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THE FRENCH SURRENDER

A Step-by-Step Guide

by Bruce Harper

No matter how well the Allies play, France will fall in every game, barring some catastrophic German bungling or an early German attack on Russia, rather than an attack in the west. The players then must resolve the French surrender. In my games, at least, that means hauling out the rulebook. The rules set out the French surrender process in comprehensive detail, but resolving the French surrender is hardly the most riveting part of the game and it's hard to imagine any player who knows the process by heart. After all, while France surrenders in almost every game, it never surrenders more than once each game!

While this article will discuss both the substantive aspects of the French surrender, its main goal is to set out a step-by-step guide to the sometimes confusing mechanics of the French surrender process, in the hope of saving readers time in future games. It turns out that implementing the French surrender isn't much more difficult than triggering it.

GATHERING STORM doesn't change the mechanics of the French surrender, although it can generate different modifiers. These will be referred to when they arise.



When France Surrenders

The triggering events for France's surrender are simple:

58.1 DETERMINING FRENCH SURRENDER:

58.11 WHEN FRANCE SURRENDERS: France surrenders at the end of the Allied player turn if:

A. Paris is controlled by the Axis; or

B. France voluntarily surrenders when it would not otherwise do so. France may not voluntarily surrender until Fall 1940 or later.

Paris falls when it falls. If the Western Allies want the French to keep fighting, they have to hang onto Paris, period. As discussed elsewhere, in a classic *A WORLD AT WAR* game, Paris will fall in:

- **Spring 1940** if the Allies blunder badly. This effectively ends the game, in my opinion, although many players think the Allies still have a chance to survive. But I think it's "just a matter of technique" to convert the Axis advantage into victory.
- **Summer 1940** in most games, with countless variations in the position at the end of the Allied Summer 1940 player turn, the casualties incurred by both sides and the French surrender level.
- **Fall 1940** in games where the Germans either have trouble conquering France or defer the conquest of France in favor of something else, such as a Summer 1940 invasion of Britain.

If France lasts into Winter 1940, the Axis are probably doomed, because the German losses are likely so high that they can never recover.

As an aside, rule 58.11B allows the French to surrender voluntarily in Fall 1940 or later, in order to prevent the Germans from deferring the capture of Paris in order to manipulate tension levels by leaving Paris under Allied control after France has been defeated. Rule 58.11B is almost never invoked,

because its very existence prevents the abuses which led to its creation.



Timing

The French surrender is resolved at the end of the Allied player turn, although practically speaking the die is cast at the end of the Allied combat phase:

58.12 TIMING: The French surrender is resolved at the end of the Allied player turn in which Paris is controlled by the Axis or France voluntarily surrenders, although the French player turn effectively ends after Allied post-combat phase adjustments for that player turn are completed; French forces may be eliminated due to isolation (30.54), but no French units may be constructed or redeployed.

When the French surrender is resolved, the various modifiers set out in rule 58.21 are applied, but some of the modifiers are dependent on player decisions made long before the actual capture of Paris.

The French Surrender Level

| | | |
|----------|-------------|---|
| 1 | auto | Determine the French surrender level (58.21). |
|----------|-------------|---|

58.21 CALCULATING THE FRENCH SURRENDER LEVEL: The French surrender level is the key modifier for determining the size of Vichy and Free French forces and the political alignment of the French colonies. The French surrender level, including after a voluntarily French surrender (58.11B), is the cumulative total of the following modifiers (positive modifiers favor the Axis):

Let's consider the various French surrender modifiers, one by one.

A. TERRITORY: +2 for Axis control of Paris; +1 for Axis control of Lyon, Marseilles: (+1 for each); -1 for each European objective under French control other than Lyon and Marseilles.

By definition, the Axis will control Paris (+2). The question is whether they will also control one of both of Lyon (+1) and Marseilles (+1). The importance of these cities has a direct bearing on how the Axis conduct their attack. Specifically, seizing one or both

of the other French key economic areas is the main justification for a secondary attack south of Switzerland. The +1 modifiers for Lyon and Marseilles can be decisive in shifting the French surrender level in favor of the Axis.

