ART OF COMMAND™
TACTICAL DECISION GAME 0
Valley Pursuit vs. Valley Stand
Print-and-Play Card Packet

Introduction
TDG 0 is a compact, two-player command exercise built around simultaneous decision-making. Each player assumes the role of an opposing commander, assesses an uncertain situation and selects one of three possible actions. Neither player knows what the other will choose. The interaction of those decisions determines the resulting conditions and provides a starting point for discussion.
The identity of the historical battle is deliberately masked on the front of the cards. Players encounter the command problem before learning what actually happened. The historical setting and outcome should be revealed only after both commanders have committed to their decisions.

Packet Contents
Page 1: Instructions
Pages 2–11: 5×7-inch format for facilitated play and discussion
Pages 12–21: Standard trading-card format for portable play
Page 22: Legal and use notice
Each format includes five double-sided cards. Each card number is printed at the bottom of the card. Card 0A is for one commander. Card 0B is for the other commander. The other three cards (0C, 0D, 0E) contain the results matrix/instructions and additional information.
Both formats contain the same material, with trading-card text edited to fit the smaller size.
Print only the format you intend to use.

Printing and Preparation
Select either pages **2–11** or pages **12–21**.
Print at **Actual Size** or **100% scale**. Do not select “Fit to Page.”
The trading-card files include bleed around the standard 2.5 × 3.5-inch finished card size. Trim to the intended card edges after printing.
Cardstock is recommended. Standard paper may also be used with card sleeves or a heavier backing.
Cut the cards along their outer edges.
Keep the two commander cards (0A and 0B) on their front sides until the commanders make their decisions.
The historical reveal appears within the card sequence (cards 0A and 0B backsides). For a fully blind experience, a facilitator or non-player should print and prepare the cards. Players should not examine later cards or reverse sides until directed.

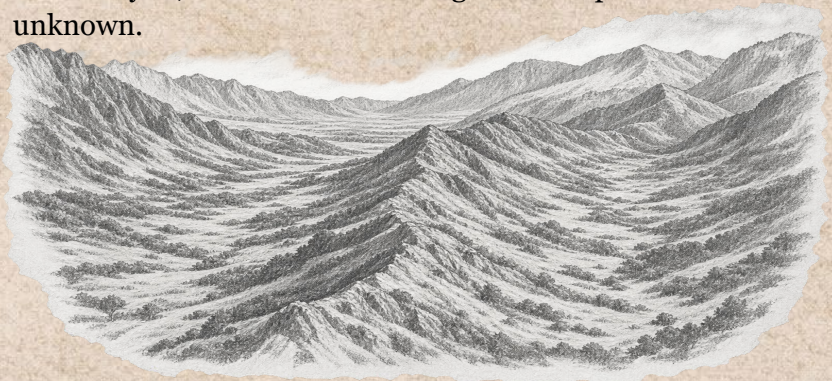
Playing the TDG
Give one player card 0A and the other player card 0B. Instruct both players not to examine the reverse side. Each commander reads the situation, considers the three available options and commits to a decision without revealing it. The players then reveal their choices simultaneously and follow the cards to determine the interaction, discuss the result and compare their decisions with history.

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Commander's Dilemma
The Valley Pursuit

SITUATION

You are in command of a pursuing force advancing through a narrowing mountain valley. Enemy forces are retreating ahead of you, but their exact strength and disposition are unknown.



The terrain constrains movement. Steep, forested slopes rise on both sides, limiting visibility and restricting maneuver. The valley ahead narrows further into a confined pass.

Your forces are extended from rapid movement. Communication with your rear elements is delayed. You must decide how aggressively to continue the pursuit.

DECISION

A. Press the pursuit aggressively into the narrowing valley

B. Pause to consolidate and regain control of your force

C. Advance cautiously with scouts and reserves ready

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

You face a situation similar to the Battle of Nu‘uanu (1795), where Kamehameha I pursued a retreating force into a narrowing valley on O‘ahu. The terrain funneled the enemy toward the Pali cliffs, limiting their ability to maneuver or escape.

