

GENERAL

★ AVALON HILL

Volume 22, Number 2



The AVALON HILL GENERAL

The Avalon Hill Game Company's *GENERAL* is dedicated to the presentation of authoritative articles on the strategy, tactics, and variation of our games of skill. Historical articles are included only inasmuch as they provide useful background information on current AH titles. The *GENERAL* is published by The Avalon Hill Game Company solely for the cultural edification of the serious game aficionado, in the hopes of improving the game owner's proficiency of play and providing services not otherwise available to the game buff. The Avalon Hill Game Company is a division of Monarch Avalon Industries, Inc. The shares of Monarch Avalon, Inc. are publicly traded on the NASDAQ System under the symbol MAHI. For information about the company write to Martha Burman at the executive offices at the company, 4517 Harford Rd., Baltimore, MD 21214.

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AH Philosophy Part 110

It has been a while since the designers/developers here at The Avalon Hill Game Company let the readership peer over their shoulders, so I pestered them until they finally jotted down some random thoughts on works in progress. All are involved in original design at this point in time, so it may be some time before the following games actually appear. However, as an appetizer, here's a glance at the menu for next year.

Looking back at the bit of puffery I pounded out last year (Vol. 21, No. 1), I found to my horror that I couldn't just copy it verbatim as two of the four projects (*FIREPOWER* and "Thunder in the East"—since retitled *RUSSIAN FRONT*) had

actually been published. The other two projects mentioned are still in the works (or "up in the air", depending on your point of view). To them have been added a few other projects to keep me from sleeping nights:

STURMOVIK, the final gamette of the *AIR FORCE* series, should be out by the end of 1985. The biggest obstacle here is just clearing the incredible amount of Art Department time that is required to finish 60 of those multi-colored Data Cards.

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RUSSIAN FRONT



On 22 June 1941 the *Blitzkrieg* was unleashed on the Soviet Union. Initial operations engulfed the entire front, and by late in the year the German forces had overrun the Ukraine and were at the gates of Moscow and Leningrad. The onset of severe winter weather and Soviet counterattacks and defensive measures finally halted these drives and even regained some ground. But the year 1942 saw a renewed Axis offensive drive all the way to Stalingrad, only to be surrounded and destroyed there by another Soviet winter counteroffensive. In 1943 the weakened German forces were repulsed at Kursk and suffered the onset of the "Russian Steamroller" offensives that, during the next year-and-a-half, drove the Axis forces from the soil of *Mother Russia*.

RUSSIAN FRONT is the new Avalon Hill Game Company release that re-creates the ebb and flow to the largest, longest and most costly military campaign of World War II. The game covers the entire vast theater of operations and the massive forces employed by the Soviet Union and by Nazi Germany and her allies. The four-page Basic Rules allow players to quickly start playing the game and mastering the unique system. The Advanced and Optional rules then allow skilled players to choose the levels of complexity and detail they prefer.



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Unique Combat System: Combat occurs *within* a hex, units take incremental losses, and battles can require more than one round for resolution.

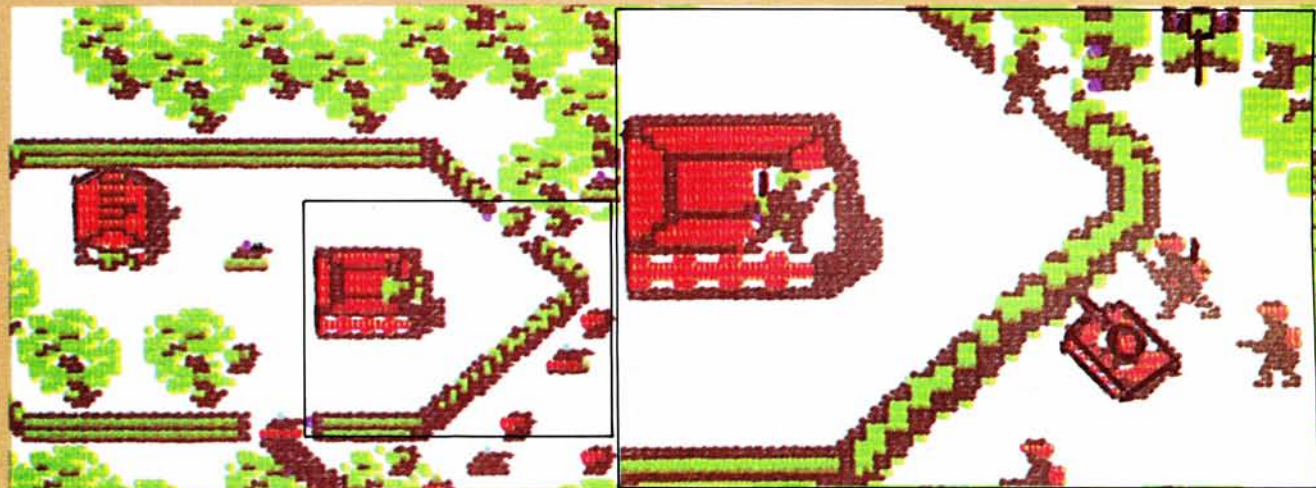
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Blitzkrieg: Armor units may break through defensive fronts to drive deep into enemy territory.

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Russian infantry squads attack revealed German positions. Strategic and Tactical Maps are shown FULL SIZE.

UNDER FIRE!®

It was quiet under the blistering Russian sun except for the rumble of gunfire off through the hills. Through his binoculars, the Soviet lieutenant could see the road leading into the dacha. The hedge blocked his view of most of the ground, and nothing could be seen moving among the second story windows. His orders were to take his squads and three T34/76 tanks in and occupy the abandoned country house.

From the wheatfields of Russia to the hedgerows of northern France, this is the world of **Under Fire**, the game of tactical World War II combat. Commanding an array of armor, infantry and support guns, take your men into the razor's edge of combat.

The lieutenant stood up and waved his arm in a circle. Around him arose fifty men who deployed in a line. Silently, they passed through the cool woods toward the hedge, their eyes scanning the windows, their fingers calmly resting on the trigger guards of their rifles.

Men and weapons from the United States, Germany and the Soviet Union are represented. The map is a topographic recreation of the ground they fought over, shown in three different scales. Choose the situational map for the strategic flow of battle, or the tactical screen that shows the terrain in amazing detail.

They were 30 meters from the hedge when the land exploded in smoke and flame. A machine-gun nest spoke from a window, sending the patrol to the earth. The hissing rocket from a panzerfaust caused one of the tanks to explode, its crew bailing out of all hatches. Two Panther tanks moved out from under their cover. The lieutenant ran forward in a crouch, waving to the squads that were not pinned under fire to follow.

Front line combat is never predictable. Hidden units can appear out of nowhere, attack and vanish again. If caught in the open, a green squad can break and suffer horrendous casualties, while veterans rush for cover. In **Under Fire**, squads are rated for morale and training. The computer handles all line-of-sight problems, and can direct the fire of your units if you wish. Without the complexities of figuring odds and terrain charts, finding the proper strategy depends upon instinct and experience. All of the uncertainties of combat are present.

The lieutenant and his patrol moved swiftly and methodically through the woods. One of the T34's entered the yard and was trading shots with the Panther. A German squad was suddenly flushed from their hidden position and was cut down by the tank's machine gun.

Under Fire, lets you begin play immediately! All orders are entered using simple keyboard or joystick commands, and there is a helpful tutorial in the rulebook to take you step-by-step into your first battle.

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Joystick required for II+; optional for IIe and IIc. Mockingboard™ optional.

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UNIT SCALE: infantry squad, individual tanks, guns.

PLAYERS: One or two; recommended for team play.

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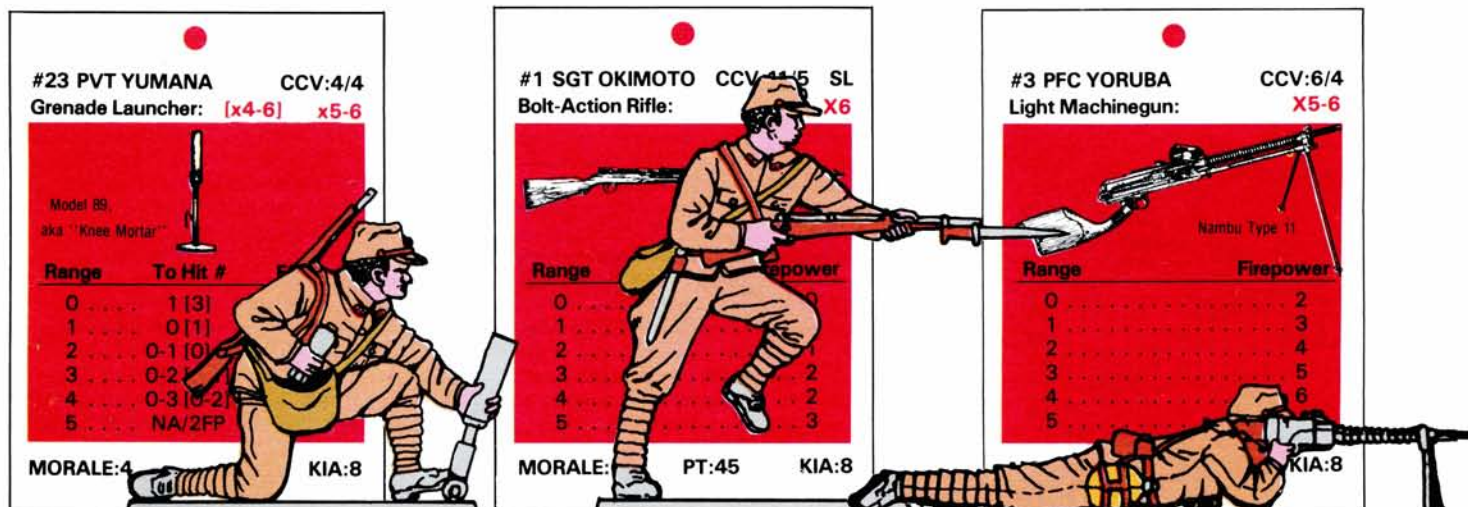
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RETURN TO THE FRONT

A Look at the Scenarios of UP FRONT and BANZAI

By James Burnett and Ron Whaley

BANZAI is the first expansion gamette in the *UP FRONT* system. The addition of more nationalities to the system is accompanied by a larger variety of scenarios. The following article is intended to build upon the commentary found in *The GENERAL* (Vol. 21, No. 1) a year ago. First we will consider the added nationalities and rules.

JAPANESE

As Don Greenwood said in an earlier article in these pages ("Playing Your Cards UpFront"), the Japanese are an interesting nationality to play. The four-card hand might seem a severe limitation to someone who hasn't studied the Japanese in some depth, or seen them in action. Actually, that four-card hand often plays as if they were five or six. One of the reasons is that the Japanese rarely have to keep a Cover card in their hand for more than one turn. The free discard of such cards takes care of this. Secondly, if their only actions consist of movement, they may still discard unwanted cards in that turn. It's not unusual for the Japanese player to use all four cards in his hand in one turn. This being the case, he rarely has a card in his hand that he doesn't want for any length of time.

Since the Japanese use the Russian split-action cards, they have the best Movement and Concealment capabilities in the game. They are penalized, however, in the areas of Smoke and Rally cards.

The Japanese squad enjoys high integrity. They have the highest morale values of any nationality, and the squad itself does not break until the casualty toll reaches 75%. That makes them very tough opponents with great staying power. Many times they will be able to stay in a game—or even win it—because of this fortitude.

Infiltration is easier for the Japanese than for any other nationality and they have higher Close Combat values. Both attributes are very helpful for the close-in fighting in which they naturally try to involve themselves.

The rest of the ledger is not as pleasant for the Japanese. They must be at relative Range 2 or better to mount any significant fire attacks. Their opponents, the US and British, can commence fire at Range 1. The Japanese will rarely get off the first shot. Nor can they expect to enjoy any other advantages at closer ranges except sheer numbers. The

lack of a machine pistol cuts down on their Range 5 firepower.

Their weaponry is, without a doubt, the worst in the system. As depicted, the rifles have poor range and are slightly harder to repair. The Medium Machine Gun, Grenade Launcher, and Anti-Tank Rifle have worse To Hit and firepower numbers than their equivalents in other nationalities. The MMG and ATR are heavy weapons and require two men to move; the ATR is the only one in the system which requires a crewman. The Japanese have no Semi-Automatic Rifle and their Machine Pistol is effectively non-existent. The Guns are less effective against armor than others. The only weapon which approaches respectability is the Light Machine Gun. Its firepower is as good as the British and better than the American BAR, it mounts a bayonet, and it does not require a crewman.

The most unique characteristic of the Japanese is the *Banzai* tactic. It confers an *automatic* rally and *automatic* Close Combat entry on any group with a Squad Leader or Assistant Squad Leader. All that is required is a single Movement card. These advantages do not come without grave risks. A *Banzai* attack is committed to Close Combat to the finish. While approaching the enemy group, the attackers are very vulnerable to fire. The attack is, therefore, usually decisive in a game. Either the attackers or the defenders are completely annihilated, often terminating the game. Who will be the eventual winner, however, is rarely predictable in these circumstances.

The *Banzai* tactic is therefore a two-edged sword that is not to be casually wielded. Success requires a subtle combination of the right situation, timing, and luck. Of course, if the game situation is such that the Japanese player expects defeat anyway, it should be employed. There are other possibilities, however. Suppose, for instance, that the Japanese have just managed to pin a number of personnel, including the SL, in an opposing British group at RR5. In his turn, the British player pins some of the Japanese with fire from another group, but takes no other action. Obviously, the British player has no Rally cards and can't draw any because his hand capacity is currently reduced to four cards. The Japanese player's hand contains a Movement card, but no Rally or useable Fire cards. He may also be

down one card in hand (to three). If a *Banzai* attack is declared, the Japanese rally and can take on the pinned group next turn with both hands even at four. Obviously, this is a contrived situation which doesn't happen in every game; but when it does occur, one should recognize the possibilities present.

In summary, it isn't difficult to predict what the Japanese player will do in most scenarios. His advantage lies in moving to close the range as quickly as possible, and utilizing the infiltration and Close Combat capabilities to good effect. He can often do this well because of the integrity and high morale of the squad. The Japanese will be tough and determined opponents if played correctly, and should not be taken lightly.

BRITISH

The British hand is an amalgam of US and German. One card poorer than the US and less flexible than the German since there is no opportunity to play and discard; there is, however the advantage of using the split actions of both, giving less Cover than the Americans and more Smoke than the Germans. The overriding advantage is their unique increase in firepower. Being able to use a card one higher than the available firepower factors is more of an advantage than it seems, especially for small groups. The graph in Figure 1 shows this as a percent of increase in actual fire effects. The graph plots the firepower factors of a group versus its increase in expected fire strength. This is derived by multiplying the number of useable cards (for single card fire only) times the average fire strength of those cards and comparing the British fire strength with that of all others. Even for normal size groups at long range, this represents an almost 50% gain and it never drops below 10%.

In weapon comparison, especially with their main foe, the Germans, the British usually come out just slightly behind. For the LMG, the British has just slightly lesser effect at long ranges but greater at short ranges (we are adding in the extra rifle fire available because the British LMG does not require a crew member, and the extra British firepower advantage). This is mitigated by the possibility—although slight—of the Black RNC Hero card showing up. All in all, an equivalent weapon, since the ability to do without a crew is worth more than it

may seem. The MMG lacks these advantages, however, but it does have equal firepower across the board (due again to the plus one firepower). The Mortar and ATR are both less accurate than the German, but the Flamethrower is equivalent.

In anti-tank weapons, the British player also comes off second best. The PIAT requires no crew, a plus, but has less punch than the Panzerschreck and is more likely to break (but easier to repair). There is no weapon similar to the Panzerfaust, just as the infantry has no assault rifle. The AT guns do have more armor piercing ability than their German counterparts (2 lb. only), but no significant HE capabilities.

All in all, the British will require more skill in handling than their opponents, but the volume of fire they are able to exert should more than make up for the other deficiencies if used correctly.

MARINES

The Marines added to the US capability in *BANZAI* are essentially the same as the regular US forces. The two new leader cards (#42 and #43) are the equivalent in morale of #18 and #20; identical except they must use bolt action rifles. Smith, Watson, and Crain (numbers 6, 10, and 24) receive a morale boost to two for being Marines if their cards are used. The big difference is the availability of three BARs in scenarios N, P, Q, V, W and X—greatly enhancing the firepower of US forces. This occasionally will be less of a benefit than it may seem, since it forces the US player to separate the BARs, thus requiring three groups—a disadvantage if only two were considered optimal for a game. The Marines, then, are no better nor worse per se than that regular US army troops, just different . . . so adding another dimension to the game.

JUNGLE

Jungle terrain is for the most part the friend of the defender. The high defense values (conceivably -9 with a -3 for Jungle, -3 Concealed, -2 for Smoke and an entrenchment) help both players. But any lessened ability to cause casualties is always a boon to the defender, who usually wants to get through the deck as quickly as possible. For the attacker, ease of advance from good terrain and increased chances for infiltration are balanced by the inability to refuse Marsh. We would suggest a modification to Rule 47.4 in that the play of a Marsh on these groups results in an automatic refusal with the inherent penalties to the movement status.

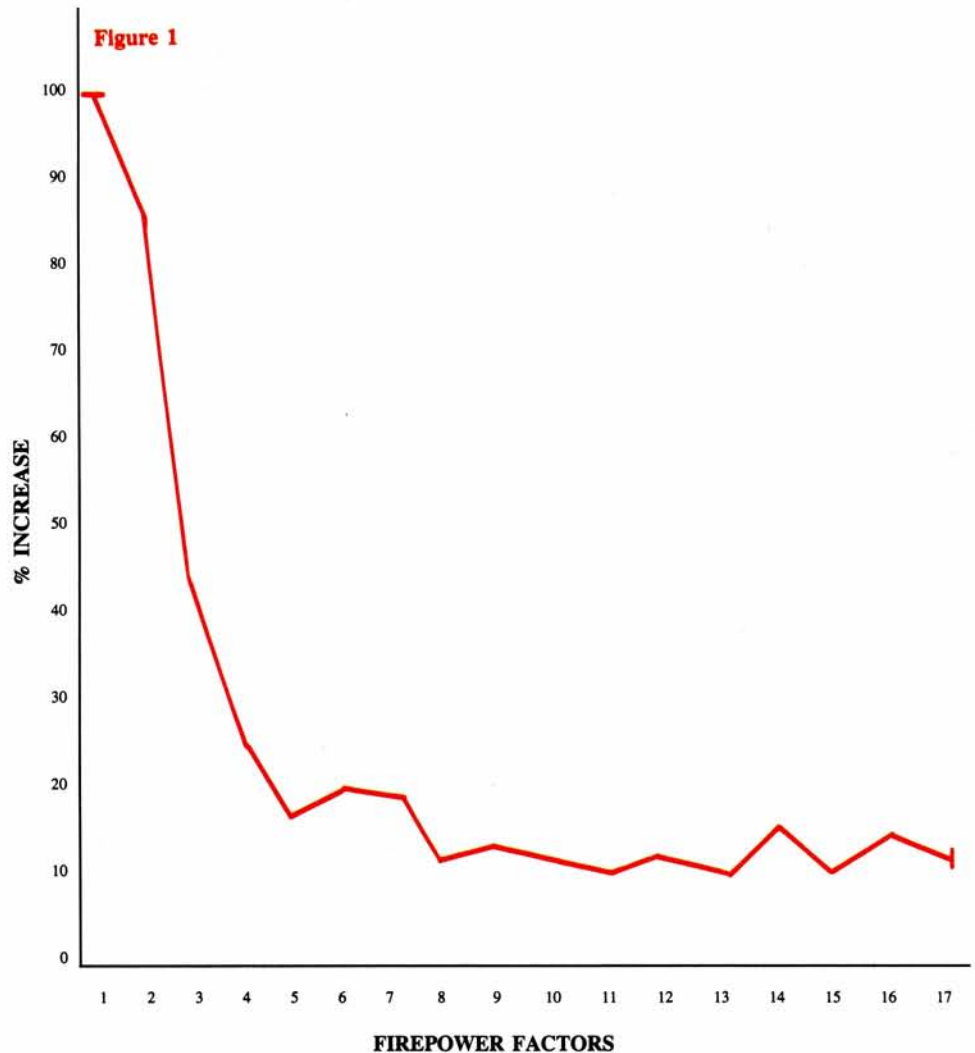
SCENARIOS

The *BANZAI* scenarios covered below include all those available in the gamette except the Patrol-type engagements (A, M and N) covered so thoroughly in Vol. 21, No. 1. Each scenario is coupled with its counterpart in *UP FRONT*. Other scenarios not included in either of these categories are also covered.

The following hints and suggestions are based on the experiences of our group. As usual, your own may have been different. The *UP FRONT* game system places most of its importance on the ability to do the best with what is dealt in rapidly changing circumstances. Knowledge of your opponent's characteristics and insight into when to act and when to bluff are just as important as tactics. In general, success will come to those players best prepared in the most areas. Experience is undoubtedly the best teacher. This said, let us share our experience . . .

PILLBOX: Scenario C

This scenario features a charge against a strongly prepared position. We have previously proposed in these pages (Vol. 21, No. 4) a modification to the start which requires the defender to set up first. This alleviates a few problems and more accurately



reflects the normal status of a positional defense.

Even with the above suggestion, the job for the attacker is still tough, but not impossible. Since the probable defense set-up is a small group in "A", the Pillbox in "B" (possibly containing the MMG) and a large group in "C", the attacker has two choices. The Pillbox can be assaulted directly or the squad can be broken with an attack on "C". If the MMG is in the Pillbox, it is perhaps best to go for the break of the squad with a flanking attack on "C". If "C" seems to have the MMG and other superior firepower, an attack against the Pillbox through "A" is a viable alternative. In any case, you definitely need a fire group and an assault group. The long-range weapons will have to be used successfully before any close-range movement can be attempted. At the least, you shouldn't expose troops for any length of time without Smoke or Concealment cards, good terrain to move from and/or to and, if possible, a Rally card just to cover any accidents.

Beginning the game with just two groups in "A" and "B" (fire and assault) may sound like a good idea, but they will have to move laterally if you are to have a go at "C". It must be remembered that the defender has full terrain privileges and can dump the dreaded Marsh and Minefield cards on you at any time. If you wish to attempt to break the squad then, a two-man throw-away group must be put in "A" to allow you to place your firepower in "B" and your assaulters in "C". For a frontal attack on the Pillbox, the fire group in "B" and the rest in "A" will work.

There is a good chance that the defender will try to transfer the MMG to whichever of his groups is threatened. If possible, your firebase should have

a Fire card available to prevent this. Remember that for someone to enter the Pillbox, someone else must exit. Fire on any one of these at a +2 modifier can ruin your opponent's whole scheme. If you advance on "C", the defender may pull back to RR -1. If you charge the Pillbox, he may conversely try to move up one range. Try to pin him as he moves. Advance after reaching RR 3 will have to be very deliberate, but you must eventually close to make use of the FT and DC. Even if you are attempting to win by "squad break", maintain at least a threat against the Pillbox. If you are facing the Japanese, destruction of the Pillbox may well be the only way possible for a win. This destruction should not depend on the DC, but this weapon can provide an edge to pin the group inside before finishing them off with the FT. A flank attack from "A" will prove most effective. Just wait for more than one Fire card to really boost the fire strength.

Although the Pillbox in this scenario is very strong defensive terrain and is certainly welcomed by the defender, it does not come without some liabilities attendant. It must be placed in group "B", effectively splitting the defending forces on either side of it. The "C" position cannot be left unused, because no defense against flanking movements could be mounted from "A" or "B" without slow individual transfers. Group "B" cannot move anywhere by itself without abandoning the Pillbox and automatically losing the game. Group "A" cannot move around "B" to get to "C". This simply means that you must stretch your squad into three groups to cover your flank.

For those defenders fortunate enough to be equipped with a MMG, the obvious question during set-up is where to put it. It would be well pro-

tected in the Pillbox. However, because only three men can be stationed there, a large fire group cannot be formed around this weapon. Greater fire values can be obtained in other groups, although at a greater risk to the MMG.

The attacker's set-up has great bearing on this decision (but not if the defender sets up first as mentioned above). If his forces are arrayed in such a way as to facilitate flanking movements, then the MMG should be placed in Group "C" to counter those. If, however, a frontal assault appears in the offing, the weapon may be better placed in "B". If the defender is required to set up first, then a possible Japanese beginning is 5-3-5 with the MMG in "B".

Against the Japanese, American and British defenders should use a 2-2-3 or 2-2-4, respectively. The MMG is placed in group "B", and the other two-man group transfers a man to the Pillbox as the scenario begins. Against the Germans, the Americans don't even have a MG to place anywhere. They should employ a 3-2-5 set-up with the BAR outside the Pillbox. The Germans must make do with a LMG. They should use a 2-3-3 set-up and use individual transfer to change it to a 1-3-4 or even a 0-3-5. Against the Russians, they not only face the usual equipment for attackers in this scenario but another MMG. This makes the German wish to hide as many valuable assets as possible in the Pillbox. The Russians defend with a LMG, also. Their set-up is probably best at 4-3-6.

There is very little mystery concerning the course of events in this scenario. The attacker will advance cautiously, hoping to withstand fire attacks, and attempt to break the squad or crack the Pillbox with the DC or FT. The defender should use Wire, Stream, Marsh and Sniper cards to slow the advance while accumulating good Fire cards. The defender is also blessed with another very excellent card, the Minefield. Not only does this card cause delay, but it also attacks the group it is discarded on. A particularly nasty German tactic is to pin some members of an attacking group with fire and then discard the Minefield on them. This usually results in some KIAs and Routs and should delay the advance of this group for some time. Priority targets for fire and discards are the men with the DC and FT.

As for the strengths or weaknesses of the various nationalities when on defense, the Japanese are the hardest to break and do have a LMG, but their enhanced mobility is of no real help here and consequently their hand can seem to shrink at times. The Americans and British have the MMG against the Japanese. The American hand of six cards should help them accumulate Fire and delaying Terrain cards; the British will have to rely on their firepower bonus. The ability to act and discard will certainly aid the Germans, but they will find their squad to be very small. The Russians do have a large squad, but they are again hurt by the small hand.

EVACUATION: Scenario P

The evacuation scenario is of inherent interest because of its dual nature—allowing a win to be obtained in differing ways for different sides. This makes the early game choices crucial to success. The scenario also is of interest because the sides start at other than relative Range 0, giving an advantage to the side that is best prepared at the start.

At first glance, this scenario would appear to be a variation of the "Meeting of Patrols". It might be better for the attacker if it were only that. The defender, however, can elect to begin retreating in an attempt to get two wounded men to RR 0 for an automatic win. If he chooses that option, he will leave a rear guard behind to slow the attack. A paucity of Movement cards at the wrong time could spell disaster. Fortunately, such a tactic by your opponent is not without great risk, because he leaves the door open for your advance to RR 5 and the

win—if you can just manage to maintain contact with his retreating groups.

Although the defender can attempt to win this way at any time, his best chance will be at the start of the game. The attacker will find himself still a long way from RR 5 and may not have had the time to acquire Movement cards or disadvantageous terrain cards with which to slow the retreat. A way for the attacker to discourage this tactic is to place a two-man group in "D" position, poised to maintain contact by advancing rapidly on the flank while the other groups deal with any obstacles in their way. The Russians and the Japanese should definitely plan on this tactic since they not only have plenty of manpower, but also plenty of Movement cards and a lack of long-range firepower. The rest of the attacking groups should consist of the usual small group in "A", a fire group in "B", and an advance group in "C".

During play, the attacker must advance with some caution. Ideally, a Movement card (preferably a Ford) should be kept in the hand to deal with emergencies such as Stream and Wire. Should a Stream, Marsh, or Wire card happen to come your way, it should be held to be played at an opportune time in catching the defender during a move where he can ill afford to be caught in the open.

No nationality has a dominating advantage in this scenario. The Russians and Japanese have the advantage of movement and manpower as usual, but the small hand makes it difficult to store enough cards to plan for any emergency. The British will have a very tough time chasing the Japanese and can only hope to slow him down with firepower. The American hand size will have to cover their own handicaps. At least they will be able to work with some plan in mind. The Germans may find the Russians a bit much to handle, but the ability to act and discard should hold them in good stead if the right terrain cards come their way.

The defender should realize that he has three ways to win. Breaking an opponent's squad is one obvious way, but this is a choice based on ongoing game conditions and in this scenario should not be an actual part of the game plan. Whether to go for the win by standing fast or retreating is a decision which must be made earlier in the game, however. A three-group set-up is recommended. Since at least three are required, this is a minimum. Four groups will merely add one man to the wound list and require more cards to organize a successful escape. Base a defensive group in "B" consisting of half of your force with the LMG. This will give an adequate fire-base. Split the rest of the squad with two in "A" and the remainder in "C" to guard against a flank attack.

Now to decide how to proceed. Remember that (1) you don't need a red RNC move card for retreat until you reach Range Chit 0; (2) opposing groups "A" and "C" are already at RR 1 to each other; and (3) wounds will not become fatal due to an end of deck draw. Nationalities also play a part in the decision making process. The Soviet and Japanese players both have plenty of Movement cards with which to organize a retreat. They even have a possibility of winning in three turns if all goes perfectly. They should start with the idea, at least, of win in this manner. Terrain received on the deal should have been allotted to "A" and "C". All other nationalities have better fire than movement possibilities and should therefore, give "B" as much advantage as possible at the start and prepare to defend with fire. Groups "A" and "C" should plan to fall back to Range Chit 0 anyway. This may force the attacker to move in response, to his detriment. This is always of value if the Russians or Japanese are the attackers. At RR 1 their firepower is minimal.

The game will, then, revolve about group "B". These are the men who will put out the fire that will either discourage the enemy or allow "A" and "C"

to escape. If the LMG owner is wounded, swap his weapon with the crewman (too bad US and British) immediately. This group must fire each time possible at the best target, giving priority to moving groups. Try to save a Rally card for them as they will probably be a target as well. The attacker will rarely win a game in which "B" is intact.

The defender, then, should operate from a position of threatening to win in whichever mode the attacker is not covering. If the attacker is forced to shuttle back and forth between victory threats, the defender can force his hand to either commit to his own destruction or run out of time.

DELAYING ACTION: Scenarios D/Q

In this scenario, the defender is trading space for time and the attacker is under pressure to advance as fast as possible.

The attacker in this scenario should realize that he is in a race with his opponent and is already behind. Combat is merely a means of slowing down the enemy in this race. Although the defender may use only those Movement cards with red RNCs to retreat away from you, there are quite a few of them in the deck; and he can employ Stream, Wire, and Sniper cards to confound your efforts to catch him. Unfortunately, those same cards are not available to the attacker.

So, aside from removing the movement cards with red RNCs from the deck when your opponent isn't looking, how does the attacker respond to this challenge? The most important soldier he owns has the mortar. This man should be a part of a two- or three-man (Russian and Japanese) group which will not plan to move for the entire game. Their job is to lob shells onto the defender's groups in hopes of a pin. Oddly enough, pinning two groups instead of killing one is better in this scenario, at least until the squad is near its breaking point. If you can keep pinning men, the defender will be forced to slow down to rally them and will have no place to use his Fire cards, thus keeping more cards in the deck. The third man in this crew is there in case a Sniper attack should happen to kill one of the others (the Japanese and Russians can always afford the extra man anyway). This group need not move because it is always at RR 0 to the defender's groups anyway.

The other squad members you have should be formed into two groups. Any larger number of groups requires too many Movement cards to keep them all in the chase. Whenever possible, concentrate long-range weapons such as LMGs and BARs in one of the groups to increase the chances of hitting your opponent from a distance. Unfortunately, this is not possible for the US under the new BAR Concentration rules.

The main activity of these two groups will be to move—quickly. They cannot afford to proceed carefully. They must move whether or not terrain is available, and they must be prepared to leave behind pinned men if necessary (i.e., no Rally cards available but good movement and terrain possibilities). They shouldn't even make a stop to fire until they have closed the range enough to have a good chance of pinning someone. All this does not change until reaching RR 3, at which time they can plan on more firing and more cautious advancing.

The attacker doesn't have to kill anyone to win the scenario. He can win by getting to RR 5 in good terrain. Therefore, a pin is as good as a kill early in the game. If you pin a group, use that opportunity to move or fire on the other group, depending upon your hand.

The Japanese seem best suited for this scenario. They are the most mobile nationality. They have higher morale, and can afford to leave behind more pinned men than anyone else. However, they do suffer from poor long-range firepower. They have the Banzai tactic. If a substantial number of personnel are pinned and cannot be left behind, and

there are no Rally cards, a Banzai attack can be very useful if the opposing group is not too far away. Suddenly, all those pinned men are available again. And, if the enemy group being attacked continues the retreat, the Banzai can be cancelled.

The US has lower morale and fewer Movement cards; but offsetting that is a larger hand, better firepower at long range, and a very good mortar. The British must rely on their firepower bonus to compensate for their relatively small squad. The German can always discard and has good To Hit numbers for his mortar. A lack of Movement cards with too much junk in his hand would be his downfall. The Russians also have good movement and discard capabilities, but poor firepower and thus must act somewhat like a Japanese without the Banzai.

The defender in the Delaying Action must take careful note of the capabilities and victory conditions bestowed by the scenario. All the attacker must do is attain RR 5. The defense must both survive his breaking point and stay out of harm's way. He has only to use the cards allotted to him to slow the attacker's advance. He should set up entrenched if at all possible.

The defense set-up will consist of two groups, with some of the rifles and the LMG in one and everyone else in the other. These groups should be of the same size so if one is totally destroyed, you will still be able to win with the other intact. Retreat must be done in an orderly fashion: first the LMG group, and then the other. Covering fire should be maintained at all times. Snipers could be played against the mortar group and all the detrimental terrain cards reserved for the attacker's point group.

Since movement is dependent on red RNC cards, it should be planned carefully. You do not have to move immediately upon drawing such a card. The attacker may be allowed to close the range somewhat. Since his mortar will probably stay at RR 0, you need only move on its account to break acquisition. You may wish to allow another group to move as close as RR 3 if you have retained a good Fire card and are in beneficial terrain. A good pinning shot here could allow you to then move back to RR 2 and set up again in terrain while he is rallying his group. This process can be repeated as long as you have the cards to do so. Remember, however, that you only have half of the available Movement cards which qualify for retreating motion. Use them wisely.

Particularly effective nationalities on the defense in this scenario are the Russians and Japanese because of their large number of both Movement cards and men. If need be, either one of these can afford at times to leave behind a pinned man if the retreat might otherwise be compromised. The Germans are also effective in this scenario because they can act and discard. It is disheartening to an attacker to be pinned by fire, see another group move farther away, and have a Sniper taking pot-shots at their mortar at the same time.

Balance is the key for the defender. Retreating evenly away, using fire to upset the attacker's plans, with a good set of discards will win the game.

PARATROOP DROP: Scenario R

This scenario will depend heavily on the initial set-up given to the attacker and the cards dealt; but it is almost always exciting and, due to the possibility of early short-range combat, is quite often short in length.

The attacker in the Paratroop must set up for the odds and hope for a bit of luck. The initial set-up for the US and USSR is relatively easy (2-2-4-4 and 3-4-4-4). For the British and German, things do not look so well. Both of these are probably best served by placing four men with machine pistols (one a leader) in one group and leaving three other groups with two men each. For the German, this means that the LMG will be left in a group alone with only

its own fire available. If the even chance of drawing the large group for "B" or "C" occurs, then at least a good threatening position can be established. If the Range Chit chosen by the defender is high, a large volume of firepower can be brought to bear; if low, you will have a group that must use movement to close range anyway. Even if a 2-2-3-3 start is chosen for these nationalities, the attacker should plan in all cases to set up in fire groups distinguished by long and short-range fire capabilities. This will at least put a small burden on the defender when he chooses the range chits for each group.

The four-man group theory makes sense when considering the victory conditions. The position at Range Chit 3 is also important. If one four-man group can get to this chit, a win can be obtained by a single man transfer from any other group adjacent at the same range. In this regard, a Gully card should be retained (if drawn) for one of those groups to duck in to. The long-range fire groups can be set to fire against a defender who will probably choose to advance if for no other reason than to thwart victory with infiltration.

Two other points need to be considered. First is the advantage of being Elite. This allows an action/discard turn which can be very valuable if the defender does try to advance. It also helps to alleviate the possibility of flanking fire—which the defender is prone to try if for no other reason than he has those excess Movement cards. Another is the possibility of getting Woods on the deal. The chance for error here is large if played upon set-up but the decision should be made according to the overall situation (all other groups at Range Chit 1 or less); there is a case to be made for starting a two-man group of LMG and crew in Woods. If both are Morale 4 men, this leaves them a 65% chance to go totally unharmed and then to be able to bring a decent amount of fire on the defender. Remember that, to protect his flank, he will probably have set up in three groups, thus lessening his own available fire strength. Needless to say, you can expect your opponent to discard the Woods card if he has other terrain to use and he can catch your largest group at long range. In general, however, you will be better off to retain this card for the first move; you'll need a good place to hide.

After the beginning, tactics will revert to that of patrol type scenarios, except that Fire cards will be more valuable due to the inevitable close ranges. The victory conditions after this are easier on the attacker since he must but get to Range Chit 3 to establish his position for a win. This assumes he survives the start; the most important portion of this scenario.

The defender in this scenario can dramatically influence his fortunes during set-up. Indeed, drawing and placing range chits is the most important single activity the defender will perform. Devising a strategy for this placement is not difficult. There are three rules or guidelines to follow. First, place low numbered range chits (0/-1, and 0/1) on strong or large (four-man) groups. Second, place high numbered chits (2/3 and 4/5) on weak or small groups. Finally, never place chits so that two adjacent groups can be at the same range if that range is 2 or greater.

Of course, fate will intervene and it may be difficult to follow these simple guidelines exactly. After all, a particularly unlucky defender could draw both 2/3 and 4/5 chits. The idea, however, is to maximize the amount of movement the paratroop player will need to assemble a five-man group and get it to the ranges specified in the victory conditions, and to isolate and quickly eliminate small or weak groups before the attacker can get his other groups into supporting positions.

The defender must form three groups, because the paratroop player's four groups could too easily flank a two-group squad. A fire group should be formed about the LMG or BAR in the "B" posi-

tion. This is most centrally located for firing at all opposing groups. Most of the personnel with high morale values should form in group "C". They will be best suited to maneuver and counter any flanking attempts. They can also move to a position to infiltrate opposing groups in "B", "C" or "D". Group "A" consists of what is left over, usually low morale personnel. Although the main purpose of this group is to take up space, it should not be overlooked. In the wild fire fight and melee which is to follow, it may be able to perform several valuable functions. Any actions made by this group will also allow the attacker to move more cards through his hand. Defensive group formations by nationality should look something like this; American 2-5-5, British 2-4-4, German 2-4-4, Japanese 4-5-4, and Russian 4-6-5.

If the defender is dealt any Woods terrain cards, he has the opportunity of placing them on one of the paratroop groups in hopes of wounding a man upon landing. He would probably be better served to keep it and shelter his own group. The higher morale of the paratroop squad should prevent wounding of any significant number of men. On the other hand, Woods terrain could be very useful to the defender's groups as they move forward or attempt infiltration. About the only exception to this is if the attacker threatens to win early due to unfortunate chit draws.

During play, the defender should attempt to move forward to Range 2 if possible. Ideally, the fire group takes up residence on a Hill in order to fire down at the approaching attackers, and the maneuver group should run to Woods or other good terrain to allow easy infiltration if required.

Any paratroop groups that begin at RR 3, 4 or 5 should be eliminated as quickly as possible. If range chit placements were done according to plan, these groups should be the small, low-morale groups. If so, the quickest way to dispatch them is through infiltration and Close Combat. A Japanese player can accomplish this job rapidly by declaring a Banzai. He can do this providing he is already at Range 5 to the targeted group, no other enemy groups are in effective firing range, and the targeted group is so out-numbered that the odds are very favorable for the conclusion of the Banzai attack in one turn. If in doubt, don't do it.

As often as possible, the defender should be discarding Stream, Wire, Marsh and Sniper cards on all long-range attackers to slow their approach to a crawl. Prime Sniper targets are the Squad Leader and LMG or BAR.

If the worst happens and the paratroops all land at Ranges 3, 4 or 5, the defender should get into Close Combat as quickly as possible. Throw caution to the wind, there is nothing to lose and all to win. Remember how quickly the attacker can obtain a win if posted at these ranges.

The Russians and Japanese may have a slight edge as defenders in this scenario. They have large squads and can afford some losses. The large Russian squad and the high Japanese morale usually spell success in Close Combat. Both of these nationalities do however have poor firepower and must close range rapidly for success with only fire weapons. Fortunately, they both have many Movement cards to use; but should this fail them, the game will get out of hand quickly. The Americans have a fairly large squad but fewer Movement cards and low morale. Their higher firepower can offset these disadvantages. The Germans must make their ten-man squad stretch into three groups. If they are facing Russian paratroops, they are under great pressure as enemy four-man groups are everywhere. The German player must make liberal use of his free discard ability to keep his opponents mired in Marsh, Streams and Wire as much as possible in order to defeat them in detail. The British also have only a ten-man squad; but as they are matched against the Germans this should not be a tremendous disadvan-

tage. All squads should attempt infiltration, but the Russian and Japanese will use it for Close Combat; whereas the British, Germans, and Americans will tend to use it as a means to increase firepower.

The Paratroop Scenario is one which forces both sides to be flexible and to devise new strategies or tactics in the heat of battle. As such, it may come closest to conveying the feeling of furious combat in which the player (SL) is continually on the verge of losing control of events. This adds immeasurably to the attractiveness of playing it.

ASSAULT: Scenarios L/S

This scenario shows your basic attacker/defender delineation. It can be either a headlong charge or a lesson in maneuver, depending on the players. It is usually bloody in the end, however, no matter what the start. Both sides are armed to the teeth.

The attacker is presented with a classic fire and movement division of forces. The first thing the attacker sees in this scenario is that he must only get to Range Chit 5. In reality, it probably won't come to that. The defender's MMG balanced against the FT, Mortars, and/or multiple LMGs of the attack almost insures that a squad will break before other victory conditions are met. Since we can expect the opposition to position the MMG in group "B" and probably advance to Range 1 if possible to thwart the stated victory conditions, how do we proceed? A three-group set-up has merit. The Mortar section can be placed in "A". Their job is to pin down one defending group, preferably the one with the MMG. The fire should be as continuous as possible to maintain acquisition. Group "B" will contain the LMG(s) and enough riflemen to give proper punch. Their job is to advance slowly and keep up a stream of fire against whoever is threatening themselves or "A". The FT and the rest of the assaulting force will begin in "C". If the Mortar's fire is effective, they will advance rapidly—even threatening a move to "D" to continue a flanking posture if the defender tries to group transfer to "C". This transfer to "D" is the best way to proceed if you wish to attempt to satisfy the Range Chit 5 victory conditions. There is a good chance that the defender's forces can be spread out to where one group can be defeated in detail and the flank turned. This too, would cause victory when the defender is forced to use more movement than he normally desires, thus presenting you with good firing opportunities.

If you are facing the USSR or Japan in this scenario, expect them to move up to Range Chit 1 as rapidly as you do. They need to close the relative range to "2" to maximize their fire; in the process, this prevents your getting to Chit 5 without a flanking maneuver. The other nationalities will probably sit back and let you come to them unless a really good terrain card offers security for movement.

The attacker will have to get to at least RR 3 to cause enough casualties to win. The jump from RR 2 to RR 3 is the toughest. Be prepared to make it with plenty of covering fire, terrain, or concealment. You have the time to take in closing range, so use it and be prepared for the worst the defender could dish out. An adequate balance of your forces should be sufficient to gain victory.

For the *UP FRONT* versions of scenario L, refer to the armor section for hints on placement of the armored car. The vehicle will usually be placed in "C". The car can then be moved to an optimal firing range while at the same time avoiding the worst of the defender's AT weapons.

Defense in this scenario is a fairly straightforward affair. The defender begins the game entrenched and, if lucky, in good defensive terrain. The attacker must come at him. The temptation is to stay put, and the defender should, in general, succumb to it. Moving forward to RR 2 puts the defender's groups squarely in the path of the assaulting groups, but makes them more vulnerable to the enemy's Grenade

Launcher or Mortar. Also, too much moving about increases the chances of one of your groups stumbling into a Stream or Marsh at a very inopportune time. Of course, when better terrain becomes available, the defender should move into it (especially if he can move laterally).

An exception to this general defensive posture is the Japanese. They have an incentive to move to Range Chit 1 to begin firing at the attacker; and if their opponent is American, they need not worry about Mortars. Their access to large numbers of Movement cards enables them to extricate themselves from Stream or Marsh easier than any of their opponents.

The defender has the advantage of seeing his opponent's set-up prior to arranging his own groups, but he can expect to need three groups to avoid being flanked. Two of the three groups should be fire groups. The valuable MMG is the core of one group and should be placed in "B". The other fire group is placed on the open flank of the MMG group at "C". The third group in "A" is small. As the game develops, individual transfers from this small group can be attempted to bolster the firepower of the other groups. Typical squad formations should be: British 2-3-5, Americans 2-3-4, Japanese 3-5-5, Germans 2-3-2, and Russians 3-5-4.

There is very little the defender can do about Mortar or Grenade Launcher attacks but to endure them. The Mortar group should be a target for any Sniper attacks; if the attacker is ever unwise enough to move it, the defender should forego any other activities to discard Marsh or Stream on it. If the group becomes stranded on them (Marsh cannot be rejected under Jungle rules) no more attacks will be made. Aside from this, when undergoing Mortar attacks, the defender should console himself by observing how many cards his opponent is using. Time (in the form of decks used) is all in the defender's favor.

