

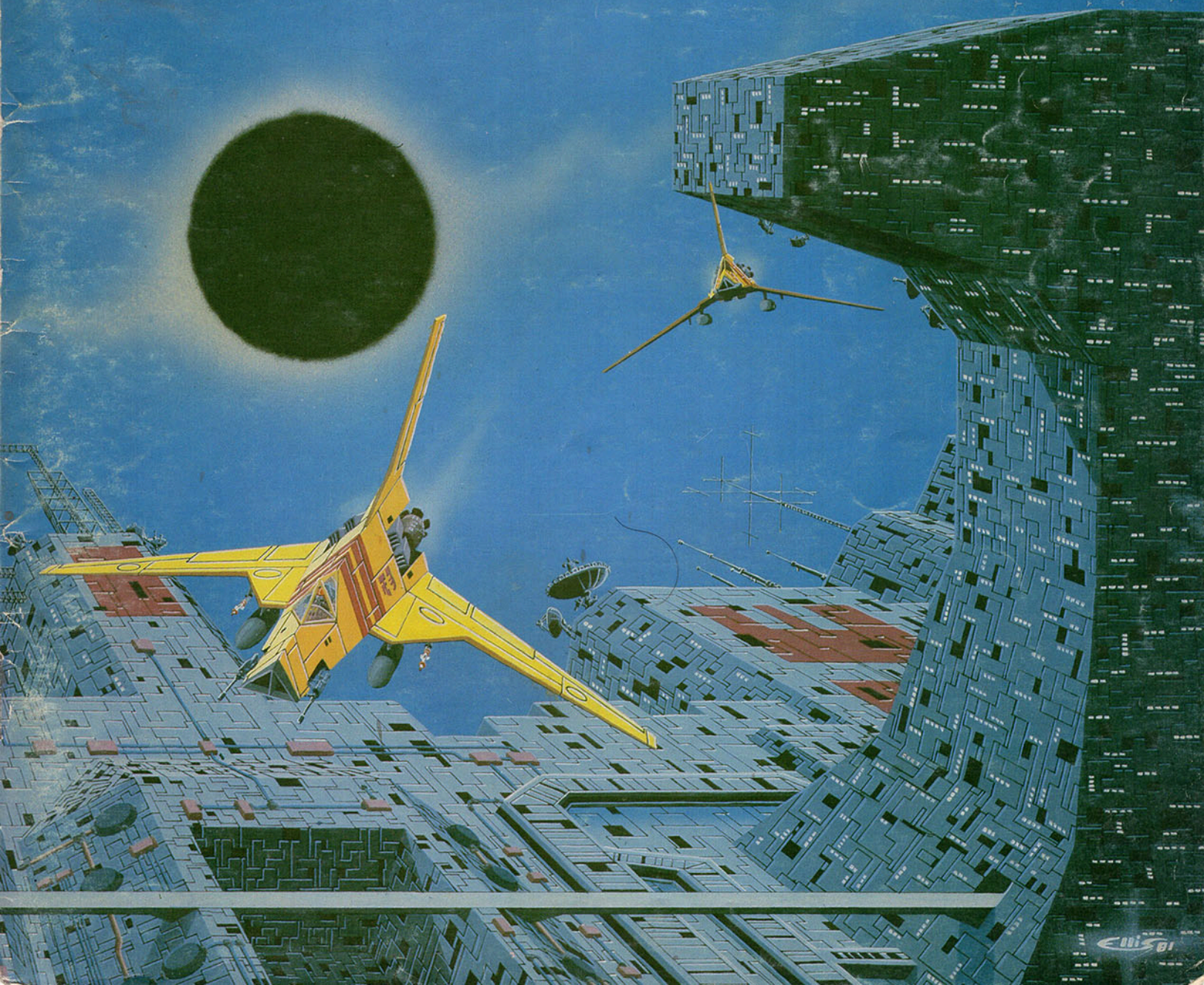
# ADVENTURE GAMING

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vol. 1, no. 9

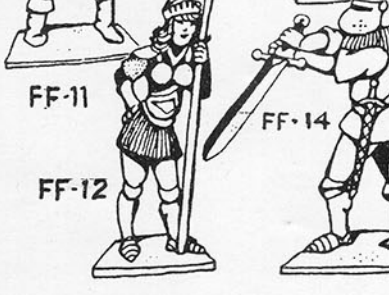
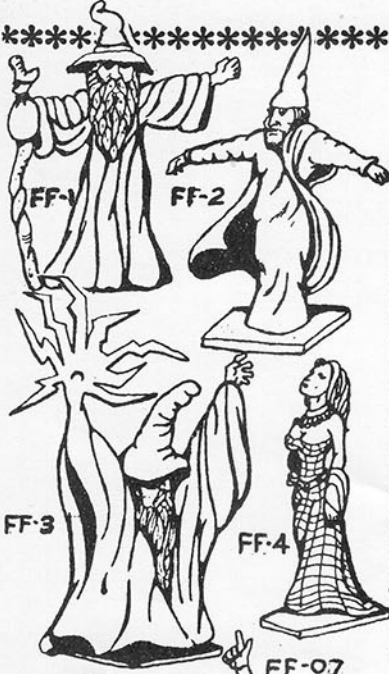
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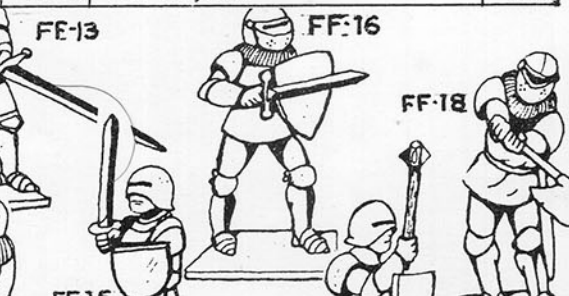
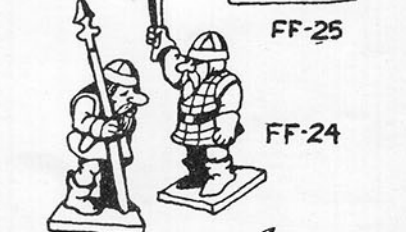
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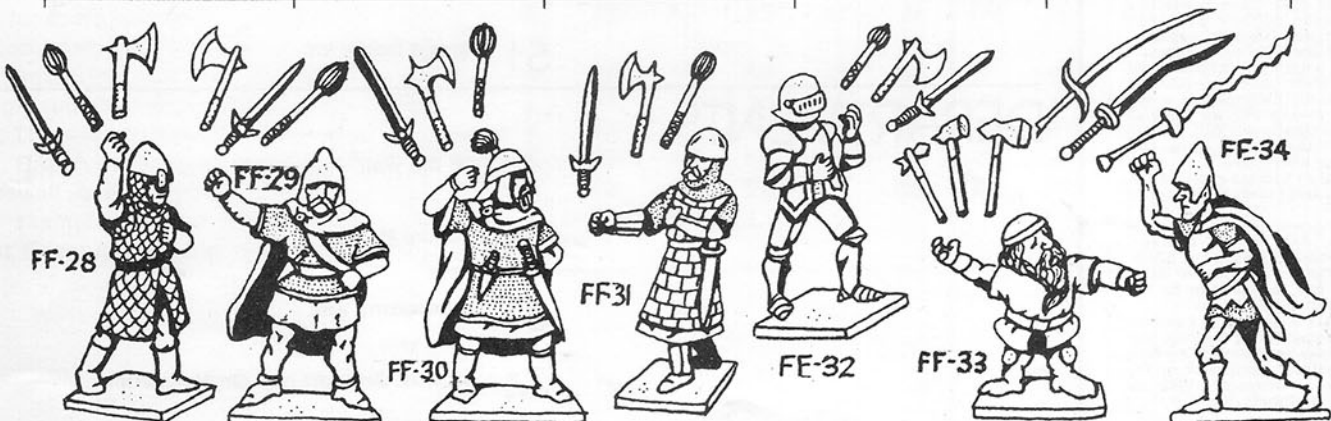
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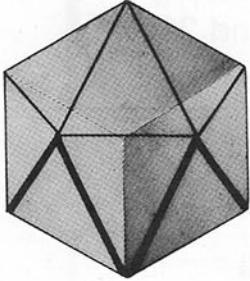
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# Hardware Wars

## understanding the TRAVELLER's<sup>®</sup> tools

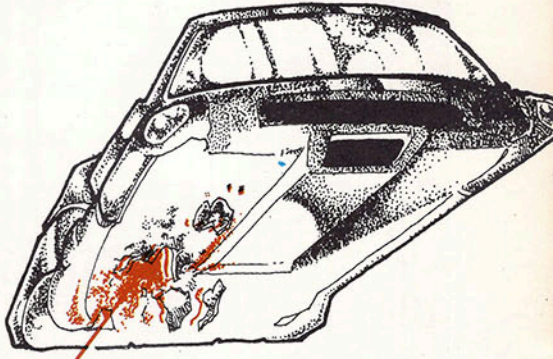
by Richard Williams

### Part One: Seeing the Light — Lasers and Other Energy Weapons.

#### Introduction

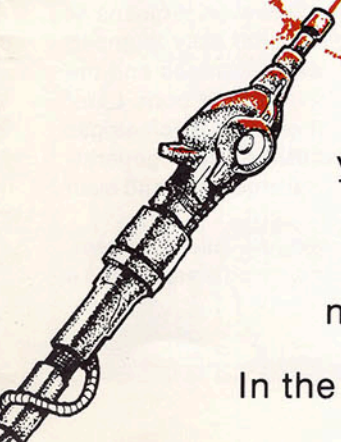
I've been reading science fiction, fantasy, and science fact since I was in school. Because of this, GDW's *Traveller*<sup>®</sup> has always been a natural game environment for me from the first, and it will always hold a special place in the convoluted depths of my black heart.

Not everyone, however, has the real science background to understand all of the hardware in the game.



Indeed, I have run into some referees that had no real idea of the practical limitations of the mechanisms which they and their players controlled. This is not to say that a character of the future could explain the physics of a laser rifle, just as today not everyone who fires a gun can explain the ballistics of the projectile that it fires.

What *is* necessary, however, is for the referee to understand enough about what is happening to know a mechanism's abilities and limitations ("You mean that I can't shoot the starship down with an FGMP?"), to add realism and to advise confused players ("This is a gun. You point the open end toward the target and pull the part that hangs down . . ."), and to keep knowledgeable players from conning you ("Of course I can fire an autocannon from the hip — after all, I'm wearing my battle armor."). As a player, an understanding of these mechanisms can add a great deal of enjoyment to play, prevent you from making a stupid mistake ("I'm clearing the room out with a nuclear grenade . . ."), and make you look sharp in the eyes of the cute blond/brunette/redhead sitting across the table ("My hero!").



What I hope to do in this article, the first of many in this series, is to explain in simple terms just how some of the widgets work. If there is an actual scientific basis for something, that's what I'll give you. Lacking that, I will provide either the most reasonable explanation or a choice of possibilities. Lacking even that, I'll fake it — after all, this is fantasy gaming we're talking about . . .

A word of caution — whether playing or refereeing, don't allow a mere natural law to get in the way of good clean fun. If you want an inflatable starship, by Crom, go for it!

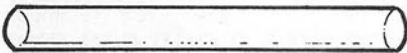
In the meantime, class, on to Lesson One. We will begin with the mainstay of science-fiction mayhem —



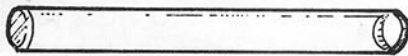
**Energy Weapons**

The takeoff point for energy weapons in most stories is the *laser*, so, as my junior college chemistry teacher said once, let's follow it and see what it eats.

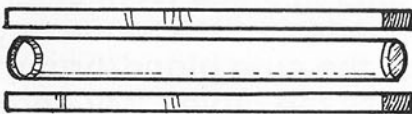
Take a very pure ruby crystal and grind it into a cylindrical shape,



put a silver coating on one end to make it totally reflective, and partially coat the other end so that it's partially reflective,



surround said crystal with a bunch of high intensity lights,

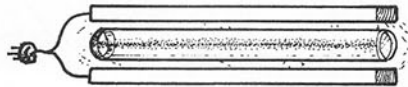


plug the lights into a capacitor, and the capacitor into a power source and a switch.

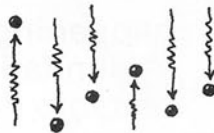
What we have here is your basic pulse laser system. If it was going to be fired rapidly, some method of cooling the monster would be required; for our pur-

poses, however, a cooling system just gets in the way.

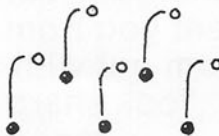
So — take switch firmly in hand, adjust your dark goggles, and turn it on. Power is first stored in the capacitor, which is like a battery except that it discharges all at once. When it does, the lights go on



and illuminate the ruby crystal in a big way. The energy from the lights is absorbed by atoms in the crystal, which were until then minding their own business.

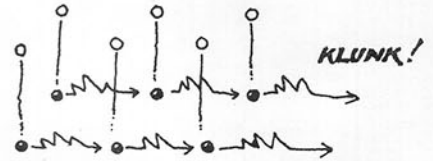


The absorbed energy makes the atoms jump to a higher level, or state of energy, than they were at originally. This process is called, naturally, *excitation*.



Since their natural state is lower, the atoms will not remain at the higher levels for long and soon return to normal. When they do, each releases an amount of energy equal to that required for its original jump. This energy is in the form

of photons, which are the basic units of light.



Some of the photons will escape out the sides of the crystal, while the rest begin to bounce back and forth between the mirrored ends of the crystal, being constantly joined by other photons as other atoms fall back until they have enough to burst out of the half-silvered end of the crystal, and then - *voilà!* — the laser fires.



LASER is short for Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation. Amplification occurs from concentrating the beam into a very small area and from the beam's coherence, which means that all of the photons in the beam are going in the same direction, which keeps the beam from spreading very much. In most lasers, the effect is felt mainly as heat. It is this heat effect which makes it so useful as a tool and a weapon.

The early lasers were of the pulse type. After each firing, time had to pass for the system to cool and the capacitor to recharge. Adding a cooling system shortened that time, and using better capacitors or more than one set shortened it still further. Later the same year that a laser first fired, however, a means of keeping the atoms continually "pumped up", or excited, was developed and the continuous beam laser was born. Later came other developments, such as gas instead of crystal as the beam "generator", lasers using infrared light, and even X-ray lasers.

Any energy weapon, like the laser, shares the same common elements: 1) a

beam source, 2) a power source, and 3) a means of directing energy to the target. Some, but not all, also require cooling systems for one or all of its elements. With that, let's return to the laser and follow it awhile longer.

The military use of lasers begins with their use as rangefinders. A low-power laser of a wavelength invisible to humans is bounced off a target and received by a sensor, just as radar is. It is less susceptible to electronic jamming, however, and can be aimed more precisely to pinpoint particular targets. Early tech-level laser rangefinders and illuminators are, however, very susceptible to fog, smog, and smoke. This will be touched on later.

As the technology develops, the laser gains power, is reduced in size and weight, and is now used to illuminate targets such as a searchlight would, though not for visual purposes. Rather, a sensor in a missile or guided artillery shell or glide bomb "sees" the beam and follows it to the target, allowing astounding accuracy and excellent first-round kill probability. The laser-guided bomb was used with telling effect in Viet Nam, and the Copperhead terminally guided artillery shell uses illumination to provide a devastating tank-killing capability.

Until technical advances allow smaller power sources, the man-portable laser is practically useless as a weapon. Its first use will be to defend fixed installations from assault from missiles and aircraft (the Army is even now pursuing it as a defense against ICBM's). As power sources grow smaller, it will move to warships (wet navy, that is), and then to aircraft. The Air Force has already mounted one on a modified KC-135 that has successfully intercepted air-to-air missiles and small drones in flight, and the Army has knocked down helicopter drones in tests.

As range and power increases, the laser will move from defensive to offensive roles, first as the primary line-of-sight weapon on surface combatants (the Navy term for a warship), then to antimissile and air-to-air weapons on large aircraft. A viable laser system could even lead to the return of the lighter-than-air craft in a combatant role! Note that for over-the-horizon engagements, the missile and artillery shell will remain dominant.

Sometime around the period when lasers become viable weapons on small atmospheric fighters, the first vehicle-mounted laser-cannon will appear. At first, they will be pulse lasers arranged in a Gatling or Calliope mode to allow for rapid fire, and will be used against armored vehicles. Later, as the rapid-cycling pulse laser and size and weight advances make it possible to put lasers on jeeps and small vehicles, the continuous-beam laser will appear on the heavier armored vehicles. The smaller vehicles will at first use the laser against its bigger cousins, but eventually the laser will turn into a true infantry support weapon.

And what of the lowly infantryman? At first, the man-portable laser is useful only as a rangefinder for artillery and an illuminator for homing projectiles, and the first laser "carbines" will be given to forward observers, who will either have to be protected by regular troops or provided with a sidearm for self-defense. As range and strength is advanced, however, the FO might begin to notice that, at shorter ranges, he can blind enemy troops if the illuminator beam hits their eyes. At some time, one who has lost his sidearm may focus his laser and blind an approaching soldier in order to escape or kill him.

It won't be long then until some enterprising armorer figures out how to turn the continuous beam of the illuminator into a pulse with appreciably more power, and some FO's will turn to this in order to get rid of the weight of the sidearm, and the true laser carbine will be born. From there it is only a short step to the laser rifle, and at that time the infantry soldier will have his first true energy weapon.

Still, the enemy won't worry too much. Lasers have several weaknesses, and there are several countermeasures against them. The first lasers will be highly susceptible to adverse weather or artificial fog or smoke. Any airborne particle will either reflect, deflect, refract, or absorb the laser's light. Early-tech lasers, whose light is of a single wavelength, will have a lot of trouble with even a light mist. Infrared lasers will have better performance. Eventually, the weapons-makers will discover how to make multi-color lasers in the hope that there won't be a particle that will absorb, reflect, deflect or refract every photon in

the beam, and shortly thereafter the prismatic aerosol makers will earn a fortune . . .

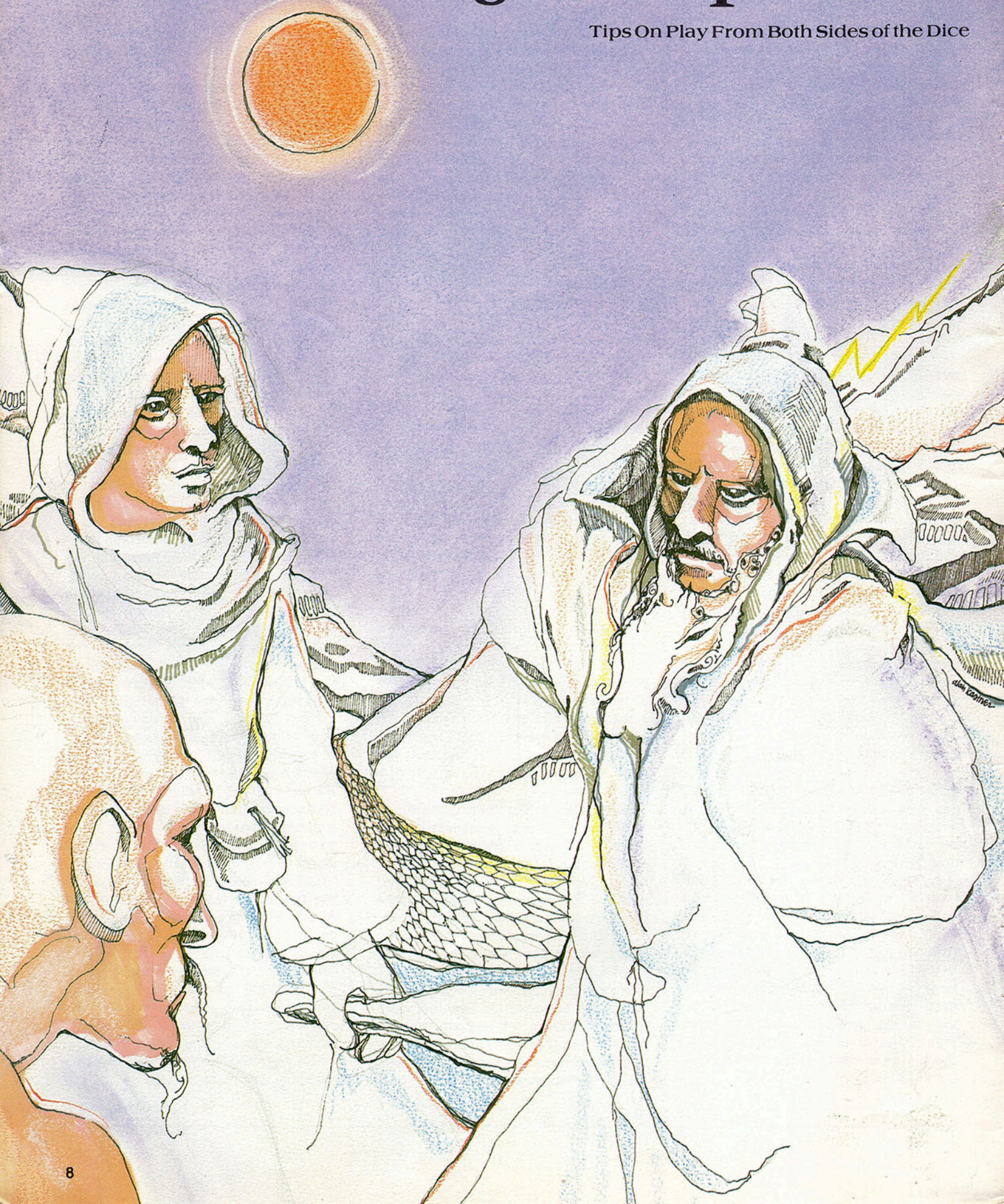
And there is always the old problem of power. A rifle laser at its best will still not develop enough power to punch through tank armor, so M60A1 crewmembers can rest easy. Vehicle-mounted weapons, however, are another matter, and to defeat these the armor-makers will come up with several strategies. The first will probably be to attempt to always operate in inclement weather and/or under cover of heavy smoke. As the lasers become more multi-colored and powerful, attempts to armor the vehicles themselves will be made. Nickel-plating the tanks would be expensive and useless, as the first road dust would destroy the mirror effect, and covering the armor with refractive crystal to bend the light beams away would be too expensive, so a foam will be sprayed onto the armor before each battle. When the beam hits the foam, it will absorb the heat and boil away, protecting the vehicle and crew, at least as long as the foam lasts. Once this occurs the weapon-makers will introduce armored vehicles sporting automatic, small-bore, rapid-firing cannon or heavy machineguns mounted coaxially to the laser cannon (pointing at the same target, in other words) for the purpose of blowing off the foam protection and leaving naked armor to the tender mercies of the laser-cannon. It also serves the dual purpose of providing area suppression fire to deal with infantrymen that try to do annoying things like launch anti-tank missiles at you, and, when loaded with armor-piercing shells, turn light armor into swiss cheese. Remember that, for all of the power that the laser can deliver to a target, it is still a pinpoint weapon, as opposed to a grenade launcher, each round of which can cover several meters with lethal force.

Let me make clear lest I be misinterpreted — a rifle laser will penetrate tank armor, *IF* 1) the beam can be left on the same point long enough, and, 2) the power pack can maintain the beam long enough for it to melt through the armor. Even with the "primitive" armor of today, that could take a while — given the refractory (heat-resistant or heat-dispersing) alloys of the future, it will become near impossible. There is also a practical weakness to consider here. If

*continued to p. 45*

# Orchestrating An Expedition

Tips On Play From Both Sides of the Dice





*Most sets of rules for fantasy role-playing games give little advice about the means of organizing and orchestrating an adventure, either from the player's or the gamemaster's (GM's) point of view. Most GM's learn, as they become experienced, how to cope with the practical difficulties of setting up and running an adventure, but they suffer from their mistakes along the way. Players, too, learn in the school of hard knocks. The purpose of this article is to help inexperienced GM's and players learn how to organize an expedition without suffering the pain of failures and mistakes. I am not going to tell you much that a GM of five years experience doesn't know, nor will every experienced GM agree with all I say, since there are many styles of role-playing gaming. But I wish I'd had some advice of this kind when I started out, and I hope most readers will benefit from it. First I'll consider the adventure from the GM's point of view, then from the players'.*

## ADVICE FOR GM's

**Organizing the Dungeon Key:** Some GM's write the information and description of each "place of mystery" sequentially on standard paper, as it might be done in a commercial adventure module. This is fine as long as you never repopulate or change anything in the place, and don't change your mind often as you create it. However, even if you're not inclined to repopulate, after every party of adventurers smashes up the place there are going to be rearrangements of inhabitants, some fleeing the area, others recruiting allies, and more moving to different locations to try to avoid the next gang. It's hard to clearly record these changes with a sequential key.

The best way to provide for these changes, and, incidentally, to allow quick access to the description of a given location, is to write the information about each room or prominent non-player character on an index card. The best size depends on how large you write, how much detail you put into a description, and what cards you can obtain. 4" by 6" will serve most purposes, but many GM's manage with 3 by 5's. The cards are placed in a file box, organized by number. The numbers are taken from the map of the place of mystery, of course. Commercial modules use a series from one (1) to whatever, but I prefer to use some coding so that I can look at the map and know that in room 1E (or

E1) there are evil creatures, in room 3M there is strong magic, in room 6N there is loud noise, etc. This helps when characters use detection spells, particularly the longer-range types. You can either use a "1 to whatever" series to number rooms and add or delete codes as needed, or you can put the codes first. In the latter case, all the evil places would be filed sequentially in the card box, while in the former case they'll be scattered throughout the box. Some useful codes are: E=evil, G=good, M=magic, N=noise, L=light, S=special. In either case, there should be only one location numbered 1, one numbered 2, and so on. If you use codes, mark the map with pencil so that coding can be changed when room contents change.

**Prepare the adventure ahead of time** and don't alter it to make it harder (or significantly easier) as you play. Except in extraordinary circumstances, when a player has done well but is still doomed by dismal luck, you should not alter any part of the adventure you wrote before the game started. Too many GM's whose "godhood" has gone to their heads begin by altering adventures in mid-game. Now they manipulate everything, and the players are mere watchers, not movers and shapers of their characters' fates. You must avoid this habit, which is unfair to the players and difficult for the GM.

