It is the summer of 1756. Frederick the Great faces the grim fact that half of Europe has formed an alliance. He is in deep sorrow: It seems to him that their aim is the annihilation of Prussia.

Therefore he makes a preemptive strike against Saxony, which surrenders weeks later. But this is only the first chapter in what would become known as the Seven Years War! Prussia is completely encircled by her enemies, the biggest continental powers in Europe. England and Hanover are her only allies. Prussia's situation has come down to a single question: To be or not to be?

Soon the Prussian House is burning. France has conquered Northern Germany. Austria has invaded Silesia. Russian hordes are crossing the River Oder, and Berlin is a mere five days march away! — Frederick is relentless. He desperately rushes from crisis to crisis within his strategic triangle, managing to check one enemy only as another takes advantage of his absence to advance. After six long years of struggle, Prussia seems doomed to fall . . .

Frederick is saved by a miracle. The Russian Tsarina Elisabeth dies, and her successor has an almost infinite adoration for Frederick, and immediately makes peace. Sweden soon comes to terms, followed one year later by a bankrupt France. Prussia is saved.
Defeat Prussia before the Tsarina dies!
Or, be Frederick the Great
and struggle for survival
with a mixture of courageous willpower,
sudden inspiration and stoic patience.

1 INTRODUCTION

♦ FRIEDRICH is a strategy game for 3 or 4 players based on the Seven Years War (1756–1763). The players take the roles of Frederick, Elisabeth, Maria Theresa, and Madame Pompadour. In a 4 player game the players control the nations shown on the chart below. In a 3 player game use the same chart except one player will play both Elisabeth and Pompadour.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player</th>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Nations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frederick</td>
<td>blue/light-blue</td>
<td>Prussia, Hanover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elisabeth</td>
<td>green/light-green</td>
<td>Russia, Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria Theresa</td>
<td>white/yellow red</td>
<td>Austria, Imperial Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pompadour</td>
<td>red</td>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

♦ One against all. Frederick is playing against the attackers Elisabeth, Maria Theresa and Pompadour. The attackers are allied and cannot fight each other. But only one player will be the winner in the end.

♦ An attacker wins if one of his nations has conquered all objective cities flagged with her colour (grey in Austria’s case). Under some circumstances, 2nd order objective cities can be omitted, see rule 11.

♦ The player Frederick wins if no attacking nation has won before the end of the game. The game ends as soon as 3 attacking nations have been forced out of the game by historical events (see rule 11). NOTE: The Prussian objective cities are used in the expert game only.

The playing pieces

♦ The game FRIEDRICH includes:

- 24 generals in 7 colours
- 11 supply trains in 7 colours
- 123 control markers
- 6 game turn record markers
- 1 game board
- 24 stickers for generals
- 5 army sheets
- 240 cards, in detail:
  - 4 Tactical Cards decks, 50 cards each
  - 2×18 Cards of Fate (English & German)
  - 4 playing aids
- this rules booklet
- Every nation has generals and supply trains, hereafter referred to as pieces.

Before playing the game for the first time, the stickers must be applied to the generals for each nation (dark blue on dark blue, red on red, etc.). Every general has a name and a rank (1=highest, 2=second highest, etc.).

NOTE: There are more markers provided than actually needed so that you can replace losses easily.

The map

♦ The map shows central Europe in the year 1756. It shows cities connected by roads. The thick roads are main roads. Cities connected by a road are adjacent.

♦ Some cities are objective cities (1st and 2nd order), set-up cities or depot cities.

1st Order Objective 2nd Order Objective Set-up City of general No. 3 Depot city

- Objective cities are different for each nation and are shown in the colour for that nation. To win the game an attacking nation has to control all of her objectives. If eased victory conditions are in effect, control of 1st order objectives is sufficient, see rule 11.
- Set-up cities are used for initial placement of pieces. Following this they are treated like regular cities.
- Depot cities are where eliminated pieces can re-enter the game.

♦ A rectangular grid divides the map into 33 sectors. Each sector is marked with a suit (hearts, diamonds, clubs, or spades). These suits affect the play of Tactical Cards in resolving combat.

♦ Home country. All dark-blue areas (including all ex-claves) are the home country of Prussia; all light blue areas are the home country of Hanover, etc. NOTE: Russia and France have no home country. The home country of the Imperial Army is all yellow territories, including Sachsen (Saxony).

