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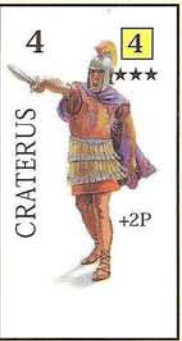
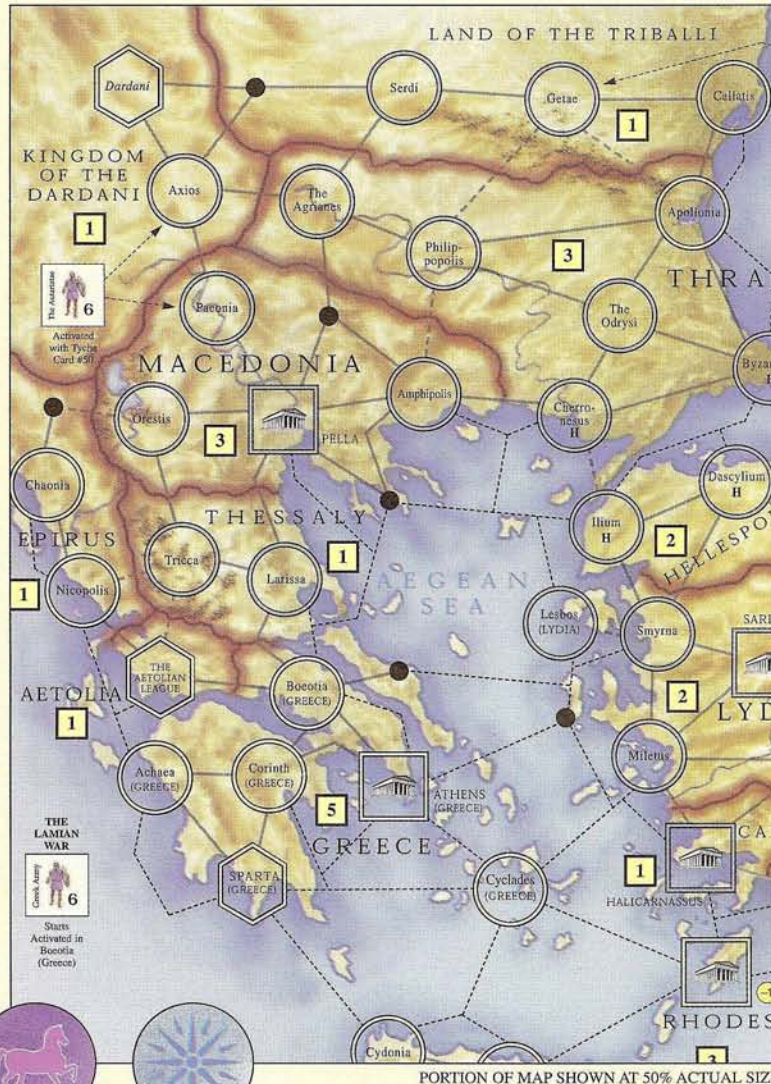


GENERAL VOL. 31 NO. 5

# SUCCESSORS

The Battles for Alexander's Empire

BABYLON,  
323 BC,  
ALEXANDER  
THE GREAT  
DIED.  
HE LEFT NO  
CLEAR HEIR  
AND NO  
INSTRUCTIONS  
ON WHO IS  
TO SUCCEED  
HIM.  
'O ZEUS HAVE  
MERCY.



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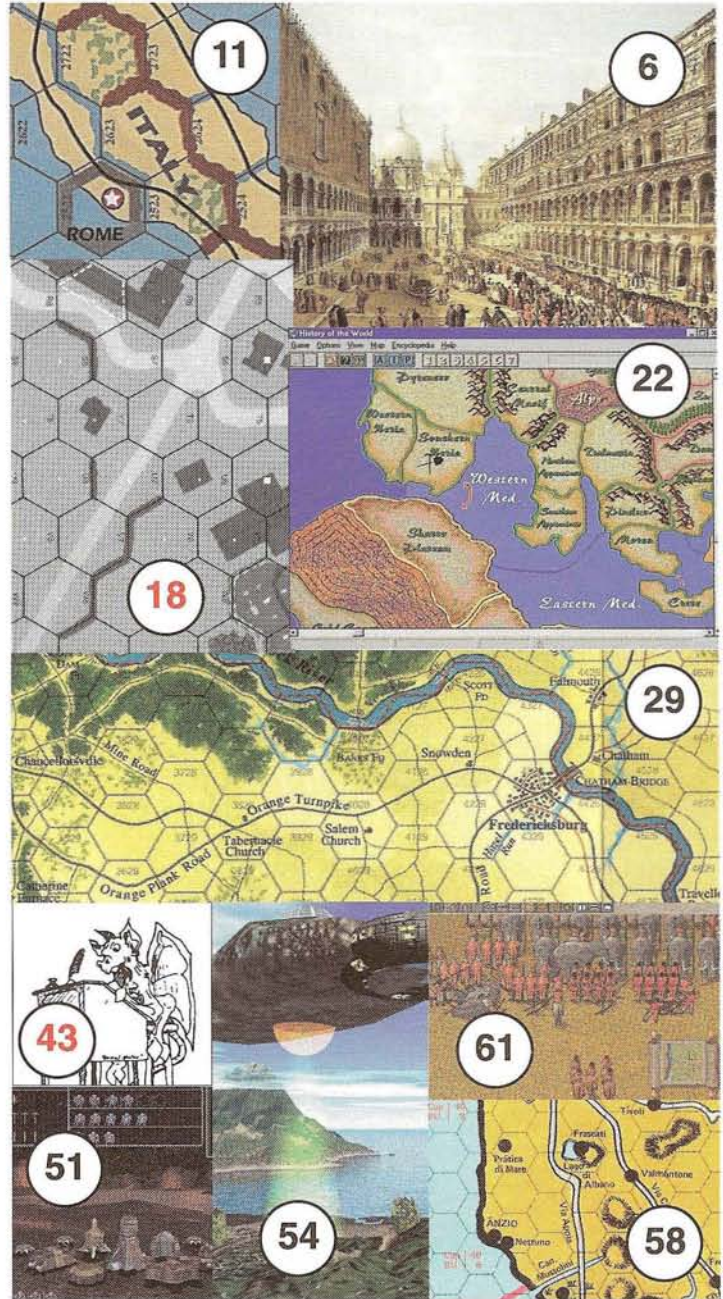
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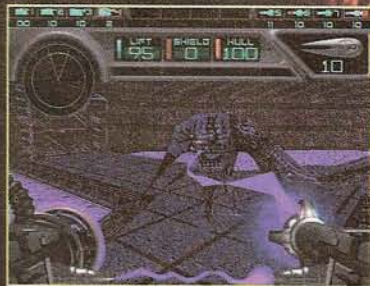
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**GENERAL**

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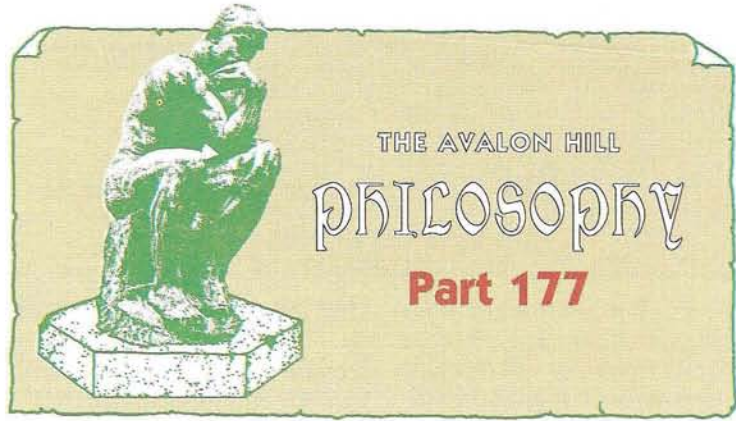
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THE AVALON HILL

PHILOSOPHY

Part 177

The 1997 Iron Man Championship at Origins this year was well-attended, despite the relative lack of publicity. Next year we will have a larger cadre of GMs to run events and include some multi-round tournaments for points as well. As it was, we saw 74 gamers manage to win some points during the two-and-a-half-day event. In fact, a few points seemed only to whet the appetite of many gamers, who seemed to be canceling their Saturday tournament plans to enter yet more Iron Man events.

The format of the Championship was simple: play in Avalon Hill-sponsored events and score points once for each game won (some points also went to second place for multi-player games). To win the overall event, you had to show a breadth of knowledge of our games.

Friday opened up with *TYRANNO EX* putting Jeff Jaeger atop the leader board with three IMPs (Iron Man Points). By 2 p.m. we had a ten-way tie at four IMPs, as the first heats of *HISTORY OF THE WORLD* and *AGE OF RENAISSANCE* ended. In the early evening, four more entrants joined the tie by winning at Naval War or by adding an extra two IMPs to their previous scores with wins in *VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC*. At 9:30 p.m. Max Brodbeck claimed sole possession of the Iron Man lead on the basis of a win in *CIRCUS MAXIMUS*. This was very shortlived as George Sauer gained 5 IMPs from a seven-player game of *NAVAL WAR* and then Jonathan Gingerich won the eight-player *CIRCUS MAXIMUS* event to earn six IMPs (which added to his previous second-place points gave him a total of eight IMPs). Meanwhile, I had stopped Bruce Reiff's climb to the top in *STOCK MARKET GURU* but was involved in a six-player game of *CANDIDATE* with him which started just before the time deadline. (Understand that I considered Mr. Reiff to be odds-on favorite throughout the competition and did everything I could to keep him from getting points—everything from alerting people at his table of his current point standing to directly taking up the cause in games head-to-head.) Gingerich left the room on top of the leader board only to return Saturday morning in second, as Bruce cut a deal in *CANDIDATE* which ensured him second place and two IMPs, putting him on top with nine IMPs at midnight.

During Saturday everybody was chasing Reiff (although he sweated the lead enough to cancel a few of his non-Iron Man plans in order to pile on a few more IMPs and end the day with 15). A number of players climbed up to six, seven or eight IMPs by the evening, but none of them managed to win in evening events, though Bruce Bernard came close to snagging seven IMPs in *DUNE*, which would have put him at 14.

Sunday became a final push for players to get into the top five in order to double their winnings (IMPs were also spendable dollars at our booth). Gerald Lientz climbed into second with nine IMPs by getting second in an *AIR BARON* game. Lauren Hickok not only beat out her father's six IMPs, but jumped into a tie for fourth place at seven IMPs with a win at *AIR BARON*.

Meanwhile, Bruce Reiff entered the *FOOTBALL STRATEGY* tournament to tune up for AvalonCon (where he is defending champion). Through luck of the draw, I found myself facing Reiff head-to-head in a repeat of our AvalonCon '96 opening round game. I could not do anything about his impending Iron Man victory, but I did manage to bounce him from *FOOTBALL STRATEGY* with an aerial attack that took a 17-7 half-time lead and pushed Reiff into "now it's time to get down to business" gear. He took a third quarter lead of 21-17, but I bounced back to win 31-21. Then, in the last remaining Iron Man game, I ground my way to a hard-fought 30-27 victory which gave me three IMPs to become the final Iron Man participant to gain Top Five status by joining the four-way tie for fourth place.

Final Leader Board

Bruce Reiff	15
Gerald Lientz	9
Jonathan Gingerich	8
Bruce Bernard	7
Lauren Hickok	7
Steve Packwood	7
Stuart Tucker	7

As satisfying as Top Five status is, believe me when I say that the head-to-head wins over Mr. Iron Man himself are sweeter. I look forward to our grudge match in *FOOTBALL STRATEGY* at AvalonCon '97. Let's all applaud Bruce for earning IMPs in seven different games, *AGE OF RENAISSANCE*, *AUCTION*, *NAVAL WAR*, *CANDIDATE*, *ACQUIRE*, *MARCH MADNESS* and *AIR BARON*. Now, let's sharpen our wits and find a way to beat him next year!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This issue marks the inauguration of the Zone of Control section, edited by John Kisner. Through it we bring to readers of *The GENERAL* the fine and timely reviews he commissions on board wargames. John has editorial control over content and will be selecting the games and writers. Subscribers to the former magazine of the same name have received subscriptions or extensions to their subscriptions to *The GENERAL* since volume 31, number 3. Welcome John and ZOC readers alike, I hope you stay with us.

—SKT



## READING, 'RITING AND 'RITHMATIC in the AGE OF RENAISSANCE

by John Kisner

**T**he author of this article is none other than the esteemed editor of Zone of Control, which now appears as a regular section of The GENERAL. With that section featuring reviews of non-Avalon Hill games, John couldn't resist submitting a strategy article on the side about one of our newest games.—SKT

"Money," according to Somerset Maugham, "is like a sixth sense without which you cannot make use of the other five." His cynical simile holds in AGE OF RENAISSANCE,

a game where the winning player, as guiding light of one of six post-medieval trading powers, will quite literally buy his way to Enlightenment. Along the way he'll spend cash on twenty-five other cultural advances in the divergent fields of Science, Religion, Commerce, Communications, Exploration and Civics. Historical figures like St. Benedict play a part, but they are strictly bit players in this homage to mercantilism.

At its core, AGE OF RENAISSANCE closely resembles another popular Avalon

Hill title, CIVILIZATION. The major difference is geographic: the new game's map covers a larger expanse of the globe, and traded commodities (things like Wine, Metal and Silk) are produced in specific provinces. The Iberian Peninsula, for instance, comprises two Wool and two Wine provinces, plus one each of Silk, Metal and Grain.

As in CIVILIZATION, the more of a commodity a player controls, the larger the payoff. A situation in which six players

**The common commercial relationship of the Middle Ages is revealed in the word "company," which literally means "with bread." A family which broke bread together usually constituted a company's members.**

each possess one Wine province leads to a market seemingly dominated by screw-top caps: a pay-off of \$5 each, for a modest total of \$30. But if one player

controls all of those vineyards, the consumers must pay richly just to sniff the cork—the wine-baron rakes in a whopping \$180. What's being modeled, in short, is the same economic force that raised gas prices around here over Memorial Day weekend and gave rise to the Sherman Act about a century ago (monopoly pricing).

### THREE'S COMPANY

Most multi-player games lose something if a few chairs around the table are unfilled. AGE OF RENAISSANCE, however, can accommodate three to six players about equally well. That's no small feat, and the game accomplishes it with breathtaking ease. When more than three play, available play-space and play-money expand commensurately. It is like there is a built-in Federal Reserve working to keep playing-time stable. As you add players, turns take longer, but the added cash usually means you need fewer turns to finish a game.

The core of AGE OF RENAISSANCE is a contest between Italian Venice and Genoa and Iberian Barcelona. Each of them has a pretty good chance of winning, but Genoa, sandwiched between the other two, seems to be at a slight disadvantage. During the

first few times we played, initial token bids were the dominant concern. Buying fewer tokens lets the player go first, so he can stake out a few adjacent provinces of critical importance. With upper Europe out of play, an immediate conflict arises between Venice and Genoa over control of mainland Italy's four open provinces. Certain deal-making possibilities can make token-bidding less stressful. I advise Venice to offer the rights for the two southern Stone

### SEQUENCE OF PLAY

#### Setup:

Simultaneously write bids for capitals. Resolve ties with die roll. Record order of selection.

Simultaneously write allocation of cash and tokens to determine order of play for turn 1.

#### Turn Cycle:

First player may pay to remove Shortage/Surplus.

All players in order draw one card.

All players in order buy one card (with Urban Ascendancy) and discard (with Master of Art).

All players in order may play any number of cards.

Collect rebates (with Printed Word).

First leader is protected from Patronage.

Other leaders may be covered with licensing fees.

All players in order may purchase.

Limit of one ship upgrade per turn.

Advances may utilize advance credits and leader credits.

Must pay stabilization or misery for holding any cards.

All players in order expand out of capital or provinces already possessing markers.

May buy one card with tokens.

Roll each competition before next expansion move.

Determine which player gets expansion bonus card and flip newly-placed markers on map.

All players simultaneously collect interest and profit and new income.

Reduce misery (with New World).

Roll twice to determine Shortage/Surplus status.

Collect majority bonus for shortage and pay majority fine for surplus.

Is this the last turn?

Does anybody have all advances? Is the deck finished? Have you reached a time limit?

If yes, skip to Final Card Play Phase.

Simultaneously write allocation of cash and tokens to determine order of play for next turn.

Repeat the turn cycle.

#### Final Card Play Phase:

All players (in same order as final turn) play all cards remaining in hand.

Determine winner: add cash on hand to cost of advances possessed, subtract misery level.



This article would not have been possible without the thoughtful advice of John Walker and my cast of worthy opponents, chiefly the Barretts, Larry and Trevor, Jeff Behan, Bryant Hancock and the Grays, Brian and Monte. Sincere thanks to them all.

provinces in exchange for the Cloth and the remaining Stone province. Genoa should reluctantly accept this split, which gives both players a likely income base of five provinces going into turn 2, and secures for it Italy's boot for the important step across the water to Sicily and Tunis (and thence eastward to Egypt).

Genoa's other flank is a bit harder to shore up. Barcelona, which itself makes Wine, often bids low on tokens in order to seize the vineyards immediately west of Genoa. This happened twice in games we played. Each time it cost the Genoese any chance of victory. A little table-top diplomacy should once again be enough to avoid a potentially disastrous conflict. Explain that you know two things about *AGE OF RENAISSANCE*: 1) Genoa can't win if Barcelona goes too far north, and 2) Barcelona can't win if it forces Genoa to play the spoiler. Barcelona should buy this argument because, with no Iberian rival, on turn 1 it has more open territories than tokens to occupy them.

With this in mind, as I see it, the expected division of the central and western Mediterranean, by turn 3, is as follows. Barcelona controls eleven provinces: everything south and west of a line drawn between Bordeaux and Algiers. Venice has nine provinces: everything east of Milan/Florence that is along the north shore of the Mediterranean, including Crete. That leaves nine in the middle for Genoa.

The initial land-grab, based on proximity, is over. A race for the fourteen open provinces of the Black Sea and Near East now begins. More on this following a brief discussion of the initial concerns of the occupants of our remaining three chairs.

### MORE'S A CROWD

The fourth chair, Paris and its eleven provinces of Central Europe, tilts the balance of power. Venice is the only Mediterranean power in a position to gain any of the new territory, and its geographical advantage is widened if Paris presses southward against Genoa and Barcelona, usually taking a province from each. As a result, Venice begins in the best position to win a four-player game, followed closely by Paris, Barcelona and squeeze-prone Genoa. As in the three-player game, things should be tight during the

early expansion period, with each player likely to control anywhere from eight to eleven provinces (Near East and Black Sea excepted) by turn 3.

Things are still nicely balanced after London sits down. The new provinces, which number eight, are all our fifth player can count on in the early going, making him a little short on income. London's not a loser, though. It emerged victorious in both of our six-player games. Its chief advantage is early control of the Wool trade. Wool, the only commodity with two payoff cards in the Epoch 1 deck, is an important early source of extra income.



**After first appearing in 1455,  
15 to 20 million copies  
of the Gutenberg Bible were  
in print by 1550.**

With six players you add Hamburg—and after your first play through you may well wonder if it was worth the effort to punch out its counters. Since only six new provinces (along the Baltic) are added, Hamburg can compete only by taking territory away from Paris, its neighbor to the southwest. In games I've played, this has led to bare-knuckle boxing—excuse me,

“market competition”—in Central Europe, with both players so bloodied by the struggle that they quickly drop out of contention. We've concluded that it is imperative to reach some sort of understanding based on the common good. Drawing an initial line of demarcation at Nuremberg, which goes to Hamburg along with everything to the east, seems reasonable to us.

Even with such a truce, the outlook for Hamburg remains bleak. It has no natural commodity monopoly to rival London's Wool. More troubling is the fact that once Paris has purchased the Nationalism advance all deals are off. Then it becomes nearly impossible to hang on to anything in Central Europe. That land route to the Black Sea, which looks so promising, leads nowhere. Invariably, just before Hamburg completes its march down the Volga, someone else drops anchor in the Black Sea and registers a claim. Hamburg's principal mission, it seems, is to drag down powerful Paris to a position near itself at the bottom of the old world order. This grave insight, that the game's delicate balance is now top-



Procession in the Courtyard of the Ducal Palace, Venice, Gift of Mrs. Barbara Hutton, © 1997 Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington.

pled, lends a new urgency to initial capital bids. With fewer than six, since no player is at a clear disadvantage, I routinely bid zero tokens for capital selection and take what the others leave me. With six, not wanting to be stuck with Paris or Hamburg, I'm forced to up the ante—as is everyone else.

### ADVANCE AND COMPETE

As noted, for the first few turns play centers on a land grab, in the course of which the 54 provinces west of the Near East and Black Sea are divided, more-or-less evenly, among the six powers. In its aftermath the serious phase of overseas expansion begins, and the era of symmetrical growth ends. Never have we seen more than four players enter the Near East and Black Sea during Epoch 1, and often it's two who divide the pick of these fabulously rich territories. It's a safe bet that, sometime around turn 5, the richest player will be receiving roughly twice the income of the poorest. The early lead in *AGE OF RENAISSANCE* is almost always based on an income boost from overseas, so early strategies center on whether an attempt will be made to be one of the first to set sail.

Geography is destiny in the early going. This is no longer the case in the mid-game. Having staked out their immediate neighborhood, players are free to pursue a wide range of options as they buy one or more civilization advances each turn in order to gain a temporary advantage in some area (at the expense of another). As everyone who's played the game knows, advances are as much a part of the strategic terrain as the land and water. They also know that advance acquisition strategy depends greatly on context. I'll confine myself to outlining a trio of general plans that have been the foundation of early strategy in a number of our games.

The fast-start favorite centers on an attempt to obtain the Exploration advances as quickly as possible. By grabbing as much open territory as possible, the player avoids expensive conflicts while expanding his income. Only those able to reach the distant shores of the Near East can enter the race. Unless you're playing Venice or Genoa, the Seaworthy Vessels advance will be required. Somewhat fewer players will seek to be the first into the Black Sea region, because a second advance, Overland East, is needed to journey there.

These two key Exploration advances, usually purchased by one or more players on turn 3, serve to break the deadlock and establish the leader. Less dramatic, and far more expensive, are the advances purchased later in the game that allow travel to

the Far East and New World. Oceanic voyages can only establish one new province each turn—a pitiful growth spurt compared to the gain from being first into the Black Sea or Near East!

Exploration is fine and dandy, but woe betides the player who lacks religious values! While some of your rivals work on gaining their explorer's badge, you can complicate their lives considerably by starting a Religion "arms race." Often it's touched off by Venice and Genoa. By purchasing Holy Indulgence (which lets you take and use two tokens from players who don't own Holy Indulgence), the purchaser forces rivals to rethink the maritime strategy—and makes it easier for the Italians to



This Columbus Statue in Santo Domingo is but one of many dedicated to the great explorer.

row their short-ranged galleys to an early lead. In several games, I've been forced to choose between Holy Indulgence and Seaworthy Vessels during the pivotal turn 3. Lately, the fear of falling behind in the "grace race" has been winning out. In my experience, the player who passes on Holy Indulgence risks more than a few tokens. He also makes himself especially vulnerable to Religion's big gun, the Cathedral advance, which I guarantee will be bought by the first player who can afford it (since he'll then automatically win one attack per turn against each player without the advance).

A final general plan is grounded in the game's underlying profit motive. It's also

perfect for players who lean to the tortoise rather than the hare. Those who follow this strategy concentrate on thrift, attempting to maximize discounts on advances. The all-important Leader-card discounts are increased by Patronage, Written Record and Printed Word (*AGE OF RENAISSANCE* treats icons like Galileo as the Crazy Eddies of Progress). No less vital is Institutional Research, which earns a steady discount on advances in all areas except Religion.

As leaders of leading mercantile houses, players should easily recognize the advantage of this strategy: it maximizes profit, meaning more advances can be purchased for the same amount of cash. Less obvious is the disadvantage: players who pursue this rather benign strategy tend to fall behind in current income. *AGE OF RENAISSANCE* is unkind to players who fall behind in the middle of the game. The impecunious find themselves simply reacting to the advances purchased by the wealthy, which can be very frustrating. But the have-nots, by acting quickly and with solidarity, can narrow the income gap before it's too late. With nothing to lose but their gains, they must turn to market competition.

These mercantile struggles are at least quasi-military, with competition-affecting event cards that read Gunpowder and Armor (not "Secure Warehouses" or "Astute Managers"). The competition is aimed at forcing a province to change hands. When focused on the early leader(s), competition may bring the game back into balance. But whether it succeeds or fails, the short-run cost of competing will cause the player to lag a bit further behind. As I told the hounds nipping at my heels in a recent game, it's tough to purchase expensive advances when you're buying thirty tokens a turn for competition. In vain I advised against embarking on a mercantile Hundred Years War, but in the end there was just another early leader chopped into kindling. There were no hard feelings; we all knew that it was business, not personal.

### RISKY BUSINESS

Through market competition, *AGE OF RENAISSANCE* players do much more than just bring down the current leader. They also increase income and target specific commodities so as to maximize an upcoming payment. Good strategy is obvious. It doesn't take a genius to see that you should capture another Silk province before cashing the commodity card. Less transparent are good tactics, which consist of knowing when and where to strike.



# TRICKS AND TABOOS

## Getting the Edge in

# AGE OF RENAISSANCE

by Stuart K. Tucker

**M**ake no mistake about it. *AGE OF RENAISSANCE* is not a game that you can decipher in an afternoon. Sure, you'll understand the mechanical rules after one playing. You'll even be able to teach others *how* to do things in the next playing. However, even a master may have trouble explaining *why* he does things at a certain point in a given game. The crux of the difficulty is that the game contains a great many "trees" through which it is difficult to discern the forest. I'm not talking Timber commodities, here. The elegance of the design is that so many things in the game interact. In short, you must take each building block and piece together a rejuvenated city-state that reaches the pinnacle of western civilization at the end of the Middle Ages. Even Leonardo da Vinci would have trouble mastering this.

**When the Turks captured Constantinople in 1453 and closed down Venetian and Genoese trade routes through the Black Sea, an alternative route to India and China was needed, giving impetus to the financing of the Age of Exploration.**

This is not a subject that can be easily contained in a magazine treatise. In fact, recently when two good players tried to summarize all that they knew to matter most to a new player, they spent the good portion of a four-hour train ride doing so (and virtually never agreeing on the nuances). In fact, the discussion was very Hegelian, with Thesis and Antithesis being bandied about wildly. The next day, the novice still managed to fall desperately behind in the mid-game turns. Yet, something in their advice must have been correct and finally sunk in, as the novice began to see the light well enough to catch a lucky wave to a slender victory by 26 points. Meanwhile, his three opponents scratched their heads in bewilderment that finally they had witnessed a novice player win a first game. Surely, now the two advisors must have the formula, eh? I wouldn't bet real money on either of them in their next game. As the knowledge around the table deepens, so do the strategies and counter-

strategies. Masters of last Fall are now the downtrodden of this Spring. As surely as Synthesis won our last game, that Synthesis will become Thesis in the next, falling victim to an ever-continuing dialectical battle over how to counteract another player's winning strategies.

True masters of the game do not see themselves as such, because they see so many minor errors they make along the way—things that could have turned out better with but a slight adjustment here or a dollar more there. Indeed, to play this game well you must be a Renaissance man—talented in all phases of the game. I have seen

many an astounding lead evaporate, with the player puzzling over the event for hours, days and weeks afterward.

Meanwhile, his mistakes—so obvious to his competitors—

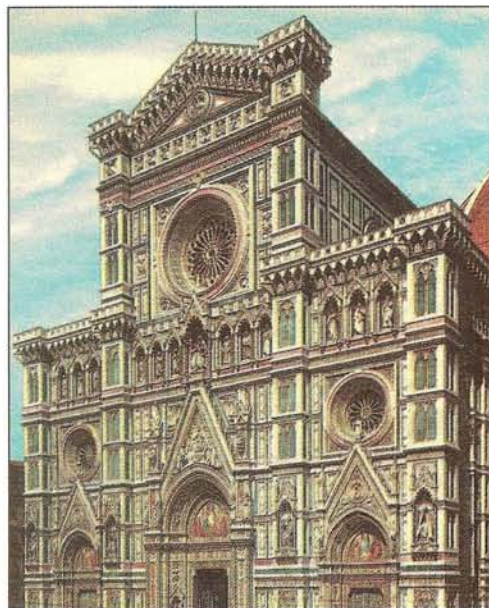
were minor compared to those committed by the rest. The game is a grand juggling act, in which you must try to keep the most important balls going, while hoping that the ones you must let fall do not slip under your feet and topple you.

I do not think that we will be seeing any "perfect plan" articles passing across my desk any time soon. Every winning strategy that I have seen employed has been easily countered in a later game. Part of the fascination of the game is trying to predict just which strategies are going to lead other players into dead ends and which will be end runs toward victory. In some sense, the best place for a novice to learn the game is among a set of very knowledgeable players. They will quickly compensate for the novice's weakness while trying to balance each other. While the game generally reinforces victory, good players know that fact well enough to begin their "counteract the leader" maneuvers early. In the end, the novice may actually have a good chance to win.

All of this makes article writing most difficult. As soon as you think you have the final Synthesis, somebody finds a way to beat it. Having been on that laborious train ride, I will not again try to "explain it all." I think it best to take a more reasonable objective of conveying to new players a number of the little tricks and taboos that are all part of winning the game. I make no pretense to say that all the "trees" below add up to a solid "forest." I forewarn you here that excessive concern for any of these will probably open you up to getting smacked by something else that matters more. Nonetheless, with mastery of these little gems, I think you will be in a better position to focus your mental concentration on the bigger picture.

### CRITICAL FOCUS

The early turns of expansion on a contiguous territorial level tend to throw newcomers into the wrong mindset. They begin to see the map as a series of national areas with boundaries that need to be negotiated. In fact, there is that obvious advance called Nationalism to reinforce this misconception. John Kisner's article in this issue con-



Cathedrals, beautiful for posterity, were a major symbol of power in the middle ages.

veys a similar set of ideas about the starting position of Hamburg, London and Paris. Yet, no matter how convenient those Area lines appear, you must not lose your focus on what is most critical to the game. Believe me, territorial continuity is meaningless. What matters more than territory is market domination of the most commodities having the best values and the highest probability of running shortages.

Therefore, the first thing to do is block out your sight to the main map—it is the least important visual reference point of the game. Far more important are the Commodity Log, the Income space on the Player Mat and the Misery Index. The Commodity Log tells you who is going to be making those big payoffs (in amounts growing on a geometric progression) and who stands to gain the most from shortages (both in terms of payoffs and free card draws). The number of missing domination markers from a Player Mat is a strong indicator of who is winning. A substantial portion of a player's game income and the critical portion for expansion is recorded right there on the player mat. That means you must surreptitiously keep a close eye on other people's mats. If you are into the second column and your opponent is into the third column of domination markers in stock, then you are probably losing. Finally, the Misery Index is not just a thermometer. It is a barometer with some predictive capacity. As players approach new thresholds of danger on it, you can be certain that they will be buying advances that help them most with fighting off the misery.

**RHYTHM METHOD**

It is rare that you want to be the third player to move in a four-player game. Your

attacks are at low odds and the fourth player with a little luck can come along and counteract your every move. While you'd love to move second with 30 tokens, you won't see that happen often.

The value of going first is clear: protected Personality play, commodity payoff before disaster strikes, low token cost, high attack success, first chance to buy an extra card with three tokens, expansion before losing a critical launching point.

The value of going last is also clear: purchase of advances after seeing enemy plans (great for catching heretics napping), ability to go after what others seemed to value most during their attacks, preservation of the secret of a hidden commodity that you plan to grab and cash, high number of tokens, ability to affect the distribution of the expansion bonus card through the direction of your attacks.

For the most part, you want to engage in a fairly ritualistic process of first moving last to expand where it matters, followed by moving first to cash the commodity before somebody decides to play a Rebellion or other disaster on you. As you move first, you also place a Personality in the protected box and spend as much money on advances as you can. Then you return to moving last next turn, as you will probably need to expand in a different direction to take advantage of new commodity card information. This is the natural rhythm of the game. Unfortunately,

with more than one opponent, this rhythm will be interrupted constantly by other players attempting to get into their own rhythm.

As you begin to master the game, you can then begin to spend time anticipating what other players are going to be bidding in an attempt to gain that 30-token expansion from the second slot. If you start by trying to outguess the players bidding 12 or 20 tokens, you are going to find the game frustrating. Nothing is much worse than moving last with ten tokens. The moral of the story for learners: bid high or bid low, but avoid the middle ground. Eventually you will see that good players try for mid-game expansion not from the last position, but from the

higher probability second or third positions with about 18 tokens. Before you can do this, however, you must have a steady stream of income and credits toward advances and a firm grasp of

how players are perceiving your chances for victory.

**SICILY IS MINE**

I know my name isn't etched on the map-board, but if I am Genoa, this is a fact of life. Let us consider the Famine card. Few people will swallow it for an Epoch. Count on it appearing three times in most games. It is a seemingly unguided disaster—an act of God for which nobody can be blamed, right? Wrong. Famine is man-made. All you need to do is control grain and have the Agriculture advance to counter it. Looking over the board, you should realize that all players have one within easy grasp. Except for the distant Kiev, any second Grain controlled will cost an opponent dearly. The player who easily gives up a presence in Grain production will find himself losing two or three boxes of misery compared to his wily opponent. Multiply that by the two or three epochs in which the card is played and slowly but surely the Grain-deficient player will be a good 400 or more points behind due to the Misery index.

Unfortunately for Genoa, his "natural" grain basket is not going to fall into his hands nor stay in them easily. Venice and even Barcelona are capable of getting to Sicily first. Everybody sees Sicily as their second Grain province when they are looking at a Famine card in their hand. Sicily is a small province with little defense. Adding

**The full-rigged ships (the carrack), magnetic compass and gunpowder of the 16th Century combine to make colonization an easier enterprise than experienced by the 11th Century Newfoundland colony of the Viking explorers.**

**EVENT CARDS IN THE HISTORY DECK**

	<u>General Disasters</u>	<u>Targeted Disasters</u>	<u>Military Advantages</u>	<u>Other Advantages</u>
Epoch 1 (one-time)			Armor* Stirrups*	
Epoch 1 (recycled)	Famine Revolutionary Uprisings Mysticism#	War Pirates/Vikings Rebellion Civil War Papal Decree* Alchemist's Gold#		The Crusades* Enlightened Ruler
Epoch 2 (one-time)			Gunpowder Long Bow	Mongol Armies
Epoch 2 (recycled)	Religious Strife	Black Death		

Notes: General disasters affect misery levels of all players, though rarely equally. Targeted disasters are usually aimed at a specific player, but the effects may spill over (negatively or positively) to the card player as well. Military and Other Advantages help only the card player, but may have negative effects upon other players as well.  
 \*Can become an unplayable misery burden through the play of another card.  
 #Can become an unplayable misery burden through purchases of advances.

# ZONE OF CONTROL

NR. 9

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We dedicate this issue to the memory of  
John J. Bowen (1927-1996)

Here's an explanation of how **ZOC** scores a game's complexity and general quality:

## COMPLEXITY

Two ratings are used to describe a game's complexity. The first, Size, is based on physical size (so the more counters or mapsheets the game uses, the higher the number). The second, System, is an assessment of how hard the game mechanics are to learn (this score is mostly based on the size of the rulebook). The sum of these two ratings is used to divide games into categories on the rating chart printed on this page.



## GAME REVIEW ABSTRACT (GRA)

In each of the following (GRA) categories we use an ascending subjective scale of 1-5:

"Look" is rated on aesthetic grounds.

"Utility" rates the component design's impact on ease of play.

"Rules" are rated for completeness, organization, and presentation.

"Game" rates fun and replay value.

"Simulation" assesses realism and detail.

"Innovation" scores inventiveness, novelty, and new combinations of old ideas.

"Solitaire" rates the degree to which solo play is possible.

## FORMAT NOTES

TAHGC game titles are displayed in *ITALICIZED CAPS*. Other game titles are in *ITALICIZED SMALL CAPS*. Series titles are *italicized*.



Welcome to our first installment for *The GENERAL* (our ninth issue in all). Those of you new to **ZOC** may find our rating system bewildering, so it's with you in mind that, for comparative reference, we present the chart below. It groups games in categories based on our rather arcane complexity scoring system. (Note the last grouping, CX-\*, is a catch-all for modules and expansions.) Only the top

six games in each category are shown, with rankings based on a combination of reviewer and reader opinion (the latter was obtained via survey forms returned from **ZOC** subscribers). As you can see by the all-important "Average" scores, there seems to be a bias against simple games. This chart corrects for that, allowing the cream in each category to rise to the top.



