry this is explained by the increased lethality of firepower which forced troops to disperse. This seems to be borne out by the historical facts. In the early months of the First World War for example the Germans attacked in dense masses and suffered the consequences, for example at Mons or 1st Ypres. Likewise, Kitchener's New Army divisions in the early phases of the Somme battles attacked in similar dense masses and likewise took similar heavy casualties. Japanese Banzai charges of World War 2 involved ttacked in dense masses. There are records of soviet infantry in WW2 using what are essentially human wave attacks, particularly in the early years when many inexperienced conscripts were used. In the Korean War the Chinese used human wave attacks, as did the Iranians during the Iran-Iraq War. In all these cases the result was the same heavy casualties. As I have pointed out on many previous occasions this kind of deployment in a BFWW2 game does, from my experience and observations also result in high casualties. This is realistic in the sense that bad infantry tactics, as demonstrated by the historical facts, does result in heavy losses in a BF game. Historically, commanders began to change their tactics and disperse their men more widely as I have often recommended be done on the BF tabletop. Having tried this myself I know that it does work in the sense of minimising losses.

Some might ask "If I disperse my companies how do I deploy my battalion in the amount of space available" If you try to deploy all companies in line abreast you probably will not be able to get everything on to the width of the table. you will also significantly reduce your tactical options at battalion level. Battalions are often not deployed in line of comanies. Instead one company may be deployed forward and the rest back.

alternatively two companies forward and the rest back. Depending on the number of companies available there are a number of options.

The hit rule is intended to reward players who have researched historical tactics and deploy their forces in tactically dispersed formations. We see photographic evidence that such formations were used, for example on P143 of Decision in the Ukraine (George Nipe) there is a particularly good picture of German infantry attacking across open ground supported by a 37mm AT gun. We see at least 3 sections each of which have several metres between each man. In turn the sections are clearly identifiable because each section has an obvious and large gap between it and its neighbour. This can only be to counter the threat of artillery machinegun and rifle fire. It is this type of formation that I use, hence my experience that casualties are significantly reduced in comparison to those who do not use such tactics.

The downside of dispersal is an increase in combat stress affecting both individuals and units. We know from research done on the subject that individuals in 20th Century warfare have suffered more combat stress than in previous conflicts, although I suspect that the phenomenon has always been there to some degree. A well trained individual has been equipped with active coping methods involving "purposeful goal orientated behaviour by the combat soldier, such as seeking shelter, firing weaponry, and scanning or scouting the terrain (P205 - 206 Land Forces) Those who are less well trained will react more poorly" Inactivity on the other hand, or complete passivity in the combat situation, is manifested by decreased movement, relative apathy to the surroundings and lack of initiative. A consequence of this unsuccessful coping mode is not only a failure to perform effectively but also a beginning of a psychological collapse, exhibited by increasing fatigue, mounting anxiety and a sense of burnout." (Land Forces P206)

If individual soldiers can be affected in this way then it follows that units too must be affected. "Systematic observations on units, such as the conspicuous reports about the American soldier (Stouffer et al 1949), suggest that continued engagement in combat, especially when casualty rates are high, adversely affects unit morale and combat motivation. When a combat unit is losing men and leaders, its tight-knit cohesiveness is at risk of loosening. Since unit cohesion is imperative both for combat performance and as a support system, deteriorated cohesion can be perilous for a fighting unit...Extreme combat stress, however, not only impairs bonding and morale: in some cases it may result in the complete disintegration of a unit, caused by total exhaustion (manpower, equipment or fighting spirit) or panic and disbandment" (Land Forces P207)

The Hits rule simulates this process at the squad level and will eventually impact upon the company level. It is true that units with a poor discipline rating will tend to go to pieces more quickly than a veteran formation. History suggests that this will usually be the case. In cases where there is a valid exception as in the case of the raw but highly motivated Soviet militia divisions defending Moscow in December 1941 you would have to use an amended version of the discipline rating system keeping them raw for all purposes except the Manuever check for which they could be rated as experienced or veteran in order to achieve the right reactions.

Regards
Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestion for an optional stand attrition rule

Author: [Bill Slavin](#) ([\(\)](#))
Date: 03-15-06 09:38

Mark and James,
Thanks for informing me about the revised thinking on Marshall's work. I had really only encountered it quoted in another book that I was reading on the subject, and had, indeed, wondered about the impact of automatic weapons on those later figures.

Bill

Re: Suggestion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: Matt Laing ()
Date: 03-15-06 12:29

Luke,

I don't have any problem with the premise of your special rule. It only seems logical that a decrease in manpower would result in a decrease in firepower. And that seems to fit well regarding American squads where the firepower was dispersed throughout the squad. But I do not think the model fits very well for the German (and to a lesser degree British squads) squads where the mainstay of firepower was the MG 34/42 (Bren). The German squad in general could take very high casualties and still retain its firepower provided the MG was still operational though its maneuver and close combat potential would be affected. IMO your proposal is not "wrong", just incomplete. To make the rule reflect a general reality you would have to account for those differences between the squads of various nations and honestly I don't think there is enough elbow room in BF to do so without un-needed complication.

I'm not quite sure how the hit rule rewards dispersed tactics though. I've tried it and it just doesn't seem to work the way I think you intend it to. What do you propose would be an ideal deployment in terms of distance between squads?

Matt

Re: Suggestion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Ken Natt](#) ()
Date: 03-15-06 13:53

Luke's hit rule only works to encourage dispersion when faced by weapons that employ templates. However, this has nothing to do with the Hit Marker system, and everything to do with the rules as written.

I am trying to follow the reasoning behind Luke's system, and I am not sure I agree with his basic premise - which as I understand it are that casualties are not high enough.

Battlefield casualties as a percentage of units involved in WW2 actions are generally rarely above 20% in a single engagement. There are of course exceptions.

It is also true that if you rely on killing alone, units in BF will hang around well beyond that level, but to my mind this is not because casualties are being caused too slowly (as I understand Luke's theory), but that the opponents are not employing their attacking forces correctly. To give Luke credit, as he says, you can force an enemy out of a position by the use of correct tactics, not by firepower alone. This is the case, disorder an opponent, get in close, preferably with supporting armour, and either his morale will fail or he will not be able to withstand an assault

Ken

Re: Suggestion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) ()
Date: 03-15-06 13:59

Matt

For the purposes of the hit rule it was necessary to make certain abstractions. In the case of the LMG in the German squad most of the riflemen were engaged in supporting the

machine gun either by spotting targets for it, defending it or carrying ammunition to supply it. If casualties occur either among the crew or in the squad these activities will become harder. Try doing a job that should be done by three people with only two. I am sure we have all had that experience at work in this era of downsizing.

I agree that different squads were of different sizes, both within an army and in those of its allies or opponents. An abstraction was the simplest and fairest way to implement the system. Remember, it is intended to show a squad that has taken a proportion of casualties and has lost some cohesion rather than the precise situation of that squad which probably would not be known at the time. You reach a point where, albeit in an abstract way, the squad is reduced to a point where it is effectively destroyed through the combination of casualties and lost cohesion.

Your final question is very interesting. As you are aware artillery is one of the biggest killers in these rules, as it was historically. My dispersal tactic is largely designed to minimise the threat by ensuring that the enemy has a less tempting target to call in a concentration or thickened concentration against. This forces him to use ordinary shelling missions which have no modifiers. While there is no certainty in this the chances are that most of the stands covered will probably escape with a suppression based on probability, although your opponent may still have some good dice rolls. Even with poor discipline ratings you still need a 7 or more to disorder and because you have forced the enemy to spread his fire out As a rule of thumb I try not to have more than 1 or at most 2 stands under the space covered by a small artillery template. I also deploy my squads in such a way as to make it hard for my opponent to cover them all with a large artillery template. First do some research on historical company deployment formations to determine how it was done at the time. Look at combat manuals, film archives and period photographs Then organise your company into nominal platoons of two or three stands and deploy them as a real company commander would have done so. Then repeat the procedure at battalion level again deploying your companies in a manner similar to the way that an infantry battalion was deployed. Identify the techniques used to reduce casualties such as the use of smoke (blocks potential observation so you could call in a smoke screen against a likely observation point for an enemy FO)

Your opponent still has the alternative of a concentration mission but because you have deployed in a dispersed formation fewer stands will come under his artillery templates, again reducing the number of potential victims.

I would add that, if you are using the grazing fire rule, dispersal becomes even more important as the machine gun template could cover several stands At an effective range this would make the machine gun a highly effective and dangerous weapon as it often was, particularly during the First World War where many commanders did not use dispersal tactics. Again, the rule of thumb I suggested would give you good enough guidance about your deployment. Of course, sometimes it is easy to forget in the "heat of battle" which one suspects also often happened with unfortunate results for the commander who allowed it to happen (lots of sad letters for him to write, assuming he survived)

Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) ()

Date: 03-15-06 14:20

Ken

The hits rule is, in addition to the other reasons I have mentioned intended to encourage dispersal when faced by artillery or machine guns (the latter if you are using the grazing fire rule) If you use correct historical tactics including dispersal then your casualties will tend to remain low. If you do not use the correct tactics and bunch your men up you make them much more vulnerable. In game terms the more stands you have that are potentially vulnerable to template type fire the higher the probability that

your opponent will roll at least some die rolls good enough to cause serious damage. Your opponent will still be able to use point fire at individual targets and there is nothing you can do about this apart from use suppression, fire and manouver tactics, smoke screens etc. Funny how popular these suddenly became when I first implemented the hits rule.

Another thing to remember is that destroyed stands/ those carrying hit markers represent both casualties and lost cohesion. Not everyone in a destroyed stand or one carrying a hit marker is neccessarily a casualty. The unit is simply less able to fo its job if carrying a hit marker or no longer able to do so at all as an effective force if destroyed. If you are concerned that casualties have become too high then you could always try the "Regroup Action" I suggested in my 0522 post on 14 March. In fact, I am giving serious consideration to ammmending the hits rule to include this after a playtest game at my local club.

One final point Ken. You can only close assault if you are able to get into a position to do so. If you use correct historical tactics you are more likely to avoid suppression and disorder results which will give you the opportunity first to inflict these results upon enemy stands and then to successfully close assault them. If on the other hand all your stands are suppressed or disordered because of bunching then your chances of a successful assault are minimised or non existant.

Regards
Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Ken Natt](#) (195.172.81.---)
Date: 03-16-06 04:08

Yes Luke

But everything you (correctly) say about tactical deployment is already covered by the rules as is. Your hit rule seems to be written as a response to a false assumption - that everyone uses "wrong" tactics.

