

# **LONE GENERAL**

Jason A. Kline

"I advise you to surrender now. Our navy is unsurpassed, and out will unbreakable. We shall fight you to the last man!"

"Is that all?" replied Gregon, "We were preparing to fight to the last woman and child was wiped out as well, then delete everything from the computer banks destroying all evidence you ever existed. Its nice to see you have a modicum of restraint."

I hate playing chess with myself – I always lose!

Well, this is my attempt to write a war game in 24 hours, officially stated at 0:00 (midnight) according to my watch – which is 5-8 minuets off schedule from the rest of the world, but a day is still a day.

I had originally wanted to make a game where it was a long story, with all the rules being parenthetical remarks to back up what happened. However, being borderline obsessive compulsive, I stated making a list before I was ready – prior preparation is a big no no in this contest. So I needed to try something else. Admittedly, I've been thinking about this for a few hours, but no writing. If you want to disqualify me on that – well, its a war game, so it doesn't fit the 24 hour rpg anyway.

## **The Inspiration**

We all like games, but the problem is most of them can't be played alone. And war games are the worst, because they have long set up times, in addition to needing at least two people, and a lot of pieces. Hence, even when you have company, you might not have time to play after all the set up.

So, lets make a war game to ply by yourself. But how do you prevent yourself from cheating? Is there someway more convenient than a huge book of paragraphs and random tables that take hours to go through and reference when you activate an enemy?

This game is meant to be strategic in scope – the map is divided into six fronts (in world war two, There was the west front, the Mediterranean/Italy, and then Russia, which itself was three fronts – army group east, center, and west) As such, micromanagement of the tactics for the solitaire opponent, or worrying about things like ammunition are are absolved into the nameless generals, lieutenants and majors below the player,

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**Optional Rule:** The space needed could probably be either reduced or increased as space allows, or it could be played on a hex map if you have one available. However, the number of fronts factors into how the game is played.

## I. Getting Ready

### Materials Needed

To help facilitate ease of play alone, the materials are kept at a minimum.

Several six sided dice (D6s from here on)

A tape measure, though a yard stick or ruler should work. Since I live in America, inches and feet will be used.

A Playing surface about 36 inches across, and two or three times that long (thats 3 feet by 6 or twelve. Space may in fact be the hardest to find)

Slips of paper or models to denote units, and terrain.  
(a set of colored pencils for making the chits could be helpful or for that matter, models from any other war game you play)

Quite a bit of extra paper to track hit points for units.

### Set Up

First, establish the playing area, by marking off a place on your table or floor. The shorter edge (the 36 inch one) should then be marked off into six 6 inch wide strips. Each of these strips will be referred to as a front, and should be enumerated, left to right, A, B, C, D, E, and F.

Set up some terrain on the battlefield. It does not have to respect the boundaries between the fronts. However, no front should be completely impassible.

Next, an opponent should be chosen – mix and match the factors Listed in the section on your opponent.

After that, armies should be produced.

Finally, set up your forces, dividing your initial units between the six fronts.

The opponent in a single player game moves first. In a two player game, roll a d6, and whoever rolls highest goes first.

## Terrain and Special affects

Yes, Penalizing infantry for being in a forest and granting a bonus to vehicles is the opposite of just about every other war game. I'm trying something different.

### **Water:**

Water comes in two types.

*Rivers* take an entire movement to cross, regardless of width, unless there is a bridge.

*Lakes* or other large bodies of water cut movement in half. If the halved movement is not enough to get the unit across, then the area is impassable, unless some other way is found.

### **Forrest:**

A penalty to infantry from the bugs, animals, and cutting trails. Vehicles have air-conditioning and can just smash through obstacles, so they aren't affected. Infantry are at -1 to hit, while vehicles are +1 defense.

### **Towns:**

A penalty to vehicles as enemy's can hide in upper stores and ambush them, a bonus to infantry since they can hide, and raid the bars and stores. Vehicles are -1 defense, while Infantry are +1 to hit.

### **Blocking Terrain**

Large dunes, cliff sides, rubble, anything that would normally prevent a unit from moving through it, thus forcing another path.

### **Attacking across front boundaries**

Each front would presumably be under the jurisdiction of a different general and thus units crossing fronts would have difficulties in being transferred to another commander, getting their frequencies right, and the general road march. As such, it takes a full move to cross the boundary between fronts, regardless of how far its moved beforehand, and any attack made that turn would be at two dice less. On the other hand, this does allow for reinforcing and flanking.