CX 11+ (Hardest)	Company	Year	Readers	Score-R	Issue	Score-Z	Solo	Sz	Sys	Average
Black Wednesday	Gamers	'95	22%	4.6	#5	4.7	Av	3.8	8.2	4.61
Tunisia	Gamers	'95	32%	4.6	#5	4.3	Av	3.4	7.6	4.60
Hube's Pocket	Gamers	'96	34%	4.6	#8	4.3	Gd	4.4	7.0	4.54
For Whom the Bell Tolls	GR/D	'95	13%	4.4	#6	4.5	Ex	4.2	10.5	4.45
Alexander II	GMT	'95	18%	4.3	#4	4.7	Gd	4.1	7.6	4.39
Zorndorf	COA	'96	20%	4.5	#8	3.8	Fr	3.2	8.7	4.34

CX 9-10 (Harder)	Company	Year	Readers	Score-R	Issue	Score-Z	Solo	Sz	Sys	Average
Leros	Gamers	'95	16%	4.5	#7	4.8	Ex	3.4	6.6	4.62
GD '41	Gamers	'96	33%	4.6	#9	4.5	Fr	3.5	6.3	4.56
Stonewall in the Valley	AH	'95	32%	4.4	#4	4.7	Ex	3.3	6.6	4.48
Hunters From The Sky	Gamers	'94	20%	4.4	#3	4.0	Gd	3.4	6.8	4.28
Great War in Europe	Command	'95	44%	4.4	#5	3.7	Fr	4.0	5.0	4.28
Corunna	COA	'95	13%	4.3	#7	4.2	Gd	2.9	7.0	4.25

CX 7-8 (Hard)	Company	Year	Readers	Score-R	Issue	Score-Z	Solo	Sz	Sys	Average
Krieg!	Decision	'96	16%	4.4	#9	4.5	Pr	2.8	6.0	4.40
Yom Kippur	Gamers	'95	32%	4.4	#5	4.2	Gd	2.2	4.8	4.34
The King's War	COA	'95	8%	4.1	#7	4.3	Av	2.5	5.0	4.22
Marengo	Gamers	'95	27%	4.3	#6	4.0	Gd	2.2	5.6	4.22
Ring of Fire	MiH	'94	24%	4.1	#1	4.2	Gd	2.4	5.3	4.14
Jena	COA	'96	20%	4.2	#9	4.0	Av	3.2	5.4	4.12

CX 5-6 (Easy)	Company	Year	Readers	Score-R	Issue	Score-Z	Solo	Sz	Sys	Average
Hannibal	AH	'96	25%	4.2	#7	4.3	Pr	2.6	3.7	4.24
Glory	GMT	'96	40%	4.1	#7	4.2	Av	2.8	4.1	4.09
Great War in Near East	Command	'96	37%	4.0	#7	4.0	Av	2.0	4.5	3.99
London's Burning	AH	'96	18%	3.9	#7	3.8	Ex	2.0	4.0	3.88
Guerilla	AH	'94	10%	3.6	#1	4.2	Pr	2.5	2.8	3.81
Eagles	Columbia	'95	10%	4.0	#7	3.5	Pr	4.0	1.9	3.81

CX 3-4 (Introductory)	Company	Year	Readers	Score-R	Issue	Score-Z	Solo	Sz	Sys	Average
Redline Korea	GameFix	'95	22%	3.1	#4	4.0	Av	1.4	2.8	3.33
Thapsos	GameFix	'94	11%	2.8	#1	4.0	Av	0.8	2.2	3.23
Winceby	GameFix	'95	14%	3.2	#4	3.2	Av	1.2	3.2	3.20
Greenline Chechnya	GameFix	'95	16%	3.0	#6	3.8	Gd	1.4	2.8	3.20
Across Suez	Decision	'95	7%	3.2	#5	3.0	Gd	1.8	2.4	3.10
Alexandria	GameFix	'94	13%	2.9	#1	3.3	Av	0.9	2.2	3.05

CX-* (Modules)	Company	Year	Readers	Score-R	Issue	Score-Z	Solo	Average
Dictator	GMT	'95	23%	4.4	#4	3.8	Gd	4.29
Eighth Air Force	GMT	'95	8%	4.5	#5	4.0	Av	4.29
EuroFront	Columbia	'95	4%	3.9	#7	4.2	Fr	4.04
KG Peiper II	AH	'96	13%	4.0	#7	3.8	Fr	3.98
Wavre	COA	'94	8%	3.9	#3	3.8	Av	3.86
Solitaire ASL	AH	'95	16%	4.0	#5	3.5	Ex	3.83

Notes — "Readers" is the percentage of respondents that rated the game and "Score-R" the average rating given. (Our three survey samples numbered 97, 160, and 164.) "Issue" references when the game was reviewed and "Score-Z" the average of six primary GRA scores assigned therein. "Solo" and complexity ratings ("Sz" is

Size and "Sys" is System) are given in the next columns. The final column, "Average," combines the two scores (R and Z) using a weighted formula:

$$\frac{(\text{Readers} * \text{Score-R}) + (6\% * \text{Score-Z})}{(\text{Readers} + 6\%)}$$



Some games are tough to get a handle on. Those powerful turn-flips in *GREAT WAR IN EUROPE* seem to make it nigh impossible to save France from total defeat. Absent a grasp of *EUROPA*'s armor rules, Germany's vaunted panzers could be stopped along the Russo-German frontier. Those games, and others like them, have served me many a mouthful of humble pie. But the taste always leaves me eager for more.

That's a large part of the hobby's appeal. Each new system and situation is a puzzle to be solved—some more puzzling than others. Take *Clash of Arms' JENA* for instance, a close relative to *L'ARMEE DU NORD*. One isn't even sure

what to call it: "Jena" according to the box, but everything inside uses "Iéna" for this simulation of the campaign in which Prussia's knee was bent to Napoleon in late 1806. More important, the design models combat in a radical new way, one that, until you're comfortable with it, might test your humility.

With most games, you set up the components. This one sets *you* up. It ranks among the best-looking games ever published, which certainly makes you want to start playing right away. *JENA* covers a long table, with its three maps, but you know it's hardly a monster with just 420 counters (many of them markers). A glance at the rules confirms you can get quickly into action: only sixteen pages, including the scenarios! The only thing that might slow you down is the hard-to-read cursive script on the game map, which slows setup the first time. In sum, *JENA* fits very comfortably into the popular 'little monster' niche.



Morale in *JENA* is modeled with the familiar *JENGA*-like approach: as with wooden pieces pulled from the structure in the popular parlor game, unit casualties have only minor effect until, suddenly, an entire corps collapses. Manpower is treated as a finite resource that should not be spent recklessly.

Demoralization affects the two sides differently. For France, its consequences are trifling: the corps becomes a little harder to activate each turn but otherwise fights on normally. The effect is much heavier on a Prussian corps or division: all its remaining brigades and battalions disappear from the map, just as if they were destroyed in combat!

In this system units burn quickly, disappearing without a trace—especially the kindling under Prince Höhenlohe when touched by a spark from Napoleon's initial north-bound bolt. Fortunately for them, in this game, death is just a temporary condition. According to the designer, that is because units totally "eliminated" in combat are actually suffering only modestly in life and limb. A shattered cadre survives from which the unit can be reformed. The French player sometimes questions the point of fighting: the enemy formations swarm back almost as fast as he kills them, because stays in the deadpile are so brief.

What liberates the French, and the game, from entropy? With experience, players realize that in *JENA* land equals losses in the demoralization equation. It is not simply a case of "lose your capital and lose the war"—that is, army morale isn't directly tied to loss of important cities. Instead, designer Ed Wimble has linked geography to the ability to recover lost combat steps.

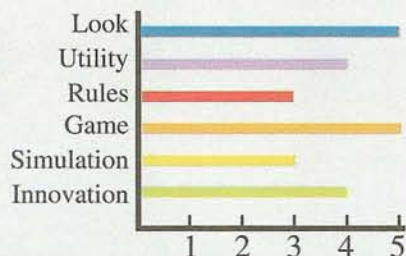
It works like this. Rivers divide the maps into seven areas called reorganization zones. A demoralized corps may only recover losses in a "pure" zone, and the presence of even a single enemy unit effectively pollutes an entire zone. Only if a player (usually the Prussian) gets

#### WANT THE BACK ISSUES?

A typical back issue of *ZOC* contains sixty pages of reviews and essays. They're now just \$5 each, which includes shipping to the USA or Canada (add \$1 per issue for overseas orders). Send a check or credit card information to John Kisner at 1914 40th Place, Des Moines, IA 50310. (Phone (515-277-8920) or e-mail [zoc@earthlink.net](mailto:zoc@earthlink.net).) Some issues are in short supply, so order today!

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 #2: *PROUD MONSTER*.  
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 #4: *STONEWALL IN THE VALLEY*.  
 #5: *CRISIS: SINAI 1973*.  
 #6: *THREE DAYS OF GETTYSBURG*.  
 #7: *INDO-PAKISTANI WARS*.  
 #8: *HANNIBAL*.

#### GAME REVIEW ABSTRACT



backed into a corner does he actually start burying the dead (at least as far as this game is concerned). So, there are two kinds of military geography—and that marked by hexagons (showing woods and forts and the like) has less effect on victory than the abstract recovery zones.

The innovative linkage of land, losses and morale is well-suited to this campaign, a classic meeting engagement. *JENA* begins with multiple French columns entering along the south map edge. Höhenlohe's army faces them, outnumbered and spread just as thin. This, the easternmost of three Prussian armies (two others begin a few day's march off-map near Erfurt), must delay

Napoleon long enough to allow a concentration, usually near the town of Jena.

In the days leading to the grand battle, some units must operate independently. This will test the initiative (as rated by the designer) of the senior piece-of-card-board present. Just as challenged will be the Prussian player, as he orchestrates troops whose frequent command breakdowns add new meaning to the phrase "delaying action."

What we have here is a unique gaming experience. A potential drawback is the twenty hours required to re-enact the full week of maneuvers prior to the Jena-Auerstadt battles. For those with limited

leisure time (or table size), five small scenarios are included that cover just a day of fighting (with the emphasis on *fighting*). They're not be as compelling as the entire campaign, but at least they can be played in a single evening.



Ed Wimble earns his marshal's baton with this masterful creation, a delight for both eye and mind. At first the core demoralization abstraction was a tough swallow. But even this dyspeptic grognard soon recognized *JENA* as remarkably suited to gourmets and gourmands alike. Assuming, that is, they don't mind having a little pie for dessert.



## Annotated Sequence

There are eight turns per day, most of which are modified by one or more special conditions (e.g., each day's first turn is Mist and Orders). Summarized below are the effects of each condition, as well as the number of such turns per day.

**Normal (4).** Permits unrestricted movement and reorganization.

**Mist (1).** Occurs at dawn. Units must use road column movement. Attacks and cavalry charges are possible, but not bombardment.

**Night (2).** No combat of any kind occurs. Movement is possible only via roads. Units may not move next to the enemy.

**Force-March Only (3).** On the twilight and both night turns units must "force march" to move, which usually requires a modified leader-initiative check.

**Orders (2).** At dawn and tea-time new "orders" may be given to independent Prussian divisions. A marker is placed in a hex; the unit can then march toward that hex without meeting normal command restrictions.

Because of these far-reaching effects on movement and combat, each day's eight turns feel

much like the distinct phases in a traditional structure. The dissonant rhythm is hard to remember, but success demands you keep in mind what restrictions apply to the turn ahead.

### Pre-Turn

**Reorganization:** Twice each day units that meet certain criteria may recover losses.

**Disengagement:** Prior to each Night turn adjacent units, excepting those in forts or behind rivers, must disengage by moving back a hex.

### French Player Turn

**Command Phase:** Without command a unit cannot move. Two methods may be used to gain command: a traditional "chain" approach and initiative die-rolls. Napoleon's command ability extends out to corps leaders within three hexes (roads count as 1/2). These leaders then pass command to combat units within two hexes. Leaders and individual units beyond the chain of command must roll for initiative. Even the best subordinates lack *some* conviction in this model, and on average success is a 50:50 proposition.

**Movement Phase:** With three maps to maneuver across, units spend a lot of time marching in road column. The extra speed is welcome, but not the stacking

problem. If a unit travels via road or bridge, it cannot end its move stacked with any other unit. This makes it tough to give battle on the fly, at least if you're hoping for better than 1:1 odds.

Two special rules govern cavalry. It conducts charge attacks during movement, which is the only way to drive away a screening force prior to regular combat. Cavalry units (plus artillery stationed in a fort) are also special in that they have a ZOC, the effect of which is to lock enemy units in place and forestall enemy cavalry charges.

**Combat Phase:** The phasing player bombards, attacks, then possibly performs breakthrough combat. The latter occurs after units advance after combat; they get to "roll up the enemy line" attacking another stack.

### Prussian Player Turn

**Command Phase:** The Prussian command structure differs from the French. The "orders" we mentioned earlier are important, because Prussian independent divisions have little "initiative" (one-sixth chance) of which to speak. Prussian *corps* are better at detached operations, but still not as dazzling as the French. For this reason it is a relief that Prussian light infantry and cavalry units are always in command. (A home-turf advantage, I

suppose, since French units have this ability.)

### Movement and Combat Phases

**Off-Board Movement Phase:** Over half the Prussian army begins the game off-map to the west. A series of connected boxes allows them to vary slightly their map-edge destination, but for the most part the process is useful only insofar as it randomizes arrival times in a way that keeps only the French player in the dark.

JENA  
Size 3.2 • System 5.4  
Solo "Good"

SCALE  
2 hours per turn  
1000 meters per hex

PUBLISHER  
Clash of Arms  
The Byrne Building #205  
Lincoln & Morgan Streets  
Phoenixville, PA 19460

DESIGN  
Ed Wimble

GRAPHICS  
Rick Barber and Paul Dangel

COMPONENTS  
Three 22" x 34" map, one  
off-board movement track,  
420 counters, 28-page  
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# Letters



## Within a Year or Two

"... *The Series Replay* in this issue represents the maximum amount of space we can devote to 'The Game' and probably won't be replicated within a year or two..."—Stuart K. Tucker, volume 31, number 3, page 19.

It appears that quite a number of readers have misinterpreted this passage. Our policy remains unwavering: we will continue to publish two ASL scenarios and at least one article in each issue. You will recall that the quoted statement led more than 17 pages of ASL material (a lengthy series replay, two articles and two scenarios).—SKT

When ASL coverage becomes a priority, I'll re-subscribe. Until there is consistent quality ASL coverage, I'll look through *The GENERAL* at the hobby shop before buying it.

—Tom Alzenshi

*The GENERAL's* new look marks the end of an era. I understand the need for the change, but it is a bit depressing nevertheless. Great graphics for the SASL series replay! Please don't let the new emphasis on computer gaming impinge on ASL space!

—Robert Banozic, Chicago, IL

## New Look

I read about the changes in *The GENERAL* on the AH Web Site. . . This is the first time in awhile that I am really anticipating its arrival at the local game store. The only thing that would make me happier would be to double its size or turn it into a monthly publication.

—Jim Pulles, cyberspace

As of last issue, I was not going to renew my subscription to *The GENERAL*. There just was not enough of interest to keep me. I'm not a multi-player gamer, can't stand computers nor their games, don't want to be sucked into the ASL black hole, and have trouble finding players for the older games. But, despite all this, I gave you a try for a year. The real reason I wasn't going to renew, however, was because of seeming Avalon Hill arrogance: "There aren't any other wargame companies out there, but if there were, we'd ignore them." Your editorship is obviously bringing that attitude to a close. I saw an advertisement in Volume 31, number 3 for *Europa* games! And I hear that you'll be incorporating a shortened version of *Zone Of Control*. Without doubt, ZOC was my favorite wargame magazine. Stuart, you are once again trying to make *The GENERAL* a great magazine for the hobby as a whole, and not just a company "rag." Your love of the hobby is showing through, and I wish to renew my subscription to honor your endeavors.

—Will Volny, cyberspace

The new look of *The GENERAL* is outstanding!! I also appreciate the coverage given to the rest of the industry.

—John, cyberspace

I am very disappointed with the fact that now you are accepting outside advertising as well as reviewing outside games.

—Alexander Brandt, cyberspace

I have respected (and subscribed) to *The GENERAL* because it has always been a serious wargaming magazine (which still knew how to have fun). I have no difficulty with the mix of articles, they remain at the same excellent standard I have always been used to. I just find the current graphic layout unappealing and pandering to the new, younger reader at the expense of us old luddites.

—Darren Kerr, Canberra, Australia

Bring back the mailing cover.

—well, quite a few people have written this.

I have been impressed by the last few issues and will renew. . . Like too many ASLers, I have abandoned the other games, and look forward to the new ASL scenarios and articles. Unlike too many ASLers, I also enjoy reading articles on games I probably never will play. *The GENERAL* is, and should be, a forum for all games. Those who wish for more coverage of their favorite games should submit an article along with their opinion.

—Jay Long, Honolulu, HI

What hobby magazine editor can resist publishing a letter with a sentence like this last one?—SKT

I was pleasantly surprised to see the ads and article on another company's game. I think it is a good decision and should strengthen the magazine. I was also a little apprehensive. I remember when certain computer magazines which had billed themselves as "strategy game-oriented" expanded their coverage to include other genres. I no longer subscribe to them. I will continue to subscribe to *The GENERAL* as long as you don't start calling games like *Doom* strategy games.

—Mark McGeehan, cyberspace

Despite a fascination in the computer industry with first-person, real-time games, I have a hard time seeing them as "strategy" games. They are not necessarily thoughtless, but they still don't involve the kind of strategic planning that our readership craves and they often involve more finger than mental agility. Such games will not be covered.—SKT

## Demo the Games

The magazine looks better, and more appealing to others. I think *The GENERAL*

should keep the same format, but also focus on beginners. If you try to learn older games (like *CIV*), it's hard to find articles on strategy and concepts, because it is not new.

The new games (like *AGE OF RENAISSANCE*) look much more appealing on the shelves, and computer games are definitely improving. It's time *The GENERAL* opened up to computer games and other companies, because the market is expanding. Just remember, keep the magazine centered on board-games. Finally, I think something could be done to better promote TAHGC games. Barely any of my friends have heard of them, but they really enjoy multi-player games. If tournaments were set up at local games stores (lots of kids playing *Magic* have the time to enjoy a game of *KINGMAKER*) and people could come in and learn, they would play more often.

—John Stanton-Geddes, 15-year-old, St. Louis, MO

One of the better local stores in my area not only has table space for in-store play but also runs demonstration games frequently to give his clientele a look inside the box. I engaged in a little "mini-tour" in late June, demoing PRINCESS RYAN'S STAR MARINES in stores. If more of us who are knowledgeable about games would coordinate with stores, perhaps we could re-invigorate the hobby. All too often the game store clerk only knows a handful of card games. To assist with this demonstration "gap," TAHGC has begun to put "quick-start" rules inside our boardgames.—SKT

## Tournament Shy

All these years, I thought your tournaments were only for really good to excellent players. However, last year, I finally attended AvalonCon with my now son-in-law; and we had a ball. You really should let people know that it is for everyone, and even average players such as myself have fun and even receive encouragement and sometimes tips from opponents—unbelievable sportsmanship.

—Michael A. Mullins, Gaithersburg, MD

## Game Raves

The PEGASUS BRIDGE module is exactly what I hoped for and wanted! . . . Please keep these historical modules coming!

—Jeff Harris, cyberspace

I just got the HISTORY OF THE WORLD CD and I think it is great. The game plays smooth and quick. I think you have a winner. Now get to work on putting AGE OF RENAISSANCE and BREAKOUT: NORMANDY on computer.

—Dennis Nicholson, Pawling, NY

**AR:** FTF opponents wanted in N.E. AR, S.E. MO, or W. TN. I play ASL and many other titles. I know you're out there. Accept the challenge! William R. Sanders, PO Box 1301, Jonesboro, AR 72403-1301, (870) 931-0158.

**CA:** Experienced player seeks others at any/all levels of ability for FTF ASL. Your choice DYO or published scenarios. Earl J. Ryan, ASL Military Tactics Instructor, PO Box 0398, Corona, CA 91718, (909) 736-RYAN.

**CO:** Experienced gamer seeks opponents for face-to-face play in the Denver area. I play almost anything. David Newport, 9821 W. Vassar Way, Lakewood, CO 80227, (303) 987-0738.

**FL:** PBM opponents wanted SL thru GI, James Woolsey, 2803 NE 6th Ln., Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33334, (954) 563-5192.

**FL:** PBM or FTF opponents wanted for SL thru GI; PL and TLD. James Woolsey, 3740 NE 4th Ter., Pompano Beach, FL 33064, (954) 783-5864.

**IL:** REN PBM league forming. Area rated play over 8-10 months. 4-week turn-around. No Fee. PBM rules available from Jared Scarborough, #1 Scarborough Rd., Payson, IL 62360-9743.

**IN:** Adult players in Indy area for Dune. Stephen Grubb, 528 Central Ct. N., Indianapolis, IN, 46205, (317) 925-2522 or E-mail: stephenkg@aol.com.

**IN:** FTF in Lafayette area. Will play most historical games. Carl W. Schwamberger, 1212 N. 18th St., Lafayette, IN 47904, (765) 742-0998.

**MD:** Average player, loves AHGC products, seeking others to form FTF once a month club. Willing to learn/play any, have: CAE, HWD, HCR, WTP, RBN, others. Michael Mullins, 12136 Suffolk Terr., Gaithersburg, MD 20878, (301) 926-3939.

**MD:** FTF SL, COI, COD, RC, AOC. Harry Deares, 34 Carling Cir., Lansdowne, MD 21227, (410) 247-2146.

**ME:** Desperately need Paydirt Team Charts from '74 and '75, then called Sports Illustrated Pro Football. Note: 1974 team charts/game will have a 1975 copyright, and '75 will have '76. Will pay generously. Peter Vorias, 48 E. Grand Ave., O.O.B., ME 04064, (207) 934-2286.

**MN:** I would like to join a PBM Pro Football League. Richard Smith, 1764 Dayton Ave., St. Paul, MN 55104.

**NJ:** Wanted: games or parts for G77. Also FTF of GOA, TRC and G77. Jim Chambers, 87 Candace La., Chatham, NJ 07928.

**NJ:** Adult FTF opponents wanted in New York city area. SL, UPF, DIP, ACV, RTG or computer games. Own many more. E-mail: draconius1@june.com. David D. VanderWerf, 133-135 Morris St., Apt. Rear 2R, Jersey City, NJ 07302.

**NY:** "Voici Bonaparte! Sauve que peut!" Looking for a few brave monarchs to play EIA. Come on! It's DIP with twice the action! WIF, GQ also. Kevin M. DeVita, 5 Prospect St., Central Islip, NY 11722, (516) 234-6554.

**NY:** FTF HRC, 1776, REN, LBG, MAC, PBM MAC(1980)—9 players needed FTF TRI, miniatures: micro-

# Opponents Wanted

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armor, ancient renaissance. Seeking Baron's Desert Tracks. Stuart J. Schoenberger, POB 510, Jamaica, NY 11435-0510, (718) 523-4493.

**NY:** AFK and TP:S opponent wanted for FTF or PBM play. Tony Burnet, Box 1472, Massapequa, NY 11758, (516) 731-4354.

**NY:** WWII hobbyist seeks opponents for most WWII simulations. Contact Ray Joel, 30 Gemini Cir., Rochester, NY 14606, (716) 247-6943.

**OK:** Veteran GM seeks players for postal 3R4. Deadlines will be used and enforced. Three-player format. John Michalski, PO Box 60665, Oklahoma City, OK 73146. AJMichalski@CompuServe.com.

**PA:** Opponents wanted for GSL and KTA games. Write tonight to Joyce Byers, 3343 Webster Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15219 USA.

**TX:** Central Texas ASL club. We are active and fanatic. Call Matt Shostak evenings at (512) 280-8414. Matthew Shostak, 11027 Watchful Fox Dr., Austin, TX 78748.

**TX:** Veteran Gamer with 20+ yrs. experience seeks players for GM'd PBM/PBEM MID '64, VITP. Also need opponents for PBM VITP, PZL, SL-GI series. fast mailing turn-arounds! Nick Harmon, 2216 Castle Dr., League City, TX 77573, (281) 332-0309.

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## CLUBS

**AZ:** Phoenix Wargaming Club holds monthly Saturday meetings. Call for more info. Club now has twelve members. Adults only. Warren T. Day, 3635 E. Bloomfield, Phoenix, AZ 85032 867-8195/404-2955.

**CA:** The Tri-Valley Boardgamers Club meets every other Wednesday night from 7-11 pm in Pleasanton, CA. Contact Mark Johnson at (510) 424-5813 or johnson@ccnet.com or www.ccnet.com/~johnson. Charles Ryder, 448 Alegra Terr., Milpitas, CA 95035-2445, (408) 945-1450.

**CO:** Volunteers needed to join the glorious ranks of the Colorado COMMISSARY, the area's most fun-loving game club. Contact Scott Johnson, 2039 Shiloh Dr., Castle Rock, CO 80104, (303) 660-2029.

**FL:** Join our growing gaming group in Sarasota, FL. For more info call Mike Bakken at (941) 355-3429, e-mail: M.BAKKEN@GENIE.GEIS.COM. 5016 Medalist Rd., Sarasota, FL 34243.

**IL:** Windy city wargamers meet 4 times a month. We play it all; ASL, A3R, VIP, DIP, monthly newsletter with ASL, VIP and DIP games. Louie Tokarz, 5724 W. 106 St., Chicago Ridge, IL 60415, (708) 857-7060.

**MA:** Vanguard Hobby Club meets first Saturday of each month. Over 50 members. Historical board games, miniatures, role-playing and cards. Michael Powell, Easton, MA. Call (508) 324-9815 after 7.

**MD:** MN twin cities ASL Club meets the second Saturday of each month. All levels of play welcome. Call for more info. Greg Dahl, Eagan, MN 55123, (612) 778-7488.

**MN:** Volunteers needed to join the glorious ranks of the Colorado COMMISSARY, the area's most fun-loving game club. Contact Scott Johnson, 2039 Shiloh Dr., Castle Rock, CO 80104, (303) 660-2029.

**NC:** PAW, The Piedmont Area Wargamers is recruiting ASL players in the NC Triad area. All levels of play welcome. Call for more information. Contact Doug Maston, 4 Three Meadows Ct., Greensboro, NC 27455, (910) 282-0552.

**NH:** Nashua, LeMarshallate, a 20-year-old wargaming club looking for new members. Meetings in Nashua on the 3rd Sat. of month. Call (603) 428-7037 or write to PO Box 221, Henniker, NH 03242.

**NJ:** Jersey Assn. of Wargamers. Meets twice monthly, one Sat., one Sun. in Park Ridge, NJ 1:00 pm-12:00 am. Historical Miniatures and Boardgames. (201) 427-8340 for dates and events, or contact Dan Foley at (914) 638-1136 or Bob Dwyer @73642.3620@compuserve.com. JAG, PO Box 167, Waldwick, NJ 07463-0167.

**NY:** Metropolitan Wargamers Club Brooklyn boasts its own 2000 square foot loft for boardgames and miniatures. Safe location near subway, ample parking, open every weekend. Joe Brophy, 16 Beachfront La., New Rochelle, NY 10805, (914) 636-6317 (eve.)

**NY:** Mid-Hudson Area Wargaming Society (MAWS). We meet monthly in the Poughkeepsie, NY area and play many different wargames (no RPG's). Beginners are welcome. Contact Barry Smith at (914) 778-5440. 104676.1161@compuserve.com, or 9E Squire Vlg. Walden, NY 12586.

**PA:** Central PA Strategists Club. Meetings are held 9:30 to 5 on the 2nd and 4th Sat. of every month at the East Shore (Colonial Park) branch of the Dauphin County Library just outside Harrisburg. Call Charles Hickok at (717) 599-5603.

**SC:** Chas. Lowcountry Wargamers, 113 Wisteria Rd., Goose Creek, SC 29445, 553-0987.

**TX:** ASL club meets regularly to play the best game in the world. Call Matt at (512) 280-8414. Matt Shostak, 11027 Watchful Fox Dr., Austin, TX 78748.

**UT:** Looking to start a game club in SLC area. Contact John Pack at (801) 523-0571. FTF most any AH game. John R. Pack, 1216 E. Tanova St., Sandy, UT 84097.

**VA:** Sunday Board Games at Fantastix on Broad Street, 12-5 pm. Acquire, ABN, 1830, MOV, RBN. Brought to you by Rage-Richmond area gaming enthusiasts. Jack Jaeger, 9518 Drayton Cir., Glen Allen, VA 23060.

## FOREIGN

**Canada:** Winnipeg ASL Club, Winnipeg, MB Canada. Contact: Jim McLeod, Tel: (204) 783-3649, E-Mail: j.mcleod15@genie.com, any and all ASL players welcome.

**Canada:** Opponent wanted for ASL, UF or Submarine, Rene Hunker, 4532 S.E. Marine Dr., Burnaby, BC V5J 3G2, (604) 433-6332.

**Japan:** AHKS Asia-Australasia PBM Games: DIP, CDP, BRI, REN, CIV, EIA, GER, MAH, ROR, COLD. Kevin Burns, 2659-4 Tsukahara, Minami Ashigara Shi, Kanagawa 250-01 Japan.

**Japan:** Japans international gamers guild PBM games: CDP, CWR, DIP, Junta, Samurai, 1812, 1759. GER Kevin Burns, 2659-4 Tsukahara, Minami, Ashigara Shi, Kanagawa, 250-01 Japan.

**The Netherlands:** Gaming organization "Het Duivelsei". Srecko Suznjevic. My Email is ssuznjev@wi.leidenuniv.nl.

Our Homepage is at: <http://www.wi.leidenuniv.nl/~ssuznjev/DuivelsELhtml>

## FOR SALE

**CA:** Attn. Collectors. Big change moving overseas. Can't take my 30 year collection. All companies. Send SASE for list. Steve Harper, 2861 Woodsorrel Dr., Chino Hills, CA 91709.

**CA:** GBG 58 ALL original components remain and in good shape. Counters in "B" condition, despite the years. Original box lid is only split at two corners. Eric Houlberg, 742 Avenida Loma Portal, Newbury Park, CA 91320.

**MD:** 100+ games classic to recent, mostly mint. Send 32 cent stamp to: Lawrence Burman, 2824 Maryland Ave., Baltimore, MD 21218.

**NV:** Many discontinued AH games for sale. You name it, I probably have it. Please send SASE for complete list to: Bruce Nelson, 1309 Rainbow Meadows, Las Vegas, NV 89128.

**PA:** Old war games wanted. Have out-of-print AH games for sale. K. Simon, 206 Whitestone Rd., Kennett Sq., PA 19348.

**PA:** Many AH games for sale. Out of print, unpunched. SASE for list. Henry W. Jones, 117 Loch Shin Dr., Moon Twp., PA 15108

**TX:** AH games, SPI, Vaquinto, other out-of-print games. Send SASE for list. Wesley McCoy, 701 Garden Meadow Dr., Georgetown, TX 78628.

**WA:** Six circa 1970 AH war games for sale: BZK, Bismarck, GBG, Jutland, Midway, Tactics II. Best offer! Seattle area: (425) 746-3137 (home and fax no.). Marshall Curtis, Box 2647, Redmond, WA 98073-2647.

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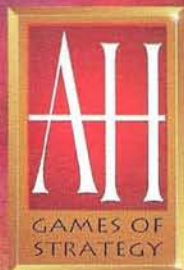
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# Winning Ways

by John R. Pack

*John volunteered to interview some AvalonCon '96 winners for their stories. The product of his endeavor is on this page and sprinkled as sidebars elsewhere in this issue. These winners add a few insights that continue to evade some of their competition.—SKT*

## BRITAIN IN THE BALANCE

The nine-hour drive with his four teammates was the best omen of what was to come at the 1996 *BRITANNIA* tournament for Scott Pfeiffer. As he drove, unable to see the board, he called out his moves in their warm-up game—rolling dice into a box by the side of his seat—and still managed to win.

Scott faced formidable competition including another former winner in his semi-final match as well as in the finals. If that weren't enough, three of the finalists met again at the PrezCon finals (where his competitors finally got their due).

The key to *BRITANNIA*, Scott asserts, is understanding the balance between the colors and using that understanding to maintain the balance until one can establish a firm lead. Crushing one player is usually a bad idea since it usually tips the balance to someone else.

The score is a nearly meaningless indication of the current position, because each of the colors relies on different groups on different turns for their principle scoring. Experience is the key to knowing when a group has done better or worse than usual thereby giving its color an edge or disadvantage. Blue, for example, scores very highly in the final turns which means that blue can't be ruled out just because of a 30-point deficit.

In the final, Scott's Romans scored only 49 points compared to a typical Roman score of 50-60. Diplomatically Scott encouraged the other players to write off purple as a lost cause when that result made him look weak which eventually set up his last-turn, come-from-behind victory as everyone ganged up on the leader.

Another key is to make sure you don't look like you're winning—especially when you really aren't! One good way to accomplish this is to purposefully take a ding that looks worse than it is.

Scott enjoys AvalonCon each year primarily because he goes home a better player. In 1995, when Scott lost in the finals, he observed that the winner (also purple) kept the Scottish forces out at sea for the entire game—raiding each turn (in conjunction with other forces who took the losses) and then

returning the Scots to sea (instead of leaving them ashore after one or two turns). The Scots managed to score 7-8 points which made the difference in the final total. It also made a difference in 1996 when Scott adopted the same raiding style.

## WORLD WAR II, '91-STYLE

Excerpts from the diary of Cpt. Jack Morrell, tank commander in the 3rd Panzer Division, on the failed AvalonCon'96 attempt by the allies to invade Festung Europa for which he received the Iron Cross First Class. . .

*We knew they were coming, Herr General, but reports show paratroops have landed outside Antwerp. We crushed the British and their American allies at Antwerp, but the landing at Dunkirk—mocking us for Goering's failure in '40—pushed inland easily and rolled up the coast for another try at the crucial Belgian port.*

*But while their advances seemed unstoppable we nipped at their heels like a rabid dog that knows its victim will succumb. Their losses mounted with every victory and we bled them white on their own success.*

*In August, our best Panzer divisions had been withdrawn due to high casualties, but who knew that the High Command would have them completely refitted to join us at Antwerp just when the 1000-year Reich needed them most.*

*With the allies limping forward, we counterattacked. It wasn't the clean blitzkrieg I remember from the early war, but the allies knew they were beaten.*

When Jack Morrell won the *BATTLE OF THE BULGE '91* and *D-DAY '91* AvalonCon tournaments in 1995, he wondered if it wasn't a fluke. After winning both events again in 1996, he knows it wasn't completely luck.

Despite August heat outside, the Battle of the Bulge tournament conditions closely resembled Winter '44 in the Ardennes. When victory came on the very last die roll of the first round, Jack felt so numb he nearly couldn't sign the chit and took the allowed bye for the second round just to go outside and change into a long-sleeved shirt.

Jack feels both games can be learned quickly but retain substantial depth. The balance between safety, speed, supply and firepower creates a real challenge. Best of all, each is short enough that the tournament lasts only one day!

Jack counsels that the defense should consider an offensive when an opponent can be thrown off balance by hitting vital resources, key units, or even just delaying the offensive

timetable. Sometimes supplies can be best used by task force delaying actions rather than front-line divisions.

The next key is to not panic. The weather will change and air power breaks will occur. The patient commander knows to wait for the right moment to order the attack!

## AGGRESSIVE COLONIALISM

"A kind word and a stick are better than just a kind word," says Brian Ecton of the aggressive style that earned him the *COLONIAL DIPLOMACY* crown at AvalonCon '96. Brian enjoys pointing out what might go wrong for his opponents should they stray from an alliance, while he also offers assistance to encourage potential opponents to direct their aggression elsewhere. In the finals, when China loomed as an adversary he offered to support China past his holdings and into upper Burma against the French successfully.

While Brian tried *DIPLOMACY* just once, the game that suits his style is *COLONIAL DIPLOMACY* with its wide open feel. He continually plays it with a circle of friends where he developed a preference for Britain. His friends taught him that the greatest mistake Britain can make is to be too successful—usually by easily building five the first year—and attracting unwanted attention.

The key to Britain is to pick one side of the board or the other for emphasis instead of trying to influence every area where one starts with pieces. Take removals from the other side of the board.

In the finals, Brian (as Britain) appeased Turkey before sending everything westward through Turkey and into Russia (with help from Turkey's last unit, no less). Brian's two opening moves are a good example of a westward plan of expansion.

A Mad – Mys; A Mys – Ara  
F Aden – Red Sea; F Red Sea – Egypt  
F Bom – Arabian Sea; F Arabian Sea C A  
Mys – Ara  
A Del – Pun; A Pun – Kar  
F Sin – Java Sea; F Sin – Mal  
F HK – SCS (x2)

Brian prefers to bounce with Turkey in Egypt rather than acquiring the supply center in Sudan with the fleet from Aden. This makes Britain less threatening to the other nations around the board. The convoy brings maximum force to bear in the Arabian peninsula as quickly as possible while armies march from India, through Persia, to Turkey.

Brian's biggest competition in the finals—China and Japan—were forced repeatedly to pass up stabbing opportunities because the nations those attacks would have crippled would have been even more vulnerable to British aggression.



# SCENARIO BRIEFING

*A Breath of Fresh Air  
from the Windy City*

by Louie Tokarz

The Windy City Wargamers (WCW), our local Chicago area gamers club, decided to develop some scenarios for our local tournament held every April (now the ASL Open). The first two scenarios were well received at our 1995 tournament, after which we went to work on scenarios for the 1996 ASL Open. I received many submissions from newly-inspired club members, making it difficult to pick only eight.

I had joined up with Jeff Cebula in 1988 when he was the TAHGC playtest group coordinator for the Chicago area. Jeff and his group took playtesting seriously and studied every new detail, rule and SSR. To this day I continue to follow the examples they set for a thorough playtest of a scenario. It was hard sometimes to keep everyone focused on the job of playtesting these eight new scenarios. (Special thanks go to Robert Banozic, Scott Holst, Scott Drane and Bob Bendis.) After more than a year of playtesting them, I didn't want to see them ever again (some I played more than 15 times). In the end, though, we had what we thought were ten good, balanced scenarios.

At MMP's request, I picked some of the best to see print in *The GENERAL*, along with some scenario analyses. The first of these is below. I'm not a big fan of the scenario analysis article. I'd rather come up with my own strategies than use a plan someone else has designed. It's more important to "see" the battlefield (playing area) than memorize setups and attack approaches. I'm not saying that nothing is gained from reading an analysis article (I've read every one that has been printed), but it is the little things you pick up from reading such articles—not the proposed setup—that ultimately improves your play.

In my analyses there are no detailed setups to copy, but rather some suggestions based on the situation at hand. Some are quite obvious, while others may be less so, especially to the ASL newbie. I hope you can gather some ASL knowledge from these analyses to use in your approach to a given scenario.

## WILL TO FIGHT...ERADICATED

This scenario depicts a last, desperate onslaught by retreating Polish forces to retake a small town named Papiance while the Germans were taking a breather. I came upon the description of this small battle in Poland while reading *Tiger Ace, The Life Story of Panzer Commander Michael Wittman*. (One might be surprised that a book about a Panzer commander could produce a strictly infantry engagement, but it just goes to show that a real ASL fanatic looks for scenario possibilities in everything he reads. As an aside, Michael Wittman and his PSW 222 were in the vicinity, but anti-tank mines in the area kept him and his unit on the outskirts of the town.) The Poles attacked and quickly regained a portion of the village, whereupon SS cooks and other non-combat personnel were ordered to stem the tide until the line soldiers could arrive to drive back the attackers. As I read the account, I pictured a bitter see-saw battle between two determined foes. I have always liked scenarios where both sides had to do something more than sit around and react. I thought that this situation would make a fun ASL scenario.

The original playtest version of this scenario awarded victory points (VPs) for each stone building Location controlled. This was a pain in the butt to keep track of when playing, so we came up with the idea of

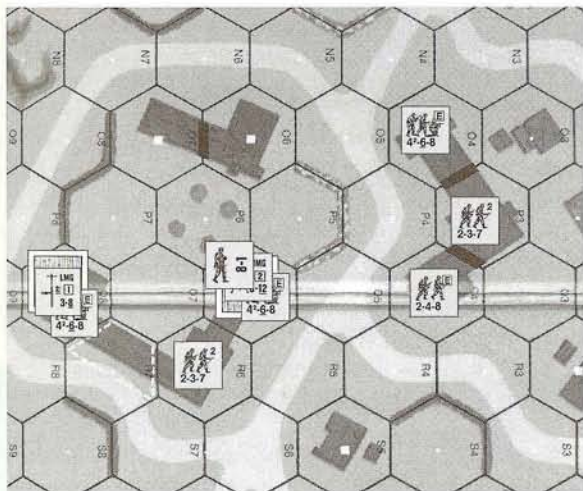
giving points for all of a building's Locations to the side that controls the building at the end of the game. The size of the building still mattered, but the bookkeeping aspect of the game was reduced. It has been my experience that, if the attacker is doing well during the first couple of playings of a scenario, it usually means the scenario favors the attacker. From the very beginning, this scenario played fairly even with some blowouts due to poor play or luck. After the change in VP determination, we didn't experience much of a difference between the final version and the first revision, and therefore adjusted the VP requirements by only a point or two.



**GERMAN ADVANTAGES:**  
Leadership, Machineguns and Strong Reinforcements

The German player has the better quality troops and three "-1" leaders. If the German player can team a medium machinegun (MMG) or two with a "-1" leader and place them in dominant positions, the Poles staring down the barrel of those machineguns will wither in fear. I used the 4-6-8 squad for the SS because it's the opening campaign of WWII and the normal 6-5-8 doesn't work well then. Also, the Poles need to be on an equal footing during close combat (CC) since so many of the games come down to the last CC phase.

