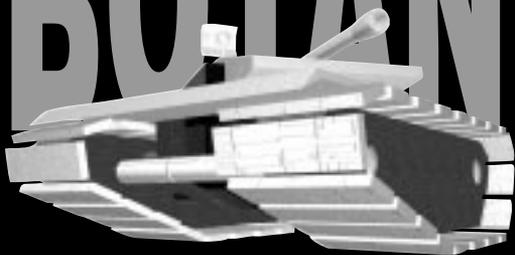


# ROBOTANKS



## **Design**

Jeff Siadek

## **Revised Edition**

### **Rules**

Neal Sofge

### **Editing**

Mike Wasson

*Senior Logician*

## **Map and Cards**

Jason Siadek

## **Rules and Tank**

### **Piece Layout**

Neal Sofge

## **Robotank Images**

Jason Siadek

### **FMG Logo**

Michael Yee

## **Gamesmiths**

### **Testers**

Dennis Lien

Alex Mandl

Dan Ferguson

Susie Pothoff

Michael B™

Bob Rigel

Glenn Fuller

Jason Siadek

### **FMG Testers**

Eric Gerber

Jim Gutt

Philip Eklund

Troy Harris

Scott Jacobowitz

Gina Karris

Lonnie Kraatz

Robert Posada

Tatyanna Wilkinson

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## Introduction

*Robotanks* is a strategy boardgame of cyber-arena combat. Players lead a team of four tanks, each controlled by a stack of command cards that form the tank's program. Cards order tanks to move, turn, fire weapons, or use special equipment. Tanks repeat their program until reprogrammed or destroyed, so careful planning is necessary. The player with the last remaining command post wins.

## Components

*Robotanks* includes 96 program cards, a sheet of cut-and-fold tank markers, a mapsheet, and these rules. A pair of six-sided dice (not included) are also necessary for play.

## Setup

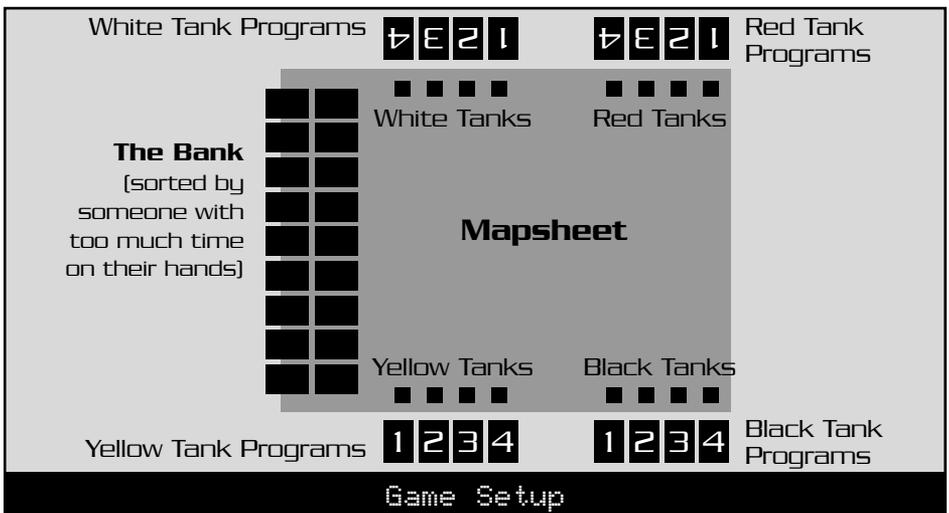
**The Deck.** For the introductory game, prepare the deck by removing all Energy Ball, Virus, Self Destruct, and Scan cards. The standard game uses the whole deck. Shuffle the deck and deal it out evenly to the players. Any player who has no fire

or movement cards at this point may declare a misdeal, in which case reshuffle the deck and start again. Each player selects 18 cards to keep as their initial hand and discards the rest to the Bank. (In a three player game, the player diagonally across from the empty seat may keep 20 cards.)

**Player Hands.** Each player's hand serves as a reservoir of cards for tank programming. It also forms their command post's final defense – a player with no cards in their hand is immediately eliminated.

**The Bank.** This is a general reservoir of program cards. All discards go into the Bank. Cards in the Bank stay face up, and anyone taking a card from the Bank may look through all of them and pick the one they want.

**The Map.** The map depicts the cyber-arena, filled with hexagons ("hexes") that regulate movement and combat. The black edges where no hexes are printed represent indestructible walls. Randomly assign each player a color (black, yellow, white, or red). Players



control tanks of their color and defend the corresponding command post.



