

Editor

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COLLABORATORS

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Chapter 1

Editor

1.1 TaskForce Mission Editor

TaskForce Mission Editor
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Contents

- Introduction
- Distribution
- Requirements
- Installation

Mission Design

- History
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- Appendix A: Items
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1.2 What is this program for?

This editor was written for use with the strategy game TaskForce. It allows you to design your own maps and define individual mission objectives.

While TaskForce itself with just a few pre-designed scenarios is rather inflexible, this tool offers you everything you need to create an almost infinite number of equally challenging and entertaining hours of fun. Think I'm boasting? Well... erm... I guess you're right. Anyway, if you still need to read the "What is this for?" section, you might as well believe me ;-). Better go on to the real things...

1.3 Distribution and Disclaimer

The TaskForce Mission Editor may only be distributed together with TaskForce.

All conditions mentioned in the TaskForce documentation also apply here.

TaskForce and the editor may be redistributed for non-commercial purposes provided no changes are made to the archive.

DISCLAIMER:

USE OF THIS PROGRAM IS ENTIRELY AT YOUR OWN RISK. THE AUTHOR CANNOT BE HELD LIABLE FOR ANY DAMAGE DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY CAUSED BY USE OR MISUSE OF FILES IN THIS DISTRIBUTION.

This program makes use of the ReqTools package which is ©1991-1994 Nico François, 1995-1997 Magnus Holmgren.

TaskForce and all related files are ©1997-1999 Jens Granseuer.

1.4 Requirements

To run the TaskForce Mission Editor you need any Amiga model with at least Kickstart 2.04.

reqtools.library V38 or higher must be installed on your system. The library is included in this archive.

1.5 Installation

The editor will automatically be installed when you execute the TaskForce installation script.

1.6 Create your own missions

A word of warning before you begin: The editor is currently not what I would call a truly user-friendly program. It was first only intended as a developer tool to make mission creation easier for me. However, I have now decided also to release the editor as well to allow other people to design their own missions. As a result of this policy, some routines are not really secure. Read this manual thoroughly before you start messing around! This means, for example, that you have to care for obsolete events when you delete a character. Illegal input will usually not bring up error messages, but may cause unpredictable behaviour (and will probably crash your system) when you try to run the module with TaskForce. You should always know what you are doing!

Now, for those of you who haven't hidden in some safe place, yet, here's the basic concept. Missions in TaskForce consist of six different parts:

1. map
2. characters
3. items
4. events
5. objectives
6. miscellaneous

You can write the mission data to a file in an almost human-readable format using Export Data from the Project menu. This file can be read using any ASCII text editor. This way it is much easier to keep track of the data and to debug a mission, should the need arise.

At the beginning you have to decide whether you want to create a mission for one or two human players. According to this decision, you have to design the map and define the goals for the teams. As the computer player is currently not very smart, don't expect him to press buttons, unlock doors, open crates etc. It will completely ignore objectives like Coord or Download, but some, like e.g. Kill, of course still have their effects.

Human players may not control more than eight units at any time during the game. This is especially important to remember when you are using events of the types Reinforcements or Change Alignment. For computer controlled players there are no such limitations.

Finally, you need to write a mission briefing so the players know what they are expected to do. For some guidelines on how to do this have a look at the briefing of one of the missions included in the archive. These briefings should contain some basic information about the mission, like difficulty, objectives, and possibly some kind of background information or story.

1.7 How to edit the map

The map created at the start of the editor has a size of 30 * 30 squares. If you want to change this, select New Map from the Project menu. Width and height of a map may be anything from 20 to 80. The new map will be filled with the currently selected block.

Pressing space will place the block that is currently selected in the selection area at the bottom of the screen at the position of the cursor. You can move the cursor around on the map display using the number pad. Pressing '5' will activate paste mode. If you now move the cursor the selected block will automatically be placed at your current position. Pressing '5' again will deactivate paste mode.

You can select a different block using the cursor keys or by clicking the left mouse button on the desired block.

To jump to a different location on the map, press 'g' and enter the appropriate coordinates or click the left mouse button on the small overview map at the lower right of the screen.

To assist you in your operations there are some drawing tools. By

pressing 'r' you can draw rectangles filled with the selected block. 'l' will help you draw lines. Using 'x' you can finally replace all occurrences of one block by the selected block. This is useful if you suddenly decide to use moats instead of walls, for example.

1.8 How to create life

An important note: Human players may control a maximum of eight units at any time.

If you press 'c' on the map, you get to the character window.

Each character has some individual characteristics which are used to determine how well he can do certain things.

If you create or edit a character, you are asked to enter the values you want him to have.

