

Over the Next Dune

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Early World War II, in northern Africa. The United States Army is still growing and inexperienced, and was surprised by an Axis offensive. Your squad was responsible for delaying the enemy as Allied forces regrouped for a counter-attack. Now it's time to rejoin the Allied army. Unfortunately, the Axis forces had greater numbers than expected, and your squad has been caught behind enemy lines.

Your mission now is to get your squad to safety. Under cover of night, each of your soldiers must help the others evade Axis patrols and reach friendly lines. Be warned, however: the sun will come up soon, and to be caught in the light means certain capture—or worse!

I. Introduction and Goal

Over the Next Dune is a game of stealth, teamwork, and puzzle-solving. Your objective is to get every member of your squad off the “top” of the map by the end of the 10th turn, which represents reaching the safety of friendly lines. If you do, the player(s) win. If even one member of the squad is recaptured and brought back to the enemy camp, or if anyone is still on the battlefield when the sun rises at the end of the 10th turn, the player(s) lose.

The game can be played cooperatively, with each player playing a single soldier, or by a single player who moves for the entire squad. If you are playing solo, some rules will not apply to you—the instructions will tell you when this is the case.

II. Assembly

1. Print out the battlefield. Cut out the grids and put them together according to the following diagram so that the colors match:

Page 1 Page 2
Page 3 Page 4
Page 5 Page 6

2. Print out the six searchers and cut them out.
3. Print out the six pieces of terrain and cut them out.
4. Print out the sixty searcher movement cards and cut them out. If you want, put them in card sleeves (*they fit in 2.5" x 3.5" sleeves, readily available from any hobby game store*), using a suitably-sized card to give them stiffness and make them easier to shuffle.
5. Print out the five player tokens and cut them out. (*Realistically, you don't need to make player tokens—any item you have in the house that will fit in a 1" x 1" square will do. I use small plastic army men, but beads and coins also work well*).
6. Print out the page of player trail markers and cut some out (*20 will probably be enough*).

7. If you want to play cooperatively, print out the five turn order cards and cut them out. *(These may be easier to handle if sleeved like the searcher movement cards, but it is not necessary.)*

You will also need some dice, optimally two six-sided dice of different colors, an eight-sided die, a twelve-sided die, and a twenty-sided die. The larger dice are also available at hobby game stores. Alternatively, there are any number of websites and apps that will imitate dice by generating random numbers.

With the steps above completed, you're ready to play!

III. Setup

1. Put the battlefield down and have the players gather at the “bottom,” the side without any colors. Shuffle the deck of searcher movement cards and put it within reach of the players. Put the player trail markers somewhere convenient. If you are playing cooperatively, also put the turn order cards in an easy-to-reach spot.
2. Randomly choose a piece of terrain (they are numbered so that you can roll a die to do this). Then, roll two six-sided dice to find out where to place the terrain on the battlefield. One die is the row and the other the column in the upper-left shaded area where the center of the terrain piece (denoted by the numbered box with an arrow in it) should be placed. Be sure to place the terrain so that the arrow points “up,” away from the players. It is OK for a terrain piece to extend into another shaded area, or even off the battlefield.
3. Continue randomly choosing terrain pieces and placing them in the shaded areas, putting a terrain piece in each one left to right and top to bottom. It is OK for a terrain piece to overlap with another terrain piece.
4. Place the player tokens on the five marked spaces.
5. For each searcher, roll three dice: a twelve-sided die, a twenty-sided die, and an eight-sided die. The twelve-sided die determines which row the searcher will begin in (counting from the top, as per the numbers on the left side of the battlefield). The twenty-sided die determines which column the searcher will begin in (counting from the left, as per the numbers across the top of the battlefield). Reroll any 1s or 20s until you get a different number. Place the searcher so that the middle of the searcher’s token is on the indicated space. It is OK for searchers to overlap with each other and with terrain.

The eight-sided die determines which direction the searcher is initially facing. Place the searcher so that the arrow is pointing up, down, left, right, or on a diagonal, as follows:

4 5 6

3 7

2 1 8

6. If you are playing cooperatively, randomly select a player to be the first player. The player to his or her left is the second player, and so on. If you are playing solo, you can skip this step.

Setup is complete. You're ready to start evading patrols and heading for safety!

IV. Play

Each turn is divided into two parts: the *search phase* and the *sneak phase*.

