



OFFICIAL RULEBOOK

Cold-war territory control on a hex map with nuclear brinkmanship

2–3
PLAYERS

45+
min
MINUTES

12+
AGE

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HOW TO PLAY IN 5 MINUTES

Nukes is a 2–3 player strategy game played on a board of hexagonal regions. You command armies across varied terrain, build fortified bases, and threaten opponents with nuclear strikes, all while managing a precarious supply of hostages that is simultaneously your resource and your countdown timer.

★ READ THIS FIRST: THE TWO CORE IDEAS

1. Platoons are fluid. Tokens have no fixed type. The number of units in a region determines the platoon type: 1 = Infantry, 2 = Artillery, 3 = Airborne, 4+ = Base. This changes constantly as units join or leave regions, and it governs movement, combat, and terrain safety.

2. Hostages are your engine. You hold your opponents' tokens. Each turn you must return 1–3 of them to their owner's forces on the board. This earns you moves, but also reinforces your enemy. Your hostage supply is finite. When it runs out, you lose.

THE CORE LOOP

- ◆ **Return 1–3 hostages** to regions where their owner already has units, earning one move per token returned. You choose which of your units to move.
- ◆ **Move your platoons.** Infantry chains through same-biome terrain. Artillery fires in straight lines over occupied regions. Airborne drops exactly two regions away and can slingshot through friendly Airborne or Bases.
- ◆ **Attack** by moving into an enemy region, but only if you have strictly greater strength than the defender.
- ◆ **Capture enemy units** as hostages instead of destroying them, sacrificing your own units to do so.
- ◆ **Build Bases** (4+ units in one region) to convert units into isotopes and unlock additional nuclear strikes.
- ◆ **Win** by destroying or occupying an opponent's city, or outlasting everyone else.

“

Nukes was designed around a single question: what if every aggressive move also strengthened your opponent? The hostage mechanic creates this tension. You need to return tokens to move, but every return reinforces the enemy. The game rewards players who find the tipping point between building momentum and over-extending.

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COMPONENTS

ITEM	QTY	NOTES
Hex Tiles	44	Each is a region. Biohazard printed on the reverse.
Tokens	75	25 per player in 3 distinct colours.
Bookmark Reference Cards	3	One per player. See the Quick Reference section of this rulebook.
Rulebook	1	This document.

TOKENS

There are 25 tokens in 3 different colours for a total of 75 tokens. Depending upon where those tokens are located or how many are placed together, they can represent:

- ♦ **Hostages** – tokens belonging to you that are owned by someone else
- ♦ **Isotopes** – tokens belonging to you that are not on the board
- ♦ **Units** – tokens belonging to you that are on the board
- ♦ **Bases** – 4 or more units within a single region on the board

A **Platoon** is a unit or group of units that move as one:

- ♦ **Infantry** – 1 unit moving from a single region on the board
- ♦ **Artillery** – 2 units moving from a single region on the board
- ♦ **Airborne** – 3 units moving from a single region on the board
- ♦ **Nukes** – 1 unit emerging from a Base that has spent at least 1 isotope

HEX TILES BY BIOME

BIOME	COUNT	COLOUR
Fields	13	Light green
Forests	9	Dark green
Mountains	7	Grey
Water	7	Light blue
Deserts	5	Yellow
Cities	3	Light red

SETTING UP THE BOARD

BUILDING THE BOARD

The board uses 37 of the 44 tiles and can be built three ways:

- ♦ **Symmetrical:** A pre-agreed mirrored layout. Visit moddable.games/tool/nuke for templates.
- ♦ **Pre-defined:** All players agree on a specific arrangement before play begins.
- ♦ **Drafted:** Each player places their City at the board edge first. Randomly choose a starting player who picks the central region. Players then alternate placing tiles adjacent to their city, the central region, or any already-placed tile.

2-PLAYER TILE COUNTS

BIOME	PER SIDE	TOTAL
Fields	5	10
Forests	4	8
Mountains	3	6
Water	3	6
Deserts	2	4
Cities	1	2
Centre	—	1

3-PLAYER TILE COUNTS

BIOME	PER SIDE	TOTAL
Fields	4	12
Forests	2	6
Mountains	2	6
Water	2	6
Deserts	1	3
Cities	1	3
Centre	—	1

★ The central region may be any biome except a City. It is chosen by the first player (drafted) or agreed upon (symmetrical/pre-defined). 36 tiles are split evenly between sides; the centre tile is the 37th.

