Summer comes, and we here at Avalon Hill once again welcome a season full of conventions—our chance to get out and meet you. Of course, premiere among the events of the summer is the convocation of ORIGINS '86 at the Los Angeles Airport Hilton on the Fourth of July weekend (3-6 July) this year. Without exception, every major wargame publisher will be well represented by their latest releases. Dozens of boardgaming tournaments and seminars will lure the novice and the master gamers. Demonstrations by staff personnel will introduce the latest titles being pushed. (For further information, contact DTI, Dept. LA O'86, Long Beach, CA 90808).

Two members of the design staff of The Avalon Hill Game Company will be carrying our flag this year—Don Greenwood and Craig Taylor. Both plan to be very busy, so you might have to look hard to pin them down to answer your latest questions on FIREPOWER or ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER.

Craig Taylor will be showcasing his newest project: development of Capt. Morgan's superbly playable game of modern jet combat, FLIGHT LEADER. A tactical simulation of air combat from the first clashes in the skies over Korea to the latest

Continued on Page 44, Column 2
On May 24, 1830 the first regularly scheduled railroad service in America was inaugurated by the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. Although those first trains traveling out to Ellicot Mills and back were pulled by horses, this was the dawning of North America’s railway era. Within a few years the horses were replaced by small steam locomotives and every town in the land was building or planning its own railroad. By 1930 the continent was crisscrossed by many thousands of miles of track, and the railroads and railroad men had secured their place in our cultural history.

The early railroads were the first great industrial corporations, and the profits, power, romance and glory of running them attracted the best and worst of the era’s bright businessmen. There was the rough hewn but shrewd Commodore Vanderbilt and his son of the New York Central, the devious and greedy partners Jay Gould and Jim Fisk of the Erie, the brilliant builder of the mighty Pennsylvania J. Edgar Thompson, and J. P. Morgan, the tough financial wizard and ruthless manipulator of men, money and the New Haven Railroad. These men and others like them presided over the wild railroad era, with its continental construction projects, financial panics and stock market swindles.

1830 is The Avalon Hill Game Company's new multiplayer railroad game that captures the drama and excitement of this period. Set in the northeast U.S. and Canada, 1830 recreates the development of the railroad system from its horse drawn beginnings to the ascendency of diesel locomotives. The object of the game is to be the wealthiest player at the finish. To this end you invest in railroad stock and operate the companies you can control. You can be an empire builder carefully managing your companies for the long term, or you can loot companies for maximum quick profits and hope to leave someone else with the wreckage.

The play of 1830 is divided into two separate segments: Stock Buying Rounds when stock is bought and sold, and Railroad Operating Rounds when each railroad in play is operated by its president. The majority stockholder of a railroad is usually its president. Operating railroads play track tiles on the mapboard, build bridges and tunnels, buy and sell trains, and decide whether to pay the revenue earned each round as dividends to stockholders or to keep it in the treasury for future needs. A railroad's stock value rises or falls depending on the payment of dividends, as well as the buying and selling of the shares. Once the starting positions are determined, there are no more random events or elements of luck in the game. Each player's success is dependent on his or her own skill and decisions.

1830 is now available for $25.00 from The Avalon Hill Game Company, 4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, Maryland 21214. Please add 10% for shipping and handling to payment (20% for Canadian orders and 30% for overseas orders). Maryland residents please add 5% state sales tax.
STREETS OF FIRE is the first boxed module of DELUXE ASL; an enlarged 2.2" hex scale for playing ASL. The greatest thing about Deluxe ASL may be that once you know how to play ASL, you also know how to play Deluxe ASL. The rules, for all practical purposes, are identical; the only changes deal with the physical stacking or positioning of counters within the enlarged hexes. In short, Deluxe ASL is no more difficult than ASL; in fact, it is much more playable, due to the many conveniences proffered by the enlarged hex size. In essence, Deluxe ASL is simply ASL without stacking. There is sufficient room in each hex to allow over a dozen counters to be placed in each hex without placing one atop another. This makes the game play much faster, because pieces don't have to be constantly shuffled to count FP factors, or moved out of the way to check LOS or the height of buildings. Even systems counters can often be laid aside units, rather than stacked atop them, obscuring their identity. Other informational counters, such as CA markers, are not even needed, because CA is readily determined by placement within the hex. Deluxe ASL is so much easier to play that we even recommend the use of 1/285th scale miniatures for those interested in the ultimate panoramic splendor in their gaming. In short, if you enjoy ASL or SQUAD LEADER, we can't recommend this scale highly enough. It magnifies the playability and enjoyment of the game even more than it increases the size of the hexes themselves.

In STREETS OF FIRE you'll receive four full-color, geomorphic, mounted 11" x 25" mapboards depicting typical urban terrain, and ten specially-designed scenarios for use on those boards depicting the bitter street fighting of the Eastern Front. No special counters or rules are provided; these being contained in the ASL rulebook and BEYOND VALOR module. Those wishing to use basic SQUAD LEADER rules may also use these mapboards; possession of ASL is not necessary, but is recommended for play of the specific scenarios enclosed herein.

STREETS OF FIRE contains no rules or counters; ownership of SQUAD LEADER or ASL is required.

STREETS OF FIRE is available for $28.00 from The Avalon Hill Game Company (4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, MD 21214). Please add 10% to cover shipping and handling (20% for Canadian orders; 30% overseas). Maryland residents please add 5% state sales tax.
FIRST IMPRESSIONS
ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER: Infantry Training
An Introduction to SQUAD LEADER Plus Four
By Robert Medrow

The first part of the catchy (?) title of this article is supposed to inform you that this article is yet another part of The GENERAL’s traditional coverage of the SL game and gamettes series. However, this portion of the title has been crossed out. Why? Because this article, like ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER (ASL) itself, is, in many ways, a new beginning. True the gamettes which followed SL always seemed to back up a little (or a lot) and change some of the old, as well as introducing something new. With ASL, while the evidence of its SL heritage is obviously there, we have something significantly different—and just so you’ll know where I stand, something significantly better.

WHERE WE’VE BEEN
Each of the previous “First Impressions” articles, like the ones which are to follow, had as its goal to increase the pleasure which you, the player, can derive from the premiere tactical game of our hobby. Before we get to the meat of the article, there is some groundwork that needs to be laid.

Games can be complex in either or both of two ways. If the rules are elaborate, then merely determining the scope of what is possible in the game can be a major task. But, even if the rules are simple, play need not be; chess, with rules that fit on a single sheet of paper, is perhaps the classic example. If you know anything at all about ASL, you know that it is complex in both of these ways. As one of the primary SL playtesters, the reality of the complexity of play was clear in connection with Scenario 1, which needs but six pages of rules to play.

Consider the question of what to do at the very beginning of that scenario with those dozen 6-2-8s and their superlative 10-2 leader. One of the earliest pieces of tactical wisdom a person learns (usually long before he or she discovers wargames) is that it’s generally best to really bash something, rather than to merely poke it. Unfortunately, for those who like things simple, in ASL as in SL, that piece of combat lore is hampered by—if nothing else—the movement restrictions placed upon units which fire in their owner’s portion of the game turn. Like it or not, we are confronted with the idea of what military theorists call “Economy of Force”. While it is often profitable to hit the other party with everything you have, if doing so utilizes resources to little probable gain, which could have been used elsewhere with greater probability of success, you are playing against the odds. Being militarily efficient certainly sounds like a good idea, and it is. The problem is to determine what one has to do in order to get there.

In this example, the problem has two aspects. The Russian assets in this locality consist of those squads and the leader. Of those units, how many, given a particular German setup, should fire and how many should move? With regard to firing, if the leader does the leader justify whatever risk there is in losing him in light of the common Russian leader shortage, does the second attack wouldn’t be necessary, thereby freeing the second stack for either an alternative attack or movement. And, while we’re at it, what does the leader do? That –2 modifier looks awfully good in an attack against a stone building, but he can only help a stack, not a fire group. Of course, used that way means that he’s not available to aid movement. Come to think of it, if he’s where he has an LOS to an enemy (since these things work both ways), a bad roll just might result in some nasty return fire. Then, while leaders like that are a real help to a squad trying to pass a Morale Check, there is the problem that the leader, going first, might break, leaving everyone in that hex with an additional Morale Check. On a less immediate level, in light of the common Russian leader shortage, does the fire/movement advantage offered by such a leader justify whatever risk there is in losing him because of that activity?

This brief discussion serves to demonstrate the sort of thing involved when one seeks to use the available forces efficiently. Something similar arises whenever we have to consider exposing our forces to danger. A reading of the rules lets us know that moving a tank down a village street past a building in which an enemy squad lurks can only be done at some risk. How much risk depends upon how well that squad is supplied with such things as leaders, demolition charges, flamethrowers, etc. The operative question for the player is the extent of that risk in comparison to the benefit to be derived from the movement.

If you want to become a better player than you now are, you will have to improve upon your ability to make reasonably good decisions in connection
with just these types of questions. Make no mistake about it; scenario designers are not interested in giving you situations in which you can expect to win without making intelligent choices and taking calculated risks.

That last statement is hardly a profound one, since such an objective is dear to the hearts of all good game designers. In general, the serious player copes with this challenge with some combination of study and play experience. Unfortunately for the

**ASL** system player, obtaining a high level of skill largely from experience is extremely hard to do. The weapons systems used, the time at which the scenario takes place, the characters of the opponents, the nature of the terrain and the weather are all variables, and are likely to change significantly from scenario to scenario. After all, it is this very variety which is central to much of the appeal the game has for many of us. In addition, the ranges of possible outcomes are sometimes quite large. What that means is that a particular situation might arise a dozen times with outcomes, by chance, confined to only a portion of that which is possible.

Even in the—comparatively—simple **SL** days, all this became painfully clear to me. To the best of my ability, I have dealt with these kinds of things with a two-part process. The first consisted of exploring the mathematical probabilities associated with the different types of die- and dice-rolling routines to be found throughout the system, modifying the calculations as the evolving system changed things. This consisted of using the information to establish doctrines. These embody a collection of rules-of-thumb covering use of the forces and weapons systems represented.

In the world of real soldiers and real weapons, this is what an army attempts to do in preparing soldiers to command companies and battalions during times of peace. A recent book, *First Clash: Combat Close-Up in World War Three* by Kenneth Macksey, is a fictitious account of the first few hours in action of a Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group. Written, originally, as an official manual intended to provide a feel for how things might go in actual combat, it provides a number of examples drawn from both sides of the front of the application of these doctrines. True, the weapons systems are more modern than those found among our pieces of cardboard; but the precept of use of what is available, based upon both what it can be expected to do and how vulnerable it is in the terrain at hand, comes through merely another particularity for one Russian commander whose superior placed upon him demands of the same sort which I’ve often felt scenario designers had placed upon me.

My first article, way back in Vol. 14, No. 5 of the *General*, explored the mechanics of the **SL** “Infantry Fire Table” (IFT) and sought to apply some of this information to the play of the first few scenarios. As the gamettes appeared, so too did the articles: **COI** in Vol. 15, No. 6; **COD** in Vol. 17, No. 2; and **GI** in Vol. 20, No. 1. Each article attempted to give more insight into how the system, at whatever level it was tested, worked. In order to help those who, like myself, had already gained some familiarity with what had gone before, the later articles also offered comparisons between how things used to work and how they then worked.

Apparently, a lot of you readers found these articles of value, and that response is one of the reasons why you’re reading this one.

**WHERE WE’RE GOING**

This article, like the ones to follow in the “Training” series, is directed toward an audience ranging from (I hope) those who just think that they might be interested in a tactical game set in **WWII** to the hardcore **G.I.: Anvil of Victory** vets. How the basic systems really work will be the major component of these articles. As appropriate, the old (SL) and the not-so-old (GI) versions of things will be compared with what **ASL** has to offer.

Why is all this stuff going to appear? To be honest, ego plays a part. A number of kind folks—in letters, at conventions and in phone calls—have said nice things to me. That’s certainly a source of motivation. However, doing this is hard work, seeing my name in print is not a novel thing, and many other activities pull at me just as they do at you.

The ultimate reason has to do with **ASL** itself. The **ASL** system is one which I expect to play for the rest of my life. It is a dynamic thing of enormous scope and vitality. As I’m finishing this article, *Streets of Fire* has just been published and the playtest of *Paratrooper* is concluding. By the time you read this, *Paratrooper* should be out and I expect to be well into the work on Chapter E for **ASL**. In part then, I’m doing this for myself. But it’s also done in the hopes that you, the reader, will be encouraged to work toward mastery of this fascinating and unique gaming situation. Few games would justify this level of effort; **ASL**, by virtue of what it is, does. Finally, I hope that some of this information will prove useful to scenario designers. The more they know about how the system really works, the better off we all be.

This first installment will cover some of the basic probability itself as it relates to the sorts of things to be found in **ASL**. Subsequent pieces will take a look at, among other things, how the armor system works, the intriguing topic of combat interaction between armor and infantry, and the mechanics and usefulness of off-board artillery. Stripped of the material-making comparisons with older versions and, quite possibly modified, the things you will see here will ultimately become the “Analysis Chapter” in the rulebook. In being given the opportunity to go back over some things, I’ll have the chance to insert results of my own expanded experience with the system into these articles. In addition to what I’ve already gained from some of you out there, I expect to have help from many more of you who share, or will share, my enthusiasm. As you read these articles, if you have ideas for extensions, additions, corrections, or anything else relevant to this sort of approach, please let me know.

[Mr. Medrow’s address is 1322 Highland Drive, Rolla, MO 65401—and he expects to hear from you.]

As a result of both my trade as an engineer and my many years in the wargaming hobby, numbers of all sorts, including those associated with probabilities, have been a large part of my life. If you wish to do any good at playing **ASL**, you’re going to have to be comfortable with certain facts concerning probability. Fortunately, since **ASL** gives us enough to do without any added headaches, the amount of material required is manageable. If you look ahead at the following pages, you’ll note a lot of tables with hordes of numbers in them. What makes the material manageable is that, much of the time, only a few of these values are needed. Why then include all the others? It’s not just to fill up the space. This way, in hopes that you, the reader, can explore further on your own—which is certainly one good reason. However, the best one is that it will help readers understand from where came these observations about **ASL** and the suggestions for what I think of as good play. Certain less general uses of the material will be mentioned as is appropriate.

**PROBABILITY**

Most of the rolls made in the **ASL** system are made with two dice. Because the numbers used in the system are the sums of the spots showing, the probabilities of the various outcomes are sometimes hard to recognize. Figure 1 shows the 36 possible results associated with the roll of two dice. The numbers in the boxes represent the total number of spots showing. For example, if the white die ends up with three spots showing, the colored die can show any value from one to six. Thus, reading across the values in the row after the “3"", we see possible totals of “4" through “9". Those boxes for which the value on the colored die is less than that on the white one have been shaded. This has been done because there are some very important cases in which what, if anything, happens depends upon not just the total number of spots showing, but also upon the colored die value in relationship to that of the white one.

Since there are six possible outcomes for each die, there are 6 times 6 (or 36) possible outcomes when two dice are rolled. If, for the moment, we only worry about the total showing by both dice, the entries in Figure 1 show that only eleven different, of distinct, outcomes are possible; the totals can only vary from “2” through “12”. In addition, we see that some totals appear more often than do others. While “2" is to be found only once, “6" appears five times. Thus, the chances of rolling a “2” is

<table>
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<th>Sum of spots</th>
<th>Ways to get this sum</th>
<th>Probability of each sum</th>
<th>Total of ways</th>
<th>Cumulative probability</th>
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<td>2.8</td>
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<td>227.5</td>
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Table 1—Tabulated two-dice results
In 36 attempts, while that of rolling a "6" is five in 36. Before going on, let me stress one important fact: the probability that a pair of honest dice will yield "2" just once and "6" just five times in 36 casts. The dice do not remember. If you've just rolled three straight "2"'s, you can still have one chance in 36 of doing it again the next time you throw the dice.

The probability of any particular total being obtained is equal to the ratio of the number of ways this particular total can be obtained. Values in this second column are equal to the number of times each of the totals appears in the boxes in Figure 1. Found by the type of calculation just done, the third column gives the percentage probabilities of each spot total.

In many cases, we'll be interested in the probability of rolling at or below a particular value. Probably the most common case is where you must roll a “Morale Check” (MC). Rolling at or below a particular value is then required in order that the unit remain fully functional. If, for example, the value is "6", we are concerned with the probability of rolling any total from "2" through "6", inclusive. From the information in the first two columns of Table 1, 15 of the 36 possible rolls will yield a total of "6" or less. These cumulative totals are shown in the fourth column; their associated probabilities appear in the fifth column. Since, to illustrate, a value of "6" or less can be obtained 15 different ways, the probability of such a roll is (15/36)x100% or 41.7%.

The remaining three columns provide information needed whenever the value of the colored die versus that of the white one is important. One common example of such a case is in connection with the determination of hit location on an AFV. If the dice total is six or less, a hit occurs; if a higher total has been obtained, the shell lands on the turret or upper body of the vehicle if the colored die roll is lower than that of the white one. Since the armor values of the upper body may well be considerably different from those of the lower body, which die roll is higher is now a matter of great importance. After all, model tanks just look nearer to many people than little model soldiers. For those who like to think that things move in cycles, it is to be noted that GHQ is now marketing collections of minatures for use with the large-hex module of ASL—STREETS OF FIRE! In playing these games, there is a new model to consider: the infantry. The infantry aspects of the game played before and how they now play shows a number of changes—some of great significance in connection with how the game plays.

The Cast of Characters

In the beginning we had but three types of infantry: ASL continues in the SL tradition in this respect, but a study of how the infantry aspects of the game played before and how they now play shows a number of changes—some of great significance in connection with how the game plays.

The Cast of Characters

In the beginning we had but three types of infantry: the Commissar, the SMC, and the squad. Representing just a single individual, the leader was, in SL, the sole example of what we now call SMCs, the single man counters. Each of the ganettes added one to this category of unit. Snipers made their appearance in COH, while Scouts showed up in COD; heroes made it to the scene in GI. The latest, in ASL, fall back to the old tradition of making it a new one. Scouts were disposed of for the very good reason that they were misused in play, and the volume of rules required in order to keep them in line far exceeded their contribution to the game. Then too, most of their useful functions could be assumed by half-squads without any great burden of rules.

Snipers are still around, but they function more now as random events, as opposed to being units under the control of a player. Currently, during certain phases of the game, whenever one player rolls the pair of a Sniper Active (SAN), there is a one-in-four chance that the Sniper counter will be discarded and moved randomly across the board and inflict some type of damage upon one or more enemy units. If the outcome of this roll delivers a fatal wound to your own 9-2 leader, he is a new one. John Hill, SL's designer, propose a Commissar rule which would have a squad eliminated if it failed to rally. This one's for you, John. Turning now to the multi-counter, the MMCs, nothing has changed, except that crews now come in two flavors thereby making a distinction between weapon crews and vehicular crews. Squads can still, in some cases, voluntarily break down into a pair of half-squads, an idea first introduced in COD where they could break down into crews. Squads now come in considerably more than the original pair of types seen in SL; therefore, they are of the major changes in SL, and will be considered in detail later.

The Infantry Fire Table

Figure 2 shows both the GI/IFT and the ASL IFT. Players who haven't gone beyond SL will see that very little has changed in this area until ASL appeared. What happened then is that warfare got less decisive in the short term. Since the net result of the changes in the IFT and what happens as a result of certain other changes forms the core of a considerably-revised infantry system, we need to look carefully at a number of points.

Where before we had only the simple KIA (a rule which had never been changed); now we have the #KIA. The number eliminated is equal to the "#"; anything left over is broken. The #/K rule is a new thing, replacing what was used to be the highest die roll KIA. When this one turns up, one unit in the hex undergoes "Casualty Reduction." If it's a squad, it becomes a half-squad; if a half-squad, it is eliminated; and a SMC is reduced to a point. Everyone left then takes a MC of the severity indicated by "#". MCMs remain as they have gradually become. The Gounding and Pinning rules introduced in COD have been combined into a single rule, such that a unit passing a MC with the pinning rule will have a half-squad (which it was impossible to roll before) move away and prevents any additional movement during that Player Turn; any fire attacks made during the rest of that Player Turn by such a unit are halved, as is its strength in Close-
Figure 2 – The old and the new Infantry Fire Tables

### INFANTRY FIRE TABLE 10.3

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### FIREPOWER FACTOR MODIFIERS:
- POINT BLANK FIRE: into adjacent hex unless 2 levels higher.
- LONG RANGE FIRE: up to double normal range.
- MOVING FIRE: moved & fired in same player turn.
- DR MODIFIERS: (a) The GI ANVIL OF VICTORY

### BACKBLAST

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</table>

### A-T Mine

- Original DC/AT Mine: Removes A-P/A-T minefield (B28.62) and/or Wire (B26.52).
- Original Concentrated HE FFE/Aerial Bomb Effects DR reduces minefield strength (B28.62) by one column (A-P) or one factor (A-T).
- Original Concentrated HE FFE/Aerial Bomb Effects DR creates shellhole in OG, orchard, brush, grain (B21.2).
The probabilities of these four different types of results are tabulated in Table 2 as a function of firepower, the net DRM. For each combination of attack strength and DRM the four values are, respectively: the #Kt#, the #K#, the #MC, and the PTC probabilities. Thus, for a 16 FP attack with a DRM of -1, there is a 17% probability of some sort of #Kt#, an 11% chance of a #K# result, a 69% probability of some sort of MC result and a 3% probability of a PTC result.

As soon as the type of result to be inflicted is not the same for all units in the hex, it becomes necessary to determine which unit or units will be affected with the more severe damage. Both the #Kt# and the #K# results produce such situations whenever the target stack contains more than one unit. A specific Random Selection procedure is used for such cases. Suppose that the result is a #K#/2# and that there are three units in the hex. A single die is rolled for each unit (best accomplished by rolling, at the same time, three dice of different colors, where the colors have some predetermined connection to position in the stack). High roll gets the "K". Of course, the dice could come up "4", "4" and "2", meaning a tie for high die. In such a case, there would then be two unhappy winners. If you can get two dice the same, you can get three—which would mean a "K" for everyone.

Because of the equivalences among units, it is now possible to place quite a few more than four units in the same hex if you wish to do so. Table 3 shows the probabilities of more than one unit being affected when a #K#/ (or a #Kt#, for that matter) result is rolled for a hex containing anything up to six units. For the three units in the example above, such a result will inflict maximum damage upon just one unit 76.4% of the time. Worded differently, on the average, one should expect that such a result will claim an extra victim just about one time in four, with just a 2.8% probability that all three will be unlucky. As you can see, the chances of picking up more than one extra unit are fairly small. Practically, more than four units is uncommon, for which strength the total probability of either three or four units being affected is only one-fifth that of the two-unit probability.

From the look of the IFT it’s clear that a column shift of one to the right would lead to just about the same collection of IFT entries as would an additional DRM of -1 to the actual attack. The size of ‘just about’ can be readily determined from the results in Table 5. Why such information is of value is a consequence of the possibility of forming fire groups using stacks of adjacent units. If all units in a particular elevation within some hex are going to fire at a single target, they are required to do so as in a single attack. Adjacent units, however, may, at their option, join the first group, or if so desired, attack on their own. We shall consider two aspects of this option because intelligent use of this part of the rules is essential to effective play.

While, other things being equal, a stronger attack is superior to a weaker one—other things are rarely equal. The most common “other thing” which enters in has to do with the DRM of the final attack. If the first stack has an 8-1 leader in it, he will contribute -1 DRM to whatever other modifiers are involved. If the adjacent stack is without at least as good a leader, this = -1 will be lost in a combined, fire group attack. One of the simplest rules of good play to be extracted from the numbers in this article is that one should never add strength to an attack

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number suffering Casualty Reduction due to a #K# result</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in hex</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in hex</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>6.7</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in hex</td>
<td>69.4</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in hex</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in hex</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3—Probabilities of various numbers of units being affected by a #K# result

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number in #KIA</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in hex</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in hex</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in hex</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in hex</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in hex</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>6.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4—Average number lost due to a #KIA result
unless the number of column shifts to the right due to this addition is, at a minimum, at least one greater than the total of the favorable DRMs lost. For example, if an enemy unit with a morale of "6" occupies a wooden building, a stack of three 4-6-7s stacked with an 8-1 leader would attack with a firepower of 12 and a net DRM of +1. If the adjacent hex contained another 4-6-7, adding its strength would produce a 16 FFP attack at +2. From section (a) of Table 5, the probability that the target will survive the first attack unharmed in any case (52.5%) is the same as the probability associated with the second attack. The Pin probabilities are also the same. Thus, in this case, adding an additional squad offers no advantage.

Before going on, let me point out that, most of the time, I will present DRMs as if they were present during the entire game, but much to the thing of importance is whether or not a unit is untouched. Now, we might expect (and, sometimes, be correct) that, in general, what is here a 35% probability of some harmful result would contain a varying mix of Broken and KIA results. My experience suggests that the "no permanent harm" probabilities are the most useful ones, so that’s what we can expect to see most of the time.

To continue, the general validity of this simple rule can be seen by reading diagonally downward through the values in any of the five parts of Table 5. For example, for a morale of "7", attacks at 12 DRM of -4, 16 DRM of -5, 16 DRM of -6, 24 DRM of -1, 30 DRM of 0, and 36 DRM of +1 show either "7/4" or "7/5" as the survival probabilities. This rule is not influenced by the morale of the unit being attacked. There is a change to be noted as higher and higher Morale Levels are considered, but the effect merely strengthens the rule. For the same attacks just listed, the survival probabilities rise from "23/6" to "28/8" for a target with a morale level of "10". This means that a one column shift to the right, if it’s accompanied by an increase of one in the net DRM, leads to a less harmful attack.

One of the general observations I have drawn from this type of material back when SL was first published was that units with a Morale Level of "7" were closer in survival performance to those with a morale of "6" than they were to those with a morale of "8". With the revised IFT this is still more true than before, but the differences are too small to be of concern. Averaged over the typical DRM ranges, the increase in outright survival percentages, for a particular attack, will increase by about the same amount between morale "6" and morale "7" units as they will between morale "9" and "10" units.