**Run the game at a reasonable time** to avoid difficulties. Players are most likely to get angry or childish when they're tired. If you start a game at 10 PM instead of 6, you're risking the consequences of tiredness at 3 AM.

**Party Summary Sheet.** Unless you know the characters well, have the players write down the most important facts about each character, one character below the next on one sheet of paper. The list should include name, profession, armor class, ability numbers, hit points, race, and important magic items. If you don't like to roll saving throws for player/characters (I never do, so that they can't blame me for a bad roll) ask the players to roll a few D20's and record the second and third results (or whatever) to use in situations in which you don't want the players to know that they're saving against something. The list is particularly helpful when you need to know an ability number but you don't want to alert the players by asking what so-and-so's strength or dexterity is. The armor class is also quite helpful in melee, and you

might want two numbers, one with shield and one without.

**The Leader or "Caller".** Both as player and GM, I strongly dislike the institution of "Leader", one player who does most of the talking, including telling the GM what other players' characters do during battle. When each player speaks for himself everyone is more involved in the game; although it may take a little longer to find out what characters are doing, on the other hand there is no danger that a player will vehemently object to what the leader the leader says he's doing, with ensuing argument. Consequently, don't ask the players to elect or appoint a leader. The person making the map tends to speak more than anyone else, during exploration, but on the other hand there are few players who actually like to map. Ask "who's making the map" and hand the graph or hex paper to whoever gets stuck with the job—it's up to the players to decide. Insofar as anyone is official spokesman for the group, it will be the mapmaker. (By the way, I assume that the *characters* are making several copies of the map, but I don't require the players to do so—why waste their time with trivia such as copying?)

If the players decide to elect a caller or leader, don't interfere, but don't encourage them either. If someone other than the leader wants to say what he's doing, pay attention to what he says, not to the leader. After all, in a "real" expedition each character, not the leader, will determine his own actions.

Make a point of directly asking quiet players what their characters intend to do, or what they think the adventurer's party ought to do in a particular situation. This may remind you of a teacher calling on a student who hasn't raised his hand, but people are supposed to *want* to participate in the *game*. Sometimes this is the only way to persuade a shy or inexperienced player to say something, and they have to start sooner or later—why not sooner?

If you feel that you must appoint a leader because your group of players is too rowdy when left to their own devices, appoint a level-headed *player*, not character. (But if the player is a hard core role-player with a stupid or rash character, you'd better choose someone else.) In general, a younger group is more likely than an older group to need an official leader.

**Don't let one player browbeat another.** To support a given course of action with

reasonable and logical arguments is fine; to threaten (physically or otherwise), or to assert that superior experience is all that counts, or to abuse another player, is unacceptable. Every participant is playing the game, regardless of his experience and the level of his characters, and he should be treated with civility. Anger is part of the game, and if players become angry with one another you can only try to distract them and hope it'll blow over. In extreme cases you may have to ask a player to leave, but this last resort should be unnecessary with mature players. On the other hand, there are many cases in which *characters* may legitimately threaten one another. If one player wants his character to attack another player's character, you might try to talk him out of it if you think he's unjustified, but in the end this danger is part of the game, especially if there are many alignments or religions in the party.

**Don't let anyone play another's characters.** Players should be told that they're expected to play the entire game, not just part of it. Sometimes someone may be forced to leave for an hour, or leave early, entrusting his character to another player's care. While this is virtually unavoidable, it should be discouraged by not permitting any player's character to get a choice of magic treasure when he isn't present. This is "unrealistic", yes, but it's better than the alternative. I dread the day when a player leaves before the end of an adventure and finds out the next day that his character has died. This dread could adversely affect one's GM'ing. It is unfair to the GM and to the other players when a player leaves the game.

**Maintain order.** If the players get too rowdy, stop the game for a few minutes. Don't try to outyell them, just wait until they shut up. If you impress on them that you want to hear only one person at a time, you'll find it easier to GM. They'll still probably talk two at a time, but that's better than four.

**Rest and recuperation.** Fantasy role-playing is sometimes hard work. Most adventures fall into distinct episodes, separated by the lull between battles or other crises. Occasionally stop the game during a lull so that players can relax, talk about the ball game, eat, drink, sprawl, or whatever they like. No one's attention span lasts indefinitely. If you don't stop periodically, the players' minds will stop on their own, and you'll find people talking about last night's party instead of the game. This is most

disruptive and will annoy those who are still "into" the adventure.

Most GM's don't like to play music, because it can be distracting and makes it harder to hear the players. Some players find that atmospheric music (such as orchestral Wagner and many contemporary orchestral and film works) increases their enjoyment. But unless you've played with a group many times and know they like your music, you're better off with none. In any case, don't have a TV or radio on. The former kills the game, the latter constantly interrupts it.

**Pieces.** A few players refuse to play without miniature figures, but most seem to be indifferent. Many GM's can't afford miniatures for every kind of monster. A practical compromise is to use figures for player characters and some non-player characters, but cardboard pieces for monsters. The cardboard can be cut to the right size for such large monsters as the sphinx, while the numbers make it easy to keep track of hit points inflicted on monsters during large melees. In fact, it's hard to see how a miniatures-only GM can run a melee involving 30 orcs without mass confusion.

**Battle boards.** GM's quickly learn that measuring movement in inches or "by guess and by gosh" is a hassle. There are just too many arguments. Using paper and pencil, or visualizing positions, is a dead loss, certain to cause altercations. The more order you can introduce into movement and positioning, the easier your task will be. In recognition of this, some games supply hexagonal grids and define strict movement scales. For other games you should make your own boards, of squares for movement in buildings and underground, of hexes (or squares offset in a brick-wall pattern, which amounts to the same thing) for outdoor movement. (Squares distort diagonal distances, but straight lines are most useful when you deal with square rooms.)

Some GM's draw squares on 8½" by 11" sheets of cardboard. This allows the GM to extend the movement grid in whatever direction is needed, by adding another sheet to the array—rather like a geomorphic wargame board. Some go farther, covering each card with transparent contact paper or plastic so that walls and other features can be drawn with (erasable) grease pencil. The drawback of this method is that the cards can be accidentally knocked askew in the excitement. I prefer to use a large piece of flexible linoleum, about five by two

feet, with a square grid drawn over the whole with permanent marker. Thin slices of heavy rubber of different lengths can be used to create walls and doors as needed for encounters. Since the linoleum is grey with streaks of darker and lighter color it conveys the feel of the underground. It can be rolled up to be carried, and it flattens in a few minutes, whereas paper is hard to flatten without plenty of weights.

If your time is more important than a few dollars, instead of drawing hundreds of squares you can buy a sewing pattern board in a dime/drug store. These stiff boards are divided into one inch squares and can fold to one-third size (about one by three-and-a-half feet). They're a bit awkward to carry. There are, of course, commercial dungeon patterns available, but these are expensive and quite unnecessary, and there aren't enough pieces in a set (or even two) to depict fairly large rooms or caverns.

For outdoor movement I use a blank hex sheet such as are sold by many wargames publishers.

**Keeping track of time.** Some highly organized GM's like to have a chalkboard at hand to help keep track of melee rounds and events during a melee. Both players and GM can see the board, which is divided into sections for each round. The duration of short-term spells can be recorded, multi-swing rounds for high level fighters can be marked, and in extremely complicated situations each character could have his name/number checked as the player rolled for his attack. Most GM's don't go to this extreme, but record information on a time sheet with grease pencil.

The time sheet is a paper divided into centimeter or half inch squares, and placed in a plastic sheet protector. Each small square represents one melee round, while groups of squares represent turns. The turns should be numbered. The GM can keep track of time during exploration and indicate when a limited-duration event will end (or begin), such as a detection spell, the effects of a potion, or the appearance of a wandering monster. Rolls for wandering monsters should be recorded on the time sheet before the game starts. Record only the numbers which might, in some circumstances, indicate the appearance of a monster. Then as this time approaches you can consider how current events modify the normal chance of appearance. For example, a 9 on a D10 might not normally result in a wandering monster, but would if a noisy battle were in

*continued to p. 47*

# The "Know-it-all"

That's what wargamers are calling our magazine, *The General!*

For 15 years, *The General* has been the bible to Avalon Hill game fanatics. It's the oldest surviving professional magazine devoted exclusively to wargaming. So exclusive, in fact, it doesn't speak about much else besides just Avalon Hill.

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In fact, it violates all the guidelines for what a successful magazine should be. It doesn't give away any free games. It doesn't pan competitors' products. It doesn't editorialize in a gossipy fashion. It doesn't even carry any paid product advertising.

Yet for what it does contain, it earns the appellation "know-it-all"! Maybe because *The General* happens to contain the largest assortment of wargaming expertise ever assembled between the covers of a gaming journal. If this sounds like slick advertising puff, then listen up. Here's specifically what you get in this bi-monthly 48-page magazine (equal to 90 pages of any other magazine since it carries no commercial advertising).

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Every bi-monthly issue is jammed full of professional articles on tactics and strategy of Avalon Hill games! Read in-depth history articles on the battles, campaigns, and background events involved in Avalon Hill games. Learn about behind-the-scenes developments in the world of game design. In short, get all there is to know about AH gaming in one magazine. *The General* is to gaming what TV Guide is to television.

## The Series Replay

THE GENERAL



### CAESAR'S LEGION

German: Keith Poulter  
Roman: Jim Hind  
Commentary: Don Greenwood

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habits than a comprehensive study of the *General's* Series Replay matches.

## Design Analysis

THE GENERAL

### IN DEFENSE OF LINEAR TACTICS

By Mark LM

Naval engagements are more difficult to plan than land battles, because in a land battle you can always count on the opponent's grabbing the best available terrain. Since there is no terrain on the sea, the best strategy available to a naval commander often depends mostly on the strategy to which his opponent commits himself. The best "plan" to opponent's strategy, then, is that null of

Doing this requires that one concentrate on a strategic point on the opposing line. Choosing that point is crucial, and the location of it depends on which way the wind is blowing.

If the enemy fleet has the wind behind it, the concentration point should be halfway through or at the rear of their line. This gives the forward part of the line the best opportunity to come to the aid of

A regular feature written only by professional game designers which goes into detail on just why specific games were designed a particular way. All of the professional game designer's tricks are laid open in this column.

## The Historical Lead

### STRATEGIC SUBMARINE

By Roland Parenteau

1943 marked the high point of the output of the first twenty days of that ninety-day merchant

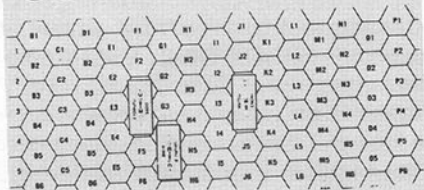
ships of his choice in each column. All available merchant ships must be placed into places in the common section of the common make-up list. He may choose the title from the list below or he may select a name of his own.

There are no limitations groups. (Note that reinforcements. They may be chosen at any time. One group in each column and its

Each issue highlights one game in particular. The lead article is always an historical study of the event in question with either a strategic study or variation of the related game as a tie-in. Such in-depth material has proven very popular.

## Contests for Cash & Prizes

### CONTEST NO. 86



In each issue, testing your tactical ability, we give away over \$140 worth of games and merchandise.

## Product Reviews

PAGE 34

### READER BUYER'S GUIDE

TITLE NAPOLEON \$12.00  
SUBJECT Operational Level Game of the Waterloo Campaign

NAPOLEON is the 4th game to undergo analysis in the RBG and managed to rank 19th on the list with a cumulative rating of 2.77. This score was probably helped by the review.

We help you decide whether that game you intend to buy is really for you.

## Advance Knowledge of New Releases

THE GENERAL

### Avalon Hill Philosophy Part 70

#### LOOKING AHEAD

1978 has not been a particularly productive year for our R & D department, judging from our almost total lack of new titles this past calendar year. New wargame titles were limited to the spring releases of CRETE, SUBMARINE, and NAPOLEON—all of which were actually late 1977 projects, and the summer release of CROSS OF IRON. This meant that we delivered only one of eight titles "promised" for July, 1977. Why is it that six months later we have still delivered only 1 of 8? What happened? Why? When will these games become available, if ever? These are just a few of the questions you might be asking.

The excuses are many and varied, but in general, they can be summarized very simply as a matter of everyone becoming too obsessed with perfection and the magnitude of their own projects. Even I, who did meet a deadline in having CROSS OF IRON ready for ORIGINS, overstepped the bounds of good sense in

#### FORTRESS EUROPA

FORTRESS EUROPA is a John Edwards design currently being sold in Australia, dealing with the Allied invasion of Europe and subsequent campaign to and including the invasion of Germany itself. The game is somewhat reminiscent of Edward's very popular RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN in style and as to D-GAP what the former was to STALINGRAD, a quantum jump forward in state of the art design, realism, and still delivered only 1 of 8? What happened? Why? The air rules stand out as particularly innovative and effective among a veritable "avalanche" of "chrome" extras. Unfortunately, the game in its present state is poorly organized and in need of major revisions and playtest. The game will not be available before July at the earliest.

Don Greenwood

#### THE RISING SUN

These were the... (text cut off)

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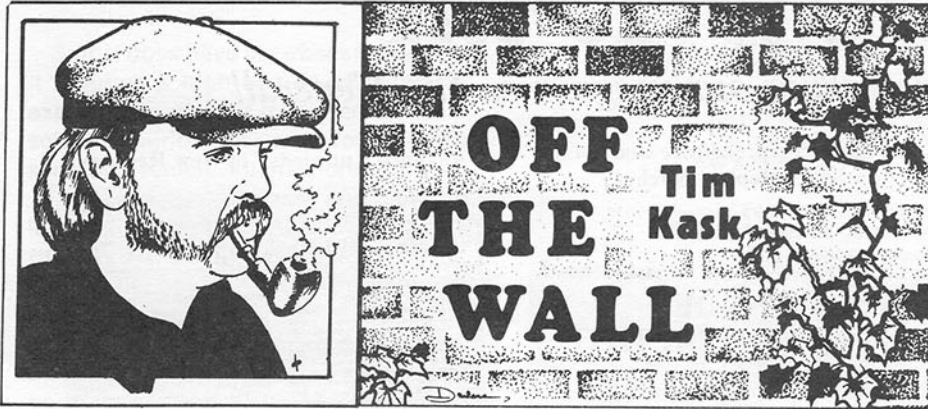
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## STATE OF THE MAGAZINE REPORT #2

To quote the renowned philosopher Anon., "Time sure flies when you're having fun." It hardly seems as though its been five months since last we brought you up to date on what's happening around here with AG.

First, notice that we have substantially reduced our subscription prices. We have done this for a couple of reasons, chief amongst them the fact that we now have qualified for greatly reduced postal rates. Those of you that subscribed at the old price will find that the number of issues in your subscription has been increased to reflect the difference.

Second, it is time to make my time-worn plea for more articles. We want to increase the size of the magazine, but need more material before we can do so. This is your chance to influence the content of our favorite magazine.

Next issue, No. 10, will see the debut of a new approach in article mixing in AG. It will remain our prime consideration to see a broad range of games and gaming covered each issue. In addition, we will from time to time run a cluster of articles all dealing with the same topic, or covering the same gaming period. For want of a better word, consider them issues with a "focus".

No. 10's focus is the Wild West. To be more precise and lofty — even bureaucratic — the topic is Games Set in North America During the Nineteenth Century (excluding the American Civil War, The

War of 1812, and both the Mexican-American and Spanish-American Wars). We will have reviews of Rimbold Ent.'s *FRONTIER SIX*®, *FGU's WILD WEST*® AND *OREGON TRAIL*®, SPI's *THE ALAMO*®, and Simulations Canada's *I WILL FIGHT NO MORE FOREVER*®. Also in next issue will be a scenario useable with any Wild West RPG, the second part of "Hardware Wars", as well as a review of GDW's blockbusting s-f minatures rules set *STRIKER*®.

Coming in No. 11 will be a feature piece on *THE CALL OF CTHULHU*® by Chaosium, more "Hardware Wars", "Fighter Pilot . . .", and we're toying with the idea of a game inclusion. The game is set in 1521, in a Europe racked by religious dissent. The spectre of religious war was only narrowly averted by the Diet of Worms, which was itself only arrived at after much power politicking and back stage maneuvering. The game we have in mind is set in Worms, and enables the players to participate in the events surrounding the crisis, requiring dash, nerve, opportunism, luck and an "Early bird gets the worm" frame of mind. All of this, and only a month late for the 361st birthday of the Diet of Worms.

In No. 12, due out in June, we have the first story of a new heroic fantasy series specially created for us by Gardner F. Fox. While I am aware that many of our

younger readers have no inkling of just who Mr. Fox is, we intend to remedy that also in that issue.

Issue No. 13 will mark our first year in print, and we have a suitably ambitious project in mind to mark that auspicious milestone. Elsewhere in this issue there is supposed to be (as I am writing this *before* it is pasted up, I never like to commit *too* heavily) an announcement of that special focus and a solicitation for articles pertaining to females and adventure gaming. We hope to publish viewpoints from all sides of the subject, from female stereotypes in art and RPG's to the social aspects of females playing in predominantly male groups to what it is like to be a "games widow". We hope to elicit articles and letters from males and females. More complete data is available in the aforementioned announcement (provided that it made it in).

Also in that issue we plan to publish an official *TRAVELLER*® tournament scenario, as well as the third set of uniform schematics.

Issue 14 is tentatively scheduled to be our American Civil War focus issue.

Also in work, but not scheduled yet, are articles dealing with figure painting, and paints in particular, and building a diorama that can be used for figure games as well, in this case a large castle.

In each of the preceding issues mentioned, don't forget that our primary consideration each issue will be variety and something for nearly everyone. I am merely teasing a little to heighten anticipation with what we are firm on. In all cases, we have not mentioned everything that will be in each issue.

If we have yet to mention your favorite area of gaming, or you feel that we have given it short shrift, please write us and let us know what you think. We want to touch all of the bases.

### TRAVELLER® Moderators Needed

We need *TRAVELLER*® moderators for the ORIGINS '82 sanctioned tournament. If interested, contact AG immediately. All considerations for judges will be in effect.

# "Whatever Possessed You To Take Up Fantasy Gaming?"

## or Demons From The Elementary School Plane

by Hal McKinney

Sooner or later, everyone who participates in Fantasy Role Playing encounters questions like, "Doesn't that game affect your mind?" "Isn't that the game of Demons and Devils where the players are ruled by the Dragonmaster?" or "What do you think about that poor unfortunate boy they found wandering mindless in the sewers?"

Naturally, we shrug off such comments with dignified remarks such as "Blow it out your ear, Pin Head," or we spend several hours explaining a gaming system to someone who couldn't care less. The end result is, they walk away believing what they wanted to in the first place, and watching us carefully for signs of violence.

Eventually we give up the struggle, discovering that all people aren't meant to be gamers.

Let's suppose, for the sake of argument, that role playing does alter the personality. I asked myself, what insidious form of mind control would be taken? What monstrous evil could even conceive of turning normal, well-adjusted, likeable and creative players into greedy, selfish, status-seeking, back-stabbing little whiners, without an ounce of courtesy or consideration?

### DEMONS!

No campaign is safe from these obnoxious little fiends. Everyone has observed them at one time or another; we simply assume it's the personality of the player. This is false. I know of several instances where the player had no personality at all, and was still insufferable. The answer to this riddle is in the consistency of the demons' behavior. Have you ever thought no one could be a worse complainer than \_\_\_ (insert a "friend's" name) and then went to play in another campaign, only to find that \_\_\_\_\_ (insert same friend's name) seemed to be in two places at once? It's uncanny how closely two persons' personality traits resemble each other's.

How can two complete different people, sometimes of different sexes, share the same horrible quirks and techniques of, dare I say it? . . . cheating? *Ergo*, it must be demons. What other force could possibly be attracted by so much accumulated gold and magic items? A dragon couldn't squeeze through the door and the only innate power dragons possess is to make player characters wet their pants. No, it has to be demons, drawn to a role-playing game like flies to honey.

Once suspected, the demons can be observed quite frequently merely by passing a drop of wine across the lips to clear the vision (sometimes several bottles are required before the eyes can adjust to the demons' plane).

These stinkers will acquire one of three forms. The first is the little bird approach: the demon squats on the person's shoulder, whispering comments like, "Hey, Bub, you're gettin' ripped off! Everyone knows you deserve more than the rest of these turkeys! Trust me, Pal, I'll steer you right." Some say these demons get the same pleasure a person would when he visits Echo Canyon for the first time. All suggestions go in the ear, and bounce around until they exit from the player's mouth. We naturally assume the ignorant ideas belong to the player.

The second type of demon becomes semi-corporeal. These are larger demons of greater power and influence. They are not content with having bubble-heads parrot their suggestions. They enjoy manipulating the limbs of the victim. The demons enjoy flicking dice and altering character statistics and abilities. If another player character possesses something this type of demon desires, the demon will not rest until he himself (through his victim) has acquired it, usually through underhanded means. These demons will even walk around with the victim, often plucking up munchies or swilling beverages while the victim sits unconcerned.

The third type is the hardest to detect. These invade the body in an ectoplasm form and actually take over the player. Usually only the facial features of this monster can be observed, fading in and out of the victim's own blank stare, as he enjoys a night of gaming.

Some of these demons may even take on all three forms at different times. However, like all true evil they can't stay where there isn't some form of acceptance, or complacency.

Let's be truthful, some players put out the welcome mat and offer a home away from home to these unseemly campaign spoilers. I will admit that everyone tends to have a weakness now and then, but think twice before you put a "For Rent or Lease" sign on yourself. You could wind up in possession of more than you bargained for.

You doubt me, I'm sure, but after lengthy research and observation I have categorized many of these demons from the Elementary School Plane. I have discovered their secret names and powers and, upon occasion, I have even been able to banish a few of them from my campaign.

Another startling fact is that once a player is made aware of these demons, he can clearly see those demons that are controlling the players around him, but he will remain completely unaware of his own possession.

These are some of the Demons from the Elementary School Plane I have observed, and this is the system I used:

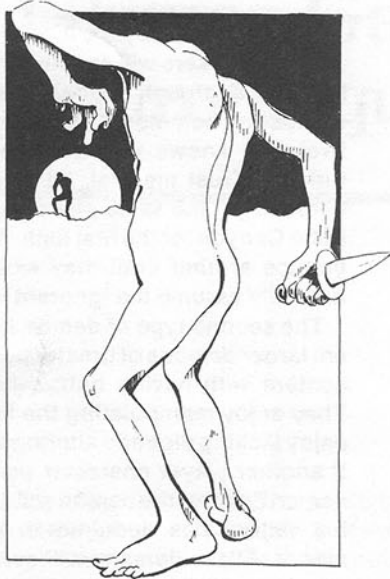
**NAME:** *the name of the demon*  
**RANK:** *the demon's rank in the Elementary School Plane*  
**CLASS AFFLICTED:** *specific classes susceptible to the demon*  
**EFFECT ON VICTIM:** *noticeable changes in behavior*  
**CRY OR CALL:** *examples of phrases or cries uttered by the demon*

**SUPERNATURAL POWERS:** abilities the demon posses. **METHODS OF DISPELLING:** how to get rid of the pest. **WORDS OF POWER:** Examples of phrases that strike fear into the heart of the demon, weakening it temporarily

**NAME:** *The Behinder*  
**RANK:** *Minor Demon*

**CLASS AFFLICTED:** *Thieves, Assassins, and Fighters*  
**EFFECT ON VICTIM:** *The victims are constantly running around in circles in an attempt to get behind every foe. They are usually invisible, but when seen, each possesses a large yellow stripe running the length of where the backbone should be.*

**CALL OR CRY:** *"Is he looking the other way?" "I sneak up quietly in my invisible plate armor and stab him in the back." "Do I get a quintuple damage bonus if he's asleep and tied up?"*



**SUPERNATURAL POWERS:** This demon always grants his victim the ability to remain completely undetected by any opponent, even after attacking. The Behinder is able to get behind any foe regardless of how many there are. Even in his extremely rare visible state, his stealthy shuffle and amazing dexterity enable him to strike as many as ten foes in the back without being detected. The demon will flee from any frontal confrontation. Other player characters should be extremely cautious when this victim is bringing up the rear, although he can instantaneously move 1,000 yards whenever a target appears. **METHOD OF DISPELLING:** The demon Behinder will quickly become frustrated when confronted by Siamese-twin warriors joined at the spine, or warriors carrying large mirrors strapped to their backs. **WORDS OF POWER:** "The enemy warrior is facing the group with his heels on the edge of a bottomless abyss."

**NAME:** *The Blamer*  
**RANK:** *Minor Demon*  
**CLASS AFFLICTED:** *All*  
**EFFECT ON VICTIM:** *The player will refuse to accept responsibility for any bad judgment or action, and is constantly uttering excuses.*  
**CALL OR CRY:** *"I didn't die, you killed me." "It wasn't my fault, how was I to know? The old bag didn't look like a witch when I attacked her."*



**SUPERNATURAL POWERS:** The Blamer has the innate ability to

cause his victim to participate in all manner of stupid, foolish and often fatal forms of bad judgment. The victim is completely ignorant of this compulsion since the demon simply directs the blame or fault onto some other player or the gamemaster. **METHOD OF DISPELLING:** Only the touch of an ancient scapegoat will reveal this minor demon's presence; barring this rare animal, a Player Maturity Spell is the only known cure. Under no circumstances allow this demon to come into contact with a Giggle (Wh)imp since the results are disastrous. **WORDS OF POWER:** "If I hear one more word it's the Blue Bolt!"

