

PANZER REICH

CRASH TEST

A Tank-Based War Game for the Æther System



Silver Gryphon Games

Kevin M. Rohan

A2 Winchester from the Apalachian Alliance leading a column of M6 Shermans into the Western Alliance.

July 2136



PANZER REICH

Concept by: Andy Kanuch, Kevin Rohan
Written by: Kevin Rohan
Edited by: David Baymiller
Layout by: Kevin Rohan

Playtested by: Jenna Barnes, Jessie Barnes, David Baymiller, Travis Bentley, David Caleb, Tiara Caleb, Nick Hanson, Ben Hoffrichter, Andy Kanuch, Grant Lachner, Andy Miller, Gary Reif, Kevin Rohan, Susan Rohan, Allen Thiele, Nathan Woods, Jonathan Wornson

Panzer Reich (SGG 7006), Copyright 2011, Silver Gryphon Games, LP. Silver Gryphon Games grants permission to make copies of the Commander Tactical Sheet, the Table Summary Sheet, and the Tanks included in this publication, but the remainder of the pages are not to be copied or distributed without the express, written consent of Silver Gryphon Games, LP

Sample file

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1: COMBAT	1	2.3.6.1: Death Drop	8
1.1: Setting up the Game	1	2.3.6.2: Over-Run	9
1.1.1: Combat Zones	1	2.3.6.3: Pushing	9
1.1.1.1: Hexes	1	2.3.6.4: Ramming	9
1.1.1.2: Setting up the Combat Zone	1	2.3.7: Repairing	10
1.1.1.3: Elevation Changes	2	2.3.8: Scavenging	10
1.1.2: Commanders	2	2.3.9: Seppuku	10
1.1.3: The Field Marshall	2	2.3.9.1: Melt Down	10
1.1.4: Creating a Command Crew	2	2.3.9.2: Rigged to Blow	10
1.1.4.1: Driving (Reflexes)	2		
1.1.4.2: Gunnery (Aim)	2	Section 3: RESOLVING RANGED ATTACKS	11
1.1.4.3: Repair (Academics)	3	3.1: Difficulty Modifiers	11
1.1.4.4: Tactics (Wits)	3	3.1.1: Range	11
1.1.4.5: Luck	3	3.1.1.1: Missile Hits at Range	11
1.1.4.6: Losing Crew	3	3.1.2: Point Blank Shot	12
1.1.5: Placing Tanks	3	3.2: Armor and Damage	12
		3.3: Damaging Tanks	12
Section 2: PLAYING THE GAME	4	3.3.1: Damaging Critical Locations	14
2.1: Rolling Damage	4	3.4: Critical Locations	14
and Skill Checks	4	3.4.1: Ammunition	14
2.1.1: Critical Success	4	3.4.2: Missiles	14
2.1.2: Critical Failure	4	3.4.3: Control Equipment	14
2.2: Initiative Phases	4	3.4.4: Crew, Commander	14
2.2.1: Tactical	4	3.4.5: Crew, Driver	14
2.2.2: Movement	5	3.4.6: Crew, Gunner	14
2.2.3: Firing	5	3.4.7: Engine	15
2.3: Tactical Options	5	3.4.8: Gauss Dissipater	15
2.3.1: Aiming	6	3.4.9: Reloader	15
2.3.2: Called Shots	6	3.4.10: Track	15
2.3.2.1: Aiming at Critical Locations	6	3.4.11: Turret Controls	15
2.3.3: Cover	6	3.4.12: Weapon	15
2.3.3.1: Other Tanks as Cover	7		
2.3.4: Evade	7	Commander Tactical Sheet	16
2.3.5: Movement	7		
2.3.5.1: Climbing	7	Table Summary	17
2.3.5.2: Multiple Tanks			
in one Hex	8	Tanks	18
2.3.5.3: Dropping	8		
2.3.5.4: Holding Ground	8		
2.3.6: Physical attacks	8		

Introduction

This book is an aspect of the Æther gaming system. It was designed using the same mechanics presented in the Æther Core Book, but it was also designed to work completely separately as a miniature-based combat system. The information presented in this short book is for the tactical side of the equation, and constitutes an open playtest. Below is a brief summary of why the setting is the way it is, and then what follows are the rules for the miniatures combat.

