

Editor

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REVISION HISTORY

NUMBER	DATE	DESCRIPTION	NAME

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Chapter 1

Editor

1.1 TaskForce Mission Editor

TaskForce Mission Editor V0.21 (28.04.98)

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Introduction

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1.2 What is this program for?

This editor was written for use with the strategy game TaskForce. It allows you to design your own maps and define individual mission objectives.

While TaskForce itself with just a few pre-designed scenarios is rather inflexible, this tool offers you everything you need to create an almost infinite number of equally challenging and entertaining hours

of fun. Think I'm boasting? Well... erm... you're right. Anyway, if you still need to read the "What is this for?" section, you might as well believe me ;-). Better go on to the real things...

1.3 Distribution and Disclaimer

The TaskForce Mission Editor may only be distributed together with TaskForce.

All conditions mentioned in the TaskForce documentation also apply here.

TaskForce and the editor may be redistributed for non-commercial purposes provided no changes are made to the archive.

DISCLAIMER:

USE OF THIS PROGRAM IS ENTIRELY AT YOUR OWN RISK. THE AUTHOR CANNOT BE HELD LIABLE FOR ANY DAMAGE DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY CAUSED BY USE OR MISUSE OF FILES IN THIS DISTRIBUTION.

This program makes use of the ReqTools package which is ©1991-1994 Nico François, 1995-1997 Magnus Holmgren.

TaskForce and all related files are ©1997-1998 Jens Granseuer.

1.4 Requirements

To run the TaskForce Mission Editor you need any Amiga model with at least Kickstart 2.04 and about 0.5 MB of free RAM.

reqtools.library V38 or higher must be installed on your system. The library is included in this archive.

The size of a mission data file varies according to the amount of data that is used. The more complex the scenario, the bigger the file. Even the most intricate ones should not swallow too much of your disk space, though, even if you're still using a floppy system.

1.5 Installation

Normally you should have installed the editor along with TaskForce. If, for some reason, this is not true, simply copy Editor and its icon to the TaskForce directory.

1.6 Create your own missions

A word of warning before you begin: The editor is currently not what

I would call a user-friendly program. It was first only intended as a developer tool to make mission creation easier for me. However, I have now decided also to release the editor as well to allow other people to design their own missions. As a result of this policy, some routines are not really secure. Read this manual thoroughly before you start messing around! This means, for example, that you have to care for obsolete events when you delete a character. Illegal input will usually not bring up error messages, but may cause unpredictable behaviour (and will probably crash your system) when you try to run the module with TaskForce. You should always know what you are doing!

Now, for those of you who haven't hidden in some safe place, yet, here's the basic concept. Missions in TaskForce consist of five different parts:

1. the

map

2.

characters

3.

items

4.

events

5.

objectives

You can write the mission data to a file in an almost human-readable

format using "Export Data" from the "Project" menu. This file can be read using any ASCII text editor. This way it is much easier to keep track of the data and to debug a mission, should the need arise.

At the beginning you have to decide whether you want to create a mission for one or two human players. According to this decision, you have to design the map and define the goals for the teams. As the computer player is currently not very smart, don't expect him to press buttons, unlock doors, open crates etc. Only use very simple objectives, or even better, none at all.

Human players may not control more than eight units at any time during the game. This is especially important to remember when you are using events of the types

Reinforcements

or

Change Alignment

.

For computer controlled players there are no such limitations.

At the moment the computer player isn't able to handle any events, so the single player missions should be kept simple in layout and internal structure. Likewise, the

Survival

objective won't prove

very effective. The computer player should therefore be used as an obstacle for the human player to accomplish his own goals, rather than as an intelligent foe who has goals on his own.

Finally, you need to write a mission briefing so the players know what they are expected to do. For some guidelines on how to do this have a look at the briefing of one of the missions included in the archive. These briefings should contain some basic information about the mission, like difficulty, objectives, and possibly some kind of background information or story.

