

Operation Nordwind – Beta Rules

A. Introduction

Operation Nordwind is an introductory card-assisted game depicting Germany's last counter-offensive in the west from December 31, 1944 – January 20, 1945.

The fighting takes place in the mountainous, heavily-forested terrain of the Alsace region of France.

Historically, the German offensive failed in its attempt to secure the Saverne Gap – needed to release its Panzers in order to cut off the U.S. Seventh Army and perhaps gain a political settlement to the war in the west.

B. Contents

1 Map
1 Battle board
3 Counter sheets
105 cards
2 dice
Combat Chart
Set Up Chart
Rule book

C. The Counters

Each counter has a strength of one. Armored units have the additional ability to add to a combat resolution die roll.

Sample American Counter - infantry:



Sample German Counter – armor:

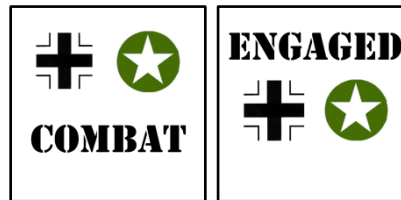


Sample French Counter – infantry:



American Units are represented by the star in the background of the counter. French units are represented by the Cross of Lorraine in the background. German units have either the Heer eagle, SS eagle or Luftwaffe eagle as their background. When known, the unit's historical insignia or tactical symbol is in the upper right corner. It has no effect on play and is there for historical purposes only.

Several types of markers are used to help aid the players during the course of the game. 1. Combat – placed in an area when units of both sides are in an area. 2. Engaged – placed in an area when called for by the Combat Results Table. 3. German Control Marker – placed in a zone when occupied by German units, and no allied units are present. 4. Turn – is used to keep track of the game turn on the Time Record Track located on the map. 5. Weather – placed on the Time Weather Track when a snowstorm develops.



D. The Map – Strategic Zone

In an abstract manner, the map depicts the Vosges area of Alsace where a portion of the Nordwind fighting took place. The weather during this time was miserable, with temperatures ranging from below 0 to the teens. Terrain was predominately heavily forested and mountainous.

Areas surrounding the map represent the Strategic Zone. German start-up areas are represented by the Heer eagle in the boxes. Those labeled transit zones indicate large areas of travel. Several of the areas are

labeled after towns in the area and function just the same as areas in the operational area of the map. All units are free to travel in either direction into only one strategic area during a turn if the strategic areas are connected by a solid black line. All strategic areas are under allied control except those on the north side of the map, and German start area E.

Each area on the map is either brown (heavily mountainous/forested terrain) or green (lightly forested/clear terrain). The number in the area is the defense value of the area. The *defender only* gets this benefit. It represents the number subtracted from an attacker's die roll.

An area is in control of a player if his units are the only ones present, or if he was the last to occupy it. At the start all areas, excluding German lettered start areas, are considered in allied control. As areas become under German control, place a German control marker in the area.

Units in strategic zone may enter the operational area of the map if an entry point is indicated by an arrow. A strategic area may have more than one entry point to the operational area of the map.

Any number of units may occupy a strategic or operational area. There are no stacking restrictions.

The picture below shows the types of strategic zones and points of entry to the operational zone.

E. The Map -- Operational Zone

The operational zone of the map is where most of the action will take place during the game. The map is an actual 1:50,000 scale map of the period, superimposed with zones (towns and terrain) and roads (red) and trails/paths/dirt roads (yellow).

Inside a town area is the terrain and defensive modifier for a die roll during combat. Some areas contain two different types of terrain. Units that enter from the north side of the town area utilize the upper terrain and modifier for defense and movement, while units entering from the south side utilize the lower terrain and modifier.

