

# HOA BINH 1951-1952

## THE BATTLE OF THE BLACK RIVER

**Hoa Binh** is a solo-play game that simulates the combats around the Black River and Colonial Route 6 which took place from 13 November 1951 to 25 February 1952 during the First Indochina War. In this game, the player controls the French side and the system controls the Viet Minh.

### 1 - OVERVIEW

#### 1.1 - GAME SCALE

On the map, 1 cm represents approximately 3 km, and one game turn represents approximately 10 days of conflict, except for turn 0 which represents three days.

**Note:** *Operation Lotus (occupation of Hoa Binh and certain sectors on the Black River) was masterfully executed and took Giap by complete surprise, hence the zero turn.*

The game is played in 11 turns maximum (see 5.2.1), from 13 November 1951 to 25 February 1952.

#### 1.2 - DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms are used in the game:

**1d6:** a six-sided die.

**Base:** an entrenched French camp with an important military force and an airstrip (like at Hoa Binh for example).

**Retreat base:** the home bases for the Convoy counters, such as Son Tay, Viet Tri and Xuan Mai.

**Viet base:** {square green spaces} places organised as a camp, departure point for the Viet Minh Infiltration counters (see 2.4.2).

**Empty space:** small or large spaces with neither a French nor Viet Minh presence.

**Force:** a group of one or more French combat units and/or a post and/or a base.

**Draw:** drawing from a bowl or some other container.

**Post:** a small, fortified surveillance point.

**CR6:** colonial route 6

**PR21:** Provincial route 21

#### 1.3 - THE MAP

The map represents the region at the confluence of the Red River and the Black River at Tonkin,


specifically the area from Viet Tri in the north to Hoa Binh in the south and its immediate surroundings, the territories of the Muong country (see detailed key, page 16).

##### 1.3.1 - Land spaces

There are two sizes of spaces on the map:

- **small:** spaces for stopovers during movement. The white spaces represent plains and the green spaces represent mountain and/or forest zones.

- **Large,** including:

- 12 green spaces that can potentially accommodate a Viet Minh base (see rule 9.4);
- white: able to accommodate a French air drop and possibly a post or the base at Hoa Binh, identified in this case by a construction symbol: 

##### 1.3.2 - Post and base spaces

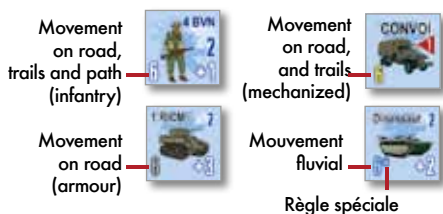
On the map, there are three **French Retreat base** spaces (Viet Tri, Son Tay, Xuan Mai) and three **French post** spaces (Song Dong, Thai Binh, Trai Vang) comprising the De Lattre Line. These spaces are considered to be “**permanent**” and are not evacuated (see 9.3.2). The player may also construct up to **ten posts** in the spaces with a construction symbol and **must** construct the base at Hoa Binh in the specified location.

##### 1.3.3 - Transport routes

The spaces are linked by transport routes; two connected spaces are considered adjacent. On the map there are three types of transport routes:

- **solid brown line:** the colonial or provincial roads that may be used by the fantassins, all French vehicles (armoured and mechanical) and the French convoys;
- **dotted brown line:** trails that may be used by fantassins, mechanised French units (8RSA and Dozer counters) and French convoys;
- **dotted green line:** forest paths or paths with access to mountains, useable only by fantassins.

It costs **1 MP** for a unit to move one space, within the limits previously described.



### 1.3.4 - River spaces

The small blue square spaces on the Red River and the Black River represent:

- a ford, bridge or ferry space, which allows for river crossing between two stopover spaces; it is considered like a white space for land movement;
- a “dangerous” zone of potential clashes between the Viet Minh guerrilla flotillas and the French Dinassaut (see 6.3.6).

**Note:** the square white spaces with a blue circle – Son Tay, Viet Tri, Trung Ha, Ap Phu Tho, Notre-Dame Rocher and Hoa Binh – are both river squares and land squares.

**Note:** *the Black River was an important artery for Viet Minh supply and an attack in this region sought to threaten and destroy it. Then, it was the French posts’ turn to attempt to use the waterway for supply.*

### 1.1.5 - Counter tracks

A counter track is used to keep track of the action points (AP) available to the player (by using an AP x 1 marker) and the victory points (VP) by using two doubled-sided French/Viet Minh markers (VP x 1 and VP x 10).

A “Hanoi” space is used to assemble the French reserve units.

A counter track (from 3 to 0) is used to keep track of the Artillery, Air and Transport support allocated each turn to the French player.

## 2 - THE COUNTERS

### 2.1 - FRENCH COMMANDERS

A French commander counter represents a superior officer and his general staff.

- **[+ 1AP]** is a bonus he may use each turn for any force with which he is stacked to carry out an action.

**Note:** *a commander may also spend his AP to request air or artillery support during the turn (see 7.2).*

- the **die** is a re-roll of the combat d6.

The back side of the commander counter indicates he has been activated and has used his AP or his re-roll.

The French player has three commander counters – Colonels Dodelier, Vanuxem and Clément – that he may use in a particular way:

- a commander counter may move alone anywhere on the map, from one free white space to another only, along a route with no enemy presence, at no cost in action points;
- a commander counter must move with a force on the green spaces.

**Note:** *this point simulates the use of air transport or fast vehicles.*

Moreover, each time a commander participates in a combat with a French force that suffers losses, he **must** test his survival. Roll **1d6**; on a 1 the commander is eliminated and removed from the game.

Any commander stacked with an eliminated French force is eliminated and removed from the game.

## 2.2 - FRENCH COMBAT UNITS

### 2.2.1 - Overview

A combat unit counter represents a French or auxiliary battalion, a convoy of thirty trucks and transport vehicles or one or two pelotons of armoured vehicles or tanks.

The front side of each French combat unit counter has an outline depicting its type, its name, a tactical bonus (a die roll modifier for the combat d6, here +2) and its movement value expressed in Movement Points (here 6 MP). The counter’s back side indicates that the unit has suffered a loss and is diminished; the unit’s combat bonus is reduced (+1).

An **asterisk** indicates that this counter follows special rules (here the 2nd BPC para counter that can stack freely with the other 2nd BPC counter, see 3).

