Back in the letters column of Vol. 21, No. 5, I requested that the secretaries (or presidents) of wargaming clubs around the country send me information on their organizations in order to publicize the FTF aspects of our hobby. The response, to say the least, was disappointing. It leads me to have some concern for the future of this fascinating pastime, since it would appear that apathy or antipathy have made some serious advances therein. (For those interested, the full list of those clubs responding to my appeal for information follows at the conclusion of this column. Of course, there are also a number of clubs listed in the ‘Opponents Wanted’ ads on the back cover of this issue as always.)

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Or ‘Ivan, We Hardly Knew Ya’

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THE QUAGMIRE DEFENSE
Playing the Reds in PG GUDERIAN
**Dark Emperor** is a fantasy wargame for two players set in the unique world of Loslon. It pits the divided, but formidable, human kingdoms against the small, but powerful, forces of Padrech dar Cholm.

As the Great Necromancer, you must subdue the kingdoms before they can unite to oppose you. In doing so, your first goal is to conquer two or three of the lesser kingdoms, to provide fodder for your vampire host. Afterwards, you may march against the seat of empire and avenge yourself on the descendants of Padron III. Losses mean nothing, victory is all. The death of your hosts holds no terror for you, for you are Padrech dar Cholm, a master Necromancer who can raise the dead to do your bidding. Aided by the power of Tol Morr and Mozal, and with the Great Sword, He-Supe-On-Muna at your side (if you can find it), you know that you are invincible.

As the active leader of humanity, the Kingdoms player, you must fight a delaying action until the heroes and heroines under your command can raise the land to fight mankind's greatest foe. Unless these forces can be united, they will surely fall. Only together can they hope to stem the dark tides and defeat Padrech dar Cholm.

Cunning strategy, subtle diplomacy and heroic, tenacious defense are their only hope against this great evil. Used well, they can lead to glorious and final victory over the powers of death and terror.

**Dark Emperor** is a simulation of Loslon's greatest war, encompassing all of the diplomatic, magical, and military factors that were brought to bear. Its movement and attrition systems reflect the non-combat losses that occur in any war, especially in a period before the modern advances in logistics and medicine. The combat system rates the relative strengths, and the different capacities, of armies, creating a necessity for intelligent command to assure victory.

**Dark Emperor** can be played in two to four hours. Included in the game is a four-color map board, a sixteen-page rule book (with extensive historical background and designer's notes), two hundred and sixty counters and two six-sided dice. On a scale of one (easy) to ten (hard), its complexity rating is SIX.

**Dark Emperor** is now available for $19.00 from The Avalon Hill Game Company (4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, Maryland 21214). Please add 10% for shipping and handling to payment (20% for Canadian and Mexican orders or 30% for overseas orders) Maryland residents please add an additional 5% state sales tax.
THE RUSSIAN FRONT DISSECTED
OR “Ivan, We Hardly Knew Ya”
By S. Craig Taylor, Jr.

Do you really have to be crazy to design and develop wargames? No... and contrary to popular legend, it doesn’t really help. Actually, it is mental outlook (not mental health) that contrasts designing a wargame from developing one and this clear division in thought processes is not always well-understood in the hobby.

DESIGN ELEMENTS
Properly designing a wargame requires research; not only to find an accurate map and order-of-battle but, even more importantly, the identification of the major aspects of the situation in order to devise a board game “system” reflecting the overall dynamics of the historical events. The last 27 years have seen the introduction of myriad wargame systems and sub-systems and most games feature familiar systems and mechanics that are assembled in some new combination or applied to some new topic. These games can be regarded as “developmental designs” in that the design mental outlook is there, along with the requirement for design research, but the game itself develops existing systems. Properly developing a game usually requires additional research that centers on smaller aspects of the situation, actually playing the game to identify problems and making minor corrections, additions and improvements to smooth over any anomalies that may lie hidden in the game’s basic systems. Good game development or good developmental designs can produce superior games but the improvements are incremental rather than wholesale.

Wargames featuring original major “systems” are less common. New “systems” (always assuming that they work well and get consumer acceptance—more than one widely-heralded new system has subsequently vanished without a trace) make possible advances in the state of the art because they open up the possibilities of reapplying the same new system in future developmental designs. As a company that already has the two most popular and widely-played games on the topic/scale, The Avalon Hill Game Company was understandably reluctant to risk publishing a third until it became apparent that RUSSIAN FRONT was one of those rare games that both introduced major new systems and also plays smoothly, providing an interesting game that is innovative and playable.

RUSSIAN FRONT designer Neil Zimmerer (also the designer of NAVAL WAR), a number of whose games I’ve previously developed, is one of the most systems-oriented designers in the business. He likes playable and elegant game systems that emphasize the most important and interesting details and what he has done with RUSSIAN FRONT is nothing short of remarkable. Games on this topic and scale are certainly nothing new in the hobby. The Avalon Hill Game Company alone has STALINGRAD and THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN in print, and similar games from other companies make these two far from unique. For all this output, which includes some first-class efforts (RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN remains a personal favorite), the fact is that all of these games are, to a large extent, development designs on the major systems of the first of the “breed”, STALINGRAD (which, in turn, shows the lineage of all the old “classics”). What Neil did was to carefully research the events and then mentally stand on his head to re-examine the campaign from new perspectives. Many tried-and-true games systems were kept, as it’s rare for any game to be totally new. Other major systems were freshly minted to introduce a startlingly different overview of the campaign compared to other titles. The rules and systems were carefully considered and assembled as part of the designer’s overall concept and the result is a game with only slightly more complexity than RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN and with many familiar systems and concepts, but having a totally different “feel” from any other game on the market.

The earlier game systems feature unit combat factors based on total combinations and evaluations of unit strength, equipment, leadership, support, tactics, and so forth; battles are resolved by comparing linear additions of these factors, usually, but not always, using an odds-comparison combat results table. On the surface, RUSSIAN FRONT looks deceptively similar until played. A cursory component and rules inspection reveals that combats are resolved within the hexes rather than against adjacent hexes, and use a differential combat results table. Casualties are handled with incremental “hits” (which oddly enough do not alter the unit’s combat factors); combat can extend over several rounds; air and sea units are more prominent and numerous than in similar games; and, curiously, for most units, the unit’s attack factors are larger than their defense factors. Since this particular combi-
nation of rules and factors looks new, there is an initial tendency to identify these differences as the game's "innovations"; but these variations are actually more the consequence of a new game system rather than the definition of the system itself.

Looking at the unit counters, one sees the common format of "Attack Factor—Defense Factor—Morale". Much is rightly familiar, but why is the attack factor larger than the defense factor and why don't increasing losses reduce those factors? And what about the rule that stacked units cannot add their factors together? Is this the Twilight Zone version of the campaign or is there more to the first letter of the system? Yes, there is, and the unit counters are the key to the combat system, which, in turn is fundamental to understanding the logic and simulation underpinnings of the entire game system.

The attack factor is usually larger than the defense factor simply because, the cost of replacing a unit is based on the attack factor. It is larger so that an entire unit costs more to replace than repairing hits when the combat results table. Also, the component elements used to calculate the combat factors are more limited than those used in other games. The strength included in the combat factors of most other games numbers, among many other elements, abstracted major support and the shock value of armor. These are not included in the RUSSIAN FRONT combat factor calculations but are presented as separate "supporting" air, sea and artillery units or as distinct game mechanisms like the "blitz attack"). The support mechanism is linked to a limited defense. RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN theory is modified by the use of Stuka units is detailed with a vengeance in RUSSIAN FRONT.

Increasing losses do not reduce combat factors because the combat factors do not represent the sum total of a unit's combat value. In World II, losses were usually concentrated in the front-line combat units—individual infantrymen and AFVs. It was not unusual for even a heavily-battered unit to still have most of its automatic weapons and artillery available, these are the basis for most of a unit's effective firepower. What the hit unit does lose is a portion of its effectiveness is based on the combined relationship of its combat factors, a unit's combat effectiveness in RUSSIAN FRONT is based on the combined relationship of its combat factors, terrain and its hits.

All right, then why can't units stacked together have their hits distributed across the entire unit? This is admittedly an abstraction that is a result of the designer's view of how events and of the game's scale, which features hces about 25 miles across and month-long turns. Theoretically, it would not be difficult to simultaneously employ the full strength of two or more units of the size typically employed in the game (Axis units and Soviet armies) in such an area if that were an effective deployment for World War II. Much more likely, additional units in a hex-sized area would be used to relieve a front-line unit after it had its chance to fight and get chewed-up, or several units of the same type of tactical unit, in the case of the mercenary combat factors for each for about the same effect as if all of one unit is used. Twentieth century armies do not fight shoulder-to-shoulder, but mass at selected key points along their frontage while holding back substantial portions of their strength to reinforce success or retrieve failure. It would be easier to do this if the combat units were less comprehensible. To know just how many survivors were needed in a hex to have a battle, the requirements for battle are presented as separate "supporting" air, sea, and infantry units, usually called "chrome", should be added to a game's flavor and detail, often called "chrome", should be added in such a way as not to distort a game's focus. The Soviet partisans played a very important role in the actual campaign, but, given the level of the game and its focus, detailed rules and separate partisan units to move around seemed out of place and inappropriate compared to the other game mechanisms. Neil had actually left them out of the original prototype, although we both realized that they were too important to leave out of the published game and some rules were eventually needed. Further research revealed that, although partisans engaged in constant and varied operations, the major effects of their activities that show on the game map are confined to the Axis rail network and that the Soviet command often used lulls in the fighting to re-organize, move and recruit their partisans so that they were available at full strength to support major offensives. The partisans are presented as "partisan factors" available to the Soviet side as replacements and these can be used for use in the most appropriate time. When used, the number of partisan factors employed and expended during one month modifies the die roll on the Parisan Table; the more partisan points employed, the better the odds of being effective. The Parisan Table affects the number of units the Axis can transport by rail during
a turn and these abstracted partisan activities, with good modifiers and a decent die roll, can virtually turn and these abstracted partisan activities, with good modifiers and a decent die roll, can virtually player most wants to transfer major reserves. Even in assorted results for both sides; scenarios starting in June 1942 gave the Axis a marked edge of 14-7 and June 1943 scenarios gave the Soviets a victory edge of 15-4.

Rules presentation and format is always a challenge with a new game system because there are no games with a similar system to provide a tested format sample suitable for shameless plagiarism. Also, some care must be taken to explain the new concepts, but this can’t be overdone or the rulebook becomes more of a design primer (of marginal interest to most gamers) than an explanation of how the game is played. This would increase the game’s price and leave no material for GENERAL articles. I decided to include a four-page Basic Game Folder to learn as well as to provide a short “practise” session covering the major new concepts in the game system for “grognards”. Most players discover that they’re doing something backwards in the middle of the first few games, anyhow, so why fumble a long game when you can make the same discovery during a short game? It helps to know how to float before you attempt to swim. Players are advised to read and play the Basic Game first as it makes learning the “real” game (the Advanced Game Rules) and transitioning to the new system much easier. The rules are basically laid out in the familiar sequence of play order, but the separation into Basic and Advanced Rules does make a bit of jumping around and cross-referencing necessary. This is no problem and, indeed, makes the game easier to learn if the instructions are followed and the Basic Game is read and played first—followed by reading and playing the Advanced Game. Times have changed since the introduction of the old “classics” during the sixties when players would practically memorize the rules and play a new game repeatedly and continuously. Rules formats evolve to reflect new playing habits. Most players today tend to read over a set of rules once, play the game a time or two, and then move on to another game, returning only weeks or months later for more playings. To make refreshing the memory after such intervals easier and for reference during play, the rules are extensively broken up by explanatory bold type headings. There is an extensive table of contents referenced to these headings. And all the charts and tables and many notes on play are printed on a separate game card that is completely referenced to the appropriate rules sections. Despite attempting to accomplish so many things at once, rules should also be kept as concise as possible. With so many factors to consider and incorporate, it is a pleasure to report that game play questions are running far below normal.

GAME ELEMENTS

What does all this come to when playing the game and how does all this differ from other games on the same topic? Competent play of RUSSIAN FRONT requires changing and rethinking many acquired “game tactics”. The traditional method of comparing all inclusive combat factors is a viable method of representing combat at this level (that is why it has been around for so long) and its abstractions and design theory are well-understood by wargamers, but much of a situation’s unique “flavor” can be lost. The RF system forces the players to think about game details in a manner more similar to the considerations of their historic counterparts. What units should be sent replacements to prepare for an offensive or maintain a defense? What major combat units and what support assets should be transferred to a section of the front? What should be the direction of an attack? Where is the best place to attack, and what are the chances for success there? Instead of worrying about that extra attack factor required for a perfect “3-1” attack, players have to look at the larger picture. The Combat Results Table can cause losses to both sides at any differential (naturally, the chances for success go up in the more favorable columns) and this means that there are few “sure things”, but also means that there is no chance of losing half your army on one “attacker eliminated” result.

Since an entire game cannot turn on the result of one die roll, the RF system permits the realistic (at this level) and effective incorporation of limited intelligence rules. The hits on opposing units may not be examined prior to combat and, if option 19.5.2 is used, any units not in direct contact with the enemy may be inverted (all Axis units have a grey back and all Soviet units have a red back for just
The Axis forces must utilize a "high-risk" blitzkrieg strategy to have any hope of victory. In the Axis forces, the limited number of German panzer corps are at once both most powerful and the most mobile units and true massed schwerpunckts must be formed of these and properly supported from the air to achieve decisive breakthroughs and rapid advances on narrow fronts. Even later in the game, they are the units best suited for spoiling attacks, limited offensives and rearguard actions. As such they are the heart of the Axis armies, but their "high-tech" capabilities require (along with maintenance of their primary support, the Luftwaffe fliegerkorps units) a high expenditure of replacement factors (two replacement factors per hit as opposed to one for infantry units). The high replacement cost of keeping these units in action can be somewhat discounted by use of the Axis "refit" capability (a refitting unit replaces one hit per turn for no replacement expenditure [game hint: use this capability to the maximum]), but it is rare that the panzer corps can be held out of action for months on end to totally refit. Their relative ineffectiveness in cities and unfavorable terrain such as swamps, mountains and forests limits the areas where they can be favorably deployed. The Axis player is also caught in a constant one-handed juggling act between using replacements to keep the panzer and Luftwaffe units fully capable and lacking infantry units or lacking the infantry up to snuff and watching the panzer and air units approach extinction. Proper use of the Axis forces requires a large degree of precision and skill.

The Soviet forces are blessed with large numbers of "all-arms" armies (abstracted as "infantry" armies in the game) that are primarily infantry and include some very powerful units, especially the Shock and Guards armies. Regarding replacement costs, they are relatively inexpensive to keep in action but lack the breakthrough and exploitation capabilities of the armor formations. The powerful infantry armies gradually achieve an offensive capability increases slowly. Powerful Soviet tank armies build up leisurely, until, by 1944, the Soviets have a definite blitzkrieg capability, but prior to that time, overextending their few tank armies can lead to their being chewed up to little purpose by counter-attacking panzers.

An interesting battle confronts the a Soviet player as the game continues. Guard units (infantry armies, tank armies and cavalry corps) can, when their entry turns arrive, be placed on the mapboard by substituting for a standard unit of the same type or by being "purchased" using replacement factors. There is usually no hesitation in substituting a 4-3-4 Guards infantry for a 4-3-4 Guards cavalry for a 2-2-6 cavalry, but substituting a 9-7-6 Guard tank for a 8-6-4 unit seems much less worthwhile. Historically, the Soviets in every case converted standard tank armies to Guard status, but the game provides a player with the alternative of purchasing the three Guard tank armies for eight replacement factors each (24 total) and improving on the actual quantity of Soviet armored forces. The problem is that the 24 replacement factors required for this could otherwise be used to, say, put four eliminated air armies back into play. Augmenting the Soviet tank forces in this manner is recommended only if the Soviet side is in a superb accumulated replacement situation; otherwise, the replacement points are better expended for other purposes.

The Soviets are always hampered by their less capable primary support units, the air armies, although large numbers become available as the game progresses. Even late in the game Luftwaffe units can achieve air superiority over limited sections of the front. Soviet offensives, therefore, for most of the game must concentrate their attacks over broad fronts that will wear down and defeat large Axis forces and force them into large scale retreats to avoid total annihilation. Defensively, armies must be deployed in continuous lines and in depth to avoid deep Axis penetrations while causing unacceptable attrition to the expensive Axis spearheads. Proper use of the Soviet forces requires less precision than use of the Axis forces, but requires as much skill and an adjustment in thinking to accommodate the fact that most air-to-air battles will be lost and that even the most powerful offensives will involve some local defeats. Soviet players cannot afford a mentality that calls for a few "high-odds" attacks but must have the ability to see a large series of battles as a cohesive whole.

**PLAY ELEMENTS**

Like any game, RUSSIAN FRONT has a number of "gaming tricks" or commonly used strategies that work well with the game's system. The measure of a game's strength or weakness as a simulation lies in how well these "tricks" and the actual play of the game represents actual events. The true test of any game is not in how it looks in theory, but how well it works in practice. Drawing on my personal experience in over 80 playings of the game (yes, I do like it), here are some illustrations of common situations, their resolution and what they simulate.

**Initial Blitz (See Figure 1)**

The Soviet problem at the start of Barbarossa is that they lack the ground units to form a defense in depth and prevent Axis breakthroughs. Soviet counterattacking capability is also small due to the lack of powerful ground units and air armies for support. The Axis player must ruthlessly exploit this advantage to destroy Soviet units and push forward at maximum speed. To illustrate a typical first turn, let's examine the northern end of the front and the initial operations of Army Group North (with an assist from a few Army Group Center units).

Instead of moving, a reserve unit is placed on the German infantry corps in hex JJ4 so it will be available for later movement during the Exploitation Phase, supplementing the panzer exploitation. The German infantry corps entering hexes NN5 and KK7 both expend an extra movement factor that will convert the railroads in those hexes (if the German units hold those hexes at the conclusion of combat. The German 4-4-7 naval flotilla supports the coastal attack in NNS. The Soviet player could, but doesn't, send the Baltic Flotilla from Riga to also participate in this combat. Note the German corps left in KK5 to block possible Soviet retreat there. Units can always retreat to a coastal hex if they have a naval unit in the same body of water. Since this is Turn 1, Advanced Rule 15.5 (Axis First Turn Surprise) applies and the attack factors of all the involved Axis units are modified by +1.
decides to voluntarily retreat to LL7. After a round of combat, if no mandatory retreat was required by the combat result, the defender has the opportunity to convert the railroad in LL7 (the blitz unit is adjusted so that a ‘11’ now shows). The 6-4-6 panzer corps splits off and expends one movement factor to enter KK7 and one movement factor to convert the railroad there and ends its movement. The 4-3-6 German infantry corps in LL6, as infantry units cannot be moved as part of blitz attacks. The new combat in LL7 annihilates the Soviet unit with no further German loss. The 8-6-6 panzer corps expends its last movement factor to enter MM7. The panzer schwerpunkt has punched through and turned back to envelop and cut off the adjacent Soviet units to ensure that there will be a big hole (at least three hexes wide) in the Soviet front for exploitation when the combat is finished.

Without going into the gory details, the rest of the combats yield the following results: HH7—Soviet tank corps eliminated for one hit on the panzer corps; JI5—Soviet infantry corps retreats to LL7 with one hit for two hits on the German infantry corps; JI6—Soviet infantry corps retreats into JI7 with two hits; KK6—Soviet tank corps is eliminated with one hit on the opposing infantry corps; MM6—Soviet tank corps retreats into NN6 carrying one hit; and NN9—Soviet infantry corps is eliminated with one hit placed on the enemy infantry corps. Following the combats, the German naval and air units are moved to base at Memel during the Post Combat Step.

During the Exploitation Phase, the German infantry unit held in reserve in JI4 moves through the hole in the Soviet line to JI5, KK5, LL6, MM8, NN8 and NN9 (Riga)—the seventh movement factor expended to enter Riga costs one hit, as option 19.2 is being used (where extra movement factors can be expended at the cost of an equal number of hits). The panzer corps at HH7 enters HH8. The panzer corps at KK7 moves LL7, LL8, KK9, KK10 and KK11. The panzer corps in MM7 moves LL7, LL8, KK9, KK10, JJ10 and JJ11. This nails down a good advance (although most of the infantry has been left far behind, a major problem for the Axis in the early months of the campaign) and leaves the surviving Soviet units in hexes I8, JI7 and NN6 out of supply (no replacements are possible and movement is halved) during the coming Soviet Phases of the Turn. The exploiting panzers could have plunged deeper into the enemy rear, but this might have left them out of supply at the start of their next turn (out of supply units may not move forward, only back toward their own supply sources). If the exploiting panzer corps had been moved further east, on the following turn the Axis player would have been able to use air supply (if option 17.2 is used) to permit their normal use or leave them in place until rail hexes are converted far enough east to supply them for use during the Axis Exploitation Phase.

An Assault on Leningrad

Leningrad can be one of the toughest nuts to crack on the entire mapboard. The city itself is very strong (‘4’ as a fortress city and ‘11’ for having a river) and it usually contains the powerful Baltic Fleet (5-5-7) for support. It is hard to reach by Axis naval support because of the dense naval minefields and the surrounding terrain (mostly forest and swamp) is hardly conducive to fast-moving blitz attacks. Naval operations, including minelaying and minesweeping, can appear deceptively unimportant until a place like Leningrad or Sevastopol is reached. Then, they can prove to be the decisive element in determining if they can be taken or held. Until the German siege artillery unit becomes available for support in mid-1942, the best Axis chance to take the city is usually to cut it off and force a surrender.

This sample attack details an attempt to cut off Leningrad and demonstrates the problems and dangers associated with these maneuvers. The German infantry corps in QQ17 attacks Leningrad directly—this is hopeless (a ‘1’ attack—the worst column on the CRT), but like the concept of “soak-off” attacks in many other games, it pins down the defenders. The Soviet naval and air units in Leningrad cannot interfere elsewhere while tied up in their own combat. The German infantry corps in PP17 joins the panzer corps in QQ18 and enters QQ19 for a blitz attack (‘4’ showing on the blitz counter)—the German fliegerkorps in Pskov will also join this combat during the Air Movement Step, as will the Soviet air army from Tikhvin (an attacker’s air units are moved, followed by the defender’s air units during the Air Movement Step, after all ground movement is completed). The Finnish infantry corps from TT19 attacks SS19, joined by the Finnish Air Force during the Air Movement Step. The German and Finnish flotillas are both moved forward during the Naval Movement Step to ‘sweep’ the outer belt of Soviet minefields protecting Leningrad in RR17 and SS18.

The blitz attack in QQ19 starts with the air-to-air combat between the German and Soviet air units. In any combat hex, the air-to-air combats are resolved first, followed by the ground attacks (which may be supported by victorious or unopposed air and naval units). With a German attack factor of ‘4’ and a Soviet defense factor of ‘2’, this is a ‘+2’ attack. A ‘11’ is rolled and the German unit takes two hits to the Soviet unit’s single hit. This leaves both units only one hit from elimination, but the Soviet player can’t stand the heat and voluntarily retreats the air arm into QQ20. The panzer corps supported by the German air unit then makes a ‘+7’ attack that results in two hits on the Soviet air and one hit on the panzer corps. Again, the Soviet player chooses to retreat to QQ20.

This opens up RR19 to the blitzing panzer corps, although the marshy terrain there means that all remaining blitz attack movement factors are expended when the panzer corps enters the hex (three to enter the hex and one for the coming combat) accompanied by the battered fliegerkorps. The 5-4-6 German infantry corps is left behind as the panzers and Stukas roll north. In RR19, the Soviet army’s ‘3’ defense factor is increased by one for the river and by one for the marsh, plus the support of the naval flotilla (‘1’), giving the Soviets a total value of seven for the combat. Note that naval units in a base (port city) hex under ground attack are not used in a separate naval combat before the ground combat is resolved, but are used only for support of the ground combat in that hex. The panzer corps, up to its idlers in muck, has its ‘8’ attack factor reduced by three for the marsh (the terrain in a hex can influence that attacker and defender, but the air unit still adds ‘+4’ in support, so the Axis has
a total value of nine for the combat. This gives them a ‘+2’ attack, and a ‘+2’ is rolled. This puts two hits on each of the Soviet army (and German panzer units). Nobody wants to voluntarily retreat, so an identical second combat round is fought. This time a ‘+3’ is rolled so both sides take one hit, but the attacker must retreat. The Axis player decides to use Option 20.1 to ignore the mandate to take an extra hit. One hit is marked on the map and the two combat rolls are on the German panzer corps (five hits total now indicated on the panzers). Both sides grit their teeth, there are no retreats and there is a third combat round. Another ‘+3’ is rolled. The Soviet player takes his hit on the army, which eliminates it and forces the Axis to retreat (‘+2’). The Soviet player could have chosen to mark the hit on the flotilla (eliminating it instead of the army), but wants to keep it to maintain a supply line across Lake Ladoga to hex S220 for the Soviet Phases. The Axis player decides to use Option 20.2 to ignore the man- 

Germans, but wants to keep it to maintain a supply line across Lake Ladoga to hex SS20 for the Soviet Phases. The Axis player decides to use Option 20.1 to ignore the mandate to take an extra hit. One hit is marked on the map and the two combat rolls are on the German panzer corps (five hits total now indicated on the panzers). Both sides grit their teeth, there are no retreats and there is a third combat round. Another ‘+3’ is rolled. The Soviet player takes his hit on the army, which eliminates it and forces the Axis to retreat (‘+2’). The Soviet player could have chosen to mark the hit on the flotilla (eliminating it instead of the army), but wants to keep it to maintain a supply line across Lake Ladoga to hex SS20 for the Soviet Phases. The Axis player decides to use Option 20.2 to ignore the man-

On To Kharkov (See Figure 3)

This is used as an example of a typical Soviet ‘broad front’ offensive. The main Soviet objective is Kharkov and, rather than drive straight at it with the fairly unimpressive forces available which would simply create a narrow (and vulnerable) salient, the Soviet player launches a series of attacks to the north and south of the city. If all goes well, this will cause unacceptable attrition and eventually cause an Axis retreat along the entire front or pocket the Kharkov defenders and permit the capture of the city without the need for a costly combat through the streets. Kursk is also threatened. (Actually, more directly threatened than Kharkov — this is a partial feint that may force the Axis player to worry more about Kursk and draw Axis strength from closer to Kharkov.) The German panzer corps in Q19 is marked for a later attack on the army, which allows it to be moved after the Soviet air movement. The air units are moved to support the ground forces in the normal manner during the Air Movement Phase.

The combats are resolved as follows: V22—‘(0)’ two Soviet to one German, and the Soviet army voluntarily retreats to V23 (this looked like a ‘+2’ attack when the offensive started, but the shifting of the reserve panzer corps to the hex changed that); T21—‘(0)’ one Soviet hit, the Soviet army voluntarily retreating to T22; S22—air-to-air ‘(+1)’ results in the Soviet air unit’s voluntary retreat. This is marked by the Rumanian air unit (staying for another round of air-to-air combat with one hit would entail a 5/6s chance of elimination), ground and air ‘(+7)’ gives the Rumanian mountain corps three hits and eliminates it; R21—‘(+4)’ one hit each and the Rumanian air unit voluntarily retreats. R20—‘(+1)’ each side takes one hit, the Axis player takes them on his air unit to avoid the elimination of the infantry corps and the Soviet army voluntarily retreats to Q22 (the movement of the fliegerkorps to this hex spoiled what originally looked like a ‘+2’ attack; N21—‘(+1)’ two German hits, the German infantry corps retreats to N20; and M22—‘(+3)’ one Axis hit and the German unit voluntarily retreats to M21. During the Post Combat Steps, all air units return to their original base hexes. As these examples should make obvious, multiple rounds of combat in one hex are possible but not successful, but elimination of the 5-4-4 should produce a very favorable loss ratio.