### **Flanking:**

Attacking from the side or behind a unit gives the defender a notable disadvantage. An attack from the side is -1 defense, from behind -2 defense.

### Special Areas:

It was tank country. Almost perfectly flat, broken only by the occasional windbreak of trees and barn. The farmers left these fields months ago to escape the fighting, and even the infantry avoided them. With a height advantage and cannons that could hit a target as far as the eye could see nothing would question the tanks dominance.

Jake was roused from his thoughts by a sudden screech of the laser warning indicator.

Anti-Tank helicopters.

The questioning began.

**Hospital:** Heals Infantry in its vicinity

**Depot:** Heals Vehicles in its vicinity

**Capital:** +1 moral

**Objective:** Necessary to win (just marks a piece of terrain)

**Earthworks:** +2 defense

**Airport:** +1 infantry upon reinforcement

**Ship Yard:** +1 vehicle upon reinforcement

While not necessary, these areas allow for some interesting variations. You may either start with them on your side, allowing for stronger initial forces, or place them in the middle to act as a focal point for the combat.



**Note:** The logistic and Unit categories also apply to you the player.

Some of these categories can make for a really weird or difficult opponent.

Provided I do this right, there should be  $4^4$ , or 256 ways to configure the opponent before you start selecting forces.

**Note:** I am going to say right now that this isn't play tested in any way, and I doubt that the forces are all that well balanced. This is a major reason why i design RPGs. Equality is far less necessary in a non-zero sum game.

## II. The opponent

Before play, decide on how you opponent will act. Mix and match attitudes from each of the concepts:

Logistics

Strategy

Units

Esprit de Corps

This could also be done randomly assigning the numbers 1-4 to each of the stances within a category and rolling a die, rolling again if it shows a 5 or 6.

As the human player, you must roll for or chose a logistics type, and a set of units. Moral and strategy are optional, one or both can be added for more challenge, if you don't mind slightly more book-keeping.

### Logistics

This is the preparation the enemy has for conflict. There are three levels of logistics,

**Short War:** Similar to the stance of Germany in the Second world war, most of their forces are ready at the start, but they can't necessarily keep up with losses. They start with 50% more forces, but their reinforcements come every 3 turns rather than every two.

**Standing Army:** The default stance on warfare, there is a median number of troops, and reinforcements every other turn.

**Long War:** Obviously the opposite of a Short War opponent, these combatants start with half as many forces, but will gain Strength every turn. Think Soviets.

**Unprepared:** Few nations would willingly let this happen, but its possible. These forces start with only one quarter the normal force level. On the other hand, reinforcements are doubled.

Since there are no other forts in the area, we shall attack this one. Any questions?

"Not a question, but rather a statement. I would prefer to attack the three forts farther 60 clicks north along the line."

"Why would you rather attack three closely spaced forts than one unsupported outpost? That's audacity"

"But it makes more sense than your plan. Look at the map. There are three towns, a depot, and possibly a helicopter staging point just beyond that fort, defense in depth. But the three forts are close together, because once they are breached, there is nothing behind them to slow my drive on the capital."

### Strategy:

Tactics change according to the equipment available, but strategy is nigh eternal – Sun Tzu's "The Art of War" remains as useful now as it did when written about 2400 years ago.

Siege: Smash the enemy's forces, destroy their ability to make war. Burn all in your path. This indicates a desire to attack on three or four fronts, generally connected.

- Opponents under this strategy will tend to ignore objectives in favor of smashing enemy forces whenever possible.
- There is little emphasis on defense of any general area, though forces will be clustered in mutual support

Blitzkrieg: Surgical strikes concentrating forces in one or two places.

- As opposed to a Siege style opponent, objectives and not enemy units are the goal.
- Only objectives are strongly held

Pincer: Attacking on two widely separated fronts.

- A general defense is set up, but the enemy's thrust against it is blunted by the need to defend on two fronts.
- Advancement is traded for security of position.

Over Watch: Rather than a generalized manner of moving across the board, this is a more short sighted approach. Two fronts will move towards a convenient objective, then get reinforced, then two more fronts will move.

- This is the most cautious type, more likely to shrink from conflict, and keep a defensive line rather than defend certain points.
- Objectives that assist defense are preferred over long range strikes.

