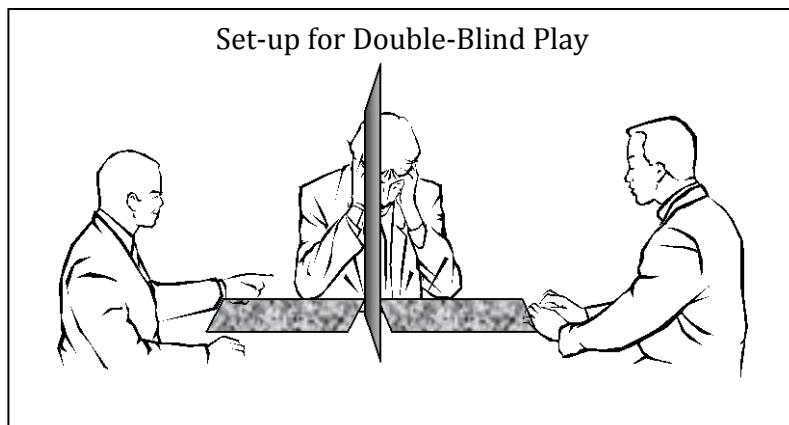# Panzergrenadier
Rules for Double-Blind Play

By Brian McCue

An even greater level of realism and tension can be added to *Guadalcanal*—or other—Panzer Grenadier games by the use of the Double-Blind Rules for Panzer Grenadier that make up this booklet.

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Introduction

The purpose of these rules is to increase the realism and enjoyment of *Panzer Grenadier* by concealing from the players any knowledge of the enemy that would not realistically have been visible. While these rules would benefit nearly all scenarios except those set in the desert at broad daylight, their major purpose is to allow more realistic play of night actions such as those in *Afrika Korps'* Beda Fomm scenarios, and jungle actions such as those in *Guadalcanal*.

Double-blind play requires two complete sets of the game and the services of a referee. Each player can see only his board, the units on it, and, through the mediation of the referee, those enemy units (and *only* those enemy units) that would be visible to his own units.

See also the illustration "Set-up for Double-Blind Play."

Changes to Panzer Grenadier Rules

Except as noted here, the game's regular apply.

2.0 Components

Double-blind play requires two complete sets of the whatever game is to be played, and the services of a referee.

The referee is positioned where he can see each of the players' maps. For his sanity, the maps need to be in the same orientation, so the usual set-up is to place a partition between the maps and have the referee sit at one end of the partition. Each player will need to have a pair of dice for the referee to roll on his side of the map; each player should also have a separate die (ideally, a distinct one, e.g., one that is marked with numerals instead of pips) to indicate his side's current initiative level.

3.0 Sequence of play

Initiative determination phase *(alteration):* Each player rolls his own initiative die. The referee then computes the number of action segments that the higher-rolling player may complete before the lower-rolling player gets his first action segment, but does not reveal how many that is (exception: see rule 17.2, below); throughout the turn, the referee cues each player as to when it he may begin an action.

5.0 Movement

(Underlying philosophy): Though the players move activated units one at a time, the activated units' actions really happen all at once. That is why (per Series Rule 3.1) the player must specify in advance which units will move and which will shoot. The leader is giving orders all at once, not sequentially.

(Major alteration): If, during movement, a unit makes a move that is impossible because of a circumstance unknown to the player (for example (rule 5.3), movement into an enemy-occupied hex to which the unit was not adjacent at the beginning of the turn), the referee makes a mental note of the situation, but allows the player to continue the action segment. At the end of the action segment, the referee moves the unit back to the last hex it could legally have entered. There, it may render other units' impossible, because of stacking limits; these units, too, have their movement ended in the last hex that they can legally enter. These pile-ups are one of the greatest aspects of realism added by double-blind play: the referee must do his best to adjudicate the units' final placement sensibly, and (per Rule 18, below) the players are not allowed to dispute this (or any) judgment.

5.4 Combat Movement *(far-reaching alteration)*: Leaderless units *can* move closer to an "enemy unit which could obtain a combat result on them" *if* (and only if) that enemy unit is not spotted, i.e., if it is not on the moving player's map.

5.46 Inadvertent Assault *(new):* Because of possibility of zero-hex visibility conditions, there arises the case in which a *unit with a leader* moves one hex and ends up in an enemy-controlled hex. This movement is taken for the assault that it is, and is resolved accordingly, using Rule 12. If the unit had not had a leader, assault would not be possible and therefore the movement would be impossible: the referee would then treat it as described in the Major Alteration of rule 5, above.

See also 15.43, below.

5.5 Night Movement *(elaboration):* In any turn in which darkness causes visibility in clear terrain to

be reduced, units may not enter hexes beyond the visibility limit—unless the moving units begin the activation with a leader, or the entered hex is friendly-controlled.

5.6 Transot (*alteration):* When an enemy transport unit has been spotted and the referee is making it visible by placing it on the player's map, the referee does not include any transported units that may be inside.

