

Battalion Combat Series v1.1

Official Variants and Optional Rules (23 Apr 18)

These rules can salt the game's model to taste in addition to those printed in the rulebook. They tend to add 'more', but only you know if the 'more' they add is worth it in your play. My recommendations follow each one in the design note.

30 May 17 Updates:

The Hard/Soft Jump rule no longer has the material regarding becoming adjacent to HQs and Trains. This confused many, so now the only thing that causes the rule to activate is if the enemy moves into the HQ/Trains hex.

Recon Screens needed a smaller Screen Zone for LB because of the denser terrain. It uses a 2 hex screen zone instead. To leave room for future developments, the Recon Screen rule now identifies Screen Zone Radius by game title.

3 Jun 17 Update:

Added a clarification regarding doing Fatigue Recovery and retaining Prepared Defense in the Orders optional.

10 Jun 17 Update:

Added a note that the selected location for the Combat Trains after a Jump need not be Legal at the moment.

10 Oct 17 Update:

Refined Soft/Hard Jump to include all Combat Table results that generate any form of Retreat or elimination of the final Combat Unit step in a hex also containing a HQ or Combat Trains.

23 Feb 18 Update:

Eliminated the apparent change in Soft/Hard Jump allowing Unprepared Units and HQs to try to jump enemy HQs and Trains. They cannot do so, still, so that was addressed.

18 Mar 18 Update:

Added "on the map" to the sentence explaining the sequencing needed in the Orders rules.

23 Apr 18 Update:

Added the Activation Smoothing Rule.

1. Ranged Fires.

In any Engagement at a range greater than 1 hex, read any *Both Loss* result as *No Effect*.

Design Note: *This little modification merely reduces the likelihood of 'kills' at ranges greater than one. For obvious reasons, AFV loss rates drop as range increases. It also has a side effect of watering down the advantage that occurs when a unit engages another outside the latter's range. While the original effect is realistic, it also tends to exaggerate the use of a player's perfect intel view of the battlefield which is not a good thing. Reducing kill rates at range make the deal for the player in those situations a bit less impressive.*

2. Modified Chit Draw.

If Chit Draw for Activations is used, rather than simply drawing one chit and Activating that Formation, do the following.

Draw three chits. The side that owns the majority of the three gets to pick the Formation from those available to Activate. Remaining chits go back into the cup.

Design Note: *h/t for John Kisner for this method. Makes for a good compromise between full random selection and having the player pick freely.*

3. Planned Fatigue.

Introduction: This is a series of interrelated concepts first proposed by Jim Stravers. The changes below are in a cribbed form for brevity. It is suggested that both the whole package be used if any of it is wanted AND that players approach it only after getting a grounding in the RAW system.

(Replace the current Fatigue SNAFU DRM (Fat-1 = -1, etc.) with the below)

Fresh = +1 SNAFU

Fat 0-3 = +0 SNAFU

Fat-4 = -1 SNAFU

Fat-4 **cannot** 'pay Fatigue'. Fat-4 takes effect **instantly** when the Formation obtains a Fat-4 marker (in the midst of the current activation). If a Formation is Fat-4 *when it initially activates*, it **must** conduct Fatigue Recovery.

Fatigue increase not done on Table with a die roll, instead, 'pay Fatigue' to purchase the the following:

+1 Place an OBJ further than 15 hexes from the HQ*
+1 Place one additional non-Recon OBJ*
(if both above apply at once, Fatigue increase is only +1)

+1 Remove Traffic marker*
+2 Conduct Forced March
+1 Second Activation DRM (+2 to the Second Activation Die Roll)

*Can be done more than once in an Activation, pay seperately each time (e.g. removing two Traffic markers = +2 Fatigue)

Note that even with the ability to pay Fatigue to buy additional OBJ markers, such purchases can only be done at the time when SNAFU OBJs are placed, not any time during the Activation. Recon placement of OBJs do not count for the 'additional OBJ' Fatigue cost, but might apply the 'further than 15' cost.

SNAFU:

- Pass SNAFU gives only **one** OBJ.
- Partial and Fail give no OBJ.
- Additional OBJs can be purchased using either Fatigue or Recon abilities.
- Partial SNAFU allows only one Fire Event per unit, not 2.

Forced March:

- Announced on the First Activation of a Formation.
- Purchased using Fatigue.
- No combat actions (Barrage, Fire Event use, any form of attack, no OBJs, testing bridges, or exiting for VC purposes) are allowed.
- Roll and Apply SNAFU normally.
- NO Second Activation allowed in such an Activation
- MA of all units is x3 (Leg/Truck) or x2 (Tac) **after** applying SNAFU effects.