**Tanks.** Tanks always face a hexside, so there are six possible directions a tank can point.

All tanks begin the game in the dock hexes corresponding to their color and number, facing the enemy force directly across the map (e.g. black faces red and vice versa).



**Tank Programs.** Each tank is controlled by a corresponding program, a stack of command cards kept face-down behind the tank's dock. A tank will do whatever its program says, usually executing one card per turn.

*Program Secrecy.* All face-down program cards always remain hidden from everyone, including the owner, unless someone uses the Scan command.

*Initial Programming.* Choose a single card from your hand for each of your tanks before the game begins.

**Game Start.** Randomly select the player to go first and start play with that player's deactivation phase. Turns proceed clockwise from there.

## Sequence of Play

When it's your turn, go through the following phases in order:

**Deactivation** – You may deactivate one of your tanks for reprogramming by picking up its program stack (including any face-up cards) and adding it to your hand. If you do not deactivate a tank, roll a die; on a 1, take a card from the Bank.

**Look-Up** – If you have a deactivated tank, you may trade in two cards from your hand for one card from the Bank.

**Programming** – If you have a deactivated tank, you may create a new program for it using any number of cards from your hand. (However, make sure you have enough cards in your hand to defend your command post.) Put the new program behind the tank's dock, rotated at a 90° angle to mark it as inactive.

**Execution** – In numerical order, your tanks perform their programmed actions. Execute the top card on their program stacks, resolving each tank's action completely before going on to the next one.

*Note: Tank actions do not normally involve player choice. Commands will execute whether they are in your best interest or not.*

After execution, most cards will go to the bottom of the stack, so that the program will keep looping forever. Some specials remain face up until destroyed or used.

Your deactivated and destroyed tanks do not execute.

**Reactivation** – Activate your deactivated tank, if any, by rotating its program to the normal position.

## Movement Commands

All movement cards are instantaneous; after executing the command, place the card on the bottom of the program stack.

**Turn Cards.** There are five different turn cards (60° Left, 60° Right, 120° Left, 120° Right, and 180°). All turn the tank to face a different direction without moving it to another hex.

**Move Cards.** There are 9 of these (Forward 1, Forward 2, Forward 3, Back 1, Back 2, Back 3, Sideslip Left, Sideslip Right, Rocket Booster). All move the tank through one or more hexes without turning, so its facing should be the same before and after the move.

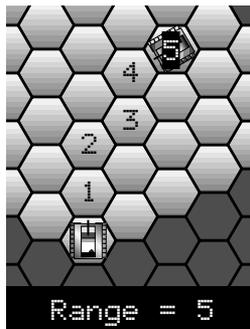
If movement would make the tank enter a hex occupied by another object or a wall, stop the tank adjacent to the object and resolve one hit against both the object and the tank (see Damage). The tank's execution is over for the turn; all excess movement is wasted, and does not contribute to further damage.

## Direct Fire Commands



Direct fire cards (Fire Cannon, Fire Displacer, Fire Electro-Grounded Cannon, Fire Virus) allow the firing tank to attack a target in its direct fire area.

**Range.** The range between a tank and another object on the map is equal to the number of hexes along the shortest path between them, not including the tank's hex.



**Targeting.** A direct firing tank will target the nearest object it can, whether that object is a command post, tank, or wreck (but not walls or docks). Friendly or enemy, strategic or useless, whatever is closest is the target. If two or more candidates in the arc of fire are equidistant, randomly determine one to target. If nothing is in the arc, the tank completes the action without firing (but the card still goes to the bottom of the program stack).

*Note for veteran wargamers: Robo-tanks nomenclature is reversed from what you're used to. There is no line-of-sight for direct fire weapons; any intervening objects have no effect.*

**Fire Procedure.** Once the target is determined, roll one die. If the result is equal to or greater than the range, the attack is successful. Otherwise, it's a miss. A roll of 1 always misses no matter what.

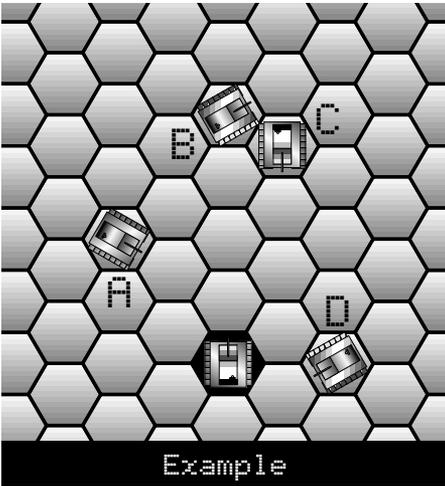
**Cannon.** Successful attacks inflict a hit on the target (see Damage).