2136 A.D.

One hundred years ago, a meteorite transport craft was hijacked by a hacker from the global hacking group, Cell Zero. The transport rocket was intended to pick up an ice asteroid from the Kuiper Belt to be used for the terraformation of Mars. Instead, it picked up a five mile wide chunk of rock and iron that was hurtled toward Earth at almost the speed that the Earth moves in its orbit around the sun.

The world was wracked with earthquakes, volcanoes, and tsunamis after the impact. Even to modern day, the world is still suffering from aftershocks related to the initial impact and its effects; the least of which is an ice age which has the world clutched in an iron grasp. Life on Earth was stripped down to the prepared and the lucky.

When the clouds of destruction started to thin, almost every major city had been destroyed. Out of the world's nearly 8 billion people before the impact, only about 100 million were left standing, and in isolated pockets. Humanity is slowly starting to recover the losses and new civilizations are starting to rebuild from ruins, salvage, and the spoils of war.

One of the things that seem to be universally used among the new political units are tanks: there are almost two million of them world-wide to be salvaged, they can be weatherized, updated with new technology, and transformed into instruments of war or methods of transportation.

There is a new world imperial ideology. This one comes not from Rome or Germany, but spawned across the entire world, seemingly all at once. It is the age of a total world war, the age of armor, the age of the tank.

Welcome to the Panzer Reich.

Using this Book

This book touches on the core mechanics of the combat system. The full version of the publication will contain a more thorough explanation of the rules as they interlace with the rules of the Æther system. It uses one new skill, Gunnery, which covers all weapons used in the game. Rules for designing a tank command crew are listed as well, and they are even more quick fire than the rules in the Æther system.

SECTION 1: COMBAT

Panzer Reich is a game that pits player against player in a Skirmish or running against a specific enemy in a Mission. All of the rules in this briefing apply to both types of scenarios. Panzer Reich utilizes rules and game mechanics found in the *Æther Core Book*; while it is helpful to be familiar with the *Æther* rules it is not required to be familiar with them for these Crash Test Rules.

1.1: Setting up the Game

The game at its core does not require fancy miniatures, but it does require some physical representation of a tank for each player. It also utilizes a hex-map. This is used instead of measuring tapes and rulers in order to simplify the combat and movement found in most traditional war games. It also leads to some interesting consequences as you will see below. In addition, each player will need a Tank Combat Summary sheet, found at the end of this book, and each will need a pencil and a pair of D10s, preferably percentile dice or off-color standard 10-sided dice.

1.1.1: Combat Zones

The map which is used is the Combat Zone. This is the physical space that the battle takes place in. It is usually not a level plane and there are often elevation changes, cliffs, possibly buildings, and perhaps dead-falls that no tank will survive falling into. Whatever the terrain outside of the Combat Zone is, players need to keep in mind that in the meta-physical world of the game, there is nothing beyond the Combat Zone and you either cannot leave the map or you will be destroyed if you try.

1.1.1.1: Hexes

Hexes were used because of the range of movement and the simplification of movement through diagonal spaces. The Hexes used in Panzer Reich are 30 meters from flat-side to flat-side. All weapon ranges are in numbers of hexes, and the speed of the tank is figured in numbers of hexes per 10-second round. Certain movement penalties and limitations apply, as described later in this document.

Why 30 meters?

The measurement of 30 meters was selected mostly for the sake of figuring out movement in combat in a fast and simple manner. A tank moving 10 kilometers per hour will move approximately 30 meters in 10 seconds. That simplification leads to some interesting side-effects, such as in-game weapon ranges vs. reality. Obviously, some of these weapon systems have ranges that are effective at thousands of meters, but to do that realistically would take a huge gaming area. The 105mm cannon on the modern M1A1 Abrams is capable of delivering kill shots at 2500 meters, which would be a board size 83 hexes long! In order to keep play moving quickly, effective weapon ranges were shortened dramatically.

1.1.1.2: Setting up the Combat Zone

There are a variety of ways to set up the Combat Zone. The quickest and easiest would be pre-printed sheets that have both hexes and terrain on them. A better way to do the terrain is through the use of hex tiles that either lock together or can be made to stay stationary on the playing surface. If you have access to sculpted terrain with hex-markings on it that would be even better still.