STARTING POSITIONS

- ♦ Place your **City tile** at the edge of the board, equally spaced from all other cities and the central region.
- ♦ Place **4 of your tokens** in your city as starting units.
- ♦ Place **1 token** beside the board as your starting **isotope**.
- ♦ In a **2-player game:** take all 20 of your opponent's tokens as hostages.
- ♦ In a **3-player game:** take 10 tokens from each other player as hostages (20 total).

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The game ends **immediately** the moment any condition below is met. No further turns are taken.

- ♦ **Destroy an opponent's city** via a Nuke strike or a Meltdown on their city hex.
- ♦ **Establish a Base on an opponent's city** by moving 4 or more of your units onto their city tile.
- ♦ **Outlast all opponents** by being the last player with hostages to return and units on the board.

ELIMINATION

A player is eliminated when **either** of the following occurs independently:

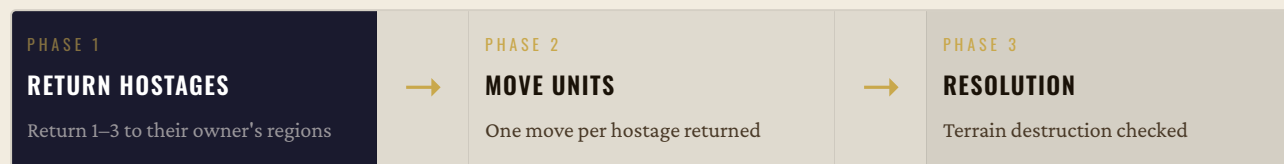
- ♦ *Hostage Attrition:* You have no hostages to return at the start of your turn. Your city is immediately destroyed and all your units removed from the game.
- ♦ *Total Annihilation:* You have no units left on the board at any point. All your tokens everywhere (on the board and held as hostages by others) are immediately removed from the game.

⚠ 3-PLAYER ELIMINATIONS

When a player is eliminated, any of their tokens held as hostages by surviving players are also removed from the game immediately. Surviving players lose that portion of their hostage supply. The two remaining players continue normally.

TURN STRUCTURE

Turns proceed clockwise. Each turn has three phases, always in this order.



PHASE 1: RETURN HOSTAGES

✦ UNDERSTANDING THE HOSTAGE MECHANIC

You hold your opponents' tokens as hostages in your supply. When you return a hostage, you take one of your opponent's tokens from your own supply and place it on a region where **that opponent already has at least one unit**, physically joining that region and potentially upgrading its platoon type. Returning hostages earns you moves, but directly strengthens your enemy's forces. **This tension is the engine of the game.**

- ♦ You **must** return between 1 and 3 hostage tokens each turn. At least 1 is mandatory.
- ♦ Each token goes to a region where **that token's owner already has units present**. You cannot return a token to an empty region or to one of your own regions.
- ♦ The returned token **physically joins that region**, increasing the unit count. A 2-unit Artillery may become a 3-unit Airborne. A 3-unit Airborne may become a 4-unit Base, with all consequences that follow.
- ♦ You may return **no more than 1 token per region** per turn.
- ♦ The number of tokens returned equals the number of **moves earned** this turn.
- ♦ *If you have no hostages to return*, your city is immediately destroyed and you are eliminated.

PHASE 2: MOVE UNITS

- ♦ You earn **one move per hostage returned**, between 1 and 3 moves total.
- ♦ Moves are **optional**. You may use fewer than you earned. Only return as many hostages as moves you actually need; every returned token costs you.
- ♦ You may move a **maximum of 3 units in total** per turn. Valid combinations: 1 Airborne (3 units), 1 Artillery + 1 Infantry, or up to 3 Infantry.
- ♦ Each move is: moving a platoon into any empty region, into a region containing friendly units, or attacking an enemy-occupied region.
- ♦ The **same unit(s) cannot move more than once** per turn, except within an Airborne Slingshot. This includes units that changed platoon type mid-turn: if Infantry moves into a region and becomes part of an Artillery (2 units), that Artillery cannot then move. None of the units in the destination region may move again that turn.

PHASE 3: END-OF-TURN RESOLUTION

After all moves and combat are resolved, any units resting in restricted terrain they cannot safely occupy are destroyed. Only the **final resting position** matters for destruction. If a platoon's movement path legally passes through a restricted region (see each unit type's movement rules for what they can and cannot pass through) and ends in a safe region, no penalty applies.

◆ IMMEDIATE VS END-OF-TURN DESTRUCTION

Nuke blasts and Meltdowns destroy units **immediately** when triggered, not at end of turn. Everything else (a platoon stranded in terrain it cannot safely occupy) is resolved during Phase 3 only.

Your Forces

UNITS & PLATOONS

Platoon type is determined solely by the **current unit count** in a region. This fluidity is fundamental: platoons change type as units join or leave regions.

