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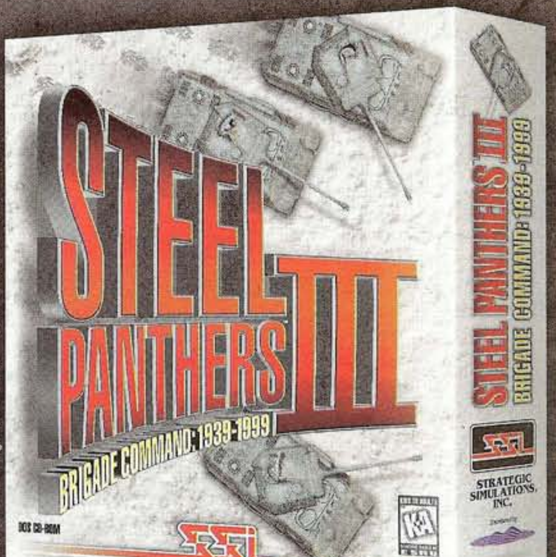
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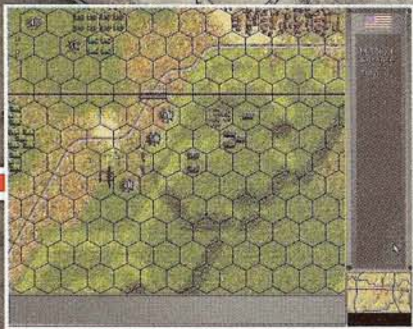

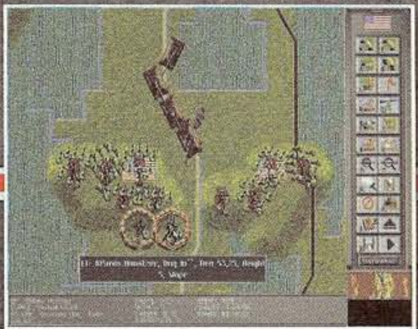

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PHILOSOPHY

Part 178

A Great Place for the Family

Somewhere along the way, I promised a reader or two that I would let up a little with my bombardment of the readership about the joys of convention gaming (don't let Don Greenwood read that). So . . . here is a guest column with somebody else's view on the matter.

AvalonCon is attracting a growing number of female gamers—including some who win rounds, ahem, in which I play. I could not resist inviting Andy Lewis (tournament director for ACROSS FIVE APRILS*) to tell me how it came to pass that one of my favorite sports game tournaments had become harder to win. I was surprised to discover that he isn't one of the rare, fortunate guys who marries a gamer.—SKT*

My wife, Carrie, and six-week-old son, Danny, attended AvalonCon '97 with me, and a great time was had by all—not for the reasons you might think. Some families go to Hunt Valley, share a room, and scatter to far corners of Baltimore (or at least the hotel), doing their own things for the extended weekend. Not us. You see, my wife now plays games as well. Carrie made the final four of a 128-team tournament in *MARCH MADNESS*. While some people were astounded, she was really bummed about it. She got close enough to "smell the wood," but was unable to pick it up. For readers who have never attended an AvalonCon (shame on you), "wood" is the nickname for the wooden plaque given to the winner of each tournament. On later reflection, however, she became very proud (as I was of her), because she had only learned *MARCH MADNESS* on the sunday before AvalonCon started (playing three games of it).

It wasn't always like this. When I met her, my wife did not play "wargames" (not really an appropriate term since a large portion of the games have nothing to do with war or killing). In fact, she continued to resist playing wargames until AvalonCon '95. At the time, we had only one car. Instead of being stuck at home with no car that weekend, she decided to come to the hotel with me. Her plan was to lay by the pool and go shopping. She didn't want to do any of the great "tourist" things Baltimore has to offer by herself.

Her plans changed within 15 minutes from the moment I picked up my convention packet. While standing in line, we ran into Greg Mayer (tournament director for a family financial game, *MERCHANT OF VENUS*) and Debbie Otto—a husband and wife from St. Louis. Debbie convinced Carrie that the games were fun and easy. The most important thing to remember, said Debbie, was "no hexes." Avalon Hill makes a tremendous number of leisure, family and sports games which are easy to learn and fun to play and have . . . no hexes. Generally-speaking, games with hexes tend to be more involved and harder to pick up quickly (although, this isn't always true).

Debbie had Carrie quickly involved in a tournament. There Carrie met a slew of great people, including Bruce Reiff and Ken Gutermuth, now both AvalonCon Hall-of-Famers for their prowess with a broad spectrum of games. Bruce and Ken dragged Carrie off to several tournaments, where she was introduced as "Andy Lewis' wife." In the end, Carrie played in five tournaments, winning merchandise certificate prize money in one. She managed to go shopping twice, but never made it to the pool.

Carrie anticipated the approach of AvalonCon '96 as much as I did. It wasn't just for all the fun games to be played. A big factor was the chance to see friends made the previous year, who live in places we don't get to visit. She was so caught up in the fever of the event that she volunteered to run the *STOCKS & BONDS* tournament. Again, her experience was great—especially since that year she was known as Carrie (not just as Andy Lewis' wife). She played in five tournaments, made one shopping trip, and ran *STOCKS & BONDS*. Although I won that tournament, claims of rigging were dispelled when I went bankrupt in the first game.

When we became pregnant last fall, there was never a doubt about attending AvalonCon '97. The question was, instead,

➤➤➤➤➤ *(Continued on p. 58)*

Kampfgruppe Peiper I
A GAME OF TACTICAL WARFARE ARDENNES 1944
ASL HISTORICAL MODULE 2

A Preface to Peiper

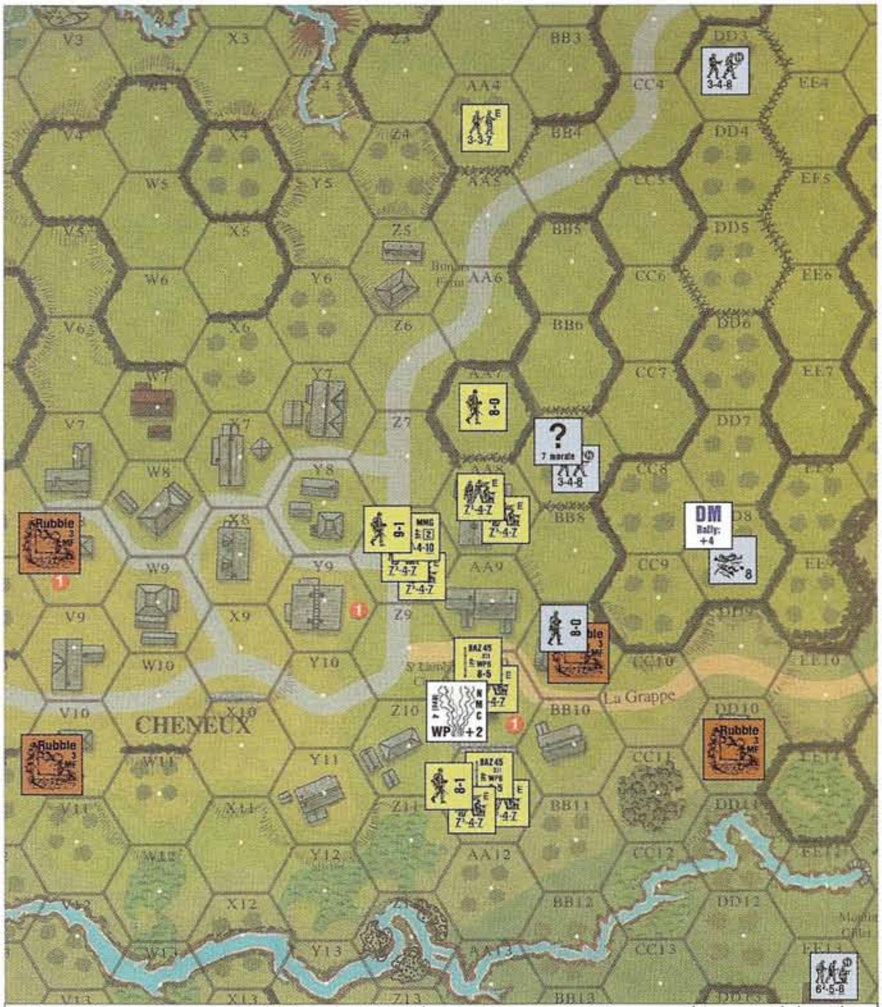
by Stuart K. Tucker

Kampfgruppe Peiper II

Although many a wargame has been published on the popular WWII topic of the Battle of the Bulge, the two *KAMPFGRUPPE PEIPER* historical modules for *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER* provide gamers with the most detailed view of those events. These modules allow recreation of some of the most pitched house-to-house and woods fighting ever experienced by the American Army.

On December 16, 1944, Adolf Hitler launched his last western offensive of the war. The hole torn in American lines by the combined might of the German Sixth and Fifth Panzer Armies gave the battle the name "Bulge." The game modules take their name from the German SS unit which led the 1st SS Panzer Division's spearhead across the Amblève river on December 18, 1944 (part of the northern shoulder of the offensive). The Kampfgruppe Peiper, having been delayed by American Engineers near Habiémont, established a defensive bridgehead at Cheneux while its remaining elements caught up with the vanguard. The most immediate reserve available to Supreme Allied Commander Dwight D. Eisenhower was the 82nd Airborne, which was rushed to the front in trucks to plug the gap between the 30th Infantry and 7th Armored divisions. This set the stage for the clash of two of the most elite units of the war in a series of battles around the Amblève river.

The scouts of US 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment approached the village of Cheneux from the west on the morning of December 20th. Thus began the battle for the Bridge at Cheneux depicted in one of the two campaign games provided in the *KAMPFGRUPPE PEIPER II* module (and the subject of the *ASL* scenario and *ASL* Crossfire article below).



Situation at end of Turn 1A. The 6-5-8 in KK13 was eliminated by the mortars using opportunity fire. In the Close Combat Phase, US units advancing into ZZ10 ambushed and eliminated a 3-4-8, then withdrew to AAll. A 7-4-7 eliminated the 3-4-8 in AA10. The 8-0 in BB10 eliminated a CX 3-3-7, while the concealed 3-4-8 in AA8 ambushed the advancing GIs and withdrew to BB7, declining close combat.

The daytime advance on Cheneux of Companies B and C were checked by the 2nd Battalion of the 2nd SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment, which had recently reached the area on foot. After nightfall, the attack was resumed, but met by intense fire. The Americans gained a toehold on the western outskirts of the village, where on the 21st the house-to-house firefight continued. Colonel Reuben Tucker, commander of the 504th, ordered the 3rd Battalion to assist with the capture of Cheneux and the bridge over the Amblève. Company G entered the western end of the battle-torn village to relieve Companies B and C, while Companies H and I flanked the village to the south and then pushed north from Monceau towards the bridge. This is the situation at the start of ASL Scenario KGP 7, "The Bridge at Cheneux."

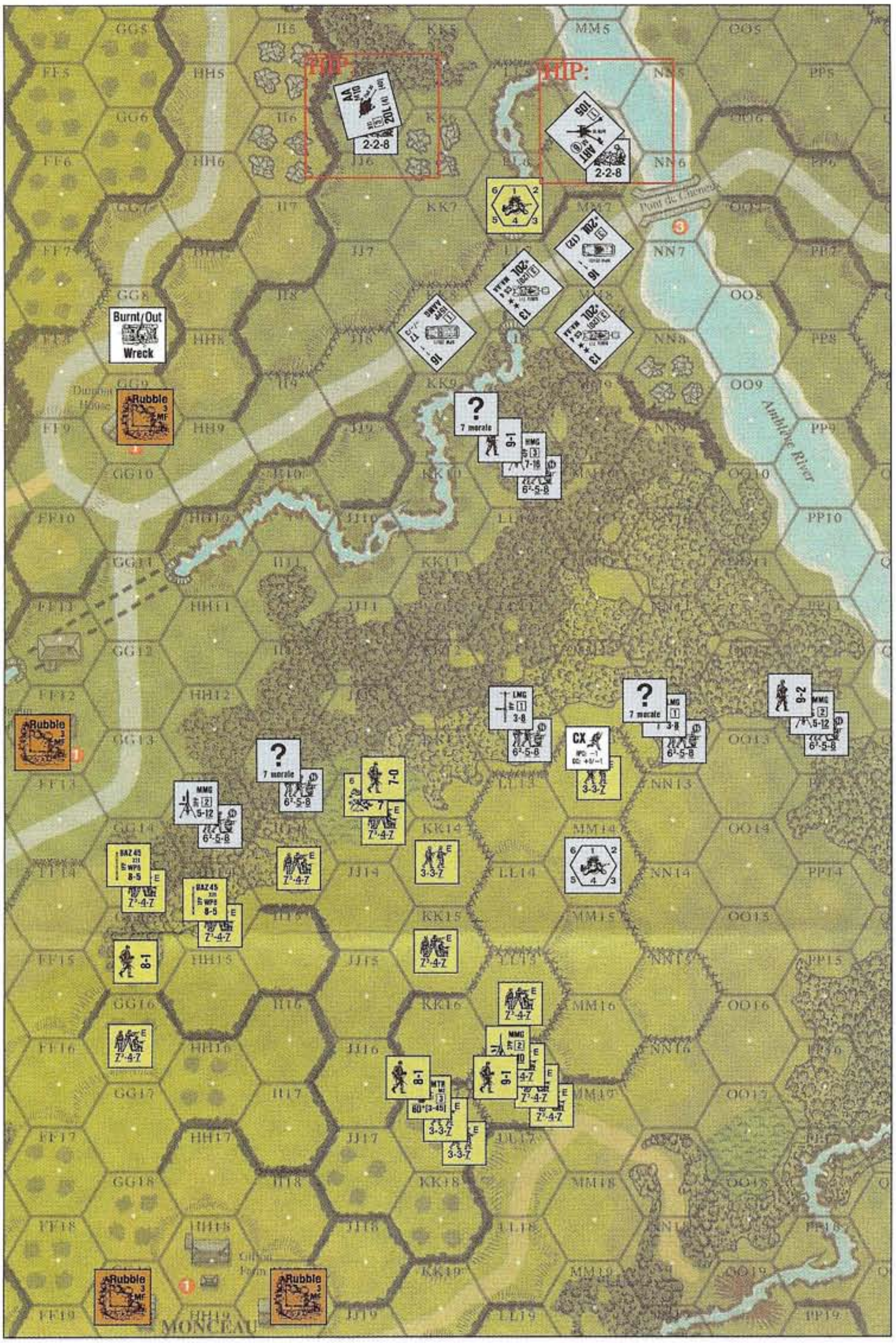
Unlike the basic modules of the *ASL* system, the *KAMPFGRUPPE PEIPER* modules include detailed, historically accurate mapsheets (hence the nomenclature, Historical ASL module). The two modules provide five large mapsheets, covering three different portions of the battlefield (Stoumont, Cheneux and La Gleize, Belgium). The hilly terrain of the valley is depicted with elevation spanning from Level -2 to Level 9. Counter sheets provide SS multi-man counters, support weapons and vehicles, their American counterparts, status counters (helpful for a battle where the German commander must concern himself with the critical issue of running out of gas and ammunition). Chapter P provides all the module-specific rules (including new terrain types) and campaign scenario material. A total of eleven shorter scenarios are also provided. The campaign rules allow for refitting, but introduce the critical tactical dimension of conservation of force.

ASL Crossfire

KGP 7

The Bridge at Cheneux

by Robert Banozic and Rich Summers



GERMAN
(Rich Summers)
Rating: 60% Pro-German

December 21st finds Peiper's drive to the Meuse temporarily stalled as the storm troopers wait for ammo and gas to be brought up from the rear. Fortunately, at Cheneux, a detachment has pushed across the Amblève and captured a vital bridge. In support, elements of a *flak* battalion have just arrived. Understandably, the Americans don't seem too happy about the developing situation, and across the misty fields and roads it is obvious that they are forming up for a major attack. It's bad enough that they don't really have a stomach for hard fighting, but won't they be surprised when they find out just how strong this bridgehead really is!

AMERICAN
(Robert Banozic)
Rating: 60% Pro-US

KGP7, "The Bridge at Cheneux," begins as almost two-scenarios-in-one, as the divided US forces must meet the dual victory condition of capturing the bridge and clearing out the town proper. By mid-game the issue should be somewhat clarified as the Heavy Mist probably thins and the Germans find themselves backed into one corner or the other. The end-game drive to secure the final objective may be a close-run thing, but I have every confidence in the ability of my men to get the job done. Today, Cheneux; tomorrow, Berlin!

GERMAN DEFENSE

Advantages: Rate of Fire, SS, Hidden Initial Placement, Range

The German order of battle (OB) includes 104 firepower factors that have the chance for rate of fire (ROF), including two quad-20 *flakwagens* that are the big hits of this scenario. Contrast that with 28 factors for the American OB. This gives the German a sustained hitting power that can't be matched by the US forces. The SS troopers aren't too shabby either. Their six factors of inherent firepower (FP) are optimal for gunning down men in the open, but its their morale that makes them shine. They don't go down easy, and, with a broken side morale of nine, they won't be down for long. Additional firepower is added by the 105mm and FlaK 38 artillery (the 105 can also fire smoke). More important, however, hidden initial placement (HIP) for the guns means that the defender has the option to hide and infiltrate back into Cheneux or Monceau after the paratroopers have passed. This threat should keep a number of GIs off the front lines for a while. Finally, the high proportion of artillery and support weapon (SW) firepower in the SS OB means that the Germans have a considerable advantage in range. This advantage is partly negated by the effect of mist on long-range fire, but much of the time, especially in the northern half of the playing area, the SS will be able to engage the paratroopers first with little risk to themselves.

Low Ammo B# -1

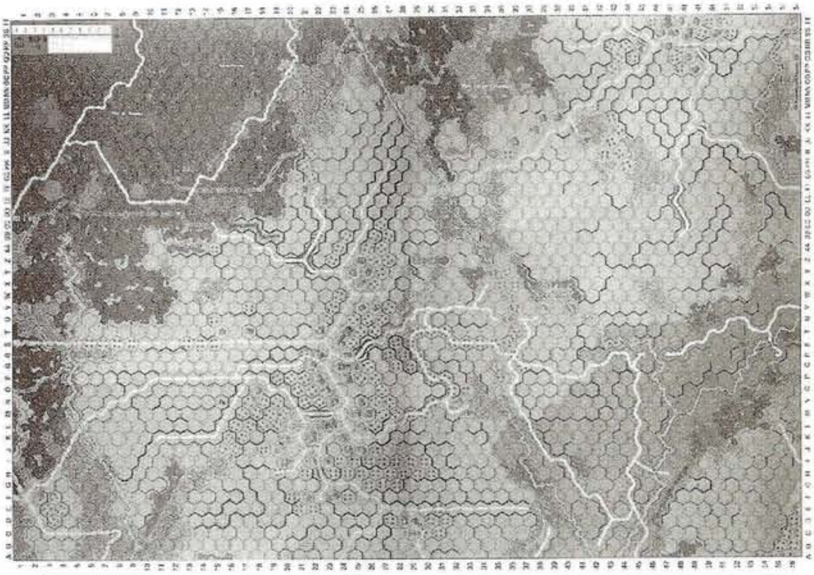
Disadvantages: Ammo Shortage, Vehicular Vulnerability

Although there are few disadvantages, the first one is a doozy. Ammo Shortage (A19.131) prohibits fire lanes (since affected machineguns are not in good order; A.7). It also lowers SW breakdown numbers by one, gives guns and vehicles a circled breakdown number one lower than their inherent B#, lowers ammo depletion numbers by one (in this case negated by the SS increase), and causes experience level rating (ELR) replacement when a 12 is rolled on an infantry fire table (IFT) attack. Without this handicap, I don't think the SS would come up short too often in this scenario. As it is, 50 per cent of the machineguns (MGs) will have malfunctioned after just eight shots (that's only two game-turns on average for the heavy machinegun (HMG). The guns and vehicles will last a little longer, eight shots before half of them have low ammo counters, and then four shots later about half of those will be malfuntioned. But even here, that's only four turns of continuous action for the quad-20s.

THE BRIDGE AT CHENEUX

The familiar *ASL* scenario cards grace each module.

Next, if ammo shortage doesn't take the *flakwagens* out, then enemy fire probably will. These large targets are particularly vulnerable to long-range mortar fire, because the effects dice roll of a hit isn't influenced by the mist. Of course, up close and personal, not even mist will save the *flakwagens* from the heavy firepower of the American squad. The armored half-tracks fair a little better, but all of the American SW have a reasonable chance to score a kill. Plus, the paratroopers are toting those captured panzerfausts (KGP Special Scenario Rule 15). No doubt about it, the key to German success in Cheneux is to build a defense that doesn't tax the vehicles or ammo too much.



This playing aid shows the other two mapsheets of the second *KAMPFGRUPPE PEIPER* module, depicting the area around La Glieze.

German setup:

Z10: 3-4-8, ?
AA8: 3-4-8, ?
AA9: 3-4-8, ?
AA10: 3-4-8, ?
BB10: 8-0, ?
DD3: 3-4-8
EE13: 6-5-8
HH13: 6-5-8, MMG
II13: 6-5-8
JJ5/1: FlaK 38, 2-2-8 (HIP)
KK8/5: SPW 251/1
KK13: 6-5-8, ?
LL7/5: SdKfz 7/1
LL9: 9-1, HMG, 6-5-8
LL12: 6-5-8, LMG, ?
MM6/5: leFH 18, 2-2-8 (HIP)
MM7/5: SPW 251/21
MM8/5: SdKfz 7/1
MM14: Sniper
NN12: 6-5-8, LMG, ?
PP12: 9-2, MMG, 6-5-8

Played out on a colorful mapboard faithful to the actual terrain, the Bridge at Cheneux from *KAMPFGRUPPE PEIPER II* is one of the finer scenarios in the *ASL* system. I'll also give it two thumbs up in the replay department, given the defensive options open to the German player. To win, the American player must control all building/rubble Locations on the board as well as the critical bridge over the Amblève River. Consequently, the SS are pretty much free to choose the field of battle. Moreover, because the strong American force is split initially, with a weaker contingent in the town of Cheneux, Peiper's finest can entertain thoughts of retaking the town (which I've seen done successfully). In the final analysis, I think the stormtroopers are better served if they let the Americans come to them. The best way to do this is to defend in strength around the bridge.

The game starts with a pre-game rubble placement phase, but even as the defender, who usually benefits from this kind of destruction, I don't think this phase is particularly important. By special scenario rule, rubble counters can't be placed adjacent to one another. Nonetheless, rubbling BB9, FF12, GG9 and DD10 will congest the central portion of the board and should give the northern wing of Rob's attack something over which to trip. The rubble in BB9 has the benefit of blocking the narrow street through Cheneux (P5.126), preventing bypass movement along both sides of hexsides BB9/AA10 and BB9/BB10. This should drive impatient Americans out of town. More important, the rubble counters in DD10 and FF12 extend the natural barrier provided by the stream, helping to channel the Americans to the north and south. Finally, the rubble in GG9 is perhaps the least important, but it prevents bypass of the hex, forcing the paratroopers from the northwest to cross a hedge or make a detour on their way to the bridge.

The strongest American force is also the closest to the bridge. More than twelve US squads start out in the southern playing area with some of their jumping-off positions only eleven hexes from the bridge. Facing this, I've arrayed seven of my ten and a half squads (and all of my SW) in the large woods south of the bridge. Three squads and two light machineguns (LMGs) are set up concealed at woods edge. Mist, concealment and range will keep Rob's best initial attack to an 8(+1) and that would burn up nearly three squads, all his medium machineguns (MMGs) and the 9-2 leader. True, with ROF, his MMGs might do a little more damage, but the odds favor less than a squad of mine breaking during the Prep Fire Phase (PFPh). His two mortars will probably be salivating at the air burst possibilities, but again, even accounting for ROF, each only has about a 20 per cent chance of scoring a pin task check (PTC) or better versus concealed, mist-enshrouded units. I like the match up in this sector. His hundred-plus men fire off a couple of inconsequential shots at my 8-morale stormtroopers. In return, any paratrooper that tries to set foot in the fields between Monceau and the woods eats potentially lethal 6(-1) or 8(-1) defensive fire.

However, that's just the picket line. Along the bank of the Amblève on the southeast flank, *oberleutnant* 9-2 heads up one MMG team in PP12 with a line of sight (LOS) to nearly half the plain between Monceau and the woods (thanks to the up-slope hexsides; P2.3). These guys will fill any gaps in residual fire. They'll also turn back threats that develop along the river. I toyed with the idea of starting the HMG here, but four portage points (PP) are tough to carry, if you are busted, making it risky to go toe-to-toe with the paratroopers. Later, the 9-2 will team up with the HMG closer to the bridge. Note that I started the leader out possessing the MMG with the squad stacked on top. As long as I remember to transfer SW during the first Rally Phase, this is a good way to keep Rob guessing about the real makeup of this stack.

The remainder of the positions on the south flank are rounded out by a squad in II13 (which gains concealment after setup), an MMG team in HH13 and a squad in the EE13 farmhouse. These three squads cover the paratrooper's safest, but longest route to the bridge. Paratroopers starting around GG17 can move up to the woods free of fire, but they'll be hit by 20+ FP when they start pushing inwards.

After turn 1, once the advantage of concealment is lost, American firepower will begin driving the stormtroopers back into the woods. Across its shortest axis to the bridge, however, the woods are five hexes deep. This will provide the SS with plenty of cover to establish a line of concealed units free from US mortar or long-range fire support. Here, Peiper's finest will face down the paratroopers at point-blank range, relying on their superior morale and the defenders prerogative to take the first shots. In the misty woods, most of these shots will be of the 12, 16, and 20 (+2) variety. Unconcealed Americans can't weather too much fire like that. Yet, if Rob wants his men to gain concealment, it will cost them a turn off the line. As the game progresses, substantial remnants of the six starting squads will coalesce around LL9, where *leutnant* 9-1 and the HMG team have been waiting from the outset. This team will deploy on turn 1, and the leader will direct two attempts to dig foxholes each turn (B27.11). By the time the paratroopers get in range, preparations should be complete. Then, the 9-2 and a couple of squads with an MMG will move in and take over the HMG. This dug-in position (48 FP at point-blank with good chances for ROF) chokes off access to the bridge from the southern woods. More importantly, if not threatened directly, this MG nest is sited to hammer the northern approaches to the bridge, as well. While the MG nest won't form until German turns 3 or 4, it will be one of the cornerstones of the final German defense—and one that the American will have a difficult time subduing.

National Archives, 111-SC-199149

House-to-house fighting was a common combat sight along the roads of Belgium during the Battle of the Bulge.

Cheneux itself is only covered by a light screen. Concealed half squads (HS) occupy all the buildings across from American set-up locations, and another HS covers the far north flank. As in the south, concealment and mist will absorb much of the initial American firepower, leaving most of the screen intact to interdict US movement out of all proportion to their actual strength. The four HS in Cheneux pack a total of 24 FP at point-blank range that can be divided up against any paratroopers that try to cross the Z6-Z9 street. This might not be the Seigfried line, but these guys will impede the opening US moves at little cost to defensive resources. The half squads that fail to beat back American moves stand to be annihilated in close combat (CC), so they'll opt to break voluntarily rather than fight if it seems that the rout options allow a continuous secondary line (even of broken units) to form astride the US line of advance. There's also an 8-0 leader in town, but if things get real hot he may not be able to do much. I don't expect many survivors to make it out of Cheneux, but every turn that they delay the American force means an extra turn of ammo around the bridge.

The early fighting should be tooth-and-nail, but the paratroopers, due to their lower morale and need to cross open ground, will be taking the worst of it. They'll probably find that they need every bit of their advantage in manpower and leadership. This, however, is just the prelude. As the SS withdraw to the bridge, they'll be falling back on their heavy equipment.

At start, the two quad-20 *flakwagens* are positioned right in front of the bridge, one on the road in LL7, the other in the woods in MM8. The LL7 location is something of a compromise setup; on turn 1 this battlewagon intends to move back across the river to PP5. It didn't start there, however, because this might have enticed US mortar teams to set up in SS17 and SS19, where they would have been perfectly sited to rain shells down on the soft-skinned target leading to a fairly swift demise. Once in PP5, the *flakwagen* can place 20 FP on the approaches to the bridge (albeit with a +1 dice roll modifier for firing through the bridge). It also can pummel the MM9 and NN9 woodland cliffs, helping to choke off the exits from the southern woods. Admittedly, some games will witness a little trouble getting into position crossing the

National Archives 111-SC-199509

By the end of January 1945, the US 82nd Airborne Division had plenty of armor support to plug the gaps, but not during the early days of the German offensive.

006/PP5 hedge as Gas Shortage (three per cent chance) or Bog (28 per cent) will conspire to stop the half-track short of its goal. Don't worry about this, because, wherever this gun platform ends up, it will earn its keep.

The second *flakwagen* owns the bridge, sited as it is to lay 40 point-blank FP onto the entry hex. For the paratroopers, it's imperative that they take this position out—not an easy task. GIs from the south can only threaten the *flakwagen* from the cliffs in NN9 or at point-blank range from MM9 and LL8. To the north the vantage points are more numerous but beyond the 7-4-7s inherent range.

Supporting the *flakwagens*, the HIP 105mm gun in MM6 can lay fire onto most of the high ground east of Cheneux and it has special orders to smoke the rubble in DD10 and GG9, if the paratroopers should decide to position some long-range weapons there. On average, the 105 will get off twelve shots before low ammo takes its toll, which means that in most playings it should still be functioning at game's end. Being set-up adjacent to the bridge, this is a key position that the paratroopers must take out.

The 20L *flak* goes in the woods in JJ5, pointing northeast. This should delay any paratroopers that try to work toward the bridge from the far north. If a threat doesn't develop from that direction, the gun can turn its attention to the bed of the stream, toward which it can spray all the approaches to the bridge with 6 FP. Other good set-up locations include HH13, where the gun can play an active role in the defense or where the crew might chose to hide, waiting to move into Monceau on turns 6 and 7. Alternatively, there are all those orchards outside Cheneux. The 20L hidden anywhere there could give the GIs nightmares, especially if the crew chooses to infiltrate back into town late in the game. Some may view this use of the 20L as gamesmanship instead of generalship, which may be true, but it also reflects the real difficulties inherent in securing an area. While I haven't chosen this tactic here, my setup will keep the 20L HIP until late in the game, forcing Rob to expend a few HS on the tedious chore of securing the mapboard. Notably, this burden will fall on the smaller northern US force.

Finally, there are the two armored half-tracks that start out huddled with the other vehicles in front of the bridge. Their role will develop as the game progresses. If the American northern group gets badly mauled on its approach to the bridge, then one or both half-tracks might go on the offensive, chasing down broken paratroopers and moving back into Cheneux. Otherwise, these vehicles will be content to stay back and hold the bridge. In this case, the 251/21, with its 12-FP IFE (infantry firepower equivalent), will most likely move into LL7, once the quad-20 leaves, adding to the already considerable firepower in this area. The second half-track doesn't pack too much of a wallop with its paltry 3-FP MG, but the American can't afford to ignore it because of its threat to motor back into town. Like almost every other unit in the defense, the American will probably have to eliminate this half-track to win. That is the main problem for the paratroopers—to get onto the bridge, they're going to have to kill or capture almost every element of this very potent German OB.

AMERICAN SETUP AND ATTACK

Advantages: Numbers, Assault Fire, Close Combat, White Phosphorous, Time

Obviously, the greatest advantage wielded by my paratroopers is their sheer numerical superiority in infantry. A two-to-one edge in squad equivalents, leaders and leadership dice roll modifiers (DRMs) is substantial in any scenario. The assault fire bonus (A7.36) enjoyed by the 7-4-7 squads will also come in handy, as it will often push my Advancing Fire Phase (AFPh) attacks onto a higher column. (Yes, the SS have the same ability, but the Germans will have few, if any, AFPh opportunities while I'm on the offensive). The one-factor edge of my squads over the 6-5-8s translates into a significant close combat advantage that I will be trying my best to exploit. I also won't forget the white phosphorous (WP) ammo for the mortars (MTRs) (see KGP16) and Bazookas (BAZs). The WP grenade capabilities of the squads should get a liberal workout. I also think that, with eight turns, I have plenty of time to do the job. Some of my units start only eleven hexes from the bridge, while others are already in town. I should have little need for reckless running in this game.

Disadvantages: Morale, Mist Change

These GIs have decent morale, but that of the SS is even better. The SS troopers rally so fast that I am going to have to work extra hard for kills (not just breaks). So, the importance of my CC advantage is magnified (it being not modified by morale levels and frequently fought to the death). The tendency of the heavy mist to decrease in intensity is also troublesome. I must get up-close-and-personal with those Nazi guns and *flakwagens*. Denser mist is better for me.

American Setup:

Y6: 3-3-7
Y7: 8-0, 7-4-7
Y8: 9-1, 2 x (7-4-7 w/MMG)
Y9: 7-4-7
Y10: 8-1, 2 x (7-4-7 w/BAZ)
Y11: 7-4-7, 3-3-7
GG17: 8-1, 2 x (7-4-7 w/BAZ)
HH17: 7-4-7
II17: 7-4-7
JJ17: 7-4-7, 3-3-7
KK17: 7-0, 7-4-7, 3-3-7
LL17: 8-1, 2x(3-3-7 w/MTR), 7-4-7, 3-3-7
MM17: 9-2, 3 x (7-4-7 w/MMG)
LL6: Sniper

I think that the rubble is more of a hindrance than a help to the Americans, no matter where it is placed. I have to place it somewhere, so I chose to rubble GG19, II19, V10 and V8, which are about as far out of the way as I can manage. I did not rubble the Delvenne Farm (S10) because I might be trying to make a stand there if Rich tries to win by storming and holding that corner of Cheneux. The rally bonus of the building could prove helpful (of course, it could help the Germans, but I am optimistic that they won't get that far).

After Rich sets up, it is clear that he intends to make his stand at the bridge. In a face-to-face game I ordinarily wouldn't count counters, but I can tell here that Rich has deployed a squad. It also appears, from what I initially can observe, that Rich has setup leaders possessing machineguns in a futile effort to confuse me. Certainly, he will transfer some support weapons in the first Rally Phase (RPh). I expect to find the 9-2 and HMG at LL9 ready for some quick entrenching work, while PP12 probably harbors a 9-1 and MMG. Hexes LL12 and NN12 probably contain LMG-toting squads. I won't be surprised if Cheneux itself is garrisoned by nothing more potent than a collection of half squads. There are no dummy stacks. The guns using HIP are likely to be positioned so as to bring under fire the approach to the bridge.

The first PFPh kicks off with a couple of BAZ WP shots from Y10, first at AA10, and, if successful, then at Z10. If I have the ammo, I'll have a hit (note that terrain effects modifiers don't affect BAZ WP To Hit attempts; see the official Q&A to C13.42). I can then fire the leader-directed inherent firepower of the squads at the best target of opportunity, depending on how the BAZ WP performed. If either BAZ unit had no WP, it will decline to fire in order to move. I will use opportunity fire on the stacks at Y8 and MM17, as well as the 8-1 and MTRs at LL17.

In Cheneux, the Movement Phase (MPh) starts with assault move WP grenade attempts from Y10 on Z10, if not already hit by smoke by a BAZ. The squad at Y7 assault moves into Z7 and also tries for a WP grenade on AA8 if Rich declines to shoot, while the 7-4-7 at Y9 assault moves into Z9 with a WP placement attempt, if circumstances dictate. These WP grenades are great, but not just for their ability to strip concealment (worthwhile in itself). The real payoff is the 16.7 per cent chance of a WP critical hit (CH) (A24.31). Since the lowest morale check (MC) the enemy could have rolled when so afflicted is a dice roll of 7, the reversed terrain effect modifier (TEM) effect really hurts. In those stone buildings, Rich's units are likely to be broken. If the target unit should fire when I move adjacent, I would not try for WP, because the enemy has sacrificed his concealment already and the chance of a CH is not worth having to digest the residual FP attack which would be triggered by the grenade attempt.

The 3-3-7 at Y11 double times (CXs) Z11-AA11-BB10 to reveal a concealed German, which I suspect to be the 8-0 leader. If the 7-4-7 at Y11 hasn't already tried for WP placement on Z10, it will follow to AA11. The 3-3-7 at Y6 moves Z5-Z4 with a planned advance to AA4. My own 8-0 runs out to BB7 to draw fire and/or cut rout paths.

What happens next in Cheneux will depend on how the attack has proceeded and on what I have discovered. Given the blizzard of WP attempts and flurry of movement, I won't be surprised if no German unit in the town has retained its concealment as we approach the Advance Phase. I intend to jump into CC at every opportunity, and, if I have penetrated to AA11 and BB7, Rich will find voluntary routs difficult to execute to his advantage. The future looks mighty bleak indeed for the garrison Rich has stranded in Cheneux, while my paratroopers should soon be streaming eastward to the bridge.

National Archives 111-SC-200445

The grim-faced soldiers of the surrounded US 101st Airborne Division move out to dislodge their besiegers on December 29, 1944.

Meanwhile, the GIs attacking the woods line from the south will move forward the sacrificial half squads. I would like to see the 3-3-7 at JJ17 move to JJ14, and the free HS at LL17 double time to LL16-MM16-MM14. I expect the FP of some 6-5-8s may still be available, with the result that the squads at JJ17, KK17 and LL17 will probably have to settle for an assault move forward. The HS at KK17 will probably move LL16-MM15 to draw additional fire. My units at GG17 move individually to GG15, while the squad at HH17 assault moves to HH16 and the II17 squad moves up to II15.

Obviously, I have taken some chances. There may well be some broken GIs on the approach to the woods line. I can afford some early casualties, as I believe I have plenty of time to get these units back into the battle. The opportunity to get into the woods quickly is worth the risk, and my opportunity fire by MTR and MMG may well open some holes in the \German defenses. These ROF weapons have the potential to inflict permanent casualties. Any broken German units appear to have a bit of a hike to their rally points.

Because the German line in the woods is so thin, I don't think that the SS will want to stand toe-to-toe with my paratroopers and exchange fire, even when the Germans get the first shot. I expect Rich to slowly pull back through the woods and so retain/gain concealment. I intend to use my numerical superiority to push some units into the face of the German FP, forcing concealment loss, while others, which have gained concealment themselves, take advantage of this with assault moves. Although these assaults will not always succeed, occasionally Rich will muff his shots or my troops will demonstrate commendable fortitude under fire, setting up the AFPh and CC opportunities which I am seeking.

I plan to swing those MTRs west around the woods mass to get into hex EE11. This can be accomplished in three turns, so they might be in position to lob WP and high explosive (HE) on the German LL9 strongpoint by turn 4, depending on how quickly I can force Rich's troops off the southern woods line. The MTRs can be effective also against the *flakwagens* from FF10 or GG10, but the return fire would be a problem. I am hoping to be able to swamp each of Rich's most powerful positions with multiple threats when the time comes. The use of "concealment growth" wherever possible should help in this. Placement of my Sniper in a hex like LL6 should improve my chances of softening-up the vehicles or the leader-directed HMG team before they tangle with the bulk of my forces.

During my assault, I will have to sweep every possible hex in the German set-up area containing concealment terrain in a hunt for HIP guns, although some fortuitous application(s) of KGP18 (civilian interrogation) might ease this burden. A crafty *ASL* player might try to keep a gun HIP in such a location until the last turn or two, when the crew can jump out to grab a Victory Condition location and thus snatch victory from the jaws of defeat. I hope Rich tries this, as it will cost him a gun, because I will have a couple of HSs run around the place looking for holdouts. Many players might be surprised to learn that even the stream-woods/brush/orchard hexes have to be checked. Although a non-vehicular gun may not fire from a stream (B20.6), there is no rule which states that a gun may not be emplaced in a shallow stream (but not deep stream; C10.1, 10.3 and A2.9). I think that the ability to emplace a gun to use HIP in an eligible stream hex is clearly a glitch in the rules arising from the new terrain types introduced, but it is legal.

Another rules question which is likely to arise in this scenario is whether the low visibility (LV) hindrance (here, it's mist) is sufficient to allow a concealed unit to assault move or advance into an otherwise open ground hex without losing concealment. It is true that LV hindrances do not negate first fire movement in the open (FFMO) or interdiction (E3.1). But A10.531 seems unclear if a hex would be considered open ground for concealment loss purposes when *both* the "-1" FFMO and a "+" DRM apply—from an LV hindrance, for example.

GERMAN RESPONSE

Rob has countered my concealed set up with opportunity fire and WP. This will certainly minimize early American casualties, but the German benefits as well. First, in about half the games, Rob's Cheneux force will have expended all BAZ WP in this effort. Those bazookas seldom carry more than one round of WP, if even that much which come back to haunt the paratroopers as they close on the heart of Peiper's defense around the bridge. Next, opportunity fire is not a technique I use too often, though a case can certainly be made for it here. The downside is that units using opportunity fire sacrifice their movement options without increasing the immediate movement options of the other units in the vicinity. After the Movement Phase, opportunity firers will probably be able to do more damage against the now unconcealed targets than if they had prep fired, but, with the assault fire bonus that the paratroopers enjoy, nearly similar results could be achieved after moving. It's not a big deal, but I think that opportunity fire works to the defenders advantage, because the attacker sacrifices some of his initiative.

National Archives 111-SC-455221

Tanks of the US 42nd Armored Battalion on the attack at Mabompre, Belgium, January 16, 1945.

