THE AVALON HILL
GENERAL
The Game Players Magazine

The AVALON HILL GENERAL is dedicated to the presentation of authoritative articles on the strategy, tactics, and variations of Avalon Hill's various board games. Historical articles are included only inasmuch as they provide useful background information on current Avalon Hill titles. THE GENERAL is published by the Avalon Hill Company solely for the educational edification of the general game aficionado. In the hopes of improving proficiency of play and providing services not otherwise available to the Avalon Hill game buyer.

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Note: all questions should be thoroughly diagrammed. No questions will be answered that are not accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Only questions regarding rule clarifications (not historical or design subjects) can be answered.

Articles for Publication, Letters to the Editor, Requests for Brochures, and Readers Response Page submissions: Editorial Dept. — Donald Greenwood


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IF YOU PLAN ON MOVING, you are certainly free to do so without giving us prior notice. We do ask that you notify our Mrs. Zomero ASAP. Please state your old and new address.

The AVALON HILL
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Contrary to what you may think, we do read all those letters & cards you keep sending in. Although they can't all be answered...probably far more so than their numbers should. Granted, a good many of them invoke fits of uncontrollable laughter and regularly fill our round files before pick-up day. However, they do all get read by at least 1 staff member, and as such constitute a sizable portion of my working day. The more interesting ones get rewarded by being pigeon-holed in the in-box of one designer or the other for a second read-through and possible reply. And of course there is the occasional gem which catches me in a receptive mood and ends up being the catalyst which starts us rolling on a new project. The Elite Club, the AREA rating system, ORIGINS, magnetic games, unit counter trays, Wargamer's Guidebooks, & countless games & improvements to the GENERAL all had their humble beginnings in the form of a letter from an Avalon Hill customer. As such we tend to place great store in reading our "nut mail" and anxiously await the kudos or brickbats which may follow the release of a new product. These letters are our first indication of how good or bad a job we've done on a new release and the collective sign of relief when the first batch comes in with more praise than anger is usually the main topic for a week's lunchtime discussions. I won't even mention the ridiculous lengths I must go through to keep the latest hobby zines from being pirated off my desk before I've had a chance to catch the reviews. The main thing is that we do care a great deal about how you perceive us and our products...and allow that to influence us far more than you should in a business sense. The occasional game buyer who comprises the majority of our business would probably be better served with simpler games, but invariably gets the shaft as we listen to the "hobby" instead.

Unfortunately for top management, we tend to listen with our hearts as opposed to our checkbooks. The seven R & D people who comprise the AH design staff have all grown up as part of the hobby—gamers first, and employees much later & only through some twist of fate, (usually having something to do with unemployment). We don't leave games at the office—they are our hobby and 40 hours at work is often followed by 30 more at play. Even Tom Shaw, the titular head of the design team, & the only one amongst us who can lay claim to never having been in the hobby by virtue of his role in starting it so long ago, is probably the most fierce of competitors across a gameboard of his choosing.

Fortunately for us, top management has no such limitations, and runs the company according to sound business principles; saving us from ourselves. They would probably be more effective on price hikes, design budgets, and overall company policy. Fortunately for them, they have no such illusions about their ability to judge games or gamers, and leave that aspect of the operation to us. Ah, the perfect marriage...a game company run by gamers within the limits imposed on them by businessmen.

But we're getting too far afield. Back to correspondence. Not all of it is praiseworthy. We're the first to admit we can't be all things to all people, so we have to settle for pleasing most of the people most of the time. This still leaves a lot of people unhappy in one form or another.

One such longtime customer is James Mueller, whose letter which follows will provide us with the vehicle for this month's philosophy.

Dear Mr. Greenwood,

This letter will, I hope, be a well thought out statement of my feelings and opinions. That is, I hope you do not consider it simply a list of "gripes" by a disgruntled wargamer.

While I will voice no complaints against The General, we are not supplied with any specific address for "the company," and, as The General is the organ of communication between the wargamers and the management, it is perhaps fitting that I send this letter to you.

Having started as a wargamer in 1961, and staying exclusively with Avalon Hill, I somehow get the opinion I have been "passed by" by the company in its expanding role in the wargaming community.

Being a confirmed capitalist, I can understand, and even applaud, Avalon Hill's expansion and acquisition policy. Some of my PBM opponents and I have, however, discussed over the past few months what we feel is the need of the "hard core" wargamers in the name of progress.

I do not fault you for your increase in prices for games, parts or services. I need only compare this month's food bill with last month's, or last year's, in order to see the reason for the increase.

After many years (and much hard work), I'm no longer a young man. I have reached a point in life when I feel the need of the "hard core" wargamers in the name of progress.

I do not fault you for your increase in prices for games, parts or services. I need only compare this month's food bill with last month's, or last year's, in order to see the reason for the increase.

On the subject of rules, I'm sure I'm not alone in thanking you for the new D-Day rules. Without changing the board or the counters, and without forcing me to purchase a "new" game, you have increased my enjoyment of an old classic.

Could we, who have been playing the "Classics" for years, hope for a real revision of the Afrika Korps rules? While I will limit my comments to AK, certainly some of them pertain to Spin the Wheel, Bulge, Waterloo, and other games.

The last "revision" was the addition of an appendix which did little to remove some of the real problems in the rules.

I am not an advocate of one set of rules for all games. Part of the fun in playing six or eight of the classics is trying to remember the

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The tactical concept that the main element of infantry combat was the small ten man group of soldiers, did not suddenly appear in WWII. Rather, it evolved slowly all the way up from the beginning of the gunpowder era. As weaponry improved, the destructive potential of small groups became greater, and it is very difficult to say "when" infantry tacticians began to forsake the concept of massed infantry in favor of "small grouped" infantry, but it started soon after Napoleon.

In the Napoleonic era, the classic use for the infantry was in ever larger "attack columns" which was, in essence, a solid battering ram of bodies. When the opponent had been properly prepared by artillery and maneuver, this battering block was generally successful. But this was the last golden era of the massed shock infantry attack. The British, by use of reverse slope and disciplined volley, made these attack columns a very dangerous proposition.

Nevertheless, in the writings of this era, and even before, we do find references to the possibility of what could be done by small groups attacking on their own. However, these tactics were still regarded as an "if all else fails" type of thing. As a matter of fact, the whole tactical doctrine was indeed referred to as the "forlorn hope." But the "hope" was to grow.

After the Napoleonic Wars, Baron De Jomini wrote an extensive technical study of combat in 1838. He called it the "Art of War." By drawing on many battles, he came to the conclusion that the best way to attack would be; not in the massive columns, nor in extended line, as others would say, but in a loose front of "little columns." In other writings the words "attack group" also crop up. Though the manner of war was not changed by these thoughts, it did show where a trend could be starting.

The nature of the combat in the American Civil War was defined by the greatly increased firepower of the rifle-musket with its elongated mini-ball. With it, devastating fire could be thrown out in excess of 300 yards with relative ease. As the troops became more proficient and as repeating rifles became more common, the war evolved into a trench type fighting very similar to the Somme of 1916. At Fort Sedman, in the Petersburg front, the Confederates used a style of attack that would become quite common in the next century. The infantry was grouped into three compact groups under one "attack leader." These groups moved out quickly and without fanfare in the attempt to gain maximum advantage of terrain and surprise. They used no formation as such, but would rely on the individual courage and initiative of their NCOs and officers, right there, leading the advance. Each group had its own engineering tools to break through the abatis. And it worked. The heavily entrenched fort was taken with a minimum of casualties. Quickly the attacking Confederates attempted to bring up "support weapons" and set up "fire bases" with their 12 pound cannons. All in all, it was a very modern attack. And the Union reaction was equally modern, a quick, instant counterattack by reserve echelons that cut-off and isolated the Confederate attack groups that had penetrated their lines. There were other examples, in other wars, and more and more the principle of the small group began to grow.

Then came World War I, and for the first three years, the small group theory was almost totally forgotten. Attacks were made in large waves, one after another, in an attempt to literally smother the enemy machine guns and defending infantry. The British attacks in Flanders were primarily linear with lines following upon advancing lines. The German response was much more advanced. Their "typical" defense was not simply an opposing fire line, but rather a series of interconnected strong points. Each "point" might only have the infantry equivalent of a platoon or even a squad, but there would be a "nest" of two or more machine guns that would set-up a murderous cross fire. In such a defense the actual connecting trench might only have what would be called a "skirmish group" that acted as a net to capture what few survivors stumbled through the cross fires. Here, the Germans were making battle with a small determined "combat group" of soldiers based on the presence of concentrated automatic weapons fire. It worked well in a defensive environment, and it was only natural that the Germans would adapt the whole concept to an offensive scenario.

It is difficult to say exactly who was responsible for the evolution of the now famous German "infanterie stossgruppen" tactics that evolved in this period. Seeing the success of the small group concept in the defense, General Von Hutier, of the German Eighteenth Army began to organize these concepts into a more formal doctrine. Also the German artillery expert Colonel Bruchnoller contributed a new "philosophy" in terms of the probable and desirable effects on various weaponry. Both of these men came to the conclusion that given the high state of the defensive art and the extensive entrenchments, it was extremely difficult to kill a defender regardless of the amount of weaponry and high explosive used. However, it was possible to demoralize him and the most likely method of doing this was to concentrate on creating an environment of doubt and confusion in the enemy rear areas.

For the artillery viewpoint, it meant that "communication" targets, such as headquarters, reserve staging areas and the like became more likely targets for pounding than did the front lines. While, in the front itself, the artillery would be a mixture of high explosive, gas, and smoke. The overall effect was to create a sense of confusion: Also, while it would be intense, it would be short. In some instances, it was advocated that the front line should be shelled for only a total of five minutes.
duration before the infantry went in. It was argued that longer than five minutes gave the defending infantry time to gather their wits.

And then came the infantry. Rather than the line waves used by General Grant at Cold Harbor and General Meade at Gettysburg, the Allies came in small groups, moving quickly through the gullies and quirks of "no-man's-land." These were the "stroßtruppen" or "storm troopers." They were highly motivated and led by battle experienced officers and NCOs. Their objective was not to break through the "defensive strong points" but to probe aggressively for the heart of the enemy. The advantage of the temporary confusion the unorthodox bombardment had produced. They sought weak points and then infiltrated through to set-up their own strongpoints deep in the enemy rear. Such a "breakthrough" even by small groups created a definite feeling of doubt and worry to the enemy defenders still far forward in their impregnable machine gun nests. And it was self-generating; the more these little groups probed, the more "weakness" they found, and then the more infiltration they achieved. Hence these "weakenesses" which meant even more troops leaked through. And soon, like a great mansion eroded by panic at Riga, and at Caporetto ten miles of enemy defenses precluded the dragging about of the enemy rear. Such a "breakthrough" would probably be able to study two or three tactical problems in the same time span it took the others to analyze by one or two.

Over in Russia, things were somewhat simplified. It was almost a one-side attack or you defended. If you were defending, you simply stayed where your officer put you until the enemy was defeated, your officer ordered you elsewhere, or you were dead. On the attack, you charged, closed with the enemy, and killed him. Or you died trying. There was only one accepted excuse for failure, your death. Needless to say, this system does indeed explain to a large extent why the Russians had the highest casualty rate of any of the European participants.

In summary, we might say that in regards to infantry, the Germans encouraged it, the West forgot it and the Russians condemned it.

One of the more illustrative of the German methods was the "attack technique" in regards to an obstacle on the line of attack. This obstacle could be assumed to be an enemy defense, possibly dug-in and perhaps even with minefields or artillery support. But, despite the outward formality of the obstacle, a battalion was expected to be able to mount an attack, in complete coordination with the parent regiment, in no longer than thirty minutes from the time the obstacle was first discovered. The battalion commander would be the same as those that would be used by his subordinates in the company and platoon level. The first step was to win the "firefight" by quickly increasing the fire density on a particular area. The contact was maintained. From this point here to establish a fire superiority on both a specific area and to a dictated depth. The actual evolution of this often followed a three phase scenario.

The first phase was called "Niederliegen" or "break down." In this phase, the foremost troops would step movement and begin laying down an intense fire in an attempt to stop all movement of the enemy. If artillery support was available, it would be used now. The intent was to make the enemy seek cover in his entrenchments, so that the individual soldier leaders could not unburden their basic terrain reconnaissances.

The next phase was called "Blinden," in which newly brought up troops would join the first offensive to increase the fire to the point where the enemy defenses would be "blinded" to the now initiated movement of small groups attempting to penetrate the enemy position.

The last phase would take place after successful infiltration had been made into the soft spots of the enemy defense. This was the "niederkämpfen," in which the enemy would be "beaten down" by fire. The principles for the battalion commander were irrelevant by this time. The battalion commander must keep in mind the enemy was defeated, your officer ordered you elsewhere, or you were dead. On the attack, you charged, closed with the enemy, and killed him. Or you died trying. There was only one accepted excuse for failure, your death. Needless to say, this system does indeed explain to a large extent why the Russians had the highest casualty rate of any of the European participants.

Throughout World War I, the tactics did evolve, and often observations made in 1940 were irrelevant by 1944. But the essence of change was still usually based on a coherent theory that merely changed its "application." It was mentioned that the German infantry in France, as they approached towards their already proven "lightning" form of mechanized war that they really did not realize that their infantry had also become outdated. However, the lesson would sink home in 1944.

As a result of this "firefight," the Germans unleashed this tactic. They sought weak points and then infiltrated through to set-up their own strongpoints deep in the enemy rear. Such a "breakthrough" even by small groups created a definite feeling of doubt and worry to the enemy defenses still far forward in their impregnable machine gun nests. And it was self-generating; the more these little groups probed, the more "weakness" they found, and then the more infiltration they achieved. Hence these "weakenesses" which meant even more troops leaked through. And soon, like a great mansion eroded by panic at Riga, and at Caporetto ten miles of enemy defenses precluded the dragging about of the enemy rear. Such a "breakthrough" would probably be able to study two or three tactical problems in the same time span it took the others to analyze by one or two.

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objective to his front and disregard the flanks. It was assumed that the regimental people would protect their flanks while his battalion did its job.

In essence, it was the age old concept of FIRE and MOVEMENT. But the Germans placed more emphasis on the “do it now!” idea than did their Western counterparts. However, in all honesty, this method did have considerable drawbacks. With its emphasis on quick decisions, there was room for misunderstanding and a German might have been told to open fire on his own smoke and chaos of battle with the result that independently advancing infiltration groups fired on one another or would be pinned down by their own supporting fires. But the Germans argued that despite these unpleasant side effects, their system, in the long run, only caused fewer casualties than the more deliberate methods of the Western allies, which minimized misunderstanding but maximized time.

The Germans claimed that every minute a defender was allowed, was another minute he grew stronger. And yet, before we conclude that the Germans were necessarily better, we must remember that their system might have many a decisive set-back, but ironically, it was usually when they ignored their own advice and gave the enemy extra time to strengthen his defense.

At this point in our discussion of infantry tactics, let’s turn our attention to how Russia evolved her infantry in the same time span. It already has been noted that the Russian system was short on initiative and high on obedience. Nevertheless, there were other salient points that made them different.

First of all, while the German infantry leaders were constantly reminding their people to concentrate their fire on a narrow front, the Russian instructors were doing just the opposite. Hence, the enemy’s objective is to close with and kill the Russian, and since the infantry’s objective is to close with and kill the enemy, it really does not matter “where” the breakthrough actually occurs, as long as it does occur. This was a complete contradiction to the Germanic thinking, which was very specific as to where a breakthrough would happen.

As an example of a Russian situation, consider:

The commander of a three battalion rifle regiment normally would prepare for the attack by deploying in two waves, accompanying the second wave himself. Close artillery support would be most likely given in the form of SP Guns that would accompany the 2nd echelon rather than using indirect called artillery. In a word, it was simple.

After everything was “staged” the attack would begin. This was often started by the first wave crawling up as close to the German positions as possible during the night before the attack. This “creeping” phase would continue until a pre-set time, or the Germans discovery of them, or when some superior got impatient. At this point, the “assault” phase would begin. The regimental commander, with the second wave, often “ordered” the first wave to fire on the 1st echelon “fire into the air” which would alert the first “creeping wave” that the assault was now to begin.

At that signal, there would be rampannt cheering and shouting to make sure everybody knew “this was it” and then the first wave would jump to their feet and make a mad charge for the German machine gun lines, firing and yelling as they went. Simultaneously, the second wave, with the regimental commander, would join in with their mad rush, hoping to reinforce any “success” of the first wave. Since the SP guns would be with this second wave, they would have little trouble winning any resistance the first wave uncovered. If tanks were used as well, the infantry would often ride on them to increase the velocity of the assault and enable their soldiers to “close with the enemy.” The Russians, once the attack did begin, were violent in its execution and cherished the time factor as much as German. Their opponents often commented that the Russian infantry was “slow to think of the attack, quick to do it, and slow to stop it.”

While the above method was very expensive in terms of lives, the Russians defended its results claiming that it was more “sophisticated” to them. Nevertheless, there indeed was some disparity to the Germans to see the complete willingness of their enemy to attack in an endless array of people despite casualties. And since one of the best ways to defeat an enemy is to demoralize him, the attack method is thereby, a success, according to the Russian viewpoint. In all fairness, it should be noted that the “Russian” system was ideally suited both to the nature of their culture, and the numbers needed. Had they opted for a more sophisticated training system, they probably would have had the time to totally re-arm their army from the severe beating that they took in 1941.

But rebuild they did, and like any soldiers that survive, they learned. One weakness of the Germans in the earlier stages of the war was their failure to perfect principles of urban warfare. The reason was fairly obvious. Up to the war and throughout its stages of fighting, no one side really “had the jump” on the other. In late 1942, everybody started from scratch on this problem. And in the streets, the Russians were the equal of anybody.

In urban fighting, the actual “combat range” is much less than in country. Out in the steppes, it was quite common for the infantry, particularly the machine gun sections, to open the engagement at about 1000 yards depending on visibility; and as the combatants closed, the fighting usually settled in at about 200 to 400 yards for a firefight. At this range, the Russians, with their MG’s and machine guns, had a decided advantage. But in a city where the combat range was very often “across the street” the Russian weapons were equal. In the streets, the main weapons became the submachine gun and the grenade. In contrast to the chelon waves used by the Russians in the country, their urban attacks were based more on an “attack group” of up to sixty men that would literally blitz one single building from all directions, and the Russians became adept at turning any defensive building into a fortress. And when they weren’t fortifying, or when the Russian would be constantly moving about: filtering through back alley, crawling through sewers and darting along rooftops. It was a new “citified” concept of Fire and Maneuver. In the early stages of the heavy fighting around Stalingrad, the Germans used to “blundering Russians” were very much punished, for they were the same Russian building displayed in the city. At the outset, it was the Germans who found their infantry tactics, for the first time in the war, inferior to the enemy. The initial German reaction was to quickly bring in more and more of their best equipped and trained small units. These were the Pioneers (Assault Engineers) who treated each building as a bunker and went about reducing it with heavy infantry weapons and sophisticated equipment such as demolition charges and flamethrowers. It did work. But in the attrition process, the Germans were forced to “trade-off” their best specialists against the regular Russian peasant soldiers. And that was an expensive trade.

But the commitment of these elite formations bought the time needed for the regular line units to learn the “urban trade.” And by late 1943, the Germans were as adept at urban fighting as the Allies Russian opponent. The Germans began fighting like the Russians with fire groups against individual buildings, but they also attempted to set up “killing zones” along the streets that paralleled the “target building.” Here, their superb medium and heavy machine guns took on an almost sinister role that was to allow the battle-point to be isolated by preventing any reinforcements from reaching the position. By setting up machine gun fire lanes, they hoped to put a break on the constantly Russian “flittering about.” It was a good tactic, and many a Russian squad was cut down by accurate fire from a hidden position far down the street. The Russians then countered by using saber movement to an even greater degree, and setting up many and devious ways for getting from one building to another. And so the Russians and Germans fought each other, and in the West, the Germans had invented a new blend of urban techniques to the Western allies with a vengeance.

By the end of 1943, the Western allies had taken heart much of the earlier lessons the Germans had shown them. Dieppe, as mentioned, illustrated the immense value of the light machine gun, and the British had countered by doubling and sometimes tripling the issuance of their LMG, the Bren Gun. Also, Allied training was much more realistic and became modeled along the German lines. And then in January of 1944, at the town of Cassino, in Italy, the “new” Allied infantry tactics were tested against the Stalingrad educated Germans and once more, as before, they had to play “catch-up.” Once again, their small unit tactics were outmoded.

In many respects, the experience was similar to the Germans’ dilemma at Stalingrad. But they reacted differently to the problem. The Germans went back to the DAT issue, and the American position was to attempt to solve it with infantry means. And that was, bring in better infantry in terms of their assault engineers. The Americans and the British reacted with brute force and attempted to erase the offending obstacle with air and artillery bombardment. But the Russians had literally blown everything off the top of the mountain. But still their infantry squads could not advance and they saw that a destroyed and rubble city is just as good, maybe even better, from a defender’s viewpoint, as an intact one. So, they too learned how to form Groups and cover the streets with fire and they too learned the high price of urban warfare extolled in men.

At this point, we might stop and compare how the British and the Americans differed in the applications of the lessons the Germans were showing in the way they look at the British. The concept of British small unit tactics went through a number of shocks, as we already mentioned, such as Dunkirk, Dieppe, and Cassino where even their crack New Zealand troops were one-upped by the street-wise Germans. But the British by then, were using small unit tactics. And the American approach to the small unit problem was basically that there are certain tactical dilemmas and each one of these has a corresponding correct solution. Therefore, to solve a tactical problem, one first had to identify it, select the correct solution, and then properly implement that solution. It was a fairly easy compared to the last, the implementation. And to perfect that implementation the British evolved a series of DRILL S that would be the same army-
wide and would give predictable results both in time and effect. They felt that with the vastly different array of forces in the British army, it was important that they all have a universality of tactics so an infantry leader could easily be moved to a new company and still have the same predictable results.

This may have seemed like a backward step compared to the German emphasis on tactical creativity, but it was well suited to Britain's complex army structure and blended well with their cultural trait of neatness; which is very well expressed by Montgomery's desire for a tidy battlefield. Each DRILL was very well thought out and when properly employed would give a successful conclusion in a good majority of the instances. There were DRILLS for everything, attacks, defense, over farms, in cities, with and without armor, and with and without artillery. They were quite specific. The whole concept hinged on the theory that the prospects for success and survival would be greatest if all members of a small unit or section thoroughly understood what their job was, how they were going to do it and what everybody else was doing as well. An example of the detail went into was the drill for moving in file with a squad of eight down a road. The file would be as follows, with each man's duty as listed:

MAN 1 . Squad Leader, leads patrol
MAN 2 . Watches Right
MAN 3 . Watches Left
MAN 4 . Watches Left, for Squad Leader
MAN 5 . Watches Right
MAN 6 . Watches Squad Leader and MAN 4 for signals
MAN 7 . Watches Left
MAN 8 . Watches Rear

Hence, if you were MAN 3 in a patrol file in the British army in 1944, your job was to watch left whether you were in Normandy, Italy or Burma. This British approach lacked glamour and was somewhat unflattering in regards to the initiative concept, BUT it produced results and by 1944-45 the British were able to stand and fight and the Germans and us as good as they got in any situation.

