

WWII Online Allied Map Strategy – 1.28

Fundamentals for the Budding Map OIC (Draft Rev 1.0)

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1. Overview

This document is a collection of ideas, guidelines, and lessons learned related to unit flag movement and management. Let me start by saying that any map movement strategy can work on any given day should your adversary make a mistake. That said, this document focuses on the percentage plays. We can't plan on the enemy making a mistake; though through our movement we will try and give him ample opportunity to do just that.

Some may think the approaches detailed here are conservative. However, the negative impact of the 'bold plan' that didn't quite work has proven to be devastating to morale and logins more often than not. At the end of the day it's about keeping people engaged and playing. Any strategy we employ must give consideration to this fact first and foremost.

Each of the following sections deserves its own document. Perhaps someday I or others will flesh this out. For now we'll just focus on the key elements of managing the map.

2. Map OIC – Responsibility

Managing Supply and Moving Flags is your primary responsibility. Any delay in a critical flag movement can turn into a Game Wining Event (GWE) for the opposing side. You are not responsible for recapping that critical CP. You are not responsible for defending or taking an FB. You are not responsible for organizing a defense or attack. Your eyes are on the flags, supply, and FB status. Let people know what needs to be attacked, defended, capped, or recapped through ample communication. If they do it great! If not, your job is to make the appropriate flag movements based on what is or is not happening. The results of a missed move, late move, or any inaction on your part can spell defeat.

Your secondary responsibility is to communicate what is happening to the players. Ideally you will assign another officer to be your communications officer. That said, at the end of the day it is your responsibility. Keep the comms flowing!

3. Understanding What Moves The Map

Though this document focuses primarily on flag movement, one must understand that without strong and positive relationships with the folks that control the squads, the best map mover in the game cannot win maps. It's a people game and this must always be in the forefront of our minds. Though map mechanics contribute heavily to the success of a side, a solid understanding of map dynamics alone will not win maps. Spend as much time developing team relationships as you do sharpening your map mechanics skills.

4. Overall Strategy

- **The Rule of Two**
 - i. Seek to deny supply to enemy flags
 - ii. Seek to secure the next frontline airfield

By focusing on these two simple rules, control of the map will inexorably move towards the enemy factories. Taking towns are only a means to an end. When sequencing attacks one must ask themselves how taking that next town supports the Rule of Two.

The process is iterative. Once you have successfully denied supply to an enemy division, your next order of business is to move such that you can deny supply to another division and/or cap that next 'frontline' airfield. This, while limiting your exposure to having your own supply denied.

By repeating this process over and over, you will soon find your team pocketing the enemy factories.

Denying supply to an enemy division has become much more difficult due to two rules changes. With 15 minute back line moves and the fact that only two brigades per division are adequate for holding a defensive position, it is harder to maintain a cutoff and the enemy can move faster to avoid being cutoff. However, the philosophy remains sound. By threatening cutoff, the enemy must move to cover. This usually will result in other opportunities or land gains.

When talking about airfields we talk about frontline airfields. That is, airfields that support the next effort to deny supply to the enemy. The Allies often find themselves with an open south flank and have a propensity to push unopposed divisions through Etain and on to Metz while the Axis still hold the Sedan – Dun line or a portion of it. These airfield gains serve little purpose while the Axis are still strong in the center. The Allied south flank is extended and risks being cutoff. As long as Montfaucon is held in this oft encountered scenario, capturing 'backline' airfields such as Etain and Metz serves little purpose.

The converse of the Rule of Two applies to you and your team....

- iii. Seek to keep your flags in supply
- iv. Seek to retain your 'frontline' airfields

5. Strategic Application of The Rule of Two

I'll approach the key concepts of strategic application by using common deployment positions and key areas on the map as the basis for the discussion.

- **The Far Flanks – North and South**

It is common for one side or the other to 'give' the far North or South flank. This is a strategy to induce the opposing side to move around the flank and extend to the factories or a back line airfield. Since the 1.27 patch was introduced there are a plethora of examples where this strategy failed and none that I know of where it was successful.

In early 1.27 maps, extending around a far north or south flank usually provoked a backwards movement by the enemy. This happened frequently due to the fact that people did not understand that a push around the far north or south flank would eventually run out of steam and also offer the opportunity for a cutoff of the extending flags. There is also a moral factor in play here because people are simply uncomfortable watching blue flags turn to red regardless of the strategic value of those capped towns. I contend that more people are becoming tuned in to the fact that unopposed movement or soft capping around a far north or far south flank often results

in cutoff, or at a minimum, a pull back of the extended line as cutoff is threatened. The morale factor associated with losing meaningless towns will decrease with each map. That is, more and more people will realize that the enemy pushing through empty towns in the far north or far south serves no purpose and only results in a weakening of their center.....which eventually will have a devastating effect.