1.7 How to edit the map

The map opened at the start of the editor has a size of 30 x 30 squares. If you want to change this, select "New Map" from the "Project" menu. Width and height of a map may be anything from 20 to 80. The newly created map will be filled with the currently selected block.

Pressing space will place the block that is currently selected in the selection area at the bottom of the screen at the position of the cursor. You can move the cursor around on the map display using the number pad. Pressing '5' will activate paste mode. If you now move the cursor the selected block will automatically be placed at your current position. Pressing '5' again will deactivate paste mode.

You can select a different block using the cursor keys or by clicking the left mouse button on the desired block.

To jump to a different location on the map, press 'g' and enter the appropriate coordinates or click the left mouse button on the small overview map at the lower right of the screen.

To assist you in your operations there are some drawing tools. By pressing 'r' you can draw rectangles filled with the selected block. 'l' will help you draw lines. Using 'x' you can finally replace all occurrences of one block by the selected block. This is useful if you suddenly decide to use moats instead of walls, for example.

1.8 How to create life

An important note: Human players may control a maximum of eight units at any time.

If you press 'c' on the map, you get to the character window.

Each character has some individual characteristics which are used to determine how well he can do certain things.

If you create or edit a character, you are asked to enter the values you want him to have.

* Name: Call him what you like, but keep it short (max.19 characters). Here you can also set the unit's user ID. With the help of this ID tag you can group characters. It is currently used only in

connection with the
Kill
objective.

* Location: Where will he start on the map. Note: If you intend to use a character as a Reinforcement, you needn't bother about this, but you must set Team to Reinforcement.

* Team: For which team does he fight. Team 1 and Team 2 represent the according players. Team CPU is a third team which will always be controlled by the computer. This team cannot have any objectives but it will automatically fight both of the first two teams. The difficulty setting for members of the CPU team is Advanced. If you assign a character to the team Barrel he will behave, well, like a barrel - he will simply hang around, look like a barrel, and will explode when he is shot at! Normally barrels shouldn't carry any items, but if they do, these items will fall to the ground when the barrel is "killed".

Units intended to be used with the
Reinforcements
event

(and only those) must be assigned to Reinforcements.

Unaligned units are controlled by noone. Such a character can be used either as a "dumb target" or in connection with a

Change Alignment
event.

* HP: Hit points. The average value for the average human is about 25. The rule that units with 0 HP receive additional damage each turn only applies to units that belong to Team 1, Team 2, or Team CPU.

* AP: Action points. Average value 8. Be careful when altering this value. Action points have a vast effect on the game and may easily unbalance it. Use wisely.

* Attributes:

* Strength: Defines how much a character can carry and how hard he can hit in close combat.

* Firearms: Defines the character's marksmanship.

* Close Combat: The better this value the more likely he is to score a hit in close combat.

* Stealth: currently unused... Should be set to 5.

* Perception: At the moment only used in skill tests and guard mode. If the defender has got a higher perception rating than the attacker, the defender has the first shot.

* Image: Should really be self-explanatory...

After that you can put up to eight items in the character's inventory. This process is exactly the same as in

item creation
, but you

only have to define type and charges. Keep in mind that the overall weight of all items may not exceed Strength times 4. The editor takes

care of this, and notifies you when you reach this limit.

1.9 How to edit items

If you press 'i' in the main window, the item window will pop up. ↔
It

contains a list of all items on the map that are not carried by a character. Here you can add new items, edit or delete them.

When you select "New" or "Edit" the editor will prompt you for some numbers. A list of possible values can be found at the appendix of this document.

Once you have created the item, you can only change its position on the map, its charges, or delete it. Depending on the type of item you chose you may not even be able to alter the charges. Again, see the

appendix
for more information.

