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Introduction

The idea for **Hit the Deck!** originated from the Jersey Wargames Society 1995/96 participation game "Appointment with Venus". The game designers managed to develop a system that combined a skirmish figure wargame with a board game mechanism and role playing elements. The game was very popular and won prizes at most of the shows in which it appeared.

The appeal for me was the simplicity of the system combined with the ability for players to participate immediately. The JWS system was specifically designed for that particular participation game and I decided not to attempt to convert it, but rather to develop my own system. For those of you who saw, or played a part in, "Appointment with Venus" you will see that **Hit the Deck!** is quite different in most respects. I do hope, however, that I have managed to capture the spirit of the other system.

Overview

Hit the Deck! is designed as a skirmish system with emphasis on simplicity and player participation rather than ultimate realism. If you want a simulation there are a number of other sets of rules that will provide a considerably greater level of detail and accuracy. This system has sacrificed detail in order to achieve speed and ease of play. These are participation rules with, perhaps, a Hollywood influence and should be played as such. The system does not cover every eventuality and an umpire is recommended to oversee any game.

The first, and most, important rule is:

"The umpire is always right. Even if the decision contradicts any of the rules that follow."

If you want to argue or discuss any decision during a game - do it afterwards!

How it Works

The Card System

The ***Hit the Deck!*** system is card based, no dice are required. It is suggested that each side, whether player or umpire, has their own pack of cards and draws are made in action sequence. This will avoid the "that was my card" problem.

Ordinary playing cards are used, if you are not using the optional rules the picture cards should be removed. Aces are low and low is good!

All packs should be shuffled before play and placed face down somewhere convenient. Cards which have been drawn should be placed in a discard pile (unless allowed to be retained - see *optional rules*) and when all cards have been drawn the pack should be reshuffled.

The Ground Scale

With 20mm figures the ground scale is 1 inch equals 2 metres. This should be modified for other figure scales. Where any distances are quoted in inches this is the scale used.

The Time Scale

Each game turn represents approximately 30 seconds of real time. Weapons are listed as capable of firing a number of rounds per turn, this is based on the number of actual shots able to be fired in this period. The weapon ammunition capacities have been adjusted accordingly. These tend to be generic and so a broad view has been taken - no complaints from gun experts please.

Skill Numbers

The skills listed may be selected to suit the scenario. They are not all encompassing and may be added to or changed as you wish. The target number for a skill will be determined by troop quality and modified (if necessary) by the umpire. A card is then drawn, if it is equal or below the target number then the desired action is performed - it's that simple!

In the event that the rules specify that a skill should be halved, then in all cases, it should be rounded up to the nearest whole number.

Generating Your Forces

Troop Quality

The most important factor to be decided is troop quality. This should reflect training, morale and experience. The basic categories are listed below:

Poor

No military training. Poor morale and/or a lack of experience in combat.

Regular

Basic military training, or limited training with high morale, and some combat experience.

Veteran

Military training with significant combat experience and/or good morale.

Elite

Extensive specialist military training, good morale and combat experience.

Troop quality then determines the permissible range for skill target numbers as detailed in the following table:

<i>Troop Quality</i>	<i>Skill Range</i>
Poor	2 - 5
Regular	3 - 6
Veteran	4 - 7
Elite	5 - 8

Special skills, relating to specific roles (e.g. sniper etc.) may confer additional bonuses as determined by the umpire.

Skills

Each individual will have a range of skills. All have *core skills* and some may require additional *special skills* according to the scenario.

Core Skills

Shoot

Skill with firearms, covering accuracy, understanding (for clearing jams etc.) and experience.

Throw

Skill with thrown objects (including knives, bottles, grenades etc.) relating particularly to accuracy.

Melee

Skill in hand-to-hand combat (whether with knife, club, broken bottle, unarmed etc.)

Field Craft

This is a generic skill for expertise in the field. A combination of observation, knowledge of terrain, camouflage expertise and the like.

Special Skills

These should be added to suit the particular scenario or to add appropriate depth to a specific character. The following is only an indicative list and new skills should be added by the umpire.

Abseil, climb, communications, demolitions, mechanical, medic and so on.

For simple activities the umpire should decide (or the players agree) a skill level appropriate to the activity. In any event, drawing 10 is always a failure.

Determining Skills

Simply shuffle the deck, select the skill and draw a card. If the card is in the appropriate range for the troop quality then that is the skill number. If not, then draw another card and continue to do so until a card in the correct range is drawn.

For specific scenarios the umpire may predetermine skills if this is appropriate. For games where players have more than one character each it may be sensible to have generic skill numbers to speed the game along.

Turn Sequence

Play proceeds in game turns, each turn is divided into two phases, *Movement* and *Combat*.

Movement

All players, wishing to do so, declare their *Movement Mode* and then move their character accordingly. Where the order of movement is significant this is decided by the umpire. Characters not moving may declare *Opportunity Fire* on those moving. This allows them to resolve their fire (as in the *Combat Phase*) at the optimum point and apply the results prior to the main *Combat Phase*.