The German player must be aggressive with the turn 3 reinforcements—and thanks to high morale, he can. With eight morale, the SS squads should be able to stand up to most fire attacks. In this scenario, I like to have my best leaders leading the attack instead of rallying troops. The Germans need that extra leadership modifier during fire attacks and morale checks.



Units in O4, P3 and Q4 are set up to cover street hexes N3, N4, O2 and P1. The machinegun units on the first levels of Q6 and Q8 can see over the hedges and wall to interdict the Polish advance. Two Polish half squads are hidden in the cellars in Q6 and U5 to block German rout paths.



### GERMAN DISADVANTAGES: Initially Outnumbered

A great deal of this scenario boils down to how well the Germans stem the initial Polish onslaught. Should they surrender ground to save troops or should every German unit in the starting order of battle (OB) go down fighting in order to save time in the end? I've occasionally seen the initial German troops survive until the end of the game if set up in one of the multi-hex buildings, though this does take some luck or conservative play by the Polish player. If the initial troops fall quickly and without causing many Polish casualties, the reinforcements will have a long road ahead of them, eight morale or not. More on this dilemma below.

### GERMAN STRATEGY

First, look at what the Germans must control in order to get the 29 VPs needed to win. There are 17 VPs on or west of hexrow S. The marketplace (R6) is worth ten and building P3 is worth nine. Thus, if the Germans can grab buildings R6 or P3 along with the buildings on or west of hexrow S, they will be very close to winning. Capture of either building R6 or P3 is imperative for the Germans to pull this one off.

In the initial setup, the Germans must decide what to do about the hidden initial placement (HIP) Poles in the cellars. Knowing where these HIP Poles are will save the Germans time and units later in the scenario—so find them! I like to deploy the second-line squad and mop up buildings R6 and P3 on the first German player turn. If both half squads (HS) aren't found by this

maneuver, I'll send the elite HS into building U5 to see what's there. Alternatively, run some HS around the buildings and into the cellars. Not a bad strategy, because, if a HIP HS wants to fire at a German recon HS, the German unit will get the cover of a stone building. Because of the option of hand-to-hand CC (SSR 4), I wouldn't advance into CC with the Poles—you are not trying to eliminate the Polish HS at this time; just find them. Wait until the big lumber arrives on turn 3 to inflict the damage.

The issue is where to put the initial MMG. I like Level 1 of Q6 (directed by the 8-1 leader) where it is fairly safe and can blast anyone who moves into P6 or P5 with point blank fire. Furthermore, Poles in O6 or O7 cannot see it. A squad with a light machinegun (LMG) looks good on Level 1 of Q8, where it can move to Level 1 of R7 and, together with the troops in Q6, protect building R6 very well. The rest of the units should set up to cover Polish movement on turn 1—O3, O4, and O6 are all possible locations.

Now, what about that key issue posed earlier: should the initial Germans pull back or die to the last man? The longer the Germans can hold building R6, the better their chances will be. Pulling back is difficult at best due to the lack of cover. No matter what the Germans do, a few Polish troops are likely to make it to interdiction positions. Thus, the best choice is to duke it out and make the Poles take the buildings from you.

The turn 2 reinforcements will be instructed to move to the most crucial spot on the board. If the Poles are running for building U5, get there first. If one or more Polish HS are still HIP, don't go running the reinforcements as one big stack toward V5. This could spell disaster. Set up one squad deployed and send a HS or two probing toward building U5.

If things have gone well for the Poles, they'll control buildings R6, P3, S5, S9 and T3. The turn 3 German reinforcements have now arrived. Don't panic—there is still plenty of time left. Any Poles on or west of hexrow S are dead meat. The German can position himself to eliminate those units when they break. Make sure this happens. Spread out and form large multi-hex fire groups. An overwatch position in U5 consisting of a squad, MMG and 9-1 on Level 1 and a squad, LMG and 8-1 on the ground floor will bust up any Poles in Q4 or on the ground level and in the cellars of building R6. This should open things up for

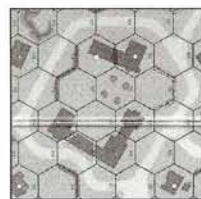
the ground assault into R6 or P3. Remember, the Germans only need one of these two buildings. Assaulting P3 is easier, due to the cover offered by the one-hex buildings south of it (and which is also required for a victory).

From here, the Germans may even be able to grab buildings O1, M2 and M3. The major drawback to this approach is its proximity to the turn 7 Polish reinforcements. The attack on building R6 will be a little more difficult, due to the open ground the foot sloggers must cross to reach it, but once the Germans are in there they won't be ousted as easily by the Poles.



### POLISH ADVANTAGES: HIP, Early Momentum

The two HIP HS will do more for the Poles than anything else they have. Just where to put them is a matter of your gaming philosophy. Do you use them to cut rout paths? Keep them hidden in order to maintain control of a particular building? Or wait for a juicy target to present itself? If used to cut rout paths, a HIP HS can also help build an early momentum swing, sending Polish squads on a rampage. Imagine your opponent's face as two or three of his initial units die on one turn. If the Poles do well, they can make it almost impossible for the Germans to get going later in the game. Most good players won't allow that to happen, barring some lucky breaks for the Poles. Be aggressive with the Polish troops early in the game (so long as any units that break will have a decent chance to make it back into the game). When misfortune strikes the Germans, you will have plenty of time to take advantage of it.



### POLISH DISADVANTAGES: ELR, Terrain

These Poles won't rally back as quickly as their counterparts, especially if they are green or first-line units. The Poles have no negative rating leadership and one +1 leader. At some point in the game the 6+1 leader will have to rally a few of his shaky followers—not something to rely upon in order to win a scenario. Don't stack this leader with any friendly Good Order units within German lines of sight (LOS); his +1 modifier will make any morale check (MC) harder to pass, with those troops more likely to ELR.

The terrain on board 12 favors the attacker. The main buildings are surrounded by a road, and the buildings are spaced out more than usual, with LOS that don't normally exist in a town environment. Because the Germans will be able to

see almost any rally points, the Poles may stay desperation morale (DM) for a long time, adding to their rally difficulties.

## POLISH STRATEGY

The first thing the Poles need to decide is how to use the two HIP units. Consider a few options. Place them both in building V4 with the idea of slowing down the German reinforcements. Place one in building V4 and the other in either building P3 or R6. Place one in building P3 and the other in R6 in order to help clear out any Germans or to stay HIP as long as possible. The longer their locations are unknown to the Germans, the better. One strategy (which will help eliminate any broken German units on Level 1 of hex Q6) is to put one HIP HS in Q6 and the other in U5. When the German units break, revealing both HS will just about kill the German units. They won't be able to go downstairs to stay there. They won't be able to go to R6, because this would bring them closer to U5.

On turns 1 and 2, the Polish player needs to be very aggressive (I can't say this enough). The Poles outnumber the Germans at start by nine and a half squads. The capture of buildings O6, P3 and R6 is an absolute must. If the Germans still control any of these buildings on German turn 3, the Poles will need a small miracle to win.

Don't risk the leaders, expect to lose some units on the first two turns. The Poles will need them to rally broken troops later in the game. The more leaders the Poles have, the more places they can use as rally points. Remember, not many locations are hidden from the German fire.

The Poles should use hand-to-hand CC whenever possible, except when they have a 2:1 or better advantage. Use the numbers advantage to the utmost. Don't shy away from any fire attacks. Rather, take any reasonable risks to break Germans.

If the Germans set up in forward positions, use a couple of HS to dash across the street into hexes with the concealed Germans. Meanwhile, designate one stack of units for Opportunity Fire and use that stack to hammer any revealed Germans. Use the Elite squads to maneuver around the German flanks. Be aggressive!

After the Poles have secured buildings R6 and P3 they must decide what to do next—move forward or hold ground and gain concealment. Digging a couple of fox-holes in hexes P7 and Q7 will make holding building R6 a little easier, because rallied or reinforcing units will be able to get into building R6 with some cover.

After turn 3, the scenario is a defensive game for the Poles. Hide from the German fire whenever possible during the Polish

player turns (although this will be difficult on board 12). If the Poles can't retreat to a blind spot, then Prep Fire. Don't rush too many Polish units west of hexrow S. They will just end up in the counter tray earlier than they should. There is no good place to defend there, and any unit that breaks will more than likely be eliminated by the swarming German reinforcements.

Believe it or not, the turn 7 reinforcements do have some significant uses. I can recall some folks asking me if there was a misprint on the scenario card. What could the Poles do with the units that enter on the last turn of the game? Consider these possibilities. They can draw fire from frontline German units that don't want to be caught in a CC position on their last turn. Many single-hex buildings needed by the Germans can be reached by the reinforcements in one movement phase. However, the most important thing the Poles can do with their reinforcements is move them into buildings R6 or P3 where one HS could be the difference between holding the building and losing it. At the very least, the Polish reinforcements may draw some German fire that would otherwise have been used to shoot up other, better-placed Polish units that could survive in an important location. The last option is using the reinforcements to secure buildings O6, M8, M6, M5 and M2. During playtesting, the turn 7 reinforcements made the difference in most of the games played and also helped make the last turns some of the most memorable scenario finishes of my ASL experience.

## FINAL COMMENTS

After releasing "Will to Fight" at the 1995 Chicago ASL tournament, it received good reviews—though more recently some people have claimed that the Germans have a slight advantage. I think this all depends on the type of Polish player. If cautious, he will most likely be in for a difficult time. I think a clear understanding of the building control rules (A26.12) is critical in scenarios like this, where a single broken leader at the end of a scenario could keep one side from gaining control of a building. Sometimes it is better to voluntarily rout upstairs than to fight it out in CC at game end.

Some folks tell me that the Germans need another squad in their starting forces. I guess that styles of play matter more. I can remember someone telling me that if the defender has the edge when a scenario first comes out, it will probably be a balanced scenario once players figure out the best approach to take when attacking. At first I didn't accept this rule of thumb, because when I started playing ASL the most difficult aspect of the game to grasp was how to play an effective defense. One could

assume that the attacker has the edge in any scenario where two people are playing it for the first time. I now believe the reverse is true in most cases.

Overall I believe that this scenario is as balanced as one can make it. After listening to many different game stories, I've neither seen nor heard anything over the past two years that would make me change my mind.

★

## TOP A.R.E.A. RATINGS ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER

Active Players

Date of Standings: April 7, 1997

Rank	Name	Rating	Games	Opp	Pbm
1	Michael McGrath	2371	86	64	0
2	Bod Bendis	2248	47	16	0
3	Steven Pleva	2208	72	55	20
4	Jim McLeod	2053	60	46	0
5	Richard Summers	2022	106	64	0
6	Eric Givler	2018	64	61	0
7	James Crawley	1984	27	13	0
8	Pete Mudge	1960	12	10	0
9	Hugh Harvey	1943	18	17	7
10	Bruce Rinehart	1942	85	30	0
11	Chad Cummins	1939	24	24	0
12	Douglas Creutz	1928	26	25	2
13	Russell Buntin	1920	20	16	0
14	Rodney Kinney	1915	10	10	0
15	Danny Stanhagen	1914	25	25	0
16	Cloyde Angell	1906	39	37	0
17	Thomas Morin	1903	48	33	0
18	Mark Nixon	1897	29	25	0
19	Scott Drane	1891	126	93	19
20	Robert Banozic	1889	55	41	0

## ACROSS FIVE APRILS

Players on List: 62 Active players: 57

Date of Standings: June 17, 1997

Rank	Name	Rating	Qualifiers
1	Mark S. Miklos	1715	DF—D6
2	Mark Giddings	1710	CF—B6
3	James Falling	1618	BE—B6
4	Michael Sincavage	1598	BD—B6
5	Jerry Cecchin	1590	AB—A6
6	Donald Stone	1580	BD—A6
7	Chris B. Rice	1570	BD—B6
8	William Place	1570	BD—B6
9	James Matt	1568	AB—A6
10	Brian Conlon	1567	AC—A5

## GETTYSBURG ('88)

Players on List: 60 Active Players: 26

Date of Standings: June 4, 1997

Rank	Name	Rating	Qualifiers
1	Allen Kaplan	1781	CF—C6
2	Vince Meconi	1759	DFCD7
3	Michael D. Urich	1750	DGBC5
4	David M. Zimmerman	1718	FIBD6
5	John D. Poniske, Sr.	1708	CDBC6
6	Charles R. Hamm	1601	BDBB7
7	Robert Mull	1596	AC—A6
8	Jeff Ciemiak	1585	BE—B5
9	John Scivolette	1579	CE—C5
10	John E. Welage	1565	AC—A5

## WE THE PEOPLE

Players on List: 22 Active players: 19

Date of Standings: June 4, 1997

Rank	Name	Rating	Qualifiers
1	Roger E. Taylor	1605	AB—A5
2	James M. Scott, II	1575	JA -- 6
3	James C. Doughan	1536	AB -- 6
4	Marty Ward	1535	AA—A6
5	James Rush	1535	AA -- 6

Qualifiers refer to quantities of games played, opponents played, PBM games, tournament participation and year of last activity (with later letters indicating greater quantities and the number being the last digit of a year). For more information on the A.R.E.A. rating system, send \$1 to:

Glenn E. L. Petroski  
6829 23rd Avenue  
Kenosha, WI 53143-1233  
email: GELP@juno.com



# AT THE KIOSK

By Glenn E. L. Petroski

## Round Robin

The round robin tournament format is the perfect system for any perfectly run tournament of perfect individuals in a perfect world. Re-read that last sentence, and you will see where we are going in a hurry.

The round robin format (RR) needs our attention because it is both a goal and a base for most other systems. The results that a true RR achieves are the results for which we all strive. This, in turn, causes most tournament directors and game masters (GMs) to adopt systems that stem from it.

The idea is simplicity in itself. Every player plays every other player in the tournament an exact specified number of times (usually once). The best win-loss record wins the tournament. Any tie is broken by the result of a specific game between the tied players. Actual strength of players does not matter, because everyone plays everyone before all is done.

A slight variation may occur in the number of specified matches between players—which allows the same opponents to switch sides and play the game again. In PBM circles, Diplomacy is sometimes played this way. When done this way, each player is playing seven games simultaneously. Each player is a different power in each game.

What is the catch with RR? Time, obviously. For small tournaments, with few players, and games of short duration, this can be worked out. But any reasonably-sized tournament is unmanageable. A typical VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC tournament will draw 30 to 50 players. Let's take 41 for an example. Every player must play 40 games (40 rounds of play). On the very bad assumption that you can squeeze in four rounds per day, ten calendar days will be needed for this tournament.

Also, the system is not flexible. Every player has many games to play, so late-comers cannot be accommodated. At the very least, registration has to be absolutely cut off at the beginning of the first round. Being late for any round is a forfeit. Dropouts forfeit all remaining

games. If your opponent is late, or drops out, you win, but you do not get to play during the round, because all opponents are occupied.

The shortcomings of RR are quite evident, but the end result and many of the side benefits are worth pursuing. The system produces a clear winner, as well as second, third, fourth and so on. In theory, everyone gets to play every round. Without elimination, every paying contestant gets his money's worth. For these reasons, the premise and basic ideas of RR are integrated into many tournaments.

The variations on the RR format must account for the fact that not everyone will be able to play everyone else, while trying to mimic the RR effects. A rating system of some kind will have to be used for the pairings in the competition. Every player must play a number of games (ideally every round)—we wish to avoid early elimination of players. The best players should face each other at some point during the competition. Weaker players should have a chance to play better players to understand where they rank—though, weaker players should not be reduced to “cannon fodder.” They need to play their peers for the sake of enjoyment.

The success of winners must be quantifiable. The scoring and pairing systems will inevitably affect one another, which is usually critical to the outcome.

Generally, pure round-robin does not work for most tournaments in our hobby. The reason we need to look at it here is that it forms the groundwork for most of the ideas and formats that really do work well. The next few columns will look at some of those variations. A number of other GMs have offered their thoughts and ideas—systems that have worked in the past, and certainly possess potential for the future. The lineup is an impressive who's who in our hobby, as well as what's what.

It is never too late to send in even a part of a thought or an idea upon which I can build.

### LADDERS REPORTING IN:

**AFRIKA KORPS:** Joe Beard is on the top of his own ladder. However, there are now 27 players, not 16 as previously reported (still not too many for Joe to handle). Contact Joe at 3822 E. Sahuaro Dr., Phoenix, AZ 95028-3442.

**BATTLE OF THE BULGE 1981:** Second round comes to a finish! Twelve players are still in search of more victims! Contact Mark Poulson, 204 E. Cannon, Lafayette, CO 86026.

**BREAKOUT NORMANDY:** Current PBEM ladder champion is Robert O'Connor. Twelve players are playing. GM: Thomas M. Pavy, 619 Gainsborough Rd. #4, Dayton, OH 45419, PH#937-299-0267, em: TPavy@Erinet.com.

**FLAT TOP:** No known PBM competition in progress. AREA does have players asking about the possibilities. I have also heard from a group in Scotland which plays *FLAT TOP* rather extensively and would like to correspond with someone “On the west side of the Atlantic.”

**STALINGRAD:** The oldest and longest running PBM competition, the current ladder champion is John Grant. Twelve players. GM: John B. Grant Jr., 198 Brookdale Rd., Stamford, CT 06903, PH# 203-329-7837, em: JBGrantJr@aol.com.

**THIRD REICH,** 4th Edition: Ongoing PBM competition. Has two boards running. GM is now setting up two more. GM: Bruce Hatter, #206753 Box 316, Fort Madison, IA 52627-0316.

**PANZERBLITZ:** Round one went quick and the slugfest continues. Contact Paul Martin, 1914-1971 Saint Laurent Blvd, Ottawa, Ontario, K1G 3P8, Canada.

**WAR AND PEACE:** Roger Cox is willing to GM a PBM competition. Who might be interested? Contact Roger at 57 Coastline Drive, Inman, SC 29349-9655.

**WAR AT SEA:** Round one has ended in each of two competitions. For PBM contact Paul Martin, 1914-1971 Saint Laurent Blvd, Ottawa, Ontario, K1G 3P8, Canada. For PBEM contact Bruce Monnin, 177 S. Lincoln St., Minster, OH 45865-1240, 419-628-3332, em: monninb@bright.net.

At your service,  
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# LIVE LONG AND PROSPER

## Less Traveled Roads in HISTORY OF THE WORLD

by Bruce Monnin

**T**he author publishes his own magazine, *The Boardgamer*, which is devoted to the competitive play of Avalon Hill games. Here, he favors us with this set of subtle strategy hints. We dedicate this article to those who claim that Ceylon, Ireland and space marines are the key to victory.—SKT

Like many multi-player games, *HISTORY OF THE WORLD* is a game which penalizes front runners and rewards those who can score the most points using the least amount of resources. In other words, you want to be near enough to the lead to vault into first place at the end, but not at the expense of getting stuck with poor empires the last few epochs because your strength point total is too high or because you are perceived as being the leader on the board.

The scoring system in *HISTORY OF THE WORLD* also rewards a scattering of your forces across the board, rather than having your forces concentrated in one Area. Therefore, if you wish to optimize your long-term victory point totals, it is often better during the early epochs to sacrifice a few short-term victory points (VPs) in order to place units in Areas where they are likely to survive for many epochs.

### SOMEWHERE TO HIDE

Following lists some of the best "hiding spots" on the mapboard in each Area where forces are likely to survive and rack up those VPs throughout the game.

#### Middle East

There are not a lot of quiet spots here. This continent is quite busy during the first four epochs, plus you never know whether all those Eurasian empires are going to come through or not. The four lands most off the beaten path are Lower Tigris, Middle Tigris, Upper Tigris and the Arabian Peninsula. The problem with these lands is that they are start lands for Sumeria and Babylonia in Epoch I, Assyria in Epoch II and the Arabs in Epoch IV. The best hope for a long-term presence here is to take these lands in Epoch IV with the Arabs, although the Assyrians have a chance to survive with the help of a fort or two, especially in Lower and Middle Tigris.

#### North Africa

Upper Nile is the dead-end land here. It is not on the way to anywhere, and most

invaders are satisfied to stop at Nubia (with the resource center). This is not a safe place until after the Upper Nile Kingdom card is played (Epoch II, most probably). A fort there may ward off the Arabs, especially if an Empires Revive card is played to place an extra army.

#### China

Although it may not look like it at first glance, Yellow River may be the best land on the board. The Shang Dynasty starts here in Epoch I, and should expand into Wei River and Great Plain of China while placing a fort in Yellow River. When the Chou Dynasty arrives in Epoch II at Wei River (and hopefully also the Han Dynasty in Epoch III at Great Plain of China), the Epoch I forces retreat behind the walls of the fort at Yellow River. Empires advancing through China can always go around Yellow River more easily than through it (unless they use one of the three Treachery cards). The lack of a monument means that a disaster card cannot take out the fort. This land alone can score 32 VPs during the game, and your opponents may have difficulty justifying an attack on it. If you see an opponent setting up a stronghold here, it may be worthwhile to devote your Treachery card to it and establish your own fortified stronghold.

Other than Yellow River, the next best land in China may be Si-Kyang. However, this is on the best path from Southeast Asia into China, and is a likely target of the Khmers in Epoch IV and possibly of the Mauryans from India in Epoch III. Szechuan is another less-traveled land, but always remember that the Sung Dynasty starts there in Epoch V. If you want to survive in China, Yellow River is the place to be.

#### India

There are two particularly good lands in India: Western Ghats and Ceylon. Neither one leads to anywhere important, and neither one is a start land for any empires or minor kingdoms. The only way to get to both of them with the Indus Valley in the first epoch is to give up a monument build or to play Allies or Population Explosion events. A better opportunity is for the Vedic City States in Epoch II to occupy these lands. The help of an Empire Revives or Empire Fortifies type card should keep enemies away from here throughout the

game. These are nice lands to have, because India is worth three VPs for presence throughout the final five epochs.

#### Southern Europe

Crete, the start land of the Minoans in Epoch I, can last a long time if it can survive the Greek City States in Epoch II. If Crete is not fortified when the Greeks arrive, they should take it and consider fortifying Morea, Crete or both. The same options apply to the Macedonians in Epoch III, who should also consider taking Morea and Crete, even if they are fortified if they have the Siegecraft card.

Another good land is Western Iberia, which should not be in anyone's path until the Portuguese arrive in Epoch VI. The Carthaginians should be able to occupy this land in Epoch II.

An interesting land is Central Massif. Although on a potentially well-travelled path, the difficult terrain will tempt others to bypass it, especially if there is a fort or multiple armies located there. However, you can never depend on this land surviving due to the number of empires starting nearby.

#### Northern Europe

The most secure land here is Ireland, a dead-end which is two crossing arrows away from all potential threatening empires except for Britain in Epoch VII. The Celts and Romans can reach here in Epoch III, as can the Goths in Epoch IV. If Ireland is still vacant, it should be the objective of the Anglo-Saxon minor empire in Epoch IV. Adding to the security of this land is the Highlands kingdom which should arrive in Epoch IV and will place a fort on the only land path to Ireland.

Western Gaul is another potential long-term possession. It has no difficult terrain and can be attacked from two other lands, but there is no strategic reason to take this land. It is likely to be bypassed, especially if fortified. This can be taken as early as Epoch II by the Carthaginians, although it will produce no VPs until Epoch III, when it can be taken by the Celts or the Romans.

#### Southeast Asia

This is an Area filled with difficult terrain, islands and crossing arrows, thus favoring the player who gets there first. The two obvious safe lands are the East Indies and Sumatra. Since the East Indies land has no crossing arrow, it will always receive the difficult terrain defense bonus. The first empire with a real chance to get it is the Han Dynasty in Epoch III. The next threats do not come until the T'ang Dynasty and the Khmers near the end of Epoch IV and the Sung Dynasty in Epoch V.

Sumatra can first be reached by the Vedic City States and the Persians in Epoch II, although this is unlikely. The first to get there should be the Mauryans in Epoch III, although the Han Dynasty and the Sassanids also have an outside shot. The Gup-tas in Epoch IV can take Sumatra by sea, especially if it is still unoccupied. It is important to get to Sumatra in Epoch III or early Epoch IV so that the presence there can then be shielded by the fort in the Malayan Peninsula when that kingdom card is played. This should discourage most attackers, and the ones willing to tackle the fort will often be content with the resource symbol in the Malayan Peninsula.

Combining presence in the East Indies and Sumatra with a land such as Irrawaddy (almost surrounded by difficult terrain) can even lead to domination of Southeast Asia for a few epochs.

### Eurasia

There are no good places to hide here. By the time this Area is worth any VPs, the traffic picks up, especially at the end of Epoch V and the beginning of Epoch VII.

### North and South America

These are late scoring Areas, too. The only key here is to place units where they may last until Epoch VII. The North American migrants are best placed in the Great Plains and Great Lakes, where they are unlikely to be disturbed until the United States in Epoch VII, if at all. However, one of these units scores as well as two, making it worthwhile to place the other army in the Pacific Seaboard (or the Deep South or West Indies) where it will inconvenience other players later in the game.

The Mayans start in Central America and could expand to the Guiana Highlands to maximize their scoring potential. Expanding to the Mexican Valley will cause them to be retreated by the Aztecs in Epoch VI. Another alternative is to fortify Central America to protect the capital which provides the majority of the Mayan VPs.

The Aztecs start in the Mexican Valley and will probably expand into the Pacific Seaboard in order to secure a monument build. The Incas start in the Northern Andes, which will be a wanted land in Epoch VII. Therefore, they should expand to the Southern Andes to be safe instead of risking a difficult terrain attack into the Guiana Highlands.

### Sub-Saharan Africa

Few victory points can be had here. Be sure to place at least one of the Sub-Saharan migrants away from the Gold Coast, Congo Basin and Southern Africa for safety.

### Nippon

Again, not many points. It is senseless for the Fujiwara minor empire to expand elsewhere in Nippon. It should instead use the final strength point to place a fort on Hokaido to aid long-term survival or invade the Great Plain of China, if it will establish a presence or dominance in China. Expect the Mongols or the Ming Dynasty to be coming to Hokaido shortly, if the capital isn't defended well.

### Australia

Who cares? Grab the mine, score the presence and your game is over.

### IMPERIAL STRATEGY

Now that we've examined some of the best lands for long-term survival, here is a quick summary of how some of the game's empires can grab these lands in the first three epochs:

#### Epoch I

*Egypt:* The Arabian Peninsula may last until Epoch IV, and a fleet in the Red Sea will last longer than in the Eastern Mediterranean.

*Minoans:* A fort will go a long way towards Crete surviving, and Western Anatolia is a good place to expand.

*Indus Valley:* Going for the monument build will yield more short-term points, but for the long term it may be better to expand into Persian Salt Desert, Western Deccan and Western Ghats.

*Babylonians:* Maximum points are gained by taking the two resource centers and building a monument. An interesting alternative, which gives up four VPs in the short run, is to place two armies and a fortress on Middle Tigris to set up a stronghold which, barring Treachery will last a long time.

*Shang Dynasty:* Place a fort in Yellow River and expand into Wei River and Great Plain of China. These units will later be retreated back under the fort.

*Aryans:* The Aryans have no good place to hide, so they should maximize their short-term points by establishing presence in the Middle East, India and China while also trying for the monument build.

*Hittites:* A fort in Eastern Anatolia and expansion into Western Anatolia should yield points for a few epochs. If Western Anatolia is already occupied and taking Western Anatolia yields no more VPs, then a second army can be placed under the fort.

#### Epoch II

*Assyria:* Your obvious targets are Levant and Zagros. Consider taking Middle and Lower Tigris if not fortified and if they contain capitals. Fortifying Middle Tigris will then help protect Lower Tigris.

## World History 196

by John R. Pack

History shows that 102 contestants attempted to rewrite the past at Avalon-Con '96. None was more successful than Keith Levy. But, as Keith attests, having only faced fifteen opponents directly, it is hard to imagine having "defeated" 101 others.

Keith would like history to show that while many players talk about how the powerful Roman Empire dooms one to lesser nations for the eons to come, Keith is the only player he knows who ever chooses to pass it off and he, by Jupiter, does so with nearly religious zeal! Sometimes to the current leader!

With experience on his lips Keith proclaims, "the United States, Netherlands and Germany are the kiss of death in the last round." Usually a kiss ensured by having flirted with the Romans and other powerful nations in early epochs.

Keith often passes up a few extra points on one turn for a better long-term position. A fort or a few extra units in an obscure location to secure a "Middle East credit" is often better than a one-time, three-point gain for venturing into Southeast Asia, for example. He also recommends not speculating on others' nations—you just give away your own hand which lets other players prepare for your moves and attack your vital areas.

Luck and solid, secure tactics helped Keith claim victory. In the second of three rounds, Keith had a solid lock on last place right through the end of Epoch V. With Spain in Epoch VI, he jumped to fourth place. As the early-moving Tsar in Epoch VII, he managed to score 82 points for a grand total of 202. At that point, Keith felt like he'd maximized scoring for the nations he'd been dealt and even defeat could not dampen his feeling of having played well.

The winner of that game finished with 204 points. However, his opponent opted for the *CIRCUS MAXIMUS* finals instead (once again showing that the lure of Rome can be the historical demise of a great world leader).

In the final round, Keith again assumed last place for the first two epochs, though he moved up to the middle of the standings by the sixth epoch. As Spain in Epoch VI again, his colonial efforts put him into third place. When he drew Britain in Epoch VII, he knew the sun would never set on his empire.

**Chou Dynasty:** Tarim Basin and Chekiang are the obvious targets here. Take Yellow River and fortify if it has not been fortified. If Yellow River is fortified, consider taking Great Plain of China to keep the unit there from retreating under the fort next epoch, and expand through Szechuan into Irrawaddy (and into India if using an Allies card).

**Vedic City States:** After starting on one resource, one more is needed. Tarim Basin and Zagros are close, but for the long term take Eastern Ghats and then expand into Ceylon and/or Western Ghats—or, take Malayan Peninsula and expand into Sumatra.

**Greek City States:** Take Crete if it still has the capital and is unfortified, and then fortify Morea to protect them both. Then seek your VPs in North Africa and the Middle East.

**Scythians:** The only long-term prospects here are to head for Ireland, picking up a monument along the way. This gains so few VPs in the short term that it is usually better to head for Southern Europe or the Middle East and maximize the short-term points.

**Carthage:** Take Western Iberia. Consider Pyrenees and Central Massif if you already have dominance of North Africa. If you are really looking for future points, consider an expansion into Western Gaul (but keep in mind the possible "sure thing" VPs you may be passing up, though).

**Persia:** You can reach many hiding places, but go for the short-term points. Live it up now, because empires from all sides attack you next epoch.

**Phoenicia:** Your start land of Levant is going to be a big target. After placing the fleet, go wherever the most immediate points are, but if you like to gamble and are going after Carthage, consider an invasion of Shatts Plateau. It could survive at least until the Romans late next epoch.

### Epoch III

**Celts:** Take Western Gaul and/or consider going after Ireland since the Highlands kingdom has not yet arrived. Central Massif can be a good land for establishing presence in Southern Europe. If the Romans head for India and China, it may even survive.

**Macedonia:** Take Morea and Crete if they still possess capitals and are not fortified. After collecting as many VPs as possible, your best chance of weathering the Romans may be multiple forts in the mountains of Southern Europe. Don't give up too much for this, however. Determined Romans cannot be stopped, only slowed.

**Maurya:** Either drive down the eastern coast of India towards Ceylon and Western Ghats or through Southeast Asia towards Sumatra or preferably both, particularly if some of these lands are still vacant.

**Han Dynasty:** Take the East Indies. The fleet may survive longer in the Sea of Japan, but the East Indies will score more. With the Hsiung-Nu next, it may be better to pass up control of China and head for India instead.

**Hsiung-Nu:** Bash through the Great Wall of China and get what you can.

**Romans:** Head east for the Middle East, India and China to maximize short-term points. Consider the western portions of Northern Europe, Southern Europe and North Africa for longer-term gains. When presented with the opportunity to clear all of a certain color's units out of an Area, be certain to do so.

**Sassanids:** The Sassanids' move is going to depend a lot upon the actions of the Romans. The Persian Salt Desert and Lower Indus are usually good candidates for long-term survival. That can also lead to taking Upper Indus and building a monument.

**Mayans:** For conservative play, fortify Central America and that Capital should last a long time. To maximize your potential point gain, expand into the Guiana Highlands. Remember, however, that this move will not pay any dividends until Epoch VI.

### LAY LOW

In summary, I'm not claiming that the best way to win is to constantly give up short-term points to fortify for later turns. However, there are definite advantages to laying low on the early turns and setting up strongpoints which will be paying dividends throughout the game. Use the opportunity to keep your strength points down, while pointing out that others are currently leading in the VP count. Get your forces spread out over as many Areas as possible and make your run to the top of the standings in the last two or three epochs. As in many multi-player games, it is best to stay near the top, but to avoid being perceived as the front runner until it is too late for you to be stopped.

★


## DESIGN ANALYSIS

PzKwVla

AB 5 3.2" 12

AB F 4.0"

GPres 14



15 A 12

8 Wt 60.5t HPWt 11.6

GUN 88mm L56 EffRng 3000m

AMMO 92 PEN 4.9" 2 MG 34

## A New Glimpse of History

by Larry Rose

Fans of The Avalon Hill Game Company's *HISTORY OF THE WORLD* may recall that the boardgame's original designers at Ragnar Brothers took their inspiration from Jawaharlal Nehru's book *Glimpses of World History*. Nehru provided a new view of world history by including the rise and fall of Eastern civilizations along with the well known Western cultures. In this article, I will provide a new view of *HISTORY OF THE WORLD*, the newly released computer game developed by Colorado Computer Creations and Avalon Hill.

### GETTING ACQUAINTED

Colorado Computer Creations designed the computer implementation of *HISTORY OF THE WORLD* to be a Windows application from the start. You won't have to spend the first two days trying to figure out how to

squeeze an extra 27K of available memory out of your operating system, or how to get all the right settings for your Windows '95 shortcut. Instead, you can just insert the CD-ROM, follow the simple installation instructions, and start playing! During the installation, you get a few options—such as whether to install the animations to the hard disk or leave them on the CD. Since your hard drive is probably faster than your CD-ROM drive, we recommend installing all commonly used files (the bitmaps and the sounds) to the hard disk. Installing the animations is not recommended.

After you have installed the game, start it and, with the help of the manual, take a brief tour of the menus. Under the Game menu are all the options for starting, loading, saving and exiting the game, as well as messaging options for use during email play. The Options menu controls display



and sound options, as well as controlling Automatic Retreat. The View menu allows you to call up various game displays and control the window placement. The Map menu can be used to center the map on a specific land, sea or ocean. The Encyclopedia menu provides some historic information about each major and minor empire that appears in the game. Finally, the Help menu provides (you guessed it) Help, as well as displaying the game credits.

If you have never played the board game, we recommend going through the supplied Tutorial, which is available from the game's menu under Help/Tutorial. This guide hits all the high points of playing a game of *HISTORY OF THE WORLD*.

### GETTING RE-ACQUAINTED

Those familiar with the board game won't find too many surprises. In fact, the rule changes that were imposed during the development were minimal.

1. To enhance play-by-email (PBEM), the Trade Bonus event was eliminated, and was replaced by an additional Civil Service event.
2. In any game which uses email, all retreats are handled by the computer.
3. The unit limits, which are used by the board game, were removed—you can never have too many fleets, forts, cities, etc. on the map.
4. We imposed a limit of two fleets per Ocean per player—anyone who regularly places more than one fleet in an Ocean is invited to play the developers for cash stakes.
5. Sumeria has graduated to full Major Empire status—allowing up to seven players to compete in each game.
6. The Incas & Aztecs now cooperate as a single empire—they still build separate capitals, but their two additional builds can expand from either starting land. For all other purposes, they act as a single empire.
7. As an option, you can choose to have Empires randomly assigned. This speeds up the game—especially for e-mail play.

### WHAT'S NEW?

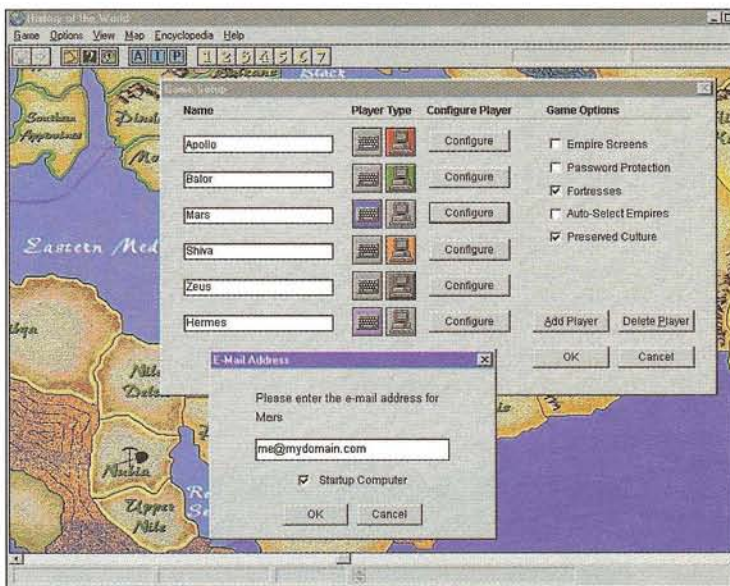
As is true with many games, *HISTORY OF THE WORLD* requires a fair amount of bookkeeping—tracking resources controlled, available builds, strength and victory points. Face it—we're all bad at this, and we've all found errors turns later. The

original Avalon Hill *HISTORY OF THE WORLD* sample game even includes an error! But computers excel at such banalities—there will be no more fleets left on the board turns after their only friendly port is annihilated.

Additionally, it is now possible to get snapshots of the board situation without all that tedious counting. Want to know how many cities your opponent owns? Just look at the current summary screen (View/Current Summary). You can also see which event cards have already been played (View/Event History), as well as which are currently active.

The replay, messaging and PBEM features work hand-in-hand to allow multiplayer games over the Internet. The game allows for multiple players at each email address, and even allows for password protection for each player.

A critical part of *HISTORY OF THE WORLD* is the strategy behind passing Empires. When it is your turn to draw an Empire card, you are presented with a display of the card-passing decisions to date. A brief overview of each Empire's capabilities is displayed.



We've added an encyclopedia section to provide some historic background to playing *HISTORY OF THE WORLD*. The encyclopedia entries present a brief overview of each major and minor Empire as well as a map showing the Empire's historic location.

### ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

You can select different levels of skill for the computer players, as well as establish their characteristic styles of play. You can use the computer opponents instead of, or in addition to other human opponents—you can also control multiple empires your-

self. The level of complexity that the computer player has to offer increases with the Skill setting—if your machine can handle it (Pentium 120, 16 MB RAM, and Windows '95 or better). The skill level affects several parameters, including, most importantly, how many builds ahead the artificial intelligence (AI) thinks. The *HISTORY OF THE WORLD* AI uses an algorithm that looks at the current board state and builds a tree of possibilities. Each branch on the tree represents a series of moves that the AI can take. The algorithm prunes branches from the tree whenever it thinks that a move series is not as good as other branches. This type of algorithm is similar to those used in computer simulations such as chess programs. The AI evaluates the move by comparing the game state before the move string to the game state after the move string. The AI balances the player's own improvement against the value of reducing its opponents' positions. Evaluation criteria include points scored, resources controlled, defensive position, current standings, current board placement, odds of winning a combat and the AI's personality.

