

The march on Madrid

Gaming the Spanish Civil War part 2

Andrew Rolph plunges into the details of running this engrossing campaign game set in the highly-charged conflict in the Spanish peninsula. Photos courtesy of Minairons Miniatures.

THE BATTLEFIELDS

The terrain for most battles will consist of six 2' by 2' terrain boards randomly selected and positioned in a 3 x 2 grid. The exceptions to this are noted below under three specific battles, where the terrain is pre-defined. Each battlefield will largely be flat, with no more than gentle slopes. There will be a few villages, perhaps a small river and a few woods. At Campamento it would be entirely in order to introduce a little more urban terrain to represent the westerly sprawl of the capital. Battles will be fought along the length of the table. Feel free to use whatever random arrangement of terrain you desire or adopt exactly the same approach as I suggested in my article on the BUSK system in issue 376 of this magazine. The templates are available still at www.miniaturewargames.co.uk.

SUMMARY AND CAMPAIGN TURN ORDER

1. Rebel player decides whether he wishes to decline battle (he may not decline battle on turn 1).
2. Roll for type of battle – Rebel Attack, Encounter or Government Counterattack. If the Rebel player declined battle at 1 above and this roll results in a Rebel Attack or an Encounter, add 1 to the current week number, go straight to step 8 below and do not count this as a turn.
3. Roll to determine the week number for the current battle.
4. Rebel player selects forces from those remaining in his column for the forthcoming battle.
5. Government player rolls for his troops.
6. Battle takes place and victory points are calculated.
7. Roll on the Advance Table and move the Rebel force forward on the Campaign Track (see below).
8. Calculate Rebel replacements.

9. Calculate Rebel attrition and start the next campaign turn at step 1 again.

1. DECLINING BATTLE

Prior to rolling to determine a battle type, the Rebels may choose not to commit any forces and instead to regroup in the current zone in order to obtain maximum replacements (because all his troops will be able to receive replacements – see 'Replacements' at 8 below). In this case, the campaign turn may pass without a battle, in which case the Rebel player forgoes any advance and simply determines replacements and attrition. However, the Government rolls for battle type normally and, if the roll is a Government counterattack, the Rebels have to fight whether they wish to or not. In this case, the battle result will automatically be 'no effect' and only non-engaged battalions can recover losses – as usual.

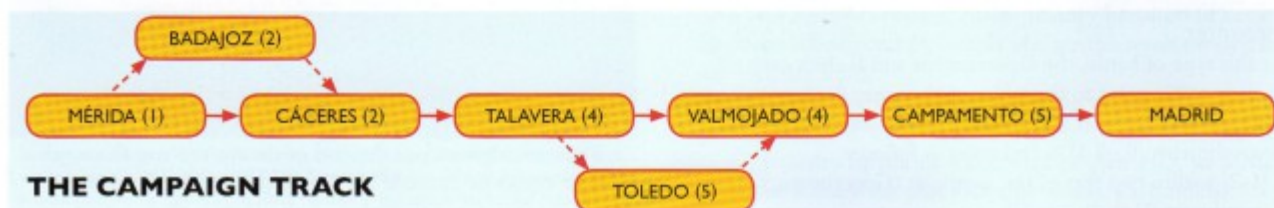
2. TYPES OF BATTLE

Roll 1D6 to determine the type of battle – 0 = Encounter, 1-5 = Rebel Attack and 6+ = Government Counterattack. If the previous campaign turn's battle result was a 'major victory', deduct one from this roll. If a 'no effect', add one to the roll.

Rebel Attack

For this type of battle, the Government sets up all its forces within 48 inches of the eastern edge of the table, may designate a maximum of one third of its forces as reserves and may not enter any troops onto the table as a flank march. Some of the Government troops will be entrenched as shown in the following table:

Battle taking place in week number	Entrenchments Permitted
1-4	None
5-8	Very light scrapes only, for half the troops
9-11	Trenches/foxholes for half the troops
12+	Trenches/foxholes for all the troops and one pillbox per battalion





Female militia. The vast majority of milicianas in communist, anarchist, *Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista* (POUM) and even Republican Army units participated in combat on equal terms with their male counterparts. This was the case despite the fact that they also suffered a double burden, as they were often expected to undertake tasks traditionally considered 'women's work,' such as cooking, cleaning, sewing and laundry. Photo courtesy of Minairons.

