

MECH BRIGADE

FIELD MANUAL - VERSION 1.26.0 - TRONSOFT GAMES

1 HEX = 250 M 1 TURN = 3 MIN = 6 PULSES OF 30 S

Central Germany, mid-1980s. Mech Brigade is a simultaneous-turn armoured command game. You write the orders for the whole formation first. Then both sides move, spot and fire together. The game rewards positional advantage, command discipline, combined arms, force preservation and timing.

v1.26 consolidation: the command interface is simplified, the machine commander understands the newer sustainment systems, and the manual now covers the full game rather than pretending the last twenty-five releases never happened.

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1. Command cycle

A battle turn represents three minutes. During the orders phase you may inspect the map, contacts, sectors, reserves and unit condition; plot routes; set stance, pace and engagement; arrange temporary formations; and call fire missions. When you execute, both commands resolve six 30-second pulses simultaneously.

The basic sequence

Step	Commander action
1	Read the Situation panel and identify the decisive point.
2	Select platoons and inspect readiness, command status, fatigue, ammunition and damage.
3	Plot routes and check route exposure.
4	Set stance, pace, engagement and maintenance priority where relevant.
5	Use Order Review before execution.
6	Execute the turn, then read the Turn Debrief and adjust.

Core controls

Control	Use
Tab / Shift+Tab	Cycle friendly platoons.
Click ground	Plot a route; Shift-click adds another leg.
U	Undo the last route step.
Right-click	Clear the selected route.
Enter	Execute turn.
Drag / wheel / + - / 0	Pan, zoom, and fit the battlefield.
?	Open the complete shortcut reference.

2. Orders, movement and fire

Stance

Stance	Effect
Hold	Stationary combat posture; good for recovery and sustainment.
Hull-down	Stationary protected posture; harder to hit and useful for deliberate fire.
Advance	Follow the plotted route and engage as opportunities arise.
Assault	Aggressive close action; high tempo and high fatigue cost.
Withdraw	Break contact toward friendly depth.

Pace

Careful reduces exposure and supports recovery. **Normal** balances movement and fire. **Rush** is fastest but a rushing platoon cannot fire and is easier to detect and hit.

Combat essentials

Line of sight, range, movement, cover, posture, crew quality, experience, subsystem damage and suppression affect gunnery. Side and rear armour are much weaker than frontal armour, so flanking usually matters more than small accuracy improvements. Guided weapons are most effective from stable firing positions and are vulnerable to suppression.

Artillery

Fire missions are called during the orders phase and land on the commanded location. Use high explosive to disrupt concentrations and smoke to mask movement or break dangerous lines of sight.

3. The command picture

The left Situation panel is the staff summary. It combines force condition, contacts, objectives, command coverage, readiness, initiative, ammunition, fatigue, damage, reserves, sector pressure and recent tempo. The right sidebar is divided into collapsible Order Card, Command and Net panels.

Grouped roster views

Group	Examples
Overview	All platoons, Moving, Holding
Combat Power	Ready, High Initiative, Veterans, Combined-Arms Team
Attention	Friction, Threatened, Needs Reinforcement, Isolated
Sustainment	Low Ammo, Can Recover, Needs Rest, Damaged, Repair Ready, Ready Reserve

Planning screens

Key	Screen	Purpose
R	Order Review	Find weak orders before execution.
E	Intel Estimate	Assess reported enemy concentration and exposed friendly units.
P	Reserve Plan	Rank usable reserves and threatened units.
X	Sector Plan	Compare objective-centered strength, pressure and command coverage.
Z	Operational Plan	Combine score, weighted ground, combat power and momentum; identify the decisive point.

4. Fog of war, intelligence and terrain

The game deliberately separates the true battlefield from your command picture. Threat overlays, route-risk estimates, Intel Estimate and sector pressure use only contacts your side has actually reported. Stale contacts lose weight. Unseen enemy units do not appear in these tools.

Threat and range tools

Threat overlay estimates the effective weapon reach of known contacts. **Weapon-range rings** show the selected friendly platoon's capability. **Fire Solutions** use fresh contacts only. **Key Terrain** is derived from objectives, elevation, roads, towns, woods and approach geometry; it never depends on hidden enemy information.

Route exposure

A plotted route is classified from clear through high exposure by comparing its hexes with the current known-contact picture and terrain protection. This is a planning aid, not prediction: a stale contact can move, and an unseen threat can still exist.

5. Readiness, initiative, command and teams

Combat Readiness

Readiness is a 0-100 summary of strength, cohesion, suppression, ammunition, exposure, command state, fatigue and experience. It answers: how much useful combat power can this platoon provide right now?

Initiative

Initiative combines readiness, suppression, crew quality, posture, command link, combined-arms support, experience and fatigue. High initiative marks formations best placed to exploit an opportunity; it does not grant an extra turn.

