

RAF_Roy 's OAW / EAW Frontline How To

(republished (4/2007) version of my old 2003 notes.. Due to advanced tools like the Target and Frontline editors made by MrJelly you can now make frontlines with little effort, but knowledge of the EAW frontlines and the way X,Y positions of the EAW World works is still very useful to know ;)

In this section I show the editing of "**Frntline.dat**" (*the EAW file that controls the "Frontlines" of EuropeanAirWar*) relative to making "**OAW-style Missions**"

Note: For this tutorial we will be using the new Graphical "**Frontline Generator Version 1.00**" utility by Alatrisme. This program works in Windows 98.

The "**Original Frontline Generator**" made by Dom (a Dos Utility) is also used.

Both Programs have the same name but do not be confused. Each has its uses and one doesn't replace the other (*currently*) for our purposes.

You will need the following things for the tutorial:

1. "**Frontline Generator Version 1.00**" utility by Alatrisme

Available from Alatrisme Add-ons page at Sandbagger's EAW Dispersal Site: frontgen.zip.

2.DOM'S "EDITING NOTES ON EAW TERRAIN AND AIRFIELD/GROUND TARGET FILES " and Utilities zip

(available at Sandbagger's EAW - LOST and FOUND page)

Which contains these files and more:

- "**Original Frontline Generator**" made by Dom (a Dos Utility)
- "**HillGmap.jpg**" Reference Map
- "**ABTGList.rtf**" Document
- **DOM's Dos utilities**; "**Convert.exe**" and **Vertcon.exe**
- Dom's **EAWK3.wdb Document** (** note; see below)

****3.** Instead of EAWK3.wdb it is easy to use my equivalent conversion; **EAWK3wdb.html** that will work in your browser. Available from my website.

4. A copy of the Default EAW **frntline.dat** and A copy of **OAW Mission 1.0 Final frntline.dat**

O.K. Let's Get Started!

-Unzip the program to a new empty folder.

-Now you need to place an original **frntline.dat** file into the folder.(For this tutorial use the default one from EAW and then later compare it to my **PAW Mission 1.0 Final** one).

-Start "**Frontline Generator Version 1.00**" utility by Alatrisme by double clicking it.

-Select "Open" Button.

-Select the **frntline.dat** and then "o.k."

-----(**Tech Note:** If you are using Windows 98 and get an error like: *"Runtime Error: 339; Comctl32.ocx not registered"* when you try to open frntline.dat just direct download this .zip: [Comctl32.zip](#) (Contains Comctl32.ocx Version 6.00.8105 For Windows 98) Then Unzip the needed file: Comctl32.ocx to the folder that "**Frontline Generator Version 1.00**" utility by Alatrisme is in.The Program will work fine now ;)-----

-You will see there are 2 windows created by the program when you open a frntline.dat.One for the editing and one showing graphically the lines that are Checked "Visible".