How to start

♦ Using the Tactical Cards ♦13, ♦13, ♦13, ♦13, the roles of Friedrich, Elisabeth, Maria Theresa and Pompadour are raffled to the players.

♦ Divide one army sheet in four quarters. Give one to each player. Each player will also need a pen.

♦ The players set up all their pieces as indicated on the map. (The army sheets also provide coordinates.) Generals go on cities marked with their rank number in their colour. Supply trains go on cities marked with a “T” in their colour.

♦ The army sheets indicate the number of troops each nation has at the start of the game. Each player secretly assigns all of these troops to his generals by writing numbers in the boxes next to the names of those generals. Each general must receive a minimum of 1 troop, but cannot receive more than 8 troops. Example: France starts the game with 20 troops and might assign them as follows: Richelieu 7 troops, Soubise 5 and Chevert 8.

♦ Shuffle one of the four Tactical Card decks for immediate use by all four players. Set aside the other 3 decks for later.

♦ Place five game turn record markers in the track next to the “1756”; one in each box numbered 1 to 5.

♦ Shuffle the English Cards of Fate deck very carefully, and place it on the hour glass next to the game turn record track.

♦ The Clock of Fate is set now. The sands are flowing, the game is ready to start…
2 SEQUENCE OF PLAY

* The game is played in turns. A turn consists of 7 action stages, one for each nation. The nations’ action stages are carried out one after the other in the following strict order:

1. **Tactical Cards.** The active nation draws Tactical cards.
2. **Movement.** The active nation may move all its pieces. It may also conquer objectives, recruit new troops and re-enter generals and supply trains.
3. **Combat.** All active generals must attack adjacent enemy generals.
4. **Retroactive conquests** are checked for.
5. **Supply** is checked for all active generals.
6. **End of turn.** For the first five turns, the end of a turn is indicated by removing one marker from the game turn record track. Starting with the sixth end of turn, all markers have been removed, the top Card of Fate is turned instead. The card is read and its instructions are immediately executed. If the card has 4 different instructions, read only the spades version. (The other versions are for the expert game, see rule 13.) After reading it, put the card at the bottom of the Card of Fate deck.
7. **Movement.** During her action stage a nation is called active. Every nation’s action stage is divided into 5 phases, which are carried out in the following strict order:

   1. **Tactical Cards.** The active nation draws Tactical cards.
   2. **Movement.** The active nation may move all its pieces. It may also conquer objectives, recruit new troops and re-enter generals and supply trains.
   3. **Combat.** All active generals must attack adjacent enemy generals.
   4. **Retroactive conquests** are checked for.
   5. **Supply** is checked for all active generals.

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3 TACTICAL CARDS (TC)

* A nation accumulates its TCs until they are played. There is no maximum hand size. Nations may never mix nor exchange their TCs. TCs may not be shown to other players unless they are played. Every TC shows a suit (♣♠♥♦) and a value from 2 to 13. There is a special wild card type called Reserve. When a player plays a Reserve, he declares it as being any suit and any value from 1 to 10. (Declaring the value is of great use in minimizing battle losses, see rule 7.)

* Whenever TCs are played, they are set aside and sorted according to their deck of origin. When the first set of TCs has been used up, use the second set as draw deck, and so on. If the fourth set is used up, always use the two sets which have accumulated most, whenever you need new TCs for the draw deck. Shuffle them carefully together.

Notes:

a) Basically Prussia receives 7 TCs per turn, Hanover 2 and Austria 5. Due to certain Cards of Fate, these values can be reduced to 4, 1, and 4, respectively.

b) Basically France receives 4 TCs, but has to choose one of these immediately. The chosen TC is discarded facedown (this simulates the French engagement overseas against England). There is a Card of Fate that reduces the French draw to 3, but France can keep all of them.

4 MOVEMENT

* In the movement phase, all active pieces can be moved. Movement is from city to city along roads. A player may move as few or as many pieces as he wishes, but one piece must finish its move before another can start and cannot be moved again that phase. Under no circumstances may a piece jump over any other piece.

* A general may move up to 3 cities, even back and forth.

* The entire move is along a main road, the general may move an additional city, up to a total of 4.

