

Paolo Mori's

BLITZKRIEG!



World War Two In 20 Minutes

*In **Blitzkrieg!** two players, acting respectively as the Allied and Axis coalitions during World War Two, battle for control of the main theatres of the conflict in a challenging game with simple rules, a short playing time, and many tough decisions!*

Players draw unit tokens from a bag to determine their starting forces and to replenish their losses. Rather than fighting battles with dice or cards, players allocate their military resources to each theatre's campaigns, winning war victory points, gaining further resources and special weapons, and exploiting strategic advantages as they play.

Refight the whole of World War Two several times in one evening!

CREDITS

Game Design: Paolo Mori
Artist: Paul Sizer
Graphic Design: Nick Avallone
Game Production: Dan Mersey
Executive Producer: Will Townshend

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Contact us:

PSC Games
Units 13-15 Henfield Business Park
Shoreham Road
Henfield
West Sussex
BN5 9SL
United Kingdom

www.theplasticsoldiercompany.co.uk
www.pscgames.co.uk

info@theplasticsoldiercompany.co.uk

SKU: BLZ001

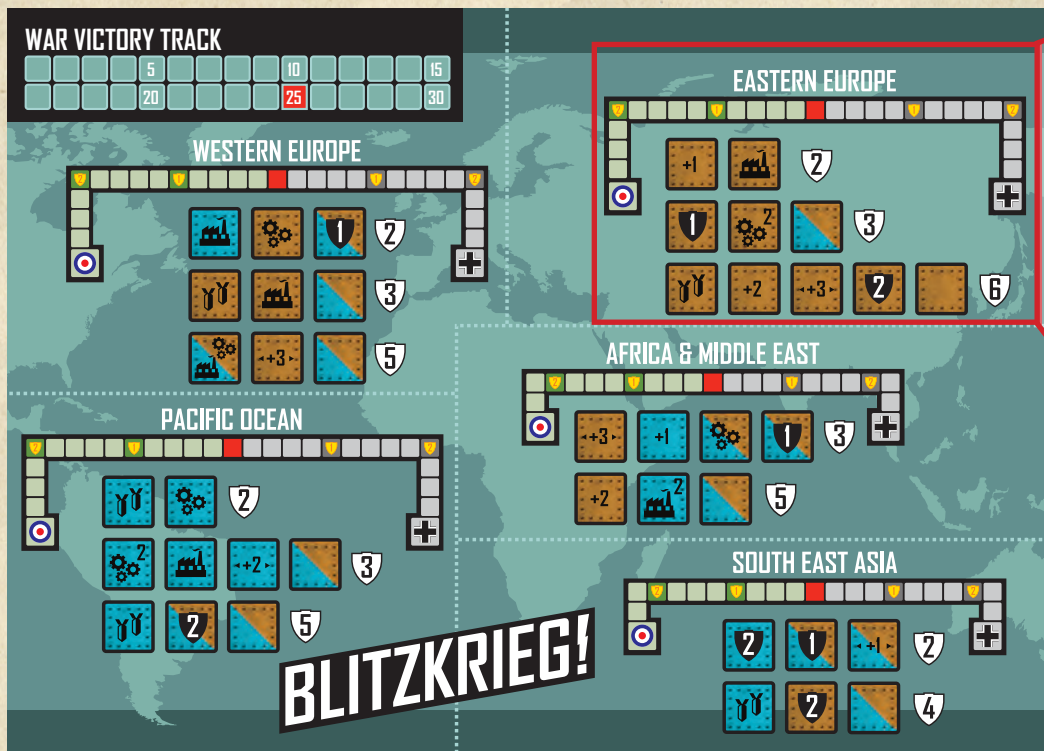
COMPONENTS

- ▶ 1 x rulebook
- ▶ 1 x game board
- ▶ 60 x unit tokens
 - ▼ 22 x Axis unit tokens
 - ▼ 22 x Allied unit tokens
 - ▼ 16 x special weapons tokens
- ▶ 2 x player screens
- ▶ 5 x battle markers
- ▶ 2 x war victory markers
- ▶ 2 x cloth bags
- ▶ Solo module (1 x rulebook; 1 x six-sided die; 8 x stratagem tokens)

We provide two blank tokens should you wish to design your own units.