- * Name: Call him what you like, but keep it short (max.19 characters). Here you can also set the unit's user ID. With the help of this ID tag you can group characters. It is currently used only in connection with the Kill objective.
- * Location: Where will he start on the map. Note: If you intend to use a character as a Reinforcement, you needn't bother about this, but you must set Team to Reinforcement.
- * Team: For which team does he fight. Team 1 and Team 2 represent the according players. Team CPU is a third team which will always be controlled by the computer. This team cannot have any objectives but it will automatically fight both of the first two teams. The difficulty setting for members of the CPU team is Advanced.

Units intended to be used with the Reinforcements event (and only those) must be assigned to Reinforcements. Unaligned units are controlled by noone. Such a character can be used either as a "dumb target" or in connection with a Change Alignment event.

- * HP: Hit points. The average value for the average human is about 25.
 - * AP: Action points. Average value 8. Be careful when altering this value. Action points have a vast effect on the game and may easily unbalance it. Use wisely.
 - * Attributes:
 - * Strength: Defines how much a character can carry and how hard he can hit in close combat.
 - * Firearms: Defines the character's marksmanship.
 - * Close Combat: The better this value the more likely he is to score a hit in close combat.
 - * Perception: At the moment only used in skill tests and guard mode. If the defender has got a higher perception rating than the attacker, the defender has the first shot.
-

- * **Features:** Here you can do some finetuning on the units you create.
- * **Mobile:** Mobile units are able to walk around. Given no other orders they will wander around randomly instead of playing dumb targets. (default)
- * **Invisibility:** The only means to possibly track down invisible units is a thermal scanner (or pure luck). The computer player has no means to defend himself against invisible units.
- * **IR Signature:** Determines whether the unit will be detected by thermal scanners. (default)
- * **Regeneration:** Regenerating units will regain one HP per turn if they have been wounded.

- * **Talk:** This is the standard response of the unit if someone tries to talk to it. Can be changed during play by the New Talk event. No selection will result in the message "There is no reply." Naturally, this only applies if the unit talked to is not unconscious.

- * **Image:** Should really be self-explanatory...

- * **Task:** Here you can give some basic commands to computer-controlled units. Units with no orders will move around randomly until they discover an enemy unit.

A command of standard priority can be cancelled at any time if the computer believes to have a better idea, while high priority commands always take precedence over the commands issued by the computer. However, in some situations this may render the actions of the computer player somewhat ineffective.

After that you can put up to eight items in the character's inventory. This process is exactly the same as in item creation, but you only have to define type and charges. Keep in mind that the overall weight of all items may not exceed Strength times 4. The editor takes care of this, and notifies you when you reach this limit. The checkbox behind each item marks whether this item can be dropped. This is especially useful when you equip a computer unit with a nasty weapon, e.g. a grenade launcher, but you don't want the player to get his hands on it. By unchecking the box, the launcher will perish along with the unit.

Pressing 'n' or the 'Next Unit' gadget during a game of TaskForce will select the player's unit following the active one. Therefore you can group certain units so that they are activated subsequently by altering their position in the units list.

The menu item Unit Names in the Edit menu allows you to edit the names of all units. This option is especially useful for translators.

1.9 Behind the enemy lines

If you decide to create a mission yourself it may be important to know what the computer player will or won't do, so you can better predict his movements and steer them if necessary.

At the moment the computer player isn't able to handle any events, so the single player missions should be kept simple in layout and internal structure. The only objectives that will have any effect are Kill and Survive objectives in so far, as the computer will score the points if the condition is met. However, this does not mean that it will "hunt" the target. Likewise it won't especially protect a unit targeted by a Survive objective. By issuing the corresponding 'Goto' command, you can also use the Coords objective.

The computer player should, for the reasons mentioned above, be used as an obstacle for the human player to accomplish his own goals, rather than as an intelligent foe with goals of his own.

Computer-controlled units will make use of firearms and short-ranged weapons, but no throwing weapons. They will reload their guns in case they are given spare ammo. If they don't carry the required ammo, they will search their belongings for other, more lethal weapons and equip them if possible. Of course, guns take precedence over hand-to-hand weapons here.

CPU units will apply medkits if they think they could need them, but they won't even open locked doors if they carry the appropriate key. They won't pick up any items lying around, either.

1.10 Standard commands of the computer player

Available commands are:

- * Goto: The unit will try to reach the destination. If it encounters any resistance on its way it will first try to eliminate the threat and afterwards resume its course.
- * Goto (strict): This is similar to the Goto command, but the unit won't heed any other forces. It will simply ignore friend and foe and head straight for the destination. This is the only legal command for non-aligned units.
- * Patrol: The unit will go back and forth between two waypoints and attack enemy units.
- * Sentry: The unit won't move but attack all enemy forces in sight.