On the other hand, another early conclusion has made its way through to the transition to ASL. Table 6 illustrates the second simple rule: an improvement of one in the Morale Level is equivalent to getting a +1 DRM on all attacks made against the unit. Unfortunately, morale usually means, finally, getting a DRM of -1. All of the survival probabilities in this table are taken directly from Table 5. They are merely re-arranged in order to demonstrate the rule.

In the center column (i.e., the one for a morale of "8"), the percentages, 11 through 89, are exactly the ones to be found in part (c) of Table 5 for an attack strength of 12. Note that the positive and negative numbers on the left of the table are not just DRMs. Rather, they are DRMs to which has been added the difference between the unit’s morale and "8". Thus, the eight values given for a morale of "6" correspond to those to be found in Table 5(a) for DRMs of -2 through -8.

Reading horizontally across any of the rows of values in Table 6 reveals the extent to which an increase of one in the morale level is capable of offsetting a change in the net DRM. To illustrate, the +2 row shows that a morale level "6" unit attacked with a DRM of -4 will survive 70% of the time, while a morale "7" unit makes it 64% of the time.

| DRM | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 |
| -4  | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| -3  | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| -2  | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| -1  | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| 0   | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| 1   | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Table 5—Probability that a single unit will survive and attack either unharmed and unpinned or (unharmed and pinned)
when the DRM is +3, a value very little different from the 62% rate for a morale level “8” unit attacked at +2. The remaining values of 63% and 65% are, respectively, those for a morale level “9” unit attacked at a DRM of +1 and a morale level “10” unit attacked at a DRM of zero.

While I don’t know the extent to which this information will be of value to you, I have found this connection between morale and DRM to be of benefit to me in organizing my play experience. Practically, most of the squads we need to make use of are at a level of “7”. With regard to those happy occasions when there are “8’s” at hand, I have found it helps to think of them as “7’s” with an extra +1 protection factor. Those unfortunate “6’s”, however, are burdened with a permanent -1. Attempting to organize my experience around the “7” level unit has made it easier for me to shift among these three difference squad morales.

Size Versus Number

One of the early difficulties I had with determining what the “smart move” was has already been mentioned in connection with the very first SL scenario. However, let’s first explore one of the most useful types of information to be obtained from Table 5 using a more recent example. In developing the first simple rule, I referred to a case in which three 4-6-7 squads, plus an 8-1 leader, were stacked next to other friendly unit(s). Suppose now that the adjacent hex contains a pair of 4-6-7s. From Table 5 we can see that an attack with 20 FPFs and a DRM of +2 is a decided improvement over one at 12 and plus 1. The practical question, of course, is should we combine the 12 FPF and the 8 FPF attacks into one attack, or use them separately in two attacks? The answer to this question cannot be found directly in the table, a simple calculation will do the job. Recalling that the fractional probability of two sequential events taking place is equal to the product of the fractional probabilities of each of the events is the key.

The fractional probability that the target unit will survive a 12 FPF attack at +1 is 0.52. The probability that it will survive one at 8 FPF and +2 is 0.72. The product of these two, equal to 0.37, or 37% is the probability that the pair of attacks will inflict no harm. The corresponding value for a single attack at 20 FPFs and +2 is 42%. Thus, the combined attack is more likely to inflict harm. Because of the nature of the system, whenever the probabilities are essentially the same for single and for multiple attacks with the same total firepower, the multiple attack route is the one to follow. If the first attack is successful, the second attack has at least two options: it can fire at an alternative target; or, if the first target is merely broken, it can be used against the original target in the hope of inflicting more permanent damage.

It’s also possible to determine the probability that, while otherwise unharmed, the target will be Pinned. To do this we have to consider the number of ways in which the target could end up Pinned. There are three: it could be Pinned by the first attack, with nothing happening as a result of the second; the reverse situation, in which only the second attack results in a Pin; and the Pinning of the unit by both attacks. The probability of a Pin is then equal to the sum of these three different sequential events, or 0.15. Thus, the two-attack procedure is also more likely to result in a Pin.

Both you and I would end up playing an awful lot of games solitaire if we had to look up these sorts of numbers and do these sorts of calculations before we could make up our minds about how to proceed with our Prep Fire. The purpose of this exercise is to, whenever possible, produce relatively simple doctrines which will, by and large, work well for us. He who would win must remember to play the odds. Yes, he who looks up the odds before each dice roll plays alone.

This particular example suggests a very simple rule: never throw away a favorable modifier or inflect an unfavorable one upon an attack merely for the sake of making a single, stronger fire group attack. The neat thing about this rule is that it works

Table 7—A comparison of individual versus combined firepower attacks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total firepower</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>16</th>
<th>24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of attacks</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRM</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td>(Morale—8)</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>5</td>
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</tr>
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<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>8</td>
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Table 6—Survival probabilities for a 12 FPF attack

(a) Morale level 6

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<td>+1</td>
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<td>6</td>
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(b) Morale level 7

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<td>2</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>(Morale—8)</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
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(c) Morale level 8

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<th>24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>No. of attacks</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRM</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Morale—8)</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
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(d) Morale level 9

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<tr>
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</table>

(e) Morale level 10

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRM</td>
<td>-4</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Morale—8)</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>+0</td>
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</tr>
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<td>+1</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
so much of the time that trying to find a better one is pretty much a waste of effort that could be more wisely spent upon other things. However, for the advanced student, there is one general area in which this rule doesn’t work quite as well.

Going back to that first scenario example of SL, an attack with the 10-2 leader and three 6-2-8 squads, followed by a second attack with just three 6-2-8 squads means a pair of attacks on the 16 FPF column, one with a DRM of +1, and one with a DRM of +3. The probability that a target with a morale of "7" will survive both of these is 0.31 x 0.52, or 0.16. Expressed as a percent, this is pretty much a waste of effort that could be more worthwhile.

If you look at the first two columns under a total attack strength of 24 FPFs, you’ll find that the trend established for the first three attack strengths doesn’t continue; the break even point is around a DRM of zero or +1. The “why” of this particular result can be determined without much trouble. The source is the number of columns between “12” and “24”. Two columns lie between these two values. If we look at the IFT for the other cases considered, we see that only one column lies between either the “4” and the “8” columns, or the “6” and the “12” columns, or the “8” and the “16” columns.

So much for the bad news. The good news is that all of the things said for a target with a morale of "6" could just as easily be said for any of the other values. Thus, any rules formulated about when to divide fires in this type of situation will not have to consider the factor of morale. My rule is quite simple: if the net DRM is zero or negative, divide your fire; otherwise, combine. This rule doesn’t alter the earlier one concerning the use of favorable DRMs.

If you’re going to divide fires, there will sometimes be the possibility of dividing them into more than two. It is for this reason that the additional situations have been included for attack strength into more than two parts doesn’t seem to be particularly worthwhile.

Taken together, this pair of rules will not always give you the very best attack odds. However, they will work most of the time and have the great virtue of simplicity. For those of you who wish to try fine tuning this sort of thing, you should have enough in the way of numbers to work with. If you come across something clever, especially if it’s also simple, don’t keep it to yourself, let me know so that we can get it into the Analysis Chapter for everyone.

Cowering

This particular effect was introduced into the system in COD, and has made it into ASL. The rule requires that, whenever infantry fires on the IFT, a roll of “doubles” will cause a one-column shift to the left on the IFT unless the units are stacked with some kind of a leader. In the case of really poor infantry, there’s a two-column shift. Such things are certainly not good. But, a lot of things in the game present undesirable choices; it is for the players to decide which ones they will attempt to do something about.

### Table 8—Percentage of otherwise successful attacks reduced in severity by covering

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DRM</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>16</th>
<th>24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>-2</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+4</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 shows my first look at this facet of the game, in that, for various attacks and net DRMs, it shows the percentage of otherwise successful attacks which will be reduced in severity as a result of this rule. The first value is associated with a one-column shift; the one in parentheses goes with a two-column shift. When I first looked at these numbers, I couldn’t make up my mind whether or not the threat of Cowering should be a factor in determining leader usage. To find out, I wrote another program which will make fire into account and ran it out.

Because of the nature of the results obtained, only those for a morale of “7” are shown in Table 9. Beneath each firepower the first number is the same as that which is to be found in the corresponding column in Table 5(b): the probability that a unit will survive without an attack on the DRM specified. In Table 9, the second number is the increase in this survival probability if the Cowering rule is used and there will be a one-column shift whenever doubles are rolled. The third, and last, number in each entry is the increase in the basic survival probability if Cowering produces a two-column shift. One or two FPFs, the largest increase due to Cowering of either variety is 3%. Given the many uses to which leaders can be put, this effect is too small to be worth considering.

### Experience Level Rating

Well folks, it didn’t go away, even after so many of you got upset about the way (mostly) American squads and half-squads could break-green if they failed a MC by an amount greater than their ELR, a value specific in each GI scenario. The rule was never intended for application solely to US forces, although most of the GI scenario would encourage this belief.

While the concept did survive, it has done so in a much-altered form. Seeing how this part of the ASL system interacts with the rest is essential both to an understanding of how ASL differs from the system through GI and to intelligent play.

The GI rule required that, for any Elite, First Line or Second Line MMC subject to the rule (crews were exempt), failing a MC by any amount in excess of its ELR would cause its immediate replacement by a broken “Green” squad, the lowest category of MMC available to the US player. Inexperienced Infantry were to be used for other nationalities when their forces were subject to this rule. While Green units did not share all of the weaknesses of Inexperienced units, they had most of them, so that the replacement of an Elite squad with a Broken Green one was always a traumatic experience.

In a modified form, the concept of reduction in quality is, in my opinion, at the heart of ASL. Figure 3 illustrates, for both the Germans and the Russians, one of their squad (and associated half-squad) sequences. While each also has a second sequence, these will suffice to illustrate the key points. Any given scenario will supply the initial quality or qualities of each side’s force, and with their ELRs. Once play begins, any MMC or leader failing a MC by more than that force’s ELR is immediately replaced by a broken unit of the next lowest quality. Thus, for the German player, a 4-6-7 failing a MC by too much would be replaced by a broken 4-6-7. Applying this same sort of thing to leader is straight-forward; an 8-1 failing a MC by more than its ELR would be replaced by a broken 8-0. If the unit is already at the bottom of its particular scale (e.g., a Conscript half-squad), an ELR failure results in its being “Disrupted”. This is a status akin to, and somewhat worse than, that of being “Broken”. Particularly troublesome is the fact that, generally, the unit cannot Root... which means it is seldom long for the battlefield.

### Table 9—Effect of Cowering on the probability that a single unit with a Morale Level of 7 will survive an attack unharmed and unpinned

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Firepower</th>
<th>DRM</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>16</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>24</th>
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<td>-4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>-2</td>
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<tr>
<td>+1</td>
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<tr>
<td>+4</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As Figure 3 shows, the lengths of the MMC sequences are not the same for all nationalities. Thus, in light of this new rule, a Germany 4-6-8 is a less fragile thing than is a Russian 4-5-8. Experience indicates that this factor is rather more important than the one-hex difference in range. It is by such choices that the ASL designers have shaped the characters of the forces we are to command. This has also been accomplished in a second way. Certain units, such as the American 7-4-7s, have their Morale Level value, in this example a "7", underscored. Such units have an ELR of 5 (the maximum possible), and will not be replaced, when this value is exceeded, by a squad of lesser quality. Instead, such units are replaced with a pair of Broken half-squads. There is a vulnerability in being a half-squad which does not exist for a squad. However, the more important observation is that with such units one can, if the half-squads survive, reverse the effects of this rule by Rallying and recombining. For other units, barring the low probability of a certain type of Battlefield Hardening result, these effects cannot be reversed.

When we combine these observations with the new IFT, we can see that the net effect is to make some units less vulnerable in the short term and more vulnerable in the long term. The gradual reduction in quality has a snowball effect which is not likely to be apparent in the first few turns of a scenario. As a result it's quite likely that there will be many times when a player will abandon a scenario when, in fact, his long-term prospects were not all that bad. As a player, you need to be cautious about quick judgements concerning scenario play balance.

Before taking a look at how likely all of these bad things are, there is one more long-term effect to be considered. "Battlefield Integrity", first introduced in COI, is not an idea loved by all because it does require a certain amount of record keeping. The placement of the appropriate values on the backs of individual counters has eliminated a portion of this problem, however. Conceptually, the idea of Battlefield Integrity as it now stands is a simple one: as the value of a force shrinks due to elimination or capture of its MMCs, there will ultimately come a time when that side's forces will have to face the possibility of a general reduction in its ELR. Without having to look at any new numbers, it should be clear that such a loss would only accelerate further declines in quality, which could, once again, trigger the provisions of the Battlefield Integrity rule, which could . . . well you get the picture.

The results in Table 10 are much the same as the ones in the GI article. However, because leaders are no longer exempt, Morale Levels of "9" and "10" have also been considered. For each of the firepowers, DRMs and Morale Levels, the number immediately following the DRM is the probability that, for this particular combination of firepower, DRM and morale, the unit will break. The five subsequent values, for ELRs of 1 through 5, are the probabilities that a unit which breaks will cause a reduction in unit quality.
become a poorer unit only 11% of the time. For example, for a 16 FPF attack at +2 DRM, on a unit with a morale of "7" and an ELR of "3", would see that unit fail some sort of MC by too much 0.45 × 0.32 × 100%, or 13%, of the time. With everything the same except that the Morale Level is "6", the numbers are 0.51 × 0.42 × 100%, or 21%. Now, let's see what the opposite is: if losses have finally led to a reduction in the ELR level from "3" to "2", in that case, the numbers are now 0.51 × 0.61 × 100%, or 31%. Since the 4-2-6 is at the end of the line, that amounts to a 31% probability of Disruption, added to (from Table 2) a 9% chance of something nasty in the way of either a KIA or K result.

My second hope is that scenario designers will weight carefully the probable impact of quality reduction, particularly with regard to the expected performance of units in longer scenarios. As the numbers in Table 13 suggest, a change of one in an ELR level can be most significant.

Leaders and Followers

One last table remains to be considered, and it exemplifies much of what makes this such an interesting system. Throughout play, ASL continuously offers us situations in which we must balance risk against gain. Time after time we find that a potentially useful activity carries with it some increased risk. It is this notion that gave rise to the approximate probabilities of the latter event has gone up by 10%. To pick a particular example, an 8 FPF attack, with a DRM of 0, on a unit with a morale of "7" and an ELR of "3", would see that unit fail some sort of MC by too much 0.45 × 0.32 × 100%, or 13%, of the time. With everything the same except that the Morale Level is "6", the numbers are 0.51 × 0.42 × 100%, or 21%. Now, let's see what the opposite is: if losses have finally led to a reduction in the ELR level from "3" to "2", in that case, the numbers are now 0.51 × 0.61 × 100%, or 31%. Since the 4-2-6 is at the end of the line, that amounts to a 31% probability of Disruption, added to (from Table 2) a 9% chance of something nasty in the way of either a KIA or K result.

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I've been waiting years to write this article. Wanting to go back to those great old classic scenarios. Planning to bring them back into the mainstream of SL play so that we could re-live those golden games.

Perhaps the greatest advantage that *ASL* confers on its proud owners is that, given time, ALL the great old scenarios will be revivified. Our intent, as play-oriented testers, is to try to recreate the feel of those "oldies but goodies" while improving the play-balance. Let this article serve notice that we are of those "oldies but goodies" while improving the mainstream of scenarios. Planning to bring them back into the mainstream of golden games.

On its proud owners is that, given time, ALL the great old scenarios will be revivified. Our intent, a feeling!

The tops of those first edition purple boxes. What three original editions and game length. That means that in most cases, you'll note substantial changes in the forces and/or set up. Nonetheless, we found that we could bring back much of that sensation of popping open the original "feel" of the Russian leader became a 10-3. Plan for this kind of just holding on to what they had.

We altered the scenario. We rate our version mildly pro-Russian when played under *ASL* rules with the SSR. The reductions in the number of German MGs and putting units trapped in the upper floors of buildings under the onus of encirclement means that the Germans are once more tied to building big firegroups and praying for KIAs. It is still hard for the Russians to root the defenders of building F6 out of the upper floors as the German player tends to concentrate lots of fire on the ground floor of F6. However, building K5 has two stairwells for the Russian to advance up, and building I7 is very vulnerable to a Human Wave assault from the ground floor of hexes F6, G6 and H5.

Some random thoughts for both sides while playing:

German should consider using their ability to set up HS to put one HS in either F5 or G6 in order to draw some of the Prep Fire. I like putting some strength initially into hex M7 to try to force the Russian MMG group to pull back to J1. When the time comes to retreat or counterattack, don't forget that you have smoke, albeit the chances of getting it are small.

Russians should always use a Commissar in building N4. Try to keep your forces set up for Human Wave assaults, both in building N4/M4 and building G6 (when taken). The threat alone will force the German to reserve some shots he might otherwise take. Always take your sniper shots. The Germans can't afford to be TI.

Both players should be aware that our experience suggests that a majority of games will evoke significant unit changes. By this I mean berserk, battle-hardened, and hero units make frequent appearances—not to mention the expected crop of conscripts. We even had one game where the Russian leader became a 10-3. Plan for this kind of game drift.

Scenario 2

Scenario 2 is mildly pro-German when played under the original *SL* rules. The Russians use a "hammer and shield" defense of building X4. (The hammer is the big groups in X3 and X4, with the shield being a screen of concealed units along the...
They must attack into and through building U3 as quickly as possible in order to reinforce the factory defenders.

Meanwhile, the Germans will smoke the street, burn the outer defenders and advance into the street. On Turn 2 they move into Y3-Y5 and throw Demo Charges. Figure to get lots of broken German units who can retreat across the street to a leader, hope to get lots of broken Russians in the center of the factory with no place to go. Once in, the Germans can hold onto a major chunk of the factory using Engineers to defend the gains.

We didn’t even attempt to play Scenario 2 without modifications and with the ASL rules for two reasons: there are not enough pieces in the counter mix to allow it, and our experience with the first scenario seemed to prove that the upgraded German MGs are just too potent.

Once we had altered the scenario, it remains mildly pro-German in feel. Very, very similar to the original. Flamethrowers are not as potent, but once the Germans are in the factory there is literally no place for the Russians to hide. The absence of an upper floor for the factory means that the stairwell defense won’t work. (By the way, unless you intend to build an upper floor for the factory means that the stairwell defense won’t work. (By the way, unless you change the occupation rules, an SSR for rooftops is meaningless.) Naturally, the Russian is likely to concentrate all of his relief forces in buildings R1 and Q3. Look for another Human Wave here very earlier on. Nonetheless, much of this scenario will turn upon the outcome of a few key die rolls. The presence of a few Russian 5-2-7s within the factory really boosts the chances for a Russian victory.

Comment should be made here on the use of the Sewer Movement. Historically, there is no question that the Germans used it to great advantage. Players who use this rule should be aware that the ability it gives the properly guided Russian to quickly reinforce the factory can swing the game. Of course, getting lost can really be a major pain in the rump.

Scenario 3

Played under the original rules, it was most frequently a draw—rarely a Russian victory. But the feel of urban combat it evoked is still for many players their strongest memory of ASL. Given the extra time, the Russians made mcinement of the Germans defending in buildings K5 and F6. The German AFVs were just too vulnerable to close assault from the 6-2-8s to be able to stave off the fall of two buildings. Naturally, this meant the German AFV tended to support the factory attack and on that flank the Russian AFVs were susceptible to the German Engineers and their SW. Thus, the game tended to devolve into heavily drawn games with the Russians winning when they moved first and got hot dice that allowed the T-34s to come in before a substantial proportion of the factory had fallen.

Despite our enthusiasm, for the same reasons noted above under Scenario 2, we didn’t even try to play this one under ASL rules without modifications of any kind.

We didn’t play the altered scenario with ASL rules and our own SSR enough to be sure, but it seems to be usually a draw, very rarely a German victory and occasionally a Russian victory. If played with SSR, it seems to be pro-German.

Russian set-up of the 295th Infantry will tend to decide the direction the game will take. If the Russian player makes a real commitment to buildings P5 and P8, then look for a pincer attack into buildings L6 and M9 and a probable tie game as the Russians win on one flank and the Germans win on the other. If the Russians put their Commissar into hex R1 and set up heavily in buildings R1 and Q3, then the Germans have a real chance to win by drawing the factory and using their armor to support the defenders of building I7 and K5. Nonetheless, sigh, lots of drawn games.

If you decide to invoke SSR 7, then the pressure is really on the Russians. Don’t plan on getting the 3:1 ratio. You’ll have to be rather hot with the dice. If the Russian player is going to win, he’ll have to force a victory in F6 and either I7 or K5 plus holding at least four hexes. Russian players should consider sacrificing one radioless T-34 by entering it into hex X3. It will surely die, but causes a major redirection of German attacks.

For those readers who have not already found them, our updated versions of the first scenarios are found on the insert of this issue. Overall, these three scenarios are probably not the best reflection of ASL. Yet who can resist replaying them at least once. "Still crazy after all these years."
CONVENTION CALENDAR

The GENERAL will list any gaming convention in this space free of charge on a space available basis provided that we are notified at least four months in advance of the convention date. Each listing must include the name, date, site, and contact address of the convention. Additional information of interest to our readership such as tournaments or events utilizing Avalon Hill Game Company’s games is solicited and will be printed if made available.

The Avalon Hill Game Company does not necessarily attend or endorse these gatherings, nor do we guarantee that events using The Avalon Hill Game Company’s games will be held. Readers are urged to contact the listed sources for further information before making plans to attend.

MAY 30-31, JUNE 1
DIPCON '86, Fredericksburg, Virginia
Contact: Pete Gaugan, 3121 East Park Row, #171A, Arlington, TX 76010
NOTE: An exclusively DIPLOMACY event featuring the national championship.

JUNE 19-22
ATLANTICON '86, Trenton, New Jersey
Contact: Atlanticon '86, P.O. Box 15405, Baltimore, MD 21220. (301) 298-3135.
Note: The largest of the East Coast gaming conventions, with events for all tastes.

JUNE 20-22
SEAGA '86, East Point, Georgia
Contact: Southern Games Adventure Gaming Alliance, P.O. Box 16564, Atlanta, GA 30321.
Note: In addition to many others, tournaments in BULGE '81, PANZERGRUPPE GERMANIA, GUNS OF AUGUST, SQUAD LEADER and the AH “Classics” are offered.

JULY 3-4-5
ORIGINS '86, Los Angeles, California
Contact: Strategicon, P.O. Box 8399, Long Beach, CA 90808. (213) 420-3675.
Note: The National Adventure Gaming Convention, featuring the latest game releases and hundreds of events. Tournaments, seminars, demonstrations, and more for all aspects of the hobby.

JULY 25-27
SECON '86, Knoxville, Tennessee
Contact: SECON, P.O. Box 15405, Baltimore, MD 21220. (301) 298-3135.

JULY 31, AUGUST 1-3
PEERCON VI, San Diego, California
Contact: Larry Peery, P.O. Box 8416, San Diego, CA 92102. (619) 295-6248.
NOTE: An exclusively DIPLOMACY event.

AUGUST 2
CAPITOL-CON II, Springfield, Illinois
Contact: Bill Winterhoff, 3329 Gaines Mill Road, Apt. 4, Springfield, IL 62704. (217) 522-5803.

AUGUST 9-10
MADNESS '86, Middletown, New York
Contact: Steve Skutell, 9 Sheffield Drive, Middletown, NY 10940.
NOTE: Science-fiction emphasis.

AUGUST 16-17
BAYCON '86, Traverse City, Michigan
Contact: Tom Ockert, P.O. Box 219, Lake Ann, MI 49650.

AUGUST 23-24
5th ANNUAL SQUAD LEADER OPEN, Knoxville, Tennessee
Contact: Tim Deane, P.O. box 9237, Knoxville, TN 37940. (615) 970-4435.
NOTE: This premiere SL event will honor the late D.R. Munsell.

AUGUST 23-24
SL RALLY '86, Harrison, Arkansas
Contact: On All Fronts, P.O. Box 265, Marshall, AR 72650. (501) 448-3066.
NOTE: Tournaments in SL system through ASL.

Some common questions on the format and intent of ASL have been voiced in letters to our offices recently. While not questions on the game system, we felt that the readers might be interested in the answers Don Greenwood has been giving to these inquiries. Should you have any questions of a like nature, we won’t promise a personal answer but we’d enjoy hearing them.

Q. Where is the divider for the Army section?
A. There is none—nor will there be one for the Training Manual chapter until such time as those chapters are completed. At that point we will issue a more useful divider for the completed chapters, one which will contain updated information for the complete system (perhaps with updated Playing Aids).

Q. Can I purchase extra binders? Mine is not big enough!
A. Yes. The latest Parts List will carry ASL binders for separate sale. However, they should not be necessary unless you have glued ring supports to both sides of every page—which triples the width of each page. Actually, I’ve found that ring supports are necessary only on the exterior pages—and certainly not on both sides.

Q. Where is the registration coupon referred to on Page 1 of the Introduction?
A. The “Registration” coupon is actually the Errata coupon printed on Page B31.

Q. Can I send in a photocopy of the Errata coupon? I don’t want to cut up my rulebook.
A. No, you must send the coupon itself—no photocopies will be honored. The coupons have been placed outside of a blank page for just this purpose and eventually Page B31 will be re-issued as Errata without the coupons and any need to “cut-up” your rulebook.

Q. How come my dividers don’t include the “Table of Contents” referred to on Page 2 of the Introduction?
A. The separate Table of Contents for the chapters was moved to the first page of each chapter instead. The Introduction is erroneous in listing them as being on the dividers.

Q. Do I have to order chapters E-M separately or will I get them free with my Errata coupons?
A. The remaining chapters must be purchased either separately by mail or as part of the future modules that will contain them. It is important to realize, however, that the ASL Rulebook is functionally complete as far as playing the game is concerned. The remaining chapters include only optional rules, information about specific theaters and nationalities, and other assorted extras. It is double, for example, whether some people will want to play the “Campaign Game” or whether experienced players will be very interested in the “Training Manual”. That being the case, it would not have been very wise to delay publication of ASL further while awaiting the completion of those chapters and increasing the price still further to players who don’t even want them. This way, players can pick and choose how many extras they want for their system.