There was a famous saying about the Americans from none other than Rommel himself, who said "no one is more incompetent in battle than an American, at first. Later on, he learns faster." The evolution of small unit tactics in the American army was probably the least systematic of any participant in the War. The philosophy was, almost: "Try anything; try something; it might work." From nothing, in terms of size, in 1940, the American army in Europe, by 1945, had blosomed into almost 100 divisions. This created a need for mass produced training and quick smatterings of tactical doctrine. At first, it might seem that the British DRILL method would've been ideal for such a problem. But it probably wouldn't have worked for the basic reason that the American soldier differed very much from his British ally.

As a soldier, the American is an amateur and always will be. He is often an exceptionally talented amateur, but he is not, and has no desire to be, a professional. The profession mixup of fighting is not that of a soldier's profession, but is rather a dirty job that has to be gotten on with. A comment made in the Civil War was that Grant's Army looked like a band of day laborers. It was more true than realized, because in philosophy and tactics the American soldier was almost a day laborer. He is a confirmed skeptic, a diehard opportunist, and a dedicated scavenger. His squad and platoon leader is more like a shop foreman than a captain of men. So, had the American military attempted to install dogmatically practiced DRILLS, the soldiers would've treated it as so much worthless "Mickey Mouse." All this, if all these were weak points, he had a number of amazingly strong points. Left by himself, he often could be amazingly ingenious in devising tactical tricks that often rivaled the best their German enemies could think of. He loved gadgets and things mechanical and given a few moments, probably could make any device work, after a fashion. He had little respect for rank, and despite orders, he had a tendency to do things his own way. When he blundered, it usually was extreme, resulting in punishing casualties, but when he was right, he probably was better than any of his contemporaries.

The American military stumbled onto this and attempted to capitalize on his innate desire to try it "his" way and published field manuals on a never-ending series of subjects, not as DRILL Manuals, but as guidelines for the soldiers to base their tactics on. Throughout the war there was a constant stream of updates and quickie pamphlets on tricks of the trade. The whole thrust was that you will win if your "trick" is better than the Germans' trick. The American soldier was bombasted with a never-ending series of these publications and he usually glanced at most of them. The hope was that by constantly exposing the soldiers to good tactics, perhaps some would rub off. All this might have made the American squads more buffoons than soldiers, if it were not for the fact that their weapons, per squad, were the best of any of the armies. The basic American squad with no extras, could out firepower anyone else. Their M-1 was definitely the best infantry rifle in the war, in overall usefulness and durability, and the BAR, while not a light machine gun, could often substitute effectively for it. Hence, the American army, despite the demonstrated effectiveness of the German Light Machine guns, never really produced or issued one. They felt it was more important that the squad have devastating firepower without adding anything extra. In essence, the only way a German squad could stand up to the American was with the addition of a light machine gun. This was being light in a small infantry battle between two opposing infantry platoons on Djebel Tabet in the closing days of the Tunisian campaign. The American and German platoons squared off against each other behind two opposite stone walls and simply fired until the German platoon was wiped out by the firepower of the American infantrymen. It had not been a contest.

There was a catch however. While the American soldier could dish it out, he was not very good at taking it. In general, he would break under fire before either the German or the British. He was always quick to take cover. In many ways, he always felt that being fired on was not really part of the job, and he would do his best to avoid that. On the other hand, though he might duck and run quicker than the others, he had a strong stubbornness that caused him to usually rally and come back to try again before another soldier would. It almost might be summed up as: Quick to run, but quick to rally. Hence the American squad was deadly and brittle, but properly used with a good imaginative leader and properly armed the American squad was the most formidable squad in 1944-45 Europe.

As we noted, the American squads did not have a light machine gun, preferring to make up the deficiency with better organic firepower. And in fire effectiveness, it was a machine gun without equal. It is still perhaps the most devastating infantry machine gun on the field, and the design has not really changed all that much. The penultimate development of this deadly weapon was the M16, a quad-fifty halftrack which carried the descriptive name of "chopper." The final point of this was the liberal availability of these weapons, even to the point that it was not rare in any area to see an American all on a big truck or two.

Which brings us to a final point on the Americans. And that was the total number of vehicles they had available. No army could approach them. The American infantry formations usually had more vehicles than the most mechanized Panzer Grenadiers. When they went to battle, it was on such an assortment of trucks, jeeps, halftracks, scout cars, and whatever, that nobody walked. In the Ardennes Offensive, the Germans were astounded by the flippancy with which American abandoned vehicles. As a matter of fact, one German officer, in all seriousness, felt that the American army had as many trucks as they did combat infantrymen. His statement was an exaggeration, but not excessively so.

And so, by the end of the war, all the nations had evolved their own infantry tactics to achieve roughly the same net result. Each nation's final infantry book of operations reflected both their national cultural backgrounds, and the tricks of the trade that they had picked up from their gallant opponents and their own dedicated SQUAD LEADERS.

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**SQUAD LEADER 2nd EDITION RULES**

The SQUAD LEADER second edition rules, scenarios, and Quick Reference Data charts are now available for mail order purchase direct from Avalon Hill. Owners of the first edition can obtain the second edition materials free of charge by returning the cover of their first edition rulebook along with an order for any Avalon Hill game. Those not wishing to purchase a new game at this time may still secure the second edition materials (a $4.25 value) by returning the cover of the first edition rulebook and adding $1.00 each for postage and handling. Postage coupons are NOT usable for this or any other parts order unless accompanied by a game purchase.
Bob Medrow headed one of no less than 24 playtest groups around the nation which labored with the by mail playtest of SQUAD LEADER. That is not all that outstanding. His playtesting was . . . so much so that he was awarded the heretofore unheard of Loyal Order of the Boog Powell MVP with hexagon clusters. We also gave him a lifetime subscription to THE GENERAL and a case of games for saving our bacon. Among his contributions were a complete revamping of the sewer and MG LOS and penetration rules and about 200 pertinent questions which led to the undoing of more than a few ambiguities. Under the circumstances we thought it wise to ask him back to playtest the expansion kits.

The origin of this article goes back over six months to a letter sent to both John Hill and Don Greenwood, respectively, the designer and the developer of SQUAD LEADER (SL hereafter). This letter was part of my playtest activity and was intended to make these gentlemen aware of how SL was being played hereabouts. Here the first priority had been given to debugging the rules. With those efforts having been completed, it was time to report on play balance in the scenarios.

Since this was my first effort at playtesting, I had spent some time trying to work out how to go about reporting the results. Obviously, there must be something besides a box score telling how frequently a particular side won. In wargames, which side wins is, in all but the most grossly unbalanced games, a function of how the sides are played and, sometimes, of luck. SL's scenarios are no exception. Thus, it seemed necessary to write something rather general about the local perception of the basic game system. For reasons developed later, what constitutes an intelligent course of action in SL is sometimes hard to see. As a result the letter began with a few pages describing what the local players had found to be important about the game system itself; only then were the specific scenarios considered.

This article follows that same general outline. First, there's a rather extensive look at some basic aspects of the game, beginning with a look at the Infantry Fire Table (IFT). The emphasis here is on the interaction between squads and the fire directed at them, and several of the many factors that modify the outcomes. The type of result most commonly found in the IFT, coupled with the fact that dice roll modifiers (DRMs) are used in the game to reflect several facets of the simulation, make some aspects of fire attacks rather obscure.

Inescapably, and unfortunately for some, this means a discussion of probabilities. Less any should really become concerned, however, there are no formulas. Articles with lots of numbers don't always go over well, and I think that's unfortunate. Intelligent play of wargames requires an appreciation of what's likely to happen. The numbers in this article will not tell you how to play SL in each and every set of circumstances. Rather, they are intended to give you a fairly broad feel for what can happen. Probabilities, when they appear in the text or in a figure, are expressed in percentages, which seems to be the most satisfactory form. As an example, if something has a probability of 10%, it will happen, on the average, once every 10 times. Anything with a probability of 100% happens all of the time. The sum of the probabilities of all possible events must always total 100%.

Of the many weapons represented in the game, only two have been included in this first section: machineguns and off-board artillery. One of the aspects of the game that simplifies play is the use of the IFT by a number of weapons. While some of the weapons have fascinating peculiarities, the two considered probably have, overall, more decisive influence upon the course of play than do the others.

At the risk of disappointing the armor buffs out there, AFVs are not considered in the general section of this article. Make no mistake about it, a great deal needs to be said about them. However, it seems more meaningful to delay coverage until the second major section of the article, in which the first 3 scenarios are considered. The specific context of the third scenario provides a very handy way in which to point out both the strengths and the weaknesses of armor in SL. In SL, infantry will always have some claim to being queen of the battlefield, and one needs to be able to appreciate the interaction between the foot soldier and the iron beast. A look at how the introduction of armor changes things in the third scenario should, I hope, be useful in showing this interaction.

There'll be some sidetrips along the way. The game considered here is not the same as the one I first saw back in April, 1977. Changes were made for various reasons and, if you're at all like most of the gamers I know, you have some interest in how a wargame comes to be what it is. Also, for what they may be worth, there will be some comments about what I would expect to see represented in a game concerning WWII combat at this level. Finally, I hope to include enough information so that those of you who might not be familiar with the game will be able to follow most of what's going on.

BASIC PLAY OF THE GAME

The basic pieces of SL are the squad and the leader, examples of which are shown in Fig. 1. Firepower and Range are conventional enough quantities to see on cardboard warriors, but Morale and Leadership are something else. Each quantifies an essential aspect of the people represented. The first is a measure of the probability that the unit will withstand the stresses of combat while the second tells the extent to which a leader is capable of...
helping the squad(s) stacked with him carry out certain activities.

**Infantry Fire Table**

![Infantry Fire Table](image)

**Figure 2**

The action of the game will center around the Infantry Fire Table shown in Fig. 2, and good play requires an understanding of it. As with all two dice, sum-of-spots tables, the probabilities of the different outcomes are sometimes hard to visualize. The Terrain Effects Modifier Table lists 7 terrain connected with the extensive use of DRMs in the game. The Terrain Effects Modifier Table shows a net die roll modifier of -5; an unlucky shot that would otherwise be possible, but concentration frequently leads to increased vulnerability as well. Of course, there’s also the question of whether concentration of fire is more desirable than separate, smaller fires.

Before looking at some (hopefully) useful specific results, one other point needs mentioning.

**INFANTRY FIRE TABLE 10.3**

**DICE** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIREPOWER FACTOR MODIFIERS:</th>
<th>POINT BLANK FIRE</th>
<th>LONG RANGE FIRER</th>
<th>MOVING FIRER</th>
<th>AREA FIRE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POINT BLANK FIRE:</td>
<td>into adjacent hex</td>
<td>Up to double normal range</td>
<td>moved &amp; fired in same player turn</td>
<td>target is covered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LONG RANGE FIRER:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOVING FIRER:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AREA FIRE:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**THE GENERAL**

Once we go beyond the KIA result only a very limited selection of results can be considered. Fig. 4 shows the probability that individual squads will survive, alive and unbroken, the particular fire attacks shown. The three morale values considered, 6, 7, and 8, cover all of the squads in the game. As an example, a leaderless fire attack with a strength of 8 directed against a single morale level 7 squad in a stone building will have absolutely no effect 85% of the time. The fire strength values shown include the numbers in these figures mean, a fire with a strength of 4 will produce a KIA result 42% of the time if the net DRM is -1. We shall need to refer back to this figure later in connection with the study of some other aspects of the game.

There are some interesting things in this figure. The numbers themselves do give us some practical insight into what we can expect from fire attacks. Further, a study of them does help us gain some insight into the game that we can carry away and make use of without having to grope through a maze of tables you’re likely to encounter in a game. The previous paragraph referred to an exact relationship between the outcomes in certain adjacent columns. A look at Fig. 4 shows that this relationship is approximately true for all of the columns. As an example of what is meant, consider an attack of strength 16 and a DRM of +2. The results are almost the same as those for an attack of strength 8 with a DRM of 0, or an attack of strength 4 with a DRM of -2. The 8 column is two to the left of the 16 column, while the 4 column is four to the left of it. Thus, all the way across the IFT, moving an additional column to the right has the same effect as staying where you are and reducing the dice roll by one. This observation should give you an additional clue as to the effective use of leaders.
The second set of observations concerns the differences among the squads. In general, the differences between the squads in complete survivability go up as the weight of fire goes up and/or the degree of protective cover goes down. Overall, squads with a morale level of 7 lie closer to the level 6 squads than they do to the level 8 ones. Before moving on to look at the effects of being in a hex with a leader, there is one last rule-of-thumb to be extracted from Fig. 4: a decrease of one in the morale level has about the same effect as adding an additional -1 DRM to fire attacks. This is a particularly useful thing to keep in mind when you move into Game Set III and encounter the morale level 6 American infantry squads. From the point of view of survival, it's about the same as still having the Rumians; but giving the German player an extra -1 on each die roll. And that's a big effect.

Having covered several things concerning individual squads, this seems to be a good place to consider what happens when you start stacking. Again, because of the structure of the IFT, this increases the number of things one could look at! I think that the most interesting study is to consider what happens when our various squads are stacked with the leaders available in the game. Fig. 5 contains results for just one attack, that at a strength of 8. Some additional calculations were made and showed nothing qualitatively different that would be worth the considerable effort and space necessary to include them here.

The first thing to keep before you concerning leaders is that any units stacked with them are subjected to an increased risk of elimination. This, of course, comes from the fact that any morale check combat result could break the leader and cause the squad to take two morale checks as the result of a single attack. How much additional hazard is involved you can see for yourself by comparing the G (for Gone, remember) values in Fig. 5 with the KIA values in Fig. 3. Overall survivability is a different matter, however. As leader quality increases so, too, does the chance that the squad will survive. For some particular leader the chance of survival is essentially the same as it would be if the squad were alone. For all of the cases shown in Fig. 5 this "neutral leader" is the 8-1. A series of spot checks for other cases showed the same result. The discussion of the results in Fig. 5, coupled with what has gone before, provides us with an example of what ultimately turns out to be a fairly common aspect of SL: the possibility of greater gain purchased at the price of a possibility of greater loss. It is just this sort of intricate challenge that appeals to many wargamers. Previous figures have shown us the increased potential for doing harm to the enemy that comes from modifying the dice roll with a negative DRM. The last one shows us the dangers involved in getting the leaders up front.

One of the many fine points that helps to decide the winner is the correct use of the different leaders. The obvious lesson here is to keep the 7-0 and 8-0 leaders out of the line of fire and use them where they can still do: allow a broken unit to try to rally and speed squads on their way with the leader movement bonus. The use of the other leaders is very much a matter of judgment, but playing SL and watching others play it has led me to believe that most players have a tendency to use the better leaders aggressively too much of the time. Unless rallied, a broken unit is little better than a dead one. (And that leads us to the discovery of yet another juggling problem involving the weighing of risk and gain.) Experience suggests that decisions about leader employment are among the most difficult in the game. You should not become entranced by any ONE of their several possible uses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Squad Morale</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fire Attack Strength</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRM</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-4</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Fire strength 8, DRM = +2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Squad Morale</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leader</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Fire strength 8, DRM = 0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Squad Morale</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leader</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(c) Fire strength 8, DRM = -2

Fig. 3 The probability that a KIA result will be rolled.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Squad Morale</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fire Attack Strength</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRM</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-4</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>56</td>
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<tr>
<td>-1</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 4 The probability that various squads will survive, alive and unbroken, some typical fire attacks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Squad Morale</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leader</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-0</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-0</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-0</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-0</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 5 The probability that a single squad will be gone (G) or okay (O) when stacked with different leaders and fired at as indicated.
One of the most difficult questions to answer is the subject of the last set of numbers connected with the IFT. The values in Figs. 6, coupled with certain of those in Figs. 3 and 4, should give us some idea into the problem of how to arrange our fire attacks in order to obtain the maximum possible effect. The information given us compare the results of two attacks with a strength of 4 each versus those of one attack at a strength 8. In Fig. 6 the column showing the results of the first of these two attacks is headed (4)x2. For the sake of compactness let us call the second attack an (8)x1, the other columns of which are in Figs. 3 and 4. The other comparisons possible are among (4)x2, (8)x2 and (12)x1. Although not included, enough cases for the (6)x2 and (12)x1 were considered to allow reference to be made to them.

### Strength

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DRM</th>
<th>(4)x2</th>
<th>(4)x4</th>
<th>(8)x2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>64</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
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<td>20</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(a) Squad morale level of 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>(4)x3</th>
<th>(4)x4</th>
<th>(8)x2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>49</td>
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<td>23</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(b) Squad morale level of 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DRM</th>
<th>(4)x2</th>
<th>(4)x4</th>
<th>(8)x2</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>22</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(c) Squad morale level of 8

Figure 7

As mentioned previously, the option to combine attacks or not exists only when the firing units in question are adjacent to one another. Since Fig. 6 shows us cases in which one option or the other yields an advantage, this adjacent placement of squads is an extremely powerful one, particularly if the enemy has little or no artillery capability. In all cases (including the (6)x2 versus (12)x1 one), the more separate attacks the better, so long as we are considering attacks with a DRM of -2. Because there will seldom be sufficient leaders to stack with thinly spread squads, -2 is about the only negative DRM one gets. The results, however, can be devastating against an enemy who must advance across open ground.

What is the most desirable attack is when we look at the more common modifiers of 0 through +3 depending upon the goal of the attack. Generally, one's best off with two separate attacks rather than one combined one if the aim is elimination of the target. If, however, one is satisfied with either eliminating or breaking the enemy, the situation is not quite so clear cut. In this case we see some advantage to combining fires at high DRMs. Particularly when your aim is the modest one of either breaking or destroying the enemy, one very important consideration is that the linked unit rules do not require a player to designate all of his fires before resolving any of them. Thus, if the first of two or more possible shots accomplishes all that you need, the remaining units can be used for other purposes.

### A Bit on Weapons

Demolition charges, bazookas, flamethrowers, panzerfausts, machineguns, anti-tank guns, howitzers, and mortars, SL has it all. But of all of these I think the two most interesting are the MGs and off-board artillery. Fig. 7 shows a typical medium MG. Its unique aspect is this business of penetration. Once a line-of-fire has been established between the weapon and a target, units beyond the first target hex are subject to attack if their hex lies along the LOF, and the firing unit has a line-of-sight into their hex. As pointed out in the Designed's Notes, this helps recreate the lethal effects of this weapon system. You'll note (7.2) that units, friendly or otherwise, do not block either the LOS or the LOF. This, as it came out in the playtesting, is a practical necessity in this game. The alternative would be to allow players to create concealing terrain by hiding more valuable units behind less valuable ones. Neither that situation nor the one mandated by the rules is completely "realistic," but the former does eliminate some peculiarities from the play. If you wish to avoid one source of aggravation and frustration in SL, avoid using the MGs in a stack unless they will move you up a column on the IFT; that is to say, on a 1 to 14 and then roll a 12, causing the MG to malfunction.

The use of off-board artillery is handled in a very interesting way. When it's available, summoning it is completely "realistic," but the former does eliminate some peculiarities from the play. If you wish to avoid one source of aggravation and frustration in SL, avoid using the MGs in a stack unless they will move you up a column on the IFT; that is to say, on a 1 to 14 and then roll a 12, causing the MG to malfunction. Another interesting set of numbers is the probability that one can get off three FFE missions in four player turns. These values are 6%, 16%, 34%, and 77% for the Germans and the Russians respectively. In a general sense, I think that these numbers give a reasonable view of the relative worth of artillery to the different forces represented.

A knowledge of what you can expect in terms of reliability from artillery is extremely important when it comes to purchasing a force from the Point Value Chart. For an American force, artillery is almost always worth having and comes at a bargain price (three-fourths of what the Germans and half of what the Russians pay). Until one's played enough to learn just what can be expected in terms of performance in circumstances that test artillery too much respect, particularly in the Russian-German scenarios. Deciding when and how to employ it is sometimes a difficult decision.

### A Bit on Tactics

The basics outlined in the rule book deserve careful reading, and I have but a few points to add. Whenever a unit in a building or in trees is broken by enemy fire a decision is required as to whether or not the unit should retreat. In most such situations it is best to retreat the unit in question so long as doing so does not place it in greater jeopardy. If at all possible it should be retreated so as to prevent the enemy from continuing to fire at it each turn, thereby forcing the unit (assuming a leader is available) to try to meet the stringent requirements of Desperation Morale. It does happen that the isolated unit left in place can suffer an ignominious fate. If it is not rallied, it cannot move unless an enemy unit moves adjacent to it or it is again fired upon. Do not be surprised if the unit remains unattacked while the enemy maneuvers so that a retreat will later be forced under circumstances that will guarantee the unit's destruction.

In selecting defensive positions in a scenario allowing some leeway, it is important to site weapons and units with a view towards the retreat routes available to any enemy units that might be broken. Remember that a broken unit unable to retreat satisfactorily will cause a clear terrain hex within both the LOS and the normal range of an enemy unit is eliminated. The game mechanics relating to broken units (section 13) are quite straightforward. Good play, however, requires careful consideration of the hazards and opportunities as they create.

The voluntary destruction of your own support weapons deserves a brief practical. Practically, it is probably best to destroy such equipment, most particularly LMGs, when you no longer have the manpower required to use them. On balance, I have seen pessimism in this area rewarded more frequently than optimism.

### Personal View

I think, before we turn to the scenarios, that this might be a good time to give some consideration to what we should expect to find in a game on this extreme tactical level. Practically, we should expect to see a lot of confusion. I feel that the concept of the broken unit handles this sort of thing very well. Units are completely reliable until they move to a location that will make it impossible for them to play. This is not completely realistic, but might conjure up some terrifyingly complex alternatives. Breaking and rallying of troops reproduces an ebb and flow appropriate to the time scale of the game, at least so far as the Germans and Americans are concerned.

With the Russians we find a more brittle force because of the general lack of Russian leaders. Assaults will tend to be more massed in character since mass is more available. This brings us to...
second thing we should expect to see: organizational and nationalistic differences. These we find in plenty. Besides the numbers and quality of leaders provided, there are the morale values and the exemption of American squads from the penalties of Desperation Morale.

This is by no means the first game to reflect the things mentioned above. It is, I think, unique in that it provides the game player the opportunity to, locally, bias the behavior of his troops by the allocation of leaders. Chance will always play a large part in SL games and that, too, is as it should be. But here, anyway, the players can make at least partial amends for the shortcomings of his particular force.

THE SCENARIOS

As with all of Avalon Hill's Programmed Instruction games, this one directs you to play the scenarios in order. Think awhile and you will see how that idea poses particular problems in playtesting. In order to do anything at all with the later scenarios I found it necessary to have some players skip ahead. Given the standards of the day, the complete set of rules is not all that formidable, but players who had gone ahead tended to experience more frustration and less satisfaction. The level of interaction among all the bits and pieces is very high. To play well one needs a good grasp of what's been covered up to the scenarios being played.

In an era of monster games you'd almost have to call this one a micro game. Fig. 8 shows the map area used and one possible deployment. To win the Russians must completely occupy two more of the stone buildings initially occupied by the Germans (F3, K5, I7, M7, and M9) than they lose of their own initial buildings (N4, J2, M2, F3) to complete German occupation, or have a favorable 3:1 ratio of unbroken squads at the end of the game (5 turns). To completely occupy a building requires that your forces be the last ones to have occupied any hex in the building at game end.

