GENERAL

★ AVALON HILL

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Elder Secrets

of Glorantha

The year is 1623 S.T.

Since the creation of Glorantha, many ancient mysteries have lurked in the heart of this world, hidden from all the most daring. For more than 16 centuries the bravest adventurer-sages have sought these ''elder secrets''. Now you can hold the sum of their knowledge in your hands. But be warned; such knowledge is dangerous!

Elder Secrets of Glorantha is a new compendium of Gloranthan lore, covering some of the most requested information on this magical world, especially concerning the Elder Races. This new, boxed module consists of two booklets and a detailed, full-color map showing exact locations for major Elder Races. The Deluxe Edition of *RUNEQUEST* and the *Gloranthan Bestiary* will be needed to fully integrate this new information, and *Gods of Glorantha* will be required to create characters who are members of any of the major cults mentioned. The two booklets that comprise *Elder Secrets* are:

The *Secrets Book* includes information on Monsters and Terrors (such as the Crimson Bat) with complete statistics, Unique Mysteries of Glorantha (such as the Egg of Erangalos Karastomabor), the Secrets of Dragonkind, full rules for Magical Crystals and Metals, Inaccessible Lands (such as Wongarissi, land of the feared Slarges), the Sky of Glorantha (the heavenly bodies), the secrets of Gloranthan weather, hero questing, and more. Many of these subjects are worthy of an entire chapter just for themselves, and future Gloranthan supplements will deal with some in more detail. But the *Secrets Book* serves as an introduction in the arcane and mysterious of the land.

The *Elder Races Book* covers all the important Elder Races, including the Aldryami (''Elves'' to the uninitiated), Mostali (dwarves), Uz (trolls), Broos, Ogres, Jelmre, Tusk Riders, and many more, as well as rules for character generation and previous experience. New *RUNEQUEST* religions, such as the Cacodemon and the Cult of the Bloody Tusk, are revealed. Most importantly, this booklet includes 25+ scenario outlines—one or more for each Elder Race. The *Elder Races Book* is a treasure trove of information for any *RQ* Gamemaster.

Elder Secrets of Glorantha is available now for $20.00 direct from The Avalon Hill Game Company (4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, MD 21214). Please add 10% shipping and handling (20% for Canadian orders; 30% for overseas). Maryland residents please add 5% state sales tax.

THE AVALON HILL Philosophy

Part 133
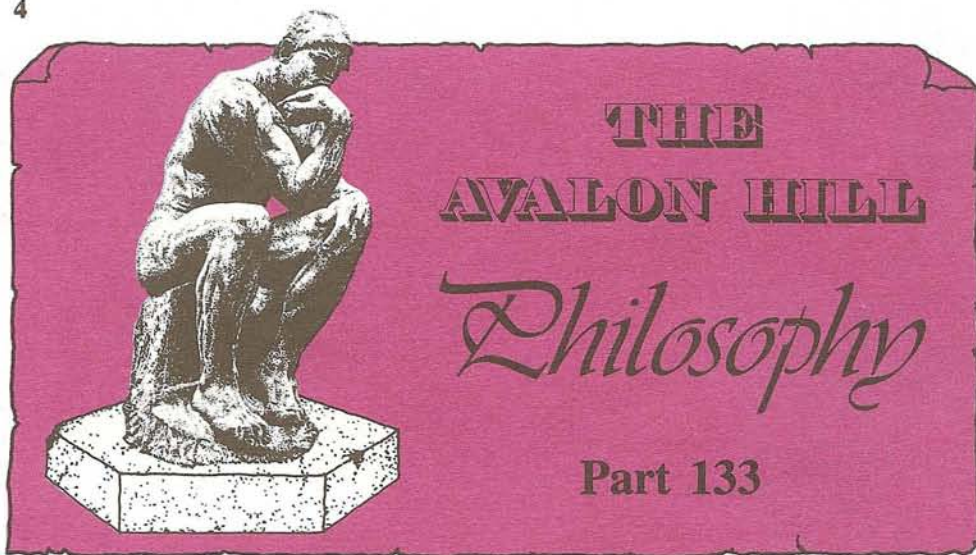
Over the past few weeks, I've received a raft of letters concerning the games featured in recent issues of The GENERAL. Seems that there is something of a rift in opinion concerning my devoting space to the likes of *ENEMY IN SIGHT, GETTYSBURG '88, RAIL BARON*; I am quite sure that this issue will only fuel that fire. And many of these writers did not stop at railing at my choice of articles. Some folk are greatly afraid that Avalon Hill is drifting away from its roots—the "traditional" wargame.

First, there are those who strenuously object to the design staff "wasting time" on games dealing with non-historical topics. They have repeatedly pointed to releases such as *MERCHANT OF VENUS, DINOSAURS OF THE LOST WORLD, BLIND JUSTICE, SPICES OF THE WORLD*, and the upcoming *WRASSLIN'* and *MARCH MADNESS*. Among them, some even object to our handling of "near-future" wars in the guise of *TAC AIR* and *MBT* as "fantasy" (and, given the rapid revisions in the political realities of Eastern Europe, perhaps they are). In the view of these writers, every such title Avalon Hill releases represents a "historical" design that was passed over.

Let's backtrack here, and touch upon some real history. In 1952, Charles Roberts published *TACTICS* (six years before "Avalon Hill" was incorporated); although dealing with a hypothetical conflict across a hypothetical land, it is commonly credited as launching the commercial "wargame" industry. In 1958, fledgling Avalon Hill released three new games: the first "historical" wargame (*GETTYSBURG*), a re-design of *TACTICS* (*TACTICS II*), and a game on railroad operations (*DISPATCHER*). Since that day, not a year has passed that The Avalon Hill Game Company hasn't released several games on non-historical topics. An extensive and award-winning line of sports games helped us survive the occasional lean year. Acquisition of the Minnesota Mining & Manufacturing (3M) line of family games placed Avalon Hill in markets not before open to us, for many retailers who carried these (and the sports line) decided to "try" the wargames; Avalon Hill's wargame sales jumped 26% in 1977, and helped spark the spread of our hobby. In 1976, the first of many fine science-fiction games (*STARSHIP TROOPERS*, the only in-house design of that year) was released; *MAGIC REALM* (1979) drew raves for its design innovations, and remains popular enough to justify publication of a complete revision of its lengthy (80-page) rulebook in 1987.

Let me stress the point again: non-historical topics have since the beginning been as much a part of the tradition of Avalon Hill as have the wargames. The excellence of the design of these non-war games is shown by their longevity; just scan a recent catalogue and note the years of publication. By any measure you care to judge, most of these are fine games. As to the belief that work on such draw the designers/developers of Avalon Hill away from wargames, I've a one-word answer for that . . . but as this is no doubt being read by some of a tender age, I will refrain from using it. Suffice to say that Avalon Hill, with a smaller in-house design staff, has over the past couple of years produced more history-based games than it did in five during the "golden age" of the hobby (late-60s through mid-80s).

I might also argue that no one so one-dimensional as to be interested in but military conflict could be a superior game designer; among our titles, there is cross-fertilization of ideas and systems from the non-war to the war games (and vice versa). If you should doubt this, you might ask Don Greenwood (whose developments have touched upon 'bout every subject you can name), Joe Balkoski (whose credits range from *PENNENT RACE* to VG's *FLEET* series) or Bruce Shelley (from *1830* to the likes of Avalon Hill's redevelopment of *PG GUDERIAN*), Richard Hamblen (designer of, most recently, *MERCHANT OF VENUS* and, much earlier, *VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC* and *THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN*), or Mick Uhl (*BULGE '81, DUNE, CIVILIZATION, KINGMAKER, KNIGHTS OF THE AIR*, etc.). These gentlemen are not just wargame designers, but *game* designers—and have the genius to make any topic the subject of an innovative and challenging contest of skill.

Turning to whether such non-war titles are fit subjects for consideration in this periodical, let me quote from a letter from one Bosmans Berry: "As a reaction to The *GENERAL*, Vol. 25, #4, I have to say that in 12 years, this is the first time I fully disagree with the statements of the editor. Indeed *ENEMY IN SIGHT* is NOT a simulation, and it is NOT worth an article in The *GENERAL*." I will readily grant that *EIS* is not a "simulation"; but it is most certainly worth an article—several, in fact—in The *GENERAL*. This periodical is devoted to exploring Avalon Hill's games of skill. And if you should believe that victorious play of *EIS* doesn't require skill, how'd you do with Contest #146? For that matter, if you hold this bizarre notion, I've a couple of youngsters that would like to take you on some afternoon. I've often enough voiced my views on what constitutes a "good" game: one that challenges the players to make intelligent decisions that will bring victory, that promotes skill over luck (while, perhaps, not dispensing with chance entirely), that is enjoyable and "fun" to play, that instructs or educates the players, that is eye-appealing. By any of these standards, the likes of *MERCHANT OF VENUS, DUNE, STELLER CONQUEST, 1830, RAIL BARON, ENEMY*

IN SIGHT, DINOSAURS OF THE LOST WORLD, and a host of other Avalon Hill titles deserve some coverage in these pages. I don't think the space devoted to them herein to have been excessive; if anything, in terms of sales and interest, I have slighted them mightily over the years.

Then there are those who not only doubt our wisdom in dealing with these topics, but also are moved to protest the use of "non-traditional" systems and approaches for the historical designs. Not for them area-movement games (such as *TURNING POINT: STALINGRAD*) nor card games (such as *ENEMY IN SIGHT*) nor introductory games (such as *GETTYSBURG '88*) nor solitaire games (such as *PATTON'S BEST*) nor political games (such as *KREMLIN*). These fellows want hexes, dice, numerical values on counters, and an opponent they can thrash. It would appear that they are uncomfortable with the thought that there might be a better way to recreate an event in history than with hexes and dice. Or perhaps they just can't be bothered with the effort it might take to master a new system.

Avalon Hill has always been on the cutting edge of innovation in this industry. In its day, *PANZERBLITZ* revolutionized game design. *UP FRONT* was a revelation for many gamers, and has a devoted following still. *THIRD REICH* remains the best (so far as I am concerned) and most-playable of the games of grand strategy. *STORM OVER ARNHEM* spawned a rash of area-movement games on the tactical and operational level, of which next issue's *TURNING POINT: STALINGRAD* is the culmination. Solitaire designs, following the sales success of *B-17*, have become *de riguer* for any profitable line. Innovation, exploring the non-traditional, is the *raison d'etre* for the existence of the design staff here. It seems rather pointless (not to mention boring) to simply regurgitate rehashed game systems; far better—for the hobby, for the company, and ultimately for the gamer—to give free rein to unique routes to the same end: the simulation of history in an enjoyable format.

This is not to say that those complaining about the current line of designs from Avalon Hill represent the majority, or even a significant number of our correspondents. For every letter I've had asking us for a *DINOSAURS OF THE LOST WORLD*, I've had two full of praise. *ENEMY IN SIGHT* has brought a great deal of enjoyment to a great many it appears, and *WRASSLIN'* has made converts of more than one playtester. As you will find next issue, *TURNING POINT: STALINGRAD* has already engendered a fanatic following. *GETTYSBURG '88* is becoming standard fare for introducing newcomers to the joys of wargaming. If regular reader reportage of what they have been playing is any indication, such unique designs as *UP FRONT* and *TAC AIR* remain popular; indeed, one would be hard pressed to point to many "traditional" wargames in the "So That's What You've Been Playing" column at any time. In the loftier reaches of the RBG, the collective readership has placed *1830, CIVILIZATION, UP FRONT, KREMLIN, BRITANNIA* and *TAC AIR* among the top ten. Lastly, if sales are the gauge by which one is to judge success (and certainly, our management tends to this pragmatic viewpoint), a glance at the best sellers of 1988 for Avalon Hill (turn to Page 8 of this issue) would seem to show that the non-traditional, in terms of topic or design, dominate. In fact, fully half of our "All-Time Best Sellers" are not what I would call "traditional wargames".

The fact remains that we are not The Avalon Hill *Wargame* Company nor The Avalon Hill *Simulation* Company, but simply The Avalon Hill *GAME* Company. In that light, I fully intend to continue to devote the pages of this magazine to its line of games—as varied as that may be.

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RED★BARRICADES

Welcome back to the streets of Stalingrad—only this time on a scale and intensity never before offered in **ASL**. **RED BARRICADES** is the first "Historical" module for the **ASL** system, complete with a huge, two-piece historically-accurate map depicting Stalingrad's famous "Red Barricades" ordnance factory and surrounding environs. The mapsheet features new 1″-wide hexes for ease of play in those scenarios with high counter density. The factory complex alone, exactingly adapted to **ASL** scale from actual German aerial reconnaissance photographs, spans an area approximately 31 hexes by 16 hexes.

Two countersheets provide (for the first time) markers for Fortified Building Locations, A-T Ditches, Cellars, Gutted Factories and Hand-to-Hand Melee. Included as well are Perimeter, Location Control and Burnt-Out-Wreck markers for the *RB* Campaign Game, plus extra Russian and German infantry and SW. Two new weapons also make their debut: the Russian "Molotov Projector" and the German StuIG 33B assault gun. Seven action-packed standard scenarios (in addition to those for the *RB* Campaign Game) are offered, most of which utilize only a small portion of the map.

Also included is Chapter O, which contains the rules for several new terrain types (debris, railway embankments, interior factory walls, storage tanks, single-hex two-story buildings and culverts), all colorfully detailed in the standard **ASL** fashion. Too, clarifications of existing rules for fortified buildings, factories, rooftops, road-negating terrain and armored cupolas are provided. Last but not least is Section 11—the "*RB* Campaign Games"—which comprises about three-quarters of Chapter O.

RED BARRICADES features three separate Campaign Games (CG) which are designed for play exclusively on the new map, enabling the **ASL** gamer to create an ongoing series of interrelated scenarios. For instance, CG 1, "Into the Factory", simulates the German effort of 17-29 October 1942 to storm the *Barrikady* factory complex. Each "day" promises a possible scenario, depending on whether either side wishes to attack. Now, for the first time in **ASL** scenarios, there are *tomorrow's* victory conditions to think about as well as today's. Since surviving units are retained for the next playing, a critical tactical dimension—conservation of force—has been added. Gone are those last-turn suicidal charges so commonly employed in standard scenarios.

RED BARRICADES is available now for $25.00 from The Avalon Hill Game Company (4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, MD 21214). Please add the usual 10% shipping and handling charge (20% for Canadian orders; 30% for overseas orders). Maryland residents please add 5% state sales tax.

TRAMP STARSHIP
A Look at MERCHANT OF VENUS

By James P. Werbaneth

For those whose ideas of good gaming are limited to historical conflicts involving panzers and the poor bloody infantry, *MERCHANT OF VENUS* comes as something of a shock. Competition is fierce, but is founded on a race to make money quickly rather than on simple combat. Destroying opponents is not the point; being the first to cross a threshold of wealth is. Otherwise it does not really matter how much money one's opponents have been able to hoard or who has painstakingly constructed the most efficient economic infrastructure. Just as long as the player is the first to amass sufficient wealth to win, no one else's financial state really means anything.

This does not preclude such "dirty" tricks as piracy and swindling, however. In fact, judiciously used, these and other acts of larceny and violence can figure importantly in a game of *MERCHANT OF VENUS*. However, they remain secondary measures in reasonably honest trade, and can be implemented only with optional rules anyway.

The main method of amassing profit is to travel about the star cluster in a tramp starship, trading in strange and wondrous goods with races that can be equally strange and wondrous—or just plain strange. There are robots whose creation myths center on kitchen appliances, tentacled manic-depressives, and some of Mr. Ed's more ambitious relatives, as well as a group of culturally deprived humans, among others. They have all been separated by the fall of an empire, once run by a species now rightly considered one of degenerates, resulting in the breakage of old trade and communication lines. Now intrepid merchants return to this fractured space, all too happy to broker furniture for snails, hallucinogenic art and other interesting products for a profit . . . modest or otherwise.

This income can then be used to buy more trade goods, or it can be invested in a better ship, extra equipment and weapons and, most important, spaceports and factories. These not only facilitate the acquisition of still more wealth but, unlike the other investments, their value counts the same as cash for determining victory.

MERCHANT OF VENUS is not a wargame, it is an economic one. Thus, it bears no more resemblance to *STARSHIP TROOPERS* or *FREEDOM IN THE GALAXY* than it does to *PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN* or *THIRD REICH*. But it is a worthy addition to the line of the oldest wargame company. And, thus, it is worth a few pointers on strategy and play for the uninitiated.

THE SEA OF STARS

All merchants are created equal, with a scout ship, twenty dollars multiplied by the number of players, and a starting point at the Galactic Base. Looming before them is a volume of space and the knowledge of where each world is located.

But one problem faces them right at the start. The knowledge of *which* species holds sway on which planet has been lost. Moreover, the detritus of empire lays scattered among the stars. Some of these items are relics that can enhance a merchant's ability to travel and trade. Others are lost spaceports and TeleGates (the latter of which can enable a ship to teleport across long distances), valuable spots in a game that is essentially a race.

The fourteen species are assigned to their systems randomly and unknown to any player. The "?" markers around their worlds might be open spaceports, relics or penalty markers. The players are thus presented with a largely blank map, one that must be filled in through exploration.

Movement is regulated by means of multi-colored dots that connect star systems. Travel is hindered by obstacles in the form of penalty dots and markers, and that stars that might appear close together may not in fact be connected except by circuitous routes through other systems. "You can't get there from here" is a major theme of the map's clever design.

MERCHANT OF VENUS is one of the few simulation-type games that use dice to determine movement rates. Ships' speeds range from "2" to "4", with that being the number of dice rolled, their sum being the vessel's movement rate for that turn. There is thus an element of uncertainty in planning movement, with a "probably" fast ship perfectly capable of slowing drastically at the most inopportune times.

When moving between the TeleGates, the player chooses one of the numbers rolled for movement, and then simply emerges at the TeleGate bearing it. Indeed, these "pilot numbers" figure prominently when transiting navigation circles—a ship leaves the circle in accordance with the pilot number. A player wants to choose a number that takes him closer to his favored destination, but bad luck on the dice roll for movement often precludes that. Choosing one that forces the ship to backtrack, a forbidden type of movement, results in his staying stationary in the circle until the next turn. Or, of course, he can opt for an alternate route, something for which the roll of the dice may leave little choice. (You can't stay still in space, if able to move you must do so.) It is possible for a merchant with a stubborn streak and a run of bad luck to spend several turns making a circuit of the navigation circles in the system called The Cloud, or shooting off into some system far from his trade routes, all while his opponents use their player turns for more productive pursuits.

Distance is the game is not spatial, but temporal. Players must plan strategy with a view of how *long* it would probably take to reach a destination, not just in terms of their distance in movement dots. The practical temporal, though not absolute spatial, distance between stars can be shortened by using a faster ship. Also, drives of different sorts can be purchased that permit their owners to disregard certain colored dots, shrinking space both temporally and spatially.

DOING BUSINESS

The first order of business is to fill in the blank spaces of the star cluster. There are vendors and customers out there, but they have to be found first.

Another reason for exploration is the need to acquire some IOUs from cultures (as the first player to return them to the greater galactic co-prosperity sphere). Most often, players' initial stakes of cash are insufficient to fund the purchase of trade goods, unless the risk is taken of dangerously depleting these funds early. IOUs are a means of buying goods and equipment without resorting to imprudent cash outlays. As in all games with limited intelligence, knowledge is power. In *MERCHANT OF VENUS*, knowledge acquired first is also money in the bank.

It is important to use the IOUs wisely, considering the relative values of the IOU and the item or items to be purchased. For example, the player who discovers the Dell culture receives an IOU of $60. As the Dell's export commodity (Finest Dust) is available for only $10 a load, immediately bartering the Dell IOU for a Finest Dust marker is a bad trade, with the merchant in effect spending $60 for a $10 item. Waiting out a turn on the Dell planet permits him to buy two Finest Dust markers for the IOU and, while not quite as a disadvantageous deal, still ends up with the player paying a severely inflated price.

There are several alternatives in such a situation. Keeping to the example of the Dell, the player can exchange his IOU and $20 in cash to obtain a "yellow" drive (allowing him to skip the yellow dots when moving). Not as potentially profitable in the short run as trade goods, it nonetheless enhances trade in the long term, although at the added cost of diverted hold space. All but primative cultures have useful equipment to sell, ranging from the $60 shield to a combined drive costing $300.

An IOU can likewise be applied toward purchase of a better starship. Together with the "trade-in" value of the player's current vessel, this frequently involves little or no cash expenditure.

A very attractive option is to simply hold the IOU until one has the wherewithal and opportunity to apply it toward a major purchase—such as expensive trade goods, a spaceport or a factory. There is no cost to save an IOU, and once held through the first temptation to spend it, can go a long way toward making an expensive item a reasonably-priced one.

IOUs provide an impetus for players to split up at the start of the game, each going his own way to find cultures ready to recognize their debt for discovery. Because of the consequent reluctance to follow in the tracks of others, it generally follows that the more players there are in the game and the higher the threshold of victory, the quicker the species will be matched to their planets. Similarly, in a solitaire or two-player situation, especially one with lower victory conditions, the game often ends before all the systems have been explored.

The primary objective of exploration is to establish trade routes similar to the "triangular trade" of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, though possibly involving more that three points. This "circular trade", defined broadly, is a functional circle of systems in which the travel time between them is no more than two player turns, and where each culture buys the goods produced by the one immediately behind it. Planning for this is listed as the first principle of play in the Designer's Notes, and with very good reason. A circular trade route is a veritable money machine, one that can well decide the game.

A secondary objective is to find the home system of one's own species. The home system grants a twenty percent discount on all purchases, and can be the jewel in the crown of a circular trade route. Whenever possible, spaceports and a factory should be built there, particularly in a longer game.

A natural consequence of trade, and an extra source of profit, are the "demand" markers. Built-up demand can grant windfall profits, not once but repeatedly. But a merchant has to seriously consider whether it is really worth going out of his way to exploit such demand. This normally requires extra transit time, first to acquire the goods concerned and then to carry them to their destination. Sometimes the time and money required is better spent on regular trade, especially if one has a profitable circular route, or if an opponent has one who can thus draw closer to the finish line as the player chases after distant demand markers. Then again, satisfying timely demand might make a losing player competitive once more in a hurry. As is true with most activities in MERCHANT OF VENUS, whether or not to take advantage of demand markers depends on the special circumstances of your position in each game.

"Fares" are another variety of bonus marker that can bring quick and easy money. Carrying them requires no payment, and a fare takes up only half the hold space required for cargo. Even more than demands, fares can be an excellent source of short-term profit. But like them, it must be decided whether the monetary return to transport fares is worth the effort. Furthermore, only in the most exceptional cases should a fare be picked up before its destination has been discovered.

Much more rare and thought-provoking than either type of bonus are the "relics". These are pieces of equipment left over from a bygone era that can aid navigation, reduce the effects of penalty ovals and markers and, with optional rules, provide weapons. Unlike other equipment, they take up no hold space. If found in a "?" box, a relic costs nothing to pick up, and the cost of acquiring a previously-owned one from a culture remains fairly low. In addition, relics can be freely bartered throughout the map. Therefore, they combine the best attributes of equipment and IOUs, although they in fact improve on the latter by being universal.

A problem with looking for relics is that ten or less, and possibly none, are scattered initially in the "?" boxes. A determined search for relics can turn up as fringe benefits open ports and TeleGates, both helpful for trade. It can also reveal indiscriminately abandoned weapons in the form of penalty markers —not so beneficial. As stated in the Designer's Notes, landing on a "?" box is preferable to ending a turn in outer space. But players should never base their strategy on finding relics, as they are far too uncertain to depend upon.

The one non-good item that a player must eventually buy is a spaceport. Only in a game with a $1000-dollar threshold of victory could a merchant get away without buying at least one; and, the longer the game, the more speceports should be bought. Placed in an orbit box, a spaceport is reachable without the movement penalty incumbent in landing on a planet's surface. Once in port, trade can be conducted freely, overriding the limits otherwise in force of but one purchase and one sale/barter in the same turn as landing. Time is money, and spaceports save both.

Hardly inconsequential is the ten percent commission granted to the owner of the spaceport on *all* transactions conducted there. By doing business at his own port, a player not only realizes his profits more rapidly, but is actually paid by the bank for the privilege of doing so. Although there is a tendency of players to avoid trading at each other's ports in order to deny commissions to opponents, sometimes doing so toward the end of the game

results in quick profits that decisively narrows the distance between assets and the victory threshold. If a player has no spaceport in a system that promises to yield significant profits as the game draws to a close, he should avail himself of an opponent's spaceport in order to attain it. On the other hand, providing the owner with an otherwise insignificant commission that proves to be the margin of victory is humiliating.

Factories are built less frequently than spaceports. Factory goods generally turn a higher profit than regular trade commodities. Also, since a player benefits from a fifty percent commission when buying the products at his own factory, such purchases can be surprisingly inexpensive. The costs decrease still further when a merchant buys not only from his own facility, but one situated on his own spaceport. The most important disadvantage here is that each factory has only one goods marker associated with it, making the owner lucky if it reappears after sale even once more in most games.

In MERCHANT OF VENUS, it is possible to have too much cash. Since deeds for factories and spaceports count for victory the same as cash, players should feel free to build both (but especially spaceports) at every opportunity. A cash reserve of no more than three or four hundred dollars should be maintained, but any above that can be put to more productive use.

OUTFITTING

Some of the most important decisions in the game are over the type of ship one is to sail among the stars, and how it is to be equipped. In the $1000-dollar scenario, the original scout ship is often perfectly sufficient for the whole game. But as victory conditions increase and optional rules are added, there is a growing need for bigger and better ships to carry larger cargoes, hold more equipment, maybe carry weapons, and move more quickly.

In a longer game, a "scout" should be viewed not as the one to carry a merchant to riches and victory, but as only a temporary vehicle, to be traded in for a better one as soon as cash and IOUs are sufficient. Though possessing adequate speed, a scout's two holds are not enough for the more intensive trade following the discovery of most cultures and the building of spaceports. In effect, the speedy scout is only useful so long as the game is still in its age of discovery phase.

A "clipper" is essentially a scout with better speed. It is frequently the first ship a player trades up to, as it is fairly inexpensive. Its holds are still insufficient for winning the game, but the increased speed decreases the time that its cargoes stay in space and hence are unproductive.

Probably the best all-round vessel is the "transport". Its third hold comes in handy when buying and selling high-profit goods at spaceports. Or it can be used to accomodate a drive, making it faster than a clipper; or it can carry a shield which, coupled with the one carried free on the hull, almost entirely negates the effects of the penalties. These options can be exercised together or apart, in that case leaving room for a fare. This is but one example of how an extra hold can increase the options open to the merchant. As for price, if a clipper is traded in for a transport, the new ship is cheaper than a spaceport.

At $300, the most expensive starship is the "freighter"—a five-hold behemoth. Its drawback, as is to be expected, is a speed of only two dice. This can be offset to an extent by adding a drive. However, no drive can overcome a choice of only two pilot numbers per turn, making travel through navigation circles problematic (a task at which the clipper is admirably suited). A freighter is not the right choice for repeated calls to the Space Station Planet. A freighter can be excellent for tapping small, usually unprofitable circular routes already copiously stocked with spaceports, however. An

ability to sell five Servo-mechanisms at one call, for example, can bring very nice income in a big hurry. Moreover, a freighter can well exploit the build-up of demand.

Just as the third hold of the transport increases options, so the extra holds of the freighter multiplies them. Assuming he has the ability to pay for it after buying the most expensive starship of MERCHANT OF VENUS, a player could well allocate two holds to extra equipment and weapons while retaining good cargo-carrying capacity. Indeed, if he wished, he could make it a travelling death star, loaded with shields and weapons. There are times when the freighter is the most useful vessel available, most notably in a long game. But it should be remembered when buying one that a merchant pays for payload, not versatility.

Even in the shortest scenario, equipment is vital. Like all of the supporting systems in this game, its importance grows with the rise of the victory threshold and the multiplication of game turns.

The most crucial piece of equipment is the shield. It is necessary if a player is going to pass through penalties with any frequency whatsoever. Without it, he has the choice of either halting (and thus extending his time in space) or being nickel-and-dimed to death (a constant and aggravating drain on income). At $60, its price is low and a shield pays for itself in one turn in many games. At some point in the beginning or middle of the game, a player should buy the one shield he can carry in his ship's hull. Two shields are better than one, but not absolutely necessary (although their desirability can be great if the "fort" rules are in effect or the Rastur are present). However, the second shield must be mounted in a hold, thus reducing the space available for cargo, and might not be cost-effective— especially on a scout or clipper.

Unlike a shield, no drive except a relic one can be carried anywhere except in a hold. Nonetheless, one in a transport or freighter can be very valuable, while still leaving room for a fare or another piece of equipment. A drive imparts a dramatic leap in speed, and one not solely dependent on dice rolls. Neither yellow nor red drives are exhorbitant, and both are good investments. Buying both is not, however. Because of the greater hold space required to carry two drives, it is better to spend the extra $100 to purchase a "combined drive", enabling the ship to skip over both color of movement dots. With the combined drive distance shrinks to a great degree, with the added benefit of nullifying all but the blue-colored penalty ovals.

In a sense, ships should not be viewed as complete when first bought, especially in a prolonged game. You need accessories to fully tap their movement capabilities, and to decrease the costs and hazards of space travel. Besides, the chance to customize your very own spaceship doesn't come along very often in life.

OPTIONAL RULES

The game's optional rules fall into two broad categories: length and warfare. Altering the victory conditions can tailor MERCHANT OF VENUS to the players' preferences of sophistication and (always important) the amount of time they can devote to the game. A $1000-dollar game is excellent for teaching the system, or if gaming time is limited to a little over an hour. Playing to $4000 is the option not just of "those diehards who can't get enough of a good thing" as stated in the rules, but of anyone who can devote the several hours needed to experience MERCHANT OF VENUS in all its richness.

But the major theme of the optional rules is conflict, among players and with the malevolent Rastur. If the rules for these anti-social worms are used, then those for combat are mandatory—although the reverse is not true at all.

The most pervasive aspect of the combat rules is that players have to equip themselves for it even if it does *not* occur. Ships have to be outfitted with more than just the basic shields and drives, and shields grow in importance. In addition, of course, weapons have to be bought. The best is the laser; it costs $100, and one can be carried in a ship's hull. Much cheaper and equally potent is a "Nova Ball", which can be carried the same way. But its $20 price reflects a serious drawback—its limit to one use in combat.

Combat alters normal play by inducing the players to allocate hold space to more weaponry than can be mounted freely in the hull. Such basic armaments may not be sufficient, and certainly will not be if the Rastur are present. This makes transports and freighters more appropriate than scouts and clippers; and freighters assume a general purpose otherwise lacking.

However, even with all this, unlike most other science-fiction games, in *MERCHANT OF VENUS* combat is much more larcenous than it is destructive. Spaceships, spaceports and factories are immune to destruction—though they can be "stolen" through one combat-related means or another. Though a player might not run the danger of losing his ship, the hazard remains of losing precious cargo to an opponent with a ship full of weapons and the willingness to use them.

Inter-player combat can be devastating to the unprepared, and a serious nuisance even to those capable of fighting back. However, its effects can be ameliorated to a degree by the players' concentration on other matters. Sometimes when combat rules are agreed upon at the beginning of the game, players will be so involved by the middle that combat occurs infrequently, if at all. Of course, all it takes is one determined aspiring pirate to upset everyone else's happy trading, making ignoring the possibility of conflict a cardinal error. An "arms race" usually ensues.

A component of the combat rules more likely to have a lasting effect on trade is forts. If the Rastur are in effect, forts will be used to keep them away from your important trading points, particularly spaceports. Without the Rastur, forts will be emplaced by devious players with an eye towards reserving choice markets for their own personal use, or at least with an eye toward forcing opponents to pay for the privilege of trading there—either through paying the owner to pass the penalty or to spend more time in space.

Although a spaceport is also necessary in most cases, a fort can be placed at a junction of movement lines to interdict them. For example, friendly spaceport-fort tandems at the Neutron Port (Multi-Generation Ship system) and Goliath (Giant Planet system) dramatically hinder opponents' commerce between The Cloud and the adjoining systems, and between the Multi-Generation, Asteroid and War-Torn systems. In the process, the player also gains profitable spaceports, made safer by the accompaning forts. Expensive in the short run, such measures can yield impressive dividends in the long run, even more so when circular trade routes are involved.

In no case does *MERCHANT OF VENUS* take on military attributes more obviously than with the inclusion of the Rastur. These creatures buy nothing, trade with no one, and cannot be dissuaded from their incusions by negotiation or by bribery. Rastur act as randomly-generated free forts (most often stronger than the real thing) to be placed where they will do hapless opponents no good at all. Rastur also place a time limit on the game, winning it for themselves and denying victory to the players when the last worm counter is placed on the map. Thus, all players have an interest in destroying them, further increasing the need for heavily armed ships. Rastur are by far the most difficult penalty markers to

destroy, and one cannot count on eliminating them with any regularity, a problem that increases with the rise in the victory threshold and the enlargement of the Rastur pool.

Since the Rastur are the enemy of all players, a degree, no matter how small, of cooperation is in order. This does not have to involve concerted offensives against a common foe, although they would do everyone some measure of good (if in no other way than extending the Rastur-imposed time limit). The minimum amount of cooperation is that players refuse to give in to the feeling that all heavy armament is directed against them, and that they eschew inter-player violence enough that they do not give others this impression.

In the solitaire game, the Rastur's chief function is to limit the time available to the player to achieve victory. He can place them either in distant parts he does not expect to visit soon, or in the easily bypassed orbit boxes of more central worlds. But as there are generally more Rastur counters than convenient locations for them, the lone merchant still has to outfit his ship with sufficient weapons to blast at least the weak ones. The difficulty in this course is that the time frame is so close that few turns can be spent on efforts other than trade, even destroying Rastur. A solitaire victory in *MERCHANT OF VENUS* is the most impressive kind.

Variable victory conditions are a mandatory option, and the first that players should incorporate after learning the basic rules. Combat is also highly recommended. The rules for it tend not to radically change the character of the game, but offer the players more strategic alternatives. The Rastur represent the least attractive option. They augment the military aspects of the design and tend to intrude on the economic core. As this is the most distinctive mark of *MERCHANT OF VENUS*, this may not be for the better, depending on player preferences. Fortunately, they too are optional.

CONCLUSION

That *MERCHANT OF VENUS* is an unusual game is apparent as soon as one sees that its cultures include pacifist dinosaurs, talking horses and other creatures ranging from the cute to the bizarre. Its unusualness lies deeper than this surface, however. Many games, including *CONQUISTADOR, PAX BRITANNICA* and (in a science-fiction vein) *STELLAR CONQUEST*, deal with the development of economic structures of one sort or another. But in all of these, economics serve the assertion of political or military dominance.

It is the most profound departure from the norm possible, one that changes both the standards of victory and the means of attaining it. The successful merchant is not the one who grinds every opponent into the ground, but the one who simply gets richer quickest. One who consistently goes out of his way to frustrate the efforts of others while neglecting to maximize his own interests has a fatally inverted view of this game. Impeding the trade of other players is a part of *MERCHANT OF VENUS*, but only a secondary one.

The game's emphasis on economics is salient to its treatment of obstacles, in the form of penalty ovals and markers, including the forts and the Rastur. They are effectively a scattered form of extortion, as all it takes to pass them at full speed is a payoff in cash.

Again, *MERCHANT OF VENUS* is not a wargame. Its competition is remarkably different than warfare. It offers a clear and striking alternative to our usual fare, one that might even prove addictive.

☆

1988 BEST SELLERS

1988 Rank: Title	1987 Rank
1. STATIS-PRO BASEBALL	1
2. STATIS-PRO FOOTBALL	4
3. TAC AIR	—
4. KREMLIN	—
5. WEST OF ALAMEIN	—
6. DIPLOMACY	13
7. ENEMY IN SIGHT	—
8. SQUAD LEADER	5
9. GETTYSBURG '88	—
10. CIVILIZATION	11
11. ACQUIRE	—
12. PAST LIVES	—
13. LAST HURRAH	—
14. GREAT-TEAMS BASEBALL	—
15. THIRD REICH	12
16. STATIS-PRO BASKETBALL	14
17. MERCHANT OF VENUS	—
18. RAIL BARON	15
19. DINOSAURS OF LOST WORLD	—
20. PARTISAN!	10

ALL-TIME BEST SELLERS

1988 Rank: Title	1987 Rank
1. OUTDOOR SURVIVAL	1
2. FACTS IN FIVE	2
3. PANZERBLITZ	3
4. SQUAD LEADER	4
5. PANZER LEADER	5
6. THIRD REICH	6
7. TACTICS II	7
8. STATIS-PRO BASEBALL	10
9. LUFTWAFFE	8
10. BLITZKRIEG	9
11. FOOTBALL STRATEGY	11
12. ACQUIRE	12
13. DIPLOMACY	13
14. PAYDIRT	15
15. MIDWAY	14
16. STARSHIP TROOPERS	16
17. D-DAY	17
18. BATTLE OF THE BULGE	—
19. AFRIKA KORPS	18
20. WIZARD'S QUEST	19

CULTURE

Colony
World

9b WOLLOW

Paperweight: $90
Factory: $100

Comfort
Station

Cobbleport
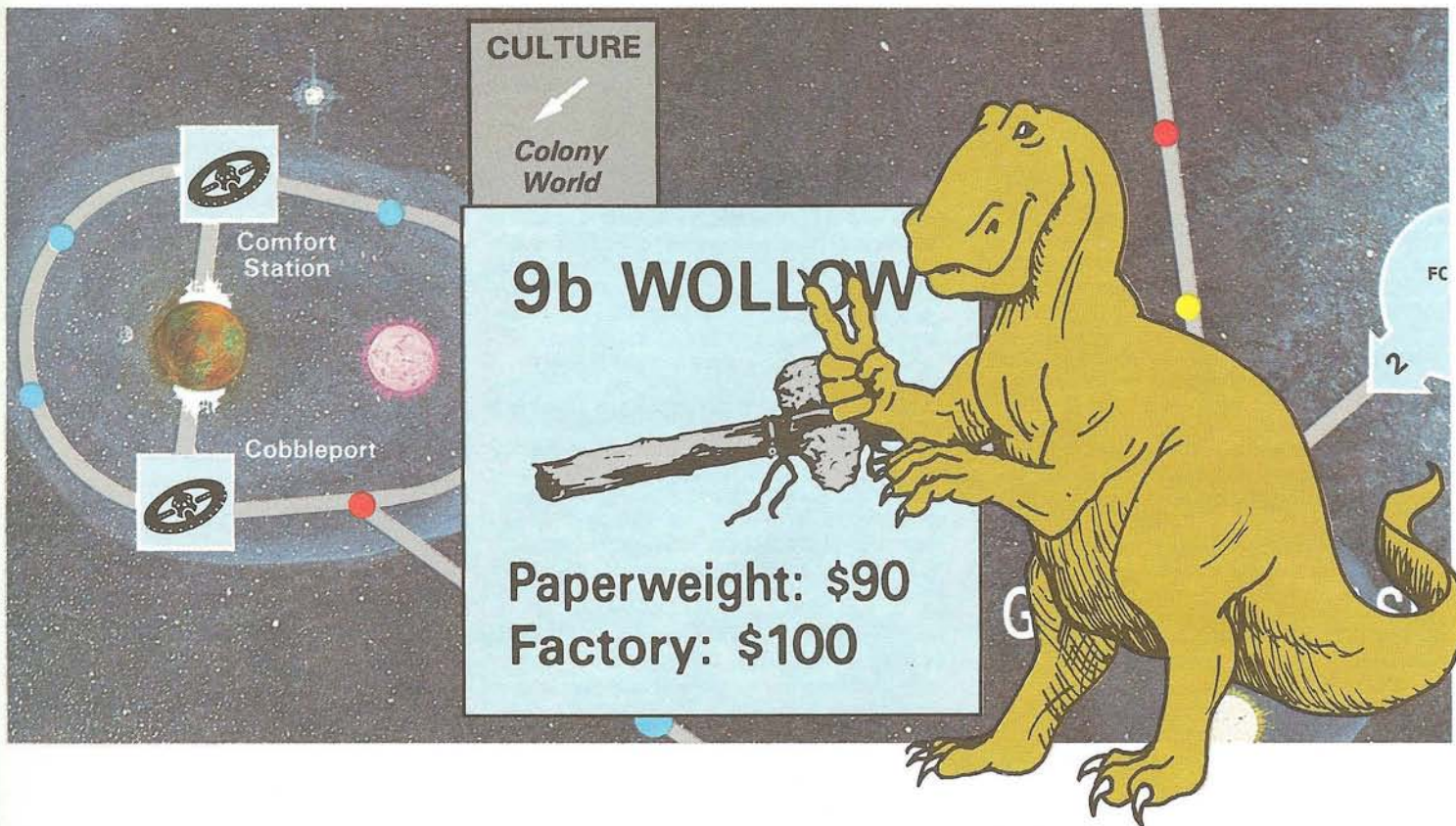
FUN AND PROFIT IN THE
32ND CENTURY

Designer's Notes and Variant for MERCHANT OF VENUS

By Richard Hamblen

For those of you who have come in late, *MERCHANT OF VENUS* is a science-fiction game based upon the interactions of commerce.

No! Wait! Come back! Avalon Hill has *not* gone mad. The game is loosely modeled upon the European Spice Trade in the Indian Ocean back during the 16th and 17th centuries. Of course, you have probably heard almost nothing about the Spice Trade, so let me explain . . .

Believe it or not, *Commerce* is an interesting subject that is perfect for a game. It is intrinsically competitive, and it has a clearly defined objective; whether you are greedy or not, success depends on making as much money as possible. It is also challenging; there are dangers and opportunities in travel and trade, and you must invest your time and resources wisely to maximize your profits—and your chance at victory.

"Commerce" is the business of making money by travelling. It arises when overabundance drives down the cost of goods at one place while need drives up their price elsewhere. A businessman can make a profit simply by buying the goods at the first place, carrying them to the second, and there selling them. This is so logical that it appears simple, but the situation is not stable. Buying the goods at the first place reduces the overabundance and drives the cost back up; and selling the goods at the second place reduces the need and so drives the price back down. Additional trading provides diminishing profits, and the profits can stop completely when the overabundance runs out out or the need is fulfilled.

Other merchants are also after these diminishing profits, which makes commerce an extremely competitive contest. Even if there are enough profits to go around, each merchant wants to buy before the actions of others can drive up the cost, and he wants to sell before the others drive down the price. Thus, the merchants are automatically in a race against each other. Money can buy advantages in this race, so each merchant must make as much as possible just to hold his own against the competition. The merchant who makes the most money can buy the most advantages and so gain even more of an edge; in the end he can corner the most valuable commodities and markets, leaving his competitors to fight over the scraps.

Maximizing profits is tricky, however, because it depends on balancing conflicting factors. There are four ways to increase your profits: 1) buy and sell more profitable items; 2) increase the number of items you carry; 3) reduce the time each trip takes, either by increasing speed or by taking shorter trips, so that you can make more profit-producing trips; 4) reduce your expenses. These factors often conflict with each other, so to find the most profitable combination you must find the best balance between the factors for your situation. You must, in terms of *MERCHANT OF VENUS*, balance the size and speed of your ship against its cost, the profits an item earns against the distance it must be carried, and so on.

This balancing act is tough enough in simple cases. When you are faced with a network where different

distances separate places that buy and sell different goods at different prices, it can become complicated. When you then change the available factors by moving from place to place, maintaining the best balance becomes a real problem. When you try to make long-range plans to account for these changing factors, the problem becomes downright tricky. Finally, when you add in the fact that other merchants are merrily buying and selling, thus altering the prices, the equation becomes mind-boggling.

So commerce can be the basis for a very competitive and challenging game. The players can move around the board, buying and selling goods to make as much money as possible, while they search for the best combination of goods, routes and ships. The board itself can present problems and opportunities for them to cope with, and items that they can buy to help them out can be introduced. Every turn players will face the strategic question of how to invest their time and money, and the tactical questions of how to best implement their strategic decisions.

The astute reader will object that commerce doesn't always work this way in the real world. That's true, and it points out a problem: when the merchants find the best strategy and corner the best markets, commerce becomes repetitive and the challenge and competition both vanish. However, the trading network will eventually change enough to make the old strategy obsolete; and then a new race will begin. Commerce actually alternates between long periods of cornered markets and short

periods of frantic competition. Obviously, a game of commerce can be made interesting, so long as it models a period of competition. However, the same problem arises within the game itself; once the players find the best strategy, the challange and competition of the game will vanish, and from then on it won't be played much.

At this point, students of Games Theory may recognize the "Transportation Problem", the most solved unsolved problem in mathematics. The Transportation Problem asks: given a network of places that buy and sell goods, how do you find the most profitable path through the network? There are some elegant solutions for specific networks and any network can be solved by exhaustively comparing all its paths; but the problem remains unsolved becase an easy formula to solve all networks has never been found.

The fact that any network can be solved spotlights the problem with any game of commerce, but the fact that no general solution exists suggests the way out: create a new network with each game, and hide it so that players cannot analyze it until they have discovered it. There are plenty of historical precedents for this. A merchant who discovers a new market can make high profits for awhile, so merchants such as Marco Polo were among the first to explore new territories when they opened up. On many occasions whole areas were opened together, which led to the wildest kind of commerce.

There is, however, one example that towers above all the rest. In the entire commercial history of the world, the most spectacular period of discovery was the Spice Trade. When Europe's merchants followed Vasca de Gama around Africa into the Indian Ocean, they found a mosaic of cultures buying and selling a multitude of goods. Europe had little hard currency to spare and produced very little that the East wanted, but a merchant could start with a pittance and build it up by astute trading right in the Indian Ocean. When he had enough money, he could buy precious goods to take back to Europe, without paying the exorbitant mark-up that Middle Eastern middlemen had been charging for centuries. The profits were fantastic.

The result was a merchant's paradise. A merchant could leave Europe with a little hard currency, build it up by trading in the Indian Ocean, and buy goods that were worth a king's ransom in Europe. The only problem with this plan was the competition from other merchants, so the Spice Trade developed into a huge race with the players constantly seeking advantages over each other. They invested in better ships and better equipment; they established ports and factories to help them in trade. They also invested in weapons, but the profits were so fantastic, and the distance from Europe so great, that commerce actally dictated war policy. Wars were prosecuted only so long as they produced profits.

This was *Commerce* at its purest. It was the perfect situation for a game of commerce . . . except that there was a paradox. To model the Spice Trade, the game should feature the historical trading network; but to model the competitive commerce, the network must change with every playing. There was no escaping this; the game could not model the historic Spice Trade directly. So I based *MERCHANT OF VENUS* on the Spice Trade, but I transferred it to a science-fiction setting.

THE GAME

Most of the mechanics of *MERCHANT OF VENUS* have already been discussed in my "Putting Spice in Space" (Vol. 25, No. 1) and in Mr. Werbaneth's article preceding this one. The discussion below restricts itself to how the game models commerce.

The game situation arises from the Spice Trade: each player mans one ship, and the players start poor and race to amass a set amount of money (in the

Spice Trade, this would be the cost of the goods they wanted to take home). The first one to get this amount has demonstrated the best trading skills, so he has a fair claim to being the best merchant.

The players move around the map to explore and trade. The movement system portrays both speed and navigation, and there are penalty locations that force the players to either slow down or pay for repairs. Different areas on the mapboard have different movement features; navigation is needed to control movement in the central Cloud, the adjacent areas are thick with penalty spaces, and speed is essential in the outer systems. To simplify play, movement is limited to specified trade routes, and random variations in speed and navigation are defined by die rolls. The game portrays only those merchants who survive, not those who are ruined, so catastrophes such as shipwrecks and bankruptcy are not allowed.

To create a new network for each playing, the trading cultures are randomly hidden in a network of trade routes. Each culture buys and sells different goods, so there is no predicting how the network will develop and interconnect. In addition, "Tele-Gates" and additional penalties are hidden about on the map to alter the trade routes themselves. Tele-Gates are short-cuts to distant parts of the map; they have roughly the same effect that the trade winds had during the age of sail.

To represent the benefits of exploring, each culture pays a reward in local products to the merchant who discovers it. And special "Relics" are hidden where explorers can find them; these Relics give their owners minor advantages similar to the shiphandling tricks that the locals taught the merchants during the Spice Trade.

A player makes money by going to a culture that has goods he wants (or can afford) to buy, buying them, taking them to a culture that wants them, and selling them. To decide which goods he wants, he must consider what he can afford, and then weigh the profit he will earn against the time transport will cost him. His profits depend on how many loads he buys and the amount he earns per load. The cost and profit of each load depends on the goods; each culture sells a different type of goods, and more profitable goods cost more to buy. The player's ship can carry several loads, but it costs extra time to buy and sell extra loads, so he must decide whether the extra loads are worth the extra time. His travel time depends on the distance and navigation difficulty of the trip. To minimize travel time, the player should end each trip at a place where he can buy goods for his next trip.

A simple game mechanic adds "Demand" that increases the price certain cultures will pay for certain goods. When the culture buys those goods, both the goods and the Demand disappear. These gradually reappear later.

Each player can buy ships and equipment to help him, as well. He can save trip time by switching to ship with better speed and navigation; or he can carry more goods by purchasing a bigger ship (or even a slow giant). He can buy drives to gain speed, and shields to protect him from penalties. Such ships and equipment must earn back their purchase price before they start earning profits for you, and the money they return depends on how efficiently they are used. Before buying them, a player should plan how he will use them to determine if they are a wise investment.

Each player can also buy ports and factories to generate even more money. Ports speed up trading, and factories produce especially profitable goods—and for both, each time anyone uses them, they pay a commission to the owner. Since they generate money on their own, their value also counts towards the Victory Conditions. They never lose money, but to maximize the profit a player should weigh the profits he expects to earn from them against the profits he could earn from other investment.

The Optional Rules recreate the limited combat of the Spice Trade, where combat served commerce. The players can steal goods, ports and factories from each other; they can build forts to defend against such attacks; and they can buy weapons to destroy the forts or indulge in piracy. They cannot simply destroy ports and factories—that would be unprofitable. Attempts to include small armies failed in our playtests because the players tended to use the commerce to finance full-scale wars instead of just fighting to make a little money. In addition to wrecking the commerce, this was simply unrealistic. *[Editor's Note: OK, so shoot me; it struck me as a good strategy at the time.]* Any merchant captain who tried such nonsense would have been strung up by his stockholders—and his own men (who were in it for the money, after all). There was no way to force the players to have the proper obsession with profits, so the armies were left out.

The optional *Rastur* automatically try to conquer the map before the players can win. They are the imperial colonists, and are enemies of commerce. They provide an implacable enemy for a player to race against when he plays the game solitaire.

The final design recreates the competition and challenge of commerce quite well, I think. The players are in a race after money, and as they get money they can use it to make more money. First, they must race to discover the cultures. When trading, the players race to get goods while they are available, and then race to sell them while the demand lasts. The faster they make money, the sooner they can buy more profitable goods, faster or bigger ships, and the ports and factories of their trading empire that will earn more money.

Each player wants to make as much as he can each turn, but this isn't easy. While exploring, he should stay ready to start trading if an opportunity arises. While trading, he must weigh the profits each trip earns against the time it takes. To end each trip where he can buy goods for his next trip, he must plan in advance. When he spends, it pays him to determine which investment will earn him the most profit. To do this, he must plan how each investment might be used and then compare the results. When the optional combat rules are being used, he can employ them to make money and/or slow down his opponents—and he should plan on how best to avoid being slowed down himself in the race for money, which determines victory.

A final note. I chose the title *MERCHANT OF VENUS* for the game because it is, in order of importance: easy to remember; appropriate to the subject; and a pun. The working title had been "Space Trader". (Or was it "Space Merchant"? Or "Star Merchant"? Something like that.) But I found that unimpressive and a little hard to remember. When *MERCHANT OF VENUS* was first suggested, I lept on it, albeit queasily. The title, of course, is a pun on Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice". This is certainly appropriate, for the merchant in the famous play is in the Spice Trade, and he desperately needs his ship to finish trading and come home before it is too late. That's exactly the position the players face in the game! Presumably, the winning ship makes it home in time, and the other players must hope to get Portia for a lawyer. Where's Shylock? Well, no game can have everything!

Fun and Profit. Not a bad combination.

THE VARIANT

MERCHANT OF VENUS provides a nice, solid base upon which to build variants. In addition to providing a simple movement system for combining speed, navigation and carrying capacity, it provides a balanced economic model with which to play. These two aspects combine to be very handy when you're modelling such expensive pastimes as war, politics or civilization. During the development of *MERCHANT OF VENUS* many alternative rules

were tried and discarded. The variant here presents some of the best of these alternate rules, and the counters to implement them. *[The mounted, die-cut variant counters will appear in Vol. 26, No. 3 of The GENERAL. Non-subscribers may order these variant counters by mail only, specifying "The GENERAL, Vol. 26, No. 3" counter sheet and enclosing $3.00 (plus the usual 10% shipping/handling fee) for each set desired.]*

These rules add quite a bit of versimilitude and fun to the game, but they also add some complexity, unbalance the play a bit, distract the players from the commercial aspects, and/or increase the playing time. That's why they weren't included in the original game. Generally, each variant rule can be used by itself, or it can be freely combined with the other rules. (Personally, I like to use Variant Rules 1 and 3 whenever I play; the others I like sometimes, depending upon my mood and the number of players.)