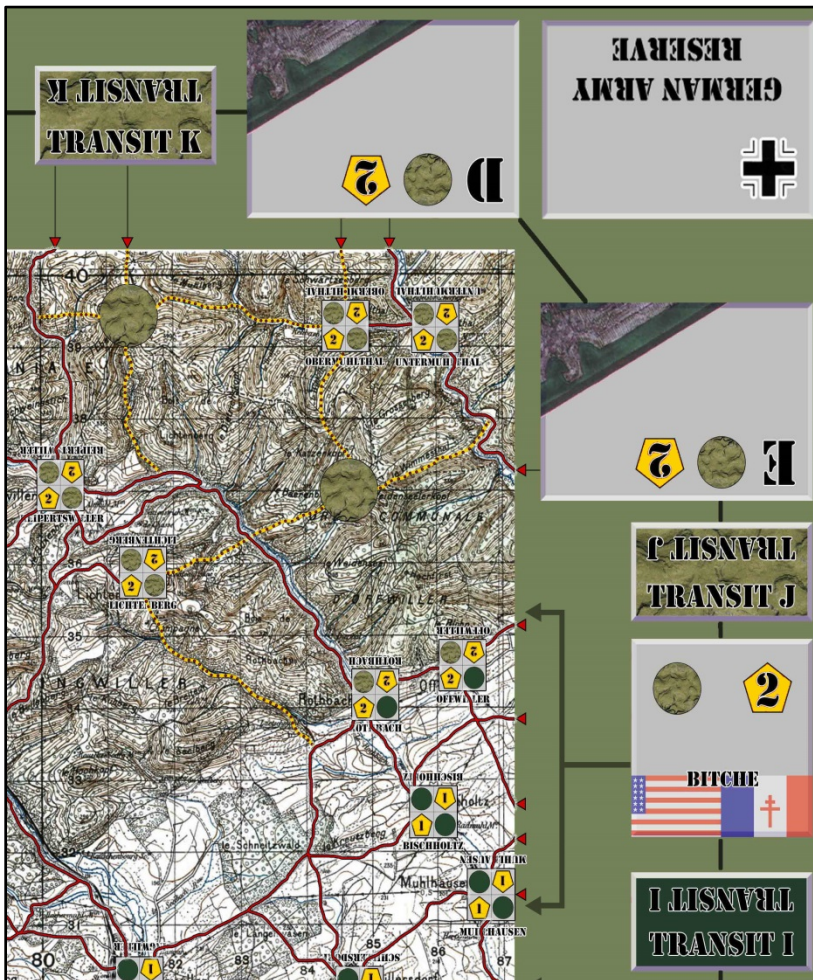
Movement of units is described in the Card section under Movement Cards.

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F. Set Up

Players decide which side they will play and then set up their units according to the set up/reinforcement/reserve sheet.

The game turn marker is placed on the Dec 31, 1944 space of the time record track.



Place the weather marker off map until called into play by a snowstorm card.

Place the control markers and the engaged markers to the side of the map where both players have easy access to them.

Units designated as reinforcements are placed on the date they appear on the time record track.

Units designated as reserves are placed on their respective Reserve Holding Box on the map.

Shuffle the cards and deal the following number to each player as seen below. Once the players have their cards dealt to them, place the remaining cards face down near the map. This becomes the draw pile.

German – First Turn Only – Dec 31 - (10)
Allied – First Turn Only Dec 31 - (7)

After the first turn the number of cards held by each player is as follows:

German – Jan 1 – Jan 10 (7)
Allied – Jan 1 – Jan 8 (8)

German – Jan 11 to end of game (6)
Allied – Jan 9 to end of game (9)

Cards used during the course of play are discarded to the side of the map face up. When the draw pile is exhausted, discarded cards are reshuffled and turned face down to be used as the draw pile.

Exception: Once reserve cards are used they are permanently removed from the game.

G. The Cards

The cards represent the heart of the game and allow the player to move, attack and defend. They also can be played in reaction to an opponent's move or attack.

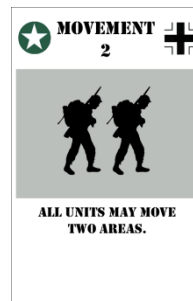
Cards that can be played by the Allies have a US insignia in the upper left corner of the card. Cards that can be played by the German player have a German cross in the upper right. If both symbols appear on the card, it can be used by either player.

Each card has an ability described on the card.

The cards are:

Movement (1, 2, 3) – Allows a player to move all his units up to the stated number of operational areas. Movement into enemy occupied areas is allowed with these cards. Units must stop when entering areas with enemy units.

Infantry units and armored units may move the indicated number of areas provided they are connected by a red line (road). However, armored units must stop and end their movement if the terrain in the area is mountainous.



Infantry and armored units must end their turn in an area if the path they took to get there was a yellow, dotted line.

A movement card allows movement into a strategic area from the operational map but units must stop upon entering a strategic area in the strategic zone.

Units in an area can move as a group or alone into the same or different areas as long as the zones are connected by routes of travel.

Units may not double back along the same path of movement during a turn.

If a player finds himself without a movement card, then any other card can be used as a movement card. Only one area can be entered by each unit if a card is played in this manner. The special ability of the card is NOT used and is in effect nullified. Moving into an enemy occupied area is allowed.