The primary burden of attack is thus upon the Russian player and his major striking force must be the dozen 6-2-8s located in building F3. Initially the ratio of squads is only 20:13 favor the Russians so the German player is winning all around at the start.

Since the German player sets up first let's take his problems first. Since buildings I7 and M9 are single hex ones, their setups are fixed. In M7 hex L6 must be strongly held because, coupled with all those Germans in I7, this divides the Russian forces (by the clear North-South LOFs running through I7 and L6) into three groups. Probably the greatest versatility is obtained if everything goes into hex L6. Deployment in building K5 can assume a number of forms. The primary objective of the one shown is to establish a strong LOF across the North side of building F5. The one weakness of this part of the German position is that all hexes in K5 can be brought under fire. For this reason the 8+ leader is left by himself where he can do little harm. By way of an aside, hexes C5 and D5 are both just visible from hex J4, using a string as thick as the white dots.

The German deployment in building F5 poses some interesting problems. Quite possibly this building will be the focus of the initial Russian drive, one which may well be successful. Familiarity suggests that the ideal deployment is one which inflicts some Russian casualties while still allowing the German player a decent chance at extracting some of his force. The combination shown is a fairly effective one. The force in F6 cannot be fired upon by any Russian force in the initial Prep Fire Phase. Those in H5 can be fired at from only E4 and G4, a pair of non-adjacent stacks. This arrangement allows the German player to avoid a 36 strength fire attack from two adjacent hexes firing together, the most effective fire attack available to the Russians. In addition, the fire from E4 is halved because of range considerations.

The Russian setup offers fewer options. Only the location of the 10-2 leader in building F3 and the forces in N4 need be considered. The placing of the 10-2 in E4 will be explored later. Handling building N4 could give a sensitive person bad dreams. The balance of forces on the eastern side of our tiny battlefield is probably in the German's favor and offensive action may occur. In self defense the Russian needs to hold M5 and N5 even in the face of German firepower in I7, L6, and M9.

Given the German firepower available, Russian tactics must be based upon the weaknesses in the German deployment, and there are some. These weaknesses were not introduced for discussion purposes; rather, they appear because every initial deployment seems to have some. Looking from west to east, the weaknesses in building F5 is the fact that hex F5 is not garrisoned. The excellent Close Combat capabilities of the 6-2-8s make them very dangerous if they can get into the same building with the Germans. The weakness is almost unavoidable since F5 lies within the normal range of the 6-2-8s in three hexes.

One solution to the problem is the one utilized; a strong force in J4. However, too strong a force in J4 poses a problem in the defense of the building it's in. K5. The squad in K4 has a clear LOF into hex M1, reducing the chances of Russian reinforcement of their central zone. Unless M1 is covered, Russian squads from M2 and/or N2 have a two-turn route into J2 via the partial (but playable) hex north of L1 without risking a -2 DRM attack from the L6 hex. The ability to reinforce the central zone increases the probability that an effective fire on J4 can be maintained from J2.

As mentioned, locating the entire building M7 force in hex L6 is a versatile move, but it also an all-you-eggs-in-one-basket move. Because of the ease of reinforcement of building M7 from M9, this is not as dangerous as it might otherwise be. With all of this, what do the Russians do? On balance, a good, aggressive opening is to move the six squads from F3 and G3 to H2 and H3. Even with some losses this makes for a respectable fire attack on J4. While this movement does create additional targets for the Germans in I7 and J4, this is not a completely negative thing. The already existing target in J2 profits from any diversion of fire to other targets. The non-moving units in E4 have the squads in H5 as their target. In order to put additional pressure on building K5 the forces in M2 can stand and fire at the lone squad in K4. The lone squad in N2 is best sent south while the units in M5 and N5 need to concentrate on the German in I6.

With this beginning no Russian unit is in less than 2 DRM cover. What happens after this is largely a function of how well the attacks go. Building F5 is such an obvious initial target for an assault that the German player may be tempted to advance units into it from I7. On balance, this appears to be a poor move. If he isn't careful, this sort of concentration could cause the ultimate loss of K5. More useful, the force beginning in M9 is better deployed in M7, except for the leader who...
needs to move back to L7 after helping his squad lug the HMG. L7 is the obvious collection point for any units broken in building M7.

Starting as indicated, too much depends upon the results of the first turn battles to permit further specifics of play. There are, however, a few things concerning play during the rest of the scenario that I think are worth passing along. To the best of my recollection, all of the Russian wins have involved the capture of either F5 or K5 by the Russians. However, not all of these wins involved the territorial objective of gaining two net buildings. The loss of either building provides the Russian player with some valuable opportunities to concentrate his efforts against selected portions of the German force and follow the second possible route to victory. Then, too, there's that matter of movement. The high terrain costs and the extensive fields of fire encourage moves of no more than a hex or two. Frequently, this seems to lull players into forgetting just how far a unit can go when there's no one to shoot at him or he gets lucky. My last point deals with the matter of fairness. The rules (19.3) outlaw "potential" LOS checks. As a practical matter each side should be allowed to make such checks before the game is begun. In addition, a beginner at this scenario who's playing an experienced player should be given some free LOS checks during the game, in addition to getting to play the Germans.

This scenario requires but one additional page of rules, but that page adds a great deal. First off, there are two new weapons, flamethrowers and demolition charges. The great strength of the former is that its attacks are not subject to any DRMs. Its weakness is that your chance of using it three times is only a bit over 50%; on a roll of 9 or more it dries up. The weakness of the other new weapon is that you must move adjacent to your intended target. Its strength is the very obvious one of a large attack value. The concept of "concealment" is a much more far-reaching one. Most commonly, it allows units to burrow into woods or buildings, trading a halving of incoming fire for the opportunity to move or fire. In this particular scenario it is also used to conceal the initial deployment of a portion of each side's force. In order to determine the contents of a hostile stack topped by such a counter, it is necessary to obtain a result on the IFT requiring at least a morale check. Against a stack in a stone building this requires an attack strength of at least 32 (before halving) to have a better than even chance of removing the concealment marker. In passing, it's worth noting that the probability of removal is almost the same whether fire is split or not. This means that if you have the option the fires should be split because of leader benefits. There's a second advantage if you are not designating all attacks prior to resolving any. As a final comment, the way in which this concept is presented seems to cause some players to overlook its benefits in later scenarios where it is frequently useful for protecting troops not currently involved.

Victory in this scenario is determined by either having six hexes in building X3 under the type of control defined in the first scenario or by having the only unbroken units in the building. Fig. 9 shows the terrain involved. The burden of attack falls upon both players. The superior quality and equipment of the Germans in the east compared with that of the Russians in X3 would virtually guarantee victory unless the western Russian forces can break in. The setup sequence is specified, but, to add a bit of spice, who starts is determined by a die roll.

Although the Russian X3 force sets up first, the number of concealment counters is such that, normally, the stack heights tell little. (For those of you without the game, remember that all you see...
of those stacks is the "7" on top.) Since what is done in X3 is in response to German capabilities it is, therefore, more instructive to consider the Germans first.

In the west, occupation of hexes S5 and R7 is desirable. This will bring any western Russian units under fire in clear terrain should they attempt to move between building R1 and the other three western buildings. Similarly, units in T4 and T6 would endanger movement between buildings U3 and X3. Although the first of these is, initially, under German control, a change in ownership must be expected. The unfortunate part about it is that it may prove impossible to get anyone into there. Overall, the western German position suffers from being too thinly held. Efforts at concentrating German forces, usually into buildings U3 and T4, have been considered. The fault with such a play appears to be that the result is too brittle. It slows the Russians a bit longer, but seems to yield fewer German units by move when the front finally breaks. While on the subject of breaking, consider the German difficulties in rallying broken units in the west. A second problem with removing Germans from R7 and T7 is that Russian movement into this area not only endangers units directly to the north, but the main attack on X3 as well.

The setup in the east is intended, first, to determine what's in hexes Y4, Y5, and X5. The forces to do this are those in Y7, Z6, AA4 and AA5. Depending upon the success of these attacks, the German force in Z7, including the leader, is available to cover either X5 or Y5, thereby gaining a foothold in X3. In anticipation of this possibility, one might wish to rearrange things enough to place an 8-3-8 into Y5. Hex X6 could then be used by any German Prep Fire, thereby greatly weakening the position of the Russians in Z6. If this were done, however, the HMG should remain in Y7. A prudent player would consider just how much is visible from the second floor of Y7. If not used in an advance, the engineer squad and flamethrower in Z7, like the combination in BB4, is available to cover so that easy movement into the building is limited without use of flamethrowers. On the other hand, it does not risk everyone, with strong forces kept back for the necessary counterattacks. Because of the number of one-story buildings to the west of X3, the HMG in W5 can be very useful against the western German.

That brings me to a comment about a kind of tunnel vision I've noted in myself, among others. It turns out to be quite easy to see this, initially, as two separate combats, pretty much divided by the V column. In fact, particularly when the Russians in X3 have been forced to give up many of their concealment counters, attacks by X3 units against the western Germans can be quite useful.

I think that the comments concerning the setups and the victory conditions offer enough insight into where the game will go from this starting point so that just one thing further need be said. For both...
which the vehicles of the two sides never even see one another. But no matter what is done the vehicles remain on a presentation of each side’s strength. The key to good play lies in understanding the interactions that exist among the various components of SL.

If you’re new to this game I think you’ll find what’s been said of some use. Hopefully, it’s demonstrated something of the delights of the first three scenarios. If you’d like to create a whole new set of problems, try adding the Second Level rules, sections 57 and 58.

GAME DESIGN: ART OR SCIENCE
AN EVALUATION OF THE SQUAD LEADER GAME DESIGN

By Don Greenwood, John Hill, and Hal Hock

Off the early mail order response and initial reviews, SQUAD LEADER appears destined to be a major success and perhaps more than just another entry in the game glut. So favorable was the initial reaction that we have embarked on publication of several sequels to extend the game to introduce new terrain, nationalities, weapons and added realism. Nor have reviews been limited to boardgaming circles. Several manufacturers have expressed interest in acquiring exclusive rights to the name and packaging for their own miniatures. Yet, no game is completely free of criticism and SQUAD LEADER is no exception. Among the game’s critics is none other than Hal Hock, designer of TOBRUK. This really comes as no surprise as Hill and Hock are on different ends of the design spectrum. The two have widely varying philosophies as to how best to broach the data of raw history into a game format.

Hill’s is the artistic approach akin to the impressionistic school of painting where subjects are abstracted until the overall effect on the viewer is such that the artist can will his impressions upon the viewer. Hence, an artistic designer studies history with concern for the overall battlefield environment and how each specific weapon relates to it, as opposed to proving ground statistics. Regardless of a weapon’s value, if the soldier wielding it has confidence in his handling of the weapon and its overall effectiveness, his performance will be greatly enhanced. He subscribes to the opinion in vogue these days in battlefield research that technical differences of weapons is not nearly as important as the psychological perception of the individual using the weapon. This is a question of perception and is not to be confused with morale. Furthermore, this design outlook takes a very casual look at battlefield statistics and in the extreme case, will dismiss proving ground graphs and charts as suspect since they fail to capture the battlefield environment. All proving ground data is based on a “controlled” situation, but the battlefield is a totally uncontrolled environment. It is a situation where the incredible, the bizarre, the unexplainable and the totally improbable happen with an uncomfortable regularity. Nothing can be stated with certainty. Events will be dictated by the laws of unregulated fate.

Hock is the scientist and indeed has been employed in such a capacity by the government. He believes that since a battle is primarily a clash of technology, it can be measured. Proving ground data is his bible. Armor actions can be studied by careful study of “projectile penetration” vs. armor. Studies show that a 75mm AP shell will penetrate exactly “X” mms of armor at “Y” range and this very fact has led to many a gaming tank being routinely saved or destroyed by a few mms of armor in the vast majority of wargame rules currently available.

The artist responds that this shell vs. armor test does not always hold true in the battlefield environment; e.g.:

1. At what angle did the shell strike?
2. How many times has this particular armor been hit?
3. Was the vision port being opened at that instant?
4. Did AFV have any miscellaneous equipment such as spare tracks on the hull which might have partially deflected the hit?
5. How did that hit in a standardized test to the hit?

Many an operable tank has been abandoned on the battlefield.

6. Might there be variable metal quality among seemingly identical tanks? Casting and weld quality has been known to vary from one factory to another, and especially in the case of field repaired vehicles.

The artist concludes then that when shell hits armor, anything can happen and that only a most generalized statement of probability can be made.

So now, we have an idea where the “artist” and the “scientist” are coming from. Given this background, we can study the finished product in a much better light. John Hill is an artist, and SQUAD LEADER is the prime result of the “artistic” or “impressionistic” school of wargame design. TOBRUK was designed to be technically perfect. Hal studies the published data tables with exacting scrutiny, and his style of game design reflects this. Being of the scientific school, he accounts only for that which is documented, and makes sure every point is played out. In TOBRUK, each time a tank or MG fires, every shell is literally accounted for, and his infantry squads use a recorded roster system. It is a precise, documented system where everything is mechanically spelled out. There is, however, no room in his approach for the operation of non-standard events or “imponderables.” In SQUAD LEADER, “everything is abstracted,” while in TOBRUK nothing is.

TOBRUK, with its reams of documentation, impresses your intellect, while SQUAD LEADER wrenches your emotions. Hill has deliberately designed the various values so the gamer can “feel” an escalation of terror, as the numbers mount up. Hence, these “terror jumps” are in easily modularized jumps, conveyed in a standardized CRT. Such an abstract concept as psychological terror thresholds might well be looked on as heresy by Hal, but they are the main cornerstones of SQUAD LEADER.

So, who is correct? The answer is neither and both. No game will please all of the people all of the time, but both games will greatly appeal to some groups. . . or, to put it in simpler terms: “different strokes for different folks.” Yet, it might be enlightening to see how the artist fields the critique of the scientist. How much factual difference will there be when Hill’s “psychological” adjustments are compared to Hock’s data? We’ll find out as the scientist comes to grips with the artist. Hock’s comments may be recognized by the italic type.
THE GENERAL

MACHINE GUNS

The firepower, range, range dependency of firepower, and general overall lethality of many types of machine gun appear to be sheer guesses. This is such an important fact that some elaboration is in order. MG's are critical in the game, so I will confine my discussion to them.

If, as stated in the Designer's Notes section, the conditional penetration values for each class of MG weapons is based upon relative rates of fire, then why, in viewing the table below, do obvious discrepancies arise?

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Note that there is no easily rationalized way of saying that a LMG has a rating of 2, a MMG a rating of 4, and HMG a rating of 6, and a .50cal HMG a rating of 8 as is done in the game. If anything, the numbers presented above belie such an assumption no matter which weapon is actually designated as being the LMG, MMG, etc. It appears that the assumption was made for convenience's sake only with no serious consideration of the data.

Few may notice that a "2" is the equivalent of a "double fire"... is the effect of a single .50 cal Mg. The Americans rated it above any other MG and hence the crews operating it tended to do better and participate much more. It has a very distinctive sound and can almost maintain a rate of fire equal to a water cooled gun. Its heavy shell nuggests much cover. The .50 cal is an already a very nasty weapon. Against an enemy in general cover, it is the best, but since all cover is the same, I gave it the little extra effect of "8" firepower factors. Notice the beauty of this, when looking at the chart from 8 to 6 the only difference is "psychological." The KIA probability is the same... and that captures the .50 very well. Its loud noise and heavy cover ripping bullets scared the enemy much more than the smaller .30 cal bullets, even when there might be more of the smaller bullets.

Hal also feels that the game is not bloody enough, and he's right. To his "4" they've given a great increase in killing power. What he forgets is that a "double break" is the equivalent of a kill, and that range does indeed play a major part, since at "point blank," range firepower doubles. A LMG at point blank range is a "4." Moving in the open adds -2, and with a MG, most competent players will include at least a -1 leader. That is a total DRM of -3 with 4 factors that yield a dice roll of 5 or less killing everything in that hex, with a 9 or less forcing a morale check. In reality, that would probably be against a quick rush, and the troops would only be expected to hold it for about 5 rounds. Even then, if Hal hasn't yet fired the squad is there... remember they both can fire. Firing both in concert yields a -3 on the 12 firepower column with a KIA occurring on a 6 or less and a Morale Check on a roll of 12 or less. No, there is no justification that "SQUAD LEADER" is not "bloody enough," and I would very much like to play Hal, as long as he is convinced that marching up to German MGs in the open is a very safe tactic. If he still feels that way, my only comment is... "Come Turkey..."

The 4" MMG and 6 HMG could be many different weapons. Hal points out that the Germans died in large numbers every time a MG fire burst was used and the MG42 was heavy. So say the field manuals. Right? Well, only on the surface. Consider an MG34 with belt feed. That is better than the drum fed MG34 since now the gunner can really put out more lead per unit area, so it is probably better than a "2." Yet, it is not equal to the MG42 with a heavy tripod, extra barrels, plenty of ammo and a telescopic sight. No, it's not that good, so it's not a heavy... it is somewhere in between. So, by USAGE or EFFECT it is a medium machine gun... and a "4," is about right, while the 6 for a gun with all those extras is really a "5". MG42 has the increased penetrations really warp the mind of the enemy... he feels, he fears, he now knows the awful potential of the HMG. Its feeling carries heavy weight.

The U.S. 50 cal 8 factor MG is rated so high simply because it was a good weapon. The Americans rated it above any other MG and hence the crews operating it tended to do better and participate much more. It has a very distinctive sound and can almost maintain a rate of fire equal to a water cooled gun. Its heavy shell negates much cover. Against an enemy in general cover, it is the best, but since all cover is the same, I gave it the little extra effect of "8" firepower factors. Notice the beauty of this, when looking at the chart from 8 to 6 the only difference is "psychological." The KIA probability is the same... and that captures the .50 very well. Its loud noise and heavy cover ripping bullets scared the enemy much more than the smaller .30 cal bullets, even when there might be more of the smaller bullets.

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Area Fire

A simple one-half reduction in effectiveness when a hidden target goes to the other extreme of giving too much effectiveness. Searching fires in general are always almost ineffectual except in forcing self-disclosures by enemy troops.

Here, Hal is on a little better ground. He maintains that my halving of area fire is too generous. Well, perhaps it is. But I stand firm in my principle that this would make it nearly worthless. As it is now, it is very weak since cover gives such benefits, and barring night scenarios, the concept is used only when in cover. The problem here is that Hal simply felt that ½ was too generous. By itself, I'd be inclined to agree, but within the overall game system wherein area fire also has to deal with cover modifiers, his point may be overstated. Remember also the abstract nature of the game. Area fire does not necessarily mean that the attacker is firing at a totally unseen target for the duration of the fire. Perhaps the few search shots were enough to evoke a response by the enemy—thus allowing the rest of the attackers' fire to be concentrated and more effective. The IFT accurately reflects that possibility.

ROAD MOVEMENT

A road movement of 12 hexes (with leader) per turn equates to roughly 9 mph and in no way could such a rate be maintained by military personnel even running in track shoes on an oval track (it's beyond the Aerobics excellent category for military personnel), let alone in battle with equipment.

Actually it works out to 8.16 mph, but that is not the point. Such rates are not maintained over a long period. The .50 cal MG is a one-man gun. Fire rushes, pauses for covering fire, and careful slow advances (Advance Phase). Given the flow of the game, the movement system is one of its strong points. Even an overeighthed clown like me could easily run 8 mph with a weapon for a short sprint if my life depended on it. Granted, I wouldn't be fatigued and would probably rest afterwards, but this is generally what occurs in the average SQUAD LEADER action. While it is possible and quite unrealistic for infantry to maintain this speed in the game over longer periods, it is extremely unlikely to occur given the nature of the scenario and the cover provided. For the sake of realism, a fatigue rule should have been incorporated, but it would have been at the expense of playability and bogging down an already complex game. Such a rule will be included in the expansion gamettes for those who are really into the system, but it wasn't deemed necessary for the basic game. Indeed, in the overall analysis, reducing movement would have been unrealistic and given the game as much excitement as a jousting match between snails. This seems a high price to pay for correcting a technical error of the game which occurs so rarely, especially when one looks at the very few but extremely abstracted cases in any case (see Designer's Notes) for the sake of correct "feel."
The use of smoke and candles to create an atmosphere was a common practice in warfare. This page from a military training manual illustrates the use of smoke and, through the use of smoke and candles, to create an atmosphere that is conducive to the training of troops. The manual includes information on the use of smoke in various military scenarios, including training exercises and actual combat situations. The manual also describes the use of smoke to create a sense of realism and to enhance the training experience of soldiers. The manual emphasizes the importance of using smoke in a controlled and safe manner to ensure the safety of all individuals involved. Overall, the manual provides valuable information for military personnel on the use of smoke in various scenarios.
The French are IN!

Design-Your-Own Scenarios for Wooden Ships and Iron Men

by John D. Burtt

The British 40 is the best all around ship for the points it costs, particularly in light of the three carronade (read soakoff) squares it has. The French are on too few bases. For the four bases (or the bigger ships) outside carronade range, it will shoot on the same HDT. Generally, the single crew square advantage the French have的是 fleets the French has. The British situation, 40 verses 40, looks better.

The 44 gun frigates are a completely different story. Here the emphasis lies completely with the French crew size. It's double the British 44 crew and nearly equal to that of a Large class 74. In a squadron action, if at all possible, the French commanders should have one or two of these vessels on the line to form their broadsides, by boarding actions, a larger vessel. Standard operating procedure for British players—given your opponent refuses to shoot at you, you'll find that you'll be able to do extensive damage with them before they strike.

This has been a very brief look at the available ships up for grabs in a DYO. Since buying your ships is a good portion of the game, a word or two on how to buy them. For the W&MS novice, this is easy—you buy big ships with elite crews. Experience shows, however, this ain’t necessarily so.

Take a close look at the HDT Modifiers. For all ships with 7-12 guns per side (13-24 guns per side in the Advanced game) a crack crew will deliver the same broadside as the elite crew. This affects the French 80 and 74, the British 110 to 74, the mainstays of most squadrons. Extra points saved could be a vital part of your fleet design.

Example: An elite French 80 and a crack 44 cost 56 points and deliver a basic HDT of 2 and 6 at a range of five open, one ship on, no boardings, or multi hull broadside. A crack 80 and an elite 44 cost 55 points and deliver 2 and 1 HDTs at the same range. For open seas, you get more punch. Something to think about.

Also, when you’re buying a squadron, it’s a good idea to purchase ships generally equivalent in value. Doing this will minimize your loss if a ship is lost. An excellent example is the previously mentioned Series Repay. The loss of mobility suffered by L’Brennus should have cost the French the game—bad luck and a disastrous collision made up the difference.

TACTICS (For Frogs and Limys alike)

Once you’ve picked your ships, you are stuck with them, for better or worse. The heart of the game becomes maneuver, hit without being hit, the use of the subtle art of second guessing your opponent. The ancient adage, “Do unto others before they do unto you” was never more true. What follows is a few hard earned “helpful hints.” (Note: most of the examples, and thus their explanations, come from games fought under Basic rules—but the rules and hints can be applied to the Advanced games also.)

The disadvantage of a three decker is, of course, its turning ability and its rigging. It can’t run with a standard L/R maneuver, so your line is short some shots after such a move. And blow a rigging section away, then transfer the fighting elsewhere on the board—it’s immobility will make it nearly useless, except for some equal rigging shots, helpful to the cause, but you don’t win battles by crippling an enemy ship aloft. Its position should be in the middle, anchoring the entire squadron and staying in the fight.