5.62 Transporting Weapons (*non-change*): Limbered enemy weapons appear along with their transport; so do portée guns.

5.66 Forced Unloading (*non-change*): Transported enemy units that are forcibly unloaded by the Disruption or Demoralization of their transport appear on the player's map if they are in a location where they can be spotted.

6.0 Leaders
Enemy leaders appear on a player's map only if they are involved in assaults.

6.71 Lone Leaders (*elaboration*): When units enter a hex containing an enemy leader, the referee surreptitiously makes the required die roll. If the result is displacement, the enemy leader is displaced on the enemy map, and the moving player is none the wiser; if the result is leader elimination, both players are so informed and the moving player gets to find out what leader has been eliminated.

7.0 Combat
7.6 Step losses (*clarification):* Enemy units appearing (through the agency of the referee) on the player's map are flipped (or not) to show their current level of step loss, if any.

7.7 Targetless fire (*new rule*): In certain situations (see also 5.4, above, and 16.6, below), there can be an advantage in being spotted. For this reason, a unit may activate (or use opportunity fire) and fire targetlessly "into the air" even if it has no target. It then receives a "FIRED" marker; the fact that it has fired may mitigate the effects of darkness or limiting terrain, and make the unit eligible to be

spotted by enemy units that had theretofore been unable to spot it.

8.0 Spotting
(Main idea of double-blind play): At the end of each action segment, the referee places, on each player's map, those opposing units and leaders that are (as the result of movement or for any other reason, e.g., per rule 8.22) newly spotted; he removes units and leaders that have ceased be spotted. (Recall that enemy leaders appear on a player's map only if they are involved in assaults.)

Note that there is a major asymmetry between the active side and the inactive side; the inactive side can spot units while they move, and subject them to opportunity fire (rule 13), but the active side only receives spotting information at the end of the action segment—*not* during an individual unit's move, and not even at the end of each individual unit's move.

When playing scenarios in which the daylight spotting distance is a major consideration, the non-active player can help the referee by using spare counters to delineate the limit of his units' vision.

9.0 Bombardment
9.52 Adjacent hex *(Simplification by removal):* Given double-blind play, this rule can be ignored, decreasing complexity and increasing realism.

9.6 Blind Bombardment of Limiting Terrain *(new rule)*: A friendly undemoralized leader who can see *to* a hex of limiting terrain (e.g., a town hex) can direct an active unit with a bombardment fire value to fire into that hex even if he is not spotting a unit in that hex (e.g., because he is too far away). But, and in an exception to rule 9.1, Target Spotting, blind bombardment *does* require the leader to activate, and consumes an action segment. This represents the time and energy that the leader expends in arguing on the radio that he wants a fire mission even though he can't see any specific enemy target.

12.0 Assault
12.12 Exiting a hex *(Elaboration):* Units that inadvertently enter an enemy-occupied hex when exiting an assault hex in darkness are immediately eliminated.

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12.13 Morale restrictions *(Emphasis):* Inasmuch as disrupted units may not enter hexes containing enemy combat units, any attempt at such entry is "a move that is impossible because of a circumstance unknown to the player" and is therefore treated as such as described under the Elaboration of rule 5.0, above.

13.0 Opportunity Fire
(Major elaboration): When the active player is moving a unit through hexes into which the inactive player's units could conduct opportunity fire, the referee takes the active counter and moves it along its path of movement (stopping at any attempted illegal movement, about which the active player will find out only later, as described in the Major Alteration to rule 5.0 above), giving the inactive player the chance to declare opportunity fire. If opportunity fire is declared, it is conducted normally.

See also Targetless Fire, rule 7.7 above.

14.0 Morale
Morale markers are placed only on the owning player's map; units' morale is not directly indicated to the enemy player, though of course he may (and will strive mightily to) infer units' morale state from their behavior.

14.31 and 14.32 (Fleeing and Going To Ground): Only spotted enemy units exert the effects described in these rules.

14.42 Required Recovery: When a player passes, the referee may issue a reminder about any Required Recovery that seems to have been forgotten.

15.33 (Cavalry Additions): Cavalry units may only charge or conduct assault movement against a hex if at least one enemy unit in that hex has been spotted before the cavalry moves. Horses' senses exceed those of people, so cavalry units do not make inadvertent assaults (see 15.46, above); the referee treats the movement as impossible, and deals with it according to the Major Alteration.

16.11 Effects of smoke (*belaboring of the obvious*): As smoke has the same effect as does "limiting

terrain," enemy units that become unspotted because of smoke are removed from the player's map.

16.3 Wrecks (*addition*): Enemy wrecks are spotted (and can become unspotted) just as if they were AFVs.

16.6 Hidden Units (*alteration*): Units that start out hidden are simply placed on the owning player's map: there is no need to write down their locations. The referee does, however, need an indication of their hidden status (because it quarters the range at which they can be spotted), so a Hidden marker is placed on each stack of hidden units at the beginning of the game, and is removed when they are spotted, when they move, or when they fire.
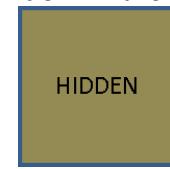
16.7 Minefields (*addition and changes*): Minefield counters are placed on the map of the player whose side laid the mines. To the other side, a minefield becomes known only when a unit enters its hex. There are no dummy minefields. The strength of a minefield is not revealed to the enemy player, and the die roll for damage is not revealed to the player who laid the mine—though he may be able to infer it by observing the effects upon the victim unit, if it is spotted when takes the minefield damage. For referee convenience, friendly mines should be placed face up on the owning player's map.