For his part, the defending player should try to slow the approach of the enemy with liberal use of Marsh, Stream and Wire cards. He should adopt a policy of using as many cards as possible, and employ crossfire tactics whenever applicable. If the attacker gets a group to Range Chit 5, the defender must infiltrate it immediately and do whatever he can to eliminate personality cards.

The British seem best suited to defense in this scenario by virtue of their firepower bonus. Conversely, the Japanese, who enjoy such high mobility, are at a comparative disadvantage in a situation where there is no premium on movement.

ARMOR: Scenarios E/F/T, G, H/U

UP FRONT and *BANZAI* are in essence infantry games. It seems, however, that no tactical simulation of WWII is complete without armor; thus we have quite a variety in the system. It is wise to note the admonition of the "Up Front" of Bill Mauldin that, "a moving foxhole attracts the eye".

The attacker in the above listed scenarios has that foxhole. Since the remaining available infantry are fewer than normal for most scenarios, the attacker's set-up should probably show two relatively balanced infantry groups at "A" and "B" ("B" being stronger and "A" possessing the longer range weapons) with the AFV in "C". A check of each scenario shows that advance to close range or opposing squad reduction is the path to victory. We must then accept the premise of war that only infantry occupies ground. It is our aim to use the armor to assist the rest of the squad to close in to meet the victory conditions.

The squad can proceed about its task as usual; but what about the AFV? This all depends on its own capabilities and that of the opposition. For open-top or light armored vehicles, the operating point will be at as great a range as is possible for them to retain their effectiveness. Even for large

tanks, advance to closer than relative Range 3 is ill advised against any good order foe. The threat of armor, whether armed with gun or machinegun or both, is the ability to bring down long-range fire on the enemy. This not only discomfits and pins the enemy, but may force movement due to the threat of acquired fire that will enable other weapons to successfully engage them. The position of armor must, then, be set by its opposition.

If you consider that the only way the attacker can win is to break his opponent's squad, the defender may be tempted to begin retreating immediately and never look back. Although this alternative should not be dismissed casually, it must be noted that any retreat can be stalled by a lack of movement cards with red RNCs in the hand, and Stream, Marsh and Wire cards discarded by the attacker. Japanese and Russian attackers also have Mortars or Genade Launchers which can lob shells onto the defender from any range at an equivalent Range of "0". Finally, if the full blown retreat alternative is chosen, taking reinforcements will be a risky business as they will arrive at Range Chit 0 and risk being easily eliminated in detail. Since they are counted as part of the squad, adding the reinforcements to the total number of men and then watching them die will just bring the defender closer to defeat.

The better strategy is usually to dig in, delay the attacker's advance as much as possible, give ground very grudgingly, accept all reinforcements that come your way, and hope. As in many of the other scenarios, the defender must adopt a policy of maximizing the number of cards used each turn, not simply to hasten the end of the game (although that is desirable, too) but to also get reinforcements as soon as possible. Each shuffling of the deck provides these opportunities. The other situation which gives the possibility, that of receiving an attack with a black 6 RNC, is not pleasant, but the defender must console himself that at least he received something for his probable sacrifice.

While reinforcement arrival and their composition is not under the defender's total control, there are things he can do to prepare for them. First, during set-up, the goal is to have two groups in "B" and "C". The best way to do that is to form a two-man group in "A" which will transfer to "B" as soon as possible. The result is that groups are nearer to the group "E" position where the reinforcements may arrive and more room is left at "Z" in case they come in at that position.

In the hand, Flank Move and Concealed cards become important. Simultaneous play of a Movement, a Terrain and a Concealed card allows reinforcements to arrive in better terrain than open ground. If that Movement card is also a Flank, they can enter the game at the same range as existing groups. If this option is not available, they will enter at Range 0, a position which could become quite dangerous late in the game after the attacker has advanced to Chit 4 or 5. Since the color of the RNC on the Movement card determines whether the reinforcements enter as group "E" or "Z", by astute management of his hand, the defender can bring on his extra troops in relative safety, and in positions which will more rapidly help his cause.

Those reinforcements will usually consist of two to five men, although the possibility of armor arriving on the scene does exist. There is also a heavy probability the only help will consist of a Sniper. This will usually be a slight disappointment unless the attacker has made a successful Sniper Check. Additional manpower, however, is welcome if for no other reason than it increases the size of the squad that the attacker is required to break.

If you do acquire armor, by all means try to have them enter the game on the opposite flank from the enemy's main AT defense. Also remember that in most cases, armor would rather face an ATR than any of the shaped charge weapons (unless of course,

the range is still less than 2). At any rate, avoid placing your precious armor resources at close range to any infantry AT weapons. The AFV gun should be fired when ever possible, since this also speeds the usage of the cards in the deck.

The Japanese are well suited to this scenario because their squad is so hard to break and they have good movement capability, although their firepower and armor are not up to par. The Russians have a large squad and good movement also, but they will suffer even more from the constraints of the four-card hand. The large American hand means that they will be able to stockpile the cards they need to properly place reinforcements. The Germans can move cards through their hand by discarding one each turn with their action, but they will be penalized if no action is possible. The British will enjoy the advantage of enhanced firepower, a real blessing to the small reinforcement groups.

AFVs in general have little to fear from plain infantry outside RR 3. The same is true of infantry armed with Panzerfausts, Bazookas or Panzerschrecks. An ATR must be respected at any range, but its To Hit probabilities are low from RR 2 on out. Flamethrowers, Demo charges, and ATMMs (along with infantry Close Combat) are weapons the AFV needn't worry about. If the range is close enough for these weapons to have effect, the game should be over anyway. As for the final weapon, the AT Gun, you essentially have a "go/no go" situation. In matchups between AFVs and AT guns, the adversaries will start the game firing at each other. The first to gain a successful hit wins, and that's it.

The tactical point of armor, then, is to use it judiciously. If kept alive for the entire scenario, it should easily provide the attacker with the overall firepower edge necessary for victory.

Players who have little experience with the *UP FRONT* game system may despair if they are cast in the roll of defender against armor-supported attacks. They should not. The infantry do have weapons which can deal effectively with the metal monsters. That fact was brought home in a recent playing of the Armored Advance (H) scenario. The Russian player obtained a BT-7-2 tank as a reinforcement. No sooner had the card been placed on the table than a German 37mm PAK found its range and quickly dispatched it. Other similar experiences with ATRs and shaped charge weapons should give some heart to the poor foot soldier.

If the defender has an Infantry Gun, its primary target should be enemy armor. He can expect that armor to place an equal importance on his Gun as a target. Hence, a duel usually results between AFV and Gun until one gets lucky and eliminates the other. The rest of the defenders can assist the Gun by firing on the tank in hopes of forcing it to button up. Once this is done, the AFV fire becomes less effective, giving the advantage to the Gun. The armor player will have to wait for the rare Hero card to re-open his hatch and by this time the IG should have found his target.

Other AT weapons, including the Bazooka, Panzerschrek, Panzerfaust, Anti-Tank Rifle, Piat, Flamethrower and the Anti-Tank Mine require the defender to close the range (or wait for the attacker to do it) to be effective. This should be done under as much cover as possible, using Gully, Buildings, Smoke and Concealed cards where possible. The ATR does have long range, but it has more likelihood of breaking at extreme range than of hitting anything. The shaped charge weapons (BAZ, PZSK, PZF and PIAT) are effective only from as close as RR 3. If possible, the defender should wait to use the PZF until the range has closed to "4", since this is only a one shot weapon. The British PIAT is very prone to malfunction and has a greater possibility of break (50%) than repair (16.7%), so care should also be used in its use. Indeed, the main problem with all AT weapons seems

to be the frailty. The FT and ATMMs are only effective at RR 5 and thus will find employment by only the most courageous, fortunate, or desperate defenders.

Attempting to close range with an AFV will be extremely difficult if the enemy infantry groups are adjacent to it at roughly the same range. Getting worked over by close-range fire or becoming engaged in Close Combat can quickly negate any threats your AT weapons could have posed. In fact, should the AFV have infantry groups supporting it, the best tactic for the defender is to stay put and let the existence of the AT weapons force the AFV to lessen its own effectiveness by keeping its distance. No other game quite so vividly illustrates the advantages of Combined Arms tactics as *UP FRONT*.

Other, not so obvious, AT weapons are the Gully, Woods, Stream, Marsh and Wire cards. Playing a Marsh card on an AFV forces it to show its flank or stop moving. Playing any of the others forces it to check for Bog. Should it become bogged, flank attacks are automatically available.

If the AFV is Open-Topped, then even the lowly rifle can have an effect on it by pinning the crew. A Rally 3 or better card will be required to get it back in operation. If an OT AFV can be bogged and then pinned, it can be out of effective service for many turns.

The final method of AFV destruction, Close Combat, is even more rarely seen in play. The infantry will have difficulty approaching any AFV with a functional MG. Conversely, an AFV will be very careful when approaching infantry groups armed with any of the AT weapons discussed here. The amount of damage that must be done to a squad that would encourage the AFV to try to use its Overrun capabilities is usually so great that the attacker has won anyway.

The Germans and Americans have the best AT weaponry. The temperamental PIAT leaves the British a notch below. The Russians and Japanese suffer from the lack of shaped charge weapons and must depend on their ATRs or closing on the armor. Their IG performance is not even quite up to par, even though the Japanese have quite good To Hit numbers on their ATR (cancelled if somewhat in the fact that it must be crewed).

In short, the defender should not despair, merely be careful and employ the weapons he does have at the optimum ranges for their performance.

AMBUSH: Scenario V

As the longest scenario in the game, the Ambush confrontation gives the players a real taste of the unknown. Both sides will do well to note that the chances for Random Reinforcements are less than one per deck (roughly estimated at 0.7) but their arrival can be devastating to the unprepared enemy and a game saver for those friends just hanging on.

The problem for the attacker as well as the defender is that he doesn't know quite what to expect. The defender's force is small, however, and a good initial assumption is that he will be forced to use only two groups or be left very low on firepower. This is all mitigated by the possibility of a flanking reinforcement entry as group "E". The attacker will usually have enough force to make four groups and enough weaponry to cope with about any threat. Our suggested offensive set-up is a two-man low morale group "A". These can either transfer to "B" if possible or by thrown away as a card using group. Groups "B" and "C" should be fairly large with any machine guns posted in "B" and flamethrowers in "C". Group "D" should also be small and should contain any AT weapons. This balances the threats of the opposition with the main fire able to bear from the center and the AT equipment covering the flank against the worst possible event—an AFV appearing at "E". Note that the

flamethrower is also available at "C" in case the regular AT weapon is destroyed or the reinforcements turn out to be infantry.

After setting up, the attacker should advance for the win as quickly as his cards will allow. Low firepower for the defender means that early in play a few risks can be taken and all chances for advancing should be taken. Remember that you are Elite—this enhances your opportunities to move cards through your hand. The defender will probably try a tactical retreat, so be prepared. If nothing else, move Group "D" up as fast as possible to insure good fire position/range if an AFV does appear. You are trying to break the squad so use pinning fire and close with the enemy. Forget Group "A" if you must, but use your Elite status to discard any disadvantageous terrain possible on the defender.

As the title of this scenario implies, the defender will find himself in trouble. Depending on the nationalities involved, he will usually be outnumbered, sometimes by two-to-one. Worse yet, he faces Elite troops. But, headquarters assures him that reinforcements are on the way and that all he needs to do is to hold for a while. Unfortunately, the type and number of these reinforcements and when they will arrive is not assured. Those additional troops are needed, however. This is the longest scenario in the game (five decks as opposed to the usual three), and the attacker will have ample time to close the range.

SURPRISE: Scenario W

The Surprise scenario has been a favorite of ours. The possibility of the unexpected is a welcome relief from too many set piece battles.

Ideally, the attacker in this scenario would like to infiltrate the defender's groups before they ever wake up (Rally). To have a chance of doing that, he will need a lot of Movement cards. Even though this is not a real probability, the attacker should initially proceed just as if he intends to do this very thing. When moving, he should not concern himself with playing terrain cards on his groups until the defender starts to rally unless he is merely trying to get cards out of his hand or he has reached Range 3. He should move through the initial ranges as rapidly as possible in order to close in on the unsuspecting defender. If there is room in the hand, good terrain cards should be saved to play on all moving groups just after the defender has rallied. Stream, Marsh and Wire cards must be dealt with swiftly at first and priority should be given to keeping all groups in motion. All advantages must be taken while the defender is short one card as a result of his Squad Leader being pinned.

If the crucial supply of Movement cards runs out, the only way for the attacker to increase the flow of cards through his hand is to discard. The German can augment the card flow for one hand by playing unusable cards as Open Ground as well as taking his normal discard. Fire in the initial portion of the game should be held unless it is of such a high value that eliminations would occur. The chance of alerting the entire camp should only be taken if KIAs are almost assured. The play of a Sniper should definitely be foregone since the chance of only one casualty is not worth the consequences.

As the range closes, the possibility of the enemy using a low-value Fire card to make his own attack and awaken his squad increases. If the defender does this while the attacking groups are still moving, the player has the unattractive choices of firing immediately with reduced effectiveness, or waiting one turn to stop while his opponent rallies his squad. Accordingly, as the attacker arrives at Range Chit 3 or 4, he should play terrain cards and alternate movement of his groups to be ready for this eventuality. Note that the Gully card may be a good play here because it allows movement while denying the enemy a chance to fire. If a Flank card is available, a devastating fire could be arranged from a prepared

position.

Any such fire attacks on the defender should be planned in advance to cause the most casualties possible. This can be done by attacking the lowest morale group first, hoping to gain an advantage which will make it easier to defeat the tougher opponents in detail later. If the defender manages to fire first, then the attacking groups should open fire and try to eliminate all groups which the defender has not yet been able to rally.

Once combat has been initiated, the attacker must keep his objective in mind. In order to seize the Buildings, he must infiltrate the occupying groups before eliminating them in Close Combat. He can expect the defender to vacate some Buildings, thus removing them from play, to force the attacking force to face his strongest group.

The attacking squad should be formed into two groups. Fewer Movement cards will be needed to advance them into position, and each group will be strong enough to use good Fire cards when necessary and to engage in Close Combat. The Japanese are best suited to this task by virtue of their superior movement capabilities and their morale, infiltration abilities, and Close Combat advantages. The Russians will be aided by the size of their squad and their abilities to discard their entire hand in search of their already plentiful Movement cards. Oddly enough, the nationality which encounters the most trouble in this scenario is the Germans. When they run out of movement, the small discard capabilities may force them to wait so long the defender will have a chance to counter and rally.

A quick look at the victory conditions is necessary for the defender. Since the attacker must occupy the same number or greater of Buildings, there is an advantage to a three-group set-up. This forces the attacker initially to take two Buildings for a win. This also significantly increases the possibility for the draw of a Buildings 3 card for housing your main defense group. This group should consist of close to half of your force. They should plan to stay put for the rest of the scenario (remember that all groups cannot abandon their cover since 0=0 and the attacker wins). If this position is flanked, you'll just have to tough it out and hope that the others can come to their rescue. Put your high morale, high firepower and sentry here along with your Squad Leader. This group should be "B". A two-man low morale group can go at "A", and plan to run as fast as possible to lower the chances of the squad breaking. The rest of the men will be at "C" and will also abandon their cover for anything equal they can find. If necessary, they can even advance to RR 1 to prevent flank attacks against "B". At any rate, you should be left with only one position to staunchly defend.

When choosing a nationality to play in this scenario, remember the hand capabilities of each. The US can Hero the BAR, increasing his firepower and also threatening early squad arousal, especially with the ability to hold five cards. The British will have the advantage of an equivalent fire of two, even at Range 1, thus giving a chance for early detection. The non-crewed LMG is a good candidate for the Hero card. The Japanese can stand heavier losses than the others and thus can afford to set up in two strong groups, forcing the opposition to split his attack. He also has a non-crewed LMG. The Soviet can discard whole hands (albeit only three cards) in search of the small Fire card or Hero. The German actually has the worst position of all in this scenario. He can only discard one card and thus goes through the deck slowly. It will take all of his other advantages used wisely to win this one.

Remember that the SL and ASL are pinned at the start of the game, so you will have to begin with one less card in your hand. This really hurts the Russian and Japanese and will lead the US, British, and Japanese player to the quandry of whether to use a Hero card on the SL to regain full-hand

capability or the machine-gunner for more firepower. If you are fortunate to have that card at the start, go for the gunner and more firepower; later you may wish to wake up the leader if you have or have been keeping up with the appropriate Fire cards.

SURROUNDED: Scenario X

This is the most confusing scenario in the set. You must take great pains to keep careful track of your Range Chits. The sandwich situation is made to order for producing range errors. We prefer to use red chits for one of the attacking sides, thus giving an algebraic sum in either direction. Even this can cause confusion if an attacking group exceeds RR 5.

The attacker's key in this scenario is balance. Any division of forces which is not fairly close to even will lead to a counterattack by the defender against the weaker and defeat in piecemeal fashion. Remember that the defender's squad must be broken for victory. All he really need do is wipe out one side and then hide. In the above, equal does not necessarily mean equal numbers, but *equal threat*. A good posture then is to set one force with long-range firepower (mortars and machine guns) and the other with the machine pistols and other short-range weapons. This allows you to stand off the defender on one side with the threat of fire if he closes range and advance with the assault group. Under average card distribution, you will also have one place to play Fire cards and another to play Movement. If he does try to counterattack against the assaulters, you will still have fire at RR 0 with either low cards for the machine gun or high cards for the mortar. In all cases, you really don't have enough manpower to form more than two groups per side (with the possible exception of the Japanese and Soviets who may be able to separate out the mortars although this may stretch their ability to use cards effectively).

All advances should be slow and deliberate, consolidating positions as you go since there is plenty of time to gain the win. This does not mean that you can't move without terrain. The ability to use almost all Fire cards means that it will often be advantageous to empty a hand using Fire and Movement cards and trust the odds to present you with at least one terrain card on the refill. The German player should be at his best here with the ability to act and discard giving him a definite edge.

The defender in this scenario cannot take a passive role in the proceedings. Imagine, if you will, the play of four Fire cards in one turn, all directed at the same defending group . . . and from a flank position. This unusual situation is possible because the attacker has two "A" and two "B" groups. An attack of that nature is very devastating and to be avoided if at all possible. Therefore the defender must be very active on defense rather than passively waiting for the inevitable.

Although the defender is surrounded by the enemy, he does have the classic strategic advantage of interior lines. No one would recommend allowing troops to get themselves in this situation (oops, Hitler did) to gain this advantage, but since you are already there, you may as well do the best with what advantages you do have. The attacker may outnumber you, but his squad is split into two forces which cannot effectively rejoin each other. The defender can concentrate his force against one of the opposing sides in hopes of defeating it in detail before the other force can come to its rescue. If he's lucky, the defender may discover he has local superiority.

The squad should set up in two groups with approximately equal firepower. Which enemy side to attack will depend on the attacker's initial set-up. If he has split his forces unwisely, and one is weak, you should obviously advance toward that one. If the Mortar or Grenade Launcher is not sup-

ported by an LMG, then advance on it. It will lob shells on you whichever way you go; but if you close range, you may be able to pin it, eliminate it, or close inside its effective range. While you are doing this, you will be moving away from the LMG. If one of the attackers moves to RR 1, Japanese or Russian defenders should move toward it to increase the relative Range to "2". This negates the natural firepower advantages.

Once you have begun to advance on a side, use all means available to slow down the pursuit of the force to your rear. Stream, Marsh, Wire and Sniper cards should be discarded on them. The Germans or Japanese are especially suited to discard and perform necessary functions in the same turn.

If you can obtain local superiority and destroy one of the two sides surrounding you, your opponent will have to exercise even more care with the other since his squad will be close to its breaking point. If you have eliminated the force altogether, and moved through its position, you will be able to continue a retreat using any type of Movement cards, not just ones with red RNCs. You've broken out.

The Japanese are best able to handle this situation because their squad is hard to break and they may both move and discard. Other nationalities must make the best of their natural advantages to maneuver for a win.

CITY FIGHT: Scenario B

The City Fight scenario is essentially the same as any of the meeting engagements. Similar set-ups (those suggested in Vol. 21, No. 1) should be used. The Demo Charge should be entrusted to a high morale man in the advancing group, preferably one with a Machine Pistol. A leader should not be selected for this job, however, as this puts too many eggs in one basket.

This scenario should favor the American player slightly since he can more readily hold onto the winning Building cards in the later half of the game until their use is of greatest benefit. The lack of Marsh also makes it easier for him to use his few Movement cards with confidence. Conversely, the Russian should use his superior movement capabilities to negate the four-card handicap and try for a win by breaking his opponent. He will be at a slight disadvantage since there is less terrain applicable to entrenchments. The German must use a balanced hand to try to negate the other nationalities' advantages. They will most benefit from the scenario method of victory, trying to get one strong group to Range Chit 2 in -3 Buildings and then force the opposition to commit themselves to the attack.

PARTISANS: Scenario I

The German player in this scenario is set as the attacker (by the victory conditions) against a defender who seems to have a large number of advantages. Despite this, the German should be slightly favored. He has enough manpower and firepower to defeat the Partisan if he can use it carefully. Remember that this is little more than a Russian squad with five less men and one less leader. A flank threat is always a viable option, especially if you get more Movement cards than Fire cards early in the game. Use your free discard to dump unwanted terrain on the Partisan if he tries to keep even with your moves. A Wall card is a good candidate if a Stream or Marsh is not available because it will force him to recant his move or accept a low value terrain card which cannot be used for Ambush tactics or entrenchments. Cross-fire tactics will also pull the Concealment cards out of his hand to allow a better result on the secondary fire. Use all of your natural advantages and keep an eye out for his special ones and a close victory by squad break should be possible.

Despite all the special rules applicable to the

Partisan player, this is a difficult scenario for him to win. Set-up is probably maximized using a 2-2-4 with the LMG in "B" and the leader in "C". While the victory conditions are difficult for the Germans, remember that he will probably ignore them. It simply may be too easy to break your squad. The tactics for the Partisan player will be simply to move to Range Chit 1 in the best terrain possible and force the German to attack. The two men in group A can be transferred to give a final 4-4 ("B"- "C") set-up. This will also take several of the excess Russian Movement cards out of your hand. After this, the best tactic is to stay in place as much as possible and put the Russian discard abilities into play. The Sniper and Minefield cards will be of benefit as will disadvantageous terrain. If there is an extra space in the hand, a Movement card should be saved to allow for a sideways move into Woods or Brush (followed by entrenchment). This will allow the use of the Ambush tactic (37.5). Whether they are used for defense or attack, the Concealment cards will be the most important in the game. The wise and timely use of these cards should be the great leveler to allow the Partisan a shot at a win.

FREE FOR ALL: Scenario J

It is our advice to not even try this scenario unless you are stuck with three people and nothing else to do. If you must, however, use the set-ups earlier recommended (in Vol. 21, No. 1). As this is a political game, the most threatening player (the one who moves first) is the prime target. Do not move any group unless you have terrain. Other than that, proceed as you would for any other "every man for himself" contest.

A more interesting variation of the scenario would be to allow the use of even more nationalities if you have enough players. Four- or five-sided games (or even more) would really test some friendships. This puts a premium on (temporary) alliances and player interaction. As before, however, the greatest threat to victory will always be the first one attacked, so proceed cautiously. Remember that you can always trust your enemies more than your friends. When selecting sides, try to avoid the Russian or Japanese. Their inability to bring significant firepower into play from RR 1 is a real handicap in this game unless the player is very adept at political interactions. They must move first. Whatever, play for fun. This scenario is not meant to be taken seriously.

ELITE TROOPS IN THE ATTACK: Scenario K

This scenario is a test of the maxim that superior training, skill, and morale will be able to defeat mere numbers. While the actual play of the game is a variation of the "Meeting of Patrols" scenario described by Don Greenwood in his earlier article, the Elite Player must win the game not once but twice. This dual game will cause difficulty for both players because of the amount of time that passes before a player can judge exactly how well he is doing.

The Elite player is faced directly by that time problem. He must remember two things. First, if you don't win the first portion of the game, the second doesn't matter. Second, losses and time are cumulative, so he must perform better in the second half than the first. This implies two contradictory things. He must play the first game cautiously enough to avoid major casualties (even two may be too many) but rapidly enough to have time to do it again. Thus the first half should be concluded before the second deck is finished if the Elite player is to convince himself that a win is possible. When this is added to the fact that he is forced to be the attacker, it's easy to see how he could have a problem.

Since squad sizes and goals are the same as in the Scenario A, the same set-up comments apply

(as are given in Vol. 21, No. 1). Some small changes in the second half set-up will naturally have to be made if there are losses in the first. If there are large losses, cut back one group and hope.

Since the focus of the scenario lies in being elite, what advantages do you have that can be parlayed into victory? Essentially, they appear small. The manpower given in the scenario gives a slight increase in morale (2.83 to 3.33 for the American player) which is offset by the extra LMG/BAR available to the defense. As for the rules, a better chance to discard, usually after an action, is all you get. In contrast, your opponent has a reduction in morale imposed by the scenario and his inexperience will make it more difficult to discard per the rules. This translates into the use of certain cards and capabilities. Flanking movements, even at long range, are valuable because the defender will have to move to counter the flank and be much more susceptible to the discard of disadvantageous terrain. Wire and Snipers will be valuable, especially when they follow a fire attack. The main fear of the defender in this scenario would be a combination of Wire and other discards which leave a group pinned under a flank attack with no place to go. In reverse, the slightly poorer hand of the defender should make the attacker a bit less afraid to take chances in accomplishing his goals.

The differences in morale must also be exploited. In the American versus German version of the scenario, the US morale goes up by one-half a point while the German goes down by the same amount. The overall effect is essentially that the attacker has an extra firepower factor. This makes low factor shooting more attractive and movement into the face of the enemy easier. Close Combat, a real opportunity for the second half win, is also the domain of the elite player.

For the attacker to win, then, he should press continuously and force the defender to react to his moves.

It's not easy being Green, as the defender will soon discover. His average morale is down quite a bit from the norm, and even his best man is rated no higher than "4". More significantly, his discard capabilities are restricted to about half the normal. Strangely, the German must show his discards to his naturally curious opponent. Consequently, useless or "junk" cards tend to accumulate in the hand, effectively inhibiting the defender's ability to accomplish anything. Meanwhile, the attacker is rapidly dumping even cards that are marginal.

Fortunately the attacker must beat you twice, and this is just enough to give you a reasonable chance to win. Knowing this, the defending player can play a little more boldly with his squad in the first half of the game. Once he loses, he gets the entire squad back, but the elite troops are gone for good. You can replace incompetence anyway, but a valuable man is lost forever; a lesson that the German army learned well in WWII.

Strategy for the defender is largely dependent on the cards he gets, but he should try to get to Range 1 at least in good terrain. Then he can hope for good Fire cards to harass the enemy trying to reach Range 4. The two LMGs should be situated in different fire groups (the American BARs must be) to give cross fire capabilities.

The defender should look upon this scenario as a challenge, do his best to win, and accept the results good-naturedly. After all, the inexperienced troops could always be resurrected again and again. It will be a revelation to both players to see how UP FRONT handles the difference when green troops face battle-hardened veterans.



EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARDS

As is usual, the editors once again offer this nominations for the best article of the past volume (Vol. 21) year. And, as usual, the readership will decide the winner, who receives a lifetime subscription to *The GENERAL*, as well as a \$100 bonus for their fine work. Please vote for only one of the nominees, and vote only if you have read all the articles nominated. Send this form (or a photocopy or facsimile) to our editorial offices. Eliminating those articles written by our paid staff members from consideration, we offer the following to select from:

UP FRONT BY THE NUMBERS

by Jim Burnett, No. 1

TEST OF ARMS by Andrew Blauvelt, No. 2

FORCE MARCH TO VICTORY

by Neil Schwarzwalder, No. 2

THE GRAND ART by W. Woon, No. 3

'41 IS GONNA BE A GOOD YEAR

by Nayer Ali, No. 4

WHICH WAY THE WITCH KING?

by Paul Bolduc, No. 5

BLITZKRIEG '85 by Jon Mishcon, No. 6

LEBANON by Michael Anchors, No. 6

WARGAMER'S GUIDE TO THIRD REICH

It was inevitable that The Avalon Hill Game Company produce a "wargamer's guide" to the most popular grand strategic game of all time—*THIRD REICH*. After two years of effort, two master players (Marcus Watney and Larry Bucher) have produced the finest guide yet published.

More than simply a reprint of articles from the files of *The GENERAL*, this 48-page, full-color guide to the game contains many articles on strategy for the individual countries never before published. The best of earlier articles have been updated for the latest edition of *THIRD REICH* and reprinted. A four-page "Question Box" clarifies and expands upon the rules, while Don Greenwood shares with the readers a bit of the history of the development of this classic game. Tucked among the text are sidebars to add spice, covering such esoteric considerations as a Russian invasion of Turkey, calculating probabilities in combat, and a classic 3R contest. Drafted by the best players of this grand game around, every page is filled with informative hints and tactics. If you consider yourself a *THIRD REICH* expert, you'll be impressed with the scope of this guide; if you'd like to be, you'd best get hold of a copy.

Released to acclaim at ORIGINS '85, the *WARGAMER'S GUIDE TO THIRD REICH* is now available for order by mail direct from The Avalon Hill Game company (4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, MD 21214). Cost is \$5.00. Please add usual 10% for shipping and handling—20% for Canadian orders and 30% for overseas. Maryland residents please add 5% state sales tax.



SERIES REPLAY

BANZAI, Scenario R

American Player—Jim Burnett

Japanese Player—Ron Whaley

Neutral Commentator—Rex A. Martin



Jim Burnett, as our long-time readers should know, is one of the masters of the UP FRONT system (as well as numerous other games). His article "UP FRONT By the Numbers" (Vol. 21, No. 1) is required reading for anyone interested in the most unusual card game around. Ron Whaley, a close friend of Jim's, has been a wargamer for a dozen years, is a Pacific Theater expert, and has served as a playtester for UP FRONT/BANZAI, FLATTOP, THE LONGEST DAY and THIRD REICH. For myself, after years of being the butt of the hilarity in these replays, I decided to take a more passive role this time around.

Pre-game

Japanese: The Paratroop Drop (Scenario R) is one of our favorite *BANZAI* scenarios. Nothing is ever certain in any playing of *UP FRONT* or *BANZAI*, and this scenario adds to the uncertainty by imposing an element of random chance on the initial setup. The players do not know where the paratroops will land in relation to the enemy forces, or to each other for that matter. The paratroop player is required to set up in four groups, so he can expect to be dispersed upon landing. Still, he may find, after landing, that he is quite close to accomplishing his victory conditions. He only needs to get five men in one group to Range Chit 3, 4 or 5—and it is possible for some to land at those ranges. In most playings, therefore, both forces become engaged early and fierce fire fights and close combat are the usual result. The pressure is intense on both sides from start to finish, and victory or defeat can hinge on the play of one card. This is an ideal situation for a Series Replay.

The Japanese have a number of advantages which are unique to their nationality in *BANZAI*. They can play Movement cards without affecting their discard capability in any given turn; and they can discard printed or scenario-defined Cower cards in any turn regardless of the number of actions taken or other cards discarded. This enhances the flow of cards through the hand, always an important consideration in *UP FRONT* or *BANZAI*, and especially so for the Japanese who must make do with a four-card hand. The most striking characteristic of the Japanese is their superior squad integrity. The Japanese squad does not break until at least 75% of the men have been lost. This, coupled with the higher average morale values of their personality cards, means that the Japanese will not quit without a long, hard fight.

The most unique play of the Japanese is the *Banzai* tactic. Simply by yelling "Banzai!" and playing a Movement card, the Japanese player can rally all the men of a group and have them automatically enter Close Combat with an adjacent enemy group. No rally cards are needed, and no cards are drawn for morale checks or infiltration attempts. But, this very powerful tactic is not without some very dangerous risks. Even when the *Banzai* group is already at relative Range 5 to the group it is attacking, it must wait one turn in Move status without benefit of concealment before entering Close Combat. If this group should be fired upon during *Banzai*, all PIN results are defined as KIA results instead.

So, one may succeed with a *Banzai* attack against an unwary opponent once; but the next time the Japanese player may see his group virtually eliminated by the high Fire card his opponent has been saving for just that purpose. Making your opponent hold onto that Fire card for most of a game (in effect reducing the size of his hand) is often your best employment of the *Banzai* tactic. Yet, there are certain times when the *Banzai* should be used. I hold those to be when enough of the opponent's men are pinned to prevent any effective fire, when you know your opponent doesn't have a Fire card, or when you have no other chance to win.

Although Jim and I have played this scenario several times, I have usually played the American side, so I don't know his tendencies in this situation. As the American, I have usually employed two four-man groups and two two-man groups. He seems to like that arrangement, so I'll make my plans based on it. If I am wrong, it won't really affect my initial plans anyway.

I must form at least three groups, because he will have four and could too easily flank a two-group squad. I'll form a fire group around my machine gun in "B", a high morale maneuver group in "C", and another, weaker group in "A". Although Group A is weak, it should not be a target for much of his fire and should not be required to move very much.

I get to draw and place range chits on his four groups to simulate the paratroop drop. I shall attempt to place low-numbered range chits on any four-man (or otherwise strong) groups in hopes of keeping them far from the "winning" ranges for as long as possible. Any two-man or weak groups shall be placed at close ranges where they can be attacked and neutralized as quickly as possible. Most important of all, I must insure that no adjacent groups begin at the same range.

One cannot make detailed plans of action in *UP FRONT* because of the myriad uncertainties involved, but a guideline for future actions can be formulated. I want to advance to Range 2 or 3 so as to bring my highest firepower to bear on his groups as they approach Range 3. Group B shall attempt to reach and maintain a good firing position. Group C shall attempt to counter any flanking moves, and shall look for opportunities to infiltrate his groups. Group A will move more cautiously, try to survive, and help out when it can. I must use the Wire, Stream, and Marsh cards I get to delay him as much as possible. Sniper targets are his squad leader and whoever has the BAR. Time is on my side, so any actions which use up cards are usually favorable.

Jim is an extremely tough opponent who always makes the most efficient use of the cards that come his way; I must do the same to have a chance of winning.

American: When looking for a scenario to replay for *UP FRONT/BANZAI*, we wanted one which would be instructive, fast, and fun. The Paratroop Drop (R) has always fulfilled these requirements for us. The sides were chosen by random draw—a method which worked well in this case since Ron is a good defensive and Japanese player where I prefer to be the paratrooper. This leads me to expect

a tight game, where all decisions will be crucial . . . right from the start.

The setup for the paratroop player in this scenario is relatively easy, compared to other scenarios. The only real decision is group composition and even this is made less of a chore if the attacker has the Americans. Since there must be four groups and each group must contain between two and four men, the choice is obvious. A 2-2-4-4 grouping will be used. We will hope that the final order brings one of the four-man groups to Range 3 in advantageous terrain. We will then try to get one of its neighbors to the same range and transfer a man for the win. This all sounds easy.

There are several problems. If the four-man groups are at long range and the two-man at short, it will take considerable time for the movement-poor US to get to Range 3. As a matter of fact, they may find that the Japanese have beaten them there. By this time both two-man groups will have suffered casualties and it will be an easy matter for the Japanese to dispatch three more Americans for the win. On the other hand, if the four-man groups are close to the enemy, we can but hope he is lacking good Fire cards. The ideal draw would be both four-man groups adjacent, close to Range 3, and in good terrain. A small further US advantage is that the American BAR does not require a crew and thus I have one extra turn of fire. As usual, both players will hope for luck and the winner will be the one who makes the most of what comes his way.

The other opening factor is terrain. With five Building cards gone from the deck, we are still left with 25 favorable cards (counting Marsh). Since one of the US advantages is the large hand, we can expect to draw one terrain card. This will be placed on the group in the greatest need. Note that this, too, is variable. A two-man group at Range 5 may be sacrificed to allow the other groups to attain success. A few terrain cards deserve special mention. Of greatest value is the Gully card. This card will allow the paratroops to get to Range 3 under cover if the defender lacks a hill.

Next is the Woods. This card is of questionable value to the defender. The chance of a wound must be balanced against the favorable terrain modifier. Obviously if thrown, it must be put on a large group, and at long range. All in all, it should not worry the attacker—at least not nearly as much as Stream or Marsh. These are both deadly to the paratroops—with the lone exception of Marsh at Range 3 when it becomes qualifying terrain.

We must also deal with the expectations of the enemy. He will most assuredly have three groups, but whether the setup is a semi-balanced 4-5-4 or the heavy 2-5-6 is in question. Obviously, his decisions will be based on a gamble on my placement. All in all, the large number of Japanese Movement cards allows for quick re-organization. This goes early and my Group A is close and strong. I do know that Ron is a wily defensive player and is not afraid to advance if he can get to the Range 3 terrain before I do. I also must watch out for a quick *Banzai* against a close-range squad that is isolated.

Having said all this, my composition is as shown in the chart. This gives me one short-range fire

group, one high-morale long-range fire group, and two small groups. The setup I hope for is #4=Group A at RR-0/1, #1=Group B at RR-4/5, #2=Group C at RR-2/3, #3=Group D at RR-2/3. The real risk to this setup is the very low morale of Group #1. They will be the sacrifice.

Remember that a maxim of paratroops is that 20-30% casualties are to be expected. However, these are worthwhile only if the final objectives are attained.

The para-drop scenario is one of fast-paced action, quickly embroiling both players in reacting to unforeseen threats. It tends to encourage close combat and high-firepower attacks, simulating the landing of an elite squad nearly on top of the posi-

tions of an awakening enemy. Since coherent planning before play begins is virtually impossible, Scenario R rewards the player best able to take advantage of the ever-changing situation. Using the cards that come your way to their fullest potential (i.e., cycling cards quickly through your hand with few wasted discards and making the most effective attacks and movements) wins the game. It is the ultimate scenario for the opportunistic player, and one that I especially favor.

Looking at the initial set-ups, Ron has stationed the Japanese in a posture identical to my preferred placement. A strong firebase, with maneuvering Close Combat oriented groups on either side, dominates the field. One of the flank forces—Group C (being so placed to engage the majority of the

enemy)—is composed of the staunchist sons of the Rising Sun. Their high morale should get them to the enemy and into Close Combat; their close combat values should best any single trooper on the American side. The lesser force in Group A are the "expendables". Maintaining pace with Group C in advancing on the paratroopers, they should draw some fire away from the other groups, despite the fact that their options are limited to assaulting the enemy groups A and B. I never hesitate to use a Banzai if this group becomes pinned, even if a couple of ranges separate them from the enemy. That charge across open ground should be so tempting a target your other two groups will be fairly free to operate during it. Finally, if Group A gains Range Chit 3 it can be converted into a moderately effec-

JAPANESE

Group A is composed of, in order, #9—#12—#10—#11

Group B is composed of, in order, #5—#8—#13—#3—#1

Group C is composed of, in order, #6—#7—#4—#2

Turn	Group A	Group B Range/Terrain/Position	Group C	Hand 1/2/3/4	Action A/B/C	Discard
#1	0/Op/2-2-3-3	0/Op/3-3-3-4L-6S	0/Op/4-4-5-5A	R4/C3/F6 ¹⁷ /HE	—/—/—	R4/C3
#2	0/Op/2-2-3-3	0/Op/3-3-3-4L-6S	0/Op/4-4-5-5A	C1/F5 ¹¹ /F6 ⁷⁷ /He	—/F6-C/—	—/—
#3	0/Op/2-2-3-3	0/Op/P-3-3-4L-6S	0/Op/4-4-5-5A	C1/F ¹⁷ /He	—/—/—	C1/—
#4	0/Op/2-2-3-3	0/Op/P-3-4L-6S	0/Op/4-4-5-5A	Wo/F6 ¹⁷ /Gu	—/—/—	Gu/F ¹⁷
#5	0/Op/2-2-3-3	0/Op/P-3-4L-6S	0/Op/4-4-5-5A	M/Wo/MF1/MF1	MF/—/MF	—/—
#6	0/Op/ML/2-2-3-3	0/Op/P-3-4L-6S	1/Op/MF/4-4-5-5A	Wo/Wo/MC1/MF1	Wo/—/Wo	—/—
#7	0/Wo/2-2-3-3	0/Op/P-3-4L-6S	1/Wo/4-4-5-5A	F3 ⁹ /F4 ⁹ /MC1/MF1	F3-A/F3-A/—	—/—
#8	0/Wo/2-2-3-3	0/Op/P-P-4L-6S	1/Wo/4-4-5-5A	R1/F3 ⁹ /MF1	F0-A/R1/—	—/—
#9	0/Wo/2-2-3-3	0/Op/P-3-4L-6S	1/Wo/4-4-5-5A	R2/F4 ⁹ /C2/MF1	—/R2/MF	—/—
#10	0/Wo/2-2-3-3	0/Op/3-3-4L-6S	2/Wo/MF/4-4-5-5A	C1/F4 ⁹ /C2/B1 ³	—/F3-C/—	B1 ³ /—
#11	0/Wo/2-2-3-3	0/Op/3-3-4M-6S	2/Wo/MF/4-4-5-5A	B1 ² /C2/M	—/MF/Op	—/—
#12	0/Wo/2-2-3-3	1/Op/MF/3-3-4M-6S	2/Op/4-4-5-5A	F2 ³ /B1 ² /Wi	—/—/IN(C)	B1 ² /—
#13	0/Wo/2-2-3-3	1/Op/MF/3-3-4M-6S	2/Op/4-P-5-5AI	F2 ³ /RA/Wi/M	MF/—/—	Wi/—
#14	1/Wo/MF/2-2-3-3	1/Op/MF/3-3-4M-6S	2/Op/P-5-5AI	F2 ³ /RA/Cw/MF1	F4-A/—/RA	—/—
#15	1/Wo/MF/2-2-3-3	1/Op/MF/3-3-4M-6S	2/Op/4-5-5AI	Sn/Wa/Cw/MF1	—/—/—	Sn/Cw
#16	1/Wo/MF/2-2-3-3	1/Op/MF/3-3-4M-6S	2/Op/4-P-5AI	Gu/Wa/R3/MF1	Gu/Wa/R3	—/—
#17	1/Gu/2-2-3-3	1/Wa/3-3-4M-6S	2/Op/4-5-5AI	F6 ¹⁶ /F2 ⁹ /C1/M	MF/RE/IN(C)	—/—
#18	1/Gu/ML/2-2-3-3	1/Wa/3-3-4L-6S	2/Op/4-P-5AI	F6 ¹⁶ /F2 ⁹ /R5/Br	Br/F0-A/CC-C	—/—
#19	1/Br/P-P-P-P	1/Wa/3-3-4L-6S	2/Wa/P-5A	F6 ¹⁶ /F4 ¹² /R5	R5/F2-A/—	—/—
#20	1/Br/P-P-P-P	1/Wa/3-3-4L-6S	2/Wa/P-5A	F6 ¹⁶ /F2 ⁹ /Wo/MR1	—/F1-A/IN(B)	—/—
#21	1/Br/P-P-P-P	1/Wa/3-3-4M-6S	2/Wa/P-5AI	F6 ¹⁶ /F5 ¹¹ /Wo/M	—/re/CC-B	—/—
#22		1/Wa/3-3-4M-6S	2/Wa/P-5AI	F6 ¹⁶ /F5 ¹¹ /Wo	—/—	Wo/F6 ¹⁶
#23		1/Wa/3-3-4M-6S	2/Wa/P-5AI	Gu/F5 ¹¹ /F6 ¹⁷ /M	MF/—	F5 ¹¹ /F6 ¹⁷
#24		2/Wa/MF/3-3-4M-6S	2/Wa/5AI	Gu/M/f1 ² /F1 ⁴	GU/F1-B	—/—
#25		2/Gu/3-3-4M-6S		Cw/M/F2 ⁹ /F6 ¹⁸	BANZAI	F2 ⁹ /F6 ¹⁸ /Cw
#26		2/Gu/3-3-4M-6S		M/B1 ² /Br/F2 ³	CC-B	—/—

JAPANESE SQUAD BREAKS ON HIS TURN #26.

tive firebase, if given some defensive terrain. It is the sacrifice, or the firebase, or the close combat specialists—depending on developments.

Group B should seek good defensive terrain (entrenched on a hill, woods, building) at Range 1. Their field of fire, especially from the hilltop, can dominate the play. Since so much of this scenario is fought at relative ranges 2 and 3, their firepower permits use of the majority of the Fire cards in the deck (25 of 48 at RR2; 35 of 48 at RR3). For any player with a four-card hand this is vital; since you can afford to hold any card for only a short time in your hand, you must seek to maximize your opportunities to play it. In Scenario R, this means moving the Japanese firebase forward a short ways, giving it protective cover, and keeping it in place

except in dire emergency (in my terms, only if flanked or in otherwise imminent danger of losing the game). Then fire on anything that moves; the paucity of American movement means that you may well be able to—after eliminating the nearest group—pin him long enough to see three decks pass.

No, I can't fault Ron's deployment of his defensive forces. He has them placed to take advantage of the American drop, regardless of where it lands. His spread of the maneuvering groups allows them to work nicely in conjunction with the firebase. The American should be facing multiple threats to his forward group. Jim, on the other hand, has some dangers inherent in his placement of dropping Americans, with few concomitant advantages.