Higher aggression levels increase the value of attack moves—especially when attacking a leading opponent. Lower aggression levels increase the value of fortification moves. These values are instrumental in helping the computer select its next move. Finally, increasing the risk level will also affect how the computer evaluates builds—a Daring opponent is more likely to take a higher-risk approach to the game.

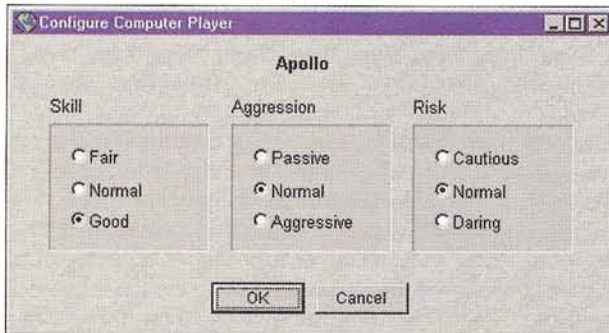
When the AI starts its turn, it considers its available events, and determines whether to play zero, one or two events before starting its empire. As it looks at each event, it considers where it might play the event, and what benefit the event has at the current time. If the event has enough benefit, it is played. The AI then starts its empire, and commences unit placement. Between each unit placement, it again considers playing any events.

Players can also benefit from the AI's capabilities by using the Advisor. The advisor can be summoned using the option under the View menu during human play. The advisor can recommend use of events, placement of builds and targets for events. The advisor uses a scaled-back portion of the game's AI routines—so, though his advice is usually good, you must recognize that you are in charge, and he's just the advisor!



# MAKING HISTORY IN THE WORLD

by William J. Dickerson



**H**ISTORY OF THE WORLD is not a game to be won in a single turn. It is won only by outplaying your opponents over the entire game—by maintaining your presence in many Areas throughout the game. You will often find that having a specific empire can be a help in one game, but a hindrance in the next. This article will provide a general idea of what your goal should be in each Epoch and a thumb-nail sketch of each empire to help you reach that goal. (I assume for this article that you turn off the Auto-Select Empires option.)

## EPOCH ONE

When deciding to keep an empire or not, always keep in mind that the player that gets to select first is the one with the lowest strength (highest score serving as a tie breaker). Therefore, you will need a good start with one of the four-strength nations to get an early selection round epoch. If you have an event card that will allow for extra armies to be built (i.e. Allies), this is usually the best round to do so, because many open territories are available. Empire strength points are listed in parentheses.

**Sumeria (4).** Middle of the road choice. It allows you the opportunity of quick dominance in the Middle East, but with Babylonia starting next to your capital, your gains will be all but wiped out before your next turn.

**Egypt (5).** A deceiving selection. You will get a point for presence in a sea and your start Area can give you presence in two Areas (Northern Africa and the Middle East). No matter how good your score, though, you will be selecting your empire in Epoch II after most of the other players.

**Minoans (4).** The starting Area is worth nothing in Epoch I, so you will have to scramble to another Area to get any points beyond your capital, possibly fighting an Egyptian navy in the Eastern Mediterranean to do so.

**Indus Valley (4).** This is another empire that will allow presence in two Areas (India

and Middle East). Using the terrain in the Western and Eastern Deccan lands can help preserve your armies for later Epochs.

**Babylonia (4).** The good news is that you start between two resources. The bad news is that you will be fighting at least one other empire to take them, which is something they probably didn't have to do.

**Shang Dynasty (4).** You will get dominance in China with no effort at all, but nothing else, without an event card giving you additional armies.

**Aryans (5).** You have no capital, you start in an Area worth nothing and will have to fight at least one empire to get to an Area that will get you a score. If this isn't bad enough, you will be going last next turn because of your high strength and low score potential.

*Minor Empire: Hittites (3).* The player with this empire has an excellent chance of selecting the first empire next round. It will help them gain dominance of Middle East or give them presence if their main empire is starting elsewhere.

## EPOCH TWO

Be aware that victory points for Areas start to change as each Area becomes more important in history. The flip side of that coin is that you can expect more empires to emerge in or near these regions as the points go up. If you only have presence in one Area, you should be looking to expand to another, preferably one next to the gains you have already made. Keep in mind that



you can take over one of your territories without a fight, but the conquest rules will still apply (Forts and Fortresses will be destroyed and Capital and Cities reduced).

**Assyria (8).** Regardless of the number of opponents, you will be fighting to expand outward. Keep in mind that you are going first and other empires will be going through you for dominance in the Middle East.

**Chou Dynasty (6).** In spite of its small strength, it can be useful to those who did not have the Shang Dynasty in the previous

epoch. If you did, then you'll be taking the same territories again without adding to your score.

**Vedic City States (6).** This empire provides the same opportunities and drawbacks for India that the Chou Dynasty does for China, with one exception. You are more vulnerable to other players attacking you from the west.

**Greek City States (9).** This is a solid choice that will allow you to take dominance in Southern Europe with little effort. The terrain will help you defend your gains here when (if) Rome or Macedonia show up.

**Scythians (7).** The worst empire of the epoch. You get no capital victory points towards your score. You must attack either through the terrain in the Middle East to the South or waste two armies to get to Southern Europe.

**Carthagina (8).** The obvious expansion paths for this empire are North Africa and the Iberian peninsula in Southern Europe. Don't discount a foothold in the Middle East through the Mediterranean—the AI won't if given the chance.

**Persia (15).** The first of the large empires makes its appearance. Excepting very bad luck with the dice, you should be able to make a significant grab of lands in India and the Middle East at least. The one drawback to Persia is that when the empires are selected next epoch, you will be last, nearly guaranteeing that one of your opponents will pass you an empire you don't want.

*Minor Empire: Phoenicia (3).* The start land for this empire won't last very long with all of the empires going through the Middle East in Epochs Two and Three. Use their navigation to attack fleets, score sea points, and pave the way for movement over the Mediterranean.

## EPOCH THREE

The Persians at the end of Epoch II signal the appearance of empires that will attempt to sweep all in their path. The computer game, as opposed to the board game, will re-calculate your score at the start of each Epoch. Until your turn takes place in the new epoch, your score will be decreased by losses suffered. Once your turn is complete, your score is "locked" and cannot be decreased by any losses you suffer. The gains you make early may be swept away later in the epoch, but by hitting your opponents hard early in the epochs, you might end up with a larger net gain in points.

Don't get caught up with the idea of gaining control of an Area at the expense of dominance somewhere else. You can count on having the computer players take control away from you, whereas you may hold your dominance in another Area until it's your turn in the next epoch.

Empire/Pass Empire	Player	Score / Strength	Received From	Passed To
Albion	Shiva	0 : 4	Shiva	Shiva
Mars	Mars	0 : 4		
Apollo	Apollo	7 : 4		
Zeus	Zeus	4 : 4		
Hermes	Hermes	4 : 4		
Balor	Balor	13 : 5		

Empire	Strength	Capital	Navigation
Aztec	6	Yes	No
Chou Dynasty	6	Yes	No
Vedic City States	6	Yes	No
Green City States	9	Yes	Yes
Zyngans	7	No	No
Carthage	8	Yes	Yes
Peria	15	Yes	Yes

Mars  
You Draw Scythians, Turn 5  
You Can Keep The Empire Or Pass It

**Celts (8).** This is a weak empire whose advantages lie in its early start and the fact that the empires to come will focus most of their attention on the Areas with higher point totals than that of Northern Europe. Use your terrain for defense and get into Albion for the easy monument build.

**Macedonia (15).** A strong empire whose main failing is that most of the gains will probably fall to the Romans in the same epoch. Use your strength to gain dominance where you can.

**Maurya (10).** Dominance of India is within easy grasp and should be your first move. The Treachery or Surprise Attack events can help you get through the rugged terrain of Southeast Asia to gain a presence in China.

**Han Dynasty (12).** The same arguments made for the Chou Dynasty in Epoch II hold true here as well. If you do have presence/dominance in China from a previous epoch, use your navigation in the South China Sea to get to an island or mine in Southeast Asia.

**Hsiung-Nu (7).** Has most of the disadvantages an empire can have. Small size for the epoch, no capital or navigation and, unless you are playing a game with few players, you are assured of having to fight your way through many armies to gain points in China.

**Romans (25).** This empire has the potential for being a ticking time bomb in the game. It has the advantage of the largest army builds in the entire game plus four navigable seas. However, you must win almost every battle this round for your highest possible score. Why? The first determining factor of selecting an empire in each epoch is your strength. If you play the Romans in this epoch, you will be last to select in Epoch IV and the first player to draw a bad empire will pass it right to you. If you have the choice, pass the Romans to a player with a low strength and good score. A lot of their victory points should be decreased before their turn begins and it will also focus the attention of the other players on them.

**Sassanids (9).** Having this empire, you have probably seen your gains from the previous epochs overrun by the activity of

this one. Dominance of the Middle East with presence in India is probably all that will be in your reach at this time.

**Minor Empire: Mayans (2).** A capital with a fort in Central America will survive possibly for the rest of the game.

## EPOCH FOUR

Upon reaching this epoch, regardless of the number of players, most of the map will be full at this point. Don't underestimate the use of navigation to help you get from point A to point B. If you have fleets from previous epochs still in play, make use of them. Keep in mind, however, that you will only be able to use the fleets from past epochs in seas for which you have navigation ability in your current turn.

**Guptas (8).** Dominance for India should be an easy goal to reach. The situation for this empire is not unlike that of the Celts in the last epoch, but the potential total for victory points is higher for the Guptas. If you have the option of trading this away, don't make the mistake of giving it to the player who had the Romans. The early start will allow that player to score the gains twice.

**Goths (10).** Don't concentrate solely on the victory points in Northern Europe. There are potentially three empires in the next epoch who will be starting in this Area. Get what you can with little effort and then think about what you can do in Southern Europe or maybe even the Middle East.

**Huns (14).** The choices here are wide open for this empire and you move relatively early. The large strength will allow movement into China, India and the Middle East together, or even Northern and Southern Europe. The path will depend on what you need to support from the past or if you can grab an Area rich in victory points and monuments.

**Byzantines (12).** A nice starting land that gives you access to three other Areas quickly. The navigation abilities here support this nicely and can allow you to make one or two attacks with difficult terrain over water instead of making many attacks over land.

**T'ang Dynasty (11).** You do not have many options here beyond dominance in China. Southeast Asia can provide some victory points, but the Khmers may come into play at the end of the epoch.

**Arabs (18).** The number of armies will help you overcome the lack of navigation. Dominance of the Middle East is a sure thing. You can use North Africa as a bridge to Southern Europe or the straits in the Black Sea to get to the Balkans. Fortunate events and dice rolls can help you reach India as well.

**Khmers (5).** Dominance of Southeast Asia is about all you can count on. All it will take is one bad roll to stop your move into China or India. You will almost always end up with this empire if you are the Romans. Going last with this empire doesn't even provide the opportunity to recover any losses suffered during this epoch.

**Minor Empire: Anglo-Saxons (3).** Can be best used in supporting one of the Northern European empires in Epoch V, should you start with one of them.

## EPOCH FIVE

There are some players who like to make use of forts and fortresses to help hold onto the gains made instead of stretching out to their limits to score the most at once. Be aware of where you place these forts, as nothing is more frustrating than a fortress being displaced by being in the starting land of a new empire. Try to make use of a land with as many borders having difficult terrain as possible. In one game my Celtic fortress in Central Europe cost the Byzantines every single army as they attacked from Danubia across difficult terrain. I was feeling pretty smart until the Holy Roman Empire started in Central Europe and wiped me out without a fight.

**Franks (10).** With the potential for two opponents to appear with you in Northern Europe, strike towards Southern Europe, where the victory points are still worth more. This will also help you make use of your navigation. Don't be afraid to try to grab Albion.

**Vikings (9).** Do whatever you need to do to break out of the North Sea into the Atlantic. The access is restricted to one land in North America, which will give you no victory points, but this move will score points later while saving the fleet build for a later empire.

Events Played This Epoch			Total Events Played	
Turn	Player/Event	Event Played	Player	Total
1	Apollo	Curator	Apollo	5
1	Apollo		Balor	6
2	Mars	Phoenicia	Mars	2
3	Balor	Scythians	Jerush Reviv	

**Holy Roman Empire (10).** Consolidate your gains in Northern and Southern Europe. Your lack of navigation really doesn't allow you to do otherwise. These should last to the next epoch, unless the Seljuk Turks turn their attention your way.

**Chola (8).** You will use up half of your strength on your mandatory fleet build and getting into position to strike at another

Area. This may not even get you dominance of India. Fortunately, India is worth three victory points, won't decrease in value and the southern half of India will not face attacks until the end of Epoch VI.

**Sung Dynasty (9).** Push for dominance of China and make a strike towards India through Southeast Asia, if you still have the strength for it. Be aware that the hoofbeats of the Mongols could be coming at you from the north.

**Seljuk Turks (12).** Your best bet is to push towards the Middle East and India. Strike towards China if you know there are no Mongols. Northern Europe may be attractive, but has less to offer in victory points in the near term.

**Mongols (20).** Eurasia is actually worth a victory point now, but not enough compared to the score potential for China and beyond. Make your mark by striking through China towards Southeast Asia and India.

*Minor Empire: Fujiwara (3).* One of the weakest of the minor empires, it starts when Nippon is not worth any victory points.

## EPOCH SIX

The latter part of this epoch heralds the first appearance of what could be termed the worldwide empires (those with ocean navigation in the game). Their strongest attribute isn't necessarily the ability to dominate the "New World" of North and South America. More important is the ability to pick and choose where they wish to make their greatest efforts. The Americas are one option, but the Indian Ocean is a gateway to the Areas of India and Southeast Asia, which are worth more than that of the Americas combined.

**Ming Dynasty (10).** This empire will help you consolidate gains in China, while being strong enough to get to India via Southeast Asia.

**Timurid Emirates (8).** The best path is towards India. The relatively low strength for this era will make it very difficult to attain dominance in India and the Middle East unless you already have a significant presence in both at the start of your turn.

**Incas and Aztecs (4).** A poor empire to have, but better than the first glance shows (after all, it moves early and neither of the prior empires of the epoch will have dug into your previous possessions). Of course, you may enter Epoch VII with little left on the board.

**Ottoman Turks (15).** Essentially, this empire can be played as the Byzantines were in Epoch IV. Gains made in the Middle East won't be challenged, but the victory points take a nosedive. You will have

tougher battles going towards Europe, but the reward in points is worth the risk and you don't want players to carry their Northern Europe position into Epoch VII.

**Portugal (10).** This empire is one that can almost get away without attacking. Don't waste armies consolidating gains in Southern Europe. Be sure to drop at least one army in each of the Americas. The Sub-Saharan African resources provide an easy monument. You can end your turn going for monuments and position in India and the Middle East via the Indian Ocean.

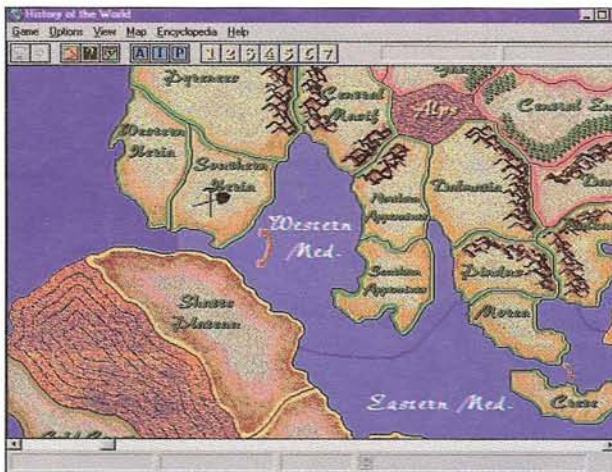
**Spain (15).** Go first to those same Areas listed above for Portugal. Usually the best play is to follow Portugal's lead and swallow them up. Your extra five armies should allow you to take a number of monuments and lands from leading players.

**Mughals (12).** Don't be afraid to be ambitious with this empire. You are likely to gain dominance in two Areas (India and China or the Middle East).

*Minor Empire: Safavids (3).* This empire should be used to straddle the Middle East and India.

## EPOCH SEVEN

The goal of the players for this epoch should have been, at worst, to stay within 30 points of the leader. I have found it to be very difficult (but not impossible) to win a game when you are further behind



than that, particularly if there are many players between you and the leader. A player in the middle of the field can win with an early empire if the leaders are substantially attacked before their empire moves. You don't want to give the leader an empire which moves early in this epoch; give them Germany or the United States.

**Russia (12).** Not an empire for the player trying to catch the leader, unless you just finished playing Spain and have a great presence around the board. However, you

can't give it to the leader either. Northern Europe is the main target, but China could be a good target as well.

**Manchu Dynasty (12).** China and Southeast Asia are the realistic targets. This is a weaker choice than Russia due to the lower point potential, the later start and the corresponding losses during Russia's turn.

**Netherlands (8).** Your advantage here is scoring before the French and British kick you around. Concentrate on Northern Europe or use your ocean navigation to make the best of a bad empire. This is a good empire to hold if you have great presence around the board and fear getting a worse empire.

**France (15).** This empire can go further than Spain did. A player with France should be able to gain enough points to overtake most opponents, as long as Britain is held by a player bringing up the rear.

**Britain (20).** The large number of builds will allow Britain to go anywhere it desires, provided it can win enough coastal battles against strengthened greeting parties. Secure dominance in Northern Europe and North America as they are worth more for the trouble than any other Area in this epoch.

**United States (10).** Some players may be surprised by the low strength of the United States. Keep in mind that the end of this epoch is 1914. At this time, the United States was a continental power, not a world power, and the game restricts you to exactly that. Go for dominance in North America and an inroad into South America.

**Germany (10).** More often than not, the game has already been decided when it's Germany's turn. Dominance of Northern Europe is within reach. After that, move where you can make the fastest gains and hope it's enough for the win.

*Minor Empire: Japan (5).* The large strength should be enough to gain dominance of Nippon with a presence in China—and a surprise victory if your opponents lost track of the fact that you hadn't yet played a minor empire.

## AFTERMATH

Nobody ever promised that it would be easy to make history. It is very likely that you will only get one or two of the best and worst empires during the game. Where you will win or lose will depend on how you play the middle of the road choices to capitalize on past efforts.

The event cards can go a long way toward helping you to victory, but with 49 cards in seven categories, these are a whole different course of historical study. ★

## SERIES REPLAY

# STONEWALL'S LAST BATTLE

## Salem Church Scenario

UNION: Charles Bahl

CONFEDERATE: Les Wain

NEUTRAL COMMENTATOR: Tony Reid

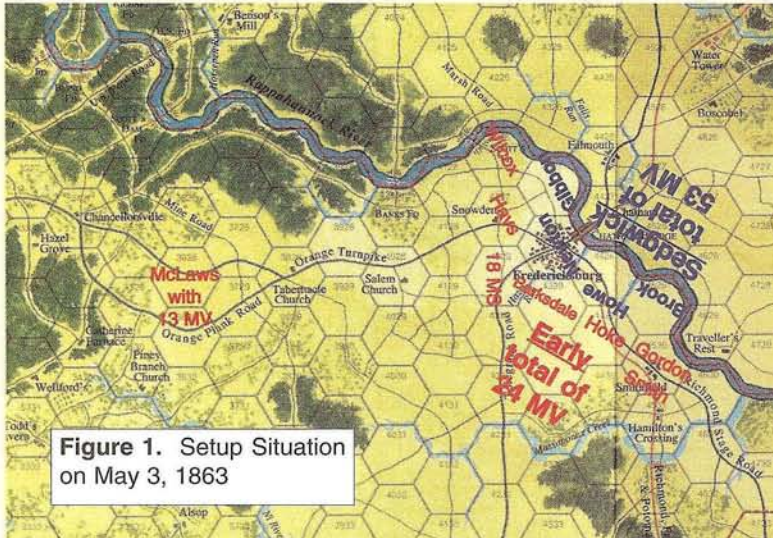


Figure 1. Setup Situation on May 3, 1863

The Salem Church scenario of *STONEWALL'S LAST BATTLE* is the simplest entry possible into the wonderful world of the *Great Campaigns of the American Civil War*. It is only one game turn long, and it contains just eight units for the Confederate player and four units for the Union player. The scenario can be finished easily in under an hour. Since it uses no cavalry and very few special rules, I highly recommend it for the beginning player, who can play it solitaire as a study tool while learning the rules. Although simple, the Salem Church scenario is well-balanced and permits an intriguing array of possible strategies for both players.

We played the Salem Church scenario several times and chose the Series Replay printed here as the most exciting, well-balanced, and instructive of the lot. Although the replay does not list every die roll, it is complete enough to allow the reader to recreate the game. Fatigue acquired by either marching or assaulting is listed after the unit's name. For example, "Brooks/F2" means that Brooks' division increases its fatigue to level 2. If playing along at home, readers should remember to increase a unit's fatigue due to combat results (along with combat losses, disorganization and demoralization).

[For those readers unfamiliar with this game system, let me quickly brief you on the situation. The scenario takes place on May 3, 1863, simulating Sedgwick's belated attack out of Fredericksburg against Early's thinly stretched line of entrenched defenders. The Union scores victory points (VPs) for being the last to occupy six hexes, with Tabernacle Church and Salem Church providing eight VPs and five VPs respectively). The Union player also gains a VP

for each Confederate Manpower Point lost in combat or retreat, while he loses a VP for each of his own so lost (march losses don't matter). The Union must obtain at least nine VPs to win. As was typical of the war, the Union is willing to trade away men for territory. Although both players must pass before the day is done, the accumulation of fatigue levels on units as they march and fight will bring the day to a close. The key will be to use the troops wisely before they are essentially "spent" for the day or to risk fighting at higher fatigue levels, when the downside can be disastrous.—SKT]

Note: In Action Phases 1 through 5, the Union automatically has the initiative. After that, rolls are made for initiative.

**Action Phase 1/Union (AP1/U):** Howe/F1 to 4328 (Fredericksburg).

**AP2/U:** Brooks/F1 to 4428.

**AP3/U:** Brooks/F2 to 4328 (Fredericksburg).

**AP4/U:** Gibbon/F1 detaches Sub-1 (with a Manpower Value of 3) in 4327. Gibbon moves to 4328 (Fredericksburg).

**AP5/U:** Sedgwick assaults 18 MS (4228) using Newton/F1 and Howe/F2.

**Combat result:** Union 1 Ea; Confederate 2DR. This eliminates 18 MS. Sedgwick

→→→→→ (Continued on p. 35)



Figure 2. Position after Action Phase 6. Union troops have broken through the Confederate lines around Fredericksburg. Will the Rebels be able to move enough units west to stem the Federal advance?

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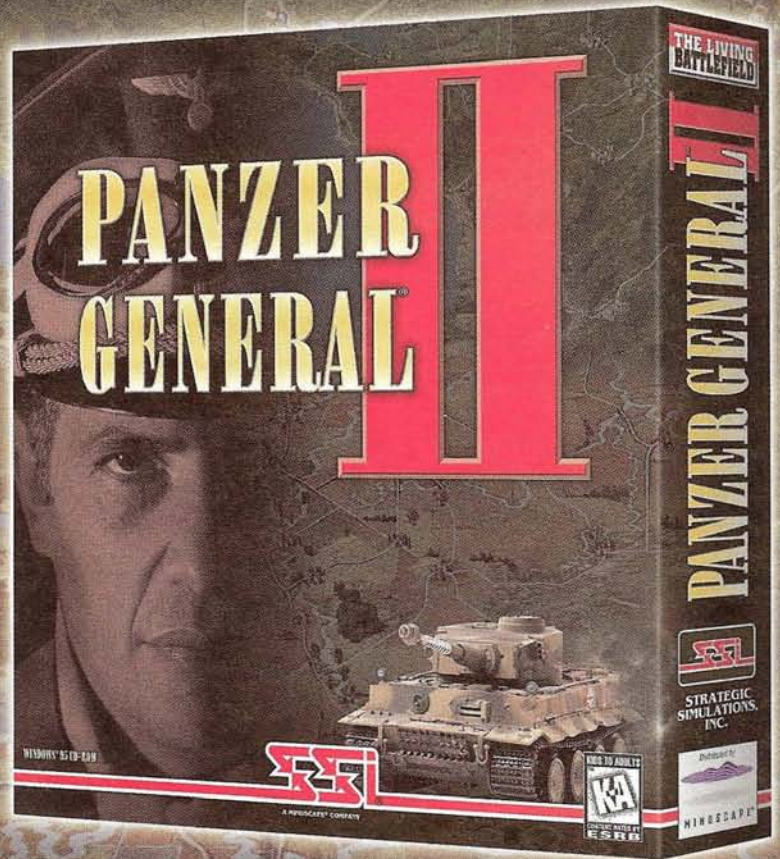
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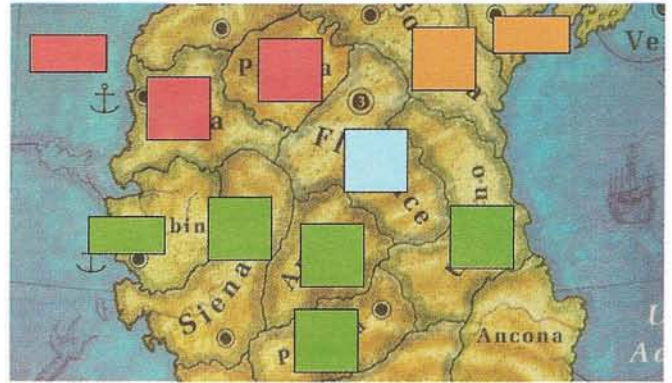


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## CONTEST #182—ONCE MORE INTO THE BREACH

Fortunately for Florence, this game is not *DIPLOMACY*. It is Scenario I, the Fall 1457 turn, in a game of *MACHIAVELLI* (1995 edition). Optional rules 16 and 17 are in force. All provinces are controlled by their current occupant (vacant provinces are controlled by original owners). A grand alliance of Milan, Venice and The Papacy has drained their treasuries and borrowed the maximum in order to eliminate Florence. The money-lender are about to call those loans, so the alliance has just one turn to eliminate Florence before the utter catastrophe of default. Florence, on the other hand, has no treasury, but can borrow 18 ducats. Will that be enough for Florence to stave off defeat? Possibly, for in *MACHIAVELLI*, there is always hope. Your editor has received the sealed orders of the grand alliance (the best plan they can conceive). Contestants must now take the role of Florence and submit orders to save the day. "I take it the odds are long, the situation nearly hopeless. It sounds like fun."



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# WILL TO FIGHT...ERADICATED

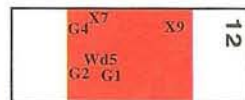
## ASL SCENARIO G40

Scenario Design: Louie Tokarz



**PABIANCE, POLAND, 7 September 1939:** After the 23rd Panzer Regiment failed to take Pabiance, the Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler entered into the firestorm and made great gains. Other units, however, couldn't keep up with the Leibstandarte, with the result being a salient. In order to hold the salient, the Leibstandarte had to dole out small sections of men. The Waffen SS attack began to run out of steam due to the number of casualties and the desperate situation at hand. The Polish Army had no such shortage of men, as units withdrawing from the west were ordered immediately into this battle.

### BOARD CONFIGURATION:



(Only hexrows K through Y are playable)

**VICTORY CONDITIONS:** The Germans win at game end if they amass  $\geq 29$  Victory Points. Victory Points are awarded for Building Control. Each Building is worth VP equal to the number of Locations it contains (e.g., Building 12R6 is worth 10 VPs to the Controlling side at game end.)

### BALANCE:

☙ In the Victory Conditions replace "29" with "27".

☛ In the Victory Conditions replace "29" with "31".

### TURN RECORD CHART

☙ GERMAN Sets Up First [0]	1	2 <sup>☙</sup>	3 <sup>☙</sup>	4	5	6	7 <sup>☛</sup>	END
☛ POLISH Moves First [142]								



Elements of Kompanies 1 and 2, Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler [ELR: 4] set up on/between hexrows O and R (see SSR 3): {SAN: 3}



3

4

Enter on Turn 2 along the west edge:



2

Enter on Turn 3 along the west edge:

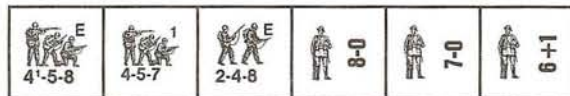


8

2



Elements of 2nd Kaniow Rifle Regiment and ad hoc Infantry and dismounted Cavalry units [ELR: 1] set up on/east-of hexrow M (see SSR 3): {SAN: 4}

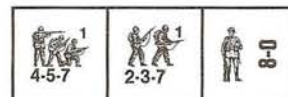


7

6

2

Enter on Turn 7 along the east edge:



2

### SPECIAL RULES:

1. EC are Moderate, with no wind at start.

2. Gullies do not exist, treat as other terrain in the hex. All buildings are wooden. All multi-hex buildings (including Rowhouses) are Two-Story houses (B23.22). Ignore all stairway symbols (B23.23) and black bars (B23.31). Cellars (O6) are in effect [EXC: they are not fortified]. Place overlays as follows: G1 on V3; G2 on Y3-X2; G4 on Y8-X7; Wd5 on X4-W5; X7 on V8; X9 on M8.

3. The Polish OB given 2-4-8s are setup first using HIP in Cellar Locations. All German units setup next, followed by the remaining Polish units. No German unit may setup in a Cellar Location. The Poles initially Control the buildings that the HS setup in; all other buildings on/west-of hexrow O are initially Controlled by the Germans.

4. Hand-to-Hand CC (J2.31) is allowed.

5. The broken morale of all German MMC is increased by one.

6. All Polish squads have Assault Fire (A7.36) capability.

**AFTERMATH:** The Polish Infantry and Cavalry units entered the battle in every type of formation and began to drive the Germans to the defensive, street fighting and engaging in close hand-to-hand combat until they were once again at the edge of town. Polish troops that had been passed by would suddenly spring out of cellars and doorways and inflict serious damage to the Germans sweeping through the streets. The SS men hung on and called for reinforcements to help take back the town. The Poles made one last desperate effort, but were gunned down by the Germans. The failure of the Polish assault resulted in the mass surrender of the Pabiance Garrison. As Polish prisoners were marched past it was quite clear that their will to fight was totally eradicated.

# JABO!



## ASL SCENARIO G41



**CHENEUX, BELGIUM, 18 December 1944:** The long file of Kampfgruppe Peiper vehicles, many heavily camouflaged with pine boughs, filled the road north from Trois Ponts, through La Gleize, and on toward Cheneux where advance German elements had discovered an intact, undefended bridge over the Amblève river. The mist and cloud cover had temporarily thinned out, however, and a U.S. F-6 aircraft (the reconnaissance version of the P-51) had overflown the column, spotted it, and promptly reported its location to the IX Tactical Air Command. Shortly after the lead German vehicles had crossed the bridge, a swarm of P-47 Thunderbolts appeared overhead.

### MAP-GROUP CONFIGURATION:



(Only hexes numbered ≤ 14 in hexrows AA-TT are playable)

**VICTORY CONDITIONS:** The Americans win if at game end they have amassed ≥ 15 Casualty Victory Points more than the Germans. Each Bugged/Immobilized vehicle at game end counts for half (FRU) its normal Casualty VP.

### BALANCE:

☛ In the Victory Conditions replace "15" with "18".

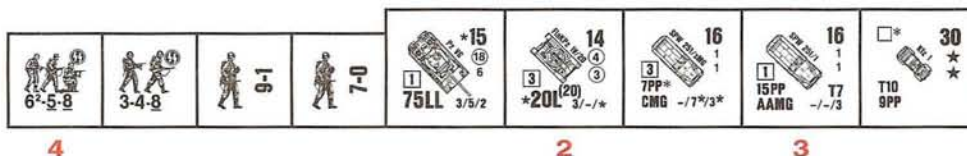
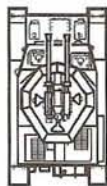
☆ In the Victory Conditions replace "15" with "12".

## TURN RECORD CHART

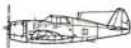
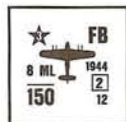
☛ GERMAN Sets Up and Moves First (see SSR 3)



**Elements of Kampfgruppe Peiper [ELR: 5]** set up in Motion on road hexes running from GG7-FF9-GG10-JJ8; no vehicle may be set up in AA mode, and all Personnel must be set up as Passengers/Riders (see also SSR 2): {SAN: 0}



**Elements of the IX Tactical Air Command** enter automatically on Turn 1: {SAN: 0}



3

### SPECIAL RULES:

1. See KGP SSR. Weather is Clear. The Mist Change DR is NA (SSR KGP 3).
2. Passengers may be set up off-map in Cloaking Display boxes, and need be revealed only if unloaded, broken, or eliminated.
3. There are no U.S. Player Turns for any purpose.
4. All U.S. FB enter carrying HE bombs.
5. No vehicle may enter a building.
6. Since there are no U.S. ground units on the map, German units lose their concealment only if they fire or are broken. However, E7.25 (re: a unit moving in Open Ground) applies normally. There can be no Mistaken Attack (E7.32); such a result is ignored and the plane remains in play.

**AFTERMATH:** The head of the column was caught in the open, with little nearby cover for the vehicles. As the *SS-panzergrenadiers* frantically unloaded and dispersed into the surrounding area, two halftracks near the bridge went up in flames. Some 200 yards further up the road, a 500-lb. bomb obliterated a Kübelwagen and its occupants, immobilized a nearby Panther, and badly damaged Dumont's house, killing several civilians inside. All the while, two Whirlwind AA tanks maintained a frenzied defensive fire, rotating their turrets incessantly as they attempted to cover all approaches. One Thunderbolt was hit, and crashed miles away to the northeast near Francorchamps. In all, the air attacks destroyed or disabled about a dozen German vehicles, including two Panthers. Its greatest contribution was in imposing a two-hour delay in KG Peiper's progress, for it took that long to get the column moving again—and those hours were put to good use by U.S. engineers, whose demolition of the bridge over the Lienne later that afternoon would force Peiper to fall back to the Stoumont-Cheneux-La Gleize area.

→→→→→ (from p. 29)

advances with Newton and Howe into 4228.

**AP6/U:** Sedgwick (with three movement points) activates Newton, Howe and Brooks. Sedgwick transfers to Brooks. Newton/F2 and Howe/F3 move to 4028 (Salem Church). Sedgwick using Brooks/F3 attacks Hays in 4227 (Snowden). **Combat result:** Union 1Da; Confederate Dr. Hays retreats to 3827; Sedgwick and Brooks advance to 4227 (Snowden).

*Union VP Total = 10 (five for Salem Church, two for Fredericksburg, two for Snowden, two for Confederate losses, -1 for Union losses).*

## UNION

The special Union Initiative rules for the Salem Church scenario allow the Union player to take consecutive initiatives without rolling the die as long as he does not attack or move north of the Rappahannock. I took advantage of this rule to get all of my units where I wanted them prior to Sedgwick's major assault to break out of the Confederate lines.

Because I intended to break out across a narrow, one-hex front (at 4228), I concen-

trated all my forces (at some cost in fatigue) at Fredericksburg. This concentration allowed me not only to breakout successfully but permitted me to capture Snowden and retain control of Fredericksburg as well. I moved Howe north in order to assist Newton in the assault against the Confederate 18th Mississippi Regiment (18 MS). I needed as much firepower as I could bring to bear in order to either destroy the Rebel unit or force it to rout. Brooks was moved up in order to attack Snowden. Gibbons was sent to Fredericksburg to hold the town after the assaulting troops had moved out. A small detachment was left in hex 4327 in order to prevent an overwhelming flank attack modifier in case the Confederates should counterattack against the lightly defended Fredericksburg position.

The position of 18 MS (hex 4228) is the key weakness in the Confederate line. The hex is not the weakest in terms of sheer Combat Value (that distinction goes to Wilcox's position). However, if the Union wins the initiative die roll in the Action Phase immediately following the successful assault on this hex, the Union can advance units to Salem Church without being stopped by a Confederate zone of control. (This kind of advance is not possible, for

example, if the Union assaults Snowden or 4226 instead.) In fact, I did win the initiative die roll and was able to advance immediately to Salem Church.

Brooks' attack on Hays at Snowden was not as successful as I would have liked. Although I captured the hex (and two VPs), Brooks at Fatigue Level 4 is essentially done for the day (and out of this one-turn game). Especially bad was the fact that Hays extended his retreat in order to be in a position to occupy Tabernacle Church at the first available opportunity.

## CONFEDERATE

The Union attack was well-positioned and successful. However, if luck had been with me and I had won the initiative die roll for Action Phase 6, things would have taken a much different turn. In all likelihood, I would then have pulled Wilcox out of the line and moved his division west to block the Orange Turnpike and the road network leading to Salem and Tabernacle Churches. If nothing else, this would have bought me time to bring up more troops from around Fredericksburg for the defense of Salem Church, or it would have given me time to activate McLaws.

As it stands, however, I have to be satisfied with Hays falling back to 3827. This is

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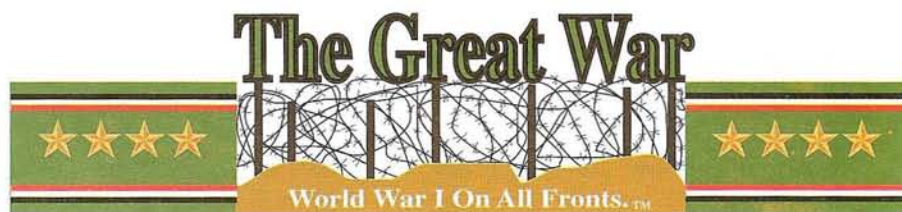
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<b>British</b>  <b>14-17-5</b> <b>1914 rifle division</b>	<b>British</b>  <b>10-13-5</b> <b>1916 inf. division</b>	<b>French</b>  <b>8-11-5</b> <b>1914 inf. division</b>	<b>French</b>  <b>6-10-5</b> <b>1916 inf. division</b>	<b>Indian</b>  <b>9-5-7</b> <b>cavalry division</b>
<b>German</b>  <b>16-18-5</b> <b>1914 inf. division</b>	<b>German</b>  <b>10-13-5</b> <b>1916 inf. division</b>	<b>Austrian</b>  <b>8-11-7</b> <b>1914 mtn. rifle div.</b>	<b>Bavarian</b>  <b>22-8</b> <b>1916 mtn. stoss div.</b>	<b>Russian</b>  <b>2-3-7</b> <b>sharpshooter brigade</b>

**Game Research/Design • POB 591 • Grinnell, IA 50112  
Vox: 515-236-8899 • Fax: 515-236-6666 • email: euroboss@avn.net**



**Figure 3.** Position after Action Phase 8. The Confederate withdrawal from Fredericksburg has blocked the approaches to Tabernacle Church. The Union player can either hold at Salem Church or try another breakout toward the west.

not just a random retreat. I planned it carefully to be as close to Tabernacle Church as possible. If I win the initiative for the next Action Phase, I will beat the Union player to Tabernacle Church, and he will have to put up a fight if he wants those eight VPs.

**NEUTRAL COMMENTARY**

I have no quibble with the Union player's troop disposition prior to his first assault. Leaving Early with control of the Rappahannock south of Fredericksburg makes absolute sense. It is virtually impossible to break through this sector of the entrenched line. Unless Early pulls out of this area for other reasons (to reinforce Tabernacle Church or attack Salem Church, for example), Smithfield and Hamilton's Crossing cannot be taken.

