

# ADVENTURE GAMING

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Vol II No. 1

eleven



Time sure does fly when you're having fun . . .

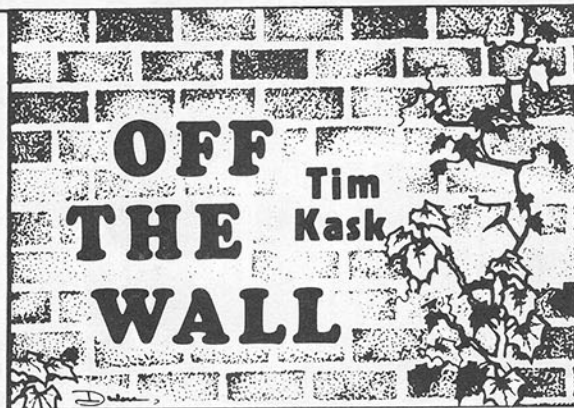
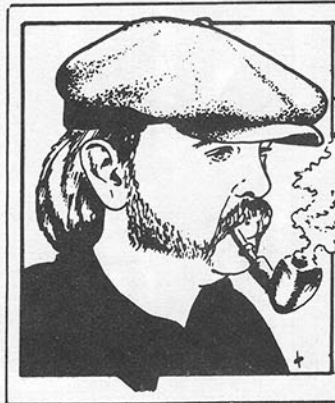
I certainly don't anticipate con season as I once did, back when I was just an attendee. Back then, all I had to look forward to was a weekend or two of heavy twitching\*, and the camaraderie that the older, smaller cons used to generate. When they were smaller, after you had attended one, you had familiar faces to look forward to seeing again at subsequent cons. Sometimes you made friends at cons that you only saw at cons.

All of that is much different now; cons have grown as the hobby has grown. Some cons now attract as many attendees as all of them combined once did. The intimacy and fellowship has been diminished as the shows have gotten larger, more commercial and more heavily attended. Where once all of GenCon was contained in the Horticultural Hall and the adjoining church basement in Lake Geneva, it now sprawls all over the campus of Univ. of Wisc. — Parkside, in Racine/Kenosha.

As they have grown, many of the cons have metamorphosed into beasties entirely different from what they once were. Consider the following changing aspects:

**Size** — Once, cons were so small that just a few hundred attendees made most of them successful. ORIGINS changed all of that. Soon, ORIGINS and GenCon (now GENCON) were engaged in foolish squabbling over which was bigger, which was "international", whether or not one or the other was a "wargame" convention or "miniatures" convention, *etc., etc. ad nauseum*. Now, if a given con doesn't attract thousands, it isn't deemed a success — except by those that attend that event and enjoy themselves. Someone always forgets to poll the attendees . . . Bigger is not necessarily better, particularly when bigger means altering the atmosphere and ambience of the event. The sea of faces one sees at the large events now makes it none too easy to recognize attendees from years past, and a good deal of the camaraderie is gone forever.

**Purpose** — It used to be that cons were excuses for getting together with others that shared your (then) esoteric hobby interests. That used to be the *raison d'etre*; today it would appear that



sales are the sole purpose of the so-called "national" cons. (John Prados goes into much more detail along these lines in this month's *BGT* column.) The attendees are there to play games as much as they are to see and/or buy the newest products. (In fact, there are many that attend far more for the new products than for the competitions.) This is not necessarily *wrong*, but it is a far cry from the past. Sure, in the past we all hoarded our money for some weeks before the cons for the purpose of buying new games and figures. But it was more for the attraction of seeing products that your local store didn't stock than seeing "new" items that caused the pre-con thrift.

**Convention Events** — When I first started attending cons (as a gamer — not a merchant) I did so for the opportunity to try out different games and to play familiar games or rules or periods with new and different players. Those games were very educational; you learned that different players had as many different ways to handle a given game situation as there were players. This was extremely helpful, especially so when it involved a game or period that you yourself were still mastering. If there happened to be some sort of merchandise prize, that was merely an added fillip. (I can still remember my delight at finding out that I had won \$20 worth of figures in the first miniatures event that I ever entered — I had already had more fun than humans should be allowed in the play of the miniatures battle.) The *play* was the thing, not the competition for a prize.

Today the events themselves have mutated to such a degree that I think that they harm the cons in some instances, and harm gaming in many more. One of the original selling points of FRP was that there were no conventional "win-

ners" and "losers" — survival became the goal. Group cooperation was placed above individual success or gain as an ideal. The game was still very much goal-oriented; what it was not was *time* oriented.

There was no onus to secure the treasure (or slay the wicked monster, *etc.*) within a finite period of time. This enabled the thinking players to reason their way out of a sticky wicket, obviating the need to resort to potentially harmful, even fatal, hack and slash methodology.

FRP is perhaps the most extreme example of how conventions and prize competition have perverted the thrust and appeal the game once had. (Not all con tourneys are guilty, just *most* of them. The RPGA is perhaps the worst offender when it comes time to assess goal deviation.) In 1978, at ORIGINS in Detroit, the winner of TSR's D&D® tourney was a GROUP, not an individual. Giving awards for individual play, while not awarding group play, is the antithesis of good roleplay. This type of pressure leads to conniving and backstabbing that you might get away with in a group of strangers, but certainly had better not practice at home with your friends and fellow gamers. What validity or value, then, can a tournament that awards antithetical play have?

Today's conventions still have a lot going for them, don't think they don't. What you get out of attending one will depend on what you expect of it and how you yourself approach it. I still recommend that you attend one if you are able — they are still the best game in town, if somewhat different than what they used to be.

\*twitch — *verb colloquialism* Activity peculiar to gamers, symptoms and degree of which vary by individual.

*continued to p. 53*



GOBLIN illustration by David Helber

# New Releases from DWARFSTAR

Last year, Dwarfstar Games' initial release set a new standard in small-format boardgames, with full-color, heavy-gauge boards and counters, and subtle, playable rules. Now, Dwarfstar announces its second series of games, featuring:

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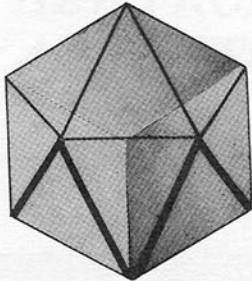
**DRAGON RAGE** — a medieval city defends itself from assaults by dragons, giants, trolls, and other dire threats.

And Dwarfstar Games are still only \$4.95 each at your gaming, hobby, or department store.

# ADVENTURE GAMING

1982

Vol. II, No. 1



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The cover this month is an interpretation of *The Horror on Old Hill* by Steve Liss.

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# GOODBYE MARY LOU, HELLO MICROCOMPUTER

Sorry 'bout that, Mary Lou!

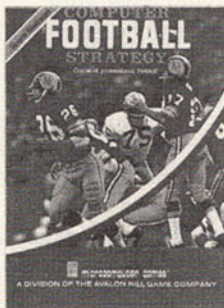
But your boyfriend has a new PET®. In fact, he may even have an Atari®, Apple II®, TRS-80®, or TRS-80® Color Computer, too . . . any of which plays an Avalon Hill Microcomputer Game.

Here's what's BRAND NEW from Avalon Hill:



## VOYAGER

A solitaire computer game that challenges the human player to explore the four levels of an alien spacecraft's maze-like corridors and rooms in 3-D simulated graphics, all the while avoiding robots programmed to blast any intruders. In order to win, the human must destroy all power generators and escape or hunt out and annihilate the killer robots. **VOYAGER** comes with color-animated graphics and sound capabilities for computers so equipped.



## COMPUTER FOOTBALL STRATEGY

Thrilling computer version of Avalon Hill's famous board game. Based on the award-winning Sports Illustrated game of professional football; forces the player to constantly make the right decisions about his team's offensive and defensive formations. Match wits against the computer or against a live opponent.

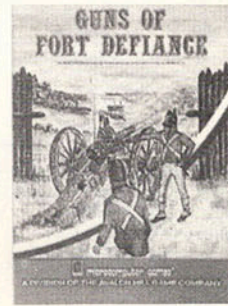


## DNIEPER RIVER LINE

A fictionalized engagement between the Russian and German forces in the southern Ukraine in 1943. The game challenges you, the German commander, to repel Russian efforts to breach the Dnieper River defensive positions. Soviet units, controlled by the computer, seek to overrun the thin German line and capture sufficient objectives to attain victory. **DNIEPER RIVER LINE** has four levels of difficulty and comes complete with over 300 illustrated counters and a mounted mapboard.

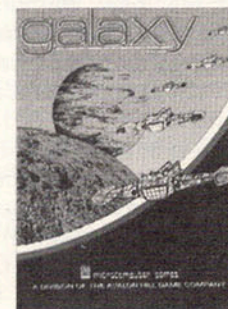
## CONTROLLER

A **real-time** simulation of air traffic control in which you will have to guide the approach and landing sequence of up to 8 aircraft. There are three types of aircraft: Light Planes, Airliners, and Private Jets, with each type having a different rate of climb, turning ability, stall speed, ceiling, fuel consumption and fuel capacity. **CONTROLLER** transforms your microcomputer screen into a realistic "radar scope"; also, each aircraft's heading, velocity, and altitude is continuously displayed on a separate chart next to the radar scope.



## GUNS OF FORT DEFIANCE

In this exciting arcade game, you are the commander of a 19th century artillery piece in a besieged stockade. For each shot you must specify a type of ammunition—ball, cannister, shell or spherical case—and fuse length (if applicable), and set the elevation and deflection of the cannon. The computer controls the enemy forces, randomly attacking with cavalry, infantry or another artillery piece.



## GALAXY

Have you ever wanted to conquer the universe? In **GALAXY**, players send their galactic fleets out to explore and conquer the universe, solar system by solar system. The planets discovered may be barren worlds or they may possess immense industrial capacity and defensive ships to resist colonization. **GALAXY** comes with sound effects (for computers with sound capability)

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|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|-------|-------|
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**The Avalon Hill Game Co.**

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# IT HAPPENED IN CINCINNATI:

## FRPG'S COME TO CABLE TV



by T. J. Kask

It happened quietly, as far as significant and potentially pivotal happenings go. It was the 14th or 15th in a series of experimental TV programs produced and aired through the auspices of Studio 30, a project devoted to new forms of cable TV programming. Studio 30 is the brainchild of the local Warner-Amex QUBE™ system, and gave various individuals the chance to try their hands at producing a TV program, from conception to execution.

(A brief word is in order here for any reader that doesn't recognize the word "QUBE". QUBE is the single most interesting development to happen in television in recent years. It started in Columbus, Ohio, on December 1st, 1977. I remember reading a little about the system, and what its technological impact on cable TV would be, in *TV Guide* magazine. It sounded most interesting; little did I realize that I would have the opportunity to see our hobby utilize its unique potential some four years later.

The QUBE system allows the viewers at home to respond to and interact with certain programs originating from the local studio. Further, there exists the

capability to use the system for programs originating elsewhere. No other cable system is as interactive, in the truest sense of the word, as QUBE. Our system in Cincinnati is called "QUBE Interact Channel 30".

QUBE costs no more than other cable systems that I have been hooked up to in other areas in years past.)

"It" occurred at 7:30 p.m., EST, on February 23rd, 1982. That was when adventure gaming came to television. That was the first time that adventure gamers, as well as the merely curious, were able to play a role playing game through the medium of cable television. It was the masterful end result of a great deal of work, inspiration and innovation on the part of Alan Fomorin, the producer, and numerous other people that worked on it with him. (The other people involved will all get their just deserts in next month's article dealing with the actual structuring of the adventure and the production of the program.)

As far as rpg games go, it certainly was not the most sophisticated or the most complex, nor can anyone say in all honesty the best treatment ever done of an rpg. The limitations of the television format are such that without the players

knowing, they are manipulated to a far greater degree than the average group of rpg'ers. (More on this aspect in the companion article next issue.)

What those fortunate enough to participate in this breakthrough did have was a thoroughly enjoyable, very interesting and totally unique opportunity for people all over the city of Cincinnati and its suburbs to participate simultaneously in a role playing adventure.

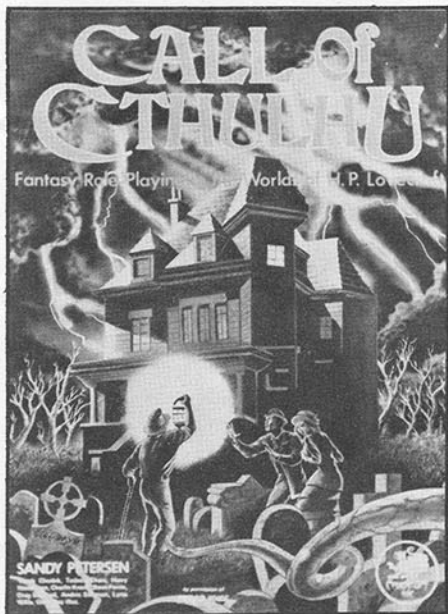
The audience at home was offered the opportunity to select one from an offering of four different characters. As in all such instances throughout this experiment, the majority ruled. Political history has proven that the majority is not always wise nor prone to do the "best" thing for the collective good. Almost predictably, after having seen the character choices available, the viewing audience chose the player character with spells. The glamour and lure of the magic user was, and still is, somewhat overvalued and overemphasized in rpg's.

As the play progressed, at various junctures and crisis points, the audience was asked to make decisions on behalf of the player character as to what his next move or action should be. At first

*Continued on page 24*

# REVIEW

## CALL OF CTHULHU<sup>®</sup> Ghastly Gothic Horror



by Terry Hauck

*The slobbering mass of putrifaction loomed over Jackson, its tentacles twitching in anticipation. Like the icy wells of G'harne, its malevolent eyes yawned and beckoned. Jackson wanted to run, to scream, but he stood transfixed, gazing ever deeper into the nether reaches of the creature's soul as the horror gathered about him. The revolver dropped from his shaking fist, but he paid no heed; locked in a communion with evil.*

*The moment of sacrifice was sweet; the reassuring pressure of the barbed tentacles flaying skin from bone, the warmth of the acid as it splashed over his body. His whimper was almost a sigh as Jackson's soul was sucked from his body and sent reeling down dark corridors, past endless terrors. Then at last he heard it. Yes, that must be it! The Call Of Cthulhu!*

Death is one of the more welcome fates that await the unsuspecting characters in this fantasy role-playing game by Chaosium printed by permission of Arkham House. And death comes all too quickly to those foolhardy enough to try to hack and slash their way through the worlds of H. P. Lovecraft. You also have

to fear the padded cells which await those who delve too deeply into mysteries, or those who have the misfortune of surviving an encounter with one of the Outer Gods or Great Old Ones.

This game, based on the Cthulhu mythos, has a framework similar to other fantasy role playing games. The players roll three six-siders to determine power, size, dexterity, etc., for their characters. And a DM, here called the Keeper, draws up a scenario for play and invites the characters to test their survival skills. For those unfamiliar with role-playing games, a basic role-playing guide has been included with the game. It is readable, informative and contains examples or every type of die roll involved.

Included in the box is almost everything a person needs to play the game except scrap paper. Along with the introductory guide to role-playing, you receive a well researched, ninety-six page rulesbook that explains each monster in the mythos as well as the game rules. The rulesbook also contains several sample scenarios, hints for a campaign and about all the basic material the Keeper will need.

You also get six dice: 1D20, 1D8, 3D6 and 1D4; eight character sheets which are easily copied, a large world map to keep track of the characters in their travels, character silhouettes, and a sourcebook for the 1920's. The sourcebook is very helpful to the Keeper wishing to have a scenario in that time period. It includes prices for various articles as well as black market listings for those not so easily aquired, such as a Thompson submachine gun. It also contains a wealth of information about bribery, distances, speeds of various vehicles of the day and other knowledge useful in fleshing out a scenario.

The thing that struck me most about the material in this game was the exhaustive attempt to provide the Keeper with all of the basics needed to run a scenario. The amount of research that went into producing the rulesbook and sourcebook is as obvious as it must have been time consuming. There are copious tables covering everything from Books

of the Cthulhu Mythos to the availability of psychoanalysis in the 1920's. These tables are spread out through the rulesbook, however, so the prospective Keeper will do well to copy appropriate tables onto a screen for easy reference during play. This screen with a collection of tables on it was the *only* playing aid I could think of that was not included in the box.

The rules themselves are involved, but are made easy to follow through the invention of a character named Harvey Walters. Harvey has his own character sheet and is used not only to show how to roll a character, but also how these attributes are used in relation to different events such as meeting a monster or making a sanity check. This use of Harvey adds continuity to what might otherwise be a sensory overload.

While the victory conditions of any given scenario are, of course, up to the Keeper, the basic objective of the players is the survival of their characters with their sanity at least somewhat intact. If a character goes permanently insane (when the sanity level is reduced to zero), that character becomes a non-player character whom the Keeper can then control and possibly turn on the other players. This addition of human reaction to the shock of unnatural or supernatural events is, I believe, an innovation in role-playing, and adds to the excitement and seeming reality of play.

A character's original sanity level is found by multiplying his Power (a 3D6 roll) by five, but it is never to exceed 99 minus his knowledge of the mythos. Therefore, as a character gains knowledge in the mythos, he gradually loses his grip on reality. A character must lose some sanity when reading certain books, and when attempting to learn and/or cast spells, whether or not the character was successful in the attempt. A character may also lose sanity points if he encounters a monster or anything else unnatural enough to warrant a sanity check, such as discovering the mutilated body of a fellow character. There are chances at saving throws and/or psycho-

*continued on page 17*

# THE HORROR ON OLD HILL

## A Scenario for CTHULU

by M. B. Willner

This article is intended to be used as the framework for a one or two sitting CALL of C'THULHU® game, with the possibility of continuing on to an extended campaign. CoC is, as pointed out by the designers, a very difficult game to run. In order that this scenario work smoothly, I will first suggest some guidelines to the Keeper.

First, the player characters: I have found through many games of CoC with different groups that three is the maximum number of players that should be run. More than this will tend to bog down. As the situation starts in Miskatonic U. in Arkham, it is very desirable that the players choose at least one of the party to be the Professor. The other two may be just about anything, but the rationale for their connection to the Professor should be considered before actually generating them. As for which skills are most useful, this is up to the style of the individual Keeper. Some suggestions on how best to have the players apply the skills in the game will follow.

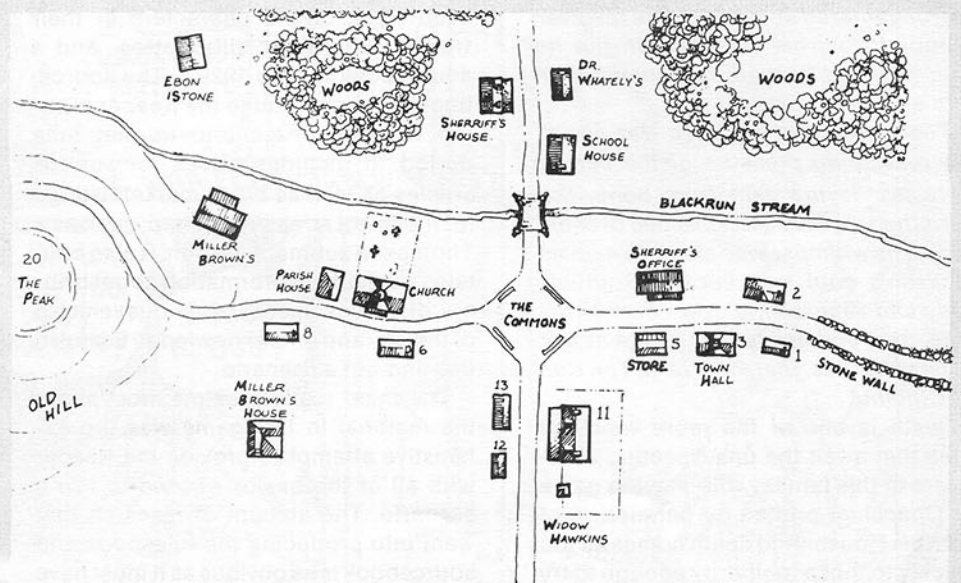
The Keeper should read through the entire scenario before playing. He will notice that there are certain mandatory events and encounters throughout the adventure. In keeping with the idea that each adventure should be crafted and thought out, random events will not be used. All the mandatory events are vital to the flow of play. This does not mean, of course, that they are shoved down the players throats. If the party never goes to the place where a vital bit of information is waiting for them, they don't get the info. A pre-play mental walk-through of the scenario by the Keeper will show how each event works in naturally.

Next, the use of skills. I find it self defeating to say to a player, "OK, roll your C'thulhu Mythos Skill to see if you

recognize that object." It's a dead giveaway. The same goes for Spot Hidden, Listen and many more. Simply making them into rolls made by the Keeper also has its problems. Many players feel they should have the chance to roll their own dice, and I agree. I feel the following is the best way to handle it. First, the referee should have a character sheet made up before play with each player's skill level penciled on each skill: e.g., SPOT HIDDEN ITEM 25%/45%/70% and so on, keeping the order of the players the same throughout. Then, when a roll is called for, check on the referees sheet for the players level of skill, and just say, "Roll a D100." You get your result, and if the roll is missed, no one is the wiser as to *what* has been missed. It is also a good idea to have them roll for no reason, just to keep things interesting. In situations where two or three players stand a chance of

doing something, in order to keep the game from degenerating into a dice-rolling fest, I tend to ask the group, "Who wants to roll a D100?;" or "One of you can roll for Occult." Never let the players compare skill levels. The above procedure has served me well through many games.

I have added two new basic skills which help play. First is Reasoning, a communication skill. What if you are trying to convince an NPC to buy a used car or concede a point in a theological debate? To simply convince an NPC that to comply with your request, or answer your question, is a reasonable thing to do, is a far more useful ability. To find a character's Reason skill level, take the Psychology and Debate skill levels after the generation process is done and add them together. This number is usually pretty high, but there is a drawback;





some NPC's are not open to reason!

The second skill is Know Vicinity. This comes into play when the party is traipsing around a strange town for a few hours. They will subconsciously have marked out landmarks, etc. This way, when they are trying to find their way around, (or out) under difficult conditions (in a hurry, or at night) this roll is made. Usually 20% is given for the first five hours spent in the area, and is increased like other skills. If one of the players was driving, give him 40%, as he has had to pay more attention to his surroundings than the others.

Finally, I would like to lay out a system for keeping track of books, and the information in them, which are so important to the game. A party that doesn't read is not long for this particular scenario. I call it the Library Card System. All of the books laid out in the listings at the end of this article are in this format. Here's how it works: On a large, (preferably 4x6) file card, write the title of the book at the top, underlined, with the author, translator, and year of publication, if known. Directly under that, the information given on page 60 of the *Call of C'thulhu* rulebook is recorded. Next, the facts contained in the book (if you have pre-determined them) are numbered and recorded below that. Under that are placed the spells, if any, to be learned from this book. On the back of the card is placed the *To Be Found* info. Various libraries and the percentage chance of it being in any private collection are entered here. Here is an example.

(FRONT)

*MALIGNIA AMERICANUS* Cotton Mather, 169?

Latin/ +3% / NONE / -1D3

Facts

- 1) Ancient cults and worships were brought to the Mass. Bay Colonies from central Europe.
- 2) Rites performed are aimed at achieving immortality.
- 3) Accused wizard Ebonezer Stoaner was condemned to hang 1687 in Salem. Escaped to wilderness of western part of colony.
- 4) Worship is not Satanic, but is far more ancient and unholy in nature.

Spells

None

(BACK)

*To Be Found*

Miskatonic U. Collection Copy.

Yale U. Special Collection.

Harvard Library Weymouth Collection.  
Assorted Private Collections (15% = owner's C'Thulhu Mythos)

Laying out your books in this manner makes things so much easier when it comes to keeping track of the info. Now we are ready to go to the scenario itself. Enjoy!

### The Horror on Old Hill

The date is Monday, September 13, 1920.

#### Players Information

The party is found sitting in the Library of Miskatonic U. at a reading table piled high with old back issues of the Arkham Advertiser. The entire University is abuzz with speculation about the recent theft from the Library. It seems that Saturday night past, someone broke into the Library and stole, from one of the display cases, a curious stone flute. The flute itself had been acquired as a specimen some years ago after being found at the scene of a local disaster. Little is known of its origins, and there is no similar flute known. This made it a somewhat prized object. All the Frat houses were questioned, and as yet, no culprit had been found. This strange event has prompted the party to look into the past of this strange artifact. This leads them to the bizarre and disturbing tale of Wesley, Mass. and its unexplained destruction. In an article printed in Dec. 1903 the following story is told, "On the night of Dec. 12, 1903, there was a thunderstorm of such epic proportions that many elderly and weak hearted expired from fear. The storm seemed to center around the West Mountains. (Locate Wesley, *et al*, about midway between Arkham and Dunwich. Lightning struck the peak of Old Hill, the mountain which looms over Wesley and other nearby towns. This started the fire which eventually spread to engulf the town itself. On Dec. 15, the flames still raged, so local firefighters, including those from Arkham, went in to put it out. What they found there struck them dumb with dismay. Almost all of the villagers were dead, in horrible ways. Some were hacked up, some disembowled, some worse. Those few found alive were stark, raving mad and could tell nothing. Conspicuous by his absence was the local religious leader, Ebon Stone, who had been reported missing the day before the storm. He headed a particularly obnoxious local sect, and was known in the area as a dangerous man. On the Peak of

Old Hill they found the flute. It lay in the dish-like depression at the peak, where the conflagration evidently started. The flute was donated to M.U. Library two weeks later."

Well, that's unusual! Looking further, the player will find a more recent article, dated 1919, stated that one Ebon Stone has taken up residence in Brammelville, a town, like Wesley, nestled at the foot of Old Hill.


While pondering this, the party is approached by a rural gentleman, shabbily dressed, wringing his cloth hat in both hands. There is an air of silent appeal about him, pleading for help. He introduces himself as Zeke Hawkins, from Brammelville. He says that the same fate that befell Wesley will soon overtake Brammelville, now that Stone is back. All of the players' questions will be answered by Hawkins pleading for their help. When he takes his leave, he gives directions to the town and to his house. Exit Hawkins. A few minutes later the sound of gunshots and a speeding car will be heard. Upon investigating, the players will find the body of Hawkins, shot dead, in the middle of a nearby street. So, what to do now?

#### Keeper's Information

The key to the story lies in the real identity of Ebon Stone. If the players, while searching for incidents of unusual sorts in the M.U. Library (Public Collection, need only Library Use to find) or in back issues of the Boston Tribune (7/17/1839) they will find reference to one Ephrim Storm, then living in Boston. He was some sort of preacher, and was thought to be connected with some recent disappearances and killings, though nothing could be proven. The local populace, in their rage, one night burned his house to the ground. It is not known if he was home at the time. The entire structure was consumed, exposing a layer of recent brick work (1-2 years) completely covering the basement. A hole large enough for a man to crawl through was found in this covering, and it was very recent (a few hours before the fire at most). Storm was not seen again.