The -1 modifier for France controlling an objective (most likely Antwerp) virtually never applies.

B. FRENCH GROUND UNITS: -1 for every ten French ground factors in France (round down) at the end of the Allied combat phase when France surrenders, after removing units eliminated due to isolation. No French unit construction is permitted prior to making this calculation. French air units are ignored.

This is a key modifier, as it is the one most under the control of the players. The number of surviving French ground factors is now rounded down, but the only way the Germans can completely negate this modifier is by eliminating all but 10 of the French ground factors in France. This implies the near complete occupation of France, which in turn implies a Fall 1940 French surrender. With Summer 1940 surrender, there will usually be at least 10 French ground factors left, as the Germans cannot attack and isolate all the French ground units.

The issue then becomes how many French ground units survive. There are several places where pockets of French units are likely to remain intact.

- The Maginot Line, because the French units defend more strongly unless the Line is outflanked, and because the fortresses mean the French units aren't eliminated from isolation (30.542A).
- Southern France, if Germany attacks only through the Low Countries.
- The hexes near Paris, if Germany drives into Paris by exploiting across the Seine.
- Western France, if the French put units there, rather than using them to block German attacks (this may result in the loss of Lyon and Marseilles, which offsets any increased modifier for surviving units).

Both players must keep in mind that isolated French units are removed before applying this modifier, France can't build in the turn of surrender and British units aren't counted.

C. FRENCH FLEET: +/-1 for every five naval factors the French fleet varies from its historical 42 fleet factors, to a maximum of +/-3 (less than 27 factors: +3; 28-32 factors: +2; 33-37 factors: +1; 38-46 factors: no modifier; 47-51 factors: -1; 52-56 factors: -2; 57 or more factors: -3).

- Damaged ships and ships on the "2" or "Launch" rows of French shipyards are discounted at a 2:1 ratio, rounded down (two

damaged naval factors are counted as one naval factor for surrender purposes; a remnant damaged naval factor is ignored).

- Uncompleted named ships on the "3" row or higher are not counted in determining the strength of the French fleet.

The modifier for the French fleet rarely applies, in my experience, as the Italian navy usually stays at home until France has fallen, and the French fleet isn't within range of German air and can't be bombed (and the German air has better things to do anyway). But if the French fleet fights, this modifier may come in to play. It can never help the Allies.

In GATHERING STORM games, France might undertake a naval construction program, generating an additional +1 French surrender modifier. This sounds great, but it doesn't take long for reality to set in. Not only does France have a lot of other things to do in GATHERING STORM, but it is very difficult for France to lay down and advance enough additional ships to make a difference.

D. FRENCH BATTLESHIP DESIGN RESEARCH: +1 if the Allies didn't achieve a French battleship design research result in *Gathering Storm*; -1 if the Allies achieved two French battleship design research results in *Gathering Storm*.

In classic A WORLD AT WAR, this modifier doesn't apply. When GATHERING STORM is played, it usually doesn't apply either, because France normally gets one battleship design research result. It is rare for France to fail to get this far, except possibly in an early war where research is cut short, and it is even more rare for France to get 12 steps of battleship design research (although it would fun to try).

E. TURN OF SURRENDER: The French surrender level is modified based on how long it takes the Axis to conquer France:

- The turn in which Germany first gains control of any hex in France: +2.
- The turn after Germany first gains control of any hex in France: no modifier.
- Two turns after Germany first gains control of any hex in France: -2.
- Three or more turns after Germany first gains control of any hex in France: -4.

Note that this modifier does not begin to apply until Germany actually enters France. It is not affected by German attacks on western front minor countries, which means if Germany conquers the Low Countries without entering France, it can attack France in the next turn from positions in Belgium, and only then does the French surrender level clock start to run.

If the Allies blunder and France falls before Summer 1940 after a Spring 1940 German attack in a classic A WORLD AT WAR game, insult will be added to injury because this also triggers a +2 French

surrender modifier (although this will usually be offset by the larger number of French ground units which will still be in play). Summer 1940 is a wash, and if the French hold out until Fall 1940 the modifier shifts in favor of the Allies (which in turn will tend to be offset by the elimination of most of the French army).

