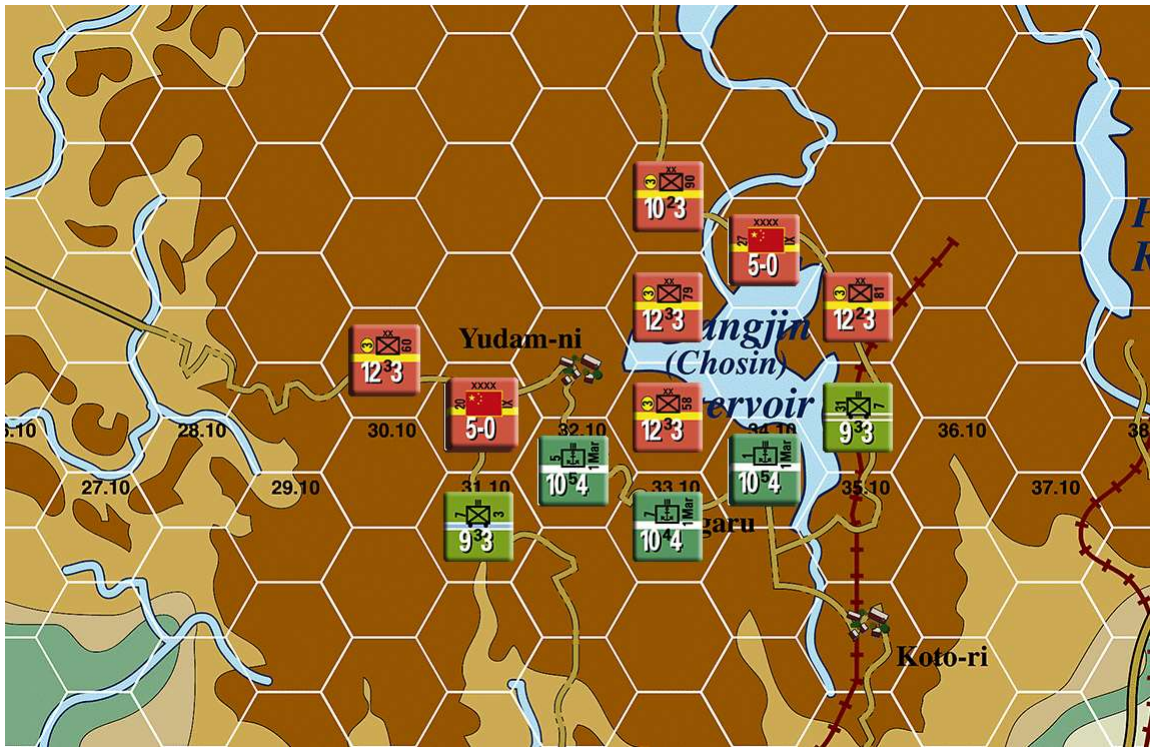
OCS 101
Combat Results & Retreats
by Chip Saltsman



Several players have asked for a comprehensive set of examples for Combat Results in OCS, particularly with respect to retreats. We have prepared some examples using a hypothetical situation from OCS Korea. We will be using the OCS v4.3 rule set.

Combat Table: Based on the results of the Surprise roll and the Combat roll, any combat generates a result in one of the cells on the table. The results include (OCS 9.0):

- **"A"** – applies to attacker
- **"D"** – applies to defender
- **"DG"** – triggers DG Mode for all units in the defender's hex. Do this before beginning any retreat (OCS 9.12a).
- **"L#"** – "L" stands for "hard loss "and the "#" is the "loss number" of required step losses.
- **"o#"** – "o" stands for "option" and the "#" is the "option number" which presents the affected player with a choice. Option results can be taken in any combination of step losses and retreat hexes, provided the total number is fully executed. Retreating a hex and losing a step would satisfy an "o2" result, for example (OCS 9.10a).
- **"e#"** – "e" stands for exploit. Attacking units with that AR or higher might change to Exploit Mode (OCS 9.13).

