

# ADVENTURE GAMING

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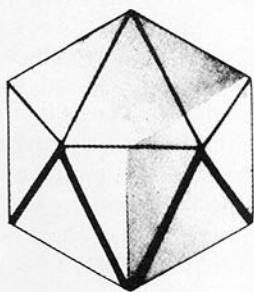
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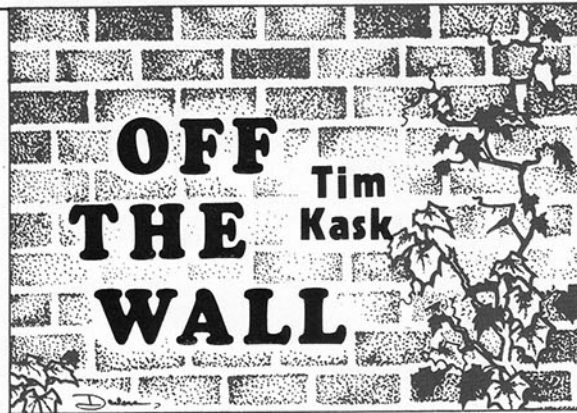
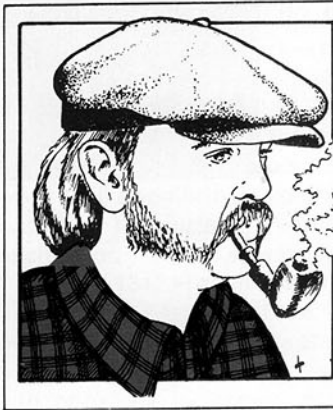


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## Spectacle On the Green

There was a bizarre incident that I witnessed while at *ORIGINS* that I feel compelled to mention. While it involves the Society for Creative Anachronism, the majority of it deals with/is directed at the spectators.

I learned quite a bit about SCA in recent years in the Middle Kingdom. My opinion of "them" had undergone a transformation from viewing them as genuine loonies to seeing nothing more "wrong" about their hobby than the grown men with the toy-train fetish.

I also learned that they were quite concerned with safety. Their duels/jousts/fighting was always done with safety uppermost in everyone's mind. Sportsmanship was highly prized, and personal integrity highly valued. I'm not so sure now about the Western Kingdom.

I was walking back from a friend's room in the early afternoon on Saturday to the exhibition area, and opted for an outside route that offered both fresh air and distance saving. In one of the green, grassy areas an SCA demo of some sort was going on.

My curiosity having been piqued, I moved closer. There was a crowd of 80-100 people standing around when I arrived, making quite a commotion. Upon getting closer, I realized that what was being presented was a "live" *D&D* adventure. Arriving late as I did, I had to piece together the details; two princesses being held by orcs were the object of a rescue attempt by a mixed group.

Normally, in all of the SCA battles I have seen, nobody was allowed to repeatedly bash an opponent — a single

killing blow was all that was allowed. In this instance, that was certainly not the case. One poor fighter got smacked in the helmet with a mace three or four times. The poor guy had to be revived and got a split scalp in the bargain.

That incident was unpleasant, but it in no way prepared me for what was to come.

The crowd behaved abominably. They would have made great extras for some film in which the Christians get fed to the lions.

It so happened that the would-be rescuers lost their torches in melee. To handicap the humans, they had large blindfolds placed over their helmets; the orcs had no such handicap as they are reputed to see well in the dark.

The crowd really showed their stuff at this juncture. Many of them were calling out purposely misleading "advice" to those blindfolded. Whenever one of them

got slaughtered (if bashing "blind" people isn't slaughter, then what is it?) the crowd *cheered!* (Once again, the orcs were being allowed to bash their opponents repeatedly, even after the one fellow had been injured from the same breach of normal rules.) Inevitably, the rescuers were butchered to the last of their number (a woman). The crowd then had the appallingly bad taste to goad the "orcs" into humiliating and molesting the "princesses", all to the accompaniment of rowdy encouragement from the spectators.

The SCA might very well fight with different rules in California; they probably shouldn't. They, for the most part, merely provided a service by acting out the playlet written by someone else. It may be that those worthies playing the orcs allowed themselves to get carried away in the course of events.

It is the crowd that I found so disgusting, or at least a goodly portion of it. To purposely call out wrong information for the purpose of speeding up the butchery is simply appalling. The deal with the princesses was in wretched taste. Cheering when each of the erstwhile good guys was butchered was perverse. The only parallel I can draw would be to cheer when some boxer got killed in the ring.

For me, that ten minute stop cast a pall over the rest of the show for the remainder of the weekend.

While I'm reasonably certain that the crowd was composed of many decent people, the aggregate impression was one of viciousness and bloodthirsty cruelty. How sad . . .





# Getting Started In Historical Miniatures

by Tony Adams

Today there are many new people becoming interested in the hobby of Adventure Gaming. Many of them start out in role-playing or board-gaming and have yet to discover the fascinating area of Historical Miniatures. I hope that this article can shed some light on the subject for those of you interested in finding out more about miniature gaming. Much of what will be discussed can also apply to Fantasy miniatures, but we will concentrate on historical armies in particular.

Historical gaming with miniatures is one of the oldest forms of our hobby with rules being devised to govern the movement of "toy soldiers" as early as the turn of the century, if not before.

*Ed. Note: Scarcely had the dust settled in the War of the Roses than wealthy English lords were refighting the battles using flat soldiers of tin and paper. Some claim that the Society of Ancients [a venerable English group of miniatures enthusiasts] trace their beginnings to those parlor soirees.*

When we talk about historical miniatures in relation to gaming what are we really talking about? Let me explain a bit of what this facet of gaming really is first. A typical historical miniatures game, if there is one, might have a flat table of about 5' x 8' dimensions with various scenery (as in model railroading layouts) to portray a battlefield of the type fought over by the troops in the period of history being represented. The miniature figures will all be organized into correctly

sized units for the armies they represent and painted according to the best information available as to proper uniforms worn. All of this will be scaled down to be more manageable, with figures representing anywhere from 10 to 100 actual men. These units formed from figures will become the 'chess pieces', if you will, of the commanding generals in their attempt to outmaneuver and outwit their opponents. The rules in use for this game are similar to chess in that they define movement restrictions and the effects of units meeting in combat on the field. As these are supposed to represent the actions of real men and not abstract chess pieces the rule may be quite detailed to portray the complexities and uncertainties of the battlefield as realistically as possible. Units move using rulers, since there are usually no squares or hexes. Firing weapons or engaging in hand to hand combat is resolved using percentages to determine chances of success or failure for any given units. Morale is usually accounted for as players determine how willing their 'men' are to gith in a given situation. All in all it is a many faceted event that can bring much enjoyment to all involved. It is also the most colorful type of gaming as the 3-dimensional affect of the battlefield is more than any board-game can achieve.

That is a very brief, inadequate description of what historical miniatures can be like.

## Getting Started

Now that we know a little bit about historical miniatures and what the end result may look like, we should start finding out how to get started. Writing an article like this is not as easy as being able to show many examples and discuss them around a gaming table, but please bear with me through the confusion and we will make some headway in getting started in this field. It is difficult to present this information in a step by step manner as much of the work and ideas involved should take place simultaneously as they all affect one another. They should all fit together in the end to form a complete picture, so hold onto your questions until then and many of them will be answered for you. Remember, some of this may sound like a lot of work at first, but if you enjoy doing it, it will be easy.

A few of you may be wondering what type of person it takes to be a historical miniature gamer, and if you have it in you or not. Luckily for most of us involved the qualifications are relatively undemanding. Topping the list would be enthusiasm for a historical army or period. This may not always be present to a great degree in starting out but will grow from a passing interest as you get more involved. It is important for sustaining interest while doing research and other tasks that would otherwise seem like

drudgery. Patience is also helpful because collecting and painting an army will take some time to complete. Beyond that you should already have that or I assume you wouldn't be reading this. So you see, anybody can be a historical gamer.

Now that we know that you have the qualifications to be a historical gamer we can get down to business. If you don't already have a particular historical period in mind for your gaming then you have a wide field to choose from. History contains many more situations than you could possibly convert to gaming in an entire lifetime. The period you choose should have at least a passing interest for you so that you will be more inclined to learn a little about it. History, after all, is not really as boring as some made it seem in school. Maybe you admire the generalship of Alexander or Hannibal, or you might be awed by the vastness of the Persian or Roman Empires. You might be a Viking fanatic or really have fun with Chivalry in the Middle Ages. The strategies of Napoleon or Robert E. Lee may be more to your liking and there are always the immense complexities of the two World Wars. I have only touched on a handful of possibilities and yet each one could be developed into literally years of enjoyable gaming. If you haven't discovered a period of interest to you yet then I envy you for the experience of discovering military history in these areas for the first time. Every time I read a book or see a movie on a historical battle my mind races as to how it would look as a miniatures game and how it

of Chess, and we are aiming for something more than that here.)

We will now begin with our chosen period by doing some research. Research can begin before you have a single figure or rulebook around. It will most likely continue all through your gaming days as well. Now, when I say research I don't mean that you have to write a thesis paper (although you may be able to before you are finished). You simply need to find out what type of army you are collecting, how they looked and how they fought. You want to have this background information so that you can make intelligent decisions later in deciding how your games will proceed and what should or should not be included in them. You can start at the public library with general histories or biographies. You will soon move on to more detailed information when you actually start collecting figures and rulebooks. Some people find such an interest in doing their research that they become historians instead of gamers (you will run into some of these people sooner or later). For now though, you should come away from your research with a knowledge of who the people were that you will collect and what they accomplished, if anything, in the context of their historical period. This isn't all as boring as it might sound at first because, for a change, you are actually going to be able to use something you learned from a history book.

### **Miniature Figures**

Now that you know a little bit about the period we can start talking about figures. There are going to be a couple

25mm figure is a shrunken version of the 30mm which used to be the only type around. As such they gained widespread acceptance when miniatures gaming was really becoming popular here 10-15 years ago. There are still many 25mm figures around in quite a few periods but the expense of collecting a large army in this scale has caught up with them and they have given way in popularity to smaller scale figures. They are still much in demand for 'skirmish' type games that use smaller numbers of figures as they have good detail that is easy to paint. The 30mm figure has all but disappeared except for the real collectors. For similar reasons 'HO' scale and 1/76 scale armor miniatures have also lost ground to smaller scales that offer a wider selection and more space. A similar situation also exists in the naval miniatures categories where 1/1200 scale ships are not as popular as they used to be either. In all cases these larger figures were the first in their fields and provided many gamers with miniatures. It has only been in the last several years that everything began shrinking to match the buying power of the gamers' dollar.

This brings us down to 15mm scale where the figures are about 3/5" tall. Again, every company decides where they will measure from pretty much on their own, so there is fluctuation in size here, too. Again, the rule is to compare before you buy. Almost every type of figure that ever existed is available in this scale. Besides cost, the other advantages include being able to use a smaller table for the same battles as before without sacrificing detail in the case of most of the figures. Some people do have a harder time painting them, but this simply takes practice. The counterpart in the armor field has been 1/285 which is really small (about 5mm) but allows large battles to be fought and more realistic ranges to be portrayed. The selection is also excellent. In naval miniatures we go down to 1/2400 scale which is still detailed enough to allow ship recognition at a reasonable distance on the gaming table. The main advantage once again is the space saving element.

There are many other scales of figures around, but none have achieved the widespread acceptance of the ones I have talked about. The type of figures you decide on will definitely affect your collecting from here on in so you should give it some thought. It is hard to change course in midstream. You should consider

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**"The most important decision is the scale of figures you will collect . . ."**

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would work out in practice. So do some reading, if you haven't already, and decide what period you would like to try first. Then you will be ready to begin.

(As an aside here, there are many people in the hobby that claim that you don't need to know anything about history to play the games. That is admittedly true. But one of the advantages of war-gaming over Chess and Checkers is the involvement and the color and flavor of a historical period that the player is able to participate in. If you don't know anything about the figures you are moving on the table, then it becomes just another game

of decisions regarding the figures you will use that are critical and must be made from the very beginning. The most important decision is the scale of figures you will collect. There are several scales that are popular and we will mention most of them along with a few comments on each.

First of all there are 25mm figures. These are roughly an inch tall although every manufacturer has his own way of measuring that inch. Most of them will be compatible with each other in most respects but always check them out next to one another before you buy. The

what type of battles you will be fighting and whether or not you wish to collect a large number of troops to represent them or a smaller number of figures for battles with a different scope to them. Obviously, one of the factors that will influence your scale of figures, and in turn be influenced by them, is the set of rules you decide to use. We will talk more about them later. My suggestion in deciding on figures if you get stuck in making up your mind is to buy just a couple in whatever scales you are deciding between and paint them up. This will give you a chance to see what you can do with either size and how you like working with them as well as the end result. The investment will be minimal and the experience well worth it. Other points to consider may be if any of your opponents presently collect or even how much space you have to devote to storage of figures when not in use. All in all, it is a decision that must be made based on your own personal taste and situation.

Now where do you get these figures? If you have a local hobby shop that carries them then you are all set. Chances are he can get you just about anything on a special order basis even if he doesn't carry the line in stock all the time. Ask him. If you don't have a shop close by, you can start by writing for catalogs to the manufacturers. (You may want to do this anyway so you know what is available in your period). Most manufacturers have a very active mail order business and will be glad to help you out. The disadvantages of buying by mail are not being able to see all of the figures before you buy without purchasing samples. Below I have made a brief list of some of the larger miniatures manufacturers that I am aware of. It is by no means a complete list of manufacturers but it will be a good place to start looking for figures.

## Choosing Figures

What should you be looking for when you are looking at these figures? A lot of it is going to be a matter of personal taste; how *you* like the figure. Some figures have more 'animation' in them than others. By this I mean that they are either in motion or are in more fluid positions that give some kind of character to their looks. Others are more 'stock' figures that may be in more rigid or uniform poses. You should also look at how 'round' a figure is. A really 'round' figure will have all of the detail protruding from the figure in such a way as to not have many crevices or deeply cut areas of detail, more of a raised type detail. Sometimes these figures are not as well proportioned as others and can tend to look overly stocky. Remember that raised details will also be easier to paint than deeply engraved areas but may take more work to add depth to the paint job if it doesn't already exist in the figure. These are all factors to consider while looking at your figures and deciding which ones to get. You should also try to consider the poses of the figures and how easy they would be to modify if you desire to add weapons or make different poses out of the same figure. You will also have to check to see how brittle the figure is and if it will break when subjected to bending. All manufacturers use the same basic ingredients in making figures but sometimes in different mixtures. This makes some figures easy to modify while others should be left alone.

Finally, you should check to see how many figures are available in the era you wish to collect from other manufacturers that are compatible with the figures you like. It is always best to have some variety and other figures to fall back on if you need them. By this time you should know a little bit about the uniforms of the period and how well the figures portray

them. Also, depending on how detailed you wish to paint you can make your decision as to the amount of detail you are looking for in a figure. Before long you will be an expert on figures in the period you are collecting and will easily be able to spot various manufacturers' figures across the battlefield. Once again, there is no "correct" answer to this question. Simply go with what suits you best.

## Rules

The next area that a decision needs to be made in is the subject of what set of rules to use for your games. The set of rules you pick will, in many respects, determine what types of game you have. They will set the sizes of units you will be able to have, the amount of space you need and even the number of figures you will need to collect. They will be the game system that your strategies will be devised around. So what makes a good set of rules? The answer lies in many different questions that you can ask about various aspects of those rules, and what type of results you are looking for in your games. Do you want the most realistic rules possible, or do you want the most playable? A mixture somewhere in between is usually most desirable. Do you want to fight battles with large units represented by a small number of figures (grand tactical), or would you prefer smaller unit actions with each unit having a greater number of figures (tactical)? Again, there are many options for compromise somewhere in between these two extremes. Do you want a simple, easy rules system that just covers the basics of combat in the period or do you want a complex game that attempts to take into account all of the variables that could be involved? The best way to answer all of these questions is to play many of the different rules sets and

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Heritage, USA (15mm)  
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“One consideration in choosing rules is, how well do they allow you to duplicate tactics from history on the gaming table? . . .”

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decide which one you like the best. A good place to do this is at a convention or club meeting where they already play miniatures. If this isn't possible then you will probably have to get several different rules sets and try them out for yourself. This is the only way to decide what type of game you like best, and how your games are going to be run.

To test out rules before you have any figures to use will take some time and effort, but will be well worth it to see what a new set of rules is really like. You must first figure out the typical stand sizes involved and cut these out of cardboard for all of the units you wish to take part in the battle. What you will basically have is a table full of stands without troops on them. In this way you can see how movement and maneuvers are done. You will have to keep track of all troop strengths on paper or on the stands themselves. This is more time consuming but is the only way to get a good idea about a set of rules. One consideration in choosing rules is, how well do they allow you to duplicate tactics from history on the gaming table? You should look for rules that will portray historical actions at least partially so that your battles will not end up with bizarre results that would have been totally impossible in real life. Your research should give you a background with which to judge this aspect of the rules. You will find out that everybody may have their own interpretation of historical events and these will come out not only in your research materials but also in your gaming rules. You must decide which interpretation sits best with you and you are the most comfortable with in playing the games. I think the main thing you should look for here is consistency. You need a set of

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*The spectacle and panoply of history comes alive*







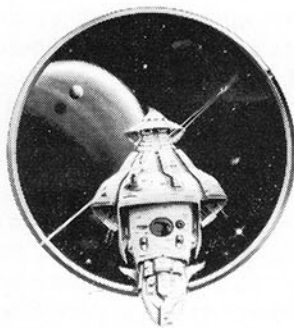
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rules that is at least consistent in its portrayal of historical events. Otherwise you will be back to a highly abstract situation that has no relation to history.

## House Rules

So you have to go out and test the waters, so to speak, before you jump in. Your main guideline should always be whether or not you enjoy using a set of rules. Before long you will probably know them inside and out. You may also wish to make changes, or even make your own rules. Many gamers, especially miniatures gamers, come up with their own modifications and rules to add to existing systems to make them more to their liking. They are simply altering them to fit more closely into their interpretation of history as they feel it should be gamed. In doing this, the only danger comes in convincing an opponent that your modifications can be justified. If he agrees to play under those rules, fine. It is in this way that almost all clubs obtain their own 'house rules' that are basically agreed on and accepted by all of the gamers who play there. Any rules that you can agree on are fine to use, just do not expect other games to accept them without explanation. This also leads us into 'home-grown' set of rules. These are rules that are designed by individuals that they feel are good for their particular period. Most of them never see publication and are usually only used by the group they normally game with, if any. Anyone who has done all the research and spent as much time as most miniatures gamers do will be tempted to write rules on their own. Again, my only caution is, getting other people to accept them and play them. If you can achieve that, then by all means go ahead and write your own rules. There are probably as many home-grown sets of rules as there are miniatures gamers by now. Once you have finally decided on a set of rules that you enjoy playing you are ready to continue. But now you know how your figures should be organized into units and how many units you can get on the battlefield for a good game. You know how much room you will need for a typical battle and you can tell prospective opponents what rules you are using so that they can begin reading and practicing with them. You can also start practicing yourself to get an idea of how the rules really work and how your tactics will be conducted on the battlefield.



## Amassing An Army

It is now time to start mustering armies for your games. Patience will be needed here because, unless you are wealthy, you will probably want to collect a little bit at a time. Besides that, it won't take you long to accumulate more unpainted figures than painted figures because painting takes time also. It may be a good idea to try to purchase your units in groups just so that you have complete units just in case something happens to the figures that you are collecting (like they go out of production). This will also assure you that when you are in the mood to paint, you can do an entire unit. Nothing is worse than having a half dozen uncompleted units in your army just laying around waiting for other figures. You should have a good idea by now of what units you are going to collect and how many figures you will need for each one. Spend some time and get your army organization down on paper so that you can use it for reference purposes as you go along. It will also allow your opponent to see what he should collect to match it, or if you happen to be doing both sides you can use it for comparison. Once you have started your collection you are ready to begin painting.

I am not an expert when it comes to painting miniatures so I am not going to give painting lessons here. There are some things I can talk about though that may help you out if you are just getting started. First of all, always remember that you should paint to please yourself at all times. By this I mean that you shouldn't feel bad if somebody else has figures that have more detail or that he says look better than yours. As long as you are happy with the end results of your painting, that is all that matters. Painting is a skill, and you can only get good at it through practice so don't get discouraged too easily. If you see someone else's figures that you really like, ask him what he did to get that effect. Most

people will be flattered that you like their figures and glad to offer suggestions on painting. Learn from the best painters around and don't be ashamed of your own work. Those gamers who will chide a poor paint job instead of offering you suggestions do not deserve your attention anyway. You should try to set up some kind of regular schedule to do your painting by. Even if it is only a couple of figures a month, that's alright, as long as you are getting something accomplished towards building the army. The most you should attempt to paint at one time is a complete unit. Doing more than that can be too big a task that may get you discouraged. You should also never paint figures if you are not in the mood to do so. Painting figures because you have to finish them will not be very rewarding work. Take a relaxed attitude towards painting and do it as long as it holds your interest, then stop. Your figures will last a lifetime of gaming so there is no need to rush to get them finished. If you do them by units or groups then each unit or group will look similar and be painted with the same amount of skill. For troops in uniform this can be especially important also.

Other ideas in painting have to do with the figures you have in your army. Some gamers will crank out their line troops without paying much attention to detail, while spending a great deal of time on guard or elite units to really make them look superb on the battlefield. It is all up to you as to the amount of detail you feel like putting into your army. Conversions of figures can be made to give a variety of poses and actions to your units. Any number of ideas may be used to change the looks of your troops so that they are unique. You may want to paint them in full dress uniforms, or weathered effects may be added to make it seem as if the army has been on campaign for quite some time. Flags and standards can be added as well as officers and messengers to add that individual touch of having special figures around and adding more color to the army at the same time.