Of course, Rob may not need too much initiative in Cheneux. He has focused on annihilating my HS screen with a careful series of moves which take full advantage of terrain, WP and assault movement to prevent my troopers from obtaining any potentially lethal "-1" DRM for my fire attacks. Without that benefit, I'll think twice about losing concealment, waiting instead to ambush the advancing paratroopers in CC (42 per cent chance of success). This will allow some of my men to withdraw from their positions to form a secondary line. Failing ambush, the HSs will retain concealment in CC and the survivors (73 per cent of the time) will assault move out of the hex during the German movement phase. In any case, I'm not counting on the survival of too many HSs. They've done their job, buying at least a turn for the bridge defenders and possibly depleting some of the bazookas of their ammo. The HS in AA9 has the best chance of getting out of Cheneux. It will work its way cautiously through the orchards east of town, breaking up the American advance. The remaining HSs will stand and fight if their concealment is stripped by WP. Grenade WP dissipates before final fire, so I'll get off a few 6(+1) shots versus adjacent paratroopers. These have about a one-third chance of breaking or pinning the GIs, which may save a few German skins.

That done, the Cheneux garrison will fix bayonets and prepare for CC. It doesn't look like my original plan to voluntarily break and rout out of town will bear much fruit, because Rob's moves may succeed in cutting the rout paths for two of the four HSs. Broken, the remaining two HSs would not form much of an obstacle to later US movement. Choosing to fight, there's still a 16 per cent chance that I might get some ambushes and withdraw (barring a favorable "-1" American leadership modifier which would halve the chances). Alternatively, I might inflict some casualties, but that's not very likely given the 1:4 odds column upon which I'll be attacking US squads.

In the future, I think I'll alter the Cheneux defense a bit. The 8-0 leader that started out in this sector is virtually useless, and would have a much bigger impact with the main line of defense in the southern woods. There, he can help men move without double-time penalties through the woodland hills and will be available to rally broken troopers, freeing the 9-1 and 9-2 leaders for their more important frontline missions. To fill the gap left by the departure of the 8-0, I'd pull the concealed HS in Z10 back to BB10 instead.

In the far north, my lone 3-4-8 HS faces down a 3-3-7 HS, which isn't too worrisome. More paratroopers will be forced north to guarantee that my boys don't work their way back into town. Indeed, this seems like a good time to spring the 251/1 halftrack on a supporting mission. So, during the German movement phase, the halftrack will motor along the paved road to HH3, remaining in motion. Depending on the American response, the halftrack can then continue to the northern board edge around GG2 on turn 2, or, if paratroopers with bazookas start dispersing northward, it can head back down to its starting position. This should keep the paratroopers off balance, deflecting them from the bridge. If the halftrack does head north, the HS in that area will make plans to fall back slowly toward it. Later, they will try to make a move back into Cheneux.

Rob's attack in the southern sector is fairly cautious, in part due to the commitment of almost a third of his force to opportunity fire. Except for the suicide HS, the remainder of the force is understandably leery of rushing across the fields against the full weight of SS fire. Consequently, little progress is made, except along the western flank where the paratroopers move forward relatively free of fire. Versus this type of attack, it is best to withhold fire from at least one of the initial SS positions, so that concealment can be retained. This will enable the German to form another concealed line on turn 2, using the concealed squad in II13, plus any squads that opt not to fire.

In this playing, the 6-5-8 in KK13 will fire on the first HS to move, hitting it with a 6(-1) shot in JJ15, leaving two residual fire (RF) factors. If this doesn't stop the HS, a 2(-1) subsequent First Fire shot into JJ14 will leave one more factor of RF. The second HS will be greeted by an 8 (even) shot in MM15 from the MMG team directed by the 9-2, leaving either two or four RF depending upon whether the MMG maintains ROF. This position can then follow up with MMG ROF or squad subsequent first fire if the HS isn't stopped. The two LMG teams will hold their fire, given the poor shots offered to them.

While it can occasionally be difficult to exercise this level of fire control in a face-to-face contest, it will pay big dividends, enabling a strong, concealed line to reassemble at woods edge for the American turn 2. As many as three concealed SS squads may be peering out over the misty fields as the Americans prepare to move again. To form this line, the concealed squad from II13 will double time to KK12 and then advance to KK13. The concealed LMG team in LL12 will assault move back one hex, avoiding defensive fire, and then advance back into its original position. The concealed LMG team from NN12 will pull back double time to MM11, and then advance into MM12. Unless the American MMG platoon advances into LOS, the MMG team directed by the 9-2 will remain in place, taking a 6(+1) shot against their best target. I'll skip using the MMG here—the incremental gain in effectiveness doesn't justify the risk to the MG for this target. It is better to save the MG for shots that receive a favorable DRM. On the western edge of the woods, the line will begin to contract as the MMG team in HH13 pulls out to JJ12 (covering the flank), and especially the vulnerable exhausted 6-5-8 in KK13. In all likelihood, the original occupant of KK13 will have been broken by American advancing fire and opportunity fire, and the remnant will rout back into the woods.

There's about a 50 per cent chance that at least one foxhole will be dug in LL9 this turn. I'll keep digging here until there's enough underground space to accommodate two squads. The two HS will then be free to move up into the woods or drop down into the streambed near the bridge. In the streambed, they can be in crest status in KK9 (nicely shielded by the adjacent hedge) or LL8 to harass paratroopers moving in from the north and west.

The squad in the EE13 farmhouse is going to start taking some licks from the bazooka-toting paratroopers in GG13. An assault move into the rubble in FF12 will increase the defense modifiers to "+4," making the squad a pretty tough target for the bazookas. My men will probably face a 12(+3) shot. Still, they have a decent chance of coming out unscathed. Over the long haul, however, they have no real escape, so they'll try to tie up some paratroopers for as long as possible.

Finally, the vehicles break out of their huddle and make their moves. The *flakwagen* motors back across the river to PP5, risking bogging down as it crosses the hedge behind which it wants to hide. Next, the 251/21 slides forward into LL7. Now, the defense begins to assume its final form. From now on, the SS are going to play cat-and-mouse with the paratroopers, ducking out of fire whenever possible and working to keep at least a few men concealed. No more than a delaying action is required until the stormtroopers are forced to pull back to LL9. There the withdrawal will stop—only broken men will leave the LL9-MM9 line, routing back to LL8 or MM8 where they will rally for another round. The *flakwagens* will hold their fire until large or threatening targets begin to present themselves, and then they will start shooting for as long as the dice gods allow (no point in being shy about firing then). If a weapon is going to go down early, nothing can be done about that. It is during this phase of the game that the German really needs to blunt the American effort.

If Rob does get his mortars north, which shouldn't happen until turn 5 at the earliest, the 105mm gun will lay smoke into their hex. I don't like those mortars for two reasons. First, as mentioned earlier, they're a threat to the *flakwagens*. Second, they can really take the sting out of the LL9 MG nest, if they succeed in dropping WP into the hex.

National Archives 111-SC-198775

The oft-recurring scene of Americans moving through a Belgian town to attack Germans dug into positions beyond the town. Here, the 87th Infantry Division moves through Bihein.

Rob's assault, though well reasoned, doesn't sway my assessment of this scenario. Of my seven squads arrayed in the southern woods, at least half should make it back to the LL9-MM9 line with whatever functioning MG they have. Concentrated here, with 9-1 and 9-2 leaders directing point-blank fire, these stalwarts should turn away most American threats, possibly with heavy casualties. Shots at 16, 24 and 36 (even) are hard for anyone to stomach.

To the north, the paratroopers will make decent progress once Cheneux's HS are eliminated. Americans may even start showing up around the EE8/EE9 cliffs on turns 2 or 3, getting their first view of the German preparations around the bridge. I hope a few stray Germans in the area will have prevented the paratroopers from gaining concealment. At this point, the *flakwagen* in MM8 will gear up for some 20(+4) shots into the high ground. Initially, the threat from the north shouldn't be too great, because the paratroopers will have been deflected in several directions (searching for HIP guns and chasing down nuisance HSs). Once the Americans are ready to focus on the bridge in strength, the stormtroopers will be ready, and a huge firefight will erupt. In the end, the stormtroopers morale, firepower and good defensive positions should stymie the GIs.

AMERICAN RESPONSE

Those Ultra intercepts have proven their worth once again—I have correctly identified all of the concealed German units (except for transposition of the 9-2 and 9-1). My attack will proceed without any major surprises. However, I am surprised at the enemy's failure to expect or better respect those stacks using opportunity fire. The classic case for the use of this tactic is when concealed (or HIP) enemy units are likely to become known due to defensive (first) fire. This is precisely the situation offered to the Americans as this scenario begins. The use of opportunity fire for the MTRs and kill stacks is definitely the way to go. That is how the American inflicts the permanent casualties which are so key to the assault, and which are simply not likely to be generated against concealed targets in the first PFPh.

I can only imagine that *Obersturmbannfuhrer* Summers' hopes for maintaining concealment in Cheneux are the product of too many of *der Fuhrer's* deranged lectures about inevitable victory. Aside from any WP rounds from the BAZs—at least one, 66 per cent of the time—my other squads will toss WP grenades with abandon when those HSs hold their fire (are they *sturmtruppen* or UN peacekeepers?). Concealed German 3-4-8s allow more of the American 7-4-7 to jump the HSs in CC (which usually won't pull off an ambush), and kill them even if they decline to attack (to preserve their concealed status). Rich's estimate that his men will survive CC 73 per cent of the time assumes that those HSs won't be up against anything more lethal than individual 7-4-7s. When two 7-4-7s attack a concealed 3-4-8 the odds are 2-1. I think the Germans would be much better served if they took shots at 6 (even) which they can get as my paratroopers assault moving into the Z6-Z9 street, thereby placing residual FP. Of course, that may not work either, but at least it affords some chance of hurting the GIs.

The real problem for the Germans in Cheneux stems from the disposition of the troops ordered by their HQ. Like the Amblève itself, Rich's defense is deep, but not very wide. By this I mean that while the woods are well-defended, the German commander has left holes in his line which are big enough, ahem, to "drive a flak truck through." Slowing the attack from Cheneux is a key part of any German defense plan built around saving the bridge, but the four HSs which Rich has allotted to this task are woefully inadequate for the job. I predict that this puny force will be destroyed or driven off by the end of game turn 2, and probably without any permanent casualties being inflicted on the GIs. Having now gained concealment in the orchards, my guys will be pushing to the crest lines overlooking the bridge and approaching the northeastern woods on turn 3. This is far too rapid for the German, particularly when the stronger US body will be pressing simultaneously from the south (with more WP-shooting BAZs).

Imagine, instead, that a couple of the German HSs in Cheneux were upgraded to full squads, and that perhaps one LMG were added to the garrison. With this increase in strength of just one net squad and one SW, a force would be created which might repel the initial US assault across the Z6-Z9 street for a game turn, with the prospect of continued resistance. To be sure, the German commander has to prioritize with a view toward his overall strategic goals. I'm suggesting, however, a somewhat more balanced defense would work better than that proposed by Summers.

Rich's attempt to establish a second concealed line in the southern woods for turn 2 has some merit, but this effort simply serves to illustrate the relatively poor options afforded the German commander in this scenario. Turn 2 will see a repeat of the opportunity fire tactics by my MTRs and kill stacks (which advanced forward one hex in turn 1A). One German unit will be the recipient of a 30 FP attack in KK13 or LL12, while another enjoys more air bursts. This is in addition to the AFPh attacks generated by the units that moved. Although Rich seems to be hoping for mega-FP end-game attacks by his survivors in the woods, he assumes that my troops will be known. Yet, concealment is easy to gain in those woods. With my numerical advantage, I expect to generally have some concealed troops on the frontline during the German turn. This means holding troops back temporarily on occasion, but it is better than getting blasted by the massive FP which Rich promises.

My evaluation that this scenario is 60 per cent pro-American does not stem from any particular defect in a given strategy. Rather, it is based on my assessment of the overall potential in the OB within the constraints of the scenario itself. Like his real-life counterpart, Rich simply doesn't have enough troops or ammo to get the job done adequately. Time (er, the turn record chart) is on the side of the GIs.

GERMAN CONCLUSION

The decision to hold fire and retain concealment in Cheneux is a tough one. It stems, however, from my desire to rescue at least one HS from the town for a turn 2 stand. If the garrison loses concealment, it is unlikely that any units will survive the combination of advancing fire/opportunity fire, close combat and turn 1B defensive fire. True, WP will reveal some of my men, but it is unlikely that he has enough grenades to smoke everyone out. Hopefully, the resistance put up by the revealed forces will enable a few men to straggle out. This might buy an extra turn for the bridge defenders.

Rob's suggestion to increase the Cheneux garrison is well taken. Yet, barring a large commitment, Cheneux is generally destined to fall early, usually with the loss of all hands. Part of the problem is that it is difficult to hide from American defensive fire during the German turn. Moreover, as demonstrated here, the city just isn't the best defensive position. The terrain on the south edge of town favors the attacker. The single road that must be crossed in the north can be tackled using assault moves or by dash (if possible). There's more open ground in front of the bridge and this is where German firepower can really be put to best effect. Plus, the stream offers some excellent defensive sites. In addition to KK9 and LL8, crest status in LL6 commands the approaches to the bridge. Units placed in these hexes can duck into the stream to avoid defensive fire and then advance into position to interdict American movement. Comparing the defensive options in Cheneux with those around the bridge, I don't think there's much question that the bridge provides the best benefits and deserves the most personnel. The Cheneux garrison is minimal to buy a couple of turns of delay. I think they will succeed in many games.

To the south, Rob's 30-factor MG nest is a real threat to cause some permanent SS casualties. Again, concealment minimizes the damage. The mere threat of firing will probably limit US moves to single-hex assaults. A bolder defensive approach would see similar restraint during the American movement phase, but the line of stormtroopers that is assembled in KK13-LL12-MM12 would then squeeze off a 24(+3) defensive final fire shot into the opportunity firing American MG nest. More than 70 per cent of the time this will score a 1MC or better which stands a good chance of breaking up this position before it gets its shot off. Of course, having retained concealment, it may be wiser to keep it. In the end, the goal in the south is to fight this battle from LL9 and its environs. The American advantage in numbers and dispersal will be negated as the GIs are funneled toward the bridge. Faced with fewer target hexes from which to choose, the true defensive strength of the German OB (its concentrated firepower) will become apparent.

AMERICAN CONCLUSION

If the German defense of Cheneux really hinges on saving a single HS to stem the American tide on turn 2, my point has been made. I predict that this kind of performance will reward the enemy commander with a chilly reception at the next OKW staff conference.

Certainly, the relatively open terrain around the bridge poses serious problems for the American attack. As Rich notes, the concentration of the front into a smaller perimeter as the GIs close on the bridge offers some advantages to the defenders. However, the ability of the numerically superior US forces to cycle units from the firing line back a hex to gain concealment (particularly in the southern woods area) should take the edge off of that concentrated German FP. Furthermore, those German units will themselves be squeezed into fewer, and juicier, target hexes as the battle moves into its final stages.

I don't want to leave the impression that the Germans can't win this scenario. A 40 per cent chance is considerably better than no chance at all. It will be a good fight, but I still want the Americans.

★

AFTERMATH

House-to-house fighting and close combat with German *flakwagens* continued throughout the 21st. The outnumbered *SS-Panzergrenadiers* fought fanatically, but were slowly forced to give ground. By 1700 hours, the few surviving Germans abandoned their heavy equipment and withdrew northward, eventually crossing the railway viaduct toward La Gleize. Peiper's bridgehead was eliminated at the cost of 225 Americans and about 200 Germans. Companies B and C of the US 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, emerging from the battle with only 56 men and 3 officers, were later awarded a Presidential Unit Citation for their valorous efforts to capture the village and bridge.

Beach by Beach

Strategy in *BREAKOUT: NORMANDY*

Part 1: Utah and Omaha

by Alan Applebaum

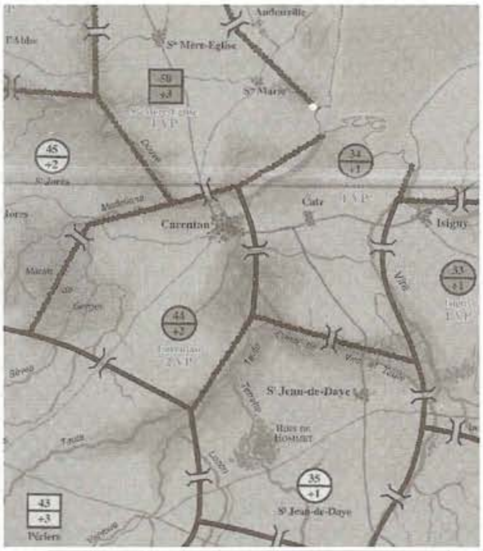
Never wanting to rest on his laurels, the typical gamer strives to improve his tactics and strategy with each playing. Andy Maly may have won the year's Editor's Choice Award with his article "A Matter of Priorities" in Volume 29, No. 3, but accomplished BREAKOUT: NORMANDY *player Alan Applebaum offers an alternative perspective.—SKT*

Don Greenwood and Andrew Maly provided a good overview of the early moves in *BREAKOUT: NORMANDY* in Volume 29, No. 3 of *The GENERAL.* Since that issue was published, substantial experience with the game indicates that the range of strategic and tactical choices described by Greenwood and Maly can be narrowed considerably. This two-part article comments upon the earlier articles and attempts to cover a number of topics in more detail. I will provide an overall strategic summary, and then discuss how the play around each beach interacts with the strategy, not only on June 6th but thereafter. Like the earlier pieces, this article deals only with the one-week game (Allies must obtain ten victory points by the end of the June 12 turn).

OVERALL SITUATION

Since the initial setup is fixed and the game has no scope for concealment, it should be possible to decide on the optimum Allied plan before the game begins. While Andrew Maly's advice emphasizes Allied aggression and flexibility, I take the opposite view and favor consistency and conservatism. This is not to say that the Allied plan will never change or that every game will follow a similar pattern. Unusually good or bad luck or German mistakes may dictate a change. Still, the Allies should go into the game with a clear idea of what they will do in "normal" circumstances.

The most important conclusion that the Allies should draw from an examination of the map is that they can win the game without taking any Bocage areas except Ste. Mère-Eglise, as follows: Ste. Mère-Eglise (1 VP), Merville (1), Bayeaux (2), Isigny (1), Catz (1), Carentan (2), plus the Advantage (1), while contesting Caen, Pont l'Abbe and two of the following three Bocage areas (Foret de Clerisy, Tilly and Villars-Bocage—contesting 7 VPs for the tenth Allied VP). This corresponds to Maly's "achievable" areas, plus Carentan, the Advantage and contesting areas. If one of the latter three Bocage areas is taken, obviously, you have a margin for error elsewhere. Carentan is by far the most difficult of these areas to capture. The climactic play of the game will quite often be a huge 20-25-attack-value attack on ten units in Carentan on June 11 or 12. Because Carentan is worth 2 VPs it is not very tempting to substitute two other (1 VP) areas for Carentan in the plan, especially if they contain Bocage. St. Lô is also worth 2 VP, but is much more difficult to take than Carentan due to being a Bocage area.



The all-important Carentan area.

Given this plan, the allocation of responsibilities among the Allied forces is quite straightforward:

Utah: Ste. Mère-Eglise; assist with Carentan; contest Pont l'Abbe.

Omaha: Isigny and Catz; assist with Carentan; contest Foret.

Gold and **Juno**: Bayeux; contest Tilly and Villars Bocage.

Sword: Merville; contest Caen.

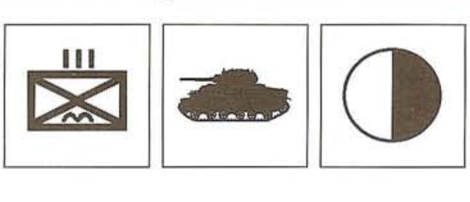
It may occasionally be possible for the Allies to vary from this overall approach, but any such variation should be viewed with extreme skepticism. The discussions below of each beach will explain why the foregoing plan is usually optimal, and how to implement it and defend against it.

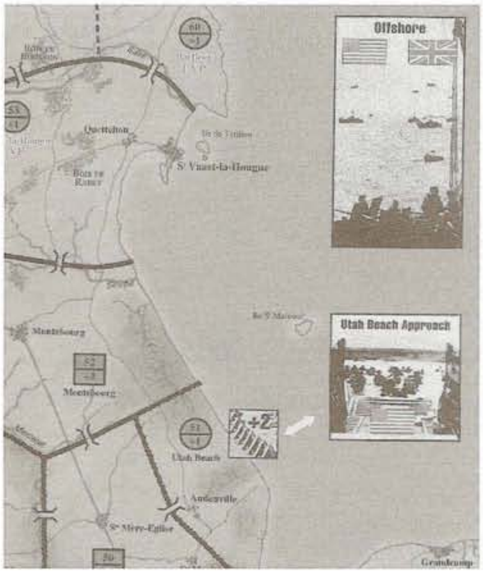
If all beaches are in Allied hands by the evening of June 7, it will be very difficult for the Germans to defeat this plan without help from the weather. Accordingly, I believe that the Allies are favored (slightly). The Allies can afford to play conservatively, and should do so because of the way the game mechanics work. The Germans, on the other hand, must play aggressively, unless they have great luck in the early going. No opportunity for a counterattack should be missed, even in clear weather. Even if no attack is made, the German can seize the initiative by threatening Allied-held areas and causing the Allies to waste valuable impulses playing defense.

Although this article should be understandable on its own, the reader should review the Greenwood and Maly articles in Volume 29, No. 3 and the Series Replay in the same issue, and also consult the probability table supplied by Ron Fedin of Volume 30, No. 3 of *The GENERAL* (page 15).

UTAH BEACH—STRATEGY

As Maly indicated, attacks out of Ste. Mère-Eglise into Pont l'Abbe or Montebourg are usually futile. These Bocage areas can be defended easily. If the German makes a mistake and gives you a good chance to clear one of these areas with a single attack, or strips the entire sector of reinforcements, that is another matter (but that shouldn't happen). Given the limited supply available on Utah and the abundance of German units available to defend what is essentially a three-area front, Carentan is all the Allies can hope to get. If Carentan falls before June 11, the Allies should romp to victory, barring a completely hopeless British situation. Thus, the Allies need to get into Carentan as soon as





possible and the Germans need to defend it as strongly as possible. How this happens is described below.

UTAH BEACH—US TACTICS

June 6: Clear the beach
June 7: Take the bridge to Ste. Mère-Eglise
June 8: Clear Ste. Mère-Eglise
June 9: Contest Carentan
June 10: Refit while awaiting link-up with the Omaha forces
June 11-12: Final assault on Carentan

This nice, conservative schedule assumes average luck and no targets of opportunity (*i.e.* a weakly defended Pont l'Abbe or Montebourg). This may seem like a slower advance than some players like, but unless the Utah group is able to clear Carentan by itself, there is no great advantage to contesting it early rather than late. If you have to wait for the Omaha force to catch up anyway, you might as well save the extra impulses for another part of the board. Note that the foregoing schedule is only going to use one impulse on each of the first three days. Bombardments should be saved for Omaha where they will be more effective due to the lower terrain effect modifiers (TEM) of the areas near Omaha.

I agree with Maly that on the night of June 5-6 the paratroopers should not seize the Utah-Ste. Mère bridge. If the Germans are permitted to seize the Montebourg-Ste. Mère bridge with both 5's and 6's, they have a 7-to-5 chance of doing so in two attempts, which they will usually get. This will generally shut down Utah for the entire game. By restricting the German to 6's (and being willing to use the Advantage if the Germans do roll it) the chance of the German reinforcing Ste. Mère is negligible. Seizing the Utah bridge can certainly work—if the Allies clear Utah and Ste. Mère on the 6th, the game is probably over already—but it's a gamble that doesn't need to be taken.

Like Maly, I favor an initial assault on Utah with two units, since if one is spent by interdiction the other will probably win the battle and save the first from disruption. A single regiment has only a 44 percent chance to clear the beach, even if 709/1/919 is spent (67 per cent to land, times 66 per cent to roll "-1" or better on the 7-3 assault). Failure affords the Germans a 50 per cent chance to blow the bridge to Ste. Mère. Even if the Germans must use Impulse 0 to defend Bretteville, the Allies may have better uses for their half of that impulse than a second assault on Utah, giving the German another chance. Finally, a needed impulse may be lost if the initial assault fails.

The US plan for dawn of June 7 is to have at least three units from the 4th Division available for a 10-8 assault across the (enemy-controlled) bridge into Ste. Mère. As Maly indicates, the 7-8 attack into Ste. Mère with the third infantry regiment on June 6 (once the beach is cleared) is okay as long as it doesn't jeopardize the 4th Division's integrity bonus on June 7. If the US rolls "+1" or better, they take the bridge, and if they roll "+2" they will have a fresh 6 AV (attack value) unit already in Ste. Mère to attack Carentan, if Ste. Mère is cleared on June 8. Be sure to make the coastal interdiction rolls for both the third infantry regiment and 4/xx *before* deciding whether to make the 7-8 assault. If 4/xx is disrupted, play it safe and just make your 17 per cent bridge seizure attempt with the infantry unit.

With equal dice rolls on the 10-8 Assault on June 7, the St. Martin Coastal just becomes spent and still presents 5 DV (defense value) to the 90th Division. If one regiment of the 90th fails its interdiction roll, the other two along with 101/327 attack at only 7-5 with only a 16 per cent chance to clear Ste. Mère. Thus with average luck, Ste. Mère will probably not fall on June 7 to the recommended plan. Fortunately, the arrival of 82/325 on that day puts an end to German attempts to seize the Montebourg bridge, as three fresh units remain in Ste. Mère even if none can be refit because the Utah bridge is still German. The German could conceivably move some artillery next to Ste. Mère, flip a couple of fresh units with a bombardment, seize the bridge, and reinforce the area. Yet, this is a low-odds move which requires a lot of time and supply. Accordingly, the Allies shouldn't worry too much about it.

By June 8, however, US forces can attack Ste. Mère with both the 4th and 90th Divisions, so it should fall easily if not reinforced by the Germans. The key question is whether the Americans take it cheaply enough so that they have enough left to assault Carentan on the same day. Carentan will be defended with at least 11 DF initially (91/6 FS, 100 Pz Rp, "+2" TEM and "+2" bridge over flooded boundary). It is unlikely that the Americans can mount even a twelve-point attack on June 7. One of the 4th Division regiments would have to be contesting Ste. Mère already, so that it could lead the 101st Airborne into Carentan, once Ste. Mère is cleared. The corps artillery will not be available to bombard Carentan until June 9, and the air unit probably will have been used around Omaha. Therefore, your chance of getting decent odds on Carentan on June 8 will depend on the availability of WTF.

Without WTF, US forces face a 12-11 assault with five units and a 34 per cent chance of failure. Loss disrupts all five units, ending all offensive operations out of Ste. Mère for that day and possibly June 9 as well. Therefore, play it cool—the Americans will have a 14 AV attack on June 9. Carentan may be strongly defended by then, but both WTF and the Corps Artillery prepare the US way. Remember, at this point you are trying to occupy Carentan, not take it. Therefore, the number of spent defenders is not important (they do not add to the DV of the area). On the other hand, if WTF is available on June 8, the assault into Carentan becomes much more attractive then, if you can spare the two impulses. Note also that if you have attacked into Carentan and stripped Ste. Mère of all fresh units, a weather change may permit a successful German counterattack into Ste. Mère, paralyzing the entire Utah sector. However, WTF may be better used on the Omaha front on June 8 (see below).

If the worst happens and the German does succeed in seizing the Montebourg-Ste. Mère bridge and reinforcing Ste. Mère, the best US response is to face reality. You *cannot* take Ste. Mère unless the German gets careless, so don't try. You will just waste impulses and supply, while the German defends with units which are not needed elsewhere. Regroup the June 7 reinforcements to the Offshore Box on the evening of the 7th and bring them over to Omaha in the morning. In this situation, the Allies need to take Foret de Clerisy, Tilly or Villars to make up for the lost VP and then take Carentan from Omaha alone (a tall order). The Allies have a decent shot with the extra units and the extra impulses created by not spending any on Utah and saving the Utah supplies each turn.

On the positive side, Ste. Mère may fall unexpectedly on June 7. If so, the US schedule moves ahead one turn. It is tempting to try for an early win by overrunning Carentan on June 8. Two preliminary bombardments by WTF and the Corps Artillery should reduce Carentan to 6 DV (91/6 FS at D1, "+2" TEM and "+2" for the bridge). The 15 AV attack (a 6 AV regiment of the 4th Division leading five infantry, two supporting divisional artillery, two divisional integrity bonuses and air support) averages nine casualty points (CP). Meanwhile, the German may react on June 7 by moving 243/921,91/xx and 91 PAK to St. Jores and regrouping into Carentan, giving it a five-unit defense on June 8. Even if these units don't get to move on June 7, they can regroup into St. Jores on the 7th and move into Carentan following the first bombardment on June 8. In either case, Carentan is unlikely to fall immediately. In fact, it is almost impossible for the Utah forces to capture Carentan by themselves anyway, given the supply situation. The Allies must beware denuding Ste. Mère to make a second attack into Carentan, allowing the Germans a successful counterattack into Ste. Mère.

Therefore, once Carentan is contested, the Utah group should reorganize while waiting for the Omaha group to reach Catz. Reinforce Pont l'Abbe with one or two additional paratroopers. Get two fresh infantry units from the 4th Division and two from the 90th Division into Carentan. The rest of the units stay in Ste. Mère-Eglise. Reinforcing Pont l'Abbe is preferable to abandoning it, both because it contributes to contesting areas for the final Allied VP and because the US presence makes it difficult for the German to keep a flexible reserve that can reach Montebourg as well as Carentan. The Americans can easily spare the units for this task. The US force remaining in Ste. Mère is powerful enough to deter the Germans from denuding the entire Cherbourg peninsula of mobile units, as it can mount 15 AV against Pont l'Abbe or Montebourg during clear weather with maximum artillery support.

The ideal is for the Americans to enter Carentan with two infantry units from each of five divisions. This yields an awesome 26 AV in clear weather (six for the lead unit, nine for additional units, five supporting divisional artillery, five divisional integrity points and one for air support). Note that substituting an armor unit does not increase the attack because it loses a divisional integrity bonus. After preparatory bombardment by WTF and both Corps Artillery units (one in Ste. Mère, one in Catz), the attack should have a good chance of clearing the area, even against ten defenders. However, if the Germans started the day with all ten units fresh, it probably will be a two-day operation. An assault which does not clear the area is an exercise in futility, as it permits the German to retreat disrupted units and replace them with other units which can be refitted to fresh status that evening. However, if the American only bombards on day one, the German is in a tougher situation. During the Regroup Phase after the first day, the German can withdraw disrupted units, but cannot add *fresh* units to the area during the night (due to being contested) or the following day (they are spent after movement), so the second day will see no new fresh German units in Carentan. After three rounds of bombardment on Day Two, most German units will be D2 and the assault will be almost a sure thing, the only possible defense being a successful German artillery bombardment of the US units in Carentan. Therefore, as long as the Americans take Catz by the evening of June 10, Carentan is likely to fall (and, by blowing out Carentan, the Allies will seize the Advantage, if they had previously lost it). In conclusion, the Allies should be patient and only attempt an early capture of Carentan if they have at least a one-third chance to overrun it or are doing poorly on the rest of the board.

UTAH BEACH—GERMAN TACTICS

German hopes in the Utah sector revolve around the survival of the Martin Coastal Artillery (CA) in Ste. Mère-Eglise. Unfortunately, short of taking the Montebourg bridge nothing much can be done to help. Even if 709/1/919 survives the initial assault, the Germans generally can't afford to blow the Utah-Ste. Mère bridge on Impulse 0, because they have to defend Bretteville. Even with 709/1/919 surviving on Utah, the demolition attempt has only a 50 per cent chance of success. If the first Allied impulse doesn't clear Utah and no other crisis develops, the Germans can try blowing the bridge on Impulse 1 or 2. However, the moves of 21 Pz PAK and FLAK, 21 Pz/22, 21 Pz/125, blowing the Bretteville bridges, blowing the Omaha-Trévières bridge and one or two Montebourg bridge seizure attempts should all have a higher priority than a 50-50 shot at the Utah bridge.

If only two or three CP are inflicted on 709/1/919, you should probably retreat it into Ste. Mère rather than staying on the beach and blowing the bridge as Greenwood suggests. It becomes much, much tougher for the Americans to take Ste. Mère when the Germans can absorb seven or eight CP and still hold the area. Then the option to blow the Ste. Mère-Utah bridge becomes only a one-sixth chance.

As for the Cherbourg peninsula, play is pretty routine as long as the Americans haven't done anything strange. On June 6, the 91/1058 makes the first seizure attempt on the Montebourg bridge (contrary to Greenwood's advice), because, if it is successful, 709/919(-) can enter Ste. Mère on June 6. The reverse is obviously not the case, as to enter Ste. Mère, 91/1058 not only has to brave air interdiction but lacks enough movement factors (MF) to enter against fresh US units. If there is a weather change after the bridge is seized (Greenwood's scenario), you don't need 91/1058 to enter Ste. Mère anyway, because the FLAK units from Cherbourg can do it. Thus, the 709/919(-) makes the second seizure attempt, if there's time. Gamblers may try a second attempt with AOK7, planning to enter Ste. Mère with 709/919(-) if successful, but the German has better things to do than take a one-ninth shot that may well be re-rolled if it works. AOK7 and 709/729 should regroup towards Montebourg, because, if it falls, there is no further defense in the sector.

If the Germans seize the Montebourg bridge on June 6, a number of units from Cherbourg should move to Valognes on a later impulse of the day so they can regroup to Montebourg and be ready to flop into Ste. Mère early on June 7. The capture of the Montebourg bridge doesn't necessarily shut down Utah, because the first German impulse of June 7 may be needed to defend the Tilly/Villars area or blow the Treviers/Omaha bridge. The German hopes that an early Allied impulse on June 7 doesn't clear Ste. Mère, which would make the bridge seizure virtually irrelevant.

If the key bridge does not fall, the Cherbourg peninsula units are divided into two missions: 1) reinforcing Carentan and 2) killing the two regiments from the 82nd Airborne in Pont l'Abbe. The latter is done (in an ideal world) as follows. On June 6, regroup Cherbourg-Valognes and Cap de la Hague-Cherbourg. On June 7, 101 NW moves safely through the flak screen in Valognes into Pont l'Abbe. That night, a 12 AV group is formed, led by 91/1058 and featuring a divisional integrity bonus from the 709th Division and possibly the 243rd. On June 8, bombard the fresh regiment of the 82nd with 101 NW and wait for a weather change or for June 9, at which time you attack at 12-5 with a better-than-even chance to kill the two Americans and clear the area. Unfortunately, while all this is happening, the American probably clears Ste. Mère and can either reinforce Pont l'Abbe or abandon it at his option. The only

➛➛➛➛➛ Continued on p. 54

Stuck in the Turanian Plain Again

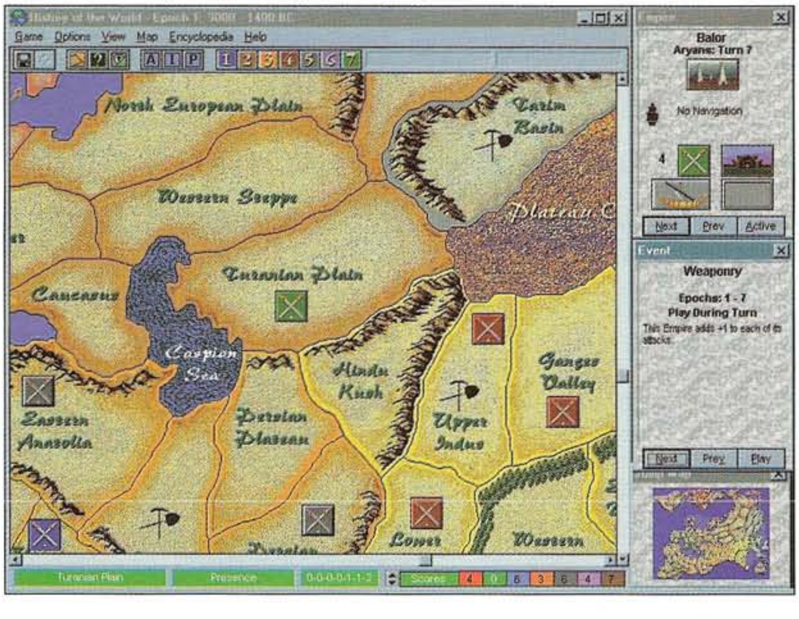
Computer Conquerors in *History of the World*

by Mark G. McLaughlin

If there is one constant in playing as the sole human against four or five computer opponents in *HISTORY OF THE WORLD (HWC)*, it is that at least three times out of five one of them will pass you the Aryans as your opening empire. This is not just my imagination. As a beta tester I played the opening turns about 50 times. In all eight beta versions I kept getting stuck with the Aryans.

SOUND STRATEGY

There is, of course, a sound basis for the computer's perversity. Most articles I have seen on either the board or the computer game (*The GENERAL, Canadian Wargaming Journal, Computer Gaming World*) appear to be of the unanimous opinion that the Aryans are the kiss of death. All of these sources say to find your worst enemy, your most feared opponent or just somebody you really don't like and stick them with the Aryans. With such a wealth of one-sided opinion against them, it is no wonder the Aryans were vilified by the programmers who "trained" the artificial intelligence in *HWC*.



This Empire adds +1 to each of its attacks.

The Aryans rank at the top of or at least right alongside such other despised strategic mistakes as the Khmer, the Timurids and the Seljuk Turks. The last two of these share the Aryan's Turanian homeland. It is the starting point for the exodus of more peoples than any other spot on the map. Truly, this must have been one of those places that everybody is from but nobody lives there anymore—sort of like the proverbial small town in Texas.

OUTWITTING THE COMPUTER

Knowing that you are going to be stuck in the Turanian Plain at some point in the game, it is a good idea to familiarize yourself with the opportunities available to a conqueror who begins his epoch (or the game) in that dusty plain.

The Turanian Plain is the gateway to China, India, the Middle East. True, it is on the wrong side of a locked gate (all the mountains on its borders defend other people from unwanted Turanian tourists). Although the rough terrain takes away the attacker's usual benefit of having one die more than the normal defender, this only evens the odds. In almost every epoch the empire that starts in the Turanian Plain should get into China (the Tarim Basin), India (the Hindu Kush) and the Middle East (Persian Plateau). Even if it goes no farther due to losses, the Turanian Plain empire will gain a minimum of four points in Epoch I or nine points in epochs V and VI. As the Tarim Basin has a resource center and both the Hindu Kush and Persian Plateaus are adjacent to resource centers, there is a very strong possibility that the Turanian emigrants will build a monument. That yields the Aryans two more points, for a respectable if not stupendous six-point opening play.

This opportunity for a monument is all-but guaranteed to happen in Epoch I if either the Shang or Indus Valley empires fail to appear. If either of those empires are missing, the Aryans can occupy three areas in either China or India for free and use the last remaining army to attempt to grab the Persian Plateau and earn two points for the Middle East. An Aryan player who has one of the three treachery cards can use it to jump over the rough terrain to gain a foothold in a new area in the event he has taken heavy losses crossing the other barrier.

It is little possibilities like this that the computer intelligence seems to have forgotten when it almost automatically gives away the Aryans or other supposed Turanian trash to the human player. To play well against the artificial conquerors in *History of the World*, you have to learn how to deal with what the computer thinks is a punishing deal.

KNOWING THE ENEMY

Just as knowing your human opponents helps you play better in the board game, knowing your computer opponents can be of great value in planning your epic epochs. The computer players are rated in three categories: Skill, Aggressiveness and Risk. The computer default for all three categories is the "Normal" play level. Playing against four or five default computer players is a bit like playing against a group of clones or robots. They play good, solid games but are devoid of personality and are thus impossible to tell apart except by the color of their pieces. It is a good idea to change the names of these computer players to those of famous historical personages (Hitler, Saddam, Nixon), characters of fiction or caricatures of types of people (Curly, Bozo, Mad Max) or friends (or other people you know). You can give your artificial opponents a personality.

For example, the skill ratings of Fair, Normal and Good reflect the basic intelligence of the computer player. This is like

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choosing a level for your opponent in a computer chess game. A Fair opponent moves quickly, almost on impulse, as it looks for the best immediate move. A Good opponent will take longer (perhaps 15-30 seconds longer) but will view the attack possibilities beyond each immediate attack open to it. A Good opponent, like a good player will plan a campaign for the whole epoch. A Fair Roman, for example, will concentrate on the Mediterranean Basin, striking haphazardly the highest value spot it can hit with each piece it plays. A Good Roman computer player, however, often picks a steady and fairly direct line of advance that aims at acquiring points in India, China or both.

Aggressiveness (Passive, Normal or Aggressive) relates to the propensity to make enemies, while Risk (Cautious, Normal and Daring) is related to the willingness to attack at low odds. Aggressive/Daring computer personalities will almost always cross straits without bothering to place a navy in the intervening sea zone. Rather than waste a build for the sake of a single point, the Aggressive/Daring computer will take the even shot of attacking across the straits. A Normal computer will usually go for control of the sea first. A Cautious/Passive computer will always go for the sea zone before attempting to cross a contested strait.

Knowledge of your opponents can help you decide whether or not to guard a straits passage. A fleet in the sea or a fort on the opposite shore will usually deter the cautious/passive type. It will also set a trap for the Aggressive/Daring type. That type appears to work on the principle that the tougher the battle, the greater the glory.

BEST AND WORST

The most consistently dangerous computer opponent I have faced in my 50-plus games is "Chris." This computer opponent I created in the Orange slot has Good Skill, Normal Aggressiveness and Cautious Risk. This is as close as the computer design will allow me to simulate one of my oldest and best gaming partners. Like the real Chris, computer Chris plays a steady, solid game. It is somewhat akin to playing against Confederate General James Longstreet. The computer makes very few mistakes and only takes a chance when the potential gain exceeds the potential cost. Although computer Chris does not win every time, "he" wins more than any other player (computer or human).