Combat Table (9.9) roll two dice

Dice Roll Modifiers: Add the Action Rating of selected attacking unit. Subtract the Action Rating of selected defending unit and the Hedgehog Level (if any is in the hex).

Extr Close	1:2	1:1	2:1	3:1	4:1	8:1	12:1	16:1	20:1	28:1	36:1	44:1	52:1	Extr Close
Very Close	1:3	1:2	1:1	2:1	3:1	4:1	6:1	9:1	12:1	15:1	18:1	21:1	24:1	Very Close
Close	1:4	1:3	1:2	1:1	2:1	3:1	4:1	6:1	8:1	10:1	12:1	15:1	18:1	Close
Open	1:5	1:4	1:3	1:2	1:1	2:1	3:1	4:1	5:1	7:1	9:1	11:1	13:1	Open
1 or less	AL2	AL2	AL2	AL2	AL2	AL2	AL2	AL1o1	AL1o1 Do1	AL1o1 Do1	AL1 Do1	AL1 Do1	AL1 DL1o1	1 or less
2	AL2	AL2	AL2	AL2	AL2	AL2	AL1o1	AL1o1 Do1	AL1o1 Do1	AL1 Do1	AL1 Do1	Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 DL1o1	2
3	AL2	AL2	AL2	AL2	AL2	AL1o1	AL1o1 Do1	AL1o1 Do1	AL1 Do1	AL1 Do1	Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 DL1o1	3
4	AL2	AL2	AL2	AL2	AL1o1	AL1o1 Do1	AL1o1 Do1	AL1 Do1	AL1 Do1	Ao1 Do1	Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 e4 DL1o2	4
5	AL2	AL2	AL2	AL1o1	AL1o1 Do1	AL1o1 Do1	AL1 Do1	AL1 Do1	Ao1 Do1	Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 e4 DL1o2	Ae4 DL1o2	5
6	AL2	AL2	AL1o1	AL1o1 Do1	AL1o1 Do1	AL1 Do1	AL1 Do1	Ao1 Do1	Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 DL1o1	Ae4 DL1o2	Ae4 DL1o2	6
7	AL1o1	AL1o1	AL1o1 Do1	AL1o1 Do1	AL1o1 Do1	AL1 Do1	Ao1 Do1	Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 e4 DL1o2	Ae4 DL1o2	Ae3 DL2o2DG	7
8	AL1o1	AL1o1 Do1	AL1o1 Do1	AL1o1 Do1	AL1 Do1	Ao1 Do1	Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 e4 DL1o2	Ae4 DL1o2	Ae4 DL1o2	Ae3 DL2o2DG	8
9	AL1o1 Do1	AL1o1 Do1	AL1o1 Do1	AL1 Do1	Ao1 Do1	Ao1 Do1	Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 e4 DL1o2	Ae4 DL1o2	Ae4 DL1o2	Ae3 DL2o2DG	Ae3 DL2o2DG	9
10	AL1o1 Do1	AL1o1 Do1	AL1 Do1	Ao1 Do1	Ao1 Do1	Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 e4 DL1o2	Ae4 DL1o2	Ae4 DL1o2	Ae3 DL2o2DG	Ae3 DL2o2DG	Ae2 DL2o3DG	10
11	AL1o1 Do1	AL1 Do1	Ao1 Do1	Ao1 Do1	Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 DL1o1	Ae4 DL1o2	Ae4 DL1o2	Ae3 DL2o2DG	Ae3 DL2o2DG	Ae3 DL2o2DG	Ae2 DL2o3DG	11
12	AL1o1 Do1	Ao1 Do1	Ao1 Do1	Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 e4 DL1o2	Ae4 DL1o2	Ae3 DL2o2DG	Ae3 DL2o2DG	Ae3 DL2o2DG	Ae2 DL2o3DG	Ae2 DL2o3DG	12
13	Ao1 Do1	Ao1 Do1	Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 DL1o2	Ao1 e4 DL1o2	Ae4 DL1o2	Ae3 DL2o2DG	Ae3 DL2o2DG	Ae3 DL2o2DG	Ae2 DL2o3DG	Ae2 DL2o3DG	Ae2 DL2o3DG	13
14	Ao1 Do1	Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 e4 DL1o2	Ao1 e4 DL1o2	Ae4 DL1o2	Ae3 DL2o2DG	Ae3 DL2o2DG	Ae3 DL2o2DG	Ae2 DL2o3DG	Ae2 DL2o3DG	Ae2 DL2o3DG	Ae2 DL2o3DG	14
15 or more	Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 e4 DL1o2	Ae4 DL1o2	Ae4 DL1o2	Ae3 DL2o2DG	Ae3 DL2o2DG	Ae2 DL2o3DG	Ae2 DL2o3DG	Ae2 DL2o3DG	Ae2 DL2o3DG	Ae2 DL2o3DG	Ae2 DL2o3DG	15 or more

