Flashpoint Campaigns

What's New

6 Feb 25

On Target Simulations

MATRIX GAMES

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What's New in the 2.1.4 Feb 2025 Release

The September 2024 public beta (2,1,4,8974) has now become the full release with version number 2.1.4.8795. The changes listed below for the September 2024 release are fully in effect for this release, plus there is one additional fix.

1.1 Scenario Repair.

American campaign scenario "US1-SN2 Tall Order" had an issue whereby the American setup hexes were not visible in the Setup Phase. A fixed scenario was immediately placed on the Matrix support website and this fixed scenario is included here as well.

2 What's New in Version 2.1.4 Sep 2024 Release

2.1 Saved Game Version ID

Housekeeping: the saved game version ID was set to 420 previously, and with this version, it jumps to 423. The game is fully backward compatible, but players should know that for a player vs player game (for example, PBEM, PBEM++), or if saved game files are shared, both players need to have version 423 of the game. If one player does not then the saved scenario will be unable to load, and a message to update the game executable will be displayed. We should mention this every time we increment the saved game version ID, but often forget. Now we have put it front and center!

2.2 Organic Transport

"Organic Transport" is the ability of units that have a mix of transport subunits and passenger subunits to load up while moving and then assume a debarked state when done. A typical example would be an infantry platoon that has a mixture of infantry fighting vehicles and infantry squads. This has been part of the game since the start, but we have refined the load capacities and lift requirements significantly in the last few months and rolled them out here.

It should make no difference to ordinary play but is important for scenario creators to know about. Validation checks have been added to the scenario editor to flag when a unit lacks sufficient organic lift to use vehicle speed for movement. Four new columns have been added to each of the national data files to support this. Again, this is a bit of a housekeeping item, but one we wanted to flag prominently as it will matter to content creators.

2.3 Improvements

- The unit Dashboard now shows **Load** and **Lift** values to support the organic transportation constraints.
- F11 '**Full Screen Display Toggle'.** The ability to play the game full screen without the title bar at the top and the Windows taskbar at the bottom can be toggled with the F11 key or the menu item 'View Info > Toggle Full Screen.' By design, this state is not saved when the game is exited. As a well-behaved Windows application, it must be turned on when the program is started if desired.
- **Artillery units** can now be put directly on Counter Battery orders at the end of a move.
- The **Command Cycle Length** has been reworked somewhat to reduce the base multipliers for formations of size brigade and above. The previous values created command cycles that were arguably too long for what was being represented. The impact of electronic warfare on command cycle length has not changed.
- Units caught within the **blast radius of a nuclear event** no longer have the chance of surviving in game terms. They are no longer mission-capable, and those not destroyed outright are

marked as having fallen out.

- Helicopter **flight pathing** is now more intelligent regarding known enemy air defense positions.
- **Amphibious** units crossing rivers now do a better job picking paths as well.
- The TOC Intelligence **Kills and Claims** chart has some new columns added and some minor columns consolidated to focus better on the important subunit types.
- The campaign **scenario transition report** can now be printed.
- **Quality of Life**. To reduce screen clutter and information overload for players first installing the game, the following changes have been made:
    - The **Radio Log** does not display by default on a brand-new install. It can be invoked with F7 in the usual way, and if the game is shut down with it hidden, then it will not show automatically when the game is restarted.
    - User preference "Show **detailed unit composition** instead of basic in-game reports" is now unchecked by default. This means that a reference to an "M1A2" Abrams tank will simply show the word "tank" instead. Equipment lists will be much more readable to the beginner historian. This has a more muted effect than several years ago, as most places now show both forms, but it will still help at the margin.
- **Quality of Life**. For brand-new installs, we now start unit counters drawn with **group-colored silhouettes** turned on to make it easier to distinguish at a glance which units belong to which formations.

3 What's New in Version 2.1.4 June 2024 Release

3.1 Content Updates

NEW - We are releasing the standalone "GM Giraud" scenario featuring French versus Soviet forces on the Epinal map. Joao Lima is the author.

NEW or UPDATED - User Manuals. Big thank you to Mr. John Osborne for his help on these!

- FM FCCW-01 Game Operations.pdf is up to date again
- FM FCCW-03 Tutorial Operations.pdf is up to date
- FM FCCW-04 Scenario Design.pdf is new
- FM FCCW-05 Battle Planning.pdf is new
- FM FCCW-06 Campaign Design.pdf is new

NEW – Content Generation Documentation. We have released three new FMs that explain how to make scenarios (**FM04-Scenario Design**), add in Battle Plans (**FM05-Battle Planning**), and how to build campaigns (**FM06-Campaign Design**).