**Electro-Grounded Cannon.** Successful attacks inflict a double hit on the target, but misses inflict a hit on the firing tank.

**Displacer.** This does not damage the target at all, but rotates it 180° instead.

**Virus.** A successful hit does no damage but allows the owner of the *firing tank* to rearrange the target's program. The firer may add cards from their own hand, but may

not take any of the target's existing cards. The tank's program is immediately activated (do not turn it 90°) and kept secret as usual.



The black robot tank is firing a cannon. Tank D is closest (range 2) but is outside of the black tank's direct fire area. Tank A is next closest (range 3) so it's the target. If tank A weren't there, then the black tank would randomly choose between tanks B and C, since they're both equidistant at range 4.

Now the black tank rolls a die; it needs to roll the range or higher to hit. The die comes up 4, which hits and damages tank A. If black had rolled a 2, it would have missed.

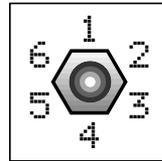
## Indirect Fire Commands

Indirect weapons (Fire Laser, Fire Mortar, Fire Energy Ball) fire randomly. Not even the tank (much less the player) may select the target. Consequently there is no targeting for indirect attacks, and programs such as Turret or Target (see Specials) have no effect on them.

**Laser.** Roll two dice; the laser beam shoots directly forward that many hexes, inflicting a hit on the first object in its path.

**Mortar.** Roll one die; the mortar round explodes that many hexes in front of the tank. Any objects in the explosion hex and adjacent hexes takes one hit. It's possible for the firing tank to get caught in the explosion.

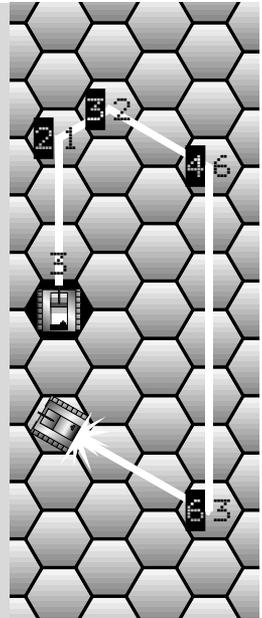
**Energy Ball.** This weapon careens randomly around the arena until it hits something (including walls), inflicting a double hit. Resolve the complete movement of the ball including the damage effect before going on to the next tank's action, regardless of how far it has to go.



To aid with randomizing travel direction, align this turning key with the firing tank.

Shown here is the entire movement of an energy ball. The movement die is shown in black type, and the turning die is reversed.

Note that except for the initial movement, two die rolls are needed for each leg – one to determine direction, and one for the distance.



Example

# Damage

Damage occurs as a result of attacks or rams (movement into the same hex). Tanks and command posts are affected differently.

**Tank Damage.** This scrambles their programming. Shuffle the target's program (including any face-up special cards) and randomly discard one card (two for a double hit). Then return the program to where it was (active or inactive) without looking at the cards.

*Tank A got hit by a cannon, which does a single hit. Before the hit, it had four cards in its program as shown, and the Radar card was face-up from last turn.*

```
Radar
Target
Fire Cannon
Turn 60° Left
```

*The black player turns the Radar card over and shuffles the stack face down, randomly picking the Turn 60° Left card and putting it in the Bank.*

*The reduced and scrambled program for Tank A now looks like this. The black player replaces the program, and Tank A will undoubtedly surprise everyone (including its owner) the next time it executes.*

```
Fire Cannon
Radar
Target
```

## Example

**Tank Destruction.** If a tank has no program cards at any point in the execution phase, it is destroyed. This usually occurs as a result of hits, but players may also cannibalize their tanks by deactivating

them and leaving them with no program. Leave the dead tank as a permanent wreck on the board; further damage does not affect it.

**Command Post Damage.** This drains the owner's energy. The owner of the firing tank randomly takes two cards from the defender's hand, then selects one to add to their own hand and gives the other to the Bank. (This whole procedure occurs even if someone hits their own CP.)

Double hits do not enhance CP damage; the target can only lose two cards from each attack. Hits by viruses or displacers have no effect on command posts.