1. FAST SET-UP:

To set up the game quickly, mix the goods markers in with the bonus markers, pick 20 markers, and leave the rest in the cup. Each time a new Culture is discovered, pick four more markers from the cup and place them appropriately. Otherwise, put all markers in the cup and pick replacements as deliveries are made normally. Factory goods remain unavailable until the respective factories are built.

Comment: This rule is highly recommended. It shortens the set-up time considerably, and the early appearance of the Bonus markers makes the game faster and more interesting. The rule does serve to slow down early trading, but this serves to encourage exploration and the construction of factories, which leads to more efficient routes later on. The rule does make the solitaire version more exacting, however.

2. THE LOST "?" BOX:

Treat the asteroid in the Multi-Generation Ship system as a "?" box. A "?" marker starts the game there, and is discovered in the normal way.

Comment: The extra "?" marker can lead to a lot of interesting variations because the dot is so crucial in play. During the last stages of playtesting, this was discarded because it makes the game so very unpredictable.

3. VARIABLE NOVA BALLS:

During blast attacks, the player who rolls higher *doubles* the firepower of any Nova Balls he fired (so each Nova Ball is worth 40), and the player who rolls lower halves the firepower of any Nova Balls he used (so each is worth but 10). If both players roll the same number, their Nova Balls are all worth 20.

Comment: I recommend this rule, for it adds interest and uncertainty to combat when Nova Balls are in use.

4. OWN SPECIES BONUS:

On the turn you land in a city inhabited by your own species, you can buy and sell any number of items. Rule 9.41 does not limit you to one buy and one sale when you are with your own species.

Comment: This rule is highly recommended, especially for novices. The only problem is remembering it when you trade with the planet your species has settled.

5. CUSTOMIZED SPACESHIPS:

Different merchants have different ships with different capabilities. The same Cultures still sell the same sort of ships for the same prices, but when a merchant obtains a ship it is automatically customized to suit his species. He cannot choose to take a "normal" ship—he *must* take his cus-

tomized version. To see how the ships differ, cross-index the ship type and his species on the "Custom Ships" Table below. The differences are easily summarized:

5.1 The *Human* player uses the normal ships that come with the game.

5.2 The *Whynom* player sacrifices a little navigation control in the Cloud and Tele-Gates to gain a little speed in space.

5.3 The *Eeepeep* player sacrifices a lot of navigation control to gain a lot of speed in space.

5.4 The *Nik* player has fast ships that navigate well, but they are small; half of the holds are restricted to non-goods.

5.5 The *Dell* player drives scows that sacrifice speed for extra navigation; these usually have room for something extra on the hull.

5.6 The *Qossuth* player has unpredictable torch ships that can go extremely fast, or extremely slow. They are uncontrollable in the Cloud and the Tele-Gates. However, they do allow him to carry an extra piece of equipment.

Comment: This variant rule allows the players to select a race whose ships suit their personal style

of play, which can lead to a very entertaining game. However, the random set-up of the Cultures often gives the advantage to one group of ships or another. If this doesn't bother you, then by all means use this rule (you can even pencil in the changes on the ship cards).

6. HAGGLING:

Each time a merchant buys goods from a Culture, he pays a penalty and collects a refund. He specifies the goods he wants to buy and calculates his refund; then he rolls one die to define his penalty and states whether or not he will buy the goods. Whether he buys or not, he can continue trading normally. Note: Haggling applies only to goods; factory goods and other items are not affected.

6.1 The merchant's refund equals $5 for each Goods marker the Culture has for sale at the moment, plus $5 for each port, factory or fort he owns on the dot he is trading at, plus $5 if his species inhabits that system.

6.2 The merchant's penalty equals $5 times the roll of one die, plus $5 for every enemy port, factory or fort on the dot he is trading at, plus $5 if he is at a city or Open Port.

CUSTOM SHIPS

HUMAN:			
Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal
SCOUT	CLIPPER	TRANSPORT	FREIGHTER
WHYNOM:	FAST	FAST	FAST
SCOUT	CLIPPER	TRANSPORT	FREIGHTER
Roll 2 Dice	Roll 3 Dice	Roll 2 Dice	Roll 2 Dice
Double One	Double One	Double One	Use 1×2
EEEPEEEP:			
ROCKET	ROCKET	ROCKET	ROCKET
SCOUT	CLIPPER	TRANSPORT	FREIGHTER
Roll 2 Dice	Roll 3 Dice	Roll 2 Dice	Roll 1 Die
Use 1×4	Use 1×3	Use 1×4	Use 1×3
NIK:			
SPORTS	SPORTS	SPORTS	SPORTS
SCOUT	CLIPPER	TRANSPORT	FREIGHTER
Roll 4 Dice	Roll 4 Dice	Roll 4 Dice	Roll 3 Dice
Use 3	Use 2×2	Use 3	Use 2
Restrict 1H	Restrict 1H	Restrict 2H	Restrict 3H
DELL:			
SCOW	SCOW	SCOW	SCOW
SCOUT	CLIPPER	TRANSPORT	FREIGHTER
Roll 4 Dice	Roll 4 Dice	Roll 4 Dice	Roll 4 Dice
Use 2	Use 3	Use 2	Use 1
	+1 Fare	+1 Equipment	+1 Goods
QOSSUTH:			
TORCH	TORCH	TORCH	TORCH
SCOUT	CLIPPER	TRANSPORT	FREIGHTER
Roll 1 Die	Roll 1 Die	Roll 1 Die	Roll 1 Die
Use 1×3	Use 1×4	Use 1×3	Use 1×2
+1 Equipment	+1 Equipment	+1 Equipment	+1 Equipment

Notes:

Roll: The number of dice rolled for movement.

Use: The number of dice used for movement. Only these dice add to your movement points, and the player must choose one of these dice as his Pilot number. If called upon to roll more dice than the player can use, he must select which to use and discard the rest (discarded dice do not count for movement and cannot be used for a Pilot number). In no "use" number if given, the player may use all the dice he rolled.

×2; ×3; ×4: To calculate movement points for the turn, multiply the dice used by the indicated value. In no multiplier is given, the player has movement points equal to the dice used.

Double One: One of the dice counts double towards movement points; the player may select which die is doubled. This die can still be used for a Pilot number, at its undoubled value.

Restrict 1H, 2H, 3H: The indicated number of Holds may carry only Fares or Equipment. These cannot be used to carry Goods or Mercenaries.

+1 Equipment, +1 Fare, +1 Goods: The player may carry one extra marker of the indicated type on the Hull (without counting toward Hold space). For example, "+1 Equipment" allows the ship to carry a Drive on the Hull, an extra Shield, or an extra Laser, etc.

6.3 If the merchant buys, he collects his refund from the Bank and pays the normal cost plus any penalty to the Bank (normal commissions are paid at the normal cost, but no commissions are paid on penalties nor refunds). If he turns down the deal, he cannot attempt to buy those Goods again for the rest of that turn; and if he just landed at a city, the attempt counts as his one buy for the turn (9.41).

6.4 If the merchant can buy several Goods, he may buy them all at once, in the same deal. He collects only one refund and pays only one penalty, regardless of how many markers are involved.

Comment: This rule adds versimilitude and some nice tactical touches, *if* you are willing to put up with the bother and delay.

7. *EXTRA FORTS:*

Add the variant Fort markers to those Forts that the merchants can build.

8. *AGENTS, BASES, & 2nd SHIPS:*

Before the game begins, each merchant is given the agent, base and second ship counters that match his color. He is the only one who may use these markers, and he cannot use them until he buys them from a Culture. These do not count towards the monetary requirements for victory at the end of the game.

8.1 Each time a merchant conducts the trading portion of his turn, *all* agent, base and second ship markers he has on ports or cities may also trade; this is in addition to any trading the merchant himself does. (His markers can conduct trade even if he is in space and cannot trade.) He may intermingle their trading and his own in any order he pleases. The merchant's turn continues until he and all of his markers have finished their trading. If his turn is interrupted, his markers can continue trading until they are done. If a marker's trade is interrupted, this does not stop that of the merchant nor his other markers.

8.11 When a marker makes a purchase, it receives the benefit (if any) of its owner's species. If the optional Haggling rule is in effect, it must haggle to buy goods. Should a marker purchase a Port, Factory or Fort, the counter for this is put in the system where the marker is trading.

8.12 When a marker buys a Swindle or a Revolt, its owner resolves the attack as if he were on that dot. If he owns any weapons on the dot, he may fire them to pay for revolts. If the attack should result in a tie, the marker stops trading for the rest of that turn. If the attack is defeated, the attacking marker is eliminated.

8.13 A Rastur on a dot prevents markers from trading; but it does not eliminate them.

8.2 The merchant keeps the cash supply for himself and all of his markers. He takes all money and IOU markers they may receive, and he pays for all penalties and expenses they incur—regardless of how far from his location they are.

8.3 *Agents:* Each merchant can buy agents only from his own species. The cost is $80 per agent. Agents have no trade-in value.

8.31 A merchant can carry his agents on his ship like Fares, and he can jettison them on any port, city or asteroid. A dot can hold any number of agents.

8.32 When an agent trades, he can make one purchase or sell one item (or make one move on his own). He may do only one action per turn. He can trade regardless of whether he is on a ship or on the map.

THE MERCENARIES

Culture	ID	Name	Strength	Cost
1a NILLIS	CI	Carnivorous Ivy	30	$90
1b VOLOIS	GL	General Luck	60	$180
2 GRAW	MG	Mud Guard	30	$90
	SL	Slug Guard	30	$90
	SA	Stock Aides	20	$60
	TS	Time Servers	20	$60
3 NIKS	PJ	Practical Jokers	40	$120
4a DELL	AA	Armored Auditors	40	$120
	AP	Adventurous Pessimists	30	$90
4b HUMANS	SC	Street Cops	50	$150
	SG	Street Gang	40	$120
5 SHENNA	PP	Panzer Pack	60	$180
	WP	War Pride	50	$150
	PB	Puss-in-Boots	40	$120
6 YXKLYX	FT	Field Team	50	$150
7a ZUM	ST	Swarm Troopers	40	$120
	SW	Swat Team	20	$60
7b EEEPEEEP	TT	Think Tank	60	$180
8 WHYNOMS	AC	AirCav	70	$210
9a CHOLOS	SF	Storm Flu	40	$120
9b WOLLOW	TTTT	10-Ton Tapdance Troop	40	$120
	BC	Ballet Company	30	$90
10 QOSSUTH	MD	Mad Dreams	50	$150
	NM	New Math	50	$150

Description of Mercenaries: (see the Gazetteer in the game for descriptions of the Cultures)

AA/40: *Armored Auditors* are CPAs trained and equipped to deal with the tough cases.

AC/70: The *AirCav* are airmobile Whynoms with proven massed firepower tactics.

AP/30: *Adventurous Pessimists* are fatalistic soldiers of fortune.

BC/30: The *Ballet Company* is a Wollow cultural exchange group that presents energetic productions of violent themes; they are temperamental artists who do not respond well to criticism.

CI/30: *Carnivorous Ivy* are Nillis practicioners of Social Darwinism.

GL/60: *General Luck* is a travelling field effect sold by the Volois. Apparently it is either an invisible entity, or an anomalistic probability field.

MD/50: *Mad Dreams* are Qossuth psychoses so strong that they impinge upon Reality.

MG/30: The *Mud Guard* are the lowest remnants of the once-mighty Graw Imperial Guard.

NM/50: *New Math* is the latest Qossuth revision of the laws underpinning the Universe.

PB/40: *Puss-in-Boots* is a Shenna soldier-of-fortune, the epitome of the clever, individualistic feline—and highly successful to date.

PJ/40: The *Practical Jokers* are Niks who use their wild imagination, zany humor, and bioengineering skills to craft pratfalls for the enemy.

PP/60: The *Panzer Pack* are Shenna military reformers, formed into a modern armored unit.

SA/20: *Stock Aides* are swarms of courtiers left by the extinction of the Graw Army.

SC/50: *Street Cops:* are battle-hardened veterans who would prefer an honest war.

SF/40: The *Storm Flu* consists of Cholos who invade a target and do random mischief.

SG/40: The *Street Gang* consists of Human teenagers who want to get off the streets.

SL/30: The *Slug Guard* were the first Graw guards, became ceremonial when the Imperial Guard was formed, and survived when the Imperium passed away.

ST/40: *Swarm Troopers* are the standard Zum fighters, fanatics who attack en masse.

SW/20: The *Swat Team* are Zum infiltrators.

TS/20: *Time Servers* are the hereditary goldbricks and dregs of the extinct Graw Army.

TT/60: The *Think Tank* is a mobile armored computer wargame, with ports for attaching an unusually large variety of input and output devices.

TTTT/40: The *Ten-Ton Tapdance Troop* is a Wollow group known for its clumsy enthusiasm.

WP/50: The *War Pride* is the traditional Shenna family fighting unit.

8.321 When an agent is on the same dot with a friendly ship or base, he can buy goods or equipment and place them in the ship or base; or he can sell from the ship or base. If there is no friendly ship or base on the dot, he cannot sell anything and any goods or equipment he buys is immediately jettisoned. [*Clarification:* When a merchant lands at a city where he has an agent, the merchant can buy one item and sell one item, and the agent can buy one item and sell one item.]

8.322 When an agent buys a ship, it becomes his owner's second ship (see 8.4 below). If the owner already has a second ship, the agent cannot buy a ship. Agents can never sell ships.

8.323 Agents cannot pick up nor jettison Fares.

8.33 When an agent moves on his own, he may go to any port, city or asteroid in the system he currently occupies. If he moves to an undiscovered city, he discovers the local Culture and his owner takes the IOU. Agents cannot move from system to system by themselves.

8.34 When the optional Combat rules are used, agents do not pay penalties and cannot be attacked. However, if an agent is in a Hold when it is hit by a blast attack, the marker is eliminated.

8.4 *Second Ships:* Each merchant can operate two ships at the same time. One of the ships must be large (a Transport or Freighter) and one must

be small (a Scout or Clipper). Second ships are bought from the usual shipbuilding Cultures for the usual prices, and they have the normal trade-in value. Only agents can purchase a second ship. When an agent buys a ship, his owner takes the ship card and places his second ship marker on that agent's dot; the agent marker is eliminated immediately.

8.41 The merchant places the items he is carrying on his own ship card, and the items the second ship is carrying on its card. To avoid confusion, place a coin on the second ship card to distinguish it.

8.42 Each time a merchant takes his turn, both of his ships may move. He can move either first, but the first ship must complete its movement before he rolls the dice for the second ship. When both ships have finished moving, he may trade. If one ship's move is interrupted, the other ship is not affected.

8.43 A second ship conducts trade exactly like a merchant. It may pick up and jettison Fares. It may even sell the old ship and buy a new one (of the proper size). When a merchant and his second ship are on the same dot, they may exchange items—and even ships. This is the only manner in which items may be exchanged.

8.44 When the optional Combat rules are used, second ships fight just like merchants. However, the presence of a second ship in a system does not prevent enemy revolts there.

8.5 *Bases:* Each merchant can own a permanent base on the map. Bases can be bought from any Culture for $120, and they have no trade-in value. Only agents can buy bases. When an agent buys a base, his owner may put his base marker on any port, city or asteroid in that system and the agent marker is eliminated immediately. A dot can hold any number of bases, but each merchant can own only one base at a time.

8.51 A base is an immobile ship with seven Holds. It cannot move, but it trades like a merchant (EXC: it cannot take Fares aboard). There are no cards for the bases, so the items in the base must be kept to the side, next to its owner's ship card.

8.52 When the optional Combat rules are used, bases can attack and be attacked just like ships. Since a base cannot move away, each turn it is on the same dot with an enemy penalty marker it must pay the penalty. Like a ship, it can make one blast attack per turn before it starts trading.

8.6 A merchant can voluntarily eliminate any of his agent, base or 2nd ship markers at any time during his turn, regardless of how far away he is. He cannot voluntarily eliminate them when it is another player's turn. Whenever a base or 2nd ship is eliminated, all of the items are jettisoned. Eliminated markers are immediately available to be bought again.

Comment: These rules add another level of complexity to the game system, and thus can slow play considerably; on the other hand, due to the increased efficiency of the trading system that may be crafted, profit can geometrically increase and so end the game quite quickly in its latter stages.

9. MERCENARIES:

Place the Mercenary markers in the Bank. The back of each Mercenary marker shows its cost and the Culture that sells it. The front shows its firepower. Mercenaries have no trade-in value, and do not count towards victory.

9.1 Each merchant can carry his mercenaries in his ship(s) like Fares, except that each Mercenary marker fills up one Hold (like a Goods marker). He may also place mercenaries on his base.

When mercenaries are in a ship or base, they fight normally, on the dot where the ship or base is located. They can attack and be attacked.

9.2 Each merchant can jettison his mercenaries and leave them on the map. When a Mercenary marker in on the map, it must be supplied by a friendly port, factory, fort or agent marker on its dot. Each port, factory, fort and agent can supply only one Mercenary marker. If a merchant has more Mercenary markers on a dct than such ''supply'' markers, he must immediately eliminate the excess mercenaries. Mercenaries are automatically in supply when in a ship or base.

9.3 Each merchant can use his mercenaries and their firepower during the trading portion of his turn. His agent, base and 2nd ship markers can also use them. Mercenaries cannot use their firepower during movement.

9.31 Mercenaries do not inflict penalties, and they cannot fire their weapons during blast attacks. They cannot be the target of a blast attack; but if they are in a Hold when it is hit by a blast attack, they are eliminated.

9.32 A mercenary's firepower can be used to pay for revolts on its dot.

9.33 After a merchant finishes moving for the turn, he can use his mercenaries to make an attack—new to *MERCHANT OF VENUS*. He can attack whether he landed, ran out of movement points, or stopped to avoid paying a penalty. He must use at least one mercenary to attack. If he landed at a port or city, he can make the attack at any time during his trading; and each attack counts as ''buying'' one item.

9.331 The merchant can choose any penalty marker or enemy mercenary on his dot as his target. He does not have to pay anything to attack, and he does not get any money if he wins.

9.332 To resolve the attack, the attacker and the defender each roll one die. Each player's strength equals ten times his die roll, plus the firepower of all Forts and mercenaries he owns on that dot. If the attacker wins, the target is eliminated and his turn continues. If the defender wins, the attacker loses one of the attacking mercenaries (defender's choice) and his turn ends. If it is a tie, the attacker's turn simply ends and no losses are taken by either side.

9.4 Each mercenary on a dot adds +1 to its owner's die roll during Swindles and Revolts on that dot; it adds $5 to his refund when he haggles there; and it adds $5 to the penalty when other merchants trade there.

9.5 Mercenaries can be the target of Swindle and Revolt attacks.

9.6 A merchant can voluntarily eliminate any of his mercenaries at any time during his turn, regardless of how far away they are. He cannot voluntarily eliminate them when it is not his turn. Eliminated mercenaries are immediately available to be bought again.

Comment: Depending on the inclinations of the players, the use of mercenaries can lengthen the game considerably—or have little effect. Their use against the Rastur should be obvious, especially if the variant rules for 2nd ships are also in play.

☆

SERIES REPLAY
Solitaire MERCHANT OF VENUS
Human Player—Ray Pfeifer
Neutral Commentator—Richard Hamblen

Ray Pfeifer, much taken by our latest SF offering, volunteered to showcase the game for our readership. But alas, having proven to be a robber baron of the worst sort, he couldn't find an opponent. No problem, at least with MERCHANT OF VENUS, for the game has a maniacal solitaire system, whereby the would-be Trump of the 32nd Century pits wits with the Rastur, a system-driven plague of conquering worms. After several attempts, Ray seemingly obtained a result he was pleased with, and so reports on it here. Richard Hamblen, whose comments are in italics, looks over his shoulder.

To win the solitaire game, a player must discover the cultures, and then trade with them to amass $2000. His enemies are the 20 Rastur markers that start the game off the map in an "Active Pool". At the end of each turn, there's a one-third chance that two markers in that Pool will combine into one marker, and a two-thirds chance that the Pool will send one marker onto the map and "grow" a new marker. This creates two problems for the solitaire player. First, the Rastur will win as soon as there is less than one marker in the Pool; the player must win before this can happen. Second, the player must place each Rastur counter coming onto the map in an orbit box or port, where it blasts anyone who tries to pass it. So, the Rastur interfere with travel about the map, and each Rastur after the ninth will either shut down a system completely (occupying all orbit boxes/ports) or block an important route. On the average, two out of every three turns a Rastur will appear, so, on the average, the Rastur start shutting down portions of the map on Turn 14; and, given the number available in the Pool, the player must win by Turn 29. (This can vary. If the Rastur flood into the Cluster quickly, the map shuts down sooner but the game lasts longer for each is weaker. On the other hand, if the Rastur combine too much, the map stays navigable longer but the game ends sooner as there are fewer Rastur counters to place.)

Therefore, at the start of the game, the solitaire player is in a race to discover the best trade routes he can before the Rastur shut them down. To explore quickly, he should avoid things that slow him down (such as penalty markers that halt movement, Navigation Circles that can misdirect him, and unnecessary turns spent trading). He needs shields that can protect him from penalties and a Clipper ship to help him move (especially when travelling through concentrations of Navigation Circles and "?" markers). Once he has these, and has discovered a profitable trade route, he must settle down to do some serious profiteering. It is the speed with which he accomplishes these steps that determines whether the Rastur will, or will not, once again win the game.

MERCHANT OF VENUS has been one of my favorite games since being involved in the playtest several years ago. During that playtest, I tackled the solitaire system three times, losing badly each outing. I knew it was a challenging system, and so decided to get all the help I could before starting. The game's designer, Richard Hamblen, graciously provided some insights into successful solitaire play.

He indicated that the $2000 version of the solitaire game usually lasts about 28 turns. His advice was to race for victory without trying to fight the Rastur. The key elements needed for such a victory are the acquistion of a shield and a Clipper in the first six turns, exploration of a large segment of the Cluster by Turn 15, with some serious trading commencing between turns 14 and 16. Further advice was to invest in three or four ports, both to speed up travel/trade and to earn profits from commissions. One last element to carefully consider was the placement of the Rastur counters, with the most powerful being placed in remote corners of the board, and the weaker clustered in the center.

I was determined to follow his advice wherever possible, limited, of course, by the placement of the various cultures and the "?" markers. So, ready to master this challenge, I selected the blue pawn (Human) and, with my Scout ship and $20, headed out to test my skills in the Cluster.
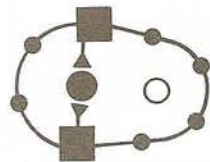
Turn 1:

I decide to head for the Colony World first. *[DR: 1, 5, 6]* My dice roll is high enough to allow me to observe the culture there from the Comfort Station, and then either land at Cobbleport or continue on toward the Giant Planet. The culture turns out to be the Shenna (#5). I decide to land and pick up their IOU since I have only two movement points left anyway. After landing, I immediately exchange the IOU for one Melf Pelt.

Rastur Roll: "6"; draw a 110-strength counter and a 130, moving these to the Reserve Pool, and a 240 to the Active Pool.

Since it is illegal to backtrack during a turn, Ray loops the Colony World to observe it before deciding whether to land or fly on. His decision to land is questionable. It costs only two MP (Movement Points) to land and two to take off, but this is probably just enough to keep him from reaching the Giant Planet next turn. If he lands there as well, landing here this turn will likely have cost him a turn. Melf Pelts are not worth much and it may take a while to sell them, so he probably would do better to use the lost turn to obtain better goods later on.

Turn 2:

Wanting to concentrate my attentions on the center of the Cluster in the early game, I decide to head for the Giant Planet. *[DR: 1, 3, 5]* My roll is disappointing, leaving me on a dot three short of Goliath.

Rastur Roll: "5"; draw a 100 and a 130, moving these to the Reserve Pool, and a 230 to the Active Pool.

Well, with that dice roll, he couldn't land on the Giant Planet this turn even if he'd kept flying last

turn (though he could have reached the "?" marker). Getting the Melf Pelt might have been the right move, after all.

Turn 3:

I'll just continue movement towards the Giant Planet. *[DR: 3, 4, 5]* With this much, I decide to check out the "?" marker in the system. This will be a bad move if it turns out to be a 30 or 40-strength penalty marker. But I may never be back to the Giant Planet, so this is the best time to find out what secrets are hidden here. The marker turns out to be the relic Switch Switch; as it can be very useful, I decide to end my turn here and pick it up.

Rastur Roll: "2", draw a 100 and place at Rainfall in the Trapped Rogue system. Move a 50-strength Rastur to the Transit Box.

A solitaire player always wants to turn up the unknown markers because Tele-Gates, open ports, and Relics can all help him immensely. However, nearly half the "?" markers are penalties that force him to pay a fine or stop moving. If he tries to run through too many "?" markers early in the game, when he has no shield and no cash, he can end up losing turns. At the moment, Ray can pay all but the worst fines, so running one "?" is a good gamble. When he discovers it is a useful relic, he is right to stop for it; it is a big help in the Navigation Circles.
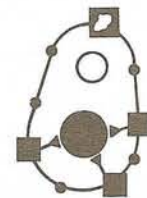
Turn 4:

I head now toward Grandport. *[DR: 5, 5, 5]* Observing the culture from there, I find it is the Whynoms (#8). Although they sell neither Clippers nor shields, they do buy Melf Pelts, so I decide to land to get some cash to cover any penalty ovals I may chance upon. In the trading, I sell the Melf Pelt for $110, pick up their IOU, draw a "Fare to Base ($110)" for 7B, use the IOU and $30 to buy one Impossible Furniture. I now have $100 cash on hand.

Rastur Roll: "2", draw a 90 and place at Dryport in the Desert World system. Move a 50 to the Active Pool.

Whenever a player leaves a Navigation Circle, he must choose one of the dice he rolled that turn and follow the arrows containing that number. For example, last turn Ray rolled a "3", a "4" and a "5", he would have had to select one and followed the arrow with that number. The number he chooses is his "Pilot Number". Normally, a player must keep using the same Pilot Number throughout his turn, but the Switch Switch enables its owner to switch Pilot Numbers during his turn. However, here Ray rolled three fives, so his Pilot Number must be "5". When he finds the Whynoms on the Giant

Planet, he can either land and gain some money and better goods, or keep moving, exploring two systems and end up broke. He is probably right to stop and trade, but his exploring is progressing too slowly.

Turn 5:

I'll move off this planet towards the Multi-Generation Ship. [DR: 2, 3, 5] Using the "5" as my Pilot Number, I can land at the Space City. (Even with the Switch Switch, I will not be able to observe from the Neutron Port and then move to the city, because I rolled no "6".) Here be the Volois (1B). I use their IOU and $20 to buy one Voll Silk, leaving me $80 cash on hand.

Rastur Roll: "4", pick a 150 and place it at Minion in the Inhabited Moon system. Move another 50 to the Transit Box.

As usual, the best way to explore the Multi-Generation Ship is just to land on it. Finding the Volois there is a piece of real luck—Ray can sell his Impossible Furniture and buy a strategic Human port at the Neutron Star, or even a combined drive! But Ray didn't notice that he could sell his load. Ah well, everyone misses a good play now and then; that comes with any game.

Turn 6:

I must move to the Navigation Circle. [DR: 2, 3, 5] If I had gotten a "6", I would have gone on to the War-Torn system as I wanted. But given my dice roll, I select the "2" as Pilot Number and head towards the Space Station planet. Rather than stop at the city, I elect to explore instead and head for the "?" marker next to Shuttlestop. This turns out to be the relic SpyEye. I have never seen much value to this piece of h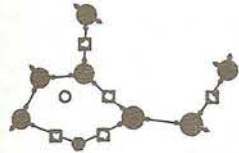ardware, so I continue movement to Shuttlestop, observing the culture from here. It turns out to be the Nillis (1A). Finally, someone who sells shields! I have one MP left, so I continue to the next "?" marker, which turns out to be the relic Air Foil. Since I am ending my turn here anyway, I'll pick it up.

Rastur Roll: "4", take a 60 and place it at Jewel-port in the Jungle World system. Move a 50 to the Active Pool.

With full holds, Ray wants to stop at a culture only if it buys his goods or sells shields and/or Clippers. Rather than make what might be a fruitless landing at the city, he wisely keeps exploring. If he likes the culture when he sees it from Shuttlestop, he can easily land on the next turn. Ray's luck holds—with a vengeance. There are only ten relics among the 36 "?" markers, and he finds two. That makes him three for three! In addition, he learns that the local culture is the Nillis, who buy Impossible Furniture and sell shields. Perfect. I have but one cavil; I would have stopped for the SpyEye, which aids exploring enormously.

Turn 7:

I'll move to the Shuttlestop, hoping to get either a "1" or a "6". [DR: 1, 2, 5] Pick the Pilot Number

of "1", and move to Space City, ending my movement. In trading, I pick up the IOU, then barter it for a shield. Then sell the Impossible Furniture for $180 (drawing a "Demand" for Mulch Wine at 5). I realize now that I could have sold this load on Turn 5 at 1B; I simply missed it. I really lucked out by having the Nillis pop up here and save me from my oversight. My cash on hand now equals $260.

Rastur Roll: "6", draw a 50 and a 120, moving these to the Reserve Pool; move a 170 Rastur to the Active Pool.

Ray's combination of exploring and trading has cost him some time, but it has put him way ahead in money. If he hadn't landed on Turn 1, then with the same dice rolls he would have ended Turn 2 on the Switch Switch, and on Turn 3 he could have observed the Whynoms and Volois both and then landed where he is now. Therefore, he has spent four extra turns to gain $240 and the Air Foil. He'll probably make more by investing that $240 than he could by investing the four turns in some other manner, so he is not only avoiding the rigors of early poverty, he will actually earn more in the end. His strategy is definitely working, although it must be pointed out that he has been extremely lucky to find cultures who will buy the goods he is carrying. However, there is a dark side to this. Ray still has a lot of travelling to do. His extra money will allow him to spend extra turns exploring later on, but by then the Rastur will often be in the way. In seven turns, the Rastur will start shutting down some systems.

Turn 8:

I now have a shield, but really need a Clipper to continue my explorations. I will head towards the relic SpyEye to see what develops. [DR: 1, 2, 5] I pick a Pilot Number of "5" and move towards the Poisonport in the Polluted Planet sytem. The "?" marker I cross turns out to be the relic Jump Start. If any Tele-Gates appear, this will come in very handy. Since I have only two MP left, I decide to stop here and pick up the relic.

Rastur Roll: "4", draw a 70 and place it at the Comfort Station in the Colony World system. Move a 50 to the Transit Box.

Ray rolls poorly, makes the best of it, and comes up holding the relic Jump Start! This will allow him to start each turn by jumping to any face-up Tele-Gate that shows his Pilot Number. From now on, it is definitely in his interest to turn up every "?" he can. Not only is he now four-for-four in finding relics, but he has found some of the best ones of all.
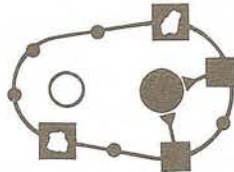
Turn 9:

I will move to the red dot first. [DR: 2, 3, 5] Observe the culture from the Poisonport; and I find the Dell (4A). I decide to keep moving, and continue through Paintfall to the next "/" marker, which is an Open Port. Not wanting to waste five movement points, I continue on towards the Inhabited Moon system. I end on the red dot just three short of Moonport.

Rastur Roll: "4", draw an 80-marker and place it at Desolation Landing in the Desert World system. (This is usually the last system I explore, and in my solitaire games it often goes unvisited.) Move another 50 to the Active Pool.

The Open Port is very valuable because Ray can buy and sell any number of items on the turn he lands there, instead of being limited to but one sale (as

at a city). However, for Ray, the Dell offer rotten goods so he is quite right to press on. If he doesn't find a better customer at the Inhabited Moon or Water World, he can always stop at the open port on his way back. Ray can use the open port to do any trading with the Dell, so Paintfall and Poisonport are now available for dumping Rastur onto. Speaking of the Rastur, despite what he says, it's a mistake to put that second Rastur in the Desert World system, closing it down before he knows what is at the Water World and Inhabited Moon.

Technically, a trading circuit has now been revealed: the Dell sell to the Shenna, the Shenna to the Whynoms, the Whynoms to the Volois and Nillis, who in turn sell to the Dell. Ray could just cycle through this circuit for the rest of the game, buying and selling; but the trips are so difficult and the goods offer such low profits that he probably couldn't win. A little exploration should turn up a far better circuit.

Turn 10:

I am moving towards the Inhabited Moon. [DR: 1, 3, 6] Observation from Moonport shows it to be inhabited by the Graw (2). So I land on the planet near Moonport. I would like to explore the "?" markers in this system, but I feel a need to press on, and the 150 Rastur at Minion is a further inhibiting factor. I'll pick up the IOU. Since I have enough money, I decide to build a port here and place it on Moonport. Perhaps this one and the open port at the Polluted Planet will be the foundations of my trading network. Cash on hand now—$60, and a $200 deed.

Rastur Roll: "3", draw a 140 and place it at the Poisonport in the Polluted Planet system. Move a 50 to the Transit Box.

Counting his Voll Silk and Graw IOU, Ray has $570 to spend on Graw goods, and he can sell them quickly at the open port. It would be better if he could invest in a better culture in a better circuit, but the Graw are available now and they do offer a fast profit, as Ray promptly demonstrates. But first he builds a port, where he will do his "fancy" trading next turn. Notice that the Rastur have already started to interfere with Ray's explorations. Those "?" markers he had to leave face down might be Tele-Gates.

Turn 11:

I will move to my port at Moonport, so the dice roll is irrelevant, . . . [DR: 1, 3, 6] There I sell the Voll Silk for $220, plus a $22 commission. Draw a "Fare to Base ($180)" for 4A from the cup. Then I use the IOU and $110 to buy a factory, placing it at Moonport, receiving $20 commission plus a $9 commission for the IOU. Next, I buy the factory goods (Glorious Junk) for $100, getting a commission of $10 plus a factory commission of $50. Last, let's buy a Space Spice (costing $30, but getting a $3 commission). This all leaves me with $154 in cash and $400 in deeds.

Rastur Roll: "2", draw a 140 and place it at Whaleport in the Water World system; move a 50 to the Active Pool.

Ray's trading this turn is excellent. By trading in his Voll Silk and the IOU at the port, he collects commissions on them, as well as everything else he buys. Buying factories and their goods is a clever way to increase his net worth, although it reduces his cash on hand. However, it's a mistake to dump

a Rastur in the Water World system, where it will surely interfere with exploration.
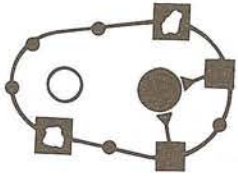
Turn 12:

Movement toward the Polluted Planet. *[DR: 3, 4, 5]* I'll land on the open port, "discovering" the Dell and picking up their IOU. I'll trade that and $40 for a laser (if I can find the relic laser, these may come in handy by disposing of some small Rastur markers). Then I sell the Glorious Junk for $200 (drawing a +40 demand chit for Space Spice at 4B). Then I sell the Space Spice for another $80 (drawing a demand for Designer Genes at 10). Last, I buy two Finest Dust for $20. Cash on hand: $374.

Rastur Roll: "5", move a 230 and a 240-strength Rastur to the Reserve Pool, and a 250 to the Active Pool.

With a full load of goods for the Dell, Ray properly goes straight to the open port, discovers the Dell, and sells his goods for a tidy $200 profit. Buying the Dell factory and factory goods would earn him an extra $100 when he finds a customer, but until then it would only serve to cripple his actions by tying up his money and hold space. With heavy trading in the offing, Ray wisely chooses the Finest Dust instead, which is so cheap he can afford to jettison it if he later needs the cargo space. Buying the laser is, however, a moot point. It effectively costs him only $60 and he can trade it in for $50 at some point, but it will probably never get used. It really takes three weapons to fight the Rastur.

Turn 13:

According to Richard, this is almost the half-way point; I still don't have a Clipper, and I have only $774 of the $2000 I need to win. Whenever possible from here on out, I need to trade. I will move toward the War-Torn system. *[DR: 5, 5, 6]* With this dice roll, I move to Terror Station and so observe the culture there (which is the Wollow, 9B). I decide to keep moving; the "?" marker is a penalty (10). I end my movement at the blue-colored penalty oval.

Rastur Roll: "5", pick a 60 and a 90 for the Reserve Pool, and move a 160 to the Active Pool.

Around this point of the game, a solitaire player normally stops exploring and concentrates on trading; but Ray is so far ahead in money that he can keep searching if he wishes. He has two choices: he can head for the War-Torn system to look for new opportunities among the undiscovered cultures, or he can head for the Water World and, if he finds someone who buys from the Dell, he can exploit the trade circuit he has already built. However, his choice will probably commit him for the rest of the game; the area he turns his back on will become the dumping ground for the Rastur.

Actually, the choice is obvious. Although Ray has been fantastically lucky at avoiding "?" penalties and finding cultures he can sell to, he has been very unlucky in finding the most profitable cultures. Four of the best six remain undiscovered (including the best two). To give himself the most chances to find

these, he should head for the War-Torn system and keep looking. He could check out the Water World and reach the Navigation Circle leading to the War-Torn system, but he wisely avoids that diversion (failing to roll a "6" next turn would delay when he would start uncovering things).

Turn 14:

I will move toward the "?" marker. *[DR: 2, 4, 5]* It turns out to be the relic Yellow Drive; I have enough movement to circle the system and end up back here, so I continue around to the other "?" marker, which turns out to be Tele-Gate #5. Continuing around the planet, I end my turn at the relic Yellow Drive and appropriate it.

Rastur Roll: "4"; pick a 110 Rastur and place it on Paintfall (since there is an open port there I can use if necessary); move a 50 to the Transit Box.

Utterly unbelievable! He finds a Tele-Gate and the relic Yellow Drive! Ray takes advantage of his luck. The Wollow aren't what he is looking for, and that Yellow Drive is definitely worth stopping for.

Turn 15:

Next, I'll head for the Asteroid system. *[DR: 1, 3, 5]* I can observe from the Airhome, finding the Qossuth (10). I move on to the red dot, the "?" marker (relic Auto-Pilot), to a red 10 penalty, to the space city, to another "?" (a yellow 20 penalty), to the space city. At this point in the game, it is not worthwhile to stop for the Auto-Pilot, as I want to do some trading. I'll pick up the Qossuth IOU, jettison one Finest Dust (drawing a demand for Mulch Wine at 5), trade the IOU and $40 for one Psychotic Sculpture. I now have $334, and $400 in deeds.

Rastur Roll: "4"; pick a 170 Rastur and place it at Titan's Tower (I should never move through that spot again); move a 50 from the Transit Box to the Active Pool.

Ray finally finds a good culture for trading, and properly concentrates on landing there (with a little browsing for Tele-Gates along the way). But I think Ray misses a bet here. I think he should buy a port at Airhome, then fly there to trade in his laser and so buy two Psychotic Sculptures; he could then sell these to the Volois and buy silk there to sell to the Dell. He could go back to the Qossuth to repeat the process, buying pots and factories when he can afford them, and stopping off at the Wollow when he wishes. The only risk all this runs is that of not rolling Pilot Numbers when he needs them.

Ray's decision to buy just one Sculpture and keep exploring is much more flexible, but it also runs a grave risk. The only undiscovered culture that buys Psychotic Sculpture is the Niks. I guess whether you choose Ray's strategy or mine depends on what worries you most: rolling the right Pilot Number, or finding the Niks held prisoner on the Desert Planet.

Turn 16:

I'll move first to the "?" marker "south" of the city. *[DR: 2,4,5]*. The new marker is Tele-Gate #3; so, I pick a Pilot Number of "2". Continuing on, I find Tele-Gate #2 on the next "?" marker, a 40-blue penalty on the next (losing $20), and move off towards the Ice Planet, ending the turn on another "?" next to the Ice Station (a red-40 penalty). My cash is down to $314 now.

Rastur Roll: "5", picking a 50 and 80 for the Reserve Pool, moving a 130 to the Active Pool.

Ray skillfully zig-zags through the asteroids to avoid backtracking while he investigates the "?" markers there. Now that he has found some Tele-Gates, he will have to select his Pilot Number carefully; each time he leaves a Tele-Gate, he must move to any face-up one that shows his Pilot Number. Note that he did not have to pay for that last penalty space because he ends his turn on it.

Turn 17:

Moving to the Ice Station. *[DR: 3, 6, 6]* And so, observing from space, I find the Niks. I can sell the Psychotic Sculpture here, but I don't want to waste this excellent dice roll, so I move around the system to the "?" marker. It is the relic Laser. Then I move back to where I started (paying $20) and onto the planet. After picking up the Nik IOU, I sell them the Psychotic Sculpture for $250 (drawing a demand for Finest Dust at 5). Using the IOU and $120, I buy a port at the Ice Station. I'm hoping to be able to get back to the Asteroid system for more Psychotic Sculptures to drop at this new port of mine. Cash on hand now totals $424; deeds, $600. I'm over half-way to victory.

Rastur Roll: "4"; pick a 250 Rastur and place it at the Open Port in the Polluted Planet system (at this point, I don't expect to ever make it back there). Move a 50 to the Transit Box.

I can't believe it; Ray finds the Niks right away. (Something about "better lucky than . . . ") Once more he exploits his luck. Circling the system to find an Open Port or a Tele-Gate is worth the $20 it costs him, and he quite properly ignores the relic Laser (things are developing such that he probably won't need it). Then he does just the right trading. The Niks are important as customers, so he invests in a Human port to use on his next trip, rather then waste time buying Mulch Wine.
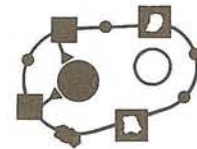
Turn 18:

I'm moving off this planet towards the Jungle World next. *[DR: 3, 5, 6]* From Jellybeast Landing, I observe the Yxklyx (6). At last, somebody that sells Clipper ships. So, I land on the planet and pick up their IOU, promptly turning it and the Scout in for a new ship (better late than never).

Rastur Roll: "6", draw 130 and 120 to the Reserve Pool, and move a 240 to the Active Pool.

On reflection, Ray would run out of time and Psychotic Sculptures before he could win by shuttling between the Qossuth and the Niks. He needs enough money to buy a port at Aerie, a factory, and two loads of Qossuth goods—around $600, including trade-ins, so he needs to do some more trading before he goes back to the Qossuth. If Ray had rolled low, he could stop at Ice Station and buy a Mulch Wine to make a little extra money; but since he rolled high, he might as well go on to the Jungle World and see its IOU.

It seems strange to get a Clipper this late in a solitaire playing, but it's still a good idea—especially since he's still exploring. With the Jump Start, he wants to roll the right Pilot Number when he needs it. Since he landed at the city this turn,

trading in his Scout prevents Ray from selling anything else; and buying the Clipper prevents him from buying anything else.

Turn 19:

No movement this turn, just trading. I sell the Finest Dust for $50, and draw the Glorious Junk factory goods from the cup to replace it on the board. Then I'll purchase an Immortal Grease for $50. Cash on hand: $424.

Rastur Roll: "2"; place a 50 Rastur on Greathome. Place a 50 in the Active Pool.

How odd. Buying one Immortal Grease is actually Ray's best move. He has to spend a turn to sell his Finest Dust anyway, so he might as well buy some goods for resale. He wants to buy Immortal Grease, since buying a factory and factory goods would tie up the cash he wants to invest in the Qossuth products. And he knows he won't find any open ports where he is going, so it would take him an extra turn to sell any extra Grease. Since he doesn't need the extra money, he shouldn't waste the extra turn; so he shouldn't buy the extra Grease available. Q.E.D.

Turn 20:

Since three of the four cultures remaining undiscovered will buy this Immortal Grease, I decide to move toward the Trapped Rogue planet to dispose of it and pick up their IOU. [DR: 1, 3, 5, 5] Since there is a 60-strength Rastur at Jewelport, I take the long way around. And I can see if anymore Tele-Gates pop up. The first "?" marker is a penalty oval (blue-30), so I pay the $10 and move on to the second "?" (a red-30), paying another $10 to get to Rumbleport to observe the culture. It turns out to be the Cholos (9A). Using the Air Foil and the Yellow Drive, I have just enough movement to land on the planet. Selling the Immortal Grease for $100 (and drawing a demand for it at 7B), I use the IOU to pick up a Designer Genes. Cash on hand is now $504, with another $600 locked up in my deeds.

Rastur Roll: "6", taking a 50 and a 150 Rastur to the Reserve Pool, and moving a 200 to the Active Pool.

Finding the Cholos here is a bonus, since there just happens to be a demand for Designer Genes at the Qosuuth. With some luck, Ray can jump right back to the Qossuth and make some serious money.

Turn 21:

I want to take the Designer Genes to the Qossuth where a demand exists, so I use the Jump Start to try moving to Tele-Gate #3. [DR: 1, 3, 4, 5] With that "3", I jump to the gate and then move on to the space city adjacent to it. To pick up some extra cash on this transaction, I'll first buy a port to place at Aerie for $200. That now gives me $800 in deeds.

Rastur Roll: "1", so a 240 Rastur gets placed at Wet Landing; a 50-strength one moves to the Transit Box.

Ray gets lucky—again. Having gotten just what he needed, right when he needed it, the rest of the move is straightforward.

Turn 22:

Will move to the blue-30 penalty spot first. [DR: 2, 4, 5, 5] Pay $10 to move on through the penalty, ending my turn on Aerie. There I sell the Designer Genes for $120, plus another $60 to satisfy the demand; and I get a commission on this deal of $18. (The draw from the cup to replace these give a demand for Space Spice at 3, and a "Fare to 4A ($140)" at Base.) Next I'll build the Qossuth factory at Aerie, spending $200 (but getting back a $20 commission). Then buy the factory goods for $120, getting a commission of $12 plus another $60 factory commission. Last, I'll fill up my hold with a Psychotic Sculpture (using $120 cash, and trading in the Air Foil for $40); this nets another $20 ($16 commission on the sculpture purchase, and $4 on the sale of the Air Foil). Now I have only $164 in cash, but $1000 in deeds. And I'm ready to make a big profit at the end of this trip.

Rastur Roll: "1", a 160 Rastur at Neutron Port, and a 50 into the Active Pool.

Expertly finishing off his trading with the Qossuth. One minor, but strange, point: I think Ray may have moved through that penalty oval just to avoid Tele-Gate #3. He needn't have worried; even if he had rolled four "5s" and had been forced to jump to Tele-Gate #5, he would have had enough movement to make it back to Aerie.
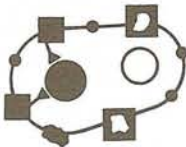
Turn 23:

I will move towards the port at Ice Station. [DR: 1, 4, 5, 5] Taking the long way around to avoid the 40 penalty marker, my ship ends at my port. There I sell the Infinite Puzzles for $250 (commission of $25), the Psychotic Sculpture for $250 (commission of $25). Draw two chits from cup: "Fare to 4B ($120) at 6" and a demand for Immortal Grease at 7B. Next, I use the trade-in value on the Switch Switch ($50), the Laser ($50) and $100 in cash to buy a factory at Ice Station (commissions on all this amounts to $30). Lastly, buy the factory goods for $80 (with a $40 and a $8 commission) and one load of Mulch Wine for $20 (with a $2 commission). This leaves me with $594 in cash and $1200 in deeds. One more trip, and this trader can go home a winner.

Rastur Roll: "5", move a 70 and a 50 to the Reserve Pool, and a 120 to the Active Pool.

The big payoff. By trading in his Air Foil last turn, the Switch Switch and Laser this turn, Ray has converted his equipment into real estate. And by doing it at Human ports, he even got commissions on both ends of these transactions.

Turn 24:

With but four Rastur left in the Active Pool, I simply need to reach the Jungle World system in one turn and there sell my two trade goods to win. [DR: 3, 3, 4, 6] This allows me to make it to the planet in fine shape. There I sell the Living Toys for $180, giving me $774 cash.

Rastur Roll: "4", placing a 120 at Terror Station in the War-Torn system; move a 50 to the Transit Box.

What else?

Turn 25:

No movement. Just sell the Mulch Wine for $60, which gives me $834. Combining this with the $1200 in deeds I hold, I claim victory in the solitaire *MERCHANT OF VENUS*.

Ray wins the game, sitting in port, and doubtless sipping some alien sort of julep.

Conclusion:

So much for my pre-game planning. I had meant to acquire a Clipper and shield quickly, but this was shattered by the placement of the cultures in the Cluster. My Clipper was acquired very late (Turn 19), but certainly did come in handy at the end of the game. The placement of the cultures 3, 6, 9A and 10, of the Tele-Gates, of the relic Yellow Drive and Jump Start, were the keys to winning. I should point out that this playing was my fourth attempt at the Series Replay, the first three having ended in various degrees of defeat.

The prime tenet I have learned by these four playings is to take what the solitaire system gives me and adapt plans to meet the realities of the unfolding situation. The relics and Tele-Gates, in particular, can often hold the keys to victory. Even early in the solitaire game, the player will be faced with some hard decisions, which must be based on limited intelligence of what lies ahead on the mapboard. It is how one handles these that will set the pace. As for the Rastur, they are both an annoyance, and conversely, the most important factor in the game—for the speed of their development and spread will determine how much time you have. Again, you must adapt your plans to meet the realities of their play. Just as you would against several live opponents. In short, the solitaire version of *MERCHANT OF VENUS* is both an excellent challenge in its own right—and the best training ground for the multiplayer game.

Ray won decisively, with surprising ease. It cannot be denied that he was very, very lucky—he found relics instead of penalty markers early in the game when he was weakest, and he consistently found customers for the goods he was carrying. But as important as his luck, each time he expertly made the most of it. I think he made some technical errors, such as in the matter of the SpyEye and in the placement of the Rastur markers on the map, but on a trading level he did an excellent job of settling on a sound strategy and pursuing it with some degree of skill.

I am not convinced that Ray's combination of exploration and trading is better than a strategy of pure exploration in the early game followed by a period of pure trading. Too much trade early in the game slows down your exploring (in this playing, Ray was still exploring on Turn 20). I much prefer to reconnoiter first, so I know where to dump the Rastur to leave my trading route intact. However, there's no denying that Ray's strategy won this game, and mine might have lost. I think I'll try a little more trading early, the next time I play MERCHANT OF VENUS solitaire.

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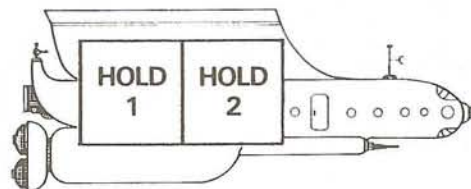
Dear Rex:

Mr. Cox makes an important point in the "Meet the 50 . . ." (Vol. 25, No. 4) about your non-wargames. There is simply no other forum for these games except The *GENERAL*, and your new expanded format more than makes up for any spare room taken by coverage of these products. They may not be my cup of tea, but as a part of your growing line they have a legitimate place in the pages of the magazine. It brought to mind Rich Jennings' letter and your thoughtful suggestion from 25-1. The man plays *DINOSAURS OF THE LOST WORLD* with his sons. Who am I to deny him that pleasure for just another wargame article? After all, it's your business, and if you want a change of pace from wargames once in awhile, I'll still stay on board.

The *ASL Annual* arrived the other day—it's excellent! I was especially proud to see my name listed as a man of Company A. And I got a big kick out of "Piper's Lament"; please include these counters in your next annual bonus countersheet—I'll pay anything! Who says we're a humorless bunch? It was, short as it is, my favorite article.

A neat idea for a future *ASL Annual* would be a Series Replay of Scenario #7 between Mr. Sylvester and Mr. Murrell. One of them has overlooked something, I suspect. Maybe both. And the scenarios . . . great scenarios. I had always hoped that the original *SL* scenarios wouldn't be "lost" as we moved to *ASL*, so I'm especially pleased that you are updating them in The *GENERAL* and the *Annual*.

I wonder how common my situation is. I'm not really a big fan of *ASL*, although I have all the modules. It's just what everyone plays. I enjoy it, but I don't consider myself a fanatic. If truth be told, I'm probably the world's worst *ASL* player but the fact that *anything* can happen in the game is very appealing. Congratulations to all involved in the *1989 ASL Annual*—and especially to you. A fine job indeed.

Robert Lesco
Bramalea, Ontario

★★★★★

Dear Rex:

I was very impressed by your response to the "cry in the dark" in the latest issue (Vol. 25, #5) of The *GENERAL*. As you know, we at *Games International* are a bunch of commie-loving Euro faggots. Anyone in the slammer deserves a break, to our way of thinking. So, we've sent your correspondent a few copies of our mag. I'm not sure whether or not you could describe this as a break, though.