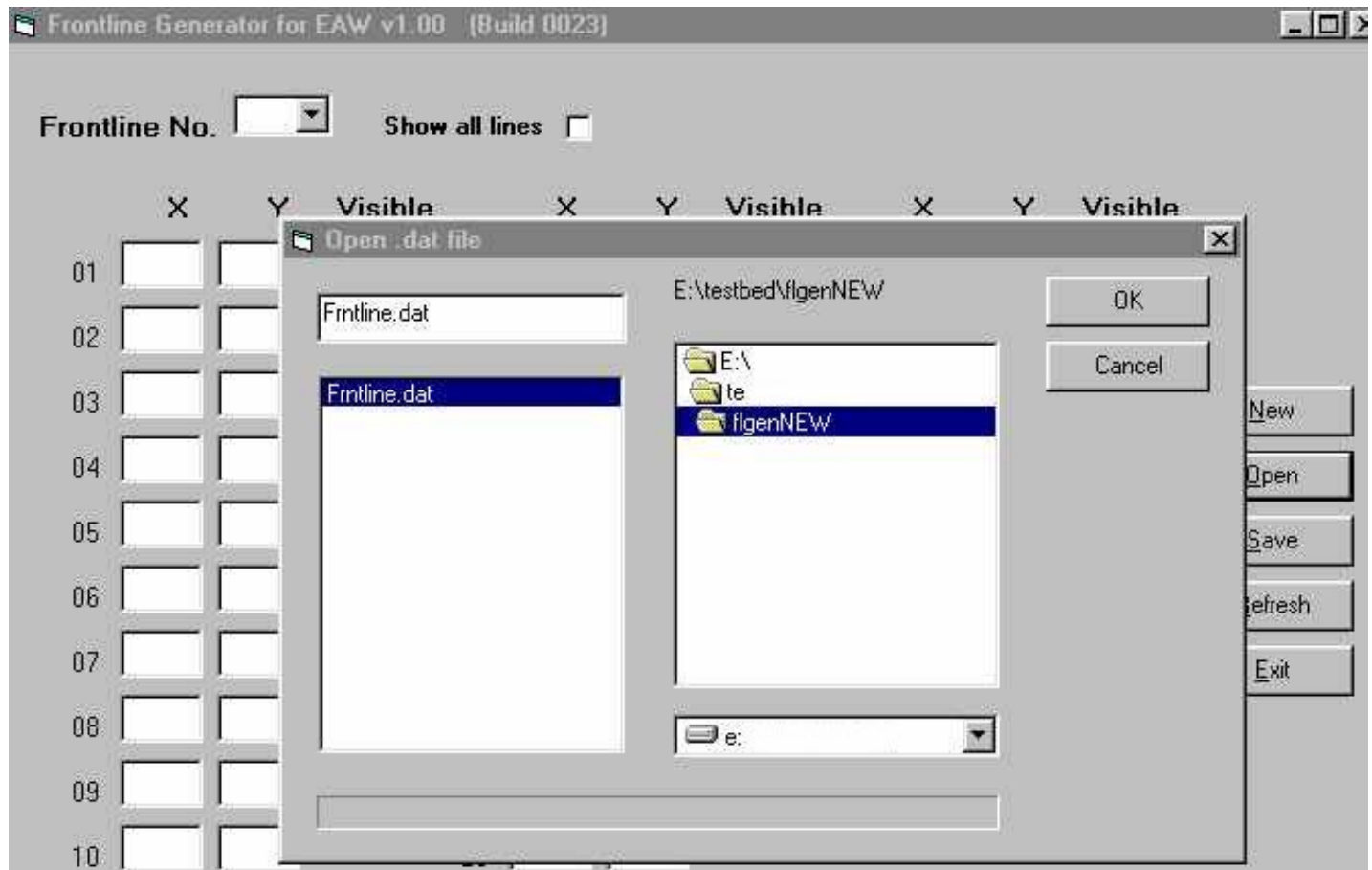
-Check all the boxes "Visible" .

-Push "Refresh" Button.*Note: You always have to push the refress button anytime you make change with the program to see it reflected in either window.*

-Now you can see the frontline shown in the other window.

Show here is the Program ready to open the selected **frntline.dat**

**ALTFLGopen.jpg*



Next we need to familiarize with the nature of the program and also **frntline.dat**: In the first window you will see the default **frntline.dat** will have the "Frontline No. **1**" box showing. And you will see 9 entries in this **frntline.dat**. These are 9 points this "**frntline no. 1**" intersects. The points specially are shown in the "**X**" and "**Y**" columns.

