

Battles in a Distant Desert Help Index

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Introduction

Battles in a Distant Desert (BDD) is a collection of battles which could have taken place during Operation Desert Storm. Each battle is presented in the form of a scenario which can be selected by you. Although this game presents a common interface for each battle, each is unique in the use and types of units involved, as well as the strategies and tactics needed to win.

The game is played by each player, moving all, some or none of the player's units in alternating turns. Each scenario has specific victory conditions and a set number of turns to play.

Tutorial

The following describes how to do many of the functions that are needed to play the game.

Maps

The map in the upper right corner of the display is a map of the entire world or battlefield. The bigger map occupying the lower left portion of the display is called the Map View, and is where all the action occurs.

Moving around on the maps

Place the pointer on a spot on the world or battlefield map and click the left mouse button. The Map View will now change and display the portion of the map indicated by the position of the pointer.

Another way of moving the Map View is to use the vertical/horizontal arrows and slider buttons that are located along the edge of the map. Use the pointer and click the left button when on the desired arrow to move the Map View one location at a time. Drag the slider buttons to move the Map View several locations at a time.

Selecting a unit

Select a unit by placing the pointer on the icon of the unit to be selected and click the left mouse button.

Another way to select a unit is to place the pointer on the name of the unit to be selected, within the UNIT LIST on the right side of the display, and double clicking the left mouse button.

Yet another way of selecting a unit is to select ORDERS/NEXT UNIT from the Map View Menu and the first unit displayed in the UNIT LIST will be selected.

Moving a unit

Move a unit by selecting the unit to move, initiating the MOVEMENT MODE for the unit, and indicating the location on the Map View to where the unit should move.

Once a unit is selected, a red square appears around the unit, and a status line for that unit is displayed at the bottom of the Map View.

MOVEMENT MODE is initiated by placing the pointer on the icon of the selected unit and double clicking the left mouse button.

Another way to initiate MOVEMENT MODE for a selected unit, is to select ORDERS/MOVE UNIT from the Map View Menu.

When MOVEMENT MODE is initiated, the status line will display "MOVING".

The unit can now be moved by selecting a destination to which the unit will move. A destination can be selected by placing the pointer on a terrain location within the Map View and clicking the left mouse button.

MOVEMENT MODE for the selected unit can be cancelled by placing the pointer on the icon

of the selected unit and clicking the left mouse button.

Units fire weapons during movement

There is no direct control over when or at what target a unit will fire. The unit will attempt to fire its weapons during movement, based on the individual, squad or vehicle commander's appraisal of the available targets and threats, and considering the FIRE and TARGETING settings which are shown on the UNIT REPORT for the unit.

Displaying the Unit Report

A UNIT REPORT can be displayed for a selected unit by placing the pointer on the icon of the selected unit and clicking the right mouse button.

Unloading and Loading with Transport Capable Units

Units can be unloaded from units which are transporting them, by selecting the transport unit, displaying the UNIT REPORT, and placing the pointer on the name of the "Transporting" unit to be unloaded and double clicking the left mouse button. The unloaded unit will appear on the Map View and in the UNIT LIST after pressing the "continue" button of the UNIT REPORT of the transporting unit.

Units can be loaded onto transport capable units, by selecting the transport unit, moving the transport unit into the same location as the unit to be loaded (the unit to be loaded must have 1/2 or more of its movement points remaining in order to load), displaying the UNIT REPORT for the transport unit, and pressing the "load" button of the UNIT REPORT. The loaded unit will disappear from the Map View and the UNIT LIST after pressing the "continue" button of the UNIT REPORT of the transporting unit.

When a unit is unloaded, it spends 1/2 of its movement points to do so. And as mentioned above, it needs 1/2 of its movement points in order to load.

Beginning A New Game

A new game can be started by selecting a scenario, from New Game, and choosing which side in the scenario you wish to play and the new game will begin with the first player's turn.

Loading A Scenario

Available scenarios are presented in a Scenario Selection Dialog Box which lists the Title of each scenario which could be selected.

A Description window under the list of scenarios will provide a brief overview of the currently highlighted scenario selection.

A Mode of Play option allows you to choose the way the scenario will be played, with your choice of the computer playing both sides, the computer playing against you or you playing another person.

The Player 1 option allows you to indicate which side in the scenario will be the first player. This option is not used in Computer vs. Computer mode.

Once you have highlighted the scenario you wish to play, selected the mode and side you wish to play, selecting OK will start the scenario. Selecting NO will dismiss the Scenario Selection Dialog Box without starting a scenario, and return you to the BDP Main Menu.

Load Game

Loading an existing game can be initiated by selecting BATTLES/LOAD from the BDD Main Menu .

