

2001

MILITARY ROLE PLAYING GAME FOR 3 OR MORE PLAYERS AGES 12 AND UP  
FOR TABLE-TOP PLAY WITH PENCIL, PAPER, AND MINIATURE FIGURINES.

# THE FRONT™

## FIELD MANUAL



MARK A HUNT

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# **THE** **FRONT** **FIELD MANUAL**

The FRONT (TF) is a traditional tabletop roleplaying game, played with paper, pencils and dice - it uses that Original 1970s Fantasy Roleplaying Game as a base. But it adds, twist and takes away elements to make it a distinct streamlined flavor of the original roleplaying game.

## An 'OSR' First Edition Hack

- by -

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- . -

With elements borrowed from 'original' era  
rpg gaming and modern d20 theory.

**Larry Hamilton**

**Proof Reader**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The front is a role playing game set in World War II (1939-1945) this was the largest international event of the twentieth century and one of the major turning points in U.S. and world history. In the six years between the invasion of Poland and the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the world was caught up in the most destructive war in history. Armed forces of more than seventeen million fought on the land, in the air, and on the sea.

There are many movies and TV shows you can use as inspiration here are some of them listed below.

**Kelly's Heroes**  
**The Longest Day**  
**Rat Patrol**  
**Saving Private Ryan**  
**The Dirty Dozen**  
**A Bridge Too Far**  
**Guns of Navarone**  
**The Big Red One**  
**Enemy At The Gates**

This is not a dissertation on World War Two this is a **GAME** go have fun!

## Table of contents

Starting The Game	p. 4	Advantage & Disadvantage	p. 30
The Core Mechanic	p. 5	Converting Saves	p. 30
Rolling Stats	p. 5	AC Checks	p. 30
Pre-War Career	p. 6	Hit Points	p. 31
Choose A Class	p. 7	Death & Dying	p. 31
Ranks	p. 12	Healing	p. 32
Equipment	p. 13	Experience	p. 33
Encumbrance	p. 14	Campaigns	pp. 34-42
Usage Die	p. 14	Opponents	p. 42
The Jeep	p. 15	Vehicles	p. 43
Movement & Distance	p. 16	Enemy Reactions	p. 44
Weapons	pp. 17-27	Random Encounters	p. 44
Combat	p. 28	Weird War Option	p. 45
Initiative	p. 29	Phonetic Alphabet	p. 46
Time	p. 29	Character Sheet	p. 47
Attack, Defense, & Damage	p. 29	OGL	p. 48



## **STARTING THE GAME**

The first step in playing this game is to create a character for play; this is a simple matter of rolling some dice to determine your character's Strength and other basic attributes, then picking a character class and finding out what you did before the war.

If you're the Referee, you've got a bit more preparation to do—that's covered later in a section especially for the Referee.

### **Rule Number One**

The most important rule in THE FRONT is that the Referee always has the right to modify the rules. In fact, it's encouraged! This is your game, after all. There are gaps in the rules—holes left open on purpose—because much of the fun of “old school” gaming is being able to make up rules as needed.

### **Dice**

In order to keep the game from being a series of arguments over whether the actions in the game are successful or not, dice are used to determine how the events unfold.

The Front uses several different kinds of dice, and we abbreviate them according to how many sides they have, and place a “d” at the front. The four-sided die is called a d4, and if we're telling you to roll 3 of them, we say to roll 3d4. The six-sided die is a d6, the eight-sided die is a d8, the ten-sided die is a d10, the twelve-sided die is a d12, and the twenty-sided die is a d20. There is no die with 100 sides— to roll this, you roll two ten-sided dice, treating the first die roll as the “tens” and the second roll as the “ones.” So, if you were to roll a 7 and then a 3, that would mean a 73. A roll of 0 and 0 means a result of “100.”

## **THE CORE MECHANIC**

Everything a character might possibly attempt that could result in failure is resolved by testing attribute stats, in order to successfully test a stat - a player must roll below it on a d20 to determine the outcome.

During a player's turn a character may move and perform an action. They could attack, look for a clue, talk with an NPC - interacting with the world is an action.

The enemies you face don't make tests - a character must avoid their attacks; the only time an Enemy Combatant would roll is for damage.

## **ROLLING STATS**

Stats are generated with 3d6 in the following order Strength (STR), Dexterity (DEX), Constitution (CON), Intelligence (INT), Awareness (AW), Charisma (CHA). Once all stats are generated 2 may be swapped around.

### **Strength**

Strength represents the character's physical power.

### **Dexterity**

Dexterity is a combination of coordination, agility and quickness.

### **Intelligence**

Intelligence represents IQ, reasoning, and the ability to solve puzzles or understand difficult concepts.

### **Awareness**

Awareness determines a character's insight, perception, and good judgment in combat.

### **Constitution**

Constitution refers to the health and endurance of a character.

### **Charisma**

Charisma refers to a character's leadership ability.