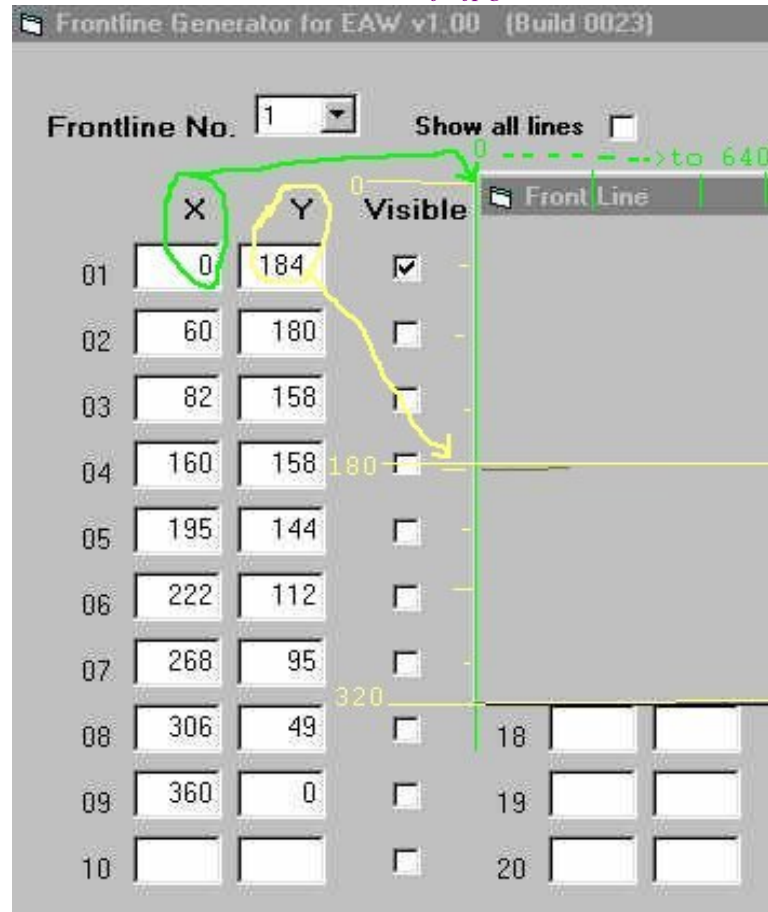
It is as if we are doing a "Paint by Numbers" puzzle or a Graph. The frontline will go from the first point to the next, and so on. There can be more than 9 points in a **Frontline No. _** but there **Must Be At Least 9 and no more than 29** for it to work (*according to Dom's notes, I believe*).

Each **frntline.dat** has 20 "**Frontline No. #**" areas for editing. These are shown by switching the "**Frontline No. _**" box (*And remember to push the "refress" button to see each one when you change the box*).

(The reason for these 20 "**Frontline No. #**" "blocks" is due to the way the data blocks in **frntline.dat** are arranged. Each area is used by EAW for a specific time period in campaigns.)

Shown: the Default **frntline.dat** loaded:

**ALTFLGDefl.jpg*

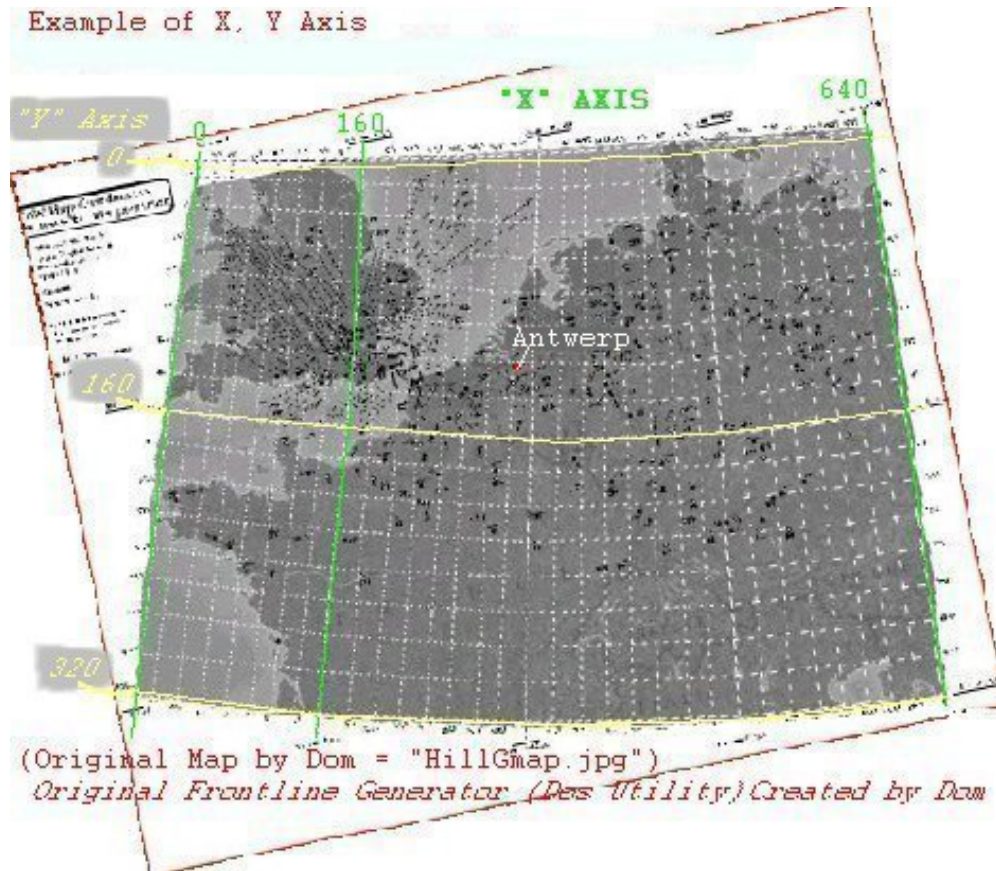


I've added some illustration of the Axis. The following picture also will help clarify the Axis and the relation to the EAW Map:

Shown: an edited image of 'Dom's "HillGmap.jpg" of the EAW World' :

**HillGSmall2.jpg*

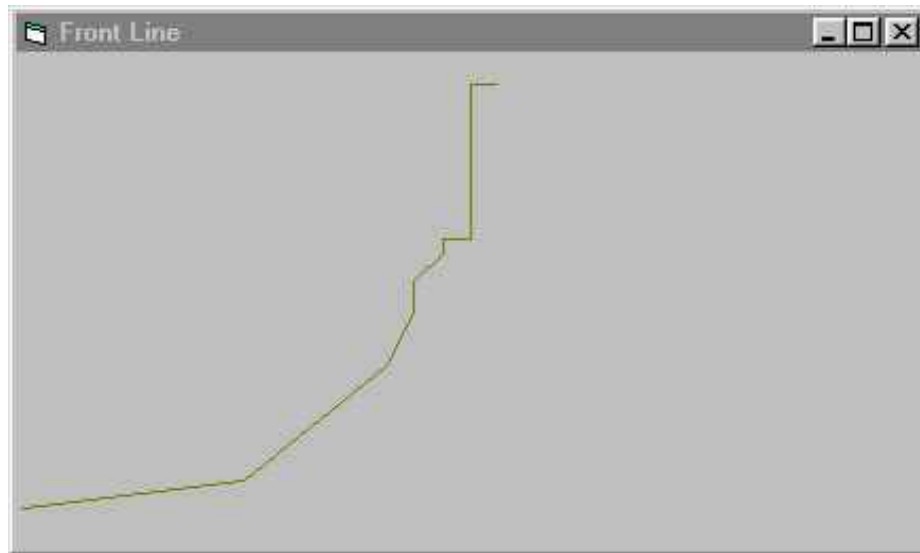
Example of X, Y Axis



The colored "X" / "Y" Axes illustrated clearly for the relation to the previous picture. Also helpful is that you can compare this to the Graphic window of the Program to see an approximation of the frontline to the EAW World.