Additionally, this provision is modified by the scale of the Rebel victory in the previous Campaign Turn:

- if it was a 'major victory', halve the provision
- if it was a 'no effect', double it

Obviously the scale of the victory will have no effect on battles taking place in weeks 1-4. In week 12 and onwards a 'doubled' provision simply doubles the number of pillboxes. Although 'earned' per battalion, a pillbox's use is not limited on the battlefield to the battalion which 'earned' it.

Rebels enter from the western side and may enter up to one half of their troops onto the table as a flank march. They may designate up to one third of their troops as reserves.

At the end of the battle, victory points are awarded to each player according to the occupation of key geographical objectives. Each quarter of the board has a key terrain feature, control of which earns one victory point. A terrain feature is controlled by the side which has (or last had) undisputed occupation of it as long as the occupying battalion has not routed by the end of the game. If neither side can claim this, then the feature is controlled by neither and no victory point is awarded. In order to determine which geographical features ought to be objectives, you may wish to follow the following levels of priority:

1. Towns/Villages
2. Hills within a view inches of any of the next two features in the rest of this list
3. Bridges/crossroads
4. Road exits from the table
5. Any other straightforwardly identifiable geographical area/point

There are two further methods of earning victory points. For the Rebels, each battalion (HQ and at least 50% of its starting combat platoons) exited from the opponent's home board edge counts as a victory point. For the Government, each Rebel battalion destroyed or routed counts as a victory point.

Encounter

For this type of battle, the Government and Rebels each roll for their entry point to the table; neither may flank march nor designate reserves, and no one is permitted any fortifications/entrenchments. Roll 1D6 and enter as follows:

- 1-2: within two feet of the southeast (Government)/southwest (Rebel) corner.

- 3-4: the eastern (Government)/western (Rebel) edge.
 - 5-6: within two feet of the northeast (Government)/northwest (Rebel) corner.
- Victory Points are awarded as in a "Rebel Attack" above.

Government Counterattack

For this type of battle, the Government forces enter from the east, may not flank march, but may designate one third of their battalions as reserves. The Rebels set up within 48 inches of the western edge of the table, may not flank march and may designate one third of their battalions as reserves. No Rebel troops are entrenched.

Geographical objectives are determined as described under 'Rebel Attack' above. To compensate for the difficulty the Government forces will have in the attack, however, victory points are awarded asymmetrically to the two sides. The Government player receives a victory point for each objective he occupies, whilst the Rebel receives two points for holding three or more objectives and one point for holding one or two. Similarly, the Government player earns a point for each enemy battalion destroyed or routed, whilst the Rebel earns a point only for every two battalions so affected.

3. THE MARCH OF TIME

Each Campaign Turn uses up a variable amount of time measured in weeks. The week number starts in the first turn at 1. Thereafter, add to it at this point in each new turn as follows.

- Second Turn: 1D2
- Third Turn: 1+1D3
- Fourth Turn: +1D3
- Fifth Turn: 1+1D3
- Sixth Turn: 1D3
- Seventh Turn and thereafter: 1D2

If the Rebel player successfully declines battle, then the time track moves on one week only. Treat it as a turn not taken for the purposes of which die roll to use for the next turn's week advancement. It is not possible, therefore, for the Rebel player to declare a week's rest in Turn Four simply to avoid rolling the 2+1D3 listed above. A successful week's rest attempt simply annuls that turn.

The campaign ends at the end of the turn where the week number equals or exceeds 15. The fewest number of turns possible is therefore five (although the Rebels could win on

Turn 4) and the greatest eleven. Generally, the number of die rolls will even themselves out and the campaign will most often play out in six or seven turns.

4. REBEL PLAYER FORCE SELECTION

The Rebel player draws his forces for the battle from his column troops (see end for Orders of Battle). He may select as many or as few battalions as he desires with the restriction that no stands may be selected from any battalion which failed a morale check in the immediately foregoing battle.

Air Support

The Rebels receive sporadic air support in the form of Italian CR-32 fighters according to the following table.