◆ THE FLUID PLATOON PRINCIPLE

If 1 unit (Infantry) moves into a region containing 2 units (Artillery), those 3 units are now Airborne, with all of Airborne's permissions and restrictions. At end of turn, a region with 3 units in water is Airborne (safe). Two units in water is Artillery (destroyed). Always ask: **how many units are here, and what platoon does that make?**



INFANTRY

1 UNIT

Chains freely through same-biome terrain. Blocked by friendly Infantry/Artillery and all enemy units. Passes through friendly Airborne, Bases, and Cities. Cannot safely rest in water or desert.



ARTILLERY

2 UNITS

Jumps in straight lines over occupied regions. Multiple hops and pivots possible. Cannot safely rest in water. Cannot attack from a forest.



AIRBORNE

3 UNITS

Must move exactly two regions. Cannot land adjacent. Slingshots through friendly Airborne or Bases for extended range. Cannot safely rest alone in mountains.



NUKE

1 UNIT + ISOTOPE

Launched from a Base. Destroys target (Biohazard) and all units in target + 6 surrounding regions immediately. Must jump over at least one region.



BASE

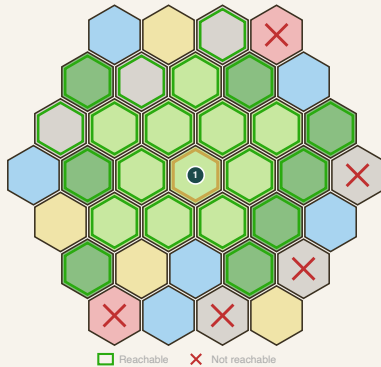
4-9 UNITS · DOES NOT MOVE

Forms immediately when a 4th unit joins a region. Provides support bonuses to passing platoons and enables isotope production.

Maximum 9 units. Each time *you* add units to your own Base, convert 1 unit to an isotope (once per event). Provides +1 combat strength to platoons passing through or over it en route to an attack.

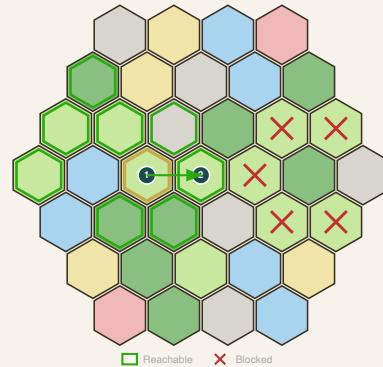
INFANTRY: MOVEMENT & RULES

SAME-BIOME FLOOD FILL



Infantry reaches every connected field hex in one move with no distance limit. Adjacent mountains are also reachable as a final step into a different biome. The mountain with a red mark has no adjacent field and cannot be reached.

CAN ENTER, CANNOT PASS THROUGH

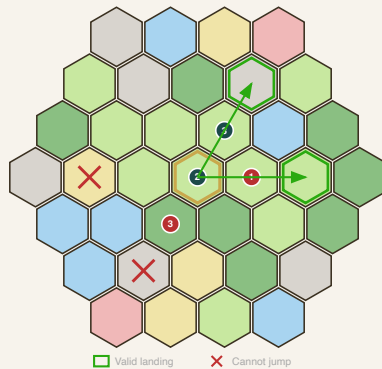


Infantry can move into a friendly Artillery region (tokens merge). It cannot move through it. Mountains seal the corridor: the fields beyond the Artillery are unreachable.

- ♦ **Same-biome chaining:** Infantry may travel through any number of connected regions sharing their starting biome in a single move, with no distance limit. At the end they may optionally step into one adjacent region of a different biome.
- ♦ **Blocked by friendly Infantry and Artillery:** Infantry cannot pass through any region containing your own Infantry or Artillery. Your own Artillery blocks your own Infantry just as firmly as an enemy would. Enemy units of any type block Infantry.
- ♦ **Bridges:** Your own Airborne, Bases, and Cities count as any biome for infantry chaining and may be passed through freely. An Airborne on a mountain connects two field regions on either side of it as if the mountain were also a field.
- ♦ **Restricted terrain:** A region ending the turn with 1 unit (Infantry) in water or desert is destroyed at Phase 3 resolution. Infantry cannot transit through water or desert unless friendly units already in that region will raise the combined count to a safe platoon type.
- ♦ **Combat bonus:** Each friendly Base infantry passes *through* en route to an attack adds +1 to combat strength. The starting Base does not count.

