

# INVASION: AMERICA

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Once in a great while there comes a game which seems to have everything. The subject is pure dynamite. The game is big, but simple enough to be easily handled and played. The system is familiar enough, but some particular development or new concept adds spice. The game is reasonably complete and accurate, though a few loopholes keep the wargaming magazine industry in business. But, best of all, the game is so big and covers so much that variants and options can be conceived more rapidly than they can be written down. In the past, such games as ANZIO, BLITZKRIEG, PANZERBLITZ, and WAR IN THE EAST have fit this most demanding description. And now, another of these magazine editor's dreams has appeared - INVASION: AMERICA! by SPI.

The game system includes, and does not include, many of the facets of modern war. For example, airpower is expected to remain dominant in warfare for the next several years, and it is very important in the game. Both sides have long-range bomber units and close air support groups. Additionally, the invaders have CV units, which have some of the functions of both. Before one may attack any ground unit, all LRB and CV units which are in range of it must also be under attack. The big American B-1 units have such a tremendous range (comparatively) that air superiority can be virtually guaranteed in a few vital areas. The system is adequate, but a better way would be to designate some units (by whatever means) as B-1 and some as B-70. Naturally, if neither is ever actually built, some more revising is in order. Whenever the first unit of either type is committed, it is tested and if found to be one of the pitiful "6" units, all of the counters of that type are considered "6's". The other type is tested separately. This would seem to be a more accurate system, as air units are more dependent on the technical aspects for their performance than the training aspects. If an American LRB unit is discovered to be one of the wonderful "10" units, all of that type are that strength. This system, with appropriate aircraft designations, should be employed in any and all situations involving air units in the game.

The assault landing sections are highly abstract, as the game is not really intended to portray the actual assaults, but the results of them. Various coastal hexes are designated as "invadeable" and have, printed in them, factors indicating the movement points the amphibious units must expend and the multiple by which the defenders are multiplied for their defense strength. The rules are a bit confusing and could have been explained much better than they were (for example, can an Amphibious unit land troops every turn, or every other turn?) but if you use what has been described as "good military common sense" and do what is logical (at least for your side, your opponent may have other ideas) you can live with them. It should, however, be noted that amphibious landings produce tremendous wear and tear on equipment, and it would be much more logical to roll a die for each amphibious unit each time it is used, with a die roll of "5" or "6" indicating that the unit has been "burned up" in combat. It could degenerate to a transport unit or disappear, as you please.

The system for handling "tested" and "untested" unit strengths is an interesting one, unfortunately it tends to lead places that are beyond the scope of game mechanics. For example, there should be some system for re-

testing units after a period of time, after (not before) each subsequent combat being perhaps the best. Anything other than that requires a plethora of record keeping or extra markers, and that is no way to run a wargame. The beauty of this type of game is in the simplicity of them. A simple procedure would be to return the unit to a pile of similar ones, drawing (and examining) the new one at that time. The unit might have improved in the situation or suffered casualties among key sub-units depleting its strength. The owning player would then have the choice of deploying this unit right-side-up or upside-down, but if he chooses the latter, he cannot re-examine it later, unless it is in combat again. All units, even those that were just exposed, would undergo this retest.

The Canadians are a fascinating group of people, but in this game they are even moreso. In any game, one can usually pick out the site of the key actions by looking for the odd-colored units. The black SS in ANVIL-DRAGOON and the white Internationals in SPANISH CIVIL WAR are only two examples. The Canadians are no better on the average than the Americans, but the crumbier Canadians are promptly sent back home to guard beaches that probably aren't going to be invaded anyway, and those units which turn out to be the overstrength ones are kept right in the heat of the action. Thus, by about turn five, one quick glance at the map, searching out any light blue units in the beachhead areas gives an immediate idea of the way things are going.

The RR system is very extensive in the US, and the game handles it by an arbitrary assumption that there is a railroad in every hex on the map except for the far northern tundra areas. The Americans are well able to shift troops rapidly and almost freely inside their areas of control.