No matter what type of board you set up, be sure that the miniatures you have selected work with the hex size you are using. Also, be sure that there are clear markings for varying terrain heights as it does come into heavy use during the game.

Most of the weapons in the game have ranges that extend over 10 hexes away, thus it is imperative that the board is large enough to accommodate longer ranges or the game quickly turns from being a tactical war game to a free-for-all at short range.

1.1.1.3: Elevation Changes

Elevation changes are considered in meters. It is possible to have a cliff that is several meters tall, but for purposes of the game, it will be an even number of meters tall. This is in part to help with maneuvering, targeting, and cover, as discussed later.

1.1.2: Commanders

All players that are running tanks are called Commanders. They dictate the actions of their tank in a given situation. Commanders have the right to surrender if they become too damaged to carry on. It is assumed that Commanders may also radio other Commanders in the Combat Zone, so a certain amount of table chatter is welcome or allowed, but the Field Marshall needs to be wary that too much planning is going on between Commanders on a tactical level. A little chatter is one thing, but one Commander basically running the tank of another Commander is something else entirely.

1.1.3: The Field Marshall

Panzer Reich is very much a player-versus-player game. It does not have a standardized Narrator to act as a story guide and a rules-keeper. Certain situations may call for a rules decision to be made, but by and large, each player will be busy with his or her own tank to manage, and the goal is to be the last man standing or the first one to achieve a set objective.

The Field Marshall's job, no matter what Skirmish or Mission is being run, is to mitigate in the case of a rules dispute and to keep track of the Initiative track as each round progresses. Once Initiative is rolled the Field Marshall needs to collect everyone's result and then announce who is going next in the round. Other combat information and statistics is the responsibility of the individual players to keep track of, but the Field Marshall needs to be aware of what is going on as well; reminding players to roll at the appropriate time and acting like a referee.

In a Mission, the objective is likely multiple players working together to reach a common goal. The Field Marshall will be in control of weapon systems or vehicles that he will pit against the players. The Field Marshall will not be allowed to run a tank as a player during a Mission; he is a referee, not a player.

1.1.4: Creating a Command Crew

Each player creates a Command Crew to man his vehicle. The game uses four skill values (for those who are using the Æther Core Book, these values include the Base Attribute Modifier as well as the relevant skill value.) Each player, for the purposes of a quick-start battle, gives each skill one of four skill values.

Each player is awarded a 40, a 30, a 25, and a 20 to put, one value each, into the four skills that are primarily used in this Crash Test. Using the four skills present here it is possible to take a standard Æther character and achieve the same effect, but the values will be much higher. The word in parenthesis behind the skills written below is the attribute that the skill is linked to for those wishing to build characters with the Æther Core Book instead of just the Crash Test Rules.

All skill rolls are made by rolling the two 10-sided dice and adding the skill in question to the value on the dice. For example, if a player rolls a 73 and has a 40 in the skill that is being used, the result would be 113.

1.1.4.1: Driving (Reflexes)

The Driving skill is used in performing maneuvers in and out of combat as well as determining a tank's Defense for the round. It is also used for special maneuvers during the movement phase of the game such as rapid ascent, ramming, or dropping on to an enemy tank.

1.1.4.2: Gunnery (Aim)

The Gunnery skill is used to fire weapon systems. The difficulty to hit a target is the target's Defense. Any roll plus (any and all applicable modifiers for range, cover, etc.) which exceeds the Defense value will strike the target. If the Gunnery roll is equal to or less than the target's Defense, the shot either misses or bounces off the enemy vehicle in some dramatic fashion.

1.1.4.3: Repair (Academics)

Repairing damaged systems is difficult, and doing so in the battle field while taking fire is almost impossible. However, the tanks of 2036 are tough and this battle-field repair check does not mean they have been refitted and are good-as-new. It is more of the kick-it-twice-and-patch-it-together-with-duct-tape sort of repair job. Each attempt takes one round, and can be attempted over and over again if unsuccessful. The tank cannot move in a round in which a repair is being made. More rules are listed on this later on in the Combat Options section.