Finishing Of A Salient (See Figure 4)

The zones of control exerted by ground units in RUSSIAN FRONT are very tenuous and the game instead incorporates a mechanism called “response movement” that permits a non-phasing unit to force combat with an enemy unit moving from one of its ZOC hexes to another. Against a weak enemy, this results in multiple ‘+2’ combat results in one area. Against a strong and numerous attacker, a screen has no chance. One enemy unit moves into the defender’s hex, forcing it into combat and negating its zone of control, and the rest of the enemy units move past uninterrupted into the defender’s rear. It is not unusual for defending units to win a combat in their hex while casualties in adjacent hexes to either side are lost, leaving the victorious defender out of supply or at least too far to have its own forces be aided by enemy response moves. Armored units make effective “rearguards” by moving to attack the flanking enemy units to rescue trapped defenders who can then move back to safety. The armored units can then use their Exploitation Phase to rejoin the main defense line after combat, as in this example.

Early in the game, the Soviets (as usual) are in trouble and one of their best units—a 6-5-4 army (among others)—is partially surrounded, although it is not out of supply. If simply moved back to GG15, either or both of the German corps in FF14 or HH14 can be the one to force a Soviet unit to use its ‘+2’ air-to-air combat in the event of intervention by a Soviet air arm or army).
Moving Pockets (See Figure 6)

Encirclement battles can lead to "moving pockets", which are a problem for the Axis player in Russian Front in the summer and fall of 1941 and for the Soviet player in the latter stages of the game, as they were in the actual campaign. Spearheads manage to encircle or "pocket" enemy units, but the encircling forces are too thin on the ground to prevent breakouts by at least some of the enemy units, which remain in existence for at least another turn and must be fought or surrounded again. All the Soviet units in the example except the army at DD18 are out of supply (ZOCs can cut supply routes unless an enemy ground unit occupies the ZOC hex), but the German encirclement is thin and incomplete and the German's penetration into the Soviet rear has not been too deep. The Soviet 6-54 army enters EE18 to combat the panzer corps there while the army in GG18 moves to combat the other panzer corps in GG19, leaving the Soviet tank and infantry corps free to move (half speed since they started out of supply) through the gap in the FF hex row. The two attacking Soviet units will take their knockouts in one round of combat only, then voluntarily retreat east. All Soviet units (somewhat bloodied) have escaped the pocket for at least one turn and can fight again.

STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

A player's strategy at any stage of the game depends on the relative strengths and positions of the sides. At the start of a full game, the Axis player must make a decision as to where to make the major effort. Unlike Russian Campaign, the various units in each Axis army group in June 1941 are not restricted to attacking the Soviet military district directly opposite, but may be shifted to attack at any point that can be reached from their initial placement areas. There are initially ten German panzer corps and five air units available with Army Groups North, Center and South and another panzer corps which becomes available on Turn 2. These are the most important offensive units and the employment defines the major offensive effort.

The panzer corps can be launched to the north or south of the Pripet Marshes and, once committed, shifts from one major axis of advance to another can be time-consuming. Normally, the Axis player should consider a major effort involving seven or eight panzer and three to four air units on one side of the marshes and the remainder on the other side for the "minor" effort. A smaller minor effort would tend to stall that advance and a smaller major effort (say, with a roughly even split of the panzer and air units on either side of the marshes) would lack the individual "punch" in either sector to provide the rapid advances needed for an Axis victory. Making the major effort north of the Pripet Marshes endangers a large number of important Soviet cities (including Leningrad and Moscow) and the area includes a convenient rail network to supply the advance, but the terrain is rough and, in many areas, not favorable for blitzkrieg operations. A major southern effort provides ideal tank country, but, in the early stages of the advance, less cities for capture and a far less conveniently situated rail network—Kiev and the Dnieper River line must be cleared before any southern panzers are in position to make really major conquests.

During most of 1941, it is springtime for Hitler and Germany as the Axis side should be able to sweep deep into the Russian homeland. Careful attention should be paid to converting railroad hexes with infantry units to keep the drive in supply (a ground unit must be within five unblocked hexes from a friendly railroad hex or mapboard edge to be supplied). Initially, do not waste time and units trying to repair all the railroad hexes; only convert those essential to keep the offensive moving, as other hexes can be converted later. Seize cities with an eye to their use as forward airfields. Do not waste the panzers in attacks close to Leningrad unless the Soviet player has left that part of the front remarkably weak or it has already been determined that Leningrad is to be the ultimate objective of the initial northern drive and Moscow will be ignored for 1941. Have a plan. Be firm about objectives, but flexible in the methods used to obtain them. It is easy to get sidetracked and send off panzer corps in every direction to grab attractive secondary objectives. Except during the first turn, to exploit the Axis First Turn Surprise rule and wear down the Soviet fronts, do not burn up Axis strength attacking every Soviet unit that can be reached. Use blitz attacks and exploit gaps in the enemy line to penetrate into the rear and leave by-passed Soviet units out SM alone. Even if some Soviet units can attack to break out of encirclements, the encircling units can be defensively supported by air units that were busy elsewhere during the Axis Phases—this allows the use of air units twice during the same turn. All of this will leave much of the Axis strength straggling up from far behind the rampaging panzer spearheads and care, especially after October 1941, must be taken to avoid becoming overextended.

Although the German units definitely constitute the bulk and quality of the Axis armies, the assorted Axis allies can still play a useful role in the initial blitzkrieg. The Finns provide far and away the best allied force, although they lack mobility and are "brittle" due to the low replacement rate. Hango may or may not be stormed immediately to secure the port; but, if the attack is made, definitely do not commit the Finnish flotilla to this attack or a sortie by the Soviet Baltic Fleet (non-phasing naval units may be moved to react to moves by enemy naval units) could defeat the attack. The main Finnish effort for the first few turns should be to drive south to Leningrad to both threaten the city and tie up Soviet forces and replacements that could be profitably deployed elsewhere. A secondary effort involving one infantry corps should be made to convert the rails leading to Petrozavodsk, and, after the August reinforcements are brought forward and the outskirts of Leningrad are secured, this effort should be converted into a full-blown drive on Petrozavodsk and the Svir River by winter. Leave the 3-3-4 corps in Helsinki to guard against a possible Soviet marine amphibious landing (if Option 17.5 is used) or an attack from Hango; later, consideration should be given to laying a belt of minefields in the Gulf of Finland to close it to Soviet naval forces.

To the south, the other allies are weaker, but the Hungarian and Rumanian mechanized corps can be useful in maneuvering over the steppes and the German infantry can be used to secure rail lines. On the first turn, be sure to garrison Constanta (probably with a Rumanian infantry corps) and Bucharest (probably with the Rumanian cavalry corps) to secure these from a possible raid by the Soviet 2nd Cavalry Corps, which will probably be lurking in the area along the Moldavia front. Initially, after the Allied Fronts in the south will be very porous. As the advance accelerates, these garrisons can be brought forward.

During the summer and autumn of 1941, the Soviet player may start to feel that the onslaught is unstoppable, but an attempt must be made to contain it by establishing and keeping a line of defense as long as possible and keep the 51st Army in Sevastopol. Use naval units to support coastal operations, but beware of the Luftwaffe and especially careful not to lose the Baltic Fleet before it can get back to Leningrad. Try to build up solid fronts blocking advances on the most important objectives and deny access to important railroad hexes. Even an isolated front of two or three units placed in and around distant but important points such as Rostov and Voronezh as winter closes in can stall the final Axis lurch forward and keep these places in Soviet hands. Do not hesitate to sacrifice the brown corps to keep the more powerful red army units in being or to cover withdrawals to avoid total destruction. Defend as far west as possible, but do everything practical to ensure the survival of the better units. Don't be afraid to retreat when necessary. If the choice is losing a city or losing a city and the defending units, kiss the goodbye and show a clean pair of heels. Don't risk losing five or six units while attempting to "save" one or two units. Pay close attention to the situation and anticipate Axis airbases and rail needs; in many cases, dropping off a sacrificial corps in a city forces the Axis player to deploy a Fliegerkorps in reducing it to secure the needed airbase/rail network. To the south, there is one less air unit available that turn to attack the main front. Use your own air armies judiciously to prevent ground unit eliminations (even if this sometimes calls for marking a hit on a supporting air army instead of on the ground unit) and to support ground units in key hexes if the use gives a chance of preventing a breakthrough; often, preventing just one unit elimination and/or breakthrough can prevent exploitation and stall an entire
Axis front for an entire month. Watch for overextended panzers and try the occasional counterattack if there is an opportunity to destroy an isolated spearhead unit. Only a few successful counterattacks that eliminate panzer corps are required to reduce a cocky Kraut to a harried Hun. Keep cool and don't get discouraged. Whistle Slavic folk tunes. Hope for an early winter.

Then the snows come! Winter 1941-42 found the Axis armies woefully unprepared for cold weather. During all snow months during this “first winter” period (weather is determined by die roll and may vary on the different panels of the mapboard), all Axis ground units (except mountain corps and the Finns) have their combat factors reduced by one and two of the powerful German fliegerkorps are withdrawn (historically, one went to the Mediterranean and the other back to Germany to rest and refit). Axis infantry is strung all across the mapboard and the panzer spearheads (probably considerably weakened by hits) maintain a precarious “front line” to the east. Powerful Soviet reinforcements, especially the Shock armies and new air armies, also arrive at just this time. If the Axis is anywhere close to victory at this point and the Soviets are, in spite of their winter advantages, too weak for serious counter-offensives, the Axis just about has the game wrapped up. The Soviet player must use this favorable period to attack and recapture cities, to drive the Axis lines back from threatened cities, and to weaken the Axis forces to hinder and delay their 1942 offensive. Don’t wait! Start attacking in November or December while the panzers are holding isolated forward positions waiting for most of their infantry. A word of warning to the Soviet player: Do not overextend these offensives as Stalin did historically. When the snows end, those panzers can rapidly regain their ability to smash up prodigious quantities of exposed Soviet units.

The coming of good weather in 1942 (this also applies to games starting in 1942) forces the Axis player to make another major decision, probably the most important since his choice of whether to make the major effort to the north or south of the Pripiat Marshes at the start of the game. The two wandering fliegerkorps return in May and June as well as a more powerful Rumanian air unit, a horde of allied infantry corps and the German seige artillery unit. Replacements reach the Axis high line for the game (it is all downhill from here) and permit shattered units to recuperate to a presentable condition. The Soviets are infinitely more powerful than a year earlier, have more support available, and stretch across the map in a continuous line that probably has some depth at selected points. If playing the 1942 scenario, the Soviet line contains some tempting salients, notably a large one to the north of Smolensk. Consider very carefully before deciding to mass offensive forces to cut off this salient, as the ground is not favorable for the blitzkrieg, there are no cities to capture, and the completion of this offensive will leave much of your striking power in the midst of a maze of forests, marshes and mountains. Any plan that envisages this maneuver should look on it as merely the preliminary to a sweep to outflank Moscow to the north.

Any serious Axis 1942 offensive will require a very powerful striking forces; probably at least five or six full-strength panzer corps, powerful German infantry and as many fliegerkorps and allied air forces as can be spared from the rest of the front. A proper RUSSIAN PLANNING for offensive is perhaps the thing that you and the other kids can stage in Dad’s barn. Planning is a required, as the ground and support forces must be amassed and available to carry out long and powerful offensives that can gain lots of ground. Take a look at the dispositions of the German army groups at the start of the 1941 offensive. They were as massed and ready to uncoil and strike as a hungry rattlesnake. That mass can’t be matched in 1942, but a smaller version should be attempted.

Where is the offensive to be made giving the best chance for a major Axis victory? A chart that gives the Victory Points Chart—just what is required at this point in the game? Leningrad, assuming that it is still in Soviet hands, is tempting but, as shown in the example above, is a poor area for the blitzkrieg. This would primarily be an infantry battle, with the seige artillley brought forward and available for the final direct assault on the city and heavy air support required to allow the Axis flotillas to sweep the Leningrad minefields. Planning for this attack while using the panzers for a more "limited" offensive to the south splits up the air support assets and runs the risk that both offensives will fall “just short” of their objectives. Moscow should always be in the back of each player’s mind. Not the best blitzkrieg terrain, but passable. Are the Axis lines close enough to make a drive feasible, especially, assuming Soviet player competence, since this front is precisely the one that should be the best defended?

Then how about the south? This is the reasoning that got Hitler where he is today, but there are many good arguments for an Axis southern strategy. Voronezh, Rostov and Stalingrad are all extra objective point replacement cities and, in addition, the capture of Rostov and/or Maikop oilfields will not only decrease but increase Axis replacements. The terrain is ideal for a blitzkrieg and the southern part of the line is so long that there are bound to be some weak spots in the line. If Sevastopol can be reduced (and it can, if the seige artillery unit is used there), the far southern flank is secure and a subsidiary attack can repair the Kerch Straits can be used to expand the Soviet front and stretch it to the limit. A rapid and successful blitz toward Voronezh leaves open the chance for a follow-up drive to the south or, possibly, a gleaming opportunity to outflank Moscow from the south. A disadvantage is that the Hungarian, Italian and Rumanian units will, under certain conditions, be employed only on the southern half of the mapboard, meaning that good German infantry must be left up north to hold the line and the weak allied corps must be employed to hold large portions of the vast southern Axis line. If the Axis side is too weak for a major 1942 offensive, the Soviets just might have a chance wrapped up. It’s now or never. The Soviets must be decisively beaten or at least severely weakened in 1942. Axis thumb-twiddling through the summer of 1942 will only allow the Soviets to uninterruptedly mass their superior replacements and re-inforcements for a bar-burner of an offensive by late 1942 or early 1943.

By late 1942 or early 1943, if no one has secured a decisive victory, the roles of the players should permanently change. The Axis forces are now strategically on the defensive, while the Soviets must take the offensive and regain lots of ground just to avoid an Axis victory caused by the Soviet forces doing better than they did historically. Looking at the 1943 scenario set-up and balance of forces, one becomes convinced that the old “rug chewer” was completely out of his mind to contemplate a major 1943 offensive, but, hmmm . . . if the Soviet player fails to pack that exposed Kursk salient with ample troops, there’s always a chance . . . Think that one through very carefully. The situation at this stage of a campaign game may be more or less favorable to the players than the actual 1943 situation. Although Hitler and Stalin both made some grave errors in the real campaign (they had, after all, only the one player), players usually make their own mistakes. Now it is the time for the Soviet player to make major offensive decisions. The Soviets should have enough powerful armies and air support to initiate a number of broad-front body blows that will bleed the Axis white and force either their annihilation at the front or extensive withdrawals.

To the north, the terrain—as always—favors the defenders but it is always useful to put Leningrad out of danger or, if necessary, to recapture the place and drive back the Finns. This can be a gradual all-infantry drive backed by an air army or two. It is usually not useful or necessary to totally overrun Finland as these troublesome Balts will automatically surrender in September 1944 if Leningrad is in Soviet hands and, isolated from the rest of the front as they are, it is more profitable just to sit on the defensive with an occasional attack to keep the Finns in line while major offensive assets are massed further south. The best way to deal with German Army North is to ignore it and exert just enough pressure and a few local attacks to prevent the movement of reserves south while outflanking its strong defensive lines with drives further south.

South of the Baltic States, the Soviet player should mass for a number of broad front offensives aimed generally at Smolensk-Minsk in the center and Kiev-Hungary-Rumania in the south. Normally the open terrain and inert allied units to the south call for major offensive steamrollers through the Ukraine with subsidiary offensives in the center, but making the major effort in the center or roughly halving the efforts are certainly viable alternatives given the Soviet offensive strength and supporting assets. Keep up a continuous pounding on the Axis forces to prevent them from regrouping and replacing losses. All this fighting will lead to heavy Soviet losses, but, since there should be far more armies available than can be profitably used at the front, Continued on Page 40, Column 3
RUSSIAN FRONT PLUS

Variants for the Latest Invasion

By James E. Meldrum

RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN was good—but RUSSIAN FRONT is even better! The Avalon Hill Game Company's newest game simulating that portion of World War II between Russia and Germany, operates on the same scale as RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN (army/corps level) but it depicts this conflict in far greater detail. RUSSIAN FRONT is just the game for those who like more detail than is found in RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN but who do not want to drive every tank in the German army as one has to do in monster games dealing with the Eastern Front.

Because of the additional detail neatly incorporated into RUSSIAN FRONT, the potential for simulating variant situations is tremendous. The variants presented in this article are intended to exploit a small part of that potential. Players may use these variants to examine how various historical factors and events might have altered the outcome of this campaign. Since the use of variant rules can drastically change the game’s balance, it is suggested that players use variants that are neutral or pairs of variants that each favor one side. A variant that favors the Axis is marked A, one that favors the Soviets is marked S and a variant that favors neither side (“neutral”) is marked N. Even this will not rebalance the game, but the whole purpose of these variants is to explore these effects. Copies of units required for some of the variants are included in this issue’s insert. Unless otherwise mentioned, all original game rules are unchanged.

I. NEUTRAL BALKANS (S):

This variant assumes that the Balkans remained neutral throughout the war. Consequently, Rumanian and Hungarian units may never be used and German forces may not begin the game in either country. The German Black Sea flotilla starts any 1941 scenario with Army Group North and in the same hex as the German Baltic Flotilla in other scenarios. The German ground units in Rumania in 1941 start with Army Group South. Italian reinforcements use Germany as their “home country” and “other” replacements (which apply only to the Italians in this case) are cut to one and are available only on Turns whose number is divisible by four from Turn 16 (Sept. '42) to Turn 24 (May '43). Neither side may enter any Rumanian or Hungarian hex with any units. The Axis side still gets the one replacement from the Ploesti oilfields throughout the game.

II. NEUTRAL FINLAND (S):

This variant assumes that Finland remained neutral throughout the war. Consequently, Finnish units may never be used. The German 18th Mountain Corps arrives in Germany in August 1941 instead of in Finland. The Soviet 19th and 27th armies are not withdrawn on Turn 10 (March '42). Neither side may enter any Finnish hex with any unit.

III. CHANGED ITALIAN PARTICIPATION:

This variant presents two options on Axis Mediterranean strategy that could have affected the Eastern Campaign.

a) No Italian Participation (A): In this option, Germany does not go to Italy’s aid in North Africa, causing Italy to shoulder almost the entire burden for the war in the south.

1) No Italian units are in any scenario and the “other” replacements are reduced by one on all turns divisible by four from Turn 16 (Sept. '42) to Turn 24 (May '43).

2) German replacements are increased by one per turn from Turn 2 (July '41) through Turn 8 (Jan. '42).

3) The Afrika Korps was never sent to North Africa and is available in the east until the inevitable early Italian collapse. The extra "AK" air and armored units from the insert may be added to the forces starting in Rumania in 1941 (note: if variant 1 is also used, the air unit is set up with Army Group North). Both of these units must be withdrawn on Turn 9 (Feb. '42).

b) Greater German Support for Italy (S): In this option German support for Italy in North Africa is increased.

1) German replacements are reduced by one for each Italian unit that is removed on Turn 28 (Sept. '43).

2) Italian units are not removed on Turn 28 (Sept. '43).

3) “Other” replacements are increased by one on all Turns 28, 32, 36, 40 and 42.

IV. MORE ACTIVE AXIS ALLIES (A):

The Hungarians enter the war immediately. Any German units normally set up in Rumania may be set up in Hungary instead and Rule 4.4.2 is suspended. The Finns may use the Nazi war more vigorously than they did historically by modifying 11.2.2 so that Finnish units may now move anywhere on mapboard panels “A” and “B” at any time.

V. NO PARTISANS (A):

One of the major reasons that Soviet partisans were so active was because of the brutal Nazi occupation policies. This not only provided partisan recruits but gave them the local support necessary for effective operations. In this variant, the Nazis opt for a more reasonable occupation policy and partisan replacements and the Partisan Activity Step are not used.

VI. BETTER AXIS WINTER PREPARATION (A):

In this variant, the Axis forces are prepared for the harsh Russian winter and Rule 15.6 is suspended.

VII. GERMAN PARATROOPER JUMP CAPACITY (A):

In this variant, the German parachute corps is assumed to be able to conduct airborne operations. Apply optional Rule 17.3 to this German corps.

VIII. NO LEND-LEASE (A):

This variant supposes that, for several reasons, the Western Allies decided not to extend unlimited lend-lease to the Soviet Union. For this variant, the Lend-Lease rules (13.2.1.2.3) are not used and, to reflect the effect this would have had on mobility of the Soviet forces (most trucks and half-tracks used came from the West), all Guards armies (this does not include Guard cavalry corps) have their movement factor decreased to “4” and their attack factor decreased by one.

IX. JAPANESE INVASION (A):

As the Germans advanced toward Moscow, Stalin sporadically worried about the threat of Japanese intervention in Siberia that would cause reinforcements needed at Moscow to remain in the Far East. These fears were never realized, but suppose they were? To simulate the effects of a Japanese attack, the Soviet player must choose one of the following during the Turn 6 (Nov. '41) Victory Level Phase:

a) None of the Turn 7 (Dec. '41) or Turn 8 (Jan. '42) reinforcements arrive. These units are treated as eliminated, although the red counters can be purchased later using replacement factors.

b) The reinforcements arrive on schedule, but the victory level is automatically shifted one level in the Axis favor (i.e., an Axis “+1” would become an Axis “+2”). Soviet replacement factors are reduced by two per turn from Turn 8 (Jan. '42) on.

X. MORE GERMAN MOTORIZATION (A):

This variant has two parts, either one of which may be selected for use.

a) Historically, the Russian mud hindered both the Axis and Soviet forces because both utilized large numbers of trucks that depended on the almost nonexistent roads. This variant assumes that the Germans produced enough tracked and half-tracked vehicles to completely equip their armored formations. As a result, the movement cost to enter clear and forest hexes is reduced to “2” during mud weather for all German armored units.

b) In this variant the Germans have increased production of trucks enough to equip all ground units except parachute, cavalry, and mountain corps with some form of motorized transportation. The movement factor of all German infantry corps is increased to “8”.

XI. UPGRADED SOVIET ARMY (S):

This variant is based on the assumption that the purges of the late 1930s, which decimated Soviet military leadership, never took place. Players may depict this possibility by having all Soviet reinforcements arrive one turn earlier than normal throughout the game.

XII. FORTIFICATIONS (N):

Fortification units are available to both sides in limited quantities (the counters in the insert). Variants 13 and 17 require the use of fortification units or they may be incorporated into any game.

a) These units can be constructed in any land hexes not containing a major or fortress city; completed fortification units add an additional “+2” to defending ground units’ defense factors. Fortification units have no effect on other terrain in a hex.

b) Available pairs of fortification units may be purchased during a Replacement Step for an expenditure of one replacement factor per pair. Fortification units are placed on the mapboard at the end of the same turn’s Ground Movement Step.

c) Fortification units may only be placed in a hex containing a friendly ground unit. When placed, they should be inverted to show that they are “under construction”. They have no value while under construction.

d) Fortifications are turned upright and are completed and ready for use at the end of the following turn’s Ground Movement Step.
e) Fortification units are eliminated anytime an enemy ground unit enters a fortification hex that does not contain a friendly ground unit, or whenever all the friendly ground units in a hex are eliminated and/or retreat from the hex. A player may also voluntarily eliminate any of his fortification units at any time. Eliminated fortification units are available to be rebuilt elsewhere.

f) Add six completed fortification units to both sides' available countermix for the start of the 1942 and 1943 scenarios.

g) The German "ST" artillery unit may use its attack factor when attacking in a hex containing a Soviet fortification unit.

XIII. SOVIET FORTIFIED BORDER (S):
The Soviets were in the process of fortifying their newly acquired borders when the Axis invasion started. This variant assumes that the fortification process was completed before the invasion. All of the Soviet fortification units may be placed, as desired, in any hexes (normal restrictions—see variant 12) located in the military district areas. All are complete when the game begins.

XIV. GREATER SPANISH PARTICIPATION (A):
To pay Hitler back for favors during the Spanish Civil War, Franco sent the Spanish Blue Division to fight in Russia, where it served with Army Group North as the 250th Infantry Division. This variant assumes greater Spanish participation, so increase available German replacement factors by one in all 1941 and 1942 turns.

XV. A GERMAN VICTORY AT KURSK (A):
Many historians wonder what might have happened if the Germans won the battle of Kursk and eliminated a large portion of the Red Army's reserve forces. Could the Axis have won in the East, or was the outcome of the war decided at Stalingrad? This variant considers the effects of such a victory. A German victory at Kursk is simulated by removing two (8-6-4) armor armies, four (7-6-5) and five (5-4-4) infantry armies, and four (3-2-10) Panzer corps from the Soviet countermix for the 1943 scenario. These Soviet losses reflect what the Germans hoped to accomplish at Kursk. Given Soviet strength at Kursk, the Germans would have had to pay a price. The price paid by the Germans is simulated by marking all 9-8-6, 8-7-6 and 8-6-6 Panzer corps in the German countermix with three hits each in addition to the normal hits marked. Otherwise, begin the 1943 scenario normally, except start it on Turn 27 (Aug. '43) and the Kursk 'bulge' is eliminated, Axis units may be set up in the bulge area using the "2" start line across the base of the 1943 bulge (from S21 to V22).

XVI. NO PRESSURE IN THE WEST (A):
The purpose of this variant is to explore how the course of the war in the East might have been changed if the Germans had inflicted a defeat on the Western Allies that precluded a "second front" in Western Europe. For game purposes, assume that the Western Allies lost the Atlantic submarine campaign or suffered a crushing defeat while invading Europe in 1943. This variant is played only with the 1943 scenario. To the Turn 27 (Aug. '43) reinforcements add two (7-5-6) armored corps, one (6-5-6) and two (4-3-6) infantry corps, and one (3-4-5) paratrooper corps. Use units not included in the 1943 scenario countermix for these reinforcements. Also, German replacements are increased by two per turn for Turn 28 on and all German unit withdrawals are ignored for the rest of the game.

XVII. GERMAN STRATEGIC WITHDRAWAL (A):
More than a few historians have suggested that the Battle of Kursk should never have been fought. The Germans squandered their precious armored reserves by taking part in this ill-advised operation. Historically, several German generals wanted to retreat to form a shorter, fortified and more easily defended line rather than attack at Kursk. The use of this strategy can be simulated by starting the 1943 scenario with the following modifications:

a) The "3" start line is modified to the west of the Orel salient and runs from hex AA19 to V16 in that area. Four of the hexes encompassed by this new section of the start line may contain four extra completed Axis fortification units at the start of the scenario.

b) The Axis ground units that would usually be deployed east of the Kurch Strait may be placed anywhere in the Crimea Peninsula instead—one of these units must be placed in Kerch (E18).

XVIII. OPERATION BARBAROSSA GERMAN STYLE (A):
When the Axis forces invaded the Soviet Union, they did not suspect the existence of the huge reserve armies that allowed the Soviets to hold Moscow, counterattack at Stalingrad and ultimately force the Axis armies back to their own homelands. This variant modifies the 1941 scenario to simulate how the Germans anticipated the progress of Operation Barbarossa. This is done by deleting all Soviet reinforcements appearing at Moscow except for any one unit of the Soviet player's choice on Turns 4, 5 and 6. All other units appear at the indicated times and places. This so unbalances the game that it is suggested that it be played only through the Turn 6 (Nov. '41) Victory Level Phase. If the Axis fails to win a decisive victory at that time, consider that the Soviets have won a decisive victory, instead.