Although the Union's attack and subsequent advance went well, the Union player will have to hold his gains in order to assure himself the victory. It might have been a good idea to send Howe south to hex 4130 while Newton continued to hold Salem Church. From hex 4130 Howe is in a position to hold up any move west from the Rappahannock by the brigades of Early's division. Obviously, the Union player does not have such a defensive plan in mind. He is most likely keeping his troops concentrated in preparation for a major thrust against Tabernacle Church. However, if Hays gets there first, Sedgwick must try to launch his final offensive against Tabernacle Church before McLaws arrives on the scene.

So far, of course, the game has belonged to the Union. Hays' retreat toward Tabernacle Church was a clever ploy, however. Since most of the Confederate units are fresh, the Rebel player still has a lot of fight left in him. Activation of McLaws and the skillful use of Early's brigades could give him the victory.

**AP7/C:** Hays/F4 moves to 3828 (Tabernacle Church), detaches Sub-1/F4 (with a Manpower Value of 1) there, and then moves to 3928.

**CONFEDERATE**

A bit of explanation is probably in order. The most obvious move on my part would have been to advance Hays directly to Tabernacle Church. But Hays is just not strong enough to hold the place versus Newton. (I calculate that an attack by Newton would produce at least a +4 modifier—a +5 modifier if the Union player added Sedgwick to the stack.) What I really need to do is hold both of the hexes to the east of Tabernacle Church (3928 and 3929). By delaying the Federals for an additional turn to the east of Tabernacle Church, I hope to be able to get a chance to activate McLaws. I occupied one of these two key hexes by moving Hays to 3928. If I win the initiative in the next Action Phase, I just might be able to move part of Early's division and seize the other hex.

**AP8/C:** Early (with eight movement points!) activates Gordon/F1, Smith/F1 and Hoke/F1. Early transfers to Gordon. Gordon and Smith (with Early) move to 3929. Hoke moves to 4129.

**UNION**

The Confederate player's prayers are answered (even without a forced march) and he puts me into an incredibly tight spot. Hoke in 4129 severs Sedgwick's Command Radius to Newton and Howe. I have only two choices now: stay put at Salem Church or push toward the west with Newton and attempt to take Tabernacle Church. Although the first alternative seems like the only rational course of action, I'm not sure. If I can advance to Tabernacle Church and hold it, I have the chance of winning a Decisive Victory. Even if the Rebel player should recapture Tabernacle Church, it is unlikely that McLaws can make it all the way to Salem Church with enough steam left over to mount a successful attack. Salem Church appears safe whether or not I get aggressive and attempt the big win. Why not go for it?

**CONFEDERATE**

In pulling back Early's brigades, I tried to find the best hexes for them to occupy. Hoke's position (hex 4129) is important for two reasons. First, it breaks Sedgwick's command radius to Newton and Howe. Second, if I attack the Salem Church hex (almost a certainty), it gives me a potential +4 flank attack modifier. The Early/Gordon/Smith position is also important. First, of course, it blocks one of the hexes to Tabernacle Church. Second, if McLaws attacks Tabernacle Church from hex 3728, it provides another potential +4 flank attack modifier. Barksdale, of course, will have to remain behind to prevent a strong Union move to capture Smithfield and Hamilton's Crossing.



**Figure 4.** Position after Action Phase 10. The Union attack has succeeded in capturing both of its primary objectives. Can the Rebels counterattack before time runs out?

## NEUTRAL COMMENTARY

The Union player's analysis is not correct. He has a better chance of holding Salem Church if he stays there with both Newton and Howe. I hope he hasn't forgotten to take into consideration all of the flank attack rules. McLaws will not receive a flank attack modifier against Newton and Howe because Hoke has less than one-fourth the defender's Defense Value (see page 12, the last paragraph of the flank attack rules). However, if the Union player leaves only Howe behind to defend Salem Church, an attack by McLaws will receive a +4 flank attack modifier. This is not to say that the Union player's plan has no redeeming characteristics. As he indicated, it does give him the opportunity for a Decisive victory. Yet, I think he should consider more carefully the risk he is taking to achieve that goal.

The troop disposition taken up by the Confederate player deserves considerable praise. This is especially true of Early's brigades, which not only defend his position well but also have the potential of providing significant offensive punch.

**AP9/C:** The Confederate player yields the initiative to the Union player and activates McLaws. The Union player uses Newton /F3 to attack Hays (as a result of the fatigue increase, Newton is disorganized). Combat result: Union 2D; Confederate f.

**AP10/U:** Howe/F4 (with six movement points) makes a prepared attack against Hays. Combat result: Union a; Confederate 2DR. Hays routs to 3527. Howe advances into 3928. Howe then makes a normal attack against Sub-1. Combat result: Union a; Confederate 3DR\*. Sub-1 is destroyed. Howe advances to 3828 (Tabernacle Church).

*Union VP Total = 19 (eight for Tabernacle Church, five for Salem Church, two for Fredericksburg, two for Snowden, five for Confederate losses, -3 for Union losses).*

## UNION

On to Tabernacle Church! After Newton's attack up the Orange Turnpike failed, I had no choice but to repeat the attack, this time with Howe. The incredible success of Howe's attack—first against Hays and then against Sub-1—rivals Early's miraculous march for the Confederate player. Now

McLaws will have his work cut out for him. Although McLaws will be favored with strong flank attacks at both Tabernacle and Salem Churches, many things can go wrong with the impending assaults. McLaws can be derailed by just one bad combat result. McLaws may be able to recapture Tabernacle Church, but the occupation of Salem Church seems like a very remote possibility. At this point, I have achieved a Decisive Victory. The trick is to hold it.

## CONFEDERATE

We're approaching the game's Armageddon. Either McLaws wins the day and sweeps east along the turnpike or I can pack up my Minie balls and go home. The strategy is straightforward. Attack Tabernacle Church, and if McLaws has enough impetus left, press on to Salem Church. I don't need to calculate my chance of success, because McLaws' attack is the only possibility I have to pull out a victory. It's an attack that has to be made. As mentioned earlier, I have some pretty high die roll modifiers working to my advantage.

→→→→→ (Continued on p. 57)

## You want Romanians?

## We've got Romanians.

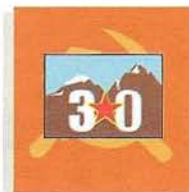


### Red Steel: Clash of Armor at Kishinev, July 1941.

*Izbanda sau moarte!* With the traditional battle cry, *Victory or death*, Romanian cavalry spearheaded the invasion of Bessarabia in the summer of 1941, joined by Romania's only armored division and some German units.

*Red Steel: Clash of Armor at Kishinev* is a battalion-level game at two kilometers per hex. The game system emphasizes armor quality, artillery, formation effectiveness and morale. The Soviets have more and better armor and artillery, while the Romanians are better led and have better infantry plus their fleet of river monitors. 560 near-perfectly die-cut counters (yes, it is possible), one map, 8 pages of rules, five scenarios. Boxed, \$42.

*Red Parachutes* uses the same game system to cover the September, 1943 Soviet airborne assault across the Dnepr River at Kanev-Bukrin. Masses of Soviet rifle divisions and several tank corps attempt to overwhelm the German defenses. 960 counters, one map. Boxed, \$48. Mention this ad and receive both games for \$75.



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→→→→→ (from p. 13)



The subject is a perennial favorite. Currently, the most sought-after strategic-level games covering WWII in Europe are *WORLD IN FLAMES* (known affectionately as “Wallet in Flames”) and *ADVANCED THIRD REICH*. Both are complex designs. They seem to take as long as the O.J. trial and require a J.D. in rules lawyering. Most players appreciate the oceanic depth of these games, but many actually prefer to swim the surface with something like *HITLER'S WAR* or *AXIS & ALLIES*. Steve Kosakowski and Alan Emrich, the dynamic duo behind *KRIEG!*, have charted a mid-level treatment of the European Theater of Operations, and in doing so have given us a game to admire *and* play.

From Scandinavia to the Sahara, Iberian shores to Iraqi deserts, Beth Queman's map is a friendly, pleasant piece of work that lacks only names for its many rivers and mountains. Don't look to be dazzled, but look forward to big hexes, no-questions terrain, and lots of notes in the margins that keep your eyes on the map and out of the rulebook.

The counters are mostly generic corps and identified armies. Eleven unit types are present, with just about every nation in Europe having at least one representative counter (with the notable exception of Switzerland, about the only neutral that can't get involved).

A conversational style keeps the rules fun to read. Accompanying them are plenty of examples, design insights and player notes. If you're like us, you'll regret the absence of an index. But take heart: one's now available at [www.alanemrich.com/krieg-hp.htm](http://www.alanemrich.com/krieg-hp.htm) (and presumably from the publisher for a

stamped envelope). With 28 pages to digest, it's tempting to just skim rather than study the rules. That would be a big mistake. Even though there's nothing really new or radical about *KRIEG!*, it contains some interesting twists that will elude gamers who make assumptions.



*KRIEG!* takes a long time to play, in part because the designers decided most of us want to refight the entire war, not a mere fraction of the action. Thus, play starts in 1939 and runs until the bitter end—that's 50+ turns assuming events follow history. In retrospect, we don't feel cheated by the lack of shorter scenarios (which can now be found on the Internet). With experience, play is fast and furious, and our group was able to play a game in about thirty hours. That's long, but not unreasonable—especially when you're having so much fun!

It is hard to point at a single mechanic that makes *KRIEG!* so outstanding. This is definitely a case of the sum being greater than the parts! But if choose we must, the game's “option cards” stand out. They codify an array of strategic elements without the tedium of complicated special rules. What we've come to call “the cards of war” (with apologies to Herman Wouk) determine how the game flows. Every card in the deck contains an implicit compromise between long-term military, economic and political goals. In every season players must make a hard choice among competing benefits.

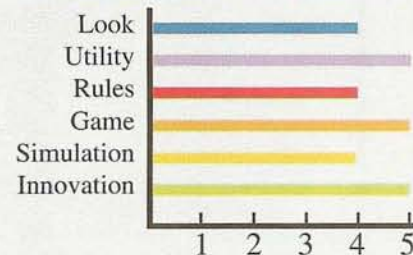
Some cards are a dime a dozen. Others are pure gold: spend them carefully. Glittering within the German deck is “Mobilization,” which occurred historically in late 1939. This card transforms

the German army from the also-ran of prewar days to a dynamo that can take out the French in a quick campaign.

Specifically, the “Mobilization” alchemy adds several powerful option cards to the German player's hand. It also supercharges his army with an HQ, seven land armies, an airborne corps and two air units. In addition to this windfall, several corps (the building blocks of armies) are received during every turn the card is in play. As such, the best time to mobilize *seems* to be over 1940's long summer season. This gets it played in plenty of time for the Russian Campaign, for which the German army needs its maximum boost of six panzer and eighteen infantry steps. The problem, alas, is that this is not a “blitz” card—and if you attack France without benefit of the extra blitz combat phase such cards provide, you'll have a tough time reaching Paris on schedule. Perhaps that's why the historical mobilization was instituted during a short, two-turn season. Hitler traded some of the possible build-up to drive his conquests a little faster.

Option card selection constitutes strategy. Counter-pushing is the tactics, but there is little room for them here. Air and naval power are abstracted; only land operations get anything near a

#### GAME REVIEW ABSTRACT



## Ultimatum

Seasonal Replacements  
4 infantry steps

### Political Event Segment

Select a Target Country or turn this card face down.

- 1 Declare War on Target Country
- 2 Declare War on Target Country
- 3 Declare War on Target Country
- 4 Declare War on Target Country
- 5 Minor Concessions—No Result
- 6 Roll on Diplomatic Incident Table

33 (unplayed)

detailed treatment. We've found that *KRIEG!* players act more like Ike than Patton, thinking more about manipulating force pools (to create armies of varying types) than about positioning forces on the map. Their main concern is overall military strategy, with a dash of politics thrown in for good measure.

Like tactics, politics remain mostly beyond the players' control. Many option cards contain a calculable risk of political repercussion, but the specifics are never known until the die has been cast. As in the real war, minor countries like Yugoslavia and Greece often get involved when least expected (or welcome), distracting one or both players from their long-term goals. These variable events mean no plan is perfect, no

outcome certain. Because of them, *KRIEG!* seems like a new game every time you play.



To fully appreciate its nuance and variety, *KRIEG!* must be played repeatedly. That's exactly what our group did. We've pushed around a lot of cardboard over the years, but for the first time in a long time we found a game that each of us just *had* to own. *KRIEG!* has made wargaming fun around here again, much more than just a time-killing habit. You don't have to be a tarot reader to know why the game gets our vote for best of 1996. It was in the cards.



## Annotated Sequence

Four of the nine turns in each year are special Seasonal Turns. Phases marked with an asterisk only apply to these turns.

### \* Seasonal Victory Check.

Players compare how many "strategic hexes" they've captured and adjust the victory marker accordingly. This may modify unit-delay die rolls or trigger automatic victory.

### Axis Player Turn

\* *Option Card*: The player discards the current card in play, turns over the card waiting to be played *this* turn, and puts face-down the card to be played during the *next* Seasonal Turn. These cards, the one just put in play and the one just selected, both drive and reflect strategy.

\* *Reinforcement*: Units listed on the current option card now enter the game.

*Political Event*: If the current option card contains political events, they are resolved now.

*Convoy*: The player deploys his convoy markers in Troop (for unit transport) or Supply (to carry supplies) mode.

*Air Superiority*: Right after the phasing player places an air counter, the non-phasing must decide whether to cancel it with one of his own.

*Organization*: Combine steps to create stronger units or break-down multi-step units. Armies are used for heavy combat while corps are used to maneuver.

*Operational Movement*: Units can move if they can trace supply. Multi-step units are stronger but single-step units move faster and thus are easier to move around between fronts. Naval, amphibious, and rail transportation is also possible.

Units must stop upon entering a ZOC. A novelty: in this game friendly units negate ZOCs! Thus, a unit moving into a hex adjacent to an enemy can act as a stepping-stone for other units.

*Blitz Combat*: Skip this phase if it's not a blitz turn (the option card in play determines this). Blitz turns trigger this extra combat segment and also the opportunity to make airdrops and amphibious landings. Also special to this (and only this) phase, attacking tanks provide a beneficial column shift.

*Regular Combat*: The CRT is a bit unusual, in that it can offer a mix of step loss (e.g., "0/3") and retreat results (e.g., "Dr2") on the *same* die roll. Even at extreme odds, no attack is a sure thing—so be careful!

*Reserve Movement*: During this phase, even unsupplied units may move. No unit, however, may move if it enters, or starts in, an enemy ZOC. Amphibious, sea transport, and rail movement can all be used.

*War and Peace*: Players may declare war on neutral minor countries and adjust relations with London or Moscow.

*Conditional Event*: Check to see if any conditional events have been triggered. The option card may also list conditional reinforcements that arrive now.

### Western Allied Player Turn

### Soviet Allied Player Turn

*KRIEG!* is probably best experienced as a three-player game, and that's the way we played it. However, since allied players cooperate fully (e.g. there's no formal way to decide which part of the coalition *really* won the war) so you wouldn't lose much

if forced to combine the Western Allied and Soviet sides.

### Mutual Interphase

*Delay*: For each unit or marker in the Delay Box, roll to determine when it will enter (or re-enter) the game. This die roll is modified by conditions that are unique to each faction (i.e., Soviets have a "-1" modifier if Japan has joined the Axis).

### KRIEG!

Size 2.8 • System 6.0  
Solo "Fair"

### SCALE

1 or 2 months per turn  
60 miles per hex

### PUBLISHER

Decision Games  
PO Box 4049  
Lancaster, CA 93539-4049

### DESIGN

Steven Kosakowski  
with Alan Emrich

### GRAPHICS

Beth Queman  
and Callie Cummins

### COMPONENTS

Two 22" x 34" maps, 420  
counters, 32-page rulebook,  
101 option cards, and charts  
and a force pool display for  
each major power.

### PRICE

\$44



**7** **6** **3** In October of 1941, driving toward Moscow by way of Tula, Guderian's spearheads were in a hurry. The object, and cause for urgency, was elementary: capture the Kremlin before the elements, mud and snow, stopped the advance. Along the main highway, at the town of Mtzensk, the Soviet 6th Guards Rifle Division took up a blocking position. Initial attacks failed, so up came the panzers and the elite Infantry Regiment Grossdeutschland (IRGD) aiming to finish the job. *GD '41*, latest in the *Tactical Combat Series (TCS)* from The Gamers, details the vicious fight that ensued.

Two full-sized maps suggest the Russian steppe, with a playing surface large, but largely featureless. The attack begins at one corner, where beyond the town of Mtzensk the main road passes over a gentle ridge, then eases back down to the village of Lechanowka on the opposite map edge. In between is a Soviet minefield, a 30-hex scar that is the battlefield's dominant tactical feature.

Fine iconographic art graces the counters. German and Soviet infantry platoons are represented, along with their supporting mortars, machine guns and fieldpieces. There are thirteen armored vehicle types, with the game mainly matching the ubiquitous T-26 and dread

KV-1 and T-34 tanks against the invading Panzer II, III and IVs. The German armor has seemingly met its match, but remember that tanks are measured by more than just firepower and armor plate. It'll be a tough fight.

**3** **6** **3** Consisting now of nine titles, the *TCS* allows fans to jump right in with little need to consult the rules. This wasn't always the case. Subtle changes marked each release between *BLOODY 110*, back in 1989, and when things stabilized a few years later with series rules Version 3.1 (also found in *HUNTERS FROM THE SKY*, *LEROS* and *BLACK WEDNESDAY*).

As the *TCS* has been covered by a trio of reviews in this magazine (most recently in *ZOC* #7). I leave most system details to the Focus and Annotated Sequence. The exclusive rules are clean, so there are few special rules to describe. Nor does the topic explore a special situation, such as an air or amphibious invasion. What drives *GD '41*, and this review, are the scenarios.

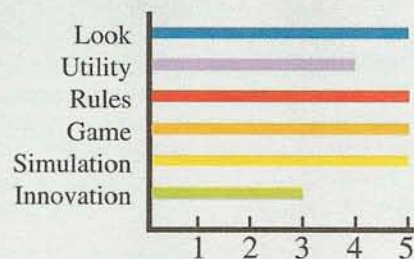
The first covers an abortive attack by the 12th Infantry Regiment on the Soviet fortifications astride the highway to Moscow. Not a crackerjack battle, it will still whet your appetite for the larger contests. The scenario gives the German player two heavy infantry battalions with which to force the road. Facing them are two battalions of the 10th Guards Infantry Regiment, dug in behind that forbidding minefield. *Achtung!* This looks suspiciously like a 1:1 attack into a good defensive position. Those who teathed on the old Avalon Hill classics know there is one likely outcome: bloody repulse.

Mad at those obstinate Soviet infantrymen? Exalted by their heroic defense? Then move on to the main action, which takes place two days later. Units from the first scenario are still there, minus their historical casualties. But since quite a few reinforcements have arrived, it's a whole new battle. The long mine belt is still there, now guarded by three battalions, not two. Its southern end hangs open, but that area is defended by a tough Soviet paratroop battalion. A few miles to the rear lies the 4th Guards Infantry Regiment, dug in and ready to block any German penetration. A brigade of Russian armor can also show up (via variable reinforcement rolls) to counterattack the invaders. Finally, four battalions of guns stand ready to lob shells across the map.

Now the bad news in this week's issue of *Pravda*. The infantry, while fine in a static defense, cannot maneuver effectively. The artillery is unresponsive, inaccurate and small caliber—only 76mm, not the fearsome 122mm and 152mm "hammers of god" that feature later in the war. The tanks, while superbly designed, don't work together effectively and have ill-trained crews. They show up in battalion-size jabs, which severely saps their combined punch. So, powerful but inept, the Red Army has its work cut out for it. Better keep a bottle—your choice, vodka or Tums—handy.

The German orders are simple: clear the road. Driving hard against the Soviets is an assortment of mechanized troops. The aforementioned 12th Infantry Regiment is here, as is another chewed-up battalion to the south. Just arrived is the title character of this drama, the elite IRGD, with the 35th Panzer Regiment

### GAME REVIEW ABSTRACT





lurking behind the scenes to exploit the eventual breakthrough. Four battalions of artillery are on call, and you can bet they respond quicker than enemy tubes.

IRGD forces the minefield's northern end while another task force attacks to the south. A mile of open ground must be crossed, and it's not an easy trek. The 105s and 150s prove a blessing, laying smoke against the worst of the enemy artillery, mortar and machinegun fire. Meanwhile, attacking men and tanks fire and move, move and fire, trying to close and let the pioneers clear a breach. Then, covered by the panzers, German infantry races through the gaps for a little hand-to-hand action. While there is room to improvise on the script, eventually the defenders are overwhelmed and must pull back to their next line, the hills about a mile away.

The set-piece stage of the battle is now over, bringing front and center the asymmetry of the command structures. The Soviets are locked into their original

orders. Changing plans is not something they do well—orders written during play will take several *hours* to implement—and once thrown out of their defensive lines, the Soviets have trouble coping. The German player, on the other hand, has quick-reacting reserves and can even change frontline orders so rapidly the enemy is forever offbalance. When openings appear, only *his* tanks and infantry can take full advantage.

IRGD's day isn't done yet. Survivors of the frontline defense are still loose. Red infantrymen have an annoying ability to dig rapidly if left alone, so you had better smash them completely before they can recover their cohesion and entrench. After that, only the last line of defense, that final Guards regiment, stands in the way of victory. Making things interesting is the threat that Soviet armor may appear at any moment. Although poorly led, those KV-1s and T-34s command respect, even envy, from men in Panzer IIIs. The battle's final act demands skill and toughness from both sides.

The Germans cleared the road back in 1941, and if well-handled, their cardboard facsimiles will probably replicate that feat. But at what cost? Many losses at Mtzensk means fewer panzers before Moscow. Properly used, the Red Army can win, or at least make pyrrhic any enemy victory. Historically, their desperate defense cost the German war effort scarce men and fighting machines, as well as three irreplaceable days. The Soviets may not have kept the field, but in many respects they won the battle.



I enjoyed *GD '41* immensely. Coming through clearly is the character of the two armies, and each must be handled correctly for it to prevail. The fighting is bitter and vicious, as yet another German thrust nears victory or Soviet tank battalion counterattacks audaciously. Fans of the *TCS* will rejoice in the game. Other devotees of the Eastern Front will have as much to shout about as they push, yet again, down the long road to Moscow.



## Annotated Sequence

The basic unit is the infantry platoon, which has five steps and is rated for firepower and morale on the counter front, and target-type, weaponry and movement on the back. Weapons units provide extra firepower and include machine guns, mortars, infantry guns and anti-tank guns. These fragile support units have just one step (with the exception of machine gun and mortar units, which have two).

Tanks are single vehicles; each counter for trucks and halftracks represents two or more. Armor is handled more simply than in most WWII tactical games (questions of turrets, facing, and the like are lost within these 125-yard hexes) but the system does a good job of differentiating among weapons and targets.

**Command Phase:** Players draw up new orders and roll to see if those already issued are implemented. German plans are implemented in about half the time of Soviet orders.

Orders are drawn on a sketch-map of the battlefield (and yes, you've gotta make a trip to the photocopier before play). Each outlines a specific plan, such as IRGD's initial advance on the minefield. The size and type of the operation, quality of the HQ, and Lady Luck determine how quickly an order is implemented.

**Aircraft Fire Phase:** There is about a 60% chance that several Stuka divebombers arrive this turn. They attack immediately.

**Action Phase:** Which side goes first is random. Phasing units move or fire (but not both; players decide what mode each unit will adopt), resolve assaults, and attempt to breach minefields, all subject to the overwatch fire of their attentive opponent. A combat modifier quickly teaches players to spread units out when under fire. When attacking, your goal is to maneuver so as to concentrate firepower on a single portion of the enemy line. You must use cover (or smoke) to minimize deadly overwatch fire. The combat model emphasizes

the cumulative effects of sustained fire. There is a traditional fire phase, but outside it more shots will be triggered as units move within spotting distance of enemy units. Overwatch is reciprocal, which means that any of the moving player's platoons in "fire mod" can return fire.

Fire can inflict hits against both men and morale, with targets marked for loss, suppression or paralysis. Although morale hits have no direct effect on firepower, they are a paramount combat concern: once a unit's morale drops it will be easily suppressed by bursts of enemy fire.

Units are individually rated for morale, and this is the base used for any morale check. Morale is integrated into the system at a second level: battalion morale. This primary modifier to any unit morale check is a variable based on recent combat losses suffered by constituent units. This elegantly induces a sense of brotherhood: until a battalion recovers (a function of time), all

of its platoons suffer the same adverse modifier to morale.

**Clean Up Phase:** Players tidy up the battlefield by removing smoke and suppression markers, and attempt to reduce their battalion morale levels.

GD '41  
Size 3.5 • System 6.3  
Solo "Fair"

SCALE  
20 minutes per turn  
125 yards per hex

PUBLISHER  
The Gamers  
500 W. 4th Street  
Homer, IL 61849

DESIGN  
Wig Graves & Dean Essig

GRAPHICS  
Dean Essig

COMPONENTS  
Two 22" x 34" maps, 840  
counters, 28 pages of series  
rules, 24 pages of game  
rules, a 4-page chart book  
for each player and dice.

PRICE  
\$43

# FOCUS



This, the second *TCS* game featuring Infantry Regiment Grossdeutschland, begs comparison with *GD '40*. Did the marquee unit evolve over the passing year? Not much changed at the sharp end of the IRGD. The infantry platoons and machine gun sections have the same ratings. Their “3” morale brands them as quality units, and their combat abilities are very respectable. By 1941 some machine guns have shifted formally to company control, but this merely codified a standard practice.

More differences are found in heavy weaponry. In addition to the mortars used in France, each of the three infantry battalions now sports antiaircraft and antitank guns, as well as a platoon of engineers. This helps mark the shift toward an independent motorized formation better able to hold its own on the machine-dominated battlefield. Having these guns at the battalion level, rather than trying to detach them from the regimental reserve, leads to a more flexible force with greater staying power.

Otherwise, the regimental weapons battalion has changed very little on the journey from France to Russia. It still has its infantry guns, assault gun battery and anti-tank platoon. New for the Russian front is a second support battalion that includes a reconnaissance company, an engineer company and more AA guns. These troops stiffen the IRGD on both attack and defense.



As important as any hardware upgrade is the improved command and control. In 1940, the regiment had a Command Prep Rating of “4,” making it professional but hardly elite. In northern France, getting a couple of battalions to act on a new order took about two hours (double that if under fire). In 1941 this crucial rating drops to “3,” and the same two battalions can commit roughly forty minutes sooner.

Our conclusion is inescapable. Fighting toward Moscow, the IRGD’s better command ability combines with some

## GD '41: The More Things Change...

extra firepower to produce a fearsome tool of destruction.



What about the Red Army? How does it compare to the French? Generally, both had infantry capable of standing up to the invaders, and both actually fielded tanks that were superior to the German machines.

The French infantry of 1940 is nearly as well armed as its German counterpart, in both personal weapons and machine guns. But there is a sore lack of heavier weapons, whose absence is felt keenly as French units get pummeled by tank-fire and the IRGD’s numerous mortars and infantry guns. With the notable exception of the reserve infantry, French morale is also quite good.

Soviet infantry encountered a year later has good morale, but only half the firepower of the attackers. To make matters worse, machinegun deployment is awkward, as this critical arm must act as a company and can’t be doled out to up-arm strongpoints or reinforce attacks. Even so, digging the Soviets out of prepared positions is hazardous duty.

German tanks have weaker armor and firepower. Their enemies suffer from a few shortcomings of their own. French tanks are prone to breakdown on their way to the front; it is a rare day in which they all arrive where needed. It gets worse: being unsupported by AT guns, they must shoulder the entire antitank load. Soviet tanks in 1941 simply have the world’s worst tank crews (as reflected by a few choice special rules)

and are often destroyed before they know what hit them. But if properly handled, with an eye toward their limits, the T-34s and KVs still put up a stiff fight.

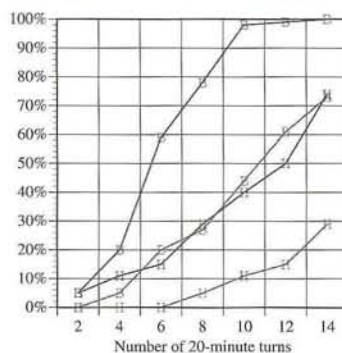


The area of command is where these two armies suffer most in comparison to the IRGD. The French have the worst Command Prep Rating, “7,” and on the attack the Red Army isn’t much better at “6.” A special rule makes Soviet Command Prep twice as good when setting up a defensive position, so although slow to counterattack they can dig new positions rapidly if forced to retreat.

Both the French and Russians are painfully slow to react. It can easily take them five or more hours to change or execute attack plans, which usually means the orders will be obsolete when implemented. Compare this to the IRGD, which can change plans in two hours or, even more impressively, can commit a reserve battalion in well under an hour. By the time a French commander decides what to do and gets his troops to do it, the German player has taken action, committed reserves, and gotten ready to implement a second attack or switch over to the defensive. Operating securely within the decision cycle of its antagonists means the IRGD can run rings around them.



The more things change, the more they stay the same. Or do they? We’ll learn more when the next game in this series-within-a-series, *GD '42*, arrives.



Chance for a two-battalion force to implement orders in *GD '41*.

— 3 Prep Rating — Reserve  
 — 6 Prep Rating — Reserve  
 — 3 Prep Rating — Frontline  
 — 6 Prep Rating — Frontline

# SURVIVING AMONG THE WITLESS

## Manifesto of an Unempowered Academic

by Alice Shepherd

**T**his first look at a non-traditional tactical simulation caught my eye. If you don't think war is unending, take a look at the American tenure system, where guerrilla tactics are practiced every day. If politics is another form of war, then professorships are the equivalent of officer training camps.—SKT

The envelopes showed up in the departmental mailbox at a large, Southern public university on the same afternoon. Both bore the very official-looking seal of the university president's office.

"It is with sincere pleasure," read the first letter from the career functionary we all called "I Claudius," "that I am writing to inform you that you have won the National Alumni Association Award for Classroom Teaching. Students and faculty have selected you as the finest classroom teacher at . . ."

Wow. Enough to swell just about any young professor's head, what? Now that should impress the tenure committee. And now the other envelope, please.

"It is with sincere regret," this one read, "that I am writing to inform you that due to budgetary constraints, your contract will not be renewed. . ."

I am not making this up. They really did come in the same campus mail delivery one May afternoon. At that point, the options included:

- A. Grab a machinegun and go postal. Nah, awful messy and besides, it's already been done.
- B. Call my attorney and sue the \$#%\*-&. See option A.
- C. Seek vengeance through a game design based on the sleazy tenure process—that destroyer of souls and raper of taxpayer pocketbooks. Yeah, that's the ticket . . .

*Survival of the Witless* from Avalanche Press, Ltd., is a simulation, not a parody. The event cards are based on actual—or at least reported—campus incidents. I did not actually witness every event that takes place in the game, but after wasting the best years of my life earning a doctoral degree (there's a reason they call it "Piled Higher and Deeper") and teaching undergraduate ingrates for less money than I made as a pool typist at age 19 (again—I am not making this up) I am ready to believe any story about sleazy, criminal or just plain stupid behavior within American higher education.

The game is pretty straightforward. Each player takes the role of an untenured profes-

sor at a liberal arts university trying desperately to grasp the ultimate prize. Earn tenure and you'll keep a high-paying job for the rest of your life, with only criminal activity a threat to your job security and then only if you're really, really unlucky.

Supposedly, this sinecure system protects freedom of speech. Without it, the argument runs, politicians and university administrators would retaliate against professors who held unpopular views and taught them in the classroom. Unfortunately, it also defends weak thinking and protects the terminally lazy. The tenure process is a hazing ritual for young academics that would get any fraternity or sorority banned from campus. The newcomers are terrorized by their seniors, who force them (and any adjuncts or graduate assistants they can corral) to do their job for them while they take sabbaticals to "consider new paradigms."

To get the prize, and thus the freedom to terrorize others, you need a couple of things. First, you need a finished book. It doesn't have to be any good—come now, do you think anyone ever reads academic books? Even other academics? The committee will not read the book, just check the spine to make sure it came from an academic press. Again, I am not making this up. In game terms, this means collecting a book contract and enough writing cards (the currency of the game) to finish your great work.

Then you need status. There are five committee members, drawn randomly from a set of 16. These will like or dislike you based on your randomly-determined race, class, gender and orientation. When you have a complete book, you can call for a vote, rolling the die for each committee member and adding your status with that person. A total of nine or more gets you a "yes" vote.

A player who gains tenure wins the game, but it's not over. Play continues while other players vie for second and third place. Meanwhile, the newly-tenured prof remains in the game doing whatever he or she can to damage rivals' chances (like I said, it is a simulation, not a parody).

Status is the other currency of the game, and rival players will try to reduce yours through card play. You will keep trying to increase yours, while kicking them in the teeth whenever possible. As H.L. Mencken claimed (and Henry Kissinger later claimed to claim), the battles in the academic world

are so vicious because the stakes are so small. Here's a look at a few of the weapons in the academic's arsenal.

### GOOD STUFF

These are the cards that help increase your status. You'll hope to see many of these and play them on yourself.

*Academic Freedom.* This is the "get out of jail free" card. Just like in the academic world, the chant of "academic freedom" can get you out of just about anything. Recently a professor at a midwestern state university, caught exchanging sexual favors for grades and other goodies with both male and female grad students, claimed charges against her infringed on her academic freedom. She denied none of it. Sexual intercourse, she argued, is the ultimate free exchange of ideas and thus vital to the teacher-student relationship. Last I heard the case was still open, but she had a lot of support from her university's faculty.

*Ass Kissing.* This is the most common action card in the deck because it's the most common action on an American college campus.

*Bold New Theory.* Original ideas are rare, and will gain you a lot of status. Likewise, claiming a new theory which isn't will cost you dearly, so watch for the Theory Debunked card.

*Co-Authorship.* This one is especially big in the sciences, but pretty rare in the liberal arts. It's so sleazy, though, that it had to be in the game. Sometimes a science breakthrough really does involve 22 researchers sharing credit. More often it's the actual researcher's boss and tenure committee horning their way in. One department chairman in Canada has supposedly "authored" hundreds of articles this way. Slap another name on the title page of your article and gain some status.

*Grad Assistant.* Grad students are great for your career. They'll do your job for you, making it far easier to complete your book. This won't help their career any, but who cares? They've gotten to bask in your brilliance, and that should be reward enough. You'll need to look out for the "Would You Like Fries With That?" card, which sends your loyal assistant into the working world of the mundanes. You will want to keep your graduate assistant from graduating (I said it was a simulation, didn't I?) and the best way to do this is to draw both an assistant and the graduation card.

*Student Boycott.* This is a very good thing. A glance through the deck of action cards should show you pretty quickly that students can do you absolutely no good; they only get in your way. This, of course, mirrors the attitude of the American professoriate. Having students stay away in droves is very good for your career.

*Foreign Research Grant.* Going overseas is cool, whether there's any reason for it or not. One of my colleagues had been scheduled to lead a summer semester program in Germany and Italy, and since he was the only one in our department fluent in both German and Italian, it seemed logical enough. In the real world, that is. When the papers crossed the desk of a university vice president, who barely spoke English but did play a lot of golf with members of the Board of Trustees, guess who ended up as the faculty advisor for this jaunt?

*Prestige Journal.* A few more people read academic articles than read academic books, but not many more. What matters more than getting an article published is *where* you get it published. Once again, quality matters little, and this card puts your article where it can do you the most good.

*Citation Index.* This functions in game terms like a prestige journal card, but is more powerful. In the sciences especially, this index—yes, it really exists—is very important for tenure decisions. It tracks how many times others have included your work in their footnotes (which explains why papers on particle physics get footnoted in articles on the Seven Years' War, if the authors are cousins).

## BAD STUFF

There are lots of ways you can get hurt in this game. Early playtest versions of the game had even more of these than are in the current mix, which made for a nasty game which no one could win and is probably pretty accurate from the simulation point of view. These have been toned down by the game's developers, but a player who stakes a lead in the race for tenure is sure to see many of these.

*Blinded With Science.* Only some forms of nerd are acceptable in the liberal arts university. Show that you lean toward techno-nerdism and get ready for the shower of scorn.

*Eye Rape.* This is another one based on an actual case. A professor at a state university in the agricultural heartland stared at an attractive young woman in a short skirt a moment too long. That's all, he just looked at her shapely legs. It cost him his job.

*Teaching Award.* This is the nastiest card in the deck and can really derail your career (see above). It is well-known among junior faculty that such an award is absolutely deadly: within the past two years, award winners at respected universities in Ontario and Georgia have gotten the axe thanks to jealous colleagues.

*Coffee Pot Burns.* I saw this one happen. A tenure candidate left the pot going, boiling the residue down to this black goo which finally burst into flames. The fire scorched the tabletop, but did nothing to the industrial-

green walls or the puke-brown carpet. One committee member publicly declared that he could never vote to tenure an arsonist. Another esteemed colleague somehow convinced the dean that she had suffered irreparable damage to her self-esteem due to fire-induced trauma and therefore required a semester off—with pay.

*Pet Cemetery.* I didn't exactly see this happen, but did witness the aftermath. A tenure committee member went to Ireland. Seeking status (in game terms, playing an Ass Kissing card) a tenure candidate (the same one who burned the coffee pot) volunteered to keep the pup. She apparently did not include feeding him in the offer, and he expired. She wrapped him in a garbage bag and tossed him in her trash can. Needless to say, the doggie's owner voted NO when the time came. Note that one potential committee member, Johnny Wanko, will actually like you better if you kill someone's pet. This is because Wanko hates all living creatures.

*Plagiarism.* No, it's not a misprint. If it's proven that you plagiarized someone's work, you don't lose the book, just some status. In a world where one's research and the publication of same are the very *raison d'être*, one would think this might be a more serious crime. The effects of the card are about all you can expect if caught, depending on the original source (steal from a non-academic, and next to nothing will happen to you).

## INDIFFERENT STUFF

Some cards can go either way, and some you really should only play if you're behind or just feel lucky.

*Department Party.* When it's party time, the liquor flows as does the gossip and the seduction (both become easier). If you're hosting, you get status and can play two cards, but there are some bad cards out there that only hit the host during a party round (Food Poisoning and VCR Set Correctly) that are sure to fly onto the table.

*Gossip Attack.* It's no coincidence that this is one of the more common cards. Gossip can backfire on you, though, so try to hold these for a party round or once someone has committed a seduction. No matter what happens, your status is going down, so hold these cards until someone is threatening to win it all.

*Lousy Teaching.* It's not a typo. There is no effect.

*Mail of Color.* Calling it blackmail would be a timeworn value judgement. In game terms, this is a desperation card. It can gain you enormous status, vaulting you to the maximum. The penalty for failure could easily put tenure out of your reach. Use it on a committee member who hates you, since the

reward takes your status to nine (the maximum) regardless of where it started.

*Mommy Track.* Knock up your wife, and the boys are impressed. Get knocked up, and it shows you are "not serious about your career."

*Political Statement.* Note that, as in the academic world, you are not required to remain consistent in your political views. Tell the committee whatever they want to hear. But watch out for the Ideological Impurity card, which can bring your lies back to haunt you.

*Seduction.* Yes, professors do have sex, and often with each other (who else would ... no, let's not go there). That's why this card is second in numbers only to Ass Kissing. You can try to seduce a committee member, which can greatly increase your status (and has, in fact, led to many a tenuring). Or you can go after a competitor, to gain inside knowledge (a look at his or her hand) and take a card (stolen kisses, as it were).

