ARG Hunt™

Expeditionary Warfare Training Group Atlantic (EWTGLANT) had an USMC Information training game—*EAB Hunt™*—for its deploying Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs), but lacked a companion game for its amphibious ready groups (ARGs). Hence, EWTGLANT asked CNA to create a version of *EAB Hunt* for ARGs—*ARG Hunt™*. EWTGLANT also requested that *ARG Hunt™* increase ARG-MEU integration and that *ARG Hunt™* should be playable in tandem with *EAB Hunt™*.

An expeditionary information warfare training game

ARG Hunt™ provides Navy information warfare training in an expeditionary setting to Sailors and Marines. The 38th Commandant of the Marine Corps' Planning Guidance raised the specter of adversaries' and competitors' long-range precision fires threating MEUs and the ARGs they embark, highlighting the importance of the "hider-finder" battle. **Every Marine and Sailor has a role in winning the hider-finder battle, ensuring their survivability and continued lethality**. *ARG Hunt™* is one means by which to increase this knowledge for Sailors and Marines.

ARG Hunt™ helps Sailors, Marines, and other players learn how their actions—*in the material world*—cast shadows into the information environment, yielding potential consequences in a hider-finder or reconnaissance counter-reconnaissance battle.

Translating actions into the information environment

ARG Hunt™ **allows players to explore the shadows cast by their actions in the information environment** by stylizing the information environment into seven subdomains—human intelligence (HUMINT), open source, imagery, signals, commercial communications, "hearts minds," and other. Each subdomain is further divided into *detectable*, *locatable*, and *targetable*. These seven subdomains set the stage on which players can track intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) threats through game cards like the one to the left (#17) depicting an insider threat.

Blue players work to move these ISR threats away from their ARGs, while Red players work to move these ISR threats toward the ARGs. At the end of each turn, the collective ISR threats for each ARG are assessed and emissions cards—representing the emitting ARG(s)—are added to Red's common operational picture (COP). Red uses these emissions cards to target the ARGs and win, demonstrating to **Blue players that they are a track in Red's COP, and that their emissions enable Red to engage against them**.

Accounting for risk

ARG Hunt™ does not use dice; instead, risk is accounted for through the use of a Jenga® tower. **The Jenga tower embodies cumulative risk, like that of risk to mission and or risk to force**. At the start of the game, the Jenga tower is short and stable: risk to mission/force is in the green. As the game progresses, the tower grows and becomes less stable: risk to mission/force moves rightward into yellow. As the tower begins to grow taller still, wobbling frequently, risk to mission/force enters the red.

Once the Jenga tower inevitably falls, the game is not lost, but there is a consequence that players must overcome on their path toward victory.

The larger learning point with the Jenga tower is how **players respond to the physical embodiment of risk and their own visceral reaction to it**.
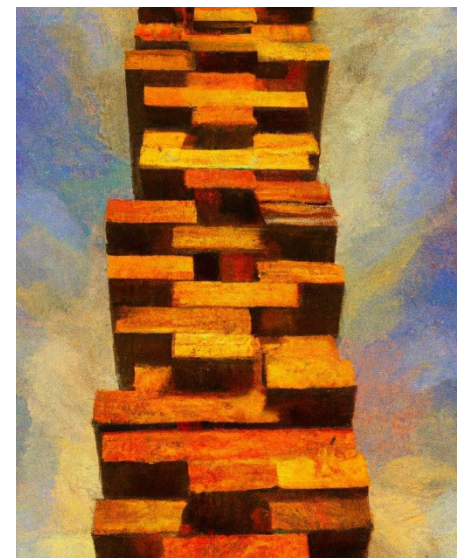
The information environment

ARG Hunt™ is played without a typical map. Instead, **the "map" is of the information environment**. In *ARG Hunt™,* players are given command of three (types of) ARGs. Discs representing each are placed in the center of one of the information environment's concentric circles (shown below). Encounters are placed and moved in the three rings surrounding each ARG.
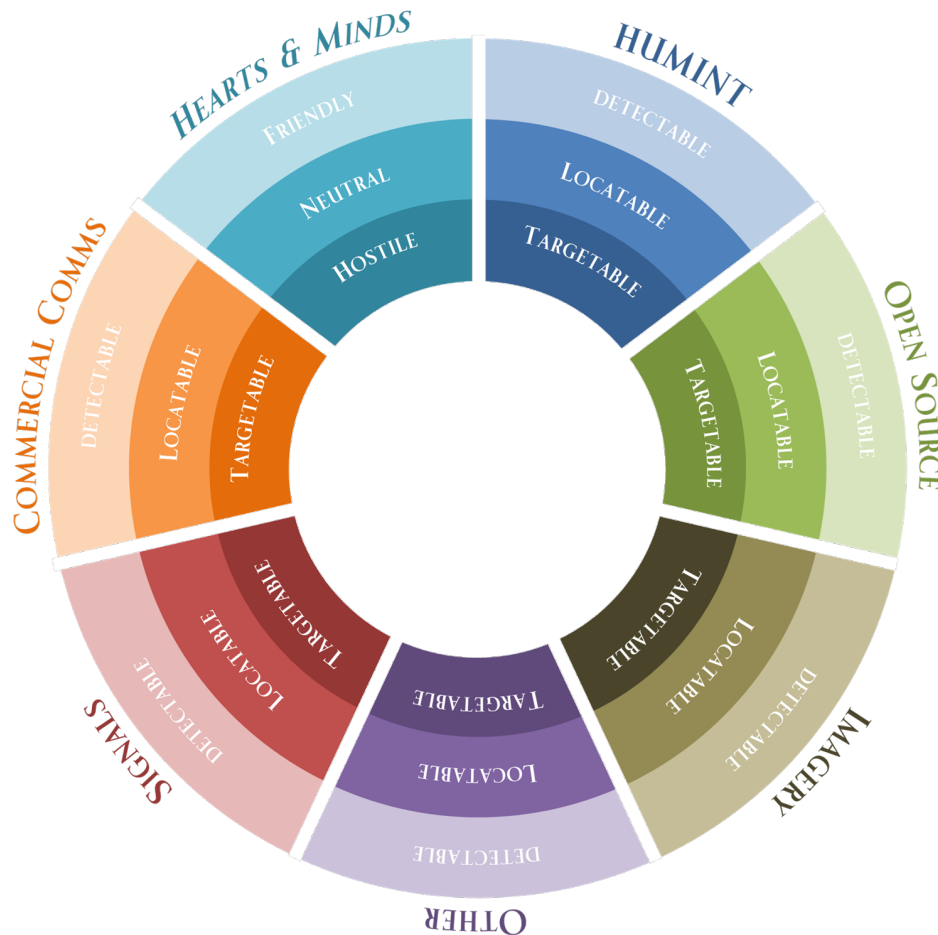
Gameplay

ARG Hunt™ is played by two sides, with a neutral facilitator present. The accompanying *Handbook* is designed to instruct anyone on how to run *ARG Hunt™*. While the *Handbook* provides a basic means to adjudicate players moves, the facilitator adds narrative, reinforcing learning objectives. The facilitator is also able to account for more advanced moves, taking play to a deeper level.

Four scenarios, each lasting about two hours, are included in the *Handbook*, but through alternating the starting ARGs and encounters these four scenarios provide many more options for exploring how actions in the material world cast shadows into the information environment. **Because everyone's role is keeping an ARG hidden, *ARG Hunt™* is a game anyone should play.**

For more information about this study, please contact

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