Combat

All players, wishing to do so, declare and resolve their combat (excluding those who carried out *Opportunity Fire* within the *Movement Phase*). Where order of firing is significant this is determined by Skill number - highest first. In the event of tied Skill numbers the lowest card drawn occurs first. An allowance for cover should be deducted from the firer's skill number (1 - light cover, 2 - buildings, 3 - bunkers etc.)

Movement

Figure movement is determined by *Movement Mode* each of which can confer restrictions on skills to be performed.

<i>Movement Mode</i>	<i>Distance per turn</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Crawl	4m (2 inches)	Thrown weapons ranges halved
Search	8m (4 inches)	
Walk	16m (8 inches)	Chance of spotting mines, booby traps etc. Halved
Run	24m (12 inches)	Fire skill halved

The *Search* mode is intended to represent a slow advance looking for mines etc.

Going to a prone position from *Search*, *Walk* or *Run* modes reduces forward movement by one quarter. Rising from prone also costs one quarter of a move.

Casualties

When a character is hit by an opponent's fire he/she becomes wounded.

One wound - all skills halved (rounding up) and all movement halved.

Two wounds - incapacitated - plays no further part in the game but is still alive.

Three wounds mean a character is dead.

All wounds are cumulative.

Weapons

Single Shot and Semi-Automatic

This category includes all firearms including those capable of fully automatic operation (when not being used in fully automatic mode).

Type	Rounds per Turn	Range (for 20mm figs)
Pistol	4	12m (6 inches)
Rifle	5	72m (36 inches)
SMG (Cat. 1)	6	24m (12 inches)
SMG (Cat. 2)	6	36m (18 inches)
LMG	6	36m (18 inches) 72m (36 inches) on bipod

SMG (Cat. 1) - Earlier model sub-machine guns with a limited range

SMG (Cat. 2) - Later models with longer range

Fully Automatic

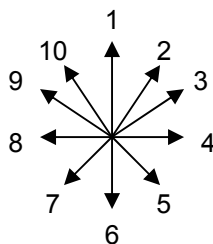
When used in this mode the weapon is capable of engaging more than one target. This is not possible for any weapon in the previous category.

Up to three targets may be engaged but they must be adjacent. Adjacent means within 4m (2 inches). Two targets within 8m may be engaged, this is achieved by carrying out the procedure as if there were another target between them (those shots are used but miss!). Automatic fire expends three times the number of rounds as normal fire. The Fire skill number is as normal for the first target, but is reduced by 1 for the second target, and reduced by 2 for the third target.

Thrown

These rules are used for thrown weapons with a range effect. Knives and the like simply hit or miss their target based on whether the card is equal to or below the skill number or not. With area effect weapons, such as grenades, petrol bombs etc., it is essential to know where these land. Where one of these weapons misses an additional two cards are drawn. The first card indicates the direction (from the target) and the second the distance.

The first card operates as follows:



The second card simply represents the distance in metres.

The following table details the effects:

Type	Range	Radius of Effect	Effect
Grenade	20m (10 inches)	8m (4 inches)	Red card - wound Black card - no effect
Petrol Bomb	20m (10 inches)	6m (3 inches)	Red card - on fire (1 wound / 2 rounds if not extinguished*) Black card - no effect

*To extinguish draw a card for each attempt (1 per round per character attempting) - if black fire is put out.

Special Weapons

This encompasses any weapon considered to be out of the ordinary. Rules for each of these should be designed by the umpire using the basic principles of the ***Hit the Deck!*** system - Keep it simple!

See also the ***Hit the Deck!*** Special Weapons Supplement - *To be released separately*

Vehicles

Movement

Vehicles move in the Movement Phase and must also declare a Movement Mode in this case an approximate speed. If they wish to perform an emergency stop they must move the distance listed prior to coming to a complete stand still.

<i>Movement Mode (Speed)</i>	<i>Distance (maximum)</i>	<i>Stopping Distance</i>
10mph	120m (60 inches)	12m (6 inches)
20mph	250m (125 inches)	25m (12½ inches)
30mph	400m (200 inches)	40m (20 inches)

Speeds over 30 mph are unlikely to be used in these type of games

All manoeuvres are governed by common sense.

Armour

All vehicles are divided into one of five categories:

<i>Category</i>	<i>Typical Vehicles</i>
<u>U</u> n-armoured	trucks, jeeps
<u>L</u> ight	half- tracks, scout cars, small tanks (Pzkw I / II)
<u>M</u> edium	Sherman, Pzkw III/IV, T34
<u>H</u> eavy	Tiger
e <u>X</u> tra- <u>h</u> eavy	King Tiger, Panther

Un-armoured vehicles may be damaged by small arms fire. Each vehicle should be allocated damage points (1 deducted per hit) and is destroyed when these reach zero. (e.g. Jeep = 2 points, Truck = 3 points)

Armoured vehicles are not damaged by small arms fire but exposed crew can be considered targets as normal. To damage armoured vehicles anti-tank weapons are required.

