

THE TRIP GAMING MAGAZINE

The logo for 'THE TRIP GAMING MAGAZINE' is a stylized, high-contrast graphic. The word 'THE' is in a small, sans-serif font above the large, jagged letters of 'TRIP'. 'GAMING' is written in a large, bold, blocky font with a jagged, lightning-bolt-like outline. Below 'GAMING' is the word 'MAGAZINE' in a smaller, simpler font. The entire logo is rendered in black and white with a halftone dot pattern. A sword is positioned vertically behind the 'I' in 'TRIP', and a handgun is positioned horizontally behind the 'I' and 'P'.

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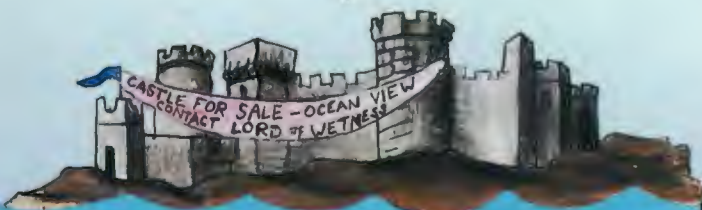
THE VIP OF GAMING MAGAZINE

Issue #1

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October, 1985

Ducks and Dragons?



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Thought you'd never get here!



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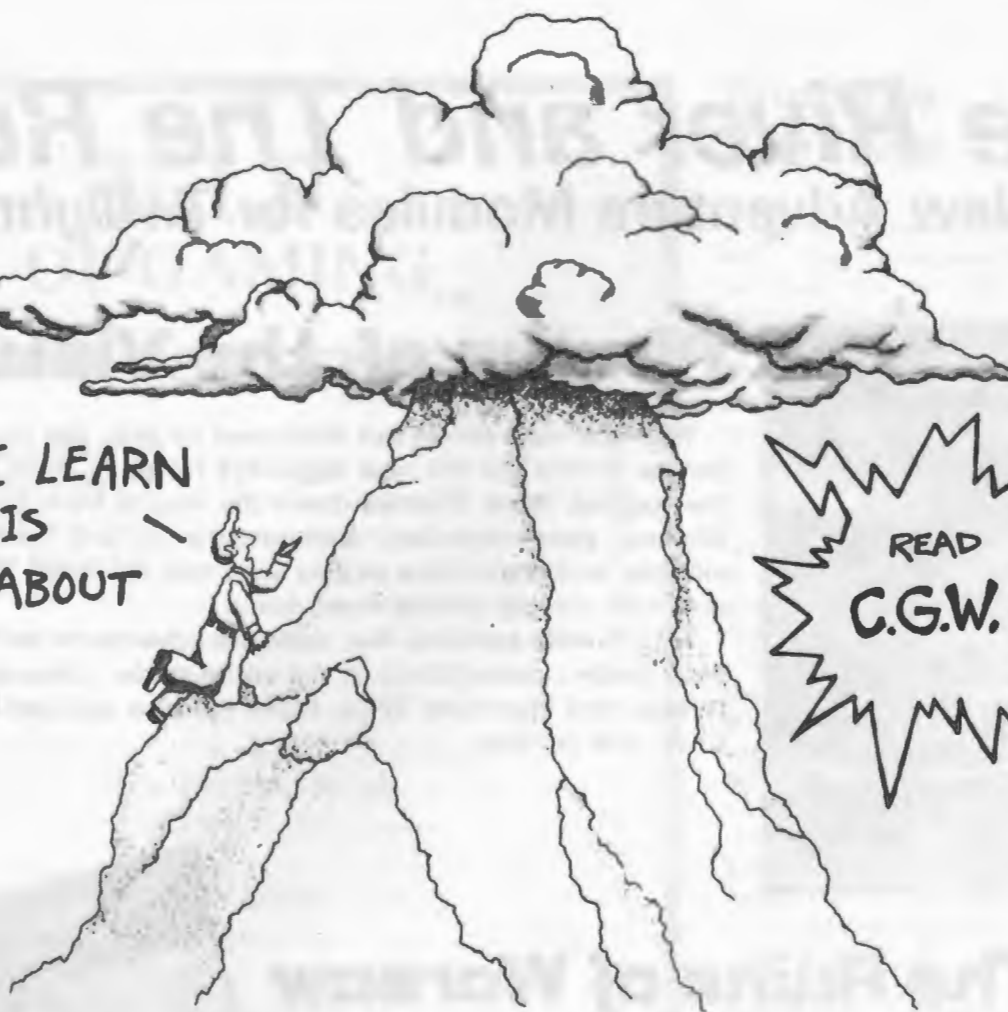
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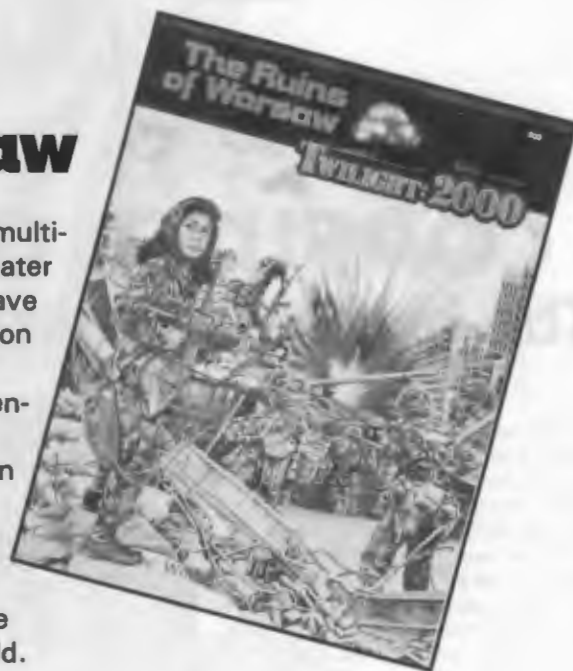
This module contains four separate adventures on the river plus detailed descriptions of the entire route: villages, countryside, and important NPCs. Rules are also included for river travel and combat.

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V.I.P. OF GAMING

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*We dedicate this and all subsequent issues to
Cortina Bandolero
who will always be missed.*

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Cover rendered by Cora Lee Flahive of Century Composing.

From the Publisher

Ages ago (it seems), when Gary Smith and I were kicking around the idea of "breaking into the game biz," those early nagging problems facing any such enterprise had to be satisfactorily dealt with early on in order to even continue to entertain the thought. Basic problems like product, location, personnel, and money had to be resolved "on paper" before ever attempting the actual event. It was during these formative days of debate and discussion that **The V.I.P. of Gaming** magazine was conceived as our initial "product."

I will take the credit and blame for the conceptualizing of this new publication. While some of the higher mucky-mucks within the adventure game magazine publishing circles have already poo-poo'd the idea of this style of magazine (which I'll soon describe), we at **Diverse Talents, Incorporated** (DTI) strongly believe that it fills a terrific need and it will therefore survive and grow.

While many magazines attempting to cover the broader aspects of gaming have gone by the wayside (**Gameplay** is a perfect example), we feel that this was largely due to not giving the people what they really wanted in the first place. Now, we're not great marketing genius' here, just a very mixed bag of gamers who "know what we like," just like the rest of you. You don't have to be brilliant to figure that the most popular articles in adventure gaming magazines are the timely, capsule reviews and the variants; just look at the feedback results.

So is that any reason to base a whole magazine on? Yes, but we've got more. Much more...

Years ago, there was a magazine called **Jagdpantner** (back when those German names were popular for wargame magazines). Each issue had a wargame in it, with an historical article about the same subject (sound familiar?), but that is not why I subscribed to it. The rest of the magazine was just game variants. Tons of "quick and dirty" (and often very amateur) game variants. That's what made this magazine a "must read" by gamers. Getting into other people's ideas about your favorite games. Wow!

I also subscribed to **Moves** magazine in those days. The first thing I read

(after finding out what new games SPI was working on) were the capsule reviews and variants. Admittedly, the "junk food" of the magazine since it touted on its covers and in its advertising to feature "serious" articles on wargaming by "serious, professional" writers, but the "junk food" was written by guys just like me, and represented something I had always wanted to try and write.

So there are the origins of this magazine. Combining the best ideas of many of my favorite publications into one comprehensive one, this: **The V.I.P. of Gaming**. Let's make no bones about it, this is a users' magazine. Other magazines — you get, you read, occasionally copy a page or two, then shelve and forget about them. That is not what **The V.I.P. of Gaming** was designed for.

The purpose of this magazine is twofold, give them what they like (variants and reviews) and encourage the creative capabilities of every gamer by giving them a "safe" magazine that they can write for. Now as for "giving them what they like," well, that's where the format we've chosen of primarily variants and short reviews comes in. Something that will bring every gamer back to read and re-read issues of **The V.I.P.**, both before he goes to purchase a game, and then afterwards to find

interesting variants and scenarios for it. Either way, it's useable, and re-useable, since variants and scenarios are always timely.

Anyone can mimic this format, however, and some have tried and failed. We feel that **The V.I.P.** will thrive because, unlike those other magazines, we make no claims about being "a serious magazine for the serious gamer." (I suppose you gathered that from looking at the cover). We want this magazine to be "user friendly" to ourselves, the "inside" adventure gamers, and so we want to keep the content light, fun and friendly. This is the magazine with a sense of humor that doesn't take itself too seriously (I believe that a satire section will even be soon forthcoming), so enjoy!

The V.I.P. has the look and distribution of a professional magazine, but inside it is written just for average adventure gamers and, most importantly, by average adventure gamers. Most of our writers are being published for the first time, some after other "more serious" magazines have rejected their material. Again, we make no false claims, we want amateur writers to try us when they want to begin to write for adventure gaming magazines. We know that the ideas (variants) and opinions (reviews) of gamers must, by necessity, come from

as divergent a group of them as possible, so we are **broadening** and not necessarily **lowering** our "journalistic standards."

"Journalistic standards," there's a good one! This magazine is likely to be known for its style as a cross between **USA TODAY**, **The National Enquirer** and **The Funny Papers**, and if that's what happens (and we are turned to and enjoyed that much) then we will have achieved our goal. We're writing this for ourselves, so let's have fun!

If you're a gamer who wants to share an idea about your favorite game, or write a review of a new product that interests you (whether you liked it or not), then put your efforts on paper according to the writer's guidelines found elsewhere in this issue and send them off to **The V.I.P. of Gaming** magazine. Although we cannot possibly publish everything we receive, if it's got merit and/or is timely, you'll see your name on the by-lines of these pages.

This is a magazine for the **fun** of adventure gaming, and that's what makes us different.

Alan Emrich
Publisher

"But Seriously, Folks..."

As your fond editor, I, Gary Smith, did not have to draw "Skippy" or fill out the appropriate matchbook cover to get my editing diploma. If I had to do those things, I would probably have become the publisher instead. Such is fate in the game industry/hobby.

Giving birth to new magazines and concepts is never easy. **V.I.P.** started as a dream nearly two years ago with the publisher, Alan Emrich. Conceived between the sheets (of paper) on his desk, Alan worked hard to find the needed backing and support of talented and resourceful people necessary to get the **V.I.P.** concept off the ground and, (if not running) at least crawling. The evolution of dream to reality is his story to tell, my story is who and where we are, and what this present reality is working towards becoming.

Editorially, the most important concept behind **The V.I.P. of Gaming** is that it is several magazines wrapped around a single cover. Each department be it Fantasy, Science Fiction, Wargaming, Miniatures or whatever, could stand alone (and probably flounder) as a separate publication. They each have separate editors and writers, but to make them viable in the marketplace, they share a common circulation base, advertisers, administration, etc. Perhaps one day each department might grow into its own publication. For now, however, we just want everyone sharing in the fun.

The V.I.P. of Gaming has determined its own immediate goals. First, to provide new "toys" for gamers, such as variants, scenarios, counters, errata, odds and ends, etc.

To this end, you, the readers, are **very** strongly encouraged to become **you**, the authors. That's right, we want all those club rules, home made scenarios, variant pieces, or whatever it is you

people create to improve your gaming fun. Do you need writing skills, home computers, a masters degree or even a dictionary to write for us? **No!!** (Okay, so a dictionary helps...) You **do** need ideas, though, and **The V.I.P.** will supply the rest, (proofreading and editing, for instance) and pay you for them to boot!

Now, this magazine's second goal is to provide information. We shall strive to provide (or, more accurately, have **you** provide) game reviews on the large numbers of games, modules and second editions being released, book reviews on material which can improve your role-playing, science fiction or historical adventure games, plus the latest convention news and reviews. (We're very big on game conventions, and want the public to know what is happening with them, what people are competing in, what they get for their convention dollar, etc.) So, again, write those convention, book and game reviews and earn yourself a little fame

and fortune (with which you'll buy yourself some more games to review, right?).

Third, we will provide you with informative interviews. It helps to know who the people are who bring you these games; what their philosophy is when designing or developing a game or addressing a major issue in the hobby today. **The V.I.P.** also wants to put faces with the names that appear on your game boxes and designers notes.

That's my briefing on where we are. The question remains, "where are we going?" A color cardstock variant counter insertion page (say it fast three times) is on the drawing board. Larger scale game additions (counters, maps, rules, organizational charts & tables, etc.). Maybe even (gasp!) full games. All this depends on feedback from the readers via calls, letters and feedback cards, material sent to us for consideration of publication, and a large influx of readers money. Tell us what ye see, people, so that ye may receive.

For now, read and enjoy **The V.I.P.**, make all your saving throws, and don't roll "mud" on the weather tables.

With pencil planted firmly in hand in an attempt to draw "Skippy" and become the publisher, I remain,

Gary Smith

THE 1984 ORIGINS AWARDS FOR ADVENTURE GAMING ANNOUNCED IN BALTIMORE

The Adventure Gaming Hobby's most prestigious awards, the Origins Awards have been presented at each Origins since the National Convention was first held in 1975. This years presentation took place at **ORIGINS 85**, held at Towson State University, outside Baltimore, Maryland June 27-30, 1985.

They are an international series of popular awards aimed at recognizing outstanding achievements in Adventure Gaming. They consist of the Charles Roberts Awards for Boardgaming, and the H.G. Wells Awards for Miniatures and Role

Playing games.

An Awards Committee, composed mainly of independent hobbyists directs and administers the awards system. The nomination ballot, which is available in February, is open to all interested gamers. A final ballot is prepared by the committee and voted on by members of the Academy of Adventure Gaming Arts and both pro and amateur. Direct correspondence and requests for membership guidelines to: Awards, 3304 Crater Ln, Plano, TX 75023.

H.G. WELLS AWARDS WINNERS

For excellence in Miniatures and Role Playing

1. Best Historical Figure Series, 1984 - 25mm Colonials (Ral Partha Enterprises) sculpted by Tom Meier
2. Best Fantasy/SF Figure Series, 1984 - 25mm Personalities (Ral Partha Enterprises) sculpted by Tom Meier
3. Best Vehicular Series, 1984 - 1/3900 Star Trek Starships (FASA Corp) sculpted by Ab Mobasher & the GHQ design team
4. Best Miniature Rules, 1984 - Sword and the Flame, revised (Greenfield Hobby) Larry Brom
5. Best Role Playing Rules, 1984 - Paranoia (West End Games) Dan Gelber, Greg Costikyan & Eric Goldberg; Twilight 2000 (Game Designer's Workshop) Frank

Chadwick, John Astell, John Harshmen, & Loren Wiseman

6. Best Role Playing Adventure, 1984 - Live & Let Die (Victory Games) Gerard Christopher Klug
7. Best Professional Miniature Magazine, 1984 - The Courier (Courier Publishing), editor Richard Bryant
8. Best Professional Role Playing Magazine, 1984 - Dragon (TSR, Inc) editor Kim Mohan
9. Best Play-By-Mail Game, 1984 - Star Web (Flying Buffalo)

CHARLES ROBERTS AWARDS WINNERS

For Excellence in Boardgaming:

10. Best Pre-20th Century Boardgame, 1984 - South Mountain (West End Games) Richard Berg with Jon Southard
11. Best 20th Century Boardgame, 1984 - Vietnam (Victory Games) Nick Karp
12. Best Science Fiction Boardgame, 1984 - Web and Starship (West End Games) Greg Costikyan
13. Best Fantasy Boardgame, 1984 - Lonely Mountain (Iron Crown Enterprises) Coleman Charlton
14. Best Professional Boardgame Magazine, 1984 - The Wargamer (World Wide Wargames) editor Keith Poulter

STRATEGICON presents ORCCON 1986

A complete Strategy and Adventure Game Convention featuring three full days of tournaments, demonstrations, seminars, exhibitors, prizes and much, much more.

ORCCON 1986 is to be held at the Los Angeles Airport Hyatt Hotel, February 14th - 17th President's Day Weekend. Pre-registration is only \$15.00 if postmarked by January 31st, 1986, and there are no separate charges for individual or events (a **STRATEGICON** tradition).

And don't miss **L.A. ORIGINS '86**, July 3rd - 6th at the Los Angeles Airport Hilton Hotel, and **GATEWAY**

1986, August 30th - September 1st at the Los Angeles Airport Hyatt Hotel. To pre-register or for more information, contact:

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The Olympus Enquirer

An Insider's Report About the "Gods" of Gaming

STOP THE PRESSES!! In the most official rumor basket: Diverse Talents, Inc. is negotiating again with Steve Jackson Games, this time to acquire **The Space Gamer** and **The Fantasy Gamer** magazines. Final details of the agreement (of which the major points have already been worked out) are still pending, but it looks like **Space Gamer** #76 will be SJG's last issue before being acquired by DTI. DTI plans to use the two magazines as separate sections for this, **The V.I.P. of Gaming** magazines, and will keep Warren Spector and **The Space Gamer** staff on duty running this "magazine within the magazine" format. Subscriptions to **The Space Gamer** will, of course, be honored by DTI, who will continue all TSG subscriptions with this magazine.

At Origins '85 in Baltimore, GAMA (The Game Manufacturer's Association) held their annual elections. Rich Banner (GDW) remained president and Rick Loomis (Flying Buffalo) treasurer. GAMA's two key committees are now made up as follows:

SITE SELECTION COMMITTEE

West End Games
Iron Crown Enterprises
Ral Partha
The Avalon Hill Game Co.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Mayfair Games
FASA
Adventure Games
Game Science
Balboa Game Co.

The awards for Adventure Gaming in 1984 are listed elsewhere in this issue.

Events and topics of curiosity at Origins include the fact that Milton Bradley was there with **Axis & Allies** etc., while TSR was represented by The Armory (a large East Coast Distributor). TSR did have **people** there, just not their own exhibit. TSR did express an interest in appearing de facto at L.A. ORIGINS '86, however, but nothing definite has as yet been reached.

Australian Design Group has commented that their fine **Empires in Arms** game has been sold to The Avalon



A typical moment in the gym which served as the exhibitor area. Despite its distance from the rest of the convention, attendance was good.

V.I.P. editor Gary Smith going over figures during set-up of the exhibitor area.



What would a game convention be without gaming? At Origins, the designers sit with the players. For example, can you find the hidden Steve Jackson at this table?

Hill Game Co. This has long been suspected. ADG has released a new game entitled **World in Flames** which is a strategic WWII game combining **Third Reich** and **Pearl Harbor** (in scale and complexity) with all of the best ideas from **Global War**, **War in Europe**, **WWII**, etc. along with many innovations of its own. This one appears to be another sure winner from ADG.

Another Australian group has emerged (Panther Publications) with a

Strategic East Front WWII game entitled **Trial of Strength** (do you get the feeling that we're running out of good titles for this subject?). The Avalon Hill Game Co. released a game on the same subject and scale (their third!) entitled (imaginatively) **The Russian Front**, and yet another addition to this genre might be SGP's **At the Gates of Moscow** (a computer and/or board wargame on the Moscow Campaign, 1941).

The Avalon Hill Game Co., while



Scott Haring and Wallace Poulter look on as Steve Jackson games' Mark Chandler negotiates with DTI's Alan Emrich the sale of *The Space Gamer* magazine. Look for *The Space Gamer* in issue #2 of this magazine as its science fiction section.

releasing the afore mentioned **Russian Front** game, also release several computer games, new **Advanced Squad Leader** boards, and the new **Advance Squad Leader Expansion game #1**. All that was missing was the long awaited **Advanced Squad Leader** itself. Mid to late September appears to be **ASL's** release date.

Steve Jackson Games had **Advanced Car Wars** at the show, which did well, as everyone expected. Two Canadian companies had new releases for Baltimore. Simulations Canada released **Lebensraum**, yet another East Front WWII wargame. The surprise hit



An ariel view of the Avalon Hill Game Company's booth. Although bringing many new products, conspicuous by its absence was **Advanced Squad Leader**.



Computer games are a growing division of this hobby. Here, GDW's **Chickamauga** is being played.

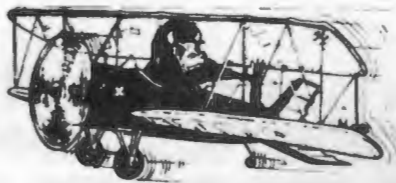
of the convention, however, was **Supremacy Games'** one and only title, **Supremacy**. This "Global thermo-nuclear, economic and military" strategy game combined excellent components with an introductory complexity level and playing fun. At **Origins**, the game was a sell out.

Aside from the myriad of new games, the next two **Origins** conventions themselves were hot topics. There was no "official" bid placed for **Origins XIII**. While the Baltimore-based **Atlanticon** people indicated that **Knoxville** might be a good location, nothing was decided upon. Perhaps potential directors have **triskadecaphobia** (fear of the number

13)?

Origins XII will "bring the games to Los Angeles," if you'll pardon the Olympic pun. Dubbed **L.A. Origins '86**, it will be run by the people who bring you the **ORCCON** and **GATEWAY** game conventions in that area. Next year's **Origins** will be held on July 3rd - 6th at the Los Angeles Airport Hilton Hotel and no separate event fees will be charged at the convention. The hosts are even putting together a "day after **Origins**" group excursion to Disneyland! More information on **L.A. Origins** can be obtained by calling (213) 420-3675.

More from **Olympus** next issue, where the "Gods" of gaming are making their sacrifices!



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STAR GAZERS

CAPSULE REVIEW

Starship Duel I (FASA); \$6. Designed by Jordan Weisman. One 32 page 4" x 5½" rule booklet, 2 navigation wheels, 3 statistic cards, 75 counters and two six sided dice. For 1 or 2 players; playing time up to one hour. Published 1984.

Starship Duel I is one of FASA's new products from their minigame line. This game is based on the battle that ensued between the U.S.S. Enterprise and the Klingon Bird of Prey in Star Trek III. Here, either two player can duel it out or one player can partake in the solitary drone battle. The game provides three ships; the well known Enterprise, the Klingon Bird of Prey, that appeared in the latest movie, or the more powerful 'Stronger Bird'. Each ship is allowed a certain amount of Power points. These can be allotted to either shields or weaponry, or they can be held in

reserve, for later use during the same turn. Each player maneuvers, secretly, using a Navigation Wheel; no map is used. If your weapons come to bear then you can attack your opponent. A scored hit reduces shields. After breaking through those, damage either reduces superstructure or total power. If either are completely depleted, the ship lies dead in space, the next hit destroys it.

The best thing about this game is the Navigation Wheel. With it, no maps are needed, and so the playing area required is greatly reduced. This game can be played anywhere. FASA has provided 75 counters to go with the game, this now means that you can lose counter after counter and still have enough left for playing. A third plus for this product is that the 'Stronger Bird' is included and is an easy match against the Enterprise. A Special Damage table is also used to account for critical hits that do extra damage. Rules covering fly-bys and disengaging are also done nicely. Starship Duel I, unlike Star Fleet Battles, gives you more freedom with firing and power allocation.

Unfortunately, the best thing in Starship Duel I, the navigation wheel, has a terrible problem. The weapons you know you can aim at an enemy are determined by your facing, not on where the opponent is. So, if you wanted to, you could simply put all power to the weapons and shields in one facing and blast away. The only thing your poor enemy can do is do the same or be blasted to bits. The navigation wheel must be assembled by the purchaser. These wheels are loose and clumsy, when put together properly, so they must be reinforced. For the price, this essential component should be better made. The drone movement system also needs work. It makes the ship move randomly, causing it to spin past a fully charged weapon and bear its weakest area to you. Drones would be smarter than that. A system that make the drone turn to bear its nearest weapon or strongest shield wouldn't be complex and would challenge the players.

In all, this is a good game that you won't tire of soon. The designer has made it so that you can play against the ships from other Starship Duel sets. Despite the flaws and the high price, you should give it a try, this part of FASA's line is great.

—Michael DeWolfe

NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Dennis Parizek

Jump Drive — Making a Good Thing Better

As the title implies, this article attempts to get gamemasters to think about Traveller's jump drive in terms of a conceptual framework. First, it hooks the reader by offering some simple, logical ways to add interest to the rules. Then it launches into an example of how one GM built his universe so that the observed features of jump drive are direct consequences instead of arbitrary pronouncements. By the end, jump drive has become a major source of lore and new possibilities, rather than just a transparent travelling device.

It has been my experience that a Traveller campaign can be dramatically improved if the gamemaster has a more detailed understanding of jump drive than that enabled by the rule books. Obviously, no one not of GDW can make official rulings, but I would like to take this opportunity to show some ways to expand beyond the simplifying assumptions that make Traveller more accessible to beginners.

Without changing the hardware, you can add rules that make jump drive more versatile. How about quick microjumps, relatively inaccurate but faster than maneuver drive? Or standard controls that can move the jump field? It could be positioned between the ship and hostile fire, in front of a missile launcher, or even a

fighter tube!

Players feel more involved when they can make strategic tradeoff decisions. You can encourage this by replacing certain single-number rules with graded ones. Try making misjumps more likely with every ten diameters of proximity to the planet and every month the annual maintenance has been delayed, for instance. Allowing short trips to take less time makes players more comfortable with them. Hardware can be subjected to this process, also. At a given tech level, you might be able to choose between a slow, efficient drive or a fast, inefficient one. Does a smart shopper spend his money on speed or economy? Letting players decide for themselves makes it more interesting for everyone.

You might also try offering more add-

on hardware options. External collapsible fuel tanks are very light, and give a ship extended range capability, but are more vulnerable to attack and malfunction than internal tanks. The owner of a ship with high density accumulators might also want to install external charging terminals. It could then charge up at the spaceport, and wouldn't have to carry and burn the fuel for its first jump. Perhaps he could find a high-tech world that sells photonic accumulators, which could be charged free, with sunlight. Of course, if he's that much of a miser, the dealer might be able to talk him into a hyperbooster. How much would it be worth to him to double his range? I suppose that depends on whether the dealer tells him that it burns out the drive rather quickly...

Once the jump is underway, many questions remain to be resolved by each GM. What does jump space look like? What does it contain? Why does every jump take a week? What happens if one turns off the drive in mid-jump? What actually causes misjumps? This is an excellent chance to exercise your creativity, and to give you an idea of what it can lead to, I'll tell you how I did it. To avoid confusion, I use the terms hyperspace and hyperdrive for my versions of these concepts.

Hyperspace has more dimensions than normal spacetime, the most important of which I call depth. Depth is a measure of how close one is to normal space. The deeper a ship runs, the faster it goes, the more difficulty it has in astrogation, and the more subject it is to the currents of hyperspace.

Matter in hyperspace tends to float 'up' until it again resides in the normal universe. The function of hyperdrive is to hold the ship 'down' against this hyper-buoyancy. Drives with higher jump numbers are more powerful, so ships with them can run deeper. While the hyperdrive holds the ship down, the maneuver drive pushes it forward. There is no inertia in hyperspace, so a continuous 1G acceleration yields a constant speed and a range of the jump number after one week. Thus, a jump-6 ship with 6G acceleration might only take four hours and ten minutes to travel one parsec.

At the shallowest penetration, hyperspace looks like a dim version of normal space. Once can see the stars, making astrogation possible. When you go deeper, the view quickly fades and distorts, making it more difficult to get

one's bearings. By the time jump-6 depth is reached, you are flying totally blind. Modern starships are certainly up to flying by dead reckoning, so it wouldn't be so bad, were it not for the hypercurrents.

The currents of hyperspace are not material, but they are capable of influencing the motion of a starship just as water currents affect a boat. There are two basic causes of hypercurrents, the first being the passage of large masses through space. Stars, planets, and moons all create turbulent wakes in hyperspace, and if you fly through one of these, you are liable to be flung way off course (thus the 100-diameter limit). The wakes only extend to certain depths: Jump-1 for moons, jump-2 for planets, and jump-3 for stars. This means that shallow-running ships must watch out for wakes all the time.

Wakes are avoidable, but not so the true hypercurrents. There are four basic types of currents - tides, streams, drafts and vortices. A tide is a single current that is relatively constant over a large area. Spacers might notice one of the legs of a round trip taking longer than the other. A stream is a much faster and more localized current. It might be discovered when a certain trip takes significantly more or less time than a parallel one of equal length. A draft is a stream that is mostly verticle. In it, the current will force a ship deeper or shallower in hyperspace, thus changing the speed relative to normal space. The shallowest parts of the draft will be surrounded by an in- or outgoing tide.