We seem to keep coming back to research also. It will be important for painting your figures to know what they should look like. For this information you will have to dig a bit harder and maybe even purchase some specialized books on your period to get the information you need. In almost every case, the information does exist, it's just a matter of finding it. In some periods the guidelines for painting will be much more strict than others. Use your own judg-

ment and the best information you can find. If you have done a good job a fellow gamer will be able to identify many units or armies just by their colors on the field, and that's what you are shooting for. All in all the painting and assembling of your army will take the most time and effort of this entire project. But if you enjoy working with the figures, painting, and seeing your progress then it will not seem long at all. This is a great part of gaming with miniatures — the hobby of painting that goes with it. It is a very relaxing enjoyable hobby and you will be using the end result, your army, instead of just putting it on display somewhere. So don't rush to get done with it. Take your time and enjoy.

Another possibility that I haven't touched on yet is purchasing your army already painted or commissioning someone to paint it for you. This is entirely up to you to decide. It will definitely cost you more money, but if you can't spend the time painting, it is a possibility.

### **Battlefield Terrains**

Up to this point we have only talked about the armies you will be using and the figures involved. But there is another important part of the game that should not be skimmed over, the terrain on your battlefield. Terrain is something that many gamers neglect to spend much time with. There are several reasons for this, I guess. If you are doing terrain you can't be painting figures for the army. And sometimes terrain can be a bit tricky if you don't know how to make it look really good. But terrain is important to the entire battlefield and can set off your troops if nicely done. Too many times I have seen absolutely beautiful figures in armies maneuvering on construction paper hills on a bare table top. If you are going to spend some time and make your army look nice you should also do some work on terrain. It doesn't have to be elaborate. It will depend on how much time and effort you wish to put into it, but terrain can really make the game come alive. Just to give you a few basic ideas of where to get started, let's take your typical battlefield of an old ping-pong table. It is a good flat surface to begin with but it has some white lines on it found nowhere in nature, so they don't really fit in with most battlefields. If you can get a piece of green felt for covering you have a good start. Now to make hills and valleys we can put boards or books underneath the felt to give it some contours that troops will also be able to move on top of. If you take a trip to a hobby or toy store you should be able to

find some building kits and lichen (in many colors) in the model railroading section. These will become your towns and bushes. You can either make your own trees from the lichen or buy them already made. A little bit of sawdust for roads and maybe some clear blue plastic for rivers and you have a respectable table without spending years on terrain. When the game is over simply pick everything up and design a new battlefield. I think you will also be pleased at how much better the battles look and how much a nice looking table adds to the game. It is also much easier to determine particulars on the battlefield when the terrain is well defined. This can prevent many arguments of movement from happening if all players can see where the terrain starts and ends. You will also be more willing to show off your games with the possibility of more people becoming involved in such an impressive undertaking than would be interested in construction paper roads. If you wish to get even more involved you will find many things all over that are in scale with what you are doing. Sometimes this takes some imagination and tinkering but keep an open mind and you will come across many useful items that will add to your terrain. If you are in a group then make sure everyone contributes to helping make and/or pay for the terrain. It isn't fair that only one person should bear the burden or cost. It is a joint effort.

### **Finding Kindred Spirits**

So far we haven't really talked much about your games as a whole or even whom you are going to game with. For some of you reading this I realize that this may be a real problem. In large metropolitan areas these days there are usually many gamers around, the only problem is in finding them. In other parts of the country the task of finding gamers sometimes seems impossible. First of all, to find other gamers you can try some advertising in conventional spots. The newspaper could be a start, gaming magazines and your local hobby shop bulletin board may all bring some response. Conventions can be a very good place to find people also. If you can locate a club in your area and become active in it you may be able to convince them to go into the same period you are in by putting on a few games for them and getting some people interested. You can also try some of your acquaintances and even relatives that may show a surprising amount of interest if approached the right way. So what is the

right way? Well, it will take some explaining to show you.

### **Making Converts**

Model railroaders sometimes have the same problem in finding people they can share their hobby with that have the same interest. Although railroading is often a solitary hobby it can be nice to have a club to share ideas with and have someone who can appreciate your accomplishments. In many cases clubs also help work on each others layouts and have other social events as well as work sessions. One of the ways they interest people is to have an open house to show off their layouts. This allows the old-timers to see the other layouts in the group and discuss ideas and it also allows new people in to see what this hobby is all about. Miniature gaming has some of the same features to offer as model railroading as a hobby. (After all a model railroad is a historical miniature isn't it?) If you were to have an open house and show your table off with some of your units on it you may just find the person you need to be your opponent. Of course to have this you have to be most of the way along in your project of having an army and terrain. If at all possible be able to do at least a small demonstration type game. You see, at a model railroad open house they will let you run the train. At a wargaming open house you could let people play the game by giving them a few simple rules and have them plan a strategy. You probably get the idea by now of what you might do to interest people. This idea may seem to be a radical one to gamers who already have an opponent, but if you are desperate to find someone, give it a try. One of the nice things about gaming is that it is something you can do with other people, a social activity. It can be competitive or casual, but the person across the table trying to outwit you will insure that it will always be challenging.

If for whatever reason you just can't find anybody to game with at this point then you may be forced to collect both sides for your battles. You should try to keep it small at first and get a few units from each army so that you can start playing small games at least. These solitaire games can teach you a lot about tactics and how your rules work. You can also try to set up historical battles and see how they come out in gaming terms. There are many things you can do with it on your own (again, as in model railroad), but hopefully you will eventual-

ly find an opponent to share in your hobby and really make it more interesting. A few hints on getting people started in gaming are in order though that may make it easier for you to find someone.

Don't start out by telling someone how hard it is to find research materials or the hundreds of books you have already read (if you did) to get to where you are. Don't start by telling them how much money you have spent on figures and paints and terrain. These are negative features to most people and they will think that there is no hobby on earth worth that much time and money. All hobbies cost money and take time. But it is time we enjoy spending and well worth the price when figured out over the many hours of enjoyment spent doing them. Do get your prospective opponent into a game and commanding some figures on the board. Again, introduce some simple rules so that you can begin a demonstration type game and get them involved in actually playing. Then he will be able to see for himself what the hobby is all about. If he is interested he won't be concerned about the negative aspects, he can take them in stride as they come, just as you have done.

Once you find an opponent and have other people involved in the collecting and gaming process you are on your way. The amount of gaming situations that you can create with even a limited number of troops is limited only by your imagination in designing them. You will be able to go back through history to the period you are gaming in and face some of the same situations that the real commanders had to face. If you start a club, you will be amazed at how fast the armies can grow and how varied they will become, each one with a personality all its own to reflect its owner's taste and ability. And at the same time you will have created a showcase of what wargaming with historical miniatures is all about. Don't let it go to waste. Make sure you show it off to anyone who is even the least bit interested in seeing it, or whoever might make the mistake of asking you what your hobby is. You will have a legitimate hobby that reflects your own talent and skill, as well as that of your group. It is something you should want to spread around and get more people involved in. After all, if you're going to go into that new period you've been reading about, you may need some new people to help collect the other side . . .

## Adventure Venue

September 25-27 **Urcon III.** Special guests Isaac Asimov and L. Sprague de Camp. A science fiction and gaming con. For more information write: Urcon, P. O. Box 6647, River Station, Rochester, NY 14627.

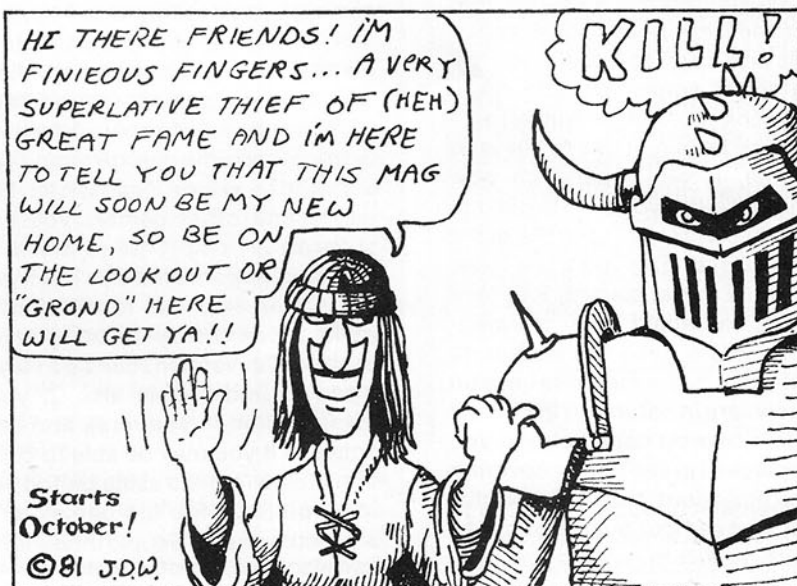
September 26-27 **Games Day 81.** Sponsored by Games Workshop Ltd. For more information contact: Games Workshop Ltd., 17/18 Hythe Road, London NW10 UK England.

October 9-11. **FallCon.** To be held in Cincinnati, OH. For more information about this 2½-day event write: FallCon, 5923 Hamilton, Cincinnati, OH 45224.

October 17-18. **Chaotic Con.** A two-day event to be held in Sunnyvale, CA. For more information write: Chaotic Con., P. O. Box 485, Campbell, CA 95009.

November 20-22. **Detroit Gamefest** (formerly *Wintercon*). For the first time at Cobo Hall, this 2½-day con and trade show features game tournaments, contests, seminars, demos, a large dealers' area and open gaming. For more information write: Metro Detroit Gamers, P. O. Box 787, Troy, MI 48099.

November 27-29. **AguaCon '81.** A 2½-day con to be held in San Mateo, CA. For more details contact: AguaCon, P. O. Box 485, Campbell, CA 95008.



# DIPLOMACY<sup>®</sup>: Variations on the Theme

by Lewis Pulsipher

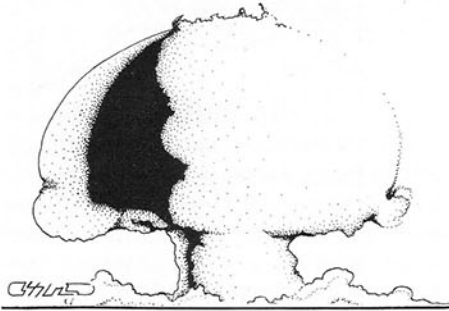
Avalon Hill's classic game *Diplomacy* is ingenious in its mechanical simplicity combined with intellectual complexity, but sooner or later even the most avid player wants to try something a little different. Many players have experimented with rule changes or new playing boards, and over six hundred variations, from single rules to virtually new games, have been distributed among postal *Diplomacy* fans. Avalon Hill's *Machiavelli* and Fantasy Games Unltd.'s (not SPI's) wretched *War of the Rings* game are both variants of *Diplomacy*, but aside from these and my book of *Diplomacy Games and Variants* no variants have been professionally published.

*Diplomacy* variants can be categorized in two ways, by form or scenario. There are three basic forms. The most popular among postal players is the variant with a new or expanded game board but few if any rule changes. The board provides new ground, reducing the advantage of the experienced player compared to the novice, but there is no need to learn new rules. The most common form uses the original board and changes one or more rules. Some of these originated in misinterpretations of the standard rules. The most ambitious form is that in which the board is changed or replaced and many new rules are added. Changes can become so radical that there is more of the new than of the old, but these variants offer the greatest scope for new strategies.

It is difficult to choose any particular set of scenario categories because so many variants are borderline cases. One scheme includes over 20 categories. A reasonable set includes 1) expansions of the original game idea, 2) "realistic" variants, 3) historical, 4) hypothetical, 5) abstract, 6) science fiction and fantasy.

## Expansions

The expansions commonly add countries to the original seven, say Spain and Sweden or Persia, or for further expansion India, China, Japan, and even the United States or South American coun-



tries. Rules are seldom changed much, except that when the entire globe is depicted the fleet rules are often modified to permit greater mobility. At their greatest extent these variants include more than 15 players and over 100 supply centers. Naturally, they tend to be long games requiring much time and effort, not suitable for face-to-face play.

## "Realistic"

"Realistic" variants are usually redesigns of *Diplomacy* intended to be a better representation of World War I, or single rules which are intended to more closely simulate reality than the corresponding standard rule. Most of the realistic versions are of the latter type, using the standard board.

## Historical

Historical variants run the gamut from the Wars of the Roses to ancient struggles and back to Vietnam. These almost always require a new board, and often several new rules. They are often more realistic than standard *Diplomacy*, at the cost of greater complexity.

## Hypothetical

Hypothetical variants include most "what if" situations in history, for example general war in South America or Africa, nuclear warfare, and so on. A new board is usually used, while rules may vary from standard all the way to radically new.

## Abstract

Abstract variants include abstract board forms and wild ideas for rule changes. The latter include rules for altering topography. For example, in one game land changes to sea and sea to land. In other games provinces are split in two, supply centers move, and so on. Abstract boards include hidden movement along mazes that may be extended by the players, symmetrical boards for perfect play balance, "hyperspace" links between provinces far from one another, etc.

## Fantasy & Science Fiction

Fantasy and science fiction variants are often based on a well-known novel or series, especially Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. Others are not based on any book but use the ideas of space travel, magic, and even inter-dimensional travel. Naturally many of these involve complex rules, but others are surprisingly simple.

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*We hope to publish several variants in Adventure Gaming. Those who want to learn more about variants can do one or more of the following:*

1. Order *Diplomacy Games and Variants from Gamescience, 01956 Pass Road, Gulfport, MS 30501 (\$5.50 post-paid).*

2. *Subscribe to Diplomacy World, which regularly devotes 5 pages to variants, including new rules and maps. \$5 for four issues from Rod Walker, 1273 Crest Drive, Encinitas, CA 92024.*

3. *Send \$1.10 to the North American Variant Bank (Rod Walker, address above) for a copy of the latest catalog. The variant bank provides photocopies (and occasionally mimeo or ditto originals) of several hundred variants, at cost. The catalog lists all variants available.*

# "Sealed With A Kiss": Magic Kisses In AD&D®

by Rick D. Stuart



## Specifics

Magic as defined within AD&D® parameters often requires the use of some particular mechanism by or through which a desired effect can be obtained. Scrolls, rings, and spell material components in general serve as examples of just such mechanisms which help to "channel" the power their wielder summons up. With this in mind an additional mechanism often overlooked can be suggested here: *The Magic Kiss* — the action of a human kiss which, when presented, triggers the release of a given magical effect or property prepared beforehand, causing a specific result to ensue. As such, in the hands of a skilled magic-user an ordinary kiss in an ordinary situation can be fatal to the unsuspecting, or in the least it can serve as a potent vehicle for magical manipulation in general. Indeed the various applications of such a device is limited only by the players and referee's imaginations.

## Format

In order to produce a magical kiss an individual of any class must first have familiarity with the *Spell of Kiss Transference*; an all-new spell described below allowing the incorporation of additional spell(s) depending upon the effect(s) desired. Central to the process is the material component! This is mandatory for the "Transference" spell to work at all. This requirement may be satisfied by the material component of a given "effect" spell, the scroll on which a spell is written, the ring in which a spell is stored, etc. Producing a magical kiss requires an individual to first place himself within a protective magical circle. The caster then recites the appropriate incantations for the effect spell (i.e. that spell which in it self would normally produce the desired effect to be stored in this case), whereupon the verbal and somatic segments of the Transference spell are made. At this point the caster must physically press the material component to his lips, repeating the effect spell routines *in reverse!* Thereafter a solitary drop of human blood applied to the lips effectively "seals" the spell until triggered by an appropriate kiss.

Several points concerning the production of magic kisses need be mentioned here. It should be noted that the above exercise must be enacted in *exact* detail as described above. Any deviation from the above will see a base 60% chance of the effect spell immediately taking hold on the caster himself, whatever the advantages or disadvantages involved! Storing Kiss spells in another individual is accomplished by essentially the same procedure. Both must be within the protective magical circle when the process begins, and the normal casting time is doubled. Likewise the drop of blood used in the preparation of the spell is obviously applied to the individual who will actually "carry" the spell, not the caster in this case.

Only one spell of any type can be "stored" as a magical kiss at any given time, although by using more than one individual at a time the caster can store spells in others equal to his/her level restrictions within a twenty-four hour period, assuming all proper materials to be on hand.

Magical kisses have a normal twenty-four hour duration subject to *Extension* spells which could be cast along with the effect spell when initially prepared. Note that magical kisses cannot be directed against a singular character; any time within the normal spell duration a given individual triggers the spell's release — purposely or inadvertently — the effect is the same.

Spell recipients are permitted saving throws vs. magical kisses where normally applicable, but saves here are made at an automatic -3 on all die rolls. The only exception to this rule exists whenever a kiss is "blown" (with appropriate motions of the hands, etc.) across a room, street, etc., in which case there is no penalty to the saving throw. In such a case however

in order to properly "blow" a kiss spell the individual storing the kiss must have *direct* eye contact with the intended target.

In conclusion the above is offered in hopes of adding just a bit of unexpected deviousness to players and ref's alike seeking new and varied means of dealing with long-standing "problems" of a personal nature. Any given spell with the corresponding effect desired, currently available to a given individual within class restrictions can be used in this manner, given that said individual already knows the Transference spell formula. Certainly the employment of the magical kiss will not work all the time in all cases, but judicious application can often make a considerable difference, especially when the other fellow least expects it.

## Spell of Kiss Transference (Magic - User)

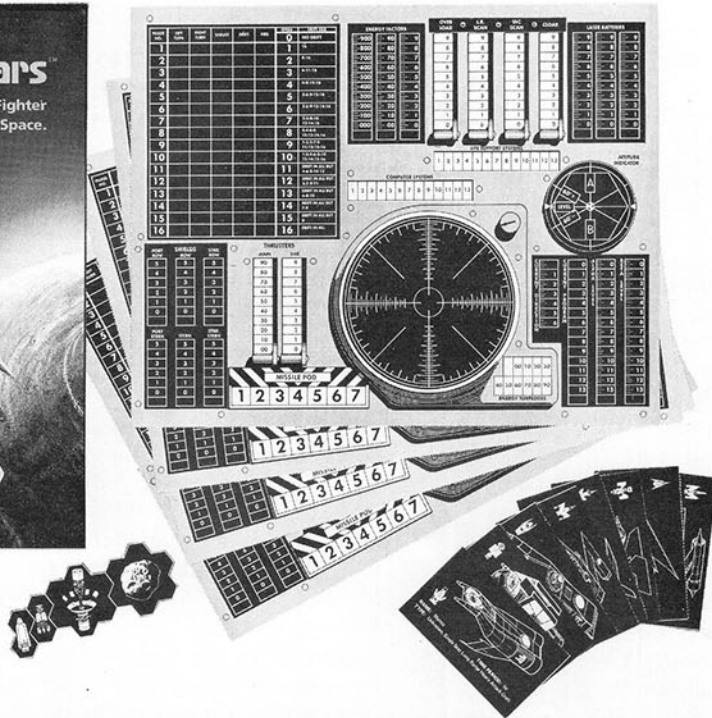
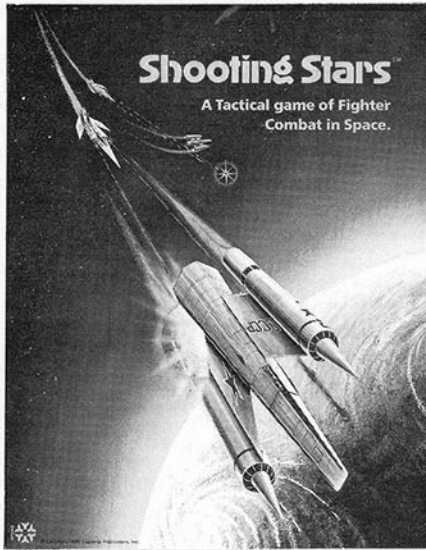
Level : 4      Composition: M, V, S  
Range : Touch      Cast. Time: 4 Segments  
Duration : One day      Saving Throw: None  
Area : One person

A spell of kiss transference, when cast in conjunction with a secondary or "effect" spell, allows the spell caster to magically "store" the effect(s) of the second spell on his person or another for a period of twenty-four hours. During this time the effect(s) of the given spell will lie dormant, undetectable by normal means, until "triggered" by the bestowing of a kiss on the intended recipient at that time the full effect(s) of the stored spell come into play.

The material component for this spell is a drop of human blood from any source. Also required is a material component of the effect spell where applicable, or another mechanism (i.e. ring, scroll, etc.) the spell is made available by. This second material component will be used up upon completion of the preparations needed to properly store a magical spell in the guise of a kiss.

Certain spells that do not otherwise normally have material components can still be used if first transferred to another medium as described above.

# Shooting Stars™



## A Tactical game of Fighter Combat in Space.

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- Vector Movement

**Components:** The boxed game components include a 21½" by 27½" mapboard, a sheet of die cut unit counters, game table cards, Ship Specification Cards for the major crafts used in the game, Ship Control Console Cards, a complete rule book with scenarios, two dice and a sturdy plastic tray.