Surprise Roll Basics
A complete summary is on chart page 2

Overrun Attacks: 9 or more, Attacker Surprise
6 or less, Defender Surprise

Regular Attacks: 10 or more, Attacker Surprise
5 or less, Defender Surprise

OCS Charts & Tables v4.3 (page 3)

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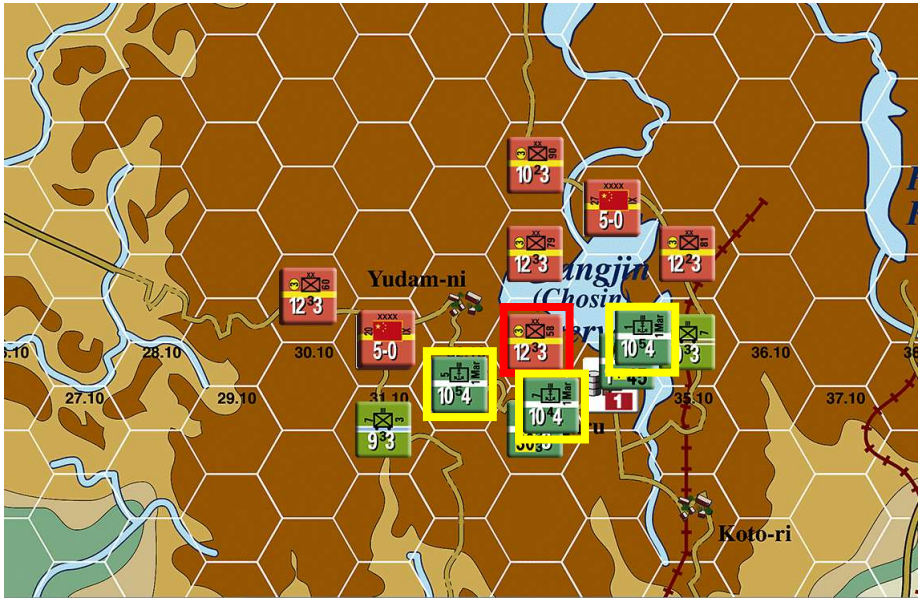
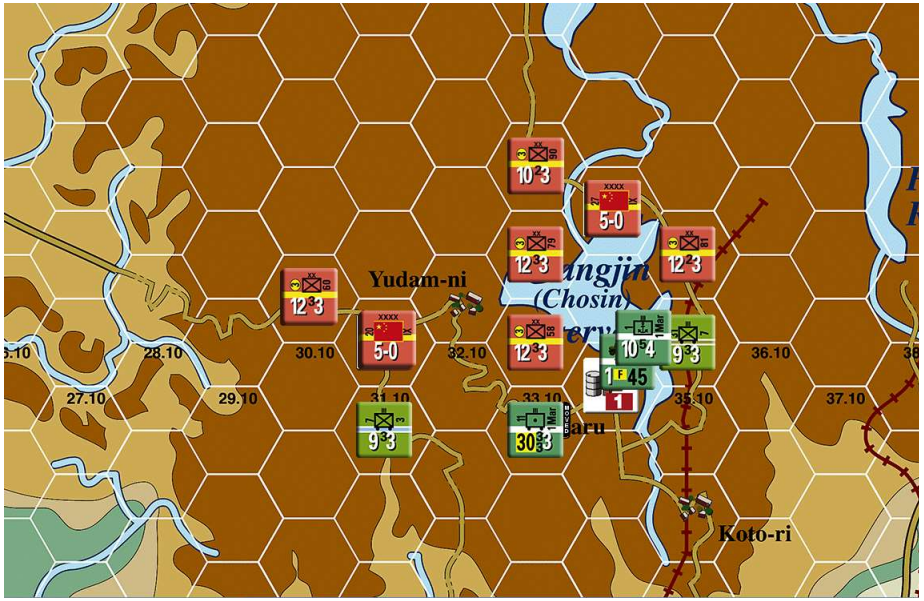
When applying combat results (OCS 9.10):