Decisions made during pursuit in constrained terrain can rapidly determine the outcome. Aggressive action may lead to decisive victory, but also increases risk if control is lost or the enemy turns to resist.

POTENTIAL OUTCOMES

A. Aggressive Pursuit
Maintains pressure and may collapse the enemy quickly, but risks overextension and loss of control in restricted terrain.

B. Consolidation
Improves cohesion and command and control, but may allow the enemy time to escape or reorganize.

C. Cautious Advance
Balances tempo and control, but may sacrifice initiative and reduce the chance for decisive results.

COMMAND INSIGHT

Pursuit is not simply a continuation of success. As terrain constrains movement and information becomes uncertain, the commander must balance speed, control and risk. The decisive moment often occurs not when the enemy breaks, but when the environment begins to shape what is possible.

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Commander's Dilemma
The Valley Stand

SITUATION

You command a defending force holding high ground at the end of a mountain valley. Enemy forces are advancing toward you after breaking through your forward elements, but their exact strength and disposition are unknown.



The terrain restricts movement. Steep, forested slopes rise on both sides, channeling movement into the valley below. The ground behind you offers little room to maneuver.

Your forces are steady but under mounting pressure. Withdrawal options are limited, and the enemy advance is gaining momentum. You must decide how to respond.

DECISION

A. Hold your position and receive the attack

B. Counterattack downslope to disrupt the enemy advance

C. Withdraw along the high ground to preserve your force

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

You face a situation similar to the Battle of Nuʻuanu (1795), where the Oʻahu chief Kalanikūpule defended against the advancing forces of Kamehameha I. Driven back into a narrowing valley, his warriors were compressed by the terrain toward the Pali cliffs, where maneuver and escape became increasingly difficult. Decisions made under pressure in constrained terrain can rapidly determine the outcome. Aggressive action may lead to decisive results, but increases risk if control is lost or resistance stiffens.

POTENTIAL OUTCOMES

A. Hold the Heights
Maintains a strong position and forces an uphill attack, but risks collapse if the line is penetrated.

B. Counterattack Downslope
Disrupts enemy momentum and seizes initiative, but sacrifices terrain advantage and risks disorder.

C. Withdraw Along the Ridge
Preserves combat power and creates space, but yields key terrain and risks loss of cohesion under pressure.

COMMAND INSIGHT

Strong positions can become traps when they lack depth. As pressure builds in confined terrain, the commander must balance holding ground against preserving the force. The decisive moment often comes when freedom of action disappears.

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Decision Matrix
Valley Pursuit vs. Valley Stand

Valley Stand (0B) ➡ Valley Pursuit (0A) ⬇	**A** Hold Position	**B** Counterattack	**C** Withdraw
A **Aggressive Pursuit**	Aggressive pursuit collides with prepared resistance. Initiative remains with attacker, but disruption grows	Both commit aggressively. Disorder escalates as attack stalls and Kalanikūpule gains initiative	Kamehameha maintains pressure as Kalanikūpule withdraws. Risk of overextension grows
B **Consolidate Control**	Kamehameha consolidates while Kalanikūpule holds position. Tempo slows as both sides restore cohesion	Counterattack strikes before consolidation is complete. Initiative shifts as disorder grows in confined terrain	Kamehameha consolidates as Kalanikūpule withdraws. Opportunity for immediate decisive combat diminishes
C **Cautious Advance**	Kamehameha advances cautiously against prepared defenses. Terrain and uncertainty shape decisions	Kamehameha advances cautiously as Kalanikūpule counterattacks aggressively. Initiative fluctuates	Kamehameha advances cautiously as Kalanikūpule withdraws. Pressure persists without decisive engagement

How to Use This TDG

1. SET THE SCENE

- Players read Valley Pursuit (TDG 0A) or Valley Stand (TDG 0B).
- Each selects Decision A, B or C within a set time (e.g., 30 seconds).