Traffic:

- Add 'Traffic' to all CRT results less than the 13+ die roll.
- Traffic applies to the hex with the marker **and** the 6 adjacent to it. (No additional effects if there is an overlap between multiple markers.)
- The player can remove a Traffic marker after it is placed by paying Fatigue.

Fatigue Recovery:

- Treat Fatigue Recovery **exactly** like a SNAFU Failure... except that Recovering Formations **cannot** carry any Pre-Def marker while doing so (yes, that means its defenses drop to do Fatigue Recovery).
- **Eliminate Failure Flip.** The player must commit to a Fatigue Recovery Activation before he sees the SNAFU result, no ability to turn a Fail into a Recovery.
- Fatigue Recovery is required if the Formation is Fat-4 when an Initial Activation begins.

Minimal Movement:

In a SNAFU Failure (incl. Fatigue Recovery), allow all units except the HQ, to move 1 hex or 1 MP whichever is further.

Design Note: *There are a number of things going on here. The revision to the SNAFU DRM reflects that Fatigue collapse, like so many things, isn't a linear progression of effects but rather a fairly staeady state until a boundary (Fat-4) is hit. This is also why Fat-4 is given more teeth here. Paying Fatigue for more activity puts it under the player's control. He can force his units to do more, at a cost. This puts more planning in the hands of the player and removes some hoping for chance to help out (as in running an engine, where the fuel tank gets used, no amount of 'luck' is going to keep it topped off... Fatigue is like that). Other features above integrate these concepts into the other system's in the game. This is a good package of rules to play with once you are well versed in the regular system.*

4. The Rod Miller Package.

Attrition. Do not use Safe Path, instead if the unit is 'bracketed' (surrounded by units and/or appropriate EZOCs) apply what would have been the Safe Path Isolation losses.

Tiger Rolls. Roll for each Tiger unit in the Reinforcement & Weather Phase, do not roll in any Activation. Same die roll as before (loss on a 1), so some Formations will get a little gimme if they activate twice.

Design Notes: Rod enjoys a high level of streamlining and doesn't like to mess with what he calls 'hair on the ball'. These changes clean out some things he is OK with ignoring that many players would find unsettling (even more than they do already). The Tiger roll rule is there mainly to make it easier to remember.

5. Middle Ground Coordination.

Allow Coordination markers and their DRMs to accumulate up to 3 markers for a single Formation. Markers are applied as they are currently with the exceptions below. Do not add additional markers once a Formation has the three marker maximum, ignore any excess at that point.

- Apply **two** Coordination markers (not one) to each Formation if units create (even temporarily) a stack containing units from more than one Formation as per 4.4a.
- Apply one Coordination marker to the Activated Formation for each Traffic result created. There is no effect on the Targeted Formation(s), only the Active one.

Design Notes: This creates a middle ground between the basic system and the full-Traffic Optionals. A decent compromise between them.

6. Orders.

Orders consist of **nothing more** than the location the formation is to move to and maybe a waypoint or two to make the route clearer:

For Example: Bardia via Sidi Aziz.

This is enough to describe how a division moves from wherever it is to Bardia with a routing that includes Sidi Aziz. No need to include 'attack', or any other details, those exist merely because the Formation meets the enemy (or not). **WHAT** a Formation is to be doing or **HOW** to do it **need not be mentioned**. Note that the player can, indeed, slow step his movement, or even not move, to his heart's content... *he just cannot decide to 'march the other way' on the fly.*

Also, a Formation that is defending doesn't need an order unless the HQ is to be moved.

Orders can be changed only in the Assignment Phase each turn. Jot them down in secret on scratch paper. Note that in an exception to the normal rule (BCS 2.1) that there is no Assignment Phase on Turn 1 of any scenario, if this Option is being used, there is an Assignment Phase on Turn 1, but it can **ONLY** be used for the creation of orders.

Orders can be freely assigned on Turn 1 of any scenario, *except* that if a Formation listed as PD cannot leave PD until Turn 2.

Exception: If a Formation (not currently in PD) Activates in any turn in which its MSR has been cut (where it was not cut when the turn began), the player may substitute any orders desired for the ones written before the MSR was cut).

If any Reinforcement Formations are to arrive in a turn (no matter when they might do so based on other requirements), be sure to give them any orders they might need in the Assignment Phase.

As part of the Orders system, the abilities to enter Prepared Defense (PD) and conduct Fatigue Recovery are more strictly controlled (no rushing forward and then popping into PD in the 2nd Activation, for example).

All PD and Fatigue Recovery changes on the map should be marked **AFTER** both sides have completed their Order writing in the Assignment Phase.

