That Thin Red Line
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Introduction

    A World at War is a successor of *Rise and Decline of the Third Reich*, and of the sister games *Advanced Third Reich* and *The Empire of the Rising Sun*. A highly acclaimed series, these games have in common several distinctive features, perhaps the most recognizable being the division of both theaters into three broad fronts, fronts that are marked on the map by long crooking lines of red. These fronts are valuable innovations that lead to many interesting choices, but their subtleties can trip up the novice. Perhaps the main culprit in this confusion is the interplay of fronts and offensive operations (that is, ground combat, overruns, exploitation, and air and naval missions). Fortunately these complexities are simpler to grasp than they may at first appear, complexities which this article will attempt to clarify.

    Before beginning, let me introduce two shorthands. The first is that, whenever I talk about BRPs, I'll *always* be referring to "BRPs spent on offensive operations," as delineated in rule 9.5. The second is that, instead of writing out the hepta-syllable phrase "offensive operations" (e.g., those actions that are detailed in rule 9.2-9.4), I'll simply use the abbreviation "op" or "ops".

The Two Crucial Questions

    There are two questions which players of *A World at War* will need to be able to answer for each front: (1) When is attrition is allowed? and (2) When is a full offensive reached (the point at which all future ops for this front become free)? The answers to these questions have one significant difference:

    (1) **Attritions** are permitted as long as a given <u>alliance faction</u> has spent fewer than 15 BRPs for ops on a front during this turn.

    (2) **Full offensives** are achieved whenever a given <u>major power</u> has spent 15 or more BRPs for ops on a front during this turn.

Example 1--Russia

For a simple case, consider a game turn of clear weather in which Russia keeps all of its units (and those of its minor allies and associated minor powers) fully within the confines of the Eastern Front, and in which Russia attacks enemy units that are only on the Eastern Front.

- If Russia spends fewer than 15 BRPs on its ops, then afterwards, all unused ground units may make an attrition attack.

  o This would occur if, say, Russia uses 3 ground factors plus 9 air factors to attack a single German 3-3. In this case, Russia would be charged 3 BRPs for the ground units and 9 BRPs for the air units, for a total of 12 BRPs, which is less than 15 BRPs.)

- If, however, Russia spends 15 BRPs on ops, then it has qualified for a full offensive on this front and every additional op it takes there during this turn is free. This lessens the costs of attacks, but it also prohibits Russia from making an attrition attack on this front during this turn.

Example 2--Britain and France:

Now for a slightly more-involved case: the Western Front prior to American entry, with both Britain and France engaging Germany (but with no cooperation restrictions being in force).

Assume, as above, that no British or French units cross front lines during this turn, and that all ops are directed solely against German units that are located on the Western Front, and further assume that every German unit which is attacked, is attacked solely by British or French units that are themselves located on the Western Front. This leads to the following possibilities:

- Should the Western Front ops which Britain and France take, together total to fewer than 15 BRPs, then a joint attrition attack--by ground units which did not take part in those ops--is still permitted against German ground units on the Western Front.

    o In this instance, neither Britain nor France will have spent enough BRPs to qualify for a full offensive.

- However, should the Western Front ops which Britain and France take--when added together--equal or exceed 15 BRPs, then no attrition attack is permitted on the Western Front during this player turn.

    o In this instance it is possible that neither Britain nor France, by themselves, will have spent enough to reach a full offensive--say if they each spent 10 BRPs on ops.

- If Britain spends 15 BRPs by itself, any additional ops during this player turn will be free for Britain. France, however--if it has yet to spend 15 BRPs on its own--will still have to pay for its ops until it, too, reaches 15 BRPs. (Even if France never reaches 15 BRPs, it still will be prohibited from conducting an attrition attack because its Alliance Faction will, when looked at combined, have spent at least 15 BRPs.)

The details of these two examples should be understandable after a cursory reading of rule 9. Where the situation gets more complicated is when units cross and re-cross those quixotic red lines.

Ops Defined

Before considering more complicated cases, it's helpful to examine ops in greater detail. The two issues that are pertinent to our discussion are these:

(1) Precisely what constitutes an op?
(2) In which hex is an op considered to take place (9.71)?

The following table is an <u>exhaustive</u> list of the ops that are available in AWAW.