Hull 2 (French 40, 74; British 90, 80, 74, 64, 50)

The meat of any squadron. Ship for ship, the French and British are fairly equal. In the Basic game, while the French have a larger crew and the British one extra rigging square (and I’m sure there are those who will gladly testify as to how important a silly little rigging square can be at times!), the 80 gun SOL will batter each other with the same HDT until guns are knocked out of action. In the advanced game, this alters slightly in favor of the French, as the British will find themselves shooting it out on a smaller table. In fact, outside carronade range, the French 80’s broadside is as powerful as the British 110 and 100 Class 1 SOLs. A very worthwhile ship.

The 74 gun SOLs is an exact reversal of the 80’s story. In the Basic game, the French hold a one HDT edge in broadsides outside carronade range. Other than that, the two nationalities are as close to equal as you can get (and still be different . . . ). W&MS give you a chance to inherit the role of game rules—in picking your 74, note that a single gun hit will notify any advantage of closing to carronade range, while it takes two gun hits to do the same with a Large class ship. In the advanced game, the 74’s will shoot at the same HDT initially, despite the Frenchman having more guns. A difference in the rule advantage is the reflection of this fact. The other British ships have their advantages and disadvantages, but in the many games I’ve played, my opponents and I have stayed from them, so I’ll leave them to you.

With neither side holding a decided edge with their class 2 ships, superior (or lucky . . . ) movement will tell the tale. Watch out for trying an overly trick move; a single unanswered broadside, especially a rake, can tip the scales to your opponent.

Hull 3 (French 40, 40, 38, 36, 52; British 50, 44, 40, 38, 36, 52)

The Series Repay mentioned above does a far better job than I could in reviewing the main frigate class vessels—there’s nothing like a battle to spell out the advantages and disadvantages. The most powerful ship is, of course, the British 50, being the only frigate that can hit shot for shot with the big ships inside carronade range. It’s getting there that’s the problem!

Figure 1: Two French 80’s screening a three decker Class 1 vessel from an enemy line in starboard.
First and foremost is the attitude you take into the game: playing a DYO scenario with a well matched opponent, you've got to concede in your head that your ships will get damaged and some will be lost (shudder...). The days of the overwhelming victory are gone—exceptions, of course. If a ship is damaged, no sweat, keep on fighting. If you can screen a damaged ship effectively, great, but don't go overboard to do it. (On one memorable occasion, an opponent screened a crippled frigate with another frigate AT FULL SAILS! Result: 2 crippled frigates.)

With this attitude firmly entrenched, a variety of aggressive tactics worthy of Nelson himself can be found.

Example: Figure 2a shows a recent position. For the British an excellent one. The French 110 (2101) can't bring her guns to bear and the two British 74's are firing into the hull of the French 80 (2201). In this situation, the Frenchman has very little choice in the matter. The 80 must move forward to escape the two-on-one, and the three decker must move down to get into the battle. Figure 2b is possible in two turns, given an aggressive British commander.

The 110 can open fire now on ship 1201, but the 74 has a stern rake on the unfortunate French 80. Coupled with the initial two-on-one, the smaller French ship will be hardpressed to win its duel with 1202. Figure 2c is what the British commander actually did. 1201 cannot be hit by the 110, whose guns remain silent another turn (repairs anybody?).

In my opinion this was not the best move—sooner or later the French 110 will hit 1201, so the British should get the most out of the ship while he can.

Tables 1-4 give a breakdown of the Basic and Advanced CRTs. Using the max and min values, a player can usually tell when he has a "doomed ship," i.e. one that is one or two broadsides away from striking. It's generally the play of these ships that spell the difference in a game. (Note on the tables: The average hits was added for the statistical freaks among us—actually, knowing you can expect 3.33 hull hits firing on HD76, only makes the pain worse when you roll a 1 or 2 and score only 2 hits!)

The owner of a "doomed ship" has three basic choices:
A) Run and hide/repair
B) Foul or grapple an enemy ship
C) Position to fire from both beams

Although occasionally useful, option A will deprive you of a set of guns and, in a close match, this could leave your opponent with an unanswered broadside, or allow him to disengage a ship for a raking maneuver. Neither is a pleasant prospect. Remember that a ship with twelve guns and one remaining hull square will hit as hard as a ship with no hull damage and the same number of guns—just not as long!

Option B is particularly well suited for the French in light of their larger crews. It is risky since grappling/fouling requires a die roll and failing to grapple/foul simply means the ship will get shot up faster. If you do succeed in boarding, go with everyone and do as much damage to his crew as you can (besides any crew left on board a ship that strikes must remain on board. Going with everyone will keep them fighting longer! More on melees later.) Chances are good your opponent will hold back a section of crew trying to finish you off with his broadside. It should be pointed out to all you eternal optimists that this bloody option should not be tried if the tables show he's got an excellent
chance of blowing the rest of your hull apart with

one shot. All you'll accomplish then is give him an
easy ship to capture and double the victory points he
will reap.

Then there's option C. Loosely translated, this
option becomes "get in there and shake things up!""
Loaded guns are no good to a struck ship, so, if
possible, try to maneuver to unload both sides into
the enemy. This particular strategem works
wonders on an opponent who, seeing the extensive
damage to your ship, assigns one vessel to finish you
off and ignores possible rakes as he moves off to
engage another ship. Double engagements are to be
avoided generally, but when you've only got a
couple turns left in a ship, you probably won't have
to worry about that unloaded broadside. You'll also
find that in order to get into a position to fire both
sides, you will most likely screen your own ships
from fire and, if you're lucky, throw a wrench into
the finely tuned battle line of your opponent.

Example: An opponent recently turned his
crippled 120 to keep a crack 80 from gaining a
raking position. In the process, he gave an elite 120 a
stern rake. Whoops . . .

If you're certain you're going to be hit, try and
minimize the damage as much as possible. This
sometimes can't be done, but usually will involve
secondguessing.

Example: Figure 4a shows a position at the
beginning of the game. The French 110 (2101) has
already sustained six raking hits and is at Battle
Sails. By turning the three decker into the wind (L),
the British 74 (1201) loses its rake and the HDT
drops from 3 to 0. However, as shown in Figure 4b,
the second 74, 1202, has the capability of gaining a
rake position and pouring its initial broadside into
the stern of the French vessel, and HDT5 shot.
Combined, an HDT0 and HDT5 shot have a
minimum hit possibility of three raking hits and a
maximum of six. In short, the 110 loses a rigging
section and is in deep trouble—not to mention the
rest of the French squadron! If, however, the 110
moves ahead (L), with the same British movement,
as shown in Figure 4c, the British will fire HDT3
(rake from 1201) and HDT2 (initial broadside from
1202). The minimum rigging hits is now one and
the maximum is six. Probability still indicates the loss
of a full rigging section, but the possibility exists
that the remaining three rigging squares will survive
the exchange, while two French ships can take their
revenge on 1202 at full sails. The second alternative
is the one the French commander chose. In actual
fact, his British opponent moved 1202 downwind
out of firing position and the 110's rigging survived
an HDT3 shot. (so all that fantastic second guessing
went for naught . . . sigh . . .)

Example: Figure 5: Two crack 74s: The British should attempt a grapple to
reduce the effect of the rake; the French can utilize grape shot here if
the situation remains the same.

D) Another friendly ship will get nailed by a
rake. Figure 6 shows an example of this situation.
The British crack 74 (1201) can deliver a powerful
broadside into the unprotected stern of the French
80 (201). In a lengthy broadside duel with the
British 80 (1202), the French SOL would be at a
definite damage disadvantage. The French frigate
(201), by grappling and boarding, can take some of
the punch out of the shot. If the frigate is an eltie 44,
as shown, the British commander will have to use
most of his crew against the attackers to insure his
ship doesn't fail.

One more quick comment on melees. If you're
forced into one of the above situations—or are
simply the bloodthirsty type—and a melee is
indefinite, make sure you designate the correct type of boarding party. The rules give you several choices, the important ones being the Offensive Boarding Party (OBP) and the Defensive Boarding Party (DBP). With abject apologies to Craig Taylor, the game's creator, I must state I've never seen good use for the DBP, simply because the DBP must be attacked before it becomes active. A simple example from a recent game: A crack French 80 has grappled a British crack 74. The British commander, fearing the worst, assigns his entire crew to a DBP. The Frenchman, knowing his opponent uses DBP lot, gambles and assigns NO boarding party. The result is a one hex breadth by the French ship with no answering fire from the British, who are standing aboard their suddenly shot up vessel, waiting for someone to fight. (This was not a contrived situation; it actually happened and a British player learned the hard way that if a boarding party is going to be formed, MAKE IT AN OBP!)

And, finally, the best and most important tactic of them all—KNOW THY OPPONENT! In the last example this was used to great effect. Some tactics will work wonders on one opponent, and lead to a complete disaster with others. Watch him (excuse me, lady) for a bit. Can he be outmaneuvered? Is he aggressive, charging in close range to slug it out and melee? With a new opponent, you will have to learn as you go—BUT LEARN! Insights into the way he plays will come as you watch his moves. And if you get into his head and figure out what he's going to do, the game should be yours if you act on your knowledge aggressively. Ah... please note the word 'should' in the last sentence. If you're rolling 1's and he's rolling 6's, forget it, baby, nothing is going to help!

The Rules

The rules under which the GENERAL'S Series Replay was fought are the rules I like best, with a few additions. With these rules squadrons of 150—200 points are just about right. This point total gives you the opportunity to play with the ships you can buy and find a happy medium between hard firepower and maneuverability. I have my own favorite squadron make ups, but I ain't gonna tell and tip off future opponents! The way to find your own combination is to play around a bit. (See the rule on the change of type of ammo, below)

Some thoughts on the advanced/optional rules.

Advanced game: This set of rules makes for more realistic play, but also lengthens it considerably. It can get messy with larger squadrons. Example: the following were fouled/grappled together—French forces: 120 el, 80 el, 80 el, 80 el, 80 el; British forces: two 120 el, 50 elite frigate, 36 el. Add to this that the French three decker was raking both one of the 120s (stem guns) and the 36 (full broadside—one!) and you get an unadulterated dice rolling game. For purists, I'd suggest that if the advanced rules are going to be used, limit your squadron size to 150 points maximum. (These rules make for some truly exciting frigate actions!)

Now for those of you who tire of playing the Basic rules and switch to the advanced game, be prepared for a drastic change in play and tactics. This comes about because of the increased length of the game, as well as the changes in the CRT. A major factor changed is the rakes. Whereas in the Basic game, you can change the game drastically with the advanced rules, a rake will not be the deciding factor, especially at long range.

Example: Figure 7 shows a squadron of crack British 74s closing in line abreast on a battle line of crack French 74s. Assuming for the moment that all ships have fired their initial broadsides, the following HDTs are used.

Figure 7: Three crack British 74s closing on three crack French 74s. The rules can determine the tactics of this maneuver.

Basic—three HDT5 shots, one against each British ship, or more likely, all three Frenchmen firing at a single target to really put him out of the fight (minimum rigging hits = 3 x 3; maximum = 3 x 5)

Advanced rules—three HDT4 shots, same possible targets, although only ship 1202 can be hit by the full raking broadsides of the three Frenchmen. (minimum rigging hits = 3 x 3; maximum = 3 x 4)

Advanced rules with Optional Rule XIII (Rake Determination) As none of the three French ships occupy a hex directly in front of a British ship, broadsides are normal, no rakes. Three HDT1 shots. (minimum rigging hits = 3 x 6; maximum = 3 x 1)

As you can see, the rules make a large difference in the type of game, and the tactics you use.

Wind Direction/Velocity Changes: The wind direction change is great; it adds an element of risk and chance that keeps the game up for grabs until the bitter end. A bad wind change can be truly devastating, as shown in Figure 8. Here with no wind change the British commander can move his two crack 80s into firing positions that also shield his crippled 120s. (Note—if the two deckers were at "irons" and at most three English ships will be able to fire as a follow up with the 120s taking the brunt of the French broadsides. Wind velocity, while adding additional realism (and giving a player an out should a hurricane arrive), also tend to add time to the movement phase, already the slowest part of the game. If you're ever fought with SOLs in a light breeze... yawn... I generally stay away from this one.

Figure 8: Two elite 120s and two crack 80s, facing a French battle line to port. The wind change raises a good move and condemns the three deckers to extensive damage.

Critical Hits: Another excellent "element of chance" rule, that can easily be added to a Basic game. A critical hit can be deadly and make a dinkum hit into a biggie. Although most often a "no effect" will result, an HDT0 shot has a chance to obscure an enemy broadside and a single lucky roll on the HDT2 rigging table can bring an entire mast down! (Please, don't ask how I know...)

Types of Ammo: Most games I've played have incorporated this rule and yet it's seldom used!

A) Grapeshot. Worthless unless you have the capability to move into a raking/solvent situation such as in Figure 4. In this position, you can cruise on a single shot with grape, before either most of your crew becomes involved in a melee, or the other vessel moves out of range. Needless to say, don't get caught with grape in your guns if the other guy is two hexes away.

B) Doubleshot. The limited range and the extra time needed to load this type of ammo makes it use risky. The turn not used for firing in a close SOL battle will generally allow your intended target the chance to pump one into your hull, and two close range broadsides with doubleshot will do more damage than one with doubleshot. Use at your peril with captured ships. Load with doubleshot and if, your opponent attempts to retake the vessel, the captured ship modifier won't hinder you too much as you hit him (once, that is...)

Another good use is with frigates when you engage SOLs. If they have added mobility they can get in and hit hard, and a rake with doubleshot will be a big bonus to your sister ships.

C) Chainshot. This is the only ammo type other than round that is used extensively. In the historical scenario, having used chain to sacrificing a ship at third of the British broadsides in order to blow away rigging. It's only the ammo advantage the French have—and more and more, DYO games are being played with the British extended the use of chain. (captured from the French, of course...)

In a DYO battle, hence shells that rigging is shot at from six to ten hexes; closer and the battle becomes a hull pounding contest. Spend too much time tearing rigging away and you'll have a badly mauled squadron on your hands, incapable of taking advantage of the superior maneuverability.

Example: In a recent game, my British opponent fired almost exclusively at my rigging with round and chain. The result was a 120 dismasted, a 44 frigate dismasted, and four crippled 80s with only minimal damage to hulls, guns and crew. In the same time span, my opponent fouled/grapped and/or sinking a 120, two 44s and in 80 SOL, with his remaining 120 and 80 battered and nearly useless. A won battle, one of the few times I've taken an overwhelming victory.

Destroyed Hull: There's nothing more frustrating than a turn of losses by struck and/or sinking a 120, 44s and in 80 SOL, with his remaining 120 and 80 battered and nearly useless. A won battle, one of the few times I've taken an overwhelming victory.

Destroyed Hull: There's nothing more frustrating than a turn of losses by strike and/or sinking a 120, 44s and in 80 SOL, with his remaining 120 and 80 battered and nearly useless. A won battle, one of the few times I've taken an overwhelming victory.

Conclusion

None.

In a game of this nature, there really can't be any hard and fast conclusions. The British found this out when they tried to avoid defeat by strictly adhering to their "Fighting Instructions," only to find out that, while they did in fact avoid defeat, they also avoided victory. What I've presented here is simply one gamer's view of an excellent game and its most exciting aspect, the DYO scenario. With a little thought and a lot of action, even in defeat, a well fought match can be enjoyed!
The RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN has borne out its initial promise as a game of classic proportions. Grand in scope and a challenge for both players, it has swiftly risen in popularity to occupy a top place in polls of many players. A myriad of available strategies, coupled with the various and distinct fronts that are sure to form, makes each game a new adventure. The fact that it is of such a large scale means that a player can make a serious mistake or suffer a severe setback in one area and yet still have the resources to compensate for his loss by a quick strike in another. Through such a mistake, or possibly because of excellent German luck or tactics, a Russian commander may find himself with his back to the wall almost immediately. The end of 1942 can still find Stalin badly outnumbered and outnumbered, thus offering no chance for offensive action in the foreseeable future. This situation is the subject of the third part of my series entitled "The Vipuri Defense." As the entire series has centered itself primarily with defensive tactics, it is fitting that this third article deal with the problem of salvaging a potentially lost game in the face of overwhelming odds.

The basic premises are that the Russian production has been seriously crippled, the German army is relatively intact, and the front line stretches roughly from Leningrad through Moscow to Rostov, all areas under German control or facing threats that cannot be easily answered. The Russian army has dwindled to numbers so few that a major offense is out of the question, while a win is a concept only to the most determined and wildly optimistic of souls. Thus the stage is set for the final act in one of the world's greatest conflicts.

Diagram 1 - "AGN Push to Archangel" (July '42) Available Russian Units: 35th Infantry (4×), 3rd and 4th Armies (6×/3×)

Assault on Archangel

Despite the remoteness of Archangel and its naturally protective (swampy) terrain, the defense of this valuable resource center should not be taken lightly, as an alert German may quickly shift some of his forces for a swift stab at this productive post. If Moscow falls early, Archangel is particularly vulnerable. Consider Diagram 1. It is your turn during July of 1942. Moscow has suddenly succumbed and the German has pressed Army Group North forward in a push to an unprotected Archangel. Assuming you had only the three units indicated available for defense, how would you allocate them? It doesn't seem like much, but a counterattack Russian has to learn to play with a minimum of units. There are several adequate solutions from which to choose, but the danger (and the point of this little problem) is that there exists one position that gives the German his only chance to take Archangel by November. Examine Diagram 2. Both of the armored units have been placed in Archangel to provide it with the maximum possible defense strength, while the 50th infantry has been (erroneously) placed on D1 to provide what is euphemistically called "flanking support." It is precisely this support which is the undoing of Archangel. The German would simply move up and attempt a second impulse attack as indicated in Diagram 2. The 43rd infantry soaks off against the Archangel defenders at D1, while the remaining units attack the 50th at D2, yielding an 83.3% chance of victory (a Contact is definitely a success). The Russian must now attack the 7th and 10th infantry on D2 at D1. Even with the help of an extra unit on D1-1, the best he can get is a 2×1. A Contact is a bad result for the Russians as now the additional unit on D1-1 will be forced into a second force impulse soakoff, reducing the attack on D2 to a 1-1. The chance of Archangel surviving such a move is only about 65% (German attack fails or Russian counterattack succeeds). Not bad, you may say, but consider if you had left the 50th infantry out of the picture completely. The best the German can now do is a 1-3 attack against the units in Archangel, and only the most desperate of commanders will attempt such a suicidal mission. His only alternative is to move his units up as close as possible and hope that November doesn't bring snow, which virtually assures that Archangel will survive the winter. If you can spare the unit, the 50th infantry should be placed on H2, limiting severely the advance of the southernmost units. 1-2 is not quite as accurate a placement as it could now be surrounded without help from either unit on F1. Note that German placement on F1 and H2, preventing soakoffs against E1 from any hex other than E1.

Diagram 2 - " Faulty Russian Defense"

This problem is a nice example of where an incorrectly placed unit can do more damage than by not even bringing the unit into play. It also illustrates another theme that often occurs throughout RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN (or for that matter, many other wargames), and which I call the principle of the "critical" hex. In many cases, a direct frontal assault against a position is not feasible as the position is too strongly held or not completely accessible. A secondary target is then chosen in order to flank the primary objective or to position units on hexes that must be attacked if the defender does not want to give up any ground. It is these hexes which I define as critical hexes. Obviously any hex adjacent to the main objective is a critical hex, but what is not so obvious is that six of the twelve hexes that are two hexes away from the primary target are also critical hexes. Diagram 3 illustrates the symmetry of this concept. When protecting a city or key river line, the critical hexes around the objective should never be garrisoned with less than the effective strength of the units occupying the objective itself. If this is not possible, placement of delay units should be considered on the non-critical hexes. Diagram 4 illustrates the correct placement of such units when defending Stalingrad. Note that HH-6, HH-1 and JJ-4 (all critical hexes) are occupied by relatively strong forces. With an abundance of units, the urge to strengthen a position by placing large forces on the critical hexes (HH-7 and JJ-8, for example) must be restrained. In a technique similar to that used in the Archangel example, the German can roll over the delay units in the first impulse and execute the second impulse attack shown in Diagram 5. If the Russian insists on fighting for Stalingrad, he will be forced to counterattack at very poor odds and only then if he takes some very bad soakoffs.

Diagram 3 - Reinforcement of Stalingrad

Line Strengthening

An interesting question arises when placing a unit along a front that is already adequately garrisoned. For example, study Diagram 6, which shows part of the river line running from Saratov to...
Stalingrad. Assuming you have an extra 3-5 infantry unit that you would like to use to beef up your line, where is the best placement? In case #1 it would go on FF-5, making for quite a formidable front line. Regardless of where the German attacks, he is going to face a defense of twenty combat factors. In case #2 it would be placed on GG-5, making the line somewhat weaker locally but slightly harder to assault. Which is correct? Well, it is impossible to get better than a point nearest line to successful. In an extreme case, the decision may be made for you if the German has managed to capture the key city of Tula. Stalin has no choice other than to flee to Archangel as the loss of Tula also implies the loss of the rail line leading south. However, as these are questions of strategy and this is an article concerned mainly with tactics, I am going to cop out on which place is “better.” Rather I will show a possible defense for both areas and leave the final decision to you.

**RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN**

### The Sunny South

Once the decision to go south has been made, the basic defensive line runs roughly from Gorki through the mountains and Saratov, and then along the Volga to Stalingrad and Astrakhan. Stalingrad has already been discussed, and the major tactic when defending Saratov and Astrakhan is to garrison them with the largest regular infantry forces available and avoid the critical hexes like the plague. Gorki is not necessary to hold, but if a few small armored and cavalry units are available, they are ideal behind the rivers and in the mountains found in that region. Ideally the Russian defenders would slowly fall back south and finally form a defense somewhat in the shape of that shown in Diagram 7. Hopefully you won’t reach this situation before the end of 1943 because even one Stuka will play havoc with the best prepared defense. The river line from LL-6 to Astrakhan is virtually impregnable. Faced with only 1-1 attacks, the German really has no choice other than to flank the defenders along the LL-row. Reserves should be as close to the front line as possible to restrict German penetration. Don’t be afraid to counterattack at 1-1. When Russia has been reduced to a mere twenty-five hexes, you’re not going to quibble at a few low odds attacks in order to regain territory. Even though the Germans have not yet halved during the winter months, raids against the rail line along FF-3 can be very productive.

An alternate defensive setup is shown by the red shaded units. This line is stronger in that the units on LL-5 can be attacked from only two hexes rather than three that give you more room to maneuver behind your lines. However, it does leave the units on GG-2 very exposed. But if you can afford the units, it is the correct defense. Anything that will keep the German away from the main action must be considered productive.

If, or when, this line finally breaks, the largest units available (hopefully you still have your 1st Guard Armored left), Stalin, and Stavka should be placed in Astrakhan. There will undoubtedly be one worker unit worth two there already, with good prospects of a worker unit worth one to come later.

### Stalin: Whither Thou Goest?

In the unfortunate circumstance where the Russian has been badly mauled in the early part of the game and the German armor hovers like vultures over a weakly defended Moscow, the Russian is forced to make a decision that will undoubtedly affect the course, and possibly the outcome, of the entire game. And the decision he is forced to make is: Where am I going to hide Stalin?