2. COMMIT TO A DECISION

- Choices are revealed simultaneously.
- No changes after commitment.

3. RESOLVE

- Use the Decision Matrix (TDG 0C) to identify the outcome.
- Read the corresponding result aloud.

4. REFLECT

- Review Command Insight (TDG 0D)
- Discuss:
  - What drove your decision?
  - What did you expect the enemy to do?
  - What risks did you accept?

5. HISTORICAL OUTCOME

- Review TDG 0E.
- Compare your decisions to the historical battle and discuss how uncertainty shaped events.

6. EXPLORE VARIATION (OPTIONAL)

- Replay with different choices.
- Compare outcomes and reasoning.

FACILITATOR NOTES

- Keep decisions time-constrained
- Focus discussion on reasoning, not just the outcome
- There is no single correct answer
- Emphasize uncertainty and trade-offs
- Add decision cycles for indecisive results

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Command Insight
The Decisive Moment

SITUATIONAL SYNTHESIS

In the Valley Pursuit and the Valley Stand, both commanders face the same reality from different positions.

Uncertainty increases as terrain constrains movement and information degrades.

One must decide how fast to act. The other must decide how long to hold.

CORE INSIGHT

The decisive moment is not when the enemy breaks.

It is when freedom of action begins to disappear.

EXPANDED INSIGHT

As pressure builds in constrained terrain, options narrow rapidly.

Momentum, uncertainty and the environment combine to shape what is possible and no longer possible.

The commander's challenge is to recognize this shift before it becomes irreversible.

REFLECT

- What did you believe was happening on the battlefield?
- What assumptions drove your decision?
- When did you think the decisive moment would occur?
- What risks were you most willing to accept?

DISCUSS

- How did your decision compare to your opponent's?
- What did you expect them to do?
- Where did your perception and reality converge or diverge?

FACILITATOR NOTES

- Keep discussion focused on why, not just the outcome
- Highlight differences in perception and timing
- Reinforce uncertainty as the central condition
- There is no single correct answer

COMMAND PRINCIPLE

Command is exercised before outcomes are known

It is shaped by how the commander interprets uncertainty and acts within it

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Historical Outcome
The Turning Point

HISTORICAL OUTCOME

At Nuʻuanu, Kalanikūpule's forces withdrew northward through increasingly restrictive terrain as Kamehameha's army maintained pressure across the valley approaches. The narrowing landscape limited maneuver, disrupted cohesion and reduced opportunities to reorganize or escape.

As the pursuit intensified near the Pali cliffs, portions of the defending force collapsed under pressure while others attempted to flee over dangerous terrain. Kamehameha emerged from the battle with control of Oʻahu and increased momentum toward the unification of the Hawaiian Islands.

BATTLEFIELD CONSEQUENCES

Nuʻuanu demonstrated how pursuit, terrain, exhaustion, fear and momentum could combine to shape battlefield outcomes long before all participants understood the scale of the unfolding collapse.

The battle reflected not only tactical success, but also the cumulative effects of leadership, preparation, logistics, morale and sustained operational pressure across the wider campaign.

CAMPAIGN SIGNIFICANCE

The Battle of Nuʻuanu became one of the most remembered conflicts in Hawaiian history and marked a major turning point in Kamehameha's rise to power. Yet the campaign was neither simple nor inevitable.

Battles are often remembered through the perspective of the victors, while uncertainty, friction and human cost remain difficult to fully reconstruct afterward.

HISTORICAL REFLECTION

• How closely did your decisions resemble the historical commanders?
• When did freedom of action begin to disappear?
• Did momentum become self-sustaining during the pursuit?
• How did terrain shape both perception and opportunity?

