

Playing Damage Incorporated (DI) is a great way to experience real battle situations from a close perspective. Strategy is as essential in the game as it is in real life. But one must not forget that DI is a game; thus the strategies used are a blend of real army tactics with game interphase features. The most important of which is covering your back, or - as us computer geeks call it - save often...

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## Saving

Save often because when you lose, you start back from the last saved game, even if that is in a previous mission! Always save right at the beginning of each level using a distinct file name. Make it a habit to save as soon as you secure an area. Occasionally, save as a different file name in the same level, because there are 2 rare problems/bugs that can be encountered: (1) one of your teammates can get stuck completely somewhere or (2) some particular switches when clicked more than once can cause the level to get stuck. In both cases you may go ahead and keep saving for a while before realizing that your mission cannot be completed!

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In the three lower difficulty levels, you can save just anywhere. But in "WWII" and "Vietnam", you must place yourself inside one of the areas that appear purple on the map ("radio zones") in order to succeed saving. In these higher levels, try to get first to the closest saving area using the map; clear it and save. Always keep the closest purple area as your base. Launch an attack from there, kill some bad guys, then come back to save. Progress like this from one purple area to the next until you clear them all. Leave for the end all the remote areas.

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## Difficulty levels

When increasing the difficulty level, the following differences occur in the game:

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- enemy projectiles travel faster and do more
- enemies can sustain more damage
- more enemies are added
- some enemies are "upgraded" into harder (a green White Paladin may become a Blue one, for instance)

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Medkits and ammo number and placement, however, are unaffected by the difficulty level.

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## The weapons

The bayonet is not very useful, as it inflicts quite low damage. If you run low in ammo, or play the level "Mandatory Suicide" (where you start off with only a knife) you'll have no choice. The key is to run up to your targets and lunge forward with the knife while you're running. This way, the kinetic force from your running is added to the damage inflicted on your adversary! This run-stabbing takes practice to get used to, but can be quite handy.

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The pistol is a nice but light weapon. Don't miss the second Beretta in White Night Engagement 3, Part II. Two Berettas make a really good job loading the enemies with bullets in no time. They're also quite accurate. They take rather long to reload though. They are very useful for taking out turrets from far, when you're out of rifle ammo.

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The M-16A rifle is the best weapon of all! Unfortunately, you can't use two of them at the same time (the

second trigger launches grenades). It can kill enemies from far, beyond their firing range. It is also very accurate; when crouching, its precision is almost 100%! Its rapid fire gives no chance to the adversary to fire back or approach. Finally, it reloads faster than most weapons. On the other hand, the ammo is not as abundant, thus you must keep it for when it's really necessary! It is best used against turrets, minitanks and the strongest of enemies. Not to spoil against groups of easier ones though. For these cases, a machine-gun or two are preferable.

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The MP-5N machine-gun is a rapid shooter but with drawbacks: it has almost no precision or fire range and makes low damage.

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The shotgun is a weapon for which you're going to find plenty of ammo. It inflicts a lot of damage but takes very long to reload, leaving you unprotected at this time. Sometimes it may be a good idea to fire the remaining 1-3 shells of each and let them reload before jumping in a "hot" area.

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The grenades are causing considerable damage and they have a very long range (adjusted with the "look up" / "look down" buttons). They bounce off walls, making it possible to attack enemies behind corners. Unfortunately, they don't seem to have a very realistic damage range. They cause a massacre where they explode but a couple of feet aside you get almost no effect. The same applies for the rockets (see below). Thus, you must be accurate when launching them and fast moving targets are hard to hit with.

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The flamethrower holds napalm canisters that last for very long! It's also fun seeing your opponent becoming a human torch while screaming! But it inflicts comparatively low damage, cuts your visibility and allows the enemy to shoot at you while he gets hit! It is particularly useful against blobs; back up running while you shoot at them. When dying from a flamethrower a blob doesn't explode!

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The rocket launcher (a.k.a. bazooka) is the heaviest of the DI weapons. It inflicts heavy damage and there is abundant ammo for it in late missions. It comes with spotting rounds that are to be used wisely. Since shooting a rocket shoves you backwards, it is impossible to tune your targeting after each launch. Instead, use 2-3 spotting rounds to target well, then launch. Picking the right team

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Selecting your teammates has certain consequences in the game. A "professional soldier" team, consisted of Frank, Aslag, Duke and Banzai will follow well your orders, stay at place and - most important - shoot carefully not harming each other or yourself.

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On the other hand, "psycho killers" like Carnage and Metal can get you out of desperate situations against superior enemy forces, but can also put you in lots of trouble with their wild shooting and disobedience.