These are just a few of the myriad factors that affected the outcome of the war on the RUSSIAN FRONT. I hope that you have as much fun experimenting with these variants as I had researching and designing them. And I look forward to seeing some of yours.

CONTEST 128
It is November 1942 and the weather is "Snow" (as is to be expected). The hard-driving Axis player has reached the gates of Moscow (positions are shown below, Axis in grey). If Axis forces can seize and hold Moscow, they will win a decisive victory and end this game of RUSSIAN FRONT. No matter what happens on the rest of the mapboard. No units shown have any hits. All rail hexes on the respective sides of the front line are properly converted. The Axis player may use all three of his "blitz" and "reserve" markers, if needed, but only the combat units shown are available to him; to the rear he has three 4-3-10 air units able and ready to join the assault. Assume that during the Soviet Phases, all Soviet hits are removed and up to two air units (but no more ground units) will be available for use if an attempt to retake Moscow is necessary. All Advanced Game rules and select Optional Rules (17.2, 18.0, 19.2 and 20.1) are in play. What Axis moves give the best chance of taking and holding Moscow?

The answer to this contest must be entered on the official entry form (or a facsimile) found on the insert of this issue. Ten winning entries will receive merchandise credits from The Avalon Hill Game Company. To be valid, an entry must be received prior to the mailing of the next issue and include a numerical rating for the issue as a whole and a listing of the three best articles.

The solution to Contest 128 will appear in Vol. 22, No. 5 and this list of winners in Vol. 22, No. 6 of The GENERAL.

The following is a position listing for all units to be considered in solution of the problem (in addition to the three off-map air units available to the German player):

Axis: GG24, 3-2-6 Infantry
PP23, 3-5-6 Mountain
FP24, 3-6-6 Panzer and 6-4-6 Panzer
EE23, 3-5-6 Infantry
EE24, 7-5-6 Panzer and 5-4-6 Infantry
DD24, 4-3-6 Infantry
Soviet: G125, 5-4-4 Infantry
PF26, 5-4-4 Infantry
EE25, 4-3-4 Infantry and 3-2-10 Air
7-5-4 Shock
7-6-5 Guards Infantry
4-3-4 Infantry
3-3-4 Mountain

The following is a list of the three best articles of this issue, as determined by the Avalon Hill editorial board at press time. These articles are printed on pages 56-59 and include a numerical rating for the issue as a whole and a list of the three best articles.

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DD24, 4-3-6 Infantry
Soviet: G125, 5-4-4 Infantry
PF26, 5-4-4 Infantry
EE25, 4-3-4 Infantry and 3-2-10 Air
7-5-4 Shock
7-6-5 Guards Infantry
4-3-4 Infantry
3-3-4 Mountain

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EE24, 7-5-6 Panzer and 5-4-6 Infantry
DD24, 4-3-6 Infantry
Soviet: G125, 5-4-4 Infantry
PF26, 5-4-4 Infantry
EE25, 4-3-4 Infantry and 3-2-10 Air
7-5-4 Shock
7-6-5 Guards Infantry
4-3-4 Infantry
3-3-4 Mountain

The solution to Contest 128 will appear in Vol. 22, No. 5 and this list of winners in Vol. 22, No. 6 of The GENERAL.
BEFORE THE SNOW FLIES
A Tour of the June-August 1941 Turns of RUSSIAN FRONT
By Dan Thompson

Hitler’s invasion of Russia in June of 1941 will always be a classic (perhaps the classic) wargame situation. Why? Unlike the overrunning of Poland (which left no chance for failure) or the almost precise execution of the invasion of France (which left just enough chance for excitement), the German invasion of Russia was overshadowed by doubt from the moment it was first put down on paper. This was in part thanks to Napoleon; Hitler did his bit as well. Yet the campaign in Russia offered a truly massive confrontation between skill and size which lends itself admirably to the wargaming format. An even more massive test of minds is the mark of a good wargame, and that is what Barbarossa translates into during the play of RUSSIAN FRONT.

But why bother with another game on it? That other Avalon Hill game is good, right? Of course. But while wargames are first and foremost a contest of minds (or equally acceptable, “mind’; for those who enjoy playing solitaire), they also offer an interpretive view of the historical event. In the same way you might read three or four books on any given subject to form an opinion of your own, a new way of treating the campaign on the wargaming table should be welcome. A new rule or approach may be fascinating and enlightening. It may help to bring the actual event just a little bit closer to you. That’s another thing a good wargame should do.

Avalon Hill’s recent release, RUSSIAN FRONT, fits right into the above comments. While the map is nothing new (after all, Russia is Russia, right?), it offers some unique impressions which are welcome. And once you set up the counters for the first time you are going to have basically the same units as that other Avalon Hill game; but again, there are differences which must be assimilated. Basic strategic moves and plans will be similar to that other game; but the new rules, the slightly different terrain, counters, combat tables and such will all influence your moves. Those players who simply repeat the tactics of that other game will find themselves defeated more times than not.

I don’t intend this article to discuss in detail all those differences or their effects. I want instead to present a general impression. The intent of this article is to discuss some basic tactics, initial set-up and movements in the game. To that end, I’ve presented a sample game, with brief discussion. Neither definitive nor necessarily expert, I would hope that it serves as inspiration for more articles on this excellent game. I welcome any comments and criticisms. That is, in the end, the real purpose of articles such as this [and, indeed, of The GENERAL].

INITIAL RUSSIAN SET-UP
We begin with the Russian initial set-up. Far from being an exercise in futility, placement of the Russian “At-Start” forces holds the possibility of good results for the Russian player if he is careful. This is primarily true for the units of the military districts since they must deal immediately with the invading Germans. As such, interior force set-up should be viewed less rigidly than the military districts whose deployment should be strictly followed.

Initial Forces, Interior
Given the size of Russia, a difference in placement of a hex here or there will make little matter. Remember to place the big infantry units on railroad hexes in case a particular one needs to move in that manner. Those units close to the military districts should be placed so as to be in reach of possible defense lines. For example, the 21 Army at Gomel sets-up in hex 224 in order to be able to reach DD14 should the Germans pierce the initial line dramatically. The 27 Army at Pskov is stationed in LL4 so that it can reach the Dvina River. At Minsk, both armor units go in DD12 in order to allow rapid movement towards Vitebsk. The 13 Army in hex DD10 will help mask any advance towards the city by exploiting panzers. The paratroopers should hold Minsk itself.

Initial Placement, Leningrad Military District
The Leningrad district is the only one with an actual excess of units. The 10 Armor Corps should not be put into the line (alone anyway) because it is the only unit in the district which can be destroyed in one shot. Therefore, it is placed in Leningrad where it can move towards Pskov if desperately needed. The other units set-up as 7 Army in hex WW20, 23 Army in TT18, and the Marine in TT17. It makes little difference which of the three infantry units are placed there, except that the Marines may have a hard time slugging through those forests so they hold Vyborg against the Finns.

Here is a fine example of the main concept underlying initial (and later) Russian strategy. The front line is held wherever possible by units with a defense strength of three as opposed to the weaker units. Only with a great superiority of numbers can the German hope to destroy the large units; even then, at best, the odds are even as to success or failure. After the initial punishment, all Russian
units retreat in the face of the German advance, badly damaged but still existent. The need for a line of defense on the second turn of the game is all important. The only thing that can win the campaign for the German army is its mobility, and if the Russian player can deny that for the second and possibly the third turn he has a chance. Let the line be blown open in two or three places on the opening salvo and the Wehrmacht will flood past as it did historically. And don't count on your opponent making the same mistakes as Hitler did to lose the game in later turns.

To get back to Leningrad, the defense as shown will permit the Finns to hit the Marine unit at relatively good odds (given air support), but that's about all. They may even have a tough time cleaning out the garrison of Hango (especially if Russian air flies there in support). But whatever the case, the Marine unit will survive the initial round of combat and retreat to SS18. That will be pretty much the limit of the Finns' advance for some time unless lack of Russian air cover gives them a chance to lunge at Leningrad.

**Initial Placement, Baltic Military District**

The units of the Baltic district are set-up as shown in Illustration #1. Both the 11 and 16 Infantry Corps are positioned to hold the right flank of the Western district. While the Germans could easily reach +7 on the Combat Table against these two units, failure to annihilate them will result in a Russian line on the second turn (and blitzing armor won't be moving very far in the forests). The rest of the line is weak and most likely will disappear well before the Russian has an opportunity to move. Little can be done about this except to try and stop exploiting panzers with a retreat of the 11 Infantry Corps to hex KK8 so that marauding enemy tankers will have to detour through the marshes.

All in all, the Germans should crack the Baltic district with relative ease, but space and distance will save the Russian. Panzers which drive too deeply may find themselves out of supply and immobile for July. While Riga is important for establishing a defense line along the Dvina River, chances are it will prove impossible to form a line here anyway (since there will be no units capable of holding here on the second turn).

**Initial Placement, Western Military District**

Illustration #1 also shows the Russian attempt to stop the advance of the cream of the German Army. Given the strengths of the panzers and German air support, most Russian units will be hit at the +6/+7 end of the Combat Table. This is where the Russian player can expect to see most of the blitz markers. The small armor corps are placed behind the line to limit exploitation movement. Bialystok is sacrificed for a better position along the river. The cavalry holds Brest-Litovsk since it can retreat through the marsh with more ease (should it actually survive). Once again, any unit capable of retreat must do so. Death will be certain on the second turn but time and distance are critically important, whereas destruction of units is not.

**Initial Placement, Kiev Military District**

Again an attempt is made to stop any broad advance. There will probably be very little blitzing armor down here and a good piece of the Russian forces should succeed in escaping the opening onslaught. Admittedly, there seems to be a threat from the south with the Rumanian border as open as it is, but there are few German units free there to roam behind the Russian lines. The weak Russian infantry and armor units are placed on border duty or written off. See Illustration #1.
Initial Placement, Odesa Military District

As per Illustration #1—although if you feel threatened in the Kiev district you may want to strengthen the northern shoulder of the district (just be prepared to hand over Odessa if you do). While the Russian forces in this district are even worse than those in the Baltic, the fact remains that the Rumanians are little better. What German units are in Rumania cannot be supported by air unless it is as possible directly through Vitebsk and Smolensk. Rumanian armor followed by infantry as fast and as deep as possible will prove highly successful if the main thrust preserves its striking effect and speed. The forces of Army Group South together with the Rumanian units concentrate on beating down and annihilating any Russian forces in front of them. There will be no great intercommunication to the coast to cut off Russian forces around Kiev. The drive on Moscow is all-important.

One easy way for the German player in RUSSIAN FRONT to lose the game is to forget the lessons of the historical campaign. Attempts to encircle and destroy pockets of Russian units will prove successful, but these will also seal the fate of the German army by slowing down and in effect stopping the drive on Moscow. Always remember that when you attack the enemy line do so at right angles; that is, drive directly through the line towards an objective correctly and a supply line is open to the panzer units to extend the supply route for the exploitation phase.

June Objectives for Army Group Centre

The plan is to use the two remaining Blitz markers to insulate destruction of the Russian 5 and 12 Infantry Corps and to drive the German armor in wedges east through Vilna and along the Nieman to hex E8E. Following exploitation should insure that most of the Russian units in this sector will be un supplied during their portion of June. Since it is impossible to advance the infantry further than the Russian initial line, there are no reserves, the infantry hitting all along the line in force to do as much damage to the Russians as possible. One might suspect that it would be wiser to leave the greatest portion of Russians un molested to prevent retreats but retreat will be curtailed by the panzers blitzing in behind and damaged Russian units will most assuredly destroy themselves should they attack the encircling German armor. German casualties may be higher than desired but if the maneuver proves successful then most of the combat in July and August will be done by the armor with air support, allowing time for the infantry corps to be rebuilt and moved up to the front positions.

The 46 Panzer Corps will execute the attack against the Russian 5 Infantry Corps in GG7, supported by air and followed by 24 and 39 Panzer Corps. Well positioned hexes to the east from Riga will use the remaining movement from Blitz to occupy all three hexes GG8, GG9 (Vilna) and GG10 to maintain a supply route. They can also convert the rail to Vilna. The 57 Panzer Corps will lead the assault against the Russian 12 Infantry Corps in FF6, assisted by air, joined by 47 Panzer and 9 Infantry (who converts the rail). Armor pushes to EE7 and EE8 (or to DD7). Exploitation is possible if handled correctly and a supply line is open to the panzer units at the beginning of July (i.e., all Russian units in between the German armor and infantry must die from lack of supply).

The remaining five Russian corps in the line are attacked by a minimum of two infantry corps each, 1-5-4-6 and 10-3-4-6. Attrition is the objective. The German 13 Infantry Corps holds HH6 in order to respond to any Russian movement and are well placed to move against the Russian defensive line which will probably form in front of Vitebsk. The Russian flotilla from Riga, damaged in action off the coast at NN5, evacuates to Tallinn when 41 Panzer Corps exploited through Riga to its present location. The Russians in the pocket around Kaunas should find it almost impossible to reach a supplied hex by the end of their turn. The panzer wedge through Vilna should have been exploited deeply into Russian territory but the armor would have found itself out of supply at the start of the German July turn. As is, they are ready to respond to any Russian movement and are well placed to move against the Russian defensive line which will probably form in front of Vitebsk. The German 2 and 8 air units are well advanced and in range of Smolensk and the rail from Warsaw will be converted all the way to Dvinsk by the end of July.

The south (Illustration #4) progression has been less dramatic and most of the Russians are in supply. The Russian flotilla in the river would probably have resulted in a pocket of sorts but with reinforcements sent into Rumania and pressure applied from there onto the Russians at Vinnitsa, the Russians will use the fact that they are in supply to retreat towards Kiev in order to maintain supply and the overall German gains will be about the same. Also, the rapid advance of the northern Ger-
man Army Groups will pose a threat of encirclement which most Russian commanders will not ignore, and they will eventually establish a line of defense well back along the Dniiper anchored in Kiev.

Casualties were somewhat high on the Rumanian front with both German infantry corps suffering heavily while their Russian opponents survived combat. The Rumanian Mountain Corps destroyed the Russian armor and the Rumanian armor pushed further east to cut the rail to Odessa. It should be quite obvious that reinforcements are needed to give the Rumanian forces any chance of exploiting opportunities such as this. With more infantry and a panzer corps, the situation at the end of June would have been dramatically different and most of the Russians defending along Army Group South would have been effectively trapped.

In the north with the Finns, the Russian air force was blasted out of the skies (although the Finns took two points of damage). The Marine unit was forced back. The weakened state of the Finnish air means that it will be some time before it can be used against Russian air without the risk of loss. If no Russian air appears in the Leningrad area then the Finns will make steady progress towards the city.

RUSSIAN MOVES FOR JUNE

In the far north, the Russian 23 Army should take up position in SS18 and the Marine unit moves to SS19. The armor comes out of Leningrad to defend along the shore of Lake Ladoga in hex SS20. The air unit originally at Smolensk moves to Novgorod from where it can support either Leningrad or Vitebsk areas.

But the real crisis for the Russians is in the center. Around Vitebsk the Russians deploy as per Illustration #5. Most of the defenders surrounded by the initial German push have vaporised from lack of supply; but the 6 and 11 Armor Corps managed to fight their way out and have taken up positions where they can respond to advancing panzers (or at least make that threat). Note that the 19 Army is railed in from Dnepropetrovsk. The original defenders of Minsk have retreated into the swamp east of the city as any defense of the city itself will achieve nothing but the destruction of the defenders and loss of the city anyway. Even if the Russians managed to hold Minsk they would be unable to move the factory. Pskov is shamefully held but there are simply no other units available to bolster the defense in that sector.
Illustration 5: Russian Positions at the end of June

In the Kiev Military District a line is formed up further west than normally expected due to the slowness of the surviving Russian infantry. The German portion of July should see most of this infantry destroyed, but the armor will then be able to retreat well back to Kiev where it will meet up with reinforcing armies from Kiev and Dniepropetrovsk. The Russian forces can be held up by the positions along the Dniester for July and when the Russians then retreat to the Bug, the Axis units in this area will find it extremely difficult to attack and maintain supply routes given the distance back to the line running through Rumania. Note that the 4 air unit stationed at Start in Rostov flies to Gomel to support either sector. See illustration #5 for deployment.

**GERMAN MOVES FOR JULY**

In Finland the battle heats up with attacks all along the line just north of Leningrad. This assault is partly a gamble that the Russian Marine unit will take a casualty and disappear even if supported by air; it is even more a gamble in that the Finnish air may be lost in a confrontation with Russian planes. With luck the Russian 10 Armor Corps may also sustain enough damage to remove it. While the attacks by the Finns are at relatively low odds (even negative on the part of Finnish 6 Corps attacking the Marines) and casualties will be high, the excellent chance of breaking open the front to Leningrad cannot be passed up or delayed until German arrival. This will be the best shot the Finnish army has for getting right up to Leningrad since reinforcements are due there during the Russian portion of this turn. Once again the Russian garrison of Hango is ignored and Helsinki is held by the Finnish 7 Corps and the flotilla. See Illustration #6.

With Army Group North the infantry moves through Riga converting the rail and 41 Panzer Corps streaks across to the coast and captures Tallinn so that an additional Finnish replacement will be available starting with the August turn. The 56 Panzer Corps, the only armor unit within near distance of the Russians, is the sole German unit to use Blitz in this sector. The attacks here along the river will not result in the elimination of many Russians but will cause some damage, and the German armor will be set up for full use of Blitz during the August turn. This threat could normally be countered by an inflow of Russian forces from Moscow and the south (Dniepropetrovsk); but if the situation at Leningrad becomes critical due to Finnish successes then Army Groups North and Centre will face less opposition than the Russian might desire and considerable gains should be made. Mopping up "battles of annihilation" are performed...
by the infantry corps as they move up. Refer to Illustration #7.

In the southern half of Russia, Army Group South unleashes its power with full effect on the Russian line west of Kiev and this should remove a large portion of the defenders. The Army Group is now assisted by German reinforcements available at the start of July which railed to Rumania before movement. The Rumanian sector is relatively quiet with only one attack being made by the Mountain Corps and the air unit. The idea in the south now is to kill as many Russians as possible during July and August so that the Russian must commit at least some of his reinforcements to this sector (thus weakening the line defending the road to Moscow). See Illustration #7.

With relatively few casualties expected on German infantry this month, any damage sustained by the air units' entanglements with the Red Air Force will be the at least partially replaced during August. Also, if Rumanian replacements continue to build up those units just might see more action than normal.

**Extent of the Army Groups July '41**

Combat results in heavy Russian losses including both air units (one of which takes down the Finns with it), the Marine unit at Leningrad and surprisingly the Russian 20 Army by Vitebsk. Heavy damage is inflicted by Army Group South but the Rumanian attack in 08 is repulsed. German exploitation is minimal given the positioning of Russian units. The only significant movement is by 41 Panzer Corps on the north coast which takes Narva in an attempt to deny that river defense line to the Russians. The unit will be out of supply with the start of August but the infantry corps of the Army Group should open a supply line by the end of the turn. With the Finns, the only good results are the removals of the Marine unit and Russian air, but along with the loss of Finnish air there is also five points in damage to the Finnish infantry corps. That will be the extent of Finn progress for quite some time.

**RUSSIAN MOVES FOR JULY**

The forces now at Leningrad should prove capable of stopping anything the Finns could throw at the city. The Marine unit (rebuilt) holds Schlusselburg and 8 Army the city. South-east of the city in the forests by Narva, the German panzer corps is being held off by two infantry armies. Pskov is held by 27 Army and two armor corps shadow Novgorod. The line in front of Vitebsk still stands (as per Illustration #8) and this will deny the Germans any possibility of capturing either Vitebsk or Smolensk during August. Indeed, if victory points are added up, then the German may find himself on the wrong end of the draw.

Likewise in the south, the Russian line pulls back to just west of Kiev—running to Vinnitsa and from there along the Bug to the coast. This prevents the capture of Kiev for August victory conditions. The port of Odessa should also remain in Russian hands for at least August unless the Rumanians are extremely lucky in their attack there. Granted, another round of combat and losses like the last and there won't be much Russian armor left around Kiev, but the reinforcements from Kharkov should be enough to hold the line. The Russian air is hurting and only one could be replaced this turn (Bryansk). See Illustration #8.

**GERMAN MOVES FOR AUGUST**

In the centre, the German panzer formations concentrate into two main attacks designed to puncture the Russian line and with the use of Blitz movement.
to reach around past the city of Vitebsk while 57 Panzer Corps pushes in the direction of Gomel. Unless the panzers can achieve some spectacular successes with these attacks it will be a long hard drive to the forests around Moscow and there would be little chance of getting that far before bad weather starts. Exploitation here may take 57 Panzer as far as Gomel or Bryansk, and the armor lunging past Vitebsk may do a similar sweep towards Rzhev if the Russian defenders take heavy casualties. One thing should be obvious from this situation: that is the need for the German player to continually push his armor formations east and whenever possible to concentrate them into Blitz attacks where the excess movement can be used to penetrate the Russian line if enough armor is present to insure supply back through to the German lines at the beginning of the exploitation phase. If you check the Short Game victory points now, you see that the German is falling behind at this critical stage of the game. If things start to go well then there should be no problem come the November check point. But the panzers must get moving. See Illustration #9 for positions at beginning of combat.

As for the south, once again the Army Group opens up on the Russian line in an attempt to finally crack it. If the panzer corps had been farther south, they could have attempted to Blitz through the Russians in hex P9 to cut off a large number of units. Even so, Russian casualties will be very high and the Germans should end up one turn away from Kiev. The rail lines have been converted right up to the front as well as half-way to Odessa, so supply will be no problem until the Russians fall back to the Dnieper. Air support is stretched to the limit but Vinnitsa should fall during September and the air will then be well within reach of the Dnieper and Gomel. See Illustration #9 again.

The Finnish front becomes static until German air can be brought into reach; then the German 18 Mountain Corps will begin assaulting Leningrad. Finnish replacements are being stored to permit rebuilding of their air force. There is finally an attempt this turn to take out the garrison of Hango by the Finnish 1 Corps while the naval flotilla sweeps the harbour of mines.

**Extent of the Army Groups August '41**

The only real progress is made by Army Group Centre (see Illustration #10) where the massed panzer attacks result in encirclement of those Russian defenders not eliminated in the combat assaults. If the Short Game victory points are added up now, the Russian gets a Decisive Victory. But the situation is such that eight points are within immediate grasp of the German Army and if Kiev should fall then it would be one point away from the German Decisive Victory.

Hopefully all of this has illustrated the need to use the German Panzer Corps correctly to maximise the advance of the army. It should be obvious from the progress of Army Group South (see Illustration #10) that sheer bludgeoning will not give the German Army the early victory which it desperately needs. It should be seen that progress for Army Group South will normally be fairly difficult given the manner in which the terrain funnels the German advance and allows the Russian armor (plentiful but weak) to form double lines of defense to prohibit German exploitation. You must also take into account the extreme weakness of the forces in Rumania (witness the Rumanian attack in P9 falling again) and the necessity to detail German infantry corps to rail conversion to insure adequate supply. It is also difficult to place Odessa within German air range. In all, the only thing that can dramatically unhinge the Russian defense in the south is the threat posed by Army Group Centre of

Illustration 8: Russian Positions at the end of July
massive encirclement and destruction. Faced with this, the Russian line must pull back to at least the Dnieper and this maneuver will place Kiev at the point of the Russian line and it should then fall in either September or October. German progress towards Dnepropetrovsk and Sevastopol will be entirely a matter of weather conditions.

With Army Group Centre, the main thrust towards Moscow must be continued with full fury. The temptation to wheel to the south with the panzers must be ignored, although if opposition is extremely heavy in the forests masking Moscow then it could prove highly successful to execute a massive wheel south from there through Orel-Kursk-Kharkov-Dnepropetrovsk. This would then position the German forces for a strike north-east towards Gorky in the Spring of ’42. Extravagant ideas perhaps but extremely likely if the German can continue to use the panzers effectively by blitzing through two or three key units and trapping a large number of other Russian units. Exploitation, handled right, can be phenomenal.

On the Finnish front it can be seen from the events of June and July that the Finns are capable of rapid progress towards Leningrad but will almost certainly fall short of capturing the city due to fragility of Finnish units, lack of German support until too late and stout Russian defenders sufficiently numerous by August.

Finally, while with time players will learn to play the German army almost to perfection, the fact that even at the best of odds all but the weakest of Russian units may survive combat will continually plague the German player as key Russian units which must be destroyed remarkably survive to hold the Wehrmacht up for another month. Blitz attacks can guarantee elimination but the blitz will not be possible if the Russian pulls back away from the panzer corps and gives up ground to help survivability (see the lack of German blitz movement in Army Group Centre during July). At this early stage of the game the German player should find that his armor is usually enmeshed in the Russian line during exploitation and thus unable to be placed in reserve to respond to Russian positioning during the Russian turn. All this means is that any player should find RUSSIAN FRONT to be an extremely tense and even game where in any one turn the victory conditions might say that one or the other is ahead (see the state of conditions at the end of August here) while the “losing” player is but a breath away from being equally ahead.

Aspiring field marshals should also take note of what poor weather conditions can do to slow down the German drive for Moscow. Blitz movement will be cut in half by wet conditions. So learn to use the Blitz well while you can and don’t spread out the armor formations all across the front (see the role played by 41 Panzer Corps here which spent July and August taking Tallinn and sitting out of supply at Narva). Concentration of force is the sole means for German victory. The fact remains that if 41 Panzer had been used together with the panzer corps around Vitebsk it would have been available to close the gap left in hex CC16 (see Illustration #10).

RUSSIAN SITUATION, MIDDLE OF AUGUST

As with many games dealing with the German campaign in Russia, the flow of the game will be set by the gains and advances of the German army. The Russian player must use his brain to exploit any weaknesses which appear and must adapt his tactics to the needs of each turn. While it is always preferable to hold as far west as possible to keep the German territorial gains down, it can be much more effective to retreat when faced with massed panzers waiting to blitz and exploit. It is rarely

Illustration 9: German Positions and Battle Locations (see notes) for August
beneficial to stand and fight it out with the German units. A seriously weakened but still existent Russian corps or army is many times more valuable than one which dies simply to inflict extra casualties to the Germans. Therefore, always remember the number one rule: "Retreat Whenever/Wherever Possible" (the old "live to fight another day" maxims). If the Russian units had stood their ground against Army Group South here there would have been no Russian front around Kiev by the end of August. Look at what that Russian line consists of, almost no units with a defense strength greater than two. Yet this line has held up the German advance admirably compared to those Russians who started in the Baltic and Western Military Districts.

A second point to be noted concerns the evacuation of Russian factories. The situation at Kiev at the end of the German August turn is typical. The Russian player has available rail transportation for four units (or for one factory and one unit), but given the situation at Smolensk the rail capacity will have to be used to move the reinforcements at Kharkov to the defense of Moscow. Unfortunately, this one turn delay will result in the German panzer formations west of Kiev battling their way to the outskirts of the city to prevent any rail movement into or out of Kiev. Indeed, by creating a crisis at a particular point the German can manipulate the Russian situation so that the factories don't train away from him before he can come up adjacent to them.