1.10 How to create events

Events are, as the name could have made you think, events that may ↔
or
may not occur in the course of a mission. They are technically classified into three types which denote the circumstances under which an event is triggered. First there are global events, for example

poison
, which are activated each turn. The second group consists of timed events, for example
explosives
, which are

activated when a specified turn number has been reached. Last but not least, there are events which must be operated. These include, for example, traps in crates which are set off when the crate is opened.

Basically, the procedure to create and edit events resembles the item creation. The only difference are the parameters that have to be entered. I can give you no general description here as the input required differs from event to event. The exact values may be looked up in the

events list
.

If events are placed, for example, on a box and this box is destroyed during the course of the mission, all attached events are discarded, too. However, if there are any

Find Item
events among them

and the Item Destruct flag of the event was set to false, the items normally provided by these events drop to the ground.

Whenever you create a new event, you must select all possible options once to initialize the event to valid values.

1.11 How to define mission objectives

By mission objectives you define how many points a player is awarded for which actions. Once a player has gained 100 points, the mission is considered completed.

Each mission objective is valid for only one of the players so it is possible to define entirely different goals for the opposing teams. A possible setup could command Team A to kill a bad guy, get his nasty weapon and retreat to point X, while Team B has to free a hostage and guide it safely back to point Y. Ideally, of course, the two plots should intertwine somewhere, or the two parties might not even see each other from a distance.

You always have to make sure that both players can achieve 100 points. Otherwise they won't be able to win.

In most cases you should create an objective which ends the mission when all members of one team are dead. Note that this is not necessary for the computer in a single player mission, as the mission is always a failure when all the human player's units are killed.

The procedure to create mission objectives is similar to the creation of events, and all important figures appear in the objectives list

It is important to note that the conditions for the completion of mission objectives are always and only checked at the end of a turn.

Whenever you create a new objective, you must select all possible options once to initialize it to valid values.

1.12 The list of items

Name	Level	Maximum Charges	Range	Accuracy	Weight
Akobe Shotgun	10	6	7	7	5
Antidot	-	10	-	-	1
Armour Jacket	2	1	-	-	6
Armour Vest	1	1	-	-	4
Attache Case	-	1	-	-	5
Bersen Guardian HP	8	8	8	7	3
Blue Keycard	-	1	-	-	1

Crystal Roamer SE	14	4	6	7	6
F&W Headhunter	9	8	7	7	3
Green Keycard	-	1	-	-	1
Grenade	30	5	-	-	2
Grenade Launcher	30	3	15	4	8
Heavy Pistol Clip	-	20	-	-	1
Knife	5	5	-	-	1
Medkit	-	30	-	-	4
Plastic Explosive	30	0	-	-	3
Protective Suite	1	1	-	-	7
Radio Transmitter	-	10	-	-	2
Red Keycard	-	1	-	-	1
Rostov A107 SMG	12	15	12	6	5
Security Armour	3	1	-	-	8
Shotgun Shells	-	15	-	-	2
SMG Rounds	-	20	-	-	2
Steroids	-	10	-	-	1
Yellow Keycard	-	1	-	-	1

1.13 The list of events

Change Alignment

Change Tile

Explosion

Explosives

Find Item

Lock Door

Move Tile Horiz

Move Tile Vert

Poison

Poison Trap

Reinforcements

Set Time Limit

Teleport

1.14 Change Alignment

This event is triggered by operation.

This event makes it possible to assign characters to a different team

during a mission. This is not intended to switch mercenaries from player 1 to player 2, but to give non-controlled characters a controller. This way you can, for example, free a hostage and guide it back safely.

Location is the position of the event, not of the character. You already have to set the unit's position when you create it.

Access allows you to restrict this event to one team. Normally all events can be activated by everyone. However, imagine Team 1 is to free a hostage, while Team 2 tries to fend off the intruders (Team 1). If a member of the second team now pulls the lever to open the cell door, the hostage will instantly join Team 1, even though they possibly don't even know of each other (at least not their positions). If you restrict the event to Team 1, you can prevent this situation.