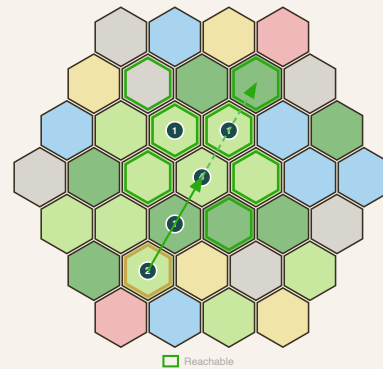
ARTILLERY: MOVEMENT & RULES

JUMP MECHANICS



Four jump attempts from the same position. Enemy Infantry and own Airborne are valid stepping stones. An empty intermediate prevents any jump. Enemy Airborne blocks the jump despite the hex being occupied.

PIVOT AT A FRIENDLY BASE

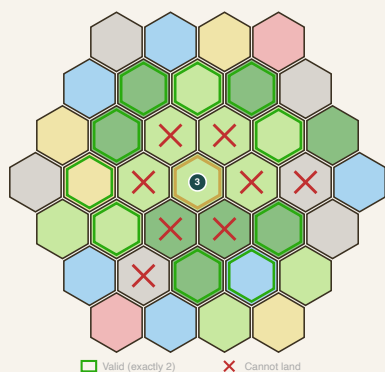


Artillery arrives at the friendly Base (gold border). From the Base it can reach 8 destinations: the Base itself, 5 adjacent hexes (excluding where it came from), and 2 hexes beyond the friendly infantry via continued jumps.

- ♦ **Straight-line jumps:** Artillery moves by jumping to the directly opposing region across a hex axis. Intermediate regions must contain units at the moment of the jump. Units placed there earlier in the same turn count.
- ♦ **Multiple jumps:** Artillery can chain multiple jumps in one move, using each occupied region as a stepping stone.
- ♦ **Direction changes (pivots):** When artillery jumps over your own Airborne or a Base, it may change to any new hex direction and continue from there. From the pivot point, artillery may: land on the pivot Base or Airborne itself; land on any hex adjacent to the pivot point (empty or friendly, where units merge via fluid rules); or jump over any occupied hex adjacent to the pivot point to land beyond it. Multiple pivots are permitted in one move.
- ♦ **Enemy blockers:** Artillery cannot jump over enemy Airborne or enemy Bases. It can jump over enemy Infantry and enemy Artillery.
- ♦ **Forest:** Artillery starting in a forest cannot attack that turn. It may still move to any unoccupied region or join a friendly platoon.
- ♦ **Water:** A region ending with 2 units (Artillery) alone in water is destroyed at Phase 3. Cannot pass through water unless friendly units already there will raise the count to a safe platoon type.
- ♦ **Combat bonus:** Each friendly Base passed over en route adds +1. The starting Base does not count.

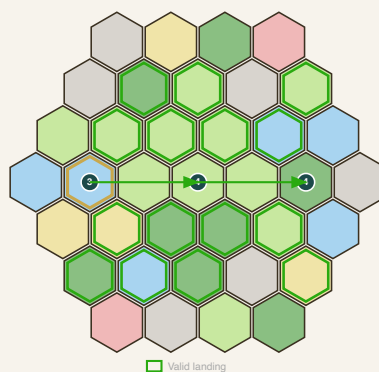
AIRBORNE: MOVEMENT & RULES

EXACTLY 2 STEPS, NOT ADJACENT



Airborne lands exactly 2 steps away in any direction. The path need not be straight. Adjacent hexes cannot be landed on. Mountains without a friendly Base cannot be passed through or landed in.

SLINGSHOT CHAIN



All valid destinations shown across the full slingshot chain, from start directly, or via either Base as a launch point. Each Base may only serve as a launch point once per chain.

Exactly two regions: Airborne moves in two steps, each to an adjacent region. The two steps can go in any direction; there is

- no requirement to move in a straight line. The only restriction is that the final landing region cannot be directly adjacent to the starting region. Any region that is two steps away via any path, and not adjacent to the start, is a valid landing spot.

Mountains: Airborne cannot pass through a mountain region as an intermediate step unless one of your own Bases is already

- present there. Airborne cannot safely rest alone in mountains (destroyed at Phase 3). Landing on a mountain with any friendly units present is safe, since the combined count (3+) always forms a Base.

Biohazard: Airborne can pass over Biohazard regions as an intermediate step. Airborne cannot end its turn in a Biohazard region (destroyed at Phase 3).