Updated – We have updated FM01 Game Operations for all of the latest new features and tweaks for 2.1.4.

Updated—We have also updated two of the Operational Area Guides (OAGs). OAG CWSS010 SITREP Southern Storm and OAG CWSS-02 Force Review are updated to the latest 2.1.4 level.

Data Fix. The national data file "CW 80s United States.xls" has been updated. A correction has been made for a specific US cavalry vehicle, US577 (H/J series formations), regarding passenger carrying capacity. This impacted the scenarios Finale, Steel Rain, The Long Night, Tutorials

1, 2, and 3, and CZ-SN4 Going for Gold.

Standalone scenarios "Lesson of War," "An Autobahn Too Far," and "Brothers in Arms" contained West-German panzer grenadier units that lacked sufficient organic transport to load all passengers at once and move. This was due to blanket data change, and these two scenarios have been adjusted so that the affected units are mobile again. We fixed a similar problem for some of the Canadian and Czech forces in other scenarios as well. At this time we believe there are no unintended shortages of organic transport in the scenarios. There are intended ones, but no unintended ones.

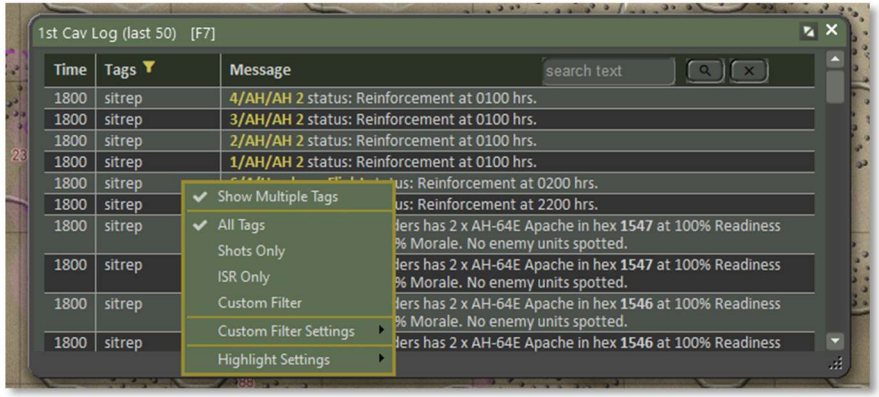
The **pathfinding** 'weights file' that minimizes overstacking has been updated.

Finally, the Canadian Campaign has had some play adjustments from the original author based on feedback from users.

3.2 Unit Log Redesign

As the game unfolds, a series of messages are recorded to the unit logs with a time stamp, a "tag" or type of log entry, and then the text of the entry.

- All messages are now Tagged (instead of just some of them as before)
- Tags are now filterable (see below)
- Unit names are highlighted to make them easier to find and hotlink to the Dashboard
- Locations are given a subtle highlight (just bold, no color) and are hot-linked to flash on the map
- The log is searchable – see the top right corner where any text that is typed in will be matched to log messages
- Highlight colors may be specified by tag type so that specific tags can be emphasized or de-emphasized (see below)



There is a filter icon (a yellow funnel icon) next to the "Tags" column header. Left-click on it or right-click anywhere else on the dialog to pop up the filtering menu.

For convenience, the Tags column can be set to show:

- All tags

- Shots only (to see just the messages that involve bullets flying),
- ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance) only
- A custom filter

Custom Filtering. For further customization, use the "Custom Filter Settings" popout to uncheck the Tag types you don't want to see, and then set the filter to "Custom Filter." You will not see messages you don't care about.

Highlight Settings. The highlight settings are a way to make the tags you want to stand out using different colors. Use with care! It's all too easy to set everything to have a highlight color and become dazzled by the beautiful but unreadable Christmas tree-like effect that results.

This new system is used everywhere we show the unit logs – this log, the unit dashboard, the counter-battery screen, and the TOC Ops Unit Logs report.

If this dialog has the Windows focus, then it can be closed by tapping the Escape key.