If the defender plays an Air support card in response to a movement card play – the number of areas that can be moved is reduced by 1. Movement can never be reduced lower than 1.

Special Rule: The German 6th SS Mountain Division (Nord) (11th and 12th Regiments) are the only units that can move through an area with mountainous terrain and not occupied by allied forces. They were adept at infiltration and perhaps the best German Division during the Nordwind operation. They had been fighting in Finland for years.

Strategic Movement Card: Allows a player to move any number of units (US) or if German, Infantry or Armor, (not both) one strategic area or one operational area. Entry into any enemy occupied area is prohibited with a strategic movement card. This card is played after all combat for the attacker is declared over and before the player's hand is replenished. *Units engaged may not move by strategic movement.*

Exception: If the defender plays an air support card in reaction to a strategic movement card, the SMC is nullified.



Support cards are played during a battle to aid in an attack or defense. *They are good for the duration of the battle.* If a battle takes more than 1 phase to complete, other support cards from the player's hand can be used at the player's discretion.

Air Support: Air support cards (ASC) can be used in either attack or defense. If used in attack, there is a 1 column shift to the right for each air support card used in each battle. More than one card can be played during a specific battle and are good only for that battle. *(See sample of play)*

In defense, there is a 1 column shift to the left for each ASC used.

If both players play the same number of air support cards during a battle, they, in effect, nullify each other.

As noted above, ASC nullify play of a Strategic Movement Card.

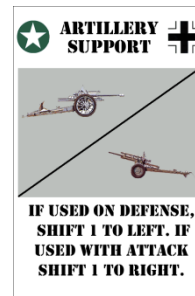
As noted above, ASC can also reduce the number of zones moved.

Exception: ASC cannot be played during a turn in which there is a snowstorm.



Artillery Support: Artillery Support Cards are played in the same way as an air support card and have the same effect in combat. Artillery support cards cannot stop a strategic movement card nor reduce a regular movement card. As with air support cards, any number can be played during a specific battle.

NOTE: Cards played during battles affect only the battle in which they are played. If a player has three battles going, and wants air support for each, he must play at least three separate air support cards.



Heroic Stand: This card is played by the defender first, and after the battle outcome is known. Play of the card is optional. If played, it negates the result and an engaged

marker is placed in the area. All units currently in the area may not move (regular or strategic) and must do battle next turn. Units can be reinforced.



Engaged Counter

If the defender plays the Heroic Stand Card and the attacker immediately plays his, it nullifies the defender's play of the card and the original battle results stand.



Military Intel: Negates the use of an opponent's card in either attack or defense. Only one card can be played per each battle.



Reserves Released: This allows a player to bring into play his reserves early. This card is played at the beginning of a player's turn. If played, units then can be moved normally.

Reserves Released Cards cannot be counter-acted by any opponent's card.

Once played, they are discarded from the game.



Snowstorm: A snowstorm card is played at the end of a player's turn. It goes into effect the turn after it is played and stays in effect for one full turn.

Place the weather marker(s) on the time record track on the correct date(s).



Weather Counter

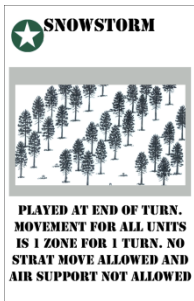
During a turn or turns a snowstorm is in effect – the following conditions apply: All movement is reduced to one zone no matter what value movement card is played.

No strategic movement cards are allowed to be used.

No air cards can be played.

It is possible to have two or more days of snowstorm – the German player plays one at the end of his turn – then the Allied player plays one at the end of his turn.

Example: At the end of the German player's first turn on Dec 31 – he plays the snowstorm card. A weather marker is placed on the Jan 1 space of the time record track. At the end of the Allied player's Dec 31 turn – he plays a snowstorm card and places a weather marker on the Jan 2 space on the turn record track. Thus 2 days of crappy weather is in store for both players.



Withdraw:

A withdraw card allows a player to retreat his units following an engaged result in the previous turn. It is played during the player's combat turn. Units in one designated battle may withdraw to one connected area.



H. Drawing Cards/Replenishing Hands

At the end of a player's turn, each player may discard 2 cards before drawing the number of cards required to fill their hands for the turn (see chart). If the defender played cards during an attacker's turn he also draws cards to fill his hand. The player moving in the next phase/turn always draws first.

At the end of a player's turn the players replenish their hand. The player moving in the next phase/turn always draws first.

Exception: During the start of the German 1st turn he has 10 cards. When drawing cards to replenish his hand at the end of his phase, the German player draws enough to have eight cards in his hand.

