

Band of Brothers VASSAL Module

A short tutorial for version 3.X

February 2023

This document collects some basic information about the Band of Brothers game module for VASSAL, version 3. Version 3 contains some new elements and introduces some different mechanics with respect to the previous versions. These novelties are briefly reviewed here. It is assumed that the reader is already familiar with the game rules. The last version of the module can be downloaded from the [VASSAL webpage](#).

Complete list of commands

Table 1: Game Piece commands

Ctrl-a	Ambush (Squad/WT in melee)	Ctrl-n	Remove Used/Op. Fire
Ctrl-b	Remove Ambush/Flanking	Ctrl-o	Mark Op. Fire
Ctrl-c	Concealed	Ctrl-p	Use Command Point
Ctrl-d	Displaced (Co. Hub)	Ctrl-r	Reduced
Ctrl-f	Fully Suppressed	Ctrl-s	Suppressed
Ctrl-g	Good order (not suppressed)	Ctrl-t	Designate as target
Ctrl-i	Sustained Fire (MG WT)	Ctrl-u	Mark Used
Ctrl-j	Seishin (Japanese units)	Ctrl-x	Resource depleted (Aircraft)
Ctrl-k	Unconfirmed Kill (Vehicles)	Ctrl-Left Arrow	Rotate clockwise
Ctrl-l	Flank (Squad/WT in melee)	Ctrl-Right Arrow	Rotate counter-clockwise
Ctrl-m	Moved (Vehicle)	Alt-r	Simple decoy (Decoy)

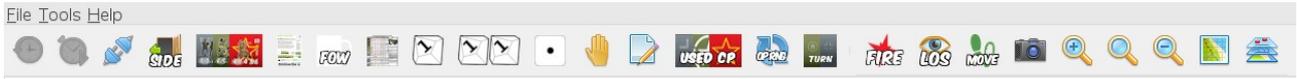
Table 2: Main Map commands

Alt-f	Fire thread	F5	Set zoom factor
Alt-o	Check LOS thread	F6	Zoom out
Ctrl-z	Undo the last move	F7	Zoom in
F4	Hide all units	Ctrl-Left Click	Flare

Table 3: Basic Piece commands

Alt-c	Clone	Alt-m	Toggle Moved status
Alt-d	Delete	Alt-l	Change label

Buttons Bar



The button bar is used to perform several actions and to access several features of the game, including the Units & Counters window, the Scenario window, the Command Points window, and the Operation Phase window. The icons in the button bar should be self-explanatory. When hovering the mouse over them, a short message appears with the name of the button.

Context-sensitive menus

Be aware that the counters' right-click menu is context-sensitive. This means that you are not going to see all possible commands in any situation. Many commands become available only when it makes sense to use them. For instance, you cannot "Reduce" a concealed unit: before being reduced, the unit has to be revealed. Similarly, you cannot place a "Flanking" counter on a unit that is not in close combat with the enemy.

Select a scenario

Open the scenario using the "File → Scenario" menu. The list of available scenarios depends on the extensions installed. The base module contains all the scenarios of "Screaming Eagles". Once the desired scenario is loaded, inspect the scenario sheet using the "Show/Hide scenario window" button. The units in use could be already prepared for you on the scenario sheet. If this is not the case, open the collection of counters using the "Show/Hide units and counters window" button. Notice that some folders can be empty, depending on the extensions installed. Before deploying units on the board, remember to select the appropriate side using the "Take/Change side" button.

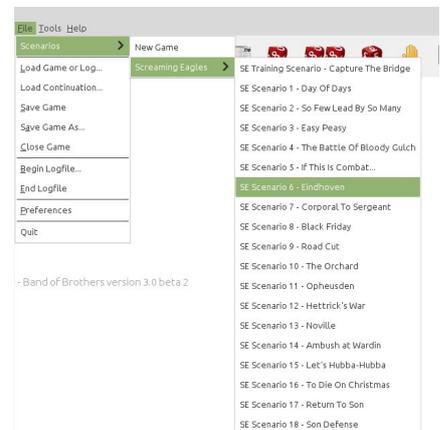


Figure 1: Select a game from the menu



Figure 2: Set trails on/off and reset moved status.

Moved units and Movement Trails

When units are moved on the board they are automatically marked moved with a yellow footsteps icon and, if the option is activated, a yellow movement trail appears that tracks their movement across the different hexes. You can decide whether or not the movement trails appear on the main map using the "Set trails on/off" button. With this button, you can also reset the movement status of all units on the board.