The most interesting currents are the vortices. The fringes of a vortex often look like one of the other types of currents, but when you get in near the center of the whirlpool, or go too deep, your ship can get sucked in, down to the depths of hyperspace. At this point, one of three things can happen. First, you could be thrown out at a tremendous depth, so that when you emerge from hyperspace, you could be as far away as another galaxy. Second, you could be deposited in a stable zone of hyperspace the currents offset the buoyancy of matter. In some of the longer-lived stable zones, people even build space stations (a very secure hideaway). Third, you can submerge so far that you actually come out the other side, into another universe. Naturally, there are also inverse vortices, which have an upward thrust and are far less interesting.

Mapping the currents of hyperspace

was no particular problem. After all, that's why I chose the hydrodynamic model, so I could use my intuition instead of some abstract set of rules. Simply start out with a tide, add a few powerful currents at random, then derive some secondary features from the interactions of the primary ones. Estimation is good enough for assigning current strength numbers, scaled in parsecs per week, that get stronger with depth. Later, you can add drift to the primary currents, so the map will slowly change and keep the players on their toes. It's tough to go wrong, because the players will be charting the currents so gradually that you will have plenty of time to refine your map to the desired degree of sophistication. Ships can detect currents by using Doppler radar while jumping, but this is not common knowledge.

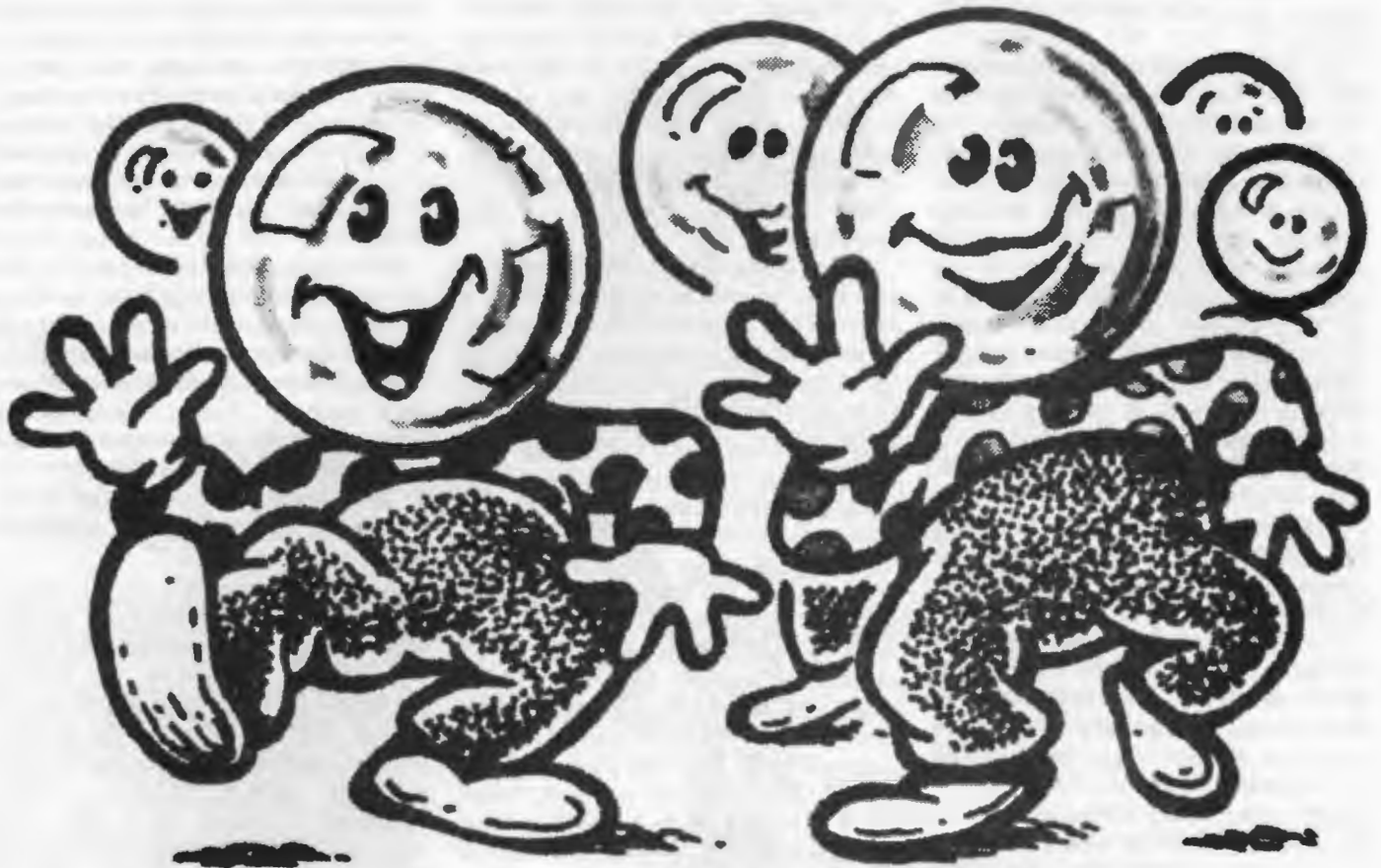
Sure, it sounds complicated. The benefits make the trouble worthwhile, though. When hyperspace has lore, spacers can talk about it in the same way sailors talk about the sea, and share a fellowship that makes them slightly 'different', like spacers should be. The point is this: Study the rules, understand them, then expand and improve wherever you see fit. After all, it's your campaign, and you won't forget how to play by the official rules when the need arises.

The Third Degree

Welcome to the feedback portion of **The V.I.P. of Gaming** magazine! We call it **The Third Degree** because it is our chance to grill you, our readers for some statistical guidance. Please fill out the feedback card inserted in this issue and return it to us. The results you'll find in a future issue as the **True Confessions** column.

The Scroll's in the Mail...

This will be our regular "letters" column. In it, we hope to find your letters with your observations about our V.I.P. articles and variants, your comments on the game hobby or industry and other relevant topics of interest to our readership. We plan to let you guide us in the direction this column should take, and would appreciate your letters and comments.



THE LAW OF CONSERVATION OF CHARACTERISTICS

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal..." Many game designers and even more referees ignore this simple principle. The result is a nonhuman race which is the "winning way": strong, fast, smart, and sturdy, with few or no weaknesses.

This is fine for fiction, where the author has absolute control over the environment and characters (statements about stories "writing themselves" notwithstanding). In gaming, though, it creates a real problem. Pretty soon, none of the players bother with anything else—all the other races are weaker, in one fashion or another.

That is where the concept of **Game-balance** enters the picture. A new race, especially one from which player characters can be generated, must be written up with great care, to prevent abuses. This month's column deals with some of the hows and whys of creating a

reasonable and realistic nonhuman, and (for the player) of avoiding campaigns an **ubervolk**.

The first consideration is the race's background. Where does it come from? What life forms is it related to, and which is it descended from? What habitat and environment is it most comfortable in? Is it intended to produce player characters, or is it purely for background?

Those intended to interact with humans to a significant extent must operate in a compatible environment. Though magical or technological assistance—such as protective clothing, talismans, or breathing masks—will allow marginal cases to function well enough, nothing sane will permit the inclusion of, say, salamanders or gas-giant-dwelling gasbags as PCs. This is not to say that such beings cannot exist, but that it would be difficult to justify speaking to one in a local tavern.

In a similar vein, most human-compatible peoples must have reasonably accessible psychologies. The aforementioned gasbags probably have few if any points of reference in common with humans; that communications gap makes it virtually impossible to deal with them on a meaningful basis. Again, they might be encountered on occasion...but one would not ask a gasbag for directions. (A cautionary note should be sounded here: Making a race similar in psychology to humans is all very well and good, but beware of the "zipper-up-the-back" syndrome. They should **not** be humans in funny suits.)

Related to the race's psychology is its mental capability. It's been said that an alien should think as well as a human, but not like a human. This applies equally as much in fantasy games as it does in SF games. Exceptions to this rule can and do exist, notably in the form of semi-intelligent creatures. But

for the most part, intellect should be approximately equal among sentient species, especially ones to which PCs belong.

All of the above is or at one time was dictated and dominated by the environment. Sentience appears to be an adaptation to a change in that environment severe enough to leave extinction as the only other probable outcome. What was that cause? In humans, credit has gone to an advancing ice age, to the withering of the Sahara region (it was at one time a rich, verdant area), and to sundry other catastrophic climatic alterations. If dolphins are indeed intelligent, the cause is most likely their return to a strange and unfamiliar environment: the oceans.

The habitat also dictates and dominates cultural and technical or magical advancement until quite a high level of sophistication. An undersea culture, never capable of producing fire, and unlikely to think of the wheel*, will in all probability never achieve a high technology. Humanity owes the opposable thumb to tree dwelling and rock-climbing; without it, the dolphins could evolve highly advanced cultural and philosophical disciplines, but little else.

All the cultural and environmental limitations in the world won't deter a sufficiently determined power-gamer, though, if the race's characteristics and/or skills are noticeably superior to the general run of racial types. I have myself had to deal with this phenomenon: any action or personality, no matter how wildly out of character for that race, can be rationalized, given sufficient time.

This brings us to the reason for this month's title: The Law of Conservation of Characteristics. The fundamental idea is simple—a race's characteristics must not, as a whole, be significantly better than human. Small variances are permitted and may even be necessary, but the approximate overall balance must be maintained. A large, heavy being may have a hefty set of muscles, and may be difficult to kill, but—likely as not—physical coordination is not what one would call breathtaking. The only major exception is intelligence, which as stated before, should itself be roughly equivalent from race to race.

Higher and lower characteristics-ranges can be at least estimated by looking at the race's background. A species descended from a plainsrunning

pack carnivore is probably fast and nimble, but may not be powerful or long-winded. By the same token, a solitary carnivore-chaser ancestor bequeaths great amounts of endurance and some musclepower, but at the expense of a certain amount of quickness. (Carnivores, incidentally, are more likely to gain sentience, due to their dominant position in the ecosphere.d)

After getting a rough idea, the number and type of dice actually rolled for a particular characteristic can be determined by comparison with other racial types to be used in the campaign. Later additions, while more difficult to polish to fit, can still use the same method.



There is one fly in the ointment: artificially-created races. This seemingly innocuous description has been the justification for a number of outrages. ("Well, we're the designers, we can do anything we want, right?") Unfortunately, there is no easy answer to this, except to say that such races are almost always created for a **reason**, and that usually some design feature allows for control of members of that race. The purpose for which the race was created is a very definite indicator of what the characteristics would look like.

Taking all this into account, the thing to watch out for—as a player, or as referee of an open game—is people's "pet races". These will frequently manifest with a can-you-top-this level of capabilities and no flaws (at least, none that the creator acknowledges). They also usually have all the subtlety of a full salvo from the **New Jersey**.

More dangerous still is the super-race

designed by someone who understands the allure of camouflage. These appear quite harmless or only mildly powerful on the surface, but have a tendency to sail through situations that inflict major casualties on others—sometimes by design. Even if the campaign is going through a lull period, a certain domination of events by the super-race character(s) gradually suffuses the game.

This raises the last topic for this month: Who's in charge here? In other words, what is/are the dominant race(s) in the campaign background and why? If it contains a super-race, and that race isn't running things, it's probably because a bunch of oppressed races got together and beat them into submission, or (less likely) because an idealistic, democratic government is mediating things.

Basically, then, while it's all right to create intelligent species of varying capabilities for one's stories, and in fact is sometimes required, in gaming extremely high levels of power should be left offstage, either in the form of gods or similar beings, or as the ever-popular "Forerunners." Semi-intelligent creatures can be fun to run once in a while, but a habit should not be made of it. For the most part, keep in mind that all player-character races are—or should be—created equal.

*Remember that mechanical gears, windmills, water wheels, and so forth are elaborations of the wheel.

ALIEN RACES AND HOW TO IDENTIFY THEM

I've maintained for years that the second most common type of alien race in all of science fiction is the parafeline: cats, cats, everywhere. I don't really mind this — I have a thing for the females — nor am I very surprised, since cats seem to be incredibly popular among both SF Fans and the authors who entertain them.

Of course, I may be wrong. There may be other types more prevalent...but I doubt it. The point is that aliens tend to fall into archetypes, especially in gaming. This month's installment examines those archetypes and their

merits and drawbacks.

First off, it should be noted that there is nothing *per se* wrong with using archetypes. After all, the concept of there being "nothing new under the sun" originated with the Greeks. The problems crop up when more than archetypes are used (can you say "plagiarism"? I knew you could).

Many science fiction and even some fantasy games contain six of the most common basic alien types: parahuman, parafeline, reptilian/sauroid, insectoid/arachnoid, avian, and exotic. Other basic types doubtless exist, but they would be much more scattered than those listed.



The parahuman physically resembles a human, perhaps to the extent of being visually indistinguishable. The differences usually lie in capabilities — a parahuman frequently has one or more 'special powers' unique to it. A subtype of the parahuman is the 'human mark two', which possesses sharper senses and better coordination. Some versions are also stronger and more robust. Examples of the parahuman include Vulcans and elves.

Parafelines are usually humanoid, slight in build and digitigrade*. They tend to have swift reflexes, but are not quite as strong or sturdy as humans. A great many parafeline races are somewhat primitive, with a strong warrior tradition. More advanced parafeline cultures often place an emphasis on dignity and grace. Some notable exceptions to those traits exist: these races run to massive builds and belligerence (the Kzinti leap to mind here). Examples of more usual parafelines include the native race of Cynthia Felice's *Godsfire* and *Star Trek's* Caitans.

Reptilians and sauroids vary enormously; the only relatively constant trait is a certain shallowness of emotion. Some are ruthless, others very humanlike, still others ideological. A humanoid build is less common, and dexterity is often traded off in favor of constitution.



Sometimes, though, a sauroid is nearly as quick as a parafeline. Tails are also prevalent,

usually heavy thrasher-type structures. Reptilians and sauroids number among them the Visitors and the various



draconic races floating about.

Insectoids and arachnoids are, as often as not, hive-mind intelligences; both mass-mind and individualistic races tend to be fairly emotionless (more so even than sauroids) and highly analytical. Humanoid forms are rare, while castes are quite common. A number of insectoids fly, just as many arachnoids build weblike cities and structures. Humans generally find members of this category repulsive. Robert Heinlein's "Bugs" and Alan Dean Foster's *Thranx* fit here.

Avians split into two subcategories: flyers and ex-flyers. Flyers retain functional wings, while ex-flyers have, in the classic phrase, "traded wings for intelligence". Both subtypes tend to be delicate but quick and flighty (no pun intended), sometimes to the point of speaking too fast for a human to follow. Such races (especially flyers) nearly always prefer dense atmospheres and low-gravity environments; vision is keen, while smell is nearly absent. Some avians in literature are Andre Norton's *Trystians* and Anne McCaffrey's *Ryxi*.

An exotic race is one that, in a friend's words, "was designed to just be as **wierd** as possible". For that reason, this classification is more of a catchall than the others: exotics vary widely, and fit this category by virtue of odd looks, bizarre psychology, offbeat environment, or any combination thereof...the stranger the better. A couple of examples, illustrating the range this designation covers, are *Traveller's* *Hivers* and the epitome of the exotic concept, John Campbell's *The Thing*.

There are, of course, ramifications beyond the above capsule descriptions. An immediately apparent fact is that several archetypes are firmly based on terrestrial animals. The ways of explaining how and why this is so are legion. The most common method is to entirely ignore the reasons behind the

resemblance to a Terran counterpart, except possibly to mumble a few words about odd coincidences.

Felines are the most specialized family of predators on Earth, and because of this specialization, are unlikely to ever develop intelligence. Cats have reached their peak, evolutionarily speaking — there's nowhere for them to go but down. Cheetahs are a good, if extreme, example. The world's cheetah population has such a limited gene pool that — apart from gender — every cheetah is essentially exactly like every other cheetah. If one member of a close group contracts a disease, it spreads with disconcerting swiftness to the rest. (This has in fact happened to at least one zoo. Every cheetah in the park died, like dominoes falling.) The species is in a genetic *cul-de-sac*, with no hope of escape. There are a few ways to get around the problems, most notably the genetically-engineered-race-transplanted-to-another-world solution. (Though canine instead of feline, *Traveller's* *Vargr* are a good example of this).

Insectoids and arachnoids are required to make some adaptations before it is practical for them to reach any respectable size. A large, purely exoskeletal body is not practical in any but reasonably low gravity — otherwise it would collapse under its own weight. Similarly, they will probably bleed red, since the inefficiencies of the normal insectoid/arachnoid circulatory systems become



insupportable as size increases; a more typical hemoglobin-based blood and closed cardiovascular system would be necessary.

Reptilians, if the temperature drops sufficiently, will go dormant. This is the result of possessing a coldblooded metabolism, and explains why a truly reptilian species of sentients is highly unlikely. Sauroids are far more likely, being based on Terrestrial dinosaurs... which according to current theory were indeed warmblooded. It is interesting to note that, were in not for the Great

Dinosaur Die-off which left mammals in control of the field, a sauroid intelligence would probably be in charge instead of humanity.

Avians, especially functional flyers, have their own problems. Even if the race does not now fly, it at one time did; the same problems had to be dealt with. The biggest of these is the cube-square law: the volume and mass of an object increase by the cube of its length, while the surface area goes up by the square of the length. A bird twice as long is eight times as heavy, but has only four times the wing area — unless it grows oversize wings to compensate. The cube-square law acts to keep size down, and smaller creatures are less likely to

develop a brain large enough/complex enough for intelligence. A secondary, but related, handicap is that avians tend to be delicate, because of the various methods their bodies use to reduce weight: hollow skeletal structure, minimal musculature, et cetera.

Two of the most common non-carbon-based life forms are silicon- and ammonia-based. While modern science is reasonably confident that the latter may be viable, to my knowledge there is no certainty either direction regarding the former — there is simply insufficient data. Ammonia, incidentally, demands a lower ambient temperature; it boils at -33.35† C and freezes at -77.7† C, a range of nly 44.35

Celsius degrees. By contrast, water is liquid over a range of one hundred Celsius degrees.

Archetypes, then, can be quite useful if a bit well-worn. The key point to remember is that any alien race must be imaginative, believable, and realistic, regardless of the inspiration. Oh, and the most common type of fictional alien? Parahumans, of course.

*Digitigrade: Walking so that only the toes touch the ground, as do horses, dogs, and cats. —American Heritage Dictionary.

Dave Bryant

STAR FLEET BATTLES -

Alternate Damage Allocation System

By Michael Random

Damage allocation in **Star Fleet Battles** has always proven to be a tedious chore. Even with the introduction of **Battle Dmaage - Code Red**, a fifty-point volley can still take forever-and-a-day to resolve. Well, this article doesn't address this problem. What it does do, however, is suggest a small modification to the existing rules that will change the complexion of damage allocation, but won't substantially reduce the amount of time taken to resolve it.

The basic premise behind random damage allocation is that neither the player inflicting nor the player receiving the damage will have any idea of or control over (beyond that of a purely statistical group of assumptions) what systems and devices will be destroyed or rendered inoperativce as a result of the damage. In **Star Fleet Battles** this type of a system is substantiated by the fact the many weapons either hit or miss. Obviously, if one is unable to insure a hit on one's target, one will certainly be unable to select WHERE the hit will occur.

I believe that the torpedo weapons used in the majority of the **Star Trek** episodes and movies depicted very concentrated damage. They only struck one section of the target, but they wasted the section that they hit. In **Star Fleet Battles**, torpedo weapons splatter the damage that they do across the

entire ship, just like all of the other weapons. While this would represent the effect of a torpedo weapon striking a localized area in some cases, it would not in most.

An easy way to resolve damage this way is, after determining which players are going to fire on a given impulse, follow these procedures:

A) Each player firing weapons listed as **NOMINAL TORPEDO WEAPONS**, below, must specify, secretly, which, if any, will operate as **TORPEDO WEAPONS**, and which will operate normally.

B) Each player firing weapons on this impulse must openly specify the **ORDER** in which the weapons, he/she has announced the intention to fire, will be fired.

C) All weapons fire is resolved between all ships, to determine the number of damage points scored by each, in the order specified in Step B.

D) These damage points are then applied on their targets in the order that they were specified to be fired. Note E, below.

E) Weapons that are defined as **TORPEDO WEAPONS** and **NOMINAL TORPEDO WEAPONS** (that were specified as operating as **TORPEDO WEAPONS**), that have hit their targets for at least two points of damage under the normal rules have their damage allocated in the order specified in Step

B, but under the **Torpedo Damage Allocation Procedures**. All other weapons are resolved in the order specified, but under the normal rules.

Torpedo Damage Allocation Prcedures:

Any weapon that is to be resolved under these rules is noted hereafter as a Torpedo.

1) Torpedoes do damage to shields and PA panels under the normal rules.

2) If the order in which weapons are resolved indicates that a Torpedo strikes a shield or PA panel, the damage is resolved normally, both against the shields/PA panels and against the ship if the shield/PA panel collapses under the Torpedo. Hence, any damage points remaining from a Torpedo hit that both hits the remainder of a shield/PA panel **AND** does internals, has the internal damage that it does resolved under the normal rules.

3) If the order in which weapons are resolved indicates that a Torpedo strikes a ship directly, then damage is allocated under the normal rules **EXCEPT** if one of the damage points strikes a boldfaced system. If this occurs, **ALL** of the remaining damage is applied to one of those groupings of systems (owner's choice) up to the

remaining number of points of the Torpedo, or the total number of systems of that type adjacent to and including the system of that type selected by the owner of the ship taking the damage.

ALL damage points remaining from a Torpedo that has destroyed an entire grouping of systems are lost.

When using this system, crippling a ship with a full spread of torpedo

weapons becomes somewhat easier. A single overloaded photon torpedo can blow off an entire warp engine, bridge, or weapons battery.

TORPEDO WEAPONS:	NOMINAL TORPEDO WEAPONS:
Standard Load Photon Torpedo	Drone (any)
Overloaded Photon Torpedo	G-Type Plasma Torpedo
Disruptor	S-Type Plasma Torpedo
Fixed-Round Plasma Torpedo	Tractor-Repulsor Beam
Direct-Fire Hellbore	Plasmatic-Pulsar Device
	Anti-Matter Probe

Special Considerations:

- When arranging the order weapons are fired with this system, fire only enough normal weapons to penetrate the enemy's shield. Then allocate all of your torpedo weapons, and then the rest of your weapons. This will drop the enemy's shield, burn up his boldfaced systems, and then clean up the rest of his ship. If you fire too many normal weapons at first, they will take up the "one-time-per-volley" hits with only one point each, preventing your torpedoes from striking them. If you allocate too few weapons early, your

torpedoes will be wasted hitting his shields AND taking up the "one-time-per-volley" hits.

- Weapons fire is still considered to be simultaneous, even though it is allocated in a specified order.

- While important systems can be destroyed in short order with this method, much of a torpedo weapon's massive damage can be lost by hitting a single small group of boldfaced systems.

- Enveloping Plasma and Hellbore weapons may not employ this system,

nor may any weapon not listed above.

- Reserve power may be used to mitigate the effects of this system by creating shields, via general reinforcement, that the torpedoes must strike. This will obviously cause their damage to be resolved by the normal rules.

- This system assumes one is employing the DAC. If using **Code Red**, assume that the "One Time Per Volley" cards are boldfaced hits, for purposes of this system.

Star Fleet Battles variant:

The Tholian Cannon By Gary E. Smith

This weapon dates from 1980-81, when the Tholians in SFB were rather weak, and our local game group wanted to give them some additional punch. Its use is restricted to the Tholians, since being a crystalline-type power enhancer, the Tholians (crystal beings) are the only ones able to understand its maintenance. Each cannon would have a BPV of a photon, the limit per ship being 2.

OPERATION: The Tholian Cannon is a power magnifier, so the power in it is seemingly magnified in strength when fired as a weapon. The cannon loads over two turns. The first turn it takes 2 points to charge. The second turn, as many energy points as the player wants are pumped into the cannon, and a bolt twice the value of the energy put in on

the second turn is available to shoot. It must be fired and cannot be held. The cannon shoots using the photon chart probabilities.

RESTRICTIONS: Each cannon when fired is subject to burn out due to the tremendous amount of energy focused through the crystal. If burn out occurs, the bolt just fired is only 1/2 strength if it hits. Use the following breakdown chart when firing the weapon, rolling each time the weapon if fired.

TACTICS: The Tholian cannon is generally considered a defensive weapon, in line with the Tholians usual practice. Statistically, burnouts are assured, so some players set back and load up +25 bolts to try and blow down shields, then rush the victim when they are successful. Patrol Cruisers armed with these weapons make dangerous opponents.

COSTS: Our group made them a BPV of 7 each, but since the bolts can be literally any strength, playtesting would be necessary to more exactly determine their true worth.

BOLT POWER DIE ROLL	2-8	9-16	17-24	25-32	33-40	41 & up
1	-	-	-	-	-	*1/2B
2	-	-	-	-	B	B
3	-	-	-	B	B	B
4	-	-	B	B	B	B
5	-	B	B	B	B	B
6	B	B	B	B	B	B

*1/2B: roll again, 4-6 indicates burnout

Into the Long Night

Unauthorized Twilight: 2000 Repair Kit

by Greg Porter

(Someone who didn't vote for it to win the H.G. Wells award)

I eagerly expected **Twilight: 2000** at the local hobby shop. I expected greatness. GDW usually puts out good stuff, and I was hoping for another game that I would quickly dogear and wear the glossy finish off of. I nearly mugged the UPS person when I found out it was in the truck. Afterwards, I felt like mugging him for having brought it in the first place. I was disappointed, to say the least. It is obvious that a lot of research was done in designing this game. I wonder where it all went? After my less than glowing review in the **Space Gamer**, I was offered the chance to write up some ways to fix what I didn't like. Where would that put me if I complained without trying to be helpful? Well...here are what I think are some improvements (Others may disagree vehemently). These keep the original simplicity of the game, but drastically improve the realism in the areas that are lacking. A word in advance: This will make gun combat substantially more lethal, so give your players some advance notice if you plan to spring this on them.

Character Generation - Some people prefer point-based generation to random rolls, but **Twilight** does a good job and I see no reason to drastically change it. One suggestion might be to allow characters to favor or slight attributes after rolling instead of before, or to perhaps allow exchange of attributes instead. One change you will need to make is to give every location a Hit Capacity equal to the total for the chest. This will be delved into later, but basic reasons are to prevent unlucky characters from getting skulls as thin as eggshells (low CON).

Time and Travel - This is basically good, but I have doubts on fatigue. Undoubtedly being in combat is

fatiguing and unnerving, but it is too simple to wear a group down by short, sporadic attacks. Characters should not be able to suffer more than 3 levels of fatigue per day due to combat, regardless of how many combats there are. Additionally, the GM may want to arbitrarily say that short combats (less than 30 seconds) do not count as hard work. Another idea might be to have characters make a Coolness Under Fire roll at the end of each combat to see whether they were fatigued or not. Any roll of a 1 automatically fails.

Combat and Damage - Ecch! Being a hardware tech and ballistics fanatic, I cringed repeatedly in this section. It can be made simpler and better. The Coolness Under Fire is nice, but it makes me feel like a **Squad Leader** counter, with equivalents of morale checks, bailing out of AFVs, etc...It is an accurate representation of men faced with imminent death, but more gung-ho GMs may wish to get rid of it so all the John Wayne impersonators don't make fools of themselves by cowering in the bushes at heroic moments. The mechanics of combat are nice the way they are: Uncluttered. Characters will perhaps seek the range barriers where the enemy's chance to hit is halved or better, but without a set of range tables, this is difficult to implement. A few suggestions, though. Less than a third of a weapon's range should be counted as Point Blank. This doubles the hit probability. For longer ranges, the best suggestion is to have a GM call on the range. For instance, at the closest medium range, a better multiplier could be given than for the longest medium range. Say a .5 instead of the normal .3. This is up to GM preference. If a weapon has a modifier for trotting, it should be

half that for walking. Given the time scale, a man walking could actually be standing still a large part of the time. This is less likely while trotting, hence more shots on the move, hence less accuracy.

Now to the weapons themselves. First, get rid of **all** armor multipliers, and replace the numbers on LCG's with the following:

HE, HEPXPFx3
WP, Thermitex4
APFSDSDU (and .50 SLAP) x.7

All other multipliers are x1. Reduce all KDR's by 2 meters, except for the RAW HE and RAW HEAT rifle grenades, which are both halved. They're big, but not *that* big. Keep the burst radius, but modify the probabilities as follows: At less than ¼ the burst radius, there is a 100% chance of multiple fragment hits, and a 70% chance at less than ½ the blast radius. Add another range step: A 40% chance of a frag hit at from 1 to 1.5 times the blast radius. Fragments will do 3d6 at less than ½ the blast radius, 2d6 out to the blast radius, and 1d6 out to double the blast radius. Most fragments are very small, but at very high velocity, they shed this velocity rapidly. That is why most NATO grenades have a 95%+ kill rate at less than 5 meters, and less than 5% at 20 meters.