F. DPs: Axis and Western Allied DPs placed in France, as reduced by covert operations (47.21D).

This modifier is self-explanatory. 1940 DP allocations to France are quite common, although since there are many other tempting and important diplomatic targets in 1940 for both sides, many games see both the Axis and the Western Allies passing on DP allocations to France.

G. ANGLO-FRENCH COOPERATION RESEARCH RESULT: -1 if the Western Allies achieved a "7+" Anglo-French cooperation research result.

Again, this modifier is self-explanatory. The French surrender modifier is an incidental and pleasant side effect of Anglo-French cooperation research. It does not apply if an intermediate research result is achieved.

Finally, when all the calculations are made, the maximum possible French surrender level is +/-3:

58.22 MAXIMUM FRENCH SURRENDER LEVEL: The French surrender level may never exceed +/-3. A French surrender level which is greater than +3 or less than -3 is treated as +3 or -3, respectively, for all purposes.

| | | |
|----------|---|--|
| 2 |  | The Axis decide whether or not to establish Vichy France (58.31). |
|----------|---|--|

58.3 ESTABLISHMENT OF VICHY FRANCE:

58.31 AXIS OPTION: Once the French surrender level is determined at the end of the Allied player turn, the Axis player has the option of establishing Vichy France (EXCEPTION: Vichy France may not be established if France surrenders after the U.S. and Germany are at war):

A. VICHY FRANCE ESTABLISHED: If the Axis player establishes Vichy France, the southern part of France and Corsica become a neutral minor country (Vichy France) worth 20 BRPs, plus the value of any Vichy colonies.

B. VICHY FRANCE NOT ESTABLISHED: If the Axis player does not establish Vichy France, the Axis gain control of all hexes in France and Corsica and receive what would otherwise have been the Vichy BRPs, but not the BRPs of those colonies which would have otherwise been Vichy (58.532).

From the Axis point of view, the main benefits to not establishing Vichy France are:

- an additional 10 BRPs in 1940 if France falls in Summer 1940.

- an additional 20 BRPs in the 1941 YSS (which could well lift Germany to the crucial 300+ BRP level).
- better access to Spain, which may be important if a 1940 Spanish invasion and a drive to Gibraltar is contemplated.
- any concerns about the Western Allies bringing Vichy France into the Allied camp are eliminated.

There are also drawbacks to not establishing Vichy France, and they normally outweigh the benefits:

- larger Free French forces, which increase the British force pool at a crucial time.
- an increased likelihood that the French colonies will become Free French, giving the British additional BRPs in 1940 and the 1941 YSS, as well as a relatively secure base for operations in the Mediterranean.
- loss of any possibilities for a pro-Axis Vichy France later in the game.

In my view it is a drastic step not to establish Vichy France, although this can be a viable strategy if the Axis achieve a +3 French Surrender level, as this minimizes some of the pro-Allied effects.

| | | |
|----------|-------------|---|
| 3 | auto | Determine hex control in France and its effects (58.4). |
|----------|-------------|---|

The control of hexes in occupied and Vichy France is determined according to rule 58.4. Control of the French colonies is determined later. The rules set out what happens to both Axis and Allied units caught up in the French surrender:

58.4 HEXES:

58.41 HEX CONTROL: At the end of the Allied player turn in which France surrenders, all non-Vichy hexes in France pass to Axis control (EXCEPTION: French surrender after U.S. entry – see 58.411). All non-French Allied ground units and airbases still in France are eliminated, and all non-French air and naval units are displaced to British-controlled bases. Western Allied units in France may operate freely in France, including that part of France which may constitute Vichy France and French colonies which may come under Vichy control, until the end of the Allied player turn in which France surrenders.

58.411 HEX CONTROL AFTER U.S. ENTRY: If the U.S. is at war with Germany when France surrenders, all French-controlled hexes in France and Corsica pass to British control. Non-French Western Allied ground, air and naval units and airbases may remain in France.