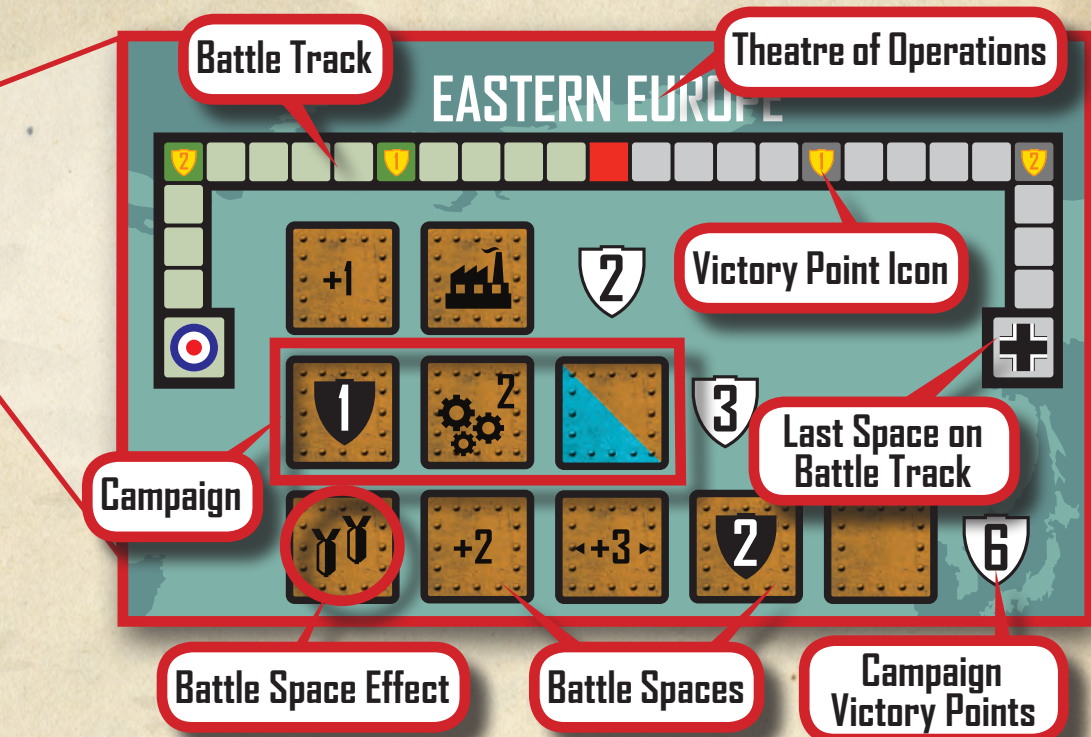


THE GAME BOARD



Theatres of operations, campaigns, battle spaces, and battle tracks

- ▶ The board shows five different **theatres of operations** where the conflict will be fought.
- ▶ Each theatre of operations is made of a number (two or three) of **campaigns**. Each campaign is represented by a row of **battle spaces**, that can be occupied by the unit tokens of either player during the game.
- ▶ An **active campaign** is the topmost campaign in each theatre of operations **with at least one unoccupied battle space**. Players can only place their unit tokens on **any unoccupied battle space** in the **active campaign** of any theatre of operations.



- A **closed campaign** is a row of battle spaces that have been all occupied by unit tokens.
- At the top of each theatre of operations is a **battle track**. The position of the battle marker on the battle track shows what coalition is currently winning the theatre of operations.

Battle spaces can be of three different types.



Land spaces: Can only be occupied by armies or airforces.



Sea spaces: Can only be occupied by navies or airforces.



Land / sea spaces: Can be occupied by armies, navies, or airforces.



Unit tokens

Each player starts the game with a supply of unit tokens (grey tokens for the Axis player; green tokens for the Allied player). The rules for special weapons tokens (yellow tokens) are explained in the next section.



Armies: Can be placed on land battle spaces and land / sea battle spaces.