Because of the severe movement restrictions on Stalin, there are only two places where he can possibly seek refuge. The first is in Archangel and the second is along the rail line from Astrakhan to Saratov. Gorki as a haven can be eliminated for obvious reasons. The question is further complicated by strategic considerations, such as the placement of the bulk of the German army, the losses on both sides, the Russian production potential and even by items as nebulous as a player’s psychology. In an extreme case, the decision may be made for you if the German has managed to capture the key city of Tula. Stalin has no choice other than to flee to Archangel as the loss of Tula also implies the loss of the rail line leading south. However, as these are questions of strategy and this is an article concerned mainly with tactics, I am going to cop out on which place is “better.” Rather I will show a possible defense for both areas and leave the final decision to you.

**The General**

This would give you the rather astounding effective defense strength of forty-six. If the German has suffered considerable losses up to this point, he may be considerably pressed to scrape up enough units for a 2-1. And if he’s incapable of rolling a number higher than a two, you’ve earned yourself a draw!

One strategic consideration I would like to mention when sending Stalin south is that Archangel stands a very good chance of surviving the rest of the war. Once Moscow falls, the German undoubtedly will exert his maximum effort to the destruction of Stalin, and allow little or no resources to take on Archangel. So what, you say. What’s a few extra factors going to do for me now? Well, perhaps that is a valid point. Just how much is Archangel worth? Assuming we place our first arriving “2” worker unit in Archangel (a good tactic, I might add), he starts producing his normal output in January, 1942. After eight turns (May, 1943), his output doubles for the remainder of the game (thirteen more). The Archangel replacements begin in January, 1942 (an average of three and one-half per turn) and continue until December, 1944 (eighteen turns). Thus the total potential production for Archangel is:

$$8 \times 2 + 13 \times 4 + 18 \times 3/2 = 131$$

One-hundred and thirty-one factors! And if you count carefully, you’ll find the entire Axis reinforcements for the entire game listed on the OOB is only one-hundred and twenty factors. Makes you think twice about the importance of Archangel, doesn’t it?

### The Frozen North

By chance or by design you may find yourself and most of your army trudging through the swamps of the far north. This area has advantages and disadvantages, as does the other, but are of a somewhat different nature. There’s only one river line (excluding the Archange1 river) to hide behind, but the total front exposed to German attacks is smaller than in the south. Again assuming you can hold out until the end of 1943, the defense in Diagram 8 is recommended. With only some minor exceptions, this entire line is 3-1 proof, and the river line is actually 2-1 proof. Thus the front line is somewhat stronger than that in the south, but one of the features here that is so conducive to defense is also one that hinders the Russian player. This feature is the large swamp lying in the north-east corner. While somewhat retarding any German
advance, it also becomes quite a large stumbling block to the Russian as he is trying to maneuver his not so maneuverable forces into optimum positions. The wise German will retreat the Russian infantry into the swamps whenever possible, which effectively removes those units from play for one game turn. Placement of Russian reserves is extremely critical as they must be prepared to fill the gaps regardless of where they may occur.

The circled number in each hex reflects the number of corps size units that can attack the given hex. (Because this defense is so dense, a terrible price may be exacted from the German in the form of soakoffs.)

The units around Lake Ladoga can be more quickly flanked than those on H-3, but H-3 which might be expected to be the weakest on casual observation. These numbers, when analyzed together with Table I, reveal some interesting statistics. The first fact is, given that the German has taken no appreciable armor loss, that it is impossible to make the line 3-1 proof. Prior to November 1944, there are two hexes, B-5 and H-3, that the German can attack at 3-1. But he can do this only if all his large armored units, his 2nd SS Res and all three Army Group Headquarters are available. Furthermore, if he wants to use the Headquarter units, he will only be able to do so in the second impulse. While technically possible to achieve a 3-1, it is in practice a rare occurrence, and the Russian commander will not have to worry about a DE result. Unfortunately, preventing 3-1's does not guarantee that the line will hold. After all, a 2-1 is not that bad of an attack, and if the German has more units than the Russian, the front will slowly but inexorably be driven back. Unless resources are plentiful or the German is badly depleted, I doubt that this defense can keep OKW from attacking Archangel for more than a year.

The units with his defense of Warsaw. What he knows that isn't so is that German infantry can reach Brest-Litovsk. His criticism of the Beyma or Standard defense is that he prefers "to make this 2:1 attack with a 3-3 infantry, a 4-6 armor and 1 air factor." Naturally this ties up fewer armor units and results in a lesser expected loss. Except that Bottrig's "Standard" Defense (not Beyma's) is defending Brest-Litovsk against an infantry unit that can't get there to attack the Polish 2-3 unit, his reasoning is flimsy. "Whatever is only almost true is quite false, and among the most dangerous of errors, because being so near truth, it is the more likely to lead astray."—Henry Ward Beecher

I do have one modest suggestion to amend the Beyma defense which is indeed a standard. I like to put the air unit on Brest-Litovsk. It has psychological effects that can lead the German to attacking a 1-3 and then Warsaw across the river. If it doesn't work, you haven't lost anything vital. Along with the conquest of Poland, Bottrig has some options. You know my methods now, Watson. As usual, I disagree that it is wise to avoid the "Do Nothing" option. There is a concept in Naval Warfare, of a " Fleet in being."  Four units never run aground. "When it is known to exist but is not brandished." —Alfred Thayer Mahan. Building up your forces to exploit enemy errors is a mini-max strategy. You try to minimize the maximum loss you can suffer. With two-front war strategies, even if one front is "only Polish," the other may not need to risk. If 60 factors of infantry you could build in the Fall of 1939 (or 28 armor, or whatever) could exploit enemy errors next turn and in future turns throughout the game, but you will not have the forces available to take advantage if they are not built now, you have a difficult decision to make. Defense in depth is seldom an error. Either side can make errors that require lots of troops for the German to win after. You might plan a lot of attrition. It works better with 61 factors.

We already discussed attacking Russia. See how the assumption that the attack first has clouded the situation. With the same data I counted off, but Bottrig decides not to attack because "most of (Germany's forces) will be attacking Poland on the first turn. We also discussed attacking France, West, which Bottrig darings as ineffective. But it is ineffective because everybody is messing about in Poland. Finally, we have covered the fallacy in attributing Yugoslavia—that a major power can take the losses instead. To recapitulate (never capitulate, just recapitulate), you owe it to yourself to ask the magic question "Why did he say that" when you hear an authority speak. "The important thing is not to stop questioning."—Albert Einstein.
PASSING IN REVIEW

ACANDID GUIDE TO AVALON HILL WARGAMES

By Nicky Palmer

Many GENERAL readers doubtless buy the magazine on the basis of owning just a few Avalon Hill games. They have a choice of dozens of other games which they might buy, and they might all sound pretty good in the advertisements, though they get vaguely distorted impressions from acquaintances: “don’t buy BULGE, that’s a real turkey’; “THIRD REICH is unplayable,” etc. Presumably they make their choice on the basis of what they have, but frequently they may get something rather different from their expectations, whereas another game would have been just what they were looking for. Disgruntled, they chuck wargaming and take up girls . . .

The RBG as an objective tool is only a partial solution—speaking as it does in tones of gray—with hundreds of likes and dislikes distilled into a form of middle ground gruel. For many unable to interpret the averages, only subjective reviews are truly meaningful.

It is hard to conceive a more commonly accepted independent critic whose views have not been influenced by a special relationship with any publisher than Nicky Palmer. He laid claim to this title and a wargaming milestone at the same time with his publication of THE COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO BOARD WARGAMING(revised in Vol. 14, No. 2, p. 35); commercial board wargaming’s first hard cover book. In addition, Nicky writes the regular wargame review column for the British published GAMES & PUZZLES magazine and is president of Britain’s International Game Club. His reviews are his own, and no doubt will be disputed hotly by other players, but, as he suggests, a survey from a single source may give a good picture of the highlights of many games in comparison with each other.

There is an odd tendency audible in increasingly widespread wargaming circles: they think there are too many wargames. This bizarre phenomenon is suggestive of Casanova complaining that women keep pestering him when he feels like a quiet evening a la palazzo: one doesn’t quite believe it either.

But there is a reason underlying the madness: the trouble is not really that there are too many games—except insofar as this indicates tight deadlines and botched jobs—but the frustration engendered by the inability to enjoy all the delights simultaneously. Possibly Casanova had a similar problem. One has to choose, limited by constraints of time, money, and available opponents.

This, however, is easier said than done. One can read the advertisements: all the games sound terrific, except the ones that are being phased out to make way for infinitely better replacements which even old owners of the game should buy at once. One can read a variety of amateur magazines: one ends up to spot a few supergames which everyone loves, and a few dollar-traps, but in general one gets a blurred impression of conflicting opinions on scores of different games.

What is needed is a basis for comparison: the same people talking about a range of alternatives, with the advantages and drawbacks of each. In my book, I tried to do this with often too brief reviews of more or less every game on the market, culled from my own experience and that of friends. I’d like here to have a more detailed look at the Avalon Hill range, in the hope that it will help readers choose those games which they do not already own which suit their particular tastes. Most GENERAL readers will have some of the games discussed, and can use the comments on these to decide whether I’m talking enough sense to make the other reviews worth considering. The readers who have all the games mentioned can compose letters to the editor pointing out all the errors of judgement. In any case—beware: my comments are subjective. All reviews are subjective, whether they admit it or not, though it is not necessary to go as far as the noted English book reviewer Sydney Smith, who never (he said) read a book before reviewing it, because it prejudiced him so. Rest assured that I am restricting myself to AH games which I know personally. I assume that most GENERAL readers will know the general features of AH games: what I want to do is convey the atmosphere: what are they like to play?

Start with the Panzerblitz family. Are they all much of a muchness, with a change of scene and some polishing done on the later games? Far from it! Beach Wars is almost certainly the most realistic. The dominance of armor in the earlier games is eliminated to give each type of unit a strong role to play, helped, of course, by the advances in anti-tank technology which have rocked the military balance in the Middle East. The right balance is found for the “Panzerbush” problem which threatens realism in Panzerblitz: units which hide in towns and forests are safe when hugging the ground, but the moment they move or fire they become liable to attack by any long-range guns which the enemy has placed on appropriate hills. A wealth of detailed rules in a booklet which, unlike the Panzerblitz rules, doesn’t fall apart with repeated use, makes a game a delight for players with an eye for realism.

However, is it really realism that is your first priority? Is it the thunder-and-lightning image of armored warfare that interests you? Would you reject a game called Soldatenblitz? Do you like really mobile positions, with swift thrusts all over the board in a few turns?

If so, then Panzerblitz is more your game than AIW. Infantry and in particular towed artillery are frankly undervalued in the game, and tracked vehicles, given a clear run on an open road, can put on a touch of speed which makes them look like Ferraris. Never mind: the point is that Panzerblitz is primarily a game of armored warfare, and it has gathered an immense following because it is one of the very few games which recreate the atmosphere of tank combat: mobile, fluid, and—given a chance—potentially deadly at the first shot. They say that people are divided into convergent and divergent thinkers, with the former brilliant at problems in a firmly defined environment, and the latter reveling in open-ended situations which change with every passing minute. Panzerblitz is for divers: unless you choose one of the narrow-board scenarios featuring a delaying action, you will find that everything turns out a little differently from your expectations.

Panzerleader is somewhere in between the two: much more realistic than Panzerblitz; with the wild lunges curbed by opportunity fire, mad dashes tending to get stopped in mid-run as they cross an open space. The game resembles AIW in a number of respects: the handy rulebook; the useful though unsightly spot in each hex for measuring line of sight; the (limited) provision for air support—and the general atmosphere, though the game is more fluid than AIW. Neither Panzerleader nor AIW can be played satisfactorily solitaire, whereas Panzerblitz can without any difficulty, and is also easier to pbm.

For a serious simulation of combined arms combat, AIW is much the best choice of the three; however, an interesting alternative is Tobruk, which uses a very different approach. AIW is a plot-and-level game, and retains elements of operational planning over a medium-sized area: the rival forces maneuver in separate groups along the numerous twisting roads through the dense terrain. Tobruk works with individual tanks and infantry sections in a virtually open desert. As well as being totally tactical in orientation, the absence of natural terrain obstacles collapses the battle into a single general melee, even if the action is currently concentrated in one sector of the line.

AIW combined system is basically similar to that of Panzerblitz: revolutionary when it was introduced, it is still in the general tradition of board wargaming: each unit has its range, combat factors, and speed, and firing is calculated according to the attack; defence odds, modified in general categories (such as armour-piercing shells fired at infantry being halved in effect). Tobruk makes a total departure from this style by descending into mind-boggling detail. A great deal has been written about the imposing numbers of die rolls needed in Tobruk; it is not always recognized that this stems directly from the decision to study each round of firing in microscopic detail. Is this the first time you have fired at the target? Where? How severely? Is he incapacitated? Can he be repaired?

The technique is partly borrowed from miniatures, where it has been used to players’ satisfaction for many years. Wooden Ships and Iron Men is its spiritual brother afloat. Basically the question is how you want to spend your time. With a Tobruk approach, you can simulate a small battle down to the individual level at which it will be experienced in reality. The Panzerblitz family remains basically tactical and enables you to let the individual fires take their place in a larger scenario, at the price of a certain blurring of detail. It should be added that Squad Leader, with features from both Panzerblitz et al and Tobruk, as well as many new ideas, is currently getting a rapturous first reception from the hobby. I haven’t played it yet myself, but it certainly looks good...
Many players believe that tactical games like those above are the closest one can get to realism. There is a very strong case for the reverse theory: that realism increases with the strategic level. Fighting in a trench or firing a tank does not really reflect combat at the higher level. The game may simulate the actual outcome: it is unreasonable (perhaps fortunately) to expect any game played on a dining-table to involve the incredible confusion and gut reactions of tactical combat. An operational or strategic game, however, does not get its realism from the situation for the higher-level commander: like us, he is sitting with a map, estimates of unit strengths and positions, firm instructions from On High about territorial objectives, and the necessity of giving orders without any certainty of the outcome.

Some products shows this to be rather an unfashionable view: the majority of new games are either tactical level, or “monsters” simulating a number of levels at once. However, fashion is primarily the reflection of last year’s feedback (the designers’ impressions, and anyway we can’t be bothered gambling miles on a considerable range of “higher-level” games. First, the “classics”, on which most of us who have been playing for more than a few years were reared.

**D-Day**, the first invasion game, with an interesting choice of landing areas for the Allies, four different scenes from the battle for the undefended South of France which, however, is a rotten place from which to invade Germany. The snags about the game, apart from its abolition of the French Railways, is that one gradually discovers that what appears to be the optimal strategy for each side is not conducive to excitement: the Allies should invade in a “safe” area, and gradually steamroller France; the Germans should evade early combat, and keep their powerful units for a last-ditch defense of the frontier in a maze of fortresses prepared for the purpose. The “Banzai complex” manifests itself so often, however, that International Game Club statistics show the results in to be exactly balanced: for every cautious Allied player plodding to victory, there is a devil-may-care fellow. The machine to the horizon. The Germans must concentrate their armour before the winter, or the game is over. The game has a formula to disturb the white peace to the horizon. The needn’t be bound by it. The strategists very neatly, despite a reckless disregard for human experience. The basic game results in a tedious series of engagements for days on end all over the board, and should be skipped in favor of the advanced version at once. An errata sheet for the rules is urgently needed, especially for the advance air combat and movement through rough terrain sections (for a really wild situation) a secretly introduced number of levels at once. However, there is little resemblance to historical simulation. The new versions in *Gettysburg* ***77*** sound more promising, but I have not seen them myself yet.

**Waterloo** is yet another “classic” which works quite well, though the piece density is rather low, giving the game a curious and perhaps realistic flavour of a violent battle fought in the midst of an otherwise completely peaceful countryside. This effect makes the game rather less dramatic than most of the other “classics”, where there is something going on over a long front. The new rules remove some anomalies in the old version and perhaps tilt the game towards the French.

The old *Gettysburg* was less of a success than the other classics, due to a combination of low piece density and feeble victory conditions emphasizing unit destruction rather than terrain: as a result, the game tends to degenerate into scattered chases with little resemblance to historical simulation. The new versions in *Gettysburg* ***77*** sound more promising, but I have not seen them myself yet.

**Kriegspiel** is a brave hole: there are a number of interesting innovations which the game introduced, such as prisoner capture and exchange, and an ingenious negotiating interaction table, but the game remains a jolly one to jollify, and in practice there is little room for ingenuity.

**Blitzkrieg** was an early attempt in the “monster” direction, with air forces, paratroops, invasions, and supply rules; while its reputation for stalemates can be belied by two aggressive players, it suffers from the tendency to end in the disintegration of one side before a real breakthrough has been achieved, as well as having the disadvantage of being totally abstract (Big Red versus Great Blue). Quite exciting, but now looking a bit dated: postal players should avoid it (too many units).

*Midway* has survived well in a specialist’s field. There are two basic ingredients to the game: the searching (which is more or less guesswork once the standard techniques have been mastered, e.g. not marking just the coastline) which is always done since the game restricts the areas to which one can move next, and the air strikes. Surface combat is very rare, as the Japanese fleet would normally win it; the Americans must rely on the bombers. The game maintains a steady pace with intermittent bouts of furious action, though it is a little short on variety.

**Battle of the Bulge** has an undeserved reputation as a German cakewalk. Despite a map of dubious accuracy, this remains my favorite of all wargames. The fascination of the game stems from the fact that you can never be sure who is winning: the Germans always seem at the point of breakthrough, but the growing tide of US reinforcements keeps plugging the gaps. IGC records show the Germans winning 90% of the games, but tenacious resistance by the US with fortification construction at every opportunity make the game almost balanced in my personal experience. The rather prosaic results reflect the tediously drawn-out series of engagements for days on end all over the board, and should be skipped in favor of the advanced version at once. An errata sheet for the rules is urgently needed, especially for the advance air combat and movement through rough terrain sections (for a really wild situation) a secretly introduced number of levels at once. However, there is little resemblance to historical simulation. The new versions in *Gettysburg* ***77*** sound more promising, but I have not seen them myself yet.

**Luftwaffe** has deceptively complex-looking rules, and is actually a pretty simple game to play. There is a fair amount of historical “feel” as the slow-moving bomber fleets roll into Germany against increasingly desperate resistance from the numerous fighter airfields en route: many a raid is frustrated just as it is about to reach its target. The players have a good deal of careful planning to do, with the Germans especially dependent on careful placement of their different aircraft types: for playability reasons, all planes of the same type fly together (and run out of fuel together), so you can’t say what an aircraft type is doing. The Russians are usually longer with a few extra ideas thrown in. The game is interesting, in the same way that *War at Sea* is interesting: both sides have difficult choices of strategies. Neither game is a great deal to distinguish it from land games, however, because of the strategic level: dogfight and single-ship action enthusiasts should look elsewhere.

**War at Sea** is unambiguously suggested that your girlfriend might be able to manage it, or failing that your kid brother. Despite this frank disavowal of hard-core simulation appeal, the game has become quite popular as a quick beer-and-pretzels relaxation, and its comparatively simple odds calculations have given the mathematicians another place to keep an eye on. A fashionable touch of fantasy gaming is, introduced by the “disabled” rule, which in ships under hot pursuit from a swarm of faster enemies are able, when hit by enemy fire giving a “disabled” result, to sprout wings and fly back to their home port as the other ship. A few innovations have helped the game: the description, though the seriously serious-minded may prefer to use “driven off”. As a simulation, *War at Sea* is frequently absurd but as a not unchallenging quick game, it has much to recommend it.

**Anzio** is altogether different, and should only be tackled by the serious simulator. Featuring a delectable long map of Italy and a magnificent set of
counters for all the units in the Italian campaign with replacement counters for each step that they lose, the game offers an absorbing, hard-fought struggle all the way up the peninsula. There are four levels of complexity, from the moderate to the mind-boggling, and three of length, from an evening’s play to a week’s campaign. Invasion and air support rules add color to the bitter land fighting, and the sophisticated breakthrough rules in the advanced versions present a trench war from developmental. There is rather a lot of accuracy to the nit-picking point: the Poles get depressed after developing. There is rather a lot of accuracy to the

moving up the complexity scale, we arrive at Third Reich. This is a brilliant game, with possibly the worst rules ever published by a leading game company. The first edition generated whole booklets of errata, and yet every game seemed to generate another unresolved question. Nevertheless, the hobby just couldn’t keep away from it, and every week sees hundreds of determined men all over North America and the UK sit down for another game: teeth set, eyes fierce in concentration, both hands through the rules to reach the unyielded game underneath. The fact is that Third Reich remains the only game on the market in which the whole European war can be simulated in the course of a reasonable span of time, while preserving a reasonable degree of realism. The backbone to the game is the outstanding production system, which steers everything from unit production to the costs of opening up the war on a new front. Both the two-player and multi-player versions work well, although diplomatic possibilities are constrained by a historical straightjacket enforced by the rules. Surprisingly, a postal game is also quite feasible, if a gamemaster is available. The 3rd edition rulebook, incidentally, is said to be a notable improvement, though still not quite devoid of ambiguity.

Finally, there are the diplomatic games: Diplomacy and Kingmaker. The player in power is greatest in Diplomacy, where it reaches extraordinary heights: impersonation, forgery, bribery and incredible flights of deception have been recorded, especially in the postal game. A celebrated game in Britain featured an offer by Italy to Austria to send $9 as a deposit, to be refunded after the move if Italy moved as promised. Austria then wrote saying “I will only return the money if you do as I request on the next move.” Back came the cool reply from Italy, “If you retain the surety after written consent to the agreement, you are guilty of grand larceny, and liable to two years’ imprisonment. If, however, you have consulted with Germany about this, as your letter implies, then you are guilty of conspiracy. The penalty for this is up to life imprisonment.” The $9 was in his letter-box next morning. But the alliance terminated by printing articles on good play, zine news, listing rating systems, game openings and listing a complete variant game and map with each issue. Subs are $4.00 with single copies available for $1.25 Foreign subscriptions $5.

Orders for DIPLOMACY WORLD must be made payable to DIPLOMACY WORLD and sent to the editor’s Indiana address.

DEALER INQUIRIES INVITED

DIPLOMACY WORLD is a quarterly magazine on Diplomacy which is edited by Walter Buchanan, R.R. #2, Box 324, Lebanon, IN 46052 and subsidized by The Avalon Hill Game Company. The purpose of each 40-page offset issue is to present a broad overview of the postal Diplomacy hobby by printing articles on good play, zine news, listing rating systems, game openings and listing a complete variant game and map with each issue. Subs are $4.00 with single copies available for $1.25 Foreign subscriptions $5.

M1

Bugs & Breaches... Cont'd from Pg. 30 discover that the Arachnids have run out of units in some areas of the perimeter, allowing you to shift and redistribute forces to concentrate against greater threats.

While the Terran player must always maintain a balanced force, the Arachnid must strive to pull him off balance by using surprise, feints, and general sneakiness. There is no set formula for this, since it depends on your enemy. Nevertheless, there are some tricks you can pull.