1.11 How to edit items

If you press 'i' in the main window, the item window will pop up. It contains a list of all items on the map that are not carried by a character. Here you can add new items, edit or delete them.

When you select New or Edit the editor will prompt you for some numbers. A list of possible values can be found at the appendix of

this document.

Once you have created the item, you can only change its position on the map, its charges, or delete it. Depending on the type of item you chose you may not even be able to alter the charges. Again, see the appendix for more information.

1.12 How to create events

Events are, as the name could have made you think, events that may or may not occur in the course of a mission. All events must be operated to trigger them. Examples include, for example, traps in crates which are set off when the crate is opened.

Basically, the procedure to create and edit events resembles the item creation. The only difference are the parameters that have to be entered. I can give you no general description here as the required input differs from event to event. The exact values may be looked up in the events list.

To modify the order in which the events are processed you can move them up or down in the list. The higher an event is positioned in the list the higher its priority. New events are always added at the head of the list.

For most events you can define flags to restrict their use.

Whenever you create a new event, it is automatically initialized to some default values. Note however, that those values may still be illegal (like placing reinforcements on top of walls) but should prevent crashes with the main program.

1.13 How to define mission objectives

By mission objectives you define how many points a player is awarded for which actions. Once a player has gained 100 points, the mission is considered complete. A player may also lose points, but the score will never drop below -100 points.

Each mission objective is valid for only one of the players so it is possible to define entirely different goals for the opposing teams. A possible setup could command Team A to kill a bad guy, get his nasty weapon and retreat to point X, while Team B has to free a hostage and guide it safely back to point Y. Ideally, of course, the two plots should intertwine somewhere, or the two parties might not even see each other from a distance.

You can select a text for each objective that will be displayed in a requester when the points are scored.

Similar to many events you can set flags for objectives, too. However,

they are used in a different way. While event flags are used to determine whether an event can be executed, the objective flags will be set when the objective is fulfilled.

You always have to make sure that both players can achieve 100 points. Otherwise they won't be able to win.

In most cases you should create an objective which ends the mission when all members of one team are dead. Note that this is not necessary for the computer in a single player mission, as the mission is always considered a failure when all the human player's units are killed.

The procedure to create mission objectives is similar to the creation of events, and all important figures appear in the objectives list.

It is important to note that the conditions for the completion of mission objectives are always and only checked at the end of a turn.

Whenever you create a new objective, it is automatically initialized to some default values. Note however, that those values may still be illegal but should nevertheless prevent crashes with the main program.

1.14 Something for nothing...

Select the Settings item from the Edit menu to alter the following settings.

Number of Players

This is the number of human players.

Flags

For each mission TaskForce maintains a set of eight user-controlled global flags which are used to enable or disable certain events. Every time an event is operated the flags set for the event are checked. If all enabled event flags are also set in the global mission flags the event is executed as usual. If one or more of the requested flags are not set the event is considered disabled. Some events do not allow to set flags. They are always executed.

The initial state of the global flags can be adjusted in the editor. During the course of a mission they can be manipulated using the Set Flag event or by reaching objectives.

Texts

These are standard messages that will be displayed at the end of a mission; one for the happy end and the other for defeat.

Turn Limit

You can set a turn limit for your mission. In this case the action will end at the end of the specified turn if it has not been completed then.

1.15 The list of items

Name	Level	Maximum Charges	Range	Accuracy	Weight
Akobe Shotgun	10	6	7	7	5
Armour Jacket	2	1	—	—	6
Armour Vest	1	1	—	—	4
Bersen Guardian	8	8	8	7	3
Blue Keycard	—	1	—	—	1
Camouflage Armour	2	1	—	—	6
Crowbar	3	1	—	4	4
Crystal Roamer SE	14	4	6	7	6
Data Disk	—	1	—	—	1
F&W Headhunter	9	8	7	7	3
Green Keycard	—	1	—	—	1
Grenade	30	5	—	2	2
Grenade Launcher	30	3	15	4	8
Knife	4	5	—	4	1
Medkit	—	30	—	—	4
Pistol Clip	—	20	—	—	1
Plastic Explosive	30	0	—	—	3
Radio Transmitter	—	10	—	—	2
Red Keycard	—	1	—	—	1
Rifle Ammo	—	10	—	—	2
Rostow A107	12	15	12	6	5
Security Armour	3	1	—	—	8
Shotgun Shells	—	15	—	—	2
SMG Rounds	—	20	—	—	2
Steroids	—	10	—	—	1
Teeth	6	1	—	5	0
Thermal Scanner	6	1	6	—	3
Toolkit	—	1	—	—	6
Vaeder M42a	18	2	20	10	6
Yellow Keycard	—	1	—	—	1