Battle taking place in week number	Planes available
1-4	None
5-8	Roll 1D6 – 5+ earns a single flight
9+	Roll 1D6 – 4 or 5 earns a single flight, 6 earns two flights

Die rolls are modified as follows:

- -1 for an Encounter battle
- +1 for a Rebel Attack

CR-32 missions can be a single flight flying multiple times or multiple flights flying single missions each – CR-32s are controlled by the HQ of the battalion to which they are attached.

Mission Support

The following assets retained at Army level are available according to die roll. Their provision increases according to time passing (reinforcement from Africa, Germany and Italy), battles won (as greater amounts of booty are acquired from the enemy) and speed of advance (as waverers throw in their lot with the rebellion).

Therefore calculate a 'Mission Support Factor' for the Rebels as follows. Add the current week number to the number in the zone where a battle was last won (e.g. 5 if a battle at Toledo has been won) and one for each 'major victory' of the campaign so far. Compare the resulting number with the following table to determine what additional forces are available to the Rebel commander



Sadurni carrier and crew. Prototypes of this Catalan tracked carrier and tank variant were built in early 1937. The Spanish Ministry of War refused its mass production, but it was built in small numbers and delivered to the Republican columns in Aragon, where they served until they ran out of spares.

Mission Support Factor		Additional units available
Up to 6		None
7-11	Rebel Attack (select all)	1 CV3/35 stand, 3 Civil Guard stands, 1 75mm artillery stand (the Civil Guard were paramilitary police – frequently ex-Foreign Legion and usually competent and well motivated).
	Encounter (select two)	
	Government Counterattack (select one)	
12-16	Rebel Attack (select four)	1 105mm artillery stand, 3 CV3/35 stands, 2 65mm infantry gun stands, 3 cavalry stands.
	Encounter (select three)	
	Government Counterattack (select two)	
17+	Rebel Attack (select five)	3 105mm artillery stands, 3 CV3/35 stands, 2 65mm infantry gun stands, 3 cavalry stands, 3 PzI stands, 3 20mm AA stands, 3 37mm ATG stands.
	Encounter (select four)	
	Government Counterattack (select three)	

5. GOVERNMENT FORCE GENERATION

The type of battle determines the starting point for the size of the Government force.

- Rebel Attack – four Government formations
- Encounter or Government Counterattack – five Government formations
- Roll 1D6 and on 1 or 2 reduce the force by one, and 5 or 6 increase it by one.

This die roll is modified as follows:

- for any battle taking place in week 4 or earlier reduce the die roll by 1.
- increase the roll by 1 if the Rebel player did not attack Badajoz (see later regarding Badajoz). This is applicable only in battles taking place in Cáceres, Talavera or Toledo.
- increase the roll by 1 if the Rebel player did not attack Toledo (see later regarding Toledo). This is applicable only in battles taking place in Valmojado, Campamento and Madrid.

The actual nature of each formation is randomly determined – being either an infantry battalion or a militia column. Roll 1D6 for each formation; 1-5 generates a militia column and 6+ a Regular/Popular Army Infantry Battalion. For a Government Counterattack, add one to the die roll and if the week number is between 1 and 4 inclusive deduct 1.

Additionally...

- No more than two of the Government formations may be Regular/Popular Army infantry battalions (ignore any further rolls after two such battalions have been rolled). Where two are rolled in week 13 or later, one of them will be a battalion of the Fifth Regiment (a communist sponsored precursor to the reconstituted regular army which promoted discipline and, generally, had high morale).
- In any Government Counterattack, at least one formation will be a Regular/Popular Army infantry battalion (if none has been rolled naturally simply change the result for one of the infantry units).

The Government formations are not up to full strength, however, or, indeed, have no fixed TOE by which to define 'full strength'. Infantry battalions will consist of their HQ, an MMG stand and an average die plus four rifle stands. Each militia column will consist of an HQ and four plus 2D6 militia stands.

In addition to the main force the Government also receives regimental/divisional support companies. These are also generated randomly according to a number of D6s rolled as determined by the type of battle being fought and the week of the battle...