Q. What about all my old scenarios? Will you reissue them for ASL?
A. No—we certainly cannot afford to re-issue them for free, and if you have to pay for them the vast majority of players would rather have new scenarios. We will be revising some of the old scenarios for ASL, but these will appear in The GENERAL (see the insert of this issue for example). Besides, they are still perfectly usable for the game you bought them with; and once you’ve gained some experience with ASL you can easily convert them for use yourself. The only real problem in such conversion is the effect on play balance—and we have found that this varies greatly depending on the styles of the different players.

Q. Will there be errata available before the 1987 Errata coupons are honored?
A. Only what you read in these pages. While ASL is hardly perfect, we have not found any major problems to date. Some 95% of the questions we’ve received have either been answered in the rules or are logical extensions of existing rules. Most of the questions we’ve received fall into a category of such bizarre happenstance that it is doubtful whether they would ever occur to 99% of the players in an average game. Answering such questions in the body of the rule would cause more harm than help for the extra verbiage involved would only add to the problems of learning the system by invoking the “can’t see the forest for the trees” syndrome. Consequently, the first errata issued will consist mainly of clarifications in the form of “Q&As” to append to each chapter rather than actual errata. Only the most serious errors will be corrected with the issuance of revised rules pages at first. In the meantime, we will be constantly using the information from the questions we receive to revise the rules in such a way which will clarify those rules not really needing changes so that when we do re-issue a page—not only the errata will be incorporated but any other wording of material on that page which will improve comprehension or answer even the rarest of questions. Naturally, the longer we wait before we re-issue those pages, the more comprehensive the house-cleaning can be. It is a quest for the perfect game system using a technique never before seen in this hobby. We hope its adherents find it as exciting as we do.

Q. Why should I spend all that money to buy ASL when it amounts to buying SL and its gamettes all over again?
A. If you have to ask that question, then I doubt whether my answer will change your mind. The best advice I can give is to seek out someone who has bought it and ask him whether he thought he made a good purchase. I am obviously biased, but I will say this—counter for counter, board for board, art for art, and rule for rule, I think ASL BEYOND VALOR is a better buy on a dollar per component basis than any game I’ve seen. ASL is not for the casual player—it demands too much of a player’s
time to gain mastery of the system. But for those who play a lot of SL (and most SL players I've met play it almost exclusively), it represents a tremendous value. On a per-hour-of-enjoyment basis, the game is exceedingly cheap entertainment because it is not just a game but an endless series of games using a tremendously detailed system. If you are someone who plays a game a few times before retiring it to the shelf--don't buy ASL (although it will certainly look at least as impressive as the other games on your shelf). If you enjoy your SL and gamettes, then by all means keep playing it. No one is saying you have to buy ASL.

But then, if you are still enjoying it, you'll want to consider buying a new radial tire to replace the old model you bought years ago. SL is unique in the wargame hobby for the maintained following it has attracted. Any game that commands that kind of devotion deserves the deluxe treatment we're given it in ASL. While I've heard from many who say they won't buy ASL because of its price, I've yet to hear from anyone who has bought it that hasn't praised it. If you like SL, the odds are you'll love ASL. The choice is yours.

Q. Will I have to buy all the ASL modules as was the case with the SL gamettes?
A. No. The only mandatory purchases to enjoy the system will be the ASL Rulebook and BEYOND VALOR, which includes the complete German OB and all the system counters. If you want to play with the Americans and not the British, you can skip the latter module (or vice versa). And to help you make up your mind, we are even putting out an introductory module called PARATROOPER which will include one new board (#24) and just enough counters to allow you to play the eight scenarios therein. You won't even have to purchase BV, although you will need the four basic mapboards found in SL. The idea is to give you just enough components to play the small scenarios included and let you decide for yourself whether you like ASL before you sink $40.00 into BEYOND VALOR. The counters will be designed in such a way to supplement--rather than duplicate--the counters in BV (which can run a little short of certain types of markers in large scenarios). This module will also be the release vehicle for Chapter K—the “ASL Training Manual” which should help new SL players by presenting basic rules in more common language. It is not a replacement for the “legalese” of ASL, only an interpretation, Learning to play SQUAD LEADER is still the best way to learn ASL.

A GENERAL GIFT

For twenty-two years The GENERAL has set the standard for magazines devoted to the challenging hobby of wargaming. This is due in no small part to the support and contributions of you, the loyal readers (and readers to be) of our magazine. And we are more proud of this fact than we can ever hope to express. The GENERAL has always been a publication by wargamers, for wargamers. The editors would like to commemorate this signal honor with a gift to all of you.

But what to give? It should be informative, and entertaining; thought-provoking, and colorful; concerned with our hobby, and serve to increase the enjoyment of it. Why... that sounds like The GENERAL! So, how about a free copy of a back issue (which normally costs three dollars).

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STRUGGLE FOR EL SALVADOR

The FMLN and FIREPOWER

By James P. Werbaneth

There are few current conflicts more controversial to observers in the United States than the continuing revolution in El Salvador. To some, the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN, in the Spanish acronym) and its political auxiliary, the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), are agents or puppets of the USSR and its allies. To others, they are nationalistic liberators determined to rid their country of long standing economical, social, and political inequities. The truth lies somewhere in between. But regardless of one's political orientation or views on El Salvador, the Salvadoran revolution is a fine subject for simulation in FIREPOWER.

The FMLN is a non-monolithic organization. It is a front consisting of five Leninist political parties, each controlling military assets of its own. Four groups, thought structurally modeled after the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, were founded in reaction to or independent of the Soviet-led, orthodox Communist movement. These are the Popular Forces of Liberation Farabundo Martí (FPL), the People's Liberation Army (ERPs), National Resistance (RN), and the Central American Revolutionary Workers Party (PRTC). The fifth member of the FMLN is the Communist Party of El Salvador, a tiny organization long noted for its military operations with those of the USSR.

On the Salvadoran political left, the political military organizations of the FMLN has a total monopoly of all meaningful power, including military power. The FDR is formally the equal of the FMLN, but is dominated by mass organizations that are themselves virtual satellites of the FPL, ERP, RN and PRTC. In addition, the FDR has no military formations worthy of the name under its banner. The FMLN is thus both the focus and the primary practitioner of revolution in El Salvador.

The current Salvadoran revolution was officially begun in 1970 by Salvador Cayetano Carpio. Although he studied for the priesthood, Carpio dedicated his life to trade unionism and Marxism-Leninism. He joined the Communist Party of El Salvador in 1947, and was a member of its Central Committee in 1948. Carpio was detained from 1952 to 1954. Upon leaving prison, he was exiled in the Soviet Union until 1957, studying at the Superior School of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. He became Secretary General of the Communist Party of El Salvador in 1964 and assumed leadership of the Union Federation of El Salvador in 1965. Carpio was one of the leaders of the national general strike in April 1967.

Despite his long affiliation with the Communist Party of El Salvador, Salvador Cayetano Carpio was deeply dissatisfied with the methods of operation adopted by the party. It closely followed the Soviet ideological line, stressing labor organization, agitation and propaganda, and other non-violent means of struggle. By contrast, Carpio advocated a more violent approach to revolution. He embraced the theory of "prolonged popular war," a theory inspired by the Vietnam War and stressing the use of many small militia units to defeat the government, then the theoretically inevitable United States intervention, before the establishment of a stridently Marxist-Leninist state.

As was the case in many other Latin American Communist parties, a rift developed between the Soviet-line traditionalists and those who wanted to take the violent route. In El Salvador, the climax to the dispute came in 1970. Carpio and a group of his supporters left the party to pursue "prolonged popular war." Carpio later claimed that he had resigned his Communist Party membership. The Communists continue to claim that he had been expelled.

At first, the new organization had no name. In 1972, Carpio named it the Popular Forces of Liberation "Farabundo Marti", in honor of the leader of the disastrous 1932 Communist uprising in El Salvador.

The seventies were a decade of organization and consolidation for the FPL, with little or no military action. The organization conducted spectacular terrorist acts throughout the decade, with the three most notable occurring in 1977. In April, the FPL kidnapped and murdered Salvadoran Foreign Minister Mauricio Borgonovo Pohl. Ex-President Osmin Aguirre Salinas was killed in June. In September the FPL assassinated three men, among them Carlos Alfaro Castillo, the conservative rector of the University of El Salvador. The war in El Salvador escalated markedly in the late 1970s. Coinciding with this was the alliance of the Salvadoran revolutionary groups. In December 1979 the FPL, RN and Communist Party formed the Political-Military Coordinator, an event later called an important preliminary to the formation of the FMLN. The same three groups then formed the Unified Revolutionary Directorate-Political Military (DRU-PM). On 11 October 1980 the DRU-PM announced the foundation of the FMLN, originally including the FPL, ERP, RN and Communist Party of El Salvador. At the beginning of 1981 the FMLN was joined by its fifth and final member, the PRTC.

By this time the Salvadoran revolutionaries had graduated from a heavy reliance on terrorism to guerrilla warfare. Because of their seniority and military superiority, the PFL and Salvador Cayetano Carpio were the most important members of the FMLN.

In sense, their leadership of the FMLN was self-destructive. Carpio was extraordinarily rigid in his adherence to "prolonged popular war", and held both his er's while allies and the concept of debate in very low regard. One important consequence of this was that by the early 1980s, the FPL had refused to coordinate its military operations with those of its allies.

By 1983, opposition to Carpio was coming from within the FPL itself. A former school teacher and union organizer named Melida Anaya Montes, who also used the nome de guerre "Ana Maria", was Carpio's second in command and the leader of the faction that demanded greater flexibility. This faction gained much strength from disgruntled FPL field commanders who wanted greater coordination with other groups.

Carpio suffered a severe blow in January 1983, when a meeting of over twenty-five FMLN commanders repudiated every doctrine that he embraced. His defeat was so severe that he lost almost all of his authority in the FPL. Although he remained its titular leader, the real power was now held by Melida Anaya Montes. She was murdered at her Managua residence on 6 April 1983, having been stabbed repeatedly with an awl. Although the act was condemned by the Sandinista Interior Minister, Tomas Borge, as one of the Central Intelligence Agency, the Nicaraguan police discovered that it was actually the result of a plot within the FPL.
They arrested Rogelio A. Bazzaglia, the head of the FPL’s ‘external’ military relations and a fervent admirer of Carpio. Carpio returned to Nicaragua from a visit to Libya and attended Monse’s funeral. At first, he did not believe that Bazzaglia or Joaquín Villalobos could have been responsible. Other FPL leaders agreed that if Carpio had not actually ordered the murder of his chief lieutenant, his policies were to blame. His career and doctrine in ruins, Salvador Cayetano Carpio shot himself to death in Managua on 12 April 1983.

At the time, some FMLN claimed that the FPL would be less radical and rigid without its founder. But in May 1983, the FPL assassinated Lieutenant Commander Alfred A. Schauffeleber, a United States Navy advisor, an act that did nothing to foster the FPL’s ‘external’ military relations and a separate entity.

Posteriority has not been kind to Carpio. Rebel literature and radio broadcasts have said little about him, while frequently lauding ‘Ana María’. More vivid are the words of one moderate revolutionary leader: “My personal conclusion is that the Salvadoran revolution has been liberated from Stalin before he could get his power.”

The center of the FPL’s operations has been in the north of the Chalatenango department, on the Honduran border. Although it was the largest political military organization in the FMLN in 1983, its political power has drastically deteriorated since then. Militarily, it appears to have been eclipsed by the ERP.

Like the FPL, the People’s Liberation Army was founded sometime in the early 1970s. Some Salvadoran rebel sources claim that it was indeed formed in 1970. Joaquín Villalobos, the ERP’s current leader, holds that it was founded in 1971. Unlike the FPL, the ERP was not founded with an overriding, rigid vision of revolutionary strategy. According to the United States Department of State, it was founded by “young Maoists and Castroites” who called for ‘attacks on public officials to spark an immediate uprising’, thus implicitly rejecting Carpio’s ‘prolonged popular war.’ The ERP immediately began to seek publicity through a series of kidnappings and other acts.

Like the FPL, the ERP has suffered from violent internal turmoil, in its own case during the mid-seventies. Its leader at the time, Sebastian Urquilla, was later blameworthy for violence through his ‘hegemonic ambitions’ and stifling of dissent. This supposedly made way for ‘adventurism’ and an emphasis on the military side of revolution at the expense of political action.

Roque Dalton Garcia was the leader of the ERP faction that objected to ‘militarism.’ Born in 1945, Dalton was a poet whose works were dominated by social themes. He was also an historian and a pro-Cuba Marxist. His faction included some of the most highly regarded members of the ERP. In 1975, Dalton and his supporters founded a new organization, the National Resistance (RN).

Originally, the RN was an independent organization within the ERP. Its formation was nonetheless greeted with rage on the part of its opponents in the parent group. Roque Dalton was tried, convicted and executed by the ERP in 1975, possibly at the orders of Vallesio and FDC. Other founders of the RN followed him to the grave. The survivors led the RN out of the ERP and established it as a separate entity.

Since then, the ERP has done much to assure itself the status of most important organization in the FMLN. Joaquín Villalobos, perhaps its most valuable asset, enjoys a wealth of charisma and an outstanding reputation among the rebels as a military strategist. In 1983 the ERP was also the most militarily potent group in the FMLN, with 1500 to 2000 combatants under its flag. Its troops are organized into highly mobile units, including the elite Maoist, or Brujo, Brigade and specialized units. The ERP’s center of operations is in the northern Morazan department, though it also operates in the Usulan and San Miguel departments.

The ERP’s political tribulations in 1983, the ERP has emerged as the pre-eminent organization in the FMLN.

The RN has stayed true to its ERP heritage by maintaining a relatively flexible strategic doctrine, one based on the writings of Mao Zedong and Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara, the Argentine physician and theorist of the Cuban revolution. It is seen by many outside observers as flexible—by FMLN standards. Its current leader, Fernando Cienfuegos, accepts power sharing with the present Salvadoran regime as a fundamental goal of the FMLN and FDR.

Militarily, the RN is much weaker than the FPL or ERP. But its penchant for very profitable kidnapings of wealthy Salvadorans, the racket that gave it its name, has made it a rich beneficiary of the upturn in Salvadoran middle-class smuggling.

The PRTC is the smallest and most obscure of the three FMLN factions. Originally an ally of the Communists, it later split from the ERP. But its penchant for very profitable kidnapings of wealthy Salvadorans, the racket that gave it its name, has made it a rich beneficiary of the upturn in Salvadoran middle-class smuggling.

The suppression of the Communist revolt was extremely brutal, and many non-Marxists were caught in the firestorm. The FMLN and FDR later claimed that up to 3000 peasants were killed in La Matanza (“The Massacre”), as it is simply remembered, though the death toll was undoubtedly less.

The PRTC, which has yet to recover from La Matanza. Its membership has seldom exceeded a thousand people since 1932, and it is the weakest organization in the FMLN.

Despite its early attack at violent revolution, the Communist Party condemned the Salvadoran insurgent organizations throughout the 1970s. Much of its support for insurgent struggle was due to its very unhappy memories of La Matanza. But the deciding factor appears to be that its sponsor, the USSR, frequently condemned the Maoist, Vietnamese and Cuban doctrines adopted by the insurgents.

The rapid change of Communist policy from stringent condemnation to alliance with the FPL, ERP, RN and PRTC was couched in the party’s customary Marxist jargon. But like the original commitment of its leaders, this doctrine contains almost undoubtly due orders from Moscow, this time with Cuba acting as a mediator between the Communist Party and the original insurgents.

The vast majority of military actions in the current conflict have taken place in the countryside. The Leninist doctrine of the FBG and the ERP, RN and PRTC anhemia to the Communist Party hold that the key to successful revolution lies among the peasantry, not among the urban workers, as claimed by the Soviet Union and its client Communist parties. Furthermore, the efforts of the Salvadoran security apparatus and death squads have made the countryside a very dangerous place for the FMLN and FDR to operate within.

But the FMLN has not totally ignored the cities and towns, sometimes seizing small cities, including departmental capitals. Nonetheless, the focus of its efforts has been in the more comfortable environment of the countryside.

One notable episode of urban warfare occurred in October 1979. In that month, a coup d’etat by centrist army officers toppled the military’s own hand-picked President of El Salvador, General Carlos Humberto Romero. Salvador Cayetano Carpio, who had collaborated with the Communists in the 1970s, was condemned the reformist coup in the harshest possible language, calling it an attempt by the United States and the Salvadoran right to perpetuate a military dictatorship with a face less repugnant to world opinion.

Villalobos’ ERP did not stop with angry words. According to the Cuban newspaper Granma, the
ERP and its satellite mass organization, the Popular Leagues of 28 of February (LP-28), initiated urban warfare in San Salvador itself.

Despite their doctrinal pluralism, the political military organizations of the FMLN agree on a three-stage strategy of revolution. In the first stage, the revolutionaries are on the strategic defensive and concentrate on building their organizations. If they fight, it is most likely to be through terrorism. This stage lasted from 1970 until 1978 or 1979.

The second stage is one of strategic equilibrium. Both sides build up their military forces in anticipation of the third phase. The insurgents rely on guerrilla warfare, in which they hold up the front lines and create their strongholds. Possibly worse for the FMLN, an already fragile rebel unity was strained.

The most frantic combat has taken place when the FMLN has tried to move to the third phase of revolution. In January 1981, it mounted a “final offensive” according to an ERP hierarchy in order to prompt a popular uprising in the urban areas. The offensive was a major failure, and the expected uprising did not occur. The FMLN’s urban organizations were rendered vulnerable, forcing many of their members to flee from the cities to the rural strongholds. Possibly worse for the FMLN, an already fragile rebel unity was strained.

Since then, the FMLN has not launched a similarly ambitious offensive. Instead, its major efforts have been either to inflict sharp, local defeats on the Salvadorean government, or to disrupt elections. It appears that the FMLN decided to gradually build momentum toward the third stage of revolution.

In 1984 and 1985, it appeared that the FMLN was in fact unable to advance to the third, offensive stage, but was actually being forced back into the first phase of the strategic defensive. Its military situation deteriorated dramatically, and its military operations were confined largely to the eastern part of El Salvador. Napoleon Romero Garcia, an FMLN commander from March 1984 until his surrender thirteen months later, told a veritable tale of woe, claiming that FMLN troop strength and supplies were diminishing.

The campaigns of terrorism conducted by the FMLN in 1984 and 1985 indicated that it has been forced onto the defensive. The front kidnapped many village and town mayors, then engaged in two very successful operations. The first was the kidnapping of Ines Guadalupe Duarte Duran, the daughter of President Jose Napoleon Duarte, in September. It appeared that the FMLN was making a new commitment to terrorism.

But it has not completely lost its ability to conduct damaging attacks against military targets. On 10 October 1985, FMLN forces shelled the Salvadorean Army training center at La Union under the cover of darkness. It was the most serious rebel assault in two years, resulting in the deaths of forty-two soldiers at the expense of only ten FMLN lives.

This must be regarded as a most extraordinary incident, and while it may have contributed to theorable erosion of the FMLN’s strategic position.

The strategies embraced by the organizations of the FMLN are not atypical of Third World revolutionary movements. What is atypical is the FMLN’s apparent reliance upon United States and Western European weaponry, with Soviet equipment fulfilling a secondary role. This is not due to a lack of generosity on the part of the USSR or its allies. Actually, the FMLN receives a great deal of military aid from the Communist world.

Cuba has long been an important benefactor to the FMLN, and Jose Luis Menendez was once chief advisor in the Cuban Finance Ministry prior to his defection to the United States in 1981. According to Lllovi, Fidel Castro has been too shrewd to openly challenge the United States through excessively overt aid to the FMLN.

In the first stage of revolution, FMLN strongholds were rendered vulnerable, forcing many of its members to flee from the cities to the rural strongholds. Possibly worse for the FMLN, an already fragile rebel unity was strained.

A further indication that at least some of the FMLN’s weapons were of United States and Western European manufacture were actually procured through Cuban aid.

In addition to the FMLN’s primary weapons of American manufacture, a practice that seems to have been either to inflict sharp, local defeats on the Salvadorean government, or to disrupt elections. It appears that the FMLN decided to gradually build momentum toward the third stage of revolution.

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The strategies embraced by the organizations of the FMLN are not atypical of Third World revolutionary movements. What is atypical is the FMLN’s apparent reliance upon United States and Western European weaponry, with Soviet equipment fulfilling a secondary role. This is not due to a lack of generosity on the part of the USSR or its allies. Actually, the FMLN receives a great deal of military aid from the Communist world.

Cuba has long been an important benefactor to the FMLN, and Jose Luis Menendez was once chief advisor in the Cuban Finance Ministry prior to his defection to the United States in 1981. According to Lllovi, Fidel Castro has been too shrewd to openly challenge the United States through excessively overt aid to the FMLN.

In the first stage of revolution, FMLN strongholds were rendered vulnerable, forcing many of its members to flee from the cities to the rural strongholds. Possibly worse for the FMLN, an already fragile rebel unity was strained.

A further indication that at least some of the FMLN’s weapons were of United States and Western European manufacture were actually procured through Cuban aid.

In addition to the FMLN’s primary weapons of American manufacture, a practice that seems to have been either to inflict sharp, local defeats on the Salvadorean government, or to disrupt elections. It appears that the FMLN decided to gradually build momentum toward the third stage of revolution.

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SCENARIOS

The following scenarios are based on actual battles and campaigns in El Salvador between 1979 and 1985.

To a much greater extent than more conventional conflicts, the war in El Salvador has been waged by ambush. Generally, the strategic offensive has been held by any given side at the same time that that side has been able to stage more ambushes than its opponent.

“AMBUSH 1981”

In January 1981, the FMLN unsuccessfully attempted to topple the Salvadoran government by staging an offensive. This scenario represents an action in the hinterland of Morazan staged by the People’s Liberation Army.

A. MAPBOARD TERRAIN: Only mapboard panel 2 is used.

**ATTACKER**

All dark green hexes, as well as tree hexes, are considered tree hexes. Brown hexes are mud in Mud weather, but are otherwise clear hexes. Hills are height “4”.

B. SPECIAL RULES: Game length is 3 Turns. Attackers exit off either or both short sides. Defenders exit off either or both long sides of the mapboard. Players decide on which side the attacker enters by agreement or competitive die roll. Defender sets up secretly as per “AMBUSH” special rules (on page 45 of **FIRES (OP)**). Attacker enters in accordance with the same set of special rules.

**WEATHER:** Roll the die: “1-7” — Normal; “8-10” — Mud.

**VISIBILITY:** Roll the die: “1-7” — Observation Condition 1; “8-9” — Observation Condition 2; “10” — Observation Condition 3. If Observation Conditions 2 or 3, roll the die again: “1-6” — Night; “7-8” — Fog; “9-10” — Raining.

**FIRES (OP):** Wet if Mud or Raining—otherwise Normal.

C. OPPOSING FORCES:

a. **Defenders:** Salvadoran Infantry Squad: 4/2; 1S; 1xLMG4, 8xRFL10, 1xSMG7, 1xPMN2, 1xHGN3 and/or HGN5 (G only); 120-122 points.

b. **Attackers:** FML Guerrilla Squad: 3/2; 1S; 1xLMG4, 10xRFL10, 2xSMG7; 1xBPD, 2xNST, 1xSCP, 1xSBD, 6xRGN2, 18xHGN3 and/or HGN5 (G only); 240-280 points.

D. VICTORY CONDITIONS: Each side gets two victory points for each surviving soldier that exits the mapboard during Turn 3. Defending soldiers must exit off the long sides of the mapboard and attacking soldiers must exit off the short sides to receive these points.

“AMPHIB 1984”

In 1984, the Salvadoran army took the initiative against the FMLN, pressuring the insurgents over the entire theatre of operations. The following scenario depicts an ambush of FPL guerrillas and militia units by Salvadoran infantry in an agricultural area of Chalatenango department during the summer.

A. MAPBOARD TERRAIN: Only mapboard panel 2 is used.

**ATTACKER**

Use all standard terrain values. Hills are height “3”, depressions are height “2”.

B. SPECIAL RULES: Game Length is 5 turns. Units may exit off any side or portion of a side encompassed by their setup hexes.

**WEATHER:** Normal

**VISIBILITY:** Condition 1.

**FIRES (OP):** Normal.

C. OPPOSING FORCES:

a. **ERP (Defenders):** Set up the defenders anywhere north of the two-hex-wide east-west road and east of Hex Row G, inclusive. Roadblocks may be set up anywhere in the east-west two-hex-wide road or north of it. (350-320-48 points).

b. **Salvadoran Army (Attackers):** Set up attackers anywhere south of the east-west two-hex-wide road and west of Hex Row 7 inclusive. Attacker may also set up in any of Hexes A and B. (438-388-50 points).

D. VICTORY CONDITIONS: Each floor of Building M and N are worth five victory points to either side. If both ERP squads are panicked at the end of Turn 5, the attacking player automatically wins, regardless of victory points.

“ATTACK ON RADIO VENCEREMOS 1984”

Located somewhere in Morazan department, the ERP-controlled Radio Venceremos has long broadcast to the rest of El Salvador. In November 1984, the Salvadoran Army launched airmobile operations in Morazan in an attempt to find Radio Venceremos and put it out of the air permanently. At least one transmitter was found and captured, as were many audio tapes of future broadcasts. But Radio Venceremos continues to operate.

A. MAPBOARD TERRAIN: All buildings are constructed of wood plank. All dark green as well as all tree hexes are considered tree hexes. Hills on panel 2 are height “2”. Hills on panel 1 are height “3”. Ignore all hills on mapboard panel “3”. All depressions are height “2”.

B. SPECIAL RULES: Game length is 6 Turns. The Salvadoran Army may exit off any outer mapboard
side that is part of panel 1. The ERP player may exit off any outer hexside that is part of panel 3. The Salvadoran Army player gets one “bonus” Impulse Phase after setup is completed. Any desired action may be performed during this Impulse Phase, and the sequence units are drawn normally after its completion.

