

WARGAME FIRST REVIEW

Sniper	★★★
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Period	WW2	Publisher	SPI
Conflict/Battle	Generic	Designer	James Dunnigan
Force Size	Section	Date	1973
Mvr Units	Men	Grid Size	~1-1.5m per hex
DOWNness	2 DOWN	Map Size	39 x 54 hexes = ~ 400m x 600m
Players	2	Turn Dur.	Not stated, seconds since move 10x1 = 10-15m
Player Roles	Sect Commanders	Playing Time	~2 hours
BGG Link	https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/437189/urban-operations-second-edition		

Util – Role	3	Elegance	2	Rules pp	16
Util - Obj	1	Explainability	3	Face Validity	2

Introduction

Subject of the game	WW2 urban combat at Section level
Scope	Individual tactics. Scenarios include East & West Fronts, North Africa
Components	16pp rules in a bog fold-out. 2 x charts sheets. Big map.
Presentation – Good	Map is quirky but good. Rules very SPI but reasonably clear.
Presentation - Bad	Hard to spot difference between Dead and Incapacitated icons
Designer's focus/objectives	Designer notes are all historical. But talks about “odd” things happening but have a “realistic” feel about them – the narrative take. Majors on VPs vs Panic vs Preservation. The game is a “complete simulation of virtually all conceivable street-fighting in the Second World War”
Overall system description	Pretty standard hex and counter. Pre-plotted per turn per man orders. Relatively straightforward combat using CF ratios in a CRT. 3 level damage. Random “panic” each turn. Preservation level to track when switches to bugging out.
Real Battle Notes	n/a

The Game System

Principal areas of reality represented in the game	• Soldier level combat • Move, shoot • Buildings – exact story, spotting, apertures
Important abstractions	• Nothing beyond the soldier/section – no Pl or higher support • No construction types • No rubble!
Types of decisions required	• Need to pre-plot moves • Where to move, what to fire at, how to move in support • When to use grenades (1 turn prep)
Effects of the game system's mechanical requirements on the player's decision making	• Some range bands • Panic uses hex last digit, so advisable to spread over digits! • Absolutely no in turn reaction unless on overwatch – literally walk up to enemy!

How well do game decisions map to real life decisions	• Real life would be far more fluid, but does force you to plan a bit
Likes/Good Elements (inc ease of play; really good below)	• satchel and grenade tables • prone markers • Flipped unit option • Combat actually pretty simple • Quite like the fire then move plot model, not as problematic as first thought, particular if use an abbreviated column for turn rather than MP approach
Contributions to the wargaming state of the art	• SIMOV – but used in other SPI games and miniatures probably • storey indicator @ door • door vs window subtle but works • cumulation of preservation chits and compare with preservation number • preparation turns, eg grenades, satchel charges, move & fire • Traffic accidents! • Rocket scatter • Flamethrowers - draw 2 chits
Deficiencies	- counters for 4 states: normal, wounded, incap, killed - I & K chits not very different - all doors and windows removed and open! - Plot sheet PER TURN! - facing - ignoring - SIMOV makes it way complex - Panic too common/viscious - keep forgetting ammo roll - no building destruction - no civilians - buildings on hexes - very wide streets (relatively to buildings) - slower movement when out of contact!
Improvements? (beyond fixing above)	• Better QRS
Evaluation of the system's success at achieving the designer's goals	Gives good game but the goals were a bit over the top!

Overall Evaluation

Evaluation of the player's experience	Takes a bit of getting used to SIMOV but flows after a while and only 10 units and they get killed. Exchanges short and sharp. Panic could be a bit frustrating.
Does the game work? (Veracity/Internal Validity)	Yes, mechanics are relatively simple, just SIMOV that seems to add complexity
Is the game engaging?	Yes
Is the game useful – for what?	Not really, far too gamey I'd expect for the military. But does have quite a bit of detail. Might be worth trying the TSR version.
How valid is the game? Is the game realistic?	No rubble, no civs, plotted movement, open doors. Not really. But does have accurate floors, gun elevation, RTAs etc
Does it provide any special insights	Not really
Replay value	High, lots of scenarios and could do own maps
Who would be most interested in the game?	SPI old skool fans. Urban wargamers.
Is the game good value?	Yes on TTS (free). Probably OK up to £30
Overall Impressions	Some interesting ideas and SIMOV not as bad as I thought, but would probably streamline for modern play. Be interesting to compare not only with TSR but with Albedo or a miniatures set – this probably has high detail.