### Units:

Any given army will have a preference in how its forces are armed. Some prefer to use masses, other go for guerrilla warfare, and still others like the high-tech advantage. For the purpose of this game, we will presume the nations at war are not capable of fielding more than one unit ideal as the United States, and Soviet Union of the 1960s-1990s could.

(Churchill, Sherman, Vo  
Nguyen Giap, and Stalin,  
with some alteration as  
necessary)

**Elite:** Never have so many owed so much to so few.

**High Tech:** War is [www.hell.net](http://www.hell.net)

**Guerrilla:** To defeat the eagles, we shall become moles.

**Wave:** One death is a tragedy, 10 million, a strategy.

### Esprit de Corps:

The will to fight is the end all factor in most warfare. Outnumbering the enemy 10 to one means little if the soldiers refuse to fight, and a willing guerrilla force can overcome a superior power.

Moral is checked by rolling a number of d6s and trying to exceed a three. Each level of spirit increases the number of d6s rolled.

**Broken:** Defection and desertion runs rampant! 1d6.

**Trained:** Be an army of three, blah blah blah... 2d6

**Nationalized:** True believers defending their homes. 3d6

**Fanatical:** No Retreat, No surrender. 4d6

### III.The Turn

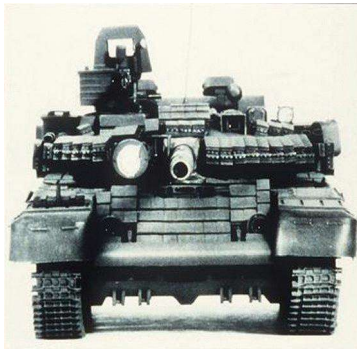
#### Example Trade

The units on fronts A,B, and C are left in their defensive positions, and don't attack. This means that there are six moves and six actions left

**Movement:** Chance to move forces, or declare forces on the defensive

**Deployment:** An attack or the use of a special ability.

**Action:** Declared Use



A turn consists of all the movements and deployments for one side. Each Front has one move and one action entitled too it. Moves and deployments may be traded from one one front to another. This allows for rapid advancement and multiple attacks on a few fronts while leaving others inactive.

Moves are just what they sound like – shifting units around their specific front. To cross the border between fronts requires an entire move unto itself.

Deployments are the use of a special ability, or an attack.

#### Movement

When a move action is declared on a front, all the units are entitled to move – though it is not necessary. Each unit has its own movement rating, and several have their own special movement types, though these are used as a deployment.

There is no penalty for moving backwards, sideways, or turning. However, Keep track of which side of the unit is designated as forwards, because attacking from the side or rear has an affect on combat.

Two caveats to keep in mind about movement. First of all, no unit may move through another allied or enemy (with the exception of those with special movement Abilities – such as the airborne). Secondly, some terrain types have an effect.

It should also be noted that crossing the boundaries between fronts has penalties – theres bound to be problems when an entire regiment is shuffled between one general and another.



"In the wire man! They're in the wire!"

"Shut up, keep firing, and count your bullets. Remember, gentlemen Murphy's Laws of combat, the thrust you're attacking is a feint, and the feint you're ignoring is the main body!"

"Game over man, Game..."

"Quote that move one more time, and I will Frag you myself!"

### Attacking

If an enemy unit is within range, an attack may take place. As with movements, all units along a front are entitled to act when the declaration is made. (It is probably best to arrange all the units that can to attack at once and then declare one big attack.)

An attack roll is made with a single d6, adding in any bonuses if granted. If this roll is greater than the enemy unit's defense, then the units listed damage ability is subtracted from the enemy's Hit Points. If the Hit points are reduced to zero or less, the enemy is eliminated and removed from play. If it is not, then a morale roll is made to see if it begins a retreat.

Nothing happens if the roll fails to exceed the enemy's defense.

### Defense

A move or an action may be spent to put a **pair** of units into defensive mode. A defending unit may fire on an enemy unit that comes within range should the player or opponent desire such. However, attacking more than once has the normal penalty. Yes, that is trading actions for an entire front to just a pair of units – but once on defensive mode, they will remain as such until:

They are moved

They are destroyed

A failed Morale check forces them back.

### Special Abilities

If a special ability is activated, all the units it applies to in that front may use the ability, but no other units get to take an action. For example, if there are three airborne units in a front, and you decide to use their long range deployment ability, the three units will advance as you wish, but no other units will move.

