

Blitzkrieg Fire Manual

Version 1.100

Introduction

Blitzkrieg Fire simulates the conflict in the European and Mediterranean theatres of World War II. You will control the naval, air, and ground forces of all of the nations involved in the conflict from 1939-1945.

The game includes 20 campaigns. 16 are smaller campaigns, covering part of the war in detail; the 'Blitzkrieg Fire' campaigns are much longer and cover the entire war. Your objectives for each campaign are shown at the start, and can be reviewed at any time by tapping the 'Objectives' button. In general, your objectives will be to capture key territory within a time limit, or to defend your territory for a certain amount of time. In some smaller campaigns, you may be required to inflict a certain number of casualties on the enemy, or destroy a certain amount of their industry.

Each campaign has a difficulty rating, indicating how challenging the campaign is to win. In addition to this, the AI difficulty can be selected prior to starting the campaign. This setting controls how smart and aggressive the AI opponent is (it does not affect objectives, time limits, or force sizes).

Sandbox Mode enables you to select each sides' starting forces and play with no time limit. The only objective is to capture all territory held by the enemy.

Basics

The game is divided into turns, each representing between four and thirty days of the war. During each turn, you will issue commands to your forces and the AI will do the same. When you press the "End Turn" button, your forces and the enemy's will execute their orders simultaneously - units will move, combat will be resolved, and reinforcements will be added. After all orders are complete and the results have been calculated, the game will be saved and a new turn will begin.

To issue orders to a unit, first select the base on the map where the unit is located by tapping its coloured circle on the map. Icons next to the coloured circle indicate what types of forces are present at each base. If land forces are present, the number of X symbols above the icon indicates the combined strength of the land units present.

With the base selected, you will see several tabs at the bottom of the screen, allowing you to view land units, air units, and naval units, as well as general information about the selected base. Tap a unit in the list to select it, and tap it again to de-select it. You can select and issue orders to multiple units at a time. You can also tap and hold on a unit to view more information about that unit.

With at least one unit selected, available orders will appear at the bottom of the map. Tap the type of order you wish to issue, then tap a base on the map to target.

Land Unit Orders

The types of orders you can issue depends on the type of unit selected. Land units have up to three orders available. "Move" orders the unit to move to the target base over land routes. The movement radius of the unit is indicated by a white circle on the map. Units may move to any base within their land movement radius, as long as there is a road connecting the bases and each base along the road is controlled by friendly forces. Additionally, units can always move to bases which are directly adjacent to their current location, even if it is outside of their movement radius.

"Sea Transport" is only available to units in bases adjacent to the coast, and orders the unit to relocate to the target base by sea. The target may be any base which is not landlocked, is within sea transport range (indicated by a blue circle on the map), and is within the same sea region as the unit. For example, units may not move directly from the Atlantic to bases in the Mediterranean - they must move through Gibraltar first. If the target base is controlled by the enemy, the units will conduct an amphibious invasion. Units arriving by sea are extremely vulnerable to interception by enemy warships and aircraft, so it is important to ensure that you provide appropriate air and naval support. Note that Sea Transport operations are disabled in some campaigns for historical accuracy.

The final type of land unit order, "Paradrop", is only available to airborne units. The unit will be transported to the target base by air and will parachute in to the location. The target can be anywhere within the aerial movement range of the unit, indicated by a yellow circle on the map. Airborne units are extremely vulnerable to enemy fighter aircraft.

Regardless of the orders given, land units will attack any enemy forces at their location after movement is complete. If in friendly territory, they will also entrench themselves - this improves their defensive strength and reduces casualties taken in future battles. If a unit moves, its entrenchment level resets to zero.

Naval Unit Orders

Naval units have five possible orders - "Move", "Bombard", "Convoy Attack", "Split", and "Merge".

- "Move" instructs the fleet to move to the target base.
- "Bombard" instructs the fleet to move to the target base, then bombard any enemy ground forces present with all available guns.
- "Convoy Attack" instructs a submarine group to attack enemy merchant shipping convoys near the target. It is only available to submarines.
- "Split" immediately splits the task force into its component ships.

- "Merge" immediately combines all selected task forces.

Note that Split and Merge both take place as soon as the button is pressed - not at the end of the turn, like all other orders. This means you can split and merge task forces as many times as necessary, then give a Move or Bombard order when you are satisfied with the composition of your forces.

All fleets will automatically engage any enemy naval forces present at their location after movement is complete (regardless of whether they were issued a "Move" order, a "Bombard" order", or no orders at all).

Similar to sea transport operations, naval units can only cross between sea regions at certain bases.

Air Unit Orders

Air units have six possible orders - "Rebase", "CAP", "Recon", "Naval Strike", "Land Strike", and "Strategic Bombing".