Brian Walker, Editor
Games International

★★★★★

Dear Mr. Martin:

I am very concerned regarding your comments in the "Avalon Hill Philosophy" in The *GENERAL*, Vol. 25, N0. 5. While I have been active in wargaming for over 20 years and consider it an excellent hobby, I feel your response to Mr. Haan's request was grossly inappropriate.

First and foremost, you made a conclusion and formulated a rather strong opinion after only hearing one side of the story. This is a natural tendency but one which must be actively suppressed to avoid profound embarrassment when the rest of the story is known. I have no knowledge of Mr. Haan, his actions nor the prison officials nor their reasoning. These are variables which might strongly alter my perceptions of the prison's rules regarding wargaming.

Secondly, do you really think you are helping Mr. Haan by sending him "contraband", Who will suffer when it is discovered? You? Me? No. He will. I suspect that one thing any inmate can do without is additional confrontation with his jailers. Also, what message do we send Mr. Haan? "You only have to obey the rules with which you agree." That *may* be the philosophy which put him in his current situation.

Rather than criticizing the prison authorities and circumventing their authority, wouldn't it be better to work with them? After all, as much as we would like to welcome Mr. Haan to our hobby, isn't it more important that we help him return to a happy life in society?

Michael Knautz
Appleton, Wisconsin

As I pointed out in the Philosophy, I sent Mr. Haan a price list, a catalogue, some flyers on new games, and a couple of copies of our now-aged

special issue. If these innocuous items are "contraband", then the situation for Mr. Haan is worse than he stated. As I pointed out in the column, obviously not all prison officials agree with such policies, for I have received letters (and some article submissions) from inmates at other institutions. My letters to the authorities in the Nevada Department of Prisons have, however, gone unanswered, so you're right—it is rather difficult for me to understand their "side of the story". The officials at the Nevada prison must make the final judgement, for surely they screen all incoming materials and can halt this pernicious, counter-productive, anti-rehabilitative evil. But, as a last word, I believe Mr. Haan did what any responsible member of society should do when faced with a seemingly unjust action—he appealed to others for help and advice. Strikes me that the great social movements of our times—Civil Rights, Green Peace, anti-apartheid, movements towards democracy in a dozen nations—are based on this precept. Nonviolent disobedience of a "rule with which you disagree" and a call for help from like-minded believers. If we are not to work together to better our world, what would you have us do when faced with the unjust and the unfair?

★★★★★

Dear Mr. Martin:

Thank you for the letter you sent reminding me of the impending lapse of my subscription to The *GENERAL*. I had totally forgotten that it was due for renewal. Yes, I would like to renew my subscription, and will for another two years—but not right at this moment. "Why?" you might ask. Well, recently I received Permanent Change of Station orders transferring my family and I back to the good ol' USA. Unfortunately I don't yet have an address to which I can have anything sent. Be assured though, I will renew my subscription at the first chance I get upon arrival at my new duty station—Langley AFB, Louisiana.

Your magazine has furnished me with hours of interesting reading and has helped in many games. Recently, there was an article on *PATTON'S BEST* which I found interested me enough to purchase the game. I was not disappointed. I also own quite a few other AH products. My first game was *AIR FORCE*, which I still own and play, though I do have some difficulty in finding opponents that would like to learn the game. It is fairly complicated for those who aren't used to wargames. My old stand-by has always been *SQUAD LEADER*, which I have spent countless hours playing. But again, my biggest problem over here in Germany has been finding opponents. There aren't that many, and I'm sure that you'll agree that it's hard these days to find people that are interested in learning to play the wargames. Hopefully, my son will be when he gets a little older.

I know that there's always PBM, but the postal system here isn't that great, and having opponents in the States would just make the game take too long. I will be starting though, once I reach home. I have never played by mail before and hope to enjoy the experience.

Again, thank you for reminding me of my subscription. Obviously, the Avalon Hill gang is concerned with the future of wargaming and its many different constituents. I hope that your offer of missed issues is still good when I renew. I have enjoyed the last two years of the magazine and would like to enjoy many more to come. I also wish to send along my belated 25th anniversary congratulations. Hope you will see 25 more.

Jeff Martindale
APO New York

★★★★★

Dear Sirs:

As I sit here pondering the numerous possible reasons why The *GENERAL* should be late, my thoughts drift to other—more serious—problems with some of the "Hill's" policies and procedures.

My first complaint concerns your method of breaking down rulebooks into sections and subsections. For example, is there no way to do this without resorting to absurdity such as

17.1.2.3.1.1 and 17.2.3.2.2.1? This is a minor point, and in a strange sort of way it can become amusing when trying to look up a certain rule. "Did you find it?" "Sure, it's under 14.4.4.2.3.3, of course. Don't you remember?" In all honesty, however, your tables of contents are a great improvement over the old days.

My real gripe is connected with your total devotion to *SQUAD LEADER* and *ASL* players, at the expense of the rest of us mortal gamers. I have noticed the trend developing over a period of years and it seems unfair to me. Why should gamers, such as I, have to "pretend" something is a certain way, while the "Squaddies" get more add-ons than they could ever possibly use. Take *UP FRONT* for instance. An excellent game that probably did well for you at the stores. Some of us anxiously awaited the following game, *BANZAI*. When it arrived, however, it was a disappointment. Where are the new jungle cards? You have to pretend that buildings are jungle??? By the time the French and Italians arrived, we knew what to expect.

Then you put out *FIREPOWER*. Another very good game. But again, instead of following it up with some new boards, we have to pretend. For desert scenarios, ignore all terrain except hills and depressions; or pretend that the green hexes are dense foliage for jungle fights. Meanwhile, the "Squadies" have more than 30 boards to choose from. Can't we get one or two extras for some other games? How about *MBT*? Another excellent effort by Mr. Taylor and company. Here is another game crying out for more mapboards. But again, in the rules we are told to "make believe". Ignore this, or pretend this is that, etc. Why can't we get the same treatment as your other supporters? Another suggestion for *MBT*: other NATO and Wasaw Pact forces added at some point, like the British and East Germans, depending on future developments.

I imagine that part of your explanation will include a line about cost. I think these designs I have mentioned specifically, and some others, have plenty of support, so you do not have to worry about losing money if you add them. All the articles on *FIREPOWER* in The *GENERAL* indicate at least moderate support.

So, here's to the new year: success to all gaming companies and the industry. To the Hill specifically, in the 90s a little more faith in some of your non-*SL* games.

Stuart Ashley
New York, New York

The simple fact of the matter is that none of the other games you mentioned sold as well as SL/ASL, and consequently variant material for them sell correspondingly less. We treat ASL players no better than other gamers; they pay their own way by buying the extras, which is why we keep making them. In fact, we probably treat non-ASL players better when all the dollars and cents get put in the right columns. Yet, when we try to provide extras for other games (such as "Revolution" for KREMLIN or the TPS Expansion Kit), we get complaints from those who say we are not selling "complete" games. It's the old story. Damned if you do, and damned if you . . .

★★★★★

Dear Mr. Rex Martin,

In the course of looking over my back collection of issues of The *GENERAL* for articles dealing with some newly-purchased games, I ran across copies of letters I had written concerning two different articles. As I reread these, I realized that my contention in one letter was as wrong as the problem it addressed. In the second case, I had the right idea for the wrong reasons.

I realize this is practically ancient history as these things go. I am writing now for two reasons: 1) I dislike letting a mistake go uncorrected; and 2) I felt I owed you an apology for not getting it right the first time. The first article is "British Strategy in WAR & PEACE" by Bill Parsons in Vol. 19, No. 5. The second articles is "The Blue and the Grey" by James McLean (Vol. 20, No. 5).

Mr. Parsons takes two 33% chances of a second British fleet joining Nelson and his one fleet in intercepting the three French fleets and the French transport (the British Gilbratar fleet is to make the first attempt, and only if it fails

does the Cartagena fleet try), and claims the combined chance of a successful interception by a second fleet to be 67%. This claim is in error, as can easily be seen by assuming the presence of yet a third British fleet available to try if the Cartagena fleet were to fail; this would make a total 100% chance of success, which is obviously wrong. I took the chance of the first roll succeeding and came up with 20 chances in 36, or 55.6%. I wrote a letter proclaiming this as the correct percentage and detailing the resulting changes to Mr. Parsons' Table 2 and Table 3. Unfortunately, I was also wrong.

Mr. McLean's Table B for the chance of death of a general involved in combat in the Intermediate Level of *GETTYSBURG '77* is based on almost the same approach as I took. It is equally wrong. If you take his cumulative percentages of "first 1" and break them down, you'll find the figures contain overlapping chances of rolling a "1". The same is true of my 55.6% figure for British interception. Since each case specifically precludes multiple chances of the target result(s), these percentages must be wrong.

The reason that these results are wrong does not lie in the figures themselves. If the percentages given were applied to, for example, three different generals involved in combat in the same turn:

One General dies = 34.7% (each one at 11.6%)
Two Generals die = 6.9% (three combinations at 2.3% each)
Three Generals die = .5%
Total = 42.1%

Likewise, if each fleet was going to try regardless of how the others fared:

Gibraltar fleet intercepts = 22.2%
Cartagena Fleet intercepts = 22.2%
Both Fleets intercept = 11.1%
Total = 55.6%

The difference being in that these rolls are *not* dependent on each other in any way. In the cases covered in the articles, each roll after the first happens only if all prior rolls did not hit the target result(s). This changes the procedure. Since you can only be rolling for a general a third time if he survived the first two rolls, you have to *already* know that you did not roll a "1" result either time. To know this, you must also know what you did roll. This means that the first two rolls are no longer probabilities but rather are accomplished fact. This in turn means that the total of possible result combinations for the third roll is not 6×6×6=216, but 1×1×6=6. This is true for any roll in the sequence, right up to infinity. It is also true for the Cartagena fleet if the Gibraltar fleet fails. The chance of Nelson having two fleets is, therefore, only 33%—not 67% nor 55.6%. The chance of a general dying is only 16.7%, not what is listed in Mr. McLean's article.

This could be a very important point with respect to future article submissions. Mr. McLean's and Mr. Parsons' tables are based on flawed probability analyses. In each case, this does major damage to the article. Extensive rethinking and re-writing would have been required before each could have been published had the flaws been seen. Again, my apologies for not getting this right the first time, and I thank you for "hearing me out" now.

Michael Lee Williams
Salem, Indiana

★★★★★

Dear Mr. Martin,

I feel that I have to compliment The *GENERAL* before I begin. While I have only subscribed for one year, this magazine has shown me that there are many people in our hobby who do care. The only problem I have with wargaming so far is a peculiar attitude on the part of some players. These people seem to group all players under the age of 18 into one group: "immature" players. I must admit that I have heard of incidents in which a younger player has quit a PBM game or otherwise annoyed a "mature" adult, but this is no reason to condemn all of us. I am 15 years old. I may not be a very good player yet, but I will put up a good fight and I never walk away from a game in any way. However, because of this pervailing prejudice among some older gamers, I have had several letters for matches go unanswered and have not been able to find postal opponents. I can sympathize with any "adult" gamer who feels this way, but please . . . give us a chance!

David Van Vessem
Beacon Falls, Connecticut

NEW WARS FOR OLD
A Variant for DARK EMPEROR

By Glenn Rahman

The Avalon Hill fantasy boardgame *DARK EMPEROR* is one of the more interesting items of its ilk. The concept of an invasion of a continent by sorcerors and vampires from another plane of existence is bold and imaginative. The system of magic is intriguing and the layout of the map—a sort of moonscape with seas—is unique. But the game is not without its problems. The movement-attrition system is almost unplayably harsh, and wins no prize for "realism". Any expenditure of movement points subjects a stack to ruinous attrition; armies tend to waste away before they can come to grips with the enemy. Some important principles of play are left ambiguous, and the alliance system is merely a round-about method of achieving approximately the same order of battle in every game.

My hope is to attempt to amend perceived problems in the standard rules, as well as to add options meant to develop the potential inherent in the material. Where no new rule or variation is offered, players can assume that the standard rules hold.

5) SETTING-UP

5.7) *Regional Variant Chits* Randomly select a Regional Variant Chit (counters numbered "1-20") from a cup and place it on the map within the borders of any nation (*EXC:* Zolahaureslor) and read the explanation for it aloud (see Section 22 below). Repeat until every nation has one chit in play.

6) ACTIVATION & CONQUEST

6.14) The Necromancer player may conduct diplomacy with Starkeep, providing he uses a leader other than Padrech dar Choim, Tol Morn or Mezal.

6.31) If a nation is conquered, half the gold in the national treasury is lost and is added to the treasury (or treasuries) of the conquering player. The remainder is retained by the "government-in-exile" of the conquered country.

6.34) If the control of a reconquered nation is restored to its original owner, the Kingdom regains it ability to collect taxes and raise units. However, if the Kingdom has been previously "Looted" by the conqueror, all future taxes raised are reduced by half (round up).

6.4) LOOTING

6.41) Immediately upon the conquest of a Kingdom, the conquering player must either elect to Loot it or not. If he elects to loot it, in his next three Recruitment Phases he may gather in the loot. No Kingdom may be looted for more than three turns per game.

6.42) The loot for the first turn of looting is equal to the Kingdom's Taxation Value. The loot for the second turn is equal to half the nation's Taxation value (rounded down). The loot for the third and last turn of looting is equal to one-quarter of the nation's Taxation Value (round down).

6.43) If a Kingdom has *not* undergone three phases of looting, a reconquest will allow the new controller to complete the cycle of looting. To do so, however, means that the nation cannot be restored to its original owner, and that any leaders or combat units belonging to the reconquered country must be removed from play (along with any magical devices in possession of the removed units at that time).

6.44) Loot may be added directly to the treasuries of the conquering (or reconquering) side.

6.45) Looting has no effect upon a Kingdom in regards to its value for Vampire Recruitment.

6.46) If a Regional Variant Chit reduces the Taxation Value for a Kingdom, the loot value is also reduced. (However, the variants do *not* increase loot.)

7) THE RECRUITMENT PHASE

7.31) To clarify, the Necromancer controls a conquered country and its Vampire Recruitment value if it has been assigned to his control. Otherwise, he controls territory for Vampire Recruitment to the degree that his vampire and undead units (and their uncontested zones of control) occupy it.

7.37) If a Kingdom has been conquered and assigned to the Necromancer, then is later reconquered and assigned to its original owner, the maximum Taxation Value for the nation is halved (rounded up). Being subject to a reign of vampires saps a country of its vitality. (If looted too, there is no additional penalty imposed.)

7.38) The Necromancer is considered to have betrayed an ally if he uses any hex of that ally's home Kingdom towards his Vampire Recruitment. *[Even if a human ruler were depraved enough to allow vampires to prey upon his subjects, a revolt would surely follow quickly enough.]* For the effects of Betrayal, see 6.16.

7.4) MILITIA (Optional)

Many players balk at paying the same price for a combat unit with a strength of "1" that another Kingdom pays for a unit of the same type with a strength of "3". Because we have provided many ways to spend gold in this variant, the following is now offered to save some:

7.41) Infantry and cavalry units with a combat strength of "1" are considered low-quality but cheap militia units. Militia infantry costs five gold points to recruit from the force pool; militia cavalry costs 8 gold points. Note that some Kingdoms will have more available than others.

8) MOVEMENT & ATTRITION

8.18) No unit, either leader or combat unit, may travel more than 36 Attrition Points in one Player-Turn. *[This is an important revision which will change play to a considerable degree. It acknowledges the fact that Loslon is a real place; accordingly, going from point A to point B upon it takes time!]*

8.19) If a combat unit is dropped off by a moving stack, it is still considered part of the original force for attrition purposes. However, in removing attrition casualties, the units eliminated first must be in descending order from those which accumulated the largest number of Attrition Points during the Movement Phase. Therefore, a unit that moved least is the last to be eliminated for attrition.

9) COMBAT

9.28) Taking part in a battle puts the safety of a leader at risk. The more active a leader has been, the more risk he runs.

9.281) After each battle, check each leader involved on both sides with a "Leader Fate Die Roll" to determine any casualties. The leader rolls against his (modified) Hero Rating (HR), as follows:

a) If the leader has modified the combat resolution by means of his Hero rating, to avoid being a casualty the owning player must roll less than or equal to the leader's HR+1.

b) If the leader has not modified the combat resolution but has instead used a magic spell in the hex of combat that Player-Turn, to avoid being a casualty the owning player must roll less than or equal to the leader's HR+2.

c) If the leader has neither modified the combat resolution nor worked any spell in the hex, to avoid being a casualty the owning player must roll less than or equal to the leader's HR+3.

9.282) Any leader may freely substitute his *current* Magic Strength value for his Hero Rating when making the "Leader Fate Die Roll". *[Remember, working spells or being injured in Heroic Combat using magic temporarily reduces Magic Strength; Heroic Combat itself does not reduce Hero Ratings for this roll, however.]*

9.283) If the leader was in the *non-retreating* stack in a combat, the die roll is modified by −1.

9.284) If a leader ends a combat situation alone in a hex with enemy combat units, the escape roll is made for him (as per rule 9.27) only *after* the "Leader's Fate" roll is resolved.

9.285) A leader who fails his "Leader's Fate Die Roll" is a casualty of the combat. Roll a second die. A result of "1-5" indicates the number of complete game turns he is out of play. (Hence, a roll of "1" on Turn 3 means that the leader does not recover from his wounds until the end of the Recruitment Segment of Turn 5.) Place a wounded leader in any friendly city. If the casualty result roll is a "6", the leader dies and is immediately removed from play.

9.286) If the injured (or killed) leader is the Necromancer or Tol Morn, the piece is never out of play for more than one complete turn, and they return as per Rule 16. However, if an enemy leader was carrying the "Sword of Loslom" or the "Sword Famir", any injury to either of these two is handled as per 9.285. The leader possessing the sword, however, must have modified the combat by his own heroic rating, or have worked magic (successfully or not) in the hex of combat. *[Leaders cowing in the rear are in no position to strike down anybody.]*

9.287) To bring back a wounded leader earlier than the number of turns indicated, a friendly magician must go to the last hex the leader occupied (the hex of combat) and work a "Raise the Dead" spell. This acts as a healing spell, which immediately brings the wounded leader back—in the caster's hex (unless the wounded leader was the Necromancer or Tol Morn).

10) STACKING

All stacking limits are removed. The small army and fleet concentrations that players can muster will hardly be crowded or ill-supplied in a hex 100 Imperial Zotz wide!

11) DIPLOMACY

The standard rules on Diplomacy in DARK EMPEROR are perfectly acceptable. However, I here introduce some additional means to modify the "Diplomacy" dice roll.

11.4) GIFTS

11.41) Gifts are items given to neutral Kingdoms

or, in the case of Gold, to Mercenaries. The giving of a gift will produce a modifier, which is added directly to the Diplomacy dice result. Any gift must be given *before* the dice are rolled. If a gift is made and an alliance follows immediately, the successful player must leave the gift in the possession of the Kingdom or leader who accepted it. This restriction is dropped immediately if the leader is killed or the enemy conquers the Kingdom in question, or the gift item is captured by the enemy. If a gift is not followed by an alliance, the gift will be controlled by the player who later gains the alliance, with no restriction upon its use whatsoever.

11.412) A Living Sword or a Hero Sword may be given to the neutral leader as a gift. The Diplomacy dice roll is modified by the number rolled by the spell-caster when the sword was originally made; the higher the original roll, the finer the quality of the blade and, thus, its value. The sword must be physically brought to the capital city of the leader to whom it will be given.

11.413) To be considered a gift, the fleet must be moved to a port of the receiving Kingdom (this movement into the Kingdom for the sole purpose of Diplomacy will not cause the Kingdom to activate against the player). A fleet which was produced by a Wood Rune spell-caster increases the Diplomacy dice roll by +1. This is cumulative; thus, if the player has given the Kingdom two fleets, each subsequent Diplomacy attempt with that neutral Kingdom is modified by +2. Fleets may be given as gifts only to those Kingdoms which have at least one port.

11.414) Gifts of Gold aid Diplomacy, both for neutral Kingdoms and Mercenaries. Deduct the gift from the presenter's treasuries. The amount of the bribe affects the likelihood of success; announce the size of the gift and roll on the following table:

Die Roll:	Amount of Gold:					
	10	20	30	50	75	100
1	+0	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	+1	+1	+2
3	0	0	+1	+1	+2	+2
4	0	+1	+1	+2	+2	+3
5	+1	+1	+2	+2	+3	+4
6	+1	+2	+2	+3	+4	+5

The number found by cross-indexing the die roll with the amount of gold gifted is the Diplomacy dice roll modifier. If the gift does not lead to an immediate alliance, the gold is lost. If it leads to an alliance, half the gold is lost; the remainder is added to the treasury of the receiving Kingdom.

11.5) OFFERS

11.51) Offers differ from Gifts in that ownership of the thing which is offered does not change *unless* the alliance is made at the time of the offer. Offers may not be made to Mercenaries.

11.52) A magic device may be offered to a neutral. It must be brought to the capital of the neutral Kingdom. The offer of such will modify the Diplomacy dice roll by a number equal to its Hero Rating or Magic Strength, whichever is higher. If an alliance results, the item is immediately placed with a leader of the new ally, under the same restrictions as a gift.

11.53) A conquered country may be offered to a neutral. If the conquered Kingdom has either been assigned to the Necromancer or to Zolahaureslor, ownership may be transferred. If the Necromancer has not used its Taxation Value for vampiric recruitment and if the conquered country has not been looted, such an offer modifies the Diplomacy dice roll by +3. If it has been looted or used for vampire recruitment, the roll is modified only by +1.

11.54) The same device or Kingdom may not be offered a second time to any neutral which has refused the first offer of alliance.

11.6) The Diplomatic value of offers and gifts are cumulative, up to a maximum of +6 modification to the Diplomatic dice roll.

11.7) Oftentimes, Regional Variants may also modify the Diplomacy dice roll (see Section 22). These too are cumulative with modifiers from gifts or offers.

11.8) Modifications to the Diplomacy dice roll are in addition to those found on the Diplomacy Table (of the standard rules, page 16).

11.9) The Kingdom of Zolahaureslor requires special Diplomacy to sway it. It may never become a Necromancer ally. The Kingdoms player may always conduct Diplomacy with Zolahaureslor, even if he currently has no leader/ambassador present at its capital. If no Kingdoms' leader is present, however, the Diplomacy modifier for Zolahaureslor is "0". This in turn is modified +1 for every Kingdom allied or conquered by the Necromancer's forces. If a Kingdoms' leader is present, Diplomacy is conducted in the usual manner.

11.10) If a leader is in a neutral capital when the neutral Kingdom joins the enemy alliance, the leader enjoys "diplomatic immunity". The leader is expelled, and moved to the nearest city friendly to his side.

13) ELEMENTAL RUNES

13.2) WATER

13.21) Part Sea: Restrict this spell such that the number of units which may move with the caster across an all-sea hexside may not exceed twice the number rolled on the die when the spell was successfully cast.

13.3) AIR

13.32) Fly: Restrict this spell such that the number of units which may move with the caster may not exceed twice the number rolled on the die when the spell was successfully cast.

13.5) METAL

13.53) Hex Metal: The caster may render enemy arms rusty or brittle, allowing a more successful attack or defense. Give +1 (if the caster is an attacker) or −1 (if the caster is a defender) die roll modifier for any battle fought in tha caster's hex.

13.6) WOOD

13.62) Fruitation: Cast this spell at the end of movement. If successful, it reduces the Attrition die roll by a number equal to the die rolled to successfully cast it. (This causes trees and bushes to bring forth nourishing fruit to provision the marching army.) To attempt the spell, the caster must have moved the entire distance with the stack.

15) MAGICAL DEVICES

15.2) LIVING SWORDS, LOSLOM & FAMIR

15.23) A Hero's Sword increases a leader's Hero rating +1 for Heroic Combat (as performed under both standard rules and this variant's optional Heroic Combat).

18) MAGIC HEX MARKERS

18.15) HEROIC COMBAT

18.152) DUELS BETWEEN LEADERS (Optional)

After movement, but before casting battle-related magic or resolving combat between stacks, the phasing player may challenge opposing leaders to a Duel. Duels may occur only in a hex where a combat situation is possible between opposing stacks. The phasing player names his leader offering the challenge. If an enemy leader is present, the opposing player must immediately accept or decline the challenge (if an enemy leader is not present, the challenge has no effect). If the challenge is declined, the declining leader(s) are spurned by their troops and may not modify the subsequent combat resolution die roll with their Hero Ratings. If the phasing player offers no challenge, the right to do so passes immediately to the defending player. However, no more than one Duel may be fought per hex per turn.

18.1521) A Duel may be fought either by arms or by magic; the *challenged* player chooses the means of combat. To conduct a duel, each player rolls a die. If the result is equal to or less than the appropriate rating (Hero or Magic) of that leader, a blow has been struck. If both players fail their die roll, or if both are successful, there is no effect. They may then either fight another round, or end the Duel by mutual consent. If ended by mutual consent, play proceeds normally, taking into account any temporary damage received by either leader.

18.1522) If one leader makes his roll and the other misses, the loser must take a blow. A blow reduces his appropriate rating (Hero or Magic) by one (1). If the relevant rating is reduced to "0" by the blow, the affected leader dies. A leader who is struck may yield in that or a later round (unless killed by the blow). A leader who yields may not use his Hero/Magic nor Magic-casting abilities, nor any Magical Device he holds, for the remainder of the Combat Phase. Other leaders of the side which yields are not affected in any manner.

18.1523) Using Magic in a Duel is not the same as casting a spell. While being struck in a Magical combat reduces a leader's Magic Rating, merely choosing to duel by Magic does not.

18.1524) There is no limit to the number of rounds that may be fought in a Duel. It ends by mutual consent, by yielding, or by the death of one of the duelists. At the end of the game turn, all damage from a Duel is removed from the leaders of both players.

18.1525) Because they do not normally fear death, the leaders Padrech dar Choim and Tol Morn may not *issue* a challenge, unless the enemy stack contains the Sword Loslom or Sword Famir. If either leader is slain by a foe using one of these swords in a Duel, he is permanently removed from play.

19) MERCENARIES

19.1) DIPLOMACY WITH MERCENARIES

Because leader movement is no longer universal, we shall restrict the re-entry of any leader who acts as an abassador to Mercenaries. The ambassador/leader must re-enter the map at the hex where he left it, at the hex where the mercenary he recruited enters, or at a friendly-controlled city of his home Kingdom. The Necromancer, Tol Morn and Mezal may return to any friendly city in a country currently assigned to the Necromancer's side.

21) SUPPLY

21.1) Combat units in an enemy Kingdom may have to forage to avoid attrition. If a unit in an enemy Kingdom moves during the friendly Movement Phase, it need not forage (it merely accumulates normal attrition). However, if a stack or unit does not move, it must forage locally.

21.11) Units located in a home, allied, or conquered Kingdom need not forage. Ships do not need to forage, unless occupying a port of an unconquered enemy Kingdom.

21.2) In the "Stacking Judgement Segment", an unmoved stack which requires forage accrues "Attrition Points" (*AP*) as follows:

Each Infantry Unit: 1 AP
Each Cavalry Unit: 2 AP
Each Naval Unit: 2 AP
Each Rocrider Unit: 2 AP

21.3) A foraging stack acquires forage equal to the Tax Value of the hex it occupies, plus the Tax Value of all hexes into which its uncontested ZOC extends. From the stack's AP total, subtract this forage value. Any surplus is the Attrition Point total which remains to be cross-indexed on the Attrition Table (see sidebar).

21.4) A stack may supplement forage with external supply. If the phasing player is able to show a path 20 Attrition Points or less to a friendly city (in a friendly or conquered Kingdom) from the stack, the player may spend Tax Points from his trasury to eliminate any surplus AP accrued by the foraging stack. One AP is eliminated for every two treasury points spent (by the Kingdom to which supply is traced). If the player wishes to originate supply from a Kingdom which has insufficient Tax Points in reserve, any other friendly Kingdom(s) may give gold to the supplying Kingdom (as per Rule 7.22). If the supply source is a conquered Kingdom, the Kingdom to which it is assigned must pay for the supply.

21.5) External supply may travel in any combination of sea and land hexes. It accrues Attrition Points like a naval unit or an infantry unit, as required. The supply route must avoid enemy ZOC. Enemy land ZOC block supply travelling by land only, and naval ZOC block supply travelling by water only. Both naval and land units block supply passing through a river or port hex. A friendly unit in a hex negates the enemy ZOC for supply purposes through that hex.

21.6) External supply travelling by sea must pass through a port in a friendly or conquered Kingdom. Likewise, it may reach land via a similar port, or one physically occupied by friendly combat units.

21.7) External supply may not originate in an conquered Kingdom assigned to the Necromancer after he has used it for vampire recruitment. If the Kingdom is reconquered, or given to another Kingdom with a treasury, it may again be used as an external supply source.

22) REGIONAL VARIANTS

22.1) Politics, economic cycles, personal indiosyncrasies of rulers, natural disaster and other factors often have a bearing on military affairs and foreign alliances. The following rules will add an element of unpredictability and individuality to the Kingdoms of Loslon.

22.2) Make twenty (20) counters and number them sequentially from "1" to "20". Place these in a cup. This is the "Regional Variant Randomizer".

22.21) Each chit represents one of 20 variations described below. When assigned to a Kingdom at the start of the game, the Regional Variant remains in effect for the duration of the game—or until its conditions are met. The vampires, Zolahaureslor, monsters and mercenaries do not receive a Regional Variant.

22.22) Usually the Regional Variant paragraphs below are self-explanatory. Often they provide modifications for the Diplomatic dice roll. Remember, these modifiers are cumulative with all other modifiers assigned each Kingdom on the Diplomacy Table.

22.3) REGIONAL VARIANTS:

1. Successive years of crop failure has reduced this Kingdom to famine and poverty. Reduce the Taxation Value by half (round up). If crossed by a stack, add +1 to the Attrition die roll.

2. A recent plague has devastated this Kingdom. Any unit not deployed at start must be considered a casualty of it, and may not enter play as a "living" unit. However, due to the great rate of death among men in their prime, each city has a well-stocked cemetery. If the city if friendly, a Death Rune spellcaster can raise one land unit in each city by means of the Raise Undead spell; randomly pick these Undead units from the Kingdom's permanently-eliminated stock. Additionally, the disruption has caused a 1/3 reduction (round up) of the Kingdom's Taxation Value. Due to the population reduction, the Kingdom's Vampire Recruitment value is also reduced by one-third.

3. This Kingdom has lately lost a war with Zolahaureslor and now groans under a crushing tribute. When activated, one-third (round down) of its Taxation Value is lost as a transfer to Zolahaureslor (see 7.22), provided it activates to the Kingdoms side. If allied with the Necromancer, no transfer of Taxation is made to Zolahaureslor. *Diplomacy Modifiers:* Necromancer +3; Kingdoms (if Zolahaureslor not active) 0 or (if Zolahaureslor active) −3.

4. This Kingdom's enterprising merchants have created an economic boom based on foreign trade. For each fleet unit the Kingdom has in play currently, its Taxation Value is increased by five gold. If it is a Kingdom without a naval unit in its counter mix, simply increase its Taxation value by 10 gold until conquered. The gift of a fleet (see above) modifies this Kingdom's Diplomacy dice roll by +2.

5. This Kingdom had modernized its armed forces extensively. If they should make up half or more of a force engaged in battle or siege, the combat die result is modified by +1 in their favor.

6. The ruler of this Kingdom is pathologically afraid of old age and death. He will be grateful to any player who uses a Counter Death spell to rejuvenate him or a special Raise Undead spell to make him a vampire. The first player to cast the appropriate spell successfully will gain a permanent +4 Diplomacy dice roll modifier; the other, a permanent −2 modifier.

7. This is one of the most corrupt governments on Loslon. Its armed forces are poorly equipped and led. If combat units of this Kingdom make up half or more of a force engaged in battle or siege, the combat die result is modified by −1 in their favor. Further, stacks containing any units of this Kingdom have the Attrition die roll modified by +1.

8. A fanatical death-cult has ascendancy in this Kingdom. Any Death Rune spellcaster working Diplomacy in this Kingdom receives a Diplomacy dice roll modifier of +3; non-Death Rune ambassadors receive a −1 modifier to Diplomacy.

9. For a long time, the balance of power in Loslon was thwarted by this Kingdom. Its leaders are inclined to view the Necromancer as a rising star. If this nation is offered a conquered Kingdom as a gift, the Diplomacy dice roll modification is +5 instead of +3 (or +2 instead of +1). *Diplomacy Modifiers:* Necromancer +2; Kingdoms +1.

10. This Kingdom is torn by factional dissent and rioting in the streets. Continued disorders reduce its Taxation Value (but not Vampire Recruitment) by one-quarter (round up). Additionally, radical factions see the Necromancer as a logical ally. Before each Diplomacy dice roll, roll to see who is in power; an odd result indicates that the radicals are in control at the moment and the Diplomacy dice roll is modified by +2 for the Necromancer and +1 for the Kingdoms. Regardless of who it allies with, internal politics make it impossible for its armed forces to leave the borders of the home Kingdom unless it is first conquered.

11. This Kingdom is dominated by a deeply conservative State Religion, which demands consultation with the Gods for every political decision. *After* rolling the Diplomacy dice roll, roll an additional die for the modifier to be applied:

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Kingdoms	−2	−1	0	0	+1	+2
Necromancer	+2	+1	0	0	−1	−2

12. This Kingdom's ruler is an avid collector of magical devices. Double the normal Diplomacy dice roll modification for any sword given him or Magical Device offered him.

ATTRITION TABLE

A revised Attrition table is introduced for this variant. It takes into account the revised stacking rules (see 10 in the article). The Attrition table cross-indexes the number of Attrition Points which a moving stack accumulates against the number of combat units in the stack. The result is the subject of the Attrition die roll. If the roll is the given number or higher, the stack suffers attrition loss. If the number found by cross-indexing is followed by a number if parentheses, immediately remove that number of units from the stack. The letter "N" means that no attrition is possible; the word "All" means that every combat unit that was part of that stack is eliminated. The value "1/2" means that one-half of the counters (round up) are eliminated. Note that if the modified Attrition die result is ever less than "1", no counters are lost.

Number of Attrition Points	Number of Combat Units						
	1	2-4	5-7	8-10	11-12	13-14	15-17	18 +
1-3	N	6	5	5	4	3(2)	2(2)	1(2)
4-6	N	5	4	4	3	2(2)	2(4)	1(5)
7-12	6	4	4	3	3(2)	2(3)	1(5)	1(6)
13-18	5	4	3(2)	2(2)	2(3)	2(4)	1(6)	1(1/2)
19-24	4	3(2)	2(2)	2(3)	2(4)	1(5)	1(1/2)	All
25-30	3	2(2)	2(3)	2(4)	2(5)	1(1/2)	All	All
31-36	2	2(2)	2(4)	1(1/2)	1(1/2)	All	All	All

Modifiers (Optional):

The attrition die roll for land movement may be modified by the following:

−2 = if all combat units in the moving stack belong to one Kingdom and the entire movement is confined to that Kingdom

−1 = if all movement of the stack is confined to active, unconquered friendly Kingdoms

−1 = if all movement of the stack is confined to river hexes (note: undead and vampire units do not benefit from this modifier)

−1 = if the stack contains only undead units

+1 = if the moving stack enters any hex of a Kingdom where looting has been conducted

+1 = if the moving stack enters any hex of a conquered Kingdom assigned to the Necromancer

+1 = if the stack ends movement in a mountain hex

13. A recent plebian revolt has culminated in the massacre of the ruling class. All the leader units of this Kingdom begin the game killed. The rebels are at odds with the aristocratic nations that surround it and are eager to gain a powerful ally, even if he is the notorious Necromancer. *Diplomacy Modifications:* Necromancer +2; Kingdoms −2.

14. A palace revolution has driven one of the Kingdom's leaders into exile. Place the leader with the lowest Hero Rating from this Kingdom next to the inactive mercenaries. He is considered a mercenary character with a Diplomacy dice roll modification of +2 for any player who is currently at war with his home country. The neutral Kingdom itself may ally normally.

15. The ruler of this Kingdom is impressed by feats of arms. For each Kingdom a player controls by conquest or reconquest, the Diplomacy dice roll is modified by +2. If the player has no current conquest or reconquest to his credit, he receives a modifier of −1 if conducting Diplomacy here.

16. This Kingdom is ruled by a timid tyrant. If the Kingdom is ever reduced to having only one unconquered city, the ruler will offer to join the invader as a full ally. This offer must be immediately rejected or accepted by the invading player. The offer may be made only once to each player each game. *Diplomacy Modifiers:* Necromancer +1; Kingdoms −1.

17. The nervous ruler of this Kingdom is susceptible to Intimidation. A Terror Rune spellcaster may deduct one (−1) from his Intimidation die roll. If the spell is actually cast, it modifies Diplomacy by +3.

18. A curse has been placed upon this Kingdom's most powerful spellcaster to rob him of his power. An ambassador with the same rune may cast a counter-spell to end the curse. This is considered a Diplomatic spell. If successful, a permanent Diplomacy dice roll modifier of +2 is gained by the player; his opponent receives a −2 permanent modifier. If the Kingdom should join an alliance before the leader is cured of his curse, he will wander off in lonely exile. Place him with the mercenaries; a successful cure will bring him in as an ally.

19. One leader of this Kingdom is a renowned champion of Heroic Combat. The leader with the greatest Hero Rating has that rating automatically increased by one for the purposes of Heroic Duels only.

20. This Kingdom has the most sophisticated educational system for the training of scorcerors in all Loslon. All spellcasters of this nationality have their Magic Strength increased by one.

SUMMARY

The intent of these revised and new rules is to open many possibilities in the strategic nature, as well as political change, in this fabulous fantasy game. Small unit combat and deployment has become more feasible, and a new political climate is created at the beginning of each playing by the use of the Regional Variant chits. While the total effect is to make diplomacy easier for the Necromancer, the achievement of victory is not made so. He may gain allies, but at the expense of his powerful vampiric units. Moreover, the game becomes more clearly a contest against Zolahaureslor (which will probably enter the war with its many ambassadors and powerful resources at an earlier date) for the Necromancer. And this should mean more fun for all in this land of round seas.

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COMPUTER CORNER

Hardware and Gaming

By John Huff

Enough people have asked questions regarding what kind of computer they should get if they want to play games to make it a topic of this column. As far as computers themselves go, there are a boatload of alternatives. As far as playing games with them go, the field is narrowing.

Virtually any computer currently on the market can handle word processing, desk-top publishing, spread sheet programs, databases, and specialized programs (like mailing lists). Some are better in one area than another, but if you care to look, acceptable software can be found to compensate for the weaknesses of any given machine.

The computer gamer, on the other hand, must select his/her computer based on the "popularity" of the machine. A sad but true fact is that the best machines do not always develop a sufficient user-base to be worthy of support by game companies. If you want to be in a position to get the best games, you will need to purchase a computer which is still growing in popularity or has an enormous user-base that is still buying games (and thereby maintaining a thriving market for new designs).

The following survey is of popular computers (past and present) and what their current status might be (relative to computer games). It is roughly chronological in order of presentation:

CPM/Z-80: The earliest microcomputers that were remotely affordable were the machines (from several manufacturers) using the CPM operating system. There is still a remarkable amount of private support for them, but no companies currently support them with software.

Radio Shack TRS-80: The first truly popular home computer. It is now antiquated and not supported by any game companies.

Apple II, II+, IIe, IIc: Most game companies have stopped all production of standard Apple II products. The machines are coming up on the used market now, but don't spend too much time looking around for new games. They are few and far between.

Commodore VIC-20: The ancestor of the Commodore 64. Too small to hold a game with any intricacy to it. It is not supported by any game company these days.

Commodore PET: Contemporary of the original Apple II, all game support for it ended with the rise of the Commodore 64. Not currently supported by any new titles from any game company.

Atari 400/800/1200 (and XL models): A worthy rival to the Apple II and Commodore 64, it was graphically as impressive as the C-64, but was the first home computer to be significantly hurt by software piracy. It is not currently supported by any new development, but there are still products available on the shelves. (Eventually, the early models

were replaced by the 65XE and 130XE, but they were not much different from the original.)

TI-99 (99/4): A nice computer that enjoyed a short career, but faded in front of less-costly competition. Not supported by anybody at this writing.

Commodore 64: "The computer that will not die!" is still impressive with its graphics and sound. Its high user-base insures that it will enjoy a few more years of releases before the developers give up. Over 100 million have been sold in the US, and about half that number overseas. C-64 users are mostly happy with their machines, are not seeking to upgrade, and *are* still buying software. Compared with the newer machines, it is underpowered, but it can still surprise the gamer with its speed and graphics. Several companies continue to support the machine, and there are thousands of games of all types available.

IBM P.C.: Originally a good office machine, but not much more. Because of its open architecture, it has been expanded into the 1990s as a power machine capable of handling enormous tasks. Still based on the 8088 technology, the newest 8086 versions are up there with the best of them. The IBM has several sub-categories, which I will try to describe:

PC (and compatibles): Runs on an 8088 processor (some compatibles use the 8086 or V-20). Supports up to 64K of memory and can be expanded to 640K using one of the five expansion slots. The most recent versions can also support the Enhanced Graphics Adaptor (EGA).

PC jr.: A little brother to the PC that has more display colors and a closed architecture. It is compatible enough to run many games, but not all.

XT: A souped-up PC, which was finally expanded to eight slots and could support up to 640K of memory on the motherboard. It uses the 8088 processor, but later was given the 8088-2 to cut the processor time in half. These faster machines are called "turbo-XTs".

AT: Originally, an 8086-2 based machine which was an improvement over the PC or XT. With its 16-bit buss, it could handle internal operations much faster. It can also support expanded memory models to allow for bigger programs and databases. Eventually the AT was equipped with the 80286 and 80386 processors, which improved the speed and power of the machine dramatically.

PS-2: IBM's most recent line of personal computers. They are fundamentally based on the AT, but with a new type of buss and expansion slot. This "micro-channel buss" was developed to

protect IBM from the third-party manufacturers who have stolen much of their business in the XT and AT markets.

The PC and its descendants are currently the most-heavily supported machine on the computer games market. All games written for the PC will run on the later machines. The PC jr., however, is not fully compatible; so if the gamebox does not specify being for the jr., don't count on it. Before buying any games for the IBM machines, become familiar with the graphics modes supported by your machine, as well as memory and special input devices (like mice or joysticks).

Radio Shack Color Computer: Radio Shack's low-end entry into the ''games'' computer market. It had limited support originally, and now is supported only by Radio Shack.

Macintosh: The first microcomputer to give the ''desktop environment'' to the home market. The Macintosh also was the first machine to use the 68000 processor (the latest versions use the 68030). It has gone through many generations since its first release. The most recent versions may not be compatible with games written for the older models, because of a change in the way that files are handled. It is an excellent computer and well supported by the game market at this time.

Commodore 128: An improved C-64 with a lot of sophisticated features. The only problem: since it handled Commodore-64 software as well as its own, game developers saw no reason to make special 128 programs. Though there are a few 128 games developed, most games for the 128 and 128D are just designs for the 64.

Commodore Amiga: Probably the most sophisticated microcomputer to be released yet. It relies on the 68000 processor and a battery of advanced custom chips to give it graphics and sound capabilities, as well as a native multi-tasking environment superior to all other home computers. Support and sales continue to grow for this machine, and eventually it will have a solid place in the games market.

Atari ST: Atari's entry into the 68000 market, which uses the GEM/TOS desktop environment (similar to the Macintosh). It comes in several flavors from the 520ST to the latest version of the MEGA ST. While not as advanced as the Amiga, it is a solid computer in its own right. Support is erratic, but new products continue to come out (both here and in Europe).

Apple IIgs: This is not included with my listing of the Apple IIs, as it is a very different machine. Still shunning the use of custom chips, Apple gave the gs excellent sound, graphics and a new 16/8 bit processor to compete with the Amiga and Atari ST, but still allow the use of the older Apple II software. Its performance, however, is still markedly inferior and its price excessively high. This in turn has hurt the sales, and few if any game companies are supporting the gs.

Mac II: A color Macintosh which takes the scope of the regular Mac and expands it. While graphics are not competitive with the Amiga, they are very fine. In addition, the Mac II will run much of the original Macintosh software. The machine is very expensive, and so its user-base is on the small side. It has some support from the game companies.

There are, as well, a host of machines popular overseas and some new machines (like the Sharp ''Wizard'') whose place in the games market is questionable at this time. Then there is the new ''super microcomputer'' with (hypothetically) everything that a power-user could want (including the price tag) on the design tables; but sales projections have been less than splendid and few companies are contemplating games developments.

Over the next few months, Microcomputer Games will be adding a number of titles that support the more popular machines. By the time you read this installemnt, *LEGENDS OF THE LOST REALM* for Macintosh should be on the market. Due to be released over the next few months are *COMBOTS* (for the Commodore 64), *COMPUTER ACQUIRE* (for the IBM) and *COMPUTER THIRD REICH* (for the Atari ST). A conversion of *POLICE BLOTTER* for the Macintosh should also soon be out. As the reader can see, Avalon Hill plans to continue to support the most popular machines with an expanding list of titles and conversions. Of particular interest to us are further developments for the Atari ST and for the Macintosh.

If you are thinking about getting a new computer, talk to the manufacturers' reps and the computer game companies and find out what their plans for up-coming releases might be. Compare that information with your non-gaming computer needs so that you have a good idea which features you are looking for are served by each. Then, make your choice based on what is best for you. As with all electronics, and all entertainment systems, each is different and each has its own advantages/disadvantages. Only you can decide what serves for your purposes.

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Area News

BY DONALD S. BURDICK

From time to time, as space permits, this column will feature personal profiles of participants in the AREA Championship competitions. As you read this issue, Round #1 of the *STALINGRAD* ladder tournament is just getting started, so this is an appropriate moment to introduce the current *STALINGRAD* champion, Dave Kopp. Dave is a facilities design and construction engineer with Exxon in Corpus Christi, Texas. He is 40 years old, and married. He began wargaming when he was in junior high school and has been a subscriber to The *GENERAL* for over 20 years. Dave also participated in the *AFRIKA KORPS* AREA tournament and advanced to the final round, where he lost both ends of a two-game match to Joe Beard. In addition to *STALINGRAD* and *AFRIKA KORPS*, Dave enjoys—and is quite good at—*D-DAY*, *WATERLOO* and *BLITZKRIEG*. He modestly attributes his success in the final round of the postal *STALINGRAD* tournament to lessons learned from first-round opponents. Don't be fooled by his modesty, though; his victory was no fluke. He is a worthy champion at *STALINGRAD* and is looking forward to defending his title.

Meanwhile, the Burdick-Garbutt match on the top rung of the *BULGE* ladder tournament is now concluded, with Don Burdick winning both games. Round #2 will begin after a winner is determined in the Grant-Malaska match on the second rung. The *ANZIO* title match between Burdick and Oleson is nearing completion, with Tom Oleson a strong favorite to reclaim his title. Tom has been working to develop rules for an *ANZIO* ladder bout. By the time you read this column, the Burdick-Oleson match should be over, and the *ANZIO* ladder could be ready to go. It would be premature at this point to make any promises, but any AREA members who think they might have an interest in competing in such a match should write immediately to Don Greenwood at Avalon Hill.

As for the other games covered by the AREA Championships, I have no news to report since the last column. The *WATERLOO* ladder tournament is still in an embryonic state. Current efforts are focused on the development of a sound tie-breaker system. Once that hurdle has been overcome, the ladder system should be ready soon thereafter. Again, AREA members with an interest in participating in a *WATERLOO* tournament should write immediately to Don Greenwood.

The next item calls for a response from you—the AREA reader. In addition to results of championship competition, I would like to use this column to report on other AREA activity, especially on games involving two members of the ''Top 50''. The problem is that I can't report what I don't know. The question is whether there is enough reader interest to justify the extra time and expense of this column. If you would like to see reports of who's playing whom at what game for AREA rating points, please write Rex Martin to let him know. Remember though, there will always be a necessary delay between the time this column gets written and the time it appears in print (for example, I'm writing this in the second week of December 1989).
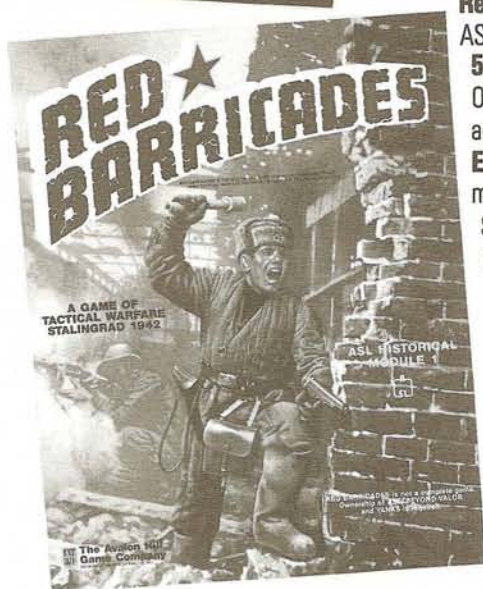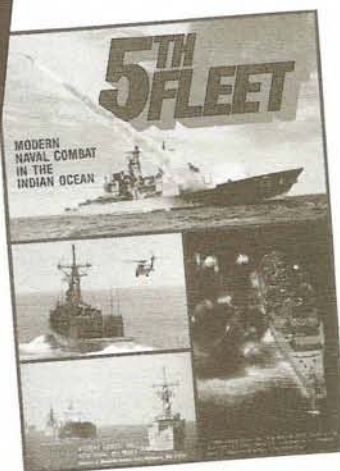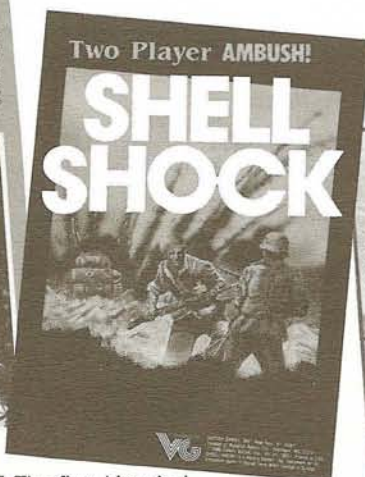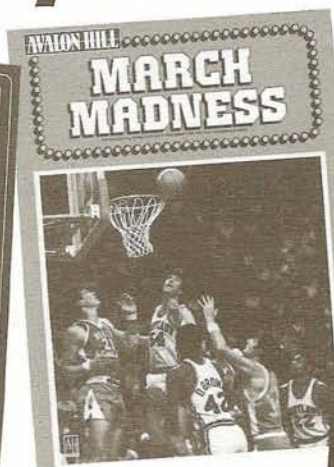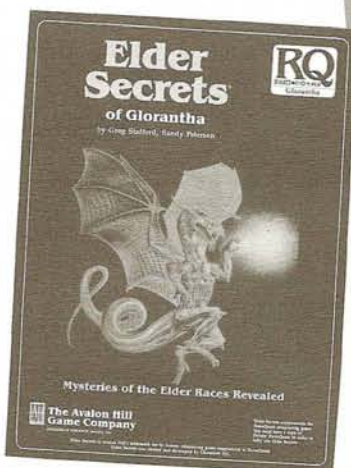
Another activity which I would gladly report on if given the information is the use of electronic mail to conduct AREA matches. I believe that electronic mail is potentially a great boon to all wargamers who play by mail. The advantage of PBEM in comparison to PBM is the dramatic reduction in the transit time for moves. In addition to the obvious advantage of shortening the time it takes to play the old PBM standbys, it may open up some new possibilities for gaming. Multiple-stage games that are too cumbersome for normal PBM may be feasible with PBEM. Multi-player games become reasonable undertakings (the hard-core of postal *DIPLOMACY* players are blazing the way even now). If any of you use, or have used, E-mail for your AREA matches, I would like to hear from you (at 1112 Huntsman Drive, Durham, NC 27713).

Again, this is your column for news of the AREA. To keep it viable and informative, I need your help. Thanks.

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THE LANSRAAD MANEUVER
A DUNE Variant

By Kenneth Burke

The Lansraad, in Herbert's classic, wielded great power in the universe of Dune. A collection of representatives from the noble houses of the Imperium, its influence was such that even the Emperor feared it. It was his fear of Duke Leto's authority in the Lansraad that led the Emperor to seek Leto's death to begin with; when the plot was eventually culminated, bribes were paid in order to keep the Lansraad unaware of the Imperial involvement.

I now wish to alter the story, though. Let us suppose the following: The Lansraad is worried. The Harkonnen tale of losing control of the vital planet Dune just doesn't impress these powerful men. No one accidentally loses control of the most important planet in the Imperium. And why were the Atreides chosen to govern it? It is a known fact that the Emeperor is growing more and more concerned with Leto Atreides' popularity; if anything, he would be the last chosen to hold Dune for the Imperium. The Lansraad Mentats thus suspect something is amiss—a surprise attack by the Emperor (and possibly the Harkonnens) against Duke Leto? On Dune! The one planet where such ruthless moves can be felt throughout the Imperium!