BF is rather good at driving home why units deploy the way they do, so if players insist on playing dumb they suffer, and if both play dumb then both suffer. That is a good thing IMHO.

I would humbly suggest that as far as I am concerned, the hit rule is an unnecessary complication, and it would therefore follow that the regroup action you suggest is a further complication introduced to rectify a problem with the (redundant) hit rule.

I also have a few problems with the historical application, for instance at Hill 112 the Dorsets were hit by Nebelwerfers as they left their start line and suffered casualties. Using your hit rule this would mean a proportion of the squads (possibly as high as 30%) would be carrying hit markers and have their combat efficiency downgraded. In the rules as written they would (probably) be able to shake themselves back into order and continue with the attack, which is what happened historically.

Either way, I can't foresee using either in our gaming group as we are happy with the rules as is, but others may wish to.

Time to draw this to a close?

Ken

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) ()

Date: 03-16-06 07:52

Ken

So far as my views on deployment go I can only comment on what I personally have seen in my particular group. There are a considerable number of individuals, often those with strong experience of certain other rule sets such as Rapid Fire (which I suspect goes some considerable way towards encouraging poor historical tactics) who often are the people most guilty of bunching their troops up. As Rapid Fire has been a widely used set of rules in the UK for almost a decade now my personal observations may be symptomatic of a wider problem in the UK. This may well not be the case in the United States.

You say that under the official version of the rules players who fail to use the correct tactics will suffer and that is true. What is also true is that, under the Hits Rule they would suffer even more. From my personal observations there are some players who, despite the consequences under the official rules, still insist on using bad tactics. However, use of the Hits rule has started to get the message across to a few of them at least (as high casualties in the early months and years of the First World War did for commanders of that era). Sometimes the only way to get a message across is by having to learn a few hard lessons.

As I have said previously, those players who use historical tactics will suffer far less even when the Hits Rule is in effect.

In regard of the Hill 112 example you and I both know that the Nebelwerfer is a particularly devastating weapon, especially when used against troops out in the open, as was the case with the Dorsets. However, I would point out that Nebelwerfers were relatively rare in comparison to other artillery. In Normandy the Germans had 3 Werfer Brigades, 1 Werfer Regiment, and 1 SS Werder Abteilung. These did not all arrive in the battle area at the same time and were spread out along the whole front. Most artillery support actually came from the divisional artillery, supplemented by guns at corps level etc. In BF terms the Nebelwerfer does have two large templates per launcher model and a +1 against troop (as does the Russian Katyusha). Even the largest gun/howitzer model would only use a single large template but does have a +2 model. Even dispersal tactics would have great difficulty in countering Rocket Launchers, although the doctrine does work very well against most artillery.

You assume that as many as 30% of the troops would suffer disorder markers under a Nebelwerfer attack. Presumably you are assuming that troops are out in the open. Chance will play a significant role in this. Your opponent may or may not roll high on the dice. I would however point out to you that under the Hits Rule the Dorsets had only just crossed the startline so any Hit Markers incurred would be the yellow (first level) hit marker which, I would remind you incurs a -1 penalty only for firing and close combat purposes. The result under the Hits Rule would be that the Dorsets would be somewhat weaker than they began, possibly with a stand or two knocked out if they were unlucky, some with hit markers (the exact number depending on how the dice rolled) but would most likely be able to continue with the attack unless they had a particularly poor series of dice rolls on the Maneuver table as well in which case the attack stalls or fails (as happened on occasions in Russia when Nebelwerfers were used. Even tube artillery could on occasion stop an attack in its tracks, particularly in cases where the attacking troops were poorly trained.

The Regroup Action I suggested is an idea that I have yet to play test. It may turn out to be a good idea or maybe not. I will let you know either way once I have tested it.

If your particular gaming group or any other does not wish to use the proposed rule that is entirely your decision. I did stress from the start that the Hits Rule was an option for anyone who wants to try it, in the same way that the engineering rule, the grazing fire rule or the the multiple built up sector rules are optional.

I would agree that the time is probably approaching where we can draw this discussion to

a close. I will play test the Regroup Action and write a final version of the rule upon which people may comment or suggest ammendments. After that we can move on to other issues.

Regards
Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: Dave Savage (
Date: 03-16-06 09:02

Luke,

"...on P143 of Decision in the Ukraine (George Nipe) there is a particularly good picture of German infantry attacking accross open groun supported by a 37mm AT gun. We see at least 3 sections each of which have several metres between each man." Remember that 1 inch equals 40 yards and each unit equals 6 to 15 men. In 15mm bases are 1.125inches or 45 yards across so each man is already assumed to be dispersed at between 3m and 7m intervals and that is if bases are adjacent to each other! This assumes that they are in line abreast. In 2 loose ranks or the equivalent then it is 6m to 14m. Troops are already fairly well dispersed!

Your proposal to add a "Regroup action" optional rule to cope with the obvious shortcomings of your "Hits" option rule is interesting. This will only add loads more complication, recording and time to the game. However, mercifully the majority of people contributing to this site can see the simpler solution - don't play the "Hits" rule in the first place.

I have played Command Decision a fair bit and with a 1:5 figure scale it needs a hits rule. This covers the situations when (in BFWWII terms a number stands get hit and some are KOed). In Command Decision the mechanisms cope with it excepringly well. However, I didn't particularly like the hits rule in Command Decision and opted for BFWWII because it played at a 1:2/3 figure scale and didn't need a hits system. I prefer casulaties being reppresented by removing stands rather than red or yellow markers. Therefore the Hits option rule is to me just plain wrong and runs counter to the ethos of BFWWII. I can only conclude that you are trying to take the best bits from 2 rule systems but in doing so you are getting getting the worst of both worlds wiuth the "hits" rule. If you want to play Command Decision then play Command Decision!

You have not answered Ken's point about the Dorsets on Hill 112. They were hit but shook themselves back into order and continue with the attack. You only argue that nebelwerfers were rare which is irrelevant to the fact that they existed and that this historically happened. You also argue that chance plays a role whilst ignoring statistics. Statistically the result will always be the same and statistically speaking (assuming the Dorsets were experienced) 20% of troops under the templayte would be KOed, 30% disordered and 30% supressed. Wioth the hits rule in force 30% of the troops would never be able to shake off the -1 combat modifier for the rest of the game. The conclusion is that this is a historical situation which is adequately represented by the published rules but not by your optional rule.

In short I agree totally with Ken on this one - you are trying to fix something that is not broken! The published rules already punish players who fail to use the correct tactics - why make them suffer even more by using the Hits Rule. They can only loose a game once!

Dave

P.S. In all this discussion about dispersal has everyone forgotten the principles of war. I'm sure that economy of effort and concentration of forces at a critical point were in the mix somewhere. With forces that are too widely dispersed then they can't

actually achieve anything so please remember to use forces according to the prevailing circumstances. Sure they should be dispersed when under artillery fire. However they should also be able to provide mutually support while firing and in close combat. It is in being able to do adopt the right posture at the right time that marks out a great leader on the battlefield (and possibly a great wargamer too).

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) (
Date: 03-16-06 10:49

Dave

The photograph in Nipe's book was referred to as an example that I feel illustrates the nature of dispersal tactics very well indeed as it does show very well the way in which an infantry platoon was deployed. You may or may not have seen that particular photograph, but, if you have not yet got Nipe's book I would certainly recommend the purchase of a copy for the detailed combat accounts and wealth of scenario ideas if nothing else.

You say that you have played Command Decision rules and can see that it needs a hit rule but a couple of sentences later you go on to say that you do not like the marker system. It may be that we are now getting closer to the real reasons you dislike the suggested Hits Rule. You obviously do not like the aesthetics of having more markers on the table. That is fine. No-one is forcing you to use the rule.

In regard to the "Regroup Action" I suggested it may be that my play testing will reveal that it causes too much complication OR it may not. That is what play testing is for!

You assume that 20% of troops under the Nebelwerfer template would be KOed, 30% disordered and 30% suppressed. How exactly did you reach those figures bearing in mind the range of possible dice rolls that a player could achieve for each individual stand, bearing in mind that there could well be several stands under the template. Your approach appears very deterministic and possibly based on your personal opinions or biases. Please explain how you calculated these percentages.

You go on to say that the 30% of the stands would never be able to shake off the -1combat modifier for the rest of the game. First you assume that 30% of the stands will be so affected, without explaining how you reached that figure given the permutations of the possible dice rolls that may result for any particular stand and extending that to the fact that there will be several stands involved. In my experience a good deal less than 30% of the stands in a company will be disordered. What there is in fact is a 30% basic chance that a stand will be disordered. That is NOT the same thing at all.

I am not suggesting that you disperse your battalion or regiment too widely. I have said that it is a good idea to follow historical practice and deploy your battalion in two or more lines of companies. Often in World War 2 the British Battalion led an attack with two companies supported by a second line formed by the other two companies. Such a formation does not prevent dispersal at COMPANY level which is what I have been suggesting.

Now you say "The published rules already punish players who fail to use the correct tactics - why make them suffer even more by using the Hits Rule. They can only lose a game once!" Dave, with the greatest respect this looks to me like the standard argument that a wargamer who thinks he is losing an argument based on historical fact would make.

You appear to agree that a player who fails to use historical tactics should suffer (and I agree with you there) However, if a player knows that he will suffer more if he does not disperse at company to a reasonable degree he will be more inclined to use correct historical tactics.

The Battle of Loos in 1915 where the British units involved had probably not developed the experience required that taught them to disperse later in the war suffered heavy losses in many units. Looking at Most Unfavourable Ground by Niall Cherry in which detailed daily breakdowns of casualties by battalion are given we see that many battalions suffered at least a hundred plus casualties (dead/seriously wounded) on the first day (25 September 1915) There were a number of units that suffered much worse than that with between 400 and 600+ casualties. For example. the 8th Devons took 619 casualties. This was due to the nature of the fighting, part of which involved advances in relatively close order against the German lines. Some of course would be due to the close in trench fighting where the British did manage to reach German lines. The Russo-Japanese War of 1905 also involved heavy casualties incurred because of close order attacks. Examples such as these clearly illustrate the dangers of close order attacks.

Sensible company and battalion commanders in World War 2 however were trained to use dispersed formations while still employing the correct principles of war and concentrating combat power. As I am sure you know it is possible to do both if you work out how it was done historically. I would also point out to you that on many occasions the Red Army got it wrong and overconcentrated their infantry in human wave style attacks as was witnessed by a number of German officers. Later in the war they changed their tactics at the small unit level as is shown by photographic evidence from the late war period showing again more dispersed small unit formations.