### 2.2.2 - Special units

#### • Armoured and mechanised

The French player has armoured and mechanised vehicle units. All together, they represent massive firepower but have some movement restrictions. (see 1.3.3).



A diminished (but not destroyed) unit of armoured or mechanised vehicles that is on a retreat base space (Son Tay, Viet Tri, Xuan May) may be rebuilt for **2 AP**. It is then turned back over to its front side.

#### • Commando units



The French player has two commando units: 18 and 22. These units have 8 MP and can choose to retreat one space instead of suffering a Viet Minh attack, while respecting stacking rules (see 3).

#### • The Morane



A Morane aircraft indicates the enemy concentrations to the French player in order to increase his effectiveness.

This aircraft may only be used **once** per turn, costs **1 AP** to activate and adds +1 to the French player's combat dice for the combat in which the Morane is involved. However, if a Viet DCA Suppor is drawn, the Morane is automatically rendered unusable and is returned to the Hanoi space and any AP are non-refundable. The Viet DCA counter is removed from the combat (see 8.2.2). Note: this counter does not count for stacking limits (see 3).

#### • The Dozer



The bulldozer counter represents Engineering's manoeuvres to reopen the closed CR6.

If the bulldozer counter is stacked with the Guerilla counter (see 6.3.5), the latter is automatically removed without needing to test on the Threat table (see 8.1).

The Dozer counter **does not count** toward stacking limits (see 3). If destroyed, the Dozer counter may be rebuilt at Xuan Mai for **2 AP**.

#### • The Dinassaut



The French player has Naval Assault Divisions, the Dinassaut, which consist of approximately 18 ships of various types with significant fire support (machine guns and artillery). The Dinassaut counter is a combat unit. It is stationed at Viet Tri and may only **move on the river**.

During its movement, the Dinassaut counter may combat the Dangerous counter (see 6.3.6) or Infiltration counters located on a blue or blue and white space.

If the Dinassaut counter is already present on a

space where the Dangerous counter must be positioned, the Dinassaut must combat it or exit the space during the French action phase and move to an adjacent space.

If the Dinassaut unit is destroyed, it can be rebuilt for 3 AP. It is then placed at Viet Tri.

## 2.3 - FRENCH POSTS



A Post counter has a front side with a post outline and its combat value (the number of dice at **+0** that he may roll during a combat), here 1d6; a back side with an outline of a truck depicting an evacuation convoy and a -1 die roll modifier for ambush tests (see 10.1.2).

The Hoa Binh base counter has the number 3 on its front side (he rolls 3d6) and a specific convoy counter (see rule 10.1.4).

Note: as soon as it suffers a loss, a post, base (Hoa Binh) or convoy counter is eliminated and removed from the map (exception see 9.3.2).

## 2.4 - VIET MINH UNITS

### 2.4.1 - Viet Minh Bases



These are the six counters number 1 to 6 and the six decoys counters representing the military bases of the army of the local guerrilla (see 6.1 and 9.4) that will be placed on the green spaces to indicate the location of a base (see 4.1).

### 2.4.2 - Viet Minh Infiltration counters

***Note:** during the battle, the French had a hard time getting a handle on the nature and quality of the forces that surrounded them. The growing strength of the Viet Minh army was hidden from them by the continuous action of the regional guerrilla forces. The game attempts to simulate this "fog of war".*



To determine the action of the Viet Minh forces in this battle, the player has Viet Minh Infiltration counters. These counters represent an enemy presence, poorly determined, by potentially dangerous and very active. A Viet Minh Infiltration counter has a front side with an outline representing the Viet Minh guerrillas and a back side with a flag. It is placed on the map during the **Viet Minh Infiltration phase**, following the parameters described in rule 6.1.

Infiltration counters provoke a draw on the Threat

Table in the case of combat (see 8).

**Note:** *the number of Infiltration counters given is a maximum [30].*

There are two additional types of special Infiltration counters: the *Dangerous* counter (see 6.3.5) and two *Guerrilla* counters (see 6.3.6).

### 2.4.3 - Viet Minh Combat Actions



The units that participated in the battle are divisions 304, 308, 312, and regional forces. To simulate these forces, the player has Viet Minh Combat Action counters. These counters are generated by a draw and the Threat Table. On the front side of each Combat Action is an outline, a name, a number indicating the score to get with **1d6 + modifiers** to eliminate it (here **7+**) as well as information about the losses and retreats it produces (here **2 step losses and a retreat**) and the time spent to combat it (the number of MP to deduct from units that **attacked** them), here **2 MP** (see rule 8.2 and 9.3). The back side shows a flag.

**Note:** *this system is designed to simulate the growing strength of the Viet Minh forces while maintaining the fog of war.*

### 2.4.4 - Viet Minh Combat Support



In the game, the Viet Minh Combat Actions may receive Support. Support is represented by a counter with a front side that indicates its name and a combat value modifier or a combat **d6** modifier and a back side with a flag (see 8.2.2).

## 2.5 - MARKERS



There are different types of game help markers to track the game turn, action points, artillery points, transport or air support and victory points.

## 3 - STACKING

### 3.1 - FRENCH

The French side must respect the following stacking limits:

- maximum of **four** combat units and convoys on a small or large white space (not including post counters);
- maximum of **three** combat unit counters on a small or large green space ;
- maximum of **six** combat units and convoys on a

retreat case space.

Stacking limits may never be exceeded except during movement.

**Exceptions:** Commander, Post, Dozer and Morane **counters** do not count in stacking.

As long as the two 2e BPC counters are on the same space, they only count as one counter.

### 3.2 - VIET MINH

The Viet Minh may stack up to **three** Viet Minh Infiltration counters per space.

## 4 - HOW TO PLAY ?

On turn 0, the French player must play Operation Lotus (see 4.1). During the following turns, after determining the War Strategy he will use, then positioning the allotted number of Infiltration counters, the French player may act and attack them. On the following turn, the Infiltration counters adjacent to the French counters attack them.

### 4.1 - GAME SET UP

The player places the Turn marker on space 0 on the turn counter track;

He places the three Air Support, Air Transport and Artillery Support markers in **space 3** on the Support points track; he places the French VP track on **space 0**. Finally, he places the French units on their starting positions (identified by a **red dot**).

**Hanoi:** 1st, 2nd BPC (including the light artillery unit from 2nd BPC), 5th BPC, 7th BPC, 8th BPC, 1st BEP, 2nd BEP, 1st BPVN, 2/3 RTA, 1/4 RTM, RICH, 1st SGB, 8 RSA, Morane counter.

