The Best Laid Plans

BY DAVE SCHUELER

Optional Combat Rules for **Air Bridge to Victory**, **Operation Shoestring**, and **Silver Bayonet**.

When GMT Games first brought out their Operational Series games in 1990, Designer Gene Billingsley stated that he wanted to produce a group of interesting, playable, and fun games with a similar set of rules so that players could easily move from one game to another in the series. The original three games succeeded in this goal, along with providing several new twists to some old subjects and one that hadn't been covered before. The game system also introduced a level of uncertainty into combat situations. In the Operational Series the effects of artillery and air support can't always be counted on and the quality of troops makes a huge difference in how they perform in combat (just like in real life). In the latest addition to the Operational Series, Operation Mercury, Gene Billingsley and Vance von Borries decided they wanted to add even more uncer tainty to the combat situations in the game and along came attack coordination. The new rules add in headquar ter units which are used to coordinate attacking forces and the units supporting an attack. The new rules will require players to consider how their attacks will be carried out and, just like in real life, poorly coordinated or planned attacks will usually fail with heavy casualties for the attacker. These optional rules refit the first three Operational Series games with new rules from the latest game in the series, Operation Mercury.

OP 1.0 Attack Coordination

After all combat declarations, combat refusals, and reaction attempts, the attacking player resolves his combats on at a time. The first step in this process is to determine the level of coordination for a given attack. This must be done once for each hex that is being attacked. Attack coordination is affected by the presence or absence of a friendly HQ within range of the defending stack, as well as a coordination die roll by the attacking player. Results determine whether the attacking player suffers a 3L column shift to his Maneuver combat (cumulative with efficiency column shifts), whether support fire is available, and may restrict the attacker to a one-hex frontal assault. If two or more friendly HQs are within command range of the defending stack, only one of them (attacking player's choice) is used to attempt coordination.

OP 1.1 Headquarters Units and Coordination

While each HQ is a combat unit like other ground units, it has a special capacity to coordinate combat. Each HQ's command range and efficiency rating affect attack coordination.

Command range is traced as a path of hexes free of enemy ZOC's (enemy ZOC's are negated by friendly units in a hex for this purpose) from an HQ to a defend ing stack in a declared combat. Do not count the hex the HQ occupies, but do count the hex of the defending stack in determining command range.

If one of the attacking player's HQs is within command range of a given defending stack during the Attack Coordination portion of the friendly Combat Phase, the owning player rolls one die and compares it to the HQ's efficiency rating to determine how well the attack is coordinated. An HQ unit may be used for any number of coordination die rolls during a game turn.

If no HQ belonging to the attacking player is within rangE of the defending stack, a coordination die roll is still made for that combat, but the roll is compared to an *out of command* efficiency rating. The *out of command* efficiency rating for Operational Series games is as follows:

Game	U.S./Allied	Axis/N VA
• *Air Bridge to Victory*	*3*	*3*
• *Operation Shoestring*	*3*	*3*
• *Silver Bayonet*	*5*	*3*

OP 1.2 Coordination Results and Limitations

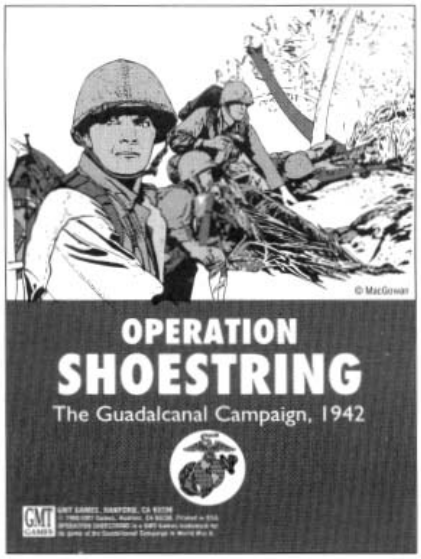
If the Coordination die roll is *less than* the coordinating HQ's (or *out of command)* efficiency rating, the attack is *fully coordinated with support.* This allows the attacker to attack with all units which declared combat against this hex, using Maneuver Combat, Assault Combat, or both and to allocate offensive support fire.

If the Coordination die roll *equals* the coordinating HQ's (or *out of command)* efficiency rating, the attack is coordi nated, without support. This result allows the attacker to attack with all units which declared combat against this hex, using Maneuver Combat, Assault Combat, or both, but denies him any offensive support fire.