You accuse me of not answering Ken's question and only pointing out the relative rarity of the Nebelwerfer. However, you are incorrect here. Had you read the paragraph immediately following the one in which I pointed out the rarity of Nebelwerfers you would have read my assessment of the Nebelwerfer's BF modifiers and seen that I briefly pointed out its potential on the Russian front.

Ken, you have made it quite clear, as has Dave that you personally do not like the hits rule. However, so far as I know none of us was involved in the original play testing of the rules which is fine. So far as I can see neither you nor Dave has made an attempt to come up with anything innovative. What I have seen from you in the past is criticism, often harsh, of those who have attempted some innovation. At least I have made some attempt to come up with an idea that may improve the rules for some people and perhaps to deal with one of the criticisms of the rules raised in Mr Whooten's recent article in the March 2006 issue of Miniature Wargames.

If or when you yourself come up with something innovative I would be more inclined to take a more constructive critical approach as I did last year during the debate on the Multiple Built up sector rule during which I took note of the comments you made regarding that rule. If I think that something is an interesting idea but needs improvement I try to suggest ways in which that improvement can be made. In doing so I also recognise that other people may have different ideas on how to approach making amendments to the rules or whether amendments should be made at all. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary that I have seen you clearly belong in the latter camp, which, of course I fully respect. As I said on a number of occasions, AND AS I MUST YET AGAIN REITERATE, no-one is forcing you or anyone else to use this suggested amendment or any other that may be made by myself or any other contributor. If a group want to try it that is fine by me. If not, that is equally fine.

Regards
Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Ken Natt](#) ()
Date: 03-16-06 16:03

Luke

We don't indulge in flame wars here, so I will refrain from answering what I feel are your uncalled for slurs.

If you cannot respond to a reasoned critique of your proposal in a polite manner, I really see no point in continuing the discussion.

If you do however wish to continue in a polite and civilised manner please feel free to contact me by email, where we can do so off list.

Ken

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) (
Date: 03-16-06 16:48

Ken

While I have no wish to get into an argument with anyone or to upset people I must point out that there are things that you have said that I may have found irritating at certain points in the debate. If you feel that you have taken offense at any comments I may have made then this is regrettable. In the past, on this forum, I have, when it has been necessary to criticise someone else's ideas, made every attempt to do so in a polite and constructive way. My point is that if anyone, including yourself, comes up with an innovation that I do not agree with I would not make one or two of the remarks that you have made. However, until now I have chosen not to comment on them in any way. However, since you now make some outright public accusations against me I feel that I must answer them in public.

The next time you feel that I have said something that you find personally upsetting I would appreciate it if you would please take it up with me using an email to my email address rather than doing so on the forum which does not seem to be the action of a gentleman.

I have at all times provided reasoned responses to your criticisms of the ammendment I have proposed. These responses have been based on the significant amount of historical information available in my book collection and on the interenet. I have also based my observations on the tactics wargamers used on what I have seen people do on the wargames table on many occasions. I have also pointed out that I am at least prepared to make an attempt at innovation

Furthermore, I have stressed from the very start, as indicated by the subject title I selected, that the rule is intended to be optional only. This means that it is something that can be used or discarded by any group or individual.

If things have reached a point where both of us are getting angry with each other then perhaps it is time to end this part of the discussion.

If other people wish to continue the debate using historical data or considering playability issues then I am happy to continue the discussion.

Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Mark Hayes](#) (
Date: 03-16-06 17:13

I think Luke's suggestions for an optional stand attrition rule have been extensively critiqued and supported, and I recomend that we move on. I think there is plenty of

material here for readers of the forum to decide whether or not they want to give it a try in their own games.

Like Ken, I'm pretty conservative when it comes to changing published rules. It's not only that I was involved in the original Battlefront WWII product, it's also my temperament. Nevertheless, no game design can claim the final word on a period, and I think it is a healthy thing to look for and be open to improvements and innovations. In order for all of us to benefit most from the exchange of ideas it is important, above all else, to keep the tone friendly and respectful. That's not always easy to do with something as impersonal as a computer, but everytime I start to feel irritated or upset I have to remind myself how easy it is to misunderstand someone I have never met personally just reading lines they wrote on the internet.

Perhaps someone wants to continue the discussion of one or more of the subtopics raised here, like tactics (especially dispersal), sources, or natural fighters. If so, can we do it by starting another subject unrelated to this one? Thanks.

Mark

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Re: Suggestion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Ken Natt](#) ()
Date: 03-16-06 19:11

"neither you nor Dave has made an attempt to come up with anything innovative. What I have seen from you in the past is criticism, often harsh, of those who have attempted some innovation"

Innovation has no value in itself, it is only of value if it actually makes us progress. Nothing so far presented has suggested to me that this is the case, and in fact seems to point in the opposite direction.

So far all but one other poster also seems unconvinced, so when I see someone trying to sell me a pig's ear dressed as a silk purse, I think it right to point it out. I have however tried to do so in a polite manner, and in return Luke thinks I and others are being harsh and we are now having to duck the toys being thrown from the pram.

As to my being a gentleman, well sir, you obviously have not met me, a situation that I assure you I am more than happy to maintain.

I have already given in on this one Mark - 40+ posts trying to defend an idea that no one but Luke seems to actually want or feel we need (count them). I seem to be losing the will to live.

Ken

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [James Baker](#) ()
Date: 03-17-06 04:38

Please gentlemen. A flame war is beginning and becoming personal. It is time to calm things down. Let those who want to try Lucas' suggestions do so, let others move on.

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Ken Natt](#) (195.172.81.---)
Date: 03-17-06 08:14

Agreed

Ken

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) (
Date: 03-17-06 08:35

Agreed

Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: Andy P (152.105.240.---)
Date: 03-23-06 08:19

Lucas,
Can i sneak in here and raise an issue regarding campaign games.

You can use the optional attrition rate to note which units that survived battles are down casualties, so when you come to fight another battle say later in the day or day after, those that have recieved these hits can be amalgamated into a full unit stand again.

Just a thought

Andy

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) (
Date: 03-23-06 08:56

Andy

Exactly. Also would hold good for scenario games. However, I think that we have now finished this debate.

Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Tom Schumacher](#) (
Date: 03-23-06 09:29

Lucas

Look for the campaign rules James posted awhile back. I have included what you are describing as far as combining units. In the campaign I ran last year it worked out well, with a combined infantry company lasting several campaign days.

Regards

Tom

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Suggestion for an optional stand attrition ru

Author: [Big Mark](#) (162.116.29.---)
Date: 11-21-06 14:29

This idea reminds me of the computer game "Close Combat", which I liked very much, so I would indeed like to try this attrition system. Each element had a 'health' bar over it, which as a commander gave an instant picture of the immediate tactical situation & options available. All you need to do is put a 1/4" red or yellow pipe cleaner on the stand

Casualties

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) ()
Date: 04-28-06 07:20

I am currently reading Volume 1 of Meyer's The 12th SS. On P402 there is a very interesting reference to the potential effectiveness of firepower against an infantry target.

"The attack on Rauray started at 8am on 27 June. The A company of the 1th Durham Light Infantry advanced from the southeaster corner of the present cemetery towards the row of trees. After 20 minutes only 6 of the 70 men of the two point platoons were still alive. Then the whole battalion attacked and was caught in the crossfire of the riflemen. Very heavy losses."

This would indicate that it was quite possible for a unit to suffer very heavy losses in a very short period of time under certain tactical conditions. I would suspect that the point platoons of A company were not only caught in a crossfire. They must also have been engaged at very short range.

Using the hits rule I have found that this sort of situation is possible under similar conditions to those mentioned above. However, if using the original version of the rules only there is only likely to be a disorder.

Any thoughts?

Regards
Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Ken Natt](#) ()
Date: 04-28-06 08:06

Lots of questions - here are 5 off the top of my head

- 1 What was firing?
- 2 What was the range?
- 3 What was the cover ?
- 4 Is there any corroboration of the events or casualties - ie What do the Durhams say, how can you treat Meyer's rather specific statement as accurate - did he pause the battle and walk around checking on the effect, then push restart??
- 5 Why can't you kill 6 stands (2 platoons) in 2 turns firing under the rules as is ?

If you accept caught at very short range is a +2 weapon factor, 12SS possibly Vet +1 with ambush adding another +1 you will get some pretty devastating results from the initial volley in the defensive fire phase of the Brits turn, followed by a second shot in the German turn. If you are correct about the crossfire and add in the flank shot then there is a 50% chance of a kill per shooting element on the first turn, with similar results on the second shot as ambush is replaced by disordered targets.

Sorry to be so negative again Luke, but we need some more info

Ken

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Ken Natt](#) ()
Date: 04-28-06 08:12

Luke - is that a typo btw for the DLI btn?

Ken

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: Dave Savage ()

Date: 04-28-06 08:33

Luke,

I don't have many books with me so I can't comment on the exact issues here however, lets put this into BFWWII terms:

"Two point platoons" = 6 bases of Infantry.

"Advanced from the southeastern corner of the present cemetery towards the row of trees" = target in the open and defenders in soft cover, probably dug-in, not spotted and able to issue ambush fire.

"After 20 minutes" = 2 turns which equates to 2 lots of German defensive fire and 2 lots of German Offensive fire or 4 shots - 2 of which would probably be within the 2" range scale. Possible that one or more of the defensive fires during a Rapid Advance and so the unit will halt if suppressed or disordered.

"the crossfire of the riflemen" = Numbers of German defenders uncertain but probably a section with some heavy support. Lets assume at least 2 x Inf, 1 LMG and an HMG.

"Meyer's The 12th SS on 27 June" = Probably elite but definitely at least veteran so they will be getting +1 in in Good Order.

Now lets do the gaming:

First Defensive fire at 5" HMG and LMG fire at +4 (+2 weapon stats, +1 discipline rating, +1 ambushing) HMG probably uses grazing fire. i.e. 50% probability of a KO, 20% probability of disorder 30% probability of suppressed (assuming DLI Experienced) Infantry only slightly worse with only 40% chance of a kill. Most likely result - at least 2 bases KOed and at least 2 disordered/suppressed.

First Offensive Fire at 5" lose the ambush modifier but lots of disordered targets to pick off! MGs KO on 40% and Infantry on 30%. Most likely result - at least 2 bases KOed and at least 2 disordered/suppressed.

Second Defensive fire now at 2" range band if the DLI push forward so all PzGrens now firing at +2 but after DLI defensive fire 1 or at most may be disordered - but probably not KOed if dug-in. Assuming DLI passed manoeuvre roll then no disordered stands (although it sounds like the DLI in actuality may have rolled low here and not been able to advance) All firing with at least 20% probability of a KO, 30% if in good order and 40% if target disordered. Most likely result - at least 1 base KOed and at least 2 disordered/suppressed.