Actual damage done by hand weapons should be converted as follows: Add 1, and multiply by 4. example: A .38 Sp. gets a rating of (1+1) *4-8. For those that want random variation, multiply by 1d6 instead of 4. This give more possibility for grazes or critical hits. For purposes of converting, assault rifles and the G11 now have a damage of 3, going to (3+1) *4-16. The 14.5mm KPV should have a damage of 9, going to (9+1) *4-40. With nearly double the energy of a .50cal, it should do more than 10% extra damage. Shotguns now have a damage of 1, going to (1+1) *4-8. Shotgun multiple hits may be covered

simply by saying that every 5% the hit roll is made by gives an extra hit. The GM will have to make special calls (limit on number of hits) if the characters are using ammo with very large or small numbers of pellets. At close range, this (multiple hits) is not nice, especially since most of the hits will be to the same or adjacent locations. The damage reduction with range can remain as is, using the new numbers, but use only the longer range for auto weapons. Bullets don't do any less damage when fired automatic. Damage from grenades is covered under fragments, but any contact hit gets double damage (grenade on the rear deck, in the foxhole, etc.). LCG's should use the damage multiplier as a base number, and multiply be $10+1d10$. Example: A damage multiplier of x6 would now do $6*(10+1d10)$. Reductions for range subtract 3 from the $1d10$ roll per range step.

The vehicle hit system is nice, but the APC's are vulnerable to axes, which is much too thin. Multiply APC and LCV armor by 3, and MBT armor by 1.5. This means that APC's are now virtually invulnerable to rifle fire, which is the way it really is. The HMMWV is actually lightly armored, and should stop shell splinters, so it should have an armor of 10 all the way around. Vehicle damage is done normally, using the revised

damages and armor.

Personal body armor remains at the same level, but the kevlar vest only has an armor class of 3, vs. puncturing wounds from sharp objects like knives and arrows. The plate insert jacket has a 75% chance of getting its full value. If it fails, it gets none (you missed the plates). In lower tech areas, mail armor may be coming back into style. The armor class for this will be about 5, and it will weigh as much as the plate insert vest.

Now, damage vs. people (the important stuff). This is how you use the total Hit Capacity mentioned earlier. All damage from torso hits that gets through armor is doubled, and all head damage that gets through armor is quadrupled. This does not apply to Body Combat damage. All damage criteria are divided by 4, except the chest death threshold, which is halved. This means a slight hit is $\frac{1}{4}$ of Hit Capacity, a serious hit is $\frac{1}{2}$ Hit Capacity, and a critical hit is over Hit Capacity. These are not cumulative. Two slight injuries that add up to over $\frac{1}{4}$ of Hit Capacity still recover as slight hits. An example of this system. Joe Macho gets hit in his unarmored torso with an M-16 bullet at close range. Using the old system, the most that he would likely feel is indigestion. Using the new rules, he takes about 16 points (or $4*1d6$ using

the random roll), which is doubled to 32, which means he is Critically Injured. If we put him in the kevlar vest and shoot him with the 23mm HE rounds, they will do an average of 62 points, of which 32 gets through and is doubled to 64 for instant death. 25mm and larger almost guarantees a critical result. His rifle will no longer go through Russian APC armor like a hot knife through butter, but if he threw a grenade on top, it probably wouldn't do it any good.

What this does to play balance - If you didn't notice, the average infantryman is no longer god-like in power. He is subject to the same laws as the rest of us, and this may make him a bit more cautious. Getting hit even once by gunfire is now a serious matter, and this may cause the characters to keep thier heads down a bit more. Vehicles are now only subject to vehicle weapons or anti-armor rockets, or maybe small arms with AP rounds, so characters are more likely to stay in them. The GM should be able to discourage too much of this by occasional mention of catastrophic vehicle hits, and muttering about what did that to the T-72 on page 25. I thought the game was quite playable before (though besotted with problems), and if these changes are taken to heart, it will be even more playable now.

RELIGION IN SCIENCE FICTION ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

Dave Bryant

Rumor has it that a recently published SFRPG was written under the basic assumption that all starfaring races are, by definition, atheistic.

If that rumor is true, then by its very existence, this opinion raises some interesting questions. The first and most obvious of these is: Is it true? Why or why not? And how does SF role-playing in general treat this subject?

First, it should be noted that the above contention is a rather sweeping statement, and thereby quite fragile. Only one exception

would be required to disprove it. Unfortunately, evidence in support of either viewpoint is scanty, as we currently have no contact with any other sentient species (if indeed any exist), and our own has yet to take any but the most tentative steps beyond our native world.

Therefore, speculation must be matched against speculation. Since the human world-view is all we have to work with, the necessary assumption is that any aliens humans could deal with on a meaningful basis are reasonably similar in psychology.

Humans, in every real culture ever documented, has had his gods and demons. From the earliest plainsdwellers to the present, man has always believed in greater forces. Even those cultures which are atheistic are consciously so; they have knowingly rejected religion. Even so, the greatest of these purposely atheist cultures, the Soviet Union, has its Jews, its Eastern Orthodox Catholics, and enclaves of several other faiths. The USSR officially has no religion; instead, another belief system has been substituted: Reverence of the

infallible Communist doctrine/philosophy, its greatest prophet Marx, and those who maintain it, the Party. That nation is run remarkably like a religious dictatorship, with variations.

In a sense, then, religious and pseudoreligious beliefs appear to be fundamental to the human psyche. The current trend toward cults and offbeat religions, as well as an apparent upswing in the established churches, demonstrates that despite—or perhaps because of—increasing technology and complexity, and the resulting pressures, people need the comfort of knowing that there is stability to a seemingly chaotic universe.

Will this change? No one can say for certain, but I am inclined to think not. The Jewish faith is alive and kicking after at least four millenia of nearly constant persecution. If this is any indication, the Jews are likely to be around after another 4000 years, unless something really drastic happens to humanity as a whole. Another factor to consider is that being Jewish, like a number of other religions, is not merely holding a particular set of beliefs. It is a heritage, a culture unto itself.

Yet the only RPGs whose character sheets provide a blank for religious beliefs are fantasy games. Admittedly, superhero games and to a lesser extent, espionage games, have less need for them. (Characters in these games with religious beliefs usually make them part of their *schticks*.) Still, though, virtually any game set in the modern period or later makes little provision for what seems to be an intrinsic aspect of the human worldview.

Science fiction games are generally quite erratic in their treatment of religion. For the most part, it is entirely ignored, save for the occasional theocratic government. Every now and then, though, a scenario is built around a (usually alien or fanatic) religion. The implication is that religious beliefs are not uncommon—yet no provision is made for faiths PCs may belong to.

This article will not attempt to address the exceedingly complex question of how to cover this gap, except to point out that it exists, and to offer a few general rules of thumb. Certainly it is possible, for example, for the occasional species or culture to

be without a formal religion, or without any such beliefs at all. How such races react to others that do can be a rich source of background material or even scenarios; atheists tend to be dour and pragmatic.

Unless the human cultures in the game have experienced a really severe breakdown, though, the great religions of today will probably still be around, albeit in a modernized form. Doubtless some new ones will have arisen, and older ones without large numbers of followers may have indeed have died off (as Shintoism did in Japan). Missionary zeal is part and parcel of stories of the conquest of the New World, and in fact is the basis of a great deal of SF literature. Why not add this aspect to a campaign—religious tension will liven up any game.

In the SF campaigns run by Ken Pick and myself in cooperation, there are two Christians (one of them, an alien, is an accredited priest), two members of a major alien religion (both human, and one of *them* a priestess), and a human from a planet colonized as a Jewish world. There are sundry other characters ranging from devout to agnostic; to my knowledge, none of the player characters is truly atheistic. Religion has a subtle, but constant, influence on these campaigns, if nowhere else, then on character interaction.

In short, if humanity is considered typical (an almost inescapable assumption, in view of the lack of data), then religious races are the rule, rather than the exception.

RELIGION IN SFRPGs, EXPANSION

Barring exceptionally fast interstellar communication, central church authority will tend to decrease in importance as lag time increases (as it would in an expanding culture heavily involved in colonization, for instance). Local sects, if for some reason cut off from that central authority, will tend to develop on their own, heavily influenced by local conditions. A later recontact with the central authority

will probably lead to trouble over the major schisms which will have almost inevitably come about.

The effects of history on religion must also be documented. What is the impact of contrasting another intelligent species? What if their religion agrees? What if it disagrees? What if they are determined to convert anyone they meet, by the sword if necessary? What if they have no religion at all? A Third World War would almost certainly devastate Europe — what happens to the Pope and the Vatican? What effect would that war have on the Holy Land...and what repercussions would follow those effects?

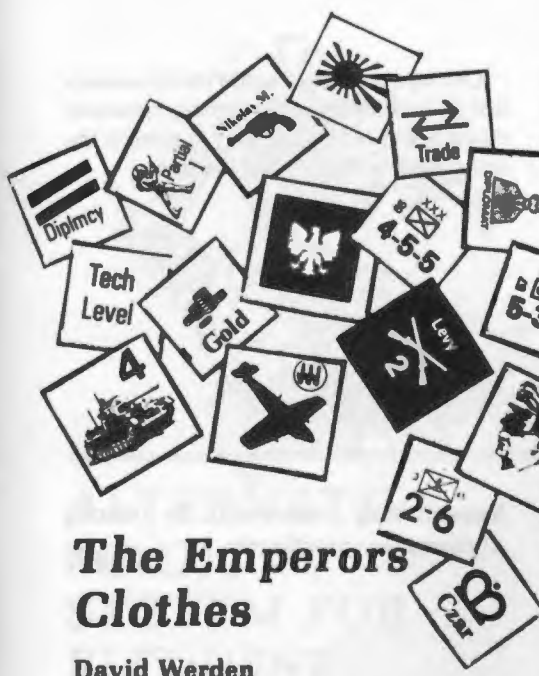
Tied up with religion is morality. What is considered by humans to be good or evil is directly or indirectly influenced by the church. If a culture has no religion, what dictates its morals? (If it is completely amoral, it is quite likely a danger to its neighbors and possibly itself as well. Whether this situation is better or worse than that of a fanatic crusading/missionary culture I leave up to the reader.) They must come from somewhere; such sophisticated philosophical concepts do not appear from thin air.

How are the player characters affected by all this? Adding religion in makes for some interesting potential: travelling men (and women?) of the cloth, whether PCs or NPCs; highly religious PCs; PCs coming into contact with highly religious people; the church hiring the PCs for some purpose — honest or dishonest (imagine the possibilities of a corrupt portion of a church structure); the sanctuary offered by certain religious establishments; and so forth.

An interesting side note is that at least one *Aftermath* campaign takes place after the Rapture.

Oddly, it seems that the oldest documented human beliefs — dating from the Paleolithic Age — are monotheistic. Polytheism did not have a major impact until towns began appearing in a big way. The last important polytheistic culture, Imperial Rome, converted to Christianity at the end of the fourth century AD. The period of polytheistic domination, then, was about eight and a half to ten and a half millenia.

COUNTERMIX



The Emperors Clothes

David Werden

I sat down on a Saturday afternoon recently to play a recently published game with a friend and at 4pm after digesting the rules we played two turns at which time (5:30pm) my partner had to leave to go home and eat dinner with his wife. Sound familiar?

The next Saturday we sat down and played again and it took an hour to remember the rules before we could play. So, I said to myself "It's not supposed to be like this. I made a living at this. I should know this stuff." No wonder Designers never play the stuff they produce. What they produce is worthless to almost everyone out there who holds down a job.

My friend's wife was furious at the loss of two Saturdays which was the only time they could shop together. The best gamer I ever know lived in Bennington, Vermont with his girlfriend, had a copy of War in the East (second edition no less) up on a wall, and was on welfare.

My feeling is that the current dichotomy between legalistic and freeform ruleswriting has missed the point. What is needed is a complicated and accurate approach to taking a set of legalistic rules and spending the time and money to boil it down to its essentials; like Vermont Maple Syrup for both accuracy and accessibility. Here is an example which was actually printed by a company I once worked for which is pretty funny and here is an example of the thought process:
First we have —

5. Game-Turn Indication Phase
The Game-Turn marker is advanced

one space on the Game-Turn Record Track to signal the passage of one Game-Turn and the beginning of the next, unless either Player has fulfilled his victory conditions, in which case the game is over.

Let's get rid of the last clause to see if there is any loss.

5. Game-Turn Indication Phase
The Game-Turn marker is advanced one space on the Game-Turn Record Track to signal the passage of one Game-Turn and the beginning of the next, unless either Player has fulfilled his victory conditions.

That wasn't so painful. No great loss. In fact, I think that the people out there are smart enough to drop the entire concept.

5. Game-Turn Indication Phase
The Game-Turn marker is advanced on space on the Game-Turn Record Track to signal the passage of one Game-Turn and the beginning of the next.

I think both players will know not to keep playing after one of them has won the game by fulfilling the victory conditions. Let's chop some more from the end.

5. Game-Turn Indication Phase
The Game-Turn marker is advanced one space on the Game-Turn Record Track to signal the passage of one Game-Turn.

We haven't lost anyone by not telling them that the end of one Game-Turn is the beginning of the next. Now let's drop the number, the status as a Phase, and telling the reder that the moving of the marker is a signal that the turn is over.

Game-Turn Indication
The Game-Turn marker is advanced one space on the Game-Turn Record Track.

Now let's add something. Let's change the passive non-engaging voice of the text to an active one.

Game-Turn Indication
The Game-Turn is now finished. Advance the Game-Turn marker one space on the Game-Turn Record Track.

It's a little bit longer but a lot easier to read. Now what's the difference between a Turn and a Game-Turn. How about...

Turn Indication
The Turn is now finished. Advance the Turn marker one space on the Turn Record Track.

Or without the heading...

The turn is now finished. Advance the turn marker one space on the Turn Record Track.

Now the original...

5. Game-Turn Indication Phase
The Game-Turn marker is advanced one space on the Game-Turn Record Track to signal the passage of one Game-Turn and the beginning of the next, unless either Player has fulfilled his victory conditions, in which case the game is over.

Most freeform rules are not painstakingly thought out. These so called simpler rules end up being even harder for the reader because of the lack of structure and half hearted approach. If a set of rules could be created in a legalistic way and then boiled down by an editor, and this approach were taken all the way down the line, the product could take a quantum leap. It might even be possible to read and play a game on a Saturday afternoon.

It would be very expensive at first. Right now I can think of only 5 or 6 people in the entire industry with the editorial experience. I estimate that it would take an experienced editor one week per page of finished typeset rules.

Once completed these rules could serve as lightweight boilerplate to be used by new rules writers to pattern their manuscripts after. This would eventually save money for the company in writing fees, as well as less paper used for the rules booklets (leaving more space for scenarios), and most importantly the games would be more accessible and therefore more fun to play.
The Wellington's Victory Rules were reduced from 16 pages to 12 for the recent Ney vs. Wellington game and

given the time and money I believe they could be reduced to 8 pages with no loss of clarity.

When playing a game I underline the needed parts of the rules in yellow, leaving out the unnecessary stuff. The problem is when one first reads a set of rules there is no way of knowing what is needed and what is not. It may be chasing after windmills but I believe that if something like this is not done

there will continue to be less and less R&D monies spent for historical games and more and more will be spent for small sized S.F. and fantasy games.

The fact is fantasy/mini-games are accessible (easy and fun to play) while historical games (which are losing R&D dollars) are not. D&D the granddaddy of them all doesn't take all that much to get into the game while there then is more than enough detail if one wishes it.

On the other hand when the dinosaurs are dusted off to be played one needs an extra brain in the tail just to absorb the important info. to play the game.

The MORAL JUSTIFICATION Chart

by Alan Emrich

Some easy answers to sticky diplomatic questions

WHEN IN THE COURSE OF GAMING EVENTS it becomes necessary nation (in a multi-player political simulation game) to sever the ties which have hitherto bound them to peace or alliance with another, to effect a diplomatic coup or launch a surprise military strike on one's neighbor (whether so warned or if duped), to take whatever action seems necessary to achieve that which is deemed best for the blatant self-interest of one's own nation and its goals at the expense of another; then it may become incumbent

upon that individual to find some explanation of his actions, particularly when the victim, with some measure of indignation, asks that most feeble question of all political last resort —

“Why?”

The victim, clearly having no grasp on political reality (since he would otherwise have assumed that an

upstanding player like you would always be justified in your actions), has, in his nearsighted self-interest, demanded some Moral Justification for your misunderstood actions which he deems “overtly hostile.” Should you ever be stuck for a suitable answer as to why your country is burying your opponent's country politically or why you have given his nation a military enema, please consult the Moral Justification chart below, by rolling a D-20 or just picking and choosing what ever reason suits you...

1. “I consider this a pre-emptive gesture.”
2. “The people wanted a fight, and there you were...”
3. “We have legitimate territorial claims here.”
4. “My actions are in **your** best interests. Please, allow me to complete them before judging.”
5. “This is just a training exercise.”
6. “I was talked into by So-and-so (your opponent's best ally).”
7. “The Regime is currently changing theories, and you re a fact that has to be changed.”
8. “This is all just a misunderstanding on your part.”
9. “Our conflicting socio-economic structures makes this conflict inevitable.”
10. “Consider this a subtle request for a favorable adjustment of our border.”
11. “The omens were favorable.”
12. “I am merely attempting to free your oppressed peoples.”
13. “Consider this another example of Global Darwinism, and you're about to be evolved into extinction.”
14. “Your attempts at a political solution have failed miserably to resolve anything.”
15. “Consider this a mere border incident.”
16. “I am only trying to assist you in gaining allies by sympathy.”
17. “Posterity will be my judge.”
18. “Your nation started the last war between us.”
19. “Your nation and its leader are too corrupt and decadent to continue in a civilized world. I'm merely purging the planet of undesirable elements.”
20. “This is just a large reconnaissance-in-force.”



THE WITCH'S CAULDRON

ALTERNATIVE MAGIC SYSTEM FOR ELFQUEST

A game variant for Elfquest

By Michael DeWolfe

In the Chaosium game, Elfquest, most elves possess magic to a degree. The system is based on the Runequest system for magic. Although this system is playable, it's not realistic for Elfquest. After all, Rayek was proficient in levitating objects, as long as those objects were small enough. It took training for him to lift larger things, such as himself. This alternative system will allow a character to know how well he can do and how much he can do. Some powers however do not need to be altered. They are Fire-Starting, Animal Bonding, Magic Feeling and Shape-Change. **Magic Power Percentages:** The player should first define this character's percentage normally using the system stated in the rulebook. Previous experience should be allotted in the same manner as well. **Establishing The Level of Power:** The level of power a character has is based on how skilled he is and how old he is. The level of power will define how much your character can accomplish with each Magic Point that is used. Young or inexperienced characters will use Magic Points quickly. There are three factors which define the character's level. The table below states at what level is the character's magic power. The first factor, that of age, takes into account how long your character has had a magic power, the second factor is your percentage with that one magic powers. And the third

factor is the (1D2-1) roll. The three factors combine and make up a character's level with a certain power. This should be done for all applicable powers that your character possesses.

TABLE 1

AGE	BASE
2-11	1
101-600	2
601-1000	3
1001-2500	4
2501-6000	5
6000 +	6

TABLE 2

SKILL %	BASE
0-25	-1
26-70	0
71-95	1
96-120	2
121 +	3

Establishing Limitations

Anti-Healing: With Anti-healing, a character can use 2D3 Magic Points per melee round and cause his level in damage to the target. A trance can be initiated that lasts one hour per level and uses two Magic Points.

Flesh-Shaping: A character can shape (level) SIZ point altered.

Healing: A character with the power of healing can heal one hit point per melee round. He would use one Magic Point for every (level) hit points restored.

Levitation: A character with the magic power of levitation can lift one SIZ point per level and the character uses one Magic Point per melee round. The speed of the object can be increased by (level x 2) yards per Magic Point spent.

Plant-Shaping: For every Magic Point

used, (level) SIZ points can be shaped. It takes one melee round to shape two SIZ points. The character can also have a plant grow by (level/2) SIZ points per Magic Point used.

Rock-Shaping: A rock-shaper can shape (level) SIZ points of rock per Magic Point used.

Astral Projection: A character can travel for one hour per Magic Point spent. The character can travel (100,000 x level) yards away from his body.

Finding: A character can attempt to find something within a (200 x level) yard range for every Magic Point used.

Hypnosis: A character can be stunned by someone with hypnosis for (level) melee rounds. The attack costs one Magic Point.

Mind Share: The cost, in Magic Points, of a mind snare is equal to (target's Magic Points/attacker's level).

Sending: A character can send (level x 1000) yards per Magic Point spent.

Shielding: A character with shielding can fend off (level) points of damage per Magic Point used by the character.

Increasing Levels

For a character to increase the level of magic power, he would have to either self train or seek another elf who a magic power with with a higher level.

A character must train for one hour per 1% of the percentile chance an an additional five hours per present level. If the character must research to attempt this increase then the time is doubled. After training or reserach, the player has to see if his level has increased. To do this, the player must roll less than (POW+INT+level) on percentile dice. If successful, the character's level in that specific power increases by either one or nothing. To establish which, roll a six-sided die. If the result is from one or two then there was no increase. Any other roll results an increase of one.

This system puts into game terms the

magic in Elfquest, more realistically. Your character cannot do as much as they might have, using the official rules, but they most likely won't run out of Magic Points.

GENERATING CHARACTERS OF MIXED RACE FOR RUNEQUEST

A game variant for the game of Runequest

By Michael DeWolfe

In Runequest, characters can be one of a variance of races; Human, Elves, Dwarves, Ducks, Broos, Halflings, or Trolls. However, a rare adventurer may be of mixed blood. Because of the conflicting parentage, a character emulates some factors of each parent. All of the differences are figured using the below systems.

CHARACTERISTICS GENERATION

For each attribute, the player rolls 1d6; if the result is one or two, then the attribute is rolled using a formula of the mother's race. A result of three or four means that the formula used is the same as the one used for the father's species. If a result is a five or a six, take the average for the average of the father's race, then take the racial average for the mother's race. Find the average of the two and add (1d3-2) to the result. Abilities such as Darksense, Earthsense and others are doled out in a similar manner to this system. The player should roll a d6. If the result is a one or a two, then whatever special ability the father's race possessed is entrusted to this adventurer. If the result is a three or a four, then the character has one special ability from each parent, but each operate at half normal. If the rolling of a six-sided die results in a five or a six, then a special ability that the mother's race has is visible in the character. One roll should be made for each special ability. If the father has two special abilities and the mother has one then roll twice. However, on the second roll, if the mother is to give over a special ability, she gives nothing, even if the first roll was in the father's favor.

Example: A half-elf, (half human half

elf), is being generated. Below, there are examples listed for the half-elf's STR, CON and SIZ scores. The player rolls the first d6; its result is a 2, meaning that the player rolls 2d6+2 for STR. The second roll results in a five, the character's CON is equal to (10 + (1d-2)), the average of the two racial attributes; the number is next modified by the (1d3-2) roll. For SIZ, the character rolls a 3 on a d6. Because of that roll, he gains a human score.

	HUMAN	ELF	1D6 ROLL	HALF-ELF CHARACTERISTICS	RESULTS
	FATHER	MOTHER			
STR	3d6	2d6+2	2	2d6+2	7
CON	3d6	3d6	5	$((10+10)/2) + (1d3-2)$	10
SIZ	2d6+6	2d6+2	4	2d6+6	10

If, when generating character of mixed blood, you find that more than four attributes are from only one of the parents you must change one of the attributes to reflect the other parent's ancestry. The Gamesmaster should oversee this alteration. All other factors, (Hit Points, Strikd Ranks, Skill Category Modifiers, etc.), are figured normally from these ability scores.

A character receives his beginning skill percentages because of what environment he lives in and what trade he follows. A character of mixed blood has the opportunity to choose which of the parents to more follow after. If a character has human blood and lives with humans, then he would, of course, gain a profession that keeps within human's ways. If he were to follow the ways of his other blood, he would then receive the training, profession and skill percentages that that society would allow. The character that grows up in one of the two societies should think and act in the way of that race, but there is always the possibility for mental conflict. Characters of two species may be rejected by each society. Some character may be hated by the society of one parent but adored by the other. Characters with Broo blood will be rejected by practically all but the Broos. Half-elves that are more violent and warlike because of their 'non-elfin' blood may be held in disdain. Half-elves that think and act as if they were elfin may be held disdain by those of their other parentage. Characters such as these are not that lucky.

Characters of two races would appear to look like a combination of the two parents, but would look more like the

one that he inherited the APP score from. The SIZ score has to be interpreted differently than you would normally for either race. If one parent's race is short and thin while the other is tall and heavy and the SIZ characteristic is taken from the short and thin race then you would have to say that he is tall and heavy for his SIZ score. The opposite is true if the case were reversed.

Some races cannot interbreed,

certainly the Ducks cannot, the decision is up to the GM. Some impossibilities stem from the racial interaction of characters. Dwarves and elves would rarely, if ever, mix with each other because of their hatred for each other. Most races would never willingly mix with Broos. The case is the same but less drastic for Trolls. Psychology will stand in the way more often than genetics will.



PLAYING IN TOURNAMENT DUNGEONS

Michael Mullen



"It's a small room full of Orcs. They're gambling and drinking. They didn't even pay attention to me. Easy to surprise." The Thief made a quick report to the rest of the party.

"But we're supposed to be here to kill the dragon. Do we have to kill them to get to the lair?" the Magician queried.

"Is it wise to attack them?" the Cleric wanted to know. He knew how little his curative powers could do, and a dragon might do far more harm than his spells could repair.

"Well, there's the money..." the Thief began

"...And the experience." the Fighter finished.

So the party attacked the Orcs. They also attracted the attention of several Gnolls, Bugbears, and a Half-Orc fighter of a higher level than any two of the party combined. In a melee that used half their available playtime, they gained about 150 gold pieces worth of "treasure" and lost 35 points towards their real goal: high score and a merchandise award in the tournament.

As both a dungeon master and a writer of tournament dungeons, I've often wondered about why the players in tournaments do this. (Since my speciality is the AD&D system by TSR, I'll talk about my experiences in that system, although much of what I say applies to, for example, Traveller, Champions, etc.) Tournament dungeons are different, for a number of reasons. The goals of tournament dungeons are not usually to advance the experience of the characters, at least in a general way. The tournaments are more likely to be a test of playing skills, a pitting of player's inventiveness to achieve a goal with limited means and inside a time limit. Usually, at least in the dungeon

scenarios that I edit, this does not mean a "death test" dungeon which makes necessary the sacrifice of most of the player's characters. But how do you do well in a tournament?

Much of how well you can be expected to do depends on how well you understand the reasoning behind tournament dungeons. They are goal oriented, and usually the goal has several clues. Now, you may not be told, for example, to "go and kill the magician who's making the stone golem in the deserted castle." but you may have a mysterious fellow with a broad hat and one eye tell you that "you must stop the forging of the weapon of stone." Look for clues not only in the introduction and set-up of the scenerio, but also along the way. It may only be in the third room of the dungeon that you learn the great evil is a magic-user turned vampire. And that only because you picked up the sword with telepathy.

The goal, or course, may not be easy to achieve. In fact, in a well written adventure, I can guarantee that it will be difficult, although not impossible to achieve. How difficult may be hinted at by the level of character and (especially) the spell-user's spell list. The general introduction (where you find out what the goal is) can also let you know, since it is where the author speaks to you most directly. Part of it will be just for entertainment, because any tournament will want you to have a good time. But each author has his own style, and you may get a hint about the mood and methods of the dungeon from the way the author "talks" to you.

Looking further "behind the scenes", you may not have thought much about the how and why of tournament dungeons. The goal of a tournament is to

find who, out of a large group of players, is "best" at this convention. Usually, this means "best" group, or panel of contestants. How to do this is the problem of the designer, and he has several methods of helping to decide who is "best". First, everyone has to start on an equal footing. This means that every group who plays in the dungeon will have the same characters, even to the spells which a character will have memorized. They will all face the same problems during the course of achieving the goal. And they will usually have limited materials to work with, although there may be things in the dungeon which will help to achieve the goal. For each room or encounter, the designer will have decided what, in his mind, is the best course of action or the best result for each room, and will have provided the dungeon master with a score sheet to mark the actions of the characters.

Usually, you can expect to get points for surviving the dungeon. You can get some for using your material in the most efficient manner. Deciding who is and is not an enemy is often a critical test for a party, and can also act as a check on how well the players are role-playing their alignments. Expect to use unusual spells and any inherent abilities (such as an Elf finding secret doors and a Dwarf finding stone-work traps) somewhere in the course of a tournament dungeon, because the designers will have taken this into account. NOTHING in a tournament dungeon is there by chance. Some rooms may well be designed to waste your time, and this is also a test of whether you can stick to the goal of the dungeon.

To achieve your goal you and your fellow players should be prepared to

organize quickly and efficiently. This is not the time for indecision! From the moment you are all seated at the table, your time is going. The choice of who is to play which character should be made as rapidly as possible. A good clue for you is what your favorite character is from your home campaign. There is a certain amount of carry-over from home play, after all. If your favorite character is a cleric or magic user, you will not have to waste time with looking up a great deal of information on the spells in your handbook since you will know many of them from your experience. If you run a fighter or thief, or a character of one of the demi-human races, you probably have a style and method which may be useful.

Whether you use a "caller" or let each man speak for himself, there should be little bickering or disagreement among the players. First, it wastes precious time. Secondly, the DM may decide that "what the players do, so do their characters" in which case you probably have forfeited surprise, initiative, or both. Last, no matter what the situation, some action (**any** action) will be better than nothing, if you are really at a loss as to what to do.