## What you did before the War



The war changed the world for everybody. People who were teaching teenagers one year were killing them the next. In this stage of character creation, you find out your pre-war profession. Roll a d220 and consult the table below.

D20	Profession	D20	Profession
1	Unemployed	11	Laborer
2	Plumber	12	Farmer
3	Lawyer	13	Teacher
4	Cowboy	14	Detective
5	Actor	15	Journalist
6	Beat Cop	16	Doctor
7	Merchant	17	Criminal
8	Student	18	Politician
9	Gangster	19	Dilettante
10	Clerk	20	Scientist

A character may do anything an Adult with knowledge of a given profession may attempt. When you do, you do so at an Advantage. What this means is best worked out between Player and GM.

## CHOOSE A CLASS



Your class represents skills and training you developed after the war began. For most characters, this literally is basic training. However, this step also can represent learning by the harsh reality of being in a war zone. For instance, you could create a character whose village was destroyed by the enemy. Forced to flee into the nearby woods, they became a resistance fighter. Although this character never had formal basic training, he did receive "on the job training" from other partisans and could be considered to have combat training.

You can choose from four classes: **Combat**, **Intelligence**, **Leadership**, and **Reconnaissance**. This will determine the characters starting equipment, and any unique abilities they may have.



## CLASSES

### COMBAT TRAINING

While the basic training of all soldiers deals with fighting to some degree, yours focused on it almost exclusively. You learned the ins and outs of various weapon systems, how to prepare defenses, how to assault bunkers, and other fundamental combat skills. You are responsible for defending our country against any threat by land, as well as capturing, destroying and repelling enemy ground forces.

**Abilities:** Dexterity and Strength are the most important abilities for you. Dexterity makes you a better shot, and Strength comes in handy in melee combat.

### SPECIAL FEATURES

Once per hour, whilst in combat, a Warrior can regain d8 lost HP.

As part of their action a Warrior can make 1 attack per level (every additional attack must be on an equal or lower HD creature than the last.)

If someone with Combat training fails a STR or DEX test and would be dealt damage from an attack, they can opt to sunder (destroy) one piece of their equipment and ignore the damage. This can be done once for each level attained per mission.

**Starting equipment:** Rifle, bayonet, 3 fragmentation grenades, 1 smoke grenade, helmet, backpack, entrenching tool, one week's rations, gas mask.

At the start of the game they may substitute a light machinegun or flamethrower for their rifle.

## **INTELLIGENCE TRAINING**

You leave the individual firefights to the grunts. Your concern is to counter activities of any foreign adversary that poses a threat to your country. You work to provide counter intelligence reports, estimates, threat assessments and vulnerability assessments. Processing intelligence and figuring out what the enemy is up to. Sometimes this means going on a patrol yourself, but more frequently you receive reports, aerial photography, and radio intercepts that require your expert analysis.

**Abilities:** Unsurprisingly enough, Intelligence is your most important ability. Charisma can also be important, since you often need to argue your case to higher-ups.

## **SPECIAL FEATURES**

Rolls with Advantage when trying to understanding written languages and process prisoners of war and captured documents

### **Logistics**

If someone with intelligence training wishes to locate a piece of equipment for their use through the black market they may attempt a Charisma equipment check, subject to Gm approval. This can be done once a mission for each two levels attained.

**Starting equipment:** Pistol, bayonet, field Radio, 3 smoke grenades, helmet, backpack, entrenching tool, one week's rations, gas mask.

At the start of the game they may exchange the Pistol for a Thompson machine gun.

## **LEADERSHIP TRAINING**

When shells start pouring in and machine gun bullets begin chewing up the scenery, someone must hold the troops together. You are responsible for providing support that affects Soldiers' overall welfare and well-being and the keeping Soldiers combat-ready and effective. You implement orders from your superiors, make local tactical decisions, lead others in many areas of combat operations.

**Abilities:** Charisma is your most important ability. Without it, you'll have difficulty gaining the respect and cooperation of your troops. Dexterity is also important, since you'll often be leading your men from the front.

## **SPECIAL FEATURES**

Rolls with Advantage when performing leadership tasks, providing Individual Training, and tactics.

### **Lead by Example**

You can lead a number of NPCs equal to your AC in a fight to the death, these NPCs will not need to check morale and will fight so long as you do. These NPCs will fight to the death if s ordered.

This can be done once a mission for each two levels attained.

**Starting equipment:** Pistol, bayonet, map and compass, 3 smoke grenades, helmet, backpack, entrenching tool, one week's rations, gas mask.

At the start of the game they may exchange the Pistol for a Thompson machine gun.

## **RECON TRAINING**

You are the eyes and ears of your commander during battle. You are trained to advance ahead of the main body of troops, locate the enemy, and bring back key information on their disposition. You are often called upon in the field to track and report enemy activity and direct the employment of weapon systems to their locations.

You can certainly hold your own in a stand-up fight, but you're at your best when using stealth and surprise.

Abilities: Dexterity is your most important ability, as it's key to staying mobile. AC also comes in handy with when trying to Listen and Spot.