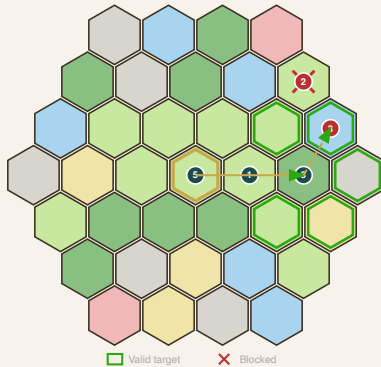
Enemy blockers: Airborne cannot pass over regions containing enemy Infantry or enemy Artillery. It can pass over enemy Airborne and enemy Bases freely.

Slingshot: If Airborne lands on a region containing your own Airborne or a Base, it may immediately launch again. Declare the entire chain at once. Each intermediate Airborne or Base may only serve as a launch point once per chain. Every leg must obey the “exactly 2, not adjacent” rule. The entire chain counts as only 3 units toward the turn's maximum. Slingshotting is the only way for Airborne to end its turn on a region adjacent to where it started.

Combat bonus: Each friendly Base slingshot over en route adds +1 to combat strength.

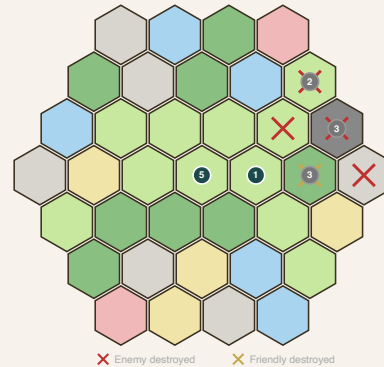
NUKES: MOVEMENT & RULES

VALID TARGETS



Nuke hops over the infantry, pivots at the friendly Airborne, then can reach the green-highlighted regions. Enemy Airborne blocks the path beyond. Targeting the enemy Airborne (strength 3) requires 3 isotopes to exceed its strength, and your own Airborne is in the blast radius.

AFTER THE STRIKE



The target hex becomes Biohazard. All units in the target and its 6 surrounding hexes are destroyed. The surrounding hexes themselves remain unchanged. Five enemy units eliminated, but 3 friendly Airborne units caught in the blast radius are also destroyed (gold X).

- ◆ **Requires a Base:** A nuke can only be launched from a region containing one of your Bases. The Base remains after launch.
- ◆ **Must jump at least once:** A nuke must cross over at least one occupied intermediate region. It cannot fire into an adjacent hex.
- ◆ **Isotopes:** Before firing, place at least 1 isotope from your supply into the target region. You may place multiple; each adds +1 to nuke strength beyond the base of 2.
- ◆ **Strength:** Starts at 2 (nuke unit + 1 isotope minimum). Add +1 per additional isotope placed in the target. Add +1 per friendly Base passed over en route.
- ◆ **Movement:** Same jump rules as artillery. Direction changes at your own Airborne or Bases. Can jump over enemy Infantry only; cannot jump over enemy Artillery, Airborne, or Bases. Biohazards block movement (treated as empty for jump purposes and cannot be jumped over).
- ◆ **Legal targets:** Any region except empty water and biohazard regions. Empty land regions and your own units are valid targets.
- ◆ **Enemy targets:** Your nuke strength must strictly exceed the defender's strength to target an enemy-occupied region.
- ◆ **Blast effect (immediate):** Target region becomes Biohazard permanently. All units on the target region and all units in the 6 surrounding regions are destroyed immediately, including your own. The surrounding regions do not change biome.
- ◆ **No hostage capture.** A nuke only destroys.

BASES: FULL RULES

- ♦ A Base forms **immediately** when a 4th unit joins a region, mid-turn during Phase 2.

- ♦ **Maximum 9 units.** Voluntarily moving your own platoon into a full Base is illegal. If an opponent returns a hostage to your full Base, the Meltdown rule applies.

- ♦ **Isotope conversion:** Each time *you* add units to your own Base (including the move that forms it) you may immediately convert 1 unit into an isotope. Triggers once per event: two separate moves adding to bases in one turn means two conversion opportunities. Does not trigger when an opponent returns a token to your Base.

- ♦ Bases provide **+1 combat strength** to your platoons passing through or over them en route to combat. Units starting their move *from within* a Base do not receive this bonus.

- ♦ Bases also provide **+1 defensive strength** to your units in any adjacent region that is attacked. Plain units adjacent to a defender do not provide this bonus; only Bases do.

- ♦ A Base cannot move, but **any number of units may leave**, including all of them, leaving the region empty.

CITIES: FULL RULES

- ♦ Cities act as Bases **for movement purposes only** regardless of unit count. Infantry can pass through freely (Cities count as any biome for infantry chaining), Artillery and Nukes can change direction when passing over, and Airborne can slingshot from them.