**NAME:** *The DieForMe*  
**RANK:** *Minor Demon*  
**CLASS AFFLICTED:** *All*  
**EFFECT ON VICTIM:** *The player has an extreme sense of personal worth and will always be found in the rear of a group. He will offer strong objections and excuses when asked to open chests or enter a strange room first. He will attempt to purchase henchmen at every opportunity.*

**CALL OR CRY:** *"Cannon fodder to the front", or, "Here, Magic User, identify this item for me" (he doesn't mention it came off a vampire that crumbled to dust when he removed it).*



**SUPERNATURAL POWERS:** The DieForMe will treat even player characters as dirt under his feet. Nothing is more important to this demon than preserving the unnatural life of its victim. It will cajole, threaten, bribe, or even run away from a conflict if not completely surrounded by faithful fools. The DieForMe will never waste easy-gotten gold on the resurrection of a player character or NPC who died to protect him. The demon assumes it is his due; after all, there are more where they come from and there's only one of him. Even if the DieForMe possesses a high-level fighter with over 100 hit points, its normal reaction is to hide behind the first-level Magic User. This demon lives in constant fear of his brother, the Behinder. **METHODS OF DISPELLING:** Several hits by even a first level foe will usually send the DieForMe fleeing in terror until loyal bodyguards can be found. I have noticed that the famous Ides of March spell cast by all the other player characters using daggers will remove the DieForMe from the game. **WORDS OF POWER:** "Et tu, Brute", and "Attack on the rear of the party."

**NAME:** *The Four Getter*  
**RANK:** *Minor Demon*  
**CLASS AFFLICTED:** *All*  
**EFFECT ON VICTIM:** *A noticeable lack of attention to what's going on around him, and a constant look of amazement on the victim's face.*

**CALL OR CRY:** *"I didn't know that", "No one told me", "I don't remember", "When did you say that?", or, "I didn't hear you".*

**SUPERNATURAL POWERS:** The Four Getter has the ability to selectively remove portions of memory from its victim, leaving only the details that are convenient at the time. Rules or knowledge that conflict with the demon Four Getter's unholy desires are utterly disregarded, leaving his poor victim in a state of ignorant bliss. Constant reminders



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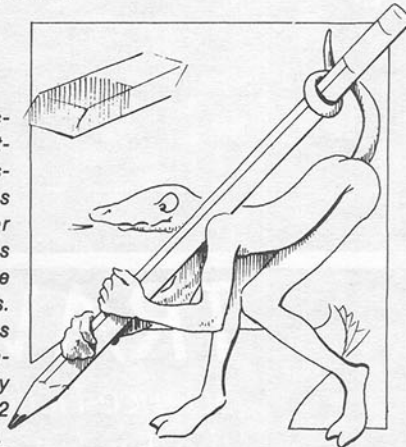
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by the Gamemaster or other players only serve to irritate the demon, whereupon it will create even greater gaps in its victim's ability to recall. The Four Getter can cause deafness at will in its victim with no saving throw, and suggestion spells are useless. **METHOD OF DISPELLING:** Only a great artifact like a Stick of Mighty Thumping will affect this thick headed demon, and the ancient practice of Bleeding Off Levels by the Gamemaster will temporarily restore memory, but only a Player Maturity Spell will make it permanent.

**NAME:** *The Fudger*  
**RANK:** *Major*  
**CLASS AFFLICTED:** *All*  
**EFFECT ON VICTIM:** *The victim seems incapable of writing with a pen, and possesses eraser burns on all his fingers. All his character sheets have numerous holes rubbed in them where he has "improved" his abilities.*  
**CALL OR CRY:** *"Oh, I've always had a 28 strength, I remember because it matched my coordination roll, and it's 2 less than my intelligence".*



**SUPERNATURAL POWERS:** The demon Fudger or, "Old Inflater" as he is affectionately called, is second in power only to the Lord of All. His power matches that of the Wizard of Odds. Some say that in ancient times the Fudger and the Wizard of Odds were one demon that split into two separate personalities. Both emphatically deny this account. The Fudger has the ability to change any pre-rolled number or item on his victim's character sheet. The Fudger can inflate hit points, armor class, characteristics, weapons, experience points, gold and even levels. The demon can also lower the damage his victim takes. The Fudger doesn't need dice to perform his magic; in fact, he disdains them. With one great swipe of a pencil he can rise five levels overnight. The demon Fudger can even change magic weapons and adjust saving throws for his victim. **METHOD OF DISPELLING:** The Fudger is nearly impossible to get rid of once he has claimed his victim. In fact, death will make him even stronger since he will "adjust" the next character for his resurrection. Only a "Careful Notes by the Gamemaster" spell can defeat this major demon. The Gamemaster's Watchful Eye spell will fail every time when confronted by the lightning-swift hands of the Fudger.

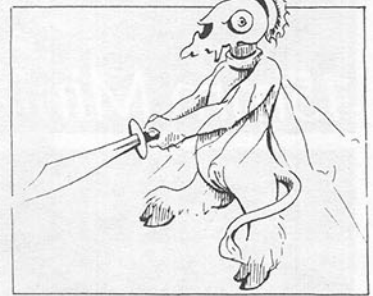
**NAME:** *The Giggle (Wh)imp*  
**RANK:** *Minor*  
**CLASS AFFLICTED:** *All*  
**EFFECT ON VICTIM:** *The victim is often observed with his hands over his mouth snickering, or moaning intermittently.*  
**CALL OR CRY:** *Inarticulate giggling whenever something unpleasant happens to another player character, followed shortly thereafter by sobbing whimpers when he is the victim. He will occasionally lift his hands and utter loud cries of "Why me?" or "Not fair".*



**SUPERNATURAL POWERS:** This minor demon or imp possesses a sixth sense when it comes to the other player characters encountering misfortune. Some claim that this demon actually attracts the misfortune. Loud giggles from the victim accompany each point of damage the players take, with carefully spiced, amusing witticisms like, "Boy, you sure are getting clobbered by those ten orcs", giggle, giggle, "Maybe

you can fool 'em by pretending you're dead", tee hee. The giggles are always accompanied by stupid advice. The Giggle (Wh)imp is at its peak when everyone in the party is taking a thrashing but its victim. However, if the demon's victim takes even one point of damage or suffers a minor set-back, the whimpering can be heard for hours. It is noticeable that, upon occasion, the demon can be observed giggling and whimpering at the same time, thus the name Giggle (Wh)imp. **METHOD OF DISPELLING:** A Player Maturity spell is the only known cure to rid the victim of the dreaded Giggle (Wh)imp, although the well-known Shot to the Teeth spell has been seen to cause a temporary cure. **WORDS OF POWER:** "Why, I believe a wandering monster has been attracted by the snickering".

**NAME:** *The Hack'n'Slasher*  
**RANK:** *Minor*  
**CLASS AFFLICTED:** *Fighters, Clerics, Thieves, Paladins, deformed Dwarves and demented Hobbits*  
**CALL OR CRY:** *"Charge!" "Attack!" "A smotel!" "A smotel!" "Kill, kill, die!" "Off with his head! . . . Hey, guys, I'm in trouble".*



**SUPERNATURAL POWERS:** The demon Hack'n'Slasher knows only one solution to any problem: draw weapons and charge. The demon's innate ability to drop its victim's intelligence to zero is manifested whenever any decision or conflict occurs. Thus, an old lady asking for directions is met with a swipe of cold steel. The Hack'n'Slasher loves missile weapons and will encourage his victim to employ them at every opportunity, especially during melee rounds when targets are impossible to distinguish from friends. The demon has no concern at all for the personal welfare of his chosen victim. The victim faces an endless fight against friend or foe until death or dismemberment. The Hack'n'Slasher will charge impossible odds with only a dagger. **METHOD OF DISPELLING:** The Hack'n'Slasher can often be dispelled by the "Unhittable, Laughing Foe" spell. When the demon discovers it can't score a hit on a laughing foe, even on a natural 20, it often gives up in disgust, leaving its victim bewildered. Another effective cure is the Bite Off More than You Can Chew spell. This results in the cry "Hey, Guys, I'm in trouble". If all else fails, the Gamemaster should remember that basket cases can't wield weapons. Due to its low intelligence, the Hack'n'Slasher will often reincarnate in the same player. **WORDS OF POWER:** "It's an illusion, Dummy".

**NAME:** *The Lord of All*  
**RANK:** *Major — Ruler of All Demons in the Elementary School Plane*  
**CLASS AFFLICTED:** *Game-masters*  
**EFFECT ON VICTIM:** *The victim usually has in his possession a large bag of wondrous dice, and other worthless paraphernalia. His every word comes to the players engraved on stone tablets, from on high. He is frequently found near a soapbox or on a pedestal.*  
**CALL OR CRY:** *"Who's up front?" "You can't do it because I say so". "It's just a guide, I can do anything I want". "Oh, looky, here comes 400,000 orcs and they see you hiding in that small cave. Make another*



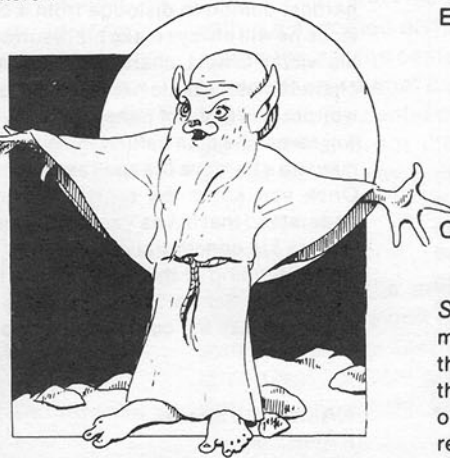


saving throw at minus 30".

**SUPERNATURAL POWERS:** The Lord of All has unlimited powers and is truly the Ruler of Demons. His wish is everyone's command. Even the Wizard of Odds, the Fudger, and the One-Upper quake in fear at the godlike powers of this demon. He can innately throw mighty death bolts at a whim, raise the dead, cure disease, dispense curses, and even create entire worlds. He draws power from his bag of wondrous dice, and his rule books. His only purpose in life is to make his victim's word law and control all the other demons. **METHOD OF DISPELLING:** The only method of dispelling the Lord of All is to remind him that there are several thousand of his brothers around, each possessing the same powers. Stealing his bag of wondrous dice won't work since he only uses them for effect. He is extremely arbitrary and if the dice conflict with his preconceived ideas he simply ignores them. In certain rare cases the "OK, Play by Yourself" spell cast by the players will temporarily reduce this demon's excesses (I have sometimes glimpsed this demon in the mirror when I'm shaving). **WORDS OF POWER:** "We all quit. Find some other suckers".

**NAME:** *The Magic Abuser*  
**RANK:** *Major*  
**CLASS AFFLICTED:** *Magic Users*

**EFFECT ON VICTIM:** *The enhanced ability to memorize double the normal amount of spells, and cast them in half the time required without components or in meleé.*  
**CALL OR CRY:** *"I throw a spell, uh, a fireball, and a lightning bolt, and my 'Hand of God. What? Sure, I know we're in a 15' x 20' room".*



**SUPERNATURAL POWERS:** The demon Magic Abuser knows all the spells. In fact, he can create any specialized spell on command if he has an hour or so to do research. His magic is so awesome that no saving throws are allowed and his spells always do the maximum of damage. The poor victim is embodied with loads of horrible death spells he often knows nothing about. Possession by the Magic Abuser causes the victim to throw these spells freely, regardless of the consequences. The demon frequently gives his victim the impression that he is 100% immune to the magic of others. **METHOD OF DISPELLING:** The Gamemaster's Watchful Eye spell will always negate any professed power of the Magic Abuser. Often the player characters will effect a cure upon the victim, especially if they were in the 15' x 20' room when the fireball exploded (and they survived the experience). The latter method is usually 100% fatal, uh, permanent.

**NAME:** *The Messer, or, Popcorn Pig*  
**RANK:** *Minor*  
**CLASS AFFLICTED:** *All*

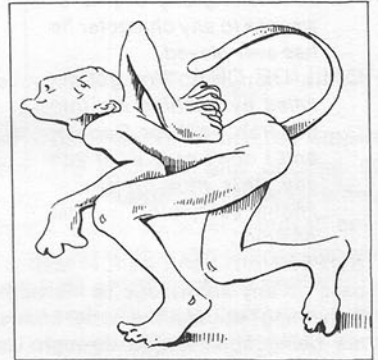
**EFFECT ON VICTIM:** *The victim's hands are enlarged from grabbing double handfuls of munchies and he is usually surrounded by discarded papers and wrappers.*  
**CALL OR CRY:** *"Pass the eats", "Are you gonna finish that candy bar?", "While you're up, get some more chips, you're running low".*



**SUPERNATURAL POWERS:** The demon Messer has the innate

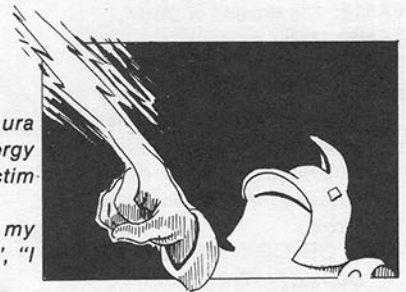
ability to arrive with the snacks and leave with a mess. He can spill any drink within a 20' radius and can do maximum damage with any liquid spilled. This ability can be re-used several times in an evening of gaming. The demon will always hoard a large bowl of popcorn for his personal use, leaving nine other players to share a small dish. He also likes to open a giant size bag of chips at 2 AM when there is already one giant sized bag open. **METHOD OF DISPELLING:** Only a "Player Quickness" spell can get around this demon, although the Blue Bolt will work if used often enough. Asking the demon Messer to pick up after himself has been known to drive the demon and his victim into a frenzy, resulting in his hurried departure. A "Shot to the Teeth" spell will sometimes work if the demon doesn't mistake the first component for cheese curls. **WORDS OF POWER:** "Everyone chip in for the refreshments", or, "Time to clean up and go home".

**NAME:** *The One Upper*  
**RANK:** *Major*  
**CLASS AFFLICTED:** *All*  
**EFFECT ON VICTIM:** *The victim's character sheet always has some absurdly high or unrealistic numbers on it. He recognizes no known limits. His hands are worn, and elbows deformed, from patting himself on the back.*  
**CALL OR CRY:** *Sings constantly, "Anything You Can Do, I Can Do Better".*



**SUPERNATURAL POWERS:** Make no mistake, the One Upper is a major demon. His power lies in being able to employ the powers of all the other demons temporarily until he is better than anyone else. Even the Wizard of Odds and the great Fudger fear this demon when he gets out of control. The One Upper recognizes no physical or magical restraints. If the highest possible player ability score, even using awesome magic, is a 21, the One Upper will have a score of 24. His singlemindedness will drive the demon on until his victim is the greatest character that will ever live, now and forever, or until his victim dies in some childish display on one-upmanship. The demon's victim may actually be deceived into believing he is better than all the other players combined. **METHOD OF DISPELLING:** Like all major demons, the One Upper is hard to get rid of once he selects his victim. He will go through countless reincarnations before realizing the impossibility of his task. Only the great Player Maturity spell can exorcise this cunning demon. **WORDS OF POWER:** "I bet you can't keep quiet for two hours!"

**NAME:** *The Recharger*  
**RANK:** *Minor*  
**CLASS AFFLICTED:** *All*  
**EFFECT ON VICTIM:** *An aura of light and crackling energy always surrounds the victim of the Recharger.*  
**CALL OR CRY:** *"I use my wand", "I use my ring", "I use my staff".*



**SUPERNATURAL ABILITIES:** This minor demon has the power to recharge any item of his selected victim an infinite number of times. The Recharger is a distant relative of the Fudger. The class of the victim is by no means limited to Magic Users, although the Recharger does prefer them. Any player possessing a magic item with a limited amount of charges can be controlled by this demon. **METHOD OF DISPELLING:** The Gamemaster's Watchful Eye spell will often make the demon scatter back to the Elementary School Plane, leaving his victim fearful and repentant. If this method fails, a Careful Notes and Count by the Gamemaster spell must be used. However, the latter spell is often accompanied by a Blue Bolt when the demon Recharger is discovered

using his four powers. **WORDS OF POWER:** "I smell a Blue Bolt coming!"

**NAME:** *The Rotter*  
**RANK:** *Major*  
**CLASS AFFLICTED:** *All*  
**EFFECT ON VICTIM:** *The victim becomes obsessed with playing practical jokes on all the other players, most of which are in bad taste. The victim is also capable of recalling any slights or wrongs to any character he has ever played.*

**CALL OR CRY:** "You got me killed by pushing me into the trap I set for George, and I don't care what you say, this new character knows everything my old one did".



**SUPERNATURAL ABILITIES:** The demon Rotter has the ability to pass on any knowledge to his victim, both in and out of gaming. If something happens, the Rotter knows. Some say this ability comes from his being able to see through Gamemaster screens, and closed notebooks. The Rotter increases the sensory ability of his victim to where he can hear a conversation two rooms away through closed doors. No note can pass hands that the Rotter doesn't know about. His extreme thirst for forbidden knowledge and heightened senses make the Rotter very sensitive. He will take offense at the slightest imagined wrong and plot a revenge that is way out of proportion. For example: If the Rotter plays stupid practical jokes on your character and you return the favor, the Rotter will attempt to murder your character when he falls asleep. The demon requires the sacrifices of player characters at regular intervals, usually those of low level since the higher level characters can strike back. Ignorance is a prime attribute for attracting a Rotter. **METHOD OF DISPELLING:** There is only one cure that will work once the Rotter has gotten its claws into a campaign, and this is the Strong Willed Gamemaster spell. However, it must be permanent. Often the entire campaign must be started over but, even then, there is no guarantee that the Rotter won't return. A Player Maturity spell can often be used to hold the demon at bay. **WORDS OF POWER:** "Act your age. The next stupid joke gets a Blue Bolt".

**NAME:** *The Wizard of Odds*  
**RANK:** *Major*  
**CLASS AFFLICTED:** *All*  
**EFFECT ON VICTIM:** *Every roll on the victim's character sheet is the highest allowable number, and he never misses a roll to hit or saving throw.*

**CALL OR CRY:** "Another 20! Do I hit?" "You'll never believe the rolls I got for this character". "Boy, was I lucky when I rolled for that". "I never miss a saving throw when I'm alone". "My uncle watched me roll this character; he moved back to Tibet last week".



**SUPERNATURAL POWERS:** The Great and Powerful Wizard of Odds possesses innate telekinesis, and mesmerizing abilities. His feats of prestidigitation are beyond belief. He possesses a bag of truly

miraculous dice and can make them do anything he wishes. In this respect, he has even more power than the Great Lord of All. With one deft flick of the wrist, he can make any die come up maximum. His skills defy science and magic. The word "random" is unknown to the Great Wizard of Odds. He will often request that the gamemaster let him roll up his own magic items and spells. The Wizard can make the colors on any dice shift to become high and a mere glance can change a roll of 1 into an 11 or a 20 if the need arises. The Wizard is often at home in a campaign where his miraculous powers can even affect the players around him, especially on saving throws. The demon can see through any illusion that would completely befuddle the other gamers. Where they would see a 3 on that percentile dice, he knows it's actually 100. There are no erasure marks on his character sheet; he writes in ink. The demon is not ashamed of his rolls and anyone can look at them — after they're written down. The Great and Powerful Wizard of Odds looks upon the Fudger with disdain. The victim, if aware of the Wizard at all, will even believe his effects are beneficial and benevolent. **METHOD OF DISPELLING:** The Great and Powerful Wizard of Odds is the hardest demon to dislodge from a campaign. Death cannot stop him, since he will always make his resurrection roll, or will be reincarnated in his victim's next character. The Wizard assumes that every other character at the table has an intelligence of 3 or less, as he performs his wondrous sleight of hand. Only the Gamemaster's Watchful Eye spell will reveal the man behind the curtain. Occasionally a player character may use a Remove Die spell and watch as the Wizard performs his tricks. Once you know the secret, it's no longer quite so astounding. (I understand that in Las Vegas they break the Wizard's nimble fingers, as well as his concentration.) Usually a Player Maturity spell or a True Understanding of the Game spell will banish this humbug back to the Elementary School Plane. **WORDS OF POWER:** "Roll it where I can see it, and call the color you want to be high."

**NAME:** *The Spoiler*  
**RANK:** *Minor*  
**CLASS AFFLICTED:** *All*  
**EFFECT ON VICTIM:** *The victim is constantly describing monsters and situations that the party has never encountered before. The victim is compelled to continually re-enact modules and scenarios with players who have not been through them before so they can have the benefit of his advice.*

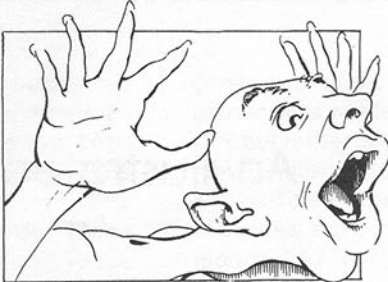
**CALL OR CRY:** "Oh, that's a four-eyed buzzle worm. They spit garbage and talk you to death", or, "You'll like what happens next", or, "Don't open that secret door, it leads to the room where the Evil Magic User is hiding".



**SUPERNATURAL ABILITIES:** The Spoiler has natural precognitive powers, which force his victim to suffer from chronic *deja vu*. The demon also innately knows every monster by sight, its hit points, special attacks and damage. Nothing in a scenario can remain hidden from the Spoiler. The demon is forced to re-enact crimes committed in old modules while constantly telling the other players what's going on, or what can be expected to happen next. The Spoiler takes a great delight in ruining a game for everyone under the pretense of being helpful. The behavior is not even limited to gaming. Often the Spoiler will tell you the ending of an exciting book you're halfway through, or describe the plot of a movie you've been dying to see. Most Spoilers like to play *Tunnels and Trolls*, where they can continuously run the same character through a book forty seven times. The demon Spoiler tends to get other

player characters killed by babbling nonsense at a critical point in the game. **METHOD OF DISPELLING:** There are numerous ways to get rid of a Spoiler. The simplest method is to alter a few secret doors and encounters. The tiny mind of the demon will never comprehend the difference and will while away hours searching for a secret door that no longer exists; or will attempt to talk the ancient Red Dragon into helping out the lawful good party. "Well, I don't understand. It was a Gold Dragon in the module and he was supposed to help us if we were polite". A continual silence spell will only cause the demon to write notes and gestures wildly. The Shot in the Mouth spell will sometimes work but don't worry about offending this demon's feelings — he doesn't have any. If all else fails, the demon is especially vulnerable to having its tongue tied in a knot and stomped on. **WORDS OF POWER:** "I've changed a few things", or, "Nothing is the same".

**NAME:** *The Screaming MeMe*  
**RANK:** *Minor*  
**CLASS AFFLICTED:** *All*  
**EFFECT ON VICTIM:** *Causes the victim to constantly raise and wave both hands shouting its cry.*  
**CALL OR CRY:** *Loud, piercing cries of "Me Me, Me Me, Me Me".*



**SUPERNATURAL POWERS:** The Screaming MeMe has the inane ability to disrupt the game at any point by using its unholy shouts and magic gestures. This usually occurs when a treasure has been uncovered or something good has happened to the party. This demon can control up to fifteen players at one time, temporarily driving out all other demons in its bid for attention. Its cries have been known to break down even the strongest gamemaster. **METHOD OF DISPELLING:** Since

it is a minor demon, the Screaming MeMe can be driven away by any unpleasant situation calling for volunteers. The bag of wandering monsters, possessed by the gamemaster, will often dispel the beast for an entire evening. Oftentimes the Evil Arch Mage, or band of thirty orcs, will become completely befuddled at the enormous silence where a band of Screaming MeMes were heard before. Unfortunately, the demon returns with remarkable regularity whenever order breaks down. **WORDS OF POWER:** "Who's up front?" "Who opens the chest?" "Who touched the mummy?"

As you can tell, many of these demons from the Elementary School Plane have probably already reared their ugly heads in your own campaign. Don't be discouraged. These demons can't abide fair play and good sportsmanship. They need jealousy, envy, and greed to continue their existence. Player maturity will defeat them at every turn. Honest play and a clear understanding of the goals of a game will put these demons back into the Elementary School where they belong. Isn't that what possessed us to get into Fantasy Role Playing?



# COMBAT

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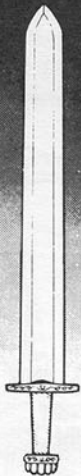
# REVIEW

## Weapons<sup>©</sup>

### An Illustrated Compendium

#### WEAPONS

an illustrated compendium  
of arms suitable for use  
in medieval fantasy role-  
playing games



Matthew  
Balent

\$4.00

This small booklet is truly a gem for all medieval fantasy enthusiasts. Although it measures a mere five by eight and one half inches in size, and is less than thirty pages long, this compendium contains 608 weapons complete with illustrations. This may sound unbelievable, but the best news is that the booklet sells for only four dollars!

I ran into this little wonder at GenCon this past summer, and it didn't take a lot of convincing for me to plop down four bucks for a copy. It is published by Turtle Press in Warren, Michigan, and was put together by Matthew Balent,

who is located in the same city. I was told that *WEAPONS* took three years to research, and anyone who sees it will believe that claim. The only books I have seen in this category that come close to *WEAPONS* are reference books costing thirty dollars or more.

The cover of *WEAPONS* is what attracted me first. It is simple but effective — a sword on a halftone background that shades to black at the top. The title and other lettering at the top is in white. The interior paper is of good quality, although I hope the cover on future editions is of heavier stock. On the first edition it is not heavy enough to protect the booklet from damage. The booklet itself is held together by staples.

The illustrations in *WEAPONS* are smaller but quite carefully rendered, and are extremely detailed for their size. As an added bonus, the edged portions of each weapon illustrated are highlighted so that the use of the weapon may be better understood. The typesetting is very simple, but that increases the legibility in something this small. Most of the weapons are listed under what they are called in their native countries. I am no expert in foreign languages; so as far as typos are concerned, let's just say I couldn't find any.

*WEAPONS* is divided into six sections. These are Swords, Knives, Hafted Weapons, Spears, Pole Arms, and Miscellaneous weapons. The weapons breakdown is as follows: 132 Swords, 110 Knives, 134 Hafted, 95 Spears, 42 Pole Arms, and 95 Miscellaneous. These sec-

tions include weapons from all parts of the world and cover a period of time spanning thousands of years. The Miscellaneous section is most interesting, and includes everything from brass knuckles to lassos to rolling pins to a Vulcan Leer-pa (you Trekkies will know what that is).