Fire & LOS thread

When firing, you can designate the firer and the target with the fire thread. The thread is activated using the "Fire" button or Alt-f command. Click on the firer and drag the line

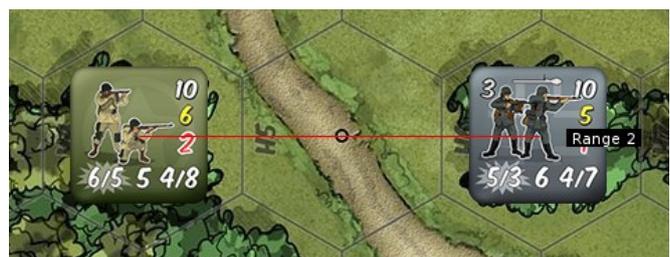


Figure 3: Fire thread

to the target hex. The selected firer and target hexes are reported in the chat. When firing at a vehicle or attacking with a plane, you have to designate a specific unit inside the target hex. In this case, use the “Ctrl-t” command or the right-click menu. If the Ctrl button is pressed when performing the click&drag operation, the thread becomes permanent. Click on the “Fire” button to eliminate it. To check the Line of Sight (LOS) without performing an attack, use the “Show LOS thread” button or the Alt-o command.

Operation Phase

Before beginning the game, you might want to prepare the Operation Range window to keep track of the number of activated units. Use the “Operation Phase” button to open the window. With the right-click menu toggle “Inactive” the counter of the side that moves second in the turn. The “Inactive” counter is greyed out. Using the right-click menu you can set an appropriate background for the two counters and insert the OP range in the label below as a mnemonic aid. These counters will automatically keep track of the units activated during the Operation Phase: when a unit is marked Used or Op. Fire, the number on the relative counter is incremented accordingly. When the active player changes, use the “circling arrows” button on the bar or on the counters to reset the counters and switch the active side. Sometimes special scenario rules or special counters can require an expenditure of CPs. In this case, use the “+” and “-” buttons to manually update the relative number.

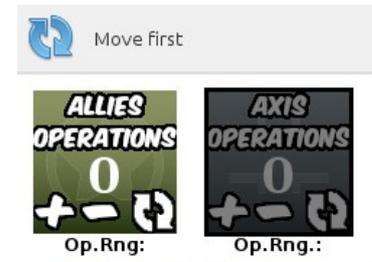


Figure 4: Operation Phase window

Spent Command Points

Command points are spent on units using the “Ctrl-p” command, or using the unit right-click menu. The command points spent by each side can be inspected from the “Used CP” window. The window reports the units on which a command point has been spent. Clicking on a unit in the list will automatically refocus the main window on that unit so that you can easily see where the points have been spent. The list of units is erased at the beginning of a new turn. To keep track of the spent CPs, units must remain in the game. I suggest moving eliminated units back on the scenario sheet instead of deleting them. Alternatively, you can set the “Drop CP” option (see below).



Figure 5: Spent Command Points window

Game Options

The module has a few options you can use to customize its behaviour. You can find these options in the “File → Preferences” menu. “Report unit suppression...” increases the verbosity of the messages that the module displays in the chat. “Show movement trails...” automatically activate the movement trail when units are moved on the main board.

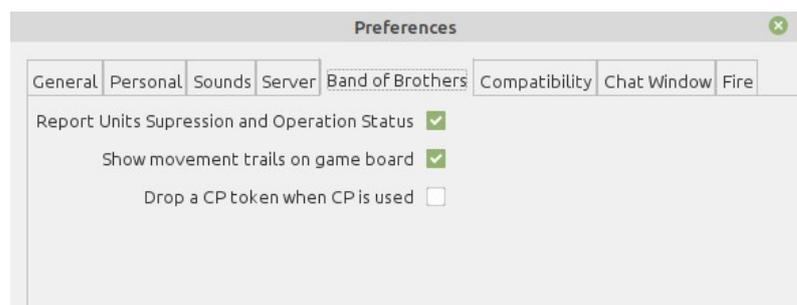


Figure 6: Game options

“Drop a CP token...” is useful for players who want to delete units that are eliminated. When a unit is eliminated on which a CP point has been spent, a CP token is dropped to keep track of the spent CP. The tokens are deleted at the end of the turn. Feel free to explore the other general options of VASSAL. They can significantly improve your experience with the game interface.

Terrain and Units Labels

Despite all the prevision for the condition of units in the context-sensitive menu, sometimes it is necessary to record something about a game piece or a location on the map. In the “Terrain → Markers” tab of the unit window, there is a special counter that can be used to write text labels on the board and/or position coloured dots inside hexes. This might be very handy for keeping track of which side is controlling one particular hex or group of hexes. In addition, each game piece can be assigned a label using the right-click menu or the “Alt-l” command.



Figure 7: Terrain and units labels

Off-Board Artillery markers

OBA counters are in the Artillery section of the Counters and Units window. When on the main map, the OBA counters possess a reddish area-of-effect “halo” of one hex around them. Use the right-click menu to select the size of the battery. Use the FFE (Alt-f) or Place smoke (Alt-s) menu entries to perform the appropriate mission and mark the counter Used, or mark the OBA counter Used if the proficiency check fails. When placing smoke, or at the end of the turn, when the Recovery Phase button is pressed, all OBA counters are re-positioned in the scenario window, in the approximate position they occupied originally, for later use. Some manual adjustments to the position of the OBA counter might be required. If a scenario window is not available, or an appropriate zone has not been set up to accommodate it, the module does not know where to move the OBA counter and a warning message will appear in the chat. The message is issued only the first time this situation is encountered in a game. You can safely ignore this message and move the OBA counter manually.

