

BLITZKRIEG

COMMANDER

WELCOME TO BLITZKRIEG COMMANDER - 4TH EDITION!

Blitzkrieg Commander is a set of wargame rules from Pendraken Miniatures, that allow you to recreate combined arms operations during the Second World War (1939-1945), using miniatures on a table top. These rules can also be used for other conflicts including the Winter War and the Chinese Civil Wars. Since its first publication in 2003, BKC has been the rule set of preference for wargaming WWII in the smaller scales, with over 5000 copies sold.

This 4th Edition brings further development and fine-tuning to what was already an excellent set of rules.

In Blitzkrieg Commander, players each take command of a Battlegroup, representing one or more battalions, regiments or similar combined arms formations. The rules attempt to provide a good balance between playability and historical accuracy, allowing players to perform like their historic counterparts with a game system that is easy to use and fast to play. The rules are suitable for solo, two-player or multi-player games at home, at the club or in a demonstration situation.

MINIATURES

You will need suitable miniatures to play the game. Whilst we, of course, recommend the use of Pendraken 10mm miniatures, you can game with any size from 2mm right up to 28mm, including 6mm, 15mm and 20mm. When using some of these other scales, it is recommended that you halve all weapon ranges when using 2mm or 3mm miniatures, add 50% when using 15mm miniatures and double all weapon ranges when using 20-28mm miniatures. Your miniatures can be based or un-based as this makes no difference when playing the game.

BATTLEFIELD

A playing area 120cm by 180cm (4ft x 6ft) will provide ample space for average-sized battles using 6-15mm scale miniatures. For players using 2mm scale miniatures, a playing area half this size will be adequate. For players using 20-28mm scale miniatures, an area 180cm by 240cm (6ft x 8ft) or larger will be necessary depending on the number of points being used. Small games are composed of between 20 and 40 playing pieces per side, mid-sized games between 40 and 60, and large games up to 100 playing pieces or more.

One centimetre on the table top represents either ten or twenty metres in real life, depending on the level of command you choose. Games will typically last from two to four hours in real time, with one game turn representing a variable length of time of up to thirty minutes.

You will need to provide suitable scenery for your table to make it look like a real battlefield. This can be as basic or as complex as you like, but the features you should include are hills, woods, roads, rivers and buildings. As a general guide, there should be at least one third to one half of the table covered with scenery for most battles as this will avoid the unrealistic situation of troops having a clear line of sight from one side of the table to the other.

TOOLS & MARKERS

You will need a handful of six-sided dice, a directional die and a tape measure. The directional die is a normal six-sided die with arrows marked on it instead of pips. The tape measure should have measurements in centimetres marked on it.

It is a good idea to get some markers to indicate various situations in the game. A handful of tiny six-sided dice are ideal for recording hits against units and if you have two different colours, for example red and white, the red die can be used to indicate when units are suppressed. Alternatively, you can make your own markers using dead and wounded soldiers and spare bits from your models mounted on small circular bases - this gives added realism to the game!

Cotton wool puffs are ideal for simulating smoke screens and acrylic or cardboard templates can be used to indicate: ambush areas; artillery bombardment areas; parachute drop zones or aircraft attack zones of fire.

A variety of gaming aids for use with these rules can be found at:

www.pendraken.co.uk

A **Quick Reference Sheet** plus a variety of **Optional Rules** and further material can be found as downloads on the **Pendraken Forum**, in the Blitzkrieg Commander section. It's also the best place to go if you have any questions on the game and to keep up with the latest news on Blitzkrieg Commander and other rulesets in the Commander series.

www.pendrakenforum.co.uk

Blitzkrieg (German, "lightning war") is a method of warfare whereby an attacking force, spearheaded by a dense concentration of armoured and motorised or mechanised infantry formations with close air support, breaks through the opponent's line of defence by short, fast, powerful attacks and then dislocates the defenders, using speed and surprise to encircle them with the help of air superiority. Through the employment of combined arms in manoeuvre warfare, blitzkrieg attempts to unbalance an enemy by making it difficult for it to respond to the continuously changing front, then defeat it in a decisive Vernichtungsschlacht (battle of annihilation).