A selection box will appear with the descriptions of all existing games. DOUBLE CLICK the LEFT MOUSE BUTTON with the mouse pointer over the desired game, or select a game to load by clicking the LEFT MOUSE BUTTON one time with the mouse pointer over the desired game, and clicking the LEFT MOUSE BUTTON on the OK button. The selected game will load if it is available.

Save Game

Saving the current game can be done in two ways.

If the game has been saved before, and you wish to save the game under the same description, select SAVE from the Main Menu and the game will save under the current description.

If the game is a new game, and has not yet been saved, select SAVE AS from the Main Menu. A selection box will appear containing the descriptions of all possible saved games. Click the LEFT MOUSE BUTTON with the mouse pointer over the description you wish to use. You can enter a description for the saved game, up to 15 characters. Press the ENTER key or click the LEFT MOUSE BUTTON on the OK button to confirm the save.

Game Options

The sound effects can be switch on or off.

The hidden units feature can be set so opposing units will be hidden until the units are in a line of sight or shown at all times.

The message delay for reports can be set to short, medium and long to determine how long the message will stay on the screen before being removed.

Battlefield Map

The Battlefield Map presents a concise view of the entire battle area within a single window.

The Map View is indicated by the red box on the Battlefield Map. Each type of terrain is indicated by a different color on the Battlefield Map.

One of the most accessed uses of the Battlefield Map, is to Jump the Map View to a new location on the battlefield by clicking the LEFT MOUSE BUTTON while the mouse pointer is over the Battlefield Map location for the jump.

Map View

The game supports a detailed map view of the battlefield map in each scenario.

Centering the Map View on the CURRENT UNIT

The map view can be centered on the CURRENT UNIT by selecting ORDERS/CENTER VIEW item from the map view menu. This function will only work if there is a CURRENT UNIT selected.

Scrolling theMap View

The map view can be scrolled by clicking the LEFT MOUSE BUTTON on the horizontal or vertical scroll bar controls of the window of the map view.

The map view is scrolled one location at a time when the arrow controls are clicked or one full map view at a time when the scroll bar is clicked.

Jumping the Map View

The map view can jump to a new location of the Battlefield Map by clicking the **LEFT MOUSE BUTTON** on the desired location on the Battlefield Map, to where the map view should now be centered.

Unit Control

Units can be controlled using a combination of mouse button clicks and menu controls. Only the movement and firing influences of the unit can be controlled.

Unit Selection

The unit control begins with the selection of a unit to become the CURRENT UNIT.

The CURRENT UNIT is identified by the red box which encloses the icon on the map, and the name, remaining movement points and status bar displayed at the bottom of the active map view.

A unit can become the CURRENT UNIT by clicking the LEFT MOUSE BUTTON one time on the unit icon as displayed on the map view. When a unit becomes the CURRENT UNIT, it automatically enters NORMAL CONTROL MODE.

Also units can be selected by selecting the NEXT UNIT menu item from the ORDERS menu available from the Map View Menu or by double clicking the LEFT MOUSE BUTTON when the mouse pointer is over the Unit Name in the Unit Selector Window.

NORMAL CONTROL MODE allows the player to control the unit. All movement and reporting is controlled from this mode.

A unit can be de-selected as the CURRENT UNIT by selecting a different unit to become the CURRENT UNIT, or clicking the LEFT MOUSE BUTTON on any unoccupied location within the active map view.

Unit Movement

MOVEMENT MODE can be entered by the CURRENT UNIT by double clicking the LEFT MOUSE BUTTON, while the unit is in NORMAL CONTROL MODE and the mouse pointer is located on the unit icon of the CURRENT UNIT, as displayed on the Map View.

MOVEMENT MODE can also be entered by selecting the MOVE UNIT menu item from the Map View ORDERS sub-menu with the mouse pointer or by pressing ALT-O ALT-M on the keyboard (which is the keyboard equivalent to selecting the ORDERS/MOVE UNIT menu item).

MOVEMENT MODE is indicated by the "MOVING" message appearing in the status report bar at the bottom of the Map View, and the CURRENT UNIT will stay in this mode until the LEFT MOUSE BUTTON is clicked one time while the mouse pointer is located on the unit icon of the CURRENT UNIT. The termination of MOVEMENT MODE is indicated by the "MOVING" message not appearing.

The destination for the move of the CURRENT UNIT is indicated by clicking the LEFT MOUSE BUTTON one time on the location within the Map View. If the unit retains sufficient movement points to reach the location indicated, it will attempt to do so. At the point the unit no longer possesses enough movement points to reach the desired location, the unit will simply not move.

Unit Status

The Unit Status Report of the CURRENT UNIT is displayed by clicking the RIGHT MOUSE BUTTON, while the unit is in NORMAL CONTROL MODE.

