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# INFANTRY VS. APC IN HEX COMMAND MECHANIZED

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## INFANTRY VS. APC EXAMPLE

Rather than make a video on this subject, this time we're just doing it the old fashioned way. Well, what the heck we'll probably do a video anyway.

Our discussion centers around the issue that when two squads are in neighboring hexes or even automatic hit range of each other, this is, or potentially is, an approaching melee situation and is generically referred to as a "close combat." The same applies when two items even of differing types are close together, such as an infantry squad facing an opposing halftrack that may have a squad of opposing troops inside it.

Because Hex Command does not consider details such as grenades and such in order to speed game play, this situation pretty much leaves the two forces facing each other with decision time rapidly running out, because unless the attacking squad has anti-vehicle ability, the halftrack and it's contents are just going to sit there without too much concern .. albeit in the few seconds remaining before the attacking squad decides to swarm the vehicle and force a melee.

In this specific case, the halftrack has a machine gun mounted on it and as such fires with the effectiveness of a squad of regular, mixed weapon infantry. We are also not concerned with snipers, but in



reality it is no surprise that Johnny is taking a bead on the gunner position while his friends work to launch themselves at the vehicle, especially if there is no gunner operating the MG42. So for the guys IN the vehicle, they are hearing the bullets striking their vehicle and are slowly going deaf because of it. As we said, time is running out. If any one of them should stand up to operate that gun, they will certainly be hit. And, furthermore, the driver of this vehicle is getting very nervous. So what are they going to do? And then...

### Grenades

Specifically, we cannot know how good grenades are against even a light armored vehicle because their purpose was not anti-vehicle; we also don't know if the vehicle has protective netting, which they almost certainly had as it was not expensive or in short supply.

So in this example, we have to assume grenades are not effective against this APC enough to resolve the situation with explosive balls alone; and in case you were wondering about it, almost all tires in armored vehicles were solid rubber not air filled, so an explosion of the anti-personnel kind is unlikely to cause physical damage.

Meanwhile the blink-blinking of bullets on the side of the vehicle sounds like a clock ticking down.

## A Squad's Decision Process

Here's the story as we can imagine it:

1944 October, 6 a.m., Western Europe

At a Wermacht company's rally point, Friedrich takes the wheel of the APC when the squad has situated itself in the back, and with the command to Move Out they drive to investigate what happened to Hans Dietrich's platoon about two clicks up the road.

After only a few minutes firing can be heard in the distance and everyone checks their equipment and prepares to launch out of the back of the Hanomag APC when the order is given. Negotiating the country road, Friedrich sees nothing as he slows to enter a cross road area bordered with hedge and walls, a pasture and creek on his right with a forest beyond, and group of trees on his left about 50 yards away. He is immediately nervous and vocalizes what he is seeing and this is confirmed by Carl standing up on the MG-42; they see nothing but can hear the popping in the far distance of small arms fire, sporadic at the moment.

Ordered to slow, Carl is instantly mesmerized by the vision on his right, in the distance, of several khaki figures sprinting toward the APC from a distant forest, across the pasture to the right of the vehicle.

Shocked and blinking, he vocalizes to the men and Sgt. Piper stands up, immediately realizing they are, believe it or not, Americans actually charging his APC.

They are American's. Fire on those men Carl.

Carl swings the 42 to his right and opens up with bursts- first to make sure the rounds are ok, then to be sure the gun is ok and then firing for effect, if any.

The figures in the distance thrust themselves to the ground and he can hear the American squad leader talking and issue orders while they fire from the ground in his direction. The plinking begins. They are barely 100 feet away.

Carl stops firing, hears no groaning or screams so he suspects non one was it and he pauses, hoping his gun shield is enough for the moment.

Piper wonders: ok now where are the rest of the American's.. on the other side of us? Is this a trap? He pops his head up and down looking around the APC. Should we just give up now? How long before their bazooka is in position? Did Carl even see one? Hey Carl did you-

Carl is hit and collapses into the rest of the squad beneath him. Michael is furious as he cradles Carl's upper body but there's no sense in helping him; as they gently release him to the floor of the Hanomag the rifle shot was true and perfect and he was killed instantly.