**Scale:** 100 Kilometers per hex, 5-10 seconds per Turn, individual ships.

**Number of Players:** Two to Four

**Average Playing Time:** Thirty minutes to three hours depending on scenario.

**Shooting Stars** is a tactical level game of fighter vs. fighter combat beginning in the near future. Scenarios range from the first U.S.-Soviet Space War, to Asteroid Pirates, to Alien invaders. The unique movement system gives the feel of piloting a one man craft in space while at the same time providing a fast paced, smooth flowing game. The Advanced Game and Optional Rules allow for Energy usage in fifteen areas of ship's functions and provide a myriad of special weapons. Scenarios range from Solitaire scenarios such as battling an unmanned outpost, destroying "Rebel Blockade runners" and protecting an Orbital Depot from "Asteroid Pirates" to multi player situations where a group of fighters attack a space station. Ship Specification cards provide information for eight different types of fighter craft, while the scenarios provide the information for space stations, larger craft, the movement of Asteroids, fighting in the gravity influence of a Black Hole and much, much more.

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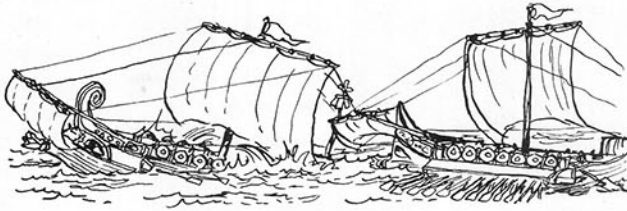


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# Trireme - Ancient Naval Warfare

by Steve List



*The Avalon Hill Company*  
4517 Harford Road  
Baltimore, Maryland 21214  
(First Published by *Battleline Games*)  
Design: Ed Smith/Decalset  
Redesign and Development: Arnold Hendrick  
Graphics: Arnold Hendrick and Steve Burnett  
Topic: Naval combat of the Greek and Roman periods  
Size: one 22x28 inch map, 495 counters  
Scale: not specified, but appears to be about 100 ft. per hex, 2 min. per turn  
Game System: The "Fleet Game" uses alternating movement and simplified procedures; the "Ship Game" uses pre-plotted simultaneous movement and much bookkeeping to add detail at the cost of time  
Complexity: Moderately simple to Moderately high  
Solitaire Playability: Pretty good  
Price: \$15.00  
Published: June 1979 (reprinted by AH 1980)

**TRIEME** is a tactical naval game of oared ships, with ten scenarios ranging in time from Classical Greece to late Imperial Rome. Or rather, it is two games, a "Fleet Game" and a "Ship Game". The Fleet Game has two purposes. As a simpler version than the Ship Game, it serves as an introductory game for new players, and as a step in learning ship handling and tactics. More importantly, it serves as a streamlined set of mechanics to allow play to involve large numbers of ships and to allow recreation of large battles without bogging players down in detail. For this purpose, almost all the information about a given ship is printed on the counter or indicated by a marker.

## Components

The counters themselves are one inch long and one-half inch wide and occupy two hexes on the board, and indicate each ship type (e.g., bireme, cataphract dekare) and identity (a Greek letter

name, e.g., Trireme Delta), its size number, boarding strength, fast speed and cruise speed. Two identical sets in different colors are provided, giving a wide variety of types. A smaller third set in a neutral color provides specialized types which can be used with either main set. The various markers (including a considerable number to indicate shorelines and reefs) are one-half inch square, and like the ship counters are the "traditional" extra-thick type; they primarily indicate status (e.g., crippled, grappled). Three different colored sets of Marine Groups are provided to act as possession markers in the Fleet Game and troop units in the Ship Game. The remaining components are a 38-page rules book, a 17"x11" card with charts, a 28x22 inch map with large (1 inch) hexes, a pad of Log Sheets for the Ship Game, and a box with four color cover art.

## Fleet Game

The sequence of play for the Fleet Game is: cripple/recovery/movement/combat. The first player moves all eligible ships, then the second player moves his (ships rammed by the first player cannot move). After movement, results of any rammings are determined, attempts to grapple made, boarding actions fought, and, finally, degrappling attempts made.

Cripple recovery is based on a die roll and can result in sinking, permanent crippling, no result or full or partial recovery. Crew quality, which figures in most aspects of the game, plays no part. Crippled ships suffer reduced movement, ramming and boarding capabilities.

Movement is done at one of two possible maximum speeds (unless crippled): cruising and fast speed. Use of fast speed may result in the crew tiring, which prevents use of fast speed for the rest of the game. This is determined by a die roll based on crew quality. An expert crew has only one chance in six of tiring, a "slave" crew five, with average and green crews in between (Slave crews are an

invention of fiction and the movies — they are included to show why there were *not* useful, and to provide a degraded condition in which to classify crews of captured or recaptured vessels). Movement is accomplished by moving the bow end of the counter into one of the three forward adjacent hexes, with the stern entering the hex vacated by the bow. This requires one Movement Point and allows forward motion to take place while turning. "Backwater" movement is also allowed — the entire movement allowance is spent to move one hex to the rear, either straight or with a turn.

Ramming and Oar Raking take place during movement. Ramming occurs if a ship can expend a Movement Point to move straight ahead into the target ship's hex, but no actual movement is made, and the results of the ram are not determined until both players have finished movement. Oar Raking is resolved during movement. If the moving ship passes at full speed adjacent to the target from the proper angle, a Rake may be attempted. Each player rolls one die (adding 1 if his crew is of better quality) with the rake working (crippling the target) if the raker has the higher roll. Ramming is more involved. Each player rolls two dice, and adds to this the size number of his ship. Further adjustments are made for crew quality, angle and location of ram, speed and a few other considerations. Each player subtracts the other's total from his own and consults a table which gives the effect on his ship only. If the adjusted totals are within 4 of each other, either both ships are crippled or both unharmed. Otherwise, the ship with the larger total is unharmed and the smaller is sunk or crippled.

Ships which are adjacent at the start of the boarding phase may attempt to grapple. In all cases in which ships are grappled after this point, Boarding Battle occurs, with each ship dividing its Boarding Value as necessary to fight every ship it is grappled to. The only results are stalemate and capture of one of the ships; no reduction in combat strength is suffered.

## Options

Optional rules can be used; chief among them is Sailing. This gives auxiliary propulsion for oared vessels and is required in some scenarios when pure sailing vessels are employed. Other options include drifting wrecks, drift of grappled ships, and use of special boarding and grappling equipment. In addi-



tion, many of the optional rules from the Ship Game can be employed with no modification, while some of its standard rules can also be used in the Fleet Game at the cost of some paperwork.

Play of the Fleet Game is quick, at least until a large number of ramming or Boarding battles starts occurring. The dice rolling required will tend to slow things down, at times to a considerable extent. This should not lessen the enjoyment (unless you are losing badly!). The rules are, by and large, complete and well done, with only one noticeable glitch (Boarding Battle results are expressed in terms of the "weaker" and "stronger" ships, hardly applicable for the situation "Values exactly equal").

As far as "accuracy", in historical terms, is concerned, various abstractions reduce it. The only one I really object to concerns captured ships. Once a ship is captured, it automatically becomes crippled, tired and of slave quality. It can recover from the crippling through, and become quite useful. The lack of fast speed and reduced quality naturally degrade ramming capability (though not a great deal), and their utility in a boarding action is not affected at all. A prize crew, spending time guarding the oarsmen, can still melee just as effectively as the full strength crew of a fresh vessel. This allows use of captured vessels alongside one's own, and actually turns capture into a form of reinforcement. This artificial condition could easily be corrected by a rule, that, for example, captured ships have a Boarding Value of 1. Since most ships have Boarding values of 4 or more, and capture is a near certainty at odds over 2-1, this would do much to discourage throwing captures back into the fray.

For those familiar with other naval games, the Fleet Game is similar to SPI's *FRIGATE*, while the Ship Game is along the lines of the *Battleline/AH WOODEN SHIPS AND IRON MEN*. The former is concerned with facilitating the handling of fleets in action, and is operational in scope, while the latter deals more with the tactical handling of single ships or small squadrons. The level of detail reached in the Ship Game is considerable, leading to a great deal of bookkeeping if one tries to fight large battles.

### The Ship Game

The bookkeeping is done on the Log Sheet, which has spaces for all possible considerations: name, type, crew quality, size, speed under oars (various maximum speeds are available depending on

the amount of "cargo" carried, *i.e.*, marines, artillery and other equipment), holes (the number of times the ship is holed by a ram), tiring (unlike the Fleet Game, ships have a set number of times, dependent on quality, that they can use fast speed), sails carried, sailing speed for each wind direction, size of deck crew, size of marine crew (of Heavy, Light and Missile types), combat equipment (artillery, towers, *etc.*), number of oarsmen, and the order section. Orders are movement orders, written secretly and resolved simultaneously, in a more complex sequence of play: 1) determine changes of wind and weather (optional); 2) write orders; 3) resolve movement; 4) perform drift movement; 5) missile fire; 6) grappling; 7) boarding battles; 8) morale checks; 9) formation of marine groups; 10) degrappling; 11) cripple recovery attempts.

Movement is one of the main changes from the Fleet Game. All movement points for the ship's current speed must be expended, if only by a "pause" command. Turns, except for the three smallest vessel types, cost two movement points and are resolved as a pause followed by movement of the counter. Two additional moves are added: Bow Starboard and Bow Port, in which the ship pivots on its stern hex. Backwater may only be done straight to the rear, but can be combined with a Bow Port/Starboard movement. Full speed cannot be used in any turn following use of Backwater or Bow Port/Starboard. Crippled ships have no movement allowance, but may execute one movement command, whether it costs one or two movement points. Also, running aground, which appears in simple form in the Fleet Game, is more complex, and includes consideration of whether the tide is rising or falling.

Execution of movement is resolved in five steps. The total movement allowance of a ship for the turn determines in which steps it will actually move (*e.g.*, a ship with 5 Movement Points would expend one in each step; one with only one MP expends it in the last step). Ramming occurs whenever a ship moves forward into a hex occupied or being entered by another ship, in which case their movement stops and further orders are ignored. Collisions occur if ships come together by backing, bow turning or drift. Following a ram, the ramming ship must backwater (unless the target sank) and in any case following a ram or collision, ships cannot use fast speed.

Resolution of rams is elaborated. First,

one calculates the "Ram Ratio" (actually the difference in ship size, modified for crew quality, target motion and cripple status) and consults a table, rolling two dice. The dice roll is modified by rammer status and point of impact. Results are given for both rammer and target, and include sinking, crippling, holing and grappling advantage. Holing forces consultation of a table, which can result in a loss of speed, men and/or equipment, crippling or sinking. It is possible to be holed any number of times without sinking, depending on die roll outcomes. Crippling can also result from collisions, though it may be avoided, with crew quality a factor, and is recovered from differently than in the Fleet Game. Two dice are rolled: a 2 forces abandoning ship, 11 or 12 recovery with a loss in speed. Rolls of 8, 9 or 10 may allow complete recovery, again depending on crew rating.

Missile fire is available at a range of one hex for missile marines and two for artillery, but effects only personnel and artillery. Losses are taken in a particular order, with all targets of one type eliminated before the next type suffers any loss. This is a rather artificial abstraction, but given the relative unimportance of missile fire, not of critical impact.

Grappling and degrappling procedures are altered. Only the player(s) attempting it rolls dice, modifying the roll for a wide variety of causes, and is successful on a roll of 9 or more. If both players wished to grapple or degrapple, they could fail, where in the Fleet Game it would be automatic.

Naturally enough, boarding battles are more complex as well. Boarding factors are determined by the number of marine and deck crew factors on the ship (optional rules count towers and armed oarsmen as well). Each ship involved in a battle must divide its available forces between all enemy ships it is grappled to. In each battle, the player cross-indexes a die roll with the number of boarding factors he used to determine the factors lost by the other. The player with higher losses in a battle (or both, if losses are equal) is the "loser" of that round, and must make a morale check for each battle it loses. Failure of this check forces surrender, and crew quality (surprise), the number of holes in the ship, and absence of friendly marines all influence the morale check and surrender procedure. Once a ship surrenders, any surviving marines and deck crew are put to death and its oarsmen reduced to

slave quality. The victor can choose to sink his prize, or form a marine group to place on board as a prize crew. Space is provided on the Log Sheet to record the composition of each marine group thus put into play.

### More Options

The optional rules for the Ship Game are many, and can be applied as desired to the Fleet Game. The most complex concerns weather. Scenarios are located in either the Eastern or Western Mediterranean, or the Northeast Atlantic, and can be set during summer or winter. Dice rolls are used to determine the wind direction from the proper table (this remains invariant), the wind strength (which can vary turn by turn) and the sea state (dependent on the wind). Winds can be Calm, Light Airs, Breeze (standard value), Strong Breeze, Storm and Gale. Sea State may be Flat, Swells, Chop and Heavy. These may reduce speed under sail and/or oars, depending on ship size. Drifting (in the Fleet Game, always one hex with the wind) may or may not take place, determined by die roll and whether the ship is under oars, sails or neither, and direction of drift may be determined by wind, tides and/or river current. The use and drifting of floating wrecks is almost unchanged from the Fleet Game.

In the Ship Game, Oar Rakes are an optional rule. If a ship is making a ram from either beam, it may elect to cancel its plotted move and try an oar rake instead. Crew qualities are compared to determine which column of the Oar Rake table is used, and two dice are rolled. The results may be the crippling of one ship (and unlike the Fleet Game, the raker may be crippled) and/or one or both ships getting a grappling advantage.

In the Fleet Game, there were provisions for "special" boarding and grappling equipment, without elaboration. The Ship Game naturally elaborates, including the Roman Harpax (Iron Hands, a catapult grapple) and Corvus (a spiked gangway to facilitate grappling and boarding) as well as towers (which improve missile fire as well as lending strength to boarding battles). Other rules which have no counterpart in the Fleet Game include the use of flame weapons and armed oarsmen, reinforced ram bows, and the beaching of ships.

### Scenarios

There are ten scenarios included, ranging from 494 BC to 370 AD and covering Greeks vs Persians and other

Greeks, and Romans vs Carthaginians, pirates, the Veneti of Gaul, Saxon raiders in Britain and of course other Romans. Guidelines are provided to allow creation of balanced homegrown scenarios. Point values for ships, crew and equipment for both the Fleet and Ship Games are given to aid in handicapping.

Before discussing play and tactics, a word is in order about the ships themselves. The two most numerous types are the *trireme* and the *cataphract quinquereme*, the standard battleships of Classical and Alexandrian/Republican Roman times, respectively, but many others (a full two dozen) are represented, most of which were oared warships whose chief weapon was the ram. Unlike many representations of these ships (including the game box cover), they were not huge, slabsided vessels whose oarsmen sat one above another in the hold next to oar looms in the hull. They were more like large racing shells with a ram bow and a runway-like deck over the oarsmen's heads for use by deck hands and marines. The rowers' heads and shoulders would be visible in the space between the vessel's side and this deck. Even in the trireme, which did have three banks of oars (one man to each), the rowers would be staggered only slightly in height, with the lowest bank of oars protruding through the hull just below the outrigger structure which supported the other banks.

Since the rowers in the trireme were exposed, decking the vessel over completely accomplished two things, protecting the rowers and providing more deck space for more marines. This made a new type, the *cataphract*, which was slower and top heavy compared to the standard trireme. The answer was more oarsmen, but not more oars. It was found that multiple men per oar was more efficient, so larger ships had only two banks, but were still named as if they had one man per oar. Thus the *quinquereme* had five men for two oars, the *deckares* 10 and the monster *sedekares* sixteen (*THE SHIP*, by Bjorn Landstrom, contains excellent reconstructions of the trireme, not to mention many other outstanding pictures of vessels up to the modern era as well).

### Tactics

Combat with such vessels is naturally different from that with cannon-armed sailing or steam ships. In the latter case, the line ahead is the most effective formation, and a commander would try to avoid having his T crossed (i.e., having

his line pointed at the broadside of the enemy's line). For ram combat, the situation is almost exactly reversed. One must point the bow at the enemy to ram him, and one's sides are most vulnerable and must be protected. Formations like Line Abreast (straight, or echeloned to either or both flanks) are more appropriate, with one or more lines behind the lead to rescue ships in trouble or exploit enemy weaknesses. Maneuvering in line abreast is clumsy, though, compared to line ahead, and in operational terms, knowing when and how to make the transition is important.

The tactics of fighting with rams can be seen to be almost identical to those of fighting on land, at least through Napoleonic times, with some necessary differences. While the man is the ultimate, indivisible unit of a land formation, at sea it is the ship. Men can be packed shoulder to shoulder, and units can be in literal contact, without seriously affecting the ability of the individual to turn on his heel and leave, should he find it prudent. Ships are not nearly so nimble, and require maneuvering room all around. Nor can they easily disengage from combat when that requires physical contact in terms of ram penetration of enemy hulls and grappling. Once battle is (literally) joined, engaged ships will be (literally) tied up, their formations broken as combat degenerates into melee. Those which successfully deal with an opponent won't have to look far for another, and usually won't be permitted to by the similarly available enemy ships. To reinforce parts of the battle line, an organized reserve is clearly required, as individual ships, pulled fire-brigade fashion out of combat, would be slow to respond and less effective.

### Summary

The scenarios provided are limited by the counter mix of one game, and represent either small battles or arbitrarily limited segments of larger ones. Many begin with the ships already deployed into battle lines as well. To truly capture the feel of mammoth ancient battles, with the pre-contact maneuvering and exploitation of wind and shore line, it is necessary to use several copies of the game and several players as well. This provides for the board space, ship counters, and possible command control problems actually faced. All in all, this is a good tactical game which can be scaled up to an operational one merely by use of more components, for those gluttons for work who desire such things.

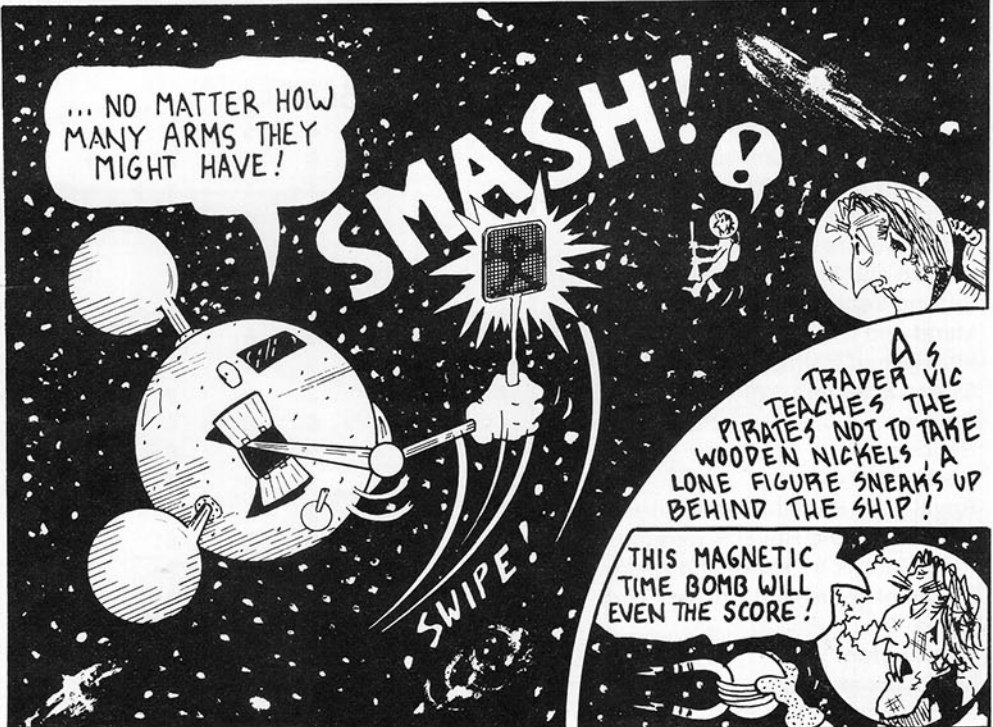
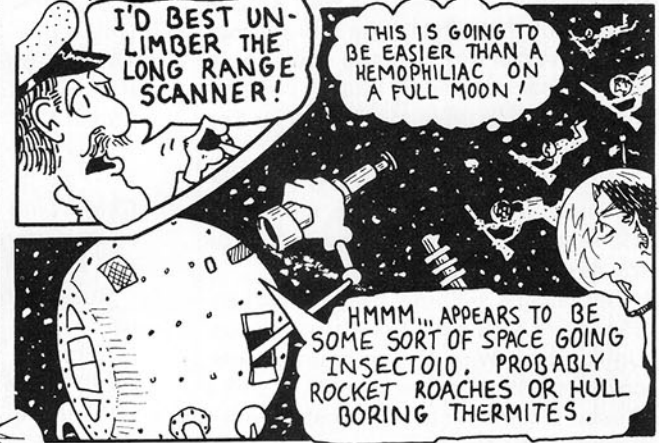
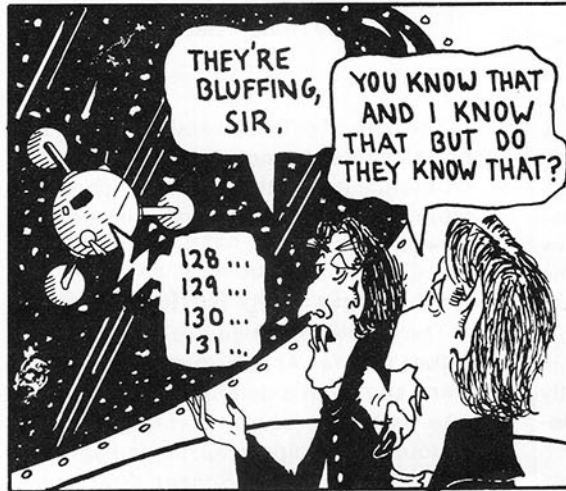
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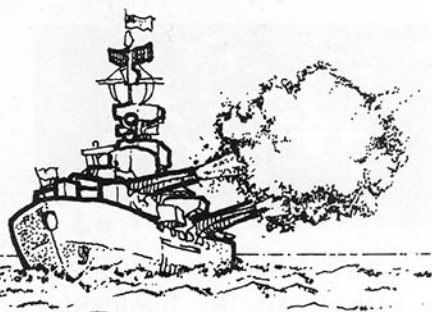
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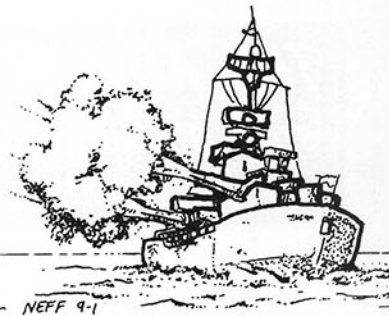
DISCOVERED BY THE INFAMOUS PIRATES OF OPHUCHI II, CAPTAIN VIC MUST ACT QUICKLY IF HE IS TO SAVE HIS SHIP FROM A SEVERE RANSACKING! BY THREATENING MUTUAL ANNIHILATION IN THE WOODEN NICKEL'S SELF DESTRUCTING ANTIMATTER BLAST, VIC HOLDS THE PIRATES AT BAY. TENSION MOUNTS AND NERVES BEGIN TO FRAY AS THE FATEFUL COUNTDOWN GOES ON... AND ON... AND ON...





