Editor

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# **Chapter 1**

# **Editor**

## 1.1 TaskForce Mission Editor

TaskForce Mission Editor V0.31 (21.12.98) ©1997-1998 Jens Granseuer

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Introduction Distribution Requirements Installation Mission Design History Contact Appendix A: Items Appendix B: Events Appendix C: Objectives

# 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... I guess 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.

#### 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  $\, \longleftrightarrow \,$  what

I would call a truly 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 six different parts:

1.

map
 2.
characters
 3.
items
 4.
events
 5.
objectives
 6.
miscellaneous
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 (

Coords

), 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.

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 created at the start of the editor has a size of 30 \* 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 new 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 occurances 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". Usually, you should choose the scenery type "Barrel" if you need one. Only use a unit if you want to hide it from the player(s) as long as possible or if you need to push the barrel around.

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.
  - \* 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.
- \* Features: Here you can do some finetuning on the units you create.
  - \* Invisibility: The only means to possibly track down invisible units is a thermal scanner (or pure luck). The computer player has no means to defend himself against invisible units.
  - \* IR Signature: Determines whether the unit will be detected by thermal scanners.
  - \* Regeneration: Regenerating units will regain one HP per turn if they have been wounded.
- \* 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.

Pressing 'n' or the 'Next Unit' gadget during a game of TaskForce will select the player's unit following the active one. Therefore you can group certain units so that they are activated subsequently by altering their position in the units list.

#### 1.9 Behind the enemy lines

If you decide to create a mission yourself it may be important to  $\leftrightarrow$  know what the computer player will or won't do, so you can better predict

his movements and steer them if neccessary.

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. The only objective that has any effect on his actions is the

Coords objective. Don't specify a single unit, though.

The computer player should, for the reasons mentioned above, be used as an obstacle for the human player to accomplish his own goals, rather than as an intelligent foe with goals of his own.

Computer-controlled units will make use of firearms and short-ranged weapons, but no throwing weapons. They will reload their guns in case they are given spare ammo. If they don't carry the required ammo, they will search their belongings for other, more lethal weapons and equip them if possible. Of course, guns take precedence over hand-to-hand weapons here.

CPU units will apply medkits if they think they could need them, and they will open locked doors if they carry the appropriate key. They won't pick up any items lying around, though.

## 1.10 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.

## 1.11 How to create events

Events are, as the name could have made you think, events that may  $\hookleftarrow$  or

may not occur in the course of a mission. They are technically classified into two types which denote the circumstances under which an event is triggered. First there are timed events, for example

#### explosives

, which are activated when a specified turn number has been reached. The second group consists of 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 ressembles the item creation. The only difference are the parameters that have to be entered. I can give you no general description here as the required input 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.

For most events you can define flags to restrict their use.

Whenever you create a new event, it is automatically initialized to some default values. Note however, that those values may still be illegal (like placing reinforcements on top of walls) but should prevent crashes with the main program.

#### 1.12 How to define mission objectives

By mission objectives you define how many points a player is  $\leftrightarrow$  awarded

for which actions. Once a player has gained 100 points, the mission is considered complete.

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.

Similar to many

events you can set flags for objectives, too. However, they are used in a different way. While event flags are used to determine whether an event can be executed, the objective flags will be set when the objective is fulfilled.

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 neccessary for the computer in a single player mission, as the mission is always considered 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 event, it is automatically initialized to some default values. Note however, that those values may still be illegal (like placing reinforcements on top of walls) but should nevertheless prevent crashes with the main program.

## 1.13 Turn Limit and Flags

Turn Limit

You can set a turn limit for your mission (t). In this case the action will end at the end of the specified turn if it has not been completed.

Flags

For each mission TaskForce maintains a set of eight user-controlled global flags which are used to enable or disable certain events. Every time an event is operated the flags set for the event are checked. If all enabled event flags are also set in the global mission flags the event is executed as usual. If one or more of the requested flags are not set the event is considered disabled. Some events do not allow to set flags. They are always executed.

The initial state of the global flags can be adjusted in the editor (f). During the course of a mission they can be manipulated using the

```
Set Flag
event or by reaching
objectives
```

# 1.14 The list of items

.

		Maximum			
Name	Level	Charges	Range	Accuracy	Weight
Akobe Shotgun	10	6	7	 7	5
Armour Jacket	2	1	_	_	6
Armour Vest	1	1	_	_	4
Bersen Guardian	8	8	8	7	3
Blue Keycard	_	1	-	_	1
Camouflage Armour	2	1	-	_	6
Crowbar	3	1	_	4	4
Crystal Roamer SE	14	4	6	7	6
Data Disk	-	1	-	_	1
F&W Headhunter	9	8	7	7	3
Green Keycard	-	1	-	_	1
Grenade	30	5	-	2	2
Grenade Launcher	30	3	15	4	8
Knife	4	5	-	4	1
Medkit	-	30	-	_	4
Pistol Clip	_	20	-	_	1
Plastic Explosive	30	0	-	-	3
Radio Transmitter	-	10	-	-	2
Red Keycard	-	1	-	-	1
Rifle Ammo	-	10	-	-	2
Rostow A107	12	15	12	6	5
Security Armour	3	1	-	-	8
Shotgun Shells	-	15	-	-	2
SMG Rounds	-	20	-	-	2
Steroids	-	10	-	-	1
Teeth (*)	6	1	-	5	0
Thermal Scanner	6	1	6	-	3
Vaeder M42a	18	2	20	10	6
Yellow Keycard	_	1	_	-	1

(\*) Personal item -

personal items cannot be dropped or moved around in the inventory

## 1.15 The list of events

Change Alignment Change Tile Explosion Explosives Find Item Lock Door Message Move Tile Horiz Move Tile Vert Play Sound Reinforcements Score Set Flags Set Time Limit Teleport

#### 1.16 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.

## 1.17 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 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.

If the square to be changed is occupied by a unit and the new tile is impassable (like a wall or water) the occupant will be killed. This way it's possible to create trap doors or crush units between closing doors.

