

DIEN BIEN PHU

THE FINAL GAMBLE

2nd Edition

Version 2.5p (changes are printed in violet)

Introduction

In late 1953, France wished to establish a strong presence around airfields in the hinterland. The Viet Minh had been troubled by this strategy since their failure to take the airfield at Na San in 1952-53. When France occupied the important valley of Dien Bien Phu with a large force, the leadership of the Viet Minh knew that they had to retake the valley. But this time they had to do it right because they were about to commit half of their entire battle force in the whole of Vietnam and therefore, failure was not an option. France in their turn ended up committing almost all elite units there, increasing the stakes on both sides, especially as peace talks had begun at Geneva. Dien Bien Phu, which started as a jumping point for infiltration among people in the western highlands, had now turned into a siege battle where the defeated side would be dealt such a blow to its prestige that it would have great difficulty continuing the war. It was indeed the final gamble.

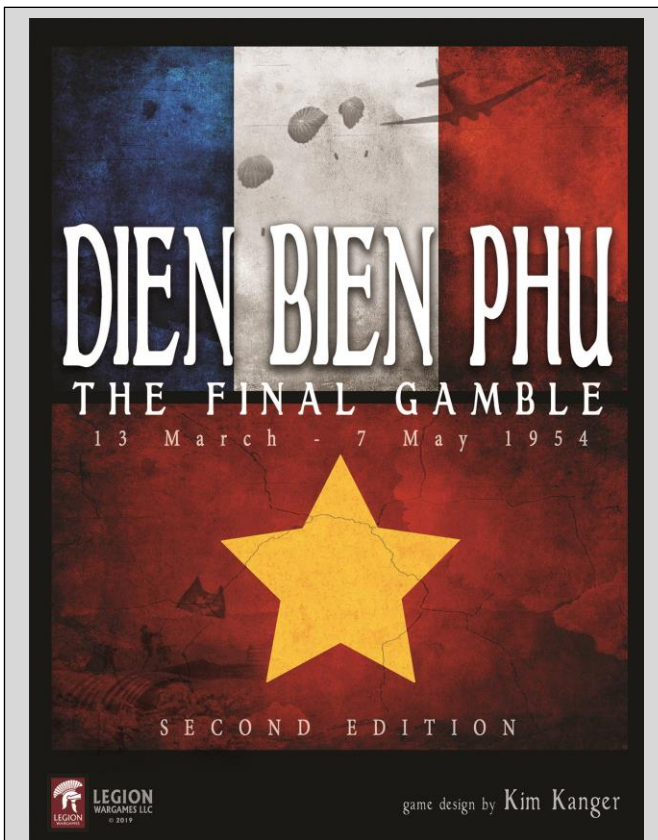
The game starts in mid-March when the Viet Minh attack begins and ends no later than mid-May when the final assault on the central French strongpoints was planned. It is a game where the Viet Minh has to race against time. Its force will suffer decreasing morale in the face of horrendous losses and desperate French resistance. It is a game where The French force literally fights for its life, trying to keep itself supplied to avoid collapse, and hopefully be the last man standing if the Viet Minh juggernaut finally runs out of steam.

*To those on both sides
that never returned home*

These are 2nd edition rules, upgraded to version 2.5o. Read these rules carefully, even if you are familiar with earlier versions. You will find a lot of changes.

The rules are laid out in the order of the Game Turn. Play your first session while following the rules, step by step. Rules within the same phase under section "A)" must take place before the ones under section "B)", which are before "C)" etc. There are interjected notes in the text that will provide you with an historical background and the ideas behind certain rules.

How to win is explained in rule 5.1.



RULES OF PLAY

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1.0 Basics

1.1 The Opponents

France

One player plays French expeditionary force. It consists of Europeans, West Africans, Moroccans, Algerians, Thai, and Vietnamese. They will all, for simplicity, be called “French” and the player “France”. Each Infantry unit is a company. Four of them, shown by the colors and designation they share, represent a battalion (except “Thai co” where each one is independent). Tank units are platoons. Artillery units are batteries, mortar platoons, and Quad 50 detachments. All will be called “Artillery units” and be governed by the same rules.

Note: *1 CEPML had twelve mortars. That is why it has three counters instead of historically two.*

The Viet Minh (VM)

The other player plays the Vietnamese nationalist movement - the Viet Minh. Units were based on people from different backgrounds, like townspeople, coal miners, highlanders etc. I will refer to them and the player as “VM”. Each unit is a battalion. Three of them a regiment, which is shown by their common designation and region name (which is printed on the side of the unit counters), as well as the symbol they share (square, circle, or triangle). Nine battalions that share a color band in the header form a division. Artillery units are battalions and are represented by their Zone Markers.

1.2 The Game Turn (GT)

A Game Turn represents 3 days. VM assaulted during nights and France during daylight. Each Game Turn is divided into a set of phases which in their turn are divided into a set of segments. The game has three weather periods which can be seen on the Game Turn Track: Dry, Rain, and Monsoon.

1.3 The Map

A) Dien Bien Phu (DBP)

The map covers the area around the former village of Dien Bien Phu where most combat took place. It will be referred to as “DBP”. It has a hexagonal grid over it to facilitate movement and range. Each hexagon is 150 meters across and will be called “hex” for short. Reference to DBP excludes the sub-map Isabelle and any box of any kind.

B) Isabelle

The sub-map that contains the area of Isabelle (which includes the strongpoint Wieme) will be referred to in its entirety as “Isabelle”. The hex grids over DBP and Isabelle do not connect and there are special rules regarding movement between them. Reference to Isabelle excludes DBP and any box of any kind.

C) Map Edge Hexes

... are all hexes along the edges of DBP and Isabelle maps. The concept of “Map Edge Hexes” will recur now and then in the rules.

D) Supply Areas

The two areas which are encompassed by pale white dashed borders are French Supply Areas. There is a large one at DBP and a small one at Isabelle.

E) Division Sectors and their zones

There are four VM Division Sectors. Sector 308, 312, and 316 are separated by red borders at DBP while Sector 304 consists of both Isabelle and boxes. Each sector consists of alternating light and dark zones where each zone has a printed Zone Number that increases in value for each zone. A zone will be referred to with its “Zone Number – Sector”, like “2z-308” (Zone 2 - Sector 308). When referring to a sector, it includes all its zones (example: Reference to Sector 304 includes both its boxes and Isabelle).

VM units have certain limitations

... when they are in a Division Sector that is not their own (rule 2.4-A, 2.4-B). **There are no such limitations in the central area, beyond the last zones, which belongs to no sector.** All French units though, may move and fight freely in any sector and zone.

F) Boxes and the arrows between them

There are two boxes outside Isabelle that belong to Sector 304. There are also two boxes that are in Laos (DBP borders Laos). When the rules refer to “Laos”, it includes both its boxes. There are arrows between boxes that show who may move between them and what direction is allowed (the arrows pointing at DBP or Isabelle do not point to any specific hex, just to the maps in general). Only the French may move across blue arrows. Only the VM may move across red arrows. Both sides may move across gray arrows.

G) Tracks, Charts and Boxes

... surround the map. Many have the Scenario Letters A, B, C, and D which indicate where markers shall be set at the beginning of a scenario (rule 9.0-G).

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1.4 Strongpoints and Trench Zones

A) Strongpoints and Structures

A strongpoint is a position where there is a single trench that may range in size from one to four hexes. Each strongpoint has a French name used for setup. It can be a name like Gabrielle, or codes like E2 (Eliane 2), or I-HQ (Isabelle HQ). You will also, for historical flavor, find their VM names, such as Dôc Lập for Gabrielle, or A1 for French E2.

Structures are hospital signs, or where it is printed “Ammo Dump”, “Fuel Depot”, “Food Supply”, “PIM” (“Prisonniers Internés Militaires” = VM prisoners).

Note: *Some strongpoints changed names during the battle. I have kept the names they were most known by.*

B) Trench Zones and Trench Markers

Each Division Sector has a Trench Marker set on one of its Zone Numbers. There are Scenario Letters among the Zone Numbers in each sector, indicating where to set the Trench Marker at the start of each scenario. A Trench Marker means that all VM units are entrenched in each and every hex in that zone and in all previous zones in that sector. All these zones will be called “Trench Zones”.

C) Dig Marker

... is the back side of a Trench Marker. If a Trench Marker has to be flipped to its Dig Marker side after moving to a next higher zone (rule 8.5-B), then that specific zone is a “Dig Zone” (all previous zones in that sector are still Trench Zones). The difference is that **neither** side may Valley move units into a Dig Zone (rules 2.1-B, 6.2-A), and that French LoC is **allowed** to enter a hex in a Dig Zone (rule 1.9-C).

D) Ownership of Strongpoints

In each scenario, all strongpoints in all Trench Zones are controlled by VM from start and marked by VM flags. The rest are controlled by France and are not marked by any flags, unless Scenario Information says otherwise (rule 9.0-G). You lose control of a strongpoint if ...

- The enemy has at least one unit occupying any hex of that strongpoint, **and** ...
- You no longer have any unit present in that strongpoint

If both these conditions apply at the end of any segment, then control immediately passes over to the opponent. A strongpoint will also change control during your Attrition Segment if ...

- It has an Isolation Marker and is unable to trace a LoC (rules 1.9, 4.1-A, 8.1-A)

E) Flags and their effect

If VM takes control of a strongpoint or structure, it is marked with a VM flag. If France retakes control, flip the VM flag to its French side. If a strongpoint has any flag (VM or French), then all wire around the hexes of that strongpoint is gone.

F) Strongpoints Track

Each strongpoint or structure is worth a number of points equal to the number of hexes it consists of. As soon as a strongpoint or structure becomes VM-controlled, **subtract** the appropriate number of points (1 to 4 points) on the Strongpoints Track. If a VM-controlled strongpoint or structure becomes French again, add the same point(s) instead.

Exception: Do **not** adjust Strongpoints Track for any strongpoints at Isabelle unless Isabelle surrenders. If it does, there are special rules for that (rule 8.1-B).

Note: *Point value on the track is less than the total value of all French strongpoints and structures. This is correct.*

G) What is the Strongpoints Taken Marker?

Whenever a strongpoint or structure is taken by VM, **increase** also the “Strongpoints Taken” Marker with the same number of points. Flip the marker into its “+10” side if you pass “9”, and start from “0” again. Whenever France retakes a strongpoint or structure, deduct the point(s) instead (but never below “0”).

H) Outposts



There are French outposts at DBP, recognized by their white triangles. An outpost will not render any points for either side. An outpost will automatically disappear at the end of a segment if it is both part of a VM Trench/Dig Zone and no longer occupied by France (there are some “No Outpost” Markers to help you remember). Place a VM flag on an outpost if it becomes VM-controlled (remove any flag when the outpost disappears). This is done in order to see who controls it when France conducts any “After-Combat Move” (rules 8.2).

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I) Who is entrenched and where?