- ♦ With **fewer than 4 units**: no combat adjacency bonus.

- ♦ With **4 or more units**: a real Base is present, providing all normal Base combat bonuses.

- ♦ The pass-through combat bonus (+1 for platoons moving through or over) does not apply to units beginning their move from within that city.

MELTDOWN

A Meltdown occurs when a hostage token is returned to a region already at its maximum capacity of 9 units. This is a legal and intentional offensive tactic.

✦ MELTDOWN EFFECT (IMMEDIATE)

Target hex: Converted to Biohazard immediately. All units on the target hex are destroyed immediately.

Surrounding hexes: Completely unaffected. Units in the 6 surrounding regions are not destroyed and those hexes do not change biome.

This is the key distinction from a Nuke, which destroys units in all surrounding hexes too.

- ♦ Triggered during **Phase 1** (Return Hostages), not during Phase 2.
- ♦ The destruction is **immediate**, not delayed to Phase 3.
- ♦ The return that triggers a Meltdown still counts as one of your 1–3 returns. You still **earn a move** from it.
- ♦ All units on the target hex are destroyed immediately.
- ♦ If a Meltdown destroys a City, that city’s owner is eliminated and the player who triggered the Meltdown wins (city destruction is a victory condition).

Resolving Battles

COMBAT

A platoon may only move into an enemy-occupied region if it can win. You must have **strictly greater strength** than the defender. A tie is not sufficient to attack.

CALCULATING STRENGTH

ATTACKER'S STRENGTH

- ♦ Number of tokens in the attacking platoon
- + 1 per adjacent region (to the *target hex*) containing any of your units
- + 1 per friendly Base passed through or over en route
- + 1 per isotope placed in the target (Nukes only)

The origin region counts toward the surrounding bonus if it is adjacent to the target and still has units in it after the platoon departed.

DEFENDER'S STRENGTH

- ♦ Number of tokens in the defending region
- + 1 per adjacent region containing the defender's *Bases* specifically

Plain units in adjacent regions do not give the defender a bonus — only Bases do. This asymmetry is intentional — it rewards building Bases near contested territory.

- ♦ The surrounding bonus for the attacker is calculated relative to the **target region’s 6 adjacent hexes**.
- ♦ If the attacker wins, all defending units in the target region are **destroyed and removed from the game** by default. The attacker occupies the region.

CAPTURING HOSTAGES

Instead of destroying enemy units, you may capture them as hostages, adding to your supply and extending your opponent's time in the game (while extending your own).

- ♦ For each point of **excess strength** (beyond what was needed to win), you may capture one of the defender's units instead of destroying it.
- ♦ To capture one enemy unit, you must **sacrifice one of your own units** from the attacking platoon or from an adjacent region that contributed support strength.
- ♦ The **attacker chooses** which specific enemy units to capture versus destroy.
- ♦ You may capture up to your total excess strength, limited by the number of physical units in the defending region. You may also choose not to capture at all.

♦ EXAMPLE

Attacker strength 5 vs defender strength 3 (Artillery with +1 Base adjacency bonus, so 2 physical units in the region). Excess strength is 2. The attacker may capture up to 2 units, but only 2 physical units exist, so both can be captured. Each capture costs one of the attacker's own units. The attacker sacrifices 2, captures 2 as hostages, and occupies the region with their remaining forces.

BIOMES

Each region belongs to one of seven biome types. Terrain restrictions apply based on the **platoon type the units form**, not how they arrived. A region with 3 units in water is Airborne, which has no water restriction. Always evaluate the unit count.

FIELDS

No restrictions for any platoon type. Completely open — safe to move through and end turns in freely.

FORESTS

Artillery starting its move here cannot attack this turn. It may still move to any unoccupied region or join a friendly platoon.

MOUNTAINS

Airborne cannot pass through or end here unless a friendly Base is also present in this region. Infantry and Artillery can move through and end here safely.

DESERT

A region ending the turn with 1 token (Infantry) here is destroyed at Phase 3 resolution. Cannot transit through without your Airborne or Base already stationed in that region.

WATER

A region ending the turn with 1 token (Infantry) or 2 tokens (Artillery) here is destroyed at Phase 3 resolution. Cannot transit through without support. Nukes cannot target empty water.

BIOHAZARD

Created by a Nuke or Meltdown. No unit may end its turn here. Only Airborne may pass through or over. Treated as empty for artillery and nuke jumps.

CITIES

Starting positions. Act as Bases for movement regardless of unit count. With 4+ units, a real Base is present providing normal combat bonuses.