Second Offensive Fire at 2" range band as above. Most likely result - at least 1 base KOed and at least 2 disordered/suppressed.

Overall - Most likely result 6 bases KOed (i.e. 2 point platoons destroyed) and lots of disorder and suppression. So under BFWWII with average luck the historical result occurs! The result would be far worse if the German player has a bit of luck, uses his mortars or has an Infantry Gun or 20mm Flak in the area to provide some heavy back-up.

I can't see what the problem is!

Dave

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) ()

Date: 04-29-06 06:41

Ken and Dave

On troop quality I would say that a rating of veteran for 12th SS on 27 June would be about right. (If using the optional morale modifier rule I suggested recently I would give them a +2 or +3 modifier on the maneuver table, most likely a +2 because they had seen heavy casualties which had not been replaced and had probably had some of their fanaticism tempered by this.) 49th Infantry Division was well trained but lacked combat experience so a grade of experienced would be about right (I see no reason to give them any special morale modifiers at this time so they will have no extra benefits on the maneuver table under my optional morale rule)

It would be reasonable to assume that, since the British attack involved a battalion in this sector there would be two companies forward and two back.

The Germans are defending the sector so let us say that we have 1 - 2 companies in the German front line and perhaps 1 in reserve. Say a maximum of 1 German company facing A Company DLI. However, we know from Meyer's account that 12th SS had taken heavy casualties, especially in Panzer Grenadiers so let us assume that in the sector concerned we have, at most, a weak Panzer Grenadier company. We know from Meyer's book that III Battalion 26 Panzer Grenadier Regiment was deployed in the Rauray sector at the time. From Zetterling we know that this was the Gepanzert regiment and that III Battalion was the Gepanzert battalion.

Let us assume therefore that the opposition in the area in question consists of a significantly under strength Gepanzert company. In defensive operations halftracks were usually left in the rear. Every effort was made to keep machine guns up to strength so this will be assumed for the suggested ME strength below.

- 1 Commander GE-46
- 3 Infantry GE-44
- 3 LMG GE-49
- 2 HMG GE-50
- 1 Sdkfz 251/2 80mm mortar halftrack GE-23
- 1 Sdkfz 251/9 75mm close support halftrack GE-24

We know that the terrain in the Ruaray area was bocage which means that engagement ranges would be very close. In gaming terms the Germans, assuming they are dug in behind a bocage hedgerow, which is highly porous, would be in dense edge cover which means that troops could not be spotted until the British come within 2 inches of German positions assuming that the Germans hold their fire until this point (I think any sensible German commander or wargamer in the same position would hold fire until the best possible range. We will therefore assume we are talking about an ambush at a range of 2 inches, probably sprung during the German defensive fire phase of the British turn. For the ambush there will be the +1 modifier and we will assume that only the infantry and machine guns open fire at this point, the 251/9 being placed in a hidden position ready to move up during the next German movement phase.

Net modifiers for the ambush will be as follows

- Infantry +4
- LMG +4
- HMG +4

To get a knocked out result you would need to roll a 6 or higher meaning that in fact there is a 50% chance only of this result. However, most people tend to roll between 4 and 7 on a D10 which means that in fact a disorder result would still be more likely in reality (this is based on two to three years experience playing these rules and finding it very difficult to actually kill a stand. Just see how many times you can roll a 6 or higher on a D10)

If you set up this situation on the wargames table I think you will find that in reality

most British stands will be disordered most of the time rather than killed. Sometimes of course you will get lucky and roll a string of good die rolls. (However, under my hits rule all of the disordered British stands will have taken hit markers so they will have taken some casualties even if they were not knocked out)

The situation moves on to the German player turn. By this time the British stands are very likely to be disordered and a couple may have been knocked out, The Germans now call in fire support from the Sdkfz 251/2 80mm mortar halftrack which would have a +1 net modifier (0 IDF modifier with a +1 for firing at a disordered stand.) We will assume that it has a couple of stands within its template. Most likely result is suppressed (net score 7 or less) so a kill is not particularly likely from this and nor is a disorder (however, if using my hits rule any disordered stands would have taken another hit - PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS IS PURELY FOR COMPARATIVE PURPOSES ONLY) Modifiers for all direct fire would likely be the same since , although the ambushed +1 modifier is lost the Germans will probably be able to claim the +1 modifier for disorder. Results under the rules would still most likely be disorder (under my hits rule stands would now be carrying two hits meaning that they would be in a most parlous condition remembering that for each hit taken they will have a -1 modifier when they finally do return fire)

During the German movement phase the Sdkfz 251/9 75mm close support halftrack moves up into position.

The British may pass their manouver check but should use their movement turn to get withdraw since they are in a bad position (and any British defensive fire is likely to be ineffective, particularly if the hits rule is in use). However, as Dave correctly suggests the DLI may have rolled low here and were pinned down (obliged to hold their position and unable to regroup (ie they were now pinned down) Under the original rules they would most likely continue to take disorder results for the next turn and maybe casualties might begin to rise if the Germans roll very high die rolls.

Under the hits rule the Germans would have a much better chance of getting knocked out stands at this point because most stands are likely to have taken 2 hits already and will be automatically knocked out under the current version of the hits rule (all stands automatically knocked out when they receive their third disorder and hit. However, I am thinking of amending this to take account of squad size) Under the hits rule you are far more likely to get the very high loss rate in the two leading platoons of A Company DLI that Meyer claims.

This should answer all of Dave's points and most of Ken's with the exception of Ken's question regarding cooperation of Meyer's claim. We know from Breaking the Panzers that 11th DLI (part of 70th infantry Brigade) attacked Rauray on 27 June and we know from Reynolds' Steel Inferno (P130) that that brigade suffered over a hundred casualties that day. As significant proportion must have come from 11th DLI although the Tyneside Scottish were also attacking Tessel on this day so a proportion of these losses would have come from them.

Meyer tells us that the passage I quoted from his book was found in the war cemetery's visitors book in July 1974 by members of the former 12th SS during a visit to the Rauray battlefield. Sometime in the previous 30 years it would seem that the entry was made in the visitor's book, quite possibly by a survivor from the DLI. However, I cannot verify the veracity of the statement in the visitor's book with the sources I have available to me. Should anyone have further information on the DLI role in Operation Martlet, particularly in relation to their casualties on 27 June, please feel free to publish that information to this thread.

Regards
Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) ()

Date: 04-29-06 10:38

Currently developing a scenario for a game on Monday simulating the counter attack made by the Canadian Scottish at Putot on the evening of 8 June 1944.

According to Meyer's account the 1st Battalion Canadian Scottish lost 105 casualties including 45 dead which it would seem can only have been in this attack since they do not appear to have been engaged in the moribund action. 2nd Battalion 26th Panzer Grenadier lost 19 dead, 57 wounded and 21 missing although some of these casualties would be from the morning attack.

Using the hit rule modification it would be interesting to compare game casualties to losses suffered during the historical action. It would be interesting also to see what the effects of not using the hits rule would be on the same scenario and what the comparative casualties are in each scenario.

Regards
Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: Billy ()
Date: 04-29-06 11:35

I don't use dice, I use a random number generator on my calculator. It gets a fairer spread. Things die a whole lot more often.

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) ()
Date: 04-29-06 12:16

Billy

As you may remember, under the hits rule modification I use a hit is awarded every time a disorder result occurs. This means, at least in my experience, stands die more often but still at a realistic rate

Regards
Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Ken Natt](#) ()
Date: 04-29-06 12:34

"However, most people tend to roll between 4 and 7 on a D10"

eh?

The chance of a single d10 roll is err, well, 1 in 10, so all people actually roll between 1 and 10. Any other result and the bastard is cheating!

Ken

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: Dave Savage ()

Date: 04-29-06 14:02

Luke,

I followed your arguments and agreed with most of them up until you said "However, most people tend to roll between 4 and 7 on a D10"

No! This is wrong and directly contradicts probability theory! As this is the basis for your argument it undermines all your conclusions.

A fair and balanced d10 will, on average, throw a 1 10% of the time, a 2 10% of the time, a 3 10% of the time etc..... So "Just see how many times you can roll a 6 or higher on a D10" - the answer will be on average 50% of the time - absolutely and with no variation. The only thing that will change this is the number of attempts. Each individual throw has a 50% chance. Throw a d10 1000 times and then on average it will be 6 or more 500 times. Throw it 10 times and it will on average be 6 or more 5 times. However it could be 6 or more all 10 times although the probability of that is 0.097% (or in wargamers parlance - very unlikely!) Understand?

I would also suggest that many wargamers seldom use fair and balanced dice. I know I have a number of dice that, although regular and not tampered with in any way, have become my "lucky dice." I'm sure if someone ever analysed them they would find some air-bubble bias or the like!

Dave

P.S. Do you want to play Poker Dice for money?

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) ()

Date: 04-29-06 15:51

Ken

Would you agree that on most D10 rolls the number rolled is usually between 4 and 7. This has certainly been the average in my experience.

Dave

I would agree that there is indeed a good chance that you will roll 6 or higher. There is an equally good chance of a knockout. Capiche? :-)

Consequently at the range we are talking about there is a 50% chance that there will be a result other than a knockout. There is a strong chance that the result will be disorder.

Now, herein lies the problem with the disorder rule as it currently stands.

At a range of some 80 yards in the real world you will probably be talking about several casualties within a squad. These could be sufficient to make the squad combat ineffective at once (knockout in BF terms)

Otherwise the squad will probably be disordered. Now, looking at the maneuver table we see that the squad has a good chance of getting "out of jail free" if the troops are experienced or better.

I find this a little odd, not in terms of morale but in terms of the fighting effectiveness of the unit. However, it will most likely have some dead or wounded in real world terms. I am sure you would both agree that you would expect to take casualties in

your squad if ambushed at close range. Everything I read about combat at small unit level seems to indicate this (see Nolan's various books on Vietnam actions as well as unit histories such as Meyer's history of 12th SS, Spaeter's History of the Gross Deutschland, Sajer's The Forgotten Soldier for examples)

In a squad of 9 men a loss of 3 killed or too seriously wounded is quite significant. You may have larger or smaller squads/teams. I am considering amending the hits rule for those who want the extra detail in their games which is absolutely fine with me (I know that you personally do not wish to use this option - there are optional rules which other people have advanced which I do not want to use as a matter of personal choice)

To take account of varying infantry squad, perhaps 2 hits for a small squad/team of 6 men or less, 4 hits for a 12 man squad and 3 for everybody else. Larger squads would take no penalty for their first hit (benefit of numbers). Small squads would have a -1 penalty which is quite sufficient as they will be knocked out after two hits.