Playing against a game filled with clones of computer Chris, however, is no different than playing against a stable of the default characters. Just as playing with a diverse group of people makes each board game experience unique, playing with a mix of computer personalities makes each computer game experience a new and different challenge. One default character (normal in all three categories) is a good base opponent. One somewhat rash player who is at the top level (the Good—Aggressive—Daring combination) makes for another fine opponent. My computer foe of that type is called "Stuart." Computer Stuart tends to either win big or fall flat on his face. This unpredictability is leavened by the "good" skill level—without that caveat such an opponent would be little more than a random factor.

TABLE 1.
Suggested Optimum Mix of Computer Opponents

Computer Player	Skill Level	Aggression Level	Risk Level
Chris (Longstreet)	Good	Normal	Cautious
Stuart (Jackson)	Good	Aggressive	Daring
Art (Montgomery)	Good	Normal	Cautious
Eric (Eisenhower)	Good	Normal	Normal

Two other players who have two out of three categories as normal and the other category as Good or Cautious, respectively, help round out my opposition. This mix, I have found, makes for the most challenging games. Four computer opponents and one human is the optimum, I believe, as it provides for fast play and a good deal of uncertainty over which empires will be left out. Five computer players makes for a very crowded and somewhat slow game. Three computer players are too easy to beat, although this makes for a rapid game.

THE CHALLENGE TEAM

To summarize, here is what I believe is the best mix of computer opponents. The names are those of long-time human opponents, with a parenthetical reference to an historical general whom I feel would match those characteristics (highly subjective on my part). *[Such flattery makes me blush. This is sort of like those personality tests where we all deny their validity before taking them and then realize how dead right they turn out to be. I guess I'd have to agree that all the obsequious diplomatic behavior among these gamers is but a disguise of their normal aggressiveness.–SKT]*

STACKING THE DECK

Should you feel that you are being unfairly treated by the computer, you can create a real dud computer opponent or team of opponents. One of my easiest and biggest (yet least satisfying) victories came against the "three stooges" and the "Shadow" (see Table 2).

The three stooges are three fair players. One is Fair-Passive-Cautious (a frightened little mouse who fortified and doubled up armies to protect capitals and monuments). A second is Fair-Aggressive-Daring (something of a loose cannon–a real gambler with no vision and no idea of when to quit). The third is Fair-Aggressive-Cautious (how's that for a split personality). Watching the split personality play is amusing. It will leap at long shots on one move and then fortify or double up units on the next.

Beating these three is easy, especially when I add the "Shadow." In that game mix, there are two Human players: me and my Shadow. That gives me control of two empires in each Epoch. I try to use the "Shadow" player to manipulate the give/keep empire screen to the advantage of my main player, or to at least cushion the blow of seeing my main player stuck with a bad empire or a run of bad dice. The "Shadow" also works with me as my "hit man" to undercut the point base for the computer player empires.

I do not recommend using this style of play too often (either the Three Stooges or the Shadow, let alone a combination). It is fun if you really just need to feel good by beating up computer people and amassing huge points. It also helps ease you into learning how to play the game.

SINOCENTRIC

The Computer is sinocentric, that is to say it yearns to play in China. If it cannot put a piece in China, it will take away someone else's piece there. The computer will almost always play Rebellion and

Civil War event cards to drop a piece in China. If there is a disaster it can use or a barbarian horde to unleash, it will use it in China. If it has a treachery card and is anywhere near China, it will use that card to cross the Great Wall or take out a fort/fortress in China.

Want to take a guess where the Black Death, Pestilence, Plague and Famine get played by the computer? How about the Empires Revive and Fortify events? China gets all of these first, almost without fail. You can practically bet your game on that.

CASTLES ARE COOL

With some exceptions, most human players rarely fortify or double-up (place two or three units in one space) unless they have nothing better to do with their builds. The Computer players fortify and double-up key spaces quite often. This is especially true of Hadrian the "Castle Builder." That is a computer opponent with a Good or Normal skill level with a Passive-Cautious combination). Any computer player who shares one or two of the characteristics of the Castle Builder personality is also likely to dig in somewhere. The most likely places for the computer to fortify are capitals with monuments, strait crossings and islands (Ceylon, Crete and, sometimes, Ireland or Sumatra).

Should a human player build a fort, fortress or double-up, however, computer opponents will almost always play the treachery, disaster and other cards that in effect turn the defensive investment into a financial loss. It is as if the computer thinks "if he is defending it, there must be something of value there." I do not have any programming proof that this is how the computer thinks, but my experience and records appear to confirm my hypothesis. This is especially true of any computer that is Good or Normal.

MIXING IT UP

To vary play and make the game more interesting, I often mix up the opposition. In addition to the optimum mix (table 1) and the Three Stooges (above and table 2) team, I have created a few other "characters" to play against. (Heh, you try testing a game 50 or more times and see what you come up with to keep it fun each time). These are summarized below:

OUT TO GET YOU

The mix of available empires, order of drawing empires, map position and event cards in play make it impossible to predict absolutes for how the computer will play its hand. Throw in some personalities and the absolutes get a little muddled. That is a function of the *HWC* game system which rings true for both human and cybernetic foes. The computer game does add one little "byte" to this mix: it is out to get you.

The programmers say that they have kept computer cheating to a bare minimum, in that it does not see your hand, or those of other computer players, and that it does not get any dice advantage in combats. Multiple playings of the game seem to bear this out. The other claim the programmers make, that the computer players do not gang up on the human player, is harder to swallow. While this may indeed be true, the computer seems to prefer putting the screws to the human opponent. (Of course, most of us feel the same way, so who can blame it for making the living choice.)

TABLE 2. Computer "Characters"

Computer Player	Skill Level	Aggression Level	Risk Level
Hadrian The Castle Builder	Good or Normal	Passive	Cautious
The Attacker (Sherman)	Good	Aggressive	Normal
The Strategic Surprise (Lee)	Good	Normal	Daring
The Default (computer base)	Normal	Normal	Normal
The Default on Drugs	Normal	Normal	Daring
Stooge I: Larry The Little Mouse	Fair	Passive	Cautious
Stooge II: Moe The Gambler	Fair	Aggressive	Daring
Stooge III: Curly The Split Personality	Fair	Aggressive	Cautious

FIXING THE FATAL FLAW

The computer plays a more than competent game. It looks for the optimum Empire for itself and the optimum attacks for its pieces. What it so often fails to notice is the bigger picture of how taking points away from another player can be just as helpful as gaining them for itself. This is a minor (and arguable) flaw. Another flaw, however, is not arguable. The computer does not seem to understand what a seemingly bad card can do to benefit another human or computer player.

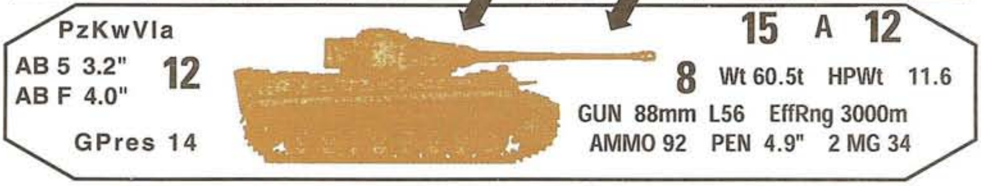
It fails to adequately examine the relative value of play order positioning. This can, unfortunately, lead to the computer in effect inadvertently "throwing" the game to another player, especially to the leader or a human, by giving that player one of the empires that moves first or second in the epoch. Such empires usually have weak hands (Chou, in Epoch II; Celts in Epoch III; Guptas and Goths in Epoch IV; Franks and Vikings in Epoch V and the Ming; Timurid and Inca/Aztec in VI.) Their position, however, allows a player to score points again from his previous move. A back-to-back move can give you or a computer player the kind of bonus that would almost never willingly be given by one experienced human player to another opponent (human or otherwise).

In table-top play, a group of gamers would talk among themselves to convince each other which player should or should not get certain empires if they are drawn. Good players understand the problem of giving an early play empire to someone with good board position. The computer apparently does not comprehend this idea.

A good rule of thumb is to save the game every turn. This way, should the computer or you inadvertently give or get the back-to-back killer move, you can go back and take another chance at getting it right. You can, of course, keep playing it as it was dealt, but most of the time this will result in the "Better Luck Next Time" end-game screen that marks your defeat.

★

DESIGN ANALYSIS



Adding the Operational Dimension

by Charlie Moylan

ACHTUNG SPITFIRE is the second game in the World War Two strategy air combat series from Big Time Software and TAHGC. Set in Western Europe during 1939-1943 and focusing on the Battle of Britain, *ACHTUNG SPITFIRE (ASP)* is the prequel to the award-winning *OVER THE REICH* which covered 1943-45.

Those of you familiar with *OVER THE REICH (OTR)* will recognize the game system and be able to jump right in and fly. But there are some important new features you should take note of. This article will discuss the most important of these additions and improvements to the game system to help you get the most from your time in the air.

ASP's most outstanding new feature is the Battle of Britain operational map. Mixing real-time strategy with a "thinking person's" wargame, the operational map is nearly a game in itself. In it you play the role of either a Royal Air Force fighter-group commander defending southeast England and London from the Blitz, or his German Luftwaffe counterpart, intent on the destruction of Fighter Command and the invasion of England. The operational map provides an exciting larger-scale context for the desperate battles that you fight out in *ASP*. The strategy you use here is every bit as important as your tactics in the turn-based combat system for the dogfights themselves. Overextend yourself, and watch your Heinkels fall prey to marauding Spitfires or the enemy bombs falling on your airfields as your fighters sit helplessly, caught on the ground refueling and unready. You must fight wisely!

GERMAN OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

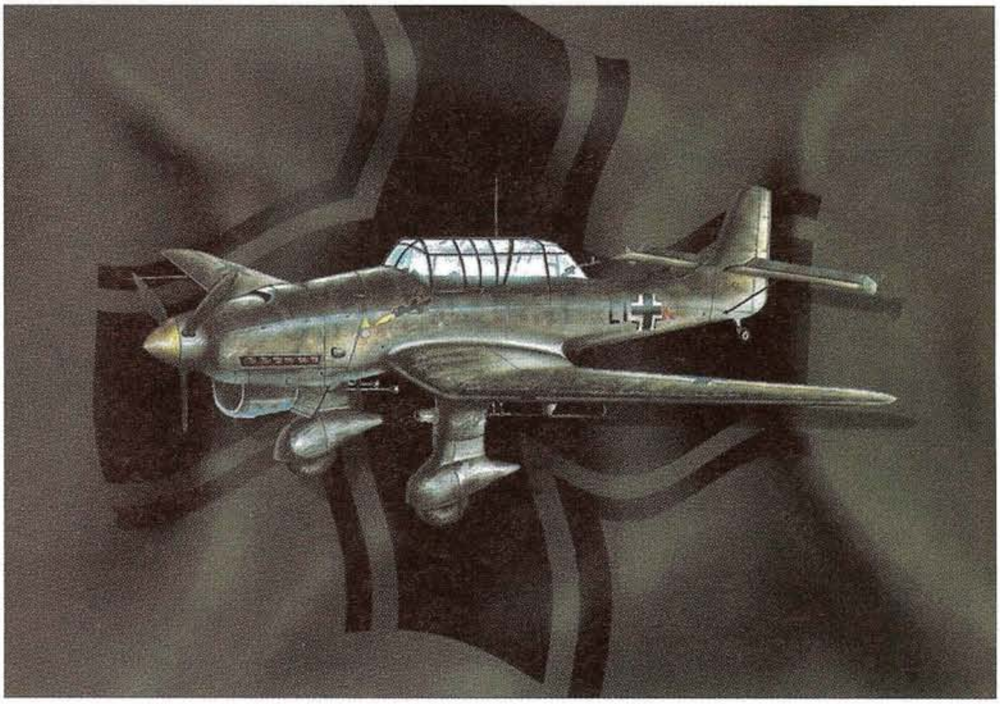
When playing the German side, you will select targets for bombing and form the strike wings from the bombers and fighters available at your home base. Do you attack radar stations or airfields first? How much should you hit Fighter Command before switching to bomb London? How much escort will you require and is it worth sending out fighter sweeps first? It is up to you. Once you have given the strike orders, you watch the action unfold in real-time. Your groups climb to altitude and fly west, until... "Achtung, Spitfire!" The British fighters, under radar guidance (unless you have destroyed it!) will intercept. Then you fight out the battles at the combat scale, using the turn-based dogfight system made popular by *OTR*. Survivors of the engagements return to the operational map. You must then decide whether to continue to the target, select a secondary target, split your groups, head for home, or launch follow-up raids. The possibilities are endless and you're in charge.

The game manual covers strategy in detail, but there are a few major points you should remember. First, always send fighters to escort your bombers. You'll never have as many Bf 109s as you'd like, or even the less-capable Bf 110, but even one or two will make a big difference in a battle against Spitfires and Hurricanes who could otherwise shoot down your poorly-armed bombers at their leisure if they didn't have to worry about any escort fighters. This is even more important on long-range missions where the British have time to form a coordinated defense.

Second, strike short-range targets first, using small, simultaneous raids all along the coast. Though your fighter cover will be spread thin, this tends to overwhelm the defenses and many of your raids will get through to their targets unopposed. Later in the Battle, however, as you reach for more distant targets, you will need to form larger groups for greater mutual protection.

Third, you must bomb London before Operation Sea Lion, the invasion of England, can commence. Don't do that until you have first bombed the fighter airfields into rubble. An intact Fighter Command will chew up your long-range raids very badly.

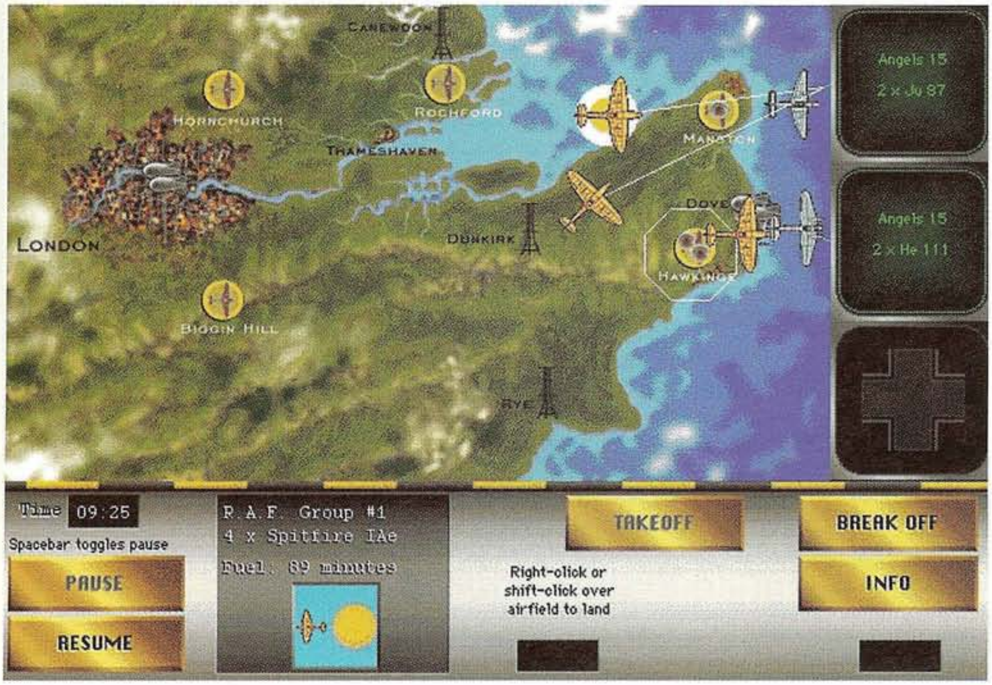
Achtung Spitfire



BRITISH OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

When you play the British side you are on the defensive. The operational map shows your airplanes distributed over five sector airfields, ready for action. First, you must decide which of your fighters to disperse to forward airfields from which they can intercept enemy short-range strikes more quickly, unless of course those airfields have been bombed too heavily to be of practical use. Then, before you know it, comes the radio crackle of a radar report of an enemy strike group of ten bandits heading for Manston at angels sixteen (16,000 feet). It is time to pause the game to consider your response. Hit them hard with your full squadron? That would give you good odds, but would leave the whole sector vulnerable if this is only a diversionary raid and your fighters are caught on the ground refueling when the real strike comes. Better to send a smaller group, and maintain a reserve. Include your ace pilot and the other one with the keen eyesight. He'll help you spot the Germans and maneuver for the attack. Then you hope that you have enough firepower to inflict enough casualties to turn back the Germans before they reach the target to unleash their bombs.

You can pause the game at any time to consider your actions and give orders, but when you restart the action the adrenaline starts pumping. Hawkinge reports it is being bombed by Heinkels! Where did that raid come from? The radar report was too late, probably because Dunkirk station is still shattered from an earlier Stuka attack. Maybe your Hurricanes stationed at Manston can catch them before they get away. Remember to attack from above and out of the sun. Don't climb so high that you lose contact with the enemy, and break off if his fighters overwhelm you. Try not to push your pilots so hard that they become exhausted, even if this means letting through some raids.



Angels 15
2 x Ju 87

Angels 15
2 x He 111

Time 09:25
Spacebar toggles pause

R.A.F. Group #1
4 x Spitfire IAe
Fuel: 89 minutes

Right-click or shift-click over airfield to land

Operational Map of area southeast of London, the center of action in the game.

NEW AIRCRAFT AND TACTICS

The combat system of *ASP* is similar to that in *OTR*. We've made some improvements in the computer AI, graphics, and the vertical movement system (see below). So if you're an old hand at *OTR* you'll have no problem getting up and flying in *ASP*.

Yet, you may be surprised by how different it feels to fly the early war fighters compared to the armored speed-demons you are used to from *OTR*. Generally speaking, fighters from the Battle of Britain are lighter and more maneuverable than their late-war successors, but they are more fragile, considerably slower, and often lightly armed or under-powered.

The British Hurricane fighter is a good example. It is highly maneuverable, usually able to out-turn its German Bf 109 adver-

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Letters

Women Gamers Speak Out

I just returned from AvalonCon '97, and (as usual) had a great time. I encourage anyone who enjoys boardgames to attend. The tournaments held at AvalonCon really do deserve the appellation "National Championships." The quality of competition is top-notch. At the same time, almost all games that I play are a lot of fun. Most of the people play for enjoyment as well as competition, so there is much good-natured rivalry without the "win at all costs" mentality. I also like reading the coverage provided in *The GENERAL*. That gives me a chance to relive the "thrill of victory and agony of defeat," as well as to experience second-hand the games I did not get a chance to play.

—Kathy Stroh, Bellefonte, PA

I would like to thank everyone at TAHGC as well as all of the game masters who made AvalonCon '97 come together. I want to single out some of your GMs for their efforts. Sean Finnerty (*D-DAY*) and John Pack (*GANGSTERS*) ran beginners tournaments, doing an outstanding job of explaining the rules. All of the gentlemen who ran sports games did a super job of making the games run well and helped make AvalonCon a lot of fun. Bruce Reiff did a great job with *$GREED* and *SLAPSHOT*, two of the most fun games. John Coussis (*DECATHLON*) got a huge number of people organized and playing quickly. Special thanks go to Bill Scott. Although I haven't tried *PANZER LEADER*, it was Bill who convinced me to enter *TITAN* at the first AvalonCon. There weren't many women registered to play back then and I had planned to be a spectator, but Bill got me into *TITAN* and the enjoyment of AvalonCon. The first wargames I tried at an AvalonCon were *STORM OVER ARNHEM* and *WAR AT SEA*. GMs Steve Kolezar and Bruce Monnin made me feel very welcome. I no longer have any kids qualified to be in the Juniors tournaments, but I think it is great that your GMs have the patience and understanding needed to help the kids enjoy themselves. Perhaps you should sell (at registration, but shipped later) a special souvenir edition of *The GENERAL* with coverage of the convention.

It would be nice if at least second place qualified for a prize in every tournament no matter the number of entrants. It was disheartening to lose the *PAYDIRT* Super Bowl in overtime and get no recognition.

—Sue Ellsworth, Morris, IL

Diplomatic Brouhaha

My friends and I have noticed that Japan has an unfair advantage in *COLONIAL DIPLOMACY*. If Japan is not dealt with right off the bat, they get way too big. Once Japan grows to eight or nine units, you cannot attack them. Holland cannot get to Japan fast enough because of worries about the British in Singapore. The British can get there, but neither France nor China can afford a fleet buildup off their coasts. Keeping Japan in check depends much too heavily on an alliance of Russia and China.

—Matt, cyberspace

I'd love to see a more thorough analysis or rebuttal appear as an article in The GENERAL. *Surely the* DIPLOMACY *community is up to the challenge!—SKT*

The Envelope, Please . . .

The following letter was addressed to the Academy of Adventure Gaming Arts & Design (which runs the GAMA Awards announced each year at the Origins Convention) and copied to Mr. Berg and to me.—SKT

I wish to call to your attention the following quote published in *Richard Berg's Review of Games*, Vol. II, No. 25 in referring to his own poll of the year's best games:

> Two games that got no votes as best (and one vote each as worst) do appear on the Origins ballot: *AGE OF RENAISSANCE* and *AIR BARON*. What this reveals, more than anything else, is AH employees are members of GAMA; many of those other companies are not. Good reason to join if you want to change that..

The inference is clear that Mr. Berg attributes the nomination of these games to a form of ballot-box stuffing by employees of Avalon Hill.

I will put aside for the moment that Richard, as an ex-attorney should know better than to mess with libelous statements. His acerbic wit has long been his stock in trade and I will not attempt to trade barbs with him. As a self-professed game critic, he is certainly entitled to his opinions and even to attempt to sway others to his point of view, just as I am entitled to my opinion on his designs. However, when he leaves the realm of design and publishes his fabricated opinion on the moral conduct of others, he oversteps the bounds of at least good taste, if not libel. My question to you is why your organization would choose anyone with such unprofessional conduct to MC the Awards?

Imagine the bitter sweet experience of rising to accept the award for *AGE OF RENAISSANCE* from the MC who had made such statements. However, that only prepared us for his next gaffe, which was to mistakenly present our *WOODEN SHIPS & IRON MEN PC* award to rival Talonsoft. Apparently, when Richard disagrees with the choices, he takes it upon himself to present them to their "rightful" winners.

All of this is nothing new. The awards system in the boardgame industry has been, to be charitable, not exactly run with the precision of Price-Waterhouse. It would be pointless and indefensible to list the entire litany of questionable practices committed by this awards system over the years, for there is no "right" or "wrong" when it comes to games. Like beauty, game quality is very much in the eye of the beholder. Your Picasso may well be my furball and vice versa.

However, one episode does stand out as representative of the types of excess that have been all too commonplace with these awards. I've always found it curious that a landmark design such as *ASL*—truly one of the hobby's major and long-lived efforts—never merited so much as a nomination from the GAMA awards. The explanation given was that it was derivative of *SQUAD LEADER* and thus not truly a new design. Fair enough, although I don't know anyone who has played both who wouldn't agree that *ASL* was a major departure from its predecessor. But that excuse pales when you consider that *A House Divided* was not only nominated, but won twice for its two editions—even though the second changed little more than mounting the paper map of the original. Could it be a coincidence that the game's designer was president of GAMA and presiding over those same awards?

I didn't complain then and I'm not complaining now. My approach, win or lose, to the badly flawed GAMA awards over the years has been to ignore them as the political football they have always been. The only truly meaningful awards are those voted by people who pay their money to play the games—not the popularity contests of the "professionals" in the industry who vote their own vested interests. Yet, the Academy continues to ignore the only people really qualified to vote for their awards—and actually bans them from the presentations by making the Awards ceremony an invitation-only event.

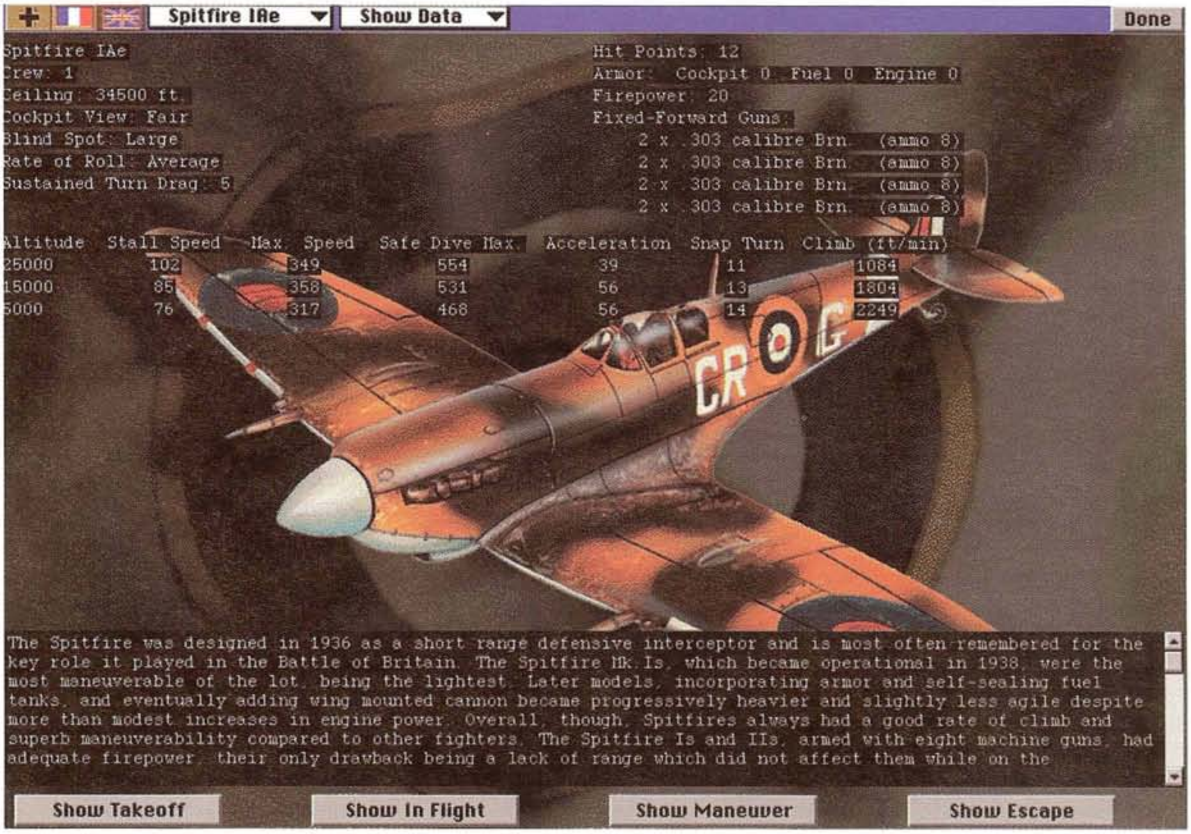
Rather, it is Mr. Berg's insinuation that has finally galled me into breaking my silence. I don't give a damn about winning the award for *AGE OF RENAISSANCE*. I have done better work which went unnominated. What does infuriate me is his public insinuation that Avalon Hill wins such awards as does come its way by underhanded means, rather than on merit. I have been an employee of Avalon Hill for the better part of three decades and during that time I have never voted for any game award, nor do I know of any fellow employee who has since the days of Randall Reed 15+ years ago. This is in stark contrast to the common practices of such firms as GDW who paid the Academy dues for all of its employees and encouraged them to vote, dare we say, perhaps for their own products.

My point: ignore my work if you will, pan it if you must, but don't accuse me of the same hypocritical tactics practiced by much of the industry while trying to pat themselves on the back. I emplore you to come forward and tell Mr. Berg's readers exactly how many votes you received from Avalon Hill employees in your nominating process. Indeed, are any of our employees members of your august body? As long as the "Academy" condones the unprofessional conduct of Mr. Berg as their spokesman, your awards will continue to be truly meaningless.

—Donald J. Greenwood
VP, R&D, TAHGC

➛➛➛➛➛ *(from p. 23)*

sary, but has a top speed of only 324 mph. Early models lack armor, which means that even a light hit can be lethal, especially to the pilot in the unprotected cockpit. The Spitfire is much the same, although it is considerably faster—even slightly faster than the Bf 109. Pilot hits and fuel or engine fires are common in these fighters. If you are used to sailing through a hail of gunfire in a P-47 Thunderbolt from *OTR* and emerging relatively unscathed in your metal monster, consider flying with a bit more care in *ASP*.



Spitfire IAe
Crew: 1
Ceiling: 34500 ft.
Cockpit View: Fair
Blind Spot: Large
Rate of Roll: Average
Sustained Turn Drag: 5

Hit Points: 12
Armor: Cockpit 0 Fuel 0 Engine 0
Firepower: 20
Fixed-Forward Guns:
2 x .303 calibre Brn. (ammo 8)
2 x .303 calibre Brn. (ammo 8)
2 x .303 calibre Brn. (ammo 8)
2 x .303 calibre Brn. (ammo 8)

Altitude	Stall Speed	Max. Speed	Safe Dive Max.	Acceleration	Snap Turn	Climb (ft/min)
25000	102	349	554	39	11	1084
15000	85	358	531	56	13	1804
5000	76	317	468	56	14	2249

The Spitfire was designed in 1936 as a short range defensive interceptor and is most often remembered for the key role it played in the Battle of Britain. The Spitfire Mk.Is, which became operational in 1938, were the most maneuverable of the lot, being the lightest. Later models, incorporating armor and self-sealing fuel tanks, and eventually adding wing mounted cannon became progressively heavier and slightly less agile despite more than modest increases in engine power. Overall, though, Spitfires always had a good rate of climb and superb maneuverability compared to other fighters. The Spitfire Is and IIs, armed with eight machine guns, had adequate firepower, their only drawback being a lack of range which did not affect them while on the

Another difference, especially for the German and French players, is a lack of sufficient ammunition for cannon. Even though early-war cannon typically had low rates of fire, the ammunition supply was quite short, allowing for only five or six seconds of firing. Your fighter can probably turn on a dime, but you must use your precious cannon shells wisely. The Bf 109, famous for its small fuel tank and short range, often finds that it has run low on critical 20mm shells well before its fuel tank runs dry. Its combat endurance is therefore limited and the German player must take this into consideration when deciding whether to continue pressing toward the target after being intercepted.

Dennis Littler

A Hawker Hurricane like those that scrambled to the defense of London in 1940.

Did I mention the French? Yes, you can play out the 1940 blitzkrieg in the west! The French *Armée de l'Air* flies mostly outdated aircraft and finds itself outnumbered by the Germans, but has enough quality pilots to give the Luftwaffe a real sting in battles where the numbers are more even. The Dewoitine 520 fighter can outmaneuver a Bf 109 and give it a nasty surprise if handled with skill.

After the Battle of Britain, the mid-war designs appear, like the Typhoon, Mosquito and Focke-Wulf 190. The heavy-hitting Fw 190A-4 really shines in the summer of 1942 when the British don't possess any fighter fast enough to catch it. The appearance of the Typhoon later in the year changes that, though the Typhoon is effective only at low altitudes. On the deck it is a tiger!

SYSTEM UPDATE

We are committed to making the *OTR/ASP* system the best strategy air combat gaming experience on your computer. To that end, we are releasing an update patch for *OTR* along with the *ASP* CD-ROM that will bring *OTR* up to the *ASP* standard. This version 1.1 patch is available on the Big Time website (http://www.bigtimesoftware.com).

The most significant improvement in the update is in the vertical movement system. Aircraft now change pitch angles in increments of 30 degrees rather than 45, and transition between angles at the same rate that they make horizontal turns. So airplanes now turn "in the vertical" just like they turn in the horizontal. A Spitfire will complete a loop before a Focke Wulf 190 can.

Additionally, the game now simulates the effects of negative-G when the pilot pushes the nose of his aircraft rapidly downward. Not only does this tend to throw off his aim, but causes non-fuel-injected engines to sputter into idle (on the next game turn) due to lack of fuel. Early Spitfires and Hurricanes lack fuel injection, while the Bf 109 does not.

If you are an *OTR* or *ASP* pilot, or are interested in learning more about the games, I urge you to visit the Big Time website. We use the internet as a means to publish the latest information about our games, including a Frequently-Asked-Question (FAQ) page for each game. You can even post your own thoughts and views. Please visit the website and learn more: www.bigtimesoftware.com. ★

Death in the Afternoon

Family Seating for *TITAN: THE ARENA*

by Stuart K. Tucker

I knew that many of my summer vacation expectations would not be fulfilled. In fact, I was just hoping for a small respite from the grind of family and work obligations. Naturally, as I packed my bags for a week at the beach, I gathered a bunch of lingering half-finished projects, on the dim hope that perhaps somebody else would be willing to get sunburnt on the beaches with my kids while I sat in air conditioning.

As I squeezed things into the car trunk and jettisoned excess materials, little did I expect that the most rewarding moments would come from the one finished project that I packed. For the most part, I don't expect to play strategy games at the beach—the people with whom I share beach rentals generally do not like games that last more than 30 minutes and do not exhibit their profound grasp of trivia. This year, however, Avalon Hill produced a game that I could give away as a present to family members: *TITAN: THE ARENA*. After all, some of the cousins and aunts and uncles play Bridge and Hearts and a few of my nieces and nephews are now old enough to take an interest in gaming. Despite the mention of "deadly combat" on the cover, I thought that maybe a few would give it a try. At least the adults would have a chance to see the subtle fascinations of the game.

It was, however, the six- and nine-year-old children at the beach house who were instantly drawn to the game. The beautiful artwork on the cards begged them to play. The kids in turn begged their parents to show them how. These devoted parents turned to me for instruction. Within five minutes we were playing the game and within half an hour we had three instant converts, lamenting the death of the Dragon and rooting hard for the Unicorn. Within a day, these converts had roped more skeptical family members into the game. In no time, I was victimized by my wife's cousin who shrewdly turned the tables in the final combat round with a Hydra-Dragon double play that made me ashamed to be listed on the game's playtest credits. (Her anti-violence morals apparently are not tainted by this beast-filled gladiatorial game nominally representing a blood-bath.)

One game later, after an over-exuberant six-year-old physically "commented" on her teammate sister's choice of a secret wager, the mother was avidly inquiring about the process for getting replacement cards or decks. I went home from the beach happy that a family of five was going to be engaged in mortal combat across the card table for some time to come.

On that day, I experienced the joy of death in the afternoon, as new player after new player ganged up on any Creature poisoned by my wagers. It was then that I learned an important lesson about forging alliances in this game.

SEATING CONCERNS

As with any multi-player card game, the seating order matters. This game provides ample opportunity for diplomacy. Indeed the game forces you to ally at least tacitly with others, through the wagering process. However, without question, the player to your left is your biggest concern. That player has the biggest opportunity to orchestrate your downfall by rallying all other players to join together to kill a Creature which you back before you get another turn. Do whatever you can early in a game to forge an alliance with that person.

Of course, if the person to your right is your friend, he or she may never deliver the blow intended to kill your bet. However, *TITAN: THE ARENA* gives every player plenty of opportunities to save their own wagers by dealing the deathblow to others. No matter how friendly is that player to your right, the blow is more likely to come than not. Consider this: if a player passes up the chance to close out a combat round favorably, that player must await a number of plays before getting a turn again. In the interim, dastardly things can be done to him for his unwillingness to play along with others.

Ultimately, you cannot count on your friend to the right. Your best strategy is to make sure the player to your left doesn't start the ball rolling against you. You have three basic strategies. The least effective (though a useful stop-gap) measure is to play low on the Creature of the player to your left. This may require the player to defend a Creature rather than threaten yours. If all goes well, others may then get in the spirit of attacking the Creature of the player to your left. Unfortunately, the long-term effect of such is probably the loss of a potential friend on your left.

More effective, but never a sure thing, is to talk your way into friendship and to back it up by helping a threatened Creature of the player to your left. More than kindness may be your reward. A third, much more resilient, strategy is the cross-table alliance. By wagering and playing in league with the players across the table from you (not adjacent), you establish a mutually-reinforcing process of never letting each other's deadliest foe form a "get you" alliance. Should the player to your left play a nasty card, the ally across the table can step into the situation in your favor before it gets out of hand. Likewise, you act in the same manner whenever the player to the left of your ally (and to your right) tries to get you into a campaign against your ally.

As I play more and more four- and five-player games, I have come to realize that the deal of the cards has very little to do with success in the game. Sure, you must avoid bungling a play, and sometimes your cards give you few choices, but the only players who need great cards to win are those under attack from too many sources. Ultimately, you can win with any deal, with any wagers, with any Creatures surviving. Diplomacy (even if entirely unspoken) counts for much in large games of *TITAN: THE ARENA*. Fortunately, you can communicate via wagering as well as through words and play.

Synopsis of *TITAN: THE ARENA*

Each player has a hand of cards used to strengthen and weaken the eight Creatures involved in the combat. By the end of the hand, five rounds of combat will have been conducted and five Creatures will be dead (one dying in each round). Players total their bets on surviving Creatures to determine which player won the game. The bets decline in value with each round of combat and also determine during the course of play which player is the main Backer of a Creature and can use its special power.

The deck consists of cards ranging from zero to ten for each of the eight Creatures, plus eleven wild cards (Spectators; also ranging from zero to ten). Additionally, the deck has three special Referee cards with powers not directly related to a Creature. Eight reference cards are used to mark where to place bets and cards.

At the start of the game each player gets eight cards. In a player's turn, he first may place an open wager on a Creature and then play a card on a Creature (helping or hurting its chances of surviving the round). Then the player implements any power activated by the card play, discards if eligible, and fills his hand to eight cards. Play then rotates to the player to the left.

When every Creature has at least one card played on it in the round, then the combat round is over as soon as one Creature is unambiguously the weakest (has the lowest Strength showing). This Creature is eliminated along with all bets on it.

The next combat round is begun by the next player in the rotation, with all Creatures beginning the round with their full power and no cards (previously played cards are left in place, as they may come back into play via the use of specific Creature powers).

Betting is indicated by colored chips and is limited to a single bet per Creature per round. Once a player has bet on a Creature, no other player can bet on the same Creature during that same combat round. It is also spiced up by the secret bet which must be determined before the end of the first combat round. The secret bet is worth five points; open bets during the first round are worth four points; open bets during the second round are worth three points, etc. Only the bets on the three Creatures left standing at the end of the game will count.

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST?

When we added the embellishment of Creatures with specific powers, we took great care to make sure they were implemented in similar fashions and were not unbalanced. We did not want a game in which one or more Creatures became the odds-on favorite. Believe me when I say that some of the playtested Creature powers were unbelievably disproportionate to others.

All this said, the Creatures remain different and therefore are by definition not equal. Some give the Backer more power at the end of the hand than at the beginning. Others are the opposite. Some are positively deadly when combined with other Creature powers. Players will soon begin to fear survival of some of the Creatures, if they are not the main Backer.

Multi-player game players have seen this all before: an early "leader" will get hammered down such that somebody else is a surprise victor. In *TITAN: THE ARENA*, the combatants are the Creatures. Players must wager on their survivability. With all Creatures wielding identical card sets, two other factors will play the biggest role in a Creature's downfall: wager placement and fear of a power. A Creature will die because too few people have a stake in its survival, or perhaps because so many do and an opposing player is given a prime opportunity to knock them all down.

The more intriguing question, however, is how players view (and fear) the powers wielded by the Creatures. Often a player must place a secret bet before he has much indication from his own hand as to what he can defend. In this situation, a player can opt to wager on the Creature that he feels is least likely to be under attack from other players. This might be a Creature without a four-point bet. Better yet, this should be a Creature whose power is not so overbearing that somebody already hates it. In short, you want to bet on the weaker Creatures, rather than the stronger ones.

Of course, after many playings of the game, you will detect your own tendencies and those in other players. At that point, you add another layer of decision-making: will I be alone in secretly betting on this Creature? If so, you may gain a huge edge in points at the end, but you also have no secret allies keeping your Creature alive at unexpected moments.

HANDICAPPING THE CREATURES

Remember that I consider a strong Creature as more likely to die early, due to the multi-player game dynamic. I list the eight Creatures below in descending order of raw power. Becoming the Backer of the strongest among them may gain you too much attention from others, while letting other control the strongest into the late combat rounds could spell disaster. The best hope for a strong Creature is when the wagers are tied and no player has control of the power.

Hydra. The power to play on two Creatures at once can be deadly in any of the five rounds of combat, but is most powerful in the last round. The existence of the Hydra may end the round quickly, thus preventing some players from playing in the final round. Consequently, few people will love the Hydra and its Backer. This Creature more than any other will draw Spectators dangling about its waist to keep the power inactive.

Unicorn. The power to teleport cards on other Creatures often can be more deadly than that of the Hydra. However, the Backer will be limited to rearranging the cards of a Creature with a Strength card already in place in the round. Consequently, the exercise of this power, though acute, can be predicted more accurately. Furthermore, this power may not threaten a number of Creatures who have successfully left a trail of strong cards in previous rounds. Yet, clearly, the Unicorn can do much damage in every round except the first and has a power that grows during the course of combat.

Dragon. Much like the Unicorn's, this power is limited to use where a card has already been played. However, instead of relying upon past round Strength cards, the Dragon takes advantage of covered-up weaknesses in the current combat round.