The great men of the Lansraad do not like this development. They can foresee the spice flow being interrupted, the great starships coming to a standstill, noble house after noble house collapsing in isolated revolts, and the Imperium itself shattered beyond redemption. Rather than risk this course, the Lansraad has decided to make its considerable influence felt on Dune directly. The houses of the Lansraad have more than enough troops at their disposal to deal with any problems that may arise; added to that is the collective wealth and experience of its members and one has a combined political and military maneuver that could, if the need arose, bring all Dune under the direct control of the Lansraad. The command has been given; the attempt begins.

The LANSRAAD

AT START—20 tokens in reserves (off-planet). Start with 30 spice.

FREE REVIVAL—3 tokens.

ADVANTAGE—You have Influence over almost all major powers (except the Fremen) on Dune.

1. During a turn, you may use your power of Influence during the revival/movement or the battle round.

a. In the revival/movement round, you may order any player to "hold in place". That player will not be able to reclaim tokens from the tanks, ship tokens onto or off Dune, or move his tokens on the mapboard during the round.

b. In the battle round, you may order any player to "hold in place". That player will not be able to attack anyone during that round, but may defend if attacked by another party.

ALLIANCE—You may not ally with the Fremen (although a third player may be allied to both). Allies may make use of the Lansraad "Optional Advantage" of restricting territories; the same conditions as to who may be affected is imposed.

Leaders and Values: Baron Moat—6
Earl Viaconte—5
Administrator—3
Commissioner—2
Representative—1

Disadvantages:

1. You cannot make use of your power of Influence in both the revival/movement *and* combat rounds of the same turn (unless able to play a Karma card, to be described later).

2. You have no power of Influence over the Fremen player, nor may you ever ally with the Fremen player.

Optional Advantage: At the start of any turn, before the Storm marker position is determined, you may declare any non-sietch territory on the mapboard (except for the Polar Sink) "restricted". All tokens that do not belong to the Lansraad player, a Lansraad-allied player, the Fremen player, or are co-existing Bene Gesserit tokens must be moved out of this territory during the upcoming revival/movement turns. Failure to do so results in the tokens being sent to the tanks. With the exception of the above-mentioned token types, tokens may not be moved into the territory during the entire turn. The Lansraad player may not declare the same territory "restricted" for two consecutive turns.

Karma Powers:

1. When played against the Lansraad player, this prevents him from using his power of Influence or optional "restriction" once. The card would be played right after the Lansraad ordered a player to hold in place or declared a territory restricted.

2. If the optional special Karma Power rules are used, the Lansraad player may use a Karma card once during the game to use his power of Influence during the revival/movement *and* combat rounds of the same game turn. The card would be played at the start of the battle round.

Strategy: Plentiful spice, a high revival rate, decent leaders, and a very effective special power are the Lansraad's good points; its starting with all its tokens off planet and commencing play with a natural enemy (the Fremen) are its bad ones. If you decide to start a seven-player game with a sietch invasion, I advise against invading any Fremen sietch. Any victory you gain against the desert dwellers will be short-lived. As time passes, the wise Lansraad player will join in an alliance, preferably of an anti-Fremen nature. His power of "restriction" can allow his allies to cordon off spice territories for their own use. But, you must be careful who you pick as your friends and what they get out of the deal, for someday they may be your enemies.

I think experienced players will find including the Lansraad into their games of *DUNE* spices things up. Not that the standard game is boring—far from it. But the Lansraad will force all to rethink old strategies; and I always found it hard to envision that such a powerful body as Herbert presents would not have become involved in the affairs of Dune after such a period. One last note: If future factions to play in *DUNE* are created, the Lansraad may or may not have Influence over them. A power like the Gholas (The *GENERAL*, Vol. 18, No. 5) or the Ixians (*HEROES*, Vol. 1, No. 1)—something from *outside* the Imperium—would hardly be much influenced by the august body, or honor their "restricted" notices. On the other hand, anything that is created to reflect some group from within the Imperium will.

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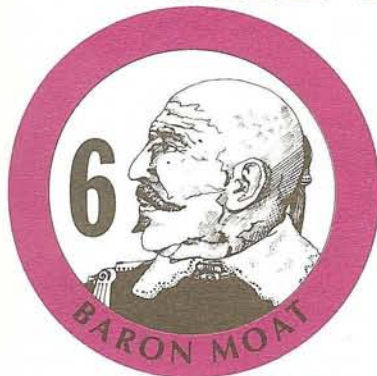
ALONE IN THE LOST WORLD
A Sample Game of Solitaire DINOSAURS

By Don Greenwood

Strategy in the solitaire version of *DINOSAURS OF THE LOST WORLD* changes drastically from the multi-player version. Instead of being coy about scoring points and assuming the bright mantle of leadership, you need to grab points as quickly as possible—not only to beat the 40-turn time limit which is constantly ticking in the background, but also to advance along the Movement Track to get away from the preponderance of "Move a Creature" squares that dominate the initial side of that track . . . a strip I refer to as "Dinosaur Alley".

In the solitaire game, each Movement Track dice roll moves a creature on the plateau. Normally the movement is random, but if that dice roll also lands you on a "Move a Creature" square, the movement is directly towards you. In short, the game treats you as the leader and attacks you at every opportunity so strategy must assume a race mentality with advances to the next side of the Movement Track always of paramount concern.

For purposes of following our progress through the Lost World we will use a hex identification system based on the Central Lake hex along the Central Lake and Watering Place hex-grain. "South" is towards the Camp and "North" towards the Chase Track. The Watering Place is thus S1 (South of Central Lake one hex). The Indian Caves are W5/N3 (West 5, North 3), and the Marsh is E2 (East 2). The Rocky Tract is E1/N3 and the Camp is S3/E2. Got it? Good, then off we go.

Outfitting the Expedition

As speed is the prime concern in this version it might be wiser to take less weaponry and more tools, but I've always been a conservative type in games and life as I reveal here by packing the full complement of rifles and bombs. My other tools will be the camera, gifts, lariat and machete. Regretfully, the protective cage is left behind because in a solitaire game it may take too long to find the Pterodactyl Rookery. Indeed, it may never be found. Consequently, I favor tools with more widespread applications. No doubt, we will trip over the Rookery the instant we set foot out of camp.

Turn 1

Dice Roll: 6   Move a Creature [1]   Expedition to S3/E1
Triceratops to S2/E1   VP: 0

It didn't take long for the monsters to show themselves as a Triceratops heads right for us at game start. We are saved from attack only by the stout walls of our Camp. The niggardly one-hex movement allowance makes it impossible to reach an Unexplored Site this turn unless I move into the Triceratops' hex and chance a 14% likelihood of an automatic attack by it should I roll another "6" on my next movement dice roll. Given the need to press forward and score points quickly, normally

I would say to chance it and forge ahead. However, because this hex is also adjacent to the Watering Place which is likely to be spewing forth critters with abandon in the opening turns, the chances of attack seem too high. Consequently, I'll give the Watering Place a wide berth and work my way towards the Indian Caves another way. Note that in the solitaire game, creature movement is an exception to the normal rule about Movement Track actions not being valid when you start your turn in Camp (so the Triceratops headed right for us).

Turn 2

Dice Roll: 7   Climb a Tree [0]   Expedition at S3/E1
Tyrannosaurus attacks S3/E1   VP: 0

Oh, great slimy horny toads! What did I do to deserve this? Not only can't I move, but the King of the dinosaurs comes bounding out of the Watering Place, bounces off the Camp, and just happens to drop in on us for lunch. To make a bad situation worse, he is obviously hungry because he attacks with the maximum strength of 14! Losing tools in a chase this early would be disastrous so there is nothing for it but to use a gas bomb to drive him away. Scratch one weapon already. The "Climb Tree" reveals "Nothing Here" in S2/W1, but it remains an Unexplored Site blocking movement through it until it is actually entered. What can happen next?

Turn 3

Dice Roll: 11   Move a Creature [1]   Expedition to S3
Phorusrhacos attacks S3/E1   VP: 0

Give me a break! The Americans didn't get this kind of reception at Omaha Beach! This time an enormous Tweety Bird emerges from the Watering Place to attack with a strength of "7". What's in the water there, anyway? I use one clip of ammo to drive it off and barely succeed with a "7". I now regret not moving to the Pinnacle—any place further away from that blasted Watering Place. However, having paid a price already to fight my way towards the Indian Caves I'll continue in that direction. "Nothing Here" is found and removed at S3. I need a big movement allowance to get away from the critter convention at the Watering Place.

Turn 4

Dice Roll: 12   Experience [3]   Expedition to W1
Pterodactyl to S1/W1   VP: 1

At last a break! A big three-hex movement allowance and an Experience card—the best possible dice roll. Moreover, a glance at the Movement Track reveals that there is a 50% chance of landing on a "Move a Creature" square next turn— any even dice roll will do it. Hell, if I'm going to be attacked anyway I may as well move north of the Watering Place and try to break out of this

menagerie. My courage is rewarded with a Victory Point for finding the Phorusrhacos Nest.

Turn 5

Adventure in the Phorusrhacos Nest
6 [6], 2 [8], 3 [11], 5 [15+]   VP: 4

My decision to take an adventure here was an easy one. Not only am I in a hurry to score points to get off Dinosaur Alley, but I am in no danger from creatures this turn while I do so as there are no other players to move them against me before my next turn. In addition, my slim complement of tools contains two that will aid me in this adventure and allow me to draw another Experience card. Lastly, the "Move 2/extra hexes" I received last turn was of no help on the Movement Track. It's replacement, if I complete the adventure, may be. (See Figure 2 for movement through the adventure.)

Lucky me. The new Experience card earned by my machete is a "6", which I use to capture an Archaeopteryx with my lariat and score two points [*play of an Experience card is indicated by bold type throughout*]. Both tools have paid off immediately. Rather than gamble on being able to use it later in this adventure to get the big four-point prize, we settle for a bird in the hand and use our last Experience card to advance two frames to find a tool (hose & protective clothing) and put the Triceratops (in frame 7) behind us. A "3" dice roll now takes us to frame 11 where we spot a Hyracotherium for our third point of this adventure. I wish we had that "2" Experience card back now, but if I'd held it I might not be here anyway. I need a "2" or "3" die roll to get out of this Adventure clean, preferably a "2". Unfortunately, the roll is a "5" and the Phorusrhacos attacks with a "9"! This is one mad bird! This must be what Sylvester the cat feels like when he mistakes the kangaroo for a giant mouse. Both rifles are regretably brought into play to open Phorusrhacos season and kill it with a "10". The new Experience card for the completed adventure is a "1/Add to Battle" type.

Turn 6

Card: 1   Find a Tool [2]   Expedition to N2/W2
                                     VP: 4

The decision to use my Experience card to avoid a dice roll on Dinosaur Alley was easy. It gets me a tool (a second lariat as it turns out), a generous two-hex movement allowance that gets me well away from the Watering Place, and keeps the dinosaurs from moving this turn. The move proves even more beneficial when the unexplored site yields the Tarpaulin—an escape item usable at the Geyser. Now if I can only earn two more quick points before I hit the corner and have to head back down Dinosaur Alley again.

Figure 1: "Dinosaur Alley", the First Stage of the Movement Track
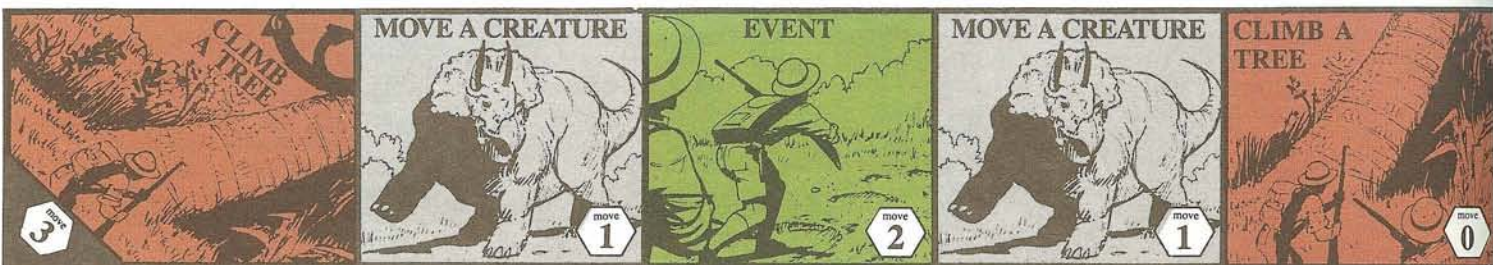
Turn 7

Dice Roll: 3	Move a Creature [1]	Expedition to N3/W2
Dimetrodon to W1		VP: 4

The move to N3/W2 is partly motivated by greed (trying to find something) and partly by fear (avoiding the Phorusrhacos). In retrospect, I probably should have just moved to N2/W4 and settled for closing on the Indian Caves but hindsight is always 20-20. I need only two points to get off Dinosaur Alley, and finding an Adventure site will get me halfway there—all the way perhaps if I venture inside. Yet, it is not wise to hang on the edge of the plateau as the creatures tend to hunt there.

Turn 8

Dice Roll: 5	Climb a Tree [3]	Expedition to N2/W4
Elasmosaurus to W1		VP: 4

Another fortuitous dice roll. The "Climb a Tree" reveals "nothing" in N3/W4, but the resulting move to the adjacent hex caused by this observation finds a shortcut and yields a free turn.

Dice Roll: 4	Climb a Tree [0]	Expedition at N2/W4
Ankylosaurus to N2/E3		VP: 4

Oh well, what can you expect for free? At least the free observation reveals the Geyser in N1/W3. Considering that I have the Tarpaulin and the hose and protective clothing "tool", that is a very useful bit of information. But the game is 20% over and I'm heading back down Dinosaur Alley. I need points!

Turn 9

Dice Roll: 8	Event [2]	Expedition to Camp
Apatosaurus to S3/W1		VP: 4

Oh no! Just as I was about to at last enter the Indian Caves, the Events deck attacks with a giant poisonous moth forcing us back to Camp. Where is the pole (or *Raid* for that matter) when you need it! So near and yet so far. Not only do I have to go all the way back to the Camp but I lose a turn as well. The game is now 25% over. Is that ticking I hear?

Turn 11

Dice Roll: 10	Climb a Tree [0]	Expedition at Camp
Indians to N2/W5		VP: 4

Double oh-no!! Another lost turn; and because I'm in camp, I can't even use the "Climb a Tree" to scout an Unexplored Site. Things are falling way behind schedule and the way back to the Indian Caves is again blocked by creatures and Unexplored Sites. Woe is me.

Turn 12

Dice Roll: 3	Move a Creature [1]	Expedition to S3/E3
Dimetrodon to S2/E2		VP: 4

Oh great! The Dimetrodon comes knocking on the door just when I leave Camp with one whole hex movement allowance into no man's land. The only Unexplored Site I can reach is under a Triceratops and between the Dimetrodon and Watering Place. Six dinosaurs stand between me and the Indian Caves. Why do I feel like a sardine in a seal tank? I'm not going to run that gauntlet again—not

with such a high chance of landing on a "Move a Creature" square next turn. I'm turning east to explore less populated climes.

Turn 13

Dice Roll: 9	Event [2]	Expedition to S2/E4
Stegosaurus to N1/W5		VP: 4

Phew! What a break! I drew the Volcano Eruption card but because the Lava Pit has not yet been found it does not apply. Otherwise, the eruption would be imminent and the game could end on any turn. At least now I'll have the full 40 turns and it looks like I'll need them. In an effort to keep my distance from the Dimetrodon, I move to the east edge and find the Lost Map in that Unexplored Site. Now, more than ever before, I need to reach the Indian Caves and secure Indian Allies. If I do, my escape is practically assured—assuming I live that long.

Turn 14

Dice Roll: 3	Move a Creature [1]	Expedition to S3/E4
Dimetrodon to S2/E4		VP: 5

The Dimetrodon attacks with a strength of "6" and is scared off with a one rifle defense of "8". I double back to S3/E4 because it is the only Unexplored Site I can reach and I must find two Adventure sites to get the six points I need to get off Dinosaur Alley. Eureka! The Triceratops Hatchery gets me half way there but also brings the Triceratops scurrying back.

Turn 15

Dice Roll: 4	Move a Creature [1]	Expedition to S2/E3
Ankylosaurus to S1/E4		VP: 5

It was tempting to stay and try my luck at getting a point in the Hatchery but with no tools or Experience cards I probably would have gotten in bigger trouble. I'd have tried it anyway if I'd had an Experience card that would have guaranteed me a point. Without it, I think my chances are better finding one of the nine remaining Adventure locations, so I set off in search of one. If only I could roll a "3-5" next turn and generate some movement. The game is now 38% over.

Turn 16

Dice Roll: 6	Move a Creature [1]	Expedition to S1/E2
Triceratops attacks S2/E3		VP: 6

Curse the luck! Anything would have been better than a "6". The Triceratops attacks with an "11" costing me my last bomb to scare it off. Only six clips of ammo left and still on Dinosaur Alley. I must find a sixth point and there's only one Unexplored Site in reach. It would appear that my choices are limited.

Be still my beating heart! I don't know whether to laugh or cry. What a way to score my sixth point—finding the Tyrannosaurus Lair, and me with no bombs left! I've got to tip-toe my way out of here before I roll a "7" and ring his dinner bell. Looking ahead, I see that the only "good" roll I can hope for is a "5" (Event [2]) or "10" (Find a Tool [2]). Only a 19.4% chance . . . but I'll settle for a "9" (Event [1]) . . . anything but a "7".

Turn 17

Dice Roll: 7	Climb a Tree [3]	Expedition to Camp
Tyrannosaurus attacks S1/E2		VP: 6

Arrgh! The Tyrannosaurus attacks with an "11" and both rifles manage only a "9" defense. Precious ammunition wasted and I still lose. I had one extra tool to lose and considered forfeiting the battle to conserve ammunition but that would have cost the free observation and three-hex movement allowance that would have finally got me out of this pocket of nasties. Now I'm back in the soup again.

THE CHASE: 5/5, 3/5[*Creature movement in italics*]

Just as the Tyrannosaurus is about to scoop us up for lunch he is sidetracked by a tastier morsel due to our landing on the Dinosaur Encounter space. Thank God for small favors. Another turn lost.

Turn 19

Dice Roll: 5	Event [0]	Expedition at Camp
Elasmosaurus to N1/W1		VP: 6

Give me a break! The second side of the Movement Track greets me with the worst possible result—another lost turn with no hex movement. Even a "Move a Creature" wouldn't have hurt because I have the camp to protect me. I can't draw an Event card because I'm in Camp and with the first two having been negative the odds are it would have been a good one. Grumble . . .

Turn 20

Dice Roll: 6	Find a Tool [2]	Expedition to S2/E1
Triceratops to N2/E1		VP: 6

The halfway point in the game finds me with only four clips left and a lousy six points. Starting in Camp cheats me out of a new tool. I need to get to the Indian Caves and gain allies in a bad way. So where do I move with only two hexes? I can't reach the "blockade" of unexplored sites and creatures three hexes away that bars my way to the Indian Caves, so I may as well enter one of the two Unexplored Sites in range. As one is adjacent to the Tyrannosaurus, the choice is obvious.

The Lost Camp of Maple White is a pleasant but cruel surprise. The three tools are of little use (more gifts, a canoe, and a pole). If the Triceratops hadn't scared me away from there on the first turn I would have had the pole then and been able to beat off that moth attack that sent me back to Camp the first time—and consequently, never met up with the Tyrannosaurus. If . . . if . . . if . . .

Turn 21

Dice Roll: 10	Find a Tool [2]	Expedition to S1/W1
Indians to S2/W1		VP: 7

The new-found tool is a specimen cage. As I have nothing to help me in the Central Lake, I opt to enter the only Unexplored Site in the "blockade" not covered by a creature and my entrance soon changes that as the apes appear with Apetown. I am now in the same hex with or adjacent to four creatures. This discovery leaves me with a tough decision. Should I chance the Adventure with only one Experience card from my lariat and try for Apemen

MOVE A CREATURE — move 1

EVENT

MOVE A CREATURE — move 1

FIND A TOOL — move 2

EXPERIENCE START — move 3

H. PHORUSRHACOS NEST ADVENTURE

Figure 2: The Phorusrhacos Nest (movement shown in red)

allies, or press on for the Indian Caves where I'll have three Experience cards. A "7" dice roll on the Movement Track will bring the Tyrannosaurus after me again and he is only three hexes away. A tempting option but this neighborhood scares me. I'm moving on. I need to roll a "6", "8" or "9".

Turn 22

Dice Roll: 6   Experience [4]   Expedition to N1/W3
Triceratops to N1/E2   VP: 8

The new Experience card is a "6/Discard". Although I can't use it this turn on the Movement Track, it does influence my decision where to move on the Lost World now. I am currently surrounded by creatures and Unexplored Sites so N1/W3 is the closest I can get to the Indian Caves. I know N1/W3 is the Geyser so I can score a point by entering it (and remove an Unexplored Site block in the process). More importantly, it is the only hex I can reach which is just two hexes from the Indian Caves and

if I use my Experience card on the Movement Track next turn I can find another tool (hopefully the rifle or flashlight) and move the last two hexes to the Indian Caves without chancing having a dinosaur trip over me. Why risk finding a hazard in one of the other two Unexplored Sites?

Turn 23

Card: 6   Find a Tool [2]   Expedition to Indian
                                   Caves
                                   VP: 8

I had to resist the temptation to stay and adventure in the Geyser as the hose/protective clothing would have given me three more Experience cards for the job. If my Experience card had been a "5", I would have done it as I sorely need those two gas bombs that frame 5 would have provided. Without that guarantee, however, the Geyser holds no allure with only four points to be won. I prefer to come back to it later—maybe a point or two short of

25—and escape in the same trip. Of course, if I don't pick up an ally in the Indian Caves I may be back sooner than that to try for those gas bombs.

Turn 24

Adventure in the Indian Caves
4 [4], 6 [10], 4 [14]   VP: 14

The Experience cards bought by the gifts are a "3/Add to Battle", "6/Reroll", and "4/Escape". The "4" is immediately played to hurdle the first three problem frames and earns another Experience card draw, which becomes another "4/Add to Battle". This fortuitous draw paves a safe path through the Adventure. Playing the "6" card earns two points in frame 10 for spotting a Cave Bear; and the new "4" card ushers us into frame 14 where we befriend the Chief, gain allies, and complete the Adventure with six points. Altogether a highly satisfactory performance. In one turn I've nearly doubled my point total and earned passage to the third side of the Movement Track, gained a weapon, and enhanced my chances of escape. Things look much better now. The discarded Experience card is replaced by another "3/Add to Battle" card.

Turn 25

Dice Roll: 11   Move a Creature [3]   Expedition to N1/W2
Phorusrhacos attacks at Indian Caves   VP: 14

I was sorely tempted to play my Experience card to land on the "Climb a Tree [3]" square because my biggest problem now is time. I can ill afford to land in any hazards that will cost me a turn so I could use the observation. I decided not to primarily because I want to hasten my departure from the second side of the Movement Track and a dice roll should eat up more than three squares.

The Phorusrhacos attacks with only a "4". I opt to defend without a rifle because I have a 50% chance of scaring it off at no cost, and if I fail I can use my Experience card to add three to the dice roll and defeat it anyway, but my "4" die roll makes that unnecessary.

My move to N1/W2 is predicated on exploring an Unexplored Site and that one appears to be the safest among those I can reach. Unfortunately, I found "nothing (t)here".

Turn 26

Card: 3   Find a Tool [4]   Expedition to N2
                                  VP: 15

I used my Experience card to move on the Movement Track this turn more because I wanted the four-hex move than the new tool. The game is now 65% over and I can't afford many more non-turns. There are three hazards still out there and I need to search for Adventure sites. I no longer even care about finding the rifle that much. I'd rather have a tool— any tool—that will buy me some experience at my next Adventure site—whatever that may be.

The new tool is a shovel. Now if only I could find the Tree Fern Grove I'd be set as I have all of the tools required there. Instead I discover the Lava Pit—a mediocre point site where I can draw only one Experience card. Nevertheless, I'll chance an adventure here because time is running short. Hopefully, I can score three more points and move onto the final side of the Movement Track (or "Easy Street" as I like to call it) with my next dice roll before I have to turn around and move down the third side again.

Turn 27

Adventure in the Lava Pit
3 [3], 4 [7], 5 [12]   VP: 19

The new Experience card is a "4/Reroll". Spending it to battle a Pterodactyl is hardly a good buy so the die offers us a choice of losing a tool or an Experience card in frame 3. The choice is easy as I have extra tools and gladly discard the excess

lariat. Now the Experience card is used to move to frame 7 where I draw another Experience card which fortunately is a "5". It is used without hesitation to reach frame 12 where we find diamonds worth four points and complete the Adventure smelling like a rose. The new Experience card is a "4/Discard" type and four squares ahead on the Movement Track is a "Find a Path".

Turn 28
Card: 4   Find a Path [3]   Expedition to N1
VP: 20

Time is the short commodity, so how can you argue with spending an Experience card for a free turn? All I need is one more good Adventure and then back to the Geyser and out. Consequently, I decide to explore the closest Unexplored Site to stay close to the Geyser and am rewarded for my reluctance to travel by finding the Apatosaurus Swamp next door. The pole and canoe are worth two Experience cards there and the lariat is also beneficial, so this looks like a great opportunity to score my remaining five points.

Adventure in Apatosaurus Swamp
6 [6], 4 [10], 2 [12], 2 [14]   VP: 28

The new Experience cards are a "1/Discard" and a "4/Add to Battle". Neither are beneficial for the opening move so I'll trust to luck. The worst possible initial result to my thinking now is the Event card which might force a premature exit. With two rifles and allies I think I can handle even the Tyrannosaurus once. I just want to score my points now and get out. Now is the time to be bold and grasp the win. The first die roll costs an ammo clip as I prefer to save the Experience card alternative for a try later at the big points. The "4" card gets us to the 10th frame where I score two more points. If I'm lucky at the Geyser, that may be enough. I now discard the remaining Experience card for a "2/Add to Battle" card. Playing it now earns another point in frame 12 and I gladly take it. This should be enough to win. I'm content, but a "2" rolls me into frame 14 for five more points and completes the adventure unscathed. I'm home free. All of the Adventures have been very good to me. The new Experience card for completion of the Adventure is a "1/Extra hex".

Turn 29
Dice Roll: 8   Experience [0]   Expedition to Camp
Apatosaurus attacks N1   VP: 28

Perchance I spoke too soon. The Apatosaurus attacks with a "12". Both rifles and the allies can only muster "8" with four dice and the chase is on. Suddenly my sure win is not so sure. One of my rifles is now out of ammo. The other has only one clip, and I must now fight my way back to the Geyser from the Camp. Hindsight says I should have used my Experience card to move one on the Movement Track to the "Move a Creature [2]" square; but that is such a poor move I really can't feel bad about not taking it.

THE CHASE: 1/6, 4/5, 1/3, 1/4

Who said an Apatosaurus is slow? It catches the Expedition on each of the first four rolls. Fortunately, this slaughter is ended when the Expedition stumbles into a hungry Tyrannosaurus with a preference for bronto-burgers. Three tools (the excess gifts, the canoe and the camera) are lost.

The new Experience card drawn after the Chase is resolved is a "5/Reroll".

Turn 31
Dice Roll: 2   Find a Path [2]   Expedition to S1/W1
Iguanodons to N3/W3   VP: 28

The "Find a Path" grants no free move because I started the turn in Camp. I turn in my "1/Extra hex" card so that I can move three hexes and reach

the "barrier" hex grain this turn, and guarantee moving off it the next and into the Geyser by playing my other Experience card on the Movement Track and ensuring no creature attack in the interim. (The "barrier" hex-grain, for those of you not following along on your own boards, is composed of Unexplored Sites in S3/W1, S2/W1, the Apes in S1/W1, and the Phorusrhacos and Elasmosaurus in W1.)

Turn 32
Card: 5   Find a Tool [4]   Expedition to N1/W3
VP: 28

The found tool is another machete. The use of Experience cards for movement on Easy Street may seem frivolous, but I want to guarantee my arrival at the Geyser where my tools will earn me three more Experience cards which should be sufficient.

Turn 33
Adventure at the Geyser
4 [4], 3 [7], 3 [10], 4 [14]   VP: 32

The three Experience cards are a "4/Discard", "4/Add to Battle", "3/Reclaim". The "4/Discard" is used to reach frame 4 to avoid the premature exit in frame 3. The point earned for discovering the Arsinostherium is almost superfluous. Only the Triceratops and Apes scare me in the next six frames and with the last of my ammo and the "add 4" Battle Experience I should be able to beat them off so I trust to the die for the second move. A "3" buys a battle with the Apes in frame 7 who attack with a "9". I defend with only my second Indian allies—hoping to preserve my last ammo clip. The "5" dice roll is just barely enough when coupled with the "4" Experience card to beat off the Apes. Playing the last Experience card now scores two more inconsequential points but gets us past the Triceratops. A "5" or "6" dice roll will now win the game; a "3" or "4" will end the Adventure prematurely. The die roll is a "4" causing the Ankylosaurus to attack with a "9" and completing the Adventure. Rather than use my last ammo and/or my Indian allies I forfeit the battle and go to the chase.

THE CHASE: 1/5, 2/6, 5/6, 1/6, 6

If an Ankylosaurus is so slow why did it catch me four times? So much for my tool surplus . . . scratch the pole, shovel, specimen cage, and extra machete. I now realize I screwed up. Instead of stopping at the Geyser, I should have moved through

it to the Indian Caves where I would have got a warmer reception. The new Experience card for completing the Adventure is a "2/Escape". *Now* I get it!

Turn 35
Dice Roll: 9   Move a Creature [1]   Expedition to S3/E1
Stegosaurus to S2/W2   VP: 32

Ouch! I need movement. The game still hangs in the balance. The problem is time, distance, and my lack of weapons. On the plus side, I am on Easy Street and have all the means for an easy escape—if only I can manage to get there in time. The Unexplored Site/Creature barrier still blocks the way. I need to move onto the barrier with a dice roll and then use the Experience card to move off before I can be attacked. Two hexes of movement will suffice for now. Only a "2", a "10", or a "12" dice roll can prevent that.

Turn 36
Dice Roll: 8   Find a Path [2]   Expedition to S1/W1
Apatosaurus to E1   VP: 32

Bullseye! A free turn is the best possible result . . . *except* for one thing. My Experience card would place me on the 0 movement allowance square (as will a dice roll of "2" or "12")—effectively forfeiting the free turn. Now would be a great time to have an Experience card that could be exchanged for another number—any number. Instead I have to chance a dice roll and a "10" will bring the apes down on me. I can ill afford a battle. At the very least it would exhaust my rifle ammunition, and if I have to use my Indian allies a third time I lose them. That would make the Indian Caves a far more dangerous escape site and I'd have to try the Geyser again. I'll trade time for safety and settle for a switch of Experience cards by landing in the "Experience [0]" square.

Card: 2   Experience [0]   Expedition at S1/W1
VP: 32

The new Experience card is a "1/Add to Battle" which is of little help. Playing it will land me in an Event square and I can't afford to be sent back to Camp now. The Event deck should be running "positive" now (to use card-counting lingo) but the chances are better yet with the dice. Only a "10" would be catastrophic—returning me to this 0 hex-movement square *and* causing an Ape attack. Even landing on the "Move a Creature" square with a "2" dice roll would only cause a 50% chance of
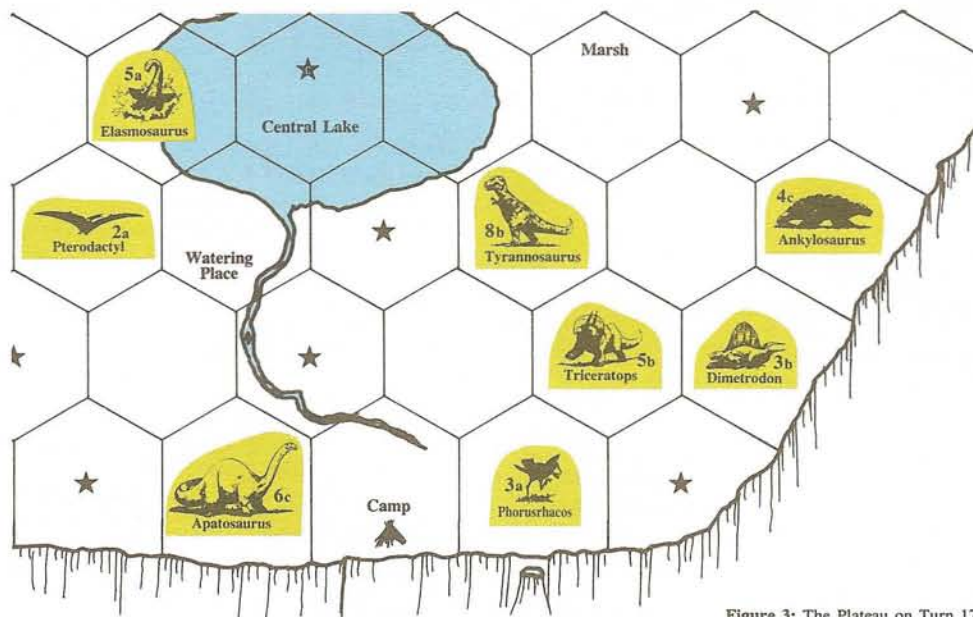

Figure 3: The Plateau on Turn 17

A. APATOSAURUS SWAMP ADVENTURE

1: Pole 1: Egg Crate 1: Canoe

1 Carnivores hunt here!

Battle Tyrannosaurus.

2 Discover Tanystrophacus

Score 1 VP.

3 Ugh—marsh gas!

Play Experience Card for next move.

4 Startled birds rise . . .

Draw Event Card.

5 Spot a Platybelodon . . .

Score 1 VP.

6 That's no branch!

Lose 1 ammo or 1 Experience Card.

7 A lake bars your way.

Move ahead 2 Frames with Canoe; otherwise move backwards next move.

8 Quicksand!

Lose a Tool if without Lariat.

9 Fresh tracks . . .

Draw Experience Card.

10 Spot and film Brachiosaurus.

Score 1 VP; 2 if you have a Camera.

11 Spotted from above . . .

Battle Apatosaurus.

12 Film Apatosaurus behavior . . .

Score 1 VP.

13 Battle Apatosaurus.

Defending her eggs . . .

14 Collect eggs.

Score 5 VP; complete Adventure.

15 There's no nest here.

Complete Adventure.

16+ I think he's hungry!

Battle Dimetrodon; complete Adventure.

Figure 4: The Apatosaurus Swamp (movement shown in red)

an attack by the whimpy Iguanodons four hexes away. Them I could beat off—possibly without the rifle. So the dice it is . . .

Turn 37

Dice Roll: 4   Find a Path [3]   Expedition to N2/W4
Ankylosaurus to N3   VP: 32

Eureka! Another free turn. I'll bypass the Geyser and head for the Indian Caves. Dare I say I'm home free? The four closest creatures are a total of 11 hexes away with an average strength of 2.75. I'll take no chances. By playing the Experience card now on the Movement Track, I guarantee an Adventure in the Indian Caves next turn and will draw a replacement Experience card to boot—possibly a better one. Put the soup on—I'm almost home.

Card: 1   Experience [5]   Expedition to Indian Caves
                                  VP: 32

The new Experience card is a "2/Add to Battle".

Turn 38

Adventure in the Indian Caves
1 [1], 4 [5], 1 [6], 5 [11], 2 [13], 3 [16+]

The new Experience cards earned by the gifts are a "5/Reroll", "3/Extra hex", and "3/Discard". The adventure isn't automatic yet but with Indian allies and four cards it should be close to it. Only frames 1, 8, 14 and 15 can prevent a win. I discard the extra "3" hoping to draw a "6" and win automatically, but the new card is a "2/Discard". The strategy is repeated and a "1/Reclaim" is drawn. So much for the pat hand. In truth, it got worse. Well, if it was easy it wouldn't be any fun. Only a "1" can hurt me on the first roll.

Groan! Naturally, I roll a "1" and have to endure an Event card draw. The red color sets off a spate of curses like I haven't recollected since my football days, but once I've actually read the card I see that I've only lost my compass and with it one extra hex of movement per turn. I can live with that. I

don't intend to move *any* more hexes . . . just frames. Who stacked this Event deck anyway?

Incredibly, with four Experience cards I need to roll again. I must penetrate far enough into the Adventure to guarantee reaching 16+. The "4" die roll does it. Now the way is free . . . the "1" die is played to reach frame 6. Because they're my allies I can ignore the Indian attack. The remaining cards lead safely to escape without incident. I win . . . with two turns to spare.

In retrospect, as I see it, the Indian allies were the key to victory, although I was very fortunate in both the Adventures and finding the Escape items so easily. The next time I think I'll take the flashlight/food tool instead of the machete. Yes, there will be a next time for me . . . both solitaire and multi-player. Like Dr. Challenger I will be lured back to the plateau for more adventures. Will you?

☆

AN ASSEMBLY OF GENTLEMEN
Exploiting Parliament in KINGMAKER
By James Werbaneth
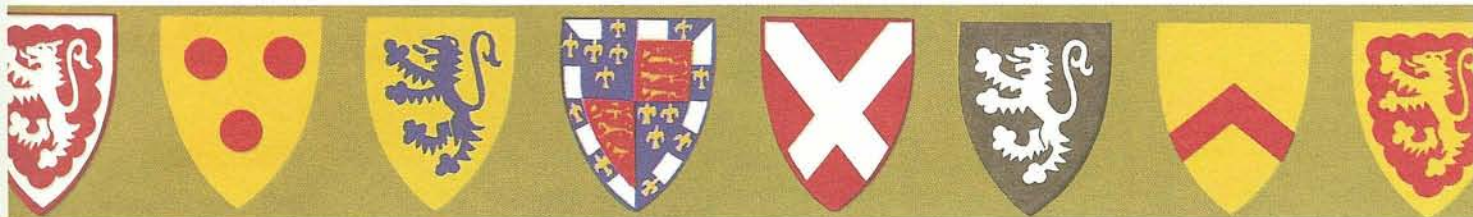
Duplicity, manipulation, ulterior motives, the stab in the back. All of these higher callings and more are held dear by the *KINGMAKER* player. The game is one of the finest studies available of the cynical pursuit of power, amply demonstrating Machiavelli's dictum that a "good" ruler must know how, and when, not to be a "good" man. Embracing the *KINGMAKER* amorality in real life might well lead one to a violent death and then a quick trip to a very warm place—but not necessarily without some notoriety along the way. Flirting with it at the game table entails none of the these real-life rewards or risks, but it remains a great deal of fun.

KINGMAKER particularly demands suspending the idea that nice people don't use each other, especially for selfish purposes. Richard Berg notes (in The *GENERAL*, Vol. 17, No. 2—reprinted in the 1988 ORIGINS Special Issue) that in games of *KINGMAKER*'s and *DIPLOMACY*'s ilk, players must play each other as much as they play the game. Less obvious is a need to pervert a democratic process that, though embryonic, must still be regarded as such. This is the fine British institution—Parliament.

Especially evident in the Optional Parliament, *KINGMAKER* players enter into the assembly as something akin to old-time ward bosses and machine politicians (or maybe more accurately, as *mafiosi*), carrying legislators' votes in their back pockets. Members of Parliament are not guardians of their constituents interests, but rather servants of the players'. This is not as readily apparent in the Basic Game; but even here Parliament remains an exercise of the player who calls it, through the pawns that bear the trappings of power. Parliament is as integral to good *KINGMAKER* play as combat or lying. It is a phenomenon in which the various and sundry nobles gather to enhance their own power—the "currency" of *KINGMAKER*.

In the games in which I've been involved, the Basic Game rules are generally used, consciously sacrificing detail and some sophistication of play in return for a reduced playing time. This admittedly cuts out much of the deal-making and bicameral shennanigans of the Optional Parliament; but much of *KINGMAKER*'s beauty lies in its basic simplicity, allowing maximum leeway for player freedom of action and conspiracy. Adding only a few Optional and Advanced Game rules (most notably the extra Royal Heirs and Advanced Game cards) adds an extra measure of detail to the basic structure. This essential adherence to the Basic Game is not for everyone, but it is the one I've used most often. Therefore, the version of Parliament to be examined below is chiefly the one of the Basic Game. However, the Optional Parliament fulfills the same functions, albeit with the added dimensions of negotiation and vote-garnering.

The first function of any Parliament is the division of the cards in Chancery. The importance of a Parliament in this regard increases with the number and quality of cards in Chancery, and can lead to a veritable shower of largesse on the part of the summoning player. In the event of a Parliament, a player must try to force the presiding faction to give away as much as possible. Thus, as many nobles as possible should be sent to Parliament in order to force the awarding of a maximum number of Crown cards.

Any player calling Parliament will surely use it first and foremost to enhance the power of his own faction, giving his nobles the best cards (unless they are distributed elsewhere to cement an alliance or pay some other debt). Even so, there is no such thing as a totally worthless Crown card, and opinions can differ over what constitutes value in one. Too, it helps if you are able to convince the presiding player that if he has to give away a card, it would be better for him not to award it to some more ambitious and less-principled player than yourself (whether this bears any resemblance to reality is irrelevant).

When *you* are giving out the Crown cards, it should be remembered that the number of troops attached to the card is not the sole determinant of value. An office, such as the Warden of the Northern Marches, is significantly diminished in value by the frequency with which the holding noble is called to dim and distant parts of the realm by revolts and raids. The Admiral of England and the Warden of the Cinque Ports are less likely to be drawn away, and even come with ships that can be quite useful indeed. Consider carefully which office might be of most value to the nominee. Bishops come with towns and cities (as well as votes in the House of Lords) and are necessary for a coronation. In short, every card has its value—lesser or greater depending on the eye of the nominee. But the most important card found in Chancery is undoubtably the Chancellor of England office. If there is no sole King (a frequent occurrence in *KINGMAKER*), calling Parliament devolves upon the Chancellor. To concede the Chancellor's position is to concede all the opportunities of Parliament.

Take for example, the case of a player I shall call "Mr. X" (let no one say I lack imagination). Mr. X controlled Henry VI as the sole King, and a very powerful faction. Respectable but still inferior in power, and holding the senior Yorkist heir, was myself. Mr. X was building on his momentum towards victory by calling a Parliament. The third (and least powerful) player and I sent all of our nobles to his Parliament to maximize card distribution. At Parliament we watched as Mr. X showered his own nobles with one desirable card after another, then begrudgingly gave the others to his erstwhile competitors. In the end, there were two Offices left, each with 50 troops attached, and in a spirit of fairness generally alien in *KINGMAKER*, he gave each of us one of these.

It was at the instance that my gift left his hand and fell on a weak and only recently titled noble (Hastings) of mine that Mr. X realized he was giving me the Chancellor's post. I giggled "Thank you" and he replied with something far less printable. I then took Hastings, my Yorkist, and the Archbishop of Canterbury (which I played from my hand when Mr. X had settled down) and ambled off to St. David's in Wales. There I gave England its rightful King, and my Chancellor assumed the ability to summon Parliament.

Lest you think otherwise, this was not the error of an inexperienced or unskilled player. Mr. X is one of the best I know, and is also good-natured enough not to hit me with a chair for all the times I've assembled coalitions against him. What this case shows is that despite simple rules, misplaying Parliament in general (and giving up the Chancellor in particular) can be disastrous. There is plenty of room for even the best players to do either.

Militarily, Parliament has its uses—particularly in the assembly of scattered forces. Armies dispersed by inconvenient revolts, raids and piracy can be immediately reassembled in the neighborhood of similarly reconstituted factions. Of course, there are times when being within striking distance of other players after the King's Peace ends is not a good idea, and that must affect your decision of whether or not to attend.

The free move to Parliament is extremely useful for bringing nobles back by naval transport to England and Wales. Probably every *KINGMAKER* player has seen or experienced an instance in which Stanley absolutely had to join the main force but was stuck on the Isle of Man, with the only available ships on the east coast of England. A timely Parliament can be a short-cut around lumbering naval movement past Dover and Penzance.

That the decision to attend or forego Parliament should be made for all nobles alike is determined by military factors, in addition to those peculiar to the Parliamentary process itself. Sending a partial delegation, unless it is the majority of an extraordinarily large and powerful faction, is an invitation to defeat in detail by opposing players all too willing to concentrate their forces for a short while. The danger is increased still further with the conclusion of a hostile alliance. Sending all your troops might be to risk all, but those hazards should be judged with each situation and remain generally less than those of having a detachment massacred once the restraint of the King's Peace is over. In effect, if you are going to send one, you might as well send all.

A cagey player can try to force an opponent to send a noble to his doom by playing a *Writ* card. Regardless of a player's determination to keep his assets out of harm's way, a so-summoned noble must attend. If a player is too weak or otherwise unable or unwilling to send his whole force with the Writ's recipient, he may have another option. With a *Free Move* card, that lone noble can double-time away from death while the King's Peace still holds. Road movement past friendly castles and towns can seal a favorable outcome, perhaps compensating for a lack of a *Free Move*. However, there will be situations in which a noble summoned to Parliament will simply have to be sacrificed.

The King's Peace can serve the military interests of the presiding player, even if the Parliament serves no other purpose. In one game, the aforementioned Mr. X controlled a weak faction with the sole King, a small stack of Writs, and not much else. His enemies massed for the kill. However, the intended victim ran, calling Parliament every time his

opponents drew near, thus imposing the King's Peace repeatedly. Although the Chancery was empty, this tactic saved his faction from annihilation until he could collect enough Crown cards to survive without the enforced peace.

In *KINGMAKER*, fortunes can shift as wildly as alliances, and the latter are notoriously temporary. Plague, an event calling away a key noble, or the draw of an unfriendly card can cripple a cause with a seemingly clear road to victory. Likewise, fortuitous draws from the Crown deck can turn a gaggle of Cropes and Hastings into a contending faction. But the area in which *Luck* enters the least is Parliament. Luck might grant a player a Writ, or possibly the sole King or Chancellor needed to control the festivities, but from that point on it is almost entirely up to the players alone how the assembly progresses.

At Parliament players can have a hand in deciding their own fortunes, for better or worse. They can augment their own power, buy each other off with gifts or supporting votes, take advantage of each other's gullability, and exploit a short interval of peace in order to assemble enough brute force to consign an enemy to political limbo. This is how a nascent legislature is harnessed for factional gain. Parliament is where the puppeteers of power politics come into their own. The rules governing it are what make *KINGMAKER* one of the most fascinating (and at times amusing) games available. ☆

EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARDS

This issue marks the beginning of yet another volume year for The *GENERAL*. As is our usual custom, we'd like to honor the best of the many writers who submitted their material to our tender mercies for publication within these pages during the course of the year past. There were so many excellent articles over the run of Volume 25 that the editors had a tough time indeed narrowing the field. A poll of the readers will determine one author from the list we arrived at to be named ''Editor's Choice''. The winner receives a lifetime subscription to The *GENERAL*, in addition to a $100.00 bonus. Please vote for only one of the nominees, and vote only if you have read all the articles nominated. Eliminating those articles written by our paid Avalon Hill staff, we offer the following articles from Vol. 25 to select from:

☐ THE TOP TURRET GUNNER
  DOESN'T ANSWER
  Paul A. Rivas, No. 1

☐ THE CASE FOR PLAYING BY MAIL
  by Tom Oleson, No. 2

☐ RIDING WITH THE BEST
  by Jeff Petraska, No. 3

☐ GUNNED-UP IN THE DESERT
  by Mark Nixon, No. 3

☐ SIGNAL CLOSE ACTION
  by Craig Posey, No. 4

☐ THE AGE OF SAIL
  by James Lutz, No. 4

☐ DARBY'S RANGERS
  by Steven Swann, No. 5

☐ SPECIAL AIR SERVICE
  by James Werbaneth, No. 6

☐ PAX DISCORDIA
  by James Campbell, No. 6

Sports Special
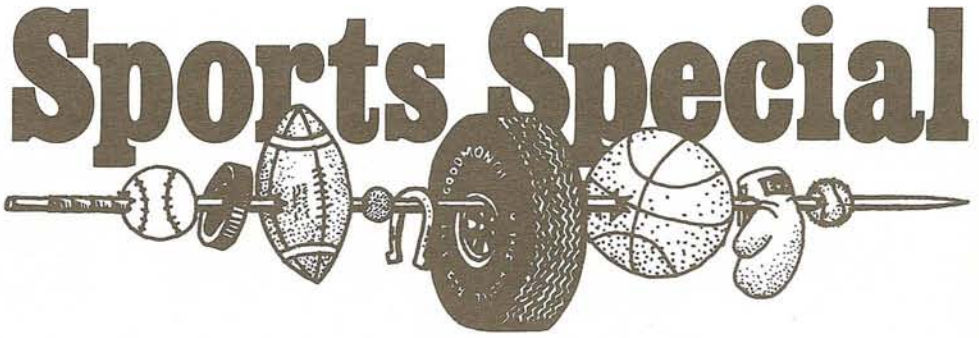
STATIS-PRO FOOTBALL
Part Two
By Jim Burnett

In our first column on *STATIS-PRO FOOTBALL* (see last issue), we covered the FACs and the running game. In this conclusion to our consideration of the game, it will be helpful to have that previous article for reference. *[Ed.: Back issues of* The GENERAL *are available for $4.00 each.]*

The passing game is covered in Figure 2 below. Once again, there is an equal split of the 96 cards between those favoring the offense or the defense. The cards favoring offense show a bias in directing passes to the ends and B1, especially in the ''quick'' patterns. You should assign your better receivers here. The flanker is totally out of the quick routes, however, and both backs are useless for the QC passes. (This is, in retrospect, a bit odd, but it seems that QC does not include the dump-off to a back.) The LE and FL should be poised for the longer routes.

If the offensive team is not fortunate enough to gain the draw, the other half of the table shows the probabilities for the defensive team if a ''zone'' is called. The defender should make the same analysis for the linebackers as was done before. For the 3-4 (FGIJ), the linebackers have a total of 74 chances of 211 (35.1%), and the 4-3 backers have 53 (25.1%). The percentages go up to 78.7% and 56.4% respectively if only quick passes are considered. The offense can, of course, refuse to throw quick passes against the 3-4, but this would severely limit their passing options. Note that if ''man'' coverage is used, each back is still covered, but the extra linebacker in the 3-4 would be available for either double coverage or a blitz. Put the better outside linebacker in box F in anticipation that B1 will be the better receiver per above. The defensive secondary can play a standard four without too much worry. The fifth back (box L) gets only 11% of the zone calls and has no assignment in the man-to-man coverage. A blitz should be by the free safety, unless there are two flankers (in which case, a linebacker or two may be sent). Double-coverage should be specified for similar players since they will not be missed much in man coverage. The 3-4 gives better deep protection, but gets hurt on the rush. This is somewhat cancelled by the fact that the rush is only 2.1% for quick and 9.4% for short. The 14.6% probability on a long pass does become a definite factor. The * and ** for out-of-bounds are also listed.

What, then, are the best offenses and defenses. For defense, you want a 4-3 when expecting the run and long passes, and a 3-4 against everything else. Minor position changes can accomplish a flexibility in each defense which can make up for their individual shortcomings. The defense should always use one of the ''Strategies'' when in man-to-man coverage. Doubling is the safest; a 3-4 should at least double one receiver and send a backer on a pass rush or blitz, or double two men, if a pass is expected.

Offensively, run inside, mixing backs, and use your passing game to keep your opponent off-balance. Draw plays and play action helps in doing this, but both can be double-edged swords (especially play action). Remember that the game is still one of think and counter-think, and quite often the least favorable option by percentages will be the most effective since it is also the least expected by your opponent. The numbers here merely show you your options. The ability to use the information to its best advantage separates the losers from the winners.

Now for the generally unpopular (at least to the offensive player) cards: the ''Z'' cards. Based on the assumptions made at the start of the first article and many game experiences, you can expect about ten of these cards to occur each quarter. The new rules now give 42 injury, 41 penalty and 13 (four ''S'') cards available to be resolved—giving an expectation of about 18 injuries, eight fumbles, and 17 penalties per game. Some of these will be inapplicable and you should split the rest with your opponent. Given the presence of a sure-handed back, you should lose less than two fumbles per game. Injuries will be a bit more serious, especially to the offense. Discounting injury chances lost to kicking plays and empty defensive boxes, you can still expect to lose six men per game for an average of six plays—a pretty tough go of it, since four of these will be from the offensive. The problem for the offense is that each position is called twice, whereas on defense only boxes A-F have two calls. The rest have only one. A further look at percentages shows that there is no substitute for depth. You can expect to lose two offensive and one defensive player for a game or more. (If you're playing out a full season, you better incorporate a method of generating
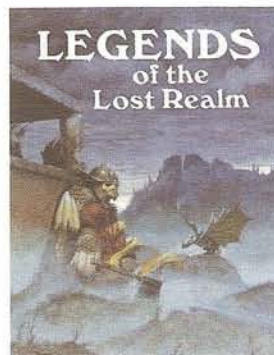
	DEFENSE										OFFENSE					OOB	
	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	Rush	LE	RE	FL	B1	B2	*	**
QL	16	14			15		1				2	20			16	12	25	44
QC		7	20	7				8	4		2	18	30				5	6
QR			13	17					16		2		20		16	12	25	44
SH				8	7	8	9	7	9		9	13	12	13	4	6	12	22
LG				7	6	8	7	6		14		17	10	17	2	2	12	16

Figure 2: Number of Times each Card comes up when Pass is called against Zone Defense.