This brings to mind an interesting possibility of splitting squads (as is possible in the computer wargame Combat Mission) I rarely do this in Combat Mission except when I really do not wish to risk an entire squad, for example in a situation where I want to reconstitute an enemy position. If played this option should only be available to infantry stands, not commanders machine guns, mortars, vehicles etc. It would also allow for the formation of fire teams. Only troops with a quality of veteran or elite should be allowed this option. Just food for thought but this option can become available if the hits rule is used (the rules as they stand probably could not accommodate this option) I will experiment with this rule in Monday's game and let you know how it goes

In terms of tanks each vehicle represents 2- 3 vehicles anyway so I think it best to treat them as being an average sized unit for hits purposes

Regards
Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: Dave Savage ()
Date: 04-30-06 04:35

Luke,

"Would you agree that on most D10 rolls the number rolled is usually between 4 and 7. This has certainly been the average in my experience." Again No! These are independent variables. The chance of rolling between a 4 and a 7 on a d10 is on average 40% - so no the number rolled is not usually between 4 and 10.

"I would agree that there is indeed a good chance that you will roll 6 or higher. There is an equally good chance of a knockout." Again No! There is on average a 50% chance of a KO, a 20% chance of a disorder, a 30% chance of a suppressed and a 0% chance of getting "out of jail free" if the troops are experienced or better.

Can I draw your attention to the article on probability theory on the free stuff of this site - it may clear up some misunderstandings.

Dave

P.S. The offer to play any dice game for money remains and I strongly advise you to avoid Las Vegas!

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) ()

Date: 04-30-06 05:25

Dave

Get a pen. Get a piece of paper.

Pick up a D10. Start rolling the die. Roll it 100 times

Record each score rolled.

Then check the frequency of times you rolled a score of between 4 and 7.

You will probably find that you will roll a number between 4 and 7 rather more often than you roll a score of 1 - 3 or 8 - 10.

Now this particular discussion of how often you roll a particular number on a D10 is starting to get a little tiresome so I suggest we leave it here and move on.

Perhaps a serious discussion regarding the extent to which BF casualties reflect battlefield reality, allowing certain squads to break down into fire teams or even some of the ammendments I suggested to the oriinal version of the hits rule I developed

Regards
Luke

P.S. I will certainly avoid Las Vegas - not hard since I live on a completely different continent :-) I also do not believe in gambling so I must decline your offer.

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [James Baker](#) (
Date: 04-30-06 05:35

The magicians Penn and Teller say that the Las Vegas economy is based on "bad mathematics".

While the "average" die roll is 5.5 (add up 1-10 and divide by 10), this means nothing in terms of an individual die roll unless the die is unbalanced. Given a fair 10-sided die, the chance of each individual result should be 10% over the long run. Note that this does not translate to a 10% chance of each "combat result", because some combat results are more likely than others. For example, with a 0 modifier, there is only one KO result in the table, which means that a KO should occur only about 1 time in 10 rolls.

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [James Baker](#) (
Date: 04-30-06 06:46

Following up on the previous, a result of 4-7 would occur approximately 40% of the time, simply because 4 of the 10 possible outcomes lie in this range.

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) (
Date: 04-30-06 07:46

James

In the situation I mentioned we are looking at a situation where there is going to be a

+4 modifier (due to the likely ambush scenario) The chance of a knockout result on a +4 is 50% which is good odds, although there is no certainty that any German player will roll the required 6 or better for each and every targetted stand. There is a good chance that the result will instead be either a disorder which, against an experienced target, would require the German player to role a 4 or 5 suppressed which requires a roll of 1 -3.

Either way the poor old DLI are in serious trouble as they are unlikely to be able to return any effective fire against the German SS behind that bocage hedgerow (we will assume that the Germans are dug in giving improved hard cover) especially since the surviving stands will be suppressed (infantry stand fires on a -1) or disordered (-3). If suppressed the best they can do against the SS is a disorder requiring a roll of 9 - 10 or a suppressed requiring a 7 or 8. However, it is more likely that the DLI will be disordered in which case the DLI will require a 9 or 10 to even suppress.

All this of course discounts any hit modifiers for those using that option. With a -1 per hit inflicted as a result of a disorder the DLI would have an additional -1 or -2 modifier against them depending on how many times the satand concerned was disodered in the preceding ambush.

The best option for the DLI would be to call for smoke and withdraw as soon as possible That is probably what happened but Meyer tells us that subsequent to this incident the whole battalion attacked and suffered heavy losses (i.e. they reinforced failure) Maybe the DLI should have reconned the positon first identifying the German ambush and at least some of their posiotions, called in the artillery to fire HE and smoke. It would still be a difficult attack but they will not fall into an ambush and will have smoke cover reducing the German dice to a +1 or perhaps further for any supressed or maybe even disordered results inflicted by the artillery. Since the DLI have little to suppress the Germans except for Brens and Vickers MMG they should go for a rapid advance to close assault the German positons. This time their chances of success are better although they are still facing better quality troops.

Regards
Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: Dave Savage (
Date: 04-30-06 08:12

Luke,

You have now changed the question in an attempt to prove your are right. Your original statement was that "most people tend to roll between 4 and 7 on a D10" which is incorrect. Your latest statement "You will probably find that you will roll a number between 4 and 7 rather more often than you roll a score of 1 - 3 or 8 - 1." could be interpreted as being correct depending on how you choose to interperet the word "or". You will on average roll between 4 and 7 40% of the time. However you will roll between 1 and 3 30% of the time and between 8 and 10 30% of the time. So you will indeed roll a number between 4 and 7 rather more often than you roll a score of 1 - 3 or 8 - 10 but only because there are 4 possible options between 4 and 7 and 3 possible options in the others. However with a conventional interpretation of the word "or" it still stacks up at 40% between 4 and 7 (4 choices) plays 60% not between 4 and 7 (6 choices).

I do not need to roll a dice 100 times to see the outcome - I did this at primary school. Did you? I also repeated the experiment with increasing levels of complexity at various stages studying statistics at O Level, A level, Degree level and studying Game Theory for an MSc. I've just done it again as homework for my 8 year old daughter. It never changes! Now Luke - I have never before told you that you are wrong - always leaving room for a differing opinion. However in this case - you are wrong - absolutely

and with no debate!

This discussion of how often you roll a particular number on a D10 is only getting tiresome because you have a fundamental misunderstanding about probability. Until you have grasped this it is pointless having a serious discussion regarding the extent to which BF casualties reflect battlefield reality as BF casualties are determined by probability!

Dave

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) (
Date: 04-30-06 08:40

Dave

I based my statement on personal observation over the years. While this may not be a statistically valid approach it is a report of what I personally have seen.

From the dice scores I have rolled and seen rolled over the years a score of between 4 and 7 is more common than another result.

As I indicated in the post I wrote to James there is a 50% chance of achieving either a suppressed or a disorder result on a + 4 and a 50% chance of a knockout.

Perhaps it is best that we drop this line of discussion and move on.

Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: Dave Savage (
Date: 04-30-06 11:51

But Luke - you need to view your proposed optional "hits" rule in relation to the laws of probability that apply to the rest of the world and not just the little bubble of "hyper-improbability" in which you live. I can see that the hits rule would work very well if rolling a d10 actually did make a score of between 4 and 7 more common than another result. Sadly this is not the case and it kind of undermines your entire argument for an optional "hits" rule. Capiche?

Dave

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) (
Date: 04-30-06 12:56

Dave

I thought I had made it clear that I have no wish to resume the discussion about the validity of the hits rule. I feel it works well in the games I play. You are not interested in trying this option which is entirely your personal choice. THERE IS NO NEED TO START WORLD WAR 3 OVER IT :-)

Any mention I make of this rule is, to make it quite clear to you since you do not seem to have realised this point even though I have indicated this on several occasions, strictly for comparative purposes AND IS NOT INTENDED TO REIGNITE THE DEBATE WE HAD A

FEW WEEKS AGO. We will never agree on that, although I will say that I believe that, if anything, casualties in a BF game are usually on the low side, I believe a little too low.

THE ORIGINAL INTENTION OF THIS THREAD WAS TO EXAMINE HISTORICAL CASUALTIES IN COMPARISON TO THOSE SUFFERED IN BF GAMES. PLEASE LET US TRY TO STICK TO THIS SUBJECT.

In Meyer's book he gives casualty figures for 12th SS and often their British opponents (all figures are those recorded by Meyer) For example at Buron-Authie 7 June (Volume 1 P151) losses were as follows:

Canadians

North Nova Scotias 11 dead, 39 wounded, 204 missing (25 stands assuming a squad representing 10 men)

Sherbrooke Fusiliers 63 officers and men along with 15 tanks (5 model tanks)

North Nova Scotias 242 casualties including 26 dead and 15 tanks knocked out and another 7 damaged. (24 stands and 5 model tanks)

12th SS

5th and 6th Panzer companies lost 13 dead, 11 wounded, 9 Panzer IV knocked out and an unknown number damaged. (3 model tanks)

3rd battalion 25th Panzergrenadier Regiment lost 28 dead, 70 wounded and 13 missing (10 stands)

2nd battalion 25th Panzer Grenadier Regiment 21 dead, 38 wounded and 5 missing (6 stands)

7th Panzer company 2 dead, 5 wounded and 3 Panzer IV written off as total losses (1 model tank)

1st battalion 25th Panzer Grenadier Regiment (including attachment heavy infantry and flak guns) 112 casualties (15 dead, 87 wounded) (11 stands)

The Canadians, who we know were soundly defeated in this battle lost very heavily (49 infantry stands and 10 model tanks in total) The SS lost a total of 27 infantry stands and 4 model tanks which is not what I would call light casualties by any means.

This is only one example of the many casualty reports Meyer makes. Buron-Authie was clearly a hard fought and bloody action with heavy losses on both sides. I suspect that in a refight of this action without the hits rule casualties would probably be lower than this.

Dave, one final point since you have elected to bring up the subject of academic qualifications. You are qualified to MSC level in statistics. I have a degree in History and Politics. You are coming at this issue from a trained statistician's point of view. I am coming at it from a historian's perspective. Both approaches are equally valid but please do not stoop to personal attacks as I feel you did in your last post.

I am quite happy to have a sensible and informed debate with you so long as it does not degenerate into mud slinging. Let us both try to make sure that we keep this at a reasonable level.