If the players find the copy of *Malignia Americanus* (Book #3 in listings) that is in the Special Collection at M.U., they will learn, among other things, of one Ebonezer Stoaner, a condemned wizard who escaped to the west of the colony before sentence could be passed.





The players should be told of the carton of books arriving in Miskatonic U. being shipped from Cambridge. They were supposed to go to Harvard, but M.U. somehow managed to secure the valuable set of books, much to Harvard's dismay and anger. Among these books is the *Liber Ivenis* (The Book of Ebion), the original Latin text (book #4 in listings). There described is young Ebion, who, by worshipping Dark Ones seeks after and gains immortality.

There you have the basic plot device. Stone is an immortal magician who exchanges worship and sacrifice to N'yarlothtep for immortality. At first only small sacrifices were needed. Then he had decided to sustain his brother, whom he deeply loves. This required human sacrifice. When his brother was struck by lightning in 1743 (see #7 location in Brammelville), it required large sacrifices to maintain his mutilated boy in life. Thus the eventual destruction of various towns, including Wesley, and soon, if not stopped, Brammelville.

To make matters worse, Stone is not the only such type. He is a member of a loosely knit brotherhood of wizards, which is world-wide. The players will need to be circumspect, careful, and clever if they are not to wind up totally insane or as the key participants in one of Stone's rituals.

The above information must be parceled out to the party very slowly if game value is to be kept up. A visit to the town of Brammelville is inevitable, and a complete description and map of the place follows.

The complete destruction of the town is set for Saturday, Sept. 18, 1920, so the party has a limited time to act. The flute and the knife described by T. Rhinelandter Waldo are keys to the ritual. If they can be stolen or destroyed, (difficult), that will delay the thing, but only as long as it takes Stone to find out who has it, (not too long, I should think), and send a Hunting Horror of N'yarlothtep to get it back.

After the players are messing around for a few days, one of them should return home to find that his house has been broken into, and his family Bible stolen, nothing else. Anyone with any Occult Skill knows that a psychic link now exists between the player and whoever has the Bible. Pretty scary, huh kids? And dangerous too, adding a sense of urgency to the proceedings.

The books in the listings are all helpful.

Note carefully their locations. Deeds, legal documents, more newspaper articles — all can be fabricated or ad-libbed as needed. If absolutely needed, Hank Hawkins, Widow Hawkins' cousin, can be sought out, as directed by the Widow or other information. He was a member of the same Brotherhood as Stone, but he has given up following it. He lives in Dunwich. He is incredibly old and will soon die since he no longer drinks the potion that N'yarlothtep gives the Brethern to sustain immortality. He will tell the party all about the undying nature of Stone, his various aliases, and so on. He will also give each player one small stone tablet, like a medallion, which is written with an Elder Sign. This will keep Stone or any supernatural minions (not the Sheriff or the Deputies, etc.) at least 5' distant. This encounter is a last resort. It is much better to let the party figure this stuff out for themselves.

Finally, if the direct approach is tried, (blowing up the town, shooting Stone and the Sheriffs, etc, reward the players in kind. The strong magic at Stone's disposal, (Shriving, the Dread Curse of Azathoth, and what ever else you can think of), should end one or two of their careers. Also, try explaining murder, destruction, and so on to the authorities who will doubtless be called in. A visit from a Dimensional Shambler should set such a party straight.

Oh yes, don't be too surprised if the party CAN'T stop the destruction of poor Brammelville! Don't feel badly, either. This scenario serves as an excellent starting point for a group to continue with their newfound wisdom to try to save the world from the rest of Stone's Brotherhood. At present, I have one group, who, after having played this adventure to the fullest, are now on board the Mauritainia headed for London and points east to try and rescue mankind from the clutches of that Thing of the Outer Void, N'yarlothtep, and loving every minute of it.

### **Brammelville**

As the party approaches Brammelville along the Aylesbury Pike, the surrounding countryside grows steadily wilder. From a distance, Old Hill is a looming bulk of green. The Pike has by now narrowed to a 10 to 15 foot width of dirt. After the group makes the turnoff to the town (if it is night, or some other extraordinary condition, the driver should roll his Drive Auto skill x2), waist high stone

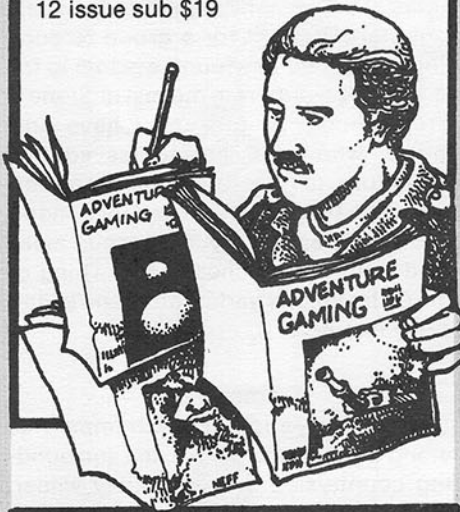
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walls rise on either side of the road. These continue all the way up to the edge of town. (See Map).

Buildings numbered 1, 2, 6, 8, 12, 13 are homes of the various townspeople. It is up to the Keeper who exactly lives in them and what the Investigators will find there.

3- The Town Hall. This is a smallish one room affair. On the far side of the room is a desk, behind which sits Miss Edith Billington, Clerk of County Records. She is neat, prim, and busily efficient. Her basic response to all reasonable requests is neutral, as influenced by any communication skill (including Reason). The various bookshelves and desks around the room contain Birth and Death Certificates, (this includes Zeke Hawkins' Death Certificate, signed by Dr. Hank Whately. Cause of death, "natural"). An assortment of deeds, wills, and some old newspaper records, (exactly what is up to the Keeper), can be found.

4- The Sheriff's Office. This is a small, delapidated, reeking little room. The Sheriff himself is likely to be found with his feet up on his desk, picking his nose and cleaning his fingernails with a hunting knife. There may or may not be one of his equally disgusting Deputies hanging around. The players should notice a rack of .30-.06 bolt-action rifles on the wall behind the desk, and a bunch of axe handles propped up in one corner.

The Sheriff is ignorant, surly, and unfriendly from the word "go". If questioned about Hawkins, the flute, or Stone, he will hear the party out, pause a moment for consideration, and then reply, "I think you strongers ought to be out of town by sunset. You city fellers could get lost, maybe even hurt out here in the country in the middle of the night." He will turn to, (or if one is not there he will call for) one of his Deputies and tell him to see that the group leaves.

The Sheriff is named Harley Stone, though this is not told to the players unless they ask. He is a cultist, in fact he is Ebon Stone's righthand man. The stolen flute is kept locked in the basement of his house (#17). He uses it to control the Ghouls and to call the cult out for rituals. The main duties of he and his Deputies is to cow into silence and keep in line those townspeople who are not members of the cult. There is a small pendant around his neck (Spot Hidden Item to notice) which serves to ward off the Ghouls. They cannot come closer than 5' of him when he is wearing it.

(Keeper Note: The warning to leave town is important to the action as a whole. If it looks like the players are going to skip seeing the Sheriff, have one of the Deputies deliver the message at some point or another.)

5- The General Store. This location serves as a place for the players to restock food and things like that. Guns and ammunition are not "sold to no strangers", by order of the Sheriff. The store keeper is a cultist, and will not answer any probing questions.

7- The Church. Upon approaching the colonial style Church building, the Investigators will see the Deacon sweeping the front steps of the building. Deacon Jones is a cultist and will automatically respond in a nasty and unhelpful manner. After telling the group that whatever they are asking about is "no business of a stranger", he will turn his back on the group and continue sweeping. As soon as he thinks he is no longer being noticed, he will run off down the path to Ebon Stone's house to inform him of the strangers asking questions.

The church itself is a standard type, and unless the Keeper wishes otherwise, will contain nothing of interest. Behind the building is the town Cemetery. If an investigation is made, one of the graves will prove to be of particular interest. It is off in a corner, and a larger, old tree grows right out of the middle of it. No grass grows on the grave, though it is plentiful all over the rest of the Cemetery. The tombstone says, "Here is laid Nahum Stone, struck by lightning 16, January, 1743."

9- The Priest's House. This is where, if anyone asks, Father Pierce lives. It is a tiny shack, with broken windows, and showing signs of long disuse. The Father was taken for the rituals.

10- The Mill. Here the Investigators will find Miller Brown and his three sons, Jebediah, Noah and Ezekial, hard at work cobbling together barrels to put the milled grain into. If a player tries to engage them in conversation while they are working, they will be told, in a friendly manner, that "a man don't stop his labor just to talk." When they take their lunch (or dinner) break, they will invite the players to join them. The Miller is an enemy of the cultists, and if Stone's name is mentioned, he will spit on the ground and curse. If asked what is going on in town he will say that "... all the damn fools here listen to Stone and follow him, or are too scared to do

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anything but remain silent." If questioned on the strange doings up on Old Hill, he will answer honestly that he is not sure, but poor Joe Whately, the Doctor's boy, snuck up there one night to watch, and nothing but screams and moans have passed his lips since. He will not want to go on too long on this topic, and before the party leaves, he will recommend the Widow Hawkin's house as a good "and safe" place to stay in town.

11- The Widow Hawkins' House. This house is probably the biggest one in town. There is a white picket fence around the place (Spot Hidden or Mythos Knowledge roll to notice the magic signs and inscriptions on the gate and spaced along the fence; Ward Away Ghouls symbols!). There are some outbuildings and stables on the grounds. The 18th century home is in good condition. A knock at the door will eventually be answered by a tiny old lady, whose shuffling approach will be heard long before the door is actually cracked open.

The Widow Hawkins herself is tiny and white haired. Frail and nervous, she will look the group over and come to some silent internal decision, and then admit them. Anyone who tries their Psychology roll on her will find out that she is not your typical old hag. An undercurrent of weirdness flows around her, but there is no way to put your fingers on it. If the party just wants to rent rooms, (this is how she earns her living), they are 2 dollars a night with dinner and breakfast. On being questioned about Stone or the goings on, she will wring her hands and shake her head, muttering, "It's only a matter of time before we are all taken, taken by evil." She will tell just about as much as the Miller. If the party should mention her husband Zeke, and that he had asked them for their help, and that they are among the last to see him alive, a change will come over her. With new resolve, she will ask how he died. She has not seen the body, nor will anyone tell her anything. With much talk of how maybe you "fellers from the big city" know something, and perhaps could help, she leads the group into her book-lined study. Peering at one of the party, she will ask, "Can ye read?" If so, (so it is to be hoped!) she will pull down an old, leather bound book entitled, *Ye Rytes of Magik to Call Out ye Starrie Deamon, & of ye Correkt Offerings to It* (see book #1 in listing). Also on her shelves, though she doesn't know it since she is illiterate, is *Prodigies in the New-English Canaan*

(see book #2 in listings) Roll library Use to find above book.

If the party returns later that night, she will give each member a leather pouch attached to a thong to be worn around the neck. This herbal concoction will keep the Ghouls at a distance as long as it is fresh (2-3 days). She will conduct them down to her basement, where, rather than the root cellar one would expect to find, there is a small, well appointed apartment. This will serve as a hiding place for the Investigators from any hostile forces they have managed to stir up thus far.

14- The Miller Brown's House. The house is a well appointed homestead in the same fashion as the rest of the town. If the party is just on a casual visit, they will be invited in for a meal, and some more conversation along the same lines as at the Mill. If they are coming at night, after encountering the Processional or the Sheriff and his Ghouls, they will be hustled in by the Miller quickly. He will listen to any description of events with nods and grunts. Saying that there seems to be nothing to be done to save the town, he will suggest that the group stay with the Widow Hawkins.

His son Jeb knows a path that cuts through the woods to the widow's place. On the way, Jeb will mention that he knows a secret path to the top of Old Hill as well. Hopefully, the party will not be silly enough to try to do this, but if they do, use the ritual later described by T. Rhinelanders Waldo, and subject them to the same affects.

15- The School House. It's just that. Miss Hatley, the 'marm, is ignorant of the local situation, and since she lives in Arkham herself, is in no position to possess special information.

16- Doctor Hank Whately's Office. The Doctor lives here as well as having his practice here. The place is clean and well kept. The maid (a cultist) will lead the party into the Doctor's study. Dr. Whately himself is the prototypical small town GP. White hair, kindly face, the works. The snag is that upon questioning, he will admit to knowing nothing. If asked about Ebon Stone, he will ask "Who? . . . oh, that new preacher in town. Never met 'im." About Zeke Hawkin's death certificate, he says he knows nothing. What about his signature on it? "I don't know everything my assistants sign my name to." His son, Joseph, recently driven mad by some horror on Old Hill? "Poor boy . . . 'drather not talk

of 'im," and so on. A more taciturn and uncooperative person you will never meet. After a short time, he will bid the group a good day, saying that he has business to attend to.

The Doctor is not a cultist, he is just scared out of his wits. His son is prisoner in the basement of the Sheriff's house. No amount of pleading or any communication skill (including Reason) will get any more out of him.

17- The Sheriff's House. The house itself is broken down and not kept up at all. At any given time there will be 1-4 of the bully-boy Deputies hanging around on the front porch. They will be armed with .45 calibre revolvers, and there will be axe handles on hand—always. Inside the house, there are always two Ghouls on guard in the darkened interior of the first floor. They always have axe handles. The place contains nothing of value except the gun collection, (Keeper: the exact composition of this location can be altered if it suits your purposes better), and the collection of various types of alcohol (Valuable due to the Prohibition at present in effect). The door leading to the basement is hidden (Spot Hidden) and locked. Down below are three Ghouls guarding young Joe Whately, and in a space behind a false front stone in the wall (Spot Hidden or Archeology) rests the flute. If the Ghouls are attacked, one of them is programmed to run off and raise the alarm. Since these things will only do what they are programmed to do, the Keeper should determine which of the three is programmed for this so that if it is killed, there will be no alarm, as the others are programmed to stay and defend. The Whately boy is indeed insane. No matter what happens, he will just sit and moan.

18- Ebon Stone's House. A typical house for the area, the Stone place strangely enough seems more wholesome than most of the rest of the town. If the Party decides to visit him during the day, they will find him home. He will invite them into his kitchen for coffee, and sit down for a talk. The Investigators should notice that his skin has a strange, leathery texture, and tends to fold in on itself like an accordion would. Also, his eyes have a bright, probing look that is unsettling. Otherwise, he is an hospitable and jovial type. If he is confronted directly with the suspicions concerning him, or if blunt accusations are made, he will smile and shrug them off, and soon after ask the group to leave. By observing

from a distance, the party will see the likes of the Sheriff, the Deacon and others coming and going. At night, there will be a large number of Ghouls on guard (as many as are needed to discourage the party).

19- The Town Commons. This is the place where the people of Brammelville come to spend an idle hour or day. Most of the "hangers-around" will be oldsters. None of them are prone to conversation. This is a good place to have the Sheriff and a few Deputies warn the players to leave town.

20- The Peak of Old Hill. After the long climb up, the Hill quickly levels off at the top into a dishlike depression. The description on page 92 of the *Call of Cthulhu* rulebook, or any other that the Keeper wants, will do. It's usually deserted during the day.

It is very important to realize that while the party is in the town, a feeling of mystery must be kept up. The following events and encounters, like the first few that draw the Investigators into the story, are mandatory, and must occur. Work them in as smoothly as is possible. Good points in the story line are suggested for each. Remember, this is a pre-arranged device to present the mysteries of the town to the players in the most interesting and playable fashion. We are assuming that the group has arrived in town around noon. It is up to the Keeper to see to it that events run smoothly. Now . . .

1) *The Harvard Students*: At some point when the whole party is together, and outside, a late model Ford will come speeding into town, up the main street. Anytime the party is in the Commons is good for this. The car contains three young students on holiday from school (Harvard). They will speed up the street, past the group, waving, shouting and being, in general, very obnoxious. On their return spin, they will screech to a halt in front of the party and introduce themselves. Their manner must be arrogant and condescending. Once they find out that the Investigators are from Miskatonic U., they will grow almost hostile. They will make it clear that they think the crate of books being sent to M.U. from Cambridge is the rightful property of Harvard Library. They will drive off slowly, shouting back something to the effect that its a shame that a second rate school like M.U. plays politics so shabbily. They will stop on the edge of town and picnic, turning away any effort of the party to join them.

2) *The Ghoul Attack*: Sometime during dusk, the party should be prompted by a Deputy to at least make a show of leaving town. Usually, (and preferably), they will contrive to turn off after driving some way out, hide the car, and sneak back to town. Just at this point, they find themselves ringed by eleven Ghouls, all wielding axe handles. Surrounding the party, they will slowly and menacingly advance out of the gloom. Two of them will go over to the car and start bashing away at it. Just before it looks like the party is going to be overwhelmed, or fight their way out, they hear a low unearthly whistling (sound affects please, Keeper!). The Ghouls drop their hands to their sides, and slowly back off from the group. "Hey, strangers," they hear from the gloomy woods. They turn to see the Sheriff, standing there with the flute in one hand, the other resting on his hip revolver. "I told ya it might not be safe around here after dark! Yew better go now, 'cause here on in, I can't be responsible fer what happens to ya." Exit Sheriff, *et al.*

3) *The Processional*: The best time for this is when the party is sneaking around at night, probably in transit between the Miller and the Widow Hawkins. They hear an unearthly, low whistling, (yes, the same) from the point marked "X" on the map, on the hillside. Then, proceeding along the road, a torch light procession of grey cloaked and hooded figures makes its way toward the Hill, and the source of the sound. The Investigators can make out one of the figures leading a goat by a leash. Two more are hoisting a pole between them whereupon is suspended a person-sized, struggling sack. The procession goes up the road on the side of the Hill, and then the line of torches can be seen climbing up to the peak.

4) *T. Rhinelanders Waldo*: Waldo is publisher and editor of *Bizzare Facts Magazine*. He is in Brammelville to look into some stories which have aroused his interest. All bluff and bravado, he bustles past the party coming into town as the party is leaving the morning after the Processional, or leaving Arkham the night before, if the party didn't stick around for the Processional. He is, of course, stark raving mad the next time he is encountered, but he will relate the description of the Ritual to the party. This will be from a hospital bed, in a straight jacket, in Arkham Mental Facility. He is not interested, when he is on

his way to the town, in joining forces with the party. "I can handle everything" and "I'll get to the bottom of this!" are his two favorite sayings. The following is a description of the ritual . . .

(Keeper please note: The following description will be gotten from an insane T. Rhinelanders Waldo. The text refers to the participants by name, but the reading to the players should be altered appropriately to leave some room for doubt. Also be sure to insert enough shudders and moans from Waldo.)

The ritual begins one or two hours after darkness. The cultists are already assembled on the Peak, the main group on one side, and Ebon Stone, and an unrecognizable, barely human form next to him, standing unmoving. Also with him are the Sheriff, holding the flute, and two cultists (should be recognized as Deputies by the players.) They are holding a goat by a leash, and a body sized sack lies struggling at their feet. Near them is a large, flattened stone and a pole or stake, man-tall, with wrist and ankle cuffs attached. The ritual is ready to begin.

First, Stone will let out a blood curdling scream with his arms above his head. The Sheriff will play on the flute, in a low, undulating whistle for 1D10 minutes. The mass of cultists begins a rhythmic, atonal mutter, which soon takes the form of a chant. As soon as the Sheriff stops playing, Stone signals and the chant dies back down to a mutter. Stone will now commence a hissing, guttural invocation. The goat is carried, bound, to the flat stone and placed on top of it. Stone, still sputtering and hissing, produces a knife from under his robe, and as the Sheriff begins piping again, he plunges the knife into the goat's stomach, disemboweling it. Drenching himself in the gore, he will raise up his blood soaked arms to the night sky, and with the steadily louder and wilder piping of the Sheriff, he screams and croaks, "AIIIIIIIIIIII!!! F'natha lai N'yarlothotep! G'aftha aia N'yarlo f'tagn iniya!" Thereupon 1D6 Servitors of the Other Gods appear. They take the form of ever-changing masses hovering in the air around Stone and the altar. They have flutes similar to the one the Sheriff plays. After a few moments of chanting the Servitors will begin piping along with the Sheriff. Along with the combined fluting and chanting, Stone starts a new invocation, facing outward from the torch-lit circle into the night. N'yarlothotep will

appear in his human form, standing near the stake and the stone. Now, two burly cultists will take out of the body sized sack a young man (one of the Harvard students from the day before), and chain him to the stake. Hissing and sputtering in the same manner that Stone was before, N'yar will take the knife Stone used to kill the goat with and will proceed to slowly flay the student's skin. This procedure will take place amid the wild chanting and fluting of the observing cult. When his horrid task is done, He will put down the knife, and then take the flute from the Sheriff. To the mounting frenzy of the cult, N'yar begins to play it in a loud high-pitched wailing. Soon, the slumped over, skinless corpse on the stake begins to twitch and stir. The Deputies will undo the wrist and ankle chains, and in response to N'yar's incessant piping, the gory thing actually begins to dance! It will stand upright and twitch and step; various body parts, no longer held in place, will fall to the ground. When only a skeleton is left, N'yar stops piping and the thing falls to the gore covered ground. The ritual now breaks up with N'yar's departure. A few remain behind to burn the remains, and the rest file down the hill. (Keeper Note: The newspapers will note the mysterious disappearance of three Harvard students the morning after the Processional.)

### THE BOOK LISTINGS

(The following four books are keyed to the text of the article by number)

- 1) *Ye Rytēs of Magik to Call Out Ye Starrie Deamon, & of Ye Correkt Offering to It*. Elizer Hakins, (or Anonymous) 168? English / +5% / 2x / -1D4

#### Facts

- a) Tells of calling out to the stars to bring out "those who serve Him."
- b) Tells of the hunger of the "Dark One", and his demands for human sacrifice.
- c) Explains the mortal danger of attempting the ritual "unready in mynde, or lacking ye proper implements."
- d) Tells how one can best learn from Masters among the Indian folk, or even from initiated white men.

#### Spells

- a) Create Enchanted Knife (+15% to success in Contact N'yar.)
  - b) Summon Servitor of the Other Gods
- 2) *Prodigies in the New-English Canaan* Rev. Ward Phillips 1822 English / +4% / NONE / -1D6

#### Facts

- a) Tells of demon worship, especially

eyewitness accounts, in New England in the 1780's.

- b) Describes the Summon Servitor Ceremony (the first part of Waldo's description, before the human sacrifice).
- c) Tells of suspected local sorcerer, Elizer Hakins.
- d) Tells of Indian worship of the "Dark One", presumed to be Satan.
- e) Hints at a holyman who is said to live forever to aid in the holy fight against these demons.

#### Spells

NONE

- 3) *Malignia Americanus* Cotton Mather, 169? (See text for copy of this book in full)
- 4) *Liber Ivonis* Anonymous, Translated circa 10-11 Cent. Latin / +13% / 2x / -1D8

#### Facts

- a) Tells how Nyarlathéapitus is "even today" worshipped by many degenerate peoples.
- b) Tells how everlasting life is sometimes given to his followers.
- c) Mentions Him as one of the Dark Gods of the Egyptians.
- d) Warns of needing protective "devices and signs" when dealing with Him.
- e) A narrative of Young Ivonis who performs certain rites and is made immortal in return.

#### Spells

- a) Contact N'yarlothotep
- b) Voorish Sigh

The following books should be of some help too.

- 3) *Clavis Solomanus* Translated Olaus Wormius 16?? Latin / +12% / x5 / -2D8

#### Facts

- a) Tells of calling and binding demons to one's will.
- b) Tells of mines and vast archives thus built.
- c) Makes clear need for complete preparations.
- d) Hints at location of Hidden Library (2xINT to figure out)
- e) Warns against Avatothim, King of the Demons, and His wrath.

#### Spells

- a- Summon Dimensional Shambler
- b- Bind Dimensional Shambler
- c- Ward Away Ghoul
- d- Create Elder Sign
- e- Dread Curse of Azathoth (Avatothim)

#### To Be Found

Miskatonic U. (fragment only, first 3 facts, first spell).

New York Public Library (fragment as above).

Bibliothèque Nationale  
Vatican Library, Core Collection  
Jerusalem Archives  
Private Collections (10% USA, 20% Europe).

- 4) *Clavis Alchemiae* Fludd, 182? Latin / +6% / 2x / -1D6

#### Facts

- a- Tells of ritual wherein the summoned being kills the sacrificial victim.
- b- Arts from the East are now being practiced in Europe.
- c- Refers reader to the *Clavis Solomanus*.

#### Spells

- a- Enchant + 10% Knife
- b- Voorish Sign

#### To Be Found

N.Y. Public Library  
Univ. of Barcelona  
Bib. Nationale

British Museum Collection  
10% for private collections.

*Of Evil Sorceries Done in New-England*,

- 5) *Of Deamons in No Humane Shape* Anonymous Fragment, 167? English / + 6% / NONE / -1D4

#### Facts

- a- Tells of long time worship of Tsa-thoggua, (written as Sadogowah), Narlota, Dagon and others by Indians.
- b- Tells of ritual, (howling in the woods, sacrifices, etc)
- c- Mentions Arkham and New Dunwich as areas of heavy activity.
- d- Mentions Elizer Hakins and Nanhum Stoaner as worshippers, both believed to have been hung.

#### Spells

NONE

#### To Be Found

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*In closing this piece, I want to thank the players who stumbled and shuddered through this scenario, and for their contributions, which as much as my own, made Arkham a scarier place to be:*

*Professor Felix Frankfurter (Dave Kogelman)*

*Hargrove Thorpe (Lionel Martinez)*

*Richard Bloch (Dick Jones)*

*Professor Herkimer Henry Braithwaite III (John Fluker)*

*Teddy Baskins, ace reporter for Bizarre Facts Mag (Bill Murray)*

*Simon Ace (Mike Bellenger).*

AG.



CTHULHU cont'd from page 7

analysis, but the character has to guard his sanity almost as closely as his life in this game.

Guarding your life can be no easy task in this game, either. The assortment of monsters for the Keeper to choose from includes immortals that are powerful enough to crush a tank with one blow. There are, of course, lesser creatures and much depends upon the scenario that the Keeper sets up. But, the fool-hardy characters, who love to run willy-nilly into battle with the first monster they see, may be in for a rude awakening.