Both sides are entrenched in any strongpoint hex, regardless of who controls the strongpoint. Only France is entrenched in an existing outpost. Only VM is entrenched in a Trench/Dig Zone hex.

Two types of wire along hexsides: Heavy and Light

Both cost +1 mp for VM to cross (even if there is a road). French units do not pay anything to cross any wire. Heavy wire is also a combat obstacle (depicted as a thick “double” wire) for VM. The light one is not. Any wire is gone for all purposes if it runs around a strongpoint with a flag, or **along a hexside** between two Trench Zone hexes (Dig Zone is not enough).

It costs +1 mp to enter an enemy ZoC (rule 1.8)

... in addition to terrain or any hexside features.

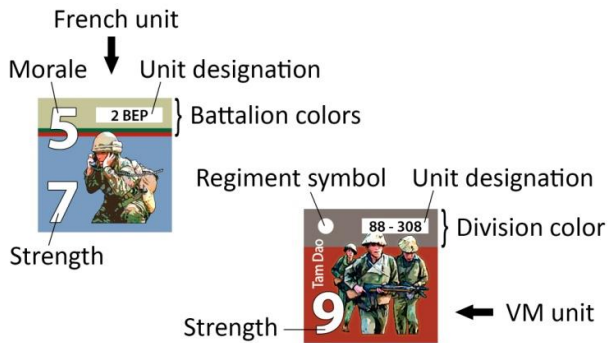
It costs +1 mp to enter a hex, ascending a hill (uphill)

... in addition to terrain or any hexside features. “Uphill” is when you enter or assault from a hex that is not part of the same hill.

It costs 5 mp (not more, not less)

... for a VM unit to enter a hex in any **Supply Area**, or for a French unit to enter a hex in any **Trench Zone** (too many armed enemy personnel). This cost is regardless of terrain, hexside features, or enemy ZoC.

1.5 → Units: Values and Movement



A) Unit's Morale and Strength

Each French unit has its Morale Value printed on the counter. The Morale Value of a VM unit depends on where its Division Morale Marker is on the VM Division Morale Track (rule 5.2-D). **Exception:** The independent 148 regiment has a printed Morale Value and therefore has no Morale Marker. **Both sides have the Strength Value printed on the counter.**

Note: *Strength Value of a VM battalion is only two more than a French elite company. The strength of a battalion consists of a company leading the charge or defense. The rest is behind preparing to be the second wave. One can see the VM battalion as a company with two supporting companies in the same hex, like in rule 7.5-A.*

B) Movement: Terrain and Features

Each unit has a Movement Value of 5 Movement Points (“mp”) with which it pays the terrain costs when moving into hexes and across some hexsides (see Terrain Effect Chart). A bridge negates the cost of crossing a river, although a river remains a combat obstacle even with a bridge (rule 3.5-A). Artillery units may only cross a river where there is a bridge.

You pay for the most expensive terrain in each hex, **plus any cost for crossing the hexside**. But if you enter a hex along a road, then you pay the road cost instead. **Exception:** You always pay the full terrain cost in enemy ZoC, even if there is a road (rule 1.8). Also, a road will not negate any cost to cross a wire.

And of course, a unit may never enter a hex that contains an enemy unit.

1.6 → Stacking

France may not stack more than 3 units in a hex, and VM may not stack more than 1 unit, at the end of any segment. Commando, Airstrike, Support Mortars, flags, and any markers stack for free. VM may inspect French stacks. If over-stacking is detected, redo the move and make it correct.

Note: *This means about 500 men. The unit(s) in a hex could be larger but many non-assault troops were kept in the rear.*

1.7 → Step Losses and Reinforcements

A) VM Step Losses

First step loss: Flip a unit to its reduced side, which has a light red band across it.

Second step loss: Place a Disorg Marker on top of it (Disorganized). The unit will now have a decreased Strength Value of “5”, but it will retain the Morale Value of the unit.

Third step loss: Remove the Disorg Marker and place the unit in the Removed Box (**remove a Pathet Lao unit from the game if it receives a third step loss**).

Note: *A removed unit is either a disorganized unit that has taken too many hits to be functional at the front, and therefore needs to be rebuilt and reorganized, or a unit that needs to be recreated due to surrender (rule 4.1-A).*

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B) French Step Losses

First step loss: Flip a unit to its reduced side, which has a light red band across it.

Second step loss: Remove the unit and roll a die. On a result of:

- **1-4** Place it in the Wounded Box
- **5-6** Place it in the Gone Box

Place a unit directly into the Gone Box (without rolling a die) if it **takes a second step loss** ...

- And it is an Artillery or Tank unit
- In any box
- Due to Commando Raid (rule 2.3)
- Due to Surrender (rules 5.1-B, 8.1)
- During Retreat (rule 3.6-C)

If a French unit at Isabelle is moved to the Wounded Box, it is placed at the “Isabelle” side of the box.

Being reduced does not affect stacking at all.

If a French Artillery unit

... takes a step loss, due to any reason, **deduct 2 French ammo** as well (two per step).

C) French losses may trigger new reinforcements

The Reinforcements Available Chart has a column to the right that contains reinforcements, and a scale in the center where the HQ Marker (Christian de Castries, or yours truly ... Kim de Kanger) is set according to scenario. If any battalion remains in the column to the right, then the HQ Marker is moved up one slot each time a French unit, reduced or not, is removed to the Gone Box or to the Wounded Box.

When the HQ reaches the top slot – “Okay, let’s see if we can” - France immediately rolls a die to see if HQ has convinced Hanoi to send another Para battalion as reinforcement. Modify the die-roll with any modification printed in the Box of the battalion in question (which is the one currently at the top of the remaining battalions).

Example (see the table that follows): *HQ is one slot down from “Okay” and two French units are sent to the Wounded Box. HQ is moved up to “Okay” due to first lost unit. A die is rolled and the result is “3”. HQ Marker is moved down one slot. Then up to “Okay” again due to second lost unit. A die is rolled again ...*

If the modified die-roll result is ...

- **0-2** “Yes, we will send one”
Move the battalion currently at the top of Column to the Hanoi Airbase Box. Those four companies may now be included in any future airdrop. Reset the HQ Marker to “You have what you need” at the bottom
- **3-4** “Perhaps, we shall look into it”
Move the HQ Marker down one slot
- **5-7** “Not now, we can’t spare one”
Move the HQ Marker down two slots

1.8 → Zone of Control (ZoC)

Each unit has a “Zone of Control” (ZoC) that covers its six surrounding hexes. An opposing unit’s ZoC is an “enemy ZoC”. The effects of an enemy ZoC are these:

- Your LoC (rule 1.9) may not exist in an enemy ZoC
- It costs +1 mp to enter an enemy ZoC (no more than that, regardless of how many enemy ZoC into a hex)
- Road movement is not permitted in an enemy ZoC

An enemy unit does not project an enemy ZoC into an adjacent hex (which means that **none** of the effects above apply), if ...

- The enemy unit is shaken, or ...
- A friendly unit occupies that adjacent hex

Example: *A French unit enters a VM ZoC and pays +1 mp. A second French unit will not have to pay an extra movement point since the VM ZoC is now “negated” by the first unit.*

1.9 → Line of Communication (LoC)

A) What is LoC?

Both sides will often have to trace a “Line of Communication” (LoC) back to their respective safe area. It can be a unit or a certain hex that has to trace a LoC. A LoC can be of any length, passing through any hexes and boxes (via eligible arrows) with some exceptions stated below. LoC includes both the hex/box where it begins and where it ends. Your LoC **may include** any hex that is occupied by your unit, even if that hex otherwise would be forbidden.

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But no hex within this LoC may be enemy-occupied or in enemy ZoC. Nor may it be an unoccupied hex in an enemy-controlled strongpoint. In addition, a ...

B) VM LoC

... must trace back to any Map Edge Hex (Trench/Dig Zone or not) either at DBP or Isabelle. A hex or a VM unit that fulfills all these conditions is in "VM LoC". A VM unit in a box is always in VM LoC.

C) French LoC

... must trace back to any hex in a Supply Area in either DBP or Isabelle. French LoC may not include a box or hex in a Trench Zone (Dig Zone is allowed). A hex or a French unit that fulfills all these conditions is in "French LoC". A French unit in any box is always in French LoC, except 2z-304 where units must trace to either Supply Area. However, they can **only** do so if 2z-304 is not a Trench Zone.

Note: *A unit at Isabelle could trace to a DBP Supply Area hex, and vice versa, as long as 2z-304 is not a Trench Zone.*

1.10 → Artillery Zone Markers

Artillery Zone Markers

Artillery Zone Markers represent ordnance fire in the hex where the marker is placed. VM Zone Markers represent 12 Artillery guns or mortars. French Zone Markers represent 6-8 Artillery guns or mortars. VM and French Zone Markers are more or less equal in their effect, even though VM Zone Markers represent more guns. This is due to the large amount of VM rounds that were duds, but also due to French professionalism and their higher rate of fire.

Note: *I have created an average artillery strength, even if some units had better guns.*

French Artillery losses will flip Zone Markers

An Artillery formation (like 3/10 RAC) has 1-3 Artillery units, but it usually has fewer Zone Markers. If all units in an Artillery formation are eliminated, remove all its Zone Markers from play. But if there are remaining Artillery units, follow this rule: If a formation has lost ...

- 1-3 steps, reduce one Zone Marker
- 4 steps, remove the reduced Zone Marker
- 5 steps, reduce the remaining Zone Marker

But remember, if all steps are eliminated, always remove all Zone Markers of that formation.

2.0 VM Pre-Assault Phase

2.1 → VM Operational Move

Move in the order A) -> B). Some units may end up moving twice with Valley Move as a second move.

A) Box Move

VM may move up to **3 units**. Each unit that moves may only do one of the four options below during a Box Move. A VM unit in ...

- **Any box in Sector 304 or Laos** may move to an adjacent box via a red or gray arrow
- **Any box in Sector 304** may move to any Map Edge Hex in a Trench/Dig Zone, either at Isabelle (only from 2z-304) or DBP. Moving into French ZoC is allowed
- **Any Map edge Hex in a Trench/Dig Zone** may move to 1z-304 (only from DBP) or 2z-304
- **VM LoC at DBP or Sector 304 (not Laos)** may move to the VM Off-Map Box
- **VM Off-Map Box** may move to any Sector 304 box, or to any Map Edge Hex at DBP or Isabelle, **Trench/Dig Zone or not**. Moving into French ZoC is allowed

Exception: The Pathet Lao unit must stay in Laos.

B) Valley Move

VM may choose up to **3 units** in VM LoC anywhere at DBP and/or Sector 304, and move them to any hex or box in a Trench Zone (**not** Dig Zone), if the final position is ...

- In VM LoC, and ...
- Not in French ZoC

2.2 → VM Bombardment

A) VM may place VM Zone Markers on French units,



... but only one Zone Marker per hex. There are regular Artillery Zone Markers as well as Heavy Weapons (HW) Zone Markers. They have the same effect, but a placed HW Zone Marker must be within 2 hexes of a VM unit, or within 3 hexes of a VM unit on a hill. Regular Artillery Zone Markers may be placed on French units anywhere at DBP and/or Sector 304.