Regards
Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [James Baker](#) ()
Date: 04-30-06 18:18

Please lets not make this personal

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) ()
Date: 05-01-06 04:15

James

My request exactly. I have no objection to an informed debate I do object to personal slurs. Even if certain people think that I am wrong they should use reasoned and logical arguments at all times.

My intention for this thread was to debate whether BF casualties reflect historical casualties or not. If the rules do not then we can discuss ways to fix the poblem within the existing system.

Regards
Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: Dave Savage ()
Date: 05-01-06 04:30

Luke,

"I thought I had made it clear that I have no wish to resume the discussion about the validity of the hits rule." They why did you mention it in the initial post?

If the intention of this thread is "to examine historical casualties in comparison to those suffered in BF games" then it is axiomatic that you first need to understand the laws of probability that govern casualties in BF games.

Sorry to feel that I made a personal attack in my last post. I assume this is either because I used the word "Capiche" back at you or I accused you of living in a little bubble of "hyper-improbability." If it was the former; then please don't give what you can't take back. If the latter then please understand that this is the only possible explanation for your obersvation that "From the dice scores I have rolled and seen rolled over the years a score of between 4 and 7 is more common than another result."

Lastly - please do not think that I am approaching this ssue from a purey statistical point of view. Firstly I have demonstrated that the statistics applied here are from primary school - so it is a common sense approach rather than a statistical one. Secondly, although my MSc may be in a statistics related subject, my MA is in Defence Stiudies. So I am already addressing this issue from a combined perspective of history and statistics.

Dave

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Andy P](#) ()
Date: 05-01-06 04:53

I have an M&S in shopping...

Andy ;-)

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Ken Natt](#) (
Date: 05-01-06 06:25

I have a terrible feeling of deja vue - go on - I dare someone.....:-)

Ken

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [James Baker](#) (
Date: 05-01-06 08:16

Deja Vu all over again

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Keith Lowman](#) (
Date: 05-01-06 09:51

Hi Guys

On the subject die rolling- you guys should game against my brother. He rolls a 10 and 9 far more than 20% of time and we use the same die. On the attack, bugga the law of probability you just know you are going to lose a few stands not just one or two when you get to 10 inch range bracket.

Keith

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Tom](#) (
Date: 05-01-06 10:49

In a game this weekend, one of the guys needed a 10 to save his Panze IIIL and rolled it. Next turn he rolled it again. Talk about luck. And this against 2 SU-85's. It made his day!

Tom

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) (
Date: 05-02-06 03:02

Keith nd Tom

Check your opponent's dice! :-)

Regards
Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) (
Date: 05-02-06 03:24

The only reason for mentioning the hits rule in the original post was for comparison purposes between the original rules and the ammendment I play (and know from my own play testing experience works well)

KEN AND DAVE PLEASE STOP READING HERE :-)

Having said that the hits rule in its original version does not take account of squad size.

I would suggest that for large squads of 12 men or more 4 hits should be taken. In this case the squad would no have a deduction for firing on the first hit (otherwise it would be unfairly penalised. Squads of 7 - 9 men would take 3 hits as now as would all vehicles as they represent 2 or 3 vehicles only. Small squads of 6 men or less would take 2 hits.

Another option that becomes available using the hits rule is fire teams. This would involve breaking a squad down into 2 sections. To calculate the number of hits a fire team can take before being eliminated simply deduct the number of hits a stand takes and halve this number (rounding up) My current thought are that fire teams should be more difficult to spot so have a negative shift one on the spotting table (this may also be an advantage small squads could have) We may also want to consider modifying the fire rules by a -1 to account for the smaller number of weapons firing or produce modified fire team cards.

Obviously there will have to be limits on who can form fire teams. In the modern era (ay from the mid 1960s - 1970s) the option would be available to all NATO armies and probably to the Isrealis. Insurgent style armies like the NVA and VIet Cong can also form fire teams as long as their discipline rating is experienced or better. In World War 2 any elite and some/possibly all veteran troops may have this option. In World War 1 only specialist troops like Storm Troopers and trench raiders (who must have a field craft rating of 1) may form fire teams.

Regards
Luke.

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Keith Lowman](#) (
Date: 05-02-06 09:25

Hi Luke,

After the first game with my brother I always use the same die as him. Luke doesn't your hits concept move away from one of the basic principles of Battlefront WWII no paper work? - not that I am knocking your ideas, as I feel the squad size and the number and type of automatic weapons in that squad are major issues that need to be accurately reflected in any set of rules worth opening.

Keith

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Mark Hayes](#) (
Date: 05-02-06 10:19

Getting back to Luke's original question, I think Ken is quite right to challenge our ability to analyze the events based on the limited information given from one perspective by Meyer. I think it much better to pose the question about casualties when you have documentation from several sources about the same event, preferably from both sides where all of Ken's basic questions can be answered. The fewer assumptions you have to make, the better.

That said, I think Dave did an excellent job of laying out a reasonable set of circumstances in BF terms that could match the facts given by Meyer. I agree with his stated probabilities, and don't see anything that alarms me.

During the years of research and playtesting the original game I watched Rich and Greg tweak the ratings and combat table to get the results they believed abstractly reflected the reality of WWII combat. I'm always open to new ideas and contrary arguments, but it would take a carefully crafted argument backed by a great deal of research to challenge something as fundamental as the BF combat system in my mind.

Mark

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) ()

Date: 05-02-06 12:08

Keith

No paperwork involved. All you need is some additional coloured markers (I use green, yellow and red) to serve as an aide memoir.

Squad sizes are pretty standard in any given military unit so this information and any differences for specific squad types can be noted on the army list. Hit markers can also be used to indicate squads who have taken casualties in an earlier action but where the scenario designer does not wish to remove a whole squad.

If using fire teams a small amount of paper work may be necessary for those who wish to recombine into the original squad. On the base of each infantry (squad) stand you put a number. You may need to buy some additional figures to represent fire teams in the event that you have permanently fixed your figures to a base. Each fire team would be based on a stand approximately half the size of a squad sized stand and would also be numbered. All you would need to do is note which squads have broken down into which fire teams. When recombining a fire team total the number of hits each fire team has received and round down.

The question to which I have not yet finalised an answer to is to what extent the basic fire factors on the current cards would need to be ammended or whether we in fact need new Fire Team Cards. Personally I would prefer the former option on the grounds that there could, judging by my games, be a lot of cards in use already. Perhaps you have some thoughts here?

Regards

Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) ()

Date: 05-02-06 12:46

Mark

It was actually me that laid out, in BF terms an analysis of the incident at Rauray

im my 04-29-06 06:41 and 04-30-06 07:46 posts. However, Ken and Dave's posts raised some questions to which I responded to the best of my ability.

As someone with a degree in history I am of course wary of relying too much on one source. Meyer however was the Chief of Staff of Hitler Jugend during this time and as such was an experienced officer in position to know what the casualty situation was within 12th SS. He does also make reference to a considerable number of Allied sources so thus far I would consider him to be a reasonably reliable source. Having said that however there is one historical issue that he does gloss over somewhat, the subject of war crimes. He does accuse Allied troops of murdering German POWs but glosses over the battlefield executions committed by his unit. Having said that there was particularly savage fighting in the Caen sector so the truth may be that both sides committed war crimes (notice allied accounts, like Meyer's account do not mention any crimes committed by their side but are only too willing to accuse the enemy) The truth may well be that both sides committed war crimes. Having said that there was something about the nature of Hitler Jugend that perhaps made its officers and men more prone to murdering POWs.

Looking at a number of sources available to be such as Spaeter,s History of the PanzerKorps Gross Deutschland, In the Firestorm of the Last Year of the War and modern sources I get the impression that casualties could often be quite heavy.

What worried me and led to the development of the hits rule was that, once I started deploying in a historical manner to counter the threat of artillery casualties were very low in my games. I have also heard a number of other people say that it is "impossible to kill anything" under the BF rules. While I would not go that far I do agree with the thrust of this argument. As you will recall a hit marker is only placed when a disorder result is rolled (a roll of between 7 and 9 depending on the discipline rating) Bearing in mind the card factors this will tend to happen at close range or will be inflicted by artillery concentrations particularly against troops in the open. I have never seen a situation during my lengthy play testing of the hits rule where attrition did not occur at a believable rate.

It is not the basic combat system I want to change. That works fine. The problem I have is in squaring the casualties suffered in a BF game with historical actions assuming that the players use correct historical tactics. If they do not then they will suffer the consequences. Indeed, during the game I played yesterday I noticed a former Rapid Fire player had finally realised the need to change his tactics beginning to spread his companies out more, using smoke and employing fire and manouvre tactics. This was because he had suffered the consequences of the hits rule on many occasions and had finally realised the need to spread out in order to reduce the effects of artillery) which, had we been using the grazing fire rule would also have minimised the effects of this as well.

This shows that the benefit of the hits rule is that it eventually forces people to realise that they must disperse their formations as was done historically during World War 2 in order to avoid casualties. Those who play using these tactics tend to suffer fewer losses.

Regards
Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Andy P](#) ()
Date: 05-02-06 13:20

I wish to point out that there are several sources of war crimes committed by all sides during war.

If you look back through history the British were quite good at it. Wasn't it us who through people from the wall of Jerusalem during the Crusades and started Jihad?

Didnt the British invent the concentration camp during the Boer war? Slavery etc we even tried to join the CSA to fight the Union to keep our slave routes open. During WW2 both sides shot POW, normally to get own back on a known atrocity. Even upto the war in Aden, were crimes committed.....

But like all things these are glossed over.

Anyhow!

I like the Lucas's idea of hits, but i wont use them because i dont like paper work. Bad memory you see. But i dont think the rules need to be changed at all, as its my opinion that they work rather well, infantry combat is rather bloody.

Andy (and his big wooden spoon) ;-)

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Ken Natt](#) (
Date: 05-02-06 14:47

Andy

Sadly, we Brits cant claim the invention of the Concentration Camp - the US were there first in the Phillipines. Funny really, they say they invented everything else, ironclads, the internet etc etc. I doubt we can be held responsible for the Crusades either, and throwing folk off walls is pretty universal. Slavery, we actually abolished well before the US Civil War, and were really far more worried about what the bloody Frogs were up to at that point anyway (like inventing ironclads!).

Luke

Not wishing to recross old ground, but my point about your "hit rule" has always been that it has been founded on a stated desire to better reflect historical tactics. I failed last time, and I still fail now, to see why the rules as written do not do this - dispersion, smoke & fire and movement are all reasonably represented without the hits rule. However, each to their own I suppose.

The problem we are left with is still the same as the first posted reply to your starting thread where I asked 5 questions. Question 1-4 are still unanswered beyond a lot of assumptions, Q 5 seems to be a resounding "you can".