Concerning Russian air power—it can be a critical factor in stalling the German advance if the Finnish air can be shot down, if the Russian air survives July combat so that replacement capacity can be used solely to bring back eliminated Russian armies and if one or more of the German air units can be heavily damaged and then destroyed. The most critical point for the Russian air force is probably the defense of Leningrad where there is even a possibility of Russian air superiority if the Finnish air is removed and if the Russian air is not needed desperately elsewhere.

Notes: For those interested, the following list indicates the units involved in the battles whose locations (BL) are shown numbered in the accompanying illustrations.

Illustration 7: BL 1 Russian 29 Inf and Baltic Flotilla vs. German 10 Inf and Baltic Flotilla; BL 2 Russian 10 Inf vs. German 28 Inf and 1 Air; BL 3 Russian 12 Armor vs. German 41 Panzer; BL 4 Russian 10 Inf vs. German 45 Panzer (Blitz 4); BL 5 Russian 3 Inf vs. German 56 Panzer (Blitz 3); BL 6 Russian 5 Inf vs. German 46 Panzer (Blitz 4); BL 7 Russian 12 Inf vs. German 57 Panzer (Blitz 4); BL 8 Russian 21 Inf vs. German 55 Inf and 1 Air; BL 9 Russian 25 Inf vs. German 43 Inf and 2 Inf; BL 10 Russian 13 Armor vs. German 7 Inf; BL 11 Russian 15 Inf vs. German 44 Inf; BL 12 Russian 8 Inf vs. German 49 Inf; BL 13 Russian 15 Armor vs. German 14 Panzer; BL 14 Russian 3 Inf vs. German 48 Panzer; BL 15 Russian 2 Armor vs. Romanian 1 Air and 1 Air; BL 16 Russian 7 Inf vs. German 4 Inf and 1 Air.

Illustration 8: BL 18 Russian Marine and 1 Air vs. Finnish 4 Inf and Air; BL 19 Russian 25 Inf vs. Finnish 4 Inf; BL 20 Russian 10 Armor vs. Finnish 3 Inf; BL 21 Russian Marine and 3 Air vs. Finnish 6 Inf and Air.

Illustration 9: BL 1 Russian 11 Armor vs. German 53 Inf; BL 2 Russian 22 Inf vs. German 24 Panzer, 2 Inf and 20 Inf; BL 3 Russian 27 Inf vs. German 56 Panzer (Blitz 3); BL 4 Russian 21 Inf vs. German 7 Inf; BL 5 Russian 8 Armor vs. German 49 Inf; BL 6 Russian 19 Inf vs. German 39 Panzer and 2 Air; BL 7 Russian 20 Inf and Air vs. German 46 Panzer and 8 Air; BL 8 Russian 17 Inf vs. German 33 Panzer (Blitz 3); BL 9 Russian 20 Inf vs. German 48 Panzer (Blitz 3); BL 10 Russian 24 Armor vs. German 40 Panzer; BL 11 Russian 9 Armor vs. German 50 Inf and 5 Air; BL 12 Russian 8 Inf vs. German 14 Panzer and 44 Inf; BL 13 Russian 15 Inf vs. German 49 Inf; BL 14 Russian 6 Inf vs. German 4 Inf and 4 Air; BL 15 Russian 16 Armor vs. Romanian 1 Air and 1 Air.

Illustration 10: Extent of German Advances for August.
Poised along an 800-mile frontier that stretches from the Baltic in the north to the Black in the south stand the cream of the Wehrmacht and the Third Reich's allies in the fight against Communism. A string of final signatories. The battle of Barbarossa, three million of the army of past victories prepare to settle a score with the lone "defender" of Eastern Europe—the Soviet Union. Eagerness and pride abounding, the Axis forces set forth on that June 1941 morning to extend the sway of the New Order. Seizing territory and destroying a goodly deal of the Soviet Union's army would prove simple enough. The blitzkrieg tactics of past campaigns, proving ever-so-effective against static front mentality of the First World War, would once again present the Axis with high initial successes. But what of the hidden foe that hovered over those battlefields—the weather?

Although German successes at the outset were fast and furious, and the vastness of Mother Russia and most importantly the extremes of weather would prove to be insurmountable barriers. Through miscalculation of the part of Axis leadership, the Third Reich lost its lightning victory right at the outset. Poor planning for the possibility of a protracted campaign allowed for little or no winter preparations. This callousness extended even to winter clothing for the troops; only a massive campaign by the Ministry of Propaganda rallied the homefront to divest itself of thousands of articles of heavy clothing for these soldiers.

As for the translation of the actual weather conditions during the campaign into a simplified version for THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN, the effort—although to be commended for its unique approach—leaves a great deal to be desired. All too often a strong Axis advance into Russia can be stymied by a "mud" roll on the September/October weather die roll. What's more, the Axis player now faces a 50% chance of drawing a result of "snow" for the Nov/Dec winter. On the other hand, nothing can be more frustrating for a Soviet player than to sit idly by as an Axis player's forces drive unhindered into the Soviet Union via the benefit of four consecutive "clear" weather turns in 1941. Are these examples common? Obviously not; but are they even possible? The answer no longer possesses its sparkling clarity.

The autumn turns of 1941 are, in many cases, the story line for the balance of the campaign game. A strong Axis advance due to good weather in 1941 will usually lead to a smothering offensive in 1942, wiping out as many Soviet units and worker cities as possible. Thus, the 1942 game year serves as the "set-up" year for the Axis player, with the death blows dealt the Soviet Union falling in 1943. On the other hand, poor weather in 1941 can lead to a bitter contest for control of central Russia in 1942 with the upper hand, more often than not, befalling the Soviet player. The players' caliber of expertise understandably comes into force; but when two evenly matched players sit across from each other, the Axis player has a tougher task. The balance of the game can drag out into the full three remaining years as the Axis player slowly falls back upon his own homelands.

If one does acknowledge that there is a problem with the manner of resolving the weather (at least in 1941) what can be done about it? There have already been myriad variations on resolving the critical weather rolls. The first lies in the very rulebook provided with the game. I'm not sure if the designer saw an inherent problem with his design of the weather rules, but in any case two alternative methods to resolving the weather were provided. These optional rules offered included the use of the actual historical weather results as a guide for the designer to "mud" roll weather changes, and a system of resolving the weather rolls on a monthly basis. The use of the historical weather table, although possibly accurate in simulating the past, gives both opponents perfect prior knowledge as to upcoming weather changes. Needless to say, both players will act and react to the other's moves in manners unintended by the basic theory of the simulation. The degree of uncertainty necessary for the game's basic structure eventually becomes suspect.

As for the monthly weather resolution system, the game's mechanics of double impulse planning and maneuver is seriously jeopardized. A critical Axis attack can be halted in mid-action by an ill-timed poor weather result. Likewise, Soviet counterattacks, essential to regaining the upper hand in local regions, are compromised if the weather hasn't remained poor for at least two complete turns. Once again, a player's knowledge of a system which he desires to change may do more to change a player's mind as to an overall strategy than the actual situation dictates.

A second variation (which is currently in vogue) is to replace the "Mud" result in the September/October turn with the "Clear" result in the November/December turn with "Light Mud" results. The premise is sound, reducing the chance of an Axis advance from gathering too much or not enough steam. Here, however, a careful Soviet opponent can defend his country in the November/December turn, not against a possible panzer advance of eleven hexes but only of six hexes. Targets beyond that distance need not be guarded, allowing the Soviet player the ability of maintaining a stronger forward defense. Again, although only a minor change to the existing system, the results will unduly be magnified as the game progresses.

A third variation can be found in Vol. 17, No. 3 of THE GENERAL. In Tom Olsson's article entitled "Dividing Pressure Zones", the author has made a good attempt to alter the weather conditions on the battlefield. Devising a system of variable weather dependent upon areas of the mapboard during weather resolution turns, the game's mechanics change drastically as units attempt to maneuver within the three zones depicted. Unfortunately, the game, under this system, makes Axis advances into the northern zone during weather resolution turns all but impossible. Ground movement is severely limited, as well as supporting air power. True, Stuks would have a hard time flying in snow storms; but the army too is all but frozen on the steppes. Conversely, Axis advances into the southern zone are virtually unstoppable as movement during good weather is unhindered. And, the air support can be as high as three Stuks in late 1941, affording the Axis player good support on his advance against worker centers in the Ukraine. Whatever's more, the Soviet player, already cherishing the few victories he has been able to deploy his paratroops, can only do so when at least two zones are covered by snow. This and other modifications may prove to be realistic but do they add to the RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN's playability?

Improving THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN's balance, at least in early stages of the game, was of paramount importance to any altering of the weather resolution rules. Basically, the alternative weather resolution systems discussed were well thought-out systems that I felt were, however, just shy of the mark. Examining each system for its advantages and disadvantages while "stirring" in my own ingredients, so to speak, I believe a better system of weather resolution has been developed. The solution I would like to put forward I've dubbed the "Weather Tracking System". Simple in effect, players afforded the luxury of better weather in the crucial September/October 1941 turn stand now less well to a chance to obtain equally acceptable weather in the upcoming November/December and March/April weather resolution turns. Likewise, players encumbered with poor weather in the September/October 1941 turn stand an increased chance of obtaining better weather in the November/December and March/April weather resolution turns. Thus the system rewards one side in the contest for unfortunate weather befalling them while penalizing the other to a mild degree for obtaining early favorable weather. Keep in mind, though, that one side still possesses the chance of obtaining better weather later in the campaign from the weather resolution turns, although the odds of such an occurrence are now remote. In such a manner, both sides must still be on guard for an unexpected turn of events directly attributable to a change in the weather. Players are no longer guaranteed a minimum weather grade as every weather level depicted in the original weather rules are still wholly obtainable in the Weather Tracking System.

Turning to the system itself, a cursory examination of Chart 1 reveals that the Weather Table has been expanded to a double-die resolution system, as opposed to the present system of a single die, one evenly dispersed event system allows for varying degrees of probability of occurrence, essential to my revised system for weather resolution. Chart 1 will be used only for the September/October 1941 weather resolution roll. With subsequent weather-changing turns using different charts wholly dependent upon the weather obtained on Chart 1.

Chart 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Die Roll</th>
<th>Weather Condition</th>
<th>Probability</th>
<th>Occurrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Light Mud</td>
<td>.03 = 3%</td>
<td>March/April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>Light Mud</td>
<td>.06 = 6%</td>
<td>March/April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>Mud</td>
<td>.08 = 8%</td>
<td>March/April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>Clear, Light Mud</td>
<td>.14 = 14%</td>
<td>March/April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>Clear, Clear</td>
<td>.17 = 17%</td>
<td>March/April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-16</td>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>.14 = 14%</td>
<td>March/April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-19</td>
<td>Light Mud</td>
<td>.11 = 11%</td>
<td>March/April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-22</td>
<td>Mud</td>
<td>.08 = 8%</td>
<td>March/April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-24</td>
<td>Light Mud</td>
<td>.06 = 6%</td>
<td>March/April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-28</td>
<td>Light Mud</td>
<td>.03 = 3%</td>
<td>March/April</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Odds of occurrence have been rounded to the nearest whole number, thus a total of 101%.

The chance of obtaining a Clear weather result has been scaled downwards slightly while the chance of obtaining a Light Mud result has been increased slightly. The reason for this change reflects my opinion that a Clear weather result in the September/October 1941 turn is the most lethal result an Axis player can ever hope to achieve during the campaign. Oftentimes a good Axis player can lay claim to an assault on several Soviet worker centers that, when destroyed, can never be replaced no matter
what future weather resolution turns may offer. Instead, the chance of obtaining Light Mud, probably better conducive in terms of fairness to both players, stands a greater probability of occurring.

Looking beyond the September/October 1941 turn to the November/December 1941 turn both players will adhere to one of three charts (labeled 2A, 2B, and 2C below) dependent upon the weather obtained on Chart 1. A Clear result from Chart 1 will lead players to Chart 2A. A Light Mud result from Chart 1 will lead players to Chart 2B. Lastly, a Mud result from Chart 1 will lead players to Chart 2C.

Finally, when faced with the March/April 1942 weather resolution turn, again results obtained from Chart 1 will determine the chart to be utilized. A Clear result from Chart 1 will lead players to chart 3A. A Light Mud result from Chart 1 will lead players to chart 3B. And a Mud result from Chart 1 will lead players to chart 3C.

Table 1
Overall Probability of the Weather Tracking System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weather Result</th>
<th>Probability of Resulting Good or Bad Weather Through September/October 1941</th>
<th>December Weather Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>10% Good</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Mud</td>
<td>32% Bad</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mud</td>
<td>22% Good</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22% Bad</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33% Good</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16% Bad</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50% Mixed</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Decent Weather Index—the addition of good and mixed weather probabilities.

Basicall, these charts attempt to balance the shortcomings in the present weather resolution system. As to their overall effects during the November/December and March/April weather resolution turns, please consult Table 1.

To make a long story short, an Axis player gaining the benefit of Clear weather in the September/October 1941 turn stands only a 10% chance of attaining further good weather and a 1/3 chance of having one turn of good weather and one turn of bad weather. On the other hand, an Axis player whose luck has seemingly run out in September/October 1941 with a Mud weather result has a one-third chance of attaining good weather through the balance of the weather resolution turns and fully an 83% chance of attaining mixed results. If bad luck and weather still occur, the chance of it happening would only be 16%.

Summing them up, the charts attempt to smooth out the wide discrepancies that can and inevitably do happen. Skill is oftentimes all for naught as a stalwart Soviet player can do little in the face of four Clear turns in 1941.

Mind you, under the present weather rules an Axis player who is lucky enough to obtain a Clear weather result in the September/October 1941 turn still has a 22% chance of attaining good weather through April of 1942. Likewise, an Axis player unlucky enough to obtain Mud in the September/October 1941 turn still has a 22% chance of additional poor weather befalling him.

In closing, one could argue that the Weather Tracking System should be used for the balance of the Campaign Game. My main thrust for devising this system, though, was to somehow alter those few critical weather rolls that set the tone for the balance of the game.

It has always struck me that the strength of a solid design is in no manner better demonstrated than by the willingness of knowledgeable gamers to tinker with it. By “tinker” I do not mean the correction of design flaws in the game system, but rather the exploration of options and cause/effect relationships beyond the pale of recorded history. Obviously, THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN is one such solid design. Mr. Dultz’s article above and Mr. Carberry’s following clarify and codify a number of variant options—enough certainly to keep the most devoted player busy exploring the “what ifs” of this classic.
HANDICAPPING IN THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN

Options for Balancing the Old Favorite
By Joe Carberry

One game that continues to rate highly on the GENERAL’s “So That’s What You’ve Been Playing” chart is THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN. Why is this so?

Well, of course the game seems to model the ebb and flow of the actual event. One gets the “feel” of both the swift Nazi armored advances and, if the Russian player survives, the relentless onslaught of a vengeful and ever-growing Red Army. These aside, the reason why so many enjoy TRC is that out of all the games played over the years, many of the most memorable have been of this title. There are few games that can keep the tension level as high over the course of play. I find this true especially between equal or nearly equal players.

Wouldn’t you want to break in a novice with TRC? Or for that matter, play against an otherwise good player who is unfamiliar with the game? My answer to that is an unfortunate NO.

In my experience RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN is the kind of game where even relatively small differences in skill and experience are very telling. This is in spite of the oft-touted luck factor which I feel, outside of a few critical weather rolls, usually does not function throughout the play of a complete game. Further, I have long felt that a bad choice of the existing optional rules vis-a-vis player skill levels can throw a game.

Is there a solution?

Well, you can play a different game. However, once a player, even a novice, experiences the sheer excitement of a good hard-fought TRC game, it will more often than not be the game of his choice. With this in mind, several years ago I devised a system using the 2nd Edition Rules which seems to solve this problem for me.

The system assigns a relative point value to the options based on their effect on play. Options which have a more pronounced impact are assigned more points, those which do not exhibit as strong an impact are given fewer points. I also developed some additional options, most of which are simple and easy to implement. Some are rather more complex and sweeping in their ramifications.

I should note here, and this is important, that any of these new options, especially those for which I claim some degree of historicity are not meant as a critique of the original rules. Rather, read them as “game-balancers” into which I have attempted to build some semblance of historical plausibility.

To use this system the players agree upon a certain number of option points per player. Each player chooses the options he wishes to be in effect. There are options which are specific to one side or the other, and there are those options which may be selected by either player. The players ought to choose their options in secret, have an agreed upon procedure for both revealing their selections, and some way of resolving difficulties if their choices happen to coincide or conflict.

What follows is a list of all the options, a short explanation of the rationale for each rule, and the effect of that rule on the game. The rules marked by an asterisk (*) are those that I have developed. The ones listed with numbers are part of the regular optional rules.

I fully realize that not all readers experienced in THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN will agree with the points assigned to each option, the following explanations, nor for that matter even with the player that the option is allowed! If this scheme should prove to be popular, all of these things ought to work themselves out over a period of time and play. Remember, this is for the players to sort out themselves; I’ve only provided the guidelines. The most important thing, and I am sure that we all agree on it, is to have those excellent hair-raising contests that TRC offers.

Given a contest between two players of equivalent skills, the relative weight in points were assigned on the following basis: one point, minimal or transient value; two points, moderate and occasionally strong; three points, strong if not critical; four points and over, very strong options—real “game-breakers” if taken alone. These point values were derived from playings using very few options per game. If players desire the use of many optional rules in a game, the scaled values are likely to lose some of their numeric validity. This occurs as the options interact to a greater extent.

The Soviet player ought to set up his units prior to the selection of the optional rules.

I. OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO EITHER PLAYER

1. OFF-BOARD RAIL & SUPPLY (26.6), 2 Points

As the Western map-edge is more constricted than that of the East, this rule will benefit the German player more often than his counterpart. This is a decent option for turning a losing game into a draw. It will help the player who is unfortunate enough to need it.

2. UNLIMITED INVASIONS UNTIL FAILURE
   (Variant II), 2 Points

For the player that holds all Black Sea ports at any time in the game, this can be a real plus. On
the other hand, if you risk an invasion or transport and it fails . . .

This rule will assist a victorious Russian player in cracking the Romanian chestnut in 1944-45. It will be of less value to the Axis as they have a more diffuse set of objectives at the Eastern end of the Black Sea. As long as no transports/invasions are lost prematurely, this option will help the player on the offensive in the end-game. The overall effect is likely to be the fostering of a more conservative approach to risk in Black Sea naval operations.

3. MONTHLY WEATHER (26.8), 1 Point

A favorite of mine and a lot of other players, it can have a stronger impact than the single point would seem to indicate. This is especially true for the German player as he must take the weather as it comes, while the Russian can play ahead. I guess that's what you get for fooling around in Mother Russia!

However, this is also true to a smaller degree if the normal weather rules are used. "Clear" in November 1941 is still three Stukas worth of trouble for the Kremlev.

This rule will go quite away toward mitigating the make or break luck of the 1941 weather.

4. BUT WHAT IF . . . (Variant III), 3 Points

On the face of it this ought to be a German option. However, unless the Wehrmacht can mount an extremely effective blitz, the extra month and the XI Fliegerkorps just do not make up for the likely disuse of two Axis-Allied armies and the anchor of the German does not bite, the Soviets have wasted their make or break luck of the 1941 weather.

The Russian player can take this option in the hope that his opponent will be tempted into using it. If the German does not bite, the Soviets have wasted three option points.

Recommended for the German player who likes to experiment and is perhaps gentleman enough to give a bit of advantage to an unequal fellow player. The high point cost for this option will ensure that Hitler won't "put the Buldge on the Russians" too often.

5. SUDDEN DEATH VICTORY CONDITIONS (24.3), 2 Points

If you thought you got rid of the luck factor with Monthly Weather, well . . . here it is again. This time you roll before the game is started! The laurels for this one will go to the player best able or lucky enough to guess his opposite's choices and keep his own disguised.

The rule will quite often serve its purpose, which is to make short an otherwise lengthy game. The cost is flexibility and occasional artificial "wins" by a player.

This rule takes precedence over the regular Sudden Death Victory Conditions.

This is a more flexible version of the original rule. As such, it may not result in a shorter game. The greatest advantage is that it will assuage the luck problem inherent in the original option. Two year intervals are a good compromise. The benefits are the same as in the usual Sudden Death Conditions.

6. VARIABLE TIME SUDDEN DEATH VICTORY CONDITIONS (*), 3 Points

RULE: This option is a variation of the regular Sudden Death rules, only instead of picking the objectives for the complete game at the very beginning, the objectives are selected for the period two years in advance.

That is, each player selects his objectives for the next following year. The objectives must be selected in advance according to the two-year time interval. For example, 1942 and 1943 at the start; in 1942 they select their objectives for 1944, and so on. The selection of objectives must be made during the first turn of each year for the appropriate interval.

II. OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO THE GERMAN PLAYER

1. RIGA, MINSK, KIEV, & ODESSA ON THE FIRST IMPULSE (26.7), 1 Point

In most games this option will affect only Odessa. If the German player sees an opportunity in the Russian set-up, some of the others could be hit. Although this could have a long-term impact on the way the game plays itself out, anyway you cut it, the German advantage remains transitional.

2. EXTRA SS REPLACEMENTS (26.2), 2 Points

The help offered by this option will arrive too late for the crucial 1942 session.

On the other hand it turns out that 1943 is to be the year of decision, the SS or their substitutes could very well tip the balance against the burgeoning Red hordes. Usually, this rule serves to either prolong the German defense or to drive the final nail into the Red coffin. The overall effect is strong, but rarely pivotal.

3. HEXES A4, A5 AND MURMANSK (*), 2 Points

RULE: If the Axis player controls hexes A4 and A5 (control defined as being the last to move a unit or its ZOC through) during any two consecutive snow impulses, Murmansk falls and the 14th Army surrenders. The Archangel replacement roll is lost and the German North Finland force enters in the next clear weather impulse.

The replacement roll is regained the turn after the Soviets move a unit north of the edge of the map at either hex A4 or A5. This unit is placed in the 14th Army's box and re-enters the game under the same circumstances as the lost army.

Murmansk may not fall again after recapture if the German North Finland force has entered the board. If that force has not entered, should the hexes fall yet again to the Germans, all conditions above again apply.

This rule depicts the cutting of the supply lines to Murmansk, as tried historically without success. With Murmansk as a hostile base, Allied shipping via this route, even in summer, would have been an extremely dubious proposition. Doubtless Murmansk could have held out for an extended period in good weather, as fresh troops and their munitions could debark from Archangel. In the Arctic winter, I think it would have been a different story.

This option forces the Russians to actively resist raids into this area. It opens up real campaign possibilities for the Germans in the north, commensurate with the forces needed. No longer can the Russians dig in near Leningrad and let go of every Northing of that city.

If Murmansk falls this is a strong option indeed.

4. EXTRA RUMANIAN AND FINNISH UNITS (*)

RULE: The Axis player receives two extra 2-4 Rumanian units, the 3rd and 11th corps. These units are placed one each in Bucharest and Ploesti on the June impulse of 1941. He also receives the Finnish 3rd corps, a 3-4, which is placed with the German North Finland group. This unit will enter with, and only if, the German units do.

The Rumanian 2-2 that enters in Sept/Oct 1942 is substituted for the 3rd Corps. These are actual units that were not included in the game since historically their scope of activity is not depicted on the map. The Rumanian units were operational at the time of the siege of Odessa. Of course they are useful for garrisons and extra replacement units. Only regular Wehrmacht units can be taken under this option.

This option is frankly very ahistorical. Its function is to enhance the handicapping system by strengthening a less expert German player.

In most cases the German will gain over 50 combat factors in 17 units. Lone panzer corps guarding sectors of the front will often be replaced by 3-4 infantry corps, thus freeing the armor for more offensively oriented tasks. The loss of corps-sized units in the historical campaign was rare, particularly for the Germans. To accurately portray this in the game would entail a fundamental, and in my view, foolish revision of the current rules.

However, this rule does depict the fleshing out of depleted units by fresh drafts of men and material in an abstract fashion. The rationale for ending it in Sept/Oct 1944 is that, faced with collapse both east and west, the Germans stripped their regular replacement units for stop-gap forces at this time. One of the strongest German options, hence the five point cost.

5. OSTARBETTER (*), 3 Points

RULE: Starting with Jan/Feb 1942 turn, and ending on the Sept/Oct 1944 turn, the German player may replace each turn the weakest infantry corps available. Only regular Wehrmacht units can be taken under this option.

This option is frankly very ahistorical. Its function is to enhance the handicapping system by strengthening a less expert German player.

In most cases the German will gain over 50 combat factors in 17 units. Lone panzer corps guarding sectors of the front will often be replaced by 3-4 infantry corps, thus freeing the armor for more offensively oriented tasks. The loss of corps-sized units in the historical campaign was rare, particularly for the Germans. To accurately portray this in the game would entail a fundamental, and in my view, foolish revision of the current rules.

However, this rule does depict the fleshing out of depleted units by fresh drafts of men and material in an abstract fashion. The rationale for ending it in Sept/Oct 1944 is that, faced with collapse both east and west, the Germans stripped their regular replacement units for stop-gap forces at this time. One of the strongest German options, hence the five point cost.

6. UNRESTRICTED INITIAL ATTACKS FROM POLAND (*), 4 Points

RULE: Any Axis belonging to Army Groups North, Center and South may attack any Russian units that belong to the Baltic, Western or Kiev Military Districts without restriction on the initial impulse of the first turn.

This and the following "Unrestricted Attacks in Poland and either Rumania or Finland" are the most controversial of my optional rules. Culling use of either of these rules can result in a "catastrophe effect" to quote Richard Hambleton) that the Russian player may find it hard to cope with.

If the goal is to break through and capture objectives such as Moscow early, the Fall weather die rolls will probably be the final arbitrator. In this case, care must be taken to trap or eliminate enough Soviet units to restrict the effectiveness of their countermoves.

With this rule, the German player is not forced to adhere to the original starting dispositions for "Fall Barbarossa" on the "main" sectors; as such, this is a perfectly plausible historical alternative.

7. UNRESTRICTED INITIAL ATTACKS IN POLAND AND EITHER FINLAND OR RUMANIA (*), 8 Points

RULE: The German and Italian units may set up and attack on the initial impulse of the first turn without restriction in Poland, and in either Finland or in Rumania.

The Russian forces belonging to the Baltic, the Western, the Kiev Military Districts, and one of either the Odessa Military District or the Finnish border may be attacked in the very first impulse without the restrictions found in rule 3.4. If Finland is selected, German and Italian units may set up there. All other Axis-Allied units must start in their home country.

Skillful use of this rule will allow twin breakthroughs and the possible entrapment of the majority of the Russian defenders. Again, the "catastrophe effect" may well cost the Soviets the game in 1941.

On the other hand, success of this, like the pre-
vious option, depends very much on good weather luck and can be frustrated occasionally by bad rolls on a crucial battle or two, and astray Russian counterattacks. This rule, given Finland’s political attitude, is historically very dubious.

3. HISTORICAL WEATHER (26.5), 2 Points
While it can be argued that over the long run the historical weather does not treat the German player too badly, and that it also allows a certain amount of planning ahead, in more than one game the Wehrmacht has lost badly by “gambling” on hopes that the weather will stay good enough for the current operation to pay off. But as many experienced players can tell you, favorable to excellent weather in 1941 gives the German his best single shot at winning the game.

For this reason, the option is available to the Russian player only. The relatively high point cost will ensure that it will not be over-used.

4. DOUBLED REPLACEMENTS THE FIRST TWO TURNS (+), 2 Points

RULE: The replacement value of all worker units is doubled for the first two turns of the campaign game only.

A good play against the German who always seems to have an overpowering opening. It is also perfect for the new player to the game, who while confident of his abilities does not fully understand the flow or mechanics.