# Refitting War At Sea<sup>©</sup>

by Robert Barrow



Avalon Hill's *War At Sea* recreates the Battle of the Atlantic in a simple, fast paced game. However, a major drawback is the lack of historical realism. The following suggestions introduce new ship ratings and address many of the minor problems in the game.

## Battleship Combat Table

The combat system has been slightly modified when dealing with major battleships. Battleships are armored to keep out or minimize the damage that an enemy shell hit creates. *War At Sea* leaves out this effect. The more armor you have, the less damage you should receive from an enemy attack. The battleship combat table moves *War At Sea* much closer to real life action.

Die rolls are the same as in *War At Sea*. However, if your target is a battleship, the reroll for damage is now based on the new battleship combat table.

Battleships will now be damaged according to their real life defensive value. Unlike their *War At Sea* counterparts, cruisers will no longer be able to sink a Queen Elizabeth class battleship with a lucky die roll. Now more realism and less luck will decide battles in *War At Sea*.

The uses of smaller warships, U-boats and air strikes are not changed. The only difference is that the battleship combat table is used when a battleship is chosen as a target.

## New Ship Ratings

The following list details revised ship values for *War At Sea*. (Note: All battleships start with a defensive value of six. The battleship combat table gives the various battleships' realistic damages.)

Germany: *Admiral Scheer, Graf Spee* and *Lutzow* 1-1-5 each; *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* 2-6-7 each; *Bismarck* and *Tirpitz* 6-6-6 each; *Graf Zeppelin* 0-2-7; *Blucher, Admiral Hipper* and *Prince Eugen* 1-1-7 each.

Italy: *Gorizia, Fiume, Zara* and *Pola* 1-1-7 each; *Andrea Doria, Giulio Cesare, Caio Duilio* and *Conte di Cavour* 3-6-5 each; *Littorio, Vittorio Veneto, Impero* and *Roma* 4-6-6 each.

Russia: *Marat* and *Okt. Revolutia* 3-6-3 each.

England: *Malaya* and *Barham* 4-6-3 each; *Queen Elizabeth, Warspite* and *Valiant* 4-6-4 each; *Repulse* 3-6-5; *Renown* 3-6-6; *Nelson* and *Rodney* 6-6-3 each; *Royal Sovereign, Royal Oak, Reso-*

*lution, Ramillies* and *Revenge* 4-6-3 each; *Hood* 4-6-3; *King George V, Prince of Wales, Duke of York, Howe* and *Anson* 5-6-5 each; *Glorious* and *Courageous* 0-1-6 each; *Ark Royal, Victorious, Formidable* and *Illustrious* 0-2-6 each; *Sussex, Suffolk, Devonshire, Cumberland, Norfolk, Dorsetshire, Kent* and *Exeter* 1-1-6 each.

America: *Washington* 9-6-5; *New York* and *Texas* 4-6-3 each; *Wichita* and *Augusta* 1-1-7 each.

French (if variant ships desired): *Jean Bart* 3-6-7 (only one turret instead of two aboard); *Richelieu* 5-6-7; *Dunkerque* and *Strasbourg* 4-6-6 each.

Several classes of battleships are given different values and speeds. The smaller Italians and the Queen Elizabeth classes are good examples. They were rebuilt in different forms and as a result, they rate out to different ship values.

Gunnery changes are based on rate of fire, weight of shell and the number of guns. The battleship *Washington* fired a 2700 pound shell from nine guns as opposed to only eight guns and a 2000 pound shell for *Bismarck*. Many of the battleships with similar main battery guns have different values because of their rate of fire. If one ship fired 4 shells to 3 for another ship, it has a marked advantage in firepower.

The German eleven inch gunned battleships fired a 695 pound shell, but even with a slightly superior rate of fire to other countries, they were no match for bigger gunned battleships.

## Submarines

Germany started the war with forty six submarines (ten more were non-operational) and only one half of these could be sent into the open seas. England was caught by surprise and her countermeasures were suspect at the beginning of the war. As the war progressed, the Germans and the Allies struggled to gain the upper hand in the submarine war. The U-Boat Attack Table is suggested as a way to better focus the effect of the submarine in the game.

## Battleship Combat

Ship	Die Roll						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Scharnhorst and Gneisenau	1	2	3	3	4	5	H
Bismarck and Tirpitz	1	1	1	1	1	1	I
Andrea Doria and Caio Duilio	3	3	4	6	6	6	T
Giulio Cesare and Conte Di Cavour	5	5	6	6	6	6	S
Littorio and Impero	1	1	1	1	2	2	
Vittorio Veneto and Roma	1	1	1	1	2	2	
Marat and Okt. Revolutia	5	5	6	6	6	6	I
Malaya and Barham	1	2	3	3	4	5	N
Queen Elizabeth, Warspite and Valiant	1	2	2	2	3	4	F
Repulse	3	3	4	6	6	6	L
Renown	1	3	4	5	6	6	I
Nelson and Rodney	1	1	2	2	3	3	C
Royal Oak, Ramillies and Revenge	1	2	3	5	5	6	T
Resolution and Royal Sovereign	1	2	3	5	5	6	E
King George V., Howe and Anson	1	1	1	2	2	3	D
Prince of Wales and Duke of York	1	1	1	2	2	3	
Hood	1	1	2	2	3	3	
Washington	1	1	1	2	2	3	
New York and Texas	1	2	3	3	4	5	
Jean Bart and Richelieu	1	1	1	1	2	2	
Dunkerque and Strasbourg	1	2	3	5	5	6	

## How To Use The U-Boat Attack Table

The Germany player selects an area for each submarine attack that he is allowed. Both sides roll a six sided die. The die rolls determine if an attack is allowed in that sea area. A tie does not count as a result. The players simply reroll until one side rolls a higher number.

The roll of the die to determine attacks in a sea zone is a good way to reflect the Germans constantly shifting the focus of their attacks and the Allied side trying to meet the threat with new weapons and tactics. The die roll gives a measure of which side gained the upper hand for each time period involved. If multiple attacks are allowed in a given turn, the German player can allocate as many attacks as desired into the same area. If the Allied player rolls a higher number, the German player selects another area and rerolls the die.

Ship losses are taken in a random fashion from the ships in a given area. Either choose from the available ships by drawing a hidden counter or use a die roll to determine the victim. If there is only one ship of the type listed on the U-Boat Attack Table, that ship takes the given result. If a ship type is determined from the table and one is not present in the area, reroll until a ship is selected.

These tables give a clearer picture of the submarine campaign in the European fighting. They were developed by consulting the sinkings by U-boats during the different time periods of the game.

In the early months of the war, when only a few submarines were operational and convoy protection had not been completed, most losses came from single ship sailings or stragglers from convoys. Germany made up for her shortage of submarines by sinking several British carriers or battleships in the early months.

After the fall of France in the summer of 1940, British shipping losses soared.

German submarines based in French ports could stay at sea longer and they roamed over larger areas of the ocean. Britain countered the new bases with extended range air patrols and convoyed ships for longer parts of their journeys.

American entry into the war was a mixed blessing. U-boats slashed into the East Coast traffic and caused the heaviest losses of the war. However, improved anti-submarine tactics and new record levels of ship building made Germany pay a very stiff price for future sinkings.

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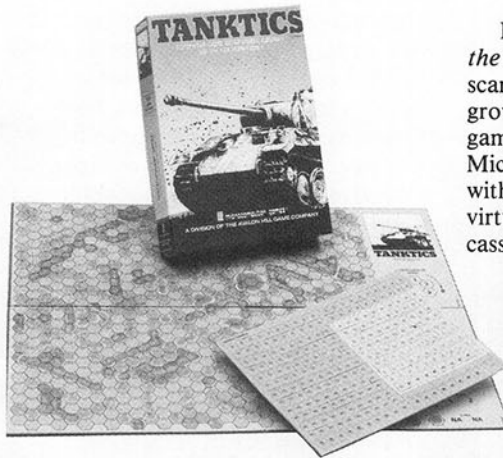
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Losses were kept down in spite of the much larger number of U-boats at sea. The combination of America and Britain reversed the slaughter. The submarine became the hunted and the Allies had large numbers of air and sea hunters.



battleship combat table. Subtract that number from ten and four is the number of repair points to fix her up for action.

### Land Based Air Attacks

The Air Attack Table reflects the German effort in the air war. As in the in the U-Boat Attack Table, roll the die for each battleship that is "damaged" on the battleship combat table. If a result is rolled that would sink the ship, reduce the damage to one less than the battleship needs before it sinks. If a carrier is "damaged" according to the Air Attack Table, roll the die for damages; however, reduce the damage to the most that would not sink the carrier. It cannot be sunk since the table ruled that the ship was damaged.

### American Ship Entry Times

A die roll is not needed and certainly does not reflect the arrival of American ships.

Battleship *Washington* arrived Scapa Flow on April 4, 1942. She departed for the United States July 14, 1942 and proceeded to the Pacific on August 28, 1942. She should be used on Turn six only.

Battleship *New York* arrived in early 1942. From July 7, 1942 and into 1943 she served as a gunnery school in the Chesapeake Bay. She should be used on Turn six for one turn only.

Battleship *Texas* left New York January 15, 1942. She was based in Iceland and stayed there until March 1, 1942. After returning to the United States, she escorted a convoy to Scotland leaving June 26, 1942 and returning to the United States July 27, 1942. Following that convoy escort, *Texas* prepared for the North African invasion and departed Norfolk October 23. *Texas* should be used for Turns five until the end of the game inclusive.

### U-Boat Attack Table

Turn	U-Boat Attacks/Turn	Die Roll	Result
1	4 attacks**		
2	1 attacks	1	Carrier sunk
3	3 attacks	2	Carrier sunk
4	1 attacks	3	Battleship sunk
5	6 attacks	4	Battleship sunk
6	1 attacks	5	Battleship damaged*
7	1 attacks	6	Cruiser sunk
8	1 attacks		

\*roll die on Battleship Combat Table for target battleship.

\*\*Roll the die for each attack allowed. If a 5 or 6 is rolled, the attack is successful and you proceed to the U-Boat Attack Table.

### Convoys

Convoy speeds should be one factor without exception. Convoys were very slow. Potter (*Sea Power* p. 549) gives a slow convoy a speed of six and one half knots. A fast convoy could make nine knots. Since most of the warships in the game could make thirty knots and the slower ones could make twenty knots, convoys should not be allowed to move very rapidly in comparison.

### Aircraft Carriers

The number of planes that aircraft carriers carried varied considerably during the war. *Eagle* carried nineteen planes in the early war days. *Ark Royal* and *Victorious* sent off strikes of just nine and twelve planes during the *Bismarck* chase of 1941. A limit should be placed on the carrier aircraft attack factors. The British should have one factor for each carrier in the beginning turns. Move this number up to two factors per ship at the fifth turn. For the final two turns, give the British three factors per carrier in the game.

### The Ships That Never Were

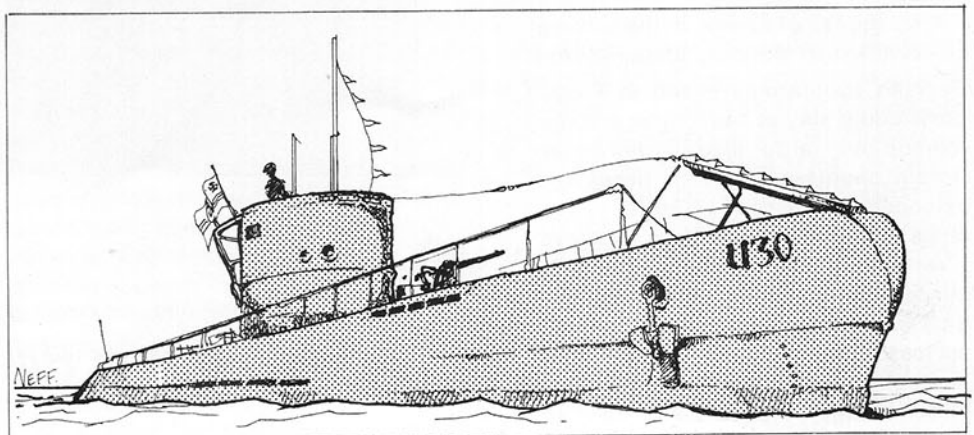
The Italian battleship *Impero* was not finished during the war. Construction was halted. If you must have this ship, a die roll, similar to that for American entry, for the arrival of *Impero* would be a reasonable compromise. However, since the ship was not really finished, a

die roll of six is needed to enter the game.

The German aircraft carrier *Graf Zeppelin* also had problems. Hitler stopped construction on his big ships to concentrate on submarine building. The carrier was captured in an unfinished state at the end of the war. If you simply must have this ship in the game, start a die roll of the same type as for the *Impero*. A die roll of six is needed to enter the game.

### Repair Values

To get the repair factors to agree with the new ship ratings, take the number of hits obtained with a die roll of six and use that column of the battleship combat table. Example: *Bismarck* takes one hit (with a die roll of six on the table). Subtract that number from ten to get the number of repair points needed. *Bismarck* requires nine repair points total. *Conte di Cavour* takes six hits on the



The American cruisers can be used from Turn five forwards.

### British Battleships To The Pacific

At the beginning of Turn four (prior to any other activity), *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse* leave the game. They went into the Pacific and were sunk by the Japanese shortly after their arrival. If either of these ships have been destroyed (or are in a damaged condition) the Allied player must substitute another battleship of equal or superior value.

### Allied Land Based Air Attacks

Allied land based air attacks should be reduced to one factor per turn. The allies did not sink any battleships with land based air power. After the time period of the game, *Tirpitz* was smashed by six ton bombs. Any attack which results in sinking an Axis battleship should be reduced to one less hit than would sink her.

#### Air Attacks/Turn (German)\*

Turn	Number of attacks
1	1
2	1
3	3
4	2
5	2
6	1
7	1
0	1

#### Air Attack Table

Die Roll	Result
1	Carrier sunk
2	Carrier damaged
3	Carrier damaged
4	Battleship damaged
5	Battleship damaged
6	Cruiser sunk

\*Roll the die for each German Air Attack allowed. If a 5 or 6 is thrown, the attack is successful and you proceed to the Air Attack Table.

### Postscript

These suggestions do not have to be taken all in one package. They are suggestions only. However, *War At Sea* is a much more accurate and interesting game using these variant rules. It is also a lot of fun because you have a whole new game.

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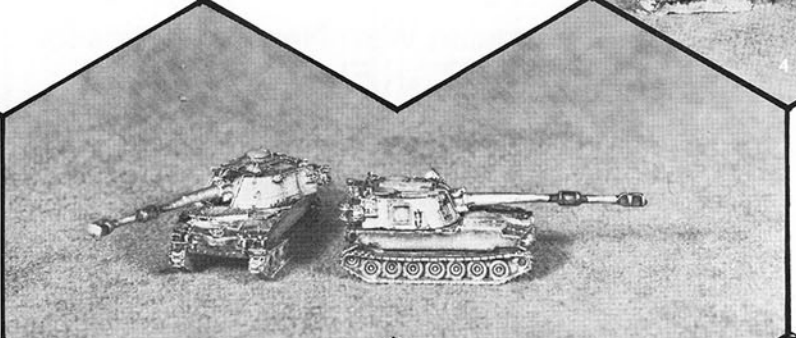
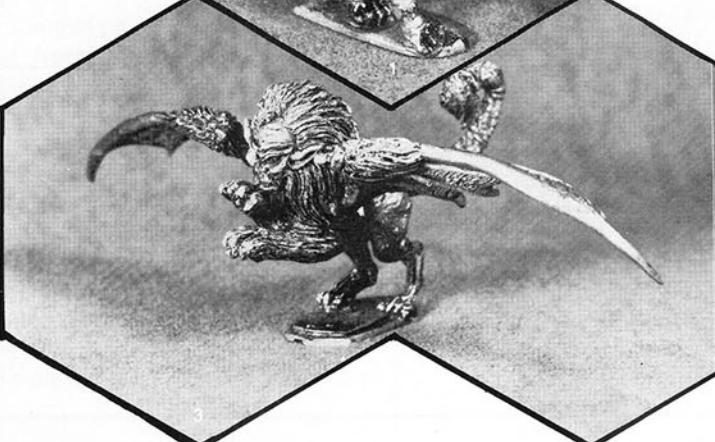
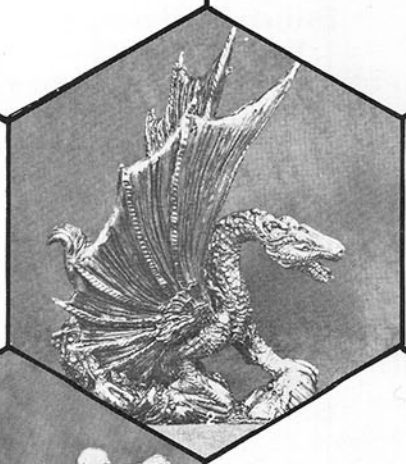
&

Finieous Fingers, Fred & Charly and all the gang!

Don't Miss It!!



# Phigure Photos





Each month *Adventure Gaming* will be featuring photographs of miniature figures and accessories in our *Figure Photos* column. We look forward to keeping you well informed about the newest miniatures on the market. This column will not be a review column. *Adventure Gaming* photographs each figure under identical, controlled, conditions. We thereby allow the figures to speak for themselves — you be the judge.

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25mm  
1284 Lucifer

I'd like to introduce this column by saying, first of all, that until recently, air warfare games had been sadly neglected in the wargaming business. But within the last 5 years we've seen quite a number of games appear on the market. These games deserve a certain amount of attention and unfortunately no one is giving them that attention. Over the next couple of issues of Adventure Gaming I will talk about some of these games in detail and about the design concepts behind these games. I will talk about whether these concepts are realistic or not, and why.

Now some of you are wondering who I am and from where do I derive my expertise. I've been playing wargames for thirteen years. My favorite field is in air-warfare games and I've played almost everything concerning airplanes on the market. On top of that I've got two years of intensive Navy flight training under my belt, I've won my wings of gold and I'm currently flying the A-7E Corsair II with Attack Squadron 122 out of Lemoore, California. In addition, I'm a private pilot working on an instrument rating and a



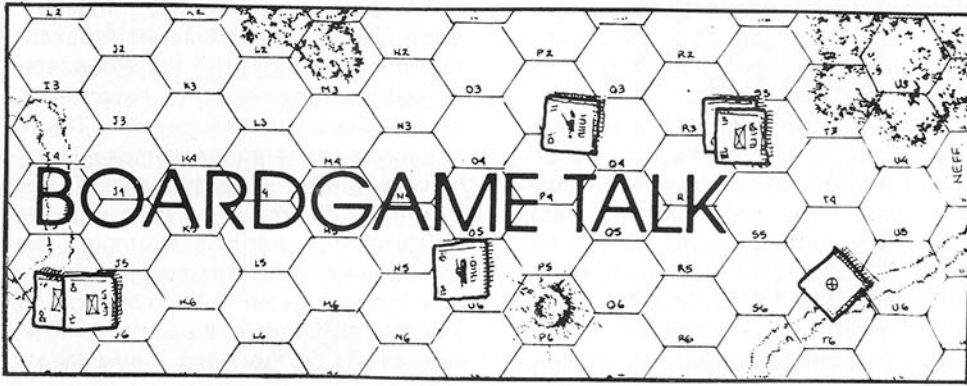
commercial license. In essence, I know what I'm talking about and I won't be throwing BS at you with this column. In the near future I'll be doing a comprehensive review of *Rolling Thunder*, I'll pick at *Mig Killers* a little, I'll talk about the good and bad in *Air-War*, *Air Force*, *Basic Fighter Combat*, *Advanced Fighter Combat*, and many others.

Well, to conclude this introductory column I'd like to just list the currently available air warfare games and rate them on a scale of one to ten in various categories, one being generally the worst and ten the best. These ratings, of course, are my own personal opinion and need be taken as such. The worthwhile purchase column is rated mainly with reference to fun and playability. I invite the designers and any knowledgeable players to write and rebut any of the things I say about various games in the column or any of the ideas I will be putting forth from here on.