➛➛➛➛➛ *(Continued on p. 30)*

AVALONCON 1997 ☆ HUNT VALLEY, MD

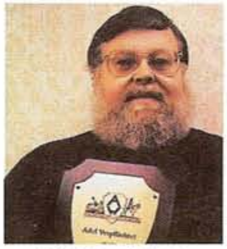
AVALONCON • 19

1830
Daniel Vice
Washington, DC

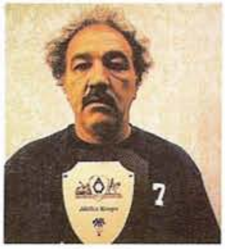
A5A, PRG, WSM
David Metzger
Pittsburgh, PA

Air Baron
James Garvey
Amherst, NY

Acquire
Chuck Nail
Atlanta, GA



Adel Verpflichtet
Thomas Stokes
Trenton, NJ



Afrika Korps
Bruno Sinigaglio
Delta Junction, AK

Blackbeard
Michael Wojke
Ft. Washington, PA

BKN, HRC
Jim Doughan
Short Hills, NJ

Britannia
David Gantt
Greenville, SC

Candidate
Chuck Foster
Fort Worth, TX

Circus Maximus
John Jacoby
Charlottesville, VA

Cross of Iron, SQL
Kevin Welsh
Browns Mills, NJ

Global War/A3R
Robert Carl
Baltimore, MD

Greed
Ray Stakenas
Livonia, MI

Gangsters
Jason Wagner
Mt. Laurel, NJ

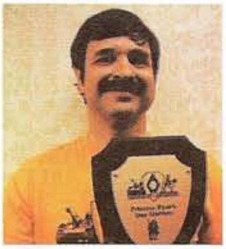
Guerilla
Gordon Rodgers
Collingdale, PA

History of the World
Bruce Monnin
Minster, OH

HWD w/bidding
Bill Crenshaw
Vienna, VA

Mustangs
Andy Lewis
Lewes, DE

Naval War
Lauren Hickok
Harrisburg, PA



Princess Ryan's SM
John Ellsworth
Morris, IN

Panzerblitz
Dave Giordano
Carney's Point, NJ

Panzer Leader
Rob Beyma
Pocomoke, MD

Rail Baron
Kimberly Lemmons
Fort Worth, TX

The Russian Campaign
Gary Dickson
Stockton, CA

Two-Player Titan
Brian Sutton
Laurel, MD

Titan: The Arena
Peter Staab
Pittsburgh, PA

Titan
David Finberg
Cambridge, MA

TV Wars
Andy Maly
Bel Air, MD

Tyranno Ex
Carolyn DeMarco
Riverside, NJ

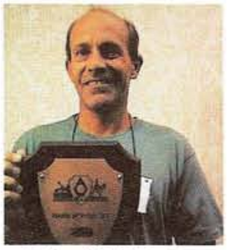
97 • CHAMPIONS

AVALONCON 1997 ☆ HUNT VALLEY, MD

Advanced Squad Ldr.
Jeff Coyle
Fairfax, VA

Attack Sub, Up Front
John Emery
Greer, SC

B17, Submarine
Paul Risner
Sarasota, FL



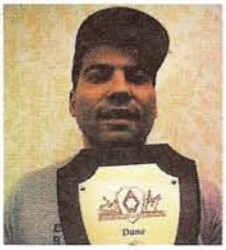
Bulge '81, Waterloo
Phil Evans
Arlingjton, VA

B91, GBG, PPW
Kevin McCarthy
South Euclid, OH

BBS, SCT
Robert Kircher
Warwick, RI

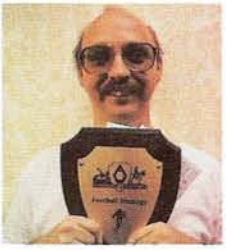
Decathlon
Steve Cameron
Upper Darby, PA

Dinosaurs of LW
John D. Poniske, Jr.
York, PA

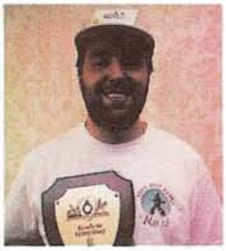


Dune
Matt Fagan
West Milford, NJ

Enemy In Sight
Tim Evinger
Bangor, PA



Football Strategy
Paul O'Neil
Baltimore, MD

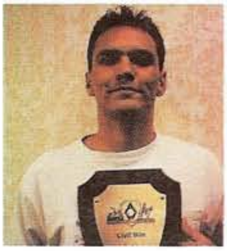


GCACW, HCR, RTG
Joe Bellas
Troy, OH

Kingmaker
Jeff Clark
Mesa, AZ

Kremlin
Tracy Graf
Odenton, MD

LBG, WPS
John Coussis
Hoffman Estates, IL



Maharaja, Civil War
Henry Rice
Albuquerque, NM

MMS, OW2, TBT
Bruce Reiff
Powell, OH

Merchant of Venus
Mark Hunter
Kirkwood, MO

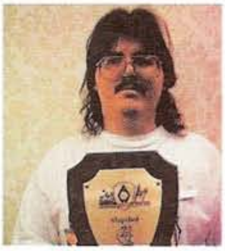
Renaissance
George Sauer
Circleville, OH

Roadkill
Sean Cousins
Bangor, ME

Republic of Rome
Chris Bartiromo
Berkeley Heights, NJ

Stonewall Jackson's Way
Jeff Otto
West Milton, OH

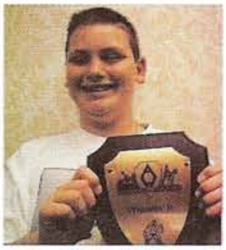
Stonewall's Last Battle
Bob Jamelli
Hazleton, PA



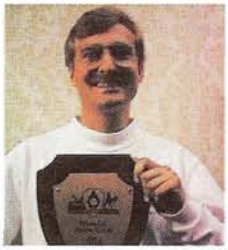
Slapshot
Dan Metzger
Pittsburgh, PA

Victory in the Pacific
Ed O'Connor
New Milford, NJ

War At Sea
Tim Hitchings
Newark, DE



Wrasslin'
Jim Dolan
Vernon, NJ



WRS Battle Royal
Lane Hess
Mountville, PA

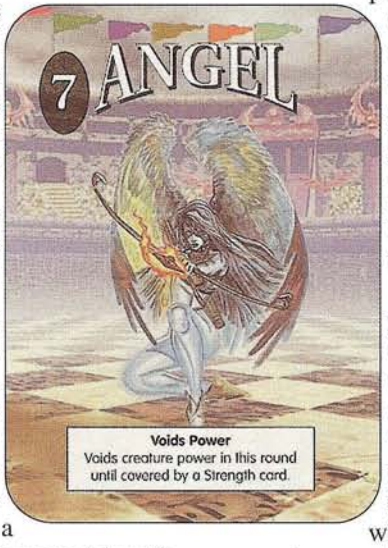
We The People
Thomas Drueding
Haventown, PA

Wizard's Quest
Gregory Crowe
Wheaton, MD

➤➤➤➤(from p. 27)

This power makes defense almost useless. If your wagers are under attack, the existence of an enemy Dragon argues for playing even lower on other Creatures. Even this may be futile if the Dragon's Backer decides to burn away that low card you just played. This power of destruction is strong in any round, but tends to matter more in later combat rounds, when players have fewer opportunities to play cards.

Titan. The power to see three enemy cards may be more useful than the card kept. The Backer of the Titan can discern much about a player's secret bet and playing strategy from the cards that have been deliberately *not* played. It is icing on the cake that the Backer keeps one of those cards, thereby undermining the cardholding strategy of the afflicted player. While this power is likely to be resented by only some of the players, that may be enough to sign the Titan's death warrant. While the picking power may actually get weaker over the course of the battle (as more dead cards fill the hands), the reconnaissance value of the power increases tremendously over the course of the game (if you carefully watched the plays of the victim).


7
ANGEL
Voids Power
Voids creature power in this round until covered by a Strength card.

Cyclops. The power of paralysis is the weakest of those powers that directly affect other Creatures or players. Nonetheless, at crucial points in the game, particularly in the late combat rounds, a key opposing card may end up out of reach due to the power. This may extend a combat round beyond its expected length and deliver to a different player the ax for dealing the death blow of the round. This will rarely help the Cyclops' Backer kill a Creature, but it can go a long way toward saving one. Player resentment about this power will fluctuate depending upon the strength of their hand and the cards that are temporarily placed out of reach. However, overuse of the Cyclops in the early rounds can make enemies far too soon. The power, therefore, is most useful in the late combat rounds and is particularly powerful when the deck is depleted.

Ranger. This power, by not directly affecting any other player, can seem innocuous. However, its early use affords the Backer a huge advantage when making a secret wager. The problem is that overuse in the early game may leave the Backer with no cards to play to save the Ranger late in the game. The power is useless once the deck is depleted (and early depletion is almost guaranteed when this power is utilized well). Once the Backer has reaped its advantages, most opponents will consider the issue spilled milk—there is no longer much point in killing the Ranger to stop the power.

Warlock. Somewhat the mirror power to that of the Ranger, many players will consider this power stronger. The ability to dump unwanted strong and weak Strength cards should not be underestimated. This can lay the groundwork for a strong hand, while at the same time allowing high early turnover of cards to put the Backer into a fine position for wise secret and open betting. The power is limited, however, by the fact that the Backer will soon run out of unwanted cards to pre-discard. Over the course of the game, this power becomes less valuable—indeed the Backer may be regretting a few of those early discards when he is running out of playable cards at the end. Consequently, the power of the Ranger is a bit more useful in the middle of the game than that of the Warlock and is more likely to be used. Essentially, nobody is likely to begrudge the Backer for using the Warlock power.

Troll. The most solitary power of them all is that of the Troll. The regenerative power doesn't hurt other Creatures or hands. The power is useless in the first round and is so innocuous at first that few will try to kill it. In fact, many players will instead piggy-back their wagers on the Troll to gain the protection expected from the Backer. The power grows over time. During the late combat rounds, it may be nearly impossible to kill the Troll. Of course, rarely can a player win the game by backing a single Creature. This only serves to make the Troll seem more harmless. The Troll is a good bet to survive, if it doesn't receive weak Strength cards in the first round. However, its Backer must be a diligent caretaker, with few other wagers distracting his attention.

I guess a number of players will quibble over this exact ranking. Of course, the utilization of powers by your opponents may not blossom into substantial fear for awhile. In the final analysis, however, the most feared beasts are those that directly affect played cards. Next most feared are those that affect playable cards in hands. Some may argue that the Unicorn is stronger than the Hydra and that the Warlock is stronger than the Ranger, but I think it safe to say that the Unicorn-Hydra pair is clearly stronger than the Warlock-Ranger pair.

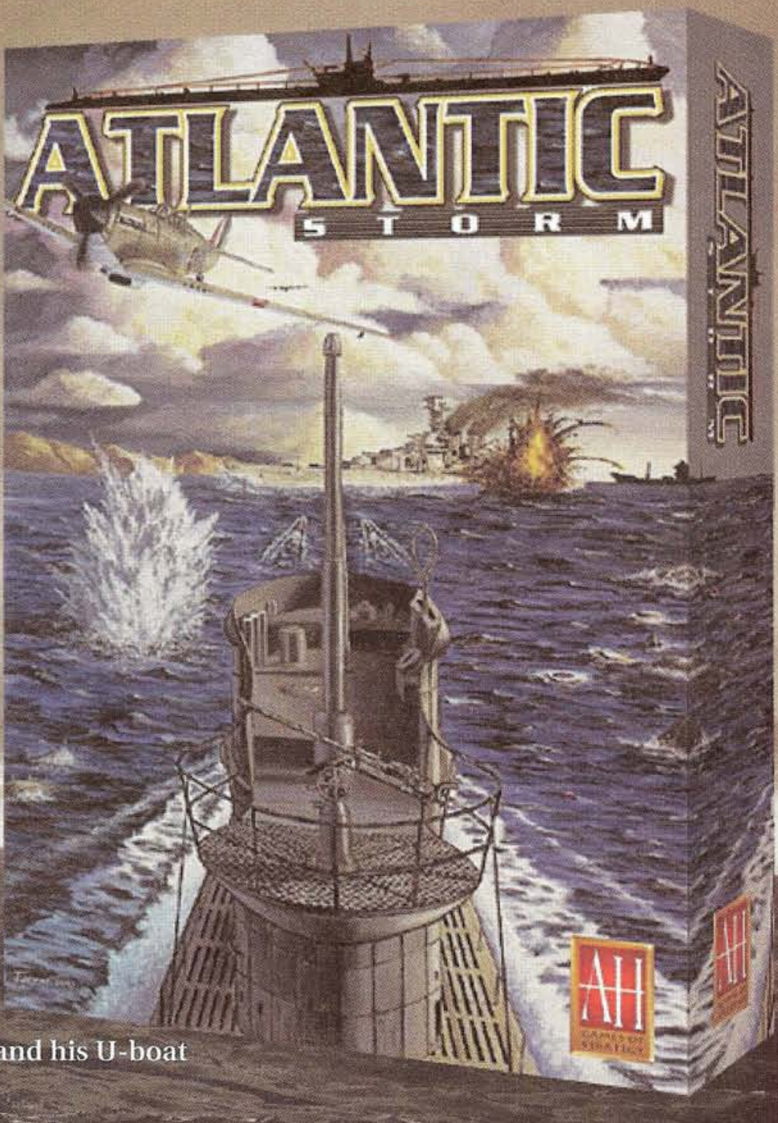
Often a Creature's power may become even more fearsome by virtue of the fact that the same player is the Backer of a similarly strong Creature. Thus, the combinations of powers controlled by a single player must be watched carefully. This in itself may cause players to engineer the premature death of some strong Creatures.

JUMPING IN THE RING

Those powerful Spectator cards not only act as wild cards to play on any Creature, but they also void a Creature's power while the Creature has the Spectator card showing in the combat round. This flexible, dual role makes these eleven cards the most powerful ones in the deck. As such, they are best reserved for use in crucial situations. The best use of the Spectator cards is not only to threaten an opposing Creature with death, but to void its power (of course, the very lowest Spectator cards should be reserved for delivering the instant death blow). The next best use of Spectator cards is to protect your more valuable asset—your wagers (particularly your secret bet). A well played Spectator can save a Creature while also taking away the fears of other players that the Creature's power may be used. Finally, a Spectator card may be crucial in the final combat round to avoid playing a Creature card because it is the only one you have (you will be most unhappy if forced to kill your own bets).

All of these uses for Spectators argue for resisting strongly the urge to jump into the ring early in the game. Your most important bets are those that survive on the final three Creatures, regardless of their nominal value. It does little good to expend too many good cards defending a four- or five-point bet in the early combat rounds such that you are at the mercy of others in the final two rounds. I've found it especially important to be able to deliver a death blow in the fourth round, because this ensures that you play late in the final one and have greater control over the final death as well. Even if you can't determine too much at the end, the voiding of a Creature's power in the late rounds may foil the plans of key opponents. Hold those low Spectators for the right moment!

Even On Calm Days They Expected an Atlantic Storm™



From September 1940 through December 1943, the German Navy and Air Force sank nearly 2,000 Merchant Marine vessels carrying over 10 million tons of needed war materials for Great Britain and Russia. However, by the end of '43 the Allies had defeated Hitler's surface fleet, and his U-boat "wolf packs" were the hunted instead of the hunters.

Atlantic Storm™ is Avalon Hill's new card game that recreates the tension experienced by seamen during those uncertain times of World War II as German U-boats, bombers and warships like the giant *Bismarck* try to stop them. The nearly defenseless Merchant Marines had to rely on the Allied anti-submarine forces and battleship escorts for their survival.

PQ 18
HX 84
'40
NOVEMBER
38 merchant ships
7 sunk

Quick Game Play

Its simplicity and replayability is reminiscent of Avalon Hill's highly praised Titan™: The Arena card game. Two to six players fight a battle for each convoy, with the winner of the battle receiving the convoy as a prize. Lots of table talk keeps the game exciting as opponents attempt to negotiate with one another to thwart the efforts of the leader.

Atlantic Storm™ includes two decks of cards. One deck comprises 40 historical convoys. The force deck consists of 112 cards representing fighting forces of the two opposing sides. The force deck is evenly split between German cards and cards for Great Britain and her allies. The cards include period photos of the combatant aircraft, ships and subs. Special events, Bonus cards and historical "Victims" add replayability to the game, and the "Atlantic Storm" card may appear to disperse your enemies.

Atlantic Storm™ is available wherever great games are sold or call 1-800-999-3222 or visit our store - 24 hours a day - at **www.avalonhill.com**

Avalon Hill Game Company
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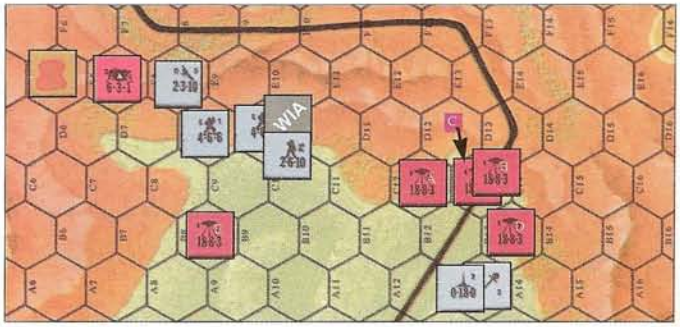
- **Playing cards show actual historic naval, air and submarine photos.**
- **Special Event and Bonus cards add to the replayability of the game.**
- **Sometimes, even wargamers can't change history. If two "Fate" cards (for example, the *Hood* and the *Bismarck*, which actually sank it) are played in the same hand, the *Hood* card is lost.**

CONTEST #183—Hot Zone

This contest is dedicated to Arachnid freedom. With a movie and a new Avalon Hill game on the subject, let us take a gander at the classic STARSHIP TROOPER game released over 20 years ago.

It is Scenario Five-B (Retreat and Evacuation from the Terran perspective). Your Arachnid colonies have successfully ambushed the Mobile Infantry. They have retrieved the bulk of their forces on the first retrieval boat. Many remain stranded. Due to extreme drift and poor planning, the beacon for the second boat landed far from the MI defense perimeter. The boat landed on turn 12. It is now the Arachnid portion of turn 13. The game score is tied except for what happens to the four MI shown here. Give orders that will maximize the Arachnid point advantage over the MI.



Target Attackers Odds

Ranged Fire ______________________

____

____

Movement ______________________

Close Combat ______________________

____

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Send entries via email to ahgeneral@aol.com or mail to:
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1. ______________________
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We value your opinion. Therefore, take a moment to write comments below regarding what you like or dislike in this issue.

Comments ______________________

Games Played in October: ______________________

Opponents Wanted/Games Sought/For Sale $1

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2. For Sale ads for out-of-print games and magazines will be accepted.
3. Clubs are encouraged to announce regular meetings.
4. Insert copy on lines provided (25 words maximum) and print name, address, and (if desired) phone number on the appropriate lines.
5. **PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY AND LEGIBLY.** If your ad is illegible, it will not be printed.
6. So that as many ads as possible can be printed in our limited space, we request that you use official state and game abbreviations. Don't list your entire collection; list only those games which you are most interested in playing.

Across Five Aprils—A5A, Advanced Squad Leader—ASL/SL, Afrika Korps—AFK, Age of Renaissance—AOR, Air Baron—ABN, Air Force/Dauntless—AFD, Assassin—ASN, Battle of the Bulge—B(yr.), Blackbeard—BKB, Blitzkrieg—BZK, Breakout Normandy—BKN, Britannia—BRI, Circus Maximus—CMS, (Advanced) Civilization—ACV/CIV, Colonial Diplomacy—CDP, D-Day—D(yr.), Diplomacy—DIP, DUNE, 1830, Empires in Arms—EIA, Empire of the Rising Sun—ERS, Enemy in Sight—EIS, Firepower—FPR, Flat Top—FTP, Fleet Series—#FT, Flight Leader—FL, Gangsters—GSR, Geronimo—GER, Gettysburg—GBG, Gladiator—GLD, Guadalcanal—GDC, Guerilla—GUE, Hannibal: Rome vs. Carthage—HRC, Here Come the Rebels—HCR, History of the World—HWD, Hitler's War—HWR, Kremlin—KRM, Kingmaker—KGM, Knights of the Air—KTA, London's Burning—LBG, Luftwaffe—LFW, Machiavelli—MAC, Maharaja—MAH, Magic Realm—MRM, MBT, Merchant of Venus—MOV, Midway—M(yr.), Napoleon's Battles—NPB, PanzerBlitz—PZB, Panzergruppe Guderian—PGG, Panzer Leader—PZL, Princess Ryan's Star Marines—PRG, Rail Baron—RBN, Republic of Rome—ROR, Richthofen's War—RFN, Roadkill—RKL, Roads to Gettysburg—RTG, The Russian Campaign—TRC, Russian Front—RFT, 1776, Siege of Jerusalem—SOJ, Starship Troopers—SST, Stellar Conquest—STC, Stonewall's Last Battle—SLB, Stonewall in the Valley—SIV, Stonewall Jackson's Way—SJW, Storm Over Arnhem—SOA, Tac Air—TCA, Advanced Third Reich—A3R, Third Reich (4th ed.)—3R4, Thunder At Cassino—TAC, Titan—TTN, Titan: The Arena—TTA, Trireme—TRI, Turning Point: Stalingrad—TPS, Tyranno Ex—TYX, Up Front—UPF, Victory In The Pacific—VIP, War and Peace—W&P, We The People—WTP, Wooden Ships & Iron Men—WSIM, Wrasslin'—WRS.

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$1.00 Volume 31, Number 6 $1.00

THE YOUTH'S FIRST BLOOD

ASL SCENARIO G42

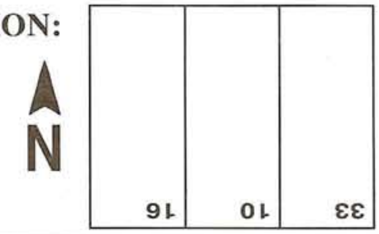
Scenario Design: Eric Givler

AUTHIE, FRANCE, 7 June 1944: The spearhead of the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division assembled at 0745 hours at the hill just north of Villon-les-Buissons, with the airfield at Carpiquet as its objective (about 4 km west of Caen). It consisted of the North Nova Scotia Highlanders and the 27th Armoured Regiment (the Sherbrooke Fuselier). The Stuart tanks of the recon unit advanced at the point, followed by Company C of the Highlanders. The main body followed behind mounted on their Sherman tanks. Standartenführer Kurt Meyer, commanding general of the 12th SS Panzer Division, observing the enemy advance from from one of the towers of the Ardennes Abbey ordered Obersturmbannführer Max Wünsche to attack. Wünsche contacted his command Panzer, "Achtung! Panzers—March!"

AFTERMATH: The point unit of the North Novas and C squadron of the Sherbrooke Fuseliers found themselves in action against several machine guns. The 6th Panzerkompanie, located immediately left of the Abbey, and the 5th Panzerkompanie started out without delay. Their fire caught the surprised enemy in the flank. Within a short time, several tanks were in flames and exploded. Lieutenant Fitzpatrick's unit dropped off infantry immediately north of Authie and lost two of its three tanks within a minute. He took position with the remaining tank in an orchard just south of Authie. There he noticed that his 17-pound gun did not work because of damage to the locking mechanism. He observed the German attack and fought it with machine-gun fire. The North Novas requested artillery support, but the observation officer reported that his artillery was still outside range. The only fire support available would be from a cruiser, but due to an error in the communications link, it could not come into action. The infantry of the North Novas withdrew to positions directly south of les-Buissons. As it turned out, only five men of C Company made it.

VICTORY CONDITIONS: At game end, the side having amassed the most points wins. Points are awarded at game end as follows: The Germans receive 1 point if they Control more board 10 stone building Locations than the Canadians, otherwise the Canadians receive 1 point. The Germans receive 1 point if they have Exited at least 31 more VP (excluding prisoners) than the Canadians, otherwise the Canadians receive 1 point (see SSR 7 for allowed Exit areas). Also, the Germans receive 1 point if they Exit ≥ 5 AFV prior to Turn 6, otherwise the Canadians receive 1 point.

BOARD CONFIGURATION:

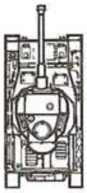


BALANCE:

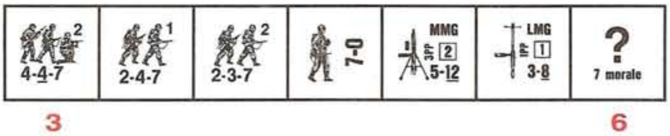
- ✠ Exchange one Sherman VC(a) for a second Sherman V(a).
- ◉ Add one a second Sherman V(a) to the British Turn 3 OB.

TURN RECORD CHART

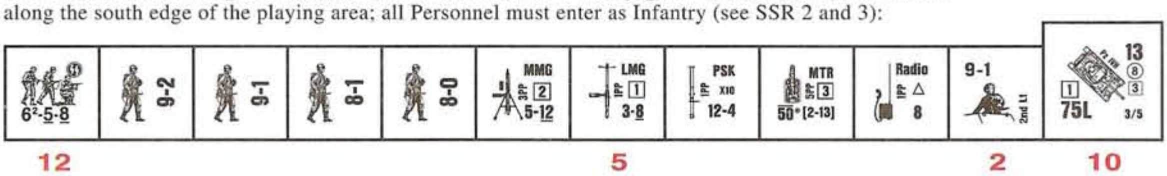
✠ **GERMAN Sets Up First [0]** ◉ **CANADIAN Moves First [143]**	◉ 1	2 ✠	◉ 3	4	5	6	7	8	9	END



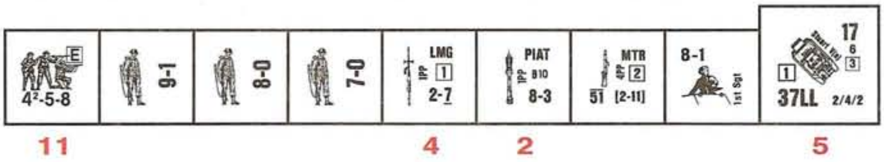
Stragglers of Infanterie Division 716 [ELR: 2] set up on board 10, on/between hexrows Q-EE: {SAN: 3}



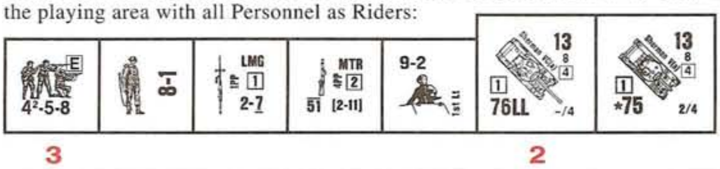
Elements of Panzer Regiment 25, SS-Panzer Division 12 "Hitlerjugend" [ELR: 4] enter on Turn 2 along the south edge of the playing area; all Personnel must enter as Infantry (see SSR 2 and 3):



Elements of Company C, North Nova Scotia Highlanders, and of the Reconnaissance Troop, Sherbrooke Fuselier Regiment [ELR: 4] enter on Turn 1 along the north edge of the playing area (see SSR 3): {SAN: 2}



Elements of C Squadron, Sherbrooke Fuselier Regiment enter on Turn 3 along the north edge of the playing area with all Personnel as Riders:



SPECIAL RULES:

1. EC are Moderate, with no wind at start. All buildings are Single Story (B23.21) [EXC: hex 10Z6 contains a Level 1 building Location and a Level 2 Steeple Location with inherent stairwells; the normal stacking capacity of the Steeple Location is one HS-equivalent].

2. In addition to the option of entering on Turn 2, the Pz IVHs may enter on or after Turn 3 along the west/south/east edge(s) of board(s) 16/10/33 on/between 16M1 and 33M10; all Pz IVHs must enter on the same turn. Use Pz IVJ counters to represent extra Pz IVHs as needed.

3. All Pz IVHs and Stuart Vs have their printed MP allotment halved during the MPh in which they enter play.

4. The Germans receive one module of 150+mm OBA (HE and Smoke). The Germans also receive one module of 100+mm OBA (HE and Smoke) directed by an offboard Observer at Level 3 of 33A7.

5. The Canadians receive one 120+mm NOBA battery (G14.6; HE only) directed by a 2-2-7 crew which is this battery's Shore Fire-Control Party (G14.61); all LOF (G14.62) for this battery is traced through 10GG5. The SFCP enters on Turn 3 along the north edge of the playing area.

6. All Pz IVHs are equipped with Schuerzen (D11.2). The Canadians may pre-record any three allowable AFV as having functioning Gyrostabilizers (D11.1). AFVs for both sides are considered Elite (C8.2).

7. German units may only exit off the north edge of the playing area. Prior to Turn 5, Canadian units may only exit off the south edge of the playing area; after Turn 7, they may also exit off the north edge of the playing area [EXC: Canadian units may exit off the north edge of the playing area after the end of any Player Turn in which SS MMC Control ≥ 12 board 10 stone building Locations].

KANGAROO HOP

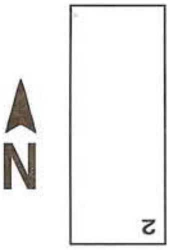
ASL SCENARIO G43

Scenario Concept: Shawn Kenny

VICTORY CONDITIONS: The Canadians win at game end if they Control all of the Level 3 hill hexes.

MONT LAMBERT, outside of BOULOGNE, FRANCE, 17 September 1944: As the Cinderella force to the Allied assault on Fortress Europe, the Canadian Army was generally assigned tasks at the whims of her sister Armies. One such task during the Normandy campaign was the clearing of the coastal belt and capturing the Channel ports. The harbors were critical in alleviating the logistical problems of supply and maintaining the momentum of the drive from Normandy. One of the key French ports, Boulogne, was dominated by the surrounding terrain to the east and south. Mont Lambert, which offered a vantage point over the town and its open approaches was critical to the defense of Boulogne. After an aerial and artillery bombardment, the 3rd Infantry Division's 9th Brigade, following tanks of the 10th Armoured Regiment (the Fort Garry Horse), pressed the attack by advancing in the Kangaroos of the 1st Canadian Armored Personnel Squadron.

BOARD CONFIGURATION:



BALANCE:

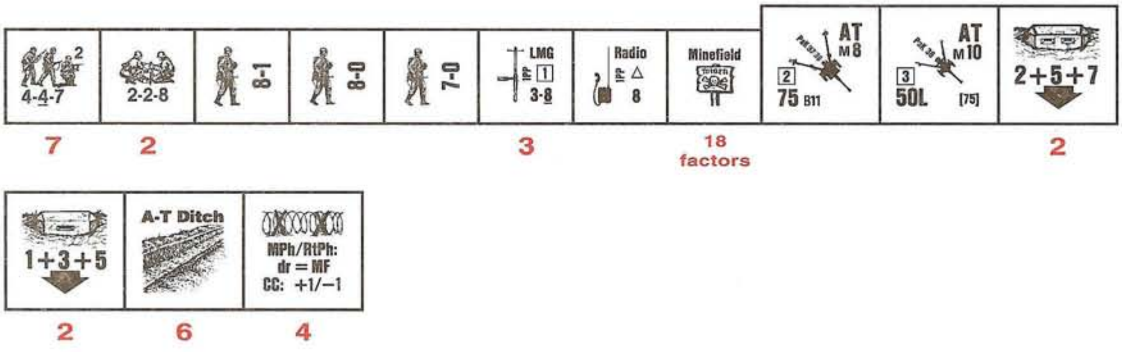
✠ The two AVRE do not enter play until Turn 2.

⊙ In SSR 6, replace "150+mm" with "100+mm".

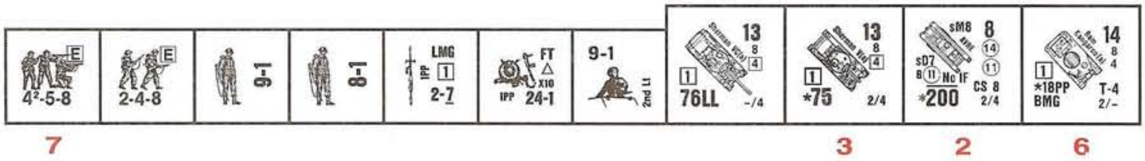
TURN RECORD CHART

✠ GERMAN Sets Up First	⊙ 1	⊙ 2	3	4	5	6	END
⊙ CANADIAN Moves First							

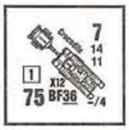
Elements of Bodenstaendige Division 326 [ELR: 2] set up in hexes numbered ≥ 2, using HIP in *any* terrain: {SAN: 3}



Elements of the North Nova Scotia Highlanders, the Fort Garry Horse, and the 87th Squadron Royal Engineers [ELR: 4] enter on Turn 1 along the west edge; all personnel must enter as passengers (see SSR 2 and 3): {SAN: 2}


4²-5-8 E
7
2-4-8 E
9-1
8-1
LMG 1 2-7
FT X10 24-1
9-1 2nd Lt
Sherman VC(a) 13 8 4 1 76LL -/4
Sherman V(a) 13 8 4 1 *75 2/4
3
AVRE sM8 8 14 11 sD7 B11 Nc IF CS 8 *200 2/4
2
Ram Kangaroo(a) 14 8 4 1 *18PP BMG T-4 2/-
6

Enter on Turn 2 along the west edge:



SPECIAL RULES:

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

2. Prior to setup, the Canadian player must secretly predesignate how many, if any, AVRE will enter play equipped with fascine (British Vehicle Note 37).

3. During setup, each Kangaroo may be covered by a 1/2" "?", with that vehicle's actual Passengers (if any, and including SW) placed out of the opponent's view in a Cloaking Box corresponding to that "?"'s ID. Such a "?" does not itself bestow concealed status on the vehicle or Passenger(s), but does prevent the opponent from inspecting that vehicle's contents, and is removed (and replaced by the vehicle's actual contents if any) as per the normal rules for "?" loss [EXC: not for being in enemy LOS unless within three hexes of a Good Order enemy unit, nor for movement of the vehicle]. Passengers are also revealed if they pass a Crew Survival DR (D6.9); i.e., if eliminated outright, they need not be revealed. The Canadians may deploy freely during setup.

4. After all setup, each German unit must take a PTC; the TEM of each unit's Location is added to its PTC DR as a negative DRM as per C1.82. Failure of this PTC results in that unit being placed onboard, unconcealed and pinned.

5. Each German unit set up in non-Concealment Terrain must be placed onboard under a "?" as soon as a Good Order enemy unit has a LOS to it regardless of range.

6. The Germans receive one module of 150+mm OBA (HE and Smoke).

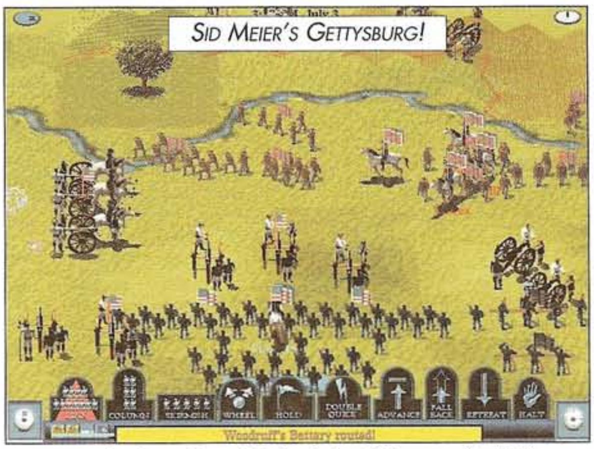
AFTERMATH: A "dummy" pass at the end of the bombing run had forced the German defenders to ground for the critical period when the Canadian assault had to cross the open two kilometers which separated their objective from their start line. Halfway up the slope, mines and craters forced the infantry to continue their advance on foot. Most of the opposition came from machine-gun nests which were in turn covered by intensive antitank gun fire. Once the gun positions and artillery were put out of action, Crocodiles lumbered forward to clear the remaining pockets of resistance. Usually just the appearance of the flame-throwing tank was enough to break the enemy. By evening, Mont Lambert was in Canadian hands with the North Nova Scotias preparing for their assault into Boulogne.

EXPLODING ON THE SCREEN

Wide-Eyed at E3

by Jim Pedicord

With the prevalence of computers in the home today, more strategy and wargames are making appearance on the computer as opposed to the gaming table. Old favorites are converted and new games are created as electronic gaming is slowly replacing the board variety in today's gaming society. Fortunately, this new outlet is increasing the number of gamers as well as the flow of games (which I witnessed at this summer's Electronic Entertainment Expo—E3). Probably the most intriguing feature of all of these new games is multi-player capability. They may be played over a modem, network or the internet, giving purchasers the chance to try their skills against real opponents. The following article outlines the exciting slate of strategy games and wargames appearing now and in the immediate future.


SID MEIER'S GETTYSBURG!

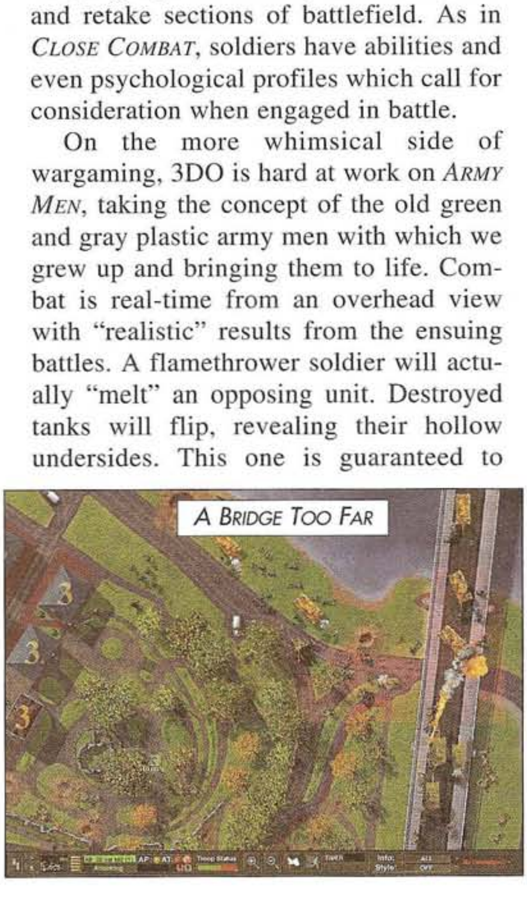
REAL-TIME WARGAMES

With the huge success of *COMMAND & CONQUER* and *WARCRAFT 2*, real-time strategy games have definitely taken center stage alongside the old stalwart wargames being created in this genre. A new form of wargame is now hitting the shelves, combining the aspects of real-time game play with the historical settings and the battle complexities found in turn-based wargames.

Legendary game designer Sid Meier (*RAILROAD TYCOON, PIRATES, CIVILIZATION*) is working on *SID MEIER'S GETTYSBURG!* from Firaxis. A real-time wargame where you are in charge of the forces at Gettysburg making split-second decisions from the Confederate or Union point of view. Control over infantry and artillery dominates the game play. Random generation of scenarios makes for unlimited replay capability.

Another in this new line of games and a sequel to *CLOSE COMBAT* is *A BRIDGE TOO FAR* developed by Atomic Games (*OPERATION CRUSADER, V for Victory* series) and published by Microsoft. This dynamic wargame, based on the battles for the bridges over the Rhine, has spectacular graphics and a unique dynamic campaign system where you can take, lose and retake sections of battlefield. As in *CLOSE COMBAT*, soldiers have abilities and even psychological profiles which call for consideration when engaged in battle.

On the more whimsical side of wargaming, 3DO is hard at work on *ARMY MEN*, taking the concept of the old green and gray plastic army men with which we grew up and bringing them to life. Combat is real-time from an overhead view with "realistic" results from the ensuing battles. A flamethrower soldier will actually "melt" an opposing unit. Destroyed tanks will flip, revealing their hollow undersides. This one is guaranteed to bring back childhood memories of your first wargaming experiences!


A BRIDGE TOO FAR

Megamedia is set to release *ADMIRAL ANCIENT SHIPS* a sequel to *ADMIRAL SEA BATTLES.* This game of ancient mariner warfare includes ships from Egyptian, Grecian and Roman eras using a real-time battle system complete with pirates, cargo, crew members, integrated mythology story line and even fantastic creatures.

REAL-TIME STRATEGY GAMES

With the widespread appeal of real-time strategy games, developers are creating a staggering amount of different games covering almost every spectrum of post-modern, futuristic and fantasy settings. Though often hectic and capable of extremely fast game play, most of these games are not just fast and furious clicks of the mouse. There is definite strategic elements to all of these games and fast reflexes are not always a needed requirement.

The near-future and alternative timelines is where *COMMAND & CONQUER* took us. Its success has shown the way to some highly-anticipated games also set in this genre. *WAR, INC* from Interactive Magic puts a different spin on real time by adding elements of revenue based on a stock market. You are placed in charge of a mercenary unit and you must develop technology to outfit your men and out-gun your opponents. The time frame is set several years in the future and includes a vast assortment of modern and futuristic weapons and the ability to design your own.

One of the first real-time combat games, *JAGGED ALLIANCE* from Sir-Tech took combat to new heights with various mercenaries you must recruit and deploy over a series of missions, gaining more advanced weapons and technology as you proceeded. *JAGGED ALLIANCE 2* continues the saga with fantastic looking SVGA graphics and plenty of new mercenaries and weapons to conduct your missions.

MGM Interactive has come up with an interesting real-time game based upon the 1980's film *WARGAMES.* Game play follows the building of increasingly more sophisticated weapons systems and the countering of such systems through resources and technology. Thirty missions are divided over three campaigns with 100 air, sea and land units cruising the 3D terrain.

With only two factions left in the world, *EARTH 2140* from Interplay is the final series of battles for the last remaining resources on the planet. Fifty missions involving over 70 units and buildings with economics and resource management are critical to the final success of the game.