### Morale and Retreating

Morale determines if A unit continues to fight or if it pulls back. A unit that is attacked will roll 2d6 against its moral rating. A roll above the rating means that the unit is shaken, and will attempt to move towards the nearest place it may be repaired – off map if necessary. Its first backwards move is free, but after that it takes from the allotment. It is also at -1d to attack until it has moved back at least twice, so there is reason to spend moves to do so.

## IV. Units and Armies

There are four types of armies, and each army has four types of units and one special ability or unit.

Attack: A bonus to the roll of a d6

Move: How far the unit advances

Range: How far away an attacked unit can be

Damage: How many hit points a successful attack removes

Defense: Target number to exceed on a d6 roll

Hit Points: how many hits a unit can take before destruction

Special: A notable ability of the unit.

The moral ability is decided by the type of esprit de corps the opponent has. Tracking morale for human troops is option to save book keeping.

The units are Basic, Advanced, Artillery, Vehicle, and then the army's special.

They may batter us with tanks, they may claw us with artillery, but in the end we shall prevail. The people riot in the streets calling our for justice.

### Guerrilla Forces

#### Revolutionaries

Attack	D6+0
Move	2
Range	3
Damage	4
Defense	3
Hit Points	6

Special Ability: Recruit

Heals in towns – a movement or deployment action spent while in an urban area will allow the revolutionaries to recruit new supporters, and replenish their hit points.

## Irregulars

"... and finally, please stop painting smiley faces on the nuclear warheads. That concludes this mornings briefing. The post diner debriefing will begin in five minuets"

Attack	D6+0
Move	4
Range	2
Damage	2
Defense	3
Hit Points	8

### Special Ability: Disband

A Disbanded irregular force can not attack, but can also not be attacked as its forces are too spread out and hidden amongst the locals. The unit may still move, but can not reform and attack in the same move.

My finger curled around the trigger before I even noticed my eyes. A sudden moment of snipers vision, where the only three things in the world, are the sights, the bullet, and the enemy's body.

The majority of any given combat unit will not be actually shooting at the opponent. As it should be. They're all scarred, and not taking time to aim, and besides, killing a man -war or not- is anathema.

But I was just initiated into the small group who shoot to kill.

And enjoy it.

## Political Officers

Attack	D6+0
Move	6
Range	2
Damage	2
Defense	4
Hit Points	12

### Special Ability: Propaganda

May alter the moral of a unit in one direction or another once – ie demoralize the enemy or cheer up allies.

## Light Vehicles

Attack	D6+1
Move	5
Range	3
Damage	4
Defense	3
Hit Points	6

### Special Ability: Nitrous Boost

Use a deployment rather than a move and get there twice as fast. May still attack this turn

## State Sponsors

These are units from any other Unit category. Only  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the starting forces may be foreign “advisors” and foreign reinforcements come half as usual as the standard resupply rate (ie, purchased every six turns for a short war combatant.)

## Elite

### Rangers

Attack	D6+0
Move	3
Range	3
Damage	3
Defense	3
Hit Points	6

“Nuhbudy, nuhwhere cun ught fight a ranger. Like this un punt in ee-ruh-p where we 'bushed a armurd colum were talkn ten men agunst twenty vehicles ...”

Gandpa's drawl might have been hard to understand, but the glass case of medals, the picture of him shaking hands with the president, and the old pictures of the platoon all presented a crystal clear message. There was the good, the better, and the best. Then there was spec ops.

Special Ability: Physical Training

Due to their extensive preparation and drill, Rangers are not stopped by any obstacles

### Air Mobile

Attack	D6+1
Move	3
Range	3
Damage	3
Defense	3
Hit Points	4

Special Ability: Long Range Deployment:

The use of parachutes and gliders allows the unit to up to three times its normal distance. However but can't attack afterwards as it regroups. No penalty for crossing front borders for this.

## Self Propelled Guns



Attack	D6+1
Move	3
Range	6
Damage	4
Defense	3
Hit Points	6

Special Ability: Shoot and Scoot:

A movement may be used instead of a deployment to fire the SP Guns, however, the attack is gets no bonuses.