Units	Op	Hex(es) Receiving the Action	Free?	Notes
Air 5-4	Counterair	Enemy Air Base		
	Attack on a Patrolling Submarine	Submarine Patrol Hex		
	Attacks on Bases by Patrolling TFs or Fast Carrier Missions	The Patrol Hex	Yes	NAS incur no BRP cost: only the carrying CVs do. (9.55) The cost for the carrying CVs *do* count toward attritions and full offensives.
	Air Supply	Ground Unit's Hex		
	BRP Grants over the Hump	Debarkation Hex	Yes	
	Air Transport	Debarkation Hex	(free during the Redeployment Phase)	This applies even if the air transport factor is eliminated or forced to abort before reaching the debarkation hex.
	Ground Support	Hex(es) Being Attacked		In a multi-hex attack, GS BRPs apply to all attacked hexes even if GS flies over only one of the hexes.
	Interception of DAS	Hex Containing DAS		
	Counter-Interception of Air Transport Interceptions	Hex of Counter-Interception	(free during the Redeployment Phase)	
	Attack Naval Base	Naval Base		
	Airdrop	Airdrop Hex		
	Strategic Bombing	Attacked City		
Naval Sevastopol BB 2	Patrol	Patrol Hex	NAS are free	These count as ops (a) whether or not the naval mission turns back, even if aborting before reaching the embarkation hex, (b) whether or not the force engages in Naval Combat, and (c) whether or not the mission counterairs enemy bases along the way.
	Sea Transport	Debarkation Hex		
	Shore Bombardment	Invasion Hex		
	Seaborne Invasion	Invasion Hex, 21.131		
	Raiding	The Front traversed on the way to Raiding		Rules 21.532B-D lists the ports from which ships may raid.
	Fast Carrier Mission	Mission Hex (the hex from which the NAS Launch) unless it is part of a seaborne invasion, 21.554A.	NAS are free	NAS incur no BRP cost: only the carrying CVs incur cost. (9.55)
Ground 5-6₃	Overrun	Overrun Hex		
	Ground Attack	Hex(es) being Attacked	Isolated Units are free, 9.81	
	Exploitation	Breakthrough hex, Hexes moved into or through (after having reached the Breakthrough hex), Hexes Attacked		

CASE A: An Op against Multiple Hexes

In the above chart, there are only <u>two</u> cases in which *a single op* can affect more than one hex, and these are the ops listed in the last two entries of this chart:

> (1) **Ground attacks against multiple hexes** (including any participating Ground Support air units and airdropped airborne units), and
> (2) **Exploitation** (9.73, 15.45).

In all other cases, a given op is directed against *only one hex* (or against only one Front, in the case of Raiding).

CASE B: Multiple Ops by a Single Unit

In some cases, an individual unit may participate in more than one op during a single turn. This includes the following situations:

> (a) Ground units which overrun more than one hex.
> (b) Ground units which overrun a hex and then participate in a ground combat.
> (c) Ground units which overrun a hex and then participate in exploitation.
> (d) Exploitation placement on a breakthrough hex, followed by an attack from that break-through hex.
> (e) Exploitation placement on a breakthrough hex, followed by exploitation movement.
> (f) Exploitation placement on a breakthrough hex, followed by exploitation movement that includes an overrun.
> (g) Exploitation placement on a breakthrough hex, followed by exploitation movement, followed by an exploitation attack.

Notice several things about these representative situations:

> (1) In all of these cases, the participating unit is **paid for only once** (9.57).
> (2) When determining whether **Attritions** are permitted on a given Front (9.61), the BRP expense of a given unit will be credited against *every* Front which contains a hex that received offensive action from that unit (as defined in the third column of the above table).
> (3) When determining whether a **Full Offensive** has been reached for a given major power for a given Front, the BRP expense of a given unit will *only* be counted toward one Front--specifically toward that Front which contains the first hex to receive offensive action from this unit.
>> *Example:* An armor unit overruns hex "A", then moves into another front where it conducts other overruns, or offensive combat, or exploitation. The BRP cost of this armor unit (when deciding whether its controlling major power has reached the 15 BRPs for a full offensive) will only apply to the front that contains that first hex that was overrun, that is the Front that contains hex "A".

