



BELGIAN PLANNING BRIEFING

GENERAL

The Planning Session is a streamlined reconstruction of a number of planning meetings of high command staffs, carried out over many months prior to the actual campaign.

BACKGROUND

Following the end of the First World War the Belgian Government had a military agreement with France, but at the same time was heavily involved in the various peace and disarmament initiatives. Following the Locarno conference of October 1925 the Belgian Government were signatories to two of the treaties agreed.

The first of these was signed with Great Britain, France and Germany, and was a mutual guarantee of the Franco-German and Belgo-German borders and the second was signed with France and Germany and was an arbitration treaty between Germany on one side and Belgium and France on the other.

Belgium was involved with the disarmament efforts of the League of Nations which dragged on from 1925 to 1934, the highlight of which was the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928 (Pact of Paris) which was a complete renunciation by all signatories of aggressive war.

By 1935 the various naval treaties had started to break down and Germany had denounced the disarmament clauses of the Versailles Treaty, and had announced a massive rearmament programme. Also 1935 saw the start of the Italian conquest of Ethiopia, this was a matter the Belgian Government had an interest in as a Belgian Military Commission had reorganised the Ethiopian Army in the late 1920's and early 1930's.

In 1936 things went from bad to worse, Germany reoccupied the Rhineland, the Italian victory in Ethiopia brought about the virtual collapse of the League of Nations through its inability to provide an effective deterrent to such an overtly aggressive act, France announced rearmament, and the Fascist states openly supported and aided Franco in the Spanish Civil War which broke out that year.

The complete inactivity of the French in the face of Hitler's blatant flouting of international treaty (by reoccupying the Rhineland) led the new King and his government to re-examine foreign policy. It was plain that France lacked the necessary spirit to support Belgium in the event of a similar move against us. The only alternative was strict neutrality, so in October the Belgian Government acted decisively and denounced their military alliance with France. In this way the government regained their liberty of action and were not

going to embroil the Belgian people in an unnecessary war with Germany through their connection with an ineffective Franco-Belgian alliance.

A year later, in October 1937, this policy was vindicated when the inviolability and integrity of Belgian territory was guaranteed by Germany so long as Belgium abstained from military action against Germany.

Over the next two years the political temperature increased and sabre rattling became the norm, on 23 August 1939 and on behalf of Belgium, Holland and the Scandinavian states King Leopold appealed for peace. The appeal was in vain and on 1 September Germany invaded Poland.

On 3 September 1939 the Belgian Government announced that mobilisation of its armed forces would immediately be carried out, but that this was a defensive measure only, and it proclaimed neutrality in the European war that had just broken out.

In summary then there are several basic political tenets, a consequence of our international treaty position and neutral stance, and which any defensive plan must recognise:

1. Dutch neutrality **cannot** be violated; we must await a German attack on Holland before that country could be entered.
2. **Belgian neutrality** is a fundamental part of our foreign policy. No excuse must be given to the Germans to invade us by premature communication with the French or British, or permitting overflight or entry by their forces. It is only by this means will the people of Belgium be protected from the horrors of another invasion.
3. **All frontiers must be covered** by our forces (including the frontier with the Netherlands and France). To do otherwise could appear to be an aggressive act against Germany.
4. Should our neutrality be violated by German forces, we will **firmly ally** ourselves with the French and the British against the Germans
5. Should our neutrality be violated by French or British forces we will be **forced to resist** them in order to protect our neutral status.
6. It is a political objective that the cities of Liege, Namur and Antwerp **may not be abandoned**, nor should battle lines be drawn through them by choice.

PLANNING OBJECTIVES

You have to come up with a plan for the successful defence of Belgium.

The plan need only be in general terms, and should have the following information:

1. The initial deployment areas of the Army. This can be shown on a deployment map provided.
2. The operational tasks of the Army - in the form of short orders. This will include:
 - a. Initial objectives and routes to those objectives. Note that strategic moves that

are the subject of a prepared plan are always faster than unplanned manoeuvres.

b. Conditional statements - what to do if....(the Germans invade Switzerland for example).

c. Timings (how soon to start moving etc).