- The attacker always goes first. Satisfy "hard number" ("L") results first, which **must** be taken as step losses. Then satisfy any options. This takes place before the defender decides what they will do (OCS 9.10b).
- The attacker must **always** fulfill his option results (OCS 9.10c).
- The defender gets to **ignore** his options if the attacker retreated or cannot take all his options. The defender cannot ignore "hard loss" results.
- The defender can choose to apply his options as retreat should he wish to retreat.
- When a result contains both option and exploitation numbers, the attacker must take all his options **as a loss** in order to earn the Exploit marker. If the attacker chooses to retreat, ignore the Exploitation result entirely (OCS 9.10d).
- In the case of an Overrun, should the attacker choose to take one or more of their options as a retreat, they end their movement for the phase. They can only continue moving if they do not retreat (OCS 8.1f).

Step Losses (OCS 9.11):

- No unit can absorb more step losses than it has available steps. When a single-step unit takes a loss, or a multi-step formation takes as many losses as its step number, place it in the dead pile.
- The AR unit must lose the **first** step of their side. Other than that, the owning player determines which units involved in a combat absorb step losses (OCS 9.6). However, in the case of multiple losses, **all** units must take one loss before **any** unit takes two (OCS 9.11c).
- These distribution rules do not apply to losses due to Barrage, Retreat or Attrition. There isn't an AR unit, nor is there a requirement to spread out losses. In those situations, the player has full control over which units to lose.





Example:

- Let's assume the three US Marine Regiments (outlined in yellow) attack the Chinese 58th Infantry Division (outlined in red), with the 5th Marines on the left as the Action Rating unit due to its "5" AR.

- Due to a horrendous Defender Surprise roll, the Combat Result is "AL2". Each of the attacking units has only one step.
- "L" results are mandatory. The first loss must be the Action Rating unit (often called the "lead" unit), so the 5th Marine Regiment is eliminated. The second loss is determined by the owning player, who selects the 7th Marine Regiment because it has a lower AR than the one which survives the combat.
- The 11th Marine Artillery Regiment was in the hex with the 7th Marine Regiment, but did not participate in the combat and is unaffected.

- Console yourself with the mantra, "Into every OCS-ers life, some AL2's will fall!"

Options (OCS 9.10):

- Remember how options work: Attacker first, each option number can be either a step loss or a retreat, and unless the attacker takes all their options as losses the defender's options are ignored.

Example:

- Slightly different arrangement, but again let's assume the three US Marine Regiments attack the Chinese 58th Infantry Division, with the 5th Marines as the Action Rating unit due to its "5" AR.
- This time the result is an Ao1/Do1.
- The attacker goes first, and has a choice of A or B . . .

A. If the attacker chooses to take his option as a 1-hex retreat, the defender ignores his option. (The defender could apply his option if he wished.)

B. If the attacker chooses to take his option as a loss, eliminating his AR unit, the defender must apply his option. Now, the defender has a choice of X or Y . .

X. The defender can retreat one hex (after which the attacker can advance). Or . . .

Y. The defender can take a 1-step loss and remain in the hex.

Let's learn more about how retreats and advances work!