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B) Deduct 1 ammo

... on the VM Ammunition Track for each VM Zone Marker that is placed (regular as well as HW).

C) French Truck/Supply Losses due to VM Bombardment

If VM places at least 6 Zone Markers, then count all of them. Each Zone Marker placed in any Supply Area is **doubled** when counting. VM rolls **two dice**. If the result is equal to or less than the sum, France suffers a Truck hit and a Supply hit. Move the French Truck Marker down one slot on Fuel & Spares Track, but **never below "1"**. VM rolls another single die and checks the Supply Hit Table (even if the Truck Marker has not moved because it is at "1") to see what supply France must deduct. Supply is never deducted below "0" on any track, though.

Note: *You don't get any extra supply hits by placing Zone Markers on "Dump", "Depot" etc printed on map. Most supplies were already distributed. There were 73 trucks moving supply. VM artillery ground the number of trucks down at the end of April making it impossible to collect airdropped packages that weighted 100 kilos or more.*

D) Bombardment roll

VM rolls a die for each French unit that is under a Zone Marker. VM chooses in what order to roll, if several units are stacked (French units in a box are never stacked, if bombarded). This roll represents ferocity and effect of bombardment for a unit. When you have rolled the die, you will first see whether the unit takes a step loss, then if it becomes shaken.

Will the French unit take a loss?

Modify the die-roll result with ...

- **+1** If the French unit is not entrenched
- **-1** If the French unit is reduced

If the modified die-roll result is **5 or more**, then remove a step from that unit.

Will the French unit become shaken?

Return to actual die-roll result (ignore any previous modifications) and then once again modify it with ...

- **+1** If the French unit is not entrenched
- **-1** If the French unit is **still** stacked with another unit that has a better Morale Value

Place a Shaken Marker on the unit if the modified die-roll result is **equal to or greater** than the unit's Morale Value. Return the Zone Marker to its box when you are done with all units beneath it.

2.3 → VM Commando Raid



Place the Commando in any hex in a Trench/Dig Zone, or in **any** Map Edge Hex. It will raid an adjacent French unit. Roll a die. Remove a step from the French unit if the die-roll result is at least **3 higher** than the French unit's Morale Value. If the unit is eliminated, place it in the Gone Box (desertion). Return the Commando to its box.

2.4 → VM Tactical Move

A) Asset Markers (Wire Breach / Recon)



There are 4 Asset Markers that VM may place on the map each Game Turn, before VM Tactical Move. VM chooses to place each one either as Reconnaissance ("Recon") or as Wire Breach (flip the marker). No more than 2 Asset Markers, regardless of which side, may be placed in a single Division Sector.

Recon is placed on any VM unit in VM LoC.

It will increase that unit's **Movement Value to "6"**. Remove the Recon after Tactical movement.

Wire Breach

... is placed either on a VM unit in VM LoC, or in an empty hex adjacent to that VM unit (but not in a French-controlled strongpoint or in a Supply Area). All wires along all hexsides of a Wire Breach are now gone for all purposes until the marker is removed at the end of VM After-Combat Move Segment (when the wire reappears).

A single VM unit can "host" two Asset Markers, if so wished: a Wire Breach and a Recon.

B) Each VM unit may move up to 5 mp

... (or 6 mp, if there is a Recon on it) within DBP or Isabelle (no Box Movement). A unit may move across any zone and/or sector boundary.

But each Division Sector may contain no more than **3 VM units** from other Divisions at the end of this segment. VM removes any exceeding unit and places it anywhere in Zone 1 in its own sector (for this rule only, consider the 148 rgt to be part of 304 Division).

Remember that there is a central area outside of any Division Sector.



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3.0 VM Assault Phase

Combat follows a procedure that is a bit different.

First, VM decides which division(s) will assault. Those that do not will rest and improve their morale.

Second, France may move some units as a Reaction Move.

Third, France may place Zone Markers on assaulting VM units as Support Barrage.

Fourth, each defending French unit may now fire upon the VM unit assaulting it. The French unit's strength is adjusted by several factors. France rolls two dice and compares the result with the adjusted Strength Value to see how well it goes. France rolls again, modifies it with the result of the previous roll and checks a table to see what happens with the assaulting VM unit.

Fifth, each assaulting VM unit that did not abort, charges into defending hex. The VM unit's Strength Value is adjusted by several factors. VM rolls two dice and compares the result with adjusted Strength Value to see how well it goes. VM rolls again, modifies it with the result from the previous roll and checks a table to see what happens with the French unit(s).

3.1 → VM Declares Assault or Rest



VM may now place Assault Markers on units that intend to assault. Place each marker so that its arrow points at the hex being assaulted. Each defending hex must contain at least one French unit, and it may not be assaulted by more than one VM unit.

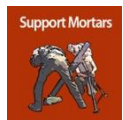
Assault, Surprise, and Hesitate Markers (but not Abort Markers) are collectively referred to as Combat Markers.

Note: *The number of Combat Markers is the limit of how many assaults there may be during a phase.*

A VM division will rest and regain some of its morale

... if none of its units declare any assaults. If it rests, move its Division Morale Marker up **1 slot** (towards "5"). Move it up **2 slots**, if none of its units are adjacent to any French unit. Resting VM units sharing a box with a French unit are not considered adjacent to the French.

Support Mortars



VM may place Support Mortars on any assaulting VM units in VM LoC (except in Laos), but only one per unit. No more than one may be used per VM Regiment **and no more than four in total**. There is no ammo cost for doing this. Each one will add a **+1** to the VM Assault Fire Roll. Remove them at the end of the VM Assault Fire Roll.

3.2 → Box Combat

If VM is occupying a box that contains French unit(s), VM may initiate Box combat (voluntary). If so, VM decides how many steps each side must lose and which units that will do so. Both sides must lose an equal number of steps, and no more than 1 step per unit may be lost. VM units that rest may not participate.

3.3 → French Reaction Move

France may move up to **4 units** as a Reaction Move. Each unit may move up to 5 mp. Artillery, shaken units or those that start adjacent to a VM unit may not do a Reaction Move. Box Movement is not permitted.

Note: *VM assaults took place at night and French units were not trained to manoeuvre at night, therefore only 4 units.*

3.4 → French Support Barrage

France may fire Support Barrage by placing French Zone Markers on VM units with Assault Markers, but only one per hex. When firing Support Barrage, France may **not place Zone Markers that are reduced**. Support Barrage will give France a die-roll modification for the coming Defense Fire Roll, and allow France to make a Defense Effect Roll on a more favorable column (**rule 3.5-C**). For each Zone Marker that is placed, deduct ...

2 ammo if it is a regular Support Barrage, or ...

3 ammo if it is an Intense Support Barrage (turn the marker a quarter, if intense, to help you remember).

Spend all ammo before you start rolling dice.

Note: *The Artillery unit itself can be anywhere while firing on any hex. Support barrage ammo expenditure was greater than when conducting a bombardment for a planned assault.*

3.5 → French Defense Fire

A) Each French unit

... that has an Assault Marker pointing at it, **must** now fire against the assaulting VM unit. France chooses in each case which unit in the hex will be the defending unit, and places it at the top of the stack. An Artillery unit may not be chosen if there is any other unit in the hex. If none, then an Artillery unit will defend with a Strength Value of 2 (or 1, if it is reduced). It will not spend any ammo doing so.

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Note: *One occasion was when a battery from 2/4 RAC in D3 repulsed a VM assault by firing point blank at them.*

France may conduct Defense Fire Rolls in any order. But before rolling, a defending unit has its Strength Value modified by ...

- **+1** For **each** obstacle the VM unit must assault across/into. The three obstacles for VM are: across heavy wire (not light wire); across river; uphill (forest is not an obstacle for VM)
- **+1** For **each** supporting French unit of any kind (including Artillery), stacked with the defending unit. It may not be shaken (*errata: "shaken" should be included in the French Combat chart*) **+2** if it is a full-strength Tank unit during Dry or Rain Game Turns (**+1** if Tank is reduced or if it is during Monsoon)
- **+1** For **each** supporting French Infantry unit from the same battalion, that is adjacent to the assaulting VM unit (Thai co, Tanks, and Artillery cannot do this). The supporting unit may not be shaken or have any **Combat Marker** pointing at it (Abort is not a Combat Marker). A unit may support more than one defending unit from the same battalion
- **+1** If the defending French unit brings in Support Barrage. **+2** if it is Intense Support Barrage
- **-2** If the assaulting VM unit is entrenched (cover)
- **-2** If the defending French unit is shaken

A supporting French unit will give a +1 even if it is reduced.

B) French Defense Fire Roll

France rolls two dice and compares the result with the defending French unit's modified Strength Value (which can be a negative number). Depending on the Fire Roll result, France will, for the coming Effect Roll, receive a modification of ...

- **+1** If the result is **below** unit's strength
- **+2** If the result is **5 or more, below** unit's strength
- **0** If the result is **equal** to unit's strength
- **-1** If the result is **above** unit's strength
- **-2** If the result is **5 or more, above** unit's strength

Return any French Zone Marker to its Box after each Defense Fire Roll.

C) French Defense Effect Roll

Find the column in French Defense Effect Table that corresponds with the assaulting VM unit's current Morale Value, taking into account whether Support Barrage has been used or not (different rows at the top). France rolls a die and modifies it with the result from the previous Fire Roll. Cross-reference the modified die-roll result with the column of the VM unit's morale. The result will either be:

- **Surprise** - VM will roll on the Surprise column (replace the Assault Marker with a Surprise Marker)
- **Step loss** - The VM unit takes a step loss and, unless eliminated, will roll on the Normal column
- **Loss & Hesitate** - VM unit takes a step loss and, unless eliminated, will roll on the Hesitate column (replace Assault Marker with a Hesitate Marker)
- **Abort** - The VM unit takes cover. There is no assault (flip the Assault Marker to its Abort side)
- **Loss & Abort** - The VM unit takes a step loss and, unless eliminated, aborts (flip the Assault Marker into its Abort side)

Complete each defense (Fire + Effect Roll) before you proceed to the next defense. All defense rolls are done before VM rolls for assaults.

3.6 → VM Assault

A) VM units with Combat Markers must now charge

... into the French defending units in any order. An assaulting unit has its Strength Value modified by ...

- **+1** For **each** supporting VM unit from the same regiment, that is adjacent to the defending French unit. The supporting unit may not have a Combat- or an Abort Marker on it. A unit may support more than one assaulting unit from the same regiment
- **+1** If the assaulting unit uses Support Mortars
- **-2** If the defending French unit is entrenched (**-0** if entrenched in an outpost)

A supporting unit will offer a +1 even if it is reduced or has a Disorg Marker. **A unit may support after its own assault and advance**, unless it Aborted.