Table for Campaign turns representing weeks commencing 1-10

1	Dinamiteros (1)	Three stands of Dinamiteros
2	Artillery battery (2)	75mm field gun stand and 105mm field gun stand if a second rolled (both militia)
3	Assault Guards Coy (1)	Three Regular Rifle stands
4	MMG Company (2)	Two militia MMG stands
5	Armoured Lorry (1)	One Armoured Lorry stand
6	Regular Army Company (1)	Three Regular Rifle stands

Table for Campaign turns representing weeks commencing 11+

1	Air Support (2)	A Polikarpov I-16/15 flight
2	Artillery battery (2)	Popular Army 75mm field gun stand and 105mm field gun stand if a second is rolled
3	A Mortar battery (1)	Popular Army 81mm mortar stand
4	MMG Company (2)	Two Popular Army MMG stands
5	Tank Company (2)	Two T26bs or FT17s
6	Popular Army Company (2)	Three Popular Army Rifle stands

The number in brackets is the maximum number of that type which may appear. If more than that number are rolled simply re-roll until something different appears.

- Rebel Attack: 1D3+2 rolls on relevant table above
- Encounter: 1D3 +1 rolls on relevant table above
- Government Counterattack: 1D3+3 rolls on relevant table above

If Government Air Support and Rebel Air Support are rolled for the same battle, they cancel each other out on a one for one basis until only one side (or neither) has air support.

Where two Popular Army companies and one company of Popular Army machine guns are generated, they may be combined with a 'free' HQ to form a weak additional battalion (exceptionally, this may mean that three battalions in total are Regulars).

6. FIGHT THE BATTLE

Having generated the forces for each side, generate the terrain by randomly placing six 2' by 2' terrain squares together, determining geographical objectives and then randomly choosing north from between the two longer sides. Set up the forces and play to a conclusion, calculating the number of victory points for each side as noted at "Types of Battle"



Minairons Republican Infantry (l) and Republican HQ and Heavy Weapons (r) painted by Rafa "Archiduque".

above. All battles last at least eleven turns. At the end of turn 6, roll 2D6. On a roll of 5 or less, the game ends after turn 11. On a roll of 9 or greater, play continues to the end of turn 13. Otherwise play ends at the end of turn 12.

7. DETERMINE MOVEMENT ON THE CAMPAIGN TRACK

Movement along the Campaign Track is determined according to the Advance Table below. Roll one D4v and one D3, add the total Rebel victory points and deduct the Government victory points earned in the foregoing battle and consult the table for how many spaces the Rebels may move forward on the map.

ADVANCE TABLE		
Score	Effect	Notes
<6	No Effect	No advance. Roll for another battle in same zone next turn.
6-7	Minor Victory	Advance one zone. Government retreats.
8+	Major Victory	Advance two zones. Government in disarray.

The Rebels may always choose to move fewer zones forward than they 'earn' according to this table. This will rarely be of interest. However, it may be necessary where the Rebel player decides to divert his campaign to Badajoz and/or Toledo.

The solid lines of advance on the Campaign Track represent the shortest route to Madrid which it is permissible to take. The dotted routes are additional steps representing key decisions in the Rebel command which the player may or may not wish to recreate. After the first battle of the campaign at Mérida, the Rebel player may assault Badajoz or move to Cáceres/Talavera (depending on whether he achieved a minor or major victory at Mérida). A similar choice awaits in Talavera, with the option to move to Toledo or to continue on the main route through Valmorado and Campamento. There are penalties to not assaulting Badajoz and Toledo detailed under the descriptions of the battles below. Note that it is not enough to have simply moved through these locations as a result of a two zone advance – they must be assaulted to nullify the penalties of not taking those towns, hence the occasional usefulness in making a short one zone advance despite two being earned.

8. REBEL REPLACEMENTS

Those Rebel battalions not committed to the battle just ended and which did not rout in the previous turn's battle must roll 1D6 for every stand lost from their OOB. On a roll of 5+, the stand is returned to the Order of Battle. A battalion repeatedly fighting consecutive battles will not therefore have the opportunity to recover casualties.

Additionally, once the week number is 6 or greater, the Rebel player may add two *tabores* of Moroccan infantry to his column's Order of Battle. These may henceforward be



Minairons Republican Infantry (l) and Republican HQ and Heavy Weapons (r) painted by Rafa "Archiduque".

selected for any battles and gain replacements in the same way as the other two *tabores/banderas* available from the start of the campaign. These reinforcements are lost if the Rebel player has failed to win a battle at Badajoz (or not tried).