## **SPECIAL FEATURES**

Rolls with Advantage when attacking from behind and deals 2d6 / 2d4 damage

Rolls with Advantage when performing delicate tasks, climbing, hearing sounds, moving silently and opening locks.

Starting equipment: Pistol, bayonet, field Radio, 3 smoke grenades, helmet, backpack, entrenching tool, one week's rations, gas mask.

At the start of the game they may change pistol for a Sniper rifle and binoculars.

## Ranks

Most characters begin with the rank of Private First Class, Sergeant or a Second lieutenant of an Officer. Most players never raise in rank more than 1-3 places during the war. Promotions are best left up to the GM if and when they decide to hand them out.



## A black and white photograph of a World War II-era U.S. Army combat uniform laid out on a flat surface. The uniform includes a jacket with an American flag patch on the sleeve, trousers with leg pockets, a helmet with goggles, a gas mask, a shovel, a rifle, a canteen, a first aid kit, and a canteen. The items are arranged in a grid-like fashion, showcasing the standard issue equipment of the period.

You can play THE FRONT just about anywhere in the world, which makes it impossible to provide a list for every type of equipment the players may encounter. While there certainly was a black market, soldiers tended to get equipment supplied to them or they won it by battlefield conquest. The Logistics roll (see Leveling up) gives you a way to requisition equipment from your own army once play begins subject to GM approval. There was, of course, a great deal of mundane equipment (camp stoves, jerry cans, rain gear, etc.) used to keep the G.I in the field.

Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope of this game to describe all that equipment. If the exact type and color of ammo pouch really does matter to you, try searching the web for reenactor sites. Since the hobby of historical reenactment requires such attention to detail, these sites often have insanely exhaustive descriptions of uniforms, collar tabs, equipment, and other gear. But lugging tons of equipment tended to bog down the troops and the first thing they often did was ditch a lot of it.

### **ENCUMBRANCE**

A character can carry a number of items equal to their STR with no issues. Carrying over this amount means they are encumbered and all attribute tests are taken with Disadvantage – you can also only ever move to somewhere Nearby. They simply cannot carry more than double their STR.

### **USAGE DIE**

The GM may assign any piece of equipment that is considered a consumable, limited item. When that item is used the next Minute (turn) its Usage die is rolled. If the roll is 1-2 then the usage die is downgraded to the next lower die in the following chain: d20 > d12 > d10 > d8 > d6 > d4 When you roll a 1-2 on a d4 the item is Expended.



## THE JEEP



During WWII Jeeps were coming out of the Willys and Ford Plants at rate of one jeep per one and a half minutes and by the end of the war over 700,000 had been built. The Americans had so many Jeeps that some German soldiers believed each America GI got his own Jeep as standard issue. In France, three American soldiers walked up to a guard post and told the sentry that they were lost. The Frenchman immediately told them to surrender and found that they were German soldiers in disguise. When he was asked how he knew, he replied that Americans always travel in jeeps. Another example happened in Belgium when a guard ordered three German soldiers to surrender after he saw that a colonel was riding in the back seat. He explained later that if they were American that the officer would be driving and the infantryman would be in the backseat.

Usage die for Fuel is d12

## MOVEMENT & DISTANCE



Rather than track precise numbers, THE FRONT uses 4 abstract ranges for measuring distances. Close, Nearby, Far-Away and Distant. On their turn every character can move somewhere Nearby as part of an action, performing that action at any stage of the move. They can forgo their action and move somewhere Far-Away instead. Anything beyond Far-Away can be classified as Distant and would take 3 moves to get to. This system is designed to support the narrative ‘theatre of the mind’ style of play, and is less concerned about tracking squares and fiddly distances.

For converting existing movement rates or measures (for ranges or movement example) use the following as a guide:

CLOSE  
0-5FT

NEARBY  
6-60 FT

FAR AWAY  
60-120FT



This chapter details the common weapons of the infantry and cavalry of World War II. Weapons are divided into seven categories: flamethrowers, grenades, machineguns, melee weapons, pistols, rifles, and submachineguns. Accompanying tables list the weapons' game statistics and descriptions of individual weapons follow. Entry types are described below.

Weapon	Usage	Damage
Flame thrower	D12	3d10
Grenades	D6	3d6
Machine guns	D20	2d6
Melee Weapon	NA	D8
Thrown weapons	NA	D6
Pistols	D8	D8
Rifles	D10	D12
Submachine gun	D12	D8

Using this as a guide the GM should be able to figure most weapon damage they will need for the game.

AMMUNATION USAGE DIE

Any item listed in the equipment section that has a Usage die is considered a consumable, limited item. When that item is used the next Minute (turn) its Usage die is rolled. If the roll is 1-2 then the usage die is downgraded to the next lower die in the following chain: d20 > d12 > d10 > d8 > d6 > d4



When you roll a 1-2 on a d4 the item is expended and the character has no more of it left.

