

Battlefield 3

Single Player Encounter Design Comprehension

Battlefield 3 is the most recent installment in the Battlefield series, and it follows the story of Sergeant Blackburn of the USMC, and Dimitri “Dima” Mayakovsky, a GRU operative. Both men are trying to save Paris and New York City from a nuclear terrorist attack by a group called the PLR. In the campaign mode, the player takes on the role of several military personnel in various locations all over the world, focusing on Blackburn and Dima for the majority of gameplay. For the purposes of this task, I have chosen to add to/rewrite a portion of one of Dima's campaign missions called “Comrades”, which is set in the heart of Paris.

The mission “Comrades” begins with the player as Dima, and two other GRU operatives, Vladimir and Kiril, entering the EURONXT Paris Stock Exchange, where a nuclear weapon is being held by the PLR terrorist group. Despite heavy opposition, you eventually find the man carrying the nuke and engage in pursuit on foot through Paris. My encounter will replace part of the foot chase, as well as add a vehicle sequence wherein the bomb carrier hops into a van that the PLR had placed strategically down the road.

To keep up with the terrorists, you and your teammates quickly requisition the nearest vehicle, a police car. The player is in the rear passenger seat. As the vehicle sequence progresses, you have terrorists attacking you from the van you are chasing, as well as from behind as they approach using off road motorcycles and vans. The player must shoot the terrorists or disable their vehicles to pass this sequence. There are several scripted events, such as the rear window being shot out, and a quick time event where you must press the correct button to open your door to knock one of the terrorists off their motorcycle. This vehicle sequence doesn't last very long, about a minute at best, and ends when you enter a tunnel filled with civilian vehicles trying to evacuate the city. As you are almost out of the tunnel (about 100 yards from the exit), a terrorist launches an RPG from a van behind you. The RPG misses you and proceeds to make contact with a petroleum tanker truck just in front of the bomb carrier. The resulting explosion causes the tunnel to cave in, as well as your car and the bomb carrier's van to flip over, killing your teammate Vladimir in the process. As you crawl out of the car, you see the bomb carrier and some terrorists climbing out of the van and proceeding back the way you came from on foot. This is when the trapped sequence begins.

As you struggle to exit the overturned car, ears ringing and vision slightly blurred, one of the terrorists tries to approach the vehicle to shoot you. After a fast scripted sequence, you manage to pull out your sidearm. At this point the character has his sidearm drawn, but you must manually aim and shoot the aggressor from your upside down viewpoint in the car to end the scripted sequence. After successfully dispatching this enemy, you crawl out of the car and struggle to your feet, only to notice there are still terrorists shooting at you from the way you came. With bullets ricocheting off of nearby surfaces, you catch sight of the bomb carrier moving the direction from which you came. The bomb carrier is obviously wounded, and limping. The road ahead is distinctly blocked by burning debris, overturned cars, and the caved in tunnel. When you regain control of your character you must make your way to the other side of the overturned car to help pull your teammates out of the wreck. Another scripted sequence begins with the character pulling Vladimir out of the wreck first, and realizing he is dead, impaled by shrapnel from the explosion. Your character moves Vladimir's body up against the side of the car, and checks for signs of life before being advised to leave him and continue on by Kiril, who has managed to free himself by now. Kiril states that both of you must survive to make it out of this scenario alive, and instructs you to use the civilian vehicles for cover as you use bounding over-watch to advance. This means you must give Kiril cover while he moves up to the next cover position, and then he gives you cover as you move up to your next cover position, repeating until you advance far enough to move freely. The first cover placement will have a “move to” mission objective marker to indicate where the player is supposed to go to, but after the first it is up to the player to decide how to navigate the cover. You must also provide cover fire, taking out PLR forces in a timely fashion lest Kiril be shot and the mission failed. Since there are civilians trapped in the tunnel, you may also try to minimize civilian casualties by watching your fire and by taking out the terrorists as swiftly as possible, although the bomb carrier is the primary objective. Most civilians will stay in their vehicles, but a few are terrified and try to run for safety. Keeping all civilians alive could result in a “guardian angel” type

achievement. As you progress toward the other end of the tunnel, encountering many PLR forces along the way, including the RPG team that caved the tunnel in, you see the bomb carrier enter a service hallway. Pursuing the target at all costs, you and Kiril make your way to the service hallway. You breach the door into the hallway, entering first, and engaging in melee combat as a terrorist tries to get the jump on you from the other side of the door. After dispatching the enemy using quick time events, you have a brief conversation with Kiril about which way the bomb carrier went. He notices blood on the ground leading toward the direction of the exploded oil tanker, and you follow it. There are small nooks and large spools of thick wire every so often on your way down this hallway, which you may use to take cover from enemy fire. Rushing down the hallway will most likely end up in death, but you must also make haste as the bomb carrier is getting away. Once you reach the end of the service hallway, you exit through some doors and stairs and continue your pursuit of the bomb carrier on foot, resuming the original foot chase scene in the game. This is the end of the trapped sequence.

Overall, this sequence, including the vehicle chase scene, shouldn't take more than 5 minutes. It is intended to be a fast paced, intense, action packed sequence. The player can dilly dally around, but the bomb carrier will get away after some time and the mission will result in a failure.