SPECIAL RULES HUE

Order cards

Unlike other games in the SGS Battles series, in Hué certain units can move each turn even if they have not been activated by order cards. This means greater autonomy of action, for example for reconnaissance units, Viet Cong infiltrators, snipers...

Furthermore, an order card is not always synonymous with a single order, i.e. the possibility of activating a single stack of units (without the autonomy described above) in the same region. In Hué, an order card can activate one, two or three stacks by playing the card, or even up to four stacks (but this card is rare).

The total number of orders (= activations) that can occur for one side or the other during a turn remains random, which guarantees great playability. However, it remains within a range that has been designed according to historical conditions. For example, the "Free World" player will never receive a total of 15 possible activations with five cards during the first few turns, whereas the possibility that the Communist player may activate more than a dozen stacks during these same first turns is, on the other hand, significant (indeed, this is what happens as early as turn 0).

Turn zero

The time scale is one game turn for one day in real time.

The idea of half a day was initially considered, but the campaign would then have spanned some sixty turns.

There was one small exception, however : round zero, designated as "January 30", actually corresponded to the night and morning of January 31, 1968, in order to reinforce the idea of initiative and offensive on the Communist side.

In this way, Tour Zero is not a "pre-tour", but a tour in its own right.

Breakthroughs

In Hué, most infantry units can break through on most terrain, with a maximum of two breakthroughs per turn. Armored units, on the other hand, are limited in the number of breakthroughs they can make : they do not initiate them, but can accompany them.

There are two reasons for this : firstly, it reflects the effectiveness of infantry in infiltrating or overrunning enemy positions that are more or less entrenched as a result of combat (particularly in urban areas), thus creating a dynamism that is also consistent with the scale of play. Secondly, the scale of the game. A region corresponds more or less to 500 meters from one edge to the other, and a turn to a day.

With a maximum of two breakthroughs per turn, up to three battles can take place for a stack of attacking units : the initial battle, a possible battle during the first breakthrough and another possible battle during the second breakthrough.

This mechanism has two implications. Firstly, the attacker has to think more carefully about the positioning of his units. Indeed, a breakthrough is only possible if a unit has enough movement points left when the battle is triggered. A stack of units that have moved little before attacking will therefore be able to break through much more than units entering the area to be attacked using their last movement points. As breakthroughs are particularly interesting, positioning your units on the eve of an attack (i.e., the turn before) can be very judicious.

Next, the defender should consider organizing secondary defense lines, or at least secondary positions from which to potentially stop a breakthrough should one occur. The numerous defensive positions (placed as

"reinforcements") that appear in the game are crucial in this respect, with a dilemma: either place them by concentrating them as much as possible on the most advanced positions facing the enemy, making breakthroughs much more difficult, or dilute them over several lines (or successive positions) with an increasing risk of a breakthrough succeeding with catastrophic consequences (encirclement of defensive positions).

Civilians

Civilian counters are present on both sides.

On the side of the "Free World" forces, civilians must be protected. Eliminating civilian counters is costly in victory points.

On the Communist side, civilians can be used as human shields. Eliminating these counters costs victory points not only for the Free World player, but also for the Communist player. In fact, the Communists executed 4,856 South Vietnamese civilians and prisoners (military, civil servants) during the Battle of Hué, in addition to those used as human shields.

This aspect of the game will come across as particularly cynical, even inappropriate. While it is certainly a game, it is also, in a way, an "interactive military history book" which, while it has a playful dimension (war, or at least strategy and its corollary war, have been a source of inspiration for games for thousands of years), also has a vocation to learn and to help people understand.

No game on the Battle of Hué takes into account the need for American and South Vietnamese forces to protect and evacuate civilians, even though this aspect was one of the major games at the start of the battle. In SGS Hué, the "Free World" player has this constraint.

Civilian counters can be moved without the need for order cards. They are represented, even in the Communist camp, by counters in the colors of the "Free World" forces.

Unit specialization via boosts

Many units provide various boosts: combat (attack and/or defense), movement, morale...

Most often, these boosts are effective if the units providing them are stacked with units that can benefit from them, and are then taken into account in the battle phase.

For movement boosts, things are a little different. To benefit from the bonus, the unit whose movement is increased must begin its turn in the same zone as the unit providing the boost, and the latter must not have moved.

The various boosts conferred by a unit are shown on the card describing the unit in question (= the "tooltype"). It's a good idea to look at the boosts in question to understand one of the subtleties of the game, which involves unit specialization.