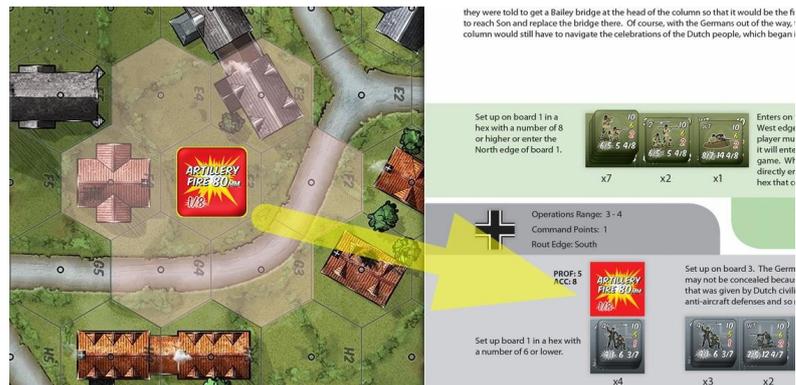


Figure 8: Artillery auto re-positioning

they were told to get a Bailey bridge at the head of the column so that it would be the first to reach Son and replace the bridge there. Of course, with the Germans out of the way, the column would still have to navigate the celebrations of the Dutch people, which began

Aircraft

After its attack, an aircraft counter is marked used (ctrl-u). When doing so, it is moved back into the scenario window. If it is removed from the game, mark it with a cross (ctrl-x). If a scenario window is not available, or an appropriate zone has not been set up to accommodate the aircraft counter, the module does not know where to move it and a warning message will appear in the chat. The message is



Figure 9: Aircraft counters

issued only the first time this situation is encountered in a game. You can safely ignore this message and move the aircraft counter manually.

Simple decoys

The module contains all the original counters of the game. The original decoys have numbers on them, to protect their nature from inadvertently moving the “Conceal” token. This is not an issue on VASSAL. Selecting “Simple decoy” in the right-click menu (Alt-r), you can replace the original decoys with simpler decoys with no information on them. They stand out more clearly and it is less likely to confuse them with actual units.



Figure 10: Simple decoys

Turn Tracker

The turn tracker can be already visible on the button bar or it can be activated by clicking on the “Turn” button. By clicking on the “+” or “-” buttons you can move across the turns and phases of the game. At the end of the “Operation Phase”, click on the “+” button to move to the Rout Phase of the same turn. Unnecessary counters are automatically removed. At the end of the Route Phase, click on the “+” button again to move to the Melee Phase. At the end of the Melee Phase, a further click will move the game to the Operation Phase of the following turn. All the steps of the recovery phase are automatically performed.

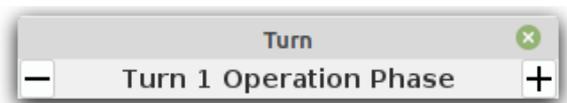


Figure 11: Turn tracker

Flare

By Ctrl-Left click in any position of the Main Map, pulsing yellow circles will appear for a few seconds. This is useful to draw the opponent’s attention to one particular location or unit.

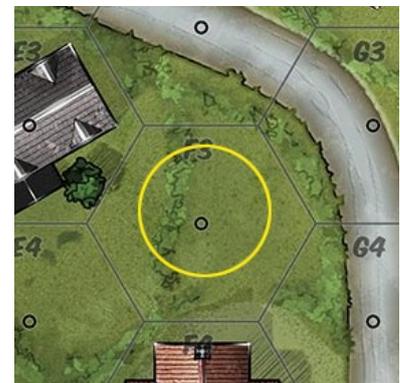


Figure 12: Pulsing circle

Fog of War (FOW) Cups

The FOW cups are accessible by clicking on the mug icon in the buttons bar. Three numbered cups are provided. To add a unit to a cup, move it into the square. When moved into the cup, units are automatically concealed. Drawing from the cup is done randomly. Cups can be labelled using the labels available in the units and counters window, Game Markers → Utility tab. Position the label on the cup. Labels automatically report the number of counters in the associated cup. Right-click on the label to adjust the text and the nationality background colour.

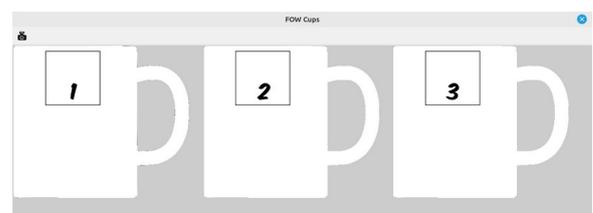


Figure 13: FOW Cups