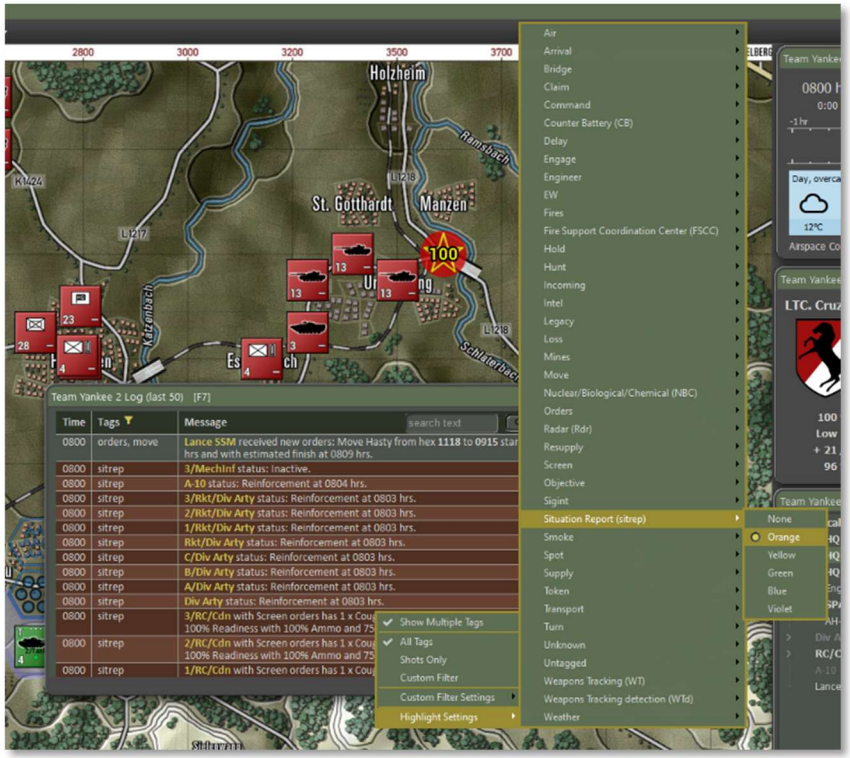
3.3 Tournament Play

This did not require many visible changes to the game, but we have now put in the plumbing to support Matrix Tournament Play through the PBEM++ server. The main visible change is that there is a new column showing a "T" for "Tournament" in the Game in Progress list. This is a big help for understanding which paired game is which. The Message area below also now contains hardwired tournament information as appropriate.

We look forward to seeing tournaments of Flashpoint Campaigns begin.

3.4 PBEM++:

We have made changes to enhance player reporting if there is an error of some sort. If there is an Internet problem upstream of the game, such as a mangled HTTP packet, then the game will be notified and will show an error message that is now more understandable. It is also far easier to capture a text log of what led up to the event which can be sent on to the developers for analysis. It was possible to do this before but not nearly as convenient.



The Matrix PBEM++ servers have a timeout of 120 seconds, and version 2.1.3 of the game had a timeout of 30 seconds. This is increased to 120 seconds in 2.1.4. This alone may fix the intermittent "We have a failure to communicate" error messages that have been reported.

If there is a problem of some sort, it will reveal the web service logging screen and allow the player to interact with it. You can find it here:

If you can see this Logging tab, please go to it and save the log as a text file and send it to us care of:

Robert.Crandall@ontargetsimulations.com.

Before you send it, you might want to find and remove your plain text password from near the top. It is harmless to send it, but it would be good practice, just on general terms, not to. Of course, we will respect the passwords we receive.

This log file is a verbose transcript of the background web service dialog and is pure gold for debugging. It will help us understand what is happening at a deep level.

3.5 Other Feature Changes & Fixes

The following sections summarize other fixes and tweaks in the game.