## Flame Throwers



These fearsome weapons burn everything in their line of attack for 3d10 damage if the target fails to get out the way. No attack roll is required to shoot a flamethrower. Anyone damaged by a flamethrower must make a second dex check or catch on fire for 2d6 dmg for 1d8 rounds. These weapons were commonly used to attack the occupants of bunkers or caves. In confined spaces, the flames can spread out and fill a whole area.

Flamethrowers are rightly feared on the battlefield, making their operators instant targets to anyone in the vicinity. What's worse, enemy fire could and did ignite the fuel tanks, and many flamethrower operators were killed in this way. Whenever a flamethrower operator is shot (including long bursts from machineguns and submachineguns), there is a 25% chance the tanks will ignite, destroying the weapon and likely incinerating the wielder. The operator takes 4d10 points of damage immediately, and 2d10 each round for 1d8 rounds

## Grenades and Grenade like Weapons



Grenades are common weapons on the front line. Throwing one is a bit different than making a normal ranged attack. The AC of your enemy is irrelevant because your aim is to land the grenade in a particular area. However, there are times when you might want to toss a grenade through a window or inside an open tank hatch. In those instances, the GM should pick an appropriate Modifier. If you hit, the grenade lands on target. If you miss, it lands 1d20 ft. away in a random direction. Molotov cocktails explode on impact, but other grenades have fuses. Many of these fuses were hand cut in the factory, so times can vary. To determine when a grenade goes off, roll a d6. If the number is even, the grenade explodes immediately. If it's odd, the grenade explodes on your turn next round (thus giving enemies a chance to dive for cover or throw the grenade back; the return throw doesn't change when the grenade will explode). If you are hit you receive 3d6 damage.

## RIFLE GRENADES



Rifle grenades work the same way, but they can be targeted at spots beyond 70 feet and they always explode on the round they are fired.

Rifles require a special attachment to fire grenades. Attaching this device is a full-round action, as is readying the weapon to fire (this entails loading the grenade and the special blank cartridge that's required to fire it).



## Machine guns



**Light Machineguns:** Light machineguns like the BAR come with bipods to steady them. Setting up a bipod weapon is a move-equivalent action. Once set up, it can fire without penalty. It's also possible, though not always advisable, to fire LMGs "from the hip." Without the bracing of the bipod, they are much less accurate. When shooting from the hip, you can only make short bursts (see below) and the normal +2 circumstance bonus to attack rolls is replaced by a -2 circumstance penalty.

### Medium and Heavy Machineguns:



Heavier machineguns are usually mounted on a tripod. Setting one up takes three full-round actions. Soviet weapons on Sokolov mounts can be readied in only one round, but their heavy carriage makes them more difficult to manhandle into position.

**Reloading:** Machineguns need a crew of two to operate at maximum efficiency. While fully crewed, it takes only one full-round action to reload a machinegun. An MG with only one crew person takes two full-round actions to reload.

**Shooting:** Machineguns can shoot either short or long bursts. See the submachinegun section for rules on burst fire.

## Pistols



Pistols follow the normal rules for ranged weapons with one exception. Pistols can be used in melee combat without provoking an attack of opportunity, however the firer takes a +2 circumstance penalty on attack rolls.

### Semi-automatic Weapons

Weapons that are classified as semi-automatic. When fired, they automatically ready themselves to be fired again. This drastically increases their rate of fire, but does not make them true automatic weapons (like submachineguns). The shooter of a semi-automatic weapon has two choices when making an attack.

**Single Shot:** If the weapon is fired only once, no special rules apply.

**Double Shot:** A semi-automatic weapon can be fired twice as a full-round action. Each shot suffers a +2 penalty.

## Submachineguns



Submachineguns are short-ranged weapons that fire a hail of pistol-caliber ammunition. They are very useful for street fighting and were favored by the Soviets above all other armies. Depending on the weapon, they can be fired two or three different ways.

**Single Shot:** Some submachineguns are capable of selective fire. If only a single shot is fired, no special rules apply. Switching a weapon from single shot to automatic (or vice versa) is a free action.

**Short Burst:** Short bursts are used for accurate fire. Each short burst uses up 3 bullets and the attack is resolved with a -2 circumstance bonus. If the target is within the weapon's first range increment, the submachinegun inflicts an additional 1d8 damage.

These rules simulate the fact that while shooting a burst increases your chance to hit, you're only likely to hit with more than one bullet at very short range. If the weapon has less than 3 bullets remaining, resolve the attack as if it were a single shot.



**Long Burst:** There are times when aiming is not as important as hosing an area down with a lot of lead. That's what long bursts are for. Firing a long burst is a full-round action. You can fire off a large number of bullets that will spray an area nearby. You do an extra d6 damage for each Ammo dice you have left if you so desire. It's entirely possible to blow off dozens of rounds of ammo and crank up the damage. Of course, the next round the weapon will be empty. Anyone in this area must make a DEX save to avoid taking damage. Remember to apply the cover save bonus to saving throws where appropriate. Prone defenders receive a -4 to their saves (in addition to the cover bonus, if any).