**WEATHER:** Normal.

**VISIBILITY:** Visibility Condition 1.

**FIRES (OP):** Normal.

**C. OPPOSING FORCES:**

a. **ERP (Defenders):** Set up in any whole hex on panel 3. (452-377-75 points)

- ERP Guerrilla Squad: +4/2, IC, IS, 1 × M3MG5, 8 × RFL10, 2 × SMG7.
- ERP Militia Squad (−): −3/2, IS, 3 × RFL7, 3 × RFL18, 1 × PST1.
- Extra Equipment and Defensive Units: 1 × BNC, 40 × HG3N and/or HG5N, 1 × LPL3, 2 × DFX, 3 × SFX, 4 × PNPM1.

b. **Salvadoran Army—Antonal Brigade (Attackers):** Set up on any whole hex on mapboard panel 1. (949-981-58 points)

- 1st Atonal Squad: +4/3, IC, IS, 1 × GLR2, 1 × LM4G4, 7 × RFL10, 2 × SMG7, 1 × BPD.
- 2nd Atonal Squad: (+): +4/3; IS, 1 × MRT6, 1 × LM4G4, 7 × RFL10, 1 × SMG7, 1 × BPD.
- Extra Equipment and Ammunition: 2 × BNC, 8 × BDA, 5 × GLR2AMO, 5 × MTR6AMO, 25 HG3N and/or HG5N.

**D. VICTORY CONDITIONS:**

Both players receive 2 victory points for each enemy soldier killed, wounded or driven from the mapboard by panic. In addition, the ERP chooses one building on panel 3 to contain the Radio Venceremos transmitter, secretly noting it on a sheet of scrap paper. Control of this building is worth 10 victory points to either player at the end of the game.

*BATTLE AT LA UNION 1985*

1985 was a very bad year for the FMLN. It was unable to carry the war to the enemy. In fact, the strategic offensive was firmly in the grasp of the government. On October 10, the formally unified FMLN struck the Salvadoran Army training center at La Union. The rebels apparently aimed to kill some of the United States advisers training Salvadoran recruits at the base. They did not succeed, but did manage to kill forty-two Salvadoran soldiers. Ten insurgents died, all of them when paratroopers counterattacked and relieved the base. The government forces suffered a stiff defeat.

**A. MAPBOARD TERRAIN:** All tree hexes and all dark green hexes are considered stumps. Ignore all hills, fences, and hedges on mapboard panel 2. All other hills are height “2” and all depressions are height “1”. All buildings and fences are of wooden plank construction.

**B. SPECIAL RULES:** Game length is 5 turns. Salvadoran Army soldiers may exit off any outer hexside that is part of panel 3, and FMLN soldiers may exit off any outer hexside that is part of panel 1. At the start of the game all attackers must make a “bonus” Impulse Phase. No combat actions may be taken, and the sequence units are drawn normally after its completion.

**WEATHER:** Normal.

**VISIBILITY:** Visibility Condition 3, Night.

**FIRES (OP):** Normal.

**C. OPPOSING FORCES:**

a. **Salvadoran Army (Defenders):** Set up on any whole hex of panel 3. Wire, abatis, double wire, and ditch counters and mines may be set up on any whole hex of panel 2. (681-469-212 points)

- 1st Salvadoran Infantry Squad: 412, 1 × M3MG4, 8 × RFL10, 1 × SMG7, 1 × BPD.
- 2nd Salvadoran Infantry Squad: 4/2, IS, 1 × LM4G4, 8 × RFL10, 1 × SMG7, 1 × BPD.
- Extra Equipment and Defensive Units: 6 × BDA, 3 × BNC, 49 × HG3N and/or HG5N, 6 × RGN4, 2 × PST2 (for M3G and LMG), 3 × NST, 5 × PNPM2, 2 × LPL3, 5 × PB, 3 × DCH, 4 × DFX, 2 × SFX, 13 × DWR, 3 × WIR.

b. **FMLN (Attackers):** Enter mapboard on “bonus” Impulse Phase on the long edge of panel 1. (890-776-118 points)

- 1st FMLN Guerrilla Squad (+): +4/3; IC, IS, 1 × GLR2I, 1 × LM4G4, 8 × RFL10, 1 × SMG2.
- 2nd FMLN Guerrilla Squad: 4/2; IS, 1 × LM4G4, 1 × M3L6, 2 × RFL11, 6 × RFL6.
- 3rd FMLN Guerrilla Squad: 4/2; IS, 1 × GLR2I, 1 × M3L6, 2 × RFL11, 1 × RFL13 (M2), 1 × SMG7.
- Extra Equipment and Ammunition: 4 × BNC, 45 × HG3N and/or HG5N, 2 × RGN2, 1 × RGN4, 2 × DMC, 16 × M3L6AMO, 4 × PSTI (for LMG, GLR, and MPL).

**D. VICTORY CONDITIONS:** Each player receives 2 victory points for each enemy soldier killed or wounded. The FMLN receives 5 victory points for each building on panel 3 under his control at the end of the game, and 5 victory points for each Salvadoran Army squad panicked at the end of the game. The Salvadoran Army player gets 7 points for each FMLN squad panicked at the end of the game.

**Selected Bibliography**


Alvarez-Solís, Antonio; Garcia-Villas, Marjaliela; Lopez-Vigil, Maria; Morales, Jose Luis et al.: *El Salvador: la grande marfa de un Pueblo* (Madrid, Spain: Editorial Revolucion, 1982).


Guerra, Tomas: *El Salvador en la Hora de las Libercion* (San Jose, Costa Rica: Editorial Faravundo Mar, 1980).


**Playtesters’ Note**

Much of the excitement of FIREPOWER lies in the ability to simulate yesterday’s newspaper headlines. “Struggle for El Salvador” arose out of Mr. Werbaneth’s master’s dissertation, an intensive study of the issues in that troubled land. When the article arrived, I asked Craig Taylor and Michael Craighead to devote some time to playtesting it. Mr. Craighead was most helpful, and the following are some suggestions from his notes to me for those who might play the accompanying scenarios.

A certain atmospheric difference should exist when playing the following scenarios and those dealing with, say, the Russians and West Germans. This difference should go beyond the mere designation of various kinds of terrain or weaponry—although these are obviously important. An irregular force will generally not perform over time as well as regulars, as Mr. Werbaneth’s fine article shows. While the reasons for this are many, most gamers will not experience it on the game board because they usually play the scenarios in isolation with no connecting framework. Therefore, I would recommend two ways to derive the best experience from these scenarios.

The best method is to incorporate them in a campaign game as set forth in the FIREPOWER issue of The GENERAL (Vol. 21, No. 6). The second method is through the use of Rules which add distinction to each scenario. Since I know that most gamers will shy away from a campaign involvement, I think the use of the following rules would be the best choice:

16.2 Assisted Optional Firing Modifiers
16.4 Suppression by Non-Automatic Weapons
16.5 Written Combat Orders
16.6 Pinned and Inactive Status
16.7 Optional Night fights
16.8 Extra Major Personal Weapons
16.9 Standing Behind “2” Height Cover

If you play these scenarios, you will agree with Mr. Werbaneth that the use of Rules 23 and 24 are very important. So, if you don’t try anything else from the above list, please try those.

Play balance is an elusive thing in a system like FIREPOWER. Sometimes one side will positively cream the other, while some games come right down to the wire. However, if you find that balance is a problem, gradually adjust the weaker side. Do not just add more grenades and think that this will help—it generally doesn’t. These scenarios have been tested and reviewed several times and are good as is. But if you really think a little help is needed, try adjusting squad ratings—add a spare sequence chit or impulse. Try an additional leader (“A” level). If a guerilla squad is perceived as weak, try exchanging older weapons for better ones—always within the framework of the equipment lists. Nevertheless, the five scenarios have been checked for balance and should give no trouble.

A word is needed about housekeeping. You will need to make many more locations mows, posture chits and status chits—especially for the larger scenarios. The number of speed chips in the original game should be sufficient. Finally, don’t overlook the value of multi-player usage in these scenarios. Suggest referring to the rules in the Battle Manual (17.)

“Iron Mike” Craighead
Making the Best of a Shot in the Dark

In invading the First District

By Felix D'Alban

Fortress Europa is, or should be, ranked among the classics of our hobby; it uses the successful game system born in its cousin the Russian Campaign but adds many intricate options for the wargamers without complicating play greatly. The contest moves smoothly and offers both players the opportunity to make many crucial decisions. Yet, for all this, not much has been written on the strategy of the game. David Perlman's article in Vol. 17, No. 4 is excellent, but was of more help to the German player than the Allies in Devine's piece (Vol. 20, No. 6) concentrated on just one district—the "bloody 15th". And Mr. Meyer posits a sacrifice initial invasion of the Lowlands (Vol. 21, No. 2). In this article, I wish to put forth what I feel is a more viable invasion strategy for the Allied player.

Before we proceed, let me make the disclaimer of being an all-knowing expert on Fortress Europa. I doubt if a SE "expert" exists. It is the nature of our hobby that self-proclaimed experts are forced to eat a large dish of crow when they lose to mere mortals—which happens with some frequency. However, I have played a large number of full campaigns based on the strategy by mail against opponents who specialize in playing the German side exclusively. With this article I am presenting only one option, one tested by many of my opponents and I.

Opening Options

After the German player has handed you his opening setup (his most important decision), the Allied player is faced with a momentous decision of his own—his invasion site. With the location of the German hidden units unknown, it has been likened to "a shot in the dark". The Allies have five areas to choose from and each has certain advantages and disadvantages. The novice player usually looks for a place to get ashore without being thrown back into the sea. The veteran looks for a site that will fit best with his overall plan, and will take risks if he feels the rewards to come later to be sufficiently large.

There is, however, a site that can fit the needs of all Allied players. But first, let's look at each district and see how they compare.

The Netherlands District lies in closest proximity to Germany, has a weak defending force, has ample port capacity, is in TAC range, and puts a great deal of pressure on the German early in the game. It also has flooded terrain and forces to slow the Allied advance to a crawl; invasion there releases all frozen German units, and it puts you right in the lap of the invasion reaction force. Any invasion here makes for a real nailbiter—only real "blood-and-guts" types will land here.

The 15th District is also close to Germany, has plenty of port capacity, is completely within TAC range. In addition it gives the Allies a real shot at splitting the German forces defending. But it has the largest number of fortresses and the strongest defending force. While the Allies might split the German, conversely the crafty German has a chance at catching the invasion forces in a "squeeze play". Players who land here, like Mr. Devine, like to take chances and enjoy a bloody good fight.

The 7th District has the largest number of hexes open to landings, very good port capacity, some rough terrain to hinder the German armor, and most of the district lies in TAC range. It also has a strong defending army, usually including the most hidden units, and offers a strong possibility of being bottled up on one of the peninsulas. It is probably the most used invasion area, as most wargamers tend to be "middle-of-the-road" types. And of course, it worked for Italy.

The 19th District has no fortresses, and under-strength army, and is difficult for the German player to reinforce quickly because of the superior Allied airpower. It also has that mountain pass to checkmate any advance, and the Allies will be forced to shift units from England to Africa before projecting them into the beachhead. Any such buildup will take what seems like forever. It is not often used except as a second invasion site.

And there is the 1st District. Usually overlooked, but the best of the lot considering the problem of the hidden German units and the danger of landing on top of them. I can hear the word "Pattons" now: "this guy must be looney; why that sector is a million miles from the objective". Yet the 1st District has some unique characteristics that make it the best choice against most German setups. Notice that I carefully use the term "most". The German can stop a 1st District invasion; in fact, he could crush it. But to do so he will have weakened other areas to such an extent that the danger is unlikely. Think back to the German defenses you've seen in past games; I'm willing to bet the 1st District was left to the lowly 1st Army to defend while the hidden units were distributed among the 7th, 15th and Netherlands commands.

Objectives

The 1st District has only two ports—La Rochelle (3) and Bordeaux (10). However, since the Allies have a limited sea transport capacity to the invasion site each turn (10 units during the second turn and five thereafter until the fall of the U-boat bases), a large port capacity is not especially important in the early game. It is of little relevance to have a SC of 30 if you can land only five units. With the 12-unit Mulberry in place and both ports in hand, the Allied player has enough capacity for some four turns and 25 units. While this may not seem like an overwhelming force, it is more than adequate to achieve Allied objectives—especially when coupled with the natural characteristics of the district.

The Allied objectives of this first invasion: to establish a secure beachhead; to destroy as many German units as possible with as little loss as possible; and to lay the groundwork for the advance to Germany. By landing in the 1st District, an Allied commander has avoided the strongest defenses yet is still within range of the heavy port capacity of the 7th District. With the exception of a few hidden units, they have outflanked the bulk of the German army, which remains frozen in place. Now he knows what all the Axis units are, yet the German still has to ponder the threat of a second invasion in all his ports while remaining out of harm's way.

The 1st District is almost completely surrounded by rivers. By using two air units to destroy the bridges from the coast at Nantes all the way to Hex 120, the district can be isolated. In most cases this tactic is enough to protect the invasion area from outside pressure, as usually only a few hidden armor units near St. Malo or the mountain hexes D3 and E4 can reach the river line on the first German turn. It is rare that a player will risk his armor units crossing a bridgeless river unless the situation is truly desperate and late in the game. The enemy could use one of his paratroop drops or an air lift to reinforce the ports, but this would only delay the inevitable and waste a valuable asset that may be needed later. The Allied player is not interested in breaking out of the sector until the fourth turn or later, so any delay of one turn will hardly matter.

But so long as the German player has his paratroopers available, the Allies will be forced to Garrison the ports and Mulberries or risk his SC being reduced by the loss of a supply base. Held in reserve, the parachute units can tie up a large number of Allied units in relation to their actual two-drop capacity. It would make me—as the Allied player—very pleased to see the German paratroops used in such a fruitless role as reinforcing the 1st District.

Should the Allied player feel naked with so few units on the board and only one invasion site, saving his invasion, or if the German player has infantry in place near the river (a rare occurrence), he could himself make a paratroop drop to the east of La Rochelle. Those units could then be used to aid in liberating the port of La Rochelle (if not already done) and spread along the river line to bolster the Allied positions.

When using the 1st District as an invasion site it is best, though not always necessary, to commit enough airpower to rail attacks to reduce German reaction to nil. This is rarely a problem, as the German player will often allocate his own aircraft to protecting his forces against ground support missions; and there are no replacements to protect or attack on Turn 1. With no rail movement and only unfrozen armor able to reach the river, any meaningful counterattack is just about impossible.

On Turn 2 the Allies will land ten fresh units, including their own armor. With these extra units it is extremely difficult, maybe impossible, for the German to reach the Mulberry or mount an effective attack against it. This is especially true if the Allied air forces continue to pound the rivers, and the Partisans block the rail line to Bordeaux from the south of France.

A smart German player will remove his panzers and HQ from the district, they are not engaged on the first turn. They can only delay the inevitable fall of Bordeaux for a single turn (and this is as easily accomplished by placing expendable training divisions spaced along the peninsula). He will want to save his armor for an attempt to contain the invasion or for the race across the open French countryside to come. The weak 1st Army is rarely around after the third turn, and the Allies can now safely build up his forces to the 25-unit maximum behind the protection of those rivers. I usually use the Bordeaux 12th District to invade, saving the 7th for the Americans and their 8-4 infantry units for the knockout second invasion. (The minors cannot be replaced, so they make excellent units to garrison the ports while remaining out of harm's way.)
BREAKOUT

At this point, the Allies are still a long way from the victory cities in Germany. That's true—but the game has just started and the Allies are in excellent position to apply a great deal of positional pressure on the Wehrmacht.

The German player is faced with some heartbreaking decisions. What can he do to contain the breakout to come? Where to form a defense line? Should he be pushed against the eastern or northern borderlines? Where to put out his forces? How to defend against a push from the north or east against the line of least resistance. He is caught between the ‘rock’ of the first invasion and the ‘hard place’ of the potential second.

Can he prevent a breakout, or at least limit it? After some twenty games using this strategy, I must admit his ability to do so. Even with the entire invasion reaction force, his strength against the line for the second invasion is small. He is cut between the two main fronts of the invasion and what is the possibility of his forces being cut off from these borders. He is already caught between the ‘rock’ of the first invasion and the ‘hard place’ of the potential second.

He cannot prevent a breakout, or at least limit it; after some twenty games using this strategy, I must doubt his ability to do so. Even with the entire invasion reaction force, he just doesn’t have enough units to hold the line—it is too long. Yet the Allies can consolidate behind the river and break out either to the north or east along the line of least resistance. If he goes north, Allied infantry will take the ports of Strasbourg, Lorraine and Brest (which he may do). The enemy finds his defenders outflanked and in danger of being isolated.

If he goes north, Allied infantry will take the ports of St. Nazaire, Lorient and Brest (which so happen to be spaced such that the enemy can just reach each from the other to attack in the final impulse under the cover of air support and naval gunfire). After each foot moves, the enemy may move into it during the second impulse where they are doubled against counterattacks. On the next turn, these veteran units may move on to the next objective while fresh units land at the new liberated port. A slow and steady advance up the coast.

Should the German elect to defend the northern route, the Allies could break out to the east with armor. By destroying the bridges along the River Loire, the Allies can safely advance along it to within four hexes of Paris. The enemy finds his defenses outflanked and in danger of being isolated.

The 7th District has now become untenable. If the German doesn’t pull out, the second invasion should come somewhere around the Seine. If added to the breakout from the 1st District, the entire 7th Army is completely trapped. Yet who wants to abandon those nice ports to the protection of one-step coastal units? Worse yet for the German, the second invasion could come closer to Germany if the district is left so weak that a second invasion is unwarranted (i.e., the initial Allied forces can handle the cleanup).

If the German player decides to continue defending the 7th District, he will not have the units to protect Paris or prevent the initial invasion forces from overrunning most of France. Should he abandon the 7th District and pull back to a line somewhere along the middle of France and anchored in the 15th District, the Allies have gained a great amount of valuable ground at almost no cost with their strongest units yet to land. The Americans could then land in the Netherlands with the second invasion, no matter how well defended. With the enemy having to cut the back door, he will be hard pressed to delay the rapid advance of the initial invasion spearheads (now somewhere around Paris). As yet, the German must still defend the ports (at least with token forces) to prevent the Allies from staging a ranger or commando raid.

OVERALL

The German player cannot win the game by falling back to the West Wall early in the game. The Allies will have too much time and firepower to hold out of the Fatherland. His last defense is to delay them as long as possible by slowly trading off chunks of France. But by invading in the 1st District, I believe the enemy can be maneuvered into giving up a good portion of France or risk enencirclement and loss of much of his fine army. It also makes the second invasion and commando raids
Q. For over a dozen years, you've been a highly visible member of the staff. What did you do before you came to The Avalon Hill Game Company?
A. I taught some high school history and was a college student. That's about it.

Q. Do you ever miss those simpler days?
A. All the time. College was very enjoyable compared to working for a living.

Q. Among your many projects for the company, which one has brought you the greatest pleasure upon completion? Is this the one you're proudest of?
A. UP FRONT is my perception of the ideal wargame and I enjoyed working on it immensely. The hundreds of playtest games that you and I played rank as probably the most fun I've ever had working on a product. But then, it's so much fun listening to you gripe about your luck!

Of course, I've never finished a game that was completely happy with afterwards—repeated play always brings ideas on how a game can be improved and if I had it to do over again I would have eliminated the blocking position aspect of the game so that each side could have several groups in the same relative position on the board but at different range chits. Nevertheless, it is still the most enjoyable wargame I've ever played due to the perfect blend of command control and luck which is built into the game system without any complicated rules. It is also my biggest disappointment—that the game did not grab a bigger following. I personally thought that it would be more acclaimed than SQUAD LEADER and far more accessible to the public—something that could bridge the gap between hard core wargamers and the game-playing public.

I suppose ASL is the product I'm proudest of because it is certainly the most ambitious. It never had the potential of being played by millions (like I thought UP FRONT did) due to its complexity, but it certainly represents the fulfillment of the developer's creed—the opportunity to develop a game system over a long evolutionary period and really bring the whole package to fruition. It is truly an incredible product—not for everybody certainly—but as far as I can tell it's as impressive an endeavour as this hobby has ever seen.

Full Name: Donald James Greenwood
Birth: Sayre, Pennsylvania
Started Wargaming: 1960
First Wargame: TACTICS II
Favorite Wargame: UP FRONT
Favorite Non-Wargame: FOOTBALL STRATEGY
Outside Interests: Sports, Gambling
Employed by AH: May 1972
Designs: CROSS OF IRON, CRESCENDO OF DOOM, GI, ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER
Developments: SQUAD LEADER, UP FRONT, STORM OVER ARNHEM, CAESAR—ALEXIA, CAESAR'S LEGIONS, RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN, WAR AT SEA, CIRCUS MAXIMUS, GLADIATOR, NAPOLEON, THIRD REICH, ALEXANDER THE GREAT, BASEBALL STRATEGY, etc.

Mr. Greenwood is the jolly fellow on the right in this photograph.
Q. How hard is it to develop a game? Any pointers for would-be designers hoping to see us publish their games?

A. I guess that depends on your definition of development and how good a job the designer did. This has always been a pet peeve of mine. Over the years I’ve done a number of “developments” in which I felt I did far more work than the designer—including correction of sloppy manual or graphic development errors I had to do. Indeed, I’ve always felt that a number of my game developments qualified me as more of the designer than the guy who got all the credit. The hardest part of developing a game is the thankless nature of the job. When the game is reviewed the designer takes the bows and the royalties, and the developer is left answering the 

Q. As with all of us, you play few games away from the office in your “spare time”. What are they? And how do you relax?

A. I still play UP FRONT just about every week. And of course I have my ongoing PBM games of ANZIO and STALINGRAD. But my real love is FOOTBALL STRATEGY which is good for about 16-20 games a year during the football season in our local league.

WANT ADS

Readers are reminded that, as announced in “AH Philosophy Part 113” last issue, THE GENERAL will no longer be accepting advertisements offering games, magazines or photocopies for sale. Due to difficulties detailed in that column, the decision to limit the “Opponents Wanted” to its original intent has been taken by the editors. Henceforth, such “For Sale” advertisements received will be returned to the sender, along with any payment sent. It should be stressed that this restriction does not apply to those wishing to advertise wargame clubs, sports games leagues, or amateur publications devoted to the hobby. These will, as in the past, be considered legitimate “Opponents Wanted” material. Club secretaries and editors of such are encouraged to announce their offerings.

The GENERAL INDEX 1964-1984

Updating the previous effort at listing every item in our pages, the new 16-page Index to THE GENERAL brings twenty years of continuous publication into sharp focus. From the AH Philosophy to the contents, from our Series Replays to Buyer’s Guide evaluations, every facet of wargaming’s oldest continuing magazine is divided for ready reference by those interested in specific games. The major portion of the Index is devoted to a game-by-game listing of every article that has appeared in these pages since the early enthusiasm of wargaming washed over those fascinated by military history. Whether for the aficionado of a particular AH game seeking every word printed on it by the experts, or for the game collector looking to insure that his AH collection is complete, or simply for the reader wanting a new (though old) idea for winning, THE GENERAL Index is a must.

The GENERAL Index is available from the Avalon Hill Game Company, 4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, MD 21214. Price is $4.50 (plus the usual 10% shipping and handling fee — 20% for Canadian orders and 30% for overseas). Maryland residents please add 5% state sales tax.
WAR AT SEA represented a new concept in wargaming and was the model for VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC, its sophisticated offspring. VTPP has not eclipsed WAS, as might be expected, however. Indeed, the opposite has happened judging by the number of WAS variants appearing in past issues of The General. In point of fact, the interest reflected back from VTPP has brought ever more sophisticated ideas onto the WAS board; these into a game that was heretofore, frankly, simplistic.

This study follows that trend. This article will discuss the game as such, not as a simulation. Any discussion of the game in relation to history would fill several Generalys and be pointless, since the objective and introduction of the game scenario as fantasy (i.e., "What could have happened.") This study will deal with particular events, areas, and issues encountered in the course of the average game of WAR AT SEA.

CRITICAL ISSUE #1: Conditions of Victory

The first consideration in WAS—or any game—is the object of that game. In WAS, "The winner is the player with the most ‘Points of Control’ . . . after eight game turns." This is, in short, exactly what is needed to win—nothing else will suffice. Grasping this is far short of determining how to win, but the aim of a winning player must be to this one end; thus the victory conditions cast a shadow across the entire game.

Take the object of WAS as an (obvious) example. POCs are derived from control of certain areas of the board. These are computed each turn, with the POC Chart showing how far one side or the other is ahead as the game proceeds. This means that: a) victory is determined by control of the sea (i.e., ship sinkings or battles won or lost), and b) victory through control of the sea must be consistent as POCs are computed each turn for eight turns running. Thus the Axis could be swept from the board at game's end and still win, if the Allies had had mediocre results before then. Conversely the Germans could, themselves, wait till the last turn and then annihilate the combined Allied navies but lose anyway. The number of ships sunk or battles won, although helpful, will not in themselves win any game, and should not be viewed by the players as the final goal, but rather as a means to that end.

Enough of lurid examples. The point of this discussion is to underline the main object of WAS. The successful player will consider long-term strategy. More than most other games, which are won at a particular sequence and victory conditions, not to mention the German ships' own strengths. Rule 11.5 gives them an advantage that the British can compensate for with aircraft carriers, which will not only serve to maximize the U-boat threat to capital units but should also cause problems for the Axis battleline. The chances aren't great (Rule 10.2 boils down to one airstrike factor to one ship each) but it only takes two "disabled" results to remove the entire Bismarck class. An added plus is the prospect of actual hits, which won't sink the larger Axis battleships or battlecruisers, but will strip the damaged ships of that +1 die roll (in the case of the Germans). A good rule of thumb for the Royal Navys would be for the carriers to aim at the largest ships present.

Another carrier consideration: the non-airstrike, one-ship rule means that the RN should deploy no more than an equal number of airstrike factors against a threatening number of ships. Better to spread the carriers across the Atlantic than to stack them in one area only to have them bypassed.

Given the presence of carriers, the British can manage to stand with a 1:1 opposition in any threatened area. One last word. Ignore the temptation to overestimate the Graf Zeppelin—its two airstrike factors attack once, whereas the capital units escorting it can fire repeatedly, unless interfered with.

Another compensating factor is numerical. Axis superiority in ships, especially in gannas, is balanced by the factors of Critical Issue 1 (long-term trends and the time factor) come into focus. There are a total of 35 British ships opposing 23 German and Italian vessels (and that's ignoring the U.S. and Russian navies). While the British ships are somewhat inferior, they can take advantage of that fact by attacking where Axis ships are weakly-held.)