The large number of units gained is low, yet the timing of their arrival is the key. A couple of extra units may easily make the difference between the Wehrmacht wintering in cities such as Bryansk or Dnepropetrovsk.

The option replicates the flow of activated Russian reserves to the front.

5. EVACUATION OF WORKER UNITS (+), 5 Points

RULE: The rules concerning rail movement, placement of reinforcements/replacements, immobility of Russian Worker units, and sea movement are altered by use of this option.

A: Rail movement is allowed during both impulses of the player who has the turns to the left of the axis. The axis has the ability to move to that impulse. Under certain circumstances Soviet Worker units may be moved by rail. Units may not move by rail unless they can trace a line of rail hexes unbroken by enemy units of ZOC’s to their respective board edge or to a friendly controlled major city. There are NO changes in the routing by which railroad control is determined. Rail and sea movement is done each impulse prior to any other movement.

B: Each side is allocated a certain number of rail moves per impulse. The Axis allocations vary with location and weather. All rail movement including that of replacements and reinforcements uses one rail allocation per unit that is moved; in the case of worker units, one per unit inverted or inverted unit that moves (see D below).

C: The Soviets receive five rail allocations per impulse. The Axis player may move 3 units per impulse in Russia, one unit per impulse in Russia during “Snow” turns only. The Axis may also move two units by rail per impulse extra, outside of Russia, regardless of weather.

D: Worker units may be evacuated (i.e., they may be moved by rail). During the first impulse of evacuation the worker unit is only inverted; after the initial inversion the worker may move up to 10 hexes per impulse, and must re-invert if they finish on an eligible major or minor city. Worker units may not count their factors toward replacements while they are inverted. Inverted worker units have no ZOC’s, nor do they have any combat value. If they are alone in a hex, they are eliminated if attacked. Worker units may not move or turn the Campaign Game, unless the Russian player gains a pre-game impulse via the “Stalin Surprise”!

Evicted workers may be moved off the edge of the board and re-invited during the same impulse.

E: The replacements for both sides must enter at specific locations. All Russian replacements must enter at a non-inverted worker at unit the normal one-to-one ratio (22.1). The Axis-Allies must enter at their respective capitals (Hungarians at T32), or in the case of the Italians at Bucharest, T3 or Breslau. All German replacements and reinforcements must enter at either Berlin, Posen, Konigsberg or Warsaw. Russian replacements may enter in Siberia if worker units have been placed there.

F: Except for seaborne evictions, all units using sea invasions or transport must start the impulse of movement at a port on the sea over which they will enter. Replacement and reinforcement units must enter from a friendly controlled site.

G: Soviet Guards Armored units are counted as both Guards AND as armored units for the purpose of replacement limitations.

One of the most crucial strategic decisions of World War II was taken by the Soviet High Command in the summer of 1941. This decision moved a large portion of Russian industry to safer havens in the east and out of Hitler’s immediate reach. This was done despite the grave wartime production dislocation that it entailed. This supremely important decision is not modeled closely in TCR.

With this particular rule, what you will not see is a massive movement of worker units to the east, the Russian player must weigh the needs of the front, the need for replacements, and then finally, the timely evacuation of workers. Nonetheless, the worker units saved by this rule, once they are “safely” placed will do much to grind down the invasion, and then to turn the tide back toward the German borders.

The effects of this rule are very broad. The Axis will have a slight advantage in the early game, as they will have much of their forces “forward,” while the Soviets will have to use the rails both to move armies to the front and to evacuate worker units. Single factor workers are liable to be used in a more aggressive manner. Critical battles are likely to be fought by smaller forces on both sides. The Wehrmacht will experience a sharper loss of momentum as it penetrates deeper into Russia. Finally the German player will be hampered in his ability to respond to Red offensives by using mass rail transhipment of troops to threatened areas.

A good tactic for the Russians to use with this option, is to use “leapfrog” workers back to the nearest available site (i.e., Kiev to Kurk, Kharkov to Voronezh, and so forth). This economizes on both lost replacements and rail allocations.

6. SOVIET “STURMOVIKS” (+), 4 Points

RULE: The Russian player now has access to air support similar to the German Stukas, which originate from his Stavka HQ units. This air support, or “Sturmoviks”, allows for more effective use of the Axis as that of the German, grows as the war proceeds. There are also extensive changes in the rules governing parachute operations, and the movement and utility of HQs on both sides.

A: Air support and parachutes may originate from HQ in either impulse, in so long as that HQ is not an impulse replacement and is located on a valid friendly rail supply hex or a controlled city. HQs may move in either impulse and by rail if so desired.

B: If eliminated, the Stavka HQ may be replaced the second turn following its destruction—unless it has “surrendered” which will eliminate it permanently. Replacing the Stavka unit will provide one replacement point and is done in lieu of a Guards or armored unit. The German HQs are replaced in the normal fashion.

C: Paratroopers are taken in lieu of air support. All paratroop units are eligible to drop any number of times as long as the air support quota is not exceeded. To drop, the unit must be “recovered” and with the HQ, the hex the drop originates from. To recover a unit, the HQ must end a impulse in the same hex
as the unit. Paratroops may enter the map at the location of their current HQ at any time in the game, even during the opponent’s phase.

D: The German XI Fliegerkorps is in the “dead” pile at the start of the Campaign Game. The 2nd Parachute Corps enters the game as a reinforcement in the July impulse of 1943. Paratroop units may be replaced in substitute for a panzer corps on the annual Axis replacements schedule. The rules covering the use of German paratroops are as outlined in the Mediterranean Distraction section of the “But What If . . .” variation with the following differences: they may drop during either impulse, and may drop during any weather as long as there is a Stuka air support mission available for which the drop may be substituted.

E: German paratroopers may airlift from HQ to HQ each impulse. This has no effect on the availability of air support, but a side record must be kept in case verification of their location becomes necessary. They may not airlift and drop on the same impulse.

F: If “Monthly Weather” is used, the availability for Stukas is determined on the basis of the roll for the first impulse. The German player is granted an extra Stuka which he may use in any impulse, regardless of weather, in 1944.

G: The number of Sturmovik/paratroop missions per year, per impulse are as follows:

- 1941: 1 mission, one per impulse
- 1942: 2 missions, one per impulse
- 1943: 4 missions, one per impulse
- 1944: 8 missions, two per impulse
- 1945: 12 missions, three per impulse
- 1946: 16 missions, four per impulse

Unlike the Soviet paratroops, the Sturmoviks may be used in any weather.

H: Sturmovik air support missions shift any Soviet attack one column to the right. Only one Sturmovik mission may be used with each attack. They may be used, however, in conjunction with artillery to gain up to the maximum of three-column shift in an attack.

I: Soviet paratroopers may only drop in snow impulses in both 1941 and 1942. They may drop in either snow or mudlight mud impulse in 1943. They may drop in any weather in 1944 and after. Soviet parachute units may be replaced at a cost of one replacement point per unit and in lieu of a Guards or an armored unit.

This rule will be invaluable in breaking the very stubborn Axis defenses found in the latter stage of the game, as it will turn a lot of those vital 1-1 attacks into 2-1s, 2-1s into 3-1s, etc. It can also help in the few crucial early Russian attacks where the German player is attacking a large force surrounded at low odds. One or two of these, if successful, can cost the German his chance to win the game.

On the other hand, the Wehrmacht can accrue large initial advantages by hitting important objectives with Stukas on the last impulse of his turn. And, if the Germans are revved up, a German player can strike at places far in the Soviet rear (such as the Stalin HQ or Archangel).

The overall effect is to put steam into the post-1943 Russian steamroller and turn a lot of ties into Soviet victories.

7. LEND-LEASE (*), 3 Points

**RULE:** Starting in Jan/Feb 1943, in a fashion similar to that of Archangel, the Russian player gets an extra die roll’s worth of replacement points, in so long as he holds either Saratov or Astrakhan. In addition to this, he is able to replace one extra Guards or armored unit if he has control of both of these cities.

The Lend-Lease program did not reach its full effect until the longer, albeit much safer, land route through Persia was implemented. In the game, this is largely factored into the doubling of replacements in May 1943. However, not enough.

This is a game balancing rule, which gives the Russians a little more losses in worker and second-impulse capable units. It also depicts historical events in a bit less abstract fashion.

8. ARTILLERY CORPS (Variant I), 1 or 2 Points

**RULE:** The one-point option is the regular rule. The two-point option allows for the arrival of the Soviet units as reinforcements from the East, and at earlier dates. The arrival times for the two point version of this rule are: the 1st Artillery Corps—Sept/Oct 1944; the 2nd corps—May/June 1943; and the 3rd corps in March/April of 1944. The German 7th Artillery unit arrives, under the two-point scheme, as a reinforcement in May/June of 1943. All arrivals are available in the initial impulse of the scheduled turn.

This, of course, is another method of assisting the Soviets in the mid-and end-games. The second impulse movement of the German unit makes it a much more valuable asset, yet the Russians are granted more units, and they are more in need of the extra “punch” these units give. I believe, except for perhaps the German unit, the two-point option’s arrival dates are more accurate than those given.

9. AXIS WITHDRAWALS TO ITALY IN 1943 (*), 3 Points

**RULE:** During the July/August 1943 turn, the German player must withdraw at least 12 combat factors of panzer/panzergrenadier squads, and 10 factors of infantry off the west edge of the map. Italian units may be substituted for German infantry, but other Axis-Allied units may not.

While this option is too severe to be considered historically, the fact remains that some units were pulled out and sent to Italy and the Mediterranean about this time. In actuality these withdrawals were replacements “not taken,” as many of the units destroyed at Stalingrad and subsequently rebuilt were the mainstays of the bitter Italian Campaign.

Use of this rule will have a marked effect on what is usually a very crucial period in the game. It will either take the steam out of a rampaging Wehrmacht, or it will signal the start of the long road to Berlin.

10. HISTORICAL SET-UP (*), 1 Point

**RULE:** The Axis player is obligated to operate under historical constraints, or suffer a penalty. Units belonging to Army Groups North, Center and South are not required to set up in Poland yet, if there is more than one extra Axis unit starting in Finland, or more than two extra units in Rumania, then the next option (“Stalin Surprise?”) is automatically enforced. Note that only via the use of the free-deployment rule may extra units begin in Finland.

Hungary is considered neutral until July 1941. If any Axis units start in Hungary, all Hungarian infantry units entering the game must remain in Hungary. If any Axis units enter Hungary, even as a result of a retreat, Hungary will remain neutral until either all Black Sea ports are occupied by the Axis, or until Red Army units enter that country. In either case all restrictions on Hungarian units are lifted at that time. Units forced to retreat into Hungary may, at the owning player’s option be eliminated instead.

For the remainder of the game, the hexes at T24, T25, and U24 are considered wooded not mountainous terrain.

This simply eliminates two anomalous features of the game, one historical, the other geographic. The infamous Lwow position is now rather more porous, and no longer will Army Group South come charging out of the Carpathian Mountains. The Germans will still face quite a bottleneck, but after all, this is a Russian option.

11. STALIN SURPRISE? (*), 1 Point

**RULE:** After both sides have set up and prior to any movement, the Russian player rolls one die to find out if his High Commander is taken by surprise.

Results: 1-3: Yes, no changes. Proceed as usual.
4: Minor, river effects are not cancelled on the first impulse.
5: No! River effects are not cancelled, and the Red Army gets a free pre-game second movement phase.
6: No! River effects are not cancelled, and the Russian player gets a free pre-game first impulse movement phase, including rail.

ADD +1 to the die roll if more than two “extra” units start in Rumania, or if any units start in Hungary.

ADD +1 to the die roll if any extra units start in Finland.

No Axis ZOC’s are in effect during any pre-game movement, nor may any Soviet unit cross any national border, nor may any Axis units enter. However, all Soviet units are released from their original Military Districts, or their reserve status. If the Soviets have selected “Evacuation of Worker Units” along with this option, he does not get any rail movement if he rolls a “5” or its equivalent.

It is ironic that a regime that prided itself on “objectivity” could have been taken in so well by its own propaganda and wishful thinking. “They won’t come this year”, became “They can’t come this year.”

A favorite option of mine, and at times a good antidote to the Nazi free set-up options. Depending on the die, the “Stalin Surprise?” could mean nothing, in which case you’ve wasted an option point. On the other hand, it might be very meaningful indeed. At the very least, occasional use of this rule will make your opponent think twice about loading up in Rumania or Hungary.

**SUMMARY**

**I: BOTH SIDES**

1) Off-board Rail and Supply 2 Points
2) Unlimited Invasions Until Failure 2 Points
3) Monthly Weather 1 Point
4) “But What If . . .?” 3 Points
5) Sudden Death Victory Conditions 2 Points
6) Variable Sudden Death Conditions 3 Points

**II: GERMAN PLAYER ONLY**

1) Riga, Minsk, Kieve, and Odessa on the first impulse 1 Point
2) Extra SS Replacements 2 Points
3) Extra Finnish and Rumanian Units 1 Point
4) Hexes A4, A5, and Murmansk 2 Points
5) Ostaraibtre (Slave Labor) 3 Points
6) German Infantry Draft Replacements 5 Points
7) Unrestricted Set-Up and Attacks in Poland 4 Points
8) Unrestricted Set-Up and Attacks in Poland and either Rumania or Finland 8 Points
9) Enhanced German Initial Attacks 2 Points

This category subtotal = 28 Option Points
III: SOVIET PLAYER ONLY
1) Armor Halved vs. Woods and Major Cities 2 Points
2) Two Worker Units in Siberia 2 Points
3) Historical Weather 2 Points
* 4) Doubled Replacements for the First Two Turns 2 Points
* 5) Evacuation of Worker Units 5 Points
* 6) "Sturnoviks" 4 Points
* 7) Lend-Lease 3 Points
* 8) Artillery Corps 1/2 Points
* 9) Withdrawals to Italy in 1943 3 Points
*10) Historical Set-Up 1 Point
*11) Stalin Surprise? 1 Point

This category subtotal = 26/27 Option Points

Newly Developed Options
SUGGESTIONS
I recommend that equal players stay with a fairly low option points apiece. Four to eight points each would be a reasonable estimate. The rationale is that THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN is a very dynamic and psychological game. The play-balance side of the handicapping system is weakened as options are loaded onto another. Large numbers of optional rules are likely to yield very unpredictable results.

In my experience, the following bonuses will even out a game given these conditions:

An Expert Player vs. A Novice:
A Good Player: +3 to +5 Points
A Fair Player: +5 to +9 Points
An Expert Player vs. A Fair Player:
A Good Player: +10 to +15 Points
A Fair Player: +3 to +5 Points
A Good Player vs. A Novice:
A Fair Player: +5 to +9 Points
A Novice: +3 to +5 Points

Another way to use this system is to "handicap." When one player wins, he should grant the loser a point or two for the next encounter. If this is done, the losing player is likely to be more amenable to having a rematch. If you think one side or the other has an edge, then factor this into your play with bonus points.

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ASK NOT WHAT WARGAMING CAN DO FOR YOU . . .

A Report on GROTEKA
By Thomas Machowski

This brief article will not deal with tactics or strategy, nor will it analyze any game, nor will it record a sample playing. Ostenstibly, it doesn't really pertain to any game. But it is about a group of dedicated gamers in Poland, the incredible difficulties they face in simply enjoying the hobby we take for granted, and brings their request for assistance.

I recently returned from a visit to Poland, where I met an interesting gentleman by the name of Urbanowicz in the beautiful city of Warsaw. He first came to my attention while reading a "Letters to the Editor" column in Vol. 21, No. 6 of The GENERAL. A second letter from him was published in Vol. 21, No. 1. It was upon reading this second letter that I contacted Mr. Martin and indicated that I would be willing to take copies of The GENERAL and wargames across the border into Poland. Due to a lack of time and Mr. Martin's concern for my not being detained upon entering the country, only copies of The GENERAL were forwarded to me. I took these to my first meeting with Mr. Urbanowicz. He was most appreciative of this gesture by gamers in our country. And he further voiced a desire to be contacted by other gamers.

Mr. Urbanowicz, for those who may not know, is the Manager of the Youth Centre in Warsaw and has been affiliated with that organization for more than seven years. He was born in Vilna, Latvia in 1927 and served as an infantry sergeant in the Red Army during the Second World War. He has seen more of strife and struggle than most of us who play these paper wars. He has been interested in military simulations for many years, and is trying—with the help of some enthusiastic youngsters—to establish a corps of wargamers in his adopted country.

At the current time, there are approximately 30 members in the Warsaw Chapter, and there are other Chapters being formed in various cities throughout Poland. For those interested in military simulations for many years, and is trying—with the help of some enthusiastic youngsters—to establish a corps of wargamers in his adopted country.

As anyone who reads the newspapers will appreciate, the economy of Poland is quite depressed. Due to financial limitations and the fact that no company behind the Iron Curtain manufactures wargames, they have asked for help in acquiring some new games. I informed Mr. Urbanowicz that I would make a "plea" to the readership of this magazine. Personally, I would ask that anyone interested in contacting the group personally write to Mr. Urbanowicz at the following address:

Tad Urbanowicz, Manager of the Centre
GROTEKA
Mlodziezowe Centrum Gier i Rozrywek ZSMP

Entrance to the Youth Centre in Warsaw
The group would be more than happy to hear from you and your club newsletter would bring them closer to the hobby. I have been assured that they will try to respond as quickly as possible. Mr. Urbanowicz himself does not speak English, but the other two gentlemen shown (Messers Piesiewicz and Pensko) are fluent and will be able to translate all your letters and correspond in turn.

As I have mentioned, wargames are a rare commodity in Poland, and there are no funds at the Centre with which to purchase any. On behalf of the Youth Centre, I am calling on the generosity of all gamers reading this report to consider supplying games to them. I am, quite simply, asking for “donations”. Obviously, no one will be reimbursed for giving their unwanted wargames to the Centre; but this gesture of friendship among gamers will be warmly thanked. If any of you could have been with me when I presented Mr. Urbanowicz with a handful of copies of The GENERAL and seen the sincerity with which he thanked me, they would fully realize the situation and their gratitude for even the smallest kindness.

The question arises as to how to send the donations on to Warsaw. Through my experience in sending packages to my family, I have learned that the “regular” mail is not the recommended procedure. The reason is simple—many items are “confiscated” and never reach their destination. Therefore, I’d like to volunteer to act as liaison with the Centre responsible for forwarding all items received. (Throughout this article I have made reference to gaming. Through an agency in the Detroit area, I am able to forward packages to Poland under guaranteed delivery. Obviously, those interested in making donations will need to send the items to me and I will, in turn, send them on to Warsaw. Please send any donations to the following address:

Mr. Thomas Machowski
14651 Ludlow
Oak Park, MI 48237

I’ve already several games to send, but will be delaying the final packaging until I receive further donations. There is a charge for the shipments, and I would ask that those who forward anything to me carefully weigh their items and submit a $1.00 per pound donation to help defray the costs. When I receive your donations I will repackage the items and make them ready for shipment, take them to the organization that will deliver them to Warsaw, and see them off to our fellow gamers across the sea. I will supply all names and addresses of those making donations to Mr. Urbanowicz (unless requested otherwise) and I am sure that each will hear from him.

On behalf of the Youth Centre, I would like to say Dziekuje. And, from me, a simple thank you.

Mr. Michael Mitchell is 38, married and father of two, holds a BA in Architecture and is a practicing architect in Roswell, Georgia.

**Favorite Game:** RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN

**AREA W.L. Records:** 9-3

**Area Time/Weeks:** 6 hrs

**Hobbies:** Camping, Tennis, Reading, Pet Peeve: Other’s pet peeves.

Mr. Mitchell injects a note of optimism: “From a player’s perspective, one can only be heartened by the outlook for the future of wargaming. Through the vehicles of magazines, books, and conventions the hobby has matured into a legitimate pastime. Gone are most of the make-believe SS goons of old. In general, today’s opponents are capable, intelligent, and courteous with an ever-increasing degree of ability and devotion to their hobby. Actually, the term ‘opponent’ is a misnomer, as most have become friends. The Avalon Hill Game Company cannot be thanked enough for the professionalism and leadership they have given this hobby. Without their stability and continuity, we would still be in the dark ages of wargaming.”
ACTIVE RETREAT
Effective Defense in PANZERKRIEG
By James Werbaneth

The PANZERKRIEG player with the burden of defense cannot carefully arrange his units in an im-
mobile line, absorb his opponent’s powerful blows, and still hope to win. Effective defense in PK re-
quires methodical retreat combined with judicious counterattacking. A mobile, active defense is ind-
ispensable.

Central to the dynamics of the game is the con-
cept of Initiative. The initiative is what determines which player enjoys the strategic offensive and
which is charged with defense. In every scenario, the player for whom territorial objectives are listed
possesses the initiative, and in each scenario except “Pocket at Korsun” that player moves first. But
initiative is not simply the task of conducting the offensive. It is also the ability to dictate the time
and place at which the most important combats will take place. The player with the initiative in PAN-
ZERKRIEG acts; strategically, the other player reacts.

The initiative and offensive ability gives the active
player a hefty advantage over the reactive player.
The defensive player must erode these advantages.
He has to stand and offer combat in terrain that aids
the defense. He must simultaneously retreat his
forces to a final line that will be difficult, if not im-
possible, to breach during the waning turns of the
game. And he must use calculated counterattacks
to take the offensive to his opponent and force him
to react, if only for a short time.

In most scenarios, the non-initiative player
 deploys his units second. But this is of slight use,
as the victor in PANZERKRIEG is most often
determined in the final two or three turns. There-
fore the defending player should view the early and
middle turns as a vital prelude to the actual time
of decision. The combination of retreat, local
defense, and counterattack is crucial to the defen-
sive player's efforts toward placing himself in the
strongest possible strategic position late in the
game.

In a properly executed active defense, territory
and objective hexes are traded for time and the
preservation of one’s forces. It should lead to the
ability of the player to shift to an effective rigid
defense late in the game, or launch a strong counter-
attack that will lead to victory. Prior to the time of
decision, the defender must be willing to concede
everything except, ultimately, the game.

THE RETREAT
The heart of the defense in PANZERKRIEG is the
retreat. Paradoxically, effective defense relies upon
the concession of territory to the opponent. Only
through the surrender of territory, sometimes in
appalling quantities, can the defensive player have
a reliable chance of preserving the bulk of his forces
for later counterattacks and the establishment of a
final defensive line. If this goal calls for abandon-
ment of objective hexes to the enemy, those hexes
must be conceded. The defensive player must be
willing to sacrifice anything but the final decision.

The defensive player should try to retreat his
forces in an orderly line. It is almost certain to be
penetrated, especially by armor and motorized in-
fantry, but the integrity of the line can usually be
regained through further retreat or counterattacks,
and massive envelopments of defensive positions can
thus be averted.

But the defensive player cannot confine his efforts
to perpetual retreat and occasional counterattacks.
He must choose points at which part of his forces
will stand and accept combat. Cities are the best and
most obvious places to center one’s stand. Towns,
fortifications, and hexes bordered by minor rivers
are much more frequently encountered and are very
good places to defend in combat. Bridges across
major rivers and river crossing hexes are better
defensive positions in a tactical sense. But for
strategic reasons that will be treated below, they are
best not considered for combat prior to the end of
the retreat.

There are two criteria for choosing a site for a
defensive stand. First, the terrain must be favor-
able to the defense in combat. Second, the site
should be located in an area that gives the offen-
sive player little choice but to attack. Offering com-
bat is pointless if one’s enemy is not discomfited
or in fact gains by temporarily halting his advance
in that area.

Stacks to be attacked by offensive units at such
a site should consist of at least one armor unit
and the strongest infantry unit available. Since the
strongest armor types will probably be withheld
for counterattacks and to act as reserves, weak armor
units can be utilized. Soviet 4-11 tank corps are most
likely to be used by that player, or 6-11 units if they
can be spared. The Axis player’s best units for this
purpose are his panzer and panzergrenadier kampf-
gruppen, 5-11 panzergrenadier divisions, and
the Hungarian, Rumanian and Italian armored forma-
tions. German panzer divisions should be held ready
for counterattacking if the Axis is on the retreat.

Because of the relative rarity of his armored for-
mations, the Axis player will often be forced to de-
 fend with stacks consisting only of infantry
divisions. In some scenarios he starts with four or
more panzer battle groups, but he will find that they
are insufficient to lend armored presence to all
his attacks that are to stand and defend. In such cases,
he can break down a German panzer division into
three battle groups to augment his defensive cap-
bilities. But the choice to exercise this option should
be made with greatest caution, as it represents a
significant sacrifice of counterattack potential.

Leader units are as valuable to defensive combat
as they are to the attack (or counterattack). They
should be included in defensive stacks wherever pos-
sible. However, leaders should never be placed in
stacks in which there are no units that cannot be
reduced to battle groups. Leaders are too valuable
to be risked through the destruction of weak units.

A retreat that is conducted for an entire game of
PANZERKRIEG represents a concession of victory.
Before the beginning of the game, the defensive
player should choose a major river to serve as his
final line. Ideally, at least one objective should be
located behind the river, and fortifications should
be located behind the river, and fortifications should
be constructed behind bridges and in river cross-
ing hexes by units arriving as reinforcements.
The final line is the point at which the defensive effort
ceases being a delaying action and becomes a hold-
ing action. Once the bulk of the player’s units have
reached the far side of the river, he should concede
no more territory, opting for a combination of static
defense and counterattacks to restore any ruptures.
The offensive player’s forces must be held across
the river, and significant breaches of the line
resisted. The strongest units should be stacked, with
leaders whenever possible, at points at which the
river can be crossed. Similarly potent units, espe-
cially armor, should act as reserves. Weaker units
can be positioned close to bridges and river cross-
ing hexes to contain penetrations.

The concept of the final defensive line gives added
importance to the necessity of preserving as much
of the defending player’s units as possible during
the early and middle play. Reinforcements can be
sizeable in some scenarios, but if the bulk of one’s
starting forces are destroyed, victory is extremely
difficult. Despite favorable terrain, the final defen-
sive line cannot be maintained without the preser-
vation of some of the initially deployed units. The
player should consider using reinforcements not only
in the line itself but to build fortifications along what
is to become the final line.

The defensive player can use the final line in
everal ways to win the game. If he can conduct
the retreat at a slow pace, he should be able to conduct a point defense of objectives between initial deployment and the final defensive line. And these objectives would be subject to his counterattacks once they have fallen.

On the other hand, an exceptionally rapid retreat can also lead to victory. In many instances, it is easier for the offensive player to retreat in good order than for the offensive player to pursue in a comparable state. Some units, particularly armor and mechanized infantry, tend to advance more quickly than others when unopposed, often moving so rapidly that their flanks and rear become endangered. Ironically, this is especially true for armor, to occur after great tactical successes, particularly breakthroughs. No player can expect his initiative to insure complete tactical success. Weak units are feasible.

Execution of a sort of "backhand blow" is entirely the river and either counterattack the leading offensive forces. In most instances in which the advancing army approaches in the disorder of its momentum, the final defense line would be a difficult feature for the leading elements to penetrate, if the retreating forces have crossed the river line in mass. The defensive player could then recross the river and either counterattack the leading offensive units or threaten them with envelopment. Execution of a sort of "backhand blow" is entirely feasible.

**THE COUNTERATTACK**

In PANZERKRIEG, the counterattack is a short term and most frequently local appropriation of the initiative by the defensive player. Even if a counterattack appears to be tactically risk free, it almost always entails some degree of strategic risk. The defensive player has to measure the risks of his counterattack and compare them with the probably tactical and strategic benefits of this small battle.