3. Decide on the deployment policy for the Air forces including:

a. Initial target/defence priorities.

b. Any changes to deployment to air bases.

c. Initial allocation of air resources to Armies.

ARMY

The army is being mobilised and Belgium has adopted an international stance of armed neutrality. On mobilisation the Belgian army will increase to 22 divisions, but its stance is defensive and the tanks, as offensive weapons, have not been formed into specialised armoured units.

The Cavalry Divisions have recently been motorised as have the 1st Chasseurs Ardennais Division and in general this shows the way the Belgian High Command has been thinking, i.e. a move away from the WWI type formation and towards a more modern motorised army, with in this case, a good number of armoured vehicles in each Division. There is therefore a concentration on light, cheap and easily produced armoured fighting vehicles to provide the mass required quickly.

Divisions

When fully mobilised the Belgian Army will comprise 22 Divisions;

18 Infantry (numbered 1 to 18)

Chasseurs Ardennais (numbered 1 & 2) and

2 Cavalry (numbered 1 & 2).

Defences & Fortifications

The main defence works on which the Army will place its reliance are its natural and man-made waterways, to these are added the man-made fortified zones around the cities of Liege and Namur.

Liege has been the priority city for defence since 1932, as the main route for invasion of Belgium. It is protected by 12 pre-WWI forts, of these 8 have been repaired (5 large and 3 small - Fl,malle, Bonnelles, Fl,ron, Chaudfontaine, Embourg, Pontisse, Barchon and Evegn,e). Two of these forts are on the left bank of the Meuse. Of the other 4 unrepaired forts, one is not in service, and 3 have been converted for ammunition storage. The defences of Liege are not, however, considered to be modern enough to bear the brunt of a main German attack alone. The fortified position of Liege (PFL) is to be incorporated into a linear defensive line. The old forts are part of the second line of defence (PFLII). A new first line of defence (PFLI) has been underway since 1931. This group of forts projects the defences further east and out from the Meuse. This is Belgium's main defensive position against a German assault and begins behind the Maastricht Appendix of the Netherlands and extends south to the Ardennes. This includes an outer group of four modern fortresses, these being at Eben-Emael, to cover the river crossings at Maastricht, and between the River Vendre and Maastricht, at Neufchateau, Battice and

Pepinster/Tancr, mont.

The fortified position of Namur (PFN) has only refurbished pre-WWI forts for its defence and these are at the following places:- Marchevette, Suarlee, St-Huribert, Malonne, Maizeret, Andoy and Dave. These are linked to the positions at Liege.

Hence Namur is the anchor at one end of the defences, with Antwerp to secure the other end. Defensive positions have been extended back from Liege to Antwerp, although local popular opinion originally delayed the full scale restoration of the old Antwerp forts, they have now been re-activated, and complete the defensive line which runs from the mouth of the Schelde at Antwerp, to Liege and on to Namur.

The KW Line: This runs between Namur and Antwerp and consists mainly of bunkers, anti-tank obstacles and the Dyle River. It is tied to the fortified position of Antwerp (PFA) and linked to Namur with lines of anti-tank obstacles running south from the vicinity of Wavre.

Along the Schelde River, around Ghent is a fortified bridgehead. This Bridgehead position of Ghent (TPG) is part of the R,duit National.

The Ardennes region lacks significant fortification, because of the ruggedness and closeness of the terrain. Such terrain, covered by relatively light forces, can be relied upon to significantly delay any enemy forces moving through this area.

In all these forts and fortresses the garrisons are independent of the Army formations previously noted and are sufficient for the manning of the works and the operation of certain subsidiary services, e.g. Liege fortress tank company. "Interval" troops, if required, will have to be provided by the Field Army.

Frontier Forces

There are a number of frontier cyclist units and these are to be supplemented by Divisional Recce units to form a frontier screen where Divisional positions are not exactly along the border (ie in the Ardennes). Frontier units will not be represented separately as operational units in the game but border incursions will nevertheless be immediately reported as these screening units automatically go into action, and report to their parent divisional-sized unit.