* A supply train moves like a general, but one less city, i.e. 2 cities (and 3 on main roads).

* Only one piece may be placed on each city. EXCEPTION: Up to 3 generals of one nation may be stacked on one city. This stack is moved as one “piece” until a player decides to detach a general. The general with the lowest number is the supreme commander; he is placed on top of the stack. Underneath is the second highest ranked, and so on.

5 CONQUEST OF OBJECTIVES

* Objective cities can be conquered by generals. Generals may conquer objectives only of their own colour (grey in Austria’s case).

* Conquest happens if:
   - a general moves over an objective; or he starts his movement phase on it and moves away; and
   - the objective is not protected at that moment. It is protected if a general of the defending nation is positioned 1, 2 or 3 cities away.

* All nations are defending their home country, including all exclaves. Furthermore, Prussia is defending occupied Sachsen (Saxony). NOTE: Hanover does not defend any objectives in Prussia! Prussia does not defend any objectives in Hanover!
6 THE TROOPS

♦ Every nation starts the game with a given number of troops, as per the army sheets. At the start of the game, players secretly allocate troops to generals as per the set-up rules. Necessary changes are marked there as well. A player has to state the current troops-total of a nation if asked for it. However, the troop strength assigned to a particular general is made public only during combat. Troops may not exist on the map without a general; a general may not exist on the map without troops.

♦ Every general has to command at least 1 troop.

♦ No general may ever command more than 8 troops.

♦ The 2 (or 3) generals of a stack must treat the sum of their troops as a common pool. They have to command at least 2 (or 3) troops, and may not command more than 16 (or 24) troops.

♦ If generals are stacked, a player can transfer troops between them whenever and as he desires (even during an opponent’s action stage or after a Card of Fate has been drawn). Troops can never be transferred between generals who are not stacked together.

♦ A general who loses his last troop, is removed from the board, unless the general is in a stack and it is possible to transfer at least one troop to him. In such a case, the transfer is mandatory: a general never is removed from the board as long as he has one troop or as long as one troop can be transferred to him. In a stack, removal is executed from bottom to top (that is, the lowest-ranked general is removed first).

♦ IMPORTANT: No nation may ever command more troops than she started with (see rule 10).

Example: The generals Friedrich and Keith are stacked, with 4 and 5 troops respectively, for a total of 9 troops. In combat they lose 8 troops, leaving 1 troop between them. The higher-ranked Friedrich gets the troop and the lower-ranked Keith is taken from the map.

Example (continued): Friedrich and Keith, like above. In this example there was no combat. For some reason, the Prussian player decides to transfer troops in this stack. Friedrich receives 7 troops and Keith 2. He writes down the new allocation of troops on his army sheet.

Example (variant): Again, Friedrich and Keith are stacked (with 4 and 5 troops). A Card of Fate calls for the permanent removal of any one Prussian general. The Prussian player chooses Keith and takes him out of the game. 4 of his 5 troops must be transferred to Friedrich (who commands 8 troops now). Keith’ 5th troop is lost to “desertion.”
negative for the player inferior in troops, and positive for the other one.

♦ Next, the inferior player has the right to play a single TC of his suit. He adds the TC value to the initial score. This results in the current score which he states aloud. Again, this score is valid for both players (negative for one, positive for the other). As long as a player has a negative current score, he has the right to play another TC.

♦ If a score becomes zero or positive, the right to play TCs switches to the other player. Now he is considered inferior, and he may play a TC using the same procedure. The right to play TCs keeps switching until the player with the right to play is unable or unwilling to do so. At that point his general is defeated.

♥ The defeated general loses as many troops as the final negative score (but not more than he commanded) and is retreated the same number of cities.

♥ The winner loses no troops and remains in place.

♥ A tie. If a player receives the right to play a TC on a score of zero, he must play a card if he has any of the correct suit (he is not obligated to play a Reserve). If he has none (and if he is not willing to play an existing Reserve), combat ends as a tie. In a tie, neither side loses troops nor has to retreat.

♦ SPECIAL CASES:
  • If the attack starts with a score of zero, the attacking player plays TCs first (following the above rule).
  • If opposing generals are in different sectors, each will play the suit for his own sector.
  • A stack of generals always fights as one piece.
  • If a general/stack starts the combat phase adjacent to more than one opponent, he has to fight them one after the other. If more than one general/stack are adjacent to one opponent, they have to attack one after the other.
  • A general who had to retreat may not attack or be attacked again in that combat phase.