Command network

Company HQ elements project a 5-hex organic command radius. Other command elements can provide a smaller emergency link. In-command platoons recover and operate more reliably. Isolated formations take modest readiness and recovery penalties.

Combined arms

Local teams are assessed for nearby armor, infantry/IFVs, reconnaissance, anti-tank, fires and air defense. Press **B** to Build Team around the selected platoon, then use formation controls to apply compatible orders.

6. Sustainment, fatigue and experience

Ammunition

Ammunition is finite during combat. Stationary Hold or Hull-down platoons with manageable suppression replenish best, especially nearer their own rear area. Cautious movers may receive a trickle. Rush and Assault postures do not magically receive ammunition by teleportation.

Recovery and resilience

Suppression recovery and cohesion restoration improve with Hold/Hull-down posture, useful cover, mutual support, command link, crew quality and experience. Heavy fatigue slows recovery.

Battle rhythm and fatigue

Assaulting, rushing, long movement, heavy firing and fighting under suppression build fatigue. Holding in cover and rotating toward the rear reduce it. Fatigue modestly lowers recovery, readiness, initiative and reserve quality.

Crew experience

Platoons earn experience by surviving turns, scoring hits, destroying vehicles and succeeding in close assault. Experience progresses Green - Blooded - Seasoned - Veteran - Elite and provides modest bounded bonuses. Scenario crew quality remains the dominant quality rating.

7. Battle damage and maintenance

Non-lethal hits can damage three subsystems. Damage persists in saves and changes actual performance.

Subsystem	Effect
Mobility	Reduces movement speed.
Fire control	Reduces gunnery hit probability.
Optics	Reduces spotting performance.

Field repair

A damaged platoon may attempt field repair when stationary in Hold or Hull-down and below the suppression threshold. Repair probability is better nearer the friendly rear. Maintenance priority can be set to Auto, Mobility, Fire Control or Optics. Auto triage repairs the subsystem causing the largest immediate penalty.

When to withdraw a damaged platoon

A damaged platoon can still be useful if it has the right terrain and mission. Mobility damage is particularly serious for maneuver tasks; fire-control damage is serious for overwatch; optics damage is serious for reconnaissance and long-range engagement. Do not spend a crippled platoon merely because the roster still lists it as alive.

8. Reserves, sectors and the operational plan

Reserve assessment

Ready Reserve and Local Reserve labels identify healthy, in-command, reasonably supplied platoons that are not already overcommitted. The Reserve Plan ranks candidates and highlights threatened friendly elements that may require reinforcement.

Battlefield sectors

Each objective anchors a sector. Sector assessment compares nearby friendly strength, known-enemy pressure, objective control and friendly command coverage. Sectors are reported as Secure, Advantage, Contested, Pressured or Critical. Sector Plan pairs weak sectors with the best available reserve by readiness, reserve value and distance.

Operational Victory Index

The Operational Plan combines current score, weighted objective control, surviving combat power and recent momentum into a 0-100 index. It identifies the current decisive point and recommends whether to hold, reinforce, seize or mass. Use it as a prioritization tool, not as an oracle.

9. Machine commander and fairness

The AI follows the same fog of war. It builds its decisions from its own contact picture rather than the hidden true unit list. Temperament changes observation, massing, siting, fire discipline and blunder tendency.

v1.26 AI staff work

The machine commander now also considers its own fatigue, ammunition, subsystem damage, field-maintenance opportunity, command links and reported sector pressure. It can pause suitable units for recovery or repair, avoids unnecessary rushing when tired or mobility-damaged, conserves low ammunition away from immediate danger, and prefers moves that restore a broken command link when operationally sensible.

These are planning improvements, not hidden combat bonuses. The AI does not receive perfect enemy locations, extra ammunition, immunity to fatigue, or automatic repairs.

10. Saves, versions and field checklist

Save compatibility

Mech Brigade v1.26 uses save schema 2 and records the game version in new saves. Schema-1 saves from earlier enhanced releases remain loadable. Missing newer fields are initialized safely. Persistent fields include fatigue, experience, subsystem damage, repair priority, orders, command history, score ledger and contact belief.

Before every Execute Turn

Question	What to inspect
What is decisive?	Operational Plan / decisive point / weighted objective value.
Who is ready?	Readiness, Initiative, fatigue, ammo, command link, damage.
Where is the danger?	Known threats, route exposure, sector pressure, stale-contact uncertainty.
What stays uncommitted?	Reserve Plan; preserve at least one useful option when possible.
Who should recover?	Suppression, fatigue, maintenance eligibility, rear-area sustainment.
Are the orders coherent?	Order Review before Enter.

Command principle: win the next decision without making the following decision impossible.