STELLAR EMPIRE
Empire-Building in STELLAR CONQUEST

By James P. Werbaneth

The ultimate objective in *STELLAR CONQUEST* is always the same: to build a powerful empire among the stars virtually from scratch. Starting with identical initial resources and entering into similar parts of space, the players have equal opportunities to win.

The draw of the cards has everything to do with the usefulness of the planets that the different players encounter, and hence the colonization and astrography of the empires. Much more important, however, is how well the players convert resources into other assets. Strategy, especially during the production turns, is pre-eminent over chance. It is definitely better for the *STELLAR CONQUEST* player to be good than to be lucky.

Power in this game is measured in more than simply numbers of starships. It is also a function of the quality of warships, production capabilities, mobility and flexibility, and the ability to penetrate a fog of war as black as space. It requires a prudent and balanced trial of construction, colonization and research. No one component can be ignored, nor can success in one entirely offset failings in the others.

Of course, this power must be wielded well to win. But the first step is to acquire it.

THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION

The most important source of *Industrial Points* (IPs) is population. It is available to everyone and is ultimately the source of almost all production. Even on worlds, especially mineral-rich ones, where most production is accomplished by factories, the cost of Industrial Technology making these possible —or at least the construction costs of building the first factories—is borne by the population. In addition, it is a critical means of garnering victory points.

Population has the advantage of cost-free, self-replication on terran and sub-terran worlds. Factories too can reproduce, but only at the cost of IPs. The emigration bonus represents a low-cost way to increase population growth still further. The mandatory transfer of bonus population points to other planets best dovetails with expansion efforts, and at worst represents only a minor inconvenience.

Though population has the advantages of being universally available, productive and easily transferable, industry remains very important. In fact, Industrial Technology is so important that it is one of the best purchases that can be made with the pre-game allotment of Industrial Points. A factory is an investment, a means of increasing a planet's production capacity beyond that of its population. To maximize the return on such an investment, factories are best constructed early in the game. For example, a factory built on a (non-mineral-rich) world at a cost of four IPs immediately after Turn 4 produces nine IPs, assuming that the planet remains in friendly hands, by the end of the game for a ''profit'' of five IPs. One built after Turn 36 produces only one IP, for a ''loss'' of three IPs. Although there might be compelling reasons beyond those of profit and loss for building factories later in the game, the principle stands that they are generally best constructed before Turn 28—the earlier the better.

Industry Technology beyond the most basic level is not such an unqualified advantage. Improved Industrial Technology is a good, moderately-priced area of industrial improvement that can be useful on mineral-rich, low-population worlds. But its cost must be justified against demands for comparably-priced researches such as five-hex speed and Advanced Missile Bases. Robotic Industrial Technology is even less desirable. It is normally a prohibitively expensive investment, the benefits of which balance the expenses only in the extended game. Otherwise it is of little use if any besides being a black hole for Industrial Points.

Controlled Environment Technology is necessary to exploit the resources of most mineral-rich planets. It costs little to acquire, and can pay for itself within one production turn. CET's main drawback is that Industrial Technology (which has the same cost) is a logical research alternative, is applicable to all planets and not just a few, and that barren worlds do not yield victory points.

THE SINEWS OF WAR

Production sources and IPs have purposes beyond their own existence and replication, of course. Among the most important is the construction of military power in the form of warships and planetary defenses.

Ships are the more important of the two. They are the most flexible means of destroying an opponent's own warships and the only one able to besiege and seize colonies from the enemy. Their central purpose is to perpetuate and extend the player's control of space, even at the expense of others. An ancillary function is to escort colony transports into systems intended for colonization. Without warships, each transport runs the risk of destruction.

New ship construction is as mandatory as population growth. The four corvettes that enter with each player's forces on the first turn are but a token squadron. However, warships should not be built with the initial allotment of IP. These should go towards research, with warships built only after a colony has been established. Furthermore, in the beginning of the game, encounters with opponents' forces are completely impossible and the first corvettes are sufficient to escort the colony transports.

The basic warship is the corvette. The least costly and available to all, it is also effective for most of the game. Even when superceded by more powerful vessels, it remains useful for escorting emigrants to systems where the threat of hostile action is minimal.

The logical step beyond the corvette is the fighter ship. Its research cost is far from excessive; in fact, fighters can become available as early as the Turn 4 production sequence. They are generally cost-effective and, unlike corvettes, capable of destroying anything in an enemy's possession.

The death star is a quantum leap in lethality beyond every other weapon in the game. It is the dreadnought of *STELLAR CONQUEST*. A fighter stands at best but a fair chance of destroying it, though with a 50% chance of meeting its own doom from the death star. It makes corvettes almost irrelevant in ship-to-ship combat, regardless of their quantitative advantage or Improved Ship Weaponry. The only dependable counter to a death star is another death star.

Improved Ship Weaponry is an extremely valuable Level 3 research objective. It doubles the probability of destroying enemy ships and missile bases and makes death stars even more frightening. This development is an excellent way to gain qualitative superiority and to offset inferiority in numbers. Its attractiveness is enhanced by its immediate benefit, without the need to construct new and more advanced warships. Late in the game its effect can be decisive.

Planetary defenses, normally in the form of missile bases, are more problematic than ships. Missile bases cost half as much as ships with identical firepower, and in that sense they are cost-effective. Also, their research expenses are quite reasonable. However, their lower cost are made in exchange for greater and more subtle sacrifices than mobility.

First, missile bases do not benefit from Improved Ship Weaponry; in that regard, they are built to be anachronisms. More important is that, regardless of numbers and quality, missile bases are powerless to prevent an enemy's siege by even a single corvette. Missile bases can make attacking a world prohibitively expensive in terms of destroyed ships, and can insure the retention of victory points associated with it. But a besieged planet cannot build ships to raise the siege, nor can it have a command post. A fortified planet can do nothing to help itself unless the enemy allows it.

Industrial Points of the besieged can still be used for research, or to build factories and missile bases. This is more severe a restriction than superficially apparent. Research may be important in constructing ships to relieve the planet, especially if it leads to Improved Ship Weaponry or death stars. Nonetheless, it is always better to have the option to allocate them thusly rather than be forced into it by an opponent. Any factories built during the siege, while useful after relief, likewise produce captive IPs until then. Added missile bases will make the world even harder to take, perhaps rendering it practically impregnable. Yet there does nothing to lift the siege and only keeps a bad situation from getting worse.

The bottom line is that if *STELLAR CONQUEST* is decided by military conflict, military conflict is

decided by ships. A player who relies on static defenses without adequate support from ships is likely to be conceding the game to the first opponent who figures out just how toothless he really is.

However, missile bases are an integral component of military power. Their role is to render attacking a planet too costly to prudently carry out, attritioning hostile task forces that actually do attack. At their best, missile bases are a cost-effective way to thin out attackers to the point that they must desist or suffer a *coup-de-grace* from counterattacking warships. The basic Level 1 missile base is an almost mandatory research goal. Like the corvette, it is generally effective through most of most games. Its low research price makes it a wise initial purchase. In addition, the low cost of the bases themselves means that significant defenses can be erected quickly and without necessarily neglecting other needed expenditures.

Even more than the mobile corvettes, however, basic missile bases are reduced to irrelevance by death stars. If one enemy death star enters a system defended by nothing more than Level 1 missiles, all the expense of building them is wasted. The remedy is to build Advanced Missile Bases. They are not the equal of death stars, but they can destroy them. Against fighters, they can hold their own, and they are clearly superior to corvettes without a proportional cost in IPs.

Advanced Fighter Bases are not an absolute prerequisite for victory. Many players will allocate their IPs elsewhere without any effective diminuation of armed power. Still, they are generally a very advisable investment.

Planetary Shield research and construction is another matter. A Planet Shield makes a planet immune to conquest. A large number of missile bases can do the same thing, however, at a much lower research cost and with an added advantage. Missiles allow an opponent, especially one attacking the planet for the first time or an over-aggressive one, to expend his ships attacking massed defenses with little or no hope of success. Planet Shields keep him from making this mistake. In the regular game, IPs that might go toward acquiring a Planet Shield are better spent on something else—maybe anything else. In the extended game, in which IPs are not at such a premium, Planet Shields are more practical.

STRATEGIC MOBILITY AND FLEXIBILITY

Military power is more than ships and missiles. It is also determined by their mobility and the flexibility of their employment. In this, research and technology are crucial factors.

Distance is fundamentally, but subtly, different in *STELLAR CONQUEST* than in most other games. Though it uses a spatially-oriented hex grid, distance is a matter of transit time instead of space between two points. Increasing ship speed through research diminishes the time it takes to travel between two stars. For example, ships with the basic two-hex-per-turn speed take two game turns to go from Lalande to Ceti. With ship speed increased to three, transit time is now only one turn. Thus, although ship speed was increased by only fifty percent, in this one case the effective increase was twice that. Not always does an arithmetic speed increase result in geometric gains. With three-hex speed, Ceti and Rastaban are still two turns apart, with no immediate advantage over the two-hex speed. Ceti and Eridani are three turns apart at two-hex speed, two turns at three-, four- and five-hex speeds, and one turn at six hexes per turn.

The gross result is that even as spatial distance remains absolute, temporal distances change at uneven rates. The net result is that, for players' purposes, the map shrinks and warps with each advance in ship speed.

There is an overwhelming need to increase speed throughout the game from the initial two-hex crawl. This is as necessary an advancement as that from corvettes and from undefended, unindustrialized planets. Mobility, the ability to move from star to star as rapidly as possible, must go hand-in-hand with an ability to defeat the enemy.

Related is strategic flexibility, the ability to choose and change options. Ship speed contributes to this as well as mobility by decreasing the distance between stars—therefore facilitating communication. Faster ships not only reach their destinations quicker, but can be more readily redirected than can slower ones. Technological research can further augment flexibility. Unlimited Ship Range frees vessels from the eight-hex leash to the command posts. As speed increases, this limit, like all spatial constants in *STELLAR CONQUEST*, becomes shorter. (Eliminating command posts also helps hide friendly colonies.) Unlimited Ship Communication is another great aid to flexibility. When used in conjunction with Unlimited Ship Range and a high ship speed, it gives the player extraordinary freedom of action.

DISCOVERY AND INTELLIGENCE

Knowledge is power. In *STELLAR CONQUEST*, it can also be hard to get.

The most striking example of the need to aggressively seek knowledge is the process of discovering star systems. The most obvious use of discoveries is to find terran, sub-terran and mineral-rich planets for colonization. A near equally important role is determining which worlds are likely to be exploited by the opponents. For this reason, scout ships should range over the entire mapboard, and not just the space within easy range of colony transports and warships. The early-turn discovery that is so distant when made is much closer later in the game when mobility and flexibility are maximized.

Scout ships are the mainstays of the exploration effort. They begin the game with unlimited range, and are cheap to build. This is fortunate, as their loss is commonplace. It is impossible to prevent the random destruction of scouts during exploration. If the ships cannot be saved, at least some measures should be taken to insure that the discoveries are made regardless. Scouts should work in groups of two, so that if one fails to survive exploration of a system, the other is present to acquire the information unless a catastrophic "snake-eyes" is rolled. When a ship is destroyed, the surviving scout should link up with another pair (or even better, another lone scout).

Warships play a secondary role in exploration. They are useful, especially for exploring stars within range of command posts, freeing scouts for the long-range missions to which they are suited. Warships' immunity to random destruction further suits them to exploration.

Besides astrographical data, players need intelligence of their opponents' capabilities and dispositions. Herein lies the difficult part of penetrating the fog of war.

Voyages of exploration reveal nothing about a sentient presence on a planet, except whether a colony is there or not. They cannot determine the size, industrialization, or defenses of the colony. They can reveal the type and number of ships in the star's hex, but that information normally comes just before any warships present make short work of the scouts. Frequently, losing one or two inexpensive scouts in exchange for intelligence on an opponent's ability to build fighters and death stars is worth the price.

The only way to determine the extent of a world's missile defenses is to actually attack it. That, to say the least, can be somewhat risky. As for industrial assets and population, conquest is the only means of gathering that intelligence. A command post

reveals the presence of a colony in the system. But that is all it reveals. From your perspective, a colony of one million beings on a barren world looks the same as one of thirty millian on a terran planet with numerous factories and extensive defenses.

Limited intelligence gives *STELLAR CONQUEST* much of its character. The inability to acquire meaningful information can affect the game in ways that go beyond the most obvious level of the rules. There is ample opportunity for alliances and other forms of mutual assistance, some of which can take the form of exchanges of intelligence. As a corollary, players can also agree not to explore certain areas, or order others not to explore them on pain of hostile action. Since nobody can really know whether his erstwhile ally is telling the complete truth, or if a possible enemy is bluffing, there is ample room for deception. The only limit on player duplicity is lingering honesty.

Task Force counters should be used throughout the game to hide the composition of ship groups. This also allows the use of scouts as dummies, in addition to their role of exploration.

Intelligence may not be as obvious an element of power as military assets or economic capability. But the most powerful and readily employed space fleets can be neutralized completely if their owner does not know what to do with them or where to send them.

EXPANSION AND CONFLICT

There are two primary elements of strategy in the game: expansion and conflict. "Expansion" is the establishment of new colonies in systems unlikely to be contested by opponents. It is far less a phenomenon of warships than one of colony transports. "Conflict" is very closely tied to the "Conquest" of the game's title. It represents efforts to bring uncolonized but disputed victory point stars under friendly control, or to conquer the colonies previously established by others. Its success depends upon the use of warships. Whereas expansion is unilateral, to the degree of almost being solitaire at times, conflict always involves two sides (sometimes more).

There are other fundamental differences. Expansion is safer in that productive planets are brought under friendly control and exploitation with little or no risk of resistance. Conflict entails the hazards of combat. Concerning victory points, conflict can yield greater relative results. A star system of one terran and one sub-terran planet, for example, colonized through expansion gives four victory points to the owning player. The same system, seized during the conflict, nets the same victory points to the controlling player and deprives the former owner of four victory points, for a relative gain of eight. The benefits can be substantially augmented if the conquered planets have large industrial bases or are otherwise important. Expansion most often yields a steady, gradual, and generally safe accrual of power and victory points. Conflict is sharp, quick, dangerous, but capable of dramatic results.

The first stage of *STELLAR CONFLICT* is one of expansion. Due to the certain lack of mobility and flexibility of the tiny military forces on all sides, conflict is physically impossible in the first four turns or so, and only gradually progresses to the point of highly improbable. The main objectives at this point are to establish a presence and facilitate population expansion. Colonization of hospitable, ideally terran planets is crucial, as is population growth that fuels the later expansion. These worlds are to be the "core" of the player's empire.

The draw of the star cards may prevent a player from colonizing a terran or sub-terran world before the first production turn. Then, he should place his population on any other inhabitable planet and utilize their production capability on the Turn 4 sequence.

Failing to make planetfall on a victory point world is not likely to be a catastrophe, particularly if the player keeps this to himself.

The first command post is established at the fifth game turn or just before. This is often placed on one of the more heavily populated core worlds. But it is often better if it can be constructed in an otherwise poor system, on a barren or minimal terran planet with a very small population, thereby misdirecting any hostile attentions later in the game.

Secondary activities are ship construction and the acquisition of missile bases and factories. Research is commenced toward better starships and Advanced Missile Bases. By no means unimportant, scout ships and corvettes search the map for desirable planets.

In some ways, the allocation of the initial IPs is one of the most important industrial activities of the game, because it can set the tone for much economic strategy. Instead of spreading these points thin among several research areas, one should be bought in entirety: Industrial Technology, Missile Base, or Three-Hex Speed. The principle is to achieve results of either immediate use or applicability on the first production turn. In later turns, the first researches are used as a springboard toward further progress. For instance, initial research in Industrial Technology allows factories to be built in the first production turn; and having Three-Hex Speed is compounded later into even higher-speed ships. These first IPs are best not converted into corvettes. There is no need for them yet, and they can be built easily enough when there is one. If Three-Hex Speed is chosen, the surplus IPs can be used for either incomplete research in other areas, or for scouts. The former can be completed in the early stages of the game, and the latter are of immediate usefulness.

The first phase of the game is one of expansion, as we've stated. The players have an adequate ability to expand in the neighborhood of their core systems, and a critical need to do so. Population is the ultimate source of power, and the players need room for it to grow. In addition, the emigration bonus is a impetus to expansion.

The second stage of the game is, to some extent, a continuation of the first. Conflict is the exception and expansion the rule. Colonization extends beyond the core systems that supply the colony transports. Research continues. Corvettes are superceded as the primary warships by fighters and death stars. Ships and missile bases are built in ever-increasing numbers in anticipation of the third stage.

The final phase of *STELLAR CONQUEST* is substantially different than the first two. The primary objective is to try to get a decisive edge in victory points over the other players. This is complicated by generally not knowing what the others control, which happens if one pays too little attention to collecting intelligence. Conflict is more common than at any other time.

Facilitating conflict are the benefits of research. Fighters are now available in significant numbers and death stars are no longer few and far between. These two ship types tend to form the backbone of military forces. Often, at least one player has Improved Ship Weaponry. Mobility and flexibility are likewise at their peak. Replacing lost vessels and expanding the fleets still further, if combat losses allow, are large populations and many factories. Even if a player has no interest in aggression towards his neighbors, he must prepare for those who have designs on his empire.

Conflict in the last stage of *STELLAR CONFLICT* is often fluid, with colonies conquered and reconquered. For the first time the core systems are within ready reach of enemy forces. Combat also tends to be quite bloody at this time. With frequent combat and often frequent shifts in alliances, the third stage of the game can resemble some barely controlled form of violent chaos. It is the decisive climax of

the game, in which players' causes can be made or broken. It is also the reason why empires are so carefully built in the first and second stages of the game.

CONCLUSIONS

With planetary populations measurable in the tens of millions and spatial distances stretching into light-years, *STELLAR CONQUEST* is truely a macro-strategic game. Players begin with the seeds of power and their strategy, more than anything else, determines how these seeds will germinate and grow.

It differs from most science fiction games in terms of its fictional background and rationale. It has none. The norm is reflected by games such as *STARSHIP TROOPERS* or *DUNE* or *FREEDOM IN THE GALAXY*, in which a "historical" background provides much of the game's atmosphere and the basis of its mechanics. By contrast, *STELLAR CONQUEST* takes a radically different approach. Its fictional rationale is so vague that it can be considered, for all intents and purposes, nonexistent. Instead, the game relies on a straightforward menu of aspects of power in an age of both technological progress, exploration, and eventual large-scale conflict among the stars. The mainstream of science fiction games deals with particulars, be they individuals, specific groups, or planets. *STELLAR CONQUEST* deals with massive generalities.

Its appeal and distinctiveness lie in its fusion of science fiction generality and its economic, technological and military components. Industrial Points in *STELLAR CONQUEST* fulfill the same function as ducats in *CONQUISTADOR*, mega-Pounds in *Pax Britannica*, or the confusing array of economic indicators by which we measure real economies. Missile bases can be viewed as abstractions of static defensive capabilities, and ships as representations of mobile military forces. Its crowning achievement is the integration of technology into the power equation in the form of research. Technology, in the real world of the planet Earth, has far-reaching effects on every aspect of human interaction; and as technology advances, so do societal dynamics, including those dealing with competition and conflict.

Like almost every wargame, these are at the center of *STELLAR CONQUEST*. It is appropriate that competition and conflict change in the game as technology advances. Again as on Terra, technology makes them deadlier as well.

STELLAR CONQUEST is about power reduced to its basic elements. Under the only moderately-complex system is a subtle and elegant portrayal of power and how it can be fostered, and wielded. very few strictly historical games can make a claim to do it as well as *STELLAR CONQUEST*. ☆

DESERT SANDS
The Scenarios of WOA, Part II
By Mark C. Nixon

In the last issue, Mr. Nixon considered the first four scenarios of WEST OF ALAMEIN and shared his insights into tactics with us. In this, the second part of his evaluation of these newest challenges for the dedicated ASL buff, he turns his attention to the last four found in that module—#39-#42.

Scenario 39
Turning the Tables

Rating: 55% German

Attraction: A heavily armed force of Germans plunge into sand, mines and wire. British defenders are frozen in their tracks as Stukas dive to the attack. The steady drumming of the Bofors has sent more than one to an earthy grave, but the guns are in danger from the ground this time as enemy sappers guide the assault through, coming out of the setting sun.

British Advantages: Wire, Mines, Sand, Entrenchments, 40L Guns

If I told you to set up a defense including 315 mine factors, my guess is your response would be similar to mine . . . "No thanks; let's play *ASL* instead." But here, the mines are all Known, and the enemy also has sappers. With ten turns available, they will be able to work through the mines, although the inconvenience in doing so will be a cornerstone of your defense. Complementing the mines, the wire and sand pose added trouble for attacking infantry and vehicles alike. Notice that even the best route for the halftracks still involves three Bog checks, perhaps making your selection of hexes to boresight quite easy. Everybody can fit into the entrenchments, and the sand provides a nice haven from the 150mm Stuka bombs, since it halves their resolution (F7.4: bombs are ordnance by definition). Those 40L guns will destroy any of the German armor in LOS, giving the AA gun plenty of time to engage enemy infantry as the vehicles hide. Naturally, the AA gun must deal with the Stukas—a matter to be covered later.

British Disadvantages: Static, Leadership, Dispersed, Sunblindness

One telling aspect of the advantages listed above is that, other than the 40L guns, these are all fixed pieces of terrain; they are not weapons you might use aggressively against the enemy. My own preference would be to trade in some of that static paraphenalia for some added hitting power, as it is much easier to adjust the defense when composed of mobile elements capable of exerting influenece beyond their own hex. The fortifications, once set, are inflexible. The enemy might work around them

or through them and, of course, you cannot make any changes to them then. A faulty set-up here, or one which the Germans negotiate early, will result in a lost game most of the time. This is magnified by the inability of your infantry to make bold adjustments due to the strength of those Stukas and enemy machineguns, coupled with the need to defend across the entire battlefield. With only three leaders, it is difficult to split the force between the north and south sand patches, and the single −1 leadership DRM to be shared by 13 squads must surely make this the poorest-led group of British ever. As if all this were not enough to convince you to choose to play the German side, there is also sunblindness to contend with.

British Defense:

Remember that all the fortifications set up HIP (A12.33), except for the Known minefields. Coupled with the fact that all your troops are concealed (in addition to the 10 dummy counters in your OB), you do have some chance of deceiving the German player into attacking the wrong portion of your defense. The other basic concept to remember is to make sure both guns are HIP so the Stukas can't simply fly in and drop their bombs on them, and to set up your infantry so any strafing runs will hit only one occupied hex.

Stringing the mines across the entire area can be useful, or using all three to block the southern edge might be good as well. My favorite is to use them to block the center, where it is most likely the AFVs want to go: 28T4-26T7, 28U5-26U8 and 28V4-26oV7. Put wire in 28O6-O10 and 26Q1-U3. The HMG goes in a foxhole in 26oP5 and can move to a trench in 26O6 if the Germans move for the wire to the north. The HIP ATG is in 26oN5 and the AA gun is in 26oO4. The guns will remain HIP until the Stukas attack; at some point, if the aircraft are playing timid, I might even expose some infantry in order to invite an airstrike. I plan for the HMG and the AA gun to deal with the planes. Should the first strikes not be at the guns or the HMG, the bombs will probably not fall and so I should get first chance to take out a plane. The MMG in a trench in 26M1 is a risk I'm willing to take during the opening set-up because he can lay down a firelane to 26Y1 and have tremendous impact on any German entry in that area. Since the sunblindness does not affect a firelane, nor does Light Dust, this is the best way to inhibit enemy movement when looking into the sun. The Stukas might move on this MMG, but cannot do so until after their infantry have entered, and even should the MMG attract their attention, so much the better as my AA fire will then spring into play. The sooner the Stukas attack and drop their bombs on mediocre targets, the happier I will be—for I can continue to fire on them. If they can be chased away, my full attention can then zero in on the ground fighting.

The rest of the infantry are dispersed in the southern sand area in three-point clusters (such as 26oW7, oV5, oU7) in order to lessen the impact of strafing. The northern sand area might contain nothing but dummy concealment counters, for the guns and machineguns can bring fire upon the area, and the wire in the O-hexrow slows any attack across that region. The three-hex deep minefield promises little for the Germans, and my guns are trained on it. A halftrack traversing the northern sand area must take a minimum of seven Bog rolls, and will also take some anti-tank fire. A German

attack across the south would be welcome indeed, for although my own losses would be great, I wouldn't expect the enemy to fight through my strength and still be able to exit 22 DVP. If he can do that, then he deserves to win.

But I won't leave the north without defenders every time. For one thing, you can play mental games by altering the number of dummy concealments in that sector. If playing a concealment "counter" (you know, one of those fellows who count your concealments in order to deduce where the real troops are), you might leave exactly ten counters in the north. He'll think they're all concealments and will be caught in a trap of his own making when they turn out to be real troops. Or, you might try the same tactic, but leave a few troops there as well. Once he has uncovered a couple of dummy stacks, he'll probably assume the rest are dummies too. But guess who will be joining the ranks of the dummies!

Yet another thing I like about concentrating in the south is that the enemy who attacks across the north can then be fired at out of sunblindness. While that may seem like small compensation for the fact that the enemy are at long range and even beyond range of much of my firepower, they will also have to send troops to contain my infantry or face a counterattack around the west side of the minefields to the 28oX1 area. Naturally, any containment force itself becomes a target for my troops. I don't expect some 22 DVP of German infantry to exit the playing area. There will be some AFV bogs, and hopefully an immobilization or two. My two guns will take out any vehicles they engage, if only the Stukas and the 10-2 directed HMGs don't strike down my crews first.

There are certainly other set-ups which will work well. This one just happens to be my favorite. I'd rather not commit a large number of squads on one flank containing only one leader, and so prefer the above attempt to deal with the entire board from a single area, hedging the bet somewhat with a few squads in the north backed by no leader at all. Putting troops in both the north and the south would be a viable alternative, but defending only in the north won't work because the south is so well screened by the high dunes in that region. Even throwing all the mines and wire into the south won't stop the Germans unless they are covered by firepower. Finally, don't forget that you can buck convention and stick a cluster of entrenchments out in the open, or string a system of trenches and sangars which will be interconnected, between fortified locations. For those who enjoy a little experimenting and the process of devising a truly remarkable fixed defensive position, this scenario should be a real jewel.

German Advantages: Stukas, Machineguns, 10-2 Leader

The Stukas might be used in a number of ways. Most obvious, and the way I tried at first, is to bring them in immediately and start ripping up the best available targets. But the British will grow wise to that and begin to keep their AA gun HIP and the HMG concealed. The German response, then, is to withhold the planes as a threat until the British reveal something worthwhile. If that 150mm bomb can be dropped on the AA gun, HMG or ATG, the infantry will have an improved chance to score a win. The beauty of this is that, since the Stuka will pin

its target with its initial MG burst in a point attack (at the very least), the targeted AA gun will be able to throw out only a ''4'' table attack instead of an ''8'', and won't have ROF. Should it or the HMG be lucky enough to nail the plane, I bet the second one will win through. I'd much rather have one Stuka around with no more AA gun to face for the rest of the game than have both Stukas left with no bombs and the AA gun cracking away at them on whim.

And what is it that will force the British to reveal their heavy hitters? The 10-2 directing two HMGs and a MMG ought to do it. Once established in a spot like 28oEE5 or 26oDD6, this firegroup can annihilate (or at least scare away) anything in its path—freeing the remainder of the German infantry to proceed forward. The heavy MG group then advances to a new position. Before long, the British must retaliate with fire from the AA gun and the HMG. If they don't, they will lose their squads; and when they do, the Stukas will dive in for the kill. The machineguns also prohibit British north-south movement and add to the overall greater range of German weaponry. This is another example of the Germans successfully engaging their enemy beyond effective range of return fire. The machineguns and leaders are what make it work here, enhanced nicely by the sunblindness at times.

German Disadvantages: Tough VC, Difficult Terrain

Part of the problem with exiting 22 DVP is that the 31 DVP of infantry will not make it alone. Some of them will certainly fall, and that means that some of the vehicles will need to exit the mapboard. Those vehicles are all flimsy, and you cannot expect them to stand up to any 40L fire. They must even beware the British MGs, ATRs and mortars. It will prove tough enough to work these AFVs through all the Bog hexes and minefields, even without hostile fire to bother them. So the attack might be hampered by the need to screen these vehicles from the enemy, at least until the locations of the guns are known. It still won't be a cake-walk, but at least your infantry can engage the British equally without the danger of that dread #9 TK eliminating six of your valuable DVP at a single blow.

The only other bit of difficulty you will encounter, beyond failure of the Stukas, is the exposure and delay of crossing all that open ground and sand. The trouble for the vehicles is worse than it is for the infantry, but the foot soldiers will pay dearly for any moving in the open and will be slowed by sand and wire—and often channeled where they'd rather not go by the minefields.

German Attack:

There is a very good reason for this being a ten-turn scenario. It is because the Germans need that much time to discover the layout of the British positions, to poke and probe into it, to work around the mines and wire, to pinpoint the emplaced guns before sending in the Stukas, AFVs and CC teams. Call it reconnaissance; call it caution. Call it what you will. The force the German marches into this battle is built around the ability of the Stukas to deliver a telling blow at a critical location at the right moment. Their failure to land a bomb on target because you took a chance on a concealed unit might cost you the game. If you run the AFVs out into the open and the 40L guns fry them, you might want to re-read Chapters C and D. If you put the 10-2 leader anywhere but with the two HMGs, set and ready to rip apart any target in sight, perhaps there is yet time to dust off the copy of *RAIL BARON*.

Ten turns give you enough time to move onto the battlefield in a cautious manner, establish a MG base in a secure spot (such as 26oDD6 or 28oEE5) with the 10-2, and begin to surge forward in a dispersed formation with the squads. If the 10-2 steps into a boresighted location, he might have to be moved. To guard against a boresight/9-1 combination wrecking him, make sure you advance concealed into position. Don't barge in during movement in Turn 1 in the hope of firing off an Advancing Fire shot at long range. Even the boresighted shot rolls a Light Dust die. In your Defensive Fire Phase, you will reassemble the machineguns in order to blast the enemy in Turn 2 Prep Fire, or will leave them DM should the British choose to slink away from your threat. When you force them to start moving, they will be abandoning not only their entrenchments but also the three-hex cluster defense, and will find themselves presenting multiple targets for a strafing attack. But, as I've mentioned, it may not yet be time to unleash the terror from the skies. Wait for a great target—not just a good one—and always attack from outside CA of the AA gun.

As one might expect, the real work will be in the hands of the seven or eight squads who must advance toward the British positions. They are the ones who will do any mine/wire clearing. They are the ones who bring forward the LMGs and their own inherent firepower which, together, must hold the British at bay when it is time to move the 10-2 closer. They are the ones who will force the majority of the enemy to drop their concealment in favor of providing additional targets for the 10-2. They must come out of the sun, so that even running in the open (which I don't recommend as a steady diet for victory) they are taking only even fire, plus the Dust dr.

By far, my favorite spot to attack is the southern area. This region provides some interesting LOS with all the dunes thereabout. It is shielded from any northern British by both the dunes (inclusing SD1) and the range, but will prove difficult for the vehicles to cross because they must enter the south-west corner to avoid close-range fire in the 16V1 area. The center is the best path for the vehicles, but in my estimation it is too open for the infantry. The north is a compromise, far from any southern British units yet more open than the south itself. Any of the three might be taken, and which will probably depend on the enemy's minefield and infantry deployment. But whatever the defense, I think the attack must proceed with the hope of clearing a path through the center for the vehicles. An attack in the south might hook slightly north to the pass at 26V9, with sappers to clear that area, while the balance of the attack continues eastward. In like fashion, a northern attack can slip a few sappers south into the 28X4 pass to do the same. Don't forget to enter the minefields with trailbreak counters and use all the modifiers at your disposal from the B24.7 to roll clearance. Should the attack not allow you to clear these central blockages, your vehicles will have to take their chances in the sand. If the British have not blocked the center, you must expect it to be heavily boresighted and should proceed through that area only after finding out otherwise or silencing the enemy's heavier weaponry.

Once located, the AA gun is the primary target for the Stukas. I wouldn't hesitate to use both bombs on it if needed. The crew will be pinned by the first MG attack, so chances are good that one of the bombs will hit with results. Even better, the 10-2 might take out the crew or the assault might sweep right through their position. Such luck would be ideal, but I think playing for the Stuka attack on the gun is about the best policy. At least, that is something you can plan for as opposed to an event that might just ''happen''. However you do it, once the AA gun is taken out, the Stukas are then relatively free—and might turn on the HMG to eliminate their last worry, although striking the ATG would be great for freeing up the armor, and screaming down on the poor bloody infantry can help out your own infantry. Throughout, the ability of those Stukas to pin everybody they attack with point attacks will prove perhaps the greatest virtue. With the right kind of luck, imagine what a single Stuka might do to the best stack the British muster; with a pin every turn, that stack might never leave its starting hex. If you can catch the HMG out of position, it might be worth pinning it every turn just to keep it out of the battle.

But the sand muffles those bombs down to the ''12'' column with a +1 for Emplacement. The bombs might fall to no effect. What should you do? My advice is to simply proceed with the infantry assault. The failure of the bombing is not a reason to assume your attack itself is failing, throw caution to the wind and charge forward with the armor. Far from it, that would be the certain path to failure. These well-led troops can still win. They still derive certain advantages from the air cover, bombs or no bombs. For one, the enemy must decide every Prep Fire phase whether he will fire his AA and HMG, or save them for use during the Movement Phase against those strafing planes. The very threat of the airstrike infringes on your opponent's options. The turn he marks his HMG for Opportunity Fire might be the turn you break its manning infantry with defensive fire. On the other hand, the turn the HMG prep fires might be the turn a Stuka ends the MG's game life.

Once you have taken out those two 40L guns, or if you can find a useful location out of their LOS, you can finally bring out the PzJgs for some added firepower at the British infantry. You should still keep them outside normal range of the enemy SW, but that should not be too terribly difficult since, by the time the 40Ls are gone, your infantry should have already silenced several of those bothersome ATRs, mortars and LMGs. The 47Ls of these German AFVs might not seem like much at first, but once they start cranking in some ROF and scoring some hits, the ''4'' attack results will be most welcome. I would not bring the halftracks forward unless you are near the endgame and desperate. These vehicles are better used for driving offboard with their 12 DVP (or maybe even more once loaded) than for any offensive action. But they need to be creeping forward throughout the game at every possibility, because they must face several Bog checks and will need an opportunity to free themselves should they bog down. The PzJgs can't help push the HTs, but you might want to use one HT to push the other in a situation where you need them both and the chance of bogging two is no more detrimental than having one stuck. Just the fortunes of war.

The end rush to get offboard in the final turns should, if you have done your job and encountered good fortune (you must always be lucky to win . . . no matter what scenario, no matter what game), be a matter of walking and driving. I don't expect that there will be any British left after ten turns of fighting. The only question is whether you still have 22 DVP to exit. If you should have extra units but there are still British in the way, try being a bit more aggressive next time. Better to put those defenders to the test while there are still a few turns to go than to throw all your hopes into one last charge. When the enemy know you absolutely have to exit a certain place on a certain turn, you know they will be throwing out those firelanes across your path and putting extra residual fire in the key hexes you must cross. This is too much advantage to give away to them. The defender will know he can Intensive Fire and risk Sustained Fire. They will use every FPF opportunity, knowing there is no tomorrow. Had you gone at them like this on Turn 8 instead of 10, there would be another turn to face and they would be reluctant to commit all these desperate shots. Plus, if they break your troops on Turn 8, you might still bring them back for more of the same on Turns 9 and 10. Troops broken on Turn 10, however, are out of the picture (almost always)!

Conclusion:

As expected, the Germans come out of the sun. The sappers are soon at work on the mines and wire of the overconfident British. One of the AA batteries prematurely fires into the minefield, and almost immediately the Stukas are screaming out of the late afternoon sky. Bombs and heavy machinegun fire, sand and dust, foreign troops in a foreign land. The pressure is too much to bear and, for the first time in the minds of some, it is time to depart to the rear.
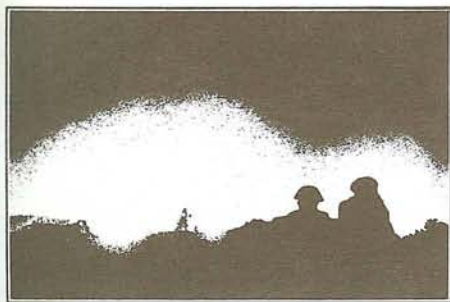
Scenario 40
Fort McGregor

Rating: 60% German

Attraction: This idea of a night assault on prepared defenses might prove the best way to get into Fort McGregor; but there can be no doubt that the attack is expected, what with the introductory bombardment. Like as not, the shells will not clear a convenient swath through the wire and it will be up to the infantry, again, to find a path. Sixteen machineguns rip the night, and at times the starshells light the area as though it were daytime. There will be no sanctuary for the weary.

British Advantages: Entrenchments, Wire, HMG

I don't see much for the British to cheer about in the meager force they are allocated in this scenario. If the beneficial TEM of the foxholes and sangars don't allow them to survive some of the potent German firepower, and if the wire doesn't slow the enemy at least a turn or two, there will be slim chance of any British victory here. The key seems to be to break some of those enemy squads early and then keep them broken. As in all Night scenarios, it is very difficult to do any serious routing with it limited to one hex at a time via Low Crawl and with DM status so much more difficult to cast aside. The awful fact is that the German can still slink away one hex at a time, whereas broken British squads might not even be able to rout at all since they are surrounded by the enemy. Still, the entrenchments should allow the defenders to hang in there longer than they otherwise might and trade blows with the encroaching enemy. Of course, the entrenchments are necessary to survive the bombardment—that goes without saying—and this encounter will prove a useful study of the various layouts possible with a combination of such earthworks and the hillock. In case you haven't noticed, this was the section detailing the British Advantages! Pray for massive ROF with the HMG.

British Disadvantages: Firepower, Surrounded

If the three mortars were all used to fire HE in one Fire Phase, they should be able to get off about five rounds with their ROF—or about 10FP on the IFT. This brings the British total to 74 firepower factors if the HS are able to use their inherent fire (which would mean that the mortars are able to be manned by full squads . . . as well as all other SW for that matter). But the Germans wield 124 firepower factors. Use the mortars to fire IR, the

Germans suddenly possess twice the firepower of the defenders. It's the kind of overwhelming ratio which normally dictates a fall-back defense; only here, that obviously won't work. The British are going to take a beating, and that's without any heavy destruction from the pre-game bombardment. (I find that bombardments are rarely harmful, but are sometimes a real nuisance.) This time there is no place to run, for the "fort" is surrounded. The implication is that there will be times when rout is impossible, and that some positions will become Encircled. Indeed, it will be a common enough practice of those devious opponents you've come to know and love, to actually illuminate their own positions so that your broken troops will be sure to see them and, therefore, not rout toward them. In this manner, you will have a very tough time getting the broken troops to the leaders for rally; and when you combine large stacks to overcome that dilemma, those stacks will come under encircling fire. It's just one thing after another inside Fort McGregor.

British Defense:

The British might choose to congregate everyone around the hillock summits themselves, but I won't spend much time here on this strategy. That would play right into the Germans' hands, allowing them to run the attack however they desire, with yourself as little more than a casual observer until such time as the enemy come within three hexes (the NVR) of your constricted defense. Instead I want to demonstrate a defense which might involve a bit more risk, but which also provides capacity to bring greater harm upon the Germans before they get so close.

The first thing to do is re-read those Night rules. That might seem no easy task, but there are a few tricks involved in setting up the defense. Make sure you take the Dummy counters in addition to concealing all your troops. Don't forget to set up three-squad equivalents HIP, and all leaders and SW HIP (page E26, Clarifications for E1.2). Because of SSR 4, some of the entrenchments will not be set up HIP, although they normally would even in a daylight scenario. When that pre-game bombardment hits, remember that only units which break/reduce/wound lose their concealment/HIP status. Units taking MC and PTC do not otherwise lose such status because there are no enemy units in LOS.

That's about it for the significant rules; the rest of the defense hinges on how you will apply your knowledge of the game as a whole. The one thing I'd like to avoid, or at least curtail, as the British is the effect of those enemy attempts at Encirclement. This determination was born during our initial playtest games, back when the Germans were not required to take the summit hexes to win. We recorded several playings in which the Germans won simply by moving to the fort's perimeter and blasting away at the British, using the power of their machineguns to force Encirclement upon them in location after location. With enemy units on all sides, the British could not rout and often had trouble enough just moving out of the Encirclement. Of course, that will no longer win the game, but I haven't forgotten the lesson and still expect to suffer at the hands of all those machineguns. To combat this, I will stay off the summit hexes themselves and use entrenched locations adjacent to the hillock to prevent the enemy even seeing me from encircling positions as much as possible. Foxholes in 28oY2, 28Z2, 27oX10 and 27W10 are the choice locations to illustrate this principle. Notice that the entrenched squads in 28ZZ2 and 27W10 cannot be encircled at all unless the enemy have gained the hillock itself. Squads on the hillock can be seen from slightly less than a 240° field of fire, which at least affords some advantage over a total 360 (which is what they would face were they established on the summit hexes). Also, by not positioning these foxholes on

the summit, you have denied their protective cover to the enemy who are, after all, the ones who must climb up there. You don't have to go there yourself, and might realize some advantage in the form of a broken German or two when they do move up there in the face of your fire.

Another feature of the defense is the use of outposts, designed to initiate the process of revealing those bothersome Cloaking counters as the enemy advance. Remember that as soon as "a Gunflash is placed due to an attack vs an enemy unit" (E1.91), you can start trying starshells. The attack which frees your starshells will usually be one against a Cloaking counter, and I advise taking the first chance offered. Once a few starshells light up the night, the attackers will be forced to follow a more predictable and stoppable pattern. The outposts themselves might only contain a HS apiece, for you cannot afford a great deal out here in the fringes of the fort. Alternatively, an outer system of entrenchments (27T7, 27Z4, 27CC6, 28T4, 28X6 and 28CC4, which equates to the fort perimeter) provides an interesting study of the effects of Wire, Night and Firelanes. With an LMG in all but one of these locations (probably 28X6 would be best to leave without an LMG since it is within normal squad range of two other entrenchments), we can throw firelanes along the entire perimeter. Of course, the firelanes are effective only to illuminated locations, so that problem must be addressed with some heavy illumination. But that's what the 51mm mortars are for. Imagine the troubles those Germans will have crossing the wire with the added worry of a firelane in their path.

But the wire might have been cleared by that pre-game bombardment and those outposts will also attract the hostile attention of the assault. It might be argued that any effort spent on reducing the perimeter defense is effort deflected away from the summit defense itself, but we all know the end result of KIA'd British defenders, no matter where they are, is the toughest end of the German VC. So the perimeter defense is something to consider, maybe even in part, but I don't recommend its use in full. I might use it with a couple of HIP units in order to protect the occupants from the probing German advance. They still might be broken by the bombardment, but somebody has to be out there to slow the enemy; it might as well be somebody who can hurt them on the wire where they are most vulnerable.

Because the Germans are headed for the summit hexes and the adjacent hexes are a bit shielded, 28oY2 or 27oX10 will be the key hex to defend. If you decide to set up the HMG in order to take advantage of the special firelane provisions of E1.71, it will have to go in a level 0 location such as 28Z2 or 27W10. In 28Z2, for example, a firelane out to 27GG9 might do a fine job of curtailing enemy movement across that flank, and the HMG is still in position to be withdrawn back up the hillock to man the close-in defense of the summit. However, because of the hillock and the relatively short effective range of the machinegun in this situation, this kind of firelane will not be nearly as devastating as it can be in other night scenarios.

The balance of the entrenchments I would string around the summit hexes, on one side only, between 28oY2 and 27oX10, in order to link them—and also pick some choice spots like 28X3, 27Y2 and 27AA8 which are shielded by the hillock in part and might present some troubles for the attacking Germans. I would not start anyone in the sangars because of their heightened vulnerability to the bombardment. As the enemy attack unfolds, I expect them to come at me from either three or four directions at once. I will pick the flank which appears weakest in an attempt to eliminate the threat from that direction. This approach, if successful, can also yield the advantage of lessening their capability to encircle

my positions. Since acquisition for the mortars will always be removed at the end of each player turn when the starshells disappear and illumination is all lost, squads will be used to fire the mortars. This allows the HS to use their inherent firepower—which is no small matter with the addition of eight FP to the otherwise pathetic total. I might even recombine these HS in order to gain the extra range of full squads.

The end of the game will probably be a last desperate attempt to either take out enough Germans to secure a win on CVP, or avoid the German accomplishing the same result. Fighting for control of the summit will probably not be the final determinant, although without that feature in the VC the aggressor's task would have been a bit too easy. Your best strategy is to make the enemy pay for taking the summits, but preserve your troops whenever possible. Make the German wreck himself in coming after you in your foxholes. Withdraw whenever facing down a stack of enemy troops. Don't light the enemy with starshells if doing so will prevent your broken units from routing in the direction you want.

German Advantages: Leadership, Machineguns, Encirclement, Night

Not only are the three leaders with DRM superior to their British counterparts, but the total of six leaders makes this one of the best-led groups we've ever seen. Every three German squads have a leader to guide them through the night. And these six will not find themselves with an idle moment as they hustle to direct the fire of ten MGs in addition to those squads. They will be able to position themselves in carefully selected spots covering 360° of the battlefield thanks to the night attack and limited visibility of three hexes. As discussed in the British section, this will allow ample opportunity for Encirclement. Each of these groups need feel no excessive risk as all are accompanied by at least one leader (and usually two) to bring back any of the troops who fail a MC. In fact, I can't fault a single item in the German arsenal for their attack on the fort.

German Disadvantages: Time, High VP Requirement

Now that I've said the *Fallschirmjaeger* look so strong that maybe they cannot be stopped, how can there be any disadvantages to consider? Well, they will get into the fort and tear up the British alright. The only matter to be settled is whether they do in enough of them fast enough without suffering prohibitive casualties themselves due to carelessness. One thing which might hurt the German is the enemy sniper with its SAN of ''6''. (By the way, that is not a distinct British advantage because of the nearly as effective German SAN of ''5''.) But the Germans can also lose because you spend too much time getting in close, or fail to avail yourself of the benefits of Encirclement, or rush into an HMG with an untimely display of unending ROF, or simply for being too cautious or too bold. You must score a lot of VP in a short period of time; the British can win by preserving a mere ten VP worth of troops, give or take any extra prisoner points, or by blowing away a few of your stacks and amassing more points than you can possibly score. The latter is unlikely, but exemplifies the fact that you can't simply charge into Fort McGregor headfirst. A little thought and planning will go a long way here.

German Attack:

I've already harped a good deal on the avenue of approach—all four directions at once, or from at least three well-spread angles. With ten MGs blasting away from as far off as eight hexes, you might encircle as many as four locations in a single Fire Phase. That is probably more than will be presented, so you get an idea of the impact of this tactic. Even more important than that, however, is the aforementioned detriment to British routing which your attack imposes. While your broken troops will be free to crawl away from the British, the enemy broken will often find they are denied even that small escape. You will find it worthwhile illuminating your own locations at times to inconvenience the British in this manner, and their three leaders will never manage to keep all the squads in Good Order.

The composition of this attacking force will usually be six Cloaking counters packed with the 18 squads, six leaders and ten SW. On occasion, it might prove beneficial to throw out a Cloaking counter with a single HS, but I'd rather not do it here. I'll send out 12 Dummy Cloaking counters this time, but make sure that they don't step within the NVR of any potential British positions until the real troops are ready (because I can't afford to have the British shooting off those starshells due to my own carelessness). The main assault on the wire hits on Turn 2 and is led by Dummy Cloaking counters. Should the first of these actually get into wire (or the hex where my bombardment cleared a Wire counter), it will be followed by the cloaked real troops, moving into the very same hex. The thinking here is that if the British didn't shoot at the first attempt, maybe they can't shoot at this hex. It's at least some protection, and a definite improvement over barging in with the real squads first or wasting time outside the wire. You might mix this up by sending in two Dummy Cloaking counters separately and then bringing in the squads. But the point is that the Dummies are used to reconnoiter a passage through the perimeter and once inside the fort are not worth a very great deal anyway, so you don't lose much by following their path with more of the same. Sooner or later the British player will shoot, and then the starshells will come out, and then your troops who have yet to move can elect to Assault Move should that be prudent. The attack on the wire is merely designed to get you in as close as you can with as much as possible quickly, not to keep sending in squads to a slaughter once the place is illuminated.

The shortcoming of this plan is that it wastes a turn. It might be smarter to run right into the wire in this same manner on Turn 1, hitting the nearest portions immediately. In this case, however, there is greater risk that your squads will be hung up on the wire itself—no pretty sight. The advantage is that everyone will probably start shooting off starshells on Turn 1 instead of Turn 2 as above, which gives you an extra turn to engage the surrounded enemy. With the time constraint and the tough VP requirements, that might be the little extra that you need to secure a win, despite the fact that it also leaves your own force more exposed and less coordinated.

I personally prefer the first method because I have great confidence in the strength of this German force. I feel that they can take out enough British troops even if they don't get into the wire until Turn 2, and that their efforts to score victory points will actually be enhanced by taking the extra time to get as far as possible at lower risk to themselves. In any case, the bet is hedged by the fact that their entrance into Wire is a sequential procedure, with some troops already there and some yet to move. Only the moving units are at risk, and if the British fire all their starshells at once (which they have to do on the first player turn of usage) the rest of my troops will know where they can and cannot move freely. But the real key to scoring points lies in taking as many prisoners as possible, while trying to convince your own squads not to lay down their arms as well. A slightly cautious approach, then, will help prevent your squads running into a location where they might be broken and captured before

you can bring in relief. The other end of that spectrum is the use of most of your strength to break the enemy and hold off his remaining troops while several of your squads move in to capture the broken foe. Surrender here will only occur as part of CC, and the way you force that against broken troops is by moving adjacent and keeping the broken unit surrounded so it cannot Low Crawl away from you. Then you move in during APh and take them prisoner in CC. A totally different sequence than taking prisoners in daylight, but just as effective once you've mastered it.

The endgame should see you mixing it up at close hand with the British in and around the summit hex area itself, scrambling for those last few VP. You might have left a few squads out a bit from the main action in order to continue to ensure that you could pump in more encircling fire from relatively secure firebases; but more likely the German will have everybody inside pounding away at point-blank range. Once the enemy HMG was pinpointed, you threw everything you had at it, so that weapon should have been silent for several turns already. If you have captured it, surely you were smart enough not to fire it. Notice that even if the enemy is currently pinned, firing a captured SW still brings a sniper attack since such an attack does not necessarily signify fire from the sniper himself (or themselves), and the Sniper counter is not moved on the occasion of such an attack. If it comes to CC, your squad-to-squad advantage still brings victory in short order, so the enemy will continue to try to back away from you. If you negotiated the wire and those initial British shots without taking more than several losses, and if no one (like the enemy sniper) manages to nail your 9-2, it's ''attrition time'' and you should be able to grind away at the enemy until there aren't any left.

Conclusion:

Mortar fire hits the isolated little hillock, its defenders shielding their eyes from the blasts so as to be able to see when the enemy comes in on the heels of the barrage. Some of the wire will surely be pierced by this devilry, and the attack can be expected from all directions. The barrage lifts and the Vickers is made ready. Rounds of IR are brought forth by the mortar crews and the little game of cat-and-mouse begins. Motionless Tommies can feel the enemy grouping out in the dark. There will be an end to this maddening waiting game soon enough, when the madness of fire and death envelops the scene once again.

Scenario 41
A Bridgehead Too Wet
Rating: 55% British

Attraction: A little rain; a little open desert. A wealth of British weapons trained upon the onrushing enemy who, in turn, hammer the trenches with 100mm artillery. A fleeting armor duel runs its brief course, and all that remains are the infantry, struggling with one another yet again, long after the guns

and the tanks have consumed their ammo stores and broken down.

British Advantages: Infantry, Support Weapons, Trenches, OBA

It is a rare day when the defender of trenches can boast 17 squads against only 21 attacking squads who must cross open ground to win. Of course, the Germans bring other strength into this fray, but their infantry cannot hurt you on their own. Your support weapons will keep the seven enemy halftracks away; 16 SW able to knock out those halftracks make for a quick lesson to be learned by any disrespectful German who doubts the capabilities of those MGs, ATRs and MTRs. Let him come into range and try his luck! If this situation could be reduced to an affair without tanks, I would give the British a 90% rating for victory. Their infantry in the trenches are that tough. And, as we have seen at Fort McGregor, the trenches are what reduce the German OBA from a straight 20FP to a "20(+4)", which is why I am able to list the British 70mm OBA as an advantage. That 70mm might even be brought in as Harassing Fire if the enemy squads/halftracks are nicely grouped. Any targets you catch within the two inner rings of Harassing Fire will take two attacks (unlike a full concentration FFE, which units not in the exact center can exit after only one attack). Also, the British have the very best Battery Access deck in the game system, better even than the Americans and better by far than the Germans; so they ought to enjoy more FFE than the enemy. (I say, "ought to"—so don't write me when you draw two red cards on the first game turn.)