This game seems to be better suited to investigative work by the characters, where they try to forego confrontation as long as possible in order to find out exactly what the danger is and how best to deal with it. It is the implied supremacy

of reason over brute strength in this game which, in the hands of a good Keeper, makes it enjoyable and raises it above the tedium of magic swords and monster killing rampant in so many games. If the game does bog down, the Keeper can always throw in a couple of sword-wielding fanatical worshippers of the god in question.

The versatility of the game lends itself well to time period variations. Although the sourcebook is for the 1920's, the inventive Keeper could cast the scenario in any time period. Since these gods are ageless, it is conceivable that dwarves and elves had to deal with them before man every came out of the east. Or, since some of the great old ones live around the stars Fomalhaut and Aldebaran, what is going to happen in another couple of hundred years when our starships enable us to meet them on their

own home turf? The possibilities are as endless and varied as the imaginings of the Keeper.

This game does have its flaws, though they are relatively few. As mentioned previously, the Keeper will be forced to make his own screen and bring together all the pertinent charts and tables which are scattered throughout the rulesbook. Also, as Keeper, I found that the rules called for (what I thought to be) an inordinate number of die rolls. I circumvented this by using only the die rolls which I felt to be essential for playing the given scenario.

Playing this game is strikingly similar to acting out a classic horror film. The detective work and gothic horror flavor will fulfill the fantasies of monster movie buffs as well as Lovecraft devotees. I know, because my name was Jackson.

---

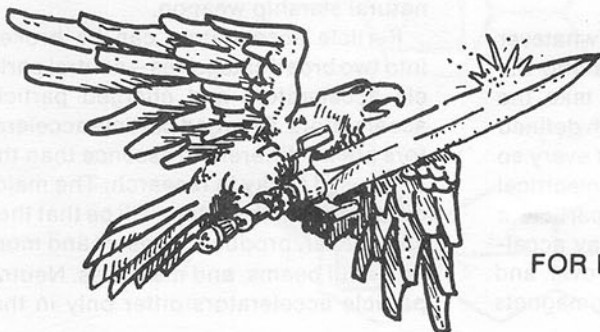
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# Hardware Wars

by Richard Williams

Part Three—Seeing the light: Energy weapons continued.

## Introduction

The following article is the third in a series designed to give the *TRAVELER*® player and referee a working knowledge of the equipment used in the game. It tries in simple terms to explain how the widgets work, in other words. And the reason this introduction sounds so dry is that I'm running out of ideas for snappy openings and wanted to save some of them for later articles.

With that, let's move into what I hope will be the final chapter in the energy weapons series —

## *The Light Unseen—Particle Beams and Meson Guns*

The story of the particle accelerator begins today, here, and now, with the study of high-energy and subatomic physics. The particle accelerator as a weapon is the same as the particle accelerator as the tool of the physicist, so let's find out why and how it developed.

In the early days of particle physics, or nuclear physics, or subatomic physics, or whatever you want to call it, particles were studied by bombarding some target substance with other particles and using various devices to study what came out. The particles most often used were pro-

tons, alpha particles, and, less often, neutrons. The particles were at first produced from other substances that radiated them naturally.

(For those of us who need reminding—protons are part of the nucleus of the atom, one of the first pieces to be discovered. They carry positive charges. The neutron is also a part of the nucleus. It is about the same size as the proton, but carries no charge. Alpha particles are helium ions, composed of two protons and two neutrons. These and electrons, very small particles that carry negative charges and orbit the nucleus of the atom, were among the first particles discovered and investigated in the earliest days of nuclear physics.)

Pretty soon it became clear that some particles could not penetrate into the nuclei (plural of nucleus) of atoms unless they were given energy and moved to higher speeds. The particle accelerator was the answer to the question of how to smash the atom.

The first decent particle accelerator was the Van de Graff generator, named for the man who designed it, which accelerated electrons and ions to energies up to one Mev. And now it's time to explain a very important term. In particle physics, each particle is weighed (if you can call it that) not in units of mass, such as grams, but in the amount of energy it requires to create or release the particle from the nucleus. This energy is expressed as electron volts. An electron volt is the amount of energy required to move an electron through a potential difference of one volt, and it is a very small unit of energy (and about as far as I go trying to explain it . . .). It takes about 10,000,000,000,000,000 electron volts of chemical energy per second to power a flashlight bulb, for example. Accelerators are rated nowadays by the number of electron volts they produce. Most of them generate at least 30 Mev (thirty million electron volts), and more than a few push 100+ Mev. At least eight had hit one Bev (billion electron volts) by 1960.

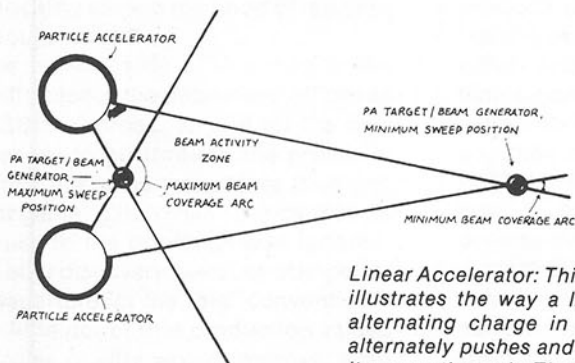
Most particle accelerators, whatever the name or power, operate along the same basic principles. They take the particle and move it down a path defined by magnetic fields, "kicking" it every so often with rapidly alternating electrical fields. Each kick moves the particle a little faster. In most present-day accelerators, the path is circular or oval, and the magnets used are electromagnets

which can be strengthened to hold the particle in its path as it speeds up. This keeps the accelerator package within reasonable limits of size (still, one that should be completed by now is two miles in circumference, if memory serves), and allows the same system to be repeatedly used, reducing cost and operating hassles. It also allows the particle "beam" to be gradually built up to high density (if you call near-vacuum that) over a period of time, to increase the likelihood of the experiment being successful (consider that sometimes only one in thousands of collisions will produce results). After the beam has been sufficiently built up, it is directed into a target, where, for the purposes of the experiment, the particles impact atoms in the target and throw out "debris", which is recorded and studied. In the weapon version the beam is released to impact upon the surface of a ship or planet.

There are some requirements which must be satisfied. There must be room for the particles to be accelerated to high enough speed to be effective. This requires a lot of power and strong magnets. Fusion and superconductors bring this in reach of a starship's capacity. There must also be a vacuum in the accelerator path, as the particles will otherwise expend their energy in impact with molecules and atoms of atmosphere. This is why the particle accelerator makes no appearance on the battlefield. Maintaining a hard vacuum in a weapon that moves over varying terrain, is constantly manipulated, and being actively shot at, is just not cost-effective when there are other weapons systems that will do the job. Its only good landside use is in fixed installations on worlds with a vacuum or trace atmosphere, where it makes a very effective weapon.

On a starship, however, making a vacuum is easy. All you have to do is open the window. Space is still the best vacuum that I know of, and the particle accelerator has no problem there. It is a natural starship weapon.

Particle accelerators can be broken into two broad categories—neutral particle accelerators and charged particle accelerators. Charged particle accelerators are no different in essence than the ones used today in research. The major differences in the future will be that they are smaller, produce "denser" and more powerful beams, and mass less. Neutral particle accelerators differ only in that



*Linear Accelerator: This is a schematic which illustrates the way a linac works. Note the alternating charge in each section, which alternately pushes and pulls each particle as it comes through. The sections get progressively longer in order to give the particle the same push as it gets faster and faster. The beam can be aimed by placing magnets at the end of the linac to pull or push the charged particles onto the target line.*

the beam of charged particles is directed into a target of some substance that produces neutrons as a result of the collisions. Since neutrons cannot be directed magnetically, aiming has to be accomplished by the angle of beam impact with the target and/or the positioning of neutron-absorbent material to prevent the neutral beam from going but one direction.

There are several different types of particle accelerators. In order of their development, the significant ones are the linear accelerator, cyclotron, betatron, synchrotron, synchro-cyclotron, and proton synchrotron. The exact differences are not important, save that at the present time the proton synchrotron is probably the most powerful of the lot, at least as far as I know (I admit freely that I don't keep up with high-energy physics like I should).

For weapon purposes, the most likely candidates are the linear accelerator and the proton synchrotron, the first because it is linear and well suited to the spine of a starship, while the proton synchrotron is the most powerful and produces the strongest beam of the lot. Given the probably technology gain, it is a safe bet that the linear accelerator (which simply pushes the particles down a straight line of RF (radio frequency) generators, each of which kicks it a little faster) will be the weapon of choice, since it adapts well to starship design.

The choice of particle to fire is fairly simple, even though there are so far ninety-two of them to choose from. Out of these, many will be disqualified because of size, mass, neutrality, or difficulty of production. Of course, the easiest way to choose is to look in HIGH GUARD® (*Traveller* Book 5), where it

says that the accelerator fires electrons and hydrogen nuclei, which, depending on the isotope of hydrogen used, is either a proton, a proton and neutron, or a proton and two neutrons. Use of the proton corresponds closely with present day accelerators, as it is difficult to push heavier particles to relativistic speeds (According to Einstein, an object as it gains velocity, gains mass. At the speed of light you approach infinite mass, and that takes a lot of energy to propel. The energy required as the particle mass grows has been a big problem with particle accelerators.).

So—the linac (linear accelerator) produces a beam of either electrons (which can get very fast because they start with a mass about 1/1200th of the proton's), or protons (not as fast as electrons, but more massive) and directs them at the target. What happens when they hit? The beam particles collide with atoms in the ship's hull and produce energy and other particles. The energy is generally in the form of gamma radiation, which accounts for the radiation damage to crew and electronics specified in *High Guard*. Surface explosions are the result of the subatomic "debris" of the beam's impact with the ship's hull. Given a high enough energy accelerator, particles of antimatter will spring forth to annihilate themselves with other atoms of the ship's skin, liberating energy. The other particles also collide, liberating energy. The combination is enough to cause a significant explosion.

Countermeasures? Run. Kill it before it shoots at you. An atmosphere does just dandy, as the beam particles run into it instead of you. Armor is a mixed blessing, as it provides more atoms for the beam particles to hit, but provides

protection from radiation and explosion effects when the hit occurs. Sandcasters don't provide enough atoms in a given space to effectively intercept the beam. For starships, the best defense comes from a high agility, a good computer, and the first shot.

Before we move on to the meson gun, there is something you should be warned about. So far in this series we have stayed pretty well within the bounds of present science. At this point, however, we are poised on the edge of current science and something which, for want of a better term, I will call parascience. It will not be long before fact ends and almost pure conjecture takes over. So strap in.

The meson gun could more accurately be called the pion gun. According to STRIKER® (*Traveller* miniature combat rules) the meson gun uses primarily the pi neutral meson. The pi neutral is one of three pi mesons, the other two being the pi plus and the pi minus. Pions are subatomic particles, existing within the nucleus. They act as carriers of the strong nuclear force (The strong nuclear force is the force of attraction that holds the nucleus of the atom together, despite the fact that protons in the nucleus, being of like charges, want to fly away from each other. It is many times stronger than the electromagnetic force we are so familiar with.), and were predicted in 1935 by Hideki Yukawa. They were not discovered, however, until 1947 by Cecil Frank Powell. In terms of size, they are roughly in-between protons and electrons, requiring about 135 Mev for production. Their lifetime inside the nucleus is about ten to the minus nineteenth seconds. Outside, this drops to around ten to the minus twenty-third seconds. In other words, it doesn't last long at best. (A meson is any of a group of unstable nucleons having a mass intermediate between that of the electron and the proton.)

Enter the meson gun and relativity. A useful fact came out of Einstein's theories; namely, that time, relative to an observer outside a moving object, slows down for that object. In other words—put a pion on a ship moving at near lightspeed. To the pion, or someone on the ship, it still decays in ten to the minus twenty-third seconds. To someone with a timer on a relatively stationary (all things are relative, remember) planet, however, the pion decays for up to several seconds, an increase of over a

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billionfold for the pion. What the meson gun does is kick the pion to a speed close to light. Again, due to Einstein (everything was so much simpler before he showed up . . .) the mass of the pion will increase as its speed does, so it takes a lot of energy to push it up near lightspeed. With a good computer, you can adjust the speed of the pion so that it decays at a chosen rate (given a very exact decay rate and a good atomic clock). In the meson gun, the computer adjusts the speed of the particle so that it decays within the boundaries of a target. Pion decay takes care of the rest.

So—you need a source of pions, a means to accelerate them to precise speeds and aim them, and a means to calculate decay rate, and you've got a meson gun. Simple, right?

First—build a pion. According to *Striker*, you get one out of a collision between an electron and a positron. At the risk of getting most of the staff of GDW mad at me, this is incorrect. A positron is an electron with a positive charge—an anti-electron. When an electron and positron meet, they annihilate each other, releasing energy. The pion is actually a pretty fundamental particle (I went through four books to get this, so hear me out). If anything, it is made of quarks, which are so far undiscovered. The quark, by the way, is the truly fundamental particle that all else is made of. Anyway, the only way to get a pion is to knock it out of a nucleus, which in turn requires a decent particle accelerator.

*Editor's Note: I spoke with GDW about Richard's comments, and was given the following reply from Frank Chadwick, Pres. of GDW.*

"Richard is correct, as far as he goes, in stating that the collision of an electron and a positron results in their mutual annihilation and the production of energy. However, we must then ask what form this energy takes. The answer depends on the energy of collision, determined by the velocity of the particles. At low energies (speeds), the collision produces only photons, which is probably what Richard means by "energy". As the energy of collision rises, many other reactions begin to be observed; the collision will still produce photons, but photons of sufficiently high energy break down into other particles before they can be observed (and are called "virtual" photons). At a collision energy of 785 Mev, or about 99.9% of the

speed of light, one commonly produced reaction is this:

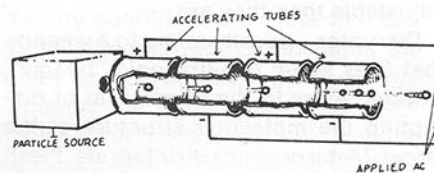


where  $e^+$  and  $e^-$  are the positron and electron,  $\pi^0$  is the pi neutral meson, and  $\pi^-$  and  $\pi^+$  are charged mesons. This reaction was first observed in the late 1950's at Frascati, in Italy, and the CERN facility in Switzerland and is commonly used to produce mesons in research accelerators today.

*In the meson gun, beams of electrons and positrons collide at high energies, producing mesons by the reaction above. The charged mesons are shunted aside by magnets, leaving a beam of neutral mesons with a velocity produced by the vector sum of the electron and positron beams."*

Enter the synchro-cyclotron. According to *Accelerators*, a book by Robert Wilson and Raphael Littauer, the number of mesons created when the accelerator beam impacted the target was so large that "people started to talk of meson 'beams' "I Aha. It is only a few centuries from this point to the test firing of the first meson gun.

Like the particle accelerator, the meson gun is well suited for starships, mainly because it is so big and requires such power that it makes a good stiff spinal mount. It is not hampered by atmosphere like the accelerator, however, so it does finally appear on the battlefield at tech level 15.



*Meson Gun: This schematic illustrates a meson gun as it might be constructed. Two particle accelerator beams are allowed to sweep a limited area and impact a movable target. The diagram illustrates the projected maximum and minimum beam sweep of the resulting meson beam. This can be obtained by either varying the angle or the speed of one or both of the particle beams. Shielding is necessary because the strays from the particle accelerator would in time create zones of radioactivity. This is one reason why a meson gun has a barrel. The other reason is probably psychological, to give the operators something to physically aim and to make the captain and crew less nervous about potentially destructive particles running through the ship on the way to their target. The target is more than likely manipulated by gravity fields.*

What happens when you fire one is this: The beams from a pair of great-great-great grandchildren of the synchro-cyclotron are directed at a target, which when struck produces pi neutral mesons. The pions, given the energy of the beams, shoot off in a calculated direction at a calculated speed to decay some seconds later inside the target. Since the beam particles are neutral, you cannot change the beam direction magnetically (this is where I sigh over the fact that GDW didn't use the pi plus or pi minus instead). However, by changing the speed and/or the direction of the impacting accelerator beams, the meson beam direction can be adjusted within pretty broad limits. The problem reduces to simple vector algebra in the end, well within the capability of a computer.

When it reaches the target, the pion normally decays into two gamma rays. This causes the radiation damage specified in *High Guard* 1% of the time; however, the pion decays into a gamma ray, an electron, and a positron. Furthermore, 1% of the pions are composed of a proton and an antiproton that have found some way to exist together temporarily. These particles are released during decay, the antiparticles to annihilate themselves and produce energy, the protons and electrons to collide with other atoms, producing other particles and energy. The collision products in turn decay and collide, and so on, and so on. The result is considerable radiation and the explosion of a small amount of antimatter, and it doesn't take much to create considerable force . . .

Countermeasures? Run. Kill it before it shoots at you. Or, erect a meson screen or black globe.

The meson screen is a development of the nuclear damper, and is based on the postulation that future science will discover some way to manipulate the strong nuclear force from a distance. Remember that pions are carriers of the strong nuclear force. To manipulate the strong nuclear force, you must manipulate pions. There may be two ways to do this, and bring the nuclear damper to life.

First, increase the rate of interchange of pions between particles in the nucleus. You use the same number of pions, but move them faster, increasing the tendency of the nucleus to hold together. With charged pions this could conceivably be done with magnetic fields. Of course, to make a meson screen you need something that acts on

pi *neutral* mesons (again, I sigh over this selection by GDW instead of its charged relatives). Again, by slowing down the rate of pion exchange, you cause the nucleus to become more unstable and shed particles at controlled rates, which is what makes nuclear warheads go dead.

The other way to manipulate the strong nuclear force is to increase or decrease the number of pions in the nucleus. You can do this by building them out of quarks, or of reducing them to quarks. Now, quark manipulation is way beyond present capability, especially when their existence has not been proven. Given a few centuries, though, and the fairly reasonable assumption that quarks do indeed exist, it should become possible to build atoms and particles out of them. The nuclear damper is the result. Focus it on an incoming warhead and destroy a few pions, and you get a dead warhead, caused by premature neutron shedding. Focus it on a box of californium rounds and build a few pions, and you prevent premature neutron shedding.

Now for the hard part—create a nuclear damper with an anti-node sufficient to surround the ship, or at least make a “wall” between it and a meson gun. When the pion beam hits, its pions are dissolved into their constituent quarks. If in the process they decay first into gamma rays and antiparticles, the radiation shielding of the ship can handle the first, and there is no matter in sufficient concentration for the second to cause a significant explosion. This is not a sure thing, but it's better than nothing.

Black globe? A true force field; an interruption in the fabric of space; a modification of the jump field generator; negative energy; these are speculations off the top of my head. In truth, I can't come up with a logical extrapolation that will end with the black globe. I'm willing to listen to anything anybody else has.

In conclusion, the meson gun, like the particle accelerator, is well suited to starship combat. While it has tremendous potential as a battlefield weapon, pure size and mass disallow this until tech 15. It is an excellent planetary defense weapon, however, since it can be buried completely without the beam being obstructed, leaving only the target acquisition and guidance gear vulnerable to fire. Disadvantages? Power requirements, size of installation required, technological expertise required for operation. Advantages? The only weapon

known that penetrates *anything* solid, no ammunition to run out as long as the fusion plant lasts, great destructive power, speed of light delivery, and the technical difficulties involved in operating field defenses against it.

So—if I were facing a meson gun, I would want a dispersed structure, great agility, a good computer, a meson screen, a black globe, and the first shot. That way, if I didn't kill it immediately, I could probably survive long enough to run.

\* \* \*

Well, that's about it for *Traveller*-specific energy weapons, and since we have some space left, I would like to briefly run down some other science-fiction weapons on the offhand chance that you might run into them in a modified *Traveller* somewhere or somewhen. So, turn to the chapter marked “Others”, and let's start with:

Blasters—a generic term for almost any energy weapon, especially those that cause explosions at the point of beam impact. Could be anything from a pulse laser on, though usually denotes something that fires a “packet” of energy.

Beamers—like blasters, a generic term, used to denote those weapons that fire a continuous beam of energy.

Flamer—from Robert A. Heinlein's *Starship Troopers*. Available in two versions, a heavy flamer and a hand flamer. Also described as a plasma flamer. The P/FGMP is the *Traveller* version of the weapon, although the flamer is more adjustable than they are.

Disrupter—usually refers to a weapon that fires sonic or ultrasonic “beams”. Always refers to the effect, that of disrupting the molecular structure of the target. Metal or solids disintegrate. Flesh or semisolids rupture or liquify. Usually target-specific; that is, metal disrupters don't work on organic matter, organic disrupters don't work on metal, etc. Neurodisrupters are a subclass of the weapon that act directly on the nerve endings of a living target, causing extreme pain or paralysis or loss of muscle control or loss of consciousness from nerve shock. Grenades can be designed to use the same effect.

Phaser—from the *Star Trek* series. According to *The Making of Star Trek* by Whitfield and Roddenberry, it emits a beam of energy which is designed to interact with the wave pattern of any molecular form. Can be set to stun, heat, disrupt, or dematerialize, with wide vari-

ety of energy transfer available at each setting. Man-portable versions range from cigarette-pack sized for concealed carrying to a rifle version about the size of a Thompson SMG.

Powerguns—from *Hammer's Slammers*, by author unremembered. Powerguns are a cross between an energy weapon and a slug thrower. It is fed with a disc of a substance whose molecular structure has been aligned and charged by strong magnetic and electric fields. The disc, when fed into the chamber, is then made to release its stored energy, which, due to the characteristics of the disc's alloy and construction, comes out in a coherent burst. The “bolt” is cyan in color and carries a lot of energy. Effect is explosive. The weapon ranges in size from a 2 cm pistol to a 200 mm cannon, used on hover tanks.

DeLameters—from the Lensman series by E. E. “Doc” Smith. Smith is fond of superlatives, so this handgun comes across as the most powerful hand-held energy weapon ever produced. No explanation as to how it generates such awful power is given. In power and effect, something like an FGMP-15 in a Colt .45-sized package.

Then there's the unnamed hand weapon in *The Weapon Shops of Isher* by A. E. Vogt. Fits in the pocket, leaps into the hand at the mental command of the owner, fires an energy beam or creates a wall of force sufficient to stop a light laser cannon. Wow.

Lightsaber—a melee weapon, yes, but it uses energy for its destructive effect nonetheless. My theory is that the handle contains a miniature plasma generator and magnetic bottle generator, controllable by the user for anything from a knife to a longsword-length “blade” of energy. The magnetic field of lightsabers all have the same polarity, which is why you can block one with another. The only other explanation I have uses gravitics and would make the user a walking black hole, which could be tricky. Other possibilities; laser contained by a force field, a hand-held variation of the nuclear damper disintegrator effect, a particle-disruptor that reduces solid matter to its component quarks, a stasis field.

Variable sword—from any of Larry Niven's stores that have anything to do with Puppeteers. A handle with a retractable wire that is the source of a stasis field. The power source and generator are in the handle. When extended and activated, you get a stiff blade that could

Cont. on pg. 53



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this was really frustrating for those of us in the apparent minority (in relation to the final decision made). At my own house, for example, there were three of us watching the game and participating. At the beginning of the game, I laid down the ground rules: majority wins. If two of us opted for the same response, that was



it. Dictatorship reared its ugly head when I declared that if no consensus or majority existed (*i.e.*, three different choices) my response would be keyed in. After all, I reasoned, it was my house, my TV and my cable.

(The console bears a brief description. It is this interactive console that makes the QUBE system unique. On it, there are five buttons, numbered from 1 to 5, curiously enough. As with all of the Interact programming, the audience at home is given the opportunity to respond, at differing intervals. At the studio, a computer scans the results and within a few seconds spits out the winner.)

After the first few frustrations (when the audience chose contrary to our vote) rather than get discouraged and pitch the whole thing in, we made a breakthrough, psychologically. Its no different than being a member of a large party and having your suggestion shouted down. The game now took on a new dimension; we no longer had to be disappointed or upset when our advice was unheeded. We were now just another voice in the mob, and the mob's wishes were not necessarily ours. Anyone that has ever been a part of an rpg of similar composition can readily identify with that feeling of being at the back of the group and going along with "... those idiots up front." "OK, we'll do it. You'll be sorry, but we'll go along with it. You'll be sorry, but, what the hey?" Once this breakthrough was made, the game became pure fun, and extremely enjoyable.

In some cases, the group (which was later determined to contain 48% non-game players, the majority of whom had

never even heard of rpg's) made bad decisions. They did not do the "wise" thing for a role playing situation. Anyone that has ever initiated a group of green players can relate to the smug feeling of superiority when apprised of a "bad" decision just made, with the attendant "... you'll be sorry ..." thoughts.

The most surprising thing about this, for whatever the reason — be it the novelty of the medium, the feeling of participation the console gives one or whatever — was that there was a great sense of "immediacy" involved. Even though you had not counseled the unwise act, you were still bound by its consequences. Perhaps the most appropriate analogy would be some sort of "super-psyche", a *la* Rachel, wherein one head had not one, not a dozen, not two dozen but hundreds of personalities trying to influence and affect the character's actions. Perhaps in this case the anonymity of the other players was a good thing because, as so often happens in mass-group adventures, where the mob goes along with the mob will, there was no way to shout recriminations and accusations or call names at the "dummies" that counseled unwisely. That unpleasant aspect was simply not present. What was present was a very interesting, very skillfully woven blend of graphics, music, live action stills, slides, *etc.*, that all served to construct the fabric of the adventure to a far more interesting and visual degree than is possible in most cases of many people sharing an adventure.



Consider this: no matter how long and well a group has played together, if asked to (and able to) sketch out the temple just described by their DM, virtually all of the sketches will be in some way different from all of the others. This is not unusual, as we rely on our own knowledge and experiences when producing visual images. This was absent from this endeavor because in all cases, a picture was presented onscreen, for all to view.

Surprisingly enough, in spite of all the faulty advice given the character by the group mind, and ill-advised actions of the character (such as wading into monsters that experienced or prudent players would avoid) the character not only survived, but also achieved the immediate goal set forth in the introduction to the game. He found a clue for the next adventure as well as a tidy sum of loot with which to better his condition. It was not a case of Mr. Fomorin deciding that "No matter what, the dummies can't kill themselves." Far from it, as there were occasions where certain actions or behavior mandated the character's death.



There are a couple of considerations that the producers had to allow for that the average DM has never had to contend with. If you or I sit down to run an adventure, we do not overly concern ourselves with a minimum time limit. More often, our concern is with a maximum time limit. With TV, you must have a minimum amount of program or you are left with a lot of dead air, to borrow a radio term. (More on this in the next article.)