Each section is arranged alphabetically and includes a note as to which area of the world the weapon is from, the basic form of attack the weapon was used for, and its weight and length (in metric). There are also relative indications given for each weapon concerning its ease of use, its ability to parry another weapon, its effectiveness as a thrown weapon, and the amount of damage it does. These indications are given as a number rating, usually from one to three.

At the end of the booklet is an index which lists all the included weapons, alphabetically, and gives the section where the weapon can be found. There is also a bibliography listing seventeen resource books used by Mr. Balent as reference for those who wish more information on a particular weapon.

If you know where to find this book, run out and get it now — it is definitely worth the money. If you don't know where to get one, or you have information on weapons to be included in future editions, Mr. Balent invites you to write him at the following address: Matthew Balent, 11834 Cardonna, Warren, Michigan, 48093. Thank you, Mr. Balent, for such an excellent piece of work.

— Graydon Gorby

# TABLE-TOP REPLAY HANNIBAL MEETS ALEXANDER

by Dick Hurchanik

This article describes a battle between two relatively contemporary ancient armies that never actually fought each other. Both armies were famous in their own time, one depending on the pike and elite heavy cavalry and the other depending on guile and javelin-armed cavalry.

The actual orders of battle that follow are keyed to the maps and follow the Wargamer's Research Group's (WRG) 6th Edition Ancient Rules:

*Note: HC means Heavy Cavalry; LC, Light Cavalry; MC, Medium Cavalry; MI, Medium Infantry; LMI, Light Medium Infantry; LI, Light Infantry.*

## Alexander's Macedonians (1500 WRG Points)

- (1) 16-peltasts, LMI w/long spears and jav, C reg
- (2) 12-Agrarians LI w/jav, C reg
- (3) 24-hoplites, MI w/long spear, C reg
- (4,6) 36-phalangites, MI w/pikes, C reg
- (5) 40-phalangites armed as (4)
- (7) 12-Agrarian LI w/slings C reg
- (8) 14-hypaspists, LIM w/long spear, B reg
- (9) 12-Thracian LMI w/rhomphia and jav, c irreg
- (10) 6-Scythian LC w/bows, shieldless, C irreg
- (11) 12-Cretan LI w/bows, shieldless, C reg
- (12,14) 9-Companion HC w/kontos, shieldless, A reg
- (13) General w/6 companion HC armed as (12)
- (15) Subgeneral, HC w/kontos, shieldless

## Hannibal's Carthaginians (1500 points)

- (A) 12-Spanish LI w/jav, C reg
- (B) 10-Morrish LI w/jav, C irreg
- (C) 12-Balearic LI w/slings, C reg
- (D) 10-Numidian LC w/jav, C irreg
- (E,H) 24-Liby-Phoenician MI w/long spear, B reg
- (F,G) 24-Libyan MI w/long spear, C reg
- (I) 18-Gallic MC w/jav, C irreg
- (J) 28-Spanish LMI w/pilum, C irreg. Subgeneral attached.
- (K) General w/3 nobles HC w/jav, A reg
- (L) 8-Spanish MC w/jav, C reg
- (M) 30-Gallic LMI w/jav, C irreg
- (N) 12-Liby-Phoenician HC w/jav, B reg

*Note: the Carthaginians all had shields*

When comparing the two armies note that the Carthaginians had no bows and their best melee weapon, the pilum, was carried by only light medium infantry

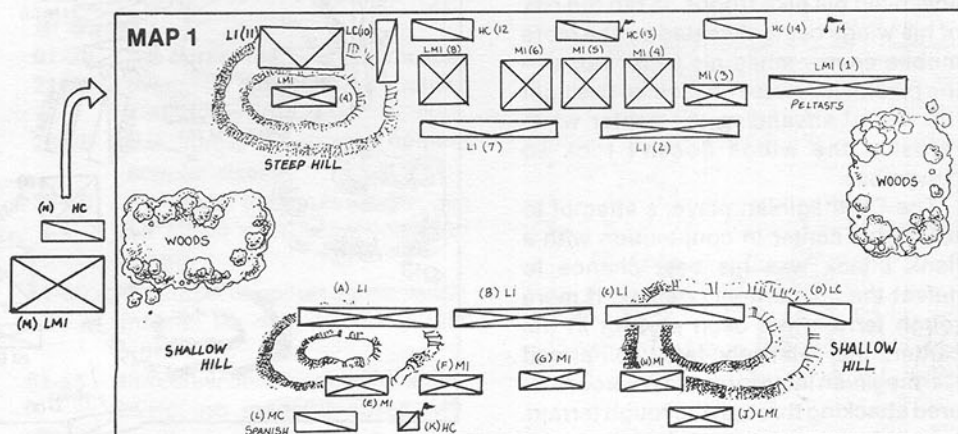
(LMI). The Macedonian Companion cavalry, although shieldless, would not count as such in the first turn of melee if they charged infantry or non-kontos equipped cavalry. The Carthaginians did have more numerous, cheaper troops. All the Carthaginian skirmishers used the javelin; while being shorter ranged, it was a better weapon in that the user could be shielded and was hardened to closing with his opponent (reflected by minus 1 on the morale chart for sling and bow armed troops). Having more light and heavy cavalry, the Carthaginians "out-scouted" the Macedonians and would be able to make one or more flank marches.

The Macedonian player placed 2 steep hills on the board to protect his flanks and 4 open areas to facilitate the advance of his pike-phalanx. The Carthaginian placed a woods on each flank and a gully in the center to block the phalanx. He also placed a steep hill and 2 gentle hills in his deployment area to assist his spear-armed infantry in resisting the Macedonian pikemen. *Map 1* shows what terrain remained after rolling the die. The Carthaginian was dismayed to see "clear sailing" for the enemy phalanx in the center since the gully did not remain.

Being outscouted, the Macedonian

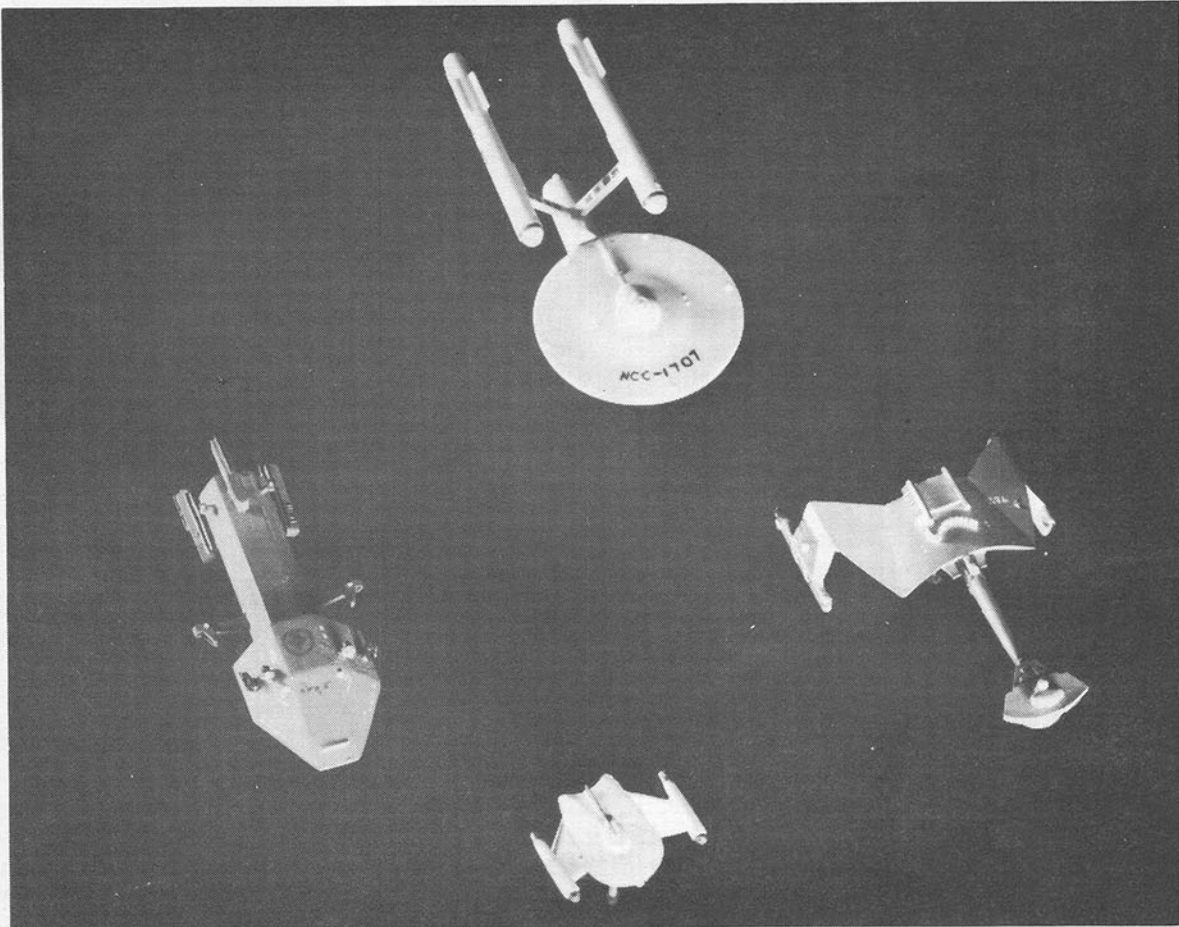
deployed his entire army first. Orders were written and then the Carthaginian army deployed. The Carthaginian decided to make one off-table flanking march on his left flank with his Liby-Phoenician HC (N) and Gauls (M). He thought the rhomphia and javelin-equipped Thracians would be a better target than the long spears and javelins of the peltasts for his HC. The Carthaginian also refused his center, to postpone the contact with the powerful pike-armed phalanx, and try to defeat the lighter wings. He would use his Liby-Phoenician infantry (E) and (H) on the wings and refuse the "average" Libyans (F) and (G) in the center. Fearing flank attacks, the Macedonian did not advance his wings the first turn and cautiously advanced his center, echelonning the hypaspists (8) and hoplites (3) to protect his 3 pike units (4), (5) and (6). *See Map 1.*

The Gallic MC (I), under attack orders, charged the peltasts on Turn 2 and were promptly routed. Even LMI, if armed with long spears, can beat off cavalry in WRG. This happened in spite of a sub-general being attached to minimize the effects of a bad die roll. (An irregular unit's random roll varies between +5, a sure victory, and -5, total defeat. When a



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gap on the left while the Numidians (D), who had rallied from an earlier evade when the Companions charged the *Liby-Phoenicians* (H), moved to strike at pike unit (4)'s flank. The Macedonian committed his remaining cavalry, (12 and 13) to cover the gaps. The peltasts (1) meleed with the Spanish LMI (J) pushing the Spanish back.

Turn 5 (Map 3), resulted in full combat across the table. The Gauls (M) charged, routing the Cretans and fixing the Thracians. The hypaspists (8) were pushed back the third consecutive time, which routed them. The Companion HC (12) attempted to relieve the hypaspists by hitting the *Liby-Phoenician* (E) flank, but were "cut" by the Spanish MC (L) charge on the Companions. The Spanish

MC were routed, however, by the heavier elite Companions.

The Carthaginian general and his *Nobles Guard* (K) charged the pike unit (4)'s flank — but they made morale and managed to turn to meet the *Nobles'* charge, routing the *Nobles*. Pike units (4) and (5) were surprised at being charged by the Libyans, (F) and (G), which they thought had hold orders. Both pike units were able to counter-charge, so the surprise was wasted. As a result Libyan (F) was pushed back and (G) was routed. The Numidians (D) managed to charge pike unit (4)'s flank but its charge was "cut" when it had to evade a charge from Companion HC (13). If the Numidians had charged, the pike unit (4) would have halted and Libyan (G)

would have had an excellent chance since the pikes would have been disordered and fought with only 1 rather than 4 ranks. It was to prevent this that the Companions charged. If another unit was available to the Carthaginian at this point he could have held off the Companions with one and struck the pikemen's flank with the other. Finally, the Spanish LMI, (J), not winning with their best weapon, the pilum, in Turn 4, were routed by the peltasts when left only with swords to defend themselves. Turn 5 was the last turn because the Carthaginian, although winning on the left flank, was decisively beaten in the center and on the right — so he conceded the game.

# How I Saved Hoopeston, Illinois From An Alien Invasion

by Mark Cummings

The sad deterioration of our national defenses during the Carter years was not brought home to me in a personal way until I relocated to a town of only 7,000 persons in central Illinois. Imagine my shock and outrage when I discovered that there was not one Laser Cannon Training Device (LCTD) to be found in the entire town.

I could not understand how the Carter administration could have been so parsimonious as to neglect to prepare for the defense of such a vital center of commerce (not only do we have canning companies, but we make the machines that make the plastic doodads that hold a six pack of pop cans together, and we are a major center for the production of pod harvesters!!). Ever since his famous speech at Notre Dame, in which the president had once and for all laid to rest our "inordinate fear of communism," the nation had achieved a growing awareness of the "Real Enemy". LCTD's had sprung up across the country and millions of patriotic Americans had labored, at their own expense, without any government coercion, to train themselves for civil defense.

This spontaneous movement by the American people was the most inspiring and patriotic example of removing *BIG GOVERNMENT* from the Defense Program since the Minute Men militia of the American revolution.

I was one of those patriotic Americans who literally sacrificed himself for the defense needs of his people. There were months when we barely made the rent payments because of my dedication to national defense and the expense involved in constant training. I remember the day when they came to repossess the car. My wife was weeping with shame

and remorse, but I comforted her by reminding her that other patriots, men such as Paul Revere, had undergone serious financial losses as a result of their devotion to patriotism.

You can easily imagine my shock when I arrived in Hoopeston, Illinois, and found that there was no LCTD. How could I keep myself in top condition for the day when *the attack finally comes*???

Suddenly I saw a glimmer of hope! Perhaps the Carter administration had not been so negligent after all! After all, when *the attack finally comes*, there will have to be *REAL* laser cannons for us highly trained, patriotic Americans to use. Simulators will be useless against the enemy! But where are these real laser cannons? Where are they manufactured? Where are they stored?

The clue that enable me to solve this mystery was that pregnant phrase, *Pod Harvesters!!* What, exactly, is a *Pod Harvester*? I was told by local people that it was a device for harvesting pods, and for a while I actually believed this. Then one day when I was in the local IGA I decided to buy a can of pods (in this way I would be indirectly supporting a local industry and helping the economy). That was when I realized *THE TRUTH. THERE ARE NO PODS!!* Just ask yourself, have you ever eaten a pod? Have you ever *met* anyone who has eaten a pod? Have you ever been talking to a farmer and asking him what he grew and had him say to you, "Ah yes! We've gone with pods this year! The drought in Argentina is sure to drive up the price of pods!"

There are no pods! Not only were there no pods in the local IGA, there are no recipes for pods in my Betty Crocker Cookbook!

That was when I realized *THE TRUTH*. The Pod Harvesters are really Laser Cannons. I quivered with excitement for a week after I realized the truth, but I was still left with my original problem: how to

stay in training for *The Invasion*.

There seemed to be but one answer. No matter what the cost, I would have to have my own LCTD. The safety of Hoopeston demanded it!

I immediately consulted the family budget director, who told me to come back with a firm budget proposal, prepared on the proper forms and filled out in triplicate. After checking with the major government suppliers, I found that the best equipment was made by an aerospace firm called Atari, and that their basic computer retails for about \$160 in discount, military-industrial complex, supply stores.

For reasons I am unable to understand, these high technology devices do not come with LCTD. They come with simulations of tank/air-craft or air-sea battles. Obviously there are many people who do not understand the presence of *The Real Enemy* (or is this perhaps an attempt to confuse the Russians so that *they won't be ready!*). In any event, the computer program for the LCTD is available for \$20-\$30 and is sold under the quaint name of *Space Invaders*®.

Once all of the preliminary information was assembled the proposal was submitted to Congress. As was expected, we were unable to get it passed. Then the free enterprise system went to work. For the first time the real figures on the number of quarters spent each month on the use of public LCTD's was revealed (fortunately the budget director has agreed that our marriage is worth saving, but it was touch and go for awhile). A local psychiatrist agreed to underwrite some of the cost (he realized that the presence of an LCTD in his community could mean a lot of extra business for him). With this new information, the



proposal was resubmitted to Congress, Tip O'Neal was unable to hold the conservative Democrats in line, and the measure passed.

(A word of warning concerning the mental stress of defense preparation: A few months ago, before I moved to Hoopston, I used to live in a large city in which there were many LCTD's. My friend, Herman Frinkle, and I, in addition to being deeply involved in the defense program, were also members of the local gun club. Herman developed an interesting tactic to use against the aliens. He took to shooting at them with his forty-five Magnum instead of using the laser cannon. This worked extremely well, since he could bring the whole attack to a stop with only one or two shots, but it won't work when *The Real Invasion* comes. A forty-five just won't stack up against a full-sized pod harvester-laser cannon!! So beware. I know it sounds hard to believe, but some people can actually have their view of reality distorted by the mental stress involved in the defense program.)

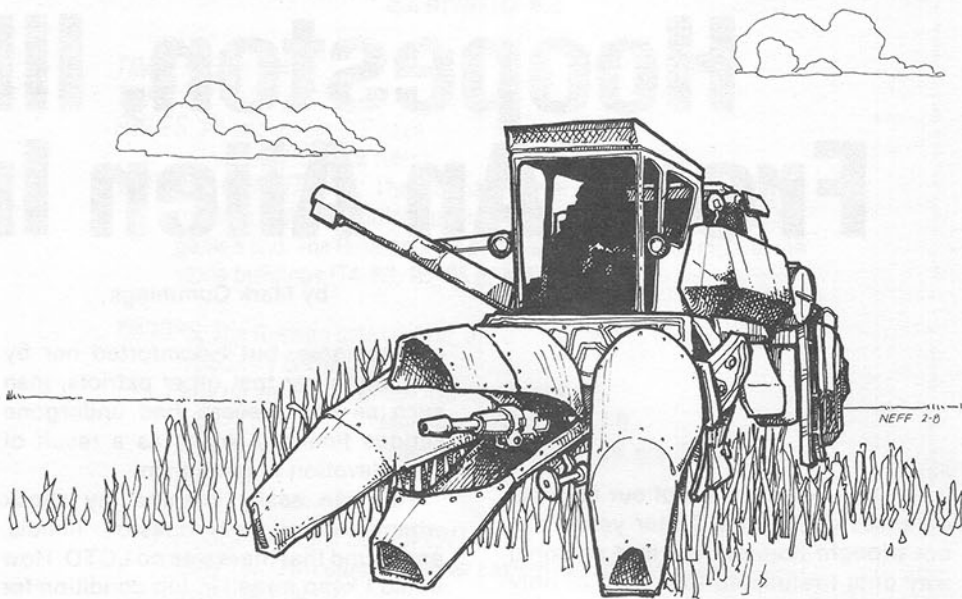
I have only had my new LCTD for a week now, so I have only played 17,462 games. Needless to say, this does not make me an expert, but I have learned two things that I feel that all patriotic Americans need to be aware of.

(I have promised the budget director that if I get this article done over the weekend, then I will not call in sick every day this week the way I did last week.)

For those of you who are opposed to military service and who have yet to do your part to prepare for the coming of the enemy, I will briefly describe an attack by these so-called "Space Invaders". The aliens teleport in above your community in groups of thirty. If you blow them all up with your laser cannon, then thirty more appear, but this time they are *CLOSER!*

The aliens appear in a nice rectangular formation, which makes it easier for you to shoot them to pieces. You will need all of the help you can get, however, because you are badly *outnumbered*. They will come in six vertical rows, each row containing five ugly aliens. They all line up on a plane perpendicular to your streets, probably so that they can drive right off as soon as they reach the ground. As they fall to earth they will shift a little to the left, and then a little to the right, the better to dodge the barrages of your deadly pod harvester.

As they come down, getting lower and lower, you have to blow them all up. If



you miss even one, and he makes it down to your street, **YOU ARE DEAD AND YOU HAVE FAILED ALL OF THOSE HELPLESS WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN YOUR COMMUNITY AND DON'T YOU WISH YOU HAD PRACTICED MORE WHEN YOU HAD THE CHANCE?**

All you will have to fight back with is your laser-armed farm implement. You have to be very defense-oriented and dodge a lot because the little alien swine drop bombs as they descend. Your pod harvester's armor can only withstand two hits. On the third hit, you're a goner!

Once you destroy all thirty of the aliens, thirty more appear, only they are lower. When you blow them all up, *thirty more* appear, and they can keep reinforcing themselves like that indefinitely! When it comes to casualties, the aliens are like the Red Chinese, they *just don't care!*

Now that you know what we are up against, I want to tell you about the two things that I have learned. First of all, it is possible to win at *Space Invaders* if you can *practice* long enough.

And what do I mean by "win"? You can win when you can just keep blowing the little monsters to pieces no matter how many times they send in reinforcements without ever getting hurt yourself.

Come, let us reason together. Calmly, rationally, let us examine our defense efforts. Using my definitions, have you ever won at *Space Invaders*? No, you

haven't, have you? And what does this mean? It means that when *The Invasion* really comes, you will *DIE* a hideous death, and the space invaders will reach our streets, and they will drive off, and they will kill your grandmother and your baby sister!!!!

Now I ask you, is that any way to defend America?

My friends, the choice is yours. You can either spend \$200 and put in the time you really need to practice, or else you can have the deaths off all of the people at the nearest Old Folks Home on your conscience.

There is one other important thing that you just have to know. The aliens have a *SPY* at the Pentagon, and maybe even one with the toy companies. This spy has nearly ruined the LCTD's, which could result in the defeat of the earth. This is the main reason I wrote this article. You must tell *all your friends* about this espionage that has undermined our defense efforts.

The computer programs all have a little space ship that periodically runs across the top of the screen that they call the "command ship". The computer programs also have number values for everything you shoot at. Believe it or not, you can keep track of these points and "play" at *Space Invaders* almost as if it was some sort of a game. This is where the sabotage part comes in. They will give you more points for hitting the command

ship than they will for destroying the other aliens.

And what can we deduce from this? Someone *wants* us to spend all sorts of time shooting at the command ship.

Do not be deceived!! We are not playing a game to get points. *We are trying to save the earth! Ignore* the command ship. It is a *decoy!*

Unlike the *real* menace, the command ship does not drop bombs. It does not keep coming lower and lower. It will not land on your city streets and eat your pod-harvester-laser cannon. It poses *no* threat to the innocent babies in your city or village!

Furthermore, the command ship does not *command*. You can blow them up all day long, and the aliens continue to act with the exact *same* strategy! (When I first saw this, I began to suspect the undermining work of a *SPY* in our midst.) Even worse, nine out of ten hits on your farm equipment come as a result of your attention being distracted by trying to hit a command ship that is really just a *filthy spy decoy*.

**ALWAYS REMEMBER! COMMAND SHIPS ARE DELILAH'S TO YOUR SAMPSON-LIKE POD HARVESTERS. IGNORE THOSE SUCKERS!!**

If you follow my advice exactly, you will soon find that you can just keep wiping them out *forever*. You will never be blown up and you will score an endless number of points as you gleefully destroy filthy alien vermin. *Then*, and *only* then, will you enter into the true meaning of why your laser cannon control is called a "joy stick" in the directions!!!!

Just the other night I was practicing. I had run the score up to 50,000+ without being hit even once. I was so good that I could even talk while I played, and I was sharing my joy with the budget director. Hoopston, Illinois would be safe for as long as I lived there!

Just then the budget director picked up a document that I had never examined, the directions to the program for *Space Invaders*.

"Oh, look honey," she said. "There is a way that you can make the aliens invisible. And here is a way to make their bombs drop four times as fast. And here is a way to make the bombs fall in a zig-zag pattern. And look at this! You can have invisible aliens dropping bombs that zig-zag as they fall four times as fast while your protective shields move back and forth . . ."

And that's all I remember. When I came to I was in this quiet place. *They* tried to tell me that I had had a breakdown, but I *know* what *really* happened. I had begun to get too good. And then the *SPY* had come for me. He probably injected nerve gas into my living room.

They say they are keeping me here until I get better, but I *know* they want to keep me from warning you about the command ships. That is why I have carefully written this entire article on paper napkins using tomato soup as ink. Tomorrow I am going to put all of the napkins in my pillow case and heave them over the wall during my fresh air period.

If you find this bundle of napkins, please forward them to Mr. Timothy Kask. I know that *he* will understand and that he will *warn the world*.

And Tim, if you get this, would you please send word to Fineous Fingers? I'm sure that he will organize a party of mighty heroes and come and get me out of here.

Please come and get me soon so that I can be ready for *The Invasion*.

Herman's in here, too. When Fineous comes to set us free, he asks that they bring him his forty-five Magnum.