British Disadvantages: Mobility, Anti-Tank Capability

Expect to have trouble getting leaders matched up with broken units. Your troops won't break easily, but once they do can provide a real headache as you twist and turn to bring them back. Your alternatives at set-up are to combine in large stacks (which would be nice for rally purposes but a poor choice for surviving enemy fire) or to disperse everyone in order to minimize the number of troops broken by any effective attacks (which, naturally, will be difficult to rally once broken). In the latter case, if it comes to routing across the desert or moving a leader to rally the shaken Tommies, the rain will lend welcome cover. But there may be no relief from the panzers. Your 57L gun is really about all the hope you have of evening the score with the Mk III and Mk IV tanks. Six 40L guns might do a number on the enemy frontal armor if you get lucky with ROF, multiple hits or even Intensive Fire, but they also might do as well in a counterattack. At least, that way they would draw fire away from the 57L as they move out to flank the panzers, and thus help keep the big gun in action.

British Defense:

Consider three types of defense. One concentrates the trenches in as tight a cluster as possible, given the restrictions of SSR2. This defense finds the required two trenches on one of the outside boards, say in 27AA10 and 27Z9, and all the others grouped as tightly as they can be around the 26AA10 area. Those two trenches on board 27 might not even contain any troops at all, in which case they'd probably be as far from the Germans as allowed (in 27DD3 and 27DD4). In this defense, the tanks also congregate around the 26AA10 area because their TEM, hindrance and (eventually) wrecks will supply added cover to fill in the gaps between the trenches. Maybe even some blazing wrecks will supply additional cover. Although I won't go into much detail with this arrangement, it is a wokable defense which enjoys the benefits one might expect from such close support between infantry and armor. The leaders are as accessible as they can be to the troops,

and if only the German OBA doesn't dance on everyone's heads too long and if the enemy fails to realize any great advantage from Encircling this cluster, there will be real hell to pay when their infantry try to pry the British out of this stance.

The other end of the defensive spectrum is to spread the British out so completely that the FFE cannot hit more than one hex of themat once. Even the tanks are dispersed in this set-up. In fact, it is the tanks—not the infantry—which I would locate in scrub terrain. This way they will remain concealed even as the enemy brings on his tanks, which are certain to lead the attack. If your tanks are in 27Z1, 27AA7, 27DD9, 26Z7, 26BB8, 28AA2 and 28DD9, the closest they will get on Turn 1 is 13 hexes away (discounting ESB). In between these tanks, the trenches are arranged so a normal concentration FFE hits no more than one target. When the panzers try to APh fire at your Valentines, they will of course be rolling improbable hit attempts and might as well save their breath, for they cannot hit your concealed tanks unless they fire HE on the Area Target Type. If they opt to fire on the Vehicle Target Type in their following DFPh, it will be at a minimum of 13-hex range ("9" TH for the 75Ls and "8" TH for the 50Ls), but with a total +5 DRM (+2 for the rain, +2 concealed, +1 small target). Add another +1 if the Germans are buttoned up; and if they aren't, bring down the 70mm FFE on them. The panzer crews must roll a "4" original DR to hit with a CE Mk IV ("5" with that −1 armor leader) and snake-eyes are required for a buttoned Mk III to score a hit. These numbers don't improve with repetition as we are accustomed, because the targets remain concealed and no acquisition is gained. It gives one a lot to think about, although I'd actually prefer not sitting here in my Valentine waiting for those hits which will eventually come. But this tactic might buy some time. At least it might spare your tanks and force a discouraged German to move in closer on Turn 2 rather than waste more time trying to roll "3-5" with his CE tanks, a matter of great worry to anyone who ever faced down hostile FFE. The longer your tanks are a force onboard, the more the German must be concerned about what they will do to his halftracks, which will probably be entering on Turns 2/3. He cannot let your guns prey on those targets, so your concealment play might buy extended life for the tanks as the panzers start up and move in on Turn 2.

The beauty is that concealed tanks have two options, in addition to the "option" of doing nothing. They could fire at the panzers if conditions seem right; or they could roll for Motion status. Notice that these two options are always available for the Vals, but the option to remain concealed only works if they set up in scrub. I think firing away at the panzers is about as straightforward as anything could be, and would argue that it will also probably signal the end for all seven Vals (another straightforward matter). Going for Motion is a favorite of mine, for you might leave behind the 57L to singlehandedly challenge the panzers head-on while the rest of your tanks head out in a flanking action, maybe three on a flank (remember my discussion of "Blazin' Chariots") to counterattack the enemy side armor. Staying in motion and at a 13-hex range, if possible, these small targets will cause the German great concern not only for the weak side armor of his tanks, but for the vulnerability of his soon-to-enter halftracks and infantry as well. I expect him to react against this threat, which should afford the 57L some shots at turret side armor for several turns longer than normal. Tying up the tanks in this manner also keeps them further away from your infantry an extra turn or two, which is welcome relief from those potent panzer machineguns.

Back at the trenches, the widely dispersed infantry try to maintain their concealment for as long as possible. When the Axis tide finally begins to lap

around the fringe of your outposts, your troops will fall—on that you can depend. But the Germans will have trouble moving from trench to trench, and you will be able to bring fire upon them from the remaining isolated pockets of resistance. It will be much more difficult for the enemy to capture seven widely dispersed trenches than to capture seven clustered all together, although the trade-off is that your own troops have suffered more for their isolation from the four leaders.

Finally, the third British defense possible tries to find a happy medium between the first two. Spread the trenches out from 27CC8 to 28BB3, with a hex separating each of them. The tanks go in the scrub again. The best place to put the leaders is in the rear trenches, so that the frontline troops can rout back to them when they break. Since this is a "compromise" defense, you can expect to suffer some of the problems of the other two—as well as enjoy some of the benefits. You might want to try firing a few of the tanks off right away while keeping the others concealed. I bet the German player will then gang up on the ones which fire, the easy targets. This will lose the tanks which fire, while prolonging the lives of those that remain concealed. I think that is a valid tactic, for I'd rather get into the middle game with some functioning AFVs than have the whole armor confrontation resolved and find myself with no tanks left versus a German tank or two free to tromp on my infantry.

German Advantages: Tanks, Rain, Attacker's Prerogative

Your Mk IV and Mk III tanks outclass the Valentines, even though it is you who must move in on the attack. The frontal armor of these two tank forces are comparatively small, but the German guns are substantially superior. Add to that their ability to hit better at 13+ hex range, APCR ammo, the 9-1 armor leader, the pre-game bombardment which might be fortunate enough to eliminate a Valentine (or at least cause some immobilization), and the fact that it will be the German crews who dare CE status and not the British (due to the contrast between the machinegun strengths of the two groups and of the two OBA), and you have the makings of a tank battle which should end with you driving the only tanks on the field. The British do have multiple hits to cheer them, and they might even manage to shroud a tank or two behind so much flame and wreckage from their eliminated AFVs that you will have difficulty nailing those last few. But that's where your "Attacker's Prerogative" allows you to maneuver around the battlefield, aided by the screening rain, until you attain new fields of fire. The infantry/halftrack force also benefits from these advantages, for without them they would not be able to pick their avenue of approach and would not be covered from the enemy infantry on their run toward the trenches. This "Attacker's Prerogative" idea is probably something which every attacker in every scenario might boast to some degree, but here, with three boards to play with and a defender who is nailed down in his trenches and your troops screened nicely by the rain, you can pick the point where your attack will hit and actually get there with enough to win. Without these advantages at your disposal to assist you in overcoming the openness of the desert, that is one blow that would otherwise never land I fear.

German Disadvantages: Casualty DVP, Open Desert, Dispersal

That old fear of winning the battle by taking the trenches but losing the war because your losses were double that of the "vanquished" should prove your greatest quandry. One way to play the game is to rush straight in at the British with everything you've got and hope to blow them away. The other end of the offensive range is to lay back at a safe range

and throw in every form of HE at hand. The first method will probably take the trenches, and the second will probably score more DVP than the British—but neither will likely win the game. The open desert must be crossed, but it must be done in a dispersed formation or the poor infantry will never get there; neither will the halftracks. The following section details some points of the attack, but the key to it all lies in how you move across all that desert without leaving behind all your valuables. That you must move dispersed we can all agree, I believe, and it is a regrettable truth that this dissipates your firepower. In my book that is less an evil than tossing out my squads in stacks for FFE to obliterate, or herding my halftracks together in an open invitation for demonstration of the effects of Harassing Fire on open-top vehicles. I've done that in the past, and suggest you try it if you haven't been a lucky receipient to date. Once will be enough. The last thing I do will be to assail these Brits with my halftracks. Letting the enemy destroy these vehicles is the surest way to jump behind the eight-ball of DVP. The infantry and the tanks shouldn't be expected to compensate for the loss of these points . . . that is simply asking too much.

German Attack:

As advertised earlier, the tanks lead the way and will be used for the first half of the game or so to take out those seven Valentines. Highest priority must be placed on the Val VIII, for its 57L gun with a "15" TK number can wreck your armor of "6" and "8" readily. If the British player sticks it out in front, I would concentrate all three Mk IVs on it, CE, at a range of no less than 13 hexes. Since the Valentines are all small targets, you will trade even THs with the 57L at 13-24 hexes, and will be one DRM better than the 40Ls with your 75Ls while your 50Ls remain even. So I'd go CE in order to gain the upper hand here. It's much less likely the British will follow suit and face down all your MGs and the 100mm OBA, so you might wind up hitting much more often than the British at the risk of taking a sniper, 70mm OBA and some sporadic MG and infantry fire.

But you can button up when the FFE approaches, and I would enter some infantry on Turn 1 also; the sniper might find them instead of the tanks. These troops aren't here just to draw that sniper fire, but want to move toward the trenches immediately. There will not be a great deal to fear at this range from the enemy, and moving singly the squads will close the gap quickly. If you really want to worry about the sniper "4" versus your CE tanks, use the tactic of entering the tanks with a HS Rider apiece. The loaded HS provides an extra random selection target in each hex with the tanks; and if you manage to unload them, they will move between the tanks and the sniper counter to establish a sniper screen of protective half-squads. But I don't really think the SAN of "4" is worth this much commitment of manpower. I would like to use the tanks to transport full squads forward, but am not willing to spend the MP required to unload them, and refuse to force them to bail out. So the infantry will advance on foot.

Group #3 will be halftracks with a small number of squads loaded, and will not enter until Turn 3 (maybe even Turn 4). The only things I really want out of these are that they not disintegrate at the whim of the British, and the two HMGs in the SPW 251/sMG—one mounted in the vehicle and the other (the AAMG) dismounted as an HMG. Oh sure, the mortar and the 37L and the 18FP of the other AAMGs might come in handy, but first priority is preservation of the 45 DVP these halftracks represent. That's only three DVP less than all five of my tanks (with the armor leader), in case you haven't compared them. I would have to take out all seven Valentines without a panzer loss, a total

of 49 DVP (counting all seven tank crews), to exceed the loss of these halftracks. I hope this hasn't been too terribly tedious, but feel the point worth a bit of extrapolation.

The final note on your sniper is that you might want to use it to absorb the British sniper. If so, position it in the line between where your tanks will end Turn 1 and the British sniper, and make sure you enter at least one personnel unit (CE crews aren't "personnel") to activate your sniper, both as potential target and for use against the British.

If the British try to keep their tanks concealed, as was discussed above, your course of action should be determined by the arrival turn of your halftracks. If they are entering on Turn 2 or Turn 3, you need to resolve the tank battle in a hurry and should move in for the kill. Understand, this attack is not a taking-on of the entire British line, for if they are concealed then they are spread out such that you can hit one flank or the other with superior numbers. With the range closed, the British will have to drop concealment in order to fire at you, and this is the very process which will allow you to hit them, and also permits Acquisition to be gained at last. Were they to try to retain concealment, they would start losing tanks without any chance of return fire, so I think that tactic unlikely. They have already gotten what they wanted out of the concealment when you were forced to move on Turn 2 in lieu of Prep Fire. With close range action, both sides will be rolling some quite potent TK numbers.

If the halftracks are not entering until Turn 4, I would be tempted to remain at long range and pop away at the concealed Valentines for a turn. Any of them you can manage to hit will lose their concealment, and at least then will be reasonable targets. Another option along this same line of thinking is to leave the halftracks offboard until even Turn 5 or later. In fact, this might be the smartest move of all, although it would probably pay to bring in at least the SPW 251/sMG in order to utilize its two HMGs. One benefit of such a tactic is that any British attempt to break out the Valentines into your rear will arrive in that area (*may* arrive, that is) only to find those elusive halftracks have declined combat. The British, in this instance, will have paid a price for moving their tanks and be unable to cash the check of their compensation.

With or without the halftracks, the infantry must be working their way eastward. Like your tanks, which should be separated only by enough hexes to preclude normal FFE hitting more than one of them, your infantry ought to advance across a wide front to minimize the effects and spread that 70mm OBA. However, it probably would not be a good idea to spread out across the entire playing area with everyone at once, so the infantry might try coming on in waves. Since there are 21 squads, how about sending in three waves of seven squads in each of the first three turns? Seven squads separated by three hexes cover a good deal of ground, so this kind of attack still consumes a full board-width of terrain, and I would definitely pick either board 27 or 28 for the attack, distaining 26 in the center. The leaders don't come on until Turns 2/3 and are also spread out at first. As they advance to the east, they will be picking up the broken pieces of the infantry which went down before them. With six leaders available to embolden these dis-spirited troops there is no need to gather together in large stacks for rally, which would only attract additional fire. None of these leaders are so valuable for fire direction that they can afford to leave broken troops behind in this engagement, for you will need every squad you can get up close in order to take those trenches away from the British.

I hope to enter the end game (Turn 8-10) with a tank or two in service facing no Valentines, roughly equal numbers of squads with the British, and my halftrack force intact because I hid them

from the Vals, and late enough for the enemy OBA to have depleted itself. If the British still have a tank advantage or a substantial infantry edge, I will have to use the halftracks aggressively to try and compensate. But I'd much rather use them from a distance while my infantry moves in for the win. This would allow the halftracks to help, while preventing their loss which, as detailed earlier, might be too many lost DVP for me to handle. One of the tricks of the trade which favors the infantry in their assault on the trenches is the 100mm FFE planted on the defenders there. Even if it doesn't break them, it adds a +1 DRM to their fire (which will hurt them more than it hurts me shooting into it because they already have a +2 TEM, whereas I have nothing—the rain DRM being equal). Of course, if the rain stops I might be in big trouble, but this could actually improve my chances of dropping smoke onto the enemy. Viewed from the vantage point of its effect on smoke, the rain might actually be considered detrimental to my attack. But we all have had plenty of experiences in which smoke might have won a game for us, yet failed to land for one reason or another. True, smoke late in the game might be a real winner, but the universal screening of mist is what allows the attack to reach far enough into the east to bring a chance to take those seven trenches.

The end of the game should be a lot of CC. Those British squads are very tough and may refuse to break despite all your firepower directed at them. Once you're in the trenches, you will have at least gained a haven from which to organize, stack and launch the next series of assaults upon the other trenches. In a close game, you may have to rush in the vehicles to help get your squads into close combat. That is, the tanks or, shudder, the halftracks enter the enemy hex to keep them from shooting at your infantry who run up adjacent. It's probably just as well that the halftracks cannot enter a trench hex to try this tactic. The regretable thing about doing this, however, is that the vehicle in the CC hex will allow the British to attack sequentially. But it may be the only way to get your troops there.

Remember that a MC failure on that pre-game bombardment which rolls Original Doubles causes Casualty Reduction (C1.82). This simple little rule could eliminate the British 9-1 and everybody stacked with him. Never overlook the slightest rule that might bring you an advantage.

Conclusion:

The panzers tear into an overmatched contingent of Valentines. Artillery from both sides adds its roar to the turmult, and the defenders huddle in their trenches. Through it all, somehow, miraculously, come the enemy infantry. The defenders grit their teeth and edge up to their posts; if they can cross the open, we can mow them down. But what do those guys eat for breakfast, anyway?

Scenario 42
Point of No Return

Rating: 50%-50%

Attraction: The New Zealanders have blundered into a trap of the sort an astute *ASL* fanatic knows only in his worst nightmare. He faces down a 10-3 leader, three other −1 leaders, six guns, fifteen SW, seventeen squads, and a pre-registered 80mm OBA. His force is badly split into three groups, and his six Valentines are exposed and in motion. The German will hit hard on Turn 1 with only the hope of Light Dust between life and death for the lead group of New Zealanders.

British Advantages: Mortars, Smoke, Reinforcements

I might have listed open terrain as an advantage, since the Germans must cross a great deal of it. But it also contributes greatly to the demise of your westernmost group and inhibits mobility between the eastern defenders, so it warrants no clear advantage for either side. Of the five mortars, you should have opportunity to use four, with that one in the western detachment probably clattering to the ground when its possessing half-squad bites the dust. In the absence of any outstanding MG fire, these mortars will be expected to supply much-needed HE as well as fulfill their primary function of landing smoke in some choice enemy positions. The six Valentines can fire off their sM; the FFE could even lay smoke and at least causes a +1 Hindrance per hex due to the Light Dust conditions; Vehicle Dust adds yet more confusion; and the whole thing is compounded by the mild breeze and drifting smoke. Should the Germans also lay in some smoke and stir up the dust with their vehicles, this battlefield will turn into one big mess. Certain parts of it will favor the attacker, but your ability to hit the German 50L ATGs (and hopefully their 10-3) with smoke is an outstanding advantage. This kind of cover will also allow some movement of your dispersed squads without suffering the FFMO modifier, and help you to concentrate enough force in the esatern end of board 25 to hold the victory hexes located there long enough for your reinforcements to arrive. Those troops you receive on Turns 4 and 5 must bring the victory, for you won't achieve it with what starts the scenario onboard.

British Disadvantages: Dispersed, TEM, Time

That these troops are dispersed and command very little beneficial TEM are game terms which define "exposure". They are very much exposed to the enemy, and will suffer much as they wrangle with this dilemma. The process by which the Germans direct heavy fire at them in order to break them, keep them under the effects of DM, double break them to cause Casualty Reduction, and force interdiction NMCs upon them is abetted by the ten turns available to effect their total demise. If the New Zealanders hang around for such abuse, there will not be any of them left after just five or six turns and the game will end ell before the ten-turn deadline. And yet, the defenders cannot all hide, or the assault will be upon them in an instant. There are Germans within a short skip-and-a-jump of the victory hexes, so some defenders must show themselves in order to prevent unacceptable free movement. Sure enough, these defenders will draw enemy fire, which at least precludes the firing units from moving that turn.

British Defense:

I don't expect to be able to hold hex 27oI5, although I do intend to make the German pay for taking it. I have an advantage in armor, but will probably lose that advantage on the first turn unless the German is unlucky with his guns. Still, I shouldn't lose all six Valentines; and the other six vehicles, believe it or not, will be plenty for the panzers to worry about. With the exposure of my force weighing heavy on any scheme I might want to try, the inevitable conclusion is that my starting positions can only be chosen with preservation fore-

most in mind. To that end, I will try to protect the western troops by dispersing them even more in an attempt to provide the German so many targets that maybe some few of them will escape to the east. By starting two of the squads in this group deployed as HS and setting up the two leaders in their own hexes, the German sees 14 separate targets. I am not at all concerned about the loss of my ability to strike back at the German, for his force is all protected by crest status and I have practically no chance of harming them no matter what. Besides, if I put the 9-1 with a squad and LMG (my best attack), the 10-3 would simply rip them up. Notice that the best troops here must set up in the S5 area so that when the Rout Phase comes they will be able to run away from both the Germans in the wadii and other enemy troops seen in the 25K6 region. Broken New Zealanders in the area southwest of S5 will not be able to rout very far to the east due to their LOS to 25K6, and troops broken to the northwest will have farther to rout and, therefore, less chance of survival.

Remember that the leaders are not as restricted as the MMC and tanks, and so are free to set up adjacent to such units, and you can also start in the sangar hexes so long as you are not actually in the sangars themselves. Try placing Valentines in S1, S3 and U4; squads in S5, S7, T8 and U7; leaders in S6 and T6; and half-squads in S10, U1, V2, V5 and V8. Should your illustrious opponent actually expend a MP/MF in LOS of any Valentine fortunate enough to survive his Prep Fire, by all means roll for your sM. A Motion attempt might let you change your VCA, but you can always take that free spin if you hold fire (C3.22). Of course, any sM smoke you place now will not last long, but will drift and provide some welcome negation of Interdiction when you rout. The obvious impact of your CA spin is that during your own Movement Phase, a Valentine taking flight to the east which begins its movement already faced in that direction will be trailed by a vehicle dust counter interrupting the LOS between the tank and the enemy to the rear. As soon as the tank moves, it gets this extra +2 DRM cover and is immediately able to take a free TCA spin for entering the new hex, and can try another sM to provide added cover for either itself or some other tank or infantry unit. Once protected by some of this kind of smoke and dust, I would not hesitate to pop out the crew and throw around some vehicular smoke grenades as well. Used to full effect, these tanks might get your overextended infantry out of this jam yet—at least in part.

Before leaving this group to their fate, be warned that the tactic of deploying into HS might afford some protection (how many German commanders want to waste their firepower on a mere half-squad) but also might hasten their deterioration. This is because a broken squad routing through three hexes which require Interdiction NMC rolls only three times, while two broken HS routing through the same path will roll six times. So there might be a problem once the HS do break, although it will be tougher for the Germans to break two HS than one squad in the first place.

Be prepared for the worst (total loss) of the lead group. Should that occur, which is unlikely without at least some loss and inconvenience for the enemy, the only place you can look for help is to the troops east of the hillock. Their 9-2, the mortars and the vehicles might be able to salvage something from the remnants headed their way—or at least provide them some covering fire and smoke. I would start all the infantry I could behind the hillock so that they will be out of enemy LOS. The Portees, too, should be screened and set up in the far southeast corner with the carriers. Keep in mind that any known unit which begins at the edge of the hillock in, say, E6 or F4 might attract that pre-registered FFE on Turn 1. Likelihood that this is where that

pre-reg hex is will be high, because the German player wants to go after the 9-2 (your single most valuable piece). By showing only concealed units, you might convince the German to withhold his OBA rather than chance loss of that automatic black draw on an additional draw of red (for lack of a known target in the blast area). The only single hex of real importance at set up in this region is 27C6. This is where I would locate the 9-2, squad, LMG and ATR. This hex is out of LOS from all possible German starting locations, so they will begin concealed, and can throw two FP on hex 25H4 modified by the −2 leader (and a total of −4 should the German consider rushing the crags). This bit of protection might become very important should the German gain extraordinary ROF on his initial Prep Fire and nullify other defenders around the crags.

Another option with this contingent is to form up on the northeastern corner of board 27 with the intent to move onto board 25, probably into the wadii, with extended wadii movement toward the crags themselves as the goal. I don't favor this approach, for it leaves these squads over-exposed to the enemy in the 25K6 area and sacrifices the hillock. Also, it will deny the carriers and portees their rightful infantry protection and yield the region around the hillock—which just happens to be the best piece of terrain for these vehicles to contest. Back there, at least they can hide from those awful 50L ATGs and concentrate on the German vehicles and infantry, which they are much better prepared to fight. Nevertheless, I might put a unit or two in that northeast corner and try to slide them over to the wadii. The 9-2 would attract a very great deal of attention, and his addition to the crag defense might do much more than compensate for his absence at the hillock. But the Germans will probably be able to hit anyone there with a 12(-1) attack (always plus the Light Dust of course) and I really don't feel like exposing the 9-2 to that, especially since he would then have to rout to the southeast if he breaks and take Interdiction or leave himself exposed to DM fire by Low Crawling. A squad or a couple of HS might try this trick, but not my 9-2 leader, despite the fact that the fire he draws will greatly benefit the 9-1 and his group at the crags. I'm not one to risk something as valuable as my only 9-2 for this. The final trick here would be to designate a HS as possessing the hidden radio. He might then slide into the wadii unmolested. If you could pull off this maneuver, it would be a real coup because the radio over there would probably stick around a lot longer than over by the hillock; and since it can't be used until Turn 3 anyway, what do you lose by trying this once?

The most troublesome group to deploy is on board 25. I'd like to suggest locations which afford some TEM and also allow avenues of rout should things turn nasty. But I can't, for I don't see any available. The smartest thing may be to set up as far east as possible, but that would allow the enemy to come forward toward the crags too easily; and should your troops rout at that point, they would be moving away from the crags which they must defend. For these reasons, I will put them in the front lines and trust to their morale, the Light Dust and my own luck. Squads go in H3, H5, F4 with LMG, and D6 with ATR, the 9-1 in F4, HS with the mortar in D2, and the Valentines are in C1, A2 and A6. The tanks will try for the same kind of smoke and free VCA change (for the one in C1) as the western group on board 27. Their ability to generate such smoke might be what it takes to get some assistance over from board 27. But all three of them will plunge into the wadii—and lower levels for the one starting in A6. That one tank can get to E7 on Turn 1 and will be welcome relief in the crag area when it emerges on Turn 2. If these tanks had some way to fire their sM before the Prep Fire Phase, I would locate them in the front line and use them to cover my infantry; what are three tanks when we're looking at potential loss of squads? But they can do nothing until

after that devastating enemy fire, so they set up to try and save themselves. Even should catastrophe strike and the Germans take the crags early, that will probably mean that their entire board 25 commitment went after those crags and my western troops therefore made out much better than had some Germans been in the 25U1 area to complete the annihilation of that group. But I really expect the enemy to sit in their trenches and pound away at me for several turns. Were they to come across the open while my strength was even partially intact, the price they pay would be too high for them to hold the crags against the counterattack of my Turn 4/5 reinforcements.

The end of the game should be determined by how well the German 10-3 is utilzed and by how effective the New Zealander reinforcements are. The Germans have plenty of time to do whatever they want with the attack, and I can't see a New Zealander victory if all we do is delay. We will have to go for the kill, and take out as many enemy squads as possible.

German Advantages: 10-3, 50L ATGs, Initial Prep Fire, OBA

"Plenty-of-punch" is what the Germans have. When have you ever seen a scenario begin with one side blasting away with everything it has at an opponent sitting in the open? The Germans not only command the firepower to hand the New Zealanders a solid thrashing, but the latter are standing flat-footed and leaning into the punch. The biggest problem your initial Prep Fire will tender must surely be how best to split all that FP in order to bring misfortune down upon the most enemy units as possible. That some of them will break is a foregone conclusion. The question is how many and can some be eliminated outright? The OBA with its pre-registered hex is something you might decide to hold in reserve; there will be enough destruction without consuming that automatic black draw on this first game turn. My opinion is that it would be better spent on a later turn when the assault eastward will welcome the extra cover while most of your troops are moving.

German Disadvantages: Armor, Rally

While the Valentines might be able to stand up to the panzers (and even the 50Ls), or at least can hide from the ATGs after Game Turn 1, the German tanks will not take much from the 40L guns of the New Zealanders. The IB and IIFs have no business dueling with the Vals, and should instead occupy their time with the enemy infantry; and the IIIG alone will not be a match for more than one Valentine at a time. The enemy tanks must be handled by your ATGs which, regrettably, might be shrouded in smoke and are, at least unable to respond once the enemy leave their LOS. The carriers and portees would be fine targets for your tanks, but those double-small target carriers will usually be in motion, and if you try to square-off against the portees with their 3ROF 40L guns with nothing but armor, you are inviting disaster. (Your 10-3 is the guy for the attack on the portees.) Still, it will be best to use the armor as aggressively as discretion will allow in order to preserve your infantry in their attack across the desert. The squads will face some amount of exposure to enemy fire, and some will undoubtedly break. The problem with this is that you will need to leave behind some leaders to bring back those who have grown disenchanted with this little war. The 10-3 is too busy leading the attack, as is the 9-1 to the northeast. One of the leaders on board 25 is commanding the radio, and the reinforcements are not immediately available. It doesn't add up to a paucity of leaders, but the broken men are scattered across the desert and those leaders simply can't rally them all immediately. Nine leaders for 25.5 squads is a fine ratio, but attempts

to deal with the fallen will leave the Germans all over this contested area east of Sidi Rezegh.

German Attack:

The details of set-up are brutal. I have to put the 10-3 with three squads, a MMG an a LMG in crest status in 27Y2. Behind him, the 9-1 with three squads and three LMGs go in Z2, the 8-0 with three squads and two ATRs in AA3 and the HS with the 50mm MTR is in BB3. The Mk III and Mk IIs go in these same hexes at crest status; the SdKfz is IN the wadii in BB4 and the ATG in Z1. Notice that this is only five hexes of non-HIP units. The New Zealand player will not be able to locate his sniper in this region, for I will be sure to set up at least six hexes of non-HIP units on board 25. This avoids the tiresome routine of protecting the 10-3 with a screen of HS and other units, saving my manpower and taking advantage of the split set up of my forces. The two panzer IBs will fulfill the requirements of the 21st Panzer Division set-up by starting in 25M9 and M10. There, they not only help meet my need for six occupied hexes in order to attract the enemy sniper as far away from my 10-3 as possible, but they also do a fine job securing the northern flank with some added machinegun fire. They might even eventually sweep down onto board 29 and run around the enemy flank to harass their reinforcements and try to jam their crag defense with some encircling fire. My infantry in this area, except perhaps the 8-0 with the phones, all go in the K6 area. This concentration might invite a hostile FFE, but I'd much rather see it hit me here in these trenches than on board 27 where I hope to display some of the finest open field running seen since the Berlin Olympics.

The brutal part begins now. Prep Fire should see the end of some Valentines and some enemy infantry. Always remember to fire off the units closest to the sniper first. That way, if he strikes you down, chances are better that he is hitting units which have already fired. For example, if you fire a 4(+1) attack which called in the enemy sniper to KIA your 10-3 leader, that 20(-3) attack will never land. Had you rolled that big attack first, you would have at least gotten one potent attack out of the leader. But here you have guarded against the initial blow from the New Zealand sniper. The enemy might move the sniper counter at first opportunity, but note that he cannot move it over the 10-3 group unless the "within six hexes of at least six hexes" criteria can be met. Once your advance forces you to spread out into more hexes in this area, the old "sniper bait" tactic of scattering around a few HS will have to be used. I don't want to overdo this sniper thing here, for a rather lengthy piece should eventually be written to cover the ins and outs of this very important part of the game.

Primary targets at first are the 9-1 and Valentines in the lead group of the enemy, the Valentines and anyone around the crags in the board 25 cluster and, of course, the 9-2 and any portees which my opponent was careless enough to leave exposed. I'll put the 8-0 with the field phone off in some remote scrub hex where he can stay HIP the whole game without fear of some stray enemy bullets or FFE rounds finding him. Were I to string the entrenchments along the hexrow from 25K6 and 25U1, I might be tempted to hide him in O4 or P3; but there is little to gain in doing this at risk of losing my OBA, so this will not be adopted as common practice. I really want to pick the crags for my pre-registered hex, for I anticipate an enemy concentration there as soon as they are able. Even should that not materialize, my ability to toss smoke into the area at a moment's notice might spell the difference between a mad rush which brings a win and one which buries me in the dust of battle. I know hex 27oI5 would also make a fine spot to pre-register (and something like 27oF5 might be even better still), but I expect to take that

area with my 10-3 and the panzers with relative ease compared to what the crags might require.

So the New Zealanders take it on the chin in the early going and will be lucky to extricate anything at all from their lead group. I will try to keep them from grabbing that 37L gun, for I intend to use it myself. Sooner or later I will try hooking up some guns and towing them eastwards in order to lay in some additional HE with 3ROF weapons. This is one of those rare *WOA* scenarios which doesn't require me to heed my DVP losses/gains, so I will not be too concerned as the casualties rise. I will simply ensure that every risk I run, every step I take *[sounds like a song to me]*, is worth the price. This scenario offers "immediate" victory (which I happen to like in VC very much), so the probability I will take an early risk is substantially higher than if the game had to consume all ten turns. There will be a very high probability some risk of this sort might be taken on Turns 5/6, after I've had ample time to rip up the enemy, yet prior to the appearance of his reinforcements at the crag area.

The machineguns will shreak, the artillery will pound, and the panzers will crash into the enemy lines. My reinforcements will hit the scene scant minutes before those of my opponent. When these do, they will be the impetus to carry my troops over the summit of 27oI5 and into the crags of board 25. If they can't accomplish it by Turn 6, the task will be made much more difficult by the arrival of fresh New Zealand troops from the east. But I don't expect to win on Turn 6, although that would be nice. Instead, I am ready for a fight to the very last turn as the enemy continues to pour more and more squads into the crag area. He will be better able to bring back his broken units—for their rout avenue back to the wadii and underneath vehicles he will have pulled into the area (hopefully, most are wrecks by now) beats my own path back to the trenches by several hexes, and has better cover to boot. If my 10-3 makes it through the battle to the south and still lives to swing up here to the crag assault, he should be able to carry the day. I won't hesitate to throw my own tanks directly into the attack at this point, using them for overrun, machinegun fire, sD smoke placement, armored assault, or just to run in and provide some hindrance and TEM DRM. Turns 8-10 of this one will see some wild attacks if I am desperate enough, for there is no tomorrow.

Conclusion:

Although none may survive, that band of New Zealand troops out in the van take as much fire as men and tanks can, buying time for their bewildered comrades to find cover and devise an impromptu battleplan. The Germans come on brandishing an overwhelming presentation of firepower, certain to awe the defenders and crush them when they dare resist. But to do it, the hunter must become the hunted—and the open desert proves its treachery to any who challenge its mystery.

CONCLUSION

A brief review of this treatment of the eight scenarios of *WEST OF ALAMEIN* reveals that I have rated four pro-German, three Even, and only one pro-British. I've called them as I saw them; had I clung to my sentimental favorite, the British would have fared better—but at the cost of what I perceive to be accuracy. As mentioned at the outset, I'll still choose to attack no matter what the odds are, if given a preference. But I don't think we have to base our final judgement of any given scenario on whether it is, or is not, "perfectly" balanced. I'm all for playing scenarios which truly do favor one side over the other. There is a great deal of excitement to be had when facing overwhelming odds, or even playing with the odds stacked slightly against you. One of the beautiful things about *ASL* is that the tremen-

dous number of scenarios available now and the many more which continue to come our way allow ample opportunity for players to own and enjoy scenarios which are balanced and scenarios which seem lop-sided, as well as scenarios which hit all the points between. This is sufficient justification for a "Six Came Back" (has anyone ever won with the US) [Ed.—Yes.] and "The Final Battle" (show me a Russian winner and I'll show you a man who is playing against his kid brother). While I may make snide remarks about them, it is still challenging to play these just to see if the overwhelming odds can be overcome. If I'm going to play "Six Came Back", I'll buck my preference and choose to defend—just to see if I can find the combination which finally brings victory. (But it's still your turn to be the Americans, Dave, so don't get any ideas!)

The *WEST OF ALAMEIN* scenarios are probably the most tightly balanced group we've seen in any module yet. They are unique in that, which I neither hold against them nor brandish here as final evidence of their worth. I have enjoyed playing them and plan to continue doing so. That, in my estimation, is the proof of their success. They will continue to be played regularly. We have now seen the desert (which hung about this game system like some "bogey man" ever since it was first mentioned back in the days of the "old" game) and we have played it and now we know it well. Never in my wildest dreams did I expect to actually enjoy the desert game. This has been the biggest surprise of my gaming life, and I am thrilled to be at liberty here to publically print this note of thanks to The Avalon Hill Game Company, and particularly to Bob McNamara who brought the desert into my gaming room. As one of those old lines of advertising might have said about this game: "Bob is going to make a killing selling shovels to all the owners of *WEST OF ALAMEIN* so they can get the sand out of their hobby rooms."

☆

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14-5: *SL*—H, A, DN, Q; *WS&IM*—A; *TRC*—S; *MD*—S; *SST*—S; *3R*—S
17-4: *FE*—S, P, DN, V; *MD*—V, Q; *COI*—SR; *VITP*—S; *1776*—Sc; *WO*—A; *SST*—V; *NAP*—S
17-5: *CM*—S, V, Q; *RW*—V; *SL*—V; *STAL*—V; *PL*—S; *3R*—S, SR; *CAE*—V; *KM*—S; *MR*—S
17-6: *STAL*—S; *WS&IM*—S; *WAS*—V; *3R*—SR; *SL*—S; *TLD*—Q; *CL*—S; *VITP*—S; *TRC*—S
18-1: *FITW*—A, Q; *BIS*—S; *SL*—S; *DUNE*—V; *DIP*—S; *AK*—A; *PB*—SR; *AL*—S; *W&P*—S
18-2: *AF*—A, Sc, Q; *AK*—V; *3R*—DN; *TB*—V; *SL*—S, Sc; *AIW*—V; *VITP*—S; *DIP*—S; *DD*—S
18-3: *GOA*—S, DN, V, Q; *AOC*—V, Sc; *AK*—S; *VITP*—V; *SL*—S, Sc; *WS&IM*—SR, P; *DIP*—S
18-4: *GL*—H, V, A, Q; *SL*—Sc, A; *LW*—V; *W&P*—SR; *AOC*—S, P; *FE*—V; *WAS*—S; *AK*—S
18-5: *3R*—S, A, V, DN, Q; *SL*—S, A, Sc; *TRC*—V; *TB*—V; *RW*—V; *CL*—A; *DUNE*—V
18-6: *FT*—A, Sc, V, DN; *VITP*—V, Q; *MD*—S, Sc; *SOTN*—A, Q; *SUB*—Sc; *BL*—V
19-1: *SOA*—A, V, DN, SR, Q; *TLD*—A, Q; *3R*—S, Q; *DWTK*—DN; *TB*—A
19-2: *BB*—H, Sc, S, DN; *TLD*—A, Q; *SL*—V; *3R*—S; *SOA*—SR
19-3: *GSL*—A, Sc, V, SR, Q; *DIP*—A; *RW*—Sc; *GE*—V; *1776*—Sc; *LRT*—V, Q; *SL*—A
19-4: *CIV*—A, V, DN; *CM*—V; *DIP*—A; *GL*—V; *AL*—V; *TR*—Sc; *WO*—Sc; *SL*—A; *3R*—S, Q
19-5: *SON*—A, S, H, Q; *W&P*—S, Q; *DIP*—A; *WAT*—V; *WS&IM*—Sc; *SL*—A
19-6: *VITP*—PBM, SR; *3R*—V, Q; *DIP*—A; *FT*—V; *BIS*—V; *NW*—A; *SL*—A, Sc; *SUB*—V, Sc
20-1: *GI*—S, A, DN, V, Q; *VITP*—SR
20-2: *TT*—A, DN, S, Q; *MR*—V; *LRH*—A; *SL*—Sc; *W&P*—V; *GOA*—S, Q; *DIP*—A; *PL*—V
20-3: *FRED*—S, V, Sc, Q; *PB*—A; *1776*—Sc; *DWTK*—S, V, Q; *DIP*—A; *CON*—V, S
20-5: *BR*—SR, S, H, Q; *LRT*—S; *DIP*—A; *GSL*—Sc; *GE*—A; *WS&IM*—Sc; *SON*—Q
20-6: *B-17*—A, V, SR, Q; *AF*—V; *LW*—V; *DL*—S; *FE*—S; *DIP*—A; *MD*—S; *BR*—SR; *GOA*—Sc; *SL*—A; *PL*—Q
21-1: *UF*—S, A, SR, DN, Q; *SOA*—S; *GI*—H, S; *TRC*—S; *DD*—S
21-2: *NAB*—S, DN; *W&P*—S, A, Q; *NAP*—S, Q; *DIP*—A; *FR*—S; *FE*—S; *3R*—S; *BFI*—S; *1776*—S; *SL*—A
21-4: *PGG*—S, SR; *PB*—A; *3R*—S; *TRC*—S, V, Q; *DIP*—A; *STAL*—V, S; *SL*—Sc; *PK*—Q
21-5: *HW*—S, A, V; *MR*—S, Q; *OR*—A; *DIP*—A; *3R*—A; *RB*—S; *CON*—V; *CIV*—A; *SL*—A
21-6: *FP*—H, V, SR; *AIW*—S, Sc; *BL*—V; *TAC*—V, Q; *SL*—A; *PK*—Q
22-1: *PAA*—A, S, Q; *TB*—A, V; *DWTK*—DN; *TR*—V; *GSL*—PBM; *DIP*—A; *AOC*—S; *WAS*—S, Q; *AK*—V; *CIV*—S; *3R*—S, Q
22-2: *BANZ*—A, SR, Q; *FT*—A, S; *SUB*—Sc; *VITP*—S, Q; *AK*—Q
22-3: *PB*—SR; *PL*—Sc, V, Q; *SOA*—S; *3R*—V; *DIP*—A; *CIV*—A; *UF*—Sc, Q; *AIW*—V; *GOA*—A, Q; *TLD*—A
22-4: *RF*—A, V, S; *TRC*—V; *PK*—S, Q; *DIP*—A; *3R*—V; *SUB*—V; *PPG*—S
22-5: *DEV*—S, A, Q; *GSL*—Sc; *BR*—S; *DIP*—PBM, A; *SC*—V; *FITG*—A; *ASL*—Sc, Q
22-6: *ASL*—A, Sc, DN, Q; *FP*—Sc; *FE*—S, Q; *WAS*—A; *DIP*—A; *SL*—S; *TLD*—S
23-1: *FL*—A, V; *DL*—V; *B-17*—N; *HW*—S, Q; *VITP*—V; *3R*—S; *TT*—V; *LW*—V; *SST*—V; *RW*—V
23-2: *ASL*—A, S, Sc, Q; *BV*—SR; *UF*—S; *DIP*—A; *PL*—A
23-3: *SUB*—V, Sc; *ASL*—S, Sc; *BV*—SR; *HW*—V; *BL*—V, Q; *BB*—A
23-4: *EIA*—S, DN; *W&P*—A, V, S; *WS&IM*—Sc; *SC*—V; *NAP*—S; *YS*—S; *3R*—S, Q
23-5: *KOTA*—DN, Sc, Q; *WAT*—V; *B-17*—V, S; *3R*—S; *RW*—V; *ASL*—S, Sc; *VITP*—S
23-6: *1830*—DN, S, V, Q; *FP*—Sc; *RB*—S; *DEV*—PBM; *CIV*—S; *MR*—S
25-2: *TAC AIR*—H, S, SR; *FP*—Sc; *PLA*—S; *MBT*—DN; *TRC*—PBM; *ASL*—S, Sc, Q; *AIW*—S; AREA Revision
25-3: *PAT*—S, H, V, Sc; *TPS*—N; *AK*—V; *3R*—Sc, Q; *ASL*—S; *PGG*—PBM; *PB*—A; *UF*—V; *SOA*—V; *PL*—S; *BB*—S
25-4: *EIS*—S, H, V, Q; *WS&IM*—V, P, Sc; *EIA*—V, Q; *VITP*—S; *NB*—DN; *1776*—V
25-5: *GE'88*—SR, V, H, Q; *1776*—H, Sc; *ASL*—H, Sc; *FP*—Sc; *RB*—V; *OS*—V; *DEV*—S; *GOA*—DN, Q; *W&P*—S, Q; *BR*—DN
25-6: *ASL*—H, S, V, A, Sc, Q; *PAA*—S; *RSN*—V; *UF*—S; *FP*—Sc

BLACK TEA FOR TWO
A KREMLIN Variant

By Ted S. Raicer

In his otherwise excellent article on *KREMLIN* ("Power Politics" in Vol. 25, No. 1), Donald Greenwood throws down a small gauntlet: "*KREMLIN* is a game of power politics for three to six players. Hermits who can't gather a group of three or more can stop reading now." Fortunately, despite being one of those "hermits" who has trouble rounding up more than one other player, I read the rest of Mr. Greenwood's article and the accompanying "Blood in the Politburo", and rushed out to purchase *KREMLIN*. The following rules are offered to help others enjoy this excellent game when that elusive third player can't be found.

General Rules

1. In a two-player game there is a third player—a "Dummy" whose actions are automatic (much like the Rastur in *MERCHANT OF VENUS*). The Dummy's actions are completely controlled by the system outlined below. All normal *KREMLIN* rules apply to the Dummy, except as modified below.

2. At the start of the game, choose an unused Faction for the Dummy. Place the Dummy's ten IP markers (one each numbered 1 through 10) in a cup, along with the IP markers of any other faction not in play (these are considered "blanks"—for those with spare blank half-inch counters from another game, these work even better). Since IP markers are numbered on both sides, the first time a Dummy marker of a particular denomination is drawn, place it face-up (odd numbers); face-down (even) the second time. The Dummy is not given any "Intrigue" cards.

3. At specified times the Dummy must "declare" IP. Dummy IP markers are drawn randomly from the cup as required. If a blank marker is drawn, it is placed aside and the Dummy is considered to have declared no IP this time. Otherwise the Dummy's faction IP counter drawn is placed on the appropriate Politician. Except for added IP, the Dummy always declares "first".

4. The Dummy will attempt to declare (make a draw from the cup) on each of the following: the KGB head at the start of the Purge Phase; the Defense Minister at the start of the Spy Investigation Phase; the Foreign Minister at the start of the Funeral Phase; on the new Party Chief at the end of the Funeral Phase. In each instance, if the indicated Politician is "inactive", then the Dummy will draw to place IP on the acting head of that office.

5. The Dummy does not draw an IP marker from the cup under any of the following conditions:

   a. the Dummy has more than 2IP already declared on that Politician (exception—adding Influence Points); or

   b. the Politician is age 90 or above, or is ill and over 73; or

   c. the Politician is under a 10+ IP marker of another faction; or

   d. the Politician is under an IP of another faction greater than the highest Dummy IP remaining in the cup (keeping track of the IP played by the Dummy on a side record is a help, although not necessary since all his current IP are displayed on the board).

6. If another faction has previously declared IP on a Politician that is three or greater (i.e., +3IP) than the Dummy marker that has been drawn, return the

marker to the cup. Consider this as though no IP were declared, and do not draw again at this time.

7. Use the Basic Game rules to resolve ties, but the Dummy player always wins ties of declared IP—even if its IP were not placed first. (However, the Dummy may never place IP on a Politician with a 10+ marker showing of course.)

8. The Dummy may never take any action against itself during the game. The Dummy player will never purge, investigate, bring to trial, condemn, or demote any Politician it currently controls. When determining targets for Dummy actions, in the case of ties for age or rank, a simple die roll will determine (highest die roll) the target.

Adding Influence Points

1. Like the other players, the Dummy receives two IP at the end of every third year. Unlike the other players, the Dummy must take these IP as one 2IP marker. The Dummy may not take any "Intrigue" cards, nor divide the added IP into two markers. Further, the Dummy always, regardless of who controls the Party Chief, places its added IP last.

2. The Dummy will place its added 2IP marker following the priorities listed below (from highest to lowest):

   a. on the highest ranked Politburo office that the Dummy can gain 10+ IP on by adding two IP; or

   b. on the highest ranked Politburo member that the Dummy can gain control of by adding two IP; or

   c. on the highest ranked Politburo member with less than 5IP declared by another faction; or

   d. on the oldest Candidate with no declared IP.

3. If the Dummy cannot place its 2IP according to these priorities, add the 2IP marker to the cup to be drawn randomly later.

4. The Dummy may place added IP on a Politician on which it already has more than 2IP declared.

The Cure Phase

1. A Dummy-controlled Party Chief who could win the game by waving this turn will *never* take the Cure voluntarily.

2. Dummy-controlled Politicians who are only *sick* will remain bravely at their posts. Dummy-controlled Politburo members who are *ill* will take the Cure on a die roll of "1-12". If another faction controls the KGB however, add six (+6) to each die roll.

3. Dummy-controlled Politicians will remain at the Sanatorium until they are well, unless another faction gains control or controls the KGB, in which case they will return to work even if sick/ill.

The Purge Phase

1. The Dummy player will always attempt to purge if it controls the KGB head (or acting head). The Dummy player must launch an "automatic" purge if the Party Chief is controlled by another faction which could win the game with a wave this turn (or if it is Turn 11). First, the die is rolled to purge the opponent's Party Chief and, if successful, the purge then continues according to the rules below.

2. Except in the case of an automatic purge, the Dummy must pass a die roll in order to begin the purging of undesirables. This roll is made once per Purge Phase (not once per purge attempt). The Dummy-controlled KGB head will begin purging on a die roll of "1-15". Add two (+2) to the die roll if the acting KGB head is ill, and add one (+1) for each year of his age beyond 80. If the Dummy KGB head fails this roll, the phase ends immediately. If the Dummy KGB head does not fail this roll (or it is an automatic purge) then purging will continue until a purge attempt fails, there are no more eligible victims, or the KGB head ages to 95.

3. Except in the case of an automatic purge, the Dummy KGB will first attempt to purge all non-Dummy Politicians in the Sanatorium—starting with the lowest ranked and working upward.

4. After all inactive Politicians have been purged, the Dummy KGB head must roll a die before each subsequent attempt and compare it with the following chart to determine the highest level of the Party that may be purged that attempt:

Die Roll	Highest Level
1-6	Candidate
7-12	2nd Level Politburo
13-18	1st Level Politburo
19-20	Party Chief

5. Once the highest purge level is determined, the Dummy KGB must choose the first target available at that level, according to the following priority:

   a. the highest ranked Politburo member (or oldest Candidate) controlled by another faction; or

   b. the highest ranked Politburo member (or oldest Candidate) with no declared IP.

6. If there is no eligible target at the highest purge level, continue moving down the Politburo until an eligible target is reached, or you reach the Candidate level. If there is no eligible target among the Candidates, the Purge Phase ends.

The Spy Investigation Phase

1. If the Dummy controls the acting Defense Minister, it will bring to trial the highest ranking non-Dummy Politburo member currently under a "?" marker in the Sanatorium. If there are none, it will bring to trial the highest ranking non-Dummy Politburo member currently under a "?" marker. All Dummy-controlled Politicians will vote *Guilty*.

2. If there is no non-Dummy Politicians eligible for trial, the Dummy-controlled Defense Minister will condemn the oldest Candidate controlled by another faction. If there are no Candidates with declared IP, he will not condemn.

3. Next the Dummy Defense Minister will investigate the two highest ranking Poitburo members controlled by another faction (currently not under investigation) if the acting Defense Minister is well, or the single highest ranking member if the Defense Minister is sick/ill.

4. Finally, the Dummy Defense Minister will close one investigation on the highest ranking Politburo member he controls—but only if the Defense Minister is not ill.

The Funeral Commission Phase

1. If the Dummy player controls the acting Foreign Minister, the Dummy will nominate the highest ranking Dummy-controlled Politician eligible. If

there are no Dummy-controlled Politicians eligible, it will nominate the *oldest* member it does not control who is eligible. If its nominee loses the ensuing election, the Dummy Foreign Minister must nominate the oldest eligible Politician that voted "No".

2. All Dummy-controlled Politicians must vote "Yes" for any nominee the Dummy player controls, and "No" for any nominee controlled by another faction (but, of course, the Foreign Minister must still always vote for his own nominee regardless).

The Replacement Phase

1. A Dummy-controlled Party Chief will now shift offices at the same level of the Politburo, so that those Politicians currently controlled by the Dummy hold the highest ranks in each level—in order of the number of Dummy IP declared on them (i.e., highest IP to the highest rank in the level, and so forth).

2. The Dummy-controlled Party Chief will now promote to fill the top three offices with Politicians it controls (again, in order of Dummy IP declared), demoting as needed to achieve this. The Dummy Party Chief may then demote the oldest Candidate controlled by another faction back to the People.

3. Note: a Dummy-controlled Party Chief may not age more than five years in this phase, nor past the age of 92.

4. The highest Dummy-controlled member in the 1st Level of the Politburo will promote one Dummy-controlled Candidate to the Politburo, if possible, when he is eligible to do so.

Rehabilitation Phase

1. Dummy-controlled Politburo members *never* release Politicians from Siberia under any circumstances.

The Parade Phase

1. A Dummy-controlled Party Chief will always attempt to wave, except in the rare cases when he is at the Sanatorium. ☆

GENERAL INDEX 1964-1989

Updating the previous effort at listing every article and author in these pages, the new 16-page Index of The *GENERAL* brings 25 years of continuous publication into sharp focus. From the AH Philosophy to the contests, from our Series Replays to those excellent gamers featured in the "Meet the Fifty", every important facet of wargaming's oldest periodical is divided for ready reference by those interested in a specific game. The major portion of this new index is devoted to a game-by-game listing of every article that has appeared in these pages since the early enthusiasm of this hobby flared in the 1960s. Whether for the aficionado of a particular Avalon Hill or Victory Game seeking every word printed on it by the experts, or for the collector looking to insure that his AH collection is complete, or simply for the gamer wanting a new (though old) idea for winning, the *GENERAL* Index is a must. The *GENERAL* Index is available now for $5.00 direct from The Avalon Hill Game Company (4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, MD 21214). Please add the usual 10% shipping and handling to your payment (20% for Canadian; 30% for overseas). Maryland residents please add 5% state sales tax.