Critical Issue #3: Rule 11.5

On the face of it, the German Navy which contains most of the board is potent given the sequence and victory conditions, not to mention the German ships' own strengths. Rule 11.5 gives them an advantage that the British can compensate for with aircraft carriers, which will boost their broadsides by 50% or half the Allies (a German ship's gannass factor—each factor has a 50-50 chance of disabling or damaging an Allied ship, rather than a 1:1 chance). In VTPPP, for those readers who have played it, the Axis has a 50-50 chance of disabling or damaging all ships except the U-boats. When you remember that the Imperial Japanese Navy has that advantage only among its cruisers, you can judge the impact on the game.

To get to the root of the matter, Rule 11.5 means that the British will have a 1:2 edge in gunnery factors over the Germans merely to break even, given average luck. The British can risk a battle at less than that—down to 1:1—but the prospects will be chancy at best.

Not to be ignored, however, is an opposite factor: while the German fleet will be more apt to damage or sink opposing Allied units, Allied ships will have equal prospects of disabling German vessels, and this should be planned for. Of the two rolls that could damage the enemy, there's a 50-50 prospect of disabling a German ship. This means that while the Germans' "hit" die rolls are twice as likely, disabling results will which leave some (albeit damaged) Allied units in the fight are no more prevalent. And, a disabled result causes the ship in question to vanish, at least in tactical terms, with no uncertainty about that.

In short, where the Bismarck can damage or sink many British ships depending on the die rolls, it could be knocked out of the battleline by a carrier or cruiser. Even a temporary loss of one or two key German units will be damaging, or catastrophic if it's due to a carrier smart enough to be aiming at the biggest units.

CRITICAL ISSUE #4: Axis Numerical Superiority

There are factors that bring WAS into balance, believe it or not, more subtle than the three factors discussed in the above. Not as sure, but potent nonetheless.

The British may not be able to obtain the recommended 3:2 edge in gunnery factors in all threatened areas. They can compensate for this with aircraft carriers, which will not only serve to maximize the U-boat threat to capital units but should also cause problems for the Axis battleline. The chances aren't great (Rule 10.2 boils down to one airstrike factor to one ship each) but it only takes two "disabled" results to remove the entire Bismarck class. An added plus is the prospect of actual hits, which won't sink the larger Axis battleships or battlecruisers, but will strip the damaged ships of that +1 die roll (in the case of the Germans). A good rule of thumb for the Royal Navys would be for the carriers to aim at the largest ships present.

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Further, it must be remembered that the two Axis navies are separated, with the Italian fleet largely confined to the Mediterranean. This leaves 11 German ships to contest the rest of the board. German losses become magnified with each one. The loss of even one ship will make later raids difficult and fewer. Each sunken German ship means a loss of not just a battleship—but at the same time, it could have made, for the rest of the game. There'll be more discussions of this when we consider specific British strategies.

**CRITICAL ISSUE #5: British Strategy**

By now you may have noted a trend in the Critical Issues—beginning with generalities, the discussion has gradually become specific, with previous comments still applying. Now my suggestions take tangible form. With the turn sequence allowing opportunism on the part of the Axis, the British are required to pursue a deliberate policy, and their strategy must be addressed. A series of options are presented—by no means exclusive of each other and no substitute for any master plan, which would depend on the opponent and be presumptuous to offer here. However, these options can be major parts of successful Allied play, when the preceding text is not disregarded; none of these are, individually, enough to guarantee victory.

**Option 1: Bar the Door.** Although the Oiler rule (see Critical Issue #6) makes the entire board untenable on the first three turns, this option can be useful later on. In essence it demands deliberate control of the Barents and North Seas for the moment. Control of these areas will, once the oilers are gone, bar the Germans (those in Germany, anyway) from the North and South Atlantic—thereby blocking forces, there to guard against U-boats, and whatever Axis forces are available from France or Italy. Control of the North Sea, at least, will split the Axis forces into three elements if France contains Axis units, and minimize Germany's usefulness as a base. Control of the Barents, North Sea and South Atlantic will mean that, although Axis forces in their three basins will still be dangerous, they'll be less flexible. This option may not hold up over several turns, but can be useful in blocking off the two rear areas, particularly the North Atlantic, when the convoys start coming.

**Option 2: Guard the 3's.** Three areas—the North and South Atlantic, and the North Sea—offer the greatest opportunities for the Axis to roll up points. Further, each area has intrinsic value: the North Sea blocks German access to much of the board, the South Atlantic offers inconvenience for disabled ships (mainly Axis), and the North Atlantic contains the convoys. This option does not mean holding these areas exclusively. The British player should, when using this option, give highest priority to these areas when assigning units, and regard this option as a bare minimum when ships are few or otherwise not available (e.g., under Germany's ongoing repairs).

**Option 3: Drop the Mediterranean.** That, ignore the area altogether. This will cost the Allies 2 POCs per turn, throughout the game. This can be balanced against the improved defenses for the remaining four areas (ignoring the Baltic, where the British can't go) and the many POCs involved. Also, the balance of forces becomes stronger: eleven German (and four Italian cruisers) must now face the British fleet.

Obviously, if this option is followed without deviation, the Italian fleet is pretty much wasted; the larger of the two Axis navies can't sink any British ships, and the German fleet can't afford to risk losses. Considering that the British and German navies must contest the four main areas anyway, this option narrows the strategy to essentials, and puts the squeeze on the Germans.

One more advantage: a "Drop-the-Mediterranean" strategy means that the British no longer have the inconveniences posed by basing in Malta, where there are poor repair facilities and greater distance from reinforcements in England. Not having to face Axis land-based air in the Mediterranean is an added plus.

**Option 4: Blanket the Atlantic.** Simply stated, to attempt to cover all four main (Atlantic Ocean) areas with the minimum: equal opposition to German gunnery factors in each area threatened. This is an alternative to yielding certain areas due to weakness or barring the door, and is best when used with the Drop-the-Mediterranean policy.

Two aims of the Blanket-Atlantic option are to counter the Oiler rule, and force the Germans to fight whenever they emerge in the Atlantic. An even ratio will mean that the British will probably lose, in a given area. However, the Germans probably won't be able to contest more than one area (barring U-boats), they will have to take some losses, and the German player will have to protect these areas for free. Particularly when the Drop-the-Mediterranean policy is used, this option will mean that, if the Germans win too many 1:1 "victories" over equal British gunnery factors (face-value) and carriers, the Germans will run out of ships. The attrition would be too great, and the Italian fleet out of the picture. 35 British ships could trade off with 15 Axis ships quite readily.

**Option 5: A Rule of Thumb.** We have discussed the 1:1 ratio in gunnery factors as a guideline. It should be noted that this is considered at face value, ignoring the -1 rule, and is considered on an area-by-area basis. Thus, a specific bit of advice on deployment: A sound practice for the British player to examine each area with the assumption that all available Axis units that can reach it, will.

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**CRITICAL ISSUE #6: The Oiler Rule**

Theoretically, the British can close off the German fleet by controlling the Barents and North Seas (see Rule 6.1). In the first three turns though, the British strategic position is completely unhinged and their resources (as determined by Rule 6.1) combined with the German acquisition of France, this means that German units have tremendous mobility—the key phrase of the rule being, "... if successful, they may be placed in any area the following turn." It's possible, then, for the Bismarck to refuse in the North Atlantic, and then pop up in the middle of the Italian battleline in the Mediterranean on the next turn. This could embarrass the British player somewhat. The British can't count on blocking German movement by control of key areas in the first turns because of this rule. German units can stay at sea, proceed to any area, and avoid being shut up in the British Home Fleet. The British player, more than ever, must make defensive dispositions on an area-by-area basis, considering the possible threat to each area. The RN should also expect nasty surprises in the Med, especially
as the rules do not prohibit German intervention there.

This rule is a "two-edged sword", however, and the cliché is apt here. The Germans are required to make obvious moves to the North or South Atlantic—they can't refuel anywhere else—which the British are in a better position to guard (and they should be borne in mind for early turn deployments). Further, bad luck with this rule can land German units in the Neutral Port—which, given control of the Axis standpoint, the North Sea is also crucial in that it offers access from Germany to the South Atlantic, and to France. Loss of control here by the Axis will mean that units moving to/from France will have to run the gauntlet of the Home Fleet, and that cramps much of their strategy. The German player should actively try to control this area, or at least, deny control to the British.

The British player should note that, controlled or not, the North Sea adjoins both France and Germany, and a divided German fleet can unite here under any circumstances short of being bottled up in the Neutral Port or the Mediterranean. This should be remembered when assigning defense forces.

The Barents Sea. The ROCs involved here are as critical as the first three areas discussed, in terms of control, but the Barents actually sees the greatest struggle over ROCs because of the convoys to Russia. Three ROCs per convoy means that the British must try for Russia to reverse the tide (i.e., the deficit on the ROC Chart) rather than chickening out and routing the convoys to England. One ROC per area for Allied control does not suffice to overtake the enemy, given the situation as printed on the map.

Here the geography is all on the German side: The convoys, and the defending surface units, are subject to U-boats, land-based air, and surface attack in succession. This succession is important, as the U-boats can (and must) try for the carriers. Elimination of these will mean no carrier participation in the air combat phase, which means more German ships staying for the main fight. German land-based air can go for the convoy. Of course, if the convoy seems likely to get through, even the U-boats will have to shoot at it, depending on how desperately the Axis wants to stop those supplies to Russia. Another problem is adjacent bases. Germany (which includes Norway) borders the area; England does not. Units introduced here from England have to make a speed roll, which in effect knocks out the Warspite, Resolution and Rodney class battleships. (See the Fast Ship option in Critical Issue #5.) Having Russia as a base during the convoy phase, but the British should avoid having to make speed rolls for units moving at speeds of five or less.

The presence of Axis land-based air means that additional surface and carrier units will have to be posted to balance the available threat; the British will have to figure on disabled losses or worse and allow for them.

The Baltic Sea. The Russians are on their own against the Germans, and the points for once are in the Allies' favor. If either Soviet ship (or both)

CRITICAL ISSUE #7: An Analysis Area by Area

The North Atlantic. The three ROCs available to the Germans, and the presence of the convoys, make this region of obvious importance. Mitigating factors are the presence of the USN and the distance to Axis ports (although the latter isn't much to rely on given the Oiler rule and the high German speed factors). Although the Allied player has no effective control over the USN (as each American ship can enter the game only on a roll of six, and even then is restricted to the North Atlantic), the USN can still serve as a means of attritioning the Germans. Since the USN can't go anywhere else, the Allies should be considered expendable in game terms and offered up for combat regardless of the odds in hopes of inflicting some damage.

The South Atlantic. Another rich source of German points, and directly threatened by Axis units based in France. A complication here is the possibility of intervention by Italian cruisers—a greater threat than they seem, given Rule 11.6. In fact, these cruisers could help engage the surface forces while the heavy German units avail themselves of the opportunity to eliminate those bothersome carriers.

An important quirk in the South Atlantic area is the port situation there. Axis sanctuaries are fewer—France is inactive on the first turn and the last two as well and is subject to air attack in the meantime (Germany as a port, at least, offers the alternative of sanctuary in the Baltic to air attack or battle). The bases available to the Axis simply aren't attractive and the worst prospect is the fate of disabled ships in the South Atlantic—straight to the Neutral Port. We know from the previous Critical Issues that the Allies are apt as not to inflict disabling results given good shooting. Thus, the Axis dare not lose an engagement in this area. Unless the Axis has had the good sense to post sufficient U-boats there, a lost battle in the South Atlantic will see much of the German fleet bottled up in the Neutral Port by Rule 6.2, which presents two unpalatable choices the next turn: stay in the Neutral Port and take the ROC loss, or enter the South Atlantic (no further if the British have control) and face a strong waiting reception committee.

A closing note: The dangers inherent in the South Atlantic point up the merits of England as a central position (as important in that position as Trunk is in VITT). Particularly when the "Drop-the-Med" option is used, England should be the main, if not the only, base for British units.

The South Sea. Third of the three point areas from the Axis standpoint, the South Sea is also crucial in that it offers access from Germany to the South Atlantic, and to France. Loss of control here by the Axis will mean that units moving to/from France will have to run the gauntlet of the Home Fleet, and that cramps much of their strategy. The German player should actively try to control this area, or at least, deny control to the British.

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are available on a give turn, they should be sent out. German forces will be destroyed and the loss of POCs can’t be ignored. Any losses the Russians can inflict will help the Allied cause. True, U-boats will suffice to rob the Russians of the POCs they can gain, but even the diversion of U-boats is a plus. In game terms, given their poor position and their vulnerability to any air attacks not used in the Med or Barents, the Axis fleet should be considered expendable in game terms. Given the situation, anything the Soviet fleet can do will be a grudge for the Allied cause in general.

The Mediterranean Sea. Another area far from England, and one in which both the sea and the ports are subject to air attack. The Italian fleet is the larger of the two Axis navies, and capable of standing up to equal numbers of British units and damaging them severely. Further, the defection of the Regia Marina occurs so late in the game that it is not a major strategy factor (in other words, don’t count on it in your calculations).

Axis land-based air is particularly potent here as it can remove surface units prior to the main battle. (Note: The three priority targets for Axis land-based air are, in order, the Barents—especially when convoys are present, the Med, and the Soviet fleet—in or out of port.) Although the Barents is somewhat more crucial, the Italians are the biggest Axis force and should be assisted wherever possible.

The Med poses severe difficulties to the British in deployment. If the British wish to defend the area, they’d better figure on posting equal numbers to Malta at the start—five battlecruisers at the very least. Some performance considerations: The Italian fleet is faster than its British counterparts (the ten 4-4-3s and 4-4-4s, which with the two Rodney class ships make up most of the RN hitting power). However, the main class of the Regia Marina, the 4-3-5s, are vulnerable because of their weak armor factor. The RN would have to shoot at these ships in the first battles, contrary to tactics against the Germans, as a cheap means of removing much of the Italian fleet.

If the “Drop-the-Med” option is used, and the British have no uses for land-based air in France or Germany, they should aim for the four cruisers first, as these are the only ones that can affect the main battle in the Atlantic.

The Italian fleet, unlike the other “minor” navies (US and Soviet), has no limitations other than confinement to the Mediterranean area. The Regia Marina can sail when and if the Axis player pleases, a great change from the British and US situation, and a minor reason for players to approach the game as such and not try to relate it to the history they know. On this board, the Italian navy is quite deadly.

CRITICAL ISSUE #8: Carriers, Convoy's, and U-boats

Tactically, of course, the battleships predominate. But the auxiliary units of the game (I do not consider the air strength important that far outweighs their small numbers).

The carriers’ primary use is tactical—when present in a given area, they can, if fortunate, eliminate valuable units from the enemy battleline before the surface engagement even begins. The “disabled” airstrike factors do not exceed the possible threat. See Critical Issue #4 for discussion of carrier deployment in this regard. Enough has been said on this here, beyond the observation that wasting airstrike factors can be tragic in the long run, when you’re faced with a battle involving too many airstrike factors and not enough targets. A second use for carriers, beyond using them against surface units, is to fatten up a fleet’s anti-submarine capability. The Eagle in particular is most useful here, as its low airstrike and speed factors make it a good “disabler.” The same goes for the four biggest British units—Hood and Duke of York—in a sound reversal of British tactics. A last airstrike factor was used on Repulse—a mistake that in the Warspite was a better target (better to have a three-factor unit shooting back later, rather than four factors). All RIGHT! SURFACE FACTOR. The British fire five factors each at Scharnhorst and Hipper, and four at Graf Spee and Graf Zeppelin each. Graf Spee’s undamaged two factors make that ship as dangerous as Scharnhorst’s damaged three factors; assigning five factors to fire at the German cruiser seems excessive. This distribution of fire is otherwise reasonable given the numerical weakness and rough uniformity of the German units. If Bismarck and Scharnhorst had survived this battle, however, fire should have been concentrated on such strongpoints in the battleline. As we can see, looking at the original German lineup, they are the German fleet here—or were.

German return fire was correct in aiming at the four big British units. As Scharnhorst was damaged by the airstrike, it only disabled the Hood, rather than damaging or sinking it. The effects of the British air strike become manifest, particularly as the Bismarck is no longer present.

In fact, the weakness in the German fleet after the battle, leaving two (weak) capital units and a cruiser and carrier pitted against four battle units and two cruisers, meant that an early withdrawal might have been in order. The retreat wouldn’t have avoided a battle, but at least the fighting would have been over before one round, and the British battlecruises are usually quite slow (not in this fight, unfortunately). Now a damaged German fleet must withdraw anyway, having had little chance at the convoy.

The lack of damage to Graf Spee now proves decisive. In the exchange of shots between Graf Spee and Hipper and the pursuing Duke of York and Repulse—the British get the worst of it with heavy damage and disabling of Duke of York. Repulse quite wisely decides to call it a day and the battle is over.

RESULTS. Neither side gets POCs for the area, thanks to the U-boats—the one consolation for the Germans. The convoy goes through, and the three POCs resulting from that will aid the Allies cause greatly. The loss of Scharnhorst’s speed is crippled and will have to undergo repairs, which will put it out of the game for a turn and under likely air attack—is an unpleasant after-effect. The loss of the German carrier removes the one counter to British carrier superiority. Thus the damage to German ships in the battle makes fall the damage done by the convoy’s voyage, in some overall manner.

COMMENTARY: An Example of Play

This article was originally planned to include a second battle scenario, specifically the principles discussed in the text. The Example of Play in the rules, however, serves to illustrate tactics as well as the conduct of play under the rules. Pull it out and glance over the example; then I’ve some commentary related to the discussion in the text.

ASW/U-BOAT. If the convoy wasn’t in this battle (its presence so close to Russia and two Allied POCs make it an imperative target), the next important target would be the Victorious. A look ahead at the airstrike phase shows its importance—Victorious will go on to damage Spee, but will knock Bismarck out of the battle. Victorious thus denies Bismarck’s 15-inches any chance to fire and, by simply damaging Scharnhorst, reduces that ship’s gunnery effectiveness by one-third. The obvious lesson: The convoy’s presence in battle is the only reason for diverting the U-boats away from carrier targets. The removal of Bismarck and Scharnhorst will cost the Germans the use of their two best units.

AIR STRIKES. Victorious quite properly aims at the two best German units. The remaining German units have very weak artillery and armor strength, roughly, and the fortunes of battle turn on those two ships. The German air strikes quite properly go for the convoy and the carrier. Victorious has done its damage by now, but is important in terms of long-term strategy. Still, in narrow tactical terms, it might have been better to ignore the Victorious and aim at another British capital unit. Remember, hits or disabling results during the air strike phase take effect before the main battle.

One final note: Of the three German air strikes left over from the convoy and the carrier, two went for the biggest enemy units—Hood and Duke of York—in a sound reversal of British tactics. A last airstrike factor was used on Repulse—a mistake that in the Warspite was a better target (better to have a three-factor unit shooting back later, rather than four factors).

SURFACE FACTOR. The British fire five factors each at Scharnhorst and Hipper, and four at Graf Spee and Graf Zeppelin each. Graf Spee’s undamaged two factors make that ship as dangerous as Scharnhorst’s damaged three factors; assigning five factors to fire at the German cruiser seems excessive. This distribution of fire is otherwise reasonable given the numerical weakness and rough uniformity of the German units. If Bismarck and Scharnhorst had survived this battle, however, fire should have been concentrated on such strongpoints in the battleline. As we can see, looking at the original German lineup, they are the German fleet here—or were.

German return fire was correct in aiming at the four big British units. As Scharnhorst was damaged by the airstrike, it only disabled the Hood, rather than damaging or sinking it. The effects of the British air strike become manifest, particularly as the Bismarck is no longer present.

In fact, the weakness in the German fleet after the battle, leaving two (weak) capital units and a cruiser and carrier pitted against four battle units and two cruisers, meant that an early withdrawal might have been in order. The retreat wouldn’t have avoided a battle, but at least the fighting would have been over before one round, and the British battlecruises are usually quite slow (not in this fight, unfortunately). Now a damaged German fleet must withdraw anyway, having had little chance at the convoy.

DISENGAGEMENT. Anticlimactic, as the decision to withdraw—when—greatly outweighs how the withdrawal is conducted. The Scharnhorst is snapped at during the retreat—crippled during the battle, it is easy prey for two cruisers and avoids sinking only because the ‘disabled’ result ironically worked against the British by confusing them as if it were still in service. It would have been sunk otherwise.

The lack of damage to Graf Spee now proves decisive. In the exchange of shots between Graf Spee and Hipper and the pursuing Duke of York and Repulse—the British get the worst of it with heavy damage and disabling of Duke of York. Repulse quite wisely decides to call it a day and the battle is over.

RESULTS. Neither side gets POCs for the area, thanks to the U-boats—the one consolation for the Germans. The convoy goes through, and the three POCs resulting from that will aid the Allies cause greatly. The loss of Scharnhorst’s speed crippled and will have to undergo repairs, which will put it out of the game for a turn and under likely air attack—is an unpleasant after-effect. The loss of the German carrier removes the one counter to British carrier superiority. Thus the damage to German ships in the battle makes fall the damage done by the convoy’s voyage, in some overall manner.
U-boats can be especially potent in the Mediterranean. They can assist the Italian fleet tactically, and, even if the Italians are swept from the sea in a particular battle, the presence of U-boats can negate any control the RN was attempting. As it takes a large slice of the RN to achieve any results against the Italians, the use of U-boats in this matter can be especially frustrating.

One final note on the auxiliary units: The British should bear Rule 11.6 firmly in mind, and assign sufficient surface units (cruisers are especially useful) to ensure that the carriers aren’t needlessly shot at.

CRITICAL ISSUE #9: Land-based Air

Land-based air units have obvious uses and limitations, as the rules and board will show. However, land-based air can only shoot one-on-one (“one factor, one ship” again), and have only a one-third chance of injuring a given ship. And the odds decrease to one-sixth against ships in port; what good is a ‘disabled’ result there? Thus, land-based air units should be used against units at sea whenever possible, for obvious reasons. Enough has already been said about the turn sequence.

CRITICAL ISSUE #10: Sermonette

I know I promised, at the start, to avoid any discussion of WAS as history. I cannot resist one particular comment, however.

It is easy to dismiss WAS at first glance, as some sort of Germanic fantasy. It must be obvious to even the most unsophisticated among the wargaming audience that the Axis forces have been inflated far beyond their historical capabilities while Allied units are badly holidays. (The limitations on the U.S. Navy are particularly galling from an American standpoint. A “minor” navy, indeed!)

We must bear in mind, however, that WAS is intended as a highly playable game and that it expressly takes liberties with the historical scenario. What we see on the board is a distortion of enemy capability. In actual fact the Axis fleets in Europe were so badly limited by poor doctrine, leadership, industrial capacities and policies that no balanced simulation of surface combat in the Atlantic would be possible in strict historical terms. Other than under water, the Axis inferiority in numbers of initiative was too great.

The main lesson to be drawn is that the actual naval limitations were self-imposed. The wargamer’s attention is often drawn to examples of excellence in engineering and leadership on the other side—but for each Bismarck there were many ships of the quality of Washington or Duke of York; for every Donitz there were many Allied admirals like King, Cunningham, Vian, et al. There were quite a few examples on the other side, as well—as to including all heads of state.

CRITICAL ISSUE #11: Bibliography

There have been many variants on WAR AT SEA, far more than such a simple game would suggest. A look at some recent examples from the pages of The GENERAL is in order, for those wishing more historical flavor or more complexity (which, mind you, is not always synonymous with realism):

Vol. 16, No. 3: “The Ships of WAR AT SEA” by Kevin Duke. An in-depth look at the units of the game. Not really a variant, but certainly of worth. Some tactical notes on the use of individual ships as well as historical commentary; makes for a fascinating study.

Vol. 15, No. 5: “Tournament Level WAS” by Richard Bauer. A thoughtful conclusion of simulated playability, expanding on the basic framework. Essentially (as the title suggests) with a minimum of added units. This is actually more an enhancement of the game rather than a variant as we’ve come to expect.

Vol. 15, No. 3: “WAS and the Russian Navy” by Sean Caulfield. A variant introducing two new areas: The Black Sea and the eastern Mediterranean. The Russian Black Sea Fleet is introduced, and new units are added to the Russian Baltic Fleet and the Italian Navy (including the carrier Aquila which, unlike the Graf Zeppelin, was actually completed).

Vol. 14, No. 4: “Victory at Sea” by Richard Hamblen. All this and World War II: a variant linking WAS and VITP. New areas introduced: the Caribbean Sea, which links US ports to both games, and Cape of Good Hope, a direct link between the South Atlantic and the Bay of Bengal. New British and US units are introduced (including light carriers like Ranger and Argus); French units are included; German merchant raiders and Italian frogmen put in appearances. Common time-frames and joint victory conditions are included; Allied transfer between theaters given decided advantages (the USN can concentrate on VITP, the RN on WAS), but the Axis can combine in interesting ways, as well. As concerned a game of global naval strategy as you’ll find.

Vol. 14, No. 3: “WAS & The French Navy” by Dr. Joseph Conolly. L’Armee de la Mer appears in full here—on both sides, with interesting rules for changes in French loyalty (similar to the Italian “Takeover” rule). Some changes in the PCOs and disposition rules. Will balance out the appearance of many survivin French ships on the Allied side. Two German pre-dreadnoughts (Schleswig-Holstein class) also appear.


Vol. 13, No. 4: “WAS Series Replay” Mick Uhl versus Richard Hamblen, with Don Greenwood as commentator. A close game with a good display of WAS under field conditions. Commentary is somewhat detailed and provided many insights into conduct of WAS as it should be played.

Vol. 13, No. 3: “Basic Probability for WAS” by Richard Hamblen. Two-faceted article. The celebrated “Fuzzy-Wuzzy Formula” was first aired, a detailed mathematical analysis of ships’ hitting-power (which inspired the article in Vol. 13, No. 6). Also featured was a variant introducing the port of Gibraltar (bordering on the Med and South Atlantic), Italian frogmen, an abbreviated French fleet, new convoys, and changes in the PCOs.

