



A GRUNT'S GUIDE TO OBA USE

Many people have had difficulty with OBA, hence the recent release of the OBA flowchart in *Action Pack 1*. While the flowchart covers the whole range of OBA options, the basic OBA procedure is relatively simple, so I present this summary.

Before we start though, note that due to an omission that was only realised when *Yanks* came out, the ammunition types available to the German, Finnish, and Russian OBA modules were not listed. For the time being (until an errata page can be released) all such batteries have HE and smoke. For other nationalities, smoke/WP/IR/HE is given in the chapter H OBA tables.

GETTING OBA

An OBA module is represented by a Radio in your OB. Radios can only be used by a Good Order Leader (the Observer).

In your PFPh/DFPh, make a DR to establish Radio Contact. If successful, draw a chit from the Draw Pile (C1.211) - a Black chit grants Battery Access, which allows you to place an AR in a hex in the Observer's LOS. You then make an Accuracy dr (either 1 or 2 required, depending on nationality); if this was not gained make a Random Direction DR (B.8) to determine where the AR is placed. At this point, if you still have a LOS to the AR it is swapped for a Red

SR, which ends the OBA action for that phase.

Radio Contact is lost immediately if the Observer loses his Good Order status. An Observer in an AFV must be CE or in an OP AFV to have a LOS to spot.

ACTIONS

At the start of your next PFPh/DFPh, roll to maintain Radio Contact (with a -1 DRM; -2 DRM for battalion OBA). If you succeed, you must perform one of the following actions:

Cancel the SR and attempt to place a new AR as before;

Cancel a FFE, losing Battery Access in the process;

If you have no LOS to the SR/FFE, you must Correct it (to a maximum of 18 hexes for a SR, 3 hexes for a FFE) or Cancel as above;

If you have a LOS to a SR and a Known enemy is in/adjacent to it, you may convert it to a FFE:1;

If you have a LOS to a SR you may Correct it up to 18 hexes and Convert it to a FFE (if there is no enemy in/adjacent after Correcting, it remains a SR);

If you have a LOS to a FFE you may Correct it up to 3 hexes or leave it, and continue the FFE;

If you have a FFE:C, you must first retain Battery Access by drawing another Black chit from the Draw Pile. You may then either replace it with a SR (can leave or Correct up to 18 hexes), convert it to a FFE:1 if an enemy unit is in/adjacent, or remove it and attempt to place a new AR.

For LOS purposes a SR/FFE has a Height equal to the Base Level plus 2 (EX: level 3 on a level 1 hill).

Failure to maintain Radio Contact means that a SR/FFE cannot be Corrected, Converted or voluntarily Cancelled. A FFE continues to be resolved as normal, with a FFE:C being automatically Cancelled after resolution.

FIRE FOR EFFECT

FFE does not affect Aerial units, those in sewers/tunnels, non-Vulnerable PRC, and certain Climbing units (B11.42).

FFE FP is not halved vs. concealed units.

To resolve a FFE, make a separate DR (adding TEM and other DRM, but not LOS Hindrances/SMOKE) for the FFE hex and each adjacent hex (the Blast Area). FFE also attack any unit which enters the Blast Area during the MPH, RtPh, APh, or CCPh. An Original DR of 2 results in a CH, in which case the FP is doubled and a positive TEM

is reversed (EX: +1 becomes -1).

HD, HA, and AF do not apply vs. AFVs, but TEM does. There is also a -1 for an OT AFV, a -1 if all AF are 4 or less, and a +1 if all AF are 8 or more. A Final DR less than or equal to half the Final DR that corresponds to a K/# results in a Burning Wreck; any other KIA result destroys the vehicle (the highest KIA# on that FP column is the maximum number of vehicles that can be affected). A Final DR that is a K/# or is one greater is an automatic Shock (if a turret hit) or immobilisation (if a hull hit). A MC or PTC has no effect other than on Vulnerable PRC Collaterally.

Units have their Morale lowered by one while within a friendly Blast Area.