For the American paratroopers, I adopt a somewhat different tack than Jim. To spread the threat to them, as well as from them, I prefer an American descent in four three-man groups. One consists of the three Thompsons (Martin, Degi and Moores); the others each hold two rifles and a BAR or carbine. This set-up works well against the Japanese (and can be devastating against the Germans). In essence, what I am looking for with the Americans is an opportunity to form a large group by combining two of these. They may be formed at Range 3 (which is rare) or formed further back and then advance to Range 3 for the win. Each has enough firepower to hold its own. The closest group(s) to the enemy will provide cover while I advance with those furthest from the action; the close-in

AMERICAN

Group A is composed of, in order, #7—#8

Group B is composed of, in order, #27—#26—#17—#2

Group C is composed of, in order, #5—#4

Group D is composed of, in order, #11—#9—#3—#18

Turn	Group A	Group B Range/Terrain/Position	Group C	Group D	Hand 1/2/3/4/5/6	Action A/B/C/D	Discard
#1	4/Op/2-3	-1/Op/ 2-2-3-3A	2/Op/3-3	0/Op/ 3-5-4B-5S	M/M/M/MFo/F2 ⁴ /F6 ¹⁸	en/MF/MF/MF	-/-
#2	4/Op/2-3	0/Op/MF/P-P 2-2-3-3A	3/Op/MF/ 2-2-3-3A	1/Op/MF/ 3-5-4B-5S	F2 ² /F3 ⁶ /Wa/MFo/F2 ⁴ /F6 ¹⁸	F1-B/MF/Wa/OP	-/-
#3	4/Op/2-3	1/Op/MF/MF/ 2-2-3-3A	3/Wa/P-P	1/Op/ 3-5-4B-5S	F2 ² /F3 ⁶ /Hi/Ma/R3/Cw	en/Hi/R3/F2-B	-/-
#4	4/Op/2-3	-1/Hi/ 2-2-3-3A	3/Wa/3-3	1/Op/ 3-5-4B-5S	Hi/F3 ⁶ /C1/Ma/R2/Cw	-/-/-/-	Cw/F3 ⁶
#5	4/Op/2-3	1/Hi/ 2-2-3-3A	3/Wa/3-3	1/Op/ 3-5-4B-5S	Hi/Sm/C1/Ma/R2/Br	-/-/-/-	Ma/Br
#6	4/Op/2-3	1/Hi/ 2-2-3-3A	3/Wa/3-3	1/Op/ 3-5-4B-5S	Hi/Sm/C1/F4 ¹¹ /R2/Sm	en/Sm/-/en	-/-
#7	4/Op/P	1/HiSm/ 2-2-3-3A	3/Wa/3-3	1/Op/ 3-5-4B-5S	Hi/Sm/C1/F4 ¹¹ /R2/F2 ¹	R2/Sm/F1-B/EN	-/-
#8	4/Op/3	1/HiSm/ 2-2-3-3A	3/Wa/3-3	1/OpEn/ 3-5-4B-5S	H1/MFo/C3/F4 ¹¹ /R5/F5 ¹⁵	-/-/-/MF	F5 ¹⁵ /-
#9	4/Op/3	1/HiSm/ 2-2-3-3A	2/Wa/3-3	2/Op/ MF/3-5-4B-5S	Hi/M/F5 ¹³ /F4 ¹¹ /R5/R1	en/MF/-/Hi	-/-
#10	4/Op/3	1/HiSm/MF/ 2-2-3-3A	3/Wa/3-3	2/Hi/ 3-5-4B-5S	Sm/MFo/F5 ¹³ /F4 ¹¹ /R5/R1	en/Sm/-/F3-C	-/-
#11	4/Op/3	2/HiSmSm/ MF/2-2-3-3A	3/Wa/3-3	2/Hi/ 3-5-4B-5S	F3 ⁵ /MFo/F5 ¹³ /F2 ⁵ /R5/R1	EN/MF/F1-C/F3-C	-/-
#12	4/OpEn/3	3/HiSm/ MF/MF/ 2-2-3-3A	3/Wa/3-3	2/Hi/ 3-5-4B-5S	M/F2 ⁷ /F5 ¹³ /Wo/R5/R1	MR/Wo/-/F3-C	-/-
#13	3/Op/MR/3	3/WoWi/ 2-2-3-3A	3/Wa/3-3	2/Hi/ 3-5-4B-5S	M/Sn/F5 ¹³ /He/R5/R1	ML/F4-C/-/EN	-/-
#14	3/Op/MR/ TM/3T	3/WoWi/ 2-2-3-3A	3/Wa/3-3	2/HiEn/ 3-5-4B-5S	Sm/Sn/Br/He/R5/R1	-/-/-/-	Br/Sn
#15	3/Br/3	3/WoWi/ P-2-3-3A	3/Wa/3-3	2/HiEn/ 3-5-4B-5S	Sm/Cw/C2/F3 ⁷ /R5/R1	EN/R1/-/F4-C	-/-
#16	3/BrEn/3	3/WoWi/ 2-2-3-3A	3/Wa/3-3	2/HiEn/ 3-5-4B-5S	Sm/Cw/C2/F2 ⁸ /R5/Br	-/-/-/F2-C	Cw/-
#17	3/BrEn/3	3/WoWi/ 2-2-3-3A	3/Wa/3-3	2/HiEn/ 3-5-4B-5S	Sm/R4/C2/B1 ² /R5/Br	-/Sm/-/-	Br/-
#18	3/BrEn/3	3/WoWi/ 2-2-3-3A	3/Wa/3-3	2/HiEn/ 3-5-4B-5S	Cw/R4/C2/B1 ² /R5/F6 ¹⁴	-/F3-A/-	Cw/-
#19	3/BrEn/3	3/WoWi/ 2-2-3-3A	3/Wa/3-3	2/HiEn/ 3-5-4B-5S	M/R4/Sm/B1 ² /R5/F4 ⁷	ML/Sm/F4-A	-/-
#20	3/Br/TM/3T	3/WoWi/ 2-2-3-3A	3/Wa/3-3	2/HiEn/ 3-5-4B-5S	M/R4/RA/B1 ² /R5/F8 ¹⁸	TM/-/MF	-/-
American Group A melded with Group B with lateral man transfer.							
#21		3/WoWi/ 2-2-3T-3-3A		3/Hi/MF/ 3-5-4B-5S	M/R4/RA/Br/R5/Cw	-/-/IN(C)	Cw/-
#22		3/WoWi/ 2-2-3-3A		3/B1 ² / 3-5-4B-5S	Gu/R4/RA/Br/R5/F3 ⁶	-/F1-B/CC-C	-/-
#23		3/WoWi/ 2-2-3-3A		3/B1 ² / 3I-5-4BI-5S	Gu/R4/RA/Br/R5/R3/R5	-/R3/CC-C	-/-
#24		3/WoWi/ P-2-3-3A		3/B1 ² / 3I-5-4BI-5S	Gu/R4/RA/F7 ¹⁷ /R5/F3 ⁴ /R5	-/-/-	R3/Br
#25		3/WoWi/ 2-2-3-3A		3/B1 ² / 3-5-4B-5S			

AMERICAN SQUAD BREAKS ON JAPANESE TURN #26.

paratroopers may even engage in a fighting withdrawal if dropped at relative range 4 or 5.

Instead, Jim favors the "weak-strong" placement. Two weak groups and two strong groups. Unfortunately, this means that one of two things will happen against the Japanese. Either the two two-man groups (individually unable to defend themselves sufficiently in either close combat or firefight situations) are going to be eliminated, or the enemy will drop one four-man group nearby and proceed to pound it. Now this is certainly true regardless of the set-up; some groups will drop near and some out of the action. But, with three-man groups, less is at risk and they are tougher to kill off. Rather than losing four men, the American may well only lose three. Thirty percent casualties I can accept as the paratrooper.

With Jim's division of forces, Ron is going to know exactly where the fire against him will be coming from (after all, even at the best, the two-man groups have only six factors at point-blank range) and be able to anticipate it (since the four-man groups will be running ahead to get into the fray, they will have to stop before they can put out any effective fire). Too, he should be able to anticipate Jim's threats to win the game. The American's best chance for victory in this scenario is to pose multiple repeated threats to form a five-man group (it being nigh impossible to break the Japanese quickly). Jim's loss of Group A means that these must come via the potential transfer of one man from C to either B or D. Unfortunately, both the latter have a way to go (strewn with Wire, Stream, Marsh and swept by fire) to get there. Three-man groups would have ameliorated this somewhat (I'd expect the Japanese to place the Thompson group and the BAR group well back), and opened up the play for the American.

On the other hand, good cards and good card play can make up for almost any awkwardness in set-up. Let's wait to see where Jim's forces end up after placement of range chits and terrain.

American Set-Up

The Japanese player makes quick decisions on the random placement of range chits: a weak two-man group becomes Group A at Range 4; the low-morale four-man group is placed at Range -1 as Group B; the other two-man group is Group C at initial Range 2; and the strong firebase is Group D at Range 0. Neither player places initial terrain, a most unusual situation.

The draw for the set-up has turned into a semi-disaster for the paratroopers. The groups are very close to the positions Jim had hoped for, but the ranges are terrible. Group A is acceptable at close range since one group will have to be a throw-away to draw fire, anyway. What does hurt is that his two larger groups are both at long range and are separated. Jim may have to get Group C to Range 3 just to hold off the Japanese and then move B and D up as fast as possible. The thing he must hope for is that Ron concentrates on Group A while all of this is going on. The Japanese 4-5-4 set-up actually helps Jim at this time due to the Ron's immediate threat against A; who among us could pass up such an opportunity (and so give the enemy a couple of turns moving up B and D unhindered)?

A favorite tactic of mine when playing the defender in Scenario R is to place a substantial enemy force (usually the four-man force) adjacent if the chit draw allows it. Then use any Fire cards available or seek to overwhelm it with infiltration and Close Combat. It is perfectly possible that it will be quickly decimated. The enemy options for the group are very limited—stand, fight and die, or retreat. Both tend to concentrate his attention, meaning other groups are minimally active. And, should you wipe out his four-man force (which quite often contains either the SL or ASL—read your victory conditions

closely), your opponent's chances of winning the game become very limited, as do the options for his remaining groups. I might have, for example, considered placing Jim's Group B at RR 4 (or RR 5) and then hit it with everybody possible over the first few turns. With the Japanese and their high movement potential, this play works very nicely. At the very least, it can throw the paratroopers into a tizzy.

Another point. I like to place the enemy Group B as the nearest, despite its composition. With a modicum of luck, regardless who the combatants are, it should be either severely damaged or forced to retreat, so using valuable Movement and Rally cards. By doing so, if eliminated in the course of these first few crucial turns, you have opened a gap between his Group A and Group C—one that you may be able to exploit given the opportunity. Since Group B is usually the defender's firebase, you in the process relieve some of the threat to your own major asset. Instead, looking at Ron's placement of range chits, we find only Group A (a low-morale throw-away) under punishing attack and only by two defending groups. At the very least, I would have placed Group C at the closest range; the elimination of this two-man group would have opened a gap between the American four-man groups.

Looking over the events of the placement, here is where Ron reveals his strategy to Jim (so allowing Jim to anticipate his play). He obviously plans to kill off the two two-man groups. This means he must operate against two separately moving targets—rather than one large target. In effect, Ron is locked into his strategy, losing the flexibility he should instead be promoting. He has left the four-man groups free to operate, so conceding the initiative to Jim during the initial turns. A move by either Group B or Group D up to Range 2, followed by the transfer of the two men on C, means Jim is but one small step from winning. If that transfer is to Group D, Ron has a serious problem. By pausing to fill to a pat "movement" hand (for the Americans—Smoke, Concealment, Movement, Terrain), the gods favor Jim's victory. Meanwhile Ron must quickly deal with American Group A, then rush forward to kill off Group C—coming under covering fire from American Group D and/or B in the process. In this situation, a Gully card in Jim's hand becomes a game winner. Indeed, with his flexibility and Ron's inflexibility, many cards in his hands are potent. I've a feeling Ron's going to be battered by repeated game-winning situations from Jim.

The fact that neither player placed terrain following the deal is ironic. This might have aided Ron, gracing him with a hilltop to quickly eliminate Group A, a marsh/stream to slow the approach of the "big boys", woods to play on one of the four-man groups in hopes of injury, or even gullies (if only in order to control placement of these boons to the American). Only a marsh or stream from Jim could annoy him. But looks like this paratroop squad landed in a field, and both attacker and defender will scramble for whatever cover they can find when the bullets fly.

In looking at the situation before ever a card is played, I'd say that the Japanese placement is superior but their strategy perhaps fatally rigid. Meanwhile the Americans commence spread out, in open terrain, but with some interesting opportunities to adapt all this to their advantage. I'd expect a close game . . . unless Lady Luck intervenes.

Turn 1

Japanese: The first two range chits I drew for his groups were high ones, and gave me quite a scare. If the last two had been high ones also, this would be a very short game. Fortunately, the odds were in my favor and I have made out very well. His four-man groups are placed well back from the action, and his weak groups are up close where I can begin

their elimination. All I need now are some good cards to work with . . .

Although these are usually considered good cards and I would like to use them later in the game, they are useless to me now. The Fire card requires 17 firepower factors and the best I can muster is 16 by using the Hero card with Group B. I cannot double the light machinegun's firepower because the Hero card has a red RNC. There are no terrain or Movement cards in my hand, either. Faced with this situation and this hand, I have no action I can perform. So I must discard two and hope for better cards. I'll keep the Hero and the Fire card in hopes that I can close the range on his Group A soon and then fire on them.

American: After making my draw, I cannot complain about the cards I have. Except for the large Fire card, the Move cards were nice and should be helpful immediately. The start will not be too bad if I just draw terrain and Rally cards on the next turn. The thing the paratrooper player must always worry about is that first turn "in the air". If I can avoid being hurt here, the game is off to a good start.

I am initially fortunate. Ron's two discards mean I get a free turn without being fired upon. If he drew no Fire cards this time, all will be very good. I will move Groups B, C and D and hope to get terrain cards next turn. I feel that I am only taking a real chance with my Group C. Fire and Wire are all I fear—for now.

Looking at the first turn, I am rewarded with a great yawn. The Japanese discarded, poorly at that; and the Americans passed up the opportunity to open the fireworks.

Series Replay—BANZAI

Abbreviations:

Terrain: Br = Brush
Bq² = Building -2
Bg³ = Building -3
Gu = Gully
En = Entrenched
Fl = Flanked
Hi = Hill
Ma = Marsh
Sm = Smoke
St = Stream
Wa = Wall
Wi = Wire
Wo = Woods
Op = Open

Positions: # = Morale, Good Order

A = ASL
C = Crew
I = Infiltrator
L = LMG
B = BAR
M = Malfunction
P = Pinned
S = SL
T = Transfer
U = Unarmed
W = Wounded

Cards: C# = Concealed, Value

Cw = Cover
F#^c = Fire, Strength with Requisite FP as exponent
HE = Hero
M = Movement
MfO = Movement, Ford
MFI = Movement, Flank
R# = Rally
Sn = Sniper

Actions: AA = Weapon Acquisition

CC = Close Combat
EN = Entrench
IN = Infiltrate
ML/F/R = Movement Lateral/Forward/Retreat
TM = Temporary Movement
RE = Repair
SC = Sniper Check
F#-T = Fire Attack, Modified Strength—Target
— = No Action

(Note: lower case type indicates failed attempt.)

Ron, given the nature of his hand, really had no option but to discard. However, his choice of what to remove as deadwood couldn't have been poorer. In UP FRONT, the choice of one's discards are as crucial as any play you may make. The Japanese tossed a high Rally card and a high Concealed card. I seriously question his retaining the high Fire card, and to a lesser extent the Hero. Both the R4 and the C3 are "multi-purpose cards", being useful if one wants to engage in a firefight or if one wants to move (as well as being rather nice for any defensive player). The F6 is very limited; Ron is assuming that he'll be able to use it, while the others are guaranteed to be played at some point in the early stages. The Hero is, at best, questionable; nice to have, but not to hold in a four-card hand. On the other hand, the Rally and Concealed cards are never "useless"!

Jim's play is also fairly obvious—but a couple of points can be made. Why, for instance, does Group A pass up an opportunity to fire to make a problematic entrenchment attempt? With the "2" attack, Jim has a fair shot at breaking at least one man in Japanese Group A, and a middling chance at breaking someone in Group B with an unmodified attack. This would pin either in open ground for another couple of turns. Digging in without providing covering fire for his moving forces is an "ostrich" strategy. Too, it would have given him one more draw from the deck for his limited hand. It would have cycled more cards through the deck to get those Buildings into play. And it might have focused Japanese attention on his own Group A, which is a sacrifice in any case. There is not one solid reason I can think of for passing up this attack this turn (and possibly forever if Ron decides to decimate American Group A).

Now, turning to the movement, I've no quibble with the movement of Group B or Group D. But the dash forward with Group C is criminal. He is putting Group C in harm's way to no avail. Better to hold it back, entrench it and wait for the bigger groups to arrive. Worse, the American has, at this point, no Rally cards and no terrain for them to go into! Group C is much too tempting a target. He is playing into the Japanese's hands. Never count on your enemy being void of a card that can hurt

Turn 2

Japanese: Now I know why I had no Movement cards. Jim has them all. I had some consolation in his poor initial position and his lack of terrain, but that was short-lived as he is now on the move. He probably will have some decent terrain cards to play next turn, also. Meanwhile, I seem to have taken root here in the open.

I now have the capability of firing from Group B at either his Group A or Group C. Because Group C is moving, the +1 modifier allows me to use the fire strength of "6". That gives me over a 40% chance of killing at least one man as opposed to approximately 33% of the same against Group A. So I will fire at Group C.

Drat! Both managed to survive, though pinned, and a nice "Rally 6" card goes by during fire resolution.

American: As was feared, he did draw a Fire card. Group C takes it on the chin, but fortunately they are only pinned. They will just have to duck here and hope any follow-up shots are not killers.

Group C will hide behind a Wall and Group D will waste the unusable Fire card as Open Ground. Group B keeps moving, hoping to get to closer range without intercepting any fire. Group A will open fire this turn, hoping for a little luck. This also means I use four cards, a benefit since some of the ones I need later may come up in this draw. He plays a Concealed on my fire. This really hurt since all I got was one pin, and without the concealment that would have been a KIA.

The exchange of fire was mutually damaging, but the American—given the contents of his hand and the position of his groups—has the edge by the end of the turn.

Since the American presented him with such a golden opportunity to punish Group C, which is seemingly rushing forward to embrace their doom, Ron hurls some lead at it (Fire 5, +1 enemy moving). Only mischance keeps the American Group C viable; at the very least, Jim must now try to save it with rally or terrain cards which might have been more useful elsewhere. Ron's other Japanese, however, stand around doing nothing. Why did not his Groups A and C, who seem stuck in the open, at least try to entrench. It never hurts (especially when on defense), shortens the game by a couple of cards, and could even help if Ron can't find Movement cards.

Jim's continued movement of American Group B is a low-risk decision, since the only thing that can hit it is the Jap machinegun, and that with only a "2" attack at best. If the Americans can get these Thompsons into play, they are deadly. If hit, well . . . c'est la vie; this is in best paratrooper tradition. The simultaneous play of Wall and Open Ground are standard. But now Jim tardily opens up with Anderson and Burke (Fire 2, -1 concealment) on the Japanese firebase. And, as expected, they pin a man and strip out a Concealed card. Despite Jim's protests, a KIA was simply too much to hope for.

With the draw to refill his hand, the American has nice flexibility. He has two middling-level Fire cards (which could be combined nicely) which will certainly be usable in the near future. A hill for his moving group, a couple of Rally cards, and a marsh to plague the Japanese with. Despite his broken Group C, Jim is in great shape for this early in the scenario. Ron has meanwhile boxed himself with a poor discard and ignorance of the basic use of shovels for exposed men; he will soon pay for his lack of defensive acumen.

Turn 3

Japanese: He's not risking very much by playing another Move card on Group B because he's too far away from me anyway. The "weak" Group A manages to pin one in my Group B in spite of my Concealed card.

There is no need to use the Hero card to rally my pinned man now, because I'll be able to do that prior to any fire resolution that may happen next turn. And I may draw a Rally card. My lack of Movement cards is really beginning to hurt because I can't get any of my troops into covering terrain. So, I shall discard and hope, once again, that I can draw a Move card.

American: All he does is discard—a real break for me. He still does get to draw two cards thanks to the concealment play, but I did need the respite. I will continue to fire at Group B, this time with my Group D. This will allow A a chance to Entrench; one which they promptly fail. The cowards in Group C are rallied and B climbs on the Hill. I hate to waste this card at this time, but I expect him to start moving soon and need to prepare against that. The fire was a good thing for me this time. He Heroed the pinned man, thus saving me from a future double fire attack. The results of my fire were also highly acceptable. I get a Pin to hold the group in place and actually kill the Heroed man—meaning that he wasted the card entirely. I can't really complain about the cards I drew, although a Movement card would have been helpful.

The Japanese continues to dither while the American web tightens around him. The shock of seeing the "devils from the sky" seems to be affecting this Japanese outpost longer than normal.

Again the Japanese player discards a Concealed card (just after seeing how useful they can be) and

retains that useless F6 card! And, for all this, he gets only two cards where he could have gotten four. Why not hero Togami now, discard the Concealed and Fire, and see what the draw brings. Ron certainly wouldn't be any worse off than he is now and might have more options next turn. If he wants Movement cards with a four-card hand, he'd best get rid of the excess baggage. After all, at this point Jim doesn't need to close the range further than that wall to win.

So, Ron pays while Jim plays. I can't even complain about Group A's attempt to entrench among the flurry of American activity; they've nothing better to do this turn. The attack on enemy Group B (Fire 2) strips out the Hero card hoarded so long by Ron to no effect. That Concealed card the Japanese so blithely tossed just now sure would have looked good to him, I'll bet. With only that Cover card a problem, Jim's hand after the draw still looks great. If he can now get his folk moving after regaining their breath, he'd have this game nearly in the bag.

Turn 4

Japanese: The situation is deteriorating rapidly. He's found a hill to camp on, and to increase his fire strength. I spent my Hero card trying to save my pinned man prior to his fire resolution, and Jim managed to eliminate him anyway. And pinned another man to boot. His Group C rallies behind the wall, and is now in great shape.

I am left contemplating a Hero card that proved to be a detriment to my cause. It served me no useful purpose, but took up space in my small hand for four turns when I needed Move cards. Its presence also encouraged me to hold onto the high Fire card, thereby compounding my difficulties. Looking at my situation now, one can see that I would have been better off had I not discarded the Rally and the Concealed cards. Yet, who among you, the readers, would have counseled me to discard a Hero card? I guess this just proves that it's best not to draw a Hero card so early in the game.

The Fire card is not worth holding onto now, and I don't want to move into a gully because I need to fire at him every chance I get. So I'll discard those two cards.

American: Another break. He discards and I get another reprieve. If there were only Fire or Move cards in my hand. What I hate to do now is give him a break right back, but I must discard in hopes of better things. The large Fire card will go along with the Cover card. The draw of Smoke and Brush are not quite what I had in mind. About the only thing good is that I won't mind throwing them away next time.

Finally the Japanese begin to sort themselves out. But the initiative, and advantage, still lies with the Americans.

At last the Japanese player cleans some of the junk from his hand. And, despite Ron's protests, his insistence on hanging onto the Hero and F6 was flawed play. I, for one, would have counseled him to discard both on the first turn. The C3 and the R4 were each easily the equivalent of that single Hero card. Ron is perfectly correct; having a Hero card early in the game if playing the Japanese or Russians is a definite detriment. Only the Americans (and possibly the Germans due to their automatic discard) can afford to hang onto it for several rounds of play in the off-chance that it will prove beneficial.

In point of fact, I am not adverse to discarding anything from my hand unplayed—streams, marsh, wire, fords, heroes. So very much in UP FRONT depends on the player's ability to judge the flow of the play, the situation he is in, his own plans, the cards that have passed by and his chances of getting what he needs, the "worst case" events. This entire process is much more critical with a four-card hand, as opposed to the flexible five of the

German or six-span of the American. Looking at Ron's situation realistically, he should have anticipated that he'd never play the F6. Only at relative Range 5 would it be useful, and then only on an undamaged Group B. Even the Hero wouldn't help take the Japanese A or C to firing level, nor a damaged Group B. Unless Group B wanted to charge straight up into the teeth of the Americans, the fire attack would never be made; and his chances of getting that group to firing position was infinitesimal. So, we dispose of the F6 on the first turn.

Without it, the Hero card is much less valuable. Don't misread me. A Hero card has its uses, and it is flexible (useful in a number of ways). But, pinned in the open, without any bullets, unable to get moving, and with the enemy closing in, any Rally or Concealed card looks more appetizing. The biggest advantage of a Hero card is its unexpectedness—a Fire attack the enemy thought you couldn't make or the salvation of a man he figured would be eliminated. Conversely, its use is limited to one man, whereas a C3 or R4 affects several. And, if pitching or playing it earlier might have brought Ron a useable Fire or Movement card, it would certainly have been a fair trade. And, of course, there is the plain fact that the play of one of those Concealed or Rally cards this turn that he instead tossed would have left the Japanese much better off.

Can't really fault Jim for his play; the Americans really don't have an other options here. Only question is what to discard along with the Cower—the F3, the Hill, or the Concealed. Since he wants to progress forward, and since it will take the Jap a couple of turns to sort himself out (and best) but still able to bite, the Concealed is most important. The Hill, with movement uppermost in the American mind for a couple of turns, has its own uses. So I too would discard the F3. Besides, there are many more Fire cards than there are Hill or Concealed cards; odds are that it is going to be easier to replace the F3 than the Hill or Concealed in his hand.

Turn 5

Japanese: Hurrah! There are Movement cards in the deck, and three of them just found their way into my hand. I'd very much like to use all three, but moving Group B would force the loss of the pinned man. I cannot afford such a sacrifice at this time. Moving up in the open when he has groups at Ranges 3 and 4 entails some risk, I know; but the situation is not likely to improve by waiting, and I need to get into good firing positions before he can consolidate his position. Anyway, my Group B has high morale and should survive. Group A will just have to take their chances.

Although I could discard also, I need to keep the cards I have.

American: As I anticipated at the start of the game, he begins to move up. This would have been a perfect time for me to open up on him, but I discarded the Fire card. The move with two groups allows him to split my attention. At least the planned discard is beneficial to some extent. I will discard the Marsh on Group A and get the Brush card out of the hand at the same time. As I had expected, he rejected the Marsh, but it served some purpose anyway. The draw of another Fire and a Smoke card is not the greatest in the world, but maybe I can hold him off until better things come up.

In a desperate attempt to get something going, Ron makes the only play he can. Moving Group A and Group C forward makes perfect sense, despite the concomitant risks. A stream or marsh could be a problem, but any attack will be middling (although even these can kill off a group, especially since Ron doesn't hold a Rally card). But it is a gamble he must take to remain competitive. That Concealed/Movement card he just drew is, thus far, the best thing he's seen in the game.

The American promptly discards, a Marsh to abort the move of enemy Group A and the useless Brush in his hand. Two questions naturally occur to my devious mind:

Should the Japanese player accept the Marsh? (Ron refuses it.) If he doesn't, his Group A is still free to operate, although now moving and still at Range Chit 0. He will be forced to halt before playing another Movement card (you don't want a double move penalty at these ranges); so . . . two turns before he is back in play. On the other hand, if he accepts the Marsh, he is pinned—but at Range 5 with the American Group A in the open, leading to a firefight he should win handily. Too, from the Marsh at Range Chit 1, he can threaten fire on the short-range Group B. He would be able to pick away at them unopposed (and at Group C hiding behind that Wall) for several turns. On the other hand . . .

Quite frankly, if in Ron's shoes, I'm not sure what I'd have done. This is one of those instances in UP FRONT where you rely on "gut reaction". If I'd perfect knowledge of potential enemy actions, of surrounding terrain, of what capabilities my troops could perform over the next few turns, then the choice would be obvious. But that's what makes this game so realistic. In a firefight at this scale, you DON'T know (or have, at best, partial knowledge). Much of what squad leaders and individuals do in combat is dependent on their instincts and snap judgements. And that's a large part of this game system.

Further question. Should Jim merely discard the Brush, or play it on Japanese Group C? Personally, I'd send the enemy into the weeds. When my opponent moves a group, or especially two or more, I must assume that he has favorable terrain. If I've no fire on that group, and nothing worse to do to him, and a spare Brush card to hand, then this play may just throw his fancy footwork off step. At the very least it forces him to waste a Movement card; at most, it may keep him out of that Gully, Building, or Hill position.

Turn 6

Japanese: Jim must have ran out of Fire cards or he would have tried to blast me as I moved forward. I was so happy to see him discard this turn. My acquisition of another Woods card means that both my forward groups can move into good terrain now. It's too bad that one of Jim's discards was a Marsh card played on Group A. Had he not done that, Group A would be at relative Range 5 to his Group A in the woods now. That would have been a very good firing position, and would have threatened infiltration of his group. As it is, both groups are in good cover for future advances. Could it be that the fortunes of war(gaming) are about to turn in my favor? I can hope so because I still need a Rally card for Group B. I rejected that Marsh card on Group A, and move into woods at Range 0.

American: Things are all of a sudden looking grim. I have no cards to counteract his movement. The play of the two Woods cards put him in a very strong position. About all I can see to do now is to lay protective smoke on Group B and try to dig in with all the others. Apparently the boys have forgotten how to use their shovels as both groups fail. This is now a very bad turn as I only passed one card through my hand. At least the draw gave me a useable Fire card for all those efforts.

The Japanese goes fishing and the American digs holes, striking bedrock. Jim needs some demo charges.

Nothing to say about the Japanese discard. The draw brings him—at long last—some useable Fire cards. With Concealment, Movement and Fire, Ron is at last able to explore (and exploit) some of his options.

About the American's play, I am less than enthusiastic. The Smoke on the Hill is rather pointless; certainly no one's going to bother with them and the hill itself is enough protection against the LMG in B and four rifles in C. And again Jim wastes time entrenching. Doesn't he know that paratroopers live for the skies, not to grub in the dirt? Seriously, the entrenchments are pointless, especially as they cost him the chance to garner another card for his hand. In this game, you entrench only if you've nothing better to do, or in extreme emergency. Neither pertains here. The American could have had two discards or, if he was adamant about the Smoke, played it and still discarded one card (due to his elite status). Instead he pulls only one card; regardless of its obvious usefulness, he might have done better still. Who knows what the next card could have been?

Turn 7

Japanese: Ah so; Group B has deployed smoke! That means they are planning to move up next turn. With the two good Fire cards in my hand, I now have a real chance to begin elimination of his forward group, though belatedly. My Group A will fire first, and Group B will follow attempting to destroy his Group A in a deadly crossfire. Although I have movement cards for Group C, I shall wait and hope to acquire a good terrain card before closing to relative Range 5 with his counterparts. Group B still needs that Rally card.

American: The previous failure to dig in hurts A again. I will have to play a Concealed card. Oh no, the dreaded crossfire. Anderson routs and all the group is left with is the lone pinned man. This is a tough time to lose someone. To add insult to injury, a Breeze wipes out B's smoke cover. I will rally A, put more smoke down on B, fire at his group B with C, and try to dig in with D. Even though the fire is modified to "0", I at least have a pin on one man. The entrenchment was also successful. Note that the Smoke card was played last to insure it staying in place in case a Breeze was drawn in prior resolution of my fire. The turn was at least worth four new cards. Received a needed Movement card and a fairly worthless Fire card.

The Japanese fire evens the losses (remember, the Japanese can lose half-again as many men as the paratroopers and still be viable). Opening with Group A (Fire 4, -1 concealment), followed by Group B (Fire 3), the Americans go down in hail of lead. But . . . Burke is still there, if pinned.

Looking over some other Japanese options, Ron could have fired on Group C (to me the most dangerous, in terms of game winning potential, of the two). An attack from B (which could well pull the Concealed card) followed by an attack from C may have damaged this more strategically placed and protected group. Again, "gut reaction"—but I'd have fired on American Group C.

Ron dismissed his other option much too quickly. Given the fire on American A, I would think that C should have moved—either to flank B or D, or forward at C. The flank move would probably be worthless, since the flanked group should be moving forward soon anyway. But the move forward would put the other small American group under pressure, Ron's avowed desire in his strategy. Combined with A's troubles, Jim would have a lot to think about. Due to the Woods and the Concealed in his hand, there'd still be a -2 modifier to any attack (even though the range shortens). The high morale of these men should see them through into close combat for that wall. Ron will have to do it eventually; I say do it now while Jim is spread and distracted.

Meanwhile, determined to open his options, Jim maximizes the use of his cards. Moores smokes, Burke rallies, and Allen digs in. The fire attack (Fire 2, -1 concealment) keeps up the pressure on the enemy firebase and reminds the Japanese that they

are still standing around in the open. Interestingly, the C1 saves a man; Ron must have learned the value of these by now.

Jim's draw is quite satisfactory. Except for a middle-level Fire card instead of the F5, I don't know what else he could want. Flexible power.

Turn 8

Japanese: I think it is becoming clear at this point that I have little hope of winning by holding him off until time runs out. He's just too close to the ranges where he needs to be. Therefore, I must eliminate enough of his squad to break it, or severely limit his chances of meeting his victory conditions. That's why it is so disappointing to apply a good crossfire attack and see only one man eliminated.

Just as I finally acquire a Rally 1 card, Jim manages to pin another man in Group B, which means they still can't get out of the open. And when a Breeze dissipates his smoke, he calmly plays another one on his group.

I'll rally one man in B and hope for another Rally card. To increase my chance of drawing one, I'll use the Fire card to fire at Group A again. Maybe I'll get lucky.

American: His fire attack was not that strong against A, but I played the Concealed -3 card anyway. This was just to insure that A was not completely wiped out and will help me save the Rally 5 card for use against incoming fire on one of the large groups. It also gets a card out of the hand in hopes of a better draw. My large fire cards are worthless now. Not really much else to be said for the turn except that I will use my Elite US status and so can make a move up with D and still discard one card. One real worry I have now is that very few Wire/Stream/Marsh cards have gone through my sight.

The Japanese fire attack (Fire 3, -3 concealment) on Group A is something of a waste. Not that Ron knew it, but fire here was sure to draw the Concealed card. I'd have thought long about using this valuable Fire card on the American Group B. Chances are that most players would, given the modifiers already present, have allowed the "I" attack to bore in. Against such low morale, Ron might have broken a man or two. For the moment, Private Burke isn't going anywhere; so why not ignore him and get more mileage for your bullets.

That Movement card remains in Ron's hand. I still think it should be used for Japanese Group C.

Jim makes a solid move for the Americans, and has a good discard/draw. Jim is ever so slowly tightening the noose. If Group D can get into good terrain (i.e., that Hill in his hand), its impact on the Japanese in Group C could be devastating. With both large groups on hilltops, there is nowhere for the enemy to hide. And, with the Rally 5 card backing him, the actual dash across the open would lose Jim little unless the Japanese in Group C can muster the best "8-firepower" attack in the deck (the F48 card).

Turn 9

Japanese: At last I will be able to rally Group B. This comes not a moment too soon as Jim's Group D has moved to Range 2 and threatens some unpleasant things. Should it continue to move on to Range 3, Group D would be in position to receive a transfer from American Group C which is already at that range. If that should succeed and he finds terrain with a negative modifier, I can kiss this game good-bye. A lesser threat is for his Group D to continue advancing and attempt to flank my Group C.

I must take action now to avert this threat. Group C must advance to Range 2 now even though I have spotted no advantageous terrain. This is not as bad as it could be, because the "-2" modifier for woods and the Concealed card more than compensate for the "+1" modifier for moving. By mov-

ing now, I should avoid any effective fire from his Group D because it is also moving. Finally, Group C is my highest morale group and should hold up well.

Moving to Range 2 will allow Group C to use better Fire cards and, more importantly, will place them in position to infiltrate and subsequently eliminate his pesky Group C. That would remove the immediate threat and significantly reduce the pressure he is applying.

American: His move to relative Range 2 is quite a surprise and also quite a help. I will now be able to use the previously worthless large Fire cards. I initially would have preferred to discard this turn but now have decided to put D on the Hill and move up with B. As usual, A fails in the attempt to dig in. The shovel contract needs to be re-let. The results of this are two groups to relative Range 2. If I can lay down some covering fire and then get them to Range 3 simultaneously, things will be going really well.

Once again Ron's play is tardy; what would have been a solid play a couple of turns ago is now a dangerous one. His Japanese move, timed to coincide with the Americans in Group D, could leave Group C stuck in the open if he can't draw a terrain card—something you don't want at these ranges. Another consideration in the play of this game is, believe it or not, concentration of force. I like to keep my groups relatively close to each other to offer covering fire and cooperative Close Combat. The paratroopers have no choice in the matter (although, the readers should note that Jim has been steadily working his rear troops forward in parallel); but the Japanese have one group edging ahead. Ron may have some difficulty coordinating his efforts because of this.

The Americans seem a bit greedy. Jim could have compromised between the choices he mentions above. Rather than playing that Movement card on Group B, he should have just played the Hill (which really did have to be played at this moment to avoid any unpleasant surprises) and, claiming his Elite status, discarded the F5. Even with Group D, Jim simply doesn't have the necessary firepower for its use. Patience is a virtue, and there's no hurry in pushing Group B forward. Besides, without terrain or concealment, B is at risk. There is just too much of a chance that Japanese A and B will open a barrage that clears the smoke.

Turn 10

Japanese: I didn't receive a terrain card, except for the Building (which is a scenario-defined cover card at this point in the game). I'll take advantage of my free discard to dispose of it. Although Group C is moving, it is still safer in the woods than it would be if it stopped in open ground. Adding insult to injury is his Group D's move onto a hill, giving him better fire modifiers. In order to move more cards through my hand, and to attempt to suppress his Group C from taking part in any possible crossfire attack, I'll fire at it.

American: The fire on Group C won't hurt a bit. As a matter of fact, at this time a pin of a single man would have been desirable. I would have gotten to use my relatively worthless Rally 1 card. This is a game anomaly for the US player. Getting cards through the hand can often be more valuable than a minor discomfort. The results are even better than I had hoped for, however. His machinegun broke! A bit of luck here to turn this into a permanent result would really be beneficial. To get even a bit, he drops a Concealed against my return fire. As it turned out, the bad draws make it unnecessary, but I had hoped for a pin at least somewhere. Group A still can't dig in! At least the draw wasn't that bad.

The Japanese looks worse than ever by the time the dust settles on this turn.

The Japanese group moving is definitely better off staying in motion than in hitting open group. The danger, of course, is that the Americans may dump an unwanted card on them. Except for one Marsh, we've seen none of the harmful cards (Wire, Stream, Marsh) come out. Ron has got to be aware of this, so keeping C moving is another of those "gut" decisions. Meanwhile, his fire on enemy Group C (Fire 4, -1 wall) succeeds only in jamming the LMG. Group B may have been better served trying to entrench; any move with them should surely draw some serious fire from the enemy lines. And, with the Americans closing in, Group A should also have attempted to entrench. Don't disdain the shovels; they are at least as important as the infantrymen's rifles.

To protect his moving group, Moores again tosses a smoke grenade. Interestingly, the Americans have drawn every Smoke card to appear thus far—a comment on Jim's luck.

The American fire on Group C (Fire 4, +1 enemy moving, +1 hill, -2 woods, -1 concealment) is certainly worthwhile; despite their high morale, someone in Japanese Group C should pin. This would allow Jim to begin destruction of this most potent threat. And it is doubtful that Ron would declare a Banzai with them when so much open space intervenes. Jim has already shown that he's holding high Fire cards.

I question whether Burke (American Group A) should continue to try to dig in, or just retreat. A backward move would likely go unchallenged, and it puts him at Range 3—ready to join Group B for a win. It opens up the options for winning; with multiple simultaneous lateral transfers, one could surely get in for a five-man group and victory. In UP FRONT, you want to use every man (as well as every card) possible. Jim is ignoring the potential in Group A. It costs him only a Movement card—vital as that may be—which might be replaced in the draw.

Turn 11

Japanese: Blast! What a time for my light machinegun to malfunction. The danger mounts with each turn. It is certainly possible that Jim could move both Groups B and D to Range 3 anytime now, providing he has the cards. If he does, the multiple individual transfer threats he could pose would be very difficult to counter. The key to stopping this is his Group C. If I can eliminate it, the immediate threat evaporates and Group D will be somewhat isolated from the rest of the action for a few turns. Eliminating that group also brings me that much closer to breaking his squad.

Therefore, I must eliminate American Group C with all deliberate speed. This was one of my initial objectives which I have been woefully slow in achieving due to my early lack of Move and Rally cards. Now, I lack Fire cards, and cannot be sure when I shall acquire some. Close Combat is my best chance of attacking Group C so I must stop, even if in open ground, and attempt to infiltrate. This won't be without difficulties, so Group B will at last begin to move up hoping to help in some capacity.

Where does he get all those Smoke cards? It must be coming out of his ears by now.

American: He plays Open Ground on C, and B moves! A golden opportunity for me to do some real damage here. He must have drawn no Fire cards at all. Group C's fire was to no effect but it drew a Concealed card from his hand. I have saved a better fire from D. Ouch! Bad draws on this fire make it to no avail either. I am taking a chance and moving my Group B. This is a bit risky, but I think worth the trouble. I still have the big Fire card to use and a Rally card in the bank. I got lucky and drew a Woods card to hide in.

The Japanese move is pure desperation. Ron is perfectly correct; at these ranges, his best chance to win will come with Close Combat—and he must clear the small groups to do so. But he should not discount the contribution of fire attacks, and leaving his LMG broken does just that. Too, that move of Group B looks to be suicidal. Looking over his options, I don't understand why he didn't move Group A instead. This would threaten to overwhelm Burke, give him some cover for the run forward, bring some pressure to bear on enemy Group B (who's movement status means that Japanese A can probably get where it wants to be untroubled): The firebase is then free this turn to attempt either repair or entrenchment. Either could be more profitable than a dash to death. Again Ron has the right idea (aggressive reaction) but errs in his execution.

The crossfire attack on Japanese Group C squatting in the open by Jim misfires. Fire from Group C (Fire 3, -2 concealment) and from Group D (Fire 2, +1 hill) was spoiled by poor draws combined with the high morale of the targets. I wonder why the Americans didn't fire on the moving target from from the hilltop—which would have produced an attack of "5", enough to stop them in their tracks even if Ron had played that Concealed card. The lower morale might have left several men pinned in the open for next turn. And that F2 would have remained in Jim's hand for another shot—nearly as good as a crossfire.

Meanwhile, American Group B takes the bit in their teeth and comes forward under cover of the smoke. Notice how Jim has alternated the Smoke and Movement cards, showing a real tactical flair. If Jim can pull terrain for them, he should have the game all but won. Jim's patience with Group B pays off handsomely as he draws a Woods card for them to duck into. Group A finally entrenches, but it is rather pointless, since all attention is on the groups at Range 3.

Turn 12

Japanese: I used one Buildings card for open ground and another one pops into my hand. Unfortunately, it still qualifies as a scenario-defined Cower card. The Wire and the Fire are nice, but a Movement card would be better.

Group C proved to be very tough cookies by withstanding his crossfire attack without so much as a scratch. I must admit I was really sweating that one out.

After moving Group B, I remembered that I could have attempted to repair the machinegun. That's impossible now as long as they are moving. Of course, the repair attempt could have failed, and the group would still be at Range 0. At least, it is moving closer to the action and will be more effective when the gun is repaired. But, alas, I have no terrain for the group to move into.

And I have no Move cards to help with Group C's infiltration attempt, so I'll just have to rely on the high morale values.

American: It's not a real surprise, but he infiltrates my C to keep me from moving into a winning position. Infiltration has many uses besides the obvious. Here he is able to prevent both transfers and a win with one move. I do not expect him to use the infiltrated men for anything but a stopper. The only way for a cheap win may be to retreat Group A to combine with Group B. Of course, I could always hope that a fire on C would get lucky and get both infiltrators. I did get one, but the other one is still a menace. Group A will move back anyway. It will not hurt to have as many threats open as possible. I get lucky on the draw and get a Move and a Hero. If the fire from B works next turn, I have the game locked.

The Japanese begin, at long last, the sequence of events that should lead to the destruction of Group C in short order. Ron sends Fujiyama and Asanti

to slide over the wall. Trusting to their high morale to get them in among Group C. Ron is not disappointed. I am moderately surprised that Ron didn't send all his Japanese in Group C over. But, in any case, now the Americans will have to deal with this annoyance. The strength of the Japanese infantry lies in their Infiltration (morale) and Close Combat abilities. Let's see how well Ron wields them over the next few turns. Looking to ready himself for all this, the draw brings him good cards but no terrain.

Panting and puffing (I can testify that at least one of them is a heavy smoker), the Americans in Group B finally find the Woods. This shows what a little patience can bring. They are now in position to pour some truly devastating fire into the Japanese. By simply holding them here, Jim can use every Fire card in the deck. He can, with all probability, drive the Japanese off and win the game—if he can protect these low-morale men.

Group A (Burke) gives up that hole he struggled for so long and retreats. It is perfectly possible for him to dodge sideways into Group B for the Victory Conditions win. And, in the heat of battle, Ron may well forget A entirely until it's too late.

American fire into the infiltrating Group C (Fire 2, +1 hill) breaks Asanti, but leaves Fujiyama still there. His odds to break both were not great (about 11%), but Jim is set up well for the next turn when fire from Group B can sweep across. If Ron had sent in all the Japanese, there might be a chance he could eliminate Group C this turn before that fire slams home. But no chance here.

Turn 13

Japanese: Two men from Group C managed to infiltrate Jim's group, but then one was pinned by his fire. One infiltrator is not enough to eliminate both men in Group C in one Close Combat. If I go into combat now, I may lose my infiltration status as a result. I'll take a chance and wait a turn.

I missed my chance to discard Wire on Group B while it was still moving but I'll do it now. I'll save my Rally All card and hope for another Rally to use on Group C.

American: The dropping of the Wire card came at a bad time, or did it? I did miss again in a fire against the infiltrator. Have another chance here, so I will try to transfer A for the easy win. If he's out of Fire cards, I've got it.

I can't help but feel that Ron is presenting so many Japanese targets that Jim won't know who to fire on first. With the F5 and Hero cards, the American can punish any group he chooses. Looking briefly at the Japanese, we find two groups moving and one entangled with the Americans behind the Wall.