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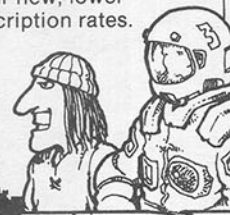
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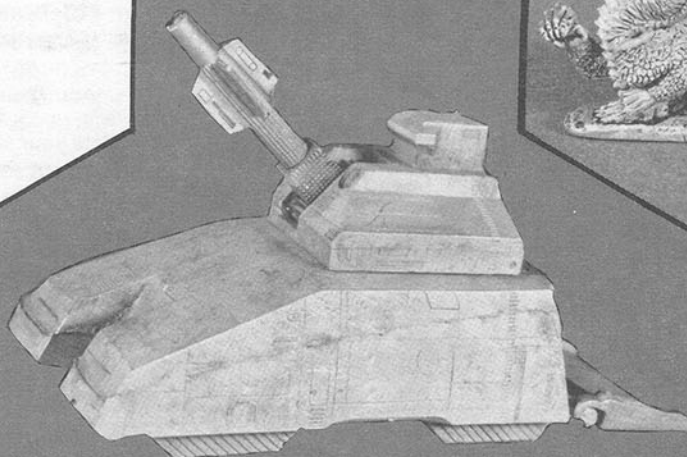
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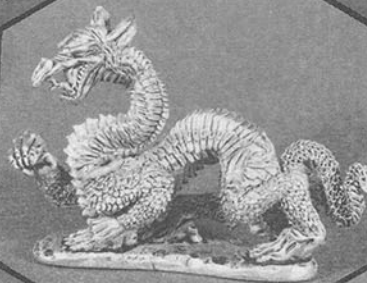
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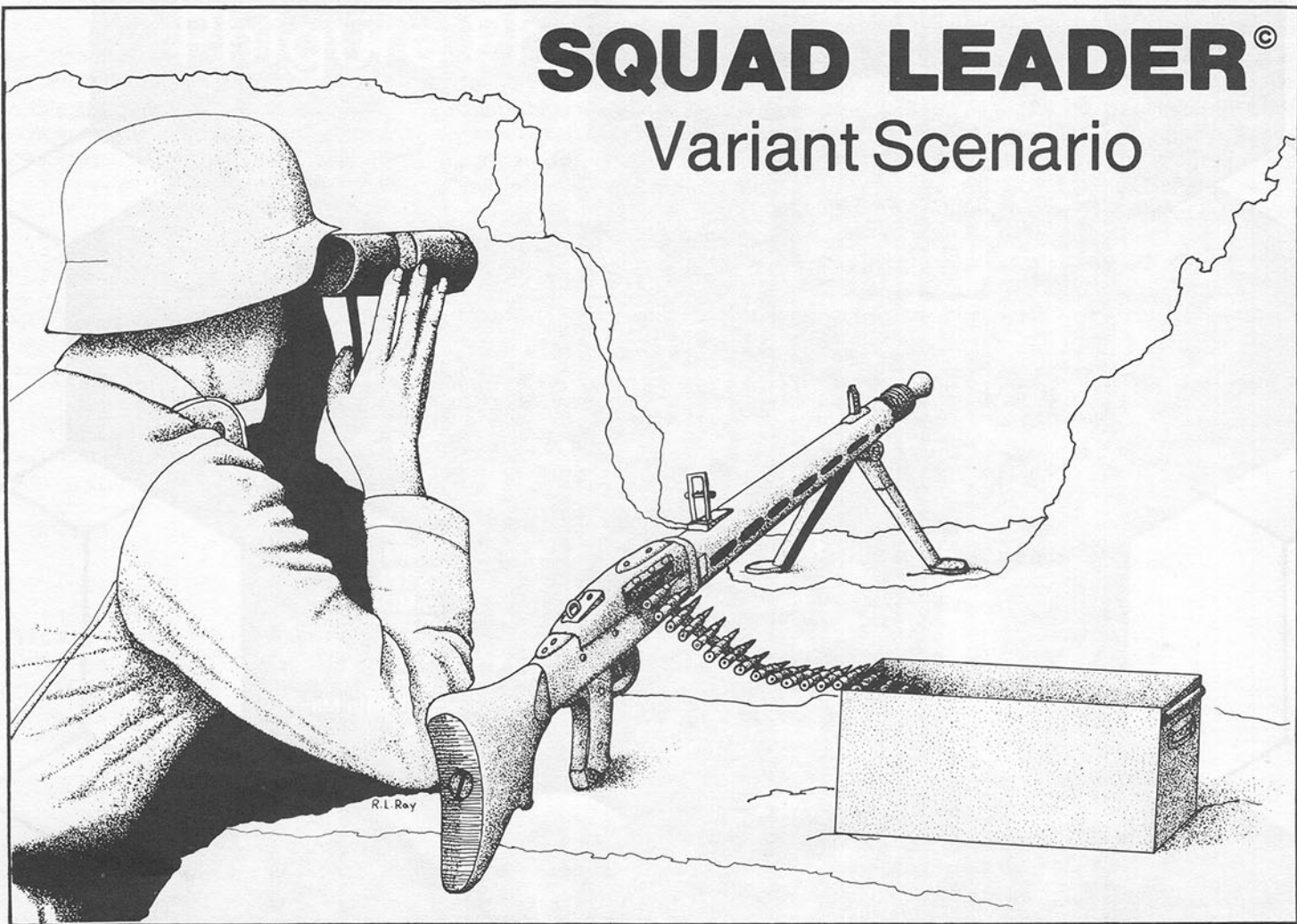
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# SQUAD LEADER<sup>®</sup>

## Variant Scenario



by Bryan J. Bullinger

The scenario presented in *Adventure Gaming* Vol. 1 No. 7, pitted a mobile German assault force against a ragtag of Russian infantry. In it, the Russian's advantage is the absolute knowledge of where the German's attack is being directed; the German's is one of strength and mobility. Map #1 illustrates possible Turn 1 positions after the German movement phase. To show the Russian set up, the map does not take into account equipment that may have been expended in defensive fire or potential casualties or immobilizations.

### Russian Player Analysis

The Russian starts the game in a good situation that turns bad very quickly. At the outset he controls the hills and the strategically valuable pass. The mortar atop Hill 621 provides supporting fire into the pass and also offers a chance for the destruction of halftracks or trucks traveling on the Board 2 road. This group also has a Molotov cocktail to discourage overruns (though the en-

trenchment may be enough and thus the cocktail could be put to use elsewhere, perhaps at U4). The position, if heavily pressured, also has a potential escape route behind the crest of the hill.

The units at R2 and T1 are sacrifice units — placed to slow the German's advance into the pass. (Given that they have some success at doing so, the situation presented on Map #1 may not occur.) As fire from R2 into S2 or R1 is tripled, it should at least encourage someone to unload prematurely. Though the Molotov cocktails are unlikely to be successful, the burning of an AFV would successfully disrupt the attack coming along the Board 2 road. While R2 has an escape route, the units in T1 will probably have no other choice than to hold and fight. The LMG is there to increase the point-blank odds and to fire on unloading infantry.

The units in Z1 should prevent an end run by the German light trucks and offer some protection to T1's rear. Once the German commits his forces, he will find that the Russian units in T1 not only harass his rear while lightly defending

against a flanking action, they also complicate his road crossings. In other words, the German will have to waste time and firepower to deal with them.

The reserve units W7 and T8 need to move into the pass on Turn 1. If at all possible, they should attempt to entrench once they get there. The 8-1 leader needs to remain on one side of the road extending from U2 to U7 while the 9-1 leader that enters on Turn 1 should take the other side. The road from U2 to U7 is a firelane that effectively divides the Russian forces.

Hex U4 is of major importance throughout the game, but never so much as at the start. Fire from it into U3, U5, V4 and V5 is tripled and the German must isolate the position in order to defeat it — very difficult for him to accomplish with only infantry. Thus it should tie up a German tank for at least two turns. Other major benefits of this position are: 1) it cannot be close-assaulted from the hexes listed above; 2) it has infantry height advantage (Rule 91); and, 3) counterattacks from adjacent AFV's are very limited (Rule 82.1).

The Russian's Turn 1 reinforcements are desperately needed in the pass. If the situation presented on Map #1 comes about, though, they will have to fight their way there. To add to their problems, there will most likely be at least one tank to contest their movement into the area. The 9-1 leader and accompanying squads, ATR, and LMG's should move quickly into a position with cover and good firelanes (perhaps V6 or W4 depending

on what the German allows). Given that the German is either very kind or very timid, all units in the pass should attempt to entrench. Two or three squads should also be used to solidify the flanks in conjunction with the "platoons-in-line" theory.

Some final suggestions and notes for the Russian: Firing at an exposed crew is perhaps the Russian's best anti-tank weapon and he should take full advan-

tage of it. Also, once the German's half-tracks and trucks are unloaded, they are worthless to his achieving his victory conditions and as such should then be ignored. Lastly, anytime a unit can't find anything to do it should dig in.

### German Player Analysis

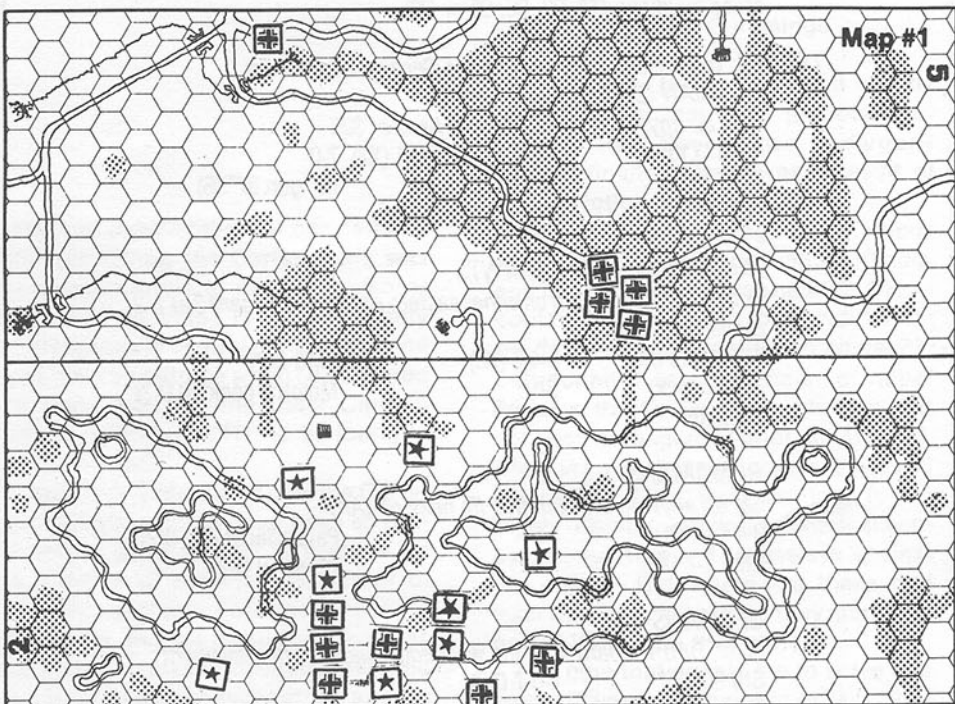
Map #1 shows the German his positions at the end of his Turn 1 movement phase given a Russian player who has consistently rolled ten or above. The map not only displays the why's of the Russian's initial setup, but also shows the German the great need for aggressive behavior on his part. It is very important that the Russians at T1 and R2 be dealt with quickly and with the least hindrance to the German's mobility. Map #2 illustrates one way of doing so.

The light truck at 5X9 unloaded at 5M2 and moved out of the way. The entry hex for the trucks and halftracks was 5FF5 and all the tank units entered at 2A6. These positions minimize the Russian defensive fire — T1 and U4 are halved while R2 and O5 are normal (instead of R2 being tripled).

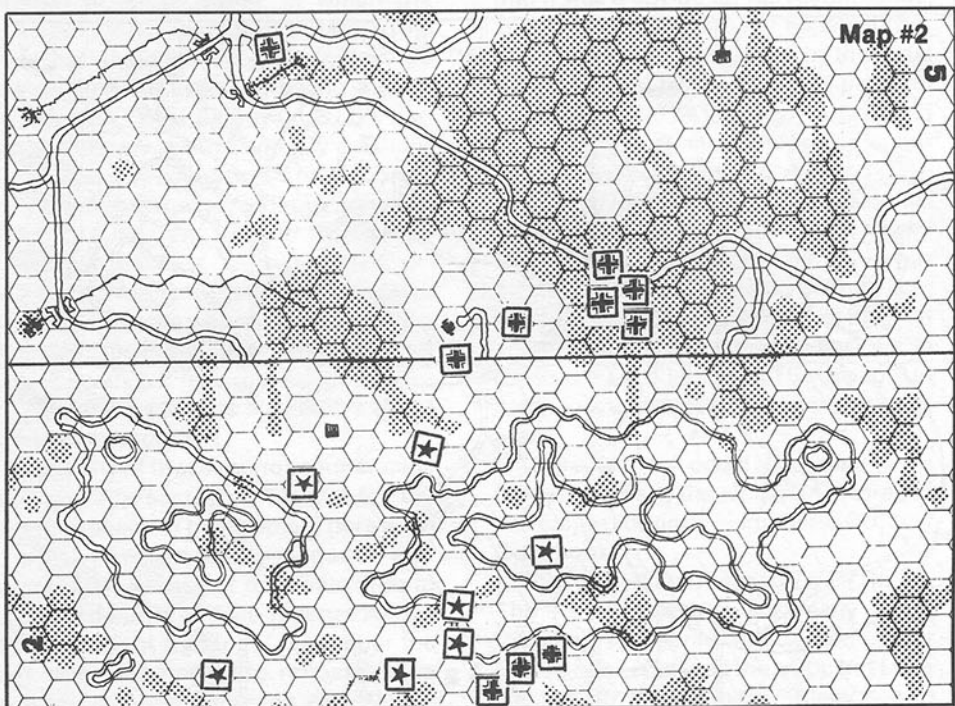
Assuming all survived the Russian defensive fire, the German tanks should fire during the advancing fire phase in order to acquire targets — the Pzkw IV fires at 2R2; the Pzkw III at 2P1 fires at 2T1 and the Pzkw III at 2O2 fires at 2O5. This action has a secondary advantage as it unloads the infantry without expenditure of movement points. The 9-1 leader, squad and LMG unload into 2S1, the 4-6-7 at 2P1 into 2Q2, and 8-0 leader and LMG into N2 and the 4-6-7 at 2O2 into 2O3. All these units (except, of course, the leader) should then use advancing fire.

If the advancing fire is successful (or even partially so) then 2S1 and 2Q2 should advance for close combat or position capture. 5M2 should advance to 5M1 and, if 2T1 has not yet fallen, be joined by a 4-6-7 and PF from 5L1. The other 4-6-7 and LMG should also advance and develop a fire lane toward 2A3 while 2O3 and 2N2 advance into 2N3. All the vehicles become crew exposed at this point except the halftrack at 5P1 (this is required if R2 and T1 have not fallen). The 10-2 leader now has a fire lane into the pass at 2W4 and the 8-0 leader at 5M2 should advance into 5L1.

The gamble for T1 may cost the 9-1 leader and a squad but if it succeeds it provides two LMG's another fire lane into the pass. Failure now means that T1



(Due to reduced size, the counters only show troop nationality. For actual troop mix, see Scenario #1 in January issue.)



must be hit during the defensive fire phase (Russian portion of Turn 1) with up to 3 PF (or as many as is needed to negate the terrain bonus), 3 squads at even, the Panzer III's main gun, MG's at even, and also maybe 12 factors at -1 from the 9-1. T1 *should* fall.

If all went correctly, Turn 2 should begin with the first Russian defense line broken, a mobile reserve ready to move through the hole, several Russian units isolated and both the tanks and infantry in position to move up to support and consolidate the gain.

Final suggestions and notes for the German: The road from U2 to U7 divides the Russian forces and this must be taken advantage of. The Russian infantry must be harassed and prevented from entrenching in the pass and the Russian units defending the flanks must be isolated and prevented from reinforcing the pass. The halftracks and trucks cannot be used to achieve victory conditions so either get them out of the way or use them as blocking terrain. The Russian player has the last move; therefore, if the victory conditions have been achieved by German Turn 5, a defensive setup that will negate an all-out rush is called for.

### Summary

The scenario just discussed has far more options than these presented here and I don't claim that they are necessarily the best ones. They will however, hopefully give both players, be they virgins or vets, some new insights into the game. In cases of players of unequal ability, additions can be made to make the game more equitable. For a weak Russian, add supplemental Rule J and/or a -2 or -3 sniper. If the German needs upgrading, use SPW251/1's.

## Scenario #2

designed by  
Dale Patton and Bryan Bullinger

The scenario this month will hopefully provide a new and interesting challenge as it utilizes a few of the little used armour units. Next time I'll present another scenario along with a review of scenario #2.

*The circle on board 3 represents radius within which Russian Garrison may set up.*

*The circle on board 4 represents radius within which Rumanians may set up.*

## Scenario #2

**TIME:** August 1941

**TURNS:** 7

**RULES:** All applicable COI rules  
(no supplemental rules)

**VICTORY CONDITIONS:** The German player must have four (4) of the five (5) stone buildings on Board 3 clear of Russian units by the game's end. The Russian wins by occupying two (2) or more of the stone buildings (T4, R3, R6, O5 or N2).

**TROOPS:** The Russian sets up first, the German moves first

### RUSSIAN GARRISON

Set up anywhere within five (5) hexes of 305

4-3-6 (X10)	Molotov cocktail (X3)	7-0
4-4-7 (X3)	MMG	Inf. gun 37* (6)
LMG (X2)	8-0	

### RUSSIAN REINFORCEMENTS

Enter Turn 2 in column on either eastern road hex on Board 3 at 1/2 movement factors

T26S(45L) (X2)	4-4-7 (X9)	LMG (X2)
Z15b (truck)	8-1	Molotov cocktail (X2)
25LL (6)		

### RUMANIANS

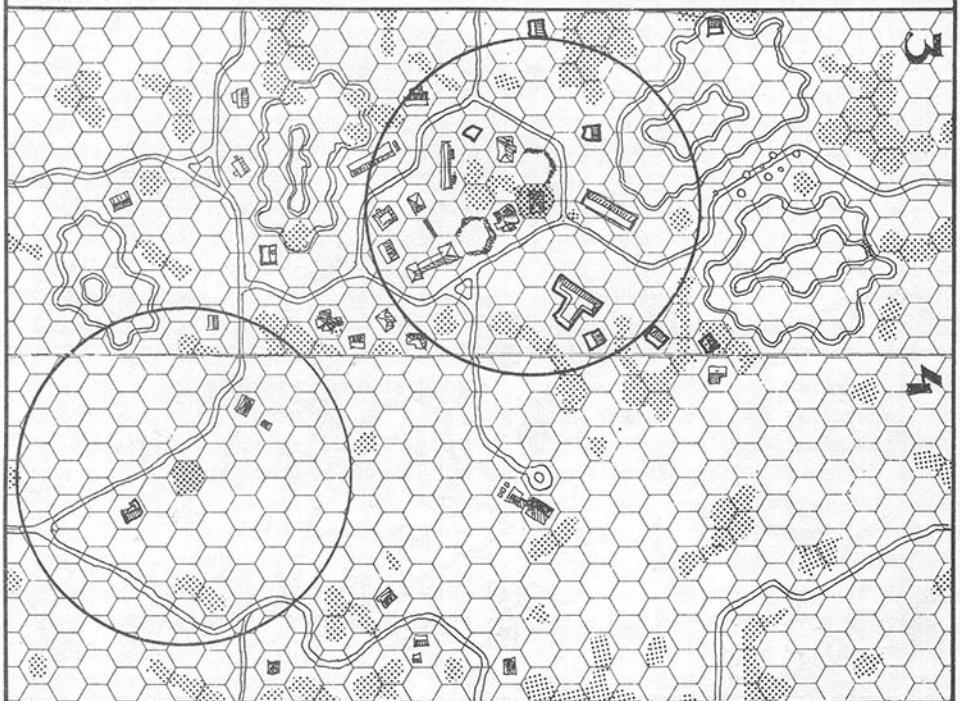
Set up anywhere within five (5) hexes of 4AA7

3-4-7 (X12)	8-0	Panzerfaust 42b (X2)
LMG 2-7 (X2)	7-0	Pzkw 1B (X2)

### GERMANS

Enter Turn 1, Board 4 on the west edge road at 1/2 movement

StG IIIb 75*	4-6-7 (X3)	9-1
Pzkw 35(t)37 (X2)	LMG (X2)	PF 42b (X2)
Lt. truck	SPW 251/2	





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# May Your Eyeballs Shivel and Your Nose Fall Off

## Effective Cursing in FRP

by Perry T. Cooper

*The peasant pointed down the narrow mountain valley to a thin cavern opening a few hundred paces ahead. "There," he said to the muscular swordsman and his two grim hirelings behind him. "That's where I saw the thieves ditch their gold while they were fleeing from those soldiers. I don't know if they've come back for it yet though."*

*The warrior sneered. "Doesn't matter," he replied, unsheathing his broadsword and testing its edge with his left thumb. "We're not worried about a band of ragged cutpurses."*

*"Then you won't mind if I stay here," the peasant said with a shudder. "I kept my end of the bargain by leading you here. I'm not going into that cave; I'll just wait here for you to bring back my share of the loot."*

*The swordsman shrugged. "That's going to be a long wait," he said. Suddenly his sword lashed out and blood gushed from the peasant's beefy belly. The peasant fell writhing in agony to the mountain grass while the warrior wiped his broadsword clean and motioned for his men to follow him to the cave.*

*"I'll be avenged!" the peasant shrieked after them as he drew his last breath. "A curse on all of you — you'll never leave that cave alive!"*

*The three ruffians chuckled at the curse, but deep down they were afraid. Too often they had heard tales illustrating the power of a dying man's curse. And within a few minutes they would learn that they had reason to fear, while the dragon who had gleefully found a new cave home complete with treasure would also enjoy a nice hot meal.*

That little story leads us into our discussion of curses in fantasy role-playing games. It is a shame, in the opinion of this author, that a tale such as the one above cannot happen in any FRP game of which I know, except of course through mere chance. Despite the fact that they are so much a part of legend and folklore, curses are almost totally neglected by FRP games.

In the ever-popular game of *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons*®, a "curse" of sorts can be placed by any cleric, as the

first-level *bless* spell can be reversed to become a *curse* spell. But this is a very limited and unimaginative spell; its only effect is to cause all of the cleric's enemies within a five-foot-by-five-foot area to have their morale and their chances for scoring a hit temporarily lowered slightly. That's hardly the sort of curse from which spine-chilling legends spring.

Not only are such curses ineffective, but they are the property only of clerics. The curses of legend could be placed by anyone, if that person was sufficiently scorned, outraged or mistreated to dredge up the necessary psychic energy. One tale related that a mounted nobleman once callously ignored a poor old woman and nearly trampled her, which so outraged her that she placed a curse which caused the nobleman's family to see each first-born son for five generations die in childhood.

Now, curses as powerful as that should not occur every day, not even in the wild world of fantasy gaming. But the very fact that such curses can be placed by even the lowliest peasant will add a new dimension to any FRP system (without intruding upon intricate rules systems or day-to-day events). And it will also prevent players from indiscriminately knocking peasants around in every village they enter; if they do, they could well have themselves a new adventure to undertake — namely the figuring out of a way to avoid or break a curse. (This challenge could make for a terrific gaming session, as players scurry to right wrongs, search out powerful wizards' aid and so forth.)

Strict controls must be placed upon curses in order to prevent their overuse and abuse; also it should be possible for the curse to backfire, to not work or to cause some terrible power to be loosed upon the one doing the cursing, resulting in his/her death, illness, insanity, *et cetera*. I have devised some tables to ensure that curses will seldom be placed, but first let us distinguish between three types of curses.

*Type I Curses* involve punishments which are not intended to be fatal. For

example, if Eldrak the magician accurately but foolishly referred to an old hag as an "ugly old bag of bones," she might retaliate with a curse that causes him to break out in a terrible itching rash for seven days.

*Type II Curses* involve the death of an individual. Example: Eldrak got so tired of scratching after a few days that he whacked the old crone with his staff, and she cursed him in reply by declaring that he would die before the moon went through another cycle of phases. (For the purpose of suspense, if nothing else, it is suggested that these "death curses" always leave something to the imagination; the one doing the cursing should not be empowered to name the exact moment and cause of the cursed person's death.)

*Type III Curses* involve the deaths of more than one person, or the cursing of more than one generation. Example: Eldrak got so angry with the old hag after hearing her death curse that he blasted her with a magic fireball; with her dying she declared that all of his friends would die with him.

Now that we have made the necessary distinctions in the types of curses, we need to discuss the risks of placing a curse. First, only a very angry person can unleash the tremendous psychic power required in order for a curse to take effect. The more potent the curse, the greater is the chance that the loosing of this great power may cause dire harm to the person unleashing it. And with all curses there is a chance that nothing will happen, that the effort to summon forth a curse was not great enough (and second or succeeding tries have zero chance of success).

Finally, curses are not all-powerful. They cannot be used to greatly alter the status quo; no person, great or small, can curse some great empire or religious group and then watch that nation or faith fall apart. Curses cannot be made retroactive; no curse will cause an adult to have died as a baby, or to never have been born at all. The past cannot be altered with a curse. And all curses can be broken or avoided if the cursed per-

son is willing to perform the necessary labors (always difficult) and if the one placing the curse is still around to bargain with — if not, his/her spirit must be contacted for its terms, or a deity must be consulted. Curses have great power and can cause great trouble for any person, regardless of rank or power, but curses should never be permitted to grow so powerful as to take over any game system.

Any time a curse is placed, the person trying to avoid it gets to make a percentile roll on the appropriate table below. Often a second percentile roll will follow to determine the fate of the person placing the curse. Note that any curse which is unwieldy, foolish, overly complex or otherwise problematic may be altered or summarily dismissed by the Game Master.