The 10 count hand is done simulate the German element of surprise during the opening hours of the battle. The Allies knew an attack was coming but did not know where. The draw of up to eight is used to

simulate the loss of surprise after the attack began.

I. How to Win

The German player can win in one of three ways:

1. Capture and hold the Strasbourg area, *and* exit at least five units off the south edge of the map by the end of the game. Strasbourg is not captured if allied units are in the area due to an engaged result -- it must be clear of allied units. The game ends immediately if this occurs.
2. If Strasbourg is not captured, and the Germans exit seven or eight units, the Germans gain a marginal victory. If more than nine units exit, the Germans earn an overwhelming victory.
3. If none of the above conditions are met, each player earns 1 point for each town they hold on the operational map. Subtract the lesser amount from the greater amount, and compare the result with the chart below.

Difference	Result
0 to 8	Draw
9 to 15	Marginal Victory
16 or greater	Overwhelming Victory

The Allied player can win if he prevents, conditions 1 or 2, and has the greater number of towns to earn a marginal victory or greater.

J. Turn Sequence

The sequence of play for both players is as follows: (NOTE: German player always plays first.)

German Phase:

1. Bring in replacements beginning with the January 10 turn.
2. Play reserve cards if in hand (optional)
3. Play movement card to move units

4. Defender may play air support card in reaction to move card
5. Combat (play withdraw card – optional)
6. Both sides play cards in support of battles.
7. Resolve battles – play heroic stand cards if you wish after results known.
8. Continue battles until engaged marker is placed or either attacker or defender retreats.
9. Play strategic movement card (optional)
10. Defender may play air support to nullify SMC.
11. Play snowstorm card if in hand (optional)
12. Both players replenish hands.

The Allied player then follows the same sequence for his phase. In addition, after players have replenished their hands, the Allied player moves the time record counter to the next day on the Time Record Track.

K. Replacements

Beginning with the January 10 game turn a player may bring in one unit per turn from his eliminated units pile as a replacement. It is the player's choice as to what type of unit to bring in.

German replacements may enter the game in any German lettered set-up area. They move normally in the turn in which they are placed.

Allied units may enter the game in any allied controlled area of the south side of the map. They move normally in the turn in which they are placed.

L. Combat

Combat occurs when units of both sides occupy an area.

Combat is *mandatory*. Place a combat marker in each area where combat is taking place as a reminder. A player may resolve each battle in any order. A battle mat has been provided to resolve battles if the operational area gets crowded with counters. Players can transfer the units

engaged in combat to a space on the mat, and when complete, place them back in the correct operation area where the combat took place.

When combat occurs in a forest/clear zone, use the Forest/Clear Combat Results Table, if in a mountain zone – use the Mountain Combat Results Table. Combat continues in an area until one of the conditions below is reached:

An engaged marker is placed in the zone or if one player is forced to retreat or is eliminated.

Every unit has a combat strength of one (1). Player's total up the number of units each has. Subtract the defender's total from the attacker's total. This number becomes the base column on the Combat Results Table. It is known as the differential.

This base column is modified as follows:

Attacker: For each Artillery, Air Support Card played, the attacker shifts the column to the right for each card played.

If *armored* units are involved – shift 1 column to the right.

For each armored unit involved in the attack, add 1 to the die roll.

Defender: For each Artillery, Air support card played, the defender shifts the column to the left for each card played.

If *armored* units are involved – shift 1 column to the left.

For *each armored unit* involved in defense subtract 1 to the die roll.

Subtract the area defense strength from the attacker's die roll.

NOTE: It is during this time that military intel cards can be played by the defender, effectively nullifying one artillery or air support card played by the attacker. *Only 1 military intel card can be played per battle by each side.*

Example: The German player is attacking with 4 units, 1 of which is an armor unit – in a forest/clear zone with a defense value of one.

The defender has 2 units, 1 of which is an armor unit.

The German strength is 4, the Allied 2. Subtracting the defender from the attacker gives a base column of +2.

The attacker plays 2 air support cards, the defender plays an artillery card.

The attacker shifts 2 columns to the right – now at +4, the defender shifts 1 column to the left, the differential is now +3.

Armored units are involved for each side. The attacker shifts 1 column to the right, to make it +4, the defender shifts 1 column to the left, back to +3 – in effect nullifying each other.

The dice is now rolled. The attacker rolls an eight (8).

The attacker adds 1 to the roll for the armor unit. The total is now 9.