PD is marked, retained, and sometimes removed in the Assignment Phase (enemy forced removals, such as when an HQ is jumped, occur normally). Formations with a PD **cannot** get a 2nd Activation. Orders cannot be assigned to a Formation in PD. If the enemy forces a PD to be removed before that Formation Activates, then it will get a normal 2nd Activation, but will have no orders to move.

Fatigue Recovery **ONLY** occurs in the Assignment Phase. Flip those that conduct Fatigue Recovery to their **DONE** sides. Remove all the language regarding Failure Flip or various other Activation use/restriction rules.

Fatigue Recovery **cannot** be done if the Formation does not have a Complete MSR at the moment or if it has any units that are subject to Isolation.

Just so it is very clear, both here and in the Standard BCS rules, no Formation can Recover Fatigue **and** be in Prepared Defense at the same time. Fatigue Recovery cannot be done while a Formation has a Prepared Defense marker. If it has one, it can be removed so that Recovery can occur.

Design Notes: *These are very, very simple orders. They essentially do one thing: display the relative inertia of Formations. By committing to a specific action (or not) at the start of the turn, even where that action is as rudimentary as where the HQ might be move to, a whole new world of Formation interactions opens up. Traditionally, players wait until the Formation's activation before deciding what they will do (using all that perfect intel we know and love). It is amazing to watch hitherto good players vibrate in indecisive puzzlement when they have to choose in advance and live with it. We have found this to be very easy to play and add a lot to the game. It isn't for competitive players or those who will squeak out the very edge of matters to try to minimize the effect on their forces, but if you play with a good heart and want to see some lovely effects... sticking to the intent of the rules above and your own understanding of what you intended to do when you set down your orders, you'll enjoy the swim.*

If you are playing with someone who cannot grasp the concept of following his own instructions as he imagined them at the time they were written, this option should not be used with him.

7. Soft and Hard Jumps.

Any time a hex containing a HQ and/or Combat Trains...

- 1) is entered by an enemy Combat Unit (given the restrictions in BCS 1.2d and 9.1f),
- 2) is inflicted with a Retreat result, of any kind,
- 3) has its last Combat Unit step eliminated as a result of a Combat against it,

...roll one die* and execute the following:

- 1-4** Soft Jump
- 5-6** Hard Jump.

Hard Jump: Execute 9.1f and 10.3d as written, displace/retreat just like the normal v1.1 rules, all effects intact.

Soft Jump: Wait until the currently moving enemy stack stops moving (it might still have an Attack, etc. to do). Then...

The owning player shifts **both** jumped HQ and their Combat Trains (*regardless* of which was actually jumped) as needed (retaining PD, no Coordination, no Ghost effects...it just wasn't found). *There is no concern about a path from the original hex to the new one, the idea is that it was in the new one the whole time, it was just thought to be in the old one.*

The hex selected (which could be the original ones) **must...**

- ...have Appropriate Terrain (a location where the HQ/Combat Trains could go to given other rules)
- ...**not** contain an enemy unit, Engagement Zone, or EZOC
- ...**not** block an Enemy MSR

The chosen hex need not be Legal at the moment, this will sort itself out the next time the Formation Activates.

* If more than one Formation has an HQ and/or Combat Trains in a hex where a die roll for Jump Type is required above, roll for each Formation separately. Also a given Formation could end up rolling any number of times in the same Activation depending on the enemy's actions.

Design Notes: *Here I'm addressing the limits of the intel the player has regarding the actual locations of HQs and Combat Trains. In real life, the commander might have some intel about them and can certainly look at a map and guesstimate where he'd have these facilities if he was running the enemy. He can risk a mission to go look and maybe interrupt the enemy a little. What he can't know is that he is dead on right with absolute certainty and that some minimal force raid will massively disrupt the enemy. The above makes the results of the effort less certain.*

8. Recon Screens.

Actual screening missions are not currently a feature of BCS where Formations Attack, Move, or Defend. While there is a form of mobile defense embedded in the v1.1 Retreat rules (for units defending without Prepared Defense or Key Terrain), there was no status that allows trading space for time and limited losses. This rule provides a mechanic to do so.

Who can Screen? Any unit designated as Recon in BCS 4.3d as modified by the game specific rule

regarding Recon Unit Types. The ability to Screen (or enter Screen) is unaffected by SNAFU results.

How to Mark Screening. Units can only be marked as Screening in the Formation's Initial Activation, **never** in a Second Activation, but a Screen marker can be removed in either Activation if desired.