3.5.1 Bring Counters of a 'Type' to Top

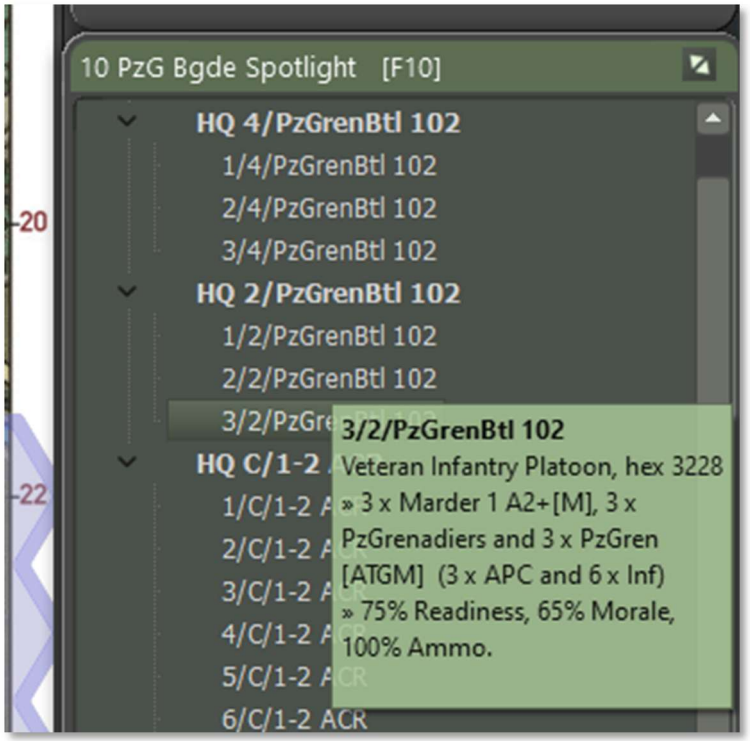
Use this new Counters > Bring To Top… menu item to bring the selected type of counter (HQ, transports, air defense, etc.) to the top of each stack to make them easier to find. Previously, we did this only for HQ units, but we have extended it now to numerous other unit types as well.

3.5.2 Timing of Arrival of Reinforcements

Scenario authors schedule the arrival time of reinforcements as 'minutes from the start of the game'. Given that player turn lengths vary so much, the chance of the reinforcements arriving at an inconvenient time - just after the player has issued orders and turn resolution has started – is likely, with reinforcements sitting out the rest of the turn in the arrival hex where they might be subject to enemy attack. The new rule is that reinforcements will be pushed or pulled in time to arrive just as a player orders phase is about to begin. Arrival times can be pulled forward if they are scheduled to arrive within the first 10% of the next command cycle, otherwise, they will be pushed back to the following orders phase. This is part of the friction of war. For example, if the command cycle is 45 minutes and the reinforcements are scheduled to arrive in 4 minutes or less, they will arrive early. Otherwise, they will arrive in 45 minutes, less a few seconds.

3.5.3 Unit Tooltips for Chain of Command Tree

Tooltips have been added to numerous buttons and all of the chain of command tree views. Now, a player can run their mouse over the list of names in any tree view, e.g., the Spotlight, and instantly see the unit's composition.



3.5.4 Campaign Games

- Version 2.1.3 of the game would sometimes lose track of which side of a campaign game the player really controlled if the player was on the Warsaw Pact side. CZ Campaign and Panzer Leader now play properly again.
- A problem with occasional missing setup areas in campaign scenarios has been fixed.
- Units that ended a scenario in a spotted state started the next scenario in that same state. They now start unspotted.
- The campaign Recovery Report that appears between scenarios in a campaign is now printable.

3.5.5 Unit Overstacking

In some scenarios there could be overstacking of units, especially at chokepoints such as newly discovered minefields. The game does a better job now of spreading out the units in such cases.

3.5.6 Amphibious Units in Water Not Spotted

Although amphibious units have a low profile when in the water, that water also does not offer any cover or concealment. We increased their visual and thermal signatures should they are more likely to be spotted.

3.5.7 Helicopters Flying over Known Enemy Units

In particular, when flying home to resupply, helicopters will attempt to avoid flying over known enemy locations. They also avoid spending as much time hovering over ridge lines.

3.5.8 Subunit Inspector Sensor Ranges

The Subunit Inspector shows more detail on sensor ranges. Separate ranges for Detect, Classify, and Identify are shown. "Detect" means that you know something is there because of dust and fleeting movement. "Classify" means that you think it is a group of perhaps half a dozen vehicles, likely tanks. "Identify" means that you know they are T80s and can shoot at them with a reasonable chance of a hit.

3.5.9 Unit Rendering

We fixed the rendering of unit counters where gray mobility, steps, and orders indicator colors were bleeding through from inactive units to subsequent active units. They show in white again as they should.

3.5.10 Radio Log Hotkey

Using the **F5** hotkey to show and hide the "Core Information Panels", will not open or close the **Radio Log** anymore. This has its own hotkey, F7, which works independently of the core group of panels.

