✦ STARFALL WORKS

Wargame Counter Creator

User Manual - Version 1.6

Forged from Myth. Written in Starlight.

A free browser-based tool for designing, organizing and printing traditional wargame counters.

countercreator.starfallworks.com

starfallworks.com

About this guide: This manual describes the current Starfall Works Wargame Counter Creator 1.6 interface and production workflows. It is intended for both first-time users and experienced designers preparing print-ready counter sheets.

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1. Quick Start

If you want to make your first counter without learning every option first, use this workflow:

1. Open the Counter Designer tab.
2. Choose a template and counter size.
3. Enter the unit name and any numeric values.
4. Choose a traditional silhouette, import your own symbol or select NATO / APP-6.
5. Set colors and font sizes as needed.
6. Duplicate the counter to create similar units quickly.
7. Set Quantity for each design.
8. Open Sheet Designer and review the page layout.
9. Use Print / PDF for normal sheets, General Double-Sided PDF for duplex-ready pages or Superior POD PDF for manufacturer-specific press sheets.
10. Use Save Project before finishing so you can return to the design later.

Best practice: Treat the JSON project file as your master working file. CSV is excellent for bulk editing, but the JSON project preserves the complete project state and imported artwork.

Guides in the preview

Guide	Meaning
Solid counter border	Finished cut edge
Dashed inner line	Safe area for text and important artwork
Outer halo / bleed guide	Artwork area that may extend beyond the cut edge to avoid white edges after trimming

2. Workspace Overview

The application has two main workspaces:

Workspace	Purpose
Counter Designer	Create and edit individual counter designs, front and back faces, symbols, text and styling.
Sheet Designer	Lay out completed counters on printable pages or manufacturer-specific Superior POD sheets.

Top toolbar

Control	Use

New	Start a fresh project.
Save Project	Download the complete project as JSON.
Export CSV	Export front-face counter data for spreadsheet editing.
Import CSV	Apply spreadsheet changes back to existing counters.
Load Project	Open a saved JSON project.
General Double-Sided PDF	Create duplex-ready front/back PDF pages.
Superior POD PDF	Create manufacturer-specific production sheets.
Print / PDF	Open the normal browser print workflow for sheet output.

3. Counter Designer Basics

Counter size and quantity

Supported nominal sizes are 1/2 inch, 5/8 inch, 3/4 inch and 1 inch. Quantity controls how many copies of that design are placed in production output. Quantity can range from 1 to 999.

Core fields

- Background color - the main counter face color.
- Border color - the finished counter edge.
- Text color - the main label color.
- Silhouette color - independent color for traditional, imported and NATO symbols.
- Label font size - scales names, labels and information text from 50% to 200%.
- Number font size - independently scales numeric values from 50% to 200%.
- Bleed - controls how far printable artwork extends beyond the finished edge.
- Safe inset - moves important content farther from the trim edge.

Background stripe

A vertical or horizontal stripe can be placed behind the counter artwork. Choose the stripe color and position (start, center or end). This is useful for nationality, formation, status or scenario coding without changing the main background color.

4. Counter Templates

Classic

Classic is the default traditional wargame layout. It uses a unit name at the top, central symbol, optional unit type and three bottom values. The bottom fields are commonly used for attack, defense and movement, but they can contain any short value.

Six-Value

Six-Value adds optional top-left and top-right values while retaining three bottom values. It is useful when a design needs additional ratings such as range, morale, step, armor or firepower values.

Information

Information is intended for markers rather than normal units. It provides centered information text and can optionally include a built-in or imported image. Typical uses include turn markers, weather, victory points, phase reminders and status markers.

Large Ship

Large Ship is designed for 3/4 inch and 1 inch naval counters. If selected on a smaller counter, the app keeps the design at least 3/4 inch. It supports two values at each top corner, a centered two-letter country code, a ship silhouette, ship name, one-letter identifier, a centered two-letter ship type and two values at each bottom corner.

Template philosophy: Templates intentionally keep layout decisions simple. Choose the template that best matches the information structure of the counter, then use silhouettes, NATO symbology and styling for visual flexibility.

5. Symbols, Imported Art and NATO / APP-6

Traditional silhouettes

- Infantry
- Tank
- Artillery
- Truck
- Fighter
- Bomber
- Destroyer
- Cruiser
- Battleship
- Carrier
- Submarine
- Helicopter

Traditional silhouettes use the independent Silhouette color control and work in previews and PDF output.

Imported symbols

Use Import Symbol to add PNG, JPG or SVG artwork. Imported images must be smaller than 2 MB. The app creates a mask so opaque background areas can be removed and the symbol can use the Silhouette color control. Imported artwork is stored inside the project JSON.