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B) VM Assault Fire roll

VM rolls two dice and compares the result with the assaulting unit's modified Strength Value. Depending on the Fire Roll result, VM will, for the coming Effect Roll, receive a modifier of ...

- **+1** If the result is **below** unit's strength
- **+2** If the result is **5 or more, below** unit's strength
- **0** If the result is **equal** to unit's strength
- **-1** If the result is **above** unit's strength
- **-2** If the result is **5 or more, above** unit's strength

Tiên lên!

Before the Effect Roll, VM may decide to add a **+1** to the **received** Effect Roll **modifier** (a “-1” will become “0” etc) by letting one unit that supported this assault take a step loss (only one per Effect Roll).

C) VM Assault Effect Roll

Find the column in VM Assault Effect Table that corresponds with the defending French unit's Morale Value, taking into account whether it is shaken or not (different rows at the top). VM then finds the correct Attack Die roll column (Hesitate, Normal, or Surprise) and rolls a die. Modify it with the result from the previous Fire Roll, and with any “Tiên lên” modification, if used. A modified Effect die-roll can never become more than “6”, or less than “1” (**same thing in 3.5-C**). Cross-reference the modified Effect Roll result with the column of the French unit's morale. The result will either be:

- **No effect** - Nothing happens. The assault fails
- **Choice** - France may choose one option:
 - Option 1:* Take 2 step losses and stay in the hex (**only** take 1 step loss **and stay**, if there are only 2 steps in the hex)
 - Option 2:* Retreat all units one hex
- **Loss & Retreat** - Take 1 step loss and retreat all units one hex
- **2 x Loss & Retreat** - Take 2 step losses and retreat all units one hex

France chooses where to retreat

... and which step losses to take among the units in the defending hex (only defending hex is affected). The defending unit must take the first step loss. A unit may retreat into any kind of hex, **even into enemy ZoC**.

Separate units in the defending hex may retreat into separate hexes. Do not retreat, violating stacking limit. But if forced to, continue until you reach first eligible hex. If a unit retreats into another defending hex, it will suffer the result of that combat (it may absorb step losses). Do not retreat across a map edge. But if forced to, and it is from a hex that is not in a Trench Zone, then place the unit in the closest eligible Map Edge Hex that is not in a Trench Zone.

A unit will be eliminated (prisoners) and placed directly into Gone Box if it retreats ...

- And it is an Artillery unit
- Across a map edge, from a hex in a Trench Zone
- Onto a VM unit

Advance after Combat, further support and advance

If the defending hex is vacated, then the assaulting VM unit must advance into it. If it does, then units that supported that assault may voluntarily also advance one hex. If they do, they must end their advance adjacent to the original defending hex (but not end up in the original assaulting hex).

An assaulting or supporting unit may, even after its own advance, support other assaults (that have not aborted), and then advance again, if eligible. Remove the Combat Marker after each assault. Do **not** remove any Abort Marker until all assaults and all advances have been made.

4.0 VM Post-Assault Phase

4.1 VM Attrition

A) Each VM unit and VM-Controlled Strongpoint

... that has an Isolation Marker (received in that case during the French turn, see rule 8.4) and that cannot trace a VM LoC during this phase, will surrender. Place such units in Removed Box (to be recreated) and make the VM-controlled strongpoint French again by flipping the VM flag to its French side. But if there is a VM LoC, then remove the Isolation Marker from any unit or strongpoint that is now able to trace it (a single strongpoint hex that can trace LoC will do).

VM may then evacuate (voluntary) any formerly isolated units and place them in the Off-Map Box.

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B) Is the Rain/Monsoon healthy?

Not really. From **12th April** and for the rest of the game, VM must, due to fatigue and disease, remove 1 step **in total** each Attrition Phase. VM removes it from any VM unit that is not in the Pulled-Back Box, Removed Box, **or in the VM Reinforcements Box.**

4.2 → VM After-Combat Move

Any VM unit that is **not** entrenched may choose one of two alternatives. If one **of them** is chosen, then the unit must end its move entrenched, but not in a French-controlled strongpoint. The unit does not have to stop in the first possible entrenched hex if "Alt 2" is chosen. If unable to end its move entrenched, then it may not move at all. Each unit moves individually and checks its LoC and enemy ZoC the moment it starts moving.

- **Alt 1:** Move 1 hex, regardless of any LoC and ZoC
- **Alt 2:** Move 5 mp, but do not enter enemy ZoC (the unit may start adjacent to a French unit)

4.3 → Remove/Add Shaken Markers

A) Remove all Shaken Markers
... on both sides.

B) Place a Shaken Marker
... on each VM unit that is not entrenched and that is adjacent to any French unit (**units are not adjacent to each other in boxes**).

Note: *VM units did not want to be caught in the open in broad daylight close to French units.*

4.4 → Mark all Isolated French Units

Each French unit that cannot trace a French LoC, and each French strongpoint where none of its hexes can trace a French LoC, will receive an Isolation Marker. A unit or strongpoint within a Supply Area has "automatic" French LoC, of course, and cannot be isolated.



5.0 Supply Phase

5.1 → Morale Check

A) VM may demand a French surrender!

If VM chooses to make such a demand, then subtract the number where the Strongpoints Taken Marker is, from the current value of the Strongpoints Track (don't move any markers, just calculate). The result is the Surrender Number (SN).

Example: *The Strongpoints Taken Marker is set on "4" which is subtracted from the current value of the Strongpoints Track, which is "12". The SN is therefore "8".*

B) Will the French Garrison surrender?

France rolls two dice and modifies the result with ...

- **+1** For each Supply Track (Fuel, Food, Medicine, Ammo) that is at "2" or less
- **-1** If any unit from Condor or Standby Force is in Laos 2 or 2z-304, but none at DBP/Isabelle
- **-2** If any unit from Condor or Standby Force is at DBP and/or Isabelle

If the modified dice-roll result is equal to ...

- **SN -3, or lower** All French units fight on!
- **SN -2** Each French unit with Morale 2 takes a step loss
- **SN -1** All French units with Morale 2 surrender
- **SN** All French units with Morale 2 surrender. Also, each French unit with Morale 3 will take a step loss
- **SN +1** All French units with Morale 3 or less surrender
- **SN +2, or higher** The French Garrison surrenders. Stop the game now. It is a **VM VICTORY!**

All units that surrendered and all units eliminated due to step loss (also considered surrendered) are placed in the Gone Box. Adjust the HQ Marker if there are still reinforcements to be had. **No unit** in any box (except 2z-304) is removed or takes any step loss due to a Surrender Roll.

Example: *The SN is 8 and dice are rolled. The result is a 10, modified to 9 because the Condor Force is in Laos 2. This equals the result "SN +1". The game continues but all units with morale 3 or less are removed (surrendered).*

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Note: *Historically, DBP surrendered in "6-8 May". Game wise, it means a Strongpoints Track at "14" and a Strongpoints Taken Marker at "12". The SN is "2" and France rolls a "4" or higher, resulting in a French surrender*

If the Garrison doesn't surrender after a VM demand ... **decrease Strongpoints Taken Marker by four (4) points**, if possible (never below "0"). VM frustration! Then, if any strongpoint becomes VM-controlled as a result of the Surrender Roll, adjust Strongpoints Track and Strongpoints Taken Marker.

If the Garrison has not surrendered by "12-14 May" (after the final VM offensive would have been done, according to plans), then it is a **FRENCH VICTORY!**

C) Will VM Troops despair?

If there is a VM Morale Check box ("MC") in the current slot on the Game Turn Track, then decrease the Strongpoints Taken Marker by four (4) points, if possible (never move the marker below "0"). If VM is only able to deduct 3 points or less, then the battle is not going well enough according to VM. If so, move **all** Division Morale Markers on VM Division Morale Track down 1 slot in the arrow's direction.

5.2 → VM Replacements and Reinforcements

A) VM Ammo Replenishment

First of all, add **3 ammo** to VM Ammunition Track.

Note: *New research shows that not only did the French have better guns and better crews, they had a bigger stock of ammunition and a larger flow of ammo replenishment.*

B) VM Patrols

VM may gather misdropped French supply when VM has **8 Trench/Dig Zones or more**. Roll a die. If the result is 1-3, move one single Division Morale Marker up 1 slot. If the result is 4-6, add 2 VM ammo instead (do not deduct any ammo from the French).

Note: *Both sides used the American 105mm howitzer, while medicine, a hot meal, and fuel will improve morale.*

C) VM Replacements

First, move all VM units in the Pulled-Back Box to the Off-Map Box.

Second, VM units in VM LoC with step losses may now receive replacements (voluntary), if there are points left on the VM Replacement Track.

VM may spend any number of replacement points, but each unit may only receive 1 replacement per Game Turn. For each spent replacement, deduct one on the Track. A VM unit that receives a replacement either removes its Disorg Marker, if it has any (do not flip the unit), or is flipped to its full-strength side, if it is just reduced.

Note: *See replacements as a form of "VM Reaction Move". Rear echelons are rushed forward to fill the front ranks.*

If a VM unit that receives replacement is in the ...

- **Removed Box**, it is moved to the VM Pulled-Back Box where it is placed reduced
- **VM Off-Map Box**, it either gets its Disorg Marker removed or is flipped into its full-strength side, depending on what state it is in

Each unit in VM LoC with a Disorg Marker

... **must** either replace one step, or be withdrawn to VM Pulled-Back Box. If withdrawn, its Disorg Marker is removed "for free" with no Replacement point spent (and its Division Morale not affected). See this as a rest and reorganization behind the lines.

Exception: Units in Laos are never withdrawn, and they cannot receive replacements.

D) Will Replacements affect VM Morale?

For each replacement that a unit receive, move its Division Morale Marker down 1 slot (in the arrow's direction) on the VM Division Morale Track. The track is divided into colors, each one starting with a number. If a Division Morale Marker enters a lower number/color, then the Morale Value of all units of that entire division will change into that number, which they will retain until another color is reached. If a marker moves upwards and enters a previous color, then all units of that division regain that higher Morale Value (it does **not** have to reach the previous number, just the color). 148 rgt has no marker. It takes replacements without affecting its morale.

Example: *308 Division Morale Marker has reached slot "M". All units of that division will now have a Morale Value 3. It then climbs back up to slot "L". All units of that division have now regained a Morale Value 4.*

Note: *Despair does not strike when losses incur. Lowering of morale was usually a result of feelings that losses were in vain and of filling ranks with newly mobilized peasants.*

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If a Division Morale Marker reaches “Shut down”, that Division will have a Morale Value 2. None of its units may assault or receive any replacements as long as the marker stays in that slot. The Division has to rest in order to leave its “Shut down” status.

E) Any VM Reinforcements on 24th April?

Yes, VM will receive 9 extra ammo, in addition to the usual 3 ammo. VM reinforcements are also now released. From this turn and onwards, during this segment, VM may choose 1 unit per Game Turn and move it from the VM Reinforcements Box to the Off-map Box. If a unit is chosen, roll a die. If the result is 1-3, move one single Division Morale Marker down 1 slot. If the result is 4-6, deduct 1 VM ammo.