CONTINUING QUESTIONS

• Could Kalanikūpule have preserved cohesion by withdrawing earlier?
• At what point did the pursuit become an irreversible collapse?
• Did terrain create opportunity, or merely expose existing weakness?
• How did fear, exhaustion and uncertainty shape battlefield behavior?

ENDURING INSIGHT

The decisive moment is often recognized only in hindsight.

Commanders must act while information remains incomplete, options are narrowing and consequences are still unfolding.

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Commander's Dilemma
The Valley Pursuit

SITUATION

You are in command of a pursuing force advancing through a narrowing mountain valley. Enemy forces are retreating ahead of you, but their exact strength and disposition are unknown.



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DECISION

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HISTORICAL CONTEXT

You face a situation similar to the Battle of Nu‘uanu (1795), where Kamehameha I pursued a retreating force into a narrowing valley on O‘ahu. The terrain funneled the enemy toward the Pali cliffs, limiting their ability to maneuver or escape.

Decisions made during pursuit in constrained terrain can rapidly determine the outcome. Aggressive action may lead to decisive victory, but also increases risk if control is lost or the enemy turns to resist.

POTENTIAL OUTCOMES

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Balances tempo and control, but may sacrifice initiative and reduce the chance for decisive results.

COMMAND INSIGHT

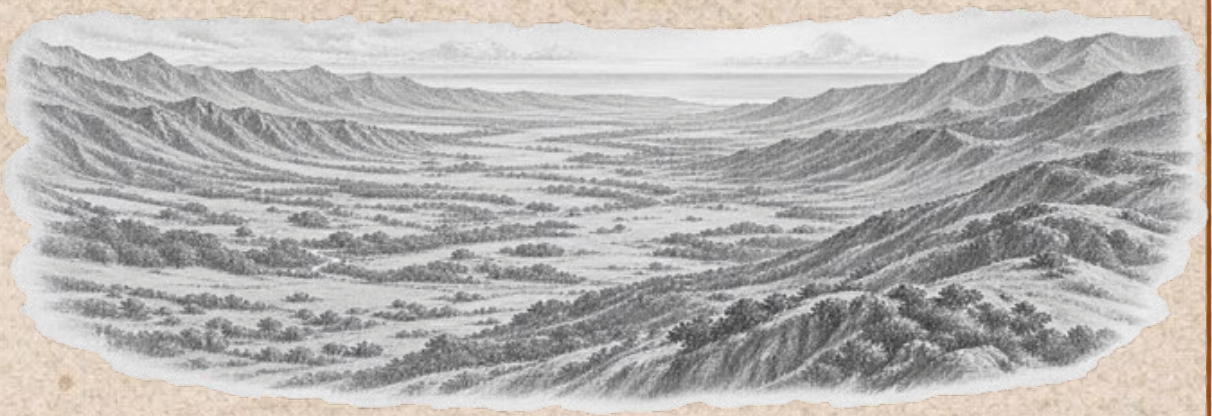
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Commander's Dilemma
The Valley Stand

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You command a defending force holding high ground at the end of a mountain valley. Enemy forces are advancing toward you after breaking through your forward elements, but their exact strength and disposition are unknown.



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DECISION

A. Hold your position and receive the attack

B. Counterattack downslope to disrupt the enemy advance

C. Withdraw along the high ground to preserve your force

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

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How to Use This TDG

1. SET THE SCENE

Players read TDG 0A (attacker) and TDG 0B (defender).
Each selects A, B or C within a set time (e.g., 30 seconds).

2. COMMIT TO A DECISION

Choices are revealed simultaneously.
No changes after commitment.

3. RESOLVE

Use the Decision Matrix (TDG 0C) to identify the outcome.
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Review TDG 0D (Command Insight).
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6. EXPLORE VARIATION (OPTIONAL)

Replay with different choices.
Compare outcomes and decision logic.

FACILITATOR NOTES

- Keep decisions time-constrained.
- Focus discussion on *reasoning*, not just the outcome.
- There is no single correct answer.
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