If the Coordination die roll *is greater than the coordinating HQ's* (or *out of command) efficiency rating by one (+1),* the attack *is uncoordinated.* This result allows the attacker to attack with all units which declared combat against this hex, using Maneuver Combat, Assault Combat, or both, without any offensive support fire. Additionally the attacks in this combat are handicapped as follows:

a. Maneuver Combat: Suffers a 3L column shift
b. Assault Combat: There is a +1 DRM to all attacker

Operation Shoestring, AirBridge to Victory, Silver Bayonet



Operation Shoestring

The Guadalcanal Campaign, 1942
Published: 1990 **Winner:** CSR Award for 1990

Game Design: Gene Billingsley
Art Director: Rodger B. MacGowan

5-5-10 | 6-6-10 | 3-3-10

Contents: 600 die-cut Counters; One 22x34 inch Mapsheet; Rulebook and Eight Player Aid Cards; One 10-sided die; Bookcase Box

Time Scale: 3.5 days per game turn
Map Scale: 1 mile per hex
Unit Scale: Company
Players: 1-4

AirBridge to Victory

Operation Market Garden, 1944
Published: 1990 **Nominee:** CSR Award for 1990

Game Design: Gene Billingsley
Art Director: Rodger B. MacGowan

5-6-4 | 12-10-6 | 8-1-4

Contents: 300 die-cut Counters; One 22x34 inch and One 22x17 inch Mapsheet; Rulebook and Four Player Aid Cards; One 10-sided die; Bookcase Box

Time Scale: 1/2 day per game turn
Map Scale: 1 mile per hex
Unit Scale: Battalion

Silver Bayonet

The First Team in Vietnam, 1965
Published: 1990 **Winner:** CSR Award for 1990

Game Design: Gene Billingsley
Art Director: Rodger B. MacGowan

3-0 | 2-3-6 | 4-2-0

Contents: 200 die-cut Counters; One 22x34 inch Mapsheet; Rulebook and Four Player Aid Cards; One 10-sided die; Bookcase Box

Time Scale: One day per game turn
Map Scale: 1 mile per hex
Unit Scale: Company
Players: 1-2

die rolls (including efficiency checks). There is a -1 DRM to defender die rolls (including efficiency checks, but not defensive bombardment).

If the Coordination die roll *is greater than the coordinating* HQ's (or *out of command) efficiency rating by two (+2) or more,* the attack is an *uncoordinated frontal assault.* The *defender* chooses the units in only one attacking hex to perform an Assault Combat against the defending hex. Maneuver Combat is not allowed. All units in other hexes which declared combat against this defending stack may not attack, nor may they attack a different unit/stack. Additionally the Assault Combat handicaps for uncoordi nated assaults (+1 attacker DRM, -1 defender DRM) do apply to the ensuing one-hex Assault Combat.

OP 2.0 Changes to Maneuver and Assault Combat Resolution

For Maneuver Combat, after the initial combat odds ratio has been determined, each side chooses a unit to *lead* the attack or defense. The *lead* units are used to determine column shifts based on their efficiency ratings, and will take the fist step losses, if any, in the ensuing combat. If the game be played has engineer effects on combat and the attacker wants to use those effects, an engineer unit must be designated as the *lead* unit.

For Assault Combat, after the results for any Defensive Bombardment are applied, each side designates *a lead* unit. The *lead* units will take any step losses from the first round of Assault Combat and their efficiency is used to determine if their side participates in the second Assault Combat round. Both sides may designate a new lead unit if the original lead unit was eliminated during the first round of Assault Combat. ***Important:*** Losses in the second round of Assault Combat need not be applied to the lead units, the owning player may allocate losses as he desires. If the game be played has engineer effects on combat and the attacker wants to use those effects, an engineer unit must be designated as the *lead* unit.

For the purposes of artillery support fire, Maneuver Combat and Assault Combat are considered to occur in two different phases.

OP 3.0 Headquarters Units

HQ units do not exert Zones of Control. HQ units with an attack strength greater then zero may attack in the same manner as any other ground combat unit. All HQs defend normally in ground combat. HQs may not be destroyed by bombardment. They must be overrun by assault combat or in maneuver combat if the defending player chooses to take them as a step loss. All HQs have only one step. They do, however, have two sides to their counters. The front side represents the original HQ at its best efficiency, while the back represents a replacement HQ, with a lower efficiency.