*Sexual Awakening.* This lets you change your orientation, which may or may not be a good thing. Whether you play this card or hold it until you can discard (once the action deck has been exhausted and is re-shuffled) will depend on your tenure committee's composition.

*Trophy Wife.* How you play this card depends on the committee you've drawn for this game. Those who lust for her will like you better, and those who are jealous of her will hate you more. There will be games in which this card should be played on someone else.

*UFO Abduction.* It is a fact that more Americans claim to have been snatched by space aliens than play wargames. This leaves them on the lunatic fringe, a group with whom you may not wish to be associated. However, just because an idea is mindlessly stupid does not mean it has no cachet on campus. The Hale-Bopp comet/spaceship claim (you know, the one that said a giant flying saucer was following the comet to take all the good little suicidal boys and girls to heaven) came from a political science prof at a world-renowned private university (yes, he has tenure, as if you couldn't guess). Some of the committee might just believe you, raising your status and that of your fellow believers.

*SACT Scores.* The effect here is random not because you don't know your own scores, but because there is no telling what the effect on the faculty tenure committee might be. The gain or loss of status is primarily due to how they view your scores (you want them to be good, very good, but not better than those of the committee).

→→→→→ (from p. 8)

A good tactician must understand the elegant way in which token bids establish both the order of play and the odds of market-competition success. The fewer tokens bought, the better is the chance to go early in the turn. On momentous turn 3, for instance, a low bid might allow a player to seize choice real estate in the Near East. Those moving later are stuck with the slums. The first move is a two-edged sword though, because one's expansion phase will be limited by the small number of tokens bought. Token bids are secret, and are made before gaining knowledge of cards played and advances purchased, which makes the process delightfully unpredictable.

Play order is vital to competition success. The accompanying Table 1 gives the attack success odds by position in the turn order. Note that an important advance, Proselytism, adds roughly ten per cent to normal attacks and seven per cent to attacks with a military advantage. Proselytism, therefore, should be viewed as an essential buy for players who, from their warrior nature or position on the board, see several turns of intense competition ahead.

**Table 1. Competition Odds by Position in Turn Order**

Position	Normal	Military	Prose-lytism	Mil+Pros.
First	90%	93%	100%	100%
Second	81	86	90	93
Third	71	79	81	86
Fourth	61	72	71	79
Fifth	51	65	61	72
Sixth	42	58	51	65

Knowing the numbers is nice, but what specifically makes one attack wise and another risky? My advice is to limit the potential token loss to no more than ten times the chance of success. Thus, I think it's a sound general strategy to risk no more than nine tokens in any attack if you're the first player, eight if you're the second, and so on. Of course, when a province has special importance, take the gloves off and punch as hard and long as necessary.

No assessment of "acceptable risk" can avoid an element of conjecture. A factor ignored by my rule of thumb is an estimate of how long the province can be held and its income collected. Even in a six-person game, income grows by only \$6 per conquest, but an attack, even when successful

on the first attempt, often costs more than \$6 in tokens. No matter how small the token-expense risk, any province within a rival's national zone is tough to hold for a long time. By the same token, the greater your rival's risk, the less likely it is that he will even attempt to take back provinces.

Savvy players also adjust the competition crosshairs according to their place in the turn order. Early-goers often go for large provinces to increase the odds of retaining any conquest until at least the next income phase. The converse also holds true: small provinces are often hit by late-going expan-

have a similar effect on defense (and, with Cosmopolitan, on attack). If you are smart, you won't ignore them when trying to decide what to do with your last handful of tokens during an expansion phase.

Often the most compelling influences on competition are the commodity types of potential targets. Around here, we've become much more aggressive about trying to gain the lead in a commodity before actually playing its payment card. What opened our eyes was a \$225 payoff on Spice from a card a player had patiently held for most of the game (his dramatic comeback has entered local folklore). Less predictable is the extra event card that's occasionally given the majority holder of a commodity. The check for shortage/surplus relies on two dice, and the resulting bell curve makes majorities near the center of the Commodity Log (such as Cloth, Wine and Metal) slightly more valuable overall than those at either extreme (such as Spice, Gold and Ivory).

A potential game-winning tactic is going for an increased market share, through market competition, prior to playing a commodity card. Some commodities are easier to take (and harder to hold) than others, and good players are aware of these differences (see Table 3). For example, let's assume a player holds

**Table 2. Regional Security Variation**

Region	Risk Category:					Security
	Defense	Low	Med.	High	Coastal	
Central Europe	8.2	1	6	4	27%	30.4
Southern Europe	9.5	3	4	4	88	10.8
Near East	9.0	0	6	2	100	9.0
North Iberia	7.0	2	2	1	80	8.8
Baltic	8.2	2	2	2	100	8.2
North Sea	7.6	3	3	2	100	7.6
Black Sea	5.5	7	1	0	75	7.3
Mediterranean	5.8	7	3	0	100	5.8

Notes: "Defense" is the average strength of the provinces, assuming addition of half the potential satellite bonus (rounded up) as well as the nationalism bonus. Capitals are not included. "Low" is the number of provinces which have a Defense value of six or less; "Medium" seven to nine; and "High" ten or greater. "Coastal" is the percentage of provinces accessible by boat. "Security" is equal to Defense divided by Coastal.

sion moves. Domination markers in three provinces without satellites and in no national zone—Angora, Granada and West Africa—seem to attract heightened interest as a player's turn nears its end.

In Table 2, I show why certain regions—notably the Black Sea and Mediterranean—seem to attract more than their fair share of market competition. The table quantifies relative security of each player's home region. Low numbers for North Sea and North Iberia raise a warning about the long-run frailty of London and Barcelona, both of whom start fast on the basis of these small province sizes. Finally, although the "Security" column probably exaggerates the strength of Central Europe, it clearly shows why the game's only land-locked region, home of Paris, can be so tough to penetrate.

Location itself can be just as important as the risk category. Once a player has bought Nationalism, attacks in his home region become the first order of business due to the competitive edge it conveys: local attack and defense totals are raised by one. The odds of winning do not change, but the lower costs make the risks more favorable. Satellite territories, which modify competition totals in adjacent provinces,

**Table 3. Mercantile Security Variation**

Commodity	Risk Category:					Security
	Defense	Low	Med.	High	Coastal	
Gold	8.2	1	2	2	60%	13.7
Cloth	9.5	0	3	5	75	12.7
Metal	8.4	1	5	1	71	11.8
Stone	8.3	2	3	3	75	11.1
Wine	8.6	0	4	2	83	10.4
Spice	10.3	0	1	6	100	10.3
Grain	8.7	3	1	4	88	9.9
Fur	7.4	3	1	1	80	9.3
Silk	7.8	3	1	2	100	7.8
Timber	7.0	3	2	2	100	7.0
Wool	5.9	6	2	1	89	6.6
Ivory	5.5	3	1	0	100	5.5

Notes: See Table 2.

commodity cards in his hand for Wool and Spice. To maximize the first card, the best bet is to make a high token bid and try to capture several low-risk Wool sites in one glorious burst of competition late in the turn. The Spice trade, in contrast, is harder to dominate. Those provinces are generally high-risk targets, so it's a lot tougher to increase market share quickly (doubly so if you don't want to tip your hand to observant rivals). So you may find that the Wool card, even with its smaller payment, is actually the more valuable of the two.

As in our discussion of regional strengths, however, location will modify the prospective value of commodity cards. Spice is mostly found in transoceanic provinces and Fur in the Black Sea region. A draw of either of these cards early in the game makes an Exploration strategy doubly attractive. Get there first, so that you don't have to use competition to achieve market domination initially. Regional advantages can also be exploited, such as use of Nationalism to bring all of Southern Europe's Stone or Central Europe's Cloth under the control of Genoa and Paris, respectively. Stone and Cloth cards will be of much less interest to London or Barcelona, which lack easy access to these provinces.

## FINAL REMARKS

Though its rules fit (a bit snugly) into a mere eight pages, *AGE OF RENAISSANCE* is far from simple. Its complex interactions are like so many Easter eggs hidden on a lawn. As my fellow players and I stumbled through ten or so games, we saw our baskets steadily filling with strategies and tactics of ever-increasing sophistication. Though we have identified certain patterns that repeat themselves, we have not yet reached a point where tactics seem repetitious or strategies stereotyped.

It is the History Deck (see sidebar) that defies implementation of any so-called perfect plan. A Leader card will force a player to rethink what advance to purchase next; a commodity card might redirect his plan of expansion. Because of this, *AGE OF RENAISSANCE* requires flexible, opportunistic thinking. More than anything else, that's what makes it such a great game.

There is a line between going with the flow and merely getting lost in the flood, a line that I admit to finding a bit blurred at times. I've frequently been a step or two behind the strategy race, and so the chutzpah involved in passing myself off as a pundit has not been lost on my fellow Renaissance men. Failure, a better teacher by far than success, has admittedly been my guru. Some go too far, however, and would deny my only victory. The malcontents claim it was thrice-tainted. Undeniably, getting me off to an early lead was the game's most powerful event card, The Crusades, that I drew right off the bat. Also true, on the last turn it was pity alone that kept an also-ran's play of Alchemist's Gold, the deck's most powerful disaster, from changing my blue ribbon into some lesser prize. Afterwards, the jealous losers were also heard to mumble something about an unfair division of that most important of commodities: potato chips. Spoils of war, I say.



## The History Deck

Extra cards are a bargain when priced at three or six tokens in the expansion phase, but until very late in the game I usually pass when the going rate is Urban Ascendancy's \$10. I've a few general observations to pass along. Below you'll find commentaries on each card-type in the deck, as well as the percentage of such cards found in each of the three Epochs (1-2-3), assuming all replayable cards have been reshuffled.

### Commodities (38% - 45% - 59%)

The first few times we played, paying the stabilization cost of holding several cards seemed almost unbearable. We unburdened our hand of those unwanted cards—even those commodities that gave a decent payment to a rival—without regard to the strategic consequences. Now we're much more likely to hold a card until the time is right. A vital concern is the timing of the next epoch. Delaying play of a Wool card, for example, until after the deck's been reshuffled for Epoch 2 may have an appreciable impact on London's final balance sheet. There are two ways to effectively "discard" an unwanted commodity card before Master of Art has been purchased. The first is to wait until a "surplus" turn, when the jaws of your business rivals will drop almost as low as their payments. The second is to play the card immediately after you've used a disaster like Rebellion or Pirates to remove one or more of your rival's control markers.

### Leaders (17% - 18% - 13%)

Among experienced players, almost no advance purchase will be made without an eye to the Leaders either in play or not-yet-played. The interaction of Leader cards with the various advances is an article unto itself. The most important advance related to Leaders is Patronage, which allows even a player who did not play a Leader card to use its credits to purchase advances. Inexperienced players, myself included, tend to underprotect Leaders from patronage claims. For example, in one game, I shielded Christopher Columbus with twenty bucks. It was a nice, round number, and seemed about right. But before I could say "Santa Maria" the eventual winner had gladly matched my \$20 to earn \$80 in discounts. As a rule of thumb, I now figure the maximum possible value of a Leader, and then protect the card with about half that total. Or better yet, when the Leader's a game-breaker like Columbus, I bid low with the intent of going first, so he can be placed in the protected "First Leader" box.

### Events (45% - 37% - 28%)

These cards fall into several sub-categories, which I'll cover individually:

- **The Crusades.** Without question, The Crusades—which often allows you to take over most of the Near East—is the most desirable card in the deck. At first we considered it too powerful, because it often comes up early enough to guarantee the lucky player an early lead. Now we are just as certain that the card is needed to de-stabilize the Eastern Mediter-

anean and pose uncertainty to those who pursue the Exploration strategy. (Tangentially, "Crusade II" is the term we use to describe what the other players informally launch against the beneficiary of The Crusades.) During Epoch 2, it can be used to capture a key commodity right before a payment—but play it fast, because the Mongol Armies of Epoch 2 make The Crusades an unplayable burden.

- **Disaster cards.** Smart players tend to play these against the current leader, but often more parochial ambitions cloud the issue. Our practice is to allow a little table-talk before the victim is targeted (it is always a hoot to hear the leader's attempts to show that some other guy is really ahead). Disasters tend to be minor annoyances, save for Alchemist's Gold and Black Death. The former can be blocked by purchasing Laws of Matter, something the leader is wise to purchase as soon as possible. There is no avoiding Black Death, which struck Paris twice in one game we played. It is "The Crusades" of disaster cards, judged too powerful only if you're the one it hurts.

- **Misery cards.** Several cards, such as Famine, raise the Misery Index of all players. Some advances lessen their effects, as does the Enlightened Ruler card, but let me stress that in games in which I've played, misery has never determined who wins. The leading players always end up with the lower misery subtraction from victory points, because they are the ones who can afford the advances (and full tiers) that reduce misery rapidly. I can't go so far as to say it's more trouble than it's worth, if only because misery is very easy to record.

- **Military Advantage cards.** These four cards doubly enhance attempts at market competition. They add to the chances of competition success while decreasing by one token the amount of force needed to launch an attack. Note the second pair of these, added during Epoch 2, make the first set unplayable burdens, so don't hang onto your Stirrups or Armor too long.

- **War.** This card is such a gamble that its play is a sign of a desperate player. That, or a player with at least a "+2" die-roll edge due to Nationalism and military advantage cards. With just one War card in the deck, an assertion seems to be made that War in general is of slight historical importance, at least when compared to the impact of specific military or cultural advances.

*AGE OF RENAISSANCE* has rough but definite pretensions to simulation. The designer, in shifting our eyes away from the battlefield, has forced us to see progress as more than advances in weaponry and tactics. This well-taught history course (not at all like the ones you probably slept through in college) soon has you pondering the relative worth of scientific research, reduced social misery, expanded trade and improved financial returns. It is a welcome change from the traditional focus on great men and great moments. This one treats them for what they are, trivial footnotes that leave barely a mark on the time line of history.

→→→→→ (from pg. 10)

insult to injury, Genoa must share the Nationalism advantage with Venice in this province. Make no mistake about it, Genoa must make it a known policy that Sicily is off-limits to others, with trespassing producing your utter wrath. It may seem like a small thing to others, but don't underestimate the issue. (And don't forget to get to Bari first, also.)

### THROWING AWAY SATELLITES

No matter how well you anticipate a situation, you will find yourself ending the occasional turn with a scattering of tokens that don't give you an attack, a domination marker or a card draw. Your next act is the search for a convenient satellite location. Bzzzzz. Wrong. Toss them away.

First of all, satellites come in two kinds: 1) the ever useful and 2) the backwaters of the universe. Those that are backwaters generally reside in places where they support either a poor commodity or a single really big domination marker. These locations rarely get attacked. They don't need satellite support. Any token resting in a backwater is no longer resting in your stock available for your massive expansion effort in a future turn. You are not allowed to voluntarily remove them. Thus, with too many backwaters you may find yourself with but 28 tokens for expansion, while a more astute player has reserved 33 or more, getting him one more crucial attack than you.

The ever useful satellite location supports a small province (usually of size two) with a very valuable commodity (Silk, Grain, Gold, Fur) or is a transit resting point for invaders. These locations are of such value that you should plan to take them with your first token placements, not your last. You will not find them vacant in the mid-game, just awaiting the moment when your poor planning gives you an extra token. They become even more powerful when somebody acquires the Cosmopolitan advance. The most valuable satellites are Gallipoli, Palma, Durazzo, Levant, Kaffa (all for commodities) and Toulouse, Leon, Salzburg, Cornwall (to resist or assist invasion).

The moral of the story is that if you didn't think about taking it by the time you have but a few tokens, then the satellite is not worth the cost of parking the token.

### PIECE OF THE ACTION

A better place for excess tokens is right in the path of future expansion. In the aftermath of Black Death, Pirates, Rebellion and Civil War, you will see the occasional unfilled province that you deem unnecessary to your plans. However, there is no reason to allow the former owner to simply rebuild domination. Why should he get

such an easy build towards claiming the expansion bonus card? Stick a token in the province so that anybody who wishes to possess it will have to roll the competition dice. Nasty, but effective.

### SEEK YE HEAVEN . . .

Although it is natural for a player of Hamburg or Paris to think in terms of caravan expansion paths, never forget the value of skipping through the seas using The Heavens advance. The three non-Mediterranean city-states need not relinquish easily the early lead. It is quite possible to swing through the straits of Gibraltar rather quickly, if a player has The Heavens and a few galleys. Barcelona can rarely stop your stepping-stone action (and often doesn't care to bother). Paris has the further option of expanding from the coast at Montpellier—a relatively unwanted space that can be grabbed.

Do not get involved in a painful dispute with a neighbor over some minor commodity on your territorial borders. I've seen Paris win the game finishing with only one domination marker in Area III (central Europe). The player simply decided to hop in boats and sail to the Near East immediately.

Certainly, the non-Mediterranean powers will be a step or two behind in the race to the Near East and the Black Sea, but that step can easily be regained by accepting a smaller share and moving earlier in the turn, thereby forcing late-moving players to fight for the trade routes. I have seen many a player assume that he had the Black Sea locked up, only to bid too many expansion markers to establish all of the domination markers. As a result, when his turn finally came around, he found several new markers in his path and ended up rolling dice for half as many spaces as he anticipated.

### PROFITEERING

Any good player in this very mercantile world understands that shortages are good for business. You want to be the guy controlling the commodity in great demand. This is obvious from the commodity payoff system. However, new players may miss the importance of the free cards given out to the majority player when shortages are rolled. The most likely commodities for those shortages are Wine, Cloth and Metal. Consequently, you must pay special attention that no other player establishes a game-long majority in those commodities. Barcelona cannot be allowed to get Crete and Cyprus to add to his good position in Wine. Venice should be boxed out of the Cloth in Tunis and North America if not Florence as well. Barcelona cannot give

away Granada's Metal on the dubious reasoning that it is not in his Nationalism area.

As a general rule of thumb, whenever you cannot see a Commodity payoff on its eve, then go for domination in provinces that will either wipe out somebody's Majority position or establish one of your own. It may not be a valuable Silk province, but then again, you may not have to fight everybody for it, either.

Never underestimate the value that a free card draw conveys to the recipient in terms of foresight and planning. One player's mediocre draw can be another player's game winner.

### CUT A DEAL

On occasion you will find yourself with a pesky opponent who keeps knocking down your commodity control before you can cash a card. You could spend the next several turns fighting with him and any other buzzards over your valuable commodity spaces. Don't bother. He is probably attacking you because he sees nothing in his own hand worth attacking or playing. Perhaps he has a commodity payoff card that can help you. Offer to play your commodity card while he possesses some of those provinces you were trying to take—but only if he will also play a commodity card that will benefit you elsewhere. While this may not lead to the most profitable division of the spoils, it certainly will reduce needless losses of tokens.

### PLAGUE UPON THY HOUSE

On the surface, the Black Death appears to be one of the most devastating cards you can inflict on other players. In reality, it can backfire badly. If a stricken player is allowed to easily rebuild his domination markers he is better off than he was before: he will most assuredly gain the expansion bonus card draw. I will not go so far as to say that you should plan to play the card upon your own provinces to gain new domination markers, but make sure that you are in a position to expand into the undermanned provinces the instant the plague hits.

### MISERY MISER

Most players grasp the importance of holding misery cards until an Epoch reshuffle is completed. Even the clueless can play a misery card when it hurts others more than himself. You should seek even more gain. Consider the knowledge that the card conveys. You know that its damage will not occur until you decide it will. While others waste their time playing defensively to counter the potential misery of the card you hold, you can safely move to bigger and better things. This is most apparent with Religious Strife and Revolutionary Upris-

ings, where your continued possession of the card will allow you to happily march up the category of advances with no fear of misery consequences. In the long run, the stabilization costs of holding Revolutionary Uprisings are small in comparison to the huge benefits of having Industry and Interest and Profit before the enemy. The same holds for Cathedral when you see the Religious Strife card. Even such simple Misery cards like Mysticism Abounds will convey to you that you need not spend on Sciences as fast as others.

Generally, I advocate driving up misery for others as fast as you can. However, if you have the chance to effectively specialize in something which causes misery, then holding the card all game long makes a lot of sense. When others hesitate, you can take the lead in the category.

### THE PORTUGAL SYNDROME

Historically, Christopher Columbus approached a number of great leaders about his project to discover a westward passage to India. After many rejections, he finally found Queen Isabel of Aragon to be a willing backer. As a result, Spain scooped up much of the New World. Meanwhile, Portugal, having shared too much of her seafaring information, became a second-rate power.

In *AGE OF RENAISSANCE*, Personality cards are problematic. On the surface, they appear to be great bonanzas, giving you needed credits with which to boost your acquisition of advances rapidly. In reality, almost every player chooses to get Patronage early and each Personality card is thereby shared on some level. If you don't cover it with a substantial fee, you have spent a card to everybody's benefit and to little advantage for yourself. If you cover it with too much money, then you have squandered the very credits it provides.

The key to successful play of Personalities is not in the issue of how much money you will charge for its use. Instead the key is the timing of their play—you should seek to play each Personality in the protected box or at one of the many opportune moments when opponents have no money to spare for your pet project. On occasion, as part of an alliance of the have-nots you will want to play it for the benefit of all but the game's leader. However, for the most part, Personalities have a funny way of helping the leader. You may have to swallow the Personality for a long time until the game leader has no ability to benefit from its play.

### CAPITALS ARE FOR MONARCHS

You witness the reduction of your capital from a disaster. Although it is cheap and easy to rebuild a reduced capital province,

## THROUGH THE EYES OF THE QUEEN

When Christopher Columbus arrived at the Spanish court in search of a backer for his great western enterprise, he had to convince people who had eyes focused largely on profits. You as the merchant duke of your city-state must view the leader cards in the History deck with the same skepticism.

Some leaders offer credits for advances that are already owned by the time of their arrival. This makes the leader more useful on two levels: a) your competition gains nothing from your play of the card and b) you get hard cash (from Printed Word) for spending on the advance you really need. Other leaders offer credits for advances that you are not yet ready to acquire. These leaders may well be men before their time, but they are burdensome cards in the game that

cause misery/stabilization problems and will probably help other players nearly as much as you. Finally, leader credits in the early part of the game are more valuable per dollar due to timeliness and the lower costs of advances. Ultimately, however, timing within an Epoch can be crucial. If you try to use a credit at the same time as another player needs it, you will have to move first to get the protection from Patronage, unless you can count on many players paying the licensing fee.

Below are my general rankings of the relative worth of these historical personalities in game terms (listed from most valuable to least). Underlined advances are usually bought in a different epoch. Roman numeral indicates the epoch of the leader card.

### Timely Chaps

- II Christopher Columbus \$30 each for Ocean Navigation, New World
- III Leonardo da Vinci \$20 each for Master of Art, Renaissance, Human Body
- II Nicolaus Copernicus \$20 each for Institutional Research, The Heavens
- III Galileo Galilei \$20 each for Renaissance, The Heavens
- III Andreas Vesalius \$20 each for Enlightenment, Human Body
- II Prince Henry \$20 each for Ocean Navigation, Institutional Research
- I Walter the Penniless \$20 for Overland East (+\$10 during The Crusades)
- III Sir Isaac Newton \$20 each for Laws of Matter, Enlightenment
- I Rashid ad Din \$10 each for Written Record, Overland East
- I Saint Benedict \$10 each for Written Record, Patronage
- I Dionysus Exiguus \$20 for Written Record
- II Johann Gutenberg \$30 for Printed Word
- II William Caxton \$20 for Printed Word
- III Henry Oldenberg \$30 for Enlightenment
- III Bartolome de Las Casas \$30 for Cosmopolitan

### Before Their Time

- II Ibn Majid \$20 each for Ocean Navigation, Cosmopolitan
- II Desiderius Erasmus \$20 each for Printed Word, Renaissance
- II Marco Polo \$20 each for Cosmopolitan, Overland East (doubled by The Mongols)
- I Charlemagne \$20 for Nationalism

remember that the disaster which reduced it was played upon you for a reason: you are perceived as the leader. If the Civil War card is still in play, you are the most likely target. Therefore, there is no point in rebuilding your capital until the situation changes (as Black Death and Civil War will reduce it again). You are a merchant-king, not a monarch. Your home is your ship, not the earthly realm where you sell your goods. In all probability, your capital is not a valuable commodity to you at such a stage in the game anyway. You need to be certain that you will have the domination intact for two turns to turn any profit from its rebuilding.

### THE WELCOME MAT

Any player who has experienced the thrill of gaining the early lead through The Cru-

sades also knows that the Black Plague is an ever-present threat to his possessions in the Near East or Black Sea. The best way to deal with this is to leave open the door for your neighbors. Don't grab everything in an Area. Stick to the most valuable commodities and let the rest be filled by your enemies. They will think twice before inflicting such an area with the plague. When they hit it anyway, at least you have fewer worries and they have a few of their own.

### ARROWS MAKE POOR SHIELDS

Never waste a military advantage card on a turn in which you allocated little money to buying expansion tokens. Even if your arch enemy has 36 tokens, a defensive play of Long Bow will only buffer part of the blow or at best divert him to others. If you play Long Bow in conjunction with many tokens



instead, not only will your enemies shy away from you, but you will actually expand your domination of key markets.

Reinforcing this advice is the fact that some advantages are negated by simultaneous play of other advantages. If you bid the most to go last, you can be certain that your card will not be played fruitlessly.

### OFF TO SEE THE WIZARD

It is truly puzzling that Dorothy did not gain a mammoth entourage on her way to see the wizard. If this guy was so powerful and benevolent, shouldn't we all be off to see him? In *AGE OF RENAISSANCE*, you gain much by going where other people are willing to tread. If Genoa is off to grab Wine, surely you can gain by grabbing Wine, too. If you lack information about pending commodity payoffs, then try to move last in the turn and follow everybody into the same provinces. Even if they decide not to pay you, you should have the ability to grab the expansion card bonus, having eliminated the handful of new dominations that others just placed.

### DO IT YOUR WAY

It is inevitable that you will find yourself in a game behind somebody who just seems to have an unbeatable lead. They got to Exploration first. They created a tier first. They have the lowest misery. They have the best commodity locations.

The solution to this problem is two-fold. The more obvious response is to form alliances. Share Personality credits with each other. Coordinate expansion bids to maximize attack effectiveness. Divide and conquer the leader's holdings.

However, even this is not enough. You must go the further step of specializing along a path different from that pursued by the leader. You must be able to capitalize on the characteristics of an advance which the leader does not have yet. Only in this manner will you be able to make an astounding rebound. Suddenly, your sole possession of Cathedral wins every key battle. Or perhaps you start dumping (via Master of Art) all the commodity cards upon which the leader had counted. Or maybe you use Renaissance to switch the play order and hammer the leader with high-odds attacks. Then again, you can dump all your money into Interest & Profit while making extraordinary extra profits through Industry from a seemingly dispersed and weak set of holdings. Or perhaps you use Cosmopolitan to launch a series of cheap attacks with help from overlooked satellites.

Whatever you choose, don't just race to be *second* into exploration. You cannot catch up that way without unusual competition luck.

### WATER DAMAGE

In every game you have one—the kind of player that methodically holds cards and attacks the relevant provinces in the next turn. Meanwhile you are staring at a bunch of nearly useless cards in Epoch 3 (The Crusades after the Mongols, for example). What do you do? It is time to use one of the least-used and most underrated powers of the game: Wind/Watermill's trade power.

This takes a bit of planning (but then, what in this game doesn't?). First, you watch carefully how cards are being played or hoarded to assess who has a rich hand for the picking (which may mean the guy with only one card). Second, you don't dump a bad card (of value to others or no value at all). Third, you bid a straight 15 tokens (this is low enough to ensure that you have an early play order and high attack odds). Finally, when expansion comes, you go right for that unsupported five-point province and hope for the best. If you move early enough, the attack should succeed. Then you cough up the extra five tokens (don't roll a 6) and ask your target player to



spread his hand. Imagine the look on his face when you grab a card he hoped to play for his own benefit towards the end of the game. If you get a disaster card, so much the better. He was counting on not facing its damage and now you get to bring on the misery.

My favorite Wind/Watermill tactic is not to hand away a worthless card, but rather one that has value—but only if the recipient attacks my other opponents. This can cause a little feuding (the Gold card is especially good for this).

Obviously, if this power were great, it'd be used more than it is. Nonetheless, its weakness should not cause you to miss opportune uses of it (generally at a critical moment in the last two turns, when control

of a card is important). It is best to have already the Master of Art advance in order to dump a stolen card that you find to be so valuable to the opponent that you cannot afford to see it played at all.

### MARATHON

The game is not a sprint. Too many players shoot for the early advantage (often through exploration), thinking that they will "get there first with the most" and thereby lock up victory. While it is true that this strategy will force a reaction from others, it often leads to failure. The early lead is meaningless if it is not supported by income to sustain the pace of acquisition of advances. Presence in the Far East is valuable indeed. However, you cannot afford to fall for the "fallacy of the five-point bid" when facing hot pursuit overseas by a competitor. This seductive strategy calls for bidding the minimum necessary to move early and to dominate your choice among the new overseas markets. The problem with it is that several players dismember your possessions closer to home and leave you with very little base income. Then everybody starts hoarding Spice and Silk cards to deny you payment. You "hit the wall" that many a marathon runner hits—gasping for breath for several turns, while everybody else happily passes you on the basis of Timber payoffs and twice as many domination markers for base income.

In order to hold a lead, you have to be willing to continue to buy expansion tokens at a substantial level. You need to choose competition targets that will be relinquished (each Stone province is still worth \$4 per turn in a four-player game—and few opponents will bother to take one back). Find a few choice, out-of-the-way provinces for high-odds expansion from an early position in the play order. Once you are perceived as the leader, you can bet that others will start bidding higher numbers of tokens, which should allow you to bid higher while retaining an effective early position.

Of course, the better strategy is to let somebody else set the pace and break the wind for you. Make it appear to others that you are doing them a service when you attack the leader (at just the right moment to secure your own victory).

### PACING IS EVERYTHING

With a typical length of about five hours, *AGE OF RENAISSANCE* can be somewhat fatiguing toward the end when you most need to concentrate. One of the biggest blunders is to miscount the number of turns left or to acquiesce in an early end. The "way-behind" players may be

fostering a sort of group-think that says, "if we buy a couple of cards, this will be the last turn."

Think about it. Is it in your best interest to so finish the deck and end the game this turn? In all probability, only one player will say yes. The rest will see enormous potential to catch up by extending the game one more turn. This can be accomplished by deliberately slowing the pace of card-drawing. Two out of three potential draws per player are entirely optional (the Urban Ascendancy power and the expansion token purchase of a card). While the information on a card is power, one more turn may be more valuable to players who are starting to catch the leader. Pace your purchases so as to not bring about a premature end to the game.

## GRAND FINALE

Many players will play cards almost as fast as they draw them. Others will hoard cards until the final card play phase. Usually you have to gauge the situation according to the card and the game in progress. If you see people not playing cards and buying advances on a turn close to the end, it is probably because they plan to take a few more provinces on the

final turn and gain big commodity payoffs during the final card play phase.

The solution to their hoarding is bidding more for tokens than you have. Bid \$37 when you only have 32 tokens if necessary, but make certain you go last in the play order. You must attack anything they attack to counter their plan.

## BEAN-COUNTING

Of course, if you have properly counted the cards as they were played and discarded, and the game is ending with most of the outstanding cards in player hands, then you need not follow your opponents. Try to bid just under them to move early in the order with a lot of expansion tokens. Then, go after those commodities that you know have to be played at the end. This is easier said than done in a game of this length, so make sure you sprinkle a little disinformation around the table to lead others astray. Few will forget the number of outstanding Spice and Silk cards, but as the replay in volume 31, number 4 of *The GENERAL* illustrates, less-obvious cards like Metal can be key at the end.

## FORGET LINEAGE

All of these reflections bring me back to one very important conclusion: you can

overcome any starting position's drawbacks. You should enter the game not caring personally about your starting capital at all. You can overcome any deficiency among them. In fact, bidding zero for a capital and gaining the tie-breaker advantage for play order is one of the best choices you can make in the game. Turn order at any given moment is critical, not just for that turn but for the repercussions for the several that follow it. You want to have the tie-breaker leaning in your direction as you decide your allocation to expansion.

Of course, if you know your competitors well, you may know of a reason to put another player in an uncomfortable capital for his playing style. However, it is usually best to talk up the issue of which capital is best and which is poor. Your objective is simply to let others overpay for their security blanket of choosing a capital.

Ultimately, you are a cosmopolitan man—with the world as your nation, human progress your goal and profit your hidden motive. You are the Renaissance man, able to adapt to any situation and talented in all phases of the game. This is your age. Seize the day.



## ?? QUESTION BOX ?? AGE OF RENAISSANCE

**Map** Does St. Gali support Nuremberg?

A. No, play it as the board appears.

**Map** What is the extent of the Bay of Biscay "sea"?

A. It touches the coastal waters from Edinburg to Seville.

**Map** Does Paris connect to London and Portsmouth? Does Bari connect to Corfu?

A. Yes to all, across coastal waters.

**Map** Do Barca's coastal waters connect to the E. Med. Sea? Do Libya's connect to the C.Med. Sea?

A. Yes. No.

**Map** Does the Norwegian Sea have any significance for play?

A. No, you can only cross one sea with The Heavens and the areas that are adjacent to the Norwegian Sea are also accessible by coastal water.

**Map & 4.1** Are Iceland and West Africa only accessible by sea?

A. Yes, requiring The Heavens or Seaworthy Vessels.

**2.2 #5** In using Caravan to go from Venice to Belgrade via Dubrovnik, must I compete with a player in Dubrovnik?

A. Only if Dubrovnik is fully occupied at the time of transit, in which case you must place enough tokens to initiate competition in Dubrovnik and only if successful may you pass through with more tokens to go to Belgrade.

**4.1** Can the Pirates/Viking card reduce domination markers in the Far East and New World boxes?

A. Yes.

**4.4** Are tokens in their capital doubled for both defense and attacks?

A. Yes.

**9.32** If all expansion tokens have been purchased (none remain in stock) when a player loses a domination marker to a disaster (such as Rebellion), may the player replace the marker with a square token from his expansion pool? Must he?

A. Yes, the player may—at his option—use expansion tokens in such cases. Alternatively, you may leave the space empty if you have none in stock.

**9.32** How does Chaos affect the order of play?

A. Players in chaos are assumed to be buying zero expansion tokens and play order is determined in the usual fashion.

**9.33** Can a player who owns Printed Word and Patronage claim a rebate by patronizing a personality?

A. No.

**9.53** If Blue has colored squares in an unfiled province co-existing with recently-arrived Red tokens, are all of them removed in a competition initiated by white-side-up Blue tokens?

A. Yes, the loser of any competition loses all tokens in the province.

**9.53** If I coexist with another player and then use competition to gain control, may I use Wind/Watermill to force a trade?

A. No, you must take the province "from another player"—meaning that player must control it completely first.

**9.53** If one of several defenders in a province has a military advantage but others do not, is the attacker required to place the additional token to counter the military advantage?

A. Yes.

**9.53** When does the conversion between square tokens to circular tokens occur?

A. Immediately as each competition roll is conducted.

**9.61** Does a commodity shortage die roll of 12 (affecting Gold and Ivory) cause card draws or payments for both commodities? In order to remove a Gold/Ivory shortage, what is paid?

A. Yes, in shortage, two cards could be drawn. Only \$10 is paid to remove the joint shortage.

**9.7** May you later collect expansion tokens if they were not at first available at the time of allocation (example, after Black Death places more in stock)?

A. No, you only get what is available at the time of allocation between cash and tokens.

**10** Can players pay cash to other players for the play, discard or non-discard of cards, or performance of other "services"?

A. Players may plead, protest and whine, but the actual payment of bribes for services rendered is strictly forbidden. You may promise a service, but never show a card without incurring the penalty in the rules.

**11.1** If someone has bought all 26 Advances, is the final turn played out fully, including a final card play phase?

A. Yes.

**11.1** Do you make new Shortage/Surplus rolls for application to the final card play phase?

A. Yes.

**11.2** Can a card be discarded (with Master of Art) instead of played during the final card play phase?

A. No.

**11.2** Is the final card play phase considered to be a different turn? Does Enlightened Ruler played during the final turn's play card phase still protect a player during the final card play phase?

A. No; Yes.

**11.2** When do rerolls occur in the case of a tie with the War card?

A. At the start of each player's portion of the Play Card phase (possibly continuing to the next turn's phase). If a War continues past the last player during the Final Card Play phase, the game ends without further die rolls for the War.

# Getting a Good Start in MASTER OF ORION II

by Rick Moscatello

This sequel game from Microprose requires a different mindset than the original. Here are a few tips, organized into sections on race creation, research priorities and early-game strategy.

## CREATING A MASTER RACE

First off, don't bother with the pregenerated races—those were designed with “balance” in mind, and you want to win the game, not come away with a draw.

The best part about *MASTER OF ORION II* is the ability to pick and choose what racial abilities you want for a Custom Race. You get ten points worth of abilities, but this can be, and often is, increased by taking penalties—each point of penalty gives you another point of ability. Let's look at a few of these.

**Farming** is much more critical than one would expect in a science fiction game. To take a penalty here is a bad, bad, idea, since it will mean that 75 per cent of your population will need to be farmers—this only makes sense if you pick the Lithovore trait. A bonus here is an excellent idea, since it will allow you to produce more science and industry. For example, suppose you had a population of twelve, and you produced two food units (the average). This means that you'll need six population to make twelve food, and you can use the other six population to create industry (average industry production is three per unit of population). Take a +1 bonus to food production, and now you need only four population to feed everyone, giving you a 33 per cent bonus to industrial production. This can be a huge factor throughout the game, and is better than an industrial bonus; you may as well forget about getting a science bonus, since it is unlikely for more than a small percentage of your population to be involved directly in science.

**Feudal** is a great government for building ships—ships are 33 per cent cheaper with this government. Unfortunately, research is halved under feudalism, making it a poor choice for anything but quick games in relatively small universes; you can only keep up in technology by constantly capturing it from other players.

**Dictatorship** is the “basic” government, and it is pretty good, though the requirement to build Marine Barracks can be a setback in the early parts of some games. A

dictatorship with all the medium/high tech morale builders can easily compete with the Unification government.

**Democracy** is the most expensive government, for no apparent reason. It grants a bonus to money (which you'll never need), and a bonus to science that isn't particularly helpful, because most advances don't mean much until you build them (*e.g.*, the Spaceport advance doesn't help you until you build a Spaceport, and you'll need one everywhere). Finally, Democracies suffer a ten per cent penalty to defensive spying—this means that those fast discoveries are likely to be stolen fast, as well.

**Unification** is an awesome form of government, granting a 50 per cent bonus to Food and Industry (six points here gets you much more than seven points spent in Population modifiers). The advantages don't stop there, as Unified governments don't need Marine Barracks, and get a nice bonus to defensive spying. The only drawbacks are that captured colonies don't assimilate quickly (not a big deal, as the percentage bonus more than compensates for this, and is not even a factor if your race is also Telepathic), and morale isn't a factor (likewise not a problem, since other races won't get a 50 per cent bonus through high morale until well into the game).

The rule book forgets to mention that an advanced Dictatorship, an Imperium, gets a +20 per cent bonus to morale (otherwise, there is little reason to research Imperium). This makes it nearly the best advanced government, although the +75 per cent bonus to food and production in Galactic Unification is still superior.