16.9 Units in Bunkers (*new rule*): Bunkers count as extremely limiting terrain; enemy units inside bunkers cannot be spotted except a) from within the same hex, or b) when they fire their weapons.

17.0 Optional Rules
In double-blind play, the use of all optional rules is recommended.

17.2 Excess Initiative *(change back):* If a player receives Excess Initiative, he is so notified by the referee, and may use the saved action segment by so indicating to the referee.
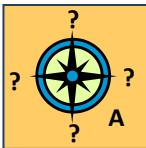
17.3 Strategic Movement *(change):* Units that begin their movement out of the line of sight of any spotted enemy unit may move with all movement

costs halved. (But note rule 5.5's restrictions on moving at night!) All opportunity fire attacks against such units are conducted at a column increase of +2, and units that receive opportunity fire (even with no effect, including targetless opportunity fire) must resume paying normal movement costs for the remainder of their movement that turn.

17.4 *Fog of War* *(clarification):* The Fog of War rule (introduced as a Special Rule in *Afrika Korps* and elevated to Optional Rule status in the 3rd Edition rules) applies. Per the *Afrika Korps* version of the rule, a player adds a +2 modifier to his FoW roll if he has just passed; per the 3rd edition rule, a +1 modifier is added on turns in which visibility has been reduced to one hex (or less).

17.5 *Disorientation* *(elaboration):* In double blind play of games (such as *Guadalcanal*, that have a Disorientation special rule, it is re-implemented as follows. When a unit or stack meets the conditions for disorientation, the referee points this fact out and secretly makes a die roll for disoriented movement, noting the presence of any leader and using its combat modifier to reduce the extent of disorientation* and marks the starting point with a counter. The player then moves the unit normally, in this and subsequent activations. The referee observes the unit's location relative to the starting point of its possible disorientation, and mentally rotates it as indicated by the disorientation die roll to see where the unit has really moved. When the unit reaches (or moves through) a point at which disorientation is dispelled (e.g., another unit, or a piece of terrain), the referee moves the unit to this true location, and the counter marking the starting point is removed.

Elevation-induced increases in spotting range (series rule 8.4) do not apply during 0-hex visibility.

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* An adverse modifier of 1 shall apply for each time that the owning player assaults the English language by saying "disorientated" instead of "disoriented."

18.0 "Rule Eighteen"

While the referee will do his best to provide an accurate and enjoyable game for the players and refereeing is seldom problematic, there will be occasions when the referee errs, or is in a difficult situation. In this situation, and in fact at all times, the referee's judgments are final and amount to rules of the game: the statement "Rule Eighteen" is the only explanation that the referee ever needs to give, at least until the game is over.

18. 1 *New Special Rules:* Prior to the start of play, the referee should consider how the scenario at hand might be improved by any new Special Rules made possible by the existence of a referee. *New Special Rules must be described in full to the players in advance*, even though the players will not be able to see them in operation.

18.2 *Advice on refereeing*: The referee can be seen and heard by both players, and therefore must take care that his movements, utterances, and dice rolls do not convey undue information. Movements, utterances and dice rolls being inevitable, the key to good refereeing is fakery. For example, the referee should, whenever opportunity fire might occur, mime the process of moving a counter across the enemy's map; he should sometimes mime the process of placing spotted pieces even when none are spotted, and he should occasionally make die rolls for no reason. Even modest amounts of such deception are more than enough to make the players cease to try to deduce much from the referee's actions, and do not really consume much extra time because they can be performed while the referee or a player is thinking. (For completeness, the referee must perform occasional fake thinking, pausing to stroke chin or beard thoughtfully, in situations that call for no referee thought whatsoever.)

Re-designer's Notes

It long bothered me that while my various beloved tank games rightly emphasize the importance of spotting as a prerequisite for direct fire, the players can see everything. One solution was to gravitate toward the North African theater (and other desert wars), in which visibility is greater and, in the words of Rommel, "tank warfare reached its highest form."

Another solution is to play the games double-blind.

Even more so than the introduction of variable and unknown victory conditions, double-blind play is a simple step that greatly increases most tactical wargames' realism. On occasion (e.g., this game's removal of the Adjacent Hex rule, 9.52, and also in the treatment of minefields), playability can be actually be increased even as the rules are simplified. And double-blind play is in some respects easier (if more time-consuming) than normal play because the referee shoulders some of the cognitive load.

Of course, a referee must be found. Frank Chadwick, who recommended double-blind for a number of his own games (and others), once remarked on the paradox that wargamers consider referees to be nearly impossible to find, but roleplaying gamers take the availability of a referee for granted.

Moreover, *refereeing is fun!* In fact, my experience has been that everybody who referees a double-blind game (of anything) for the first time can be heard to say afterward "That was at least as much fun as playing!"