*P.S. "Fox-2" is the fighter/attack pilot's radio call for a simulated sidewinder launch during air combat training.*

GAME	CO.	PLAY-ABILITY	RULES & CONTENTS	APPARENT REALISM	FUN	WORTHWHILE PURCHASE
AIR WAR	SPI	5	8	7	5	7
AIR WAR 80	SPI	5	8	8	5	7
FOXBAT & PHANTOM	SPI	6	6	5	6	6
SPITFIRE	SPI	6	5	4	5	5
FLYING CIRCUS	SPI	6	5	4	6	5
LUFTWAFFE	AH	7	6	3	7	6
AIR FORCE	AH	7	6	6	6	8
RICHTHOFEN'S WAR	AH	7	6	6	7	8
AIR FORCE	BL	7	6	5	7	8
DAUNTLESS	BL	7	7	5	7	8
AF EXPANSION KIT	BL	7	7	6	7	8
MIG KILLERS	GS	6	5	6	6	6
BASIC FTR. COMBAT	GS	5	7	8	5	6
ADVANCE FTR. COMBAT	GS	5	8	8	5	7
FIGHT IN THE SKIES	TSR	7	6	5	8	8
AIR POWER	TSR	5	4	3	5	4
ACE OF ACES	NDC	8	6	6	7	8
ROLLING THUNDER	OSG	6	7	5	6	6
EAGLE ONE	QG	5	4	3	3	3
DOGFIGHT	MB	8	5	1	7	6

CODES: SPI — SIMULATIONS PUBLICATIONS INC.; AH — AVALON HILL; BL — BATTLE LINE; GS — GAMESCIENCE; TSR — TSR HOBBIES, INC.; NDC — NOVA DESIGN CORP.; OSG — OPERATIONAL STUDIES GROUP; QG — Q-GAMES; MB — MILTON BRADLEY.



## More Best of Board Wargaming

by John Prados

In this space last issue BOARDGAME TALK discussed some of the "golden oldies" among simulation games. In fact some of the games we spoke of are probably unknown to many if not the majority of gamers. With the existence of a variety of game publishers and the constant succession of new titles appearing it is inevitable that hobbyists remain unaware of some game designs of sur-

passing quality. A succession of new material to see and master is not only characteristic of the game field but of most. Usually the function of informing interested persons of items of interest is exercised by media. As in many fields there is a media in the game hobby and the topic today is a short survey of the game media.

There are actually two major sources

of information about games. One is the periodical literature, the second a small number of books that has come out. A review of both types with some description of typical contents may be of help to hobbyists who wonder where they might find out more about games.

The discussion may as well begin with magazines that *contain* games. Here the highest circulation offering is *The Dragon* but this publication focuses on fantasy and role-playing games and need not concern us too much here. Similarly, Simulations Publications puts out a science fiction magazine-with-game, *Ares*, which is soon to put out its first material from a known science fiction author. Better known to board wargamers is SPI's magazine *Strategy & Tactics*, a bimonthly which usually contains two major historical articles, a number of "short takes," and a game. Readers familiar with S&T already may be interested to hear that the SPI people intend shortly to bring out some magazine games with as many as 400 counters (a full rather than a half countersheet). Less well known than S&T but with a similar format is *The Wargamer*, put out by Britain's Simulation Games Ltd. Under the editor-

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ship of Keith Pouleter this British magazine with a growing stateside circulation is acquiring a reputation for publishing innovative treatments of novel game situations. For example their recent game *Drive on Damascus* is a simulation of the British invasion of Syria in 1941 designed by Vance von Borries, who previously has done *Air Assault on Crete* for Avalon Hill.

All of the above magazines include reviews of new games. *The Wargamer* goes even farther and devotes a substantial proportion of its content to this kind of material. But beyond these are a category of magazines that specialize in reviews and related types of articles. Most prestigious among these magazines, because it is not tied to any game company, is *Fire & Movement* which comes from Baron Publishing in California. Were it not for the fact that *F&M* has evident production difficulties, particularly on making its scheduled publication dates, the magazine would be even more successful. *F&M* has recently changed from a bimonthly to a quarterly format, a change which will hopefully assist in meeting its production deadlines. Much more dependable than *F&M* has been Don Lowry's *Campaign Magazine*, also out of California. This remains a bimonthly, with both capsule and long reviews along with articles about play of games and about given rules subsystems or data content of particular games. *Campaign*, for example, has been running an extended series of pieces on the accuracy and play of games in Avalon Hill's *Squad Leader* series. Finally there is SPI's magazine *Moves*. This typically contains review articles on different game genres and lately it has devoted considerable attention to computer games. *Moves* also has sections edited by English hobbyists and is projecting the addition of a Canadian game section.

What is most lacking from the above publications and is only occasionally seen is the kind of article that focuses on the strategy, tactics, and play of a particular game. This is most surprising considering that when game media first began, with the Avalon Hill *General* in 1962, this was the *only* kind of article there was. Today the *General* is still the only magazine to concentrate on this kind of material. But, as in the early days, the *General* still features only Avalon Hill games. In effect, being a house organ has limited the *General* to this editorial content. The *General* should be applauded for keeping the "strategy" article alive and other media should be

encouraged to run more such pieces, but Avalon Hill might also look beyond its own game line for interesting topics to feature.

Here we have described a veritable mass of game hobby media. It is perplexing, however, that among all the magazines described there is still none that a gamer can look to for articles on *old* games. The "golden oldies" we talked of still would not be covered for newer hobbyists. Ideally one should be able to turn to a book to get this information. Unfortunately the available books don't fill the bill too well. Wargame books are inadequate in several areas: they are insensitive to important design advances, and therefore don't explain why certain things are done in a certain way in certain historical period games. The capsule game reviews exclude many important ones and are often compiled with no sense of the historical development of the hobby. The reviews themselves don't discuss the impact of each game on design practice either. No attempt is made to relate any game to the larger body of the work of a designer, company, or trend of games. Therefore, what do the reviews say that is worth reading in a book? When the game is current, we have seen, there is a plethora of places to read about it in game magazines.

The latest game book is Nicholas Palmer's *The Best of Board Wargaming* (NY: Hippocrene, 1980). This is Palmer's second effort, following his "comprehensive guide" by three years. The result is very disappointing. Six chapters devoted to surveying the field contain commentary that skips much too easily from topic to topic and really gives little sense for the development of the game genres which the author purports to discuss. The game reviews are good as far as they go but again present a static picture of a subjectively chosen selection. Of the four SPI golden oldies recalled in the last BOARDGAME TALK, none receive reviews in *The Best of Board Wargaming*. None of the reviews that are included identify the design and development staff who produced the "best" games or try to discuss the design intentions revealed by the creators. Except for game reviewers it would be difficult to find any game hobby people mentioned in all the reviews. Palmer's previous book was actually superior in this regard and also contained novel game tactics "problems" to be solved by the reader. That, at least, was fun.

I am also obliged to object to the identification and extensive discussion

of *Third Reich* as a "pocket monster" game. I have written articles and spoken at seminars in opposition to the concept of "monster" games and I have never designed such a game for print. There was never any intention to make *Third Reich* a "pocket monster" game. There is a major difference between a game which permits intricate strategies, as *Third Reich* does, and a "monster" game. The "monster game" is huge not only in physical size but in the detail of the subsystems in the rules. *Third Reich* contains subsystems that are deliberately made simple and relatively straightforward. The notion that intricate games are automatically "monster" games suggests that there may be definitional problems with the term "monster" applied to games. Personally, I would rather not have a category called "pocket monster" games if it means that strategic games arbitrarily start to fall into this category.

The point here is not to single out *The Best of Board Wargaming*. Similar weaknesses are endemic to all the previous game books. Last year we also had out the *Complete Book of Wargames* (Consumer's Guide, 1980) which has a format identical to the Palmer book except that the game reviews are interspersed within the chapters rather than gathered in a separate section at the end. Jim Dunnigan's book on playing games is not useful for our purposes; it provided only a list of games in print. The SPI staff study *Wargame Design* also had only a list. That's about all there is.

Gamers should develop more of a sense of roots. Game books won't be real books until gamers learn to give perspective to the topics they discuss. Game magazines would also be better if they had more of a retrospective view. The magazines aren't truly "current" anyway when it comes to reviewing the new games, an occasional look at game roots would certainly not prevent sufficient coverage of new games.

*Ed. Note: Luckily for John, it is AG's intention to address some of the points he makes, i.e., we plan to do articles on tactics and strategies of specific games, and look back on some of the "oldies".*

*There's an old axiom in publishing that explains why we still are "intending" to address these issues, but haven't done so already: "You print what you get!" (We're sometimes lax on syntax and grammar, but never in print.)*

*To put it bluntly, we've not been deluged with articles of this type. We are looking for them. Any takers?*

# Table-Top Replay: Ancients

## Macedonians vs. Sung Chinese

by Richard Hurchonik

In June of this year a 1000 point Macedonian Army met a 1000 point Sung Chinese Army using the Wargames Research Group 6th Edition of its *War Games Rules, 3000 BC to 1485 AD*. This period of wargaming is usually called "Ancients"; the rules are known as the 6th Edition Ancient's Rules. The order of battle for each army followed the Wargames Research Group's *Army Lists* modified by the players for the 6th Edition cost increases.

### Alexandrian Macedonian

- A, B Companion Cavalry, each 12 *Heavy Cavalry*, A-Regular with kontos
- C, D Phalangites, each 24 *Medium Infantry*, C-Regular with pike and shield
- E Phalangites, 48 *Medium Infantry*, C-Regular with pike and shield
- F Hypaspists, 12 *Light Medium Infantry*, B-Regular with long spear and shield
- G Cretans, 10 *Light Infantry*, C-Regular with bow
- H Thracian peltasts, 12 *Light Medium Infantry*, C-Irregular with rhomphia, javelin and shield
- I Agrianians, 8 *Light Infantry*, C-Regular with sling and shield
- General mounted as Heavy Cavalry with kontos

### Sung Chinese

- 1, 2 *Extra Heavy Cavalry*, each 10 EHC, C-Regular with lance and shield
- 3 *Heavy Cavalry*, 10 HC, C-Regular with javelins and shield
- 4 *Horse Archers*, 10 *Light Cavalry*, C-Regular with bows
- 5 Halberdiers, 16 *Medium Infantry*, B-Regular with halberds (The 6th Edition increases cost +1 = to 5 points per man.)
- 6, 7 *Infantry*, each 20 *Medium Infantry*, C-Regular with long spear and shield
- 8 *Heavy Infantry*, 20 HI, C-Regular with long spear and shield

- 9, 10 Archers, each 10 *Light Infantry*, D-Regular with bow
- General mounted as Extra Heavy Cavalry with lance and shield

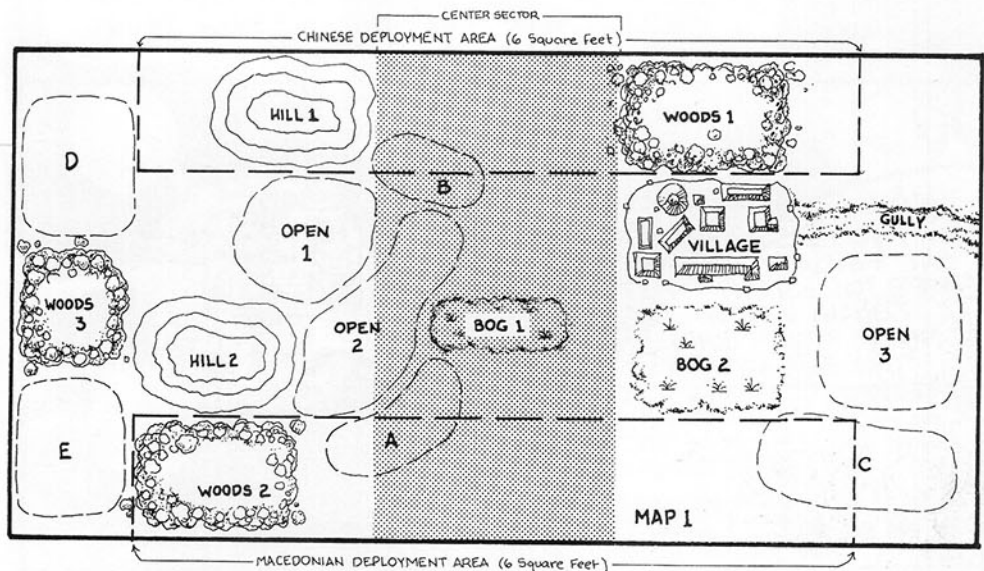
Under the 6th Edition, an ancient battle now consists of two phases. The first or preliminary phase is terrain selection and the latter is combat. This is appropriate because history has many examples of ancient commanders carefully selecting and even preparing the battlefield. In the 6th Edition each player alternates placing up to six terrain features each (including open spaces) on the table. They then roll a die to determine which pieces remain and which are removed. Placement in the center sector and in each deployment area requires a higher die roll to retain the terrain piece. Although it seems crowded when all 12 pieces are on the table, usually only three to five pieces remain. As may be expected the more common features are easier to retain than others. Terrain placement can determine the outcome of a battle before the troops are placed on the table.

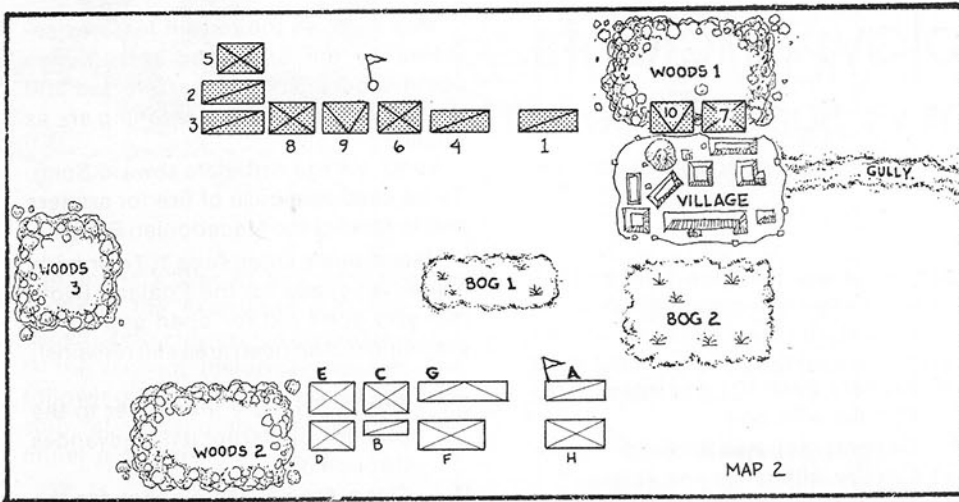
Map 1 shows the terrain features selected by the Sung and Macedonian commanders. The pieces selected and the respective player's reasoning are as follows:

Sung: Village with gate toward Sung. To be used as a base of fire for archers and to restrict the Macedonian Phalanx.

Macedonian: Open Area 1. To provide maneuver space for the Phalanx (Note that you don't roll for open areas — if you remove it an open area still remains!)

- S: Bog 1. To deny the center to the phalanx or disrupt it if it advances through it.
- M: Open Area 2. More space for the phalanx.
- S: Open Area 3. To provide maneuver space for his cavalry on that flank.
- M: Gully. To block the Sung's contemplated maneuver on that flank. (Only infantry can cross a gully)
- S: Steep Hill 1. To provide high ground for his infantry to resist the phalanx which is disordered climbing it.
- M: Steep Hill 2. To provide a base of missile fire and to protect the left flank from the superior Chinese cavalry.
- S: Bog 2. To break up an advance on the village, and to protect that flank in case the village is not retained.
- M: Woods 1. To hinder Sung entry into village and restrict switching of reserves in the Sung rear.
- S: Woods 2. To block Macedonian access to Hill 2.
- M: Woods 3. To seal off left flank to off board flank march or an on-board flank sweep.





### CRITIQUE:

The Sung overdid the defense of the village with bog 2. Difficult terrain at A or B would have been better; Sung forces could hit the phalanx as it emerged disordered from difficult terrain such as the gully or bog. Meanwhile, their superior missile power and mobility could be used. The placement of Woods 2 actually helped the Macedonian by giving cover for the superior numbers of Macedonian light troops. A bog would be better for both slowing light troops and exposing them to arrow fire. A little "tit for tat" probably caused the Sung to respond to the woods just placed in his rear. The Macedonian placement of the woods in the Sung rear was unique, but would have been better to place it at C, D, or E to provide a haven for the superior number of Macedonian light troops. C would

also back up the cavalry-stopping gully if it didn't remain. The gully placement was very effective in stopping a cavalry flank attack, especially by anchoring it to the Sung's own obstacle — his village.

After all this careful thought, Lady Luck removed many of the terrain pieces. The results are shown in Map 2. Since the Macedonian was out-scouted he placed units E, C, G, and A on the board. The rest were blocked by terrain or units in front of them from Sung view. Both commanders then wrote their battle orders. They are as follows (6th Edition order code in parentheses):

### Macedonian

- A- Hold (CWH) General with this unit for "follow me" charge.
- G- Skirmish, move quickly, center sector. (CQSX)

- C, E and Attack. Move quickly (LQA for E and D; CQA for C)
- D- Skirmish on left, move quickly (LQXS)
- B- Attack. Move warily (LWA)
- F- Hold Bog 1. Move there quickly. (CQH bog 1)
- G- Skirmish on right. Move quickly. (RQSX)

### Sung

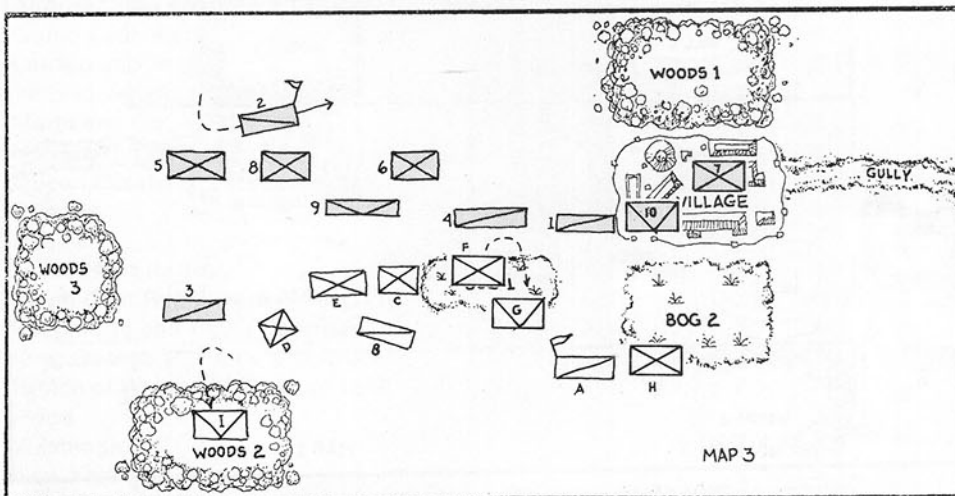
- 2, 3, 5 & 8 Attack. Advance quickly. (RQA)
- 9- Skirmish on right, move quickly. (RQSX)
- 6- Attack in center, move quickly. (CQA)
- 4- Skirmish in center, move quickly. (CQSX)
- 1- Attack on left, move warily. (LWA)
- 10- Skirmish on left, move quickly. (LQXS)
- 7- Move quickly to village and hold. (LQH village)

The Sung commander declined to make an off-board flank march. Map 2 shows the placement of all troops which was completed after the above orders were written.

In the first period both armies advanced. Missiles were fired with some casualties resulting, but no unit faltered. The Sung general, fearing for his left (suspecting wrongly that G, F, and H would advance straight ahead) rode to extra heavy cavalry (2) in order to change its orders to "follow me" to lead them to the other flank.