Judging from the response from the audience, *SWORDQUEST* was a success. Whether or not it will be expanded upon in the future is still undecided as this is being written. I fervently hope that someone at Warner-Amex has the intuition and ability to evaluate what they have done and the new channels for adventure gaming that have been opened. A program of this sort seems to be a sure winner in any area that has any game players.

Personally, I felt that *SWORDQUEST* was outstanding, and I am trying to convince anyone that will listen at Warner-Amex to continue the program. I had not experienced the involvement level and excitement that playing the game gave me in many years. I want more ...

RG.



# Winner: 1981 Charles Roberts Award—Best 20th Century Game

## WINGS<sup>©</sup>

### The Definitive WWI Aerial Combat Game

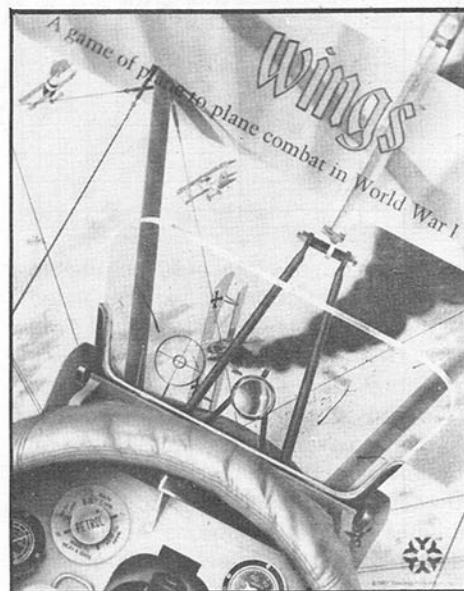
by Tony Adams

The word for WINGS<sup>©</sup> is *Definitive* (*definitive: Designating a statement, . . . that can stand as the most complete and authoritative on its subject*). It is the game about WWI air combat that will have DOGFIGHT<sup>©</sup> and SOPWITH<sup>©</sup> players standing around in awe. Devotees of RICHTHOFEN'S WAR will use the boxes to store their SQUAD LEADER<sup>©</sup> pieces from now on, and those hard core FIGHT IN THE SKIES<sup>©</sup> players will cry at the beauty of it all. And finally, even the ACES OF ACES<sup>©</sup> fans will put down their books to applaud *Wings* for its achievement. With all of those others out there competing for the WWI flying enthusiast, how do you design a new game on the subject that will have a chance to be accepted by the gamers? It was easy—Craig Taylor (the designer) and Yaquinto (the publisher) simply chose not to compete. They went for definitive instead. That is why *Wings* cannot be compared to any other game out—it stands alone. Here is why:

Upon first opening the *Wings* box you are immediately struck by the sheer volume of the contents. Besides the three mapboards that total 21" x 27" when put together, and the several hundred counters of airplanes, ships, Zeppelins, balloons, clouds and vehicles, there is a huge quantity of paper. Most of it includes data used in the game or sheets for keeping track of it. There is a 52 page rulebook, 50 3" x 4" data cards for the planes, 4 11" x 14" game cards (a duplicate set of two double sided cards) containing the charts used in the play of the game, a pad of at least 50 11" x 14" record sheets that are used for writing orders on (each one has space for 6

aircraft and 14 other units so that you will not soon run out), as well as two dice and a Yaquinto counter tray that does hold all of the pieces very nicely. This may all seem overwhelming at first, but if you approach it one step at a time the pieces all fall into place very nicely. Even though the game, taken as a whole, can be quite complex, it is actually very playable in practice because it is so very well organized. Let's start out by taking a look at the Basic Game.

A 52-page rulebook is a large one by any standards, but as they say on the first page, 'their bulk is deceptive' as they try to explain simple concepts and ideas so that first time gamers will have no problem understanding them. The Basic Game breaks down like this. The first 8 pages are Introduction and Set-up where game components and cards are shown and explained very clearly. Players will probably have to refer back to these pages a few times as they play their first game. The Basic Game covers the next 7 pages. So, by page 15, you are ready to get started. The Basic Game uses all the charts and cards as they will be used later in the Advanced Game so there is nothing to re-learn later, you simply add on a few things at a time. Basic Game topic headings include: Sequence of Play; Order Plot Phase; Speed Increments; Speed Changes—Power & Brake Factors, Basic Maneuvers: Straight, Bank, Turn, Slip; Plotted Order Execution; Collisions; Gunfire Procedure; Marking Hits; Damage Effects and Victory Conditions, to name most of them. You are now ready to pick one of the beginning scenarios (the last 10 pages of the rulebook) and begin



flying.

"The air was clear and warm and Stachkel was happy to be flying today. The small flight of half a dozen red Triplanes cruised leisurely over the trenches below, but still alert for the sign of enemy planes. From 8000 feet up the front lines could be clearly seen as great gashes in the otherwise peaceful green and yellow of the countryside. But Stachkel was interrupted in his thoughts by a short burst of gunfire from his number two, Franz, who was pointing ahead and to the right. Now Wilhelm saw them too, a half dozen specks in the distance climbing up to meet them. He waved back to Franz with their 'good hunting' sign to acknowledge that he had spotted their prey. He cleared his guns to be ready and noticed that the British were flying their new Camels. They were very fast and quite maneuverable but he knew he could outclimb them and usually turn with them. Wilhelm could feel his adrenalin pumping and his heart race as the distance closed. He heard the first chatter of machine gun fire from the Camels when they were still out of range: must be new pilots. He pulled the Fokker up into a climb and began to bank to the right to get the altitude and angle he wanted. The distance was closing fast as it was almost head on with the lead plane off to his right. Just as the enemy pilot opened up Stachkel kicked into a right turn and pressed the trigger."

In order to get started playing *Wings* one should familiarize oneself with the plane data cards, which are really the heart of the game. Shown for comparison are the Fokker Dr.1 and the Sopwith F.1 Camel, which are two of the more popu-

**75 FOKKER Dr.1** (110 hp Thulin Le Rhone B1)  
**GERMANY**  
 FULL NAME Fokker Flugzeugwerke Drosselcher Dr.1  
 POINT VALUE 20-10-5-2

**PLANE MOVEMENT CHARACTERISTICS CHART**

| ALTITUDE<br>Ft. | SPEED INCREMENTS |               |                |                 |                |                | ALTTITUDE CHANGES |      |               |               |               |               | BASIC MANEUVERS   |               |               |                   |               |               | ADVANCED MANEUVERS |               |               |                   |  |  |
|-----------------|------------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|--|--|
|                 | LEVEL<br>DIVES   | LEVEL<br>DIPS | POWER<br>DIVES | POWER<br>CLIMBS | POWER<br>ROLLS | POWER<br>DIPPS | CLIMB<br>RATE     | SLIP | BANK<br>LEVEL | TURN<br>LEVEL | SLIP<br>LEVEL | SKID<br>LEVEL | SHOULDER<br>LEVEL | SLIP<br>LEVEL | SKID<br>LEVEL | SHOULDER<br>LEVEL | SLIP<br>LEVEL | SKID<br>LEVEL | SHOULDER<br>LEVEL  | SLIP<br>LEVEL | SKID<br>LEVEL | SHOULDER<br>LEVEL |  |  |
| 1-100           | 1.2              | 1.4           | 2.4            | 2.7             | 2.8            | 2.9            | 3.0               | -1   | 1             | 1             | 1             | 1             | 1                 | 1             | 1             | 1                 | 1             | 1             | 1                  | 1             | 1             | 1                 |  |  |
| 101-200         | 1.2              | 1.4           | 2.4            | 2.7             | 2.8            | 2.9            | 3.0               | -2   | 1             | 1             | 1             | 1             | 1                 | 1             | 1             | 1                 | 1             | 1             | 1                  | 1             | 1             | 1                 |  |  |
| 201-300         | 1.2              | 1.4           | 2.4            | 2.7             | 2.8            | 2.9            | 3.0               | -3   | 1             | 1             | 1             | 1             | 1                 | 1             | 1             | 1                 | 1             | 1             | 1                  | 1             | 1             | 1                 |  |  |
| 301-400         | 1.2              | 1.4           | 2.4            | 2.7             | 2.8            | 2.9            | 3.0               | -4   | 1             | 1             | 1             | 1             | 1                 | 1             | 1             | 1                 | 1             | 1             | 1                  | 1             | 1             | 1                 |  |  |
| 401-500         | 1.2              | 1.4           | 2.4            | 2.7             | 2.8            | 2.9            | 3.0               | -5   | 1             | 1             | 1             | 1             | 1                 | 1             | 1             | 1                 | 1             | 1             | 1                  | 1             | 1             | 1                 |  |  |
| 501-600         | 1.2              | 1.4           | 2.4            | 2.7             | 2.8            | 2.9            | 3.0               | -6   | 1             | 1             | 1             | 1             | 1                 | 1             | 1             | 1                 | 1             | 1             | 1                  | 1             | 1             | 1                 |  |  |
| 601-700         | 1.2              | 1.4           | 2.4            | 2.7             | 2.8            | 2.9            | 3.0               | -7   | 1             | 1             | 1             | 1             | 1                 | 1             | 1             | 1                 | 1             | 1             | 1                  | 1             | 1             | 1                 |  |  |
| 701-800         | 1.2              | 1.4           | 2.4            | 2.7             | 2.8            | 2.9            | 3.0               | -8   | 1             | 1             | 1             | 1             | 1                 | 1             | 1             | 1                 | 1             | 1             | 1                  | 1             | 1             | 1                 |  |  |
| 801-900         | 1.2              | 1.4           | 2.4            | 2.7             | 2.8            | 2.9            | 3.0               | -9   | 1             | 1             | 1             | 1             | 1                 | 1             | 1             | 1                 | 1             | 1             | 1                  | 1             | 1             | 1                 |  |  |
| 901-1000        | 1.2              | 1.4           | 2.4            | 2.7             | 2.8            | 2.9            | 3.0               | -10  | 1             | 1             | 1             | 1             | 1                 | 1             | 1             | 1                 | 1             | 1             | 1                  | 1             | 1             | 1                 |  |  |

lar aircraft out of a total of 50 included in the game (not counting variants listed on the cards). Players of Battline's old *AIR FORCE/DAUNTLESS* system will recognize the style of the cards in *Wings* as being just as well organized and containing even more data. Starting on the left hand column we find that each row across represents that aircraft's capabilities at various altitudes. An altitude level represents 25 feet but is always kept track of simply in levels with conversion to actual feet being unnecessary. Thus, levels 1-100 (25-2500 feet) and the row of numbers following them give the performance of the plane while at those altitudes. An aircraft's performance changes at different altitudes and this is found by comparing and using a different row on the cards when the altitude reaches a new category. The Speed Increments columns list three pieces of information. The Stall speed is the speed at which an aircraft will go into a spin as the engine stalls; in other words, it is not fast enough to maintain level flight. The Level speeds column shows the normal speed for the plane while doing regular maneuvers and straight movement. The Dive speed lists the maximum speed a plane can achieve without falling apart. To move at that speed however, requires the plane to be in a dive. The next column to the right is Speed Changes and is simply the amount of Power factors a plane may apply in a given turn to speed up or brake factors that can be used to slow down. (The number -2 below the words Brake Factors represents the automatic slowing effect on the plane if the engine is turned off for any reason, both of these aircraft are affected the same way.) In the next set of columns, Altitude Changes, we find the Climb rate of the plane expressed in the number of levels of altitude the plane can gain in one turn. The fraction at the top of the column (-1/3 or -1/2) reflects the loss of speed from climbing. The fraction is read as -1 speed factor for each three levels, or fraction thereof, climbed in a turn. The next column is Zoom Climb which is only used in the Advanced game rules. Then we have Dive rate also expressed

SIZI MODIFIER 0 STEADY SHOT-OP: 34  
 FLEXIBLE GUN TURNING-ADV: ---  
 RELOAD TIME (OP): ---

**SIGHTING VALUES (OP)**

**CREW AND GUN POSITIONS**

STRATEGIC GAME INFORMATION

COMBAT RANGE  
 31 18

CLIMB  
 150

DIPPS  
 100

MANEUVER NO.  
 100

**PLANE TARGET CHARACTERISTICS CHART**

PLANE GUN CHARACTERISTICS CHART

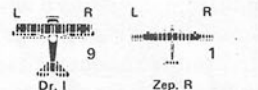
PLANE GUN CHARACTERISTICS CHART

PLANE GUN CHARACTERISTICS CHART

PLANE GUN CHARACTERISTICS CHART

in number of levels that altitude can be decreased in a turn. The fraction at the top of the column this time expresses speed factors gained in diving every 3 levels. The next set of columns is for Basic Maneuvers of which there are three types: Bank, Turn and Slip. Each column is further divided into two sub-columns showing the different rates of performing these maneuvers at either Level Speed or Dive Speed. The numbers in these columns in each case tell how many straight hexes a plane must move before it can perform this maneuver. The actual execution will become clear when you start actually moving the planes.

Finally the Advanced Maneuvers columns list the same type of information as in the Basic Maneuvers, but for Skid,



Half-Loop/Immelmans and Roll maneuvers which are not used in the Basic game. Any numbers in parentheses on the cards usually refer to the performance of a variant aircraft that may have had different capabilities than the original. In the case of the Sopwith Camel, the second number refers to this plane's better maneuver ability to the right than to the left. You now have all of the information needed to fly your planes and execute any movement that you decide on. This will be kept handy for reference during the order writing phase. Before you start writing orders though, flip the data card over and see what it is going to take to shoot these planes down and what guns they have to fight with. For the Basic game all you are

concerned with is the section on Plane Target Characteristics and the Plane Gun Characteristics Chart below it. The first chart tells how many hits each area of the plane can take before it is destroyed. Here is a quick run through:

'W' is how many wing hits a plane can take. A plane also loses one brake factor for each wing hit incurred and suffers the loss of one dive level for each two wing hits incurred. 'S' is for structure hits. 'L' is for fuel hits. When all fuel hits are gone your engine stops. 'T' is for control hits. Each control hit causes the plane to enter an additional straight hex in performing any maneuver. Plane is destroyed when all 'T' hits are marked. The '3' with a circle around it on the next line down indicates that the pilot can take 3 hits before he dies. On the next line down where it says 'Engines', the R stands for radial engine, the 3T means the engine can take 3 hits and it is a 'tractor' engine. Each engine hit causes the loss of one power factor. Under the Plane Gun Characteristics you find '3-3' which represents two guns that can each fire 3 bursts in a turn. The range is 10 (directly below that) hexes in an arc of 60 degrees forward. All other information on this side of the card does not pertain to the Basic Game. Now you are ready to begin play.

"Stachkel's guns spat lead at the Camel as it came up from below and kept climbing off to his right. Just as the double burst started to stitch the tail section of the bi-plane with a series of jagged holes working their way toward the fuselage, the clatter of the German guns stopped. "Damn!" cursed Stachkel. What a time for his guns to jam! The Camel continued to climb and was starting to turn right to come back on top of him for a diving pass so Stachkel wasted no time and started climbing after him in a tight right turn himself. No chance to clear those guns just yet because he couldn't use them if the Camel was behind him anyway. The rest of the sky around him was a blur of whirling and

SIZI MODIFIER 0 STEADY SHOT-OP: 22  
 FLEXIBLE GUN TURNING-ADV: ---  
 RELOAD TIME (OP): 12

**SIGHTING VALUES (OP)**

**CREW AND GUN POSITIONS**

STRATEGIC GAME INFORMATION

COMBAT RANGE  
 21 18

CLIMB  
 150

DIPPS  
 100

MANEUVER NO.  
 100

**PLANE TARGET CHARACTERISTICS CHART**

PLANE GUN CHARACTERISTICS CHART

PLANE GUN CHARACTERISTICS CHART

PLANE GUN CHARACTERISTICS CHART

**45 SOPWITH F.1 Camel** (130 hp Clerge)  
**GREAT BRITAIN**  
 FULL NAME Sopwith Aviation Company F.1 Camel  
 POINT VALUE 20-10-5-2

**PLANE MOVEMENT CHARACTERISTICS CHART**

| ALTITUDE<br>Ft. | SPEED INCREMENTS |               |                |                 |                |                | ALTTITUDE CHANGES |      |               |               |               |               | BASIC MANEUVERS   |               |               |                   |               |               | ADVANCED MANEUVERS |               |               |                   |    |    |
|-----------------|------------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|----|----|
|                 | LEVEL<br>DIVES   | LEVEL<br>DIPS | POWER<br>DIVES | POWER<br>CLIMBS | POWER<br>ROLLS | POWER<br>DIPPS | CLIMB<br>RATE     | SLIP | BANK<br>LEVEL | TURN<br>LEVEL | SLIP<br>LEVEL | SKID<br>LEVEL | SHOULDER<br>LEVEL | SLIP<br>LEVEL | SKID<br>LEVEL | SHOULDER<br>LEVEL | SLIP<br>LEVEL | SKID<br>LEVEL | SHOULDER<br>LEVEL  | SLIP<br>LEVEL | SKID<br>LEVEL | SHOULDER<br>LEVEL |    |    |
| 1-100           | 1.2              | 1.4           | 2.4            | 2.7             | 2.8            | 2.9            | 3.0               | +3   | 15            | 100           | 111           | 211           | 321               | 1             | 2             | 5                 | 3             | 2             | 5                  | 3             | 2             | 21                | 21 | 21 |
| 101-200         | 1.2              | 1.4           | 2.4            | 2.7             | 2.8            | 2.9            | 3.0               | +3   | 15            | 100           | 111           | 211           | 321               | 1             | 2             | 5                 | 3             | 2             | 5                  | 3             | 2             | 21                | 21 | 21 |
| 201-300         | 1.2              | 1.4           | 2.4            | 2.7             | 2.8            | 2.9            | 3.0               | +3   | 15            | 100           | 111           | 211           | 321               | 1             | 2             | 5                 | 3             | 2             | 5                  | 3             | 2             | 21                | 21 | 21 |
| 301-400         | 1.2              | 1.4           | 2.4            | 2.7             | 2.8            | 2.9            | 3.0               | +4   | 18            | 100           | 111           | 211           | 321               | 1             | 2             | 5                 | 3             | 2             | 5                  | 3             | 2             | 21                | 21 | 21 |
| 401-500         | 1.2              | 1.4           | 2.4            | 2.7             | 2.8            | 2.9            | 3.0               | +4   | 17            | 100           | 111           | 211           | 321               | 1             | 2             | 5                 | 3             | 2             | 5                  | 3             | 2             | 21                | 21 | 21 |
| 501-600         | 1.2              | 1.4           | 2.4            | 2.7             | 2.8            | 2.9            | 3.0               | +4   | 18            | 100           | 111           | 211           | 321               | 1             | 2             | 5                 | 3             | 2             | 5                  | 3             | 2             | 21                | 21 | 21 |
| 601-700         | 1.2              | 1.4           | 2.4            | 2.7             | 2.8            | 2.9            | 3.0               | +4   | 18            | 100           | 111           | 211           | 321               | 1             | 2             | 5                 | 3             | 2             | 5                  | 3             | 2             | 21                | 21 | 21 |
| 701-800         | 1.2              | 1.4           | 2.4            | 2.7             | 2.8            | 2.9            | 3.0               | +4   | 18            | 100           | 111           | 211           | 321               | 1             | 2             | 5                 | 3             | 2             | 5                  | 3             | 2             | 21                | 21 | 21 |
| 801-900         | 1.2              | 1.4           | 2.4            | 2.7             | 2.8            | 2.9            | 3.0               | +4   | 18            | 100           | 111           | 211           | 321               | 1             | 2             | 5                 | 3             | 2             | 5                  | 3             | 2             | 21                | 21 | 21 |
| 901-1000        | 1.2              | 1.4           | 2.4            | 2.7             | 2.8            | 2.9            | 3.0               | +4   | 18            | 100           | 111           | 211           | 321               | 1             | 2             | 5                 | 3             | 2             | 5                  | 3             | 2             | 21                | 21 | 21 |

twisting shapes spitting death and making an awful racket that Stachkel knew was the result of a dozen other battles going on similar to the one he shared with the Camel. He had no time to concentrate on any of his other surroundings except to check for other planes endangering him. The Camel he was after had outclimbed his mates, though, and was more isolated than the rest so Stachkel could concentrate on his private duel. Shortly, the new British pilot levelled out and started to twist to the left. Stachkel had a couple of precious seconds to clear his guns as the Camel veered left and came across his field of vision again. Stachkel was able to get off one quick burst that found its home in the control lines of the Camel, which immediately started to lose altitude as it continued off to the left. But the German's guns had jammed again! Stachkel cursed again as he put the triplane into a hard left bank after the Camel and began a diving slip to go after his already damaged prey. If he could only stay with him long enough to clear his guns for another shot, he knew he would have his fourth kill. Stachkel was confident that he was fighting a new British pilot that so far had not used the advantage of his own plane to turn the

tables on him. He only just barely perceived a rapidly enlarging shape closing on him from his own left rear before it was too late."

The sequence of play for the basic game is simply this: Order Plot Phase, New Initial Plot Phase, Plotted Order Execution (Movement) Phase, and Gunfire Phase. To understand how plotting is done go to the Wings Command Sheet with the example of Wilhelm Stachekl and his Dr.1 shown. The information in the top part of the sheet is simply that copied off of the back of the aircraft data card. The columns below this section are where movement is actually plotted each turn. An explanation of the columns is very simple. Initial Speed is the speed that the aircraft is going at the beginning of the turn. Initial Altitude is the beginning height for that turn and Initial Bank is the attitude that the plane is in with respect to the ground. (Banked left, level or right and either rightside up or upside down.) These, of course, may change during the course of the turn, in which case they will be adjusted before beginning the next turn. Following this information is a set of ten Impulse Columns. These boxes are used for writing of movement on a hex by hex basis. The speed of the plane will determine how

many boxes are used each turn. (i.e., a plane moving at a speed of 5 is entitled to and must expend five impulse boxes worth of movement in that turn). The next column over is the Speed Change column where any power or braking factors being applied this turn are to be noted. The effects of these will not take place the next turn, though. The Altitude Change column is for keeping track of how many levels have been climbed or divided in that turn. This will, of course, affect the Initial Altitude for next turn.

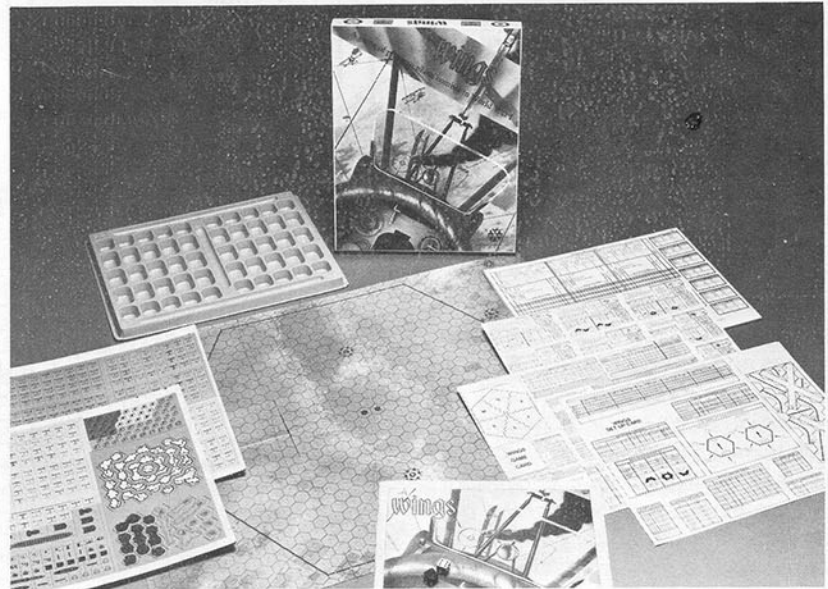
You can now concentrate on what to write for movement in the Impulse Column boxes to accurately construct your moves. First off, a '1' in a box stands for one hex moved straight ahead. A 'BR' or 'BL' is a Bank Right or Bank Left maneuver. Keep in mind that if the plane is already banked right and we bank left, that returns it to the level position. A second bank left order would then be needed to bring the plane into a left bank attitude. The importance of banking is to allow turns in that direction. So, in order to do a right turn, the plane must first be in a right bank, and so on. Also, in order to slip right or left the plane must be in a right or left bank, respectively. The 'TR' or 'TL' orders represent the hex in which the turn is actually made. These are all

## WINGS is the definitive WWI tactical air game!

Only moments before, Horst had a Spad 7 in his sights, now it was he, spinning helplessly to the earth. He could feel the pressure exerted by the dive and could hear and feel the wings tearing. At the last moment he brought the nose of the plane up. Quickly Horst surveyed the damage and decided to fight another day. As he nursed his Albatros home he could hear the steady rat-tat-tat of combat behind and above him. Occasionally he would see a trail of smoke and a plane fall to earth.

**Wings** is the ultimate in World War One air combat, and can be played at all levels of complexity. The strengths and weaknesses of German, French, British, Italian and Austro-Hungarian planes are accurately and playably duplicated on fifty data cards that display all information needed to maneuver and fire. The game includes three 21" by 9" geomorphic map sections, two large sheets of die cut unit counters, a complete rulesbook with scenarios and features that allow almost any air action from World War One, an order sheet pad, game table cards, two dice, and a plastic storage tray. Complexity Levels: 1, 2, 3 and 4.

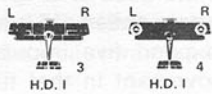
**Wings** ..... 29.00



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turns of one hexside (60 degrees). The 'SR' or 'SL' orders stand for Slip Right or Slip Left and are written in the appropriate box for the hex in which they will actually be executed. The last notation is the '-' that precedes some of these maneuvers. The '-' is executed by moving the plane forward one hex. In that respect it is the same as a '1' order except that it indicates the plane is in a maneuver instead of simply moving straight. The number of dashes that must precede a maneuver is the number found on the front of the plane data card under that type of maneuver and speed listing. If you will remember, this number may be different depending on whether the plane is going level speed or dive speed. (Maneuvers will take longer to do at high speed.) If the number is '0', then the maneuver can simply be written without any dashes preceding it. Once a maneuver has been started, it must be completed, there is no way to abort or change it. Maneuvers may overlap into the following turn (as on turns 4 and 10 in the example) but a plane may not fire if it is in a maneuver at the end of a turn (again as in turns 4 and 10). Other than those restrictions, each pilot then constructs his move as to where he wants to go and writes it out box by box in the Order Plot Phase. He then writes in the new initial speed, altitude and banking attitude he will be in at the beginning of the next turn. He determines these by the results of his present move taking into account the changes he is making. This is known as the New Initials Plotting Phase. Then both sides are ready to actually carry out their moves and resolve gunfire, if there is any.