**Table A: Results of a Type I Curse Placement**

01-60	the curse works as specified; proceed to Table B for possible effects on the curser
61-65	the curse backfires; its effects are felt only by the curser, not the intended person
66-98	no effect at all
99-00	the curse does not work; instead the psychic power generated causes the immediate death of the one placing the curse (this person may be magically raised from the dead if desired)

**Table B: Penalties For Placing a Type I Curse**

01-40	the curser feels no effects at all
41-70	the curser is slightly ill and weak, requiring 1-4 days of bed rest
71-90	the curser is stricken with a serious disease (see appropriate disease tables or have type of disease randomly assigned by Dungeon Master)
91-98	the curser goes insane (can be cured magically)
99-00	the curser becomes permanently insane (no cures of any kind will work)

**Table C: Results of a Type II Curse Placement**

01-45	the curse works as specified; proceed to Table D for possible effects on the curser
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46-53	the curse backfires; its effects are felt only by the curser, not the intended person
54-95	no effect at all
96-00	the curse does not work; instead the psychic power generated causes the immediate and irrevocable death of the person placing the curse (no magical way of raising the dead or resurrecting will work)

**Table D: Penalties For Placing a Type II Curse**

01-30	the curser feels no effects at all
31-37	the curser is slightly ill, requiring 1-4 days of bed rest
38-55	the curser is stricken with a disease
56-80	the curser becomes insane (can be cured magically)
81-98	the curser become permanently insane; no magical cures will work
99-00	the curser becomes permanently blind; no magical cures will work

**Table E: Results of a Type III Curse Placement**

01-35	the curse works as specified; proceed to Table F for possible effects on the curser
36-45	the curse backfires; its effects are felt only by the curser, not the intended person
46-90	no effect at all
91-00	the curse does not work; instead the psychic power generated causes the immediate and irrevocable death of the person placing the curse (no magical way of raising the dead or resurrecting will work)

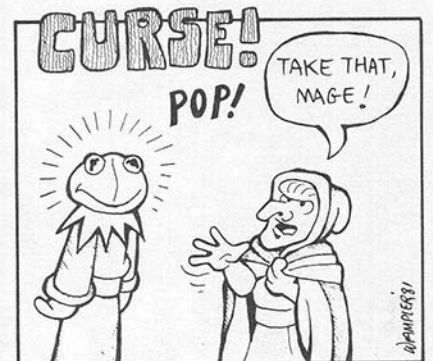
**Table F: Penalties for Placing a Type III Curse**

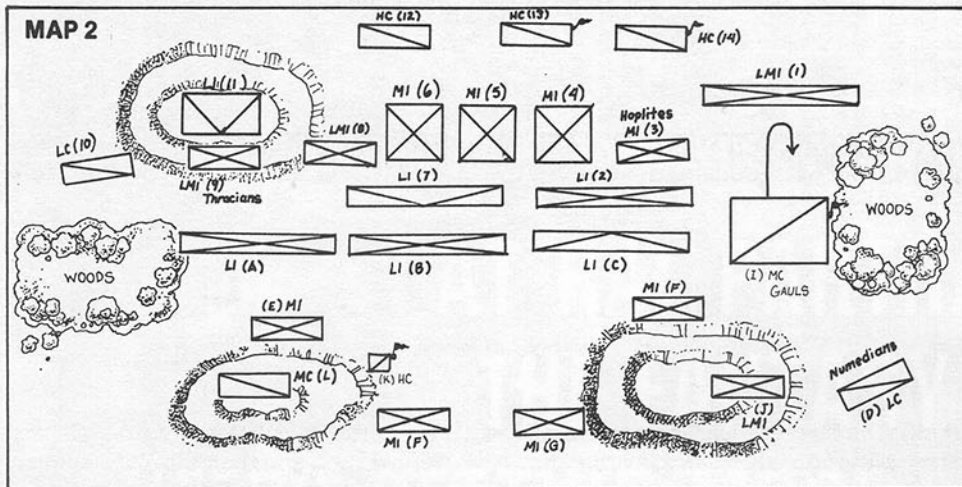
01-20	the curser feels no effects at all
21-25	the curser is slightly ill, requiring 1-4 days of bed rest
26-35	the curser is stricken with a serious disease
36-50	the curser becomes insane; can be cured with some forms of magic
51-80	the curser becomes permanently insane; no magical cures will work
81-95	the curser becomes permanently blind; no magical cures will work

96-00	the curser is totally and irrevocably destroyed; his/her very soul is eaten
-------	---

The potentially terrible penalties for uttering a curse as described in these six tables will prevent curses from being laid except in extreme cases where revenge means too much for the price to be considered.

Note finally that for a curse to be placed, there must be both the necessary time and the ability on behalf of the curser. The curse must be spoken aloud or put in writing in order to go into effect; a person slain by a crossbow bolt is unlikely to have the time and ability to face his/her slayer and pronounce a curse upon that person. And of course only a small portion of those slain will even desire to do so; a warrior accepts death on the battlefield as a hazard of the trade and will not seek to obtain revenge upon the person slaying him/her. A curse is never intended to be an oft-used weapon; but for those who are ruthlessly oppressed, a curse can be the one means of striking back successfully at an oppressor.





general is with a unit its random value can't be less than zero.)

The three Macedonian pike units advanced behind their skirmishers until the Macedonian skirmishers were halted by the Carthaginian LI. The Macedonian LI (2) and (7) were unable to roll high enough to charge the opposing LI. Likewise the Moors (B) were unable to charge the Agrarian slingers (7). The Liby-Phoeniceans (E) and (H) continued to advance while the Libyans (F) and (G) did not move, having "CWA" orders — attack but act defensively. The Macedonian mistakenly thought they had hold orders which prohibited them from attacking. See Map 2.

### Analysis

The Carthaginian had the dubious pleasure of seeing his tactic of uncovering the pikemen's flanks work, yet being unable to effectively exploit it.

In summary, the Macedonian brought up his reserves nicely to cover the gaps as they were made, while the Carthaginian didn't have enough troops at the time of need. If the Macedonian had been more cautious in the center and not advanced his pike troops he ran the risk of his wings being defeated by the more mobile enemy while his best troops — the pikemen — were unused. In this light the risk of advancing the center while refusing the wings doesn't look so dangerous.

The Carthaginian player's attempt to refuse his center in conjunction with a flank attack was his best chance to defeat the pike-armed phalanx. If more rough terrain had been present in the center, the relatively less well-armed Carthaginian infantry could have considered attacking through the rough terrain.

In this game every infantry-cavalry

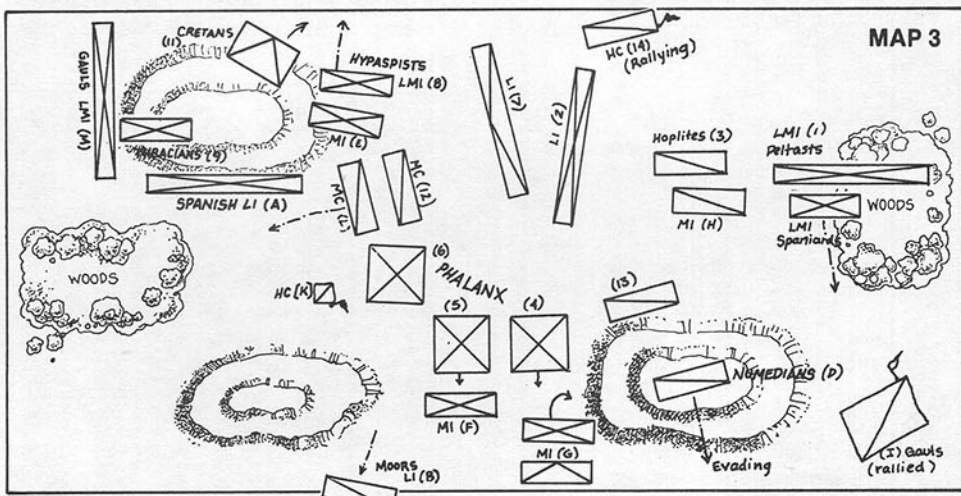
encounter was won by the infantry. The cavalry may have been better able to cope with close-order infantry and loose-order infantry armed with spears with 'skirmish' rather than 'attack' orders. The Carthaginian should have made flank marches on both flanks because his right flank cavalry would be unlikely to break the spear-armed peltasts, and would have done more damage appearing in the rear while pressing that flank from the front with infantry.

On Turn 3 the Liby-Phoenicean spearmen (E) and (H) charged, respectively, the hypaspists (8) and hoplites (3). The Macedonian also charged his hoplites (3) and Companion HC (14) led by his subgeneral who joined it the turn before. The Liby-Phoenicean had to receive both charges at the halt (infantry contacted while moving by cavalry are disordered). They beat off the Companions and did not receive enough casualties (one per figure) to be pushed back by the hoplites. The Liby-Phoeniceans were unable to

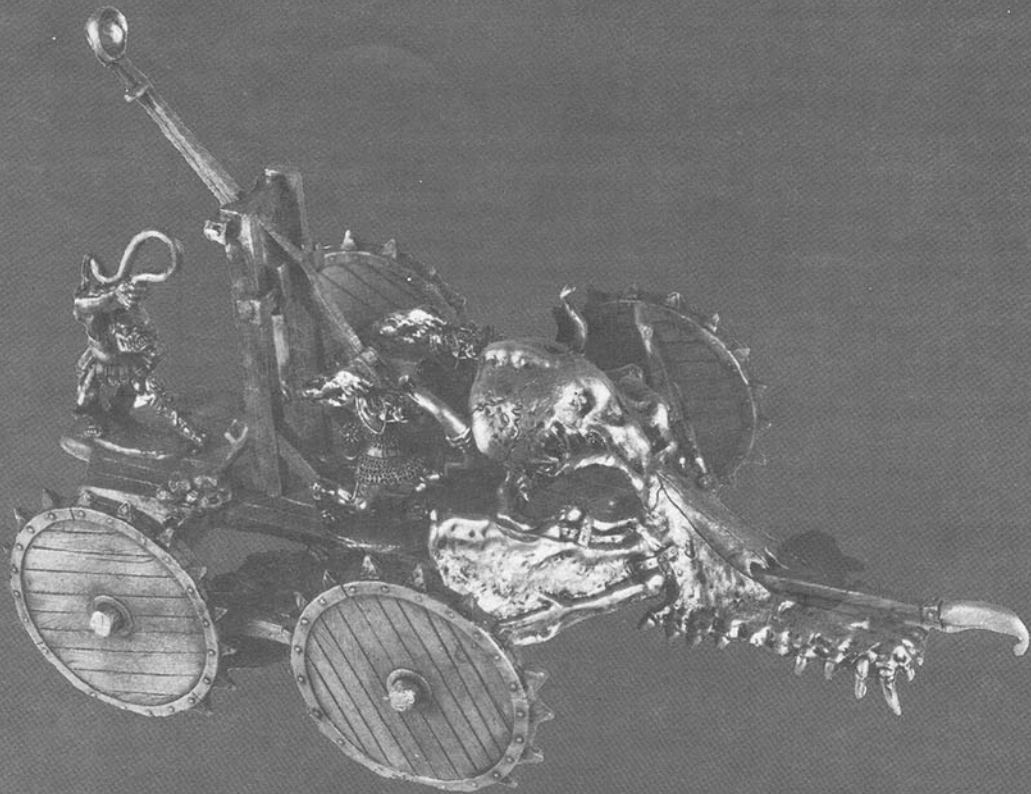
exploit their push-back of the HC, being held by the hoplites. On the left flank, the Liby-Phoenicean HC (N) arrived and rolled high enough to charge that turn. The Scythian LC (11) broke in reaction to this charge and routed off the board. The Thracians (9) and Cretans (10) were made of sterner stuff and stood to meet the charge. Only the Thracians were contacted and the HC were routed — what would only have been a push-back became a rout because of arrow-caused casualties from the Cretans. Again infantry prevailed over cavalry. The Thracians were able to make the reaction test to avoid a futile pursuit of the heavy cavalry off of the hill.

The Carthaginian was now getting fairly discouraged at his troops' lack of success in melee (and listening to the unkind remarks of the bystanders). The Macedonian pike units charged the LI (B) and (C) and, surprisingly, caught the Moors (B) while they were evading (with the lowest possible die roll). In an instant the Moors were reduced to a routing mob at 60% strength. (Now the bystanders were remarking how the Carthaginians couldn't even run away properly!)

On Turn 4 the fortunes of war turned somewhat. The Gauls (M) arrived, and although they couldn't charge (wrong die roll), they and the Spanish LI (A) put the Thracians (9) in a murderous javelin crossfire. The hypaspists (8) were pushed back a second time, opening a large gap between them and pike unit (6). On the other side the melee between the hoplites (3) and the Liby-Phoeniceans (H) combined with the advance of pike unit (4) opened another gap in the Macedonian lines. The Carthaginian MC (L) and Nobles (K) advanced to exploit the



**AT RAL PARTHA  
THE FANTASY  
KEEPS GETTING MORE FANTASTIC**



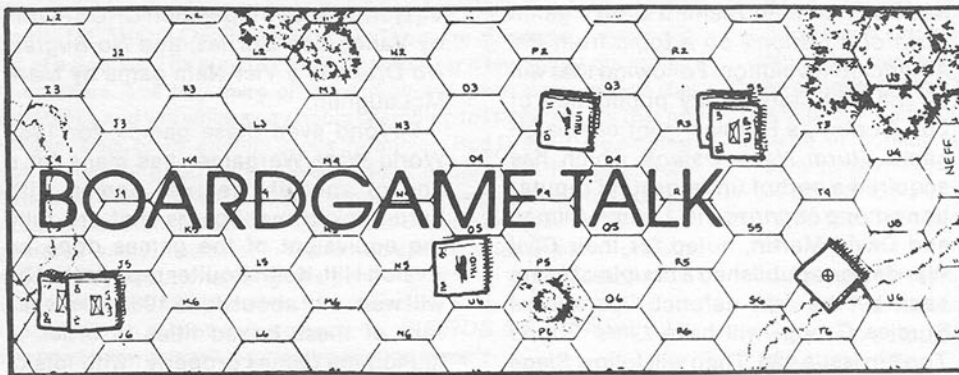
02-078 WAR MACHINE  
(shown actual size)

**RAL PARTHA**

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## THIRD WORLD II: Simulation Games

© by John Prados



For many years the game hobby has been dominated by a few major American game houses. Beyond them has been what is called the "Third World", the small and usually highly innovative game companies in the avant-garde. These companies are often known only to the small band of fans who keep track of literally everything in the hobby. Often we gamers just don't get to hear about games and companies in which we'd be very interested if only we knew. As part of a continuing effort to inform gamers about items of hobby interest BOARDGAME TALK today presents information about a notable "Third World" game company that merits interest.

The subject is one of the few foreign simulation game companies to make a splash in the United States. This is Simulation Games of Essex, England. Some readers might be more familiar with the association World-Wide Wargamers (WWW) which is part of Simulation Games. Indeed, the degree of confusion is such that the company expects to formally change its name to the World Wide Wargamers appellation sometime in early 1982.

Both WWW and Simulation Games are the brain children of Keith Poulter. Keith had been in intelligence in the British Army and later became an instructor in Political Science at a British university, with a bent toward the more philosophical aspects of political theory. Keith had been a longtime player of chess but became interested in games only after seeing a chance ad in a magazine. Poulter turned into an avid player and eventually determined to fill a gap in the United Kingdom by producing a high quality British simulation magazine.

The magazine was called *The Wargamer*. It was and is an increasingly sophisticated equivalent of SPI's *Strategy & Tactics*. Like *S&T*, each issue of the *Wargamer* contains a new simulation

game. Unlike *S&T*, however, *The Wargamer* does not focus on historical articles but rather is full of material on other new games, articles on game strategy and on different aspects of game design. In this respect it includes elements common to *S&T*, to the game review magazine *Fire & Movement*, and to Avalon Hill's house organ *The General*. Each issue of *The Wargamer* contains only enough historical material to introduce the game subject for that issue.

Beginning in the later 1970's Simulation Games achieved more and more notoriety in England. It soon became a major publisher at British game conventions. A few of the most successful simulations from the pages of *The Wargamer* were reissued in a boxed format. Much of the success achieved was the result of Keith Poulter's tireless efforts to keep down the overhead costs for World Wide Wargames. In fact he has put together a company that is truly world-wide in scope. *The Wargamer* is written in Europe and the United States, edited in England, and printed in Hong Kong. Along the way there are doubtless other stops as well. At a time when some American magazines like *F&M* appear fitfully, if at all, this British product appears regularly despite an incredibly complex production network.\* (see below)

For World Wide Wargames the process of growth has been one of slow but steady consolidation. Not until the end of 1979 did the company retain full-time employees. Then Keith began to put all his own time into the effort. For a time his products were marketed in the United States by TSR Hobbies. By 1981 Penn-Hurst had become a major WWW distributor and last fall Keith spent three weeks working out of Penn-Hurst offices promoting *The Wargamer* in the United States. Readership of the magazine stood at some 16,000 in early 1980 but Keith

Poulter estimates that circulation rose by a surprising thirty-five percent, most of it in the United States, just in the fall of 1981. Currently Mr. Poulter expects circulation to double over the next year or so.

What of the games produced by this British company? It turns out Simulation Games has pursued some interesting topics and done several novel things. In the early days of the company the boxed game *Dresden*® was a nice Napoleonic battle game. There was also *Bloody Buna*®, a WW II Pacific island warfare game, and *Chinese Civil War*®, the first treatment of this subject anywhere (it still has not been matched or duplicated).\*\*

While not trying to cover all of WWW's simulations it can be said that two of the most interesting 1980 games were *On To Richmond*®, a Civil War battle game about the Battle of Bull Run, and *Assault on Leningrad*®, a game of the 1941 fighting for the Baltic coast and the cradle of the Russian Revolution. The Bull Run game featured a novel method of using a single counter to denote up to eight strength values for a piece in play. The Leningrad game used a system similar to the popular *Panzergruppe Guderian*® design series from SPI of New York. This game also used both a large-scale theater map and an inset, small-scale map of the city of Leningrad for use in street fighting.

This past year Simulation Games again produced a variety of interesting and innovative games. One of these was *Drive on Damascus*® by Vance von Borries, designer of Avalon Hill's paratroop game *Air Assault on Crete*®. The Damascus game is a simulation of the contest between the British and the Vichy French in 1941 for control over Lebanon and Syria in the Middle East. This game used a novel graphic method of "dots" in place of hexagons, keeping

the spatial relationship afforded by hexagons while using a much less visually dominant form of representation (the "dot"), thus enabling the terrain landforms to stand out much more clearly on the mapboard.

Another Simulation Game of 1981 with very ambitious goals was *Carrier Strike*®, a Pacific War aeronaval game of the Solomons campaign and the battles off of Guadalcanal. This game featured different sized counters for both tactical play and the strategic board plus the usual comprehensive carrier game rules. Most interesting was the addition of a real system for cycling of carrier aircraft complete with base diagrams of carriers using flight decks, elevators, and hangar decks. The rules for arming and fueling aircraft are the most comprehensive yet in a game of this kind. *Carrier Strike* was the most ambitious design yet produced by WWW and the game cost more than double the largest amount Simulation Games had previously spent to print a game design.

What is in store from Simulation Games for 1982? It should be noted that issue #17 of *The Wargamer* appeared early with a Jim Hind/Keith Poulter design *Napoleon At Austerlitz*®. The next

issue will contain Richard Berg's game *Birth of a Nation*® on a topic from the American Revolution. Following that will be the first high-quality publication of Lou Coatney's Russian front campaign game *Sturm Nach Osten*® which has acquired a sort of underground reputation among *cognoscenti*. Lenny Millman and David Martin, noted for their Civil War designs published a couple of years back by the now-defunct Operational Studies Group, will have *Little Round Top*® in issue #20. Then will follow *Siege of Peking*®, a game of the Boxer Rebellion in China by Dan Campagna, designer of the Heritage game *Samurai*® subsequently acquired by Avalon Hill for republication. *The Wargamer* is already planning to return to the Russian front in its twenty-second issue with *Kirovograd*®, a tactical/operational game designed by Jack Radey of People's War Games.

Keith Poulter is also planning to release some larger games not included in *The Wargamer*. Among the slated designs are *Glory Road*®, an operational Gettysburg game; *Peninsular War*® (Wellington in Spain); *Lawrence of Arabia*® by Roger Nord; *Shiloh*® by Keith; *Waterloo*® by Jim Hind; a game

on North Africa's Operation CRUSADER by Vance Von Borries; and *No Bugles, No Drums*®, a Viet-Nam game by Mark McLaughlin.

Beyond even these games, for 1983 World Wide Wargames has plans for a line of special "deluxe" games with hard-backed mapboards that are fully the equivalent of the games done by Avalon Hill. Keith Poulter reports that he will wait until about June 1983 to release four of these boxed titles in order to launch the games properly "with lots of playtesting, etc."

Thus WWW started well, has grown steadily, and today seems strong with some pretty interesting planned games as well. If the company continues as well as it has so far gamers may look forward to some really good games from England!

\*As this issue went to press, F&M had been sold by Baron Publishing to Steve Jackson Games. The word now is that F&M will be resuming a regular publishing schedule, perhaps even by the time you read this. - Editor

\*\*Little Wars magazine published *The Long March*® in the fall of 1977. TLM was an innovative area movement stimulation of the entire Japanese-Nationalist-Communist struggle of 1942-1948, for two or three players. - Editor

## Rafm Publications

### THE BAVARIAN AND WESTPHALIAN ARMIES 1799-1815

Translated from German sources, this book, organized by George Nafziger, describes the military organization of Bavaria and Westphalia during the Napoleonic era.

The book covers in detail: infantry, cavalry, artillery and ancillary units with information on organization, uniforms, drill and formations. Ea. ....\$6.95

### NAPOLEONIC ARMIES

The organizational details of the armies of Europe that fought for and against Napoleon Bonaparte between the years 1805 and 1815 are now available in two volumes.

Detailed information is provided on company, battalion and regimental structure and strength. The composition of divisions, corps and armies is discussed as well.

Volume one is France and her Allies, Volume two tells of those Nations and States that fought against Napoleon.

Volume I or Volume II Ea. ....\$5.95

### THE UNIVERSAL SOLDIER

Wargame rules for Ancient, Medieval and Pike & Shot with 25 mm or 15 mm figurines.

The Universal Soldier miniatures rules are comprehensive yet very playable. The game system spans history by allowing each fighting unit to be uniquely assigned its fighting ability, weapons, formation and morale. This information is summarized for many armies in the Appendix.

Ea. ....\$7.95

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# SIMPLE RULES FOR FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION

## Variants of DIPLOMACY<sup>®</sup>

by Lewis Pulsipher

This is a compilation of rules that may be used to add a fantasy or science fiction flavor to *Diplomacy* variants. Unless otherwise stated, each of these is a separate rule that may be used without the others. Employing too many at once, or using incompatible variations, can result in a dull or unplayable game. With experience, players will learn to foresee the repercussions of possible combinations.

### Science Fiction

**BERSERKER.** This is a non-player-controlled space fleet with moves

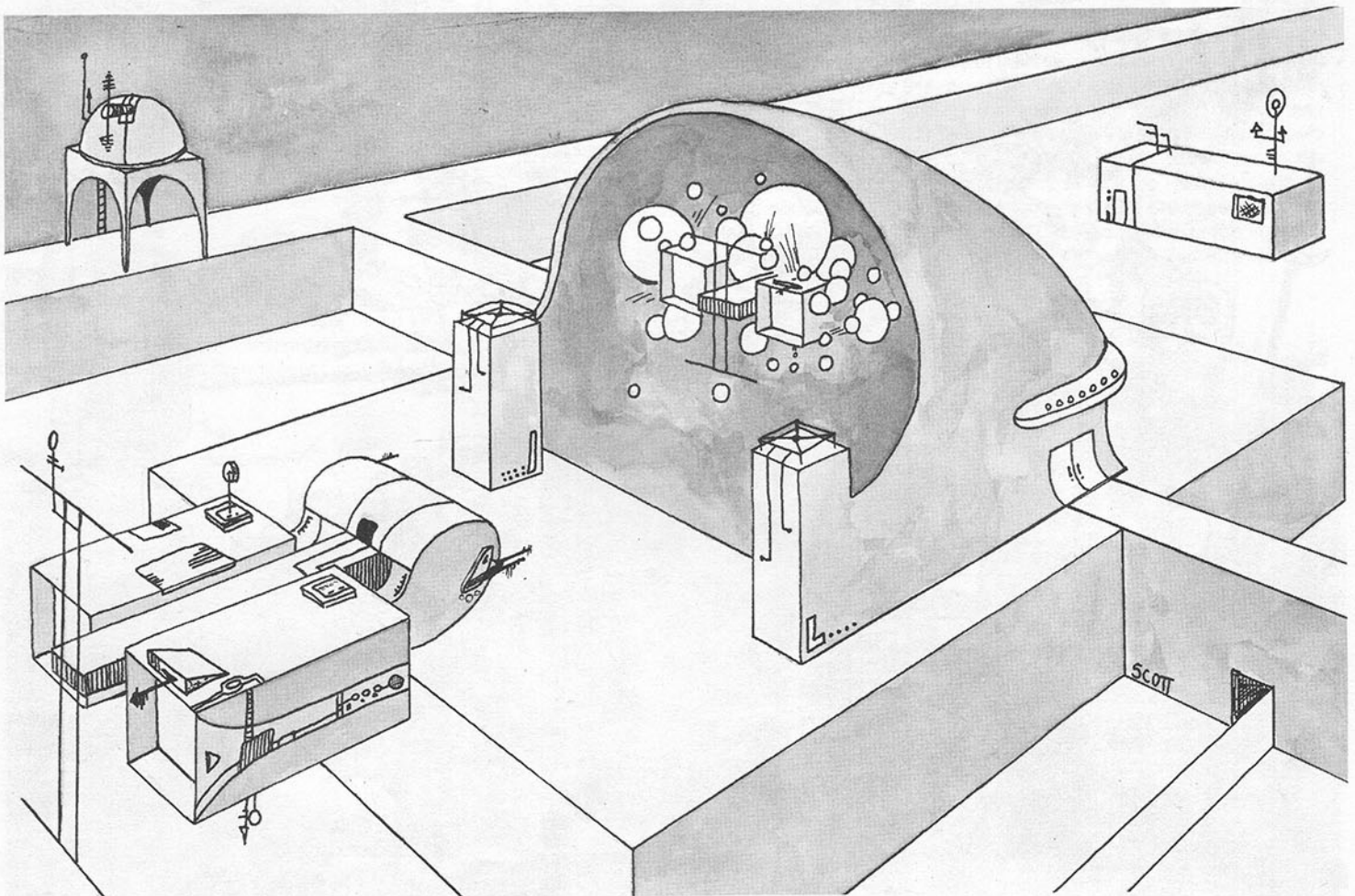
toward the nearest life (supply center) if within a specified distance; otherwise it moves toward the center of the galaxy. It burns off any planet it captures, rendering any supply center useless for several game-years, if not the entire game. It moves slowly, say only once per game year.

### DERELICT SUPERWARSHIP.

Appearing in the same manner as a ghost army, this unit may be combined with an ordinary fleet to make a double strength space fleet, still requiring only a single supply center for supplies. (Think

of the Imperial battle cruiser in Asimov's *Foundation*.)