AIR FORCE

In keeping with the idea of a non-aggressive armed force the Aeronautique Militaire has been grouped together with the Observer Service and the Anti-Aircraft Artillery to form the Territorial Air Defence (Defense Aeronautique du Territoire or DAT)

The Air Force has three Wings

Order of Battle

As you can see from the squadron designations below each has three elements to it, the first being the squadron number within the regiment, the second being the group number and the third the regiment number.

Unit	Base
1st Air Recce Wing	Gossoncourt
2 nd Fighter Wing	Nivelles
3 rd Bomber / Recce Wing	Evsre

NAVY

The Navy had been disbanded during the inter-war years but was re-established on 15 September 1939. It has just over 600 men (all ranks) and these are formed into 4 squadrons.

1st Squadron - Ostende
2nd Squadron - Zeebrugge
3rd Squadron - Antwerp
Replacement & Training Squadron

The vessels are all small coastal craft, generally with 1x47mm + 2xmg, with some wooden fishing vessels used as minesweepers and some requisitioned civilian vessels.

There are also two coastal batteries, each of only one gun, one at Antwerp and the other at Zeebrugge.

SUMMARY OF MILITARY ASSETS IN THE GAME

The military assets that will be available to the Belgian GQG during the game are as follows -

18 Infantry Divisions (1 to 18)
2 Chasseurs Ardennais Divisions (1 & 2)
2 Cavalry Divisions (1 & 2)

2 Modern Fortified Zones (Liege & Namur)

1 Reconnaissance Wing (Air Force 1st.Regiment) – Base NAMUR
1 Fighter Wing (Air Force 2nd.Regiment) – Base ANTWERPEN
1 Bomber Wing (Air Force 3rd.Regiment) – Base GENT

Annex A

EXTRACT FROM DRAFT GAME HANDBOOK

7. Orders

General

The contents of the orders you issue are, of course, very important. What will be even more important is how you write them. If the Team Control and other umpires do not understand you, then even the greatest tactical stroke in the annals of military operations will go for nothing.

To help you and the umpire team we have devised a standard order form. You will be issued with enough of these to last the day - please do not use them to mop up spilt tea or as scrap paper.

You will undoubtedly wish to amplify the broad orders given on your daily orders sheet - try and make your additional material short and simple.

Issuing Game Orders

The orders form (Annex A) does not attempt to emulate the layout of historical military orders - which at this level would have been both longer and more detailed.

Orders include an INTENTIONS section. You must circle one of the options. They mean the following:

- a. PREPARE. This is preparation for a formal attack. Preparation normally takes an entire day, during which time you may not be engaged in combat. Attacking without prior preparation is at a significant disadvantage. Preparation is specific – so the order will take the form of “*Prepare to attack and capture the city of Borchester*”. If the objective changes then preparation starts over again.
- b. ALL OUT = All Out Attack : The units will expend everything in the attack, probably attacking more than once a day, and expending most of their reserves of ammo etc. It will leave the unit much more 'tired' at the end, but its actions are briefly much more intense. Note the times taken to prepare given in Section 10.
- c. ATTACK = Attack : Deliberate assault on an enemy or position with the aim of destroying or defeating him. This is sustainable over a longer period, since not all reserves are consumed at once. Note the times taken to prepare given in Section 10.
- d. PROBE = Probe : A probe is a forward move to find or maintain contact with the enemy – without necessarily engaging in much combat. It is likely to be used during an advance to contact where you wish to avoid falling into an unwanted combat by accident. Intelligence will be gathered about any enemy units you encounter.
- e. HOLD = Remain in position. It is assumed that the units will adopt a basic defensive posture and dig in. The unit can prepare to attack whilst holding. This is the activity assumed if no orders are given for a unit.
- f. TACMOVE = Move Tactically : A move forward in bounds, with lead units prepared for combat. This represents the usual advance to contact speed. A unit cannot move and prepare to attack.
- g. Non Tac MOVE = Move Non-Tactically : A road-column move, with only rudimentary tactical deployment if any. If engaged whilst in this mode the unit has a very low chance of survival. It does, on the other hand, move much faster than the tactical move. A strategic move by rail is also, by definition Non-Tactical, as are the units being loaded or unloaded from trains. A unit cannot move and prepare to attack.
- h. REST = Unit takes leave, troops are rested and the unit 'stood down' from operations. A unit cannot move or fight while resting. It takes this opportunity to rebuild itself if badly battered. It takes one day to make ready for further operations after resting. A unit cannot rest and prepare to attack.