**Viet Tri:** Dinassaut.

**Son Tay:** Colonel Dodelier, Infantry 4 BVN, 3/5 REI, 1/1RTA, 1st RCH, Armoured 4 BVN.

**Vi Thuy:** CLSM, Commandos 18 and 22.

**Song Dong:** 6 BVN.

**Xom Mo:** Colonel Vanuxem, 1st and 2nd BM.

**Xuan Mai:** Colonel Clément, 1/13 and 3/13 DBLE, 1/5 REI, RBCEO, Dozer.

He mixes up the 12 Viet Minh base and decoy counters, front side down, and places them on the reserved spaces on the map without turning them over.

He must play the French action phase of **turn 0** by spending the **12 AP** allocated by **Operation Lotus** without engaging in combat with a Viet Minh base or mobilising units (other than paratroopers)

from the Hanoi space; he may however carry out airdrops.

**Note:** *historically, it's General De Lattre's operation to seize Hoa Binh; it is a complete surprise for the Viet Minh.*

Once all the allocated AP have been spent, he turns over the Viet Minh bases. The decoy counters (Infiltration) return to the reserve, and the real bases remain on the map. The player proceeds to **turn 1**, following the game sequence.

## 4.2 - GAME SEQUENCE

Each turn after turn 0 is organised according to the following succession of game phases:

### 1. Command phase

The player rolls 1d6 on the War Strategies Table to determine which one will be used for this turn (See 5). He prepares the drawing of the Viet Minh Combat Actions (see 8 and page 16). He decides whether or not to keep his para units on the map (see 7.2 - parachuting).

### 2. Viet Minh Infiltration Phase

The player rolls 2d6 to determine the active Viet bases then places on the map the Viet Minh Infiltration counters allocated by the War Strategy that was drawn (see 6). He then rolls a die to position the Dangerous counter if it isn't already on the map (see 6.3.6).

### 3. French Action Phase

The player may spend his AP to make his units act (see 7): movement and/or combat (see 9).

### 4. Viet Minh Action Phase

The player rolls the die for the isolated Infiltration counters (see 6.3.7) then resolves the attacks (see 9).

## 5 - WAR STRATEGIES

The War Strategy represents the entirety of the military decisions made by General De Lattre, then Salan and Linares (commanders in chief of the French forces in Indochina) or the Viet Minh command.

Each War Strategy allocates to the French the number of Action Points (AP) that he may spend for his units to take action (see 7) but it also determines for the Viet Minh the number of Infiltration

counters that will be placed on the map to mark his progression (see 6).

## 5.2 - PROCEDURE

### 5.2.1 - Classic operations

In the Command Phase, the player rolls 1d6 on the dedicated table (see page 16) to determine the War Strategy used for the turn. The War Strategies are:

- **Alerted**: the French side has 6 AP, and the Viet Minh has 4 Infiltration counters.
- **Harassed**: the French side has 8 AP, and the Viet Minh has 6 Infiltration counters.
- **Operation**: the French side has 10 AP, and the Viet Minh has 8 Infiltration counters.

### 5.2.1 - Obligatory special operations

Starting with turn 5, the following two operations will be initiated by the French **instead** of a random drawing on the Table, **on the turn of his choosing**. They represent the two great operations to exfiltrate the French forces from the sectors of the Black River and Hoa Binh which put an end to the campaign and allow him to win Victory Points.

- **Operation Violet**: Operation Violet's mission is to evacuate the posts along the Black River to return to the bases of Son Tai or Viet Tri. This operation must be played after turn 4 and before turn 8 as the player chooses. When played:
  - the French side gets 12 AP, the Viet Minh has 8 Infiltration counters;
  - the French player must evacuate his forces stationed at Tu Vu, Notre-Dame Rocher, Ap Phu To, Dan The, and La Phu and bring those units back to Son Tay or Viet Tri before the end of the turn.If Violet is played on turn 5, the player loses **-5 VP**; on turn 6, the player does not win any VP; if played on turn 7 he wins **+5 VP**.

- **Operation Rainbow**: Operation Rainbow's mission is to evacuate Hoa Binh to return to the base at Xuan Mai via CR6. This operation must be played **after** turn 6 and at the latest on turn 10, as the French player chooses. When played:
  - the French player gets 12 AP, and the Viet Minh has 8 Infiltration counters;
  - the French player must evacuate his forces stationed at Hoa Binh and posts Xom Moi, Belvédère, Ben Ngoc and Xom Pheo and bring those units back to Xuan Mai before the end of the turn.

If Rainbow is played on turn 7, the French player loses **-10 VP**; played on turn 8 he loses **-5 VP**, on turn 9 it awards **0 VP**, on turn 10 it awards **+5 VP**. Once Operation Rainbow is played and then the Viet Minh's game phase has been carried out, the game must come to an end.

## 6 - VIET MINH INFILTRATIONS

### 6.1 - DETERMINATION OF THE ACTIVE VIET BASES

The six Viet Minh base counters are the starting point for the Viet Minh Infiltration activity. All the Infiltration counters used by the Viet Minh are first allocated to **one or two** Viet Minh bases to determine their action zone.

The player rolls **2d6** which indicate the active bases numbers for this turn. The total number of counters is divided evenly between these two bases.

If the player gets a double, or if one of the bases that is drawn is destroyed (see 9.4.3) then all the Infiltration counters will leave from this one base. The player reroll if he gets zero base.

### 6.1 - USE OF INFILTRATION COUNTERS

Each Infiltration counter is positioned on the map, from these bases, along the transport routes that leave from them, from free space to adjacent free space, so as to create a progressive line of Infiltration counters.

#### 6.1.1 - Placement of counters

They are placed according to the following process:

- The first counter is placed on the **first** empty space of a transport route starting from a Viet base **determined** by a die roll.

**Note:** *each potential base indicates the directions by numbers, the player rolls a die to determine the departure direction.*

- each following counter **must** then be placed in a free space adjacent to the preceding counter so that it continues in the most direct line possible (by the **shortest** route) and in the following order of preference:

- 1-** The Black River or CR6 (if equidistant: turns 1-7, priority to the Black River, turns 8-10, priority to CR6).
- 2-** A Post or a Base.
- 3-** A French force.