Note: *They were all guarding supply and chasing pro-French guerrillas. If brought to DBP, supply may be lost.*

5.3 → Deduct French Supply

A) Fuel & Spares

Deduct **4 Fuel & Spares** if the Truck Marker is at 7 or higher, on the Fuel & Spares Track. Deduct only ...

3 Fuel & Spares if the Truck is at 6 or lower.

2 Fuel & Spares if the Truck is at 3 or lower.

1 Fuel & Spares if the Truck is at 1.

If, due to the Truck’s position or simply due to any lack of Fuel & Spares, you are only able to deduct ...

- **3 Fuel & Spares**, there is a +1 to Weather dice-roll
- **2 Fuel & Spares**, there is a +2 to Weather dice-roll. No more than 6 ammo (3 Ammo Markers) may be added to the French Ammunition Track during the Airdrop Segment
- **1 Fuel & Spares**, there is a +3 to Weather dice-roll. No more than 2 ammo (1 Ammo Marker) may be added to the French Ammunition Track during the Airdrop Segment
- **0 Fuel & Spares**, there is a +3 to Weather dice-roll. No ammo at all may be added. **France also removes 3 steps** (not in Laos, and not tanks or artillery). If any unit is removed due to this, place it in the Wounded Box (no fuel = no water purification)

Place the Fuel Shortage Marker on the corresponding number to remind you.

Fuel shortage does not affect how many Ammo Markers you may load ([rule 5.4](#)). It only says how many you may add to the track, regardless of how many that arrive (any excess ammo is wasted).

Replacing (repairing) Tanks and Artillery

France may spend **3 Fuel & Spares** once per game turn to flip any reduced Tank or Artillery unit in French LoC to its full-strength side ([check if Zone markers need to be updated according to rule 1.10](#)). You may not return any unit from the Gone Box.

B) Food & Bullets

Deduct **3 Food & Bullets** on the Food & Bullets Track. Deduct instead ...

4 Food & Bullets, if any unit(s) from Condor or Standby Force is at DBP and/or Isabelle.

5 Food & Bullets if any units from Condor and Standby Force are at DBP and/or Isabelle

Note: *Deduct until the very end. While the soldiers were decreasing, there were an increasing number of wounded, internal deserters and prisoners of war. There were also a few thousand non-combatant army personnel in the camp.*

France removes 3 steps

... from any units (not in Laos, and not from artillery or tanks) for each Food & Bullets that France fails to deduct. If any unit is removed due to this, place it in the Wounded Box (no food = starvation).

C) Deduct Medicine

Deduct **2 Medicine** on the Medicine Track. Deduct **3 Medicine** instead during Monsoon. Then deduct ...

1 extra Medicine for every group of up to **5 units** in the Wounded Box. Count all units, both on the DBP and Isabelle side of the box.

Example: *6 wounded means 2 extra Medicine*



Deduct **3 extra Medicine** for each 31 BG unit that is in the Wounded or Gone Box (they kept the water supply going).

France removes 1 step

... from any unit (not in Laos, and not artillery or tanks) for every Medicine that France fails to deduct. If any unit is removed due to this, place it in the Wounded Box (no medicine = sickness).

Note: *France calculated that 300 casualties could be evacuated each day. But the airstrip was shut down by VM already in March and all wounded had to stay in the valley and be cared for there. This became an increasing strain.*

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Finally, bring out your wounded

France may spend **6 Medicine** to bring back a unit from Wounded Box (only one unit per Game Turn). If so, place it reduced on any French-controlled hospital hex at DBP. If it is a unit from “Isabelle side” of Wounded Box, place it on the hospital at Isabelle.

5.4 → French Airdrops

A) Plane-Loads with stuff

France may bring in supplies and units by filling the Airdrop Chart with any mix of Supply Markers (Ammo, Food & Bullets, Medicine, Fuel & Spares) and units (Reinforcements and Replacements) from the Hanoi Airbase Box. France is not forced to include any specific unit or Supply Marker. Each slot may only contain either **2 units** (Replacements and/or Reinforcements) or **1 Supply Marker**. When either is placed on the Airdrop Chart, it will be referred to as a “Plane-Load”.

Note: *Each slot represents what two crews (C-47 Dakotas) or one crew (C-119 Flying Boxcar), delivered during three days, flying 5-6 sorties: about 30 tons.*

VM Trench/Dig Zones affect airdrops

France may not use a “T/D Zones” slot in the Airdrop Chart that has a printed number that is equal to or lower than the total number of current Trench and Dig Zones (just count them). This represents the shrinking area for airdrops and the increasing chance of misdrops.

Rain and Monsoon affect airdrops as well

The “Rain” slot may not be used during Rain and Monsoon Game Turns. The three “Monsoon” slots may not be used during Monsoon Game Turns.

Laos and airdrops (rule 6.2-B)

If **any** French units occupy any Laos box, a certain number of slots may not be used for Plane-Loads. Do not use a “green” slot for every group of up to 4 units (reduced or not) that occupy any Laos boxes.

Example: *5 units in Laos 1, and 4 units in Laos 2, means that 3 green slots may not be used.*

If France decides to add Standby Force (rule 5.4-D) this Game Turn (possible only if a French Condor Force unit occupies Laos 1), then only the two white slots at the top of the Airdrop Chart may be used (the rest is not available). Return to the usual Airdrop Chart rules next Game Turn.

Note: *Condor Force needed 40 tons a day. Together with Standby Force, it meant 60 tons a day (plus all the aircrafts needed to airdrop the two battalions). But they had to be supplied from the same pool of aircrafts that were flying to DBP. Historically, the French were unable to do that.*

B) Weather decides how many Plane-Loads that arrive

France rolls two dice and checks the Weather Table, after all eligible slots have been filled with Plane-Loads. The dice-roll might be modified due to fuel shortage (an incapability to collect packages equals an increased chance of aborts). The result tells how many Plane-Loads that will abort back to the Hanoi Airbase Box. The result will either say “All [Plane-Loads] arrive”, or how many that will “Abort”, or that there is “Foul Weather”.

Note: *Weather Table result includes anti-aircraft fire, crew fatigue, misdrops, incapability to collect airdrops etc.*

Aborting back to Hanoi

If the result is a number of aborts, then France will roll two dice a number of times equal to the result of the Weather Table. The black die shows which row and the white die shows which column on the Airdrop Chart. By rolling both, you will get a cross-reference to a certain slot. After each roll, return the Plane-Load in that slot to the Hanoi Airbase Box. If you roll an empty slot, then it still counts as a roll.

Foul Weather

France rolls only the black die (pointing at the rows), but rolls it 4 times. After each roll, remove all Plane-Loads occupying that entire row. They abort back to the Hanoi Airbase Box. If you roll an empty row, it still counts as a roll.

C) Adjust Supply Tracks

After all aborts are done, adjust tracks accordingly, based on what supplies have arrived. Fuel shortage will affect the amount of ammo that may be added. Each Food & Bullets Marker will increase the track by one. Each Fuel & Spares and Ammo Marker will increase their respective track by two. A Medicine Marker will increase its track by six. Any supply on a track beyond “99” is wasted. Return all markers to the Hanoi Airbase Box after all adjustments.

D) Reinforcements

... are placed in any hexes within the Supply Area of DBP and/or Isabelle. Placing them in VM ZoC is allowed. Reinforcements may not be placed at Isabelle if it has surrendered (rule 8.1-B).

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If Standby Force is added this Game Turn, ... then it is added now. Move both battalions directly from the Standby Box to Laos 1.

E) Replacements

Flip one reduced Infantry unit in French LoC to its full-strength side, if the Replacement unit arrives. Return the Replacement unit to the Hanoi Airbase Box afterwards. These units may not be replaced:

- Thai units (Thai co, 2 Thai, 3 Thai)
- Units in Laos
- Units in Wounded or Gone Boxes

Each unit that moves may only do one of the three options below. A French unit in ...

- **Any Map Edge Hex** at DBP or Isabelle, that is not in a Trench Zone (Dig Zone is okay), may move to 2z-304 (Trench Zone or not)
- **2z-304** (Trench Zone or not) may move to any Map Edge Hex at DBP or Isabelle that is not in a Trench Zone (Dig Zone is okay). Into VM ZoC is allowed
- **Any Box** (incl. Condor Force Box from 24th April) may move to an adjacent box (Trench Zone or not) via a blue or gray arrow

The Condor & Standby Forces

Condor Force is released (but not forced to leave its box) on 24th April. If any French Condor unit occupies Laos 1, then France may (voluntary) add the entire Standby Force into Laos 1 during the French Airdrop Phase.

6.0 French Pre-Assault Phase

6.1 Airstrike

Place the Airstrike unit on any VM unit anywhere (including Laos). An airstrike is conducted as any French Bombardment roll. It has a die roll modification of “-1” (equivalent of “Long range”, but no ammo is used). Return it to the Airstrike Box afterwards.

6.2 French Operational Move

Conduct movement in order A) -> B). Some units may end up moving twice with Box Move as a second move.

A) Valley Move

France may move any unit in French LoC, to any hex or box in French LoC that is not in a Trench/Dig Zone. Both its start and end position must be able to trace its French LoC to the same chosen Supply Area. The imagined route the unit takes may not include Laos, and Artillery can only cross the river by bridge. The number of units that may move is either:

- 4 units, anywhere at DBP and/or Isabelle, or ...
- 6 units that all start in the Supply Area at DBP

Note: A direct move between DBP and Isabelle is possible if 2z-304 is not a Trench Zone.

B) Box Move

France may move up to **12 units** (not artillery). If you enter a box with VM unit(s), then at the end of the move, there must be at least twice as many French units in that box as there are VM units there.

6.3 French Bombardment



A) France may place any French Zone Markers

... on any VM units at DBP and/or in Sector 304, but only one per VM unit. It is normal range if placed within 2 hexes of a French unit, or within 3 hexes of a French unit on a hill. A Zone Marker placed beyond normal range, or in a Sector 304 box, is long range. Exception: It is normal range in 2z-304 if there is a French unit there.

Note: For VM bombardment, there is no “long range”.

B) Deduct 1 ammo

... on the French Ammunition Track for each placed Zone Marker firing regular bombardment, or ...

Deduct 2 ammo

... on the French Ammunition Track for each placed Zone Marker firing intense bombardment.

Note: Yes, you deduct the same amount of ammo if the Zone Marker is reduced. See it as “ammo attrition”.

C) Bombardment roll

France rolls a die for each VM unit under a placed Zone Marker. This roll result represents ferocity and effect of bombardment upon the VM unit. When you have rolled the die, you will first see if the unit takes a step loss and then if it becomes shaken.

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Will the VM unit take a loss and become shaken?

Well, modify the die-roll result with ...

