

NCO APPENDIX B. INTEGRATING VEHICLES

Created by Elijah Kellogg for the NCO game. Copyright 2018. Revised for v3.0, February 2021.

Throughout World War II, multiple millions of vehicles were produced and utilized specifically for ground-based conflict. Nearly 333,000 tanks and SPGs were produced alone! Thus, these historical numbers can make it difficult to envision a WWII game without any armored vehicle presence—even if the game is focused on squad vs. squad fighting like NCO. But the problem with initially putting vehicles on the table in NCO was not one of realistic occurrence as much as it was an issue of gameplay mechanics and thematic focus. Foremost, sergeants of an infantry squad had zero authority whatsoever to command, let alone call upon, armored support. Letting players purchase and command vehicles would have been simply out of line with an NCO's authority and experience, as well as a huge hassle from a game building and balancing standpoint. Which relates to the second issue: NCO is unique as a WWII experience because it's all about the story and tactics of an infantry squad. To give players full control of vehicles would significantly take away from the game's unique point of view. But...as WWII gamers, we all love our tank models! They're fun. They're full of character on the table. They bring a real sense of drama to the battle. I agree! So, how could we find a way forward with vehicles in NCO, without drastically changing the game's mechanics and feel? Could we have our tank, and eat it too?

It turns out we can! The idea was to produce an appendix that would utilize military vehicles more as "battlefield situations" and not as "battlefield strategies". A tank entering the fray would be like a living "Event", coloring the battlefield for both players in exciting ways, without creating unrealistic command and balance issues. And thus, Appendix B was born! I believe this supplement will prove to be the proper compromise of realism, mechanics, and fun when it comes to using your awesome tank models in NCO and I truly hope you enjoy using it in your battles!

**As with all appendices, this supplement is approved for both casual and competitive NCO gaming, as agreed upon by the players.*

ADDING THE "VEHICLE PHASE" TO A GAME OF NCO

If players wish to include vehicles in a game of NCO, then they will each need to have appropriately scaled models of military vehicles available to add to the table throughout the game. It is ideal for each player to have three types of vehicles on hand: an armored car model (or similar), a light tank model (or similar), and one large tank model (or similar). Players may intentionally restrict their game to include only one of a certain type of vehicle, or two vehicles of two different types, instead of using all three. For example, if one player only owns a heavy tank model and a jeep, then maybe both players will agree to each bring only one large tank and one armored car to the battle.

Once the vehicle models are chosen, set them aside and begin the battle per usual, following the rules outlined in the NCO rulebook. The entire first turn of every battle including vehicles and a "Vehicle Phase" will flow like any other battle. No vehicles will be in play. Then, starting with the second turn, a "Vehicle Phase" is added as a new, first phase to the turn sequence, for every turn, for the remainder of the game. This phase could be considered as a "Phase Zero", completely played out before the normal drawing of order dice and executing orders during "Phase One" of a turn.

PHASE ZERO: THE VEHICLE PHASE

When starting this phase of a turn, players each roll one D6 and individually consult the chart below to see if a new friendly vehicle has entered the battlefield:

- 1-3: No friendly vehicle enters the battlefield.
- 4: A friendly armored car (or equivalent) has entered the battlefield.
- 5: A friendly light to medium tank (or equivalent) has entered the battlefield.
- 6: A friendly large to heavy tank (or equivalent) has entered the battlefield.

If players intentionally restricted their vehicle options to only two types, then they change the chart above so that a roll of 1 or 2 does nothing, 3 or 4 brings out the smaller type of vehicle, and 5 or 6 brings out the larger. Similarly, if players each brought only one vehicle type, then a roll of 1 to 3 will do nothing and 4 to 6 will bring out the vehicle. *If a player rolls a number where he already has a vehicle of this type on the battlefield, then the roll counts as "no friendly vehicle enters the battlefield".*

When a new vehicle enters the battlefield, the controlling player chooses the appropriate vehicle model and then rolls another D6. On a roll of 2 to 5, the vehicle enters anywhere the player chooses along his deployment edge of the table, facing forward. On a 1, the vehicle enters along the left edge of the table, anywhere up to the centerline of the battlefield, facing horizontally across the battlefield. On a 6, the vehicle enters along the right edge of the table,

anywhere up to the centerline, facing horizontally across the battlefield. Regardless of which table edge the vehicle enters from, and where the player places the vehicle, the rear of the vehicle must be flush with the table's edge.

After any new vehicles have entered the battlefield, both players will now alternate executing orders for each one of their friendly vehicles currently on the tabletop. Players will roll-off to see who gets to order the first vehicle. To give a friendly vehicle an order, the controlling player rolls a D6 and then consults the appropriate command chart below, based on the vehicle's type. These orders are randomized by dice rolls and not chosen, as it assumed the orders are coming from the company or platoon level and out of the NCO's control:

Armored Car

1-2: Move Out: The vehicle has been ordered to scout beyond its current position, without delay. The vehicle speeds straight forward, moved by the controlling player—in the most direct route possible—up to a full 18" or until it exits the table, whichever comes first. The vehicle is assumed to be moving in full gear and will not engage with enemy models. If fired upon by another vehicle, it is an additional -2 to hit modifier.