A. Search Phase

During each search phase, do the following:

1. Move the turn marker one space up the turn track.
2. Starting with the first searcher, flip over a searcher movement card. Move the searcher six spaces according to what you flipped over:
 - a. If the card shows a straight arrow, the searcher moves six spaces in the direction it is currently facing.
 - b. If the card shows an arrow turning to the left, the searcher moves six spaces in a direction 45 degrees to the left of its current facing. (For example, if the searcher was facing in direction 5 above, it would move six spaces as if it was facing in direction 4.) The searcher keeps its original orientation.
 - c. If the card shows an arrow turning to the right, the searcher moves six spaces in a direction 45 degrees to the right of its current facing. (For example, if the searcher was facing in direction 5 above, it would move six spaces as if it was facing in direction 6.) The searcher keeps its original orientation.
 - d. The searcher moves freely across terrain. If the searcher tries to move beyond the edge of the battlefield, the searcher “bounces off” at the same angle. Thus, if the searcher hits the edge of the battlefield at a 45 degree angle it will continue moving at a 45 degree angle from the edge of the battlefield (a 90-degree turn); if the searcher hits the edge of the battlefield head-on (a 90-degree angle) it reverses direction and keeps going. When the searcher is done moving reorient it so that it is facing in the direction it is now moving.

Examples:

- a. A searcher moving in direction 8, as defined in the diagram above, hits the edge of the battlefield after moving 3 spaces. It moves 3 more spaces in direction 2, and then reorients so that it is facing in direction 2.
- b. A searcher moving in direction 5, above, hits the edge of the battlefield after moving 3 spaces. It moves 3 more spaces in direction 1, and then reorients so that it is facing in direction 1.

- e. If the searcher moves at a 45 degree angle into a corner of the battlefield, it reverses direction to move back out. When the searcher is done moving reorient it so that it is facing in the direction it is now moving.
- f. The searcher movement card is discarded. Players may look through the pile of discarded searcher movement cards at any time.

3. Repeat step 2 for each searcher.

B. Sneak Phase

When all of the searchers have moved, the sneak phase begins. During the sneak phase, do the following:

1. If you are playing cooperatively, the first player chooses a turn order card, then the second player chooses, and so forth. Players cannot communicate with each other about these choices unless their player tokens are adjacent on the battlefield (see **Player Communication in Cooperative Games** below). Once these choices are made, whoever chose turn order card #1 becomes the new first player; the new second player is the person to the new first players left, and so forth. If you are playing solo, skip this step.

Note that someone must choose turn order card #1, even if the number of players taking turn order cards has been reduced (see **Getting Caught**, below).

2. Each player now moves in order according to the turn order cards. The moving player may move his or her player token up to 5 spaces. Players may make any combination of vertical, horizontal, and diagonal moves they like, may backtrack, and may even choose not to move at all. Player tokens must stay on the battlefield, with the exception that they can move off the top of the map (which represents them reaching friendly lines). In addition, player tokens can never move into a space occupied by a searcher or by another player token.

If you are playing solo, you decide what order to move the tokens in. Otherwise, the movement rules are the same.

3. Repeat step 2 until all players have moved.
4. When all players have moved, return the turn order cards and begin a new turn by going back to the Search Phase rules above.

V. Terrain

Whenever a player enters a space covered by terrain, he or she must forfeit an additional space of movement. If the player cannot do so, he or she cannot enter that space.

The searchers ignore terrain entirely. (As forward scouts at the head of the Axis advance, the searchers are riding motorcycles, trucks, or other vehicles that allow them to move quickly through even rough terrain.)

VI. Player Trails

If the players move to the five columns on either side of the board (i.e., columns 1-5 or 16-20), they leave a trail which makes it easier for the searchers to find them.

Whenever a player token leaves any space in columns 1-5 or 16-20, the player must place a direction marker in the space from which the token departed, facing the direction in which the token went. Whenever a searcher covers one or more spaces which are marked in this way, it immediately turns to face the direction marked. (If the searcher has more than one direction to choose from, it chooses the direction in the space closest to the “top” of the board. If multiple spaces with a direction marked in them are equally close to the “top” of the board, the searcher chooses the direction in the space closest to the center of the board among those options.) If the searcher has not yet finished moving, it continues moving in the new direction. Whenever a searcher covers one or more direction markers, it removes those markers after making any necessary change in facing.