Combat example

Prinz Heinrich (Prussia P, 2 troops) has moved adjacent to the stack Richelieu and Soubise (France F, 4 troops). He has to attack in the upcoming combat phase.

\[ t = \text{difference of troops} = 2 - 4 = -2 \]

Prussia is inferior by 2 and has the right to play TC. (Heinrich could also opt to retreat immediately, thus losing all his troops, but saving the Prussian Tactical Cards for another use.)

Heinrich is in a diamonds sector. Richelieu is in a spades sector.

Prussia has: ♦️10 ♦️9 ♦️7 Reserve
France has: ♣️5 ♣️4 ♣️3

P is −2 and plays: ♦️10
New score: −2 + 10 = +8

Now Prussia is superior and France is inferior. The right of playing TC switches.

\[ F = -8 \text{ and plays: } \spadesuit 5\]
\[ F = -3 \text{ and plays: } \spadesuit 3\]

The score is zero. The right of playing TC switches again. On a score of zero Prussia may only abort from combat, if she has no diamonds. If she had only the Reserve, then she could continue the combat or abort (the combat would then result in a draw). Since Prussia has still diamonds, she must play:

\[ P = \pm 0 \text{ and plays: } \spadesuit 7 \]
\[ F = -7 \text{ and plays: } \spadesuit 4\]

France is now running out of spades and decides to accept defeat with a final score of −3. Result: Richelieu loses 3 troops and has to retreat 3 cities. Only one troop is left, therefore the lower ranked Soubise is removed from the map.

8 RETREAT

♦ A defeated general has to retreat before the next combat is resolved. The length of the retreat is the same as the number of troops lost. During a retreat a stack may never split up.

♦ The winning player chooses the retreat path, according to the following conditions:
  • The general must retreat the full distance and has to finish his retreat as far away as possible from the winning general (only the winning general matters).
  • A retreating general may never enter a city a second time.
  • A retreating general may not enter or move through a city containing any other piece (enemy or friendly); not even to eliminate a supply train nor to stack with a friendly general. A general can retreat through an objective city, but cannot (re-)conquer it.

♦ If a general cannot retreat the full distance, he loses all his troops and is removed from the map.

Black has lost 3 troops, and has to retreat 3 cities!

9 SUPPLY

♦ Generals need supply, otherwise their troops will desert. The Supply status of generals is checked exclusively in the supply phase of the nation’s action stage.

♦ Inside his home country a general is always in supply. Russia and France have no home country, but their generals are in supply if occupying their depot cities. REMEMBER: Prussia’s home country is all sea blue territories, the Imperial Army’s home country is all yellow territories including “Sachsen”, etc. (see rule 1).

♦ Outside his home country, a general needs to be able to trace a supply path to a supply train of his own colour in order to be in supply. This path may have a maximum length of 6 cities. The path can be traced through friendly pieces, but not through hostile pieces (generals and supply trains). A supply train may supply an unlimited number of generals of its own colour.

♦ If a general is out of supply in his supply phase, he is flipped face-down. If this general is in supply again in his
next supply phase, he is flipped face-up. However, if he is still out of supply, he will lose all troops and is put off-map.

**RULE OF THUMB:** If a nation’s general goes out of supply in his own action stage (including retreat), he has one turn to re-establish supply. If, however, he goes “out of supply” in an enemy action stage, he will have two turns to re-establish supply (this is because generals only get turned face-down for being out of supply at the end of their own action stage, never during an enemy action stage).

♦ Whenever a face-up and a face-down general are uniting as a stack, both are automatically and immediately considered face-down (i.e. both need supply in the supply phase of the current action stage, otherwise all their troops will be lost).

♦ Face-down generals have no special restrictions on them: they can move, fight, conquer, receive new troops, etc.

♦ A supply train cannot fight. A general can eliminate a hostile supply train simply by entering its city. The supply train is taken from the map; but the general has to stop moving immediately. Supply trains which are hostile to each other cannot do each other any harm.