Retreats and Advances (OCS 9.12):

- Options not taken as step losses must be taken as a retreat. All units involved must retreat a number of hexes equal to the remaining option result.

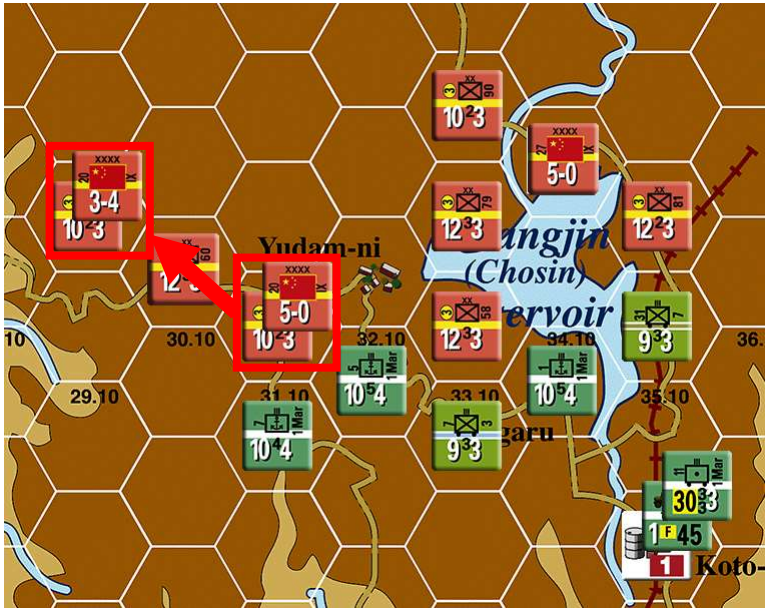
A retreat must end the full distance (as the crow flies) from the hex where it began. A retreat path does not have to be a straight line. It can zig-zag to avoid prohibited terrain, but must extend to reach a hex satisfying the "full distance" requirement (OCS 9.12).

- The Chinese 58th Infantry Division (outlined in red), retreats two hexes, even if that means traveling additional hexes around the Reservoir to end two hexes from its starting hex of 33.11. It cannot halt its retreat in 33.12, since that is only one hex from its starting point.
- **(Note that a 2-hex retreat incurs a DG, see page 7)**

Eliminate units that must retreat though enemy-occupied hexes or prohibited terrain (OCS 9.12)

- In this case, the Chinese 58th infantry Division is surrounded by US units and prohibited terrain. Any options it receives must be taken as step losses, since it cannot retreat.

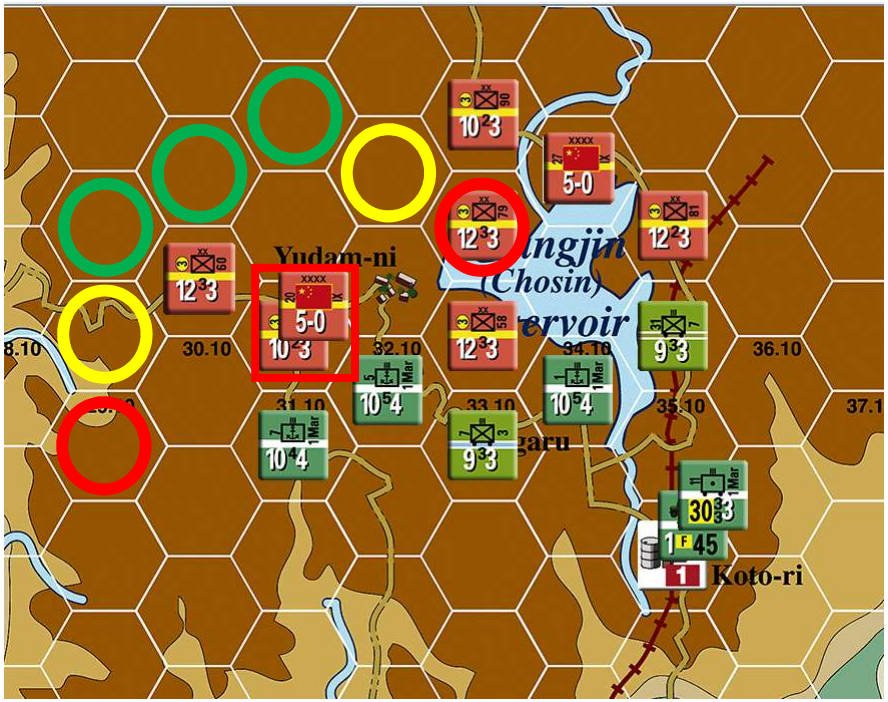
Retreats and Advances (OCS 9.12):