Coming Attractions
REPUBLIC OF ROME

REPUBLIC OF ROME is primarily a political game, with military overtones, for three to six players. The game defies comparison, as it is very different from anything I've ever seen before; that uniqueness is part of the reason I'm so enamored with it. Admittedly, the other reason is that it is hip-deep in chrome from an historical period I love. I'm usually not one for diplomatic games. Although I like some multi-player games, I hate *DIPLOMACY* and was never really wild about either *CIVILIZATION* or *KINGMAKER*—both of which I considered overly complicated and too long to comfortably play. *REPUBLIC OF ROME* is every bit as innovative, and much shorter. Experienced players can finish a game in four to six hours.

Although it includes a 16″×22″ board, the game's main component is a deck of 192 illustrated cards. However, it would be a mistake to classify *REPUBLIC OF ROME* as a card game. The political wheeling and dealing and the richness of historical detail far exceed that found in most games of that genre. The cards simply make it easy to painlessly pack a *lot* of detail into a relatively clean Sequence of Play in an attractive manner.

Wargamers addicted to hexes and moving forces around a map may not care for this game. The board is purely organizational and used to track the Republic's finances, the degree of public satisfaction with the senatorial government, and the display of cards which dictate the game action. Each player starts the game in command of a faction of three prominent senators with differing Military, Oratory, Loyalty, and Influence ratings whose goal is to increase their individual Influence to the point where they control Rome. Thus, all the factions are at odds with one another as they jockey for position, cutting deals to undermine each other and promote their own interests.

But this is where it gets interesting. All of these adversarial factions also *need* to co-operate with each other to run the State lest Rome fall to internal strife or foreign wars. If the players do not act in concert for the good of all, Rome inevitably falls and all players lose. Human nature being what it is, newcomers often ignore the warnings and lose their initial games until the hard lesson sinks in: work together or die together. This balance between the need for individual advancement and the common good proves to be a two-edged sword that keeps the players constantly guessing as to the true intentions of their fellows. Those who are too paranoid lose to the game system; those not careful enough lose to a power-grabbing opponent. This is just the best of many finely-tuned checks and balances that makes *REPUBLIC OF ROME* an exquisite game of timing.

The Sequence of Play consists of seven phases. The first is the Mortality Phase wherein a chit is drawn to see which Senator (if any) dies of natural causes. Although quickly resolved, this simple mechanism keeps the balance of power constantly changing and also nicely portrays the passage of time in a game spanning 200 years of Roman history. The dead Senator loses all of his possessions and ratings and is returned to the Forum, from where

he will spring anew as a descendant of the deceased to be wooed by a new faction as time passes.

The Revenue Phase handles the game's accounting, which allows both Rome and the individual Senators to gather their finances. Rome collects annual taxes with which to run the State, while the Senators who administer it increase their personal treasuries through corrupt governorships, concessions, or ties with the merchant class. Money, however, is only a means to an end. The Senate needs it to build Legions and Fleets, finance Wars, and fund Land Bills for public contentment. For the Senators themselves, it is a path to increased Influence and Popularity.

The real action begins in the Forum Phase. The game begins with the 1st Punic War card in the Forum but "inactive". As such it represents a potent future enemy facing Rome. However, war is not established until the Senate votes to attack Carthage, or until a matching War or Commander card is drawn to activate it. Each player, in turn, rolls the dice to see if he triggers a Random Event. If not, he draws a card. If the card is red, it is some form of Intrigue card which he may hold and play at his convenience. If black, it must be placed in the Forum immediately, where it has the potential of activating the Punic War. Having drawn a card, each player finishes his Initiative by making a Persuasion Attempt to lure other Senators to his faction and attempts to attract Knights to increase his votes and financial clout. After all players have finished, additional Initiatives are auctioned off until a total of six cards have been drawn. Thus, while the Punic War is harmless as long as it is inactive, sooner or later a card drawn will not only activate it, but also increase its strength. The longer Rome waits to deal with it, the greater the danger. Yet circumstances seem constantly intervene to tempt the players to wait till next time to deal with Carthage. (Lord help them if Hannibal or the 2nd Punic War shows up in the meantime.) Wars are the chief threat to Rome. Not only do they drain her Treasury, but should any turn end with four active Wars, Rome falls and the game ends. Wars need to be defeated quickly, but they often appear in rapid succession and events can conspire to make their defeat difficult. The Random Events alluded to earlier can also visit any number of calamities on the Republic, ranging from Epidemics and Storms at Sea, to Natural Disasters and Provincial Revolts.

The Population Phase is over with a single dice roll but it can end the game suddenly if the players aren't careful. The dice roll is modifed by the Rome Consul's Popularity and an assortment of current events ranging from Drought to Pirates that gauge the "Unrest Level". If it goes off the scale, the people revolt and all players lose—which means the Senate must constantly balance their War expenditures with sufficient outlays at home. As ever in history, foreign interests must be balanced with domestic ones.

If the Forum Phase provides the action, the Senate Phase is the reaction. The current Rome Consul must oversee elections of two new Consuls. The winners of the election gain Influence and then roll

to see which becomes Rome Consul (and presides over the Senate) and which becomes Field Consul (and marches off to war). The new Rome Consul then proposes candidates for Censor until one is elected. The new Censor may then hold trials to prosecute Senators for misdeeds—again subject to the vote of the Senate, albeit influenced by outside factors such as the Population Appeal Table, Tribune cards, the Influence of the accused, and all the votes money can buy. The guilty lose Influence for minor offenses, or their life (or go into exile) for major offenses; the Prosecutor gains accordingly from the victim's misfortune. Following Prosecutions, the Senate gets down to the business at hand: electing Governors, raising military forces, passing Land Bills to quell the populace, and sending the Field Consul off to war to smash the enemies of Rome.

It is then off to the Combat Phase to deal with those Wars/Revolts that the Senate has sent forces against. If successful, the Field Consul gains Influence and Popularity. If stalemated, the war drags on with dire consequences for Rome. If defeated, the Field Consul dies (along with a large portion of his force) and Rome is in for some tough sledding. Unprosecuted Wars affect Roman provinces while growing stronger and continue to sap the State Treasury.

Each turn ends with the Revolution Phase, in which Rome's victorious Commanders decide whether they'll surrender control of their Legions back to the Senate—or march on Rome and try for a military victory!

This is just the bare bones of a system rich in detail. Along the way historical figures such as Pompey, Cicero and Caesar emerge from the ranks of the Senators with special capabilities to liven things up. The game has three decks of color-coded cards to enable play of three separate scenarios dealing with the Early, Middle or Late Republic. Alternately, players can throw playing time concerns

away and combine all three into a Campaign Game spanning the life of the Republic. The Advanced version introduces a new office: *Pontifex Maximus*, showing the effect of religion on Roman politics. Provincial forces, which can get involved in border wars or revolt and march on Rome to bring more spice to the military aspect, are added.

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GENERAL
Variant Counters

With the third issue of the year (Vol. 26, No. 3), subscribers will be treated to a half-sheet of counters (130, mounted and die-cut) intended for use with several variants appearing in The *GENERAL*. These counters include new ones for *MERCHANT OF VENUS*, *FLIGHT LEADER*, *FIREPOWER*, and additional markers for *TP: STALINGRAD* and are necessary to play the variants appearing in Vol. 26, No. 1 through Vol. 26, No. 5. These will be enclosed as a bonus for **subscribers only**, and readers should note that issues purchased at stores do not contain these counters. Nor will this counter sheet be included when customers order **back issues** of Vol. 25, No. 3. The variant counter sheet may be ordered separately direct from Avalon Hill (4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, MD 21214) for $3.00; please indicate "GENERAL Vol. 26, No. 3 Counters" on your order form. Usual shipping and handling charges apply.

SO THAT'S WHAT YOU'VE BEEN PLAYING

Titles Listed: 111   Total Responses: 321

| | | | Rank Times | | |
| | | | Last | On | Freq. |
Rank:	Title	Pub	Time	List	Ratio
1.	Gettysburg '88	AH	12	3	4.2
2.	Advanced SL	AH	2	21	3.7
3.	Enemy in Sight	AH	1	2	2.8
4.	Up Front	AH	15	8	2.1
5.	Diplomacy	AH	4	22	2.0
6.	Squad Leader	AH	7	50	1.8
7.	Third Reich	AH	—	1	1.8
8.	Afrika Korps	AH	—	1	1.7
9.	Civilization	AH	—	1	1.6
10.	1776	AH	—	1	1.5
11.	Air Force	AH	8	3	1.4
12.	Kremlin	AH	18	2	1.4
13.	VITP	AH	16	3	1.3
14.	Guns of August	AH	13	2	1.2
15.	Luftwaffe	AH	—	1	1.2
16.	WS&IM	AH	3	2	1.2
17.	B-17	AH	6	3	1.1
18.	TP: Stalingrad	AH	10	2	1.1
19.	Civil War	VG	—	1	1.0
20.	Flat Top	AH	9	4	1.0

And yet another of the "old guard" failed to make this list (*RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN*), leaving only the seemingly indestructible *SQUAD LEADER* to reach 50 consecutive showings in our survey of what the readership has been playing recently. On the other hand, a pleasant surprise was the return of a number of old favorites: *THIRD REICH*, *AFRIKA KORPS*, *CIVILIZATION*, *1776* and *LUFTWAFFE*. And, despite the short length of time for responses, we had an appreciable number of survey forms returned, so that cannot have skewed the result. Maybe the readers are simply readying themselves for the many convention tournaments in these "classics" that will abound this summer. Or perhaps this marks a wave of wargame nostalgia. Or perhaps some of the newcomers are just now discovering what fine games these are.

WEST EXTENSION MAP

For some time players of the popular *CIVILIZATION* have been looking for ways to improve this already-classic game. Back in 1982, the "Expansion Trade Cards" were introduced—and were an immediate hit. Now comes a new map, extending the world of *CIVILIZATION* to the Straits of Hercules and adding all Gaul, southern England, and western North Africa. Printed on heavy, glossy stock, the **West Extension Map** (or **WXM**) may be added to any standard *CIVILIZATION* game to produce a greatly improved four-player scenario and a challenging five-, six- or seven-player version. Iberia now starts from any of the three areas on the western edge of the peninsula (replacing Italy as a player-race); African openings are also expanded. Both make use of a revised AST Table printed directly upon the new map section. Other than these intriguing changes, all standard rules remain in force.

Experienced players, perhaps suffering ennui after yet another thrashing as Africa, will find their games considerably livelier as new approaches are debated. Novice players, with more room for expansion of their people, will find the penalties for mistakes less daunting. Whether with four or seven, the extended-map version of *CIVILIZATION* is sure to be seen at more than a few Saturday-night gaming sessions

CIVILIZATION WEST EXTENSION KIT $8

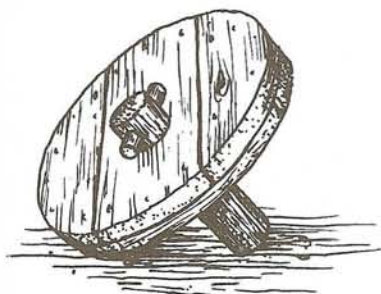**CIVILIZATION EXPANSION TRADE CARDS $4**

BEYOND THE ELEVENTH CARD
Advanced CIVILIZATION
By Jim Eliason

WHEEL

Moves two spaces

10   **110**

MILITARY

Gives an advantage in battle

170   20

CIVILIZATION is an abstract game, and it is a abstract system that works well. It seems a little presumptuous to try to make it more "accurate", yet two of its rules have always bugged me (to the point that they reduce my enjoyment of the game). These are the maximum of 11 Civilization cards that can be held, and the limited number of each type of card. Phillip Hanson (in Vol. 24, No. 5 of The *GENERAL*) recommended, "Buy [*Civilization cards*] for the point value and to avoid scarcity, not to obtain temporary benefits." This is sound strategy for any *CIVILIZATION* player, but ridiculous strategy for any culture. Civilization cards are meant to represent skills, knowledge and in some cases political institutions. Why is it that a successful culture in this "simulation" can have Pottery or Clothmaking, but seldom both? How many real cultures can you think of with advanced skills like Engineering that didn't have both? How can Egypt prevent Babylonia from acquiring Clothmaking by getting it first? Seeing your neighbors well dressed would make you more likely to get the same idea, wouldn't it?

The reason for such unrealistic rules is, of course, to reward the player whose choices of Civilization cards fit a successful long-term strategy. How do we keep the element of strategy in the acquisition of Civilization cards, but avoid these silly limitations? The answer is to increase the benefits of holding each type of card, introduce a couple of new cards, expand trading possibilities, and institute a somewhat different set of credits and calamities.

Of course, the first part of my proposal is to let each player hold as many Civilization cards as he wishes, though still only one of each kind, and to let players acquire a card regardless of the number of other players who may have it. Second, I think the tangible benefits for having each card should be increased. In game terms, "tangible" means bettering your ability to move, accumulate wealth, combat enemies, or reduce the effects of calamities. Most cards already provide some special benefits (e.g., Agriculture allows each land area to support one extra token). This is all very well, but I think much more of this kind of flavor is needed. As Mr. Hanson points out, these benefits are not enough to seriously influence your decision on which card

to buy next. My additional benefits for each Civilization card are summarized later.

Third, a culture acquires skills out of bitter experience—not just out of convenience. In the "Description of Play" it states that, "Calamities may also provide the impetus from which a well organized society can rise in new ways and achieve still further greatness." This is very true, but this factor is ignored in the present rules. Calamities and losses to enemies with superior technology should provide a credit toward the purchase of a Civilization card that ameliorate it (see below). This credit can normally be used only at the first opportunity for purchasing cards after the calamity took effect, and can be used whether the player himself suffered the calamity directly or was directed to take losses by an opponent.

Fourth, cultures exchange not only commodities but also information. Either or both parties to a trade can now include a "credit voucher" towards a Civilization card that he holds but his trading partner does not. This credit may be in units of 10 or 20. It must normally be used at the first opportunity. Only one credit can be obtained per Civilization card per trading partner per turn, but credits toward more than one card may be part of a single trade.

Fifth, credits should be more tailored to the characteristics of each card. Currently, each Civilization card (except the three high-value Civics cards) provides one or more credits toward the purchase of other cards. For instance, each card in the Arts group counts five toward the purchase of each other Arts card; each Craft card counts ten toward Craft cards; and each Science card twenty towards another. Arts also give their credit toward Law—Crafts toward Democracy—Science toward Philosophy. There are also a few special credits (e.g., Music counts 30 towards Philosophy). Again, this is good, but knowledge increases geometrically, not linearly. Change the group credits for all three groups as follows: the first card of any group still gives a credit of five towards the purchase of the next card of that same group. The second card counts as ten (giving a group discount of 15 now), and each subsequent card in a group counts another 15. This raises the Arts group credit and decreases the Science group credit, which seems reasonable. Logically, Drama & Poetry is more help in acquiring Literacy than Astronomy is in acquiring Medicine. When calculating group credits for Engineering, calculate each aspect separately—then add them. (For instance, one Science and one Craft give ten, not 15.) These restructured credits also apply toward the high-value Civics cards. In addition, more special credits are given (see below). Where a card gives a group credit and a special credit, both apply. However, at least half the cost of a card must be paid in trade cards and/or treasury. Without this limitation, players can often accumulate enough credits late in the game to buy five or more cards in a single turn.

To implement these ideas of mine, here is an expanded list of credits and special benefits for each Civilization card. Many of these credits and benefits are in the game as it now stands. My changes are noted by the phrases "in addition", "new" or "instead of". Please forgive the redundancy in this list. It is meant to be a comprehensive reference as well as a description. Those who wish to use these variant rules would do well to write them on the back of the Civilization cards. The use of the Expanded Trade Deck (see The *GENERAL*, Vol.

19, No. 4) is highly recommended; some of the additional benefits below require its use.

Pottery

Credits Toward Purchase: Crafts group credit. In addition, each unit point lost to Famine gives one point of credit toward the purchase of Pottery, and possession of Literacy gives a credit of ten toward Pottery.

Gives Credit Toward: Crafts group credit.

Special Benefits: With Grain cards, it reduces the effects of Famine. In addition, the holder can leave ships at sea (with or without tokens aboard) at the end of movement. Tokens and ships that start the turn at sea must land by the end of the turn however, or they are lost. Unless Pottery is held, ships not in a coastal area with a friendly city or token are lost at the end of the turn. The range of ships is doubled when determining the legitimacy of ships for Piracy (see below).

Clothmaking

Credits Toward Purchase: Crafts group credit. In addition, Literacy gives ten toward purchase of Clothmaking. If using the Expanded Trade Deck, Cloth cards turned in to purchase this card are doubled in value after all other calculations.

Gives Credit Toward: Crafts group credit.

Special Benefits: Ships move an extra area. In addition, when using the Expanded Trade Deck, a player must hold this card to get the geometric benefit when buying a Civilization card with Cloth trade cards (e.g., four Cloth cards are worth $4 \times 5 = 20$, not $4^2 = 5 = 80$ unless Clothmaking was bought on a previous turn). When buying Clothmaking itself and using the Expanded Trade Deck values are double; thus the value of the four Cloth cards is $4 \times 5 \times 2 = 40$.

Metalworking

Credits Toward Purchase: Crafts group credit. In addition, one point of credit is given for each unit point lost in a conflict with another culture that has Metalworking. Literacy gives ten toward Metal-

working; Coinage gives ten; Professional Military (see below) gives ten. Iron, Bronze, Silver and Gold trade cards are doubled in value when used to purchase this card if using the Expanded Trade Deck.

Gives Credit Toward: Crafts group credit. In addition, ten towards Coinage and 10 towards Professional Military.

Special Benefits: Advantage in battle. In addition, when using the Expanded Trade Deck, this card must be held to get the geometric benefit for turning in Iron, Bronze, Silver or Gold cards.

Agriculture

Credits Toward Purchase: Crafts group credit. In addition, each unit point lost to Famine gives two points of credit; Literacy gives ten; Astronomy gives ten. When using the Expanded Trade Deck, Grain cards turned in to purchase this card are doubled in value.

Gives Credit Toward: Crafts group credit. In addition, ten towards Astronomy.

Special Benefits: Permits an increase in population. New: note that this reduces the effects of Famine and can reduce the effects of Epidemic (see below). When using the Expanded Trade Deck, this card must be held to get the geometric benefit from Grain cards.

Engineering

Credits Toward Purchase: Crafts and Sciences group credits. In addition: two points of credit are given for each unit point lost due to Flood, Earthquake or Volcanic Eruption; a credit of five is given for each city of the player reduced by enemy attack; Philosophy gives five and Literacy gives twenty; Architecture gives ten.

Gives Credit Toward: Crafts and Sciences group credits. In addition, ten towards Architecture.

Special Benefits: Strengthens city defenses to enemy attack and Flood. In addition, it reduces the effects of Earthquake and Volcanic Eruption.

Astronomy

Credits Toward Purchase: Sciences group credit. In addition, Agriculture gives ten credit towards Astronomy; Philosophy, five; and Literacy gives 20.

Gives Credit Toward: Sciences group credit. In addition, ten towards Agriculture and ten towards Philosophy.

Special Benefits: Permits voyages across open seas.

Coinage

Credits Toward Purchase: Sciences group credit. In addition, a credit of two is awarded for each city that revolted due to inability to pay taxes. Metalworking gives ten towards Coinage; Philosophy gives five; Literacy, 20.

Gives Credit Toward: Sciences group credit. In addition it gives ten towards Metalworking.

Special Benefits: Allows changes in taxation. In addition, when using the Expanded Trade Deck, it enhances trade by allowing two additional trade cards to be held at the end of a turn.

Medicine

Credits Toward Purchase: Sciences group credit. In addition, two points of credit are granted for each unit point lost to Epidemic. Philosophy gives five; Literacy gives 20.

Gives Credit Toward: Sciences group credit.

Special Benefits: Reduces the effects of Epidemic.

Mysticism

Credits Toward Purchase: Arts group credit. This card is now considered an Arts card only. It is not considered a Science for any purpose (it could be argued that mysticism actually impedes true science, but that debate is best left to another forum).

Gives Credit Toward: Arts group credit. It must, however, be acquired before Philosophy, and gives a 20-point credit towards that card.

Special Benefits: None.

Music

Credits Toward Purchase: Arts group credit. In addition, two points for each city reduced by Civil Disorder.

Gives Credit Toward: Arts group credit; and 30 towards Philosophy.

Special Benefits: New—Reduces the effects of Civil Disorder (see below).

Drama & Poetry

Credits Toward Purchase: Arts group credit. In addition, two points for each city reduced by Civil Disorder.

Gives Credit Toward: Arts group credit. Also, ten towards Democracy, and ten plus the group credit towards Literacy (instead of 20).

Special Benefits: New—Reduces the effects of Civil Disorder (see below).

Architecture

Credits Toward Purchase: This card now costs 110 instead of 80. Arts group credit. In addition, Engineering grants ten credits towards Architecture; Literacy gives ten.

Gives Credit Toward: Arts group credit. New: only five towards Democracy or Philosophy, and only the group credit towards Literacy or Law. In addition, it grants ten towards Engineering.

Special Benefits: New—Cities may be constructed by substituting treasury tokens for some of the population required if this card is held. The population limit of the area in on-board tokens must be used; the remaining required to build a city may be any combination of treasury or population tokens.

Literacy

Credits Toward Purchase: This card now costs 170 instead of 110. Arts group credit. In addition, Science group credit can also be used to help purchase Literacy. Drama & Poetry gives ten, plus the group credit. When using the Expanded Trade Deck, all Papyrus cards turned in to purchase Literacy are doubled in value.

Gives Credit Toward: Arts group credit. Also, 25 towards Democracy and Philosophy. In addition, it gives 20 towards any Science, and ten towards all Crafts, Architecture or Law.

Special Benefits: New—When using the Expanded Trade Deck, this card is required for the geometric benefit of Papyrus cards. Also, the special credits gained in trade and for suffering a calamity may be saved indefinitely; otherwise, they are lost after all Civilization cards are bought in the turn. Literacy also prevents the loss of the Professional Military card for failure to pay maintenance.

Law

Credits Toward Purchase: Arts group credit. In addition, Literacy gives ten plus the group credit; Architecture gives the group credit only. Also, grant five for Coinage, two for each city reduced by Civil Disorder, and ten for each Civilization card lost to Iconoclasm & Heresy (see below).

Gives Credit Toward: Required for purchase of Democracy. New—not required for purchase of Philosophy.

Special Benefits: Reduces the effects of Civil Disorder and Iconoclasm & Heresy. In addition, when cities revolt due to a failure to pay taxes, the player gets to decide which cities revolt instead of an opponent.

Democracy

Credits Toward Purchase: Crafts group credit. Law is required. Drama & Poetry grants ten. Literacy grants 25. In addition, Architecture gives five (instead of 15). Each city reduced by Civil Disorder gives two; each unit point lost in a Civil War grants one.

Gives Credit Toward: None.

Special Benefits: Reduces the effects of Civil War and Civil Disorder. In addition, cities never revolt for failure to pay taxes and never surrender to enemy attack. If there aren't the requisite six tokens in stock to replace an attacked city, it is eliminated and replaced with whatever tokens are available (even zero) and combat is resolved normally.

Philosophy

Credits Toward Purchase: Sciences group credit. Music gives 30; and Literacy gives 25. New—Architecture gives five only; Astronomy gives ten; Mysticism gives 20 (and is required). Each Civilization card lost to Iconoclasm & Heresy gives ten; each unit point casualty in a Civil War gives one.

Gives Credit Toward: New: five for each Science.

Special Benefits: Modifies Civil War and reduces the effects of Iconoclasm & Heresy.

Just for some added spice, here are my new Civilization cards:

The Wheel Cost—110. Crafts group.

Credits Toward Purchase: Crafts group credit. Literacy grants ten.

Gives Credit Toward: Crafts group credit.

Special Benefits: All tokens can move two spaces each turn. They are not allowed, however, to move through an area occupied by any other player's pieces—but they can move through friendly cities.

Professional Military Cost—170. Sciences group.

Credits Toward Purchase: Sciences group credit. Metalworking grants ten; Literacy grants 20. One token from the board and one from the treasury must be removed to stock each turn during the Ship Construction Phase to maintain this card or it is turned over; all benefits of the card are lost, and the card must be surrendered (and re-purchased) unless Literacy is held by the end of the turn. If retained through Literacy, the benefits of the Professional Military can be regained simply by paying maintainence in any following Ship Construction Phase. Each unit lost in battle to a culture with this card grants two points of credit. Each card lost to Piracy (see below) gives its face value (e.g., four Salt grant 12 points). If a culture with this card draws a Civil War, the nominee (the first one to take over defecting units) is granted a 50-point credit toward purchase of Professional Military.

Gives Credit Toward: Sciences group credit. Grants ten towards Metalworking.

Special Benefits: When combating a culture without this card, the following advantages apply: in conflicts between tokens, the card confers an advantage in the same manner as Metalworking, and the advantages cancel if one player has only Metalworking and the other only Professional Military. In resolving combat, the player without Professional Military must remove two (instead of one) each time a removal is necessary. With Professional Military, only five tokens are required to attack a city (six if the opponent has Engineering). Each friendly ship

on the mapboard reduces the trade cards lost to Piracy by one. Each friendly ship engaging in Piracy allows two trade cards to be stolen (see below). If the other player also has this card, regular rules apply in all cases.

The sixth part of my proposal is that Civilization cards that reduce the effects of calamities should have to be purchased in advance. Currently, Civilization cards are bought after calamities are received, but before they take effect. Players can see the calamity coming and buy the proper card to ward it off. Simply change the sequence of play to resolve calamities after trade but before Civilization cards can be purchased.

Seventh, I have altered the effect of most calamities. Those that cause unit losses are more severe than before on a civilization that is highly concentrated or urbanized, and less severe on a culture that is small, dispersed or has the appropriate skills. For variety, two calamities now cost things besides cities and tokens. Effects are summarized below:

A player drawing an Earthquake/Volcanic Eruption suffers one of two events: 1) a massive earthquake reduces a city and all cities that are adjacent to it (even across water and regardless of who owns them) or 2) a volcano erupts destroying all units in areas it touches and reducing all cities adjacent to the destroyed areas. The event chosen must give the maximum number of affected player's cities lost. If several areas are tied for causing the most losses, the volcanic eruption takes precedence. Otherwise, the player chooses the first city reduced. If the player holds Engineering, only one city need be reduced by an Earthquake (and the holder of that card cannot be affected by another's Earthquake). Engineering cannot protect units in areas devastated by volcanos, but adjacent cities need not be reduced. Earthquake victims receive credits toward Engineering in the upcoming Civilization card purchase phase.

The capacity of a Famine victim's land to support population is cut in half. The player adds up all the population limits of the areas occupied by his tokens. The effect of Agriculture is calculated; each co-existing token reduces the capacity by one; and areas occupied by cities are not counted. Divide this number by two, round down, and eliminate all tokens in excess of this number. If any cities must be reduced due to lack of support, they are replaced by tokens representing half the population limit of that area (rounded up). The affected player may even choose to depopulate an area. The player may then direct one or two other players to also suffer Famine. These players must eliminate one token from each area at its population limit. Cities reduced for lack of support are replaced with tokens representing one less than the population limit of the area. For each Grain card held, a player having Pottery can reduce his Famine losses by four unit points. Grain cards used for this purpose need not be surrendered. Famine victims receive credit towards Pottery and Agriculture.

The effects of Civil War are unchanged except for the procedure for chosing a nominee to receive the defecting units. Allowing the victim to choose the nominee sometimes resulted in a disaster for the nominee, so the proposal was made by Mick Uhl (in Vol. 19, No. 4) to force the victim to select the player with the most tokens in stock. Since this can still result in a disaster for the nominee and unduly restricts the victim in what is already the "worst" calamity, I prefer the following method. As before, any player currently without tokens or cities on the board must be chosen first. Failing this, the victim can choose any player to be the nominee, but *he* may refuse the "honor" and the victim must choose opponents until one accepts. Any player taking over units must take over as many as he is able to. If no one accepts, the player divides his forces as described in the rules, acting as his own nominee, and simply eliminates the faction of his choice. If a player accepts but cannot take over all the defecting units, the player who drew the Civil War card chooses another opponent to take over the remainder, who again has the right to refuse. This process is repeated until all defectors are taken over, or all players have refused consecutively. Unclaimed defecting units are eliminated. This process is the same (except for the size of the factions) if the player drawing the calamity holds Philosophy. Note that players whose stock is depleted by taking over units do not necessarily have to lose all their cities to revolt next turn, since the changed Sequence of Play allows them the chance to replenish it by spending treasury on Civilization cards. Civil War losses grant credits toward Democracy and Philosophy. (And the first player to take over units from a player with Professional Military gets a 50-point credit toward that card.)

A player drawing a Flood calamity with no units on a flood plain gets off with no losses in the current version of *CIVILIZATION*. Now, however, units are lost from a flood plain or one coastal (sea or lake) city of the player's choice is eliminated—whichever causes the most unit point losses. On a flood plain, all the player's vulnerable cities are eliminated, then two tokens are removed from each affected area. The two areas in Babylonia that are entirely dark green and the area containing the white city site on the Black Sea are the only areas that can be depopulated if their plain floods; in all other areas, eliminated cities are replaced by one population token and the lost city counts as four unit points. Other players with cities on the same flood plain suffer the same effects. A player holding Engineering loses only half (rounded down, but at least one) of his cities on a flood plain, they are reduced instead of eliminated, and then one token is lost from other affected areas. Coastal cities that would be eliminated are reduced instead with Engineering. A player that loses units to Flood receives credits toward the purchase of Engineering if he does not already have that Civilization card.

When a player receives an Epidemic, he must eliminate half (rounded down, but at least one) of his cities and then must eliminate one token from each other area. No area may be totally depopulated however, and eliminated cities are replaced by one token. The player may then direct one or two other players (the player who passed the card is not eligible) to eliminate one city and then remove one token from each area at its population limit (the effect of Agriculture is considered when determining the population limit). Again, no area may be completely depopulated. A player with Medicine receiving this calamity need only eliminate one city and remove one token from each area at its population limit. A player with Medicine directed to take losses from another player's Epidemic loses no tokens, and still loses one city. Epidemic losses create credits toward purchasing Medicine.

When Civil Disorder strikes, reduce all cities in excess of three (instead of four). One city is saved from reduction for each Music, Drama & Poetry, Law and Democracy card held by the player affected. Thus, a player having all four of these cards could keep seven cities in play after receipt of this calamity. Cities lost to Civil Disorder generate credits towards purchasing these cards.

A victim of Iconoclasm & Heresy must discard a Civilization card chosen by the player who passed the calamity card to him in trade. If this results in the player failing to fulfill the Civilization card requirements for his position on the AST, he may not advance his marker further thereon until he does. A player holding Law may select three cards that may *not* be chosen. A player holding Philosophy may guard six cards, and this is cumulative with the effect of Law. Suffering this calamity grants credits towards Law and Philosophy.

Piracy no longer causes city losses. Instead, immediately after the trade which included the Piracy card is concluded, the victim must show all his trade cards to the player who passed the calamity and the "pirate" may steal one trade card for each "legitimate" ship that the pirate has in play on the mapboard. To be legitimate, the ships must be within movement range of a coastal area occupied by a city or token of the victim. Clothmaking and Astronomy gives their normal benefits; see also the benefits of Pottery described above. Piracy losses grant credits towards the purchase of Professional Military.

My eighth change, to discourage card-counting and to make calamities truly random, is that trade cards and brown-backed calamities are *not* always placed on the bottom of the trade stacks as soon as they are played. After all calamities are resolved and all Civilization cards are bought, all the brown-backed cards that have been played or discarded that turn are shuffled and placed as a group on the bottom of the appropriate stack. Red-backed calamity cards are always put on the bottom at the start of the game and at the end of each turn they are played, as before. Too, at the start of the game, all card stacks are shuffled and hence no one knows where the calamity is in each stack.

Ninth, with no limitation on the number of Civilization cards held, it is much easier to accumulate large numbers of points. All cultures now need an additional 200 points to enter their "Finish" space on the AST.

Tenth, and last, allow a player to advance two spaces on the AST under the following conditions: 1) he satisfies the requirements for reaching the square three spaces ahead, and 2) the move does not put him into first place (or a tie for the lead). For example, the Egyptian player has had problems but is finally ready to enter the Late Bronze Age. He may advance his marker two spaces since three spaces ahead is still Late Bronze Age period. It hardly seems fair for a player who has the best collection of Civilization cards to be hopelessly behind because a series of calamities forced him to stall on the AST for two turns early in the game.

What do these new rules do to this classic game—and is such change worthwhile? The new attributes of the Civilization cards present the players with several viable strategies now. A culture can "decide" to be a militaristic one and embark on campaigns of conquest by acquiring the Wheel, Astronomy, Metalworking and a Professional Military. (Course, you may find that you've no friends and few Civilization cards if you go this route.) A player may try for Literacy, Coinage and Architecture to increase credits, taxation and city building; or perhaps, you'd prefer Metalworking, Agriculture and Clothmaking to expand the values of your trade cards. This latter strategy allows rapid accumulation of wealth if neighbors are peaceful and nature is kind, but gives little protection against calamity or invasion. More conservative players may buy Pottery, Agriculture, Engineering, Medicine and the Civics cards for defense against calamities and invaders. Such an approach makes for slow but steady progress. Hybrid strategies may be used as well. The optimal strategy will usually depend on the personalities of your opponents.

Certain skills are essential to any flourishing culture in any competitive environment, and since no one can be shut out of any Civilization card type now, this feature can be added to the game. Metalworking is a must for everyone. The vastly increased credit grants provided by Literacy make it an excellent early buy, but its now steep price can make this step difficult. Architecture is very valuable for managing the treasury, building cities in remote areas, or rebuilding after calamities. (It is also now the cheapest two-color card, and will often be the ticket to the Late Bronze Age though it too has a new, higher price.) Agriculture will be almost man-

datory for Crete and Africa, who are not blessed with much good farmland; everyone else will also find it too good to pass up since it reduces the effects of several calamities and makes Grain cards more valuable. Egypt and Babylon will have to acquire Engineering early to protect their investment on the flood plains, and Crete will want it to protect against the earthquakes that probably ended the Minoan civilization historically.

A sophisticated culture is built on a broad foundation of basic skills, and the new rules don't penalize such. A large number of low-value cards is no longer a handicap; indeed, they usually provide more credits than a few high-value cards. It is often good strategy, though, to leave one or two of the low-value cards unbought as long as possible to provide a purchase in those turns where trading goes poorly and you haven't enough capital to purchase a good card, but too much to cheerfully discard.

Trading is much more productive because of the option to trade credits and the random placement of calamities. Under the original rules, a canny trader would often refuse to make a favorable trade because the other player would benefit more. By having one player throw in a sizable credit towards a Civilization card he has (akin to trading in technology these days), more trades will be consumated fairly. Since even complusive card counters will almost never know who has a calamity to trade, no one gets shunned during the trading phase. It also behooves players to check out the mapboard positions and Civilization cards that each player has when trying to pass off a calamity. Some of the opponents will be highly vulnerable, while others might be entirely immune. The effects of a second calamity are often minimal after losses suffered in the first one. Also, a calamity can be devastating temporarily but might allow an opponent to pick up a good Civilization card cheaply in compensation. The timing of passing a Piracy card, for instance, can be very important. Try to catch the player who has a nearly completed set of trade cards and steal some from him. There is nothing more satisfying

than trading the last Grain card to a player along with Piracy and having your four Professional Military pirates steal a complete 256-point set of Grain cards.

Under my new rules, entering the Late Bronze Age can cause some delay since the group credits have not had a chance to build up, and many trade cards will be of limited value since their geometric benefits will not yet be available. Also, some 155 points in Civilization cards wil be required, as opposed to the 75 under the regular rules. In practice, it is not a serious problem. The competition for Salt, Timber, Oil and Wine will be intense in the early turns since their geometric benefits don't require any Civilization card. Even lowly Hides and Ochre can be good trade objectives for the same reason. The best early purchases to enhance trading possibilities are Clothmaking, Metalworking and Agriculture, but since they are all Crafts, buying these cards first will engender delay in getting the three categories necessary to enter the Late Bronze Age. Such a delay was often fatal when using the Expanded Trade Deck and the regular rules. With the new "catch-up" rule, this is now a viable strategy.

As the game goes on, credits of all kinds build up, Civilization cards reduce the effects of calamities, and the pace of progress increases greatly. It becomes hard to bring a leader back to the pack, but there are still several good methods. If he doesn't have a Professional Military, two invaders that can can rapidly lay waste to most of his holdings. Without Law or Philosophy, an Iconoclasm & Heresy calamity will halt his progress for a turn. Failing that, a trade boycott can still be effective. I am sure that players have their own methods of bringing low the mighty.

Try these rules next time you get together with experienced *CIVILIZATION* players. The increase in complexity is moderate, and the game has a much richer feel. This is "Advanced CIVILIZATION".

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reserves into your league procedures.) One method to hold down the slaughter would be to have an injury modifier on the cards such as in *STATIS-PRO BASEBALL*; this would allow players to simulate their actual injury tendencies in the game.

Table 4 gives a list of the probable penalty calls during a game. This table will give an idea of frequency; still the particular penalty may not occur when applicable, so the actual number will be less than the expected 17 flags. As per real life football, the offense is twice as likely to draw a flag, but the kicking and receiving teams are pretty evenly split.

Table 4: Number of Times each Penalty come up when called for on the 41 Penalty Z Cards.

Penalty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Total
1O	15	3	2	1	2	1	2							1		27
1D	6	3			2		2	1								14
2O	13	2	1	1		7	1		1							28
2D	4	2			1		2	3	1							13
3O	5			2			2	10		1						20
3D	5			2				9	1	4						21
4O	2			2			3	10			3					20
4D	1			2				18								21

This completes the statistical section of our consideration of *STATIS-PRO FOOTBALL*. Now for some suggested Optional Rules so you can throw all these calculations out the window.

Quick Huddle:

If a "quick huddle" is called, neither team may substitute or change cards on their display without using a Time Out. The defense must use "no strategy". The offense must use the same strategy as the previous play or "no strategy".

Intentional Downing:

This can take two forms. After a quick huddle, the quarterback may deliberately throw the ball out of bounds. This takes five seconds and uses a down. The popular NFL ploy is to "spike" the ball. The other option is for the quarterback to deliberately incomplete a pass after the receiver selection is made and the coverage is revealed. The quarterback has seen his primary receiver covered and does not wish to risk an interception. This is not intentional grounding, uses a down, but no other FAC are drawn for the play.

Deliberate Safety:

A team inside their own 20 may elect to take a safety. This is resolved as an ordinary scoring play, but uses no FAC. Play proceeds with the kickoff.

Measurements:

Anytime a team is exactly on the yard marker for either a first down, a touchdown or a safety, they may have been just short or just long enough. If the pass number on the next FAC is even, the team is just over the line. If it is odd, they are short. The measurements are made on all applicable downs except for incomplete passes which are short; and if all yardage has been gained only by penalty since the last first down, a new first down is automatic.

Punts & Fair Catches:

In general, these numbers seem reversed. The shorter punt is more likely to have a fair catch. As one resolution to this dilemma, draw separate FAC for the punt distance and for the return.

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Squad Leader Clinic

MORTARS

By Jon Mishcon

Mortars are some of the most powerful pieces given to the *ASL* player. Properly used, they can dramatically alter play-balance. While medium mortars may be used as a lesser form of artillery, and light mortars are often found acting as erstaz MGs, Joe Suchar and I favor taking advantage of their special capabilities. This article will briefly review mortars, their usage in World War II, the *ASL* treatment, and how we use mortars in our games.

Mortars are usually muzzle-loading smoothbore firing tubes. The firing pin in most mortars is fixed to the base. Drop in the shell through the open bore; it slides down, hits the pin and BANG, off it goes. A heavy baseplate generally holds the tube in place. Altering the leg length changes the angle of flight and range. While there exist examples of trigger-fired, rifled or breech-loaded weapons, all mortars share a very high trajectory and relative inaccuracy. Given the obvious advantages of accurate, breech-loaded, rifled direct-fire weapons, why do mortars continue to find favor?

First and foremost is their relative light weight and portability. Most mortars easily disassemble into base plate, bipod and firing tube. They can be carried in a cart or light vehicles, or even back-packed, into locations no other weapon can reach. Rooftops and dense forest or jungle are mortar terrain. More complex direct-fire weapons can be disassembled, but only by experienced crews with considerable free time.

Secondly, the very high trajectory means that the rounds tend to fall directly on top of the target. Accounts of mortar use in the hedgerows of Normandy tell of units that thought they were pro-tected behind the huge mounds of dirt and hedge falling victim to mortar fire dropping on them. These units were protected, but only from direct-fire weapons. Also, a mortar's high-trajectory fire enables a simple pit or high wall to provide plenty of cover for its crew—whereas a direct-fire gun must be positioned higher and more exposed.

Third, almost anyone can "spot" for mortars. By calling out range adjustments, mortar fire can be directed from almost any elevation you can smuggle a half-squad into. Of course, a trained artillery observer *can* call down mortar fire—you just don't require his services.

Fourth, mortars are cheap to build and maintain. They lack any form of recoil arrangement (they usually transmit the force of the shot directly into the ground). Often the only mechanism that requires any adjustment is the height/angle of the legs for ranging purposes. There were even Soviet mortars that simplified this into two fixed angles and adjusted range by ports that bled off the propellant gases. Direct-fire weapons, with their recoil-absorbing mechanisms and moving firing pins, are much more likely, round for round, to jam.

Fifth, mortars tend to have a high rate of fire. Generally speaking, you can fire just as fast as you can drop rounds down the tube. This means a battery of mortars can put far more metal on target, in a given amount of time, than any comparable breech-loaded artillery piece.

Last, the unspun mortar rounds fly *silently*. The "chugging" sound of artillery that alerts troops to "incoming" shells does not apply to most mortar fire. Your first warning of mortar attack is often the explosion of the first round. Particularly deadly against advancing troops.

Nevertheless, mortars do have some notable dis-advantages. Their short, unrifled tubes means poor accuracy and short range. The light weight of a mortar tube also limits the power of the projectile's propellant, or greatly diminishes its explosive power. In World War II night fighting, the round often trailed a burning "finger" as it lifted away from its firing tube. This meant that, at night, mortar locations were quickly exposed.

All combatants in World War II used mortars. Many nationalities started the war with a light, front-line mortar in service. Really no more than a glorified grenade-launcher, the limited punch and range of these weapons meant that troops preferred the power of a MG to hauling around the equal weight of a small "meatball thrower". The U.S. continued to use its excellent 60mm mortar through-out the war, as its range (45 hexes) was quite good. Additionally, airborne troops took advantage of a mortar's light weight by using slimmed down versions for local fire support.

The mainstay, however, was the medium 76-82mm mortars. Known as "vest-pocket artillery", this weapon gave the line battalion commander a dedicated indirect fire weapon. This form of fire support supplemented, rather than replaced, regular artillery. Often the mortar teams were placed close behind the front line so as to allow mortar fire both defensively and offensively. All the major comba-tants represented in *ASL* to date had their own version of this weapon. The Russian tube was par-

ticularly designed so as to be able to use German rounds while the German tubes would find the Russian-made rounds too small. The ammo of the U.S., French and Italian 81mm mortars was completely interchangeable.

As World War II progressed the impotence of mortar fire, relative to real artillery, and the need to deliver "special ammunition", drew attention. In order to effectively deliver smoke and, with increasing frequency, potent HE fire the "heavy" mortars became more common. The best known example was the Soviet 120mm tube. However, given the additional weight of the weapon (200+ pounds) and range, these weapons really fall into the category of light artillery. Most *ASL* scenarios will find these weapons either as OBA or in "overrun" situations.

ASL is generally faithful to all of the above points. Mortars are always indirect fire weapons that require use of the Area Target Type. Any good order personnel unit may be designated as a spotter in any adjacent hex. Mortars can be manpacked into crags, and graveyards, and even onto rooftops. The rate of fire of most mortars is quite high (generally "2" or "3") and the breakdown number is often "12". As mortars in *ASL* are always firing Area Fire, this means the breakdown number is particularly good on a round-for-round basis. Light mortars are treated, for portage purposes, as infantry support weapons, and even the medium mortar becomes a SW when dismantled.

How do Joe and I play the mortars? Our prime rule is to never (well, almost never) risk mortars in enemy LOS. Far better to accept a lower ROF and risk a HS than to expose the mortar to enemy fire. Offensively, the range considerations usually obviate play with medium or heavy mortars on board. When we do get medium mortars, we usually bring them in dismantled. Move behind any high ground, set up for fire while putting a spotter into position, and the use the mortar for smoke and recce fire.

SMOKE is perhaps the single most important offensive use of mortars. Mortars are the only weapons in the game that can fire multiple SMOKE rounds in one Prep Fire Phase. Remember that firing SMOKE requires use of the Area Target Type (C3.33) and that only mortars can retain ROF when using this target type. *[Ed. Note: Allowing mortars to have this special capability was an inadvertent oversight by the designers. It was originally intended that mortars be treated the same as all other Guns in this respect, and we intended to "fix" this in the '89 Errata. Indeed, questions received through the mail asking if mortars can be used in the above-mentioned manner have been answered in the negative. However, this capability has proven so popular and pervasive that we reconsidered and let the rule stand as is.]* Additionally, mortars that were designed for "chemical" use often have high SMOKE numbers. This means one mortar is often more valuable for SMOKE application than two or three other weapons. If you're playing the Americans, always think of WP. Even stout defenders often begin to think of pulling out when their fire is impeded by SMOKE and they themselves are subjected to repeated MCs.

"Recce" fire is another good use of mortars. Shoot at the trees you think might contain hidden guns. As Indirect Fire, a mortar gets −1 for Air Bursts and drops the gunshield benefit by one. This is particularly nasty when the defensive setup options are limited. Note again the benefit of retaining ROF while using the Area Target Type.

Another cute trick is to bring a mortar onto the ground level within two-hex range of a level-3 gun position. Mortars and AA guns are the only weapons that can reach upward at close range.

More commonly, players will find they get mortars when they are on the defensive. Here is

where mortars are at their best. Use A12.34 to set up hidden next to a prominent elevation, preferably behind an obstruction and in a foxhole. Now take a good look at the board. Are there choke-points anywhere? Perhaps a road beside a cliff, or a woods-road? Prime targets for "denial" fire. Denial fire is our version of interdiction (no, not firing on broken units). Pick a hex you can see that you figure the enemy will have to move into. By firing at the hex before it is occupied, you gain Area Target Acquisition. Often the simple existence of this convinces the opposing player to move into another location. Very valuable when there is a deep, key road junction. Enemy moving through the woods? Hitting the leading woods hex(es) is doubly intimidating because of Air Bursts. As long as your spotter can see the hex he can stay concealed while your MTR remains hidden.

Anti-tank fire is also the realm of mortars. Take a good look at the numbers. In the early years of the war, the lightly armored AFVs are vulnerable to shock or immobilization from fire—even from light mortars. In later years, medium tanks are still vulnerable to 80+mm mortars, with a 16% chance of immobilization, automatic shock, or even a kill.

Included are revisions of two more of the original *SQUAD LEADER* scenarios wherein mortars play a prominent role. Experiment with some of the ideas and suggestions above.

⁂

These notes continue the series of commentaries in the Clinic pertaining to the scenarios published with the previous installment of the column (Vol. 25, No. 6 in this case). The intent is to present the *ASL* player with one of numerous possibilities for defensive setup, attacker initial placement, and basic tactical approaches for both. Having had several months to examine your own approaches to our Clinic scenario, the reader can now compare his findings with our summation.

After Action Report— Soldiers of Destruction

GERMAN: 9-2 and two 6-5-8s and LMG in 6Q4, another 6-5-8 in 6R9. Place the 8-1 and two squads with an LMG in 4T9. Place the PzJg III/IV in 4Y10 (CA: X9/Y9) and the JgdPz V in 6Y10 (CA: X9/Y9). Both tanks start CE.

RUSSIAN: Put one T-34, the 8-1 leader and three squads in 6I10. Place another T-34 with the 8-0 and three squads in 6I9. Then put one T-34 each in 6I8 and 6I7, with two 6-2-8s in 6I4.

ATTACKER'S TACTICS: First you must grab control of building 6N4. At the same time, try a strong drive down along the board edge around Q10. At some point before reaching 6V9, divert across to 6X5. Crossing the road will be costly, but your tanks can run off from here. Don't try to fight; it's always better to run around with your superior mobility. If you must fight, you want the T-34s to pound the German infantry while your own infantry threatens his tanks. You can certainly swarm over one enemy tank, but you have to figure on losing at least one of yours too.

DEFENDER'S TACTICS: You can confront the Russians frontally with your Jagdpanther. Make sure you stay beyond 12 hexes when you move, and always cover your side. Try to get both your AFVs together so he doesn't just swarm all over one of them. You must use your ability to maneuver to fullest. What you are attempting to do is use your range advantage. Best bet is to use your infantry to beat his infantry. The same with your tanks. Again, it is a matter of quality versus quantity.

☆

CONTEST #149

It is nearing the end of a standard game of *MERCHANT OF VENUS*, playing to $2000. You are the Human player, with $900 in assets (cash and deeds) towards the victory; your problem is the Whynom player, who has $1300 in assets. However, you move first, and if you but roll average dice and get the Pilot Number you wish each turn, you can guarantee a win. The situation appears below, with both your ship and the Whynom ship at the Galactic Base. Other players are not involved in this area, and will interfere with neither you nor the Whynom. At the moment, you and your competitor hold the following:

HUMAN Player:
Clipper Ship carrying:
  1 Shield
  1 ServoMechanism
  1 Pedigree Bolts

$200 in cash
$700 in deeds
IOUs: 1b and 9b

WHYNOM Player:
Clipper Ship carrying:
  1 Shield
  1 Impossible Furniture
  1 Other Shoes

$400 in cash
$900 in deeds
IOUs: 1 and 10

To enter, indicate where you will move and what you will buy and sell on the next two turns (if you get these right, we'll assume that you know the third move, which will bring you victory, as well). For the purposes of this contest, the rest of the map is not in play. Each race shown has all its Goods available, but no Factories are in play on this portion of the map (yet). Remember, you can assume that both you and the Whynom player each will get 14 movement points each turn, and that you will get whatever Pilot Number you may want each turn.
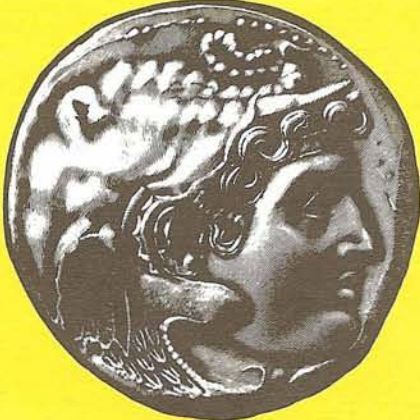
The answer to this contest must be entered on the official entry form (or a facsimile) found on the insert of this issue. Ten winning entries will receive a merchandise credit from The Avalon Hill Game Company. To be valid, an entry must include a numerical evaluation for this issue as a whole and a listing of the three best articles in the judgment of the contestant. The solution to Contest #149 will appear in the next issue and the list of winners in Vol. 26, No. 3 of The *GENERAL*.

SUDDEN DEATH · TWIST OF FATE · ROBBERY · TIME PORTAL · TREASURE

PAST
LIVES

People are fascinated by the idea that they have had a Past Life.

PAST LIVES is a board game which takes players back through history so they can win a past life. The game is intended for entertainment and a means for people to learn more about history and past life experience in a fun and competitive way.

The game is divided into four periods of history: **Ancient Times, Dark Ages, Age of Kings, Industrial Age.** The players travel backward in time, avoiding hazards and pitfalls. Although the four periods share the same kinds of squares, each age has treasures, twists of fate, and traps which are unique to that time period. In this way, every player actually feels that he is going through and living that part of history.

According to how many points have been gathered, the player will refer to the accompanying BOOK OF PAST LIVES which details a past life from actual history. Everybody gets a life!

PAST LIVES is intended for players of ages 13 to adult, and for those who have a special interest in reincarnation and history. Up to eight players can play at one time.

PAST LIVES is now available from The Avalon Hill Game Company (4517 Harford Road Baltimore, Maryland 21214) for $38.00. Please add 10% shipping and handling (20% for Canadian orders; 30% for overseas orders). Maryland residents please add the 5% state sales tax.