Again, looking over Ron's options, I think he has misplayed. By putting Group A into motion, he has presented the Americans with the perfect situation for Burke to transfer to Group B. With everyone momentarily busy, it may be that he can't be stopped by fire. It might have been better for Ron's Group A, rather than moving, to use the Fire card on Burke, attempting to shoot him down as he ran back. The Movement card could have then been used to take Group B to relative Range 5 with the enemy. Of course, the wire would not have been dropped, and casualties might have been high in Group B (charging a Machine Pistol is not healthy) but a Banzai or straightforward infiltration would tie down the enemy Group B. Those Thompsons aren't so good in Close Combat. So, fire on Group A and a charge at Group B would probably have taken care of that threat.

Meanwhile, Ron should either go ahead and commit Fujiyama to Close Combat, or send in the rest of these clowns for infiltration. You won't keep a single man infiltrated for long at these ranges. If he'd charged Group B, Jim may well have chosen to fire on the proximate threat (with likely deadly

effects) and ignored Group C. On the next turn, the Japanese could then overwhelm Frattali and McElroy.

But, luckily for him, Jim is not faced with such hard choices. If Ron had even dropped the Wire on Burke instead of Group B, the American player would have had to think a bit. As 'tis, his only consideration is which group to hammer with the F5. He opts for Group C (Fire 5, -1 wire), killing one man and breaking the infiltration. Meanwhile Burke jogs sideways and Group D entrenches on the hilltop.

Oh, oh! Jim draws no Fire cards. At this point, with the Japanese ready to launch themselves into Close Combat mode, this is not what you want to happen. The only thing that could cost Jim the game at this point is an ammunition shortage, the paratrooper's bane. Of course, if Burke makes it in, it is all irrelevant.

Turn 14

Japanese: Yipes!!! Am I blind or stupid?! (Don't answer that!) Jim has managed to move Group A into position and initiate a transfer while I have been worrying about Group C. I failed to see how close he was getting to make a transfer, and now have blundered into a first rank disaster unless I can pull some magic out of the hat. If nothing stops it, the transfer will be completed next turn, and Jim will have five unpinned men in one uninfiltrated group at Range 3 in terrain which reduces the strength of fire attack against it. That's called Victory Conditions!

The Wire doesn't stop him because the "-2" modifier for being in Woods still gives him a "-1" modifier. Another Wire card would negate his victory conditions momentarily, but I don't have one. I have helped dig this hole by having both Groups A and B moving at a time when I need them to fire.

Obviously, I must stop that transfer. Group A will attempt to do it by using the Fire card. Although the fire strength will be halved, I can take some solace in the "+3" modifier I'll have because of his transfer and the Movement card. If that doesn't work, my only remaining chance is to attempt infiltration with the one available man in Group C. Note that a Banzai attack doesn't work because I would have to wait a turn for Close Combat, and by that time Jim would have won.

If Lady Luck is ever to smile on me, now is the time.

American: Rats! He did have Fire cards and managed to pin Burke to save his position. I don't really have that good of a hand at the present time so I'll play the Hero to save the pin and play the Brush, and use the Sniper. This is another attempt to run cards through my hand. It is possible I should have held onto the Hero in hopes of using it against one of his groups with the doubled firepower effect, but I really think I need to see more cards at this time. The Sniper managed to find the man I wanted to hit but just couldn't draw a high enough number to do any real damage. I'm still in a winning position but now I am out of cards to back up the necessary moves.

Japanese fire from the moving Group A (Fire 2 halved, +1 movement, +2 transferring) stops Burke in his tracks (17.84). If this had not worked (and there was only about a 50-50 chance of breaking him assuming that Jim held no Concealed cards), then Togo and Kobayashi would have made the desperate and problematical attempt to infiltrate the wired group. Ron has the opportunity to waste his Rally All card to bring back one man. Since all this smacks of cycling cards through his hand, why didn't Ron also toss that Cower card?

The American does all he can to pass cards through his hand. Jim needs some impressive Fire cards or some Movement cards to open up his options. The Sniper is a long-shot, but a cheap

gamble. Unfortunately, while he had Togo in his sights, he missed. Jim's draw isn't bad (although the Pillbox is a Cower card, and a waste). The C2 and F3 both will surely play; indeed, as we near the point of bayonets and gun butts, I'd say they are the most valuable cards in his hand. The American wants to garner as much concealment as possible, ignoring incoming fire (using his Rally cards to bring broken men back).

Turn 15

Japanese: Whew! A high RNC saves my neck on the fire resolution by pinning the transferring man. Even though Jim played the Hero to revive him, the transfer has been squelched, and the game continues. He apparently doesn't have a Movement card for another attempt. That's good because I'd be hard pressed to stop him now. I'll play the Sniper on Jim's Group B in hopes of eliminating one man and, therefore, reducing his chances of pulling that trick on me again. I didn't think to discard the Cower card last turn in my desperate attempt to prevent his win. I'll do that now.

I must calm my nerves after last turn's near miss. What happened is only the most glaring example of inefficient play. I cannot afford to be so careless against an accomplished player like Jim. Although I have a little breathing room now, many problems still exist. Jim has three groups at Range 3, and could move the other one up at any time. I cannot hope to hold them all off unless I begin to significantly reduce the number of personnel in his squad.

American: Now we wait. His Sniper pins Martin. This may actually be a blessing in disguise because I will get to play the Rally 1 card to look for the crucial Movement card. Maybe a small shot will get lucky. It doesn't, but I can hope for the draw. That hope is also dashed with the draw of some nondescript cards—that is—no Movement card.

The Japanese seems to be just marking time, and accomplishing precious little. He had many possibilities open, and chose the most passive. While the transitory Sniper pin on Group B has its uses, it really changes nothing and does not serve to improve the Japanese position one whit.

Instead he could have put Group B behind that Wall and then tried to repair the LMG—a significant action. With Group C healthy again, he might have tried infiltrating the enemy (American B and/or C). He may have used that Movement card to try a Lateral Man Transfer to Group B to increase their hitting power. He could have taken Group B another step closer to try infiltration next turn. Any of these would be a gamble of course, but positive in outlook.

While the draw for Ron is nice, these are essential defensive cards. This is not what he needs. The Japanese must take the bayonet to the Americans, and for that he needs Concealment and Movement cards.

The American fire on Group C (Fire 3, +1 hill) isn't to be discounted, and it pins a man. But, Jim needs kills right now. He may have been better served to hold his fire, waiting to stretch the Japanese hand next turn, accenting its deficiencies in responding to several threats.

Jim might have foregone the Rally card and fired on either other Japanese group who—because they are moving and have a lower morale—offer higher percentages for multiple pins. A shot into Group A, for instance, might have taken them out of the chase of Burke and improved his chances of getting into Group B. On the other hand, Jim might have considered holding onto the F3, rallied Martin, and discarded the Cower card for a two-card draw. On reflection, this strikes me as his best course.

Turn 16

Japanese: We're playing one of those little "mini-games" we sometimes get into wherein Jim fires

and pins man or men, and I rally him/them in the next turn. Jim fires again and I rally and so on and so on until one of us runs out of cards. Very frustrating and nerve-wracking. Especially now, because I would like to infiltrate his Group C with all three members of my Group C to give myself the best chance of eliminating his group. But he keeps pinning them. So, I'll rally again.

Elsewhere, Group A ducks into a gully in preparation for closing on its opposite number for infiltration. Infiltration is becoming a specialty of mine in this game. Group B finally finds some decent terrain.

American: Am depressed now. He gets terrain and I don't get any Movement. My fire misses and the draw is also bad. I still wait for a chance at a fast win or disastrous loss.

A well-played Japanese move; no flair but no errors either. We could debate endlessly as to whether the placement of the Wall and Gully should have been reversed. Suffice to say that both possible plays have their strong points and their disadvantages. Besides keeping Group C intact to take on the Americans in B and C, Ron must repair that LMG to give himself some effective hitting power.

The American fire again doesn't faze the Japanese (Fire 2, +1 hill, -1 concealment), although it does pull one of those now valuable Concealed cards from Ron's hand. By pitching the Cower card at last, Jim picks up a good Rally card. Too bad it couldn't have been some bullets. There is absolutely nothing Jim can do here except store up Concealed cards and fend off any stray shots from the enemy.

Turn 17

Japanese: The Concealed card helped to prevent any pins in my Group C. Now is my chance to get more infiltrators into his position. Both of these men have high morale values, so I'll not play any Movement card on them and accept a morale check. Group B will attempt to repair the light machinegun, and Group A moves forward in the Gully. Closing the range will help me to finally eliminate his one man remaining in Group A.

American: Here he comes. The machinegun is repaired and there are more infiltrators. A very bad turn for me. I can only play Smoke and discard Brush and hope.

At this time, we reach the second crucial point in the game. It seems that I erred in not combining groups at Relative Range 2 (B or D with C). From a good winning position, the game has turned against me with Ron performing his favorite tactic of infiltrating to prevent transfer. He has managed to turn the game into a firefight instead of one of maneuver. This is a change which will hurt since I am ill prepared to win this type of contest.

At last the Japanese player repairs his LMG, but it may be too late. Obviously, Ron is coming with a rush. However, I think he should have laid some groundwork first for his path to glory. The Japanese should have fired into Group B from his own Group B or C. Since the American Group B is sure to provide some fire into his infiltrators, neutralizing it would be a real boon. Fire upon these Americans might pull a Concealed card from Jim—all to the good from Ron's standpoint. Softening up the opposition is never a bad idea; and if he waits, Ron may lose his chance. I think this course might pay better dividends in the long run than repairing the LMG.

The infiltration of Group C finally looks like something that Ron can be satisfied with. It better be, it is probably all he's going to get. Even though one man broke, Ron has the possibility of eliminating both Fraitali and McElroy in one fell swoop next turn. Should that come to pass, things are beginning at last to turn the Japanese way.

Looking for some kind of break in his recent luck, Jim drops Smoke with Moores and tosses the Brush.

As I feared, Ron has lost his best chance to suppress Group B. Jim chose to retain the Building, a mistake since this game will probably be over long before they come into play. As to the discard of the the Brush—why not onto Group A, leaving them feeling a bit exposed? (As the American here, I'd have to assume they were dashing for Woods, Hill or Gully).

Turn 18

Japanese: Darn! A "morale 5 man" fails his morale check. Good help is so hard to find these days. At least two men made it in, and Jim apparently doesn't have Fire cards. Do I detect a slight shift of fortunes to my side of the table?

I have a decision to make. I had hoped that all three men in Group C would be infiltrators by now. A three-on-two Close Combat would be less risky than two-on-two. Of course, I have a card to rally the would-be infiltrator, but it would take at least two turns to infiltrate with him. I don't expect Jim to sit passively while I attempt to align more force against him. If he acquires a good Fire card and manages to pin my infiltrators, I may never get back to the position I'm in now. So, the Close Combat will have to happen now, and I'll just have to rely on the high CCV's of my infiltrators to win it.

Elsewhere, Group A finds some Brush and Group B will fire with its recently repaired machinegun at Jim's Group A.

American: He takes a Fire 0 at Group A. I would hate to lose this man, or even get him pinned, but I feel I must save the Concealed card. I was right on that score as he misses, but now have to face the Close Combat versus my poor fellows in Group C. The Close Combat will decide a lot in this game. He is trying to split my groups B and D to really put the pinch on getting victory conditions. About the best I can hope for is to split the CC with one loss apiece. I'm really glad I saved that Concealed card now.

The results were not quite what I had hoped for. My Group C is wiped out and he claims the Wall as the fruits of victory. The slaughter of one Japanese was not a real consolation. I now must hope for good results on my shots at his Group A and wait for a Movement card to transfer Burke for a win.

Despite his play of a Concealment, all of the men in his Group A are pinned.

Togo and Fujiyama show their prowess in Close Combat, eliminating both the Americans that comprised Group C. Jim's play of the Concealed card means, however, that Fujiyama dies too, his fingers locked around the throat of McElroy. In the process, Ron at long last gains some cover for the survivors of Group C. Ron's decision to send them in proves itself. But then, the worse that could have happened would be for both men to gang up on one American, probably retaining the infiltration in any case.

The fire on American A (Fire 2, -1 brush, -1 entrenchment) seems rather pointless. I'd think that a "0" attack on Group B would be more profitable. Ron may be concentrating so hard on eliminating these small groups that he is missing the picture of what Jim's group in the woods can do to him at this range. When you've an equivalent attack, and all other things being equal, fire on the larger group. Draw of a Concealed and a good Fire card couldn't be better.

American fire (Fire 6, -1 wire, -1 brush, -1 concealment) turns Group A into a quivering mass. Discarding the Cower card, Jim finally pulls that Movement he needs, and a fair Fire card to boot.

Looking over this turn, I'd call it a toss-up. Both players have been seriously injured; neither fatally. Both have potential strong actions next turn; both have problems to face. Casualties are still equal. A Japanese advantage, but Jim has more possibility of eliminating enemy men at this point. So, from

a one-time American cake-walk, the game has transformed itself into a tight situation where either player could win.

Turn 19

Japanese: I was very relieved that the Close Combat was so successful. Each of my men were able to take out one of his and so eliminate the group. The only disappointment was the loss of one of my men also. Having eliminated the group entitles me to claim the terrain they had occupied, so bloodied Group C finally gets out of clear terrain.

I am not so fortunate elsewhere. My fire fails to hurt his Group A, and Jim manages to pin every man in my Group A with return fire. I guess my decision to attack last turn was a good one, because he did have a Fire card.

I only have one Rally card, and I choose to play it on Group A because it is in the most danger right now. Group B will again fire at the only man who can still transfer to a group for a win.

American: Once again a Rally card appears. He always seems to have one up his sleeve at the most inopportune time for me. Luck is on my side a bit, however, when a Fire 2 fails to disturb Burke in the least. I now have a reasonable chance provided he gets no large Fire cards or I can at least draw a good Concealed card.

I will now try once again to transfer Burke and take a shot at his Group A. The fire is again successful so I will dump the Smoke card on Group B hoping to lower his fire strength enough for the win. My draw will allow a lot of fire if I don't get lucky enough to nab a win next turn.

The rally of Japanese Group A was imperative. So, having done that, Ron proceeds to squander his own fire again (Fire 4, -1 brush, -1 entrenchment). I am firmly convinced that Japanese fire on Group B would be better. While a KIA on either target would end any hope for an American win by massing five men, the chances of a pin is higher when firing on B. And the final modified attack would be a "3" rather than a "2". Any damage to Group B would cut Jim's firepower, pin him on the Wire at least for another turn, and force Concealed and/or Rally cards out of the enemy hand. Ron seems to have a fixation on this small group; and this inflexibility could cost him the game.

The American Burke, still wanting company, again requests a transfer to Group B. If he makes it, of course, that's the game. Moores dumps Smoke to help cover him. However, I suspect that the Japanese will fire on Group A directly—they have a better chance of aborting the transfer that way. Meanwhile, covering fire from the hill (Fire 4, +1 hill, -1 brush) pins everybody in the Japanese Group A, again. If I was Ron, I'd be real worried about Group A . . . and even more worried about that transfer.

Jim's dropping of the Smoke card seems almost a "knee-jerk" reaction. I think that if he had thought about it, he would have realized that this could help Togo in his likely attempt to infiltrate.

Turn 20

Japanese: Here he comes with that transfer from group A again. As before, if he completes it, he wins. Obviously, I must take whatever action I can to stop it. Group A is pinned again and cannot help. Fortunately, I have two ways to thwart his attempt. Group B will fire at Jim's Group A, hoping to pin the man as was done once before. If that doesn't work, my only other chance is to infiltrate Group B with the one unpinning man in Group C.

This sure is a closely run operation.

What a time for the machinegun to malfunction again! My fire doesn't work, so I must now depend on infiltrating Group B. I can't chance losing a morale check, so I'll play the split Rally/Movement

to avoid it. His Smoke helps me by allowing two shifts to the left for the RPC. Now I draw one card, and if the RPC is black this game is over.

American: The best of luck starts off the turn. His gun malfunctions and Burke lives. As is his normal ploy, however, he succeeds in an infiltration of Group B to keep the game up in the air. I will complete my transfer and wait for just a bit of luck in order to eliminate his infiltration and claim the win.

The fire from the Japanese firebase (Fire 2, -1 brush) goes awry when the LMG again jams. Sure hasn't been Yoruba's day. Now Ron's only chance to avoid the American victory is to infiltrate with the sole functioning man—Togo! Wisely he uses that Movement/Rally card to best advantage. Togo blends into the smoke-shrouded Woods.

Without the LMG, and with Group A broken, those high Fire cards in Ron's hand are a detriment. At least he knows that Jim hasn't got them. The Movement card, however, is vital to any slim chance he still has.

Burke is back. And the other Americans now come pelting down the hill. It should be noted here that the Buildings have become playable, so I suspect that Group D is rushing to shelter. From that range they can eliminate enemy Group C, and possibly turn the flank. However, it should also be noted that the deck has been reshuffled, so the Marsh and Stream cards are lurking around somewhere. Jim's play of the Movement card also brings him a draw.

Turn 21

Japanese: Hurray! The game ain't over yet, folks. This is a very interesting situation. Jim has five unpinning men in one group. They are at Range 3 and in good terrain. But, he still doesn't win because that group has been infiltrated. It sometimes pays to read your victory conditions carefully.

This is, of course, a precarious situation which forces a difficult decision. I could go ahead and enter Close Combat this turn. My infiltrator has a very good CCV compared to any of his, and should win. That would reduce his group to four men once more and it would be sometime before he would be in position to attempt transfer again. However, if I lose the Close Combat (and I could if he has a high value Concealed card to play), he automatically wins the game—and I would know that I assisted in my own demise (I mean beyond what I've already done).

I could postpone Close Combat until I have a better chance of success—say, after pinning some of his men with a fire attack. After all, as long as I maintain infiltration, he doesn't win. But a successful fire attack on Group C, or a Sniper attack, or even a Close Combat of his own could pin or eliminate my infiltrator and give him the game.

Calculating the odds of success with either tactic is extremely difficult, if not impossible. It all boils down to one question. If I am going to lose, how would I want it to be? I prefer to go down fighting, so I'll enter close combat now.

I'll use the Movement card to avoid a morale check because failing one would be a disaster. Group B will attempt to repair the machinegun.

American: Does he have the guts? Unfortunately the answer is yes. After surviving on his own for all this time, Burke dies the minute he joins up with his comrades on the bayonet of a crazed kamikaze. The protective Smoke has also blown away and Group B is left in quite a precarious position. I will have to try to eliminate his Group A and go for the 75% win at this time.

The fire against Group A does work beautifully as all of his group are blown away. Now to deal with the rest. They'll be a bit tougher since Group B is still infiltrated and my draw wasn't the best in the world. I will just have to accept fire versus the low morale men in B and depend on luck for the rest.

Although he is unaware of it, the Japanese player must commit Togo to Close Combat this turn. Otherwise, the Americans in Group B will unleash that F8 card and likely end the infiltration (and the game). With no fire options, Ron must seek to kill a man this turn. Hoping to take on Martin or Degi (each with a CCV of only "5"), he instead is matched with Burke. Burke, struggling for eight turns to get here, runs smack into a bayonet. The game is now reduced to its basics: who can break the other side first. With the LMG broken and five men pinned, with unuseable Fire cards in his hand and no draw, the Japanese look to have the short end. Only the C2 Ron pulls provides any glimmer of hope.

The Americans begin the process by sweeping away Group A (Fire 8, -1 wire, -1 brush, -2 concealment). Jim's Group D goes into the Building, where they are now well placed to fire into the Japanese. If Jim can draw Fire cards from the reshuffled deck, he can pick the enemy apart over the next couple of turns.

Turn 22

Japanese: I was so happy to see a black "6" turn up for the Close Combat resolution RNC. I won and stayed infiltrated, to boot. Noting that the man eliminated was the very one who had just transferred into the group caused me to realize that I have now eliminated Jim's most forward groups. That was the what I set out to do twenty-one turns ago! Better late than never, I guess. It seems that I have spent the whole game parrying one threat after another.

I didn't have much time to enjoy my victory in Close Combat, however, before witnessing my Group A being cut down by a hail of bullets from his Group B. I have now lost over half of my squad, but being Japanese keeps me in the game.

Interestingly, both Jim and I need to eliminate three more of the other's men to win by breaking the opponent's squad. This game is becoming a real slugfest. I need to get better cards and will discard this turn, rather than attempt repair.

American: A Japanese discard turn helps. I will send Myers and Greenwood in against his Group C as counter-infiltrators. With any kind of luck at all I may be able to counterbreak his squad and let my Group B off the hook. I do get a good Fire card, but the Gully is a bit late to be of any use to my battered paratroopers.

The Japanese must dump some of this junk. With the Concealed card used in a vain attempt to save Group A, Ron's hand is useless. However, his draw is almost as bad as what he tossed.

Using the Movement card to insure that Greenwood gets in, the American goes for the destruction of Group C in Close Combat. His two men that have infiltrated it may, however, have a tough time, since their CCVs are not all that high.

An interesting possible strategy for Jim would have been to use that Movement card for a Lateral Group Transfer. He would be gambling that the Japanese have no significant Fire cards in for Group B, but it is a carefully calculated gamble—especially since Jim has both terrain and good Rally cards to back the play. This would force Ron once again to face the potential of a transfer of a man (in either direction).

Turn 23

Japanese: Now is my turn to be infiltrated. Group C is in some real trouble unless I can get good Concealed cards to add to the CCV values of my men, and, maybe a Hero card to rally the pinned man before the Close Combat that is surely coming. I can draw three new cards by discarding two, and using the Movement card to move Group B forward. I'll keep the Gully to use next turn.

American: A Move and discard by the Japanese gives me a bit of breathing room. The Close Com-

bat does result in one casualty for him but not both. I will take a fire attack versus B now with hopes of breaking the potential infiltrators at least. This may have been an odd thing to do, but I felt that I needed to keep both groups off balance. The fire is not successful, so the tactic obviously was not good. The draw of a Rally card now leaves my hand with nothing but trash.

Simply to clear the card, the Japanese in group B lurch forward. I think it would have been more profitable for Ron to repair the LMG. If fixed, both those Fire cards would become playable and he could have raked the enemy Group B over the coals. Nor would he have put Okimoto and friends in danger by rushing right up to the muzzles of the Thompsons.

Nor do I understand the delay in sending Togo into Close Combat again. That Movement card would have seen him in. Every turn that passes increases the percentages of the Americans turning devastating fire on Group C. Ron must assume that Togo is a walking corpse and "make hay" with him while the Rising Sun still shines. His chances of knocking out Martin or Degi are very good, and he could even retain infiltrator status. It is a waste to simply let him sit after the victory over Burke. You should never give an opponent two turns in a row without posing some kind of threat, especially at this late moment in a game.

Greenwood and Fox bash the pinned Japanese in Group C, leaving only Togo to be dealt with. The fire on Group B (Fire 3, -1 wire, +1 enemy moving, -2 wall) drew no results. Jim needs to pin some of the Japanese to put them down. He needs but two kills to win. Assuming that he can eliminate the dithering Togo next turn, Jim must still KIA one man from Group B. But they are running into his sights. Too bad he has no Fire cards.

Turn 24

Japanese: This situation is almost identical to that of last turn. I still need Concealed cards. Unfortunately, I don't need a Hero. To get three cards out of my hand, I'll play the Gully, and fire from Group C with the two Fire cards. I know this will forfeit my infiltrator status, but I don't really need to stay infiltrated anymore. Who knows, I may even get lucky with the fire.

American: He jumps into the Gully. Now to get the last two men for the win. Martin is pinned by his fire but I have nothing to fear from this. If there's one thing I have in abundance right now, it's Rally cards. Close Combat is successful against Group C. I now need merely to get one man from Group B to satisfy the victory conditions for breaking his squad. The gain of one card to the hand is of no help, however, since my draw is again disappointing.

Instead of going for the high percentage kill through Close Combat, Togo breaks his infiltration by spraying American Group B with relatively useless fire (Fire 1 + Fire 1, +1 wire, -2 woods). Predictably, it pins only Martin. If Ron had wielded Togo as he should, it is perfectly possible that he could have eliminated two more men from Group B in addition to Burke. This would have taken the Americans to the threshold of defeat.

Martin is promptly rallied during the American turn, returning this firebase to its former power. Meanwhile, the team of Greenwood and Fox does a tap dance on Togo. Notice that, once committed, Jim has used his infiltrators to best effect. He has, in so doing, left the Japanese with very few options.

Turn 25

Japanese: The last two turns have been bad ones for me. Jim eliminated my two highest morale-valued personnel with no trouble at all. If I lose one more personality card, my squad will break. Now

that I have only one group remaining, Jim can fill his hand to seven cards. At that rate, it won't be long before he has just the cards he needs to finish me off. He'll move Group D adjacent to mine; or worse, he'll move it to effect an encirclement. Then the deadly crossfire attacks will commence. I cannot retreat to avoid this or he will use individual transfer to form a five-man group and win. Even a lucky sniper shot could shatter my squad.

My best time to strike at him is now while his groups are still separated, but the only Fire card I can use is weak and his groups are protected by good terrain. Nor can I afford to wait to get better cards. My previous experience with Close Combat has shown that it could take a number of turns before an effective attack could be made.

But, I have noticed quite a few Fire cards flowing through my hand, and Jim has used a few also. He just might not have any in his hand right now. Even if he does have some, the Wire and Smoke will reduce its effectiveness, and Group D can't even shoot at me while I'm in the Gully. So, in case you haven't guessed by now . . . **BANZAI!!!**

I know it's risky, but I have higher CCV's than he does. Anyway, who would forgive me if I played the Japanese in a Series Replay and didn't make a Banzai attack?

American: Having absolutely nothing in my hand worth playing, all I can do is discard and face the Banzai. I was somehow expecting this tactic now. He has decided to force the game. If I had just one good Fire card, all would have been fine. But my valiant troopers have run out of bullets at the wrong moment. As it is, there is nothing to do but let this attack decide everything. I will discard two cards in hopes of drawing Concealed cards to aid in what shapes up to be a very dangerous situation in Close Combat. The draw actually gives me the Fire cards I had wished for the previous turn. Will just have to take what comes.

Let's pause and look at the possible Japanese plays for this turn. They come down to only three—fire, infiltrate, charge.

The F2 card would bring only a mediocre attack, one that might cut Group B's return fire (note that Group D can't fire on the Japanese). However, odds are that the Americans will still be able to mass some 14-15 firepower factors. If Jim has a high Fire card, even the Gully won't keep someone from breaking. With no Rally cards in his hand, this would be the end.

Infiltration comes off as a poor second choice. To make it worthwhile, everyone should go in (Ron must kill three enemy men, remember). He would be risking not only the defensive fire, but the possibility of one or two men failing their morale. He could assume that Okimoto would pass, and use the Movement card to insure someone else does, but the last two would be forced to draw for morale. Nor is the infiltration assured. Figure that when the dust had settled, only two men would be infiltrated (approximately a 63% chance). This won't bring him the win in quick order, and time is definitely of the essence.

So, distasteful as it is, the Japanese declare a Banzai charge. It doesn't matter if Jim has a high Fire card; if he does, any of his other choices would have been just as bad. If Jim has no Fire card, Ron will have a very slim chance of winning. But it's better than none.

With the Banzai cries ringing out and no bullets, all the Americans can do is search—in vain—for Concealed cards.

Turn 26

Japanese: Ah! He didn't have Fire cards. I just might pull this off. But after drawing RPCs to determine who is attacking whom, I am not so confident. I was hoping that the man with the malfunctioning LMG would join with another to attack

someone. Instead, he alone must be paired with the highest CCV in Jim's group. His CCV of 5 (-1 because of the malfunction) is two less than that of his opponent. Everyone else seems to be in good shape with CCV differentials of +5 and +6 to my favor.

I'll pick the order of resolution so that the malfunctioning LMG goes last. Jim might use up any Concealed cards he has on the first two resolutions and have none left for the third. And, of course, it postpones the moment of truth to the very last. This is definitely the last turn of the game. Either I win or Jim does.

After resolution, I don't know whether to laugh or cry. I came so close to snatching victory from the jaws of defeat—but didn't. But I didn't lose either and, considering the situation, I probably should rejoice. I won the first two resolutions, but on the third I drew a card with a RNC exactly two greater than Jim's, and both men were eliminated. So both squads break simultaneously. We interpret that as a draw.

American: Now for the finale. His Close Combat modifiers are quite a bit greater than mine so that works against me. In my favor is the fact that I must only kill one man before he gets three of mine. I would like to see all of his men against one of mine in order to use the Fire cards from D in my turn to get a win. It's nail biting time as he does get positions against three of my men, all of which, but one, are at disastrous odds for me. The game is definitely on the line.

As expected, he takes the easiest ones first, with Sakai and Fusano killing Moores and Okimoto taking down Degi. I have the advantage on the last CC but just by two. The result of this final attempt (both squads are one man from breaking) is a real heart breaker. I draw a red two and his zero kills both men; a draw by simultaneous death!

What can be said? The permutations of possible Close Combat match-ups and results are endless. Literally either player could have won. Lady Luck decreed that they both lose—which is how I define this "draw".

Post-game

Japanese: As advertised, this was a hard-fought struggle, featuring a lot of hand-to-hand combat. Very bloody, also; a total of seventeen personality cards were eliminated in the fray. And, as with any rousing good brawl, the outcome was in doubt until the last card was played.

Though he was denied victory, Jim should be congratulated for his play. He quickly overcame the awkward position fate and I placed him in, and applied steadily increasing pressure on me. I was so busy countering his threats that I never had time to pursue my own course to victory until, of course, the last turn. It is interesting to note that Jim's first attempt to win came on Turn 13, and it took desperate fire from a moving group on my part to turn it away. Who, at that point, would have predicted the game would continue for another thirteen turns! In *UP FRONT* or *BANZAI*, the game isn't over 'till it's over. I also should note that the group that saved my bacon by pinning the transferring man was a weak one which wasn't expected to do anything but occupy space. Things rarely happen as planned in *BANZAI*, and it's this unpredictability (or "fog-of-war") that is the beauty of the game.

Though it might be expected, I shall not lament over poor luck in this game. I had bad luck at times; but I also had some incredible good luck at other times. I'm not sure how it all balances out. I'll leave that to more objective observers. Besides, it seems inappropriate to complain about luck in a game system in which luck is so pervasive. Anyone who comes to play *UP FRONT* knows, or should know, that much luck is involved. The point of the game is to play the most effectively with the luck you

have. It is perfectly possible for the "best player" to lose at *UP FRONT*, but he will usually win because he played in such a way as to give himself the best chance to win.

There were instances here where I did not give myself the best chance to win. Aside from by obvious blunder in Turn 13, I failed to attempt entrenchment in some turns when it would have cost me nothing to do so. That could have afforded a little extra protection from Jim's fire attacks. The failure to discard that Cover card in Turn 14 is inexcusable. I lost the use of a space in my hand due to that oversight at a very crucial moment in the game.

Most of my fire attacks were aimed at Jim's small forward groups. As the range closed, I should have shifted some of that to his four-man groups. By not doing so, I let them have a "free ride" and the uncontested fire from them did great damage to my squad.

In closing, I hope this match has made an entertaining Series Replay. I certainly enjoyed it.

American: "Post-mortum" seems a fitting title to the game which wiped out ten of the 13 Japanese and seven of the 12 Americans. There are worse results than a draw, but a win is always preferable. What really hurts here is that I thought I had the game in the bag on a number of occasions, only to have Ron's opportunistic defensive play take it right back away from me. This is a credit to Ron and his ability to come up with just the right tactic at just the right time. I thought that my major errors in the game came in trying to achieve a win too rapidly. It is probable that a bit of caution here and there would have given me the victory, albeit a bit slower. The only thing that kept me from doing this is the knowledge that *UP FRONT* is a timed game. The cards which come through the hand are only good if used, and the way to maximize results is usually to maximize card flow. This may seem like a luck factor, but luck is merely what you make of it. I do feel that fortune smiled about equally on both players; it just seemed to desert each of us at crucial times. All in all, I would have liked to have maximized just one more card. Shall we try it again?

As both players have mentioned, the "luck factor" balanced out. Both garnered their benefits from it, and both were stretched when it deserted them. Indeed, it is how they react to the latter that marks the master players. Anyone can play a good hand; knowing what to do with a moderately poor one to improve your chances of having an effect upon enemy play and maximize card flow is much, much rarer.

Looking at this game, I am forced to admire Jim's play. Only rarely did he make a move that did not seek to bring him victory. If he could be condemned for his play, it was that he may have hurried the pace along too much—at times to his detriment. Instead of waiting for better cards or better chances, he would occasionally bore right in. This is not necessarily bad; it certainly keeps one's opponent off-balance. But the risks are great. It is, like so many aspects of this game, a matter of timing. His moving of Group C forward long before it was necessary to do so certainly contributed to their demise, for instance. By holding back at Range 2, Jim could have merged these two with Group D and moved the six-man group forward for the win. If I were to mark a telling mistake on Jim's part that led to his loss, it would be this.

Despite my seemingly near constant criticism of Ron Whaley, he too is a superior player. Ron's difficulties in this game all stemmed from a proclivity to rashness. I received the definite impression that Ron, due to a fixation on his strategy, was overlooking some of his options for play. Look back over the comments for a number of examples. For Ron, a number of actions led to his downfall. Most serious to my mind was his misuse of Togo once he had him infiltrated in Group B. If Togo had elimi-

nated even one more man before his inevitable demise, the Banzai would have brought him the game. Less serious, because more probematical, was Ron's missed opportunities to repair the LMG.

But perhaps Ron's biggest problem was in not maximizing the card flow through his hand, and through the deck, in the opening stages of the game. For the Japanese, as for the Russians, this is crucial. And, it is why many new players find these nationalities so difficult to play. On the other hand, looking at the Americans, Jim made the most of opportunities to dump deadwood and open up the potential of his six-card hand. It is ironic that, after having enjoyed the favor of the cards for the bulk of the game, the reshuffle seemingly dried up his source of Fire cards.

*Both players overcame their difficulties with the style of winners, and for that they are to be thanked for providing such a tight game. The initial spread of the paratroopers and the immobility of the Japanese both set the tone of the early game. Later, Jim's lack of bullets and the decimation of the Japanese brought about a rousing conclusion. Their game for this Replay should stand as a model of what *UP FRONT/BANZAI* games can be: edge-of-the-seat excitement and challenging decisions that, even when minor, can have immense ramifications later in the game. *UP FRONT* is, quite frankly, the best simulation of man-to-man tactical combat around.*



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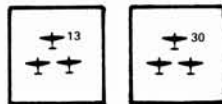
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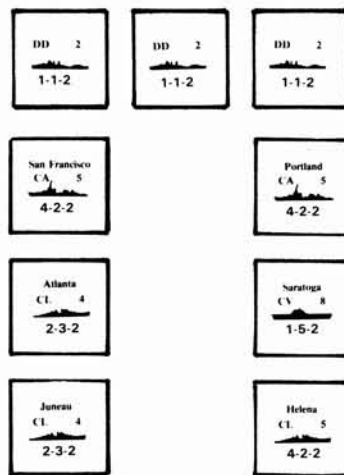
CONTEST 126



A game of *DYO FLAT TOP*, meant to occupy an afternoon pleasantly, has turned into a tough match as you—playing the Japanese—and your friend have stumbled across each others' carrier task forces. The latest American strike, delivered last turn, left the Victory Point tally at 394 for the Americans and 320 for the Japanese. Now your two Air Formations have sighted an enemy task force and are boring in. One formation (AF 13) consists of 21 Vals; the other (AF 30) holds 20 Kates.

Below lies the target. The enemy ships are the *Saratoga*, *San Francisco*, *Portland*, *Helena*, *Juneau*, *Atlanta* and three destroyers. But, luckily, their CAP fighters were instead used to escort the American strike that just razed Rabaul. Especially lucky for you, since you've no fighter escort. All you need to face is the flak. You can visualize the Vals and Kates nosing over in the clear sky and arrowing toward the waiting Americans. For your sake, the attack must bring you as many points as possible. The game may rest on it.

The object of Contest #126 is to allocate the aircraft of the Japanese air formations in such a manner so as to bring as large a point advantage over the Americans as possible. Altitude of the attacks must be specified, as well as target(s). Weather is clear and the action takes place during the day. No optional rules are in play. Winners will be those whose attack allocations guarantee the greatest final discrepancy in Victory Points (to the Japanese advantage, of course).



The answer to Contest #126 must be entered on the official entry form (or a facsimile) found on the insert of this issue. Ten winning entries will receive merchandise credits from The Avalon Hill Game Company. To be valid, an entry must be received prior to the mailing of the next issue and include a numerical rating of this issue as a whole, as well as listing the three best articles. The solution to Contest 126 will appear in Vol. 22, No. 3 and the list of winners in Vol. 22, No. 4 of The *GENERAL*.

PACIFIC DREAMS

Considerations for FLAT TOP

By Friedrich Helfferich

South Pacific—magic land of deep blue ocean glistening under a tropical sun, its whitecaps whipped up by a steady breeze, dotted with lush-green islands crowned with ragged mountain ridges and rain forests; palm studded shores, sparkling beaches, coral reefs, and crystal-clear, blue lagoons. A world whose stunning, shining, colorful beauty is almost beyond belief.

South Pacific, 1942. War had come to this paradise, war of a kind never seen before. Groups of ships stalked one another, struck at great distances often without having caught a glimpse of the opponent. But a war as murderous as any other.

It is in the South Pacific that the two great naval powers clash, that the attempt is made to stem and roll back the tide of Japanese conquest. Most of the American battlefleet lies shattered on Pearl Harbor's shallow bottom. This is a war not of the battleship, but of the aircraft carrier and cruiser, and in these the combatants are more evenly matched. For over a year the decision will hang in the balance, before a wave of new American ships of all classes can make itself felt and inexorably tilt the scales. This time of decision in the South Pacific is what *FLAT TOP* is about. In all naval history, a more fascinating topic is hard to find.

THE ART OF CARRIER GAME DESIGN

"Weeks of boredom, interrupted by minutes of frantic, terrifying activity"—so carrier warfare has aptly been described. Quite a problem for the game designer, who has to juggle time scales and make even that boredom exciting! Nevertheless, the fascination with the topic and the challenge have enticed some of the best designers time and again to try their hand. Indeed, one of the first games of our hobby was a carrier game: The Avalon Hill Game Company's classic *MIDWAY*. In fact, it was *MIDWAY* that got me hooked on wargaming—on one of our first wedding anniversaries (and my wife will never forgive me for it!)

MIDWAY is mainly a *game*—not by any stretch of imagination what we would call a simulation. It can be played after but a brief perusal of the rules and is fun. It is too simple to give a true picture of the realities of carrier warfare, yet it does have elements of authenticity. Not only are the deck plans of the ships on the counters quite accurate, but the rules make the proper tactics of protecting carriers with a ring of other vessels pay off. That is precisely what fascinated me at the time. One might say that *MIDWAY* is halfway between Milton Bradley's *BATTLESHIP* and our present-day complex and detailed simulations.

Quite a number of noted designers have followed in the footsteps of *MIDWAY*'s Shultz and Pinsky, but none to date have been as successful as Craig Taylor with *FLAT TOP*, first published as a Battleline game and now available in an AH edition. He has produced a simulation that is at the same time an enjoyable, if difficult, game. And he has accomplished this by concentrating on the essential *operational* facets of carrier warfare and compromising on the others. Do not expect from *FLAT TOP* the wild excitement of ships twisting and turning under air attack; these tactical "minutes of frantic activity" are abstracted, and you will have to combine *FLAT TOP* with its cousin *DAUNTLESS* to re-enact them. Even old *MIDWAY*, in which the ships at least are laid out on a battle board, provides more tactical detail. But with this well-considered sacrifice, *FLAT*

TOP achieves a sharp focus on the operational aspects and yet avoids the lengthy "telescoping" of time scales attempted in some other design.

On the operational level, *FLAT TOP* shines. Where *MIDWAY* and some of its more elaborate successors launch, execute, and retrieve an air strike all in one game turn (thus having no ship movement while the planes are aloft), *FLAT TOP* moves ships and planes simultaneously—and it does so on a *big* mapboard and at their proper relative speeds. This captures one of the essentials of carrier warfare. There is the excitement of whether the enemy, unsuspecting, will hold his course and allow your full strike to hit him, or whether he will smell danger and turn tail so that the slower or more short-ranged of your aircraft will have to return before reaching him. There is the problem of figuring out many turns ahead where your carriers will be when your planes return. Closing with the enemy may allow your planes to fly on just those few extra miles to reach the enemy task force instead of having to turn home, mission unaccomplished; but if your carriers steam forward at flank speed, will they not become exposed to massive enemy retaliation in turn? This is the excitement into which *FLAT TOP* translates carrier warfare's weeks of "boredom".

FLAT TOP also provides an interesting solution to that eternal problem of naval games—carrier games in particular!—of limited intelligence. One of the imperatives of carrier warfare is to be first to strike; if you do so, and hard enough, your opponent will no longer be able to retaliate effectively. To strike, you must first find the enemy. So searching and spotting is at the heart of carrier warfare and of every carrier game. But in a game, how can you "search" (asking your opponent whether he has something at a stated location) without revealing the positions of your scouts, thereby giving your own disposition away? In *FLAT TOP*, ships remain hidden and only air groups are moved on the mapboard, and players are honor-bound to reveal any naval forces of theirs which would be sighted by the enemy planes as they move. It may seem strange at first that hard-to-see spotter planes move openly on the board while the much more visible ships remain hidden, but the system works quite well in practice. Still, the problem remains that the point of origin of air groups in mid-ocean would immediately be recognized as the position of a carrier. To alleviate this problem, Craig Taylor's original design allowed search and strike aircraft to remain off-board for their first and last game turns aloft. AH's edition goes even farther in leaving it up to the player whether to move an air group on the board or keep it hidden; of course, a hidden group will never spot an enemy, even if it flies directly over him! (Combat air patrol over own ships remains hidden in both designs.)

This search system may well be the best possible compromise solution for a two-player game, short of the use of expensive electronic or cumbersome mechanical matching devices. It does not mirror reality completely: you may see air groups hundreds of miles from your nearest observer while missing others right under—pardon me, over!—your nose. Still, the realistic effect is achieved. And there just is no way for two players, without gadgetry, to search without telling one another where they are searching. For two players, that is. If a third can be found, to act as umpire, the whole problem becomes trivial. This is indeed *the* best way to play a carrier game! More about that a little later.

ANATOMY OF A SYSTEM

FLAT TOP's system is an interesting mixture of intricate detail and elegant abstraction. It works remarkably well for the main aspects of the game, but does have its weaknesses as play could lead to combat actions for which the game was not designed.

The time scale for one hour per game turn is a happy compromise providing sufficient operational detail without slowing the game down unduly. This scale allows for fairly detailed distinctions between aircraft types, flight endurance ranging from five turns aloft for a P-40 fighter to 24 for an Emily flying boat; and speed, from four hexes per turn for a Pete to 12 for a P-38 fighter. On the sea, this scale fits less well. There are just two speeds; fast carriers, cruisers and destroyers streak over the ocean at a miraculous, sustained 40 knots while slow craft such as lowly transports still manage a respectable and equally unrealistic 20. However, the system is internally consistent in that aircraft cruising speeds, too, are exaggerated by about 30 percent. So, we might just say *FLAT TOP* has days with twenty-four 80-minute hours. I cannot guess the reason for this distortion, but its effect on play is minimal—not much greater than that of forcing movement into a hex grid, something wargamers have long learned to live with unquestioningly.

The play sequence is intricate, with no less than ten phases per turn. In essence, naval forces are moved first, simultaneously and in secret. Their positions are conveniently kept track of on pads of reduced-size mapsheets. Air formations are then moved sequentially, the player who wins an "initiative" die roll going first. (Incidentally, to have the initiative may be a disadvantage!) It is up to the owning player whether to move any air formation openly on the mapboard or secretly on the record pad. In any event, only anonymous formation markers appear on the map, so that the composition of the formation remains unrevealed. Aircraft may fly at either of two altitudes: high or low.

Depending on weather conditions, the presence of a ship or ships must be disclosed to aircraft at high altitude flying by at a distance of up to two hexes. Radar may detect "boogies" at even greater distances. However, to make out the composition of a force, the observer must be nearer. There are special provisions for observation at night or by Japanese troops or Allied coastwatchers on many of the islands.

All combat is between forces in the same hex. Air-to-air combat may occur only within observation range of an air base or carrier or directly over any ships. All combat, including anti-aircraft fire, torpedo attacks, shore bombardment, and such is resolved on a single, universal Combat Results Table. In essence, any type of attack—say, by Japanese Kates armed with torpedoes—is given its "Basic Hit Table", really just a number (a whooping 10 for the Kates). This number is cross-indexed on the Combat Results Table with the attacker's strength (here, number of Kate air factors participating) to give a "Result Number". This is the number of probable hits. A single die is then rolled and its result may increase or decrease the number of hits by one or two or leave it unchanged. One hit destroys an air factor (equivalent to three planes), submarine or transport. Other ships can take more hits before sinking: a destroyer, two; a cruiser, three to six; a large carrier, five to eight; a *South Dakota*-

COMBAT RESULTS TABLE														
Hit Table	Number of Attacking Factors													
	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	13-15	16-20	21-23	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50+
1	*	*	*	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
2	*	*	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	3	3	3
3	*	0	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	3	3	4	4	5
4	*	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	3	4	4	5	6	6
5	*	1	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	5	6	6	7	8
6	0	1	1	2	2	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	8	9
7	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	5	7	8	9	10	11
8	0	1	1	2	2	3	4	5	6	7	9	10	11	13
9	0	1	2	2	3	3	4	5	7	8	10	11	13	14
10	0	1	2	2	3	4	5	6	7	9	11	12	14	16
11	0	1	2	3	3	4	5	6	8	10	12	13	16	17
12	0	1	2	3	4	4	6	7	9	11	13	15	17	19
13	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	9	11	13	16	18	21
14	0	1	2	3	4	5	7	8	10	12	14	17	20	22
15	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	9	11	13	17	19	21	23

OBSERVATION TABLES						
OBSERVING UNIT	UNIT BEING OBSERVED	WEATHER	DISTANCE BETWEEN OBSERVING UNIT & UNIT BEING OBSERVED			
			0	1	2	3
Day Turns						
Base/TF/Coastwatcher	Air Formation	Clear	3	2	1	—
		Clouds	2	1	—	—
	TF	Clear	3	2	1	—
		Clouds	3	2	1	—
Air Formation	Air Formation	Clear	3	2	1	—
		Clouds	2	1	—	—
	TF	Clear	3	2	1	—
		Clouds	2	1	—	—
TF/Base with Radar	Air Formation*	Clear	2	2	1	1
		Clouds	2	2	1	1
	TF	Clear	—	—	—	—
		Clouds	—	—	—	—
Night Turns						
Base/TF/Coastwatcher	Air Formation	Clear	1	—	—	—
		Clouds	—	—	—	—
	TF	Clear	1	—	—	—
		Clouds	1	—	—	—
Air Formation	Air Formation	Clear	2	—	—	—
		Clouds	1	—	—	—
	TF	Clear	1	—	—	—
		Clouds	—	—	—	—
TF/Base with Radar	Air Formation*	Clear	2	2	1	1
		Clouds	2	2	1	1
	TF	Clear	—	—	—	—
		Clouds	—	—	—	—

class modern battleship, fifteen. Throughout combat resolution, various modifiers to the Basic Hit Table or die roll may apply, (e.g., for weather conditions, anchored ships, etc).