Units with a zero MA can change to Move Mode before retreating. Units which are unable to move in any mode are destroyed if forced to retreat (an example is Coastal Artillery) (OCS 9.12b).

- The Chinese 20th Army HQ and 89th Infantry Division are stacked together and satisfy 2 options by retreating two hexes. The HQ flips to Move Mode to do so.

Tagalongs (OCS 9.12d). Combat units and Organic Trucks that did not participate in a combat **can** join a retreat from their hex. Other types of units (ships, aircraft, ports, hedgehogs, non-organic trucks and dumps) **cannot** tag along, and must remain in the hex.



Players retreat their own units. They may remain together as a stack or split up. A retreat should be generally away from enemy units involved in the combat, but to avoid losses units are allowed to bend the definition of what is "locally to the rear." (OCS 9.12c).

- The Chinese 20th Army HQ and 89th Infantry Division are stacked together and satisfy 2 options by retreating two hexes. They were attacked by the adjacent 3rd and 7th Marine Regiments. The HQ flips to Move Mode. Any of the green hexes are obviously "locally to the rear." Yellow or red are not locally to the rear, but may be the only choices that avoid losses.
- "Locally to the rear" is too situational to be easily defined. Be reasonable about it—the spirit of the rule is that you are heading away from the enemy.

DG Results (OCS 5.10c):

- DG is an involuntary Mode. When one of three "triggers" takes place, it instantly causes ALL Combat units in the hex to become DG. Units which are already DG remain DG—there is no additional effect for being DG again.
- Combat units enter DG whenever any of the following happen:

Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 e4 DL1o2	Ae4 DL1o2	Ae3 DL2o2DG	7
Ao1 DL1o1	Ao1 e4 DL1o2	Ae4 DL1o2	Ae4 DL1o2	Ae3 DL2o2DG	8
Ao1 e4 DL1o2	Ae4 DL1o2	Ae4 DL1o2	Ae3 DL2o2DG	Ae3 DL2o2DG	9
Ae4 DL1o2	Ae4 DL1o2	Ae3 DL2o2DG	Ae3 DL2o2DG	Ae2 DL2o3DG	10
Ae4 DL1o2	Ae3 DL2o2DG	Ae3 DL2o2DG	Ae3 DL2o2DG	Ae2 DL2o3DG	11
Ae3 DL2o2DG	Ae3 DL2o2DG	Ae3 DL2o2DG	Ae2 DL2o3DG	Ae2 DL2o3DG	12
Ae3 DL2o2DG	Ae3 DL2o2DG	Ae2 DL2o3DG	Ae2 DL2o3DG	Ae2 DL2o3DG	13
Ae3 DL2o2DG	Ae2 DL2o3DG	Ae2 DL2o3DG	Ae2 DL2o3DG	Ae2 DL2o3DG	14
Ae2 DL2o3DG	Ae2 DL2o3DG	Ae2 DL2o3DG	Ae2 DL2o3DG	Ae2 DL2o3DG	15 or more

rprise **Regular Attacks:** 10 or more, Attacker Surprise
rprise 5 or less, Defender Surprise

