



TRENCH RAIDER: World War I Wargaming in Ten Minutes

by *David Raybin* © 2014

INTRODUCTION

Instead of a generic set of WW1 rules I determined to make the rules fit the game scenario rather than the other way around. Certainly the rules can be altered to fit other theaters but for good 'ol mud slogging fun these rules are for trench warfare as we think it was -- or at least how a veteran explained in to me 40 years ago when he was my math teacher in military school.

The game board is a series of trenches: three for the French and three for the Germans. As you can see in the photos this is a purpose-built game board with shell holes and obstacles of every sort. The photo on the right is half the 4 by 6 foot game board. In this rule-scenario, the French are attacking and attempt to take all three trenches before darkness falls or their losses become prohibitive. I use 15mm Minifig figures and tanks since they paint up quickly and are nearly indestructible. I have "units" of 30 or so men who are individually mounted. Dice are 6 siders and we use a lot of them.



THE GAME SEQUENCE

1. Misfortunes of War

The Game Master will tell you if there are any special events this turn, i.e. I make up historical things as we go along.

2. Determine Which Way the Wind Blows

The players determine the wind direction. Roll one dice. On anything but a 6 the wind (or rain) stays as it was last turn. If a six is rolled then roll an additional dice. A 1 and the wind blows from the French left. A 2 and the wind blows from the French Right. A 3 or 4 and it blow from the French rear. A 5 and it blows from the French front. A 6 and the wind changes to rain which means all smoke and gas disappear.

3 Generate and Move the Poison Gas Clouds

Each side may now generate a Poison Gas Cloud on a roll of 1 or 2. Toss a cotton ball and that is the center of the gas cloud. Put a 12" ring in place. Next turn the ring is moved 12" per turn according to prevailing winds. Everybody and everything under the Poison Gas clouds throws a dice. A 6 kills. Everybody under the gas is pinned this turn and stays put but may fire. Troops will not move into the poison gas cloud. Troops may fire in or out of the gas cloud but only at a range of 4".

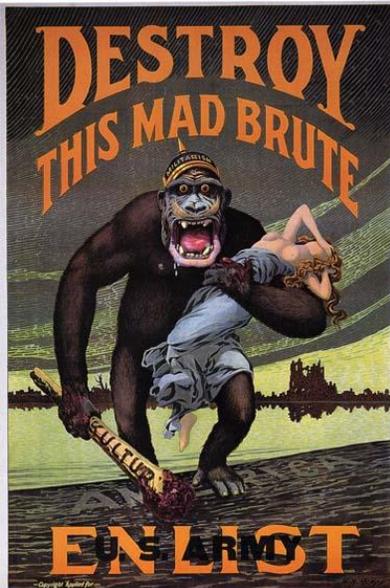


4 French Phase.

4(a) Bombardment Phase.

First the French player determines if he will be allowed any off board bombardment. Roll one dice. A 1, 2, 3 or 4 is NO bombardment. A 5 or 6 is a bombardment and allows that many shells. These are cotton balls thrown from behind the board WITH YOUR EYES CLOSED ! Where they land dictates enemy (or friendly!) casualties. Whatever the cotton ball touches when it comes to rest is killed or destroyed.

Then the French player is allowed to fire “on board” bombardment. The French roll 1 die for each artillery piece the board. Each pip is a shell. Small cotton balls are issued depending on the number rolled for each gun. Players toss the cotton balls from behind the gun. Whatever the cotton ball touches when it comes to rest is killed. Alternatively on board artillery may fire armor piercing shells at a range of 24 inches as direct fire. A 6 is a hit and a kill on any target. If on board artillery uses direct fire it is not considered a covered target and is more vulnerable to enemy fire.



4(b) French Move and Fire and German machine gun opportunity fire.

The French infantry Move and Fire. Each Regiment gets 2 dice, which dictates maximum moving distance this turn in inches. Each soldier can move and fire but firing ends that soldier’s movement. Machine guns and mortars can either move OR fire. Tanks move up to three dice and fire once for each cannon; each machine gun may fire three times but do not have to stop after they fire. Once you remove your hand from any piece that is it for that piece.

While the French player is moving the German Player can fire each machine gun three times except those on vehicles may not fire.