Unless you are already knocking on the doors of the factories, a seasoned enemy commander will simply wait until you extend around the flank, breakthrough your weakened line at the appropriate point, and cap the 3-4 towns to north or south map edge thereby cutting off your extending division(s).

It follows that soft capping around an open North or South flank also provides little benefit and is unlikely to provoke a reaction. The towns are laid out such that eventually you will have to get frontline on a town where the enemy can place an air brigade or naval brigade thereby stopping your paratroop supported soft cap effort.

The objective of any far North or far South flank push is not to extend many towns past the end of the enemy line. Rather, it is to curl around the flank at the earliest possible opportunity and 'roll the flank up' by threatening to cut the line one or two towns back from the lines end. Even at that, if you are close to the south or north edge of the map, you are risking to be cutoff yourself. So the curl around the far flank approach is still a risky strategy at best.

This concept is even more important with Brigade TOE's as there are really only 2 brigades per division that are suitable for holding the line as you move around a flank. Thus any extension past the end of the flank is even riskier than before.

The bottom line is that the far north or south flank push is generally doomed to fail unless you are close enough to a factory or frontline airfield to make a serious threat thereby making the inherent risk worth the reward. Similarly, do not overreact if the enemy pushes around the far north or south. He will eventually run out of steam due to lack of flags.

- **The Center**

Control of the center of the map is vital for success. Simply put, the center is the most important area on the map to control and affords the greatest opportunities for decisive breakthroughs and cutoffs.

For this discussion, the center runs from Antwerp to Sedan. You want to stay strong in this area while being willing to weaken your flanks. Staying strong in the center affords you the opportunity to cut off the enemies extending line if he tries to move around the far north or far south flank. It also gives you the firepower to cap the critical key towns in the center needed to push the map towards the enemy factories.

The most important town on the map is Bertrix. One way or another, the allies must have this airfield. Controlling Bertrix allows you to press key towns such as Marche, Manhay, Liege, and Bastogne. Control of these towns will be vital in securing your next airfield at Wiltz or Verviers.

If you don't control Bertrix, your priority must be getting a plan in place to take this town. The details are the subject of another section.

Though there are infrequent exceptions, without Liege - Verviers, any attempt to push across the northern river line into Germany will fail. With the addition of a new airfield in the north,

Hatert, north pushes may be better supported. However, I believe any attempt to push across the far north part of the map will result in the same big ball of fail encountered when attempting a Venlo push in maps before the north towns were added.

Not only is simply staying strong in the center desirable, offenses pushes in the center are highly desirable and should be a priority any time there is a good chance of moving forward in this area. To illustrate why this is important you must visualize what happens when we push forward and create a bulge in the center. The far north and south flanks stretch and the lines become weak on the flanks. Though both sides' flanks weaken, the advantage goes to the side creating the bulge in the center as that side has greater opportunity to cut the opposing side flanks and run the short distance to the north or south edge of the map to affect a cutoff.

- **Airfields**

Everyone understands that having close air support will make or break any effort to capture or defend a town. But what airfields are important and how do the locations and proximity of those airfields effect the battle and movement of the map?

Perhaps the best example of how airfields affect one side's ability to push is to consider the airfields at South Hertgenbosch / Eindhoven versus the airfields at Monchen Gladbach / Aachen. Over and over we see the same thing. The allies are able to easily push to the river line and perhaps capture towns like Venlo or the Roermonds. However, without holding Liege / Verviers, any additional push across the north river line is met with failure. Further, Venlo, the Roers, and Maasiek will not hold without Liege and ideally Verviers. . This is all due to the proximity of airfields to the front line. Similarly, the Axis has difficulty obtaining and holding the towns near Eindhoven when the allies have that airfield controlled and buffered.

The most difficult thing to do in the game is to get that next frontline airfield because as you move closer to it, you move further from your own air support. So how do we do this?

For the discussion, visualize center airfields like Bertrix, Wiltz, Veviers, and Halschlaag versus flank airfields like Berry, Reims, South Hert, and Montfaucon. In general, you will need to hit center airfields and their buffer towns head on while flank airfields can usually be gained by pushing in the center and forcing the enemy flanks to pull back leaving those flank airfields weak. Again, this is a generalization....for example if it is difficult to push past Montfaucon to the north unless you already have Bertrix.