3-4: Patrol: The vehicle has been ordered to patrol the area and defend against enemy aggression. The vehicle is moved by the controlling player up to 6" in any direction, except off the board, and then faced in any direction of the players choosing. The vehicle will now defend from this location and is set in Ambush, similar to an Ambush order for soldiers found in the NCO rulebook. During the next two phases of this turn, the vehicle may trigger its Ambush when any enemy movement order brings an enemy soldier within 12" and line-of-sight * of the vehicle. When the controlling player chooses to trigger the "Ambush", movement is immediately interrupted, the enemy model halts where they are, and a Fire Order is executed towards this model. This shot is AOE. Roll to hit for each soldier within the AOE radius, needing a 3+ to hit with no modifiers of any kind. If the moving soldier was hit, he cancels his order and immediately executes a "Down" order instead. When rolling to wound, add a +1 on the wound chart roll.

5-6: Engage: The vehicle has been ordered to fire upon any visible enemy soldiers, without prejudice. The vehicle does not move from its position and executes up to two simultaneous Fire orders at any enemy soldiers within line-of-sight *, without a limit on range. The orders can be executed on the same position, or may be split to fire at two different targets. Roll to hit for each soldier within the AOE radius, needing a 3+ to hit with no modifiers of any kind. When rolling to wound, add a +1 on the wound chart roll.

Light to Medium Tank

1-2: Move Out: The vehicle has been ordered to move-out beyond its current position, without delay. The vehicle speeds straight forward, moved by the controlling player—in the most direct route possible—up to a full 12" or until it exits the table, whichever comes first. The vehicle is assumed to be moving in full gear and will not engage with enemy models. If soft cover is in the path of the tank, it will simply roll through the obstacle, creating a clearing in its path. If fired upon by another vehicle, it is an additional -1 to hit modifier.

3-4: Engage Armor: The vehicle has been ordered to strictly engage enemy armor and only fire at infantry when approached. The vehicle is moved by the controlling player up to 6" in any direction, except off the board, and then faced in any direction of the players choosing. If there are any enemy vehicles within line-of-sight *, the vehicle will immediately fire armor-piercing rounds at any one of the vehicles. Consult the "Armor V Armor" section for rules on firing against enemy vehicles. If there were no enemy vehicles to engage within line-of-sight, then the vehicle takes a defensive position against enemy infantry and is set in Ambush. (See "Patrol" rules above). When the vehicle chooses to trigger its Ambush, movement is immediately interrupted, the enemy model halts where they are, and a Fire order with AOE is executed. Roll to hit for each soldier who falls in the AOE radius, needing a 3+ to hit with no modifiers of any kind. If the moving soldier was hit, he cancels his order and immediately executes a "Down" order instead. When rolling to wound, add a +2 on the wound chart roll.

5-6: Engage Infantry The vehicle has been ordered to fire upon any visible enemy soldiers, without prejudice. The vehicle does not move from its position and executes up to two simultaneous Fire orders at any enemy soldiers within line-of-sight *, with no range limits. The orders can be executed towards the same target, or may be split to fire at two different targets. Roll to hit for each soldier who falls in the AOE radius, needing a 3+ to hit with no modifiers of any kind. When rolling to wound, add a +2 on the wound chart roll.

Large to Heavy Tank

1-3: Move Out: The tank has “bigger fish to fry” on the frontline, and moves forward without delay. The vehicle speeds straight forward, moved by the controlling player—in the most direct route possible—up to a full 12” or until it exits the table, whichever comes first. The vehicle is assumed to be moving in full gear and will not engage with enemy models. If soft cover is in the path of the tank, it will simply roll through the obstacle, creating a clearing in its path. If fired upon by another vehicle, it is an additional -1 to hit modifier.

4-5: Engage Armor: The vehicle has been ordered to strictly engage enemy armor and only fire at infantry when approached. The vehicle is moved by the controlling player up to 6” in any direction, except off the board, and then faced in any direction of the players choosing. If there are any enemy vehicles within line-of-sight *, the vehicle will immediately fire armor-piercing rounds at any one of the vehicles. Consult the “Armor V Armor” section for rules on firing against enemy vehicles. If there were no enemy vehicles to engage within line-of-sight, then the vehicle takes a defensive position against enemy infantry and is set in Ambush. (See “Patrol” rules above). When the vehicle chooses to trigger its Ambush, movement is immediately interrupted, the enemy model halts where they are, and a Fire order with AOE is executed. This AOE radius is extended to 3” instead of 2”. Roll to hit for each soldier who falls in the AOE radius, needing a +3 to hit with no modifiers of any kind. If the moving soldier was hit, he cancels his order and immediately executes a “Down” order instead. When rolling to wound, add a +3 on the wound chart roll.