In the second period the Sung horse archers (4) charged the Cretans (G) which evaded the charge by running behind the hypaspists (F). Fearing the bog and the hypaspist's long spears, the archers pulled up and contented themselves firing a volley at the now uncovered hypaspists — their real intention. The evading Cretans were unable to return fire. This was first blood, discounting the first period's long range skirmishing. The Sung heavy cavalry (3) also charged the Agrainian slingers (1), which were able to evade beyond Chinese javelin range into the woodland. In the 6th Edition, evade moves are a combination of a fixed distance and a distance determined by a die roll. The Sung general noted that since the heavy cavalry (3) missed the slingers, they were vulnerable to a charge from the left flank pike phalanx

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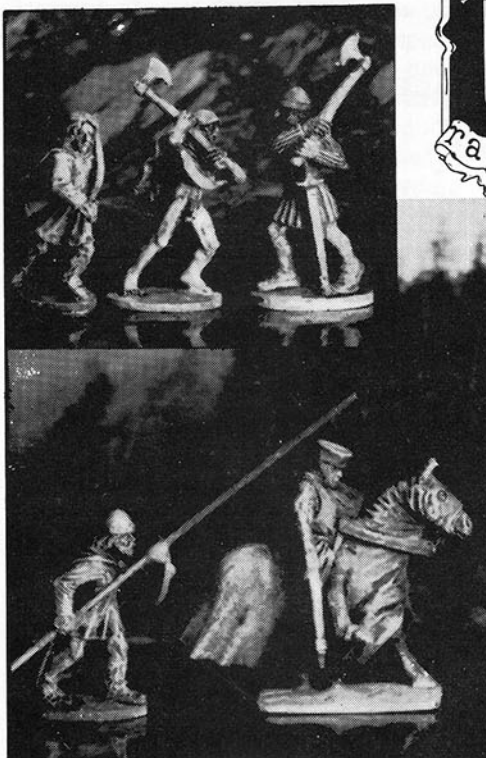
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# In The Barrel

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 sues past, and at-  
 tempt to rectify  
 them; we hope this  
 column doesn't  
 show up often.*

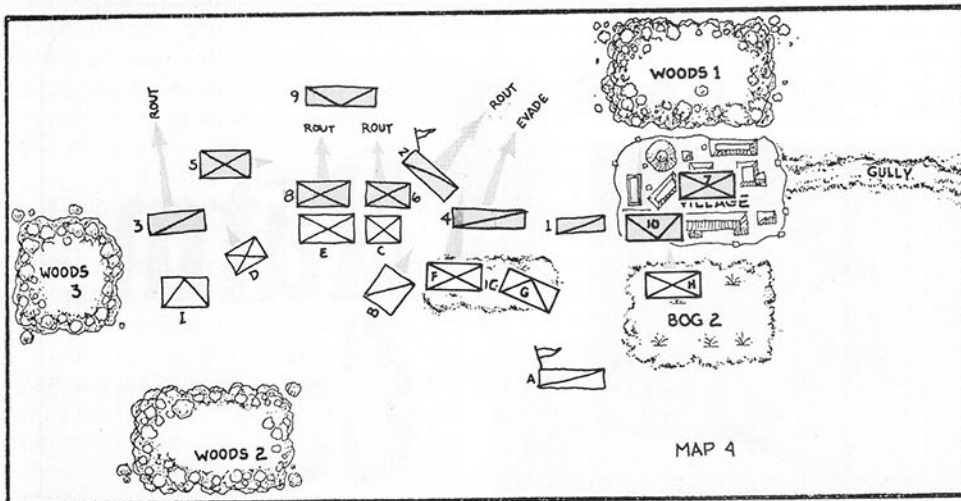
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(D); cavalry has little chance frontally against pikes. The Sung general sounded bugle signal "all mounted troops orders changed to skirmish." This would allow (3) to evade the coming phalanx charge next period. The only other unit that had to obey, (1), was out of range of the relayed bugle calls. This was a clever way to extract the unit from certain destruction next period. The extra heavy cavalry (1) declined to charge through the gap between bog 1 and bog 2 because it would have to reduce its frontage to seven to fit through; the Companion cavalry (A) was waiting to countercharge with frontage of 12, not counting the general. In effect, whichever unit narrowed and went through the gap would almost certainly lose to the other's countercharge with larger frontage. On the village flank the Chinese archers (10) and the Thracians (H) struggled through rough terrain to come to grips with one another. The Sung infantry (7) held the village palisade as ordered. (Awaiting an attack that never came!) Map 3 shows the troop positions at the end of period 2.

The third period began badly for the Sung. Phalanx (D) charged heavy cavalry (3) as anticipated, but the evade distance was the shortest possible which allowed the rallying Agrainians to be able to fire a disordered volley of missiles at their unshielded backs. This would become critical next turn. The hypaspists (F) charged the horse archers (4) who evaded while firing a "Parthian" shot. Phalanx (E) and Sung heavy infantry (8) charged each other resulting in the Chinese being pushed back. Phalanx (C) and Sung infantry (6) charged each other which resulted in twice as many Chinese cas-

ualties which routed the Chinese medium infantry (6). Sung archers (9) evaded out of the way.

Turn 4 ended the battle. The Thracians (H) charged the archers (10) who evaded. (See Map 4.) The Sung extra heavy cavalry (1) and Companion cavalry (A) continued to eye each other. The Cretans (G) fired a volley at the Sung cavalry (1) without encouraging them into action.

Companion cavalry (B) charged at extra heavy cavalry (2) simultaneously with the hypaspists (F) charging from the bog. Those charges plus seeing the Chinese infantry rout caused (2) to be shaken and thus easily routed in the ensuing melee. The routing Sung infantry (6) were unable to outrun the pursuing phalanx and were butchered to the tune of 68 casualties. Both the initial turn of rout and pursuit are a combination of fixed distances and a distance determined by the die.

Phalanx (E) pushed back heavy infantry (8) a second time causing them to rout. The "skirmishing" heavy cavalry on the Sung right flank had to test reaction to Phalanx (D)'s second charge. The combined factors of receiving casualties to missile fire, backs to enemy and being charged by infantry caused them to rout despite a respectable die roll. With four major units in rout the Sung commander conceded defeat and rode back to his tent.

### CRITIQUE (Phase 2):

The Sung's placement of one-third of his spear-armed infantry in the village was ineffectual. They would have been of more use in the center or right. The shifting of extra heavy cavalry (7) from a flank where the Chinese had a numerical edge was well as a mobility edge was

likewise an error. Infantry (7) would have been a better counter to the feared attack in the center. With combined flank and frontal attacks the phalanx (D) could have been defeated unless Companion cavalry (A) was quickly diverted to protect it. The Halberdiers (5) also failed to keep pace with the other infantry. They may have threatened the phalanx (E)'s flank or fallen on the phalanx (E)'s flank after they pushed the heavy infantry (8) back on turn 3.

Its hard to criticize a winner, but the powerful Thracians (H) seemed wasted wading through bog 2. The slingers (I) with their longer missile range seem a better choice, but it was the longer range of the slingers' stones that caused the difference and routed heavy cavalry (3) on turn 4. The Macedonian commander correctly kept his light troops in or near difficult terrain to prevent their destruction by kontos-armed cavalry.

In summary, the major difference in the 6th Edition is the importance of the terrain-selection phase and the increased effectiveness for an aggressive player. Infantry charging cavalry who did not have charge orders give a hefty minus 3 to the cavalry's morale roll. This makes a difference when cavalry advances toward infantry they cannot defeat by a frontal charge, *i.e.*, pike-armed infantry. Cavalry must be careful not to be committed too soon in the wrong place because of the difficulty in extracting them. The Sung general's innovative method of changing the cavalry's attack orders to skirmish is not completely satisfactory because the initiative then goes to the advancing infantry. The 6th Edition rules are an improvement over the 5th Edition in this author's opinion. Try them, you'll like 'em!

---

*One of the options open to historical miniatures gamers is fighting armies against each other that never met in history. Although, ultimately, the results of such "what-if" battles are a reflection of the respective players' skill, or, lack thereof, it is great fun to pit a Roman Legion against Mongols, or some other impossible matchup.*

*From time to time we will be printing replays of such battles, as well as "normal" battles. We feel that the battle replay is an extremely useful aid to understanding miniatures gaming.*



# Convention Season 1981 - Better Than Ever

Having just returned from Gencon, the final summer con this year, we feel like long lost children returning home at last. In a little over six weeks we attended three cons, in San Francisco, Cherry Hill, NJ (greater Philadelphia area) and Lake Geneva, WI. While trekking about, we also got two issues of AG out. (Our ass't. editor also attended MichiCon three weeks prior to Origins.)

While this might sound like heaven to the average gamer, it's a lot of hard work for those that exhibit.

Because we spent so much time in our booths, we don't feel qualified to sit in judgement. Therefore, this article is more in the nature of a report, not a review.

On Friday, Saturday and Sunday, June 12, 13 and 14, over 2500 people descended on the Oakland University campus in Rochester Michigan for the 18th convention put on by the Metro Detroit Gamers'. As always with this group's conventions, they found a well-organized and fun-to-be-at weekend laid out for them.

This year's Michicon featured over 40 board game tournaments, 30 role-playing tournaments, 80 miniatures events, numerous seminars and panels, 3 auctions, a figure painting contest, and over 48 exhibitors representing most of the major companies in the hobby.

An additional feature to their usual wide variety of boardgame, miniature and roleplaying events was a room devoted solely to computer gaming.

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*Computer gaming was evident as a growing portion of the hobby at all the conventions.*



A number of manufacturers released new products at the convention and several offered seminars and demos on both their new releases and old favorites.

Though it is a physical impossibility for any convention to run without any problems, the MDG group manages with fewer than any

The dealer area was spread out over a number of rooms, all situated on the same corridor. This arrangement was less than satisfactory because some of the smaller dealer rooms were overcrowded, and the arrangement necessitated the attendees having to run around looking for their favorite companies.

There were hundreds of events and seminars covering virtually every aspect



*There were numerous new products this summer to interest nearly all gamers.*

other organization I've seen. Each convention they run (they put on two a year) gets better and better.

This year, Origins was finally held on the West Coast. The site was The Dunfey Hotel in San Mateo, which is in the greater San Francisco area. The total attendance, as stated by the Origins people, was 4,000. This was a creditable turnout for the first year on the West Coast, especially considering that it was held over the 4th of July weekend, which had to hurt some.

This site was nice, but overcrowded and overpriced (the soy-burgers were ludicrously expensive). While it is nice to be able to room in the same complex as the con, it's kind of spooky with all the gamers wandering the halls at all hours, and turning up everytime you round a corner and stumble on yet another game in progress.

of gaming.

The SCA was in attendance, and provided a number of displays and demonstrations that drew respectable crowds.

The crowd was very well behaved for the most part. The preponderance of interest seemed to lie in fantasy, especially if the costumes in evidence were any barometer.

All in all, Origins was a good convention.

Next stop on our itinerary was Cherry Hill, for Gencon East, three weeks and a whole country apart.

The site was The Cherry Hill Inn, a huge hotel complex. This site, however, absorbed the crowd better than did The Dunfey.

There were a few minor problems that were not the fault of the organizers, but evidently were caused by the management. It seems that new owners had

acquired the Inn between the time the contract had been written and the con took place. This seemingly led to some creative interpretations of what the contract provided. At the eleventh hour, critical space was taken back. In order to meet their space requirements, the committee had to agree to match what the coffee shop was expected to have earned that weekend, in order to give the area to Avalon Hill.

The paramount consideration here is that they *did* it, and thereby met their obligations. Too bad that they were not more successful in providing the space promised to the dealers. All of the dealer booths were reduced to squeeze more exhibitors into the available space.

Once again, the exhibitors were scattered about through one large room, the lobby, the coffee shop and a hallway. I can't help but think that those companies in the lobby suffered from their location. Considering the problems with management that the committee had, they should

ant. Unfortunately, evidently neither contract provided for decent food at reasonable prices. We can hope that future con committees will learn a lesson from this.

Our last port of call for the summer was Gencon, the granddaddy of all major conventions. Coming a scant three weeks on the heels of Gencon East, we barely had enough time to return to Ohio and get out Issue #2. We cut it so close to the wire that we took delivery on the magazine the morning that we left for Wisconsin.

For us, it was the first convention at which we could expect some feedback, so we were really looking forward to it.

As has been the case in recent years, Gencon was held at The University of Wisconsin-Parkside, in the Kenosha/Racine area south of Milwaukee. All in all, I still feel that UW-Parkside is one of the best convention sites, even though lodging and food are some few minutes distant.

This year, the site was expanded in a most salutary fashion. For the first time, the Athletic Building was used as a giant, one-stop shopping, dealer area. All exhibitors were in one large, spacious area. For the consumer, this has to be a distinct advantage, having all the displays in one area.

While the food at Gencon certainly merited no stars, I thought it was a much better deal than at the two preceding cons, and much more worth the prices.

Gencon had a huge turnout—5,100 according to the coordinator. There were hundreds of events of all types available, with the huge AD&D tourney the most heavily entered, understandably enough. This year the expanded facilities seemed to swallow up the crowd. Even at its busiest, the dealer area was never seriously congested. The crowd was orderly and obviously enjoying itself.

We heard nothing of any screw-ups or obvious problems. The only complaints we did hear voiced concerned pre-registration and the advance filling of some of the various tourneys, particularly the AD&D. It seems that no matter how big they make the AD&D tourneys, there are always more that would have liked to enter. Next year, those disappointed this year would be well advised to pre-register themselves.

This year's conventions were a barometer of our hobby: bigger, better, and more professional than ever.

See you at Detroit Wintercon/Gamefest in November.

## What Do You Say To A 200 Lb. Hobbit Carrying A Sword?



In the past couple of years, the rising interest in FRP has manifested itself in an amusing fashion. As more and more players get more involved in their characters, more and more people show up in costume.

Long a common phenomenon at s-f cons, "dressing the part" is spreading over to game cons in a big way.

In gaming, this phenomenon is manifesting itself quite humorously in many cases. In some ways, those that do dress the part of their *personae* are laying bare their souls and psyches, because they are making manifest their fantasy and ideals.

At one con this summer, one fellow showed up dressed as a *Star Wars* rebel soldier from Hoth, complete with parka and snow goggles. He wandered around like that for two days, wrapped in enough clothing to stifle himself in the heat. Every time I went around a corner, I half expected to find the guy lying on the floor from heat exhaustion.

At another con, a very large (6'2", 200+ lbs.) fellow, wearing a big sword, stopped by the booth and proceeded to tell me all about his favorite character, his hobbit. Who am I to argue with him? In his mind, he's a small, nimble hobbit. Is that any worse than my pretending to be a mage?

The costume bit does go to extremes in some cases, as if running around in a parka in August was not extreme enough. At one con, one narcissistic male paraded around in a loincloth, preening and strutting. At another, one fellow clanked around in a suit of chainmail all weekend, sweating profusely and polluting the air all around himself, much to the discomfort of anyone unfortunate enough to be near him. Then there was the 200 lb. harem girl . . .

The preceding, while amusing or annoying depending on the circumstance, is essentially harmless. There is another manifestation that is not so inoffensive and harmless.

I'm referring to the proliferation of weapons. Luckily, only Origins didn't anticipate this. Gencon has a stated



*Numerous innovative displays were evident this summer.*

be congratulated for putting on as good a show as they did.

We did not hear of any serious schedule problems, or tourney screw-ups, and those in attendance were orderly and well behaved.

All things considered, it was a very good convention.

Both Origins and Gencon East suffered from one problem that bears mentioning in some detail here; the limitations of mega-site conventions. As at Origins, food sold by the Inn food service was of generally poor quality and grossly overpriced. Luckily for those attending Gencon East, they had alternative eating facilities much closer to the site than Origins had. The "fleece 'em while we can" mentality is, sadly, running ramp-

policy banning all weapons and facsimiles, and any post-1900 uniforms. While I don't know the policy that Gencon East had, there were few, if any, weapons to be seen.

Unfortunately, there were enough incidents of this nature at Origins to last a whole season.

To be sure, none of the incidents I heard about were deliberate or malicious in intent. Rather, they were the result of stupidity and rudeness. Countless attendees were whacked or poked by some clown's weapon, particularly in the dealer area. One series of incidents comes to mind as typical. It involved two ignorant males supposedly dressed as Ninja in each case, though I have no way of knowing if the same two fools were responsible. The use of the word ignorant is intentional — they were both wearing the double swords that were the hallmark and prerogative of the samurai class, not Ninja.

In one incident, a middle aged man, not a convention attendee, was minding his own business, using the elevator. Imagine his consternation at being set



upon by two loonies with unsheathed swords when he exited the elevator; he nearly stroked out on the spot. It seems the two *ersatz* Ninja got the wrong man in the wrong elevator, while involved in some bizarre game.

In the other incident, two clowns dressed as Ninja (as they wore face coverings it was impossible to identify them) were admiring some miniatures at the Citadel booth next to mine. Every time they bent over or squatted down to inspect a figure, some unsuspecting sucker got poked or tripped. They nailed two people apiece in as many minutes, and not only showed no remorse, but did it again until

I pointed out the problem to a security person, who promptly bounced them until they shed their weapons.

To be honest, the Origins security people made an effort to ban the weapons towards the end of the con, but only half-heartedly. Those who chose to disregard them simply hid them under their cloaks and such.

It is my sincere wish that all cons would adopt a policy, in writing, similar to that in effect at Gencon. If the sword nuts can't use some common sense, and show some consideration for the other attendees, they should have their toys taken away.

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# BOOKS

"Books" will hopefully be a regular column reviewing books of interest to games players, including boardgamers, role-players, wargamers, and computer gamers. Normally, books devoted to a single game, including game rules, will not be reviewed. Books for review should be sent to "Books", Adventure Gaming, P. O. Box 12291, Norwood, OH, 45212.

**The Playboy Winners Guide to Board Games** by Jon Freeman. \$2.50 in paperback. IOSBM 0-872-16562-0. Published in 1979 by Playboy Press, 747 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017 (add 50¢ postage — book 16562). 280 pages, some diagrams, bibliography, no index but detailed contents, c. 110,000 words. Originally published in hardcover by Stackpole Books, 1975. This is a revised edition.

Jon Freeman is probably better known in adventure gaming circles for his *Consumers Guide Complete Book of War-games*, but his *Winners Guide* should survive longer and be of more value to general games players. This book is part review, part strategy suggestions and rule variations, for a variety of parlor, classic, and war boardgames. The author intended it to be "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Board Games . . . but Couldn't Find Anyone to Ask." And he goes remarkably far toward accomplishing his goal. Moreover, he does it with a lucid, witty, forthright style. For each game he discusses what it is, how it's played, how much skill and time are involved, and anything else which might help the reader decide whether to spend \$10-20 to buy a copy.

In a few cases he describes it so well that you could make your own copy and play. He then discusses winning strategy — not "perfect plans", but how to play well and what to watch for. Sometimes he also suggests rule changes to improve the game, for example allocating political factors simultaneously (in writing) in *Origins of World War II* to help offset the strength of the Russians and Germans.

How good is his advice? The review parts are excellent. He's not afraid to debunk popular games which really don't offer much variety or require much skill, such as *Stratego* or *Orthello/Reversi*. As for strategy and variations, judging from the two games I know best (*Diplomacy* and *Dungeons and Dragons*) Freeman is sound and sometimes sharp but occasionally champion's peculiar notions (for example, that Germany should attack Russia first in *Diplomacy*, or that the Vancian magic system used in *D&D* is "neither playable nor creditable", an assertion belied by the thousands who do play it). He illuminates facets of strategy in other games I am less familiar with. His analysis of *Monopoly* may not surprise successful players in its result, but I doubt that many have rigorously examined the probabilities and investment percentages from which he derives his suggestions. In general, then, an expert might find details to disagree with, but most people can be experts at just a few games; Freeman writes as though he's expert, or nearly so, at dozens of games.

The book is divided into 11 chapters discussing the following types of games (with those prominently covered listed in parentheses): stock market and business; family (*Monopoly* 22 pages); abstract and circular race games (*Backgammon* 6); abstract (*Twixt* 8½, *Go* 9, *Ploy* 5, *Master Mind* 7½, *Black Box* 4½); sports, deduction and detection (*Clue* 5½); word games (*Scrabble* 6); semi-abstract battle games; multiplayer conflict games (*Risk* 6, *Cosmic Encounter* 4, *Diplomacy* 17½, *Kingmaker* 4); "pure" war games; and role-playing games (*D&D* 6½ — this is Freeman's favorite game). Several games are covered in each chapter. In the last two this amounts to brief mention of a great many games because so many war and role-playing games have been published lately, and by now the information is partly outdated. Also included are 4 pages on dice and the laws of probability and an admirable 8 pages on game theory (how to win) which every gamer should read.

If you're exclusively a role-player or computer-gamer, the book doesn't offer much; if you're primarily a hex wargamer, you should look at a copy before you decide to buy; if you're interested in games of all kinds, particularly the games I've listed, then it's worth the trouble to order a copy through your bookseller or direct from Playboy if you can't find a copy on the shelves. At this price, it's a great bargain. — Lewis Pulsipher

Deighton, Len., *BLITZKREIG, From the Rise of Hitler to the Fall of Dunkirk*, Jonathan Cape Publishers, London, 1979, 319 pgs.

Many books have been written on the armored warfare systems developed by the Germans and executed upon their various neighbors, but few have provided the detailed explanation of the philosophy and evolution of it as does this book. It is written, from comments gleaned in the text, by a former member of the German Panzerarmee, by an individual whose own personal experiences provide an interesting insight into what it was all about, without resorting to interminable "war stories."

The book begins with a short discussion of the first use of the tank in the First World War. It then moves chronologically through the historical developments in Germany that influenced the eventual raising of the German armored forces and the developments of their tactics. It does not, however, dwell in the bottomless pit of minute detail. Instead, it provides a clear and concise overview of the flow of ideas and technical developments.

A great deal of time is expended on discussion of the different arms of the army and their functions in the blitzkrieg style of warfare. In addition, the enemy's technical developments and tactical innovations are discussed in a parallel conversation that clearly illustrates the strengths and vulnerabilities of each system.

After the discussion of the mechanics of the German blitzkrieg style of war, the book thoroughly discusses the operations of the Germans in Poland and France up to the evacuation at Dunkirk to fully illustrate the theory that has been discussed earlier.

Though its manner and approach is simple, it gives a thorough and detailed explanation of what blitzkrieg really is, not what it has been made into by the various propaganda machines of that

Cont. to pg. 38

# The Gamesters of Findass II

## Games of Chance for TRAVELLER®

by Rick D. Stuart

### Introduction

The following is given to illustrate the possibilities open to gamers with gambling expertise in GDW's Traveller game system. Actual rules governing appropriate die modifications per gambling skill levels were purposely left out here, as the author feels that should be up to the individual game master to determine for himself; specifically what is best for his/her own campaign. What is presented here is suggestive of a format that can be used to provide the gambler with some interesting hours of would-be money-making adventure along with all the misery and heartaches that can so often accompany Lady Luck in the 31st Century . . .

*From the Notebooks of Joe Snuffy, Space Peasant At Large . . .*

Findass II is a little out-of-the-way sort of colony lying between the mighty Ibarren and regal Stalline quadrants somewhat off the beaten spacelane path, so to speak. As an Imperial colony it is looked after by its Governess, Baroness Janissa Vellacora, the daughter of a once proud but now rather pauperized noble house of old renown. Findass itself is a Tech. Level Seven world, not exactly lacking in the social amenities of the "good life", but is most often known for its' sole major export: *Gambling*. Findians claim with pride to be the finest gamesters in the Imperium and they have the games of chance to back up that claim!