Now let's consider both of our questions again, but this time for more complicated situations.

When is Attrition Allowed?

This is the easier question of the two to answer: when it comes time at the end of the combat phase to conduct attritions, an alliance faction simply totals all of the BRPs it spent on ops on that front during this turn. The alliance faction includes the cost of *every* op which it has directed against *any* hex within that front, per the third column in the table above. Sometimes a single op will have been directed against multiple hexes, and sometimes a given unit may have participated in multiple ops--but in both cases, the alliance faction applies the full BRP op cost of that unit toward every front which contains a hex affected by offensive ops from that given unit (9.71).

- Note that if a single unit has conducted ops against more than one hex in a given Front, those BRPs are only counted once, 9.57.

- Also note that combat by isolated ground units are free, and therefore they don't contribute when deciding whether attritions are permitted. (Nor do they contribute toward achieving a full offensive.)

- Conversely, when NAS fly from carriers at sea to attack enemy bases or to participate in ground combat, when considering the cost of ops directed against those land hexes, you use the BRP charge for the carriers that the NAS flew from when tallying BRPs.

If the total cost of all of the ops that can be counted for a given front by an alliance faction sum to 15 or more BRPs, then *no* attrition roll is permitted during this player turn for that alliance faction on this front. But if fewer than 15 BRPs worth of ops have affected hexes within this front, then attritions *are* permitted.

When do Future Ops become Free?

The more complex issue is determining when a given major power has spent sufficient BRPs on ops within a given front to qualify for a full offensive. (Note that a major power pays the cost for all ops taken not only by its own units, but also for those ops taken by its minor allies, its associated minor powers, and its partisans.)

The only complexity in deciding whether the threshold of a full offensive has been reached, arises when considering the two cases mentioned above: Case A--when a single op that affects multiple hexes involves hexes that are located on more than one front, and Case B--when a given unit is involved in multiple ops that involve hexes on more than one front.

The second case--Case B--is simpler: a major power credits the BRPs spent for a given unit toward the front in which the first op conducted by that unit occurred.

- If an armor unit overruns an enemy ground unit on the eastern front and then overruns another enemy ground unit on the western front, the BRPs for the ops conducted by that armor unit affect both fronts when deciding whether attritions can occur, but are only credited toward the eastern front when deciding whether or not the controlling major power has spent enough BRPs to reach a full offensive.

The first case--Case A, that of a single op affecting hexes located on more than one front--is only marginally more complicated.

- With regard to **exploitation**, the BRPs are credited on the front which contains the breakthrough hex (which will be the first hex in which the exploiting armor unit conducts ops--unless of course it overruns a ground unit during its movement phase).
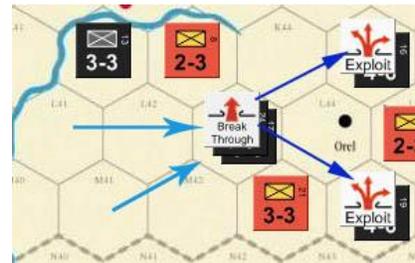
- When it comes to a **multi-hex attack** against hexes on more than one front (15.45), the BRP cost of the attacking ground unit(s) are applied toward the front in which the attacking ground units are located (assuming the attacking ground unit(s) are located within one of the two fronts being attacked).

  o If the attacking ground units are all on the Eastern Front, and all of the attacked hexes are on the Western Front, then the op cost of this entire attack is credited toward the Western Front when deciding whether a full offensive has been reached.

  o If the bizarre case ever occurs in which ground units in, say, the Eastern Front make a multi-hex attack against enemy ground units located in both the Western and Mediterranean fronts, then the attacking major power may choose either of the simultaneously attacked fronts to credit the attacking BRPs toward (for purposes of reaching the 15 BRPs of a full offensive), each attacking ground unit being credited as the attacker chooses.

  o Ground support air units and airdropped airborne units which participate in a multi-hex ground attack are credited toward the front containing the hex to which they fly (18.551) or airdrop (10.55B).

That's all there is to it. And now, intrepid leader, you can go out there and drive your tanks back and forth across every red line on the map, fully assured that when you're done you'll know exactly which accounting department gets the gas bill!