An example of play on these pages shows how this system works in an action for which the game was mainly designed, an air strike against a naval task force. This example also gives an idea of what tactical options are open to the players in such an engagement. There is ample opportunity for good combat tactics, although they largely are a clever use of game mechanics rather than bearing any resemblance to reality. Still, some illusion of tactical combat is maintained.

Unfortunately, the system works less well for surface and submarine combat, even with the improvements incorporated in the AH edition. Fortunately, this matters little as surface combat is an exceptional event. In some games, however, surface engagements do occur, especially if the scenario calls for a Japanese landing. Surface combat makes use of the same, universal Combat Results Table. The Bas-

ic Hit Table is taken to be the sum of two numbers from 1 to 6, secretly selected one by each player and revealed simultaneously. Each ship has just one gunnery strength, from 1 for a lowly destroyer to 18 for the mighty *Yamato*, and opponents bang away at one another for one round of combat, combining fire as they wish and with only few restrictions. No vessel smaller than a cruiser may fire at a battleship; torpedo-carrying craft may be set aside for a subsequent torpedo attack (they may be fired at but cannot fire themselves); and valuable ships may be "screened" by others to protect them from fire. There is no maneuvering, and the whole affair resembles the chaotic night action at Savo Island, not a normal naval engagement as one might have expected it to develop during daytime.

If a surface battle does occur, it usually is very bloody and ends, more often than not, with annihilation of the weaker force down to the last destroyer. This is because even a flotilla of fast destroyers has little chance of disengaging from a stronger, if slower, enemy. Carriers, modern battleships,

cruisers, destroyers, all travel at two hexes per turn so that the stronger force usually manages to follow the weaker one by "shadowing" it. In the original design there was no escape, except into a storm front or with nightfall. The AH edition mitigates that a little by making the success of shadowing dependent on a die roll (still five chances out of six in daytime and fair weather) and introducing rules limiting ammunition. Even so, no naval buff will be satisfied with the results of surface combat. If you are such a one, you may wish to play surface engagements out separately with miniatures.

Beyond movement and combat, *FLAT TOP* has a great many detailed rules for observation, plane handling on carriers and at bases, weather, nighttime, fuel and fleet oilers, seaplane tenders and temporary bases, and many other facets than are historically relevant and make the game more interesting. In general, they are well designed and coordinated. There were a few rough edges in the original design, but most of them have been smoothed out in the AH edition, in part thanks to the input from a large group of *FLAT TOP* enthusiasts.

OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS

Apart from illustrating the combat system, our example of play can demonstrate three important points at the operational level, all much more closely related to reality than are the game's combat tactics.

The first point concerns the size of an effective air strike. Ours was quite a massive one, 32 air factors—almost one hundred planes. Yet it failed to sink the *Zuikaku*. A weaker strike against the same task force would have taken the same losses to combat air patrol and anti-aircraft fire, a lesser proportion of its planes would have got through, and these might have been too few to do significant damage. Therefore: *Against a fresh enemy, mass your strike*. If you fail to do so, you will dribble away your attack aircraft for little return.

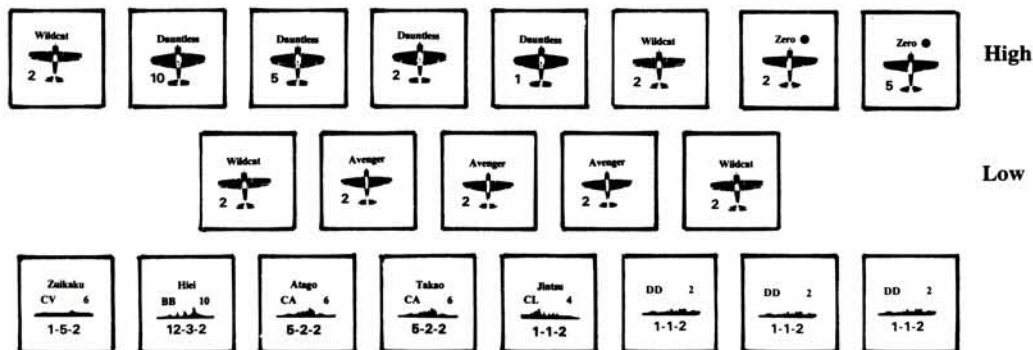
This rule is easier to state than to follow, however. The "Normal Launch Factor" of a large carrier is 10 to 12, and that is the number of air factors which can be launched during one game turn and still move half their movement allowance in that turn. The carrier could launch an additional, equal number of air factors in the same game turn on its "Maximum Launch Factor", but these planes would have to remain in the carrier's hex for the rest of the turn. Thus, if a single carrier were to have launched our eighteen Dauntless and six Avenger factors (not to mention the Wildcat escort), it could have done so in one turn. But the planes would have spent one hour of fuel in the carrier's hex on launching, one hour for maneuvering in the target hex, and a third hour over their carrier for landing (for which the same rules as for taking-off apply). For a Dauntless, with total flight endurance of six hours, three would thus be spent in this fashion and only three would be left for movement. That means, either leg (or both) of the flight, to or from the target, would have to be covered in a single game turn. That a carrier comes so near to an undamaged enemy carrier is a rare occurrence—and is very uncomfortable! And if it should happen, it comes as a surprise and the carrier is unlikely to have all these planes ready on deck for a Maximum Launch.

Of course, our strike could have been launched by the carrier in two successive turns. But then the first wave would have lost an hour of fuel waiting for the second to be launched, and the situation would not have been much more favorable.

It is more likely that our strike was launched by two or even three large American carriers on "Normal Launch Factor" in the same game turn. Two carriers could launch the 24 attacking factors, and the faster fighter escort could catch up later on the way to the target. Easy? No! To be considered as a single air formation, the strike (not counting

EXAMPLE OF PLAY:

Air Attack on a Carrier Force



A massive strike of eighteen factors of Dauntless divebombers armed with armor-piercing bombs (high-explosives bombs are less effective against ships) and six factors of Avenger torpedo bombers armed with torpedos, escorted by eight factors of Wildcat fighters, is attacking a Japanese task force composed of carrier *Zuikaku*, battleship *Hiei*, cruisers *Atago*, *Takao* and *Jintsu* and three destroyers, protected by seven factors of Zeroes on combat air patrol.

The torpedo planes must attack at low altitudes. The divebombers attack from high altitudes (they could instead make a low-level attack, but their Basic Hit Table would then be only 5 instead of 7). To give all his planes some protection, the American player decides to split his escorts evenly, four factors each at high and low altitude. The Japanese player, fearing the divebombers more than the torpedo planes, has placed all his Zeroes at high altitude. So the Wildcats at low altitude remain idle, and the Avengers are unopposed.

The first combat action is that of the Zeroes intercepting the incoming, escorted divebombers at high altitude. The interceptors may be allocated in any fashion against the escorts and bombers; here, however, it is to the Japanese player's advantage to send all of them against the escorts.

Air-to-air combat of interceptors versus escorts: seven Zero factors, cross-indexed with the Zeroes' Basic Hit Table of 9 gives a Result Number of "2". A die roll of "4" leaves this unchanged, so two of the four Wildcat factors will be removed, but not before *all* four have fired back. Four Wildcat factors, with Basic Hit Table of 9, give a Result Number of "1"; a die roll of "5" increases this to "2", so two of the seven Zero factors are removed.

Air-to-air combat of interceptors versus bombers: after their brush with the Wildcats, the interceptors outnumber the escort 5:2. This is better than 2:1 and thus allows them to attack the bombers. With their Basic Hit Table of 9 and a die roll of "3" (number of hits unchanged) the five Zero factors shoot down two Dauntless factors. In return, the eighteen Dauntless factors, with a Basic Hit Table of 3 and a die roll of "2" (one hit less) brings down one Zero factor. Air-to-air combat is now complete.

The Japanese player could have diverted some of his Zeroes to attack the divebombers directly. However, the Zeroes fighting the escorts might then not have established a superiority of 2:1 or better over the escorts, and this would have prevented them from joining their comrades in the attack on the bombers. Worse, if the escorts had gained a 2:1 or better superiority over the

interceptors attacking them, they would have prevented *any* attack on the bombers.

Next, the attacking planes must choose their targets. Let us say the American player decides to attack the carrier with all planes except three Dauntless factors which will go for the cruiser *Jintsu*.

The planes must now run the gauntlet of anti-aircraft fire from *all* ships of the task force. The Japanese ships have a total of 17 anti-aircraft factors, which can be directed in any proportions against the three attacking groups (two divebomber groups attacking different ships, and one torpedo bomber group). However, no single ship may split its fire. For maximum effect, the Japanese player allots 11 factors against the divebombers attacking the carrier, and 3 each against the two other groups. The Basic Hit Table for anti-aircraft fire being 4, the Result Numbers are "2", "1" and "1". (There is a -2 Hit Table modifier for high altitude; however, divebombers do not profit from it.) Let us say the die rolls are "3", "1", and "6" (+0, -2, and +2 change to Result Number, respectively). This brings down two of the Dauntless factors attacking the carrier, none of those attacking the cruiser, and three factors of Avengers. Anti-aircraft fire is now completed.

The Japanese player could have allocated all 17 anti-aircraft factors against the most dangerous attack, that of the divebombers against the carrier. However, the six additional factors would not have increased the Result Number which, for a Basic Hit Table of 4, is "2" at 11 as well as at 17 factors firing. In his allocation, the Japanese player maximized the effectiveness of his anti-aircraft guns, and indeed brought down an additional three planes.

Now, finally, the surviving aircraft attack their targets. Attacking the *Zuikaku* are 18-3-2-2=11 Dauntless factors (Basic Hit Table 7 for divebombing) and 6-3=3 Avenger factors (Basic Hit Table 6 for torpedo attack). The Result Numbers are "3" and "1", respectively. Assume the die rolls are "4" and "3", leaving the number of hits unchanged, so that the *Zuikaku* takes a total of four hits. Six would have been required to sink her. Fortunately for her, she had no ready planes on deck, or the divebombing hits would have been doubled, sealing her fate. However, having suffered more than 50 percent damage, she is reduced to half speed. Also, for each hit, one air factor is removed from her complement aboard and both her gunnery and anti-aircraft strengths (1 and 5, respectively) are reduced by one. Moreover, each hit reduces her Launch Factor by three; since that factor was only ten to start with, she is no longer able to

conduct air operations. Under an optional rule, there is a chance of critical hits, possibly causing further damage or total loss. As it stands, she is still afloat, but out of action, and to get her home will be a problem.

Meanwhile, the three Dauntless factors attacking the *Jintsu* (Basic Hit Table 7, Result Number "1") scored one hit on a die roll of "3" (no change to number of hits).

Should the American player have used *all* his planes against the carrier? A more conservative player, conscious of the possibility of higher losses to anti-aircraft fire, would have done so. As it turns out, however, three more Dauntless factors attacking would not have given him a better Basic Hit Table and Result Number, so the damage to the carrier would not have been greater and the *Jintsu* would have gotten off free.

The air attack is now over. All American planes are at low altitude, except the two Wildcat factors of the divebomber escort. The four Zero factors of combat air patrol are still at high altitude. In the next game turn, if the Japanese player wins the initiative die roll, his Zeroes may attempt to attack the Wildcats at high altitude once again before they can move off. Of course, the outnumbered Wildcats will attempt to evade. To catch them, the Japanese player would have to roll a 5 or 6 on the Interception Table (the probability of interception increases with the number of planes involved on both sides). If the Wildcats had still been escorting any bombers, they could not have attempted to refuse combat.

All planes, except the Wildcat escorts at low altitude which did not participate in any combat actions, have one additional hour deducted from their flight endurance to reflect the extra use of fuel in their frantic maneuvering. The escorts could have avoided this extra expenditure of fuel, but they would then have had to use a Basic Hit Table of 3 instead of 9. If the fighters at high altitude fight once again in the subsequent turn, they have another extra hour of fuel deducted, and again the defending Wildcats can avoid this by using the lower Basic Hit Table.

In *FLAT TOP*'s original design, all aircraft which had participated in any combat action had to return as quickly as possible to a hex of a friendly base or carrier. This prevented planes from staying behind after their attack to keep shadowing the enemy task force. The new AH edition does not contain this "no lingering" rule. So, while the others make for home, one of the long-range Avengers (eight hours flight endurance) might stay behind to keep the Japanese task force under surveillance from a respectful distance.

ALLIED AIR HIT TABLES														
Allied Plane Name	Air to Air	Air Attacks Vs. Bases					Air Attacks Vs. Ships			Torpedo Bombing				
		Level Bombing High Altitude		Level Bombing Low Altitude		Dive Bombing	Level Bombing High Altitude		Level Bombing Low Altitude		Dive Bombing			
		GP	AP	GP	AP	GP	AP	GP	AP		GP	AP		
A-20	3	5	2	8	3	—	—	—	1	2	5	—	—	—
Avenger	3	4	2	6	2	—	—	—	1	2	5	—	—	6
Beaufighter	6	—	—	5	—	—	—	—	—	1	3	—	—	—
Beaufort	3	4	2	6	2	—	—	—	1	2	6	—	—	7
B-17	8	13	5	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—
B-25	4	8	3	11	5	—	—	—	1	3	7	—	—	—
B-26	4	6	2	10	4	—	—	—	1	2	5	—	—	5
Catalina	4	6	2	9	3	—	—	—	1	2	7	—	—	10
Dauntless	3	3	1	5	1	6	2	—	—	2	5	2	7	—
Devastator	2	3	1	5	2	—	—	—	—	1	5	—	—	6
Hudson	3	3	1	6	2	—	—	—	1	1	4	—	—	—
P-38	7	—	—	5	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
P-39	6	—	—	5	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
P-40	7	—	—	4	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
Wildcat	9	—	—	4	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—

the escort) must assemble in the hex of a friendly carrier or air base in an Air Operations Phase preceding air movement. If it does not do so, its components are treated as separate air formations, each of which would have to bear the brunt of the target's full anti-aircraft strength. So, if the attack aircraft of our strike came from two carriers at different positions, those from one carrier would have had to fly first to the other carrier, there to meet their comrades, and would have lost one hour of fuel doing so. The situation is no better than if one carrier had launched the strike in two successive turns.

To avoid the waste of precious flight endurance, a strike as large as ours should be launched by two (or three) carriers in the same hex. Now, the attack aircraft can start out toward the target in the turn of their launching and as a single air formation.

There is an important operational lesson in this: *Keep your carriers together!* They need not move with one another at all times, but if they separate they should remain close enough that, at short notice, they can meet in one hex to launch a massive strike. This is the second point our example can demonstrate.

The third point concerns anti-aircraft fire. Since all ships of a task force may fire at each incoming strike, it is obviously to your advantage to concentrate as many ships as possible in one task force around your carrier or carriers. But the game's rules wisely put a limit to such concentration; no more than fifteen American ships, including no more than two carriers, and no more than ten Japanese ships, including at most one carrier, may be in the same task force. The number of task forces in the same hex is not limited, but none may fire at planes attacking another force. You will do well to protect your carriers by placing them in a task force, or task forces, with as many other ships as the rules allow and you have under your command. *Concentrate your ships!* For example, our eight-ship Japanese task force with one carrier was able to put up a respectable 17 factors to anti-aircraft fire, pretty close to what the Japanese normally scrape together. Here, the Americans are at an advantage with larger task forces and better anti-aircraft armament. A fifteen-ship American force with two carriers, two modern battleships, and a complement of cruisers and destroyers may well throw up a formidable anti-

aircraft fire of 40 factors or more. All the more important is it for the Japanese to attack such a task force only with a truly massive strike.

There is another, incidental advantage to your concentrating your carriers. That is that each additional carrier in a hex can contribute fighters to combat air patrol. This is so even if the carriers belong to different task forces as combat air patrol protects the entire hex rather than only one specific task force in it.

Of course, the concentration of carriers also has its disadvantages. For one thing, it makes it easier for the enemy to keep track of. And there may be overriding strategic considerations demanding two or more carrier forces to operate far from one another. Yet, a decision to split the carriers should never be taken lightly.

Beyond the general tenet of concentration, underlying all three points we have examined so far, *FLAT TOP* can teach other lessons. Let us look briefly at some of these.

The first concerns the practice, often seen in the movies, of keeping readied aircraft on deck. If you are a *MIDWAY* player, you may be tempted to storm into your first *FLAT TOP* game with all your planes in that condition, ready to take off at a moment's notice. But this tactic is dangerous and largely unnecessary. As in *MIDWAY*, divebombing hits are doubled on any carrier having ready planes on deck. But contrary to *MIDWAY*, *FLAT TOP* allows planes to be brought up from the "Readying" section (hangar) and launched in the same turn—up to the limit set by the carrier's "Ready Factor", which usually is a few points smaller than the Normal Launch Factor. For example, the *Lexington* has a Normal Launch Factor of 12 and a Ready Factor of 8. So, in normal operation, you are wise to bring up from the hangar no more air factors than you want to launch that same turn. You may want to make an exception when you feel safe from air attack and plan to launch as large a strike as possible. In such a situation, the "Lady Lex" might bring up four air factors onto her deck in one turn, so as to be able in the next turn to launch twelve factors (full Normal Launch capacity) instead of only the eight which the Ready Factor allows to be brought up from the hangar.

Another concern of yours should be combat air patrol. A novice may be tempted just to put a batch

of fighters aloft and keep them there until their fuel runs out, at which time he retrieves them and sends up another batch. But that is not the best way to go about it. For one thing, in their last two hours of flight endurance the fighters don't do much good: the last hour of fuel goes into landing, an activity which, in the turn sequence, precedes air combat. And in the hour before that your fighters, if intercepting, would use up their last fuel maneuvering in combat, and would then have to be ditched at the end of the turn. So, combat air patrol should be replaced the turn before their fuel runs out, or earlier. But this is not all. Launching or retrieving a sizable combat air patrol will force your carriers to turn into the wind, possibly delaying their progress. Moreover, just at the time you have retrieved your combat air patrol, you might need all points of your carrier's Ready Factor to get a big strike readied and launched and your fighters might then have to wait a long time before they can be refueled. So, learn to rotate your combat air patrol gradually and continuously, in ones and twos and making best use of your Ready Factor at times it would otherwise be idle, even if such a procedure occasionally means retrieving a fighter with still a few hours of fuel in its tanks.

Another skill the novice will have to acquire is how to search. His feeling of unease and insecurity, with no idea of the enemy's whereabouts, may tempt him to send most of his planes out criss-crossing the mapboard. If he has not been careful to plan his schedule of flight operations, he might find himself compelled to land more planes on his carrier than his Minimum Launch Factor permits (3 for most carriers; that is the maximum number of air factors that may take off or land in one turn and move their full movement allowance). A plane being more than half its movement allowance away from the carrier at the start of its last hour of fuel may thus have to ditch. Moreover, if an enemy force is spotted, not enough planes may be ready for strong enough a strike to be launched. So, be stingy with your searches, always keep enough aircraft at hand for a good strike.

Actually, if you search systematically, surprisingly few air factors can cover a wide area of the mapboard. But do so systematically! Few things are as annoying as having left a hole in the search pattern and now being unsure whether an enemy, possibly a carrier force in striking range, is not after all lurking in the area searched. In fair weather, aircraft at high altitude will spot naval forces as far as two hexes away, so a cordon of air factors five hexes apart can effectively sweep an area. But they must move in a cordon, not some of them a turn later, lest ships move from a not yet swept to an already swept strip of the pattern. (Remember, the opponent sees your planes moving!) Also, clouds reduce your range of observation; unless you want to leave a hole in the pattern, you will have to have your planes zig-zag through clouds to cover all the hexes of their strips.

A more or less normal procedure for a carrier force, typically with two carriers, is to conduct a morning and an afternoon search, each with about five to seven air factors. It is good practice to start launching the morning search before daybreak; the scouts are then already well on their way when the sun comes up, and the area right around the carriers is easily covered at that time by a fighter or two of the combat air patrol. Needless to say, to be able to extend your searching as far out as possible, you should always try to launch and retrieve your scouts on Minimum Launch Factor.

As you will not want to use many planes for searching, think before you launch! Most searches are "offensive": You will want to find the enemy, and preferably before he finds you. Morning searches are almost always of this nature, and are directed into the enemy's most likely hunting grounds. By afternoon, you might have acquired a

pretty good picture of the situation and then want to conduct a "defensive" search, to be sure where the enemy is *not* and where you can retreat to in safety until you are ready to strike again.

Should you search at night? Only in exceptional situations, as it would take an awful lot of planes to comb even a small area. As a rule, you will want to have your scouts, including the long-range flying boats, home at or before nightfall to run no risk of their crashing in a night landing.

And who should search? The best scout planes, of course, are the long-range flying boats (Mavis, Emily, Catlinas). The B-17s are pretty good, too. You should search with carrier planes only where shore-based scouts have a hard time reaching. When you search from a carrier, you will probably prefer to use divebombers (Dauntlesses, Vals). Fighters are needed for combat air patrol and as escorts, and the torpedo planes are rather slow.

If you thought air search calls for careful planning, so does a strike on the enemy. The main problem here is to assess how far your planes will have to go, considering that your target will move while your strike is on its way. A large strike that has to be recalled for lack of fuel short of its target sets your air operations back the better part of a day. You also have to work out a landing schedule, taking note which planes you will retrieve on Minimum, Normal, and Maximum Launch Factors. On this basis, you can then figure the point of no return for your strike. If you strike from a carrier or carriers, you can stretch the range quite a bit by steaming toward the target after the launch—but be conscious of the risks your carriers may be taking when doing so. Or, if the target is near, you may want to open the range while the strike is in the air; just take care not to run too far.

What targets should you go for? As a matter of course, carriers should always be given preference. Even only one or two hits will seriously impair a carrier's flight operations, and that pays more dividends than sinking a cruiser or scratching a battleship's hull. There is only one other target that might vie with carriers for priority and that is a fleet of troop transports whose reaching their destination will win the game for the enemy.

Should you try to damage a number of ships or, instead, sink a few? Usually, you fare better if you sink ships. For one thing, the job then is done and you get more victory points. But there are exceptions. Two damaged carriers pose less of a threat to you than one unharmed one. Or, for example, if you have superior surface forces chasing an

enemy, it will do just to damage his ships sufficiently to reduce their speed; your ships' guns can then do the rest.

THE OPPONENTS

Finally, let us take a look at the relative strengths and weaknesses of the opposing forces and what opportunities and dangers they entail.

The Japanese are inferior in almost every respect. Their bases and carriers have no radar, the American ones do. Their bases have slower turn-around of aircraft. Their carriers are smaller. They are allowed fewer ships in a task force, and only one carrier in a task force to the American's two. The anti-aircraft strengths of many of their ships are lower. And except in a fantasy scenario you might brew up with *Yamato* and *Musashi*, they have no ships to match the firepower and endurance of the *South Dakota*-class battleships. But they have two important advantages: the greater ranges of their carrier-based aircraft and the formidable strengths (Basic Hit Table 9 or 10) of their Kate, Betty, and Nell torpedo planes. Here is a comparison of maximum ranges of carrier aircraft (in hexes, for one-way flight):

	American	Japanese
Fighters	Wildcats: 48	Zero: 80
Divebombers	Dauntless: 54	Val: 63
Torpedo Bombers	Devastator: 30	Kate: 49
	Avenger: 56	

These disparities in strength and range largely dictate Japanese operational planning. The Japanese must try to keep at a distance, to strike from out of the enemy's range. In practice, however, this is more easily said than done. Often enough, a strong enemy carrier force is suddenly discovered well within Dauntless range. Besides, a truly deadly Japanese strike will have to include both Vals and Kates and will fly at the Kates' lower speed and have the Vals' lesser endurance. This calls for "going in for the kill", and a few necessary maneuvers such as turning into the wind to launch or retrieve planes can well bring your precious and vulnerable carriers into the enemy's range. Still, this is a risk the Japanese will have to run.

How can an American player outwit a Japanese who exploits his planes' superior range? Apart from the obvious attempt to sneak up on the Japanese carriers, perhaps from several directions, he can try to "gain the weather gauge". To launch or retrieve

a strike, the Japanese carriers will have to turn into the wind, in this case *towards* the enemy, and this may bring them into the range of the American planes. On occasion, it may be possible to ride undetected with a rain front into strike range. But most of all, the American player must see to his defenses, maintaining a strong combat air patrol and keeping his ships together to receive any strike with devastation anti-aircraft fire. It is quite difficult for the Japanese to conduct a large strike at very long range. Let him launch smaller ones, and the attrition to his planes may hurt him more than damage to your ships hurts you.

All in all, I would say the two sides are fairly evenly matched in capabilities—like two boxers, one of whom makes up in range what he lacks in power. Among highly skilled players, the Americans will have a slight edge, though, unless the Japanese are given the larger naval and air forces. Nevertheless, enjoying agility more than brute force, I usually prefer the challenge of playing the Japanese side. Many do.

THE SCENARIOS

The rulebook lists five scenarios. The first of these, *Rings Around Rabaul* (February 23, 0600-1800) is no more than a training device, pitting an American task force with carrier *Lexington* against Japanese shore-based aircraft. The other four scenarios are long battle games (66 to 109 turns) but each (except the last) has one or two shorter versions of 18 to 42 turns. The second scenario, *Coral Sea* (May 4-8) has fairly evenly matched forces, but its victory conditions saddle the Japanese with attempting a very difficult landing at Port Moresby. The third, *Eastern Solomons* (August 24-26), pits an American task group superior in carriers but inferior in heavy surface vessels against a Japanese armada that, again, is shown a carrot of victory points for a landing (this time at Gili-Gili, on New Guinea's eastern tip). Number four, *Santa Cruz* (October 25-27), is a large carrier battle in which, for a change, the Japanese have a superiority in carrier-based aircraft. And last, *Guadalcanal* (November 12-15), has both sides relatively weak in carriers and strong in battleships and forces both Americans and Japanese to attempt landings on Guadalcanal; this scenario is the most likely to lead to surface actions, and is the weakest of all.

The most interesting scenarios are *Coral Sea* and *Santa Cruz*, but all except Rabaul's "rings" are interesting and challenging. And, of course, you can easily design your own!

GAME AND HISTORY—HOW REALLY TO PLAY FLAT TOP

A well designed wargame is a wonderful tool that can help us understand history. It can never take the place of a book because it must gloss over a great many details, oversimplify situations, and press the great wide world of war into the strait jacket of game mechanics. But it can do what no book ever can. It can make you a participant, not a detached viewer and passive bystander—who knows the outcome already. It presents you with options, it actively involves you in decision making. *You* act, and you can see the consequences evolving.

Such an experience can indeed change your outlook. I remember having read numerous accounts of the Battle of Coral Sea and having wondered why the Japanese did not force a surface engagement and press on with their troop convoy instead of meekly turning tail. Wasn't Port Moresby theirs for the taking? Then I designed my own Coral Sea game, based on a slight elaboration of AH's *MIDWAY* system. Playing the Japanese and having to decide, on the basis of the situation of the moment as I would see it, I found I had no choice other than to do what the Japanese command did in 1942. And I learned to be less self-assured in my criticism of the actions

JAPANESE AIR HIT TABLES

Japanese Plane Name	Air to Air	Air Attacks Vs. Bases						Air Attacks Vs. Ships						
		Level Bombing High Altitude		Level Bombing Low Altitude		Dive Bombing	Level Bombing High Altitude		Level Bombing Low Altitude		Dive Bombing	Torpedo Bombing		
		GP	AP	GP	AP		GP	AP	GP	AP				
Betty	3	4	2	6	2	—	—	—	1	2	5	—	—	9
Dave	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Emily	6	8	3	9	4	—	—	—	1	3	7	—	—	15
Jake	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Judy	3	2	1	3	1	4	2	—	—	1	5	2	7	—
Kate	2	4	2	6	2	—	—	—	1	2	6	—	—	10
Mavis	5	6	2	7	3	—	—	—	1	2	6	—	—	15
Nell	3	4	2	6	2	—	—	—	1	2	4	—	—	9
Pete	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Rufe	6	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
Val	2	2	1	3	1	4	2	—	—	1	5	2	7	—
Zero	9	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—

of historical personalities.

So you have played *FLAT TOP* a number of times against a friend of yours, a game much truer of life than my Coral Sea, and now you understand carrier war? Well, not really. Yes, you get quite a few glimpses of historical reality and necessity (apart from learning a few game tricks unrelated to reality), but you still miss out on most of the tension, the pressure, the heartbreak, the exhilaration, the burden of responsibility and decision a carrier force commander must have experienced. And you may still see a few things in the wrong light.

But there is a way you can play *FLAT TOP* and gain still deeper insights. Get together with your friends, form two teams, and appoint an umpire. Let each player take a naval task force or shore command, under the direction of a supreme commander. Let each team have a conference, but from then on players should not be allowed to communicate even with members of their own team, except by radio message (through the umpire) or if their flagships and/or headquarters are in the same hex. To break radio silence will entail the danger of interception and may enable the enemy to get a fix on the transmitter's position. No player sees the umpire's "master game board" with all forces laid out. Each player receives only the information that would be available to the respective historical commander. On that basis he must make his moves, handing them to the umpire. If you want the pressure on, have the umpire run this game with timed moves—but this might become the worst fun you ever had!

A very important facet in such play is that a carrier commander will lose control of the planes he has launched, once they are over the horizon—unless he ventures to break radio silence. An air strike should either be commanded by a different player or be executed by the umpire in accordance with specific instructions and directives. The result is that the carrier commander is forced to designate a point of return for his aircraft many turns ahead of time—and there he will have to be when the time comes, lest his pilots must ditch. Not until I played *FLAT*

TOP in this fashion did I understand why on occasion, a carrier force "lingered" in an area that was manifestly becoming too hot for comfort. You too will experience that feeling. *This* is the kind of play that can really put you in a commander's shoes and let you begin to understand what he was faced with.

Such play is made even more interesting if the situation is *not* historical, so that none of the players will have more than a foggy idea of what forces the enemy may field and what he is up to. An experienced umpire should have no trouble concocting a hypothetical scenario, yet one that *could* have evolved, and to give the players tasks appropriate to that situation. His much greater problem is to decide which team or which individual player has "won" when all is over.

An experienced umpire, who has the players' full confidence, should also be given license to regard the rules of the game as no more than traffic laws—laws that may be broken, but not too often and only for good reason. This allows him to compensate when a literal application of rules and die rolls produces a patently impossible or wildly improbable outcome. The umpire may even encourage players to take measures or conduct operations that make sense historically but have no place in the rules as written. Think of landing coastwatchers at night from a submarine on one of the unoccupied islands, of interrogating enemy survivors fished out of the drink, of having picked destroyers well forward of your task force to give advance warning of an incoming strike so that readied fighters can scramble to intercept, of laying smoke at a landing site . . . The possibilities are almost endless. Under the guidance of an umpire with sufficient knowledge of naval tactics and military history, a new dimension can be added to the game.

An outstanding umpire should even be able to break the rigid framework of hourly turns, running his game on "real time" and doing away with all the artifacts the turn schedule and phase sequencing generates. He could even break the rigidity of the hex grid! But now I *am* dreaming.



justifiably ask why, with one such game (*RICHTHOFEN'S WAR*) already available from this company, should we wish to produce another—all the more surprising considering its narrow appeal. The reason is simple, however. I felt that I had a new and interesting way of presenting these air battles and convinced the management here to let me show it.

The design concentrates on the quick thinking and abilities of the pilots. As a player/pilot, you do not need to calculate the actual hex-by-hex movement of your aeroplane. You, instead, need only to select the maneuver you want your plane to perform from among a set of maneuvers provided to you by your pilot rating and type of plane. The actual movement plot of the maneuver has already been determined and shown on a card. In this way, you think only in terms of your next action and not in the mechanics of that action. Anyone who has become proficient at some physical skill understands this phenomena. An automobile driver, for instance, consciously thinks only of making a turn or changing gears; the complicated interaction of gauging distance and turning the wheel to the proper degree, or coordinating the clutch pedal with the gear shift, is done instinctively from repeated experience.

This method of approach accrues another benefit as well as it allows me to personalize the maneuvers specifically for each type of plane being operated. I can permit a Sopwith Camel, for instance, to complete a 180-degree turn to the left much faster than I would allow, say, a Junkers two-seater. The player is forced to become proficient in playing a particular type of plane only by the realistic method of repeated flyings.

At this point, the game design is still much in its theoretical stage. More specific information will be communicated from time to time in the upcoming months once I've converted the great amount of technical data into game values.

Mick Uhl

AH Philosophy . . . Cont'd from Page 2

THE MED will be my own design and will cover the sea and air battles in the Mediterranean during World War II. This was an interesting and hard-fought campaign. The potential is there for many different scenarios based on the British convoys to Malta, the Italian convoys to Africa, and the evacuation of Crete. The rules will probably be based on a modified and simplified *FLAT TOP* system. This game is very much on the back burner at present as other games have been pushed into position ahead of it.

EMPIRES IN ARMS is our version of the excellent Australian Design Group's game on diplomacy and warfare in the Napoleonic Era. This will be our second "monster game" and, to keep costs down and be able to squeeze it all into one box, this will be the first Avalon Hill boardgame with an unmounted map. Development efforts have included extensive playtesting both here (this tied up a large part of our staff for one night a week for a year—including the grumpy and treacherous Mr. Martin, the large and dangerous Mr. Shelley, the lovely and talented Mr. Uhl and yours truly) and by some dedicated outside groups to eliminate rule glitches and identify any other problems. This is a large and long game, but is a *superb* game for club groups. Changes will be restricted to reformatting the rules and game charts plus some rules changes to add a bit more "chrome" and improve the game's balance (the major problem with the original version). The game should be out in the Spring of '86.

CHECK SIX is a game of tactical air-to-air combat using jets. The title refers to a pilot checking his 6 o'clock position to avoid surprise and a different (as yet undecided) title will probably be applied prior to publication. Designed by Phantom jockey Captain Gary Morgan, it was originally published in a limited edition for use by the USAF in training its fighter pilots. The Avalon Hill Game Company's commercial version will extend the game's scope by adding many more older aircraft types, as the original concentrated on the most up-to-date hardware. This is a "deep" game—in that it is easy to learn but hard to master. The play is fast-moving, yet gives a realistic picture of jet combat and can be most unforgiving of any failure to apply the proper tactics. Playtesting is moving right along and the game should be released by spring.

Captain Morgan also designed a companion USAF training game to CHECK SIX called FEBA (*Forward Edge of the Battlefield Area*) that will also probably be retitled. FEBA covers air operations against ground targets in a modern battlefield environment. Our commercial version is currently holding a "reserve" position until I can get STURMOVIK, EMPIRES IN ARMS and CHECK SIX off my desk and into boxes on store shelves, but conceivably could be published late in 1986.

S. Craig Taylor, Jr.

KNIGHTS OF THE SKY refers to the brave pilots of the First World War and to a new game on the same subject sometime this winter. One might

HELL ON WHEELS is the working title for a solitaire game which puts the player in command of a WW2 Sherman tank. This project is a response to the great success of our *B-17* game and Victory Games' *Ambush* series. My current version of "Hell on Wheels" is played on a *SQUAD LEADER* type mapboard, with the player's tank posed as part of an infantry/tank combat team. The mission of your force is to clear the board of enemy positions and/or reach other geographical objectives. The actions of the elements of your combat team and friendly troops on your flanks off the edge of the board are handled abstractly. You will be mainly concerned with what your own tank can see and do. The player will keep track of ammunition and fuel, and will operate his own tank within some limitations from the team's orders. Enemy action will be generated randomly.

The game of HELL ON WHEELS is intended to provide a fun and interesting solitaire game which will illustrate what it was like to fight from the famous Sherman. I hope HOW will provide the technical information and repeat-playability of *B-17* with the decision-making opportunities of *Ambush*.

Bruce Shelley



TORPEDO JUNCTION

New Pacific Scenarios for SUBMARINE

By Robert D. Harmon

It is difficult to find enough superlatives to describe *SUBMARINE*, an innovative wargame whose playability may actually enhance the intricacy, suspense, and deadliness of undersea warfare brought out in the course of play. *SUBMARINE* is easy enough to play, but difficult to master except through long and varied experience. Hence, this article.

SUBMARINE presents some daunting tactical challenges—it is difficult to launch an accurate torpedo attack, and more difficult yet to oppose one. More and varied experience, possibly beyond the scope of the original game, is needed, and this article has been written to provide such opportunities.

The following scenarios are of assorted size, arranged in chronological order, and cover operations in the Pacific Theater. Although based on actual engagements, the ship classes and victory conditions are approximations for ease of play and balance. Players should find a satisfying variety of setting, complexity, and scope among these scenarios.

SCENARIO TJ1 DEATH OF THE YORKTOWN

I. Introduction

The voyage of USS *Yorktown* after the Battle of Coral Sea was an epic of endurance. Damaged in that battle, patched up at Pearl Harbor, she left Pearl 72 hours after limping in from the South Pacific. During the Battle of Midway, the *Yorktown* took three bombs and two torpedoes from Japanese aircraft, and was abandoned on the afternoon of 4 June 1942. Yet, the *Yorktown* remained afloat that night, and salvage parties boarded the ship the next day. By the afternoon of the 6th, it seemed that Task Force 17 might actually save its flagship—when *I-168* appeared. Destroyer *Hammann* was sunk during the melee, while *I-168* escaped after putting two more torpedoes into the *Yorktown*—which still took another 12 hours to go down.

II. Order of Battle

1. Japanese Player — *I-168*, Class I-168 2.
2. American Player — *Yorktown*, Class Enterprise
Astoria, Class Indianapolis
Portland, Class Indianapolis
Hammann, Class Craven
Anderson, Class Craven
Hughes, Class Craven
Morris, Class Craven
Russell, Class Craven

III. Starting Location

1. *I-168*—(see 20.4) Set-up must be within 20 hexes of *Yorktown*.
2. *Yorktown*—L30, Bd B, Dir. 4
Astoria—L36, Bd B, Dir. 1
Portland—L24, Bd B, Dir. 4
Hammann—L29, Bd B, Dir. 4
Anderson—L18, Bd B, Dir. 4
Hughes—X24, Bd B, Dir. 5
Morris—L42, Bd B, Dir. 1
Russell—Z36, Bd A, Dir. 2

IV. Victory Conditions

The scenario is resolved according to rule 20.1. The Japanese player, however, receives no victory points for the initial damage to the *Yorktown*, nor for it being dead in the water.

Game Length

20 turns, Day Scenario

VI. Special Rules

Yorktown now has 12 damage points remaining,

out of an original 32 (the Japanese player does not receive victory points for damage he does not inflict). The *Yorktown* is DEAD IN THE WATER throughout this scenario, and may not change position nor facing.

The *Hammann* remains stationary until the third turn after the appearance of torpedoes or visual/sonar contact with the sub. It may then move within the limits of rule 8.0.

American ships (other than *Hammann* and *Yorktown*) must move in a counterclockwise direction, at a speed of three, around the *Yorktown*, maintaining an exact distance from the *Yorktown*'s bow hex. Escorts and cruisers may move freely beginning on the turn after torpedoes are sighted or sub contact is made.

I-168 has a Professional crew (49.0).

SCENARIO TJ2 TORPEDO JUNCTION!

I. Introduction

After the Battle of the Eastern Solomons, American carrier forces retired to the Coral Sea to regroup. On 31 August 1942, American naval forces were roughly 260 southeast of Guadalcanal when part of the task force was sighted by *I-26*. One torpedo sufficed to knock the USS *Saratoga* out of action for the second time in nine months. After another carrier came to grief south of the Solomons, the area would become notorious as "Torpedo Junction".

II. Order of Battle

1. Japanese Player — *I-26*, Class I-15
2. American Player — *Hornet*, Class Enterprise
Saratoga, Class Enterprise
North Carolina, Class North Carolina
Portland, Class Indianapolis
Atlanta, Class Indianapolis
Phelps, Class Fletcher
Worden, Class Fletcher
Dale, Class Fletcher
Farragut, Class Fletcher
MacDonough, Class Fletcher

III. Starting Location

1. *I-26*—(see 20.4) 2.
Hornet, *Saratoga*, *North Carolina*, *Portland*, *Atlanta*—must be placed, one per position, in the following:
I40, Bd B, Dir. 6
Q40, Bd B, Dir. 6
I47, Bd B, Dir. 6
Q47, Bd B, Dir. 6
M53, Bd B, Dir. 6
American escorts—(see 20.3)

IV. Victory Conditions

The scenario is resolved according to rule 20.1.

V. Game Length

20 turns, Day Scenario

VI. Special Rules

American ships begin the scenario at speed of two hexes/turn (three/turn in the Advanced Game).
I-26 has a Professional crew (49.0).

SCENARIO TJ3 THE SINKING OF THE WASP

I. Introduction

The 7th Marine Regiment left Espiritu Santo in early September 1942 to help deal with the deteriorating situation on Guadalcanal. Two American carriers shadowed the troop convoy, as the Japanese fleet was very active then. The enemy detailed the *I-19* to stop the troopships. It ran across the USS *Wasp* instead on the afternoon of 15 September. Three

torpedoes struck the *Wasp*, which had to be scuttled later by its own escorting destroyers.

II. Order of Battle

1. Japanese Player — *I-19*, Class I-15
2. American Player — *Wasp*, Class Enterprise
San Juan, Class Indianapolis
San Francisco, Class Indianapolis
Salt Lake City, Class Indianapolis
Aaron Ward, Class Benson
Buchanan, Class Benson
Farenholt, Class Benson
Lang, Class Craven
Selfridge, Class Fletcher
Stack, Class Fletcher
Sterrett, Class Craven

III. Starting Location

1. *I-19*—(see 20.4)
2. *Wasp*—M46, Bd B, Dir. 6
San Juan, *San Francisco*, *Salt Lake City*—must be placed, one per position, in the following:
I40, Bd B, Dir. 6
Q40, Bd B, Dir. 6
I52, Bd B, Dir. 6
American escorts—(see 20.3)

IV. Victory Conditions

The scenario is resolved according to rule 20.1.

V. Game Length

20 turns, Day Scenario

VI. Special Rules

American ships begin the scenario at speed of four hexes/turn. They must hold that speed until the turn following sub contact or sighting torpedoes.

(Optional) Players may wish to follow this scenario with an immediate playing of Scenario TJ4, combining the two scores. The highest combined score wins. This option must be agreed upon before play of Scenario TJ3 commences.

SCENARIO TJ4 I-15 AGAINST THE HORNET

I. Introduction

The *I-15* was five miles from the position of the USS *Wasp* when its commander witnessed the attack by *I-19* strike. He promptly ordered his crew to fire on another nearby American task force. Missing the USS *Hornet* his torpedoes struck the *North Carolina* and destroyer *O'Brien*.

II. Order of Battle

1. Japanese Player — *I-15*, Class I-15
2. American Player — *Hornet*, Class Enterprise
North Carolina, Class North Carolina
Portland, Class Indianapolis
Atlanta, Class Indianapolis
Balch, Class Fletcher
Benham, Class Craven
Ellet, Class Craven
Grayson, Class Benson
Monssen, Class Benson
Mauzy, Class Fletcher
O'Brien, Class Craven

III. Starting Location

1. *I-15*—(see 20.4)
2. *Hornet*, *North Carolina*, *Portland*, *Atlanta*—must be placed, one per position, in the following:
I40, Bd B, Dir. 6
Q40, Bd B, Dir. 6
I52, Bd B, Dir. 6
Q52, Bd B, Dir. 6
American escorts—(See 20.3)

IV. Victory Conditions

The scenario is resolved according to rule 20.1.

V. Game Length

20 turns, Day Scenario

VI. Special Rules

American ships begin the scenario at speed of four hexes/turn. They must hold that speed until the turn following sub contact or sighting torpedoes.

(Optional) Players may wish to precede this scenario with an immediate playing of Scenario TJ3, combining the two scores. The highest combined score wins. This option must be agreed upon before play of Scenario TJ3 commences.

SCENARIO TJ5 GUADALCANAL AFTERMATH

I. Introduction

In the first round of the naval battle of Guadalcanal, five American cruisers and eight destroyers entered Ironbottom Sound and ran head-on into the "Tokyo Express". The surviving ships were leaving the Sound by way of Indispensable Strait on the morning of Friday, 13 November 1942. The *I-26* was waiting. A spread of torpedoes missed the USS *San Francisco* but struck the USS *Juneau*, which exploded. The remaining ships kept full speed and only two survivors were ever rescued.