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.
- 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.

#### 1.18 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.

#### 1.19 Prime 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.

## 1.20 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.

#### 1.21 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.

#### 1.22 Message

This event is triggered by operation.

Message offers you the possibility to include your own messages in a mission.

To do this you have to create text file containing all messages you want to include. This can be done using any ASCII editor. The file must have the following structure:

<--- Start of example --->
# <- This marks a new message. Must be first character on line 1.
This is my first message.
# New message. This line is not interpreted. May be used for comments.
This is my second message.
This also belongs to my second message.
And this is the third line.
# Next separator = third message
Have a nice day!
<--- End of example --->

A single message must not be longer than 254 characters including newlines. If the message is to be displayed in the text box, it must not be longer than 25 characters and may not contain newlines. Lines to be displayed in a requester should be about 50 characters at maximum.

Separator lines (starting with #) must not be longer than 100 characters.

After you have created the text file you must import the messages to the editor using the menu item Import texts in the Project menu. Now the messages should be available. Messages containing newlines will look a bit strange in the listviews but will be displayed correctly in requesters.

#### 1.23 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.

### 1.24 Play Sound

This event is triggered by operation.

Playing a sound effect can be useful to illustrate that something has happened. Suppose you have set up a terminal which will open or close a door when operated. If you don't play a sound effect it is often difficult to note whether the action had any effect. If you play the door sound on operation the player will know he triggered something.

## 1.25 Reinforcements

This event is triggered by operation.

With Reinforcements you can make additional forces available for one of the teams .

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

If the square you want the new unit to appear on is already occupied, all adjacent squares will be checked in random order. If one of them is passable the unit will be placed there. If no free square is found the unit will be discarded!

#### 1.26 Score

This event is triggered by operation.

Score is a mixture between an event and an objective. Objectives are rather restricted as victory conditions are only checked for at the end of a turn. This event gives you the opportunity to award points for certain operations. This could be opening a door, using a teleporter or a computer, or talking to another character.

The points are scored when a unit of the requested team operates the event.

#### 15/19

## 1.27 Set Flag

This event is triggered by operation.

This event sets and/or unsets the specified global flags

#### 1.28 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.

It is possible to remove units from game using this event. Do not set this option if you are using the Kill objective with group or team targets! In this case all units removed from game will be marked killed. There are no problems with single targets, though.

## 1.29 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.

#### 1.30 The list of mission objectives

Coords Download Escape Get Item Kill Survival Tile Type

## 1.31 Coords

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.

#### 1.32 Coords

Points for this objective are awarded when a character uses a Data Disk on the specified computer terminal. If you wish you can also print a message when the objective is completed.

#### 1.33 Escape

Points for this objective are awarded when the specified unit ↔ leaves the map using a teleporter

#### 1.34 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.

#### 1.35 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.

Do not use teams or groups as targets if you are also using

teleporters which allow units to leave the map! In that case, escaped units would also be marked killed.

## 1.36 Survival

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

## 1.37 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.

## 1.38 History of the TaskForce Mission Editor

V0.31 (21.12.98) \* fixed possible crash when editing Play Sound events \* removed a couple of Enforcer hits \* a small frame displays current position on the overview map Change Tile event also works if square is occupied \* events and objectives automatically initialized at creation time \* selects screen mode using BestModeID() for OS 3.0+ \* uses NewLook menus for OS 3.0+ V0.30 (20.11.98) \* again only minor changes V0.29 (14.11.98) \* minor code clean-up V0.28 (17.09.98) \* a unit generation bug would activate all special features with no opportunity to take them back \* added regenerating units \* added two more unit images, five more floor images, and the scenery type Barrel V0.27 (09.08.98) \* added invisible units and Camouflage Armour V0.26 (02.08.98) \* removed a couple of Enforcer hits \* added sniper rifle and Thermal Scanner V0.25 (16.07.98) \* an error on loading a mission could cause illegal memory flushes \* the Find Item event didn't allow 0 charges for some items \* added jammed doors \* new items Crowbar and Data Disk \* new objective Download

V0.24 (12.06.98) \* the order of units can be changed \* improved algorithm to draw lines V0.23 (06.06.98) \* fixed some more problems with non-native screen modes \* removed Poison and all related events and items \* Reinforcements event is no longer timed \* new event Play Sound \* new item Teeth \* one more unit image V0.22 (21.05.98) \* crashed if you tried to open non-mission files \* hopefully fixed some of the problems with non-native screen modes \* fixed handling of Prime Explosives events \* fixed a minor bug in keyboard control of listviews \* removed time limit option from Kill objective \* added flags (also see Set Flags event) \* new events Score and Message \* new option for Teleport removes units from game \* new objective Escape 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 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

## 1.39 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 Junkermanns Weg 7 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!