4(c) German Return Fire

After the French player has finished moving all his units the German player then gets to fire once at the French with all weapons including machine guns mounted on vehicles.

4(d) Combat.

Any soldier in contact with an enemy fights hand-to-hand until one or the other is killed. Each player throws a dice. High die wins. Add +1 for each man beyond an even fight. Elite troops fight hand-to-hand +1 on die roll. No “combat” between tanks. Tanks do not engage in combat with men and vice versa: tanks are too slow and men cannot defeat tanks on their own.

4 (e) Morale Phase

After hand-to-hand combat the French determine morale. Any French unit that 10 or fewer men surviving rolls 1 die for morale. A 1 or 2 indicates the unit breaks. If the Brigade HQ unit is 12” or less away from the regimental leader then 1 pip is added to the die roll. A breaking unit disappears from where it is and the surviving soldiers reappear on the base line. If the Germans counter-attack to reclaim one of their own trenches and there are 5 or fewer Frenchmen in a captured Germans Trench line the French surrender and that line now belongs to the Germans again. An Iron Cross is awarded all around !!!

4 (f) French reinforcements Phase.

IF any French regiment has entered or captured a LARGE shell hole in no man's or in enemy territory that Regiment can roll two dice for reinforcements who appear next to the leader figure. Example: you roll a three and you get three men. These reinforcements are regular infantry only.

Capturing a Bunker (by killing all the folks inside and having a man within 3 inches) allows three dice worth of reinforcements.

Entering an enemy trench for the first time allows four dice worth of reinforcements for the first unit that enters the trench.

If two French regiments are eligible for reinforcements in the SAME turn then the French player can ALSO roll for machine gun, mortar, artillery or tank Reinforcements. A 1 or 2 is a new machine gun, a 3 is a mortar, a 4 is a new artillery piece or armored car, a 5 is Whippet (4 MG) or Renault (1 Cannon), and a 6 is French St. Chamond (1x75mm, 4 MG.)

French Reinforcements only come from the dead pile and cannot be accumulated.

5 German Phase After the French receive reinforcements the Germans have a go.

5(a) German New Units Phase

First the German gets to bring up new units. Unlike the French who get reinforcements from the dead pile, the Germans start the game with all the troops they will ever have (other than Fortunes of War) but many of their troops are not yet on the board. Roll 1 die. A five or six allows for a new troops. Roll another die: A 1 is 10 soldiers. A 2 is a machine gun. A 3 is a mortar. A 4 is a field gun. A 5 is 3 elite soldiers. A 6 is a special. Roll another dice: a 1 is a leader, a 2 is one of the three German tanks, a 3 is one of the two Airplanes, and a 4, 5 or 6 allows for another immediate roll for new units.

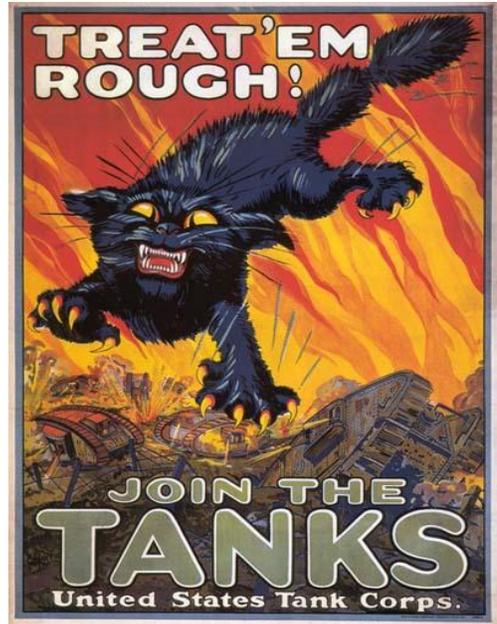
5(b) German Bombardment Phase.

The Germans have off Board bombardment only on a Roll of 6, roll three dice and you get that many shells. Then the Germans may fire any on board artillery. If an airplane is in play it makes its strafing run.

5(c) German Move and French Machinegun fire Phase

The Germans throw two dice. This dictates the number of inches their regular troops may move this turn. A roll of three dice dictates the length of move for the German Elite troops and tanks.