I'm not knocking you here Luke, but I am surprised that we have not tried to actually answer the first four questions. Anyone got a map of the Rauray Op? - How far is it from the cemetary to the trees?, when did the attack start - what do the DLI say about it (this is self criticism as I am in DLI land and have not shifted off my arse to find out).

Another question relates to Meyer - sure he was the staff officer at HJ, but IIRC wasn't he famous for his total lack of technical (ie staff) skills?? - his briefings were about as far from the model expected of a staff officer as you could get, with scant attention paid to the usual stuff about timings, boundaries etc etc and a fair amount of flare and bravado. Fair enough, his unit got results (and bled to death doing it), but should we accept his version without question?

Ken

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) (
Date: 05-02-06 16:06

Andy

We all know that war crimes are committed during war and probably have been since the dawn of time. Meyer does seek to explain the actions of his command (and probably to justify himself as well bearing in mind that he was tried for war crimes after the war. Some or all of the allegations he makes against British and Canadian troops may be true. Interestingly Allied accounts are often equally partisan on the subject (it was always the Germans, in particular the Waffen SS who commit war crimes, never Allied troops) My purpose here is to illustrate that I do not completely trust Meyer as I do not completely trust any other source.

However, as an operational account of the battles fought by 12th SS Meyer's book is particularly well researched and, from a military history point of view his account is certainly one of the better ones I have seen as you can understand fairly easily what both sides were doing, particularly if you combine Meyer's accounts with the other sources eg Michael Reynolds' books, Terry Copp's Fields of Fire: Canadians in Normandy and of course the various Battlefield Europe booklets published by Pen and Sword.

Ken

You know that your questions 1 - 4 cannot, given the information available, be answered by more than inherent military probabilities. If you can supply evidence from the DLI since you are in the area then we can proceed with a deeper analysis and reconstruction of the incident to better determine what may have happened.

The question of the timing of the attack can be answered from Meyer's book. He quotes the entry from the cemetery visitor's book which tells us that the attack started at 8am on 27 June. Meyer also tells us that the record was made some time before July 1974 by a member of the DLI. This of course would need to be verified and the identity of the DLI identified. Was this individual an eye witness to the events he describes? Can his story be corroborated by DLI records? Sounds like a job for you there Ken :-)

You say of Meyer "Fair enough, his unit got results (and bled to death doing it)" which appears to be a criticism of Meyer's generalship. First Meyer was in a very difficult position owing to his orders from Hitler (via the German high command) which meant that his (and German 7th Army) options in Normandy were limited. They were essentially under orders to dig in and hold, irrespective of whether that was actually the correct operational decisions. I think most historians would agree that this was the wrong decision and doomed the German army in the west to heavy casualties and ultimately to defeat. Whether a more flexible approach would have worked is open to debate. I think that the Germans could have prolonged the war and inflicted heavier casualties on the British and Americans by adopting a more mobile strategy but ultimately the war in the west was lost once the Allies secured the bridgehead in Normandy, in particular when we consider the effects of the Destruction of Army Group Centre in June 1944 (which in my personal view was the true decisive battle that doomed Germany).

On the question of Meyer's staff work. German officers did tend to approach war fighting differently. They used the Auftragstaktik command doctrine, giving orders "off the hoof" and tending to be less concerned than the British staff officer with issues like unit boundaries and timing which are more characteristic of the Befehlstaktik command doctrine. Meyer, as the divisional staff officer was simply doing his job as a good German staff officer under Auftragstaktik doctrine.

Hitler Jugend did indeed suffer heavy losses in Normandy as you very correctly say. Meyer admits this (you have read his book?) Other German units in Normandy also suffered heavy losses as did German units on every other front. Allied units suffered losses almost as heavy in some cases. As David Glantz pointed out in one of his recent books heavy casualties do not mean that the unit was poor quality (or that staff work was poor) Heavy casualties were often simply a feature of later World War 2 combat.

The question is why? In Normandy fighting was clearly very intensive which all the accounts confirm. One reason was that the terrain was often very close (either bocage or

built up terrain) Another is the amount of artillery available. In many of the historical refights I have run there is a lot of artillery available. I have used artillery in the amounts actually available to WW2 battalion and regimental/brigade commanders. Artillery can be one of the greatest killers on the battlefield. In a recent game I had a TOT against four Panthers and (rolling some good dice) was lucky enough to knock three of them out. In the same game I fired a thickened concentration against a company of infantry out in the open for several turns gradually attriting them with hits generated by disorder results. It is also possible to do this with infantry in cover but it is more difficult and will take longer due to the cover.

As you know the German referred to Allied (and particularly British) artillery support as Trommelfeur (drum fire) and this was something that the Germans hated and feared almost as much as the Jabos. Meyer's account, and other German accounts such as "In the Fire Storm of the Last Year of the War" are full of references to this phenomenon. By the way, it was also a phenomenon of the First World War, certainly from the time of the Somme as Jack Sheldon's "The German Army on the Somme 1914 - 1916" (which primarily uses the surviving German sources from that time - it seems many official records were destroyed in the allied air raid on Potsdam on 14 April 1945) Artillery does tend to cause heavy casualties even against dug in troops.

Regards
Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Mark.Hayes](#) ()
Date: 05-03-06 00:10

Luke,

I was complimenting Dave for his 4-28-06 post. I have found that of all the posters on the forum, Dave's views on BF most closely match my own. I like to think of him as my "evil twin". :-)

Ken,

Just to set the record straight, I don't know who "invented" concentration camps, but the Spanish were using them in Cuba before we acquired the Philippines by treaty in 1898. We won't get into the horrible myths about "civilizing with a Krag" that was implied. As far as ironclads go, only the uneducated goofballs in the United States think we invented them. Everyone who has studied naval history knows that the first ironclad was invented by the Koreans. :-)

Mark

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) ()
Date: 05-03-06 03:38

Mark

Dave's 28-09-06 post was indeed a good one and led directly to my post next day which analysed the Rauray action in BF terms from the perspective of Meyer's book taking into account what the Germans MAY have actually had in this vicinity.

I would suggest however that the specific war crimes committed in Normandy by the Germans and possibly by the Allies as well centered around the issues of battlefield executions. The concentration camps are a completely separate issue of which the Nazis were unquestionably guilty. Anything the British did during the Boer War did not amount

to the deliberate policy of genocide which is the big difference between the Boer War British camps and those the Nazis had during the Second World War. I am not familiar with the Spanish camps in Cuba so cannot comment further on that issue/

Could we try to limit the discussion to Normandy please.

Regards
Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Craig Simms](#) (
Date: 05-03-06 04:17

Keith,

you think gaming against your brother is bad - try working with him :P

(ducks....)

Craig

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: Dave Savage (
Date: 05-03-06 05:49

I was watching Matrix on TV last night - where "Deja Vue" is the prelude to lots of me in sunglasses and black suits laying down an unfeasible amount of suppressive fire that never actually achieves anything ;-). However, consider it an honour to be christened Mark Hayes' "Evil Twin" - Thanks Mark!

War Crimes - They happened! However, I personally think that they are best left to historians rather than wargamers! The proceedings at Nuremberg are a matter of record if anyone wants to read them (they are very dull let me assure you). I for one am far more interested recreating the incredible military struggle that occurred in Normandy and by doing that in some small way honouring the majority of ordinary men on both sides who achieved incredible things while fighting and dieing for their contries, beliefs and honour.

Ken / Luke - be careful when discussing Meyer. Are you talking about Hubert Meyer the Chief of Staff or the 12th SS who wrote most of the histories or SS Standartenführer Kurt "Panzer" Meyer the CO of 25th PzGren Regt who took over the division on Fritz Witt's death (14/6/44) and who wrote "Grenadiers." I think that the Meyer from which Luke initially quoted is not the Meyer who led the Division.

Now onto the main subject of the post:

I was playing a game last week where I had a flamethrower unit attached to a company. It was clearly a flamethrower unit as it had a little person holding a flamethrower on the base that I had spent hours painting. However, I used it as normal infantry throughout because I forgot it was a flamethrower. Now if I can make such an obvious mistake how much easier would it be to confuse me with 4 hit stands, 3 hit stands, 2 hit stands, 4 hit stands that you have divided into fire teams and may wish to recombine at some point in the future, stands that have taken 1, 2 or 3 hits, suppressed and disordered stands etc.... Not to mention remembering the different discipline ratings and various additional plusses for morale and close combat ratings. So even if I really liked the

hits rule - I'd be in agreement with Andy (and his big wooden spoon) by wanting to "Keep It Simple" (KISS) - I have omitted what the last S stands for for fear of offending anyone.

Lastly - a comment from a Professor who led me on a battlefield walk in Normandy 3 years ago. He recounted to me a story when he had led a similar walk with a group of veterans for the 50th anniversary of D-Day. On this day he described a fearsome action where an Allied Company was shot to pieces in an advance by a unit of the 12th SS - he didn't mention where this was - it may even have been Rauray. Anyway he described it by saying that a company of the 12th SS was hidden behind the hedge and the Allied survivors nodded in agreement until a man at the back quietly said "That is incorrect!" At this point the Professor said "Excuse me I think you are wrong - I have read all the books and the first hand accounts and I can assure you that that is the way it happened." To which the voice replied "You may have read all zee books but I was a soldier in the Flakvierling Zug II/12th SS PzFlak and on the day you mention I was here dug-in behind this hedge. Zee fighting you mention was not recorded because it was very short and our job was to shot down the Spitfires and not infantry." To prove his point he bent down, dug a 20mm shell case out of the ground and chucked it at the Professor!

Why recount this little story? We'll I suppose it is a plea for answers to Ken's questions 1-4 as well as being an admission that my earlier post of how the DLI may have been legitimately decimated in BFWWII terms by a single platoon of 12th SS Infantry made some significant assumptions. How much easier would it have been to eliminate 6 bases with three 20mm Flakvierling's that ambush at +4 up to 10 inches away or +5 at the closer range?

The Evil Twin

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Ken Natt](#) (195.172.81.---)
Date: 05-03-06 07:10

Damn - yes of course - I'm confusing my Meyers (you may call me Goering) :-)

Ken

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) (
Date: 05-03-06 11:32

Dave

I thionk we have now covered the issue of war crimes in Normandy quite sufficient depth. My point was that you can never rely completely on Meyer or indeed any source from either side.