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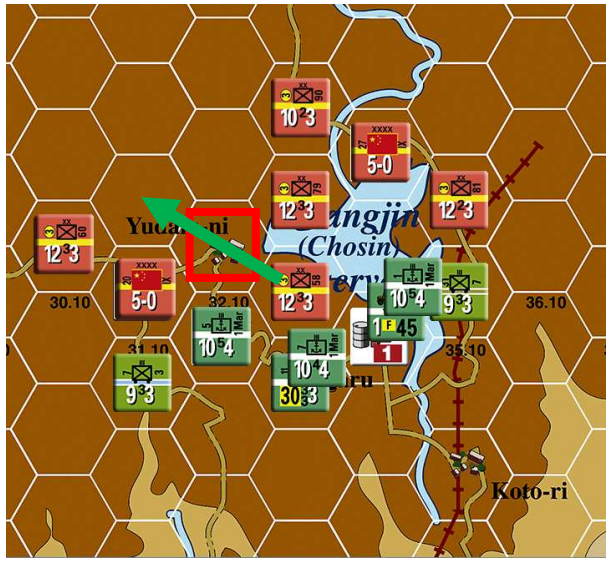
1. They suffer a "DG" result in Barrage or Combat. This happens immediately, prior to any retreats (particularly because of item #3).

2. They retreat two or more hexes. Apply the DG the instant the unit retreats into the second hex, even if they have additional hexes to retreat.



3. They retreat into an enemy ZOC. If units that are **already** in DG Mode retreat into an enemy ZOC, inflict one step loss on those units (owning player's choice from among the retreating units). This cannot be negated by friendly units (OCS 9.12e).

Advance After Combat (OCS 9.12g). If ALL of the defenders are destroyed or retreat, attacking units can enter the defender's hex:

A. Only units which paid combat supply costs can advance (including units with a strength of zero).
B. If the attackers take their option as a retreat, no advance is possible.
C. Advance after combat can capture or destroy enemy ships, aircraft, and non-combat units (per OCS 9.14)
D. Advance after combat is required after a successful overrun, but after regular combat the owning player gets to choose which of his attacking units to advance (if any).

Enemy Units (OCS 9.12f):

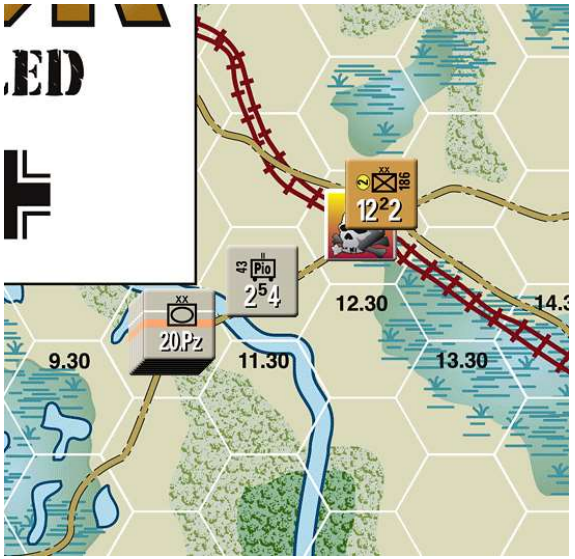
A retreat cannot go through a hex that contained enemy combat units at the start of the combat.

- Even if several of the American units were eliminated due to losses or options, the Chinese 58th Infantry Division could not then retreat into/through those hexes.
- (If you are an experienced OCS player, this is a relatively recent change!)

Handle retreats through non-combat units, aircraft, and ships as you would when moving (per OCS 9.14).

- If the Chinese 58th Infantry Division retreats into 32.11, treat the situation as if the unit is conducting normal movement. Roll on the Capture Table for the Dump and Transport Unit, and on the Air Base Capture Table for the air unit.
- Don't forget to garrison key hexes like this!