♦ In the rare case that all of a nation’s depot cities are occupied by hostile pieces, the following rules apply:

a) That nation may choose one city as a substitute re-entry site. The chosen city may change from turn to turn. It can be any city for:
   - Prussia in the Berlin spades sector;
   - Hanover in the Stade diamonds sector, but only north of Munster;
   - Russia in the Warszawa spades sector;
   - Sweden in Sweden (Sverige), incl. exclaves;
   - Austria in the Brunn diamonds sector (Austrian territory only);
   - Imperial Army in the spades sector south of Hildburghausen;
   - France in the hearts sector south of Koblenz.

b) For that nation, the costs for every returned supply train and for every recruited troop increases from 6 to 8 points of TC (even if the troop is not given to a re-entering general).

11 THE CLOCK OF FATE

♦ The Clock of Fate consists of 18 cards. Beginning with the 6th game turn, the last action of every turn is to read and execute the top card. After that, the card is put underneath the complete deck, so that no one ever knows when the last card will be picked.

♦ 6 Cards are historical Strokes of Fate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>History</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELSABETH</td>
<td>Death of the Tsarina</td>
<td>Russia quits the game!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDIA</td>
<td>France loses India</td>
<td>First: Austria receives only 4 TC &amp; France only 3 TC from now on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMERICA</td>
<td>France loses Europe</td>
<td>Then: France quits the game!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWEDEN</td>
<td>Sweden makes peace</td>
<td>Sweden quits the game!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LORD BUTE</td>
<td>England reduces subsidies</td>
<td>First, Prussia receives only 5 TC, then 4 TC from now on.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

♦ The other 12 cards have four versions with only minor effects. In the standard game, always read the spades version. Whenever a general receives a special bonus or a restriction, put a game turn record marker on him as a reminder.

♦ The allocation of nations may change:
   - If Russia and Sweden have dropped out, player Elisabeth takes over the Imperial Army.
   - If France has dropped out, player Pompadour takes over the Imperial Army.

**NOTE:** 1.) **By the above method all players will participate till the end.** 2.) The Imperial Army still moves after Austria.

♦ Eased victory conditions. For victory, control of 1st order objectives will be sufficient for:
   - Sweden, if Russia has dropped out.
   - Austria and/or Imperial Army, if the Imperial Army has switched players.

♦ In a 3 player game, the Imperial Army switches players in the same way. Eased victory conditions are also not changed.
13 THE EXPERT GAME

- The game will end only at the end of a turn. EXCEPTION: Offensive Option (rule 13).
- Victory of an attacking nation. If an attacking nation controls all her objectives before the Card of Fate is picked, this nation has won. Do not pick the card. If a nation controls all necessary objectives after the pick (due to eased victory conditions) the nation has won, too. In both cases the game ends with the victory of the player currently playing this nation. If two or more nations fulfill their victory conditions simultaneously both will win. All other players – allies and opponents – have lost.
- Prussian victory. If Russia, Sweden and France have quit the game due to the Cards of Fate, then the game ends with the victory of Prussia/Hanover (player Frederick).

12 GAME END

- The game will end only at the end of a turn. EXCEPTION: Offensive Option (rule 13).
- Victory of an attacking nation. If an attacking nation controls all her objectives before the Card of Fate is picked, this nation has won. Do not pick the card. If a nation controls all necessary objectives after the pick (due to eased victory conditions) the nation has won, too. In both cases the game ends with the victory of the player currently playing this nation. If two or more nations fulfill their victory conditions simultaneously both will win. All other players – allies and opponents – have lost.
- Prussian victory. If Russia, Sweden and France have quit the game due to the Cards of Fate, then the game ends with the victory of Prussia/Hanover (player Frederick).