## Telescopic Sights



Most armies developed specialized sniper rifles that used telescopic sights (see the rifle descriptions in Chapter Three for sniper variants of standard weapons). Firing a scoped rifle is a full-round action (since your field of vision is restricted and it takes time to acquire targets). The scope provides the firer with a -4 circumstance bonus to hit that can only be used to offset range penalties. Effectively, a sniper with a scoped rifle can shoot out to Distant range.

# COMBAT





## INITIATIVE

When combat breaks out, everyone must be sorted into an order so they each get to act and react in turn. Every character tests their Awareness (AW), those that succeed, take their turn before their opponents, they must then act as a group – deciding their own order for actions. Those that fail their AW tests, go after their opponents.

## TIME

There are 2 important types of tracked time - Moments (rounds) and Minutes (turns). Moments are used during combat and fast paced scenes of danger and Minutes are used when exploring and adventuring. A GM may advance the clock as they need substituting Minutes for Hours, Days or even Months should the Mission require it.

## ATTACKING, DEFENDING & DAMAGE

When a character attacks a foe they must roll below their STR stat for a Melee Attack or DEX for a Ranged Attack. Likewise, when an enemy makes an attack, the character must roll below their own STR or DEX to avoid taking damage. The damage an attack deals is based on the weapon or the HD of the combatant.

To make a Melee Attack an opponent must be Close range. Ranged Attacks against Close opponents are possible, but the attacker suffers a Disadvantage. Unless the attacker uses a pistol.

How Difficult (HD)	Damage they can Inflict
1	D4
2	D6
3	2d4
4	D10
5	D12
6	D6+D8
7	2D8
8	3D6
9	2D10
10	D10+D12

## **ADVANTAGE & DISADVANTAGE**

A GM may decide that a particular course of action or task has a higher or lower chance of success. They will ask a player to roll an additional d20 when making a test - with advantage the lower result is used and with disadvantage, the higher number rolled.

## **CONVERTING SAVES**

The Front ignores saves and instead asks the player to roll attribute tests when any damage, trap or effect would impact them - using the below as a guide. Remember the advice in the Powerful Opponents section.

**STR checks** to overcome things such as poisons, gasses, acids, and stunning damage. Physical Harm that cannot be dodged.

**Dex Checks** represents resistance to reaction-based threats, such as Physical Harm that can be dodged. Things like avoiding a trap, leaping aside as a land mine goes off, and twisting to safety before a flamethrower's blast strikes home.

**AW Checks** represents resistance to mind-influencing threats, such as a pretty girl's charm or hypnosis.

## **CRITICAL DAMAGE**

If a player making an attack rolls a 1, they double the result of the damage dice they roll. If they roll a 20 when avoiding an attack, they take double damage.

## HIT POINTS



This is the amount of punishment the character can take before being taken Out of Action (**OofA**).

**The Gritty Option:** This option set the characters hit point total as equal to his Con. If you look at the weapon damages, you'll note that it's entirely possible for one shot to put down a character.

**The Hollywood Option:** If you'd prefer your game to be more like the movies, this option is for you. Characters start with base hit points equal to their Constitution score, then roll and add 1d6 for each level attained after 1<sup>st</sup> level.

## DEATH & DYING

When a character is reduced to zero Hit Points (HP) they are taken Out of Action (OofA), they are unconscious and cannot make any actions. When the fight is over/are out of danger, a character that is taken OofA can roll on the table (following page) to see what happens to them. If they survive they regain 1d4 HP.

If the characters lose the fight or are unable to recover the body of the character, they are lost forever!

## HEALING



Characters can gain Hit Points from First aid, Med kits, and R&R. They can never gain more than their maximum - and can never go below zero either.

First aid kits heal 1d6 HPs once a day.

Characters gain 2 HP for each day on R&R (Rest and Relation).

When healing a character who is **OofA**, just start at zero and count up. That character is now back on their feet and no longer **OofA**.

Roll	Outcome	Effect
1	MIA	Cannot find the body
2	KIA	Killed in action
3	Disfigured	CHA reduced to 5.
4	Crippled	STR is permanently reduce by 2
5	Crippled	DEX is permanently reduce by 2
6	Cracked Bones	STR, DEX and CON are temp. -2 for the next day.
7	Shell shocked	Disadvantage on all tests for the next day.
8	KO'd	Just knocked out.

## EXPERIENCE

The characters learn through defeating and overcoming obstacles. Just Killing is not enough. Surviving an amphibious assault, completing a mission or simply living to tell the tale are the things that bring perspective and growth. As character completes Missions, he practices his skills and becomes more talented. Thus for every encounter/major event the character survives they gain a (XP) Experience Point.

When a character earns the needed XP they go up a level at the end of the current game session or mission. The GM will decide which, and it's recommended that this decision remains more or less a constant throughout the campaign - and a GM should be clear and upfront with the players so they know where the 'goalposts' are.

After a character reaches level 10 they are rotated back to the states or retire from the current conflict.