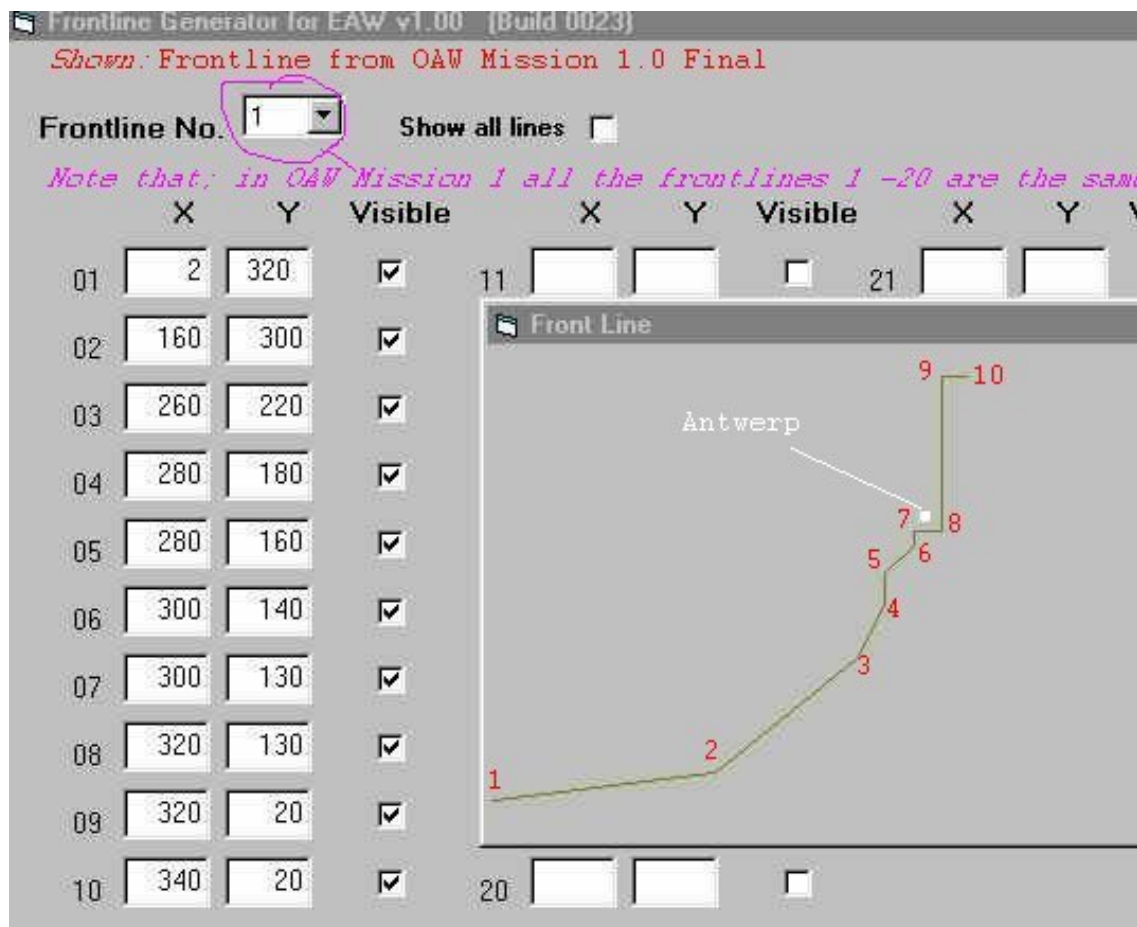
Comparing the above to the next showing my "OAW Mission 1" (hereafter referred to as: **OAWM1**) frntline.dat frontline in the graphic window illustrates this :

**ALTFLGOAWM1.jpg*



OAWM1 frontline starts in the left corner in the Atlantic below France and winds up through middle Europe curving sharply in below Antwerp, Belgium and then straight up to the North and into the sea, lastly turning a sharp right.

Next: Picture below shows the **OAWM1** frontline graphically in relation to the file data with the points marked:
**ALTFLGdataM1.jpg*



You'll notice I marked about where Antwerp is for reference. And also take notice of my comment; That all the "Frontline No. _" blocks in **OAWMI** frontline are the same. Just repeated 20 times. You can confirm this by looking at the "Frontline No. 1 to 20"; they all have the same data.

(This is because in "OAW style" Missions there is no moving frontline needed, only a "static" frontline.)

Note: The **OAWMI** frontline data doesn't begin and end the frontline with zero. You need not fix this. If the end is far enough above (if to the right) of the map or below (if to the left) it works. See related EAW Documents for more info.

The other reason for this is that the "Original Frontline Generator" by Dom by Dom seems to have a certain Glitch of not liking to write the file properly if you begin or end with 0's!

It also seems to not want to close if you use less than 10 frontline points :/?

Deciding where to place your Frontline for a Scenario

And how to find the coordinates of Bases in the EAW World

Deciding where to make a frontline comes with designing a scenario. In designing **OAWM1** I first started with the close airbases I wanted and then placed the frontline. I did a lot of guessing, and testing. I later edited it as I worked on other targets / bases in the scenario.

Later I used the "**HillGmap.jpg**" Reference Map and the "**ABTGList.rtf**" Document. Both of these are included in **DOM's zip**. The "**ABTGList.rtf**" lists the coordinates in "**X**" / "**Y**" most conveniently.

Other available EAW Documents also contain all relative information.

Prune even seems to have a method using bitmap conversions to overlay maps with data files and so forth. *But frankly I haven't been able to understand it yet! (LoL).*

Regardless of what you do later when you're an expert, here's how to understand the coordinates;

Hands on. By learning to convert the hexadecimal coordinates of a Target / Base listed in Dom's EAWK3.wdb (or my equivalent conversion; **EAWK3wdb.html**).

It is done by use of **DOM's Dos utility**; "**Convert.exe**" which are also in the Dom's tools. Get this and the above mentioned two Documents and Follow Along:

- Unzip **Convert.exe** to a working folder.