To help you decide what to do, listen to the descriptions of the areas your characters enter and try to visualize them. The authors may give helpful clues as to what to do in the room by what they present to you. The hints may be as broad as Alice's mushroom ("Eat me") or may be subtle ("You see a small room with chairs chained to the floor. A white powdery substance covers the walls to within 2' of the ceiling.") Knowing that you are near the ocean, if you ask the dungeon master what the powder tastes like, you may not be surprised to find he says it's salty. It might be deduced that entering and closing the door is not a good course of action. Especially when the Dwarf spots the trap-door in the center of the room....

Imagine the courses of action that you can take, and don't be afraid to ask for more detail if you think you need it. If no more are to be had, then the room is probably simple, and you can enter, or avoid, as necessary. If a room is unavoidable, it surely has victory points lurking within.

Melee is the most time-consuming thing in a dungeon. It is sometimes amazing how players handle their characters in a fight. Think of yourselves as a group of trained

soldiers (alright, mercenaries) and proceed accordingly. Anyone in a dangerous situation will want to get out of it as soon as he can, and without attracting undue attention to themselves. That is, if they can't avoid it to begin with.

The balanced party which your author has created will have everything to get out of such a fix. And the key, as in military games, is combined arms tactics (CAT). CAT says everyone has a function, and as much force as can be brought to bear at once is desirable. Handling opponents at a distance is also desirable. A good (or high-level) Magic User is the group's artillery: deals out devastation at a distance and usually from a protected position in the rear. Rangers and other fighters with bows are your rifles. Thieves are your advanced scouts, usually, and Clerics double admirably as medics. Spears can keep some distance between you and your opponents. Swords, battle axes, and maces for close-in work when the party is surprised. But surprise **your** opponents if you can, and if you can't, at least soften them up. Clerics, of course, are also good for handling the undead, and increasing the overall chances of the party with a prayer, or one champion with a blessing. Don't be surprised to find a specialist, like a monk, druid, or illusionist. They will usually have a special obstacle to overcome.

Remember the usual course of a melee is the 4 m—s: Magic, Missile, Movement, and Melee. Try to use all four to your advantage. Check out how your DM runs melees, since I have often found variations in playing in tournaments, and forewarned is really forearmed.

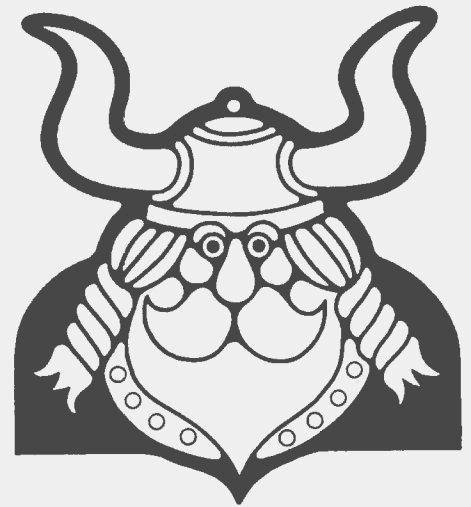
In preparing for the round, often players overlook their real-world setting. You should, first of all, be on time. If you're late, you are already wasting time that should be available to you. Bring dice, a player's handbook (and other reference material if it is allowed by the tournament) and Iron rations or other necessities of survival. I have always taken a small scratch pad (3" x 5") a graph pad for mapping, and a pencil. The small pad has come in handy for passing notes and making notes about the goal of the dungeon and so on. A **small** selection of miniatures has proven useful in organizing the party members and visualizing marching orders, melees, etc.

If your round is not in a room by itself, try to keep the noise level down, in

consideration of the other rounds being played. You may find that it also helps to keep your own game in order and allows you to concentrate on your own problems. High spirits can not always be kept in check, but the more you can concentrate on the task at hand, usually the better you will come out on the final tally of who is the best group.

As you progress through the round, keep an eye not only on the game's progress, but also on the clock. If you find that you are dragging, it's time to pick up the tempo. These dungeons are usually quite full for the time allotted, and many good groups have lost a tournament because their time ran out just a room or two too early.

Role-playing is the icing on the tournament cake. Unexpected humor, tragedy, and just good fun as you become the Dwarf complaining about "wimpy elves" or the elf talking about "midgets" can make a tournament round really memorable. I can remember one exceptional group during a theme dungeon run on St. Patrick's Day. The party consisted of seven obviously Irish clansmen and a Swedish Dwarf mercenary. As I entered the room to check that the tournament was running smoothly, I heard Eight Irish accents (one was the DM) and one broad Swedish bass singing "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling". Since I knew the group had just been asked for a song, I expected something like this, but the effect was gratifying.



The Ten Commandments of Tournament Dungeons

- I. Thou shalt REMEMBER THE GOAL.
- II. Thou shalt not split the party.
- III. Thou shalt cooperate with fellow party members. Nor shalt thou backstab or attack party members.
- IV. Thou shalt not waste time. Thou shalt not fight unnecessary combats, pull levers, or engage in other needless wastes of time.
- V. Thou shalt use the inborn abilities given ye by the dungeon designer and other archane gods, be ye dwarf, elf, or other.

VI. Thou shalt cometh prepared to the round for play, with all apparatus necessary thereto. Thou shall be on time.

VII. Thou shall fight, when necessary, as efficiently as possible. Thou shalt not release fireballs into small enclosed areas. Thou shalt not fire missile weapons into a melee. Thou shall engage the enemy with as many of the party as can.

VIII. Thou shalt play thy character and alignment.

IX. Thou shall pick one from among ye to lead the rest.

X. Honor thy DM, for he is keeper of the blue bolt of the Gods. Taketh thy complaints to the higher authorities, if any.

Good Luck and Good Gaming.

This is a dungeon which we prepared for the ORCCON tournament run on Feb. 18, 19, and 20 of 1985. It was to serve as our "Introductory" level tournament, using characters of no more than 5th level and having a "run time" of 2 hours from start to finish. Our comments are in italics.

NYSTLE'S SPIRE

An Advanced Dungeon & Dragons Adventure Prepared for play at ORCCON 85 by S. Mullen and M. Mullen.

PLAYER'S INTRODUCTION

The place: near wilderness. The crater of an old, blown-out volcano. A low ring of hills in the middle of nowhere. In the center of the hills is a needle of glass. It used to be the center of the volcano.

The time: early morning.

Our job: being Heroes.

We were working the back country of Maritaine when news of a red dragon came in. The rewards were not getting chased out of town and the chance to get the dragon's hoard while the getting was good. The Prince's army is away on a border raid. We were talking to the innkeep.

"You the innkeep?"

"Yep."

"I hear you used to be a magic user."

"Where'd you hear that?"

"Word gets around."

"Maybe I was."

"So how come you haven't gotten rid of the dragon?"

"Single-handed? I leave that for Palidins."

"How's that?"

"I'm not stupid. ... Besides, I don't go into old wizard's towers."

"A Wizard used to live there?"

"A couple of centuries ago. Nobody's seen him since then. Lived in the base of the Spire. Everybody calls it Nystle's Spire."

"Just the facts."

"Well, ok. Dragon moved in a couple of months ago. He's living in the upper cave."

"Then there's a lower cave?"

"Yeh. Must be someway up, 'cause you can't climb the outside."

"How's that?"

"Slick glass, lots of rubble down below. One slip an' its curtains."

"Any one else been around?"

"Well, one guy, kind of shifty eyed. And a Palidin."

"Why didn't you join him?"

"He was goin' there alone. Like I said, I ain't stupid."

"One more thing"

"What's that?"

"You got any beer?"

Two days later I led our party to the base of the Spire. There was a cave down low. The dragon had eaten two days earlier. I figure he'll be awake and hungry by tomorrow at the latest. We're going to have to get the job done by then.

My name's Randell. I'm a Ranger.

The Dragnet theme was our cover

story, and we hoped it would let the players know it was to be a fun dungeon. The goal is obviously to slay the red dragon. Since we wanted the parties to go through the dungeon, the slick glass sides and sharp glass splinters below were to stop any attempt to go around. As far as we know, no one tried to climb the spire.

DM Note: Through the front half of the dungeon (through room 5) there are lights provided by torches every 10', except in the entrance to room 2 and that room itself.

1. GUARDROOM

The cave is musty and littered. Lounging around and gambling are 8 orcs.

8 orcs: Ac 6 (leathers and shield)
Hp: 5 ea
damage: 1-6 (spear and short sword)
Treasure: 4 sp and 3d6 cp each.

DM Note: If party was loud, the orcs will not be surprised. If the party has been quiet they can pass by without notice, but the orcs will come to help their comrades at any sounds of fighting or alarm.

This was a test of a party's concentration of effort. They should

have walked by both this room and the next. We are still wondering why so many parties began their adventure by fighting a needless battle. It was set up so that rooms two and three would always become involved, as you will see.

3. BUNKROOM

Loud snoring is coming from this darkened cavern.

6 Gnolls are asleep in this chamber. If the party goes quietly by, they will not wake up. If they come to investigate with lanterns, etc., the gnolls will wake up and melee. If, however, the party comes in without lights, and relying on infravision, the party will gain automatic surprise.

If the party goes quietly by, the gnolls will rouse and rally to a fight farther down the corridor, taking two rounds to prepare and moving normally to the fight after that.

6 Gnolls. HD:2 #atk:1 or weapon (longsword, d8)
AC:5 hit points: 10 ea.

The Gnolls would thus arrive around after the Orcs had moved down the corridor to room three, and, by our instructions, ahead of the Bugbears if the fighting was in room one. They were supposed to be ignored by the party. One of the better parties cast silence in the entryway to make sure they stayed asleep.

3. COMMON ROOM

A door, partially open, blocks the way, light showing through the crack. Sounds of talking and monstrous laughter can be heard.

If the party cautiously investigates:

A small company of Bugbears are eating, drinking, and making merry with two females of their kind. They are at two tables with benches in the middle of a rather large cavern. The passage continues directly across from the door. A smaller passage is at the rear of the cavern.

The smaller passage leads to the chambers of the leader of the monsters, a large half-orc known as "Bubba Gumbach" (local orchish for boss-man). The party can't sneak across the open area. When they are spotted, the Bugbears will set up a chant "Bub-ba Gum-bach... Bub-ba

Gum-bach..." to bring him into the fight.

The party can, of course, rush the monsters (normal chance of surprise).

If the party spikes the door, they won't have to worry about interference from the rear, since the guards will just figure that the big boys are having a brawl and want to keep all the fun to themselves.

6 Bugbears HD: 3+2 +atk:1
Damage:2d4 or weapon (sword,d8)
AC: 5 hit points: 15 18
20 12
(the girls) 8 10

Bubba Gumbach, half-orc Fighter Level 6. (S:18(28%)D:15 C:16)
#atk:1 weapon: broadsword
damage: 2d4 +3
whip: d4, entangles on to hit roll of 19 or 20
AC:2 (splint mail and shield + Dex)
hit points: 40

This is the first of three unavoidable encounters. The party has the advantage of a magic user and outnumbering their opponents. If they have taken the precaution of preventing interference from their rear, they should have an easy time of it. Few parties did.

4. CAVE OF THE LIZARD

Two large lizards are chained to the wall by spiked collars around their necks. There is a lizard-man near a lever by the chains in the wall.

Pulling the lever releases the lizards. The guard will pull the lever if there is a sign of anything wrong.

Giant Lizard: HD:3+1
#atk:1
Damage:d8
AC:5 Hit points: 16 ea.

Lizard Man: HD:2+1
#atk:1
Damage:d10 (halberd)
AC:5 Hit points: 12

This is one of two options for the second encounter. Some parties chose to take out the monsters in both room four and five, and gained some extra points for their trouble. Note that invisibility by itself will not stop the lizards from smelling the party members, and communicating this information to the lizard-man guard, although the standard -4 modification applies to the

monsters. In a prime example of bad judgement, one party eliminated the lizard man and then released the lizards, thinking that the lever was the way to open the secret door.

5. PRISONER'S CAVE

Digging sounds and clanking of chains can be heard from down the corridor.

If the party cautiously investigates:

Three Gnolls are standing guarding the entrance to prevent escape by the other creatures in the cavern. The others are chained in gangs and are busy mining the cavern, clearing away rock. They are short, about 3' high, and covered in dark black fur. They have large noses and small, almost invisible eyes. They have small ears. They are wearing little but belts. Several are smaller, apparently children. The little fellows are scraping rock away with long, sharp claws. The rock is being put into barrels and wheelbarrows. The cavern has a rather unfinished look. There is a stock of torches by the guards at the entrance, and each guard holds a lighted one. The Gnolls seem to control the movements of the small creatures by these torches. The small ones keep away from the torches.

The small folk are the mole people. There are 12 men, 6 women, 4 children. These gentle folk are the unwilling prisoners of Bubba's gang. They don't have vision in the light, which is why there has been so many of the torches in the corridors. They have, however, excellent sense of smell. They can tell how many people are in the party, their race, and sex all by smell. There are 3 of the mole men who can talk common.

They will tell the party of how the old wizard had let them lead their own life, but he had not been seen for a long time. "Evil smells" had begun coming from the old man's quarters, and they have not been there in a long time. They will not go into the further chambers because of them. They are aware of the Dragon (who has carried off an occasional orc) but fear him. They only go outside in the dark, to carry out the rubble from their digging. They know that there is a wall beyond the rubble at the far end of the chamber, and that

there is a secret door that leads to the wizard's chambers. It has been buried in a cave in, and the bad guys have had them working to uncover it.

The moles have been living on the grubs and insects they uncover while digging and (ugh) orc slops. They'd be happy to eat the lizards, if someone would kill them.

If the players want the mole people to uncover the buried door, take a **fifteen minute break** (real time) to allow them to clear the way to the door.

3 Gnolls: HD:2

#atk:1

Damage:d6 (spear or torch as club)

AC:5 Hit points: 10 ea.

12 Mole men: HD:2

#atk:2

Damage:d4

AC:9 Hit points: 4 ea.

6 Mole Women: HD:1

#atk:2

Damage:d4

AC:9 Hit points: 4 ea.

4 Mole Kids: HD:1/2

no attack

AC:9 Hit points: 2 ea.

The mole people were a chance for the DM's to role play and have some fun interacting with the party. This non-standard monster was a secondary story line. Releasing them would confirm that the party was acting to alignment, and could gain some additional information for the party. Having the mole people uncover the secret passage was not the best choice for the players, and there was both a "real time" and point penalty for doing so.

6. HALLWAY

Mirrors line the far wall. Two lounge chairs are in front of them. A red brocaded carpet is on the floor. Hanging from a rope in the center of the hall is a chandelier. One candle is lit.

On closer inspection, there is a "lump" under the carpet, running straight across the hall in the middle. It is the end of the chandelier rope and, unless detected and avoided, it will drop the chandelier. Party members caught underneath will take d4 damage from the chandelier.

The candle was "lit" with a permanent light spell, and acted as a kind of nightlight for the wiz. If the party drops the chandelier, the candle

will shatter and the spell will be lost, extinguishing the light. If the party lowers the chandelier, they can take the light with them. It gives a dull illumination in a 3' radius.

This was just a check to see that the party was paying attention, and to warn them that there may be more to come.

7. BEDROOM

There is a large bed (a four-poster) in this room. There is a spittoon in one corner. A spacious closet is on one of the walls. There is a small table with a porcelain basin, a bottle, and some small metal objects on it. In the middle of the bed is a body-shaped lump.

On the table, the bottle contains some old (and very strong) lilac water. The metal objects are a straight-razor (treat as a weapon doing 1-2 pts damage, +1 to hit but with no damage bonus) a comb, and a key with a handle shaped like a bone.

The lump in the bed is actually in the blanket. Lift up the blanket, and nothing is revealed. Lower the blanket, and the "body" reappears.

The closet is locked. It is actually the front end of a walk-in closet. The key on the table unlocks it, releasing the monsters:

10 Skeletons: HD:1

#atk:1

Damage:d6 (spear or s.sword)

Chance to turn: automatic, but only id12

Special: edged weapons do half damage.

This room was designed to be a time-waster. The blanket served this purpose better than expected. It usually caught the attention of the party members, who spent a fair amount of time trying to decide why it was doing these strange things. The "magic razor", so far as I know, wasn't used by the party to take a quick shave. It could have been of use against the gargoyle, but not much use. If anyone used the skeleton key, they were in big trouble. Melee is the greatest time waster of all.

8. WHOPTY-DO

Flashes of light, and the tinkling sound of glass hitting glass come from the hallway. In the middle of the hall is a wind-chime, ringing in a non-existent wind. Each time the pieces of glass strike another, they glimmer

with a pale blue light. An alcove, made as if to hold a statue, is in the left-hand wall in front of the chimes. Beyond, a darkened doorway is visible on the left hand wall, and another room is barely seen at the end of the hallway.

The wind chimes are the pretty bait for a trap (a slide to the lower level.) If the party carefully observes the area, they will note that the alcove and a 6' wide strip of the floor are of different stone. If anyone touches the windchimes, the floor will tilt and the alcove will swing back to reveal a passage, the floor of which forms a slide. The slide takes several curves and up-and-downs before depositing the party members concerned into room 13.

If a party member goes into the alcove, he will set off the trap.

If two or more people step onto the slab on the floor, they will set off the trap.

If the windchimes are touched, the trap will be set off.

If the party passes one at a time, not touching the chimes, the trap will not be set off.

If the dwarves are looking for stone work traps, they have the normal chance to detect one. Spiking the floor is possible, but touching the windchimes will still open the alcove and reveal the slide.

It's amazing the number of parties who forget completely about traps. Anything unusual in a dungeon should alert players to be on their guard. The dwarves among our parties weren't looking for traps. Nearly every party set off the slide. Most of the parties followed their companions down the slide, some hauled them back up, and some re-united by way of the stairs (splitting the party temporarily). This dungeon was fairly forgiving of a split party. In our more advanced scenarios, splitting the party is a sure way to eliminate your chances for a prize.

9. KITCHEN

This room contains a hearth, a small oven, a table, some shelves, a stone counter, and some pots. There are several round, flat pieces of metal. There is also a small well with a bucket on a rope on the floor by it.

The round, flat pieces of metal are pizza pans. The bucket will leak

profusely if it is used. (Anyone doing so without a purify water spell will have mild stomach cramps — no penalty, just another dumb move.)

There is nothing else of interest here.

Every dungeon should have an empty room.

SPIDER'S STOREROOM

This dusty room contains barrels and sacks. Several are open and flour and a powdery substance are spilled on the floor. Cobwebs cling to the ceiling.

The cobwebs are the webs of a giant spider. Barrels can contain any food your inventive imagination can come up with. (One should contain pepperoni). The powdery substance is dry yeast, used in baking.

1 Giant Spider. HD:4+4

#atk:1

Damage: 2d4

AC: 4 Hit points: 20

Special: Save us. Poison or die.

Another avoidable encounter, for those who had the moles uncover the "back way" into the dungeon's farther regions. Most of the parties who made it this far ignored it.

11. ONE-WAY STAIRWAY

The opening has a flight of stairs going down.

The stairs are on a moving chain which is free to go in one direction only. If a person or party is moving down the stairs, they will proceed normally. If however, they are trying to go up, the chain will slip and the next stair will come down in an endless belt, like an escalator going "down".

You just can't walk up the down staircase, unless you look for the trick.

Concealed at the bottom of the staircase is a small secret compartment. Successfully finding this door reveals a lever. Throwing the lever locks the stairway in place so you can go up again.

We thought this was a pretty trick. It had the advantage of keeping parties together when some members failed their saving throws in room 12.

12. LIBRARY

At the bottom of the stairs is a doorway on the right.

Let the players open the door. Locked, no traps.

The room contains a fireplace, shelves full of scrolls, and a comfortable chair. Dust is thick almost everywhere in this room. Seated in the chair is a skeleton dressed in chain mail. Leaning against the arm of the chair is a shield with the symbol of a jewel-encrusted chalice. A ghostly visage forms in the chair, cloaking the skeleton like a misty man.

Roll a save for each party member vs. paralyzation at -2. Failure means they will run for d6 rounds away from this room in fear. The monster is a Phantom (see monster manual 2.) Remember the "down staircase."

Those remaining will see the following:

The ghost is a handsome man, with blond hair and a yellow glow surrounding his face. He walks out of the library and down the hall, into a room with several pictures and objects d'art. Striding up to a picture in the wall, he walks into it. The picture is of the man, shield raised, with a glistening sword in his hand, fighting a dragon.

The skeleton has not actually moved. If they move into the room, they can see that the man was probably stabbed from the rear. There are dark stains on the back of the armor.

The shield is +1. The chain is elven chain. These can not be used by the dwarves. One scroll is magical. It has 1 Magic Missile spell (level 7 — 4 missiles.)

Here is an example of gathering clues and additional aid along the way in the course of the dungeon. The scrolls, unless a detect magic is used, would waste a fair amount of player time. The clue in the library leads to a clue in the gallery, which should lead to the single most powerful help the party can get, the Paladin's sword.

13. GALLERY

A long hallway extends before you. There are pictures hanging on the walls.

Be inventive, but not too bizarre. Family portraits, small still lifes, and things like the etching of a Knight kicking the dragon.

13a. LANDING PAD

One corner of the room has an

opening about half-way up the wall. It is apparently the end of a chute of some nature. There are many pillows scattered about the floor under the opening. They're not in too good a shape.

The hallway has pictures hanging on the walls. Two large ones are very realistically done. One has a portrait of a warrior fighting a dragon, sword in hand and shield raised. The other is of a waterfall, in which the water appears to be moving.

There is also a large bronze statue of a lady, apparently unclothed (although her long hair conceals some of the more interesting portions of her anatomy) riding bareback on a unicorn.

The hallway continues beyond, after taking a slight jog around a corner.

The portrait of the paladin (for it is he) can be swung away from the wall. If the players want to do this, treat the latch as a concealed door. Scratched on the wall is a message:

**Foully slain through I may be,
Grieve ye not o'er long for me.
Near to hand will be my sword,
Of this I have Bauldir's word.
The sword is sharp, and is the
dread
Of foes of good, and dragons
red.**

The portrait of the waterfall can also swing aside. It conceals a bathroom.

The Statue is nothing special. It faces the chute.

Even some of the parties who didn't adventure into the library found the paladin's clue. Anything described in detail may be worth investigating. This room is where the designers hoped that their DM's were inventive, to help conceal the worth-while objects. The statue is because not everything well described should be worthwhile.

13b. THE FAR GALLERY

Among the pictures are two of exceptional realism. One is of a wizard, dressed in long robes, contemplating the skull of a unicorn. The other is of a group of dark cloaked figures at a banquet. A toast is being offered by the central figure, a jeweled chalice being held high. Scattered about the table are a

number of jewels, with a realistic sparkle. There are life-sized statues in this room also, one of a griffin done in stone, one of a mermaid in bronze.

The picture of the wizard can be swung aside, giving entrance to a passage leading past his tomb to his lab. Treat this as a secret door.

The picture of the banquet is actually a room, with the frame holding a clear sheet of glass. Opening this frame breaks the spell holding the monsters frozen in place:

3 Ghouls: HD:2

#atk:3

Damage: 1-3, 1-3, d6

Armor class: 6

Hit points: 10 ea.

Special: save v. Paralization or be held (2d6 rounds)

Cleric can turn on a roll of 4 or more on d20. The turn affects d12 ghouls. Characters paralyzed may be automatically re-hit by the ghoul, but you should try to paralyze the whole party first.

Closing the glass will hold the ghouls in place. (But don't tell them unless they think of it themselves.)

It is a never ending source of amusement to those of us who design these things that so few people think to close a door and thus shut trouble away from a party. A fair percentage of the parties who came this far didn't open the ghoul window at all, which means they either had learned our wicked ways or had made their "greed roll."

14. TOMB

In the center of the room is a stone coffin. It is open, and empty. On the wall in the back of the room is longsword with a large diamond in the hilt. In the two far corners of the room are stone statues of gargoyles.

One statue is a statue. One statue is a gargoyle. (You choose which one.) The gargoyle will fly to the attack when the party enters the room, or when the door opens a second time. Gargoyle has normal chance of surprise and automatic melee initiative (due to speed of flight) on the first round.

Gargoyle: HD: 4+4

#atk:4

Damage: 1-3, 1-3, d6, d4

AC: 5 Hit points: 29

Special: Need a magic weapon to hit.

The sword is a Frost Brand (+3, +6 against fire using creatures.) It grants protection as a ring of fire resistance (base 50% reduction in damage).

When is a treasure worth fighting for? **The decision facing the party. If they could come up with a way of getting the sword first, or in the course of the melee, it was almost a sure sign that they would win. This was not a necessary combat, but a highly recommended one. The picture of the paladin should have been a give-away. Only one gargoyle because two would have been too much for the limited resources (in terms of magic weapons) given to the party. A Frost-Brand because a red dragon slaying sword would eliminate the dragon too easily, while the expected kill of the final encounter with it is three rounds (which the party's major fighter could expect to survive.)**

15. WIZARD'S LAB

This room looks like an alchemist's lab. One one side of the room there is a table with two beakers of water, a vial of pale blue liquid, and three vials of liquid which are constantly changing color. (They go from red to orange to yellow to green to blue to violet, etc.) In the center of the room is a round table with an open metal work frame in it's middle. There is another vial in the frame, filled with liquid which is violently swirling with rainbow colors. It is in a shaft of multi-colored light entering the room from a 5' round opening in the wall. Against the far wall is a bench with glassware and jars and bottles of various powders and liquids. Setting in one corner is a stand with the skull of a unicorn.

The potions with rainbow filled water are potions of rainbow healing (removes d6 damage). The vial in the frame will not have this effect, and in fact will stop appearing as anything except water if removed from the frame since the wizard did not finish the spell on this potion. The potions have a side effect of making the drinker unusually happy.

The pale blue liquid is a potion of flying.

The beakers contain only water.

The rest of the room's contents are nothing of use to the party, although an alchemist may be interested in them.

We felt that the potions might be necessary by this time. The party needed some extra help in their curative department, and the fly spell might come in handy when they got to the dragon's lair. The incompleated potion helped "flesh out" the background story of the spire.

16. THE SHAFT

This is a shaft made of obsidian and volcanic glass. In the middle of the shaft is a large crystal prism, which has light entering from above. The light is reflected down the tube of glass using three mirrors set into the side. Leading up the shaft is a set of rungs which look like they could be climbed. At the bottom of the rungs is a skeleton in what looks like the remains of expensive robes. Two thirds of the way up the shaft, just a little way over from the ladder, is an opening.

The skeleton is the wiz. A check of his robes will show them to be the same ones as in the picture. Searching the body yields a ring of spell storing, containing two spells: jump and audible glammer.

The mirrors can be moved on pivots, like the side view mirror in a car.

There is a broken rung half-way up the shaft. the other rungs are perfectly safe.

The broken rung is the last link in the story why the wizard met his untimely demise. The ring of spell storing, of course, is to give the party a little more help. The top movable mirror could be useful in distracting the dragon.

17. DRAGON'S LAIR

This is a large cave formed by a bubble in the glass. The cave is lit by sunlight filtering through the walls and coming in an entrance to the outside. There is a fair amount of coins and jewelry in the middle of the cave. Lying on top of this is a red dragon.

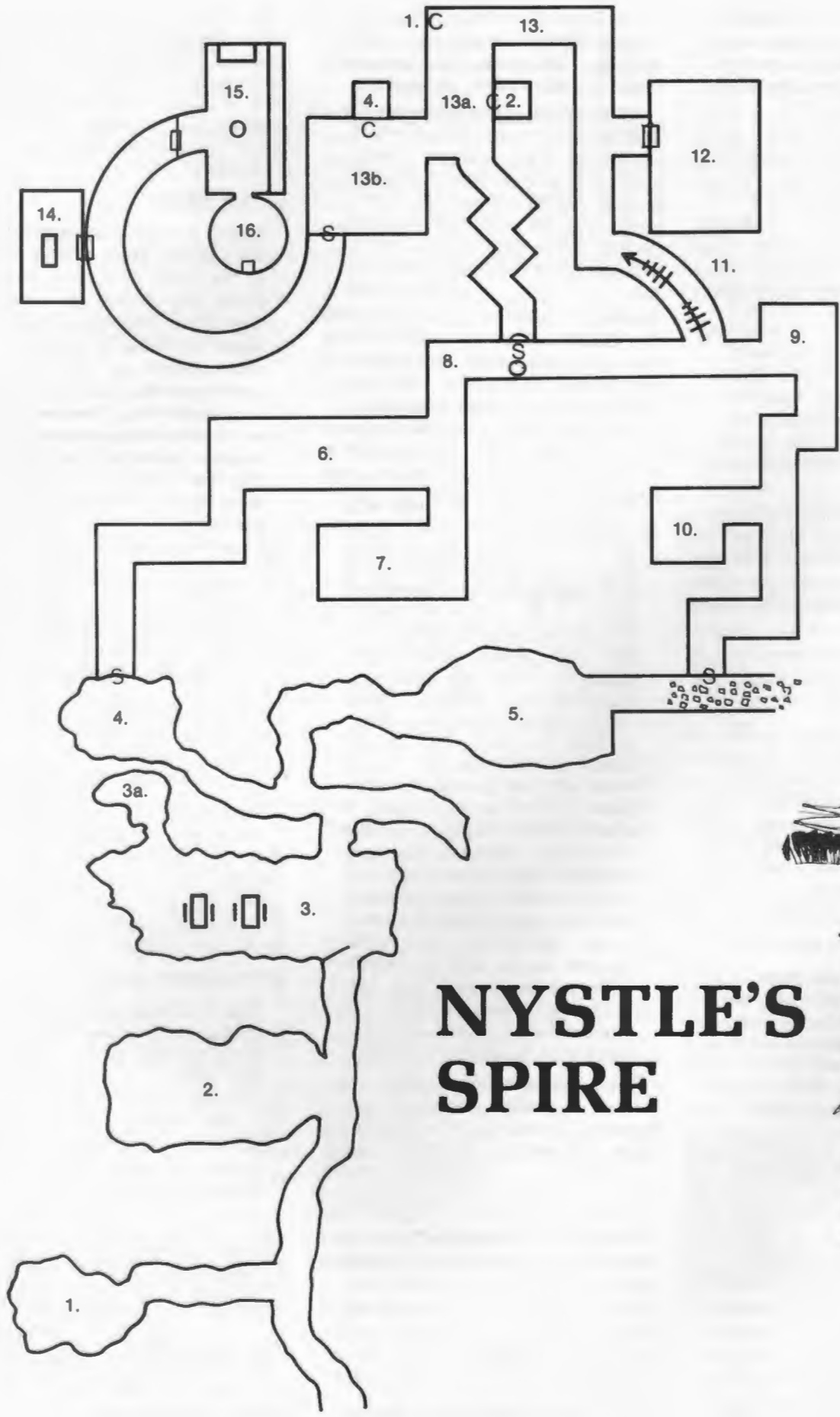
The dragon is awake, but still a little drowsy. The party has normal chance of surprise. Surprise will give one round of free action. He will breath first and ask questions after the Bar-B-Que.

