

The Perfect General II

THE MARROWDALE FRONT • FIELD MANUAL

THE ARGUMENT

You are given a purse, a fixed number of placements, and an order slate that is always smaller than the army you can afford. Sixteen bodies and eight orders means eight bodies stand still, and choosing which eight is the whole of generalship here. Everything else in this manual is detail on that one sentence.

A twelfth tank bought against eight orders is a spectator. That is not a flaw in the requisition screen; it is the question the requisition screen is asking you.

THE ORDER SLATE

At the head of every turn your slate is refilled to the allowance for that action — between seven and ten orders, plus a separate small allowance of artillery fire missions. Orders **do not bank**. An order you decline to spend is an order burnt, so there is no such thing as thrift here; there is only choosing well.

One order buys exactly one of the following, from one body:

Order	What it does	Notes
March	Move up to the body's movement allowance	A body that moved is easier to hit for the rest of the turn
Fire	One shot at a target you can see	Reveals the firer for the rest of the turn
March and fire	Both, at a penalty	Emplaced weapons cannot do this at all
Rally	Shake off accumulated suppression	Often the best order on the board and the last one anyone gives
Plot fire mission	Artillery, onto observed ground	Spends a fire mission, not an order; lands next turn
Bridge work	Engineers blow or span a bridge	Only from a hex adjacent to the crossing

OPPORTUNITY FIRE

Every body you did **not** order may still take one opportunity shot when an enemy moves in its view, at 60% strength. This is what keeps the unordered two-thirds of your army from being furniture, and it is why a firing line left standing on good ground is not wasted. It also means a march across an open field in front of eight idle rifles is a decision, not a formality.

ARTILLERY IS PLOTTED, NOT AIMED

A fire mission goes onto ground you can observe *this* turn and the shells arrive at the head of your *next* turn. You are therefore never firing at where the enemy is; you are firing at where you believe he will be.

If a body of yours is still watching that ground when the shells land, they land where they were plotted. If nobody is watching, they scatter. That is the mechanical reason to spend a slot on recon: eyes are not a luxury arm here, they are what makes the guns work.

CONCEALMENT

A body that fires shows itself, and is spotted by the enemy for the remainder of the turn regardless of range or cover. Holding fire from timber is therefore worth something real, and a marginal shot has a price beyond the order it costs. An anti-tank gun that opens on a lorry has told an entire enemy battalion where it is.

READING A SHOT BEFORE YOU TAKE IT

Select a body and hover an enemy. The Fire panel gives the attack strength, the defence, the odds column, and all six rows the die can land on with the steps and suppression each would inflict. After you fire, the row that actually came up is highlighted.

Those numbers are produced by the same function the engine uses to resolve the shot. There is no second calculation, so the preview cannot disagree with the result.

THE GROUND

Terrain	Effect
Open	No cover. Fast to cross and dangerous to stand in.
Timber	Heavy cover, slow going, and it blocks sight through it.
High ground	Cover, and sight over what is below it.
Built-up	Heavy cover for infantry; armour in a village is a target.
Marsh	Slow, and offers almost nothing in return.
Water	Impassable. Rivers run along hex edges, not through hexes.

Rivers are edge features. They are crossed at a bridge, at a ford, or slowly and expensively anywhere else. Engineers can blow a bridge behind them or span one ahead — and a bridge blown in the wrong turn strands your own armour as effectively as his.

THE SIX ACTIONS

Action	The situation	Par
Kessel Crossing	Two columns reach the same river from opposite banks. Three bridges, and neither staff knows which the other has chosen.	32
Harrowgate	A prepared position, dug in and outnumbered. The attacker has the weight; the defender has the ground.	44
Sablewood	Two fifths of the map is timber. Sight is short and the guns are half blind.	31
Ostmark	Fighting through a built-up belt, street by street.	12
The Long Field	Open armour country with a larger order allowance. The one action where you can command most of what you own.	21
Brech	Mud. Everything is slower, including the mistakes.	12

PAR, AND WHAT IT IS NOT

Par is a **measurement**. It is the margin a General-grade commander actually achieves on that ground against another General, averaged over thirty battles. It was not chosen to feel fair and it is not a pass mark. If your margin is above zero you won; if it is above par you did better than the machine manages.

Two honest notes about it. First, par absorbs a **first-mover advantage that varies by action** — in mirror matches it runs from about –37 points on Brech to +47 on Ostmark. That is acceptable only because you always take the Red seat; there is no Blue seat. Second, the standard error on each par figure is roughly ten points, which is why they are quoted as whole numbers. Beating par by three is not a result.

YOUR OPPONENT

The three grades differ in one measured thing: how wide a band of near-best orders the commander is willing to pick from. A Cadet frequently takes an order that is nearly the best one; a General does so least often. Every other difference between them is small and deliberately held small, because a dial that has not been shown to be worth points has no business deciding how hard the game is.

One consequence is worth knowing before it puzzles you: the ladder is **not additive**. The General beats the Staff Officer by a wider margin than he beats the Cadet. A wide-band Cadet is unpredictable, and a commander playing to a plan is more exploitable by noise than by a slightly worse plan. Expect the Cadet to be awkward in a way the Staff Officer is not.

SAVING

One slot, held in this browser. The save carries the entire state including the random generator, so a restored battle continues exactly rather than approximately. If the browser refuses storage — which happens when the game is opened from a file path in some browsers — the Save button reports the failure rather than pretending to have worked.

The Perfect General II was published by Quantum Quality Productions in 1994 and is long out of print. This is an original recreation: the title is kept, but the map, the order economy, the actions, the unit list and every line of code are new work and are not derived from the original game. Not affiliated with, endorsed by, or connected to QQP or any successor rights holder. See LICENCE.txt.