AIRBORNE LANDINGS
FOR WWII MICROARMOUR®:THE GAME

by Leif Edmondson.

The WWII rulebook presents some parachute landing rules in scenario #3 'A Costly Setback' and in the Modern MicroArmour® rule book as well. The rules presented here are specific to WWII and include Parachute and Glider infantry landing rules.

[8.7] Airborne Landings

As early as the opening days of Fall Gelb, in 1940, surprise landings by paratroopers and gliders have been an integral part of combined arms military doctrine. The tension and uncertainty connected with airborne deployments makes for exciting gaming. The challenge for the scenario designer is keeping things balanced enough that the game is still enjoyable for all the players.

There are two distinct types of Airborne forces in World War 2, Paratroopers and glider borne forces. They deploy differently, so there are distinct rules for both.

8.7.1 Paratroopers

History suggests that paratrooper infantry formations, landing in ideal conditions, could take as little as 15 to 20 minutes to 'assemble' back into battalion or even regimental groups. With bad conditions assembly took hours, and in the worst cases it took days for a regiment to put itself back together after a jump. Despite the chaos, 5 to 10 man groups would typically form within minutes of landing and platoon to even company sized formations of paratroopers would organize around a strong leader in not much longer periods of time. It was not uncommon for men of different units (from a different company to a different division and anyone in between) to be mixed together. Despite this homogenization, they quickly organized themselves and set about accomplishing assigned tasks or objectives. Paratroopers, when finding themselves too far off target to work on one of their assigned goals would do their best to reach their assigned position, help a local unit with their goals, or just 'raise hell' in the enemies rear area until they could link up with allies.

8.7.1,1 Parachute landings are executed by 'landing groups'. These groups will be established by the scenario designer and detailed in the scenario's Order of Battle section. Landing groups should consist of the stands that make up company sized units or about 3 to 5 stands each.

Note: Scenarios should be designed around a Parachute Infantry Battalion or group of battalions and their attached supporting units. The number of stands belonging to the attached units may not exceed those of the battalion they are supporting.

Editor's Note: Since combat parachute landings were typically planned to 'surprise' the enemy, these rules are written to deploy a force on the board prior to the start of play. Readers may wish to modify them to accommodate mid-game deployments.

8.7.1.2 The scenario should provide the Drop Zone locations (coordinates) for each landing group. If not provided, the drop zone's coordinates should be chosen, written down, and kept secret, by the 'landing' player prior to the opponent deploying any of their forces. Drop zone locations must be in 'clear' terrain' and ideally should be about 3 to 4 inches away from each other. The coordinates should be written using the artillery plotting conventions. After the landing player has recorded his drop zone locations the defending player deploys his forces on the board.

Note: the 'artillery plotting convention' was first presented in GHQ's MicroSquad:The Game. Any location on the board may be expressed as a number (typically 4 digits) using "standard" 'right and up' format. This format records the number of inches from the left hand side of the board (as the player faces it) to the right until one reaches the target location as the first two digits. Then the number of inches 'up' from the edge of the board closest to the player, to the target location, is recorded as the second two digits. For example: a recorded coordinate location of '0426' would be 4" right, then 26" up, '1722' would be 17" right, then 22" up.

8.7.1.3 Paratrooper Landing Procedure:
To deploy the 'attacker's' landing groups on the board, perform the following steps for each stand of the group:

1. Determine landing location:
Place a stand of the landing group at the pre-determined 'drop zone' coordinates and make a cohesion roll. Modify this roll with a+4 if the jump is occurring at night and/or +2 if there are any enemy AA units in range of this location. If this cohesion roll is a natural (unmodified) '20' the stand is eliminated, on a natural '1' the stand is placed on the drop zone coordinates and no deviation check is made for this stand.

On a successful cohesion roll follow the Airborne deviation process (see 8.7.5 below) to determine the stands new landing location. Use the 'On-Target/Milk Run' jump condition to determine the 'distance die' to roll for this deviation. Place the stand at this new location.

If the cohesion check is unsuccessful follow the Airborne deviation process (see 8.7.5 below) to determine the stands new placement coordinates and place the stand on the board. The distance deviation die will be detailed in the scenario or determined by players as in 8.7.4 below.

2. Determine landing results:
After each stand is placed, resolve any landing issues in the following order:

a) Check for landing terrain effects:
Find the terrain of the stands landing location and if not automatically 'Eliminated', make a cohesion die roll.
Apply the following cohesion die modifiers:
+2 if the landing is occurring at night
+2 if there are any enemy AA units within range of the stand's landing position
Apply the 'terrain effect' before resolving any other landing issues.

b) Check for 'occupied landing coordinates' effects:
-If the landing location is occupied by a friendly stand, place the 'arriving' stand adjacent to the 'on board' stand randomly and make cohesion checks for both, if either fails their check apply an (S) (S-Paren) CRT result to that stand, otherwise there is no effect.