After resolution a FFE:1 is replaced with a FFE:2, and a FFE:2 is replaced with a FFE:C.

A HE FFE is a two level LOS Hindrance but with a maximum +1 DRM regardless of the number of Blast Area hexes traced through.

TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

When OBA is central to your attack/defence, protect the Observer well. If the enemy SAN is high, give him an escort, such as a HS (this is actually a good practice even if he is in the rear rallying broken troops; he is vulnerable). Although you may not feel you can spare a HS to act as Sniper bait, consider how important the OBA is - a SMOKE or a 100mm HE concentration is likely to be more effective than a 2-3 FP MMC attack almost any day.

If enemy fire is a bigger threat, consider using a higher quality leader. Admittedly, a 9-1 is very useful up front, but even with a lowly 7-0 troops move faster and rally almost as quickly; they also suffer less when he breaks or is KIA'ed!

Position is another thing. Rather than set up in a position to see (and be seen from) all the board, pick an area that lets you concentrate on your objective, or, if defending, your opponent's likely route of advance. Why allow your opponent the chance to concentrate his fire on your observer, especially if that's the only target he'll have while your units move up. Also remember to get your Observer in position before attempting Radio Contact, as the Observer cannot move while using a radio, only advance.

Always consider using Harassing Fire. Although the FP is halved, the doubling of the Blast Area usually makes it well worth it. Harassing Fire is ideal to deny an area to enemy movement, and can be par-

ticularly deadly if the enemy must move through the area.

Be wary of woods when OBA is present, as you are subject to a -1 airburst DRM instead of the +1 TEM. Even worse, a CH reverses the TEM and also adds the airburst, giving a net -2 DRM!

FFE TIMING

For maximum effect, you need to think about the timing of the FFE:1.

When you are attacking, it is probably best to try and fire the FFE:1 in your PFPh, even if solely to avoid walking into your own artillery! By working back through the procedure, and assuming everything works out as planned (and we all know how often that actually happens in *ASL!*), you

ideally want to establish Radio Contact in the DFPh prior to your PFPh in which you want to see the FFE:1 land.

When defending though, you ideally want the FFE:1 to actually be landing in your DFPh, so try to establish Radio Contact in your previous PFPh. By having the FFE land in your DFPh, you also hinder the attacker's advances, although admittedly he can also use his advances to evade the FFE before your PFPh. In the next turn, the FFE:C interdicts his movement right through to the subsequent DFPh, particularly as you can correct the FFE:C for maximum effect.

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THE SECOND CARD DRAW

In some cases, a player must make an extra card draw for his OBA. These extra draws are intended to counter the 'Omniscient Player' syndrome, whereby the player is firing OBA against enemy units he knows about, but that the Observer would not in reality. Defining this intention in a clear rule is not easy, and the way the *ASLRB* does so seems to confuse some players.

To see if an extra draw is necessary, look at the board from the Observer's perspective. If there is an enemy unit Known to the Observer in the target hex or the adjacent six hexes, then no extra draw is necessary. In this case, the game designers gave the player the benefit of the doubt and assume that this unit was the one the player was shooting at, even if it is only a broken HS and the real target is a concealed stack of three HMG-armed squads with a 10-3 leader in an adjacent hex.

On the other hand, if the player can see any on-board ground units (concealed or not, but not HIP) in the target hex or in

the adjacent six hexes but they are not Known to the Observer then an extra draw is necessary. In this case, the game designers assume that the player is abusing his ability to see things that the Observer on the battlefield cannot. Thus even though the unknown unit might be a wounded, disrupted, DM 6+1 leader and the real reason the player wants to put down artillery is to block an important piece of terrain, if the enemy unit is in the target hex or the adjacent six hexes, it forces the extra card draw.

Note that the extra card draw applies even when you use ammunition that is not 'harmful' like Smoke, and even when you use Harassing Fire, you only consider the target hex and the adjacent six hexes.

So, each time you place an AR or are about to convert a SR or FFE:C to FFE:1, look at the board as both the Observer, and a player. Then you'll be able to see if have to draw an extra card or not.

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