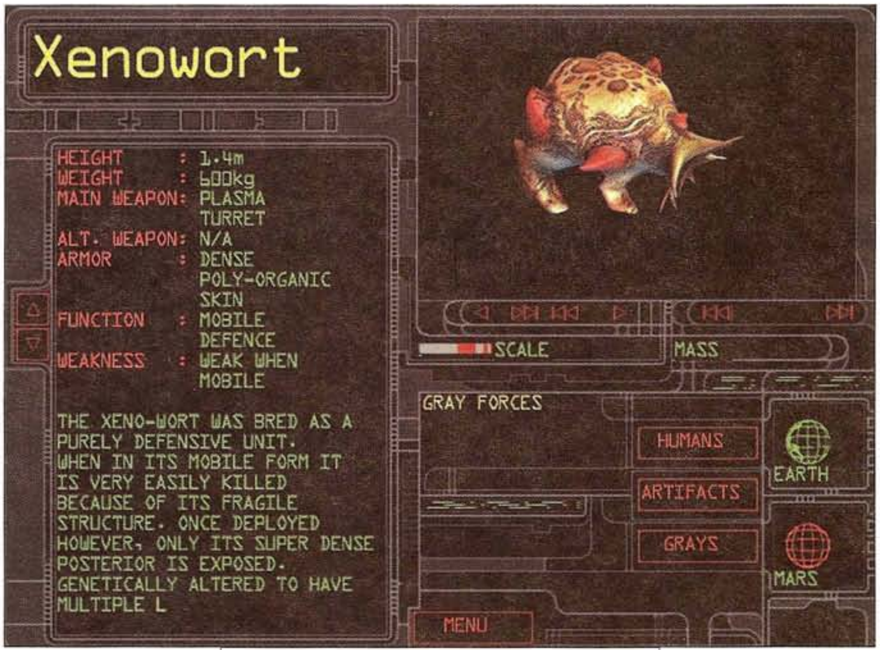
Space does seem to be the final frontier for strategy games and a vast array of titles is lined up for war. *Starcraft* is the next game from Blizzard (*Warcraft 2* & *Diablo*) taking real-time into space and away from the fantasy realms. Now you can choose between three races (Terrans, Protoss and Zerg) in this game of resource management and technological improvement. Thirty scenarios and a scenario editor should mean plenty of repeat play for this highly anticipated title.

Dark Reign: The Future of War from Activision is another highly regarded product that will be gracing computer screens everywhere. A futuristic tale where you must defeat two armies involved in an intergalactic war by constructing and using robotic weaponry to defeat them and restore peace to the galaxy. Thirty non-linear battles make up the campaign for this strategic real-time game.

Eidos, known for their action games, has joined the strategy arena with *Conquest Earth* another real-time game of battle between the forces of Earth and Jupiter. Unique to this game is a set of night missions and the technological capability of the Earth forces versus the natural weapons of the Jovians.

In a similar vein *Dark Colony* from SSI pits the Earth versus the Martians using all means of technology and weapons available. Combat takes place over three types of terrain encompassing over 40 battles with hidden artifacts aiding the cause.

Dark Colony dropship.



Xenowort

HEIGHT : 1.4m
WEIGHT : 600kg
MAIN WEAPON: PLASMA TURRET
ALT. WEAPON: N/A
ARMOR : DENSE POLY-ORGANIC SKIN
FUNCTION : MOBILE DEFENCE
WEAKNESS : WEAK WHEN MOBILE

THE XENO-WORT WAS BRED AS A PURELY DEFENSIVE UNIT. WHEN IN ITS MOBILE FORM IT IS VERY EASILY KILLED BECAUSE OF ITS FRAGILE STRUCTURE. ONCE DEPLOYED HOWEVER, ONLY ITS SUPER DENSE POSTERIOR IS EXPOSED. GENETICALLY ALTERED TO HAVE MULTIPLE L

Creatures are weapons in *Dark Colony*

Warbreeds from Red Orb takes future combat a step further. Four alien clans are the basis of the play in this real-time game with conquering units gaining access to genetic material for the building of stronger and more capable armies. Domination and survival are the final goals of this unusual game.

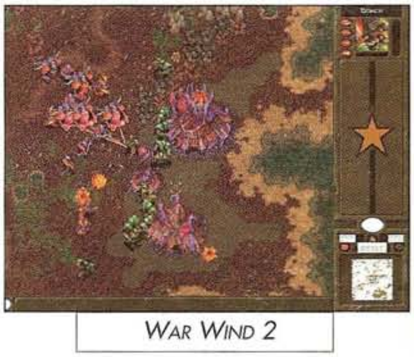
"Groundpounders" in *Cyberstorm 2*

Sequels of the first generation of real-time strategy games are hitting the market and *Deadlock 2: Shrine Wars* from Accolade is a great advancement from the original. Forty-two scenarios, a campaign editor and a multitude of new units make this game of planetary development and conquest.

Cyberstorm 2: Corp War from Sierra takes the original turned-based *Mission Force: Cyberstorm* and converts it to real-time. Units are smaller and battles take place on a single star system where resource management and control of jump points are critical. Units will also retain a semblance of intelligence so they can manage themselves if you are off controlling others.

Seeking to expand on the well-received *War Wind*, SSI, with *War Wind 2: Human Onslaught*, adds more powerful units, unique abilities and multiple leaders to this game of no co-existence on a distant planet. With improved graphics and over 46 missions in four campaigns, this provides plenty of replay value.

Warhammer Epic 40,0000: Redemption from SSI is futuristic game based on the popular Games Workshop universe. Units from the Imperium of Man and the Ork Warbosses pair off against one another with over 100 units available for you to command.



War Wind 2

Star Wars has spawned many top-selling computer game and LucasArts uses this universe again as basis for *Star Wars: Rebellion*. Players may choose the Galactic Empire or the Rebel Alliance and must manage resources and planet loyalties to win control over sectors in space. Familiar characters from the movies can be used to help increase the chance of success in specific missions such as sabotage or diplomacy.

The crush of space-faring and futuristic real-time strategic games is joined by those from the realms of fantasy. A decidedly different game, *Plague* from Eidos is a medieval wargame where you must rise from a town leader to king of the land. Combat takes place on land and sea with seasonal weather effects and random events helping dictate your rise to power.

Myth: The Fallen Lords from Bungie is the much anticipated strategy game pitting armies of undead creatures versus your armies of warriors. Battle is extremely intense with a fantastic 3D modeled landscape which soon becomes covered with blood and debris of battle.

DARK OMEN in the *Warhammer* universe

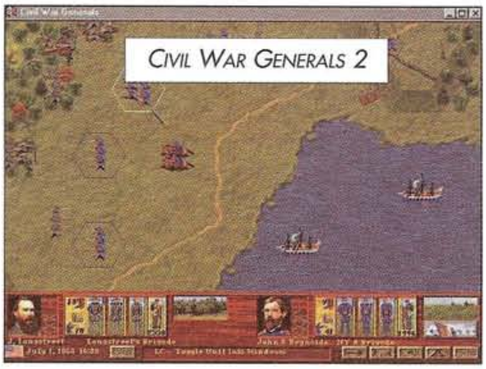
SSI is soon to release another title from Games Workshop—*WARHAMMER: DARK OMEN*. Several different features make this title one to watch. Battles are dynamic—results from one battle can lead to completely different conditions in the next. As your victories mount so does the strength of your allies and the power of your enemies. The typical fantasy units are available, all taken from the pages of the *Warhammer* universe.

SIEGE from Sir-Tech is an interesting medieval-based game where you must design strategies to defend and conquer castles. As your troops increase in stature and knowledge the castles become more complex and difficult to capture or prevent invasion.

TURN-BASED WARGAMES

Even with real-time being the latest fad, there still is large market for turn-based games, especially in the area of historical wargames. Interactive Magic has two more entries into it's "Great Battles" series, *HANNIBAL* and *CAESAR*, both using the game engine developed for *BATTLES OF ALEXANDER*. Each has individual scenarios and a campaign mode with the player controlling the appropriate generals and units under these generals. Beautiful background graphics and animated battles make these games a delight to watch as well.

Moving forward in history, the Sierra division Impressions is completing *CIVIL WAR GENERALS 2* , giving you command of Confederate or Union generals during key battles of the Civil War. A scenario editor is also included for creating your own re-enactments of battles.


CIVIL WAR GENERALS 2

Considered to be the most popular computer wargame of all time, SSI is putting the finishing touches on the long awaited sequel to *PANZER GENERAL*, appropriately called *PANZER GENERAL 2*. With VCR playback of each turn, hand-rendered maps, a battle editor and many other new features, this title looks like a necessity for any wargamer.

Another sequel from SSI, *STEEL PANTHERS 3* moves the scale out for this popular tank wargame. Now, full brigades and divisions can be commanded in scenarios ranging from World War II to the present day. Multi-player and email support are included and a scenario editor can create an infinite amount of unique scenarios.

TAHGC, not to be outdone in sequel department, recently released *ACHTUNG SPITFIRE*, the follow-up to the critically acclaimed *OVER THE REICH*. Using the same game engine, this game concentrates on the earlier air exploits of World War II, including the Battle of Britain and the German Blitzkrieg. You are made the commander of a group of the French, British or German air forces and must defend or attack for your country.

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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PANZER GENERAL 2

In the eighth game of their Battlefields series, Talonsoft turns back to the Napoleonic era with *Prelude to Waterloo* covering the battles of Ligny and Quatre Bras. Using the same features that made its predecessors extremely popular, this game includes many variants and scenarios for the two battles that preceded Waterloo.

Talonsoft is also hard at work on it's World War II wargame, *East Front* which puts you in the middle of the massive campaign in Eastern Europe. Set at the platoon level, you are put in command of over 300 different units from the games huge database and may play the full campaign or supplied scenarios, or create your own with the map and game editor.

Moving to present-day military operations, *Semper Fi* is the next game from Stanley & Associates (*WOODEN SHIPS & IRON MEN*) published by Interactive Magic. As the name implies this is a marine wargame covering modern and future scenarios in which the US Marine Corps may participate. This battalion level game also includes a full scenario editor to make your own missions.

Blue Byte is producing a turn-based strategy game based on their *Battle Isle* universe called *Incubation*. A tactical game that put you in charge of a squad of space marines as they attempt to evacuate a colony from invading monsters using a multitude of weapons and equipment.

In the realms of fantasy, Impressions has updated the *Lords of the Realms 2* engine for use in a realm of myths and monsters. Players must control resources as well as explore, use diplomacy and fight monsters with powerful spells and magic.

Pax Imperia: Eminent Domain by THQ sends you deep in space as you attempt to conquer planets and star systems in this massive game. Diplomacy, economy and resource management are all critical for success as you explore and colonize over 800 worlds. Technological development and even intelligence agencies all play a part as you try to rule the galaxy.

LORDS OF THE REALM 2: SIEGE

OTHER TURN-BASED GAMES

A couple of unique turn-based games defy classification. *Netstorm* from Activision places you in charge of floating "islands" in the sky. By deploying various pre-programmed units you must build fortresses, defend your island and capture enemy priests. Each unit has its own unique capability. Care must be taken in the placing of these units to achieve your goals.

Virus, from Sir-Tech, is a strategy game where you must prevent a deadly computer virus from infecting your system. What makes this game unique is that the pictures and representations of your drives and directories are used as ingredients for the game. The whole objective is to keep the virus from infecting your entire machine. (Don't worry, no damage is actually done!)

★

March To Victory

First game in this complete series covering all the campaigns of World War l.

From the guns of August through the exhaustion at bloody Verdun. Old armies with new weapons fight on the fields of France. The German Imperial High Command launches the invasion in what it believes will be a massive and fatal blow to France. The first part of the war is definitely mobile in nature. Maneuver and strike, then stalemate.

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16 miles to the hex
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Origins - 1997
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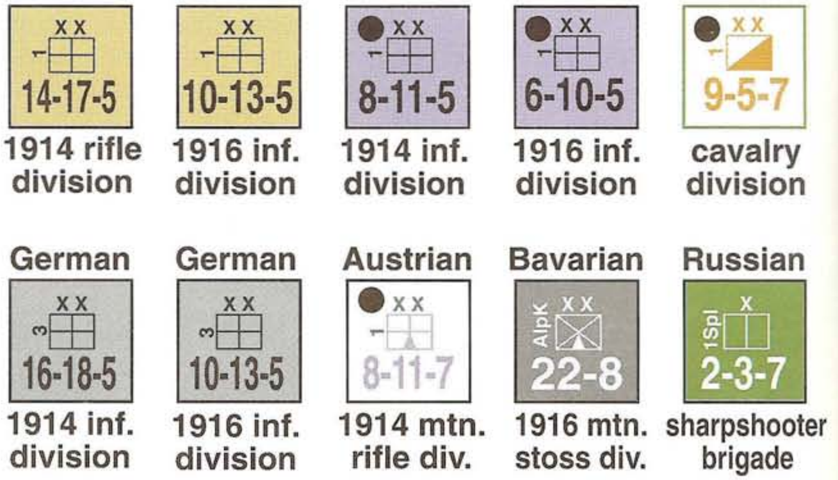

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ZONE OF CONTROL

NR. 10

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Chris Perleberg, and Rick Stuart.

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).

GAME REVIEW ABSTRACT
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.

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Many wargamers are convinced that Judgement Day is near. Millenarian gloom punctuates their table talk. A glimmer of hope is seen in baseball's lovable losers: prophesied to win the last pennant before Armageddon, the Cubs finished the 1997 season in last place. But they still worry, having just seen the Giants complete a worst-to-first turnaround.

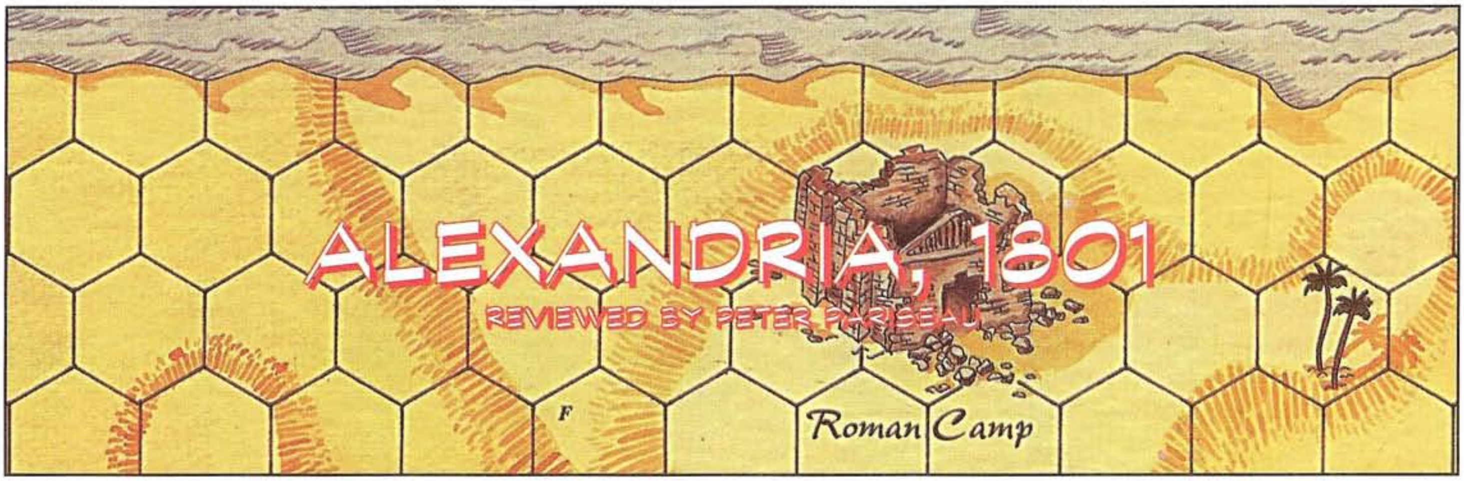
What's inspired all this banter about the end of the world? Forget pestilence and disease, some say the chief worry is *Command* becoming our hobby's deepest well of game design innovation. Upon hearing the forecast, I almost fainted dead away. After all, the conservatism of the Bomba/Perello development team has been fodder for much sarcasm on GEnie and AOL. Break free of the strands of web-think dogma and it becomes clear that the cutting edge really has passed to publishers of magazine games. To be sure, the leader in the field, *Command*, remains more concerned with safe landings than in pushing the design envelope. Perceptions are shifting only because modest changes from issue-to-issue are magnified in an era when boxed games don't change much from year-to-year. Boxed games are in a rut—and most gamers wouldn't have it any other way.

How far has it gone? At hot Ohio Origins, in a booth for long-defunct Operational Studies Group, stood what seemed a mirage from twenty years back: Kevin Zucker standing just so, smiling and tall and selling. There he was, and there it was: a new-and-improved *NAPOLEON AT BAY*. Near perfect when first released, and having gone through several editions since, the game must (dare we say it) be past perfect now.

Everywhere there is evidence of the iron grip of nostalgia. Rumor is that GMT's *THREE DAYS OF GETTYSBURG* (that *TERRIBLE SWIFT SWORD* with new blade and hilt) was so disturbingly innovative that a more conservative set of rules is being written to bring it in line with older *GBACW* games. Another golden oldie, the oh-so-arrogantly unplayable *CAMPAIGN FOR NORTH AFRICA*, has been reborn as The Gamers' *DAK*. My friends Bowen and Mignerey have declared Dean Essig's opus so perfect that they may play nothing else. Ever. Walker feels much the same about Clash of Arms' *LEUTHEN*; such craftsmanship grows increasingly rare.

The twin rages, for nostalgia and for series, do have a certain twisted logic: whatever else we might not like about a game, "at least it's not new." I never thought I'd see the day when, in the eyes of most gamers, happiness no longer depends upon buying a new design every week, or buying into a revolutionary system every month. But more gamers are restricting themselves to a core group of tried-and-true favorites. Most possess a much longer shelf of titles to play eventually (don't we all?), but increasingly find it tough to drum up shared interest in anything that's not cold off the presses. And it gets tougher each time precious time is wasted on a game obviously rushed through development. Who can blame them? Not me: twice this year I've carefully read rules and clipped counters only to find the game unplayable as published. It doesn't take a Zen master to state the obvious: The sound of one hand clapping means some of you guys ought to review your production methods.

As gaming groups fragment between certain familiar, highly specialized game series, what brings them together? Some recombine in pairs over the latest magazine game. In groups, others play some multi-player offering from Avalon Hill. We at *ZOC* have always envisioned a similar role: to produce a magazine that, in covering the entire hobby, helps scattered fellow gamers reconnect. What better place to follow that vision than from our new home, the pages of *THE GENERAL*, a magazine that has brought us together from the start. As always, we're guided by a realization that the typical reader doesn't need much help choosing what to buy. It always comes down to questions of topic and scale, and questions about the publisher's reliability. No, it's what to actually *play*, what to spend precious *time* on, that they really want to know. With that, and without further ado, for a few—but a carefully chosen few—new games, Judgement Day has arrived.



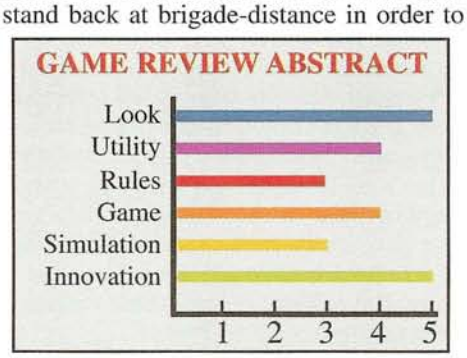
ALEXANDRIA, 1801

REVIEWED BY PETER PARISEAU

Wargaming is travel — time-travel. Like physical travel, it broadens the mind. But the edge is off the wanderlust of a good many gamers I know. Like some migratory fowl, they find themselves flying with the seasons between favorite destinations. When next you find yourself stuck in a holding pattern over Moscow, 1941, why not try something new?

Alexandria is something new: a battalion-level Napoleonic wargame unlike any you've seen before. Though fairly simple, it passes muster for both grand decision-making and grim fire-eating. I know what you're saying: been there, done that. Yes, in the past we've measured Napoleonic battlegames by minor degrees of deviation from a pair of hobby landmarks. Clash of Arms' *La Bataille de Corunna* is the most recent of a long series of games modeling the era's tactical formations with fine accuracy. The other, less respected among the grognards, is dinky, drab *Napoleon at Waterloo* (or "numbly abstract Waterloo," as we call it). The basis for much dross, some fun, solid games (such as the recent *Battle for Dresden* from New England Simulations) have also descended from the simple SPI design.

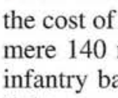
These alternatives are extreme, and the resulting split has left players with stark options. They could share in the detailed drama of the battalion-level battlefield, or stand back at brigade-distance in order to grasp the larger decisions determining great events. What many gamers actually want is a considered compromise of the two viewpoints. Let's face it: battalion-level Napoleonic tactics are *essentially* complex. Realism demands that many elements be treated, and in a detailed fashion. Equally true, gamers' lives are *essentially* finite. Realism demands that we finish the game by six o'clock (or what have you). With *Alexandria*, Spain's Simulaciones Tacticas (SimTac) has found that elusive middle ground.



Leading with complexity let SimTac garner the respect (and custom) of people who know Napoleonics well. *Sagunto* and *Los Arapiles*, earlier games from the company, stray only slightly from landmark *La Bataille*. One can even play an advanced version of ALEXANDRIA using the rules from these games, but the publisher has consciously exchanged rifle for musket, so to speak, and shot a simpler and more finishable ball at the general audience. This review will stick to the fresher, more innovative basic game. It's the most playable rendering of battalion-level Napoleonics I've ever seen.

This is not a battle so much as a riot — of colors. The British unit counters are a uniform bright scarlet. Facing them is a mob in jester's motley. The neglected Army of the Orient has long since worn out its blue jackets. General Kleber's men obtained new uniforms in the bazaars of occupied Egypt, and fight in technicolor green, violet, red, blue, brown, and purple. The haberdashery is in itself almost violent.

The other components include two rulebooks, a page (laminated!) of the advanced game's charts and tables, and a travelogue-whimsical mounted map. Decorated with scattered palm trees and ancient ruins, hemmed in by the sea to the north and a great marsh to the south, the playing area is at once amusing and functional. The map-mounting puts SimTac in an elite group of publishers. It is a luxury I would have dispensed with in order to lessen the price. Some money saved could have been spent on disruption markers (there are none, a problem for players using the optional facing rules). One also feels the want of a chart listing all the fire results and modifiers for the basic game. But that is something one can easily make for oneself.



Novelty in a game system lies not so much in the elements assembled as in the discipline used to constrain them. Here we have a structure that aims for classical simplicity without garish heaps of chrome. There isn't even a Combat Results Table, and modifiers to fire and melee combat are rare as hood ornaments on Hyundais. These self-imposed limits don't come at the cost of a close-up view; the hexes are a mere 140 meters across, the combat units infantry battalions, cavalry squadrons and light companies. Battalions of a given brigade must be adjacent at the end of movement, forcing a rough approximation of formation without specific rules to their effect. This typifies what SimTac is striving for: play that's both clean *and* true.

More than mere color distinguishes the two armies. French battalions have an inherent light company that soaks up British fire. British battalions have more firepower, but only a few of their select battalions are blessed with a light company. This is a significant balancing mechanism, historically accurate but requiring no rule as such.

Further asymmetry is found in the command structures. French brigades are subordinated in pairs or trios to a divisional HQ. British brigades are given their own HQ (with a few exceptions). As in *STONEWALL JACKSON'S WAY*, the order of each turn's events is controlled by an initiative cycle. Here it's done through these headquarters, which activate one at a time. When the French player wins initiative, he activates at least two brigades in a row. This means the British player, who activates just one brigade per headquarters, will usually have several formations remaining to activate after the enemy is finished for the turn. Tensions can run high as each side exploits its particular sequencing advantage.

As noted above, the basic system dispenses with the obligatory CRT, relying instead on direct dieroll comparisons (to which are added unit strength or firepower level). Combat results in morale checks or automatic morale reductions (from good order to disrupted to broken) that effect the individual unit or whole brigade. No clumsy markers are needed to track the morale state of units (another endearing semi-novelty) unless you want to use the optional facing rules.

In one of those compromises we spoke of, all combat results are expressed as loss of morale. Casualties, at least in game terms, occur only when broken units suffer a further morale loss. That is a radical compromise, of a sort whose acceptance your judgment of the system will likely depend on. The system sets up an iron correlation between spilled blood and fear, even though, in fact, units sometimes flee without first suffering grievous losses, or are decimated several times over and still fight. They correlate, but only in general terms. To accept this and other such correlations is to accept *ALEXANDRIA*.

In play, my thoughts turned to ways by which the efficiency of the simulation engine could be increased. Musket fire could use a few more modifiers, nor should it be as effective against a light company as against a full battalion. Fire by disrupted units should be less potent, and their morale checks more likely to fail. Cavalry should charge harder against disrupted units than against ones in good order. A few revisions along these lines would not detract from the game's essential elegance.

Play balance favors the British, who have good morale and are fortified on high ground. Pity the poor French who try to dash up those heights at the ancient (Caesarian) camp! One is far better off launching a diversionary probe on that old Roman artifact in preparation for a dawn sweep round the south end of the central ridge. Victory can hinge on last-turn control of objective hexes, but more likely goes to who shoots up more of his opponent's army.

Having my grumblers shot to pieces most of the time has not lessened my enthusiasm for fun, innovative *ALEXANDRIA*. Travel broadens the mind; here's hoping many of those reading this review are broad-minded enough to sign up for the new weekend tour of Egypt.

ANNOTATED SEQUENCE

Initiative Cycle
You know what initiative is. Who gets it?

- If neither Commander is stacked with his HQ —> the French.

- If only one Commander is with his HQ —> that army.

- If both Commanders are so stacked (the usual case) —> each player rolls a die and high roller (after modifications) wins the initiative.

After determining initiative, limited movement of headquarters is allowed. Initiative winner may attempt to move (to any place on the map) an HQ by rolling under the Commander's rating.

Finally, each player may deploy a new HQ from his reserve. In the main scenario most HQs begin in reserve. The battle is shaped by the sequence in which players "wake up" their HQs.

Operations Phase
Initiative winner may activate one brigade, whose component units may fire or move. Following this, he may activate another brigade attached to the same HQ until all of its brigades have been activated. Then opposing player gets to activate an HQ of his choice, following which we return to the top of the Initiative Cycle.

Fire: Infantry and cavalry do it by adding roll of one die to their firepower rating. Artillery does it by adding the number of firing companies and number of companies in the target hex to a dieroll, then subtracting the number of hexes in range (up to eight in daylight). In all cases, if the fire result is ten or greater, all units in the target hex must check morale. Musket fire causes direct (no check) morale loss when the modified dieroll is '15' or more. Unit strength and firepower numbers are rather low, making combat a varied and opportunistic exercise.

Movement: Units can't move if they fire and vice versa (exception: light companies and French guns may do both). Brigaded units must end their move either stacked or adjacent to one another. ZOCs halt moving units, and units beginning or ending movement in a zone halve their movement allowance (this is cumulative, so when moving directly from zone-to-zone movement is quartered). Units must stay within command range of their HQ (usually three or four hexes). Light companies, cavalry and camels — yes, camels — are not so tethered.

Assault: Declare infantry attacks and cavalry charges, taking defensive fire after doing so. Any morale loss on the assaulting unit aborts the attack.

Each player rolls a die and modifies it for combat strength, terrain, morale state, and ratio of companies engaged. High number wins. Loser drops a morale level (if successfully charged by cavalry, two morale levels) and, if defender, must retreat.

Recover Unit Morale: Attempt to rally disrupted or broken units not in an enemy ZOC that have not fired or moved. You may regain a morale level *or* drop an additional morale level.

Check Brigade Morale: Whenever a unit in a brigade suffers a morale loss, you mark off a circle on a track; when the marks go into the track's gray circles (alas, too soon!), make a morale check against the divisional morale number given on the roster. Failure takes that brigade out of the fight, reducing morale across the board for the formation and forcing its retreat.

ALEXANDRIA, 1801
Size: 1.8 • System 3.7
Solo "Av"

SCALE
15 minutes per turn
140 meters per hex

PUBLISHER
Simulaciones Tacticas
Aben Al Abar 4
Valencia 46021 (Spain)

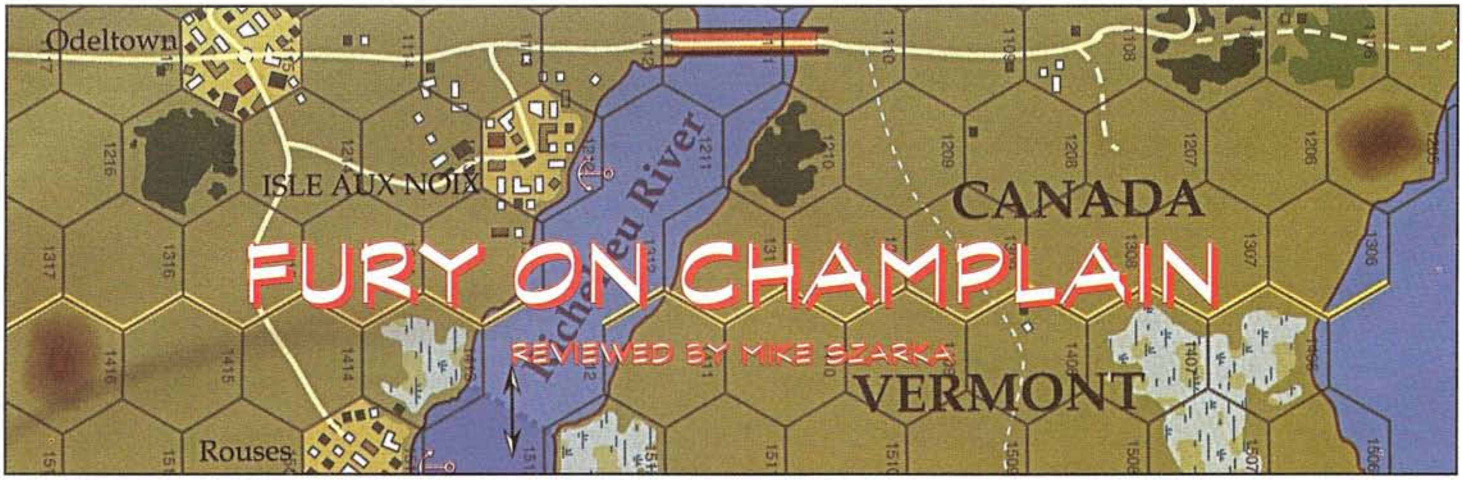
also available through:
Admiralty House Publications
PO Box 6253
Los Osos, CA 93412

DESIGN
Jose Luis Arcon

GRAPHICS
Carmen Sanchez and
Jose Luis Arcon

COMPONENTS
22" x 34" mounted map, 216
counters, basic rulebook,
advanced rulebook, one sheet
charts & tables, and two ten-
sided dice.

PRICE:
about $45



FURY ON CHAMPLAIN

REVIEWED BY MIKE SZARKA

I've always wondered what goes through the mind of a medical student who decides to pursue proctology, urology, or some other seemingly unpleasant specialty. Similarly, what thought process makes a college student settle on a diploma in mortuary science? Actuarially, in about forty years I am likely to call upon the services of at least one, and possibly all three, of these specialists. So I'm glad somebody is entering these fields, whatever their motivation may be.

I have something of the same ambivalence toward the hobby role of Keith Poulter's Worldwide Wargames (3W). While resisting the urge to play the medieval and renaissance battles in their myriad Rob Markham quadrigames, I feel glad somebody takes an interest in such esoterica. My own collection is home to 3W offerings on battles of the Franco-Prussian War, Chinese Civil War, several bottom-drawer Napoleonic battles, the Falklands conflict, Boer War, the campaigns of Marlborough, and the House of Saud's dynastic struggle for control of the Arabian Peninsula in the 1920s. I've yet to play many of these quirky titles, but all of them are interesting objects of study.

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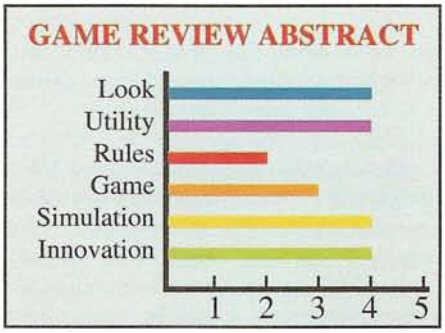
A worthy addition to their ranks is the game under review, *Fury on Champlain.* Courtesy of 3W, wargaming now has a detailed treatment of fighting on and around Lake Champlain to lay alongside various Jutlands and Midways. Renditions of *this* campaign for your computer are a ways off; so pay close attention. The War of 1812 was a sideshow for a Great Britain facing the supreme test against Napoleon. The British invasion of northern New York was a sideshow within that sideshow. Still, both the war and this campaign were key in the growth of an American fleet that even the Royal Navy could not take lightly.

Fury on Champlain is probably 3W's last game. It awaited publication a good while, for although a mid-1996 release, its box cover shows a copyright of 1994. Designer John Farewell has undertaken to support the game himself and will send a five-page errata supplement — including a completely revised CRT! — upon request (see Fact Box). Most of the errata, other than the CRT, are clarifications. The publisher crowbarred the rules into only eight pages, and as a result many points are inadequately explained in the rules as written.



NY +1
APPLING
1-6

Pierre Berton's "The Invasion of Canada" characterizes 1812 as blindly entered into, and fought by men out of touch with reality and the forces under their command. This too accounts for the fewness of games; conventional systems do not account well for stupidity or ignorance — and when they do, often result in games that are not much fun to play. *Fury on Champlain* is a case in point.

By way of background, in the Fall of 1814 several veteran divisions from Wellington's peninsular army were shipped to the North American theater. Could they make short work of a dispute whose key irritants (impressment and US trade with France) had already been largely mooted by Bonaparte's downfall? Time would tell as Canadian Governor-General Sir George Prevost put in motion a bold plan to march these troops — quite possibly the world's best-trained — deep into New York.

Prevost was an exemplary politician but no general. Having marched as far as Plattsburgh, which is on Champlain's western shore, he would not advance further until the small British naval squadron secured his supply line. With news that his fleet had been roundly defeated by the Americans, Prevost countermarched his vastly superior army homeward.

Fury on Champlain covers both the land and naval aspects of this abortive campaign. Each of the twelve game-turns represents a day. Counters represent regiments or single ships. The components are readable and attractive, although there are several errata affecting the counters.

To win, the British player must secure both a naval and a land victory. His army is free to march as far as Plattsburgh, but a "Prevost's Incompetence" rule keeps him from securing the U.S. strongholds on the south side of the Saranac River before getting control of Champlain. So the British troops advance to Plattsburgh, mowing down any and everything in their path, then just sit waiting for the big naval battle to occur. The best British vessel, the frigate *Confiance*, is under construction as the game begins. She will usually stay in port as long as possible to outfit for the coming showdown; likewise, the American fleet waits anchored in Plattsburgh Bay. All this is perfectly true to history.

With might and main, and not inconsiderable success, the designer has tried to infuse some period flavor into the crucial lake battles: there are rules for grappling, closing, turning, prepared and hasty anchoring, and the effects of small island batteries. There's even a counter representing the hospitalized Americans who manned the guns historically. But the core naval mechanics are highly abstract: winning and losing can boil down to a tedious dierolling contest.

If the British squadron wins the Battle of Champlain, the Eagle is probably cooked: American troops (mostly militia) are laughingstocks. The reverse also holds: if the British lose the naval battle, they cannot retrieve things on land. Not that the ground mechanics aren't interesting, but the futility of their application often renders them pointless. This was also the case in another game on 1812, Simulations Canada's ROCKETS RED GLARE where both players spent lots of time fighting land battles in Southern Ontario and New York, only to find the outcome decided almost solely by the effectiveness of Britain's naval blockade.

Post-publication errata betters the situation slightly. British soldiers still cannot *attack* across the Saranac, but those that can maneuver across may attack freely. FURY ON *CHAMPLAIN'S* fluid zones of control make it hard for the American player to hold that key river line, though the Prevost restrictions still anchor the British to the Saranac unless they take the roads and bridges in and around Plattsburgh. The change seems aimed more at fixing the game competitively than at providing a more accurate model of Prevost's behavior. A game variant does much the same thing; it supposes that Prevost harkened to subordinates who had more derring-do, and lets him attack all-out. Now he must clear the map of American-held towns — but is still held to the requirement of winning on the lake.

It's hard to give an either-or verdict on this game. I had some fun with it and was inspired to learn a bit more about the campaign. It has many interesting design elements, including rules for roadblocks and bridge blowing, decoy units and spies, naval transport. It has several game variants to break open the strategic lock. On the minus side, the fleet tactics aren't very subtle, and since the naval battle decides the entire game, you can come to feel that dice matter more than strategy. It's not unlike AFRIKA KORPS, where so many contests are decided by that notorious 2:1 for Tobruk.

CRAB ISLE
1-0

Readers of ZoC know what led to 3W's demise: games so unfinished and underdeveloped that they got a do-it-yourself-kit reputation. This was by no means true of all of them, and isn't true of FURY ON *CHAMPLAIN*. Nevertheless, there are consumers who wouldn't touch a 3W box with a bargepole. This even though game buyers are, by and large, a forgiving lot — perhaps too much so. We're not going to name names, but as everyone knows, or should know, Keith Poulter's alleged business and marketing practices were not unique to him. But unlike most of his peers, Poulter made little serious effort to reverse the negative image. This, more than anything else, made 3W's collapse inevitable.

A fitting legacy to the company is *FURY ON CHAMPLAIN:* warty but with an underlying core of value. There are precious few in this hobby who would write a flattering eulogy for the publisher. But like the unsung heroes who collect our garbage, examine our prostates, and make us look natural in death, Keith Poulter deserves our appreciation for having had the courage to publish the odd, the obscure, and the delightfully esoteric. 3W, rest in peace.

ANNOTATED SEQUENCE

Each game-turn consists of two identical player-turns, with the British going first. At the beginning of each, a roll is made for wind direction.

Reinforcement Phase: New units enter and Yanks may roll for militia availability.

Naval Movement: Ships are moved between lake areas, with speed strongly affected by wind direction and admiralship. Naval units can also anchor, intercept, or withdraw. Units remaining in open lake areas may be damaged by gales. Ships which do not move can roll for repairs. Naval units may transport ground units.

Naval Combat: Battles are fought in rounds until one side withdraws. Ships are laid out in opposing battle lines, and fire at ships in the directly opposite line position. Land-based batteries may also fire. Hits are marked off against gun or hull boxes on a ship status chart. After the first round ships close, so that short as well as long-range guns may fire. Closed ships may also attempt to grapple and fight melee. Ships face with either port or starboard guns firing, and may turn during battle. Defeated ships may strike, retreat, or sink.

Land Movement: British units check for command control at the beginning of the movement and combat phases. Units move, block or unblock roads, blow or repair bridges, and build entrenchments. Spies may attempt to examine enemy stacks. British units may breakdown for combat or to form supply-line outposts. American militia units may disband.

Land Combat: Adjacent land units participate in combat. Supply lines must be checked and supply units expended in order for units to fight at full strength. The "Prevost Incompetence" rule requires that all hexes in a British supply line be in the ZOC of an infantry battalion on outpost duty.

FURY ON CHAMPLAIN
Size 2.0 • System 3.2
Solo "Gd"

SCALE
1 day per turn
1 mile per hex

PUBLISHER
3W Inc.
PO Box 205
Prather, CA 93651

DESIGN
John Farewell

GRAPHICS
Joe Youst and Beth Queman

COMPONENTS
One 22 x 34" map, 200 counters, 8-page rulebook and a double-sided player-aid card.

PRICE: $33

For errata send SASE to:
John Farewell,
1519 Colony Road
Rock Hill, SC 29730

BULGARIA
TURKEY
CONSTANTINOPLE
SALONIKA
IZMIT
MUDROS
REECE
O 49
O 55
O 56
O 57
O 58
P 44
P 45
P 46
P 47
P 48
P 49
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R 44
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S 52

THE GREAT WAR AT SEA

REVIEWED BY CHRIS PERLEBERG

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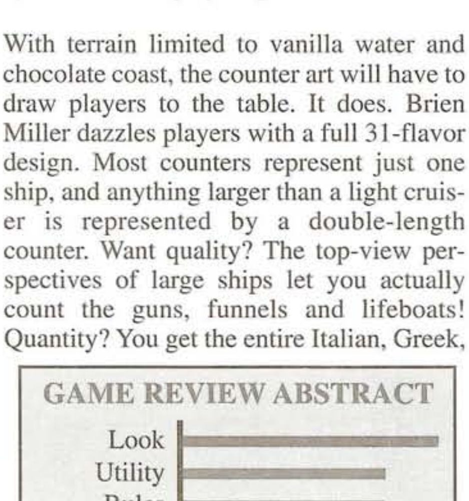
Indomitable

Mention naval combat in World War One, and most people think of Jutland, which remains the only dreadnought fleet action in history. Believe it or not, dreadnoughts, cruisers and squadrons did sail outside the North Sea. A new game from Avalanche Press, *The Great War at Sea*, takes a comprehensive look at lesser-known naval actions on southern waters during the years 1911-1918.

The Great War at Sea is operational with tactical undercurrents. Its main map portrays the Mediterranean and Black Seas at 32 miles per square (the squares are offset, which makes them functionally identical to traditional hexagons). When fleets stumble into contact, action shifts to a generic tactical map, scaled at about 4.5 miles per square. The maps are well drawn except for the main map's hard-to-read zone numbers, which in poor light can be a source of eyestrain when players plot their moves.

With terrain limited to vanilla water and chocolate coast, the counter art will have to draw players to the table. It does. Brien Miller dazzles players with a full 31-flavor design. Most counters represent just one ship, and anything larger than a light cruiser is represented by a double-length counter. Want quality? The top-view perspectives of large ships let you actually count the guns, funnels and lifeboats! Quantity? You get the entire Italian, Greek, Rumanian, Turkish, Austro-Hungarian,and Russian Black Sea fleets, most of the French fleet, lots of British ships, and a few German ships (the *Goeben* and *Breslau*, naturally). One can regret the absence of the Bulgarian navy (didn't they have a gunboat?). Also missing are some US and Japanese ships in the Med (mostly on anti-submarine duty). But there are more than enough ships to keep you busy.



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Merchant S10

The game system is a major upgrade from Pacific Rim's *Black Sea Fleet*, also a Mike Bennighof design. The movement and combat rules have more detail, but my impression is dominated by the quantitative: *The Great War at Sea* has more color, more space, more ships.