3.5.11 Battle Planning Resupply

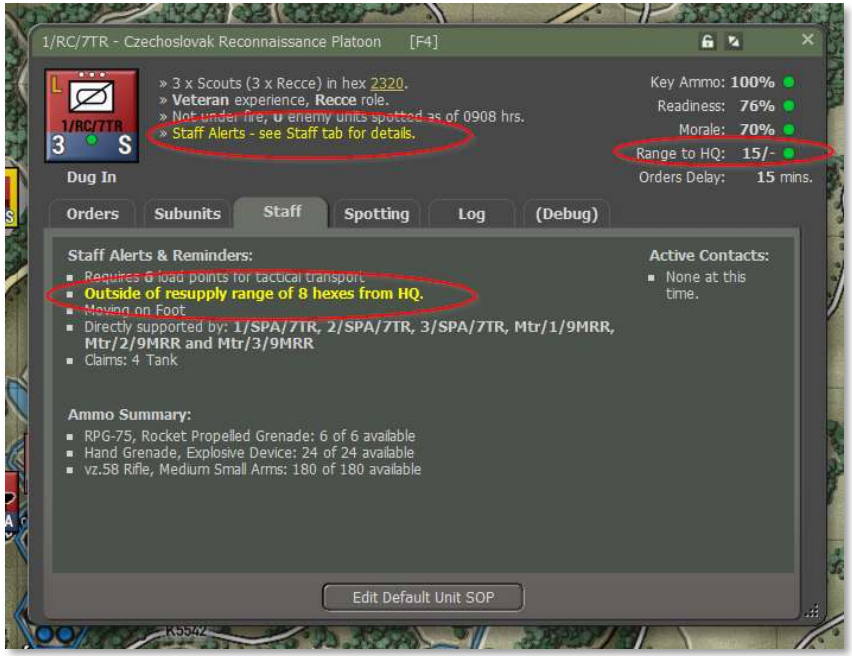
Missions could be given to forces in the battle planner, but the label used was "Reorganize" which was confusing. This has been changed to "Resupply" instead.

3.5.12 Unit Ammunition On Hand

The Staff page of the Dashboard now shows a unit's total ammo inventory at a glance.

3.5.13 Outside Supply Range Alerts

Recon units have no particular Command Range by design but do have a Resupply Range of twice what their command range would otherwise be. This meant that if they were too far away, they could not Rest and Resupply. Now the Dashboard alerts the player up top and gives details in the Staff report:



3.5.14 PBEM VCR Replay

Animations were not always showing in VCR replay of PBEM games. This was fixed.

3.5.15 Improved PDF Printing

The problem was with images, specifically with cached images. Printed reports should work better now.

3.5.16 Yellow on Yellow Popups

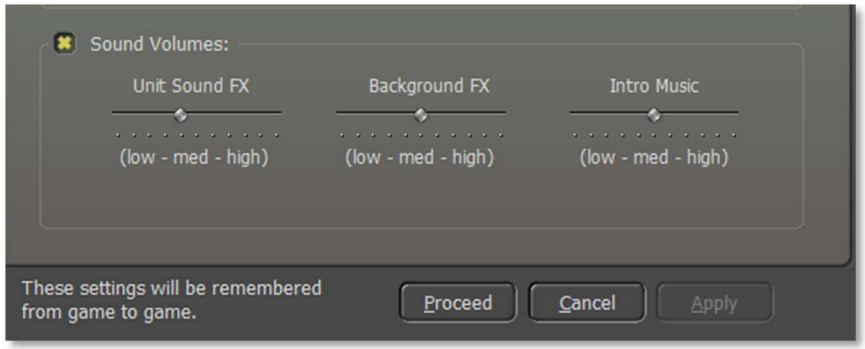
Some popup hints used yellow text on a yellow background. This did not work well and has been corrected.

3.6 Quality of Life Features

These are feature additions or changes to make playing the game easier on the player.

3.6.1 Mute All Sounds

The ability to mute all sound effects while preserving volume settings. We added a Disable All SFX checkbox to the User Preferences dialog. This new checkbox works like the existing Ctrl-Q (blanket Quiet Sound FX) but does not force the player to zero out and, therefore, lose the three respective volume levels. The state of Ctrl-Q is now saved to the flashpoint.ini file and used for the next game. This makes it easier to set and keep the various relative volume controls and toggle them on and off as a group more easily.