- **+1** If the VM unit is not entrenched
- **+1** If you fire an Intense Bombardment
- **-1** If the French Artillery Zone Marker is reduced
- **-1** If the VM unit is reduced (**only** for checking loss)
- **-1** If the VM unit is at Long range (**also Airstrike**)

The unit takes a step loss

... if the modified die-roll result is 5 or more.

Place a Shaken Marker on the unit

... if the modified die-roll result is equal to or greater than the unit's Morale Value. But **do not include any -1 modification** for "VM unit being reduced" (if any). When you are done with the unit beneath a Zone Marker, return the Zone Marker to its box.

6.4 → French Tactical Move

Each and every French unit may move up to 5 mp freely within DBP or Isabelle (no Box Move). Artillery units may only cross the river by bridge.

7.0 French Assault Phase

7.1 → Box Combat

If France occupies any box that contains VM unit(s), there is **mandatory** Box combat. Each VM unit takes a step loss, or 2 step losses if shaken. For each VM unit that takes any loss(es), France removes 1 step loss from any French unit with Morale 4 or higher, or 2 step losses from any unit(s) with Morale 3 or less (two such units can take one step loss each).

7.2 → France Declares Assaults

France may place Assault Markers on units that intend to assault. France chooses in each hex which unit will be the assaulting unit and places it at the top of the stack. Artillery units may never be chosen. Each hex may only contain one Assault Marker. Place it so that the arrow points at the hex being assaulted. Each defending hex must contain a VM unit, which may not be assaulted by more than one assaulting unit.

7.3 → VM Support Barrage



VM may offer Support Barrage by deducting 1 ammo (**in total**) on the VM Ammunition Track. If so, then VM may place up to 4 Support Mortars on any VM defending units in VM LoC, but only one per VM Regiment. A defending unit that receives Support Barrage will receive no modification on its Defense Fire Roll, but it will allow a roll on a more favourable column. Remove any Support Mortars after your Defense Fire Roll.

7.4 → VM Defense Fire

A) Each defending VM Unit

... that has an Assault Marker pointing at it, **must** now fire against the assaulting French unit. Before making a Defense Fire roll, a defending unit has its Strength Value adjusted by ...

- **+1** For **each** obstacle the French unit must charge across/into. The three possible obstacles for France are: across river; uphill; into forest (wire is not an obstacle for France)
- **+1** For **each** supporting VM unit from the same regiment, that is adjacent to the assaulting French unit. The supporting unit may not be shaken or have a Combat Marker pointing at it. A unit may support more than one defending unit from the same regiment
- **-2** If the defending VM unit is shaken

A supporting unit will offer a +1 even if it is reduced or has a Disorg Marker.

B) VM Defense Fire Roll

As in rule 3.5-B, but with VM as defender.

C) VM Defense Effect Roll

As in rule 3.5-C, but with VM as defender. Any loss is taken from the chosen French assaulting unit. If the assaulting unit is eliminated and it is not an Abort, then France must choose another assaulting unit from the same hex, if any (not artillery).



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7.5 → French Assault

A) French Units with Combat Markers must now charge
... into the VM defending units in any order. An assaulting unit has its Strength Value adjusted by ...

- **+1** For **each** supporting unit from the same battalion, that is adjacent to the defending VM unit (Thai co and Tanks cannot do this). The supporting unit may not have a Combat- or an Abort Marker on it. A unit may support more than one assaulting unit from the same battalion
- **+1** For **each** supporting French unit of any kind (except artillery), stacked with assaulting unit. **+2** if it is a full-strength Tank unit during Dry or Rain Game Turns (**+1** if Tank is reduced or if it is during Monsoon)
- **-2** If the defending unit is entrenched
- **-3** If Medicine Track is at "0"

A supporting unit will offer a +1 even if it is reduced. **A unit may support even after its own assault and advance**, unless it has an Abort Marker.

B) French Assault Fire roll

As in rule 3.6-B, but with VM as defender.

En Avant!

Before the Effect Roll, France may decide to add a **+1** to the **received** Effect Roll **modifier** (a "+2" will become "+3" etc) by letting one unit from the same battalion that supported this assault take a step loss (only one per Effect Roll).

C) French Assault Effect roll

As in rule 3.6-C, but with VM as defender, with the exception that if the result is:

- **No effect** - Nothing happens. The assault fails
- **Choice** - VM may choose one option:
 - Option 1:* Take 1 step loss and stay in the hex
 - Option 2:* Retreat the unit one hex
- **Loss & Retreat** - Take 1 step loss and retreat the unit one hex
- **2 x Loss & Retreat** - Take 2 step losses and retreat the unit one hex

VM chooses where to retreat

You **may retreat into enemy ZoC**. But a VM unit that retreats onto a French unit is eliminated and placed in the Removed Box (**remove any Disorg marker**). Do not retreat onto a VM unit. But if forced to, continue until you reach the first eligible hex. Do not retreat across a map edge. But if forced to, place the unit in the closest eligible Map Edge Hex in a Trench Zone.

Note if there is no such hex at Isabelle, then place the unit in the closest Trench Zone: 2z-304 or 1z-304.

Advance after combat and further support

... are done as described in 3.6-C, with the exception that a supporting unit must end its advance either **in or adjacent** to the original defending hex.

8.0 French Post-Assault Phase

8.1 → French Attrition

A) Each French unit or French-Controlled Strongpoint

... with an Isolation Marker and that cannot trace a French LoC now, will surrender. Place the unit in the Gone Box, and make the strongpoint VM-controlled. But if there is a French LoC, then remove the Isolation Marker from any unit or strongpoint that is now able to trace it (a single hex in that strongpoint, that can trace LoC, will do).

France may then evacuate (voluntary) **any formerly isolated units** (only at DBP) and place them in any hex in DBP Supply Area, not in VM ZoC.

B) Isabelle will Surrender

... if 2z-304 is a Trench Zone and Isabelle Supply Area is VM-controlled during a French Attrition Phase. The following will then take place:

- Deduct 5 points on the Strongpoints Track and increase Strongpoints Taken Marker by 5 points
- Move to Gone Box all French units at Isabelle (**adjust the HQ Marker for these**), plus those at the "Isabelle side" in Wounded Box
- Deduct, if possible, 2 Ammo (plus ammo for any artillery step loss), 2 Food & Bullets, 2 Fuel & Spares, and 3 Medicine
- No French unit may now enter Isabelle
- The Trench marker in 304 Division Sector may not be moved anymore

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C) Rats of Nam Youm or “Wrong stuff in the boxes”

Some supplies were stolen by internal deserters at DBP, the “Rats of Nam Youm”. Some boxes contained stuff that was different from the four main supply categories in this game.

France rolls a die and checks the Rats of Nam Youm Table to see what is missing in their stockpiles. Deduct, if possible, the appropriate track. In any case, nothing is added to any VM track.

Note: “Rats of Nam Youm”. *Thais left, hoping to get home. Others lived along the banks of river Nam Youm in burrows where they grabbed anything worth having to survive. The Rats of Nam Youm were about 2,000 men when the garrison fell (20% of the garrison).*

8.2 → French After-Combat Move

Any unit that is **not** entrenched may choose one of three alternatives. If one **of them** is chosen, then the unit must end its move entrenched, but not in a VM-controlled strongpoint/**outpost**. The unit does not have to stop in the first possible entrenched hex if you choose “Alt 2”. If unable to fulfill this precondition, then it may not move at all. Each unit moves individually and checks its LoC and enemy ZoC the moment it starts moving. The alternatives for each unit are ...

- **Alt 1:** Move 1 hex, regardless of any LoC and ZoC
- **Alt 2:** Move 5 mp, but may not enter VM ZoC (the unit may start adjacent to a VM unit)
- **Alt 3:** Relocate to any strongpoint hex in DBP Supply Area, not in VM ZoC (only applicable at DBP). The unit must be in French LoC

Exception: A unit in 2z-304, even if a Trench Zone, may also relocate to any strongpoint hex, not in VM ZoC, that is in a Supply Area either at Isabelle or DBP. In order to do this, there must also be a Map Edge Hex which can trace a French LoC to the chosen Supply Area hex. You cannot relocate more units than what the stacking limit of the hex(es) allow.



8.3 → Remove/Add Shaken Markers

A) Remove all Shaken Markers

... on both sides.

B) Place a Shaken Marker

... on each French unit that is not entrenched and that is adjacent to any VM unit (**units are not adjacent to each other in boxes**).

Note: *French units did not want to be caught in the open during night close to VM units.*

8.4 → Mark all Isolated VM Units

Each VM unit that cannot trace a VM LoC, and each VM-controlled strongpoint where none of its hexes can trace a VM LoC, will now receive an Isolation Marker. A unit in a Map Edge Hex has an “automatic” VM LoC, of course.

8.5 → VM Trench Digging

A) Dig -> Trench Marker?

First, flip each Dig Marker to its Trench Marker side in each Dig Zone where there are no longer any French-controlled strongpoints or outposts in any Trench/Dig Zone of that Sector. A Dig Marker that is not flipped may not move into a new zone.

B) Moving Trench Marker

VM may then move one (only one) Trench Marker forward into its next higher zone within the same Sector and place it on the Zone Number there. If there is any French-controlled strongpoint/outpost in the new zone, the Trench Marker is flipped to its Dig Marker side after moving. **If there is none, the marker stays on its Trench side** (see rule 1.4-C which explains the difference between a Trench Zone and a Dig Zone). France can never move a Trench/Dig Marker and “untrench” a zone.

Note 1: *French units had a limited effect on VM trench digging. They tried to raid and fill approaching trenches, but the trenches were simply dug up again during night.*

Note 2: *An unoccupied French-controlled outpost will disappear only at the end of a segment. Flip the Trench Marker to its Dig Marker side, even if an outpost in the zone is unoccupied and will soon disappear at the end of Trench Digging segment. VM should try to occupy each outpost in a zone before moving a Trench Marker there.*

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8.6 → New Game Turn

Move the Game Turn Marker to the next slot on Game Turn Track. Note the increased movement cost for field when you enter the Rain period and onwards. Note also the limitations on airdrops when you enter the Rain period, and even worse when you enter the Monsoon period. Note the French “attrition” on Medicine during the Monsoon period, and the “attrition” that VM suffers from 12th April and onwards. Finally, note the extra ammo that VM receives on 24th April. This is also when VM reinforcements may be brought into play and when the French Condor Force is released.

9.0 Scenarios

A) Who wins?

This is a cage fight to the bitter end. France will either surrender during a Morale Check Segment, resulting in a VM victory, or win simply by not having surrendered by the last Game Turn (rule 5.1).

B) Scenarios and Scenario Letters

There are four scenarios, each with a Scenario Letter as identification. The letters are: A, B, C, and D. You will find them on the top of the Scenario Card, on the map, in boxes, and close to all tracks. These letters indicate what units will set up, and where. They also indicate where markers shall be set at the start of each scenario. Regardless of which scenario you choose, it continues until either player wins.