"But the pilot of the second Camel had not anticipated Stachkel's next move. The German dipped down and slipped to the left to maintain good position on his primary target. The pilot of the second Camel had no time to try and draw him off anyway as he had his own fight in progress with Wilhelm's wingman, Franz. All of them were playing their own part in the massive deadly concert in the sky. Meanwhile, Wilhelm noticed the Camel recovering from his loss of control below him and off to the left. He just had time to level off and clear his jammed guns once again before the British novice pilot realized that he wasn't yet out of danger.

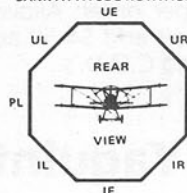
The Camel quickly veered and turned left in a shallow dive to head for home. But Wilhelm could tell that it wasn't going to be quick enough. He put the little Fokker into a dive and turned left himself, confident that he could stay with the Camel in a left hand turn with no problem. This British pilot had not learned the advantages of his plane in turning to the right and Wilhelm was going to make sure that he never would have a chance to. As he continued in his dive after the Camel he checked his guns one last time and lined up his target as carefully as he could as he dove down on top of the Camel. Without hesitation, he squeezed the trigger."

All movement is now done simultaneously. Then, all pilots check to see if they have targets in range that they can bring their guns to bear on. A fixed gun typical of most fighter planes that is front mounted has an arc of fire of 60 degrees. Other guns, depending on their mountings, may fire in other directions.

FOKKER DR.1

|                                  |         |     |    |    |    |   |   |   |        |
|----------------------------------|---------|-----|----|----|----|---|---|---|--------|
| NAME: WILHELM STACHKEL ID. NO. 4 |         |     |    |    |    |   |   |   |        |
| W                                | 5       | S   | 5  | L  | 2  | T | 3 |   |        |
| C                                | 1(3)    | 2   | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6 | 7 | 8 |        |
| E                                | R E 3 T |     |    | E  | E  |   |   |   |        |
| G                                | 3       | 3   |    |    |    |   |   |   |        |
| A                                | 28      | 28  |    |    |    |   |   |   |        |
| LOAD:                            |         |     |    |    |    |   |   |   |        |
| INITIAL HEX:                     |         |     |    |    |    |   |   |   |        |
| INITIAL DIRECTION:               |         |     |    |    |    |   |   |   |        |
| IMPULSE COLUMNS                  |         |     |    |    |    |   |   |   |        |
|                                  | 1       | 2   | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 10   |
| 1                                | 4       | 320 | UR |    |    |   |   |   | P 2    |
| 2                                | 4       | 322 | UR | BR |    |   |   |   | P 1    |
| 3                                | 5       | 322 | UR |    | TR |   |   |   | P 1    |
| 4                                | 5       | 322 | UR |    | TR |   |   |   | 2P C 2 |
| 5                                | 5       | 324 | UR | TR |    |   |   |   | P 1    |
| 6                                | 5       | 324 | UR | BL | BL |   |   |   | D 3    |
| 7                                | 5       | 321 | UL |    |    |   |   |   |        |
| 8                                | 5       | 321 | UL |    | TL |   |   |   | P D 6  |
| 9                                | 7       | 315 | UL |    | TL |   |   |   | B D 6  |
| 10                               | 7       | 309 | UL | BR | BR |   |   |   | 2P 1   |
| 11                               | 5       | 309 | UR | TR |    |   |   |   |        |
| 12                               |         |     |    |    |    |   |   |   |        |
| 13                               |         |     |    |    |    |   |   |   |        |
| 14                               |         |     |    |    |    |   |   |   |        |
| 15                               |         |     |    |    |    |   |   |   |        |
| 16                               |         |     |    |    |    |   |   |   |        |
| 17                               |         |     |    |    |    |   |   |   |        |
| 18                               |         |     |    |    |    |   |   |   |        |
| 19                               |         |     |    |    |    |   |   |   |        |
| 20                               |         |     |    |    |    |   |   |   |        |

BANK ATTITUDE NOTATIONS DIAGRAM



Normal Climb Rate is reduced by "1" if not in UE Bank. No Climb Allowed if in Perpendicular Bank for entire Turn.

Bank Left: BL  
Bank Right: BR  
Slip Left: SL  
Slip Right: SR  
Spin: SP  
Straight Ahead: 1  
Turn Left: TL  
Turn Right: TR  
Making Maneuver: -

All fire is now designated and results are determined. All gunfire is also considered simultaneous. The pilot with a target now decides how many bursts he will fire from each gun. The more bursts fired, the greater the damage may be, but you also run a higher risk of jamming your guns by putting them under the higher strain of continuous fire. (Gun jamming is an optional rule but is illustrated here to explain the example being described.) We go to the gun jamming table and cross index the number of bursts being fired with the die roll. Two six sided dice are used for Wings, a red die and a white die. They are both rolled and read off, using the red die number as the 'tens' column and the white die number as the 'ones' column, yielding results of between "11" and "66" for the charts. Anytime a modifier applies to a die roll, it is either added to or subtracted from the red die total. As an example, if 3 bursts are fired from each gun and a '57' is rolled for the first gun, it will fire one burst and then jam. If the second gun rolls a '25' it will not jam and thus get out 3 full bursts. So we have a total of 4 bursts being fired. We must then check on the Range Finder Chart to see if the difference in the altitude between firing plane and target plane will increase the firing range. At a range of 4 hexes (across the top of the chart) and with an altitude difference between planes of 12 levels we see that the actual range be-

RANGE FINDER CHART

| ALT. DIFF. | HEX RANGE |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|------------|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|            | 0         | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 1-5        | 1         | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 6-10       | 2         | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 11-15      | 3         | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 16-20      | 4         | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 21-25      | 5         | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 26-30      | 6         | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 31-35      | 7         | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 36-40      | 8         | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 41-45      | 9         | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 46-50      | 10        | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 51-55      | 11        | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 56-60      | 12        | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 61-65      | 13        | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 66-70      | 14        | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 71-75      | 15        | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 76-80      | 16        | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |



GUN JAMMING TABLES (OP)

| INTENDED BURSTS PER GUN | BURSTS BEFORE JAM | DICE ROLL  |
|-------------------------|-------------------|------------|
|                         |                   |            |
| 1                       | 0                 | 65+        |
|                         | 1                 | 63-64      |
|                         | No Jam            | 62 or less |
| 2                       | 0                 | 64+        |
|                         | 1                 | 62-63      |
|                         | 2                 | 55-61      |
| 3                       | 0                 | 62+        |
|                         | 1                 | 55-61      |
|                         | 2                 | 52-54      |
| 4                       | 0                 | 43-51      |
|                         | 1                 | 42 or less |
|                         | No Jam            | 11-16      |

MODIFIERS:

±1: In Dive Speed; Using Incendary;  
 In Inverted Bank; Making Advanced Maneuver; or Altitude  $\leq 6000$ .  
 ±3: Experienced; or Ground or Ship.

TARGET IDENTIFICATION TABLES (OP)

| DICE ROLL | TYPE GUN FIRING |           |         |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------|---------|
|           | FIXED AIR       | FLEX. AIR | GROUND  |
| 11-46     | Target          | Target    | Target  |
| 51-56     | Target          | Target    | Nearest |
| 61-63     | Target          | Nearest   | Nearest |
| 64-66     | Nearest         | Nearest   | Nearest |

tween planes is '5' hexes. We now go to the Hit Table Modifiers and the Deflection Modifier Chart (again, not part of the Basic Game but being used to better illustrate complete firing procedures.)

| HIT TABLE MODIFIERS                      |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| Size Modifier:                           | On target's Data Card      |
| Firing while Inverted:                   | -4                         |
| Firing while Perpendicular:              | -2                         |
| Per firing Crew hit:                     | -2/each                    |
| (A) Target in Spin:                      | -4                         |
| (A) Target in Slip, Skull-in Roll:       | -2                         |
| (A) Firing in Spin:                      | -8                         |
| (A) Firing in Slip or Advanced Maneuver: | -6                         |
| (A) Firing in Dive/Slope:                | -2                         |
| (OP) Steady Shot:                        | +3                         |
| (OP) Firing into Sun:                    | -6                         |
| (OP) Inexperienced Firing:               | -1 to -3                   |
| (OP) "Ace" firing:                       | +15 "rolls"                |
| DEFLECTION MODIFIER CHART (ADV)          |                            |
| TARGET UNIT CLOCK POSITION               | FIRING UNIT CLOCK POSITION |
| 12                                       | -4                         |
| 2 or 10                                  | -2                         |
| 4 or 8                                   | 0                          |
| (Sides) 6                                | +3                         |
| Up                                       | -1                         |
| Down                                     | +1                         |

Assuming a size modifier of 'zero' on the target and a head on pass (meaning both target and firing plane in the 12 o'clock positions) we get a deflection modifier of '-4' which will make this a tougher target to hit than if we approached from a better angle. We now take this number to the modifier chart to see what kind of effect it will have on our Hit Tables to be used. By again cross indexing our '-4' modifier along the top of the chart with our 4 bursts fired along the right hand side of the chart we come up with the number '2'. This is a '-2' because our modifier was minus to begin with. Finally, we take this minus 2 to the Gunnery Tables under FIXED AIR guns. It will be subtracted from the number we get by cross indexing the range (5 hexes) with the number of bursts fired (4). The number we get originally is '7' but then we subtract the 2 from the modifier chart to end up with a '5'. This is the hit table we will use to determine damage on the opponent. All of this may seem like a long and drawn out process as you sit there reading it over for the first time. But after using the table just a couple of times, it does become second nature. There is very little die rolling to get this far and the charts are all grouped together on the same card for easy access. It seems like a wealth of numbers and letters are displayed on the card, but as you use them a couple of times it becomes routine enough that they no longer tend to confuse you, but they add to the variations that can occur in the course of a battle. The charts contain enough information and are so well calculated and balanced as to realistically portray the skill of the player in maneuvering his aircraft for the best possible shot. The tactics that were actually used in WWI air combat are very well portrayed in the game tables and the results they give.

*"Stachkel was rewarded with a steady stream of bullets that laced the upper wing surfaces with jagged holes and continued on down into the engine of the staggering Camel, which promptly started gouting black smoke and quit. The Camel started going down in a spin of rapidly increasing velocity as the pilot tried to regain enough control to try for a crash landing. There wasn't a good chance he'd make it with the shape his plane was in, but then he really didn't have much choice without a parachute. As Stachkel watched him go down he felt the same thrill as when he scored his first kill a month ago. He banked back to the right and headed back to his comrades who were even now breaking off the action and, fewer in numbers, heading for home. He did not like killing, or war for that matter, but he was inexplicably drawn to this death defying dueling in the air. It was the ultimate game of wit and experience and he was glad that he had WINGS."*



The game continues like this until victory conditions or a time limit are met.

In looking back over my explanation of the basic game it may seem as if *Wings* is a very complex system that takes many things into account about WWI air combat. This is true. What is also true, luckily, is that *Wings* is still a

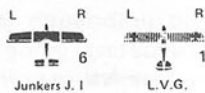


highly playable game due to the way everything meshes together to make a coherent system. My very brief summary of the rules for the Basic Game do not do the system justice. The rules booklet is the best teacher for understanding the game system and how each phase works. Many people seem to have had problems with Yaquinto rules in the past. (That criticism continues to crop up in reviews of their games.) Personally, I don't feel that their rules have been the best in terms of comprehension, nor do I think they have been the best in terms of comprehension, nor do I think they have been the worst. Most Yaquinto rules, and *Wings* in particular, cover extremely tactical situations in a realistic manner. The explanation required to convey rules for the tactical aspects of a battle such as these portray must be very exacting. The best example of this is to consider the difference between a set of miniatures rules and a typical operational boardgame rulebook. When looked at in this light, by anyone who is familiar with most sets of miniatures rules, the rules to *Wings*, and several other Yaquinto games as well, stand up very favorably. Simply stated, I believe that in most cases rules need to be more precise and complete when simulating any type of warfare on the tactical level. In that respect, *Wings* is a bit more complex than the 'average' boardgame and will

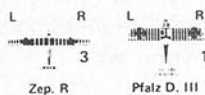
We are now ready for the final step in the firing phase which is to resolve damage on the Hit Tables. In our previous example we ended up with our shot on Hit Table '5'. The two dice are rolled and read off as a two digit number. Let's say we rolled a '22'. Reading 22 across from the left over to hit table '5' along the top we end up with the cryptic letters 'EGT'. They stand for 'Engine', 'Gun' and 'Controls' respectively and indicate that we have scored one hit on each of these areas of the target. The player with the target plane then checks off these hits on his command sheet and absorbs any affects that these may have in reducing his planes' capabilities. If the plane is destroyed it is removed at the end of the firing phase. All players resolve fire in a similar manner and when all results have been taken, play reverts to the Order Plot Phase for the next turn.

require a greater commitment to learning how to play. But rest assured that you will be well rewarded for your time spent.

In addition to the Basic Game there are five more pages in the rulebook to cover the Advanced Game. Topic headings include: Advanced Game Sequence of Play, Advanced Maneuvers, Skids, Half-Loops, Immelmann and Barrell Roll Maneuvers, Snap Maneuvers, Zoom Climbs, Inverted Movement, Advanced Gunfire, Fixed Guns, Flexible Guns, Slide Guns, Cannons, Collisions, Advanced Damage Effects, Passing Out, Dual Controls, Crash Landings and Plane Variants to name most, but not all, of the categories covered. Players will want to familiarize themselves with the Basic Game first and then start adding



the Advanced Rules as they feel comfortable with them. Then they can start easing into the Optional Rules as they see fit. The Optional Rules cover the next 15 pages of the rulebook (more than the Basic and Advanced Rules combined) and allow you to simulate every aspect of the War in the Air that you can dream of. Topic headings here include: Surface Terrain, Clouds, The Sun, Sighting Rules, Loaded Planes, Exceeding Plane Strength Limits, Landings and Take-Offs, Spin Recovery Prior to mid-1916, Gliding to Safety, Gun Jamming, Incendiary Ammunition, Steady Shots, Converged Shots, Strafing, Bank and Nose Attitudes effects, Gun Play Arcs, Infantry Units, Balloons, Zeppelins, Ships, Vehicles, Bombs, Torpedoes, Rockets, Smoke Candles, Fire Damage, Armored Planes, Bailing Out, Crew Quality, Multi-Player Rules for an umpired Game, Solitaire Rules, and



Aerial Photography, again to name most, but not all, of the headings for rules options. One that may have caught your eye is the Solitaire Rules section. This mainly deals with 'Balloon Busting' Missions and scenarios are provided. It is a



good way to practice your flying and maneuvering capabilities in different aircraft. These missions are by no means easy, either, as many balloons come either well armed themselves or with a quantity of ground support AA that must be successfully gone through to reach the target.

The scenarios cover a full eight pages and give 18 scenarios, many of which are historical engagements or based on actual battles. There are solitaire versions of many of them also. The scenarios fall into several different categories such as; Gasbags, Dogfights, Missions and Low Level. There is also a section describing how to design your own scenarios.

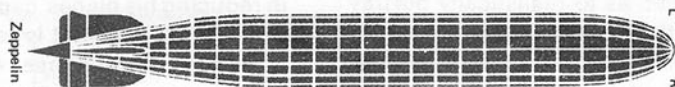
The *Wings* rulebook isn't through yet, though. There are additional rules included for two other versions of *Wings*, one at each end of the spectrum of complexity. For a fast and simple game with lots of planes there is the Mass Game that is explained in 3 pages and



only uses about 7 numbers to define each planes characteristics. A six player game can easily have 72 or more planes involved and take only a couple of hours to complete. It is great for introducing younger players and non-wargamers, as well as providing a simple diversion for the hardcore *Wings* pilot. For those who can't get enough there is the Duel Game. This version uses all of the rules of *Wings* from the Basic, Advanced and Optional rules and breaks down the turn sequence into individual impulses. This is definitely more simulation than game and pilots should limit themselves to flying a single plane as opposed to the normal of two or three in other versions. It is a real challenge for the experienced

pilot, and a single mistake may be fatal when playing an equal opponent.

To summarize what *Wings* really is we keep coming back to that word: Definitive. Despite all of the complexity that is factored and contained in the charts, *Wings* remains playable. Two or four people can sit down and play a complete game in 3 or 4 hours with each of them flying 2 or 3 aircraft. The rules do not all have to be digested at once, and may need a second reading in some cases for clarity, but they are all there. A typical game may refer to the body of the rules once or twice, with all remaining information being gleaned from the charts. The charts themselves contain the bulk of the game system and are highly functional in actual play. The counters contain overhead views of the aircraft and while not really beautiful in themselves, they get the job done. The data cards for the planes are another wonder of completeness and are very easy to use, although it would have been nice had they been larger. The full color map-board with a view of the terrain below is also very nice and the only complaint here is in multi-player games with a lot of planes (16 or more) it begins to get overly cramped for flying space. The Command Sheets are well set up for clear orders writing with plenty of space, and the sheer quantity provided with the game is very impressive. The only other drawback to *Wings* may be the \$29.00 price tag to which many people I know will object. If you asked me if *Wings* is worth it I would have to say yes; I know I have gotten much more than \$29.00 worth of enjoyment from it no matter how you measure it. On the other hand, I know that I have bought games for \$3.00 that have been a total waste of money. Obviously if you don't play it, it isn't worth a plugged nickle. However, *Wings* would make a valuable addition to any gamer's library or collection and I am sure it is a worthwhile investment. In the meantime, I will keep playing *Wings* and anxiously await the Expansion kit (already planned) to be published with 50 more data cards, more counters, more scenarios and a Strategic Campaign Game as well.



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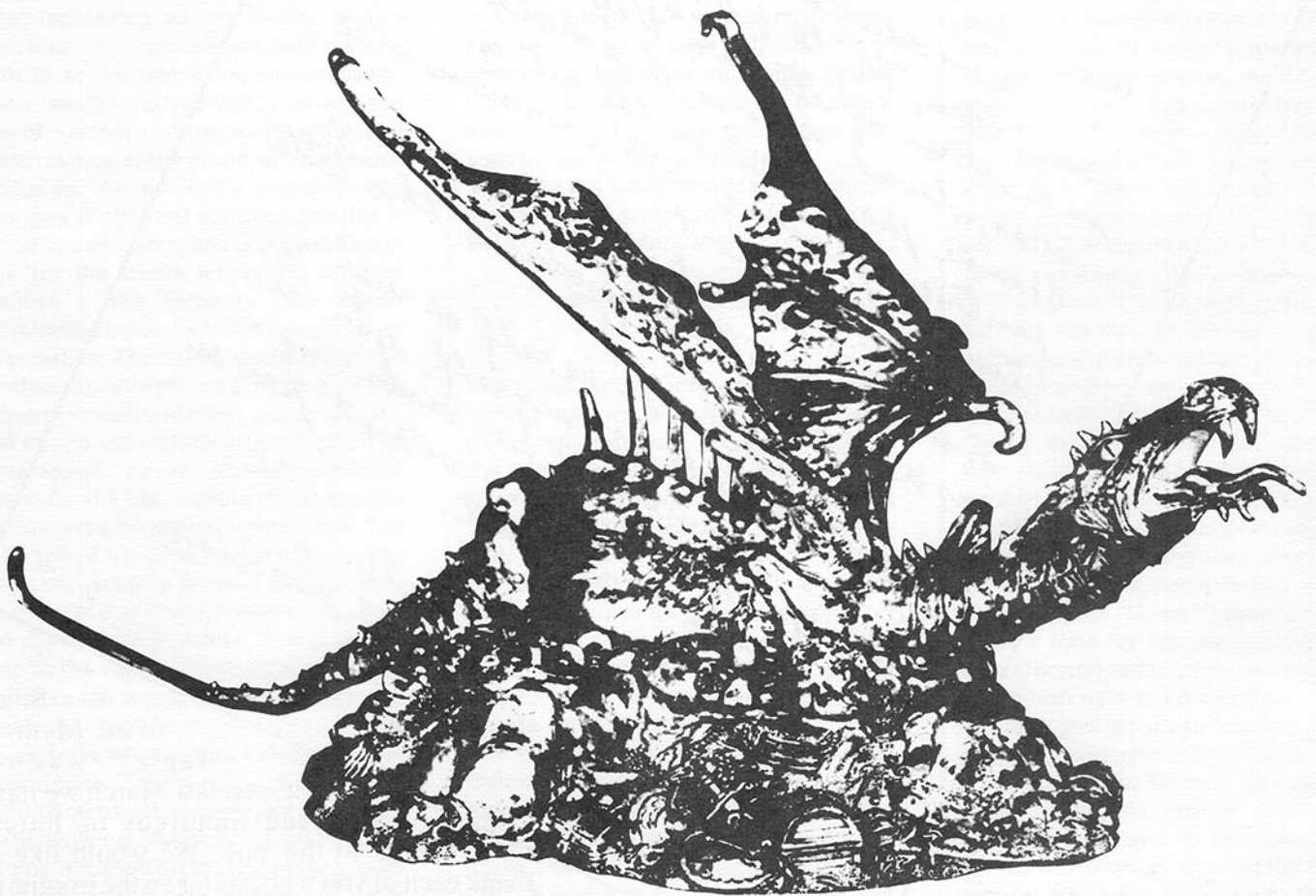


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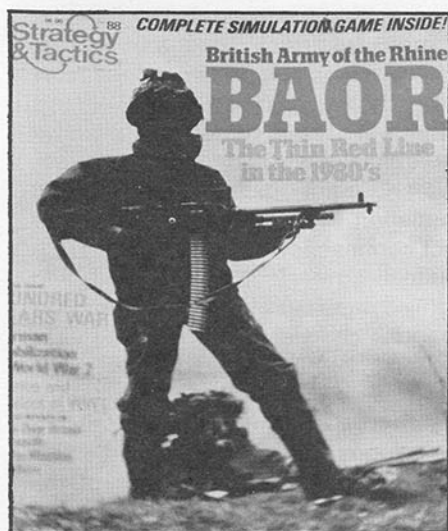
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## BAOR<sup>®</sup> Another Headache for NATO

by John Prados

The British Army of the Rhine (BAOR) is today the major field force of the British Army. As such it occupies an important sector of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) defenses in northern Germany. Now BAOR<sup>®</sup> is the title and subject of the latest entry in Simulations Publications' "Central Front" game series which will eventually cover all of NATO Europe at a larger scale than their mammoth NEXTWAR.<sup>®</sup> BAOR is the issue game in *Strategy & Tactics* number 88 and it is the swan song of SPI designer Charles T. Kamps who has recently been let go.

The game itself is up to the usual Simulations Publications standards of presentation. It consists of a four-color 22 x 34" game map, 400 counters representing British, West German, Belgian, and Soviet forces; a set of exclusive rules for BAOR, and a set of "standard" rules for the Central Front series. The "standard" rules are worth comment at the outset. Here SPI is introducing revised and updated rules for the whole series and there are a number of new wrinkles and provisions for fans of HOF GAP<sup>®</sup> and Vth CORPS<sup>®</sup>, the previous games in the Central Front series.

One convenience feature that was previously missing in the series standard rules is the addition of a rules outline which assists in locating rules provisions for references. Substantively, there are several new features. In this system "friction points" determine when units are eliminated in the game and the new standard rules provide different "friction point" levels that will apply for company, battalion, and regiment-sized units. In combat the old provision for "overrun" attacks has been replaced by a new category of "mobile operations" which are, however, allowed only against defenders in flat or broken terrain. Artillery units are now being given the new mission of firing "counterbattery" fire. Electronic Warfare has been raised to the level of a standard rule rather than being relegated to the game "exclusive" rules. The same thing is true with airmobile and airborne operations. Probably the most significant changes in the new rules set have to do with the increased specification of rules dealing with combat support functions — this second edition contains separate rules not only for the points mentioned but also for airpower and assault helicopters which were previously combined in the artillery rules. The extra specification means greater rules length, of course, and the standard rules have now grown in length by fifty per cent to a total of twelve pages.

Like the earlier games BAOR plays well with movement and combat integrated for each unit or stack and a (theoretical) limitless number of player-phases

during each game turn. This movement/combat system, an adaptation of that in Jim Dunningan's NEXT WAR<sup>®</sup>, works very nicely with the larger scale of the Central Front series. There is one physical bother for players who want to match up the new BAOR with the older games: the mapboard instructs the player to join the map with that of *Vth Corps* by matching two hexes of the city of Kassel; however, Kassel is not marked on *Vth Corps*. The hexes meant are marked there as Fuldabrock (3942) and Cohfelden (3943). A full-length game of BAOR (the "Thin Red Line" scenario), SPI tells us with dedication to truth-in-gaming, will take some 15 hours to play. My experience indicates that this is correct.

There was a time in the early 1970's when the modern-period games that Simulations Publications brought out on NATO-Warsaw Pact confrontations all seemed to be unfairly biased in favor of NATO forces. My difficulties with the Central Front series still revolve around bias but this time the shoe is on the other foot. Granted, Warsaw Pact forces have many divisions and many more tanks and aircraft than NATO; Central Front, and BAOR especially, make it look as if the Pact can do no wrong. A few examples may help to clarify this objection.

For many years the most important doctrinal debate within NATO has focused upon whether the alliance should adopt a strategy of "forward defense" or one of "mobile defense." The former is favored by the West Germans, who understandably do not wish to give up

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their country in order to provide maneuver space. Many other military authorities favor "mobile defense" on the grounds that such an approach would make the best use of NATO's advantages in the tactical initiative of troops and qualitatively sophisticated armament. In *BAOR*, however, Soviet combat factors for mobile combat are uniformly the highest provided for each unit while NATO ones, with a few exceptions, are the lowest.

Along similar lines is the case of the Soviet paratroop division included in *BAOR*. Here, too, the division's units can use their highest factors in "mobile combat." The implicit assumption is that the Soviets can land an airborne division virtually without equipment losses and, moreover, *supply it at the high scales of ammunition and POL required for mobile operations through an airhead* while at the same time making further air landings of conventional forces at the same airhead!

Then, there is the case of the various rules designed to simulate the tactical rigidity of Warsaw Pact organization and doctrine. The "March Order" rule makes for cute rules diagrams but is meaningless once the Soviet player has deployed his units onto the map. "March Order" would have meaning only if it applied throughout the game and obliged the Soviet player to maintain close integrity within each of his divisions. The "exclusive" rule in *BAOR* that has to do with advance after combat is of minimal importance.

