

# Successful Playtesting

- Aim: to suggest playtesting best practice and then invite comments and enhancements

**A practitioner's view – Graham LB**

# Aspects of the wargame to develop (everything!)

- **Scenario**: supporting the objectives; coherency, balance of forces, antagonists' plans etc
- **Wargame processes**, tested to *destruction*
- **Adjudication** processes and methods, models and tools
- **Calibration**, per Volko Ruhnke's 2018 talk
- **Analysis and data capture**, based on an evolving Data Collection and Management Plan or Training and Enabling Objectives.
- **Player requirement**
- **Supporting personnel**
- **Simulation(s)**, including work arounds
- **Communication equipment and IT**, including identification of user training
- **Briefs**
- **Information Management** beyond data capture
- **Etc.....**
- **Identification of aspects not suitable for wargaming**

# Playtesting sequence, per the *Wargaming Handbook*



- Internal Playtest(s). 10-50% complete. Team only
- Integrated Systems Test(s). ~ 80% complete. Sponsor
- Test Exercise (singular). 95% complete. Sponsor!
- The Testex is **not** a rehearsal, which is part of execution

Note NATO (2013), Bi-SC *Collective Training and Exercise Directive (CT&ED) 75-3*: Initial, Main and Final Planning Conference (IPC, MPC and FPC).  
Bi-SC 75-3 does not mention 'playtesting' or 'Test Exercise'

# Agenda examples (not blueprints)

# Internal Playtest agenda example:

## Army 'find' wargame

- **Wargame Design Meeting outcomes review**
- **Data Collection and Management Plan (DCMP)**, and how this would be integrated with that of the overall experiment and the Integrated Analysis and Experiment Campaign Plan
- **Scenario** coherence and ability to support the analysis
- **Red Cell plan**, including detailed vignettes
- **Mapping**. Mapping and geo-data, physical or electronic, is always problematic and so should feature as a priority in all development meetings
- **Players** and required **supporting personnel**
- **Wargame turns** and **vignettes**
- **Wargame processes**, including adjudication
- **Combat result generation** and supporting data tables
- **C2 model**

# Internal Playtest agenda example: RAF High Command experimentation

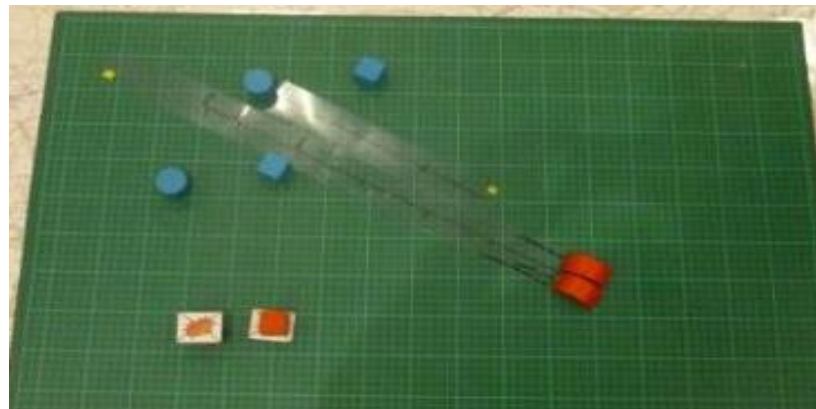
- **Wargame Design Meeting outcomes review**
- **DCMP**, and how this would be integrated with that of the overall experiment and the Integrated Analysis and Experiment Campaign Plan
- Gross-error event **programme check**
- Conduct a **matrix game to familiarise everyone with the scenario and elicit improvements to it**
- Conduct an RCAT<sup>1</sup> baseline to **identify potential Command Group topics, Red Cell and Critical Thinking options** and ‘What if?’ questions
- **Assess Commercial Off The Shelf recreational games** for their suitability to support the wargame

1. Rapid Campaign Analysis Toolset, a Cranfield University/Dstl manual simulation system

# The Test Exercise (Testex, TestEx, TESTEX)

- The Testex is **the** critical development activity
- All development work should be 90-95% complete
- So the agenda should reflect the actual wargame
- The Testex is **not** a rehearsal; you are still testing
- Test everything to **destruction**
- Look for, and expect to find faults, so leave time to rectify these, e.g.