- Doubleclick it to start

- A Dos box will open in windows -Now open the **EAWK3wdb.html** Document -In the **EAWK3wdb.html** Document go to "Anvers" (Name; this is "Antwerp" translated)

- Now in the columns of the Table it lists; **X1,X2,X3,X4** and **Y1,Y2,Y3,Y4**. These are hexadecimal coordinates. -Go back to the **Convert.exe** Dos box and type in the "**X**" Hex. coordinates. *Note the zero's are not "oh's" ;)*

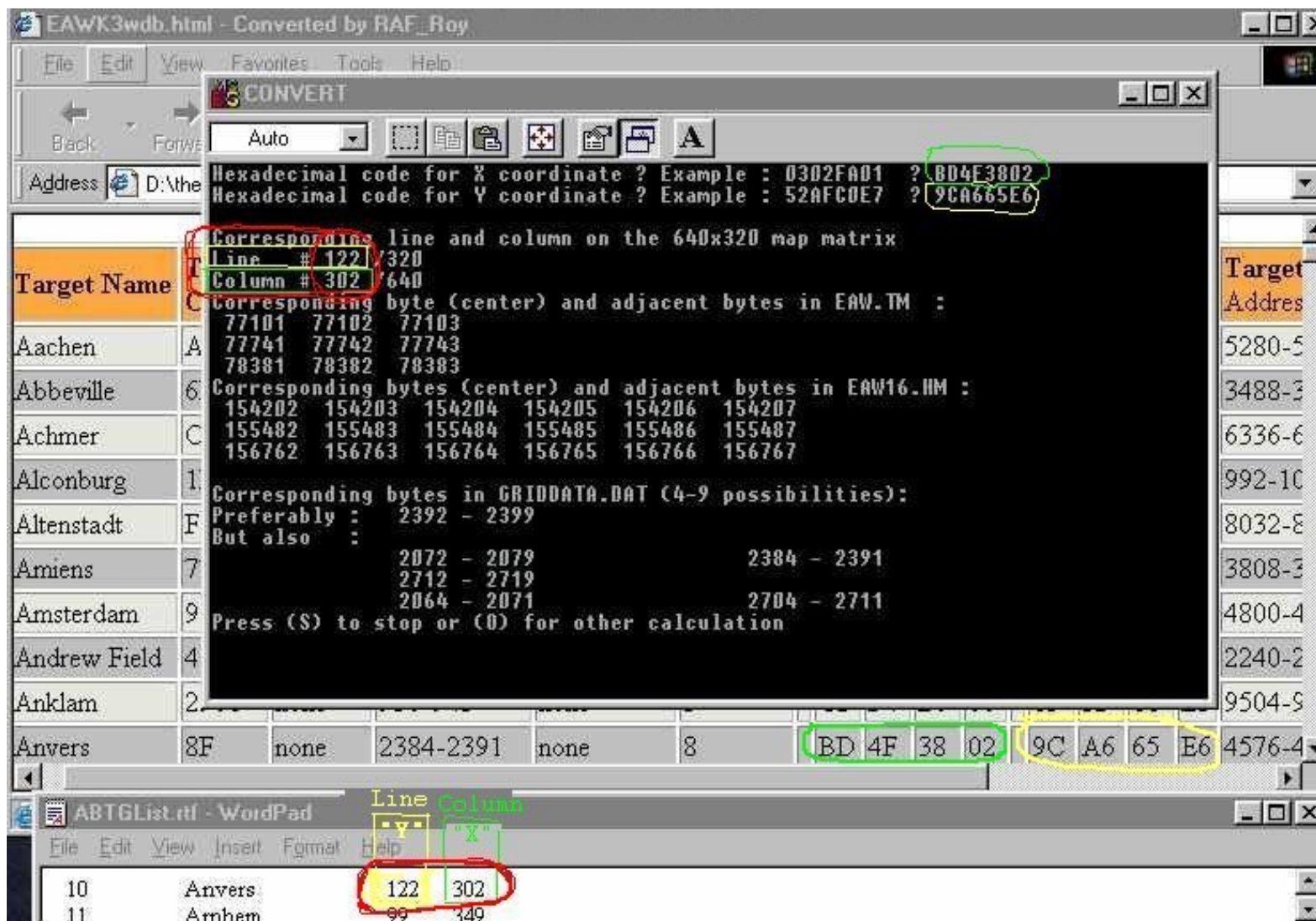
- Now press "Enter" on your keyboard and then type in the "**Y**" Hex. coordinates

- Press "Enter" when done. *-(When you've reviewed all the results and compared to below you can exit the Program by pressing "S" on your keyboard. Then Close the Dos box by clicking the close button in top right of it, just like any Windows program.)*

Now the results will display. There is also all kinds of other information we need not be concerned with here.