What about chemical warfare? The British Army is not generally thought to possess an arsenal of *offensive* chemical weapons but its defense against CBW use is usually conceded to be the best in NATO. In *BAOR*, however, the Soviet player gets just as much of an advantage using chemicals against the British (and West Germans who also have very good CBW defenses) as against the Americans in the other Central Front games. Moreover, CBW use is "cost-free" in these games. Whereas the use of chemicals would oblige both offense and defense to utilize protective gear which could reduce combat effectiveness by as much as 60%, in *BAOR* Soviet units making use of chemicals still retain their full allotment of twelve "operations points" allowing them to conduct movement and combat.

Not to be forgotten is the question of nuclear weapons. Under the rubric of

"flexible response" the use of tactical nuclear weapons has been at the center of NATO doctrine since 1968. The new Central Front standard rules provide a phase in the game turn to resolve nuclear weapons use but are completely silent on how such weapons are delivered, when and by whom. The *BAOR* exclusive rules also say nothing about what is a major NATO capability. The earlier games provide for nuclear weapons only as an "optional" rule and even then the weapons are virtually "cost-free" as well. In Central Front nuclear *weapons effects do not persist past the turn of firing!* In a game with turns representing twelve hours each, such an approach is laughable and hardly deserves to be called simulation. No doubt both NATO and Pact commanders would be very gratified to discover from SPI that exotic and highly dangerous chemical and nuclear weapons can be used with such ease and to such military advantage!

In a recent *Moves* article Chuck Kamps noted the difficulty of finding information on weapons effects, orders of battle, and relative capabilities for games of the modern period. There is, however, plenty that is publicly known about the persistence both of chemical agents and radiological byproducts. There is much that is unknown, by contrast, about relative capabilities for electronic warfare (which are still disputed) but here, too, *BAOR* gives a decisive superiority to the Soviets despite the (known) generally more advanced state of Western electronic technology. While senior officials like Frank Carlucci at the Pentagon worry that the latest advances in Soviet military technology are being based on American (and Western) technology, SPI tells us in *BAOR* that the Soviets have a 2-1 advantage in *electronic warfare*.

Simulations Publications seems to have fallen victim to the hysterical views of some in the West that everything about Soviet military power is better than everything about our own. This view is just as unlikely to be true as the early 1970's bias in favor of NATO. More research about weapons effects and better modeling of tactical flexibility versus operational rigidity is necessary to make *BAOR* a truly balanced game. Unfortunately, once again, the work has to be done by the gamer at home instead of by the designer and his publisher. Would that it were not so.

dg.

# RAID ON IRAN

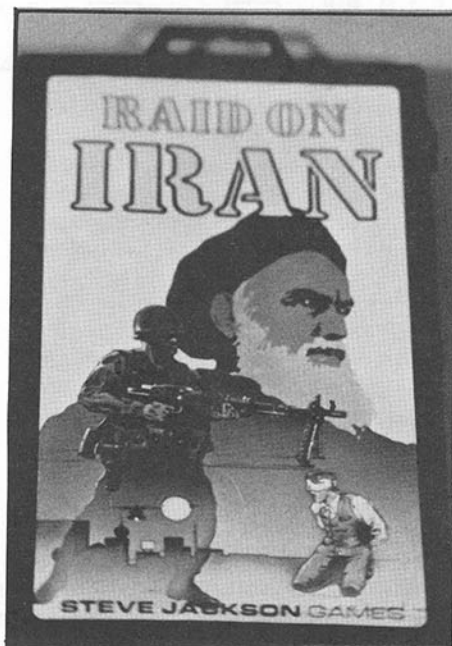
by Mark Schumann

Don't be fooled by the price tag or the plastic zip-lock bag. Steve Jackson's RAID ON IRAN® is one of the best gaming values you can find today and only costs three dollars. The low price is due not to shoddy quality, but to cost-cutting measures such as printing the map, rules, and CRT on one sheet of paper; the purchaser is expected to cut on the dotted lines. The counters (over 100 of them) are also printed on one piece of cardboard. This leaves the players cutting paper and cardboard for a while, but it is certainly preferable to paying extra for a rules booklet or die-cut counters.

Once you get past all the scissors work, *Raid On Iran* is one really fine wargame. It simulates what *might* have happened if the American mission to rescue the hostages had gone into Tehran. The American player is provided with 90 commando troops and two mortars, as well as ten explosive charges (for blasting through the wall of the embassy compound). The Iranian player is given 120 "students," or militants of the Khomeini regime, to guard 50 hostages, represented by "hostage counters." Interesting variations in play are provided by Rule 2.3, "Special Advantages," in which each player is allowed to choose one from five of these bonuses, ranging from a .50 caliber machine gun for the U.S. to booby-trapped woods for Iran. Neither player knows which advantage the other has taken until it actually comes into play (for example: "By the way, American Devil Carter, you just lost six commandos in a land mine explosion . . . Praised be Allah!")

Since the attack was to be carried out in the wee small hours of the morning, the American player is given the advantage of surprise over the Iranians. He is able to get into the embassy compound by going over the walls, faking his way around them, or by blasting through them. If he fails to take advantage of his surprise, the American will be in trouble. And there's your game balance — time is on the Iranian's side. Combat rules are

## REVIEW



comprehensive, including both close and ranged combat, quiet attacks, and special weapons. There are rules covering the entrance of reinforcements and Iranian mobs, and, of course, the infamous helicopters.

Victory conditions are quite well balanced, with recovery of hostages the primary factor in the scoring. Interestingly enough, the Iranians are little better off killing the hostages than letting the Americans rescue them; this is because the dead hostages would be seen as martyrs by the American people and world opinion.

On the back of the map sheet (not such a good place for it, but what do you want for the price?) is a quick alternate scenario in which the Imam himself is the target of a kidnapping attempt, to be exchanged for the hostages at some later date. The balance here is extremely precarious at best, and play does tend to get a bit mechanical, but then again, it never was meant to be a truly serious and realistic simulation. The alternate scenario is just a change of pace and a halfway decent solitaire game.

All things considered, *Raid On Iran* is a great game, and not just a great game for the money. Buy it.

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# SAVING UP THE GOOD GAMES

© by John Prados

Each year at about ORIGINS time, the gaming community gets all agog at the prospect of the new games that will be released by all and sundry. The same thing happens to a lesser degree at Christmas. But what about, and especially what about, the times in between? Ever notice that in the spring and the fall, the months *before* ORIGINS and before Christmas, major new games are few and far between? BOARDGAME TALK recently encountered an irate gamer in an area game store who claims he has literally been unable to acquire any interesting new historical games for several months. His complaint forms the topic for this month's installment.

There are two sets of reasons for the present problems. One has to do with design work and production of games and with difficulties in the shops and low productivity at Simulations Publications, Avalon Hill, and other major houses. Game gossip is interesting if ephemeral, today's topic is the other set of reasons for the "pre-ORIGINS" problem. These are the so-called "market forces."

It used to be that the design, development, and production of wargames proceeded integrally. Whenever a game was finished it was released to the general public and the gamer had his interesting new design. It should be made clear, of course, that here we are speak-

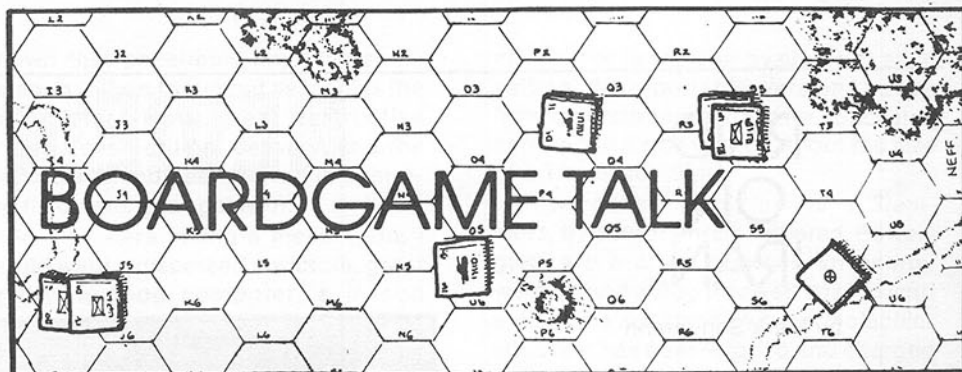
ing of major historical game releases and not games which are only issue contents of certain gaming magazines like *Strategy & Tactics* and *The Wargamer*. In any case the old integral method pertained to an earlier time in the history of gaming. It was appropriate to an era in which there were relatively few game media, and the majority of the selling was done by mail order.

The crux is that the practice of marketing the games has changed very much from that early period. Simulations Publications grew to a point where it thought it could challenge Avalon Hill. Only by going into more stores, and more kinds of stores as well, could SPI begin to rival the marketing reach of AH. As these companies went many of the Third World game publishers hastened to follow. Mostly they saw only the possible volume increases that could be had. Even Game Designer's Workshop, for some years considered the mecca of historical gaming, rose to the status of a million-dollar company by becoming much more market-oriented. What tripped up many Third World houses smaller than GDW, however, was the lack of ability to deal in volume, given their production costs and print runs, the necessary discounting to marketers, and the state of their finances.

With increasing market orientation

came the rise of the game store and, coincidentally, the ORIGINS Convention. I was present on the floor in the opening moments of ORIGINS II and well remember the killing made that day by the publishers who had anything *new* to sell, while those who released games as they went along stood idle. A game industry "fact" was established that day — that *new* things are for ORIGINS. Christmas is another natural for any industry that deals in leisure time products. In the half-dozen years since then, this trend has become even more pronounced. Indeed the "fact" has increasingly led game companies to hold back releases so that they can meet the desirable dates.

One pernicious consequence of this market orientation is the feast-or-famine cycle it creates for the gamer. Of course, if you manage to get to ORIGINS (or at Christmas) you find a wealth of new material, but if you're kicking around in late May, out of school and looking for a challenging game, good luck to you! Moreover, there is even a problem with too many new games out at once — the gamer does not get a chance to absorb all the new material when it appears in the form of momentary gluts. Things are a little better in the relative quiet of a game store but in the teeming aisles of an ORIGINS Convention the problems



of choosing among the flood of releases are acute indeed.

The reverse side of this coin is the frenetic pace in the publishers' offices as ORIGINS approaches and all the new games try to go through the printer at virtually the same time. More than one major game "glitch" has been caused by the rush to the printer or else ignored, even after discovery, because of impending departure for the "big" convention. I have little doubt that production values and rules quality would improve, even over the relative sophistication that they have achieved in recent years, if games were released at a steady pace and not in droves.

Another aspect of the problem is that market orientation does not preclude an even more narrow focus on the so-called "market." This tends to promote fad-ism in which all the publishers essentially throw designs at topics or genres that are newly "discovered" and therefore presumably popular. The successive ex-

plosions of "monster" games and then "mini-games" in the 1970's are cases in point. Another is the area of science-fiction gaming, in which the subject was extremely popular for a couple of years and then interest fell off rather rapidly. Publishers who follow fads too closely tend to be stuck with inventories of designs that don't sell any more, sunken costs that lead to bankruptcy.

As for market orientation becoming narrower, many gamers will no doubt be surprised to learn that a major benchmark of the hobby now is a show they never get to see — the convention of the Hobby Industry of America which generally takes place in the first months of the year. New designs are also increasingly released in this forum for sales to major distributors and chain stores. There is nothing very much wrong with selling more games, of course, the point is that the game hobbyist's interests are being left behind as the companies chase the "market."

Most perniciously, those who live by the market may die by it as well. We can all be sure that next year there will be a new "discovery," whether it be DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®, home computers, or video-disc players. Where will that leave the companies which followed the "market" into, say, "monster" games.

Gamers *are* the gaming hobby; *you* are the companies' bread and butter. The unfortunate thing about your problem is the fatal attraction of the "market" for the companies. Certainly the farther from your interests the publishers get, the less inclined you will be to go on buying their games. But you may be stymied in your search for challenging games if the publishers succumb to the market forces they chased so assiduously. The only real solution for the gamer is to be a vocal minority and hold out for your own interests and topics. It would be good if the publishers will come back toward hobbyists, but only a vocal minority will be able to achieve this.



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# MIX AND MATCH BATTLES WITH SPI'S PRESTAGS® SERIES

by Brian L. Reddington

The Egyptian General looked down across the battlefield. The enemy phalanx was drawn up in front of its city. An allied Legion was already marching across the plain to engage the phalanx. Viking fleets were sailing down the river, hastening to aid in the city's defense. He turned towards his troops, drawn up behind him in their chariots, and ordered, "Bowmen, race to the cliffs and fire a volley down at the fleets; fall back before any survivors can debark and engage you in combat; harass them for as long as you can. Swordsmen, we have to cross the ford before the Vikings cut us

off; if we don't get across the river, nothing can prevent them from hitting the Legion's flank. Let's go!"

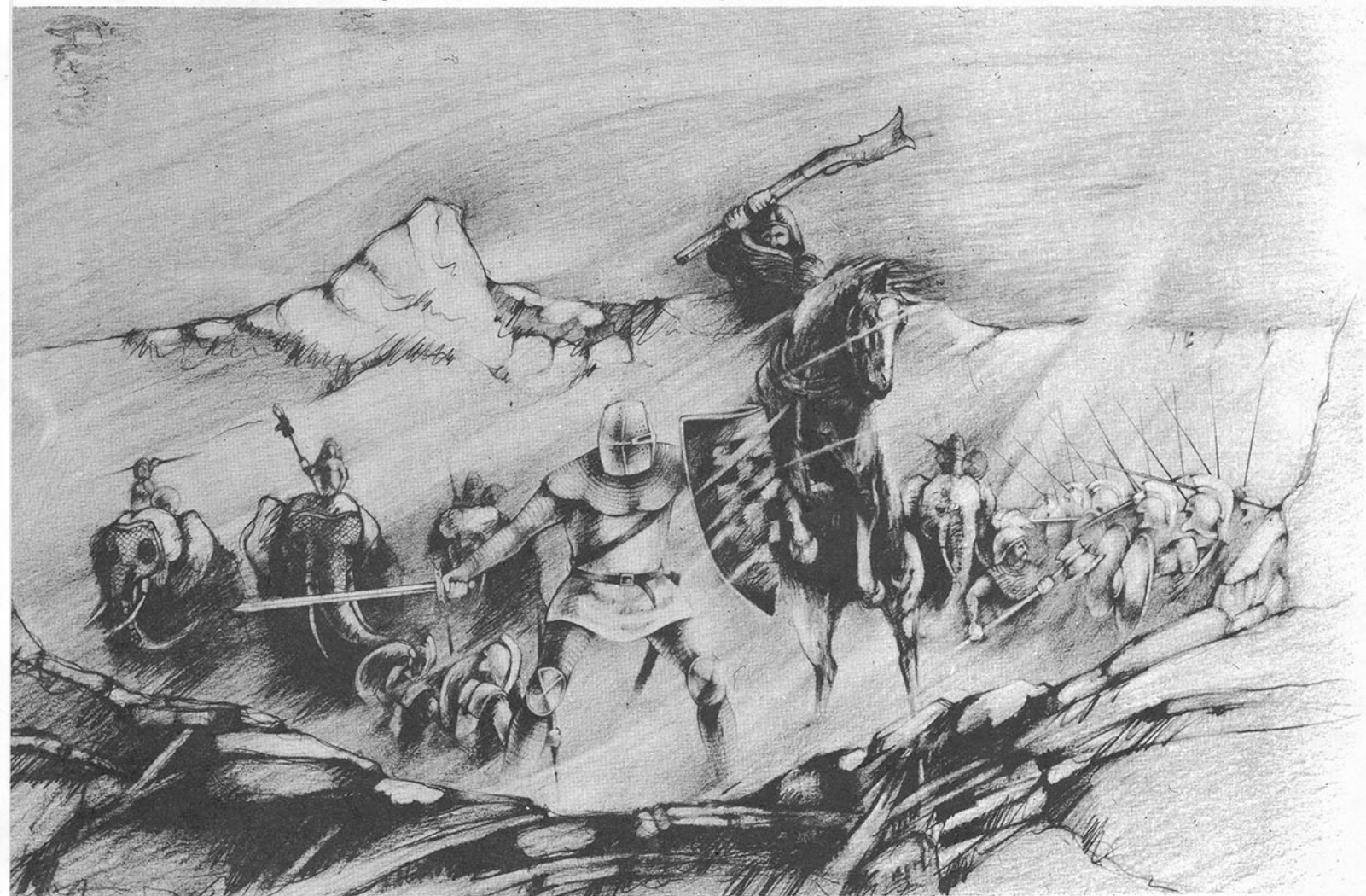
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In 1975, SPI published five games in the PRESTAGS (Pre-Seventeenth Century Tactical Gaming System) Series, CHARIOT®, SPARTAN®, LEGION®, VIKING®, and YEOMAN®. This series unified five older games; *Armageddon*®, *Phalanx*®, *Centurion*®, *Dark Ages*®, and *Renaissance of Infantry*® into one compatible system. Each game in the series comes with a set of Standard Rules, common to all of the games, and a set of

Exclusive Rules, detailing the unique rules and scenarios for that particular game. Although the Designers' Notes in the rules mention that the five games can be linked together (the unit counters are totally interchangeable between the games), a system is not provided in the rules for doing so. Here then, is one system for linking the five games and creating mix and match battles with the armies available in the series.

## ADJUSTING THE RULES

The optional rules presented in each of the Exclusive Rules sets require slight adjustments to complete the unification of the system. The following optional



rules were designed to replace conflicting ones presented in the individual games:

### Terrain Prohibitions

Class A units may not enter woods hexes. Class Mf, Class C, and Elephant units may not enter swamp hexes.

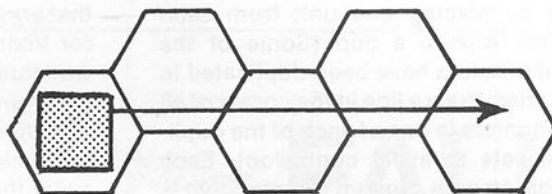
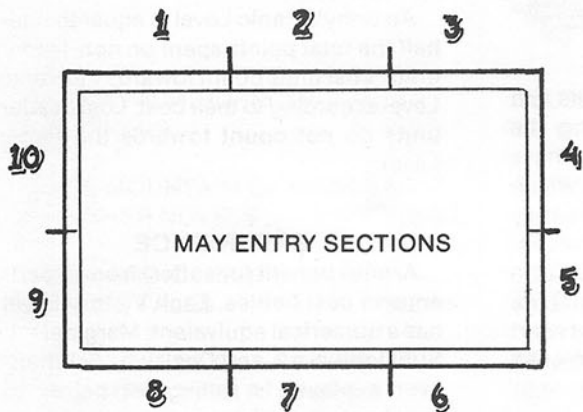
### Terrain Effects Chart

When fighting a battle on one of the PRESTAGS maps, it is convenient to use the Terrain Effects Chart printed on that map. For consistency, or for battles fought on other maps, the accompanying chart has been averaged from the ones in the games.

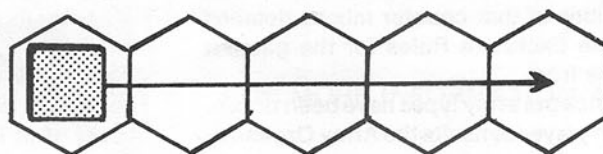
#### Unit Capability Chart

Effect on Melee Defense Strength:

| ATTACKING UNIT |         |    |
|----------------|---------|----|
| DEFENDING UNIT | Class C | SD |
| SD             | x½      | x1 |
| Class A        | x2      | x½ |



CHARIOT CHARGE



The type of Attacker is cross-referenced with the type of Defender; the Melee Defense Strength is multiplied by the indicated factor. Any combination not covered in the chart is assumed to take place at normal strengths. In the case of more than one type of Attacker the benefit is given to the Attacker.

### Range Effects

Fire units on hilltop hexes firing on units on slope or ground level hexes may add one hex to their Range Allowance.

All fire units attack at full strength at a range of one hex (two hexes if utilising the range bonus listed above) but Fire Strength drops off after that. (see Range Effects Chart for range effects.)

### Fleets

In scenarios utilising Viking Fleets, only Class Mf, Class C, and Elephant units may cross the streams, but they may not end their move in a stream hex. No type of unit may end its move in ford or bridge hexes.

### Chariots

In addition to the rules presented for Chariot units, the rules for them from *Armageddon* should also be used:

Units embarked on chariots may have their Melee Attack Strength augmented. If the embarked unit 'charges' (moves in a straight line, see accompanying diagram) for at least four unoccupied clear terrain hexes and ends its movement in the last of these consecutively travelled hexes, any attack that unit participates in will be shifted two columns to the right. For example, a 1-1 attack would be shifted to a 3-1 attack. The attack may be made into any type of hex.

### THE SCENARIO

Despite the varied victory conditions presented in the scenarios printed in the rules of each game, such as holding a piece of terrain or exiting a number of units off the map, the battles usually develop into a fight to the death, after which the victor goes about completing the victory conditions. Hence, for fighting non-historic battles there is no need to spend time developing intricate victory conditions. Victory is computed for each army by the standard Marginal, Substantive, and Decisive ratios of units killed to units lost. Any army which retreats off the map will suffer at least a

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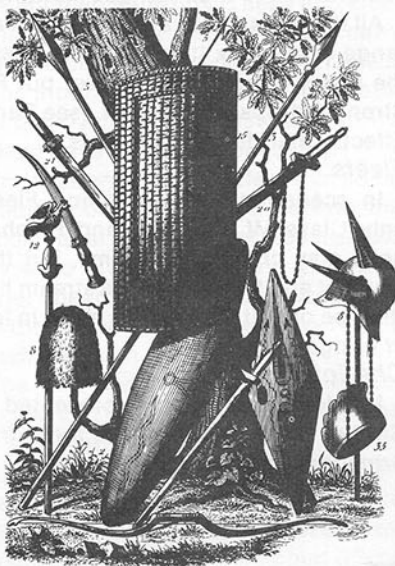
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**Marginal Loss.** Any army which controls the Defender's starting hex will win at least a Marginal Victory.

The first step in creating the scenario is to determine the sides. The number of players on each side should be balanced. If there is an uneven number of players, one side should not outnumber the other side by more than one player. Roll a die, giving each player an equal chance of being the Defender. The Defender then rolls to determine who his allies will be. If there is an uneven number of players, the Defender has a 50% chance of having the extra player on his side.

Once the sides have been determined, initial placement must be determined. The map used will be the one that corresponds with the Defender's army, i.e., a Viking army will defend on the *Viking* map, or on any other map chosen by mutual consent. The Defender may choose any hex on the map to defend and may set up his army within two hexes of that hex. Each of his allied armies has a 50% chance of beginning the scenario on the map. Each one that does begin on the map may set up within two hexes of any hex the owning player chooses.

Once the Defender and his onboard allies have chosen their set-up points, each of the other armies roll to determine from which section of the map edge they will enter. The accompanying diagram shows the fewest sections the map should be broken into for determining entrance areas. It may be broken into more areas if desired. Armies from opposing sides may not enter from the same section. Reroll if such a conflict occurs. All entering armies come on during the first turn.



Each side moves all of its armies and resolves all of its attacks during the same Player-Turn. Once the armies have been selected, roll to determine which side will move first. Allied forces may move through each others' stacks; however, they may not combine units in one stack. Allied units may combine strengths to attack. Leaders do not exert control or rallying benefits over units from other armies.

#### SELECTING ARMIES

After the scenario has been determined, each person builds his army. Start by placing one unit from each counter mix in a cup (Some of the counter colors have been duplicated in the series; draw a line in the corner of all the counters in one of each of the duplicated sets to avoid confusion). Each person draws a random counter; that is the counter mix from which he can build his army. Unless otherwise noted, the player can utilize any of the special abilities of that counter mix as detailed in the Exclusive Rules for the game it came from.

Once the army types have been drawn, each player consults the Army Organiza-

tion Chart (averaged from the scenarios printed in each game) and rolls two twenty-sided dice. The first roll determines that army's stacking limitations. The second roll determines that army's special abilities, if any. In some instances, the stacking limitations must be adjusted to maintain play balance. If any enemy units have a stacking limit of 3 and none with a stacking limit of 1, treat one's own stacking limits of 1 as 2. If any enemy units have a stacking limit of 4, treat one's own stacking limits of 1 as 2.

Once the army organizations have been determined, each player rolls to determine how many points he will have to purchase his army. Each person receives 60 plus 1-20 points; unless there is an uneven number of players, in which case two players on the larger side will each receive half-sized forces: 30 plus 1-10 points. Units cost one-half their Melee Attack Strength (retain fractions) plus their Fire Attack Strength. Leaders cost their Combat Bonus plus their Movement Control Radius. Chariots cost 1 point. Viking Fleets cost 2 points. Units which can dismount into other types cost according to their most expensive possible option.

An army's Panic Level is equal to one-half the total points spent on non-leader units. Lost units count towards the Panic Level according to their cost. Lost Leader units do not count towards the Panic Level.