The defensive player (and the offensive player in "Pocket at Korsun") can normally expect to have his initial lines penetrated in several places at the beginning of the game. As he retreats, his opponent will try to force the defensive positions during the next several turns in most games. This reflects the supremacy of the offense in PANZERKRIEG.

Such breakthroughs can be perfect targets for counterattacks, especially if the originally defending units were forced to retreat instead of being eliminated. If the counterattack is successful, good offensive penetration is negated. If it fails, the counterattacking units will most probably be forced to execute a two-hex retreat. Since retreat would have been the most probable alternative to the counterattack in any case, the defensive player's strategic advantage will not be undermined.

Combat units are a finite resource and must not be squandered. The offensive player will often, however, give his opponent an opportunity to destroy offensive combat units. He does this by leaving some segments of his line lightly defended while concentrating force for any counterattacks. Such a situation almost always exists during the first few turns, when the offensive player masses his strongest formations (especially his armor) for his initial assault. The defensive player can use such opportunities to erode his opponent's almost inevitable initial superiority.

Perhaps the best target for a counterattack during the early turns of the game, if allowed by the offensive player, is a city that he controls at the outset. A counterattack against such would have to come in the first turns, as the defensive player's retreat will probably put any enemy-held objective well beyond the reach of his forces during the middle and late turns. By definition, the initiative gives the offensive player the ability to largely determine the time, location and scope of combat. But by seizing a city, the defensive player reverses roles. The loss of some segments of his line therefore adds to the difficulty of the offensive cause.

The offensive player is presented with a difficult choice. He can concede the city and risk having to take one more objective in order to win, as well as accepting a probable threat of further counterattack on his initial lines. Alternatively, he can use the initiative to forward his forces. Advances in other areas force the defender to retreat from the city, the retreat will most likely need not be as rapid or lengthy as it would have been if the city had not been taken. Or the offensive player can divert needed units from his main thrusts to retake the city. In this situation, offensive forward progress will be slowed until the defensive player have left the city.

Late in the game, the counterattack can be used to seize victory from the "jaws of defeat." The defensive player can counterattack to deprive his opponent of objectives, principally towns, needed for the initiative. If the offensive player has been able to advance over vast amounts of territory and dominate in combat and yet is robbed of that last objective he needs to win the game, you have played a brilliant game—just as if his advances had been minuscule or his forces resoundingly defeated in battle. If the defensive player sees a need for a last minute counterstrike, he should try to keep his units within striking distance of the objective. Outside of reaching the final defensive line, this is the only reason to abandon the strategic retreat. Further, counterattacks (or feints) should be made against as many exposed objectives as possible in order to increase the chances that at least one will succeed.

The defensive player should adhere to several general rules of the counterattack throughout the game. Counterattacks should be made with the greatest possible force. They should include at least one armor unit to take advantage of armor superiority or to deny it to the opponent's forces. Pure infantry counterattacks should be undertaken only against weak forces and be of limited duration. Furthermore, a leader unit should always be among the counterattacking forces.

When he is on the defensive, the Axis player in PANZERKRIEG, especially if he has a 13-13 unit, and the defending stack lacks armor or is composed of weak armor units, success is almost inevitable. The stack of panzer divisions can be perfect targets for the counterattacks. If an Axis counterattack includes a stack of three panzer divisions, especially if at least one is a 16-11 or 13-11 unit, and the defending stack lacks armor or is composed of weak armor units, success is almost inevitable. The stack of panzer divisions can be further improved if the defending player possesses a 13-13 leader. Panzergradiant divisions have the potency and mobility to join panzer divisions on the counteroffensive, and are suited to exploit breakthroughs. German 5-7 infantry divisions can attack in concert with panzer and panzergradiant divisions, or in purely infantry assaults against weak Soviet stacks. Counterattacks by German 4-7 and 3-7 units, or any Hungarian, Romanian or Italian units, should not be made unless accompanied by stronger divisions as the cutting edge.

The Soviet player should be governed by similar rules for allocating units to the counterattack. He should not attempt to dilute any of his panzer divisions. The counterattack must be deep and wide. But he should exercise caution about using his own 5-7 infantry divisions because they differ from similar German units in that they cannot be reduced to battle groups. Soviet 4-7 and 3-7 infantry units should never be used alone for counterattacks.

**AIRPOWER**

Although it is much more vital to the offensive cause, airpower is of great use to the defense. The defensive player should therefore try to preserve his airfields and air units, though not at the expense of significant numbers of ground units.

The most frequent use of air units will be the disruption of the offensive player's units. Disruption can severely hamper the ability of the most powerful offensive formations to pursue and attack. Furthermore, air units attacking ground units can mount an effective prelude to a counterattack in which other air units function in a close support role. Combat air patrol is a constant and sometimes very important aerial aid to the defense. It can prevent the offensive player from attacking a hex by denying air support to the effort. Offensively, air units can transform a tactical situation only slightly favorable to the attacking party to one of almost certain offensive triumph. On the other hand, denial of close air support to a player can force him to attack at unfavorable odds, or it can induce him to forego the attack altogether. Therefore the defensive player should place CAP markers over the stacks that he believes are most likely to be attacked with close air support.

Consistent with this, the defensive player should place CAP markers over any stacks attacked by the enemy in the previous turn in which the result was a draw. If the previous attack was undertaken with close air support, some of the strength that gave the offensive player the confidence to attack can be negated. If no air units were involved, the offensive player will not be able to renew combat at more favorable odds, or preclude it with a disruption attack. Combat air patrols represent a local denial of the initiative to the offensive player.

**CONCLUSIONS**

When playing the defense in PANZERKRIEG scenarios, one should remember that the game simulates truly mobile warfare in which the offense is more potent than the defense. Truly, playing the defense well is a much more difficult task than that of playing the offense. But the defensive disadvantages are not insurmountable if the player relies on a mobile, active defense and is willing to take losses in territory if not in combat units.

The defensive player must deal with the initiative as well as his opponent's forces. He must at times deny the initiative to his opponent and take it as his own. But since the offensive player is seeking victory in the last two turns, he must always be able to diminish the advantage when it swings back to the attacker.

Effective defense requires perfect timing. A player has to exercise good judgement as to when to stand and offer combat, when to counterattack, and how to determine the pace at which the retreat will be conducted. Much of the challenge of PANZERKRIEG has its roots in this sense of appropriate timing.

The principles of the active retreat are applicable to all the scenarios, although they are less apparent in "Battles for the Dnepr." In this scenario, the Axis player begins the game in the unenviable position of standing on what should be his final defense line. To make his plight even worse, the Dnepr line has already been breached by the Soviet player, who holds the initiative. Therefore the Axis player should opt for a more rigid defense from the outset, with a mobile reserve to exploit breakthroughs.

In "Aftermath of Zitadelle," the Soviet player does not have towns and cities as his objectives. This scenario is especially suitable for the active retreat, as the Soviet player can win only through crossing the Dnepr in force. And the Dnepr is tailor-made to serve as the final Axis line, especially since there is nothing worth denying to the offensive player on its east side.

The war of PANZERKRIEG is one of maneuver. The popular image of war in the southern USSR
Errata for PANZERKRIEG Scenarios

The following modifications should be made to the scenarios to bring them into balanced play:

Kiev Pocket Scenario:
1) Only two German 6-11 units should start, not three.
2) All ten units shown are withdrawn on Turn 5.
3) Leaders Geyr and Guderian are also withdrawn on Turn 5 if still in play.
4) Setup Area “D” is hex 0222, Sevastopol.
5) The Start Line around Odessa should be black (i.e., an Axis Start Line). Soviet “A” units may set up anywhere in hexes 1114, 1115, 1214 or 1215.
6) German units need not set up on every hex of the line that says, “No German panzer units may set up south of this line.”
7) All black-on-grey Axis forces are German except three 2-7 infantry divisions in Force “X”, which are Hungarian.
8) All white-on-grey Axis forces are Rumanian except three 3-7 infantry divisions in Force “X”, which are Italian.
9) The two 2-7 infantry divisions arriving on Turn 6 are Rumanian.

Winter Counteroffensive Scenario:
1) The Axis may not set up in hexes 0427 and 0527.
2) All black-on-grey Axis forces are German except three 2-7 infantry divisions initially deployed and one arriving on Turn 11, which are Hungarian.
3) All white-on-grey Axis forces are Rumanian except three 3-7 and three 2-7 infantry divisions, which are Italian.
4) There should be no Soviet Inf/Gds replacements.

The Backhand Blow Scenario:
1) Add the SS Totenkopf Division, 8-11, arriving on Turn 2, entering areas 14-16.

The Drive on Stalingrad Scenario:
1) The Soviets should only start with three headquarters units units.
2) All Axis forces initially deployed in area “X” plus one 3-8 Air unit and the Turn 3 reinforcements are Italian.
3) All Axis forces initially deployed in area “Y”, the Turn 4 reinforcements, and two 2-7 units of the Turn 7 reinforcements are Hungarian.
4) All Axis forces initially deployed in area “Z”, two 3-8 Air units, the Turn 5 and Turn 11 reinforcements, and two 2-7 infantry divisions arriving on Turn 7 are all Rumanian.

The Stalingrad Scenario:
1) Axis deployment notes that the Axis is required to garrison twelve cities and towns. Those within the “Y” deployment area may be garrisoned by “Y” forces.

In the two previous columns [Vol. 22, No. 1 and Vol. 22, No. 3], I’ve discussed the sources of Russia’s weakness and what a player might do to overcome the initial blow of losing his northernmost or southernmost supply center (something that happens quite a bit to Russia). The fact remains, however, that Russia has won more postal games than any other Great Power. In this column, I am going to examine why and how Russia has accomplished this.

The world of DIPLOMACY (that is, the playing board) may be considered to be two worlds, “East” and “West.” Across the continent of Europe there is a zone of provinces which are not supply centers—Piedmont, Tyrolia, Bohemia, and then Galicia-Ukraine and Silesia-Prussia-Livonia. Most of the stalemate lines in DIPLOMACY run through this “empty zone” in one way or another. A stalemate line is one which a single Power (or group of Powers) with fewer than 18 centers can hold forever against a combination of Powers with 18 or more centers. Holding a stalemate line can often force a drawn game. Three Powers lie west of this line—England, Germany and France. Three Powers lie east of it—Austria, Turkey and Italy. Russia alone lies on both sides of the empty zone.

Similarly, the world of DIPLOMACY may be said to have two ocean fronts: Mediterranean and Atlantic. This is important because the Atlantic is defensible; an Atlantic Power can deny entry to the Atlantic to any Mediterranean power. Any Power holding England and Portugal can block the entrance to the Atlantic to all Mediterranean Powers, even though their land forces occupy the whole of the continent. (Conversely, the Atlantic Powers can’t be denied entry to the Mediterranean but they can be stopped at a stalemate line in and around Italy.) The Atlantic and Mediterranean Powers are the same as the West and East above . . . and again, Russia fronts both oceans. She can build fleets on the Atlantic behind the Gibraltar blockade, and fleets on the Mediterranean behind the Italian stalemate line.

Because of this situation, Russia wins more often than she might otherwise. We can see why this might be if we examine the most common and typical situation which occurs in DIPLOMACY: Turkey versus England/France. On her side of the stalemate line, Turkey can get as many as 16 supply centers. On the other side, England/France can have as few as 18. The result is a single power with not quite enough centers to win, facing a pair of powers which share enough centers to win . . . but if one of them stabs the other for the 18, Turkey gets across the stalemate line and wins instead. Stalemate, nobody wins and the three Powers draw. This situation can exist in many different combinations: two (or more) Eastern Powers versus two (or more) Western Powers. In this case, one of the Eastern Powers could be South Russia. Of course, draws can occur for many other reasons (and not infrequently for no good reason at all), but this sort of East-West draw is by far the most common.

The effect of this situation can be seen in the win/draw ratio of the various Powers: Austria, 167/254; England, 172/379; Germany, 154/303; Italy, 121/253; Turkey, 163/320. As you can see, the Great Powers win considerably less often than they draw, averaging a ratio of about 1:2. But Russia’s ratio is almost 1:1 (251/262)! This means, using a rough extrapolation, that Russia has won about 80 games which she should have drawn, or just about one-third of all her victories!

It is likely that this considerable advantage is conferred by Russia’s position on both sides of the stalemate line. A Russia grown gigantic (say, 12-16 centers) presumably has considerable power in the Baltic/Atlantic and in the Black/Mediterranean. Although it often happens that Russia is allied with an Eastern Power who is handling the Mediterranean flank. A Power with fleets in the north has automatically outflanked the stalemate line. A Western alliance can, by clever tactics, delay the Russian juggernaut . . . but in the end they cannot force a stalemate. They might possibly be able to secure the southern front so that they can put more power into the north than Russia can and push Russia back or get a draw, but the line cannot be held as easily as it can be held against one (or more) of the other Eastern Powers.

A Russian player should therefore plan carefully so that this potential advantage will be usable in the end-game if he is successful in reaching, say, 12+ units in the mid-game. The secret is a strong presence in the Baltic/Scandinavia area. (Of course, Russia can win by a major sweep through the center and south, but this can be stymied by determined Defense at the stalemate line, which in turn can only be outflanked in the north.) If Russia’s margin of victory is going to be in the north—as it often is—then sooner or later Russia must face England (or whichever Power controls the English island). If it happens early in the game, Russia will be in a very strong position. Normally, Russia’s early supply center gain amounts only to Norway; but that is enough—the strategic gain in position is by far the most important objective. If the clash with England is to come later in the game, then Russia must be ready for it. Having two fleets in the area, with St. Petersburg free for the build of a third, is a good objective. But don’t expect England to be happy about it and it may be impossible to achieve it without war with England right away. Russia’s immediate objective when the northern front becomes active would be Norway, Denmark, Berlin and Kiel—thus totally outflanking the stalemate line (and
with hopes of bringing five fleets into play eventually. Once this is achieved, Russia may not be unstoppable (after all, anything is possible in DIPLOMACY), but the steamroller has gotten a running start.

It is important, therefore, for the Russian player to keep in mind the inherent advantage of his position. He can afford to lose his northeastern or southernmost home center and still hope to do well. If he keeps them both, he can hope to outflank the stalemate line in the north, press forward in the center (and perhaps also in the south), and win the game. It is an advantage which increases his chances of a win (as opposed to a mere draw) by 30%. With skillful diplomacy (always!), this potential can be a real strategic boom. If he uses it.

Rod Walker is Editor Emeritus of DIPLOMACY WORLD and author of Avalon Hill's own GAMEG'S GUIDE TO DIPLOMACY. The quarterly DIPLOMACY WORLD is devoted exclusively to the game and each issue contains articles, statistics, humor, news and general information for and about the DIPLOMACY fandom. For a year's subscription ($12.00) to DIPLOMACY WORLD, contact the publisher, Mr. Larry Peery (Institute of Diplomatic Studies, P.O. Box 8416, San Diego, CA 92102). A sample issue is available for $4.00, and several back issues are still available. The GAMEG'S GUIDE TO DIPLOMACY is available from The Avalon Hill Game Company for $4.50.

RUSSIA AND THE U.S.
Historical Capabilities in THIRD REICH

By Robert Beyma

THIRD REICH is one of the all time great games; it has been one of my favorites since I first laid eyes on it. One fundamental problem with the game that has always bothered me, however, is Russia's relative strategic weakness vis-a-vis Germany after 1941. It is not uncommon for Germany to have over 300 BRPs as compared to around 100 for Russia by 1943. Germany can literally afford to attrition Russia right out of the game. Something is not right here. Russia reached strategic parity with Germany in 1942 and overwhelmed the Germans with superior manpower and material resources thereafter. The designer's own historical notes address the Soviet resources as well as mentioning that "they managed to increase their armaments production even though the Germans had captured vital Soviet production centers." But one does not get that feeling of vast Russian resources when playing THIRD REICH. The following four modifications will better simulate the Russians' strategic strength and their counteroffensive capabilities in 1943-1945.

1. RUSSIAN BRPS

Beginning with the 1942 Year Start Sequence, the Russian player adds the indicated BRPs for control of the following cities to his BRP total:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CITY</th>
<th>1942</th>
<th>1943</th>
<th>1944-1945</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rostov</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stalingrad</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grozny</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuibyshev</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sverdlov</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnitogorsk</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Russian player loses the BRPs for these cities if they fail to the Germans and the Russian player fails to recapture them in his following player turn. Likewise, the Russian player gets one turn to recapture Leningrad or Moscow. Besides reflecting the increasing industrial capability of Russia as the war progresses, this places some strategic emphasis on the key industrial cities and oil fields in the south as well as the Urals.

2. GERMAN BRPS

The German player gains 5 BRPs for each of the above cities that he captures. Additionally, the German player only receives 5 BRPs for Leningrad and 10 BRPs for Moscow (not the current 15 BRPs each). These cities' BRPs, including those for Leningrad and Moscow, are added to the German BRP total only during the Year Start Sequence. The German player loses the BRPs for these cities if they are retaken by the Russians and the German player fails to recapture them in his following player turn.

3. FORCE POOL

The following units are added to the Russian Force Pool in Spring 1943: 2-4-5 armor and one 5-4 air. These units may be built at no BRP cost. They may be placed at Leningrad, Moscow, or any of the aforementioned cities with a maximum of one unit per city. If the Russian player holds less than three of these cities, the excess units do not arrive. These units will go a long way towards rectifying the armor and air disparity between Russia and Germany from 1943 to 1945. (Note: Players will have to make these three counters.)

4. FREE SIBERIAN TRANSFER

The Siberian transfer is indeed free; delete Rule 15.63. By the time the Siberians were brought west, Japan had already decided on its grand (or not so grand as it turned out) strategy.
ON PATROL
Solitaire Rules for SUBMARINE
By Robert Harmon

Many of this magazine's readers can testify to the difficulties of finding a live opponent—even in urban areas. In rural regions, this can be a serious problem, as I found when I moved away from the San Francisco Bay area in 1978. Although living near Mount Shasta does have its advantages, fish play is much more difficult when opponents are twenty or thirty miles away (as the crow flies).

My first experiences with SUBMARINE were in solitaire play. A problem with the SUBMARINE rules is that the few scenarios devised for solitaire only involve a sub against randomly moving cargo ships, which are unchaperoned. The resulting game soon becomes reminiscent of wooden ducks under fire on a carnival midway. I decided to produce something more challenging.

The new rules provided below should change that problem, and add to SUBMARINE's enjoyment for many players. In these rules, the player assumes the role of sub commander but will face opponents that can shoot back as well as unarmed merchantmen. Players will find that the escorts will move automatically—and implacable. The rules may appear complex at first, with added terminology to boot. The aim of the rules is to provide for automatic escorts that will give the player something more than target practice. Once in operation, players will find that the system is fast-moving and playable once the rules have been mastered.

100.0 SOLITAIRE RULES

The solitaire player assumes the role of submarine commander, and opposes the surface vessels in any convenient scenario. The surface ships (escorts, capital ships, and merchantmen) move automatically according to the rules provided below. The solitaire player moves both submarine and surface units, and maintains log entries for all of them. Surface units move and attack as set forth in these rules, automatically rather than by choice of the solitaire player. The player should strive to move these units as the rules dictate. The result will be a real fight against a faceless but active enemy.

101. Applicable SUBMARINE Rules

101.1 All rules for SUBMARINE are in force, unless amended or cancelled by these rules.

101.2 Players may select to play either the Basic Game, the Optional Rules with the Basic Game, or the Advanced Game (optional rules included). Whichever of these three options are selected, they must be played in their entirety with all rules involved (as amended by the solitaire rules). In other words, each of the three possible rules configurations must be used as a "package".

101.3 Any of the "Design Your Own" scenario rules may be used at the player's discretion, except those specifically deleted below.

102. SUBMARINE Rules Deletions

102.1 Disregard Rule 20.3.2. In any scenario where escort placement is not dictated by the rules, escorts are placed according to Rule 103.2 at start.

102.2 Disregard all rules in Section 21.0 (Submarine Hidden Movement) except rules 21.2, 21.6 and 21.7. Rule 21.2 is amended to apply to the submarine at all times; the bow hex is to be noted each turn in the Submarine Log. Submarine visibility and "hidden" movement is discussed in Section 104 below.

102.3 Disregard Section 40.0 (Torpedo Hidden Movement) in its entirety. Torpedoes are presumed visible under Rule 21.6 and will have their counters on board throughout the movement.

102.4 Cancel Rule 50.0 (Weather) in its entirety. Presume clear (i.e., calm) conditions unless a scenario specifically states otherwise.

102.5 Delete Sections 61.0 and 62.0 (Depth Charge Capacity and Torpedo Availability) entirely. Submarines start each solitaire game with all tubes loaded and the maximum reload allowed by the Data Chart; choice of torpedo types is left up to the player, subject to the availability restrictions shown on the Torpedo Data Charts. Escorts have unlimited depth charge and ATW capacity, and all carry only the latest, heaviest depth charge allowed by the Weapon Availability Chart (e.g., 600 lb. depth charge instead of 300 lb.). ATW are always present when indicated by the Ship Data and Weapon Availability Charts. (EXC: One-ton, MK X depth charges are carried in addition to 600 lb. depth charges on British DDs, with a limit of one Mx X per ship under Rule 51.5.11)

102.6 Delete Section 71.0 (Surface Ships) entirely. Torpedoes are fired or a sub is detected as the result of searches performed during turn.

103.0 Starting the Solitaire Scenario

103.1 New Formations Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bow Hex</td>
<td>E20</td>
<td>E20</td>
<td>E20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direction</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

103.2 Escort Formations:

103.2.1 Escort formation is mandatory, and is performed according to Chart 103.2 (Escort Stations Chart). This is done after placement of merchantmen or capital ships, and is based on the number of escorts present as the chart indicates.

103.2.2 Escorts move in unison with the convoy, maintaining their place in the overall formation, until torpedoes are fired or a sub is detected as the Solitaire Movement rules dictate.

103.3 Placement is in order of priority: Escort Station A being the highest priority. The highest valued escort (i.e., highest VP) is placed in Station A, the next highest in Station B, and so forth in descending order.

103.4 Escorts placed in Escort Station B may be placed inside the convoy box in compliance with the Escort Station Chart.

103.5 In scenarios where escort stations are the only surface units, placement will be directed by the scenario rules, and the escort will move in unison as directed by Rule 104.2 below.

103.3.1 Capital Ship Formations:

103.3.1.1 Capital Ships (defined as carriers, battleships and cruisers) are placed in convoy formation (i.e., columns) in the patterns dictated by Rule 20.2.7 and Chart 103.1.

103.3.2 Capital ships, when in a convoy with merchantmen, must be placed in column in the following priorities:

103.3.3 Placement of Capital ships is to be by order of Victory Point value, and is done before merchantmen are placed.

104.0 Solitaire Movement

104.1 Submarine Movement:

104.1.1 Submarines are moved by the Solitaire player acting as the sub commander. Submarine movement is voluntary and is performed in accord with normal SUBMARINE rules.

104.1.2 Submarine controllers are on board and visible to the player at all times. "Hidden" or "visible" status is now determined by the Escort Action Table (Chart 104.2.1) and the Submarine Detection Table (Chart 104.1.3) as the result of searches performed during turn.

104.1.3 Whenever a submarine is contacted by radar or sonar search, or is "visible", an additional submarine marker is placed according to the Submarine Detection Table. This indicates the sub has been detected by the enemy. Submarine markers may not exceed one per active submarine.

105.0 New Formations Table

These formations may be added to those detailed in Rules 20.2.7-12 in order to cover all situations that have appeared in print to date.

Formation 7

This convoy formation is composed of six ships in three columns with two ships per column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bow Hex</td>
<td>E20</td>
<td>M20</td>
<td>U20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direction</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Formation 8

This convoy formation is composed of three ships in one column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bow Hex</td>
<td>X22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Formation 9

This convoy formation is composed of five ships in three columns with two ships in each outside column and one in the middle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bow Hex</td>
<td>E20</td>
<td>M20</td>
<td>U20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direction</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Formation 10

This convoy formation is composed of four ships in two columns with two ships in each column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bow Hex</td>
<td>H40</td>
<td>Q40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direction</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
104.1 A submarine is visible when:

a) it is on the surface or at 25-foot depth during daylight.
b) it is on the surface or at 25-foot depth at night and is within four hexes of an enemy vessel (including merchantmen) or within seven hexes of a vessel torpedoed on the previous turn and which is still afloat.
c) it has been sighted under Rule 47.0.

104.1.5 Submarines may only attack vessels visible to the sub under the Submarine Visibility Table (see the Data Cards).

104.2 Escort Movement:

104.2.1 Escort movement is automatic and is determined by the Escort Action Table (which itself is based on the Submarine Detection Table’s results). The Escort Action Table is consulted at the end of each turn, and will determine movement for the escorts for the coming turn.

104.2.2 The Escort Action Table is also consulted at the beginning of the game, prior to movement. Unless the scenario actually states that contact has been made, or if the initial depth of the submarine is 25 feet or less, the escorts will begin play in Mode 1.

104.2.3 As detailed in the Escort Action Table, escorts move in one of three general ways:

a) In formation. Escorts move in unison with the merchantmen or capital ships, maintaining their convoy stations. Escorts will match convoy movement exactly. They break formation only when the Escort Action Table so dictates.

b) Radial Movement (see 105.0).

c) Diameter Movement (see 106.0).

104.2.4 When escorts appear in a scenario alone (with no merchantmen or capital ships), they move according to the Escort Action Table. When in Mode 1, they move according to the Fleet Movement Table (Chart 104.3.1) at Fast Convoy Speed.

The die roll for movement is done prior to each turn’s movement, and is performed for the escorts in unison (i.e., one die roll only, with results applying to all ships).

104.3 Merchant Movement:

104.3.1 Merchantmen (cargo and tanker vessels) move according to the Fleet Movement Table. One die is rolled at the start of each Convoy Movement Phase and is performed regardless of the tactical situation. This same die roll will also apply to escorts moving in formation (Mode 1 on the Escort Action Table), but applies to merchantmen every turn regardless of what the escorts do.

104.3.2 Merchantmen move and turn in unison. They maintain their relative positions in formation unless sunk or dead in the water.

104.3.3 Merchantmen will not collide with ships dead in the water. If an individual ship is to perform a movement directed by the Fleet Movement Table that will result in collision, the moving vessel stops the moment it comes within three hexes (inclusive) of a stopped ship (i.e., a two-hex gap) and the ship’s bow is pointed at the stopped ship. The moving merchantmen halts movement at that point and remains stopped until the Fleet Movement Table dictates a movement that won’t bring the bow closer to the stopped ship. Ships stopped by this rule will continue to make all turns dictated by the Fleet Movement Table (i.e., the bow will face the same direction as the remainder of the convoy).

104.4 Capital Ship Movement:

104.4.1 Capital ships also move according to the Fleet Movement Table. Movement is made in unison with the entire convoy, as directed by the table.

104.4.2 Once torpedoes have been fired, and as long as Capital ships are not in convoy with merchantmen, Capital ships move according to the Emergency column on the Fleet Movement Table. When moving in Emergency mode, which begins the turn after torpedoes are fired, Capital ships increase their speed by one hex each turn until the maximum speed of that ship is reached. That speed will continue in effect until the end of the scenario. One die roll for the Fleet Movement Table is made each turn, and the results followed in the appropriate column, for all Capital ships.