**4-** A large empty white or blue square space (the blue space may be on the CR6 or on the Black River).

**5-** A small white or blue space.

**6-** A small green space.

Respecting the rules in 6.1.2.

#### 6.1.2 - Priority of placement

The player chooses last where to place the counters (randomly or not) and if in doubt in the most **unfavourable** way possible for the French.

During play, the player must always give priority to occupying free spaces when positioning the Infiltration counters rather than stacking them. However, for the flow of the game, it's the player who chooses last where to place the counters (randomly or not) and if possible in the most unfavourable way possible for the French.

**A-** Position the counters one after another, then in the case of blockage (by a post or French force);

**B-** Stack the remaining counters to create the possibility of multiple attacks, respecting the stacking limits (see 3).

**C-** then if there are counters remaining, start from a counter that has already been positioned ;  
**D -** then from the base (with a new die roll) and create several progression itineraries.

**Note :** *If there is already at least one Infiltration counter positioned for the selected Viet base, the placement starts again from this counter if possible, otherwise roll the die.*

Counters that cannot be placed on the map are returned to the reserve.

**Note:** *if a counter is blocked by the river and there is no ford to cross at this point, movement continues along the river. On the other hand, CR6 can always be crossed.*

#### 6.1.3 - Special cases

- If the starting space is blocked by a French unit and the stacking limit of **3 Infiltration counters** has been reached, re-roll the die to determine another empty starting space to position the extra counter(s) (see also 9.4.2).

- If the placement starting space goes toward a **real Viet base**, re-roll the die to determine another empty departure space.

**Note:** *this re-roll procedure may be repeated several times if necessary.*

## 6.3 - IMPACT OF INFILTRATION COUNTERS

### 6.3.1- Overview

An Infiltration counter indicates Viet Minh activity and provokes a draw on the Threat Table that may generate Combat Actions, (see 8) whether he attacks or is attacked.

Any French force, post or base on a space **adjacent** to an Infiltration counter may be attacked during the **Viet Minh Action Phase**.

### 6.3.2 - Movement

An Infiltration counter never blocks French movement in an adjacent free space.

### 6.3.3 - Supply

As soon as a French base, post or force has at least **3 adjacent** Infiltration counters (including Guerrilla and Dangerous counters) at the beginning of a combat phase, it suffers a penalty of **-1** applied to every combat **d6** rolled for all the combats of this phase.

This rule does not apply to Artillery and Air Support which attack by themselves.

**Note:** *this principle allows for the simulation of supply problems caused by an encirclement situation.*

### 6.3.4 - Eliminating an Infiltration counter

Since the Infiltration counters represent a threat for the French player, he must attempt to eliminate them by attacking them.

A French force **must** enter the space of the Infiltration counter in order to attack it (see 9.1).

**Note:** an Infiltration counter may also reveal a Viet Minh combat action (see rule 8.2), in which case the combat is resolved according to rule 9.

**Important:** if a Viet Minh combat action that is attacked by air or artillery support **only** is not eliminated, the Infiltration counter that provoked this combat is immediately returned to its original position.

### 6.3.5- Viet Minh Guerrilla (two counters)



As soon as a Viet Minh Infiltration counter is placed on a space on the CR6, the player replaces it with a Guerrilla counter (if he still has one) and return it to the reserve of IC. He continues to place the remaining Infiltration counters normally.

**Note:** *the Guerrilla counters represent the "piano*

*notes" tactic employed by the Viet Minh to block the roads.*

If there are no Guerrilla counters available, leave the Infiltration counter instead.

If an Infiltration counter is already present in a space where a Guerrilla counter should be placed, this Infiltration counter is returned to its reserve.

A Guerrilla counter is of the same type as an Infiltration counter. However, if at the end of the turn it remains in its space, the Viet Minh wins **1 VP** (see 11).

A Guerrilla counter is eliminated like an Infiltration counter except that it cannot be eliminated by only using a support (Air or Artillery). A land unit must attack the Guerrilla counter during the French action phase in order to remove it from the map (see 9.1.).

The French player may also use the Dozer counter (see 2.2.2).

Finally, any French force adjacent to the Guerrilla counter is considered as if adjacent to an Infiltration counter for the rules of supply (see 6.3.3).

**Important:** a Guerrilla counter can never generate a result other than an Ambush and/or Clash during the draw when it combats. The other Viet Minh Combat Actions that were drawn are put to the side (see 8.2).

### 6.3.6 - Dangerous counter



Every turn during the Viet Minh Infiltration phase, to represent his mastery of the river traffic, the player places a Dangerous counter in one of the spaces containing numbers: to do so he rolls **1d6** and positions the counter based on the result.

The Dangerous counter is of the same type as an Infiltration counter with the only difference that at the end of each game turn in which it remains on the space, the Viet Minh wins **1 VP**.

If an Infiltration counter is already on the space in which the Dangerous counter must be placed, this Infiltration counter is returned to the reserve. If an Infiltration counter adjacent to a Dangerous counter is removed after a combat, the Dangerous counter is also removed.

The Dangerous counter placed on a ford space on the river acts like an Infiltration counter and other markers will be able to "cross" the river if they are placed there afterward.



Finally, any French force adjacent to the Dangerous counter is considered adjacent to an Infiltration counter for the rules of supply (see 6.3.3).

Only the French Dinassaut counter **can** combat the Dangerous counter (see 2.2.2).

**Important:** the Dangerous counter on a blue river space can never generate anything other than an Embuscade and/or Clash during the draw when it combats. The other Viet Minh Combat Actions that were drawn are put to the side (see 8.2).

### 6.3.7 - Isolated Infiltration counter

An Infiltration counter is considered **isolated** when it is **no longer** adjacent to another Infiltration counter. At the beginning of the Viet Minh action phase, the player rolls **1d6** for each isolated counter. On **1-2**, the counter is removed from the map and returned to the reserve.

An isolated Infiltration counter **cannot** attack a French force; it does however count in terms of supply (see 6.3.3).

## 7 - FRENCH ACTIONS

### 7.1 - USE OF FRENCH AP

During this phase, the player places the AP track marker on the space of the game scale that corresponds to the number of AP he has been allotted by this turn's War Strategy. Once he performs an action, he subtracts the number of AP used by moving the marker to the appropriate number. When he has used all of his AP or has chosen to stop spending them, the phase ends.