## Fast Attack Vehicles

Attack	D6+1
Move	5
Range	4
Damage	3
Defense	4
Hit Points	6

Special Ability: Field Repair:

A little baling wire, some chewing gum, and an action is all it takes. Spending a deployment will repair any FAVs on the front.

## Sniper

Three units anywhere along the front may be attacked, d6+2 and 5 damage to them.

## High Tech

The air inside the Mark III was an intoxicating mix of new plastic degassing, with a slight tang of Ozone. Fresh from the factory and straight to the battlefield

Estavan checked over to the left. Robots looking similar to his powered suit but four times as tall stomped along.

Off to his right was a mobile orbital artillery command center. He almost felt sorry for the men inside the "Orc" to accommodate the powerful up links and electrical generators, the unit had paper thin armor.

However he couldn't feel too much pity for those soldiers. After all, his real sympathy was for those who got in the way his G-11 hypervelocity cannon.

### **Power Armor**

Attack	D6+0
Move	3
Range	3
Damage	3
Defense	3
Hit Points	6

Special Ability: Hard Shell  
Half damage from infantry

### **Heavy Walkers**

Attack	D6+1
Move	4
Range	2
Damage	3
Defense	3
Hit Points	4

Special Ability: Stomp

Make an attack on any enemy unit it moves over. This is an exception to the normal units can't move through each other rule.

### **Orbital Strike**

Attack	D6+1
Move	3
Range	5
Damage	5
Defense	3
Hit Points	6

Special Ability: Hard Rain

Can alter the terrain on the map with a super powerful attack! Can level a forest, widen a river or lake, or create an earthworks on clear terrain. Could also technically destroy a capital, sea/air port, towns and the like, though that would be a war crime.

## Hover Pod



Attack	D6+1
Move	3
Range	5
Damage	5
Defense	3
Hit Points	6

Special Ability: Transit:

Not affected by water, and can move another unit with it.

NanoTech

3 units on the front may be repaired at the cost of a deployment

Wave

## Fodder

Soldat Number 35472  
Report! You are to assault gid square G849, eliminate all resistance, and hold the refinery at all costs.

Attack	D6+0
Move	2
Range	3
Damage	3
Defense	3
Hit Points	8

Special Ability:

Endless Supply: a damaged unit that spends a turn out of combat returns to full Strength.

## Light Tank

Why does the tank not  
move? Enemy Action?

Or simply out of gas?

-lousy haiku found  
scrawled on vehicle #8795  
outside of Krakow, June 2023

Attack	D6+0
Move	2
Range	2
Damage	3
Defense	4
Hit Points	8

Special Ability: All Terrain

Not slowed by rivers, nor does it suffer in towns.



## Rocket Arty

Attack	D6+2
Move	3
Range	4
Damage	3
Defense	4
Hit Points	8

Special Ability: Fire for Effect

Attack multiple units within 2 inches of 1<sup>st</sup> target.

## Medium Tank

Attack	D6+0
Move	3
Range	4
Damage	3
Defense	5
Hit Points	10

Special Ability:

Dozer blade: may use its move action to create a defensive position for itself – or other units if it leaves the spot.

## Rally

Penalties for attacking across front borders are ignored. Also, three units each turn can attack twice without penalty.



## V. More Rules

Alternate Special Ability's

State Sponsored: Increase the number of reinforcements available.

Sniper: Extend the range of any unit that hasn't moved

### Choosing Units

There are two ways to choose units.

**Point Buy:** Each unit has a set cost – 3 or 4 points for the listed units, but its possible to create more expensive ones as well. While these may not seem very different, most games begin around 36 to 72 points, which means only 6-12 expensive units, rather than twice as many cheap ones, and there is no rock-paper-scissors here, all are endangered and dangerous.

**Pre Set:** A standard starting force is 24 units – four per front if you will - and reinforcements amount to four units each turn. These would be in a 3:1 ratio of three point units to four point ie a Guerrilla army would start with 16 revolutionaries or Irregulars, and 8 Vehicles or Political officers (Ignoring their special ability to recruit others, which could mean they start with up to 6 non-standard units)

### Reinforcements

Fresh troops arrive at the start of a given turn. How often reinforcements arrive depends on the level of readiness determined under choosing an opponent. These new units are split amongst the fronts however you may like, starting at the very back of the board, rather than the 4 inch initial deployment zone.