Look to the next illustration:

**ConvertCoords.jpg*



Here is the **Convert.exe** results shown in the Dos box. The "Line" and "Column" area circled in Red are the "X" / "Y" coordinates used by "Frontline Generator" (Both Versions).

Behind the Dos box you can see the **EAWK3wdb.html** Document where just below I have highlighted the "Anvers" Hex. coordinates also. Below that is shown "Anvers" from the **ABTGList.rtf** Document.

So Now you can see how the Hex. coordinates are translated for use of the "Frontline Generator" and also the **HillGmap.jpg** Reference Map.

This also will clarify the coordinate matter for use in the "Original Frontline Generator" by Dom which will ask for the "Line"

and **"Column"**. Just remember: *Line* = **"Y"** (and has _ of up to 320).
Frankly I still forget this and have to read it again and again...LOL!

So now what if you want to do the reverse lookup of a Coordinate?

Use **DOM'S Vertcon.exe** Dos utility. Which is also included with **DOM's Tools**.

I'm not going to show how to use it as it is the same really as this above lesson in reverse.

Using the "Original Frontline Generator" by Dom (a Dos Utility)

Here's a quick illustration using the old Program:

For this we'll recreate the **OAWM1** frntline.dat.

(One Note: Before we start: I just need to warn you that when the Program is done it will save the file by the filename you chose, and like most Dos Programs will automatically overwrite any file with that name in the folder without warning.)

-Unzip the **"Original Frontline Generator" by Dom** to a folder and open it by double clicking it. A Dos box will open.

-For name, type: **testfile**

-For number of points: **10**

-Now line..? Hmmm. .. lets's see; *Yes even I have to look..lol: Go back up the page to the picture of my **OAWM1** frntline.dat ..*

YES .. that's it. Remember *Line* = **"Y"** so the number is: **320**. -Press **"Enter"** on your keyboard *You must press "Enter" after each entry you make.*

-Next the **"Column"** is: **2**

-Now set: **1** for "visible" (*we'll make it visible for clarity, although normally over ocean we would not*).