13 THE EXPERT GAME

- If the picked Card of Fate shows 4 versions, read out the one with the suit corresponding to the sector where the most recently victorious general is currently positioned.
- When Russia controls all objectives in East Prussia (“Ost-preußen”), at least one Russian general has to stay in that territory. If at the end of a Russian action stage there is no Russian general in East Prussia, any two objectives in East Prussia are automatically reconquered by Prussia (her choice which).
- Prussia may win the game using the Offensive Option (OO) as follows:
  - In turn 3, Prussia has to decide (before moving any piece) for or against the OO. Prussia shows that she goes for the OO by setting aside a TC with a value of at least 10 and of any symbol.
  - Austria picks up this TC as soon as Prussia has lost a combat against Austria with at least – 3; or if a Prussian general was removed from the map due to lack of supply south of the coordinate line “5”.
  - To win with the OO Prussia has to control the 14 objectives in Bohemia (“Böhmen”). Without the OO conquests of objectives are not possible after turn 3.
  - If Prussia has conquered all her objectives, the game ends immediately with a Prussian victory (as an exception to rule 12, 1st paragraph).
  - When the first subsidy reduction has occurred by a Card of Fate and Austria has picked up the open TC, the OO has failed. Prussia is not allowed to conquer objectives in Bohemia anymore. Victory is possible only by defense.
  - If Prussia decides to go for the OO, then Austria is exempted from the conquest of any four objectives. At any time when Austria has four or less objectives left to conquer, she can declare she has won. To be able to make the declaration, however, Austria must control at least one objective in Saxony (“Sachsen”).
  - All other nations win by meeting their usual conditions.
Designer’s Notes

When the idea for FRIEDRICH first came to me, my first thought was that, if the new releases of classical games did not have hard disks, and I knew less than nothing about Prussia. Then one evening I was watching the TV series “Saxony’s Glamour and Prussia’s Glory” (an East German production shown on Bavarian television): all of a sudden I had a vision for a game. Since that first moment, FRIEDRICH has not changed in its basic concepts, and only details have changed since the first prototype. So why was the development process so long? Because I wanted all the players (though not the nations they control) to have an equal chance at victory, without artificial and ahistorical leveling. Achieving this could only be done through long testing and the collection of detailed statistics.

The basic concept of FRIEDRICH is that life writes the best stores. It was clear from the start that Everybody-against-Frederick and the sudden death of the Tsarina should be the inner engine of the game. The Cards of Fate were born in the first minute of the design, and with them the opportunity to spotlight en passant the fascinating figure of Frederick the Great and the era as a whole. From this came the next idea: the game should draw an historically accurate picture, but always remain a game. It should have few rules and avoid mechanical nightmares, but always offer great depth of play and give players lots of decisions to make. Finally, it should base everything on a novel concept: the unification of board-game and card-game.

The map only seems to be accurate. The borders are greatly simplified. In early versions dozens of German minor states had been indicated with individual colors, but now they are all in yellow for the sake of clarity (although the existence of states like Waldeck and Anhalt add flavor). Some cities were moved to prevent overcrowding, and – I am ashamed to admit – some territories were moved as complete blocks by over a century simply because it was easier than changing borders. The road network reflects terrain. Gaps can be found at mountain ranges (Harz, Erzgebirge), rivers (the Oder and Bober) and marshes (the Warthebruch and the swamps near Hanover). Important intersections are located at major cities (Breslau, Prague and Dresden), and fortresses (Minden, Glatz). The main roads are the interior lines which were used by Frederick the Great with masterful perfection. All in all, it is the complex and irregular terrain which gives FRIEDRICH its appeal: after playing the game more than a hundred times, one should think that I would know the roads inside out by now, but no! It happened to me that suddenly Louis of Hesse-Darmstadt, or some other bastard shows up in front of me, just because I couldn’t count to three!

The Tactical Cards were part of the game from the beginning. Some points especially worth noting:
1) Only the precious “Reserve” can be used as a “5”.
2) The influence of the arrangement of sectors on the game balance is profound; the strange gap in the three central rows is only there to balance the game.
3) It took a long time for me to finally decide whether to use the traditional French suits for the cards (spades, clubs, diamonds, hearts) or whether I should introduce new ones just for the game (e.g. tricorns, sabre, boots, horse-shoes). I opted for the traditional suits. The reasons were: a) The French suits were in use in the era represented in the game; b) French was the lingua franca of the era and particularly of Frederick; c) Sentences like “I will enter horseshoes now!” or “You tricorn; me boots” just sounded ridiculous; and d) Why should I reinvent the wheel and introduce unnecessary terminology and add confusion? – As a side note, traditionally spades were a symbol of the sword, clubs of power, hearts the church, and diamonds money.