Less is more as far the sequence of play is concerned. It's as easy as one-two-three: players plot orders, move fleets accordingly, then check to see if ships in the same square make contact (in which case play switches to the tactical map). Most movement must actually be plotted two turns in advance, which introduces a fairly simple command control element to the game. The resultant fog of war blurs the ahistorical impact of god-like players gazing down from mid-map Mount Olympus. In *The Great War at Sea* you can't just head straight toward the nearest enemy force; you must anticipate where he's headed and plot an interception course.

It can be frustrating when fleets chase each other in circles without making contact. When ships finally do end a move in the same square with the enemy (often easier said then done) there's only a 50-50 chance of actually sighting one another — and that's in daylight turns. The probability increases when leaders are present, but perhaps the number of ships should also be a factor: more ships, after all, equals more scouts and more smoke. Sighting was easier in *Black Sea Fleet;* even with its bigger hexes, interception always led to contact. By reducing contact to a coin toss, Bennighof has severely truncated the combat opportunities. This is hardly a plus for gamers who long for the siren song of sixteen-inch shells and revel in the prospect of sinking the other guy's battleship.

The tactical map, which you probably will get to eventually, is fittingly featureless. The resulting action is less bland than the cartography, but still just a variation on the old line-up-the-ships-and-roll-dice model. With facing irrelevant, and range limited to three squares, cap the T is a will o' wisp. Instead your major tactical decision is where and when to close. If a player has more than one group of ships he can try to flank the enemy, or he can move in his torpedo boats while the big ships hammer away from long range.

Aside from the all-important range question, combat is essentially a dice-throwing contest. You roll a die for each factor fired. For instance, Britain's *Queen Elizabeth* has ten factors of primary guns and three factors of secondaries. Thirteen dierolls for that ship alone, and those just to determine hits and misses; another two dice must be thrown to resolve each hit. It's kind of fun, with both players tossing whole handfuls of dice (into the boxlid or something; nobody should throw that many dice near stacks of counters). It's also fast.

The system has some nuance, as you record damage on fleet rosters that list every ship (which, incidentally, means you need to make a bunch of photocopies). Ships have one damage box for each gun, torpedo, and hull factor. Each box has an armor rating: heavy, light or none. Primary guns penetrate all armor levels, secondary guns only light armor, and tertiary guns can only damage unarmored ships.

Obviously, the effects of armor penetration have been kept basic, but such abstraction seems perfectly suited to the game's level of detail.

There are a few tactical quirks. Germany's *Goeben* can't be damaged by Russian light cruisers, for instance, and should try to close to secondary range when fighting British battlecruisers: its secondary guns can damage the enemy, but the reverse isn't true. Even the largest dreadnought has something to dread: attacks by a swarm of torpedo boats. Torpedoes turn out to be the great equalizer.

The tactical sequence works best in battleship actions. Their guns have the range to engage each other right after set-up, and their slow relative speed prevents one side or the other from dashing away. The system breaks down a little when smaller ships make contact or when the speed differential is too great.

Take the scenario where the Russians need to find and sink the *Breslau*. Takes luck, since the *Breslau* can almost always run from the tactical board before a shot is fired. It comes down to whether the Russian player manages to roll a '6' when contacting the *Breslau and* also gets the initiative (a 50-50 chance). When this happens, he gets to deploy his ships at range three instead of four: now the *Breslau* can't get away, which usually means it's dead. So the *Breslau* either escapes unscathed or is sunk — there is no middle ground. Compare *Black Sea Fleet:* even with its more simplistic combat resolution, those Russians would always fire before the *Breslau* got away.

Similarly, if two destroyer flotillas contact each other, no combat occurs unless both sides want to fight. Again acceptable, but again sometimes dull. And the mechanics also allow some "cheap shot" tactics — for instance, you can prevent an enemy fleet from bombarding by contacting it, setting up the combat, and then running away without firing a shot.

These are caveats only. The system works, and it's generally an improvement over its predecessor. It's just that it's been slimmed down too much. More could be added with little danger of system overload. Moreover, many of us look at *The Great War at Sea* as the warm-up for a forthcoming game on Jutland and the North Sea. But Bennighof has his work cut out for him, as it's hard to see how Jutland is going to work here; the tactical map alone would take up an entire mapsheet and then some.

The Great War at Sea has about fifty scenarios (but, sadly, no campaign game). Some have you setting up on the tactical map and blasting away: over in minutes. Others involve lots and lots of ships and can take hours to finish. Most of the scenarios assign a player some kind of mission which his opponent must thwart. Some are pipe-dream hypotheticals, such as where the Italian and Austro-Hungarian fleets team up to invade France in 1914.

Certain scenarios do suffer heavily from the tactical problems described earlier. For example, in the obligatory "Flight of the *Goeben*" scenario, there are just three ships (the British battlecruisers) that can attack the *Goeben* if she doesn't want to fight. (that's barring the Allies rolling a '6' for the contact and getting initiative). This is very, very dull, and the dullness is compounded by the fact the *Goeben* gets to use hidden movement for much of the game. Just winding up in the same hex is a considerable feat. Imagine the frustration of patiently maneuvering the entire French fleet into the same hex as the *Goeben*, and *making* contact, only to have the pesky ship run away without so much as a goodbye salvo.

Even given the occasional dead-in-the-water scenario, there's still a sea of playvalue. You get mine-laying missions, convoy actions, shore bombardment, attacks on the Otranto barrage. You will probably do a lot more fighting than those you represent, for as the designer points out, *you* don't have to answer to a king, emperor, czar, sultan, or parliament. So what if you lose the war in an afternoon, so long as you have fun during that afternoon?

CL04
2
0•5•0
Admiral Lazarev

Despite some small flaws, *The Great War at Sea* is a fun game that shows the influence of geography on naval strategy. It's remarkable how it manages to incorporate mines, shore bombardment, towing, fuel, submarines, seaplanes, leaders — even airships — within eight pages of rules. I do wish Bennighof had supplied more historical notes, though, for it's hard to find data on some of these fleets and some of this information is interesting. Who wouldn't want to know that the Greek battleships *Lemnos* and *Kilkis* are the ex-*USS Mississippi* and *Idaho*, or that the Austro-Hungarian submarine ace von Trapp is none other than "Mr. Sound of Music" himself?

Lift anchor and attack the Otranto barrage; sail the K.U.K dreadnoughts from Pola with the *Tegetthof* (opponents: pronounced Take It Off) in the lead; post your lookouts for another *Lissa* even as you protect those coal barges from Zonguldak and raid Greek convoys in the Turkish Hamidieh. Need I say more? *The Great War at Sea* is a very successful game on a fresh and exotic topic.

German Ship Data Sheet

	primary	secondary	tertiary	torp.	move	hull	fuel
BC01 Goeben 81	▦▦▦ ▦▦▦	▦▦▦	□	1	2	▦▦▦▦▦▦ ▦▦▦▦▦▦	○○○ ○○○
BC02 Moltke 81	▦▦▦ ▦▦▦	▦▦▦	□	1	2	▦▦▦▦▦▦ ▦▦▦▦▦▦	○○○ ○○○

	secon.	tert.	torp.	move	hull	fuel
CL01a Breslau '16 9	□	□□	1	2	▨▨▨	○○○○○○○○
CL01b Breslau '17 9	□□	-	1	2	▨▨▨	○○○○○○○○
CL03 Breslau '14 8	-	□□□	1	2	▨▨▨	○○○○○○○○
CL04 Magdeburg 8	-	□□□	1	2	▨▨▨	○○○○○○○○

The Great War At Sea
System 3.7 • Size 2.8
Solo "Average"

SCALE
32 miles per square
(8,000 yards tactically)
4 hours per turn

PUBLISHER
Avalanche Press
PO Box 4775
Virginia Beach, VA 23454

Design
Mike Bennighof
with Brian Knipple

GRAPHICS
Brien Miller

COMPONENTS
Three 22" x 17" maps, 280 double-width counters, 180 1/2" counters, one 8-page rule book, one 24-page scenario booklet, 8 roster sheets, and 1 player log.

PRICE
$42

TANK COMMANDER

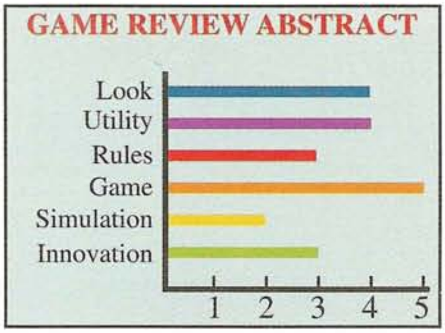
REVIEWED BY ANDREW MALY

UP FRONT, in this reviewer's humble opinion, is the greatest game ever made. But he will readily admit that the Avalon Hill classic skimps in a few areas, chief among them the treatment of tanks. The vehicular rules just don't mesh all that well with the rest. It's the same with *SQUAD LEADER.* So he jumped at the chance to review Moments in History's new TANK COMMANDER, hoping for a design that would allow him to fight actions larger than those possible in *UP FRONT*, and in a more armor-friendly environment.

TANK COMMANDER's components are cards and rules and nothing else. The cards are collectible, and like other such games, sold in sixty-card decks (of the complete set of 164). An even mix of Soviet and German cards is packed in each box, allowing players to recreate typical actions on the East Front. Expansions to other WWII theaters are possible, but not likely.

Although collectible, *TANK COMMANDER's* cards are meant to be used, not just saved. They are well produced and stand up to repeated play. Each is of one of six types: AFV, anti-tank gun, infantry, support weapon, terrain or special card (which include hindering terrain, unexpected minefields and artillery or counterbattery support). Depending on the type, up to thirteen different factors describe the unit's combat capabilities and provide a set of random numbers used for combat resolution. The volume of information seems a bit overwhelming at first, but the data layout soon becomes second nature.

The rulebook, literally, fits in the palm of your hand. Even at 56 (tiny) pages, it's a quick read. But unless you have the errata — or the new and larger Player's Guide — the rules are confusing and contradictory in spots. It's partly stylistic: the instructions are intended as a flexible framework, not a logico-conceptual straightjacket. The disadvantage, obviously, is that against the wrong opponent the action could resemble Lincoln-Douglas rather than Manstein-Zhukov. Luckily the reviewer deals with opponents who play with a full deck in terms of sportsmanship. Our disputes were quickly resolved.



The game is played on an imaginary battlefield three cells wide by four deep. Each player possesses six cells at the start of the game, but possession of each can change over the course of play (otherwise it wouldn't be much of a game). You deploy your forces into the cells, with no more than three cards per cell at one time. You also have a notional "reserve" cell, your hand, that can contain up to ten cards.

Movement rules are quite basic. Units are rated as slow or fast. Slow units can only move to an adjacent cell, while fast units can move two cells per turn. Units must stop upon entering an enemy-occupied cell, and as their second move fast units cannot enter cells containing certain terrain cards.

There are four types of combat: anti-armor, HE, small arms and melee. Within limits imposed by target type and range, all combat is resolved as follows. In lieu of rolling dice, one of the five random-number *colors* is declared and a card from the draw pile is turned over. On the card, if the number of the designated color is less than or equal to the modified hit number, the target is history, with one exception: anti-armor attacks. They include a second step to determine if the shot's penetration value is greater than the target's armor protection. Only then is the tank eliminated.

TANK COMMANDER
System 3.7 • Size 2.8
Solo "Average"

SCALE
500 meters per cell
unspecified time scale

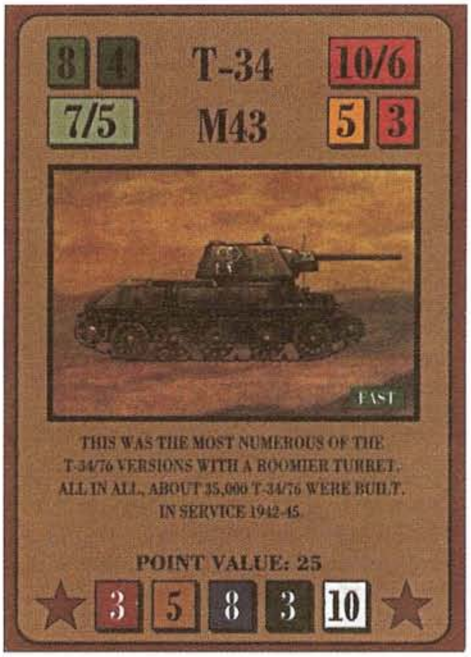
PUBLISHER
Moments in History
PO Box 6253
Los Osos, CA 93412

DESIGN
John Desch and Ulrich Blennemann

GRAPHICS
Beth Queman

COMPONENTS
Sixty cards per box.

PRICE: $9.95
($8.95 for Player's Guide)



THIS WAS THE MOST NUMEROUS OF THE T-34/76 VERSIONS WITH A ROOMIER TURRET. ALL IN ALL, ABOUT 35,000 T-34/76 WERE BUILT. IN SERVICE 1942-45.

TANK COMMANDER is primarily an armor game. Most cards are vehicles, and the focus is on their interaction. One wishes tactical games could reach a better balance between the combat arms. A more serious complaint echoes Larry Barrett's "The Curse of Collectible Card Games" in ZOC #7. Even with six *TANK COMMANDER* decks, the reviewer was unable to play any of the three historical scenarios provided. It's a disappointment, for what he would really like is to pit realistic formations of German and Russian troops in a fast action shoot-em-up. Alas it was not meant to be.

Difficult though it may be to put together historical formations, the build-your-own-force scenarios neatly work around the "collectibility" problem. Five thematic variations (such as Prepared Defense) are provided, and in them each side is budgeted a certain number of points to buy troops and terrain appropriate to the time period chosen. Trying to trump your opponent's buy is always the great pleasure of design-your-own scenarios. But be alert to the danger: the speed at which the action plays out in *TANK COMMANDER* seems to encourage reckless gambles.

You might not know it from all the griping done in this review, but *TANK COMMANDER* succeeds mightily as a fast-paced game with enough historical hook to make the fun semi-serious.

★

Scoring *PRINCESS RYAN*

OPTIONAL RULES FOR PRINCESS RYAN'S

STAR MARINES

by Mark G. McLaughlin

PRINCESS RYAN'S STAR MARINES (PRS) is unique in many ways. It plays like a card game and a board game at the same time. It can be played cooperatively by all of those involved. Nobody needs to be the bad guy—the game system can take that role for you. Thus, you can teach children and new or novice gamers how to play without having to either beat them or pull punches. You can all win or lose together. If there is a Guard player to act as the bad guy, all of the others can cooperate against him (sort of like adventurers going into a dungeon against a dungeon master). The game also plays well as a solitaire, multi-player or head-to-head game.

The following rules do not lengthen the game, nor do they alter how it is played. Any, some or all of them may be added, like extra choices at the salad bar, to enhance or vary the main course.

SCORING POINTS

PRS is designed so that all of the marines either win together or lose together. The marine who rescues the princess does not "win" the game alone. He merely gets the credit for the victory. If this was the "real" world, the player who saves the princess would get the medal and the promotion, while everybody else who survived on the marine team would get a nice little note in their personnel file—and maybe a two-week pass.

Individual players often like to find out who is "second" or at least have some measure of how well they did when compared to the others in the game. Those who play repeatedly, especially solitaire, like to have some way to measure their performance. A scoring system is also useful for tournament play. The following system was used at the AvalonCon '97 tournaments.

Each player will fill out one copy of the score sheet (see end of this article) at the completion of play. If there is a Guard player, he must keep track of how many time chips are used by the Marines *during* the game. The Marines start with 15, but, as they may gain or buy additional time chips during the course of play, the Guard player can not depend on the number of chips remaining to be a true mark of how many time chips were expended.

The first three lines of the score sheet will be the same for each marine player. (Each Marine player gains the same number of points for the Marines winning, for facing a human player as the Guard and for time chips remaining, unexpended.) Marine players gain points individually for the number of marine cards, weapons cards, dispatches and promotion points in their own, individual possession (their own hand). One Marine player (only), will gain ten points more for rescuing the princess. The Marine players lose points if they used the "Do or Die!" option and for Marine casualties. No player should ever be burdened with a negative record. All scores less than zero become zero. Why? "Its Better That Way!" (*Princess Ryan's Star Marine* motto.)

If you have one, the Guard player also scores points—for winning, retaining dispatches, causing marine casualties, each time chip used by the marines.

A Guard who stops the Marines from rescuing the princess usually scores very, very high. A Guard who loses tends to score as well or better than most Marine players. In tournament play, it is best if every player was able to be the Guard once. No gamer should be allowed to be the Guard more than once. Players who have never been the Guard in any round should get a handicap bonus of 20 points for a two-round tourney or ten points for a tourney of three rounds or more.

In case of a tie, a player who has never been the Guard should come ahead of one who has been the Guard. If still tied, the tie should be decided in favor of the player who did better as a Marine.

HEAD-TO-HEAD PLAY

PRINCESS RYAN'S STAR MARINES is also designed for head-to-head play, with one player as the Guard. The other takes a double hand of marines (as if playing solitaire). Consult the Barracks setup as if there were two players versus the system (*i.e.* use Guardians 2 through 32 plus all six specials). The Marine player must keep the two groups of marines separate, as per the solitaire game.

Option: Interrogate the Guard after each Marine victory, but the Marine player must correctly identify the holding cell to win the game.

Advanced Rule: The Marine player chooses one hand as his own and only interrogates when that hand wins a battle.

MULTIPLE-HAND PLAY

Just as one Marine player may control two groups of marines in the solitaire or head-to-head play, two players may each control two groups of marines. For purposes of determining how many Marine players there are when drawing guards, treat each hand of three marine cards as a Marine player. Thus two people, each with a double hand, would be four Marine players. Adding one for the Guard, use the five-player line of the Barracks setup.

EVERY MARINE A LEADER

Give every Marine player an equal shot at being one of the top links in the chain of command. At the start of the game, separate the five top ranking marines (20, 21, 22, 23, 24), shuffle them, and give one of them to each Marine player. Each player is then dealt two marines from the remaining deck (marines 1 through 19). All undealt cards of both piles are combined, shuffled, and placed in the Ready Room.

PREPARED FOR BATTLE

After dealing out all the cards, the Marine Commander may decide he is not quite "ready" to hit the Drop Zone. At the cost of one time chip he may do a pre-invasion check. Deal each Marine player an extra (fourth) Marine and two extra (seventh and eighth) weapon cards. Each player may keep any three of his Marines and any six of his weapons, discarding one Marine and two weapons. After discarding, reshuffle the weapon and Marine decks and place all of these weapon and Marine cards in the Weapons Locker and Ready Room (respectively).

The Marine commander may expend a second time chip if he wishes to further prepare for battle. By expending a second time chip he allows each Marine player to draw one Dispatch.

If the Marine commander chooses the prepare for battle option, the Guard player draws an extra card from the Barracks and adds it to his Task Force hand. In addition, instead of drawing a Guard at random from the Barracks to fight the Marines in the Drop Zone, the Guard player may play one of the cards from his Task Force. (If he declines, a card is drawn from the top of the Barracks deck for the Drop Zone as usual.)

BANZAI!

The Marines drive the game by deciding where and how to advance and whether or not to use the "Do or Die!" mission to snatch victory from the jaws of certain defeat. The Guard should also be given a "last chance" to turn the tide of battle. If the Marines rescue the princess the Guard may attempt to declare a "Banzai!" attack. Do a site check. On a draw of seven or more, the Marines escape. On a draw of six or less, the attack is launched.

In a "Banzai!" attack, conduct one more round of combat. The skirmish takes place in a site drawn at random from the Network (this is the Marine escape route). Place the site on the Prisoner Pens site.

The Guard plays one card from his Task Force. If the Task Force is empty, he draws one from the Barracks. The Marines play cards as in a normal skirmish. If a player does not have a Marine or a weapon, and no other player has any extra to give him, that player may draw a Marine and/or a weapon from the Ready Room and/or the Weapons Locker. The skirmish is conducted with the following exceptions:

- The Marine player who rescued Princess Ryan adds five to his total skirmish value (reflecting morale and the fact that the princess is a mean shot with a pistol).
- The Marines win a tie.
- If the Marines win, the game is over as a Marine victory.
- If the Marines lose, they must move directly back into the Royal Suite to try to free the Princess again. They may do this normally provided they have at least one time chip remaining. They may regroup if they can pay the time chips to regroup. They may not declare a *second* "Do or Die!"

Just as the Marines get only one "Do or Die!", so the Guard player gets only one "Banzai!" attack.

The "Banzai!" attack can be invoked in a game without a Guard player as well, with the Guard card coming from the Barracks.

In scored games, each Marine player gains five points and the Guard player loses five points when the "Banzai!" is invoked. This bonus/penalty is scored regardless of whether the Marines or Guards win.

PERSONALITIES

Each player in the game has a Personality. Personalities are characters in the novel now being written by the designer of *PRINCESS RYAN'S STAR MARINES*. While Marines and Guards in your hand may change, your Personality remains constant throughout the game (never dying—you are never at risk). The Personality represents your faction in the Marine and Guard camps. The Marine side has three Imperial, two Support and eight Marine Personalities. The Guard side has five Personalities (see insert between pages 32 and 33).

Personalities are drawn at the start of the game. Each Marine player draws from the Imperial, Marine and Support Personalities Deck. The Guard player draws from the Guardian Deck. In multiple-hand games, each Marine player draws a Personality for each hand he is operating. In games with three or more Marine players, the Guard player draws a second Personality (he thus has two to use).

Personalities are placed face up in front of the player. When the power listed on the Personality card is used, turn the card upside down. Each many not be reused until the start of each Regroup Phase when all Personalities are turned face up.

The use of personalities gives the Marines a slight advantage, even with the Guard Personalities in play. If this option is used, each Marine player loses five points.

★

PRINCESS RYAN'S STAR MARINES SCORE SHEET

		POINTS	TOTAL	Score & Ranking
M	Marines Win	add 20		20 or Less: Target
A	If There Was a Guard Player	add 10		21-30: Boot
R	Time Chips Left	add 3 each		31-40: Grunt
I	Marines in Your Hand	add 3 each		41-50: Veteran
N	Weapons, Dispatches & PP in your hand	add 2 each		51-70: Raider
E	You Rescued the Princess	add 10		71-90: Hero
	SUBTOTAL (add all of the above)			91+: Hero with Clusters
	Used "Do or Die!"	minus 5		
	Marine in Sick Bay, Morgue, Holding Tank	minus 1 each		
	TOTAL FOR MARINE PLAYER			
G	Guard Won	add 15		
U	Dispatches in Guard's Hand	add 1 each		
A	Marine in Sick Bay, Morgue, Holding Tank	add 1 each		
R	Time Chips USED by Marines	add 1 each		
D	Marines Used "Do or Die!"	add 5		
	Marines Win BUT Fail to Guess Cell	add 5		
	TOTAL FOR GUARD PLAYER			

OPERATION RESCUE

PANZER LEADER Situation 31-6

by F. Pierce Eichelberger

Just 30 days before the end of the war in Europe, Force Baum was ordered by General George S. Patton to rescue several hundred prisoners of war (POWs) held at the Hammelburg POW camp. The camp was 60 miles behind enemy lines, with three German Divisions standing before the 307 American GIs sent to conduct the rescue. When the raiding force got to the camp they found over 1,500 POWs, not the several hundred they expected. There was not enough transport to take all of the prisoners to Allied lines.

The real reason for the operation was to rescue Patton's son-in-law, John K. Waters, who was held as a prisoner there (he was captured in Tunisia in 1943).

During the attack Waters was shot by a German guard and was unable to be evacuated when the column left the camp. It was 20 years after the war that the truth about the mission's objective was finally known.

After Patton's death, an excerpt of his personal journal appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* in August 1948. He wrote, "I can say this—that throughout the campaign in Europe I know of no error I made except that of failing to send a combat command to Hammelburg." When Creighton Abrams was given this mission by General William Hoge, he stated, "Fifty miles is a long way to go, sir, for that small a force. If we have to go that far, I want my whole command to go. Hell, a combat command can go anywhere."

Again *PANZER LEADER* demonstrates a solid framework for handling additional scenarios (a source of its continued popularity). Note the additional Jeep counters, POW counters and the Ferdinand tank destroyer counter provided on the insert.

The versatility of the Jeep was critical to the war effort. Allied Supreme Commander Dwight D. Eisenhower referred proudly to the Jeep in a speech after the war. "The Jeep, the Dakota airplane (C-47 or DC-3) and the landing craft were the three tools that won the war."

FURTHER READING

Baron, Richard, Abe Baum and Richard Gildhurst. *Raid!* G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, NY, 1981. An in-depth story by two that were there.

Denfeld, D. and Michael Fry. *Indestructible Jeep.* Ballantine Books, New York, NY, 1973. Military history of the Jeep from its design to its use in all theaters of World War II.

Fetherston, David. *Jeep.* Motorbooks International, Osceola, WI, 1995. The Jeep story from design through modern versions of the war-horse.

Margry, Karel. *After the Battle,* No. 91, "The Hammelburg Raid." London, UK, 1996. Great maps and pictures of sites important to the Hammelburg raid.

Toland, John. *The Last 100 Days.* Bantam Books, New York, 1967. Toland devotes a chapter to the Hammelburg raid.

Whiting, Charles. *48 Hours to Hammelburg.* PBJ Books, New York, NY, 1982. Paperback treatment of the raid.

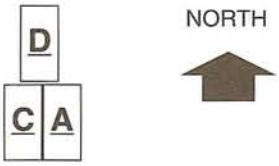
★

SITUATION NO. 31-6

RAID ON HAMMELBURG

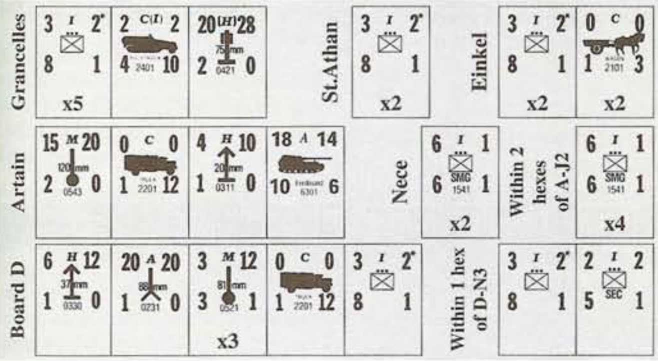
MARCH 26-28, 1945: Elements of 37th Tank Battalion and the 10th Armored Infantry are sent 60 miles behind enemy lines to rescue an expected 300 Allied officers held as prisoners of war.

MAPBOARD ORIENTATION

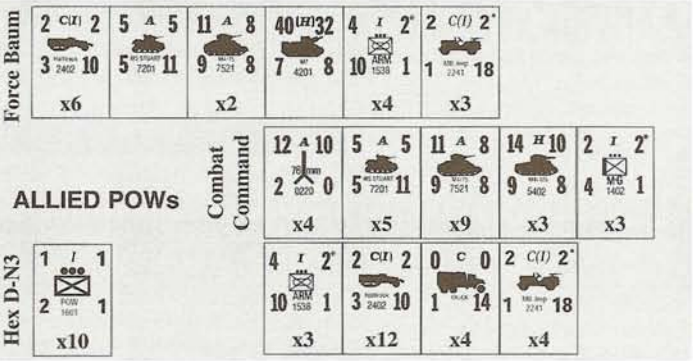


AVAILABLE FORCES

GERMAN


Grancelles
3 I 2* / 8 1 / x5
2 C(I) 2 / 4 2401 10
20 (H) 28 / 75mm / 2 0421 0
St.Athan
3 I 2* / 8 1 / x2
Einkel
3 I 2* / 8 1 / x2
0 C 0 / 1 2101 3 / x2
Artain
15 M 20 / 120mm / 2 0543 0
0 C 0 / 1 2201 12
4 H 10 / 20mm / 1 0311 0
18 A 14 / 10 Ferdinand 6301 6
Nece
6 I 1 / 6 SMG 1541 1 / x2
Within 2 hexes of A-J2
6 I 1 / 6 SMG 1541 1 / x4
Board D
6 H 12 / 37mm / 1 0330 0
20 A 20 / 88mm / 1 0231 0
3 M 12 / 81mm / 3 0521 1 / x3
0 C 0 / 1 2201 12
3 I 2* / 8 1
Within 1 hex of D-N3
3 I 2* / 8 1
2 I 2 / 5 SEC 1

ALLIED


Force Baum
2 C(I) 2 / 3 2402 10 / x6
5 A 5 / 5 M5 STUART 7201 11
11 A 8 / 9 7521 8 / x2
40 (H) 32 / 7 4201 8
4 I 2* / 10 ARM 1538 1 / x4
2 C(I) 2* / 1 2241 18 / x3
ALLIED POWs
Combat Command
12 A 10 / 76mm / 2 0220 0 / x4
5 A 5 / 5 M5 STUART 7201 11 / x5
11 A 8 / 9 7521 8 / x9
14 H 10 / 9 5402 8 / x3
2 I 2* / 4 MG 1402 1 / x3
Hex D-N3
1 I 1 / 2 POW 1601 1 / x10
4 I 2* / 10 ARM 1538 1 / x3
2 C(I) 2 / 3 2402 10 / x12
0 C 0 / 1 14 / x4
2 C(I) 2* / 1 2241 18 / x4

SETUP

GERMAN: Set up first in locations indicated. See insert for Ferdinand.

ALLIED: On turn 1, each unit starts at and moves out of hex A-A3. See insert for Model MB Jeeps and POWs. Force Baum alone was historical force. Option: Use instead the combat command.

SPECIAL RULES

1. All POW counters are stacked on board D, hex N3, which is treated as a town hex and represents the POW camp. Allied POWs cannot move or fight until another Allied unit moves adjacent to camp at D-N3.
2. Armored infantry units and POWs may ride on Sherman tanks or in halftracks.
3. German units on Board D cannot move until Allied units move onto Board D. German units on Boards A and C cannot move until Allied units are within two hexes (reflecting the "garrison detachment" status of these non-frontline units).
4. Smoke shell concentrations are permitted by both sides.

(Optional: Jeeps may also transport POWs.)

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Allied player wins by moving at least one POW off the southeast corner of Board A (hexes A10 through H1). German wins by avoiding Allied victory.

TURN RECORD TRACK

ALLIES move first	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Opponents Wanted

Avalon Hill does not vouch for the character or business practices of any advertisers.

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.

CA: Looking for opponent for PBEM TRC. esirko@cs.ucr.edu Eric W. Sirko, 801 Navajo Dr., Riverside, CA 92507, (909) 369-3742.

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.

MI: HELP! Need opponents for PZB, 3R4, HOW, ACV, Samurai, TTN, SJW, HCR, RTG, SIV, SLB, 1776, and others. John Hattrem, 1251 Kimberly Dr., Lansing, MI 48912, (517) 372-3154.

MI: FTF for any Civil War games. Esp. American Civil War series. ASL also. Play most games. SOJ, PB, PL, BZK or you teach me! Leigh Cole, 15598 Garrison Ln. #2, Southgate, MI 48195, (313) 285-1131

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 opp. wtd in NY 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: Want to buy Chancellorsville, Stalingrad (not the computerized version) and Afrika Korps. David Bassanelli, P.O. Box 724, Ithaca, NY 14851.

NY: FTF HRC, 1776, REN, LBG, MAC, PBM MAC(1980)—9 players needed FTF TRI, miniatures: microarmor, ancient renaissance. Seeking Baron's Desert Tracks. Stuart J. Schoenberger, POB 510, Jamaica, NY 11435-0510, (718) 523-4493.

NY: Opponents wanted for AH WWII era historical simulations. Contact Ray Joel, 30 Gemini Cir., Rochester, NY 14606, (716) 247-6943.

NY: PBM Adult The Last Blitzkrieg by 3W. Rated or not. Albert Thomas, 120 Kimberly Dr., West, Syracuse, NY 13219, (315) 488-1943.

NY: Seeking gamers for TAC, SOA, TPS, SUB. For sale: many out of print games and Generals. Call or write. John Caccioppoli, 84-24 98th St., Woodhaven, NY 11421-1735, (718) 805-8737.

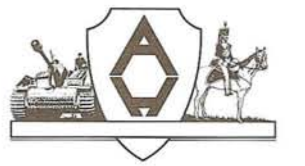
NY: Looking for FTF opponent for SJW, HCR, RTG. PBM GE88, AFK rated. William Vell, 2810 Moreland St., Yorktown Hts., NY 10598, (914) 245-4636.

OH: Need to improve my play of DIP. Would like a seven-man game of DIP. Sean O'Donnell, 126 S. Park, Oberlin, OH 44074.

PA: Opponents Wanted: Looking for an adult experienced gamer for FTF in a group setting. Walter H. Dippel, 4033 Valley Vue Dr., Gibsonia, PA 15044, (412) 443-5737.

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.

AVALONCON



Ads for roommate and travel arrangements are free.

CLUBS

AZ: Phoenix Wargaming Club meets monthly. Call for info. Also looking for a copy of Caesar's Legions. Warren Tiberius Day, 3635 E. Bloomfield Rd., Phoenix, AZ 85032, 404-2955.

CA: Quake Coast Gamers meet once a month in San Jose for adult gaming. All games except RPG's. For information e-mail hexdude@aol.com. Charles Bahl, CA

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.

CT: The Connecticut Game Club has been hosting board games, card games and miniajtures for over nineteen years. Anyone interested in attending our monthly meetings contact CGC at (203) 332-0410, (email CGCSBS@aol.com) or write POB 403, Fairfield, CT 06430.

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: ASL played most Saturdays at the Bunker. Veterans and novices welcome for AREA rated play, campaigns, and playtesting for our newsletter: *Dispatches from the Bunker.* Vic Provost, 1454 northampton St., Holyoke, MA 01040.

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, LeMarshalate, 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 to5 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.

TX: Central ASL club meets regularly to play the best game in the world. Call Matt at (512) 280-8414. We are active and fanatic. 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.

FOREIGN

Australia: Opponents wanted for 3R4, A3R and MAC. Pawel (Paul) J. Dabrowski, 66 Marshall Ave., Clayton N. Victoria Australia, tel/fax: + 61 3 95442101.

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 Hanker, 4532 S.E. Marine Dr., Burnaby, BC VSJ 3G2, (604) 433-6332.

Japan: AHIKS 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.

South Africa: Wanted: One edition ea. '89, '90 ASL Annual–Good Condition. Will pay well. Phone: 0027-031-465-7395. J.M. Tosh, 11 Glendale Green, 1 Glendale Rd., Belair Durbin, Kwazulu-Natal 4094 South Africa.

FOR SALE

CA: Boardgames Sale: BZK, 1914, Stalingrad complete, good to excellent condition SST magazines with games 41-46, 51-58. Make offer. Ronald Rogers, 6827 Creekside St., Redding, CA 96001, (916) 246-5626.

PA: 125+ games for sale. Send SASE for list. Walter H. Dippel, 4033 Valley Vue Dr., Gibsonia, PA 15044.

MD: Unopened: Starship Troopers (1976)k Dune (1979), SUB, Dragonhunt, CMS, WPS. Ex. Cond.: SUB, KGM w/var., FPR, B-17, Conquistador, G'64 and others, plus computer games. Contact: Michael Schofield, (301) 294-6282 or (301) 294-7549 (FAX).

TN: Original SQL, two modules, 8 trays of pieces, dozen boards. Also original WS&IM. John M. Broderick, Jackson, TN, johnmb@usit.net.

History of the World

with Personality

by Michael Welker

So your gaming group has been enjoying *HISTORY OF THE WORLD (HWD)* now for some time? The players enjoy the broad outline of the eons passing before them in an evening. The game offers politics and warfare, population expansions and snapshots of culture, albeit in an abstract way that keeps play simple yet exciting. The game can also teach a bit of history and geography, though it is, of course, not intended to be a thorough tome of critical analysis.

Still, perhaps you would enjoy adding a little spice to a game with a few new event cards. I am a teacher, and I can't resist the teaching value in *HWD*, so I developed a small sample of personalities to situate in particular epochs and geographic locations.

This variant offers one set among many possibilities by using the game mechanics associated with event cards. These Personality Event Cards (PECs) are those I deem as plausible due to the impact certain historical persons have had on their cultures, leaders or history itself. Admittedly, the list is limited. The criteria for selecting persons on the basis of their influence is entirely subjective. I experimented with a broad set of PECs (over 25) and our wise editor suggested to me that I limit them to the most significant (interesting?) personalities. We played with some variations and decided to cast our votes for the best ones. Thus, our 13 cards are the ones we thought would be the best for this variant. The play of PECs adds a little more detail to the game without altering the mechanics.

I invite others to develop their own lists, though I suggest a few guidelines based upon my own group's playtesting: (1) keep the addition short to avoid confusion; (2) avoid emphasizing one epoch or a particular location on the map, thus maintaining some play balance; (3) adjudicate any anomalies that might arise by player vote.

Personality Event Cards may be altered, depending on your views of influential persons and the preferences of your own gaming group. This article presents mine for your enjoyment, along with a brief description of the person depicted by the event.

Use the printed cards on the insert of this magazine between pages 32 and 33. Shuffle the 13 cards into one event pile. At the outset of the game, each player draws one PEC along with normal event card draws, making a hand of ten cards, instead of nine. Generally, normal event card rules apply, except as herein noted.

- PECs do not count toward the two card per epoch limit on the play of event cards.
- Some cards are re-used by the same player during subsequent epochs.
- The great revolt inaugurated by Thomas Jefferson is played at the start of the turn of the player with the United States empire, no matter when the player played (or will play) his empire in Epoch VII.

WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?

EPOCH II

Lao-Tzu (604?-531? BC). Lao-Tzu, it is generally thought, wrote the most translated work in all the literature of China, the *Lao-Tzu* (also called *Tao-te Ching*). The book is the earliest document in the history of Taoism ("the Way"), one of the major philosophical/religious traditions which has shaped Chinese life and thought for more than 2,000 years. The Way emphasizes individuality, freedom, simplicity and a natural mysticism.

Confucius (551-479 BC). The greatest teacher in Chinese history, Confucius taught a humane philosophy that influenced the civilization of all of eastern Asia. Though Confucianism is commonly called a religion, it is rather a system of moral conduct, emphasizing the importance of goodness.

Buddha (563?-483? BC). More than 500 years before Christ was born and at about the same time that Confucius was teaching the Chinese how to lead the good life, a Hindu prince named Siddhartha Gautama (also Gotama) became famed in India for his holiness and love for all creatures. He was called the Buddha, meaning "the Enlightened One." Many persons believed in his teachings while he lived. After his death, temples were built in his honor, and his religion spread through a great part of Asia. Today some 255 million people profess the Buddhist faith.

EPOCH III

Jesus Christ (5? BC-AD 30). The "Anointed One" of Christian tradition and the lowly born Hebrew of the tribe of David, Jesus has been the accepted incarnation of God by followers of the Christian faith for nearly 20 centuries. His life is chronicled in the four Gospels, which emphasize his ministry to the Jews and eventual betrayal by a disciple (Judas Iscariot). After a hasty trial, he was condemned as a blasphemer deserving death on a cross. His triumph over death is asserted by the New Testament. Belief in Christ's resurrection from the dead became the focus of Christianity, the religion that developed around his teachings.

Plato (428?-348? BC). The influence of Plato has been persistent and unbroken in Western thought. Plato was born in Athens circa 428 BC and grew up during the decades of conflict with Sparta and other city-states (the Peloponnesian War). His parents, Ariston and Perictione, were one of the most distinguished and aristocratic couples in the city. Probably through them, Plato came to know Socrates. Plato recounts the forced suicide of Socrates in 399 BC in his "dialogue," *The Apology*. Sometime after the death of Socrates, Plato decided to devote himself to philosophy and teaching. He opened a school called The Academy and remained with it as teacher, with two brief interruptions, until his death in about 348 BC.

EPOCH IV

Muhammad (AD 570?-632). Muhammad is the founder of one of the world's major religions. He was also the founder of a state by his unification of Arabia. Within decades after his death his followers sent out armies that conquered the whole Middle East, North Africa, and Spain. The religion Muhammad founded became one of the most potent cultural forces in the world. In the 20th century it plays a decisive role in the politics of the Middle East, Africa, and Central Asia.

Irene (AD 752?-803) was the first woman to rule the Byzantine Empire. Upon the death in 780 of her husband, Leo IV, she seized power and then planned to unite the Eastern and Western empires by marrying Charlemagne. Her plans were interrupted by her son, Constantine VI. She blinded and later murdered him. In 802, she was deposed and exiled by Nicephorus, who was her successor.

EPOCH V

Francis of Assisi (AD 1182-1226). St. Francis was born at Assisi, in central Italy, in 1182. In 1202, after a year as a prisoner of war with a serious illness, Francis tired of worldly pleasure. He sold his property and gave the money to the church. The young man began to tend the poor and the lepers. When his father disinherited him, Francis supported himself by repairing chapels around Assisi. At last, throwing aside even his shoes, he lived in absolute poverty. During this time, he founded the Order of Friars Minor and the Poor Clares, as well as a third order for secular persons "in the world." Some historians credit this Third Order movement with the spread of peace, for Francis maintained that the lay person should never possess weapons.

Thomas Aquinas (AD 1225?-74). The Roman Catholic church regards St. Thomas Aquinas as its greatest theologian and philosopher. Pope John XXII canonized him in 1323, and Pius V declared him a doctor of the church in 1567. Leo XIII made him patron of Roman Catholic schools in 1880. Thomas held that there are two sources of knowledge: revelation (theology) and reason (philosophy). His literary output was enormous, illustrated by the fact that at times he dictated to several scribes on different subjects. His chief works are *Summa Contra Gentiles* and *Summa Theologiae*, which form the classical systematization of Roman Catholic theology. Thomas revived the reading of Aristotle by Northern Europeans, giving them a renewed intellectualism.

EPOCH VI

Martin Luther (AD 1483-1546). The Protestant Reformation in Germany was inaugurated by Martin Luther in 1517 when he nailed to the door of the church in Wittenberg a list of 95 theses, or propositions. It was his intention to reform the medieval Roman Catholic church, but the firm resistance of the church to Luther's challenge, instead, led to permanent divisions in the structure of Western Christianity.