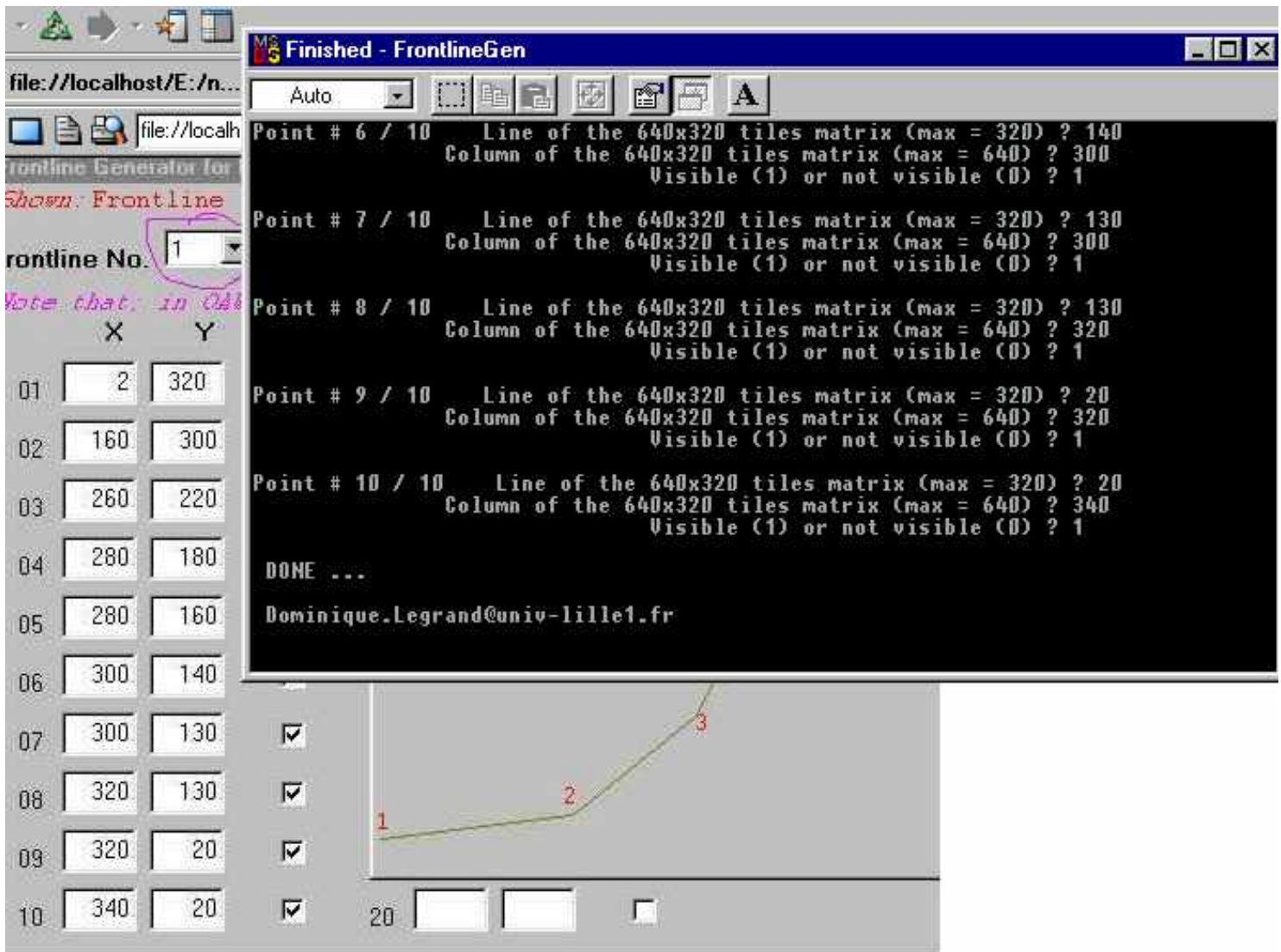
-Now follow the rest until the end, where the last **"Line"** entry will be: 20.

-when you see the "Done ..." it is done.

-Don't close it yet: review the picture below to compare:

Shown: The **"Original Frontline Generator" by Dom** in a Dos box. The OAWM1 picture from above *ALTFLGdataM1.jpg* is seen also.

**FLGtestfile.jpg*



You should compare to the data as shown in the picture.

-When satisfied, close the Dos Box by clicking the close button in top right of it, just like any Window.

Congrats! Now you know how to make a frontline with the **"Original Frontline Generator" by Dom**

You might why you are learning this since there is the newer **"Frontline Generator Version 1.00" utility by Alatrisme?**

The reason why is; Although the newer program is a great tool for the creation of moving Frontlines and is able to show and edit all of the 20 "Blocks" of data (and also especially for learning and checking the files) for the purpose of making a "static" **"OAW style" Mission** frontline **"Original FrontlineGenerator" by Dom** is quicker. That is because it will write the data of the frontline

of the first block into all 20 blocks automatically. So you don't have to edit each block as you would with the new utility. If you examine the **"testfile"** we made or the **OAWMission1** frontline you will see this. The same data is in all 20 blocks.

I should point out that this doesn't *Necessarily* mean that future advanced OAW Missions you or I make won't be able to use a dynamic frontline; the fact is I haven't tried it.

(Again;) It is only required to make a static frontline to create an "OAW style" Mission, and it is also used by "Single Missions" offline. This is a main advantage of "OAW Missions" of the present type (IMHO); they are easier and quicker to make than campaigns ;).

Other Documents Relating to Frontlines Include:

Readme's in DOM's Notes and Tools zip:

- Readme.rtf (a.k.a. "EDITING NOTES ON EAW TERRAIN AND AIRFIELD/GROUND TARGET FILES")
- "Readme.txt" in the Frontline_Generator.zip

From P.O. Prune:

Newworld.doc

From Charles Gunst:

"Gunst's Notes"

Other Sources:

"To_campaign_makers.txt" (a.k.a. "Editing Notes to Campaign Makers and Programmers") Originally included in the "Frontlines Mover" Package.