Guided weapon overmatch traces:



# Test Exercise agenda example:

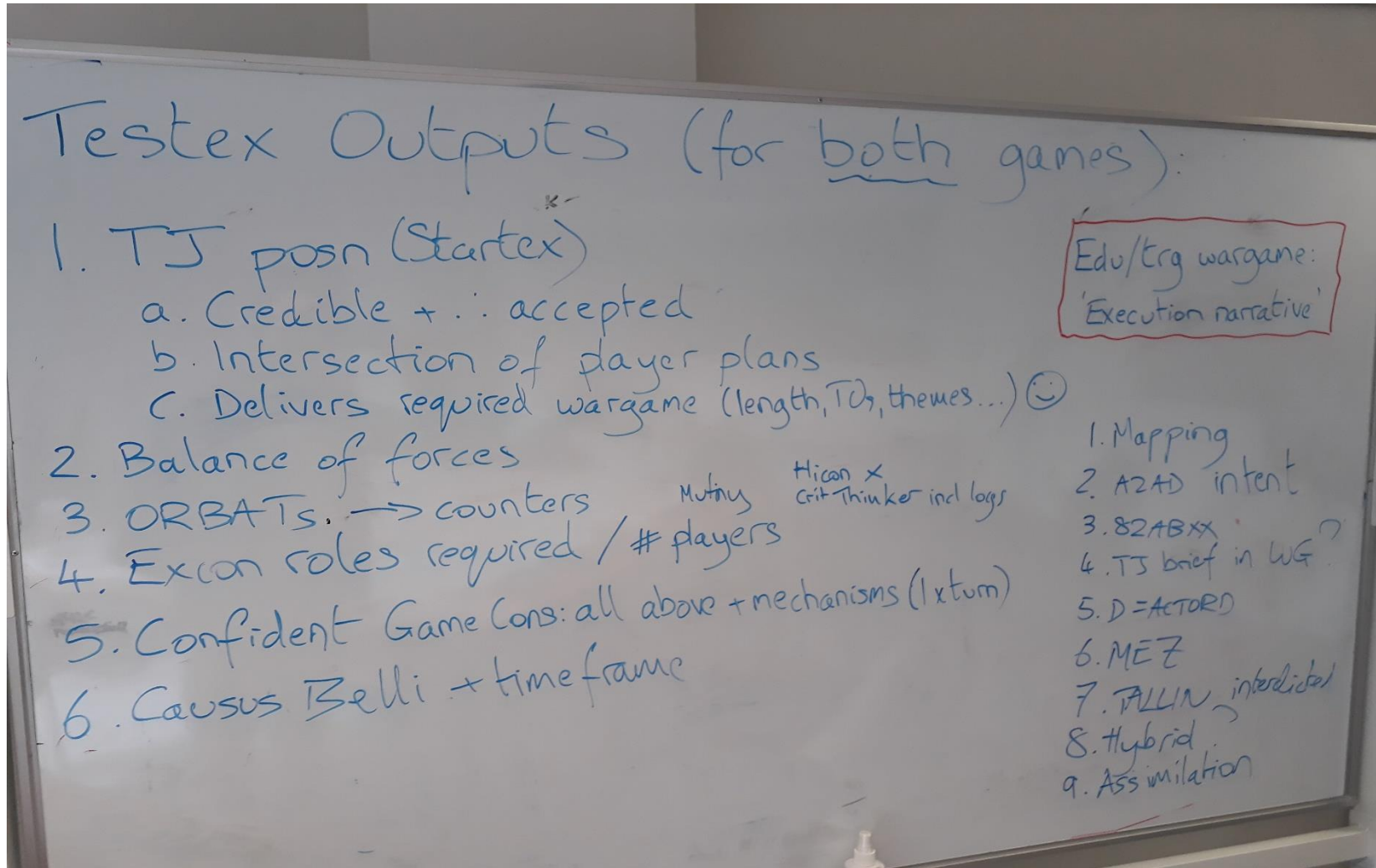
## Army 'find' wargame

- **Purpose.** The Testex purpose is to robustly test all aspects of the wargame to ensure they are fit for purpose
- **Agenda.** The agenda is that of the actual wargame, with every serial enacted to the degree necessary to ensure it will work
- **Review briefs:** Introduction; wargame mechanics; and scenario
- **Execute wargame turns.** Sufficient of every turn will be executed to ensure it will meet the analytical requirement
- **Conduct immediate post-turn then final analysis and voting**
- **Outcomes.** The Testex outcome should be that the sponsor and all members of the project and wargame teams are confident that the wargame is fit for purpose; that it can be set up, executed with a full player contingent, and deliver the required outputs to meet the overall aim