- "Rebase" orders the squadron to relocate to a different base by means of air, land, or sea transport. This is the only way to permanently move a squadron to a different base.

The other orders for air units can only target bases within the squadron's aircraft's range. The range of a squadron is shown by a yellow circle on the map when the squadron is selected. After completing any of these orders, the squadron will return to base.

- "CAP" stands for "Combat Air Patrol" and orders the squadron to fly to the destination and engage any enemy aircraft present. CAP missions are only available to fighters.
- "Naval Strike" orders the squadron to fly to the destination and engage any enemy ships present. The squadron will also attack enemy merchant ships at the target base, reducing the enemy's industry score.
- "Land Strike" orders the squadron to fly to the destination and engage any enemy ground forces present. The squadron will also bomb enemy airfields, causing losses for any enemy aircraft stationed at the base.
- "Strategic Bombing" orders the squadron to fly to the destination and bomb factories, transport facilities, and civilian infrastructure. This significantly reduces the enemy's industry score for the turn, as well as damaging the base itself.
- "Recon" orders the squadron to perform aerial reconnaissance of the target base. This enables you to view more information about enemy units present as well as giving your forces a slight effectiveness boost. Aircraft with longer range are more effective at recon missions.

Order Resolution

Once all orders have been given and the "End Turn" button has been pressed, units will execute their orders and combat will be resolved. This occurs in the following order:

1. Air units fly to targets.
2. Air units on Combat Air Patrol missions engage enemy aircraft.
3. Fighters attempt to intercept enemy naval strikes.
4. Naval strikes are resolved.
5. All aircraft attack any enemy ground forces attempting to land at their location.
6. Fighters attempt to intercept enemy land strikes.
7. Land strikes are resolved.
8. Naval units move to destinations.
9. Ground forces and air units being transported by sea move to destinations. Naval units attack enemy ground forces attempting to land at their location. Naval units attack enemy ground forces attempting to escape their location.
10. Naval units bombard ground forces where ordered.
11. Ground forces engage enemy ground forces at location.
12. Air units return to bases.
13. Ground forces capture bases if all defending enemy ground forces have been destroyed. Air units in captured bases are destroyed.
14. Units receive reinforcements. New units are created.
15. Game is saved and a new turn begins.

The order of resolution can be extremely important - for example, if the Axis player orders a fighter squadron to rebase from Cherbourg to Cologne and the Allied player orders a fighter squadron to perform CAP over Cherbourg, the Axis fighter squadron will be caught by the Allied CAP before it gets a chance to rebase. If the Allied player orders a ground unit to move to Crete and the Axis player orders a naval unit to bombard Crete, the Axis fleet will arrive first and will attack the Allied ground forces as they are landing, then bombard them once they are ashore.

After this has been calculated you will see several short cutscenes showing any combat which has occurred. The actual calculation of combat results is far more complex than the cutscenes show - they are just intended to help you visualise what has happened. Cutscenes can be disabled through the Options menu. More detailed information about the events at the location can be viewed by tapping the "View Log" button.

At the end of combat, bases are captured if there are hostile ground forces present and all defending ground forces have been destroyed. Any air units stationed at a base when it is captured will be destroyed. Ships (and aircraft aboard carriers) are unaffected.

Reinforcements

After combat resolution, any ground or air units which are below full strength and located at a friendly base will be reinforced. The amount of replacement men or aircraft received depends on the size of the base and their team's Industry Score. Damaged ships at friendly bases will be repaired; repairs will be completed much faster at larger bases. New units are also created periodically at larger bases.

Air units at friendly bases can upgrade to newer aircraft types during the reinforcement phase; the probability of a unit upgrading is higher at larger bases. Ships do not upgrade, but new naval units created later in the game will typically contain more advanced and powerful ships.

Each team's Industry Score is also updated. The Industry Score represents a range of factors, including the manpower levels, the amount of resources (steel, oil, rubber) available, how quickly factories are producing new vehicles and equipment, and so on. In practical terms, higher industry scores mean more units are created and more reinforcements are received each turn.

Each team's industry score depends on the number and size of the bases held. In addition, teams will have a certain 'base score' in some campaigns representing off-map industrial production - this is not affected by damage to bases.

Submarines on convoy attack missions cause a temporary reduction to the enemy's industry score. The amount by which the score is reduced is proportional to the tonnage of merchant ships sunk that turn. Submarines will locate and sink more shipping when targeting bases where merchant convoys are more frequent; this can be viewed by selecting the base and viewing the Info tab.

Strategic bombing from aircraft significantly reduces industry score for the turn, but also damages the targeted bases - reducing the enemy's industry score long-term. Strategic bombing campaigns are most effective if focused on large enemy bases - destroying small towns and villages will have very little impact. Damaged bases automatically repair one percentage point of damage each turn.