C) French unit setup

Set up all French units on the Scenario Card by placing them on the Formation Boxes that you see along the sides. Each Formation Box has its unit symbol and designation. Those on the left-hand side have their setup information in the blue rows. Those to the right have their setup information in the light gray rows. The scenario Letters are shown at the top. Each one creates a column that contains all setup information for that scenario. By cross-referencing a Formation Box with a scenario column, you will get a Setup Section that shows where all units of that formation shall be set up.

A Setup Section contains an equal amount of setup info as the number of units of that formation (usually four units). Formations with less than four units have their excess setup info replaced by a diagonal stroke. Setup info will sometimes be replaced by a dot. In those cases, the left-over units from that formation are piled up on the “Wounded Square” in the lower left corner of the Scenario Card.

Each single setup info corresponds with the French name of a strongpoint, like “E2”, where a single unit from that formation (it does not matter which one) is set up. A unit may be placed in any hex within that strongpoint, within stacking limits. If there is a red band across the setup info, then the unit is set up reduced. “Gone” means that a unit is placed in the Gone Box on the map. Some formations have “Reinforcement”, “Condor Force” or “Standby Force” printed in their Setup Section. Those formations are set up on that scale and in those boxes respectively.

Example: *The four units of 1/4 RTM are set up as follows in scenario C: one full-strength unit in any hex at H4 and one at C1, one reduced unit at C7, one unit, shown by the dot, is moved to the Wounded Square on Scenario Card.*

Note: *The three Thai co sections represent four independent Thai co units each. There is no common insignia for them. So I used one by an auxiliary unit to represent them all.*

D) Wounded and Gone

“Wounded Square” on the Scenario Card should now have a pile of units (except in scenario A). In the row to the right, there is printed within each scenario column how many of these units shall be placed in the Wounded Box on the map. France and VM alternate choosing units from that pile, placing them on the DBP side of Wounded Box, until that number is reached (France begins). The units that remain are placed in the Gone Box on the map (the number of remaining units shall correspond with the number printed in the row beneath).

E) French Markers

Place all French Zone Markers in the French Artillery Zone Markers Box. If any Artillery unit(s) are reduced or gone, flip or remove any Zone Marker(s) of that formation according to rule 1.10. The Replacement unit and all Supply Markers are placed in the Hanoi Airbase Box. Airstrike unit is placed in Airstrike Box.

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F) How VM units are set up

VM units, as default, are set up full-strength. Any step losses are mentioned in Scenario Information (and may not be taken from any reinforcements). Some units, according to the scenario, are set up in boxes. Remaining VM units are set up in any hexes, **not** in French ZoC, in any Trench Zone (**not** Dig Zone) within their respective Division Sector at DBP. The Scenario Information may permit extra positions within a Division Sector where VM may set up. Place all VM Zone Markers in the VM Artillery Zone Markers Box. Place the Commando in the Commando Box. Place all Asset Markers and Support Mortars off-map, easy to reach.

Example: *In scenario B, all units from 312 Division are set up anywhere in Trench Zone 1, 2, or 3 in the 312 Division Sector, but not in French ZoC from units at D1 or D2.*

G) Scenario Information

Scenario A

- Set all markers to “A”
- France sets up all French units first, according to Scenario “A” on the Scenario Card
- VM sets up afterwards according to rule 9.0-F. Flip 3 units from 308 Division, and 2 units from 316 Division to their reduced side (both Divisions have just returned from other campaigns)

Scenario B

- Set all markers to “B”
- All strongpoints in Trench Zones are controlled by VM, as well as strongpoint Anne-Marie. Put VM flags at them. Any outpost within any Trench Zone do not exist any longer
- France sets up all French units first, according to Scenario “B” on the Scenario Card
- VM sets up afterwards according to rule 9.0-F. VM may also set up in Anne-Marie. Flip 3 units from 308 Division, and 1 unit from 312 Division, and 1 unit from 316 Division to their reduced side

Scenario C

- Set all markers to “C”
- Zone 5z-308 is a Dig Zone. All strongpoints in Trench Zones are controlled by VM as well as strongpoints Francoise, D5 and D6. Put VM flags at all of them. Put a French flag at strongpoint E1. Any outpost within any Trench/Dig Zone do not exist any longer
- France sets up all French units first, according to Scenario “C” on the Scenario Card
- VM sets up afterwards according to rule 9.0-F (do not set up in 5z-308 since it is a Dig Zone). VM may also set up in Francoise, D5 and D6. Flip 3 units from 308 division, and 4 units from 312 Division, and 2 units from 316 Division to their reduced side

Scenario D:

- Set all markers to “D”
- Zones 3z-304 and 6z-308 are Dig Zones. All strongpoints in Trench Zones are controlled by VM as well as strongpoint H1. Put VM flags at all of them. Put a French flag at strongpoint E1. Any outpost within any Trench/Dig Zone do not exist any longer
- France sets up all French units first, according to Scenario “D” on the Scenario Card
- VM sets up afterwards according to rule 9.0-F (do not set up in 3z-304 and 6z-308 since they are Dig Zones). VM may also set up in H1. Flip 4 units from 308 division, and 3 units from 312 Division, and 1 unit from 316 Division to their reduced side

I always support my games

Make it a habit to visit:

www.legionwargames.com/legion_DBP_GS.html

There you will find any updates and extras.

Enjoy the game!

Kim Kanger

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French units and their origins

Metropolitan:	1 RCC, 2/1 RCP
Foreign Legion:	1/2 REI, 2/2 REI, 3/3 REI, 1/13 DBLE, 3/13 DBLE, 1 BEP, 2 BEP, 1 CMMLE, 2 CMMLE, 1 CEPML
Colonial:	1 BPC, 6 BPC, 8 BPC, 4/4 RAC, 3/10 RAC, GAACEO
Algerian:	2/1 RTA, 3/3 RTA, 5/7 RTA
Moroccan:	1/4 RTM, 31 BG, RICM
West African:	2/4 RAC
Vietnamese:	1 BPVN, 3 BPVN, 5 BPVN (a lot of Vietnamese also served in many of the colonial units)
Laotian:	1 BPL, 4 BCL, 5 BCL
Thai (highlanders):	2 Thai, 3 Thai, Thai co

Playing the Viet Minh

This will not be easy. VM may have won historically but you may not. Patience is your most important ally.

You must conquer Béatrice and Gabrielle in order to advance the trenches beyond Zone 2 in those two sectors. Capturing these strongpoints will keep your soldiers in good mood for five game turns. See to it that the morale among your units stays at "5". If it slides down to "4", you will quickly notice the decrease in battle worthiness. Units with Morale 3 is almost useless. The French can always stack a tough para unit together with units of feeble morale, but you cannot.

Do not wreck all main divisions at the same time. Try to assault with two Divisions while the other two rest. If possible, avoid being adjacent to any French units while resting since that will make you regain two morale instead of just one. Assaulting with at least two divisions at the same time will also make it more difficult for the French to respond since he can only move a limited number of units during his Reaction and Valley Move.

79 replacements seem to be a lot. But it only means 3-4 replacements per Game Turn. If you wish to keep your army strong, try to keep you average losses per Game Turn around that level.

Allow yourself calm periods after major assaults. Use the withdrawn option to avoid using replacements. Units that support an assault do not have to be in full strength. It may be enough to have only one unit per regiment in full strength, the one that intends to assault.

Make good use of the Asset Markers. It will allow you to reach hexes that may prevent a French Reaction Move. Use them to remove wire obstacles as well. Don't forget to use your Support Mortars. If possible, assault from hexes where you are entrenched since it will provide you with a protection when assaulting.

What VM learned historically after their massive assaults on the eastern hills was patience. It was less bloody to slowly but surely encircle and isolate strongpoints with trenches and units, than to assault them head on. This will force the French to fight their way through to open a route for LoC (supply) and eventually for an evacuation of the units there. By encircling and not assaulting you will be able to rest while causing the French to take losses assaulting you. Remember that it costs 5mp for the French to enter any hex in a Trench Zone. Use that to secure your flanks.

Save your ammunition. Use it to deplete and shake French defenders just before an assault. Save ammo so that you can fire away grand bombardments in order to grind the number of French trucks down. Destroying trucks is the best way of decreasing the threat from French artillery. It will also deplete French supply stocks. Consider choosing French Artillery units as targets when you bombard, especially if they are within the Supply Area since each VM Zone Marker placed there also counts as double when rolling for Truck/Supply hits. For each French artillery step loss, there are also French ammo losses.

Use the VM Off-Map Box to turn up at any Map Edge Hex, so that you can isolate strongpoints that are close to the map edge. Another prize is to attack Isabelle when 3z-304 becomes a Dig Zone. The French will have great difficulties helping their comrades there. If you take one of the strongpoints there, go for the Supply Area in the center. If you can hold on to it, then Isabelle and all French units there will surrender.

If France has saved enough supplies to gamble for a rescue force coming up from Laos, then try to weaken it through combat in the boxes. But basically, if this force is coming, you will have just a few game turns to settle the battle. Start your final offensive and attack, attack and then attack.

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If French units start to arrive, then France will be less likely to surrender and their defense might improve just enough to deny you your victory.

If France rolls the Surrender Roll in any Game Turn before the last one, try to occupy a hex in the same strongpoint as any weak French units. If the roll causes them to desert, then you will take control of the strongpoint.

Play wisely and you will prevail

Playing France

While VM must play with patience, you must play with a plan. Don't let the first half of the game fool you.

First part of the game usually feels like a piece of cake, even though some large strongpoints are lost. Abundant supply is arriving and you usually have two new para battalions to compensate for earlier losses. Remaining strongpoints are also now within Reaction Move distance. But your supply situation will eventually deteriorate. The effect of Rain, the increasing number of both VM Trench/Dig zones and wounded units, and the depletion of trucks will eventually be felt. As a rule of thumb, try to have supply in stock that will carry you for three game turns. This means that you may need to save ammo from start since you may have to prioritize other things than ammo later on. If you have spent your ammo lavishly and therefore run low late in the game, you will have VM troops despising you by not bothering to stay in the trenches.

The Thai units seem all weak and worthless. They were very good jungle fighters and knew their home territory well. But by the time the battle began, most of their territory was under VM rule and a siege battle was not their cup of tea. But there were times when they fought ferociously, like at D3 during VM's final offensive. Your paras are your best friends. A full para company together with an auxiliary company and tanks is a strong stack indeed. Much of your time will be spent on relieving isolated strongpoints, either to bring supply to them (LoC) or to evacuate the units therein.

A decision that you will have to make repeatedly is whether to hold on to a strongpoint or not. If you reckon that you will lose a strongpoint no matter what, then you might as well evacuate the units there, unless of course the step losses that VM usually gets in

assaults are more worth to you than your units left behind. VM has a Morale Check every second Game Turn which may force all VM Division Morale Markers to move down one step. Try to keep on to strongpoints just to make VM fail that Morale Check.