There are many special abilities from which to choose, but only a few are good.

**Aquatic** is priced well—for five points, you get a +1 bonus to food production on planets with water in them (fairly common in this game); this alone is worth four, since you are only going to produce food on worlds suitable for it anyway. The extra point gives you a population capacity bonus on Tundra, Swamp, Ocean and Terran worlds—again, these are the worlds where you'll want a higher capacity.

**Subterranean** is too expensive. A sneaky player will capture a Subterranean alien and put one of such race on each of his already-populated planets—this will greatly increase the population capacity of

the planet. The morale penalty for this won't matter to a Unified government. You can do this with Aquatic as well, but it isn't nearly as effective.







**Creative** is a mighty ability. You will have a great tech advantage over non-Creative races—a good choice for new players. Experienced players know exactly what technologies are necessary, and tend to avoid this one eventually. Note that in the latest update, Creative costs eight points instead of six.

**Telepathic** is a valuable ability and cheaply priced. A telepathic player gets a big bonus to spying (that's worth three points already), a small bonus to diplomacy (another point), and can immediately use captured ships in combat. Even better, you can capture worlds just by orbiting them with a cruiser-sized ship (the smallest size that's worth building anyway). They instantly assimilate, removing the chance for revolts and immediately grant maximum production. This also means that you won't have to build Transports (with marines, the usual way to capture planets). This is a mighty fine deal.

**Warlord** is a nice ability at every stage of the game. Your economy will better support warships, your warships will have more experienced troops (this is devastating with Ship Offense and Defense advantages), and your mercenary leaders perform better. It is great for a military race in the short game, and pretty good the rest of the time. This isn't necessary, but it can be very helpful.

## MASTER OF ORION II by Microprose

System Requirement: DOS 5.0 or Win95, 16 MB RAM, double-speed CD-ROM drive, SVGA graphics, mouse. I found it to run slowly on less than a Pentium 133MHz and unless you have a fast CD-ROM drive, you should copy all the \*.lhx files to the hard drive, which will make the game consume about 170 mb.

	Mental Challenge
	AI Ability
	Artistic Appeal
	Excitement
	Realism
	Replayability

Rating icons range from one (wretched or ten years behind the state of the industry) to five (top 10% of industry). Four is good, three is passable (middle of the road for the industry) and two is not great (bottom third).



You don't have to spend all your points. Unspent points give a ten per cent bonus to your score for every point. By taking penalties, and no advantages, you can easily get a score over 8,000, and have a real nail-biter of a game as well.

### CUSTOM RACES

Here are a few Custom races.

#### The Hivers

Good for playing against computer in long games.

**Disadvantages:** -0.5 BC, -20 Ship Defense, -20 Ship Attack, -10 Ground Combat.

**Advantages:** +1 Food, +1 Production, Unification, Telepathic, Large Home World. (Beginners should not take Large Home World, +1 Production or -0.5 BC, in order to make finances easier.)

The Hivers is a powerhouse race. Unified Governments don't get many Command Points (CPs), and assimilate captured races slowly. Telepathic cancels these drawbacks, since no Transports means no CPs are spent on them. This race can easily conquer a Huge universe, even on the more difficult settings, by the 30th game year.

#### The "Blitz"

Good for smashing Humans in small universes.

**Disadvantages:** Repulsive, Feudal.

**Advantages:** +1 Production, +50 Ship Defense, +50 Ship attack, Dictatorship, Rich Home World, Warlord.

(Variant: Telepathic instead of Warlord and Rich Home World).

While the typical human player is researching a nifty Neutron Blaster, this race will be blasting away his space station with crude lasers. Two laser-armed cruisers

and a bunch of transports is enough to conquer the universe. Note how Feudal is an advantage for a race that plans to build only ships. Against humans, you don't need to take over planets all that much—a player will often just concede when his homeworld is blasted into oblivion. Only by capturing technology and population can this race be competitive throughout a game—don't forget to put Extended Range fuel tanks on your first few ships, as nothing slows down an assault like being unable to reach the enemy.

#### The Eggheads

Good race for experimenting with technologies.

**Disadvantages:** -50% Growth, -20 Ship Defense, -20 Ship Attack, -10 Ground Combat.

**Advantages:** +1 Food, +2 Production, Dictatorship, Creative, Rich Home World.

The Eggheads should avoid early conflicts, and appease neighbors long enough for the population advantages to become insurmountable. Once you get to Cyber-technics, you can build androids, making the population penalty irrelevant.

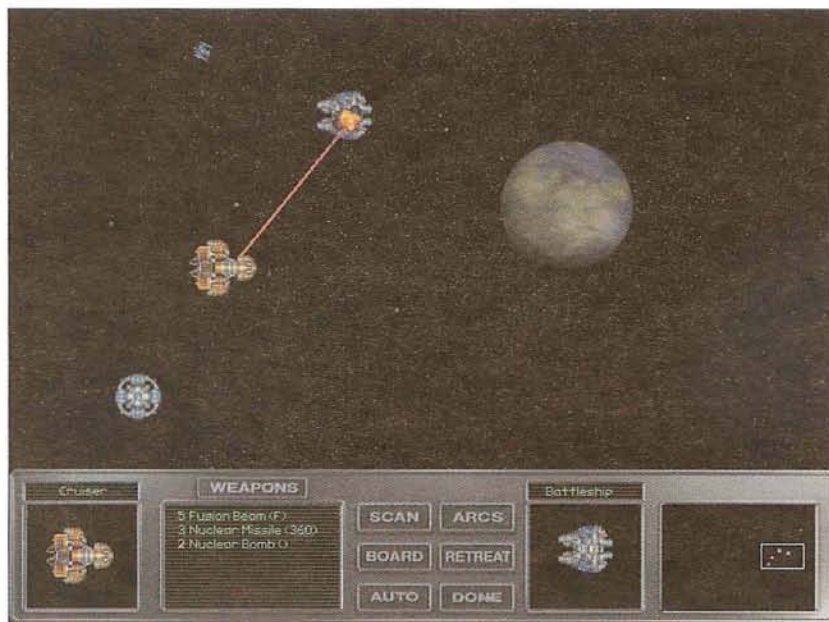
### RESEARCHING VICTORY

Once you know what techs are important, the Creative attribute becomes much less useful. While Creative players get every tech in every field, non-Creatives get to pick only one. I recommend the following techs by order of acquisition.

**Engineering:** Reinforced Hull, Automated Factories (try to steal/get Missile Bases from someone else), Battlepods, Space Port, Robo Mining Plant (Powered Armor almost as good), Advanced Damage Control, Titan Construction, Recyclotron, Robotic Factory, Deep Core Mining, Advanced City Planning, Doom Star Construction. Usually research in engineering becomes a low priority once Space Port is achieved.

**Power:** Fusion Drive (or Augmented Engines if you don't need speed), Ion Drive (ditto for Ion Pulse Cannons, whose use has been much reduced in versions 1.3 or later), Anti-Matter Drive, Transporters, Megafluxers, Hyperdrive, Interphased Drive. Power is a low priority for research, and you should only go for it when you *need* faster ships.

**Chemistry:** Tritanium Armor, Pollution Processor, Atmospheric Renewer (every once in a while, you'll need Iridium Fuel Cells), Zortium Armor (the others are good too), Neutronium Armor, Adamantium Armor. Having even a slight armor advantage will allow you to crush your competition. Don't build ships until you get Tritanium. Fuel Cell technology is best avoided—





Technology advances can be reviewed on screens like these. Success in war often comes down to having the newest weaponry.

use Outposts to expand, in those rare, rare, games where you aren't near anything.

**Sociology:** Space Academy (duh), Alien Management Center (obviously not if you're Telepathic). After this point, there aren't any choices. If you are a Dictatorship or Unification, push for the advanced government if you can, otherwise there's almost always something better.

**Computers:** Research Laboratory, Neural Scanner, Planetary Supercomputer (the others are good too), Cyber Security Link, Cybertronic Computer (Autolab is better if you already have better ships, but this is the best computer you will find for the research cost), Android Scientists, Virtual Reality Network, Achilles Targeting Unit (the others are good, too). Researching computers allows you to research everything else better.

**Genetics:** Hydroponic Farm (Biospheres if you have Natives or good bonuses to food production), Soil Enrichment, Microbiotics (Telepathy is good, too), Terraforming, Weather Controller, Psionics, Universal Antidote, Evolutionary Mutation (don't take any mutations and you'll get a 40 per cent bonus to your score). Terraforming is a good place to stop research until you know you're going to win, then push for the Mutation to get the score bonus.

**Physics:** Fusion Rifle, Battle Scanner, Neutron Blaster, Planetary Gravity Generator (Tractors aren't bad, but won't be useful until you miniaturize them), Jump Gate (Subspace Communications if you are having trouble with command points), Phasors (or the Rifle), Plasma Cannon (the best weapon if you get in close, even though they doubled its size in version 1.3), Dimensional Portal (in theory, anyway—I have captured this from the AI in every single game I've ever played), Hyperspace Communications, Star Gate (the game is usually over by this stage). This is the "Weapons" research tree, and the most important in a war game; what you pick

depends a lot on what you need at the time. You can get nifty stuff, but by the time you get it, you might own such a large percentage of the galaxy that you won't need it. Still, Stellar Converters (which can destroy planets) are fun to use.

**Force Fields:** Class I Shield (or Mass Driver, both are useless), Anti-Grav Harness, Planetary Radiation Shield, Stealth Suit, Warp Field Interdictor, Class V Shields (Some people love Gauss, but I never use it), Hard Shields, Class VII Shield, Subspace Teleporter, Class X Shields. Shields take up space and offer minimal protection. It is usually a good idea just to take them off and put on more weapons or better defensive stuff (at least until you get to Class V or so). This is the lowest priority field to research once you get Planetary Radiation Shield, and you only need it if you have several, large, rich, Radiated planets.

### THE EARLY GAME

Regardless of what race you use, early research goes in the following order: Reinforced Hull, Automated Factories (immediately build factories on every planet), Research Laboratory (build immediately), Tritanium, Pollution Processor, and Battle Pods. At this stage, you'll be able to build a Battleship with 18 Nuclear Missile Racks

Table 1. Goals

Year	Sys.	Colonies	Pop.	Resr.	Tech Disc.
3501	2	2	9	6	Reinforced Hull
3503.4	2	3	15	11	Automated Fact.
3504.8	2	3	20	26	Research Lab.
3505.7	2	5	23	72	Tritanium
3506.9	2	5	26	82	Pollution Proc.
3507.5	2	5	30	126	Battle Pods
3507.8	First Contact with establishment of colony in a third system.				

(in five different groups, each able to fire two shots, Mirved, Fast, Heavily Armored, with ECCM—electronic counter-counter measures). Such a ship can singlehandedly defeat most monsters. Two such ships can beat every monster (except the Guardian), crush most Antaran incursions, destroy any alien fleet that doesn't have at least Zortium Armor, and allow you to destroy enemy Star Bases with impunity until they get Neutronium Armor. Often these ships survive until you attack Antares. Telepaths should build Missile-armed cruisers, which they need more of, since their empire can grow very quickly.

Table 1 sets goals for when you should complete the above research list. Mileage will vary, of course. Just keep restarting the game until you can consistently keep up with these numbers (with a Unified race,



Greetings from your newly-found neighbors give you the chance to talk your way out of an unwanted war (at least in the beginning).

other races will usually perform more slowly).

One important strategy that is often overlooked is having colonists build housing as opposed to Trade Goods or working on a Star Base; an early population boost will reap large dividends later. Notice from the above chart how much Research Laboratories increases research—while Pollution Processors aren't necessary, it is mandatory to build Automated Factories and Research Labs on every planet, as soon as possible. As you don't get interest on any money you save, you should invest that money by buying Automated Factories on new colonies, rather than slowly building them. Try to keep your money low for much of the early part of the game—having too much money can motivate the AI to attack you!

Once your colony has maximized its population, and has built everything except a Star Base, it can take several paths. If it isn't Rich or Ultra-Rich, put the colonists on research, and set production to Star Base—this "saves" the production you get from the Automated Factory, since as soon as you get a new structure to build (like Supercomputer), you can change production at no penalty. Once the new structure is built, go back to Star Base, and keep doing this until you need the CPs or defense that you can get with a Star Base. If it is a Rich, small, colony, have it build spies, spies, spies. Don't even think about not building spies until you have around 40. If it is a large, Rich colony (or Ultra Rich and not really tiny), build the Starbase and use it to crank out Colony and military ships.

A player following these tips should come out of the first ten years of the game ahead of a good computer player, and once you are a bit ahead, it's a simple matter to just keep re-investing your resources for ever higher returns.

# SAVE THE PRINCESS!

## A First Look at PRINCESS RYAN'S STAR MARINES

by Mark G. McLaughlin

Just beyond Uranus in the 23rd and a half century, the Imperial courier ship *Tori* lies broken in space, its passengers and cargo a prize for Dar Yamaguchi, Viceroy of the Far Marches of the Grand Republic. Among his hostages is Princess Ryan, the 12-year-old nominal monarch of Earth and local representative of the Holy, Universal Galactic Empire. The princess must be rescued from Yamaguchi's base, the Dark Citadel, which is defended by an elite force of the Republic's Black Guard. Time is short. Fleets from the Republic and Empire are converging upon the planet. Unfortunately, there is only one force that can reach the planet before the cataclysmic battle: the antiquated Armed Freighter *Sch-enectady*, crewed by a small company of third-rate Imperial auxiliaries. Though equipped with outmoded battle suits and obsolescent weapons, their morale is high and their motivation personal, for this company is drawn from Ryan's own regiment: Princess Ryan's Star Marines. The ship echoes with their battle cry: "Save the Princess."

And now, one to six players will attempt to do (or prevent) just that.

Avalon Hill's newest game, *PRINCESS RYAN'S STAR MARINES (PRS)* can be played alone or as part of a team going against the "bad guys" (the Black Guard), which is run by either a player or the game system. One to five players can be the Marines. Although only one Marine officially wins, the Marines are all members of the same team; they have to work together or else none of them will ever get the glory for saving the Princess.

### PLAY FOR THE TEAM

This "team spirit" is what makes PRSM unique. It makes it especially well-suited to introducing new players to gaming and for play as a family. Instead of playing against your wife, kids or novice gamers, you can play with them against the system. This cooperative spirit makes playing the game a very positive experience. If the Marines win, they win as a team. The player who actually rescues the Princess is just the most valuable member of the winning team. Even if your team of Marines loses, however, you all lost together: nobody beat anybody else.

This may sound a little too "nice" for most gamers, but if you have ever tried to get non-gamers, especially wives, girlfriends or children to play with you, then the value of this "cooperative" spirit becomes obvious. What is even better is that you can play at your best without pulling punches (you do not have to "let them win").

### PLAY FOR BLOOD

All this nice stuff aside, however, once you get into the game, you can really play for blood. Show me a gamer or a pro-ball player who wants to be one of the guys carrying around the MVP on his shoulders! Nah, we gamers want to be that MVP. The trick is to get the rest of the team to help you get the trophy.

Much like in *DIPLOMACY*, the question is not *whether* to stab someone in the back or not, but *when and how* to do it (preferably in such a manner that even the person being stabbed will appreciate the beauty of your victory). Timing is important in *PRS*, as stabbing someone in the back too early or too often will not endear him to your cause.

### THE BLACK GUARD'S BEST ALLY

The Black Guard fights alone—most of the time (the occasional traitor may exist). As the solo meanie in the game, he has no friends. All the other players are fighting him. His mission is simple: kill as many Marines as possible or, failing that, stall them long enough that they cannot win without taking some unimaginable and suicidal risk (that would be the oft-used Rule 10: Do or Die).

The Guard player can try to "work" the Marines against each other. He can cultivate enmity among the Marines by focusing his more deadly and hurtful attentions on one or two Marine players, while leaving others alone. In this way, he can encourage them to take actions to undercut their fellow Marines. Usually, he will find it easy to brew dissension among the Marines.

### A CARD BOARD GAME

This is not to be confused with the traditional cardboard—one word—game which includes hundreds of tiny little cardboard counters. In this game, the cards are the

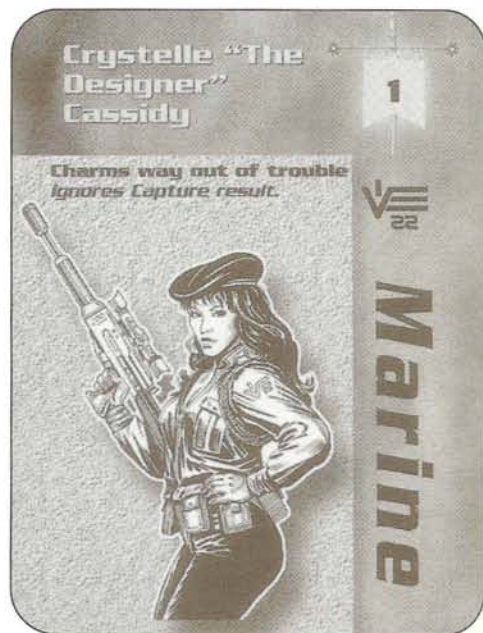
pieces. *PRS* has the look of a collectible card game—having over 200 beautifully rendered playing cards. However, this game has two illustrated game boards, a neat little metal Marine playing piece and a rule book (not a little fold-out pamphlet)—all of which comes in a big box. And the system and components are complete—no further purchases are necessary to "improve" your decks.

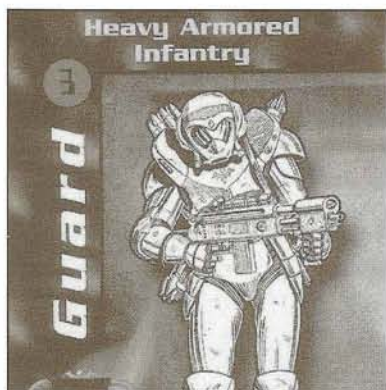
Borrowing some of the best elements from the wealth of innovative and interactive card games that have arisen in the past three years and marrying them with the excellent tradition of board gaming for which it is best known, TAHGC has come up with a new type of game: a Card Board game.

### SERGEANTS RULE, LIEUTENANTS DROOL

Each Marine player begins with three of the 24 available Marine cards. Each Marine has a name, rank, skirmish value and special ability. Drawing on personal experience in the military, the designer (me) has made the five sergeants the most valuable Marines, having the highest skirmish ratings and best special abilities. The least valuable are the two lieutenants. This the designer knows first hand: not only was I a lieutenant, but I'm even a lieutenant in the game and on a scale of one (low) to six (high), Lt. McLaughlin is a lowly one. The four corporals have skirmish values of three, while the twelve Privates are worth two each. The Star Marine company is led by a valuable Captain who tends to draw frequent attention from Guard snipers and the occasional, "accidental" piece of jagged metal from a "friendly" source (he rarely makes it to the end of the battle).

The command of the Marine team goes to the highest ranking Marine in play. That





means that unless Captain Bob is on the field, one of the inept lieutenants is going to be the commander of the Marines. The player who has the commander makes all the big decisions in the game—for as long as he lives.

### A SAFE LANDING (FOR THE NAVY)

The game board has a start (the Drop Zone) and a finish (the Royal Suite), with a large number of nasty pieces of terrain in between (no naval pilot—when given the choice—is going to risk his ship and life putting the Marines down anywhere near their target). At each step, the commander decides which path to take (usually the shorter path will be a tougher fight, but the time saving may be necessary). Some terrain spaces contain good things for the Marines (like the Imperial Arms Cache, the Monastery or every girl gamer's favorite, the Interstellar Shopping Mall). Some contain bad things (like the Jungle of Death or the Fungal Fire Swamps). . . at least, this is what "Marine Intelligence" *thinks* is in those spaces.

Chances are good that the Marines will be looking at outdated maps as they move—especially when they take detours—resulting in battles in unexpected terrain. This confusion (or sense of discovery if you want to take a more positive attitude toward Marine Intelligence) is portrayed through use of the deck of 32 site cards. Each time you enter one of the spaces on the board, you check to see if you actually end up wandering into the site shown on a previously hidden card, possibly into the real killer in the game—the Planet Defense Battery. If you find this you cannot afford to bypass it (it will send a *really big* missile at your mother ship, where your Marine reinforcements originate, that is, until the Battery kills every Marine aboard).

Even if you find something good in the next space, the Guards always get there first. Sometimes you cannot beat them, so you have to go around them (take the other path) or, if you are really adventurous, go *over* them.

### THE ONLY WAY TO FLY

This being "the 23rd and a half century," Marines do not always have to walk or drive to get where they are going. They can fly. The Marines have two assault shuttles (actually, they are more like flying minivans with guns). If faced with a particularly nasty opposition or some very bad locations to their front or flank, the Marine commander can decide to jump over the bad guys. The shuttles can only be used once (things—like the engine and the guns—sort of fall off as they bounce ballistically to the landing zone). You see, the Guards also have a strong air presence on this planet, so the Marines can't stay airborne for long.

Should the Marines survive the aerial gauntlet they still have to discover and fight whatever they land on. If they are fortunate, it will be some nice, quiet spot like the Bone Yard, the Shores of Tripoli or A Gentle Hill Called Avalon. Of course, they are just as likely to drop into an Ion Storm, an Endless Desert or the Guard's Special Forces Camp. Such a bad drop will usually send most of the Marines to Sick Bay—or the Morgue. Luckily, one of these will be the Commander. If he chooses such a risky tactic, he has to go along for the ride. Who says there is no justice in the galaxy?

### GUARDS EVERYWHERE

Almost any space the Marines enter will be defended by Black Guards. These will either be drawn from the 36-card Guard deck at random, or selected by a Black Guard player from the hand he is dealt at the start of the round. Higher valued cards are not used in games with fewer Marine players to ensure similar odds of success, no matter the number of Marine players. The Guards are a varied mix of militia and hi-tech troopers which include some relatively weak cards, such as the Light Infantry and Floating Gun Jeeps, as well as some really tough heavy-hitters, notably the Flying Plasma Tanks and the Suicide Fappers.

A good number of the Guard cards you always face have special abilities, such as the ability to hide, cause extra or deadlier casualties, or call in reinforcements ("Look out, it's a trap—there are two of 'em!"). Six special cards add more danger. One of these, the Sniper, shoots at the Marine commander. The bad news is that the commander can be wounded, captured or even killed—actually, that is often the good news for promotion-hungry Marines. The Mind Meld stuns the best Marine in play. The Domsday Bomb hits the whole skirmish squad. The Chemical Attack hits the back lines.

**IT'S MY GUN; I'LL DECIDE WHEN**

### You Self-Serving S.O.B. Interview with a Princess Ryan Star Marine: Stuart K. Tucker

*The following walking interview was found on the recorder of our deceased field correspondent during the mop-up operations after the attack on Mount Yamaguchi.*

"You self-serving S.O.B." is probably what my fellow marines think of me. Of course, I care about freeing the Princess. Yeeeessssss, I want to beat the Guard. But in case you haven't noticed, buddy, a lot of us are dying out here. This is no cake walk. The terrain is tough and our commander appears to be a little too concerned about his own laurels for my tastes.

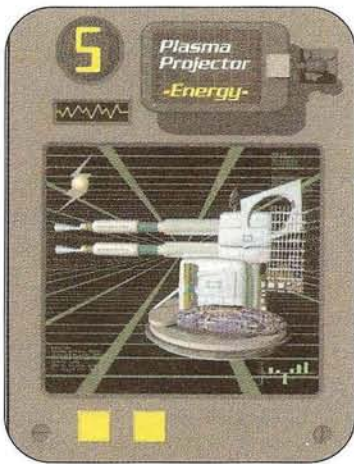
When we go over that ridge in a few minutes, friend, I'll pull my share of the load. I'll take a risk or two. I'll even take a lazer bolt for her highness. But you can be sure, I'll not take one for that lousy C.O. of ours. Heck, if he is the one who is going to get the promotion out of this, then let him expend his ammo and use up his personal repertoire of gadgets.

I, for one, will fight for the good of the company. I will probably die, doing so. If I am to get a promotion, I'm willing to put the effort into it so that I deserve it. That is all I am saying. The C.O. has set up the situation so that the Guard is going to kick our butts if we don't all fight like demons. But, I ask you, will he? Will our efforts be wasted? Will Joe "Brown-nose" over there get the promotion, though you and I make all the sacrifices?

I can't make up my mind as to whether I should approach the C.O. about getting a cut of the profits from this venture or simply hurry fate along in the matter of getting us a new C.O. What do you think, sister? Is it time for your field promotion?

*The tape ends at this point.*

*The commandant of the Princess Ryan's own Star Marines refuses to comment on the possibility of internal dissension during what he portrays as a highly-successful rescue operation. The company Captain and Lieutenants all received high commendation for their efforts which led to the freeing of the Princess, although the Captain received his medals posthumously.*



### TO FIRE IT

The powers that be do not send Marines in unsupported. Each Marine player draws six weapons cards at the start. The weapons come in four varieties: Vehicular, Energy, Firepower and, my favorite, Edged (no problems with jammed guns here). They range in value from nearly worthless (1) to magnificent (13). The assortment of weaponry is state of the art . . . if it were the 20th Century, not the 23rd. Thus, the Marines have fairly conventional weapons in their matchup against the Security Robots, Laser Guided Perimeter Sensors and Psychic Disruptors of the Guards. Still, sometimes the old weapons are the best.

Of course, not all weapons can be used in all situations. In some spaces on the path, Marines are penalized for using firepower or energy weapons. In other places only vehicular weapons are used at full value. Edged weapons have their place in close-quarter fights, such as the kind of skirmish Marines will encounter in the Docking Bay.

Some Marines prefer certain weapons and operate them better than others. Sergeant Major Hank "The Tank" Martin, appropriately, adds three to the value of vehicular weapons. Private Carol Ann "Kitty" Holbrook, the "cleaning lady," likes Energy weapons.

In addition to weapons, Marines also receive Dispatches. These are cards that are played to enhance or replace weapons, weaken the guards, heal or hurt Marines or just plain screw things up. (There are even the equivalent of "get out of battle free" cards). Most of the Dispatch cards can be used to help the Marines. Others can be used to cut down a fellow Marine. This can be important to a player trying to win a promotion for himself. In each combat where the Marine wins, the player with the best combination of a Marine's face value and weapons will claim the prize—expressed in Promotion Points (PPs). In skirmishes where the Marines lose, the player with the lowest combination of Marine and weapon will take the casualty. Playing the right kind of Dispatch card can turn that result

upside down, thus gaining the prize for yourself or shoving your buddy into the line of fire to take the bullet meant for you. See? It doesn't *have* to be a nice game.

### TIME OUT AND OUT OF TIME

As play progresses and the Marine players run out of weapons, dispatches and Marines, the commander will have to call for a Regroup. During this pause, Marine reinforcements and new weapons come down from the mother ship to replenish players' hands. Marine players who have earned Promotion Points (PPs) can buy Dispatches and extra weapons. If the Marines pool their PPs together they can even fix up one of the shuttles they used so they can try another Ballistic Insertion. Perhaps even more important, they can pool their PPs together to buy more time—a precious commodity which the commander just burnt when he called for the regroup.

Time is of the essence in this game. The Marines begin with 15 Time Chips. Each time they enter a new space on the path they may have to expend a time chip. Each time they regroup they will expend three time chips. Other events can eat up time. When the Marines are out of time chips, the game is over. If they have not rescued Princess Ryan by then, they lose.

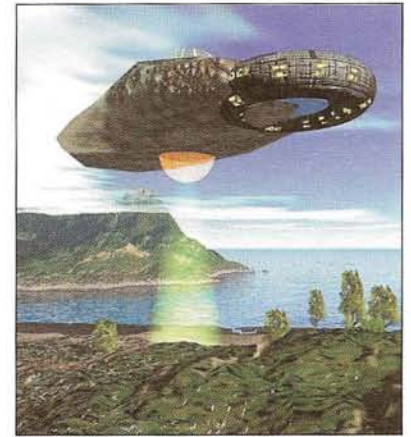
This time element often forces a Marine commander to order the risky ballistic insertion to, quite literally, save time. It means that a Marine commander has to weigh the need to regroup his weary, weakened team with the need to get the job done *now*.

Do you still want to be the Marine Commander? Well, fortunately, no matter how bad things look—and most of the time they look pretty bad—there is always one last chance. That is the fabled Rule 10 that I mentioned earlier: Do or Die.

### THE FINAL BATTLE (LITERALLY)

As with any good science fiction story, *Princess Ryan's Star Marines* is never hopeless for the good guys. There is always one last chance.

No matter where your Marines are, or how much time is left, or how few Marines remain in fighting condition with useful weapons, the Marine Commander can



always call for the Do or Die assault. In "real" terms, this involves using the mother ship, the *Schenectady*, as a giant attack shuttle. The Marine players retreat to the mother ship, assign the remaining Marines and a few choice weapons (sort of a mini-regroup), strap themselves in and order the ship's captain to head for the Dark Citadel—nose first, at full throttle.

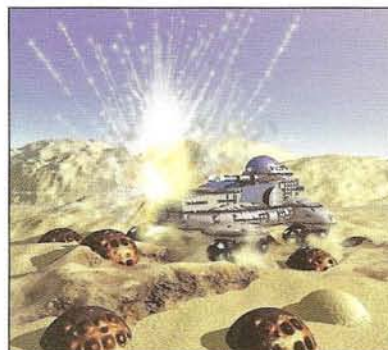
It is a "Damn the Torpedoes, Full Speed Ahead" kind of move dear to the heart of every Annapolis graduate and desktop admiral. As the *Schenectady* hurtles planetward, it has to brave the screen of fighters sent to intercept it. The closer the Marines were to their goal, the fewer the fighters they will face. Thus the Do or Die rewards a team of Marines who came close to the Dark Citadel (and represents a nearly hopeless last chance at salvation for bozos still floundering on the Drop Zone).

The game can end right here. If the fighters shoot down the *Schenectady*, all marines die. Game, set, match and tournament. The Marines don't just "not win," they do not even survive.

Then again, if they were close to the Dark Citadel there is a good chance they will brush off the fighter screen (assuming of course, they also managed to take out the Interceptor Base before coming to this dire strait). If they manage to swat away the fighters, however, there is still the gauntlet of anti-aircraft defenses to run. If the Marines took out the Tsirnobil Power Plant, another location on the path, they will have a pretty good chance of getting through intact. If not, they could be shot down or at least will probably be hit by and take casualties from the AA batteries (anti-aircraft—not "double A" cells).

If the *Schenectady* bulls its way through the fighters and guns, and enough Marines survive, the mother ship crashes into the Dark Citadel, nose first, right into the Royal Suite. There, under the watchful, hopeful and tearful eyes of Princess Ryan, they have one, last chance to fight the Guard and save the Princess!

Of course, the Guard will most certainly have saved his best guard for last. ★





→→→→→ (from p. 37)

## NEUTRAL COMMENTARY

Apparently the Age of Miracles has not passed after all. First, the Confederate player makes a stunning march to seal up the approaches to Tabernacle Church, and then the Union player makes an equally extraordinary attack through the Rebel blockade.

Early's march only emphasizes the point I made previously, that it would have been better for the Union player to seal off the roads to Salem Church by sending Howe to hex 4130. Now, with Early's boys in key positions around both Salem and Tabernacle Church, the Federal troops may end up paying the price for a lax defensive setup. In addition as I said before, I question the Union player's drive on Tabernacle Church. It cost him two VPs in losses to capture a position that he will not be able to hold. It would have been better to keep his forces together at Salem Church.

**AP11/C:** McLaws/F3 force marches for a total of six movement points (he is disorganized but does not lose any manpower). He moves to 3728 and makes a normal attack against Howe. **Combat result:** Union 2DR; Confederate a. Howe retreats to 3932. McLaws advances to 3828 (Tabernacle Church). McLaws continues moving to 3928 and makes a normal attack against Newton. **Combat result:** Union 1DR; Confederate Da. Newton retreats to 4125 (via 4027, which costs him one Manpower Point). McLaws advances to 4028 (Salem Church).

*Union VP Total = 2 (two for Fredericksburg, two for Snowden, five for Confederate losses, -7 for Union losses).*

## CONFEDERATE

I turned the tables, and it was not as difficult as it looked. Although I lost some Combat Value because of my forced march, it did not hurt me much. Early's positions in 3929 and 4129 were the keys to victory, because they provided the +4 flank attack modifier I needed. In one Action Phase we have gone from a Decisive Union Victory to a Substantive Confederate one. The only thing left for me now is to move Early east, surround Fredericksburg again, and try to garner a few more VPs.

## UNION

No chance now. Another extraordinary feat of dice rolling on the part of the Confederacy.

## NEUTRAL COMMENTARY

Not so much superior dice rolling as superior generalship taking advantage of a weak tactical deployment of the Federal divisions. If McLaws had not taken Salem Church, Early's brigades certainly would have. In this scenario, even though the



**Figure 5.** Position after Action Phase 11. The Confederates beat back Howe and Newton, thereby recapturing Tabernacle Church and Salem Church. The battle is essentially finished.

Union has to play aggressively from the very beginning, he should not neglect his defenses. Next in importance to capturing Salem Church is the construction of a defensive bulwark to hold the position. At all costs, he must make sure that Early remains isolated south of Fredericksburg. This means blocking the road net that leads west, especially the one from Hamilton's Crossing that runs along the northern bank of Massaponax Creek. A sizable force left in 4130 can make it almost impossible for Early to come to the relief of Salem Church.

Dealing with McLaws is another matter entirely. Once Early is bottled up, it makes sense to move a division (or two divisions, if they can be spared) west of Salem Church to attack McLaws before he has a chance to be activated. This attack is to be made not to achieve a favorable combat result, but to increase McLaws' fatigue to the point where he is no longer a threat. Level 4 fatigue, of course, will stop him dead in his tracks. Level 3 most likely will be enough to prevent him from getting to Salem Church. In order to pull this off, the Union player has to watch for and block any sneaky retreats (as the Confederate player pulled off in this replay) that may slow the Union attack on McLaws.

**AP12/U:** Sub-1/F1 makes a prepared attack against Wilcox. **Combat result:** Union Ea; Confederate 1DR. Wilcox retreats to 3828. Sub-1 does not advance.

**AP13/C:** Early activates Gordon/F2, Smith/F2 and Hoke/F2. Early (with Gordon and Smith) moves to 4129. Hoke moves to 4228.

**AP14/C:** Early activates Gordon/F3 and Smith/F3. Early (with Gordon and Smith) moves to 4228.

**AP15/U:** Sub-1/F2 moves to 4328 (Fredericksburg).

**AP16/C:** Pass. Pass. Action Cycle and game ends.

*Union VP Total = 3 (two for Fredericksburg, two for Snowden, six for Confederate losses, -7 for Union losses), which is a Confederate Substantive Victory.*

## UNION

My retreat of Newton to 4125 during Action Phase 11 was in anticipation of the attack I carried out in Action Phase 12. The extra flank attack die roll modifiers definitely helped me to defeat Wilcox for one additional VP. However, this is all end-game stuff, a point here or there at most. I suppose a truly aggressive player would have attempted one final assault by Gibbon in order to decrease the Confederate's victory to a marginal one. This would have smacked too much of sour grapes. The Confederate player gets the credit for soundly defeating my plans.

## CONFEDERATE

Since I have the victory, I decided not to take a chance on any risky final attacks. This became especially true after the Union player moved Sub-1 into Fredericksburg.

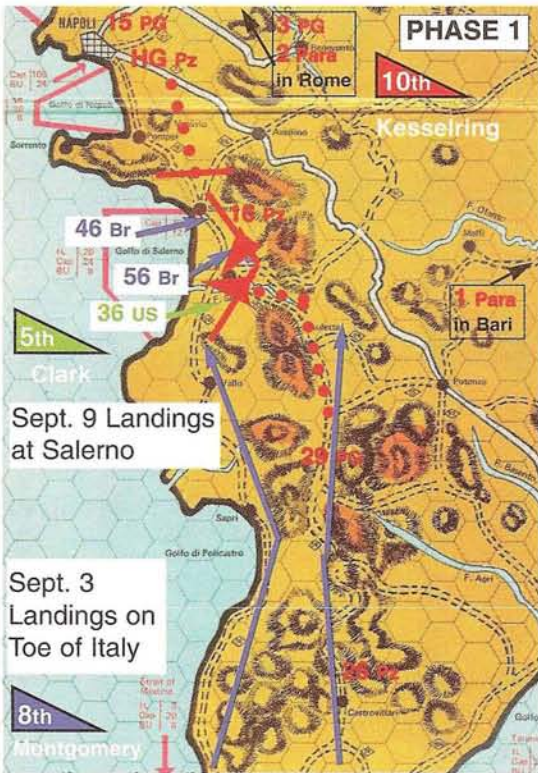
## NEUTRAL COMMENTARY

An exciting game with good give and take. In the final analysis, I don't believe the Union committed enough troops to his advance up the Turnpike. Of course, Sedgwick and Brooks were stuck in Snowden. However, Fredericksburg could have been abandoned and Gibbon sent west with the rest of the VI Corps. There is a natural reluctance on the part of Union players to give Fredericksburg to the Rebels (if nothing else, it represents secure VPs), but those two points can be sacrificed if abandonment can materially contribute to the acquisition of 13 points (Tabernacle and Salem Churches). In this game, Gibbon might have provided just enough troops both to blockade Early and to stop McLaws dead in his tracks. ★

# HISTORY IN A BOX

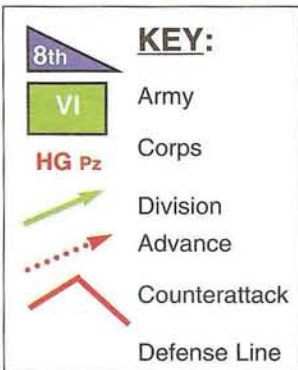
## ANZIO and the Drive on Rome

By Stuart K. Tucker



### PHASE 1: Southern Italy

Having kicked the Germans and Italians out of Sicily, the Allies proceeded in September of 1943 to land in several parts of southern Italy, within range of air bases in Sicily. The Germans had moved quickly to occupy Italy and disarm the Italians, virtually eliminating any rearward threats to the defense of the peninsula. The 26th Panzer and 29th Panzergrenadier Divisions conducted a fighting withdrawal from the southern tip of Italy. The 16th Panzer Division defended the hills above Salerno until the Herman Goering Panzer Division arrived to hold the northern passes. Then on Sept. 13th, the 16th Pz and the 29th PG attacked down the Sele R. versus the US 36th. Montgomery's troops linked up with Clark's on the 16th, bringing an end to Kesselring's delay. The Germans withdrew in order. The Allies pushed their way north, liberating Naples. The Germans pulled back upon successive delaying lines until they finally put up stiff resistance along the Gustav line.