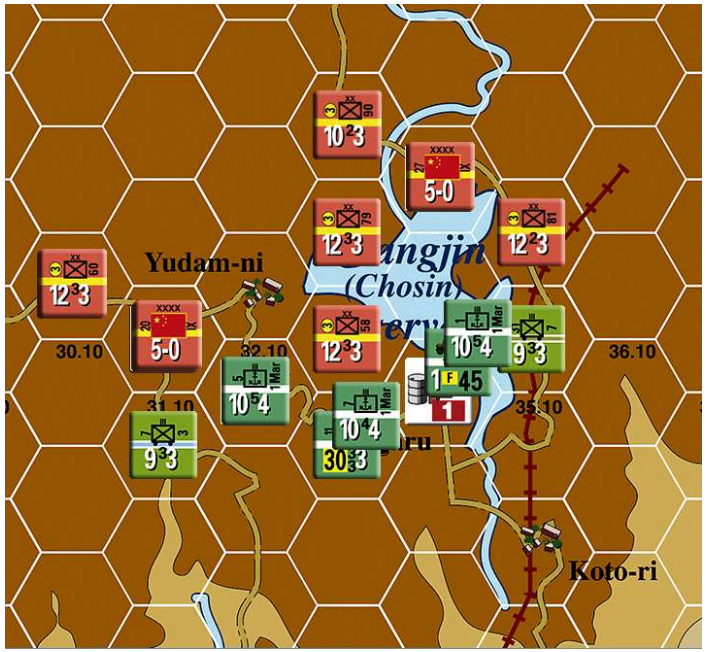
And a quirky situation from a game of Smolensk:



Suppose the 43rd Pioneer Battalion attacks the Soviet 186th Infantry Division (which has only 1 step remaining), and the combat result is Ao1/Do1. If the German player eliminates the sole attacking unit to fulfill his option, the Soviet player must still fulfill his own option by either eliminating or retreating his unit (thus opening the road into Vitebsk).

Exploit Results (OCS 9.13):

- Exploit is an involuntary Mode. Combat results that include a notation "e" and a number indicate that attacking units with an AR of that number or higher **might** change to Exploit Mode. Units must have actually been **involved** in the attack, so only Attack-Capable units can ever gain an Exploit marker.
- Exploit Mode units can move and fight in the upcoming Exploitation Phase (OCS 11.0).
- Ignore exploit results if:
    A. Attacking units are in DG Mode (Non-DG attackers in the same combat treat Exploit results normally).
    B. It is an Overrun (in any phase) or an attack in the Exploitation Phase.
    C. Any two attacking stacks are not mutually adjacent. Thus in order to gain an exploit result, **at most** two stacks can be attacking and they **must** be in adjacent hexes.



If the three US Marine regiments attack the Chinese 58th Infantry Division, they cannot earn Exploit, since two attacking stacks are not mutually adjacent (32.10 and 34.10). This is one of those "often-overlooked" rules.

Effects of Step Losses (OCS 9.11d):

- A multi-step unit missing one or more steps halves its Combat Strength when it attacks. If it is missing half or more of its original printed steps, its Combat Strength is also halved on defense. The Combat Strength may be further modified by DG, OOS markers or lack of Combat Supply.
- This reflects the nature of combat, where the defensive "staying power" of divisional units was particularly resilient, especially if their organic artillery was intact. Offensive "hitting power" was much more difficult to maintain.
- Per the Rounding Rule (OCS 4.1), fractions less than .5 round down and .5 or greater round up. For Combat Strength, round the final odds in combat, but do not round fractional strengths before determining odds (OCS 4.2 Fractions).

		Full Strength			
	Attack	20	10	10	10
	Defense	20	20	10	10
	Attack	13	6.5	6.5	
	Defense	13	13	6.5	
	Attack	12	6		
	Defense	12	6		

Proportional Loss optional rule (OCS 21.2):

- Some OCS players prefer "Proportional Strength", where the strength of multi-unit formations is a straight-line formula of (Strength x Current Steps / Printed Steps). So the German 23rd Infantry Division with 3 step losses would be 20 x 1 / 4 or 5 for both attack and defense. In this case, round fractions immediately. This is mathematically easier, but less historically accurate.