SL, COI, GI, ASL, DASL. We got it all. SL rally June 15-17, Dallas, TX. Write to: On All Fronts, P.O. Box 265, Marshall, AR 72650

ASL, AK, BS, NATO, GL, KM, WAS; others. Give me a call. Warren Day, 6203 E. Gold Dust Ave., Scottsdale, AZ 85253, 991-7863.

Help! Non-Rated teenager sick of doing nothing. FT, EIA, 3R, Pacific War are my favorites. Pbm only. Lack systems. All letters answered promptly. Chad Olson, 3070 Bristol, Suite 460, Costa Mesa, CA 92626, 496-6654.

Interested in ftf opponent in ASL and Deluxe ASL. If in San Diego area call! Be prepared to lose. Jon F. Scott, Box 18-1546, Coronado, CA 92118, (619) 435-0956.

Ftf for VITP, FT, GOA, FE, SOA, TA. Also interested in pbm for BB81, PAA. Will also try anything once. William A. Raber II, 460 Combs Ct., Fort Ord, CA 93941, (408) 384-8383.

Wanted: pbm/ftf AREA/non-AREA for SL/ASL series, CASS, TP: STAL, AF/DL, BL, GE'88, PB, PL, FL, KA, UF, FITG, FT, MD, WAS, SC, MOV, DIP, FE, DE, SST, SUB, FITG, TRC, TLD, LW, BB. Hurry moving to Tuscon, AZ July-Aug 90. Mike Smith, 406 Radden Rd. (Marshall Park), Ft. Ord, CA 93941, (408) 899-4607.

Opponents wanted for pbm Tac-Air. Have system. Also umpired pbm campaign game (mult-player). Also pbm, PB, PL, NATO and FT. Rated only. Mike Combs, Box 42, NEX SUBIC, FPO S.F., CA 96651.

Ftf opponents wanted for 3R or any other AH games. Evenings and weekends. Dan Bergh, 19296 Torreypines Circle, Huntington Beach, CA 92648, (714) 969-7849.

The IGA is a fifteen year old organization with many ftf activities. We also serve pbm gamers. Write for more information, or call, Eric Obleman, IGA pbm Director, 4237 Green Ave., Los Alamitos, CA 90720, (213) 431-8573.

So. Cal. Diplomats!!! Pseudo-normal people meeting semi-regularly? Add other multi-player games too! DIP, BRIT, CIV, MACH; etc. Kevin M. Kinsel, 21561 Oakbrook, Mission Viejo, CA 92692, (714) 830-2939 or 458-0819.

Redding Wargaming Club now forming. Players of all levels welcome. Learn new games, meet other gamers. For info call: (916) 221-0360. Greg Parker, 1401 Alrose, #37, Redding, CA 96002.

Gamer seeking AREA Rated opponents. New to pbm. 15 year veteran with ftf. ASL, CIV, HW, 1830, 3R are favorites. Philip Manoff, 34 W. San Joaquin St., #2, Salinas, CA 93901, (408) 758-3795.

Adult ftf opponents wanted for DUNE, CIV, WSIM, KM, GE, et al. Non-smoker preferred. Rob Morris, West LA (213) 390-5865.

Experienced opponents wanted for ftf 3R, RF, FT, Civil War, Pacific War, DIP. Also looking to join EIA campaign. Mark Conder, 5554 Alder Ave., Littleton, CO 80123, (303) 979-8234.

Young novice seeks ftf play for 3R, EIA, AK, MD, KREM. Will try any game. David Van Vessem, 35 Wolfe Ave., Beacon Falls, CT 06403, (203) 729-7451.

Conn. 31-year-old gamer seeks Rated or Unrated opponents in BR, GE, HW; other titles considered. Bruno Passacantando, 25 Sturbridge Rd., Marlborough, CT 06447, (203) 295-8493.

Attention Northwest Florida Gamers! Now organizing gaming club based in the Marianna area. For more information write to: Kirk M. Carroll, Rt. 1, Box 183-G, Alford, FL 32420.

27 year old reliable gamer Rated 1500. Pbm TRC, Caesar Alesia. I love that game. Honor system preferred. All letters answered. Chris Burk, P.O. Box 12074, Panama City, FL 32401, (904) 763-8755.

Any gamers in the West Palm, Ft. Pierce, Stuart area? Ftf virtually anything. Own 200+ titles. Daniel Fox, 2223 NW 22 Ave., #104, Stuart, FL 34994, (407) 692-0981.

Pbm AOC, BB'81, VITP, GOA, AL; ftf AZ, SOA, PAA. Greg Dilbeck, 400 Tidwell Circle, Alpharetta, GA 30201, (404) 475-1036.

Adult gamer seeks ftf players ASL or other WWII games. Call and leave message. Emory, NE Atlanta area. Jay Leslie, 1459 Council Bluff Drive, Atlanta, GA 30345, (404) 636-8291.

Teen seeking ftf opponents. MBT, FL, FP, DEV, BL, MR, PB, PL, SST, TT and Pacific War. Also looking for beginner ASL players—Modules 1-4. Jeff Tabion, 439 E. 168th Street, So. Holland, IL 60473, (708) 596-1285.

Wanted ftf gamer for ASL or SL. Dave McLee, 1911 W. Pearl Ave., Rockford, IL 61103, 877-5557.

Reliable gamer seeking pbm opponents for SL, SC, FL, Wizard's Quest, Yellowstone, and Outdoor Survival. Will try B-17 also. James M. Cook, 9704 Stacy Lane, Union, IL 60180, (815) 923-4434.

Seeking ftf in West Chicago suburbs. Favorites are CIV, 3R, Pax Brit. Interested in learning EIA and others. All replies answered. Matt Taylor, 1000 S. Williams, Apt. 30, Westmont, IL 60559, (312) 852-5878.

Ftf wanted in Lafayette area. Will try most historical games. Carl Schwamberger, 3820 S. Co. Rd., 25 E., Lafayette, IN 47905, 474-6718.

Ftf opponents wanted for ASL, UR. UR players write. Jay Richardson, 109 S. Washington, Lindsborg, KS 67456, (913) 227-2489.

Looking for additional opponents for ftf multi-player games including CIV, DIP, FT, KOTA, SL, WSIM, SUB and CAE. Jim Johnson, 2148 Larkspur Drive, Apt. 1-B, Lexington, KY 40504, (606) 278-4200.

Wanted opponents for wargames. I have a few. Bruce Speicht, HC 67. Box 600, Many, LA 71449, (318) 586-4237.

New Orleans Area Gamers Club seeks players for all game types and skill levels. Greg Schloesser, 3800 Briant Drive, Marrero, LA 70072, (504) 347-7145.

Wanted Opponents for ftf or pbm 3R, W&P, MD, AK, PK, MD, (Will travel to play a game in Louisiana.) Ricci Moran, P.O. Box 1065, Ruston, LA 71273, (318) 251-9038.

Adult gamer looking for ftf opponents for SL, STAL, AIW, CAE, 1776, FP, TRC. Any clubs in Baltimore area? All letters answered. Eric Filipkowski, 4707 Hazelwood Ave., Baltimore, MD 21206, (301) 325-4519.

Wanted: players for Avalon Hill's 18th consecutive 28-member Football Strategy League. All games played in Baltimore area. D. Greenwood, 1541 Redfield Rd., Bel Air, MD 21014, 893-0380.

Experienced gamer new to pbm seeks opponent for pbm RW, WSIM, GL. I should be AREA rated (Prov.) by March '90. Steve Petersen, 112 Vernon Ave., Glen Burnie, MD 21061, (301) 768-0885.

Anyone interested in a Guns of August tournament, using the new "Third Edition" rules, at any East Coast Convention during summer 1990? Contact: Rob Beyma, 109 Brentwood Cir., Pocomoke, MD 21851, (301) 957-3541.

DIPLOMACY players—pbm with the 'zine PROTOCOL or by computer and modem with its electronic counterpart, ELECTRONIC PROTOCOL. Eric Klien, 1 Sinai Circle, B10, Chelmsford, MA 01824, (508) 663-5480—Work or (508) 250-0820—Home.

Boardgame Challenge held every month at the Norwood Civic Center. All type of boardgames played. Call for free newsletter and meeting schedule. All gamers welcome. Eddie Campisino, Norwood Recreation Dept. Norwood, MA 02062, (617) 762-0466.

Statis Pro Baseball League being formed 1989 season cards used; draft to be held when enough managers are secured. James Cieslak, 22301 West Outer Drive, Dearborn, MI 48124, (313) 274-6965.

Wanted pbm AK, DD, STAL, TRC or WAT. Rated (1500 Prov.). Rocky Nelson, 1656 Finch Lane, Mound, MN 55364.

Wanted dependable ftf opponent for SL, GOA, WSIM, VITP and others. Call after 5:00 or leave message. Carl Nardin, 9405 Burt St., #54, Omaha, NE 68114, (402) 393-5852.

Join the club! The Tri-State Stratagist meet monthly in IA, SD, NE. Miniatures and ASL, DIP, Sports Games, Speed Circuit! 25+ people per meeting. Russ Gifford, 320 E. 27th, South Sioux City, NE 68776, (402) 494-8746.

Looking for Napoleon's Battles ftf opponents and historical-based AH games. Have French and British armies/great terrain system. Jim Brady, 29 North Brook Ave., Basking Ridge, NJ 07920, (201) 766-5435.

Adult gamer seeks opponents for FT, MD, HW and Fantasy Games to play ftf or via modem. I am in North Jersey area. David DeGil, 31 John St., Fairfield, NJ 07006, (201) 927-5101.

North Jersey, NY area ASL Club meets quarterly for more info contact: Dave Leeman (201) 261-6629 or Andrea Cantatore (201) 767-1556. Dan Dolan, RR 2, Box 443, Highland Lks., NY 07422, (201) 764-8381.

Experienced player looking for worthy opponents for ftf in 3R, GOA, W&P, Pacific War, ET, AL.; call Robert, willing to travel. Robert Hogancamp, 193 Prospect Place, Rutherford, NJ 07070, (201) 896-9051.

DIP players needed for pbm, only cost is stamps. Novices welcome, send SASE for details. E. P. Fleming, P.O. Box 9360, Albuquerque, NM 87119, (505) 242-4864.

AF Capt., 32, seeks adult for Rated AK pbm. Two sides, games simultaneously. No honors systems! 1500 Prov., pbm kit ordered. Later, FT, MD, TA, TRC possible. Clay Griswold, 1057 Saudia Vista Rd., NE, Rio Rancho, NM 87124, (505) 892-6778.

Wanted pbm PB, Rated or Unrated, I'm a Prov. 990 adult. Will finish all games. Bob Passamonti, 3080 Voorhies N., Apt. 1K, Brooklyn, NY 11235.

New to Albany, NY. Into ASL, RF, TPS. Any clubs? John Wood, 103 Baxter Court, Delmar, NY 12054, 475-0243.

Coming back after 8 year layoff. Pbm AK, BB, Rated games only, 1235 BDF. Tom Delaney, 74-36 64th St., Glendale, NY 11385, (718) 381-0841.

Adult gamer new to RTP area interested in joining FRP group for RuneQuest, etc. Weekends only; willing to travel. Dick Jesser, Rt. #3, Box 256A, Creedmoor, NC 27522, (919) 528-3768.

Ftf only AIW, BR, BIS, JUT, TRC, WSIM, TAC. James J. Scott, 5741 Kroegermont Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45239, (513) 923-1684.

Would like to play ftf GOA, TPS, SL, PL or many other titles. Any players in OKC area? Mike Robinson, 12 Del Norte Dr., Edmond, OK 73034, (405) 359-1371.

Intermediate DIP player wants ftf/pbm opponents. Write: Matt Miller, 6150 SW Spruce Ave., Beaverton, OR 97005. Immediate reply guaranteed.

Looking for a SL player in Portland area. Willing to learn ASL too. John Aniello, P.O. Box 230552, Tigard, OR 97223, (503) 684-5578.

Join Penn-Jersey gamers. We meet monthly near Phila. 40+ members. All games, no role-playing. For info. send SASE:P Jim Vroom, 2290 Galloway Rd., A-23, Bensalem, PA 19020.

Opponents wanted for ftf or pbm, greater Harrisburg area. ASL, FT, 3R, others. Eager to start or join existing clubs. Bob Buckheit, 14 W. Simpson St., Mechanicsburg, PA 17055, (717) 691-7623.

Pbm SL using bypass and hidden initial placement and men under fine rules. Anyone out there for Tobruk? Ray Baumiller, P.O. Box 309, New Eagle, PA 15067.

Looking for ASL opponents in the Central PA area. Willing to travel a reasonable distance. Have all modules. Kevin Meyer, 133 E. Maple St., Palmyra, PA 17078, (717) 838-1911.

The Emperor of ETNA wishes to meet more local wargamers for some fun or serious ftf gaming. Tom Semian, 219½ Kittanning St., Pittsburgh, PA 15215, 781-2147.

Looking for opponents for a 4 player pbm game of BRIT. Have pbm referee already lined up. Also looking for other ftf or pbm competition. Jeffrey M. George, 40 High St., Apt. #18, Pottstown, PA 19464, (215) 970-9431.

Pbm opponents wanted for GE'88, AF/DL, FITW, DEV, WAS, WAT and PAA. Rated or Non-Rated. Ed Snarski, 111 Swanson Road, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702, (717) 825-2323.

26 year old gamer, new to the area, looking to play anything, 3R, SL, CIV, etc. Tim Francis, 24 Chestnut Street, Cranston, RI 02910, (401) 781-9106.

1500 Prov. seeks same for pbm or ftf MID, SC, PIAY, AK, LW, 3R, RF, TRC, STAL, TP:STAL, PB, WAS. Pat Hall, 1007 N. Edisto Rd., Leesville, SC 29070, (803) 657-5685.

Anyone in western S.D. or Eastern Wyo. looking for ftf. GE77, GE88, STAL, BB81, BK65, WAT, SL, MD, DIP, more! Richard Wheaton, 1224 Elkhorn, Belle Fourche, SD 57717, (605) 892-2183.

1500 Prov. seeks Rated pbm PB, SL; ftf Rated or not UF, EIA, TA, ASL, FP, CIV in Knoxville area. Charles Hawkins, P.O. Box 110, Corryton, TN 37721.

Attention! East Tennessee Tacticians need ASL'ers of all levels. Meeting on the second Sunday, each month. Playing micro and macro. For all ASL'ers. Tim Deane, 720 Carolyn Dr., Jefferson City, TN 37760, (615) 475-9286.

Attn: D/FW area wargamers! The Texas War Dept. meets once each month to play all types of historical conflict games. For more info., please contact: Greg Clayton, 3550 Timberglen Rd., #302, Dallas, TX 75252, (214) 306-1451.

Wanted: players for si-move EIA campaign. Strict deadlines. Reliable only need reply. All letters answered. David Holmes, 7318D Alma Dr., #627, Plano, TX 75025, (214) 517-4265.

Wanted: experienced player for umpire pbm TA. Already have one player and umpire. Send SASE. Scott Ransom, 1507 Meadow Glen, Richardson, TX 75081, (214) 235-6647.

Adult returning to wargaming after absence. Would like to play ftf or pbm VITP, FT, MID, FE, RF, 3R, HW. Have others, will answer all letters. Bob Kennedy, 11910 Westlock Drive, Tomball, TX 77375, (713) 255-3451.

A pbm multi-player umpired game of MBT is now formng. Send a SASE for details. Steve Desrosiers, 15927 Eastcape Drive, Webster, TX 77598, (713) 480-1813.

The Washington Gamers meet the second Saturday every month. Get our newsletter by joining (6 issues for $5). Over 100 issues published over 12 years! Dennis Wang, 2200 Huntington Ave., Alexandria, VA 22303, (703) 960-1259.

Gamers in North VA for FT, BIS, VITP, SL, and more. Ftf wanted. Can travel weekends; can play here too! Robert Bloom, 707 Maryland Avenue., Shenandoah, VA 22849, (703) 652-8680.

Need players for umpired TA, FL. Will also accept any openings in your own umpired game. J. Thomason, 4140 14th South, Seattle, WA 98108.

Playing wargames 20+ year. Now want to get serious! Pbm MD, WAS, VITP, LW. Wish to learn others, but not ASL. Ftf almost anything. Michael Knautz, 1826 W. Kamps Ave., Appleton, WI 54914, (414) 731-3375.

Interest Group Milwaukee wants you! 12 year old group looking for new blood. Regular meetings, many games including most multi-player. No Dues! Contact: Jayson Gralewicz, 1413 240th Ave., Kansasville, WI 53139, (414) 878-0618.

Cheyenne Armchair Generals meets each Sunday. Twenty members and growing. SL, TRC, EIA, CM, DIP, many others and various miniature systems. Larry Sturgeon, 3508 Amherst, Cheyenne, WY 82001, (307) 635-0512.

Wanted pbm players to play following games: AIW, DD, DIP, FT, FE, GOA, TRC, 3R. I am AREA Rated (1500). Corey Masson, 2407 17th St., S.W., Apt. 5, Calgary, AB, Canada T2T 4M9, (403) 245-8126.

Looking for ftf opponents in the Sudbury Region. Play SL thru GI, FT, AF, SUB and others. Any clubs or groups I should know about? Shaughn Haines, General Delivery, Espanola, Ont., Canada P0P 1C0, (705) 869-5682.

Adult solitaire ASL players seeks mature opponents of any age; for ftf play. Michael Rodgers, 5187 Beamish, Pierrefonds, Que., Canada H8Z 3G4, (514) 620-5757.

ASL opponent wanted. R.K.B. Hanker, 1302 E. 37 Ave., Vancouver, B.C. V5W-1G5, 322-6698.

Wargamers in Frankfurt/Wiesbaden area, boardgames and miniatures of all kinds played at weekly club meetings. Theo Bierschenk, USA VEO (West Germany), APO, NY 09757, 06190-1535.

Wargamers wanted in the FRG. To join DA Wargamers; write Patrick Fennessey, CMR 594, APO, NY 09175, 06151-314125.

UK Wargamer seeks mature adults for pbm with Pacific War or Vietnam. Multi-player options likely on good response. All letters answered. Ian Hayes, 12 Lightfoot Road, London, N8, UK.

Any pbm gamers in Italy? In Europe? In U.S.A.? If Italy is not too far write me. MD, RW, FT, AIW; will answer all letters. Paolo Rubino, Viale Unita' ol'Italia 13, Formia, Italy 04023.

Norwegian pbm gamer seeks opponent for Rated pbm games. Will play TRC, FE, BB. Stein Surland, Svaleveien 24, 3030 Drammen, Norway, (03) 884746.

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THE QUESTION BOX

MERCHANT OF VENUS

Q. What happens if a player lands on an Open Port in an undiscovered system?
A. He discovers the local Culture, takes their IOU, and can trade with them at that port immediately!

Q. The *Guard Plants* marker shows a payoff of $160 both on the marker and in an illustration in the rulebook, but on the reference cards the payoff is listed as $140. Which is correct?
A. The payoff should be $140. The reference cards are correct and the marker is wrong.

Q. The rulebook mentions that 11 "?" markers are left over when the map has been set up, but I always have 12 "?" markers left over. Am I doing something wrong?
A. No—there are always 12 markers left over.

Q. Suppose a player moves onto Tele-Gate #6, chooses "6" as his Pilot number, and later that turn moves through another Tele-Gate. When he leaves the second Tele-Gate, does he jump back to Tele-Gate #6? Doesn't this count as backtracking?
A. He must jump back to Tele-Gate #6 when he leaves the other Tele-Gate. This is not considered backtracking. Backtracking occurs only when you move from dot A directly to dot B, and then try to move from dot B back to dot A later that turn. Moving from B to C and then from C to A is not backtracking.

Q. Can a player buy a Spaceport when he is in an empty orbit box?
A. No; he must land at a city, a Spaceport, or an Open Port to buy anything.

Q. When at a city, does trading in an IOU, a ship or equipment to buy a ship or equipment prevent the player from buying or selling goods that turn?
A. Trading in a ship or piece of equipment prevents the player from selling anything else that turn, and buying a ship or equipment prevents him from buying anything else. IOUs are different; trading in an IOU does not prevent one from selling or trading something else.

Q. When at a port, does the owner of the port get a commission on everything sold or bought? For example, if I trade in a $90 IOU and a Scout to buy a Clipper, is the total commission really $24?
A. Yes; $9 for the IOU, plus $3 for the Scout, plus $12 for the Clipper.

Q. When choosing exactly which Rastur markers to put in the Active Pool, do you pick them randomly or do you take one from each denomination?

A. Neither. You take all of the Rastur markers with the values shown on the "Rastur Mix Chart". For example, when playing to $1000, you take all of the markers showing values from 60 to 110 inclusive (there are 12 such markers).

KREMLIN

Q. If a Politician is in his strong post, does the −1 to aging apply *only* during the Cure Phase, or can it be used against gaining other SP?
A. Only during the Cure Phase.

Q. Once exposed, but not necessarily acted upon, can an Intrigue card be retracted?
A. Yes—unless someone else has played another card in reaction to it—at which point it has been "acted upon".

ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER

A4.15 & B30.44 Can a MMC use Infantry Overrun to enter a pillbox occupied solely by an enemy SMC?
A. No.

A11.31 & C13.7 Can a player make his ATMM availability dr before declaring the order of his CC attacks versus a vehicle?
A. No.

A12.152 May a unit Search its own hex?
A. A Search automatically includes its own hex. Moreover, the Searcher's hex cannot be counted as a hex that may *not* be Searched.

A13.31 May Infantry mount a Horse counter that has already moved during that MPh?
A. No.

B24.8 Suppose a squad fails an attempt to accomplish a Task and as a result is placed beneath a Labor (−1 DRM) counter. If the next time it attempts the Task it is joined by a new squad that tries to help it, does the combined attempt still get a −1 DRM? If they fail the combined attempt, are *both* squads now placed under a Labor (−2 DRM) counter?
A. Yes to both.

B27.11 If a squad makes a successful Entrenching Attempt during its PFPh, can a leader who applied his leadership modifier to the attempt DR be immediately placed under the squad's Foxhole counter in that PFPh?
A. Yes.

B28.41 Would Infantry changing Location within an A-P minefield hex undergo a minefield attack in that hex?
A. No.

GETTYSBURG '88 $15.00
Introductory Civil War Battle Game

Obviously, an introductory wargame should have low complexity, be highly playable, excite the players, with play completed in a reasonable length of time. *GETTYSBURG '88* exhibits just those traits. On our ongoing "Readers Buyer's Guide", only three games have a lower "Complexity" rating, and only one has a lower "Playability" evaluation. One can complete a game of this latest incarnation of *GETTYSBURG* in the space of some 90 minutes (on average), and the "Excitement Level" insures that the novice player's attention won't wander far during this span.

The "trade-off" comes in the guise of "Authenticity" and "Play Balance" it seems. The realism of *GETTYSBURG '88*, while better than some on our listing, is not all that it could be in the judgement of many. Undoubtably, some rules that would have better simulated the situation were sacrificed to keep the design simple; I expect a spate of variants offering additional rules for the game to be forthcoming (as the efforts of Mr. Blumberg and Mr. Boeche would indicate). As for balance, this rating probably reflects the common perception that the Confederates have the edge. My suggestion would be to allow the novice player to take that role in your playings; and, given that

the Rebs are on the attack with the potential to change the course of known history, that should excite him even more.

Drawing on 66 responses, the abbreviated ratings for *GETTYSBRUG '88* will appear on future installments of The RBG. Below are listed all the ratings for this new entry in the ranks of introductory wargames:

Overall Value: 2.42
Components: 2.61
Map: 2.93
Counters: 2.68
Rulebook: 3.68
Complexity: 1.79
Completeness of Rules: 3.32
Playability: 1.64
Excitement Level: 2.06
Play Balance: 3.10
Authenticity: 4.43
Game Length (average): 9.11
　　　　Shortest: 45 mins.
　　　　Longest: 2 hrs., 45 mins.
Year: 1988
Type: 2P
Sample Base: 66

READERS BUYER'S GUIDE

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 ratings take the form of a numerical value ranging from 1 to 9 (with "1" equalling "excellent" and "9" equalling "terrible"). However, the Game Length category is measured in multiples of ten minutes (thus, a rating of "18" equates to three hours). A "+" following the Year of release indicates that the game is continued or complemented by additional modules in successive years (for instance, the ratings for SL reflect the entire system—original game plus add-on modules). Game Type is broken down into three broad categories: SO=Solitaire; MP=Multi-Player; 2P=Two Player. Finally, it should be noted that a minimum requirement of 50 responses (see the "Sample Base") was judged necessary for a valid representation; additional titles that garner such will be added to the RBG in the future.

WARGAME RBG

Title	Overall Value	Components	Complexity	Completeness	Playability	Authenticity	Game Length	Year	Type	Sample Base
ADVANCED SL	1.80	1.77	9.25	2.11	3.44	2.04	33.02	1985+	2P	172
1830	1.85	2.00	3.88	2.72	2.04	3.20	24.52	1986	MP	50
CIVILIZATION	1.97	2.60	3.20	2.03	1.72	4.09	32.08	1982	MP	152
FLATTOP	2.00	2.47	3.61	3.12	3.56	1.76	43.98	1981	2P	95
EMPIRES IN ARMS	2.08	2.45	8.08	2.94	3.84	2.11	166.86	1986	MP	71
UP FRONT	2.11	2.24	4.36	2.83	2.38	3.56	10.16	1983+	2P	126
RUSSIAN FRONT	2.12	2.33	5.32	2.88	2.67	2.40	40.16	1985	2P	113
KREMLIN	2.28	2.51	3.64	3.33	1.81	5.24	11.94	1988	MP	63
BRITANNIA	2.31	3.08	2.93	2.89	2.07	3.52	23.72	1988	MP	77
TAC AIR	2.38	2.39	5.02	2.91	2.77	2.72	33.65	1988	2P	88
GETTYSBURG	2.42	2.61	1.79	3.32	1.64	4.43	9.11	1988	2P	66
VITP	2.55	3.12	2.56	3.32	1.91	5.56	21.09	1977	2P	183
RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN	2.60	3.35	3.85	3.10	2.28	4.22	35.44	1976	2P	208
ENEMY IN SIGHT	2.61	2.88	2.30	2.63	1.87	6.76	7.73	1988	MP	68
CASSINO	2.68	2.71	4.43	2.75	2.32	2.63	23.67	1988	2P	52
DIPLOMACY	2.71	3.36	3.00	2.69	2.92	5.16	33.26	1976	MP	169
ST. NAZAIRE	2.72	2.56	4.01	3.12	2.80	2.52	18.92	1987	SO	98
FIREPOWER	2.76	3.03	6.42	3.63	3.76	2.88	15.48	1985	2P	94
STORM OVER ARNHEM	2.78	2.68	3.84	2.84	2.32	3.49	24.35	1981	2P	87
FLIGHT LEADER	2.79	2.20	4.62	3.00	2.77	3.20	10.18	1986	2P	76
BULL RUN	2.80	2.67	3.80	2.95	2.96	2.93	23.76	1983	2P	62
DEVIL'S DEN	2.81	2.85	5.04	2.99	3.52	2.61	24.68	1985	2P	60
B-17	2.83	2.87	2.93	2.83	2.00	3.33	8.82	1983	SO	192
SQUAD LEADER	2.84	2.11	8.06	3.68	4.27	3.00	21.37	1977+	2P	231
2nd Fleet	2.89	3.35	5.27	3.44	3.28	3.55	32.23	1986	2P	55
WS&IM	2.92	3.24	5.64	3.00	3.04	2.60	20.07	1975	2P	172
THIRD REICH	2.95	3.56	8.83	3.70	4.00	3.51	45.83	1981	MP	227
BULGE '81	2.96	3.11	4.21	3.24	2.92	3.19	28.02	1981	2P	155
PANZER LEADER	3.12	2.79	5.63	3.72	3.32	3.82	19.47	1974	2P	210
WAR & PEACE	3.13	3.44	4.55	3.68	2.95	3.15	36.80	1980	2P	138
TITAN	3.16	2.68	3.48	2.66	2.47	4.48	29.08	1982	MP	85
Civil War	3.20	3.69	6.95	3.92	4.17	3.58	46.96	1983	2P	112
DUNE	3.21	2.48	3.29	2.93	2.88	4.28	16.84	1979+	MP	87
MAGIC REALM	3.29	2.44	8.41	4.08	4.20	3.79	20.76	1979	MP	75
Battle Hymn	3.32	3.33	5.24	4.32	3.48	3.89	21.26	1986+	SO	51
NAVAL WAR	3.35	4.20	1.12	3.40	1.60	6.72	6.00	1983	MP	81
STARSHIP TROOPERS	3.36	3.12	4.84	3.32	3.20	3.12	16.37	1976	2P	110
KINGMAKER	3.39	3.21	5.65	4.48	3.49	4.63	27.98	1976	MP	141
PG GUDERIAN	3.40	3.24	5.44	3.20	3.28	3.32	22.87	1984	2P	90
PATTON'S BEST	3.43	3.22	4.16	4.23	3.25	3.87	14.13	1987	SO	109
GLADIATOR	3.44	3.36	3.89	3.32	2.56	3.20	8.69	1981	2P	56
CIRCUS MAXIMUS	3.47	3.60	3.28	3.39	2.64	3.36	11.70	1980	2P	91
6th Fleet	3.48	3.04	6.64	3.73	3.88	3.64	47.67	1985	2P	59
AIR FORCE	3.48	4.27	5.36	3.64	3.61	3.12	12.90	1980+	2P	123
ARAB-ISRAELI WARS	3.49	3.25	6.93	3.72	3.52	3.72	16.37	1977	2P	123
PANZERBLITZ	3.56	3.55	4.92	4.16	3.26	4.50	18.25	1970	2P	215
PA AFRIKA	3.63	3.68	4.23	3.36	3.19	3.88	25.14	1981	2P	80
Pacific War	3.64	3.57	7.98	4.32	5.28	3.19	120.63	1986	2P	66
Pax Britannia	3.64	3.60	4.85	3.91	4.25	4.61	52.14	1985	MP	50
MIDWAY	3.65	4.48	2.80	3.16	2.43	4.52	21.10	1964	2P	130
DWTK	3.68	3.56	4.88	4.28	3.85	3.89	22.82	1981	2P	52
Ambush	3.68	4.08	4.94	4.40	3.91	4.61	19.69	1983+	SO	121
FORTRESS EUROPA	3.73	3.23	5.36	3.78	3.88	3.57	42.44	1980	2P	167
AFRIKA KORPS	3.77	4.43	2.20	2.84	1.88	5.40	21.44	1964	2P	167
HITLER'S WAR	3.80	3.89	4.20	4.25	3.44	4.68	34.79	1984	2P	78
WIZARD'S QUEST	3.82	3.07	2.11	2.94	2.15	4.92	20.92	1979	MP	85
Vietnam	3.89	3.35	8.60	3.83	5.26	3.75	90.86	1984	2P	60
WAR AT SEA	4.04	3.94	1.40	3.40	1.87	6.72	12.80	1976	2P	155
BLITZKRIEG	4.19	4.36	5.84	3.87	3.60	5.57	33.76	1965	2P	136
1776	4.25	3.64	5.28	3.88	3.24	4.40	26.30	1974	2P	154
D-DAY	4.32	4.73	3.56	3.45	2.91	5.08	27.16	1977	2P	125
RICHTHOFEN'S WAR	4.33	3.78	3.99	3.60	3.24	4.87	8.23	1983	2P	53
PANZERKRIEG	4.35	4.02	6.11	3.84	3.83	3.28	24.48	1973	2P	137
GUNS OF AUGUST	4.41	4.00	6.32	4.56	4.51	3.83	44.72	1981	2P	104
WATERLOO	4.44	4.48	2.24	3.08	2.21	5.55	17.99	1962	2P	104
Mosby's Raid	4.53	4.55	4.63	4.36	4.42	5.13	20.85	1985	SO	50
LUFTWAFFE	4.80	4.27	4.16	4.08	3.91	5.33	20.08	1971	2P	170
Nato	4.96	4.16	6.28	5.24	4.76	4.63	33.70	1983	2P	73
TACTICS II	5.88	6.22	1.52	3.89	2.96	6.80	14.87	1961	2P	108

The issue introducing *GETTYSBURG '88* (Vol. 25, No. 5), despite (or perhaps because of) the varied mix of short articles, managed a respectable Overall Rating of 3.23. In the usual batch of letters following each issue, Mr. Blumberg's variant and Mr. Moore's fiction drew the most comment; response to Mr. Swann's piece on Darby's Rangers was favorable enough for me to encourage him to submit further installments of his "Reference Notes for ASL". Taking a random selection of 200 responses (and awarding three points for first choice, two for second, and one for third), the ratings for all articles are as follows:

The recent December 1989 issue of *Marine Corps Gazette* (Vol. 73, No. 12) features a section entitled "Focus on Wargaming". Among the several articles that comprise this feature: Col. Raymond Hord (Director, Marines Corps Wargaming & Assessment Center) writes on the role of his command; Capt. Eric Walters presents an introduction to commercial wargaming, from the viewpoint of a serving officer; Lt. Col. Dennis De Lisle discusses the USMC-devised wargame "Steelthrust" (platoon/company level with players taking on the role of battalion staff). Of most interest to the designers here at Avalon Hill were Capt. Walters' short reviews of a number of our titles, including *GETTYSBURG '88, FLIGHT LEADER, FIREPOWER, VITP, RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN, 1776* and Victory Games' *6th Fleet.* Indeed, Walters' views on board wargaming, its strengths and shortcomings, and especially on what can be learned from the play by soldiers, should be required reading for anyone concerned with our hobby.

The electronic age has caught up with the ultimate postal game. We received recently a copy of

Infiltrator's Report

Electronic Protocol (Issue #123), an "electronic 'zine" devoted to *DIPLOMACY*. It can be accessed through CompuServe, Arpanet, Csnet, Mailnet, Bitnet, Usenet and Portal (note that CompuServe is expensive, and the other networks except Portal are free but players can access them only through a university or company account). According to its editor/publisher Eric Klien, the venture stresses no NMRs and quick turns (about a week's time for each). At this time, there are six rated games ongoing. Each issue also offers some of the best articles on *DIP* culled from the traditional hobby press. Currently Mr. Klien has some 140 players and 150 subscribers, and the number seems to be growing rapidly. It should also be stressed, for those not yet in the fast-paced flow of the computer world, that hard copies of the 'zine are also offered to postal players who are involved. If you're interested in playing *DIPLOMACY* at this hectic pace, or just in some good reading on the game, drop a line to Mr. Klien (at 1 Sinai Circle #B10, Chelmsford, MA 01824).

Avalon Hill is seeking another batch of "blind" (i.e., outside? playtesters. *Seahawks* is a proposed game dealing with the age of piracy for one to four players. Volunteers must be willing to spend 20 hours per month in the playtest for a period of three months, and send in monthly written reports. Both solitaire and multi-player testing is needed, so gamers able to enjoy either are sought. Applicants are cautioned that the playtest materials are pre-production quality and may involve considerable labor to assemble. Remuneration is limited to a free copy of the published game for each group coordinator. We also have a variant submitted that extensively expands our popular *CIVILIZATION* game; volunteers to evaluate it for possible publication are needed as well. We regret that, due to the volume of mail such playtest invitations usually generate, we will be unable to reply to any but those actually accepted for the test.

Still another new 'zine, devoted to the postal play of *1830*, rolled in the other day. The first issue of *Fast Trax* from Dick Martin featured his houserules for play, and announcement of the six players in his initial game. Mr. Martin also put out a call for further players, and for articles and letters concerning *1830* and railway lore in general. Subscriptions, at the moment, are free. Those interested in *1830*, or railroad games in general, are urged to contact Mr. Martin (17601 Lisa Drive, Rockville, MD 20855) for more details.

Contest #147 posed a problem in structuring an attack by the Confederate player in a game of *GETTYSBURG '88*. While there are numerous possibilities, given the strictures of the contest, there were certain precepts we were looking for. David Terry summarized those best in the letter accompanying his entry: 1) avoid errors in movement and stacking; 2) must take into account Union defensive artillery fire; 3) no attack to have a DRM differential of −4 or worse (else the attack cannot possibly cause a two-step Union loss) unless; 4) soak-offing off to permit specific attacks; and 5) assume the enemy player will flip his units intelligently. While none agreed with all details of our solution, the winners concentrated on the same vulnerable targets—and met the above conditions. Each will by now have received a merchandise credit from us. The ten winners are: Mike Beller, Charlotte, VT; John Butitta, Neenah, WI; Danial Ferens, Kettering, OH; Jeffrey George, Pottstown, PA; Gary Grove, Moore, OK; Harrison Mathias, New Orleans, LA; Orest Swystun, Bladensburg, MD; David Terry, Sykesville, MD; Dan Thompson, Portland, NY; Richard Wheaton, Belle Fourche, SD.

We decided to test the readers' knowledge of the rules for *ASL* in Contest #148. Undoubtably, *ASL* has the most complete, extensive and dense rules ever written—which is only natural considering the scope of this greatest of all tactical simulations. Part of the fascination to it lies in the many, many possible events that can occur in a single short scenario. Contest #148 challenged aficionados of the game system with but two. The questions that comprised our challenge, and the correct answers to them, follow:

1) What is the highest Original DR that will cause a CH when firing at a single squad in a hex that is not overstacked? What conditions are required for such a result?

Answer: An Original DR of 12 results in a CH, when an AFV with a 9-2 or 10-2 armor leader fires its MA at a squad that is under a −2 Acquisition counter and which is either pushing a large-target Gun, or using a Trailbreak, in an open ground hex adjacent to the AFV. [Base To Hit=8; < half of 8=3; Original DR of 12, −2 (leader, −2 (Acquisition), −2 Hazardous Movement or non-Assault Movement in the open), −2 (PB Range), −1 (Large Target or moving on a Trailbreak)=3.]

2) What are two situations in the game in which an Original DR of 2 can *never* result in a CH against a Vehicle Target Type?

Answer: An Original DR of 2 does not result in a CH when making an Immobilization Attempt, nor when using MGs, against an AFV.

Next — TURNING POINT: STALINGRAD

MBT — Vol. 26, No. 3

The SIEGE of JERUSALEM — Vol. 26, No. 4

MERCHANT OF VENUS $25.00
Multi-player Science Fiction Game of Trading

INSTRUCTIONS:

Rate each category by placing a number ranging from 1 through 9 in the appropriate space to the right ("1" equating to 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 *HITLER'S WAR*, enter "15" for category 7a.) For an explanation of the categories, refer to the AH Philosophy of Vol. 24, No. 5. Enter ratings only for those categories relevant to the game in question. Note that AH's ratings for Complexity, Year of Publication and Type (2P=two player; MP=multi-player; SO=solitaire) have been provided for your information.

1.	Overall Value	____
2.	Components	____
2a.	Mapboard	____
2b.	Counters	____
2c.	Rulebook	____
3.	Complexity	____
3a.	Avalon Hill Complexity	4
4.	Completeness	____
5.	Playability	____
5a.	Excitement Level	____
5b.	Play Balance	____
6.	Authenticity	____
7.	Game Length	____
7a.	Shortest	____
7b.	Longest	____
8.	Year of Publication	1988
9.	Type	MP

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN PLAYING?

Top ten lists are always in vogue—be the subject books, television, shows, movies or even games. The public seems never to tire of seeing how its favorite way of spending their leisure time stacks up against the competition. So, to cater further to your whims (and to satisfy our own curiosity), this is The *GENERAL*'s version of the gamer's top ten. From the responses to this form the editors produce the regular column "So That's What You've Been Playing" found elsewhere in this issue.

We aren't asking you to subjectively 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 fewer) games which you've spent the most time playing since you received your last issue of The *GENERAL*. With the collation of these responses, we can generate a consensus list of what's being played by our readership. This list can serve both as a guide for us (for coverage in these pages) and others (convention organizers spring instantly to mind). The degree of correlation between this listing, the Best Sellers Lists, and the RBG should prove extremely interesting.

Feel free to list any game of any sort regardless of manufacturer. There will be, of course, a built-in bias to the survey since the readers all play Avalon Hill games to some extent; but it should be no more prevalent than similar projects undertaken by other periodicals with special-interest based circulation. The amount to which this bias affects the final outcome will be left to the individual's own discretion.

1._____

2._____

3._____

Opponent Wanted 50¢

1. 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 uncancelled U.S. postage stamps.
2. For Sale, Trade, or Wanted To Buy ads will not be accepted. No refunds.
3. Insert copy on lines provided (25 words maximum) and print name, address, and phone number on the appropriate lines.
4. Please PRINT. If your ad is illegible, it will not be printed.
5. 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.

Advanced Squad Leader—ASL, Afrika Korps—AK, Air Force—AF, Arab-Israeli Wars—AIW, Blitzkreig—BL, Britannia—BRIT, Battle Of The Bulge—BB, Bull Run—BR, Circus Maximus—CM, Civilization—CIV, D-Day—DD, Devil's Den—DEV, Diplomacy—DIP, Empires in Arms—EIA, Enemy in Sight—EIS, Firepower—FP, Flat Top—FT, Flight Leader, FL, Fortress Europa—FE, France 40—FR, Gettysburg—GE, Gladiator—GL, Guns of August—GOA, Hitler's War—HW, Kremlin—KREM, Kingmaker—KM, Knights of the Air—KOTA, Luftwaffe—LW, Magic Realm—MR, Merchant of Venus—MOV, Midway—MD, Naval War—NW, PanzerArmee Afrika—PAA, Panzerblitz—PB, PanzerGruppe Guderian—PGG, Panzerkrieg—PK, Panzer Leader—PL, Patton's Best—PAT, Platoon—PLA, Raid on St. Nazaire—RSN, Rail Baron—RB, Richthofen's War—RW, The Russian Campaign—TRC, Russian Front—RF, Stellar Conquest—SC, Squad Leader—SL, Storm Over Arnhem—SOA, Tac Air—TA, Tactics II—TAC, Third Reich—3R, Thunder at Cassino—CASS, Titan—TT, Up Front—UF, Victory In The Pacific—VITP, War and Peace—W&P, War At Sea—WAS, Waterloo—WAT, Wooden Ships & Iron Men—WSIM.

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NAME_____ PHONE_____

ADDRESS_____

CITY_____ STATE____ ZIP_____

CONTEST #149

Using the situation described on Page 55, give the next two moves made by the Human player (moving first) to insure victory:

First Turn:
Move To: Sell: Buy:

Second Turn:
if the Whynom player moves to 1a:
Move To: Sell: Buy:

if the Whynom player moves to 1b:
Move To: Sell: Buy:

if the Whynom player moves to 9a and buys a factory:
Move To: Sell: Buy:

if the Whynom player moves to 9a and buys no factory:
Move To: Sell: Buy:

if the Whynom player moves to 9b:
Move To: Sell: Buy:

if the Whynom player moves to 10:
Move To: Sell: Buy:

Issue as a whole _____ (Rate from 1 to 10, with "1" equating excellent and "10" terrible). To be valid for consideration, your contest entry must also include the three best articles, in your view:
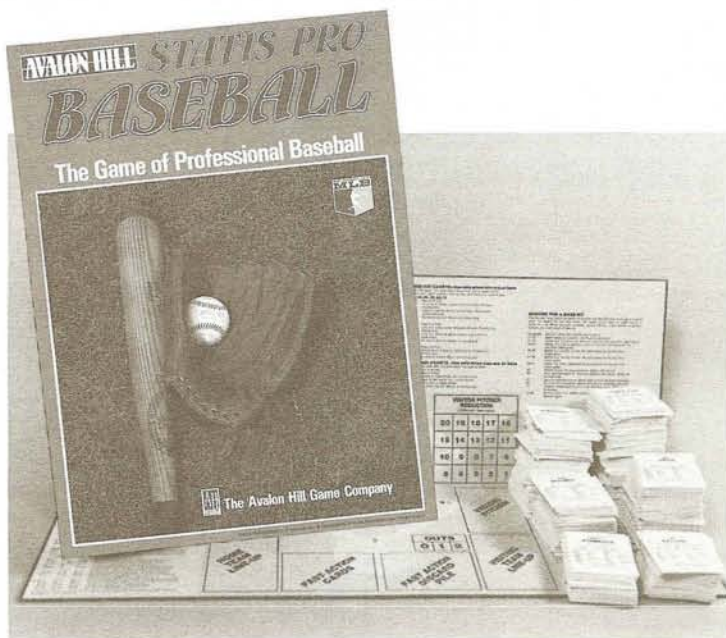
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE ____ ZIP _____

ASL SCENARIO P — THE ROAD TO WILTZ

East of WILTZ, BELGIUM, 18 December 1944: The German offensive had surprised the Americans both in its size and intensity. Desperately, the Americans formed scratch defenses to buy time so the key road junction of Bastogne could be reinforced. The Germans had to be delayed or stopped as they drove along the roads to Bastogne. In the early hours, elements of the 44th Combat Engineers, supported by fragments of the 707th Tank Battalion, took over the responsibility for the road leading to Wiltz from the border with orders to hold for at least a day.

BOARD CONFIGURATION:

N ↑

3	2
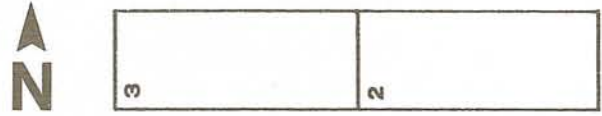
BALANCE:

✚ Increase game length to 15 Turns.

☆ Decrease game length to 13 Turns.

VICTORY CONDITIONS: The Germans win immediately upon Exiting ≥ 35 VP off the west edge of board 3.

TURN RECORD CHART

☆ AMERICAN Sets Up First	✚**1**	✚**2**	✚☆**3**	✚**4**	**5** END	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	restart on turn 11 (1)
✚ GERMAN Moves First [112]											

Elements of 44th Combat Engineers and 707th Tank Battalion [ELR: 3] set up on boards 2 and 3 as per SSR 2: {SAN: 2}

7³-4-7	6³-6-6	2-2-7	9-2	9-1	8-1	8-0	7-0	MMG 4-10	BAZ 44 8-4	FT 24-1	DC 30-1	? 7 morale
3	4	7		2				3	2		3	9

Minefield	76L 15 -/-/4	105 14 -/-/4	15PP *AAMG T6 20 -/-/4	T5 29PP 28	AT M10 *57L	ART M10 105*	MTR M11 81* [3-75]	Roadblock	MPh/RtPh: dr = MF CC: +1/−1
21 factors	3	3	3	2	2	3		2	

Elements of the 707th Tank Battalion enter on Turn 3 along the west edge of board 3:

76L 13 2/4/4	75 15 2/4/4	105 13 2/4/4	76L 15 -/-/4
		3	

Elements of Volksgrenadier Regiment 39 [ELR: 3] enter on Turn 1 along the east edge: {SAN: 2}

4-4-7	9-1	8-1	6+1	dm MMG 3-8	LMG 3-8	75L 13 -/4*/1*	75L 13 -/-/2*	75* 13 3/5
16				2	4		2	

Elements of Panzergrenadier Regiment 902 enter on Turn 2 along the east edge:

4²-6-8	10-3	8-0	LMG 3-8	Radio 8	75L 13 3/5
4			2	4	

Jagdpanzer reinforcements enter on Turn 4 along the east edge:

75LL 11 1/-	75L 13 -/-/1*
2	2

81* 16 -/-/3*	24 T2 29PP	2

1st Company, Panzergrenadier Regiment 902, enters on Turn 3 along the east edge:

4¹-6-7	2-4-7	2-2-8	10-2	9-2	9-1	8-1	dm HMG 3-8	dm MMG 3-8	LMG 3-8
12	3							2	4

| 15PP AAMG T7 16 -/-/3	T7 21PP 28
5	4

SPECIAL RULES:

1. EC are Ground Snow, with no Wind at start. However, all roads are plowed and all units may use road bonus/rate.

2. The Americans may begin the game with no more than 21 counters (including Fortifications and *all* Concealment counters, but not Mines) on board 2 (inclusive of hexrow A), and may not set up in hexrow GG of that board.

3. Bore Sighting is NA.

4. The Germans receive one module of 80+mm battalion mortar OBA.

5. The German player may delay entry of German units as desired.

AFTERMATH: General Cota had obtained authority to pull the 110th Infantry behind the River Clerve, but Wiltz had to be held. Holding it would block three roads that converged there. Cota sent two companies of engineers with limited support to block the road. The engineers felled trees, cut fire lanes and spread mines, making the passage a tough proposition. In point of fact, no one on the enemy side wanted Wiltz. But Colonel Kokott, commander of Volksgrenadier Division 26, detailed a regiment to keep an eye on the road. Overstepping their bounds, and drawing elements of Panzer Lehr into the fray, the officers of Volksgrenadier Regiment 39 pushed down the road, in the process driving the Americans back to the banks of the river northeast of town—within sight of the first buildings. Lest his sole armor support be lost, Cota ordered a withdrawal behind the small river and the bridge destroyed.

THE ST. GOAR ASSAULT

ASL SCENARIO O
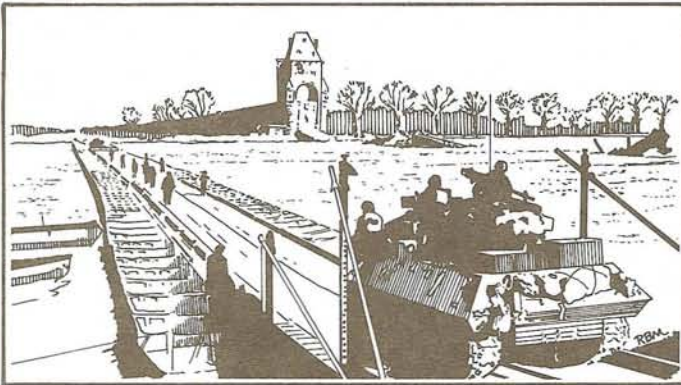
VICTORY CONDITIONS: The Americans win if, at game end, any one mapboard (whole hexes only) is devoid of Good Order German MMC. An Inherent German AFV crew is considered a Good Order MMC for this purpose unless currently shocked.

ST. GOAR, GERMANY, 24 March 1945: Germany's army was beaten. The Rhine river had been crossed at Remagen and elsewhere. As more and more of the Allied forces closed in on the Rhine, there was a growing tendency to simply take it "on the run" rather than shift to an existing bridgehead. Such a situation faced the U.S. 87th Infantry Division as it approached the St. Goar sector. The Americans made good use of a heavy morning mist to get two battalions across the river undetected, but there was a shortage of boats and the formations had to be shuttled over. The Germans, though totally disorganized, did form a semblance of defense based on the local Headquarters unit.

BOARD CONFIGURATION:

BALANCE:

✠ Exchange a German 8-1 for one 9-2 SMC.

☆ The U.S. player makes a dr (halved; FRU) at the end of each friendly RPh; the result equals the number of *additional* squad-equivalents he may land that turn.

TURN RECORD CHART

		1 ☆	2 ☆	3 ☆	4 ☆	5	6	7	8	END
✠ GERMAN Sets Up First [214]										
☆ AMERICAN Moves First										

Elements of Wehrkreis XIII [ELR: 2] set up on any/all boards as per SSR 5: {SAN: 5}

Elements of the 87th Infantry Division [ELR: 4] enter as per SSR 2: {SAN: 2}

SPECIAL RULES:

1. EC are Moist, with no wind at start. There is Level 1 (and lower) Fog covering the first two whole hexes of the south edge of all boards at start; the Fog DRM (E3.311) is +2. Commencing on Turn 2, the U.S. player must make a dr at the start of each friendly RPh; a dr of "6" causes the Fog to immediately vanish.

2. All south-edge *half* hexes are Water Obstacles. American units must land on whole hexes adjacent to ≥ 1 Water Obstacle. Such landing is considered Hazardous Movement (A4.62) that consumes all MF in the MPh (but does not result in TI). American units that attempt to land on a hidden German unit must instead land on the next turn as part of that complement; the German contents of that hex are placed onboard concealed. Note that six squads (or equivalent) maximum per turn may be landed. One SMC/SW may accompany each MMC landing. No unit may enter a Water Obstacle once onboard.

3. The Germans suffer from Ammunition Shortage (A19.131). The AFV is not recalled, however, if the MA is disabled. Whenever a Mobile vehicle

expends the *first* MP in its current MPh, its owner must make a dr; a dr of "6" permanently immobilizes that vehicle for the remainder of the game.

4. The German command structure was very confused. The German player must make a dr at the beginning of each German RPh. The result is the maximum number of *Infantry* units (each *stack* is considered one unit for this purpose) which can move in the MPh. There is no such limit during the APh.

5. The Germans may use HIP for all units that set up in Concealment Terrain. German MMC may set up in south-edge hexes only if in a foxhole or building. The instant that all American MMC have landed, all German *units* still hidden must be placed on the mapboard, concealed.

AFTERMATH: One battalion hit a German strongpoint and spent the next hour hugging the riverbank. The other was luckier and landed at a relatively undefended area. The German defenders, unable to react to both landings were defeated in detail. The Americans then linked up, and yet another Rhine bridgehead had been established. The ad-hoc attack had worked only because of the poor initial deployment by the Germans, which had allowed one battalion to land and build up unopposed, and of a confused German command structure which was unable to react quickly.