#### EXPERIENCE

Armies benefit (or suffer) from experience in past battles. Each Victory Level has a numerical equivalent: Marginal = 1, Substantive = 2, and Decisive = 3. Whenever a player is rolling for points to purchase an army from a counter mix he has used before, he adds the Victory Levels of any battles he has won and subtracts those of any he has lost with that army. For example a player is rolling for Viking Force A; previously he has won three Substantive Victories and lost a Marginal Victory with this force; he will now have 65 (60+2+2+2+-1) plus 1-20 points. In addition to the point bonus, for every three Victory Levels that an army accumulates it may acquire one leadership level free of charge. For example, this Viking army has a total Victory Level of +5, for its next battle it may move one of its leaders up a level of acquire a 4L leader at no charge. If this army wins its next battle (thus acquiring a total Victory Level of at least +6), it may move two

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### ARMY ORGANISATION CHART

| Army            | Die Roll | Stacking Limit | Die Roll | Special Abilities                                |
|-----------------|----------|----------------|----------|--|
| Chariot Force A | 1- 3     | 1              | -        | none   |
|                 | 4-17     | 2              |          |  |
|                 | 18-20    | 3              |          |  |
| Force B         | 1- 9     | 1              | -        | none   |
|                 | 10-17    | 2              |          |  |
|                 | 18-20    | 3              |          |  |
| Spartan Force A | 1- 4     | 2              | 1-10     | Leadership Mt. Ex.                               |
|                 | 5-14     | 3              | 11-20    | none   |
|                 | 15-20    | 4              |          |  |
| Force B         | 1- 6     | 2              | 1- 3     | Leadership Mt. Ex.                               |
|                 | 7-16     | 3              | 4-20     | none   |
|                 | 17-20    | 4              |          |  |
| Legion Force A  | 1- 2     | 2              | 1- 5     | Leadership Mt. Ex.                               |
|                 | 3-10     | 3              | 6-20     | none   |
|                 | 11-20    | 4              |          |  |
| Force B         | 1-12     | 2              | 1- 8     | Leadership Mt. Ex.                               |
|                 | 13-18    | 3              | 9-20     | none   |
|                 | 19-20    | 4              |          |  |
| Viking Force A  | 1-13     | 2              | 1- 7     | Leadership Mt. Ex.                               |
|                 | 14-20    | 3              | 8-10     | Viking Ferocity                                  |
|                 |          |                | 11-20    | none   |
| Force B         | 1        | 1              | 1- 6     | Leadership Mt. Ex.                               |
|                 | 2-19     | 2              | 7- 8     | Viking Ferocity                                  |
|                 | 20       | 3              | 9-10     | AX Units have Francisca                          |
|                 |          | 11-20          | none     |  |
| Yeoman Force A  | 1-11     | 2              | 1- 2     | Leadership Mt. Ex.                               |
|                 | 12-18    | 3              | 3- 5     | PS Units have Ferocity and a Stacking Limit of 4 |
|                 | 19-20    | 4              | 6- 9     | Cavalry Units may dismount                       |
|                 |          | 10-20          | none     |  |
| Force B         | 1- 9     | 2              | 1- 3     | Leadership Mt. Ex.                               |
|                 | 10-19    | 3              | 4-10     | PS Units have Ferocity and a Stacking Limit of 4 |
|                 | 20       | 4              | 11-14    | Cavalry Units may dismount                       |
|                 |          | 15-20          | none     |  |

Notes: Legion Armies without Mt. Ex. may use Swordsmen and Legionary rules. Legion Armies with Mt. Ex. may use Byzantine Cataphract Rules. Yeoman Armies are considered to be pre-1500. Yeoman Longbowman may always convert to Axmen. Yeoman PS Units with Ferocity may form Squares.

leaders up one level, or move one leader up two levels, or acquire two 4L or one 3L leader free of charge for the battle after that. Conversely, for every three Victory Levels that an army loses, it must lose one leadership level. For ex-

ample, an army with a total Victory Level of -3 pays the cost for a 3L leader but only receives a 2L leader. For half-sized armies, apply the full Victory Level point bonus, but not the leadership adjustments.

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### TERRAIN EFFECTS CHART

| Terrain Type | Movement Point Cost to enter hex | Fire Protection Strength | Effect on                       |   |                           |
|--------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|---|---------------------------|
|              |                                  |                          | Fire when Firing Unit is in hex | Melee Strength when Unit is in hex and is . . . | Attacking . . . Defending |
| Clear        | 1 MP                             | 3                        | none                            | none  | none                      |
| Village      | 1 MP                             | 5                        | none                            | none  | doubled                   |
| Woods        | 3 MP                             | 4                        | none                            | none  | doubled                   |
| Slope        | 2 MP                             | 3                        | none                            | none  | none                      |
| Stream       | 2 MP                             | 1                        | No Ff Fire                      | halved  | none                      |
| Swamp        | 3 MP                             | 3                        | No Mf Fire                      | none  | doubled                   |
| Road         | 1 MP                             | 2                        | none                            | none  | none                      |
| Bridge       | 1 MP                             | 1                        | none                            | halved  | doubled                   |
| Ford         | 1 MP                             | 1                        | No Ff Fire                      | halved  | none                      |

### RANGE EFFECTS CHART

| Unit Type | Normal Fire Strength | Fire Strength at Firing Range |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |
|-----------|----------------------|-------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
|           |                      | 1                             | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |  |
| EX        | 2                    | 2                             | — | — | — | — | — | — |  |
| BW        | 2                    | 2                             | 1 | — | — | — | — | — |  |
| IB        | 2                    | 2                             | 2 | 1 | — | — | — | — |  |
| SK        | 2                    | 2                             | — | — | — | — | — | — |  |
| BL        | 3                    | 3                             | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  |
| CB        | 2                    | 2                             | 2 | 1 | — | — | — | — |  |
| AE        | 2                    | 2                             | 2 | 1 | — | — | — | — |  |
| AL        | 2                    | 2                             | 2 | 1 | 1 | — | — | — |  |
| LB        | 3                    | 3                             | 2 | 1 | — | — | — | — |  |
| HB        | 1                    | 1                             | ½ | — | — | — | — | — |  |
| OC        | 1                    | 1                             | — | — | — | — | — | — |  |
| BC        | 1                    | 1                             | ½ | — | — | — | — | — |  |
| HA        | 3                    | 3                             | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  |
| LA        | 2                    | 2                             | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | — | — |  |

In multi-player battles, it is important that each player keep track off how many points he has eliminated from the opposing armies (not counting leaders) in order to calculate individual Victory Levels at the end of the battle. It is possible for allied armies to come up with different Victory Levels.

### TACTICS

When fighting mix and match battles with armies from 3000 B.C. to 1500 A.D., each type of army will encounter tactical situations which its historical commanders did not have to face. Each type of army has special advantages and disadvantages in relationship to the other armies. It is important that each player comprehends the relative "uniqueness" of his army before purchasing and leading it into combat.

The Chariot armies are probably the most delicate ones to handle. They have weak units and low stacking, but very high mobility. When pitted against more powerful forces, such as a Phalanx or a Legion, they should not even consider fielding an infantry force. Their chariots and cavalry can provide screening and flanking functions for an allied army (which will do the heavy fighting), while occasionally throwing in a chariot charge to bolster an ally's attack. When pitted against other mobile forces, they have an advantage in that they are the only ones that can move, fire, and move. This ability is particularly useful for sinking Fleets and panicking Elephants. Although the cost of large numbers of Chariots is expensive, they are worth the investment.

The Spartan armies are amongst the most powerful ones available. With strong and fast units to choose from, these armies can serve well as either the front line or the primary reserve of an allied force. Although their predominant units are Class A and halved when attacked by Swords, the Professional Pikemen, which are available in large numbers, can withstand all but the most concerted attacks, and when used in conjunction with cavalry can easily eliminate the noisome Sword units. To add to the shock value of the Phalanx, Spartan armies also have Elephant units available to them. However, these units are quite difficult to use successfully. In any event though, they are sure to liven things up. ("OK, who invited the elephants?")

The Legion armies will usually be the backbone of any allied force. They have a counter mix of strong units to choose

from and usually have very good stacking limits. The historical Roman army organizations were quite good and it will be to a player's advantage to copy one of them, picking a mix of Swords, Skirmishers, and Light Cavalry; or Byzantine Cataphracts, Oriental Cavalry, and Skirmishers. In either case the army is capable of delivering the main thrust of an attack, either head-on with the Roman Legion or flanking with the Byzantine Army.

The Viking armies do not have quite the cross country mobility of the Chariot armies, but on the rivers they have the fastest armies. On the defense, they can enter the map and get into position before the attackers arrive, or sally forth to cut off an incoming attacker before he joins up with any allies. On the offense, they can slip past defensive lines and disembark in their opponents' rear, or move to cut off an incoming opponent before he reaches the Defender's position. The Viking player does not have to purchase Fleets to carry all of his units; the Fleets can carry half the army at a time and still get everyone together fairly quickly. The Viking player may also wish to purchase a sizeable cavalry force, as this is useful in protecting the moving Fleets from missile fire.

The Yeoman armies have the best fire power of all the armies. On the defense, Heavy Artillery placed on a hill can do unpleasant things to an attacking army. On the offense, the army should wait for its Light Artillery to get into place on a hill just behind the jump off point before advancing into combat. The artillery, combined with Longbowmen on the slopes and in the front line, can soften up an opposing army considerably. With the dismount capability, the Yeoman player also has the option of moving his infantry force as dragoons, riding to a favorable position and dismounting before the attack.

There are, of course, some general points which apply to all the armies. Combined arms are useful; in most cases an army should have some Class A, Class C, and Sword units to take advantage of the Unit Capability Chart. Leaders are expensive, but their benefits are invaluable; do not be afraid to purchase several of them. The army with the best organization; in terms of units, leadership, and/or stacking; will have a distinct advantage over the other armies.

AG.

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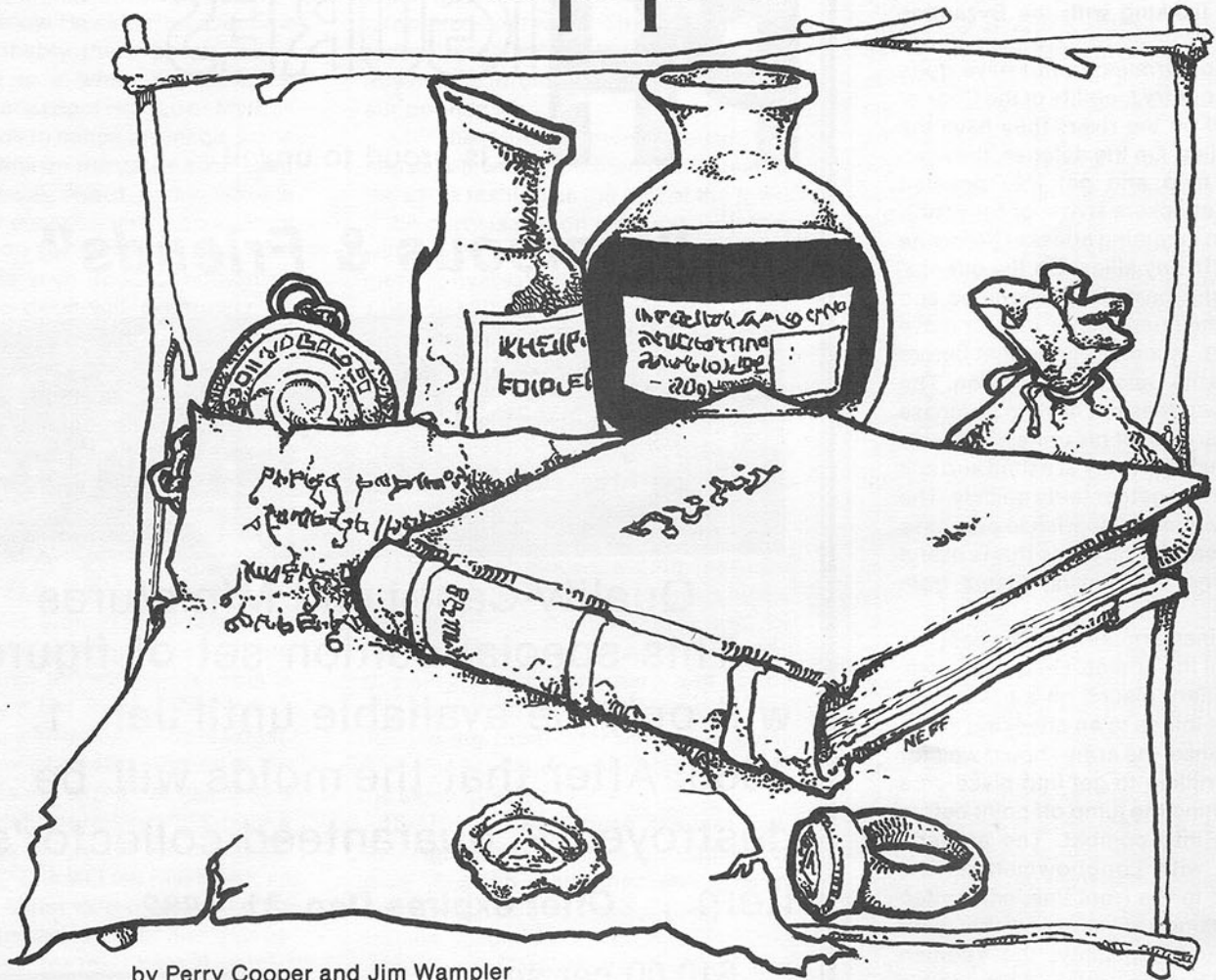
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# The Realistic Magick Shoppe



by Perry Cooper and Jim Wampler

It's bound to happen sooner or later in every fantasy role-playing campaign: the players, their purses laden with gold, start making noises about finding a magic shop somewhere so that they can buy magic items which they are too chicken to try and take by force from the Wizard of the East Isles. The Gamemaster, groping for control of the situation, finds himself having to make a saving throw *versus* abject stupidity in order to avoid providing the uppity players with some Santa Claus of a magician who will generally sell them the keys to heaven for a few measly sovereigns.

Hence the need for establishing a few particulars about magic shops, to help

them to really work as intended within the context of a fantasy role-playing game.

Magic shops, first and foremost, do not exist for the benefit of player characters; they appear on the scene because they provide a means for retired wizards to make a comfortable living doing what they do best. What wizards do not do best, or *at all* for that matter, is sell precious magic items that are difficult to manufacture. Think about it; if you were a retired wizard with a crystal ball, would you want to part with it? You don't have to be an active adventurer to want to keep something for yourself, and few wizards of any caliber are going to be

totally destitute, which is what it would take to make them want to liquidate their hoard of valuable possessions. Such items were generally won at the peril of their lives during their adventuring days, and the items still serve to protect them from murderous thieves, burglars and the like.

If by chance a retired wizard has an item that he or she cannot use, it follows that he or she would barter it to an old comrade-in-arms for a more useful item, give it away as a gift to someone who once saved the wizard's life, or bestow it upon a trusted hireling who could benefit from it (on the promise, perhaps, that the hireling employ the item whenever pos-

sible for the protection of the wizard).

It does *not* make sense that a wizard would put a powerful magic item up for sale to any gold-toting jerk who happened to stroll into the shop; after all, how far can you trust some guy off the street? His gold could be a clever fake, or there might be a curse on it; maybe he even plans to use the magic item, once acquired, to rob the wizard. Who knows? And why take such chances? No intelligent wizard is likely to.

This is not to imply that there is nothing in a magic shop that would interest the wizard's adventurous customers. Magic shops might offer many, if not all, of the following services or wares:

**POTIONS & SCROLLS.** In most FRP game systems a magic potion can be mixed by any moderately powerful wizard, just as magic powers or spells can be inscribed upon scrolls. When not dealing with customers or enjoying the easy life of retirement, the wizard running a magic shop would likely be engaged in the manufacture of these simple magic items for a quick profit.

**MAGIC SPELLS.** In his/her adventur-

ing days, the wizard running the magic shop knew many spells. Now, in the peaceful life he or she is enjoying, those spells are rarely needed. But the wizard may be willing, if an adventurer is in dire need, to dust off the old magic tomes and cast a spell, just for old times' sake and a sack full of gold.

**LONG-RANGE COMMUNICATION.** Most game systems provide wizards with some form of spell that enables them to communicate with other wizards over great distances. It is quite natural, then, that magic shop proprietors with this power would organize a primitive communications network, at least within their own kingdom. Each wizard would get in touch with one or more other wizards on a regular basis, perhaps every day. Adventurers needing to contact distant comrades would be eager to pay for this service, though the price would be quite a bit steeper than coast-to-coast direct dialing, and, of course, calls could *never* be made collect.

**NEWS.** Having established that the wizards running magic shops would likely have daily contact with others in

distant places, it is obvious that these spellcasters would be able to keep abreast of news from afar better than anyone else in a pre-newspaper era. These well-informed wizards might be willing to share some of that precious information—but seldom for free.

**TRANSPORTATION.** Many game systems provide magic spells which enable wizards to instantly transport persons or objects from one locale to another. It's expensive, but Amtrak was never quite as much fun or as effective as this.

**IDENTIFICATION OF MAGIC ITEMS.** Thanks to years of experience and possibly some helpful spells, most wizards will be able to identify the majority of magic items floating around in a fantasy system. Any player character who has chosen to test his new magic shield the hard way and ended up being carried back to town upon it will be receptive to paying a veteran spellcaster for accurate information next time around. Chances are, however, that there will be no money-back guarantee if the wizard fails to detect a curse upon a magic item, so if that "sword of mighty thunder" turns out

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to be a "sword of stupid blunders," that's just too bad.

Now that we have established the services that might be provided by the typical magic shop, let us turn our attention to the employment of a method for rounding out the details of individual magic shops and their proprietors so that the Gamemaster can maintain firm control over the situation when his or her players decide to stop in at the local magic shop.

The following tables will provide important details concerning the characteristics of individual magic shop proprietors, allowing Gamemasters to quickly create such characters. But because there are major differences between some of the more popular fantasy games (e.g., a "sixth-level wizard" may tell the players of one game a lot but the same term would be meaningless to players of another game), it is impossible to construct tables to portray *all* the necessary data about a magic shop proprietor. These "missing tables" will be discussed at the end of the following list of ten tables. All of the tables require the use of percentile dice.

**TABLE I: Race**

|       |          |
|-------|----------|
| 01-85 | human    |
| 86-93 | elf      |
| 94-98 | half-elf |
| 99-00 | gnome    |

*Notes on Table I:* The races presented here are those commonly found in fantasy literature and in most FRP games. If any race above is not present in your campaign, or if members of that race could not serve as magic shop proprietors, alter the table accordingly. Note also that in some kingdoms there may be a greater or lesser concentration of elves or other races, so the table may be adjusted for this reason as well.

**TABLE II: Sex**

|       |        |
|-------|--------|
| 01-20 | female |
| 21-00 | male   |

**TABLE III: Age**

|       |                                      |
|-------|--------------------------------------|
| 01-15 | very young (late 20's to early 30's) |
| 16-27 | young (mid 30's to 40)               |
| 29-50 | middle-aged (early 40's to mid-50's) |

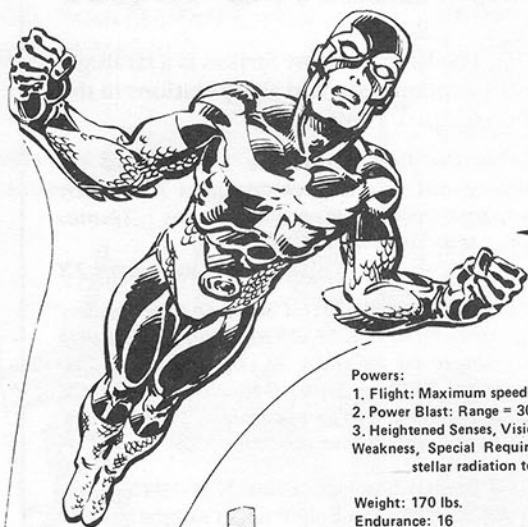
|       |                                   |
|-------|-----------------------------------|
| 51-77 | greybeard (late 50's to mid-60's) |
| 78-91 | old (late 60's to late 70's)      |
| 92-00 | patriarch (80's on up)            |

*Note on Table III:* Ages given here are in human years that can be easily understood in twentieth century terms but may not be truly appropriate in a fantasy game. Due to magic, a human wizard could still be youthful at ninety years of age, and in some systems an elf might be a mere child after marking his sixtieth birthday. Thus the table provides mostly general, rather than numerically specific, information on the proprietor's age.

**TABLE IV: Height**

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| 01-02 | 5'0"  |
| 03-05 | 5'1"  |
| 06-10 | 5'2"  |
| 11-14 | 5'3"  |
| 15-19 | 5'4"  |
| 20-23 | 5'5"  |
| 24-30 | 5'6"  |
| 31-39 | 5'7"  |
| 40-47 | 5'8"  |
| 48-58 | 5'9"  |
| 59-69 | 5'10" |

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**SKYHAWK**  
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Side: Unknown!  
Age: 22  
Level: 2

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2. Power Blast: Range = 30', PR = 1 per shot, 1d20 damage  
3. Heightened Senses, Vision: Magnifies up to x100  
**Weakness, Special Requirement:** Needs exposure to stellar radiation to regain Hit or Power points.

**Weight:** 170 lbs.  
**Endurance:** 16  
**Intelligence:** 12  
**Damage Mod.:** +2  
**Accuracy:** +3  
**Carrying Cap.:** 370 lbs.  
**Movement Rates:**  
48" Ground, 986" Flying

**Strength:** 14  
**Agility:** 18  
**Charisma:** 12  
**Hit Points:** 19  
**Healing Rate:** 1.6  
**Basic HTH Dam.:** 1d6  
**Power:** 60  
**Detect Hidden:** 10%  
**Detect Danger:** 14%  
**Inventing Points:** 2.4  
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|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| 70-78 | 5'11" |
| 79-85 | 6'0"  |
| 86-91 | 6'1"  |
| 92-94 | 6'2"  |
| 95-97 | 6'3"  |
| 98-99 | 6'4"  |
| 00    | 6'5"  |

*Notes on Table IV:* Subtract two inches for the heights of half-elves, four inches for female humans, six inches for elves and thirty inches for gnomes. The heights tend to be somewhat slight compared to the average adventuring person, and this is because: a) wizards tend to be smaller than warriors, and b) wizards are generally older than other adventurers, and as people age they usually lose an inch or more of stature.

**TABLE V: General Body Structure**

|       |                                  |
|-------|----------------------------------|
| 01-04 | emaciated                        |
| 05-12 | skinny                           |
| 13-31 | thin                             |
| 32-59 | average, unremarkable in any way |
| 60-67 | sturdy, well-built               |
| 68-69 | unusually muscular               |
| 70-86 | chubby                           |
| 87-95 | fat, pot-bellied                 |
| 96-00 | exceptionally obese              |

**TABLE VI: General Personality**

|       |             |
|-------|-------------|
| 01-05 | modest      |
| 06-10 | arrogant    |
| 11-15 | aloof       |
| 16-19 | hostile     |
| 20-23 | suspicious  |
| 24-27 | diplomatic  |
| 28-32 | abrasive    |
| 33-37 | surely      |
| 38-41 | overbearing |
| 42-45 | blustering  |
| 46-47 | clowning    |
| 48-52 | rude        |
| 53-56 | bland       |
| 57-62 | friendly    |
| 63-67 | garrulous   |
| 68-70 | quiet       |
| 71-75 | scholarly   |
| 76-80 | stern       |
| 81-82 | shy         |
| 83-85 | mysterious  |
| 86-88 | secretive   |
| 89-91 | genteel     |
| 92-94 | courteous   |
| 95-97 | greedy      |
| 98-99 | egotistical |
| 00    | unstable    |

**TABLE VII: General Honesty**

|       |                               |
|-------|-------------------------------|
| 01-10 | quite dishonest; lies openly  |
| 11-30 | will misrepresent facts occa- |

|       |   |
|-------|---|
|       | sionally if it is in his/her interest to do so  |
| 31-70 | average honesty; will not flat-out lie, but may not always tell the "whole" truth       |
| 71-90 | generally quite honest; will never lie  |
| 91-00 | honest to a fault; extremely open with customers, never bending or stretching the truth |

**TABLE VIII: General Price Range of Merchandise**

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| 01-10 | items are usually outrageously overpriced                                   |
| 11-30 | items are usually priced above the average range for the region             |
| 31-70 | items' prices are generally average, not much higher or lower than expected |
| 71-90 | items are reasonably priced, even a bit below the average for the region    |
| 91-00 | items tend to cost notably less than in most other shops                    |

*Note on Table VIII:* Some players, after pricing an item such as a magic potion, will try to bargain with the proprietor for a better price. Here the Game-master must use his or her own judgment; taking into account all the variables involved, such as the proprietor's personality and the scarcity of the item involved, a decision must be made whether to bargain or tell the player to "take it or leave it." In any event, the Gamemaster must take the side of the proprietor and act things out, which is what fantasy role-playing is all about.

**TABLE IX: Number of Personality Quirks**

|       |                          |
|-------|--------------------------|
| 01-15 | no personality quirks    |
| 16-45 | one personality quirk    |
| 46-80 | two personality quirks   |
| 81-00 | three personality quirks |

*Note on Table IX:* Most people have individual likes or dislikes, personal favorites and pet peeves. In order to play the role of the magic shop proprietor as realistically as possible, it is helpful to know what sort of personality quirks he or she has. The number of quirks to be rolled up on Table X are discovered here in Table IX.

**TABLE X: Personality Quirks**

|       |                  |
|-------|------------------|
| 01-02 | admires warriors |
| 03-04 | admires wizards  |

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| 05    | admires thieves  |
| 06-08 | admires priests  |
| 09-10 | admires demi-humans  |
| 11-12 | admires tall people  |
| 13-14 | admires muscular people  |
| 15-17 | despises warriors  |
| 18-19 | despises all wizards except himself/herself, seeing them as rivals                                       |
| 20-22 | despises thieves   |
| 23-24 | despises priests   |
| 25-28 | despises demi-humans   |
| 29-30 | despises foreigners  |
| 31-32 | despises members of opposite sex   |
| 33-34 | despises tall people   |
| 35-36 | despises short people  |
| 37-38 | despises fat people  |
| 39-40 | despises skinny people   |
| 41-42 | despises muscular people   |
| 43-46 | despises young people  |
| 47-48 | very rude to anyone who asks a stupid question   |
| 49-52 | won't let customers bring any weapons into the shop with them  |
| 53-55 | sexually aggressive  |
| 56-57 | takes payment only in gold   |
| 58-59 | takes payment only in precious stones  |
| 60    | takes payment only in silver   |
| 61-62 | allows just one customer into the shop at a time   |
| 63-64 | gets hostile at any mention or representation of religion  |
| 65-67 | talks incessantly about the "gold old days"  |
| 68-69 | has an attack-trained dog by his/her side at all times   |
| 70-71 | asks a lot of personal questions   |
| 72-73 | has 2-12 pet dogs lounging around the shop   |
| 74-75 | has 2-12 pet cats lounging around the shop   |
| 76    | is in poor physical health   |
| 77-78 | has trophies from his/her adventuring days all over the shop   |
| 79-80 | always asks, "If I sell it to you, what are you going to do with it?"                                    |
| 81    | drinks a lot; 40% chance at any given time of being drunk  |
| 82    | weird sense of humor; employs as a doorstep the remains of a small monster he/she once turned into stone |
| 83-84 | very sarcastic   |
| 85-86 | tells a lot of lousy old jokes   |

- 87-89 won't tolerate any dawdling by customers
- 90-91 easily bored by adventurers
- 92-93 won't allow customers to touch anything that is for sale
- 94 will never give his/her name
- 95 wears more jewelry than the Empress of China
- 96 will be taking a nap 50% of the time
- 97-98 keeps all magic potions, scrolls and memorabilia locked away, reluctant even to show them to customers
- 99 is afflicted with some sort of disease (50% chance it is communicable, 10% chance it is lycanthropy)
- 00 has a weak heart; getting the proprietor angry makes for a 20% chance of his/her suffering a heart attack

*Notes on Table X:* Sometimes this chart will produce an obvious conflict, such as indicating on the first roll that the wizard admires warriors and then on the second roll indicating that he or she despises warriors. In such cases always accept the first roll and reroll the conflict-

ing quirk. Note also that some rolls may be illogical for certain wizards; an elven wizard is not likely to despise all demi-humans, for he or she *is* a demi-human; so if that quirk comes up, a reroll is in order.