TERRAIN RESTRICTION SUMMARY				
PLATOON (TOKEN COUNT)	WATER	DESERT	FOREST	MOUNTAIN
Infantry (1)	Destroyed alone; needs support to pass	Destroyed alone; needs support to pass	No restriction	No restriction
Artillery (2)	Destroyed alone; needs support to pass	No restriction	Cannot attack from here; may still move	No restriction
Airborne (3)	No restriction	No restriction	No restriction	Cannot pass or end without Base present
Nuke	Cannot target empty water	No restriction	No restriction	No restriction

♦ **"NEEDS SUPPORT TO PASS": WHAT THIS MEANS**

A platoon can transit through a restricted terrain region if **friendly units already stationed there raise the total unit count above the danger threshold**. For example, Infantry (1 unit) can safely end in desert if friendly Artillery (2 units) is already there. Combined they form Airborne (3 units), which has no desert restriction. Any friendly presence that changes the platoon type to a safe one counts as support.

RULES AT A GLANCE

INFANTRY	ARTILLERY	AIRBORNE	NUKE	BASES
 1 unit	 2 units	 3 units	 1 unit + isotope	 4–9 units
- Cannot pass own Infantry - Cannot pass own Artillery - Can pass own Airborne - Can pass own Bases/Cities - Cannot pass enemy units	- Can jump own/enemy infantry - Can jump own/enemy artillery - Can pass own Airborne - Can pass own Bases ✗ Enemy Airborne/Base	- Can pass own infantry - Can pass own artillery - Can pass own/enemy Airborne - Can pass own/enemy Bases ✗ Enemy infantry/artillery	- Can jump own/enemy infantry - Can jump own artillery - Can redirect via own Airborne - Can redirect via own Bases ✗ Enemy artillery/airborne/base	- Does not move - Max 9 units +1 strength to passing platoons - Convert 1 unit → isotope when you add units
Biomes ✗ Water alone ✗ Desert alone	Biomes ✗ Water alone ? Cannot attack from	Biomes ✗ Mountain alone ✗ Cannot pass w/o Base	Biomes ? Cannot target empty	Meltdown Returning hostage to full Base → Biohazard

BIOME KEY

FIELDS — NO RESTRICTIONS	FOREST — ARTILLERY CAN'T ATTACK	MOUNTAIN — AIRBORNE NEEDS BASE	DESERT — INFANTRY DIES ALONE
WATER — INFANTRY & ARTILLERY DIE ALONE	BIOHAZARD — NOTHING MAY REST HERE	CITY — BASE FOR MOVEMENT ONLY	

TURN STRUCTURE	COMBAT STRENGTH	VICTORY & NUKES
- Phase 1: Return 1–3 to owner's regions (max 1 per region) - Phase 2: 1 move per hostage returned (optional) - Max 3 units moved total per turn - Same unit can't move twice (except slingshot) - Phase 3: terrain destruction at end of full turn - No hostages OR no units = eliminated	- Attacker needs strictly MORE than defender - Attacker: +1 per unit adjacent to target hex - Attacker: +1 per Base passed through en route - Defender: +1 per adjacent Base only (not plain units) - Capture: sacrifice 1 own unit per 1 captured - Attacker chooses which enemy units to take	- Destroy an opponent's city - Base on opponent's city (4+ units) - Last player with hostages + units - Nuke: target + 6 surrounding units destroyed immediately Meltdown: 9-unit overflow — target hex → Biohazard, surrounding hexes unaffected - Win is immediate — no further turns

RULES CLARIFICATIONS

All clarifications below have been confirmed by the game's designer. Items marked **NEW** are rules not explicitly stated in previous versions of the rulebook.

How exactly does the hostage return mechanic work?

When you return a hostage, you take one of your opponent's tokens and place it into a region on the board where **that opponent already has at least one unit present**. The token physically joins that region, increasing the unit count — potentially upgrading the platoon type (e.g. turning Artillery into Airborne, or forming a Base). You are not returning tokens to your own regions. You are reinforcing your enemy's forces on the board in exchange for earning a move. This tension — moves cost you enemy strength — is the engine of the game.

Does returning a hostage token trigger Base formation and isotope conversion? **NEW**

If a returned token brings a region to 4+ units, a Base forms immediately. However, **isotope conversion does not trigger** — it only triggers when a player adds units to their own Base through their own movement on their own turn. The opponent whose Base was bolstered cannot convert an isotope at that moment.

What is a Meltdown and is it intentional? **NEW**

A Meltdown occurs when a hostage token is returned to a region already at 9 units. The target region is immediately converted to Biohazard and all units on it are destroyed. The 6 surrounding regions are completely unaffected — this is the key distinction from a Nuke. A Meltdown is a **legal and intentional offensive tactic**: you may deliberately return a token to a full enemy Base to trigger this effect, earning a move in the process.