The Status Report section provides an indication of the current status of the unit. The current value for the unit's HIT strength, ARMOR strength and DEFENSE SHIELDS strength is displayed. The respective color bars reflect the percentage the remaining strength is of the maximum available for the unit, thus the bars will become smaller as damage is sustained and applied to the unit.

HIT strength is the actual condition of the unit. When this value reaches zero, the unit is destroyed.

ARMOR strength is the condition of the armor shielding which the unit may possess. When this value reaches zero, additional damage sustained by the unit is applied to HIT strength.

DEFENSE SHIELD strength, when present is the condition of the energy shielding emitted from the unit. When this value reaches zero, additional damage sustained by the unit is applied to ARMOR strength.

This report also provides control over the unit, such as:

UNIT NAME CHANGE

Edit the unit's name area as desired.

CHANGE UNIT HEIGHT

Edit the height value for units which can get off the ground. Maximum heights will be automatically enforced for AIRSPACE and SPACE unit types.

CHANGE UNIT FACING

Click the radio button indicating the direction the unit is to face.

CHANGE FIRE INFLUENCE

Click the radio button to DIRECT to restrict the unit to firing on targets in line-of-sight only, INDIRECT to restrict the unit to fire on targets NOT in sight.

CHANGE TARGETING INFLUENCE

Click the radio button to AGGRESSIVE to direct the unit to select those targets which it has the best chance of hitting and causing damage, DEFENSIVE to direct the unit to select those targets which present the gravest threat to the unit, or NONE to cause the unit to NOT select any targets for fire.

REVIEW WEAPONS DATA

Scroll the weapons of the unit, DOUBLE CLICK LEFT MOUSE BUTTON on a weapon to display the Weapon Analysis Report showing the characteristics of the weapon.

REVIEW TRANSPORTED UNITS

On applicable transport units, scroll the transported units, DOUBLE CLICK LEFT MOUSE BUTTON on the transported unit to UNLOAD the unit.

LOAD UNIT

On applicable transport units, click LEFT MOUSE BUTTON on the LOAD BUTTON (or press ALT-L) to load one of the units located in the same location as the transport unit.

The Unit Status Report can be dismissed by clicking the LEFT MOUSE BUTTON on the CONTINUE BUTTON (or press ALT-C).

Unit Fire

All units receive a single fire opportunity during each turn. When a unit takes this opportunity, and what target the unit selects to fire on, depends on the FIRE and TARGETING influences of the unit, the proximity and types of targets available to the unit and the status of the game.

Units under the control of a human player, which are not moved prior to the player selecting the END TURN item from the Map View Menu, will receive their fire opportunity from their current location.

Computer controlled units also receive the same fire opportunity and are subject to the same considerations.

Each weapon of the unit will be considered for firing at the selected target. The HIT FTR rating found in the Weapon Analysis Report provides an indication of the potential of each weapon for hitting the target at different the ranges (Short Range is 4 locations distant, Medium Range is 7 locations distant and Long Range is every distance beyond up to the Maximum Range of 12 locations distant). The higher the HIT FTR the greater the chance the weapon will have of hitting a target.

In determining whether a weapon hits a target to which it has been fired, the condition, level and experience of the unit firing the weapon is considered. The range to the target is considered, as well as, the defense factor of the terrain which is occupied by the target. Some targets can only be hit by some weapons, such as units which are AIRSPACE, and have a height greater than 0, (ie. the unit is above ground), can only be fired on by weapons which are ANTI-AIR or DIRECT AREA capable.

Likewise, weapons which are ANTI-AIR capable cannot fire upon units which are on the ground (height equals 0).

When a target is hit, the DAMAGE rating of the weapon is used as a value to be applied to the target. DAMAGE is applied first to Defensive Shields (if present on the unit), then Armor, and then finally to Hits for the unit. DAMAGE reduces these values on the targeted unit, such that when the Hits value of a unit is zero the unit is destroyed (KIA).

Sensor Report

A brief report of any unit not under control of the player can be obtained by clicking the RIGHT MOUSE BUTTON while the mouse pointer is located on the unit icon of the desired unit.

Terrain Report

Information describing the terrain in a particular location is available on this report. The player should click the RIGHT MOUSE BUTTON while the mouse pointer is located on an unoccupied map location.

The TERRAIN REPORT will display an information box in the center of the screen, naming the type of terrain found at that location. The location coordinates, in column/row form, the elevation of the terrain at that location, and the defense factor of the terrain at that location.

Scenario Information

There are two sources of information about a particular scenario which you are playing.

Selecting HISTORY from the Map View Menu will present a short illustrated story discussing the events leading up to and including the battle presented in the scenario. It is often told from the point of view of one of the participants of the battle.

Selecting INFO from the Map View Menu will provide you with access to specific information on the scenario.