58.42 EFFECT ON AXIS FORCES: Axis forces in Vichy France or Vichy French colonies when Vichy France is established may only trace supply through Vichy French territory during initial supply determination of the Axis player turn following the French surrender. They must leave Vichy territory by the end of the Axis player turn

following the French surrender or be eliminated, do not modify a diplomatic die roll for Vichy France, may not move into Spanish hexes, and may not attrition or conduct offensive operations from Vichy territory, although they may do so if they first move out of Vichy territory. Additional Axis units may not enter Vichy territory unless the Axis declares war on Vichy France.

58.43 EFFECT ON ALLIED FORCES: Allied forces which are in Vichy France or Vichy colonies at the end of the Allied player turn in which France surrenders are eliminated.



| | | |
|----------|-------------|---|
| 4 | auto | Resolve the control of the French colonies (58.53). |
|----------|-------------|---|

One die is rolled for each of Lebanon-Syria and Tunisia-Algeria-Morocco. The die roll is modified by both the French surrender level and +3 if Vichy France was established. The results for the three French North African colonies are graduated: a result of “4” or more for Lebanon-Syria and Morocco means the colonies go Vichy, while for Algeria “3” or more is required, and for Tunisia only “2” or more. All the French colonies are guaranteed to go Vichy if Vichy France was established and the French surrender level is 0 or greater. Otherwise the die rolls are necessary:

58.53 FRENCH COLONIES:

58.531 After Germany has announced whether or not it is establishing Vichy France, the political alignment of the French colonies is determined by a die roll for Lebanon-Syria and a second die roll for Tunisia-Algeria-Morocco.

A. The die roll for the French colonies is modified by the French surrender level and by +3 if Vichy France was established.

B. French colonies that do not become Free French become Vichy French if Vichy France was established, and become independent, neutral minor countries if Vichy France was not established (58.532).

C. Britain receives the prorated BRPs for Free French colonies at the start of the next Allied player turn. All Free French colonial hexes become British-controlled, with the exception of Axis-controlled hexes, which remain under Axis control.

D. Lebanon-Syria becomes Free French on a modified die roll of 3 or lower.

E. For French North Africa:

- Morocco becomes Free French on a modified die roll of 3 or lower.
- Algeria and Morocco become Free French on a modified die roll of 2 or lower.
- Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco also become Free French on a

modified die roll of 1 or lower.

If Vichy France was not established, the French colonies can become independent:

58.532 If Vichy France was not established:

A. Each French colony which would otherwise have become Vichy overthrows its colonial administration and becomes an independent, neutral minor country with a force pool consisting of one 2-3 infantry unit, which is placed in its capital. These newly formed minor countries may only be attacked after a declaration of war costing 10 BRPs, with its attendant effect on the USAT level.

B. Allied forces which are in former French colonies at the end of the Allied player turn in which France surrenders are eliminated.

C. Axis units in a former French colony at the start of the Axis player turn immediately following the French surrender are considered to be in at least partial supply during that Axis player turn and, unless the Axis declare war on the former French colony, must leave the former French colony by the end of that Axis player turn, may not make any attacks while still in the former French colony and are eliminated if they fail to leave.

French colonies conquered by the Axis are unaffected by the French colony die roll. This gives Italy an additional incentive to conquer Tunisia before France surrenders, although in practice this is very difficult to accomplish unless Italy declares war on the Western Allies in Winter 1939 or the Western Allied player simply ignores or bungles the defense of Tunisia:

58.533 French colonies controlled by the Axis when France surrenders are unaffected by the French colonial die rolls. They are treated as Axis conquests until captured by the Allies.

58.534 French colonies controlled by Britain when France surrenders are unaffected by the French colonial die rolls. Such colonies become Free French. This may occur only if a French colony were conquered by the Axis and reconquered by Britain prior to the fall of France.



5 auto Remove French forces from the board except French ground units in Free French colonies and British-controlled hexes (58.61).

58.6 VICHY AND FREE FRENCH FORCES:

58.61 FRENCH FORCES REMOVED FROM BOARD: Once the political alignment of the French colonies is established, the French fleet and French ground and air units in Free French colonies and British-controlled hexes remain on the board. All other French ground and air units and airbases are removed from the board. Free French and Vichy France forces are then established.