What blocks Infantry movement?

Infantry cannot pass through regions containing friendly Infantry or Artillery platoons, or any enemy units. Infantry **can** pass through regions containing friendly Airborne, Bases, and Cities. This means the positioning of your own platoons creates movement corridors and dead ends for your own Infantry.

Can Airborne pass through mountains?

Only with Base support. Airborne cannot pass through or end its turn in a mountain region unless one of your own Bases is also present there. Without a Base, mountains are completely off-limits for Airborne — both as an intermediate step and as a destination.

How many direction changes can artillery or a nuke make in one move?

As many as it passes over friendly Airborne or Bases. Each friendly Airborne or Base it passes over may pivot it to any new hex direction. There is no limit per move.

Can a nuke fire into an adjacent hex?

No. A nuke must jump over at least one occupied intermediate region. It cannot be fired into a hex directly adjacent to its launching Base.

How does the Airborne Slingshot work — and can Airborne return to its starting region?

Declare the entire slingshot chain at once. Each intermediate Airborne unit or Base may only serve as a launch point *once* per chain — this prevents a Base being used repeatedly, but does not prevent the airborne from landing back at its starting region if it arrives there via a legal final 2-region leg. Every leg must obey the "exactly 2, not adjacent" rule. The entire chain counts as only 3 units toward the turn's maximum.

Can a unit that changed platoon type mid-turn move again as its new type?

NEW

No. If any unit in a region was involved in a move this turn, the entire region is locked. For example: Infantry moves into a region containing another Infantry, forming Artillery (2 units). That Artillery cannot then perform a jump — because the units in that region have already moved. The "no unit moves twice" rule applies to all units in the destination region, not just the arriving unit.

When does terrain destruction trigger, and why does it matter?

At the very end of the turn — Phase 3 — once all moves and combat are resolved.

Only the final resting position matters. A platoon may transit through restricted terrain regions mid-move and end safely elsewhere — it will not be destroyed. The key question is always: what is the unit count in this region at end of turn, and is that platoon type permitted here? Nuke blasts and Meltdowns are the exception: those are immediate.

How do terrain restrictions interact with fluid platoons?

Always evaluate the unit count at end of turn. If hostage returns place 3 of your opponent's units into a water region over multiple turns, those 3 units form Airborne — which has no water restriction. The restriction depends on the final platoon type: 1 unit in water (Infantry) = destroyed. 2 units in water (Artillery) = destroyed. 3 units in water (Airborne) = safe. The key question is always: what is the unit count at end of turn, and is that platoon type restricted here?

Does the attacker's origin region count toward the surrounding bonus?

Yes, if the origin region is adjacent to the target and still has units in it after the attacking platoon departed. The surrounding bonus is calculated based on the 6 hexes adjacent to the *target region*.

Why do defenders only benefit from adjacent Bases — not plain units?

This asymmetry is **intentional design**. Attackers gain +1 per any adjacent unit; defenders gain +1 per adjacent Base only. This makes Bases uniquely valuable for defence and rewards building Bases near contested territory rather than massing plain units. It also means offence is generally easier than defence — encouraging dynamic, aggressive play.

Do cities provide combat strength bonuses? NEW

Cities with **fewer than 4 units** provide no combat adjacency bonus — movement only. Cities with **4 or more units** contain a real Base, which provides the normal +1 combat adjacency bonus. Cities also provide a pass-through combat bonus (+1) to platoons moving through or over them en route to an attack — but not to units starting their move from within that city.

Can multiple isotopes be placed in a nuke target? NEW

Yes. You may place as many isotopes as you choose into the target region before firing. Each one adds +1 to the nuke's strength beyond the base of 2. All placed isotopes are consumed regardless of outcome.

What can artillery land on after pivoting at a Base? NEW

After arriving at the pivot Base, artillery may land on: the **Base itself** (units merge); any of the **5 adjacent hexes it did not arrive from** (whether empty or containing friendly units — units merge via fluid rules); or **further beyond** any of those adjacent hexes that contain units, by jumping over them exactly as normal. How far artillery can reach in any direction depends entirely on what units are present around the Base — the pivot simply opens up all directions, and the standard jump rules apply from there.

Are there two separate ways to be eliminated?

Yes — two independent triggers. Hostage Attrition (no hostages to return at start of your turn) or Total Annihilation (no units on the board at any point). Either condition alone is sufficient. When eliminated, all your tokens everywhere are removed from the game immediately — including those held as hostages by others.



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