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Try to always include in your team Frank and Aslag; protect them from death in order to have them available until the end of the game. The rest of your teammates are more expendable; just make sure that you have enough not to get short-handed. Frank and Aslag are great for fighting in narrow areas, as they are careful whom they shoot. They can also serve great as cover when you scout ahead.

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On the other hand, more aggressive teammates can be of big assistance when you fight numerous enemies in wide areas. Just stay away from their fire!

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Commanding your troops

A strategy that seems to work well in low difficulty levels is to ask the entire team to "Seek and Destroy", then try to keep up with them and aid them. It is a particularly good strategy because you get to see what's going on all the time and be able to call the team back if you discover an ambush.

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In upper levels however, this tactic may wear out your soldiers quite fast as they jump into every situation without thinking. In these cases you're better off to use the "fishing" strategy: Deploy your men in an area that is good for fighting, then move ahead letting yourself serve as a bait. As soon as enemies see you and start coming after you, move back and bring them to your team. It is preferable to crouch during all this sequence to allow your teammates to shoot over you.

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Use the map to your advantage! The map lets you see if enemies are behind a corner or inside a room. Unrealistic as this may seem, it can be extremely useful in the game. Be aware though that all non-team characters show up on the map as green squares: both the bad guys and the hostages. Thus, in hostage situations make a visual identification before shooting.

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When turning a corner or opening a room leading to an unexplored area, don't jump in; instead peek at the opening from the side, covering only a little angle and move progressively widening your room view, each time pointing to the newly seen angle. This is actually a standard army and SWAT strategy, called "Slice the pie".

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Be sure however to stop your team from following you when you do that. If you find out that things are too much for you to handle, you should have the chance to pull out rapidly. If you have teammates following you, they may block you and get you caught in a hot spot.

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You'll need people to cover you as you advance to an unexplored area. It is best to place 1 or 2 disciplined teammates (i.e. Frank or Aslag) behind you, then crouch ahead as a scout. Disciplined teammates will be careful not to shoot at you and are preferable when you're the front scout.

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When fighting enemies using exploding projectiles like grenades or rockets, don't leave your team as a bunch. Unfortunately there is no "spread" button in DI and trying to arrange them while under attack is usually too late. But if you're setting up an ambush for such enemies, deploy your team in such a way that a single grenade won't kill them all!

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Blobs appear in this game; they are part of the "Seekers of Desu". These guys are fast and run right up to you as soon as they spot you. To avoid them from catching up with you, you must RUN backwards while shooting at them. If you set up an ambush for them, make sure that your team has enough free space around it to kill them before they reach it. Don't place your team just around the corner where a blob can turn from! If the area is small and you have no other choice, switch to the flamethrower and roast them with it; in contrast to other ways of killing them, bursting into flames does not make them explode!

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Sometimes, in maze-like situations, your men may not be able to follow you anymore. In these cases, try "Come to me", instead of "Follow me". If this still doesn't work, you have one last chance: Set the position where you are as "Bravo", or "Alpha" or whatever, then ask them to go to that position. Surprisingly enough, where one doesn't work, the other often does! If all of the above fail, start moving towards them, turn a few corners and try again until something works.

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Crouching and side-stepping

Crouching is very important, as it increases significantly the accuracy of your weapons, while it makes it much more difficult for you to get hit. But it is not always easy to shoot with two weapons and turn around while crouching... That's why the button arrangement is of importance here: If you use a joystick, your good hand usually controls the movement and shoots the primary weapon. So, if you want to be able to use the secondary and crouch at the same time (with your other hand), make sure to arrange these two buttons next to each other! You can also use low benches or objects to your advantage; shoot, then crouch to reload in security.

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Side-stepping is also a very important defence, especially to dodge rockets and grenades. It is much faster to step aside than turn and run away. When facing such projectiles, have your hand ready over the side-step modifier. To achieve this, configure your keyboard in a way that this modifier key is close to the secondary fire and the crouch keys. You should have a finger on each when fighting and practice a little to gain reflexes.

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### Fighting the last battle

The last battle of the game is a very tough one. There are numerous ways to fight Jeremiah, and there is no way narrowing them down to a perfect one; they all have their strong and weak points. The easiest one is to order your men to attack him until they all die; then finish him off yourself. It is of course essential that you keep all your teammates with minimal damage until the final face-off. It will be preferable that you involve yourself in the first part of the mission more than usually, setting ambushes and following all the rules described above. This way, when the time comes to battle Jeremiah you will have many possibilities - and a much better chance!

### Conclusion

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War is won by strategy, and DI is a war game. It isn't easy to establish recipe strategies for DI; and that's where its beauty lays. There are so many things to do, so many possibilities. Whatever hints you're given here, you will have to make all the decisions in the game by yourself. You'll get all the credit for them - or pay the consequences...

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