9. REBEL ATTRITION

All Rebel units are subject to attrition – this represents fatigue, straggling, commitments to garrisons/small pacifying actions etc. For every eight stands (or fraction thereof) of the original OOB in a formation, roll 1D6. For each die rolled, a result of 6 or greater causes one stand to be lost from the group for which it was rolled. Add 1 to the die roll for each zone of advance made at step 7 above and 1 if the Alcázar falls to the Government.

HQ stands may never be taken as attrition losses, other stands are diced for randomly. HQ stands do count for the purposes of die roll groups.

SPECIAL CASES

First Battle of Mérida

This battle is always a Rebel Attack battle. Otherwise, generate it as normal. For the second and any further battles occurring here (as a result of a 'no effect' roll on the Advance Table), use the standard generation/selection rules.

Battles at Badajoz

The Rebel player decides which route to take after the battle of Mérida. He may advance along the main path towards Madrid or may divert to Badajoz. If he diverts to Badajoz, then the battle is generated as a Rebel Attack, but on the following table with amended victory conditions.



The Rebels enter the table from points originating anywhere on the line A-B-C. The Government forces may set up anywhere west of the red line. No flank marches are permitted to either player. The River Guadiana is impassable other than at the bridge. The stream is passable by any troops as poor terrain. For this first battle, victory is determined by the proportion of Badajoz occupied by each side. If the Rebel occupies the San Roque suburbs and 75% of the main city, it is a 'major victory'; San Roque and 50% is a 'minor victory'; and less than that is 'no effect'. Failing to occupy San Roque reduces the level of victory by one category.

Badajoz was a formidable walled city at the time. To represent this, entry to the city may be gained only at the gates shown on the table. However, once inside the city walls, the morale of the defenders fell precipitously. Therefore:

- Once a Rebel stand starts inside the city walls via one of the

gates, no Government forces inside will have morale better than ordinary (regardless of how high it was at the start of the battle).

- Once a second Rebel stand starts inside the city walls via a second gate, no Government forces inside will have morale better than poor (regardless of how high it was at the start of the battle).

Should the result of the first or any subsequent battle of Badajoz be 'no effect', then the next battle will take place in the same zone. However, for simplicity's sake, it is assumed that they take place on ground near Badajoz and additionally that the first such battle (i.e. the second in the Badajoz zone) will be a Government Counterattack. Therefore, in the following Campaign Turns, generate the battle/terrain according to the usual rules – other than that the type of battle in the first will automatically be a Government Counterattack. If/when the Rebels achieve better than a 'no effect' result, Badajoz is deemed to have fallen and the campaign proceeds as normal.

If the Rebel chooses to ignore Badajoz, then:

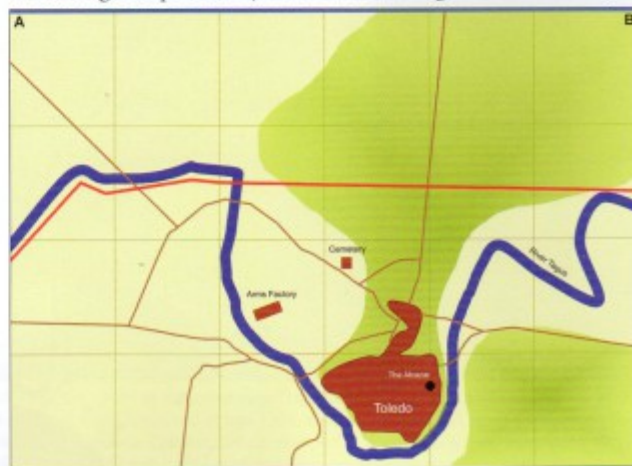
- his scheduled reinforcements for Week 6 (two Moroccan *tabores*) do not arrive – they are too busy securing Badajoz; and
- the Rebel left flank is unprotected for the next four weeks. For any battles occurring in the four weeks following (weeks 2-5), the northern flank of the table is not available as a flank march option for the Rebels. Additionally, should any battle of those four weeks be a Government Counterattack, the northern flank is, exceptionally, available to them for a single battalion to flank march.