Copies

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The Compleat Diplomat

By Rod Walker

A corollary of Murphy's Law declares that if you write a sentence, no matter how simple, there is somebody, somewhere, who will misunderstand it. This obviously means that if you create a set of game rules, there will be people who come across game situations which are clearly covered in the rules but resolve them incorrectly anyway. Well, after all, we gamers are only human, right? Now this failure to find the rule applicable to a given situation is understandable in a game which, say, recreates the Battle of Chancellorsville with the entire original cast—right down to irate roosters and panic-stricken pigs. However, it's a little hard to believe this would happen in a game like DIPLOMACY, whose rules consist of barely more than nine small pages.

Wrong! It's hard to believe, but it nonetheless happens. Over the years I've been told things or asked questions by (mostly novice) DIPLOMACY players which reveal that they've misread or overlooked some statement or the other in the rules. I'm going to ignore some of the arcane brouhahas of the 1960's, and some of the really oddball views that cross my path now and then, and discuss briefly some seemingly very common misapplications of the DIPLOMACY Rulebook.

1. Support in Place.

When you order one of your (non-moving) units to support another unit, you can support its movement—or you can support it holding if it remains in place, but not if it moves. The order to support in this example is illegal:

FRANCE: A Bur-Mun, A Par S A Bur

I've been told quite seriously that the rationale behind this order is that if Army Burgandy fails to move, it is attacked with support (say GERMANY: A Ruh-Bur, A Bel S A Ruh-Bur, for instance), Army Paris can support it in place. No way! Rule IX.6 clearly prohibits it. Only a unit not ordered to move can be supported in holding its present position.

2. Movement Behind an Attack.

A successful attack clears the way for a following unit, despite the rule which would otherwise require a stand-off. This is clearly shown in Rule IX.7 and Examples 5 and 6. But here's another example:

FRANCE: A Bur-Mun

GERMANY: A Mun-Bur, A Ruh S A Mun-Bur, A Kie-Mun

The italicized order is unsuccessful, of course. Note that the orders Army Burgandy to Munich and Army Kiel to Munich would normally result in a stand-off. However, the Army Burgandy is dislodged by an attack coming from Munich, so it can't prevent the move from Kiel from succeeding. On the other hand:


Here the French unit is still defeated and dislodged, but not by an attack from Munich. Its ordered move therefore still results in a stand-off in Munich. Some players who've written to me find this a strange result—but it is the correct one under the rules.

3. Cutting Support.

An attack always cuts support, no matter what happens to the attacking unit (with the exception noted in Rule X and Example 8). This fact sometimes yields results which may seem odd to the novice at first:

ITALY: A Bur-Mun, A Ven-Tyrolia

ENGLAND: A Pic-Bur, A Par S A Pic-Bur

GERMANY: A Boh-Tyrolia, A Mun S A Boh-Tyrolia

Even though Italy's Army Burgandy is dislodged, its attack cuts the support being given elsewhere by Germany's unit in Munich. In fact, single armies can sometimes really gum up the works:

AUSTRIA: A Ser-Bud

ITALY: A Tri-Ser, A Alb S A Tri-Ser

RUSSIA: A Ukr-Rum, A Bud S A Ukr-Rum, A Mos-Ukr, A War S A Mos Ucr

TURKEY: A Rum-Ser, A Bul S A Rum-Ser

Had it not been for that Austrian army, all of Russia's orders would have succeeded. The result looks even odder, since the Austrian also survives the combined (but not coordinated) attack of four hostile armies. For that situation, note Rule IX.5, the "Beleaguered Garrison".

4. Retreats

It has been known to happen that some players assume that a dislodged unit can't retreat to a supply center not already owned by that player. But Rule XI makes no such exception. So, in the instance below, with France owning Marseilles:

FRANCE: A Pic-Bur, A Par S A Pic-Bur

GERMANY: A Bur-Par

The German is dislodged. If Marseilles is vacant (but not vacant due to a stand-off that season), then the German army may retreat to it. If this is a Fall season, Germany gains Marseilles and France loses the center (see Rule XII.1, in which it is specified that ownership of supply centers is calculated not merely after the Fall moves, but the retreats as well).
With the impending release of *Advanced Squad Leader*, I fear that some players may lose sight of the geniuses—the original game and its superb scenarios that became one of the greatest sellers in the Avalon Hill line. To return to our boots, I offer here a general plan for the novice German player and firm guidelines for the maneuvering of his forces designed, in accordance with the Victory Conditions, to defeat the Soviet player by retaining control of at least three of the "level 3 elevation hexes that constitute the high crest line of Hill 621." Unfortunately, it is true that "no plan of campaign survives contact with that constitute the high crest line of Hill 621," designed, in accordance with the Victory Conditions, to defeat the Soviet player by retaining control of at least three of the "level 3 elevation hexes that constitute the high crest line of Hill 621." Unfortunately, it is true that "no plan of campaign survives contact with that constitute the high crest line of Hill 621." However, tactics and principles that I outline will hold true in all but the most exceptional circumstances. Only rules 1-63 (Fourth Edition) are considered; this is classic SL.

**The Russian Set-up (Board 3)**

They begin with three squads. 01: 9-1, 3 squads, 2 LMGs. 301 to 405 (using the road bonus); the 8-0 at 3Y1 to 4G04 (to threaten the entry of the Mark IVs).

**The German Set-up (Board 4)**

V2: 9-2, 3 squads, radio, 2 LMGs, 2 Panzerausfas (PFs).

T3: 1 squad, HMG

G2: 8-1, 3 squads, 2 LMGs.

H0: 1 squad, MMG, 1 PF.

The maximum number of squads are placed with leaders, to benefit from the leader modifier during the special "At Start Morale Check" (Special Rule 5.1). Squads breaking at V2 and G2 will be sheltered from any fire from building 3N1 during the first turn, and will not therefore suffer from Desperation Morale when they attempt to rally at the beginning of the Russian turn. Note that wooden building 4T3 is just out of range of the normal Russian MMGs—the basic idea behind setting up so far back on Board 4 is to enable the Germans to strike at the Russians with their longer-range weapons and inflict casualties before the Russians can close in and retaliate. Unless more than one squad breaks at V2, Stahler intends to move up to hex 4T3 on his first turn, and will be in position to rally the squad already there should it have broken before-hand.

At the outset of any Squad Leader scenario it is vital to have a plan of campaign, and—unless this involves taking a whole unexpected turn, or an opportunity arises which must be seized—to stick to it. You can always tell a player who has a plan in his head from the one who doesn't (he's the one who's winning).

In this scenario the German player enjoys the advantage of knowing exactly what the Soviet objectives are, and the routes he must follow to obtain them. The shortest distance to Hill 621 is down the center of Board 4, through and around the wooden building at 66. Consequently this approach must be the most heavily defended; Stahler, the artillery, and the heavy machine gun will shortly be backed up by the Mark IVs and the anti-tank gun (ATG). The second best inroad lies in front of the Soviet "left wing", through the forests of 416, 4F4, 4H2, apart from the fact that the HMG at 4T3 has a line of fire that cuts directly across the board. Consequently this approach must be the most heavily defended; Stahler, the artillery, and the heavy machine gun will shortly be backed up by the Mark IVs and the anti-tank gun (ATG).

In his Defensive Fire Phase the HMG of the Soviet player is deployed on this side to slow down the enemy thrust. Lastly, the line of attack which involves covering the most ground would require a wheeled movement from the Soviet "right wing", infiltrating down the road 4Y3-2Y8 and through the woods to the south of it. Trading space for time, this flank not only to be lightly covered—principally by a squad, an LMG and two PFs ensconced in the stone building at 4X1.

The overall aim of the German player is to slow down the advance of the Russian infantry to such an extent that the attack becomes uncoordinated or disintegrates altogether before the level three hexes can be reached, whereupon the Soviet player is obligated to send in his armored fighting vehicles (AFVs) alone to seize the crest line, making them vulnerable, once they are deprived of their infantry support, to panzerfaust and Close Combat assaults (the German reserves, the 8-3-9s, are essential only in this role, needing only a roll of "8" to eliminate the heaviest Assault Gun). The initial perimeter defended by the Letornovski garrison will be centered on hexes 4X1, 4T3, 3110, 4G1 and 4F2. Of course it will be a shrinking, retreating perimeter. Bearing in mind his dearth of leaders, the German player would like to bring back alive to the slopes of Hill 621 both Stahler and Hamblen. Realizing, however, that during the first three or four turns he will need tenaciously to hold his ground and where possible bring the Russian attack to a bloody halt, he will need to judge very finely the right moment of surviving in place by the end of the next move, and withdrawing when the odds have turned against him.

**German Turn One**

In the Rally Phase, establish radio contact for the artillery module (be grateful if you get anything better than two missions of 80mm!); from the given set-up one can expect on average two squads to break. Assume that one squad at 4V2 and one at 4G2 fails the initial morale check.

In the Preparation Fire Phase the HMG can fire into 301 or, if that hex is vacant, into the second level of 3N1. The Letornovski garrison begins to move; from out of 4V2 a squad, carrying a LMG and two PFs slips onto 4W2 (a blind hex to 3N1). Meanwhile Stahler, along with the one remaining unbroken squad, a LMG and the radio, shifts into 4T3 through 4U3. From out of 4G2, on the other side of the board, a squad runs to 2G10 through 4G1. The squad with the MMG and PF at 4H0 retires onto 2H9.

The 75mm anti-tank gun (ATG) loaded onto a halftrack makes its entrance at 3Q1. It aims to deploy to 2Q7, from where it will be able to look straight down the center of the boards as far as 3Q5, dominating those vital stretches of roadway 2Q8 to 4G2, and 4Q6 to 3Q3, and after German Turn 3 denying their use of the T-34's. By splitting the center of the playing area along the line of sight (LOS), not only will the ATG discourage a Soviet tank charge down the middle but it will make it hazardous for the Russian player to switch his tank forces from one side of the playing area to the other. The halftrack carrying the ATG moves round to 2R7 (13 Movement Points), facing 2Q7/2Q8.

In his DFP a novice Russian player will combine his MMGs into one fire-group, giving them a total firepower factor at long-range of "4", risking a die roll of 1+ that breaks down both MMGs at once and deprives him of a vital tactical weapon. All firing finished, the routing takes place. From 4G2 Hamblen, carrying a LMG, elects to fall back on 4G1 with the single broken squad (15.8). Note that a broken squad remains at 4V2, Stahler cannot afford to delay a game turn rallying this squad—which his modifier is needed behind the HMG, and he must call in the artillery as quickly as possible. By the end of the next turn the broken squad will have
grown a concealment counter, increasing its chances of survival so that Stahler may be able to return to it later, and in the meantime it denies the enemy passage through 4V2.

During the Advance Phase the squad at 4W2 enters the stone building at 4X1. Out of 2H9 the squad, carrying only the MG, moves onto 2110 (where it is hoped to entrench on subsequent turns); the squad at 2G10 moving onto 2H9 to pick up the PF. The squad the LMG at 4G2 advances onto 4F2—a blind hex to building 3N1 and a good position from which to cover hexes 4G4, G5, G6 and snipe at the Russian "left wing".

Finally, a word of caution. You should resist moving any squads into the woods at 4T4—the hex is just within normal range of the MGs at 3N1, who will probably penalize you for sticking your head out in this manner. The only time the German player should consider such a move in the Advance Phase is if a large number of leaders/squads have been stacked around hexes 3R1, S1, T1, U1 and there is an evident intention to rush up hexrow T on Board 4 (in which case 4U3 is a safer hex than 4T4 from which to frustrate that particular attack).

RUSSIAN TURN ONE

During the Rally Phase establish/maintain radio contact. Place the German artillery request at 4T4; you don't intend to bring down the FFE there (hexes 4V5, V4, or U5 are the real selection, covering the blind spot at 4T4 and discouraging a charge through the wheatfield) but should you fail to roll a "1" or a "2" placing your spotting round, you will have a better chance to keep track of it as it goes astray from 4T4. Meanwhile, the squad at 4G1 rallies.

Now the Russians begin their onslaught... Note how the German HMG and MG hinder an advance through the center—the HMG preventing the full use of the road by covering 4Q8 and the MG able, by firing along the wall hexside, to shoot into 4N7 and catch out the unwary.

For the sake of coherence I shall divide the Russian front into three groups—left wing, centre and right wing. The following moves can be expected, or a variation thereon:

Left wing: 3C1: 2 squads to 4D7; squad to 4C9. 3E1: 3 squads to 4E7. 3G1: 8-0, 3 squads, LMG to 4I6 (alternative—4F5). 3H1: 3 squads to 4I8. 3K1: 2 squads to 4J8.

Centre: 3M1: 3 squads to 4O8. 3N1: squad to 4M9. 3O1: 9-1, 3 squads, 2 LMGs to 4O7. 3P1: 3 squads to 4P8 (using road 3Q1/4Q9). 3R1: 3 squads to 4R8. 3S1: squad to 4S7. 3T1: squad to 4S9.

Right wing: 3U1: 3 squads to 4T7. 3W1: 3 squads to 4W7. 3X1: squad to 4W9; squad to 4X9. 3Y1: 8-0, 3 squads to 4X5. 3Z1: 3 squads, LMG to 4CC7 (accepting Defensive Fire from 4X1 into BB7 with a net modifier of 0: -2 for moving in open, +2 for hedges at Y2/X2 and BB7, which threat was enough to discourage the 8-0 leader from trying the same route). Squads at 3EE1 and 3FF1 to 4FF7.

And then the Advance Phase:

Left wing: Squad at 4C9 to 4BB. 4D7: squad to 4D6; squad to 4E7. 4E7: 2 squads to 4E6, squad to 4F6. 4F6: 3 squads to 4F7. 4G6: squad, LMG to 4J5; 8-0, 2 squads to 4I6.

Centre: Squad at 4M9 to 4M8. 4O7: 9-1, 3 squads, 2 LMGs to 4O6. 4O8: 3 squads to 4O7. 4P8: 3 squads to 4P7. 4R8: 3 squads to 4R7. Squad at 4S7 to 4S6. Squad at 4S9 to 4S8.

Right wing: 4T7: 2 squads to 4T6; squad to 4U7. 4W7: squad to 4W6; squad to 4X6; squad holds. Squad from 4W9 to 4W8. 4X5: squad to 4W5; squad to 4X4; squad holds; 8-0 to 4W6. 4CC7: 3 squads, LMG to 4CC6. 4FF7: 2 squads to 4GG7. Squad at 4Y9 remains in place.

Figure 1: Initial Placement, German and Soviet.
GERMAN TURN TWO

In the Rally Phase, assuming your spotting round landed satisfactorily the previous turn, maintain a red spotting round at 4T4. Do so especially if you have only one or two fire missions available; they are best used up during the second and third Russian turns two (falling in your DFPh) coming down at 4V4 or 4U4 to protect and prolong the lives of the group in 4T3.

Generally speaking, if you have three or four fire missions at your disposal, use them up quickly—the chances are you will lose contact on the radio or your leader will be broken before they can all be accounted for. If you are given only one fire mission, handle it carefully. Often it pays to hold back until the last possible moment, the mere presence of a red spotting round being sufficient to cause an opponent to hesitate.

Try for entrenchment at 2110 (not using the leader modifier, as Hamblen moves back now to 2110 to get behind the MMG). Do not attempt entrenchment at 2H9 in case the squad at 2110 subsequently breaks and you need to send in that at 2H9 in the Advance Phase to take charge of the MMG.

In the Movement Phase, the Halftrack carrying the ATG unloads in 2Q7 (10 MPs), facing 2R6/R7. Hamblen moves as described above, whilst the squad and LMG that became vulnerable at 4F2 step back to 4G2.

Correct use of the tanks is essential if the German player is to win this scenario. It is important to realize they have a dual role to play: to knock out the T-34s and to hold the enemy infantry by gun, since rules (34.8) require a KIA result to be accounted for. If you are given only one fire mission, try and pick off just those tanks which cover potential lines of retreat. Keep in mind that you want to avoid slugging it out on your next turn, but where possible shift back to defendable positions and enjoy another volley of shots in your DFPh against the T-34s as they come on to seek you out.

Once three or four T-34s have appeared, the direction of the attack will be clear and now one can think about hitting out at the remaining three or so tanks as they come on. You hope to kill a T-34 or two (and if the German player does get the upper hand in the tank-to-tank fighting, his chances of victory increase enormously) but don't be surprised if you don't kill any—once the shell has struck home, a

RUSSIAN TURN TWO

I am, as the German player, concerned here with the entry of the six T-34s and methods to deal with them. Assume the first tank enters at 3Q10. Do not open fire at it as soon as it appears in your line of sight at 3Q3—even though, from 4Q2, you only require a “7” or less for a hit—or as it advances up to 4Q10. Always let the first tank go by. If you open fire, even if you score a kill, you are committing yourself too early and run the risk of leaving the tank which has fired vulnerable to subsequent T-34s closing for a shot in the Advancing Fire Phase. Watch where the first T-34s end up: it will give you a vital clue to the direction of the assault and to its aggressiveness. For example, if the first tank ends up in the building hex 4P6, 4P8, or 3S1, your opponent is a highly aggressive player prepared to take chances, who is about to make an all-out attempt to force your Mark IVs away from the center. It will pay you therefore to withhold your fire until his deployment is complete and you can try and pick off just those tanks which cover potential lines of retreat. Keep in mind that you want to avoid slugging it out on your next turn, but where possible shift back to defendable positions and enjoy another volley of shots in your DFPh against the T-34s as they come on to seek you out.
"6" or less is required to finish the job, and that can prove remarkably elusive.

GERMAN TURN THREE

If all is going according to plan, on the right wing you are consolidating around and behind the entrenched at 2110 (dig if you haven’t achieved it so far). On the left flank the squad at 4X1 should be beginning to make the usual stubborn stand inside the stone building (probably fighting to the death) with its LMG and the tank’s machine guns to fend off the Soviet infantry. In the center Stahler hopes to hang on for another two turns at 4T3. Eventually it might prove possible to evacuate him via 4T2 (with the reserve halftrack parked there to provide cover) into 4S2. The second fire mission from the artillery is reserved again for the Defensive Fire Phase.

The anti-tank gun unlimbers at 2Q7 (hoping that the enemy machine guns at 3N1 don’t penetrate past the gun shield and break the crew). Note that besides warding off the T-35s, the 75mm gun has the option of firing smoke shells into 3N1 to blind the machine guns, or HE shells into the Soviet infantry as they scamper into such places as 4P1 and 4O3.

The halftrack which releases the Pak 75 this turn, and has still 8 MPs left to expend, has a number of possibilities that require a follows. To block the Soviet armor, advance, I usually send it up to 2Q5 and onto the crest line at 2Q6 next turn. At 2Q6 it will provide cover (+1 DRM) against incoming fire directed at the 10-3 leader and squad who will arrive there in the Advance Phase of Turn 4. Don’t despise the +1 die roll modifier; it can make the difference between a KIA and a severe morale check, when losing Oberst Greup and a quarter of his forces to a fierce burst of fire would be an undisputed disaster for the German player. Even if the halftrack is subsequently hit and destroyed at 2Q6, the wreck continues to provide the +1 modifier, and the 10-3 and his squad should be able to pass the mandatory morale check (32.5) attendant on the destruction of the vehicle.

GERMAN TURN FOUR

This is the turn of the entry of the rear area reserves. These are the men whose job it will be to link up with the survivors from Stahler’s and Hamblen’s Kampfgruppen and hold the crest line of the ridge. However, don’t overestimate the ability of these 8-3-8s to withstand morale checks. Of course you will want to put them and their machine guns on the third level hexes of Hill 621, where they will have excellent fields of fire; but by now the ridge is being bombarded by the guns of the T-34s, as well as raked by the machine guns firing at long-range from 3N1 and the inherent firepower of the Soviet infantry. Should a squad break down and run, Greup will have to abandon his radio, call off the artillery, and hasten down the western slope of the hill to rally his men at 2Q4 or 2M4. Especially if you have a powerful artillery module available to Greup, you should think very carefully about setting out your squads on exposed positions along the ridge.

To some extent the deployment of the reserves will depend on the state of the battlefield at the time they arrive. For example, if Stahler has received plenty of artillery support and is still holding out at 4T3, it would be sensible to send a halftrack to 4S1, disgorging into the wooden building at 4S2 a squad equipped with panzerfausts to drive off marauding T-34s (remember that until the entry of the SU-152s the panzerfaust with a frontal TO KILL number of "7" is the most effective anti-tank weapon on the board) and cover Stahler’s evacuation towards the ridge. Even under these circumstances however, the machine guns will still be put down along the crest line of Hill 621.

Assume however that the surviving Mark IVs from the center have been driven back around the Pak 75 (where they will prove especially difficult to winkle out), the Mark IV from 4Y2 has had the good sense to retreat in time to 2X7, and the T-34s are helping to crush the outposts at 4X1 and 4T3, then the reserves will effect a standard deployment, entering at hex 2Q1.

The leading halftrack, carrying the 10-3 leader, a squad, a radio and six panzerfausts, runs up to 2P4 (12 MPs), putting down the squad and the 6 PFs at 2O4, the leader and the radio at 2Q5. The second halftrack reaches 2P3 (12 MPs), unloading into hex 2P4 a squad and the HMG. The penultimate halftrack, squad and MMG aboard, drives up to 2K4 (10 MPs) and sets down its passengers at 2Q5. The last vehicle, transporting a squad, MMG and two panzerfausts, moves up to 2K3 (10 MPs) and deposits its load onto 2K4.

During the Advanced Phase, Greup, the radio a squad and the MMG slip under the halftrack at 2Q6; note that only five portage points can be placed under an AFV, unfortunately excluding the possibility of putting Greup there with the radio and the heavy machine gun. The squad with the heavy machine gun at 2P4 can move on to either P5 or O5, depending on the proximity of the Russian infantry, whether the machine guns are still firing from 3N1 and the size of the threat posed by the T-34. Bear in mind that hex 2O5, within the "shoulders" of the LOS-blocking level three hexes at P5, N5 and T6, is the safer hex. The squad with the half dozen panzerfausts at 2Q4 moves to N4 on its way to 2M4 where it hopes to entrench. This squad constitutes the reserve, whilst from 2M4 it will be in a fine position to fire off its PFs at any tanks/assault guns which eventually top the rise. The squad with the MMG and two PFs at 2K4 will lurk there or advance up to 2K5 depending on the situation to the east of it.

There is one other consideration which will forestall a standard deployment, if a T-34 has by now worked its way round to 2U3. This is in fact only a minor nuisance, prohibiting as it does the use of 2Q1 as the reserve entry hex; and it carries with it the consolation that the Russian tanks will have come on at 3Y10, which limits the attacking options for the other five T-34s as opposed to an entry at 3Q10. And, of course, the T-34 at 2U3 has missed the ensuing tank battle (where, with the odds at only 5:4 against them, the Mark IVs have a fair chance of getting the better of the Russian tanks).

In this case the entry hex is switched to 2I1 and the leading halftrack, this time bearing Greup, a squad, the radio and an MMG, drives to 2P3 (14 MPs) unloading everyone onto 2P4. The following vehicle moves to 2O3 (9½ MPs), setting out at 2O4 a squad with the heavy machine gun. The third halftrack, squad, MMG and 2 PFs aboard, reaches 2L4 (13½ MPs) and deposits its passengers at 2K4; whilst the last transport moves up to 2N2 (9½ MPs) setting onto 2K3 a squad with six panzerfausts. On this occasion the halftrack disgorges from the Pak 75 good to 2P5 to provide cover for Greup and his group after the Advance Phase.

A final word about the reserves and their halftracks. Forget any idea of not unloading the halftracks on their turn of entry and setting up a mobile reserve. A loaded halftrack makes an easy target for a T-34 (whose movement factor of "10" makes them fast indeed) racing up adjacent to the halftrack in its Movement Phase and firing off a shot with a TO HIT number of "7" or less (cases F and J applying) in its Advancing Fire Phase.

GERMAN TURN FIVE

Now you must commit the Turn 5 reserves, a pleasant enough task. The entry hex will usually be 2Q1 or 2I1, but note that 2A5 is also available.

Figure 3: A view of Hill 621 showing the standard deployment—down the rear are reserves, the anti-tank gun and the halftrack.

The fifth turn reserves are a very disparate group, and in order to use them effectively you must define clearly in your mind the role of each has to play. The assault guns (STG IIIs) are tank-killers, with a +1 armour modifier that enables them to stand up well in a duel with anything smaller than an SU-152. Notice that they also have an excellent machine gun factor for discouraging infantry. Keep these guns moving towards always better firing positions, shooting up infantry with the machine guns in the Advancing Fire Phase. Don’t hunt down the T-34s (unless you have brewed up so many with the Mark IVs and Pak 75 that the assault guns come on to complete their rout) or Soviet assault guns, but rather settle into defensible positions and wait for them to come to you. Typical good positions are 2I5 (screened off from fire from the plain by...
the woods at 2J6, 2L7 and 2H6) and 2L5 (screened this time by the second level hexes 2M6, 2L6, 2K7 and the woods at 2L3).

The Mark IV/F1, carrying HE ammunition, also cannister (34.9), is clearly designed as an anti-personnel weapon. I usually send it round the left-hand side of the hill 621 (often with one of the extra crews that you are given as a replacement crew for the Pak 75) frequently ending up at 2U7 and firing into the surrounding buildings and woods.

The 50mm anti-tank gun is likely to be more useful against infantry than tanks, but it could be dropped off at hexes such as 2V2 or 2W4, threatening to strike in the rear T-34s that should by chance slip round to the back of Hill 621 with the intention of shooting up your squads attempting to rally halftracks to block off roads around Hill 621. Heed that the crest line. Note that the halftrack is armed with mobile firepower, to be pushed into any gap appearing in the defenses. A good site for the halftrack is a hex such as 2R3.

A word here about the STG III rolling onto the board on Turn 8. Think of this as a anti-personnel weapon and, if possible, try to push it onto the eastern slopes of Hill 621 as a last-ditch measure (hopefully unnecessary) to drive back enemy infantry.

Finally, what employment are you going to find for these halftracks which, having unloaded the fourth turn reserves, are now standing empty and idle? Your use of these depends on the type of player you are. One who regards SQUAD LEADER as a strictly historical simulation will want to use the halftracks to block off roads around Hill 621. He might just possibly use them, as I have used one halftrack already, to provide extra cover for the troops on the ridge.