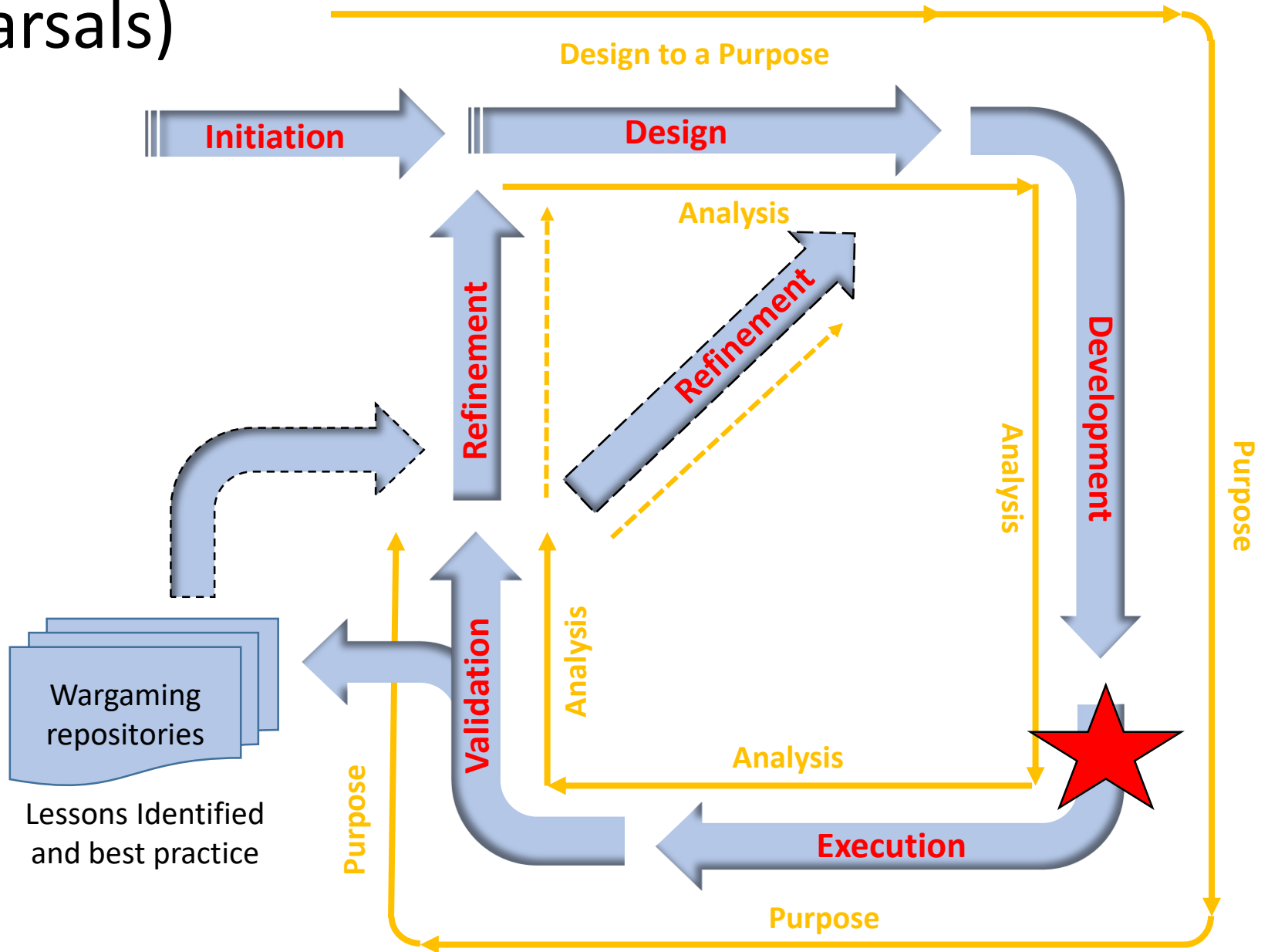


# Test Exercise agenda example:

## Higher Command and Staff Course **educational wargame**



# (Rehearsals)



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- First time you will have all players, Control staff and technology
- Excellent way to:
  - Bring people into the scenario
  - Introduce people to the wargame processes and technology
- ‘Mini games’ and a ‘Turn ‘0’

# Final (slightly random) observations

- Commercial game production features a different design and development team
- Development includes blind playtests, then back briefs to the designer(s)
- **Produce an audit trail**

# Successful Playtesting

Comments added after the Q&A session:

1. X
2. X
3. X
4. X
5. X
6. X
7. X
8. X
9. x