During the phase in which new units are placed on the map, a previously eliminated full efficiency HQ may be reconstituted as a replacement HQ and placed on the map, subject to the following restrictions:
a. Each HQ unit starts the game on its front (full effi ciency) side. If eliminated, it may re-enter play (only once) as a replacement HQ.

b. Replacement HQs are placed when new units would be placed on the map, stacked with any friendly units that are in the same command as the HQ or with any off-map reinforcements in the same command.

c. If a reduced efficiency HQ losses a step in combat, it is permanently eliminated. Reduced efficiency HQs can never be reconstituted.

Specific Changes and additions to Operational Series Games for using Attack Coordination rules.

Air Bridge to Victory

2.3 Playing Pieces
Add the following units to the counter mix for the game:
(The numbers in parenthesis indicate Attack-Defense Movement-Stacking-Efficiency-Command Radius for full/replacement efficiency)

Scenario Additions/Changes
Allied
-HQ/101st Abn Div (0-2-4-1-7-4/0-1-4-1-5-4)
-HQ/82nd Abn Div (0-2-4-1-7-4/0-1-4-1-5-4)
-HQ/1st Abn Div (0-2-4-1-7-3/0-1-4-1-5-3)
-HQ/Guards Arm Div (0-2-6-1-6-5/0-1-6-1-4-5) motorized
-HQ/43rd Inf Div (0-2-6-1-6-5/0-1-6-4-5) motorized
-HQ/50th Inf Div (0-2-6-1-6-5/0-1-6-4-5) motorized

German
-HQ/9th SS Panzer (0-2-6-1-8-5/0-1-6-1-6-5) motorized
-HQ/10th SS Panzer (0-2-6-1-8-5/0-1-6-1-6-5) motorized
-HQ/7th Para Div (0-2-4-1-7-4/0-1-4-1-5-4)
-HQ/59th Inf Div (0-1-4-1-5-4/0-1-4-1-3-4)
-HQ/180th Inf Div (0-1-4-1-5-4/0-1-4-1-3-4)
-HQ/85th Inf Div (0-1-4-1-5-4/0-1-4-1-3-4)
-HQ/84th Inf Div (0-1-4-1-5-4/0-1-4-1-3-4)
-HQ/107th Panzer Bde (0-1-6-1-6-2/0-1-6-1-4-2) motorized

Scenario Changes/Additions
▪ *The Breakout of the Guards Armor*
British Set-up: Add HQ/Guards Arm Div (stacked with any Guards Arm Div unit)

▪ *Tournament Scenario*
German Reinforcement:
-Sept 17 PM, Turn 2: Add HQ/9th SS Panzer = B/5014
-Sept 18 AM, Turn 3: Add HQ 10th SS Panzer = B/4125

British Set-up: Add HQ/1st Abn Div

▪ *Campaign Scenario*
German Set-up:
Add HQ/7th Para Div = A/0411

German Reinforcements:
-Sept 17 AM, Turn 1: Add HQ/59th Inf Div = West A/2701 to B/2501, and HQ/180th Inf Div = A/1714
-Sept 17 PM, Turn 2: Add HQ/9th SS Panzer = B/5014
-Sept 18 AM, Turn 3: Add HQ/10th SS Panzer = B/4125
-Sept 19 AM, Turn 5: Add HQ/107 Panzer Bde = A/2714 to B/1114
-Sept 20 PM, Turn 8: Add HQ/85th Inf Div = West A/2701 to B/2501
-Sept 23 PM, Turn 14: Add HQ/84th Inf Div = East B/2225 to B/3725.

Allied Set-up:
Add HQ/Guards Arm Div anywhere south of the L'escaut Canal, HQ/101st Abn Div with any 101st Abn unit, HQ/82nd Abn Div with any 82nd Abn unit, and HQ/1st Abn Div with any 1st Abn unit.

Allied Reinforcements:
Add HQ/43rd Inf Div and HQ/50th Inf Div to reinforcements.

Turn Sequence Changes
(all phases that have a change are noted with an *)
I. Strategic Interphase (A.M. turns only, not on turn 1)
1. Initiative Determination (same as original rules)
2. Roll for Weather (same as original rules)
3. Remove Fatigue Markers (same as original rules)

II. First Player Turn
A. Initial Phase (same as original rules)
B. Airborne Assault Phase (same as original rules)
C. Movement Phase (same as original rules)
*D. Combat Declaration Phase
1. Declare all combats (the attacker should not declare if the attack is a maneuver or assault combat).
*E. Defender Combat Refusal Phase
1. The Defending player rolls once for each hex in which he wishes to refuse combat. Only hexes contain ing combat motorized units with at least one unit having an efficiency of five
2. If the die roll is less than equal to the highest efficiency rating in the hex, the refusal succeeds and units are retreated one hex. The attacker may immediately advance up to 8 stacking points into the vacated hex.