The historical restraints inherent in the game are usually tugging at my sleeve too. But what if: against the odds, you have fought hard up until Game Turn 5, turning every element in your defense into a deathtrap for the all too numerous enemy, raking through your memory of paragraph after paragraph of rules for the ones that will favor you, and Stahler and Hamblen are withdrawing in good order with their surviving Mark IVs? Mark IVs still standing up alongside the Pak 75, whilst the Russians, if not stopped in their tracks, have been blooded enough to make them suddenly hesitant. What if, in other words, the game hangs finely in the balance and a stroke of good fortune now, a clever maneuver from one side or the other could prove decisive. Can you resist ordering your halftracks in neat convoy to drive onto the road at 2Q8, proceed along it as far as 4Q2, and roll down the Q row of Board 4 in the direction of Board 3?

This tactic is almost worth employing simply for the look of incredulity, puzzlement, intense suspicion, and downright realization it will paint successively across your opponent's face. What dreadful strategem is this you have found? What sudden bolt from the blue? . . . Of course you are intending to park the halftracks at 3Q3, 2Q4 and Q1, obliging the slow-moving assault guns to pay the extra terrain costs (2 MP/vehicle - A or DT) merely to squeeze past them. The SU-152s in particular, with a movement factor of "8", could be delayed as much as an entire game turn! There can be other bonuses too: the first time I employed this maneuver, my bewildered opponent fired off his two T-34s at the oncoming halftracks—the first missed, the second jammed its main gun.

Nor need you feel too shame-faced about resorting to this tactic. I offer two guidelines for deciding whether or not to call on its services. If you have a personal dislike of your opponent, do it! On the other hand, if you consider luck has been on your side so far in the game, then limit yourself to sending down just one halftack to 3Q1 to annoy the opposition. If luck has been against you, then send down the lot and redress the balance!

Dealing with The Soviet Assault Brigade

Although the assault guns are at first sight extremely formidable, they have a number of significant weaknesses of which you should take careful note. They are slow; their guns cannot fire in the Advancing Fire Phase if they have moved in the same turn; and when they do fire, they have a poor range (case B and C applying); they have no machine guns with which to protect themselves against assaulting infantry.

Your best defense against the Assault Brigade is your original plan. You must hope that you have so badly disrupted the infantry onslaught that the Russian player will have to rely chiefly or entirely on his tanks/assault guns to claim the ridge. This is where it pays to scrutinize carefully the "Victory Conditions". Observe that the Russian player must be in occupation of five of those level 3 elevation hexes at the end of the game (in other words it is not enough simply to pass through them). As far as the Russian soldierly is concerned, it is enough for them to clear of Germans the eastern slopes and the crest line of Hill 621, reaching the second level hexes on their Movement Phase of Game Turn 10, during their Advance Phase—since the Russian player will have in the last move already—litely they themselves up onto five of the seven level three hexes when it is too late for the Germans to stop them.

Soviet AFVs on the other hand, having no Advance Phase, allowing whatever STG IIIIs, anti-tank guns and panzerfausts you have left on the western slope a chance to score a kill and win back a hex or two. If your Pak 75 at 2V2 does nothing, the German player—oh the exactly the right place to hit the assault guns as they advance down the Q hexrow of Board 4. You are unlikely to achieve a kill, but at least hitting the monsters will force the invading infantry to dismount (31.7). In the meantime, I would advise you to concentrate your infantry firepower on stopping the ordinary 4-4-7 squads, as their better rifle fire makes them, until late in the game, deadlier than the 6-2-8s.

CONCLUSION

There is something about "Hill 621" that brings me back to it despite all the changes and achievements that we have seen in our favorite game system since it appeared. Is it a matter of taste? I think it gives me the feel of the Germans in Russia 1944: the overwhelming odds, the desperate race (knowing in the back of your mind that so little will be achieved by it, but that this much must be done)? Or is it because this scenario throws down such a formidable challenge to the German player—the old excitement of winning against the odds. Or does the satisfaction lie in the fact that it requires of the German player real finesse, calm judgement, an exact sense of timing, and an ability to smoothly coordinate disparate elements—men, machine guns, tanks, anti-tank guns, panzerfausts, assault guns and artillery in a solid, interlocking defense?

Whatever the reason, "Hill 621" is a great scenario. It is hoped that a study of this article will equip the novice to give a good account of himself as the German player. No need to feel too dismayed if you lose. Congratulate yourself if the issue was still in the balance on the ninth and tenth turns of the game. And you can be justifiably proud of yourself when you win, and know that you are well prepared for the challenges that lie ahead in ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER. You’re ready for graduation to the ultimate.
This is the second article offering the opposing approaches of two master players of our monster game. In their previous article ("Getting Ashore and Staying Ashore" in Vol. 21, No. 3), Messers. Piotrowski and Thompson considered the difficulties the Allies faced during that crucial first turn, and methods of overcoming these. Here they look at the German response. Readers should note that Mr. Thompson's comments are in black; Mr. Piotrowski's opposing views are in red.

Daring! Throughout history that one word has been synonymous with both military success, and disaster. THE LONGEST DAY, true to its nature, allows for this. The player who can blend cunning and daring and luck successfully will dramatically increase his chances of victory. Indeed, it may be that this is the only way the German player can win.

During the Allied portion of June 6 it is extremely important that the Allied player hit the Normandy beaches as hard as deep and as fast as possible, trying to throw the enemy off-balance, for their June 6 turn at least. The Allied army is at its most critically weak state on this turn and the Germans must be allowed to gain the initiative anywhere on the battlefield during this opening portion of the game. Of course, what gives the German player any reason for continuing the game after the Allied landing is the fact that he is quite capable of doing so if certain conditions are right and he has the daring to attempt it. It takes intelligence and experience to recognize the conditions which can be exploited. That only comes with many playings of the invasion (even "abbreviated" ones). And the daring to attempt to seize the initiative will come only from a German commander who knows that anything less will mean certain Allied victory.

GERMAN REACTION

Just how the German commander reacts to the invasion depends upon the initial penetrations made by the Allied armies. For this reason, the basis for the German reaction consists of two distinct approaches—one assuming a solid Allied landing and the necessity of forming a defensive line at all costs (i.e., the Allies firmly have the initiative); and the second assuming that the Allied landing offers the opportunity for the German seizing the initiative. Further, the German commander must divide the battlefield into three distinct sectors and handle each individually: a) the British sector running from the Ranville area west to Bayeux; b) the OMAHA Beach area from Bayeux to Isigny; and c) the UTAH Beach area from Carentan to Montebourg and the coast.

It is vital for the German player to fully appreciate the extent of the Allied landings in each sector and be aware of his own capabilities in reaction. The German is quite capable of a fluid response on June 6, able to either form his defensive line back from Allied units (most particularly the British) so as to escape the June 6 defensive fire and allow for the formation of a defensive line rightside of the Allied positions. Given this, the German must be familiar with his possibilities and limitations. He must be conscious that these will change from turn to turn (and even from phase to phase) during the early part of the game. He must continually adapt or else be defeated.

Limitations are rather obvious. The Allies will have stormed ashore in strength, particularly at OMAHA and SWORD, and the German player will find himself critically short of units of any type to hold a defensive line until reinforcements can arrive. If the British sector and the Americans on OMAHA are both healthy, there is little chance of the German stealing the initiative. Any attempt to counterattack will most likely result in the loss of even more precious units and rapid advances by the Allies off the beaches. This applies, of course, to a lesser extent to the center and, if the American efforts at the coast are not too successful, the German can still hold a defensive line on the north coast for a long time. Thus, the German reaction consists not only of an immediate defensive line, but also of counterattacks as soon as is practical. A German counterattack, of course, is within the realm of possibility, though once again, there is little chance of completely overwhelming the Allied player.

Before we see how this supposedly can be done, let's review what the German reaction on June 6 should be. I agree with Dan that there are two defense lines possible; but I have different reasons for using the two plans with many factors affecting the decision. Of course, the successes and penetrations of the Allied landings are a major factor; but other things, like the experience of the opposing player and the amount of "luck" affecting each player thus far, are also important in front line allocations. (If, for instance, you have a gut feeling that the enemy player is "due" a run of good luck, then change your set-up accordingly.)

I do agree with Dan's sector arrangement, and I'll discuss each sector individually in the same format. First though, the importance of UTAH Beach should not be underestimated as I believe Dan has done. He states that it should prove to be easily checked. It is critical that the German positions his units properly—especially at Carentan where, if the German is not careful, the Cotentin peninsula can be cut off from France on June 9th. This will be discussed in detail later.

I don't approve of putting a big push towards SWORD because I feel that it just isn't very im-
important. There are no build-up forces and most likely large stacks of British units will land in the follow-up phase. The German player shouldn’t attack here on June 6 because there will be no undisrupted units to form a healthy line on June 7th if he does. Always think ahead. It will be virtually impossible to advance counterattacking units from June 6th, so the important ones will end up behind the front line! Since the entire front will be disrupted daily, there is the danger of potent British defensive fire and counter-counterattacks against disrupted units. This situation is not only unpleasant, but also an unnecessary depletion of the 21st Panzer Division. Any semi-competent Allied player will have armor on the front lines after combat on June 6th, which will result in a combined arms modifier of -2 to attacks against them. Dan fully realizes all these facts; the problem is that he will not modify an appealing plan to fit the circumstances. The modification to his plan here is to call off the big attack until the time is right.

GERMAN DEFENSIVE OPTION: BRITISH SECTOR

First then, the “passive” German defense in the British sector. With the 6th Airborne HQ out of the way for ten turns, the only real obstacle to setting up a German line of defense in the Caen region will be Allied air interdiction. Heavy interdiction can all but derail the proper placement of the 21 Panzer HQ, thus effectively rendering the division susceptible to damage on 7 June from the front line north of the city. For that reason, I here introduce my “patented” defense of Caen, which excludes the 21st Panzer.

711 INFANTERIE DIVISION. It will take at least three days for the division to concentrate in the area of the remnants of the British paratroopers. Its main concern at first should be blocking the expansion eastward by British units from SWORD. Destruction of the paratroopers is secondary until the division can be supported by flak and independent armor. Permanent disruption by British naval guns is all but a fact of life.

716 INFANTERIE DIVISION. There is a definite psychological trap the German commander can fall into when he prepares to defend Caen. All basic rational feelings say to defend along the line running from the hill west of Fort Douvres through the fort and city down to the Periers hills and woods to the canal. The double defense offered, the controlling ZOC and the realization of no air or naval bombardment in the woods—all seem too good to pass up. One problem is that the line is in range of most of the guns of the Royal Navy and that a defensive line here will suffer from massive naval disruption on June 7, besides the possible losses to British defensive fire on June 6. A second problem results from the first when the disrupted units find themselves unable to fall back in the direction of Caen fast enough. Thirdly, such a line is simply too long for the German to hold unless units of the 21st Panzer are put into the front line; if so done, they will suffer horribly on June 7 should the divisional HQ not be able to supply them.

The point to remember when considering the “passive” defense of Caen is that there is no Allied Mechanized Movement Phase on 6 June. If you don’t think that this saves the German line from total collapse on June 7th, try giving the Allies that mechanized phase sometime. No Allied mechanized movement means no defensive fire and no naval disruption. The German line should therefore be formed north of Caen but not adjacent to British units. It must, however, be formed as far north of the city as possible to allow the 12 SS Division to use strategic road movement on June 7 to reach positions at Epron, St. Contest and adjacent points.

With an average landing at SWORD, the German can expect to have the 7716 infantry battalion in Oustreham trapped behind enemy lines. At best, if not disrupted, the battalion may reach Amfreville on the east side of the Orne. The remaining units of the division should be available (infantry in Fort Douvres and north of the Periers hills may be reduced).
My first illustration shows the locations of the units of 716th Division after German movement on June 6. There are several points to note. First, 716 HQ is positioned on the front line at the east end in order to be out of range of as much British artillery as possible. It is still in range of the division's only mechanized unit, despite any possible Allied interdiction. The PzG 716 is stacked with the HQ to lend anti-tank support in case 1716 cannot reach Carp-2 and is disrupted by Allied air bombardment. In an attempt to preserve infantry units, infantry battalion II/736 is set so that it can be attacked only from one hex. There should be a secondary line of defense to prevent Allied penetrations in the event of attacks, and this should be formed by the anti-tank units of 21st Panzer and necessary Nebelwerfer units. The anti-tank units should keep to the roads wherever practical in order to maximize June 7th movement.

21 PANZER DIVISION. As far as 21 Panzer is concerned, the HQ moves as far as possible with its supply ending with it (a nice place to stop is in the woods east of Bourguebus to avoid possible air attack). The mechanized elements of the division then move to be in supply range of the HQ so to be able to move north on June 7. During British combat on the next day, the units of the division should be used sparingly to shore up the defenses of 716. There are two reasons for this: destruction of 716 is acceptable so long as the 12th SS sector we are concerned with those units of the division is supplied by 1 Illustration 2.) 

Dan's "patented" defense line is pretty, but can it fight? Probably not, given that if the weather on June 7th is fair heavy interdiction will prevent mechanized units of the 21st Panzer from reinforcing the 716th—which could result in a total collapse of the line in front of Caen.

Moving west from the bridge at Caen, the II/726 infantry battalion should be sacrificed at the bridge hex north of La Frenes-Camilly to stop the entire British army from attacking the left flank of the Caen defenses. It may be possible to retreat II/726 westward to Tierceville; if the British player isn't careful, the road heading south from Asnelles-sur-Mer can be blocked in order to at least partially inhibit the immediate landing of the 7th Armoured. If the battalion is used in this manner, or if it is obliterated in the Allied Combat Phase of the 6th June turn, there is nothing to worry about because the left flank is being held securely (for at least a day) and the British cannot do anything damaging to the German line.

352 INFANTERIE DIVISION. Moving west to Bayeux, a worse case scenario may be considered. That is that no flak units are available to support infantry units of the 352nd east of Bayeux. This should occur about 56% of the time assuming a competent Oppama Beach attack allocation. (See Illustration B for my suggested June 6th setup in this area.) A few things can be done about the lack of flak to support the infantry. The two mechanized units of the 352nd should be moved in the Mechanized and Movement Phases to a position on the road just west of Tilly-sur-Seulles to support defensive positions on the hill and at Conde-sur-Seulles. If the 785 Security Company survives the 6 June attack, it should move southwest.

The 1916/822 infantry battalion goes to Nonant; which is a waste, but something has to go there and that is as far as it can move. As an option, if this unit is attacked and retreats, put it on the hill, the security company at Nonant and the I/915 west of the river for added defense. As far as I'm concerned, anything stationed at Nonant has a limited life span because it will be surrounded and destroyed on June 7 by tanks from the 7th Armoured Division. However, blocking this road squeezes the British advance through the corridor of the Seules and its eastern tributary. This wide-open roadless space is slow going for the motorized infantry and gives the German a day or two of breathing space.

GERMAN OFFENSIVE OPTION: BRITISH SECTOR

In order to launch a major attack upon the British left flank, certain realities must be understood by the German player. First he must not be intimidated by the units of the British 6th Airborne. With the HQ dead, these units can be eliminated with ease by elements of the 21st Panzer. Those which remain after German combat on June 6 can be isolated and contained by the 711th Infantry Division until supporting flak arrives from Pas de Calais. Second, the British are not without fire support, but it is limited (especially if some is hit by coastal artillery fire while landing). In order to have large amounts of defensive fire, the British player will have to postpone any large-scale attacks which require artillery support. This is just one more way of keeping the British from attacking, by maintaining the threat of possible German counterattacks and forcing them to reserve their artillery fire. Third, the June 6 attacks have definite physical objectives (i.e., hexes) while the later attacks, from 7 June through 10 June, will concentrate on one hex per day in order to strike with maximum power; your objective is the massing at least 84 combat factors (including artillery) onto British units in that target hex. Combat odds of 6-1 are a minimum and the most defense the British will be able to put into a hex is 14 factors.

What happens north of Caen should be as follows. Instead of falling back to a defensive line just above Caen, units of the 716th Infantry Division maintain their forward positions. Some alterations are, of course, necessary. The II/736 infantry battalion transfers to Douvres since it will be doubled in defensive strength there and the PzG moves into the fort. The high ground around Periers is also held by units of 716 Division. While this may seem like a weak line—which it is—the British should find it difficult
to make any sort of progress against it since they will have to deal with the push of 21 Panzer towards Oustreham. Defensive fire support should also be able to help this line hold. With the left half of the German line thus anchored, the 21st Panzer Division concentrates in the narrow area between the Periers hills and the Ranville bridge. Objectives are: capture of the bridge across the Orne and Caen Canal, destruction of British units at Benouville, and establishment of a firm line running from the south hex of Oustreham to Benouville and west to the Periers hills. Depending upon the landings at SWORD, the line may possibly form up one hex north of the Periers hills and Benouville woods. Most likely, the panzers will be unable to cross through the city of Caen and reach the fighting to the north. It should instead be used against the glider company holding the Ranville bridge and then advance after combat so as not adjacent to British units if possible.

The British glider company on the Ranville bridge is no problem to remove. Armor and infantry assault from the east bank and are supported from the other by 88s of the division. Low combat odds are not acceptable; the unit must be destroyed. There is the possibility that the British player will elect to drop his remaining units of the airborne division during the Allied Build-up Phase, but none will be able to support the bridge except for a small portion of British defensive fire. The only threat the airborne artillery really poses is against the 1/200, 2/200 and 3/200 units. That risk must be taken if the German player is ever to have a chance at destroying the British offensive capabilities.

Comment has been made above about the airborne battalion which drops at Zone "K". This unit has to be the most irritating to the German player. It is obviously a waste of time and effort to attack the paratroopers during the German Combat Phase of June 6. The units which would be used for this attack are much more profitably employed further north. Yet the British unit cannot be ignored; if it were allowed to move adjacent to (or, even worse, onto) the main highway to Caen, the strategic movement of 12 SS Panzer Division would be effectively stopped. The easiest solution is to detail three nebelwerfer units from 21 Panzer to move adjacent to the unit in such a manner as to prevent the British paratroopers from reaching any critical hex in their 7 June movement. The nebelwerfer units should, of course, be the weaker ones of the division if possible.

Another benefit accruing from this first-turn counterattack, should it prove successful, is that units of the 71th Infanterie Division will eventually be shuttled over the Ranville bridge to strengthen the defenses north of Caen. Not having to hold a line from east of Ranville down to Caen, and then west, effectively frees one German division. This is why it is so important to firmly anchor the German line in Oustreham. Sure, whatever German units hold that city are going to be permanently disrupted; but the British should find it difficult to attack the hex without armor support. Indeed, the adjacent flooded hex can be a death-trap for any British infantry in it since they will not be receiving armor support if needed.

Another change in the German defensive posture concerns Bayeux. Units of the 352nd Infanterie no longer fall back in face of the British flood. Instead they form up and stop it cold. (See Illustration 3.) Once again anti-tank support from 1 Flak is imperative and, should it prove impossible to supply (for example, if American follow-up units land at FOX GREEN and succeed in cutting the main highway from Isigny to Bayeux), then the German defense should follow the pattern described above.

I can hear many now saying that it is folly to commit the 21st Panzer to the hopeless task of beating down the British at SWORD Beach, if for no other reason than that the entire division will be disrupted by British naval fire on June 7. True . . . except that the German player will take extreme care with his June 6 combat, the target hexes, order of execution and advance after combat so that as much of the division as possible ends up in the line. Even so, given that most of the division suffers from disruption, the effects should be primarily against the motorized infantry battalions, and possibly against the 305 flak unit. The three 88mm companies, the armor and the panzergrenadiers should all be undisrupted, and are the units which will accomplish the attack on 7 June, supported by divisional artillery and possibly even by the artillery from 12 SS Panzer which will be forming up in Caen and westwards (since the job of holding the Carpiquet to Tilly-sur-Suelles line now becomes the responsibility of the 12th SS). Since I am dealing primarily with the German June 6th response in this article, I shall leave discussion of the later stages of this offensive option against the British until a more appropriate moment.

My "offensive option" is more a plan for defense when considering a poor Allied landing than a plan of attack. I do not commit the 21st Panzer to an impossible task. Dan uses the 21st not only to counter-attack the British at SWORD and "anchor" the German line in the south hex of Oustreham, but also "to eliminate with ease" units from the 6th British Airborne and "to be free on June 7th to form a line from Carpiquet west to Tilly-sur-Suelles". What follows is my reasonable approach to the German "offensive option".

Elements of the 21st Panzer should be used to attack the British 8th (Midlands Counties) Paratroop Battalion that lands at DZ "K". If it is possible to get armor into that attack, then by all means use it. Elimination of the enemy is preferred, if possible. The rest of the 21st Panzer should form up north of Caen with the 716th (as per Illustration C). Again, the bridge at Cairon is strongly held.

By Bayeux, my strategy is much like that shown in Dan’s illustration, but with the following changes: at Sully is MAR (it should survive) and the flank unit from the 352nd; east hex of Bayeux is home for the fusiller battalion with the 785th Security at Nonant. Otherwise, I can’t fault Dan’s positions. Sully is not held strongly because there won’t be an attack there. It is between the British and American sectors and neither side will want to stretch their lines just to attack there. Remember, this option assumes a poor Allied landing.

OMAHA BEACH SECTOR

Normally the Germans behind OMAHA Beach have a very difficult time holding the American 1st and 29th divisions at bay. There is an acute shortage of infantry and what infantry is available will be for a large part out of supply on June 7th for the simple reason that the 352nd HQ is trying to supply units from well west of Bayeux right across to Isigny. If it wasn’t for the presence of flak in this region, the entire German center would most assuredly collapse.

Defense of this sector is split into two parts, one on each end of the flooded terrain between Isigny and Bayeux. In the eastern portion, the German has enough infantry with good flak support and is well within supply range for the divisional HQ. This is
also the sector which will most quickly receive reinforcements as either the the 21st Panzer of 12th SS panzer move into place around Tilly-sur-Suizelles. The only problem is the sheer mass of enemy units that hit this area from three directions (from west across the bridge near Formigny, from the north across the bridge at Sully, and from the east through the streets of Bayeux). At the other end, there is generally less enemy opposition (unless forces from UTAH break out in the direction of Isigny, but there is very little ground which can be given up once the line reaches the outskirts of Isigny.

So, in the east around Bayeux you give up ground in order to preserve units while waiting for reinforcements. There is not much else possible. Competent use of the many terrain defensive positions is demanded—holding behind rivers, in trees, on hills (which will hold three hexes by their ZOC), and so forth. Units from one of the panzer divisions will eventually hold the hill near Juaye-Mondaye. First turn placement consists mainly of holding behind the river with flank units (not adjacent to the river but one hex behind) while infantry and flank hold the east side of the bridge near Formigny. In the direction of Isigny the roads are held by flank in an effort to delay the Americans until useful infantry arrives at the town (most likely AOK 7). If the US forces have not succeeded in cutting the main bridges and other likely river crossing areas.

true. The flak sits one hex behind the river to try to the road so that, if an American infantry battalion comes across the river, this enemy is poised to attack it (and any attack without armor is impossible). The German player can only form up as a defensive line as close to the city as possible, in as short a line as possible, and keep the armor unit well back in reserve. Until further reinforcements arrive there is little the German army can do to stop or slow down the Americans from driving towards Isigny.

Around the area of the 82nd Airborne drop zones, there are few defensive moves which can be made. The primary objective, of course, is to secure the road running from Orglandes south to St. Jores but this may prove difficult if the roads in the immediate vicinity are heavily strafed.

In the region of the 709th Infanterie Division, it is important to move units south of MKB MARC if possible in an attempt to shield the coastal gun for as long as possible to permit shots on the UTAH beachheads. This will depend upon Allied air interdiction in the area as well as the extent of the advance of American units and availability of 795 OSS battalion. Basically the German is safe if he can hold the line running along the river from Fresville up to MKB MARC and to the coast. The real strength of this line will appear on June 8 with the arrival of the flank from Cherbourg.

Around Carentan, the German is forced to defend with the following units on June 6th: III/6FS/91, 100 tank, 13/6FS/91, Morser, II/435/91, KG 895, KG 955 and 435 OST. The 32nd Flak is used east of Isigny unless OMAHA is dead or dying. There are two possible setups here depending on the health of UTAH Beach.

My definition of a healthy Allied landing at UTAH is that both hexes of Carentan are occupied and neither stack gets hit in the follow-up phase. In this case, the available units should be allocated in the following manner: III/6FS at St. Eny (southwest of Carentan); 13/6FS goes one hex southwest of III/6FS; 16FS goes one hex northwest of Bauple; the 100th tank hides in the swamp south of St. Jores; and the 91st HQ is at Lihaire with the supply unit. This HQ placement assumes fairly heavy interdic-

Essentially, I agree with what Dan has said here about unit positioning. I feel that a few points should be added though.

Between Formigny and Bayeux, the 1st Flak holds on to the road so that, if an American infantry battalion comes across the river, this enemy is heavily fired upon and hopefully retreated to its destruction. The infantry available should hold behind bridges and other likely river crossing areas.

Between Formigny and Isigny, the same holds true. The flak sits one hex behind the river to try and force the Americans to be cautious. Thank goodness for those rivers! the 32nd Flak should take up positions in the Grandcamp-la Cambre area.

**UTAH BEACH SECTOR**

Unless German coastal artillery fire against UTAH Beach is extremely lucky and hits both follow-up wave stacks, the German commander will be faced with the problem of dealing with American units in Carentan. There is no dealing with it. If the German player attempts a June 6 counterattack against the city, he risks the destruction of his only piece of armor in this sector (and any attack without armor is impossible). The German player can only form up as a defensive line as close to the city as possible, in as short a line as possible, and keep the armor unit well back in reserve. Until further reinforcements arrive there is little the German army can do to stop or slow down the Americans from driving towards Isigny.

Illustration C: Front line allocations on June 6 assuming a poor Allied landing.

If the Allied landing at UTAH is hurting, (that is, none or one hex of Carentan occupied), then utilize the following allocations: III/1058/91 goes to hexes south of St. Come-du-Mont, III/6FS in the west hex of Carentan, 13/6FS in the III/6FS setup hex and the 100th tank in the vicinity of Baupre. In either case (good or bad), the 435 OST moves to St. Hilaire and KG 895 goes one hex south on the rail line. KG 955 probably goes with the 435th OST. If no American units make it into Carentan at all, then the allocations are obvious.