1.16 The list of events

Change Alignment
 Change Tile
 Explosion
 Find Item
 Give Orders
 Lock Door
 Message
 Move Tile Horiz
 Move Tile Vert
 New Talk
 Play Sound
 Reinforcements
 Remove Events
 Score
 Set Flags
 Set Time Limit
 Teleport

1.17 Change Alignment

This event makes it possible to assign characters to a different team during a mission. This is not intended to switch mercenaries from player 1 to player 2, but to give non-controlled characters a controller. This way you can, for example, free a hostage and guide it back safely.

Location is the position of the event, not of the character. You already have to set the unit's position when you create it.

Access allows you to restrict this event to one team. Normally all events can be activated by everyone. However, imagine Team 1 is to free a hostage, while Team 2 tries to fend off the intruders (Team 1). If a member of the second team now pulls the lever to open the cell door, the hostage will instantly join Team 1, even though they possibly don't even know of each other (at least not their positions). If you restrict the event to Team 1, you can prevent this situation.

1.18 Change Tile

Using Change Tile you can replace any one block of the map by another block of your choice.

This event allows you to create effects such as the revelation of a secret passage when a lever is pulled, the destruction of the only bridge across a river or you can trap a mercenary.

If the square to be changed is occupied by a unit and the new tile is impassable (like a wall or water) the occupant will be killed. This way it's possible to create trap doors or crush units between closing doors.

Under Operation you can select one of three possible operating modes for this event.

1. The event does always work. Each time the event is activated the target square is altered again.
2. The event does always work, but each time the new block and the target block are swapped. That means, if you replaced water with a wall, the next activation will break down the wall and flood the square again.
3. The event works only n times.

You don't need to define an event of this type for doors and levers. They are handled automatically.

1.19 Explosion

This event lets you create instant fireworks at the touch of a button.

The standard value for explosion power as used by Plastic Explosives, for example, is 30.

The hot spot is, of course, the square where the explosion will be ignited.

1.20 Find Item

With the help of this event you can make items available during a mission. These items will not be placed on the map and remain invisible until the event is activated. You can, for example, hide something in a crate. The item will drop to the square the activating character is standing on.

Some containers such as crates can be destroyed. In such a case all events placed on the square are discarded. With Find Item you can decide on whether you want to destroy the item as well or create it and drop it to the chosen location.

When the event is activated, the operating character must succeed in a perception test. If a random number between 1 and 11 exceeds his Perception rating, he won't notice the item. The modifier you can enter here is added to the random value. This means that a modifier greater than 0 makes it more difficult to notice the item, while a value smaller than 0 makes it easier. A modifier of +10 makes it impossible even for the eagle's eyes while a modifier of -10 guarantees success.

1.21 Give Orders

This event will give new orders to a computer-controlled unit. Most of the basic commands are available here.

The command priority affects whether the orders actually take effect. High and standard priority commands are always issued, but the latter can be changed again by the computer player. Orders of Low priority are only executed if the targeted unit is otherwise unoccupied.

1.22 Lock Door

This event allows you to lock doors, so that they can't be opened normally. First there are three possibilities: The door could be jammed completely, or you just need some kind of key to get through, or you just want the computer player(s) to keep their hands away from it. This way you can make sure that the human player(s) enter the location first. After the door has been opened or closed once, the lock is removed entirely.

If you choose to have a key, there are three more options.

1. The door can always be operated by someone who owns the appropriate key.

2. The key is only required for the very first use. After the door has been operated once, everybody may open or close it.
3. Even with the key the door can be opened or closed only once. After that it won't move any more.

There may be only one event of this type per block.

1.23 Message

Message offers you the possibility to include your own messages in a mission.

To do this you have to create text file containing all messages you want to include. This can be done using any ASCII editor. The file must have the following structure:

```
<--- Start of example --->
# <- This marks a new message.
This is my first message.
# New message. This line is not interpreted. May be used for comments.
This is my second message.
This also belongs to my second message.
And this is the third line.
# Next separator = third message
Have a nice day!
<--- End of example --->
```

A single message must not be longer than 1000 characters including newlines. If the message is to be displayed in the text box, it must not be longer than 35 characters and may not contain newlines. Lines to be displayed in a requester should be about 60 characters at maximum. You can import 30000 bytes of text at most.