The defender subtracts one for the armor unit and 1 for the area defense for a final result of 7.

Cross referencing the result of 7 under the +3 column of the forest/clear CRT we get a D1 result – the defender must retreat *all* units 1 zone.

NOTE: The defender – if he has it in his hand – could play the Heroic Stand card in which case the results are nullified and both forces become engaged. The attacker could respond with one of his own - reverting back the original results.

If an engaged marker is placed, combat ends. Units must stay in the area and fight during the *next player's* next turn unless the player plays a withdraw card. The area may be reinforced.

Once combat is finished for one area, resolve combat for the next area until all battles are resolved.

NOTE: Players will quickly see that they will not have enough cards to support every battle. Players must choose their battles wisely!

Explanation of Combat results:

D1, D2 – defender retreats all units (1 is one area, 2 is 2 areas)

A1, A2 – attacker retreats all units (1 is one area, 2 is 2 areas)

DE1, DE2, DE – defender eliminated (1 equals one unit, 2 equals 2 units, DE equals all units eliminated.) Continue combat until one side retreats, is eliminated or an engaged marker is placed.

AE1, AE2, AE – attacker eliminated (1 equals one unit, 2 equals 2 units, AE equals all units.) Continue combat until one side retreats, is eliminated or an engaged marker is placed.

Units can only retreat into unoccupied areas. Units may move into one or more unoccupied area during a retreat. If forced to move through or into an enemy occupied area it is eliminated instead.

E – Engaged. Attack stops and is continued during the next player's turn. Place an engaged marker in the zone. Units may not exit area but may be reinforced by *normal movement*. (*Exception – see withdraw card*)

NOTE: Eliminated units are placed off map near the owning player's side – destroyed units come in as replacements at a later time: See: Section (K) - *Replacements*.

M. Reinforcements

Each player has reinforcements that come in on specific dates. These units are noted on the set up chart. Icons on the time record track are reminders for each player.

Where they enter is noted on the set-up chart.

NOTE: The German Player must withdraw all regiments of the 269th VG Division (469th, 489th, and 490th Regiments if they are still in play at the beginning of turn 18. They are

removed from the game at the beginning of the turn.

At least 1 unit must start in the designated entry area when coming into play. This also applies to reserves.

O. Designer Comments

The game depicts in a very abstract manner the Nordwind Campaign. This was Hitler's last offensive in the west.

The terrain and weather were deplorable. Continual freezing weather and snow, mountainous terrain made movement difficult. Roads were slick with ice, making motor movement extremely slow or nearly impossible, especially for armor.

The movement cards are used to simulate these conditions. Think of the 1 value movement card as bad weather conditions and a 3 value movement card as a temporary break in the weather.

Despite the generally crappy weather, air support was available to the Allied side. The 358th Fighter Group was the predominate group supplying the support. Many missions were flown, hence the large number of air cards for the Allied player.

There were reports of German air activity during Nordwind. It is difficult to pin down the nature of these attacks. The German player has a few air cards to simulate this, but not many.

Each player will find that he never has enough cards to do what he wants – this is intentional. This is used to simulate the supply problems for each side. The number of cards a player can hold per turn is also indicative of the supply situation.

That being said, the Allies were able to manage their supplies better hence the ability to move both types of units with a strategic movement card.

The German player is strapped with a bad supply situation that just got worse as the campaign went on. Hand count and the limited ability of a strategic movement card reflect this.

The German player must decide at the start which strategy he wishes to pursue and try to stick to it.

Trying for all objectives hoping one will come through will not work – your resources just won't stretch that far.

Coming up with a complete order of battle was next to impossible. The units in the game are known to have participated during the course of Nordwind.

P. Resources

United States Seventh Army Report of Operations – WW2

358th FG Operational Reports

German manuscripts covering Nordwind on file at the Center of Military History.

Various unit websites and histories.

Ordeal in the Vosges by the late Charlie Pence

Riviera to the Rhine, U.S. Army Green Book Series – U.S. Army History of World War II

When the Odds Were Even by the late Kit Bonn.