As one might expect on a Law Level Two world (!) Findass can be, and often is, a haven for rogues of all types and descriptions. This notwithstanding I will limit myself here to discussing Findass' more interesting products rather than their consumers.

Thus, in the *Starship and Scepter* exactly two blocks from Government House, I had my first exposure to the tiny triangular pastebacks of Findian high society. The game was called *Comet Call*, or simply "CC" to its devotees. CC is an ancient game, no doubt with equally ancient predecessors, the object of which is to beat the house with a card value closest to — but not exceeding — nine points. A first card is dealt to each player after which bets are placed with the house announcing the odds. A sec-

ond card is then dealt and players have the option of increasing or decreasing their bets. Hands are then revealed and the resulted noted accordingly.

*REF. NOTES:* In this game two different colored d10 are utilized. One is rolled before bets are placed, the second thereafter as noted above. "0" rolls count as face cards and are zero in value. Totals over nine are recounted as "ones". Ex.: A "8" and "7" totaling "15" would be read as a "5".

While in the *Drunken Starswan*, surveying the "accouterments" for which it is famous, I ran afoul of *Impulse*, the game giving me serious difficulty at first before I later recovered. In *Impulse*, players are dealt two cards each in the



first round, three in the third, and four in the fourth. The second round as such — for some obscure reason does not exist *per se* but in lieu of cards being dealt players can again increase or decrease bets against a set wager put up by the house before the game begins. The object is again to beat the house hand, a win in any given impulse automatically doubling over and over one's current winnings. A player may collect his current winnings after a given impulse or he continues as he sees fit. Once one bows out after a given impulse the game continues without him until the round is played out. A player trying to "stick-out" the third and fourth impulses, should he lose, must pay the doubled or quadrupl-

ed amount of the original bet placed. This one is definitely not for the weak of heart.

*REF. NOTES:* Players again use d10 with "0" rolls counted as ten this time. All rolls are thrown simultaneously. All scores are immediately compared with the house roll with gains and losses determined accordingly.

As played in the *Raider's Roost*, *Meteor Swarm* has quickly become my favorite of all Findian attractions (at least at the card tables that is.) In this little spectacle players are dealt one card each from different colored decks. Players may set their own initial bet, attempting to beat the house total. Scores are revealed simultaneously and the odds are determined based on the highest card value on a given card in the house player's hand. Thus while players may bet as little or as much as they wish the odds, high or low, are not known until the "final reckoning". Players can quickly amass or lose a fortune depending on the size of their bets.

*REF. NOTES:* Each player is given one 4-, 6-, 8-, 10- and 12-sided die. Casting their "swarms" simultaneously the total points thrown determine winning or losing hands. The odds compute from the highest value ("0" = ten points here) on any given single die the house player has thrown. Ex.: Player A roll his dice coming up with a total of 27 pts. His bet is 1,000crs. The house rolls and comes up with 23 pts., the highest value having been an "8" rolled on a d8. In this case player A would have won 8,000 crs.

The potential Findian tourist should not that not all the better games of chance this wayside planet has to offer are to be had at the gaming tables. *Razor's Edge* for those—more morbidly inclined in a case in point. It seems that even on this low level world (law-wise) occasionally the locals do break ordinances sufficiently damning to warrant capital punishment. On such an occasion locals will often play a casual game of *Razor's Edge* in which spectators will bet on the efficiency of the marksman in question and how close he will come to actually hitting his target before actual termination occurs from a distance of 200 meters. As such *Razor's Edge* is a

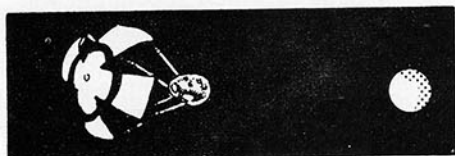
highly popular pasttime among native Findians and serves as a sorry statement as to the current moral fabric of some of our Imperium's citizenry.

*REF. NOTES: Each player selects a number from 1 - 12; Betting either on the total number of shots required before a hit is rolled (12) or the last, closest impact hit before actually striking the target. (Here the number to be rolled last before a hit is recorded.) It should be noted that Findians are notoriously great gamblers and notoriously bad shots!*

If you plan on coming down to Findass you must see one of their famous sun-jammer races. These three A.U. legged races across the inner system are the delight of all, both the participants and the gambling spectators as well. In fact, when local notables are known to be competing in a given race on a given day, it is not so unusual for the Baroness to declare the day an impromptu local holiday so the school children can get into the act. Bets are placed on the basis of individual pilot skill and ship maneuverability with many an armchair navigator winning or losing the proverbial starbundle on such occasions.

*REF. NOTES: The referee should randomly determine the number of entrants in each race, rating each by Pilot skill and ship maneuver drives. (1/d6). The two figures combined serve as the odds for that given contestant. Players place their bets and the referee rolls three d10 for each of the three "legs" of the race, corresponding to that pilot's time in hours, minutes, and seconds. Allow each better to deduct from the above rolls, one time only, a time period in hours equal to their contestant's pilot level skill. (In effect a -DM). Players are free to bet any amount and may even bet on themselves if they have a jammer and a high skill level.*

Such are some of the more popular and most frequently encountered of Findian productivity. Permit me to close this little narrative with one word of warning to the would-be Findian tourist. Findians rather frown on welchers so come prepared. (Now about this block of cement I'm standing in, . . . Hmmm, that water looks cold . . .)



period. It is the sort of book that would provide a novice with a complete understanding of what blitzkrieg is and provide a refreshing insight to those of us, like myself, who have been hard core armor enthusiasts for years and thought we fully understood the theory of blitzkrieg.

I can't recommend this book more highly and fully believe that it would be a worthwhile edition to any armor or WWII enthusiast's library. — G. Nafzinger

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*Board and Table Games by R. C. Bell. \$5.00 in paperback. Published by Dover Publications Inc., 180 Varick St., New York, NY 10014. Originally published by Oxford University Press, 1960 — statistics below are from this hardcover edition. xxiv and 208 8 1/2" x 5 1/2" pages, c. 170 excellent diagrams including about 25 photos, bibliography, 8 page index, detailed contents and list of diagrams. 90-95,000 words.*

*A History of Board-Games Other than Chess by H. J. R. Murray. \$25 hardcover reprint of 1952 Oxford U. Press edition. Published 1978 by Hacker Art Books, 54 W 57th St., New York, NY 10019. xii and 267 9 5/8" x 6 1/2" pages, 86 diagrams, 7 page bibliography, 11 page index of games and 7 page general index, list of diagrams. 130-135,000 words.*

Most gamers are familiar with chess, backgammon, checkers, pachesi, and perhaps mancala among boardgames of ancient lineage, but there are many other ancient and medieval games which for some reason have fallen out of favor, despite good qualities. Backgammon itself goes through periods of neglect. Occasionally an older game is revived: Reversi (Orthello) is the most notable current example, though it is one of the youngest of the "old" games, less than 100 years old. A good book describing some of the once-popular old games, with diagrams of boards to make yourself, and rules of play, can be a treasure-trove for anyone who likes abstract games. The two books listed above are the only ones I've seen which fit this description.

Both books deal predominantly with boardgames, though Bell includes some dice and dominos games. Neither book discusses modern chess, but predecessors such as Shaturanga and Shaturanj are described, showing how chess evol-

ed. In his more recent book, Bell acknowledges his debt to Murray. He writes with a broader audience in mind, compared to Murray's scholarly listings which emphasize languages, area where each variation was played, and derivations. In fact, Murray's book is as much a catalog of old games and their relationships to one another as a description or rules. In many cases he does not attempt to give a playable set of rules. Bell, on the other hand, concentrates on rules, not history. In cases in which the original rules are not fully known he states recommended rules.

Both books discuss the more obscure old games which are so simple, in some cases, that even during their heyday many players probably "solved" them and went on to other things. But games such as Tafl/Tablut, Ludus Latrunculorum, Alquerque, the predecessors of backgammon, Fox and Geese, Nine-Men's Morris, Go (Wei-chi), and Mancala-Wari have more depth. All of the games named can be reconstructed from Bell, and most from Murray. Bell describes 91 games altogether, divided into the categories race games, war games, games of position, mancala, dice games, and domino games (including the infamous Ma-Jong).<sup>\*</sup> Murray mentions over 270 games, but many are no more than variations of about 27 types. In his last chapter Murray discusses why boardgames developed and how the oldest games spread, mostly from Egypt and Sumer, to other lands. Bell says little about the history of games, but includes brief biographies of ten authors of important books about boardgames, ending with Murray himself. Both books cite more articles than you'll ever want to read.

The books cover roughly the same ground. Bell is easier to digest, and much better value for money, though the hardcover will naturally be more durable. I can't recommend Murray at this price, with this competition, but avid boardgamers may want to look for it in the local library. — Lewis Pulsipher

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<sup>\*</sup>*Ed. Note: Mah Jong infamous? I find it to be fascinating, and almost the ideal social game for four people. The rules are deceptively simple, the play fiendishly intricate and clever, if you choose.*

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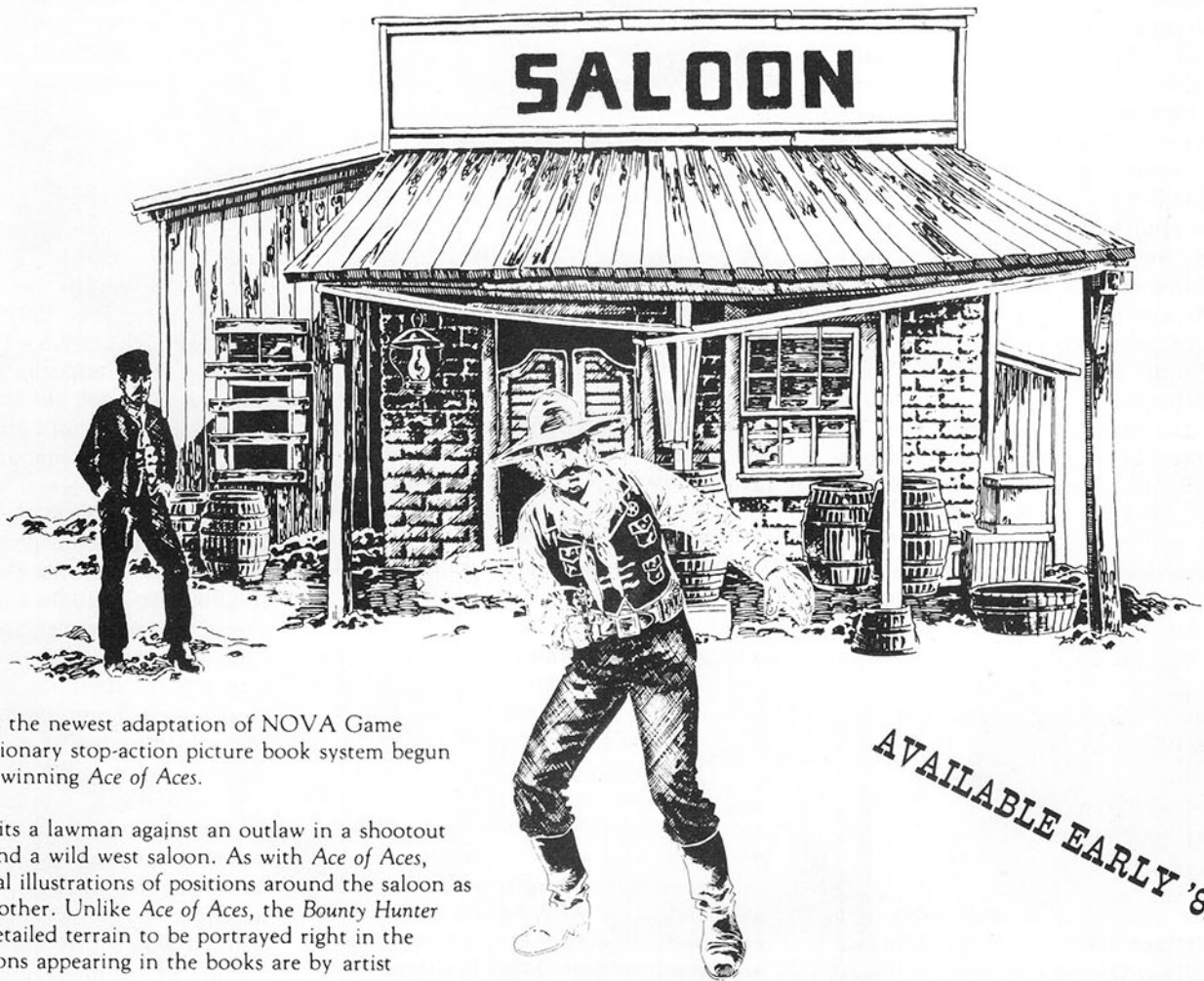
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# LETTERS

Dear Editor:

I agree that traditional boardgame detail is beyond reasonably priced personal computers in most circumstances, but John Prado's article (vol 1 no 1) was misleading when he said that the entry price to home computers may be in the thousands of dollars. It also may be a few hundred dollars; e.g., For \$250.00 you can get a ZX80 with *Space Invaders*, *Galaxians*, *Dungeon Adventure*, and other games we must stand in line to play at the arcade.

In Greater Cincinnati there's a lively trade in used home computers. People with Radio Shack Systems, Sorcerer, PET etc. want to get an \$800.00 Apple or Atari, so they sell their \$500.00 system for \$300.00 to other people who want a \$600.00 system but aren't willing to spend that much. Brokers collect a small commission for putting them in touch with each other.

Another entry point is the cable TV network tie-in to "games" with hundreds or thousands of players. They're not as sophisticated as "Beer and Pretzels" games but the technology does exist whenever the demand catches up with reality. True, the computer revolution has not reached most hobbyists yet, but if you live in a large city, you can get in on this action at about the same price as heavy involvement in boardgaming, miniatures, or role playing.

Sincerely  
Al Macintyre

*While your point is well taken, you seem to have missed his point. John said it "may" run that high. It certainly does if the gamer is looking for the sophistication in computer gaming that he has come to expect in other media of gaming. While Space Invaders and their ilk are fine for what they are, I certainly don't rate them with games the likes of DUNGEON! or COSMIC ENCOUNTERS (rather simple in mechanics), let alone with something like D&D or SQUAD LEADER. Even simple dungeon games require quite a bit of memory capability, and the price begins to mount from there.—TK*

Dear Editor:

Congratulations on another fine magazine to follow in the footsteps of *THE DRAGON*. I'm sure that *ADVENTURE GAMING* will be a smashing success under your editor-ship and management. I was disappointed when I no longer saw your name on the masthead last April, but it was probably inevitable that you'd see the light and come back to the editor's desk.

"What Makes A Player Good?" is just what I need for my AD&D players—a bunch of robot PC's if I ever saw one. Speaking of robots, "NPC's Are People, Too!" provides a far better NPC personality table than the one in the *DM's Guide*. I can't wait to see the upcoming article on APBA baseball, although it would be nice if you could get a few on the Strat-O-Matic series, too.

I was most impressed with the professionalism of your new magazine; few, if any, typos, perfect grammar, and flawless printing. I wish certain others would take the hint.

Sincerely,  
Mark Schumann

*Thanks for the praise, we love it. I must point something out right now, though, with no offense intended. It is not our intention that AG follow anyone. (I know what you meant, and appreciate the sentiment. However, your letter is a great opportunity to discuss just this point.)*

*I knew just how tough my competition was going to be. After having started TD and made it number one, I knew I was setting myself quite a task to surpass my first endeavor. I do not wish TD ill, nor do I have the slightest inclination to "kill it off" (hardly likely in any case). That would be like rooting for my second-born child to flourish by killing of my first-born, simply because someone else had custody of my first-born.*

*As TD has become pre-eminent in its field of fantasy gaming, so, too, do I intend AG to become pre-eminent in a wider field, all of gaming.*

*As for your "robot" PC's, disrupt their programming. The ultimate responsibil-*

*ity for a lively campaign rests with the DM. Give them doses of the unexpected until they twitch. Unless they are total drones (which don't usually go in for this type of activity) you will soon rouse them from their lethargy/tedium.*

*I'd run articles on Strat-O-Magic games if I had any. Any volunteers?*

*If only our second issue had come out as clean as the first. As evidenced by the new column this month (Our Turn . . .) we made a few errors in No. 2. I knew perfection couldn't last.—TK*

Dear Editor:

Congratulations on a fantastic magazine. I wish you all the best of luck and hope to see *ADVENTURE GAMING* around for a long time. The thing that I enjoyed about your first issue is that you did cover a fairly wide area of the hobby and from your editorial it appears that your coverage will become even wider.

Another thing that I thought was outstanding in your magazine was your editorial; I consider it a definite plus when a magazine in our hobby has a good sized editorial (this is one of my gripes with WD and DW). Kathleen's column also brought out several valid points, and as a college age male gamer I consider the perfect relationship to be with a female gamer. I recognize that there is a lot of prejudice towards female gamers, though I have noticed a trend towards more female gamers coming into the hobby through RPG.

One of the highpoints for me in AG was Whither Boardgames. I have been a fan of John Prados' since he started writing in *THE DRAGON* and if I was an editor I would give John a substantial portion of my magazine to let him say what's on his mind. A suggestion for more fun; how about more Friar and Fighter cartoons, even a whole strip. These were great.

Thanks for a great mag,  
David Wilkin

*On behalf of the staff of AG, thanks for your kind words.*

*If initial sales and response are any indicators, we will be around for some*



time to come. We are currently at a point in growth that we did not anticipate for at least two more issues. The critical response at GenCon was most gratifying. It seems we may have come up with the right approach at the right time.

I hope that you will continue enjoying the editorials. "My column" is my one avenue for getting various things off of my chest from time to time, and somewhat of an concession to ego, although I do try to continually remind myself to lighten up and not get preachy.

I don't know that I agree with you in what constitutes the "perfect match". While I do know a few couples where both parties share an interest in games, usually fantasy, I have also seen a few relationships deteriorate and end because of something to do with gaming. As for myself, I've been married for over eleven years to a lady that doesn't care for adventure gaming in the least, and only learned to tolerate it when I explained that I might be able to make a living at it.

Your observation about women and RPG's is very valid. The hobby owes a great debt to D&D for opening the field to ladies.

I'm sure John will be delighted to find such a fan as yourself. Let's hope it doesn't go to his head. For the nonce, John will be contributing through his monthly column and his incisive reviews. What he chooses to do in addition is entirely up to him and dependent upon his other commitments. He has been made aware that AG will always have room for his writing.

As for fun, we have fun aplenty in the offing. This issue marks the debut of *The Crimson Crusader*, wherein superheroes get their due. Starting next month, *Finious Fingers* takes up residence within these pages. In October we have a heroic fantasy strip starting up, with a three page debut. In December we have a serious s-f strip starting. Not yet scheduled, but definitely upcoming, will be a humor strip dealing with the foibles of our hobby, drawn by Bill Neff, and written by a consortium of friends of mine and myself. Also upcoming will be an irregular strip dealing with TITAN.

All things considered, we think we can make you a deal you can't refuse, and won't want to.

—TK



Now, *that's* a good question. I'm glad you asked, because I *love* to find out what *is* new, and spread the word. Gives me a feeling of worth, you see. So, as long as the great Kask allows I will be telling you, my fellow gamers, WHAT'S-NEW each month.

'NEW', by the way, doesn't mean items that are 'coming soon', so don't save your ripe tomatoes for me. I wouldn't want the responsibility of telling you, for instance, that GI: ANVIL OF VICTORY is coming out at Origins '81 (what a tall tale that would be!) and then have to admit that no one actually knows when it's to be released, or if it has even been *designed* yet... not me, fella, I don't go for that S & M stuff. Rather, I will be informing you of what *actually is* available from the manufacturer or another source. This will be the most up-to-date news possible, as I am submitting my column by express mail *on* the deadline date for catching each issue before it goes into print!!

Now, occasionally this writer hears what he considers very reliable information on an upcoming game. Say, for instance, the distributor I work for has a shipping invoice in hand for the new product. If I feel that there is at least a ninety-five percent chance that it will indeed become available soon I'll include that bit of information under the heading 'FAIRLY RELIABLE SOURCES INSIDE THE INDUSTRY INDICATE THAT THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE TO BE RELEASED SOMETIME BETWEEN NOW AND JANUARY 1, 1999.'

And now, without further ado, I take pleasure in the feeling of power and authority of telling you less informed cousins of mine WHAT'SNEW??

*SPELL LAW* is a boxed set of fantasy role-playing (FRP) aids, comprising a complete magic system, meant for incorporation with a variety of different systems. The four books and eight charts contain over 2,000 spells for fifteen

character classes, spell research rules, and extensive magic items information. From Iron Crown Enterprises, P.O. Box 6910, Charlottesville, Va. 22906, at \$17.50.

*OUTWORLDS* is an 8½" x 11" booklet with soft cover, and is a supplement for *SPACE OPERA*. The booklet contains data on a multitude of planetary systems on the fringe of the Space Opera Galaxy. From Fantasy Games Unltd., P.O. Box 182, Roslyn, N.Y. 11576. \$6.50.

*THIEVES WORLD* comes as a boxed fantasy role-playing (FRP) system, designed for use *with all* of the major systems, both s.f. and fantasy. Major authors and contributors of the original systems are contributors in this set, which is a licensed adaption of Mr. Asprin's infamous books. Produced by The Chaosium, P.O. Box 6302-AG, Albany, Ca. 94706. \$16.00.

*HIGH PASSAGE* is a monthly publication devoted to and licensed for *Traveller™*. Format is 5½" x 8½". The 'zine has a black and white soft cover, resembling GDW'S JOURNAL, and contains similarly informative articles on equipment and beings. From F.A.S.A., P.O. Box 6930, Chicago, Ill. 60680. \$4.50 cover price.