If the defender only has one card left, the firer takes it and does not give the Bank anything.

**Command Post Destruction.** If a player has no cards in their hand at any time, their command post is destroyed and they're out of the game. Wreck all of their tanks and add their programs to the Bank.

# Special Commands

Specials override certain rules or give tanks special abilities. Some specials remain face up until used or other conditions occur, then they go to the bottom of the program stack like any other card.

**Transwarp.** Swaps the tank's map position with another tank. Roll two dice; the first indicates the color (1 = black, 2 = yellow, 3 = white, 4 = red) and the second indicates the specific tank to be swapped, whether wrecked or not. On a 5 or 6 the player may select any result from 1-4.

**Radar.** Turns the tank to face the nearest object. If objects are equidistant, determine which to “aim at” randomly. If it’s not possible to face the object directly, the tank will turn to get the object as close as possible to the laser line of fire.

**Turret.** Expands the tank’s direct fire area to include everything within six hexes’ range in all directions. This command has no effect on indirect weapons.

**Armor.** Protects the tank from damage. Roll a die for each hit inflicted. On a 1-3 the hit dissipates, on a 4 or 5 the armor is destroyed but the tank is unhurt, and on a 6 the armor remains intact but the tank is hit. No effect on virus or displacer hits.

**Shield.** All direct fire attacks against the tank must succeed twice in order to hit. Additional active shield cards have no effect. Doesn’t work on indirect weapons.

**ECM.** The tank is not a viable target for direct fire attacks. No effect on indirect fire weapons. If the tank moves or fires, move the ECM card to the bottom of the program stack before executing the other command.

**Self Destruct.** Count all program cards for the tank, including face-up specials and the self destruct card itself. The tank immediately makes that many attacks and then turns into a wreck, its program added to the Bank.

Resolve each attack as a cannon shot against a random target within 6 hexes; ignore the normal direct fire area. The attacks count as indirect weapons for defensive purposes.

**Scan.** Allows the tank’s owner to look at any tank’s program. This includes the owning players’ tanks.

## Modifier Commands

These cards (Target, Auto Hit, and Zoom) remain face up until used. After use, place the modifier card on the bottom of the program stack first, with the fire card or other commands that followed beneath. This is so that when the program repeats, the modifier card will come up first.

**Target.** For the tank’s next direct fire attack, the owning player may choose any target in the direct fire area instead of the nearest object. This command does not work with indirect weapons.

**Auto Hit.** The tank’s next direct fire attack hits without rolling the die. This command does not work with indirect weapons, and cancels Target commands.

**Zoom.** This command does nothing when executed, but stays face-up. The following turn, the tank executes the next *three* cards in its program, instead of one. The cards execute in order as normal.

Programs won’t loop while zooming, so if a tank has fewer than three face-down cards after the Zoom it will just execute them all and end its turn. Zoom cards executed as part of a Zoom have no effect.

## Shorter Game

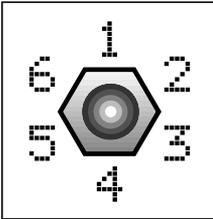
The normal *Robotanks* game lasts about two hours. For a shorter game, reduce the size of the starting hands or have command posts lose *three* cards when hit (the firer still only gets to keep one).

## Weapon Effects Summary

<u>Weapon</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Effect on Tanks</u>	<u>Effect on CPs</u>	<u>Special Effects</u>
Cannon	Direct	<i>1 card</i>	2 cards	
Displacer	Direct	Rotate 180°	None	
EG Cannon	Direct	<i>2 cards</i>	2 cards	Miss hits firer
Energy Ball	Indirect	<i>2 cards</i>	2 cards	Random path
Laser	Indirect	<i>1 card</i>	2 cards	Hits first object
Mortar	Indirect	<i>1 card</i>	2 cards	Area effect
Virus	Direct	Reprogram	None	

*Results in italics also scramble the target's program stack.*

**Energy Ball**



**Transwarp**

<u>Roll</u>	<u>First Die</u>	<u>Second Die</u>
1	Black	Tank 1
2	Yellow	Tank 2
3	White	Tank 3
4	Red	Tank 4
5-6	Choice	Choice

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Rules queries will be answered if phrased in an intelligible manner and accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope (or through email).



**P.O. Box 341136  
Los Angeles, CA 90034**

**neals@aol.com**

<http://www.fatmessiahgames.com>