II. Order of Battle

1. Japanese Player — *I-26*, Class I-15
2. American Player — *Helena*, Class Indianapolis
Juneau, Class Indianapolis
San Francisco, Class Indianapolis
Fletcher, Class Fletcher
Sterrett, Class Craven
O'Bannon, Class Fletcher

III. Starting Location

1. *I-26*—(see 20.4)
2. *O'Bannon*—Q10, Bd A, Dir. 6
Fletcher—D20, Bd B, Dir. 6
Sterrett—V20, Bd B, Dir. 6
Helena—M30, Bd B, Dir. 6
San Francisco—M40, Bd B, Dir. 6
Juneau—W40, Bd B, Dir. 6

IV. Victory Conditions

The scenario is resolved according to rule 20.1. The Japanese player, however, receives no victory points for the initial damage to the US ships.

V. Game Length

20 turns, Day Scenario

VI. Special Rules

American ships may be removed from play if moved off the board edge in Direction 6. Such ships may not be returned to play.

American ships commence play with the following damage: *Sterrett*—4 damage points; *Juneau*—7 damage points; *San Francisco*—5 damage points; *O'Bannon*—1 damage point and NO sonar. This damage does not count toward Japanese victory points, but does count towards these ships becoming DEAD IN THE WATER (as per data card).

American ships begin the scenario at speed of three hexes/turn (four/turn in Advanced Game). They may not exceed that speed until the turn following sub contact or sighting torpedoes.

I-26 has a Professional crew (49.0).

SCENARIO TJ6 ENCOUNTER IN THE SLOT

I. Introduction

The "Slot"—the passage along the Solomons—saw increasing use by American forces once the Guadalcanal campaign ended. On 5 April 1943, the escorts of one such force detected an intruder on their radar. *RO-34* had been sent with orders to find American ships in the area. Two destroyers obliged and *RO-34* never returned to Rabaul.

II. Order of Battle

1. Japanese Player — *RO-34*, Class RO-33
2. American Player — *Strong*—Class Fletcher
O'Bannon—Class Fletcher

III. Starting Location

1. *RO-34*—R31, Bd B, Dir. 5
2. *O'Bannon*—Y8, Bd A, Dir. 2
Strong—H35, Bd A, Dir. 2

IV. Victory Conditions

The scenario is resolved according to rule 20.1. However, the American player loses if he fails to sink the *RO-34*.

V. Game Length

30 turns, Day Scenario

VI. Special Rules

RO-34 begins game on surface.
American ships begin scenario at full speed.

SCENARIO TJ7 SADO VS. TAMBOR

I. Introduction

The abandonment of the faulty US magnetic torpedo warhead, and increased tanker losses, caused a severe fuel shortage in Japan in January 1943. Two special convoys were ordered to set forth from the East Indies to alleviate the problem. The first one—comprising the *Ariake Maru*, *Goyo Maru* and *Sado*—was stalked for a full day and night through the East China Sea by the USS *Tambor*. The Americans struck just before dawn on 3 February, and sank both tankers—paying for their success by 16 hours of depth-charging by the *Sado*. The *Tambor* barely survived, and returned to port victorious but leaking.

II. Order of Battle

1. Japanese Player — 2-T2 Tankers
Sado, Class Etorufu
2. American Player — *Tambor*, Class T

III. Starting Location

1. *Sado*—M25, Bd B, Dir. 6
T2 Tanker—J32, Bd B, Dir. 6
T2 Tanker—Q32, Bd B, Dir. 6
Both tankers are in a slow convoy.
2. *Tambor*—(see 20.4)

IV. Victory Conditions

The scenario is resolved according to rule 20.1.

V. Game Length

30 turns, Night Scenario

VI. Special Rules

The ocean floor at this point is 275 feet. *Tambor* may dive to this depth only if it doesn't move on the turn it sinks to, or rises from, this depth. *Tambor* may actively move at 250 feet and above. Resting on the ocean floor provides a Sonar Homing Table modification of -1 (if reloading or making repairs) or +4 (if silent running) to the colored die. These modifications apply only on turns when submarine is on the ocean floor throughout the turn (i.e., does not change depth).

Sado has a full complement of depth charges (if rules 61.0 and 62.0 are invoked). *Sado* has a Professional crew (49.0). *Sado* uses Prolonged Attack Procedure at game's end if it is still afloat and both tankers have been sunk (no convoy to guard makes rule 34.7.1 academic).

SCENARIO TJ8 ONE MORE FOR ENGLAND

I. Introduction

Responding to carrier raids on New Guinea and Truk, the Japanese executed plan "Ichi-Go" which called for a submarine cordon between Truk and the Admiralty Islands. Seven RO boats were posted to this line in May 1944, a move closely followed by US intelligence. An experimental force of three Allied destroyer escorts, equipped with the latest weaponry,

went from one end of the line to the other introducing the Japanese submariners to hedgehogs and other ASW innovations. Seven boats, including two that were not part of the picket line, were sunk; only two boats escaped the debacle. During the operation, USS *England* was credited with sinking six of the enemy. "Ichi-Go" was cancelled.

II. Order of Battle

1. Japanese Player — *RO-108*, Class RO-100
2. American Player — *England*, Class Buckley

III. Starting Location

1. *RO-108*—O35, Bd B, Dir. 5
2. *England*—P20, Bd B, Dir. 3

IV. Victory Conditions

The American player must sink the *RO-108*; any other outcome is a Japanese victory.

V. Game Length

30 turns, Night Scenario

VI. Special Rules

All weapons available to the ship on the Weapon Availability Chart, as of Spring '44, may be used by the *England*. *England* has a Professional crew (49.0). Rule 34.7 is not used.

(Optional) Rule 61.0 may be invoked. If so, the American player must announce what type(s) of depth charges the *England* carries, and how many within overall capacity. Rule 62.0 is not in play; *RO-108* has a full load of torpedoes.

SCENARIO TJ9 HARDER OVERDUE; PRESUMED LOST

I. Introduction

In August 1944, several American submarines found good hunting off Manila under the guidance of Sam Dealey of the USS *Harder*, senior captain present. Seven enemy merchantmen and four escorts were sunk. On the morning of 24 August, the crew of the USS *Hake* watched *Harder's* periscope heading toward the coast of Luzon, pursuing a Japanese minelayer and Thai destroyer. They heard a brief depth charge attack. USS *Harder* was never seen again; Japanese records report finding cork and wood debris. Sam Dealey had tackled his last destroyer.

II. Order of Battle

1. Japanese Player — *Phra Ruang*, use British Class "V Type 1"
Sub Chaser #43, Class Sub Chaser #28
2. American Player — *Harder*, Class Gato

III. Starting Location

1. *Phra Ruang*—T20, Bd B, Dir. 6
Sub Chaser #43—H30, Bd B, Dir. 1
2. *Harder*—S22, Bd B, Dir. 4

IV. Victory Conditions

The scenario is resolved according to rule 20.1.

V. Game Length

30 turns, Day Scenario

VI. Special Rules

Maximum depths are as follows: Bd A—100 feet; Bd B—200 feet; Bd C—300 feet. *Harder* must rest upon the bottom (i.e., it doesn't move) on the turn it descends to, stays at, or rises from maximum depth. The submarine may move freely 25 feet or more above maximum depth.

Ships may not move onto or through Row B of Board A (a reef exists here).

The *Phra Ruang* (Thailand destroyer) has no radar, no sonar and no ATW. It uses Japanese 250 lb depth charges.

Sub Chaser #43 has a Professional crew (49.0).



THE QUALITY POINT SYSTEM

The Last Word on Game Popularity

By Dan Ryan

The relative popularity of the products of The Avalon Hill Game Company has been the subject of many articles in *The GENERAL* over the years. Some might think that the subject has been dealt with in such detail that another article on it would be of little or no use. This might be true if the previous articles had covered more than one aspect of what *GENERAL* subscribers play regularly. However, I feel that all previous authors have failed to display each game's real popularity—when all factors are taken into account.

First, I should define "game popularity". To me, a popular game is one that is played often, and is still played on a regular basis months after purchase. In this article I wanted to analyze each game's popularity on the basis of its performance on the "So That's What You've Been Playing" column and the coverage that the game has received in *The GENERAL*. I will also show why my system is superior to previous attempts to gauge game popularity.

Before I explain why I chose the "So That's What You've Been Playing" list and *GENERAL* coverage as the basis of rating these games, I should explain why I didn't use some other aspects of popularity. One of these on display is the annual "Best Sellers" list, which rates the best-selling AH games of the previous year and of all time. I believe that this listing is not a viable way to judge popularity because it merely recounts ownership—not playing time. Many games don't get played after the first weeks of interest following purchase. Because the list includes sales of games to non-*GENERAL* subscribers, any attempt to monitor game popularity with it is doubly useless.

It is by the same token that I believe that one cannot judge a game's popularity by how many people rated it in the "Readers Buyer's Guide", a list that rates games according to subscriber's mailed-in opinions in various categories. Again, this too is just an indication of ownership. Many people undoubtedly had to brush a heavy layer of dust that covered a rarely-played game to rate the contents inside.

While on the subject of the RBG, I should note that a game's rank on the chart does not indicate its popularity in any form. While it may be true that what folks think are good games more often than not are popular also, it is also true that sometimes games that do not rate highly get played regularly. The reasons for this vary. For some wargamers, it might be the only game that they know well enough to play with enjoyment; hence, some ahistorical, simple games are quite popular. For others, it might be that they play a game a great deal for which they've developed a "sure-fire" strategy. And, of course, the RBG rankings are absolutely no sure measure of the worth of any game. No, one cannot say which games are popular by looking to the RBG.

Another aspect which I feel is not accurate in determining game popularity has been the subject of no less than four articles in *The GENERAL*—the "Opponents Wanted" ads. Four separate surveys have looked at the games which have been requested by players using the advertisements. Taking nothing away from these authors, whose hard work in research for their articles I can appreciate better than most, it is my opinion that this is not an accurate gauge of popularity. There are several reasons for this belief. First of all, it is impossible to know which games end up being played as a direct result of an appearance of an advertisement in the Opponent's Wanted section. Secondly, it is also unknown

which games a person has listed in his ad are games he would really like to play, and which listed games he will play only if he gets no offers to play any of the others.

Finally, I believe that the people who send in requests for opponents do not represent the average *GENERAL* reader. In a typical issue, the "Opponents Wanted" list includes some 74 advertisements—approximately a mere .38% sampling of the readership. Additionally, about 10% of these ads were from clubs seeking members. It seems that the vast majority of readers have plenty of opponents, or play solitaire. For all these reasons, any attempt to evaluate game popularity on the basis of the "Opponents Wanted" list is ludicrous.

Now that I have shown the various reasons why I decided not to include various quantifiable aspects of game popularity in my rating system, I should explain why I chose the aspects that I did. I wanted a system which could measure how much playing time each game received compared to other games on a regular basis. The "So That's What You've Been Playing" list fills that role nicely.

Each issue of *The GENERAL* has a small questionnaire in the insert that asks readers to list the three games they have been playing since they received their last *GENERAL*. The results of this survey appear two issues later. There is usually a fair number of responses (from 400 to 700), so it represents the readership well. When all the votes are tabulated, the twenty games that received the most votes are listed. Too, included on the listing is a "Frequency Ratio", which is derived by dividing the number of votes a game received by the number of votes the 20th placed entry has. The "So That's What You've Been Playing" column is without question the most accurate method to determine game popularity. The only way the list could be improved would be if the editors called every subscriber and asked them what they played each week! As is, the listing serves its function well.

The list is, however, not highly regarded by the editors. Making comments such as, "I have long harbored reservations about the worth of our So That's What You've Been Playing column . . .", they have let their feelings be widely known. Both Don Greenwood and Rex Martin have stated in the past that because the list is so affected by what games receive coverage in *The GENERAL*, that any attempt to determine each game's popularity from it would be futile. The feature game in an issue will shoot out of nowhere onto the list due to its heavy coverage. Other games that have articles on them appear also to do well on the list—momentarily.

It is quite true that the list fluctuates with each new issue of *The GENERAL*. However, if the amount of coverage a game receives is then factored into our calculations, the *GENERAL*'s impact on a game's popularity will be revealed. The question now is how to calculate each game's true popularity.

The Quality Point System

We have now reached the focal point of this article. The "Quality Point System" which I have developed is based on three critical factors. These three factors are:

Average Rank Point (ARP): The first step in this process is to figure the first issue that each game would be included into the calculations. This "starting issue" can be used to derive the game's average Frequency Ratio. The first issue that had an installment of "So That's What You've Been Playing" was Vol. 17, No. 6. All games published before

this issue will use it as a starting point for our calculations. For any game published afterwards, the starting point is the first issue in which the game received enough votes to place it on the list of top twenty most-played games. I make this distinction of how long a game has existed for a very good reason. If calculations for all games started with Vol. 17, No. 6, games released after that date (April 1981) would be held accountable for not placing on the list when they simply did not exist.

Once each game's starting point has been decided, I then calculate the "rank points" each game would receive for each appearance on the list. The number of points for each appearance was assigned depending on the rank the game held. For a first place ranking, a game received 20 points. A game got 19 for a second place showing; 18 for a third place slot; 17 for fourth place; and so forth. I then merely added up each game's total and divided the result by the number of issues since its starting issue (to Vol. 21, No. 6—the last included in this survey). To illustrate how all this works, I will display how the *GUNS OF AUGUST* ARP was calculated. The first time *GOA* appeared on the list was in Vol. 18, No. 3. From then to Vol. 21, No. 6, it earned 114 rank points. The number of issues from Vol. 18, No. 3 through Vol. 21, No. 6 is 22. So, *GOA*'s Average Rank Point is 114/22, or 5.18.

Average Frequency Ratio (AFR): This is determined by adding up all the frequency ratios a game has received during its tenure on the listing, and then dividing that sum by the number of issues since the first issue it appeared in. For *GOA*, for instance, you'd have $27.5/22 = 1.25$.

Is the "Frequency Ratio" an important factor in a game's popularity? According to Kiczec, "the frequency ratio changes in every list and thus renders any attempt to base the survey on this aspect ludicrous." I believe that Kiczec is wrong. Obviously, a game's rank on the list indicates that a game has received more votes than games ranked lower than it. The frequency ratio tells by how much. Sometimes the top ranked game will dominate the listing with a ratio of nine or higher. Sometimes the top game will only have a ratio of around three or four. Often games with the same rankings, but in different lists, will have frequency ratios that are quite different. Without any ratio calculation, all ranks must be considered equal in popularity which is certainly not the case. Incorporating the AFR in game popularity calculation makes the system more complete.

Pages Per Issue (PPI): The first step in calculating PPI lies in finding each game's starting issue. Occasionally we must then subtract two for the number of issues it takes the game to be included in the survey results after appearing in these pages. The result is the "PPI starting issue".

Next we look at all the issues of *The GENERAL* from that game's PPI starting issue through Vol. 21, No. 6. Find all the articles on that particular game, and count all the pages of all those articles. This total is then divided by the number of issues since its PPI starting issue. To illustrate how this works, let us again use *GOA* as an example. *GUNS OF AUGUST* was the subject of articles that have totaled 19.67 pages. Its starting issue was Vol. 18, No. 3. Thus *GOA*'s PPI is $19.67/22 = .89$.

Some may feel that counting the number of pages of each article for a particular game may be "bogus" and that merely counting the times a game appeared in *The GENERAL* would be sufficient.

However, not all issues of *The GENERAL* cover games equally. When *CIVILIZATION* was the featured game back in Vol. 19, No. 4, it had only 5.67 pages devoted to it. On the other hand, *G.I.: ANVIL OF VICTORY* had some 27 pages devoted to it in Vol. 20, No. 1. I think it quite obvious that *GF*'s heavy coverage did considerably more to stimulate that game's performance on the list than did *CIVILIZATION*'s light coverage. Including how many pages a game has had in *The GENERAL* when deriving a system to measure the effect the magazine itself has on a game's popularity is necessary for any accurate reporting. (Readers should note that I have included coverage in *The Victory Insider* when relevant.)

Once the ARP, AFR and PPI for a game have all been calculated, the *Quality Points* (QP) for that game can be figured. The formula for my system

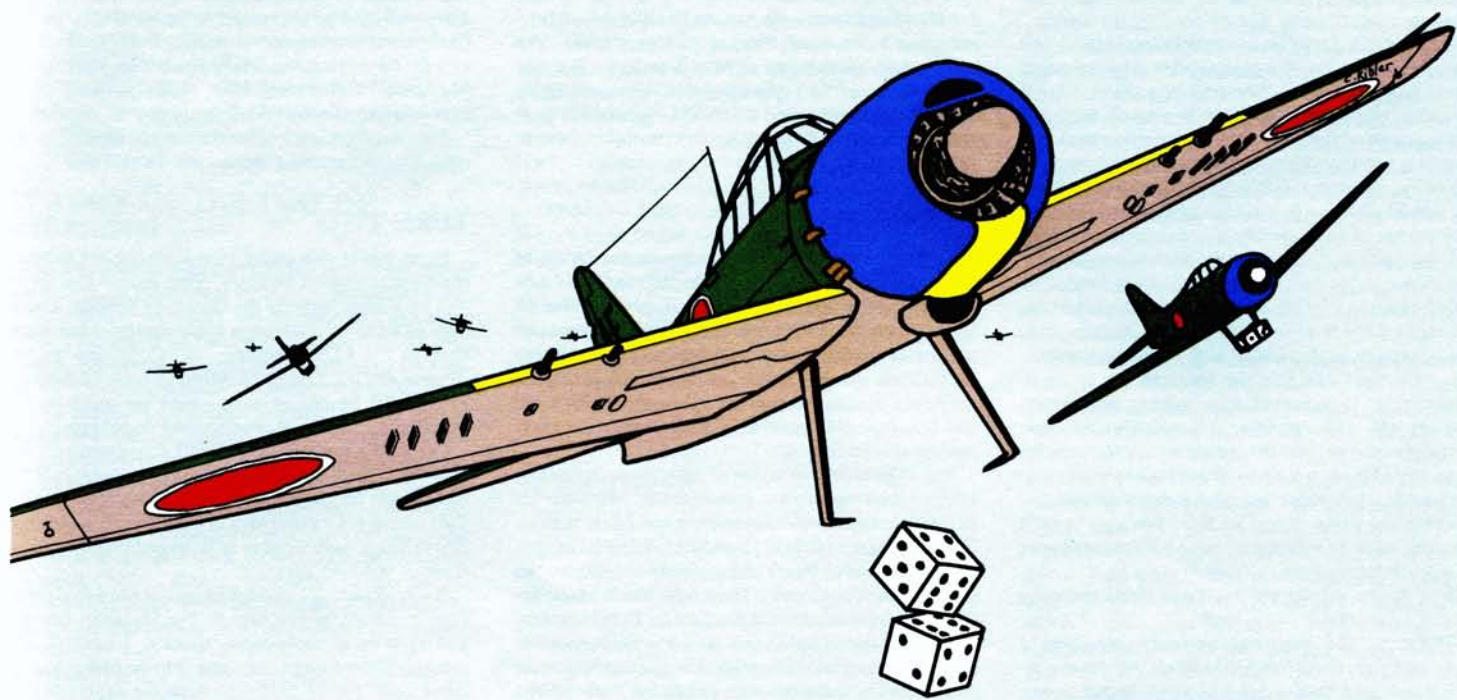
is $QP = (21 - \text{Average Rank}) + \text{AFR} \cdot 15 - \text{PPI}$. For *GUNS OF AUGUST* this would mean, $(21 - 15.82) + 1.25 \cdot .89 = 5.54$ Quality Points. After everything was sorted out, I assembled the accompanying chart. There have been 55 games that have appeared on the list. The games are ranked in descending order of Quality Points, their average rank, the AFR, PPI and relative ranking for each respective category.

As my title suggests, I think that my Quality Point System is accurate in determining game popularity. The system shows that many games should be receiving more coverage in the pages of *The GENERAL* (notably, *RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN*)—at least in terms of the "So That's What You've Been Playing" column. Other games receive a disparate amount of coverage (look to *STORM OVER ARNHEM*). As a point of interest, a game that gets what we should consider "fair coverage" will have a PPI rank very close to its OP rank.

The chart is dominated by games that the editors of *The GENERAL* have often named "future classics", with a handful of newer releases grouped behind them in the QP rankings. The system also reveals some new games that are far from being popular at the present time. Many conclusions can be drawn as the result of my work here. I would only hope that this system will answer some questions that might arise about game popularity, and provide some incentive for authors and editors both to be aware of what the readership would like to see. In my humble opinion, the *Quality Point System* is truly the last word in judging the popularity of a game.



Title	QP Rank	Quality Points	ARP Rank	Average Rank	AFR Rank	Average Frequency	PPI Rank	PPI
SQUAD LEADER	1	22.59	1	1.56	1	5.75	4	2.60
RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN	2	19.12	3	4.40	5	2.96	30	.44
THIRD REICH	3	18.80	2	3.24	2	3.92	3	2.88
B-17	4	17.58	5	5.00	6	2.54	16	.96
G.I.: ANVIL OF VICTORY	5	17.13	4	4.73	3	3.28	5	2.42
CROSS OF IRON	6	15.69	6	7.48	7	2.42	39	.25
Ambush	7	12.53	8	10.00	11	1.78	38	.25
UP FRONT	8	12.23	7	9.90	4	3.06	8	1.93
CRESCENDO OF DOOM	9	12.03	10	10.12	8	2.07	46	.16
BATTLE OF THE BULGE	10	10.69	9	10.70	10	1.87	11	1.48
VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC	11	10.43	11	10.10	9	1.94	10	1.61
CIVILIZATION	12	10.33	12	11.80	13	1.51	31	.38
Dungeons & Dragons	13	9.78	15	12.64	14	1.46	50	0.0
WAR AND PEACE	14	9.36	13	12.16	12	1.56	14	1.05
FLAT TOP	15	8.83	14	12.63	16	1.41	18	.95
HITLER'S WAR	16	6.70	18	15.33	22	1.03	55	0.0
PANZERBLITZ	17	6.07	19	15.56	19	1.12	28	.49
FORTRESS EUROPA	18	5.72	17	15.32	20	1.11	13	1.07
Empires in Arms	19	5.62	23	16.20	23	.82	51	0.0
GUNS OF AUGUST	20	5.54	21	15.82	18	1.25	19	.89
WOODEN SHIPS & IRON MEN	21	5.39	20	15.80	17	1.30	12	1.11
PANZER LEADER	22	5.38	22	16.16	21	1.06	27	.52
WAR AT SEA	23	4.47	24	17.20	22	.83	45	.16
PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN	24	3.78	16	14.00	15	1.45	1	4.67
Civil War	25	3.63	29	17.80	30	.63	44	.20
AFRIKA KORPS	26	3.62	27	17.64	24	.81	26	.55
DIPLOMACY	27	3.62	25	17.44	29	.67	24	.61
BANZAI	28	3.50	33	18.00	33	.50	52	0.0
MIDWAY	29	3.42	34	18.04	27	.70	40	.24
TITAN	30	3.41	26	17.64	26	.76	22	.71
AIR FORCE	31	3.36	31	17.87	31	.61	32	.38
GUNSLINGER	32	2.56	32	17.94	32	.52	15	1.02
STORM OVER ARNHEM	33	2.24	28	17.67	25	.76	9	1.85
NAVAL WAR	34	2.19	36	18.82	38	.34	33	.33
PANZERKRIEG	35	1.89	37	19.33	43	.22	54	0.0
CIRCUS MAXIMUS	36	1.57	38	19.50	37	.36	34	.29
MAGIC REALM	37	1.45	40	19.76	40	.32	48	.11
KINGMAKER	38	1.22	42	19.88	36	.37	37	.27
STALINGRAD	39	.87	41	19.80	42	.28	23	.61
STRUGGLE OF NATIONS	40	.87	39	19.57	41	.30	20	.86
HUNDRED DAYS BATTLES	41	.66	48	20.67	39	.33	53	0.0
SUBMARINE	42	.54	44	20.32	44	.15	35	.29
STARSHIP TROOPERS	43	.34	46	20.48	47	.10	36	.28
THE LONGEST DAY	44	.16	45	20.37	46	.13	25	.60
D-DAY '77	45	.08	50	20.76	48	.08	42	.24
NAPOLEON	46	.04	54	20.92	51	.04	49	.08
GETTYSBURG '77	47	-.01	53	20.92	50	.04	47	.13
WIZARD'S QUEST	48	-.12	52	20.92	53	.04	41	.24
DUNE	49	-.12	55	20.96	52	.04	43	.20
GLADIATOR	50	-.20	47	20.53	49	.08	21	.75
FREDERICK THE GREAT	51	-.27	35	18.50	34	.48	6	2.29
1776	52	-.28	51	20.82	54	.04	29	.44
BULL RUN	53	-.38	30	17.83	28	.67	2	4.22
FREEDOM IN THE GALAXY	54	-.52	49	20.71	45	.14	17	.95
Nato	55	-.63	43	20.00	35	.37	7	2.00



T.K.O. IN TWO

An American Strategy for *VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC*

By Phillip Hanson and Bob Schroeder

The authors, after having read much of the *VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC* literature, agree with the consensus that one player has an enormous advantage. We part company with the others, however, in that we feel it is the American player who possess this advantage.

Most of the advice heretofore printed on Japanese strategy implicitly assumes a basically defensive posture for the U.S. Navy. If the U.S. player contents himself with trying to ward off the Japanese onslaught then he will be a ripe victim for the many ploys advocated for the Japanese elsewhere, for example the "TKO in Three" of Alan R. Moon (The *GENERAL*—Vol. 17, No. 4). To avoid this, the U.S. player must adopt an attitude paralleling that of the U.S. Navy historically. In WWII the turning point was certainly the battle of Midway. This was quite a risky operation for the American command and this may partially account for the Japanese players' disregard for the possibility of intervention by the U.S. carriers in the wargame.

To duplicate the feat of the U.S. Navy, duplicate its willingness to take risks. In the game, this may mean taking unpleasant actions or avoiding satisfying actions. Swallow your pride and do it.

Herewith is a step-by-step strategy for success. It calls for humility and risk taking. It would not have set well with Washington. (Recall the official nervousness over the Midway plan.) But it will work, subject to the normal effects of luck.

OVERVIEW OF U.S. STRATEGY

Before beginning, get out the board and spread it in front of you. Look at the board. It reveals many facts which you would do well to remember. For example, notice the Point of Control levels for each area. In most cases, the points for Japanese control exceed those granted for American control. Combine this with the awareness that the game is won

on points and the conclusion is stark. Effort spent preventing Japanese control is more fruitful than the same effort used to assert your own control. This is a crucial point to bear in mind.

Generally, it requires less effort to decontrol an area with raiders than to control it with patrollers. This is because you need not guess how many ships the enemy will have in the area. The number of patrollers required for success is always unknown. But at the time of allocating raiders, all Japanese ships have already been placed so you can take advantage of this knowledge to only send as many ships needed to do the job.

Furthermore, when decontrolling, the job itself is easier since the objective is only to eliminate all patrollers and planes of the Japanese, rather than to wind up with some of your own still around. Thus it is often possible to break off action after a few rounds with the goal already attained, instead of having to toe it out to the end.

Next, look at the bases and ports. The Japanese have three ports and four bases. You have five ports and ten bases. This is a powerful advantage, and one which should not be carelessly frittered away, as it frequently is. Consider this. Only one area (Japan itself) is safe for the Japanese on Turn Two, even assuming they have done the best they possibly can. All other areas are vulnerable to Allied ships or planes or both. The Japanese *must* change this if they expect to survive, much less to win. Furthermore, all areas are potentially reachable from U.S. ports by patrollers, except the Aleutians. Note, though, that if Singapore falls, Japan and the Marianas become unpatrollable from Allied ports as well. Given the point importance of these areas this is an important change.

Armed with an awareness of this *Achilles heel*, a shrewd and courageous American player can often bring the Japanese to their knees on Turn Two. Details follow in the notes on the play of Turn Two.

Finally, notice that if the Japanese can control the areas that they start the game with and if they can take Guadalcanal and Midway, they then have a perimeter. This perimeter will enclose over ten points for the Japanese, and leave only eight for the U.S. The conditions they must meet to achieve this are not too difficult. The disparity of POC will pile up turn after turn. And the Japanese will probably not sit idly by and allow you even the eight you might get.

The insights available from the board can be summed up succinctly: the U.S. has little need to patrol; raiders suffice initially. The main effort should be devoted to raids for several reasons. Raids can prevent Japanese control of areas which is the prime objective, as discussed above. Raids can protect ports and bases; the Japanese need control to force port surrender, and raiders can attack Marines just as well as could patrollers. Raids may protect Singapore; this is the most important and most threatened port. Any raid can puncture the Japanese perimeter, exposing vulnerable rear areas to subsequent attack. Most importantly, raiders move last, maintaining flexibility of response, and avoiding premature revelation of your intentions to your opponent.

Now look at the reinforcement track. The Japanese have next to none. The U.S. has many ships coming on. Therefore, the U.S. can withstand losses more easily than the Japanese can. This is all to the good, since the American player can expect heavier losses than the Japanese player, due to the basic and substantial inferiority of U.S. ships.

Let's look at the relative worth of the various weapons systems the two sides have to work with, as revealed by the rules. Notice the action roll modifiers. This guarantees the superiority of planes over surface ships. The carriers have the attack bonus. Land-based air units don't. Carriers are affected by the attack bonuses of the enemy and by disabled

results. Land-based air units aren't. Obviously, carriers hit harder, but land-based air units are tougher.

The potential for offensive action revolves around the carriers precisely because they are the more potent weapon system. The role of surface ships is to escort the carriers and keep them safe from the surface ships of the other side. In the rules each surface ship has the same ability for escort purposes, regardless of its size. For this function, five cruisers are just as good as five battleships. Better in fact, because speed rolls are often necessary to keep up with the carriers. Cruisers make them automatically. Battleships often fail. Thus, battleships cannot be counted on to carry out this mission. Pursuit of the defeated enemy is easier with cruisers. Escape from enemy pursuit is also easier with cruisers. Remember, "Cruisers can flee the bruisers".

Hence, it is apparent that: planes are better, cruisers are worthwhile and battleships are not. Coincidentally or not, these are exactly the conclusions the U.S. Navy drew from its experience in the Pacific. You need not repeat their mistakes in learning the same thing. In fact, you can benefit from this prior knowledge by not pinning your hopes on your battlegagons.

How do the Allied and Japanese fleets compare system by system? Let's look:

Cruisers. The Japanese cruisers are clearly superior to anything the Allies have. All get the attack bonus and have at least as much speed as any Allied ship afloat. Also, they have as much, if not more armor, except for the *Kitkami* and *Oi*.

Battleships. The Japanese tend to be slightly faster in the early turns—which means fewer botched speed rolls—but this is mostly a wash, due to the fundamental worthlessness of battleships.

Carriers. The Japanese have more, but they are smaller and more fragile by and large. This is actually an advantage in that a damage roll of "3" will sink the *Enterprise* or the *Zuiho*, but whereas the U.S. player would have lost four attack factors, the rich Japanese would have only lost two. Likewise, a single "Disabled" result will send away the *Enterprise* or *Zuiho*, but the U.S. has been hurt the more. On the other hand, a "2" will still kill the *Zuiho*, but the *Enterprise* will live to fight another day. The smaller Japanese carriers also give the Imperial Japanese Navy more flexibility in deployment. While the *Zuiho* and *Shoho* can be split between two areas, the *Enterprise* cannot be.

Land-based air units. Here the advantage is clear for the Allies. The units on both sides can take the same punishment, even though the U.S. formations are smaller and more flexible. This allows the Allies to outmaneuver the Japanese in the Air Placement Phase, and more than compensates for the minor Japanese advantage of one more die on the attack. Offensively, the U.S. gets 20 dice to the Japanese 18. Defensively, it takes 40 points of damage to stop the U.S. Air Force, but only 24 to stop the Japanese. So the decision must be hands down for the Allies.

Marines. The U.S. marines are slightly better. They are stronger (Island Combat option), can take a bit more damage, and there are more of them. This is balanced, however, by their bad timing. They don't appear until late in the game, and often wind up stranded in Hawaii on Turn Three, in which case Turn Five is the earliest one can really count on them. A pity, since the Marines in combination with land-based air units are the most potent weapons system the Allies have.

Lastly, the non-American Allied forces are subject to severe basing and sailing restrictions. The British are subject to both, making their fleet much less impressive on water than on paper. The Australians and the Dutch cannot raid three areas. The relative worth of the forces under Allied command on a ship-by-ship basis is obviously that the U.S. are best, Australians and Dutch are good, and the British are frequently ineffectual.

However, the British become a powerful factor in the game if Singapore is preserved. Then they can threaten Japanese positions in Japan, the Marianas, and in the South Pacific, all critical areas. The implication of this is, as stated before, that the preservation of Singapore is a thing devoutly to be desired on many counts. Every effort should be bent to this end, rather than ceding this pivotal real estate without a fight.

TURN ONE

To begin with, let's get into the proper frame of mind. Do not gnash your teeth and tear your hair out over ships lost in air raids. Expect to lose all the forces in Pearl and Indonesia. Smile at your opponent as he gloats over your losses. (This will unnerve him; and psychological warfare is about the only sort of warfare you are allowed this turn.) If any ships should survive, look upon them as unexpected reinforcements.

It is impossible to write an article, such as this, without making certain assumptions. We take for granted here that the Japanese have been reasonably intelligent in their placement. They have sent a strong force to Pearl and possibly another to the Central Pacific Ocean. They have land-based air units in the Marshalls and the Central Pacific Ocean. There are four land-based air units in Indonesia. (Three if the diversion with the cruisers was successful.) The Marines are either in Truk or the Central Pacific Ocean.

Your objective on this turn is simply to get into position for *next* turn. For this reason, basing has been given high priority in our commentary on Turn One. Follow the advice offered.

Also, you must harass the Japanese as much as possible. Hit the ships in the Central Pacific Ocean and run away before the inevitable night round of combat, preserving forces for Turn Two. If the enemy was careless and left the Marianas or Japan unguarded, jump on it with the three available cruisers. But don't commit suicide under any circumstances. Every ship is needed next turn.

The Australian cruisers should be sent to the Coral Sea and the U.S. Mandate, in case of an I-boat attack on the single patrolling ship in these areas.

The *Houston*, *De Ruyter*, and *Exeter* should patrol the Marianas or Japanese Islands if there are two or less Japanese patrollers in either of these areas. This might draw off air units from the Indonesia raid, or raiders from the Central Pacific Ocean, or get you some points. They cannot hope to defeat even the three weakest ships in the Japanese fleet, so if the Imperial Japanese Navy is out in force send these three cruisers to safety—you will need them later.

Retreat as soon as possible after these raids, unless you have more surface ships in the Hawaiian Islands than the enemy; even then think very carefully about the effect on your future of a round of day combat, which is likely.

In the Central Pacific Ocean, hit the Marines first if they are present, then retreat. If you have near-equality or better in night capability, stay and munch as many of them as you can get. Sometimes you can deal the Japanese a major wound at this point, but don't count on it (and we will not assume any such luck).

Basing in this turn, as stressed above, is crucial. Send the first four carriers to arrive in the game to Australia. If all five show up, hold *one* back in Samoa (remember that uncommitted groups appear in Pearl automatically). Thus, in most cases, all the carriers surviving Turn One battles should be in Australia.

Meanwhile, send *a* wounded battleship to Samoa, along with about half the surviving cruisers. And send the other battleship and cruisers to Australia.

Take the four cruisers in the Coral Sea and the U.S. Mandate to the New Hebrides. From there,

they can reach any area they could reach from Samoa, and some they couldn't get to from Samoa. They will also be able to get to any area they would likely want to get from Australia. Pull the *Houston* and *De Ruyter* into the Philippines if they are in the Marianas. Otherwise, treat them as any other cruisers and allocate them to Samoa or Australia.

This deployment offers maximum flexibility of response to Japanese moves on Turn Two.

TURN TWO

Here, again, we assume the Japanese are following their strongest strategy. This means that there will be a large force in the Hawaiian Islands. There may be additional attempts made against other areas such as the U.S. Mandate, the Coral Sea or the Central Pacific Ocean (if Midway has not fallen). There will be enemy land-based air units in the Marshalls, the South Pacific and Indonesia.

Let's take a moment to recall some earlier conclusions. Specifically that raiders are very potent, and should be used to the greatest possible extent. This means it's a good idea to keep patrols to a minimum. Some patrolling is still desirable, of course. Here is the best program.

If you think the Japanese player is not too clever, send a couple of cruisers to the Marshall Islands and try to be inconspicuous about it. Under no circumstances put more than one ship on patrol in any other area. Never patrol an area the Japanese are patrolling. Put a British battleship in the Bay of Bengal and put a British cruiser in Indonesia (to secure control if the air units eliminate each other). Put one wounded U.S. battleship each in the U.S. Mandate and the Coral Sea. If no wounded battleships are available, use the Australians instead. Send a cruiser to the North Pacific Ocean if you feel so inclined. Only repair your carriers if they have no planes. Every other ship in the Allied fleet should raid.

Air placement is the most critical part of the turn for you. The Japanese player has more units than you do, and so is able to conceal his intentions to some extent. Your objective is to mount a strong defense of Singapore. If you believe that placing an air unit in the South Pacific Ocean or the Marianas will lead the other side to place two there, do it. Otherwise, plop them down in Indonesia.

By now, the Japanese battle plan is before you. All his ships are committed, and less than ten of yours are. Exploit this position when you place your raiders. The first question is whether you have a realistic chance of successfully holding onto Singapore. A simple formula can tell you whether your air resources are sufficient to overcome the enemy land-based air units present. One Japanese land-based air unit is the equivalent of: one U.S. land-based air unit, or two U.S. carriers or the British carriers. Carriers are more or less directly comparable.

The Japanese will likely have three or four land-based air units. Add up your forces in Indonesia, Ceylon, and Australia to determine if you have enough to duke it out. If so, go for it. If you have extra units, throw them in—there is no such thing as being too strong.

Occasionally, due to unfavorable rolls, a "go" situation could become a "no-go" situation. In this case the better part of valor is indicated. Apply the formula each round to decide whether or not to stay. Remember, "Lady Luck" is under no obligation to "make it up to you". She always starts afresh; so should you. If you cannot meet the test of strength, don't add anything in Indonesia leaving, if necessary, the airmen to die alone. (Now you can gnash your teeth and tear your hair out.) Extract any surviving land-based air units and the cruisers after the first round, as you will need them later.

You may notice that there is no mention made of Japanese ships in Indonesia. This is because they

are assumed to be beating on the U.S. Navy elsewhere. If there are a few in there, send in the Brits to engage them. In the event that there are too many for the Brits and the Americans at Australia to deal with, then the Japanese player cannot be seriously threatening Pearl, as we assume they are.

Note too, that no defense of Pearl has been mounted. This will be the cause of many nervous messages from Washington. Ignore them.

IF YOU FAIL THE TEST OF STRENGTH

So you couldn't swing it. This is not the end of the world, or even the war. Again, look around the board. Count carefully the number of your ships which can reach all the various areas open to you. Count, equally careful, the number of Japanese ships in these areas. Use the previous formula to figure out which areas are vulnerable to you. Go there and put down the enemy planes. Don't be deterred by Japanese control, since it will be a day fight anyhow.

This tactic is especially effective in the Marshall Islands in conjunction with the heretofore inconspicuous cruisers you may have sent there earlier. Seizing control of this area means that the Imperial Japanese Navy cannot sail from Truk to the Hawaiian Islands. Their plans against Pearl will be cheaply foiled unless they have forces at Johnston or Midway.

Enough surface seapower should be sent with the carriers to assure their protection from enemy surface ships, plus another ship or two for good measure. Any excess could be sent to areas where they can get a 2:1 superiority over Japanese surface ships if any such areas exist.

There is often at least one area in which you can achieve superiority in surface ships. Go there if you can match the number of Japanese carriers and land-based air units in the area. Give preference to the areas you controlled last turn. This will help get a night fight in which you can revenge your otherwise nearly useless battleships by letting them sink the enemy carriers. Reverse Pearl Harbor!

These actions will make a hole in the Japanese perimeter through which you can sail next turn. This can also cause the Japanese player to lose points and ships, both precious to him.

Finally, it is a sound idea to raid either the North Pacific Ocean or the Aleutian Islands. This will enable you to base a force (try to include a carrier from Pearl) there to threaten the Japanese home islands.

In all these actions, consider carefully the gain you hope for and the threat to your carriers, which will be needed desperately in defense of Pearl next turn.

ASSESSMENT OF TURN TWO

If the Japanese carriers obligingly present themselves as targets, hit them with the U.S. carriers rather than with your land-based air units or the British carriers. The carriers will have to be sent away anyhow; U.S. carriers get the bonus against them. They also don't come back from the grave. And the enemy land-based air units don't get the bonus against you.

You should expect certain hard results among your forces. Loss of all carriers sent to Indonesia. Half the remaining carriers sent into harm's way are sunk. In other words, one or two carriers left. Two to four land-based air units destroyed. One-quarter to one-third of the cruisers committed to combat sunk. Indeterminate battleship losses. Also expect to lose some areas: the Philippines, Lae, Singapore, and one of Johnston Island, Dutch Harbor or Guadalcanal. The Japanese will have garnered about 15-20 points of control by now. Only if your situation is worse than this are you in real trouble.

So to basing your weary units at the end of the second turn. If you still have Singapore, the Imperial Japanese Navy is in big trouble. Wheel the British into the harbor. Notice all the areas they can reach now. Mention each to your opponent. Gloat over them. You deserve it. The Royal Navy, which was a minor irritant to the Rising Sun before is now a very real threat. The only chance the Japanese have now is major errors on the Allied side. Actually, many Japanese players throw in the towel at this point, hence the title.

Otherwise, base according to these considerations: Return local forces to Dutch Harbor (i.e., any ships in the Aleutian Islands or the North Pacific Ocean). Use the New Hebrides again, they are very flexible. Don't send anyone to Pearl. They will be trapped there if the Japanese have control. It's bad enough that your reinforcements have to show up there; don't make it worse. Take undamaged battleships to Samoa or the New Hebrides. Send the Australians and Dutch, if any, to Samoa.

TURN THREE

This is the last critical turn. Now the ownership of Pearl will be decided. We assume that a competent player knows what to do if he holds Singapore or if the Marshall Islands ploy has worked and the Imperial Japanese Navy cannot get to the Hawaiian Islands. We will deal here with only the most difficult situation. Pearl is half gone and there is no reason for the Japanese to break off the effort.

Your objective is to save Pearl, if possible, and in so doing leave yourself in a position from which you can credibly carry on the fight. Notice the qualifier "if possible". It is quite conceivable that you will be unable to save Pearl. In this case, it must be written off. You can still win from Samoa or other bases. But the fleet is irreplaceable; if it is lost, you are lost, so don't send it to certain death.

Since the three reinforcement battleships show up in Pearl and cannot move out of the Hawaiian Islands sea area, move them out on patrol. Carefully count the number of surface ships in the Japanese fleet that are patrolling the Hawaiian Islands or that could reach there. Subtract that number from the surface ships available to you (include the three battleships in the Hawaiian Islands). The remainder is the number of ships you might want to use as patrollers. But remember that each ship you commit elsewhere lessens the chance of success in saving Pearl, your main objective on this turn.

If you followed our suggestions with regard to basing last turn, your forces are in four groups:

The British are in Ceylon, and should be entrusted with the task of holding the Bay of Bengal. This should be easily within their capabilities if the Japanese seriously want Pearl. If any carriers remain, reserve them as raiders to threaten Indonesia if the Japanese player commits the bulk of his land-based air units elsewhere.

The Australian ships should be carriers and cruisers only. They can make the raid to the Hawaiian Islands without speed rolls. In Samoa are the only ships that can raid two areas automatically—the Australians, Dutch and undamaged battleships. The forces in Dutch Harbor should be placed in raid mode, to give the Japanese insecurity over the Japanese Islands.

Repair any carriers that have lost their planes. Other than that, you will need all available forces this turn, so don't take them out of action yourself. Again, send any wounded battleships out on patrol of the Coral Sea and the U.S. Mandate.

You will have two to six land-based air units available this turn. You may or may not be facing the possibility of Japanese land-based air units in the Hawaiian Islands. If you are, put all of yours in the Hawaiian Islands as well. If not, you will still want to put them all there unless the Japanese have lost

half of their carrier force (an unlikely occurrence). If the Japanese air shows up somewhere discomfiting your holdings, so be it; Pearl is more important.

Your Marines are locked in the Hawaiian Islands. Still, they should be moved out to sea for a possible assault on Johnston Island, should it be Japanese-held. If not, you face a "no-win situation". You could move them to sea, because the Japanese might shoot at them and in so doing distract attention from units that affect control. Or, you can hold them out of immediate harm in the harbor, though subjecting them to possible air raids if you lose. We favor the second option, since it is unlikely that a good Japanese player would be distracted, and any carriers left to raid the harbor in case of loss of the Hawaiian Islands are carriers not chasing the remains of the fleet.

We assume the Japanese will have committed the bulk, if not the entirety, of the carrier fleet to the Hawaiian Islands operation—along with a correspondingly impressive escort. Count the Japanese escort vessels in the Hawaiian Islands. Count the escort of your fleet that can reach the Hawaiian Islands. If yours are larger you have a choice in a night battle.

Remember, though, that the Japanese ships are better than yours, and this edge will evaporate quickly. Also remember that any night fight is unlikely with plus two to the Japanese roll.

If you have superiority for day or night action, you must try to save Pearl. If not, look for other vulnerable areas, grind your teeth, tear your hair—but don't be lured into inevitable slaughter. "Vulnerable area" is as defined above. Your objective, if you can't defend Pearl, is conservation of forces and points. Smash the Japanese perimeter and don't let them rebuild it.

THE GREAT BATTLE OF PEARL

At Pearl your priority targets are the carriers and land-based air units. Then the patrolling surface ships. Only if you are really carrying the day should you attack with raiding surface ships. If it comes to a night fight and you have surface superiority, use the "wrap-around" tactic to get the battleship trained on the carriers. If you don't have superiority at night, gang up on the patrollers.