6 The Allies select and place the Free French forces after consulting the Free French Forces Table (58.611-58.623).

58.611 FREE FRENCH HAVE PRIORITY: The Allied player selects the composition of any Free French forces before the Axis player selects the composition of the Vichy French forces.

58.612 FRENCH FORCES TABLES: In the Free French and Vichy France Forces Tables, infantry, army air, and destroyers force levels are listed in factors; armor, battleship and cruiser force levels are listed by unit.

58.613 FRENCH ARMOR: If France had a 4-5 armor unit in its force pool as a result of French armor research in *Gathering Storm*:

A. FREE FRENCH FORCES: If the French surrender level is -3 and Vichy France is not established, the Free French forces include a French 4-5 armor unit, rather than a 3-5 armor unit.

B. VICHY FRENCH FORCES: If the French surrender level is +3 and Vichy France is established, the Vichy French forces include a French 4-5 armor unit, rather than a 3-5 armor unit.

58.62 FREE FRENCH FORCES:

58.621 LEVEL OF FREE FRENCH FORCES: The level of Free French forces is set as detailed in the Free French Forces table:

| Free French Forces Table - 58.621 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|-----|-----|-------|----|----|------------------------------|-----|-----|-------|----|----|
| | Vichy France Established | | | | | | Vichy France Not Established | | | | | |
| | Army | | Air | Naval | | | Army | | Air | Naval | | |
| FSL | Inf | 3-5 | AAF | NS | CA | DD | Inf | 3-5 | AAF | NS | CA | DD |
| +3 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | - | - | - | - | - |
| +2 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 6 | - | - | - | 1 | 1 |
| +1 | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | 6 | - | 1 | 1* | 1 | 1 |
| 0 | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | 6 | - | 2 | 1* | 2 | 2 |
| -1 | 6 | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | 9 | - | 2 | 1* | 2 | 5 |
| -2 | 6 | - | 1 | 1* | 1 | 1 | 12 | - | 2 | 1* | 3 | 6 |
| -3 | 6 | - | 2 | 1* | 2 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 2* | 3 | 6 |

*The indicated number of named ships of the selecting player's choice. Unfinished or damaged ships in the "2" or "Launch" row of a French Naval Construction Chart may be selected.

Explanation: The French Surrender Level (FSL) and whether or not Vichy France was established determines the level of the Free French forces.

58.622 REDUCTION IN FREE FRENCH FORCES IF VICHY FRANCE ESTABLISHED: If Germany established Vichy France, the level of Free French forces is less than if Vichy France was not established.

58.623 PLACEMENT OF FREE FRENCH FORCES: The British player may select all, some or none of the French units in Free French colonies and in British-controlled hexes as Free French forces. French units in these areas which are not selected are removed from play. If additional Free French units are required, the British player then adds the necessary French ground and air units, unbuilt, to the British force pool as Free French forces. See 58.64 for the placement of Free French naval units.

While it is not part of the French surrender process, rule 58.624 defines the nature of the Free French forces:

58.624 STATUS OF FREE FRENCH UNITS: Free French units are treated as British units for all purposes but retain their air and fleet nationality modifiers (EXCEPTIONS: Free French units are treated as a distinct nationality for attrition purposes (14.522), when allocating air losses (19.61A) and when recombining air squadrons into factors (23.14); Free French units may not operate in the Pacific theater; the production of Free French units is subject to the restrictions set out in 42.332B and 42.333E). Britain pays for offensive operations involving Free French forces and may construct Free French units in Britain. Objective hexes controlled by Free French units count as British-controlled objectives.

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The Axis select and place the Vichy French forces after consulting the Vichy French Forces Table (58.63-58.632).

58.63 VICHY FRANCE:

58.631 LEVEL OF VICHY FRANCE FORCES: The level of Vichy France forces is set as detailed in the Vichy France Forces table:

| Vichy France Forces Table - 58.631 | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|------|-----|-----|-------|----|----|
| FSL | Army | | Air | Naval | | |
| | Inf | 3-5 | AAF | Named | CA | DD |
| +3 | 12 | 1 | 3 | 2* | 3 | 6 |
| +2 | 15 | - | 3 | 1* | 3 | 6 |
| +1 | 12 | - | 3 | 1* | 2 | 5 |
| 0 | 12 | - | 2 | 1* | 2 | 2 |
| -1 | 12 | - | 1 | 1* | 1 | 1 |
| -2 | 12 | - | - | - | 1 | 1 |
| -3 | 10 | - | - | - | - | - |

*The indicated number of named ships of the selecting player's choice. Unfinished or damaged ships in the "2" or "Launch" row of a French Naval Construction Chart may be selected.