Battles at Toledo

This battle is similar to Badajoz inasmuch as the Rebels are not required to fight there – it is another diversion. If they choose to advance to Toledo, then the battle is generated as a Rebel attack, but on the following layout with amended victory conditions.

The Rebels enter the table from points originating anywhere on the line at the top of the map A-B. The Government forces may set up anywhere south of the red line. No flank marches are permitted to either player. The River Tagus is impassable other than at the bridges. Victory in the first battle located here is determined solely by the occupation of the Alcázar. If the Rebels take it then they have won at least a 'minor victory'. Should they take it without the Government ever having taken it, then they win a 'major victory'. Should they not take it then the result is 'no effect'.

The representation of the Alcázar's occupants presents something of a problem (as does the building – see later notes).





Miniairons Nationalist Infantry (l) and Nationalist HQ and Heavy Weapons (r) painted by Rafa "Archiduque".



The actual number of troops (mainly Civil Guard) present was in the region of a thousand. At the scale currently considered here, that would be 20-25 stands of rifles in a, more or less, impregnable fortress. If that were to be how this scenario was presented, however, it would not be much of a game. For play balance purposes, therefore, I suggest six stands of Civil Guard as the fortress' occupants. This may be somewhat rationalised by imagining them as the defenders of that part of the defence which has actually been breached – once overcome, the fight continues 'inside out' and it can be assumed that the fortress will fall. Furthermore, the defenders may not move from the confines of the Alcázar.

The rules above for Badajoz and the Government's morale also apply here, modified as follows:

- Once one Rebel stand starts inside the city, no Government forces inside will have morale better than ordinary (regardless of how high it was at the start of the battle).
- Once a second Rebel stand starts inside the city, no Government forces inside will have morale better than poor (regardless of how high it was at the start of the battle).

Should the result of the first or any subsequent battle of Toledo be 'no effect', then the next battle will take place in the same zone in the same fashion as at Badajoz i.e. one turn's counterattack followed by the usual battle/terrain generation. If/when the Rebels achieve better than a 'no effect' result, Toledo is deemed to have fallen and the campaign proceeds as normal.

If the Rebels choose not to fight in this zone (i.e. they proceed directly to Valmojado and beyond from Talavera), then the Rebel right flank is unprotected for any battles occurring in Valmojado or Campamento. The effect is exactly the same as the consequences of avoiding Badajoz above, other than that it is

the southern side of the table which is denied to the Rebels or available to the Government.

There is a time pressure on the Rebels to relieve the Alcázar. It may be captured by the Government during a battle fought there or is deemed to have fallen if the Rebels have not fought a successful battle in Toledo (not necessarily their first) by the time a Campaign Turn's week number is 10 or greater. If the Alcázar is captured by the Government, or deemed to have been captured at any point, (regardless of whether it is subsequently recaptured by the Rebels) then Rebel cause's morale is badly affected. To represent this, the Rebel replacement die roll is reduced by 1 for all attempts made thereafter and their attrition die roll is increased by 1.

Battles at Madrid

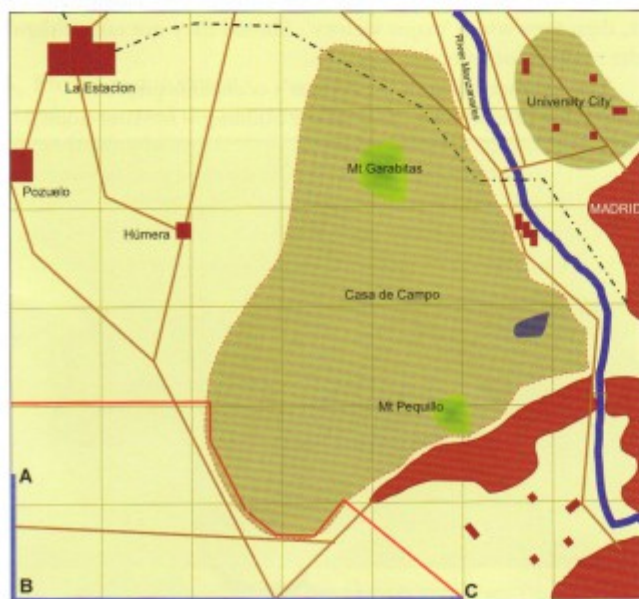
This location represents the extent of the initial Rebel advance and the first assaults on the capital city. Once the Rebels have reached this zone then the nature of the campaign changes inasmuch as it continues on this layout only. The Rebels no longer roll on the Advance table, but continue to fight battles on this layout until they run out of time or until they have achieved the victory conditions for this battle.