### Objectives:

Equal armies simply trying to kill one another leads to sieges, trench warfare, and atrocities as they attempt to find a way out. A turn limit and a few pieces of territory to hold give you direction as to how your forces should maneuver – and prevents anyone from attempting to break the stalemate with a nuclear weapon. (a war game based entirely on cockroaches is probably not very fun – but who knows, mabey the next 24 hours...)

### Off board repair.

A damaged unit that escapes off your edge of the map may return at full Strength the next time you get reinforcements.

### Two or More Players

While this game can be played with multiple people, there is a consideration that the forces are not necessarily balanced, just unique. A human with actual tactical capability will be able to exploit this far better than the advancing hordes a solo game will provide.

### Variations:

**Multiple army:** Use units from more than one army when choosing

### Random Enemy Generation:

Use a d6, rerolling on a 5 or 6, and use it to choose a stance for the enemy.

"What is this?"

"We are calling it the Barracuda for now. It is a main battle robot."

"You mean we are not making 8 meter tall bipedal cement mixers? I never would have guessed it was an MBR."

"If I may continue sir, it is equipped with twin 30mm four barreled cannons, each with 1500 rounds, 12 135mm anti-tank missiles, and a 4 Megawatt Thermal plasma ejector."

"Anything else?"

"Noise reduction coating taken from our latest SSBN, and a dynamic energy dampening system to reduce its visibility by 50%"

### Sample Scenarios

#### **Protect the President**

In Front A, set up a large city, and designate it the capital. In Front C, set up an airport. Finally, in front E, place a hospital. Declare one side the defender. At the end of 6 turns, the defender must be holding all three of the objectives so that the leader and his family may be safely removed from the country

#### **For the Motherland**

Whoever controls the most of the 8 randomly selected objectives at the end of 16 turns wins.

### Creating Units:

Balancing units is one of the hard parts of creating a war game, so the basic units here are made on a "zero sum" basis, with a special ability tacked on. The abilities have no real numerical definition – after all, most things in a real war are either difficult or impossible to quantify, and it makes things more interesting.

A units cost is equal to the number of points distributed amongst Move, Attack, Range, Damage, Defense, and hit points. Divided by five. The unit below would cost 3 points.

Attack	D6+0
Move	3
Range	3
Damage	3
Defense	3
Hit Points	3 (x2)

Hit points, once determined, are doubled. (otherwise, it would be rare for a unit to survive one shot, making the morale rules fairly unnecessary. However to save time and paper work, this may be desirable. In such case, just cut the values for the units in half.)

## VI. Parting Thoughts

Start:

7/14/05 at 0:00

Complete:

7/14/05 at 23:20

root beer, coffee, wheat toast,  
and chocolate rice cakes were  
consumed during production.

The Offspring and 80's music  
was played on win amp.

This file was made with  
Open Office 1.1

The first thing I would suggest is that you make explosion noises, and give certain units specific names. If you're playing by yourself, no one will laugh if you provide your own heavy handed narration of the battle. Yet giving things a bit of personality and a individual story adds a lot to your own enjoyment. The characters in Final Fantasy are playing pieces just like checkers – yet people will dress up at conventions and write fan fiction.

If you have a friend with you, do it anyway. Its not as if this is an attempt to faithfully recreate Kursk with 1:256 scale with 1:1 model representation. (About 5,000 tanks were involved in that 3 day battle). This is obviously geared towards fast action – you move entire sections fronts of the army without worrying which piece goes first, if its in contact with a commander and so forth

I've never created a war game before – I've written out ideas, but the problem is at some point, you need to start arbitrarily picking numbers and deciding all the units stats – then going back and seeing if they look right. The 24 hour challenge has forced me to go ahead and smash right through that difficult impasse. But it still stands there must be problems. I know that the turn sequence could be clearer, and units better differentiated. This is the first time I've really used artwork, and its mostly small pics – all of which are from FAS.org – to fill some of the more sparse pages when I didn't feel like adding bouts of short fiction.

On the other hand, theres a brief TOC, 4 different forces, 256 ways to set up the solitaire opponent. I think I covered all the bases so far as the needed rules.

Please E-Mail me at [Flanker39@Hotmail.com](mailto:Flanker39@Hotmail.com), and visit my website [Flanker39.tripod.com](http://Flanker39.tripod.com). A free RPG (Gangland) is available, and my links page includes passage to my message board.



(This last picture it the Flanker referenced in my E-mail, in case you were wondering)