The replacement system operates on the usual method of returning destroyed units to active duty. However, in a game with a double-strength system, this leads to some interesting maneuvering by the players. For example, if there is only one Canadian Armored unit in the pot, you both have a pretty good idea of what it is. A better way would be to return the destroyed unit to the pile of unused counters, and select a new unit which is totally unknown in all respects to be placed in the destroyed box. Naturally, one selects an Infantry unit from the game box to replace the discarded Infantry unit, and so on. One may not replace a destroyed militia unit with a B-70 unit or an Infantry unit with a Tank unit.

Much was left out of the game, but a substantial portion of that can be attributed to the game's scale and scope. The US Army will, presumably, quit asking the Armored recon units to do screening missions (a role that requires them to use vehicles unsuited to the recon mission) and will include a "Tank Destroyer" unit in each Division, but in a Corps level game, this cannot be shown with any degree of importance. The fact that units are fighting with long-range missile weapons cannot really be shown on this scale, and must await an operational level game on this subject or time frame.

However, many things which were not in the game could and should have been. For example, just where are the Africans? While, with a substantial amount of salt, one can assume that the Arab nations are included in the ESC or were destroyed outright, the black African nations would provide the ESC with a tremendous manpower pool from which to draw cannon fodder. Their units would vary dramatical-

ly in combat power. While they would include some of the 20-4 human-wave infantry units the basic unit would be a 4-4 which could turn out to be anywhere from a "0" to an "8". Mechanized units and Armored units would, most likely, not be included.

Also not included were airborne and airmobile forces. Statements that they were overwhelmed to the contrary, the invaders will make every use of any method to get troops on the beach in the critical first days, and the Americans will never, despite any setback, give up their prized helicopters. The ESC should have three Airborne corps, of which only one could be used on a given turn. These units would be 5-2 special units, and could be dropped within air superiority zones. The Americans would have two elite airmobile units, with factors of 2-8-24. These are special units and are not tested.

With as much rugged terrain as the North American slab has, one wonders where the Mountain troops are. If we will accept the idea that all AlpenTruppen are created equal, we can use the same rules for everyone's units. Such units would expend only one MP for Wilderness or Broken hexes, only two for Rough or Tundra. Additionally, units would not have the terrain advantages of Broken or Rough hexes (these would be doubled instead of tripled) if attacked by Mountain units only. The American units would include four Mountain Infantry units (redesignated Infantry), the Canadians, ESC, PAL, and SAU two each. Mountain units cannot be taken as mountain units, they would have to be replaced in the pool with plain infantry.

In the far north the Canadians usually end up having a couple of their militia units chased around by the few Chinese that land in Anchorage. Why not provide a few RCMP Ski-Patrol units? These would be 0-3 units and could refuse combat by retreating one hex. They would be considered as Mountain units for movement purposes.

The US Army has already designated selected reserve officers in various areas as "Guerilla Forces Commander" for their home areas, and made some perfunctory plans for a partisan campaign in the event of an Invasion. If that Invasion was imminent, it would be presumed that these plans would be considerably expanded and carefully prepared. To reflect this, the American Player should designate secretly on paper 10 hexes which will be the base camp of one of the partisan bands. Whenever he wishes, the US Player can direct one or more of these units to begin operations. This is done at the end of his turn. When activated, the partisan units exert a 7 hex zone of activity which costs all enemy units an extra MP to enter. Also, no enemy unit may trace supply through this area unless the hex in question is occupied by an invading unit. The partisan band is presumed to have a defense of 2, modifiable by terrain, but no movement. A DE or DX result is required to destroy the partisan unit.