At the start of an Initial Activation of the unit's Formation, place (or remove) a Screen marker onto the desired Recon unit. The unit must be on its Move Side to acquire the marker.

Effects on the Screening Unit. The unit marked as Screen...

...**can** Move, establish OBJ markers, and spot Barrages normally,

...**cannot** Attack, Assist, or *Initiate* Engagements,

...**also cannot** jump HQs or Combat Trains. They have no effect on any part of an MSR (this includes the Screening unit itself, its ZOC, and its Screen Zone).

Additionally, a unit cannot end any movement or Retreat STACKED with any other unit (including one also marked as Screen), should this happen, remove the Screen marker from all involved units.

Note that since they are unable to Initiate an Engagement, they must **STOP** if in a situation requiring a Stopping Engagement.

Effects on the Enemy: Combat.

While Screening units *cannot* initiate Engagements, they can be fired upon using the Engagement Table. Convert any **Both Loss** result into **Target must Retreat, no Losses** instead.

Units marked as Screening **cannot** be Attacked on the *Combat Table* or by Barrage. Instead, Screening units automatically retreat 3 hexes if any enemy unit moving using *Deployed Leg MA* enters their hex. Ignore the Screen unit's ZOC effects if a Leg MA unit is moving into its hex (that is they do not get stuck in the hex adjacent to the unit and are unable to enter the hex).

Effects on the Enemy: Movement. Screening units retain their normal ZOCs, but also have a Screen Zone that includes the normal ZOC hexes as well as all others up to a number of hexes away from

the unit (inclusive). Ignore enemy units and terrain for purposes of the Screen Zone. See list below for the applicable Screen Zone radius by BCS title.

Effects of the Screen Zone: Enemy units moving on their Move Side pay +1 MP per Screen Zone hex entered. There is no effect at all on enemy units moving using their Deployed side or on any friendly unit. Note: Tac or Truck MA Infantry units cannot enter the hex occupied by a Recon Screen unit.

Screen Zone Radius:

Last Blitzkrieg: 2 hexes

Baptism by Fire: 3 hexes

Brazen Chariots: 3 hexes

Restrictions on Screening Units. Screening units **cannot** jump HQs or Combat Trains. They have no effect on any part of an MSR (this includes the Screening unit itself, its ZOC, and its Screen Zone).

Design Note: *In LB, NO US unit (not even the 14 Cav Grp) sets up on 16 Dec with a Screen marker. In all non-16 Dec start scenarios in that game, Recon units are allowed to set up with a Screen marker, if the player chooses. Since LB is the only one of the Series Games to not have its own Screen markers, if used there you will need to borrow some from another game or use a substitute.*

9. Activation Smoothing.

Credit: Björn Högberg

In some scenarios or even at times in one, one side or the other will have more formations to Activate. Under the standard BCS rules the Activation of all these "extra" formations occur after the side with the smaller number of formations has completed his Activations.

Under this Optional Rule these "extra" Activations happen at random times during the turn.

For the explanation of this rule I'll call the two sides Side-A and Side-B. Side-A will be the side with more Formations to Activate.

At the start of each turn, put a number of chits into a cup equal to the number of Formations in Side-B. The chits will be numbered 1 or 2 with the number of chits with a 2 will be equal to the difference in

number of Formations between the two sides. The remainder will have a 1 on them.

For example:

Say Side-A has 8 formations and Side-B has 5 formations. 5 chits will be put in the cup.

Three of them will have a 2 on them. Two of them will have a 1 on them.

Each time during the turn **after** Side-A has completed a Formation's Activation, he draws one chit. If the chit is a 1, Side-B does the next activation. If the chit drawn is a 2, Side-A does the Activation of a second Formation right away. He **does not** draw a chit after this second Formation's Activation, instead play goes directly to Side-B.

Do not count any Formations that begin the Scenario "Done" in the available number of Formations used to determine the chits above.

Retreat Answer Key

Leg or Truck MA?

—Yes:

No Safe Path? #3

Automatic Retreat? #2

If neither of the above apply, use the No version below anyway.

—No:

Situational Retreat Result **AND** Key Terrain or PD? #3

Everything else: #1

Results:

- 1) Retreat 3 hexes and Flip to Move Side
- 2) Flip and back to, or adjacent to, HQ
- 3) Stay where you are and take a step loss per unit.

Special Cases:

- *If you have to do #2 and are...*

- 1) *too close to the HQ (2 or less),*
- 2) *would be forced to over-stack, OR*
- 3) *are an unassigned Independent unit*

...then Go Off Map, instead

- *If you are doing a Voluntary Retreat, regardless of all other considerations, do #1, but also take a step loss per unit.*