**EMPIRE.** Players within the empire borders are Electors and choose an emperor. The emperor can appoint new Electors. He also owns all "neutral" centers or planets within the empire, receiving one unit per three such centers; he may loan some of these centers to Electors, or even give them outright. Anyone who captures an unloaned "neutral" center may be banned by the emperor. In that case no empire player may support him without risking the ban himself. Similar rules can be devised for a Pope.



**HYPERSPACE.** After each move season, or better, after each Fall adjustment, each player may form one hyperspace link between two spaces, and one separation of two adjacent/linked spaces. Units may move along the linkages but may not move between two spaces that are separated. Fleets may occupy land at the end of a link with a sea space but armies cannot occupy sea spaces.

**INVISIBILITY/HIDDEN MOVEMENT.** This is an obvious choice but is difficult to use in face to face play, even with a gamesmaster.

**NUCLEAR WAR.** Each supply center is worth three supply points per year. Armies and fleets require two supply points per year for supply. A nuclear weapon requires three supply points in the year it is built *only*. All units in a space struck by a nuclear weapon are destroyed and any center therein is eliminated for a season, that is, if struck in Fall it is not counted in Fall adjustments. A unit may not retreat to a land space that was bombed in the same season. Nuclear weapons may not move and are

captured if the space in which one is built is occupied by another player. Range is unlimited. (Alternatively, weapons may move as armies or fleets but may only strike an adjacent space as determined after movement.)

A "neutron bomb" would destroy units but not a supply center.

**PARATIME.** (Based on the notion of "parallel universes".) Two or more *Diplomacy* sets are used. Each player controls the same country on each board. Boards are numbered consecutively. Units may move between a space on one board and the same space on another board numbered one higher or lower, for example between Munich II and Munich III or Burgundy I and Burgundy II. Builds and removals may be made on any board, so that a player might have five centers on each of two boards but eight units on one board and two on the other. The player possessing most units at the end of a time limit wins.

**SPACE WARPS.** These have definite locations in some hex or space (though a gamesmaster may place them secretly so that players encounter them un-

awares). Some warps transport a space fleet to a specific place every time; others transport randomly to different destinations.

### Fantasy

**ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL BATTLES.** In a hand-to-hand battle losses usually were light until one side broke and fled, after which a high proportion of the losing army was cut down by the pursuit. To reflect this a dislodged land unit is disbanded, or alternatively is disbanded unless it can retreat to a space not adjacent to an enemy unit other than the attacking unit.

**BARBARIANS.** If there is no garrison unit in a Barbarian supply center it reverts to Barbarian (non-player) control. Some Barbarian centers may possess an inherent defense strength of one army. Barbarian units move randomly and need no supplies. (For a different version see *Feudal Diplomacy*, printed in AG Vol. I, No. ).

**CASTLES.** A castle may be built in any land space a player owns at a cost of part of a supply center's supplies. A castle is a separate space within a space.





A unit must occupy either the castle or the surrounding space, deciding which when it enters the province. If a unit is dislodged from the surrounding province it may retreat into the castle. If dislodged from the castle — not possible without special enemy units attacking, since only the unit in the space can reach the castle — it is disbanded. A unit may occupy the space while another occupies the castle. The former owns any supply center present, though players may agree before the game starts to let the castle control the center. Sieges are possible. A unit isolated in the castle surrenders after a game year. (For another version of castles see *Feudal Diplomacy*.)

**CONVOYS.** Pre-modern era fleets had difficulty staying at sea for long periods, especially after battles. A single attack on a convoying fleet, therefore, disrupts the convoy. If the fleet is dislodged, the convoyed land unit is disbanded.

**DRAGONS.** Each player places one dragon/unit (D) in a space within his country. The dragon can be called to support an attack on any space within two moves of it, or in the space it occupies. The dragon then lands in or adjacent to the space into which it gives support. Dragons may not themselves attack. Three move seasons of inactivity must intervene between each call for dragon support. If an enemy army or fleet occupies the space the dragon is resting in the dragon must be called the next move or die.

**DWARVES.** Dwarven armies move through mountains without penalty and can move underground.

**ELVES.** Elven armies may move across small bodies of water and rivers without penalty, or move an extra space each season.

**GHOST ARMY.** The first time a space is entered during a game the player rolls two dice. If a 2 results, a ghost army appears there. (Alternatively, a gamemaster may invisibly place ghost armies before the game begins.) A unit moving into the ghost army's space retreats to its original space, and in the next move season it moves randomly (in terror).

An awakened demigod is similar except that the unit is disbanded (wizards and heroes only flee in terror as above).

**GIANTS.** Otherwise like normal armies, giants are immune to magic.

**KNIGHTS.** These may be double strength armies or armies which move once before (or after) non-knights move,

or both. When using the Ancient and Medieval Battles rule, knights retreat normally.

**MOUNTAINS.** These may be impassable borders between provinces. They may instead be borders or spaces passable only to certain types of units (dwarves, units of country A, or whatever). In addition they may be spaces adding one to the defense of any unit holding in them.

**NOMADS.** These armies follow a prescribed route on the plains each game year or two. They need no supplies. (See *Feudal Diplomacy* for a different version.)

**PIRATES.** A pirate fleet is stationed on an island. The island acts as supply center for the pirates whether or not it is a center for player units. Pirate fleets move randomly, never going more than one space from the home island, except that such will always attempt to defend the home island if it is attacked.

**PLAGUES.** A space is selected randomly and suffers a plague. Any unit there is immobilized for a game year. The plague spreads (moves to) an adjacent space randomly each year — it may

move across seas occupied by fleets. Players may want to start two or three plagues, perhaps including a particularly virulent one which kills units at the end of the year of immobilization. Other plagues may affect supply centers only, killing crops and animals.

**TRANSPORT FLEETS.** There are few or no normal fleets. An army may build a transport fleet in Spring or Fall provided it does nothing else and is not attacked. The army travels by sea in the transport fleet. No standard *Diplomacy* convoys are permitted, and more than one transport fleet, even of different players, may be in the same sea space. A transport fleet has no strength even when carrying an army; it cannot move on its own. Transport fleets require no supply.

**DECIMATION.** In some eras an army included the entire able-bodied populace of an era. Consequently, when a retreating unit is disbanded, whether voluntarily or not, it may not be rebuilt for several years; until then the player is one unit short of the number of centers he owns. (Do not use with Ancient and Medieval Battles rule.)

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## FEDERATION SPACE<sup>®</sup> a game of mixed emotions

by Rick D. Stuart

Were one to attempt to judge the potential for success in a given manufacturer by the quality of its first releases in a given year, then by all indications this may well be a banner year for the folks at Task Force Games of Amarillo, Texas. And, then again it may not. If these statements appear to be something of an exercise in Orwellian doublespeak it is due to impressions gleaned from TFG's first release of 1982: *Federation Space*<sup>®</sup>. *FS*, conceived by Stephen Cole of Amarillo Design Bureau, is the long-awaited strategic link-up to TFG's popular *Star Fleet Battles*<sup>®</sup> game design. Following some initial design and development delays *FS* is now at long last available and in many respects will serve as a welcome compliment to the line of *SFB* products already on the market. And, then again, in many respects it also falls short of the mark.

There is much that can be said in praise of *FS*. One of the nagging problems recognized in *SFB* was the inability of the players to fight out those large-scale fleet actions that could conceivably occur. Designed primarily as a ship-to-ship combat game this limitation in *SFB* was deliberate, even if somewhat restrictive. *FS* takes care of this problem by providing back-printed counters making possible a wide variety of possible fleet arrangements given the particular situation on hand. This flexibility is a welcome departure from the standard fare the gamer has been exposed to date. The fleets represented here, in terms of size and combat capabilities, are faithful to their fictional counterparts, although the rules inaccurately credit the Federation navy as being the strongest of all the "national" navies.

Divided into a "Basic" and "Advanced" format, the rules allow for a simplistic yet enjoyable "Beer & Pretzels" approach by players wishing an enjoyable evening's entertainment. Use of the various optional rules provided allows the more



radical devotee increased realism without bogging him down with unnecessary complexities. Indeed, it is this realism hidden beneath the surface that may well appeal to many a s-f buff not ordinarily caught-up in things primarily related to *Star Trek*.

A good portion of this hidden beauty lies in the combat system *FS* employs. Up to six ships per side may be deployed against each other at any given time, each commander matching his opponent ship per ship in a manner reminiscent of GDW's *Imperium*<sup>®</sup>. A separate Tactical Combat Display Sheet is provided to facilitate engagements in a simple yet effective manner. Lest one be deceived by all this simplicity, let it be said that this is not a "Static" combat system. Ships can maneuver having first dispatched their opponent, they can split their firepower against more than one target, break-off and disengage, pursue and intercept pursuers, etc. The combat resolution table itself gives a base (1-6 DR, unmodified) 54.2% probability of inflicting damage in a given round. The use of back-printed counters that show reduced/damaged strengths help to limit the amount of time involved; five to ten

minutes being usually sufficient to resolve large fleet actions.

Movement in *FS* is both fluid and full of tactical suspense. Zones of control are elegantly expressed as the range at which a ship's sensors could detect an enemy vessel. Interception of enemy task groups is possible through reactionary movement whenever an opponent comes within a one or two hex radius. (Federation scouts, due to the long-range sensors they employ, have a two-hex detection radius!) The result is an approach both straightforward and full of subtleties the experienced gamer will appreciate.

*FS* incorporates material not only from *Star Fleet Battles* and the *SFB Expansion Kit #1* but also material drawn from the #2 Kit soon to be published. The Hydrans thus gain the use of a new dreadnought, as do the Gorns, and the Federation gets their long-awaited carrier with their powerful "Tomcat" attack-shuttle squadrons.

Economically, the Federation stands the best chance of surviving a long, protracted war, while the Tholians, should anyone seriously desire to do so, can most easily be overcome.

Individual ship-to-ship comparisons may surprise *Star Fleet Battles* players. As to "Who's on first?", the Gorns top the list with their dreadnought being the most powerful ship in space in terms of attack values. The Romulans pull in second place with the Klingons and the Hydrans tied for third. The Federation's Battle-Tug gives the UFP a sixth place rating. (If you're like me, you may question how a battle-tug can be more powerful than a Federation dreadnought but so it is!).

All this notwithstanding there are some very negative aspects to this product. This reviewer's major complaint lies with the 18 x 24" map display. A larger display could have more realistically represented the vast distances between the various races while allowing for a limited time scale, not the *six months per turn* scale currently employed. The latter makes smaller, "Limited" conflicts seem impractical and unrealistic given the time involved.

Likewise, the planetary systems displayed on the map appear to have been chosen pretty much at random. Further, there are inconsistencies between the

map and known facts about the *Star Trek* universe. Orion, for example, as every Trekkie knows, is actually Rigel VIII, yet the two are displayed here as separate systems hundreds of parsecs apart. And where is Organia? And why is Cestus shown to be well within Federation territory when the Gorns claimed that region years ago and have shown a decisive willingness to go to war in order to back up their claim?! Moreover, one would expect to find Starfleet Command HQ on Sol but instead it is stuck off near the Tholian Rim in seeming defiance of reason . . .

The point to be made here is that while one or two such instances (and there are others) could be excused, taken together such inconsistencies point to a haphazard and ill-conceived effort, detracting from the game as a whole.

This haphazardness is reflected in other ways: While effort was made to incorporate as much material from already published sources, much that is included in the standard *Star Fleet Battles* system is simply missing in this "link". The Klingon's powerful stasis field generators which could conceivably be

a major tactical advantage in a combat situation are nowhere provided for. Likewise, the Federation auxiliary police cruiser is not accounted for, nor is the new Kzinti Space Control Ship to be released nor is the Federation's new carrier escorts. Some consideration of the Lyrans — the new ally of the Klingons — should have been given, but again the limitations of map size have not permitted this. There are other examples . . .

In summation, the player has been presented in *FS* with a game system that has considerable substance and much to commend it. Unfortunately, the excellent design techniques apparently have not been carried through throughout the entire project. It is hoped that a future second edition or expansion will address some of these issues. Until then the player must be content with essentially a well presented and produced framework on which considerable modification and adaptation should be made in the name of completeness.

Bottom line: *Federation Space* is still probably worth the money but probably not worth the long wait.

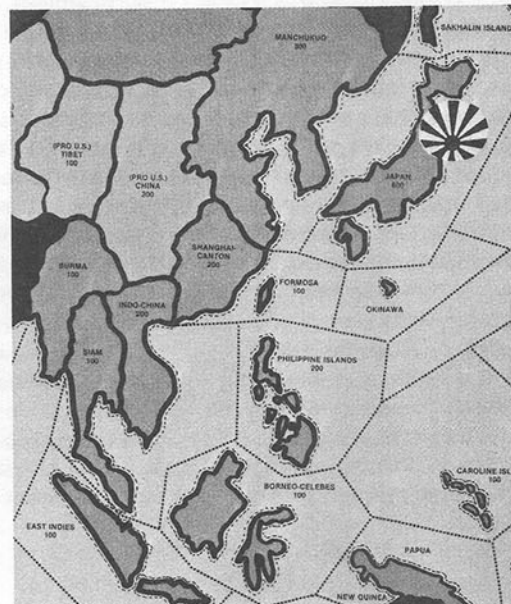
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# AXIS AND ALLIES

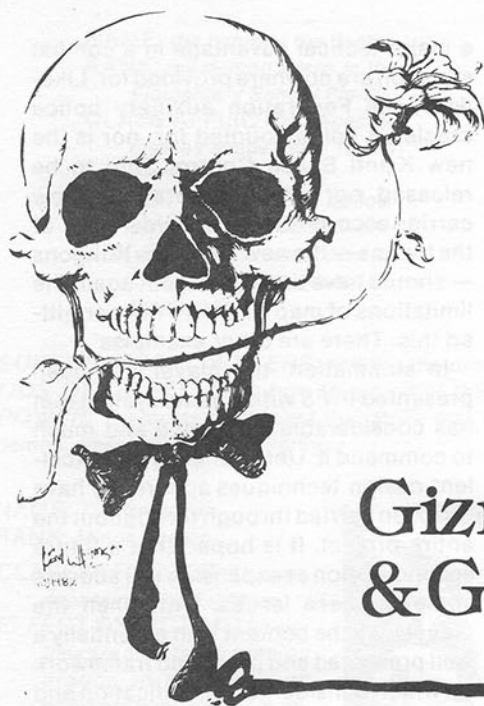
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## Gizmos, Gadgets & Grotesqueries

*Adventure Gaming* plans to print a regular column of gamemasters' play aids and rule additions, using monsters and magic items for fantasy role-playing games contributed by the readers. Contributions will be selected and edited by Lewis Pulsipher.

This is your chance to get your best creations into print so that thousands of people, not just your local group, can enjoy them. It's also a chance to see your name in print. If your idea is good, don't worry if you feel you can't write in a polished style. The editor will rewrite or alter contributions where necessary.

We want each contribution to be usable with at least two different sets of fantasy role-playing rules. Wherever possible, descriptions should be written with this "universality" in mind, and statistics for at least two games should be included. If you know only one game, the editor will add stats for others. One way (the preferred one) to write descriptions "univer-

sally" is to define characteristics of a monster in terms of other creatures, rather than in numerical terms. For example, you can say "hears as well as an elf" instead of "+10% hearing".

We want "monsters" — not necessarily evil or violent, as long as they're interesting — magic items, which should be easier to write universally, and occasional interesting or useful non-magic items, traps, and the like. If enough contributions come in we'll have "theme" columns of all magic items, all monsters of a given type (such as undead or flyers), all material for two particular games, etc. Character classes are *not* wanted.

The majority of the column will be monsters. It would take pages to explain exactly what we want, but we can give a few guidelines.

First, we do *not* want minor variations of existing monsters. Variations are useful, but only when the result is substantially different from the ancestor.

Second, we do not want silly or absurd monsters. Ask yourself if you could believe in the monster if you read about it in a good action novel. If not, we probably won't want it. (And *please*, no carnivorous death-dealing bunnies!)

Third, monsters of all "levels" or ranges of deadliness are needed, but good low level monsters are probably at a premium. Anyone can cobble together a bunch of powers for a high-level slaughter-machine, though really good high-level monsters are even harder to design than good low levels. Similarly, we want low-powered magic items, not artifacts.

Fourth, state how and why the monster came to exist, and how it continues to exist within the world's ecology. (For example, dragons which breed one infant per adult per year simply cannot exist — they'd soon eat everything edible and starve).

Fifth, give some suggestions about how gamemasters could use the monster in interesting ways. You have more experience than any reader with it — let us have the benefit of that experience. The editor is particularly interested in accounts of how the monster was used, even if these are not intended for publication.

Sixth, test the monster in play before you submit it. You may be surprised at how many things you forgot to say in the description.

If your first contribution isn't used, don't give up. Every writer's work has been rejected sometime or other. All contributions become property of *Adventure Gaming*, except that those not used, and accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope, will be sent back to the contributor. Send contributions to: Grotesqueries, Manzakk Publishing, P.O. Box 12291, Norwood, Ohio, 45212. Please keep contributions for this column separate from all other correspondence!

*All contributions used will entitle the author to a free issue of the issue it appears in.*

the target is even slightly resistant to the laser's effect, it will take a measureable length of time for a man-portable or even small cannon laser to burn through. Compound this with the problem of keeping the same point in sight on a moving target that is actively shooting at you, and it becomes difficult at best to believe that a laser-armed soldier could pose a serious threat to even a "primitive" M60A1.

Now individual men — that's another matter. What happens when a person is hit by a strong laser beam?

First, a hole magically appears in his or her person. Depending on factors such as amount of body fat, point of beam impact, and intensity setting of the laser, the beam could expend its energy within the body or burn right through. The beam itself will not do that much damage in itself, however. Remember, we're talking about a rifle laser here. The beam diameter is very small, and, unlike a solid slug, the heat is enough to fuse shut any blood vessels in its path. The actual hole will probably not exceed five millimeters, and there will be no bleeding. So what's the problem?

Heat, that's what. Ever been burned? To the second or third degree? Very painful. Now, imagine a third degree burn **INSIDE OF YOUR BODY, MAYBE ALL THE WAY THROUGH AN INTERNAL ORGAN.** See? The laser itself does not **HAVE** to kill — nerve damage and shock will do that quite effectively. And how do you treat a burn in an internal organ? Tomorrow's medic will have a very tough job ahead of him . . .

Once the laser has established itself as a field combat weapon, the military will have several advantages to consider: Almost unlimited range; no worry of a vehicle running out of ammunition as long as it has power; psychological effect of the beam sweeping away obstacles in its path; precision firepower, accurate to the millimeter; a hand weapon that can be recharged by plugging it into a vehicle power plant, eliminating the necessity of separate ammo supply.

They will also have several disadvantages to consider. A laser will not cover a wide area without becoming just another searchlight. It cannot engage targets over the horizon or an obstacle, as artillery and rockets can. The infantry will become very dependent on the vehicle

that provides their "ammunition", forcing a change in tactics. Visual-light lasers at night will blind everybody, friend or foe, when it fires. Nearby friendly infantry will get the greatest effect, and it takes thirty seconds or more for the eye to restore its visual purple that is so necessary for night vision . . .

Not to mention the fact that a vehicle without power is unable to defend itself, unlike those armed with the more "primitive" slug-throwers. On an infantry level, consider — a laser-armed infantryman has 100 shots in a laser rifle pack, at a weight of ten kilograms counting the weapon. Now, consider the same infantryman armed with an assault rifle, the *Traveller* equivalent of our present M-16. The weapon itself is three kilos, and double the normal combat load of a Viet Nam-era grunt ( $2 \times 180 = 360$ ) of ammunition in clips comes to 3.96 kilos, total 6.96 kilograms and *over three times the number of shots* available. Plus the fact that the assault rifle is capable of area and suppressive fire where the laser rifle falters at best, can be fitted with attachments to enhance its capability (ever tried to fire a rifle grenade from a laser?), and can be silenced, whereas a laser cannot.

I can hear the cries of outrage already. Sorry, guys, but true. Neither does it hum, either. I have a friend who plays with Special Forces people on odd weekends, and he has heard an experimental laser fire. It is reported to make a snap which is just as loud as a rifle, due mainly to the sudden heating of air in the path of the beam, and its rushing back to fill the void left by the pulse. It is the same phenomena that creates thunder from lightning, and is just as hard to silence. A firearm is silenced partially by slowing the bullet to subsonic velocities as it leaves the barrel, preventing the crack of its breaking the sound barrier. How do you slow down light?

It is easy to see why the automatic rifle will probably remain the favored weapon for some time to come, as is witnessed by the Advanced Combat Rifle and the Gauss Rifle, both appearing at tech-levels beyond that of the laser. There are other reasons. Slug throwers easily penetrate atmospheric effects that stop lasers (sure, you might be firing blind, but remember — lasers stop at the surface of the smoke screen that projectiles zip

right through). And, bullets find little or no resistance to body armor designed to halt laser fire. Sure, armor is available to stop projectiles, but it also weighs more and is stiffer, and weight has always been a problem for the combat man. And while it is true that you can add reflect (which is nothing more than shiny foil which reflects the laser beam like a mirror) to projectile armor at negligible increase in weight, consider that even normal body armor retains heat — reflect, next to the skin and totally waterproof, retains both heat and moisture, reducing endurance at even moderately warm temperatures.

Still, a laser rifle does have some good points. It is a fairly simple system, with fewer moving parts than a firearm. Also, the individual components are fairly tough — power cells can be made of tough metal, encased in plastic. The power cable can be armored, and it takes a lot of stuff to break a crystal of even a gas encased in tough plastic. I personally feel that a laser carbine or rifle is not nearly as fragile as *Traveller* says it is, and could make a very effective cudgel in a pinch without hurting its ability to fire.

Also, lasers can be made that defeat the normal types of armor available to men or machines. This might possibly occur naturally as a result of the problem of a visual-frequency beam causing night blindness. The natural thing to do would be to research lasers in the ultraviolet and infrared areas of the spectrum. At first, ablat and reflect would have little trouble even with these. As you got farther and farther away from visual, though, the armor would have more and more trouble. I am not familiar enough with sub-infrared frequencies to speculate much, although a microwave laser, or maser (which is, in fact, the ancestor of the laser) would boil a man from inside without ever touching surface skin. Past ultraviolet, however, we enter the area of the gamma ray or X-ray laser, of which several have been fired even up to now. The X-ray laser would be unseen and have tremendous penetration. Almost any armor you could mount on a mobile frame would be clear glass to it, and it is invisible, only the effects being seen or felt where it struck. It is also immune to most or all of the "normal" laser's obstacles.

## Do Adventure Games Discriminate Against Women?

Still, it does have drawbacks. For one, it requires a high degree of technical expertise to make it much more than a scientific curiosity. I would not expect to see it on a vehicle much before tech level 10, and not man-portable much before level 13, if even then. Also, the X-laser's (if I may coin a term) effect would be felt only on electronics and living organisms, which can be good or bad. And, like its relative the neutron bomb, it does not kill immediately. This can also be good or bad, depending on your objective. I would put the X-laser more in the category of an assassination weapon than a combat piece, and would not be surprised to find it banned altogether under some future Geneva Convention ruling. Not very sporting, a weapon that is invisible, hard to detect, almost impossible to stop, you know?

History aside, what can go wrong with a laser weapon? There are a number of possibilities — the power pack, being basically a battery, could discharge accidentally from long storage, cold, or breaching of its outer shell; any of the numerous electrical connections could rust, corrode, or break; a wire could break; a short-circuit could occur; the light source which begins the whole process of beam generation could blow out or rupture; the crystal or beam source could crack, break, or rupture; the silver could fade or rub or be corroded off the ends, turning the weapon into a big lamp; the crystal could be jarred out of alignment, ruining accuracy or the weapon itself; the trigger, being almost the only moving part, could break, stick, loosen, or fall off. There are other things that I haven't thought of, I imagine. For a table of malfunctions, look at the article "Odd Thoughts From a Traveller Referee," in *Adventure Gaming*, October '81.

Well, class, time's almost up, and we'll have to save the descendants of the laser for next time. In later articles I also hope to discuss spacesuits and battle armor, starship drives, advanced slugthrowers, and other maddening mechanisms. Any questions or suggestions for subjects will be welcome. So will — gulp — constructive criticism.

You will notice that I have said nothing about the laser's use in space, deliberately, I might add. After all, I need something to bring you back next time . . .

### SPECIAL ISSUE PLANNED: MATERIAL NEEDED

*ADVENTURE GAMING* is planning a special issue for this summer (probably July or August) dealing with the topic of women and the gaming hobby. We hope to address some of the following:

- \*Female Stereotypes in Fantasy Literature and Art
- \*Are some games and rules sexist?
- \*Why are some clubs and groups hostile to women gamers?
- \*If there are problems, what can be done to solve them?
- \*What aspects of gaming most appeal to women gamers?

If you have an opinion on this subject, whatever it may be, share it with us. If you don't feel that you can, or want, to write an article, letters to the Editor on the topic will also be most welcome. Please have enough courage in your convictions to sign whatever you choose to send. If you wish to make a point anonymously, please so indicate in a cover letter. We can anticipate certain circumstances where anonymity would serve the valid purpose of not sundering friendships or wounding sensibilities, and will consider honoring such requests on a case by case basis. We will *not* use your name if you don't want us to. Regular payment rates for articles will apply. All submissions of either type must be typed, double-spaced. Please address all material on this subject to:

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## Orchestrating *cont'd from p. 10*

progress. The prepared appearance roll also allows you to plan the approach route of the monster. Altogether, proper use of the time sheet ensures that players will never know whether a monster is truly random, or was placed there for some purpose.

**Let the players roll the dice.** When I roll the dice as a player, I can feel, a little, as though I'm really taking a whack at the enemy; when the GM rolls, it seems as though someone else is doing the fighting, not me, and I tend to lose interest. I've found that 95% of players feel the same way. There may be circumstances when the GM should do all the rolling. If players are inclined to cheat, or if they get wild with the dice, you need to keep the dice under your control. Players who don't understand the rules can slow down the game when they roll their own dice. (The player who always wants to know what number he needs before he rolls is particularly annoying.) But with most players, the game goes faster and the players have a stronger sense of participation when they roll their own. In unusual situations they can be asked to roll where only you can see the result, if you want to conceal information.