Level	XP Needed
1	0
2	5
3	10
4	15
5	20
6	25
7	45
8	65
9	85
10	100

### GAINING LEVELS

When a character levels up, their character gets to make a Logistics check (roll an 8 or less on a D20) if they pass they may make a requisition request for any new equipment that the character wants with the approval of the GM. Also a player should roll a d20 for each Stat, if the result is higher - that Stat increases by 1.

At levels 3 and level 6 the character may select a primary and secondary specialty respectfully that they are at an advantage when doing actions related to their specialties.

*Examples: His primary military specialty is intelligence. His secondary military specialty is language instructor. Or Armor Defeating Weapons Systems or tank Driver.*



This chapter has several specific recommendations for campaigns, chosen to address many of the issues of this type of game.

Running a military-based roleplaying campaign can be a bit different than running a fantasy game. There are some inherent issues that need to be addressed or overcome before play can begin. The primary difficulty is the placement of player characters in a military hierarchy. Players love to do their own thing, and putting them in a position where they have to follow orders all the time can be a recipe for disaster. There are, however, certain ways to make campaigns like this work.

The most important choice you have to make when starting a game is the campaign background. This is the general spin of the campaign, and can be as simple as "You're all French Foreign Legionnaires." You should settle on a campaign background before your players make characters, since it will have a huge effect on how they go about it. They may all wish to be recon types or intel class if they are spies or undercover agents.

Once you know the general spin of your campaign, it's time for everyone to make characters. It's helpful if everyone makes characters together, so the group can come to an agreement on thorny issues like who's going to play an NCO or officer. You should work with your players to make sure their group is well balanced and makes sense in the context of the campaign.



When the game begins, players may complain that they have to take orders (and this is entirely in the spirit of the enlisted man!). What you should try to show them in the first few firefights are that battle is inherently chaotic. There's an old military aphorism that says that no plan lasts beyond the first contact with the enemy. In the heat of battle, it is up to local officers and NCOs to make important, tactical decisions and up to individual soldiers to seize the initiative. Only they can have a true appreciation for what's going on in their corner of the battlefield. This means that although your players may be a part of a huge military operation, their immediate concerns are going to be a lot more localized and they'll have a great deal of choice in how they execute their orders. Battle, in other words, is the only real place that soldiers can achieve a degree of freedom. You therefore want such engagements as the focus of your campaign.

### **Unit Organization**

Most of the time, your PCs will be going up against enemy units. It's thus useful to build your NPCs into squads (and occasionally a platoon). These all would be part of some larger force often a Company and identified by a letter. So you would have A, B, and C company referred to as Able company, Baker company, and Charlie company, but today they would be Alpha, Bravo, and Charlie companies. Note that these designate a unit at full strength, which was rare on the front line. Officer casualties were often so high that men assumed commands beyond their rank. It was not uncommon to find platoons led by sergeants, for instance, or companies led by 2nd lieutenants.

Some units were also referred to by Nicknames such as the Screaming eagles or the Fighting 99<sup>th</sup>.

## The Partisan Campaign



The Partisan Campaign is one of the best options for World War II roleplaying. This could allow for all walks of life and from many nationalities to take place while still allowing some sort autonomous action with a wide array of character types. People from all walks of life fled into the mountains, forests, and swamps of Europe to resist the Germans, and similar groups fought the Japanese in Asia.

Politically, partisan bands did not always get along, which can create great opportunities for roleplaying. Players may find out they are battling other resistance fighters out to save a key bridge that you may need to destroy! While the partisans' primary foes were second-string troops, they did tie-down a good number troops in the Axis rear.

## The Resistance Campaign



A resistance campaign is similar to a Partisan campaign, but is more focused on espionage. While partisans take to the hills, resistance fighters live openly in occupied territory and fight the enemy clandestinely. The French Resistance, the Maquis, is perhaps the most famous of these groups, but there was organized resistance in many other countries as well. Most were in communication with the Special Operations Executive, a British organization dedicated to supporting resistance groups in occupied Europe. The SOE airdropped supplies and sometimes agents, and collected intelligence gathered by the resistance. Their task, as Winston Churchill put it 1940, was to "set Europe ablaze." For most of the war the activities of resistance groups were limited to running intelligence networks, publishing underground newspapers, smuggling downed aircrew out of occupied territory, and engaging in a small amount of sabotage and assassination. German reprisals were brutal.

## The Elite Campaign



In most games, the PCs are a bunch of elite troops: small in number, highly specialized, and deadly. It is thus no stretch to center a campaign around the exploits of what today is known as a special forces unit. These first saw development early in World War II, beginning with the British Commandos. They were formed to raid occupied Europe and show the Germans that the Brits still had some fight in them. The Americans followed suit with the creation of Ranger units, the earliest of which trained at the British Commando School in Scotland.

The Elite Campaign works well because it focuses on small units sent on discrete missions. Since all units of this type survived by quick strikes and fast movements, you needn't worry about heavy equipment, artillery, and the like.