Anti-Tank Weapons

These weapons are split into three categories:

<i>Category</i>	<i>Typical</i>
<u>L</u> ight	Panzerfaust
<u>M</u> edium	Panzerschreck, Bazooka, 37mm PAK
<u>H</u> eavy	75mm PAK

Firing is achieved by nominating a target, drawing a card against the relevant skill number and, if successful, noting the card's suit and consulting the table below:

<i>Anti-Tank</i>	<i>Armour</i>	<i>Spade</i>	<i>Club</i>	<i>Diamond</i>	<i>Heart</i>
L	L	Disabled	Disabled	Damaged	Damaged
L	M	No effect	Disabled	Damaged	Damaged
L	H	No effect	No effect	Damaged	Damaged
L	X	No effect	No effect	No effect	Damaged
M	L	Disabled	Disabled	Disabled	Damaged
M	M	Disabled	Disabled	Damaged	Damaged
M	H	No effect	Disabled	Damaged	Damaged
M	X	No effect	No effect	Damaged	Damaged
H	L	Disabled	Disabled	Disabled	Damaged
H	M	Disabled	Disabled	Disabled	Damaged
H	H	Disabled	Disabled	Damaged	Damaged
H	X	No effect	Disabled	Damaged	Damaged
Damaged	Odd Card	Track damage - no further movement			
	Even Card	Turret damage - unable to traverse			
Disabled	Odd Card	Crew abandons vehicle			
	Even Card	Vehicle destroyed			

Anti-Personnel

When used against personnel it is assumed that the weapons (including mortars) will be loaded with high explosive ammunition and have a range covering the entire wargames table. This is then dealt with in the same manner as thrown grenades, with a point of aim nominated and a skill number draw made. The relevant ranges and blast radii are given below:

<i>Weapon Category</i>	<i>Blast Radius</i>	<i>Effect</i>	<i>Example</i>
L	10m (5 inches)	As grenade	Light Mortar
M	15m (7½ inches)	Ditto	Med. Mortar / Light Gun
H	20m (10 inches)	Ditto	Med. Gun

Optional Rules

These rules require that the specified picture cards are included within the deck.

The Knave

When a Jack is drawn this activates a pre-determined event. These should be generated by the umpire in advance.

Lady Luck

When a Queen is drawn this represents "Lady Luck", i.e. something good or bad happens to the character for whom the card was drawn. Red Queens represent good luck and Black Queens represent bad.

For example, when character drawing a card to accurately throw a grenade draws the Queen of Clubs then he suffers bad luck. The grenade drops at his feet, or it is a dud or some such unfortunate event as decided by the umpire.

For King and Country!

When a King is drawn this card may be retained by the player for later use.

When attempting a particularly courageous act at a later stage in the game, the player may play the card saying "For King and Country!" (or the appropriate equivalent for non-British characters).

On completion of the courageous act the player draws a card, if the card is the same colour (red or black) as the King then any wound suffered whilst performing the act turn out only to be flesh wounds and have no adverse effect. If the card is the other colour then any wounds are applied to the character, who will then be mentioned in dispatches (possibly posthumously!)



Movement

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Crawl	4m (2 inches)	Thrown weapons ranges halved
Search	8m (4 inches)	
Walk	16m (8 inches)	Spotting mines etc. Halved
Run	24m (12 inches)	Fire skill halved

Weapons

<i>Type</i>	<i>Rounds per Turn</i>	<i>Range (for 20mm figs)</i>
Pistol	4	12m (6 inches)
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SMG (Cat. 1)	6	24m (12 inches)
LMG	6	36m (18 inches) 72m (36 inches) on bipod
MMG		Line of sight

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Speeds over 30 mph are unlikely to be used in this game

<i>Category</i>	<i>Typical Vehicles</i>
Un-armoured	trucks, jeeps
Light	half- tracks, scout cars, small tanks (Pzkw I / II)
Medium	Sherman, Pzkw III/IV, T34

<i>Anti-Tank</i>	<i>Armour</i>	<i>Spade</i>	<i>Club</i>	<i>Diamond</i>	<i>Heart</i>
L	L	Disabled	Disabled	Damaged	Damaged
L	M	No effect	Disabled	Damaged	Damaged
L	H	No effect	No effect	Damaged	Damaged
L	X	No effect	No effect	No effect	Damaged
M	L	Disabled	Disabled	Disabled	Damaged
M	M	Disabled	Disabled	Damaged	Damaged
M	H	No effect	Disabled	Damaged	Damaged
M	X	No effect	No effect	Damaged	Damaged
H	L	Disabled	Disabled	Disabled	Damaged
H	M	Disabled	Disabled	Disabled	Damaged
H	H	Disabled	Disabled	Damaged	Damaged
H	X	No effect	Disabled	Damaged	Damaged

Damaged *Odd Card* *Track damage - no further movement*
Even Card *Turret damage - unable to traverse*
Disabled *Odd Card* *Crew abandons vehicle*
Even Card *Vehicle destroyed*

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