Now let us address ourselves to the "missing" tables mentioned earlier. Because of differences between game systems it is impossible to produce useful tables here for determining whether the magic shop proprietor belongs to an unusual order of wizardry, his or her precise rank or level, whether he or she has a "familiar" (such as a black cat), his or her alignment and his or her precise character attributes (strength, wisdom, etc.). Suffice it then to say that these characteristics need to be determined in order to provide a complete picture of the magic shop proprietor. Resolving these matters within each fantasy campaign should be simple enough.

Having fitted the magic shop proprietor out with a wealth of characteristics that should make him or her easy and enjoyable to play within a fantasy system, it is a simple enough matter to equip their retired wizard with a workable shop.

Shops are almost always located within towns or cities, or else close by. They









are usually fairly large structures, almost always having a second story (75%) and a cellar (90%). The proprietor will have 1-4 burly hirelings to watch over the place and perform menial duties, plus 1 or 2 apprentice wizards (who typically dwell in, and receive their instruction in, the cellar). The wizard himself (or herself) generally lives somewhere in the same building (80% chance) and may have a spouse living there also. Wizards rarely have children about, but they almost always (95%) have some sort of magic wand or other powerful item on their persons or within easy reach, just in case of trouble. There will be 1-3 magic scrolls on sale in the shop 70% of the time, with 1-3 magic potions available 80% of the time.

And there you have it. Employing this system for setting up a magic shop, no Gamemaster should ever have to worry about failing to make his saving throw *versus* abject stupidity and becoming overly generous again. Of course, for some Gamemasters generosity means letting a player purchase a totally worthless potion for half his or her worldly goods, but that's another story . . .

AG



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TILL NOW! ...

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RITHGAR THE NIGHT RIDER, BATTLED HIS WAY  
DEEP INTO A DEADLY DUNGEON SEEKING A  
MAGIC CHALICE OF WINE DRINKING ... BUT,

JUST AS HE  
REACHES FOR  
THE CHALICE ...



VANISH!  
VISCIOUS  
VYPERS!!



FINIEOUS FINGERS,  
A NOT SO BRIGHT  
THIEF SWIPES IT...

PART II: THE THEFT OF  
THE CHALICE ACTIVATES  
A SPELL WHICH SUMMONS  
AN ANCIENT LICHE...



THE LICHE TRANS-  
FORMS INTO A VERY  
BEAUTIFUL WOMAN  
AND SETS OUT TO  
FIND AND

RECOVER  
THE MISSING  
CHALICE...



PART III: SEVERAL DAYS LATER;  
AT A TAVERN,

THE CURSE BEGINS...

SO THERE  
I WAS ...



GLUG!



FINIEOUS BRAGS ABOUT HIS TREASURE. ROLFE, A  
LARGE MERCENARY, DOUBTS THAT THE CHALICE  
IS CURSED AND DRINKS FROM IT... A FEW  
SECONDS LATER, HE STUMBLES AND FALLS —

to be continued.

# THE ADVENTURES OF SPACE TRADER VIC

STORY BY BRUCE WHITEFIELD & RON TALBOT.

ART. BY BRUCE WHITEFIELD.

#6

DENIED LANDING CLEARANCE BY THE MISINFORMED RODENTINES, SPACE TRADER VIC CLEVERLY UTILIZES THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE TO CROSS THE GAP TO THE REFUELING STATION ON FOOT.

USING THE BRIDGE AS A BRIDGE! WHO WOULD EVER HAVE THOUGHT OF IT?!

ALRIGHT! WHO SAYS I CAN'T REFUEL? I'VE GOT A BLASTER HERE THAT SAYS I CAN!

GEE, THAT'S FUNNY...

...THAT'S NOT WHAT OUR BLASTERS SAY.

YOU GUARD THE TRADER WHILE THIS RUNT SHOWS ME THEIR SHIP.

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WHILE TRADER VIC IS CLOSELY GUARDED BY THE SUSPICIOUS RODENTINES, BILL IS FORCED AT BLASTER POINT TO SHOW RONNY RAYGUNS THE WOODEN NICKLES CARGO.

TRADER VIC MUST RELY ON BILL'S QUICK WIT TO GET THEM OUT OF A JAM.....

I DON'T HATE RODENTS, ALTHOUGH I COULD EASILY START TO...

OUR ONLY CARGO IS THESE NUTS AND BERRIES FROM EARTH.

LUXURY FOOD ITEMS, EH?

SINCE THE NEW MILITARY SUPPORT SURTAX IS CALCULATED BY THE MILE, THE TWENTY PARSECS YOU TRAVELED SHOULD BE AMPLY COVERED BY THE ...

... CONFISCATION OF YOUR SHIP!

BOOT!

... WITH PREDICTABLE RESULTS.

BOUNCE!  
BOUNCE!  
BOUNCE!  
BOUNCE!  
BOUNCE!

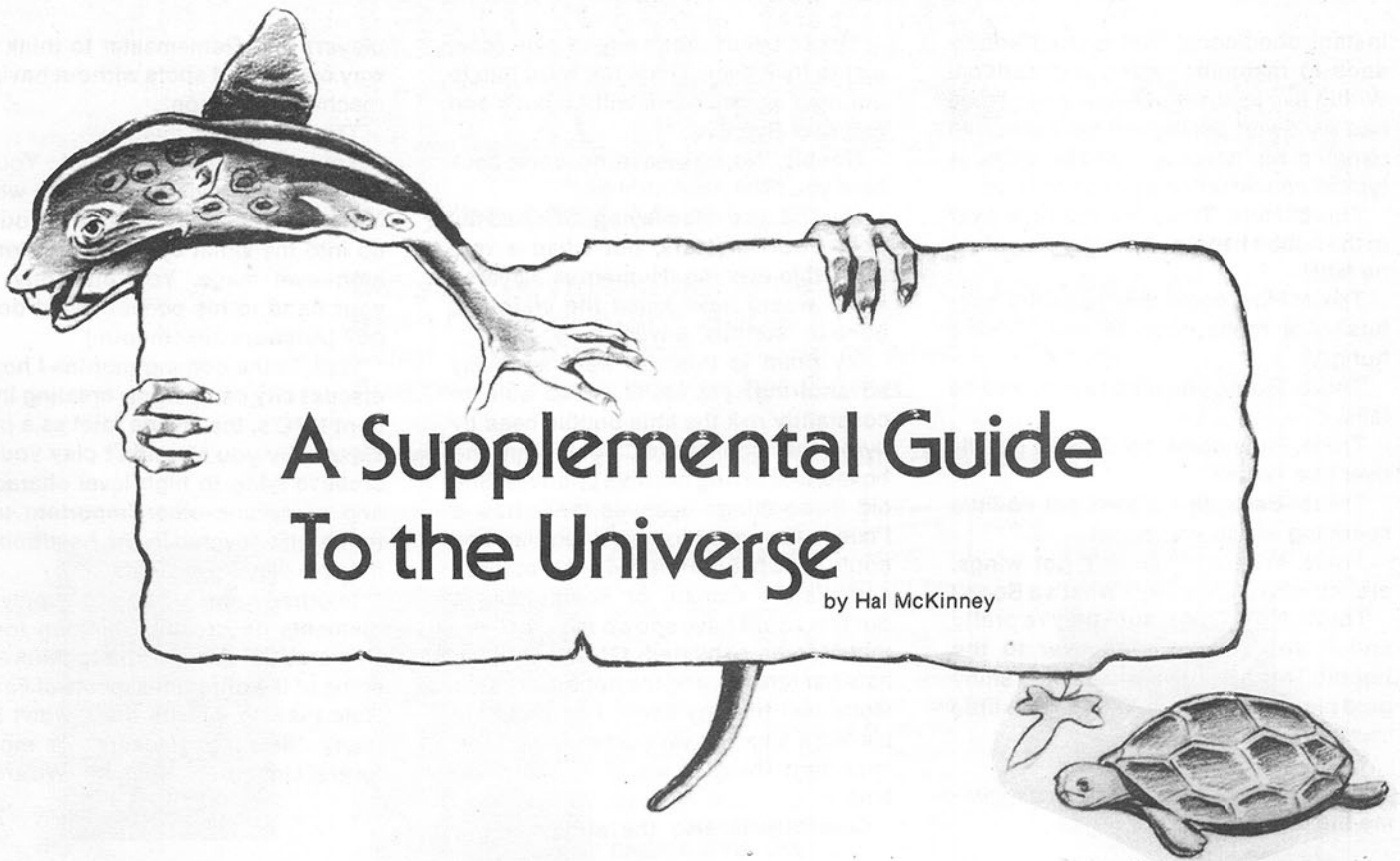
IS THERE ANY WAY I CAN SHOW YOU THAT I DON'T HATE RODENTS?

I DOUBT IT, BUB!

BUT THIS LOOKS LIKE A GOOD WAY TO START!

YUM! YUM!

SPLAT!



# A Supplemental Guide To the Universe

by Hal McKinney

The credit (or blame) for the title of this column belongs to the editor, Tim "Mr. Wizard" Kask. Tim has a philosophy of giving a writer all the rope necessary to hang himself, absolutely free of charge. One day over lunch, my numerous complaints about poor quality campaigns, unimaginative players, and Gamemasters resorting to endless streams of kill-crazy monsters caused him to comment "Don't tell *me* about it, write a column. We'll call it A Supplemental Guide to the Universe." He then devoted his attention to his sandwich (a Zipburger Deluxe). When I mentioned the amount of effort that a column would require, he replied, "I've done all the hard work by thinking up a title, all you have to do is justify what you're saying, unless you'd rather just complain."

Personally, I'd rather just complain.

Why ASGTTU? According to all known theories, the Universe is constantly expanding. The Big Band has thrown off a multitude of different galaxies, and an infinite number of worlds. Fantasy role playing, since its conception, has also exploded into the imaginations of the gaming public, causing Gamemasters to create a myriad of individual worlds. The original D&D® has given birth to AD&D®, RUNEQUEST®, THIEVES' GUILD®, BUSHIDO®, TOP SECRET®, TUNNELS & TROLLS®, BOOT HILL®, TRAVEL-

LER®, and numerous other role playing systems. At first glance, the only things these systems seem to have in common is the use of multi-sided dice, and a method of recording the character to be played.

Although these constantly expanding systems use vastly different rules, magic systems, and settings, they do have a lot in common. Just as our Universe has a set of "Physical Laws" the FRP systems require that the players possess creative, thinking, minds. What? I'm supposed to tell everyone how to be creative? "Help, Mr. Wizard!!" (Remember Tudor Turtle?)

There is no rulebook or set of tables that can compensate for a poor imagination. The players who lack this ability usually spend the evening slashing and hacking at anything that moves. The old saying "small things amuse small minds" is very appropriate. A vast majority of players find satisfaction in senseless vicarious violence, *i.e.*, killing another player's favorite character, or splatting helpless baby orcs against a wall. These mental giants take a great deal of pleasure in random acts of stupidity and abuse any game they play in. They cannot create, so they destroy. The solution to any dilemma is the edge of a sword, and their constant chant of "Did I go up a level? I need some more awesome powers to threaten the other players with," is detrimental to any sys-

tem. The Gamemaster who puts up with players like these has my sympathy, but not my respect. The creative mind *creates!*

Good roleplaying is the ability to play at a role. Great actors create a character that is believable and involves the audience, sometimes to tears, if the performance is portrayed properly. While it is true that some actors play themselves, in an endless series of roles, and are very successful, the truly great ones can play almost any role. It makes little difference if the player is a gunfighter, or a cleric, or the sole survivor of a future race, the requirements are still the same. Good role playing is the result of creative interaction between the players and the Gamemaster.

Several weeks ago, I had the pleasure of playing in a game of *Thieves Guild* run by Kerry Lloyd. I mention the name of the system because it allows players to play Pixies as a character class. Marsha, one of the finer players in our club, decided to "run a Pixie". This Pixie was definitely not the usual level headed, non-nonsense character she often plays. She portrayed Trixie the Pixie, with the attention span of a three year old, curious about everything, and an absolute bubble head. Thurb, my dwarvish fighter, was a battle-hardened veteran who tolerated no foolishness. Thurb expected

instant obedience, with a strict adherence to marching order, and caution. Within five minutes of game time, Trixie had my dwarf pulling out his beard and banging his head against the walls. A typical conversation went as follows:

Thurb: Here, Trixie, fly this rope over to the hobbit hanging from the pit, before he falls!

Trixie: How come they're called hobbits? Are ropes good to eat? Trixie's hungry!

Thurb: Hurry, you little twit, before he falls!

Trixie: How come he doesn't just fly over like Trixie?

Thurb: Because he don't got no little sparkling wings, you boob!

Trixie: Why not? Trixie's got wings, are Trixie's wings pretty? What's a Boob?

Thurb: Nice Trixie, sure they're pretty and if you fly the rope over to the hobbit, Thurb will give you a bright shiny gold piece. (and, (mumble) rip your little \*%# wings off).

Trixie: OK!

Hobbit: Thank goodness! Quick, gimme the rope, I'm slippin'.

Trixie: Dwarf didn't say to give rope, just to fly it over, Trixie not want him to get mad again. Trixie will fly back and ask, Ok? Bye Bye.

Hobbit: "No, oh please, no, come back here you little Ahhhhhhhhh!"

Marsha was role playing. She had my poor dwarf in tears, but I had a very enjoyable evening. Numerous players I know would have killed the pixie and gone to "serious" adventuring.

My point is this: we were seriously adventuring, yet Marsha was able to constantly risk the little bubble head by flying into rooms first, poking around boxes, and taking horrible chances. She did these things because that's how a Pixie is supposed to be played. Anyone could have played the Pixie character as a miniature Conan, or Scaramouche, but few could have shown the creativity that Marsha exhibited. Of course I will hate her forever, and the hobbit, may the Gods rest his tiny spirit, has probably placed a small death curse on her. The important thing is we all had a good time.

Creativity is also the ability of the

players and Gamemaster to think their way out of tight spots without having to reach for a weapon.

The situation is this:

Your character is a thief. You are industriously plying your trade when a large hand clamps over yours. You look up into the violet eyes of Merridor, the high-level mage. You presently have your hand in his pocket. What do you do? (Answers next month.)

Well, in the coming months I hope to discuss city campaigns, creating intelligent NPC's, the village idiot as a player class, why you shouldn't play yourself, creative lying to high level characters, and numerous other important topics that aren't covered in the handbooks of the role playing systems.

In other words, I hope to supply supplements on creative thinking for any Universe. If I can get you to think about some of the different aspects of Fantasy Role Playing, maybe there won't be as many "Slash n' Hackers" or monster lovers. Until then "Help, Mr. Wizard".

26

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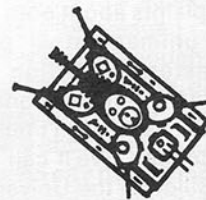
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## Hardware Wars *cont'd from p. 22*

be up to several feet long and will cut anything. Note that objects protected by stasis (at least in Niven's stories) can go through stars and impact planets at high velocities with no effect. Best explanation for the stasis field I have is that it is an alteration of probability. There is never a 100.00% certainty that something will affect something else. The stasis field alters that probability so that it doesn't. (I hope that that wasn't too confusing.)

Force knife, blade, axe, sword—a melee weapon that generates a force field in the shape of the particular blade specified. Generator and power source are in the handle. Capabilities vary from the ability to cut anything to the ability to cut internal organs of the body without marking the skin.

Ion cannon—from *The Empire Strikes Back*. Taken at face value, a large beam weapon that fires a bolt or beam of ions. An ion, by the way, is an atom with its electrons stripped partially or fully away, or with too many electrons. This suggests either that it is a modified particle accelerator or a fusion cannon. (The high temperatures of plasma strip electrons away from atoms.) I suggest that you treat it like a very powerful fusion gun.

Stun gun—energy weapon that produces unconsciousness. This could be done by "shutting down" the brain or nerve shock/overload. Effect is usually produced either with sonics, ultrasonics, occasionally infrasonics, or with electromagnetic fields. Stun weapons range from grenades to handguns to cannons.

And that, finally, I hope, is that. Everything you never wanted to know about energy weapons so you didn't ask. Questions, class? Oh, shucks, there's not enough time (sigh of relief)! Too bad. Remember, the exam is Thursday, and next time we meet, the topic will be spacesuits and armor.

Have a nice day.

---

## OFF THE WALL *cont'd from p. 2*

*This malady is known to strike gamers without a moment's notice. It usually happens when two gamers possessing similar interests get to conversing about said interest. For example, two "tankers" meet, and begin to discuss armor thicknesses, gun velocities, armor slopes, penetration ability of gun, ground-weights, etc. To the non-"tanker" chanc-*

*ing to overhear the conversation, it is just so much gibberish. Observation of the conversant pair would show heads together, speech patterns accelerating, and a general high level of excitement. They are twitching. The same phenomenon manifests itself when a chance remark about ancient chariots, for example, prompts a bystander to suddenly discourse at great length on how the Babylonians had the first spring suspensions, and are therefore entitled to move faster, or over rougher terrain, etc.*

I am as big a twitcher as anyone I know.

One must walk in the way of twitch to recognize it.

---

## Up Against The Wall . . . The Magazine That Wouldn't Die . . .

*(Those of you that subscribe are asked to bear with me through some of the following—some of this is already known to you from the notes we put in the last mailing.)*

Manzakk was funded by another company in getting it off the ground last July. The other company owned half of the stock, and I owned half. For reasons of their own, the other company became no longer willing to bear the financial responsibility. (AG *nearly dies the first time* . . .)

A couple of other companies were interested in Manzakk, but wanted to move the operation east, which I was loathe to do. (AG *nearly dies a second time* . . .)

By the time both of the other parties had been talked with and ultimately turned down, operations had been suspended for a couple of weeks, and time was running out. Rumors surfaced, most of them far off the beam. (AG *goin' down for the third time* . . .)

It was now becoming apparent that if AG was to survive, it was up to your kindly editor to put something together. I took stock of the situation: AG was showing healthy signs of growth; advertiser support was strong; numerous figures in the industry had given me great encouragement to try to keep it going, as they were fond of the magazine and wished to see an independent voice not be stilled; we had money owed us; we owed lots of money; we had no cash flow at all; I

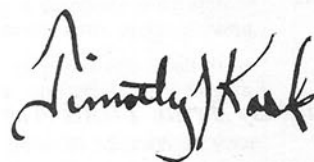
was not making much money; I was working ridiculously long hours; I had two very lucrative job offers; I enjoyed AG and was proud of it. (AG *was looking deader all the time* . . .)

Luckily for all of us reading this, I'm an inveterate glutton for abuse. That last entry in the long preceding list was worth as much as all the others. I found five small investors (not one of 'em is more than 4'6") and we bought out the founding/funding company's interest.

So, what does all of this bode for you, the readers, you wonder? Good question. . . First and foremost, it means that AG is now the only total hobby magazine on the market that is truly independent. We join a select few—*THE COURIER* is independent, but primarily a miniatures/historical magazine; *CAMPAIGN* is independent, but primarily a board/historical magazine that sometimes delves into the mysteries of miniatures and fantasy. AG stands alone in editorial direction and market served.

While I feel no particular compunction to become a "voice in the wilderness", it seems that that role has been thrust upon us—perhaps even expected of us. We feel it important that one voice does exist that can be taken at face value. In the future, if we praise a product, you the readers need not wonder what ulterior motive we hold in doing so. Conversely, if we rip a product, you needn't consider that we might have done it because of some vested interest that we hold in some competing product. Like most editors and publishers before me, my only two concerns are that we keep you the readers buying and reading AG and we keep the advertisers mollified and give them fair and equitable treatment.

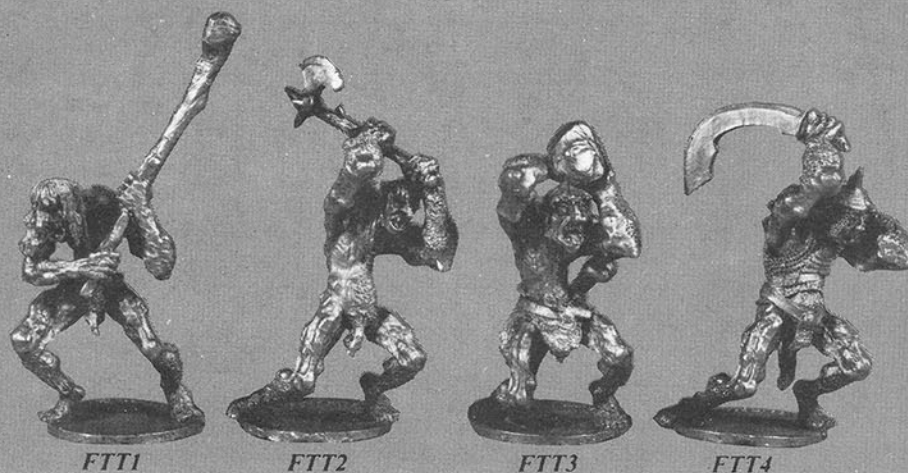
This does not portend AG turning into a "preachy" magazine. We will continue to push those games and systems we feel have merit. We will continue to do just about everything we have done in the past, with a few surprises. We already feel that AG is the best gaming magazine published—our next goal is growth.



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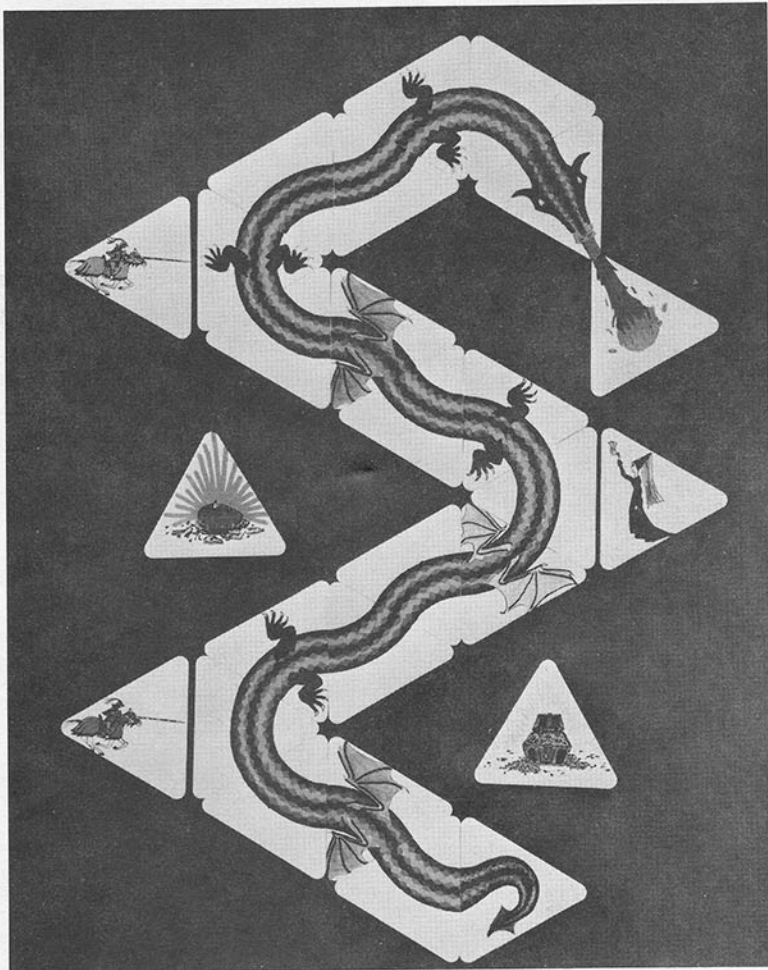
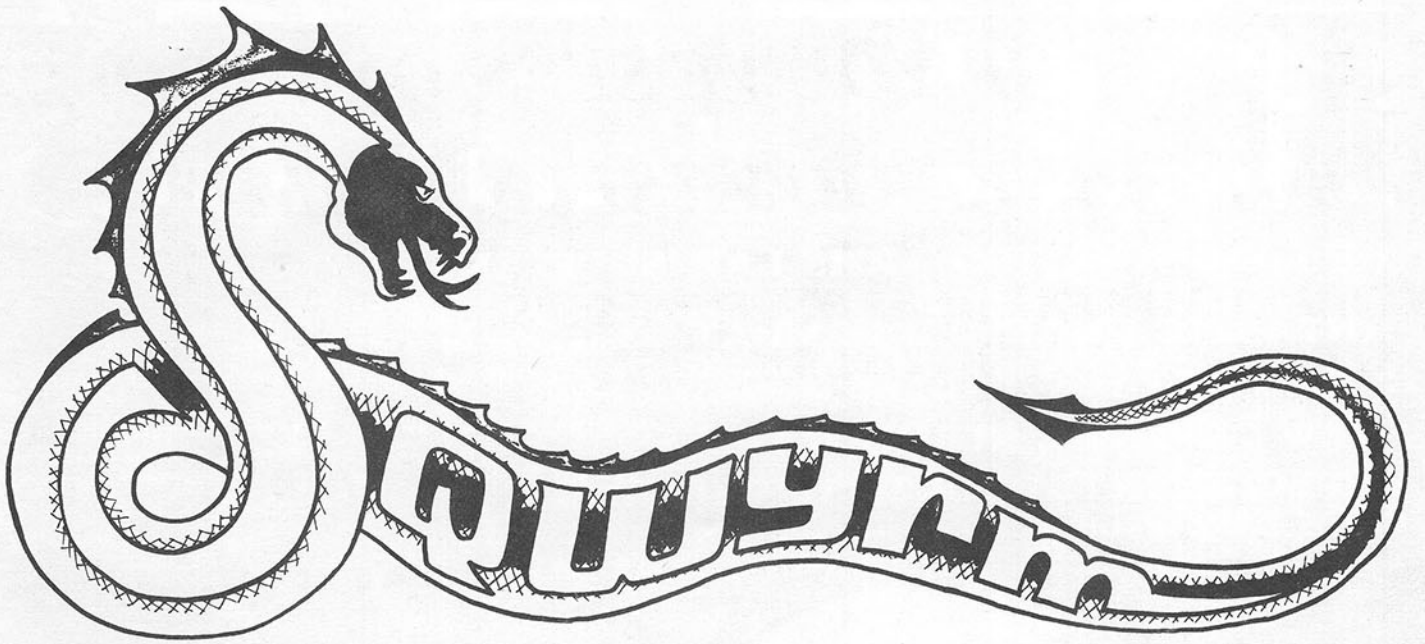
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