1.1.4.4: Tactics (Wits)

Tactics checks are used for initiative and initial placement on the board. The higher the initiative the better the battle field advantage the player has tactically. The player with the lowest initiative moves first, and then the next lowest, and so on until the highest initiative moves last. When it comes to shooting, the player with the highest initiative shoots first; the player with the lowest initiative shoots last.

1.1.4.5: Luck

The Æther system uses Luck, and it is included in this rule set as well. Luck is the ability for a Commander to change the outcome of a single roll of the dice. Each Commander is awarded a single point of Luck, and once it is used, it is gone. Commanders that are playing in longer campaigns or multiple missions may be awarded an additional point of Luck between gaming sessions at the Field Marshall's discretion. A Commander may use this point of Luck in one of the following ways.

- **Add 50:** If declared that a point of Luck is being used prior to any skill check, a player can add 50 to the roll, plus the skill value. This cannot be used on damage rolls. Using Luck in this manner always removes the possibility for a Critical Failure.
- **Re-roll:** If a Commander is unhappy with the outcome of a dice roll, even if it is a critical failure, he or she may spend a point of Luck to re-roll it. This is for any dice roll in the game, including skill checks, damage, and critical locations. If this is used on a roll that someone had used Luck, that point carries over to the re-roll attempt.
- **Player Fiat:** Similar to Re-rolling a dice result, a Commander may make any other player, including the Field Marshall, re-roll a dice result. This result could be for any skill check, damage, critical hit location, or any other roll that they make. If this is used on a roll that someone had used Luck, that point carries over to the re-roll attempt.
- **Not Dead Yet:** Any time a critical hit is scored on a location in a tank a Commander may spend his point of luck to have that location be unaffected. The shot is then considered to have hit an empty location and results are handled normally, as stated below. Additionally, a point of Luck may be spent to instantly repair a critical location that had been previously destroyed. This usage of the Luck point will never restore dead crew or ammunition, only tank and weapon systems.

1.1.4.6: Losing Crew

In the last section of this chapter there are references to losing crew members and incurring penalties for three of the four skills as a result. It is important to note that the -25 points that a skill can be reduced by can cause a skill to go to 0 or even to -5, depending on skill placement and which crew member gets killed in an attack.

1.1.5: Placing Tanks

Once the Combat Zone is established and everyone has their skill points distributed the combatants roll a Tactics check to determine the order that they place their tanks. As with initiative the lowest initiative places first, the highest places last, being able to best observe the battle field conditions and make the best tactical decision for placement.

Section 2: PLAYING THE GAME

Once the tank Command Crews are set for each player, once the board is set, and once the tanks have been placed, play can begin. Play continues until the Mission Objective has been accomplished. In a Skirmish, the objective is simply the destruction or disabling of all but one of the tanks on the board. For other missions it could be the destruction of a specific tank or the collection of a piece of hardware on the field. Whatever the case, the game plays out in the following steps until it is complete.

2.1: Rolling Damage and Skill Checks

Rolling Damage is different from rolling a skill check. Damage is calculated as a number of 10-sided dice, plus or minus modifiers as per the weapon description. Some weapons have multiple impacts, such as missiles, and they have additional tables to roll on to determine how many times the enemy was hit with a single barrage. Damage is always calculated per single weapon. If a Commander is using a Puller and fires all of the weapon systems, each weapon system is rolled separately for attacks, and each weapon system is rolled separately for damage.

Damage dice are always added together for an attack. When rolling skill checks, the dice are considered to be part of 100, and they are not added together in the same way. If a player rolls an 8 and a 7 for a skill check, that becomes an 87 plus the relevant skill value. If a Commander rolls an 8 and a 7 for damage, that becomes 15 points of damage, plus any additional modifiers.

2.1.1: Critical Success

Any time that a skill check is being rolled and the dice come up as 00, or 100, it is a critical success. Only skill checks can have a critical success, never damage. If a critical success is rolled at any time during the game, including placement before play begins, the Commander gains a free skill point in the skill that was being used. Only relevant rolls are applicable to getting a critical success; a player will not be awarded a free point if they are simply rolling dice or are making additional rolls for the sake of making them.