The Meyer I meant of course was the Hubert Meyer who served as the division/s Chief of Staff and wrote the 12th SS two volume divisional history (which was recently republished by Stackpole at £12.50 per volume - a very good deal)

The incident referred to in the post above may or may not be the same incident Meyer refers to as mentioneed in my original post. The Flakvierling Zug II/12th SS PzFlak could have done the damage. It could also have done the damage in combination with infantry although this must remain conjectural. However, in yoput 28 April post you did say "Numbers of German defenders uncertain but probably a section with some heavy support. Lets assume at least 2 x Inf, 1 LMG and an HMG." In my 29 April post I estimated an understrength company from III Battalion 26 Panzergrenadiers which we know from Meyer's book was deployed in the Rauray sector at the time. The veteran you mention

could well have been part of an attachment to 26 Panzergrenadiers. Meyer does mention that there were two anti aircraft batteries present in the Cheux area on 26 June 1944 and it would make sense for 26th Panzer Grenadiers to have some AAA support so both stories could be true.

In regard to the hits rule varying the number of hits depending on squad size and administering the fire teams has yet to be fully tested. Play testing may or may not reveal that this is too hard to administer and this may be the case with the fire teams idea.

Regards
Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Richard de Ferrars](#) (
Date: 05-03-06 15:42

Luke

Don't forget that III/26 was the only SPW Battalion in the division, so perhaps more likely to be "over-endowed" with heavy weapons. Also, (speaking from many, many hours of reading around 12SS in Normandy!) it was the only Battalion that had not been engaged in a "full-frontal" assault on Allied positions and, therefore, was probably closest of all 12SS Battalions to full-strength.

Richard

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) (
Date: 05-03-06 17:22

Richard

OK, so maybe add another infantry stand or two to my original suggested III/26 company at Rauray.

May not make that much difference as for the British we the whole of the DLI was involved, A company being one of the forward companies in this attack.

Regards
Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [R Mark Davies](#) (
Date: 05-04-06 07:29

The approach to Rauray from Fontenay-le-Pesnel is very open for the last mile or so. It was most definitely not bocage country (though was/is in the immediate vicinity of Fontenay-le-Pesnel and the Bordel valley on the right flank of the assault. In 1944 it was only slightly less open (I have Kevin Baverstock's enhanced air recce photo files - kindly loaned by him - I can't share, so please don't ask), with a few thin belts of trees and low hedges lining some of the roads.

There is virtually no dead ground whatsoever and it is an ideal killing ground for mortars and MGs.

I'm somewhat concerned by Meyer's comments re the cemetery visitor's book though - the Fontenay-le-Pesnel cemetery, which sits in the centre of the battlefield and adjacent to the 49 Div memorial, is filled with casualties from 59 Div's July battles - NOT with 49 Div casualties from Op Martlet (though recently-discovered bodies from the Martlet battles have been buried there).

Captain A P Whiutehead of 11 DLI wrote: 'the leading companies were met with heavy and accurate small arms fire soon after crossing the start line and enemy artillery and mortar fire began to fall on our back area. Opposition was particularly heavy on the right on 'A' Coy's front. The CO Lt Col R W M de Winter moved up 'C' Coy in support. Ground was being made and by 1430hrs all companies were on their objectives...'

Casualties were recorded as 108 men and 7 officers - these are killed AND wounded, not just killed.

Mark

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Ken Natt](#) ()
Date: 05-04-06 12:58

Thanks Mark

So "After 20 minutes only 6 of the 70 men of the two point platoons were still alive" is looking a bit open to question when compared to 115 killed and wounded all day.

Having said that, Meyers version, if stripped of some of the hyperbole, is still believable - that the DLI were hit hard at Rauray by supported small arms.

Luke's initial post questioned the way that BF models this. So far as I can see, and making the assumptions about who was involved and what happened, the rules do seem to model the events fairly well.

Is this a consensus?

Ken

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [R Mark Davies](#) ()
Date: 05-04-06 13:02

Ken,

I agree - the British accounts fit the German accounts reasonably well and the terrain (I forgot to add that I've walked it!) would undoubtedly allow a high casualty rate from smallarms, a la WWI.

Again I agree, the rules would model this very well - frontal attacks against an unsuppressed enemy are always costly.

Mark

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) ()
Date: 05-04-06 16:53

Mark wrote

"I'm somewhat concerned by Meyer's comments re the cemetery visitor's book though - the Fontenay-le-Pesnel cemetery, which sits in the centre of the battlefield and adjacent to the 49 Div memorial, is filled with casualties from 59 Div's July battles - NOT with 49 Div casualties from Op Martlet (though recently-discovered bodies from the Martlet battles have been buried there)."

While you say that much of the cemetery filled with casualties from 59th division's battles you also accept that there are 49th Division dead from the Martlet battles buried there as well. The 27 June attack to which Meyer refers was a part of Operation Martlet as Patrick Delaforce attests in the Polar Bears *)his divisional history of the 49th Division) Martlet was a subsidiary operation to the main Epsom operation.

"Captain A P Whitehead of 11 DLI wrote: 'the leading companies were met with heavy and accurate small arms fire soon after crossing the start line and enemy artillery and mortar fire began to fall on our back area. Opposition was particularly heavy on the right on 'A' Coy's front. The CO Lt Col R W M de Winter moved up 'C' Coy in support. Ground was being made and by 1430hrs all companies were on their objectives...'

Casualties were recorded as 108 men and 7 officers - these are killed AND wounded, not just killed.

So "After 20 minutes only 6 of the 70 men of the two point platoons were still alive" is looking a bit open to question when compared to 115 killed and wounded all day."

This would seem to agree with Meyer's account He may be incorrect in his statement that only 6 out of the 70 men were still alive after 20 minutes. Perhaps a more correct interpretation would be that only 6 men were still capable of fighting after 20 minutes the others being killed or wounded, Meyer does tell us that there was probably a short ceasefire following this action between 1200 and 1400 after which fighting was resumed. (As a point of interest Meyer records the casualties suffered by 3rd battalion 26 Panzergrenadiers being 8 killed, 23 wounded and missing) I would suggest that the accounts given would support the hypothesis that A Company suffered many of DLI's casualties that day many of whom probably fell during the incident mentioned by both Meyer and Captain A P Whitehead.

Ken wrote

"Having said that, Meyer's version, if stripped of some of the hyperbole, is still believable - that the DLI were hit hard at Rauray by supported small arms.

Luke's initial post questioned the way that BF models this. So far as I can see, and making the assumptions about who was involved and what happened, the rules do seem to model the events fairly well."

All I can say is that in my experience with Battlefront prior to implementing the hits rules the number of stands knocked out, even at the closest ranges was very low (usually just 3 to 5 in an average battalion sized game lasting 8 -12 turns or so which is about all we have time for on a 3 hour club night session including setting up time) We have found that disorder results are much more common even at the closest of ranges and that is the reason for going to the hits marker system.

While the actual number of stands knocked out is not significantly greater there are rather more stands carrying either a first or second level hit which does seem to more realistically portray the level of casualties involved. The exact proportion will still depend on luck, skill, and cover ((or lack of) And yes, frontal attacks over open terrain are costly.

All I will say is try the hits system out for yourself for a couple of games before making up your mind one way or the other.

Regards
Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: Dave Savage ()
Date: 05-05-06 04:10

Luke,

"in my experience with Battlefront.....the number of stands knocked out, even at the closest ranges was very low (usually just 3 to 5 in an average battalion sized game lasting 8 -12 turns.....disorder results are much more common even at the closest of ranges..."

Can you just check your dice for me. It is a d10 with numbered sides from 0 to 9 and you do count the "0" as a "10" don't you? I'm not trying to be condescending here but I can't understand why your experience with BFWWII is so dramatically different to my own!

I generally find that MEs average about 50% casualties during a closely contested 8-12 turn game - so about 20-25 bases knocked out during an average game for an average battalion.

The Evil Twin

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) ()
Date: 05-05-06 08:32

Dave

Yes my dice are D10s numbered 0 - 9 and yes we do count the 0 as a 10 :-)

Perhaps the reason for the difference between my experience and yours is that most BF players at my particular club are generally a cautious and canny bunch. Once people learn to spread out, use fire and movement tactics, bombard enemy positions prior to an attack and use plenty of smoke casualties fall significantly most of the time. Also some of us roll low dice rolls sometimes :-)

There can be rare occasions when casualties rise further. In a game last Monday a company of mine was caught by an indirect fire mission digging in in a forest (Hurtgen Forest scenario - as a special rule we did have an extra + 1 for indirect fire against troops not dug in to represent the effects of the extra shrapnel caused by tree bursts) My opponent just happened to roll a string of very good dice rolls (yes - I checked his dice :-)) killing my company commander in the first barrage along with killing or disordering many of that company's squads (with hit markers added for disordered troops as per my house rule) Then I rolled a 1 for the Manouver table test and the company (rated as experienced) panicked en masse. This proved to be the turning point of a closely fought game. Note that it took two or three turns for the bombardment to have an effect but the real damage was done in the first turn of the bombardment and that company only finally panicked after enemy armour approached to within 5 inches of their position. Even though they had only taken 25 casualties most stands were disordered, the commander was dead (could not appoint a new one because of a hold position result in turn 2 of the bombardment) and then the enemy armour moved up giving a total modifier of - 6 for disordered stands or -4 for suppressed (no stands were in good order at this stage). The roll of a 1 was fatal under these conditions.

Not complaining though. Panic did occur sometimes as on at least one occasion in the Hurtgen forest and most likely happened elsewhere as well only incidents were not always

recorded.

I would suggest that, in addition to tactics and luck, much will also depend on terrain, posture (attack or defence), the amount of artillery available. Looking at Meyer's book casualty breakdowns for 12th SS often appear to be low but it must be remembered that they did not receive replacements during the Normandy campaign so their companies soon became very under strength. Consequently, although the figures Meyer gives for many of the actions he reports may seem quite low it must be remembered that the German losses in proportion to their strength (maybe 4 - 8 stands in a battalion in many cases) was actually quite high. Other German units in Normandy and elsewhere suffered similar problems later in the war (see unit histories such as Panzer Korps Gross Deutschland, In the Fire Storm of the Last Year of the War and of course Meyer's history of 12th SS for highly detailed German perspectives)

Regards
Luke

[Reply To This Message](#)

Re: Casualties

Author: [Lucas Willen](#) (
Date: 05-05-06 12:59

Typo error in previous post "Even though they had only taken 25 casualties most stands were disordered, the commander was dead (could not appoint a new one because of a hold position result in turn 2 of the bombardment) and then the enemy armour moved up giving a total modifier of - 6 for disordered stands or -4 for suppressed (no stands were in good order at this stage). The roll of a 1 was fatal under these conditions."

Should read even though they had only taken 25% casualties"

Sorry for any confusion this may have caused

Luke