-If the landing location is occupied by a defender's stand, the defender makes a cohesion check. If the defender's roll was successful the 'landing' stand is eliminated and the defender's stand is suppressed. If the defender fails the cohesion check place the landing stand adjacent to the defenders stand and conduct a close assault using only these two stands.

8.7.1.4 Once all stands of a landing group have been placed, for each unsuppressed stand, make a cohesion roll. Add a +2 modifier if the jump was conducted at night and/or +1 if landing within 3 inches of an enemy stand. Each stand that does not pass this cohesion test is 'suppressed'. All stands which pass the cohesion test remain in the normal cohesion state.

8.7.2 Paratrooper Surprise (Optional)

Use this method if this scenario is occurring during the night, one wishes to portray effective 'surprise' of the defender, or prolonged 'reorganization time' for attacking paratroopers. After deploying the paratroopers on the board (using their regular Cohesion level) begin with either one or both sides' Force Cohesion Level lowered by 4. During the Marker Removal Phase each side makes a cohesion check, modified by the GHQ's Quality value. A successful check raises the sides Force Cohesion Level by 1. Each side may continue performing this roll until it reaches its original cohesion value.

8.7.3 Paratrooper Loss of Command

Due to the natural initiative of men selected to be paratroopers and their higher levels of training the paratroopers of all nations demonstrated an ability to easily transition to the authority of a new commander on the loss of the original.

If the HQ stand is 'eliminated' during the landing process roll 1d8/2 to determine the number of turns it takes for a new battalion commander to be established.

If a GHQ stand is 'eliminated' due to the landing process use rule 8.7.2 to simulate the effects of the loss. On the turn when the unit's cohesion returns to full strength, during the marker removal phase, pick a stand and designate it as the GHQ.

8.7.4 Glider Borne Forces

Glider borne forces were unique to WWII. They could be silent on approach. They could deliver groups of 'combat ready' soldiers and larger, heavier 'assembled' guns, vehicles, or equipment, to areas behind enemy lines. Finally glider infantry troops took less time to train than paratroopers. The challenges of using glider borne troops include the fact that the gliders were very fragile aircraft, were helpless against attacking aircraft, very susceptible to damage and disorganization from ground fire and required relatively smooth fields to land on safely. Combat glider landings were often described as 'controlled crashes' even by the pilots. These factors meant that when things went wrong, the resulting casualties added up quickly.

In some cases glider troops were used for surprise attack operations and 'opening battles', but high casualty rates inflicted by 'alerted' ground forces meant that planners tried to opt for glider troops to be deployed after a group of paratroops or other friendly troops could be deployed to cover the gliders' landing zone. But this idea was only used if possible; even the last major airborne deployment of the war disregarded this idea.

8.7.4.1 Glider landings are executed by 'landing groups'. These groups will be established by the scenario designer and detailed in the scenario's Order of Battle section. Landing groups should consist of the stands that make up company sized units.

Note: Scenarios should be designed around a Glider or Airlanding Infantry Battalion or group of glider borne infantry battalions and their attached supporting units. The number of stands belonging to the attached units may not exceed those of the battalion they are supporting.

8.7.4.2 Unless specified in the scenario's description, the player records a set of Landing Zone coordinates, in clear terrain, for each landing group prior to the start of play. The coordinates should be written using the artillery plotting conventions.

8.7.4.3 The turn of arrival may be determined randomly, prior to the start of play, or by scenario design. Glider landings, beginning after the start of play, occur during the movement phase of the turn of arrival. If the arrival is at night, the landing occurs after all onboard movement had been resolved. If the arrival is during daylight, the landing occurs before all onboard movement is resolved, if the landing player doesn't have initiative and after all onboard movement if he does.

8.7.4.4 Glider Infantry Landing Procedure:
For each Landing Group scheduled to arrive on the current turn, perform the following:

1) Place the stands of the landing group on the board, in a line abreast formation with one of the stands on the prerecorded landing zone coordinates. *This could use a better definition!*

2) Determine if the group stayed together during the flight:
   Each stand in the group makes cohesion check with the following die roll modifiers (+2 if night landing, +2 for AA fire on route, +2 for AA units on board, +2 for cloudy skies) If the die roll is a natural 20 the stand is eliminated. If the cohesion check is successful the stand stays in the formation. If the check is unsuccessful determine the landing location using the airborne deviation process outlined in 8.7.5 below. The distance deviation die will be detailed in the scenario or determined by players as below. If the stand's landing location is off board it is eliminated.