1.15 Change Tile

This event is triggered by operation.

Using Change Tile you can replace any one block of the map by another block of your choice. This exchange only takes place if the square to be changed is not occupied by a character.

This event allows you to create effects such as the revelation of a secret passage when a lever is pulled, the destruction of the only bridge across a river or you can trap a mercenary. However, the last two uses are not secure, as the square to be changed could be occupied. This cannot be the case if you change a tile that cannot be moved onto. Therefore, if possible, restrict yourself to the first example.

Under Operation you can select one of three possible operating modes for this event.

1. The event does always work. Each time the event is activated the target square is altered again.
2. The event does always work, but each time the new block and the target block are swapped. That means, if you replaced water with a wall, the next activation will break down the wall and flood the square again.
3. The event works only n times.

You don't need to define an event of this type for doors and levers. They are handled automatically.

1.16 Explosion

This event is triggered by operation.

This event lets you create instant fireworks at the touch of a button.

The standard value for explosion power as used by Plastic Explosives, for example, is 30.

The hot spot is, of course, the square where the explosion will be ignited.

1.17 ACT_EXPLOSIVES

This is a timed event.

This event is usually set if you prime explosives during the game, but you may also use Explosives to cause explosions on pre-defined turns.

The timer is decremented each turn (i.e. at the beginning of the first player's turn and at the beginning of the second player's turn). If the timer reaches zero... bang.

There are three possible types of explosives. First, you can place Plastic Explosives somewhere on the map as it is done during the game. Second, you can place invisible explosives on the map. These work as usual Plastic Explosives, but no item will show up so players can't detect these.

Third, you can put already primed explosives in somebody's inventory.

The standard value for explosion power as used by Plastic Explosives, for example, is 30.

1.18 Find Item

This event is triggered by operation.

With the help of this event you can make items available during a mission. These items will not be placed on the map and remain invisible until the event is activated. You can, for example, hide something in a crate when you combine this with an event of the type

Change Tile

. The item will drop to the square the activating character is standing on.

Some containers such as crates can be destroyed. In such a case all events placed on the square are discarded. With Find Item you can decide on whether you want to destroy the item as well or create it and drop it to the chosen location.

When the event is activated, the operating character must succeed in a perception test. If a random number between 1 and 11 exceeds his Perception rating, he won't notice the item.

The modifier you can enter here is added to the random value. This means that a modifier greater than 0 makes it more difficult to notice the item, while a value smaller than 0 makes it easier. A modifier of +10 makes it impossible even for the eagle's eyes while a modifier of -10 guarantees success.

1.19 Lock Door

This event is triggered by operation.

This event allows you to lock doors, so that they can't be opened normally. First there are three possibilities: The door could be jammed completely, or you just need some kind of key to get through, or you just want the computer player(s) to keep their hands away from it. This way you can make sure that the human player(s) enter the location first. After the door has been opened or closed once, the lock is removed entirely.

If you choose to have a key, there are three more options.

1. The door can always be operated by someone who owns the appropriate key.
2. The key is only required for the very first use. After the door has been operated once, everybody may open or close it.
3. Even with the key the door can be opened or closed only once. After that it won't move any more.

1.20 Move Tile

This event is triggered by operation.

Using Move Tile you can realize things like rafts or moving platforms. If the event is activated the specified square will move horizontally or vertically until it has reached its destination. Characters as well as items and events located on the same square will be transported along. If the event is triggered a second time, the platform will be moved back where it came from.

If you have two or more events controlling the same platform the block to replace the platform image must be the same at the source and the destination.

If you have set up only one such event you may use different blocks.

The destination square as well as the block that will replace the platform image must be of a type characters can't walk onto.

1.21 Poison

This is a global event that is activated each turn.

This event poisons a character. As a result he will lose a number of hit points equal to the poison level each turn.

Usually this event is set by
Poison Traps

.