The generals and armies are taken from history. The strengths of the armies are taken from their historical strengths, averaged over time. The number of generals and supply trains is a compromise between history and game balance. A lot of thought went into the decision as to whether France should have 3 or 4 generals. She received 3, because France’s chances would be extraordinarily high with 4 generals, and 3 generals allowed the elegant and mobile campaigns in northern Germany that were so characteristic of Ferdinand of Brunswick. The generals who were the outstanding commanders of the period – or at least the most influential ones. Some names are unfortunately missing (e.g. Zieten, Hadik, Rumjanzew, Finck), and in the case of France and Sweden different choices could easily have been made (for France d’Estrées, Clermont, Contades, Broglie were alternatives, and for Sweden the supreme command changed annually). As an aside, don’t confuse the general Richelieu of the game with Cardinal Richelieu, his namesake.

The nations all play differently. FRIEDRICH in this way is a little bit like role-playing. Playing France is a totally different experience than playing Russia which is totally different from Prussia which is totally different from Austria. France, by the way, is not less of a challenge for having so few pieces to move: in chess, the endgame is not easier than the opening because there are fewer pieces in play. There will be days when you feel fit to play Frederick with all the mental stress to feel the sword of Damocles hanging over your head and you will long to play Russia. In contrast to history you should never turn up your nose at the minor countries. Of course Sweden and the Imperial Army are of no military importance (during the first ten turns they should never engage in combat!), but they can become dangerous over the long haul if they adhere to the tactics of “look-and-run”. This is especially true with the eased victory conditions: if they control all their 1st order objectives at the moment victory conditions are eased, they win immediately – with no chance for Prussia to make a counter-move. Additionally, there is the per-fidy of the Imperial Army, which can switch players! Maria Theresa can do all the work, only to have Frederick get the glory and the crown: is there a better way to represent German sectionalism?

Although FRIEDRICH is not a pure simulation, the game recreates the nature of the Seven Years War surprisingly well. During the first four turns Prussia is more than a match for each of her opponents: the temptation is quite strong to fight them all in a wild brawl. But this is the perfect recipe for a rapid Prussian defeat: instead the key to Prussian victory is the well-targeted use of her superiority. Remember what Frederick wrote to d’Argers in early 1759: “Until now my enemies had never coordinated their activities. This year they want to attack in concert. If they succeed, you can start to prepare my epitaph.” In game terms the Prussian dictum is: “Never fight an enemy nation in more than one suit!” Adhering to this requires a lot of discipline (which is of course the signature Prussian virtue). On the other hand, if the attackers manage to unite their generals in a single sector, Prussia is really doomed! But if Prussia is doomed, who is the winner? Well, that is the key question! The dissention of the coalition saved Frederick 250 years ago; it can also (depending on the character of the players) be Prussia’s salvation in the game. Furthermore, the necessity for a Prussian victory will be a major barrier to the realization of the unite-in-one-sector strategy. Saltikov and Kunersdorf are to be remembered here!

At first blush, the TC system looks very abstract and arbitrary. But, in this simple mechanism you can find: the limited Prussian resources and population (the Prussian hand will constantly decrease, while the Austrian hand will tend to grow); the curtailment of Prussian mobility starting around game turn 12 (approximately the 4th year of the war), sieges (although no fortresses exist!); motionless entrenchedments (Bunzelwitz), threats to supply lines (Henry’s move to Görlitz in 1759); the breakdown of supply (Laudon’s coup at Domstädt); and encirclement to force a decisive battle (Lignitz, Torgau, Hochkirch).

The Cards of Fate. The players know what Tactical Cards they have, and plan accordingly. Perhaps they will succeed, perhaps not. All plans, however, can come to a sudden end with the death of the Tsarina or by the bankruptcy of France, something that can neither be planned for nor foreseen, because it is beyond the players’ control and knowledge. It is a violent and radical game mechanic. It will irritate some, and cause them to think that the Cards of Fate are nothing but pure luck… nevertheless, in the game, they work! They have been playtested over and over. Most importantly, they make FRIEDRICH like life itself; today I feel on top of the world, but tomorrow I may be killed by a brick falling on my head…

Today, Germany is united and computers have enormous hard disks. After a period of development which lasted over twice as long as the war depicted in the game, FRIEDRICH is now released to the world. If players have only half the fun playing the game that I had designing it, they will truly love the game and the elegance of its mechanics. And maybe they will be touched by the idea that there is something quite alien about in which states can be outlived by game ideas.

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