104.4.3 If Capital ships move off the board in Emergency mode, they may not return to play.

104.4.4 Since Capital ship counters have no ID numbers, the ship’s position in a convoy is to be determined by writing the ship’s name across the spaces in the convoy section of the Log normally used for merchantmen. (Example: if the Enterprise is in Row 1, Column 1, the word “Enterprise” is written across the five boxes in the corresponding location on the convoy/escort Log.) Capital ships will continue to be shown in the escort group section in the Log; the name in the convoy section merely identifies which counter is which. Since Capital ships are set up in convoy formation in solitary play, and since they may not deviate from it unless sunk or dead in the water, this rule is necessary to distinguish Capital ships from their lack of ID numbers.

104.5 Capital ships perform evasive action as described in 104.3.3, and will not collide with other surface ships in any circumstances.

105.0 Radial Movement

105.1 Radial movement is the term applied to the procedure used to move escorts toward a submarine contact. Radial movement also describes the procedure for escort attacks under solitary conditions.

105.1.1 Radial movement procedures are automatic, and are instigated as dictated by the Escort Action Table. These actions are mandatory in solitary play.
105.3.5 When performing radial movement, escorts speed up to maximum speed (in the progression described by Rules 8.2.1 and 31.) unless the Escort Action Table states otherwise. Search Speed, when mentioned on that table, is always three hexes per turn.

105.4 Escort Attack:

105.4.1 Escorts attack automatically when they reach the assault zone, as long as radial movement is in effect. All weapons able to reach the assault zone (ATW, depth charges, K-guns) do so, up to their maximum and in as many hexes of the assault zone that can be reached. This is done regardless of the escort’s speed. Remember that the assault zone is the target hex and all hexes in a two-hex radius—effectively, the range of movement of a submerged submarine.

105.4.2 An escort may, in solitaire play, steam across hexes undergoing Hedgehog attack. No escort may steam across a hex undergoing depth charge or K-gun attack.

105.4.3 ATW does not take effect immediately in solitaire play. ATW attacks are resolved along with the depth charges in the Anti-Submarine Attack Resolution Phase.

105.4.4 Priority of Attacks: Where range and escort characteristics permit (see 105.4.6), assault zone hexes are to be attacked in the following priority, with at least one ATW, depth charge or K-gun each:

a) the target hex;

b) the hexes adjacent to the target hex, starting with the hex ahead of the target hex (i.e., two hexes ahead of the sub marker’s bow); then

c) the hexes at a distance of two from the target hex, starting with the hex directly in front of the sub marker, then proceeding around the circle of hexes evenly in both directions from front to rear.

105.4.5 Order of Attacks: The nearest escort to the target hex (distance counted from the escort’s bow) moves first in the Escort Movement Phase. The other escorts move in order of priority. Where two escorts are equally near, the escort whose bow points the closest to the target hex moves first.

105.4.6 The Attack: Each escort moves on a straight line through the assault zone, firing all possible ATW, K-guns and depth charges in such a manner as to put at least one such weapon in all reachable assault zone hexes. When sufficient hexes cannot be reached to allow one-attack-per-hex, weapons will be fired as evenly as possible (e.g., when six depth charges can only reach three assault zone hexes, the escort drops two in each of the available hexes). In all cases, the escort will adhere as closely as possible to the priorities of Rule 105.4.3.

105.4.7 All movement and attack by escorts is final; no die rolls may be made again nor movement retracted.

105.4.8 Escorts may not move through hexes containing previously-moved escorts or depth charges dropped by same. Escorts may deviate from Rule 105.4.6 but will, in all cases move parallel to its radial and as close to the target hex as possible.

105.4.9 Escorts move through the assault zone and leave it on the same course they entered it. When the stern of the escort is outside the assault zone, the escort executes a Williamson turn and launches a new attack. Escorts will attack repeatedly, so long as Radial movement is in effect.

105.4.10 If an escort cannot reach enough assault zone hexes to spread its attacks evenly, (especially if K-guns are involved) and no vacant assault zone hexes can be reached, K-guns and ATW may be fired into hexes already containing other attack markers.

105.4.11 Escorts may only attack assault zone hexes, only when Radial movement is underway, and must fire all weapons able to reach the assault zone (see Escort Action Table for surface gunfire, which is not used in Radial movement and not defined here in “weaponry”). Escorts may not be moved so as to collide with other escorts, or in violation of Rule 105.4.8. Escorts may not fire ATW into hexes occupied by other surface vessels.

105.4.12 Attacks are resolved as prescribed by the SUBMARINE rules, except that the Submarine Depth Combat Table is rolled first for all depth charge and K-gun attacks (including Squid). This represents the enemy’s guess as to your depth.

106.0 Diameter Movement

106.1 Diameter movement is a maneuver used when escorts move around a target hex rather than towards it. This is used especially when firing on a surfaced submarine and, in any event, is implemented by the Escort Action Table.

106.1.1 A “diameter”, for the purposes of this

104.1.3 Submarine Detection Table

The submarine counter itself, of course, remains on board at all times, since the solitaire player is the sub commander. However, markers are used to show the various levels of detection by the enemy—and are used to orient escort movements. The markers indicate the target hex—the hex ahead of the marker’s bow—and provide a convenient basis for using the Escort Action Table at the end of each turn.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHASE EVENT</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any Sub visible or surfaced (depth 0-25)</td>
<td>Place submarine counter (any) of the sub’s own nationality under the sub counter. Move the marker with the sub as long as it remains at 0-25’ depth. Do not confuse it with your real sub!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub disappears from visible depth (50+)</td>
<td>Put submarine counter of escort’s own color in the exact position sub began its movement, to include precise facing/bow direction. Do not move with sub in sub movement phase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub found by radar/sonar search, not visible (50+ day, 0-50+ at night)</td>
<td>Put sub marker of escort’s own color on sub position, pointing in same direction. Do not move with sub in sub movement phase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub missed by radar/sonar search, not visible</td>
<td>Invert markers already on board. If there was no sub marker to begin with, continue in Mode 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torpedoes launched, not previously sighted or contact lost</td>
<td>Place inverted torpedo marker in hex ahead of sub bow (hex B on Submarine Log sheet), pointing in the same direction (this marker is the target hex for escorts). Remove any inverted sub markers. This marker remains on board till new sub markers appear. This marker is not placed if the firing sub was already visible or in radar/sonar contact.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

104.2.1 Escort Action Table

Movement of escorts on the following turn is determined by this table at the start of Phase 10 of the preceding turn. Placement of submarine markers, which determines the result on this table, is done using the Submarine Detection Table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUB MARKER</th>
<th>MODE</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>none</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No previous sightings. Escorts proceed in formation, moving in unison with convoy. All escorts conduct sonar and radar search.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>torpedo marker</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Torpedoes launched. Escorts begin RADIAL MOVEMENT at Search Speed, using marker as target hex.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sub marker</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sonar/radar sighting. Escorts begin RADIAL MOVEMENT, full speed—with the exception of escorts with sonar contact, which move in RADIAl MOVEMENT at Search Speed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sub color</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Submarine sighted (25-foot depth). Escorts begin RADIAL MOVEMENT, full speed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sub marker</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Submarine on surface. Escorts begin DIAMETER MOVEMENT, full speed. All surface vessels open fire whenever LOS permits. Nearest escort to sub this turn begins RADIAL MOVEMENT, orients on bow of sub (not target hex), and will RAM if sub hasn’t submerged by then.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sub marker, inverted</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Contact lost. Begin DIAMETER MOVEMENT, Search Speed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two markers</td>
<td>Double</td>
<td>A second sub is sighted. The nearest escorts (half of each force detailed to the other two subs) proceed according to appropriate mode.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three markers</td>
<td>Triple</td>
<td>A third sub is sighted. The nearest escorts (half of each force detailed to the other two subs) proceed according to the appropriate mode.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Sonar search is always conducted by vessels at Search Speed, each turn. Radar search is always conducted by vessels having that capability, each turn.
game, is a circle of hexes that is an equal distance at all points from the target hex. A diameter of six, for example, is that circle of hexes that is six hexes from the target hex in all directions (the circle forming a large hexagon).

106.1.2 Diameter movement is executed by following the diameter and never having the bow hex leaving the path (the bow hex must always remain at the same distance as dictated). This means a 60-degree turn at each radial (as a glance at the illustration will show).

106.2 Movement Procedure:

106.2.1 Diameter movement is directed by the escort Action Table, and continues as long as the Table directs.

106.2.2 Escorts follow, in order, their respective vectors and/or radials toward the target hex as in Radial movement (Rule 105.3.2). However, upon reaching the assigned diameter distance, each escort will turn and follow the diameter hexes in a counter-clockwise direction.

106.2.3 In the diameter pattern, all vessels move at either Search Speed or, when the Escort Action Table is calling for “Full Speed”, at the maximum speed of the slowest ship in the diameter.

106.2.4 The diameter to be followed is a distance of /2 hexes from the target hex. If a vessel commences Diameter movement already within that distance, it moves to and follows a diameter of six hexes.

104.3.1 Fleet Movement Table

This table is rolled upon at the start of each Convoy Movement Phase and applies to all merchantment, Capital ships and escorts moving in formation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Convoy Type</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slow Convoy</td>
<td>L1</td>
<td>R1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1L</td>
<td>1R</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow Convoy (Speed 2)*</td>
<td>L2</td>
<td>R2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2L</td>
<td>2R</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fast Convoy</td>
<td>L2</td>
<td>R2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2L</td>
<td>2R</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fast Convoy (Speed 3)*</td>
<td>L3</td>
<td>R3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3L</td>
<td>3R</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency</td>
<td>(Speed M)</td>
<td>LM</td>
<td>RM</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>ML</td>
<td>MR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Advanced Game

107.0 Night Illumination

107.1 Section 107.0 applies whenever Section 25.0 of the original SUBMARINE rules is to be followed, and only in night scenarios.

107.1.1 Starshells are fired whenever torpedoes or a submarine is detected. This is automatic and is spelled out in detail on the Escort Action Table.

107.1.2 Starshells are fired by the escort furthest from the target hex.

107.1.3 Starshells are fired in the target hex and three hexes ahead of it (in the direction of the sub marker or torpedo). Line of sight considerations do not apply when firing starshells; they may be fired over one or more surface ships.

107.2 Tankers and Cargo Ships:

107.2.1 Visibility of submarines at night is described in Rule 104.1.3.

107.2.2 Daylight conditions prevail for a seven-hex radius around any tanker torpedoed on any previous turn (regardless of whether still afloat); cargo ships so illuminate an area only under the provisions of 104.1.3.

107.2.3 Daylight visibility prevails within 20 hexes of any tanker torpedoed while containing aviation fuel. These conditions will prevail until the turn after the ship sinks, ending with the Star Shell Phase. Mark the location until then with a starshell counter in both hexes of the tanker.

Illustration—Assault Zone The hexes where attacking escorts launch their weapons. The target hex is the first priority; remaining hexes are numbered in order of priority.

108.0 Evasive Action and Searches

108.1 Ships:

108.1.1 Escorts may not move into any hex that a merchantmen might enter on its move that turn, as determined by the Fleet Movement Table. In this case, Escorts may deviate from radials and vectors but must parallel them as close as possible.

108.1.2 Escorts may not move into any hex that a merchantmen’s stern might pivot into—that is to say, the hex on either side of the ship adjoining both bow and stern.

108.1.3 Escorts may not move into any hex that a Capital ship might enter on its move that turn, as indicated by the Fleet Movement Table, nor any hex that a Capital ship’s stern might pivot into (as in Rule 108.1.2).

108.1.4 Capital ships and merchantmen move in unison in the solitaire game, so no collision is possible. Avoidance of vessels dead in the water is discussed in Rules 104.3.2 and 104.3.3.

108.1.5 Surface submarines may be rammed by merchantmen and Capital ships if the Fleet Movement Table happens to dictate such. Ramming of surfaced subs by escorts is not only possible, but mandatory under the Escort Action Table. However, only one escort may ram an individual submarine.

108.2 Torpedoes:

108.2.1 No escort may intentionally steam over a torpedo, nor end its move directly ahead of one, when performing Radial or Diameter movement. Escorts will instead avoid such an event by leaving its vector, radial or diameter and paralleling its former path as close as possible, or by slowing to the point that it will not be in the path.

108.2.2 Capital ships and merchantmen move according to the Fleet Movement Table regardless of where torpedoes may be. The first firing of torpedoes in a scenario will trigger Emergency movement for Capital ships; no other response is possible.

108.3 Search:

108.3.1 All ships possessing sonar, and moving at speeds permitting search, are required to do so each turn. The player may dispense with this if all submarines are surfaced or sunk.

108.3.2 All ships possessing radar must conduct radar search each turn. The player may dispense with this if all submarines are at depths of 50 feet or greater.

Illustration—Williamson Turn The escort turns 180 degrees and returns to its original course in reverse. When leaving the assault zone, the turn may begin only when the stern is no longer adjacent to any hex of the assault zone.
Q. Most of our readers are aware of your fine work, Charlie. where did you get your artistic training?
A. The University of Tennessee in Knoxville, Class of '79, a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Communication Design.
Q. And how was it that you came to work for the Avalon Hill Game Company?
A. I had just quit an ad agency job. Dropped in at Avalon Hill. Just so happened they were looking to replace a retiring artist from the department. Stroke of good fortune. The right place at the right time, it seems.
Q. You have done a number of things for the company, from mapboards to advertising, from counter art to box covers. Where does your inspiration come from?
A. My cats. No, seriously most of my "inspiration" (if you will) comes from research into photo studies of the various time period that needs this art—at least for historical projects.

Q. You’ve proved yourself adept at blending functionalism and attractiveness in your mapboards. The many SL boards stand out. How do you do it?
A. With a paintbrush, acrylics and a lot of TLC.
Q. So much for the tools. Do you use actual overhead views? I’ve heard rumors of boards crafted to depict historical locations (Dieppe, Stalingrad, Cassino, and such); any truth to those or are there plans to produce any?
A. As a matter of fact, there is right now (on the "back burner") an ASL project of mine depicting the area of the Red Barricades Ordnance complex in Stalingrad.
Q. Do you check all the potential lines of sight, or have you developed a "feel" for the SL terrain?
A. No, I never check the LOS (unless playing a scenario, of course). Don, however, has accused me of having all the lines of sight memorized. There's no truth to the matter; he's just a sore loser!
Q. On the average, how long does it take you to complete a mapboard? Are there many steps to its final production, and do you oversee each?
A. A "normal" sized ASL mapboard probably takes about 15 to 20 hours, depending on the complexity of the terrain (i.e., city versus open). There are about five major steps to the production: 1) layout, 2) painting, 3) color separations, 4) in-house camera work (i.e., adding the grid and registration), and of course 5) actual printing (also done "in-house"). I do the first two steps myself; the rest...
we must depend on the skill of others. The most critical one to oversee, I've found, is our camera room's work.

Q. I've seen the superb three-dimensional views of all the SL terrain features that you drew for the ASL rulebook. What's the story behind that clever idea?

A. I reckon Donald thought of this, and I carried it out to fruition. They were quite enjoyable to do; you have to "see 'em to believe 'em".

Q. A number of the covers for our microcomputer games are yours. Any of them a masterpiece in your mind? Any stories to go along with them?

A. No, none of them are "masterpieces". My two favorites are TANKTICS and MOON PATROL, however. TANKTICS (by the way, the first box cover I ever did for Avalon Hill) is a rather straightforward approach, but its directness (a Panther tank approaching head on) and simple color scheme really "pops it off" of the shelf. MOON PATROL, on the other hand, aptly depicts my more whimsical drawing style.

Q. Do you happen to know what Avalon Hill does with the original artwork that the covers come from? Any hopes of a reader ever obtaining the original cover painting to their favorite game?

A. I think one of our best is the new cover (done, by the way, by George Parrish) as it covers I ever did for Avalon Hill) is a rather straight-forward approach, but its directness (a Panther tank approaching head on) and simple color scheme really "pops it off" of the shelf. MOON PATROL, on the other hand, aptly depicts my more whimsical drawing style.

Q. Do you favor one period over others? Which?

A. WW2, East Front—the real war. My second favorite period would be the American Civil War I guess.

Q. The "real" war. That might raise some eyebrows—why do you say that? And what fascination does that particular phase of the war hold for you?

A. Because, in my opinion, it was. All the rest ("Europeously speaking" at least) was simply a side-show, or "tidying up". It was "Lebensraum" in the East, and the destruction of the Communist "menace" that Hitler was after, as attested to in Main Kampf.

Q. Do you suggest to would-be artists looking to work in the game industry that they steel themselves in military history?

A. No, it's not vital. Though, if seeking work in the wargame industry it would certainly be to their advantage. In today's art world, you need every advantage you can get.

Q. What would you suggest for them? Any courses or learning that would give them an edge? How should they approach a game company to obtain work?

A. Firstly, they should get as much experience as possible in other graphics work, collect a good portfolio, and make your move. Of course, dedication and hard work are a must... and a little luck never hurts.

Q. Among other artists, are there any whose work you particularly admire?

A. I especially admire the work of George Parrish (mentioned previously) who has done all the covers of the ASL modules so far, among other covers. Certainly a great find for The Avalon Hill Game Company.

Q. Do you do any other artwork—fine art or otherwise—of which you didn't mention any among your list of hobbies.

A. Actually, I don't do much "outside" artwork (though I have done some "free-lance" projects for friends in need). Most of my outside leisure time is spent gaming and designing ASL maps/scenarios these days.

Q. At the moment, there are only a couple of awards for the artists that are so vital an element of this industry. Would you like to see them get more recognition? Of what sort?

A. More recognition wouldn't hurt. I'd like to see awards for best graphics (highlighting the functionalism, in particular) for each major game component—counters, maps, rules, covers.

Q. Given your views, do you hope to win a Charles Roberts Award for graphics someday?

A. I've never seriously considered it. But, being the vain guy I am—sure, I'd be plum "tickled pink"!

Q. What lies ahead for Charles Kibler? Do you have any goal in mind that you've not yet attained?

A. To become rich and famous. Now that I'm "famous", I just need money. Send all donations to The GENERAL, Artist Relief Fund, c/o C. Kibler.

Russian Front... Cont'd from Page 11

replacements should be concentrated on the more powerful armies (5-4-4 and larger) and the air units while allowing the weaker armies to absorb a hit or two. This can be used to back up the fronts to provide depth and to convert the liberated rail hexes. (The fact that Axis units can convert rail hexes faster than Soviet units is no reflection on the capabilities of Soviet engineers but simulates the fact that the Axis forces proved more imbued with realistic in tearing up trackage.) Many of the Soviet armies were historically reduced to mere cadres strength as the war continued and the Soviet player will be doing extremely well to avoid the same situation. Use the artillerists corps to support direct assaults on cities or other strong defensive positions. By 1944, there should be enough Soviet armor available that some true blitzkriegs can be used to hasten the Axis demise. Even in 1943, if the Soviet Tank armies are used en masse or in close proximity, they can bludgeon their way forward and exploit on broad fronts.

For the Axis player, the endgame strategy should be one of the stubborn defense of cities to hold the maximum numbers for the bi-annual Victory level. Phases interspersed with selected withdrawals to avoid the pounding for a turn or two (preferably during bad weather so that the retrograde movements can be shorter) and—let's emphasize this enough slashing local counterattacks to keep the Soviet player conservative, destroying powerful Soviet spearhead units and generally try to hold the overall attrition. Standing on the defensive is not enough. The Axis cannot win a war of attrition. If the Axis player adopts a flexible defensive strategy, middle to late 1943 can be one of the most interesting periods of the game to play—a maelstrom of see-saw battles with attacks and counterattacks, salients to hold or evacuate, pockets and counterpockets, and break-ins and breakouts. If the Soviets start in mid-1943 with a victory level of "1" or above, it is unlikely that the Axis can win, although it may be fun trying. If the Soviets start mid-1943 with a victory level of "0" or less, anything is possible.

All-in-all, RUSSIAN FRONT presents a fresh approach to wargaming the largest land campaign in history. Although the game is currently selling very well, it is a new release and time and continued sales are the only true measures of success or failure for a new gaming system. New systems are always a gamble. But RUSSIAN FRONT, which I'll be playing for many years to come, looks to be a sure bet.

Clarification and Errata for RUSSIAN FRONT

5.2.1.2 Mapboard edge hexes used for reinforcement placement must, like cities, be located in the unit's home country.

7.2.1.1 If both sides have a choice, the defender chooses first.

7.3.6 If both sides' engaged units are eliminated and both sides still have unengaged units in the hex, the attacker must retreat.

Scenario Two.H.2.22 "22" hits on German infantry instead of "12".

Soviet Order of Battle Card In January 1943 (20), the 19th Army unit pictured should be a picture of the 27th Army unit.

Game Card Replacement Chart The Dec '42 line of the "on Board" column should include a dot next to the "14".
Notes on Organizing a Wargame Club

By Henry C. Robinette

You are new in town. Your one and only wargaming buddy just got transferred to another city. You’re tired of playing by yourself. How do you find someone else to play? Every wargamer at one time or another has had difficulty in finding opponents. And who of us has not lamented, “Why doesn’t somebody start a club?”

When I moved to Douglasville, Georgia in September 1977, Battleline Games was located across the street from where I was located there and I thought I would be able to play face-to-face every week. Well, two months later Battline moved to Dallas, Texas (subsequently, their line of excellent games was absorbed by The Avalon Hill Game Company) and I had nobody to play. Like a lot of other closet wargamers, I played the occasional solitary game and waited patiently for somebody else to start a club. Fortunately, nearby Atlanta is a big place and two years later a fellow did try to start a club. However, after three or four months he quit. Once again, I was exacerbatally by not playing. The wife and kids will just have to understand that you are going to play wargames.

Then in February 1980 I decided to start that club myself. I won’t bore you with the trials and tribulations of the Atlanta Wargaming Society. But I want to share a few tried and proven techniques for starting a club. As Hunter says on his TV program, “Know thyself. Not everybody should try starting a club. If you are not a committed wargamer, then you should skip reading the rest of this article. A committed wargamer is willing and able to set aside time each and every month (or week for the hard core) to play wargames. There can not be any excuses for not playing. The wife and kids will just have to understand that you are going to play wargames.

Once you have made the commitment to start a club, you need the ability to follow through. This means you must be able to find a facility and have access to it on a regular basis. If you cannot get off from work to pick up keys to a meeting room or to make reservations, then you will need to find someplace else or give it up.

A good facility is essential. You can always rent a meeting room in a hotel. However, for those of you who are not there are numerous other possibilities. You may find a meeting room in a church, fire station, or library. You may have a local hobby store where you could play. You may find a meeting room in a restaurant. Your local Civic Club or American Legion may have a room. Where I live, the banks have community rooms available for meetings. My club has played in a library, a fire station, a pizza parlor, a church, a bank, and a Naval Air Station. You too, can find a place to play if you use your imagination and simply ask.

Publicity. If your local hobby store does not have a bulletin board, it should get one. Suggest it. Your notice in a hobby store will stay up for months, and anybody with more than a passing interest in wargaming will notice it. Contact your local newspaper. Many newspapers publish listings of club meetings and activities; they will publish yours if you send it in. Of course, use an ad in The GENERAL and be prepared to run it for several issues. Many supermarkets have bulletin boards. Your notice in a supermarket will get some results. Some stores post notices in their windows; give that a try too. Suburban shopping papers hunger for feature articles; your club notice will be published and handed out free to thousands.

After you have lined up a place and publicized your meeting, you are not through. You must arrive early and stay all day. When people show up to play, get their names and addresses. Then follow up with a mailing for the next meeting. Do not slack off on your publicity. Keep on publicizing. Persevere. Do not get discouraged. It will take time for the word to get out.

Of course, there will be personality clashes and petty squabbles; the minor crises will arise. But you, and the other members, have one serious matter on which you must agree—what is the scope of your club to be? Will you, as many do, limit the type of games played? How about role-playing; ban it from club meetings? Miniatures? What of family games? Chess anyone? Bridge? You must limit some facet on the central concern of your club. This question even extends to the complexity level that your membership will accept. And, once you’ve determined all this, be up front about making it common knowledge. Make yourself and others some frustration by “truth in advertising.”

But starting a wargame club is not the most important thing you can do for your hobby. The future of our hobby is in your hands. Whether or not The Avalon Hill Game Company and wargaming are around to celebrate their fiftieth anniversary depends on how well we have succeeded in getting people to play wargames. If you have children, teach them to play wargames. And they make the most stalwart members of your club, you’ll find. If you have friends, encourage them. And, always make your club meetings open to the public. In that way, the hobby will grow and your efforts will have helped.

Finally, as promised, I’ll close out this installment of the Philosophy with a listing of the clubs whose secretaries kind enough to contact me. I’d like to thank the secretary of each one, and hope that his small tribute might cause them to prosper in their endeavors to better our pastime.

**Anchorage Wargaming Club, meeting every second and fourth Saturday monthly at the UA/AAC campus. Contact: Joseph R. Regan, 3912 College Drive, Anchorage, AK 99505. (907) 243-5297.**

**Atlanta Wargaming Society, monthly meetings on variable dates. Contact: Henry C. Robinette, 3172 Lake Monroe Road, Douglasville, GA 30135. (404) 942-7416.**

**North Shore Gaming Club, twice monthly meetings on variable dates. Contact: Alan R. Moon, 11 Boardway, Apt. 6, Beverly, MA 01915. (617) 7488.**

**Michigan Gamers Corp., irregular meetings on variable dates. Contact: Mitchell Bellick or Todd Brady, 16191 Thomas, Allen Park, MI 48101. (313) 928-7420.**

**Bartlesville Military Simulator Association, meeting every first and third Saturday at various locations. Contact: Roger Dunnell, 245 NE Roselle Avenue, Bartlesville, OK 74406. (918) 335-2887.**

**Texas War Department, meeting second Sunday every month (after 12pm) at Armadillo Soldier Shop, 4325 Alpha Road, Dallas, TX 75224. (214) 239-2679.**

**Fox Valley Gamers, meeting fourth Saturday every month at Appleton Jaycees. Contact: John Butitta, 1444 East Northland Avenue, Appleton, WI 54911. (414) 725-7218.**

For those of the readership in these areas, I’d hope that you might find some kindred souls by contacting these organizations.
THE QUAGMIRE DEFENSE
Playing the Reds in PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN

By Brett Murrell

Few wargamers who have played PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN would probably admit that they enjoy playing the Russian forces against the German Army. Factors in the game that just seem to pile up against the Russians; they require purely defensive thought and are allowed very little offensive action, their supply system is fragile at best and easily disrupted, and even after well-played games the Russian player is many times "rewarded" with a German Army's sight of yet another red piece being flung off the map after destruction by the superior race, while the German "dead pile" remains empty.

Perhaps these difficulties are what make PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN the challenging game it is. Few other games can give the rewarding feeling that a Russian player gets when he sees the Wehrmacht ground to a dead stop against a quagmire of Russian defenders. Creating this quagmire, however, takes meticulous play, plenty of forethought, and a generous amount of prior experience, but it is far from the pipe-dream of "legend."

THE QUAGMIRE PRINCIPLE:
How to be Russian Flypaper

PG has some fairly novel rules systems not found in most other games. The most important one to the Russian is the "Zone of Control Pin." When a unit enters an enemy Zone of Control, it may never move away and until either the enemy or a new Russian escapes that Zone of Control during combat. This escape can be engineered by eliminating the enemy or by causing the enemy or yourself to retreat.

Because the German panzer units have the ability to move 20 movement points in one turn, first priority for the Russian is to limit the German mobility as much as possible. The best way to do this is by pinning the panzers with Russian units. This is usually easy to do; the difficulty comes in maintaining that pin. One or two Russian units sent up to pin German units can usually expect to be surrounded and overrun with virtually no loss of time to the Germans. Because of this, more than simple pinning is needed.