You may choose to limit the poison effect to a number of turns. If you don't, the poison effect will last until it is cured by application of

Antidot of the same level or until the poisoned character dies.

1.22 Poison Trap

This event is triggered by operation.

Using this event you can attach a
Poison
event to the
character who sets the trap off.

1.23 Reinforcements

This is a timed event.

With Reinforcements you can make additional forces available for a team if the specified turn is reached.

If you want to use a character as a reinforcement, you must assign him to the team Reinforcement accordingly.

1.24 Teleport

This event is triggered by operation.

Teleport allows you to transport units to any place on the map.

There may be problems if the destination square is already occupied, because only one unit may be on a single square at the same time, so you can decide on whether you want to cancel the transport in that case, or if you want both units to swap their positions.

1.25 Set Time Limit

This event is triggered by operation.

By using Set Time Limit you can manipulate or set up a time limit during the course of a mission. It is recommended that you only use this event in single player scenarios, as only the player who activates the event is informed of the new time limit.

1.26 The list of mission objectives

Coords
Get Item
Kill
Survival
Tile Type

1.27 Coord

Points for this objective are awarded when a character reaches the required coordinates and ends his turn there.

Normally this goal applies to the entire team. If you want a specific character to get to the denoted target square you must explicitly say so.

1.28 Get Item

Points for this objective are awarded when the specified item is brought to the specified coordinates. The item must be dropped to the ground there to complete this goal and will be removed from the map entirely. If you are requested to bring two charges of the required item, and you drop three of them, only the requested charges are removed.

1.29 Kill

Points for this objective are awarded when the specified target is eliminated. The target may be a single unit, an entire team, or a specially marked group.

If you selected a group as a target, all members of this group must have the same user ID. They will be identified by this ID tag so this is the only information needed by the event.

You may set a separate turn limit for this task. However, this should only be done if this objective is regarded rather as a "bonus" and is not absolutely necessary. Otherwise you should use the standard global turn limit.

1.30 Survival

Points for this objective are awarded if the given character is still alive on the specified turn.

1.31 Tile Type

Points for this objective are awarded when the specified map square has changed to the required type. This could be a box that must be destroyed, a door that must be opened, or a secret passage that must be discovered.

1.32 History of the TaskForce Mission Editor

V0.21 (28.04.98)

- * fixed bug with
 - Move Tile
 - events
- * fixed a minor bug in the inventory section
- * all events may now be placed on doors
- * new event
 - Teleport
 - * a new option for the
 - Lock Door
 - event allows you to
 - keep the computer player(s) from opening the door
- * new item Radio Transmitter to call in air support

V0.20 (15.04.98)

- * a new computer-controlled team is available
- * one additional character image added
- * removed an Enforcer hit
- * some more error checking

IMPORTANT NOTE: Due to some internal changes that have been necessary to implement the new computer team, some of the missions created with older releases of the editor must be updated. I have decided not to bump the mission version tag, though, as this doesn't affect all missions. The missions that must be updated are all those with unaligned units. All respective units must have their Team corrected.

V0.19 (10.04.98)

- * removed two bugs in item creation routines
- * moved the options to delete units and items to the respective selection window
- * slightly improved behaviour in character generation
- * two more weapons and two more blocks available

V0.18 (02.04.98)

- * user interface for character, item, event, and objective creation completely reworked
- * units used as reinforcements were sometimes incorrectly shown on the overview map
- * Draw Rectangle also works from lower to upper, right to left edge
- * new option for
 - Find Item
 - event
- * some error checking added

V0.17 (05.03.98)

* first public release

1.33 Contact

If you encounter any bugs, have some ideas for improvements, or just want to tell me how much you (don't ?) like TaskForce, send your comments to this address:

Jens Granseuer
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59071 Hamm
Germany

Email: jensgr@gmx.net

If you create any missions for this game, feel encouraged to send them, too. If I like them, I may include them in the archive.

Have fun!