F. Defender Reaction Phase (same as original rules)
G. Bombardment Phase (same as original rules)
*H. Combat Phase (one combat at a time)
1. Attack Coordination Roll
a. Roll once and compare the die roll to the efficiency rating of a friendly HQ within command range of the defending hex (or the *out of command* efficiency) to determine whether the attack is coordinated and support is available.
b. Uncoordinated attacks cause unfavorable column shifts and DRMs and disallow support fire.
c. Die rolls greater than the HQ (or *out of command)* efficiency by two or more indicates that the ensuing combat *must* be an assault with units from only one hex (Defenders choice), with unfavorable DRMs.
2. Attacker declares Maneuver Combat, Assault Combat, or both against the attacked hex, within the limitations of the Attack Coordination die roll result.
3. If Maneuver Combat, then:
a. Designate attacking units and *lead unit,* then compute odds and column shifts.
b. Attacker allocates and resolves support fire, if available.
c. Defender allocates and resolves support fire, if available.
d. Place First Fire or Final Fire markers on artillery units which fire.
e. Attacker rolls die and resolves Maneuver Combat modifying die roll for DRMs listed on Maneuver Combat Table.
4. If Assault Combat, then:
a. Defender allocates support fire for Defensive Bombardment. Place First Fire or Final Fire markers on artillery units which fire.
b. Both sides designate *a lead unit.*
c. Defender resolves Assault Combat Table first, modifying for listed DRMs. Attacker losses are allocated immediately.
d. Attacker resolves Assault Combat Table, modifying for listed DRMs. Defender losses are allocated.
e. Both sides simultaneously conduct efficiency check for their *lead unit.*
f. A second round of Assault Combat is fought if one or both sides pass their check.
g. If the defender is not eliminated, attacking units remain in the hex(es) from which they attacked.
h. If defender is eliminated, attacker advances up to four units into the vacated hex.

I. Mech Movement Phase (same as original rules)

III. Second Player Turn
This player turn is identical to the First player turn except that the Second player will now move and attack and the First player is the defender.

IV. Game Record Interphase (same as original rules)

Operation Shoestring

2.3 Playing Pieces
Add the following units to the counter mix for the game:
(The numbers in parenthesis indicate Attack-Defense Movement-Stacking-Efficiency-Command Radius for full/replacement efficiency)

Scenario Additions/Changes
United States
-HQ/1st Rgt/1st Marine Div (0-2-10-0-6-5/0-1-10-0-5-5)
-HQ/5th Rgt/1st Marine Div (0-2-10-0-6-5/0-1-10-0-5-5)
-HQ/7th Rgt / l st Marine Div (0-2-10-0-6-5/0-1-10-0-5-5)
-HQ/2nd Rgt/2nd Marine Div (0-2-10-0-6-5/0-1-10-0-5-5)
-HQ/6th Rgt/2nd Marine Div (0-2-10-0-6-5/0-1-10-0-5-5)
-HQ/8th Rgt/2nd Marine Div (0-2-10-0-6-5/0-1-10-0-5-5)
-HQ/27th Rgt (0-2-10-0-6-5/0-1-10-0-4-5)
-HQ/35th Rgt (0-2-10-0-6-5/0-1-10-0-4-5)
-HQ/132nd Rgt (0-2-10-0-6-5/0-1-10-0-4-5)
-HQ/147th Rgt (0-2-10-0-6-5/0-1-10-0-4-5)
-HQ/161st Rgt (0-2-10-0-6-5/0-1-10-0-4-5)
-HQ/164th Rgt (0-2-10-0-6-5/0-1-10-0-4-5)
-HQ/182nd Rgt (0-2-10-0-6-5/0-1-10-0-4-5)

Japan
-HQ/4th Rgt (0-2-10-0-6-4/0-1-10-0-4-4)
-HQ/16th Rgt (0-2-10-0-6-4/0-1-10-0-4-4)
-HQ/28th Rgt (0-2-10-0-6-4/0-1-10-0-4-4)
-HQ/29th Rgt (0-2-10-0-6-4/0-1-10-0-4-4)
-HQ/124th Rgt (0-2-10-0-6-4/0-1-10-0-4-4)
-HQ/228th Rgt (0-2-10-0-6-4/0-1-10-0-4-4)
-HQ/230th Rgt (0-2-10-0-6-4/0-1-10-0-4-4)

Scenario Changes/Additions
-Campaign Game:
U.S. Initial Forces:
(In Noumea)
Add HQ/1st Reg/1st Marine Div, HQ/2nd Reg/2nd Marine Div, and HQ/5th Reg/1st Marine Div.