Separator lines (starting with #) must not be longer than 100 characters.

After you have created the text file you must import the messages to the editor using the menu item Import texts in the Project menu. Now the messages should be available. Messages containing newlines will look a bit strange in the listviews but will be displayed correctly in requesters.

1.24 Move Tile

Using Move Tile you can realize things like rafts or moving platforms. If the event is activated the specified square will move horizontally or vertically until it has reached its destination. Characters as well as items and events located on the same square will be transported along. If the event is triggered a second time, the platform will be moved back where it came from.

If you have two or more events controlling the same platform the block

to replace the platform image must be the same at the source and the destination.

If you have set up only one such event you may use different blocks.

The destination square as well as the block that will replace the platform image must be of a type characters can't walk onto.

1.25 New Talk

In TaskForce units can talk to other units. As default setting you will get the "There is no reply." message unless you specified another text when creating the unit. This event allows you to change the response during the course of a mission.

1.26 Play Sound

Playing a sound effect can be useful to illustrate that something has happened. Suppose you have set up a terminal which will open or close a door when operated. If you don't play a sound effect it is often difficult to note whether the action had any effect. If you play the door sound on operation the player will know he triggered something.

1.27 Reinforcements

With Reinforcements you can make additional forces available for one of the teams .

If you want to use a character as a reinforcement, you must assign him to the team Reinforcement accordingly.

If the square you want the new unit to appear on is already occupied, all adjacent squares will be checked in random order. If one of them is passable the unit will be placed there. If no free square is found the unit will be discarded!

1.28 Remove Events

Remove Events disables all or a certain type of events at the specified location.

The target square must be different from the event location.

1.29 Score

Score is a mixture between an event and an objective. Objectives are rather restricted as victory conditions are only checked for at the end of a turn. This event gives you the opportunity to award points for certain operations. This could be opening a door, using a teleporter or a computer, or talking to another character.

The points are scored when a unit of the requested team operates the event.

1.30 Set Flag

This event sets and/or unsets the specified global flags.

1.31 Teleport

Teleport allows you to transport units to any place on the map.

There may be problems if the destination square is already occupied, because only one unit may be on a single square at the same time, so you can decide on whether you want to cancel the transport in that case, or if you want both units to swap their positions.

It is possible to remove units from game using this event. Do not set this option if you are using the Kill objective with group or team targets! In this case all units removed from game will be marked killed. There are no problems with single targets, though.

1.32 Set Time Limit

By using Set Time Limit you can manipulate or set up a time limit during the course of a mission. It is recommended that you only use this event in single player scenarios, as only the player who activates the event is informed of the new time limit.

1.33 The list of mission objectives

- Coords
- Download
- Escape
- Get Item
- Kill
- Repair
- Survival
- Tile Type

1.34 Coords

Points for this objective are awarded when a character reaches the required coordinates and ends his turn there.

Normally this goal applies to the entire team. If you want a specific character to get to the denoted target square you must explicitly say so.

1.35 Download

Points for this objective are awarded when a character uses a Data Disk on the specified computer terminal.

1.36 Escape

Points for this objective are awarded when the specified unit leaves the map using a teleporter.

Alternately, you can specify a certain item type. In that case points are scored if any unit of the team carries the specified item when it leaves the map.

1.37 Get Item

Points for this objective are awarded when the specified item is brought to the specified coordinates. The item must be dropped to the ground there to complete this goal and will be removed from the map entirely. If you are requested to bring two charges of the required item, and you drop three of them, only the requested charges are removed.

1.38 Kill

Points for this objective are awarded when the specified target is eliminated. The target may be a single unit, an entire team, or a specially marked group.

If you selected a group as a target, all members of this group must have the same user ID. They will be identified by this ID tag so this is the only information needed by the event.

Do not use teams or groups as targets if you are also using teleporters which allow units to leave the map!
In that case, escaped units would also be marked killed.

1.39 Repair

Points for this objective are awarded when a unit applies a Toolkit to the specified "broken" object.

1.40 Survival

Points for this objective are awarded if the given character is still alive on the specified turn.

1.41 Tile Type

Points for this objective are awarded when the specified map square has changed to the required type. This could be a box that must be destroyed, a door that must be opened, or a secret passage that must be discovered.

1.42 Contact

If you encounter any bugs, have some ideas for improvements, or just want to tell me how much you (don't ?) like TaskForce, send your comments to this address:

Jens Granseuer
Junkermanns Weg 7
59071 Hamm
Germany

Email: jensgr@gmx.net

If you create any missions for this game, feel encouraged to send them, too. If I like them, I may include them in the archive.

Have fun!