It is important also for ground units to include orders for Close Air Support if necessary. The Air command may have issued orders to the air units, but without complementary orders from the ground units it is assumed that the necessary cooperation was not achieved, and the close air support will be ineffective. It is up to players to ensure they get it right.

8. Logistics

In a game set at this level we will not be concerning ourselves too closely with the detail of logistics. So long as a unit can trace an unblocked path back to a major city of their homeland, they are probably ok. The combat umpires will rule as to whether a unit has been cut off, and players will be informed via their Team Control in the normal way.

Note also that all the armies have very long logistic tails. If, in manoeuvring armies, the 'tails' cross over, this will have a logistic effect as the supporting services get stuck in a long traffic jam.

The overall effect will be to delay most movement, but it can, in extreme cases, mean that units have lower combat effectiveness. The umpires will advise you as necessary.

9. Movement

General

Map references will be simplified, and you will not be required to give standard 6-figure references. The key thing is to make it clear where you are referring to. A position relative to a town is usually sufficient.

Time Scale: Each move represents one day.

Ground

The main type of terrain represented on the map will be as follows:

Open : Open countryside, containing fields and small woods etc, with the occasional farm or small village. A reasonably dense road-net is assumed. No serious obstacle to movement of all types of troops.

Rough : Closer country, forest and or hills. A low-capacity road net and difficult terrain.

Low Country : As open country, but criss-crossed by canals and waterways and marshy or susceptible to flooding. A dense road net, but off-road movement for vehicles is very restricted.

Roads : Only the main roads are marked. These are very good quality and when clear will facilitate rapid movement. There are many minor roads which will not be marked on your maps, these are assumed to make little additional difference to the overall movement of units, and are factored into the movement rates used by the umpires.

Rivers : The rivers marked are usually wide, fast-flowing and are often difficult to cross. Not all crossing points have been marked. If a crossing has been marked is is a significant one and can easily support the logistic rear-echelons of an army. Minor (unmarked) crossings are usually of low capacity and will delay movement and are more easily interdicted.

Rates of Advance

As a guide only, absolute maximum movement speeds in km per day on your map are as follows:

Kilometres per day:

Unit type	Situation	Tactical move	Non-tactical move	River crossing delay
INFANTRY	All terrain	10	30	1 day
CHASSEURS ARDENNAIS & CAVALRY	Main Road	25	75	1/2 day on bridge
	Open	25	60	1 day to bridge using army assets
	Rough	20	45	n.a.
	Low country	15	60	n.a.
HQ	Main Road	75	150	1 Day
	Other terrain	50	120	n.a.

Movement can be interrupted or delayed by combat, enemy air activity etc.

Movement can be only at night, and it is at half the above speed, but is proof against air attack.

Motorised and armoured units make heavy use of roads. They have a vehicle 'tail' when moving (even when moving tactically) of 20km on a major road, or 40km on minor roads. This is made worse where the roads cut through rough or wooded areas, making passing and turning harder. There are obvious risks of traffic jams if complex manoeuvres are attempted with motor or armoured formations.

River Crossing

On the operational map only river obstacles of importance are marked. There are numerous minor obstacles which have been factored into the movement rates. Any river crossing not at the point of a major road crossing is assumed to involve Army bridging operations of some sort either to repair or strengthen minor bridges, and/or to add capacity.