Ground Reinforcements:
- September (Turn 9):
  Add HQ/7th Reg/lst Marine Div.
- October (Turn 17):
  Add HQ/8th Reg/2nd Marine Div, HQ/147th Reg, and HQ/164th Reg.
- November (Turn 25):
  Add HQ/182nd Reg
- December (Turn 33):
  Add HQ/35th Reg, and HQ/132nd Reg.
- January (Turn 41):
  Add HQ/6th Reg/and Marine Div, HQ/27th Reg, and HQ/161st Reg.

Japanese Initial Forces:
(In Rabaul)
Add HQ/28th Reg, and HQ/124th Reg

Ground Reinforcements:
- September (Turn 9):

Add HQ/4th Reg, HQ/230th Reg, and HQ/16th Reg.

(Defenders choice), with unfavorable DRMs.

2. Attacker declares Maneuver Combat, Assault Combat, or both against the attacked hex, within the limitations of the Attack Coordination die roll result.

3. If Maneuver Combat, then:

a. Designate attacking units and *lead unit,* then compute odds and column shifts.

b. Attacker allocates and resolves support fire, if available.

c. Defender allocates and resolves support fire, if available.

d. Place First Fire or Final Fire markers on artillery units which fire.

e. Attacker rolls die and resolves Maneuver Combat modifying die roll for DRMs listed on Maneuver Combat Table.

4. If Assault Combat, then:

a. Defender allocates support fire for Defensive Bombardment. Place First Fire or Final Fire markers on artillery units which fire.

b. Both sides designate a *lead unit.*

c. Defender resolves Assault Combat Table first, modifying for listed DRMs. Attacker losses are allocated immediately.

d. Attacker resolves Assault Combat Table, modifying for listed DRMs. Defender losses are allocated.

e. Both sides simultaneously conduct efficiency check for their *lead unit.*

f. A second round of Assault Combat is fought if one or both sides pass their check.

g. If the defender is not eliminated, attacking units remain in the hex(es) from which they attacked.

h. If defender is eliminated, attacker advances up to four units into the vacated hex.

H. Final Concealment Phase (same as original rules) I.

Game Record Interphase (same as original rules)

GMT GAMES

NUMBER ONE RATING

Design	Deluxe **Alexander** (GBoH Vol.I)
Playability	**Glory!**
Graphics	**SPQR** (GBoH Vol.II)

GAMES RATING CHART

	Game (Volume in Series)	Year	Design	Playability	Graphics	Combined Score	Award Winner/ Nominee	Designer(s)
1	**SPQR** (GBoH Vol.II)	1992	4.70	4.45	4.90	**4.68**	☆	Herman/Berg
2	Deluxe **Alexander** (GBoH Vol.I)	1995	4.73	4.34	4.85	**4.64**	△	Herman/Berg
3	**Glory!**	1996	4.42	4.68	4.73	**4.61**		R. Berg
4	**Caesar** (GBoH Vol.IV)	1994	4.55	4.35	4.68	**4.52**	△	Herman/Berg
5	**Typhoon!**	1995	4.62	4.25	4.68	**4.51**	△	von Borries
6	**8th Air Force** (DIF Vol.II)	1995	4.38	4.46	4.46	**4.43**	△	D. Verssen
7	**Crisis:Sinai 1973**	1995	4.60	4.20	4.46	**4.42**	△	J. Prados
8	**Rise of the Luftwaffe** (DIF Vol.I)	1993	4.25	4.37	4.43	**4.35**	△	D. Verssen
9	**Invasion: Norway**	1996	4.41	4.00	4.47	**4.29**		K. Boylan
10	**Battles of Waterloo**	1994	4.14	3.98	4.61	**4.24**	☆	R. Berg
11	**Three Days of Gettysburg**	1995	4.45	3.83	4.40	**4.22**	☆	R. Berg
12	**Lion of the North** (GBoH Vol.III)	1993	4.11	3.68	4.43	**4.07**	☆	Herman/Berg

The above ratings are based on results from ***C3i*** Feedback cards. Ratings scale is from 1-to-5, 5 being best. ☆ = Winner