**Note:** the French player may hold on to AP until the end of the turn, especially to use air or artillery support actions and the "parachuting" action (see rule 4.2), allowing him to intervene in the Viet Minh Action phase.

The player may spend AP several times for the same unit or group of units.

### 7.2 - TYPES OF ACTIONS

During a turn, the French player may perform the following actions, as he chooses and by spending the necessary AP.

- **Construction (1 or 2 AP):** enables the player who has at least one combat unit on a white square space, identified by a construction symbol, to construct a post there (**1 AP**) or at Hoa Binh (**2 AP**).

**Reminder:** constructions award VP (see 11).

- **Movement (1 AP):** enables a force composed of 1 to 4 stacked units, regardless of their type, to move **without** voluntarily attacking, bearing in mind the stacking and movement limits (see 1.1.3 and 3). If the units do not have the same movement capacities, they move with the speed of the slowest unit if they remain stacked.

**Reminder:** the presence of an Infiltration counter or a Viet base does not hinder movement on an **adjacent** space (see 6.3.2 and 9.4.1).

- **Offensive (2 AP):** enables a unit to move and attack a French force, composed of 1 to 4 stacked units, bearing in mind the stacking and movement limits (see 1.1.3 and 3), when it arrives on the space containing the Infiltration counter. If there are MP **remaining**, the force may continue its movement after a victorious combat and combat again.

**Note:** any Movement or Offensive action enables units to be **dropped** off along the route without additional cost of AP.

- **Dinassaut's Movement and Attack (1 AP):** enable the Dinassaut counter to move in order to eliminate the Dangerous counter (see 2.2.2).

- **Air drops (1 AP):** action that can be played at **any time** during the French **and/or** Viet action phase; the player declares he will carry out an airdrop; the cost is one Air Transport point to parachute in a unit on any white space on the map and may, once per zone, perform a Movement or an Offensive by paying the AP. If the space is occupied by a Viet Minh Infiltration counter, the airdropped unit immediately launches a combat with a **-1** on its combat bonus.

At the start of the turn **following** the air drop, the player decides whether or not to keep his paratroop units on the map. If he chooses not to, the units are immediately repositioned at Hanoi and can be airdropped again. A paratroop unit remaining on the map costs him **1 AP**. This process is repeated each turn for each para unit on the map.

- **Transport (2 AP):** action which allows the player to spend one Air Transport point to move a maximum of **two combat units** (except armoured and mechanised units) from a French base (Viet Tri, Son Tay, Xuan Mai or Hoa Binh if constructed) or the Hanoi space toward any French base on the map (Viet Tri, Son Tay, Xuan Mai or Hoa Binh if constructed); once it is in the



zone, the unit may carry out a Movement or an Offensive by paying the AP cost.

- **Reinforcements (2 AP)**: this action allows the players to place a maximum of two units on the Hanoi space on the turn counter, **one turn later**. They must be positioned in a **Retreat base**; they can then carry out a Movement or an Offensive as soon as they are in play by paying the AP cost.

- **Maintenance (2 or 3 AP)**: action which allows the player to reconstruct **diminished** armoured/motorised units, or the **destroyed** Dozer or Dinassaut counters (see 2.2.2). The counters appear on a retreat base at the beginning of the following turn.

- **Artillery Support (1 AP)**: the player may spend one Artillery support point, he moves the Artillery Support track marker one point to the right and gets a roll of **1d6+3** during one combat (see 9).

- **Air Support (1 AP)**: the player may spend one Air Point and gets a roll of **1d6+4** during one combat (see 9).

- **Mine clearing and road repair (1 AP)**: enables the Dozer counter to move in order to eliminate a Viet Minh Guerrilla counter (see 2.2.2 and 6.3.5).

- **Evacuation (1 AP)**: allows the player to turn a Post counter or the Hoa Binh base counter over to its Convoy side, and to move it with its maximum movement capacity on the transport routes useable by the convoys in the direction of a retreat base. For each space on this route, adjacent to a Guerrilla or Dangerous Infiltration counter, the player tests for the convoy for possible ambush (see 10.1.2).

**Reminder**: a convoy counter counts in the stacking limit.

## 8 - VIET MINH COMBAT ACTIONS

### 8.1 - OVERVIEW

A combat is a clash between the French combat units and the Viet Minh Combat Actions. During a **French attack**, or during a **Viet Minh action phase**, the player rolls a die on the Threat Level Table for **each** Viet Minh Infiltration counter participating in a combat to determine **how many** Viet Minh action combats will be drawn for combat: Threat level 1, he draws one Action, Threat level 2, he draws counters until he gets two Combat Actions, etc. However, since the container contains other counters, the player may also draw Supports before drawing a Combat Action, thereby

creating the Viet force he will have to confront.

To best organise the various enemy forces, the player places the counters **in the order** they were drawn to specify each Combat Action (first, second, third) and equally distributes any multiple Supports in the order they were drawn that is least advantageous for the French side.

***Example**: on turn 3, the player gets a 4 on the d6, and so Threat 2; the draw gives the order Artillery, Clash, Trenches, Elite, Offensive. So he must engage in a Clash with the Artillery and Trenches Supports and an Offensive with the Elite Support. Each Combat Action is resolved with the Supports **one after another**, respecting rule 9.2. If a Viet Minh Action **requires** the French to retreat, the other actions are not played.*

***Note**: any Viet Minh Combat Action generates losses for the adversary if it is not eliminated and can force it to retreat.*

See the **composition** of the Threat draw on page 16.

***Note**: this varies based on the turn so as to represent the rise in strength of the Viet Minh forces and then their fatigue after two months of combat.*

## 8.2 - CONTENTS OF THE CONTAINER

### 8.2.1 - Combat Actions

The Viet Minh has the following Combat Actions at his disposal:

- **Clash** (*Accrochage* - three counters): the Combat Action is eliminated on a **4 or +** on the combat d6, otherwise it provokes for the adversary **a loss and the retreat of one space**;

- **Ambush** (*Embuscade* - two counters): eliminated on a **5 or +**, otherwise it provokes **a loss and the retreat of one space**. Before being attacked, Ambush rolls a **d6**,

on a **6**, a French unit loses one combat step, as the player chooses. Combatting Ambush costs **1 MP** if the French player is the attacker;

- **Offensive** (*Offensive* - two counters): eliminated on a **6 or +**, otherwise it provokes **2 losses and the retreat of one space**. Combatting Offensive costs **2 MP** if the French player is the attacker;

- **Assault** (*Assaut* - two counters): eliminated on a **7 or +**, otherwise it provokes **2 losses and the retreat of one space**. Combatting Assault costs **2 MP** if the French player is the attacker. Destroying Assault awards **1 VP** to the French player.