10. Land Combat

Land Combat

We will be working on the following assumptions:

- ▶ Infantry have a slight advantage over tank formations when defending built-up areas or closely wooded country.
- ▶ Certain units were exceptionally heavily armed or well trained, and will be given a slight bonus in combat as a consequence.
- ▶ Armies are assumed to have their own supporting artillery, bridging and AA troops. All divisions operating within the Army gain a combat bonus for that support. Independent or detached divisions do not.
- ▶ ALL DIVISIONS MUST BE ATTACHED TO AN ARMY. Reserves held by High Command must therefore be allocated before they can be ordered into action. If not attached properly to a higher formation they will fight at a disadvantage - since the support of Army infrastructure is assumed in the combat calculations.
- ▶ It takes time to do anything. For the vast majority of units, the following timings apply:

To prepare a division/corps for an attack.	1 day.
Attach a division to a new corps/army.	1 day.
Load/unload a division on a train for strategic movement.	1 day.
Move a divisional-sized unit by train anywhere within the national rail network.	1 day.
Prepare an entire army for complete orderly withdrawal from its current position in the line	1 day.

Players must allow for these timings in their orders.

It is possible to attack unprepared, but this is regarded as very unlikely to be successful. Orders to prepare for an attack must be made on the order sheet.

Within guidelines such as these, the combat umpires will use their judgement as to the relative balance of advantage and disadvantage in each combat. No appeals on combat results will be accepted during the game - although you will have the opportunity to make comments at the end, and in the critique questionnaire.

Units will become progressively more tired as the battle goes on. The more often they fight, the lower their effectiveness. This is obviously made worse if they are losing. In extreme cases, units might disintegrate - this is especially the case with the poorer quality reserve units involved in heavy fighting.

Note that the vast majority of units in ALL the armies in this campaign are untested in battle. They are therefore particularly vulnerable to unusual or surprise events - they always need time to settle in.

11. Air Combat

Orders

Most air operational orders will emanate from Army Group level.

Since the vast majority of air operations on each side were flown in direct support of the ground forces it is intended that orders are issued in terms of air units supporting particular Armies or Divisions - or specific geographical points.

A specimen order form is at Annex B. Orders basically allocate resources to specific armies, with a mission profile.

Units

The basic unit is the Wing. The term 'Wing' had different historical meaning in different air forces. To keep a rather complex subject simple, we approximate the wing to a force of about 80-100 aircraft.

Air units can only conduct operations within a given radius of their base (see below)

Airfields

Airfields will be marked on the map. In the time period covered by the game, new airfields will not be created.

Unit Types

Fighter – very good at attacking other aircraft, intercepting transport, bombers and ground attack.

Bomber – moderately good at supporting Land Combat attacks. Also good at attacking airfield capacity, logistics, lines of communication and terror bombing civilians.

Ground Attack – includes dive bombers. Particularly good at supporting Land Combat attacks.

Transport – moving troops and logistics from airfield to airfield.

Recce – Good at observing deployments of the enemy and major troop movements.

Mission Types

The types of Mission that can be flown, and the aircraft that can fly them, are as follows:

- ⦿ Combat Air Patrol (CAP) (Fighters only): Defensive air cover over a particular Army's area of operations. CAP does not guarantee to intercept every raid but the more fighters (and raids) the better the chance of doing so.
- ⦿ Escort (Fighters only): Represents the close escort to accompany a specific mission.
- ⦿ Close Air Support (CAS) (Ground Attack and Bomber only): CAS missions aim to apply a modifier to the ground combat and so orders must specify the Army to be supported. This support should be included in Army orders - and those orders will indicate the Corps and attack to be supported.
- ⦿ Bomb (Ground Attack, Bombers): attacking geographical locations or units beyond the immediate front line.
- ⦿ Transport (Transports): generally of air units to new airfields or small numbers of troops from airfield to airfield. It would take about 5 days to transport an infantry division (less its heavy equipment) from one airfield to another.
- ⦿ Recce (Recce): Reconnaissance of specific geographic area, looking for troop movements, concentrations etc. Generally best used behind enemy lines. Typically one recce wing can cover up to 4 map squares (map squares are 20km x 20km).
- ⦿ Move: Units can move from one airfield to another. This takes one day during which no combat missions can be flown.