Canadian crew of a Sherman tank, south of Vaucelles, Normandy, France, June 1944

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GAME CONCEPTS

It's always useful when reading a new set of rules to understand some of the concepts used in the game.

OVERVIEW

Players alternate between turns, with turns being broken down into four phases. Play continues until either one side reaches its objectives or it breaks and withdraws from the battlefield as a result of suffering too many casualties. The game will also end when the last turn of a scenario has been played or one side concedes defeat.

- The first phase of a turn is the **Scheduled Phase**, when scheduled artillery and air strikes take place.
- The **Initiative Phase** follows and allows troops in close proximity to the enemy to respond to their immediate situation without having to wait for orders to be issued.
- The **Command Phase** is when command units attempt to issue orders to their troops and if successful, the troops carry out actions such as move or fire. The command system represents the core of the game and allows the unpredictable nature of combat to be simulated in a simple yet elegant way.
- The fourth phase is the **End Phase** of a turn when troops recover from poor morale and players determine whether any scenario objectives have been attained.

The different types of actions in the game are resolved in exactly the same way, so troops firing small-arms are calculated the same as tanks firing guns which are calculated the same as artillery firing a barrage. Not only does this allow for very fluid game play but it also allows troops to support one another by accumulating sufficient hits against enemy units in a turn to be able to knock them out of the game. No longer do the different arms of service act independently of one another, but players should use combined-arms to get the most out of their troops and ultimately, the game.

UNITS, FORMATIONS & BATTLEGROUPS

Each miniature (or stand of miniatures if they are mounted on bases) is referred to as a **Unit**. A unit represents a platoon of infantry or vehicles, or a battery of guns, when playing the game at the regimental or divisional level. Whilst this is a more abstract level of play, it does allow you to fight larger battles without needing loads of miniatures. However, you can also play games at the company or battalion level by simply stating that each unit represents a squad of infantry, or a single vehicle or gun. This gives a realistic simulation where what you see on the table is what you get in real life. Some conflicts lend themselves to this level of play, whereas others lend themselves to the higher level.

A **Formation** is a convenient term to use for all the units you will issue orders to at any one time during a turn. Formations are based around their historic counterparts: battalions at the higher level and companies at the lower level. There are no restrictions on the distance each unit can be within a formation as this is built into the command system. Essentially, the further away a unit is from a command unit, the more difficult it will be to order - simple!

Finally, all the formations under your command are said to be a **Battlegroup**. A battlegroup represents a regiment at the higher level and a battalion at the lower level of play. Players wishing to field a division (or a regiment at the lower level) should deploy separate battlegroups, one per regiment (or one per battalion at the lower level). This is ideal for multi-player games where each player takes command of a battlegroup.

ATTACKS, SAVES & HITS

All units in the game have three main stats: **Attacks**, **Saves** and **Hits**.

Attacks are split into three separate stats – AT (Anti-Tank), AP (Anti-Personnel) and CA (Close Assault) and the attack value represents the number of dice you will throw to attack the opposition. The first two indicate the offensive capability of the unit when it opens fire. This could be infantry firing small-arms, tanks firing guns, or aircraft firing rockets. Close assault attacks are used when the unit is in close contact with the enemy. Whenever you use your attacks against an enemy unit, your opponent will get to make a saving roll as long as their unit has a save value.

Anti-aircraft (AA) weapons are an exception to the above in that they have an additional AA attack value, that only applies in their anti-aircraft role. This attack value can be found in the Notes column of AA units in the army lists.

Save values represent the defensive capability of the unit, primarily its armour protection. Not all units have a save value, such as infantry or trucks.

If an attack isn't saved, it causes a hit against the unit and a unit can only take a certain number of hits before it is Knocked-Out of the game. This is the **Hits** value of the unit and shouldn't be confused with the number of hits it has actually taken. Incidentally, hits inflicted against a unit are removed at the end of the active player's turn so there is no major bookkeeping in the game, except for units that are suppressed.