Combat Results Table: Forest (Green) Area

Differential ▶	<-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5 >
Roll ▼											
-4 (or less)	AE	AE	AE	AE	AE2	AE2	AE1	AE1	AE1	A2	A2
-3	AE	AE	AE	AE2	AE1	AE1	AE1	AE1	A2	A2	A1
-2	AE	AE2	AE2	AE1	A2	A2	A2	A2	A2	A1	A1
-1	AE2	AE2	AE1	A2	A2	A2	A2	A2	A1	A1	A1
0	AE2	AE2	A2	A2	A2	A2	A2	A1	A1	A1	E
1	AE2	AE1	A2	A2	A1	A1	A1	A1	A1	E	E
2	AE2	AE1	A2	A1	A1	A1	A1	A1	E	E	E
3	AE1	A2	A1	A1	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
4	AE1	A2	A1	A1	E	E	E	E	E	E	D1
5	A2	A1	A1	A1	E	E	E	E	E	E	D1
6	A2	A1	A1	E	E	E	E	E	D1	D1	D2
7	A1	A1	E	E	E	E	E	D1	D1	D2	D2
8	A1	E	E	E	E	E	E	D1	D2	D2	DE1
9	E	E	E	E	D1	D1	D1	D2	D2	DE1	DE1
10	E	E	E	D1	D1	D1	D1	D2	DE1	DE1	DE2
11	E	E	D1	D1	D2	D2	D2	DE1	DE1	DE2	DE2
12	E	D1	D1	D1	D2	D2	D2	DE1	DE2	DE2	DE2
13	D1	D1	D1	D2	D2	D2	DE1	DE2	DE2	DE2	DE2
14	D1	D1	D1	D2	D2	DE1	DE1	DE2	DE2	DE2	DE
15	D1	D1	D2	D2	D2	DE1	DE2	DE2	DE2	DE	DE
16+	D2	D2	D2	D2	DE1	DE1	DE2	DE	DE	DE	DE

Combat Results Table: Mountain (Brown) Area

Differential ▶	<-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5 >
Roll ▼											
-4 (or less)	AE	AE2	AE2	AE2	AE2	AE1	AE1	AE1	AE1	A2	A2
-3	AE2	AE2	AE2	AE2	AE1	AE1	A2	A2	A2	A2	A1
-2	AE2	AE2	AE2	AE1	AE1	A2	A2	A2	A1	A1	E
-1	AE2	AE2	AE1	AE1	A2	A2	A1	A1	A1	E	E
0	AE2	AE1	AE1	AE1	A2	A1	A1	A1	E	E	E
1	AE1	AE1	AE1	A2	A2	A1	A1	E	E	E	E
2	AE1	AE1	A2	A2	A1	A1	E	E	E	E	E
3	AE1	AE1	A2	A1	A1	E	E	E	E	E	E
4	AE1	A2	A2	A1	E	E	E	E	E	E	D1
5	A2	A2	A1	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	D1
6	A2	A1	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	D1	D2
7	A1	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	D1	D2	D2
8	A1	E	E	E	E	E	E	D1	D2	D2	DE1
9	E	E	E	E	E	E	D1	D1	D2	DE1	DE1
10	E	E	E	E	E	D1	D1	D2	D2	DE1	DE1
11	E	E	E	E	D1	D1	D2	D2	DE1	DE1	DE1
12	E	E	E	D1	D1	D2	D2	DE1	DE1	DE1	DE2
13	E	E	D1	D1	D1	D2	D2	DE1	DE1	DE2	DE2
14	E	D1	D1	D2	D2	D2	DE1	DE1	DE2	DE2	DE2
15	D1	D2	D2	D2	D2	DE1	DE1	DE2	DE2	DE2	DE2
16+	D2	D2	DE1	DE1	DE1	DE1	DE2	DE2	DE2	DE2	DE

Modifiers for both Tables: **Attacker:** Shift right for each Air Support, Artillery Card played. Shift one column to the right when armor is attacking with infantry. Add 1 to die roll for each armor unit attacking. **Defender:** Shift left for each Air Support, Artillery Card played. Shift one column to the left if armor is with infantry. Subtract 1 from die roll for each armor unit defending with infantry. Subtract area modifier (1 or 2) from die roll.

Results:

D1, D2 – defender retreats all units (1 is one area, 2 is 2 areas)
 A1, A2 – attacker retreats all units (1 is one area, 2 is 2 areas)
 DE1, DE2, DE – defender eliminated (1 equals one unit, 2 equals 2 units, DE equals all units.) Continue combat until one side retreats, is eliminated or an engaged marker is placed.
 AE1, AE2, AE – attacker eliminated (1 equals one unit, 2 equals 2 units, AE equals all units.) Continue combat until one side retreats, is eliminated or an engaged marker is placed.
 E – Engaged. Attack stops and is continued by the next player. Place engaged marker in area. Units may not exit area but may be reinforced by normal movement. They cannot be reinforced by strategic movement.