**Note:** a Combat Action, whether or not it is eliminated, is returned to the container after the combat for the drawing of the following Threat.

If the Combat Action provoked a retreat or the disappearance of units, a new Infiltration counter is **immediately** placed on the newly vacated space (see 9.3.1).

## 8.2.2 - Combat Action Support

To increase the power of his Combat Actions, the Viet Minh has six Support counters that he may use once per Threat when drawn. His Support counters are the following:

- **Artillery** (Art. one counter): the Viet Minh force rolls **1d6** before the combat resolution, on a **4, 5 or 6** the French forces suffers an immediate loss.

- **DCA** (one counter): the player rolls **1d6**, on a **5 or 6**, the French Air Support counter participating in the combat or the Morane (see 2.2.2) cannot accomplish its air support mission and returns to the Hanoi space; if there is no air counter present, the DCA counter acts like an Artillery counter, but only on a die roll of **5 or 6**.

- **Elite** (one counter): the Viet Minh subtracts **1** from the French combat d6.

- **Reinforcements** (Renforts - one counter): the player draws from the container until he gets an additional Combat Action for this Threat (he could possibly draw other Supports).

- **Trenches** (Tranchées - two counters): inflicts a **-2** penalty on the French combat d6.

**Note:** the Support is returned to the container after the combat for the drawing of the next Threat level.

## 9 - COMBAT RESOLUTION

### 9.1 - OVERVIEW

There are two types of combats:

- **During the French action phase**

- each time a French unit or units **enter** a space occupied by a Viet Minh Infiltration counter, combat immediately ensues with this counter (see 7.2)

- If the player engages Supports alone against an Infiltration counter.

- **During the Viet Minh action phase**, each time a French unit or stack of units, a post or a base becomes **adjacent** to one or more Infiltration counters, the Viet Minh provokes a combat with all adjacent counters.

### Important:

- Each Infiltration counter is resolved **one after the other**.

- The combat **always** begins by drawing the **Threat** level, then each Combat Action is resolved one after the other.

## 9.2 - COMBAT RESOLUTION

After having drawn the Threat level, the player resolves **each** of the Viet Minh Combat Actions for this Threat in their order of appearance, bearing in mind the possible presence of Viet Minh Supports as follows.

### 9.2.1 - Process

**1-** Determine the Threat level (see table).

**Note:** if it's just one Infiltration counter, he can attack it with a force, an artillery or air support counter, and win the combat by rolling **6+** with a potentially modified **1d6**. If he does, the player removes the Infiltration counter from the map and returns it to the Viet Minh reserve.

**2-** Parachute in a unit on the space in question if possible and decide whether or not to use the Morane counter's Air and Artillery Support markers, paying the AP cost.

**3-** Draw the Combat Actions for the Threat.

**4-** Roll **1d6** for each of his units (modified by their combat bonus) or posts and **3 or 5 d6** for a retreat base.

**5-** The Combat Action is **eliminated** by the appropriate score of a single modified **d6** (see 8.2.1), otherwise the French force suffers the losses linked to the Viet Minh Combat Action that was not eliminated and the potential retreat.

**Reminder:** a commander may permit a re-roll.

**6-** He repeats this procedure until the elimination (or not) of **all** the Viet Minh Combat Actions that are present.

**7-** The first victorious Viet Minh Combat Action always **marks** the end of the combat unless the French force does not retreat (see 9.2.3 and 9.3).

**8-** Test the elimination of a commander in the case of a loss.

### 9.2.2 - Combat against French forces

- If several units or posts are located in the spaces **adjacent** to a single Infiltration counter, the player designates the French space with the weakest die modifiers to be attacked. In case of a

tie, use the space containing fewer units.

- If a unit or post is located on a space **adjacent** to **several** Infiltration counters (stacked on the same space or positioned on several spaces), this space may be attacked as many times as there are adjacent Infiltration counters.

*Example: three Infiltration counters are adjacent to a space occupied by a post, so it can be attacked three times during the Viet Minh Action phase.*

### 9.2.3 - Terrain's influence on the combat

If the combat takes place in:

- a **green space**, the French units and support have a **-1** penalty on the combat dice;
- a **white space**: **+1** on the combat dice for an armoured or mechanised unit;
- a **white space with a post or a base**, a French force that is present ignores the first retreat result (but not the loss).
- **Kem Hill**: **-1** on the combat dice for armoured or mechanised units.

## 9.3 - RESULTS OF THE COMBAT

### 9.3.1 - Overview

The combat continues until one of the following two results is reached:

- all Viet Minh Combat Actions have been **eliminated**, declaring victory for the French player who remains in place on the defended or attacked space and who may be able to continue his movement if he has MP remaining (when France is the attacker);
- all the French units are pushed back or eliminated, and victory is declared for the Viet Minh who **must** immediately occupy the attacked space with an Infiltration counter (possibly taken from the reserve) or else the Infiltration counter remains on the space it defended.

*Note: any space that becomes free while adjacent to stacked Infiltration counters is automatically occupied by the surplus counters.*

The French losses are always allocated as the player chooses. During a retreat provoked by a Combat Action, the stacking limits **must** be respected; a unit that cannot respect this rule is eliminated.

Moreover, any force that cannot retreat suffers an additional loss.

**Note:** any reduced unit (that has already suffered

red a loss) that suffers a second loss is eliminated and removed from the game.

A force **may** choose not to retreat and instead suffer an additional loss.

An **attacking** French force that suffers a retreat result after combat returns to the space adjacent to the one it occupied before the combat.

**Reminder:** posts and bases are the last elements of a force to suffer a loss.

A French force that loses a combat it triggered stops its action. The player may spend AP to make this force act again.

### 9.3.2 - Special consequences

A French post or base counter that is engaged in a combat **never** suffers retreat; if it is eliminated, the counter is immediately removed from the map and replaced by a Viet Minh Infiltration counter.

The permanent posts and retreat bases Viet Tri, Song Tay and Xuan Mai remain permanently on the map and grant the bonuses linked to the post or base to the Viet Minh.