For example, a machine-gun section/peloton will provide an attack boost and a defense boost. The attack boost will be higher for units equipped with certain machine guns (M60, RPD...). In offensive actions in urban areas, where attack combat factors are drastically reduced, this support section boost is therefore crucial.

Units that bring bonuses to various factors (combat, morale, movement) do not necessarily have extraordinary combat factors. To take the previous example, light machine-gun support platoons have relatively mediocre combat factors for attack and defense. On the other hand, the boost they give to the units in the stack is far from negligible. This highlights the need to think "inter-army", with units of different natures that support each other.

Making the most of bonus-granting units is therefore extremely important.

Unit specialization via battle rounds

In addition to boosts, units can play a differentiated role in battles by intervening with assets (or handicaps) during battle rounds, i.e. the various stages in the resolution of a battle.

For example, Viet Cong infiltrators, if present in a battle involving South Vietnamese police units, or in an assault (which is a form of battle phase, but occurs if the assault has been chosen rather than the siege of a structure) against sentries, will fight without taking into account the combat modifiers linked to the terrain on which the battle is taking place.

These units are invaluable because they can attack while remaining "camouflaged" (if they don't lose their camouflage), they move without having to be activated by order cards, they enable reconnaissance authorizing a stack to retreat without the battle breaking out, and finally, they provide a small boost to movement (reflecting their role as guides for other units unfamiliar with the area).

Their attack and defense combat factors are fairly poor (they're only lightly armed), but they can strike at the very start of a battle phase under favorable conditions, with the potential to dent enemy morale while causing a few losses. Using them as part of a stack may therefore be more interesting than using them in isolation (although it may be worthwhile to do so) in order to avoid their rapid elimination.

CS gas counters also represent a very special category: replaced more or less every turn (but not systematically), they "attack" in a specific round without any terrain-related malus. Their use is therefore formidably effective, even more so in conjunction with balanced stacks (tanks, Marine fireteams, support units, etc.).

Another example: the light machine-gun units mentioned above can fire in a specific round, that of "suppression fire". Imprecise and relatively ineffective in causing casualties, they nevertheless represent an indirect advantage: light machine-gun units will fire more than more conventional infantry units in an entire battle phase, because of this round.

The composition of unit stacks should therefore be considered through :

- unit bonuses (if any)

- What units do during a battle phase, and more specifically, when and under what conditions they intervene in that phase.

Smoke, tanks...: units that "take" losses

Two types of units are used to "take" enemy fire as a priority, thus preserving the relatively more fragile infantry units.

The loss steps taken by smoke counters represent enemy fire missed due to a reduced field of vision, and the difficulty of aiming at units taking advantage of the smoke. Note that units friendly to a smoke counter have their attack factor reduced. If enemy fire is "lost", friendly fire is also hampered...

The step losses incurred by tank counters reflect the fact that tanks will attract more enemy fire than infantry units (which are advancing under the protection of tanks) and, in this case, small arms fire will have little effect overall.

But beware: tanks are not replaced in the same way as smoke counters. A destroyed tank counter is permanently destroyed (it never comes back into play). Tank platoons (or sections) can be repaired with replacement points, but the cost of repairs (in replacement points) is high. On the other hand, this "protective" aspect only applies to Marine and US Army tanks (which arrive at the end of the game). South Vietnamese tanks are insufficiently armored, so their role (unless sacrificed) is not to "tank".

In the case of smoke grenades, the counters representing them are replaced more or less quickly during the game if they are "destroyed".

With smoke (or tanks) and unit specialization (boosts or rounds), and with the problem of activating units using order cards, the player can compose his inter-army groups by trying to adapt as best he can to different types of terrain, and to an enemy that also has assets (and weaknesses).

Reinforcements and replacements

With the battle taking place over about a month of real time, replacements are relatively rare, and as a result, units can only be reconstituted to a limited extent. Many units are destroyed (infantry companies or support platoons, sapper sections, tank platoons). Once destroyed, they are permanently destroyed.

The player, regardless of which side he's on, must therefore strive to keep his units in relatively good condition, and avoid sacrificing them, unless he wants to end up with a skeleton crew. The AI knows how to manage the state of its forces relatively well, so as to reconstitute the most important ones (those that never come back once destroyed).