Red Dragon HD:10

#atk:3 or breath

Damage: d8, d8, 3d10

Breath weapon: 20 hp



NYSTLE'S SPIRE



AC: -1 Hit points: 20

The dragon will not be able to panic the player's characters (since the cavern is too small to allow flight). Dragon will not leave hoard and is chaotic, anyway. Speaks common but you don't have to talk if you don't want to play him. The dragon does not use magic.

Even a weak dragon can be a major

challenge to a low-level group. Our test group gave everything they had gained to the lead fighter and let him go to it, with minor help from the magic user and with the cleric giving him a blessing and the party a prayer. There were only two parties in our group of 16 panels who got this far. The dungeon is a full one, especially if your party is wasting time in unnecessary melee or is

handling the melee awkwardly. So, as a tournament, this one fulfilled it's requirement of finding the best party successfully. We hope that this example will help you be one of the few successful parties at your next convention.

How'd You Get That Scar? A Gang Variant for Dungeons & Dragons

By Bill Dachelet

"Groff turned on his barstool, a wicked scar danced across his face, as he smiled an evil smile..."

That scene would hardly be the same, and indeed, Groff would hardly be the same character, without that wicked scar running across his face. Here is a system to give your characters some of those needed scars to remember their adventures by.

In the Dungeons and Dragons game, the Dungeon Masters Guide states, on P. 82, that, "if any creature reaches a state of -6 or greater negative (hit

points before being revived, this could indicate scarring or the loss of some member..."

Two tables are offered to make use of in this event. One for nice DM's, and one for other DM's. Choose as you will. Rolls should be modified up or down according to the severity of the situation; 5-10% is suggested for each hit point below -6.

Position on Body	Scar or loss of limb	Scar only
Scar on shoulder, body, etc.	01-54	01-59
Scar on upper leg	55-63	60-69
Scar on lower leg	64-72	70-79
Scar on arm	73-81	80-89
Scar on hand	82-86	90-95
Scar on neck	85-87	96-97
Scar on face	88-91	98-00
Loss of finger	92	
Loss of hand	93-94	
Arm at elbow	95	
Arm at shoulder	96	
Loss of foot	97-98	
Leg at knee	99	
Leg at hip	00	

The Dragon of Juompur

A "Villains & Vigilantes" scenario for 1-3 characters, 1-4th level.

by S.D. Anderson

Player characters have learned of some impending supervillian activities on the island of Juomper in the South China sea. Such information as they have been able to unearth indicates that the villains are after a small Iron statue of a wormlike dragon kept in a temple near the Juomporan rainforest. For the GM: If the players do some investigating in the Juompur capital they can learn the names of the supervillians from the local police if a non-hostile reaction is indicated. Without official aid, it will take 3 hours and at least \$500 dollars in bribes (or telepathy or some sort of "persuasion") to get that same information.

The three villains are Occult, a female mystic previously convicted in the United States for the thefts of allegedly magical items, Chainsaw, a psychotic hockey-mask-wearing killer thought to be responsible for the murder of 19 sorority girls having a ski party last December, and the Huntsman, a shadowy mercenary/assassin with supposed connections to a number of Western spy organizations.

If further information on these villains is sought after by the players, they can learn that the Huntsman is not working with the other two and may very well be working against them.

The Temple Dragon: The statue shows no sign of rust despite centuries of humid air and heat because of protective enchantments placed on it. These enchantments resemble game powers, specifically Emotion Control (fear), Mind Control, Power Blast, & Teleport (ray). *All hit as if used by a 4th level villain, with a range of 8". *Anyone hit by the ray will be teleported 4 miles from the temple.

Each form of defense has 3 charges (per day), & each unspent charge contributes 2 points of invulnerability to the statue, and that score will drop as a charge is used.

The statue itself is actually a focus which can breach the dimensional barrier and open a portal to the universe

of the forgotten ones.

The Temple: A large more or less rectangular building with doors at the southern and western sides, the building is some 12 x 15 inches in size and stands 3" high. Occult & Chainsaw will have cleared any and all furniture from the building by the time the heroes get there. The outside terrain is surrounded by vegetation up to 3" from the building, plenty of places to hide.

The situation: Occult & Chainsaw are working to activate the portal, in order to bring some of the forgotten ones here. Occult has been promised a gift of power if she can bring them here, and Chainsaw is mind controlled by her.

The Huntsman has been hired to stop them from successfully summoning the forgotten ones. If at all possible, he is to learn all he can about the summoning rituals before destroying the statue. Huntsman has more extensive information sources here than the heroes have had time to develop, and his spy eye devices as well. He knows of the heroes and plans to let them take on Occult & Chainsaw. If the heroes manage to defeat the villains and destroy the statue, they may never know he was there. If they attempt to protect the statue he will try to kill them. Huntsman has a spy eye in the temple and another floating overhead. **Scenario Start:** It will take 90 seconds (6 turns) for the portal to open once the ritual has been done. (for game purposes the ritual is considered complete the moment combat phases are initiated. Chainsaw will be immediately free to fight, but Occult will spend the first turn casting a spell that will protect her from the forgotten ones when they arrive.

The statue must be destroyed before the portal opens to keep it from opening. If the pentagram drawn around the statue is broken during the creation of the portal, a mystical feedback will drain the statue of 1d6 charges, which will come randomly from each defense type (roll a d6 then roll a d4 the indicated # of times deleting the statue of the appropriate charge.) Chainsaw will simply attack whoever is nearest to him. When able to join in the battle, Occult will use her Solid Illusion power to create an energy duplicate of the supervillian Mammoth (see V&V rulebook page 42 for Mammoth's stats.) (the Mammoth duplicate takes up 46 creation points. On her next action she will use the remaining jpoints to put a protective wall around the statue. For

every 5 points put into it, the wall's structural rating goes up one point. If things really go bad she will teleport out and leave Chainsaw for the heroes.

If the Huntsman gets involved, his first shot will be to launch a rocket (HTH+3 to hit, 5d4 damage.) at the statue. Once the statue is taken care of he'll leave unless he has reason to believe either the heroes or villains will pursue him, in which case he will try to take them out first.

AFTERMATH: If the portal opens, the least servant of the forgotten ones will emerge, grant Occult her extra powers then leave to begin its duties, unless attacked. If the statue is destroyed after opening, the gate will close but the least servant will remain and attempt to reopen it. In this regard note that the Huntsman's employers have a need of the ritual for activating a dimensional focus, but no need for that particular focus. Obviously, they have one of their own.

OCCULT: Name: Kay Franklin, Level: 7, age 28, sex: Female, Side: Evil. Powers: 1) Cosmic Awareness Device (Magic Mirror) 3 Questions/day, adjusted die rolls over 60% indicate no image. 2) Mind Control: 3" range, PR=20 3) Teleport: range: 580,000' (approx 550 miles) PR=5 4) Invisibility 5) Illusion B (solid) PR=2 6) Vulnerability: takes double damage from silver weapons. Wt: 130 BHits: 3S: 11 E:14 I:18 A: 15 C:16 HPmod: 2.912. Hit Points: 9 Acc: +2 DamMod: +2 Heal: .9 POWER: 58 Move: 40' Car.Cap.: 178 Basic HTH: 1d4. DetHid: 14% DetDang: 18% Inventing: 54% InvPts: 12.6 Legal Status: Record, Wanted.

CHAINSAW: Name: Jason Carpenter Level: 5 Side: Serves Hela, goddess of Death (Extremely Evil) Sex: Male, Age: 19 Powers: 1) Magical Spell: Weapon Summoning PR=5 automatic if no other action taken that phase must save vs A on d20 or drop weapon if multiple action tried. The weapon summoned will be a chainsaw (+3 to hit, HTH +1d12 damage) on a roll of 1-3, 4: 2x4(club) 5: Machete 6: Pick (as per axe) 2) Armor A: 2.1xbodywt (150 to 315) ADR=70 3) Heightened Strength B: + 23 4) Revivification (variant): works only on himself, power spent by the goddess Hela. If Hela makes a hostile reaction,

He'll return fully healed the following turn, otherwise he'll dissolve to dust & return somewhere else the following week.

5) Low self control: Kills for any reason.

WT: 315 Bhits: 7 Af Mod: -2 S: 33 E: 15 A: 15(17) I: 10 C: 11 HPmod: 7.488 Hit Points: 53 Acc: +2 Dam Mod: +1 Heal: 2.8 POWER: 75 Move: 63" CarCap: 11,129 Bth: 2d10. Detect Hid: 8% DetDang: 12%

HUNTSMAN: Name Derek M'bse Side: Evil, Sex Male, Level: 10 Age: 33 Powers: Heightened Expertise: +4 to hit with Military weapons

2) Heightened Defense: -4 to be hit while active.

3) Natural Weaponry: (Martial Arts) +3 to hit +6 damage

4) Heightened Agility A: +18

5) Heightened Endurance: +10

6) Physical Handicap: Artificial left leg, movement reduced 25%.

Wt: 216 Bhits: 5 S: 14 E: 25 A: 33I: 12 C:

17 HPmod: 15.708 Hit Points: 79 DamMod: +4 Acc: +6 Power: 84 Move: 54" CarCap: 595 BHtH: 1d8 DetHid: 10% (60% using spy eyes) Det Danger: 14% Inventing Pts: 10.0 Inventing: 36% Inventions: Spy eye & spy eye floating platform.

Legal Status: Dubious due to involvement with western covert agencies

Security Clr: 8

Spy eye Data: The spy eye is a small tv camera/microphone. Both audio & video are digital and microcircuits analyze and play up anomalous details, particularly human voices among louder noises animal body heat infrared, and the like. The result is that the user of a spy eye gets (when applicable) a bonus of 50% to his/her detect hidden score. Spy eyes only have a perceptible range of 20" but can transmit up to 5 miles. The spy eye floating platform is a transparent mini-zeppelin that can hover above the ground with little chance of detection (-

15% to detect rolls, excluding radar/sonar type scans)

Huntsman's weapons: 5 laws rockets (5d4 damage) .444 hunting rifle (12 rounds per reload) hits as rifle but heavier caliber bullets do an extra d4 of damage, 3 smoke grenades (5" radius, as per darkness control.)

LEAST SERVANT OF THE FORGOTTEN ONES: Wt: 720 Bhits: 15 AgMod: -4 Level: 1 Side: Evil Powers: Heightened Strength B (x2): +42

3) Invulnerability! 12 pts.

4) Natural Weaponry (tail) +2 to hit, +4 damage

5) Natural Weaponry (teeth): +1 to hit/+2 damage

6) Heightened Endurance: +13

S: 57 E: 23 Ag: 9 I: 13 C: 10 HP Mod: 10.812 Hit Points: 163 Move: 90" POWER: 103 CarCap: 67,962 Basg HTH: 5d10 Det Hid: 10% DetDang: 14%



Underwater Misadventures

by Richard Fichera

The air weighs heavy in your lungs as you pole down this slow-moving, brown-water river. You and your companions have been traveling on this crude raft, made of bamboo and vine, for several days, crawling through a tropical marsh. The sounds of strange wildlife make your ears hum. Each creature sends haunting mating calls to its companions, yet is never seen by your watchful eyes. The mysterious dwellers of this humid swamp have left you and your party unmolested for days, but your remain alert.

Then Belgar, the scout, cries out. He has seen a creature resembling a boulder slip into the water, yet it moved

as if walking. It is quickly approaching the raft from the riverbank. Suddenly, a pair of small ears breaks the surface, followed by a huge, grey bulk of a body. As the thief reported, it is advancing toward you. Garren the Mighty grabs his spear and poises at the edge of the raft to strike, but as it comes closer, the beast submerges. All is still for the moment.

And the monster strikes. The raft lurches beneath you, tumbling Belgar, who grabs the end of a vine in his strong Dwarven hands and saves himself. Garren pitches forward and is thrown into the brown, murky water, disappearing from sight. Candrell, the priest, loses his grip on the pole, flips backwards and spills over the edge, following the warrior to the river bottom. Only the mage, Vornis, who

was busily fumbling with his pack keeps his place on the raft.

The scene above has reached a point in the **Advanced Dungeons and Dragons** game for which there are no rules. What does a Dungeon Master do when characters fall into a river, lake, or ocean? Logic dictates that anyone wearing metal armor or heavily encumbered would sink to the bottom, there to meet a watery death. But death is not instantaneous; any conscious adventurer is going to try to escape by dumping backpacks, shedding armor, losing weapons, and pushing for the surface. But how much time does all that take? And if a character runs out of time (or air), what kind of damage is suffered? What are the chances of saving a drowning party member? Presented here is a system that will

answer these questions and provide rules that will help Dungeon Masters when players "take a dive."

When a character who is armored and/or heavily encumbered falls into the water, the player should immediately roll a four-sided die. The result is modified by one-half of the character's Defensive Adjustment due to dexterity, dropping all fractions. The result is the number of rounds required for the character to dump all weighty equipment and begin pushing for the surface.

A second four-sided die roll is then made and modified by the character's Hit Point Adjustment due to constitution. The result is the number of rounds the character will be able to hold his or her breath before losing consciousness. Characters may be assisted by other (swimming) party members to help speed removal of their equipment. However, if a character is unconscious, the assisting party member must finish removing the unconscious character's equipment before bringing him or her to the surface.

How heavily encumbered individuals are will also determine the rate at which they sink. This becomes important in deep, ocean waters where adventurers will need enough air remaining to reach the surface. The rate at which any character will sink is found in the following table:

Encumbrance	Rate of Sinking
21-39 lbs of equipment	30 feet/round
40-84 lbs of equipment	60 feet/round
85-119 lbs of equipment	90 feet/round
over 119 lbs of equipment	120 feet/round

Characters with 20 lbs or less of equipment are able to swim at their normal movement rates. This usually includes adventurers in leather or magic armor. Characters completely relieving themselves of all encumbrance can swim at rate "12" or paddle for the surface at rate "15".

If an adventurer loses consciousness underwater, he is immediately considered to be at zero hit points. He will continue to lose hit points at the rate of one point per round thereafter (as water seeps into his lungs), as long as there are no other considerations (i.e. - submerged monsters enjoying an underwater snack which would cause

additional damage).

After being unconscious underwater for more than three rounds, the character will begin to take permanent intelligence and wisdom damage. One point of intelligence will be lost on each even-numbered round; one point of wisdom will be lost on each odd-numbered round. In other words, on round four, one point of intelligence is lost; on round five, one point of wisdom; on round six, one point of intelligence, and so on. This continues until round ten, at which point the character expires. As usual, lost attributes can be restored by powerful magic in the form of magic items, wishes, and divine favors.

If a character is pulled out of the water before being unconscious for ten rounds, he or she may be brought back to consciousness by party members attempting to revive the drowned victim for one round. All intelligence and wisdom adjustments are totalled and applied to the character, and hit points are slowly restored. Drowned adventures do not regain all their hit points until they have been out of the water for a number of turns equal to the number of rounds that they were unconscious. Hit points should be divided into equal portions, with each portion being restored at the end of each turn.

With all of this in mind, let's take a look at our party of adventurers.

Vornis, the mage, was sitting safely on the raft and so was not affected. On the next round, he finds his potion of "Mammal Control," drinks it, and commands the hippopotamus (did you guess right? to leave. Belgar, the scout, grabbed onto the end of a vine as he fell, saving himself. That leaves us with Garren, the warrior, and Candrell, the priest. This river is relatively shallow (20-30 feet deep), so figuring the rate of sinking for each character should not be necessary.

Garren the Mighty rolls a 3 on his first four-sided die roll. Since his dexterity is 17, he subtracts 1 (one-half his Defense Adjustment of -3, dropping fractions),

giving him 2 rounds as the time required to take his armor and equipment off. Next he rolls a 2. Since his constitution is also 17, he adds 3 (his Hit Point Adjustment), allowing him to hold his breath for an incredible 5 rounds. He quickly removes his armor and on round 3 breaks the surface of the water to breath again.

Meanwhile, Candrell the Holy is having problems. His first die roll was a 3. He has a 13 dexterity and therefore gets no modifier; it will take him 3 rounds to remove his armor and equipment. His second roll is a 2. The cleric's constitution is rather poor, being only a 6 (he's been sick lately), and so he takes a -1 penalty on his second roll (modified by Hit Point Adjustment). This means that he was able to hold his breath for only 1 round. He loses consciousness, still needing 2 more rounds to completely unencumber himself. He drops to zero hit points.

Since Garren did not reach the surface until round 3, Candrell has been unconscious for 2 rounds by the time Belgar tells Garren to dive down and look for the priest. Garren makes another four-sided die roll (he rolls a 4), adds his Hit Point Adjustment (+3, and realizes that he can hold his breath this time for 7 rounds (no doubt, a world's record). He dives down and finds Candrell on the second round of searching. Candrell has now been unconscious for 4 rounds; he is currently at -4 hit points and has lost 1 point of intelligence. Garren has 6 rounds of air left.

The warrior spends the next 2 rounds removing the rest of the cleric's belongings (remember that Candrell still had 2 rounds to go when he passed out). This puts Candrell at -6 hit points, having lost 2 points of intelligence and 1 point of wisdom. Garren has 4 rounds of air remaining.

Garren grabs the unconscious priest by the shoulders and pushes him toward the surface, where Vornis and Belgar drag his wet, limp body onto the raft. This takes one final round, putting Candrell at -7 hit points and costing him another point of wisdom (-2 total).

The wizard and the thief bring the cleric back to consciousness on round 8, raising him to zero hit points. Since Candrell was unconscious for 7 rounds and he had 42 hit points before falling in the water (no, drowning will not restore hit points that were lost elsewhere), he will regain his hit points at a rate of 6 per turn over a period of 7 turns. He has

permanently lost 2 from his intelligence and 2 from his wisdom due to brain damage.

It is interesting to note that if Candrell loses consciousness again due to combat before regaining all his hit points, he will regain consciousness after combat on his own, as his hit points lost due to drowning will continue to be restored. This does not apply if he reaches - 10 or lower hit points due to combat (dead is dead).

Some of the values shown in this system may seem slightly exaggerated. It was actually intended that way for a number of reasons. First, adventurers

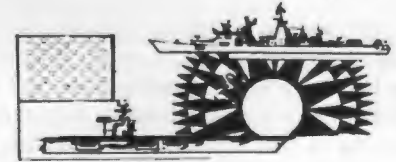
are much harder than average people and are able to drive their bodies to greater extremes. Some may recall that Conan, the character of Robert E. Howard's tales, was known to stay under water for 20 minutes (rounds) during some of his later adventures (see specifically *Conan of the Isles* written by L. Sprague de Camp and Lin Carter, published by Ace Books). Furthermore, the world record for underwater endurance, without previously hyperventilating, is 6 minutes, 29 seconds. In fantasy role-playing, characters should also be able to do "fantastic" things.

The system can get complicated if several adventurers have fallen into the water, and *Dungeon Masters* should feel free to modify this system to improve the style and flavor of their individual games.

Your friend, Candrell, opens his eyes and smiles weakly at you. In a hoarse, whisper-of-a-voice he thanks you all. Garren suggests that he could dive down and get their lost armor and weapons. But what was that large, green lizard-creature you saw slip into the river just now?



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(EDITOR'S NOTE: The DTI philosophy of Adventure Gaming is that more mutual support should exist between the hobby and the industry aspects of it. With The V.I.P. of Gaming magazine serving as DTI's philosophical outlet, it seems only fitting that our first interview in these pages be that of a high profile game company that takes neither itself nor its games too seriously. Steve Jackson Games means fun to gamers everywhere, and when represented "live" at game conventions, Steve Jackson people bring even more fun to the folks they meet.

On the Road with Steve Jackson Games

The mayhem and misadventures of a traveling show

An interview with Scott Haring and Warren Spector

by Alan Emrich

VIP: When Steve Jackson Games hits the convention trail, whom do they send where and to what type and size conventions?

Scott Haring: I thought you said this was going to be a fun interview, and then right off the bat, I get to answer a serious question... As much as I enjoy going to game conventions, there are some serious business questions that

have to be answered before I can put the awesome SJ Games juggernaut in motion. Basically, if it looks like we'll make a slight profit or better, we go. That simple. The farther away a convention is, the bigger and better it has to be for us to go. In Texas, we've gone to some amazingly small conventions. To get us out to either coast, it takes a con the size of L.A.'s ORCCON, or an ORIGINS. Other factors are the convention's "feel", its good publicity, past experiences we've had with it, my intuition, and luck.

As to who gets to take the trip, I always lead the delegation. Beyond that, it's strictly patronage. I've got to spread it around a little bit to keep everybody happy, because despite all the hard work, convention trips are seen as "perks" around the office. I also look at the dull, boring stuff like who's got experience working at cons and who's done good jobs in the past. But for the most part, the person who bribes me the most gets to go. (You wouldn't believe the fun I had entertaining offers when I announced the trip to HawaiiCon — alas, air fare was too high, and they ended up cancelling the con anyway). **Warren Spector:** Scott makes all the decisions about who goes to which conventions, but I will say that he does a terrific job — I mean, he takes me to all the "glamour cons". (A glamour con is one that involves air travel, exotic climates, jillions of people, fancy hotels, that sort of thing). Every once in a while someone here at the office complains about my convention attendance. In answer, I simply quote Mel Brooks: "It's

good to be the king" (or, in my case, the Editor-in-Chief).

VIP: Since its you, Scott and Warren, actually answering these questions, tell our readers a little bit about yourselves. Backgrounds, felony convictions, or any other amusing, informative tidbits.

SH: It's not nearly as interesting as you might think. I possess a journalism degree from Texas A&M University and spent two years working at the New Braunsfels Herald-Zeitung (that's a newspaper) before coming to SJ Games. I started in gaming like just about everybody else, with D&D (Circle R, TM, Patent Pending, M-O-U-S-E). This was back in 1975, and I was hooked. I would rather play D&D than study. Since I was a freshman chemical engineering major at the time, this had a negative impact on my grades. I actually flunked out because of D&D, but I eventually returned to school and got my degree — and even continued to play games. I just didn't play them every waking moment.

I met Steve Jackson through the Society for Creative Anachronism when I was still in school. After I graduated, we kept in touch. Since New Braunfels is only 40 miles from Austin, I was able to come up and participate in some early playtests (it is not widely known that I won the very first game of Illuminati ever played — that early version, though, bears little resemblance to the game that finally published).

I've worked a number of different jobs here at SJ Games, but the two biggest are Editor of Autoduel Quarterly and Convention Manager. To answer the other typical biographical questions I was born in Tulsa, OK, I'm nearly 27 years old, I own two cats, and my hobby is baseball — I'm a fan of the game to the point of rabid obnoxiousness.

WS: Unlike Scott, my background is a series of fascinating tales of excitement, adventure, intrigue — I was born into the royal family of a small middle-European country, wrote my first novel at age three, completed college at six, and assisted the FBI in solving several tough cases. I've dated Jackie O., Streisand, and Brooke Shields.

VIP: It sounds like you had a busy night...

WS: If any of you believed that, I've got a bridge in Brooklyn I'd like to sell you...

Seriously, I'm a New Yorker by birth and am about to turn (choke) thirty. I've been a "gamer" for about ten years, give

or take, starting with D&D (what a surprise). I picked up Ogre when it first came out, and Rivets, and haven't looked back since.

I got started with Steve Jackson Games because I happened to be in the right place at the right time: I'd been teaching film courses at the University of Texas, Austin for a year or so when they said "Take a hike". I needed a job, and my friend, Chris Frink, was editing *The Space Gamer* at that time and asked me if I wanted a job as an Assistant Editor. I jumped at the chance and here I am, a year and a bit later, the Editor-in-Chief.

Other background: Journalism major at Northwestern University for two years. Transferred into Radio-TV-Film. Got a Masters degree in film from the University of Texas, Austin (my thesis was about Warner Brothers cartoons). For the last I-can't-remember-how-many years I've been trying to finish up my Doctorate in Communication. I'm just a dissertation away from being Doctor Spector. I LOVE movies... and the New York Knicks (and basketball in any form)... and comic books... and book books.

My primary function at SJ Games is to keep an eye on the Editorial and Production departments: I set deadlines, make up schedules, do a lot of budgeting, handle most of our dealings with printers. Basically, I put out the fires. Once in a while I even get to do some editing or (gasp!) writing. Things get interesting when Scott and I go to conventions — at work I'm his boss; at cons he's my boss. Lucky we're good enough friends to make it work.

VIP: Now, when you're "On the road with Steve Jackson Games," are there people you see regularly at these game conventions, exhibitors or attendees? Any "interesting characters"? Tell us something about these "regulars".

SH: Indeed, there are some regulars. They're the usual mix of people we see at conventions, some good, some bad. These are people who regularly attend a particular con because they live in the area. For example, there's an AADA chapter president (that's the American Autoduel Association, our Car Wars Club) named David Wilson. He and his friends appear at any con within 300 miles of Dallas (where he is from). He's the best kind of regular — comes to our seminars, asks intelligent questions, knows almost as much about our line as we do, plays in all our tournaments (and



wins with disgusting regularity), and always has good comments about our new products. Now that we've been making a regular habit of attending STRATEGICON's Southern California conventions, I'm beginning to recognize a number of "regulars" there, too.

As for our fellow exhibitors, it's gotten to the point where we're all one big happy family — or at least a big family that doesn't shoot each other on sight. Lou Zocchi is an amazing dealer that can show up at any con anywhere in the country, carrying a staggering array of games, plus he does great card tricks! On the West Coast, I can count on seeing Jeff Tibbetts of *The Grenadier*, Wallace and Barbara Poulter of *3W* (and now *DTI*), all of the wonderful folks at Hero Games; Ray, Steve, George, Niki, Debi, and company — and Steve Luckey of *Balboa Games*. Another pair I spend a lot of convention time with is David and Martha Ladyman of *Texas Gaming Products*. They go to a lot of the same cons that we do, and we always look for ways to help each other out by covering each other's tables, going for food and drinks, etc. I've made a lot of good friends on the convention trail.

WS: Scott forgot to mention Aaron Fichtelberg and Dan Ghozeil, who show up at the Southern California cons I've attended, and who split their time between the SJ Games tables and the Hero Games booth. They're a couple of sharp gamers who know the SJG line better than I do and always manage to ask questions that I can't answer. As far as other regulars go, let me explain why

the Hero Games crew is so popular: they give great back rubs. Ray Greer should never be allowed near women, they melt in his hands; Niki and Debi should never be allowed near any man but me, I melt in their hands.

Friends are what conventions are all about... Well, okay, maybe there's a little business involved, too. Like Scott, thought, I've made lots of good friends since I got into this kooky business.

VIP: That's great to hear, and really true. But for our readers not fortunate enough to see you at their local game conventions, what sort of activities do you perform, other than just selling the SJG line at your dealer table? Do you usually give seminars and demonstrations?

SH: Well, we do sell the entire SJ Games line at our dealer's table. That's everything, including the junk that doesn't sell. One of the big advantages a con gets by having manufacturers attend is that they bring the company's entire line, including the hard-to-find stuff the attendees can't get at their local hobby shops.

Enough for the mercenary plug. We also sponsor tournaments in our games, providing prizes that can be redeemed at the table for merchandise. These prizes give players something to shoot for, and help attract them to our tournaments. We also do seminars — mostly question and answer sessions where the gamers get together with our attending staff. These sessions can go in any direction whatsoever; they're very unpredictable, and also a lot of fun.