That concludes advice for the GM. Advice for players is shorter, since much depends on which game you play. Yet it is amazing how many experienced players fail to observe the most elementary principles of good play of any game, or for that matter, of sensible action in any phase of life. The guidelines below should help your characters live longer, though there may be slightly less excitement in their lives.

### ADVICE FOR PLAYERS

**Elementary precautions.** Make sure you have sufficient equipment and food for the trip, extra horses if you're riding, spell books, etc. Try to have a balanced set of professions (classes) and skills in the party so that at least one character can meet any problem you might encounter. Think defensively. As long as you stay alive you can "win" in the long run. In a choice between firepower and protection, prefer the latter. Sure, the best defense is a good offense, but all the big-hitting spells in the world are no good if the enemy incapacitates you with his first attack because you lacked protection. In *AD&D*®, for example, I like to have two or three *dispel magic* spells in a powerful party, in case one of the spell-casters is charmed, possessed, or otherwise magically incapacitated. A *dispel magic* can be worth a lot more

than a *fireball* or *lightning bolt*. You can always run away as long as all members of your party retain free will and free movement.

**Who do you trust?** Let's hope you trust your fellow adventurers; but how do you know you can trust everyone in the party? I've seen players introduce new (evil) characters into a party and betray the rest at a crucial moment, if only by fleeing during a battle. And a subtle GM can introduce ringers, doppelgangers, or other evil types disguised to look like trusted party members. After all, your character can't constantly keep tabs on what other player characters do between expeditions, in town or elsewhere; there are many opportunities for substitution.

In view of these dangers, the day before the expedition sets out there should be a check for ringers and characters of incompatible alignment. The methods used will depend on the rules. In *AD&D*, for example, *know alignment* is a great spell, as is *detect charm*. *ESP* is also very useful. Alignment language can be employed as a recognition code. And what happens when a character drinks holy water of the opposite alignment? Pass some around and find out. (Some GM's, however, will allow a character to drink holy water, or hold a sword of opposite alignment, and take damage without showing it in any way; don't be too hasty to believe that someone has passed your test.) In games not providing such convenient tests, long conversations may reveal a ringer's lack of knowledge of "his" own past. Even metaphysical and religious discussions might draw out an evil character, but that doesn't seem likely. In some universes, asking a suspected character to pray aloud to his supposed god might force him to give himself away.

(Those who complain that this is "mini-max" play rather than role-playing are barking up the wrong tree. No one in his right mind will agree to adventure with someone he knows nothing about, but on whom he might depend for his life. And in a world fraught with the pitfalls of possession, control, and disguise, who wouldn't at least informally test his "buddies" for ringers?)

**Know your objective and stick to it.** Each expedition should have a particular objective beyond the typical desire to eradicate evil/good and gain a little gold on the side. Perhaps on a past adventure you found a treasure map or riddle: your objective could be to follow that map, or to acquire information which will enable you to solve the riddle (and thereby gain whatever advantages accrue). Or you may

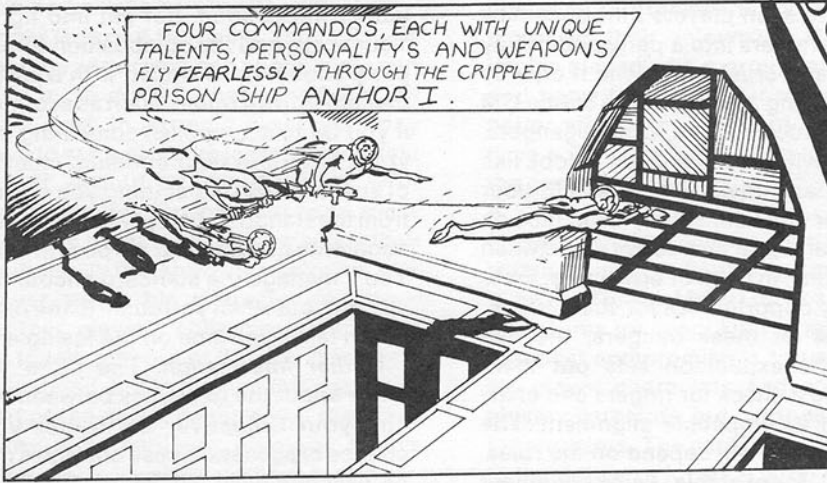
have stumbled onto an orc lair, or a dragon lair, on a past adventure. Organize your expedition, then, with the specific purpose of looting this lair. If you don't have any information to lead you to a specific goal, then make this a scouting expedition. But that means you should gather information, not get into fights. Your spells and the composition of your party should be arranged with a particular objective in mind, such as scouting; if you try to accomplish something else you'll have less than optimum chances of success. The worst thing you can do, from the standpoint of survival, is wander about with no particular purpose in mind. You'll manage the standard encounters all right, but when you come to the really tough tasks you'll be on the losing end.

**Gather information.** The more you know about the obstacles between you and your objective, the better your chance of success. These obstacles may be psychological, social, economic, or political, as well as physical. Show me a party who set off for parts unknown as soon as they've been given a mission by the GM, and I'll show you a party that wouldn't survive in a tough world (including the "real" one). How you gather information will vary with the rules of the game. In *AD&D*, for example, the *commune* spell is a wonderful source of accurate information, often neglected by players. *Contact higher planes* and *legend lore* are also useful. In any game, you can seek information among rumor-mongers and storytellers, from local inhabitants and sages, from libraries and old inscriptions. Even the bartender might know something important. Bits of information can add up to important revelations. Write down those bits, and look them over occasionally to detect patterns or juxtapositions you didn't notice before.

**Provide for escape.** This is easier said than done. The idea is to try to arrange with local politicians or with adventurers who aren't on the expedition for a rescue mission if things go wrong. Moreover, think about how you might escape if something goes wrong during the adventure. If you're hunting a dragon in *AD&D*, for example, you don't have many means of escape except *teleport* or (in some cases) *dimension door*. But if you're stalking a gang of orcs in a dungeon, you might take along an apparatus which will enable you to shut a door as you flee through it; or you might take a *web* spell earmarked for blocking a corridor if you need to retreat.

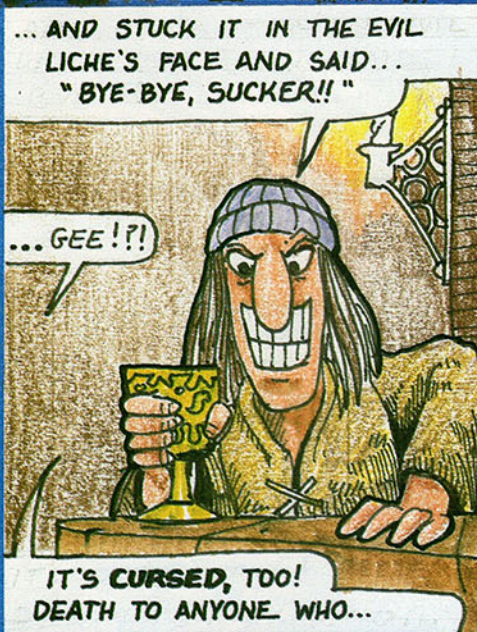
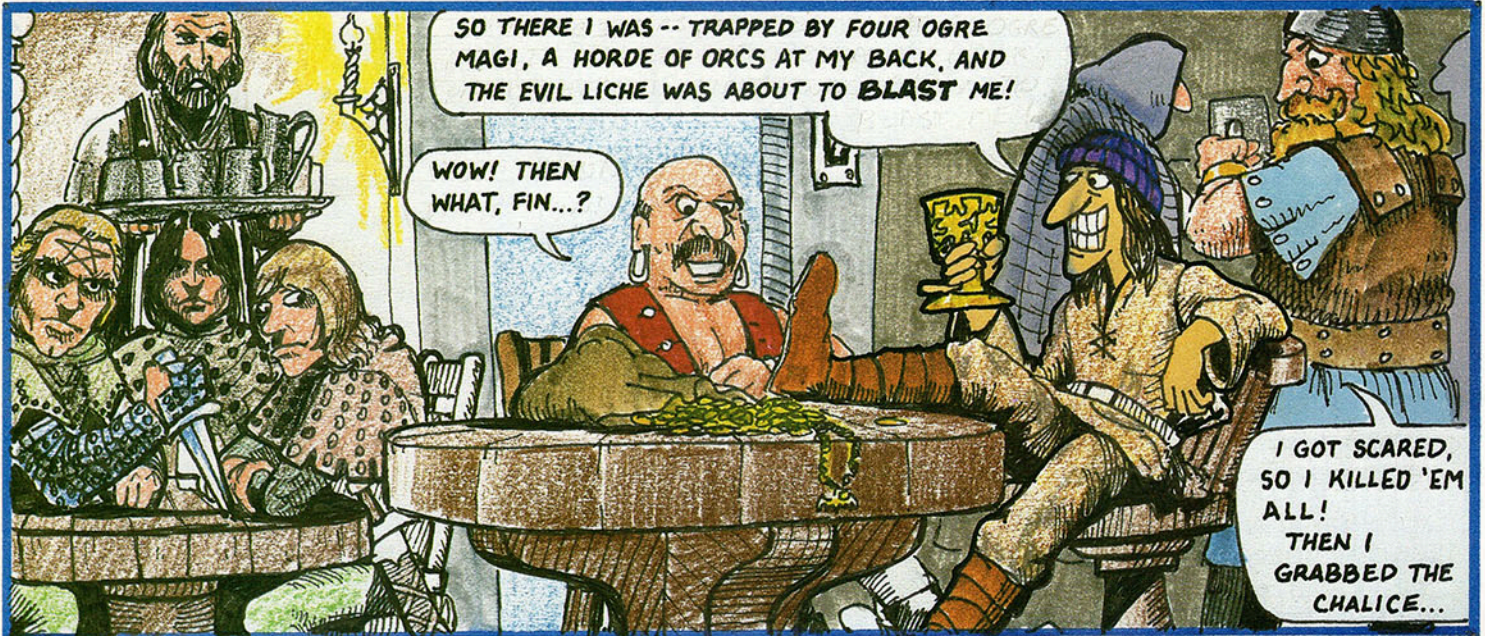
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BY  
STEVE SWENSTON



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SENSING A PRESENCE WHERE THERE SHOULD BE NONE!



# THE ADVENTURES OF SPACE TRADER VIC

STORY BY BRUCE WHITEFIELD & RON TALBOT.

ART. BY BRUCE WHITEFIELD.

#9

DANGER CLOSES IN FROM ALL SIDES AS TRADER VIC AND BILL CLIMB TOWARDS THE WOODEN NICKEL. CAN THEY REACH THE SHELTER OF THE SHIP? OR....

.... WILL THE MILITARY FORCES OF THE MOST POWERFUL NATION ON EARTH CATCH THEM ON THE MOUNTAIN'S EXPOSED FLANK?

WILL TRADER VIC FORGET THE SHIP'S PASSWORD?

SCRAMBLE A SQUADRON OF F-14 TOMCATS!

SORRY, SIR, BUT WE GAVE ALL OF THOSE TO THE ISRAELIS.

HOW ABOUT THE PHANTOMS?

WE SOLD THE PHANTOMS TO THE SAUDIS, SIR.

DO WE HAVE ANY JETS LEFT?

I THINK WE'VE GOT AN OLD VOODOO ABOUT THEM.

THEN SCRAMBLE IT!

REGRESSION? STAGFLATION? REBATEISM? DRAT! I KNOW IT HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE LOCAL BARTER SYSTEM...

© BRUCE WHITEFIELD 1982

WILL THE ALIENS BLAST THE WOODEN NICKEL TO ATOMS WITH THEIR ATOMIC FUSION GUN?!

GOOD GRIEF! IS THAT THING A WEAPON? I THOUGHT YOU WERE PEACEFUL VISITORS!

OH, MY... NO!! THAT'S JUST THE EQUIPMENT FOR ONE OF OUR FAVORITE SPORTS.... YOU'VE HEARD OF HUMAN CANNONBALLS HAVENT YOU?

YOU SHOOT YOURSELVES THROUGH THAT CANNON?

NO... JUST HUMANS.

OR WILL THE WOODEN NICKEL REMAIN ON THE HILL UNTIL VIC ARRIVES?

I DON'T LIKE THE LOOKS OF THIS...

THIS HOT IRON MASK MUST AFFECT MY MEMORY!

SINCE IT'S ALREADY SERVED ITS PURPOSE AS A DISGUISE, I MIGHT AS WELL...

... GIVE IT A TOSS!

THROP!

CRASH!

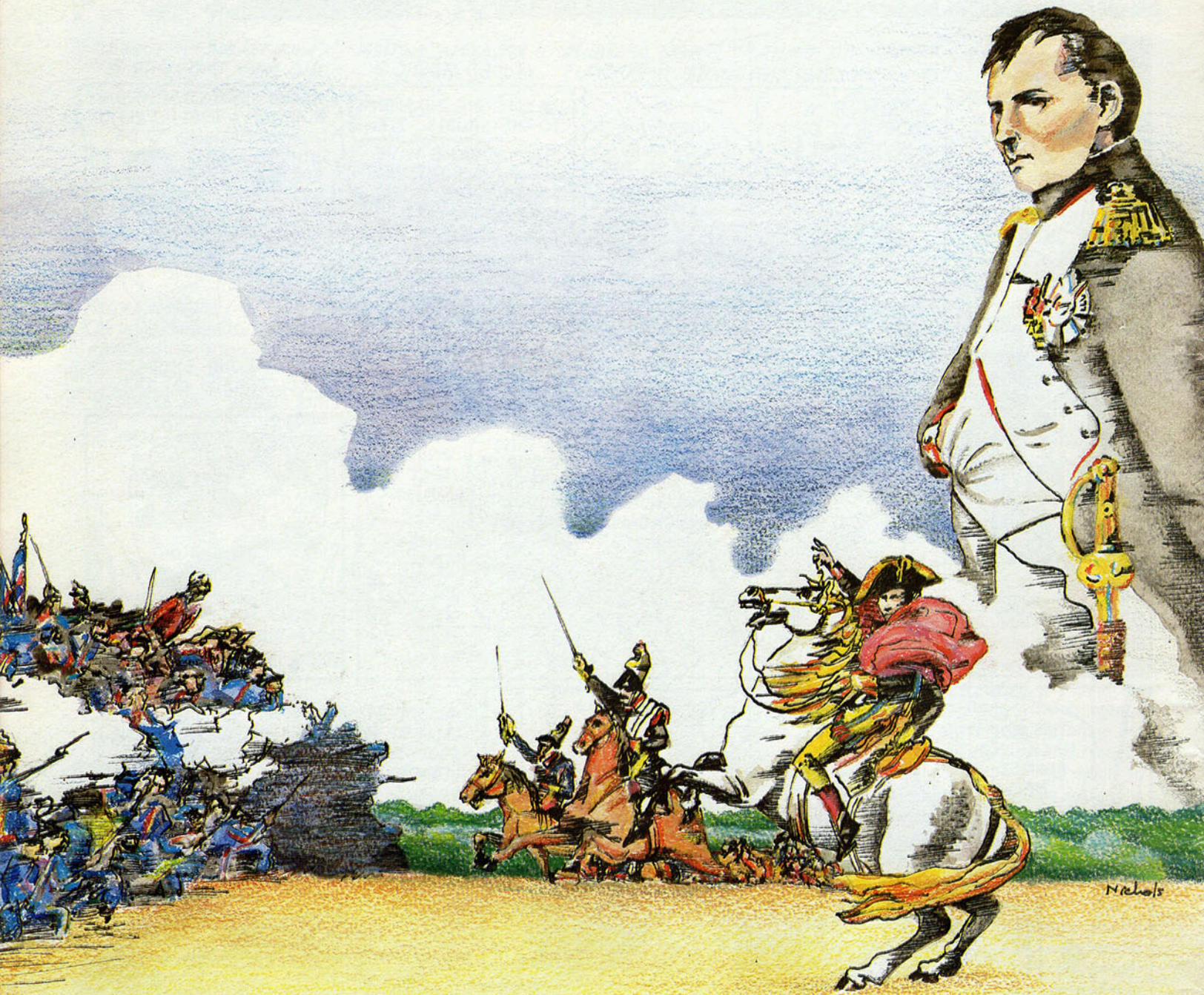
ALTHOUGH THE NATIVES SHOW A MARKED LACK OF GRATITUDE FOR THEIR RESCUE FROM THE GALACTIC CON ARTISTS, TRADER VIC REMAINS ON EARTH HOPING TO PURCHASE ENOUGH TRADE GOODS TO TURN A PROFIT ON THE VOYAGE. HE FINDS, HOWEVER, THAT GALACTIC CREDITS ARE ONLY ACCEPTED FOR LIMITED TYPES OF MERCHANDISE...

Handshake icon

HA! YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN THIS SILLY FOREIGNER I SOLD THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE TO!

# A COMBAT RESOLUTION TABLE

## meets its waterloo



by Perry T. Cooper

One of the most popular historical simulation games is *Napoleon at Waterloo*.<sup>®</sup> Its creator, Simulations Publications Inc., boasts on the game's cover that *NAW* is "the classic introductory game," and indeed it fills that billing. The game features two skill levels, consumes

on the average only one-and-a-half hours to play, provides historical material on the actual Battle of Waterloo and boasts on its back cover an excellent "acceptability rating" of 6.2.

But there is one aspect of *NAW* that has never earned my applause, and that

is the simplistic and rather bizarre Combat Resolution Table. Those familiar with the game will recall that this table asks the player(s) to determine the approximate numerical odds between attacker and defender in each of the great battle's many clashes, locate the

appropriate column of the table, then roll a six-sided die to determine the outcome of the battle encounter.

All this is very well except that the six-sided die does not produce nearly as many possibilities as I believe would be desired by most players; and in some cases the results as listed can be seriously questioned.

Example: Let us say that the French player has isolated a small British cavalry unit and is in the process of surrounding it with several stronger units. He consults the Combat Resolution Table to see how great a numerical advantage he needs in order to ensure the elimination of the British unit. He finds that at 1-to-1 odds the British unit has three chances in six of repulsing the attack; at 2-to-1 odds that unit has but one chance in six of survival. At 3-to-1 the British cavalrymen have no chance of escape, but they have one chance in six of taking a French unit to the grave with them (an exchange). But here in the next column we discover a strange discrepancy; at 4-to-1 odds the British have no chance of survival, but now for some weird reason they have two chances in six of forcing an exchange. They also have two chances in six of forcing an exchange when faced with a 5-to-1 numerical disadvantage. So according to this table, the French commander has a better chance of wiping out the British unit without suffering the loss of a unit himself if he goes into battle with only a 3-to-1 numerical advantage; a larger advantage is actually a disadvantage.

Another example: At odds of 1-to-3 or worse, no attacker can force a defender to retreat, nor can it force an exchange; all it can do is end up being forced to retreat or be wiped out. Similarly, at the other end of the table, no attacker has to worry about being forced to retreat when he has numerical superiority of 3-to-1 or greater. While it is understandable that numbers should prevail in the vast majority of cases, it seems a shame that in *Napoleon at Waterloo* there is never any chance for some stoic defenders to hold a position against all odds or for some tough, embattled little unit to turn a seemingly suicidal attack into a successful one. There is no chance for finding a French, British or Prussian counterpart to Stonewall Jackson here.

Final example: On the official NAW Combat Resolution Table, encounters

fought at 1-to-1 and 2-to-1 odds never result in one unit or the other being totally eliminated if there is any room in which to retreat (though in the 2-to-1 encounter there is one chance in six of an exchange). This means it is utterly impossible for one unit to charge another of equivalent strength (or even a unit of only half as much strength) and either annihilate that unit or be annihilated by it.

Behind all these deficiencies is a single culprit: the six-sided die. Six potential outcomes to each battlefield encounter simply don't provide a great range of possibilities.

My solution to the problem is simple: use a 20-sided die. Most gamers probably already own one or more of these dice, which can be purchased at virtually any hobby store or through the mail. (If you absolutely cannot find such a die, you can always write the numbers 1 through 20 on separate slips of paper and draw them at random from a hat — or, better yet, a helmet.)

The 20-sided die gives more than three times as many possible outcomes to

each encounter than the six-sided die does, and thus combat can be made more realistic and less predictable.

I have devised the following chart to be used with a 20-sided die in the play of NAW. The abbreviations employed are the same as those used in the game itself: AE = attacker eliminated; ar = attacker retreats; DE = defender eliminated; dr = defender retreats; EX = exchange.

Any attacks made at odds of 1-to-6 or worse are always suicidal. At the other end of the scale, all attacks made at a numerical superiority of 7-to-1 or greater are massacres.

Thousands of gamers have been introduced to historical simulations through *Napoleon at Waterloo*, so obviously the game is enjoyable enough even with its simplistic Combat Resolution Table. But I have always been of the opinion that a little improvement is possible with practically everything, and I know that my 20-sided die system of resolving combat has immeasurably increased my enjoyment of NAW. I hope it does the same for you!

**Combat Resolution Table**  
(attack strength to defense strength)

	1-5	1-4	1-3	1-2	1-1	2-1	3-1	4-1	5-1	6-1
1	AE	ar	ar	dr	dr	ar	dr	DE	dr	dr
2	AE	AE	AE	ar	dr	dr	dr	dr	DE	DE
3	AE	AE	AE	ar	ar	dr	DE	DE	DE	DE
4	AE	AE	AE	EX	ar	dr	DE	dr	DE	DE
5	AE	AE	AE	ar	AE	dr	ar	DE	DE	DE
6	AE	AE	ar	ar	ar	EX	dr	ar	dr	DE
7	AE	AE	EX	ar	dr	DE	dr	dr	EX	DE
8	ar	AE	AE	dr	ar	ar	dr	dr	DE	DE
9	AE	AE	AE	AE	ar	dr	EX	DE	DE	DE
10	AE	EX	AE	ar	dr	dr	dr	DE	dr	DE
11	AE	AE	ar	ar	dr	dr	DE	DE	DE	DE
12	AE	AE	dr	ar	ar	dr	dr	dr	DE	DE
13	AE	AE	AE	AE	EX	dr	ar	EX	ar	EX
14	AE	AE	AE	ar	dr	ar	dr	dr	DE	DE
15	AE	AE	AE	ar	ar	DE	dr	DE	DE	DE
16	AE	AE	AE	ar	ar	dr	dr	ar	dr	DE
17	AE	ar	ar	AE	dr	dr	dr	DE	dr	DE
18	AE	AE	AE	dr	dr	ar	EX	dr	DE	DE
19	AE	AE	AE	ar	ar	dr	dr	dr	DE	DE
20	EX	AE	EX	EX	DE	EX	DE	EX	EX	dr

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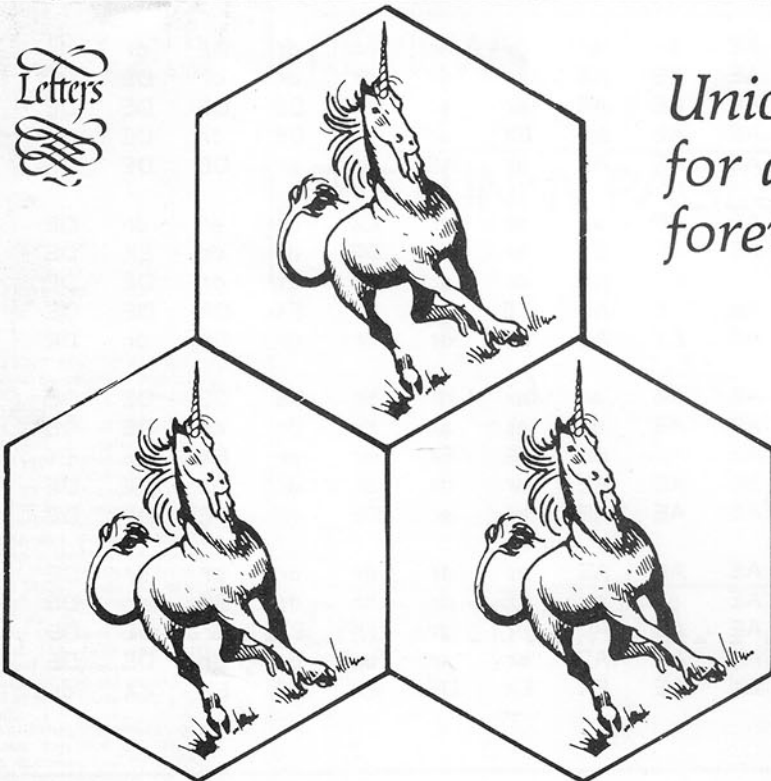
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Peter Beagle, *The Last Unicorn*

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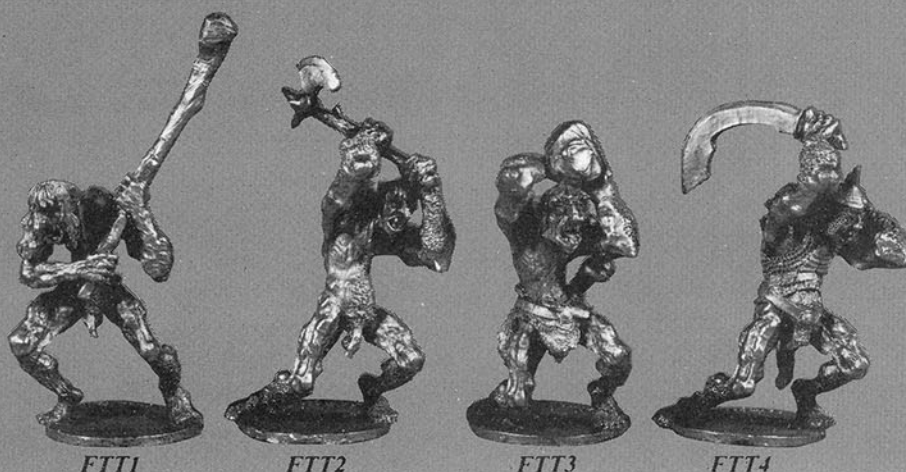
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