Explanation: The French Surrender Level (FSL) determines the level of the Vichy French forces. If Vichy France is not established, there are no Vichy French forces.

58.632 PLACEMENT OF VICHY FORCES: One Vichy 2-3 infantry unit must be placed and remain in Vichy city and in the capital of each Vichy French colony until Vichy France associates or allies with one side or the other (EXCEPTIONS: Vichy infantry units in French colonial capitals may be sent to Russia after a "5-6", "7" or "8" diplomatic result for Vichy France; Vichy units in French colonies which become Free French after Vichy deactivation may move freely). The remaining Vichy French ground and air forces are placed in Vichy France. See 58.64 for the placement of Vichy French naval units.

Rule 58.633 defines the status of Vichy France and refers the reader to rule 77, which contains the detailed rules for Vichy France:

58.633 STATUS OF VICHY FRANCE: Vichy France is a neutral minor country whose hexes are controlled by neither side. For the rules relating to Vichy France, see 77.

Rule 58.64 details how the Free and Vichy naval units are allocated. The actual selection of the naval units has already occurred in steps 6 and 7, above:

58.64 THE FRENCH FLEET:

58.641 ALLOCATION OF FRENCH NAVAL UNITS: French naval units remain at their bases when France surrenders. If there are too few French naval units based in British-controlled ports to make up the Free French navy (58.621), the required number of French naval units based in Axis-controlled or neutral French colony ports move to any British-controlled port(s) within range with the basing capacity to receive them and may not be intercepted by Axis air and naval units as they do so. Similarly, if there are too few French naval units based in Vichy French-controlled ports to make up the Vichy navy (58.631), the required number of French naval units based in British-controlled ports move without impediment to any Vichy-controlled port.

58.642 FREE AND VICHY FRENCH FLEETS LIMITED BY EXISTING UNITS: The size of the Free and Vichy French fleets is limited by the size of the French fleet when France surrenders. French ships which are damaged may be selected and are counted at their full, undamaged value: damaged Vichy French naval units may be repaired in the Marseilles shipyard at no BRP cost prior to Vichy activation; damaged Free French naval units may be repaired at a Western Allied shipyard. French ships unfinished on the "2" row of a French Naval Construction Chart are treated as damaged ships (27.7281).

58.643 NO SUBSTITUTIONS: If there are not enough named ships, cruisers or destroyers available to fulfill the levels shown in 58.621 or 58.631, the remainder of any insufficient type is lost.

The final rules in this section fix the BRP value of France as a conquest. Rules 58.72 and 58.73 deal with timing and cooperative conquest:

58.7 BRPs:

58.71 FRANCE'S BRP VALUE: After the fall of France, Paris, Lyon, and Marseilles remain key economic areas worth 20, 10 and 10 BRPs, respectively. In addition to the economic value of any key economic areas under German control, France's BRP value as a German conquest is 20 BRPs, regardless of any French BRP growth prior to France's surrender.

Conclusion

The French surrender process is not as complicated as it first seems. The process itself is mostly automatic and there are few player decisions to be made:

| The French Surrender Process | | |
|------------------------------|------|--|
| 1 | auto | Determine the French surrender level (58.21). |
| 2 | | The Axis decide whether or not to establish Vichy France (58.31). |
| 3 | auto | Determine hex control in France and its effects (58.4). |
| 4 | auto | Resolve the control of the French colonies (58.53). |
| 5 | auto | Remove French forces from the board except French ground units in Free French colonies and British-controlled hexes (58.61). |
| 6 | | The Allies select and place the Free French forces after consulting the Free French Forces Table (58.611-58.623). |
| 7 | | The Axis select and place the Vichy French forces after consulting the Vichy French Forces Table (58.63-58.632). |