WS: My primary function at conventions is to make buttons. Scott doesn't trust me with the cashbox. ("But Scott, I paid for that Porsche out of my TOON royalties..."). In addition to manning the button machine, I get to take part in TOON demonstrations, which are always lots of fun. I do tend to get a bit carried away, however, and I suspect there are dealers all across the country who would love to see my lungs ripped out so I couldn't shoot BOOM! again. (So TOON is a loud game, so sue me. Better yet, sue Greg Costikyan).

I love seminars. They remind me of my teaching days. Seminars give us a chance to find out what gamers really want, what they think about upcoming projects, and what they think about already existing games. Aside from pontificating, we get to listen to gamers who tell us how we're doing. I don't know how we'd get along without them.



VIP: Okay, let's get the fun stuff. Would you each tell us an amusing story or two about some of the misadventures you have had or seen while "On the Road with Steve Jackson Games".

SH: You want stories? I've got stories...

Have you ever driven all night across West Texas? We once went to a convention in Amarillo, Texas. We left Austin about 10pm Thursday night and drove (and drove, and drove some more). It's amazing how much nothing is out there. We finally got in about 9am, just in time to set up in the dealer's room and do the con. Talk about fun... (Talk about stupid. Despite the experience,

we made similar all-night drives to Lubbock (8 hours) and Tulsa (10 hours), two different times, and St. Louis (16 unforgettable hours), all in the same year! Never again).

When attending ORIGINS '83, one of the features of the "new" Detroit was a thriving Greek town about 20 blocks from the convention center. So Pat Mueller (then our art director) and Mike Stackpole of Flying Buffalo organized an expedition one night for dinner. Well, by the time everybody had contacted their friends, we were about 30 strong, and quite a sight (a rampaging horde of gamers marching through downtown Detroit). The muggers probably ran when they saw us coming. The Game Designer's Guild held their annual dinner the next night at a local Mexican restaurant, which prompted a number of people to comment that the next year (in Dallas) the dinner would probably

be held at a Greek place...

Last June, we were in Orange, California, for the first GAMEX convention. Business was a little slow and we were in need of a pick-up, so Saturday night we went to the movies. There was this giant movie complex in a shopping center across the street from the hotel we were staying in, so we took off. It was Warren Spector and myself, Martha Ladyman of Texas Gaming Products, Wallace and Barbara Poulter of 3W, plus Ray Greer, Steve Peterson, and Niki Canotas of Hero Games. After spending about two hours in line (Ghostbusters was pretty popular at

the time), we finally headed in. It was one of those amphitheater-style places, with long, curved rows of seats and no center aisle. To get to the good seats in the middle, you've got to walk past 20 to 30 seats on either side.

Well, somehow Warren got separated from us, but we forged ahead and nailed down some pretty good seats, saving one for Warren. A few minutes passed, and the theater was almost full when we began to wonder where Warren was. Ray Greer, never one to be bashful in a crisis, stood up and hollered at the top of his voice, "Hey Spector, where are ya"?

A hush fell over the theater as the assembled multitude of some 700 Californians contemplated the meaning of this question, and then a quiet voice in the back said, "Here". This was followed by two or three quick "heres" from down in front. Suddenly, 50 different people were yelling "here", and the house was in an uproar. Only a minute or two later, we finally spotted Warren, and flagged him down. As he worked his way past the 20 to 30 now filled seats to get to the one we had saved for him, Greer, never one to pass up an opportunity to embarrass a friend, yelled, "It's okay, everybody, we found Spector!" Warren received an enthusiastic, and thoroughly embarrassing ovation from the crowd. Of course, Warren's a ham, so he loved it.

If the schedule permits, we always try to do something a little different when we travel. Different members of the crew have been to Photon (a live-action video game) in Dallas, Disneyland, Second City in Chicago... I even tried to go to Milwaukee during GENCON to see a Brewers game (whod've believed it would be sold out?). I think it's part of what makes the convention trail so much fun. Now, if only I didn't have to work while I was there...

WS: Darn! I've been scooped by Mr. Haring. That "we found Spector" story was one of my best. Another I'm particularly fond of is the story of "Mr. 3000".

It was back in the late Winter of 1984. Scott and I had been to Southern California about a jillion times, attended countless conventions located just minutes away from that mousey mecca (Disneyland), and poor Scott had never been there. This time, we vowed, we'd make it. We did, and Disneyland will never be the same.

A contingent of SJ Gamers (Scott and me) and Heroes (Ray and Niki) headed

for mouseland. On the way, someone happened to mention that Disneyland was celebrating its thirtieth anniversary, and prizes were being given to selected customers: Every 300th person through the gates got a free pass; every 3000th person through the gates got a watch; and so on. We got our tickets and started through the gate when, as I passed through the turnstile, the girl taking tickets said, "Wait a minute. Wait a minute". I started to panic. (New Yorkers don't like to be stopped by strangers. I mean, I figured I'd done something wrong, or my beard wasn't trimmed neatly enough, or something).

Anyway, it turned out that I was the 3000th person through! I fell to my knees and kissed the ground. (Disneyland is the only place in the world you can do that and live). Then a guy in a white jump suit, pushing a broom came over to me and started talking REALLY LOUD about how lucky I was — "Hey, this guy won a watch". (He sounded and acted a lot like Goofy). "That's a great watch you won... know how much it's worth?... This guy won a watch..." And he followed me all the way to the prize redemption center. Good thing I'm such a ham or I might have been really embarrassed. Anyway, the day started out great and it continued that way. It was almost like a picture of "Mr. 3000", as I was immediately dubbed by assorted Hero types, had circulated around the park. I was congratulated all over the place. We never had to wait on any lines. We got great seats for all the shows.

What really made the whole situation is the fact that I happen to own four shares of Disney stock; I got my Masters degree by writing a thesis about cartoons; and I was in California, at least in part, to promote a game called TOON, The Cartoon Role-playing Game. The appropriateness of the situation just about killed me!

When ORCCON got going the next day, the other folks who'd been to Disneyland started spreading the word about the Mr. 3000 Fan Club — they even made me a Mr. 3000 button. Maybe you had to be there, but this will remain one of the great convention trip memories of my life.

And then there was last year's ORIGINS in Dallas... Picture this — 1 am, big party, lots of industry greats (and me too) voting on the year's worst games, silliest gaffes, etc. Then some joker sets off the fire alarm in the hotel.

Out pour millions of gamers. ORIGINS takes to the streets!

Want to talk parties? Go to a Hero Games party some time. Their parties are so terrific that I can't even remember most of them (and I think you know what I mean).

Finding restaurants in strange cities is always a thrill, too. Thank Goodness Ray Greer is an experienced guide — I think he follows spoor or something. Somehow he always manages to find food. Just don't ever drive with him. I mean, where I come from, you're supposed to stop at STOP signs. He rolls. And what's a Speed Limit? Crazy Californians!

VIP: Gee, Warren, it sounds like you're the ham and Scott, Ray and Niki are always basting you. As a final question, though, please consider women at game conventions. What have been your observations of this attendance phenomenon? Do you see any positive trends developing in this matter?

SH: I might get out my soapbox here again. When you say "positive trends", I assume you mean more women attending. Now everyone agrees that's a good thing, but most people think that's a good thing for all the wrong reasons. Let's face it — most gamers today (I'm talking about the male ones, who are the vast majority) don't want more women to attend game conventions because it will improve the quality of gaming, or because higher attendance will allow more events to be run, or because women offer unique strategies and outlooks on gaming. Most people want women to come to game conventions so they have a better chance of scoring. This attitude is — in addition to being sexist — counterproductive. It will drive away the very people gamers are hoping to attract.

The games themselves are also to blame. The problem goes beyond the simple, "Well, wargames are aggressive by definition, and women aren't aggressive". (An argument which happens to be wrong, by the way, but that's not my point here). It's not the violence or the aggression of adventure games that turns women off, it's the sexism. It's particularly obvious in the game art, where all the women have comic-book proportions that defy physics and biology, but the tone of many games (particularly roleplaying games) is the same: Men do all the heroics, and women are background scenery. The knight does the rescuing;

the princess is helpless in the tower. The space ace zaps the bad guys with his laser pistol; the girl pushes buttons behind a console and looks good in her skin-tight space suit.

As long as games and gamers are stuck in this adolescent fantasy mentality where the male does all the work and the scantily-clad female throws herself at the hero's feet in gratitude as the credits roll, the women will (rightly) stay away in droves. There are some women who can overcome this in their own minds, and can enjoy the games for their own sake. And there are others who have picked up on this fantasy and have decided — for whatever reason — to play along. They're the ones in the chain mail bikinis. It's kind of sad, actually.

Female game company employees are a special case. It's tough to generalize on this point, but I believe most look at the hobby as job-related, so they can go to a con, put up with the 15-year-olds leering from across the dealer's table, and get the job done. They're also generally very good for sales — again, for all the wrong reasons.

WS: Women at conventions, eh? I've always been a little perplexed when people complain about the lack of women gamers. I know lots of women who play D&D. Game publishers and players should probably work to get even more women interested in the hobby. For one thing, we can invite women to take part in our games. For another, we can "watch our language", by which I mean we can write rules that avoid sexist terminology. I'm quite proud of Space Gamer's record on that score. If you read the word "he" in SG you can be damn sure it refers to a specific person. And nowhere in TOON will you find any rules like, "If a player wants to hit another HE rolls two dice". It's really quite simple to recast such a sentence so it reads, "Players who want to hit others roll two dice" or "A player who wants to hit another rolls two dice".

Just a few more points before I climb down off the soapbox so recently vacated by my esteemed colleague Mr. Haring: The premiere issue of Griffin magazine, a new gaming journal, really hacked me off. The GENCON report spend an inordinate amount of space talking about a "Barbarian Queen", clad in a skimpy leather outfit. Surely that wasn't the most important thing that happened at GENCON. Hell, **that**

wasn't even worth mentioning.

Scott's showing me another piece of evidence in the case against male gamers: check out the Jan/Feb 1985 issue of *Different Worlds*. Page 20 features a full-page discussion of women in gaming (a pretty good one, by the way). Page 24 is a full-page illustration of a naked woman swinging on a vine. Does anyone out there see the problem here besides Scott and I? What's a women to think?

SH: *Different Worlds* asked "Why aren't there more women in gaming?" and four pages later, they answered their own question.

WS: One bright note: The *Dungeons & Dragons* cartoon show on Saturday morning could do more than anything else to get more girls into gaming. First of all, the show is pretty good. Second it features a mixed party racially and sexually. More of this sort of thing would be nice.

What can conventions do to help right whatever wrongs have been committed? Not much, I'm afraid to say. Ladies' nights? Spare me. Dances? That might just make matters worse. Until the games change, and attitudes change (and maybe some magazine editors change), women will continue to be outnumbered about ten to one.

Maybe male gamers have some growing up to do before women **should** attend conventions in greater numbers. End of rambling lecture.

VIP: Gentlemen, do you have any closing remarks you wish to leave our readers with? Any gaming or worldly philosophy you feel you should share?

WS: No. (Just kidding).

The other day, a friend of mine said something that really hit home. After a long day playing *Samurai Blades* (a nifty little game, by the way), he looked at me and said, "Isn't it great — here we are thirty years old, still rolling dice and pushing little cardboard counters around a board". And you know something? It is great. I've made lots of good friends through gaming. I expect I'll make a lot more before my gaming days are through. Unfortunately, I've also lost a couple, because they took their games too seriously.

Games are a big part of my life, but I hope they'll never be the **biggest** part. Play for the human interaction; play to have fun; don't play **only** to win. A year from now, you won't remember who won last Saturday's *Civilization* game. Why lose sleep over it now? Heck, I've never won a *Civilization* game in my life

(and you can add *Risk*, *Victory in the Pacific*, and scads of other games to the list of games I've lost every time I've played). And you know what? It just doesn't matter. Play for friends; play for fun; never play for keeps. At the risk of sounding trite: It's only a game.

SH: Final words of wisdom? Support your local game conventions. If they're doing something that you don't like, volunteer to help. Game cons are one of the best ways to introduce new people to the hobby, and the hobby must continue to attract new gamers if game companies are to continue to publish new products. I'd suggest making an

effort to attract female gamers, but anyone recruiting for the wrong reasons won't be very successful.

Also, remember that this is a **hobby**, not life-and-death. Gamers are generally very intelligent and creative — devote some of that creativity to the real world. There are lots of problems that need solving that are more important than the optimum opening set-up in *Ogre*. Play games, but don't let them dominate your life — they're **games**, for goodness' sake.

VIP: Thank you, gentlemen, and we'll see you on the convention trail.



BIT BY BIT

COMPUTER GAME REVIEW PRELIMINARY REVIEW REVIEWED BY JACK KAMMER

It's something like three-dimensional chess with SuperSonic Transports instead of kings and queens, 747s instead of knights on horses, and sluggish Cessnas instead of lowly pawns. It's Kennedy Approach, the latest release from Microprose, and it's more intense, for me at least, than chess ever was. This is Commodore simulation par excellence.

When real life airplanes below a certain altitude approach busy airports they are required by federal regulation to contact Approach control. The air traffic controller watches a radar screen and monitors the progress of each flight in his or her area of responsibility. It is his or her job to keep those planes away from each other by at least three miles if they are at the same altitude, or by 1000 feet of altitude if they are within three miles of each other.

Kennedy Approach gives your Commodore 64 the power to simulate not only the air traffic controller's radar screen, but also his or her two-way radio communications with pilots.

Using an ingenious system of joystick and fire button, Andy Hollis, Microprose's chief programmer for Kennedy Approach, allows you quickly and conveniently to send complex instructions to the planes appearing on your screen. To give a command to a particular plane, you will use your joystick to move the cursor to the plane's radar image, press the fire button to lock onto that plane, move the cursor up or down for altitude changes, left or right for changes in direction, and press the fire button once again to transmit the message. Since planes sitting on the ground waiting for permission to take-off have no radar image, you lock onto them by pressing their single-letter identifier on the keyboard.

When you transmit a command, always consisting of a compass heading and altitude, you actually hear it being transmitted to the plane, loud and clear, thanks to the spectacular voice synthesis of Electronic Speech Systems of Berkeley, California. Usually the pilot responds with a simple and efficient "Roger", but sometimes there are problems to announce: "United 817, Emergency! Eight Minutes Fuel!" Believe me, hearing is believing.

JFK International Airport's Approach is only one of five Approach Control Centers this game simulates. On your way to the top of the heap, working flights into and out of New York's crowded airspace, you'll start in Atlanta, move on to Dallas-Fort Worth, proceed to Denver, and then show your stuff in Washington, DC to sharpen your skills before opening your show in the Big Apple.

After you choose a skill level from 1 to 5, you'll pick a shift at an airport that will challenge the skill you claim to have. A slow graveyard shift at Kennedy, for example, demands the same skill level as a relatively hectic morning in Atlanta.

At Dallas-Fort Worth, for instance, you'll watch a screen showing not only the airport at DFW, but also a nearby smaller, general aviation field cluttering the sky with snail-paced private planes on sightseeing and local flights. At the top of your screen you'll see abbreviated flight plans for up to twenty-six planes telling you who started where, their current altitudes, who is waiting to take off, and where they all want to go. Sometimes a plane will want only to fly through your area on its way to another city, but more often than not it's up to you to steer it clear of all other planes in the area and bring it in for a landing.

A safe landing. Not only safe, but safe in accordance with all applicable regulations. Or you just might find yourself catching a flight back to mama in Des Moines to help with the harvest. With hundreds of lives on the line, your bosses have no qualms about firing an inefficient air traffic controller.

But for each ten-minute or quarter-hour playing segment, you can receive cash bonuses for good performance and be promoted as well. The simulation evaluates you favorably for your successful landings, proper departures and management of emergencies. What the bosses don't like to see are conflicts, in which you allow planes to encroach on each other's airspace, delays of planes waiting for take-off, improper departures (wrong direction or altitude) and, understandably enough, crashes.

When, in the course of real-time simulation, nothing is happening, you can press the space bar to speed the clock to double time to maintain the pace. And if a skyful of planes isn't enough to keep your computer brain happy with simulation stimulation, Kennedy Approach can arrange to have a killer thunderstorm sweep across your airport, forcing you to send the radar blips in your care scurrying to safety.

What it all adds up to is engrossing, captivating, intense and frenetic fun.

There is only one tiny little negative thing I need to say, and I say it only to save you a few minutes of confusion and frustration. The screen shows each plane's altitude by displaying bars under the plane's icon. Each bar indicates 1000 feet of altitude. The actual position of the plane is represented not by the icon, but by the bottom bar. The documentation falls a little short on that point. Otherwise, even the documentation is commendable for weaving factual information about the real world of air traffic control into its explanation of how to have fun, learn from, and enjoy a most impressive piece of software.

The "Personality" of Computer Opponents

by Chris Crawford

Computer wargames made their first commercial appearance seven years ago. In the ensuing years, we have seen the supply of computer wargames steadily increase and we have seen a number of intriguing technical developments that have made the games both more realistic and more enjoyable. Yet, in at least one crucial area of computer wargame design we have seen very little improvement since the earliest days. I refer to artificial intelligence, the magical algorithms that endow the computer with the ability to play against the human opponent on something like equal terms. Artificial intelligence remains the stumbling block in computer wargaming.

Just how good is the artificial intelligence in existing computer wargames? The embarrassing answer has to be, "Not very smart." Computer wargames still cannot give you the run for your money that a mildly competent human player can offer. They need a big handicap and lots of special advantages. Moreover, I have yet to meet a computer wargame that exhibited any of the traits that make an opponent interesting. They do not display cleverness, deception, or strategic insight. All computer opponents that I have met play a simple, plodding game with few risks and no brilliance.

How can we realize artificial intelligence in our computer wargames? I am hesitant to talk about true "Artificial Intelligence" (AI) as it is commonly considered in systems research for more than twenty years now with few solidly applicable results. Hardly a year goes by without some development being hailed as a "major breakthrough in AI," but most of those familiar with the field are reluctant to refer to anything as a breakthrough. AI remains a field with more promise than product. It is therefore silly to waste time talking about utilizing proper AI on microcomputers. If they cannot get it to work on mainframes, they are not going to do any better on micros.

All is not lost, however. The simple

fact that we do indeed have a number of games running on micros right now suggests that computers can handle at least a rudimentary form of AI — I prefer to call it "Artificial Reckoning," or "AR". AR is composed of a bag of tricks and stunts that create a semblance or illusion of intelligent play.

The most commonly used stunt is so cheap that it hardly deserves inclusion in a list of AR techniques; quantity vs. quality. The computer may not be able to think very well, but if it can perform a calculation for one unit, it can repeat the same computation for each of several hundred or thousand units with equal ease. This is why so many computer games have such a David-and-Goliath atmosphere. The computer needs to be Goliath to have any chance at all against the smarter human. Thus, I provided the computer opponent in **Tanktics** with twice as many tanks as the human player receives. **Legionnaire** also gives the computer twice as many units as is granted to Caesar (the player). Likewise, the situation confronting the Germans on the **Eastern Front (1941)** lends itself naturally to this unbalanced strength approach, where the computer-led Soviets outnumber the Axis forces by 115-to-48. With odds like that, you do not need a great deal of intelligence to prevail.

Of course, giving the computer plenty of men is a little too obvious. A sneakier solution is to give the computer roughly the same number of units, but grant them some special powers that the human player's units lack. A good example of this might be **Operation Whirlwind** (designed by Roger Damon and published by Broderbund Software), in which the computer-driven units in the higher levels of difficulty move faster and shoot straighter than the human's do — or at least they certainly seem to.

The third technique from the computer wargame designer's bag of tricks is the creative use of limited intelligence. If the human player does not know the positions and strengths of the computer units, he will not be able to bring his superior reasoning ability to bear against the computer. He will be forced to use much the same random thrashings that the computer relies on. In other words, if you cannot move up to the human's level, bring him down to yours. A nasty variation on this technique allows the computer access to information that in simulation terms he really has no right to know. This technique gives a completely new

meaning to the term "artificial intelligence." The poor human player begins to think that the computer is second-guessing his every move. "Wow! That computer is really smart!"

The fundamental technique behind most computer wargames (derived from the early work on chess playing programs) involves the use of a point system to evaluate each of a variety of potential moves. The computer looks at each unit and examines each possible move it could take. It then calculates the value of that move based on weightings devised by the designer. For example, if clear terrain is worth five points, then woods might be worth ten points and a position behind a river worth twenty. Of course, this is complicated by the overall strategic situation. Units moving up to the front want to get there quickly, and so are less concerned with cover than with speed of passage.

Then there are the complex geometric considerations. Which side of a river is across from the attackers? How do you evaluate the strength of a line of resistance? How can you tell that location "A" is vulnerable because it projects forward of the line, while position "B" is within the lines and therefore safer and stronger? These things can be calculated, but they get a little messier.

Another serious problem arises from the need to coordinate the moves of the units. Suppose we have a game with 100 units. Imagine that each unit has about 100 possible moves from which to choose. Thus, the computer must evaluate about ten thousand possible moves each turn. This may sound like a lot to you, but this is precisely the sort of thing the computer does well. To do the entire calculation in, say, ten seconds, it must evaluate one thousand options per second — an entirely reasonable specification. But now consider that the computer, in evaluating the move of each unit, really ought to take into account the actions of the other 99 units. Thus, each of the ten thousand possible moves must also consider each of the other 9,999 moves. This adds up to 100 million possible outcomes. If it takes the computer ten seconds to consider the simple case of units acting independently, it would take 100,000 seconds (more than a day) to consider the same units acting in a coordinated fashion. It takes some very clever "pruning" (i.e. eliminating of inferior moves) to make such calculations take place in acceptable time periods.

How can we improve the use of AR in wargames? I must first take a negative tack. I do not think we can obtain much more satisfying AR by merely sharpening the pencil. That is, I do not think that more complicated point systems that take a larger range of variables into account will, by themselves, give the computer a better chance of winning. But this by itself is not what we are looking for. I am sure you have met boardgamers whose only strategy was to compulsively rearrange each move until every unit had been placed in its absolutely optimal position, such that every battle would be fought at precise, integer odds with no strength wasted in rounding off. This is not strategy, it's razor-sharp accounting. We will not make our computer opponents more interesting by making them superior accountants.

The first thing we need to do is develop a variation on AI that would be crucial to all games. I like to call it "AP" — artificial personality. If we create models for people (not mere intellects) and make these models work inside the computer, we will have the basis for some fascinating games. An AP-oriented game would plan its actions on the basis of factors such as "risk aversion," "initiative," "confidence," and "desperation." My first game to utilize artificial personality was **Excalibur**. Its internal variables included factors such as ambition, cowardice, independence, nastiness, and indecisiveness. In future games I plan to extend these concepts.

The second major development that we need is an emphasis on considering the actions of the opponent. The concept of a feint, for example, is meaningless unless you take into account the thought processes of your opponent. This will require that the same AP models that we use to guide the computer must be good enough that the computer can apply them to his human opponent. ("Hmm...Enemy ambition appears to be high, but his indecisiveness quotient exceeds 542. This suggests we draw him out and then counterattack...")

Such techniques will be very difficult to realize, especially on the mass market, 64K computers. Nevertheless, they are crucial to the continuing development of computer wargames. You cannot interact with somebody unless you consider what his is thinking about, and interaction is, after all, the essence of gaming.

BATTLE FOR NORMANDY

By Terry W. Raney

Battle for Normandy, designed by David Landrey and produced by Strategic Simulations Inc. is a simulation of operation Overlord or D-Day, the amphibious and airborne invasion of France during World War II. The game consists of a 5 1/4 inch floppy disk, rule booklet and a card that summarizes the order of battle, computer commands and has a small map of the entire playing area. The simulation is available for the Commodore 64, Atari and Apple II lines of computers. I played the game in solitaire on my Apple II Plus. A disk drive and monitor are required. Retail price is \$40.00 although the game is available at a substantial discount through mail order outlets. Playing time varies between three to six hours depending on the skill and experience of the players. There is a save game feature.

The simulation is for two players or can be played solitaire with the computer running the German forces. Turns alternate between the Allied and German player and each turn represents one day. The units participating are, for the Allies: Infantry, airborne and armored divisions, cavalry regiments, separate armored brigades, ranger battalions, beach depots and supply depots. For the Germans: Infantry, panzer and airborne divisions and brigades along with static beach units. The German airborne units do not have an air drop capability and fight as infantry. The period covered is from June 12, 1944 to June 30, 1944. The area of play is the entire Normandy invasion area from Cherbourg to Caen and inland to just beyond St. Leo.

After initial scenario selections, a game turn consists of: Airborne drops (only one drop is possible on the first Allied turn and thereafter the division functions as an infantry division); supply allocation consisting of four categories—fuel, general, combat and amphibious; air interdiction; movement; and combat.

The rules are clear and understandable. The computer commands and inputs are simple to execute. Movement can be in any order desired and the Allied player has free choice concerning the order of the Allied units for amphibious landing at preassigned beachheads.

On the mechanical level, the game is simple. On the planning level the game is fairly complex. The variety of scenarios and flexibility of movement, supply and combat provide sufficient complexity to seriously challenge the experienced wargamer. The graphics are good. I particularly like the variety of the symbols for the units. Only a portion of the play area is displayed and there is a scrolling feature so the entire play area can be examined.

Battle for Normandy is a good simulation. The order of battle, historical setting and unit capabilities are accurate and realistic. The addition of the logistics function and the need to maintain supply lines is particularly realistic. The computer is a formidable opponent but can be beaten. The Allied player must act swiftly but prudently maintaining supply and mutually supporting unit positions. All factors considered, playability, complexity, graphics, challenge, interest and price **Battle for Normandy** is an A-.



F-15 Strike Eagle

MicroProse
Atari version

F-15 Strike Eagle is a flight combat simulator in a modern conventional war. The disk includes several different scenarios covering many of the troubled areas of the world in the last few years, however many of these tend to be very similar.

Your mission as a pilot is to destroy primary bombing targets, airfields, enemy jets, etc., and make it back to your base without running out of fuel. You have a variety of attack weapons to use, such as a gun, bombs, and medium or short range missiles. All of which are kept track of on your display. Your defensive measures include flares (for heat seeking missiles), an electronic jammer, and of course, speed. There are also a variety of other things you control from your highly detailed cockpit.

Although the cockpit is detailed, the graphics outside of it tend to be rough and crude, shown mostly as rough geometric shapes, such as triangles and squares. It's realistic method of turning makes the ground displayed at the angle you are turning, this helps take your mind off the uninteresting terrain below.

After learning the keyboard control positions and their functions, the game is easy to play. Skill is needed to place bombs correctly on their targets, and make it back to base while destroying the maximum number of targets on your limited fuel supply. For a greater challenge try relying on your gun to destroy enemy planes instead of guided missiles. There are four difficulty levels to the game.

F-15 Strike Eagle is not very complex, and is easy to play. It has good entertainment value, but not really as a serious military simulation.

Presentation/Enjoyment: 7

Graphics: 7

Skill: 6

Complexity: 6

Overall: 7

—REVIEWED BY ROB HESS

Computer Game Reviews: **Expedition Amazon (Penguin Software)**

by Robert L. Hayes Jr.

"Explore lush tropical jungles in search of lost cities filled with gold! Canoe past hostile natives in search of treasure beyond your wildest dreams! Find ancient artifacts that unfold the secrets of the ages before your very eyes!"

Sounds good to me. It must have sounded good to buyers of **Expedition Amazon** too, because Penguin Software still is in business. **Expedition Amazon** is an (alleged) role-playing-game, where you play the part of four mentally deficient 'characters' on an 'expedition' into the Amazon in search of the lost city of Ka.

There are good points to every game, so let me mention those of **EA**. The rulebook is beautiful, printed on simulated parchment, and captures the feel of an expedition down the Amazon. The graphics are GORGEOUS. I didn't think my little Commodore 64 could make pictures like that.

So much for the good parts. Now, the fun begins.

The game simulated 'B' adventure

movies - shlicky situations, etc. But the designer succeeds too well - it gets to the point where the humor is repetitive and the atmosphere one of total boredom.

There are technical problems as well. The messages, even when set on high speed, are incredibly slow. Once, while exploring a catacomb, a lava flow erupted beneath the surface. Although my characters weren't even near the flow, abruptly I was informed they were dead.

There is no role-playing involved in the game. Your personality as a person makes no difference on the outcome of game play. There are ridiculous limitations - four people can carry a grand total of only eight grenades! As a reasonably well-informed person re: Amazon peoples, the natives presented would, in real life, make fast work of four Marines, let alone archeologists. A flawed effort; which I would recommend avoiding. Unfortunately, many people will be drawn to the striking cover, and will miss the obvious defects.



WHAT ? IF

Fighter Command Tactics

SSI has updated **Fighter Command** to prevent the Germans from launching zero-plane raids which show up as 100-plane strikes on British radar, but some quirks still remain in the program which can be turned to your advantage.

Planes which are assigned to patrol missions do not begin to use up their endurance until they actually arrive on station. This means that squadrons which are assigned to 13group, even if they are on two-hour call, can be on-station over the cliffs of Dover at 0600, and can remain there for their entire endurance. Of course, if the Luftwaffe does not launch any early morning raids these planes will have to return to base without having engaged the enemy, but the 10, 11, or 12 group aircraft which would otherwise have been grounded for refueling will now be available to maintain the patrols.