Marco Polo (AD 1254-1323?). In 1298, a Venetian adventurer named Marco Polo wrote a fascinating book about his travels in the Far East. Men read his accounts of Oriental riches and became eager to find sea routes to China, Japan and the East Indies. Today, geographers agree that Marco's book is amazingly accurate.

EPOCH VII

Thomas Jefferson (AD 1743-1826). The third president of the United States, Thomas Jefferson authored the Declaration of Independence and the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom. In an age of great men, Jefferson was among the most remarkable. Known for his wide-ranging curiosity on many subjects, his preoccupation with human rights set the groundwork for the grand political experiment known as representative democracy.

Karl Marx (AD 1818-83). Marx was known during his lifetime only to a small group of socialists and revolutionaries. His writings, including *Capital* and *The Communist Manifesto* are central to the communist ideology concerning economics, philosophy and politics. His ideas spread throughout the world, inciting revolutions in Asia, Europe, Africa and South America.

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The Gaming of History

by David Spangler

I occasionally teach at an experimental school, the Puget Sound Community School (PSCS) near Seattle, which combines classes with apprenticeships and community service. Unlike a normal junior high or high school, the curriculum is created each quarter through a creative process involving the students, teachers and parents, and is strongly dependent on the initiative and interests of the kids. The program thus incorporates the kind of self-directed learning that one might normally find at a college level and is open to innovation.

This past quarter, a number of the students asked for an introductory course in Western history. I volunteered to create it. Rather than simply make it a traditional lecture course, however, I wanted something that would engage the kids imaginatively and give them a sense both of the sweep of events and of a love of history.

I have been an avid gamer for as long as I can remember, a passion that found an exciting new outlet when I discovered my first Avalon Hill games back in the late 1950s. Avalon Hill's advertising asked if I could "change history." It was a challenge that I couldn't resist then and still can't, some forty years and hundreds of games later. It was this challenge that I wanted to present to my students—the challenge of learning about history by seeing if and how they could change it.

I called the course, "The Gaming of History." My objective was to first give the kids a sense of the sweep of world history and then to focus on one particular period. I chose the Renaissance because it was such a pivotal time in the development of Western civilization. It also resembles the post-modern era in which we live, in the introduction of new ideas and discoveries, in the challenge of facing an expanding world and the encounter with new cultures, and in the political and economic ferment. It would enable me to explore with the kids both some of the seminal ideas and events that led to the modern age and some of the changes, opportunities and challenges that we are encountering now.

Of course, my other main criteria was finding multi-player games that would serve in a classroom setting. It wouldn't do any good to pick an historical period for which there were no suitable games (or any games at all, though by now just about every historical setting has been covered in some game by someone somewhere). In this respect, three Avalon Hill products fit perfectly the criteria: *HISTORY OF THE WORLD*, *AGE OF RENAISSANCE* and *MACHIAVELLI*. The first provides the sweep of world history in broad, brush strokes, and is an easy game for beginners to learn. The second focuses on the economic nature of the Renaissance and highlights certain key historical figures, inventions and events. The third gives a sense of the infighting among the city states of Italy and the struggles with France and Austria during this period, as well as providing the kids (ranging in age from thirteen to sixteen) with a wonderful opportunity to practice diplomacy, backstabbing and negotiation, all important talents for a teenager!

The whole class was twelve weeks long with two hours for each class session, meeting once a week. We spent four weeks on each game. During this time I assigned the students reports and research projects based on elements in the game itself. So for instance, while playing *HISTORY OF THE WORLD*, each student had to pick one of the empires in Epochs I through IV and write a report about it. Likewise, while playing *AGE OF RENAISSANCE*, students did both oral and written reports on historical personages represented in the game or on inventions or events important to that period.

PSCS has small class sizes generally (classes are really more like seminars in most cases), and mine had six students, a perfect number for these multi-player games. Most of these six had previous gaming experience, but a couple did not. None, however, had played multi-player games like these. Most of their gaming experience had either been two-player boardgames or, primarily, role-playing games and collectable card games like *Magic: The Gathering*. So I had fun myself introducing them to a whole new gaming experience.

This was my first extended experience using boardgames as teaching tools in a class. (Some years ago, as part of a year-long class for adults on the dynamics of cultural change, I did a one-day seminar using Avalon Hill's *ADVANCED CIVILIZATION*, monitoring eight simultaneous games involving twenty-five students). Sometimes I played in the games with the kids, particularly if someone was missing for a particular session, but mostly I took the role of a game master, adjudicating rule questions and the like. I found, though, that my love of gaming sometimes outweighed my teaching role, and I would get involved with the kids in a particular game and forget that I had also planned to give a talk during that class period!

We used the first class session in each four-week block to do a trial run of the game, not intending to finish or produce a winner (just to learn how to play). The students received a copy of the rules in advance and were expected to be familiar with them on that first session, but needless to say, there were many rule questions that arose, particularly with some of the subtleties in *AGE OF RENAISSANCE*. However, the kids caught on quickly and by the second session were generally playing like veterans. The other three weeks were used to play a campaign game, with game positions being recorded and saved between class sessions.

In all three games, where there was a choice between basic and advanced rules or optional rules, we opted for the basic, simplest version. This was done mostly because of time constraints; we wanted to get into the games as quickly and easily as we could. However, we talked about the advanced and optional rules and what they represented or were intended to simulate, even if we didn't have time to implement them.

HISTORY OF THE WORLD was a good introductory game and more than served the purpose for which I had intended it. I made it very clear that the game would not replicate history, but it did give an overall flavor of the appearance and growth of various empires over the past five thousand years or so. The structure of the game itself, with its division into epochs and with empires in a particular epoch playing in the order in which they historically appeared, was very helpful as a teaching tool. The research projects helped give more depth to the students about a particular empire. As for the game play itself, the kids enjoyed it a great deal, once they mastered the concept that pieces were placed and not moved. Several of them brought a *RISK*-type mentality to the game and expected to start an empire and then sweep across the board, conquering other players. It took a couple of sessions for some of them to adjust to a very different playing style and also to the concept that you were identified with a color and not with a particular empire. Yet, once they grasped the particular elegance and style of this game, they all enjoyed it. They did express a desire for more direct player interaction (as in "When can I betray my allies?")

AGE OF RENAISSANCE introduced more of a sense of actual movement and conquest and more diplomacy. It is a more complex game than *HISTORY OF THE WORLD* and required more of a learning curve for the class. It, too, had different concepts that had to be appreciated, such as the fact that the units that were sweeping across the face of Europe and the Mediterranean were not armies but traders, merchants and the like. Also, it took awhile for it to really sink in that winning had nothing to do with controlling the most territories (at least not directly) but with acquiring advances. Likewise, the subtlety of card play was not quickly grasped. This game was a stretch for some of the kids, and it didn't really get into full stride until the last couple of sessions, when suddenly everything clicked.

For the kids, it was the hardest to learn because it introduced game concepts that were very new to them (and, truth be told, the manual is not the easiest to read and could have been better organized to get the game ideas across). It presented game objectives (civilizational development) that were different from the usual territorial conquest goals of many strategic games. This was one of the reasons I chose this game. I appreciate the interaction between inventions, economics and civilization advances, and I used it as a foundation to communicate many of the points I wished to make in the class. The game, with its beautiful cards and its economic model, provided opportunities for both historical research and discussion. I felt it was the best game for the purposes I had intended, precisely because of its depth and quality of presentation.

Still, the spirit of competition being what it is, it was *MACHIAVELLI* that the kids really took to heart. Given the option of using the advanced and optional rules, the students decided to keep the game play as simple as possible in order to concentrate on the diplomatic aspects. This they really enjoyed and conducted very well, conceiving wonderful strategies of alliance and deception.

To learn the game, we played the initial scenario, "The Balance of Power." However, as our campaign game, we picked scenario three, Struggle for Dominance (Part Two), in part because I found a Series Replay of Struggle for Dominance (Part One) in *The GENERAL*, volume 30, number 5, which I copied and passed out to the class as an example of play. I didn't want to simply use the same scenario; students might be tempted to simply copy the moves described in the magazine. Part Two was similar enough that good insights could be gained from the magazine article, and different enough that new strategies would have to be applied.

As I write this, the campaign still has one more session to go, and at the moment, Austria is near collapse, Milan is in the lead in central and northern Italy, the Turks are making an end-run up the western side of the board through the Western Mediterranean and the Gulf of Lions to strike at the underbelly of the French Empire, and everyone else is locked into a struggle in the center and south of Italy, with the Papal player (now wishing he had agreed to use the optional rule of Excommunication) trying to establish and hold a dominant position there. Unfortunately, the deadline for this article came sooner than the class ended so I don't know who will ultimately win. (As I am currently playing the Turks on behalf of a student who had to leave the class early, I have let it slip that everyone had better be facing Mecca at the end of the game or there will be a lot of failing grades in this class! Hey, isn't that what *MACHIAVELLI* is all about: hardball diplomacy?)

If I do this class again next year, and I am seriously thinking about it as there is more interest in the school, I will know better how to arrange it. For one thing, trying to do three games in the time we had proved too ambitious, especially with one as subtle and complex as *AGE OF RENAISSANCE*. We did not have enough time to really get into the games and into their relationship with the history they represent. Next time I will scale back and concentrate on two games at most. I would also like to explore some other periods. For example, a class on the westward expansion of the United States, the Indian Wars and the various tribal cultures of the Native Americans would be very interesting and would make interesting use of *GERONIMO*.

The fact is that the diversity and richness of TAHGC's many games provide a plethora of wonderful tools to use in the gaming of history and in making the learning of our past as fun and exciting as one hopes the creation of our future may be as well.

Post Script: On the last day of school, we finished our *MACHIAVELLI* campaign. As it turned out, my threats of grading reprisals proved fruitless and hollow. My home territories were ruthlessly invaded and conquered by Papal fleets and armies (abetted by Florence and Austria). My jihad was countered by a crusade!

When the class ended, Milan controlled the most cities in the game (eleven) and recognized as the strongest player (and moral victor). The real winners, though, were all of us, who had a good time with the class—and TAHGC, as some students new to wargaming enthusiastically determined they would keep playing these games in the months ahead.

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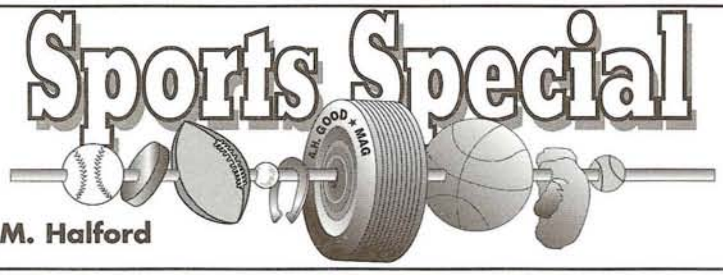
Sports Special



By Robert M. Halford

PUTTING THE H BACK INTO YOUR OFFENSE

I have spiced up my game of *STATIS-PRO FOOTBALL* by adding a new position and a few plays and options. I hope you will enjoy these changes as much as I have.

H-BACK

The H-back position uses the empty squares of the offensive player grid, on the left between RB1 and FL2 and on the right between RB3 and FL1. The H-back is considered to be part of the backfield. If a run play is called, the blocking value of the player comes into play. This position will be covered by defensive boxes G and I, with the G defender covering the left H-back position and the I defender covering the right H-back position. With this addition to the formation, a player may run five receivers at a time.

WIDE RECEIVER SCREEN

This new play calls for the receiver to be in the H-back position. The receiving player also must have a rushing column with some kind of yards on his card. Thus, not all receivers can run this play. This screen is determined in the same manner as a screen play to a running back.

QUARTERBACK DRAW

This play uses the rushing statistics of the quarterback. Once called, the offense must wait four plays before calling it again.

AUDIBLES

After the offensive and defensive calls have been made, the offensive team may change the play (but not the players on the field). The defensive team may then also change its play (but not players). This is only allowed on third or fourth down and only once per quarter.

KICK RETURNS

In over 100 games, not once have I seen a return for a touchdown. To change this, on punt and kickoff returns, if the runback number is a 1, then flip another fast action card (FAC) and if that is a 1 or a 2, the return is for a TD.

WIND

We have added wind to field goal kicks. The wind is either in your face or at your back (wind direction should be determined before the coin toss at the start of the game). When attempting a field goal, make a wind check. Flip the next FAC and use the run number as the strength of the wind (which is the number of yards added or subtracted from the kick length). We also found that field goals are unrealistically easy in the normal rules. Therefore, we add only twelve yards to the FG attempt, instead of 17.

TIME

In order to cut the playing time of the game by about a third, we changed the way the clock runs. Now, ten-second plays last 20 seconds, except in the last two minutes of the first half and the last five minutes in the second half. ★

➛➛➛➛➛ *(from p.17)*

benefit may be to cause the American to spend an impulse and supply rescuing the 82nd. Still, the threat is cheap to produce and most of the units on the peninsula are too far from the action to do anything else in the early turns anyway.

The units from Barneville, St. Saveur and Les Pieux should not threaten Pont l'Abbe but instead should regroup toward Carentan each evening. If an emergency develops, they can move one area during the day and still reach Carentan on time. Whether or not the Germans ultimately clear Pont l'Abbe, they must keep a small reserve in Valognes to defend against threats to Pont l'Abbe or Montebourg. Many a German player has lost the game by forgetting that 91/1057 is not invulnerable, even when accompanied by 101 NW. The Americans may not tip you off by bombarding before hitting you at 15-8 and romping across the peninsula to victory.

I was quite intrigued by Greenwood's suggestion that 91/6 FS regroup to Catz. It is true that it will not be hit by a bombardment of Carentan, but so what? Its absence may obviate the need for a preliminary bombardment of Carentan in the first place. I don't really see how the Carentan garrison can achieve a decent DV without it. The unit's counterattack ability into Isigny is interesting, but will require the assistance of a weather change to be really effective. A 6-5 attack against spent Americans contesting Isigny could work, but at what cost?

The two units in Coutances provide the German with some interesting options on the 6th and 7th, as they can be used to shore up Carentan, Isigny-Foret or the Villars-Tilly region depending on need. More on these units later.

OMAHA BEACH—STRATEGY

The Americans on Omaha are charged with reaching Carentan to assist with its capture, and therefore must take Isigny and Catz on the way. Foret de Cerisy is an attractive target because it can be entered without crossing a bridge, but like other Bocage areas, it can easily become a quagmire if the German can afford three or more units to defend it. Generally the Americans should be satisfied with merely contesting Foret and shortening their line. Bayeux should be left to the British, because the Omaha force suffers the most time pressure of any Allied group. Maly's suggestion that, as a general rule, the Americans should contest St. Lô seems incorrect. If US forces get into St. Lô, they are already doing well enough. If they can reach St. Lô from Foret de Cerisy, they already have their "extra" VP (beyond the basic plan) and a very safe rear. If they are in Isigny, their job is to head for Catz, not fool around in St. Lô (unless, of course, it is so weak that it can be captured outright). It is true that, by contesting St. Lô, the Americans may be able to take Foret more easily, but this ties up units that are needed for the drive to Carentan. On the other hand, with either Tilly or Villars in the bag, the Allies no longer need Carentan and can focus on surrounding and capturing Foret for the tenth VP (contesting St. Lô and Balleroi).

OMAHA BEACH—US TACTICS

Regarding air bombardment on June 6, Maly and I agree completely. Only fresh CA should be attacked, in the following order of priority: Omaha, Juno/Gold/Sword, Port-en-Bessin, Grandcamp. No other choices are even close. Omaha gets first priority, because it is the most critical beach, and a big roll nets four spent units. Juno and Gold bear on two beaches each, but Sword is more critical, making these a tossup. Port-en-Bessin not only bears on two beaches but is easier to flip than Grandcamp, which contains a FLAK unit, which outweighs the chance of flipping three units.

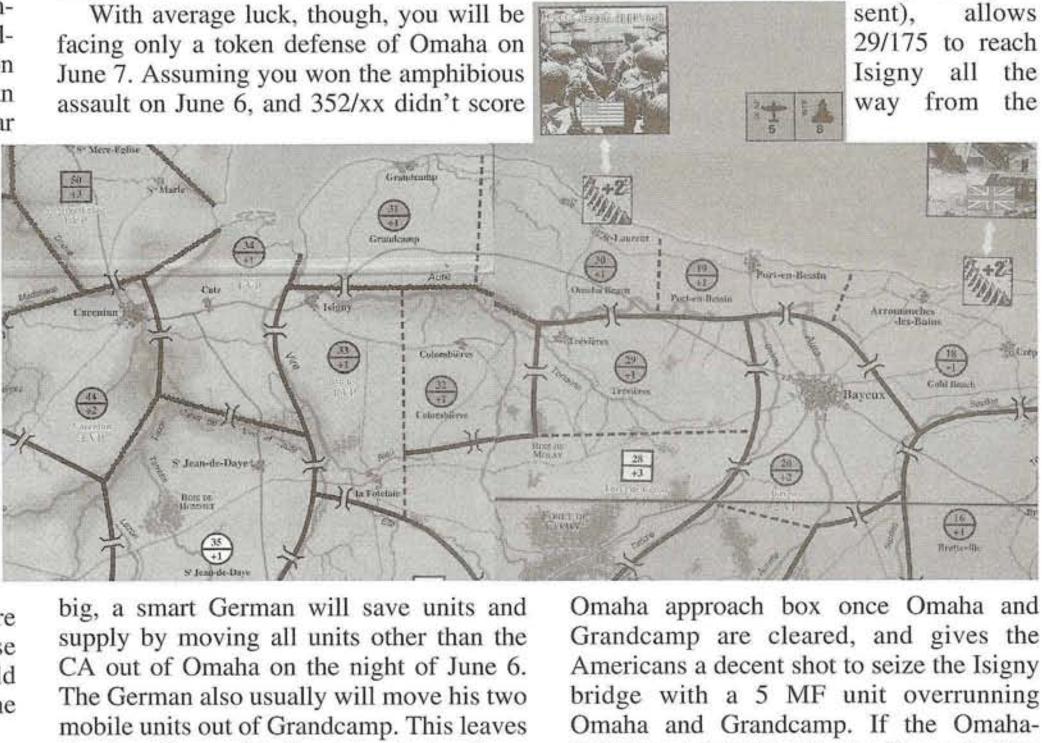
The initial assault on Omaha will depend on the preparatory bombardments. As Maly notes, against a completely spent defense and no available coastal interdiction, it probably makes sense to land just the 1st Division and the Rangers, assaulting at 12-7. You have only a 5.4 per cent chance of losing (which you can and should re-roll if necessary). Attacking at 14-7 (by adding in the two regiments of the 29th Division) gives you less than a ten per cent chance to clear the beach anyway. On the other hand, an attack by the 1st Division and the Rangers allows for one regiment of the 29th Division to clear the beach and the other to advance into Trévières, Port-en-Bessin or even Grandcamp. Note that (a) killing either the Grandcamp or Port-en-Bessin CA may give up the three-unit "hat trick" on June 7, and (b) if you contest Grandcamp without clearing it, you make it easy for the German to blow the all-important Isigny bridge. If you can induce the German to reinforce Omaha from Grandcamp you have already won the battle, because the two mobile Grandcamp units are sorely needed elsewhere. Even if the 352/xx remains fresh after the initial bombardments, you should consider withholding at least one brigade of the 29th Division from the initial assault, so that the German will be reluctant to fire the artillery (for fear of losing the beach on June 6). Moreover, if the German needs to use Impulse 0 elsewhere, your follow-up assault may flip 352/xx before it attacks.

In any event, the American should take reasonable steps to ensure that the initial amphibious assault is at no worse than "+3," if possible. Accordingly, if two or three fresh CA are available to interdict the amphibious assault, be conservative and come ashore with all units. Nothing is worse than losing on Omaha, spending the Advantage, and losing again. Speaking of the Advantage, it has only three uses on June 6: the initial assaults on Omaha and Sword, and a successful German seizure of the Montebourg bridge. Because Omaha is the highest priority, you should roll the assault on Omaha *before* the assault on Sword.

I believe Maly's concern about the vulnerability of the two US artillery regiments to bombardment by 352/xx is somewhat overstated. With the 1st Division, the Rangers and one regiment of the 29th Division already ashore, the US artillery does not present an extra target unless the 352/xx rolls "+4" or better (only a 16 per cent chance). Accordingly, I would generally bring both artillery units ashore with the first follow-up assault along with one regiment of the 29th. If both regiments of the 29th are already ashore from the initial assault, the chance of the 352/xx hitting the US artillery is reduced to less than ten per cent. Therefore, bring the artillery units ashore as soon as possible. If they come ashore with assaulting infantry conducting a non-mandatory assault, they are not disrupted even if the assault fails. While the Allies have less to do on D-Day than the Germans, they still need five or six impulses to get everyone ashore efficiently. Don't waste an impulse.

If you lose on Omaha, re-roll. Or, if 352/xx disrupts all or most of your units, don't despair. Rather than make weak attacks with your few fresh units on June 7, wait for your force to repair itself and use your impulses elsewhere. As you will get the benefit of at least one overrun on June 8 anyway, you don't gain much by clearing Omaha on June 7. The Rangers come in handy on June 8, if Omaha is still contested. Of course, if the situation gets really desperate, the British can help by clearing Port-en-Bessin so that some of the spent/disrupted Americans can regroup there and make room for an assault on June 8 by the US 2nd Division.

With average luck, though, you will be facing only a token defense of Omaha on June 7. Assuming you won the amphibious assault on June 6, and 352/xx didn't score big, a smart German will save units and supply by moving all units other than the CA out of Omaha on the night of June 6. The German also usually will move his two mobile units out of Grandcamp. This leaves the American with the opportunity for a "hat trick," eliminating the three CA units in Grandcamp, Omaha and Port-en-Bessin in a single impulse. Make this move early in the day on June 7 to get the maximum benefit from the "+1" dice roll modifier (or the Advantage). However, the assault on Caen is a higher priority because the Advantage may well be lost there. Saving the "hat trick" until after the risky Caen assault allows the Allies to regain the Advantage.



A bit of "prep fire" may also be necessary prior to the overrun attempt. If the Grandcamp CA is fresh, the Americans should consider an air bombardment early in the day. If this works, the MF cost of entering Grandcamp is reduced to three. Thus, the 5 MF US infantry can overrun Omaha and Grandcamp and still retain a movement factor to scramble back to Omaha, avoiding the German LXXXIV Corps Artillery firing from Isigny (or attempt to seize the Isigny bridge if only one fresh unit is in Isigny). Also, the Rangers can now participate in the overrun attack on Grandcamp. Of course, the Rangers are stuck in Grandcamp at the end of the impulse, but any punishment they take from the LXXXIV Corps is meaningless, because they are withdrawn at the end of the day anyway. The WTF could also bombard Trévières, if the 352/xx is waiting there to take its revenge on US units assaulting Port-en-Bessin or the spent artillery remaining on Omaha. On the other hand, hitting Isigny with WTF is probably better, because, if the attack spends all German units, it prevents LXXXIV/xx from firing (if present), allows 29/175 to reach Isigny all the way from the Omaha approach box once Omaha and Grandcamp are cleared, and gives the Americans a decent shot to seize the Isigny bridge with a 5 MF unit overrunning Omaha and Grandcamp. If the Omaha-Trévières bridge is still standing, priorities change and the hat trick could include Trévières, instead of one of the other areas (depending again on German bombardment opportunities).

Having considered all this, one still must decide whether to try for the hat trick at all. If the Germans have the Advantage, it may be critical to recapture it. But if the Allies already have it, the hat trick may be paying too high a price for a mere Sunset dice roll modifier (DRM). The maximum overrun attack out of Omaha into both Grandcamp and Port-en-Bessin against a lone spent CA in Grandcamp and a lone fresh CA in Port-en-Bessin is very likely to succeed. Whether the move succeeds or fails, your Omaha force is all done for the turn (except for 29/175) and may be vulnerable to counterattack or at least bombardment. Even if 29/175 does make it into Isigny, it is vulnerable to counterattack as well, particularly on a weather change. On the other hand, if you hold back units from the Omaha overrun (or if the air bombardment on Grandcamp fails) your odds on the hat trick are worse (significantly worse if Grandcamp CA is fresh). If you fail to clear Grandcamp, you will have done yourself serious harm as the German gets a 67 per cent chance to blow the Isigny bridge on each attempt.

In summary, with the Advantage in hand, it may be wiser to press the attack on Isigny by holding back some units from the assault clearing Omaha than to try for the Sunset DRM by killing the three CA units. The Americans look silly if they decline the hat trick and the German succeeds in blowing the Isigny bridge. Yet, since the Americans will certainly clear Grandcamp, the chance is only one-third, in which case the Americans may be able to console themselves by assaulting Trévières instead. In summary, if holding the Advantage, the Americans should consider sending just one infantry unit into Port-en-Bessin after the overrun and treat the Sunset DRM as a pleasant surprise if it occurs.

Assuming all is going according to schedule, play on June 8 revolves mostly around the Grandcamp-Isigny bridge. If it is still standing, the number one US priority is to get across it. Bombardment may be an unaffordable luxury, because it permits an extra bridge demolition attempt. Once contested, Isigny is easy pickings, given its "+1" TEM and lack of defenders. If the bridge is blown, however, because the Americans cannot afford to spend impulses on low-odds repair attempts, they will have to go through Trévières and Columbieres, a time-consuming and dangerous process. The "+1" TEM of these two areas make German bombardments of spent US units quite attractive. It is a bad idea to attack Trévières without a good chance to clear it, because if you merely contest it the Germans get an 83 per cent chance to blow the Columbieres bridge, delaying your advance for another day.

Once Trévières is cleared, the Americans should make one assault on Foret to contest it and shorten US lines, but they should not try to take it unless a 50 per cent chance or better presents itself. A failed assault with a full division or more is devastating, but a successful assault with three or more units isn't much better, if it doesn't lead to capture of the area. Therefore, unless the German center is near collapse, stay with the plan and advance next into Columbieres. In fact, even the first assault on Foret should not come at the expense of taking Colombieres that day. If you can get into Isigny before the German Zone E reinforcements can rush to the rescue on June 9, Isigny and Catz will both fall easily. Even if Isigny can be heavily defended, the German will have to think twice about taking a stand because the area can be hit by Naval and Air Bombardment, VII Corps Artillery and several divisional artillery units in Grandcamp. If the German is stubborn, the Americans can make Isigny a massive killing ground if not distracted by "opportunities" in Foret or Bayeux.

Once Isigny falls, life gets easy for the Omaha forces. Unless Ste. Mère has been shut down, the German won't be able to spare too much from Carentan. The June 9 Zone E reinforcements must cover both Catz and St. Lô. Once the Isigny-Grandcamp bridge is captured/repaired, the 2 CCA comes into the game. The big challenge is to get sufficient forces into Catz, and then into Carentan, so you can make the massive assault described above. This is no easy task, especially as assaults across the German-held Catz-Carentan bridge are mandatory assaults. Even if Isigny falls on June 8, the American may not have enough time to organize all his forces. As the Americans get spread out, the 20 supply points provided by Omaha may not be enough to refit all units. Again, the key is to remember that you are heading for Carentan. As long as you don't waste impulses in a futile pounding of Foret, and as long as you didn't lose the initial assault on Omaha or get the entire force spent by 352/xx, you will do fine. If US forces take Catz on June 9, they can attack from Catz into Carentan on June 10 to join forces with the Utah group (which should be contesting the area already). This puts together the giant assault force for the final showdown. If you don't get the ideal setup until June 12 but Carentan is all you need, then you can still win if the day doesn't end very early.

OMAHA BEACH—GERMAN TACTICS

Omaha is the place where the Germans can really put the hurt on the Americans, but they must pick their spots. When absorbing CPs from the initial assault, the Germans should try to keep 352/xx fresh as long as possible, but be realistic. If your defense is going to consist of Vierville at D2 and a fresh 352/xx alone, with both infantry units at D2 and retreated out, and all US infantry hasn't been landed, it may be worth considering taking two CP by flipping and retreating the 352/xx. The 352/xx can disrupt the entire US force with one swing of the bat, but if your Impulse 0 is to garrison Bretteville, you can be sure that the US Impulse 0 will come from the Omaha approach box and you may not get your bombardment anyway. Even if you do get it off, that may well be the last bombardment this unit ever makes. Even worse, you have weakened Omaha by one DV and one step, significantly increasing the chance of losing Omaha on June 6. The Trévières-Bayeux region is extremely vulnerable early in the game, and any Omaha veterans which can be fresh in Trévières on June 7 are a big plus. If the Americans won the initial amphibious assault and 352/xx did not get a big bombardment, you should assume that Omaha will fall early on June 7. No units should remain on the beach overnight other than the Vierville CA.

This is not to say that the Grandcamp units shouldn't be thrown into Omaha on June 6, if they will prevent Omaha from falling that day. These units may even make a successful assault on Omaha following a weather change on June 6. In one memorable (but short) game they actually destroyed the entire US invasion force! In most games, however, you are asking for a painful overrun if you have three or four units defending against two fresh US divisions. Even if you are planning to abandon Omaha during the evening of June 6, reinforcement from Grandcamp is still risky, because these units will not be able to escape to safety during the night. The Americans are likely to obtain a three- or four-unit kill on June 7, if you retreat to Grandcamp. If you go anywhere else, Isigny is very likely to fall too soon.

Some players have experimented with taking the Vierville CA as a unit loss so that they can totally abandon Omaha during the night. This denies the American hat trick on June 7. While clever, this is not really worth it. The areas around Omaha are too vulnerable to allow the Americans total freedom of movement on June 7. Besides, the Americans might still get the hat trick by assaulting Trévières, Grandcamp and Port-en-Bessin simultaneously—even more devastating than the traditional kill of the three CA units.

Earlier articles have indicated that the Omaha-Trévières bridge must often be blown on the first impulse of June 7. As the German may need to move Panzer Lehr (or reinforce Ste. Mère) on Impulse 0, this is hardly ideal. The bridge can be blown on June 6, as long as 352/xx has made its escape to Trévières. If this unit is already spent, you should retreat it in preference to an infantry unit. Then, the bridge can be blown safely on June 6, because the infantry units don't need it to retreat to Trévières. If possible no more than two

➛➛➛➛➛ Continued on p. 61

" . . . an action/combat game that's light years ahead of the competition." ZDNet

Praise from the media:

" . . . sharp 3D engine that looks like it could go head to head with Quake". "It's like Rebel Assault* with real game play."*

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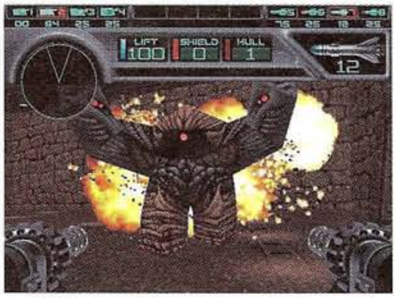
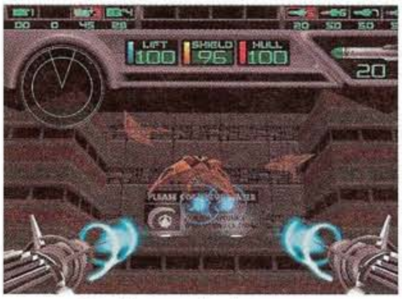
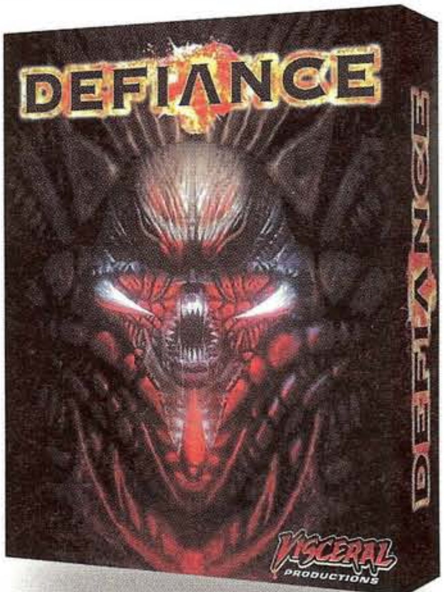


Suddenly, walls come crashing down and all hell breaks loose.



City living can be dangerous.



Windows 95*

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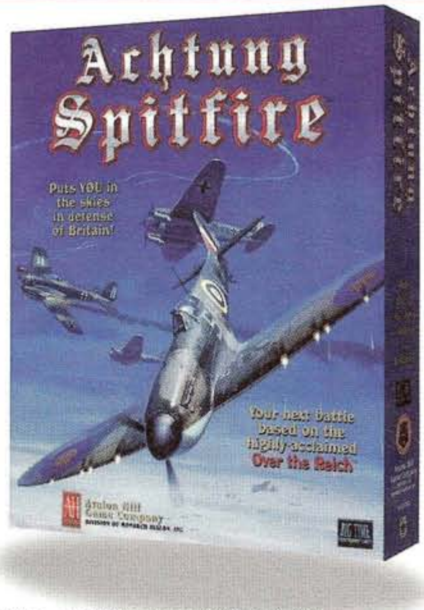
Computer Gaming World magazine's headline announced, "Avalon Hill's Finest Hour. This Battle of Britain Mixes Real-Time Strategy With Turn-based Tactics." The reviewer went on to say, "For any gamer fascinated by the complexities of many-on-many air combat tactics, or the Battle of Britain in particular, ACHTUNG SPITFIRE's blend of depth, variety, and long-term replayability is sure to please."
CG Choice Award; Rating: ★★★★★

More great praise from *Computer Games Strategy Plus* magazine. Commenting on the player's ability to control each plane's actions, "This strategic element provides the game with that 'up until 2:00 a.m.' dimension that all great wargames possess." "Highly recommended." Stamp of Approval Award; Rating: ★★★★1/2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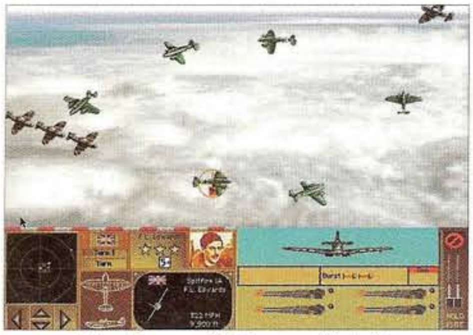

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➛➛➛➛➛ *(from p.5)*

how to handle a baby at the convention. Of course, slight adjustments were made to our gaming schedule to fit Danny's. We played a few games while either feeding Danny or holding him while he slept. Our opponents were very gracious, to the point of rolling dice for us when our hands were full. Fortunately, there were very few times when Danny became fussy during which we hadn't planned on taking a break anyway. We think Danny actually had as good a time as we did. He so enjoyed watching the people around him that, like most gamers at the convention, he got a lot less sleep than normal. The mandatory shopping trip (at least Carrie thinks it is) to the Towson Mall was made as usual. In three years, Carrie still hasn't sat by the pool; I haven't made it there yet after six years of attendance.

We are already looking forward to AvalonCon '98. We are trying to decide what to do about Danny. I am sure that he will come with us, especially since more and more of our AvalonCon gaming friends are coming as families. We will probably bring a sitter with us. (Anybody else want to join us in hiring a sitter?)

We are also looking further down the road and hope that AvalonCons continue to be held so that Danny will get a chance to play in the wonderful junior tournaments which are held for the kids. This may not be too far off—I heard a rumor that a *PRO GOLF* "under five" tournament may be in the works.

—*Andy Lewis*

* * * * *

Here we have positive evidence for the environment side of the genes vs. environment debate. While I shall not discourage selective breeding of new gamers, gentleman, there is hope for the immersion , or exposure, technique of recruiting new gamers.

In this issue you will find on pages 28-29 the photos of sixty AvalonCon '98 National Champions (selected on the basis of most participants in the tournaments they won). The full list of National Champions appears on this page. The AvalonCon '98 tournament summary report will appear in volume 32, number 1.

Let's give a pat on the back to each of those volunteer game masters who not only suffered the indignations that any referee suffers, but also gets to be pestered by me for a tournament summary (the last thing on anybody's mind when they are enthralled in the convention action).

—*SKT*

★

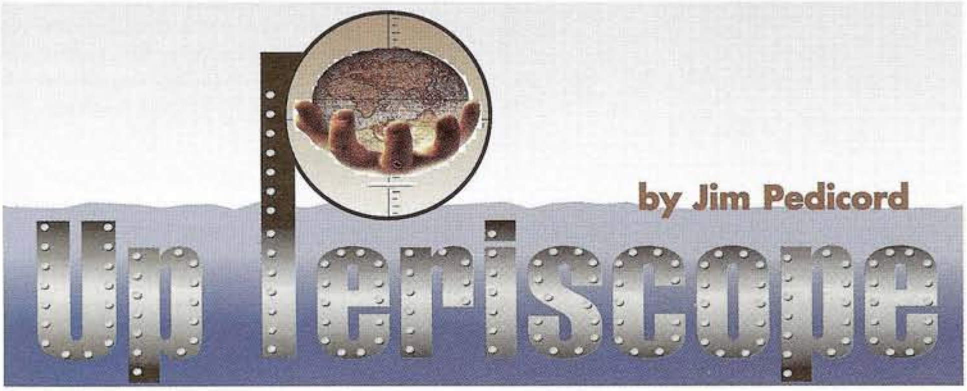
A
AVALONCON 1997 ☆ HUNT VALLEY, MD

1997 NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

EVENT	WINNER
Acquire 56	Chuck Nail
Across Five Aprils 23	David Metzger★
Adel Verpflichtet 54	Thomas Stokes
Advanced Civilization 40	Todd Vander Pluym
Afrika Korps 25	Bruno Sinigaglio★
Advanced Third Reich 17	Paul Ackerman
Age of Renaissance 106	George Sauer
Air Baron 112	James Garvey
Air Force/Dauntless 9	Forrest Speck
Anzio 10	Tom Olson
ASL 81	Jeff Coyle
Assassin 18	Bryan Schott
Attack Sub 32	John Emery★
Auction 16	Ken Gutermuth
B-17 34	Paul Risner
Baseball Strategy 25	Robert Kircher
Battle of Bulge '81 15	Phil Evans
Battle of Bulge '91 8	Kevin McCarthy
Blackbeard 40	Mike Wojke
Breakout: Normandy 53	Jim Doughan
Britannia 52	David Gantt
Candidate 20	Chuck Foster
Circus Maximus 72	John Jacoby
Civil War 8	Henry Rice
Colonial Diplomacy 14	Christian Dreyer
Cross of Iron 8	Kevin Walsh★
D-Day '91 8	Sean Finnerty
Decathlon 55	Steve Cameron
Dinosaurs of Lost World 20	John D. Poniske, Jr.
Diplomacy 46	Steve Cooley
Dune 28	Matt Fagan
1830 50	Daniel Vice
Empires in Arms 16	Jeff Slater
Enemy in Sight 64	Tim Evinger
Facts In Five 19	Stephanie Greenwood
Fifth Fleet 8	Jack Morrell
Football Strategy 32	Paul O'Neil
Fortress Europa 10	Randy Schlib
Gangsters 49	Jason Wagner
Gettysburg 10	Kevin McCarthy
Global War 26	Rob Carl
Greed 30	Ray Stakenas
Guerilla 36	Gordon Rodgers
Hannibal 52	Jim Doughan
Here Come the Rebels 19	Marty Hogan
History of the World 108	Bruce Monnin
History of the World w/bid 34	Bill Crenshaw
Jutland 10	Michael McAnnany
Kingmaker 26	Jeff Clark
Kremlin 46	Tracy Graf
London's Burning 14	John Coussis
Machiavelli 12	Doug Faust
Maharaja 19	Henry Rice
Merchant of Venus 78	Mark Hunter
Mustangs 20	Andy Lewis
Mustang Furball	Dave Davis
Naval War 47	Lauren Hickok
Origins of World War II 16	Bruce Reiff
Pacific War 8	Gary Gonzales
Panzerblitz 20	Dave Giordano
Panzer Leader 20	Rob Beyma★
Pax Brittanica 12	Ben Foy
Paydirt 15	Harry Floyd
Peloponnesian War 10	Kevin McCarthy
Princess Ryan's Star Marines 38	John Ellsworth
Pro Golf 65	Dave Metzger
Rail Baron 94	Kimberly Lemmons
Republic of Rome 27	Chris Bartiromo
Roadkill 52	Sean Cousins
Roads to Gettysburg 24	Joe Bellas
RuneQuest 8	Allen Then
1776 8	Steve Packwood
Slapshot 106	Dan Metzger
Speed Circuit 25	Robert Kirchner
Squad Leader 13	Kevin Welsh
Statis Pro Basketball 10	Dennis Nicholson
Stock Market Guru 18	Debbie Otto
Stonewall in the Valley 16	Trevor Bender
Stonewall Jackson's Way 22	Jeff Otto
Stonewall's Last Battle 19	Bob Jamelli
Storm Over Arnhem 19	Steve Koleszar
Submarine 10	Paul Risner
Superstar Baseball 8	Henry Richardson
The Russian Campaign 24	Gary Dickson
Titan 72	Dave Finberg
Titan: The Arena 126	Peter Staab
Titan 2 29	Brian Sutton★
Title Bout 24	Bruce Reiff
Turning Point Stalingrad 8	Byron Stingley★
TV Wars 26	Andy Maly
Tyranno Ex 36	Carolyn DeMarco
Up Front 42	John Emery
Victory in the Pacific 42	Ed O'Connor
War & Peace 12	Chris Roginsky
War at Sea 33	Tim Hitchings
Waterloo 18	Phil Evans
We The People 40	Thomas Drueding
Win, Place & Show 15	John Coussis
Wizard's Quest 22	Gregory Crowe
Wooden Ships & Iron Men 20	David Metzger
Wrasslin' 26	Jim Dolan
Wrasslin' Battle Royal 34	Lane Hess
Best GM	William Wible
Sportsmanship	Ed Connery

Team Tournament: Pillage, Then Burn –
Scott Pfeiffer AOR, Dave Gantt BRI 8,
John Emery UPF 8, Earl Anderson PXB = 16 (212)

# is number of entrants ★ is defending champion

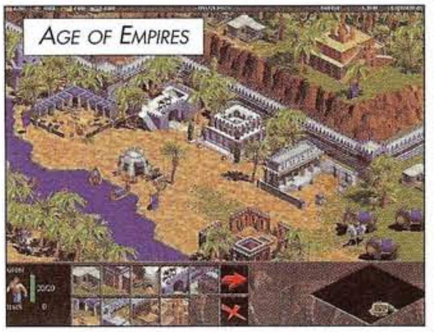


Up Periscope

by Jim Pedicord

Building a civilization from the ground up has long been a popular genre in the world of games. From the old board games *ADVANCED CIVILIZATION* and *HISTORY OF THE WORLD* to the computer game generation of *Populous*, *Civilization* and *Civilization 2*, this format of game remains very popular today. In this column, I examine a trio of upcoming civilization-style games which continue this long tradition of empire building, conquest and research.