## Strangers in a Strange land



Most general histories of World War II must perforce speak in generalities. It's very easy to reduce the war to its major participants, but there is a reason it was a World war. Men and women of dozens of nationalities and ethnic groups fought in the war, sometimes in very strange circumstances. A story from D-Day illustrates this point vividly. The British captured two German soldiers who were clearly not European and spoke no language anyone could understand. They were sent back to England and after some time the British figured out that the two men were from Tibet. They had been forcibly recruited in the Red Army, shipped to Europe to fight, captured by the Germans, and then pressed into service again in one of the German "Ost" battalions (which consisted of very unmotivated Soviet prisoners).

The war is full of strange tales (like the creation of an SS unit composed of Bosnian Muslims) and some of these can provide the basis for an interesting campaign. Most of these ethnic units had reasons of their own for fighting, reasons not always shared by the parent army. This type of campaign allows for both internal politics and front-line action, so it makes a good choice if your group wants something more than combat.

**ENEMY COMBATANTS**

You can't run a game of THE FRONT without bad guys. Who exactly the bad guys are depends on your campaign. From El Alamein to Stalingrad to Iwo Jima, men on the ground faced the battles up-close and personal, bound by the military traditions of their countries and services. You can simulate lots of things that can confront your players, Tanks, troop formations and even bunkers to destroy. Even though Aerial warfare was still something new at the start of WW2. These daring pilots bring a brand new dimension to the field of military science.

**COMBATANT HD**

This is HOW DIFFICULT (HD) the foe is to defeat on a scale of 1 to 10. With a one being relative easy to beat and a ten being one that will challenge even the most battle hardened troops. This is also the number of d8 rolled to determine its HP. You can add special effects to any foe to simulate any number of opposing forces.

**POWERFUL OPPONENTS**

For every HD above the character's level, add +1 to every roll the player makes for any attribute test that would determine the outcome of a conflict between them and an NPC.

- A level 3 character defending against a HD 5 foe's attack would add +2 to their roll.

Combatant	HD
Green troops	1
Experienced Foes	3
Pack of wild dogs	1
Sniper	3
Retreating forces	1
Enemy patrol	5
Recon patrol	2
Machine gun nest	5
Assault force	8
Frontal assault	10

**VEHICLES**

Vehicles can also be simulated with the exact same system. WW2 saw a vast number of vehicles that were pressed into service.

**TANKS**

Tracked and heavily armored, they were originally designed to break the trench stalemates in WW1, but by WW2, they had turned into highly mobile weapons.

Type	HD
Armored Car	3
Tank	5
Heavy tank	8
Fighter	6
Bomber	9

**ARMORED CARS**

Armored cars were lightly armed and wheeled, often used as command or reconnaissance vehicles, though they saw their share of combat.

**SELF-PROPELLED GUNS**

Whether an anti-aircraft gun, or anti-tank gun, or rocket artillery, these self-propelled guns offered much greater flexibility than their towed predecessors.

**TRANSPORTS**

Front lines could only advance with secure supply lines behind them. A wide array of transport vehicles was necessary to bring the needed supplies to the advancing fronts.

**OTHER TYPES**

Vehicles of other classifications, whether tractors, motorcycles, or other types, contributed to the war as much as their higher-profile siblings.

**ENEMY REACTIONS**



Sometimes the enemy or the neutral NPCs will have predetermined personalities and goals that will guide a GM when choosing their actions and feelings towards the characters. Those that do not, such as randomly encountered combatants, make a Reaction roll on the following table:

ROLL	REACTION	ROLL	REACTION
1	Flee then roll again.	5	Mistake PCs for friends.
2	Avoid the PCs entirely.	6	Trick the PCs (roll again)
3	Trade with PCs	7	Call for Reinforcements
4	Give the PCs aid	8	Capture/Kill/Eat the PCs

**RANDOM ENCOUNTERS**

The GM should roll a d6 every 15 minutes of real world play (you are paying attention, right?) A result of 1-2 means the players will encounter a randomly generated foe or distraction in the following Minutes (turn). This is always useful when the players start to wander at the table.