Along these same lines, British fighters on Runway Alert still enjoy their full endurance regardless if they wait 10 or 110 minutes before taking off. Although Runway Alert is too draining on morale to be used frequently, the above anomaly allows this status to be effectively used to provide the earliest possible intelligence on incoming raids.

For example, by occasionally placing one Spitfire squadron at Lympne and another at Hawkinge, a rapid reaction force is still available to intercept and identify incoming raids even if previous



enemy fighter sweeps have engaged RAF airborne patrol squadrons. (Spitfires transferable for these forward bases since they are the only British planes which can come close to holding their own in a dogfight with an ME-109 sweep.) Place these forward-based Spitfires on **Cockpit Alert** at the start of the turn. If your radar line is still intact, leave them in this status until incoming raids are actually sighted. Don't immediately switch to Runway Alert as soon as the computer notifies you of enemy activity — you could be tricked by a clever German who makes his first raid from Luftflotte 5 and then waits two-and-a-half hours to hit your forward bases while the planes are trapped on the ground refueling from their runway alert.

If your radar line is damaged, you will have to judge your opponent and make your best guess as to when to switch to

runway alert. At any rate, **NEVER** put planes in runway alert at the start of a turn; the Germans can arrive at any time, so an inopportune Luftwaffe raid can catch large portions of your air force exposed on the ground.

Despite enemy fighter sweeps, these forward Spitfires will be able to intercept and identify incoming raids at the earliest possible moment, often over the Channel. Such information will afford planes based further inland a chance to get airborne, and they can attack the German bombers before they hit their targets.

Tom Dworschak

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Greetings from your Book Review Editor, Gary Smith

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Reviews should roughly follow the formats shown here and be typed, double-spaced, and roughly 400 to 800 words in length. At \$12.00 a printed page, **The V.I.P.** will therefore pay about \$6-8 per review. Send copy to:

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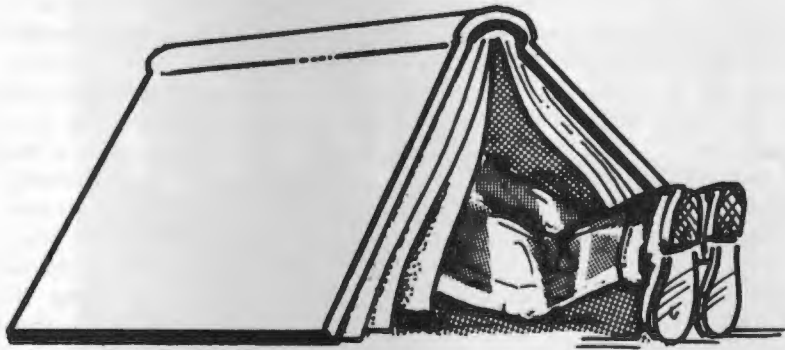
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UNDER COVER



A SELECTION OF PREVIEWS AND REVIEWS

Shadow Lord

by Lawrence Yip

Published by Pocket Books, 279 pp.

Copyright 1985 \$3.50

Review by W.A. Salieri.

Shadowlord, the 22nd book of the popular Pocket Books STAR TREK series, takes us from the USS Enterprise and goes back to the curiously arranged, 17th Century style planet Angria. Prince Vikiam, eighth in line as emperor, has spent years learning how to guide his home world into the modern 23rd century. He is going home to advise his father on the proper way to fit into the Federation, with Mr. Spock going along to help fix Angrian star charts, while Sulu accompanies because the Prince likes to fence. The Enterprise and everyone else are going off on a medicine delivery chore, and not due back until the last chapter.

Once on the planet, we are presented with various anti-progressive factions who do not want any off-world help or technology. Uniting, the factions stage a massacre, killing all royal claimants except Vikram. Our intrepid duo (Spock and Suju), along with various native Angerians, help the Prince to safety, win over some natives to "progress," and only slightly violate the Prime Directive repeatedly in accomplishing their job. Right on schedule, the Enterprise and crew show up, and everybody is left wiser, with hope for the future. Sorry, no phasers, photons, Klingons or dueling starships in this mission.

Alas, Shadowlord only makes us wonder idly if Prince Vikiam gets to be Emperor or not. Any sort of subversive, underground, anti-progressive forces that might exist are glossed over and we are shown that one final battle among 36,000 men planet-wide will decide the whole issue. All the problems are tidied up, with Jim and the crew off on another adventure. Not the worst of the series but certainly not in the top five, ShadowLord is really only recomendable to those of us wanting a complete set of this ever-growing series.

As for the narrative style, the plotting is basic, there is no real suspense in the story telling, and no character development per se takes place. In fact, Spock really has no part in this book, the character could easily be omitted and replaced by a native Angiran of some wisdom. The knack in writing stories in series such as these is to make the journey between the start and finish interesting and colorful. I.e., we know all about the list of main characters, we know they can't die and we know they are all going to be together at the end. Given this, the trick is to produce a story where the situation and the characters interaction with it exist and sustain the interest.

Air War South Atlantic

By Jeffery Ethell and Alfred Price
Macmillan Publishing, 1985
232 pages.

Reviewed by Gary E. Smith.

About forty books have been published on the 1982 Falklands War, of which, I'd say, this is one of the best four. Utilizing actual interviews with over 90 participants from both sides, AWSL gives a chronological view of the air combat from each side's points of view. Tactics, planning, honest evaluations of both combatants (by both combatants), losses; the research is all here and very well presented.

Truly, one of the books most useful features is to confirm, by delving into Argentine source materials, that, as in every war, initial loss claims are not to be relied on. Particularly, the British claim more aircraft shot down than the authors can reasonably account for. It seems the British and Argentine counts match near perfect regarding all Harrier kills, and losses before and after the San Carlos invasion days of May 21-25.

It is during this time frame that one sees bogus multiple claims loom large. Now, with several ships and shore AA weapons all firing at the same few target aircraft, multiple claims are inevitable. The Rapiere SAM, given 14 confirmed kills, is relegated 1 by Ethell and Price, for example.

The only flaw is an over-reliance on the authors' word. Too often, phrases such as "our research" was done with what specific materials. Conclusions they base on "hard" evidence are presented without the interviews, squadron logs, ships logs or maintenance reports to go with them! The book lists interviews in a separate section, and the text only mentions some ship logs. Beyond this, there are no certifications of authority. You either trust the authors' conclusion, or you don't. I do trust them, but I have questions only a certificate of authority could console me on.

Therefore, I found **Air War South Atlantic** to be both a very readable and valuable addition to my library, and one that should prove so to both researchers and interested readers alike.

Delta Force.

By Col. Charlie Beckwith and Donald Knox.

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 1984 276 pp.

Reviewed by Don Towers

Billed as the story of "The U.S. Counter-Terrorist Unit and the Iran Hostage Rescue Mission," **Delta Force** lives, unfortunately up to its billing. Touted as the inside story on the failed U.S. rescue attempt to save the U.S. embassy hostages, what one actually gets is less, in the guise of more. This is really the story of one Col. Beckwith, the rescue mission commander.

The first third of the book is background on Col. Beckwith, his times in the SAS (Special Air Services) and his tour of duty in Vietnam. One presumes that this information is here as background to show us how and where things will evolve in the remainder of the book. Frankly, if your interest is the subject promised to be covered by the title of the book, the opening third is not relevant, and could have at least been compressed into a shorter space.

The second third of this book concerns the founding and rocky beginnings of Delta Force itself. This section is much more interesting in that it points out two important facts about the military that need to be brought forward and dealt with. First, that too much jealousy and interdepartmental bickering occurs in our military. Given that Delta Force (a trained anti-terrorist force) is to be created, nobody beyond the founders is interested in helping or lending aid. Potential recruits are not even allowed to attempt to qualify! Even requests for equipment, job clarification and embassy information were ignored, left hanging or just refused.

The second problem is that, even through sanctioned, Delta Force was involved in Army politics. Other commando type units (Rangers, Airborne) either at times want to smother Delta Force and extinguish it, or else incorporate it into their own group. It can't seem to exist on its own, even though the Joint-Chiefs wanted it that way. Soldiers playing politics is not an encouraging image for the U.S. Army, and one they should not want to promote.

The final third of Delta Force deals with the actual organization, training and undertaking of the mission itself. As an overview, told by the mission commander, it is very good on the story angle. If you are interested in the

technical side of the mission, however, the "Order of Battle," so to speak, you'll be searching in vain. There isn't even a diagram of the embassy, the focal point of the entire mission!

Therefore, Delta Force is a clear disappointment for those researching the actual event the book ostensibly covers. As a tale told about Col. Beckwith and his life, the book does have some merits. At best, however, this book will only whet the appetite of its readers to dig more deeply into the subject.

My Enemy, My Ally

A Star Trek Novel by Diane Duane

Published by Pocket Books

Reviewed by Bob MacClean

Copyright 1984 \$2.95

I have to admit that when I first saw Diane Duane's most recent attempt at Star Trek fiction on the shelf, I was reluctant to lay out the \$2.95 cover price. I recalled the oath I had taken after mercifully completing her first epic, "The Wounded Sky", not to further subsidize her writing career. The painful memories of the story came back to haunt me. Memories of how our space traveling heroes accompanied by a spider scientist, who was having pangs of guilt (and maybe indigestion) about having just eaten her most recent and unfortunate spider husband, set out to save the universe. The pain in my stomach increased as we came to discover the problem turned out to be a baby God, who was having an identity crisis and was tearing up the very fabric of space. Not having any fabric of space around, I, instead, tore up the book.

Being the Trekkie that I am (and somewhat of a masochist), I finally relented.

Duane didn't disappoint my pessimistic prejudgement, either, being still true to form as I discovered the first chapter was written mostly in Romulan. Unfortunately, I am not as well versed in Romulan as the book's Romulan commander named ail i-Mhiesan t'Rilailieu (how would you like to be the unfortunate host introducing her at a Romulan cocktail party?). Ail, it turns out is rather upset about the fact that her superiors are

conducting experiments that require large amounts of Vulcan brain tissue (raise one eyebrow). Being the moral and honorable Romulan she is, she solicits the help of the Enterprise in putting an end to these dreadful experiments (raise the other eyebrow).

The actual mainspring which sets the plot in motion, (brain stealing) is as farfetched a notion as seen in a long time (my pardon, Dr. Frankenstein). Romulans, kidnapping Vulcans, removing selected pieces of brain, implanting said pieces into Romulan brains, and chemically treating the altered Romulan brains for a short while, so that, when done, we get Romulans who have such greatly expanded mind-meld powers that they can, from battle distances and through shields, cause enemy bridge crews to cease shooting and lower shields. A new ultimate battle weapon!

Admittedly, the story line itself became "fascinating" after a while. The interaction between the Romulans aboard the Enterprise and the Federation crew was very good. The story *did* lead up to climatic conclusion (when it wasn't being overly verbose and taking itself too seriously). There were even some fun tactical items concerning Romulan Dreadnoughts and an attempted takeover of the Enterprise by Romulan boarding parties. Though the book became a bit laborious in spots, I feel it is worth the effort and was all in all an enjoyable time. Duane's style, at least, has indeed progressed light years and, therefore, deserves a second chance.

Also, for those of you into FASA or Task Force Games' Star Trek systems, you may get some ideas out of *My Enemy, My Ally* for scenarios you may care to develop.





"FIRST CLASS" GAMING GLOBAL SUPREMACY

— A review by M. Anderson

Published By: Schubel & Son
Retail Price: Flexible but High
Game Type: Correspondence (PBM)

Game Scaled: Operational
Subject Matter: Post WWII Earth
Playing Time: Years (Monthly Turns)

Comments: **Global Supremacy** is a correspondence game in which each player assumes absolute control over a nation, territory, or group of territories in post-holocaust Earth. The game is oriented towards combat, but an abstract economics system is used for unit production.

Global Supremacy can be summarized by the following sentence: "Each player builds an armed force and attacks his neighbors." That is about all there is to the game. Some players will try to build up their economies (most can't afford to), while others build their armies, and the rest attempt to do both. All units are individual planes, ships, and battalions of U.S. designations. Foreign makes are assumed to be equivalents of the U.S. units. Combined arms is emphasized to such an extent that even the combat (the main, if not only, thrust of the game) becomes stale very shortly.

I took the position of Iran in GS game number 15. I was doing quite well, especially because my neighbors were dropping out of the game constantly. I, too, was forced to resign because of the game's major flaw: It is just too expensive to play. If one is not willing to pay AT LEAST \$20.00 per month to

"feed the 'Son' god," then he will be unable to fully participate. The game REQUIRES \$6.00 per month per player BEFORE the player takes any actions. An ADDITIONAL \$7.00 expenditure is necessary if one wishes to both produce and move units. Each attack one makes (or suffers) costs one \$3.50, and every time that a player wishes to take actions not covered by the rules will cost him/her AT LEAST an additional \$3.50. The player turnover rate is excessive.

The combat system is supposed to be very advanced and complicated. Players, however, are not allowed to know too many of the details. This, as well as some of the battle reports that I have received, lead me to believe that some, if not all, of the battles are resolved by GM assumptions, rather than some intricate combat system. Also, diplomacy is generally non-existent (the game seems flooded with spastic six-year olds who just "wanna fight somethin'" and refuse negotiation).

Many countries just make attacks with no real willingness to conquer. All of Afghanistan's neighbors in game 15 (like me) were constantly subject to light airstrikes (which cost each of us \$3.50 apiece). This eventually led to my resignation. If Afghanistan was run by a player, I guess his theory was to make us spend so much money that we would drop out of the game and that he would conquer our then immobile territories. This, in my opinion, is blatant poor sportsmanship. If the referee was running Afghanistan, that's a complete lack of ethical business practices.

I don't make this review because of "sour grapes." As I stated previously, I was doing quite well, and I knew the fee schedule before I entered the game. I think that **Global Supremacy** has a sufficient number of good points, especially if one is, financially, very well off. I feel, however that most PBM players can either find a better bargain elsewhere, or should wait for a less-ambitious effort.

Category	% of Success		Category Weight		Weighted Grade
Playability	75%	x	.3	=	22%
Realism	75%	x	.2	=	15%
Simplicity	45%	x	.2	=	09%
Presentation	30%	x	.1	=	03%
Play Balance	30%	x	.1	=	03%
Solo Play Suitability	100%	x	.1	=	10%
TOTAL RATING					62% (D-)

JUNTA

Reissued by West End Games
Complexity: Simple
Graphics: Adequate
Playability: excellent
reviewed by; W.A. Saleiri

Very few games are as aptly summed up by the box art as is **Junta**. Although this review is only 500 words, the box illustration well tells a full 1,000. **Junta** is a game of diplomacy, intrigue, pay-offs, corruption, and murder at a speed of about one "revolution" per hour. Supposedly occurring in the banana republic of your choice, the players (from 4 to 7, although best played by at least 5) are all officials of the government, the winner is the official able to (in the game's fine corrupt and cynical manner) deposit the most money into his or her Swiss bank account!

Setting yourself up for the best overall income, of course, is what produces all of the fun and action. The hand of event cards dealt to each player may give him votes in the Chamber of Deputies, street mobs, assassins, control of certain events or political factions, and other interesting and useful tools with which to influence the game in one's favor.

The game begins by the players electing El Presidente For Life (however long that may be) who then assigns the other players their cabinet or military posts, to wit: 1 Minister of the Interior and "Internal Security", 3 Army Brigade Commanders, 1 Admiral of the Navy and 1 Air Force commander, some of which are powerful (Army and Minister) and some of which are only supportive (Air Force and Navy). El Presidente then draws 8 money cards (with a value of from 1 to 3 million pesos). The total of these cards is "The Budget," which El Presidente secretly tallies and announces how it will be divided among the other players (keeping unannounced portion for himself). Ah, the smell of corruption!

The budget is then voted on in the Chamber of Deputies and, if passed (enough of the right palms were greased or promises made), the budget is doled out as El Presidente has described. If the budget is voted down, the Minister of the Interior may "seize the Chamber" and force its passage at gunpoint, should there be no successful coup in the ensuing phase of the game. It is the arbitrary nature of the budget and job assignments of El Presidente that often force the "have not" players to initiate the "game within the game," the coup.

After the assassins have cleared the streets of the capital, any player with an excuse may begin a coup to topple El Presidente by force. The combat and movement systems are



clean and simple with lots of "cheering on the dice," but ultimate success hinges on key allies, continual diplomacy, good cardplay, treachery, and timing. The object of the coup, by the way, is to be in the faction (either loyal or rebel) controlling 3 of the 5 key places within the Capital (such as the bank, radio station, or the Presidential Palace).

Following a coup, either the victorious rebels elect their own new El Presidente, or the victorious El Presidente is confirmed. Then the ceremonial victim goes before the firing squad and is automatically assassinated. (Don't worry, he'll be back next turn!). And so the fun and double-dealing continue until the proverbial "money runs out."

Playing time for **Junta** is variable, with an average game lasting in the 2-3 hour range, depending on the number of coups. It is one of the most fun "beer and pretzels" variety games you can have on your shelf, and a necessary addition to any game library, and certainly one of West End's "best ins."

AN **Assault**
Series Module



REINFORCEMENTS

Players Notes by

John D. Burt

REINFORCEMENTS is the first module - as opposed to game - of GDW's ASSAULT series, adding more units and no new rules. The module essentially completes the U.S. and Soviet arsenals, expected to see action in an European conflict, that were started in ASSAULT and BOOTS AND SADDLES.

Included in the 11 new Soviet units is an armored battalion utilizing old T-62 tanks, and a mechanized infantry battalion using BTR-60s. Both vehicles are markedly inferior to the newer Soviet equipment, not to mention their U.S. counterparts. As with the first two games, GDW continues to provide the tools to use and compare armored fighting vehicle types on both sides - it is perhaps the best aspect of the game series. The new Soviet units also include a Desant (mechanized parachute) regiment of three equipped with BMDs. These units can be airlifted or driven into the fray and allow a head to head comparison with the U.S. airmobile infantry, the 9th Battalion, now equipped with some ground transport.

On the U.S. side, a fourth company is provided to bring the M113 equipped

3rd Battalion into compliance with the Army of Excellence organization. Ground transport has been added for the anti-tank platoons of the airmobile 9th Battalion (it would appear you can either use the jeeps or the leg carried counters, depending on how the battalion was brought into action). Elements of an air defense unit are provided, armed with M741 Vulcans and M730 Chapparals. Two troops of M3 Bradley equipped infantry platoons are attached to the 5th Squadron as ground support for its helicopters, introduced in BOOTS AND SADDLES. Finally, there are two additional squadrons: The 11th combat support, equipped with UH-1H Hueys, and the 12th air cavalry, armed with Kiowas and Blackhawks. these U.S. units are exactly what the module title states - reinforcements. They add versatility, if not variety, to the U.S. arsenal.

There are no new rules introduced in REINFORCEMENTS. The major discussion, other than the excellent report on equipment types and national tactics, is on assigning a point value to each of the units and subunits in the ASSAULT series. For example, the U.S. 1st Armored Battalion (M1 Abrams) rates at 856 points with each company worth 160; The Soviet 1st Armored

Battalion (T-80s) is rated at 324 points with each company worth 96. This is a "design-your-own" with a major qualification. GDW states that the ratings are only a rough guide to the units and are to be used for getting a handle on victory modifiers - NOT to establish a competitive scenario! A third party could use the system to design scenarios, but not the people involved. This is a realistic, honest appraisal that gamers should abide by - I commend GDW heartily for the warning. There is one new scenario. The Soviets are surrounded by U.S. forces and are trying to break out. It's an interesting tactical problem that uses all four ASSAULT maps and, I presume, the force levels from the first two games. The only hitch is that the units included in REINFORCEMENTS are not included in those force levels and would have to be written in a la the point system mentioned above.

In summary, REINFORCEMENTS adds some new battalions and squadrons to complete the U.S. and Soviet arsenals, with no new wrinkles on the game system. If you've already been hooked on the ASSAULT series, get this one.

From the Trenches:

Even now, as I am soaking in the glory of the dubious honor of becoming **The V.I.P. of Gaming's** first board wargame editor, I have been instructed from our imperious Commanding Editor, Gary Smith, to write for you, our wargaming readers, an editorial column for this section of the magazine. Since this area of **The V.I.P.** is ours (yours and mine, fellow wargamer), it is only proper to pick your brain and find out what you'd like to see.

In truth, reviews we will always need, and the game review article in this magazine has more details on that. Information on the latest games and "collectors item" games is particularly useful.

It is this magazine's philosophy to focus on short reviews, new scenarios, and interesting variants. This sounds like fun to me, and hopefully to you as well. I think we all enjoy adding a little variety (i.e. variants and scenarios) to our favorite or enjoyable "forgotten" games collecting dust on our shelves. How we can best support each other might be as follows:

Remember when you first got that new wargame that you were all enthused to play? Remember all the time you spent over the rules and then playing the game? Now, think back to the ideas you wrote down on paper about it. A new scenario, maybe, or a variant idea you had, perhaps. Nothing can compare with the ideas of an enthused gamer when his mind is applied to being creative within a game, so...

If this has ever happened to you, if you have notes from your current or past favorite game, then its time to dust them off, clean them off and shoot them to me, Alan Emrich, c o this magazine. It would be great to see wargame articles for today's favorites, as well as ones that would get a collector to dust off a forgotten game and try a new variant for it.

We're all doing this for fun anyway. Help us share in the fun by sharing your ideas for variants and scenarios.

—Alan Emrich,
board wargames Editor.

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CALL YOUR FRIENDS!



Guerrilla Risk and Other Variants

Henry C. Robinette

Sometimes it can be very frustrating to play Parker Brothers' Risk especially if you are dealt bad territories, or if you don't deal the cards, you rolled too low and had the last pick of the choice territories. If you have had this happen to you and then went on to be the last player in the round, you probably found the other players had grabbed the easy continents of Australia and South America before you even got started. Wouldn't you like an equal chance to take a continent early in the game? By playing the Guerrilla Risk variant you will have a chance to put your armies wherever you want them and you will have a chance to take a continent regardless of when you play in the round.

Guerrilla Risk

Instead of starting the game with only one color's armies in a territory, you start the game with everybody's armies in every territory. Each territory will have at least one army from each player and each player will have an extra ten armies that he can put anywhere. Play begins by rolling to see who goes first. Each player receives three armies and places them. A player cannot take a territory until he has eliminated all the armies in it other than his own; only after he is the sole occupier of a territory can he take a card. Adjacent territories cannot be attacked until the player is

the sole occupant of the territory from which the attack is to be made. The adjacent territory cannot be taken until all the opposing armies in it are eliminated. However, transfers may be made from territory to territory as long as the transferring player has at least one army in the territory to which the transfer is to be made.

Customized Risk Map Variants

Have you ever wanted to attack Fortress Australia from your base in South America but could not because you lacked a territory in Asia and could not afford to fight your way through everybody else's armies? Well, why not give your artistic sensibilities free reign as you modify your board to make it possible to attack Australia from South America? You can draw in Easter Island and make it part of South America. Then connect it to Eastern Australia and Argentina. You can add Hawaii to North America and connect New Guinea to the Western U.S. via Hawaii. But why stop there? You can add the Falklands (or Malvinas) to South America so that South Africa could be linked to Argentina. Just because it has nothing but ice and rocks is no reason to exclude the continent of Antarctica from the map. After all Greenland is on the map isn't it? Antarctica should have at least two territories — East and West. Connect Argentina and South Africa to East Antarctica and Eastern Australia and Western Australia to West Antarctica. The continent of Antarctica is worth one extra army a turn. The fantasy gamers may want to add the Hollow Earth along the north edge of the board, but I won't go into that.

Casino Risk

The more sporting players may want to play Risk for both fun and profit. This can be done by requiring the players to

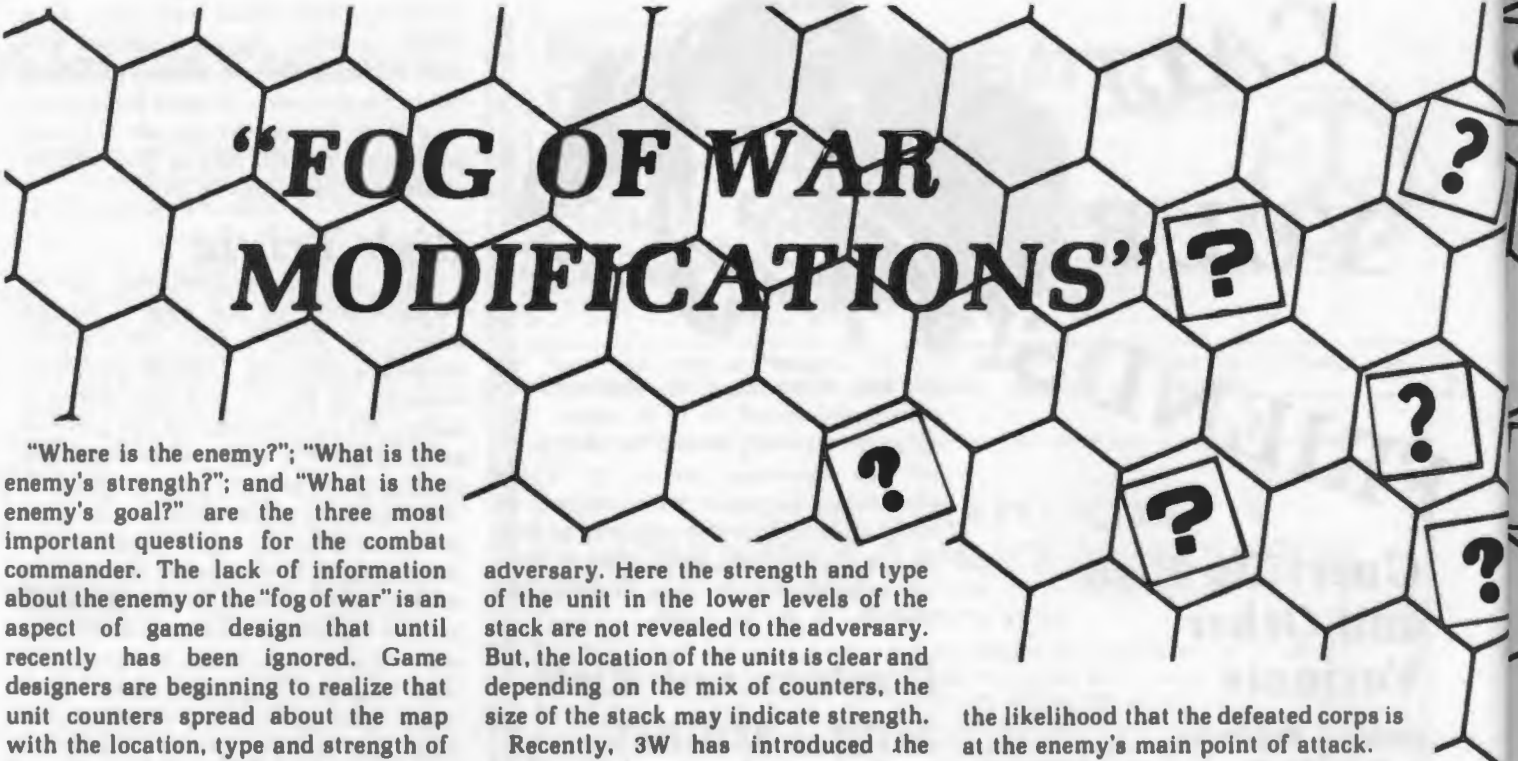
purchase their armies each turn. At a penny or nickle per army the pot will soon add up. However, Casino Risk may not be for everyone. In some localities it may even be against the law. If your game gets raided, maybe you will be allowed to play Risk in jail.

Risk Trivia

Risk is an international game. Perhaps some of you own a foreign edition of Risk. I own the German version of the game. The name has been changed to Risiko and the territory names are in German, but the game is pretty much the same as the American version. Still there are some differences. The cards are plain white on one side and printed on the other. And like the old fashioned Risk of years ago that we used to love so well, it has the small painted wooden blocks for armies. You can still build little walls and pyramids with the armies if you want to rub it into your opponents' noses. Try doing that with the plastic armies sometime. Anyway, for the benefit of you trivia buffs here are the names of the territories as they are listed on the Risiko board:

Alaska, Mackenzie-Yukon, Keewatin-Baffin Land-Gronland, Alberta-Brit. Columbia, Manitoba-Ontario, Quebec-Neufundland, Weststaaten, Oststaaten, Mittelamerika, Kolumbien-Venezuela, Peru-Bolivien, Brasilien, Chile-Argentinien, Island, Grossbritannien, Spanien-Frankreich, Mittel-europa, Italien-Balkan, Norwegen-Schweden-Finnland, Kola-Karelien-Komi-Weissrussland-Ukraine-Georgien, Nordafrika-Westafrika-Ghana-Nigeria-Kamerun, Kongo-Angola, Rhodesien-Sudafrikanische Union, Madagaskar, Sudan-Abessinien-Kenia, Kleinasien-Arabien-Iran, Kasachstan-Turkestan, West-Sibirien, Mittel-Sibirien, Jakutien, Chabarowsk-Kamschatka, Japan, Irkutsk-Amur Land, Mongolei-Mandschurei, Sinkiang-Tibet-Inner-china, Pakistan-Indien, Hinterindien, Indonesien, Neu-Guinea, Tasmanland-Nord-territorium-Westaustralien, and Queensland-Neu-sud-Wales-Sudaustralien.