On the first turn you can pop up in V-11 safely, since there is no way for the M1 to attack it, and you pick up an easy five points. After the first turn, a good Terran player will be able to attack every hex within his perimeter. The mountains are good places to surround him because of the die roll modification. Especially nasty are hexes surrounded by rough terrain, because they are so hard for the M1 to reach; note that a trooper must be adjacent to attack with ranged fire.

The barren terrain is good for feints, or a surprise assault. One good tactic, if it is lightly garrisoned, is creating three breaches in one turn without sending units through them. You now have the threat of six units popping up in the desert at once (assuming that three breaches have been made there), and he will have to rush reinforcements there. If he doesn’t, you have the capability to embarrass his desert troops with an attack.

The desert is reinforced, attack elsewhere: you have caught him off balance he may just maim. After

This can also lead to ambushes of enemy units, or your armada of seaborne bugs, forcing him to rush troops there not quite in time, and giving you some points.

Now you have a bag of tricks to use in the first two scenarios of STARSHIP TROOPERS. The more you play the more tricks you will accumulate.

The above players represent the 25 highest verified (11+ rated) games of the 3,000 member AREA pool. Players with an opponent qualifier less than C were not calculated among the top player ratings.

The following AREA members have been terminated. No rating points can be awarded for games with these individuals as they are no longer members of the system.

Terminated Memberships
0089-01 38059-01 64113-01 91794-01
0193-01 45268-01 67208-02 93603-01
0206-01 55113-01 70064-04 93531-01
1121-04 56020-02 71378-04 CANADIAN
1407-01 68441-01 75080-02 OVERSIZED
1403-01 68540-02 77996-02
2801-01 68541-01 90603-02

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Kingmaker is a chancier game, and a great favorite at conventions late in the evening: it may not be a tremendous test of skill, but it is remarkably good fun. There are plentiful opportunities for card-turning and those who like to be outdone by the slings and arrows of outrageous card-turns: your leading noble is called away to face a peasant revolt, or your armada of seaborne toughs are swept ashore by a violent storm into a peaceful harbor in France. Diplomacy, while making less attempt at realism, is a faster game. Kingmaker is a less unpredictable game, with tremendous suspense deriving from the simultaneous movement and total player distrust. Buy Kingmaker for colorful fun; Diplomacy to discover the true depths of twisted ingenuity to which you and your friends can sink! But note that both games require a number of players (3 or 4 in Kingmaker, 7 in Diplomacy) to be much fun, so you should either be willing to play postally, or have a lot of mad friends.
AWAY FROM THE COMBINED FLEET

New Concepts and Tactics for Midway

By William B. Seagrave

With MIDWAY's some 14 years old, you could well believe that everything that could have been written about strategy and tactics in the game has already been printed. Probably because up to now the Japanese player has been mesmerized by the Rengo Kantai (combined fleet) concept, where, except for one or two scout cruisers, the Japanese group their ships into one huge carrier group and the Yamato group. In all three of the MIDWAY "Series Replays" in the GENERAL since 1973, the Japanese have lost. Since the old concepts and tactics don't seem to work for the Japanese, one must consider new ideas on mass, movement and time-distance ratios.

**Search Pattern**

All too often the Japanese, restricted by lower number of searches, ends up biting his nails in fear of a 1700, June 3 attack. To prevent an undetected first day air strike, the following search pattern will disclose the Americans every time.

When searching, insure the Nagara moves into one of the central B areas in order to search the F column on the second turn. By the sixth turn, Nagara should be in the central or southern D column.

June 3

| 0500 | None |
| 0700 | F4, F5, F6 |
| 0900 | F1, F2, F3 |
| 1000 | E5, E6, E7 |
| 1300 | E2, E3, E4 |
| **1500** | D4, D5, D7 |
| (one ship search by Nagara) |
| 1700 | D1, D2, D3 |

(Nagara does not search, but evades detection)

*If no contact is made by the 1500 turn, then the 1700 safe sanctuary will be in any zone within the A column.

Of course a much simpler search pattern could detect the American Fleet, but then the Japanese would normally hug the A, D, G zones of the A column with no room for maneuver during the night turns. Obviously during the first day the Japanese are almost always kept under observation; especially during the 1500 and 1700 turn when he joins with the three cruisers. The two night turns and the 0500, June 4 turn are of little benefit as he combines with the Atago group. An American 0500, June 4 search of A, 2, 3, 4, followed by an 0700 search of A, B, 4, B, 5, 6, will locate or trap the Rengo Kantai within a restricted area.

The American, during his two night and 0500 turn, could be within any of 25 areas. With this being the case, any surprise to be gained lies with the Americans.

**Fleet Tactics**

To try to bring the pendulum of surprise back towards a somewhat more even basis, the Japanese must abandon the Rengo Kantai tactic and employ a novel strategy. During the previous described search pattern the Japanese could be in any zone of the A column. A distinct advantage, as will be shown.

During the two night turns of June 3-4 and the following 0500 move the Kaga, Hiryu, two BB's and five CA's advance into the C column. The Nagara is further ahead and is not counted as part of this group. During the same time frame the Akagi, Soryu and Suzuya move within the A column to join the Atago group. This separation of the CV's is known as the split CV concept. When the American searches the A column areas he will most likely locate the Japanese, but not what he expects. A Japanese response would be: carriers, battleships and cruisers located in area zone. Since the actual names or total numbers do not have to be disclosed, the American will assume that he has located the Japanese Rengo Kantai. Unaware that a CV strike force is steaming westwards, the Americans could easily be caught unprepared with readied aircraft on deck. With suicide attacks ruled out the Americans would feel safe 8 or 10 zones away from the Japanese even if he were located in return.

(a) Akagi, Soryu and Zuiho's attack aircraft fly 10 zones; attack the Americans and land on the Kaga and Hiryu decks.

(b) Simultaneously Kaga and Hiryu's attack aircraft fly 4 zones, attack and fly on to land on the Akaga, Soryu and Zuiho.

As in previous articles, the best attack on readied carriers is the 6-9-6 formula. Six torpedo sqds. on each beam of two carriers with nine divebombers on top of each, while the third carrier is attacked with three torpedo sqds. on one beam, six on the other and again nine of the divebombers. The remaining T and D sqds. can be used against the Atlanta. As explained previously, this attack will definitely sink one, and possibly two carriers.

Of course with your positions now disclosed, the Americans could counterattack, but only the Kaga group. Weakened by the loss of at least one carrier with its complement of aircraft, his strike would be weaker and deficient in fighter escort.

As the Japanese initial surprise attack would not require escorts, he would now be free to fly full fighter CAP (32 sqds.), over the Kaga group. Against a weak American fighter escort (17 or 18 sqds.), the Japanese could strip off his excess fighters for ship defense. Up to 15 sqds., the equivalent of three battleships.

Naturally, once the Americans have been stung by this strategy, he will definitely vary his own in future games. He may stay further east and conduct an 0500, June 4 search of the C column in order to locate and attack your Kaga group.

The Japanese in turn, should vary his strategies such as:

1. The advanced Kaga group moves west, but stays in the B areas instead of full movement into the C column.
2. Vary the direction of the advanced group (north, center, south).
3. Not splitting them up at first and have the jittery American looking for a ghost CV fleet until his split searches have lost your actual fleet. Then divide it into a more balanced CV, BB, CA disposition.
4. Keep both CV fleets in separate A areas on 0500, June 4 with a balanced BB, CA force (oncoming Aiago group arrives in two separate areas to meet with the two CV groups, so that each has the same ship type and approximate anti-aircraft protection.

As you can see, there are at least four basic methods which could cover 21 possible areas. Whereas before the Americans had an 80% chance of locating the combined Aiago CV group within an area, now he will be pulling his hair trying to locate and keep track of two CV groups and later on, the Yamato group. Gone is the time when a Japanese CV force spotted 8 or more zones away leaves the Americans feeling safe from air attack. Now any CV contact within 13 zones can give the American a nervous breakdown as he tries to decide when to throw up CAP. Who knows, another CV fleet just might be sitting right next to him.
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As with any strategy or tactic, none is ever perfect. The split CV concept does not guarantee a Japanese win, but rather a more evenly balanced game.

**Doolittle Strategy**
For every strategy there is eventually developed a counter strategy. For the Americans this is in the form of a first day sneak attack upon the Japanese. Instead of maintaining all of the American ships together, split them up into two groups. One group will consist of two carriers and two cruisers to act as the decoy force (D.F.), while the remaining carrier (Hornet or Yorktown) and six cruisers make up the strike force (S.F.). When starting on the east edge of the board, the D.F. group will proceed cross the center while the strike force moves by the northern or southern route. On the second turn, two objectives are met. First, move the D.F. into one of the F3, 4 or 5 areas to be located while being, the S.F. moves on undetected. By announcement CV's and CA's, the Japanese will believe what you want him to believe. Second, launch and transfer aircraft from the decoy carriers and Midway to the S.F. and vice versa so that the final aircraft complement on the strike carrier is up to the 10 torpedo and 10 divebomber sqds. With the Japanese under the assumption that he has located the entire American fleet, he will concentrate all of his future searches to keep this group in sight. Meanwhile the S.F. is steaming westwards. The D.F., so as to not alarm keep this group in sight. Meanwhile the S.F. is launch a first day air strike. By 1700, June 3rd your S.F. will be in range. It is important to remember that once tried and a 2-1 attack. With readied aircraft, the thin skin carrier could only sustain two hits before sinking.

**First Day Attack**
The split CV group concept may be split sooner than you desire if the American is the kind who likes to charge across the board, regardless of being found, in order to strike during the first day. He would gladly take the chance of losing one carrier for two Japanese flattops. Against this it would seem that the jig's up.

One way is to surprise the Americans first. But how? By hitting him when he least expects it from 8 zones away from your located CV's, BIB's and CA's on the 1500, June 3 turn. Remember that no suicide attacks are allowed. Basically it would work as follows, although the described mechanics are not exactly necessary each time to make it work. With a little experimentation you can come up with several alternate methods.

**CV's, BIB's, CA's, American**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>0500</th>
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<th>0900</th>
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<tr>
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<td>A4E</td>
<td>C4A</td>
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In the table above, the American position is shown once as he is steaming across the board with no evasion tactics. The previously described Japanese search pattern can easily locate and track him.

Each time the Japanese are located they are only obligated to give their exact location and ship contents (name, numbers of each type). This tactic is possible as the CV group with escorts moves about the above co-ordinates while the two other CV's (Kaga and Hiryu), remain undetected and are moved into the B column on the sixth turn. **NOTE**: However you utilize this tactic, insure that the main CV group can not move into the same area or the same possible area as the two lone CV's until after you have launched your attack.

This unexpected attack would catch the Americans with readied aircraft on their flight decks. With the loss of one aircraft, the Americans will have a little more time to locate the now disclosed second carrier. On the following 1700 turn, the Japanese forces combine in a single zone and fly full CAP (28 sqds.). This allows the Japanese to strip off up to 10 fighter sqds. for ship defense (equal to five cruisers, more flexible). With a weakened American attack, you may suffer only damage with no actual carrier losses.

It is imperative to stress that the actual movements are for illustration purposes only. With a little experimentation, alternate ways to accomplish desired results can be discovered. You may also have to move out the two single carriers on the third turn instead of the sixth turn, depending on how the Americans approach (north, south). Using the same tactics it is feasible to move the two carriers out on the third turn. Replacement aircraft could not join the main force until 1700, but those same 10 extra fighters on a 1500 CAP are worth five cruisers. **Midway-First Day Strike**

Only once in all of the previously written articles has there ever been any mention of a first strike against Midway. Probably because the two lone carriers, after reducing Midway, were reduced themselves. Although at first thought it seems suicidal that a single carrier could attack Midway and survive, it is possible in the beginning by a lone carrier (Hiryu), moving into A7C, while the main fleet is in A1-AS (example ASC). With aircraft readied on the first turn they are shifted about so that on the second turn the Hiryu, now in B7B, has a total of 20 attack sqds. and one fighter sqd. Since you know you have cut him in half (two turns in a row), he might wonder what you are up to. To pull him by announcing on your 1700 turn that you are de-redding planes (actually only two fighter sqds.). One of the sqds. can be from the Hiryu. By moving along the 7 row and then angling up the board, the Hiryu can be in position by 1700 (example E4F). With no expected CAP over Midway on the first day (who ever has), the Hiryu's attack odds will be one to one against Midway. That is a 67% chance to reduce Midway by at least one half of its strength. In addition, a number of American sqds. will be destroyed on the ground. With two night and the 0500, June 4 turn to run, the Hiryu could be within any of 25 areas before the American can strike back. The American expecting the carrier to run for the safety of the main fleet could search for him in hopes of catching you there. Obviously you don't want to be there, so you move elsewhere; even nearer Midway itself. There exists a one out of six chance of the carrier being located. This constitutes better odds than that of finding the main fleet. If the American does continue on his way finding the raidsing carrier he will most likely lose track of the other CV's or if he were to split his searches between both, he may lose sight of everyone. On the 0300, June 4 turn in expectation of a second strike, he might fly everything off Midway and fly CAP over the island, leaving his aircraft grounded on the following turn.

Even without a second strike, the damage already done is worth the effort. An even better time for a second strike would be after the American fleet has been located further than 7 zones from your carrier and Midway.

**Baby Flattops (CVL's)**
The Zuilo and Hosho comprise one third of the Japanese carrier force although in total aircraft they only carry three fourths of that of a single fleet carrier. Weak in anti-aircraft firepower and in ability to sustain hit damage, they more closely resemble glorified light cruisers except for their point value.

Regulated to remain in fleet formation, they are doomed when attacked. Not even Japan's largest gunned battleships could save them against a determined American air attack. Their role up until now has been to provide additional aircraft in an attack. This is well and good up to a point. As time progresses with the Japanese advancing towards Midway, what of them then? It has been found through play that both CVL's stand a very good chance for survival through independent action. In the case of Zuilo she could drop back into the A or B area as the CV group begins its westward movement into the C or D areas, without the Americans being aware of her absence.

The Hosho can easily be despatched as the battleships move on towards Midway. These carrier as undetected floating supply depots. Replacement aircraft could be flown up to 14 zones to land on any of the advanced fleet carriers already attacking Midway. Even when demmed of aircraft their function could be to save many valuable fighter sqds., if one of your carriers are sunk, that had been flying CAP.

In both of the above situations these carrier's positions would not have to be disclosed since none of the aircraft participated in any attacks upon the American fleet.

**Summation**
In order to balance play in MIDWAY several exotic strategies and tactics have been brought fourth. Some of these you may concur with while others seem suicidal in concept, but all have been tried and have some validity. Depending upon your skill and ability to take calculated risks, the unsuspecting American can be stung in a variety of ways.

The split CV concept is able to close upon the Americans while seemingly out of range in order to attack first. Even after he is aware of this tactic it is always harder to keep track of two CV groups than just one. In reducing Midway an attack would disclose the location of one CV group, but not the other.

The tactics involved in striking the Americans before he can attack the first day and a first day strike on Midway, are all part of expanding the Japanese offensive capabilities. The more variations eventually used the more cautious the Americans will become.

A word of warning to the Japanese player. Never continuously use the same tactics time after time. What would give you victory in one game could crush you in the next. Vary your play and you will give the American player the jitters chasing a real or ghost CV fleet. Never again will he feel really safe even if all battles CVS's 8 or more zones away.

The American, using his favorite split board search of A1-A4 on the first turn and A5, B4-6 on his second turn, is consistently and unknowingly falling into the same rut as the Japanese. Rather, the American should vary his search patterns to try to disclose any unusual Japanese tactics.
When I first heard that Avalon Hill was making a Science Fiction game, I was skeptical. Up to then, I had stuck to historical games, or at least pseudo-historical games such as TACTICS II and BLITZKRIEG. So AH was finally giving off the scent.

Well, I was given a copy of STARSHIP TROOPERS, and I couldn't help looking at it. Having looked at it, I couldn't help playing it and having played it, I couldn't help loving it. Although a radical departure from Gvalon Hill's usual bill of fare, it is a fun and exciting game. We will have to wait 200 years to see if it is realistic, but it does a good job of capturing the feel of Heinlein's novel and it has the highest excitement level of any game that I have played.

STARSHIP is divided into eight scenarios, numbered one through seven (no, my counting is not fuzzy, there are Scenarios 5A and 5B). Each scenario introduces new rules, new units, and a new situation. I will discuss the first two scenarios, giving you hints on strategy, tactics, and some of the dirty little tricks that I have discovered in the play of the game.

SCENARIO ONE: FEINT AGAINST THE HUMANOIDS

"Our mission is to let the enemy know that we could have destroyed their city, but didn't!"

The first scenario is a simplified game, good for beginners new to wargaming, but still interesting for the veteran. It depicts the raid on the Humanoids described in the beginning of the novel, in which a Mobile Infantry (MI) platoon drops onto a Humanoid planet to destroy as much property as possible. The game only has one squad instead of a whole platoon—representing only part of the action. Many elements that appear in later scenarios, such as HE rocket launchers, Humanoid heavy weapon beams, drop procedures, and MI retrieval, are not included in the first scenario for the sake of simplicity.

In Scenario One we first meet the Mobile Infantry. These include three types of units: Marauders, Scouts, and Commanders. They are all quite mobile, as befits the Mobile Infantry. The Marauders are the main striking power of the MI. They are heavily armed and armored, making them difficult to kill. You will use your Marauders to go after enemy units, installations, and strong points.

The Scouts are nearly twice as fast as the Marauders, although they are not as powerful and much more vulnerable due to their weaker, lighter armor. Their main mission in the first scenario is one of intelligence. The Scout must use his speed to investigate possible installation sites to determine if they are real or decoy, so that you will know where to zero in on the Humanoids. Care must be taken to ensure that the weak Scout doesn't get into trouble. Since it has only three defense factors, the Scout can get up to a 4-on-1 on the Scout using six warrior units, or 2-1 using only three. Nevertheless, damage to the Scout is worth fewer points than damage to a Marauder or Commander, making it a risk to the MI. Note that damage to the Scout prevents the Scout from being killed, but it can still move and gather intelligence.

The Commander is worth the most points if damaged, in Scenario One, but it is as hard to damage as a Marauder. Since the Commander is as fast as the Scout, his role is also intelligence gathering. Because of his Combat factors and armor, you could send him into areas too dangerous to send a Scout. Don't neglect the offensive power of the Scout and Commander; together they are as strong as a Marauder, and the two factors that they each have could be just what you need to tip the odds in an attack.

Humanoids, or Skinnies as they are affectionately called, come in two varieties, workers and warriors. The workers are completely harmless. The warriors aren't much more dangerous to the MI, but they can be irritating, especially to the Scout. Both types of units are sufficient to prevent an installation from being destroyed, but the warriors are much harder to kill.

These units are useful to deceive the enemy, for example in defending decoys. Since in Scenario One the Humanoid player gets points for eliminating workers, it is a good tactic to force the Terran to fry plenty of workers if he wants to wipe out an installation. Also, just one worker unit is sufficient to prevent a strongpoint from being automatically eliminated.

The only real force the Alien player has consists of the warriors. Because they are weak in the attack, it doesn't pay to be very aggressive against MI units. It may be worthwhile to come out in the open to attack a Marauder if you can catch it on its own, but not when there are lots of Marauders about. Warriors are best kept in strongpoints or in the city, coming out only when an installation is threatened. It is useful to keep warriors in groups of three, since six attack factors are needed to get 1-I on a Marauder or Commander, and 2-I on a poor little Scout.

Strongpoints are important to shield skinny units while the MI approaches. They should be placed near enough to installations so that units in them can move to defend the installation in one turn.

In Scenario One, there are two terrain features of importance: the roads and the city. The Humanoid units move twice as fast along the road as off it, which leads them to set up along one of the roads to give them greater mobility. The road also helps them to get through the mountains quickly if they are heading toward the Northwest corner of the savanna.

The city not only speeds up the Humanoids but slows down the MI, so that the Skinnies are actually more mobile in the city than the Terrans. By subtracting one from the die roll in an attack, units are turned around to kill in the city. This makes the city a good sanctuary for the Skinnies. The Terran player will not let his troopers get bogged down in the city since he is on a tight time schedule. Of course, it is also more difficult for the MI to get hurt in the city, but they are so hard to hurt anyway that their added safety in the city is of little importance.

One of the only types of fighting allowed in Scenario One is Close Combat. This involves jumping onto the enemy and fighting it out with hand flammers, bombs, and fire pills. Note that regardless of odds the attacker can never be hurt, so if you have units in the same hex with enemy units, it always pays to attack. You can't lose anything, and you may damage or at least immobilize some enemy units. This applies to Scouts and Commanders as well as to Skinnies defending installations.

Now that we've met the adversaries and examined the field of battle, let's get on to strategy and tactics. The key to the Humanoid defense is dispersal. Note that Marauders move six hexes per turn. It is therefore convenient to put installations seven hexes away from each other, so that the Terrans will have an extra turn going to the next installation to burn. Since the MI enters from the South, it is wise to set up along the North edge of the city, so that they will spend nearly half the game just reaching their targets. I have found setting up along the northern road very effective, alternating strongpoints with installations or decoys, so that the units in a strongpoint can reach two or three installations. It is also convenient to place installations adjacent to the city, so that units in the city can reach them easily while being safe from the enemy. Each installation should be within reach of troops from more than one strongpoint. Be sure to vary your setup from game to game to keep your opponents guessing.

They are safer in strongpoints or the city than when they are in the open, where they can be more easily destroyed. Just one worker unit is sufficient to prevent a strongpoint from being automatically eliminated.

One setup that I have had great success with is to put a Scout or Commander at least four turns to reach a possible installation, and a Marauder cannot reach one until six. MI must take nearly half the game just marching. This puts a time pressure on the Terran player. Normally, the MI reaches the installations in row II, and finds two decoys. Now he must decide which way to go if he goes East to the city, he generally won't have the time to find all the installations and then go the other way. Similarly, by going West he has to leave alone the two Western installations. By splitting his forces, there usually is insufficient strength to destroy any installations at all. To add to the discomfort of the Terran, note that each pair of installations can be covered by a pair or two turns of movement for the Marauders. The workers and warriors are stationed in the strongpoints or the city, each within one turn's reach of several installations.

There are a few ways to improve this setup. A decoy or installation could be placed in QQ1 at the Southeast corner of the city. This can be covered by part of the city garrison. Any MI unit wandering over here will be out of action at the main front for two or three turns. Similarly something could be put near the rough terrain on MI2, also causing Terran troops to waste time investigating. This could be either a decoy covered by a worker or a real installation covered by a warrior. Also, the bends in the road at S4, X4, and EE3 are good places for installations because they can be reached from three hexes away along the road in either direction.

We have only twelve turns and have far to go with much to do. The Scout and Commander must dash ahead to discover the locations of the real targets. The Marauders must follow up with a knockout blow. It is important not to split up the Marauders. Only two Marauders are needed to prevent half the force from achieving 2-I odds.

There are two main tactics open to the Terran player. One is to attack the enemy units in their
strongpoints, destroy them, and then wipe out the installations unopposed. The other is to advance onto an installation, watch the Skinners flock to its defense, and eliminate them there.

The Terrans have a total of 32 attack factors, given the mapboard. The Arachnids have a maximum of 20, even after injuries. Sometimes a combination of the two will work, in which some MI units attack strongpoints at 2-1 or 1-1 in an attempt to pin down the defenders, while others attack the installation. This tactic is especially useful when an installation can be reached by Skinners from only one strongpoint.