- Use simple, high-contrast silhouettes when possible.
- Transparent PNG or SVG files usually give the cleanest result.
- If an opaque image is imported, the app estimates the background from the corners and converts the artwork into a usable mask.
- Removing an imported symbol removes it from the project and clears it from counters that were using it.

NATO / APP-6 symbols

Choose NATO / APP-6 Symbol from the symbol selector to open the military symbology controls. The current hosted app bundles milsymbol 3.0.4 locally, so NATO rendering does not require an external CDN.

Control	Purpose
Search	Filter common friendly-name presets such as infantry, armor or artillery.
Category	Limit the list to Combat, Combat Support, Combat Service Support, Command & Control or Aviation.
Matches	Choose one of the matching common symbols.
SIDC	Enter a supported symbol identification code directly for symbols outside the preset list.
NATO unit size	Add a conventional unit-size/echelon mark above the symbol.
Show NATO frame	Display the NATO frame around the symbol.

NATO unit size / echelon marks

Selection	Displayed mark
Team / Crew	•
Squad / Detachment	••
Section	•••
Platoon / Troop	|
Company / Battery / Squadron	||

Battalion / Squadron	|||
Regiment / Group	|X|
Brigade	X
Division	XX
Corps	XXX
Army	XXXX
Army Group / Front	XXXXX

Compact counters: On 1/2 inch counters, text, the NATO frame and the echelon share very limited space. Version 1.6 includes compact-safe positioning and improved separation between echelon marks and the NATO symbol.

6. Two-Sided Counters

Enable Two-sided counter when the back needs real artwork or values rather than a blank/status back. Front and Back buttons switch which face is being edited.

11. Design the front normally.
12. Enable Two-sided counter.
13. Use Copy Front to Back if the back is similar to the front.
14. Select Back and change any values, colors, symbols or text.
15. Return to Front at any time to continue editing the first face.

Front and back share physical geometry so the finished counter remains aligned. The two faces may otherwise use different artwork and values.

One-sided counters: When a one-sided counter is used in two-sided production output, the tool creates the appropriate simple back treatment rather than requiring a separate back design.

7. Visual Styling and Number Controls

Number styling

Each numeric position can have its own text color. Numeric positions also support an optional highlight with an independent highlight color. This is useful for emphasizing reduced values, special capabilities or scenario-specific ratings.

Damage explosion

Enable Damage explosion to place an explosion graphic behind the selected symbol. The explosion color is independent from the silhouette color. The symbol remains in the foreground.

Font sizing

Label font size and Number font size are separate controls. This allows compact unit labels without sacrificing readable combat values, or large labels on information markers without increasing numeric fields.

Safe area: If text approaches the dashed safe-area line, reduce the relevant font size or increase Safe inset. Keeping important content inside the safe area is especially important for physical trimming.

8. Managing Counters and Quantities

- Add (+) - create another counter design.
- Duplicate - copy the selected counter, useful for unit series with similar styling.
- Delete - remove the selected counter.
- Move Up / Move Down - change production order.
- Quantity - specify how many copies of the design should be produced.

Counter order is significant: normal sheets, General PDF and Superior POD automatic placement use the counter-list order with quantities expanded after ordering.

9. Saving, Loading and CSV Bulk Editing

Save Project / Load Project

Save Project downloads a JSON file containing the project state, counter designs, front/back data, imported symbols and production settings. Load Project restores that project later.

CSV workflow

CSV is intended for bulk editing of existing counters in Excel, Google Sheets or another spreadsheet application.

16. Save the JSON project first as a backup.
17. Click Export CSV.
18. Open the CSV in your spreadsheet tool.
19. Edit the desired fields.
20. Save/export the file as CSV.
21. Return to Counter Creator and choose Import CSV.

How CSV matching works

Rows are matched to existing counters using Counter Number (1-based project order). CSV import updates existing counters; it is not a counter-creation workflow.

- Only columns present in the CSV are modified.
- Blank values in present text/value columns may clear those values.
- Supported counter-size forms include 1/2, 5/8, 3/4 and 1, as fractions or decimals.
- Color fields accept #RGB or #RRGGBB.

- Boolean fields accept common forms such as Yes/No, True/False and 1/0.
- CSV export/import includes NATO SIDC, NATO Unit Size, NATO Frame and damage-explosion fields.

Important: The CSV workflow primarily represents front-face data. Preserve the JSON project as the authoritative source when using independently designed back faces.

10. Sheet Designer

Sheet Designer arranges counter quantities onto printable pages. Use it to review page capacity, margins, gutters and cutting guides before producing output.