6: Engage Infantry The vehicle has been ordered to fire upon any visible enemy soldiers, without prejudice. The vehicle does not move from its position and executes up to two simultaneous Fire orders at any enemy soldiers within line-of-sight *, with no range limits. The orders can be executed towards the same target or may be split to fire at two different targets. Roll to hit for each soldier who falls in the AOE radius (of 3”), needing a 3+ to hit with no modifiers of any kind. When rolling to wound, add a +3 on the wound chart roll.

**When determining line-of-sight, divide the vehicle into two halves: front and rear. Any model that stands within the front half of this division, and is at least partially in view if behind cover, is considered in line-of-sight of the vehicle. Anything that is beyond the halfway-line of the vehicle, standing closer to the rear half, is out of line-of-sight of the vehicle.*

ARMOR V ARMOR

Sometimes a friendly vehicle will be ordered to fire upon an enemy vehicle during the Vehicle Phase. To work out the fire order, Roll a D6 to hit, and then—if hit—a D6 to destroy, and consult the chart below:

Light/Med Tank shooting Armored Car

Roll a 4+ to hit // Roll 3+ to destroy the vehicle

Large/Heavy Tank shooting Armored Car

Roll a 4+ to hit // Roll a 2+ to destroy the vehicle

Light/Med Tank shooting Light/Med Tank

Roll a 4+ to hit // Roll a 4+ to destroy the vehicle

Large/Heavy Tank shooting Light/Med Tank

Roll a 4+ to hit // Roll a 3+ to destroy the vehicle

Light/Med Tank shooting Large/Heavy Tank

Roll a 3+ to hit // Roll a 5+ to destroy the vehicle

Large/Heavy Tank shooting Large/Heavy Tank

Roll a 3+ to hit // Roll a 4+ to destroy the vehicle

If a vehicle is hit, but not destroyed, it is considered pinned, meaning something problematic has happened to the vehicle or crew—such as a busted tread or blown engine—and caused further movement impossible. A pinned vehicle will still attempt to fully execute orders during the following turns, except that it cannot move—even if the order calls for movement. If a pinned vehicle is hit again, regardless of whether there was a successful roll to destroy the vehicle, then the vehicle has been rendered useless and is abandoned. Count the abandoned vehicle as being destroyed. Destroyed vehicles are not removed from the table, but remain in play as functional terrain.

VEHICLES AS BATTLEFIELD TERRAIN

All soldiers from both sides may use all vehicles as hard cover, giving them a -2 to be hit modifier when positioned in base contact with a vehicle and partially obscured from enemy line-of-sight. In some case, depending on the size of the vehicle and perspective, a vehicle can even give full cover, completely obscuring a soldier from line-of-sight altogether.

When a vehicle moves, it is always assumed that soldiers are aware enough of the movement to jump or duck out of harm's way. Soldier models in the way of moving vehicle models are moved just enough for the vehicle to pass in the direction of the controlling player's choice.

Functioning vehicles may be traversed over by soldiers, as long as the moving soldier has enough movement to move over the entirety of the vehicle. However, destroyed vehicles, while still useful for cover, cannot be moved over, as the wreckage is most probably smoking or burning or hazardous to cross. Thus, soldiers may only move around destroyed vehicles.

TANK FEAR

Low ranking soldiers can be quite spooked to see especially large enemy armor roll into their battlefield location. When a heavy tank first appears on the battlefield for your army, all opposing soldiers with a courage value of 3 or less—who have line-of-sight of the tank model—immediately lose -1 psyche. If such a soldier was already down to only 1 psyche value left, then instead of losing psyche, the soldier immediately pulls a die from the dice bag and executes a “Down” order, without the ability to use an item or execute any further actions for the remainder of the turn. This rule only applies once the tank first appears, and all subsequent turns cause no fear among the soldiers, as they have already come to terms with the tank's presence.

Optional Rule: Anti-Tank Weapons

If both players agree to use this rule when integrating vehicles into their battle, then each player chooses two soldiers from their squad, except for sergeants, to carry anti-tank weapons. These weapons come free of additional cost and are assumed to be taken on top off any of the soldier's other weapons.

When executing any “Assault” order, soldiers equipped with anti-tank weapons may choose to “Assault” an enemy vehicle instead of an enemy soldier. To do this, the soldier is moved anywhere within 6” of the vehicle, stops, and then fires (throws/discharges) his anti-tank weapon. Roll a D6. On a roll of 3+, the weapon has hit the vehicle, with no modifiers of any kind added. If the weapon hits, roll another D6. For an armored car, on a roll of a 3+ the vehicle is destroyed; for a light tank, on a roll of a 4+ the vehicle is destroyed; for a heavy tank, on a roll of a 5+ the vehicle is destroyed. If a vehicle is hit, but not destroyed, then the vehicle is considered “pinned”, per the “pinned” rules outlined under the “Armor V Armor” section. After executing his “Assault” against the vehicle and working out the dice results, the soldier immediately assumes the “Down” position. Also after executing his “Assault” order, the soldier no longer carries an anti-tank weapon, as it is a one-time use weapon.

For any battlefield scenario, if this optional rule is taken, and a soldier manages to destroy an armored car or tank during the battle, then the soldier's squad is awarded an additional 50vps per vehicle destroyed when tallying victory points at the end of the battle.