**Note:** a permanent post (or a retreat base) that is captured may be reoccupied by a French force after a victorious combat; the same is true for the Hoa Binh site. However, the player doesn't receive any more VP for the construction of the base.

## 9.4 - COMBAT AGAINST A VIET BASE

A combat may take place between a Viet Minh base and a French force.

### 9.4.1 - Overview

A Viet base does **not** block French movement to a free adjacent space.

*Note: a square green space with no Viet base at the beginning of the game is considered like a green stopover space (see 1.3.1).*

### 9.4.1 - Viet base and Infiltration counters

A Viet base never attacks adjacent French units but it can generate Infiltration counters against an adjacent French unit (these counters are stacked on the base). If the French player attacks them, he attacks the Infiltration counters and not the base.

### 9.4.2 - Attack by a French force

French units may attack a Viet base (see 8 and 9). To defend itself, the Viet base first rolls a defence die; if the result is **5-6**, the attacking French force immediately loses one combat step, then **three Combat Actions** and potentially Support counters are drawn (**note**, the pile to be drawn from is always identical to the one used in turns **3-8**). If **all** the Viet Combat Actions are eliminated, the Viet base is destroyed. The player removes the counter from the map and places it on the turn counter track **two turns** later.

A Viet base is **never** permanently destroyed; it returns two turns later. The player repositions the Viet base counter at the **beginning** of the Viet Minh Infiltration phase.

*Example: a Viet base that is destroyed on turn 3 is placed on space 5 on the track.*

If there are any French units on the space, they are moved one or two spaces in the direction the player chooses.

*Note: historically the French cleaned out the Ba Vi several times in their search and sweep operations, but they never managed to completely eradicate the Viet Minh presence.*

### 9.4.3 - Consequences

During the die rolls to determine the active Viet bases (see 6.1), if the **number** of one (or several) destroyed Viet bases comes up, then:

- either **all** the counters are posted to another remaining base;
- or the player **re-rolls** the dice to determine at least one base to position the Infiltration counters.

## 10- SPECIAL POINTS

### 10.1 - EVACUATIONS OF FRENCH POSTS AND ESCORTS

#### 10.1.1 - Overview

The French player may use an “Evacuation” action to evacuate a post at a cost of **1 AP**. He turns the Post counter to its back side, thereby transforming it into a Convoy counter. To use a Convoy counter, the player moves it from the post’s location, by a transport route that **necessarily** accepts vehicles, following the itinerary he chooses, until the Retreat Base he wishes to reach (Viet Tri, Son Tay or Xuan Mai).

An evacuation must last a maximum of one

turn, and so the French player must often carry out at least an additional Movement (1 AP) with his convoy to reach the desired Retreat Base. A convoy that doesn’t reach its Retreat base during the turn is considered to be eliminated by the Viet Minh and the counter is removed from the game with a gain of **1 VP** (see 11.2).

An evacuation **cannot** take place if any Viet Minh Infiltration counters **occupy** a space along the itinerary route.

If combat units were present in the post, the player may choose to use one unit **maximum** to escort the Convoy (**exception** 10.1.4).

#### 10.1.2 - Ambush test

At the first space of the journey, for each space **adjacent** to a Viet Minh Infiltration counter, the player tests for ambush. He rolls **1d6** modified by the **-1** penalty attributed to the Convoy and by a bonus of **+1** for a potential escort unit: on a result **3 or less**, the Convoy counter is destroyed.

**Note:** if an evacuation is attempted while the post is **adjacent** to an Infiltration counter, the player tests for ambush; if the Convoy is destroyed, the free space is automatically occupied by an Infiltration counter.

If several Infiltration counters are stacked in an adjacent space, the player adds to the **d6** as many **-1** penalties as there are Infiltration counters.

*Note: historically, during the battle, the French convoys of this type remained extremely vulnerable.*

#### 10.1.3 - Consequences

If a Convoy counter is destroyed, the escorting unit suffers a loss but may continue its movement alone.

#### 10.1.4 - Evacuation of the base at Hoa Binh



As soon as Operation Rainbow is activated (and only then), the French player must evacuate the base at Hoa Binh: the base counter is turned to its Hoa Binh Convoy side.

*Note: historically, 1000 civilians and 700 PIM (detained military personnel or prisoners) participated in the evacuation of the base.*

The convoy moves more slowly and can only move with **4 MP** instead of 6 MP; it can, however,

be escorted by **two** units maximum, each allocating **+1** for the ambush test.

## 11 - VICTORY CONDITIONS

Victory points (VP) are accumulated as the game goes along **when** the corresponding event occurs.

### 11.1 - OVERVIEW

The French side wins victory at the end of the game according to the following victory conditions:

- On a score of **-11 VP and fewer**, it's a major defeat; the French high command is dismissed.
- On a score of **-1 to -10 VP**, minor defeat;
- On a score of **0 to 10 VP**, minor victory;
- On a score of **11 to 20 VP**, major victory;
- On a score of **21 VP and more**, historic victory; Giap is sent to a rehabilitation camp and is replaced.

### 11.2 - ALLOCATION OF VP

#### 11.2.1 - Viet Minh

The Viet Minh player's victory points are counted as follows:

- 1 VP** for each French unit step that is eliminated.
- 1 VP** for each eliminated commander.
- 1 VP** for each French post or convoy that is eliminated;
- 1 VP** for every two Infiltration counters still present to the east of the Black River at the end of the game (round down to a whole number);
- 1 VP** for each turn in which a Dangerous counter or Guerrilla is present on the map at the end of each turn;
- 2 VP** for each permanent post of the De Lattre Line or for each Retreat Base that is captured and retained by the Viet Minh at the end of the game;
- 3 VP** if the Hoa Binh Convoy is destroyed;
- 3 VP** for each zone, if the Ap Phu To and Notre Dame Rocher spaces are captured and retained by the Viet Minh before Operation Violet is launched;
- 5 VP** if the Viet Minh captures and retains the base at Hoa Binh before Operation Rainbow is launched;

#### 11.2.1 - French

The French player's victory points are counted as follows:

**1 VP** per post created at La Phu, Dan The, Tu Vu, Xom Pheo, Ben Ngoc, Xom Moi, Belvédère, Trung Ha, Ap Phu Tho, Notre-Dame Rocher;

**1 VP** per Viet Minh **Assault** combat action that is destroyed;

**3 VP** for the Base counter created at Hoa Binh;

**1 VP** for a permanent post maintained at Song Dong, Thai Binh and Trai Vang at the end of the game;

**2 VP** for a post maintained at Trung Ha at the end of the game;

**3 VP** for the Hoa Binh Convoy that arrives at Xuan Mai after the triggering of Rainbow;

**2 VP** for each Viet base eliminated;

**-5/0/+5 VP** when Operation Violet is played (see 5.2.1);

**-10/-5/0/+5 VP** when Operation Rainbow is played (see 5.2.1).

## 12 - OPTIONAL RULES

### 12.1 - PLACEMENT OF VIET BASES

The player may use a **historical** placement by placing on turn 0 a **real** Viet base counter on the green spaces with a flag: Doi Cuong, Nghoc Nhi Forest, Ba Vi, Spot Height 564, Long Bui, Lang Mac; the positioning of bases is done at random, nevertheless.