When Germany collapsed in 1945, the Allies carted home plans from German drawing boards for everything from the F-84 fighter to the V2 rocket to the H-bomb to "Zero-Gee" equipment to be used on space stations. One of the less well known devices, however, was a Hydrogen Peroxide drive for submarines. This allowed WW2 type subs to operate submerged at speeds equalling their surface speeds. As the Americans were on the verge of Nuclear drive for their submarines, they did not develop the plans. The British did. If we presume that the aggressors hunted the USN from the seas, partly due to the ability to track their nuclear piles, then perhaps the few RN HP subs could have survived long enough to reach American shipyards, where the industrious Americans would turn out scads of short ranged coastal HP powered subs. These could be used to attack the aggressor fleets. The American Player is given six units of such submarines, two on the West coast, and four on the East. During the combat portion of each turn, the American Player would allocate these to attack Invader Naval units. The chance of success is 33% and determined by a die roll. The result is removal of the unit from the game for two turns. Attacks on CV units have only a 16% chance of success. Any attack would run a 67% chance of expending the submarine unit for the rest of the game. Presumably, the attacks are supplemented by light naval surface vessels and some air units, but these need not be accounted for further in a game of this scale.

But the best thing about the game is that possibilities for scenarios abound! Without going beyond the scope of the game, three have been developed which provide as much entertainment as the parent game.

#### THE CENTRAL AMERICAN ACQUISITION

##### INITIAL ORDER OF BATTLE

USA Units: 4a, 4mi, 6 i, 3 cas, 2 lrb, 5 m

Canadian Units: None

Mexico and Central America (use SAU units): 2a, 2m, 18 i, 2 cas

##### INITIAL DEPLOYMENT

US units: Anywhere in USA

M+CA units: Anywhere in Mexico or South America, except that all hexes of this area must be within 6 hexes of an M+CA unit.

##### Constant Replacements:

US: 1 a, 1 mi, 2 i, 1 cas, 1 lrb

M+CA: 1 i

##### No Variable Reinforcements

Victory Conditions: The US Player must eliminate all M+CA units in 10 turns.

There are no special rules, and the three great coalitions are not involved in the campaign.

#### THE CANADIAN INSURRECTION

After years of subversion by the KGB, the Canadian Military is riddled with ESC agents. This occurs because the FBI, which virtually rules the US as a secret police, is not able to function in Canada as this offends the sensibilities of the Canadians. So, at any time during any of the first five scenarios in the game, the ESC Player may declare that an insurrection has started in Canada. All untested Canadian units anywhere on the map are flipped over. Units which are actually equal or superior to the untested strength are loyal. Units outside of Canada that are of lower strength than their untested values are removed from the game. Units in Canada which are of lower values are immediately on the ESC side. Canadians may not attack Canadians, for obvious reasons. The insurrection is triggered in the beginning of the mechanized movement phase of the ESC turn.

#### 2002 SCENARIO

This scenario presumes that an Invasion took place in 2001, and while it did not get thrown into the sea, it did not conquer the US. Thus, it is essentially an attempt to get going again after bogging down.

##### INITIAL ORDER OF BATTLE

USA Units: 6 a, 9 mi, 16 i 15 m 4 rr, 6 cas, 6 lrb

Canadian Units: 3 a, 3 mi, 4 i, 2 cas

ESC Units: In US: 6 a, 6 mi, 9 i, 4 cas, 2 lrb

In Cuba: 4 a, 4 mi, 4 i, 2 cas, 2 lrb

Within 2 hexes of n1530: 3 i

Anywhere above or at sea: 4 cv, 4 Supply, 6 t.

SAU Units: In Central America up to the line 0730 to

1132: 6 a, 10 mi, 10 i, 2 cas

Within 2 of s1628: 2 a, 8 i

With above or at sea: 2 Supply, 1 t

PAL Units: Within 2 of s1522: 2 mi, 4 i, 1 cas

Within 6 of n2504: 4 mi, 10 i, 2 cas, 2 lrb

With above or at sea: 2 cv, 2 supply, 2 t

INITIAL DEPLOYMENT: As noted in Order of Battle, plus the ESC units noted as "In US" deploy in the area generally South and East of the Mississippi - Ohio - St Lawrence line.

Constant Replacements: As in 19.13

Variable Replacements: As in 19.14

Special Rules: The Central American Garrison rule.

Victory Conditions: At the end of 12 turns each of the four country-players totals the number or Urban and resource centers it possesses. The country-player with the most (total) wins. The ESC, PAL, and SAU are figured separately. If played by two players only, one player could end up 1st, 2nd and 3rd. Or, he could be 2nd, 3rd, and 4th. Or something.