Setting	Options / purpose
Paper	US Letter or A4
Orientation	Portrait or Landscape
Margin	0.25, 0.375 or 0.50 inch
Gutter	None, 1/32, 1/16 or 1/8 inch
Crop marks	Show cut-reference marks
Bleed guides	Show bleed reference guides
Superior POD counter size	5/8, 3/4 or 1 inch production geometry
Superior POD back	Automatic backs or repeat fronts on backs
Superior POD layout	Automatic order or Manual slot layout

The summary panel shows the number of counters, per-page capacity and page count for the current sheet configuration.

11. General Double-Sided PDF

General Double-Sided PDF creates a direct PDF rather than relying on the browser print dialog. It honors paper size, orientation, margins, gutters, counter order and quantities.

- Each front page is followed by the matching back page.
- Back positions are mirrored horizontally for duplex registration.
- True two-sided counters use the independently designed back face.
- One-sided counters receive a simple corresponding back treatment.
- PDF page dimensions use true physical dimensions, so counters can be printed at 100% / Actual Size.

Printing: When printing a direct PDF, use Actual Size or 100% scaling. Avoid Fit to Page, which changes physical counter dimensions.

12. Superior POD Production

Superior POD PDF is for manufacturer-specific press-sheet output. Choose the counter size first; only counters matching that production size are eligible for the selected sheet.

Counter size	Front capacity	Press-sheet layout
5/8 inch	176 fronts	18 x 12 inch, side-by-side front/back geometry
3/4 inch	126 fronts	12 x 18 inch, fronts above linked backs
1 inch	80 fronts	12 x 18 inch, fronts above linked backs

Automatic layout

Automatic counter order fills manufacturer slots using the current counter-list order and quantity. It is the fastest workflow when exact slot assignment is not important.

Manual slot layout

Manual slot layout exposes the manufacturer positions directly and allows each front slot to be assigned to a specific counter design. Linked back positions are shown automatically.

Planner control	Purpose
Fill from Counter Order	Seed the page using the current counter order.
Group by Color	Create a starting arrangement that tends to keep similar background treatments together.
Add POD Sheet	Add another production sheet.
Clear This Sheet	Remove assignments from the current sheet.
Remove This Sheet	Delete the current manual sheet.
Selected slot	Assign a counter design to the clicked front position.
Clear Slot	Leave a selected production position blank.

Back modes

- Automatic backs - uses the true designed back for two-sided counters and the normal simple back treatment for one-sided counters.
- Repeat fronts on backs - places front artwork on the linked back position when that production method is desired.

Bleed behavior

Superior POD output extends counter background treatment into surrounding bleed territory. When adjacent counters share a color, the gap can become a continuous color field. When neighboring counters use different colors, each color extends toward the midpoint of the shared gap. POD output intentionally avoids adding dark divider lines between adjacent counters.

13. Printing Guidance

- Print direct PDFs at Actual Size / 100%.
- Disable browser headers and footers when using Browser Print / PDF.
- Use the safe-area guide for important text and symbols.
- Use bleed when background color should extend through the trim edge.
- Test one sheet before committing to a large print run.
- For duplex printing, verify the printer flip setting with a small test before printing all pages.
- For commercial production, confirm the manufacturer requirements before submitting files.

14. Troubleshooting and Tips

Issue	What to try
Text is too close to the edge	Reduce Label/Number font size or increase Safe inset.
Imported image appears as a box	Use transparent PNG/SVG if possible; re-import a cleaner silhouette if background detection is ambiguous.
NATO symbol not what you expected	Choose a preset first, then verify or edit the SIDC directly.
Echelon is crowded on a small counter	Reduce label size or use a larger counter when the design contains name + frame + echelon.
Back artwork is wrong	Confirm Two-sided is enabled and that you are editing the Back face, not Front.
CSV import changed the wrong design	Check Counter Number and current counter order before import.
PDF prints at the wrong physical size	Print at Actual Size / 100%, not Fit or Shrink.

POD manual layout is missing a counter	Check the usage summary for assigned vs required quantities and add/assign another slot if needed.

Recommended workflow for larger projects

22. Create one representative counter and establish your colors, font sizes and symbol style.
23. Duplicate it for units that share the same visual system.
24. Use CSV for high-volume value changes after the project structure is established.
25. Save JSON checkpoints before major bulk edits.
26. Review each counter size at realistic scale, especially 1/2 inch counters.
27. Use Sheet Designer to validate quantities and page count.
28. Export a small test PDF and print at 100%.
29. Only then generate the final production sheets.

Starfall Works

Wargame Counter Creator is a free Starfall Works tool for the tabletop gaming community.

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