At the end of each battle, start the next campaign turn – omitting steps 2, 7 and 9. In determining the level of Rebel air support and numbers of additional Mission Support Units, treat every battle here as a Rebel Attack. Conversely, when determining the Government Forces, treat every battle as a Government Counterattack. Essentially, everyone is maximizing their efforts. Finally, all additional artillery supports (not the 75mm batteries which are part of the Rebel Columns from the start) in the battle will be 105mm calibre and, where a single stand is rolled, treat it as three stands. For every battle in this zone where a Campaign Turn starts in week 14 or 15, at least one battalion of the Government's forces will be a battalion of the International Brigade. If no regulars are rolled, simply change one of the designated militia units.

The layout used is as shown opposite.

The Rebels enter the table from points originating anywhere on the line A-B-C. The Government forces may set up anywhere north of the red line. No flank marches are permitted to either player. The River Manzanares is impassable other than at the bridges, which may not be destroyed by the Government player. The usual victory conditions of the battles in the campaign are suspended from this point on. Victory is determined by the establishment of a bridgehead over the River Manzanares. If, at the end of a game, the Rebels have captured an intact bridge, have at least six stands of unsuppressed troops in supply on the eastern bank of the river and no Government forces have exited the table through the blue line during the game or are within 12" of that line, then the Rebels have won.

If the Rebels have not achieved their victory conditions at the end of a game, determine the new front line, which





A determined attack by Nationalist armour and infantry against Civil Guard with armoured cars: 15mm Spanish Civil War miniatures including Peter Pig, Minairons and Skytrex, painted and photographed by Ruben Torregrosa of Heresy Brush painting studio (www.heresybrush.com).

represents the greatest distance forward at which troops may set up for the next battle. Some cooperation may be needed here between players unless you have an umpire. The following is guidance to cover most situations, but if you can't decide, roll a die between two alternatives.

Basically, the Government determines its front line by marking the leading edge of its units at the end of the game and joining them together with straight lines. The Rebel front line is then double effective rifle fire away from that line in the open, or up to effective rifle fire range within cover. If anyone is forced off the table, then the opposing side may set up within double effective rifle fire of that table edge, or in cover if that's closer. The retreated side starts the next battle off-table (in that area – it may be that other parts of the front line are on-table, where the attacker had not advanced as far).

At the start of the second and any subsequent battles, all troops of both sides may start the games entrenched. If you wish, you could restrict set-up to those areas where battalions

finished the last game. Alternatively (and far more simply), I assume that within each player's own lines there is enough time between battles for them to shuffle their troops as they wish. Similarly, the Rebels may rotate units as they wish to rest and recover their troops. The Government's forces continue to be randomly generated afresh for each battle – their troops too are being rotated.

Optionally, and particularly if your rules have restrictive command and control provisions which can be drawn/written down as an intelligible plan, before the first battle the Rebel player is required to show the Government player that plan, at which point the Government player can change the Government forces' deployment/orders as he or she sees fit. Alternatively, simply have the Rebel player set up first (historically the entire plan of attack was found in a captured Italian tank the day before D-Day).

Next month: the Orders of Battle and all the remaining rules needed to play the campaign.



Minairons Ford AA trucks. The one on the left has been constructed as a 'bookmobile', the other as an ambulance. The Catalan Government (Generalitat) used bookmobiles to bring leisure and culture to the Republican soldiers – even in the midst of war. Conceived in late 1936, the service began in early 1937, consisting of a small fleet of adapted trucks and buses that visited field hospitals and rearguard encampments. The last, sad service of the bookmobiles was during the fall of Barcelona in early 1939, evacuating as many Catalan men of letters and their families as possible, and carrying them to the French border and safety.