### 12.2 - THREAT MANAGEMENT

To vary the combats, the player may choose to change the Viet Minh Threats according to the War Strategies that are used. Add to the Threat Table d6 roll:

**+0** if alerted; **+1** if harassed; **+2** for an Operation

### 12.3 - AMBUSH TEST

To facilitate evacuation, the penalty cannot exceed **-1** whatever the number of adjacent Infiltration counters. ♦

**A game by** Lionel LIRON

**Development** Nicolas Stratigos

**Graphics and layout** : studio VaeVictis

**Tests and proof reading** : Luc Delmas,

Philippe Séberac, Nicolas Stratigos

### EXAMPLE OF PLAY

On turn 4, during the **Command Phase**, the French player rolls a 3, the War Strategy for this turn is therefore Harassed. The French player obtains 8 AP and the Viet Minh has 6 Infiltration counters to position. Since there are no Para units on the map, the French player doesn't have to spend any AP to keep them. On the **Infiltration Phase**, the player rolls two dice and gets 4 and 6. Three Infiltration counters are placed starting at Viet base #4. The Dangerous counter is placed in space 1-3-5.

The player rolls a 2 on the d6 for base #4, the three Infiltration counters are placed as follows, one at Xom Bu and one at Ap Da Chong. Since it is not possible to

spread out farther (due to the Dinassaut), the player stacks the last Infiltration counter at Ap Da Chong. During the **Viet Minh Action Phase**, the French player will therefore combat two Infiltration counters. For the first, he gets 1 on the Threat Level Table, so it is just one Infiltration counter. He must roll a 6; he gets 4 for the post and 5 for the 4 BVN +1 = 6. The Infiltration counter is returned to the reserve. For the second draw, he rolls a 4, for Threat level 2. Given this, he decides to airdrop the 1st BPC for 1 AP and requests artillery support for another AP that he had kept in reserve.

He draws Ambush, *Elite*, Assault. Yikes ! He rolls a die for Ambush and gets 6, one French counter loses a step. He chooses the 4 BVN which is turned over to its back side. The Viet Minh wins 1 VP. Then he rolls the dice and gets post = 4 (4), 4 BVN = 3 (3), 1 BPC = 5 (8), Art = 3 (6), Ambush is destroyed. He starts again for Assault with Elite (the support is used in the means the least favourable for the French player). He will have a penalty of -1 for his die rolls. He rolls the dice and gets post = 3 (2), 4 BVN = 4 (3), 1 BPC = 5 (7), Art = 4 (6). It narrowly passes; Assault is destroyed thanks to the Paras, and the French player wins 1 VP.



## WAR STRATEGIES

Turn/die	1	2	3	4	5	6
1-2	A	A	A	H	H	H
3-8	A	A	H	H	OP	OP
9-10	A	A	H	H	H	OP

**A:** Alerted; 6 AP/4 IP  
**H:** Harceled: 8 AP/6 IP

**OP:** Operation: 10 AP/8 IP  
**Lotus:** 12 AP

**Violet:** 12 AP/8 IP  
**Rainbow:** 12 AP/8 IP

## THREAT LEVEL

Turn/die	1	2	3	4	5	6
1-2	–	–	M1	M1	M2	M2
3-8	–	M1	M2	M2	M2	M3
9-10	–	M1	M1	M2	M2	M3

–: Infiltration counter only

**M1:** Draw **one** vietminh combat action counter

**M2:** Draw **two** vietminh combat action counters

**M3:** Draw **three** vietminh combat action counters

**Die Roll Modifier**, only for the following cases

**River combat** on a **blue** space : **-1**

**Combat** against a **Guérilla** counter : **-1**

French Support **alone** : **-1**

**Vietminh combat action** : only *Clash* and *Ambush*

**Optional rule(12.2) :** + **1 DRM** if Harressed; + **2 DRM** if Operation

### Turn/VM Actions in the container

**1-2** = 3 x **Accrochage**, 2 x **Embuscade** + 1 x Elite, 1 x Renforts

**3-8** and **Viet base** = 3 x **Accrochage**, 2 x **Embuscade**, 2 x **Offensive**, 2 x **Assaut** + 1 x Elite, 1 x Renforts, 1 x Art., 1 x DCA, 2 x Tranchées

**9-10** = 3 x **Accrochage**, 2 x **Embuscade**, 2 x **Offensive** + 1 x Elite, 1 x Renforts, 1 x Art., 1 x DCA

### Placement of Infiltration counters

**1-** The Black River or CR6 (if equidistant : turns **1-7**, priority to the Black River, turns **8-10**, priority to CR6).

**2-** A Post or a Base.

**3-** A French force.

**4-** A large empty white or blue square space (the blue space may be on the CR6 or on the Black River).

**5-** A small white or blue space.

**6-** A small green space.

Respecting the rules in 6.1.2.



**Stopover spaces - plain**  
(white)



**Stopover spaces - Forest or mountain**  
(green)



**(Potential) Viet Base.** les chiffres indiquent la direction de départ des pions *infiltration vietminh*



**Historical Viet Base** (green).  
(see 12.1)



**French Retreat Base**  
Number of **d6** rolled for combat



**Permanent French Post**  
the **red** dot shows a set-up zone (see 4.1)



**Stopover space in plain where air drop can occur.** The **symbol** shows the possibility of building a post.



**River space** that can accommodate ground troops and the Dinassault. (white)



**River space** (that can accommodate the Dangerous counter on **1d6 = 1-3-5**)



Road



Trail



Path