Navies: Can be placed on sea battle spaces and land / sea battle spaces.



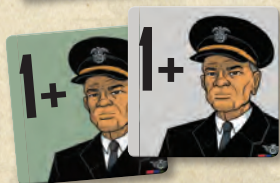
Airforces: Can be placed on any type of battle space.



Blitz airforces: Can be placed on any type of battle space. After placing a blitz airforce, you can immediately place another unit token from your reserve to an eligible battle space in the same theatre of operations. *Note: Even if you played more than one unit token, you'll get to draw only one unit token in the draw phase at the end of your turn.*



General: The general is considered an army. Advance one space on the battle track for each army and airforce you have already deployed in this theatre of operations (including the general but ignoring special weapons).



Admiral: The admiral is considered a navy. Advance one space on the battle track for each navy and airforce you have already deployed in this theatre of operations (including the admiral but ignoring special weapons).

Special weapons tokens

During the game, due to the effect of research battle spaces, players will gain access to new unit tokens called special weapons. The rules for these tokens are explained below.



Elite forces: These are just unit tokens with better values.



Task forces: When you place these unit tokens, ignore the effect of the occupied battle space.



Blitz forces: After you place (and resolve) one of these unit tokens, you can immediately place another unit token from your reserve to an eligible battle space in the same theatre of operations.
Note: Even if you played more than one unit token, you'll get to draw only one unit token in the draw phase at the end of your turn.



Naval bombing / aerial bombing: When you carry out the effect of the battle space, also carry out a bombing effect (discard one random unit token from your opponent's reserve).



Nuclear bomb: The nuclear bomb is considered an army. When you place the nuclear bomb, advance seven spaces on the theatre of operations battle track, and retreat two spaces on all other theatre of operations battle tracks that are not yet closed.



Spy: Copy the value, type (army, navy, airforce), and any special ability of the unit token just placed by your opponent.



Scientist: You can place the scientist on any battle space (not only the topmost open campaign) of a theatre of operations of your choice to carry out its effect. The scientist has no military value, so you don't get to move the battle marker.



SETTING UP THE GAME

1. Open the gameboard in the middle of the table.
2. Place a battle marker on the middle (red) space of each battle track.
3. Decide who will be the Axis coalition player, and who will be the Allied coalition player. Each player takes a player screen and places his unit tokens in his bag.
4. Each player shuffles his unit tokens in his bag and draws three. These are kept hidden from your opponent, behind your player screen. The tokens behind your screen are called your “reserve”.
5. Place the two war victory markers next to the war victory track.
6. Shuffle the special weapons tokens and place them face down next to the game board. This is called the “research pile”.
7. The Axis player takes the first turn of the game.

PLAYING THE GAME

Players alternate in taking turns.

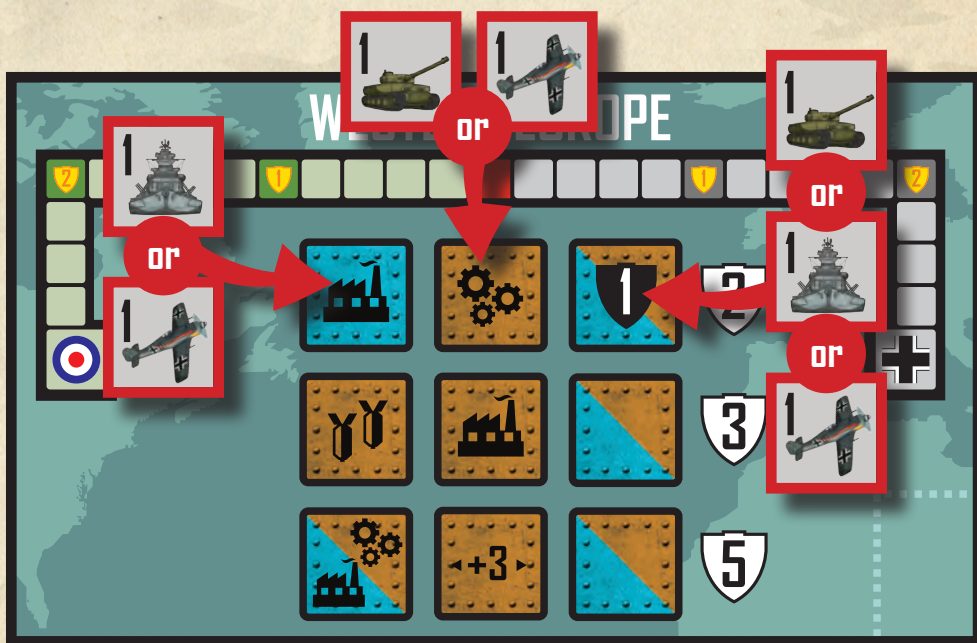
On your turn, carry out the following phases:

1. Place a unit token from your reserve on a free battle space.
2. Carry out the effect shown on the battle space you have just occupied.
3. Move the battle marker toward your end of the corresponding battle track a number of spaces equal to the value of the unit token you have just played.
4. Draw a new unit token from the bag and place it in your reserve.

1. Place a unit token

Take one unit token from your reserve (behind your screen), and place it on any unoccupied battle space in the topmost open campaign (i.e. a campaign with at least one free battle space) of any theatre of operations.

- ▶ Armies can be placed on land battle spaces and land / sea battle spaces.
- ▶ Navies can be placed on sea battle spaces and land / sea battle spaces.
- ▶ Airforces can be placed on any type of battle space.



Units must be always be placed in the topmost open campaign of a theatre of operations.

2. Carry out the battle space effect

On most of the battle spaces an icon is depicted, representing the effect that must be carried out by the player that occupies it with one of his unit tokens. This effect must be carried out immediately after the unit token is placed.

If a battle space has no icons on it, it can still be occupied by a unit token, but it won't trigger any type of effect when occupied.



Industrial production: Draw one unit token from your bag and add it to your reserve.



Bombing: Discard (put back in the bag) one random unit token from your opponent's reserve.



Research: Draw one random unit token from the research pile, and add it to your bag.



Tactical advantage: Advance this number of spaces on the battle track of the theatre of operations where you just placed your unit token.



Strategic advantage: Advance this number of spaces on the battle track of any theatre of operations except the one where you just placed your unit token. You cannot move onto the last space of a track with this effect.



Propaganda: Advance this number of spaces on the war victory track.



Improved industrial production: Draw two unit tokens from your bag and add them to your reserve.



Research industry: Draw one random unit token from the research pile, and add it directly to your reserve.



Improved research: Draw two random unit tokens from the research pile, and add them to your bag.

3. Move the battle marker

Move the battle marker of the corresponding battle track toward your end (the Allied roundel icon if you are the Allied player; the Axis cross icon if you are the Axis player) a number of spaces equal to the value of the unit token you just placed.



The Axis player previously placed a 1-strength navy token and moved the battle marker one space in her favour. The Allied player now places a 3-strength army token and moves the battle marker three spaces in his favour.

Closing and winning a campaign

If you occupied with your unit token the last battle space of a campaign (i.e. the final vacant battle space in the row), that campaign is closed. Check whose side of the battle track the battle marker is currently on: that player immediately advances his war victory marker a number of spaces equal to the campaign victory points depicted next to the current campaign row. Moreover, the winning player scores additional war victory points if the victory point icons (worth one war victory point at the first icon, and one more at the second icon) are reached by the battle marker on his side of the track.

Note: When a campaign closes and the battle marker is on the neutral space at the centre of the battle track, both players advance their war victory markers a number of spaces equal to the campaign victory points.



The Allied player places a 3-strength army to close this campaign. He moves the battle marker three spaces in his favour, gaining one war victory point from the victory point icon on the battle track, and gains a further two war victory points for closing this campaign.

Closing a theatre of operations

If, as a consequence of placing your unit token, you move the battle marker onto the very last space on your side of the battle track, you immediately close and win the theatre of operations. If this happens:

- ▶ All the campaigns of the corresponding theatre of operations are considered closed.
- ▶ Immediately carry out the effect, in any order you prefer, of all the unoccupied battle spaces of the corresponding theatre of operations.
- ▶ Score the war victory points shown next to each campaign you have closed in this way.