The Combat Results Table in the game does not create many casualties in and of itself. Attackers can be totally eliminated only at odds of 1-2 or less, and even then the chances of elimination are never greater than 33%. On the other hand, attackers need at least 6-1 odds for a meager 16% chance of rolling a Defender Eliminated. Attackers need at least 9-1 odds to get a better than 50-50 chance of causing complete elimination of the defender; these odds are very difficult to obtain against an average Russian unit in good defensive terrain.

What the Combat Results Table does create is a lot of retreats—so surrounded units who have no retreat option are living on borrowed time. With the lightning speed of the German panzer and motorized units, the German player needs only one hole in a Russian line to pour units through and surround a whole Russian line. While the Russian challenge comes, you, as the Russian player, must create a line which cannot be outflanked, which has no significantly weakened area and which can deal with small German breakthroughs aggressively. A well-planned Russian line in good defensive terrain is a tough nut to crack and can win the game by itself; a haphazard "delaying" line is usually doomed on the first contact with the panzers and allows the Germans a lot of practice throwing red pieces into the "dead pile" without delaying his army more than a turn.

The basic principle of the Quagmire Defense, then, is this: A solid, permanent Russian line is possible to create if enough planning is put into it. This line must be strong and must be wholeheartedly adhered to or it is just a waste of time and units. If successful, it will stop the German push, pinning it down for at least the first eight turns—and possibly until the end of the game.

THE LINE: Where?

The Quagmire Defense requires that the Russian player plan exactly where his defense line is going to be before play even begins. Many players believe that the line from the V1 entrance area to Smolensk and down to Roshav offers the best defense area. This line is shaky at best. Certainly Roshav has good terrain, and the area north of Smolensk is no place for mechanized units; but the area between, around Smolensk, is a playground for panzers. Even stacks of three Russian units are easily cut down in clear terrain once surrounded or put out of supply. And the number of Russian units needed to defend just the middle area in a permanent line is prohibitive.

The Russian defense line cannot be pin any farther back than Smolensk; however, because the German gets a marginal victory by taking just Smolensk and either Roshav or Yel’nya with the three towns on the west edge of the board. Only one place is left—the west.

The most common assessment of the western area, the line running basically along the 0500 row, is that it is too far forward to defend well. The Smolensk line is preferred because it is farther back and allows more time for the line to be set up. These assessments are fallacious for two reasons. First, if both the 16th Army and the 19th Army can move on the first turn, a total of 23 infantry divisions, five armor divisions, and two weak German corps leaders are available to create a line along the 0500 defense line—plenty of units to stop the German first-turn forces with ease. Secondly, in relationship to the speed of the German units, the Smolensk line is only one turn (in fact one movement phase) farther eastward of the 0500 line—hardly much delay to be worried about how far forward you are defending.

THE 0500 LINE: How?

The 0500 line offers by far the best natural terrain anywhere on the board. In the south, the river flowing south of Orsha, along with hexes 0424, 0422, and 0420, offers the Russians a defense line that is perfectly straight and doubled in every position. This line is extended by the woods along the Vitebsk-Orsha highway, which allows doubled and tripled defensive positions up to the West Dvina river. From here, the line can be extended along the West Dvina as far as the Russian player wishes.

The strength of this line is that it offers no undoing positions to the German and when the Germans can get two divisions on each of the required defense hexes, he can possibly be worth up to 32 defense points; with many of the defense hexes attackable from only two hexes, the German motorized divisions (worth 12 points each) cannot be used to attack a defense hex containing two unlimited Russian units on the first two turns without the possibility of getting a 1-2 odds attack—disastrous if a six is rolled.

Figure 1 gives a possible setup for the first turn along the 0500 line if both the 16th and the 19th Armies can move. The 13th Army deploys south of Orsha, sending its armor division to 0518 to help in the center. The 20th Army deploys its infantry in 0512, 0515, 0517 and 0518, leaving the defense of Orsha and Vitebsk to the 16th Army units piled up to these hexes. Another 16th Army infantry division moves to 0417 to blunt an attack in the center, while the last infantry division is sent to 0825. The 20th Army’s armor moves north along the West Dvina, while one goes to 0517. Finally, the 19th Army spreads out north and west, offering reserves to all of the north front.

This line is more than a match for the first turn German forces, who are too few in number to exploit a breakthrough even if they should make one. But what if the 16th and 19th Armies cannot move? A line is still possible, as shown in Figure 2. The 13th Army takes over the defense of Orsha, while the 20th commits units to Vitebsk. Even though the line is fairly weak along the West Dvina River, it is placed so as to pin the Germans for the next turn, as the break-throughs along the north, and you have one ace in the hole in the north: Yershakov’s Army.

YERSHAKOV’S ARMY:
The Northern Anchor

For the first two turns, the German threat is in the north. Containing a breakthrough at or north of the West Dvina river is vital at this time to insure that your line is unruffled when the German hordes come in on Turn 3. Yershakov’s Army is the key to holding the north.

Figures 3 and 4 show Yershakov’s advance from the north. He should come in as far west as possible. If he does, he can be set up in the forest area at 1204-blocking any end-around by the German forces entering at A on Turn 2. If the German first-turn forces have already swept west the north, Yershakov is there to pin them or cut their supply line. Later, if the Germans ignore Yershakov and embroil themselves in a battle around the West Dvina, Yershakov’s forces can pull back behind them, threatening to surround the German and perfectly able to do so if the Germans continue to ignore him.

THE SOUTH: Planning is a Must

The line south of Orsha is a tranquil place for the first two turns, as no Germans can attack it without wasting valuable time getting there. But do not let the peace lull you into a sense of security; on Turn 3 all hell will break loose with German panzers dog-piling onto your defensive line along the whole south front. You must begin preparing the south on the second turn before you realize it’s too late on Turn 3.

The south line requires at least ten units: two units each in 0430, 0428, 0426, 0424, and 0422. Never spread your troops out by putting one division in each hex; this just allows the Germans to attack one hex at a time without touching the rest of the line. If possible, several other divisions should be behind the line to block breakthroughs. The divisions needed for this must come from units which are either moved down from the north line or sent by rail. Usually this means sending the bulk of the 24th Army, as the 21st Army coming in on Turn 3 on Entrance Hex Z will not make it in time. Even if interdicted by German planes, two rifle divisions of the 24th Army can make it to 2319 on
Turn 1 (assuming the other six divisions moved by rail were units of the 16th Army.)

The German player then faces a decision. He can either continue to interdict them on the rail south of Smolensk, keeping the reinforcements from the south line but allowing the rest of the 24th army to race to any spot on the north line, letting north line units shift southward. Or he can ignore the units. The last option is obviously best for the German player; but with these two divisions, the division from Smolensk, and the seven already down on the south line from the 13th Army, the minimum requirement of 10 divisions is available.

If the 16th Army was unable to move on the first turn, the south front will need to be reinforced from the north if the German player is intent on keeping the 24th and 16th Armies from railing south on Turn 2. If the German player does interdict south of Smolensk, simply rail west to Orsha and the central road area, moving the divisions already at those places south. Whatever way it is done, the Russian must have the units able to pull into position in the south by Turn 3.

A GERMAN BREAKTHROUGH:
Do not Panic

No matter how well your defense is planned, some 0-0-6 infantry in the wrong place or a lucky die roll can open a hole in your line to allow some German units to pass through. Do not fret; one breakthrough does not mean Doomsday. Any competent German player will be able to get some type of breakthrough sooner or later; you must be able to react to it without going into a headlong retreat.

Most German breakthroughs happening on the first four or five turns will be one of two types. Either the German player will make a breakthrough and have a lot of mobile divisions to run through it (which means that he has few units elsewhere that are pinning your units down). Or he will make a breakthrough with just a few mobile divisions and have you pinned in most places.

Reaction to the first option should be very forceful. Send everyone that can to pin the breakthrough units; and if the German player has left any unit by itself, especially ones on the front pinning you, attack them if you can surround them. You must give the German player a motive for coming back to the front and saving his attacked units instead of driving around your interior.

Another possibility is to close the line back up after the German player’s divisions have moved through, cutting him out of supply and forcing him to reopen the hole somehow. Anytime you can knock German units out of supply during this time you should do it. Hang tenaciously to your line and if he finally totally breaches it, find a good defen-
sive hex and make him dig you out of it. Digging out a large defensive line even after it has been surrounded is time-consuming and cannot always be left to the infantry if the German supply roads are still in your hands.

Reaction to a small breakthrough should be more conservative. Somewhere behind your lines you should have kept several reserve units. Use these to plug the hole, but do not react by weakening your whole line to pin down a breakthrough; doing this just makes your line susceptible to another and usually bigger breakthrough. In fact, most of the deadly breakthroughs are the third or even the fourth after a Russian player has over-reacted to the first breakthrough.

**CONCLUSION: The Payoff**

The Quagmire Defense, or any defense in general for that matter, is difficult to master without practice and planning. Your plans and your line are like a chain; the strength of it is equal to your weakest link and in this case you can bet that a good German player will find any weak links you might have. Whatever line you try to hold, only practice will make it perfect, and few lines that are less than perfect will be able to stand up to the German's blitzkrieg. That is the challenge of it. If, at the end of a game of PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN, you still have a line of red between the German panzers and Smolensk, you will know that you have pulled off one of the toughest juggling acts in the wargame field.

Back in Vol. 21, No. 4, Henry Robinette ("Is Smolensk Burning") first looked at a number of Russian defense strategies for PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN. He traced the history and explored the strengths of such plays as The Orsha Landbridge, The Main Line of Resistance, and The Egg. His seminal work was obviously the goad for Mr. Murrell's "Quagmire".
Dear Sirs:

I just received my copy of THE GENERAL (Vol. 22, No. 2) featuring BANZAI as the main article. I read with great interest and concern the "Infrascope's Report" which listed the games that will be retained by Avalon Hill. It was rather surprising that STRUGGLE OF NATIONS is being slated for "reinforcement"! It is rated #17 on the BGG rating scale, so it seems a bit odd to be following this, since it was published in 1981. It has only been available for four years.

I would like to point out that this fine game be ratalized in your line. I would also like to see you keep your ASSAULT ON CRETE as well. I wish you had given us, the buying public, extra copies of these two games so that at least we will be able to play them for some time to come.

We were surprised to find that ALEXANDER THE GREAT and FRANCE 1940 were both given the same "face lift" as BILDZEIGER, LUFTWAFTE, WATERLOO and even PANZERBLITZ and its sister game PANZERBLITZ II! This was an experience which could not be a work, although I realize the appeal may be too limited to do this. Some games which probably need to be published and given a "face lift" would be BILDZEIGER, LUFTWAFTE, WATERLOO and even PANZERBLITZ and its sister game PANZERBLITZ II! As you can see, these endangered species will still flock be should be pulled and reprieved with new maps, counters, and rules—essence, a whole new game than the game that retained the "hypothetical" concept of the original. The other games also need work on the components to re-constitute their enjoyment.

Well, I've probably said enough for now. I realize that individually I may not have a great impact and I am aware of the setbacks and the insane decisions for the decisions that are made. I only hope that there are others that share my interest enough in keeping STRUGGLE OF NATIONS and perhaps upgrading some of your other games.

Reer M. Skar
Monro Valley, California

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**Flying Weapon Target (Cont’d)**

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Thank you for running my TOBRUK article in Vol. 22, No. 1. The article had been submitted several years ago, and had passed from my memory. It was a joy to see it published.

It comes as somewhat less of a joy to admit that this writer "gooded" on the handling of the "K" results for TOBRUK at one arm. In all cases I can say that I was younger and more reckless when the article was put together. So to the TOBRUK players, I propose the following chart for the maximum "K" range against side armor when Oblique shots are taken:

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Obviously, if you have any advantage by a certain factor, merely subtract that factor from the number of points. For example: if a particular example gives above, your opponent's chances of winning are 56.28%. The remaining 10.29% of the numbers gives

Jim Burnett
Clinton, Tennessee

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My UP FRONT article that was previously published in these pages (Vol. 21, No. 1) and later included in the BANZAI rulebook, I discussed the different types of armor. One major table was omitted, namely one giving the odds on winning a Close Combat or other situation where the players were drawing in a "high card" resolution. The following table is now presented, giving the chances of winning a draw or other situation based on the number of cards for that suit. For example, if you have a CCV of 9 to your 8, you need to win by two; therefore the percentage chance is 43.43%.

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<td>5.35%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Obviously, if you have any advantage by a certain factor, merely subtract that factor from the number of points. For example: if a particular example gives above, your opponent's chances of winning are 56.28%. The remaining 10.29% of the numbers gives

Jim Burnett
Clinton, Tennessee

---

My UP FRONT article that was previously published in these pages (Vol. 21, No. 1) and later included in the BANZAI rulebook, I discussed the different types of armor. One major table was omitted, namely one giving the odds on winning a Close Combat or other situation where the players were drawing in a "high card" resolution. The following table is now presented, giving the chances of winning a draw or other situation based on the number of cards for that suit. For example, if you have a CCV of 9 to your 8, you need to win by two; therefore the percentage chance is 43.43%.
**Rule 5.12** Enemy units crossing supply sources. This is incorrect. Adverse combat results have no effect on attacking air units whatsoever as stated in Rule 9.3.

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**Rule 4.0** Weather is checked at the beginning of the first turn of each scenario. Where friendly forces have appeared from, are supply sources, and any units using railroad movement may not conduct Exploitation attack. This rule states that ground units may not attack one hex in addition to normal

**Rule 6.3** A unit sitting on a railroad hex in any enemy ZOC may not use railroad movement. Units using railroad movement may not move adjacent to an enemy unit, regardless of whether the enemy unit has a ZOC or not. Units using railroad movement may not conduct Exploitation movement.

**Rule 6.3** Railroad hexes that were not friendly at the beginning of the first turn of each scenario, are supply sources, and any units using railroad movement may not conduct Exploitation attack. This rule states that ground units may not attack one hex in addition to normal movement.

**Rule 9.3** Air units which move to a hex but don’t attack in anticipation or participating in an attack during the Exploitation Phase must make a separate attack by themselves during the Exploitation Segment, or return to their bases unused if the attack does not take place.

**Rule 9.32** Air units attacking alone do not have to attack all defending units in a hex. They may choose to attack one, some or all defending units in a hex, ignoring the others. Terrain benefits apply for the unit(s) attacked.

**Rule 9.42** For Air Supply purposes KGs, BGs, Anti-Tank units and Artillery units each equal one ship. However, for the other commands, the value is one ship.

**Rule 10.1** The hexes occupied only by these type of units are doubled (or tripled) in towns.

**Rule 10.11** An Air Base containing Air units may be used to stack in a hex.

**Rule 11.0** This rule states that ground units may not enter enemy occupied hexes, but Rules 17.1 and 17.2 permit this against enemy anti-tank and artillery units.

**Rule 17.1** and 17.2 should be noted as exceptions to the enemy unit has a ZOC or not. Units using railroad movement may not conduct Exploitation movement. Units using railroad movement may not move adjacent to an enemy unit, regardless of whether the enemy unit has a ZOC or not. Units using railroad movement may not conduct Exploitation movement.

**Rule 19.0** ZOCs do not extend across Lake hex sides.

**Rule 21.0** This rule states that ground units may not enter enemy occupied hexes, but Rules 17.1 and 17.2 permit this against enemy anti-tank and artillery units.

**Rule 24.1** These rules apply for the unit(s) attacked.

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Infiltrator’s Report

On the insert of this issue, the readership will find the nomination form for this year’s H.G. Wells and Charles Roberts Awards, to be presented at ORIGINS ’86 in Los Angeles by “The Academy of Adventure Gaming Arts and Design.” While I do not belong to the Academy (indeed, none of the staff of The Avalon Hill Game Company does), I’d like to encourage the readers to complete and dispatch the nomination ballot.

It costs nothing more than a stamp. Yet from those ballots received will come the five products formally nominated in each category (quite simply, the five mentioned the most—perhaps your only chance to have a say in the process. And from these five, the membership of the Academy will then vote one as the award winner. So if you’ve a few moments to spare between now and May 3rd, take up a pen and play your part in recognizing the best of the hobby’s new offerings.

I would stress that the products nominated must be from among those released in the calendar year 1985. The Avalon Hill Game Company has won more “Charlie’s” than any other in the gaming industry (the award is, after all, new, not our founder). Among our broad line, the following wargames were released in 1985: FIREFRONT, STELLAR CONQUEST, RUSSIAN FRONT, DEVIL’S DEN and, of course, ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER and BEYOND VALOR.

The MicroComputer Games division of The Avalon Hill Game Company is looking for playtesters who have experience with two of our more popular games. Computer versions of PANZERGRUPPE GUIDERIAN (for the Commodore 64, 130ST/BX/OOLX, and Apple II) and WOODEN SHIPS & IRON MEN (for the Commodore 64) will be finished in the near future. Playtesters are needed to help “de-bug” the programs and ensure that the games adhere faithfully to their boardgame versions. The playtest list will be limited to about 20 people per version. Applicants must own the boardgame version. This type of playtesting is not meant to be fun so, please, only those willing to put in the work should apply. If interested, send a letter describing your gaming background and what computer you own to Avalon Hill addressed to the attention of Bill Peschel.

Of the two hundred or so entries to Contest #126, twenty-four proved to be single-minded enough to concentrate on the CV Saratoga. Despite some discrepancies in the math involved, all brought the Japanese player a six-to-ten-point lead by throwing both air formations at the carrier. Note that the winners all made the assumption that their planes were loaded with suitable bomb loads (torpedoes for the Kates and AP for theVals) and that there were no planes on the beleaguered carrier (knowledge which, as we here play, the Japanese player would be aware of but not everyone). Both of these assumptions can be derived from the fact that the contest specified the best possible attack to guarantee the lead. From the twenty-four correct entries, the following ten were selected at random and will be awarded merchandise credits: Ronald Barnett, New Hyde Park, NY; David Cottenden, Herbro, PA; Paul Fretheim, Northport, MI; John Snider, Whitehorse, Yukon; Scott Sparr, Laramie, WY; Stephen Scibba, Carlisle, PA; David Sweezea, Flint, MI; David Thalheimer, Henscom AFB, MA; David Theil, Livingston, MT; and Scott Tomasic, Hobart, IN.

Contest #127 posed the age-old question for the die-hard wargamer—is there a chance of winning or shall I concede? Allied troops, having lost eight units in the process, had finally reached Nece, in a close-fought battle of Situation #6 in PANZER LEADER. The Germans have two possible methods of denying the Allies victory—recapture a hex of Nece, or eliminate three more Allied units. Let’s look at the first option.

Given the position in Nece, the only possible weak-points are hexes T3 and S3. The German infantry in V3 cannot take out either, nor can the halftracks (even in conjunction with fire from the 75mm howitzer). No other German unit can even reach these hexes. So this method of snatching victory from the jaws of defeat is obviously a “pipe-dream.”

Turning now to the possibility of eliminating three Allied units and so making it a pyrrhic victory, only two Allied stacks seem vulnerable—those engineers at R5 and the spotted position at N8. Either can be pounded by the howitzer (the engineers subsequently being run down by the halftracks), but not both. Banzai infantry is, unfortunately, out of range to affect either; nor can infantry fire disarm those Allied units in the town. So, while two units could be eliminated; the third necessary to seize victory cannot.

With both options discarded, it appears that the German player cannot win—even with the best die rolls possible. So, he might as well concede and get on to the next game.
OPPONENTS WANTED

For Sale: A choice of All opponents. Mail Only for complete details. Access by the following ad in the local newspaper.

Collectors Corner

For Sale: A choice of All opponents. Mail Only for complete details. Access by the following ad in the local newspaper.

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Only the following General Back issues are still available. Price is $5.00 or issue plus 10% postage and handling charges (20% to Canada, 30% overseas). Maryland residents please add 5% sales tax.

- 14th
- 16th
- 17th
- 18th
- 19th
- 20th
- 21st
- 22nd
- 23rd
- 24th
- 25th
- 26th
- 27th
- 28th
- 29th
- 30th

The "Opponents Wanted" advertise-ments on this page are included as a service to the readership of the periodical. This service will continue so long as certain editorial policies are adhered to strictly. The editors of The GENERAL reserve the right to accept or reject any portion of or on an advertisement should these not be followed. Wannads will be accepted only if printed on the appropriate form or in a reasonable font. Such mail must be accompanied by the appropriate fee. This may take the form of a self-addressed, stamp-enclosed envelope, note that foreign postage is not acceptable. No refunds of the fee will be made, even should the ad not be printed due to failure to conform to our policies.

Please print or type the ad copy. If the ad is illegible, it cannot be printed. Too, no ad dealing with products or a product manufacturer will be printed and any mention of such an ad will not be accepted for a single printing only. Should the reader desire that a specific ad enjoy a multiple printing, a separate number of copies equal to the number of times the ad is to be run must be submitted—although only one total payment must be included to cover all printing costs.

In The GENERAL is protected by copyright and reproduction is hereby forbidden to sell or resell for private or business purposes. You may sell reprints of any portion of articles from this periodical only if in stock for a listing of those issues available, you may order reprints of any portion of articles from the back issue section at the bottom of this page. You may charge no more for this service than the amount of the foreign postage or any mention of such an ad will not be accepted for a single printing only. Should the reader desire that a specific ad enjoy a multiple printing, a separate number of copies equal to the number of times the ad is to be run must be submitted—although only one total payment must be included to cover all printing costs.

Finally, due to the pressure of time, the ad cannot be printed. After the above deadline, often advertisements are lost before an issue appears will not be printed in that issue. Please be patient—such a situation will be handled in an automatic fashion by the next weekly issue. Please do not specify a particular number or an ad to be reprinted or to appear—the reader cannot be honored.
The Origins Awards, presented at Origins each year, are an international series of awards aimed at recognizing outstanding achievements in Adventure Gaming. They are comprised of the Charles Roberts Awards for boardgaming, and the H.G. Wells Awards for miniatures and Role-Playing games. An Awards Committee of hobbyists (some professionals, but primarily independently direct and administrate the awards system. The publication of the nomination ballot is open to all interested. YOUR VOTE can make a difference! A final ballot is prepared by the committee and voted on by the members of the Academy of Adventure Gaming Arts & Design. Academy membership, $3 per year, is open to active, accomplished hobbyists, both pro and amateur. Membership guidelines are available for a SASE from the addresses given below. Correspondence should be sent to the US address.

DEADLINE: MAY 3, 1986

THE H.G. WELLS AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN MINIATURES AND ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<td>2. Best Fantasy/SF Figure Series, 1986:</td>
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<td>3. Best Vehicular/Accessory Series, 1986:</td>
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<td>4. Best Miniature Rules, 1985:</td>
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<td>5. Best Role-Playing Rules, 1985:</td>
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<td>6. Best Role-Playing Adventure, 1985:</td>
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<td>7. Best Role-Playing Supplement, 1985:</td>
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<td>8. Best Professional Role-Playing Magazine, 1985:</td>
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<td>9. Best Professional Miniatures Magazine, 1985:</td>
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<td>10. Best Play-By-Mail Game, 1985:</td>
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Name: ___________________________ Signature: ___________________________

Address: ___________________________

City/State or Province/Zip or Postal Code: ___________________________

Send in your ballot by May 3, 1986 to only one of the following addresses:

North America: Awards, Howard Barash 3304 crater Lane Plano, Texas 75023

UK & Europe: Awards, Ian Livingstone 27-29 Sunbeam Rd London NW10 United Kingdom

Australia & NZ: Awards, Adrian Pett Breakout Magazine PO Box 162 Mooroolbark, Vic 3138 Australia

Variant Counters for RUSSIAN FRONT

(see Page 12)
The GENERAL

A Lifetime of Gaming Pleasure from The

For over twenty years, the AH GENERAL has set the standard for magazines devoted to the challenging hobby of wargaming. And the oldest professional wargaming magazine is still the best value for the wargamer's dollar with the least expensive subscription rate to be found in the hobby. Every bi-monthly issue is packed with articles on the strategy, tactics and variations of AH games. Written by the AH staff and by fellow hobbyists who are enthusiastic experts on the games, the articles are usually thought-provoking, occasionally controversial, and always enjoyable. Graced with the best of graphics, each 48-page issue is full-color and blessed with numerous maps and charts to highlight the information the authors present.

Judging by responses to regular surveys of the readership—conducted in a continuous effort to bring them what they want—the many “extras” found within the pages of The GENERAL are as important as the articles. For the past year, The Victory Insider has brought our readers similar high-quality and informative articles on the products of Victory Games as a bonus insert. Many issues have Series Replays, move-by-move recreations of one of AH’s games by expert players with neutral commentary on their efforts by the designer or developer. New product announcements, game strategy contests, historical background pieces, discount coupons, information on conventions and other doings within the wargaming hobby world—all are found in these pages; and all have but one intention: to increase the pleasure for those who play AH’s fine line of games.

So, if you know of someone who hopes to make wargaming a hobby that they will enjoy for the rest of their life—all the challenge and color of the fascinating hobby of wargaming—you can’t go wrong by giving them a subscription of The GENERAL. Even if that person happens to be yourself! And you can’t beat the price: a two-year subscription represents a 50% saving over the newstand cover price. (Ah . . . but if you are not quite convinced that this is for you, try ordering a sample issue—only $3.00. We’re sure that one look is all you’ll need to understand the pride we take in The GENERAL. Individual copies may be ordered direct from The Avalon Hill Game Company at the address below.)

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- **Counters**
- **Player’s Aids**
- **Complexity**
- **Completeness of Rules**
- **Playability**
- **Excitement Level**
- **Play Balance**
- **Authenticity**
- **Game Length**
- **Basic/Shortest**
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**Good For Pedagogical/Change Only on Complete Game Purchases**

**WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN PLAYING?**

Top ten lists are seemingly always in vogue these days. Whether the subject is books on the Best Seller List, television’s Nielsen ratings, or even games, the public never seems to tire of seeing how their individual favorites stack up numerically against the competition. Our preoccupation with this national pastime is almost akin to rooting the home team on to victory every Sunday. So to further cater to your whims (and to satisfy our own curiosity) we unveil The GENERAL’S version of the gamer’s TOP TEN.

We won’t ask you to objectively rate any game. That sort of thing is already done in these pages and elsewhere. Instead, we ask that you merely list the three (or less) games which you’ve spent the most time with since you received your last issue of The GENERAL. With this we can generate a consensus list of what’s being bought. The degree of correlation between the Best Selling Lists and the Most Played List should prove interesting.

Feel free to list any game regardless of manufacturer. There will be a built-in bias to the survey because you all play our games to some extent but it should be no more prevalent than similar projects undertaken by other magazines with a special interest-based circulation. The amount to which this bias affects the final outcome will be left to the individual’s discretion.

The games I’ve spent the most time playing during the past two months are:

1. 
2. 
3. 

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50c

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3. Insert copy on lines provided (25 words maximum) and print name, address, and phone number on the appropriate lines.

4. Please PRINT. If your ad is illegible, it will not be printed.

5. So that as many ads as possible can be printed within our limited space, we request that you use official state and game abbreviations. Don’t list your entire collection, list only those you are most interested in locating opponents for.


NAME  PHONE  ADDRESS  CITY  STATE  ZIP

**CONTEST #128**

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Score a whole... (Rate from 1 to 10, with 1 equating excellent, 10 equating terrible)
Best 3 Attacks:
1. 
2. 
3. 

NAME  PHONE  ADDRESS  CITY  STATE  ZIP
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