Tick plink plink, tick, plink plink tick..



## Questions

What does Piper do?

Well, we don't know. The player is not Piper here, nor over there, nor 400 yards over there on the other side of the "game" table. The player is the judge and manager of his forces. We could say things like "why should we interfere- let the player decide what he likes," but we could just as easily say "how can the player have the ability of commanding all aspects of the field when in reality there's no way that could be done?" "Must we have decision rolls ALL the time??"

Well, in a board game such as Panzer Leader, Squad Leader or others, was there ever a moment when the player was immediately unable to decide what a chit on the game board was going to do over here, and NOT over there, such as Piper's APC now just arriving and located just inside the edge of the game table? How do we know when to and when not to check for decision making?

Well, we don't. That's the point; we don't know everything and could NEVER know everything, but even with our desire to not micromanage, we must exercise reason to know there are times when we can and times when we can't make a decision for a situation. We must leave it up to- yes- chance, or in better terms, *probability* that the person -right there- has to make a decision, regardless wrong or right; a choice, as the clock is ticking or the sand is almost run out, as in the case of Piper's APC.

Most of the time, decisions need to be checked because something extraordinary, bizarre or unusual happens. In this case bizarre- like a wave of charging Stuart tanks against unknown German forces hiding in a forest in 1945; certainly armed with powerful anti tank equipment- a squad of American's has chosen to RUN as quickly as possible DIRECTLY AT Piper's armored "truck. "



### The Questions:

What is Piper supposed to do: Find out what happened to Hans.

Has he found out: No, he has encountered enemy forces.

Can he continue on his mission: Unknown; it may be a trap if he stops OR continues.

So what are his choices:

- a. Continue moving and ignore the Americans. Continue on his way to where the sound of the guns was heard, because Hans may be in trouble and this may be a way of keeping him from reaching his friend. If he does this, the Americans may end up getting behind him, cutting the road he just was moving on which is the direction of the rest of the company.
- b. Stop, get out and fight, drive them off and find out if there are any more, and hope that help arrives in any form very soon, and hope there are no other American's here either. If they get out, they may be clobbered from the other side of the APC by another hidden squad of Americans.

## Resolution

The only method we use in the Hex Command series is the *Command Valuation System* or CVS. The CVS is simply a series of values or commander traits for the company commander, a brigade commander in Hex Command Gunpowder and Legion commander in Hex Command Ancients.

The assumption is, and it just makes things simpler, that the values of that commander will be expressed in his subordinates. So, we derive the values for:

- Initiative
- Morale
- Combat
- Tactical
- Aggressiveness

The values for Morale are less used than the rest because the game system already considers morale, but we maintain a value for reference sake; the best being 2 and worst inspiring leader being a zero. For combat, +2 to zero in combat bonus when he is attached to a unit. A +2 commander would be extremely rare.

The other values are used in conjunction with rolling a 1d10; roll higher than the value to score a success for the category or situation in question.

Here, our situation is not initiative- being the start of a turn or game, not Aggressiveness because our questions do not regard Piper attacking as much as defending himself FROM attack, so the quality we'll consider is Tactical: how a commander arranges his forces in his zone or moves them to accomplish a task.

So with a value of 6 for Tactical, we decide what Piper will do: Success he will continue on his way to Hans, Failing means he will stop and fight.

As the sand runs out we roll the die and Piper fails it. But, the word "Fail" is just a way of saying one decision has been reached; it doesn't mean it's the wrong decision because, equally, we don't know what the RIGHT decision is in the first place.

So, our situation is resolved. Piper's phase occurs now in the game.

Friedrich stops the APC and the guys pile out, taking cover where they can around and away from the APC (in case the American's have Antitank no one wants to be too close- sorry Friedrich), and Friedrich prepares to take the MG-42 position as soon as he feels brave enough to do it. He will wait for firing to commence because that may ensure his survival as the American's are preoccupied with the rest of his squad.

The firing begins, he takes the 42 stock into his arm pit and pulls the trigger, spraying the ground about 80 feet to his right.