It should be noted that destroyed units can also come back into play at random, such as snipers (especially on the Communist side), fireteams and certain entrenchments. Nevertheless, it would be unwise to rely on this possibility to drive the battle, as these returns can be very rare or depend greatly on the moment in the battle (certain units can return to play more easily at the beginning of the game than at the end, or vice versa, depending on the side).

Miscellaneous fortifications played a major role in the battle, particularly on the Communist side. The return to play of these counters (which represents a "rollover" of the valorization of the terrain by building entrenchments). An "average" fortification that has been destroyed "comes back" into play more easily (the most solid fortifications are a little more rare). The same applies to tunnels and secondary positions.

The Perfume River

The areas that make up the river are accessible, for the most part, to US Navy river craft: LCU units and PBR counters from the Hue Security Group (historically responsible for providing protection around LCU ramps). These units can fire from the river onto the banks.

From the riverbanks, some Communist units can also open fire on US Navy boats. These elements, which are responsible for harassing river communications, cannot move outside the banks of the Perfume River, and their long-range fire is only possible against the river.

In addition, the "Free World" player can deploy, as reinforcements and provided he controls the access ramps on both banks to the south (towards the new town and the citadel) and on the access bank to the south (towards the new town, so, previous access point) and at Mang Ca (HQ of the 1st South Vietnamese Division) two LCU counters which, once placed, will allow "connections" (with a different cost in movement points) between the access ramp of the new town (south) and the northern access ramp (citadel/old town) or that of Mang Ca.

Beware, these counters may be attacked by the Communists. If they no longer exist on the map, you can only cross via bridges (provided they have not been destroyed) or by airlift via CH-46 helicopters. The latter can only be set up from the stadium area (new town) towards Mang Ca and/or Tay Loc airfield (provided the latter is not occupied), again creating connections.

The Communist player, for his part, can place the "boats" counters, which arrive as reinforcements (and less and less) at certain points. Once in place, a Communist "boat" token authorizes passage across the river. Beware: these counters are easily destroyed by aircraft or artillery.

Last but not least, Recon marine combat swimmers and Communist sappers can clash

to protect or destroy bridges... A destroyed bridge means a lost connection and, in concrete terms, the impossibility of crossing the river where the bridge used to be.

Supply

Supply is a crucial aspect of the game.

Supply lines are built in segments of five regions. This means that supply is possible from the area where a source is located up to five areas away. To extend these lines, relays are required.

On the Free World side, sources are more numerous and better placed. This guarantees the player greater "tranquility". Provided, however, that he doesn't lose the sources in question. Possible relays are the trucks that will gradually arrive as reinforcements, the CH-46 counters that provide connections from the stadium in the new town to Tay Loc and/or Mang Ca, and the LCUs on the Perfume River.

On the Communist side, in addition to supply sources, particularly in the west (off-map), the player has temporary sources (see below) and "porters" assigned to his battalions to carry limited supplies (each turn without supply, the mobile supply counter represented by the porters loses one "life" point). They can move to accompany forces in offensive posture, to supply isolated units (not connected to a supply source).

The player also receives depot counters. On turn 1, once the night has passed (turn 0), he will (automatically) receive several depots which he can place as he wishes, but only on certain points of the map (mainly where pagodas or churches are located, as the Communist player prefers to use religious buildings to house his depots in order to limit the enemy's attacks).

In addition to the depot, he also places a "pagoda/church" counter representing the fortified building. The pagoda/church is the first to be hit by ground troops, artillery or aircraft fire, with its own defensive combat capability (communist fighters defending the fortifications near the depot). Each time one of these buildings is considered "neutralized", the Free World player loses one victory point. The problem is that a depot cannot be destroyed without neutralizing the building (= the "pagoda/church" counter) with which it is stacked... That said, a destroyed depot earns the Free World player two victory points...

Communist depot counters can't be placed everywhere, which means you have to be vigilant when it comes to supply lines. This aspect makes control of the western regions vital for the Communists. Temporary source counters will be depleted (one step lost each turn), so they won't be able to provide supplies quickly enough, and all Communist logistics will be based on the need to maintain a corridor from the west, through which supplies can arrive.

While major supply sources are fixed (and can be used by the enemy if captured), punctual supply sources are represented by counters with a limited operating time. Immobile, they can be the target of artillery fire, air raids or ground attacks. These counters receive no replacement. The Communist player will therefore have to race against time to establish a viable logistical network (e.g., by capturing fixed sources, especially with the Western Corridor).