## Weird war Option



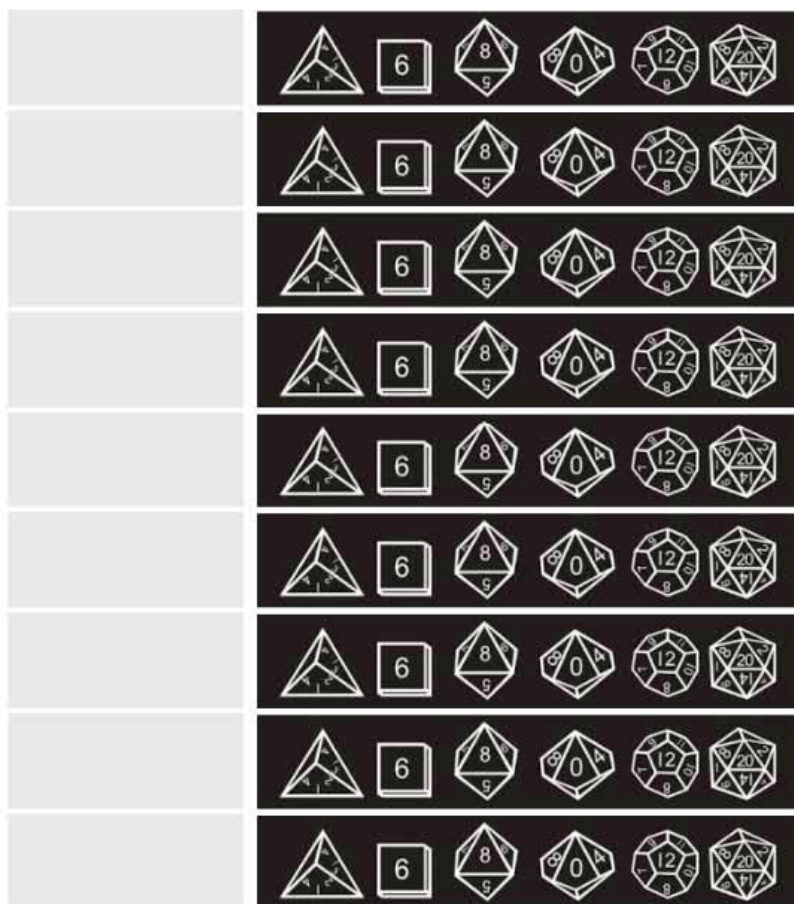
Rumors of a secret Nazi guerrilla organization began to surface soon after the Allied invasion of Normandy. On March 23, 1945, Goebbels gave a speech known as the "Werewolf speech", in which he activated some sort of super agents. These Werewolf agents had at their disposal a vast assortment of weapons, from fire-proof coats to silenced pistols. The tactics available to the organization included sniping attacks, arson, sabotage, and assassination. The players are now faced with battling savage and sinister

monsters created by the enemy. This is a mixture of the Elite campaign and classic fantasy!

Creature	HD	ACTIONS AND SPECIALS
Gargoyle	5	2 Claws 1d6 horn 1d8
Ghoul	2	2 Claws 1d6 + Con test or paralyzed.
Banshee	7	Shriek-Con test or paralyzed d8 moments
Blink Dog	4	Bite 1d6- teleport once per combat
Skeleton	2	Sword 1d6
Zombie	1	Claw 1d8 attacks in packs of d12
Vampire bat	2	Bite 1d4 -Con test or 1d6 per moment
Vampire	8	Bite d10 can turn gaseous and fly
Mummy	6	Slam d8
Werewolf	5	Claw d8 only hurt by silver
Ogre	4	Club d12 can throw large objects
Shadow	3	Touch drains d6 STR and does d6 dmg
Giant Spider	3	Bite d6 can make webs

Letter	Phonetic	Letter	Phonetic	Letter	Phonetic
A	Able	M	Mike	Y	Yoke
B	Baker	N	Nan	Z	Zebra
C	Charlie	O	Oboe	0	Zero
D	Dog	P	Peter	1	One
E	Easy	Q	Queen	2	Two
F	Fox	R	Roger	3	Three
G	George	S	Sail/Sugar	4	Four
H	How	T	Tare	5	Five
I	Item	U	Uncle	6	Six
J	Jig	V	Victor	7	Seven
K	King	W	William	8	Eight
L	Love	X	X-ray	9	Nine

# USAGE DICE TRACKER



# THE FRONT

CHARACTER SHEET

NAME

RANK

BEFORE THE WAR I WAS A

STR

INT

DEX

AW

CON

CHA

HP 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 OofA

CLASS

LEVEL

I AM AT AN ADVANTAGE WHEN I

EQUIPMENT

AMMUNITION

Place Ammunition LEAF DIE HERE



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NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

RANK: \_\_\_\_\_

SERIAL NO: \_\_\_\_\_ AGE: \_\_\_\_\_

*STATUS BEFORE THE WAR*

PLACE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_\_

OCCUPATION: \_\_\_\_\_

# THE FRONT

## CHARACTER SHEET

CHARACTER CLASS: \_\_\_\_\_ LEVEL: \_\_\_\_\_

PRIMARY MILITARY SPECIALTY: \_\_\_\_\_ SECONDARY MILITARY SPECIALTY: \_\_\_\_\_

ADVANTAGES: \_\_\_\_\_

### ABILITY SCORES:

STR:

SCORE:

INT:

DEX:

AW:

CON:

CHA:

SCORE:

### WEAPONS:

### XP:

### HP:

20	19	18	17
----	----	----	----

16	15	14	13
----	----	----	----

12	11	10	9
----	----	----	---

8	7	6	5
---	---	---	---

4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---

OUT OF ACTION

### AMMUNITION

place Ammunition Usage Die here



### EQUIPMENT:

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

DESCRIPTION/NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_