The Germans move and fire like the French. French machine guns get their three shots of opportunity fire except those on vehicles may not fire.



Tanks can cross wire at will. Tanks can cross a trench only straight on and not at an angle. The French tank will be successful in crossing with a roll of 13 or better on its 3 dice movement roll. A fascine will enable an automatic cross once the fascine is placed. German tanks cross trenches at will.

Armored car. The French have armored cars which each have 3 machine guns. They may run up and down between a trench line but cannot cross a trench.

Saving Rolls (Lucky Duck)

Elite men save on a 4, 5 or 6 when suffering any adverse reaction. German elite throw three dice for movement. Elite troops fight hand to hand +1 on die roll

Barbed Wire (Ouch)

A man cannot move through barbed wire, it must be cut. A man can cut wire on a roll of 6, two men on a roll of 5 or 6 and so forth until you get to 6 men in which case the wire is automatically cut. Wire cutting men can only do so in their turn which is their entire activity that phase. In other words you can move up to the wire but you must wait until next turn to cut it. Needless to say you are not covered while cutting wire.

German Airplanes (Red Baron)

Whenever a German airplane appears for a strafing run, place a 36" tape across the battlefield at any angle the German player desires. Every Frenchman crossed by the tape is killed on a roll of 4,5 or 6. A roll of 1 assumes the Frenchman manages a return shot, which strikes the German plane. A return shot of 1 or 2 is a bullet through the wing, no effect. A 2 or 3 is a bullet in the vitals of the plane, the German breaks off the attack but can return on later turns if an appropriate reinforcement roll is made. A 5 or 6 is a bullet in the vitals of the German, the plane crashes and cannot return for remainder of the game. Once the strafing run is finished the plane flies away and returns only when an appropriate reinforcement roll is made unless it has been shot down by ground fire.



Bombing Run. This is exactly the same as strafing. But here, each plane carries but one bomb. Pick a target, drop the bomb: 1 the bomb misses and the enemy shoots the plane down; *serves it right.* 2, 3 or 4 bomb misses; *in the confusion the plane gets away,* 5 or 6 boom (!!!) target destroyed and plane gets away; *who ever saw an enemy plane shot down after blowing up its target?*

Interception

The French are aided by two airplanes. They may attempt to intercept: A 5 or 6 both planes intercept, a 3 or 4, one intercepts, 1 or 2 no interception and one French plane is shot down by ground fire. A successful interception a further roll of the die for each intercepting plane: 5 or 6, German shot down, 3 or 4, German driven off, a 1 or 2 the German plane survives and executes another "free" strafing run.

The German Tank (Sausage on Wheels)

When the German brings on a tank (German A7V 1x57mm cannon and, 6 MG) it will operate as a French tank does except it can cross a trench at will.

Leaders (Fearless)

Leader stands dictate the center of mass of the unit and form a point where reinforcements arrive. Units belonging to the regiment must be within 12 inches of the leader to move. If outside this zone they may not move but may fire. If a leader is “killed” leave him where he is and remove the three closest friendly men.



Bunker

Bunkers have a machine gun firing from each of the four sides. Bunkers can be destroyed by direct fire artillery or tank cannon weapons which need a 6 to destroy the bunker. A high explosive cotton ball will also destroy it on the spot. Bunkers are strong points and all units inside are considered in cover. With the exception of things which destroy the bunker itself all figures inside saves on a 4,5 or 6 from ANY prospective casualty taken with the exception of hand grenades. To throw a hand grenade the enemy soldier must be within 3 inches and is considered NOT in cover. You pitch the grenade and it manages to get into the gun slit on a 5 or 6 and it explodes. Everybody inside is killed except on a roll of 6 in which case only 1 soldier is killed given that he fell on the grenade. A posthumous medal is awarded.

Flamethrowers

Certain elite German troops are armed with flamethrowers. These fellows will automatically kill any enemy within 3 inches of a 45 degree arc as they move across the field in the German movement phase. BUT when they start toasting the enemy there is a danger their fuel tanks will be punctured by enemy rounds. Roll a dice: a 1 indicates the fuel tank explodes: killing all friendly troops behind them at a 45 degree angle to a range of 6 inches.