*LIBRARY DATA A-M* (supplement #8) and *FIGHTING SHIPS* (supplement #9) are the new offerings for *Traveller™*, by Game Designer's Workshop (G.D.W.), 203 North Street, Normal, Illinois, 61761. \$3.98 each.

*FIFTH FRONTIER WAR* is a complete boxed game, designed for use with *Traveller™*, and also playable as a separate boardgame. The game consists of a color paper gameboard of the frontier region, on grand strategic scale, over 250 counters, rules booklet, charts, and dice. From G.D.W. — address above. \$14.98.

**ULTRA WARRIOR** is available from Task Force Games, in their packet-game series. Contained in the packet is a one-color paper mapboard, counters sheet, and a rules booklet. The game involves creating a fighting man capable of taking on whatever, usually another ultra-warrior. From Task Force Games, 405 S. Crockett, Amarillo, Tx. 79106.

\* \* \* \* \*

**RAVENS CRAG** comes from Judges Guild, and is a complete castle with dungeons below, for use with any FRP system. This is the first one from Judges Guild to say on the cover "A universal fantasy supplement". Also new from J.G. is **LARA'S TOWER**, and **AD&D** adventure. Judges Guild is at RR8, Box 9, 1221 N. Sunnyside Rd., Decatur, Ill. 62522. **Ravenscrag** is \$10.00, **Lara's Tower** is \$3.00.

\* \* \* \* \*

**BONE HILL-MODULE L1** - An **AD&D** adventure for character levels 2-4, from T.S.R. Hobbies, at \$5.50.

\* \* \* \* \*

**FIEND FOLIO** is a new hardback book, dealing with a myriad of new monsters from England, for **AD&D**. Edited by Don Turnbull, the book is profusely illustrated, the monsters very deadly. From T.S.R. Hobbies, P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva, Wis. 53147. \$12.00.

\* \* \* \* \*

**DOWN IN THE DUNGEON** is a new 8½" x 11" booklet with full-color cover (softbound). The entire booklet is a pictorial of characters and denizens of an underground labyrinth. From Squadron-Signal Pubs., 1115 Crowley Drive, Carrollton, Tx. 75006. \$9.95.

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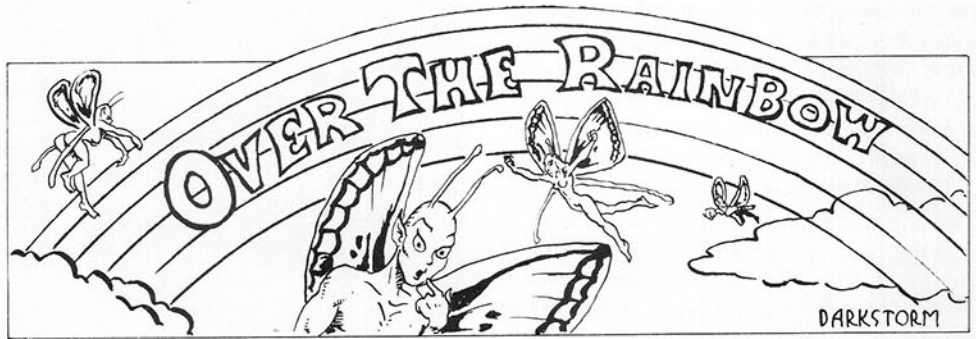
**AXIS & ALLIES** is a boxed game from Nova Game Designs, and sports a map of greater Europe and an assortment of counters, a rules booklet, and dice. The game involves diplomacy and might in the W.W. II era. From Nova Game Designs, 46 Dougherty St., Manchester, Ct. 06040. \$18.95.

\* \* \* \* \*

... If anyone wishes to make sure that I don't miss their new product (I have a great vantage point, but not a perfect one), be sure to send a copy (for **WHAT'SNEW**) or a postcard (for **FAIRLY RELIABLE SOURCES**...) to me at:

**WHAT'SNEW??**

c/o Mark P. Simmons  
4367 W. Ponds Cr  
Fulton, CO 80223



Yes, Virginia, this column is named after the song from the Wizard of Oz.

This column is derived from companies' press releases and announcements. All information has been supplied by the various manufacturers, and we are merely passing it along to you. This lets us off of the hook if the product in question fails to come out "on time". Having been on both sides of this fence-consumer and producer-I know how frustrating it can be for all parties involved when a product is delayed.

If that happens, don't hold us liable; it's still somewhere over the rainbow.

Automated Simulations... has released two new science fiction computer adventures - **Star Warrior & Invasion Orion**. In **Star Warrior** the player is an interplanetary avenger who must take on a planetary force. **Star Warrior** has 19 command options and five levels of skill. It comes boxed on cassette or disk for Atari 800 with 32K RAM. **Invasion Orion** is a tactical space battle playable by one or two players. Included are 10 scenarios. When playing the computer, the player may chose from three skill levels. **Invasion Orion** is available in a format for most home computer systems.

\* \* \* \* \*

Dimension Six... will soon be releasing role-playing game called **Concrete Wilderness** in which you can be yourself or create a player character which has to survive after some disastrous event in earth's future history.

\* \* \* \* \*

Eon Products... has released two new **Cosmic Encounter** expansion sets - #6 & #7. You get a total of 24 new alien character and **Cosmic Encounter** LUCRE.

\* \* \* \* \*

GDW... announces three new **Traveller** releases for November. **Striker**, a boxed, three-book set of miniature rules; **Invasion Earth**, a boxed game of the final battle of **Solomani Rim**; and, **Expedition Zhodane**, a new **Traveller** adventure.

\* \* \* \* \*

Heritage USA... has recently released four boxed miniature adventure game sets - **Fighter's Fury**, **Cleric's Quest**, **Woman Warrior**, and **Wizard's Bane**. Each game comes with a set of plastic figures, paint, paintbrush, dice and a rules booklet.

\* \* \* \* \*

Marischal Adventures... has announced the release of three **Folio Adventures** approved for use with **Traveller** - **Flight of the Stag**, **Fleetwatch** and **Salvage Mission**. All three adventures are set during the time of the Fifth Frontier War.

\* \* \* \* \*

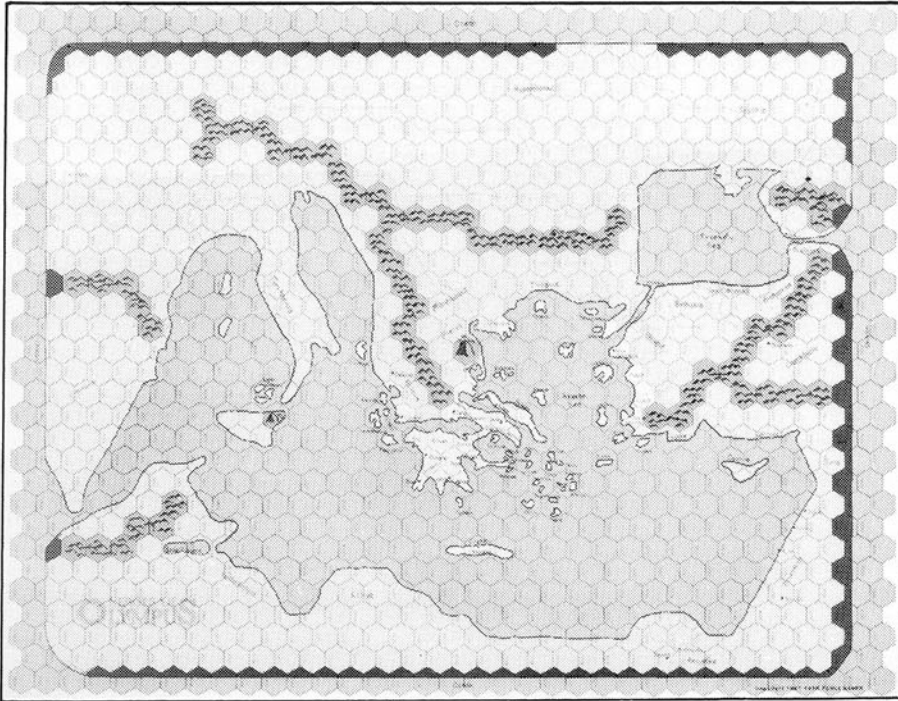
Nova Games... is releasing, this fall, **Bounty Hunter**, its latest entry in the stop-action picture book system begun with **Ace of Aces**. **Bounty Hunter** pits a lawman against an outlaw in a shootout around and inside a Wild West saloon.

\* \* \* \* \*

!!!Fantasy Battle "Bash"!!! Heritage Models of Dallas, Texas will try to regain its honor this fall at WinterCon. Lost this past June at MichiCon when the forces of Ral Partha defeated Heritage in a charity miniatures game, Howie Barasch, leader of the vanquished force, vows not to be smashed again. The special feature of this battle is the fact that at the end of each round of combat, the dead figures are removed from the table and smashed to bits. The ultimate loser of the battle donates one unit which is auctioned off, with the proceeds going to charity. As a bonus to this times' event, Jay Hadley is offering an additional painted unit of his for auction. When last contacted, Glenn Kidd, the leader of the victorious Partha forces, stated "I'd throw down the gauntlet again but I doubt if Howie can reach up to grab it."

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The game contains a full fledged campaign system with rules for movement, navigation, weather, storms, treasure and provisions. Each player may select his or her character from the legendary Argonauts such as Jason, Atalanta, Hercules, and Orpheus, or create a new hero from a complete set of charts covering parentage, homeland, wealth, characteristics and much more. Extensive rules to aid the Gamemaster in setting up and running comprehensive campaigns are also provided.

The basic game comes with five complete adventures. The Challenge of Amycus, King Phineus and the Harpies, The Clashing Rocks, and The Golden Fleece are provided as well as a multiple adventure which is actually three encounters in one.

**HEROES OF OLYMPUS** includes a full color campaign map and nine scenario maps, 216 playing pieces and all the dice, charts and rules needed for play.

**HEROES OF OLYMPUS** is now available in fine game and hobby stores everywhere.

**TASK FORCE GAMES - THE NEW FORCE IN GAMING**

# Painting An Army: Mass Production With A Brush

by George F. Nafziger

To some people there is nothing worse than painting hundreds of figures, unless it's playing with unpainted figures. If you feel this way and don't really want your gaming figures to be works of art, there is a relatively simple system that will, depending on the time you invest and the care you take, allow your figures to be both functional and recognizable, yet still give you the opportunity to demonstrate your painting prowess and cut the time it takes to achieve those results in half.

The initial step is to mount your figures on a stand. Unfortunately, this does not work with cavalry figures and they must be handled separately. By mounting your foot figures you can safely handle several figures at once and not endanger the paint you've already applied. This is important, as this system entails painting figures before they are fully dried.

After having mounted your figures it is important that the number of figures that you are going to paint is 25 or larger. The reason for this is that you are going to paint only part of each figure and the more figures you paint the greater time will have elapsed before you begin to handle the first figure again. That is the primary secret of this technique. This is a mass production technique, where a single color is applied to each figure in sequence. By starting at one of a large number of figures and repeating the same strokes on each figure in succession you can increase your painting speed and save money!!!!

"Save money!!!!" you say. How?? Everytime you open a bottle of paint you have to stir it to get the colors evenly mixed with the thinner. If you have to open those bottles and mix them time after time you will not only lose paint each time you expose them to the stirring stick, but you will find yourself cleaning your brush of the excess paint when you've finished with that color. It makes sense to stir as little as possible and to clean your brush as few times as possible, as that is expensive paint that you are throwing away on your cleaning cloth. Also, everytime you dip that brush into the thinner and wipe it on your cloth you are drying and breaking off those

bristles. A brush has a limited life and repeated cleaning cuts it very quickly.

When you reduce the number of times that you have to clean your brushes you cut costs. Good brushes aren't any cheaper than the paint, so the more miles gotten out of both, the better your return.

The "System" which I recommend is not a universal system. It is tailored to uniformed armies, but can also work on non-uniformed figures such as landsknechts or your *D & D*® armies.

painted the 50th figure and are returning to the first figure the second color will apply nicely and no problems will result. It is important that you use a number of figures so sufficient drying time is allowed. As each successive color is applied you will find that your figures will be completed in a far shorter time than they took before you attempted this system.

There are, however, a number of points that should be considered.

First, spray painting is a time saver. This will give you an even coating and



The basic method of the system, already mentioned, allows the first figure painted to have dried sufficiently that you can apply a second color without fear of the two colors mixing unnecessarily or wiping off the paint by handling the figure. That is not to say that some paints won't mix or rub off if improperly handled. I have found, however, that most enamels and the various hobby industry watercolors designed for use on figures will work with this system. I do not recommend using oils or other paints that aren't advertised as drying within an hour.

You will find that by the time you have

cuts handling time. To do this, only the primer (if you use one) and the basic color of the figure should be sprayed. Cavalry is the best example. The horse is the biggest single colored portion of the figure. Mix your grey, brown, or black and spray the entire figure. This leaves the minimum amount of detail to be done on the horse. If the rider is attached to the horse's casting, you have applied a free coat of primer to him as well. Once the base coat is dry you are ready to paint in the detail.

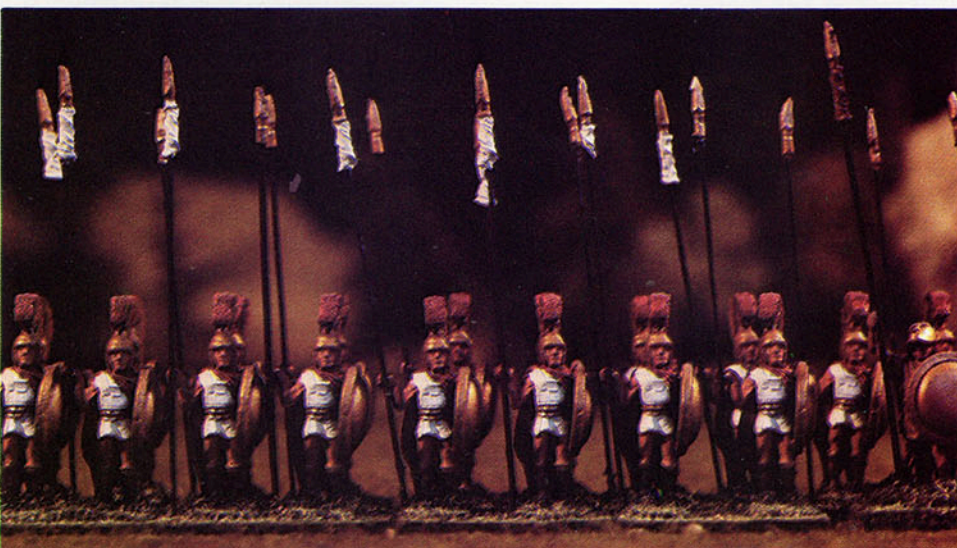
If the stand is infantry you should determine what the primary color of the figures is. This color should be the most



*counterclockwise, from center top:*

*An example of simple color definition: primarily white, then red, black, etc.*

*Here the primary color is brown, dominating the entire figure and the unit. Detailing relieves this and adds highlights.*



*Consistent, careful and accurate painting bring an aura of majesty to small bits of metal.*

*With practice, skill, and desire, creating fine art is within the capability of the historical miniatures enthusiast.*

common single color of the figures involved; *i.e.*, Union soldiers — blue, WWII Germans — *feldgrau*, British Infantry pre-1900 — red, etc.

Before any detail painting is done you should plan your approach. There is what I call a seniority of colors, which is based on the surface area covered by each color.

Take an 1812 French infantryman. His uniform is basically blue, then his breeches, breast, and belts are white, his boots and shako — black, his knapsack and gunstock — brown, his flesh — flesh, and then there is the detail. This color sequence is the sequence in which they would *generally* be painted.

As you apply the colors, the primary color applied is the blue of his jacket. This is, if possible sprayed on. As you begin to apply the white make your sharp lines with your brush where the white and blue will interface on the finished figure and paint down, or away from the center of the figure, without regard to what else you are painting.

The reason for not worrying about this is relatively simple. To speed up the process you will paint sharp distinctions only where existing colors interface. This system might best be described as "painting towards or away from one point without regards for the end of the last stroke, but insuring that the beginning of that stroke is as sharp or as defined as you wish the finished product to appear."

Now, back to our French infantryman. You've painted his breeches white and have slopped white paint over his, as of yet, unpainted boots and gaiters. Now you take your black paint and paint a sharp line across his calves, where the top of his gaiters would be. With that as a starting point, paint downwards to the stand. This will give you a figure which has a sharp line between the blue and white, and a sharp line between his breeches and his boots. The only problem is a little paint spread on the stand, which we'll be painting later.

Now we turn to the top of the figure. Since we have the black paint open we'll paint his shako. Don't worry if you get some on his face, we're going to get that later and a little black paint won't hurt anything.

After you've painted the 50 shakos and cleaned the brush we'll turn to the browns, both because they are a larger surface area, and because we're going to paint the flesh shortly and this interval

will allow the black shako to dry a little more before we attempt to paint the lighter color adjacent to it. We will also paint this now because as we paint his hands later, we won't have to paint the brown of his musket around them. By painting the musket now we can make



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one very long stroke to paint the entire musket rather than having to paint around his hands, should we have painted them first. Always try to paint the smaller areas on top of the larger painted areas. Never try to paint large areas around smaller detail.

Should you paint the musket one color and the knapsack another there is no problem and the interval will allow the other colors to dry just a little more. You will find that it is always desirable to paint on the driest part of your figure.

Trying to paint directly on the last color applied can result in problems.

After that detail has been applied you can do the flesh in the same manner. By this time you have done 90% of the figure and only the small detail remains. This should be painted in the same manner, painting the brass plaque on each shako before beginning to paint the plumes on each figure. Eventually, you will find yourself painting detail that the system will not accomodate, but by that point the figure is substantially finished.

There is one more technique that should be mentioned and builds on this system. Once you've mounted your infantrymen and can handle more than one figure at a time, hold the stand so that you can see the same portion of each figure and make the same single stroke on each figure mounted on the stand. That is, paint the left hand on every figure on the stand, then rotate the stand so that the right hand is exposed and can be painted in the same manner. You will be executing the same brush stroke over and over, which again increases both the speed at which you do it and its precision.

Using this system you will reach the zenith of the figure painting production levels. It is truly an assembly line technique and will permit you to paint as many as 400 15mm figures in two days. I realize that that sounds impossible, but I have done it repeatedly and have a 18,000 figure collection to prove it.

For non-uniform figures the system can be modified by operating on a paint rather than an anatomical system. Here you open the red paint and paint some portion of as many of your figures as you choose, red. Clean the brush and select the next color and the next, until you have fully covered each figure with a basic coat of paint. Then select the universal colors, such as flesh and brown and apply them as described earlier. The system will similarly speed up your painting process.

If you seek greater detail you can take slightly more time in the application of each color and delay as long as you like when you are applying the details in the last stages of painting. The system is flexible enough to accomodate both the individual who is only concerned with fielding the next battalion and the Rembrandt who is more interested in style.

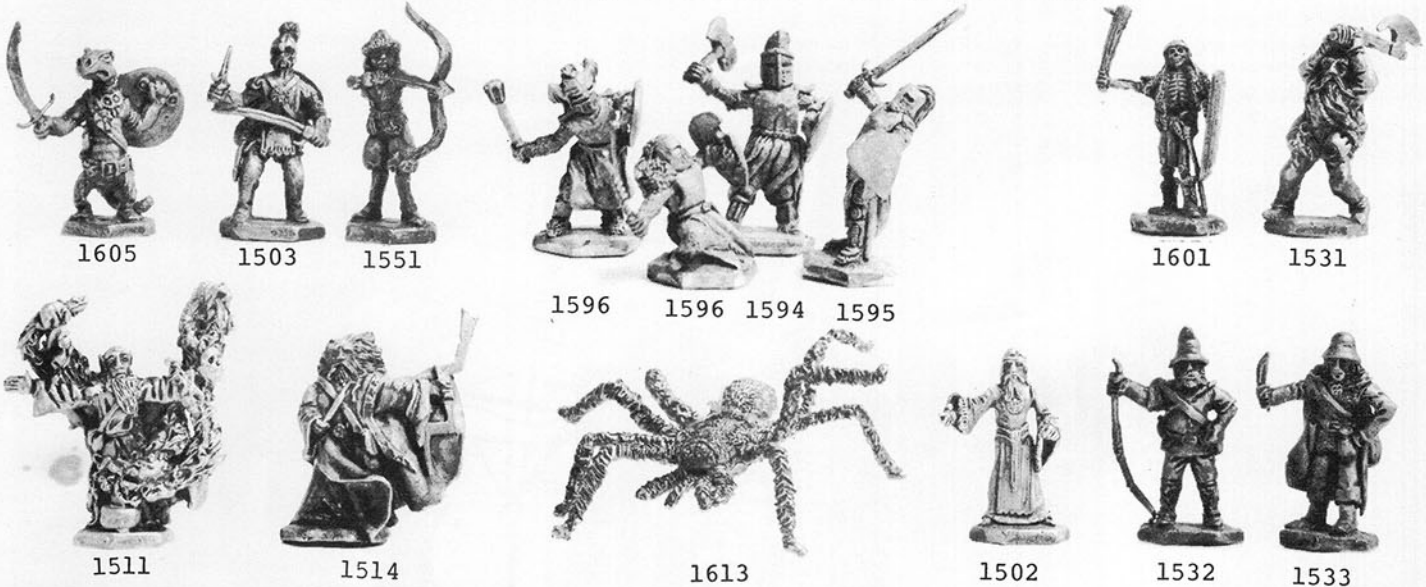
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