When a 100 is rolled, the task always succeeds. If a Commander has a 20 Gunnery skill and is going up against a target with a Defense of 121, a 100 will still hit the target because it is a critical success. Scoring a 100 on the dice roll when shooting at another tank has additional effects that are discussed below.

2.1.2: Critical Failure

Any time that a skill check is being rolled and the dice come up as a 01, it is a critical failure. No matter what they were attempting, they failed. If a critical failure is rolled during the Tactical phase, the Commander that rolled it goes last in the round no matter what their modifiers are. Defense remains unaffected in this manner, except that the Commander only adds 1 to the skill value.

2.2: Initiative Phases

In Panzer Reich, there are four phases in every combat round: Initiative, Tactical, Firing, and Resolution. All of the phases of initiative take place in a weird phantom time within the 10-second round because it is a turn-based system. The tank crews are assumed to keep their tanks moving, firing, and repairing as appropriate for the entirety of the 10-second round, but everything is broken into phases to keep things orderly. Because of that order, however, there are always hiccups like crashing a tank into another tank that hasn't moved yet in the round, even though it technically never stopped moving from last round.

2.2.1: Tactical

Unlike the rules presented in the *Æther Core Book*, initiative is not static; it must be rolled during the Initiative phase of each round. Each player makes a Tactics check, rolling a D100 and adding her Tactics skill value to it. The Commander with the lowest Initiative goes first, while the Commander with the highest Initiative goes last, representing their superior grasp of the tactics of the situation as it unfolds.

During this phase each player also rolls their Defense roll. The Field Marshall records the Tactics Check results and the players record their own Defense rolls. The Defense of a tank is the difficulty to hit it for the round and there are several combat options that raise or lower the Defense of a tank. These are discussed in the Combat section.

2.2.2: Movement

Each tank has a speed rating and this is the maximum number of hexes it may move in a single round. Every standard hex takes 1 movement point to move through. Tanks may move up a level at the cost of one movement point in addition to moving onto the hex that the higher elevation uses. Moving down in elevation does not have an additional movement cost, but if the drop is too far it may cause damage to the tank.

Certain tactical situations will not allow for movement, such as holding ground, aiming, or repairing. Commanders must be honest when announcing their intentions to do such things as it will affect their Defense for other Commanders who have already moved, especially if the Commanders that move prior are trying to perform combat maneuvers such as ramming or performing an overrun or a drop.

After all of the tanks have moved and before the Firing phase begins, all Commanders may move their turrets to the direction they desire. The turret may not move from that position during the Firing phase. All Commanders need to declare (or position) their turret facing at this time.

For example, a tank with a speed of four moves one hex and is now at a one meter ridge it must climb to continue. The tank uses 1 movement to climb the meter ridge wall, plus 1 hex to move to the hex on the other side of the ridge wall for a total of 3 hexes. If there was another meter rise that the tank wanted to climb to complete its move, its Commander cannot do so without attempting a Rapid Climbing check. However, it can use its last hex of movement to drive to another hex on the same level as the first meter rise, or a level below it, if applicable.

2.2.3: Firing

The firing phase takes place after movement is resolved. Commanders move their turrets, and the Commander who had the highest Tactics check shoots first, making them last to move and first to shoot. After all the shots are attempted, damage (if any) has been rolled, and critical hits (if any) are determined, the round is over. Some tanks may be disabled, some crews may be unable to continue, and some tanks may have gotten by without a scratch. If the Objective has yet to be obtained, a new round begins, starting with the Tactical phase. The resolution of firing weapons, with a list of modifiers for doing so, is found in the section entitled Resolving Ranged Attacks after the Tactical Options section.

2.3: Tactical Options

Combat in Panzer Reich is more than just firing huge weapons. There are combat maneuvers that Commanders may try which will result in tank-on-tank damage. There are also tactical decisions to make that will dramatically increase or decrease a tank's Defense.

The list of options included below are all situations that can be planned during the Tactical phase of combat and carried out during the Movement and Firing phases. It is possible that you have a Commander that wants to try something new, and if so, let them try.

Because of the nature of using a hex board some of these options may seem almost absurd at times. The Field Marshall ultimately has the decision to follow these rules to the letter or make something up on the fly. If a decision other than what is listed below is used, the Field Marshall must be careful to use it universally across the Commanders and the situations at hand.