As you can see having more than one name in a single territory can get confusing and calling out the names with each attack could even get hilarious. Try three from Komi to Kasachstan or three into Jakutien from Chabarowsk sometime. However you spell it, Risk is a good game and I hope these variants will add to your enjoyment of it.



“FOG OF WAR MODIFICATIONS”

“Where is the enemy?”; “What is the enemy’s strength?”; and “What is the enemy’s goal?” are the three most important questions for the combat commander. The lack of information about the enemy or the “fog of war” is an aspect of game design that until recently has been ignored. Game designers are beginning to realize that unit counters spread about the map with the location, type and strength of the units clearly visible to the opposing player is not a realistic simulation. In actual combat, the commander is constantly groping for information. Indeed, most combat operations are combat patrols to find the enemy’s location, strength and disposition. Combat success or disaster depends on how well the commander penetrates the “fog of war” and acts to attack or defend based on superior information.

This article will discuss two subjects. First, some games that simulate the “fog of war” and second, some player modifications for existing games to simulate the “fog of war”.

Some game designers have attempted to simulate the “fog of war”. For example, Patton (SPI) has variable strength counters which are haphazardly selected by the owning player at the time of combat. This uncertainty means that neither player knows the combat ratios prior to actual combat. While it is true that the combat commander never knows exactly how strong his unit is, the seasoned combat commander has a more precise view of strength than is simulated by a haphazard selection of a unit strength counter. The most significant disadvantage of the variable strength counter system is that the location of the units and the types of units are visible to the adversary.

There are numerous games where stacking is part of the play. Stacking conceals information from the

adversary. Here the strength and type of the unit in the lower levels of the stack are not revealed to the adversary. But, the location of the units is clear and depending on the mix of counters, the size of the stack may indicate strength.

Recently, 3W has introduced the double-blind system where each player has a separate map and the counters for his own forces but doesn’t have the location or strength of the other player’s forces. For example, West Wall (3W) employs this system. In West Wall an operation must be announced when it will take place in an area controlled or influenced by the opposing player. Thus the non-phasing player knows that something is happening and the enemy is near. The non-phasing player then has an opportunity to act. Depending on the action of the non-phasing player, combat may result that discloses the location and strength of all units involved. The system is quite realistic but requires a little practice for play to run smoothly.

A good computer simulation of the “fog of war” is Simulations Canada’s Fall Gelb. This is a corps level game of the Nazi invasion of eastern Europe in the spring of 1940. In Fall Gelb the player only has information about his own units. Any information about the opposing player has to be developed as a result of combat or aerial reconnaissance. During play the computer provides operational results. These results have to be watched and evaluated for additional information. For example, a corps routed from a good defensive position has been attacked by a substantial enemy force. This result probably has disclosed the enemy’s axis of advance. If there is enemy air activity in the area of the defeat this confirms

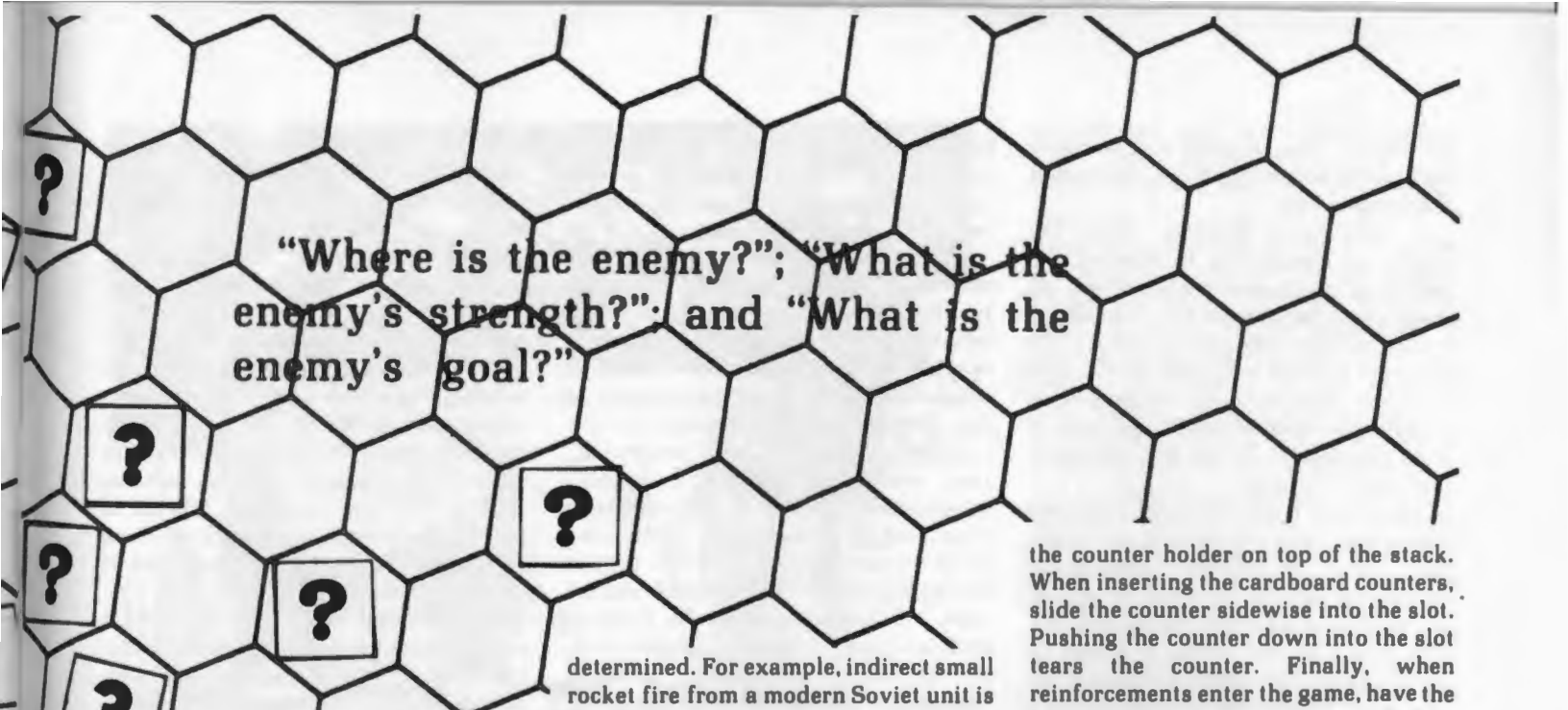
the likelihood that the defeated corps is at the enemy’s main point of attack.

In addition to games that have the “fog of war” as part of the game there are game play actions that simulate the lack of information. Simply turning the counters upside down hides the strength and type of unit. Also, mode or blank counters can be placed on top of the counters in play to hide the information. But in both situations the counter location is still obvious.

For groups, clubs or organized competition, the game controller system provides an excellent simulation of the realistic situation. Here the opposing players are constantly working to acquire information. Some games, for example, **NATO Division Commander** (SPI) provide controller rules. Those players who have played some of the more elaborate fantasy games or miniature simulations are familiar with the controller system. For those players that are unfamiliar with the controller system, the following outline is provided. With a little tailoring, the controller system is applicable to any game.

1. **Controller.** An umpire or controller is required. This person is not a player and the controller must be impartial and thoroughly familiar with the game rules.

2. **Game Equipment.** A minimum of two game maps and counter sets are required. Each player has his own map and places and moves his own counters. The controller has a complete second set of counters and as the first player



“Where is the enemy?”; “What is the enemy’s strength?”; and “What is the enemy’s goal?”

develops intelligence, the controller places the second player’s counters on the first player’s map and vice versa. A third map and third set of unit counters for the controller’s use or for spectators is helpful but not required.

3. **Player Location.** Each player is located or screened so that neither player can see the other player’s map.

4. **Information Provided by the Controller.** The quantity and quality of information provided by the controller to the players is based on the following events or operations.

a. **Line of Sight.** This concept implements the military axiom that if the enemy cannot be seen then the enemy cannot be engaged. Sighting can be relatively simple with distance and blocking terrain the only factors considered or more sophisticated with the addition of weather, camouflage, time of day, type of unit to be acquired (vehicle size or movement status) or acquisition means used by the acquiring unit (electronics or optics). Realism is enhanced because in a tactical simulation each player must perform reconnaissance, patrol, and establish listening posts, observation posts and early warning positions. When the acquiring unit has line of sight to the enemy’s previously undisclosed unit, the undisclosed unit is revealed.

b. **Combat Activity.** An attack reveals the aggressor and the defender. For indirect attacks, the type or ordinance and volume of fire can reveal the general location of the attacking unit. Also, the type and size of the unit can be

determined. For example, indirect small rocket fire from a modern Soviet unit is from a multiple rocket launcher battalion (MRL). This unit is organic to the Soviet motorized rifle division (MRD) and MRL range is 9,180 meters. Even the results of indirect fire provide intelligence. When there are secondary explosions, the location of ammunition, POL, or combat units is revealed.

c. **Specific Intelligence Gathering Operations.** If the game rules do not provide for aerial observation, signal intelligence, or informants, these factors can be introduced into most tactical game systems.

The disadvantages to the controller system are that it requires a nonplaying extra person, extra equipment and maps. Also, play is slower as the controller reveals unit disposition and other information to the opposing players. Finally, if complex intelligence, counterintelligence and deception rules are used, the “bookkeeping” can be burdensome.

An alternative to the controller system is the hidden counter system. As was discussed earlier, the counters can be covered or inverted. In addition, the counter holder can be used to conceal information. The counter holder is a plastic piece into which the unit counter is inserted. The plastic holder piece is snapped onto a hexagonal clear plastic base. If counter holders are going to be used, some suggestions are offered. First, stacking more than two high is cumbersome because the piece invariably falls over. Also, a four inch high piece of plastic looks silly on the map. The easy solution for multiple counter stacks is to use one or two counter holders on the base. Then put the rest of the counters on the map with

the counter holder on top of the stack. When inserting the cardboard counters, slide the counter sideways into the slot. Pushing the counter down into the slot tears the counter. Finally, when reinforcements enter the game, have the counters mounted in the counter holder and ready to play. This avoids the “time-out” for mechanical arrangements and keeps the reinforcements hidden from the adversary.

Whether counter holders or counter covers are used, the following changes need to be considered.

1. **Complexity** A choice must be made about the degree of sophistication for intelligence, counterintelligence and deception operations. The main choices are, will information be revealed as the result of a specific intelligence operation, that is, picking an area to be searched and the mode of observation, for example aerial overflight? Or, will randomly selected counters in a certain percentage or number be revealed as the game progresses? The first choice is more realistic and is easily implemented. The established game rules for line of sight implement part of the intelligence gathering function. The only change in play is that in addition to units moving to attack or defend, an operation should be added where units move to conduct reconnaissance. In actual military operations these functions are performed by cavalry, scouts, armored cavalry or combat patrols. Combat patrols vary in size and composition depending on: the length of the operation; distance to be travelled; terrain and obstacles; method of travel; degree of secrecy; quantity and quality of information sought; and anticipated enemy resistance. Where the game already has units that typically conduct combat intelligence, play can be changed slightly to allow the unit to move to contact, then disengage and

withdraw. Also, a small low strength unit can be added to perform the combat intelligence role.

2. Intelligence Results. After the degree of complexity is selected the following intelligence modifications are made using the game's existing rules.

a. Line of Sight. The game's line of sight rules are applied and when the counter is within line of sight, the counter is revealed by uncovering or removing it from the counter holder and placing it face up on the map.

b. Simulated Patrol Results. In games where the units are brigade or larger, the patrol or combat intelligence operations can be reflected by giving the moving unit a patrol radius in hexes. The length of the radius is based on terrain, game turn length and map scale. In a game where the smallest unit is a brigade, a hex is ten kilometers and a game turn is twelve hours, it would be reasonable to have a one hex search radius into obstructed terrain and a one or two hex search radius into unobstructed terrain and a one to two hex search radius into unobstructed terrain. Search operations may partially consume the searching unit's movement allowance. At the end of the search or intelligence phase all enemy units within the search radius are revealed and play continues.

c. Combat Activity. After combat, the counters are disclosed.

d. Specific Intelligence Operations. Patrolling by cavalry, scout or reconnaissance units was discussed above. In addition to these operations, specific intelligence operations are: aerial observation; signal intelligence (the electronic signals themselves or the interception of the signal for the information being transmitted); and informants. Aerial observation in modern warfare can be simulated by knowing the historical situation concerning air superiority, aerial reconnaissance doctrine and aerial capability of the opposing forces.

e. Deception can be simulated by allowing each player to establish a set number or percentage of "dummy" units.

The whole process of intelligence gathering is complex and unless a game is created to simulate the intelligence process itself, it is unlikely that the player will want to add detailed operational intelligence rules. As with the combat commander, what is important to the player is the information obtained, not the process

by which it is obtained. In most games, realism is enhanced simply by adding the intelligence gathering action and the results of the action.

There will be a tendency when making modifications for the intelligence process to provide more information than is obtained in combat operations. Except in rare situations where an enemy courier is captured or the enemy code is broken, the intelligence process is a methodical, time consuming process by which information is slowly accumulated. Even where there are spectacular breakthroughs, as in the Ultra project during World War II, the combat results were not always spectacular because good information was disregarded, was not properly acted on or was not received by a commander in a position to act.

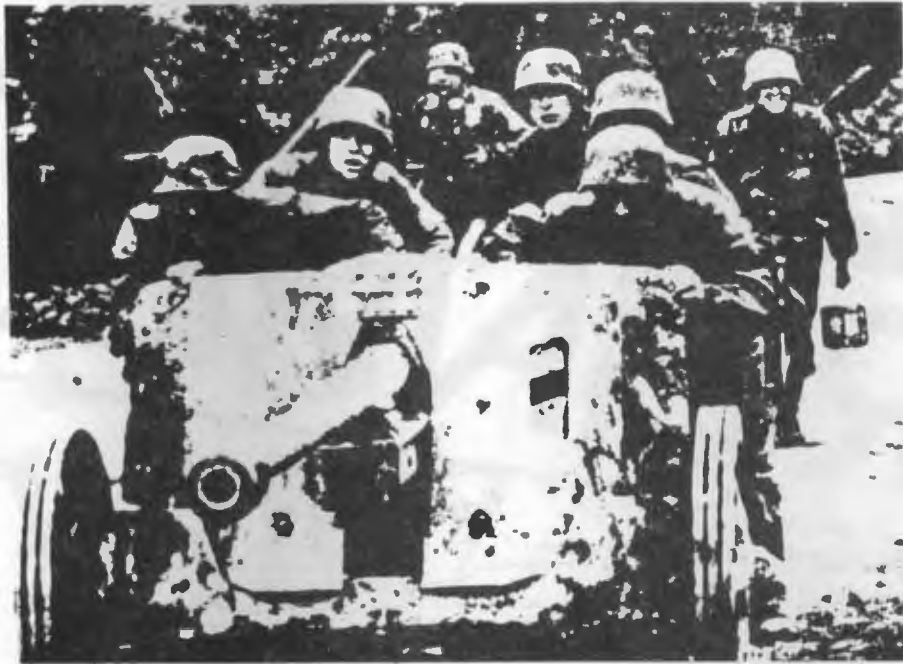
Probably the most important part of the intelligence process is knowing what the enemy should be doing. In the U.S. Army this is called "doctrinal templating". At the tactical level, the G-3 (operations) and G-2 (intelligence) have to know the doctrine of the enemy and the general tactical situation. To do this analysis the first step is for the player to determine which of his units or the enemy's units must be engaged and what terrain must be held to accomplish the mission. In most games these objectives will be expressed in victory conditions or points toward some level of victory. The next step is to evaluate hindering terrain factors, the



mobility and capability of the enemy units and to decide the best disposition for the enemy or the enemy's options. What the enemy "should do" is "doctrinal templating". For example, in modern combat simulations, Warsaw defensive doctrine is to defend in echelons. At each level, two units are forward with a third unit in the second echelon and a tank unit in reserve for a counterattack. So at the Army level, two motorized rifle divisions (MRD) are in the first echelon of an Army defense. A third MRD is the second echelon of the Army defense and a tank division (TD) is readied for the counterattack. If there is no tank division in the Army, generally a tank force will be formed out of the tank resources of the MRD because the overriding Warsaw principle is the offense. Also, the tank maximizes its combat potential in an offensive rather than a defensive role. Once the Warsaw options are identified then the NATO player must develop his own options to counter, minimize or capitalize on the enemy's disposition.

Where there are options, the limited information garnered during play confirms or refutes the enemy's choice of an option. The final step is an evaluation of the consequences of error. If the wrong choice is made are the consequences total defeat or minor damage? Generally the optimum solution avoids total defeat, provides opportunity for success and maintains combat capability to exploit the enemy's mistake. Where game design is good, and its just amazing the number of good games that there are, the off-the-wall, erratic or totally undoctrinal choice by the adversary is the first step in the adversary's total defeat. Creativity and surprise are still substantial assets. But, it is foolish not creative to attempt a tactical armor assault through a swamp. It is creative and may well achieve surprise if the game system has an engineer function which can be employed surreptitiously to overcome an obstacle and then conduct an assault through what was obstructed.

So the best intelligence is a player who knows the capabilities and limitations of the units, understands the objectives (victory conditions) and has a flexible plan which recognizes the enemy's options. And, good games can be even better and more realistically simulate actual combat when modifications are made to create the "fog of war".



END OF THE IRON DREAM CONSOLIDATED ERRATA Tyrone S. Bomba

THE MAP: The northern border of Bulgaria is missing. It runs along the R. Danube to the point where hexes G31, G32, and F31 all meet. From there it continues zig-zagging east to the point where F32, F33, and G33 meet.

Seven blocked hexsides are missing from the Alps. The hexsides shared by the following hex-pairs are blocked hexsides: L15/K15, L15/K16, L16/K16, K16/K17, K17/J17, K18/J17, I18/J18.

The "MTO" holding box situated in the Atlantic Ocean is, of course, actually the ETO holding box.

Hex J14 is considered a mountain hex; hex F12 is not.

Some of the blocked hexsides printed on the map, those in the Adriatic and Baltic areas, have the red block-line symbol shown as running across only a portion of the hexside. Those hexsides are all fully blocked—there is nothing like a partially blocked hexside.

GERMAN NAVAL MOVEMENT CHART: Add another die-roll modifier: +1 if a German unit is evacuating off a beach and is embarking from a hex next to an enemy unit.

TURN RECORD: Add the following: "Turn 4 — Jul II: OKH appears at Berlin, and the German must permanently remove one supply unit to get it. U.S. 13th corps." "Turn 21 — Apr I: German 18th Mtn. corps appears at the

German/Danish border (hexes AA19 or AA20). If neither of those hexes is German controlled, this unit never enters play." "Turn 22 — Apr II: Nothing." "Turn 23 — May I: End of Game."

UNITS: The 5S.S. Mtn corps should not have an "8" in its upper-left corner; it should have a "Y" there, as it is part of the initial Yugoslav garrison. The 58th panzer corps should have an "F" in its upper-left corner; it starts the game in southern France. There is no 59th panzer corps. The German 34th infantry corps and 1st Rumanian Army need dots in their upper-left corners. The 2nd Soviet Shock Army is missing its I.D. number on its front side; it does appear on the reverse side. The British 13th and P2 corps should have "I" in their upper left corners, as both those units start in Italy. The British 61st corps is actually the C1 corps. German FLAK corps should have "S" (not "5") as their attack factor.

CASES: 2.6—Add: GUD - Heinz Guderian. 3.3—In line 4 change "and" to read "all". 3.7—Change "59" panzer corps to "58". 5.0—Hitlerite player, step 4: line 2 change "German player" to read "German unit". 9.12—New case: Anglo-Allied units making invasions do not protect any zones of control until they

actually get onto the invaded coastal hex. Their zones of control then instantly extend normally. 10.10—Add: Roads in no way effect the status of zones of control. 10.11—Add: "If a hex contains any portion of the marsh, rough terrain or mountain symbols, then the entire hex is considered to consist of that type of terrain." 11.7—Delete the portion of the sentence beginning "and units mobile assaulting..." Use the procedures outlined in 18.22; mobile assaulters are not halved when attacking across water barriers; the defenders are doubled. 11.17—When occupying the defender's vacated hex with mobile assaulters, the attacker must make note of what his supply state in that new hex would be before resolving the assault. If occupying would place the assaulters out of supply, then one unit in the assaulting stack would have to stay behind, not participating in the assault, and thus hold the supply line open for the advancers. 14.9—A coastal hex is considered invadable if it has a white arrow pointing to it. 14.28—A city is a port if its name is printed in blue ink on the map. 14.39—No amphibious assault can be made into hexes H15 or G16. 15.8—Line 7, "does not negate" should read "does negate". 15.14—Line 4 in the parenthesis "the scenario" should read "the Let History Judge Scenario". 15.15—The first paragraph of this case got printed beneath that of 15.16. When reading, transpose it up to just above the paragraph starting "Any German unit on..." 15.16—Ostende (X11) is also a source of German fortress supply. 17.9—Line 1, between the words "hex" and "of" insert the word "empty". 18.1—Line 2, change the word "against" to "between". 18.16—Units with emergency general supply may advance after combat ignoring general-supply-line requirements. 18.19—Retreat stacked units one at a time. 20.3—Change to read "Non-Yugoslavian Soviet-controlled units may only enter Yugoslav clear terrain hexes and the 'Y' hexes". 25.7—Ljubljana also has no Volksturm. 26.1—The player with the most points is the winner, actually, not the winner. 27.5—German Freikorps may not enter play via Trieste or Ljubljana. 27.6—Add: NATO-liberated and A-bombed cities still do count for victory points. 27.9—Add: NATO units may not set up in Turkey, but they may enter those to clear terrain hexes in this scenario, and trace supply through them.

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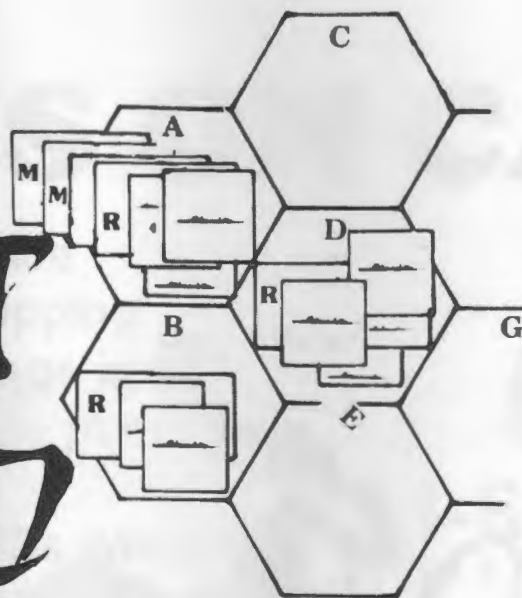
Variants by Gary Smith

3W's campaign game of the WWII Pacific theater is one that serious gamers should have in their collections and strive to play often. Conceived on the strategic level, EWR covers all the forces employed during 1941-45 with the map itself running from just east of the peninsula of India to Hawaii, and from Somoa to Dutch Harbor. All major class ships are represented individually (BB, CV, CA, CL) while CVCs, DD's and subs are represented in pairs or quads.

With the option to fight the entire campaign or just pick a scenario to try, the designers have taken some steps to give players different historical avenues to explore. Section SSV "What If" Optional Rules, gives each side eight possible/ probable options such as added island defense (US) or Civil Unrest in India (Japan). However, I have found, with a little research, even more "What If's" can be found. They are listed in what I would consider an ascending scale of complexity of use, most likely to least.

"What If" options - Japan

9. *Brother of Hosho*: In 1920-21, while Hosho was under construction, a sister



THE WAR IN THE PACIFIC 1941- 1945

ship was planned. To be named Shokaku, she was cancelled before work began due to the Washington Naval Treaty. Being so small (7500 tons standard), the Japanese might have kept her in their plans anyway. Make a duplicate Hosho counter, deploy in Japan at the start of the campaign game. If you want a name besides Shokaku, call her Toryu (Dragonslayer).

10. *Taiho Hurried*: CV Taiho was completed March 7, 1944, but she had been laid down in 1941 and launched in 1943, a somewhat slow early build period. Given a little forethought, she could have taken six months less time. Bring her out in October-December 1943.

11. *Shinano as CV*: Though she looks and walks like a duck, Shinano was designed as a supply and maintenance carrier, not as an attack carrier. Assuming the Japanese really wanted her as such, she would rate a 5A instead of the 2A assigned now.

12. *The Third Soryu*: Jane's Fighting Ships, through the late '30's persistently mentioned that another carrier (named Koryu) was in the works. While no such name appears in Japanese records, and during this time Shokaku and Zuikaku were building in secret, the Japanese did have several CV projects kicking around unofficially. Most were Soryu-

sized, though some came into the Rjuyo area. While Jane's basically was wrong, if we assume that they weren't then, depending on what the Japanese can argue for, take either the third Soryu as Koryu or the second Rjuyo. (Make duplicate counters accordingly.)

"What If" Options - US/ Commonwealth

9. *British Carrier*: When HMS Prince of Wales and Repulse sailed to Singapore, the carrier HMS Indomitable was to accompany them on their task. Unfortunately, she grounded in the West Indies while on trial maneuvers. Unable to repair her or find a replacement in time, Prince of Wales and Repulse sailed to their fate. Assuming she joined the fleet movement to Singapore, start her there on the initial set-up.

10. *B-17's to Manila*: One squadron of B-17E Flying Fortress bombers were scheduled to make the long flight from San Francisco to the Philippines in late November, 1941. However, unseasonal headwinds delayed the flight for nearly two weeks. The planes eventually made it to Hawaii, arriving just in time to be part of the Pearl Harbor fireworks. Granting normal flying conditions, add one extra army bomber Strength Point to the Manila total.

11. *Mitchells to Australia*: After the Doolittle raid, the B-25C Mitchells were to continue on to China, there to be part of the China Air Mission, or be deployed at a later date back to the Pacific theater. Assuming they made it to China, the plan deploys them back to Australia within 8 weeks. Assign them to Australia starting with the July-September 1942 turn.

12. *CLV Design*: Basically, this ship was a hybrid cruiser/carrier, armed with three triple turreted 6", and carrying 18-24 aircraft. While actually authorized by Congress, money was never appropriated for construction. Assuming it was, she would have served in a scouting role for the battlefleet, a perfect Pacific design. Particulars for EWR are:

	CVL	2A
	1	3
	1	F

reverse side is: E4/41
(Plus later additions as necessary)

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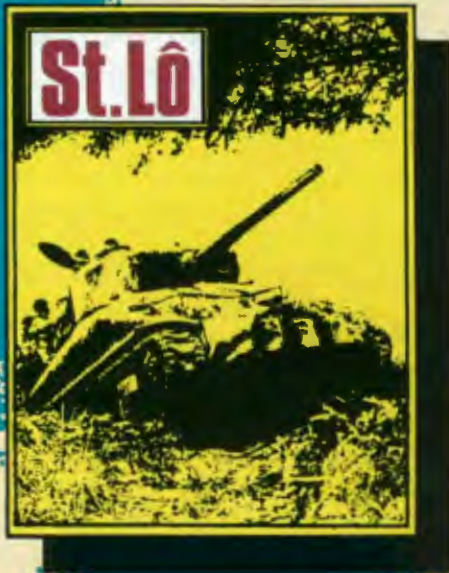
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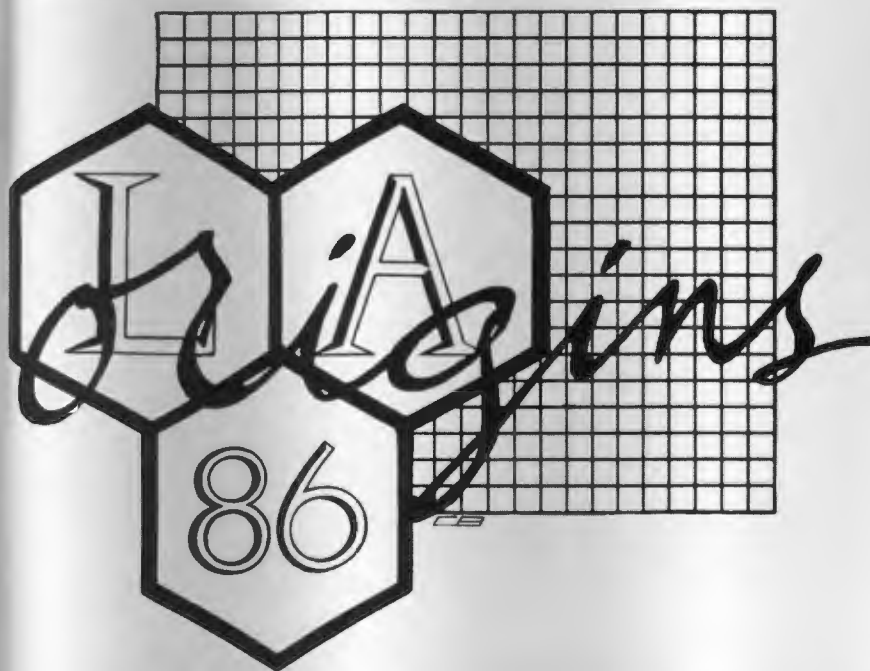
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