



OBJECT OF THE GAME

Rout the enemy forces by tactically deploying troops to defeat your opponent's troops. Alternatively, break through their line to create an exploitable gap

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16 cards labeled "Infantry"

8 cards labeled "Anti-Armor"

4 cards labeled "Tank"

[Many] Armor & Health Tokens

Game Board

PLAYERS – 2

THE GAME BOARD

The board has five lanes where troops can be deployed. These lanes are separated by black lines. There are five lines of different colors denoting the "Front." The Front is where deployed troops clash. The space off of the board in front of each player is the "Staging Area."

SETUP

1. Create two decks of troops, each with 8 Infantry, 4 Anti-Armor, and 2 Tank cards. Shuffle them and give one deck to each player.
2. Draw 7 cards into your hand, without showing them.

3. Choose 5 cards to place down in front of you, face down. Each card should be placed in front of a lane in the Staging Area.
4. Once both players have chosen their five cards, flip each of them over and move them up to the green Front line.
5. Draw back up to 5 cards in your hand.

GAMEPLAY

The game takes place over several rounds with three parts per round. Both players act independently and complete each part before agreeing to jointly move on to the next part.

1. **STAGING:** Players may stage up to three cards across the five lanes as they did during the Setup. These cards stay face down for now. Each lane can have no more than one card staged in front of it at a time.
2. **RESOLVE COMBAT:** The troops currently on the Front attack each other according to their respective statistics. In general, Infantry are good against Anti-Armor who are good against Tanks who are good against Infantry. Damage dealt between opposing sides is resolved simultaneously, meaning that if a card is defeated before its damage is tallied, then said damage is still counted. Armor requires 2 points of damage to crack. If there is not enough damage to break through an armor, then the Armor holds. A card is removed from the front if it's HP is reduced to zero.
 - a. **INFANTRY:** Deal damage to each opposing card equal to their remaining HP.
 - b. **ANTI-ARMOR:** Deal damage to one opposing card equal to the sum of their Armor + Remaining HP. They ignore the opposing Armor.
 - c. **TANK:** Deal 4 damage to one opposing card, regardless of remaining HP.
3. **DEPLOY:** The troops that were staged are flipped over and moved to the Front. They push as far forward as they can. If, after combat, exactly one side has no troops on the Front, any newly deployed troops from the other side may advance the Front by 1 stage in that lane, pushing towards the opponent by one color. Any friendly cards follow along to the new Front. If both sides have troops or if both sides deploy troops to an empty Front, then the Front does not change.
4. Players then draw back up to 5 cards, shuffling their discard into their draw piles if needed.

END OF THE GAME: The game ends when a gap in the line is created or one side is routed. A gap is created when a single lane is pushed back beyond the Red Front. A rout is when all five Lines are pushed back to the Red Front. The player whose line is broken or is routed loses and their opponent wins.

Design Process

Trying to make a “simple” strategy game is difficult simply because of the desire to add complexity. As an amateur designer, there is a perceived correlation between adding complexity and adding choices. More complex games feel like they have more choices. As a result, the need to strip down and make something simple can be difficult. Nevertheless, I think this game is fairly simple for a strategy game. It is, however, difficult to make special attack rules and cards within an analog system of a board game. For “Hold the Line,” I decided to go with a military theme of pushing the opponent’s Front back and back until they are forced to retreat.

To keep the different troop types simple, I opted to go with a rock-paper-scissors style of who is strong against who. This hopefully keeps the game simple, with clear decisions on what to focus on. What was trickier was figuring out how exactly said system of strengths and weaknesses should be implemented using board game pieces. Here, I added some complexity by creating a system of “Armor,” which hopefully also reflects the real world to some small extent. Tanks are obviously heavily armored, which can be reflected in either super high HP or creating the Armor. Thus, trying to balance the HP, Armor, and combat triangle became the hardest part of the game.

Using the reading to describe the game reveals how this game falls much more into the formal definition of tactics rather than strategy. Nevertheless, this game has an overarching strategy with multiple ways to win. Players could either attempt a blitzkrieg style of punching a hole in their opponent’s line, or they could try to do a much more grinding conflict that involves finding a weakness to push the lines one way or the other. These are a pair of strategies that can be employed. The tactics involved revolve more around how to stage and deploy troops. Planning one or two turns ahead is important, as is strategizing based on the limited cards in their

hand as well as the limited cards in their deck. The mix between fast and slow decisions are what I wanted the game to do.