Your land-based air units should shoot at enemy land-based air units first; save your carriers to attack carriers. Hit the most powerful ones first, resolving ties by looking at speed. Thus, the *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku* are your juiciest targets. If your land-based air units are holding the skies alone (no U.S. carriers present), shoot at the carriers first, because a "5" will send away a carrier but not a land-based air unit, and they're all going to have to go if you are to hold the area. If you run out of air power, you have lost the battle unless he is down to one or two carriers and no land-based air units and you have an enormous superiority in surface ships. Even in this situation, expect huge losses in your surface fleet. Humble your pride and run.

Effective retreating is crucial to your further chances. Too often, despair sets in and a game still salvageable by the Allied player is conceded at this point. Your priority here is to conserve your force for another day.

The first important decision is how many groups to run in. If you have a superiority in surface, and the enemy has few or no carriers, run in a single group. But generally, it is wise to split up. Here the battleships become a strict disadvantage. They are slower than anything in the Japanese fleet. They will probably have to be left behind to the tender mercies of the Japanese battleships and slow carriers. The cruisers have a better chance. If you followed directions, the fast Japanese carriers (*Shokaku*, *Zuikaku*, *Soryu* and *Hiryu*) should have come under heavy attack and will hopefully not be available to pursue your cruisers.

If you have heavy superiority in ships, able to make speed "7", run them as a group. Usually, though, it is much better to split up, every ship for itself. In the inevitable pursuit, either the Japanese player gangs up on some of your cruisers and lets the rest escape, or he pursues at nearly one-on-one. In this latter situation, you aren't too badly off. To escape, you must get a five or six or they must get a four, before they get a five or six. Thus, in three of five encounters, you should escape unscathed—although without having inflicted much loss on them.

If your forces not committed to Pearl have punctured the Japanese perimeter, concentrate your navy at the base closest to the hole in preparation for pouring through it next turn. Especially important is the placement of the Marines, if they survive.

TAKING STOCK

If things have gone badly, Pearl is gone and with it not only your most important base, but its repair facilities and convenient access to the Central Pacific Ocean and the Aleutian Islands. This transfer will, in addition, shorten the Japanese lines considerably and make your access problem even greater.

Still, the Japanese fleet is in much the same shape as yours. Any battle for Pearl should leave wide gaps in the Japanese order of battle. If you declined the fight, then your fleet is still in good condition. You can carry on. Of your initial bases you will by now have lost the following: Pearl and Singapore among major bases; and the Philippines, Midway, Johnston, and Lae among the minor, with the possible additions of Dutch Harbor and Attu. If any of the above mentioned bases survive, you are in better shape. If any others have fallen, you're in deeper trouble.

If the Japanese have 20 or more points, it is improbable that you can prevent them from reaching 29 before Turn Six. Therefore, the only reason to patrol from now till then is for the action roll modifiers if you believe that fighting will occur in your areas next turn. This means you can, and should, raid with everything. This will create maximum uncertainty in the Japanese mind. It is unfortunate that you must telegraph your intentions to some extent with your commitments of land-based air units and Marines, but this cannot be helped. It cannot be overstressed that these two components will be the determinants of your future success or failure.

You must seek bases for the swollen ranks of your air power to defend. All those land-based air units should be able to prevent the fall of Samoa, regardless of Japanese strength. If the Marines can survive to grab bases, the land-based air units will be able to keep them yours in perpetuity.

By the sixth turn, the balance of power should have shifted irrevocably to you; but you have a large backlog of points to overcome. Relentless expansion is the by-word at this stage. Only if you are still bound to the outer fringe of the board at the end of Turn Six should you consider resigning.

These comments are sparse, to be sure, but the focus of this article has been the early game. By following them you will hopefully exit the scope of this scenario at one of several points, and will not be in need of guidance for the later game. You leave our scenario when any one of the following happens: 1) the Japanese player does not try to take Pearl (Turn One); 2) Singapore is saved (Turn Two); 3) the Japanese are prevented from a second turn foray into the Hawaiian Islands by your control of the Marshall Islands (Turn Three); 4) the Japanese do not try for Pearl for some other reason (Turn Three); 5) Pearl is saved (Turn Three); or 6) the Japanese Navy suffers heavy casualties and thereby loses effectiveness (which could happen anytime).

If you don't make it through one of these exits, you can always claim it was a 'dice game'. ☆

THE AVALON HILL GAME COMPANY'S BEST SELLER LIST

As is our custom, the editors once again present sales rankings for our line of game titles based on totals for the 1984 Fiscal Year, which began May 1984 and ended April 1985. Figures for the All-Time List include all versions of a title sold to date, provided the game system has not radically changed in any subsequent printing over the years. *D-DAY* and *FOOTBALL STRATEGY*, by way of example, have collectively passed through eight different editions but each retains its original system. *GETTYSBURG*, on the other hand, has changed dramatically in each of its four versions and is therefore omitted from the list—even though the collection totals of its incarnations would normally grant it the eighteenth place. Titles are placed on the All-Time List only after having sold in excess of 100,000 copies while under The Avalon Hill Game Company's ownership. Readers should note that there are seven games which qualify under this restriction but have not surpassed, as yet, *TWIXT*; these are in, in no particular order: *WAR AT SEA*, *FEUDAL 1776*, *BASEBALL STRATEGY*, *CROSS OF IRON*, *BULGE (old)* and *KINGMAKER*.

1984 BEST SELLERS

Rank:	Title	1983 Rank
1.	GAME OF TRIVIA	—
2.	SQUAD LEADER	4
3.	STATIS-PRO BASEBALL	3
4.	B-17 QUEEN OF THE SKIES	8
5.	DUNE	—
6.	FACTS IN FIVE	7
7.	STATIS-PRO FOOTBALL	—
8.	TELENGARD	1
9.	OUTDOOR SURVIVAL	9
10.	THIRD REICH	6
11.	DIPLOMACY	15
12.	TAC	—
13.	WIZARD'S QUEST	14
14.	POWERS & PERILS	—
15.	B-1 NUCLEAR BOMBER	2
16.	HITLER'S WAR	—
17.	DELUXE RNEQUEST	—
18.	COMP. FOOTBALL STRATEGY	5
19.	LORDS OF CREATION	—
20.	CIVILIZATION	11

ALL-TIME BEST SELLERS

Rank:	Title	1983 Rank
1.	OUTDOOR SURVIVAL	1
2.	FACTS IN FIVE	2
3.	PANZERBLITZ	3
4.	PANZER LEADER	4
5.	TACTICS II	5
6.	SQUAD LEADER	8
7.	THIRD REICH	7
8.	LUFTWAFFE	6
9.	BLITZKRIEG	9
10.	FOOTBALL STRATEGY	10
11.	ACQUIRE	11
12.	STARSHIP TROOPERS	13
13.	STATIS-PRO BASEBALL	19
14.	DIPLOMACY	17
15.	D-DAY	14
16.	PAYDIRT	16
17.	AFRIKA KORPS	15
18.	WIZARD'S QUEST	20
19.	RICHTHOFEN'S WAR	—
20.	TWIXT	—

AREA TOP 50 LIST

Rank	Name	Times On List	Rating	Previous Rank
1.	K. Combs	45	2542XOV	1
2.	B. Dobson	20	2368RJR	2
3.	D. Burdick	44	2188GGN	3
4.	B. Sinigaglio	30	2150GHT	4
5.	P. Siragusa	39	2150EHK	5
6.	E. Mineman	15	2097DFE	7
7.	F. Preissle	42	2089LNX	8
8.	D. Garbutt	43	2072GIN	9
9.	J. Beard	34	2068HIQ	6
10.	J. Kruez	39	2063GGL	10
11.	P. Gartman	10	2052HGJ	14
12.	P. Landry	19	2032HHM	12
13.	H. Newby	10	2025OHI	11
14.	D. Barker	10	2014GHN	13
15.	D. Munsell	40	2002NHM	17
16.	S. Sutton	12	1997EHM	15
17.	M. Sincavage	34	1993EEJ	16
18.	W. Scott	42	1989LJU	21
19.	B. Remsburg	28	1964GIP	18
20.	F. Freeman	19	1964EFG	19
21.	J. Cormier	4	1957CEF	20
22.	F. Reese	25	1952HDH	26
23.	P. Flory	21	1942DGK	23
24.	G. Charbonneau	8	1937HGJ	22
25.	R. Beyma	20	1910DDF	24
26.	R. Leach	46	1906ILS	25
27.	L. Kelly	38	1889WWZ	27
28.	M. Simonitch	15	1874DEH	29
29.	B. Schoose	10	1871GIM	30
30.	M. Rogers	5	1855CEH	31
31.	C. Wannall	21	1852HLP	32
32.	N. Cromartie	30	1838GHO	33
33.	T. Oleson	54	1833XZZ	28
34.	R. Berger	6	1833CDE	34
35.	J. Sunde	20	1830KKS	35
36.	B. Downing	34	1830FHL	36
37.	P. DeVolpi	11	1828DED	37
38.	D. Greenwood	45	1821CFJ	38
39.	B. Salvatore	12	1816GKO	40
40.	R. Shurdut	11	1815DEJ	41
41.	F. Ornstein	28	1813GHM	42
42.	W. Ownbey	14	1812CEI	39
43.	J. Anderson	2	1809DDF	43
44.	J. Martin	3	1807DFI	44
45.	R. Phelps	26	1806HIQ	45
46.	B. Sutton	13	1806DFE	46
47.	D. Kopp	4	1801GIN	47
48.	P. Ford	10	1797GCP	48
49.	M. Miller	31	1795GHO	49
50.	E. O'Connor	3	1792EFL	50

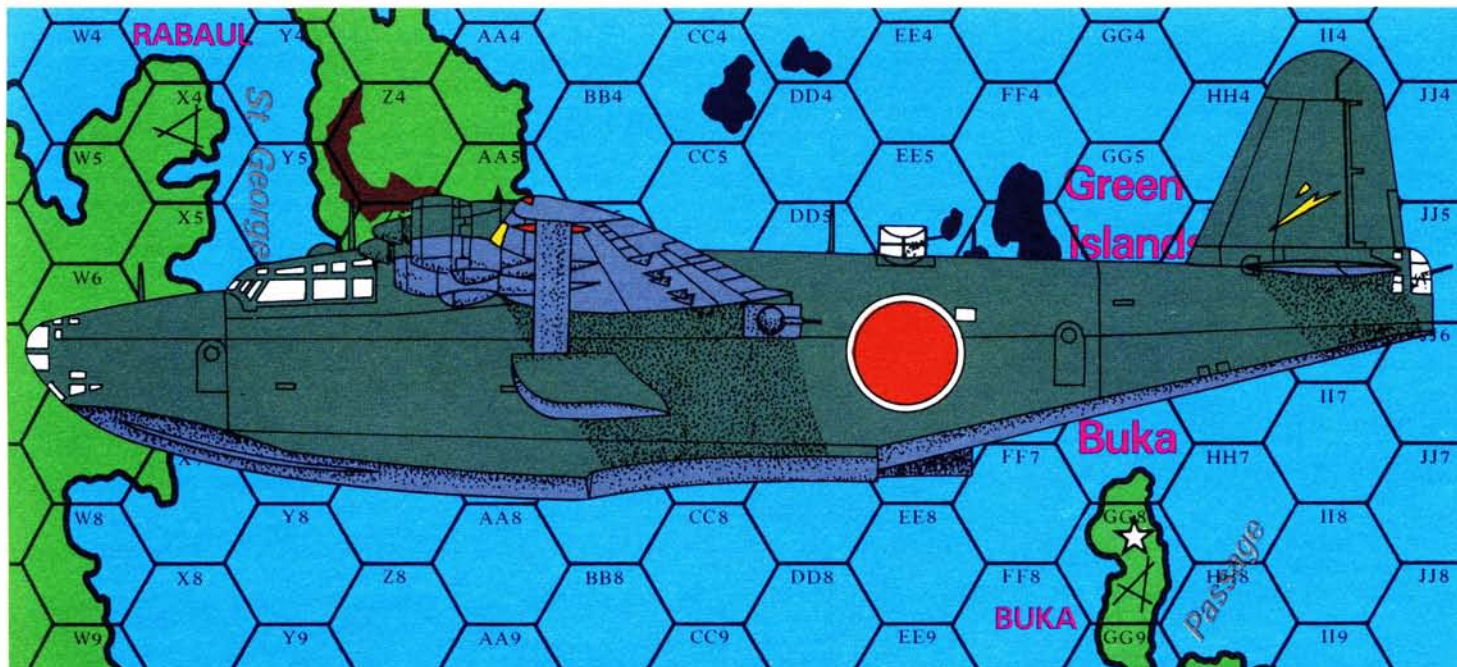
MEET THE 50 . . .

Mr. Mark Simonitch is 27, married and father of one, holds a BS in Graphic Design and works as a graphics artist in Vallejo, California.

Favorite Game: VG's Civil War
AREA Rated Games: AK, TRC, FE, AZ
AREA W-L Record: 13-2
% Time PBM: 90%
Gaming Time/Week: 6 hrs.
Play Preference: PBM
Hobbies: Military History Art
Pet Peeve: Ugly mapboards.

Mr. Simonitch, naturally, gives us his views on the eye-appeal of wargames:

"Graphics are extremely important to the success of a game. Good graphics add flavor, ease play and give the game the seriousness and prestige that the extensive time spent in design/development has made it deserving of. This applies equally to both the artist and the production manager. Glossy mapboards and counters say a lot—just as beautiful and meticulous artwork does. Properly done, the mounted mapboards are the best indication of a serious game. Too many companies compromise their products with low art budgets to keep costs down. There's plenty of companies out there that are into the "fast-food" market of game production; we need at least one company where we can count on the best in quality. The Avalon Hill Game Company is it."



THE AIRPOWER SYSTEM

Understanding Land-Based Air Assets in FLAT TOP

By James Werbaneth

FLAT TOP is a naval game in which the outcome is always decided by airpower. The primary offensive weapon for both players are their aircraft carriers. The advantages of ships such as the *Lexington*, *Enterprise*, *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku* are mobility and the ability to launch potentially decisive air strikes against either enemy task forces or enemy bases.

Land-based airpower lacks these strengths. From turn to turn and game to game, land bases remain in the same hexes. Furthermore, land planes differ from their carrier-based cousins in that they tend to be specialized types that are good against one kind of target but less potent against others. Perhaps the best example of this is Japanese land-based bomber force, which is comprised mainly of Bettys and Nells. Each is potentially effective, if used in sufficient number at low altitude, against Allied bases. But the real strength of the planes, as indicated by their Torpedo Basic Hit Table of 9, is their capability against task forces. Although the Japanese player may be able to score a few points by employing his Bettys and Nells against his opponent's bases, he would probably be better serving his own cause by using the same bombers to attack ships.

If *FLAT TOP* is decided by airpower, the most decisive weapon in either player's aerial arsenal is the bomber. Fighters can destroy an opponent's aircraft in air-to-air combat, but only bombers can sink ships and damage bases with any degree of dependability. Furthermore, bombers can destroy other aircraft including fighters, with near impunity, by catching them on the ground during bombing attacks upon bases or aircraft carriers.

Though they lack mobile bases and some of the versatility of carrier-based aircraft, land-based air elements are not without advantages of their own. Chief among them is that land bases can be repaired and returned to peak capability. In game terms a hit to an aircraft carrier is irreparable. This especially aids the Allied player in the "Santa Cruz" and "Guadalcanal" scenarios, in which the critical Henderson base can repair two hits per day turn.

A second advantage of land-based airpower is that it can be dispersed among several bases. This can make an enemy attack against an important base such as Rabaul or Port Moresby less likely to endanger the bulk of one's land-based air factors. This aids the Japanese player more than his opponent because there are more Japanese than Allied bases. Unless the aircraft are flown to land bases, it's nearly impossible to similarly disperse carrier-based airpower.

On the whole, the Allied player has the superior land-based air strength. Only in the introductory "Rings Around Rabaul" scenario does the Japanese player enjoy a clear quantitative advantage in land-based bombers. In every other scenario, the Allied player is better equipped for attacking bases than ships with his land-based bombers, but is nonetheless able to mount a substantial threat against the Japanese player's task forces also. The Allied player's land-based airpower is thus more balanced than that of his opponent, due in great part to a wider variety of bomber types. If the optional rules for para-frag bombs and skip bombing are used, the Allied edge is even greater.

The Allied player has several other advantages. He can launch effective attacks with his land-based air assets against any Japanese land base on the map. But only three Allied bases, Port Moresby, Gili-Gili and Henderson are likely to be attacked by either land-based or carrier-based Japanese aircraft. The Allied player is thus better able to concentrate his fighters, having only three bases to worry about defending, for combat air patrols.

The Allied player has most of the qualitative advantages in terms of land-based airpower throughout *FLAT TOP*. Exploiting these advantages is necessary for him to overcome his disadvantages in ships, and sometimes in carrier-based air strength, and remain competitive. But to do this, he must fully understand the resources available to him. The best way to understand land-based airpower is to systematically examine it.

Such a system can likewise help the Japanese

player in understanding his land-based air assets. These may not be the strongest part of the Japanese order of battle, but land-based airpower can valuably assist carrier-based air assets and surface ships.

Allied land-based air strength is both greater and more complex than that of the Japanese player. Therefore it warrants primary consideration.

PLANE CLASSIFICATION

In the five scenarios in *FLAT TOP*, the Allied player has fourteen different types of land-based aircraft. *FLAT TOP* places great demands of force management on the players, and keeping track of the capabilities and weakness of fourteen different airplane types is among the most difficult. But the Allied player need not be overwhelmed by this task.

One method of examining land-based airpower is to classify the airplanes involved according to potency against bases, potency against task forces, air-to-air combat capability, and effective range. Such an effort at classification can aid the player in assigning his aircraft to the tasks and bases to which they are best suited.

The first class of aircraft is the heavy bomber. The only plane of this class is the B-17. Operating with general purpose munitions and from high altitudes, it is extremely deadly against bases. Its lack of low altitude capability hardly matters as the B-17 operates best where anti-aircraft fire is least effective. It is clearly not suited for combat against ships from any altitude with any kind of bombs, despite the theories of Billy Mitchell and Douglas MacArthur. Therefore, B-17s should be sent against naval targets only if absolutely necessary or in the unlikely event that there are no lightly damaged or undamaged Japanese bases within striking distance.

The idea of sending B-17s, without fighter escort, to a target can conjure thoughts of bombers being downed by the dozens over Schweinfurt. But that is another theatre of operations and another game. In *FLAT TOP*, the B-17 has the second highest air-to-air Basic Hit Table of the Allied player's aircraft.

The B-17 can more than hold its own against the Zero, which is more than can be said about some Allied fighters.

The Allied player should provide his heavy bombers with fighter escort whenever possible, but this measure is not imperative. He would be cheating himself of much of his aerial anti-base capability if he chained his heavy bombers to the shorter ranges of her fighters. He can and should send his heavy bombers against distant Japanese bases, exploiting the B-17's long range. Night attacks should not be ruled out, as the B-17 is still a very potent threat after dark. The argument for night heavy bomber attacks is strengthened by the unlikelihood of combat air patrols over the target. Furthermore, anti-aircraft fire directed against attackers at night is seldom something to be feared.

The range of the B-17 is greater than that of any aircraft except the flying boats. When based at Port Moresby or Gili-Gili, it can strike any Japanese base, including Rabaul, and return to its base of origin.

Light-medium bombers are the backbone of Allied land-based airpower. The A-20, B-25, and B-26 comprise this class. Unlike the B-17, light-medium bombers operate best against bases and ships from low altitude, though they can attack from high altitude if necessary. If the Allied player is willing to trade decreased effectiveness for decreased aircraft losses, he should attack from high altitude.

Light-medium bombers are very potent against bases, especially when striking from low altitude. They are also much more of a threat to enemy ships than are the heavy bombers. This is especially true of the B-25, which is the best plane of its class. Light-medium bombers will seldom put a heavily escorted battleship or aircraft carrier out of the game, but they can be murder to smaller ships. An aircraft carrier with a large complement of planes is the ideal platform for attacks on task forces. A major base such as Port Moresby or Henderson, with a large group of light-medium bombers, is second best.

A-20s, B-25s, and B-26s should never be sent against any base likely to be protected by Zeros unless accompanied by Allied fighters. Light-medium bombers are less than mediocre in air-to-air combat.

They are also inferior to the B-17 in range. Due to their low range factors and need for fighter escort, light-medium bombers are unsuited for missions in which they need more than three game turns to reach the target. Aircraft of this class based at Gili-Gili or Port Moresby are best used against Japanese bases on New Guinea or task forces near the island. Under most circumstances, the farthest base subject to attack by light-medium bombers is Gasmata.

Using the optional rules for para-frag bombs and skip bombing gives light-medium bombers added significance. Only a A-20, B-25, and B-26 can exploit the enhanced capability that these rules give the Allied player against ships and parked aircraft.

The third class of Allied land-based aircraft is the naval bomber. The Avenger, Beaufort, and Dauntless are torpedo and dive bombers that function better against ships than do light-medium bombers. But, they are adequate for attacking bases. They are comparable in range to the B-25 and B-26.

In all scenarios, except "Guadalcanal", naval bombers are available to the Allied player only in limited numbers. Thus, in most cases he must use them either in conjunction with light-medium bombers or Avengers and Dauntlesses based at sea. In situations in which the Allied player is attacking task forces with his carrier-based airpower, the addition of even a few factors of land-based naval bombers can significantly aid the attack.

Because the Beaufort is always initially deployed at Port Moresby, Gili-Gili or Australia, there are few chances to use it with carrier-based aircraft. If he wishes to use his Beauforts against Japanese

ships, he has two options. He can base them at his New Guinea bases and use them with light-medium bombers when Japanese task forces sail within striking range. The second alternative is to transfer them to Henderson, where there are normally more opportunities for naval bombers in larger numbers to attack naval targets.

Naval bombers are similar to light-medium bombers in their air-to-air capabilities. They are poor in combat against other aircraft and must have fighter escort when flying to any target likely to be protected by Zeros.

Heavy bombers, light-medium bombers, and naval bombers constitute the offensive arm of the Allied player's land-based airpower. Most frequently, they will score more victory points than any other part of the Allied order of battle except carrier-based aircraft. Each class is better suited for one task than the other, but together they are a versatile aerial threat. The remaining two classes of aircraft are vital to support the bombers.

The Catalina and Hudson are the patrol bombers. Although they are capable of attacking bases and task forces, they should never be used for these tasks. Their primary purpose is to search for Japanese task forces that are subsequently attacked by other land-based and carrier-based planes.

This is one of the most important roles for aircraft in *FLAT TOP*. The destruction of enemy ships may decide the game, but they must be located first. Often the first player to attack a major task force is also the player who wins the game; and the player who attacks first is usually the player who locates his opponent's naval forces first. It would be most unwise to risk one's search capability attacking a target best left to more numerous classes of bombers.

The Catalina has a range factor higher than that of any other Allied aircraft and should, therefore, be used for long distance searches. Because of this role, it is just as important as any combat aircraft to the Allied player. The Hudson has much less stamina. Because of this trait and its mediocrity as a bomber, the Hudson is suited for reconnaissance over the seas near Allied bases. The Allied player thus has a better chance of finding task forces that escape detection by his Catalinas.

The optional rule for submarines expands the functions of the patrol bombers. In this case, they should never leave their bases unless loaded with general purpose bombs. Once the locations of the Japanese player's task forces have been determined by patrol bombers flying at high altitudes, other Catalinas and Hudsons should descend to low altitude with the aim of finding and attacking Japanese submarines. Surface units have the greater offensive potential and search efforts should always focus around them. But neither player should pass by a chance to attack the other's submarines.

The Allied fighters, the Beaufighter, P-38, P-39, P-40 and Wildcat are not his greatest aerial asset. None of them, except the Wildcat, are the equal to the Zero in combat, and none can match the Japanese plane in endurance. The lack of long range fighter escorts will keep almost all Allied players from using their light-medium bombers, naval bombers, and possibly their heavy bombers to their fullest potential. The inferiority of the Allied land-based fighters is a very strong argument for that player to rely upon his bombers.

BASES

Aircraft are only one part of airpower. Of equal importance are the bases from which aircraft fly. The Avengers, Dauntlesses, and Wildcats that operate from aircraft carriers are identical in performance to the Avengers, Dauntlesses, and Wildcats that fly from land bases. Yet the carrier-based aircraft are a greater offensive threat than their land-

based counterpart. The difference is not due to performance, but to the mobility, concealment and potential for surprise that are the strengths of the aircraft carrier.

All land bases are not created equal. Their locations, maximum capacity, ready factors, and launch factors determine which planes are best suited to them and the targets that they can fly against. Therefore, a careful examination of Allied bases is in order.

Australia and New Caledonia are the Allied player's two offboard bases. This may be their only important shared characteristic.

Except in the "Coral Sea" scenario, in which the Allied player has no choice but to use it as a Catalina base, New Caledonia is very nearly useless. In the "Eastern Solomons", "Santa Cruz", and "Guadalcanal" scenarios, New Caledonia has very high ready and launch factors, but is simply too far away from the Solomon Islands or New Guinea to justify its use. When the Allied player deploys aircraft earmarked for New Caledonia, Espiritu Santo, and Henderson, he should divide the air factors between the second two bases.

Australia is far more useful. It is close enough to New Guinea for heavy bombers to fly from it to Lae and return. All light-medium bombers can reach the same target if they end their flights at Port Moresby or Gili-Gili. Australia has a ready factor of 25 and unlimited launch factors, which greatly enhance its utility as a bomber base. The base is immune to Japanese attack, freeing Allied fighters for use in New Guinea, where they can conduct escort missions as well as flying combat air patrols over Port Moresby or Gili-Gili.

Espiritu Santo and Ndeni are located on the eastern edge of the map area. The base at Ndeni is available only for the "Eastern Solomons" scenarios and can accommodate only the Catalina, so it warrants no discussion.

Espiritu Santo lacks importance in the "Eastern Solomons" but is much more significant in the "Santa Cruz" and "Guadalcanal" scenarios. Without the seaplane base at Ndeni, the Allied player should use Espiritu Santo as the point of origin for his Catalina patrols. Heavy bombers can strike as far as Rabaul if they land at Henderson, Port Moresby, or Gili-Gili.

Fighters should not be kept at Espiritu Santo. Henderson is much more likely to need them to defend against Japanese air attacks. Furthermore, Espiritu Santo is too distant from both Allied and Japanese bases for its fighters to effectively escort bombers. In addition, if the Japanese player is able to use his air elements against Espiritu Santo, the Allied player's carriers and Henderson are probably so badly damaged or their air elements so depleted that he would have much more pressing matters to worry about—such as losing the game.

Gili-Gili is much more centrally located than Espiritu Santo. Light-medium and patrol bombers can operate against all bases on New Guinea, New Britain and the Solomon Islands from Gili-Gili, although its low ready and launch factors impede missions against the more distant Japanese bases. In the "Eastern Solomons" scenario Gili-Gili's offensive potential is greatly reduced by the stipulation that only fighters may operate from it. Nonetheless, its location is such that neither player can regard it lightly.

The two most important Allied bases are Port Moresby and Henderson. Port Moresby lacks the astronomical ready and launch factors of Australia, but its more northerly position makes it an almost ideal base for heavy bomber strikes against Lae, Buna, Gasmata and Rabaul as well as light-medium bomber missions against the first three Japanese bases. Like Gili-Gili, Port Moresby is close enough to Lae, Buna and Gasmata to provide attacking bombers with fighter escort.

Chart 1. ALLIED LAND-BASED AIRCRAFT CLASSIFICATION

Plane Class	Against Bases	Against Ships	Air-to-Air	Range
Heavy Bomber (B-17)	Excellent	Poor	Excellent	Long
Light-Medium Bomber (A20, B-25, B-26)	Good+	Good	Poor	Short to Medium
Naval Bomber (Beaufort, Avenger, Dauntless)	Good	Good	Poor	Medium
Patrol Bomber (Catalina, Hudson)	SHOULD NOT BE USED IN COMBAT			Medium for Hudson, Very long for Catalina
Fighters (Beaufighter, P-38, P-39, P-40 Wildcat)	Poor	Poor	Good+, Excellent for Wildcat	Short

Chart 2: ALLIED BASES

Base	Plane Types Recommended	Aircraft Targets and Tasks
Australia	Heavy Bomber Light-Medium Bomber Patrol Bomber	Lae, Buna, Gasmata, Rabaul, Buka, Buin, Naval Search
Port Moresby	Heavy Bomber Light-Medium Bomber Naval Bomber Patrol Bomber Fighter	Lae, Buna, Gasmata, Rabaul, Buka, Buin, Shortland, Ships, Naval Search
Gili-Gili	Light-Medium Bomber Naval Bomber Patrol Bomber Fighter	Lae, Buna, Gasmata, Buka, Buin, Shortland, Ships, Naval Search
New Caledonia	Patrol Bomber	Naval Search
Ndeni	Patrol Bomber	Naval Search
Espiritu Santo	Heavy Bomber Patrol Bomber	Rabaul, Buka, Buin, Shortland, Ships, Naval Search
Henderson	Heavy Bomber Light-Medium Bomber Naval Bomber Patrol Bomber Fighter	Rabaul, Buka, Buin, Shortland, Ships, Naval Search

Chart 4: JAPANESE BASES

Base	Plane Types Recommended	Aircraft Targets and Tasks
Rabaul	Naval Bomber 1 Naval Bomber 2 Patrol Bomber	Henderson, Port Moresby, Gili-Gili, Ships, Naval Search
Buka	Naval Bomber 2	Henderson, Ships
Buin	Naval Bomber 2	Henderson, Ships
Lae	Naval Bomber 1 Naval Bomber 2 Fighter	Port Moresby, Gili-Gili
Buna	Naval Bomber 1 Naval Bomber 2 Fighter	Port Moresby, Gili-Gili, Ships
Gasmata	Naval Bomber 1 Naval Bomber 2 Fighter	Port Moresby, Gili-Gili, Ships
Shortland	Patrol Bomber	Naval Search
Tulagi	Patrol Bomber	Naval Search
Truk	SHOULD NOT BE USED	
Kavieng	SHOULD NOT BE USED	

Chart 3: JAPANESE LAND-BASED AIRCRAFT CLASSIFICATION

Plane Class	Against Bases	Against Ships	Air-to-Air	Range
Naval Bomber 1 (Nell, Betty)	Good	Good+	Poor	Medium
Naval Bomber 2 (Kate, Val)	Good	Good+	Poor	Medium
Patrol Bomber (Emily, Mavis)	SHOULD NOT BE USED IN COMBAT			Very Long
Fighters (Zero, Rufe)	Poor	Poor	Excellent Good+ for Rufe	Medium, Short for Rufe

In scenarios in which it is available to the Allied player, Henderson will most frequently occupy the attention of the Japanese player more than any other base. It has the ready and launch factors to be a vital Allied installation. But perhaps more important is its location near the center of the eastern half of the mapboard. This exposes Henderson to operations from Rabaul, Buka and Buin as well as attacks by carrier-based airpower and naval units. Geography also allows Henderson-based aircraft to strike at these same Japanese assets, often to great effect.

Light-medium and naval bombers can significantly aid carrier-based aircraft in attacks against ships. Naval bombers are used from Henderson more frequently than from any other Allied base. The *FLAT TOP* equivalent of the "Cactus Air Force" can also cause havoc on its own against previously crippled or insufficiently protected Japanese ships near Guadalcanal. In fact, airpower from Henderson may be the Allied player's most consistent and potent weapon in the "Guadalcanal" scenario.

A glance at the *FLAT TOP* mapboard and at the scenarios reveals that the Allied player's area of operations is divided in half. Aircraft from Australia, Port Moresby and Gili-Gili operate in the western half while aircraft from Henderson and Espiritu Santo operate in the east. There is some area of overlap, especially around Rabaul and Bougainville, but this generalization largely holds true.

This does not mean that forces on one half of the map cannot help forces on the other. The Allied player should bear in mind that if he can destroy or neutralize much of his opponent's airpower in the west he can transfer aircraft, including fighters from Gili-Gili and Port Moresby, to Henderson. This option greatly enhances the strategic value of the B-17s based at Australia and Port Moresby.

APPLICATION'S TO THE JAPANESE PLAYER

The same assessment of airpower can be applied to Japanese land-based air forces, although some modifications are in order. The Japanese player lacks the versatile bomber force enjoyed by his opponent, but has advantages of his own, primarily in fighters and basing.

Whereas Allied land-based aircraft are classified into five groups, the Japanese player's are best broken down into only four categories. He has no heavy bomber and no true light-medium bomber. He has, however, an abundance of naval bombers, which constitute his only true land-based offensive threat.

There are only two types of Japanese naval bombers. The first, and generally most numerous, is comprised of the Nell and the Betty. Like the Beaufort, these two-engined planes are based only on land but must be classified as naval bombers because they operate optimally in torpedo attacks

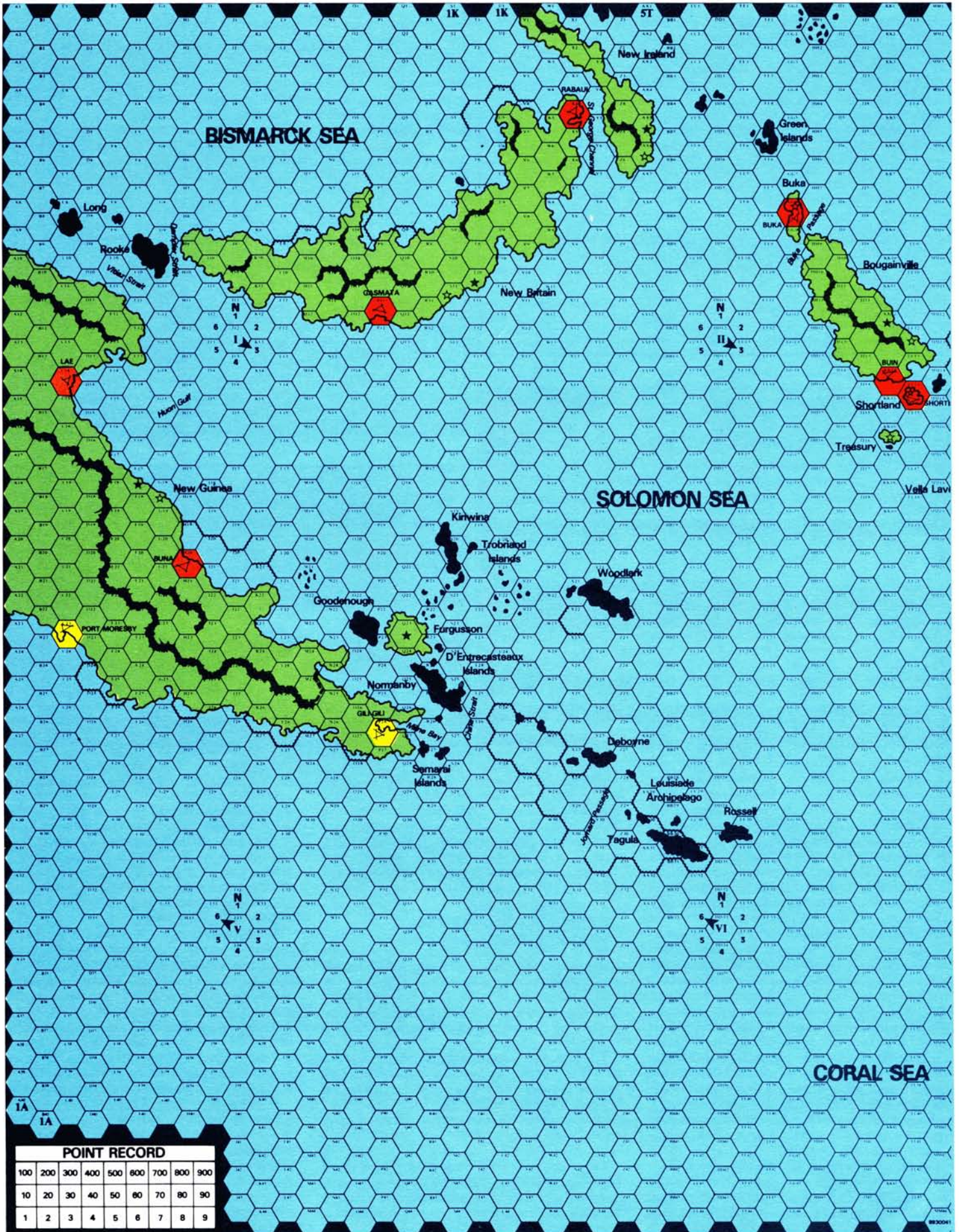
against ships.

The Nell and Betty are superior in range to every Allied torpedo bomber. This enables the first type of Japanese naval bomber, especially the longer-ranged Betty, to be a threat to Allied task forces anywhere in the Solomon Sea and in most of the waters around the Solomon Islands, if the planes are based at Rabaul. Rabaul-based Bettys can fly as far as the Stewart Islands, the southeast coast of San Cristobal, or Rennell.

The Nell and Betty are superior to Allied torpedo bombers in both range and basic hit table for torpedo attacks against ships. They are identical in potency to all Allied naval bombers, both land- and carrier-based, against bases. However, the Japanese player should be somewhat reluctant to use them for attacks against bases. They are the backbone of his land-based bomber force and if he is going to risk them, he should risk them under circumstances in which they have the highest probability of inflicting the most damage upon the Allied player's cause.

If, however, the Japanese player wishes to attack a base, it should be Port Moresby, Gili-Gili or Henderson. In any case, he must be guided to two principles. The first is for use against Allied naval targets. The second is attacking with the greatest strength and highest hit tables in the face of acceptable risks.

Because of their poor performance in air-to-air combat, they should always be escorted by Zero fighters. The escort should be as large as possible.



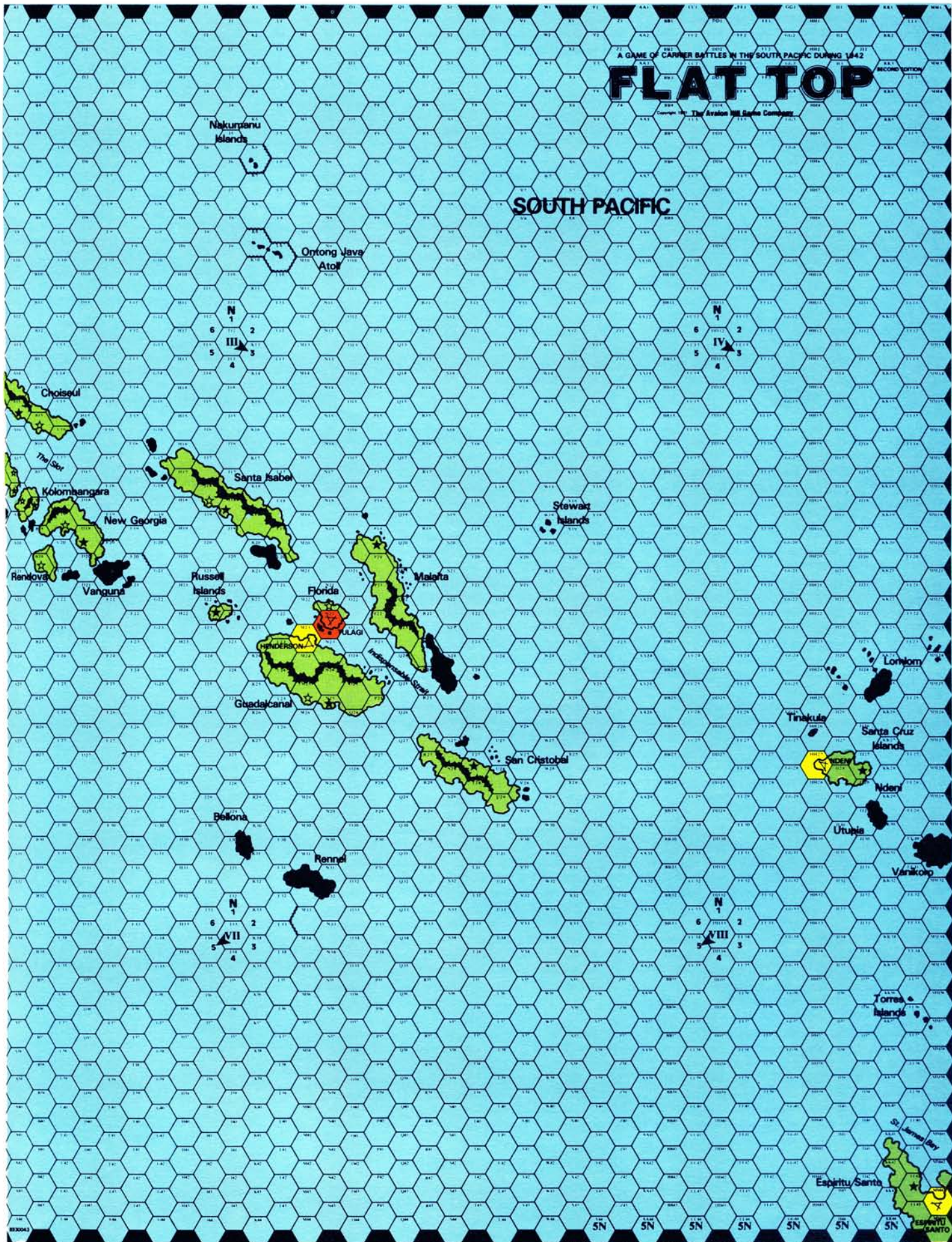
These pages show the airbases in FLAT TOP. American bases are shown in yellow; Japanese in red.

A GAME OF CARRIER BATTLES IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC DURING 1942

FLAT TOP

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SOUTH PACIFIC



All planes should approach the target at low altitude to use the highest hit tables and negate the inevitable Allied radar. The higher anti-aircraft hit table used by the Allied player against aircraft at low altitude is an acceptable risk.

The target should be struck with as many bombers as the Japanese player feels he can commit to the attack without violating the first principle. This may be only a few air factors, or it could be his entire force of Nells and Bettys, depending on the situation at the time of the attack.

The second type of Japanese naval bomber encompasses the Kate and the Val. These planes share with the Nell and Betty a greater capability against ships than against Allied planes. They can be used for strikes on bases, but if so the dive bombing capability of the Val should be sacrificed in favor of a low altitude attack. Dividing the attacking bombers into two groups according to altitude means dividing their escorting Zeros, and that constitutes an unacceptable risk. Nonetheless, the Japanese player should refrain from using the second category of naval bomber against bases even more than the first.

Possibly the ideal situation for the Japanese player is one in which he can combine land-based naval bombers with planes from his carriers in an attack upon an important Allied task force, especially one containing an aircraft carrier. In the "Santa Cruz" and "Guadalcanal" scenarios, the Japanese player enjoys a quantitative advantage in carrier-based bombers. The effective use of land-based naval bombers with carrier planes can turn a slight edge in the order of battle into a decisive advantage in combat.

Like his opponent, the Japanese player possesses patrol bombers for reconnaissance and anti-submarine operations. Numerically, he is grossly inferior in patrol bombers in all scenarios except "Rings Around Rabaul" and "Coral Sea". But the Emily and Mavis is superior to the Catalina both in movement and range factors. Coupled with the availability of a centrally located base at Shortland or Tulagi, this gives the Japanese player an ability to cover almost as much of the map with his long range patrols as the Allied player.

The Japanese player lacks a patrol bomber to fill a role similar to that of the Hudson. He has two ways of overcoming this. He can divert a small number of naval bombers, especially Bettys, to medium-range patrols. Or he can divert some of the pathetic Dave, Jake and Pete seaplanes carried by seaplane carriers and cruisers to his seaplane bases. The first option allows him to conduct more extensive patrols, but decreases the number of air factors available for action against Allied task forces once they have been located. The second frees the naval bombers from bombing missions, but markedly reduces the amount of the map that can be covered by non-flying boat searches.

Undoubtedly the greatest area of Japanese superiority in land-based airpower is in his fighters. Whereas the Allied player must rely upon a variety of short-ranged planes, the air-to-air capabilities of which have already been discussed, the Japanese player relies almost entirely on the Zero. If the Allied player has a fighter comparable to the Zero to complement his land-based bombers, *FLAT TOP* would frequently be a nightmare for the Japanese player. The Zero is second to no plane in air-to-air combat. It has a very high movement factor and a range factor that enables it to stay in the air two turns longer than any other fighter in the game. It can escort bombers virtually anywhere within their range or it can maintain lengthy combat air patrols.

The Japanese player can engage Allied fighters over any Allied base and retain qualitative equality if not superiority. A large number of Zeros escorting naval bombers will often sweep aside opposing combat air patrols. The Zero can enable the Japanese player's bombers to penetrate to Allied bases in much the same way that unescorted B-17's can

bludgeon their way to distant Japanese targets.

The Japanese player should be ready to use his land-based Zeros as well as his naval bombers in conjunction with his carrier-based aircraft. In critical attacks by carrier-based bombers upon Allied ships, land-based Zeros added to the air formations can both save bombers from destruction and free carrier-based fighters for combat air patrol over their ships. When Japanese vessels are near friendly bases, Zeros can provide lengthy aerial protection. Because of the lack of endurance of Allied fighters, exercising such options is much more difficult for the Allied player.

The Rufe is decidedly inferior to the Zero in both performance and range. Yet this fighter, which is available only in very limited numbers, should not be disregarded by the Japanese player. Although its range is insufficient for all but the shortest escort missions, the Rufe's performance is adequate to allow combat air patrols, especially over the critical base at Rabaul. Of all the seaplanes in *FLAT TOP*, the Rufe is the only non-flying boat to be taken seriously.

Basing is a much different proposition for the Japanese player than it is for his opponent. Whereas the Allied player sees a map divided into eastern and western halves, the Japanese player is confronted by more of a north-south division. In the north are Rabaul and its neighbors, Buka and Buin; in the south are Lae, Buna and Gasmata.