SCENARIO TWO: OPERATION "BUGHOUSE"

"Bugs Mr. Rico! Zillions of 'em!" (How many, Zilflip!) .

If you think that Scenario One was full of surprises, wait until you play Scenario Two. It involves a full MI platoon attempting to secure a beachhead from the Arachnids, who continuously pop up from their underground tunnels to compromise it. The First Battle of Kendlathu, also known as Juan Rico's first combat drop, which later turned into a fiasco--too many bugs popped out of too many holes, resulting in a whole disastrous situation for the MI.

The Arachnids, or bugs, emerge in Scenario Two. They have tunnels, quick, brains, and engineers underground, but only their warriors, workers, and heavy weapon teams appear on the surface. Any one of these three types of units, even the lowly workers, are sufficient to get points for the Arachnid player, and deny them to the Terran. The workers are slow, weak, and cannot attack at all. Nevertheless they are useful for drawing off enemy troopers, and they too must be killed for the MI to secure the perimeter and earn points.

The warriors are relatively weak in defense, although much tougher than workers. They are vicious in the attack, even stronger than a Marauder. A stack of four warriors can get at least a 4-1 attack on any MI unit, which guarantees at least stunning the hapless victim, not to mention the crew. The key Arachnid units are heavy weapon teams. These are tough to kill, especially in the mountains. They have tremendous offensive power—it only takes one to get a 3-1 on any MI unit; and they are fast, being the only bug units able to move in rough or barren terrain. Your strategy must be based around these units. They should only be used in the most critical situations.

Once the tunnel system is drawn, the Terran player selects his perimeter to defend. Leaving the perimeter to the Arachnids is critical because it determines the Arachnid capabilities for the whole game. Where you put your perimeter is critical because it determines the Arachnid mobile and the critical units are the Scouts and Commanders. Every Scout and every Commander should carry an HE launcher. With their high speed, they can range far and wide, maximizing the effectiveness of the ranged weapons. They should be placed so that every hex of the perimeter can be reached by at least two HE weapons to insure a 1-1 attack on a warrior, should one appear.

The Terrans are a much nastier than the Skinners we met in Scenario One, but the Mobile Infantry platoon has correspondingly greater fighting power. Not only are they six times as many as in Scenario One, but they have superior mobility due to their extended jump capability, and the 15 HE missile launchers give the MI platoon considerable punch.

The roads and city have vanished from the mapboard, and the rough and barren terrain have become the critical mapboard features. On the barren terrain hexes the MI has an advantage over the bugs because of mobility. The MI can rocket at full speed through barren country, but most Arachnid units cannot move at all and the heavy weapon beam can only fire hex per turn. Since barren hexes don't affect combat or block ranged weapons, a few MI troopers with HE launchers can command the entire barren area. The only real danger is from the beams; warriors can attack an MI trooper only if he is standing on a breach (not too clever) or where a breach is about to happen (not too likely).

The Terran player selects his perimeter to defend. Leaving the perimeter to the Arachnids is critical because it determines the Arachnid capabilities for the whole game. Where you put your perimeter is critical because it determines the Arachnid mobile and the critical units are the Scouts and Commanders. Every Scout and every Commander should carry an HE launcher. With their high speed, they can range far and wide, maximizing the effectiveness of the ranged weapons. They should be placed so that every hex of the perimeter can be reached by at least two HE weapons to insure a 1-1 attack on a warrior, should one appear.

The MI must be concentrated enough to be mutually supportive of giving a hand to any trooper in trouble. The key to the defense is mobility and the critical units are the Scouts and Commanders. Every Scout and every Commander should carry an HE launcher. With their high speed, they can range far and wide, maximizing the effectiveness of the ranged weapons. They should be placed so that every hex of the perimeter can be reached by at least two HE weapons to insure a 1-1 attack on a warrior, should one appear.

The Perimeter System is to protect the MI-carryers who will be the main strike force. It will be a favorite trick of the Arachnids to dis-able--stun or wound--a Terran and end the turn in his hex. This prevents you from using HE fire, lest you risk hitting your own man. It is the job of the Marauders to close with and destroy the enemy in this situation, but don't overlook the extra help that Scouts and Commanders can give. Note that they can make a close assault and fire HE rockets in the same turn. Normally use HE to try to close in, close in only when you have to.

The Perimeter to the MI will be divided by between rough terrain into two areas: barren and savanna. The enemy is not likely to put up much fight in the barren terrain because of his lack of mobility. You should station 6 of your 15 HE launchers and two squads to protect them. This force should be sufficient to defend the barren terrain and the adjacent mountains.

The rest of the platoon should be positioned in the savanna near the rough terrain, to enable them to take up a position of fire on the MI and other units as well as providing fire support in the barren terrain. Make sure that each MI trooper is within one turn's movement of plenty of friendly units, in case he gets pounced on. Beware of three blunders that can boost the bug's chances of success:

1) Don't stack your units at the end of your turn. This makes tempting targets for enemy heavy weapon beams. You may have to concentrare to make a close attack, but be sure to use extended jump to spread out afterwards; that's what is there for.

2) Don't end your turn in savanna adjacent to a breach. You never know what will come boiling out of the hole; it could be dangerous to your health. This rule may be difficult to follow late in the game if there are a lot of breaches, but you should try. Why give enemy warriors free targets?

3) Don't end your turn in rough terrain. You get no defensive advantage from it, and if the Arachnids manage to disable you and end the turn in your hex, you will have the devil of a time destroying them. They get defensive help from the terrain, and they have very good chances of getting troops to the hole. You may have to redesign your perimeter to include this additional movement through mountains.

It pays to keep track of the enemy's breaches, to get some idea of how the tunnels run. Remember enemy losses in each cell. After a while, you may
"It's what you learn after you know it all that counts." —John Wooden

"Because of false knowledge it is more dangerous than ignorance." —E. B. Shaw

"Knowledge is ruin to my young men." —Adolf Hitler

I knew I should have called play 17." —Thomas Shaw

This is my second draft of a criticism of David Botter's article on THIRD REICH in volume 14, number 3. Thomas Shaw's minireview "Well written, but incorrect" I have agreed to rewrite it. Therefore, I want to make clear that all brilliant ideas are my sole property, and any mistakes are the fault of the editor. "The victor will never be asked if he told the truth." —Adolf Hitler

"If facts do not conform to theory, they must be disposed of." —Mr. Botter has disposed of some inconvenient facts and I have a feeling that despite his request for "outraged" reaction that Winston Churchill's comment "personally I'm always ready will apply. I must request an examination of his carriers in Midway based on a similar examination. The rules do not require the Germans to attack Poland (I cheated—I looked through the rules to make sure). To win, the Germans must conquer at least one of France, Russia, or England. Two make a tactical victory and three a strategic victory. The marginal victory condition does not require any be conquered, but it is hard to conceive of 28 objects being occupied by Winter 1943 without at least one down and two to go. In the Alliance game, Germany only needs six to eight objectives, but even this objective is greatly facilitated by conquest of not Poland so much as the major powers. Now all this is logic, and "logic is like a sword—those who appeal to it shall perish by it." —Samuel Butler, Poland is worth BRPs and must normally be taken by Germany eventually. But what if . . .

We might attack in the West. Botter's third option discusses the advantage (?) of letting the French occupy Luxembourg, in order to attack them across a river in order to get a bridgehead. Why not let them into Berlin in order to attack from the east (across a river) and put a bridgehead in Berlin, too? Of course this is sarcasm, in the remote eventuality my readers think I advocate making the German attack any harder than necessary. Do I get an Ironic Cross? The advantages of the Fall 1939 Western offensive include starting one hex closer to Paris thanks to Luxembourg's lack of garrisons. I like the attack Botter suggests under the heading "A Two Front War" but I don't see why it has to be run as one, i.e., to get a bridgehead, industry can attack from Aachen into Belgium (against a tripled one factor infantry), taking advantage of a now solid front of non-attributable axes (Antwerp, Brussels, bridgehead, Aachen and Essen). With infantry support the French may well be rolling for "Vichy" by mid 1940. In addition to the bridgehead attack, one infantry should occupy the vacant Maginot line hex. An infantry and an armor attack Sedan with air support can attack from the newly cleared bridgehead square and then move in, completing the clearing of our supply line to the armor adjacent to Paris. Two more infantry can easily clear the Hague, and the remaining infantry can attack Denmark with support from the fleets to make a 3 to 1. Ye friendly editor has confirmed that from their base in East Prussia this can easily be accomplished. What about the rest of the 25 factors required to start in the east? Well, the rest is air that staged to useful western factors to attack Denmark, except one factor that flies to Helsinki to scare away the bad Russian Bear. We could save some BRPs on declarations of war (the Netherlands for one, Denmark for two) and start some infantry in Finland. Whatever you put there on setup stays there (and subtracts from the points you can put in other minor allies) until you attack Russia and march it overland or capture a port. No SR transport, or invasion is permitted into Finland as it has no ports or beaches. Of course, builds in the East are rapidly required to bring us up to 25 factors—two infantry, two fleets, and a one point air unit in Finland do it nicely, and can sit in the port in East Prussia and not even suffer attrition. Best put something in Rumania, too. But enough minor, obvious points. What about my other "What if . . ."

Let's consider attacking Russia in Fall, 1939. I have no shame, why should you? If the fleet is in Leningrad and the Russian northern garrison is weak, particularly if non-existent between Lakes Ladoga and Onega, a reasonable ease can be made for a super-quick two front war. A 3-1 is conceivable against Russia's two factor infantry unit in Leningrad (quadrupled to eight factors). With 75 BRPs or 60 if Moscow also falls, and no fleet in being, almost all the Russians must be on the board all the time. The winter of undoubled Germans will occur in 1939, with Russia at its weakest. Holding in the West will be a difficult assignment, and under the circumstances could be worth it. Russia can only spend 45 BRPs per turn (37 in 1940). If reduced to 50 factors on turn one, 36 must be built to stay alive. This takes 30 BRPs for infantry and 12 for armor. If Germany can kill 4 more factors of infantry (even less, if the Red Army is from Leningrad) Russia must surrender! Makes the palms of my hands sweat. The offensive is even free. Mind you this time I'm NOT recommending this attack. I'm with W. S. Gilbert, who "led his regiment from behind... He found it less exciting... But when away his regiment ran... His place was at the fore." Another benefit that should be brought out is the 25 BRPs for the partition of Poland. Somewhat to my surprise, ye friendly (sic) editor has informed me that Russia can capture them before Germany takes Warsaw. This amendment to rule 6.2 (second paragraph) makes delaying the capture of Warsaw less attractive, but gives a super-quick two front war as above, the Russians probably won't be able to afford the BRPs, units or time to capture what is otherwise theirs. And the Germans can, with luck do so before the start of 1940. This makes up for a lot of Western neutrals not captured. I don't know how to coordinate rule 6.4 prohibiting offensives in Russia in the first winter with the probable weakening of offensives against Poland. Probably if you "offend" against Poland you will not be able to Attrition against units in Russia. Maybe the editor will put in his three cents worth to settle the question. (Attrition is everywhere, it used to be two cents worth. Or as W. C. Fields said, "the cost of living has gone up another dollar a quart." ) As I read the rule, an offensive would be allowed in winter against the cities needed to capture the 25 BRPs. (Poland and the Baltic states are not in Russia—thus the prohibition against German attacks.) The comings would not apply as the Germans wouldn't be in Russia yet.

I'm saving some comments on taking Warsaw for last, so now let's consider the strategem (as opposed to a strategy game) of Italy "pigggybacking" into war with Yugoslavia (saving the cost of a declaration of war) by virtue ("virtue is learned at mother's knee; vice at other joints") of Germany's declaration of war on Yugoslavia, combined with activation of the Axis alliance by Italy declaring war on an Ally. The laconic editor, with a single "yes", has notified me that this rubegoldberg play works. However it also makes Yugoslavia an Ally of France and England. Even if they were not, as soon as the "clever" attritionplay is played, France (for example) can eliminate one of their own units in the Med, and gain Yugoslavia's BRPs. See rules 3.71 and 3.7, particularly the last paragraph of 3.7. Since elimination of at least one Yugoslavian unit was required for success, this approach must be judged a failure.

In the matter of Russian Invasion of Turkey (RIOT, for short) the calculation of the present value of saved BRPs is correct as far as it goes. But it doesn't go very far. What happens, given RIOT, when Huns Undertake Reconquest of Turkey (HURT, which is both the long and short of it)? Russia loses a fast 30 BRPs, and lives with a base of 106 instead of 124 for the rest of the war. This 18 BRP difference could be Russia's every year. If you believe Turkey will stay Russian every year, I have an interesting real-estate proposition for you—the Brooklyn Bridge. Among other reasons, the Germans need to kill the fleet by denying it a Russian port or other friendly port to park its car. The shortest distance to Batum is through Turkey. As an alternative to a Russian attack on Turkey to avoid the "unwanted initiative," how about an attack upon Persia and Iraq? Perhaps the British and in Egypt could use some help. For motivation for this generous act, this may open up the southern land-sea route or at least keep Molus (the red dot might be useful) to the Russian side. If Lebanon-Syria is Vichy, Russia might even get 5 BRPs of the truth."

On page 23 the article makes another of those comments that just MUST be examined. Marx said "Military intelligence is a contradiction in terms." Groucho Marx, not Karl. It must have been Botter's military intelligence that decided Germany must effect a one-turn conquest of Norway and that that objective can be attained only by a paratroop assault. (Does anyone know what to call Polish paratroops? Give up? Air pollution.) There is a rule that can help the Germans carry out a one-turn assault with armor, without building more fleets. Rule 3.8 allows the Germans to use an Italian 2 factor armor unit together with a German 4-6 factor armor unit (together they make the carrying capacity of the two fleets) to attack a Norwegian beach and exploit to attack Oslo. Thanks to having air support available there is no need to risk the paratroop unit. It dies with the fleets if the battle is lost. There is no no adjacent German ground unit (new rules). For tenousyousy BRPs and an opportunity to stop Britain from "breaking windows with Guinea" (sending BRPs to Russia early in the game when Britain can't really afford to, the risk of losing the paratroops) is too great. Note that if the fleets and armor start to fail the invasion can hit either beach—one will have to
A.H. Philosophy . . . Continued from Pg. 2, Col. 3

slight variations in rules, and incidentally, trying to catch your opponent when he forgets a rule which pertains to that game only. But the inclusion of phrases such as “when entering from a road hex-side” and “from a non-road hex-side” would remove much of the ambiguity from rules pertaining to movement on escarpments (and mountains, rough terrain, rivers in other games).

Many good variations have been printed in The General. One of the best for Afrika Korps was Dave Roberts’ “Competitional Afrika Korps” in Vol. 14, No. 1. Certainly some of these variants could be included in updated rules. If Avalon Hill is leery of “chasing away” new wargamers by having too complicated a set of rules, why not follow established procedure and list a “Basic Game,” “Tournament Game,” and “Options”?

A review of the questions most often asked would certainly indicate the rules which cause the most trouble. Any revision could remove the “worst” problems (the most “infamous”) which comes to mind is that answer to Question 3 under RETREATS, Tournament Game, only, in the appendix to the slick little pamphlet of rules which is at exact odds with a specific sentence under “Advance” on the Tournament Game Battle Results Table.

While on the subject of questions, it appears to me that the increase in the size of the company has not been accompanied by an increase in the amount of personnel handling gamers’ questions. I have today sent a letter to Research and Design, asking if they would check on what happened to a letter sent a few months ago. I made this request because I have received an answer for the past eight weeks. I can expect that the increased number of games, and the subsequent increase in the number of wargamers, has caused a flood of questions, but two and a half months without an answer is quite unfavorable.

I guess what I'm really asking in this letter is not that you don't forget there is a core of wargamers out here who still look to Avalon Hill for leadership in the field and who still expect more from AH than from its ever-increasing list of competitors. There seems to be an anomaly here. In the good old days of AH, if you could have pretty well done as it pleased it didn't; yet today, with more quality competition, when one would expect the leader to be more “on its toes,” certain fine points seem to be lacking.

Many of us (I think) feel a sense of loyalty to Avalon Hill, and will bend over backwards to give you the benefit of the doubt. But we need some help from the company, loyalty only goes so far. Perhaps, in these days of an exploding wargaming community, you won't miss the old-timers if we go. Perhaps you will.

James D. Mueller
Elyria, OH 44035

Quite a blend of harsh and faint damnation, what not? Let's take James' points one at a time starting with the blanket generalization of neglect of the hardcore wargamer. This one really hurts, but we've heard it before, so at least some of you agree with the charge. Yet, it seems to me you remember the good old days through rose-colored glasses. In point of fact, AH offers much more in games and rules in the last few years. AH was too busy trying to stay solvent to worry about doing good deeds for the hobby! Getting the GENERAL out every two months or so was about as concerned as the company ever got. Proposals for side projects which would benefit the hobby, but not yield a buck simply could not be given any credence whatever in the undermanned Dark Ages of AH.

In contrast, recent vintage has seen the implementation of the AREA rating service—a losing financial venture if ever there was one. Bringing AH full-time, and giving the Juniper Hill an identity of its own by creating the CAESAR-ALESIA contest into the full-time salaried technician—a salary which soon ate up the token $2.00 (later 42.00) membership charge. An even better example would be our creation & sponsorship of the original two national ORIGINS conventions—a project which easily ate up enough R & D time to cost us another game design. One less game is no mean sacrifice for AH. Because of our comparatively slow publishing schedule, a new game means more to us than it would to a company producing 20 or more titles annually. We make up the difference in number of titles published by the quantity sold of each title. To reduce our rate of production by a game was a sizable concession by management in the interests of the hobby. Dana Lombardys of the world aside, the promotion of ORIGINS was a major beneficial gift to the hobby and a helluva dumb business move by AH. Think, if you will, how many Third World customers we gained at ORIGINS in comparison to the number of AH devotees who were exposed for the first time to the tiny game companies which exhibited there. It was not the usual rule for all mailing lists garnered from the Opponents Wanted page of the GENERAL which lured thousands to the first truly national showplace convention of its kind. It was the combined clout of AH & SPI which more or less gave the Third World a free chance to strut their stuff before our assembled customers. The cash sales generated by these conventions were miniscule when compared to the revenue another new game could have brought in, and doubtless would have been made up anyway in mail order or retail sales. But for the number of new wargamers would see the convention goers were more or less our steady customers. Is this ignoring the best interests of the hard core?

But these are grandiose examples on a tangent. Mr. Mueller’s real gripe seems to take aim on the quality of recent releases, that . . . “Avalon Hill doesn’t do it right the first time any more.” Jim is partly right . . . Avalon Hill doesn’t do it 100% right the first time. But it first did, nor does anybody else. The last game has, and never will be, a game that couldn’t be improved the second time around. But to say that AH first editions are not as good as they used to be is a highly questionable, subjective statement. Compare the first edition rules of, say, PANZERBLITZ with the king of the good old days—PANZERBLITZ—which still holds the record for generating the most “nut mail”. The ambiguity and omission problems of SQUAD LEADER, a far more complex game, are almost non-existent in comparison to PANZERBLITZ. Mr. Mueller himself cites in the BULGE rules, are non-existent. CAESAR-ALESIA is an even better example. When it came time to do that game’s second edition, only one typo could be found after the game had been on the market for a year. Other games have had more problems, to be sure, but to say that the games are not as well considered as they once were, is a simple opinion. The main difference is that AH no longer ignores the problems & sweats them under the rug under the guise of a complete game. Now we make the effort to pursue excellence, no matter how evasive it may be, by updating subsequent editions as soon as possible, rather than sometimes waiting for several years.

Many veteran players as it would pleasure. BULGE does need a rewrite and it is an ongoing project—albeit one with low priority. The main question now seems to be whether only to clarify a la D-Day or to come out with an entirely new game a la GETTYSBURG. AFRIKA KORPS could probably use a less ambiguous set of rules, but the need is not great and clouding the issue by printing Dave Roberts’ variant would not prove satisfactory to many veteran players as it would please. The last game I had questions about in the BULGE rules, which the conclusion is that the hobby is the game’s forte.

Me thinks you doth complain too much . . .

Questions . . . uh oh . . . he got us. Frankly, our question answering isn’t what it ought to be. Delays of 2 months are not all that uncommon. Actually, I’m relieved that the example cited is only two months. One of our designers has been known to sit on a bulging box of nut mail for the better part of a year before getting up the intestinal fortitude to answer it. But, believe it or not, this service, too is better in some ways than it used to be. In the early days of this hobby, you could grab any warm body he could find to answer questions at the going rate of 20c a letter. I even got a shot of this “employment” back in 71 before I made the mistake of coming to work at AH fulltime. The letters with a simple yes or no question on STALINGRAD were easy money, but the guys who tendered field manuals of several hundred questions resulted in slave labor wages. Pay was per letter—not per question. There’s still somebody out there waiting for me to return his 25 page single-spaced manuscript of 1214 questions. With this sort of “revolving door” answermen, it’s no wonder that conflicting answers to the same question often arose. At least we’ve improved on that problem. Nowadays the nutmail is handled directly by the AH staff designer or developer who originally designed the game. Because this assignment never changes, the answers should be more accurate, albeit just as slow in coming. Each staff member is instructed to answer all his nutmail at least once a month. Many of us make the effort to do it weekly, but with different designers are in the office, particularly when the designer is near, he may well let the nutmail go until his game is finished. You compound the
Letters to the Editor ...

Dear Sirs,

In response to Mr. Stanislawski's letter in the September-October issue of THE GENERAL, I feel I have to come to the defense of one of my all-time favorite games, THIRD REICH.

What Mr. Stanislawski laments is that the attention the player pays to the historical context of the game is not counterbalanced by the strictness of the rules, which make the game more suitable for younger players. Indeed, the beauty of THIRD REICH lies in the fact that the counter strengths of each nation's Force Point show, not what was done with, say, the resources of Germany in 1939 or the U.S. in 1941, but instead the relative strengths of all the bell-letters through the six years of the war. You control what each nation will do in the field, not some historical game mechanism.

In a game such as THIRD REICH it would be impossible, nay fruitless, to simulate the effects of different types of tanks (or planes or guns or whatever) that matter on the outcome of a campaign. In every case during the Second World War, it was not the battle that decided the war, but the issue of control of the battlefield and/or numerical superiority that decided the issue. Panzer fans may hate me for that but it’s true, fellas.

For instance, it would be wrong to switch the strength factor of a Soviet 3-5 for the admittedly high quality of the Soviet T-43s and KV-1s were more than enough by their small numbers at the beginning of the war as well as their being used in 'peny packets' all along the Russian line. One cannot change deployment doctrine in a strategic level game. The fight that the Soviet tanks gave to the Germans in 1941 was always locally felt and never permitted further up that the regiment that had been hit by the attack in the first instance. Such a change as advanced by Mr. Stanislawski would influence theater-wide events, something altogether improper for a game that matters.

In conclusion, we have to modify THIRD REICH counters at all. Part of the popularity of the game lies in the fact that Mr. Stanislawski’s suggestions had been built into the game before he set his eyes on it. The modifications therefore are useless, trivial, and do not apply to the scale involved. The game can stand as is.

Ken Ranstead
Laval, Quebec.

Dear Sirs,

I hope that you will find room in The General to publish this letter. I would like to warn other wargamers about a problem I am dealing with. My case is as follows.