Supply Lines and Encirclements

It is essential to ensure that land units always have an intact supply line at the end of each turn. Supplies are generated by supply bases (indicated with stars on the map) and supply ports (indicated with anchors on the map). If a unit cannot trace an unbroken line of friendly bases back to a supply base or supply port at the end of the turn, it will not receive supplies. Bases with out-of-supply units are shown with yellow or red jerry can icons on the map. If a unit does not receive supplies for two turns, its morale will drop to zero and it will become almost totally ineffective in combat. Even after restoring supply lines, it will take several turns to recover morale.

Supply ports can be blockaded by naval forces. If enemy naval forces are present at a supply port, it will not generate supplies for that turn - so all units which were relying on it will run out of supplies.

Paratroopers are subject to the same supply constraints as other troops. If paratroopers are dropped behind enemy lines, it is important that you establish a supply line to them within the next turn - else they will run out of supply and be very vulnerable to enemy counterattacks.

Ground Units

A wide range of military units, vehicles, and equipment are represented in Blitzkrieg Fire. Ground units have three main components - men, tanks, and guns. Men are the core of the unit, and the number of men roughly shows how powerful it will be in combat. Tanks are useful when attacking territory, particularly overland. Guns (representing artillery, AA, and AT guns) are most useful in defence, and also enable the unit to shoot down attacking aircraft.

A unit's combat effectiveness is heavily affected by the unit's morale. Morale is lost whenever the unit takes casualties, and slowly recovers over time. Casualties from airstrikes and naval bombardment cause significantly more morale loss than casualties in combat. When a unit's morale is low, it will cause less damage to the enemy and take greater casualties. Units with very low morale will quickly retreat or surrender in combat.

A unit's combat effectiveness is also affected by its experience and entrenchment levels (visible by tapping and holding on the unit icon). Units gain experience each turn they are in combat. Entrenchment slowly increases over time when the unit is in friendly territory, but resets to zero when the unit moves.

The strength of a unit is also affected by its equipment. Armoured units will gain access to more powerful tanks over time, significantly boosting their effectiveness in combat. Each nation also has a combat modifier based on the quality of its equipment - for most nations, this gradually increases throughout the war. Germany is the main exception - it starts with excellent equipment, but its modifier does not increase over time.

An estimate of the unit's overall combat power is shown by the number of white squares next to its name in the land unit list. This incorporates the number of men, tanks, and guns, as well as the unit's morale, experience level, and national equipment modifier.

In general, the best way to capture territory defended by entrenched, experienced troops is to:

- Ensure your forces outnumber the defenders by at least 3:1
- Ensure your forces have good morale before launching the attack
- Ensure your forces have plenty of armoured support

Bombard the enemy forces with battleships and heavy bombers in the same turn as you launch the attack. The combat resolution order (above) means that the bombardment will take place before your ground troops arrive, meaning they will face a heavily demoralized enemy.

If possible, send a strong naval taskforce along with your troops to ensure they are not intercepted by enemy ships as they land. If the troops are caught by enemy warships while landing, they will generally take significant casualties and suffer a massive morale loss - meaning they are unlikely to defeat the defenders.

Air Units

Air units consist of up to 25 of a single type of aircraft. Generally, fighters are best at attacking or defending against aircraft, level bombers are most effective against ground units, and dive or torpedo bombers are most effective against ships - but the individual characteristics of each aircraft (viewable by tapping and holding the unit name) can mean there are exceptions.

Air units can take losses in two ways - on missions (due to enemy fighters or flak) or on the ground (due to enemy ground strikes on their airfield). It is therefore important to allocate your fighters to defend your airbases and carriers as well as your aircraft on strike missions.

Naval Units

Naval units consist of a collection of ships. Larger ships (higher displacements) are tougher, and larger guns do more damage. Torpedoes are useful on fast, lightly armed ships (like destroyers) as they can enable the ship to damage significantly more powerful adversaries - if the ship can get in range. AA enables a ship to shoot down attacking aircraft, and ASW enables a ship to engage submarines.

Submarines are a special case - they are a ship which cannot be engaged with guns or torpedoes, only depth charges and other ASW weapons. In combat, they will try to engage the largest enemy ships they can find with torpedoes then attempt to escape. Battleships and aircraft carriers are particularly vulnerable to submarines, and aircraft and destroyers provide the best defence. Submarines cannot attack other submarines.

Aircraft carriers act like regular ships, except they can host one or two squadrons of aircraft. Carrier aircraft cannot be rebased to land or to other carriers, and will automatically move with the carrier group. Carrier aircraft have a much larger effective 'range' than land based aircraft, because the carrier can move closer to the target before they launch. If the carrier is sunk, aircraft will attempt to move to another carrier at the same base; if no other carrier is available, they will ditch into the sea and the squadron will be lost.