3) Determine if the landing group lands on target:
   Make a cohesion roll for the (remaining) group of stands with the following modifiers to the die roll: +1 for night landings, +1 if any enemy AA units are on board. If the check is successful the group of stands remains in place. If the check was unsuccessful determine the landing location for the group using the airborne deviation process outlined in 8.7.5, below. The distance deviation die will be detailed in the scenario or determined by players as in 8.7.5 below. Once the new landing location is determined, position the stands of the landing group at the new location, in the same formation. If the location is off board the group's stands are eliminated.

4) After each stand is placed resolve any landing issues in the following order:
   a. Check for landing terrain effects:
      Find the terrain of the stands landing location on the airborne landing terrain effects chart and if not automatically 'Eliminated', make a cohesion die roll.
      Apply the following cohesion die modifiers:
         +2 if the landing is occurring at night
         +2 if there are any enemy AA units within range of the stands landing position
      Apply the determined cohesion change (if any) before resolving any other landing issues.

   b. If the landing location is 'Occupied' do as follows:
      -If the landing location is occupied by a friendly stand, place the 'arriving' stand adjacent to the 'on board' stand randomly and make cohesion checks for both, if either fails their check apply an (S) (S-Paren) CRT result to that stand, otherwise there is no effect.

      -If the landing location is occupied by a defender's stand, the defender makes a cohesion check. If the defender's roll was successful the 'landing' stand is 'Eliminated' and the defender's stand is 'Suppressed'. If the defender fails the cohesion check place the

landing stand adjacent to the defenders stand and conduct a close assault using only these two stands.

After conducting the landing process for each landing group scheduled to arrive in the current turn, play resumes as normal.

8.7.5 Airborne Deviation process:

The deviation roll for airborne troops is only slightly different from an artillery deviation roll. A standard 'direction' roll is conducted using the compass rose and 1d8. The scenario will specify which 'distance' die or dice to use for the deviation roll. If not specified, consult the table below and by player consent determine which type of roll to make for the distance determination.

Airborne Distance Deviations		
Jump Conditions:	Distance Die Roll:	Consider Transports had:
'On-Target':	1D8/2 (1-4")	Good visibility , No AA, Daylight, Good communication w/ground
'Milk Run':	1D20/2 (1-10")	Good visibility, No/light AA, Daylight, Some communication w/ ground
Combat Jump:	2D8 (2-16")	Poor visibility, Moderate AA fire, Night/Dawn, Poor communication w/ ground
'Hot' Combat Jump:	4d6 (4-24")	Poor visibility,AA fire, Night, Poor communication w/ ground

The factors that induced the greatest dispersal of transport aircraft included: flying/navigating at night, clouds, ground fire (AA), poor communication/coordination with ground forces, and lastly enemy fighter aircraft attacks. Scenario designers are advised to consider these 'pre-game' and 'off board' factors when assigning deviation distance die types.

AIRBORNE LANDING TERRAIN EFFECTS CHART				
	Paratroopers Cohesion Roll		**Glider Infantry** Cohesion Roll	
Terrain	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail
Clear	NE	S	NE	S
Jungle	S	D	D	E
Woods	S	D	D	E
Grove	S	D	S	D
Gravel Plain	NE	S	NE	S
Broken Rock	S	D	D	E
Soft Sand, Mud	S	D	D	E
Gentle Slope*	NE	S	NE	S
Steep Slope*	D	E	D	E
Hilltop or Ridgecrest*	NE	S	NE	S
Bocage/Hedgerows	S	D	S	D
Rough Terrain 1	S	D	S	D
Rough Terrain 2	S	D	D	E
Rough Terrain 3	D	E	D	E
Light Buildings	S	D	C	D
Medium Buildings	S	D	D	E
Heavy Buildings	S	D	D	E
Rubble	S	D	D	E
Good Road*	NA	NA	NA	NA
Poor Road*	NA	NA	NA	NA
Track*	NA	NA	NA	NA
Smoke	D	E	E	E
Artillery Impact zone	E	E	E	E
Light Improved Position*	NA	NA	NA	NA
Medium Improved Position*	NA	NA	NA	NA
Heavy Improved Position*	NA	NA	NA	NA
Barbed Wire	S	D	D	E
Minefield	S	D	D	E
Anti-Tank Ditch	NE	S	D	E
Wreck	NE	S	NE	S
Water	E	E	E	E
River	E	E	E	E
Stream, Ford	D	E	D	E
Marsh	D	E	E	E

Notes:
Slopes and ridge crests: If the slope or ridge crest is in any other terrain besides clear, see that terrain type for the effects on the stand.
Roads and Track: Apply the effects of terrain type that a road or track is in.
Improved Positions: Apply the effects of the terrain type that the improved position is in before resolving the 'occupied' landing location effects.