3.6.2 Escape Key Use

The "Escape" key now closes these additional dialogs if they have the user focus:

- Dashboard
- SU Inspector

- Radio Log
- SOP Manager
- Off Map Assets

The dialog must have a Windows focus for the Escape keypress to work. For example, If the Dashboard is up but the player has clicked on the main map, then the map has the focus and not the Dashboard. An Escape keypress in this case will be ignored.

4 Known Issues

The following items are known issues that will be addressed in a near-term release.

- The team is still looking into units that fail to shoot spotted targets at close ranges when engagement/kill probabilities are very low. Some improvements have been made in this area and we are also looking at ways to better inform the player as to why shooting may not be happening or is ineffective. In a number of cases units with depleted or small number of subunits in good cover and concealment are just hard to spot if they are not moving or shooting. This is all a highly complex area of the code with a large number of dynamic factors.
- In the scenario editor, if you delete one or more units that have been renamed earlier in the session then the game is likely to crash.
- On rare occasions, FoW settings do not use the settings received from the PBEM++ server.

5 If You See Something Odd…

If you think you are seeing strange behavior, please let us know in the forum (Tech Support) and please get us a save game (.SAV and .SAV.BLR files) to review with your observations. These really help us diagnose any issue in the game code.

6 Finally

Please enjoy the game. The OTS team has worked on it for many years and hopes that you have as much fun with it as we have. Development on both the game engine and the content is going to continue for years yet.

- ***The OTS Team***

7 Flashpoint Campaigns Credits

7.1 On Target Simulations Team

- Founder and President: **Robert "Ironman" Crandall**
- Data, Programming, Graphics, and Sound: **Jim "Cap'n Darwin" Snyder**
- Programming, Data, Models, and Research: **Jeff "Iron Mike" Sugden**
- Lead Programmer, Map Master, Programmer, AI, and Graphics: **William van der Sterren**
- Quality Czar and Testing Lead: **Charles "The Whip" Belva**
- Programming: **Kevin "SgtZDog" Zemon, Will Jackson, Alex Kriesel**
- Testing: **Tomasz Niedzinski**
- Scenario and Campaign Design Lead: **Joao Lima**

7.2 Cold War Contributors/Testers

- Alexander "Stimpak" Schwarz, Bryan "Tazak" Jones, David "22sec" Whitt, Mike "MikeJ19" Johnstone, Jurrie van der Zwaan, John "JohnO" Osborne, Jorgen "Jotte" Torgersson, Jo van der Pluym, Scott "WABAC" Gibbs and Steve "Mad Russian" Overton

7.3 Cold War Beta Testers

- Alexander "Lomo7j" Shestakov, Bas "Baskaatje" Kreuger, Calvin Breaker, ||CptMiller||, Craig "CTCharger" Truesdell, Dario Miroli, Dave Duckett, David "ultradave" Anderson, Don "Dovs" Lazov, Doug Miller, Durkik "gucciflocka97" Koth, Eemeli "Kurrestan" Sorri, Eric Estes, Exsonic01, Gary Bezant, Gary Heintz, Harry "harry_vdk" van der Kooij, Henry Simpson, Howard Rigg, Hoyt Burrass, Ian Strauss, Jack Herling, James Cleeter, Jing "cristianwj" Wang, Jonas Solberg, Jonathan (Yogdog) Brown, Justin Wonderlick, Kamyar Ashfar, Marc Bellizzi, MadGuard, Mark "nelmsm" Nelms, Maxime Lemieux, Nefron, Panta "Panta_slith" Astiazaran, Patrick Walker, PullG, Reto "rgeiger" Geiger, Richard "The Plodder" Lloyd, Ringtailhawk, Robert "rsallen64" Allen, Searry, Shannon "ObfuscatedJava" Morgan, Stas "StasSche" Schebetov, Steve (CV90) Lohr, TarkError, Terry Barnes, Todd "sfbaytf" Fong, Todd Bergquist, Tommi "Tomcatter" Saarainen, Tyler "daddywarlord" Knapp, Ai "Xavier Jot" Zhang

7.4 Matrix Production Manager

- **Erik Rutins** – The man behind the curtain keeping us on task!

OTS on the Web

Matrix Games Forum: https://www.matrixgames.com/forums/viewforum.php?f=10149

Check Us Out on Steam: https://store.steampowered.com/app/2366530/Flashpoint_Campaigns_Southern_Storm/

Check Us Out on Discord: https://discord.com/channels/911711314051739659/911711314257248331

OTS Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/ontargetsimulations

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