In issue #12 of MOVES page 21, I saw a review of the British game, Escape from Cookie. The game intrigued me and I spent two unsuccessful hours trying for it here in the States. Then, on Origins 11, I saw an ad in a copy of Games & Puzzles for Games Centre, a hobby shop in London, UK, -behind, there was a cooling display for £15.50.

I wrote to Games Centre on 8 September, to ask for the price, in U.S. currency of the game and received an immediate reply from N. Thomas, Mail Order Department, who informed me that the exchange rate was 85 pounds, or approximately $45.00.

On 21 September, I mailed a check for $15. I received a cancelled check and a freebie - a map of war game strategy. Without the game, I waited over eight weeks and wrote to them, but got no answer. On 1 October, I wrote another letter with a copy of the cancelled check, asking if they could file a claim on the lost package. To that letter I also received no reply.

On 11 October, my local post office initiated a tracer on the package and has since informed me that I should have gotten some word by now.

After waiting nine months, I am writing to you in my only recourse. I hope that with the check, you will publish this letter and help some other wargamer.

Michael Zynski, Jr.
Boston, MA.

Dear Sirs,

While reading "Barbarossa Repulsed" in the GENERAL (Vol. 14, No. 3), a flaw in one of the author's tactics regarding an amphibious invasion of Romania was noted.

The basic of the invasion is that the Russian armor unit can cut off rail movement from the north, thereby isolating Bucharest from reinforce-
SQUAD LEADER

Q. In scenario 6 are the Germans restricted to setting up on one board?
A. No.

Q. Is the die roll to see who moves first in scenarios 2 and 3 made before or after set-up?
A. After.

Q. In scenario 2, must you deploy at least one unit in each listed building or can you have a building unoccupied?
A. No, you may leave some of the listed buildings unoccupied.

Q. Does a scenario end on the last numbered turn of the scenario card or the turn after the last numbered turn marked "END"?
A. It ends on the last numbered turn.

5.54 Is a shellhole/road box considered open ground for purposes of infantry movement such as infantry entering such a hex along a road pays 1 MP rather than 1.5?
A. Yes, but the terrain effects remain cumulative for vehicles. In addition, units leaving the hex along the road beside could do so at the road movement rate.

5.75 How is possession of support weapons indicated, e.g., assume two squads are moving through a hex carrying one or more support weapons and one squad is broken by defensive fire. May the other squad pick up the abandoned support weapon and continue movement?
A. Yes. There is no provision in the game to indicate possession of support weapons between infantry in the same hex. Those desiring this additional complexity could agree that all support weapons in a hex belong to the nearest infantry unit stacked above them. Otherwise, it is assumed that any squad in a hex has access to weapons in the hex.

6.1 What are "infantry" units?
A. Any squad, leader, or crew member.

7.2 Suppose a squad has two LMGs. Can it fire one in the Pre-Fire Phase and the other in the Advance Phase of the same player's turn?
A. No, once a unit (the squad) fires in the Pre-Fire Phase, it cannot fire (even support weapons which haven't fired) in the Advance Phase.

12.4 If there are two leaders in a hex, may they help each other in their Morale Checks?
A. Yes.
Policeman Jim Bell captured the honors in the Avalon Hill Football Strategy League's Super Bowl V when his Philadelphia Eagles franchise bested the Browns of Doug Burke 31-21. Bell, in only his second year in the league, won $100 and the rotating SlCFL trophy in sweeping the three game playoff series after barely making post season competition as a Wild Card entry with a 9-4-1 record. The league follows standard NFL format with 28 owners each paying $20 annually for a franchise to participate in the Saturday games. In 1978, the league will abandon its NFL schedule in favor of expansion to enable more players to participate. Those in the Baltimore area interested in playing should inquire to Don Greenwood c/o AH to be put on the waiting list for a franchise opening.

We were aware that there were alternate solutions to Contest Number 79, which makes it doubly embarrassing that the solution we published last issue is incorrect; the overrun attack (n. 14 and 15) against the woods hex is illegal. An example of a correct solution would be to use the two "A" airstrikes to disperse all units in hex V2, then use the "H" air strike to disperse all the units except 3411 in hex U3. Use the MRL to disperse the infantry and MG in hex U2, then use S121 (SU-100) to disperse the armored targets in that hex. The 120mm mortars attacking together disperse the AVLB and eliminate the truck and jeep in U3; the three BTRs disperse the COBRA in the IP. Then 6321 and 6323 (7-TOMs) move to U1 and overrun and eliminate the dispersed stack at V2. The two Centurions move into V2 and overrun and eliminate the dispersed stack at U2, and the remaining SU-100 and 1-TOM move to U2 and overrun the Improved Position. Eliminating the dispersed COBRA and dispersing the other units in V3. Finally the engineer and COM 1321 enter U2 and CAT the IP, with the die roll 2 for the IP - 2 on die roll, all units are eliminated; the remaining infantry and COM CAT attack the AVLB and 3411, eliminating the last Israeli units.

Alternate solutions that were correct were accepted, and the following winners were selected from among the entries: J. Hooper, Santa Ana, CA; J. Jones, San Jose, CA; L. Kurowski, Chicago, IL; J. Elison, Cambridge, MA; R. Seeley, Hiram, GA; P. O'Connor, New York, NY; L. Lim, Toledo, OH; K. Green, Newburgh, NY; R. Mosher, Oakland, CA; and J. Morgan, La Grange, GA.

Clarifications concerning some of the errors in the entries that were submitted: all air attacks must be executed before any direct fire attacks, then all direct fire attacks must be executed before any overrun moves, then all overruns before any CAT attacks; the same unit cannot be attacked twice by the same type of attack in the same turn; in attacks against mixtures of armored and non- armored targets the majority of units determines the target type - and if there are equal numbers of armored and non- armored targets, the target is treated as the least favorable type for each attacking unit; "H" airstrikes are halved against armored targets, and BTR-60s move like trucks (i.e. pay truck MF costs).

Our accuracy record in the Contest area has been none too hot lately. Contests are extremely time consuming both to develop and to judge. As such, all of the designers here have taken to cringing in the nearest corner whenever word spreads that the editor is in need of a new puzzle. Rumor has it that the best way to get out of doing another puzzle contest is to do a faulty one so as not to be asked again. Indeed, were it not for the popularity of this feature among a small but vocal part of the readership they would have been discontinued long ago. Here's your chance to do our designers one better. Design your own contest. The Puzzle Editor will select those good enough to warrant publication in the GENERAL and authors will be awarded $25 in remuneration or any three Avalon Hill games of their choice. Contests which have to be altered by our staff will be subject to lesser payments at the whim of our editor. The criteria used in evaluating puzzles is as follows:

1) Puzzles should be small enough to fit on one-half of a GENERAL page without being too small to use and must be accompanied by a diagram of the board, grid co-ordinates alone to pose your situation.
2) Each puzzle submitted should have a clear answer included with the submission. The answer should be unique or nearly so, with few (if any) alternate correct answers.
3) The puzzle should be easy enough to be solvable, but it should not be easy to solve.
4) Avoid questions that deal directly with probability or percentages; these take too much time to check. "Where should unit X be placed to have the best chance of victory" or "which side has the better chance of victory" are acceptable, although not preferred; "what is the probability of unit X's winning its battle" is not acceptable except in certain cases.
5) Preference will be given to puzzles that spotlight tactics that are commonly used in actual play of the game, rather than totally artificial situations.
6) Preference will be given to puzzles that spotlight fuzzy, tricky or ambiguous sections of the rules, since we like to use these puzzles to point out the correct interpretations of oft-asked questions.
7) Last, but far from least, the puzzles must be based on Avalon Hill games now in print (NO 1914 puzzles, please), and all puzzles should be based on the latest version of the rules governing the game in question—puzzles based on the 1965 version of the D-DAY rules will not be accepted, for example, since there is a 1977 edition of the rules.
These binders are ruggedly constructed in attractive red leather finish vinyl, with gold embossed logos of the THE GENERAL and the Avalon Hill Game Company located on the front and spine, each binder is 9" x 12" 5/8" and holds twelve (12) copies of THE GENERAL. Spring-steel retaining wires hold the issues firmly in place, yet your magazines are not damaged in any way, and can be easily removed from the binder at your desire. The binders are available from Avalon Hill for $5 plus 75¢ postage. Maryland residents please add 5% state sales tax.

THE GENERAL

ORIGINS BUS

Avalon Hill and IGB will again sponsor a bus to the national convention in Ann Arbor, MI July 14th-16th. The bus will probably leave the Baltimore area Thursday, July 13th so as to arrive in time for the start of the festivities and will leave Ann Arbor at 3 p.m. on Sunday. Round trip fare based on full occupancy will be $39.00. Meals and lodging must be arranged separately by each individual with the convention authorities. Those interested in this transportation should send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Avalon Hill marked to the attention of Don Greenwood, Origins bus.
SUBMARINE

Ever wonder why Hollywood seems to make at least two submarine pictures for every one tank flick? What does the glamor factory see in submarine warfare that makes it such a popular choice for war movies? Submarine actions have all the ingredients needed to construct a successful drama: tense action, close calls, great triumphs and defeats. But most importantly, they reduce the brutal and overwhelming macrocosm of war into a clean, easily visualized microcosm of one-on-one combat. These same ingredients have been incorporated into the latest AH release, SUBMARINE, in order to bring the excitement and drama of the silver screen to the game table.

SUBMARINE is a tense duel of nerve and wits recreating tactical submarine warfare in WWII. Each player assumes the role of either submarine or destroyer captain and can pilot his vessel just as historical counterparts did. SUBMARINE has been divided into three games of increasing complexity so that one can advance to the level of difficulty that one desires.

In the Basic game, the Submarine player maneuvers his boat past the enemy escorts as he closes in on the target convoy or battle fleet. He lines up his targets and fires his torpedoes. His skill, coupled with the luck of a last minute change in course, determines whether they hit or speed by. Success means an exploding tanker or cargo ship or perhaps an aircraft carrier, the pride of the navy, sinking beneath the waves. Failure, at best, means delay in the mission. At its worst, it is a final trip to the bottom in an iron coffin.

The Escort player must locate and destroy the enemy submarine before it is able to deliver its deadly arsenal. The destroyer has a variety of weapons which can force the enemy from accomplishing his objective. When a submarine is located, the destroyer steams in for the attack dropping depth charges and firing k-gun charges and ahead-throwing torpedoes to force the submarine from its hiding place. Both players use the popular simultaneous movement system introduced in WOODEN SHIPS AND IRON Men to maneuver their vessels so that neither player is ever totally sure of the exact location of the enemy ship as his vessel conducts its torpedo attack or depth charge run. The submarine player must also maintain his depth settings as he dives and rises to avoid the deadly “ashcans”.

In the Basic/Optional game an added dimension is introduced. A submarine can move hidden from view beneath the waves. The destroyers and escorts must now utilize their sonar and/or radar to contact the invisible hunter. In this game, the submarine can use its greatest weapon, its submersibility, to advantage.

The Advanced game is for the nautical devotees who want to fight the battle as it was actually fought. A more detailed treatment of ship and weapon capabilities has been incorporated. Submarines can carry a variety of torpedoes including ones which circle or home in on the noise of a propeller. Destroyers and escorts keep pace in the technocratic war as they are equipped with newer and more efficient sonar, radar and anti-submarine weapons.

A Campaign Game allows wolfpacks to battle convoys in ongoing battles across the Atlantic with success & failure in each round influencing the battle which follows.

SUBMARINE is rated Intermediate on the Avalon Hill Complexity Scale. Playing time varies with the scenario in play from 1 hour to an entire weekend for the Campaign game. SUBMARINE is available for $12.00 plus postage. Maryland Residents add 5% sales tax.

A Design-Your-Own section permits the players to add new or more exotic ships and to design scenarios utilizing the ships of Russia, Italy and France as well as Germany, Britain, U.S., and Japan.

SUBMARINE comes boxed complete with three 11” x 28” mounted panels that, in combination with a slightly reduced hexsize, gives it the largest playing field of any Avalon Hill game. Included also are over 200 different ship counters and weapon markers depicting all major ships and weapons of the submarine war. Players can pilot submarines including the Class XXI German super submarine which revolutionized submarine design, the Japanese-I400 and French Sureff (with its twin 8” guns) monster submarines. Surface vessels vary from aircraft carriers and battleships down to the coastal sub chaser and patrol frigate. Escorts also have a variety of weapons available, including hedgehogs, squids, k-gun launchers and the standard stern rack depth charge. A log pad is provided so that all players can keep track of their ships’ positions, speed, weapons capabilities, ammunition supply, etc. A 36 page rulebook with an illustrated sample game lets you get into play quickly and easily. A set of 4 Data cards organized by nationalities and a combat results card have also been provided to facilitate set-up and play procedure.

ORDER BY PHONE

We will now accept game orders by phone from those individuals with currently valid MASTERCHARGE, BANKAMERICAN (VISA), or AMERICAN EXPRESS credit cards. The number to call is 301-254-5300. Ask for Clo Newton or ext. 34 and state that you wish to place an order for a game. You must give the order taker the number, expiration date, and name of your credit card along with your order and shipping address. Phone orders are available every Monday-Friday from 8:30 AM to 5 PM. Absolutely no collect phone calls can be accepted.
CONTEST NUMBER 81

It is the start of the Russian Prep Fire Phase on turn 10 of Scenario 4 in SQUAD LEADER. All rules up to and including Section 4B are in play. The only remaining uneliminated units are in the diagrammed area. Movement outside the diagrammed area is not allowed. Five German and 15 Russian squads have already been eliminated as well as all leaders, radios, and MGs of both sides not pictured in the diagram above. All broken units were broken in the hex they presently occupy. Assuming the Russian rolls no higher than a “7” (before DRMs), how can the Russian guarantee a victory in this turn?

Fill out the chart below listing any hex by grid coordinate which is fired into (during the proper fire phase) or moved into (during the proper phase). If the listed unit does not conduct any activity during a phase, leave that section of the chart blank.

Entries will be accepted only on this form or a photocopy. No hand drawn facsimilies will be accepted.
AIR ASSAULT ON CRETE

AIR ASSAULT ON CRETE is a game where two talents are essential: the ability to plan far in advance, and the willingness to engage in sustained heavy combat regardless of losses. This is especially important for the Axis player, but also is crucial to Allied victory. The game rules are in Basic and Advanced sections, but readers of THE GENERAL familiar with other Avalon Hill games will easily be able to assimilate both.

The Situation: Three full-color, 8" x 22" mapboards are laid out to represent the northern coast of the island of Crete. On that island are counters representing 42,000 British, Australian, New Zealand and Greek troops, many poorly armed and organized. And with them are large numbers of noncombatant technicians and specialists whom the Allies cannot afford to lose. The British troops are spread across the island to protect the three airfields of Maleme, Haraion, and Retimo, as well as the port of Suda, vital to the British for evacuation and to the Germans as a landing site for reinforcements.

Heading toward Crete is the 7th Flieger Division; four assault regiments of elite German paratroopers, each headed for a different objective. Although they know the general location of the enemy, all British counters are positioned inverted, and they include a large number of decoys and units that can be placed anywhere on the map.

The Game: Neither side has it easy in this game. Both players know that the Germans need to take an airfield to survive. One is all they need, and if they get it the powerful 5th Mountain Division will be landed. Initial set-up is of crucial importance, and the results of the first turn can be disastrous to a player who has not deployed his troops wisely.

The rules themselves are of moderate complexity, with much of the players' efforts being needed for decision-making rather than absorbing the rules or game system. Special rules cover ranged artillery fire, German unit organization (integrated battalions fight better than individual companies), airborne assault, air landing, aircraft, sea movement, amphibious assault, inverted units, and Allied evacuation. The 560 four color diecut counters include the usual range of infantry, artillery, and armor (including Allied heavy tanks that have a distressing tendency to break down when they're most needed); along with truck units, a coastal steamer, anti-aircraft units, coastal artillery, air units, glider troops, and even the half-sunk HMS York, the heavy AA of which aided greatly in Suda's defense.

Victory: The British player wins AIR ASSAULT ON CRETE by either maintaining control of all three key airfields by a stated time, or, failing that, by evacuating the vital non-combat specialist units (engineers, dock troops, etc.) that were to later be essential in the Mediterranean campaigns. The Germans win by avoiding the British conditions of victory. In other words, they must first seize an airfield, and then prevent the British from retreating off the map. Neither side has an easy task.

A special addition to AIR ASSAULT ON CRETE is the INVASION OF MALTA 1942, which shares the CRETE system, though with its own set of special rules and counters. In this game, it is assumed that the Axis could have attempted to invade Malta, and the players find out for themselves what might have happened. Here again strategy is the key, and before the game the Axis player can pick his landing sites and plan his assault with total freedom. The British player must determine where to mass his vital AA guns and mobile troops, so they can throw the Axis airborne troops into the sea before reinforcements land on the beaches. This game is a real gem, and should become a classic in its own right.

FACTORY OUTLET

Whenever in the Baltimore area feel free to drop in at our Factory Outlet store located in our design offices at 900 St. Paul and 20 E. Reed St. This store is the world's only retail outlet featuring a complete selection of Avalon Hill games, parts, magazines and accessories. Pay by cash or check or bring your credit card, and if visiting on Saturdays feel free to stay and attend a gaming session with Interest Group Baltimore and get involved with whatever playtesting happens to be going down. Or just drop by and play or talk the games of your choice on Saturday with any of the locals and enjoy the competition.

Hours: AH Factory Outlet—Tuesday thru Saturday; 9 A.M. to 5 P.M.
 IGB Playtesting—Saturday; 10 A.M. to 5 P.M.
WE WANT YOU... to write for the GENERAL. If you can string words together into an interesting article format on any Avalon Hill wargame, there's a good chance you're just the person we're looking for. You can supplement our literary staff with articles of strategy, game analyses, Series Replays, commentaries, new scenarios, or variants.

All articles should be type-written, double spaced and accompanied by a self-addressed envelope bearing first class postage. Otherwise, rejected articles will not be returned. Articles should be supplemented with illustrations and/or charts whenever possible.

Commencing with the January, 1977 issue the GENERAL will pay $6 per running 10" column of edited text. Letters to the Editor are not subject to remuneration. Alternatively, authors may elect to have their remuneration in the form of Avalon Hill products, paid at the rate of 150% of the cash remuneration. Note that illustrations and decorative type faces are not subject to remuneration except by prior agreement with the editor. It is generally expected that articles will be accompanied by sufficient illustrations as a requirement for acceptance.

At the end of each calendar year an EDITOR'S CHOICE article will be selected. The author of this article will receive a $100 bonus and a lifetime subscription to the GENERAL.

COMPARTMENT TRAYS

At last! The long-suffering problem of unit counter storage for Avalon Hill games is solved. The Avalon Hill compartment tray fits snugly into the bottom of the bookcase style box. A clean plastic cover fits over the mold to prevent counter leakage. Each tray has sixteen 1½" x 2½" compartments 3/8" deep which will accommodate up to 400 unit counters and 4 dice.

The tray is also usable in the flat box games. By cutting off with a pair of ordinary scissors three of the four side panels of two trays another perfect fit is arranged for the flat box games—this time with 32 compartments and 5 dice depressions.

These trays are available by mail order only direct from Avalon Hill. They will not be included in new game releases in either the retail or mail order line. The trays are available only in sets of 3 and sell for $3.25 per set plus 75c postage charges. Postage coupons cannot be utilized to order compartment trays. Maryland residents please add 5% state sales tax.

FOREIGN READERS

Due to contractual obligations with our exclusive distributors we cannot accept mail orders for games from Australia, Britain, Germany, Greece, Italy or Japan. Such orders must be placed with our exclusive distributors whose addresses you'll find listed on Page 2 of this magazine. Orders for parts and airmail subscriptions to the GENERAL are not subject to this ban. APO and FPO addresses of U.S. servicemen likewise are not subject to this ban. We also urge you to get in touch with the distributor for your country in regards to placing your GENERAL subscription through him in most cases will result in considerable savings for you.

MAGNETIC GAMES

Now you can convert your favorite game for vertical display or secure in-play storage with magnetic tape, unmounted boards and just an hour of your time. All you'll need is a metal surface and an unmounted gameboard. We supply the magnetic strips with self-adhesive already applied. You just cut the ½" x 1½" strips into half inch squares and apply them to the unit counters which came with your game. The result is a ½" thick counter which will stack six high even when the mapboard is mounted in a vertical position for display purposes. Never worry about that phm move being jostled again between turns.

Naturally this magnetic treatment will be less valuable for counters with two-sided printing, but that still leaves them with a multitude of uses. NOTE: it will be necessary to be sure that the top portion of all unit counters are uniformly applied to the top half of the magnetic strips. Otherwise, the polarity may be reversed and the counters will actually repel each other rather than attract. Therefore, it is wise to mark the back of the magnetic strips uniformly across the top so as to be sure to apply the top half of the counter to the top half of the magnetic strip.

Magnetic strips are available from Avalon Hill for 90c a foot or $7.50 for ten feet. Unmounted mapboards are available upon request for $6.00 apiece. Usual postage charges apply, as does the 5% state sales tax for Maryland residents.

PANZERBLITZ BOOKLETS

After hundreds of requests for it, we've finally published the best of the GENERAL's many articles on PANZERBLITZ—conventional wargaming's all time best seller. Entitled 'Wargamer's Guide to PANZERBLITZ' it initiates and may very well end the "Best of the GENERAL" series as no other game has been the target of a comparable volume of literary attention.

The 36 pp. manual resembles very much an issue of the GENERAL except that it is devoted 100% to PANZERBLITZ. The articles are taken almost exclusively from back issues, dating as far back as 1971. In addition, two never before published articles appear, Robert Harmon's "Commands Notebook" which analyzes the original 12 scenarios, plus Phil Kosnett's "Chopperblitz"—a hypothetical variant utilizing helicopters with six new scenarios.

Reprints include Larry McAneny's "The Pieces of Panzerblitz"—voted the best article ever to appear in the GENERAL, "Beyond Situation 13"—twelve additional scenarios by Robert Harmon, "Parabellum"; "Panzeracht"; "Blind Panzerblitz"; "Situation 13"; "Campaign Situations"; "Panzerblitz Concealment"; and "Incremental Panzerblitz." Top ping it all off is a complete listing of all errata on the game published to date where the Opponents Wanted Page once ruled supreme.

The Wargamer's Guide to PANZERBLITZ sells for $3.00 plus 50c postage and handling charges from the Avalon Hill Game Company, 4517 Harford Rd., Baltimore, MD 21214 Maryland residents add 5% state sales tax.

PBM EQUIPMENT

Tired of playing solitaire or humiliating the same opponent day after day? You may be good in your game room but what can you do against a good player from another part of the country? There's only one way to find out — play them by mail! PBM is an easy-to-learn and convenient-to-use system of playing fellow gamers across the nation. A special CRT and combat resolution system makes it impossible to cheat! PBM is an entirely different experience from face-to-face play. It has smarter gamer's who have tried it, and all those who have mastered it. PBM is the only way to participate in the many national tournaments held regularly for Avalon Hill games.

Each kit sells for $6.90 postpaid and includes enough materials (4 pads) to play virtually dozens of games, including addendum sheets which list grid-coordinates for those games not already possessing them. Half kits consisting of two pads and all the pertinent instructions sell for $3.50 postpa id.

Kits are available for the following games:

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