Spread out your units in order to avoid becoming fat targets for VM Artillery. Move some of the French Artillery units away from the Supply Area since they may be tempting targets for VM bombardment. Position some strong units in reserve in one or two strongpoints or outposts just behind the front where they can rush forward during Reaction Move. Keep a para battalion and two tank units in the Supply Area as a counterattack force during your turn.

If a VM division takes a lot of losses, consider retaking strongpoints that you can reach in that section. It will force VM to divert units there to strengthen the wrecked division. Don't hesitate to pound any VM units that venture out from their trenches with your artillery. If you can inflict more than 3-4 VM step losses per Game Turn, that will be more than what VM can handle.

Remember that you win just by denying VM the victory. It may be better to save troops than holding on to strongpoints at whatever cost. VM will increase the chance of victory if a lot of strongpoints can be taken in a row. Therefore, don't kill yourself holding on to strongpoints just to collapse afterwards, resulting in a VM sweep. Keep strongpoints long enough so that VM fails its morale check and/or to prevent VM to flip a Dig Marker to a Trench Marker and thereby deny it to advance into the next zone. Fall back when you are too weak to defend them. Losing lesser units has the benefit of increasing your chance to get para reinforcements. The quality of your force will actually increase, but it will also become increasingly brittle.

Don't play with the Medicine, Food, or the Fuel Tracks. You don't want to experience a situation where you cannot deduct what must be deducted. This will mean step losses. It also will prevent you from bringing in the two relief forces since you will not be able to refrain from bringing in supplies. In addition, being low on the tracks makes you suffer a negative modifier if a Surrender roll is demanded by VM.

If you fear that you might have to roll for surrender, try then to avoid having units weak in morale alone in important positions. You don't want to lose strongpoints due to their desertion.

Don't ever give up

DIEN BIEN PHU - The Final Gamble

Designer's Notes

How can one create games about French modern colonial wars without doing one about Dien Bien Phu, perhaps the most iconic battle for the French since Verdun? So, of course I had to do one.

But first, a big Thank You!

Main sources have been "Hell in a Very Small Place" by Bernard Fall and "The Last Valley" by Martin Windrow. I wish to thank Kevin Boylan for supplying me with info from maps and books. A big thank you goes to Ewen le Picot and Luc Olivier for sharing their research done in French military archives. I would like to thank Ewen as well as Roger Miller and Robert Mårtensson for taking time to test the game. I also wish to thank Elias Nordling and Mats Eden for assisting me in my development of version 2.4 of the rules that is offered online.

Finally, the book "Valley of the Shadow" by Kevin Boylan and Luc Olivier has been the main source for this new 2nd edition of the game - version 2.5 - that you are holding in your hand. The book offers new information from the archives in both France and Vietnam which makes this game have not only the best info regarding supply but also the best order of battle you will ever find. I would like to thank Bruce Geryk and John Collis for play-testing this version with me. This is a major upgrade of the game and contains not only new rules, but also a new map and added counters. Hopefully, the result will please you.

Dien Bien Phu was a battle where either side may have lost. Historically, the French broke first but it could well have been the Viet Minh. VM took horrendous losses but felt that it was worth it since it broke the French will to fight. If VM would have taken such losses and failed, then that would have had severe implications for them. Not only would a large part of the veteran VM troops have been wiped out, but the nucleus of all French elite battalions would have survived and been rebuilt.

Two things made VM victory possible: One was their artillery. Not because it was better than the French counterpart (it wasn't); not because its guns fired more shells than the French guns (it didn't), but because it was there at all. VM artillery gave their divisions a fighting chance to take the French strongpoints one by one. The second cause was their strategy to slowly dig siege trenches that encircled and approached and sometimes even connected with French strongpoints. This patient approach eventually paid off.

How would I depict the approaching VM trenches? How would I simulate combat where a small unit sometimes could prevail over a larger opponent in both defense and offense? How would I show unit interaction and the way units moved both short and long distances? I quickly decided against having trench markers all over the map and chose instead to have zones depicting the approaching VM. The reason why French LoC (supply) cannot enter a hex in a Trench Zone is simply because there were too many VM troops to get through.

This was a battle where combat was almost semi-tactical, sometimes with strange results. I solved this by creating a double-roll where the first roll would have a certain chance of success and its outcome would then affect the second roll. By connecting the effects of artillery with these two rolls it became a system that was impossible to precalculate. You can increase your chances by sending a tough unit into battle supported by auxiliary units and artillery, but you cannot be sure. Any roll in this chain of rolls may fail. The system became realistic and exciting as well.

Units that are shaken may not support. This will weaken French defenders more than VM defenders and it shows the difficulty of stopping an assaulting VM wave. Then again, French defenders can have as many as six steps in a hex, compared to the three steps that VM can have, which shows the resilience of French defence.

Historically, units moved long distance to get into combat while sometimes failing to reach the fighting close by. I needed an "operational" move as well as a "tactic" one. But I didn't want to have a situation where all units would swish around the map at their pleasure. It all turned out to be a delicate system of Tactical Move, and a limited Valley Move and After-Combat Move where ZoC, LoC and Trench Zones are important.

In the game, both sides will experience periods of despair when nothing seems to work. But this will change, several times. If you feel like giving up, then suddenly your opponent will fail miserably in a few assaults and you are back in lucky street again. Fight to the end. It's not over until it's over.

After many play sessions, I dare say that *Dien Bien Phu, the Final Gamble* with the new rules - version 2.5 - has become a better game than before.

Best wishes, and enjoy the game



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VM Pre-Assault Phase

- 2.1 **VM Operational Move Segment**
 - A) Box Move, 3 units
 - B) Valley Move, 3 units
- 2.2 **VM Bombardment Segment**
 - A) VM may place Zone Markers
 - B) Deduct 1 Ammo per marker
 - C) Check French Truck and Supply losses
 - D) Bombardment roll
- 2.3 **VM Commando Raid Segment**
- 2.4 **VM Tactical Move Segment**

Place any Asset Markers, no more than 2 per sector
All VM units may move 5 mp.
No more than 3 VM units in a wrong Div. Sector

VM Assault Phase

- 3.1 **VM Declares Assault or Rest Segment**

Place Assault Markers, adjust the VM Morale Track for divisions that rest. Place any Support Mortars
- 3.2 **Box Combat Segment**

- 3.3 **French Reaction Move Segment**

4 units may move 5 mp
- 3.4 **French Support Barrage Segment**

France places Zone Markers and deduct 2 Ammo per marker, or 3 Ammo if Intense Support Barrage
- 3.5 **French Defense Fire Segment**
 - A) Calculate the defending strength
 - B) Conduct Defense Fire roll
 - C) Conduct Defense Effect roll

- 3.6 **VM Assaults Segment**
 - A) Calculate the assaulting strength
 - B) Conduct Assault Fire roll, and perhaps "Tiên lên!"
 - C) Conduct Assault Effect roll

VM Post-Assault Phase

- 4.1 **VM Attrition Segment**
 - A) Isolated VM units not in VM LoC are eliminated. Those in LoC remove Isolation Markers / may evacuate
 - B) Rain/Monsoon attrition from 12th April and onwards
- 4.2 **VM After-Combat Move Segment**

Any VM unit not entrenched may either move:

 - 1) 1 hex, regardless of any LoC and ZoC
 - 2) 5 mp if it does not enter French ZoC
- 4.3 **Remove/Add Shaken Markers Segment**
 - A) Remove all Shaken Markers.
 - B) Place a Shaken Marker on each VM unit that is not entrenched and that is adjacent to a French unit
- 4.4 **Mark all Isolated French Units Segment**

Supply Phase

- 5.1 **Morale Check Segment**
 - A) Demand a French surrender?
 - B) Will Garrison surrender? If not, deduct 4 Strongp. Tak.
 - C) Will VM troops despair? Deduct 4 Strongp. Tak. if "MC"
- 5.2 **VM Replacements and Reinforcements Segment**
 - A) Add 3 Ammo
 - B) VM patrols find supplies (when T/D zone 8, onwards)
 - C) Move units from Pulled-Back Box to the Off-map Box. Take replacements, adjust Replacement Track
 - D) If replacements, adjust Division Morale Track
 - E) Choose VM reinforcement from 24th April, onwards

Extended Game Turn Sequence

- 5.3 **Deduct French Supply Segment**
 - A) Deduct Fuel & Spares, repair Tanks/Artillery
 - B) Deduct Food & Bullets
 - C) Deduct Medicine, bring back Wounded
- 5.4 **French Airdrops Segment**
 - A) Fill eligible slots on the Airdrop Chart with Plane-Loads
 - B) Check weather and roll for aborts
 - C) Adjust supply tracks
 - D) Place any reinforcements (check Condor/Standby Force)
 - E) Replacements

French Pre-Assault Phase

- 6.1 **Airstrike Segment**
- 6.2 **French Operational Move Segment**
 - A) Valley Move, 4 units, or 6 units (if all in Supply Area)
 - B) Box Move, 12 units
- 6.3 **French Bombardment Segment**
 - A) France may place Zone Markers
 - B) Deduct 1 Ammo per marker, or 2 Ammo if Intense fire
 - C) Bombardment roll
- 6.4 **French Tactical Move Segment**

All French units may move 5 mp

French Assault Phase

- 7.1 **Box Combat Segment**
- 7.2 **France Declares Assault Segment**

- 7.3 **VM Support Barrage Segment**

Deduct 1 ammo, if up to 4 Support Mortars are placed
- 7.4 **VM Defense Fire Segment**
 - A) Calculate the defending strength
 - B) Conduct Defense Fire Roll
 - C) Conduct Defense Effect Roll

- 7.5 **French Assault Segment**
 - A) Calculate the Assaulting strength
 - B) Conduct Assault Fire Roll, and perhaps "En Avant!"
 - C) Conduct Assault Effect Roll

French Post-Assault Phase

- 8.1 **French Attrition Segment**
 - A) Isolated French units not in French LoC are eliminated. Those in LoC remove Isolation Markers. May evacuate
 - B) Isabelle Surrender?
 - C) Rats of Nam Youm. Roll for missing supplies.
- 8.2 **French After-Combat Move Segment**

Any French unit not entrenched may either move:

 - 1) 1 hex, regardless of any LoC and ZoC
 - 2) 5 mp if it does not enter VM ZoC
 - 3) To strongp. in Supply Area at DBP, not in VM ZoC
- 8.3 **Remove/Add Shaken Markers Segment**

Remove Shaken Markers. Place Shaken Marker on each French unit, not entrenched and adjacent to VM unit
- 8.4 **Mark all Isolated VM Units Segment**
- 8.5 **VM Trench Digging Segment**
 - A) Flip Dig Markers into Trench Markers if no French-controlled strongpoints/outposts in Trench/Dig Zones in sector
 - B) Move one single Trench Marker. Flip it into Dig Marker if any French controlled Strongp./outpost in new zone
- 8.6 **New Game Turn Segment**