Third Party Reviews	@soltan gris – “15 minutes of prep per turn and morale as a random factor - from sublime to ridiculous in SNIPER!... At the time, there were no other man-to-man combat games. ... The two issues that were most broken for these designs, at least, in my book, were the PANIC rules and the SIMOV system.”
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Interesting Expansions	Updated by TSR in 1986. Replaced SIMOV plotting system with random activations and 2AP per man. Fixed Panic? Pushed scenarios to CWGH.
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MECHANICS (relative to Urban/PhD)

(include Intricacy of the system, and the mechanical ease of play)

Aspect	Mechanic
Activation/C&C	Automatic – but then Panic stops upto 20%!
Comms	None
UxV	n/a
CEMA	n/a
Other ISR	n/a
Movement	10MP, +2 MP for doors, all MP to change level. Can jump
Damage	Wounded (half effect), Incapacitated (no g=fighting), dead
Direct Fire	Fire factor depending on wpn and range, then ratioed to defense factor (stood, prone, cover, moving) to CRT
Assault	Wpn factor vs D6 CRT
Indirect Fire	Rifle grenades only, anywhere on board w/o LOS!
IEDs/Engineering	None
Casualties	Can be carried off
Logistics	Can get OOA from separate rules
Morale	Preservation chits drawn on each damage. Once > force level must withdraw etc
Opinion	n/a
Victory Condition	Achieving objs and killing enemy
UTZs	None. All bldgs. Same construction type
Building Damage	None – just breaching
Civilians	None
Subterranean	None
Other Urban Specifics/Notable	Does do storeys accurately. And shows apertures. Special sniper rules – super overwatch Good grenades Flamethrowers RTCs!

Triad Representation

	Challenges		Solutions	
	Elms	Comment	Elms	Comment
Civilian Population	0	•	0	•
Civilian Infrastructure	0	•	0	•
3D Man-Made Terrain	6	• Apertures • Storeys • OOA • Preservation as morale • Panic as morale • LOS	4	• Tanks • Direct HE fm tanks vs inf in bldgs. • Sniper rules • Flamethrowers

[Per scenario/run through]

Date	30 Jul 26	Scenario	Introductory
Players	DB	Constraints	None

SET-UP

As per standard

HOW IT PLAYED

- T1 - Non-sighted, patrol fwds, 10MP
- T2 ditto
- T3 dittos
- T4 ditto -drop to 5MP
- T5 in sight, can spot and react next turn
- T6: Point US man panics!
 - GE misses @ 20,
- T7
 - Lots of US panic
 - US kills rifleman and wounds MG
 - GE incapacitates MP and wounds rifleman
- T8
 - No panic
 - US Incap MG
 - MG kills US
- T9
 - Spirited GE onto roofs
 - US panic
 - MG misses, so does MP, MP OOA
- T10
 - Bad panics for US, stops them hitting charging German, and rifleman misses!
 - GE MG took out us rifleman
 - Two german grenades land in the alley and incapac 2, wound 2
 - Evens on the two melees