In the 82nd Airborne area, the 88s from the 91st should be placed three hexes north of St. Jores with the III/191/91 artillery unit one hex to the northwest for support. The pioneers from the 91st should be moved to one hex southeast of the (12)-5-8 setup hex to block the road to St. Sauveur.

In the 709th zone, no matter how much interdiction there is, enough units will arrive at the line from Village-du-Nord to Fresville to hold sufficiently. Arriving on June 6th should be I/91/709, Pzg 709, PAK 709, I/191/709, 1709 mechanized, and the I/1058/91 and II/191/91 if the situation looks serious. Don’t forget the possibilities for IV/1709, 795 OST and III/1058 if not disrupted or destroyed. They can be used to move to the intended drop zone of an HQ or to block the causeways to prevent some units of the 90th US Infantry from landing in the build-up phase. Another sneaky possibility is for IV/1709 to defensive fire a disrupted unit adjacent to the 795 OST, retreat the unit, and then advance the 795 OST to the beaches gloriously in the following movement phase. Also, don’t forget to move the 722nd Railway Coastal Artillery unit if there isn’t a cut beside it.
CONCLUSIONS

It should be evident that my primary concern as the German commander in Normandy on 6 June is to deal effectively, determinedly and crushingly, with the British army—in particular their extreme left flank. It is the weakest sector of the entire Allied invasion front. It is the key to the other sectors reaching the beaches. It is the sector most easily reinforced by the German player and it is the sector containing the most powerful German units on June 6th. Finally, it is also the sector which threatens the German line the most (a British expansion on the east side of the Orne River by June 7 or June 8 can be disastrous). It is the sector to take a defensive stance immediately. That means if you are lucky enough to gain the upper hand on June 6th, until you mangle the British. Panzer divisions should have only one function in THE LONGEST DAY—offensive action. That may be out of step with the nature of the game design. But it is possible if the German player racks his brains to figure out how, and if he has that requisite amount of daring in his own nature.

Being on the “defensive” is just what the German player must do on 6th June to survive. The sooner he realizes this, the better off he will be. Get rid of those dangerous ideas of glory and counter-attacks.

Don’t be misled. SWORD will not be the weakest area of the Allied line. The British should be able to hold his own against the Germans given even the closeness of the board edge. For the German, a British expansion over the Orne is unpleasant—but definitely not disastrous. In fact, I welcome it.

To be defensive in the first few turns is necessary for the German in THE LONGEST DAY, simply to preserve units for the coming weeks of attrition. It is important also to let the Allied player feel that he is in control for a while so that when he is counterattacked later, he will doubt his own strength and ability. If the German player makes a foolish counterattack on June 6th that is successfully repulsed, the Allied player, who will be just that much more confident about his situation. He will know that a German counterattack can be repulsed with ease. The German player should never permit this thought to take root. He should save his “daring” until the time is right to use it.

Discretion is the better part of valor.

Compleat Diplomat . . . Cont’d from Page 33

Many readers may find all these situations quite routine, but they are all examples of ad hoc rulings, contrary to the rules, which players make in the course of their games. You may chuckle at these and say “how simple”, but it’s possible you may be making rules errors equally simple. Virtually every situation which can arise in DIPLOMACY (except some knotty and extremely rare convoluted circumstances) can be resolved by specific statements found in the rules. Check them out.

And ponder for a moment the thought that if such misapplications can occur in a game like DIPLOMACY, what must be the situation of the poor answer-man for ASL!

WARGAMER’S GUIDE TO THIRD REICH

It was inevitable that The Avalon Hill Game Company produce a “wargamer’s guide” to the most popular grand strategic game of all—THIRD REICH. After two years of effort, two master players (Marcus Watney and Larry Becker) have produced the finest guide yet published.

More than simply a reprint of articles from the files of THE GENERAL, this 48-page, full-color guide to the game contains many articles on strategy for the individual countries never before published. The best of earlier articles have been updated for the latest edition of THIRD REICH and reprinted. A four-page “Question Box” clarifies and expands upon the rules, while Don Greenwood shares with the readers a bit of the history of the development of this classic game. Tucked among the text are sidebars to add spice, covering such esoteric considerations as a Russian invasion of Turkey, calculating probabilities in combat, and a classic 3R contest. Drafted by the best players of this grand game around, every page is filled with informative hints and tactics. If you consider yourself a serious THIRD REICH expert, you’ll be impressed with the scope of this guide; if you’d like to be, you’d best get hold of a copy.

Released to acclaim at ORIGINS ’86, the WARGAMER’S GUIDE TO THIRD REICH is now available for order by mail direct from The Avalon Hill Game Company (4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, MD 21214). Cost is $5.00. Please add usual 10% for shipping and handling—20% for Canadian orders and 30% for overseas. Maryland residents please add 5% state sales tax.

AH Philosophy . . . Cont’d from Page 2

Lybian-American brouhaha, the game follows the nature of the German commander. If he is in-
Dear Editor,

It was with considerable amusement that I read "Noss of Commeclization" in Club Book No. 24 by Mr. Robinette in the Vol. 22, No. 4 issue of THE GENERAL. Whereas I agree with most of what he said, I would like to point out two minor errors he makes:

First, it isn't really necessary to become an obsessive-compulsive miniaturist in order to enjoy wargaming. Our club has had them on and off during our around and doing quite well—and I've yet to instills a feeling of community, and, most imp-t something along the lines of "I'm so into wargaming that I've become a bit of a hermit."

Second, another error in which he is, I believe, is necessary for a successful wargaming club is a regular publication. A newsletter put out four times per year can create a soapbox, instills a feeling of community, and, most imp-tly, keeps less active members "in touch" with the club's activities. If anyone would like to discuss the "how and why" of wargame club formation, just call or write to Mr. Robinette, 511 West Maple Street, Northfield, Ill. 62702.

Paul Piglowski

Piglowski, Illinois

I do heartily applaud Mr. Piglowski's views on the plus of a newsletter, having been in- providence of a newsletter as a part of my wargaming life. They are vital to the growth and legimacy of a club, bringing a sense of com-munity and an end to the "isolation" caused by the hobby's nature. It is well worth laying a newspaper fee for financing. In St. Andrews, we made it common practice to send our newsletter to all hobbyists, past in the local libraries (public and school), mail copies to other clubs in Great Britain, and have extra copies on hand to pass out when putting on miniatures displays at local fairs and such. It brought us quite a few casual members, some of whom developed into fine players. It was an excellent tool for any club, albeit a great deal of effort if you wish to take pride in it.

Michael Metcalf
Raleigh, North Carolina

Dear Sir,

Issue 22, #4 brings to mind two concerns, or worries, your comments regarding the state of TFW gaming (in the AH Philosophy) appear quite discouraging. Although I understand your concerns, I am seriously bothered by the lack of public gaming organizations. I believe that this gloomy prediction is not substantiated by the data you provide. As far as I see, the number of clubs is not decreasing but rather expanding. The evidence is the lack of ability for me in this hobby to have influence upon the type of wargaming journal we want; one letter won't do the job.

Michael Metcalf
Raleigh, North Carolina

Dear Sir,

As it usual in writing any editorial intended to stimulate some response and thought, I have deliberately pained a "clannish" picture of the status of our hobby. From the data you provide, many small groups of "private" gamers exists, being myself a member of such a "exclusive" group. Another very small and interesting type are the "wargame players". And I too have a couple of clones which I get together with to play games of interest to me in increasing the quality of the issues such as to increase our in-fluence (such as it is) to the GENERAL's format. We do not deal with the fact that we must work within this system to have influence upon the type of wargaming journal we want; one letter won't do the job.

Michael Metcalf
Raleigh, North Carolina

Dear Sir,

I believe that the wargaming groups that frequent many university, college and high school campuses are in general very inactive. How many years have you been following the wargaming groups that frequent many university, college and high school campuses? Many have been following these groups for years. I believe that one of the main reasons for this is the lack of organizations. In the wargaming groups that frequent many university, college and high school campuses, the number of players who are seriously interested in wargaming is very small. The lack of organizations is one of the main reasons for this. However, I am not a member of any of these groups, and I believe that the lack of organizations is one of the main reasons for this.

Michael Metcalf
Raleigh, North Carolina

Dear Sir,

It has been some time since I have been active in the hobby; I grew up on some of the early issues of THE GENERAL, and I believe that wargaming has passed the peak of its popularity. It is a fact that the number of wargamers in this country has declined in recent years. Although I have not purchased either THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN or RUSSIAN FRONT (although I was planning to purchase THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN before I started my new job), the situation is still quite encouraging. There are still a few wargamers who are active in this hobby, and they are making The Wargamer's Journal a very successful publication. If I understand you right, there are still a few wargamers who are active in this hobby, and they are making The Wargamer's Journal a very successful publication.

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THE QUESTION BOX

ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER

A1.32 & A1.81
If a Fanatic HS Recombines with a HS that's not fanatic, is the resultant squad Fanatic?
A. No.
A1.34 Suppose a Russian 4-4-7 squad is carrying six MF, learn about one MF, and it uses Minimum Move to move into an adjacent building hex. For Defensive First Fire purposes, is it considered to have spent only one MF in that building hex—or two MF?
A. Two MF.

A2.1 If a stack of units are moving together, and one in the stack expends MF to place a SMOKE grenade, is the ZOC extended across the black hex for this purpose?
A. No, should have been stated that the adjacent hexes must be part of a continuous causal depiction. Hexes EE3 and EE4 are not adjacent for this purpose.

A2.4 & A2.7 May units isolated from a regular land route but located in a city-fortress hex receive replacements if they are not adjacent to an enemy unit?
A. No—"isolated" to the non-continuous conditions of 27.7.

A2.7.5 This rule is confusing as to exactly what turn is the Allies' next turn for lost steps to occur in the same turn?
A. No, next turn means next turn. By 4.1.2 the Weather roll is part of the current turn.

A2.7.6 & A2.7.7 If there are two separate beachheads on Europe completely isolated from one another with different port supply capacities, do the restrictions for one apply to the other or are they judged separately?
A. Separately; use spare or blank counters to indicate the status of the different beachheads on the SC.

A4.14 Can a leader apply his leadership modifier to another unit's Recovery dr?
A. No.

A4.15 & A15.4 Can a berserk HS use a Dash move to enter an enemy (or neutral) hex?
A. Yes—provided it meets all the requirements for both Dask and Berserk movement.

FORTRESS EUROPA

11.4 Is normal Sea Movement blocked into inlands from the sea in any way as in 12.5?
A. Yes, you cannot use Sea Movement into an inland port if passage is blocked by an enemy ZOC. ZOC extends across the black coastline for this purpose.

12.10 If the Allies invade Bremen, is the invasion of the Netherlands District used?
A. The Allies cannot invade Bremen—12.5.

12.6 About 50% of your opponents read your adjacent beach hexes rule for invasions to skip hexes, so long as the hexes are joined overland (for example, EE4 and EE5 are not adjacent). Is this correct?
A. No, should have been stated that the adjacent hexes must be part of a continuous causal depiction. Hexes EE3 and EE4 are not adjacent for this purpose.

18.4 Can a leader apply a Combat Leadership modifier to the different beachheads on the SC?
A. Yes—provided it meets all the requirements for both Dask and Berserk movement.

18.7.6 Do paratroopers block retreat on the turn dropped in hexes other than the ones they occupy?
A. No.

20.1 May the German player airlift units to a fortress when the adjacent units are commandees (which have no ZOC)?
A. No—the rule simply specifies "enemy units adjacent" and says nothing about ZOCs.

RUSSIAN FRONT

Strategic Simulation of the Great Patriotic War

Something of a stellar achievement for Messers. Zimmer and Taylor, RUSSIAN FRONT now holds the RBG Chart—displacing the long-standing G.I. But then, this event is not one that really takes to staying. Having a popular historical subject, the approved scope of simulation, tempered with some innovative systems and wrapped in beautiful graphics is guaranteed to produce a winner. And RUSSIAN FRONT is a winner (take a look at the other polls in this issue).

Of the ratings accorded this game by the large number of responding readers, all but two are above average—and those for Overall Value (2.00) and the Mapboard (1.53) are the best by far. In comparison with Charles Kilber's hand-painted mushroom art, the counters suffer: the rating for the utilitarian playing pieces is below the norm (refer to Vol. 20, No. 1). Ironically, the "Completeness" of the rules is also rated below average—perhaps this reflects the fact that the four-page introductory rules left short of their intent.

Mastery of this newest "classic" will demand some investment in time. The "Shortest" Game Length (15.24) and "Longest" Game Length (89.64) entries indicate that the game is not for the casual player. Yet, regardless of the scenario chosen, RUSSIAN FRONT should prove a boon for those interested in the war in the East, those interested in elegant game systems, or those simply looking for challenging play.

Overall Value: 2.00 Components: 2.78 Map: 1.53 Counters: 2.61 Player's Aids: 2.63 Complexity: 5.11 Completeness of Rules: 4.15 Playability: 2.56 Excitement Level: 2.35 Play Balance: 2.92 Authenticity: 2.36 Game Length:

Shortest: 2 hrs., 35 mins.
Longest: 14 hrs., 56 mins.
Year: 1985
Sample Base: 88

The following games are ranked by their reader-generated overall Value rating. Further aspects of reader response to our titles are included by the ratings in other categories. By breaking down a game's ratings into these individual categories, the gamer is able to discern for himself where the title's strengths and weaknesses lie in the qualities he values highly. Readers are reminded that the Game Length categories are measured in multiples of ten minutes (thus, a rating of "18" equates to three hours).

WARGAME RBG

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COMING UP NEXT TIME

INDEX
true "collector's items" status. Our latest "Game and Parts Price List" carries FRANCE '40 at $25.00, SOURCE OF THE NILE at $50.00 and TOBRUK at $30.00 for mail orders.

The software division of The Avalon Hill Game Company is again looking for playtesters familiar with one of our boardgames. This time the game is none other than the venerable PANZER LEADER and the computer is the Commodore 64. Playtesters are needed to help "de-bug the program, give their opinions on the quality of the design, and ensure that the game adheres faithfully to its boardgame counterpart. The playtest list is limited to 20 readers of The GENERAL, and we expect openings to be filled rather quickly. Applicants must own and have played the boardgame version extensively. Please, only those willing to put in the many hours of playing hours of voluntary. If interested in playtesting this new computer version, please send a letter describing your gameplay background and make of computer you own; address your application to the attention of Mr. Bill Peschel, Microcomputer Games.

Mr. Blumberg's variant for the venerable AFRIKA KORPS—"Operation Compass" (Vol. 22, No. 1) —brought a number of new counters into play to react the opening salvos of the desert war. Richard Gutenkunst has shown an amazing proficiency in the past for crafting excellent sets of counters for variants which appear in these pages; and he couldn't resist the challenge of these. He is offering sets of "Compass" counters to our readership in two forms; readers may order these. He is offering sets of "Compass" counters to our readership in two forms; readers may order these.

The ten winners, selected as winners were workable without violating the rules of RUSSIAN FRONT. The ten winners, each to receive merchandise credits from The Avalon Hill Game Company, are as follows: John Anderson, Canby, OR; Dennis Devine, Bloomington, IN; Eugene Harvey, St. Petersburg, FL; Charles Jones, West Jordan, UT; Dennis Long, Kitchener, ONT; Michael Rodgers, Pierefonds, QUE; Michael Sincavage; Sterling, VA; Dan Thompson, Cambridge, ONT; Byron Waldman; Tulsa, OK; Steven Williams, Fairborn, OH.

Contest 129, despite a minor flaw in the set-up listing Lt Col. Waddell as being in hex 1332 (as opposed to the correct placement in 1332); revolves around the capture of Houck's Ridge. Waddell fulfills his function regardless of his location. The solution:

20th Georgia: Lt Col. Waddell spends seven Command Points on a rally to brands to move to hex 1332 (three CPs to rally unit in enemy ZOC plus one for ineffective unit present) and three CPs for the March order (two CPs for infantry in line and one for ineffective unit present). Note that for this solution, no spontaneous rallies are possible because the contest begins in the Activation Phase. The only way Col. Waddell can successfully defend his hex 1332 is with one CP conserving CPs for movement. Both units in hex 1332 must be rallied according to Rule 15.23.

During the Movement Phase, #1 expands ten Move Points and moves to 0932 via 1131, and stops facing west. Unit #5 does not move and suffers Opportunity Fire (45.11). Units #2 and #3 withdraw from ZOCs (triggering Opportunity Fire) to move to 1323 and block the 99th PA #2 from firing into the rear of the 15th Georgia troops in 1133.

16th Georgia: Lt Col. Hershiger spends seven Command Points as follows: three CPs to rally unit #2 (three CPs in enemy ZOC) plus two CPs to order March plus two CPs to order Melee. During the Movement Phase, #1 moves to hex 1034 to block the LGS from the 124th NY #1 at 1033; #2 doesn't move; #3 and Hershiger move to 1133 with #3 going on top of the stack; #4 moves to 1033 facing east; and #5 moves to 1033 going on top of the stack facing east.

Defensive Fire is irrelevant in the contest, but not these points—if the units in both 1033 and 1133 are disordered, the Confederates must fail. The 1133 command points is the only command points of the units there if the 20th Georgia fails to occupy 1232 and block fire through it. Finally, the top units in both 1033 and 1133 can take a step loss without becoming ineffective. Offensive Fire is likewise irrelevant, except that the units in 1033, 1133 and 0932. Lt Col. Waddell must own the fire on 1032 (allowed by 37.1 and 37.2).

Lastly, Melee Phase sees the stronger of the 1033 and 1133 (after Defensive Fire) plus Hershiger enters 1032 and attempts to force the defenders to retreat. If hex 1032 was vacated during the Offensive Fire Phase, units in either hex could enter 1032, if not occupied.

With the above moves, hex 0932 is captured during the Movement Phase. Hex 1032 will likely fall during the Melee Phase. The Confederate player wins the scenario.
THE STREETS OF STALINGRAD

ASL SCENARIO C

STALINGRAD, RUSSIA, October 6, 1944: This scenario joins ASL Scenario A and ASL Scenario B together as one combined game. In addition to the normal two-player game, this scenario makes for an excellent team game for four players.

BOARD CONFIGURATION:

VICTORY CONDITIONS: Victory is based upon satisfying the Victory Conditions of ASL Scenarios A and B. If each side fulfills one Victory Condition, the game is a draw. If a player fulfills one Victory Condition and draws the other, he wins. A decisive or “double” victory is achieved when a player fulfills both Victory Conditions.

BALANCE:

1. Add one Hero to any German group.
2. Allow Sewer Movement by Russian units.

TURN RECORD CHART

SPECIAL RULES:
1. Environmental Conditions are Moderate with no Wind at start.
2. Use the exact Order of Battle and Set Up restrictions provided in ASL Scenarios A and B. Set up the forces of Scenario A prior to placing the units in Scenario B.
3. Any unit in the upper floor of a building whose path of egress is blocked by Good Order enemy MMC is encircled. Such encirclement occurs the instant the path is blocked and is removed the instant there fails to be a Gc Order enemy MMC blocking the exit path. If a unit is encircled by fire as well as having its egress path blocked, there are no additional penalties other than the fact that encirclement can only be removed by having both an exit and meeting the conditions of A7.7.
4. In this scenario, units may set up anywhere within the designated buildings. Following set-up, units may move freely on both sides of the board regardless of initial placement.
5. All Russian units in the Tractor Works (building X3) get Fanaticism benefit while in the building, which is a Factory (B23.74).
6. German armor may delay entry one game turn and thereafter enter on any southern or eastern mapboard edge hex.
7. Prior to play, both players may agree that if the game is a draw by the standard victory conditions above, then the Russian loses unless he has a favorable 3:1 ratio of unbroken squads at the end of play.

AFTERMATH: Both the German and Soviet attacks jumped off at about the same time, and the entire area erupted in bloody street fighting. Utilizing overwhelming numbers, the Soviets overran the strung out German defenders, but at so high a cost that by the time they reached the Tractor Works their reinforcement value was much abated. The German assault engineers, meanwhile, had done their work and another section of the factory was cleared, but they too had taken heavy casualties and their attack soon fizzled in the face of a die-hard group of Russians still hanging onto a corner of the Works. The overall result was that the Russians had recaptured a few city blocks, but were still being slowly eroded in the factory complex. Neither side, despite desperate efforts with mounting casualties, was able to achieve a decisive result that day. In essence, it was a draw—with both sides pouring fresh troops into those same few blocks where so many more men would die in the days ahead.

Soviet Armor Support enter during the Russian Movement Phase of Turn 2 on Road Hex 11:

German Armor Support enter during the German Movement Phase of Turn 3 on Road Hex Y10 and/or GG5-GG6:
**STALINGRAD, RUSSIA, October 6, 1942:** While pushing into the industrial area of the city, advancing elements of the 389th Infantry Division isolated a contingent of the 308th Rifle Division in the crucial Dzerhinsky Tractor Works. The German command decided to crush this island of resistance and to help, brought up a crack team of assault engineers. However, the Russians had noted a critical weakness in the ring around the Tractor Works and had decided to launch a major counterattack to relieve their garrison there.

**BOARD CONFIGURATION:**

- Only hexrows O-GG are playable.

**VICTORY CONDITIONS:** The player ending the game with undisputed control of at least six hexes of the Tractor Works (building X3) wins. A hex containing units of both sides in Close Combat is controlled by neither. If only one player has an unbroken unit in the building at the end of play, that player is the winner. If neither player ends the game in control of six hexes of the Tractor Works or in sole possession of the building, the game is a draw.

**BALANCE:**

- Add one Hero to any German group.
- Allow Sewer Movement by Russian units.

**TURN RECORD CHART**

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<th>8</th>
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**Elements of the 308th Rifle Division [ELR: 3]:** set up first in any hex(es) of Building X3: {SAN: 6}

![Element 308th Rifle Division](image)

**Remnants of two battalions, 295th Infantry Division [ELR: 3]:** set up last in buildings P8, P5, Q4 and R1:

![Remnants of 295th Infantry Division](image)

**Elements of 389th Infantry Division [ELR: 4]:** set up second after the Russian 308th Infantry units, as indicated: {SAN: 6}

- **Company A, Assault Engineer Battalion 50:** set up in buildings AA4, CC3 and Y8:

  ![Company A, Assault Engineer Battalion 50](image)

- **Kampfgruppe Stahler:** set up in buildings U3, T4, R7 and T7:

  ![Kampfgruppe Stahler](image)

- **Kampfgruppe Tienham:** set up in buildings Y8, CC7 and AA4:

  ![Kampfgruppe Tienham](image)

**SPECIAL RULES:**

1. Environmental Conditions are Moderate with no Wind at start.
2. Any unit in the upper floor of a building whose path of egress is blocked by Good Order enemy MMC is encircled. Such encirclement occurs the instant the path is blocked and is removed the instant there fails to be a Good Order enemy MMC blocking the exit path. If a unit is encircled by fire as well as having its egress path blocked, there are no additional penalties other than the fact that encirclement can only be removed by having both an exit and meeting the conditions of A7.7.
3. In this scenario, units may set up anywhere within the designated buildings.
4. All Russian units in the Tractor Works (building X3) get Fanaticism benefit while in the building.
5. The Tractor Works (building X3) is considered a Factory (B23.74).
THE GUARDS COUNTERATTACK

ASL SCENARIO A

STALINGRAD, RUSSIA, October 6, 1942: After an extremely successful summer campaign, the Germans came upon the Volga fortress of Stalingrad. Here the Red Army had dug in and was determined to make a stand. Sensing total victory, the Germans threw more and ever more troops into the fighting. But for the first time in the war, German infantry found the Russians their equal. Rebuffed by stiff resistance, the Germans committed crack assault engineers. Gradually the Germans cleared one block, then another—only to lose them again to sudden Russian counterattacks. By October 5, the Germans had almost taken the key Dzerhezinsky Tractor Works. However, the fighting had been so heavy that the line troops occupying the surrounding area were exceptionally weak from the previous week's combat. At that point, the Russians counterattacked with their crack 37th Guards to break the ring the Germans had thrown around the factory and reinforce the desperate defenders.

VICTORY CONDITIONS: To win, the Soviet player must completely occupy two more of the stone buildings initially occupied by the German player than he loses of his own initially-held stone buildings to German occupation... OR have a favorable 3:1 ratio (Russian to German) of unbroken squads (or their equivalent) at the conclusion of play. The German player wins by avoiding Soviet victory conditions.

BOARD CONFIGURATION:

BALANCE:
★ Add one Hero to any German group.
★ Allow Sewer Movement by Russian units.

TURN RECORD CHART

Company H, 389th Infantry Regiment [ELR: 4] sets up as indicated: {SAN: 6}

In building M7:

In building M9:

Elements of the 308th Rifle Division [ELR: 3]: set up as indicated: {SAN: 6}

In building N4:

In building J2:

In building M2:

In building N2:

Elements of 2nd Battalion, 37th Guards Division [ELR: 3] set up in any hex(es) of building F3:

12

SPECIAL RULES:
1. Environmental Conditions are Moderate with no Wind at start.
2. Any unit in the upper floor of a building whose path of egress is blocked by Good Order enemy MMC is encircled. Such encirclement occurs the instant the path is blocked and is removed the instant there fails to be a Good Order enemy MMC blocking the exit path. If a unit is encircled by fire as well as having its egress path blocked, there are no additional penalties other than the fact that encirclement can only be removed by having both an exit and meeting the conditions of A7.7.
3. In this scenario, units may set up anywhere within the designated building.
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. 

CONTEST 130

As detailed in the contest description, indicate the moves and/or fire of all three Russian units surviving. Please also indicate whether your play will most likely result in a Russian or German victory, or in a draw.

- [ ] Russian Win
- [ ] German Win
- [ ] Draw

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Issue as a whole: (Rate from 1 to 10, with 1 equating excellent, 10 equating terrible) Best 3 Articles:

1. 
2. 
3. 

NAME __________________________ PHONE __________________________
ADDRESS ________________________
CITY __________ STATE ______ ZIP ______

The GENERAL