Microsoft has jumped deep into the strategy game water with *Age of Empires* designed by the co-designer of *Civilization*, Bruce Shelley. Taking place from the Stone Age through the Iron Age, the player takes command of one of twelve ancient civilizations ranging from the Sumerians to the Yamato period in Japanese history.

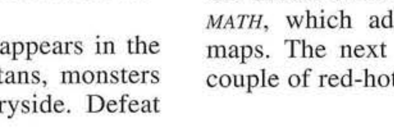


Age of Empires

Play is real-time with the player (or players) starting with a small tribe that then sets forth to explore the unknown world, uncovering resources and materials that are the cornerstones of a fledgling empire. Each of the empires has varying abilities, strengths and weaknesses designed around actual historical aspects. Different paths in a technological "tree" lead to various results so victory can be achieved economically as well as militarily. Multi-player capability has a very strong presence in this game with opponent and cooperative play available over a network or the Internet. Victory conditions can be pre-assigned and include playing with time limits, conquest conditions, controlling historic ruins or gathering all the ancient artifacts. Finally a very detailed scenario builder quickly creates custom games with varying maps, units and victory conditions. Early game play is easy but you face some complexities as you progress further along your timeline.

Seven Kingdoms by *Capitalism* designer Trevor Chan and published by Interactive Magic appears to be the typical real-time strategy game similar in many ways to *Age of Empires*. But sit down with it for more than a few minutes and you will be amazed at the complex and multi-faceted strategy that is quickly at your disposal.

Choosing one of seven historical kingdoms (Persians, Normans, Mayans, Japanese, Chinese, Greek and Vikings) begins the game as you start out with a simple village and command center. As is norm for a game like this, resources must be acquired (mines), production must be started (war factories) and research must be conducted (towers of science). What makes this game unique, however, is the many different aspects of play. Diplomacy is a necessity or you will be up to your neck in hostile nations. Caravans, marketplaces, harbors and ships move trade items and help in the acquisition and selling of products. The spy unit can infiltrate other kingdoms, possibly ending up in positions of leadership and giving you control of the enemy forces. Counterspies can help keep your empire free of spies. As can be expected from the designer of renown business strategy games, the monetary system is well developed and plays a crucial part in the game. The circulation of money and awards will help boost loyalty, for troops with low morale will defect and villagers will revolt leaving you with an empty kingdom. Loyalty and reputation play key factors in keeping your kingdom together and must constantly be kept high.



Outpost 2

A fantasy element also appears in the game in the form of Fryhtans, monsters whose lairs dot the countryside. Defeat them and gain money and scrolls of power that can eventually give you access to powerful creatures from your kingdom's mythology (Norman Dragon, Mayan Kukulcan or even Thor for the Vikings). Graphics are crisp, colorful and perfectly portray each of the historic kingdoms in this extremely addictive game which also has full multiplayer capability.

If a more modern era is your cup of tea take a look at *Imperialism* from SSI, which puts you in charge of an empire during the industrial revolution. As in all developmental games, you must slowly build up your economy and forces so you can venture out into the world. Power can be achieved economically through the manipulation of the commodities market or militarily through conquest and battle.

Set in an environment similar to 19th century earth, a surprisingly good diplomatic feature stands out and becomes widely used throughout the game. Just ganging up on smaller powers does not always work in this turn-based game and can easily lead to several other minor powers joining forces with a major power to ruin your day. "Advisors" (an on-line help system) may be called upon to help you when you are not sure what to do next and a great set of eight tutorials will quickly get you up and running. Balance is definitely the name of the game here with trade, diplomacy, technology and warfare all playing their part in the victory conditions. Besides a wide variety of scenarios a random map- and resource-generator will set up games on the fly. Modem and network support are included for multi-player games.

SONAR BLIPS: Interactive Magic has recently released *War, Inc.*, a real-time strategy game with you in charge of a mercenary band. Successful missions plus investing in a detailed stock market helps you finance the research and construction of powerful weapons and equipment. On the sequel front Sierra has released *Outpost 2*, yet another real-time strategy game pitting two moon colonies against each other. Beside the resource management of the first *Outpost*, combat is now included and this title looks much better than the original. For those hooked on *Command & Conquer: Red Alert* another scenario CD should be in stores, *Red Alter: Aftermath*, which adds more new units and maps. The next column will touch on a couple of red-hot Civil War games.

★

The second "new look" issue, Volume 31, Number 4, received a 4.3 rating, an improvement over the first. With the initial shock of change having passed, reader feedback has been upbeat and encouraging. Some readers even rated the information columns among the top articles—not to deride the other content, but to applaud coverage of the industry as a whole. The AvalonCon tournament scenarios were a big hit, collectively reaping a score of 147, which would have been the second favorite article. Credit is due also to Trevor Bender for his *magnum opus* on the *Great Campaigns* series games (which also had a great many votes split among three articles).

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The latest hot game is clearly *AGE OF RENAISSANCE* which drew extremely well at the summer convention tournaments, is among the top games being played by respondents and was the subject of the best article in the last issue. I think I learned my lesson about critiquing series replay commentary, when I managed to lose to Bud Sauer this summer (but then again, everybody at AvalonCon did, too).

The games recently played by the most respondents were *HANNIBAL: ROME VS. CARTHAGE, ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER, AGE OF RENAISSANCE, THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN, ADVANCED CIVILIZATION* and *SETTLERS OF CATAN*.

John Michalski (Oklahoma City, OK) is the winner of the feedback drawing and wins a one-year subscription extension.

* * * * *

The Avalon Hill Game Company's *FREEDOM IN THE GALAXY* (computer conversion of the boardgame) is expected to be released in the autumn of 1998, allowing players to try their hand at fomenting revolution in a galaxy dominated by a brutal imperial government. Meanwhile, Activision has licensed the rights from TAHGC to put out a new *ADVANCED CIVILIZATION* game. The game *ACROSS FIVE APRILS* is getting a facelift. The piece of art on the original box can no longer be used. (We were using it as a result of a mix-up at the National Guard with regard to ownership of artwork and publication rights.) Be forewarned that the *ACROSS FIVE APRILS* with a new cover (which will remind you of *BULL RUN*) is *not* a new volume of battles. We are still negotiating to get a second and possibly a third volume of battles into print.

* * * * *

The Infiltrator's Report

In case you didn't read the letters page and weren't among the invitees to the 1997 Origins Awards ceremony (or were wrapped up in AH Iron Man competition like me) and missed the news, *AGE OF RENAISSANCE* won the award for Best Pre-20th Century Era Boardgame, while *WOODEN SHIPS & IRON MEN* won the award for Best Computer Strategy Game of 1996.

* * * * *

The incipient board wargame market in Russia continues to grow. Recently I made contact with a group trying to translate and distribute games in Russia. The task is not easy given customs taxes and procedures, currency conversion problems and a generally low standard of living. Nonetheless, Ilya Kudryashov and Igor Luckyanov report that Moscow alone has over 100 wargamers and significant groups exist in other Russian cities as well. Through advertisements in *Sargeant*, a military history magazine, a Muscovite wargaming "club" has been created. Understand that in the privatized Russian economy, the term club is more akin to a limited partnership business. They have shown interest in *AFRIKA KORPS, VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC* and *PLATOON* as well as games about history closer to home. I must say that I am perturbed that *The GENERAL* isn't in the Russian State Library—but then, unlike *Strategy & Tactics*, we never ran articles with little more than raw data on modern military arms. I wonder if they realize that Eastern Front WWII games remain one of the hottest (maybe overdone) topics in western wargaming. At the risk of advancing worldwide business interest in this small but growing market and furthering the expansion of the hobby, let me give you Ilya's email address: urfinjg@msk.tsi.ru.

On a related note, my own wife has been acting as a sort of ambassador, conveying to Volgagrad my interest in publishing art from the Battle of Stalingrad Panorama State Museum. It soon may be time for an article on *TURNING POINT: STALINGRAD*.

* * * * *

The tough Contest #181 (Devilish Deal) drew an enthusiastic responses from those that managed to come up with most of the reasoning. Quite a number of you found the deal fishy and didn't take it—though apparently after much exhaustive analysis. Among those taking the deal, one popular, but incorrect, plan B (when finding the Roman with #49 or #55) was to use both Mago and Hannibal in a Campaign card in which Hannibal leaves 1 CU at Rome to maintain the siege points, and sails to Carthage with 1 CU to conduct a battle with Scipio Africanus. Then, Mago moves to Rome to roll for the siege (50 per cent chance). This Campaign card approach depends on suspect reasoning about Hannibal's naval and land chances. The naval modifier for Hannibal going from Rome to Carthage is "-1" ("-2" for the Carthage's naval allies, "0" for sum of both port DRMs, "+1" for Roman PC on Rome; note that the errata in vol. 31, no. 3 wipes out the "-1" for sailing with 1 CU—only lone Generals get that now). With only a 33 per cent chance by sea (assuming there is no storm at sea or bad weather—possibilities missed by most contestants favoring a Campaign), Hannibal must have a 100 per cent chance of land victory to make this move better than Pestilence—as Mago has only a 50 per cent chance with the siege train and a single die roll. Rome would have a minimum of a 33 per cent chance to defeat both moves of the campaign and then claim victory with its automatic siege roll. Even if you use the old naval rule, Hannibal would have to win the land battle two-thirds of the time to make this move better than Pestilence. Yet, Rome can be holding the Numidian Allies Desert card (#32), which would give Hannibal only a 7-7 BC battle against S. Africanus (not exactly the kind of numbers likely to consistently give Hannibal victory the required two-thirds of the time).

Though many of you got the point about taking the deal and using #49 and #55 as plan A, all but one of you stumbled over the issue of plans B, C and D. Our congratulations go out to Seth Fine (Lynnwood, WA) who nailed it on the head.

* * * * *

Contest #182 (Once More into the Breach) has the beauty of having no "perfect" solutions or logical twists for me to miss. You simply need to outguess the alliance pitted against you and present a move that wins (several are possible and I expect about 30 per cent of you to succeed—forcing me to conduct a drawing). With 18 ducats for a bribe, Florence has its own army and any one adjacent enemy army to use to hold onto one home city (Florence, Arezzo and/or Pisa). With six possible bribe choices, Florence's options are many. If I read the situation correctly, not all can be countered by moves by the alliance. Hence the alliance took their best shot at Florence and wrote the following orders, aimed at holding all three Florentine cities:

A PISA-FLO
A PIS S A PISA-FLO
A BOL S A PISA-FLO
A ARE-FLO
A URB S A ARE-FLO
A SPO-ARE
A SIE S A SPO-ARE
F LS-PISA
F PIO S F LS-PISA
F FER H

The strength of the move is in securing Pisa and Arezzo, but the weakness of the move is that if Bologna or Pistoia is bribed to become Florentine and supports Army Florence, a standoff occurs and the grand alliance crumbles under the weight of its debt to bankers.

➛➛➛➛➛ *(from p.56)*

units should remain in Trévières following the Regroup Phase on June 6, the others moving to reinforce Bayeux or to garrison Foret-de-Cerisy or Colombieres.

Once the American has "exploded" off Omaha and taken Grandcamp, the situation gets dicey. Isigny will be at risk by Impulse 0 of the following day. If the US overrun was not into Trévières because of the blown bridge, you have a little breathing space. The line you are trying to hold is Tilly-Balleroi-Foret-Isigny. Bayeux is worth two units and some bridge-blowing attempts, but that is all. Bocage is your friend; stay in it. With Isigny being the weak link in the line, you must hustle as many units there as possible. I recommend regrouping the mobile Grandcamp units and LXXXIV into Isigny. If Carentan, Villars and Tilly all look safe for June 7, you may be able to spare the Coutances units for Isigny as well. Blowing the Grandcamp bridge is probably worth two or three impulses. However, Isigny cannot be defended to the death, because you cannot afford heavy unit losses in this sector in the early turns. When the Americans get a big assault (which tells you that the area is about to fall), you should take as many retreats as possible and leave only one unit to defend the area. Then, you must immediately blow all bridges out of the area (only missing on a 1). This saves Catz and St. Lô for the turn (unless the US player gambles on a bridge-repair impulse and gets lucky).

Frustratingly, the hordes of units which the Germans receive in Zone E on June 10 and 11 will rarely be able to save a desperate situation. They are simply too slow and too far away to defend Catz or Carentan. If they have time to make it into Carentan, Carentan is probably not in danger anyway. You hope to be able to avoid moving June 10 units at all on the 10th unless there is a weather change, because you can't afford to resupply them if they are spread out over three or four areas. In summary, the defense of this region is probably the German's toughest and most critical task. He must (with the barely adequate forces available) balance unit losses against the need to delay the US advance. An early weather change (allowing Panzer Lehr to advance) is your best medicine. Failing that, a defense in depth gives the Germans the best shot at survival.

This article will continue in the next issue with Applebaum's analysis of Gold, Juno and Sword beaches and some general tactical considerations.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

ON TO RICHMOND

The Peninsula Campaign: April to July 1862

In the spring of 1862, General George McClellan sailed the Union Army of the Potomac down the Chesapeake Bay to Fort Monroe. From there, McClellan's troops marched up the Virginia Peninsula on their way to Richmond. At the time, it was simply called "The Grand Campaign.' Over a quarter of a million men, more than any other campaign of the war, were involved in this operation. McClellan's plan necessitated amphibious movement, siege operations, three different supply bases, and close coordination of ground and naval forces—making it one of the most complex strategic maneuvers of the war. Other games have covered portions of this famous campaign, but *ON TO RICHMOND*, the sixth member of Avalon Hill's award winning *Great Campaigns of the American Civil War* series, is the first to depict the entire four-month campaign with all of the strategic options available to both players.

In line with the size and complexity of McClellan's operation, *ON TO RICHMOND* represents the most ambitious project to date in the *Great Campaigns* series. Two brand new maps, stretching from Richmond and Petersburg in the west to Urbana and Yorktown in the east, depict the Virginia tidal wetlands over which the campaign was fought. These maps cover entirely new ground for the series, starting some 15 miles to the south of the Fredericksburg area covered in the series most recent installment, *STONEWALL'S LAST BATTLE*. The character of this region of Virginia is reflected in the new terrain types added for the game: two types of swamps, ferries, dams, redoubts and naval batteries. The rule book and counter set have been expanded as well. With three full counter sheets, the game includes all of the units stationed within the Eastern theater which could have participated in the campaign.

The creation of *ON TO RICHMOND* also breaks new ground by being the first combined effort of series originator Joe Balkoski and *STONEWALL'S LAST BATTLE* designer Ed Beach. The focus has been equally divided between historical accuracy and playability. The basic mechanics of the series remain unmodified. However, key changes have been made to the rules for artillery, assaults, flank attacks and retreats to streamline play, eliminate misinterpretations, and enhance the historical flavor. The changes have been made in such a way that they are fully compatible with the previous games in the series and can be applied to them as desired. *ON TO RICHMOND* includes a rich set of basic game scenarios, seven in all, ranging in length from 30 minutes to six hours. Scenarios appropriate to newcomers to the series and veterans alike include Stuart's First Raid, Seven Pines, The Gates of Richmond, Flight to the James and The Seven Days.

Once these scenarios are mastered, players will be ready to tackle the full campaign. The initial strategic burden is on the Union player, who starts the game by selecting between the historical invasion site and three alternative routes to the Confederate capital. The southern side has plenty of tough strategic decisions as well. Forces can be recalled from the Carolinas and Shenandoah. The ironclad *Virginia* can sortie against the *Monitor* in Hampton Roads. Norfolk can be reinforced against a Union attack or abandoned. The game contains rules for siege artillery, amphibious movement, gunboats and naval batteries to complete the historical picture. Finally, the system that allows the Union player to gain and lose the strategic initiative, a technique that works well to model the indecision that marked McClellan's spotty performance in his grand campaign. —Ed Beach

WHISPERS . . .

. . . Decision Games released *Fire & Movement* editor, David Nicholas, in September and is attempting to sell the magazine. . . New company Rio Grande Games will be publishing in 1998 English-language versions of *Medici* and *El Grande*, two popular German games. . . After volume 2 of *The Great War at Sea* (ready in late 1997 or early 1998), Avalanche Press will publish *Eagles of the Empire: Eylau* and another wargame. . . Moments in History entered discussions with Azure Wish about a joint venture on the distribution of *Risorimento 1859*, which promises to be a package of battles and a campaign and is expected in early 1998. *Iron Bottom Sound II* (with ten scenarios) by Jack Greene is expected in November 1997. MiH has also signed with Greene to publish *Fleet Admiral*. They hope to release *DAK II* in the Spring of 1998 and an updated *Decision at Kasserine* in 1998 as well. They plan to enter the Napoleonic field with a four-map version of *Austerlitz*. . . Meanwhile, Spearhead, having lost Greene's naval game, plans to move up release of the first installment of *East Front Battles*. . . Clash of Arms had ready for August's GenCon four new products: *Leuthen*, *Close Action*, *Africa 1880* (a diplomatic game) and *The 1997 Harpoon Naval Review*. They follow that with the release of *Operation Spark* about the relief of Leningrad in 1943. Their first module of the *Struggle for Europe* series, *War without Mercy*, is a strategic simulation covering WWII in the East with corps units plus some divisional breakdowns and is touted as being more detailed than *THIRD REICH* (but without production), but less so than *Europa*. John Prados has submitted his *Funeral in Berlin* design to Clash of Arms. . . Mayfair is producing the English rules for *Das Kartenspiel* (the two-player card game version of *Settlers*) this autumn. . . ICE's *Night Brood Armageddon* supplement to *Silent Death* has been delayed to 1998. . . GMT is planning two Pacific expansions for *Down in Flames*. Their *Three Days of Gettysburg* maps went to print in September. They are nearing completion of the *SPQR Gamers Guide* and modules *Jugurtha* and *Phalanx*. (the latter having two battles for *Deluxe Great Battles of Alexander*) along with the game *Saratoga*.. *Cataphract* has been pushed back, probably to 1999. *Battle for North Africa* remains in development. *Great Battles of* Designer Richard Berg is moving into higher gear on *Caesar* modules *The Gallic Wars* and *Alesia*.. . . Fat Messiah Games is putting out Phil Eklund's multi-player, mutant bug combat game *Rainforest*, an expansion of *Insecta*. . . West End is releasing a Rebel SpecForce handbook and a special edition Trilogy source book for their *Star Wars* RPG system and hopes to get approval for a number of miniatures. They are also releasing an *Indiana Jones* supplement in December, a *Paranoia* in July 1998 and eight books in 1998 for *Hercules & Xena*. . . FASA is not planning any more products for the *Star Trek RPG* line, as Paramount is licensing Simon and Schuster for all Star Trek material. . . Once again, Lucas Film has kept another company (Event Horizon Publications this time) from using the term Battledroids on a product (FASA's *Battletech* was originally titled such). . . Daedalus Entertainment, which filed for Chapter 11 protection from creditors in July, licensed to Ronin Publishing a book for the *Feng Shui* RPG. . . Chameleon Eclectic is cranking out *Last Crusade* scenarios and expansions, *Millenium's End* source books and awaiting Warner Brothers approval of *Earthforce* materials for the *Babylon 5* RPG. . . New (this year) company Archangel Entertainment has released several RPGs and *Groo* (with expansion set), a card game based on a popular comic book character, and is working on the game *Badlands* for 1998.

. . Traditionally a method for a designer to become known by game publishers, the "desktop publishing" (DTP) craze is blossoming into a business approach with more longevity. By printing components only when the game is ordered, the desktop publisher saves on costs associated with wrong-sized print runs and inventory management while still getting the design into print, albeit with significant drawbacks for the consumer (poor components, payment up front, weak development). The internet has made this possible by giving the consumer a look at the "inside" of the game before purchase and by disseminating information throughout the *cognoscenti* who are the main customers. Sierra Madre Games successfully parlayed its effort into republished, revised games through a traditional publisher. Simulations Workshop and Microgame Co-op are taking their shots at the game business with a broader array of DTP games. What makes DTP games notable these days is the level of support given them by artists, developers and designers who are seeking refuge in them, because traditional companies continue to cut back on output. I would guess that there just might be more game designs out there than consumers, but the internet has allowed fulfillment of the publication dream for some. The real question is whether the DTP games get replayed or become curiosities that will be haunting auctions for years to come.

. . **In computer strategy gaming news** . . . Spectrum HoloByte, Inc. (which now owns the MicroProse label) is publishing Epic MegaGames' *7th Legion*, a futuristic, real-time strategy game featuring MMX technology (Intel) to accelerate game speed. The player will construct and lead powerful armies of robots, infantry and tanks in a raging world war. . . SSI expects to release late this year, a turn-based strategy game, *Final Liberation*, set in the *Warhammer Epic 40K* universe (man vs. ork in the 41st century). Also slated for this winter is *Steel Panthers III*, focusing on large tactical battles using the familiar interface of its predecessors. . . September saw the release of *Man of War* from SimCanada. . . The *Command & Conquer* add-on disk, *Aftermath*, also hit the stores then. . . Talonsoft announced that new release *Prelude to Waterloo* will be the last of the Battleground series games, while the platoon-level *East Front* (expected in October) will be the first of their "Campaign" series games. . . Westwood has *Blade Runner*, presumably a first-person action role-playing game, slated for November 1997 release. —SKT

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). —SKT

I love playing *COMMAND & CONQUER* over the modem, but it seems to me that too often the combat is reduced to tanks, tanks and more tanks. I always use infantry and recently have developed some winning formations, but infantry are all but useless during the most important part of the game, base assaults (except for engineers and commandos, and these are too special to count).

—John Turner, cyberspace

I'm glad to see *The Ardennes Offensive* (SSG/SSI) has some boardgame combat results table feeling built into the game. TAHGC's *5TH FLEET* is based on Victory Games' fleet series, but a player doesn't see any of the detailed, integral calculations that occur behind the scenes. . . As I often tell my friends, even setting up the [boardgame] counters is a learning experience. Computer games take all that away.

—George Chow, Milpitas, CA

I used to play boardgames in my youth, but it was always hard to find players. When my brother moved I was lost, until *Panzer General* (and its nice equipment icons). However, the smaller unit action of *Steel Panthers* is more enjoyable. You need to push for *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER* for the PC.

—Richard Bradshaw, cyberspace

★

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. Feel free to email information to ahgeneral@aol.com.

ASL WINTER OFFENSIVE 1998
January 16-18, 1998, Bowie, MD

Sponsored by Multi-Man Publishing and held at the Comfort Inn US Route 301 at Route 50 (301-464-0089), this seventh annual Balt./Wash. ASL tournament goes from Fri. 1800 to Sun. 1800. Registration $15 ($20 after Jan. 1). Write Perry Cocke, 1664 Forest Park Ave., Baltimore, MD 21207 or call (410) 944-3342 or email p.cocke@genie.geis.com.

CRUSADES '98
January 16-18, 1998, New Haven, CT

The sixth annual wintercon of the Connecticut Game Club will be at the Quality Inn Conference Center and features board and card games, miniatures, seminars, dealers and a painting contest. Write Phillip Spera, 2 Sibley Lane, East Haven, CT 06512 or call (203) 469-9391 or eamil Quillup@aol.com.

Celebrate History
February 13-15, 1998

Held at the South San Francisco Conference Center, this new annual event for those who love history is part symposium and part convention. It will focus primarily on American History, but also other historical periods and other aspects such as geneology. It will feature seminars, guest authors, exhibits, re-enactments, dealers and tournaments of computer, board, card and miniature wargames. Write Celebrate History, LLC, P.O. Box 70332, Point Richmond, CA 94807-0332 or call 1-800-748-9901 or email info@celebratehistory.com

PrezCon '98
Feb. 26-Mar. 1, 1998, Charlottesville, VA

This fifth annual event sponsored by THe GAMe PLACe is held at The Double Tree Hotel (1-804-973-2121). It features a variety of multi-player boardgames, some two-player games, card games and miniatures, including demonstration for beginners. Registration before February 5th is $25; no event fees. Write PrezCon, P.O. Box 4661, Charlottesville, VA 22905 or call 804-961-6953.

COLD WARS 1998
March 6-8.1998, Lancaster, PA

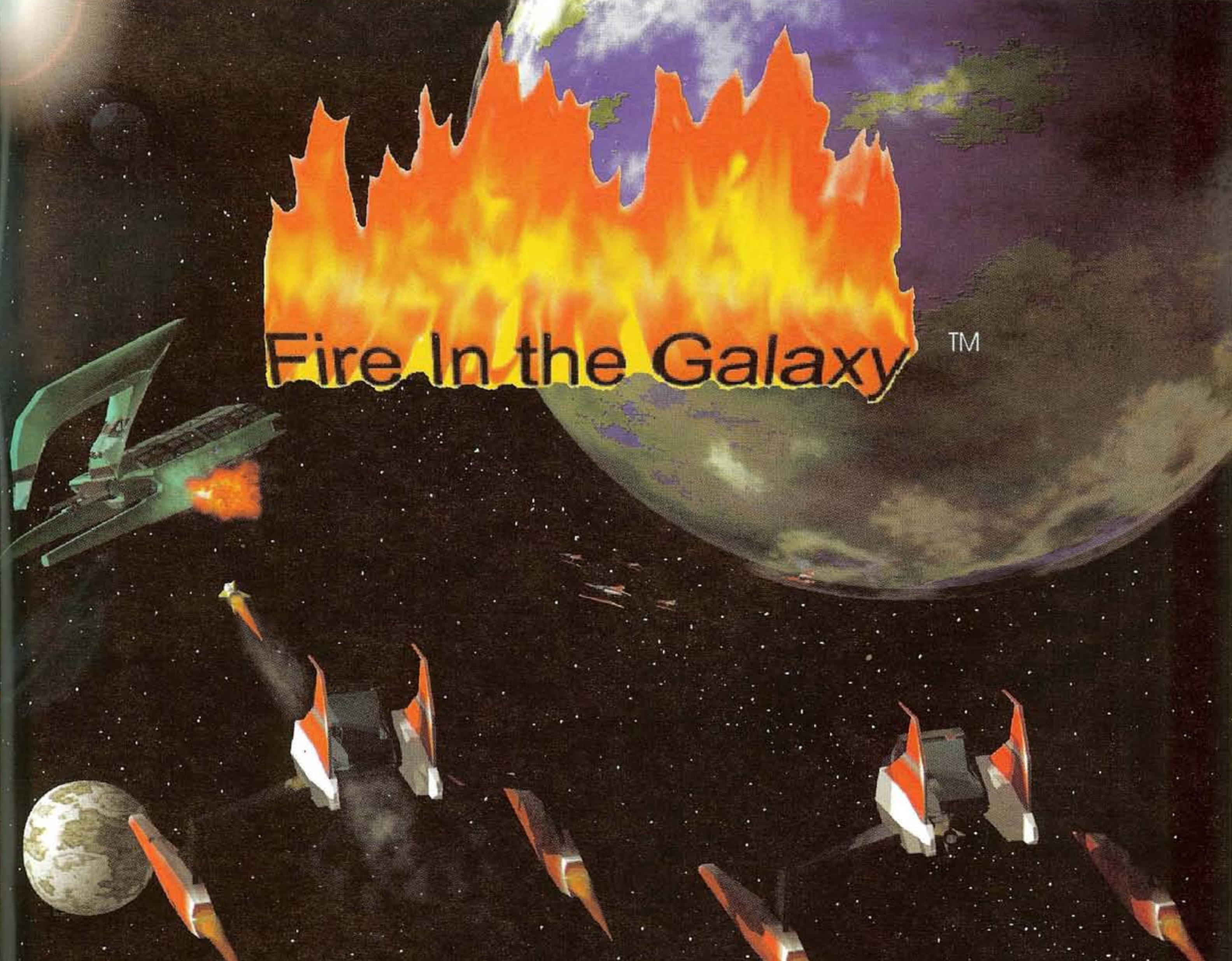
Held at the Lancaster Holiday Inn Host Resort (717-299-5500), this miniatures convention, sponsored by the Historical Miniatures Gaming Society, will have as its theme this year the air war of the Great War. Write Cold Wars 1998, P.O. Box 5094, Herndon, VA 20172-1996 or email a co-director at dluff@erols.com or avatar@wam.umd.edu.

Egyptian Campaign 1998
March 27-29, 1998, Carbondale, IL

This 11th annual convention is held on the campus of Southern Illinois University and features special guests, boardgames (including *DIPLOMACY*), card games, role-playing, auction and miniatures contest. Write S.I.U.C. Strategic Games Society, Office of Student Development, 3rd Floor Student Center, Carbondale, IL 62901-4425 or call Joel Nadler at 618-529-4630 or email ECGamCon@aol.com or visit www.siu.edu/~gamesoc.

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. Web page at member.aol.com/HymesC/WCW.html.



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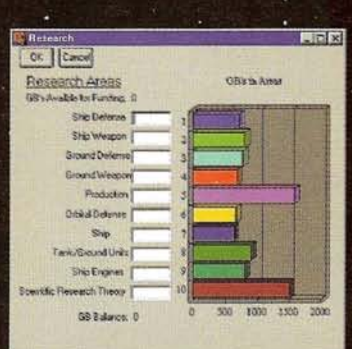
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GB's Available for Funding: 0

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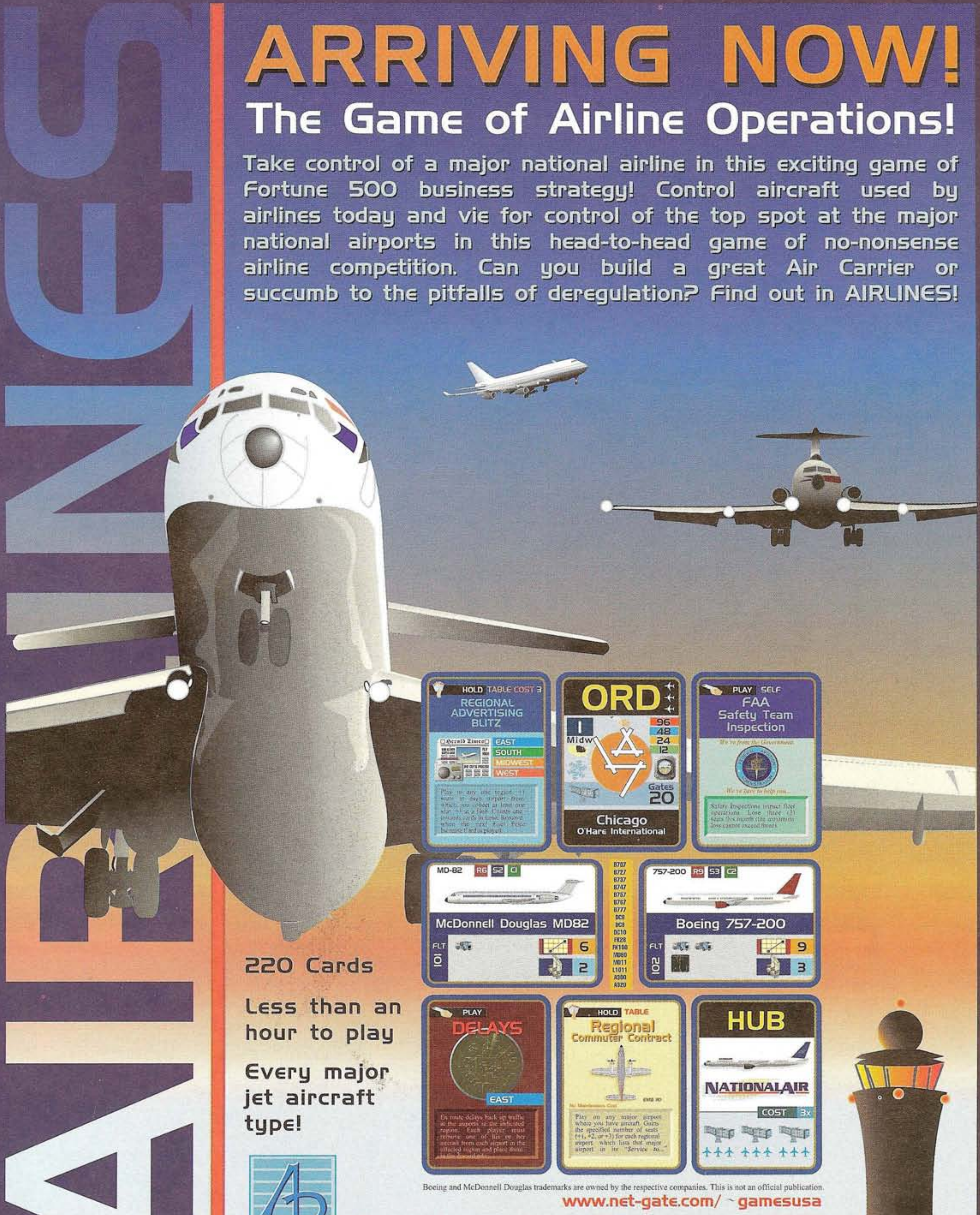
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Epoch V

play during turn

THOMAS AQUINAS

(AD 1225-1274)

Teaches philosophy and theology at the University of Paris.

Place 1 free army of a past empire and 1 monument in Western Gaul. Eliminate pre-existing armies in land.

Epoch V

play during turn

ST. FRANCIS

(AD 1182-1226)

Founds the Order of Friars Minor and Poor Clares.

Player places one free monument in any possessed land in Northern or Southern Europe.

Epoch VI

play during turn

MARTIN LUTHER

(AD 1483-1546)

Nails the 95 theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg, inaugurating the Protestant Reformation.

Place 1 free army of a past empire and 1 monument in any possessed land of Northern Europe.

Epoch VI

play during turn

MARCO POLO

(AD 1254-1323)

Publishes book about his travels to the Far East.

Player may draw one event card from any player with presence in Northern Europe or China.

Epoch VII

play before US turn

THOMAS JEFFERSON

(AD 1743-1826)

Authors the Declaration of Independence.

Remove any one army from North America. Player who plays this event receives 1 VP if the United States empire is played.

Epoch VII

play before turn

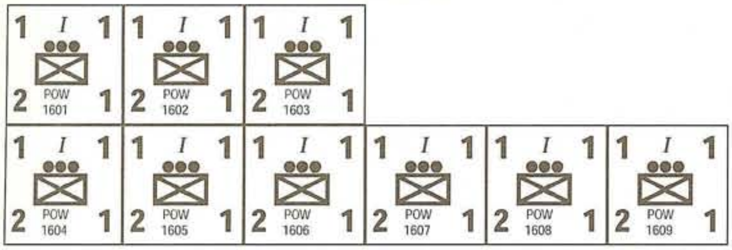
KARL MARX

(AD 1818-1883)

Founds modern communism through various criticism of capitalism.

Select one land possessed by each other player. Roll 1 die for each army in those lands: on a 1, replace with army of past empire (attack unconverted armies).

Personality events for *HISTORY OF THE WORLD*



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Personality cards for *PRINCESS RYAN'S STAR MARINES*

MARINE PERSONALITY
Company Color Sargeant
Rob "Stonewall" Hay

Draw one more weapon card during each Marine Regroup Phase. Once per hand, may play two weapons together if neither is a vehicle or energy weapon.

MARINE PERSONALITY
Battalion First Sargeant
"Iron Mike" Fappenkoff

Once per game, may use a previously used Shuttle to conduct a new Ballistic Insertion. Draw two more weapon cards during each Marine Regroup Phase.

MARINE PERSONALITY
Regimental
Sargeant Major
RSM Al-Masum
(The Infallible)

Draw a number of cards from the Weapons Locker equal to the number of Marine players. Examine and give one per Marine player.

MARINE PERSONALITY
Regimental Commander
Col. Tristani McDowell

Draw one Dispatch free of charge during each Marine Regroup Phase.

IMPERIAL PERSONALITY
Sentinel of the Inner Chamber,
Standard Bearer Elenu
Volpone

Once per hand, may draw one weapon card at random from each other Marine player. You must give each player a substitute from your hand.

IMPERIAL PERSONALITY
Star Marshal
Ivan Gregorivich Solistes

Imperial Strategy Council sends supplies.

Once per hand, may draw two cards from Weapons Locker to add to your hand.

IMPERIAL PERSONALITY
Grand Fleet Admiral
Andrea Christina
Jellica Ibares

Imperial battlecruiser provides fire support and blockades Citadel.

Once per hand, may negate a Guard REIN, HOLD or CAS characteristic.

GUARD PERSONALITY
Religious Guide, High
Council Mother Superior
Sister Grace

Once per hand, may stop one player from using a Personality or Dispatch in the round.

SUPPORT PERSONALITY
Chief Petty Officer of the
Schenectady Morris
Silverberg

Once per hand, may try to activate the 16-inch guns of the *Schenectady*. Draw a card from Weapons Locker. If energy or firepower, reduce the Guard skirmish value by the card's value.

SUPPORT PERSONALITY
Superintendant, Lunar
Repair Yard
Louis Raab

Once per hand, one of your Marines may ignore all penalties that affect the weapon played.

MARINE PERSONALITY
The Three Privates
'Abd Allah

Once per hand, but only three times per game, you may add a private of choice (Marines 1 to 12) to your hand from the Ready Room.

MARINE PERSONALITY
Company Medical
Specialist
Laureen Petitbone

Once per hand, may take one Marine from Sick Bay and add Marine (in unstunned ready status) to hand.

MARINE PERSONALITY
Acting Lance Corporal
Patrick Luigi
Giuseppi O'Brien

Once per hand, ignore a capture result against your Marine and return the Marine to your hand.

MARINE PERSONALITY
Assault Shuttle Pilot
Warrant Officer
Indira O'Malley

May play second weapon card during Ballistic Insertion. Once per hand, ignore any vehicle penalty to your Marine's weapon.

GUARD PERSONALITY
High Council
Grand Republic Senator
Hyburium Slatburn

Guard draws two extra cards from Barracks during Marine Regroup Phases, but keeps only six.

GUARD PERSONALITY
Viceroy of the Far Marches
Corps Leader
Dar Yamaguchi

Guard draws one more Dispatch during Marine Regroup Phase. Once per hand, treat a Guard card as having a HIDE characteristic.

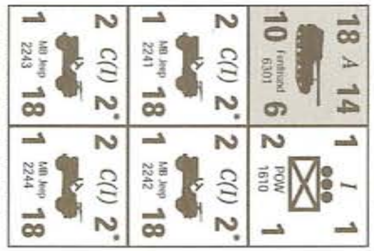
GUARD PERSONALITY
Republic Security Service
Commander Velda Kaliban

Once per hand, may look at all Weapons and Dispatches of one Marine player.

GUARD PERSONALITY
Council Chamber Guards
Corps Gun Commander
Bresh

Fire the Hidden Ion Pump Battery.

Once per hand, may attack a Marine vehicle. Draw a card from the Weapons Locker and reduce the vehicle's value by value of draw (but not below zero).



PANZER LEADER
variant counters

Epochs IV-VII
play during **each** turn

MUHAMMAD
(AD 570-632)
Founds religion of Islam and writes the Koran.

In Epochs IV-VII, player rolls one die: on a 4-6, the event acts as a conquered resource symbol for building monuments, on a 1-3 there is no effect.

Epoch IV
play during turn

IRENE
(AD 752-803)
First woman to rule the Byzantine Empire.

Player may draw one event card from player of the Byzantines (if played). Otherwise, draw one event card from player of the Romans (if played). Otherwise, no effect.

Epochs III-VII
play during **each** turn

PLATO
(428-348 BC)
Founds the Academy and writes *The Apology*.

In Epochs III-VII, player rolls one die: on a 4-6, the event acts as a conquered resource symbol for building monuments, on a 1-3 there is no effect.

Epochs III-VII
play during **each** turn

JESUS CHRIST
(5 BC-AD 33)
Founds Christianity during public ministry in Palestine.

In Epoch III, player places 1 free army of a past army in Palestine. In Epochs IV-VII, player rolls 1 die to convert armies in adjacent lands:
6 converts 2 lands,
5 converts 1 land,
1-4 converts none.

Epochs II-VII
play during **each** turn

BUDDHA
(563-483 BC)
Attained enlightenment and founded Buddhism.

In Epoch II, player places 1 free army of a past empire in any area of India. In Epochs III-VII, player rolls 1 die to convert armies in adjacent lands:
6 converts 2 lands,
5 converts 1 land,
1-4 converts none.

Epochs II-VII
play during **each** turn

LAO-TZU
(604-531 BC)
Wrote the *Tao-te Ching* and founded Chinese Taoism.

Player receives one extra VP for each monument in China and Nippon possessed.

Epochs II-VII
play during **each** turn

CONFUCIUS
(551-479 BC)
The "Great Teacher" who founded China's system of moral conduct.

Player receives one extra VP for each monument in China possessed.