RESULTS

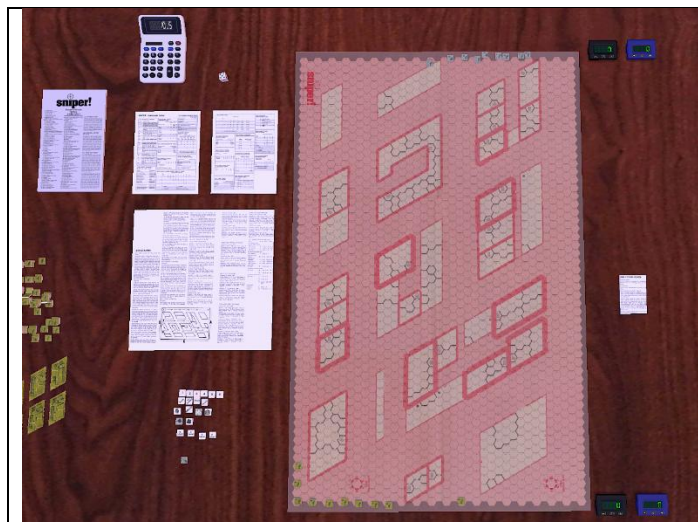
GE won convincingly.

- US only have 1 full op, 1 wounded, 2 panicked. 3 Incap, 1 dead, GE have only 3 incapac, rest active
- US have 47 Preservation Pts vs max of 15/20! GE has only 14.
- GE has dominant positions

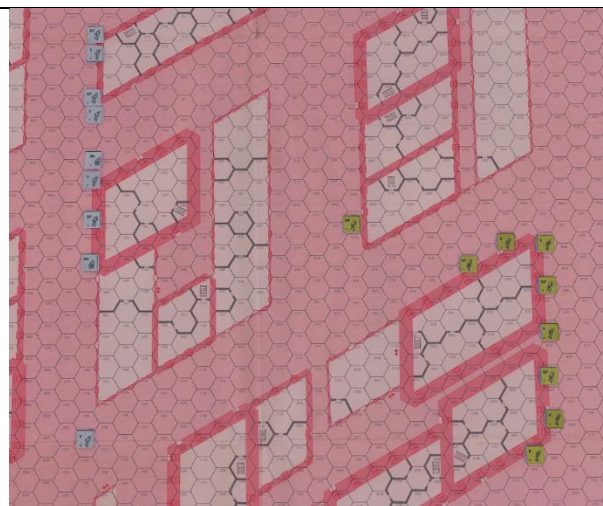
THOUGHTS (c.f. RL AND URBAN, only for subsequent plays)

Nothing beyond above

IMAGES



STARTEX



T5 - Contact



T6



T7



T9



ENDEX

SIMOV – modified to be column per turn, not column per MP!

SPI SIMULTANEOUS MOVEMENT PLOTTING CHART										Game - Turn: _____		Phase: _____	
UNIT	MOVEMENT PLOT		PLAYER			GAME				DATE			
Q-MP	MV 2131	DF1137-P	Incap										
R-AR	DF1137	DF1136	DF1136	Dead									
K-R	MV2330	MV2130	MV2130	PG	Incap								
J/F-R	MV2628	MV2129	MV3129	MV2126	MV4824								
S-MP	MV2728	MV2123	MV2123	MV1423	HH								
D-R	MV3028	MV2126	MV2124	MV1420	Incap								
T-MP	MV3126	MV2127	MV2126	MV1722	DF1322								
H-R	MV3527	Mv2528	MV2233	MV1520	DF1322								
G-R	MV3529	Mv2728	mv2522	Mv2217	DF1626								
			d										
D-R	DF3129-P	DF2330	Incap										
T-MG	MV1136	DF2131	DF2131	Incap									
N-MP	MV1135	DF2131	DF2131	ER	TG								
E-R	MV1429	MV1730	UP2	Ldr	Ldr								
V-MG	MV1330	MV1830	MV1730	DF2129	DF2217								
F-R	MV1626	UP2	UP3	PG	TG								
K-MP	MV1626	UP2	UP3	DF3522	RA								
B-R	M1129	Stay	Stay	MV1122	HH								
L-MP	MV1128	Stay	Stay	MV1322	Incap								
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
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US:	First 1/2 sqd hold road, 2nd 1/2 sqd follows route til blocked, then leapfrog, stay on streets												
GE:	Eliminate en as found, sawn to both sides of bldgs on street												