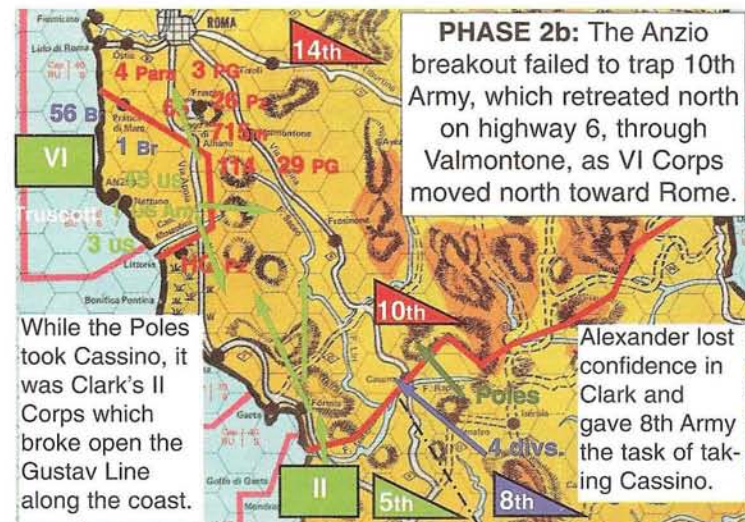
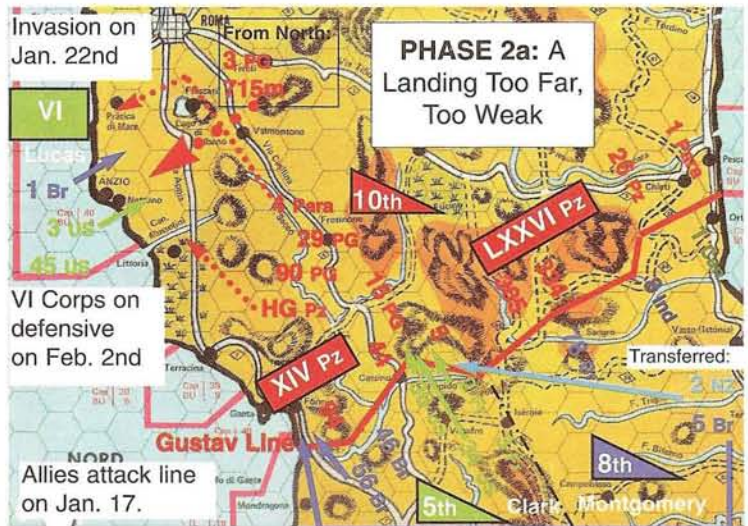


### PHASE 2: Rome

When the Allies ran into severe German resistance along the Gustav line (anchored on Monte Cassino, in the Appennine mountains), they decided that the push to Rome required another amphibious invasion, this time 60 miles to the north of the front, at Anzio. The US VI Corps drew the assignment of landing on January 22nd at Anzio and pushing inland in an attempt to out-

flank and trap the German 10th Army forces in the Liri valley. A simultaneous offensive along the Garigliano River and at Monte Cassino would break through, link up with VI Corps and liberate Rome.

The plan was flawed. The landing had insufficient forces and its commanders were too conservative to effectively seize the



**PHASE 2b: The Anzio breakout failed to trap 10th Army, which retreated north on highway 6, through Valmontone, as VI Corps moved north toward Rome.**

hills surrounding Anzio. Consequently, German reinforcements from northern Italy ringed the beachhead with superior force. Meanwhile battle after battle for control of Monte Cassino dealt the allies failure.

### PHASE 2b: Diadem

In mid-May, the Poles led a two-division attack that finally gained Monte Cassino, while 8th Army launched four commonwealth divisions over the Rapido. It was Clark's II Corps along the coast and his French divisions in the mountains which broke through the Gustav line. By May 26th, the German line had crumbled completely. Truscott's reinforced VI Corps broke out to the south on the 27th, as the Germans had no reserves to commit. Finally, 5th Army linked up with VI Corps 125 days after the initial Anzio landing. Truscott was ordered to turn north, allowing the US Army to liberate Rome on June 4th, but missing an opportunity to trap the fleeing 10th Army—the main military objective.



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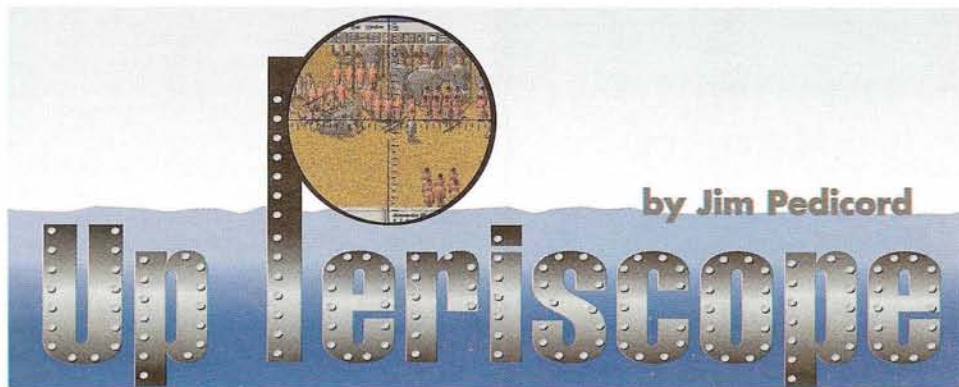
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# Up Periscope

by Jim Pedicord

**J**im has offered to act as our eyes on developments in the computer gaming world via this column that takes its logo from the world of underwater surveillance. He is preparing a report (to appear in volume 31, number 6) on happenings at E3, the annual electronic software show.—SKT

Welcome to this new computer wargaming column. In each issue, I will "ping" on some of the more interesting and worthwhile titles in computer war and strategy gaming as well as give sneak previews of future games to be appearing in our periscope.

*GREAT BATTLES OF ALEXANDER* is the first game out of the chute. Based on the award-winning boardgame from GMT, this turn-based wargame from Interactive Magic puts you in charge of famous ancient generals 300 years before the birth of Christ. Game play takes place from an overhead view with individual control of various Macedonian, Greek, Persian and other Old World units. Ten battles and a campaign mode make up the basis of the game with each battle showcasing some of the different styles and combat techniques Alexander the Great used in his conquering of the known world. Combat emphasizes cohesion of units and also heavily favors strong formations, so good battlefield tactics of avoiding exposure of flanks when defending or opening holes in enemy lines when on the offensive are critical to success in this game. Winning and losing is based on rout points, meaning units must keep their cohesion and commanding generals must keep formations tight while rallying troops whenever possible. Units vary widely, from light infantry to Macedonian phalanxes, Persian chariots to Indian elephant units. Missile-capable units such as archers, slingers and javelin throwers complete the army composition.

Great looking graphics (half the enjoyment is watching the units engage and bloody the battlefield) and an epic soundtrack round out this game and make the complexities of ancient warfare fun to play, though for the purist these features may be turned off leaving a standard hex-based wargame. With support for modem, network and Internet play, *GREAT BATTLES OF ALEXANDER* can be played against the computer or against human foes.

This is the first in a series of "Great Battles" games from Interactive Magic with

*GREAT BATTLES OF HANNIBAL* to be the next in the series.

Torpedoing a few years forward from the ancient world to World War II, we find another new wargame: *THE ARDENNES OFFENSIVE* developed by SSG and published by SSI. Designed at the operational level, your position puts you in charge of battalions and regiments of infantry and armored units during "The Battle of the Bulge." Artillery and air support round out the units in this hex mapped, turn-based game that also has full two-player capability through modems, networks or direct cable hookup. Game play is not too complex (good for beginners), though there is a wide variety of rules and options available. Normal wargaming principles like zone of control and supply integrate nicely into seamless computer play. Operation points are the name of the game in *ARDENNES*, controlling movement and being affected by ZOC, supply and terrain features. Combat comes in an odds format with attacking and defending units' points totaled and the results displayed on screen. Additional factors such as terrain and air or artillery strikes can then shift the odds up and down.

There are additional little caveats that add substantially to this game. Bridges may be demolished and repaired. Infantry units may be "motorized" by drawing trucks from the motor pool. One interesting element is the varying stage of exposure with regard to the "fog of war." Exposure may be adjusted at the start of a scenario so that unit strengths may be observed from a distance or set so that only close observation of an enemy unit will display its strength and composition. A full campaign as well as individual scenarios and a training scenario are included in the game, giving hours of solid WWII-era wargaming.

Since the submarine vernacular is being used in this column, I find it only fitting that I will end this issue with mention of a new simulation/strategy game from Electronic Arts, *JANE'S 688(I) HUNTER/KILLER*. Though really considered to be more of a simulation, the strategic elements of this game make it a title to closely examine. Unlike flight simulators where fancy handwork with a joystick is a necessity, piloting a sub is more of a command and knowledge adventure. The key elements of this game are achieving your mis-

sion goals, using the wide assortment of the very realistic instrumentation at your disposal. Missions can include surveillance, mine-laying and strike missions (with Tomahawks and Harpoons). To succeed at these missions, you must master the multiple sonar, radar and ESM (electronic surveillance measures) systems. You learn to configure your sub for silent running, maneuvering in the various thermal layers to mask your signature. Using your wide variety of sensors, you must target and identify other objects. If an enemy or mission goal is detected, you calculate the firing solution and launch torpedoes. As with any Jane's product, an exhaustive amount of reference material taken directly from the Jane's archives is included on the CD. Full multi-player support is included and there is even a mission editor to design your own undersea adventures. Several hours on this simulator will leave you feeling like you really are commanding an advanced submarine!



## SONAR BLIPS

*X-COM: THE APOCALYPSE* from Microprose, third in the *X-Com* series, should be hitting stores' shelves as this article goes to print. This squad-level strategy game of UFO intrigue and combat looks to be a true winner based on its predecessors. *PACIFIC GENERAL*, another title from SSI, looks to continue the tradition started with *PANZER GENERAL* and *ALLIED GENERAL*. Battles now take place in the Pacific in this turn-based World War II re-creation. Finally for the fantasy strategist a new add-on CD for *HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC 2* has appeared, called *THE PRICE OF LOYALTY* (from 3DO/New World Computing). With four new scenarios, 20 new maps, new artifacts and up to six-player capability, this expansion is a must for one of the best fantasy strategy games of all time.

In the next several Up Periscope columns, I will cover the new breed of strategy/wargames online and over the Internet and also give a sneak peak at several major titles coming up later this year: *ARMY MEN* from 3DO, *CLOSE COMBAT 2: A BRIDGE TOO FAR* from Microsoft and *SID MEIER'S GETTYSBURG!* from Firaxis/Electronic Arts.

Volume 31, Number 3 inaugurated a number of changes in the format and look of *The GENERAL*. It also contained a replay of *SASL*, feature coverage of a hot recent product and a contest on a popular old game. All of this combined to elicit an increase in the amount of "Rate This Issue" feedback (overcoming a number of mailing fiascos which certainly reduced the response level). Keep it up . . . and why aren't the rest of you voting as well? Raymond Bermudez (Hoboken, NJ) is the winner of the feedback drawing and wins a one-year subscription extension.

However, I suspect the clincher for some people was that many *ASL* fans saw a need to respond to my introduction to Brian Blad's article, "It's Debatable: Why So Much *ASL*?" Let me reassure you that the statements therein are in no way a change of policy. I will continue to publish two *ASL* scenarios in each issue and at least one article as long as they keep coming. The popularity of the *ASL* articles among respondents is obvious (see ratings below).

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The issue itself received very mixed reactions, getting a shockingly poor 4.9 (my worst yet as your editor). Quite a number of you voted it 9 or 10 (the worst rating)—largely out of disdain for coverage of non-Avalon Hill products, computer games and advertisements. On the other end of the spectrum, superlative ratings were abundant as well, with these people seeing the changes in a positive light.

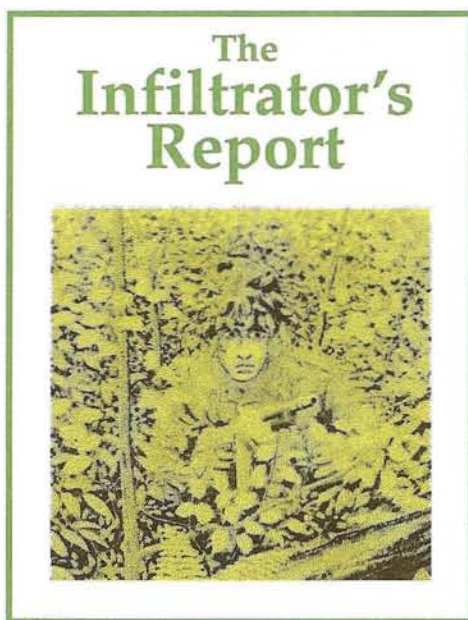
All of this does nothing to deter us from our stated path. These changes are intended to expand the magazine into being more of a center of the whole hobby. While we could please a small number of you all of the time, we'd lose money. We have to try to please a larger number of you, though this will mean never doing so all of the time.

The five games played most in March by respondents were *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER*, *THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN*, *AGE OF RENAISSANCE*, *THIRD REICH* and *LONDON'S BURNING*.

★★★★★

A new quarterly magazine called *Rail Gamer* is devoted to adult rail board games such as *RAIL BARON* and *1830*. The first 32-page issue has a special focus on *RAIL BARON*. Write to Rail Gamer, P.O. Box 98242, Brentwood, PA 15227 or email dmodo19@sgi.net.

★★★★★



Our congratulations go out to veteran British gamer and wargaming author, Nicky Palmer, who was elected to the House of Commons on May 1st as the Labour member for Broxtowe, Nottingham, UK.

★★★★★



Jean Whitesell

It's not Soldier Field, but the weather is brisk and the competition is tough. Barry Grabow's Bears challenged the mighty Chiefs of Dave Prendergast in the 23rd Avalon Hill *FOOTBALL STRATEGY* League Superbowl. Prendergast emerged victorious to earn the rotating trophy (in background). The League's new season has just begun. The Eagles of Stuart Tucker (which specialize in defeating reigning champions) will be searching for a second career win. Hmm, are the Chiefs on my schedule?

★★★★★

The answer published in volume 31, number 3 for Contest #180 (Sideshow) has the virtue of being correct according to a large number of entrants. It is also incorrect. The 50th Army can improve upon the published defense by moving to E4 to attack the Finnish 7th Corps, cutting in half the chances of Archangel falling. However, even more effective is defending in B1, not Archangel. Unfortunately, I can find no rule or errata defining what constitutes a playable hex. My error (and obviously not an uncommon belief) was to consider playable only those hexes that have a clear majority of their surface showing on the board (as is the case in numerous other wargame rule books by TAHGC). In retrospect, however, I have to conclude that hex B1 (along with the many others like it) is in play (and

so does the AvalonCon GM). By placing the 1st Cavalry replacement in B1 (a valid eastern edge entry location for both reinforcements and replacements), the Finnish 7th and German 27th Corps are denied any attack on Archangel. By ending their turn only contesting control of Archangel, the Axis units do not establish supply and are eliminated. The Soviets do not lose their Archangel replacements because the city was never in Axis control. A similar effect can be achieved by railing the 9th Armor to Archangel and then moving in the second impulse to B1. Note that neither D1 nor E1 serves the same purpose.

Consequently, given that B1's playability is such an ambiguous issue, I must conclude that "best" answers of either variety (B1 playable or not playable) should be accepted. The five winners receive \$15 merchandise certificates: Robert Beatrice (Muenchberg, Germany), Rob Beyma (Pocomoke, MD), Jim Fardette (Ft. Gordon, GA), Tom Gregorio (Norristown, PA) and Brian Shahan (Las Vegas, NV).

★★★★★

Contest #181 (Devilish Deal) put entrants into the position of assessing Rome's chances of pulling a victory out of the hat against Carthage and finding the best method of securing a Carthaginian victory before that happens. Rome has too few provinces and removable PCs to survive the turn, no matter how PCs are played with his two cards, so the siege probabilities are the key. You have to fear that if you turn down the deal and fail with your siege of Rome (half a chance), Scipio Africanus is likely to play a Forced March or Treachery within City card, giving him a three-quarter chance of victory if he gets a card play (remember the siege modifiers for capital cities). If he has two such cards your odds are worse. Assuming he has just one of those cards, turning down the deal gives Carthage a 19/32 chance (.594) of victory overall (including the residual 1/32 chance that all sieges fail and Carthage wins by the province count suit for peace).

Carthage can improve its chances by snapping up the deal and looking for the right combination of cards. One alternative is to sail back and drive Scipio away to break the siege. Given Scipio's weak army, the main problem is the Roman fleet. The best possible military move would be a Mago forced march to Cosa before sailing (this provides a two-thirds chance of naval success and a virtually indeterminate, but substantial chance of land battle success—a 10-6 BC advantage plus any one battle event card of your choice makes Mago formidable indeed). However, better options exist. If you can pick Opposing Fleet Breaks Siege (to reduce siege points to zero), then you have it made by also taking the Messenger Intercepted to foreclose a Roman roll for the final point. If he has the Messenger or the Opposing Fleet, then we have to look for Plan B. This leaves you with nothing that guarantees victory, which means that your next best play is Pestilence (not Epidemic). The modifier means that you'd have a 2/3 chance of eliminating Rome's crucial third CU, thereby making the siege unprosecutable. If Rome has foiled Plans A and B by holding both the Opposing Fleet and Pestilence, you can play the Surprise Sortie, watch him place only one more siege point, then you play the Messenger to deny him the turn for the final point. Therefore, your order of priority for choosing and playing cards is: A) Opposing Fleet Breaks Siege + Messenger Intercepted, B) Pestilence, C) Opposing Fleet + no double-siege card, D) Surprise Sortie + Messenger Intercepted. This gives you a minimum of a 2/3 chance of victory.

## COMING ATTRACTIONS

### STARSHIP TROOPERS™ PREPARE FOR BATTLE

Live Broadcast: "We've just landed here on what Cap Troopers are calling 'Big K' with the 6th Mobile Infantry Division. It's an ugly planet, a Bug planet, a planet hostile to life as we know i-GKKKKKKK!"

Huge insect jaws slash into the correspondent. Trooper Johnny Rico turns and fires his weapon point blank at a 7-foot tall Warrior Bug.

Welcome to the Bug War. It's the far future, and an alien race of giant insects called Arachnids have been launching asteroids from their own star system at Earth. It's up to the Starship Troopers to land on the Arachnids' barren planets and confront the Bugs face-to-face.

*Starship Troopers™* is based on the movie of the same name by TriStar Pictures coming to theaters in November. The game should be available in October. It is designed for 10-year-olds and up.

Two players or teams of two can play. A 32" by 22" mapboard shows a stretch of desert terrain and can be arranged in two patterns. The Trooper player commands a squad of ten Troopers armed with Morita Assault Rifles, grenades and a tactical nuke launcher. The Troopers face an army composed of Warrior Bugs with pincer jaws, Hopper Bugs with stingers and ten-ton, spitting Tanker Bugs. The Troopers must attempt to kill the Bugs at range with their weapons, because any Bug that survives the fire and is adjacent to a Trooper has a good chance of killing that Trooper.

Unfortunately for the Troopers, whenever a Bug is killed, a new one comes from endless reserves up through a Bug Hole to replace it. Thus, the Troopers' main objective is to plug the Bug Holes using their tactical nukes.

The 24 game pieces will be printed with movie images on clear vinyl and come with plastic stands, for easy use on the oversized hexes of the mapboard. Each player will have 4" by 5" reference cards with firepower, movement rates and other information. A die-cut sheet provides extra terrain overlays, Bug Holes, weapons and vehicle markers.

There are 20 different scenarios, featuring action involving Dropships, an Outpost, Chain Guns, Tactical Fighters, Plasma Bugs and tunnels. A scenario typically takes one hour to play. The game easily lends itself to designing your own scenarios, so you should get countless hours of entertainment out of this game...if you are willing to do battle with our new enemy.

—Ben Knight

## Kaiser Chatham's Empire by John R. Pack

Perhaps the most surprising characteristic of Jim Chatham, the AvalonCon '96 *EMPIRES IN ARMS* Champion, is that his victory was the third time he'd ever played. The second time was at AvalonCon '95 where he placed second (though he claims he played a better game that year than in 1996).

Jim owes his skill to a roommate who is a fanatical *EMPIRES IN ARMS* fan and has wallpapered their room with the map. His roommate's Waterloo came quickly as Prussian troops commanded by the youngest player in the tournament routed the would-be Napoleon. This prompted Jim and others from several games to kneel and bow before the new master and proclaim "we're not worthy."

The tournament, which runs for four days, is a test of endurance, tactics and diplomacy. The tournament relies on interested gamers who have a few hours to assume command of key positions when endurance begins to take its toll. Those who are interested but are committed to other tournaments can keep tabs on the games for an opportunity to play.

Jim offers several tips on tactics and diplomacy to both old and new players. First, beware

## WHISPERS . . .

Moments in History released *EASTWALL: BATTLES FOR THE DNEPR* this summer and plans to release this fall two ziplocks: *IRON BOTTOM SOUND II* and *WHITE ENSIGN/RISING SUN*. MiH also has two small (half-size maps/single counter sheet) games in the pipeline, *KIEV 43*, by John Desch (using the *RING OF FIRE* system), and *TIMOSHENKO STRIKES!* a simple game by Dirk Blennemann (Kharkov in 1942). . . The Gamers began shipping *DAK* and *CRUSADER* in early July. . . Chameleon Eclectic is about to release *BEACHEAD TO BERLIN: SCENARIOS AND EXPANSIONS FOR THE LAST CRUSADE*. They may move to North Africa or the Eastern front for the next expansion. . . Clash of Arms sent the second run of *HOME BEFORE THE LEAVES FALL* to the printer in July. Their work on *MOSCOWA* is going slowly, taking a backseat to work on *LEUTHEN*, the third in the *Battles in the Age of Reason* series (which shipped in mid-July). . . Decision Games released *SCHLIEFFEN PLAN*, a WWI game from a new company and designer. More *KRIEG* stuff continues to get tested as a second edition/expansion is under development. *CHARLEMAGNE* will be the game in *S&T #189* (coming in the winter). Decision is developing *STORM OF STEEL* (on WWI) and *FREE MARS!* for 1998. . . Simulaciones Tacticas released *LA BATALLA DEL EBRO*, a long game set in the Spanish Civil War with battalions and two-day turns. *TERUEL* will be the second in the series. . . Games Research/Design released in July *MARCH TO VICTORY*, covering West front WWI through December 1916. GRD also reprinted *SECOND FRONT* of the *Europa* series. . . In case you missed the ad in last issue, Kevin Zucker has reentered the game publishing business with a restart of Operational Study Group. OSG

of committing too strongly to a single option. Jim's Prussian troops were primed and ready to defeat Napoleon after the French player made a pre-game statement that his favorite strategy was to crush Prussia. The French player had won his game at the 1995 tournament but revealing his hand early made a repeat impossible. It also allowed alliances with England and Russia to be prepared.

Second, when in the lead and anticipating a shift in the alliances against you, try to take all your bad news at once. After acquiring the lead, Jim knew the "gang up on the leader" idea was going around. Instead of pointlessly trying to keep the dike breaking with a finger in the crack, Jim subtly encouraged everyone to gang up on him at once so that he would only be forced to sign a single surrender. This saved him enough points to eventually come out on top whereas the French player negotiated separate surrenders in his conflicts—giving up many more points.

Third, do not take the opening negotiations too seriously if the tide seems to be going against you. Seasons will change if you persist. Initially, Jim thought Napoleon would prevail. Additionally, don't concentrate your efforts solely on alliances. Encourage other players to battle each other, then make your position decisive when it matters most.



released in July a new version of *NAPOLEON AT BAY* (same scale as the older version, but all-new art and rules). OSG has licensed the services of Monarch Avalon to handle printing, warehousing and shipping. Zucker is considering for the future a Napoleonic card game, a reprint of a WWII eastern front operational game and a new WWII western front operational game. OSG plans to focus exclusively on the 18th, 19th and first half of the 20th centuries. . . Another designer is acting upon his frustration with game companies and taking matters into his own hands. Joe Youst is launching a series of homemade minigames using state of the art DTP gear and having uncut counters. He hopes to put them out for about \$10 each, available only through mail order (printing a color copy on demand at 720 dpi). None have been completed, but the first five will probably cover Chalon (a medieval game), Brunete, a Red River Delta battle between the French and the Vietminh, Spanish conquest of the Incas and a small-scale battle in the Vietnam war. . . I guess we could have predicted this: *WORLD IN FLAMES* is coming out in a revised "Final" form by early August. The next expansion set, *AMERICA AFLAME*, is also expected at that time. . . Steve Jackson Games continues to keep *OGRE* and *CAR WARS* on back-burner status. . . GMT Games began shipping *BARBAROSSA: ARMY GROUP SOUTH* in late June. The next in the system, *ARMY GROUP CENTER*, is undergoing playtesting and will link with the maps of the first as well as with *TYPHOON*. . . FASA, due to settlement of a suit brought against them by Harmony Gold USA, Inc. and Playmates Toys, Inc. over the use of twelve design images in their *BATTLETECH* system, has agreed to stop using this handful of images originating in the Japanese television series, "Macross." Mention of the fictional battlemech

names and statistics will continue, and use in tournaments is allowed. . . TSR, bought in June by Wizards of the Coast, has relocated offices to Seattle. . . For the archeological adventuring types, you may want to dig up *WADJET* by Timbuk II, Inc. . . Spearhead is shooting to publish soon *FLEET ADMIRAL* by Jack Greene. . . TimJim expected to ship *THRONESWORLD* and *REIGN OF TERROR* this summer. . . Avalanche hopes to have the next volume in the *GREAT WAR AT SEA* series finished by the end of 1997. They released *RED STEEL: CLASH OF ARMOR AT KISHINEV* in May. . . Though bought up by Iron Crown Enterprises, Mayfair games will retain a separate identity with many of the titles continuing to be developed and expanded by the Bromleys. Publication of *FANTASY ADVENTURES*, *CHILL*, *UNDERGROUND* and *SIMCITY* will cease. . . Reiner Knizia continues to put out abstract games for the German market which catch the attention of US publishers—*MEDICI* is being done in English by Wargames West. . . XTR is publishing a whole series of Ted Raicer WWI games: *CAMBRAI*, *THE MARNE*, *TANNENBERG*, *VERDUN* and *FIRST YPRES*. . .

**In computer strategy gaming news . . .** Already an unofficial website has sprung up for *HISTORY OF THE WORLD*, providing e-mail game matching and a ratings ladder: [www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/5850](http://www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/5850). . . GMT Games' sequel to *GREAT BATTLES OF ALEXANDER* will be the computerization of *SPQR* and titled *GREAT BATTLES OF HANNIBAL* (targeted for December release). It will include only Second Punic War battles. Module disks for both games are planned and may include some of the battles that fell through the cracks. . . Talonsoft is working on a series of operational games,

starting with *EAST FRONT* (due in October). . . Late this summer, SSI expects to release *DARK COLONY* in which Mars is the focus of mega-corporation conflict. . . LucasArts expects *REBELLION*, their real-time, grand strategy game of galactic expansion and domination set in the *Star Wars* universe, to be out this fall. . . Blizzard is working on *STARCRAFT*, a real-time game with three species fighting for survival and involving missions in space, on planetary surfaces and in installations. . . Sony Interactive releases in September *TANARUS*, a first person action-strategy game of futuristic tank war. . . Cyclone Studios and 3DO are teaming up to release this fall the real-time *UPRISING*, a game that looks to be a first-person version of *COMMAND & CONQUER*. . . We'll reserve judgement on this crop of real-time, action-strategy games as to whether they are more action and shooting than strategy, more reaction than thinking.

## Firefight

**Use only short, controlled bursts. Hit the weak spots and move out.**

*This column is dedicated to voicing gamer concerns about how the computer wargame genre can improve. I wish to generate short, constructive criticism from this magazine's readers intended to help advance the computer game design process. Readers, mail me your comments (better yet, email them to [AHGeneral@aol.com](mailto:AHGeneral@aol.com)).*

I am writing to complain about the lack of Macintosh versions of games. I was unim-

pressed by *D-DAY: AMERICA INVADES*, but it gave me hope that more Mac games would come out. I do not enjoy games with high piece counts in general, especially if this results in a loss of touch and personality as in *D-DAY: AMERICA INVADES*. Perhaps if I had gotten *STALIN-GRAD* I would have been happier; it looks as though the battles are less static.—Tom Turner

The scenarios in *STEEL PANTHERS* are no less representative of the real situations than those in *AGE OF RIFLES*, which vary widely in their historical accuracy (for example, infantry can shock mounted cavalry with impunity). *STEEL PANTHERS* is one of the best computer wargames of the past couple of years, and is the closest to bringing *SQUAD LEADER* to the PC.—David Fox, White Plains, NY

*SID MEIER'S CIVILIZATION's* combat system is perfect for this kind of game; partial elim results would distract from the game's economic/grand strategic focus—Rob Citino, Ypsilanti, MI

In a recent online discussion, one gamer complained that *MASTER OF ORION II* failed to follow in the footsteps of the original. To him, it is a micromanagement nightmare in which individual control of ships, a scrolling battlemap and tasks regarding farmers and freighters detract from the role of being a star lord and makes you a bureaucrat. He applauded such sequels as *CIVILIZATION 2* and *HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC 2* in which the changes were kept simple, leaving you with the meat: exploration and battle.—SKT

*A note to those subjected to fire: take solace that you hold ground worthy of a fight.*

## CONVENTION CALENDAR

NOTE: We encourage submission of announcements, but please do so at least six months in advance of the event to ensure timely publication. Our sympathies go out to those who missed LCD Game Day, Milwaukee Summer Revel and Capitalcon XIII. Feel free to email information to [ahgeneral@aol.com](mailto:ahgeneral@aol.com).

### ADVENTURE GAMEFEST '97 October 17-19, 1997, Portland, OR

Held at the convention center, this convention features boardgames, miniatures, role playing, card games, dealers and auction. Write Adventure Gamefest, 6517 NE Alberta, Portland, OR 97218 or call 503-642-4678 or email [sah@teleport.com](mailto:sah@teleport.com).

### TENNNCONN '97 October 17-19, 1997, Knoxville, TN

The Knoxville Convention Exhibition Center hosts this third annual event featuring miniatures, strategy, board and card games, plus industry guests, auction and dealers. Write Gameboard, 3018b Mall Rd. North, Suite 161, Knoxville, TN 37924. Web site: [www.gameboard.com](http://www.gameboard.com).

### TNT '97 October 16-19, 1997, Dorsey, MD

The premier *TITAN* tournament of the year is held at the Best Western BWI near the airport. It features continuous play, single-elimination two-player and multi-player tournaments and instruction for beginners. Registration is \$20; half-price for gamers under 21 years old. Write

Keith Levy, 7310 Kathydale Rd., Baltimore, MD 21207, call 410-653-2735 or email [bksutton@zombie.nesc.mil](mailto:bksutton@zombie.nesc.mil).

### ORGANIZED KAHN-FUSION XII October 25, 1997, Enola, PA

This convention at the Central Penn Business School features over 30 games, including cards, live-action role playing, dealers and open gaming. Registration fees vary from free to \$7. Write M. Foner's Games Only Emporium, 230 S. 8th St., Lemoyne, PA 17043 or call 707-761-8988.

### WINDY CITY GAMERS' CELEBRATION November 8, 1997, Schiller Park, IL

All are invited to celebrate the ten-year anniversary at the Day's Inn O'Hare South by engaging in a day of non-stop gaming from 8am to midnight. Free admission. Contact Jeff Boles at 773-725-7782.

### CASABLANCA

#### November 8, 1997, Fall River, MA

This naval minicon held aboard the Battleship *Massachusetts*, features miniatures, board and card games, re-enactment of the 1942 battle of Casablanca, and tours of warships at Battleship

Cave. Write Seth Owen, Attn: Casablanca, 16 Scouticut Neck Road, Fairhaven, MA 02719.

### PENTACON XIII

#### November 15-17, 1996, Fort Wayne, IN

At the Grand Wayne Center, this convention sponsored by the Northeastern Indiana Gamers Association features hundreds of games, auction, role playing, CCGs, dealers, demos, flea market, contests and guests. Write NIGA / PENTACON, P.O. Box 11174, Fort Wayne, IN 46856 or call 219-426-1609 or email [102654.230@compuserve.com](mailto:102654.230@compuserve.com).

### 1998 ASL OPEN IN CHICAGO April 24-26, 1998, Burr Ridge, IL

This seven-round tournament features computerized pairings using Chicago-style scoring and includes a team tournament. Scenario list provided to pre-registrants. Shuttles to Midway and O'Hare. Registration is \$15 but \$18 after March 1. Write Louie Tokarz, 5724 W. 106th St., #2E, Chicago Ridge, IL 60415 or call 708-857-7060 or email [MGLouie@aol.com](mailto:MGLouie@aol.com). Web page at [member.aol.com/HymesC/WCW.html](http://member.aol.com/HymesC/WCW.html).



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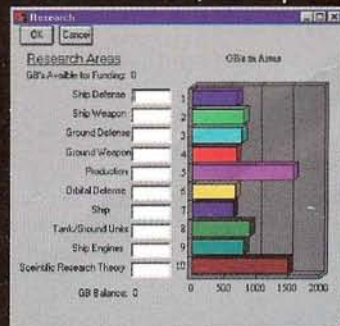
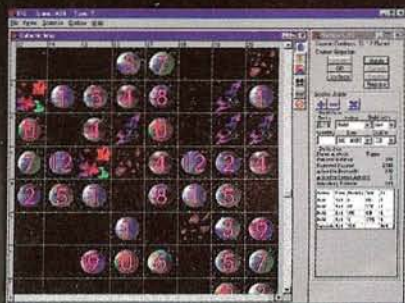
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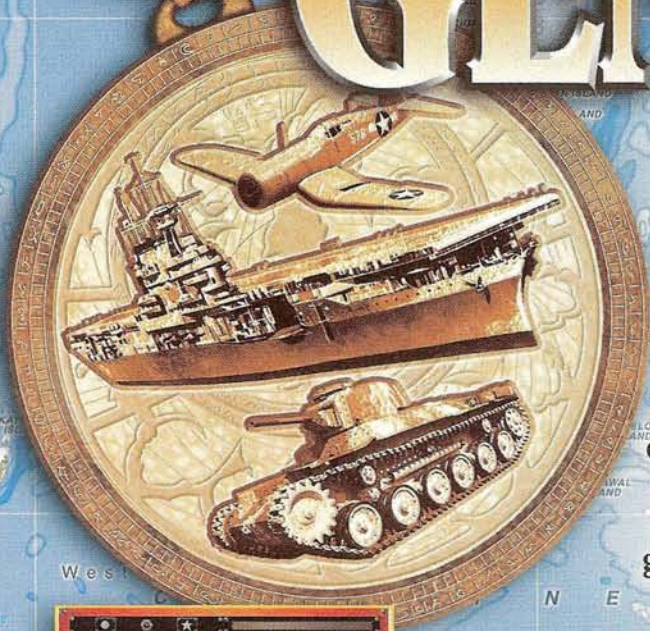
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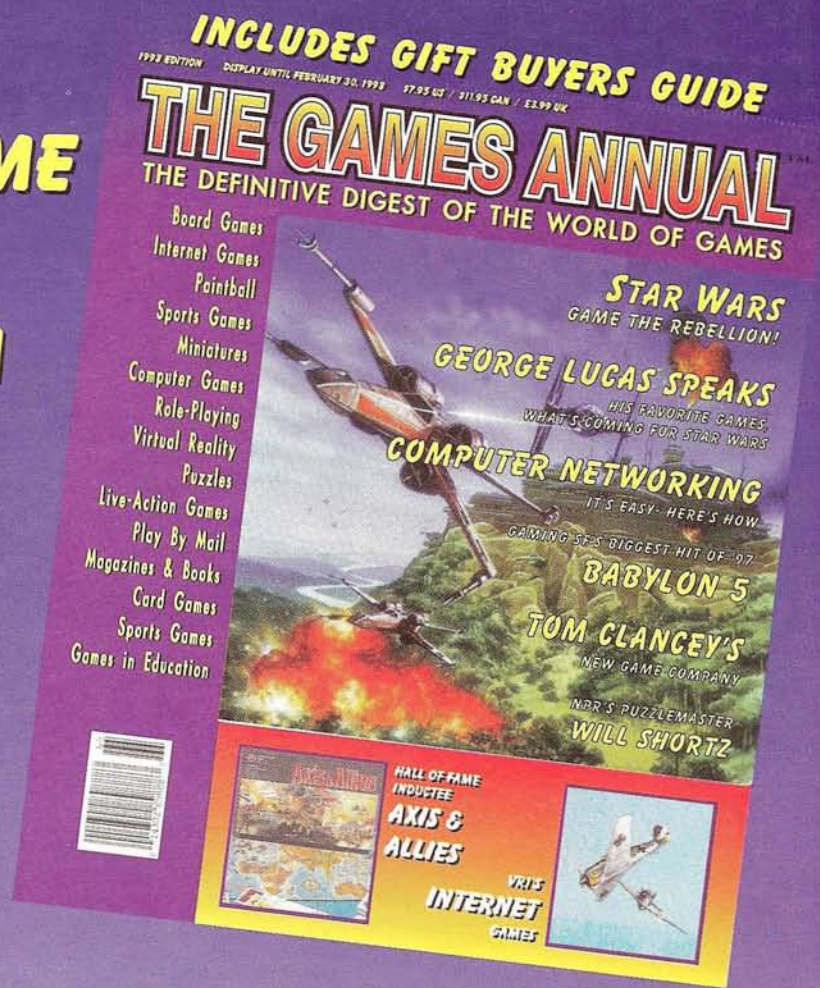
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In this issue: Strategy tips from dozens of designers, *Axis & Allies* creator Larry Harris speaks, in-depth looks at the many *A & A* expansions, NPR's Puzzlemaster Will Shortz, Tom Clancey's new company Red Storm Entertainment, *Star Wars* in every scale & mode, GMT's *Great Battles of Alexander* on computer, researching Osprey's *Men at Arms* series, an easy guide to networking computers for multiplayer gaming, Challenge Park opens Paintball in Russia, Origins Awards Winners, European game coverage, *Babylon 5*, *Historicon*, and much more!

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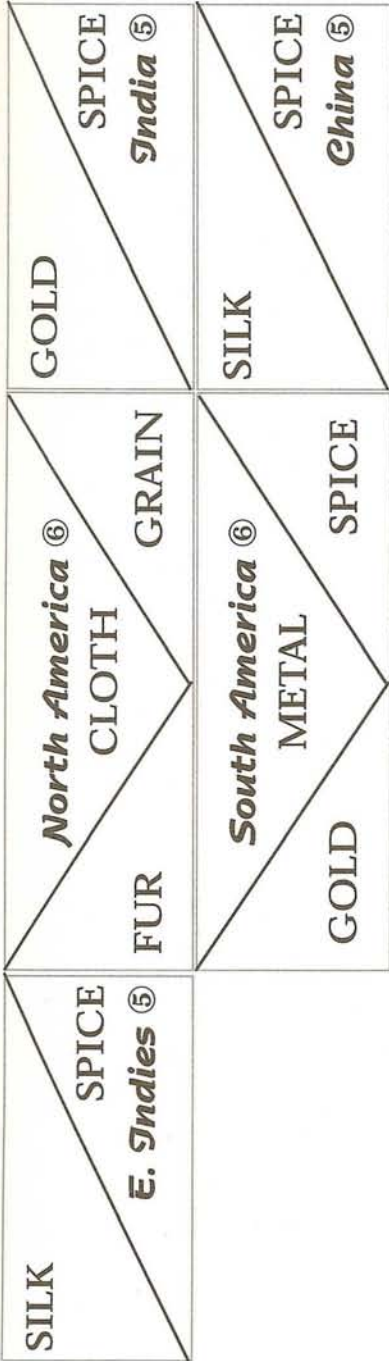
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