

# Designer Notes



Tonkin 2nd edition is about the war in French Indochina during the early fifties. In this design I wanted to create a lot of interactivity and stress through endless situations and choices. Both players start the game turn with 10 operation points and each point enables you to do a certain action, like moving all units in a hex, removing disorganized markers, attacking an enemy stack and so on. To remove disorganized markers and then move units in order to attack the enemy would require 3 operation points. But the sinister part is that you never know how many operation points you will get to spend before your opponent may spend points. By rolling a die you will be allowed to spend 1, 2 or 3 points of those 10 original ones before your opponent rolls the die to get 1-3 points. So, if you only get 1 point, what will you do? Do you start getting a larger attack going or do you use that point to move other units where they are needed? If you get 3 points, do you spend them in a larger operation or do you save some points until later? Each time you get one or a few points you will have to decide what is most urgent. Do you respond to your opponent's action or will you try to force him or her to respond to your action instead; a kind of a chess feeling where every action counts.

You are limited in supply and transport which will demand some planning from you. Supply dumps not only save you from attrition, they are also used to allow certain actions. If you "spend" one (which means that you remove it later) then you can attack, within a certain range of that dump. This means that you might have to save dumps since you only receive only a few each game turn. You have a limited amount of transports, like trucks and airplanes, and the only way to move units long distances, or to move supply dumps at all, are through these transports.

French and Viet Minh (VM) troops have different characteristics. Both sides have abilities and disabilities. VM troops move faster and fight better in bad terrain. French troops are generally of better quality and have assets like air forces and artillery which can be deadly in clear terrain. You have to learn in what way you should fight and how to avoid getting into your opponent's backyard.

When I started to work on the 2nd edition of Tonkin I wanted to update the game while keeping much of the original feel. I took away the whole garrison aspect which was really just a complicated way of describing invisible units on the map. I reworked the victory point system; the old one had some serious flaws where the Viet Minh and the French could receive a different amount of points for the same location. A Viet Minh player who moved a unit into and out of a place (that turned friendly to the French by default if unoccupied) meant that the Viet Minh player could gain more points moving in than he lost when moving out. If he moved in and out again he would keep getting a net gain of victory points. The 2nd edition also has a more accurate Order of Battle and an updated and better looking map. The number of phases and game turns are now less than before. This, in combination with a streamlined design and set of rules, will create a faster play.

Tonkin 2nd edition will not necessarily award you when you play wisely but it will punish you if you play badly.