If a player leaves a space which already has a direction marker, remove the old marker and replace it with a new one showing the direction in which the player’s token just left the space.

A searcher with a captured player token ignores direction markers.

VII. Getting Caught

If a searcher occupies the same square as the player’s token, the player has been caught. The searcher immediately stops moving, and the player’s token is put on the searcher’s center square. (If multiple players are caught at the same time, put all of their tokens on the searcher’s center square. This is an exception to the normal rule that player tokens cannot occupy the same square.) Turn the searcher so that it faces directly “down” toward the players, away from the players’ goal. When the searcher moves in the future, move the captured players tokens along with it. A caught player cannot be caught again; other searchers ignore caught player tokens.

While caught, a player does not take a turn order card and cannot move his or her player token. During the search phase, other players can rescue those who have been caught by having three or more uncaught player tokens adjacent to the searcher who caught the player(s). As soon as that happens (even in the middle of a player’s movement), the caught player places his or her player token on any space adjacent to the searcher who caught him or her. The caught player then takes an available turn order card, and play proceeds normally. (If multiple players are rescued at the same time, they take turn order cards in player order. For example, if the second and fourth players are caught, the second player takes a turn order card and then the fourth player.)

If you are playing solo, apply these rules with two exceptions:

1. Only captured player tokens may not be moved; you may move uncaptured tokens even though one or more of your other tokens have been captured.
2. Ignore the rules relating to turn order cards. When one of your tokens is rescued, you may move it later in the turn order if you wish.

IX. Winning and Losing

The players win immediately when the last player on the battlefield reaches friendly lines by moving off the top of the battlefield.

The players lose if:

1. A searcher with one or more captured player tokens reaches row 20 of the battlefield, representing the Axis taking squad members to the rear for imprisonment; or
2. The sun comes up and reveals the players still on the battlefield, represented by the turn marker moving past the “10” space on the turn track.

X. Tricking the Searchers, Tracking the Players

Although the players cannot attack the searchers—doing so would reveal their location immediately—the players can help their squad mates by attracting the searchers’ attention, causing them to move to a place that is more advantageous to the players.

A tip: *The battlefield is not large, and the searchers move faster than the players. Players will often be in situations where they cannot escape a searcher by themselves. Tricking the searchers is vital. Keep an eye out for opportunities to help your squad mates!*

If a player token is adjacent to a searcher at any point during the player’s movement, the searcher notices something. Whenever the player token moves for the remainder of the turn, the searcher will follow. After each time such a player token moves to a new space, move the searcher as well so that their relative positions are maintained.

The searcher will follow the player token until it stops moving. However, if another player token moves adjacent to the searcher later in the sneak phase then the searcher will follow the other player token, potentially away from the first player token.

Keep in mind that player tokens can never move into a space occupied by a searcher. Player tokens “pull” the searchers; they cannot “push” a searcher.

Searchers can catch players while following during the sneak phase. (*Be mindful of where your teammates are, and don’t move searchers into their squares!*)

Searchers will only follow player tokens in this manner during the sneak phase. During the search phase the searchers will move past adjacent player tokens without being affected. (*Conceptually, if the searcher does not find anyone while moving after a player token during the sneak phase the searcher decides that “it was nothing” and keeps moving.*)

Another tip: This movement by the searchers is not optional. As a result, a player adjacent to a searcher and directly in the searcher's path cannot escape that searcher on his or her own. Be especially watchful for these players who need help!

XI. Player Communication in Cooperative Games

In general, players may not communicate with each other about the game. (*Conceptually, the players are sneaking through the night with Axis soldiers nearby; it would be unsafe to have a conversation!*) Of course, it is perfectly permissible to ask another player to pass the chips or to flip the next searcher movement card. The only thing the players cannot do is discuss strategy.

The one exception is that players whose player tokens are adjacent to each other may communicate with each other about the game during step 1 of the sneak phase. Such players may not communicate about the game with players whose tokens are not adjacent. (*Like soldiers caught behind enemy lines, it may be necessary to whisper.*) Once everyone has chosen their turn order cards, discussion must cease.

By moonlight you can see your watch just well enough to know that it will be dawn soon. You can hear the Axis patrols in their trucks, but you can also hear the call of Allied sentries. Safety is just over the next dune