Planes from the northern bases can reach both Allied bases on New Guinea. Bettys and Zeros based at Rabaul and its neighbors have the range to attack Henderson. Perhaps more importantly, planes flying from these bases pose a potential threat to Allied task forces in every scenario, with the possible exception of "Coral Sea".

The primary targets of aircraft based at Gasmata and New Guinea bases are Port Moresby and Gili-Gili. The planes can attack task forces in "Rings Around Rabaul" and "Coral Sea", and may possibly attack an Allied destroyer in the "Eastern Solomons" scenario. But overwhelmingly, their targets will be Allied bases on the south shore of New Guinea.

Shortland and Tulagi are not included in either group. Neither base can launch land planes, and both are thus unsuited for offensive operations. Yet these are vital as patrol bomber bases, allowing Emilys and Mavises to reach the probable area of Allied naval vessels quickly. The two bases, especially Shortland, do much to offset the Japanese player's quantitative disadvantage in patrol bombers.

By far, the most important Japanese base is Rabaul. It has the highest ready and launch factors of any base available to the Japanese player. Its location beyond the effective range of Allied light-medium bombers, naval bombers, and fighters based at Port Moresby, Gili-Gili and Henderson makes it the most difficult Japanese base to attack, as does its high anti-aircraft factor. If the Japanese player has any doubts as to the initial deployment of any aircraft factors, he should deploy them at Rabaul.

Two bases that the Japanese player should avoid using are Truk and Kavieng. In terms of ready and launch factors, Truk is the Japanese equivalent of Australia. But it is much more like New Caledonia when its remoteness is considered. Land planes should never be based at Truk, and patrol bombers should be kept there only in the extremely unlikely event that Rabaul is unable to ready or launch aircraft. Likewise, this event is the only reason for the use of Kavieng by land planes.

JAPANESE DIFFICULTIES

The Japanese player faces two difficulties that are faced by his opponent to a much lesser degree. Coastwatchers of both sides operate throughout the map area, but the Allied player has a clear superiority in this respect. During daylight turns, it is very

difficult for the Japanese player to assemble large air formations without the knowledge of the Allied player. It is even more difficult for Japanese aircraft to attack Port Moresby, Gili-Gili or Henderson without flying directly over an Allied coastwatcher hex. Surprise is something that is rarely gained over the Allied player.

Conversely, the Allied player is able to move his bombers to Lae, Buna and Gasmata directly from sea hexes or land hexes behind the New Guinea coastwatcher perimeter. Often the first warning of an Allied attack on Buna, Lae, Tulgai or Buka is the appearance of Allied air formations over the target.

All of the Allied bases in *FLAT TOP* have radar, whereas five Japanese bases at most are similarly equipped. The Japanese player can counter Allied radar by launching low altitude air attacks, but there is nothing that he can do about his own technological deficiency. It is always there for his opponent to exploit.

CONCLUSIONS

Carrier-based airpower is the most important weapon to both players in *FLAT TOP*. But neither can disregard land-based airpower, either his own or that of his opponent. The Allied player can turn his varied aircraft types into a weapon that, though seldom decisive in its own right, can greatly offset the Allied disadvantages to augment his already formidable carrier-based airpower. The Japanese player must wield his land-based air arm with care and decisiveness.



SO THAT'S WHAT YOU'VE BEEN PLAYING

Titles Listed: 86

Total Responses: 367

Rank:	Title	Pub	Rank Times		
			Last	On	Freq.
			Time	List	Ratio
1.	Firepower	AH	—	1	5.6
2.	Squad Leader	AH	1	27	5.3
3.	Third Reich	AH	5	27	2.8
4.	Russian Campaign	AH	8	27	2.5
5.	Bulge '81	AH	12	7	2.2
6.	War & Peace	AH	17	5	2.0
7.	Cross of Iron	AH	10	2	1.9
8.	G.I.	AH	6	17	1.8
9.	Hitler's War	AH	2	5	1.8
10.	Panzer Leader	AH	18	3	1.7
11.	Ambush	VG	11	6	1.6
12.	A-I Wars	AH	—	1	1.5
13.	Up Front	AH	7	9	1.4
14.	B-17	AH	4	10	1.3
15.	Fortress Europa	AH	—	1	1.3
16.	WS&IM	AH	20	12	1.2
17.	Air Force	AH	—	1	1.1
18.	COD	AH	—	1	1.1
19.	Guns of August	AH	—	1	1.0
20.	Stalingrad	AH	19	2	1.0

On the strength of the recent issue featuring them, both *FIREPOWER* and *ARAB-ISRAELI WARS* appear on the list for the first time. I predict that *FP* will occupy a slot in our ongoing survey of playing preferences for some time to come. Meanwhile, a number of old favorites cycled back onto the "Top Twenty" while others slid off momentarily. I find it interesting that the once standard approach to wargames—the "Operational Level" design—is represented so sparsely these days. The wargaming public has taken to playing either tactical level or grand strategic level games. A full dozen tactical games on our list would seem to indicate that our readership wants even more. Looking over the production of The Avalon Hill Game Company for the past two years (and plans for the next two), it would appear that is exactly what they are getting.

Dear Mr. Martin:

QUESTION: Will *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER* make the original *SQUAD LEADER* game and its three modules (*CROSS OF IRON*, *CRESCENDO OF DOOM*, and *G.I. ANVIL OF VICTORY*) obsolete?

James Leah
Bozeman, Montana

ANSWER: No.

ASL has been produced mainly to tie the entire SL series together under a common system of rules. Heretofore, some *CROSS OF IRON* rules contradicted some of the original *SQUAD LEADER* rules; likewise *CRESCENDO OF DOOM* contradicts some *CROSS OF IRON* rules; and *G.I.* does the same to *CRESCENDO OF DOOM*.

So ASL clears up all ambiguities and, in general, makes for a more realistic and consistent game system. Most *SQUAD LEADER* fanatics will likely "graduate" to ASL.

But ASL does not make *SQUAD LEADER* obsolete; far from it. Some components are interchangeable; but original *SQUAD LEADER* and its add-ons has appeal of offering many more scenarios; nearly 100 altogether. ASL has no scenarios; it is merely a binder of rules that are required for its modules of which *BEYOND VALOR* is the first and only one currently available. *BEYOND VALOR* has but 10 scenarios.

It is important to note that no ASL module scenario will repeat those available in SL, although with modifications, those scenarios used in SL could also be used with ASL. Then too, there will always be those who prefer the original game to the new ASL system.

BEYOND VALOR contains 12 sheets of Troop Counters, none of which are needed for SL; relatively few of the Troop Counters available in SL can be utilized in ASL.

In time with the availability of more and more ASL modules, it is hoped that the original *SQUAD LEADER* gamettes, but not *SQUAD LEADER* itself, can ultimately be phased out. But that's many years down the road. Original *SQUAD LEADER* may never become obsolete because of its programmed learning approach which makes it easier for beginners to learn. We will continue to recommend that newcomers start with *SQUAD LEADER* before graduating to ASL. It is only *COI*, *COD*, and *G.I.* which may become obsolete if the marketplace shows a preference for ASL over the earlier SL system.

★★★★★

Gentlemen:

It's a lot more fun to observe those running arguments that you see from time to time in letters columns in magazines than to jump into one, but certain additions need to be made to the points made by George Minde (Vol. 21, No. 6). Like any good rhetorician, Mr. Minde ends his letter by saying that *THE GENERAL*, after printing his own editorial, ought to stop printing "political editorials". Others may want to correct his data. I am bothered by some of the facts that he left out, and I hope there's a room in your letters column for some of them.

Popular history in the West does sometimes underplay the role of the Soviet Union in fighting Hitler. But many popular works, including the prestigious Time-Life series on WW2, the *American Heritage Picture History of World War II* and the games by Avalon Hill give Russia due. No serious history or historian in the West denigrates the role of the Red Army. The insistence that either popularists or professionals are mostly biased in that respect has long been a bit of Communist propaganda.

A very different situation exists behind the Iron Curtain, where historical studies are government-produced propaganda. The official "history", *Great Patriotic War for the Defense of the Motherland Against the Fascist Invader*, is a tool of Soviet ideology and state policy. In the Soviet Union our role is always misrepresented and downplayed—as is the role of one Joseph Stalin just now.

The Communists and their apologists like to gloss over the campaigns in the Pacific and the war against Germany elsewhere in Europe and Africa, as well as the fact that Stalin started the war along with Hitler. The Red Army invaded Poland from the East two weeks after the panzers surged across the western border. There might never have been a "Second World War" without the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact of 1939.

Communists are also embarrassed by the fact that Stalin actually has won the title of "Murderer of the Century", surpassing Hitler and other

Letters to the Editor . . .

vicious tyrants. And they are made uncomfortable by reference to the continuing imperialistic policies of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and elsewhere. That is why our government and others did not celebrate the recent anniversaries of victories of a wartime partner-of-convenience.

Most wargamers know more about the width of T-34 tank treads than they do about the causes of World War II. The latter are much more important, and in looking at them we must be careful to examine not only both sides of the big picture, but all of it.

Daniel Beattie
Charlottesville, Virginia

★★★★★

Dear Sirs,

It was nice to see the two articles on *AIW* in Vol. 21, No. 6 of *THE GENERAL*. I've always liked this game, but there have been few articles on it in print. Although both pieces were well researched and written, there are a few problems.

"Sand in the Wind" by Robert Allred was an excellent article on *AIW* tactics, but only for the situations as they appear in the game. The Question Box for *AIW* (Vol. 14, No. 3) listed several corrections to the published situations which Robert seemingly did not apply. Some of the situations have part or all the boards rotated 180 degrees, which may reverse the set-up areas for each side. Other situations have changes made in the type or number of units. When these corrections are made, a couple of Robert's suggestions may have to be adjusted. In spite of this, I was glad to see something on *AIW* strategy finally appear!

The Lebanese situations were something I hoped to see sooner or later. However, the Lebanese Army in Situation L-5 amazingly has two Israeli Centurian tank units. Since Jordanian Centurians units are used for other LA units, should not Jordanian Centurians be used in place of the Israeli ones?

Finally, both articles had high praise for the designers of Situation S-12 (*Marjayou*). Who are these anonymous geniuses?

Dave Holmes
Dillon, Montana

So far as our records show, the *Marjayou* scenario was designed by Seth Carus, and heavily modified during playtesting by Richard Hamblin and Randy Reed. And yes, the Centurians should be Jordanian, not Israeli; our mistake.

★★★★★

Dear Mr. Martin,

Until lately, I have not paid much attention to your letters column. A short time ago, however, I saw a letter with a bit of strategy. I then got out my back issues and started reading. In the process, I was amazed at some of the trivial things that people were complaining about to you. One reader actually counted the number of illustrations in several issues after saying there weren't enough.

The most common complaint pertained to the fact that you have included articles on what they term "non-wargames". Mr. Bill Fawcett's article on *WIZARD'S QUEST*, "The Wars of Marnon" (Vol. 19, No. 4), was one of the most enjoyable I've seen in *THE GENERAL*. People who can find nothing better to complain about must be very narrow-minded. What are their criteria for determining what is a wargame and what isn't? They seem to think that only games that simulate historical military events are wargames. I point out Avalon Hill's *Invasion Malta* game in *AAOC*. This is certainly not based on any historical event, but I don't think anyone would doubt its status as a wargame. To all these folk I say, even though you may not like fantasy or other games, some of us do.

David Holmes
Wiggins, Mississippi

★★★★★

Dear Mr. Martin:

I have never taken the time to write the editor of any of the magazines to which I subscribe, but the outstanding Volume 21, No. 6 issue of *THE GENERAL* demands comment. This particular issue was the last of my most recent two-year subscription and I must admit that I had con-

sidered not renewing. My attitude totally changed after seeing the excellence to which you and your staff are capable of aspiring.

Aside from the rather poor grammar and prose of the "Sand in the Wind" article, each and every feature was both interesting and entertaining—two attributes of a very fine magazine. Most remarkable about my comments is the fact that I do not own a single one of the games that were featured in that issue. Even so, I found it to be the finest issue of my many years of association with *THE GENERAL*.

Keep up the good work, Mr. Martin, and congratulate your talented staff. And, yes, my subscription renewal order is in the mail.

Judson R. Kring
Madison, Indiana

★★★★★

Dear Rex:

Thank you for your letter requesting that I resubscribe to *THE GENERAL*. As you may recall however, I wrote you approximately six months ago. At that time I requested you either get my issues to me in a more timely manner or refund my unused subscription fee. You demurred on both—feeling the tardy arrival was just awful but not your fault, and that refunds were inconsistent with the policy of TAHC.

Well, the most recent issue (*HITLER'S WAR*) arrived today. This is exactly twelve days after it went on display at my two local retail stores and sixteen days after it was received at their distributor. To anticipate your reply—yes, it's tough but not your fault. This mailing schedule of yours tells me that I am a low-priority—probably because you already have my money—but not the money of those who will buy the issue in retail stores.

Mr. Martin, I am a businessman—and quite successful at that. I know that "fault" is irrelevant—because what counts is the customer's attitude toward me and my wares. I know that I can ramble on as long as I like in justifying deficiencies of my service—but the bottom line requires me to satisfy him, for I want and need his money.

In that sense we're alike, aren't we? You need and want my money. But why should I give it to you? As a subscriber to the *Atlantic*, *Military History*, *Golf Digest*, *Baseball Digest*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Playboy* and several professional journals, I know the kind of service I am entitled to expect. As a subscriber, I should get—and do get—my issues before my non-subscriber friends. Except for *THE GENERAL*; you're always late.

Please don't suggest that I subscribe and pay for first-class postage; then it will be cheaper for me to buy it at the retail outlets. And I won't miss any issues—in fact if you need any back issues, let me know. The local stores have a fine selection of your magazine dating back six years!

So what's it going to be? Can you promise me better service—equal to the service the above periodicals provide? Or will you once again dismiss my problem in a whimsical manner? You decide. Until you can tell me I will get the same service retail stores get, I'll keep my money. It's up to you.

Paul Pigulski
Springfield, Illinois

In response to your recent letter concerning the mailing schedule for *THE GENERAL*, you are quite right—it is usually "late". However, I will point out that a delay of a couple of weeks is hardly going to make the information carried in our pages "out-of-date". I do not presume—nor should you—to equate our circumstances and outlook with the much larger circulation popular periodicals you mention. To provide some small insight to those who have voiced this complaint in the past, let me briefly elaborate on a couple of points.

First, unlike most of the publications you hold up as sterling examples of the periodical industry, the prime emphasis of *The Avalon Hill Game Company* is the production of games. This means that the technical work in producing our magazine (color seps, artwork, veloxs, typesetting, and so forth) and the press time available to me takes second place to that of any game currently under production. I've no doubt that *Playboy*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Atlantic* and others

that you mention demand the full attention of the extensive staffs of those corporations. While the technicians of *The Avalon Hill Game Company* perform stupendous feats of production, the hard fact is that even they can only do so much in any given time period when so many projects demand their attention. Since *THE GENERAL* generates very little of the overall profit of *Monarch-Avalon Inc.*, it will continue to be near the bottom of the priority list—rightly so. This issue is a case in point, being greatly delayed by efforts for *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER* and new *Victory Game* releases; I wonder at the reaction should we delay those for a few months instead.

As to the delay in the *Postal Service* (causing the difference in the arrival dates of wholesale orders and those for mail customers), you can rail all you wish, but the facts show that nothing will change. *The US Postal Service* has, in their infinite wisdom, decreed that *THE GENERAL* does not qualify for a second-class permit (as do the others mentioned, if you ever glance at the mailing cover) and has denied all our normal applications for such (regarding it as an advertising medium). Without it, we are forced to rely on a fourth-class permit—meaning that our magazines get the lowest priority rating from the *Post Offices* that they must pass through on their way to you readers. This means that an extensive delay between mailing and delivery is not at all unusual. (It also means that copies of *The GENERAL* cannot be forwarded, despite your requests, and are instead destroyed; you must notify these offices of any change in address if you expect to continue to receive your issues.) On the other hand, since suppliers order multiple copies, we can use normal shipping carriers for their delivery. Obviously, prompt arrival is the "bread-and-butter" of these freight companies, and the retail outlets usually receive their copies within a matter of days. Unless the *Postal Service* sees fit to revise their judgement and grant us a permit in keeping with our function, the best that we can continue to do is mail *THE GENERAL* bulk-rate and offer prohibitively expensive first-class mail subscriptions for those few to whom money is no object in the face of their own enjoyment.

To complicate this matter at the moment, the grand lady who for twenty years kept your copies coming to you—Gertrude Zombro—has, for reasons of health, retired. It is more than a little difficult to replace someone who so well fills a critical slot in the production and distribution of a magazine, especially when the departure is so abrupt. It will likely be a few months before someone of the calibre and dedication as Gertrude can be found. In the interim, the transition will probably engender some delays and confusion in subscribers receiving their copies.

To conclude this, let me answer your closing questions. First, there is simply no way that we can offer service similar to that of the magazines you tout without an appropriate mailing permit, and there is little chance that the *Postal Service* will change their judgement. I hardly consider your plight whimsical, but unless and until you are willing to order a hundred copies, I can hardly promise that you will get the same "service" as the retail stores since your situations are so vastly different. If you are concerned about the timeliness of your copy, I would strongly advise that you do purchase copies from your local retail outlet. It will make our task of convincing retailers to carry our magazine on their newstands easier, and perhaps keep even your happier. After all, it is all the same in the end.

I am quite pleased that your local retail outlet keeps a stock of our back issues on the shelves. Since our publication is hardly "dated" or topical in its coverage of the games, many retailers have standing orders for us to keep them in back issues as best we can (meaning until our own overprinting surplus of an issue is gone). By keeping these back issues on display, they increase the sale of both our games and our magazine, since they support each other to an extent that no other publication in this hobby does. And if your local game store doesn't carry the magazine, ask them if they might consider doing so for your convenience. Thanks for your offer for back issues, but I've several full collections of our magazine in prominent place on my office and home shelves already.

So, no, I can't "promise" you delivery as prompt as those you quote. I can, however, promise you the best of material and graphics on our hobby within these pages regardless of whether you buy it off the shelves, or receive it at home.

THE QUESTION BOX

UP FRONT

19.15 Does a non-fully crewed LMG (or a captured weapon) automatically malfunction if firing from a group containing only regular rifles on a red 6 RNC?

A. No. The LMG or captured weapon would automatically malfunction on a red 5 RNC; but should a red 6 RNC be drawn, the question of which weapon may malfunction is resolved normally.

20.2 May a player elect to cancel remaining designated infiltration attempts upon seeing the result of earlier ones?

A. No—that's why they have to be predesignated to begin with.

20.8 When a group is eliminated in CC and its terrain is captured, is the capturing group also entitled to a change of range or Group ID chit?

A. No.

21.2 Does an infiltrator who sets off a Demolition Charge lose its infiltration status?

A. Yes as per normal application of 20.53.

21.2 How can a Demolition Charge be used with a strength of 8 against an AFV?

A. It cannot. A Demo Charge can be used vs armored targets only in CC and only as a +4 CC DRM (28.81).

21.3 Do Smoke or Fire cards modify a Demo Charge attack?

A. Only those on the defender's group—not the attacker's.

23.8 Can a pillbox be encircled?

A. Yes, but 23.8 overrides the effects of 17.612 (i.e., Flanking Fire vs a pillbox is obtainable only by 23.7).

24.33 How does an AFV exit a minefield?

A. Minefield attacks vs an AFV are treated exactly the same as if they were against an infantry group except that it attacks with a base anti-armor strength of 1.

28.46 Does this flank shot apply to non-ordnance shots when an AFV plays a Sideways movement card?

A. No.

28.61 Can a Concealed card be played to aid the defense of an AFV or its crew against a non-ordnance attack?

A. No.

28.8 Once a man has infiltrated vs an AFV, does he have to play a Movement card or undergo a Morale Check in order to attack that AFV?

A. No. Either a Morale Check or Movement card was required for the infiltration attempt, but once infiltrated, the CC attack occurs immediately with no further requirements.

28.9 What effect does being Hull Down have on an Infantry Gun being fired on by non-ordnance weapons?

A. None, other than the normal application of the terrain card's TEM.

AFRIKA KORPS

13.2/15.22 If an unaccompanied supply unit moves adjacent to an enemy combat unit to supply an attack on that enemy unit, is the supply unit captured by the enemy combat unit?

A. No.

VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC

Q. If the Americans abandon Pearl Harbor on Turn 1 after the Surprise Attack, can the Japanese control the Hawaiian Islands?

A. No, the Japanese units are considered Raiders.

Q. If the last ship on a side is disabled, and so must retreat, are the ports and bases in that sea area subject to air raids?

A. Yes.

Q. If an air raid is conducted on a port or island with no repair facility and a ship there is "bottomed", is there any manner it may be refloated and moved to a port with a repair facility?

A. No.

Q. If one repairs Marines (per Optional Rules), does this action take points away that may be applied to ship repairs or LBA repairs?

A. No.

Q. When Marines receive damage equal to their armor value, do they still get one shot or do they lose all fire power?

A. Damaged Marines still get the one shot.

Q. Can damaged ships be used as raiders? If so, can a ship with a speed of "2" try to raid into a third area?

A. Yes. Yes.

AH RBG RATING CHARTS

The following games are ranked by their reader-generated overall Value rating. Further aspects of reader response to our titles are indicated by the ratings in other categories. By breaking down a game's ratings into these individual categories, the gamer is able to discern for himself where the title's strengths and weaknesses lie in the qualities he values highly. Readers are reminded that the Game Length categories are measured in multiples of ten minutes (thus, a rating of "18" equates to three hours).

WARGAME RBG

Title	Overall Value	Components	Complexity	Completeness of Rules	Playability	Authenticity	Shortest	Longest	Year	Sample Base
1. GI	2.02	1.93	10	3.01	3.38	1.88	12.84	35.33	1982	264
2. COI	2.06	1.95	9	3.29	3.13	1.99	11.61	29.27	1978	532
3. 3R	2.21	2.67	10	3.81	3.40	2.73	25.94	69.24	1981	273
4. COD	2.23	1.97	10	3.12	3.08	1.85	12.15	30.20	1980	224
5. TRC	2.29	2.53	4	2.52	2.12	3.11	17.44	37.74	1976	540
6. SL	2.31	2.09	8	3.48	2.87	2.45	10.17	27.90	1977	680
7. UF	2.42	2.26	4	2.57	1.31	2.84	4.84	13.05	1983	58
8. B-17	2.51	2.62	3	2.52	1.86	2.21	3.30	11.50	1983	87
9. WS&IM	2.53	3.04	6	2.93	2.67	2.39	7.01	34.90	1975	464
10. FP	2.57	3.10	4	3.12	2.91	2.87	5.42	16.81	1985	85
11. HW	2.59	3.27	4	3.68	2.13	4.25	8.27	21.73	1984	63
12. W&P	2.61	2.76	5	3.46	2.93	3.04	13.04	57.19	1980	374
13. BB'81	2.67	2.46	4	2.53	2.94	2.91	19.62	35.09	1981	277
14. TLD	2.68	1.95	8	3.72	3.54	2.04	24.44	170.68	1980	119
15. VITP	2.72	2.86	2	2.89	2.22	4.52	16.96	22.36	1977	420
16. CAE	2.85	3.01	4	2.32	2.89	2.52	25.14	32.57	1976	252
17. SON	2.92	3.03	10	3.72	4.09	1.92	29.50	81.78	1981	123
18. SOA	2.97	2.79	3	2.73	2.41	3.88	18.22	22.57	1981	232
19. FE	3.00	2.72	7	3.21	3.21	3.00	21.17	49.05	1980	345
20. FRED	3.00	3.41	4	2.93	2.58	2.75	12.25	24.67	1983	58
21. SUB	3.08	2.64	8	3.13	3.08	2.74	9.41	26.15	1978	281
22. CON	3.12	3.64	7	3.08	2.52	3.52	25.8	49.1	1983	73
23. MD	3.13	3.51	3	2.80	2.21	3.44	14.75	20.74	1984	395
24. AZ	3.17	2.72	7	3.18	3.86	2.68	18.63	63.40	1978	292
25. PL	3.19	2.94	7	3.31	3.13	3.50	9.49	25.80	1974	479
26. 1776	3.21	2.97	7	3.09	3.03	3.10	10.16	45.09	1974	373
27. FT	3.23	3.12	10	3.22	3.67	3.16	24.51	57.39	1981	196
28. PB	3.35	3.08	6	3.73	2.90	3.94	10.35	23.07	1970	448
29. BIS	3.45	2.96	6	3.43	3.25	3.06	12.41	26.35	1979	248
30. AAOC	3.52	2.95	5	3.02	3.26	3.07	15.52	26.53	1978	239
31. FITW	3.53	3.14	4	3.17	2.94	3.72	16.14	30.01	1981	100
32. CL	3.54	3.35	5	3.15	3.33	3.79	12.53	25.53	1975	136
33. DL	3.61	4.02	7	3.85	3.22	3.29	6.66	19.94	1981	120
34. GOA	3.66	3.37	5	3.67	3.79	2.98	18.68	60.06	1981	297
35. WAS	3.71	3.67	1	2.48	2.37	5.98	9.09	12.71	1976	396
36. GE	3.72	3.12	6	4.64	4.41	2.84	13.25	57.13	1977	248
37. AF	3.74	4.16	7	3.98	3.34	3.35	5.61	16.02	1980	192
38. AIW	3.74	3.05	8	2.92	3.52	3.06	8.69	25.36	1977	308
39. LRT	3.75	3.60	4	3.53	3.39	2.96	13.04	17.00	1982	56
40. TR	3.80	3.76	3	3.33	3.60	3.70	9.51	25.79	1980	72
41. WAT	3.83	4.17	2	2.95	2.64	5.00	17.08	23.13	1962	296
42. NP	3.87	3.29	3	3.27	2.56	4.89	9.69	14.40	1978	159
43. AK	3.92	4.38	2	3.30	2.48	5.09	14.49	19.13	1964	492
44. AL	4.03	4.05	5	3.69	3.18	3.57	12.34	17.93	1974	217
45. TB	4.06	3.53	7	3.48	4.47	2.50	11.28	32.50	1975	304
46. RW	4.14	3.14	5	3.32	2.91	3.98	4.22	21.15	1973	311
47. JU	4.17	3.20	6	3.61	3.83	3.22	16.01	36.66	1974	193
48. PAA	4.17	4.24	5	3.79	3.99	3.70	15.51	25.24	1981	144
49. DD	4.22	4.07	2	3.04	2.88	4.64	17.54	26.25	1977	367
50. CH	4.39	3.80	4	3.35	3.52	4.67	14.76	24.96	1961	140
51. STAL	4.39	4.29	2	2.88	2.75	5.83	20.57	28.85	1963	320
52. LW	4.45	3.75	5	3.77	3.79	4.79	13.36	34.14	1971	372
53. FR	4.79	3.49	4	3.47	3.75	4.06	16.27	26.95	1972	244
54. BL	4.73	4.16	7	3.65	3.77	5.27	20.43	41.44	1965	336
55. TAC	5.62	5.25	1	2.79	3.23	6.34	11.70	19.29	1961	285

FIREPOWER

The Game of Man-to-Man Modern Warfare

\$22.00

The latest of a long line of tactical games to move into the top ten on the ongoing RBG chart, *FIREPOWER* scored strongly in every category, well below the average in all except *Counters*. The high response to our rating attempt (*Sample Base*) also serves to indicate its popularity. Craig Taylor, working with a proven system, has brought forth a fine game.

While superior in every aspect, *FIREPOWER* is obviously designed for the players' enjoyment. *Playability*, *Excitement Level* and *Play Balance* all indicate that the game is an edge-of-the-seat experience. As the Series Replay and Contest #124 showed, play is fast-paced and interspersed with unforeseen switches of fortune. With the comprehensive listing of nationalities, definitive in its scope (hence the high *Authenticity* rating), for players to choose from, *Play Balance* is assured. And, best of all for lunch-hour tacticians, *FIREPOWER* can be played in under an hour. With Craig's campaign system (see Vol. 21, No. 6 of *THE GENERAL*), the game can also keep players occupied for a month.

Among the plethora of games being released on the modern period at this time in the industry, this one deserves its place in the front rank. The ratings for *FIREPOWER* will show on the ongoing RBG henceforth, as follows:

Overall Value: 2.57
Components: 3.10
Map: 2.79
Counters: 3.25
Player's Aids: 3.17
Complexity: 4.67
Completeness of Rules: 3.12
Playability: 2.71
Excitement Level: 2.38
Play Balance: 2.56
Authenticity: 2.87
Game Length
Shortest: 54 mins.
Longest: 2 hrs., 49 mins.
Year: 1985
Sample Base: 85



With a wealth of well-written material on games as good as *FIREPOWER*, *SQUAD LEADER* and *ARAB-ISRAELI WARS*, we anticipated that Vol. 21, No. 6 would bring the volume year to a strong close. But we were elated by the best Overall Rating (2.74) in over five years—since that for Vol. 16, No. 1 in fact. Also pleasing and surprising, the Series Replay and Craig Taylor's look at modern combat theory dominated the polling for individual articles. Ratings for all the articles, based on a random sampling of 200 contest responses, are as follows:

FIREPOWER SERIES REPLAY	410
GUNS FOR FIREPOWER	308
SQUAD LEADER CLINIC	163
LEBANON	100
A FIREPOWER CAMPAIGN	97
SAND IN THE WIND	48
BLITZKRIEG '85	34
ALL ASHORE WHO'S GOING ASHORE	29
AH PHILOSOPHY	11

Mr. Bruce Linsey, one of the grognards of the *DIPLOMACY* hobby, is the newest "Runestone Poll" Custodian—a rating of the postal game-masters and of the many and varied 'zines devoted to that hobby. The annual report of the results of this survey to the hobby, this year entitled "The Cream Shall Rise", is now available. The 56-page report, besides presenting the survey, also contains some tidbits of history on the hobby, a look at the workings of the poll, and reflections on the structure and results. Our congratulations are extended to Mr. Linsey, whose own 'zine *Voice of Doom* topped the list for *DIPLOMACY* magazines, and to Mr. Mark Larzelere, voted best *DIPLOMACY* GameMaster by his peers. Mr. Linsey, besides his many other activities, also has produced a packet intended to introduce novices to the postal *DIPLOMACY* hobby—"Supernova". Both "Supernova" (\$1.00 fee) and "The Cream Shall Rise" (\$2.00) are available from Mr. Linsey (73 Ashuelot Street, Apt. 3, Dalton, MA 01226).

One of the reasons for the popularity of *Voice of Doom* (see above) is due in no small part to the excellence of its content. This fact is reflecting in the latest awarding of the annual *Rod Walker Award for Literary Excellence*. It was presented to Mr. Linsey for his article entitled "The History of a Diplomacy 'Zine" in *Voice of Doom* #100. A must read for anyone interested in the *DIPLOMACY* hobby, or in publishing fan 'zines, it typifies the intent of the *Rod Walker Award*. Mr. Linsey will be presented with the permanent plaque and other honors at the annual *DIPLOMACY* convention (held in Seattle this year). The award, funded in part by The Avalon Hill Game Company and administered by the Institute for Diplomatic Studies, recognizes the best of authors each year and is voted upon by hobby members from a list of nominees proposed by a committee of seven editors/writers concerned with the hobby. The Avalon Hill Game Company extends its congratulations to Bruce Linsey for his efforts at bettering the play of *DIPLOMACY* and the vibrant hobby that surrounds it.

Even as the new comes in amid fanfare, the old fades slowly away. A number of games in our line will not be reprinted and, since stocks have fallen to a low point, are now considered to be "collector's items". These include the following: *CHANCELLORSVILLE*, *ALEXANDER THE GREAT*, *CAESAR'S LEGIONS*, *ORIGINS OF WWII*, *ASSAULT ON CRETE/MALTA*, *STRUGGLE OF NATIONS*, *FRANCE 1940*, *TOBRUK*, *MYSTIC WOOD*, *TRIEMME* and *SOURCE OF THE NILE*.

Infiltrator's Report

When current orders are filled, the prices of these games will rise as per those for other discontinued games.

The 1985 edition of the *Black and Blue Book* is now available, according to Larry Peery. This fourth edition lists some 1066 names, addresses, telephone numbers and hobby interests of *DIPLOMACY* players from all over North America. This 128-page publication represents some three years of effort, and is broken into various listings: alphabetical by last name, by Zip Code, organizations, 'zine publishers, and hobby services. Other little tidbits (list of ftf *DIPLOMACY* conventions, electronic mail, tips for beginning players, and so forth) fill out this informative booklet. Everything you ought to know, if you are inter-

ested in the energetic *DIPLOMACY* hobby, is put together in the *BBB* in a way designed to make it easy to use. The price is \$4.00 (plus \$1.00 for postage and handling) from The Institute of Diplomatic Studies, P.O. Box 8416, San Diego, CA 92102.

Richard Gutenkunst has been busy cutting again, and his latest offer is for the *Arab-Israeli War* counters for use with Mr. Anchors "Lebanon" scenarios (Vol. 21, No.6). He is offering these for \$1.00 a set (no SASE required). As a special to our readership, he is also offering two complete sets for \$1.50. Since this allows both sides expanded use of the modern armor, DYO scenarios abound. The new *A/W* counters can be ordered direct from Mr. Gutenkunst at Box 3301, Traffic Station, Minneapolis, MN 55403. Richard is reported considering completing sets for the recent *CONQUISTADOR* variant (Vol. 21, No. 5) and *FIREPOWER* campaign (Vol. 21, No. 6). If you are interested in either of these, you might drop him a line indicating your willingness to buy and so encourage him in his efforts.

For those who may be new to the play of postal *DIPLOMACY*, a word of advice. Find yourself a copy of "Masters of Deceit". Inside its plain brown wrapper are a number of articles on the game, its play by mail, and the wide-spread international hobby by some of the leading practitioners of that dark art. Even if you've no interest in playing the game by mail, a number of fine strategy articles prove entertaining and engaging. Sections on getting started, and on the *DIPLOMACY* press, are particularly used for novices. "Masters of Deceit" is available for \$1.00 from Steve Woody Arnowoodian (602 Hemlock Drive, Lansdale, PA 19446).

Contest #124, featuring a no-win situation for the Syrians in a *FIREPOWER* scenario, brought a large number of entries. Indeed, we had so many that we discovered numerous ways to win the game besides the one we devised. However, our solution brings a four-point advantage to the Israelis in the final tally; to avoid the need to randomly draw winners, we decided to use this as the "tie-breaker". All entries with a *legal*, four-point split were declared winners and will receive a merchandise certificate from The Avalon Hill Game Company. *FIREPOWER* experts in our contest proved to be: Arlen Busch, Greenbelt, MD; Stephen Desrosiers, Houston, TX; John Holloway, Earlsyville, VA; Jeff Petraska, New Boston, MI; Dave Ratliff, Greencastle, IN; Stuart Rushing, Oceanside, CA; Scott Spahr, Laramie, WY; Kent Welton, White Oak, TX.

The solution to Contest #125 utilizes the classic Rommel pattern of a sweep to the south to break the Allied line. In order of play, the following moves give a deep penetration of Egypt:

Truck and Depot, from 1623 to 1427
Italian forces, from 1825 to 1331
155th and 115th Infantry, from 1725 to 1231
104th and 1/5 and 2/5, from 1523 to overrun
1132, then overrun 1334, finally one 3-60
penetrates to 1434

With this, the Allied line has been shattered; more importantly, much of it has been placed out of supply. It is not necessary for the Italians and German infantry to attack from 1331 and 1231. Their presence does insure, however, that supply can be traced through these hexes. Note that it is possible for the Axis to have captured the British depot in 1334. This should not be counted on, and reliance upon the capture (as opposed to destruction) would invalidate any contest entry.

CONVENTION CALENDAR

The *GENERAL* will list any gaming convention in this space free of charge on a space available basis provided that we are notified at least four months in advance of the convention date. Each listing must include the name, date, site, and contact address of the convention. Additional information of interest to our readership such as tournaments or events utilizing The Avalon Hill Game Company's games is solicited and will be printed if made available.

The Avalon Hill Game Company does not necessarily attend or endorse these gatherings, nor do we guarantee that events using The Avalon Hill Game Company's games will be held. Readers are urged to contact the listed sources for further information before making plans to attend.

SEPTEMBER 20-22

COGACON '85, Columbus, Ohio

Contact: Paul Riegel, War Game Designs, P.O. Box 124, Hilliard, OH 43026.

SEPTEMBER 21-22

COI/COD FALL MANEUVERS, Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Contact: Bill Thomson, 7081 NW 16th Street, Apt. 114, Plantation, FL 33313, (305) 587-3315.

Note: Tournaments in *COI* and *COD*.

SEPTEMBER 28-29

TOL-CON III, Toledo, Ohio

Contact: Keith Zunk, Mind Games, 3001 North Reynolds Road, Toledo, OH 43615, (419) 531-5540.

OCTOBER 4-6

CRUSADER CON V, Denver, Colorado

Contact: Auraria Gamer's Club, P.O. Box 13395, Denver, CO 80201.

Note: Tournaments in *DIPLOMACY*, *SQUAD LEADER* and *KINGMAKER* among others.

OCTOBER 5-6

WARGAMER'S WEEKEND, Newburyport, Massachusetts

Contact: Chris Parker, c/o Toy Soldier Ltd., P.O. Box 148, Newburyport, MA 01950.

OCTOBER 20

ADVACON, Depew, New York

Contact: The Advacon Fellowship, 101 Floss Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14211.

Note: A number of science fiction and fantasy tournaments.

DECEMBER 7-8

KNOXCON, Knoxville, Tennessee

Contact: Tim Deane, The New Hobby Hut, 3615 Chapman Highway, Knoxville, TN 37920, (615) 970-4435.

Note: Five rounds of *SL* competition.

BANZAI \$12.00
Tactical Warfare in the SouthWest Pacific, 1941-45

INSTRUCTIONS:

Rate each category by placing a number ranging from 1 through 9 in the appropriate space to the right (1 equating "excellent"; 5, "average"; 9, "terrible"). **EXCEPTION:** Rate items 7a and 7b in terms of minutes necessary to play the game, in ten-minute increments. (Example: If you've found it takes two and a half hours to play the basic scenario of *FRANCE 1940*, enter "15" for category 7a.) For an explanation of the categories, refer to the AH Philosophy of Vol. 19, No. 4. Sub-categories are indicated by italics. Enter ratings only for those categories relevant to the game in question. Note that AH's ratings for **Complexity** and **Year of Publishing** have been provided; do not rate these categories.

- 1. Overall Value _____
- 2. Components _____
- 2a. Mapboard _____
- 2b. Counters _____
- 2c. Player's Aids _____
- 3. Complexity 4
- 3a. Complexity _____
- 4. Completeness of Rules _____
- 5. Playability _____
- 5a. Excitement Level _____
- 5b. Play Balance _____
- 6. Authenticity _____
- 7. Game Length _____
- 7a. Basic/Shortest _____
- 7b. Advanced/Longest _____
- 8. Year of Publication 1984

\$1.00

\$1.00

This coupon is valid only for mail order purchases of complete games direct from The Avalon Hill Game Company. Each postage coupon entitles the sender to deduct up to \$1.00 from the postage charges of any order for a complete game provided the amount deducted does not exceed the total postage charge for that order. Coupons are not usable for parts, magazines, or phone kit orders. Shipping charges are 10% of the dollar amount of your order. If sent to a USA address, shipping costs to Canada and Mexico are 20% of the order; overseas orders must add 30%. Any past GENERAL postage coupons previously offering different values may be used as the equal of this coupon. Example: Customer A lives in the USA and orders a \$15 game. His postage charge is \$1.50 which he may pay by sending in 2 postage coupons and \$15, or 1 postage coupon and \$15.50. Customer B lives in Canada and orders the same game. He must pay \$15 in USA funds plus 3 postage coupons or \$15 plus \$1 for each postage coupon less than 3 which he sends.

Good for Postage Charges Only on Complete Game Purchases

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN PLAYING?

Top ten lists are seemingly always in vogue these days. Whether the subject is books on the Best Seller List, television's Nielsen ratings, or even games, the public never seems to tire of seeing how their individual favorites stack up numerically against the competition. Our preoccupation with this national pastime is almost akin to rooting the home team on to victory every Sunday. So to further cater to your whims (and to satisfy our own curiosity) we unveil The *GENERAL*'s version of the gamer's TOP TEN.

We won't ask you to objectively rate any game. That sort of thing is already done in these pages and elsewhere. Instead, we ask that you merely list the three (or less) games which you've spent the most time with since you received your last issue of The *GENERAL*. With this we can generate a consensus list of what's being bought. The degree of correlation between the Best Selling Lists and the Most Played List should prove interesting.

Feel free to list any game regardless of manufacturer. There will be a built-in bias to the survey because you all play our games to some extent but it should be no more prevalent than similar projects undertaken by other magazines with a special interest-based circulation. The amount to which this bias affects the final outcome will be left to the individual's discretion.

The games I've spent the most time playing during the past two months are:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Opponent Wanted

50¢

- Want-ads will be accepted only when printed on this form or a facsimile and must be accompanied by a 50¢ token fee. No refunds. Payment may be made in uncanceled U.S. postage stamps.
- For Sale, Trade, or Wanted To Buy ads will be accepted only when dealing with collector's items (The Avalon Hill Game Company's out of print games) and are accompanied by a \$1.00 token fee. No refunds.
- Insert copy on lines provided (25 words maximum) and print name, address, and phone number on the appropriate lines.
- Please PRINT. If your ad is illegible, it will not be printed.
- So that as many ads as possible can be printed within our limited space, we request that you use official state and game abbreviations. Don't list your entire collection, list only those you are most interested in locating opponents for.

Afrika Korps—AK, Air Force—AF, Alexander—AL, Alpha Omega—AO, Ambea Wars—AW, Anzio—AZ, Arab-Israeli Wars—AIW, Assault On Crete—AOC, Bismarck—BIS, Blitzkrieg—BL, Battle Of The Bulge—BB, Bull Run—BR, Caesar Alesia—CAE, Caesar's Legions—CL, Chancellorsville—CH, Circus Maximus—CM, Civilization—CIV, Conquistador—CON, Cross Of Iron—COI, Crescendo Of Doom—COD, Dauntless—DL, D-Day—DD, Diplomacy—DIP, Down With The King—DWTK, Dragonhunt—DH, Firepower—FP, Flat Top—FT, Fortress Europa—FE, France 40—FR, Frederick the Great—FRED, Freedom in the Galaxy—FITG, Fury In The West—FITW, Gettysburg—GE, G.I.: Anvil of Victory—GI, Gladiator—GL, Guns Of August—GOA, Gunslinger—GSL, Hitler's War—HW, Jutland—JU, Kingmaker—KM, Legend of Robin Hood—LRH, The Longest Day—TLD, Little Round Top—LRT, Luftwaffe—LW, Machiavelli—MA, Magic Realm—MR, Midway—MD, Napoleon—NP, Napoleon at Bay—NAB, Naval War—NW, Origins—OR, Outdoor Survival—OS, PanzerArmeek Afrika—PAA, Panzerblitz—PB, PanzerGruppe Guderian—PGG, Panzerkrieg—PK, Panzer Leader—PL, Rail Baron—RB, Richthofen's War—RW, The Russian Campaign—TRC, Squad Leader—SL, Stalingrad—STAL, Starship Troopers—SST, Storm Over Arnhem—SOA, Struggle of Nations—SON, Submarine—SUB, Tactics II—TAC, Third Reich—3R, Titan—TT, Tobruk—TB, Trireme—TR, Up Front—UF, Victory In The Pacific—VITP, War and Peace—W&P, War At Sea—WAS, Waterloo—WAT, Wizard's Quest—WQ, Wooden Ships & Iron Men—WSIM.

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

CONTEST #126

To enter, please list the target, type and number of aircraft, and altitude from which they are attacking. Winners will be those who allocate their aircraft attacks in such a manner as to guarantee the greatest point total for the Japanese.

Target Attacking Aircraft Altitude

Issue as a whole . . . (Rate from 1 to 10, with 1 equating excellent, 10 equating terrible)
Best 3 Articles

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

The GENERAL



A Lifetime of Gaming Pleasure from The **GENERAL** ★ AVALON HILL

For over twenty years, the AH **GENERAL** has set the standard for magazines devoted to the challenging hobby of wargaming. And the oldest professional wargaming magazine is still the best value for the wargamer's dollar with the least expensive subscription rate to be found in the hobby. Every bi-monthly issue is packed with articles on the strategy, tactics and variations of AH games. Written by the AH staff and by fellow hobbyists who are enthusiastic experts on the games, the articles are usually thought-provoking, occasionally controversial, and always enjoyable. Graced with the best of graphics, each 48-page issue is full-color and blessed with numerous maps and charts to highlight the information the authors present.

Judging by responses to regular surveys of the readership—conducted in a continuous effort to bring them what they want—the many “extras” found within the pages of The **GENERAL** are as important as the articles. For the past year, *The Victory Insider* has brought our readers similar high-quality and informative articles on the products of Victory Games as a bonus insert. Many issues have Series Replays, move-by-move recreations of one of AH's games by expert players with neutral commentary on their efforts by the designer or developer. New product announcements, game strategy contests, historical background pieces, discount coupons, information on conventions and other doings within the wargaming hobby world—all are found in these pages; and all have but one intention: to increase the pleasure for those who play AH's fine line of games.

So, if you know of someone who hopes to make wargaming a hobby that they will enjoy for the rest of their life—all the challenge and color of the fascinating hobby of wargaming—you can't go wrong by giving them a subscription of The **GENERAL**. Even if that person happens to be yourself! And you can't beat the price: a two-year subscription represents a 50% saving over the newstand cover price. (Ah . . . but if you are not quite convinced that this is for you, try ordering a sample issue—only \$3.00. We're sure that one look is all you'll need to understand the pride we take in The **GENERAL**. Individual copies may be ordered direct from The Avalon Hill Game Company at the address below.)

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