Note: You cannot close and win a theatre of operations with the strategic advantage effect of a battle space. If this effect would allow a player to advance to the last space of a battle track, the marker is instead stopped at the penultimate space.



The Allied player places a unit that moves the battle marker to the very last space on the battle track. This closes the theatre of operations!



4. Draw a new unit token

Draw a new unit token from your bag and add it to your reserve.

Reserve size

During the game the number of unit tokens in the reserve of each player can vary. Each reserve starts with three unit tokens, but due to the effects of industrial production, bombing, and so on, the reserve can increase or decrease in size, and offer players better or worse choices of available troops.

WINNING THE WAR

The game ends if either of these conditions occur:

- ▶ A player has 25 or more war victory points at the end of his turn.
 - ▼ If the Axis player first reaches 25 war victory points, the Allied player gets one final turn, and the player with the most war victory points is the winner.
 - ▼ If the Allied player first reaches 25 war victory points, he is the winner of the game.
 - ▼ If both players are tied on 25 or more war victory points, the Allied player is the winner.
- ▶ At the beginning of his turn a player cannot place any unit tokens (he doesn't have any in his reserve, or the unit tokens in his reserve cannot be placed). His opponent is immediately declared the winner.

DESIGNER'S NOTES

Without any doubt I've always been – as a player – more a boardgamer than a wargamer. Nonetheless, I've always been fascinated by the world of conflict games, for their ability to tell stories about crucial moments in history, and also for their strong confrontational dimension: a dimension that is getting progressively weaker in the boardgaming scene and that sometimes I feel the urge to nourish in some way.

This charm, together with the diverse challenges I often like to pose myself as a designer, made me wonder if it was possible to develop a game that allowed players to recreate the entirety of the World War Two (surely the most iconic conflict in history) in a minimalist form, with a very short playing time, but still delivering players a good amount of tactical choices and, moreover, the idea of fighting a war.

The first opportunity to develop this concept was given by a print-and-play wargame contest held on BoardGameGeek. The game went mostly unnoticed, but the feedback received was positive enough to push me to develop the game further, streamlining the rules and balancing some things for smoother play. The game played well and was fun, but my main concern was to make it replayable: giving it enough variability to prevent playing through the same experience over and over or to be played like a game of chess with standard openings and countermoves between players. The different requirements for the battle spaces and the large amount of special weapons was functional to this design goal.

A second step in the development came when I was asked by the Italian game magazine *IoGioco* to release a game in their first issue. *Blitzkrieg!* was a perfect fit, so was published in the magazine with the title *Guerra Lampo*, and appreciated by its Italian readers. The game was then almost in its final form. Very few changes were made after I proposed the game to Will and Dan at PSC Games (by the way, this was probably the fastest publishing licence I ever signed for a game, after their in-house playtest!). A small first-player advantage was noticed, so – to keep things 'historical', with Axis always starting the war – we allowed the Allied player one final turn to catch up and win the game. The second discussion we had was regarding the opportunity to end the game for what I'm calling 'economic victory', i.e. making your opponent unable to place a counter on the board at the beginning of his turn. This game end condition seemed anti-climatic to some, but I strongly opposed the idea of removing it: I think this adds a whole new layer in playing the game, so that players don't have to care only about going for victory points, but also about keeping their industrial production high enough to grant them choices in placement. Deciding, for example, whether to use blitz forces to push forward to win while weakening supplies is sometimes a critical choice. In a small effort of historical simulation, this should recreate the reasons for which the Blitzkrieg plans of the Axis finally failed. Will you be able to do better?

I hope that *Blitzkrieg!* will appeal to boardgame players for its easy gameplay and unusual setting, and to old grognards for its fresh take on an overused theme. But most of all, I hope you will have fun in playing it at least as much as I did in designing it.

– Paolo Mori

BATTLE SPACE EFFECTS



Industrial production: Draw one unit token from your bag and add it to your reserve.



Bombing: Discard (put back in the bag) one random unit token from your opponent's reserve.



Research: Draw one random unit token from the research pile, and add it to your bag.



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