Most often, you will find yourself on a line you can hold. This line will normally be a line where the proximity of airfields is the same for both sides. Your attack generally will have to move from this line all the way to your objective airfield without stalling. As soon as you take one buffer town to the airfield, your objective must be to contest and cap the airfield, thereby bouncing the enemy air flags out. This will give you the opportunity to then secure additional adjacent towns without having to contend with volumes of enemy air. If you do not accomplish this without stalling, you will invariably be pushed back once again to your starting line. It follows that a push to an airfield MUST be well supported with supply and you will generally need to weaken an area of your line to provide the flags necessary to sustain your drive. Know where the supply to sustain the push will come from prior to mounting your drive.

If you don't have the 'juice' to move from your start line all the way to the enemy airfield without stalling, you may do better to attack in another area with the objective of getting the enemy to weaken his line defending the airfield. Simply moving one town towards the airfield

generally won't hold up for very long. One strategy is to wait until the enemy tries to push the next town towards your airfield, attrit him, and then counterattack towards his airfield. When it comes to taking airfields, timing is everything!

Once you secure your new airfield, you must buffer it as quickly as possible to get it operational. Once it is operational, you should be able to push out to the next natural defensive line which usually is somewhere between the airfield you just made operational and the next airfield you need to take.

If the airfield is on a far flank, such as Berry and Riems, you would do well to attack and push north of this area to create a bulge and threaten cutoff behind these airfields as opposed to hitting them head on.

And finally, the most important Airfield on the map is Bertrix because it allows a side to control the all important center of the map.

- **The Zees**

As long as you hold Antwerp.....which you must do, the Zees have no strategic implication for who wins the game whatsoever. We can only hope the Axis commit a ground division to the Zees and attempt to push through Vliss and Breskins without controlling Antwerp. Any Axis effort to do this has failed time and time again, sometimes resulting in their loss of the entire north.

Moving ground brigades up through Zandvliet or BOZ has only one purpose. That is, to induce inexperienced Axis commanders to move units north to cover a perceived threat, thereby weakening their center.

That said, Map OIC's must recognize that many play this game primarily for action in the Zee's that require coordination of naval, ground, paratroop and air assets to be successful. Map OIC's should be prepared to support these players with an AO more often than not. Support our naval players and they will be there for you when you really need the extra push to take a key ground target.

6. Tactics

This section deals with the details of moving and positioning your flags to accomplish strategic goals and/or avert disastrous situations.

- **The Breakout**

"We must measure what we might gain by what we might lose...."

A breakout is much more than simply making a hole in the enemy line. For the breakout to be valid additional elements need to be in place.

First, you must have enough flags moving to the area of breakout to support holding the hole open.

Second, the breakout must threaten to cut off enemy units from supply OR capture a key town of strategic value within 2 to 4 towns. A 'hole' on the far north flank or far south flank serves little purpose and is seldom a real threat

Third, and perhaps most important, a salient 2-3 towns wide must be created at the point of breakout prior to pushing units through a one town wide hole. **The negative ramifications for not following this guideline are considerable!** 9 times out of 10, pushing a one town hole will result in your units being cutoff. 1 time out of 10 it will work and perhaps even turn into a Game Wining Event (GWE) for your side. Let's be clear, it's simply not the percentage play! I have seen experienced and aggressive commanders chase the GWE by pushing through the one town hole fail miserably for their side more often than not. One would also note that these aggressive commanders are quick to grab the glory when the one town push works but seem conspicuously absent as soon as the grand plan starts to fall apart.

My favorite example of the impact of a disastrous one town push was in Campaign 44. The allies had the Axis pushed back into the factory pocket in the north and controlled much of the south including links to Bitburg. We had been on this line for about 10 days with both sides pushing back and forth.

One evening we had a good night during US prime and took Prum and Densborn without having Bitburg or Stadkyll. Prum was a one town cutoff and we shoved a division and half into Densborn during low pop in a futile effort to run east to map edge and cutoff the Axis south pocket. Needless to say we were cutoff at Prum and lost 6 flags as a result of the ordeal. **The impact to morale was devastating and within 4 days the Axis pushed the Allies all the way back to the Namur to Verdun river line and reclaimed the majority of the north as well.** We never fully recovered from that loss and one could contend the move was a GWE for the Axis.

Again, considering risk versus reward, you may wish to poke your head into the hole as you work to create the salient. The loss of one flag is immaterial and can generally be risked.

You must always assume the opposing side will have the 'juice' to destroy your salient and as such, you must always have a fallback plan and be prepared to use it sooner rather than later.

With 15 minute back line moves and only 2 flags per division suitable for holding ground, the days of the sweeping breakthroughs appear over. We must be content to take the gains we can with smaller localized breakthroughs while protecting our own flags and supply.